

Astaroth

Diabolus

Layer: The Terminal Archive

Areas of Concern: Liberal sciences, knowledge, learning, memory

Domains: Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, Prophecy

Favored Weapon: Dagger

Knowledge separates humans from the animals, allowing them to reflect upon their status and, using the lessons of those who came before, to improve upon it. Astaroth personifies the philosophy of knowledge gained at any cost. The demon prince known as Diabolus is the patron of revolutionary thinkers and those willing to push against the forces of propriety and the *status quo* to break into truly innovative paths of thought. He discounts the “hard” sciences as too rigid to accommodate original concepts.

Astaroth also has become associated with prophecy, though his philosophy is more about consulting written lore and making a prediction based upon the past than peering into the unknowable future.

Like Abaddon and Raum, Astaroth’s purpose is tied to the coming multiversal apocalypse. Since the rise of the tanar’ri, he has collected all the written works of humanity; ritual burning of the accumulated lore will herald the beginning of the End Times. In the meantime, Astaroth has become extremely fond of his collection, priding himself on the completeness of his libraries and his ability to recall historical facts and human philosophies from memory. Though dedicated to the role he must eventually play, the great librarian is in no hurry to destroy his books—he’s even become so fond of some human scholars and philosophers that he tracked them down and brought them to his lair (willing or not) to engage in friendly debate. Astaroth mourns the destruction of anyone of intellectual worth, necessary though it be, and has a greater appreciation for mortal life than most of his demonic fellows.

His natural form is that of a beautiful angel astride a terrible dragon. He carries a viper in his right hand and usually reads from an open book held in his left. The snake represents knowledge gained through forbidden means, which Astaroth considers the most valuable of all. Knowledge protected by religious taboo and strictures must, after all, be more worth knowing than what is sitting around for everyone to devour.

The Terminal Archive, Astaroth’s sprawling library, forms the entirety of an always-expanding Abyssal layer. The place comprises countless wings, which contain a copy of every written work put to paper since the birth of mortals and which are staffed by an army of bodak librarians. Astaroth invites any and all to

study within his halls, naming the Archive as neutral ground in any conflict between demons. Remarkably, he even allows devils access to his collection, though few brave the journey to get there. Occasionally battles between rivals do break out, but these are quickly quelled by a cadre of nalfeshnee called the Ardent Archivists, who maintain order in the stacks. Given the relative peace offered by the Archive, many expect to find a given item easily. Unfortunately, Astaroth enforces no organization upon his collection at all, so finding a particular volume can be an adventure in itself.

Followers of Astaroth fancy themselves revolutionary thinkers. Many do in fact push forward the liberal sciences by challenging conventions and daring to dream without worrying about such limits as morality. Even more, though, are best classified as lunatics, “visionaries” only in the sense that they believe their insane (albeit generally well-informed) babblings mean something to anyone other than themselves.

Those who honor Diabolus will do anything to learn previously unknown lore. They’ll use anyone, even friends and relatives, to further their own knowledge, and won’t hesitate to kill whoever stands in the way of some juicy bit of information. Astaroth demands that his followers sacrifice their first-born child to him to prove their dedication to casting away even their most cherished possessions in the pursuit of learning.

Obedience

Every morning, a thaumaturge dedicated to Astaroth writes the experiences of the previous day into a personal journal of reflections, finishing with three philosophical questions to think upon as the day goes on. The following day, he writes his conclusions or progress toward conclusions in the book. After spending an hour in such transcription, the thaumaturge regains his full complement of spells.

Azazel

Guardian of the Goat

Layer: Maldinach, the Desert of Broken Dreams

Areas of Concern: Scapegoats, the betrayed, pestilence, revenge

Domains: Animal, Chaos, Disease, Evil

Favored Weapon: Halberd

The doctrine of Azazel holds that every successful civilization is built upon the broken backs of the betrayed. Society itself is inherently corrupt: Some must suffer so that others can seat themselves upon the throne of propriety. To make things right, the high and mighty must be overthrown by those they have betrayed. Only when the lowly have tasted the blood of the powerful will the world be healed.



Paigoel

Large Outsider (Chaotic, Evil)

Hit Dice: 12d8+36 (90 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 22 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +12 natural)

AC (Flat-Footed): 21

AC (vs. Touch Attacks): 10

Attacks: 10 Large weapons +16 melee

Damage: Large weapon 1d10+5 or by weapon type

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Hail of darts, potent charge

Special Qualities: Acid and electricity resistance 15, all-around vision, damage reduction 10/+2, fire and poison immunity, SR 24, true seeing

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +9

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11

Skills: Appraise +8, Balance +9, Bluff +8,

Concentration +11, Intimidate +10, Jump +13,

Knowledge (geography) +8, Listen +9, Pick Pocket

+11, Search +12, Sense Motive +9, Spot +13

Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Sunder

Climate/Terrain: Underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 13

Treasure: Double standard

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: By character class

The personal layer of Anarazel, the Guardian of a Thousand Terrors, is known as the Caves of Chaos. Within endless miles of corridors and galleries, Anarazel has secreted treasures beyond mortal comprehension and set deadly traps and monstrous creatures to guard them. Among his favorite guardians are the fierce demons known as paigoels.

Paigoels are near and dear to Anarazel's avaricious heart because they are made from the souls of his most dedicated worshippers. Those who give praise to the Guardian of a Thousand Terrors know that if they die seeking treasure in the deep dark of a dungeon, they'll be given a new demonic shape when their souls arrive in the Caves of Chaos. What very few know, however, is that when an entire adventuring party is wiped out in some tomb of horror, the souls of the slain are fused together to create a paigoel.

Paigoels are grotesque in appearance, having three faces and ten arms. With eyes facing in every direction, they cannot be surprised. Anarazel uses paigoels to guard precious artifacts in the Caves of Chaos, and he sometimes sends them to haunt the deepest levels of famous Material dungeons.

Combat

Paigoels used to be adventurers, so they know many of the classic dungeoneering tricks and how to counter them. They don't let on that they can see invisible creatures, for instance, allowing sneaky characters to get close before lashing out. Some paigoels even pick the pockets of enemy rogues to prove that they've still got it. When combat gets down and dirty, paigoels use their hail of darts in corridors where possible and then close to let their ten arms finish the opposition.

A paigoel is proficient with all martial weapons and can wield a different weapon of up to Large size in each of its ten hands. For the sake of ease, average damage is provided above. GMs who want more precision should detail the weaponry carried and determine damage by weapon.

Hail of Darts (Su): As a standard action, a paigoel can project a hail of darts from its outstretched palms in a line 30 feet long and 5 feet wide. Those caught in the hail take 10d6 damage (Reflex half DC 19).

Potent Charge (Ex): A paigoel can take advantage of its many arms for extra attacks when charging. If a paigoel executes a successful charge, it can make up to three attacks that round instead of the usual one.

All-Around Vision (Ex): With three sets of eyes, a paigoel can see in every direction. A paigoel receives a +4 racial bonus on Search and Spot checks and gains the uncanny dodge ability of a 6th-level rogue.

True Seeing (Su): A paigoel has a permanent *true seeing* ability as the spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer.

Feats: A paigoel receives Improved Bull Rush as a bonus feat.

