

Biosoph

Biosoph – Base Class

A Biosoph is essentially an Archivist of flora, fauna, nature and elemental forces. The Biosoph is a wielder of divine magic, similar to a druid only in the type and nature of the magic at his command. Indeed, the Biosoph has much more in common with the wizard than he does with the standard servants of nature, due to the scholarly way in which he collects and maintains his spell selection. Biosophs seek out esoteric sources of natural (and supernatural) lore, wherever those sources might be, securing those secrets for themselves and their fellow scholars.

Making a Biosoph

Similar to the archivist, the Biosoph is a more academic profession than the druid or ranger but hardier and more worldly than the average cloistered wizard. Due to the exploratory and often dangerous nature of their work, Biosophs develop techniques for safeguarding themselves and their allies from the dangers of the natural world that so often surrounds and accompanies the obscure lore they seek. Biosophs are thus exceptional support characters, bolstering the efforts of those who aid them in their scholarly pursuits.

Abilities

The most important characteristic for a Biosoph is a keen Intelligence. That intellect must also be tempered with a high degree of Wisdom, due to the fine line the archivist must walk in studying in natural settings without becoming victims of the various predators found in the wilds. A strong Constitution is also highly prized for dealing with the rigors of the Biosoph's missions.

Races

Elves tend to make the best Biosophs, due both to their longevity and to their natural proclivity for the natural world. Humans and gnomes can be drawn to the class as well, often becoming the most ambitious of seekers. Halflings make fine Biosophs but tend to focus more upon the flora aspects. Half-Orc and Dwarves rarely take up the mantle of the Biosoph

Alignment

Characters of any alignment can become Biosophs, but the class does require some measure of academic detachment to study the balancing act of nature without bias. As a result, Biosophs tend to be quite neutral in their outlooks, usually having one aspect of their alignment be neutral (much like druids). Each alignment tends to view the study of nature differently, some to protect nature, while others tend to look to exploit the natural world.

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills

The Biosoph's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Int), Survival (Int), Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.



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Table: BIOSOPH

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Nature Lore (tactics) 3/day, Scribe Scroll	3	2								
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Lore mastery	4	3								
3rd	+1	+3	+1	+3	Nature Lore 4/day	4	3	2							
4th	+2	+4	+1	+4	Still mind	4	4	3							
5th	+2	+4	+1	+4	Nature Lore (puissance), Bonus feat	4	4	3	2						
6th	+3	+5	+2	+5	Nature Lore 5/day	4	4	4	3						
7th	+3	+5	+2	+5	Lore mastery	4	5	4	3	2					
8th	+4	+6	+2	+6	Nature Lore (foe)	4	5	4	4	3					
9th	+4	+6	+3	+6	Nature Lore 6/day	4	5	5	4	3	2				
10th	+5	+7	+3	+7	Bonus feat	4	5	5	4	4	3				
11th	+5	+7	+3	+7	Nature Lore (dread secret)	4	5	5	5	4	3	2			
12th	+6/+1	+8	+4	+8	Nature Lore 7/day	4	5	5	5	4	4	3			
13th	+6/+1	+8	+4	+8	Lore mastery	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	2		
14th	+7/+2	+9	+4	+9	Nature Lore (foreknowledge)	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	3		
15th	+7/+2	+9	+5	+9	Nature Lore 8/day, Bonus feat	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	2	
16th	+8/+3	+10	+5	+10	--	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	
17th	+8/+3	+10	+5	+10	Lore mastery	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	2
18th	+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Nature Lore 9/day	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3
19th	+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	--	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4
20th	+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Bonus feat	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Class Features

The Biosoph's class features all serve to further his overall purpose, which is to seek out knowledge of geography, nature (and supernatural/aberrant nature), and obscure fey lore from strange and forbidden sources, and to gain both understanding and mastery thereof.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Biosophs are proficient with all simple weapons and with light armor, but not with shields.

Spellcasting: A Biosoph casts divine spells, drawn primarily from the druid spell list although he can eventually uncover, learn, and prepare non-druidic divine spells. Unlike druids, Biosophs prepare spells from a prayerbook, a collection of copied divine spells. To learn, prepare, or cast a spell, a Biosoph must have an Intelligence score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a Biosoph's spell is 10 + the spell level + the Biosoph's Int modifier.

Like other spellcasters, a Biosoph can cast only a certain number of spells of each level per day. His base daily allotment is given in Table: The Biosoph. In addition, he receives bonus spells per day if he has a high Wisdom score (see Table 1-1 on page 8 of the Player's Handbook). He must choose and prepare his spells ahead of time by getting a good night's sleep and then spending 1 hour studying his prayerbook. The Biosoph decides which spells to prepare while studying.



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Prayerbook: Unlike a druid, a Biosoph does not receive his daily spell complement from whatever deity or cosmic force he worships. Rather, he must seek out and collect new spells much as a wizard does, but from such esoteric sources as druidic writings, ancient standing stones, or other fey scriptures. He cannot prepare any spell not recorded in his prayerbook except for read magic, which archivists can prepare from memory.

A Biosoph begins play with a prayerbook containing all 0-level druid spells plus three 1st-level druid spells of the player's choice. For each point of Intelligence bonus the Biosoph has, the prayerbook has an additional 1st-level druid spell. At each new class level, the archivist gains two new druid spells for his prayerbook; these can be of any spell level or levels that he can cast (based on his new Biosoph level). At any time, a Biosoph can also add spells found on scrolls containing divine spells to his prayerbook, but he must make any rolls and spend the time required (see Adding Spells to a Wizard's Spellbook on page 178 of the Player's Handbook). The Biosoph can learn and thus prepare non-druidic divine spells in this fashion but the two free spells he gains for advancing in class level must be selected from the druid spell list.

The term 'Prayerbook' is used loosely. Biosophs often call the book a journal, encyclopaedia, or simply tome, based solely on personal preference.

Nature Lore: Three times per day, a Biosoph can draw upon his expansive knowledge of monsters, granting his allies benefits against the creatures they face. Doing this, counts as a move action. The secrets of Nature Lore pertain only to aberrations, animals, elementals, fey, giants, magical-beasts, plants (either normal or enhanced). (this entire section is an adaptation of the Archivist Dark Knowledge ability)

A Biosoph unlocks new nature lore abilities as his level increases and can also call upon his nature lore more often, gaining one additional daily use for every three Biosoph levels (4/day at 3rd level, 5/day at 6th level, and so forth).

Using nature lore requires a Knowledge check of a type appropriate to the creature faced. A Knowledge (arcana) check reveals secrets of magical beasts, Knowledge (dungeoneering) pertains to aberrations, Knowledge (nature) covers most normal animals, plants, giants and fey. Knowledge (the planes) applies to elementals. The DC of the check is 15. Most of the Biosoph's natural lore abilities increase in effectiveness if he succeeds on his Knowledge check by 10 or more. Natural lore can only be used once against any given creature.

The Biosoph's natural lore can affect a single creature or all creatures of the same race, depending on the effect used. A target creature must be within 60 feet, and the archivist must be aware of the creature's presence, although he need not have a line of sight to it. The effects of natural lore last for 1 minute, unless stated otherwise

Tactics: The Biosoph knows the general combat behaviors of creatures of that race, granting his allies a +1 bonus on attack rolls made against them. For example, a Biosoph confronted by corruption eaters* who succeeded on his Knowledge (dungeoneering) check would grant his allies the attack bonus against all the corruption eaters they fought in that encounter. If the archivist succeeds on his Knowledge check by 10 or more, then this bonus increases to +2. If the Biosoph succeeds on his Knowledge check by 20 or more, then this bonus increases to +3.

Puissance: Starting at 5th level, the Biosoph can use his nature lore to help his allies fight off the special abilities of other creatures. Allies within 60 feet of the Biosoph gain a +1 bonus on saving throws against the affected creature's abilities. If the archivist succeeds on his Knowledge check by 10 or more, this bonus increases to +2. If the archivist succeeds on his Knowledge check by 20 or more, this bonus increases to +3.



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Foe: Starting at 8th level, a Biosoph can direct his allies to attack vital spots of his enemies. On a successful Knowledge check, he grants them a bonus to weapon damage rolls made against the target creatures equal to 1d6 points of damage. If the Biosoph succeeds on his Knowledge check by 10 or more, then this bonus increases to 2d6. If the Biosoph succeeds on his Knowledge check by 20 or more, then this bonus increases to 3d6.

Dread Secret: By speaking aloud a dread secret of the target creature, a Biosoph of 11th level or higher can dazzle a target creature for 1 round. Unlike other natural lore, this ability can be used only against a single creature. If the Biosoph succeeds on his Knowledge check by 10 or more, then the target is dazed for 1 round. If the Biosoph succeeds on his Knowledge check by 20 or more, then the target is stunned for 1 round (if the target is immune to being stunned but not immune to being dazed, such as most undead, then the Biosoph can choose to daze the target instead of stunning it).

Foreknowledge: Starting at 14th level, a Biosoph can better prepare his allies for the attacks of the affected creature, making it harder for the creature to land blows and successfully deal damage. Allies within 30 feet of the Biosoph gain a +1 insight bonus to Armor Class that applies to attacks by the affected creature only. If the Biosoph succeeds on his Knowledge check by 10 or more, this bonus increases to +2. If the Biosoph succeeds on his Knowledge check by 20 or more, this bonus increases to +3.

Scribe Scroll: Biosophs gain Scribe Scroll as a bonus feat at first level.

Lore Mastery (Ex): Upon reaching 2nd level, a Biosoph gains a +2 bonus on all Decipher Script checks and on all checks of any one Knowledge skill of his choice. Once this choice is made, it cannot be changed. At 7th, 13th, and 17th level, the Biosoph can choose an additional Knowledge skill on which to gain the +2 bonus.

Still Mind (Ex): Starting at 4th level, a Biosoph gains a +2 bonus on saving throws against spells and effects from the school of enchantment, due to his rigorous focus and intense mental discipline.

Bonus Feats (Ex): When a Biosoph reaches 5th level, 10th level, 15th level, and again at 20th level, he can select a free feat from the following list: Biosophs' feats (exclusive to the Biosoph class), Skill Focus (any Knowledge skill), Spell Focus, any metamagic feat, any item creation feat, or Weapon Focus/Specialization feats that deal with magical attacks (for example: Weapon Focus (ray spells) or Weapon Specialization (touch attack spells)). Even though a Biosoph does not gain the druidic benefit of Wild Shape, Biosophs have access to the Natural Spell feat, as they often cast spells that change their form. (modified from original archivist text to include additional bonus feats at 5th & 15th levels, and expanded selection of feats)

Playing a Biosoph

As a Biosoph, you travel in search of new and unusual magic from the natural and supernatural world. Since your understanding of magic revolves around the written word, you prize magical writings of any kind and will travel far to investigate a newly uncovered (or yet-to-be-discovered) fey text or mystical recitation. Generally speaking, you aren't quite as stuffy as the average wizard, given your breadth of experience and high Wisdom score, but you are not a tree-hugging nature warrior either. The secrets you uncover are their own reward, and your confidence in yourself and in the job you do is more rewarding than the empty gratitude of some group or hierarchy.



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Religion

While most Biosoph are religious in a similar fashion to druidic groups, it is fundamentally their way to put more stock in the power of the nature than in the divine itself. Biosophs exist for virtually every known nature deity or nature worship sect, as well as others who approach the profession with total detachment from the divine. Some hunt down the secrets of ages past to exalt the greater glory of their deity, while others seek only to safeguard sacred natural lore from falling into the wrong hands. Still others see very little connection between their personal devotion and the work they do, aside from perceiving their continued success as evidence of their god's favor.

Other Classes

Biosophs tend to fare well in the company of wizards, who appreciate the scholarly approach they take to magical study. By the same token, however, they have a mercurial relationship with standard druids. Some druidic circles view Biosophs as an essential arm of their god's following, while others see them as little more than shameless thieves who seek to despoil or abuse the natural world. Clerics of particular faiths often object to certain proprietary spells being cast by non-believers. Biosophs often travel in the company of scouts and rangers who share their interest in the lore of the land and obscure beasts.

Combat

Biosophs are not especially potent front-line fighters and will often hang back with the wizards when combat arises. They are sturdier and usually better armored than their arcane counterparts, however, and sometimes stride into combat when necessary (for example, when it means defending one who is weaker or easier to hit).

Biosophs are especially effective in parties that contain other divine casters or bards. Given preparation time, a Biosophs can use his magic to bolster party members, including the clerics, so that when combat begins, the clerics can wade into battle with the fighters, leaving the Biosoph free to help in other ways.

If PCs are likely to face foes that have secret weaknesses, there can be an enormous benefit in recruiting a Biosoph. A Biosoph can often provide information about a foe's weaknesses that spells the difference between failure and success against that adversary.

Advancement

It is often said that Biosoph are born, not made. Many who embrace this class do so out of a genuine thirst for learning, often accompanied by a reverence or admiration for the power of nature. Some people who end up walking the path of the Biosoph began as apprentice wizards or junior clerics but soon felt the call to seek hidden knowledge.

Many Biosophs are Biosophs for life; the more hidden lore they uncover, the more they feel they still have to learn. Other Biosophs will multi-class to complement their abilities, sometimes augmenting their pursuits by taking levels in druid or even ranger. Less frequently, a Biosoph's hunger for lore causes him to branch out into the arcane arts, splitting his studies between natural exploration and wizardry, often taking up the mystic theurge prestige class. The Biosoph is also an exceptionally versatile class for the purposes of prerequisites, acting as a natural gateway class for many prestige classes.

Original Source:

HEROES OF HORROR ~ ARCHIVIST, altered

