Ferrous Dragons In Faerun

Inspiration and Acknowledgments

This article's purpose is to give a place in the Realms to the ferrous dragons introduced in the Dragon Magazine article about ferrous dragons in issue 356. The article was written by Kevin Baase and Eric Jansing, and was based on an earlier article by Jason M Walker. In addition to providing some Realms-based ideas for how to include these dragons, there is also Realms specific names provided for those dragons who might be named after metals that either aren't well known in Faerun or that might have other names there.

Some of information about Gruaghlothor was based on material provided by the article's authors at the Paizo forums, mainly detailing the sidebar about the lord of iron dragons that was cut from the article before it saw print.

A Lost Family of Dragons

There are a great many species of dragons known in Faerun. Some have been observed first hand during the recent Rage of Dragons, and other species are documented from the records of the dwarves and elves in days long past, and while specimens of these dragon races may still exist, they have not been seen first hand for ages.

One of the most reclusive of these draconic families are the dragons known to some sages as the ferrous dragons. These dragons are so rare in modern Faerun that many sages refer to both the most common of the family, the iron dragons, as both iron dragons and ferrous dragons, not knowing that there are other related species of dragons. Of all of these species of dragons, only iron dragons have been seen in recent years in Faerun, and even the iron dragons are truly rare compared to metallic, chromatic, and other more common forms of dragons.

Of those sages that do know of the related species of ferrous dragons, many have found records that seem to indicate that the less known breeds of ferrous dragons, while a rare breed indeed, may still survive on Toril, having migrated to land masses less populated by dragonkind. It has also been theorized that the other ferrous dragons seek territories far from the dominant iron dragons so that they may have a degree of independence without directly challenging the authority of the iron dragons.

In recent years ancient elven epics of the Reign of Dragons have come to light, and in these epics several draconic families seem to be detailed. The outcast “cousins” known as linnorm are one such family, but the chromatic, metallic, ferrous, and a group that seems to be identified as the stone dragons are also present as a faction, with the “lesser kin” dragons serving as vassals, warriors, messengers, and minions of these factions.

In the elven epics, even the noble metallic dragons do not appear to be much better than their brethren. While more civilized and honorable, they still look at all other species inferior, to be crushed if they offer the slightest resistance to draconic domination. The chromatics are much more expansionist and tyrannical, and the stone dragons often shift allegiances between the other factions, even the linnorms, but never are they allied to the ferrous dragons.

The ferrous dragons were led by a powerful wyrm known as Gruaghlothor. He set forth a strict hierarchy for the ferrous dragons, and vowed that their empire would be greater than any of the other draconic factions. For many years his faction fought with the stone dragons, no matter who they were allied to, but the ferrous dragons refused any allegiances with other factions. After nearly hunting the stone dragons to extinction, Gruaghlothor thought that he could rest easy, but was slain by a roving wing of red dragon warriors seeking to eliminate as many rivals as possible. Gruaghlothor vowed that he would return someday, and in fact, the ferrous dragons are always ruled by one iron dragon who assumes the title of Gruaghlothor, and inherits the ability to telepathically communicate with the other ferrous dragons (and who, it is said, knows when any ferrous dragon seeks to undermine him or the authority of the iron dragons under him).

The gnomish sage Yannistandar Uldremesk and the halfling bard Thidwillow Moonswhistle have spent time looking over these sagas and poems, and compared them to various accounts of unidentified dragon kind over the years, and drawn the conclusion that many of these unidentified draconic species were in fact part of the ferrous dragon family, and do in fact owe their allegence to Gruaghlothor and his iron dragons. These dragons have been noted as having scales that appear very similar to metal in various shades, and the two scholars assigned metals to these dragons as well.

Telstang Dragons (Chromium Dragons): In several places shining, dull silver dragons that did not seem to match up in description to silver, steel, or mithril dragons were mentioned. These dragons had a breath weapon that fired forth freezing crystals, and the scholars named them Telstang dragons, after the rare gnomish alloy of the same name. These dragons appear to have a particularly malevolent nature to them.

Darksteel Dragons (Cobalt Dragons): Some of the records the scholars encountered midnight blue dragons that could fire a breath weapon of pulsing, barely perceptible energy. These dragons, like the telstang dragons, were foul of temper, but subservient to iron dragons and their lord. The scholars named this dragon after the purplish dwarven metal known as darksteel.

Dlarun Dragons (Nickel Dragons): Another violent species, this form of dragon had grey and white metallic scales and could breathe corrosive gas as a weapon. These dragons were named by Thidwillow Moonswhistle after the white halfling metal known as dlarun.

Hizagkuur Dragons (Tungsten Dragons): A species that appeared to be generally benevolent, there was a species of ferrous dragon, one whose breath weapon was composed of superheated sand and bludgeoning sand, that seemed especially set upon fighting chromatic dragons and other forms of powerful evil. This form of dragon has metallic scales that are a dull green with grey, and Yannistandar noted that the scales resembled the clay that Hizagkuur is extracted from, and named them after that particular metal.

Ferrous Dragons During the Rage

During the most recent Rage of Dragons (1373 DR), there are few recorded incidents of ferrous dragons. In fact, none of the lesser known ferrous dragons (those detailed by Yannistandar and Thidwillow) have been observed for generations. There are a few unconfirmed sightings of iron

dragons during this time, but the most notable one occurred over the East Wall Mountains in Halruaa, where a massive iron dragon was sighted tearing three young black dragons to pieces.

The dragon appeared to menace a Halruaan skyship when it was first spotted, but upon sighting the black dragons, it blasted the skyship with its breath (a fire which the wizards aboard managed to put out quickly) and then dove into the black dragons with murderous rage. While the Haluraans believe that the iron dragon may have saved some of Halruaa from unknown family of black dragons, they also believe that the iron dragon itself would not have hesitated to cause its own damage to Halruaa had it not flow off to the north during its assault on the red dragons.

Some of those that either saw the iron dragon or heard the descriptions of the event have inferred from the creatures size and relative control (compared to other dragons in the thrall of the Rage), that this dragon may have actually been the current Gruaghlothor, though it is not a certainty. If this was the master of ferrous dragons, it is still not known if this creature's lair is in the mountains that protect Halruaa, or if the dragon had simply flown through the region in the throws of its madness.