

The Boulder-Stone Temple

"I've never been there, mind, but I know a fellow whose wife once trained in the Butterfly dosha out in the Cosanq Hills, and she said that there is this huge rock all by itself on the valley floor, and that a hermit priest lives inside it. She reckoned that this priest said he could teach people how to talk to the rocks. Just don't ask me why in the names of the Ten Thousand Immortals you'd want to!"

- Dashakra Vlotin, overheard in The Catfish.

Background

Out in the deep valleys of the Cosanq Hills in Fnoi province a traveller might come across a massive boulder standing in the middle of a u-shaped vale. Some say it was left behind as the Great Glacier retreated, when the cosmic cycle shifted back towards Chaos from Concordance. Some say it was a missile cast by the mighty demon Falls-Mountain, a minion of the Divine Minister of the Shaking Earth. Some say it is the heart of the Cosanq, a fallen heavenly guardian made of iron. Some say it fell from one of the Wanderers. Truth is, nobody knows, perhaps not even the lone mystic who tends the temple within the Boulder Stone.

The Temple

The Boulder Stone is just a bit larger than a two-storey house and is roughly spherical. On the outside it appears to be nothing more than a giant stone with an iron ladder leading up to a hole in the side. Getting through the hole is a bit of a squeeze (Escape Artist check DC 5 for Small creatures, DC 10 for Medium sized and DC 20 for Large. Creatures sized Tiny or smaller can pass through easily. Creatures sized Huge or greater cannot pass).

The Boulder Stone has been hollowed out to form an internal chamber roughly 20 feet to a side. The walls, floor and ceiling are smooth (Climb DC 30). Another ladder leads down to the floor. At the back of the temple is an altar and every available surface has been carefully etched with geometric designs based upon squares. Light from the opening shines upon the altar, and glowing stones set in alcoves around the chamber provide a warm orange light.

The Priest

The priest is Cormush the Decided, a stocky edraldi with wrinkled grey skin, deep black eyes, a shaggy grey mane of hair and tightly curled ram-like horns. Cormush's age is difficult to determine. He

claims to have tended the temple for centuries, but he is about 60 years old. Edraldi have four 'genders', but Cormush seems male to most observers. He likes to consider his words carefully, leaving long pauses before answering a question (often so long that the questioner may think that Cormush is ignoring him). When he does answer, Cormush uses as few words as possible.

Dealing with the Temple

Cormush does not object to visitors, and assumes that anyone who enters is a passing pilgrim come to pay their respects to the Boulder Stone. The temple has powerful defences if strangers should turn nasty, so Cormush has no reason to be distrustful or defensive.

If visitors express a deeper interest in the Boulder Stone beyond simply offering a prayer, Cormush is initially surprised, then delighted, and will bore the recipient with a lengthy diatribe concerning the glorious dichotomy between the seeming impermanence of stone versus its evident changeability over eons. This is the philosophy of the Boulder Stone – permanence and change in one, the perfect balance between Chaos and Concordance.

Through worship at the Boulder Stone it is possible to access the Boulder Stone domain of spells that reflect this balance of movement and rest. It is up to the gamesmaster how best to implement this. Characters of the Shaman class presented at <http://www.creativeconclave.co.uk> can swap domains using a ceremony that takes a day and costs 100gp per shaman level. The gamesmaster may decide to allow clerics to perform a similar act, although how this is seen by their patron deity is another matter. Another possibility is to allow any spellcaster (or perhaps any divine spellcaster) to take the domain instead of a feat. In effect they are taking a feat called Boulder Stone Domain that allows them to use the spells on its list.

Boulder Stone Domain

This domain reflects the philosophy of the Boulder Stone spirit that stasis and permanence in equal measure are the route to perfection.

Deity: The Boulder Stone Spirit

Granted Power: Once per day the cleric can reduce damage from a fall by 1D6 per four class levels.

Boulder Stone Domain Spells

- 1 Expeditious Retreat
- 2 Heat Metal
- 3 Meld into stone
- 4 Fly
- 5 Wall of Stone
- 6 Animate Objects
- 7 Stone Tell
- 8 Earthquake
- 9 Meteor Swarm

Beyond the wall behind the altar is a sealed chamber. It can be reached using *passwall* or similar spells; alternatively clerics with the Earth or Boulder Stone domains may use a turning attempt sufficient to affect a 5HD creature to cause the wall between the temple and the sealed chamber to open.

Within the sealed chamber is the temple treasury, guarded by wards that summon up four large earth elementals if the treasury is breached by any means other than the turning attempt described above. One elemental appears in the treasury, one in the temple and two outside the temple. The elementals proceed to attack all intruders until either the intruders or the elementals are dead. The elementals pursue thieves beyond the temple, but if any treasure remains in the treasury, at least one elemental will remain with the temple. The enchantment does not summon more than four elementals per day.

The exact nature of the treasure is up to the gamesmaster, but a simple suggestion would be stash of gems such as: one pink diamond (500gp/500k-yen), 2 yellow topaz (800gp/80k-yen each), 1 garnet (700 gp/70k-yen), one topaz (600 gp/60k-yen), three blue spinels (400gp/40k-yen each), six amethysts (120gp/12k-yen each), 11 pieces of inert yellow jade (100gp/10k-yen each), 16 pieces of inert red jade (100gp/10k-yen each), 8 tourmaline (100gp/10k-yen each), 5 red garnets (90gp/9k-yen each), 14 bloodstones (60gp/6k-yen each), 100 pieces of inert green jade (30 gp/3k-yen each). This treasure is calculated for one EL 12 encounter (Cormush) and one EL 9 encounter (the elementals).

Using the Temple

The temple as written in somewhere relatively far from civilisation, but it could equally be placed in the middle of a city as an unusual temple to any Earth deity of the gamesmaster's choosing. It can be used as a place of training for player characters with ties to an Earth deity, a source of information or of rare spells and magic items. Its rich treasury makes it a tempting target to rob, or perhaps for Earth-aligned characters to protect. In a non-Conclave setting, Cormush could

be kept as an Edraldi – a singular oddity of his race, or he can easily be converted to a dwarf.

As well as the guardian elementals, the entire temple is able to become animated, and transform into a humanoid stone colossus, for an epic-level challenge. The circumstances of this are down to the gamesmaster.

Option one: Give my creation life! Initially, Cormush is friendly and hires the player characters to go on quests to retrieve specific, valuable, gemstones. These play an important role in animating the temple and in fact Cormush is setting the player characters to gather the components for a ritual that will awaken the Boulder Stone temple. In one version of this, Cormush is benevolent and the reason for awakening the Boulder Stone is to defeat another epic challenge that threatens civilisation (the tarrasque, perhaps). In the alternative version, Cormush is a dangerous fanatic who wants to use the awoken colossus to conquer the world.

Option Two: Temple Amok! In this scenario, the colossus is already complete, but slumbering. The gems in the treasury form a vital part of its 'brain', and if they are removed the temple colossus awakes, but it is insane and goes on a destructive rampage. Replacing the gems will calm the colossus again, but getting to the specific place on the transformed temple is a dangerous challenge. Assuming the player characters aren't responsible for the theft of the gems, there is also the matter of finding those who are and retrieving the gems before the colossus causes too much damage.

Denizens of the Temple

Cormush the Decided, Stone Edraldi Cleric 12. **CR** 12. Medium Humanoid (Earth); **HD** 12d8+36; hp ; **Init** +0; **Spd** 30ft; **AC** 14 (masterwork chain shirt +4) touch 10, flat-footed 14; **BAB** +9/+4; **Atk** +1 *crushing greatclub**, melee +12 (1d10+4); **Full Atk** +1 *crushing greatclub**, melee +12/+7 (1d10+4); **SA** spells; **SQ** disease immunity, stonebond; **AL** N; **SV** Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +14; **Abilities** Str 14, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 19, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Appraise +4, Concentration +15, Craft (stone) +9, Knowledge (arcane) +7, Knowledge (religion) +11, Survival +7; Endurance, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (concentration).

Spells commonly prepared:

0th: *Detect magic, guidance, mending, read magic, resistance, light.*

1st: *Bane, bless, divine favour, expeditious retreat^D, magic stone, sanctuary, shield of faith.*

2nd: *Bull's strength, endurance, heat metal^D, hold person, remove paralysis, shatter.*

3rd: *Dispel magic, magic vestment, meld into stone^D, protection from elements, remove curse, stone shape.*

4th: *Divination, fly^D, freedom of movement, planar ally (lesser), spell immunity.*

5th: *Break enchantment, commune, spell resistance, wall of stone*^D.

6th: *Animate objects*^D, *geas/quest, summon monster XI*.

^D: Domain spell.

* The *crushing* property is the same as *keen*, except for bludgeoning weapons, i.e. it doubles the threat range. Cormush's club threatens on a 19-20.

Saving throws: Stone edraldi gain +2 to all saves against poison.

Immunities: Stone edraldi are immune to all non-supernatural diseases.

Stonebond: A stone edraldi gains a +4 bonus on ability checks made to resist being bull rushed, tripped or lifted when in contact with stone (including climbing stone walls, but not when climbing trees, flying, riding, or otherwise not in contact with stone).

If a stone edraldi is not within 100ft of at least its own body weight of stone, it begins to sicken, taking 1D3 Str and Con damage per day if it fails a Fortitude save (DC 15). A successful save merely prevents ability damage for that day, and the edraldi must make another check the following day. It regains these points at the rate of 1 per day if it is once again in the vicinity of sufficient rock.

Born of the Earth. Although a living edraldi is a creature of flesh, blood and bone, upon death its body reverts to the earth from which it came, and crumbles into a pile of ordinary earth and stones.

Earth Elemental (4): **CR** 5; Large Elemental (Earth, Extraplanar); **HD** 8d8+32; **hp** 68; **Init** -1; **Spd** 20ft; **AC** 19 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +10 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 18; **BAB/Grp** +6/+17; **Atk Slam** +12 melee (2d8+7); **Full Atk** 2 slams +12 melee (2d8+7); **Space/Reach** 10ft./10ft.; **SA** Earth mastery, push; **SQ** DR 5/-, earth glide, darkvision 60ft., elemental traits; **AL** N; **SV** Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +2; **Abilities** Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot +5; Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack.

Earth Mastery (Ex): An earth elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its foe are touching the ground. If an opponent is airborne or waterborne, the elemental takes a -4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

Push (Ex): An earth elemental can start a bull rush maneuver without provoking an attack of opportunity. The combat modifiers given in Earth Mastery, above, also apply to the elemental's opposed Strength checks.

Earth Glide (Ex): An earth elemental can glide through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other signs of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing earth elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

Living Temple, Stone Colossus: **CR** 24; Colossal Construct; **HD** 64d10; **hp** 432; **Init** -3; **Spd** 40ft (can't

run); **AC** 44 (-8 size, -3 Dex, +45 natural) touch 1, flat-footed 44; **BAB/Grp** +48/+94; **Atk Slam** +70 melee (8d6+30); **Full Atk** 2 Slams +70 melee (8d6+30); **Space/Reach** 30ft./30ft.; **SQ** Construct traits, magic immunity, antimagic field, DR10/Epic and adamantine; **AL** N; **SV** Fort +21, Ref +18, Will +21; **Abilities** Str 70, Dex 5, Con -, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 1. **Skills and Feats:** Jump +34

Shatter (Su): A stone colossus can use *shatter* (DC 7) as a free action once every 2 rounds against an opponent's weapon or other item as a 24th-level caster. The DC is Charisma-based.

Magic Immunity (Ex): A stone colossus is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows it (as the *slow spell*) for 1 round, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell has no effect on a stone colossus.

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