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# Nine Hells revisited

More 'facts' about devildom

by Ed Greenwood



Research into the nature and affairs of the diabolic, particularly those specialized investigations that can be carried out only in the Nine Hells, is understandably perilous. Much is yet unknown, or is largely conjecture; here follows more information about devils and their doings, and the Nine Hells, gathered from many scattered sources.

(Editor's note: This article is designed to be used in conjunction with Ed Greenwood's earlier treatise on the Nine Hells, which was printed in issues #75 and #76 of DRAGON® Magazine. However, readers who do not have immediate access to those issues will find that much of what follows here can be used without the earlier information. Issues #75 and #76 are available by mail order; see the list of back issues and order form elsewhere in this magazine.)

## Dealing with devils

On the Prime Material Plane, there have always been creatures of all sorts, including men, who worship and/or serve devils. To ensure the survival of these agents (and with them, diabolic influence on the Prime Material Plane), devils have always aided (by "serving under duress") these agents under a detailed code of laws and behavior.

Knowledge of these laws and behavior — in practical terms, the summoning and control of devils, and of their sigils and talismans — has survived down through the ages outside the ranks of diabolic agents, despite the unceasing efforts of devils and their agents to eradicate it. Fear of diabolic attack, and of the possible actions of other beings seeking such knowledge, has kept the identities of the possessors of diabolic knowledge, and the knowledge itself, secret. One can be sure (DMs take note) that player characters' discovery of such knowledge in play, if revealed or communicated to anyone who is not a player character, will bring eventual diabolic attack upon the PCs. Tutors or temples will not knowingly accept talismans and summoning information as gifts or payment for services. If such are unwittingly accepted, it is extremely likely that the tutor or temple will shortly thereafter be destroyed. Note that (according to the official AD&D® rules) the mere handling of, or speaking of any inscriptions on, a talisman will bring immediate response. Devils, or any specific devil linked to the talisman, will appear from the hells within 1-4 rounds — and without specific knowledge of how to control such summoned devils, the summoner is at their (non-existent!) mercy. It must be emphasized that the inscriptions on talismans are never the truenames of devils, and do not give the speaker any power over the summoned devils.

The protected (the word "safe" can never be truthfully used) storage of diabolic talismans is another topic upon which lore is fragmentary and largely silent. The long-

ago wizard Enthor mentions in his writings a fellow mage who stored a talisman in a silver box, its seams sealed with wax wet with holy water; indeed, silver and holy water would seem ideal physical components of any protection (along with locks and traps to prevent uncontrolled access to the storage-place of the talisman). But magic — strong magic — must also form a part of such defenses, and of this, nothing survives in known writings.

## Diabolic names

Many sages, diabolic agents, and others who have dealt with devils have repeatedly emphasized the importance of correctly pronouncing the common name of any devil in all diabolic dealings, for the vanity of a devil is a powerful and dangerous thing. Again, it should be noted that the names by which all devils are commonly known are *not* truenames; use of such common names will often *summon* the being concerned from the hells, but the devil will not be under the control of the speaker unless other magical preparations have been made. Here follow what are generally agreed to be the correct pronunciations of the more difficult or lesser-known common names of the known hierarchy of the hells, with accented syllables printed in *italic* type:

| <i>Name</i>  | <i>Pronunciation</i>                 |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| Adonides     | Ah- don- <i>eeds</i>                 |
| Adramalech   | Ah- drama- <i>leckh</i>              |
| Agares       | Ah- <i>garr</i> -aiys                |
| Amduscias    | Am- <i>doo</i> -see - azze           |
| Amon         | <i>Aiy</i> - mon                     |
| Arioch       | <i>Air</i> - ee - okh                |
| Baalberith   | <i>Bahl</i> - bair - ith             |
| Baalphegor   | <i>Bahl</i> - feh - gor              |
| Baalzebul    | <i>Bahl</i> - zee - bull             |
| Baalzephon   | <i>Bahl</i> - zee - fonn             |
| Bael         | <i>Bay</i> -ul                       |
| Barbatos     | <i>Bahr</i> -bah- toss               |
| Bele         | <i>Beel</i>                          |
| Bifrons      | <i>Bye</i> - frons                   |
| Bileth       | <i>Bye</i> -leth                     |
| Caarcinolaas | Kar- <i>crin</i> - oh - lass         |
| Chamo        | <i>Chamm</i> - oh                    |
| Dispater     | Diss- <i>pay</i> -ter                |
| Fecor        | <i>Fee</i> - kor                     |
| Goap         | <i>Goe</i> - <i>app</i>              |
| Herobaal     | <i>Hair</i> - oh - bahl              |
| Herodias     | <i>Hair</i> - oh - dee - ass         |
| Hutijin      | <i>Hutt</i> - ih - jinn              |
| Machalas     | <i>Mah</i> - <i>shall</i> - ass      |
| Melchon      | <i>Mell</i> - khon                   |
| Merodach     | <i>Mare</i> - oh - dakh              |
| Naome        | <i>Nay</i> - ohm                     |
| Tartach      | <i>Tarr</i> - <i>tackh</i>           |
| Titivilus    | <i>Tih</i> - tee - <i>vie</i> - luss |

## More "outcast" devils

Described in the following section of text are nine unique devils who, for one reason or another, have been relieved of their former position or status and exiled to Avernus, the uppermost plane of the Nine

Hells. As such, one or more of them might well be encountered by a party of adventurers who have traversed the Astral Plane and emerged on Avernus — generally the first (and often the last) stop for those who would visit the hells and meet the devils on their own ground.

## ARMAROS (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 ARMOR CLASS: -1  
 MOVE: 14"/20"  
 HIT DICE: 99 *hit points*  
 % IN LAIR: *Nil*  
 TREASURE TYPE: *See below*  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +4*  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 90%  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*  
 SIZE: *L (12' tall, 26' wingspan)*  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: 226  
 Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Armaros, sometimes called "The Resolver of Enchantments," is the least unhappy of the devils cast out of the present hierarchy of the hells, for his sojourn on Avernus is largely a matter of politics and not punishment, and he is often visited by Asmodeus or certain of the Overlord's emissaries. Other archdevils are forbidden to have contact with him — including Tiamat — and Tiamat's dukes have orders to drive him away from all archdevils or their servants, but not to harm him. This is fine with Armaros, who desires to be left alone to practice and perfect his magical powers anyway.

Due to his talent for magic, both in terms of capacity for innovation and present development, Armaros is potentially too powerful to be allowed the rank of archdevil, for he could well successfully challenge Asmodeus on purely physical terms, given the power base (diabolic servants, wealth, defenses, and communications) of an archdevil. Armaros would require far less in the way of allies and outside aid than other pretenders to the Overlord's throne, and thus could well overcome the masterful politics of Asmodeus, who keeps the archdevils hostile to one another and thus divided, rather than united against him.

And yet Armaros is an asset to the hells, a dweomercrafter supreme and one who has had a hand in the making of many of the plane's magical treasures — an asset that Asmodeus wishes kept loyal (and behold) to himself. Due to long-standing feuds with both Adramalech and Phongor, Armaros could not serve at the court of Asmodeus without imperiling their loyalty to the Overlord, and thus the security of Nessus and of the Overlord's rule, so he was placed on Avernus, separate from the archdevils. If any archdevil is found to have

consulted with him, Asmodeus has decreed, he will be exiled and Armaros will take his place as ruler of a plane — and all of the offending archdevil's dukes, consorts, and officers will be exiled or destroyed. Note the double edge of this stroke: Were this to occur, Armaros would have no staff and thus would be the weakest of the archdevils, perhaps prompting others to challenge his rule of the plane, and thus keeping Armaros weak and beholden to Asmodeus for any support given to bail him out. On the other side, the dukes, consorts, and officers of all the incumbent archdevils have a strong incentive not to let any communication occur between Armaros and their archdevil, and will not let themselves serve as emissaries or go-betweens for such a purpose.

Armaros himself is fairly happy with his lot, in the same way that Geryon is content with his — Geryon enjoys his hunting, and Armaros his spellcasting. Armaros has a free hand to do what he likes on Avernus so long as he neither approaches nor molests Tiamat or her consorts, dukes, and armies — nor those of any visiting archdevil — and so he is feared and hated by the other inhabitants of the plane (such as the other exiles, Tiamat's minor offspring, intruders, and the lesser infernal creatures native to Avernus). Armaros is apt to appear without warning, and harm (or even destroy) them, frustrate their plans or activities of the moment, or even experiment with them to perfect a spell (e.g., transforming or otherwise attacking them). He does such things with calm detachment, sometimes even amusement, and cares nothing for the fate of others. He respects only Asmodeus, and shrewd, elegant, or spectacular uses of magic, and is always seeking to further his own arts; any intruders he encounters will be probed for what can be learned (i.e., wrested) from them, to this end.

Armaros can call upon the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *delayed blast fireball* (3d6), *ice storm*, *wall of ice*, *continual light*, *read languages*, *read magic*, *detect magic*, *write*, *erase*, *detect invisibility*, *locate object*, *invisibility dispel magic*, *hold person*, *hold monster*, *shapechange*, *dimension door*, *blink*, *beguile*, *charm monster*, *mass charm*, *geas*, *restoration*, *resurrection*, *reverse gravity*, *disintegrate*, *wall of force*, *wall of smoke* (equals *wall of fog* in effects), *unseen servant*, *tongues*, *repulsion*, *darkness 15' radius*, *detect lie*, *remove* (or *bestow*) *curse*, *water breathing*, *passwall*, *fire shield* (both versions), *feeblemind* (devils immune), *telekinesis* (6000 gp weight limit), *flesh to stone* (and its reverse), *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *light*, *burning hands* (doing 13 points of damage), *ESP flame strike*, *enchant an item*, *permanency*, *spectral force*, *cause critical wounds*, *heal*, *know alignment*, *true seeing*, *identify* and (fulfill another's) *limited wish*, as well as the powers available to all devils (see the Monster Manual). Armaros can cause fear, with effects as for the 4th-level magic-user spell. He is thought to

be the only devil to have developed and mastered the ability to raise a *prismatic sphere*, which he can do once in every 33-day period.

Thrice per day Armaros can pronounce an (*un*)*holy word*. He can use any and all *symbol(s)* once (each) per 24-hour period. He can unleash two *meteor swarms* per day, and in the same time period attempt to *paralyze* one opponent, cast four *cones of cold* (9d4 +9 damage each), and employ two *fingers of death*. He cannot summon or otherwise call upon the aid of any devil. He regenerates 1 hit point every 3 rounds.

Armaros strikes for 2-8 points of damage if fighting barehanded, but is loath to do so, and will seek to escape if caught at a disadvantage. Note that he can only employ one of his awesome array of magical powers in a round, and thus cannot defy diabolic armies or even individual greater devils with impunity. He is currently experimenting with electrical discharge spells (e.g., *lightning bolt*, *chain lightning*) but has not mastered them.

Armaros appears as a grey-skinned, bearded, handsome-featured human male with dark grey, leathery, batlike wings and two short, forward-thrusting horns on his forehead. His eyes are a luminous blue-green. He usually wears a leather tunic and weapons belt, and pouches containing both spell ingredients and ink, quills, and vellum (scraped, bleached hides) for spell experimentation and recording of results. He does not need the ingredients to exercise the powers listed above. (Note that Armaros knows the ownership and precise properties of all diabolic magical items.) Armaros will readily trade magical knowledge with, and (in exchange for magical knowledge) perform spells for, any creature(s) he meets whom he cannot overcome. He feels no strong loyalty to the hierarchy of the hells, and is obsessed with working, and learning more about, magic.

## AZAZEL (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 ARMOR CLASS: -2  
 MOVE: 12"/16"  
 HIT DICE: 97 *hit points*  
 % IN LAIR: *Nil*  
 TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 3  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-16/1-4/1-4 or  
     *by weapon type +4*  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or *better*  
     *weapon to hit*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*  
 SIZE: L (10' tall)  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: 215  
     Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Azazel, "The Serpent," enjoys combat, but does not take well to being ordered

about by any he deems lesser than himself (this includes all devils except Asmodeus, Mephistopheles, Baalzebul, and Adramalech). As a result of this aggressive rejection of what he deemed undesired and unfounded authority, he was thrown out of two successive dukedoms, despite being an able general of infernal armies and a master strategist.

Azazel is vain, and often wears rich garments incorporating fur and gold braid, and gaudy, oversized jewelry. He will not cooperate with any devil except those mentioned above unless rewarded, and spends much of his time in self-indulgent amusements such as planning ways to overthrow Tiamat and take control of Avernus. He has lured forth or ambushed and slain no less than three of Tiamat's consorts, and slaughtered great numbers of her lesser spawn.

At will Azazel can call upon the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *read magic*, *detect magic*, *detect invisibility* *hold person*, and *polymorph self*. Once per day Azazel can employ *invisibility* on himself, duration unlimited (ceasing when he wills, or when he employs another power; if he struck another creature he would become visible for 1 round, but could thereafter become *invisible* again unless he willed otherwise or used another of his spell-like powers). Thrice per day he can *dispel magic*. His touch causes *fear*, as he wills. Azazel regenerates 2 hit points per round. (Note that he cannot use a *symbol*, nor *summon* another devil.)

Azazel appears as a winged, emerald-green, scaled humanoid with broad (40' wingspan) batlike wings and a snakelike head. His great fangs do 2-16 damage when he bites; his clawed hands and feet do little damage (1-4 and 1-2 each respectively), but he usually prefers to employ weapons such as a three-bladed military fork and a broadsword. Azazel can employ all five attacks (jaws, two hands, two feet) if unarmed and in flight or swooping.

Azazel, like his fellow exile Dagon (see below), shares his name with a demon prince (a cause of mutual displeasure). Azazel was renamed (from "Hazzael," as he was formerly called) by order of Asmodeus, to ensure that his exile was not broken by many summonings to the Prime Material Plane — for the ritual of his summoning had become widely known there — and from whence it was (and is) feared that he would work against the plans of the archdevils, and gather strength to challenge for a place among them. Like Kochbiel (see below), his lighting abilities are still respected in the hells.

## CAHOR (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 ARMOR CLASS: -1  
 MOVE: 14"  
 HIT DICE: 93 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: Nil  
 TREASURE TYPE: Nil  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 6-11 or by  
*weapon type +5*  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better  
*weapon to hit*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%  
 INTELLIGENCE: Exceptional  
 ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil (chaotic  
 tendencies)  
 SIZE: M (6' tall)  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: 215  
 Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

Cahor, "The Deceiver," is a scheming, masterful actor and mimic who is most skilled in his use of illusions — and is heartily detested even in the hells, for he is chaotically untrustworthy and untruthful, to the point where he became useless in the hierarchy; no underling could act upon his orders for fear of those orders being denied later, and no superior could entrust any task to him. But he is outwardly obedient at all times to archdevils, acting contrary to commands only when not under direct observation by the one who issued them; for such contrary actions Cahor will always have plausible, well-thought-out rationalizations or reasons. Those who have encountered him and lived to grow wiser know that his words can never be trusted.

Cahor now amuses himself by trying to

make Avernus a realm of confusion, where no one but he knows where they stand. Intruders, lesser devils, and greater devils alike he manipulates and misinforms to stir up trouble, create feuds and strife, and upset diabolic plans. Cahor's destruction will be secretly applauded by those devils who inhabit Avernus — but no devils move directly to destroy him themselves, for Cahor's indirect work on the Prime Material Plane, and his efforts to diffuse the activities of intruders into Avernus who seek to strike at the hells, is invaluable. As much of the active "hellish doings" on the Prime Material Plane are Cahor's work as they are that of any of the archdevils; he is energetically evil and has carefully developed contacts on the Prime Material Plane(s). He enjoys engaging in one-sided battles with lemures or intruders, ripping into and rendering opponents with snarling savagery.

Cahor can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, detect illusion, detect invisibility, polymorph self, audible glamor, spectral force, dancing lights, darkness, wall of smoke* (equals *wall of fog* in effects), *blindness, detect magic, fly* (maneuverability class A, 16" move), *misdirection, ventriloquism, ESP, fire shield* (both versions), *dispel illusion, and mass-morph*. Thrice per day Cahor can cause *confusion* by his gaze, and once per day he can *paralyze* a creature by touch (save vs. spell at -1 to avoid either of these effects).

At will Cahor can generate *fear* in a 10-foot radius about himself. Cahor regenerates 1 hit point per round. (Note that he cannot use a *symbol*, nor *summon* any other devil.)

Cahor's true appearance is rarely seen; he prefers to pose as a man or demi-human, deceiving those he meets with the aid of his *misdirection* and *ESP* abilities. (One adventurer writes that his diabolic nature betrays him; his breath remains uncomfortably hot when he is in this form.) He usually wears a tattered grey robe and poses as an imbecile or deaf-mute. In his true form, Cahor appears as a tall, mottled black- and grey-skinned, horned and bat-winged humanoid. He has black hair, mustache and beard, a human face of cruelly handsome aspect, and a pinkish-white barbed tail which can manipulate knots, keys, fastenings and the like, but is not strong enough to wield a weapon. Cahor's eyes are yellowish-brown; they shine green when he becomes enraged (a rare event). Cahor prefers to employ his powers of illusion in combat, striking from afar with black javelins of iron (he usually carries three such weapons). Hand-to-hand, he prefers to use a scimitar, but will make use of any weapon available.

### DAGON (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: Unique (Very rare)  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 ARMOR CLASS: -1

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MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 91 hit points

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: See below

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type +5

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: Exceptional

ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil (neutral tendencies)

SIZE: M (5' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 211

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

Dagon is one of the most despised of the diabolic outcasts. The ritual of his summoning became relatively well known among human conjurers, and he was so often summoned to the Prime Material Plane that he began to freely carry on covert dealings with humans and other spellcasters, providing (for a fee, of course) substances found only in the hells for collections and alchemical ingredients, and information to aid in the summoning of fellow greater devils. For these dangerous practices (which weaken all of the devils) and for his unpleasant activities within the hells, Asmodeus changed his name and banished him to Avernus. He was formerly known as Jaqon, the least duke in the court of Asmodeus. In that capacity he traveled freely about the Nine Hells as the herald and messenger of Adramalech and



Asmodeus; these tasks are now performed by various pit fiends and dukes.

The "unpleasant activities" referred to above included similar trading of information, including hints as to the truenames and the preferences of various she-devils with regard to an archdevil winning one of their hands to be his consort. For this pandering, he is especially despised by all of the consorts and she-devils in the hells; none will aid him, work with him, or even speak civilly with him.

To make Jaqon's exile a punishment rather than a mere inconvenience, and to lessen his treachery against the hells, it was necessary for Asmodeus to end his frequent summonings to the Prime Material Plane. The Overlord accomplished this by forcibly changing Jaqon's name to Dagon, the name of a demon prince — an insult to both Jaqon and the demon Dagon, and a means of confounding the familiar summoning rituals used by Prime Material plane conjurers. The Overlord did not destroy his former herald because Jaqon's continued existence — and knowledge of the consort's truenames — remains a threat to many of the consorts, thus ensuring their loyalty to Asmodeus, upon whose protection they must depend.

Dagon will be pleased and flattered if addressed by his former, proper name, and will try to bargain with any intelligent being whom he perceives to possess the means of escaping or returning from the hells to the Prime Material Plane, offering (honestly and generously) much treasure in return for a service: to seek out certain conjurers (Dagon recalls their names, descriptions, and the locations he was summoned to by each, in perfect detail — although most must be dead by now) and spread the word of his name-change and the means of summoning hence anew. He sees this as the only way out of his present exile, and if he obtains this outlet, he will serve with diligent enthusiasm until he has built up a frequent clientele of summoners again.

Dagon is not a fair or kind bargainer or servant; he firmly believes in a lawful society wherein the stronger rule the weak (devils being the strongest, and distributing their services to summoners is seen as a

form of largesse). He thinks himself above the rulings and laws of Asmodeus, whom he disagrees with. Of the archdevils, he most closely identifies with Geryon, and feels a sort of kinship to the rebellious pit fiends on the fringes of the frigid eighth plane, Caina. Dagon is a most accomplished actor and diplomat when he wishes to be, and often successfully impersonates a fellow intruder or explorer to trap or gain the measure and cooperation of intruders whom he encounters in Avernus. He is master of his own temper, reactions, and visible emotions. He has much treasure, including many items of evil magic — gained from both devils and Prime Material Plane clients — hidden away around Avernus, and will not hesitate to spend some of this wealth to obtain something he wants.

Dagon can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, wall of fire, ice storm, wall of force, charm monster, hold person, beguile, read magic, read languages, tongues, detect magic, detect invisibility, polymorph self, invisibility, detect lie, locate object, obscure alignment, and misdirection*. Once per day he can cast a *meteor swarm*, and once a day he can create a *wall of thorns*.

Dagon can strike barehanded for 2-8 points of damage, but he prefers to employ weapons — usually a whip and rapier, or some sort of polearm. He regenerates 2 hit points per round. At will, Dagon's gaze can cause *fear* in a single creature within 8" (save vs. spell to avoid).

Dagon usually appears as a red-skinned satyr with a slyly handsome, hairless visage, pointed ears, and short, curving horns like those of a pit fiend. His eyes are green, and shine brightly when he is angry or excited. He wears a weapon-harness (see above for weapons carried) and backpack, and often tries to pretend that he is an unfortunate woodlands creature trapped in the hells and seeking to escape back to the Prime Material Plane, employing his powers of *misdirection* and *obscure alignment* to reinforce this deception.

## DUSKUR (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: Unique (Very rare)

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -4

MOVE: 16"/22"

HIT DICE: 111 hit points

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: See below

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8/2-8

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better  
weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 85%

INTELLIGENCE: Exceptional

ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil

SIZE: M (6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 219

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

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Duskur is an enigmatic and mysterious she-devil, sometimes called "The Dark Lady." She roams the wastes of Avernus accompanied by the skeleton and zombie armies she has raised, having spurned more than one archdevil who offered her his hand (Geryon and Belial are known to have been among her rejected suitors), and chosen to have no mate instead.

Although Amduscias, Malphas, and Goap respect her more than any other of the outcast "rabble of devilkin" that they must protect Tiamat from, they have orders to slay Duskur if possible, and in any event prevent her (or any of the outcast devils) from occupying and fortifying any lair or stronghold on Avernus from which the outcast(s) might gather strength and challenge Tiamat's rule. So Duskur wanders, avoiding greater devils as much as possible. When encountered, she is almost always found within a ring of skeletons who bear her arms, personal effects, and treasure (all types possible) gained from victims.

Duskur can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, wall of fire, ice storm, invisibility levitate, detect magic, dispel magic, read magic, read languages, ESP, tongues, blink, hold person, shatter, gust of wind, push, detect invisibility, and bridge of fire*. This latter power is like a *wall of fire* except that it can span chasms, climb heights, etc., in the form of a blazing, flat path with neither side-rails nor supports reaching the ground below; only Duskur and creatures she is carrying can walk on it; all others will pass or fall through it. Once per day she can cast a *meteor swarm*, and once per day *reverse gravity*.

Duskur's kiss causes *sleep* if she wills it (no saving throw, but creatures immune to the spell *sleep*, and all greater devils, are unaffected), and thereby she gains most of her prey. She bears an venomous dagger similar to the weapon carried by erinyes devils (see the Monster Manual), and her skeletal bodyguards carry other weapons gained from victims. With each fist Duskur can strike for 2-8 points of damage. She regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Duskur appears as a winged but otherwise normal human female of thin, shapely form and graceful movements. Her flesh is snow-white, her eyes black pools — iris, pupils, and all a glistening black — and her hair long and black. Her wings are smoky-grey and white, leathery rather than feathered, and she usually wears a long, sweeping hooded cloak over them unless actually in flight. She is said to sometimes sing to herself in a beautiful fluting, high voice, but she bears no musical instrument or any love for the music of others.

## KOCHBIEL (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*  
NO. APPEARING: 1  
ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 6"/15"  
HIT DICE: 104 *hit points*  
% IN LAIR: 20%  
TREASURE TYPE: *See below*  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 4  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +8*  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better*  
*weapon to hit*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%  
INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*  
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*  
SIZE: *L(14' tall)*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: 215  
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Once a great general of the hells (marshal to the archdevil Beherit, now destroyed), Kochbiel was too feared and mistrusted by the other archdevils to win himself another place in the hierarchy. A cold and calculating general, his inspired tactics, iron leadership, and personal brawn made him the victor in many armed squabbles on Avernus and elsewhere in the hells, leading Beherit's legions. Although he never seemed to delight in defeating opponents — only in the lighting and strategy involved — many in the hells still bear grudges. Kochbiel takes care to avoid large groups or devils and all archdevils in his present exile, and is as elusive as his fellow exile Duskur (see above). Kochbiel is said to have explored (and enlarged upon) many subterranean chasms, caverns, and tunnel-warrens in Avernus, and is believed to spend much of his time moving about from one of these rough lairs to another. He is said to have gathered rich hoards of treasure in the most remote of these hideaways, and certainly much of what is known to have been brought to Avernus is presently unaccounted for. He and Nergal (see DRAGON issue #75) are rivals, and often find and raid each other's treasure hoards.

Kochbiel (pronounced *Kawokh - beel*) is very cunning and perceptive in matters of battle, ambush, and taking the measure of opponents. He is surprised only rarely (1 in 12 chance), and is always armed with at least four weapons taken from fallen foes. He can strike with all four of his arms in a round, at different targets if desired, and does 4-7 (1d4 +3) points of damage per fist if striking barehanded. He has 18/00 strength, regenerates 2 hit points per melee round, and can hold and constrict a single opponent for 2-8 points of damage per round if he scores a successful hit with his tail.

Kochbiel is able to employ any of the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, wall of fire, detect magic, detect invisibility, polymorph self, hold person, invisibility, fireball (3d6), push, wall of force, and ice storm*. At will he can also shed *fear* in a 30' radius (save vs. spell to avoid). Once per day Kochbiel can cast *repulsion*, and thrice per day he can *dispel magic*. He cannot use a *symbol*, nor *summon* any devil.

Kochbiel resembles an especially large,

grey-skinned pit fiend with tall, curving, bull-like red horns. He has four massively muscled arms set in two opposing pairs — that is, a "front" pair plus a "back" pair facing the other way, two arms sharing a bony-plated, spike-horn-protected shoulder on each side of his body. Kochbiel can light four opponents on four sides at once with apparent ease. His eyes are a brilliant, flashing yellow, and his tongue and inner mouth a vivid purple.

## MALAREA (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*  
NO. APPEARING: 1  
ARMOR CLASS: -1  
MOVE: 9"/24"  
HIT DICE: 96 *hit points*  
% IN LAIR: *Nil*  
TREASURE TYPE: *See below*  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/2-5/2-5 *or*  
*by weapon type +2*  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better*  
*weapon to hit*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 70%  
INTELLIGENCE: *High*  
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*  
SIZE: *L (7' tall, 28' wingspan)*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: 213  
Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Malarea (pronounced *Mahl-ah-ree -ah*) is a bitter and envious devil. She despises many of the consorts of the Nine Hells and desires (to the point of mania) to join their ranks. If she has to slay them all to claim her rightful place among them, she will do so unhesitatingly — but rude defeats on the occasions of her bold, direct assaults in the past have made her more cautious.

Malarea remains a fiercely combative, fractious devil, given to sudden berserk rages and wild physical attacks. This temperament probably cost her a consortship or other position in the hierarchy of the hells, and has certainly earned her her present exile. She has learned little, however: if she recognizes an archdevil, duke, or unique greater devil, she will pause to ascertain their situation and intentions before she attacks — but she almost always attacks eventually, except when faced with impossible odds. Lesser devils and intruders are her prey — she will attack any such creatures immediately, swooping at them to bite (1-4 damage) and strike with a lance, spear, or other weapon gained from a previous victim, or bare-handed with her iron-hard claws. Malarea is a strong flyer, and often buffets airborne opponents with her great wings, or rams into them at full speed (1-12 damage).

Malarea is able to use the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, wall of fire, detect magic, dispel magic, detect invisibility, hold person, and polymorph self*. She can shed *fear* in a 2" radius



at will (save vs. spell to avoid), and can cast a *delayed blast fireball* (5d6) thrice per day. She regenerates 1 hit point every 2 rounds.

Malarea appears as a tall, human-like female with huge black wings, which tower 6 feet above her own head when furled; in short, rather like an erinyes (see the Monster Manual). Her eyes are fiery red, her hair long, greasy, and black, her body sleek but powerfully muscled and of a faintly luminescent, "ghostly" white hue. Her hands have long claws, and she has large, vampire-like fangs. Malarea speaks Mabrahoring (the language of the hells), her alignment tongue, and the common tongue. She is usually encountered wearing some gaudy trophy of a previous victim — a gleaming necklace or jeweled belt, but she cares nothing for the value of such items, and will carelessly discard one for another of gaudier appearance.

Malarea roams Avernus, avoiding the armies of Tiamat's dukes and the Chromatic Dragon herself, but striking at all others she meets, seeking to slay and devour. If she encounters strong and determined opposition, it is quite likely that she will abruptly break off combat and wing away in search of other prey.

## NISROCH (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 14"/6"

HIT DICE: 99 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: *Nil*

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12/1-4/1-4

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better*  
*weapon to hit*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (11' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 217

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Nisroch, "The Eagle," is the poisoner of the hells; he is polite, cruel, faintly mocking, and darkly humorous — and will try to slay any creature that thwarts his will. He destroyed the duke Senciner and nearly slew Abigor, another duke, and for this was banished. He now has little chance to practice his favorite art, poisoning sumptuous feasts, but instead contents himself with concocting deadly poisons from the sparse ingredients at hand in Avernus, and poisoning corpses and other food sources to surprise the unwary.

Nisroch can employ the following spell-like powers, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, affect normal fires, continual light, read magic, detect magic, detect invisibility hold monster, create food & water, purify* (and *purify*) *food & drink, darkness 15' radius,*

and *silence 15' radius.* Once every 24 hours, Nisroch can create an *incendiary cloud* up to 6" distant. He can also *heal* himself (within 1 round) or another creature (by touch) once per day. At will, Nisroch can radiate *fear* in a 10'-radius sphere about himself (save vs. spell to avoid effects). Nisroch regenerates 1 hit point per melee round. (Note that he cannot employ a *symbol*, nor *summon* any other devil.)

Nisroch appears as an upright male humanoid with an eagle's head, black feathers upon his head and chest, yellow eyes and talons, humanoid arms, and batlike wings protruding from his shoulders, separate from his arms. Where he is not feathered, Nisroch's leathery, hairless skin is dusty black in hue. His elbows end in upswept, barbed spines; a slash from one of these, likely to be incurred only if the victim is grappling with Nisroch or attacking him from above, does 1-3 points of damage.

Nisroch's unblinking stare rivets most who look upon him; he says little and observes much. He prefers to overcome opponents by subterfuge and poison rather than in open battle, but is not loath to fight non-devils, opponents, he deems weaker than himself, or any who attack him. In battle he uses his cruel, hooked beak (3-12 damage), his talons, and his spines (see above). His hands are not taloned and are not used in battle except to grapple with, snatch at, or disarm opponents; Nisroch avoids using weapons except in a pinch.

## RUMJAL (Greater Devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 16"/16"

HIT DICE: 100 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: *Nil*

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8/2-8 (fists)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 *or better*  
*weapon to hit*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (8' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 209

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Expelled from the hierarchy of the hells for the molestation of Geryon's consort Cozbi (see DRAGON issue #75), Rumjal is a proud and bitter exile, who delights in tormenting lemures, lesser devils, and non-diabolic visitors to Avernus. He is tolerated by Tiamat and her dukes far more than the other exiled devils, for he has in the past informed them of the schemes of both Nergal (see DRAGON issue #75) and several nycadaemons, and physically aided them in thwarting such plans. It is said that Asmodeus likes Rumjal, and does not wish him harmed or ill used.

Rumjal still considers himself lieutenant to Geryon (his former post) and a legitimate member of the hierarchy of the hells who has been temporarily displaced by a fall from favor. He acts accordingly, hoping that the loyalty and usefulness of his actions will restore him to his rightful place in the hierarchy (and he may be right). Rumjal, although a cruel prankster and an admirer of wit, art, and poetry, will let nothing sway him from the course of action that a loyal scion of the hells would take. He will never fawn or flatter when dealing with archdevils or other dukes, although he is always polite and generally good-natured; he deals with all other devils as equals. He often remarks that Asmodeus used to enjoy a good game of chess with him, and this is true.

Rumjal can employ the following spell-like powers at will, once per round and one at a time: *pyrotechnics, produce flame, light, read magic, read languages, detect invisibility, blink, and ring of fire.* This latter power produces a hollow circle of fire identical to a *wall of fire* in effects, except that Rumjal can throw it, roll it, and pick it up and swing it about; he is the only being able to do so. Once per day Rumjal can utter a *power word, blind.* His touch causes *fear* (save vs. spell at -2 to avoid). Rumjal regenerates 2 hit points per round. (Note that he cannot use a *symbol* nor *summon* another devil.)

Rumjal appears as a tall, muscular, hairless, slate-grey humanoid with a cruel, grinning human visage, dead-white curving horns, and bat wings. He has a prehensile tail of the same dead-white hue that splits at its end into three back-curving, barbed points, like a fishhook, with which he can flail (1-6 tearing damage) at opponents or constrict them (1 - 10 crushing damage per round). The barbs on his tail are envenomed with Rumjal's caustic spittle, and upon each strike from a barb a victim must save vs. poison or take a further 2-8 points of corrosive, tissue-eating damage. This venom works only in open wounds; it reacts with a victim's blood as it works, changing to become mere water. For obvious reasons, this liquid has not been analyzed or reproduced by alchemists. Rumjal produces it only in small quantities; in a pinch, he could spit it directly, but can only do so once in a 3-day period, and habitually uses it instead to keep his weapons well smeared.

## Riches of the hells

Understandably, details of the treasures of the hells are largely unknown. Much is speculation, based on inference and fragmentary records. The following plane-by-plane summary is by no means complete., Note that, as a general rule, treasure in the hells is *not* lying around unguarded, and if it is taken, it will be actively pursued and recovered. Note that all consorts have fine clothing and jewelry (including diadems), and all archdevils have personal treasuries, not usually known about in detail.



Note also that many items of no intrinsic value (the skull of a devil, the normally used weapons of all devils, etc.) will have a high value to collectors if brought intact to the Prime Material Plane — rulers, sages, priests of rival gods, and such figures often like to possess and display such artifacts; these “treasures” are also not specifically mentioned herein. DMs should consider the possible alignment or physical-damage effects of wielding diabolic weapons or magic items. It should be noted that most forges and jeweler’s workshops on the planes of the Nine Hells are within the fortresses of archdevils, unless specifically mentioned as otherwise.

### Avernus

The wastelands of Avernus have no easily accessible natural treasure, although deep-lying rocks (reached only by a few labyrinthine caverns and remote rifts) are said to contain some naturally occurring garnet, spinel, ruby, and sapphire. Many small hoards and caches (of varied treasure gained from intruders and from raids on Tiamat’s hoard) have been concealed in the many caverns of Avernus by Dagon, Kochbiel, and Nergal. Magic items and all types of currency are to be found among these — if they can be found at all, for all are difficult to locate (if they were not, they would have already been raided by other devils), and most are trapped with acid, balanced rocks (deadfalls), stake-lined pit traps, etc.

The largest single hoard on Avernus is certainly that of Tiamat, consisting of 100% of treasure types H, S, T, and U. She knows the size and components of her hoard intimately, will spot any thefts immediately, and has charged her consorts to guard her treasure at all times in her absence. Some abishai (see DRAGON issue #75 or Monster Manual II) encountered may bear treasure, and any erinyes encountered will have a *rope of entanglement* and a *dagger of venom*.

Individual devils also carry treasure of note, as follows:

Amduscias — All types possible, small amounts; carried only when in human form.

Goap — (J, R)  
Malphas — 333 gems of base value 100 gp each, on robes.

Armaros — Spell components, fragments of spells and relevant notes written on vellum (in Mabrahoring, the language of the hells), magic items and knowledge of same.

Duskur — small amounts of all treasure types possible; gained from victims and carried by her skeleton bodyguards.

Malarea — Gaudy (appearance over material value) treasures worn as personal adornment; plunder from victims.

### Dis

In the hills of the plane of Dis are a few, almost worked-out veins of nearly pure copper, and smaller amounts of the ores of

iron, tin, and zinc. These have been extensively worked by the devils, and the working are constantly labored in and guarded. In underwater crevices along the banks of the rivers of Dis, deposits of turquoise are found, but much of the mineral wealth of Dis has already been mined.

In the streets and underways (“pits”) of the Iron City of Dis there are undoubtedly items of treasure lost amidst the darkness, filth, and garbage. Large hoards, however, are found only in the palace of Dispater and in the fortresses of his dukes.

Individual devils may own and perhaps be carrying treasure as follows:

Dispater — The lord of this plane has a sizable treasure (Qx10, S) of gold pieces, worked turquoise gems, spare *ropes of entanglement* and *daggers of venom* (see Monster Manual, “Erinyes,” for special venom effects), and his personal rod (see MM illustration of Dispater for its appearance), which has the combined powers of a *rod of rulership* and a double-strength (4-24 damage) *staff of striking*.

Lilis — (Qx4, S)

Arioch — Dispater’s bodyguard carries a 20’ - long double-ended +1 *halberd* of adamantite, and bears monetary treasure only upon the order of his superior.

Biffant — Dispater’s provost carries an ornate iron rod of office (finely made; worth 20 gp for its workmanship alone), and controls a treasury amounting to (Qx8, S).

Alocer and Bitru — These dukes, who



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command companies of erinyes in Dispat-er's service, each have (G, P) plus a sizable number of spare *ropes of entanglement* and *daggers of venom*. Bitru also has his personal weapon, a +3 *two-handed sword*.

Titivilus — (G, S, T) plus a silver-bladed *sword of wounding*; its hilt is adorned with three rubies, each of 1700 gp value.

Baalzephon — personal treasure equal to (J, R) hidden about Dispat-er's palace.

In addition, all of the dukes have small, well-hidden hoards of treasure in their fiefdoms, accumulated over centuries from intruders and from mining efforts — the little baubles they hoped Dispat-er would not miss or begrudge them.

## Minauros

Mammon, ruler of this plane, is known as the "Lord of Avarice" for good reason: he jealously guards all items of value in his fortress (called "Galbuach," but more often referred to as "Mammon's House" or not named at all). His hoard is said to be great (Hx20, Sx6, Ux2, Vx3 plus unknown additions), but Mammon never lets a single piece of it outside of his vaults — the guarding of which is the first of Focalor's duties. Focalor himself commands a much smaller treasure, the "palace purse" (F, I, Qx3), which he is allowed to spend as he sees fit to ensure the security and comfort of the fortress. Mammon's personal wealth, kept on his person or in his apartments, is (H, R). Mammon fights with a fauchard-fork that

does normal damage, but otherwise acts as a *sword of wounding*. His consort Glasya is known to have treasure equal to (I, Qx5, S), and she carries a *dagger of venom*.

The marshy surface of Minauros itself may well hold many small treasures fallen from slain intruders, but all large, magical, or noticeable items have been taken. Mammon's dukes have no fortresses, but inhabit bowl-like craters in the higher parts of the volcanic ridges on this plane. Here they hold their treasure, typically in chests, in a pit covered by a massive boulder and constantly guarded by a score or more of their troops. These treasures are as follows:

Bael — (G, P), guarded by barbed devils. He carries a bronze +2 *morning star* that can change its length from 4 feet anywhere up to 8 feet, as its wielder desires.

Caarcinolaas — (G, P), guarded by barbed devils. He carries a +3 *scythe*.

Malchon — (G, P), guarded by two rings of erinyes — one aloft and one on the ground. Malchon has no magical weapons, but all of his arms are poisoned.

Zimimar — (J, R)

## Phlegethos

This active, fiery plane is rich in mineral and gemstone wealth due to its volcanic activity: all major metals are found here — including the two metals unique to the hells, *arjale* and *tantulhor*. Obsidian and diamonds abound in hardened lava-flows, and rubies, sapphires, zircons, spinels, tourmalines, and lapis lazuli (lazurite) are recovered in large quantities from the mines, where spined devils labor ceaselessly under the eyes of barbed devil overseers. The outlands are well patrolled (by barbed devils, usually in squads of 12-16), for the security of this plane is imperiled by the few salamanders in hiding here (see issue #75, p. 26), and beings of all sorts (including the devils of other planes) wishing to make use of its mineral wealth and splendid natural forges, the fabled "firefalls." These cata-racts of liquid fire are always guarded, with many devils within call, and here (so say magicians and sages) are made the best *flame tongue* swords and the best *helms of brilliance*. Belial makes much of the normal weaponry used in the hells here, and is paid well — in treasure, services, and favors.

In Abriymoch's lowest tiers, surrounded by hell hound kennels, are Belial's vaults containing monetary payments; his personal wealth (A, S, T, Y) resides in his own chambers high up on the rim of the volcano. Individual devils bear or own treasure as follows:

Belial — huge +4 *military fork*; if struck, save vs. spell or be affected as though by a *symbol of pain*.

Naome — (P, S, T) plus a large wardrobe of rich silk and gold wire filigree garments, with gem-studded belts and pins.

Chamo — (C, P, S) plus an iron-shod +1 *staff* that parts or negates all web, hold, and other locking or binding spells or mechanisms by touch, and can also detect good in a creature (range 9") or item (by touch).

Balan — (C, P)

Bathym — (C, P) plus a black +3 *mace* which dispels *light*, *continual light*, *faerie fire*, or *dancing lights* automatically upon contact with any part of the radiant area, and a *dagger of venom*.

Gaziel — (P, S)

Zaebos — (J, R)

Zaebos — (J,R)

## Stygia

Stygia is rich in natural wealth; its mountains, steam trenches, and waters all yield valuable substances. Opals and topazes are dredged up from the bottom of the Styx (through holes broken in the ice), and the mountains around Tantlin yield granite, basalt, marble, and even chalk, from great quarries where much of the structural stone used in the Nine Hells is hewn out of the impassive rock. Rubies, beryls, and turquoise deposits are found in the seams or veins of these quarries, and in the "steam trenches" or volcanic rift valleys high in the outlands of the plane many metallic ores are found in veins of igneous origin. Spined devils labor ceaselessly in the quarries under the direction of bone devil overseers, and every known "steam trench" is home to many malebranche.

The massive, labyrinthine halls of Tantlin are crammed with the plunder of centuries, items given to or seized by Geryon on many planes. The exact composition and value of his hoard are unknown, but in type it is (Ux?, Vx?, Xx?), rather than coinage of any sort; statues and temple idols of all origins are common, as are pieces of furniture, tapestries, unusual or gaudy ornaments, and the like. Geryon would merely be bored with an exquisitely tiny ruby — he has hundreds — but show him a ruby the size of a man's head, and he is delighted. DMs should detail his treasures accordingly.

Geryon himself carries treasure (H, R) plus a magical bull's horn almost 4 feet in length, bound about with bands of brass and pins of nickel. It can be blown only once in any 7-day period; when sounded it calls forth 5-20 minotaurs, who will serve the horn-blower until death. It is a relic of Geryon's adventuring on other planes, and is not of diabolic origin. Other individual devils resident in Stygia may bear treasure as follows:

Cozbi — +1 *spear*, up to 6 poisoned knives, personal treasure (C, E) and jewelry in Tantlin only.

Gorson — (A, G, P)

Herodias — (A, S, G, P)

Agares — (G, P), a +1 *staff* shod in iron, and trained hawks (1 - 16 in number).

Amon — (G, P) plus a huge +3 *mace*.


Machalas — (G, P) and a +2 *axe*.

Fecor — (J, R)

## Malbolge

Like Phlegethos and Stygia above it, Malbolge is volcanically active, and its fire pits and caverns yield rubies, sapphires, and diamonds aplenty. Most of these valuables find their way to Baalzebul's coffers

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via Moloch, Lilith, Tartach, Bileth, Bethage, and Herobaal — all of whom exact a few gems along the way for their own personal gain. They take care to keep most of these apart from their own hoards, and well hidden, until they can sell them unbeknownst to Baalzebul, exchanging them for less easily identifiable coinage. Most gems are to be found in the vaults of the fortresses of malebranche, with many concealed hoards — and raw, unmined gems — about the tortured surface of Malbolge.

Like Phlegethos, Malbolge is a source of the metals *arjale* and *tantulhor* (see the end of this section); Moloch's whip, said to be fashioned of an "unknown, pliable metal" (see *Monster Manual II*), is made of an alloy of *arjale*. These metals are much rarer in Malbolge than in Phlegethos, and are mined by nupperibos and spined devils under the command of malebranche, in a haphazard and untidy fashion. The status of a malebranche is in part measured by his yield of gems and metallic ores, so there is intense rivalry, trickery, and sometimes outright theft or battle between various malebranche in order that each may bring the largest yield to its commander.

It should be noted that personal treasures on Malbolge are portable, and often moved about, as Moloch and court move about in accordance with Baalzebul's wishes. Incidentally, Neabaz the herald (see the following section on Maladomini) is often the recipient of bribes on his visits when a

resident of Malbolge wants something not mentioned, or reported in a certain light or terms, to Baalzebul.

Individual devils on Malbolge may bear treasure as follows:

Moloch — (I, R, S, T, X) plus a 6-tailed whip which transmits his own natural electrical discharges (of great value for its metal, or to collectors).

Lilith — (C, I, S)

Tartach — (C, I, P), a *rope of entanglement*, plus a *sword +1, flame tongue* which is +2 vs. regenerating creatures, +3 vs. cold-using, inflammable, or avian creatures, and +4 vs. undead. Note that in the hells this blade does +2 damage to all devils, but +3 damage to all devils when wielded outside the hells.

Bileth — (C, P) plus a set of gilded coat-of-plate (material value 1200 gp).

Bethage — (J, R)

Herobaal — (J, R)

### Maladomini

Maladomini is identical to Malbolge in terms of natural mineral wealth, with perhaps slightly more diamonds and obsidian to be found — but on Maladomini, almost all wealth finds its way to the great fortress of Malagard. Here is a vast, well-guarded (by malebranche) collection of gems (Qx300?) of all varieties, and a similarly protected collection of plants from all planes, tended by nupperibo under the command of a few bone devils, who are in

turn watched by the malebranche. In the vast, seemingly endless chambers and passages of Malagard are many riches of all sorts, from tapestries and furniture to marble and beaten copper wall inlays, but relatively few of these are "lost and forgotten" (more likely, they are surreptitiously hidden and hoarded by malebranche) in the disused, garbage-choked areas. Note that any attack upon, or pilferage from, Malagard will swiftly bring ever-increasing hordes of malebranche down upon the intruders' heads.

Individual devils resident on Maladomini may carry treasure as follows:

Baalzebul — (E, R, V)

Bafts — (D, G) plus a finely worked bronze spear (material value 4 gp).

Neabaz — May have some treasure due to bribes, or carried upon Baalzebul's business and explicit orders. He also holds a *sword +1, flame tongue* (see Tartach, above, for effects vs. devils) that when grasped can *know alignment* of any creature pointed at, and can fire 9 *magic missile* spells (1 missile per spell) per day. Neabaz wears a cape of blood-red silk which can at the wearer's will give forth a "cold version" *fire shield* up to 4 times per day, each aura lasting up to three rounds as desired; these flames will not harm the wings of Neabaz. Both the sword and cape are believed to be of Prime Material Plane origin.

Barbatos — Carries treasure only upon the orders and specific business of Baalze-

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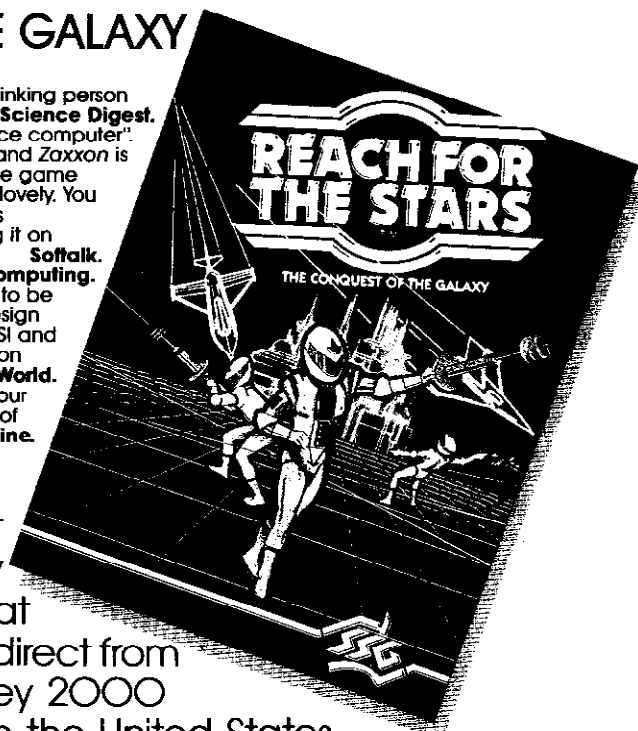
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bul, but when on the Prime Material Plane can *detect treasure* (of metal or mineral nature, as in a *wand of metal and mineral detection*) at a 3" range, and gains as much treasure as he can when there, which he gives to Baalzebul if seen with it, but otherwise hides in Malagard; the amounts and types thus hoarded are unknown.

Abigor — (A, I) plus a +2 *battleaxe*.

Zepar — (A, P), a hand axe and shortsword that are both envenomed (save vs. poison or faint for 1-6 melee rounds), and black-hued +1 *plate armor*.

### Caina

Caina, the largely frigid realm of Mephistopheles, is rich in mineral wealth. Where hot magma meets the cold surface conditions (particularly in the "hot fringes" of the plane), it cools in metal-rich veins. Forges are located all about this region, under the administration of Nexroth. In the icy interior of Caina, magma cools and hardens at greater depths, forming what we know as "plutonic rocks": crystal-rich ores such as pegmatite, which harden in "dykes" and are the source of beryl, topaz, garnet, tourmaline, and many quartz gemstones. These are mined, at great peril, by nupperibos and ice devils who tunnel down through the unstable, shifting rifts of the great glaciers to reach deep rock exposed by glacial action. Rifts may open — or close — with sudden, crushing force, and mining tasks are — to say the least — not eagerly sought by the ice devils.

Mephistar, the iron citadel of Mephistopheles, contains the greatest treasure hoard on Caina (believed to be H, Xx10) under the guard of ice devils and spined devils commanded by Barbas. Nargus, the glacial palace of Bifrons, also has rich treasures — ice sculptures (non-portable, and rapidly destroyed when away from regions of biting cold) and gems (Qx14).

The nobles of Caina (two companies of pit fiends, including Silcharde, Bechard, Guland, Sphandor, Buldumech, Anxrabab, Ezegul, Ulfrin, and Seilazar) all have personal treasure equal to (J, R) each, but many may well have more, for their loyalty to Mephistopheles is minimal, and little tribute from the outer fringes reaches the Lord of No Mercy.

The hollows, caves, and glacial clefts of Caina are vast and remain little plundered for their mineral wealth, but Adonides, Steward of the Realm, keeps a careful eye on what creatures go where and what areas are disturbed. No intruders will mine in even the most remote areas of Caina for long before an ice devil, or a patrol of 1-4 ice devils, or even Adonides himself, with his guard of 16 ice devils, will appear.

Individual devils resident in Caina may bear treasure as follows:

Mephistopheles — (R, X, Z) plus a great 3-tined +3 *fork*. Upon the wielder's command, this weapon can deliver 3-12 points of cold, electrical, or fire damage as well as normal weapon damage. Each special attack form is usable 3 times per day; targets who save vs. spell will suffer only half damage.

Baalphegor — (R, X, Z)

Bele — Carries a *dagger of venom* and a black rod of office (equal to a *rod of smiting*), and also has personal *fools gold* natural power (as in the 2nd-level magic-user spell; 9 cubic feet affected, and saving throws of all creatures viewing the gold are at +9).

Adonides — (R, X, Z) plus a twisted, spiked +1 *staff*.

Barbas — (R, X, Z), a *staff of striking*, 3 *daggers of venom*, and a *chaotic good iron goad*. This last item is a rod with a hook at one end; it does 4-24 damage to all lawful evil creatures, including devils; other creatures suffer 1-6 (size L) or 2-8 (size S or M) points of damage.

Bifrons — (R, Qx6, Z) plus an envenomed scimitar (effects same as an erinyes' blade).

Hutijin — (G) plus a *net of snaring* and a +3 *trident*.

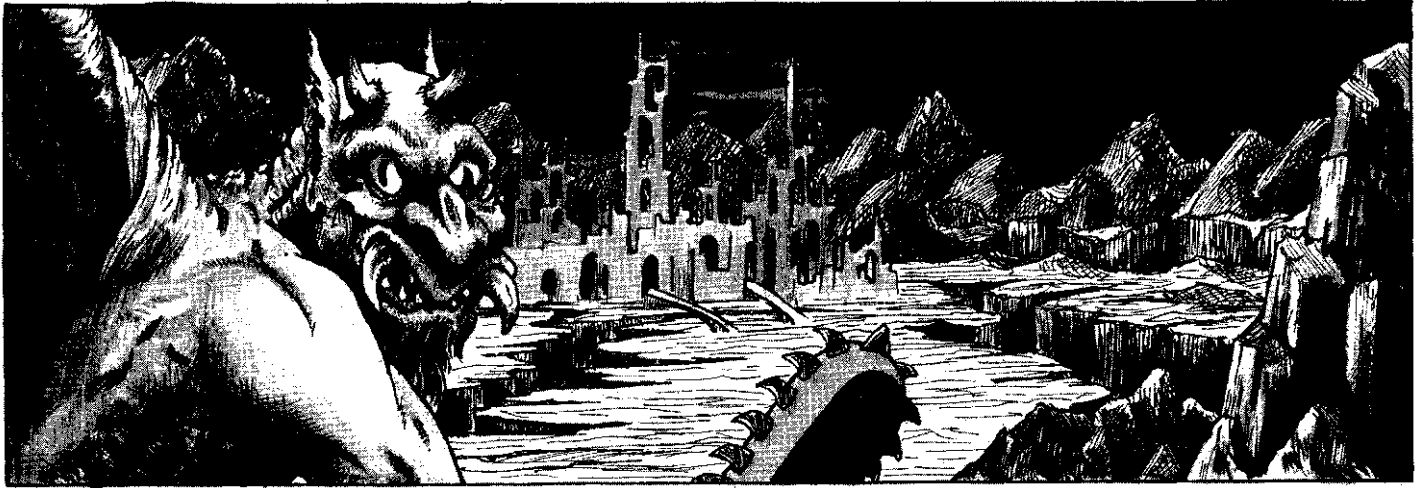
Nexroth — (J,R) . . . plus more, hidden away?

### Nessus

The nethermost plane of the Nine Hells, variously known as Cocytus or Nessus, is the abode of the Overlord, Asmodeus, and the source of much of the wealth of the hells.

In the crags that lie all about the far reaches of the plane are to be found all gems and metals known on the Prime Material Plane, and in the central rifts, perhaps





aided by the unique conditions there (the "firewinds"), are to be found rich deposits of the two metals unique to the hells, as well as veins bearing the fiery red, strongly lawful evil gems unique to Nessus, the "hellstones."

Hellstones are the hardest gems known — many have survived hammer blows and weapon attacks unscathed. They are lit by an inner, flickering radiance, and do damage to all non-evil creatures (and half damage to non-lawful creatures of evil) upon the slightest contact, equal to 1-4 points +1 hit point per level or hit dice of the creature touched. The pit fiend Alastor is known to bear a double-bladed +4 *axe*, the head of which is studded with hellstones. The stones are rare, valuable (4000 gp each), but superstition-shrouded on the Prime Material Plane. Apart from the danger to most people of handling them (for they retain their damaging properties when removed from the hells) — even with tongs or gloves, the chance of an inadvertent contact is great — many priesthoods, classes (i.e., paladins), and individuals will not wish to possess or even be close to them, except to destroy them.

Sometimes, sages assert, contact with a hellstone does no damage, but causes a subtle change in alignment, not immediately noticed by the victim, one step closer toward lawful evil. A crushed hellstone — one that is shattered into many small fragments — will lose its radiance and capacity to cause damage. Due to their often lethal damaging properties, hellstones are often called "deathstones," "doomstones," or the like. Their "scholarly" name is Ulith, or the plural Ulithim.

The clear green waters of the river Lethe cause permanent *feble-mindedness* (save vs. poison to avoid; devils are immune), and it is thus dangerous to capture and convey the liquid elsewhere; it is said to retain its power on other planes. Properties of the frozen waters of Lake Cocytus are unknown. The vast Burning Wood between the lake and the river Lethe (see DRAGON issue #76) yields ever-blazing branches (causing 1-4 points of flame damage upon a touch) with blue-green sap or ichor that is valued as a potion and spell-ink ingredient,

and as an unguent or ingredient used in the making of many magic items.

Such natural substances of Nessus may well bring high prices (15,000 gp and up) per item or container if sold to alchemists, sages, and magic-users on the Prime Material Plane. It should be noted that aerial patrols of pit fiends watch the rifts, crags, and woods of Nessus closely, and the mighty personal armies of Asmodeus are always encamped in a ring about the Overlord's palace.

The palace is vast and beautiful, crammed with all sorts of exquisite creatures and objects, many of which are highly valued on the Prime Material Plane and elsewhere. Details of the palace and its treasures are not known to non-devils, although it is commonly thought in the hells that Asmodeus holds in his palace more riches than are in the clutches of devils in all the rest of the Nine Hells put together. Even his pit fiend guards have (J, R) personal treasure.

Individual devils are, however, known to possess — and may bear some or all of — the following:

Asmodeus — (I, R, U, V) plus his glowing rod of pure ruby (1,000,000 gp material value) with opaline tip that can cause *serious wounds* upon touch. It also acts as a *rod of absorption*, and upon command will shoot a cone of frost, jet of acid, or bolt of lightning (equal in range and effects to these attacks as often as 9 times per 13 turns, 1 attack per round. If desired by the wielder, the rod can fire one particular attack in 9 successive rounds, or strike continuously, using all three attack forms interchangeably, for 27 successive rounds. No audible command word is required to fire these attacks, and Asmodeus can mentally override the commands of any non-archdevil who grasps the rod unless he himself is slain, on another plane, unconscious, or engaged in psionic combat. The rod will shift the alignment of any possessor gradually but inexorably to lawful evil, more rapidly the more often the rod is used. more often the rod is used.

Bensozia — (C, R, X) plus a brass scepter (4-16 damage per contact to all creatures of good alignment, 3-12 to devils, 2-8 to

others) and a diadem of beaten gold set in rubies (total value 26,000 gp).

Adramalech — (I, S, Z) plus a +2 *staff* that can *slay living* (save at +1 to avoid) by touch, and *disintegrate* (devils save at +1) by touch. Each power is usable at the wielder's will, but only once in every six turns, and only one power is usable within any round. (Note that all greater devils and archdevils are immune to the staffs powers.) He also may carry a tome known as the "Book of Fire" or the "Infernal Records" — composed of many folios and papers recording almost all diabolic truenames, known powers, actions, likes, dislikes, treasure, activities, means of summoning, and so forth.

Phongor — (Qx2, Z) plus many instruments of torture, and a cat-of-nine-tails of 9 wire strands, which does 1-4 damage plus venom effects (see erinyes entry in Monster Manual for details).

Buer — (H, Qx4) plus a +2 *mace* and a +1 *bow* (with 20 arrows).

Bune — (I, Qx10, W, Z)

Morax — (H, I, Y)

Rimmon — (Qx6, R)

Zagum — (C, P)

Baalberith — (W)

Alastor — (I, V) plus his double-bladed +4 *battleaxe* studded with 16 hellstones.

Martinet — (J, R)

## Unique metals and talismans

The two metals unique to the hells are found in Phlegethos, Malbolge, Maladomini, and Nessus.

One of them is *arjale*. It is black in color, light in weight, easily worked to a smooth surface, and can be brought to razor-sharpness. If alloyed with iron, it becomes a light green-grey in color, and quite pliable (a metal sometimes called "dajavva").

The other is *tantulhor* (no relation to what we know as "tantalum"). It is about the weight of iron, can be worked into a smooth finish, and is apparently unbreakable — weapon blades fashioned of it will cut anything they touch, except stone.

Methods of forging and working these metals are unknown outside the hells — as,

by and large, are the metals themselves. Due to their rarity and properties, such metals will bring very high prices if shrewdly sold on the Prime Material Plane.

The rod of Dispatier is known to be made of tantulhor, and Moloch's whip is of dajvva. The talismans of many devils — Agares, Asmodeus, Barbatos, and Buer, for certain — are known to be fashioned of arjale, and most others are suspected to be of tantulhor (so far, Zagan's talisman and the talisman for all barbed devils have been specifically identified as of tantulhor; note that both of these talismans have a number of barbs that will cut anything but stone).

The compositions of a few other talismans are known: the talisman for all bone devils is a hook of bone (origin unknown); the talisman for all malebranche is of obsidian; and the talismans of Belial, Morax, and Zepar are of polished brass.

## The devils' dark agents

Here follows a very brief summary of those creatures who actively further diabolic causes on the Prime Material Plane(s). These are of two types: agents (who obey, and spend much of their time working for, the devils), and allies (who will and do cooperate with devils to further common causes or in return for sufficient reward).

The most important diabolic agents on the Prime Material Plane are the dominant race of the plane — humans. Both individual humans (particularly lawful evil magic-users who can summon devils from the Lower Planes to the Prime Material) and devil-worshipping groups (such as lawful evil priesthoods of the diabolic) exist, and they are the backbone of diabolic influence on the Prime Material. They deal either directly with devils or through intermediaries such as dark nagas, hell cats, imps, and the like. Such intermediaries can command nightmares, mephits, and so on for their own use.

These intermediaries can also deal with equivalent races in cold regions (frost men), swampy areas (some tribes of muckdwellers), and in the sea (sahaguin, and the few lawful evil sirine). Other types of creatures also dealt with by the intermediaries are dragons (the green and blue varieties; lawful evil dragonkind, who will obey Tiamat directly, or orders attributed to Tiamat brought by a devil or known intermediary creature) and the subterranean races (meenlocks and mites), who are sometimes ruled through another rank of intermediaries, such as medusae.

In turn, all of these human-and-equivalent races command more stupid creatures (both lawful evil creatures such as manticores, and those of neutral alignments) which they can force, goad, or train into service. Humans of sufficient talents can create undead (skeletons and zombies) to serve them, and such creatures as scarecrows and homonculi. The truly loyal diabolic servants are few in number, but rely in

most situations upon the allies they can call upon for fighting strength and weight of numbers.

Such allies include beholders (and in the sea, eyes of the deep); the goblin races (goblins, orcs, hobgoblins) and kobolds; some tribes of muckdwellers; some wererats (and in turn, normal rats); some fire giant bands; some ogre magi, annis, and greenhags; some intelligent undead (such as wraiths, spectres, mummies, wights, penanggalans, ghosts, and poltergeists); a few liches and adherers; some duergar settlements; some men (mercenaries, LE non-diabolic priesthoods, and their worshippers); and screaming devilkin. They in turn have servant creatures and allies they can call upon: "The arm of Asmodeus is long," as the saying goes, "longer than you think."

Some lawful evil creatures are so self-interested that they rarely, if ever, cooperate with the devils' dark agents. These include the aboleths, the (lawful evil) githyanki, and the illithids (mind flayers).

Details and precise dispositions of diabolic agents will vary from Prime Material Plane to ("parallel"/alternate) plane — that is, from campaign to campaign. But there should be one constant — the enigmatic, "watchdog" devil Gargoth:

## GARGOTH (Arch-devil)

FREQUENCY: *Unique (Very rare)*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -6

MOVE: 16"/20"

HIT DICE: 177 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: *Nil*

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type +7*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 90%

INTELLIGENCE: *Supra-genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

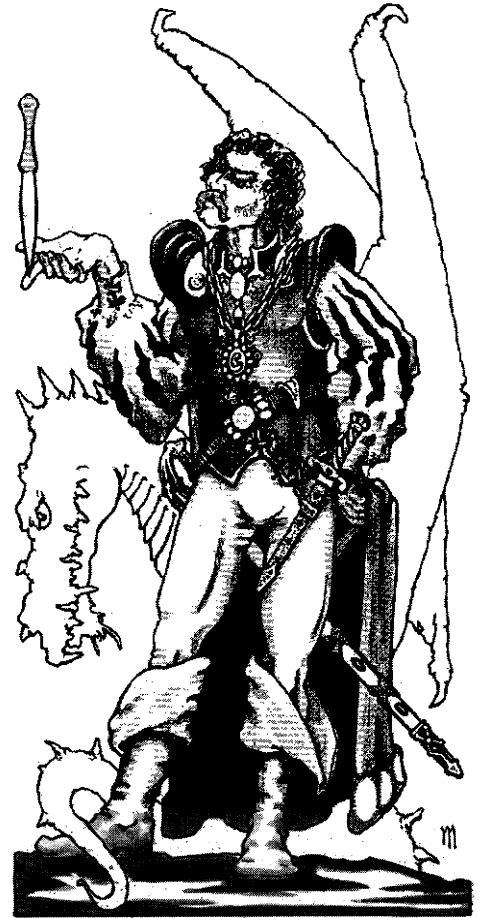
SIZE: L (8' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 311

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Gargoth, "The Lord Who Watches" (sometimes misnamed by sages as "Ashtaroth"; a name properly applied to a demon prince of great-power), was once a mighty power in the hells, second only to Asmodeus himself. For untold eons, however, he has resided elsewhere — most believe on the Prime Material Plane — and has become little more than a legend both in the hells and on the Prime Material Plane. He is real, however, and very powerful. The reason for the departure of Gargoth from the hells is unknown. Some sages say he challenged Asmodeus and was driven into exile; others say that he left upon the destruction of his closest friend, Beherit, at the hands of Asmodeus (see the following section, "Of the nature of devils"). One or both of these reasons may be true.

It is certain that Gargoth is a loner; his



few servants are undead and other creatures he can control with his *charm monster* ability (he favors snakes and blue dragons). He cannot *summon* any devil, and never openly works with the devils or their agents. He dislikes revealing himself, preferring to work behind the scenes or in disguise. Of all the devils, he has the strongest sense of humor, and possesses a wily intelligence and acting ability that rival those of Asmodeus himself.

The activities and aims of Gargoth on the Prime Material Plane are similar to those of the devils and their agents — not surprising, considering his alignment and upbringing, but some devils (notably Mephistopheles and Adramalech) believe that Gargoth and Asmodeus are staunch allies, as friendly together as devils ever get, and that Gargoth works to further their common ends from concealment outside the hells, serving in part as a "watchdog" on the activities and loyalties of "official" servants of the hells, and the devils themselves, on the Prime Material Plane. Certainly he has never supported another archdevil in any bid to unseat Asmodeus — although he is continually sought after for that end by the ambitious dukes, due to his great personal power — and when a devil meets with Gargoth, Asmodeus eventually knows what has befallen.

Gargoth can employ the following spell-like powers at will, one at a time and once per round: *pyrotechnics*, *produce flame*, *wall of fire*, *fireball* (4d6), *ice storm*, *dispel magic*, *detect lie*, *detect magic*, *detect invis-*

ibility, ESP, beguile, geas, know alignment, read magic, read languages, tongues, identify, shapechange, charm monster, raise dead, and (fulfill another's) limited wish. His gaze causes confusion (as in the spell), his breath causes fear (a cone 2" long and 1" wide at its farthest extent, usable once every 2 rounds), and at will he can surround himself with a nimbus of choking, caustic, sulphurous fire (save vs. breath weapon or lose consciousness for 1-6 rounds) affecting all creatures within a 10' radius. It causes 1-6 points of fiery damage (save for half damage), and will ignite paper, clothing, and other combustibles.

Once per day Gargoth can use a *symbol of insanity* or of *pain* (one or the other, not one of each), and once per day he can *transmute metal into gold*. Using this latter power, he can change any refined metal except silver (i.e., any implement, crude forging, weapon, etc., but not raw ore) by touch into gold (no volume limit, but the weight of the metal to be changed cannot be more than 600 gp). This takes 1 round, and other substances touching, or attached to, the metal(s) to be turned are entirely unaffected. The gold produced is very pure — and thus soft and crumbly — but will conform to the shape and disposition of the metal it replaces exactly. Thus a hook holding a heavy cauldron, if turned to gold (Gargoth can so control his power that he could choose to change only the hook, and not the attached chains and cauldron, if he

so wishes — or change all three, even if they are all made of different metals) would break off, twist, and crumble away immediately, dropping the cauldron to earth. Broken items will be transmuted into broken gold items, not whole items. If any magic item is transmuted, the transformation "drinks" the magical charge, leaving the item bereft of all dweomer. Gargoth's power of transmutation can only be successfully used when he is in full control of his senses (i.e., a psionically or magically controlled Gargoth could not turn baser metals into gold).

Gargoth can breathe in water, and take in gases poisonous to men without apparent effect, and is immune to *charm*, *sleep*, and *hold* spells of any type. Poisons (including venom) do not seem to affect him, but silver weapons are known to do him double damage. Mere contact with silver does him 1-3 points of damage. (A bag of silver pieces hurled at Gargoth once nearly slew him.) He regenerates 2 hit points per round.

Gargoth has no known lair (it is likely that he has many, and is often on the move, concealed by his illusions — see the Monster Manual for spell-like powers common to all devils). Gargoth can strike with his naked fists for 2-8 damage each in a round, or employ any weapon except one made of, or adorned with, silver. He will seek to destroy, bury, or drown silver objects so they can never be used against him.

Gargoth cannot be *summoned* by any devil

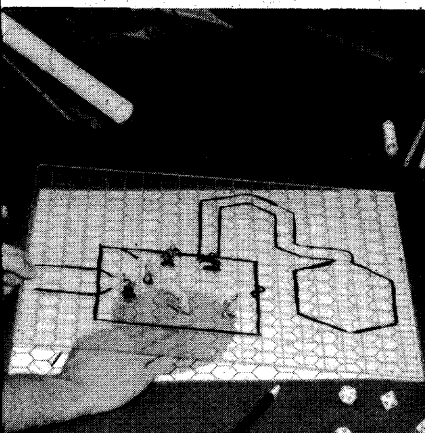
or conjurer, although he can be compelled to service by the same spells that affect other devils if he is encountered.

Sages say that Gargoth possesses an ability unique among devils (an ability that causes some to argue that he is not a devil at all): he can *plane shift* once every 9 days, apparently freely about the known planes of existence, for he has been seen far from the Prime Material Plane.

Gargoth usually appears as a handsome, 8'-tall man of indeterminate mature age, with noble features, a soft, low voice, and a mustache. He wears swash-topped boots, jenkins with slit and puffed sleeves, velvet-lined cloaks and similar finery, and usually carries treasure equal to Qx4 in the form of huge, sparkling knuckle rings, pendants, buckle ornaments, and cloak pins. In his voluminous sleeves, and slipped down his boots, Gargoth usually carries 4-6 throwing knives, and he can juggle these with a showman's skill and flair if he wishes. Sometimes he adopts the guise of a nondescript trader or an old pilgrim, but only rarely appears as a female creature. He has more self-control, and thinks in a more strategic fashion, than any other devil — his sense of humor tempers his thinking and reactions in situations where even Asmodeus would fly into a rage. He is an awesome foe, and if he preferred to rule the hells rather than walk his own path, the present Overlord's days might well be numbered. Gargoth sees himself as more powerful, and far more intelligent — cer-

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tainly less rash — than the present hierarchy of hell, and therefore above them in rank, and free to choose his own role and way — he is lawful evil, but he is himself the lawmaker. He is on friendly terms with Asmodeus, whom he sees as the most capable of the archdevils — and is known to respect also Alastor, Bifrons, and Mephistopheles. He views only Asmodeus and Alastor as anything approaching equals, and sees Mephistopheles as a young, rash, inexperienced replica of himself. DMs please note: Gargoth will reveal nothing of his personal thoughts on such things, to anyone, under any circumstances. He will always speak with detachment, dispassionately and reflectively, and often pretends to beliefs and emotions to mislead and manipulate his audience of the moment.

He is so skillful at this that he can elicit obedience from even the vainest of creatures, such as the (lawful evil, green or blue) dragon. Gargoth customarily employs a large, adult or older blue dragon as his steed (one, named Rathguul, he has grown very fond of, and often engages in riddle-games with), and often bears a giant poisonous snake (such as a pit viper) wrapped about his arm (see the Monster Manual for effects of the snake's poisonous bite). Gargoth has been known to cast this snake at nearby foes, or atop sleeping or preoccupied men or orcs, for his own amusement.

## Of the nature of devils

To understand the hierarchy of the hells and how it works — and to know how properly to deal with and defeat the diabolic — it is necessary to know something of the nature and biology of devils. Unfortunately, this is a subject rife with mystery, misunderstanding, and wild, often false speculation as far as most Prime Material Plane observers are concerned — and it must largely remain so. What little is known of the nature of devils follows hereafter.

All lesser and non-unique greater devils derive their physical forms and powers from the archdevils. These mighty lawful evil beings alone possess the power to transform or “shape” devilkin, a somewhat mysterious process whereby an archdevil by an act of concerted will and direct physical and mental contact with a lawful evil spirit, lemure, larva, or devil can permanently *shapechange* that being into an undead or lawful evil creature of any sort (including diabolic form).

The Overlord has the means (see below) to enforce his own limitations on the use of this power; by such tradition, for example, only he creates pit fiends. And although any archdevil has the time and potential “raw material” (lemures, stench kine, hell hounds and the like) to create legions of devils, they are rarely allowed to do so.

Lawful evil souls and spirits come to Avernus via the Astral Plane, and wander freely through the hells, until noticed and mentally “bound” (*charmed*) by an arch-

devil. Any number can be bound (and are controlled as a cleric controls animated undead) until needed for shaping. The shaping process takes 1 round per hit die of the form being created, and must be commenced with a particular end result in mind (and once begun, followed through to that result — i.e., the shaper cannot change his mind about what is desired in the midst of the process, although an unsatisfactory result can be reshaped anew). An archdevil can do nothing else while shaping (for it commands all his attention) and is thus vulnerable during this time.

Advances in the personal power of a diabolic spirit cause it to be rewarded with a more powerful form and a more influential position, and eventually such a spirit with continued growth would rise into the ranks of the greater devils, becoming in turn a styx devil, malebranche, ice devil, and pit fiend.

The essential difference between lesser and greater devils is that the spirits of the latter are of sufficient power (lawful evil loyalty, mental/psionic development, self-will and self-control) to take a distinctive name. By doing so, such spirits protect themselves from the caprices of archdevils, for the very name of a named spirit determines its form, and so a given spirit cannot be ousted from its form, nor shaped into another diabolic form without its cooperation (although an archdevil of sufficient strength can always give another devil the choice of cooperation or utter destruction). Thus, an ice devil is always an ice devil; an archdevil can give it a replacement form of an ice devil or even a lesser creature if its own form is lost, but cannot demote it in form without its cooperation.

Greater devils always derive their own new name when they have developed sufficiently; then they seek out an archdevil to grant them such a higher form (typically pledging limited loyalty to the archdevil in return for the bestowal of a new form). To advance beyond the status of a pit fiend requires an anima (soul or spirit) of unusual lawful evil strength and finely honed powers — powers that apparently are served best, and serve the hells best, when matched with a unique personal form; therefore, much of the hierarchy of the hells consists of devils of unique forms and powers, despite the strict regimentation of lower ranks.

The most intelligent devils, and the most loyal to Asmodeus, are the consorts; the Overlord allows only certain loyal spirits to take this form, thereby limiting possible treachery, and protects the consorts from unwanted attentions of other devils and diabolic creatures — on pain of destruction or exile (see the description of Rumjal above). The consorts can see and appreciate the strategy of Asmodeus, and consider him a fair and astute Overlord, much better at ruling the hells than any of the other archdevils would be, except perhaps Mephistopheles. Glasya, daughter of Asmodeus and one of the most influential consorts, does not always see eye to eye with her

father, but thinks and acts in a like manner to him, and thus supports him continually.

However, none of the consorts can afford to be complacent. In comparison to their male counterparts and underlings such as pit fiends, they are relatively weak in physical and magical powers. Their survival depends upon continued usefulness to, and being in the good graces of, Asmodeus and their respective archdevil mates. Among the ranks of the “outcast” unique devils are several she-devils who could readily be elevated to the position of consort, to replace an unwanted or destroyed incumbent. These include Duskur and Malarea, described above. At least one consort, Batna (and her mate the archdevil Beherit, the former ruler of Malbolge), has been utterly destroyed by Asmodeus for disobeying his restrictions upon the elevation of devils.

Asmodeus alone has the power and knowledge to alter the truename of a lawful evil creature; it is largely this power that enabled him to become master of the hells, and that leads some to consider him a deity. It is also this ability that enables him to exile devils, by ending their ability to answer a *summons*.

Asmodeus carefully maintains his rule over the Nine Hells, and as carefully nurtures the strength of his domain, keeping it close-knit and individually strong by limiting its hierarchy, holding the pit fiends loyal to (and beholding to) him personally by threat of destruction or exile and by promise of elevation to the hierarchy as a reward. Such advancement is rare, coming only when a vacancy is created in the hierarchy by the utter destruction or exile of an archdevil or a unique greater devil (most of whom are dukes).

Exile of a rebellious devil involves the taking of a new name and form; the former unknown to the Prime Material Plane summoners, and the latter having diabolic censure and comparatively feeble powers — all resulting in practical imprisonment on the plane of exile. The outcasts of the hells have been exiled to Avernus, and collectively are known as the “rabble of devilkin,” although many remain quite powerful. Note that a rebellious styx, horned, or ice devil, or pit fiend must be elevated to unique form to be exiled; more often, such are merely destroyed.

The body of a devil slain on a plane other than one of the Nine Hells will slowly begin to burn, regardless of temperature, oxygen, or surroundings, giving off first thick, oily smoke, then a rising, crackling burst of orange and sickly yellow through green-hued flame, which gives off little heat but consumes the carcass in a puff of smoke and shower of sparks (within a ten-foot radius), leaving nothing but a sulphurous, brimstone stench. Combustion begins 6 rounds after death, and is complete at the end of 9 rounds after the devil (or at least its physical form) is slain.

A *speak with dead* spell cast upon a devil outside of the Nine Hells will have no effect. If cast upon the corpse of any slain devil



while in the hells (diabolic bodies do not spontaneously combust in the hells, but rather lie to rot, usually being eaten before long), *Speak with Dead* will bring the spellcaster into direct communication with the archdevil who rules the plane (and if that archdevil has itself been slain, into communication with Asmodeus himself). This occurs regardless of the archdevil's location and activities at the time; the archdevil will hear all questions (and any other words uttered by the spellcaster while the spell is in effect — it retains normal duration), and may — it is not compelled to — answer, or speak something else, which may be a message, threat, or order, but not a spell, in reply.

All unique greater devils (including archdevils) who suffer destruction of their form on a plane other than their own will flee the place and plane of their slaying as disembodied spirits, travelling astrally back to their home plane. There they can seize control of any lemure, casting out the spirit therein, and make the form their own. Greater devils endure nine decades of torment in lemure form before being granted their old form back. Archdevils can slowly shift forms back to their own form, but it takes a decade before an archdevil can regain the ability to leave its own plane at will.

## Traveling the Styx

Recently information has come to light (Monster Manual II, p. 28, *Daemon (Charon)*) that the river Styx spans the Lower Planes, with branches flowing through the topmost layers of Pandemonium, the Abyss, Tarterus, Hades, Gehenna, and Acheron, and culminating in an ocean on Stygia, the fifth plane of the Nine Hells. The river Lethe in Nessus, nethermost of the Nine Hells, may well be one of its branches, but the waters of Lethe have slightly different effects (see DRAGON issue #76, p. 32) than those of the Styx.

Note that although the Styx appears as a deep, swift, unfordable torrent, the river never seems to "go anywhere"; its source(s) have never been found, and although its waters rush in one direction or another (remaining consistent only while within a given plane), it never empties nor floods its banks. Although an observer journeying to Stygia on it will find that it falls from the mountains, flowing ever slower, to end in a swamp and apparently boundless ocean, Charon or a charonadaemon will take its skiff somehow through the swamp and pass on to another plane without having to climb back out of Stygia's encircling mountains. In similarly confusing fashion, a boat on the Styx may pass on from plane to plane in an apparently random fashion, coming upon Acheron, Pandemonium, and the rest in any order — one knowing the Styx's branches well could pass from any of the Lower Planes (topmost layers only, except for Stygia) to any other of the topmost



Lower Planes. This may not be so, for only Charon and the charonadaemons know the Styx well. It is certain that the branches of the Styx enter the Astral, Ethereal, and Prime Material Planes, and that Charon and his charonadaemons, in their skiffs, can travel them freely, regardless of current or plane traveled into or across.

Note that Charon and the charonadaemons are immune to the effects of the waters of the Styx (or of the Lethe, if doused with them), and if attacked by a passenger, or if a passenger seeks to steal its goods — including stealing back the fare paid — the daemonic boatmaster will typically capsize its craft deliberately, towing it away — for Charon and his charonadaemons are strong swimmers (18" move) and can at will exercise *water breathing* and *water walking* (18" move) and care nothing for breaking bargains that someone on the other end of has already violated — recovering its treasure, righting its skiff, driving off its former passengers, and sailing on. Passengers could thus find themselves stranded. Should they later raise treasure or the means to make a suitable sacrifice (see *Monster Manual II*, p.29), and then summon Charon or a charonadaemon again, however, they begin with a clean slate; Charon and his servants hold no grudges as long as the fare is paid, and will take aboard beings they have fought previously.

Charon and the devils largely ignore each other. Charon and the charonadaemons will never speak to or attack a devil, and only archdevils or greater devils would ever approach or attack such a creature, or the passengers in its skiff. In such a case, Charon or a charonadaemon would seek to defend itself (*not* its passengers) and *plane shift* via the Styx to another plane immediately. The skiffs of such daemons do not seem affected by fire- or cold-based (and most other spell) attacks.

As far as the hells are concerned, this means that the easiest road to the hells is via the Styx, for if it can be found on the Prime Material Plane and the fee paid, an admittedly perilous route to the hells is opened. The Styx passes eventually into Avernus, and thence to Stygia, before passing on to other planes. No devil except a greater devil or archdevil will touch the boatmaster or any passenger until they leave the skiff, in either Avernus or Stygia — although lesser devils often find and travel with such a skiff, waiting for the passengers to alight. Any greater devil or archdevil attacking passengers — which they will do usually only when the passengers are fleeing with treasure belonging to the archdevil or greater devil (or the greater devil's archdevil master) — will ignore Charon or the charonadaemon, who will in turn ignore the devils, poling steadily onward, although behind him his passengers may be slain or torn from the skiff. Such attacks rarely damage or upset the skiff — if they do, Charon or the charonadaemon *will* strike back.

Anyone summoning a skiff to escape from the hells will find that the boatmaster

will not tight for them nor carry anything aboard — except its fee — but will not waste time or attract undue attention, either. Lesser devils will rarely attack beings dealing with, or in the presence of, Charon or a charonadaemon, except from a distance (i.e., by the use of missiles or spells). Neither Charon nor a charonadaemon will take a passenger "on credit" or upon the promise of being paid at the destination — if you lack the fee up front, you will not be allowed aboard. Note that charonadaemons will not take most devils aboard — for only the styx devils (see the FIEND FOLIO® Tome) can pass out of the Lower Planes by using the plane-spanning powers of the Styx or of such a skiff, hence their name.

The boatmasters of the Styx will readily take non-diabolic lawful evil creatures if the fee is paid, including achaerai, barghests, daemons, hell cats, hell hounds, hordlings, mephits, and rakshasas. Note that the boatmaster will not police its passengers; if they fight among themselves, it is not its affair, unless they attack it or its boat, and a party of human adventurers could well find themselves sitting with a pair of styx devils — or fighting them savagely in a small, precarious, open boat!

Mounts, including nightmares, are difficult to transport. They must be blindfolded and made to lie down, and for the inconvenience and the space required Charon and his charonadaemons will charge triple fare for such creatures, in addition to the fee for their rider (or owner, if a pack animal). If a boat has insufficient spaces left when summoned, the party must let it go and summon another, or split up; no boatmaster will evict a passenger who has not yet reached his or her destination to make room for another. If they did this, almost no one would seek passage with them, and so this is an inflexible rule: even if a charonadaemon intends to later betray a passenger by delivering him to the wrong place or by leading him into an ambush, it will never force any passenger out unless that passenger attacks it. If a charonadaemon docks at a place known by its passengers to be wrong, and they refuse to get out of the boat, it will not attack them (unless they attack it), but rather wait for a time, and if the passengers also wait patiently, will move on to the proper place (if they seem too strong to overcome) or to another wrong destination or ambush (if the passengers seem weak). A boatmaster will never attack first. Note that Charon himself will *never* betray passengers by leading them into ambush or to a wrong destination.

Mention should be made of another route into the hells: Pazuzu (see *Monster Manual II*, p. 41) will carry a summoner (a servant or a being he hopes to gain as a servant in this way) to the hells in return for a service to be performed in the hells, or later — usually, as he is also called to bring the being back out of the hells, it costs two services! (A less expensive way to venture alone to the hells may be to take Pazuzu in, and Charon or a charonadaemon out again.

Travelers are advised to avoid the busy season.)

## Note to the DM

In conclusion, a much-needed reminder to Dungeon Masters handling devils in play: devils are too often misused. The legions of the hells may seem small in numbers when compared to the goblin races, men, and demons, but they are both mighty and numerous when compared to a party of adventurers — or even an army of invaders. Player characters entering the hells will have to wade through almost all of an archdevil's legions (thousands of strong, organized devils, enthusiastic and/or fanatical and/or afraid of punishment if they perform poorly, and fighting on their "home ground") before even seeing the archdevil (unless the party has that archdevil's talisman). Greater devils send lesser devils to do their bidding, and call on aid from higher ranks only if hard pressed. No player should ever be able to boast of his or her character slaying Asmodeus in his very throneroom in Nessus, or for that matter, outsmarting any archdevil!

The distressingly widespread tendency to mishandle devils and other powerful monsters so that players can overcome them too easily cheapens any AD&D® campaign, and ultimately the interest and pride of player-character achievements therein. Bear in mind also that no PC or NPC, however learned, will ever know fully and accurately the powers of devils and the details of the Nine Hells as presented in "The Nine Hells" (DRAGON issues #75 and #76) and herein: all available diabolic information should be scanty, distorted, and often wildly inaccurate. Seekers after such knowledge may well attract the attention of diabolic agents (see above), too.

Note also that treasure taken from the hells will be actively sought by devils and their agents (both to bring about its recovery, and the destruction of those who took it), and that gems in their natural state found in the hells do not resemble cut, polished gems; extensive knowledge (lapidary secondary skill, or the knowledge of a dwarven miner) may be required even to recognize them.

Research into the diabolic continues — and probably never will be complete. Perhaps there are some things men were not meant to know, and certainly many will die trying to learn more — for what is still mysterious lies in the innermost nature and workings of the Nine Hells, and the sane and wise do not inquire too closely of such matters. Wherefore, this treatise is at an

END