



THE ECOLOGY OF THE CYCLOPS

On the first day, the sacred oracle demanded a dozen roasted goats. On the second, he demanded three casks of wine. On the third day, we grew tired of the oracle's greed and demanded that he give us the answers we sought. We demanded he tell us what he could see.

"What do I see?" he roared. "I look back, and I see the glory days of my people. I see ten thousand years of suffering and chaos and humiliation." The oracle rose from his seat, stretching his long, sinewy arms ahead of him and fanning his fingers before continuing, "Then I look forward, human, and do you know what I see? I see revenge!"

—From the Journal of Mavrid Leoni,
Pathfinder and Ghol-Gan explorer

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INTRODUCTION

The crumbling white ziggurats stand as grave markers or lonely sentinels. Explorers find them across the world, from the swamps of the Sodden Lands to the distant mountains of Iobaria. These monuments were home to the cyclops seer-kings of old, who have been dust now for thousands of years. The great empires of the cyclopes are gone, leaving only their witless, degenerate descendants and a few stone ruins as testament to their former glory.

Survivors from a distant age, cyclopes once possessed great power, but are now a broken and doomed race. Humans who grow too proud and confident of their race's dominion over Golarion should look to the fate of the cyclopes and shudder.

CYCLOPS HISTORY

The cyclopes no longer remember their own history beyond the last few generations. Their past must be reconstructed from their legends and from the ruins of their former civilizations.

Obscure creation myths claim that the world was born out of chaos, and that by witnessing it the first cyclops seers imposed shape and order on what was previously shapeless. Certainly, the chief strength of the cyclops empires was the cyclopes' gift of foresight, which was vastly more powerful than it is today. A degenerate cyclops can glimpse the future only dimly, but it is said the ancient cyclopes were able to perceive the whole swathe of past, present and future in a single glance. This supernatural foresight made them invincible in battle, because they only fought battles they already knew they would win.

Before Earthfall, there were a few great cyclops civilizations scattered throughout Golarion. Their seat of power was Ghol-Gan, which rose even before the Age of Serpents. Exiles from this empire, it is said, moved on to northern Casmaron to form the empire of Koloran. Others moved to the island nation of Iblydos, establishing a prominent cyclops society there. Since their origin on Golarion lies so far in the past, it is unclear whether this timeline is entirely accurate, but it is known the cyclopes predated humankind. Some suggest the various cyclops civilizations sprang up simultaneously in various parts of the globe—all well before the arrival of humankind. Ruins in other lands suggest there were other cyclops colonies or empires, but little remains of those civilizations save rune-marked stones, time-tumbled ruins, and surviving pockets of these once-great beings.

CYCLOPS PHYSIOLOGY

Physically, cyclopes are tremendously resilient, able to survive injuries that would be lethal even to a larger creature. They can live for more than 500 years, although few reach such an advanced age except for oracles and

prophets, who are protected and fed by their followers. Many savage cyclopes suffer starvation trying to sate their rapacious appetites as they clear out local wildlife, but more often, they fall victim to their own unbridled violence.

The appetite of cyclopes is legendary. They are voracious eaters, able to consume well over a hundred pounds of food in a day. They prefer meat, especially mutton and pork, but will eat almost anything. Cyclopes deprived of food rapidly become more savage and bestial, turning into unthinking monsters whose only instinct is to devour. Well-fed cyclopes, by contrast, can be surprisingly erudite and witty. To maintain their sanity, most far-thinking cyclopes keep a well-stocked larder. This huge appetite forces most cyclopes to live alone, as a group would quickly eat their surroundings bare.

Cyclopes' most important physical distinction is obviously their single eye. In most humanoids, the brain is the most demanding organ, consuming the lion's share of the energy derived from food. In cyclopes, the eye requires nearly as much energy as the brain. A jutting brow protects the huge, pulsing arteries that carry nutrition to it. Any injury to the eye is a death warrant for cyclopes. Though they lack the depth perception of two-eyed races, cyclopes' vision is uncanny—they can see over a far greater distance and with much more acuity than can humans. It is said that cyclopes can count the feathers on a soaring eagle, and they have excellent night vision.

Cyclopes' eyes are also the seat of their powers of foresight. Every cyclops, even the most brutish monster, can dimly perceive future events. In the distant past, the most powerful cyclopes lived simultaneously in the present and future, and were able to discern everything that lay in store for a mortal with a mere glance. This prophetic power has declined steadily over the millennia, so today most can see only a few seconds into the future, and then only with great effort. The disruption of prophecy in the last hundred years may herald an era of complete blindness for the cyclops race.

Unlike for other prophets and oracles, the foresight of a cyclops is intimately linked to what it can see in the present. If a cyclops is to foresee the fate of a mortal, it must first look upon that mortal in the present. A cyclops could not tell how a city is going to be destroyed unless it can see either that city or the agent of the city's doom.

The various cyclops-kin, like the great cyclops, share this foresight to some extent. Those brutes see only violence, and pluck the moments of greatest carnage of out of the chaos of the yet-to-come; the weaker oracles can see further, but only at the cost of their own sanity.

CYCLOPS PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIETY

Ambition is rare among cyclopes. Without a leader to inspire them or a vision to guide them, they never look up



CYCLOPES IN PIRATE LANDS

The kuru people of the Cannibal Isles are a result of the lingering corruptive influence of Ghol-Gan. Pushed into the islands and foul ruins left by degenerate cyclopes, they fell to cannibalism. This behavior is a reflection of the cannibalistic ways of the cyclopes common in postclassical Ghol-Gan. Because of this influence, some kuru people also venerate the savage cyclopes, seeing them as a vindication of the kuru's brutal ways, though they lack the hindsight to recognize that they have fallen into the same rut as these giant beasts.

Likewise, some of the Koboto tribes, survivors of Yamasa still living in the Sodden Lands, treat great cyclopes with awe and respect. Though wary of the untamed beasts, they offer sacrifices of slaves and captives to the one-eyed brutes to gain their allegiance. Some remote tribes even worship the creatures as living deities, even ritually plucking out one of their own eyes as a display of adoration. More often than not, however, this misguided trust and reverence lead to the entire tribe being eaten in a night.

from the quotidian task of getting enough food to sate their enormous appetites. They have little instinct for planning, relying on foresight rather than forethought. The cyclopes of today, without any true culture or civilization, mate infrequently and raise their male and female offspring separately. The father raises any males, and the mother takes the females. Many male offspring born of savage cyclopes are eaten by their sires before reaching maturity. Mated pairs of cyclopes are uncommon but not unheard of. Among cyclopes, fat is considered attractive and desirable; even at the height of the old empires, a fierce cyclops warrior might be honored with titles like "the Fat", "the Large", or "Big-Belly." Many of the statues and carvings from the old cyclops empires depict rotund deities and heroes.

While most cyclopes are too preoccupied by their hunger to use their foresight on anything other than hunting or fighting, some look beyond their immediate needs and are driven by grander visions. A charismatic prophet can yoke other cyclopes to its vision and lead them to conquer more territory, or make great strides in some field of study. The few cyclopes who practice magic show surprising talent at it, as their glimpses of the future hasten their mastery of the art. Visionaries founded the cyclops empires of the past, and should another long-sighted overlord arise, the cyclopes could regain their former prominence.

Today, different cyclopes tribes worship a variety of gods. The old empires, however, practiced a form of worship split among ancestors and the sun and moon, though

some venerated the concepts of fate and foresight. As time went on, they fell to worshiping dark gods borrowed from the races below ground and even darker forces among the stars. This decline in civilization led them to embrace the depraved practice of anthropophagy. Ritual cannibalism is a common practice in many cyclops cultures, although cyclopes never eat the central eye. Instead, it is removed from the corpse and ceremonially buried, or otherwise preserved. Injury to the eye is a terrible taboo—being blinded is considered a fate worse than death, and poking a cyclops's eye is the most insulting gesture possible.

Philosophically and emotionally, cyclopes are stoic by nature (except when in a blood rage). Their foresight makes them fatalistic; whatever they see will be, so they accept whatever fate awaits them without complaint. Other races find the cyclopes' lack of emotion to be solemn or sinister, depending on the circumstances.

CYCLOPES AND CYCLOPS-KIN

Cyclopes vary little by region. The cyclopes of Iobaria are biologically the same as those who made their empire in Ibydos and the first of their kind who ruled Ghol-Gan. Some variation in skin color exists, but that is the extent of their regional variation and is a circumstance of millennia of evolution and environment. All other offshoots of cyclopes result from the creatures' own experimentation long before their empire fell—gifts from their otherworldly patrons and dark gods.

The biggest variation among cyclopes is the difference between the savage and destructive cyclopes and those who embrace some degree of civility and enlightenment. This split began from an ancient order that segregated cyclops society into two major castes: the seer caste and the soldier caste. Both served to expand and protect the empire, and from these two castes the cyclopes of today were born. The brutal great cyclopes were bred into existence during the decline of the cyclopes' reign, in Ghol-Gan's postclassical period. These behemoths served as soldiers in wars against the serpentfolk and any other opponents to the savage cyclopes' way of life. Serving the more civil side of cyclops culture were the standard cyclopes who branched into the oracular caste, embracing and enhancing their talent at prognostication.

The majority of modern cyclopes are thuggish barbarians, preying on the weak and eking out an existence in the wilderness, but they are still thinking beings. Some, though, have become truly savage. These brutes abandon reason entirely, and live from moment to moment, guided only by what they see and foresee. A swelling number of common cyclopes have succumbed to this madness. Savage cyclopes behave like the most destructive, vicious ogres, indulging their bloodlust and basest impulses. They can be distinguished from their more intelligent cousins by their

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eyes—the eye of a savage cyclops is perpetually blood-shot and dull by comparison.

All the known offshoots of cyclopes are the product of magical breeding and experimentation that rose during the decline of Ghol-Gani civilization, guided by their far-flung patrons. Known variations include the following:

Gholdako: These undead cyclopes, while not a true race or breed of cyclopes, were created during the decline of cyclops civilization; they show the lengths to which Ghol-Gani culture went to preserve itself for posterity, exemplifying the short-sightedness of a society in perilous decline (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Isles of the Shackles* 49).

Great Cyclops: These hulking monsters were bred for war and destruction. Towering three or four times taller than their lesser kin, great cyclopes' strength is matched only by their bloodlust (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 61).

High Cyclops: While not a true sub-species, these civilized cyclopes also descended from the Ghol-Gani cyclopes. The name is used to describe the less savage of these otherwise brutish giants. The number of high cyclopes in the world has greatly diminished over the passing centuries. High cyclopes are physically identical to the common breed, but are more intelligent and cultured.

Ngoga: Bestial creatures, ngoga resemble great one-eyed orangutans. These shaggy beasts were bred for war and fought alongside the soldier caste (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Kingdoms* 30).

Oracular Cyclops: The descendants of the rulers of Ghol-Gan, oracular cyclopes are smaller and often sickly, but retain greater powers of prophecy (see page 73).

CYCLOPS LAIRS

Though they have fallen from building gargantuan towers and fabulous cities to living in caves, there are traits common to every place a cyclops calls home. A cyclops's lair always has a commanding view. Often, the cyclopes build atop hills or mountainsides, or dig into cliffs. In the lowlands, a cyclops might choose a sea cave by a beach that overlooks the water, or raise a mound of earth and stone as an artificial hill. At the very least, there is always a vantage point or high place within a short distance of the lair's entrance, where the cyclops can look out at its territory and see what's coming.

The portion of the lair the cyclops actually dwells in is a cave or underground chamber beneath the vantage point. Commonly, there is an outer cave used for cooking, tool-making, and other work; an inner larder for storing meat; and sleeping quarters. Since cyclopes are solitary by nature, the lair is usually protected in some fashion. There may be a secret entrance or a barrier blocking access, like a heavy stone that must be rolled aside. More complex lairs have traps or guardians to protect the inhabitants as they sleep.

Easy access to food is the main priority, for a cyclops is always hungry. Often, a cyclops herds animals it intends to eat or simply steals its meals from farmers and ranchers. Cyclopes often choose lairs near good fishing grounds where they can cast huge nets into the water or sieve the entire span of a river. In lean times, a cyclops can strip whole fruit trees or taro fields in a single day. In less bountiful places, a cyclops is forced to be semi-nomadic, and might have half a dozen lairs spaced several days' journey apart. The cyclops remains in one lair until it has eaten the surrounding countryside bare, then moves to the next lair.

If no ruins created by their ancestors lie nearby, savage cyclopes make their homes in natural caverns. If there are several chambers in the cave system, one is designated the larder and another is used for sleeping. In a smaller cave, the food is hung from the ceiling, and the cyclopes bed down in the warmest, most sheltered area. The stench



Oracular Cyclops



of rotting meat and cyclops sweat gives some warning of the danger to trespassers.

The glory days of the cyclopes' empires are long gone. Even where their works still endure, their cities have been conquered, inhabited, abandoned, recolonized, and abandoned yet again many times over. However, even the cities that were taken over by former slaves still bear the marks of the cyclopes. In the lands formerly covered by Ghol-Gan, for example, giant-sized steps ascend to stone towers that overlook cities adorned with statues whose hulking bodies are carved from old, weathered stone (and sometimes topped with two-eyed heads carved from much

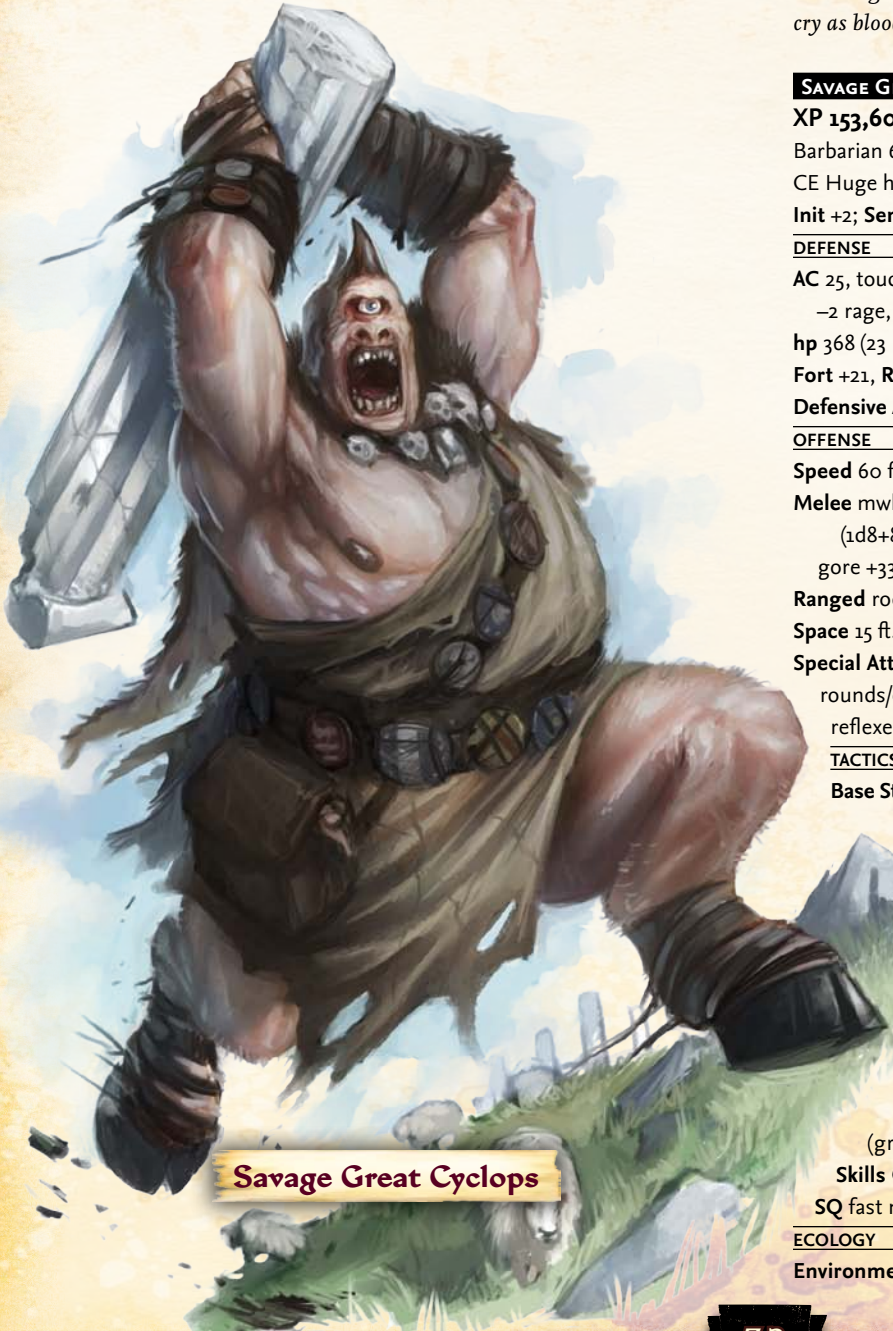
newer stone). Unsurprisingly, the single eye is a popular motif in cyclops art. Orbs of all kind dominate art and architecture in these ruins, as do images of flowing water (which represents the warp and weft of the future).

CYCLOPS ENCOUNTERS

The biggest distinction among cyclopes is the difference between the savage and the civil. Far more cyclopes are savage, though PCs can encounter the whole spectrum. Below are two examples from the opposite ends of that spectrum.

SAVAGE GREAT CYCLOPS

Towering nearly 40 feet tall, this monster bellows a horrid war cry as blood vessels bloom crimson in his single, rage-filled eye.



Savage Great Cyclops

SAVAGE GREAT CYCLOPS	CR 18
XP 153,600	
Barbarian 6	
CE Huge humanoid (giant)	
Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +23	
DEFENSE	
AC 25, touch 8, flat-footed 23 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +13 natural, -2 rage, -2 size)	
hp 368 (23 HD; 17d8+6d12+253)	
Fort +21, Ref +11, Will +19	
Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2	
OFFENSE	
Speed 60 ft.	
Melee mwk Huge greatclub +35/+30/+25/+20 (3d8+25), gore +33 (1d8+8) or gore +33 (1d8+17), 2 slams +33 (2d6+17)	
Ranged rock +18 (2d6+19)	
Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.	
Special Attacks powerful charge (gore, 4d8+24), rage (23 rounds/day), rage powers (knockback, night vision, quick reflexes), rock throwing (120 ft.)	
TACTICS	
Base Statistics When not raging, the barbarian's statistics are AC 27, touch 10, flat-footed 25; hp 322; Fort +19, Will +17; Str 40, Con 29; CMB 35, CMD 47; Skills Climb +21.	
STATISTICS	
Str 44, Dex 15, Con 33, Int 6, Wis 16, Cha 8	
Base Atk +18; CMB +37; CMD 47	
Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Critical Focus, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greatclub)	
Skills Climb +23, Intimidate +14, Perception +23	
SQ fast movement, flash of brutality	
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Environment any temperate or tropical	

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Organization solitary

Treasure standard (masterwork greatclub, hide armor, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flash of Brutality (Su) Once per day as a swift action, a great cyclops can gain a burst of savage inspiration. When it does, it doubles the threat range of all attacks using weapons, natural attacks, and rock attacks it makes until the start of its next turn. Furthermore, once per day when the great cyclops reaches 0 or fewer hit points and is conscious because of its Diehard feat, this ability recharges, allowing the great cyclops to use the ability a second time that day.

In the jungles of the south, great cyclopes roam. Some brutes are especially dangerous, raining down furious blows with their huge greatclubs, and stunning and smashing foes in a blood-red rage. The roaring cries of savage great cyclopes can be heard echoing through the jungles as a warning for all other creatures to flee before its wrath.

ORACULAR CYCLOPS

Clothed in loose robes and wearing jewelry, this one-eyed giant appears to hold a high station.

ORACULAR CYCLOPS

CR 7

XP 3,200

NE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+1 Dex, +4 insight, +7 natural, -1 size)

hp 91 (14d8+28)

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk Large greataxe +15/+10 (3d6+7/x3)

Ranged heavy crossbow +10 (2d8/19-20)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +13)

3/day—*divination*

1/day—*augury*

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 12, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 31

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack

Skills Bluff +10, Intimidate +9, Perception +20, Profession (soothsayer) +16, Sense Motive +17, Survival +8; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception

Languages Common, Cyclops, Giant

SQ greater flash of insight, protective foresight

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Environment any temperate or tropical

CYCLOPS ORACLES

The practice of keeping a cyclops (sometimes in captivity) as a soothsayer began in Azlant, and continues to this day in parts of Avistan. Some cyclopes are treated as honored sages. For example, in living memory a cyclops oracle lived in a cave near Riddleport, and every year would predict the future of the town in exchange for a chest of silver and two dozen goats. Other oracles were slaves, forced to prophesy on demand. Many old castles have a special dungeon that looks out upon the surrounding countryside, where a cyclops was kept as both oracle and sentinel.

The race's power of foresight has diminished over the ages. The cyclopes of legend were said to see the future as plainly as a man sees the waking world, but ever since Earthfall their powers have weakened. The hundred years since the death of Aroden have marked an even sharper decline in their powers, leading some to wonder whether the loss of other prophecies and omens is somehow connected to whatever spiritual wound destroyed the cyclops empires of prehistory. Some say the cause of the Age of Lost Omens may be found in the ruins of legend.

Organization solitary, conclave (2-6), or tribe (7-18)

Treasure standard (hide armor, greataxe, heavy crossbow, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Greater Flash of Insight (Su) Once per day as an immediate action, a cyclops can peer into an occluded visual spectrum of possible futures, gaining insight that allows it to select the exact result of one die roll before the roll is made. This effect can alter an action taken by the cyclops, and once per week the oracular cyclops can apply this ability to one creature of her choosing. The target of this boon must be within 30 feet of the oracular cyclops and be able to be seen.

Protective Foresight (Su) An oracular cyclops can peer into the future to protect itself. This ability grants the cyclops a +4 insight bonus to AC.

A cyclops oracle retains more of the powers of foresight than most of its kin. In addition to a cyclops's typical flash of insight ability, an oracular cyclops can share its gift with others, granting them a boon on a future challenge. While often smaller than others of its kind, an oracular cyclops gains the ability to foresee danger coming its way. The statistics above depict a cyclops who is served by a cult of worshippers, and is therefore in good health. Other oracular cyclopes are sometimes kept as chained prisoners, at the mercy of their captors.