

# Gazae et Monstrí

Treasures & Monsters from Greek & Roman Myth

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## Gazae et Monstrí

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### Introduction

Salve!

You hold in your virtual hands the latest in **Spes Magna**'s PDFs written for *Quid Novi*? subscribers. What's more, this PDF is the result of a poll conducted to determine what topic respondents most wanted to see covered next. Magic items and monsters of Greek and Roman myth won the poll against the other two options by nearly two to one.

Six magic items and five monsters fill the pages that follow. As always, source material provides inspiration rather than limitations. My goal wasn't to be mythologically correct, but rather was to turn some of my favorites into fun, useable items and creatures.

But enough with the introduction. Let's get on with the goodies. If you see something you like, dislike, think needs correcting, et cetera, please don't hesitate to fire off an <u>e-mail</u>.

Sincerely, Mark L. Chance Spes Magna Games

## Magic Items

The magic items below are drawn from a variety of sources. The cap of invisibility appears (so to speak) in The Iliad, used by Athena to aid Diomedes against Ares. Perseus uses it to escape from Medusa's vengeful sisters. The cesti of Eryx come to us from The Aeneid. The cuckoo scepter was one of Hera's symbols, the cuckoo commemorating her seduction by Zeus,



who took the form of that bird. Amazon queen Hippolyta's *girdle* was the object of Hercules during his ninth labor. The *Nemean hide armor* resulted from Hercules' first labor. The last item, *Pandora's box*, derives from Hesiod's tales.

#### Cap of Invisibility

Aura moderate illusion; CL 7th Slot head; Price 35,000 gp; Weight --

#### Description

This leather cap enables its wearer to turn <u>invisible</u><sup>1</sup> upon command (as per <u>greater invisibility</u>). The cap functions for seven minutes per day.

#### Construction

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, greater invisibility; Cost 17,500 gp

<sup>1</sup> As usual, hyperlinks for rules lead to d20pfsrd.org.

#### Cesti of Eryx

Aura moderate evocation; CL 8th Slot hands; Price 14,060 gp (for one gauntlet), 31,870 gp (for a pair); Weight 2 lbs. (for one gauntlet)

#### Description

This "pair of prodigiously heavy gauntlets" is made from "the hides of seven huge oxen" and "stiffened by lead and iron sewn into them." Both gauntlets are permanently "caked with blood and spattered brains."<sup>2</sup> These +1 <u>mighty cleaving cold iron spiked gauntlets</u> grant a +1 dodge bonus to AC if both gauntlets are worn at the same time.

#### Construction

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *divine power*, must be crafted as a pair to get the +1 dodge bonus to AC; **Cost** 15,935 gp (for a pair)

#### **Cuckoo Scepter**

Aura moderate transmutation; CL 9th Slot none; Price 28,200 gp; Weight 3 lbs.

#### Description

Polyclitus's statue of Hera in Argos depicted the goddess holding a scepter surmounted by a cuckoo to commemorate Zeus changing form to woo her. Made from wood or bone and surmounted by a carved cuckoo, this arm-length scepter allows the use of the following spells:

- <u>alter self</u>
- <u>baleful polymorph</u> (2 charges)
- <u>beast shape II</u>
- <u>eagle's splendor</u>
- whispering wind

#### Construction

**Requirements** Craft Staff; *alter self, baleful polymorph, beast shape II, eagle's splendor, whispering wind*; **Cost** 14,100 gp

#### Girdle of Hippolyta

Aura moderate abjuration, moderate transmutation; CL 6th Slot belt; Price 14,000 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

#### Description

This thick, leather belt is worn across the chest from shoulder to hip and around the waist as well. It is reinforced with iron studs. On command, any melee or ranged weapon can be magically stored "inside" the girdle. The girdle can store two weapons in this manner. The weapons can weigh no more than 20 pounds total.

While stored, the weapons have negligible weight. With a snap of the fingers (a free action) while wearing the girdle, one weapon reappears in hand. Spell durations active on a stored weapon are not suppressed, but continue to expire. If the girdle's effect is suppressed or dispelled, the stored weapons appear instantly in hand if possible or else fall to the ground.

The girdle also provides a +2 armor bonus, but imposes no armor check penalty or arcane spell failure.

#### Construction

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, shrink item; Cost 7,000 gp

<sup>2</sup> Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Book 5.400-414. Translated by David West. Revised edition. Penguin Books, 2003.

#### **Nemean Hide Armor**

Aura no aura (nonmagical) Slot armor; Price 10,165 gp; Weight 25 lbs.

#### Description

Crafted from the hide of a Nemean lion, this masterwork hide armor grants DR 3/bludgeoning to its wearer.

#### **Pandora's Box**

Aura strong enchantment, strong necromancy; CL 15th Slot none; Price 223,920 gp; Weight 5 lbs.

#### Description

A *Pandora's box* is constructed of hardwood and bound with iron, making it rather heavy despite its smallish, 1-cubic foot size. This dread wondrous item has five different command words, one for each of its effects. Upon command, the box opens. On the inside of the lid appears a magical *symbol*. *Pandora's box* can display the following: *symbol of death, symbol of fear, symbol of insanity, symbol of pain, symbol of weakness*. The type of *symbol* depends on which command word was uttered. Each *symbol* can be used only once per day.

#### Construction

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *symbol of death, symbol of fear, symbol of insanity, symbol of pain, symbol of weakness;* **Cost** 111,960 gp

## Monsters

Now for my favorite part of the game: the monsters! Two of these beasties are intended to be unique creatures. Antaeus and Python are proper names, and the creatures presented are one of a kind foes. The other three -- the mares of Diomedes, the Nemean lion, and the Stymphalian birds -- are general examples of a species (although this isn't mythologically accurate in one case). Most of these monsters come from the stories about Hercules. Only Python isn't associated with Hercules. Instead, the mythical Python guarded the Delphic Oracle until slain by Apollo.

Each monster is formatted to be printed on one page, either on one side or front-and-back.



#### Antaeus

The earth trembles as a giant bursts from the ground, his mammoth fists clenched, his stony teeth gritted in a terrible smile.

CR 10; XP 9,600 CE Huge humanoid (earth, giant) Init +1; Senses low-light vision, <u>tremorsense</u> 20 ft.; Perception +2

#### Defense

AC 29, touch 10, flat-footed 28 (+1 Dex, -2 size, +14 natural, +1 deflection, +5 armor) hp 125 (10d8+80); regeneration 5 Fort +15, Ref +4, Will +7 Defensive Abilities earth bound, rock catching Weakness earth bound

#### Offense

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft. Melee unarmed strike +17/+12 (1d6+12), or Melee (Power Attack) unarmed strike +15/+10 (1d6+16), or Ranged rock +6 (2d6+16) Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft. Special Attacks rock throwing (120 ft.)

#### **Statistics**

Str 33, Dex 13, Con 27, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11 Base Atk +7; CMB +20 (+22 grapple); CMD 30 (32 vs. grapple) Feats Cleave, Improved Grapple, Improved Iron Will<sup>B</sup>,

**Skills** Cleave, Improved Grapple, Improved from Will<sup>B</sup>, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will<sup>B</sup>, Lunge, Power Attack **Skills** Climb +15, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +6, Survival +8 **Language** Common, Giant



Gregorio de Ferrari's Hercules and Antaeus

#### **Special Abilities**

Earth Bound (Su) As long as Antaeus stands upon natural

earth or rock, he enjoys great supernatural powers. At the beginning of his turn, Antaeus recovers from the following conditions: bleed, blinded, deafened, exhausted, fatigued, nauseated, paralyzed, petrified, sickened, and stunned. He also has Iron Will and Improved Iron Will as bonus feats. If somehow separated from natural earth or rock, Antaeus loses the above benefits. Furthermore, he ceases to regenerate and is treated as if he were staggered.

#### Ecology

**Treasure** NPC gear (+1 hide shirt, amulet of mighty fists +1, ring of protection +1, potion of darkvision, potion of resist energy 20, plus 500 gp)

Antaeus is the monstrous offspring of a hill giant and a powerful earth elemental. He stands about 16 feet tall and weighs nearly 5,000 pounds. Coarse black hair covers his ruddy flesh, and his fingernails, toenails, and teeth appear to be made of stone. His shirt is made from cured elephant hide.

Antaeus makes his living via robbery, extortion, and kidnapping. He eschews weapons in favor of fighting with his bare hands. His skill in unarmed combat is great. Combined with his enormous strength, Antaeus is capable of squeezing the life out of dire predators. Thanks to his elemental mother, Antaeus possesses remarkable supernatural powers as well, making him all the more deadly.

This horrible giant loves to use tremorsense and burrowing to ambush victims. If hard-pressed in battle, he retreats via burrowing long enough to regenerate his injuries. He may also use a combination of burrowing and rock throwing to harass enemies from a distance.

#### Mare of Diomedes

The horses wheel in your direction, neighing as they charge. There is something savage about their attitude, reminding you more of a wolf pack on the hunt than a herd of horses on the run.

#### **CR** 3; **XP** 800

N Large animal Init +2; Senses low-light vision, <u>scent;</u> Perception +7

#### Defense

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, -1 size, +4 natural) hp 25 (3d8+12) Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2

#### Offense

**Speed** 60 ft. **Melee** bite +5 (1d6+4), 2 hooves +0 melee (1d4+2) **Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. **Special Attacks** <u>rend</u> (1d6+6, bite and 1 hoof), <u>trample</u> (1d4+6, DC 15)

#### Statistics

Str 18, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 8 Base Atk +2; CMB +7; CMD 19 (23 vs. trip) Feats Endurance, Run Skills Perception +7

#### Ecology

Environment temperate plains Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3-18) Treasure none

The mares of Diomedes appear to be normal horses unless one gets a closer look at their jaws. Instead of the rough, blunt teeth of a herbivore, these mares possess the tearing fangs of a predator. All members of this species are female. When in heat, a mare of Diomedes attracts a normal horse with which to mate. It then rejoins its pack. The mare's foal may be either male or



Gustave Moreau's Diomedes Devoured by His Horses

female, but male foals -- which are normal horses -- are set upon by the pack and devoured.

The mares of Diomedes hunt in packs much like wolves, but these powerful animals are not ambush predators. Instead, they run their prey to ground, and then circle in for the kill. They attack with their fangs and hooves, or else by trampling their victim.

In some regions, gnoll matriarchs catch and train these mares for battle. Add the <u>advanced creature</u> simple template to create a warmare of Diomedes.

#### **Nemean Lion**

Its growl rumbles deep in its chest. Its claws tear gouges in the earth. This isn't an ordinary lion. It's gray hide ripples with muscle, and it's long tail appears more reptile than mammal.

#### CR 8; XP 4,800

N Large magical beast Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, <u>scent</u>; Perception +10

#### Defense

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, -1 size, +8 natural) hp 81 (9d10+36); DR 15/bludgeoning Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +4 Defensive Abilities invulnerable hide

#### Offense

**Speed** 40 ft. **Melee** bite +16 (1d8+8 plus <u>grab</u>/19-20), 2 claws +16 (1d6+8) **Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. **Special Attacks** <u>pounce</u>, <u>rake</u> (2 claws +16, 1d6+8)

#### Statistics

Str 27, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 10 Base Atk +9; CMB +18 (+22 grapple); CMD 31 (35 vs. trip)

**Feats** Critical Focus, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Run **Skills** Acrobatics +13 (+17 to jump), Perception +10, Stealth +9 (+13 in undergrowth); **Racial** +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth (+8 in undergrowth)

#### **Special Abilities**

**Invulnerable Hide (Su)** Any nonmagical weapon striking a Nemean lion's hide might break. The weapon takes damage equal to the amount of damage the attack would have inflicted (not



Peter Paul Rubens's Hercules Fighting the Nemean Lion

counting DR) unless the wielder makes a DC 18 Reflex save. The weapon's hardness protects against this damage as normal. Natural weapons are not subject to this ability. The save DC is Constitution-based.

#### Ecology

Environment warm plains or hills Organization solitary or pair Treasure incidental

A Nemean lion is a top-tier predator. It appears much like a lion, but its well-muscled flesh is covered with a fine coat of gray fur. Males have short manes. A Nemean lion's tail is long and lizard-like. Toward its tip, fur gives way to scales. When attacking, its thick talons and powerful jaws inflict horrible wounds. A Nemean lion's hide possesses supernatural resistance to harm. Most slashing and piercing weapons glance off without inflicting injury. Nonmagical weapons of all types frequently break upon striking a Nemean lion.

#### Python

The enormous horned serpent slithers forward, emitting a hissing laugh as it advances. The barbed stinger at the end of its tail drips a viscous fluid.

"What offerings have you brought me?" it asks. "None? Well, no matter. I shall take your lives by way of apology."

CR 15; XP 51,200 LE Huge dragon (earth, elemental) Init +1; Senses darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, <u>tremorsense</u> 60 ft.; Perception +19 Aura <u>slow</u> (30 ft., DC 23)

#### Defense

AC 28, touch 9, flat-footed 27 (+1 Dex, -2 size, +19 natural) hp 207 (18d12+90); DR 10/--Fort +16, Ref +12, Will +16 Immune acid, <u>elemental traits</u>; SR 25

#### Offense

Speed 60 ft., burrow 60 ft.; earth glide
Melee bite +25 (2d8+9 plus grab), gore +25 (2d8+9), sting +25 (2d6+9 plus poison), or
Melee (Power Attack) bite +20 (2d8+19 plus grab), gore +20 (2d8+19), sting +20 (2d6+19 plus poison)
Ranged Touch acid arrow +17 (3d4 acid)
Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft. (15 ft. with sting)
Special Attacks constrict (2d8+9), poison
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th):
At will - acid arrow (3d4 acid, 6 additional rounds)
3/day - flesh to stone (DC 20), transmute rock to mud (DC 19), wall of stone (DC 19)

#### **Statistics**

Str 29, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 18, Wis 21, Cha 18 Base Atk +18; CMB +29 (+33 grapple, +31 trip); CMD 36 (cannot be tripped) Feats Alertness, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Empower Spell-Like Ability (acid arrow), Great Cleave, Improved Trip, Intimidating Prowess, Persuasive, Power Attack Skills Bluff +16, Climb +30, Diplomacy +18, Intimidate +38, Knowledge (history) +25, Knowledge (nature) +25, Knowledge (planes) +25, Perception +19, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +25, Stealth +14, Swim +30 Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Terran, Undercommon

#### **Special Abilities**

**Earth Glide (Su)** Python can pass through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. If protected against fire damage, it can even glide through lava. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other sign of its presence. A *move earth* spell



cast on an area containing the burrowing Python flings it back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

**Python's Venom (Ex)** Sting -- injury; **save** Fort DC 24, **frequency** 1/round for 5 rounds, **effect** 2d4 Dex, cure 2 consecutive saves.

**Slow Aura (Su)** Creatures within 30 ft. of Python must make a DC 23 Will save or be *slowed* as the spell cast by an 18th-level sorcerer. A creature who makes its saving throw against Python's slow aura cannot be affected by the aura for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

## Ecology

#### Treasure double

It is widely believed that Python spontaneously formed from the primordial ooze left over after the gods created the world of mortals. Whatever the truth, it cannot be doubted that Python is a creature of enormous power.

Python appears to be a huge serpent with straight horns growing from its brow. Thick earthen scales cover its body. Its tail ends in a barbed stinger that carries a powerful venom.

In combat, Python has a variety of weapons at its disposal. Python is a clever opponent. It seeks to destroy enemy spellcasters first. Python uses its earth glide ability for hit-andrun tactics when prudent.

Its natural attacks include a bite, goring horns, and its venomous stinger. Victims of Python's bite must also contend with the monster's crushing coils. Python makes generous use of Great Cleave, Improved Trip, and Power Attack when fighting. It's also likely to take the -20 CMB penalty to maintain its grapple so as to avoid having the grappled condition itself.

#### **Delphic Mists**

These magical vapors rise from the earth itself in rear of the uppermost cave of Python's lair. Any creature with Int 13+ and Wis of 18+ who inhales these vapors must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become <u>fatigued</u>. Furthermore, if the breather fails this saving throw, it gains the ability to use <u>divination</u> as a spell-like ability. This spell-like ability must be used within 5 rounds of failing the save, and it can only be once per failed saving throw against the fatiguing effects of the Delphic mists.

Against more distant foes, Python employs its spell-like abilities. It is fond of using *walls of stone* to divide and conquer groups of enemies, and then earth gliding to reach confined enemies while using *transmute rock to mud* and its *slow* aura to bog them down.

Python lairs in a vast complex of caverns also inhabited by other creatures who serve Python in various capacities. Among these servants are several evil spellcasters who monopolize the Delphic mists. Petitioners seeking advice about the future bring treasure to the cave. Of course, Python gets the lion's share of these offerings.

#### Stymphalian Bird

The creature combines traits of a human woman, a bird, and a serpent. Its head, chest, and arms are of a woman. It has wings covered with metallic feathers. Instead of hands, its arms end in raptor-like feet with bronze talons. The beast's lower body tapers into scaly tail.

CR 2; XP 600 NE Small magical beast Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +8

#### Defense

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +1 size, +3 natural) hp 19 (3d10+3) Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2

#### Offense

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average) Melee 2 claws +4 (1d3), or Ranged 2 feathers +5 (1d3 plus <u>bleed</u> 1d3) Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Special Attacks <u>bleed</u> (1d3), feathers

#### **Statistics**

Str 10, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 10 Base Atk +3; CMB +2; CMD 13 Feats Flyby Attack, Hover Skills Acrobatics +6, Fly +9, Perception +8; Racial +4 Perception Language



Albrecht Durer's Hercules Killing the Stymphalian Birds

#### **Special Abilities**

**Feathers (Ex)** With a flap of its wings, a Stymphalian bird can loose a volley of two razor sharp feathers as a standard action (make an attack roll for each feather). This attack has a range of 90 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The creature can launch only 12 feathers in any 24-hour period.

#### Ecology

Environment warm or temperate marsh Organization solitary, pair, or flock (3-24) Treasure incidental

The predatory Stympalian birds hunt warm and temperate marshlands. They prefer to feast upon the flesh of sentient creatures. As noted above, a Stymphalian bird appears to be a bizarre amalgam of woman, bird, and snake. These creatures are roughly the size of an adult gnome, although weigh only about half as much.

Stymphalian birds prefer to attack while on the move, relying on Flyby Attack and their razor sharp feathers to weaken prey before closing in for the kill. Possessing low intelligence, these monsters are clever enough to divide into groups in order to engage in hit-and-run attacks. Attack groups within a Stymphalian bird flock have even been observed taking turns at offering cover to each other in order to thwart ranged attacks<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Typically this means one-half the birds fight defensively while offering soft cover to the other half.

#### Magic Item Cards

Print these on cardstock and cut them out for your players.

#### Cap of Invisibility

Aura moderate illusion; CL 7th Slot head; Price 35,000 gp; Weight --

#### Description

This leather cap enables its wearer to turn invisible upon command (as per *greater invisibility*). The cap functions for seven minutes per day.

Construction

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, greater invisibility; Cost 17,500 gp

#### Cesti of Eryx

Aura moderate evocation; CL 8th **Slot** hands; **Price** 14,060 gp (for one gauntlet), 31,870 gp (for a pair); **Weight** 2 lbs. (for one gauntlet)

#### Description

This "pair of prodigiously heavy gauntlets" is made from "the hides of seven huge oxen" and "stiffened by lead and iron sewn into them." Both gauntlets are permanently "caked with blood and spattered brains." These +1 mighty cleaving cold iron spiked gauntlets grant a +1 dodge bonus to AC if both gauntlets are worn at the same time.

#### Construction

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *divine power*, must be crafted as a pair to get the +1 dodge bonus to AC; **Cost** 15,935 gp (for a pair)

#### **Cuckoo Scepter**

Aura moderate transmutation; CL 9th Slot none; Price 28,200 gp; Weight 3 lbs.

#### Description

Polyclitus's statue of Hera in Argos depicted the goddess holding a scepter surmounted by a cuckoo to commemorate Zeus changing form to woo her. Made from wood or bone and surmounted by a carved cuckoo, this arm-length scepter allows the use of the following spells:

alter self eagle's splendor baleful polymorph (2 charges) whispering wind beast shape II

#### Construction

**Requirements** Craft Staff; alter self, baleful polymorph, beast shape II, eagle's splendor, whispering wind; **Cost** 14,100 gp

#### Girdle of Hippolyta

Aura moderate abjuration, moderate transmutation; CL 6th Slot belt; Price 14,000 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

#### Description

This thick, leather belt is worn across the chest from shoulder to hip and around the waist as well. It is reinforced with iron studs. On command, any melee or ranged weapon can be magically stored "inside" the girdle. The girdle can store two weapons in this manner. The weapons can weigh no more than 20 pounds total. While stored, the weapons have negligible weight. With a snap of the fingers (a free action) while wearing the girdle, one weapon reappears in hand. Spell durations active on a stored weapon are not suppressed, but continue to expire. If the girdle's effect is suppressed or dispelled, the stored weapons appear instantly. The girdle also provides a +2 armor bonus, but imposes no armor check penalty or arcane spell failure.

#### Construction

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, shrink item; Cost 7,000 gp

#### Nemean Hide Armor

Aura no aura (nonmagical) Slot armor; Price 10,165 gp; Weight 25 lbs.

#### Description

Crafted from the hide of a Nemean lion, this masterwork hide armor grants DR 3/bludgeoning to its wearer.

#### Pandora's Box

Aura strong enchantment, strong necromancy; CL 15th Slot none; Price 223,920 gp; Weight 5 lbs.

#### Description

A *Pandora's box* is constructed of hardwood and bound with iron, making it rather heavy despite its smallish size. This dread wondrous item has five different command words, one for each of its effects. Upon command, the box opens. Upon the inside of the lid appears a magical *symbol*. *Pandora's box* can display the following: *symbol of death, symbol of fear, symbol of insanity, symbol of pain, symbol of weakness*. The type of *symbol* depends on which command word was uttered. Each *symbol* can be used only once per day.

#### Construction

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, symbol of death, symbol of fear, symbol of insanity, symbol of pain, symbol of weakness; **Cost** 111,960 gp

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