

Piscaethces

(The Blood Queen, Mother of Savants)

Intermediate Power of Baator, LE

PORTFOLIO:	Domination, oppression, magic, aboleths
ALIASES:	Piscaethces
DOMAIN NAME:	Minauros/the Bog Caverns
SUPERIOR:	None
ALLIES:	Blibdoolpoolp, Ilxendren
FOES:	Callarduran Smoothhands, Darahl Firecloak, Eilistraee, Ghaunadaur, Great Mother, Gzemmid, Juiblex, Lolth, Meriadar, Psilofyr, the drow pantheon, the Morndinsamman, the orcish and goblinoid pantheons
SYMBOL:	Sphere of mucus surrounded by droplets of the same
WOR. ALIGN.:	LE, NE, CE

Worshipped by aboleth as their creator, the Blood Queen Piscaethces (PIH-seeth-sess) is a disgusting, bloated creature bent on domination of other races. She has no grand goal beyond this domination, for it is simply the rightful place for her race to control all other creatures.

The aboleth say that the Blood Queen birthed their race in the distant past, setting upon them the task of dominating all the races and worlds of the multiverse. They seem to have little in the way of a formal mythology, having no fanciful stories about their origin or tales of heroes and other gods; instead, their racial memories stretch so far back that they claim each individual aboleth remembers the origin of their race. Whether this is true or not has never been determined, for the alien nature of the aboleth mind and their own psionic prowess has resisted the rare attempts to probe their memories. In every known case, aboleth society has been well established when they are first encountered by other races.

In a similar fashion, little is known of Piscaethces' origin; in fact, until relatively recently, even the baatezu had no idea she lurked within the endless bog of Minauros. Some sages speculate that this is because until the last few centuries she resided elsewhere, but most hold that her realm has always been there, but the great distance between it and the Sinking City of Minauros itself kept her hidden, and it is simply that as parties searching for stone needed to shore up the city have had to range further and further afield, they are only now coming into contact with her realm's sphere of influence. Given the variety of slaves that already resided in the realms when it was discovered, it is clear the Blood Queen's aboleth were already well aware of the Sinking City itself.

The pitiable creatures enslaved by her aboleth toil away within the swampy cavern of the Blood Queen, which is said to connect to an extensive network of submerged caverns that stretch all the way to the outskirts of Minauros, allowing aboleths to move about without detection. The baatezu are said to scoff at this idea; nevertheless, rumors abound that they patrol the swamps searching for any such entrances they can find. For her part, Piscaethces moves little, her vast and corpulent form resting in a near torpor in the center of the caverns. She dreams endlessly of her grandiose goals of dominating all life in the multiverse, but in her lethargic state she does little to advance these goals besides exhorting the virtue of domination to her followers. Even on the occasions of her infrequent egg-laying, she does nothing to care for her offspring, instead typically dispatching them to the Prime Material Plane to be hatched by mortal aboleth, becoming the most powerful of savants. While immersed in her fantasies, Piscaethces' body continuously exudes a blood-red mucus that seeps into the water around her, tinting the water of her whole realm; this is the origin of her title the Blood Queen.

Despite her lethargy, Piscaethces is still able to maintain a pair of alliances. Some sages speculate that this is all that remains of an ancient, wider network, while others suspect these remaining alliances are little more than formality, since they do not appear to have been tested recently. These two powers are the kuo-toan patron Blibdoolpoolp and Ilxendren, the god of the underdark subrace of ixitxachitl known as the ixzan. Who else she may have once been allied to is left up to pure speculation at this point, for there are no legends of any such ties. In contrast to the small number of alliances, when active, the Blood Queen has been known to take notice of, and act against, many other powers. Of particular note are a pair of deities that appear to be taking advantage of her lethargy to capture

worship of some of her aboleth children. Both deities, Ghaunadaur and Juiblex the Faceless Lord, are powers of slime and ooze, and have convinced cults of aboleth that they maintain the integrity of their skin. Beyond these two, all of the Blood Queen's foes are powers of the races her followers seek to dominate or are otherwise opposed to the actions of her followers. For the most part, Piscaethces seems to take little notice of any of them.

Due to her lethargy and somnolence, the Blood Queen is rarely active on the Prime Material Plane; her avatars almost exclusively only appear to defend aboleth cities from existential threats. Much more often, her servants or followers make appearances, either at her command or on their own initiative, to render aid or guidance. Furthermore, many of her savant aboleth priests are more than powerful enough to contact her or her servants directly.

Piscaethces's Avatar (18-HD Aboleth, Mage 32, Cleric 32, Psionicist 20)

Piscaethces is an enormous, bloated aboleth with slimy pink skin and grey mottling. She lacks the tentacles of normal aboleths, instead having only stubby nubs where they would be. Her head and back have tough, hardened protrusions, and her wide eyes are a pale yellow in color. The Blood Queen constantly oozes a blood-red miasma that smells strongly of rancid grease. She draws her spells from all schools save those of elemental fire and is limited to necromantic spells of 4th level or lower; she draws her priest spells from the spheres of all, charm, divination, elemental (air, earth, and water), guardian, law, protection, summoning, sun (reversed only), and weather.

AC 0; MV 3, Sw 24; HP 190; THACO 0; #AT 1

Dmg 4d8 (head smash)

MR 25%; SZ G (40 feet)

STR 16, DEX 10, CON 16, INT 19, WIS 19, CHA 16

Spells P: 13/12/12/10/9/9/8, W: 7/7/7/7/7/7/7/7

Psionic summary: Mental #AT: 2; Mental THACO -4; Mental AC -10; Dis all/Sci all/Dev all; PSPs: 318; Att all; Def all.

Saves PPDM 2; RSW 3; PP 5; BW 7; Sp 4

Special Att/Def: The Blood Queen almost never engages in melee combat, instead using her servitors to defend her while she uses her magic and powers from afar. If forced into melee, she can batter foes with the bony ridges on her head for 4d8 points of damage, striking up to two size L, three size M, or four size S creatures directly in front of her. This attack is clumsy and made with a -4 penalty. Any bipedal creatures successfully struck with this attack must make a Dexterity check or be knocked off their feet and stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Piscaethces can attempt to *enslave* one creature within 200 feet ten times per day; a saving throw versus spell with a -4 penalty is allowed to negate the effect. Any creature *enslaved* obeys her telepathic commands without hesitation, even if such an action would be suicidal. Once per turn the Blood Queen can spit a blob of disgusting mucus up to 100 feet, covering an area ten feet in diameter where it strikes. Any creatures within this area are allowed a save versus rod/staff/wand with a -4 penalty to escape the area. Those who fail their saving throw are glued in place (feet stuck to the floor, arms bound to their side, etc., depending on the position they were in when the blob hits). This mucus can be dissolved with alcohol or eliminated with a *dispel magic*. Twice per day each, she can create *symbols of hopelessness and domination*, and once per day she can summon 1d3 savant aboleths and 1d4+4 ordinary aboleths.

Because of her thick, rubbery hide, the Blood Queen is immune to all bludgeoning weapons and any weapons of +2 or lower enchantment. Slashing and piercing weapons of +3 or better enchantment cause half damage. She is immune to all illusions and elemental water attacks, as well as magic or psionics that would exert mental control over her (*charm, domination, emotion, etc.*).

Other Manifestations

The Blood Queen never manifests her powers to aid her followers. She grants them significant gifts and has imbued in the race many potent powers, and so feels there is little need to aid them directly further. She sends dreams to her powerful followers to encourage their conquering and enslavement, and her eggs are periodically delivered to her mortal

followers to lead them in her name. Piscaethces is an ancient power with much arcane knowledge known to no other entity, and she occasionally shares tiny morsels with her powerful priests to aid their domination desires.

The Blood Queen is served primarily by shaboath golems, skum, and hamatula baatezu, as well as aballin, baatezu (least and lesser), cave fishers, gargoyles, hydrax, imps, incarnates of pride, subterranean fish of all sorts, water elementals, and water weirds. She is not known to manifest her pleasure or displeasure through any particular discoveries or manifestations.

The Church

CLERGY:	Specialty priests
CLERGY'S ALIGN.:	LE
TURN UNDEAD:	SP: No
CMND. UNDEAD:	SP: No

All specialty priests of Piscaethces receive religion (aboleth) and reading/writing (aboleth) as bonus nonweapon proficiencies.

Even among underdark races, little is known of the church of the Blood Queen, and its existence is virtually unknown on the surface. Aboleth do not share information on their faith with outsiders, and few of those who are able to visit a great aboleth city are able to leave to share details with outsiders. However, all other races fear, or at least respect, the power that the aboleth derive from their faith. Only races with whom aboleth trade or ally know anything more than rumors of her rites and tenets, and this is still very little information. Ixzan have been known to be long-term allies with aboleth who serve Piscaethces; on occasion kuo-toa and illithids have been known to form alliances as well, but these tend to be rockier. Aboleth do not tolerate other faiths among their own kind, and the Blood Queen's priests are especially cruel if they uncover a hidden cult worshipping another power.

Temples dedicated to Piscaethces dominates aboleth cities, typically being located at the very center of the city. Complexes with four or five towers are the most common, each dominated by a different savant aboleth priest of the Blood Queen, one of whom is the high priest of the whole church. These towers are beautifully crafted, but composed of unsettling geometry that makes most humanoids who look at them for too long disturbed and queasy. They are sometimes spiraled, with outer ramps leading to upper floors; otherwise, the ramps are located within the towers. Flat surfaces are carved and painted with friezes and murals of aboleth dominating and sacrificing other underdark races, such as drow, derro, duergar, and svirfneblin. Abstract and symbolic art fills the spaces between these more significant sections; all told, the temples exude an uneasy, alien beauty. These temples make heavy use of magical glyphs to protect and defend them. Shrines are never built by aboleths, and smaller settlements have no temples; priests are dispatched to rule these outposts and towns as needed from the central city.

As aboleths inherit the knowledge of their parents, very few individuals need the training that accompanies a typical novitiate period; as such the priesthood of the Blood Queen has no such term for this period. Collectively, priests of Piscaethces are called Paragons of Domination. In ascending order of rank, the titles used by the priesthood of the Blood Queen are glyphreader, glyphknower, glyphstudier, glyphunderstander, glyphformer, glyphcreator, and master of glyphs. High-ranking priests who rule whole cities have unique individual titles. The clergy consists entirely of specialty priests, which are called thrallmakers. While savant aboleth make up only a small fraction of aboleth society, they comprise nearly a third (32%) of the priesthood of Piscaethces and virtually all high-ranking priests are savant aboleth; standard aboleths make up the remainder of the priesthood (68%).

Dogma: Aboleths are the natural rulers and dominators of all life. Bring all other races under you and make them serve. Bring the natural order of domination to the chaotic rabble that are other societies, and ensure they obey the true queen's law. Savant aboleth are the chosen of the Blood Queen, and her essence flows in their veins; just as it is right and natural for aboleths to rule other creatures, so too is it right and natural that savants rule aboleth society.

Day-to-Day Activities: Piscaethces' clergy are the rulers of aboleth society. They direct the day-to-day operations of their cities or nations, and often have grand, long-term plans that involve strategic wars, alliances,

and covert operations against other underdark nations. However, they also direct more mundane activities such as new construction, management of the slave populations, and food procurement. As each aboleth retains the memories of their parents and the brains of those they consume, many priests come from lines of aboleth who could be considered sages, and as a personal matter, most priests of the Blood Queen continue to pursue the acquisition of knowledge within their favored fields.

Important Ceremonies/Holy Days: The priesthood of Piscaethces observes no special, unique holy days, instead having only regular ceremonies. Typically, these are held monthly on the day of the full moon; as a subterranean race the aboleth track these events based on the subtle differences in the tides they detect in their watery homes. During these ceremonies, the Rites of the Queen's Dominion, a sentient creature is sacrificed in Piscaethces' name, to prove the aboleths' sovereignty over other races. At least once per year, such a sacrifice must be of a wizard or priest of significant power, or an equally powerful creature with innate magic. The rest of the time the sacrifice has no requirements, although variety is favored, and if possible, each month should include a sacrifice of a race that hasn't been sacrificed during the previous 12 months. The sacrifice may be a slave or a prisoner, but prisoners are favored if possible.

Major Centers of Worship: Aboleth are not ones to undertake pilgrimages, and while their city-states and nations are not necessarily hostile to each other, the aboleth desire for domination extends even towards each other. As such, temples serve only a city's population of aboleth, and few such cities are known to surface dwellers. One such city, named Great Shaboath, resides beneath a land known as Haranshire. Until recently, this powerful city was attempting a great feat of magic designed to project the aboleth enslavement ability to a great distance. The city was attacked by heroes from the surface and the Grand Savant, an aboleth of immense size, was slain. This aboleth was not only the absolute ruler of the realm and high priest of the Blood Queen, but also likely an offspring of the goddess herself given its physical and magical powers. Much damage was done to the city, and it will likely be many decades before they can affect a full reconstruction; without the leadership of the Grand Savant, it is likely to be relegated to no more than a threat to the immediate environs of the subterranean sea on which it floats.

Deep beneath the Yeomanry on the world of Oerth in Greyspace lies a large lake upon which four small aboleth cities float. The shores of the lake are a perpetual battleground between these cities, although strict rules of engagement appear to govern the conflict, leading nearby races to speculate this is either a war for honor or some sort of organized struggle to determine which city shall rule the others. All four are governed by their own priesthood of Piscaethces, although rumor has it one city has secretly converted to the worship of Juiblex in order to gain an advantage over the others.

In the underdark reaches under the Sea of Fallen Stars of Toril in Realmspace rests a relatively new city of kuo-toa named Leshynmul, the City of Coral Caverns. The kuo-toans are not the rulers of this city, however; shortly after establishing the city while still weakened from a war with sea elves, the gogglers were secretly conquered by aboleths who dwelt still deeper, who now rule Leshynmul in the name of the Blood Queen. They have been slowly expanding their influence but may come into conflict with the Ghaunadaur-worshipping aboleths of nearby Llurth Dreier.

Affiliated Orders: The church of the Blood Queen sponsors no martial or monastic orders. However, most aboleth cities have colleges of magic or psionics, as well as organizations dedicated to collecting knowledge, all of which are nominally under the direction of the church.

Priestly Vestments: Aboleth wear no vestments and it is nearly impossible for non-telepathic races to distinguish a member of the clergy from the rest of the population. Aboleths and other races that communicate telepathically can pick up subtle cues that indicate an individual is a priest. The holy symbol used by the priesthood is a solidified sphere of mucus that an aboleth can store inside its mouth when not eating. Some aboleth, especially savants, will have the spheres surgically implanted under their skin, either on a tentacle or on their forehead.

Adventuring Garb: Aboleth priests use no weapons and wear no armor, as with other aboleths. As the ruling class of their race, they are unlikely to range afield from their cities, instead sending normal aboleths to do their bidding.

Specialty Priests (Thrallmakers)

REQUIREMENTS:	Wisdom 15, Intelligence 15
PRIME REQ.:	Wisdom, Intelligence
ALIGNMENT:	LE
WEAPONS:	Any (natural weapons typically used)
ARMOR:	None
MAJOR SPHERES:	All, charm, divination, elemental (air, earth, water), guardian, law, protection, summoning, weather
MINOR SPHERES:	Sun (reversed only)
MAGICAL ITEMS:	Same as clerics
REQ. PROFS:	Local history
BONUS PROFS:	Ancient history

- Thrallmakers must be aboleths or savant aboleths.
- Aboleth thrallmakers are not allowed to multiclass. Savant aboleths must multiclass as thrallmaker/wizards.
- Savant aboleth thrallmaker/wizards do not level as normal for multiclass characters. They do not split XP, instead assigning full XP awards to one of their classes as desired. No class can exceed the other by more than three levels, however; attempting to do leads to a loss of any XP that would have brought the higher level class to the next level. Savant aboleths do not gain a 10% bonus to experience points for having high prime requisite scores.
- Thrallmakers may select nonweapon proficiencies from the wizard group without penalty.
- At 2nd level, thrallmakers can cast *empathic seizure* (as the 1st-level wizard spell) once per day.
- At 5th level, thrallmakers can cast *empathic control* (as the 2nd-level wizard spell) once per day.
- At 8th level, thrallmakers can cast *glyph of warding* (as the 3rd-level priest spell) once per day.
- At 10th level, thrallmakers can cast *empathic link* (as the 3rd-level wizard spell) once per day.
- At 12th level, thrallmakers can cast *domination* (as the 5th-level wizard spell) once per day.

Piscaethcean Spells

In addition to the spells listed below, the DM is encouraged to make the piscine and amphibian spells listed in the article "Arcane Lore: Spells of the Scaled" in *DRAGON* Magazine #235 available to aboleth spellcasters (both wizard and priest).

3rd Level

Acidic Slime (Pr 3; Alteration)

Sphere:	Protection
Range:	0
Components:	V, S
Duration:	1 rd./level
Casting Time:	1 rd.
Area of Effect:	The caster
Saving Throw:	Special

By means of this spell, the caster alters its normal slimy coating into a powerful acid that only affects organic material. For the duration of the spell, any melee weapon striking the caster causes a spray of *acidic slime* that injures the attacker for 1d4 points of damage, plus one point per level of the caster. A saving throw versus breath weapon is allowed for half damage, adjusted for Dexterity. If the saving throw is failed, any organic material (leather, wood, wool, etc.) caught in the spray must make a saving throw versus acid or be ruined. If the melee weapon's striking surface is made substantially of an organic substance (staves, clubs, etc.), the weapon's saving throw is made with a -2 penalty. If the caster is attacked by a creature using natural weapons such as teeth, claws, fists, etc., then the saving throw versus breath weapons is an automatic failure.

Any tentacle attacks the caster makes while under this spell are enhanced, dealing an additional 1d3 points of damage, plus 1 point per two levels they have achieved. However, the normal ability of the caster's slime to alter the skin of a struck creature into a clear, moist membrane is suspended until the spell expires and their slime returns to normal. The caster is never harmed by their own *acidic slime*. The caster can use this

acid to burn their way through wood or other organic substances at a rate of three inches per round.

Glyph of Warding: Breath Curse (Pr 3; Abjuration, Alteration, Evocation)

Sphere:	Guardian
Range:	Touch
Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	Until discharged
Casting Time:	Special
Area of Effect:	Special
Saving Throw:	Special

A *glyph of warding* is a powerful inscription magically drawn to prevent unauthorized or hostile creatures from passing, entering, or opening. The *glyph of warding: breath curse* is favored by priests of the Blood Queen. No other priesthoods are known to use it. The conditions, limitations, and material components for casting a *glyph of warding: breath curse* are the same as for a normal *glyph of warding*.

When triggered, breath curse brings down a curse upon a creature that alters how they breathe. Any air-breathing creature becomes a water breather, and any water-breathing creature becomes an air breather. In the case of a creature that can breathe both air and water, the breath curse blocks the form of breathing that the creature is currently using. Creatures unable to get to their new breathing environment begin to suffocate/drown, following rules in the Player's Handbook in Chapter 14: Time and Movement under the heading "Holding Your breath."

4th Level

Gaze of Debilitation (Pr 4; Alteration)

Sphere:	Charm
Range:	0
Components:	V, S
Duration:	Special
Casting Time:	7
Area of Effect:	The caster
Saving Throw:	Neg.

With this spell, the caster causes severe debilitation in any creature it turns all three of its red eyes upon. If the target fails a saving throw versus spell, they have their Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores reduced by three for 5 rounds per level of the caster. This spell cannot be reflected by mundane means, although magical spells that can reflect gaze attacks can cause it to rebound upon the caster.

Upon completion of this spell, the caster can immediately gaze upon any one creature it can see within 30 yards, or it can save the gaze for a future round. In addition, it can gaze on additional creatures in subsequent rounds to a maximum of one creature per three levels (so 1 at 3rd, 2 at 6th, etc.) they have achieved. The gaze attacks can be used in addition to its normal actions in a round. For creatures with no ability scores, apply a -1 attack penalty, a +1 penalty to Armor Class, and reduce current and maximum hit points by 1 per hit die (to a minimum of 1 point per die). Any unused gaze attacks are lost after one round per level of the caster.