



LIFE, DEATH, UNDEATH, UNLIFE, AND THE UNDYING

The pursuit for understanding of Practical Metaphysical Naturalism

By Master Zandeyr Grawarith, Esq

About the Author

Scholars and the well-read or somewhat educated may have heard of Master Zandeyr Grawarith, Esq for his various works.

Author of "The Shroud and the Shard"; A small semi-historical book about the Shroud of Souls which was a powerful artifact allegedly capable of calling the spirits of the dead. And the events around how Morlanth used the Shroud to recall the spirits of the Doomguides buried within the crypt as ghosts, shadows, and wraith, then brought it to the Shard of Night and how she attempted to use it to raise the spirits of the Neverwinter Nine as wraiths under her command and her demise. The book is written from the point of analysis of historical records and leaves out specific details such of the potential location or ownership of the Shroud and excludes more recent accounts of the Shard...

Author of "Poisons of the Sword Coast" Remedies and curatives for Nightviper venom, Numbfish jelly venom, Pauper's poison, Saldruth's viper, Slarkfish venom, Udderfish... Handy lifesaving recipes if applied quickly...

Author of "Faerûn Flora and Fauna", the unfinished and unpublished work, held as a treatise in the Candlekeep Library.

A common rumor that is retold in many taverns, is of how he helped solve the problem with Sleeping Dragon dark, a drink brewed by Thrun Samallahhan at the Sleeping Dragon inn. The drink was made from the local oats and barley and had a nutty flavor with a pleasant bite. The barely crop had become infected by a small fungus blight that turn the brew unpleasant, and how he found a way to cleanse it from local produce.

Winner of the Candlekeep Archery tournament, two years running. Not a major achievement as Candlekeep is most renowned for its library filled with books and scrolls of knowledge and the scholars are not known for their martial prowess. To gain entry to the halls of wisdom a visitor must gift the library collection with a new tome of immense value. This is what lead to the writing of his next book to gain entry.

A self-taught, is well travelled, modestly financed, "Practical Metaphysical Naturalist", he is a recluse who learned combat skills, tracking, and even a magical connection to nature through the necessity of surviving in the wilds.

His current approach to "Practical Metaphysical Naturalism" holds that all properties related to consciousness and the mind are reducible to, or supervene upon, nature. Broadly, the corresponding theological perspective is religious naturalism or spiritual naturalism. More specifically, metaphysical naturalism rejects the supernatural concepts and explanations that are part of many religions. He is documenting his belief system "Practical Metaphysical Naturalism" as the only natural (as opposed to supernatural or spiritual) laws and forces should operate in the world. The "Practical" component requires the devout removal of unnatural "un-living" elements in the world. This may take time and a systematic careful and cautious approach.

He asserts that natural laws are the rules that govern the structure and behavior of the natural universe, that the changing universe at every stage is a product of these laws, and all other systems should be removed from the world for the betterment of the living.

Master Zandeyr Grawarith, Esq

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Introduction

Several important and groundbreaking works, collections of essays, and journals have set the pace for the study of natural life and the living.

I myself have written many as have scholars of nature some of the texts. These seminal studies only form a framework for further study of course.

However, an important cross-disciplinary collection covering a wider range of subjects analyzing the response to death, dying and covering an even wider framework, have not received the attention due to them, and even an attempt to rectify this by comparing this with material remains and necromancy is still just a beginning.

There has been considerable interest in death and burial as several different themes become interwoven. Folklore as an area of study of the changes and the new religious belief systems of various cultures.

The number of detailed historical records has grown exponentially with some have specialized in assessing how the changes were used by individuals to alter the way that people remembered them, and some have specialized in how the funeral customs have developed.

There are many journals that carry occasional articles about the subjects. Journals that cover all mortality issues but also include the occasional historical articles occasionally cover aspects of the subject of death and burial.

The study of death as an academic subject is relatively recent and has expanded greatly in the last seven decades.

While antiquarian scholars were usually interested in the local monuments, or temples of cultural significance some have

opened the historical study to new approaches.

While the work can be criticized, for having considerable overlap between the sections, the book may spark heightened awareness of the subject.

Since then, the historical study of death has quickened, with numerous books, chapters, and articles covering a wide range of subjects.

I have examined how life and nature are perceived for over two hundred years.

However, my new interests have altered my subject matter interested, and a differing set of studies will be covered in my new book; Life, Death, Undeath, Unlife, and the Undying...



Nature

Nature, in the broadest sense, is the natural, physical, or material world or universe including all planes. "Nature" can refer to the phenomena of the physical world, and also to life in general. The study of nature is a large, if not the only, part of scholarly work. Although humans are part of nature, scholarly activity is often understood as a separate category from other natural lore.

Nature "essential qualities, innate disposition", and is related to the intrinsic characteristics that plants, animals, and other features of the world develop of their own accord. The concept of nature, the physical universe, is one of several expansions of the original notion.

Nature can refer to the general realm of living plants and animals, and in some cases to the processes associated with inanimate objects—the way that types of things exist and change of their own accord, such as the weather and geology of the Earth. It is often taken to mean the "natural environment" or wilderness—wild animals, rocks, forest, and in general those things that have not been substantially altered by human intervention, or which persist despite the intervention of thinking beings. Manufactured objects and interaction generally are not considered part of nature, unless qualified. Depending on the context, the term "natural" might also be distinguished from the unnatural or the supernatural.

Naturalism

Naturalism is the belief that nature is all that exists, and that all things supernatural (including gods, spirits, souls and non-natural values) therefore should not exist. It is often called Metaphysical Naturalism. The practical component is the application of activities

to remove these elements from the universe.

Arguments for Practical Metaphysical Naturalism

- ❖ Argument from Precedent: Methods have consistently discovered only natural things and causes, even underlying many things thought to be supernatural. Hence, we should presume that any unexplained fact has a natural explanation until we have proven otherwise.
- ❖ Argument from Best Explanation: Sound naturalist hypotheses about unexplained facts still out-perform all other hypotheses in explanatory scope and power and have to resort to fewer ad hoc assumptions than any supernatural alternatives.
- ❖ Argument from Absence: If the supernatural does exist (whether as gods, powers or spirits), it is so silent and inert that its effects are almost never observed by the living, despite extensive searching and when uncovered it always needs to be removed for the betterment of the natural (living).
- ❖ Argument from Physical Minds: Scholars have accumulated vast evidence that the mind is a product of a functioning brain, which is entirely constructed from different interacting physical systems that evolved over time through the animal kingdom.
- ❖ Cosmological Argument: The formation of life via natural processes in the cosmic world, and supernaturalism has not given us any insights into a more likely alternative world.
- ❖ Argument from the Implausibility of Alternatives: In the absence of any reasonable argument to believe anything supernatural, and in the presence of some reasonable arguments to believe the natural world exists as a betterment, then the natural world.

Arguments against Practical Metaphysical Naturalism

The arguments against Naturalism are, to a large extent, arguments for the Gods, or for supernatural:

- ❖ Argument from Despair: Naturalism leads to despair because it allows for no cosmic meaning of life and the elimination of free will (and therefore of hope and moral responsibility).
- ❖ Argument from Religious Experience: Many people claim to have seen, felt or talked to God or any number of other spirits, and claim that these religious experiences refute naturalism.
- ❖ Argument from Miracles: Often, some miracle is offered as evidence refuting naturalism, including alleged cases of supernatural healing, fulfilled prophetic or psychic predictions, or the supposed impossibility of composing some book without divine aid.
- ❖ Argument from Necessity of God: It is in some sense impossible for the universe to exist, and to achieve the apparently impossible feat of life as we know it, unless it is caused or cohabited by a supernatural person.
- ❖ Argument from Cosmological: The fundamental constants of physics and the laws of nature appear so finely tuned to permit life that only a supernatural engineer can explain it.
- ❖ Argument from Improbability of Life: The origin of life was too improbable (with a probability tending to zero) to have occurred without supernatural intervention and therefore naturalism fails to explain the appearance of life.
- ❖ Argument from natural: Certain structures in evolved organisms (e.g. the eye) are too complex ("irreducible complexity") to have evolved by natural selection and can only be explained as the result of intelligent design.
- ❖ Argument from Consciousness: Some argue that conscious experience (or qualia) has not been, and cannot be, scientifically explained.
- ❖ Argument from Reason: Certain features of human reason (e.g. intentionality, mental causation, abstract objects, the existence of logical laws) cannot be explained by naturalism.
- ❖ Argument from Physical Law: The mathematical nature of physical laws entails a supernatural mind behind them, and naturalism can provide no

ontological foundation for such physical laws.

- ❖ Argument from Incoherence: Because naturalism assumes that everything is physical, using physical data in support of it would constitute circular reasoning.
- ❖ Moral Argument: Naturalism cannot explain the existence of moral facts.
- ❖ Evolutionary Argument: Maintaining the truth of both naturalism and evolution is irrational and self-defeating because the probability that unguided evolution would have produced reliable cognitive faculties is either low or inscrutable, and so asserting that naturalistic evolution is true also asserts that one has a low or unknown probability of being right.

Typical Beliefs of Practical Metaphysical Naturalism

Naturalism typically leads to the following beliefs:

- ❖ The universe has either always existed or had a purely natural origin, being neither created nor preserved by the gods.
- ❖ Life is an unplanned product of blind natural processes and luck.
- ❖ Slow and imperfect life occurs by natural process is the explanation for the rise and diversity of life on earth.
- ❖ Thinking beings should have an independent soul or spirit, and a free material thought which operates to produce a conscious mind.
- ❖ Mental contents (such as ideas, theories, emotions, moral and personal values, beauty, etc.) exist solely as the computational constructions of our brains, and not as things that exist independently of us.
- ❖ All humans are mortal since the death or destruction of our brain cannot be survived.
- ❖ Humans developed (and are now dependent on) culture and civilization, because we evolved as social animals.
- ❖ All conduct and behavior should be directed towards the pursuit of human happiness, which being the greatest value possible for humans.

Types of Naturalism

- ❖ Metaphysical Naturalism is the belief (as described in detail above) that nature is all that exists, and that all things supernatural (including gods, spirits, souls and non-natural values) therefore do not exist.
- ❖ Methodological Naturalism is the assumption that observable events in nature are explained only by natural causes, without assuming either the existence or non-existence of the supernatural, and so considers supernatural explanations for such events to be outside science. It holds that the scientific method (hypothesize, predict, test, repeat) is the only effective way to investigate reality, and that such empirical methods will only ascertain natural facts, whether supernatural facts exist or not.
- ❖ Absolute Methodological Naturalism is the view that it is in some sense impossible for any empirical method to discover supernatural facts, even if there are some.
- ❖ Contingent Methodological Naturalism is the view that, from past experience, empirical methods are far more likely to uncover natural facts than supernatural ones, so that it is generally an ill-advised waste of resources to pursue supernatural hypotheses, but it would not be impossible to confirm them empirically if any were found.
- ❖ Thinking Naturalism holds that thinking beings (with free will) are best able to control and understand the world through use of the scientific method, because concepts of spirituality, intuition and metaphysics can never progress beyond personal opinion. Everything is regarded as a result of explainable processes within nature, with nothing lying outside of it.
- ❖ Ethical Naturalism (or Moral Naturalism) is the meta-ethical theory that ethical terms can be defined without the use of ethical terms (such as "good", "right", etc.), and moreover that these non-ethical terms refer to natural properties (as opposed to

relating the ethical terms in some way to the will of the Gods).

- ❖ Scholarly Naturalism is the theory that the natural world and the thinking world are roughly identical and governed by similar principles. It is closely connected to Positivism; which advocates use of the method of the nature studied by Scholars.

In addition, Naturalism is also an artistic style (referring to the depiction of realistic objects in a natural setting), and a literary, and theatrical style (referring to the attempt to replicate a believable everyday reality, as opposed to a symbolic, idealistic or even supernatural treatment).

The Soul

This natural in people to kill animals for Food, if it did not give rife to, was certainly much heightened by, the belief of the metempsychosis, or Transmigration of Souls; which scholars having intrigued many. As this doctrine of the 'Metempsychosis is very ancient and constitutes the very essences of many religions to this day; and as the account of their original tenets.

World Axis Cosmology

No greater question vexes the living than the mystery of death. Yet no sooner does a soul pass the border between life and death and glimpse the answer than the mystery reveals itself to be a part of a far vaster enigma.

For to the dead, the greatest riddle of existence is life. These mysteries of existence are at once the best- and worst-kept secrets in the entire multiverse. Beyond the guesswork of evangelists there sprawls a vast and vital truth, a cycle of creation and dissolution responsible not only for every life, but also every death, and the endless transitions between the two.

It is a cycle as old as existence, responsible for the stability of the planes themselves.

It is nothing less than the pulse of the living multiverse, the answer to the questions that haunt both the living and the dead.

All are destined to travel this mysterious route at the end and the beginning of their existence. Among the planes it is called the River of Souls, and all who live will someday journey upon its endless course.

For the purposes of this discussion, certain terms take on specific meanings, sometimes uncharacteristic to their wider use.

These terms are used in impossibly broad contexts and are fraught with exceptions, but the following philosophical definitions apply to most circumstances and do not

dominions and the creation (or possible return) of the Elemental Chaos.

The World Axis was composed primarily of the fundamental and parallel planes. "Above" and "below," the fundamental planes encircled the rest of the cosmology, forming hemispheres in the conceptual model, though since both the Astral Sea and the Elemental Chaos were infinite in size, this was mostly metaphorical.

To the "left" and the "right" of the Prime Material Plane, which laid at the center of this cosmology, sit the parallel planes, which floated in sync with the Prime.

Together these planes formed the World Axis, other planes lying outside of the model and having an indistinct cosmological placement.

The World Axis was similar in many ways to the World Tree that came before it.

Like the World Tree, the World Axis model placed the astral dominions "above" the Prime while placing the elemental and energy planes, the precursors of the Elemental Chaos, "below." Likewise, the Plane of Shadow, the Shadowfell's precedent, existed in close sync with the Prime.

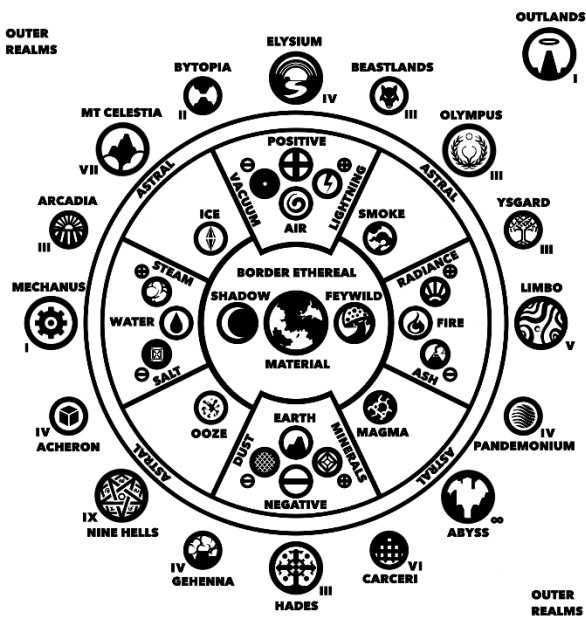
The Shadowfell

A dark and twisted echo of the Prime formed by Shar from the Plane of Shadow and part of the Negative Energy Plane, the Shadowfell was the home of shadow creatures as well as much of the undead that filled the planes.

The Feywild

The Feywild, also known as the plane of Faerie, existed as an "echo" of the Prime Material Plane.

It was from here that the fey originated, giving the Feywild its name, and it was also a place of unusually potent magic.



change or undermine existing rules.

The World Axis was a cosmological model created after the dramatic changes to the nature of the multiverse caused by the Spellplague of 1385 DR, and quickly became the most widely accepted model during the late years of the 14th century DR and for most of the 15th century.

This structure, which resembled a sphere split into two axes, hence the name, resulted from the Spellplague and its effects upon the local multiverse, which included the untethering of the astral

Life

Life is a concept of nature regarding the characteristics, state, or mode that separates a living thing from dead matter. The word itself may refer to a natural being or ongoing processes of which things of nature are a part of.

All nations and races from the earliest time have held the intuitive belief that mystic beings were

always around them, influencing, though unseen, every action of life, and all the forces of nature.

They felt the presence of a spirit in the winds, and the waves, and the swaying branches of the forest

trees, and in the primal elements of all that exists.

Fire was to them the sacred symbol of the divine essence, ever striving towards ascension; and water, ever seeking a level, was the emblem of the purification that should cover all daily life; while in the elemental earth they revered the power that produces all things, and where all that lives finds a grave, yet also a resurrection.

Druids

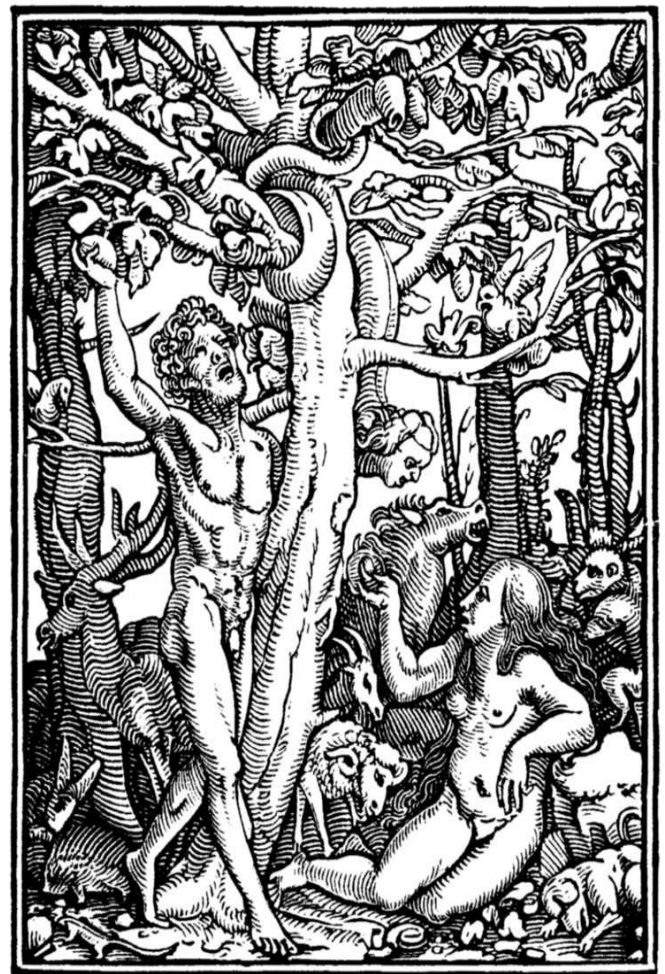
Thus to the primitive races of mankind the unseen world of mystery was a vital and vivid-reality the great over-soul of the visible, holding a mystic and psychic relation to humanity, and ruling it through the instrumentality of beings who had a strange power either for good or evil over lives and actions.

We turn back the leaves of the national legends of all realms and peoples and find stamped on the first page the words "God and Immortality."

These two ideas are at the base of all the old-world thought and culture, and underlie all myths, rituals, and

monuments, and all the antique usages and mystic lore of charms, incantations, and sacrificial observances.

The primal idea may be often degraded, debased, and obscured by the low instincts of savage man yet, religious faith is the basis of all superstitions, and in all of them can be traced the ceaseless and instinctive effort of humanity to incarnate and make manifest this prescience within the soul of the unseen dominating the seen, with the desire, also, to master the forces of nature through the aid of these invisible spirits.



It is worthy of note, also, that the mythology and superstitions of a people are far more faithful guides as to the origin and affinity of races than language, which, through commerce and conquest, is perpetually changing, till the ancient idiom is at last crushed out and lost by the dominance of the stronger and conquering realm.

But the myths, superstitions, and legends (which, are the expression of a people's faith), remain fixed and fast through successive generations, and finally become so in woven with the daily life of the people that they form part of the national character and cannot be dissevered from it.

This is especially true of the barbarian tribes of men, who, having been wholly separated from thought and culture for countless centuries, by their language and insular position at the extreme limit of the known world, have remained unchanged in temperament and nature ; still clinging to the old traditions with a fervor and faith that would make them, even now, suffer death sooner than violate a superstition, or neglect those ancient usages of their fathers which have held them in bonds since the first dawn of history. For the customs and usages of the barbarian races can be traced far back, even to ancient influences that dominated the primal tribes of humanity, ever wandering by the shores and islands of the great sea. The tribes followed the earlier along the same line of westward migration, carrying with them ideas even beyond, till they reached the shores of the distant lands, where pre-historic monuments, supposed to be of origin, are still existing to attest the presence of that ancient people—such as the grand and wonderful temples to various gods.

The barbarians, however, have retained more of the ancient superstitions than any other peoples, and hold to them with a reverential belief that cannot be shaken by any amount of modern or philosophic teaching. They are also, perhaps, indebted to others for the wonderful knowledge of the power of herbs, which has always characterized the barbarians, both amongst the adepts and the peasants.

From the most ancient times, the Druids were renowned for their skill in the

treatment of disease, and the professors of medicine held a high and influential position in the Druid order. They were allowed a distinguished place at the royal table, next to the nobles, and above the armorers, smiths, and workers in metals; they were also entitled to wear a special robe of honor when, at the courts of the kings, and were always attended

by a large staff of pupils, who assisted the master in the diagnosis and treatment of disease, and the preparations necessary for the curative potions.



The skill of the Druids was based chiefly upon a profound knowledge of the healing and properties of herbs; and they were also well acquainted with the most deadly and concentrated poisons that can be found in the common

field plants. But, in addition to the aid given by science and observation, they also practiced magic with great

effect, knowing well how strongly charms, incantations, and fairy cures can act on the nerves and impress the mind of a

patient. Consequently, their treatment of disease was of a medico-religious character, in which various magic ceremonials largely helped the curative process.

The oldest record of Druid dates from a battle fought about three thousand years ago between the Firbolgs, the primitive, unlettered dwellers and a new set of invaders from the Isles of the Sea, more learned and powerful than the Firbolgs, skilled as metal workers, and famous as warriors and physicians.

An ancient poet thus describes their great medical power, the Druid by force of potent spells, could raise a slaughtered army from the earth, and make them live, and breathe, and fight again.

Adjoining the royal palace of Kings', they erected a hospital called "The House of Sorrow' where the wounded warriors and chiefs were carried after the battles and forays to be healed of their wounds, and were attended there by a Druid and his staff of pupils until quite restored.

Physicians

The practice of physic was hereditary in certain families, and each of the nobles had a special physician attached to his service. In the more ancient times, medical knowledge was handed down by oral tradition from father to son; then, as learning advanced, by written books, carefully preserved in each family. The sons were generally educated by their fathers in the practice of physic.

Meantime, the ancient Druidic charms and invocations continued to hold their power over the people, who believed in them with undoubting faith. No doubt, in ancient times, the invocations were made in the names of the gods and by the power of the sun, the moon, and winds; but the converts, while still retaining the form of the ancient charms, substituted the

names and the words of the rituals as still more powerful in effecting cures. And in this mode they are used to the present day amongst the peasants, who consider them as talismans of magic power when said over the sick ; and no amount of argument would shake their faith in these mystic formulas which have come down to them through centuries of tradition nor would any one venture to laugh at them, or an evil fate would certainly fall on the scorner. For, above all things, fervent faith is necessary while the mystic words are uttered, the charm will not work for good; and charms are set with most effect upon.

Cannibalism

The events of recent past, are distressing, tragic and horrific, however evil the actions uncovered, understanding must be sort, documented and prevented if possible, in the future.

Cannibalism is the act of consuming another individual of the same species as food. Cannibalism is a common interaction in nature. It is recorded in the lore of the "Living". It should not be confused with the necrotic arts or with acts involving the undead, unliving or undying. It is the act or practice of the "living" eating the flesh or internal organs of other beings. A "living" creature who practices cannibalism is called a cannibal. The expression cannibalism has been extended in nature to mean one individual of a species consuming all or part of another individual of the same species as food.

The rate of cannibalism increases in nutritionally poor environments as individuals turn to as an additional food source. Cannibalism regulates population numbers, whereby resources such as food, shelter and territory become more readily available with the decrease of potential competition.

Although it may benefit the individual or small group, it has been shown that the

presence of cannibalism decreases the expected survival rate of the whole population and increases the risk of consuming a relative.

Cannibalism has occasionally been practiced as a last resort by people suffering from famine. In some societies, especially tribal societies, cannibalism is a cultural norm. Such cases generally involve necro-cannibalism (eating the corpse of someone who is already dead) as opposed to homicidal cannibalism (killing someone for food). In law, the latter is always considered a crime, even in the most trying circumstances.



Consumption of a person from within the same community is called endocannibalism; ritual cannibalism of the recently deceased can be part of the grieving process or be a way of guiding the souls of the dead into the bodies of living descendants. Exocannibalism is the consumption of a creature from outside the community, usually as a celebration of

victory against a rival tribe. Both types of cannibalism can also be fueled by the belief that eating a creature's flesh or internal organs will endow the cannibal with some of the characteristics of the deceased.

Some controversy exists over the accuracy of legends and the prevalence of actual cannibalism in the culture although it is well documented that Lizardfolk are known to practice it. Cannibalism has been said to test the bounds of cultural relativism because it challenges anthropologists "to define what is or is not beyond the pale of acceptable social behavior". Some scholars even argue that no firm evidence exists that cannibalism has ever been a socially acceptable practice anywhere in the world, at any time in history, although this has been consistently debated against.

Lizardfolk had no interest in money or jewels. They also did not much value accumulating knowledge if it was not practically useful. They largely valued things based on whether it was good to eat. If it was, it quickly got their attention; if not, it was ignored.

Lizardfolk could often become distracted at the appearance of food, even if they were in combat. They were easier to parley with after a meal, and a hungry Lizardfolk was completely obstreperous.

Lizardfolk could be highly dangerous when provoked. However, they were not inherently evil; they were simply savage and had a hard time fitting in with the civilized world.

Those that ventured into towns or cities were often alarmed, frightened, or offended by the environment. Few tried to adapt, let alone assimilate into Faerûnian societies. Instead, they felt their part was to learn about "softskin" ways and in turn show them how "real people" lived.

Lizardfolk were omnivorous, but strongly favored meat when they could get it. According to stories, to the Lizardfolk, the most delicious meat was humanoid flesh, especially human, but this claim was more-or-less unfounded. However, some tribes did consume captives and enemies slain in battle, but more civilized tribes often resisted this craving. Meanwhile, ritual cannibalism of deceased tribe-members was customary.

Most Lizardfolk worshiped Semuanya, who focused solely on the survival and propagation of the Lizardfolk species. This religion was maintained by clerics who served as tribal shamans; they bestowed Semuanya's blessings on the Lizardfolk people whenever required. Although they had no shrines or temples, nor even regular ceremonies, Lizardfolk were very proud of their religious traditions and their deity.

However, Semuanya was an uncaring and unfeeling god who dismissed even the suffering of his followers, expecting them to take care of themselves.

Thanks to Semuanya's close links to nature, and because Lizardfolk were naturally close to the land, ready to take what it gave them, many Lizardfolk had no problem shifting to worshiping nature itself. This led to a high number of Lizardfolk druids.

However, the Lizardfolk had other gods. Their original god was Essylliss, who focused on the Lizardfolk themselves. But as Semuanya's influence grew, Essylliss's worship declined until he was almost forgotten. He was followed by a bare few Lizardfolk.

There was also the cult of Sess'innek, a demon lord who represented dominion and his version of civilization. He sought to corrupt the Lizardfolk and created the demonic lizard kings to this end; they operated as tribal leaders or shamans.

Sess'innek's followers were hostile, territorial, and greedy. They tried to convert all other Lizardfolk to their cult, or else kill them off, and they attacked Semuanya's shamans on sight.

Lizardfolk generally inhabited marshes and swamps in the temperate and warm regions of Faerûn. The majority dwelled in swamps in well-hidden lairs, but around a third of the Lizardfolk population laired in underwater caves that were filled with air.

There were populations of Lizardfolk in Chessenta and the Chondalwood, around the Lake of Steam and the Vilhon Reach, on the Nelanther Isles, and in the Western Heartlands. Communities lived in the Deepwash, the Flooded Forest, the Marsh of Chelimber, the Marsh of Tun, and the Great Swamp of Rethild. Lizardfolk could also be found in the cooler swamps of the Sword Coast like the Lizard Marsh and the swamps at the mouth of the Winding Water.

Mongrelfolk

Mongrelfolk, or Mongrelfolk, were a race of wildly varying humanoid beings.

Mongrelfolk were humanoid in shape but wildly varying in appearance. Common traits for Mongrelfolk. Skin tones varied from pale to dark, and their hair ranged from smooth to rough, and from black to brown.

Their eyes could seem black in the dark, and yet pale in the light and their ears were slightly wide and long, with broad noses and heavy jaws. All these traits however were highly variable and could just as easily be replaced with those of other races. They were known to also have pieces from many other species, such as Bugbears, Bullywugs, dwarves, elves, Gnolls, Hobgoblins, Humans, Ogres, and Orcs as well as Crabmen, goblins, Lizardfolk, Minotaurs, and even satyrs. However, Mongrelfolk could appear to be

mildly unusual members of other races by hiding their more outlandish features.

Mongrelfolk were typically skittish, perfectly aware of their unwanted status in the wider world. Those who could would hide the nature of their existence, disguising themselves as other races.

Despite their pitiful lot in life, Mongrelfolk were largely accepting of other races, treating all as equals and never discriminating on account of heritage, although a lack of acceptance from the world could end up pushing some to brutal acts of self-interest with a pitiless disregard for others.

To better bond with their distant kin, they would often take up their cousins' hobbies, such as archery for elves, and stonework for dwarves.

The core principle among the Mongrelfolk was survival, and they would gladly suffer through humiliation and abasement to continue living. Patience was a virtue amongst Mongrelfolk and even when being abused they would wait to be released via outside forces.

Mongrelfolk had a strong sense of community as a result of their outcast status and would defend their territories fiercely.

Owing to the vast differences in Mongrelfolk physiology and a general aversion to combat, Mongrelfolk did not possess a shared combat strategy. They more commonly employed simple traps to defeat intruders but would still fight if their homes were threatened or their masters demanded it.

Of the few shared abilities Mongrelfolk possessed, stealth and pickpocketing were some of their strongest. They had long experience with camouflage, making use of leaves, grass, and pigments to hide their presence as well as disguise their extremities. The varied heritage of Mongrelfolk allowed them to use magical

equipment designed for use by members of specific races, yet also resist spells that had effects on certain races.



Mongrelfolk also possessed incredible vocal imitation skills, thanks to their variable vocal cords. Whilst they could mimic nearly any bestial and humanoid sound, they were generally not educated enough to create codes with them.

Some Mongrelfolk possessed fangs and claws sharp enough for combat use, although this didn't apply to all of them.

Other potential abilities included but were not limited to sharp hearing, flight, superior sense of smell, dark vision, aquatic respiration, wall-crawling, enhanced leaping, multiple heads, improved strength, infra-vision, larger lung capacity, flexible eyestalks, extra limbs, and various types of tails.

However, Mongrelfolk deformities could very easily prove detrimental. Those without proper hands (like pincers)

couldn't properly wield items. Those with mismatched legs couldn't properly ambulate and would end up slower than others. Others with piscine or amphibian skin could easily dry out if not submerged in water regularly.

Mongrelfolk were omnivorous because of their combination of random ancestral traits. Although their teeth typically were better at chewing through meat, they could just as easily digest plant matter.

Like the infiltrators, they could absorb the genetic code of those they consumed, although they were incapable of manipulating it at will. Rather, via a process known as "feasting", they would store it within themselves and potentially pass the traits onto their offspring (although there were limits to the process). It is they feasting that led to their extinction.

Mongrelfolk could come into existence in three ways. The first method was for humanoids to be transformed via a magical process which could be reversed using supernatural means. Those who underwent the transformation were not true Mongrelfolk as they were not born this way. Secondly, they could descend from an infiltrator.

Those born from this method could not be reverted and contained the genetic code of everything the infiltrator had digested. The third method was to be born from other Mongrelfolk. This was often an extremely random process and it was hard to predict what combination of traits the offspring would possess, although breeding with a non-mongrel had a one-in-a-hundred chance to produce a normal member of the other race. They had a high rate of infant death, especially when enslaved, making the birth of a healthy child a cause for celebration.

Mongrelfolk spoke a broken Common, interspersed with animal noises, and other

random sounds. They would usually try to learn the languages of other races, especially those they were visibly related to, and had no trouble with pronunciation. They also spoke a pidgin language known as Mongrel, which was composed of a series of animalistic noises, typically only used when being observed by other races. Some Mongrelfolk adopted naming conventions from the races they emulated and used a middle "clan" name as a prefix to their last name as a cant for nearby mongrels. Others used two separate names.



The first was a "true name", usually an animal noise, and the second was a "slave name" adopted from a pronounceable name used by other races.

Slave names could be demeaning or derogatory and were assigned by other entities, but this was of no concern to the mongrels. Titles did not truly exist in Mongrelfolk society, with elders, priests, and chiefs all going by their true names without regard for station.

Mongrelfolk had a deep appreciation for beauty, most likely a consequence of their lack of it. Unlike hags, they did not view their own hideousness as beautiful, and were perfectly aware of their gross appearance, taking even mild physical compliments as remarkably kind.

Any vaguely aesthetically pleasing feature was greatly admired by Mongrelfolk. Clothing was often simple and filthy robes that assisted in camouflage and could be easily used to cover themselves. They held many artistic traditions, with music being an important one. Their songs were a combination of noises from a variety of different animals, as well as grunts and howls.

The only known settlement to have existed was at the Abbey of Saint Markovia in the city of Krezk in Barovia, a family of inbred lepers going by the name Belview arrived and petitioned the Abbott for shelter. The Abbot took them in gladly and set about trying to cure their maladies. He succeeded in removing the leprosy, for which they were eternally grateful. He explained however that the Belview's had a very unusual view of their humanity, insisting they not merely be cured, but improved. They wanted to merge their human souls with those of animals, seeing that as an ultimate expression of god's will. Being a man of good faith, the Abbot took them at their word, and started experimenting with blending human and beast.

Alas his early attempts proved less than viable, and he struggled to help the Belview's with their desires, with many fatalities. They were not deterred however, continuing to breed with each other and provide more fodder for experimentation.

One day a stranger arrived at the Abbey, introducing himself as Vasili von Holtz. The Abbot could sense the man was evil, but he was also able to offer great insights into the biological process the Abbot was

pursuing — so great, indeed, that the Abbot found himself trusting the man despite his nature.

The effect of this forbidden lore on the Belview subjects was immediate — suddenly the Abbot was creating the merged species the Belview's dreamed of. Strange combinations of man and spider, woman and wolf, and everything in between became possible. There were of course still failures, but the strike rate grew immensely.

The Belview's kept breeding with each other too, and the results were often bizarre — but they were happy, however, they were also slowly getting madder and madder. So much so that the Abbot now keeps over 60 of them caged up in the western wing of the Abbey. It was revealed that the mysterious visitor who had revealed the secrets of breeding was eventually unveiled as Strahd von Zarovich himself.

After the death of the Abbott; at the request of the Burgomaster Dmitri Krezkov, Bannor a drunkard grifter used toxic rootstock to poison all the Mongrelfolk in the town.

Note: *This book was written with one of the winged angelic feathers of the Abbott, a fallen celestial. While the term "angel" properly referred to a subset of celestials, those on the Material Plane, it is hoped that some good may come from the retelling of this tragedy.... With his quill...*

Wereravens

An inherited or 'True' Lycanthrope is a genetic lycanthrope. They are Lycans from the day they are born, but don't have the ability to Shift until they hit puberty. They have a short period of uncontrolled shapeshifting after which they are forever in control of their shift--they never have to worry about a 'trigger' causing them to shift unwillingly (like a Werewolf). A True

lycanthrope can only be 'cured' of their condition by the Wish spell.

True Lycanthropy is a Simple Inherited trait: If one parent is a True lycanthrope, there's a half chance the child will be born as one--if both parents are, it's guaranteed. However, in a mixed couple, if the mother is the True Lycan...the child has a half chance to be born a True Lycan, and a half chance to be born Infected.



An Infected lycanthrope is someone who has been bitten by a True Lycanthrope or another Infected and failed to Save against the disease/curse. Perhaps an Infected Lycan can never control their shift and are unaware of what they do while shifted. 5E states that by 'embracing' the curse, an infected lycan can learn to control themselves and their shifts, but still lose it during their Trigger (Full Moon).

Infected Lycanthropy is not precisely inheritable, in that an Infected father has no ability to pass the curse to their offspring--however, an Infected mother will always pass the curse to her offspring. An Infected Lycan can be cured with the Remove Curse spell. If you want to make

things more complicated than that, hold on for my write-up on the Werewolves--I'll explain the old Ravenloft model in that post. Of note: like True lycans, a child infected with lycanthropy usually doesn't Shift until puberty.

A Maledictive Lycanthrope is hard to quantify in terms of their capabilities but is simply an individual who was Cursed with lycanthropy by means other than birth or bite. They don't really matter for the purposes of this writeup...I'm just mentioning them for completeness.

What type are the Martikovs?

The reason this is important, in this case, is that you can determine some things about the Keepers based on what 'type' of Lycanthrope they are. What we know is that the Martikovs weren't always were ravens...the exact words were:

At some point, the Martikov family became infected with widespread lycanthropy.

Taken at face value, that would imply that they are all Infected lycans, who must (around puberty) go through an extended period where they shift uncontrollably until they learn to control it. Thankfully, wereravens are innately Lawful Good, and thus are not terribly aggressive. This does mean, however, that they can be stripped of their lycanthropy via Remove Curse (unless you are using the 'harder lycanthropy removal' rules I'll get into in my next post).

On top of that, if they want to keep having Wereraven children, any woman who marries into the family must be intentionally infected and go through the process of learning to control their change.

Nature of Wereravens

Wereravens are, along with wererats, the lowest lycanthropes. They don't do a ton of damage and, if you can bypass their immunities, aren't terribly durable. But, in combat, their immunities are fearsome.

A Keeper of the Feather should be entirely familiar with their immunity to nonmagical weapon damage. Against most of the threats in the Baratok Valley, the wereravens are simply impossible to directly harm. Wolves, bandits, blights, and even the werewolves can't directly hurt them.

The wereravens could fight them freely without worrying about being injured. But injury is not the only threat you face in combat. Sure, needle blights can't pierce their skin, but they can seize them, pull them to the ground, then drag them off. Immunity to nonmagical weapon damage doesn't help when you get lashed to a post and set on fire or tied to a stone and tossed in the river. This is why the Martikovs were driven out of the winery despite there being only a tiny handful of opponents actually able to damage them--the blights would have simply overrun them, disarmed them, and kept them restrained while the Druids figured out a way to kill them that didn't involve weapons.

However, wereravens are phenomenal spies and can turn into a Raven in a land where ravens are extremely common and both major people-groups in the valley have a superstition that says harming ravens invites bad fortune.

They can easily hide in plain sight and, with their Perception and Insight scores, are unlikely to miss much and far less likely to be deceived with false information. Pair this with a raven's curiosity, and you have individuals who are quite capable of forming a formidable spy network. Especially once you add in the normal Ravens

Relationship with Ravens

In any social species, natural versions of an animal tend to defer to a lycanthrope of the same animal. Thus, natural ravens will tend to defer to wereravens. And ravens

are generally acknowledged to be quite intelligent.

They are one of only four known species on the planet capable of linguistic displacement (defined: the ability to communicate about objects or events that are distant in space or time from the communication). In practice, this means that Ravens (along with bees, ants, and humans) can convey information to one another that references something not physically present.

For example: if a single raven finds a large carcass then returns to roost with its flock, it will inform them of its find and the next day, the entire flock will descend on that carcass. They'll even do this to go get backup if they need help to drive other birds away from something they want. No other vertebrate (save humans) does this.

They are also quite gifted in problem solving and imitation--not only can they learn to as well as some parrots (and can usually mimic a voice with far more accuracy), but they have been known to mimic wolves or other predators in order to lure a larger predator to a carcass that they can't break open themselves, so they can have the scraps when the predator is done.

Wereravens can use the vast host of normal ravens that live in Barovia as a spy network and courier service. The common ravens can report basic information back to the Keepers, can be told to transport something to a specific place, or even sent to go look for something. In spying, the goal would be to cast a broad net of normal ravens in order to determine points of interest worth sending in a wereraven spy.

Alternately, they can be used to locate specific individuals and bring that information back to the wereravens commanding them...then be dispatched again to carry a letter or small item.

Death

Death is a constant, visible presence in the world around us. Yet, the acknowledgement of death does not necessarily amount to an acceptance of its finality.

We are confronted by the angelic and the demonic. Whether they were commoners, clergy, aristocrats, or kings, the dead continue to function in the lands and our social forms and customs even long after they were laid to rest in their graves.

From the stories of our experiences, our work must be to protect the living, in all forms for the purposes of practical uses; and we need to examine how we deal with their dead as continual, albeit non-living entities. We must embrace the living in all its forms and revere it in glory. We need to console the dying that death is not something to be afraid of, and to endure those living around us in abject suffering.

The five temptations that beset those of us on this journey to rid this land of unliving; lack of faith, despair, impatience, spiritual pride and avarice.

We need to confront these five temptations and their corresponding "inspirations" or remedies: temptation against faith versus reaffirmation of faith; temptation to despair versus hope for redemption; temptation to impatience versus charity and patience; temptation to vainglory or complacency versus humility and recollection of misdeeds; and temptation to avarice or attachment to wealth versus detachment.

Of special importance is our question of what any form life is worth with two sharply contrasting states: an awareness of one's misdeeds that places us beyond redemption and a confidence in one's merits that sees no need for forgiveness.

Both despair and complacent lack of value of any form of life can be damning because

they rule out repentance. Our path seems both darkened and yet clearer by our actions.

The literature of death is so vast and copious that it is impossible to do adequate justice to its history within the compass of a small manual. The science is acknowledged on all hands to be of great antiquity and contains a mine of information not to be altogether despised by the students of medicine of our day. Should it be approached in a spirit of fairness and inquiry, possibly it might disclose of not a few of the marvelous discoveries in the realm of death of which the present century is justly proud, and afford a diligent scholar ample scope and materials for comparison between the old and the new systems, with a view to supply the deficiencies of the one or the other for the benefit of the peoples. An elaborate and complete history of death is a great desideratum. If this humble attempt, however imperfect and fragmentary, should induce any of my readers to set himself seriously to the task of compiling from original sources a more readable and comprehensive history, I shall consider my labor to have been well spent.

Warding off Death

This sacred work treats of the subject of life, describes the conditions tending to prolong or shorten life, dwells on the nature of diseases, their causes and methods of treatment. It is divided into eight parts. These are:

- ❖ Surgery. This includes the methods of removing foreign bodies, of using surgical instruments, of applying bandages, and of treating various surgical diseases.
- ❖ Treatment of diseases of parts situated above the clavicles, such as the diseases of the eyes, nose, mouth, ears, etc.
- ❖ General diseases affecting the whole body, such as fever, diabetes,
- ❖ etc.

- ❖ 4. Demoniacal diseases. This describes the means of restoring by prayers, offerings, medicines, etc., deranged faculties of the mind supposed to be produced by demoniacal possession.
- ❖ Management of children —comprising the treatment of infants and the diseases they are subject to.
- ❖ Antidotes for poisons — mineral, vegetable, and animal.
- ❖ Treats of medicines preserving vigor, restoring youth, improving memory, and curing and preventing diseases in general.
- ❖ The means of increasing the virile power by giving tone to the weakened organs of generation.

Dissecting the Dead

The collection of living matter, when superficially collected, is generally evacuated by a puncture made with a lancet; but when the abscess is a considerable distance from the surface, a straight bladed bistoury is the best instrument for performing the operation, which should be done thus. The bistoury is to be held nearly perpendicular, with its point downwards, grasping the heel between the thumb and fore-finger of the right hand, the middle finger being placed on the side of the blade, at the same distance from its point, as the matter is supposed to be from the surface. The hand being supported by the ring and little fingers, the bistoury is to be passed through the integuments into the abscess: the situation of the middle finger thus, prevents the instrument from puncturing too deep.

The acquisition of is knowledge principally by dissection of the dead but, to overcome that disgust, and distraction, which invariably attend the study of anatomy, to familiarize the mind with the different operations of the living, and the best mode of performing them, is indeed, to him, when a student, a difficult and laborious task; yet it has been acknowledged from antiquity, that he must dissect; and it is

expedient he should dissect, with all the guidance and assistance, which the experience and instruction of others can supply. The knowledge of anatomy, and the art of operating on the dead body, are, however, distinct; and depend upon the principles of different sciences. The latter is especially derived from Mechanics, as well as from Anatomy, and is regulated by the doctrines of Surgery, which at once inform the practitioner what will be the state of his patient after any operation, and suggest to him, the means of rendering that state, as favorable as possible.

The ultimate benefits of any surgical operation, must, of necessity, depend greatly on the dexterity of the operator, and any failure from a deficiency in this respect, is not less disgraceful to him, than unfortunate for his research. The importance therefore to the student, of actual practice on the dead body, cannot be too highly estimated.

Power over Life and Death...

The power of life and death could be used both to save a life and to create one, if another life was given in return. It could even be used to allow a barren woman to conceive.

However, the use of this magic carried a heavy price. The Abbott had the power to mirror life itself while giving nothing in return.

As such, another life had to be sacrificed in order to restore the balance of the world, and once a life-for-a-life bargain was struck it could not be undone. In fact, I scribe this note with the quill made from the feather of his wings.

This made the power over life and death a very dangerous form of magic to use, mainly because of its fatal and potentially unpredictable results. For example, when life was taken in return on mass. Grief-

stricken, we blame human weakness itself for death that instigated the great purge of the unfortunate mongrel men.

According to our companion, death was not his initial choice but merely the enforcement of town law.

However, it has been implied that he may have been more culpable than he cared to admit and bartered his own soul. When he was confronted about this, he replied, that they were unworthy of life - who care who lives and who dies.

Only that the balance of the world is restored. This may imply that choosing who was sacrificed for whom was entirely up to his discretion, which is supported by the fact that she had no trouble ensuring that life would be traded for inconvenience.



The power over life and death is a very powerful form that could only be achieved by powerful entities. Perhaps the gods are

the only known individuals to have mastered it.

As servants of nature, it has been speculated that all that possess this power, should neither wield it or even acknowledge of it.

There are many ways in which the nature (or those who serve it) have control over life and death.

The power to both revives the dying and to kill an intended enemy, is also presumably called upon to strike another sacrifice with an incurable disease. But perhaps to save a life, another life had to be given in return in order maintain the balance of the world.

However, there are apparently exceptions to this rule, as magic has been used to heal several potentially fatal injuries without any known consequence.

It is unknown whether the power of life and death is involved in the creation, but no one is known to have died from it at the Abbott's hand directly.

Considering these exceptions, it's possible that power over life and death (and therefore a sacrifice) is only needed to revive a victim when the power itself has caused their death.

There is no indication that the power of life and death is involved in Necromancy, nor that it has any relation to magic that is used to reanimate corpses or skeletons, unnaturally prolong life, preserve the soul, or gain immortality.

Is the power over life and death, true power? Should that be what I seek? Is power contained in a staff for example or in the hand of the one that wields it?



Undeath

One thing most ancient civilization share is a fascination with the afterlife. The art of necromancy, communicating beyond the grave through messages to ghosts or the reanimation of deceased flesh, has long been regarded as a deviant way to find answers in the realm of the underworld. Although it has been practiced in some way in nearly every ancient civilization

Necromancy is most commonly associated with witches and witchcraft. Since ancient days, tales of witches using necromancy for power and insight have appeared in legends and lore from multiple cultures. Part of this association comes from the belief that witches work with spirits, including those of humans, animals, plants, and the material plane itself.

Necromantic rituals could be both mundane and grotesque, depending on their purpose, but they were almost always elaborate - often involving talismans, incantations, magic circles, candles, symbols, and wands. The necromancer might wear the clothes of the deceased, sit for days without moving, or even mutilate and eat corpses to call out to the other side. They would choose melancholy locations that were well-suited to their guidelines - perhaps the home of the deceased subject, a ruin, or a dark graveyard.

All these morbid practices were just prelude for the eventual summoning of the spirit. According to folklore about necromancy, in order to raise a physical body from the other side, the process had to occur within one year of the death, otherwise, the necromancer would only be able to evoke the ghost, not the real person.

As one may expect, the best time to perform necromancy was at midnight, especially if the night was filled with wind,

rain, and lightning because it was believed that spirits would show themselves more readily in stormy weather. Although practices varied from place to place, most rituals involved lighting the scene with torches and creating a backdrop of deep contemplation and morbidity.

Necromancy is a practice of magic involving communication with the dead - either by summoning their spirits as apparitions, visions or raising them bodily - for the purpose of divination, imparting the means to foretell future events, discover hidden knowledge, to bring someone back from the dead, or to use the dead as a weapon. Sometimes referred to as "Death Magic", the term may also sometimes be used in a more general sense to refer to black magic or witchcraft.

Early necromancy was related to - and most likely evolved from - shamanism, which calls upon spirits such as the ghosts of ancestors. Classical necromancers addressed the dead in "a mixture of high-pitch squeaking and low droning", comparable to the trance-state mutterings of shamans.

Practices such as these, varying from the mundane to the grotesque, were commonly associated with necromancy. Rituals could be quite elaborate, involving magic circles, wands, talismans, and incantations. The necromancer might also surround himself with morbid aspects of death, which often included wearing the deceased's clothing and consuming foods that symbolized lifelessness and decay such as unleavened black bread and unfermented grape juice.

Some necromancers even went so far as to take part in the mutilation and consumption of corpses. These ceremonies could carry on for hours, days, or even weeks, leading up to the eventual summoning of spirits. Frequently they were performed in places of interment or other melancholy venues that suited

specific guidelines of the necromancer. Additionally, necromancers preferred to summon the recently departed based on the premise that their revelations were spoken more clearly. This timeframe was usually limited to the twelve months following the death of the physical body; once this period elapsed, necromancers would evoke the deceased's ghostly spirit instead.

Many scholars believed that actual resurrection required the assistance of God. They saw the practice of necromancy as conjuring demons who took the appearance of spirits. The practice became known explicitly as maleficium, and many common religions condemned it. Though the practitioners of necromancy were linked by many common threads, there is no evidence that these necromancers ever organized as a group. One noted commonality among practitioners of necromancy was usually the utilization of certain toxic and hallucinogenic plants usually in magic salves or potions.

Necromancy is believed to be a synthesis of astral magic derived from many influences and exorcism derived from various teachings. These influences are evident in rituals that involve moon phases, sun placement, day and time. Fumigation and the act of burying images are also found in both astral magic and necromancy. Religious influences appear in the symbols and in the conjuration, formulas used in summoning rituals.

Practitioners were often members of the priesthood of various gods, though some non-clerical practitioners are recorded. In some instances, mere apprentices or those ordained to lower orders dabbled in the practice. They were connected by a belief in the manipulation of spiritual beings – especially demons – and magical practices. These practitioners were almost always literate and well educated. Most possessed basic knowledge of exorcism and had

access to texts of astrology and of demonology. Most were trained under apprenticeships and were expected to have a basic knowledge of Infernal, ritual and doctrine. This education was not always linked to spiritual guidance and seminaries were almost non-existent. This situation allowed some aspiring clerics to combine Infernal rites with occult practices despite its condemnation in religious doctrine and practitioners believed they could accomplish three things with necromancy: will manipulation, illusions, and knowledge:

- ❖ Will manipulation affect the mind and will of another person, animal, or spirit. Demons are summoned to cause various afflictions on others, "to drive them mad, to inflame them to love or hatred, to gain their favor, or to constrain them to do or not do some deed."
- ❖ Illusions involve reanimation of the dead or conjuring food, entertainment, or a mode of transportation.
- ❖ Knowledge is allegedly discovered when demons provide information about various things. This might involve identifying criminals, finding items, or revealing future events.

The act of performing necromancy usually involved magic circles, conjurations, and sacrifices.

- ❖ Circles were usually traced on the ground, though cloth and parchment were sometimes used. Various objects, shapes, symbols, and letters may be drawn or placed within that represent a mixture of occult ideas. Circles were believed to empower and protect what was contained within, including protecting the necromancer from the conjured demons.
- ❖ Conjuration is the method of communicating with the demons to have them enter the physical world. It usually employs the power of special words and stances to call out the demons and often incorporated the use of prayers or verses. These conjurations may be repeated in succession or

repeated to different directions until the summoning is complete.

- ❖ **Sacrifice** was the payment for summoning; though it may involve the flesh of a human being or animal, it could sometimes be as simple as offering a certain object. Instructions for obtaining these items were usually specific. The time, location, and method of gathering items for sacrifice could also play an important role in the ritual.

The rare confessions of those accused of necromancy suggest that there was a range of spell casting and related magical experimentation. It is difficult to determine if these details were due to their practices, as opposed to the whims of their interrogators.

In the wake of inconsistencies of judgment, necromancers and other practitioners of the magic arts were able to utilize spells featuring holy names with impunity, as any references in such rituals could be construed as prayers rather than spells. Therefore, the necromancy may be an evolution of these theoretical understandings.

Origins of Undeath

Undead are once-living creatures animated by spiritual or supernatural forces. Undead is a term that collectively refers to once-living creatures which have been animated by spiritual or supernatural forces. Some deities employed undead as divine servants.

There are six basic ways a living creature can become undead.

Purposeful Personal Reanimation

This is where a living creature willing undergoes the transformation to undeath. In most cases the creature will already be evil, but this is not always the case. The most common reasons a creature seeks undeath are fear of dying of old age, fear of dying from a wound and power.

Minions

This is where an intelligent creature creates undead creatures to serve their own ends. Undead are often used as guards. Evil spellcasters often create hordes of undead to do their bidding.

Atrocity Calls to Unlife

This is where a creature commits a evil, heinous act and is transformed into an undead creature. Not every such act results in undead creation and it is completely random. It's common enough for evil creatures to become undead this way, but anyone who commits an evil enough act can become undead because of it.

Unfinished Business

This is where a creature dies or is killed with an important deed left undone. Not every creature with such a need results in them becoming undead and it is completely random. Any intelligent creature, of any alignment can become undead in this way.

The Dark Curse

This is where the evil forces simply create undead at random. This can happen to any creature, anywhere and at any time.

Death by wounds caused by another undead

Most forms of undead will cause their victim to become one of their type by causing a mortal wound. This is common in ghouls and vampires. This can affect a creature of any alignment.

Types of Undead

Undead have a wide array of immunities, including being immune to all mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, and death effects. Undead can be "turned" (driven away) or destroyed by a good cleric, and rebuked (forced to cower) or bolstered by an evil cleric.

Skeletal

A skeleton is a type of physically manifested undead.

Lich

A lich is an almost universally evil form of undead spellcaster of great power, usually a wizard, but also possibly a sorcerer or cleric. Liches were feared by mortal beings for their malign magic, their intelligence and their willingness to embrace undeath for a chance to live forever (or rather, exist forever).

A Lich is an undead being who has escaped the mortal coil by ritualistic and magical means. They have imbued an object with intense magical energies to become a phylactery, which holds their undying soul. Their corporeal form, usually rotted away with the passage of time, is destructible but not permanently so; the phylactery reintegrates this form in a matter of days. A Lich lives forever; usually alone, feared by society, despised by colleagues, and abhorred by kin. The only way to permanently slay a Lich, a matter of much importance to many adventuring parties, is to destroy the phylactery.

A Lich grabs hold of the imagination of the people - tales of the horrific deeds inspire both chivalry and infamy as the fate of the world can change on the whim of a sole being. More powerful sorcerers than vampires, despised more than dragons, and the ultimate lords of nigh-all undead; a Lich commands fear and awe wherever it chooses to make itself known. They may be good; they are often evil. A Lich, simply put, is terrifying. It began, like most horrible and atrocious things, with a rather brilliant idea. I wasn't born a God, but I would become one.

The single most frequent question on Lichdom is how one becomes a Lich. An innocent enough question on a late night filled with tales of were-folk and mermen

but the pursuit of Lichdom is no mere undertaking, and accidents abound. For every Lich ever existing, hundreds of mages lie dead (or worse) from failed or misinformed pursuits.

Because of their cataclysmic nature, most all centers of magical inquiry and study put a general ban on the study of Lichdom past finding the best way to kill them. Even citadels and colleges tolerant of necromancy will usually draw a line at Lichdom in "civilized" society. But in magical groups that do not abhor Liches, even those that celebrate them, especially in Mortocracies, the pursuit of Lichdom is well-regarded.

The problem is that even before Lichdom, necromancers do not want to reveal what they know for fear of having their power or position stolen. Often lectures are shaded in conjecture and duplicity, and more often describes the cautions one should take. The first step to Lichdom, is knowledge. A Lich craves knowledge more than anything - a king mad to know the future of his legacy, a wizard lusting for the final component of his research, a druid holding fast to study the inner workings of an ancient forest. The ritual of Lichdom is not standardized - and what rituals are useless and what are critical steps are indistinguishable until a mage dies and either rises again or rises nevermore. To become a Lich an ordinary mortal must look for the knowledge stolen away by past Liches or held fast by ancient patrons. Explores to abandoned temples or deep beneath the sea, any lead will be pursued by a mortal running out of time. Often a mortal mage will resort to bargaining with an otherworldly being to attain Lichdom. These Liches will often be bound in submission and altered by their patron to suit their ultimate will. In canon, Liches who have subjugated themselves to another entity in exchange for their powers are known as Bound Liches.

Common myth holds that the secrets of Lichdom are usually spread apart across the planes, but certain repositories of grand knowledge may exist. Books such as the Necronomicon, the Black Book, and the Living Thought are said to exist that hold the entire secrets of Lichdom. Some scholars, mostly of monastic orders, purport that the pursuit of Lichdom is simply escaping the cycle of reincarnation by truly knowing the self.



Whatever the case, classical Lichdom has a few known rituals that are relatively well researched. The beginning step, some middle-level rituals, and the final ritual are all relatively well-documented although variations do exist. The first step to Lichdom must always begin with the Knowing. This is the point at which a necromancer forsakes 'good' deities and embraces the total pursuit, from this step there is no going back. Usually a simple prayer to evil deities (which often leads to a Bound Lich) some True Liches claim to have started with a ritualistic slaughter in the name of themselves. In this way, a

True Lich also begins the first step on its path to Divinity. It is yet undocumented how a Good Lich passes through the Knowing. Some elven communities speak of sagacious - immortal elders who have sacrificed their mortality and eternity in paradise in exchange for guiding future generations.

Most middle-level rituals are simple evocations or conjurations designed to produce the materials for the final ritual. This includes strengthening the phylactery, infusing reagents, etc. Often the raw magical energies required for this process will begin to rapidly age the proto-Lich - and being too consumed with the pursuit of Lichdom to maintain appearances, this is also the stage at which it becomes easier of locating a proto-Lich. During this stage, depending on the nature of the Lich, the environment around their laboratory and ritual sites will change. Most plant life will die, water will become poisoned, and animal life will grow sick and their flesh will become necrotic. This is not to say all Liches produce these results. There is one instance of a Bound Proto-Lich in service to a mighty Dao clan near a mining town that mysteriously found a massive vein of gold ore. Another in service to a god of Quaggoths began to cause the nearby village to devolve into lustful and cannibalistic frenzies.

The final ritual is the most well documented because it is the point at which a proto-Lich is most vulnerable, and their presence is most observable. The central ritual is for the proto-Lich to kill itself on the night of a celestial event. The most traditional means of this is through an Elixir of Defilement on the night of a Full Moon. The means by which the proto-Lich performs this ritual is also dependent on their patron and alignment. Most Liches will create the final Elixir with the ichor of a mighty celestial being - most

commonly devas or Unicorns - and the viscera of an ancient natural being - krakens, rocs, dragons, etc. The rarity of the celestial event seems to influence both the strength of the Lich and their bolstered magical prowess. After killing themselves, the proto-Lich will lie dead for a day before rising the next night as a full Lich. The entire process of Lichdom has been examined for centuries, and it has been suggested that the process of Lichdom is not necromancy at all - it is the process of ascension. Liches thus would be a corrupt and limited form of demi-god - and True Liches who have attained undeath by their own will are on the path to true ascension.

The Lich experiences a much more enjoyable state of undeath than most undead. Like most, they do not require sleep, food, drink, or air but they have been known to be able to enjoy them. A Lich exhibits the general status of necrosis among the whole body, with drawn flesh and viscous blood. Feathered and furred species that enter Lichdom will molt and shed most of their outer coverings, and skin often sloughs off in large portions. This process of decomposition can be carefully staved off, but the motivation to do so is usually not that present in the reclusive Lich. They still have excellent sensory input and response however, even though their eyes are usually among the first to be eaten by maggots. The undead body of a Lich is deceptively strong. In addition to their ability to reform, their corporeal form is extremely strong, and their viscera are very potent. Bones are as strong as the strongest metals, blood is extremely toxic, and even the touch of a Lich makes flesh necrotic. Liches can paralyze mere mortals with this touch and conjure forth hordes of undead minions at their will. Bound Liches are often imbued with great powers in line with their patron also. A Lich retains perfect recollection of their past life, and often claim to have sharper wits and a more subdued

disposition. Depending on the patron of a Lich and their alignment, some Bound Liches exhibit a slow decline into madness (especially among chaotic deities and fiendish patrons.) The immense timeframe that a Lich must implement plans, along with the tomes of knowledge they gain on their path are counted among Liches as their strongest asset.

The magical energies of a Lich are amplified by the potent rituals and excruciating trials one must perform to become a Lich - the sheer force of will alone; the drive and ambition of a proto-Lich is a nexus for the raw magical energies of undeath.

But this toll of ever-life is exacted upon a Lich in the form of requiring souls to fuel their phylactery's energies. Several subspecies of Lich exist that react differently to Lichdom, some notable Liches are Alhoon Liches, Dracoliches, Arcliches, Baelnorns, True Liches, and Bound Liches. The Demilich is an advanced form of Lichdom; one that has been starved of souls whose consciousness travels without regard for planar boundaries.

The specific form of phylactery is traditionally depicted as a metal strongbox stuffed with scrolls and parchments with strange runes. It is safe to assume that most Liches choose an alternative form as adventurers take to smashing all objects and casements that look like they might have a few coppers in.

A phylactery must be of strong material construction, certain rarity, or personal importance to grant it magi-corporeal binding stability.



A relatively easy to attain form is a that of an exotic gem, which is relatively safe from being smashed and easy to disguise as a simple magical pendant. Phylacteries may also be imbued with magical properties beyond that of Lich magic, such as Contingencies, curses, and illusions. These act as a defensive mechanism to protect the phylactery if the series of minions and hordes of undead are swept away.



To continue existing in their current form, a Lich must feed souls to its phylactery. The amount of souls required seems not to vary but has been known to increase with great magical exertion. Many Bound Liches attest that if significantly trusted, their patron will imbue the phylactery into their divine presence - thus rendering the Lich completely immortal unless the bond between divinity and Lich is severed (usually in consecrated or desecrated grounds, with specific binding magics, and a powerful gem designed to

capture the unbound Lich soul upon severance)

The ecology of Lichdom is a controversial and vast field - for every sentient species so too are their respective Liches and subclasses of Liches. Some races of course are simply too aggressive or unintelligent to support more than one or two exceptional Liches: goblins, orcs, Quaggoth, and others. But truly advanced species often have similar rates of Lichdom as the common human: elves, dwarves, halflings, Tieflings, and others all are prone to Lichdom. Certain qualities of a race make them predisposed to Lichdom. Races the live for long or indefinite periods of time, such as elves, gith, celestials, or fiends often are not drawn to infinite lifespan of a Lich. Races with already inherent magical prowess also do not tend towards Lichdom. Lichdom is more prevalent among the ambitious races: humans, dragons, half-elves. Races concerned with purity such as Yuan-ti, Nagas, and some dragon sub-species are even less so inclined towards The Demilich is considered by some Liches to be a degeneration of Lichdom, and by others to be the next evolution of a Lich. A Demilich has been deprived of souls for such an extended period of times that the magics sustaining the body (and some would say consciousness) of the Lich can no longer function - slowly dissolving a Lich into a sole bone body part - usually a skull or hand. In this state, Demiliches claim to exist as "an ethereal conscious." Whether this is simply a constant state of divination magic - in which the scrying matrix fuses with the psyche - or a limited form of divine presence is still unresolved. Dracoliches are the draconic form of Lich, who along with inheriting the strong magics and temperament of the race also have a unique feature among Liches. A Dracolich may imbibe itself and soul into the body of another drake such that it has full

possessive control (not unlike fiendish possession.)

Celestial beings are thought to be incapable of becoming Liches, but rumors of fallen Deva and Planetars seeking godhood through Lichdom do exist. Fiends and other outsiders can become liches, classified as lichfiends. Especially in the intrigue of the Hells, it is not uncommon for a fiend to essentially steal the souls of lesser devils to prevent a rise of power like their own. These beings exist solely by the will of a superior fiend, however, and at any moment their soul may be cast down back to the Maggot Pits of Avernus.

It is unknown if the Lich deities were once pure or if they ascended as Liches. Some theologians posit that the divine essence could not be corrupted in such a way - but the matter is often reserved for a matter of thought experiments.

Skeleton

Skeletons were undead animated corpses like zombies, but completely devoid of flesh and did not feed on the living. They could be made from virtually any solid creature, and as such their size and power varied widely. In addition to the basic humanoid skeleton, there were also skeletons created from Wolves, Trolls, Ettins and even Giants.

The following is a collection of notes made, the foundation of which is taken from previous studies, with further observations made to gain a better understanding of the subjects.

A mundane skeleton is no stranger in form or function to any who walk this world long enough to know of death, but an Undead Skeleton is not encountered quite as often, though they are common as far as Undead go. A Skeleton has a mechanical nature virtually identical to that of a person, though whoever they were in life is gone. There is no soul there, and rarely any

sense of self, only the dark magics that animate them.

Skeletons are easily animated and make good foot soldiers and guards if kept under their creators will, and because of that they are encountered anywhere that one might find magic users, and sometimes even 'naturally' occurring in places that are abundant with necrotic energies.

A skeletons physiology is typically the same as the base creature it was made from, though there are some things to note here. First, humanoid skeletons are by far the most popular to animate. This is due to the fact that they have the form needed to effectively make use of the very same things we make use of ourselves, and especially arms and armors, often taken from the very soldiers that were killed to animate the skeleton in the first place.



Skeletons can, in theory, be formed out of collections of unmatched bones, or even bone shards. A skilled Necromancer who is in dire need of a skeleton can piece one together from any collection of solid bones,

but it is far easier to simply animate a pre-existing and as intact as possible skeleton.

Some people, especially those unaccustomed to magic, when first presented with a Skeleton, will comment on its lack of muscles, tendons, or any other flesh, and become confused about its methods of ambulation. (Authors note: I find it odd that people are more easily able to accept that a pile of bones has a consciousness than a system of movement that they cannot see with the naked eye) Some people simply go 'its magic!' as if that were the explanation itself, as though asking 'where is the smoke coming from' should be answered with 'its fire!'

While technically a true answer, like the source of smoke, the simple answer is not the most important part! During the casting of the spells needed to animate a Skeleton, you must create a system of energies, which I refer to in my personal notes as the Necrotic Nexus. From a central point, typically around the mid-spine, you make the Nexus, and from there, tendrils of Necrotic energies are infused into the bones, mimicking natural tendons and musculature.

Raising the skeletons of other creatures is possible though and can often be quite helpful. A skeletal warhorse knows no fear, requires no food, no rest, and is still intelligent enough to make minor decisions on movement if the rider finds himself distracted.

Untamed Skeletons have a strict dichotomy with their behaviors towards other creatures. They do not interact with other Undead in any way, with few exceptions, but will viciously attack any living creature.

Any living creature that they become aware of is instantly attacked. Like many Undead, Skeletons are driven to destroy any living thing they can. Just as water quenches fire, the Necrotic energies

flowing through a Skeleton seek to douse the spark of life in others.

Skeletons behavior will change from these standards in ways that have caused many a layman to speculate that Skeletons retain their former selves, maybe even still carry the same soul! This is of course ridiculous, and heart breaking to think about how many people have died trying to reason with a Skeleton.

The source of these misinformed notions is the fact that Skeletons will sometimes carry with them a very, very basic memory of what their former occupant did in their lifetime. The bones of a miner may pick up a pickaxe and start hammering away at stone. A ball in which the guests are all turned into Skeletons may find itself hosting a dance of the Undead, until a living person shows up and is attacked, and then back to the eternal dance.

I cannot stress this enough: **THEY ARE NOT PEOPLE.** If there is one thing and one thing only that you take from my notes on these entities, let it be this. Skeletons are not people. They do not have true memories, they do not have a soul, they do not love or feel at all. They will kill you if you attempt to reason with them.

Corporeal

Undead creatures who have a body or some substantial form. This is opposed to incorporeal undead, who "exist" but are not composed of matter.

Ghast / Ghoul

Ghasts were also far more deadly and cunning than ghouls, with their paralytic touch dangerously affecting their opponents, especially elves. They resemble very closely their undead cousin, except perhaps being just a bit slenderer and ghost-like. The stench of death and rot lingered around their undead forms.

Ghouls are monstrous, undead humanoids who reeked of carrion. A ghoul

is said to be created on the death of a man or woman who savored the taste of the flesh of people; this was probably derived from the popular connection of the word "ghoul" with persons who delighted in the unsavory. They not only ate the dead, but also preyed on the unwary living. Ghouls are humanoid undead that fed on the flesh of corpses. They laired within ancient crypts or hid in graveyards where food was plentiful. Whenever possible, a ghou would attack a living target as a rare opportunity to have fresh meat. People rightfully feared ghouls and their corpse-eating ways. Of all the creatures of undeath, ghouls are one of the most fearful. Even necromancers are wary of them.

A ghou resembles an emaciated elf with a notably protruding jaw. A ghou's skin is possessed of a deathly white pallor often covered in blotches. Most people describe ghouls as being skin and bones with abnormally long arms that end in hands with long spindly fingers and claw like fingernails. These fingernails drip with a black ooze which acts as a poison that causes paralysis. Ghouls have no body hair and their teeth more closely resemble canine teeth than they do that of an elf's with massively exaggerated canines and incisors. A ghou's skull has a longer mandible and a maxilla that protrudes more than normal. As a result, a ghou's skull vaguely resembles that of a dog or wolf yet maintaining its humanoid appearance. When their skulls are cut open, ghou's brains appear shriveled up. This is likely due to decay caused by all the necrotic energy that they are exposed to during their transformation.

A Ghast is very similar to a ghou with a few exceptions. The most notable of which is that its skin varies in color. A Ghast's limbs are also slightly longer than a ghou. A Ghast's brain also resembles that of an elf or human.

A Ghast's claws radiate necrotic energy. While a ghou's claws are black and covered in ooze, a Ghast's claws appear to be heavy, almost darker than black (this must be seen to be understood). This is not the same kind of necrotic energy like that of a wraith's life drain which causes necrosis in the victim. The necrotic energy of a Ghast's claws is subtler.

Similar to the poison of the ghou's, this necrotic energy stuns the nervous system when the claws cut through a living being's tissue. This necrotic energy lingers in the victims' bodies and will sometimes cause them to become a ghou.

When someone is slashed with a Ghast's claw and survives the encounter, sometimes the victim starts to become a ghou.

Victims possessed of a hearty constitution typically have more of a chance of surviving and recovering. It is important to note that due to the divine immunity granted them, elves are fully immune to this process. The first sign of the transformation is necrosis in the wound. Necrosis typically appears twelve to twenty-four hours after the wound is received and will continue to grow over the next forty-eight hours. Wounds from a Ghast's claw never get infected as the necrotic energy kills any kind of disease that might be on the wound. About three days after infection the victim will start feeling unusually hungry. This marks when the necrotic energy has spread to the stomach. At about five days the victim will almost surely start binge eating, particularly meat and other animal products. The victim will also start looking pale, start losing hair, and will start complaining of pain in the jaw and teeth. Their hunger will grow until it becomes uncontrollable and the victim loses all sanity. This means the necrotic energy has eaten away at the brain. After another week most higher brain function and

become a crazed, flesh-eating creature that only listens to Ghosts. And thus, a new ghoul is created.

Ghouls and Ghosts do not have stomach acid. Instead their stomachs are full of a necrotic soup that decays and destroys anything introduced into the stomachs. This is an extremely inefficient way of absorbing nutrients as most of the nutrients the ghoul consumes are destroyed. As a result, a ghoul constantly hungers and consumes an amount of meat on a daily basis that would make an ordinary humanoid morbidly obese, yet they maintain a skin and bones appearance.

However, ghouls are like most undead in the sense that they are animated and draw the energy their bodies need from necrotic energy. This means that a ghoul needn't use nutrients from eating to function. A ghoul also does not need to maintain homeostasis as it appears to matter little what its internal temperature is as long as its blood isn't freezing or boiling. Thus, most of the nutrients a ghoul consumes are used for regeneration of wounds which is why ghouls have impressive regenerative capabilities. In fact, a ghoul or Ghost can survive for decades or even centuries without eating. It is not entirely known what happens to excess nutrients as the ghoul's body does not convert nutrients into fat. Most undead experts theorize that excess nutrients are converted into more of the negative energy that fills the ghoul's stomach.

As a ghoul eats more and more food, the negative energy in its stomach grows. As the energy grows, it moves towards the limbs and making the ghoul stronger and faster. Once it moves to the claws causing them to glow with necrotic energy and moves towards the brain, reforming it, a ghoul is considered to have progressed into a Ghost. Like ghouls, Ghosts draw their animation from the necrotic energy

from their stomach. Because of this, the best way to kill a ghoul or Ghost is to either decapitate it (which is effective for most undead) or to disembowel it.

Ghouls and Ghosts are almost always looking for their next meal unless they're under the control of some necromancer. Ghouls and Ghosts either hunt alone, in packs, or rarely hordes. A pack of ghouls refers to four to ten ghouls led by a Ghost. Ghosts communicate orders to ghouls via a language resembling a more rudimentary version of common with moans, snarls, and grunts replacing most of the vowels.

When a ghoul in a pack progresses to a Ghost, the new Ghost and the established leader of the pack will equally divide the pack of ghouls and go their separate ways. Sometimes the two packs will join up together to take down a large group of prey or for safety if they are being targeted by an undead hunter. Sometimes several packs will join up into a horde.

Ghouls and Ghosts typically roam forests, old crypts, and other out of the way places. Some ghouls have been observed hunting city streets and sewers. Once they have been realized to be ghouls they are hunted down and slaughtered but the city guard almost immediately. Ghosts, being slightly more intelligent, can sometimes hunt an immense metropolis for weeks or even months by spacing out the time of their kills. Generally, in cases such as these city guard attribute the cannibalistic murders to serial killers. A captain of a city guard must not discount the chance that a serial killer might be a Ghost when cannibalism is involved.

Ghoul hordes are the stuff of nightmares. A horde contains anywhere from twenty to even eighty ghoul foot soldiers and five to twenty Ghosts leading them. The Ghosts command their horde towards a common goal. Generally, hordes wander rural areas on the edges of civilization attacking towns

and razing villages. Hordes tend to disperse after only a few raids as they quickly attract the attention of local garrisons. Naturally occurring hordes are a rare thing though skilled necromancers have been able to organize them to terrifying effect.

Mummy

A mummy is an undead creature, usually evil, created from a preserved corpse that have been animated by "the dark gods". These horrid creatures are often marked with symbols "of the dire gods" they serve. While other undead often stink of carrion, the herbs and powders used to create a mummy give off a sharp, pungent odor like that of a spice cabinet. Mummies cause fear in the living on sight, and any creature they touch is affected by a rotting curse called mummy rot. Inhabiting great tombs or temple complexes they maintain a timeless vigil and destroying would-be grave robbers. Mummies are the undead guardians of tombs and vaults of honored dead (such as kings or nobility of the ancient world). They patrol their homes with dedication, remaining alert for signs of tomb robbers or others who would desecrate their assigned lair.

Revenant

Revenants are wronged souls that claw their way back into the material plane by sheer will. Reports say they look just like zombies but with a burning fury in their eyes and a certain resolve in their stride. However, after following reports of one of the creatures found its quarry. When I spoke to the frightened man, he told me the creature looked exactly like a person he'd wronged but with flaming red eyes. He told me that when he looked into them, he felt the lower planes calling him. Now I can't be sure if the man's word can be trusted because it seemed like fear had driven him mad. Every report tells us the same: The revenant can't be killed. When their physical body stops moving, a few

days later they return in a different corpse. Even getting their current body to stop moving proves to be a real challenge. Their wounds seem to start healing at an incredibly fast rate immediately after it is inflicted. Some people have reported fire to be effective.

Revenants usually don't seek out other creatures, simply because they're completely focused on getting their revenge. If their target is strong, they are known to try and get powerful allies to help them hunt. For that same reason you'll sometimes see several of them together. They always come over as angry, determined and impatient. Sometimes you'll still be able to sense a certain sadness for the thing or things they've lost. Judging from their actions, there is no reason to believe that these creatures are inherently evil. Some even keep praying in their current form. They mostly keep away from people because most people wouldn't understand their situation and only see them as an evil undead creature. It sure seems like a tragic existence to me.

Revenants are focused on one thing and one thing only: getting revenge. They never rest, they keep going everything that isn't their target or helps them achieve their goal, is a distraction or an obstacle. So if you become an obstacle you'd best be prepared to fight. If you're willing to help or have some information to offer, they're willing to negotiate terms. They value everything that helps them get their vengeance. They keep their general sense of morality, so if they were good in life, they will remain good in their return. However, if they had no problem killing a person that annoys them, they'll still have no problem with disposing of people.

Vampire

Vampires were one of the most feared and powerful undead creatures in Toril. A vampire is an undead creature. A humanoid or monstrous humanoid can

become a vampire, and looks as it did in life, but with paler skin, haunting red eyes, and a feral cast to its features. A new vampire is created when another vampire drains the life out of a living creature, or when a living creature is killed by its Energy Drain. Vampires are drawn to feed on the blood of the living and can only survive on blood (normal food and drink do nothing for it and cause it to forcefully vomit it up within moments), obtaining it in any way they possibly can. They do not cast shadows, nor do they possess a reflection.



Vampires are the dark beings who wake to an endless night, hungering for the lives they lost upon their conversions. They sate this hunger by consuming the blood of the living creatures, absorbing their essence to and power. These monsters detest the sunlight, for the touch of Corellon's pure light burns them. They do not have shadows or cast reflections which is why any vampire planning to move unnoticed hides in the shadows far from reflective surfaces.

Vampires are often a representation of whatever race that they were in life. Often however, most vampires come from the medium sized races as vampires like for their brood to have the versatility of movement and power that comes from being a human or an elf. Because vampires are undead, they do not have beating hearts or blood coursing through their veins. They do not require air to breath or food in the ways that most ordinary creatures need food. Rather, their sustenance comes from the blood of the living, the creatures that the monsters envy the most. They are immortal, un-aging, and only die.

After their conversion to the undead, vampires become incredibly resilient. Their skin, tissues, and bones harden to a point that they develop natural armor like that of leather armors. Of course, they choose not to move without clothing. Combined with other armors, vampires become almost untouchable. Besides simply hardening, the skin of vampires becomes untouchable by all necrotic damage (which should be obvious when you consider that vampires are undead already). Additionally, their skin has hardened to the point that it cannot be cut or bludgeoned by any weapon that is not magical.

The magic that grants the vampire his undead abilities also grants the vampires body grants it a legendary resistance which allows the vampire to successfully resist anything three times a day. The eyesight of vampires sharpens well enough for them to see perfectly in the dark. This same magic grant vampire the ability to turn into a small bat or a cloud of mist.

This magic enhances their physical prowess as well. They gain enhanced strength, enhanced constitution, and enhanced dexterity, placing vampires at the pinnacle of physicality.

They gain more than just physical prowess as well. Their intellect improves extremely quickly, and they gain a little wisdom. Their immortality grants them this luxury. This increased ability lets these abominations to climb any surface including upside down on ceilings.

To understand how and why Vampires are created, it is important to know the story of Count Strahd von Zarovich, who legend claims to be the first vampire. From the recantation: "A brilliant thinker and capable warrior in life, Strahd von Zarovich fought in countless battles for his people. When war and killing finally stripped him of his youth and strength, he settled in the remote valley of Barovia and built a castle on a towering pinnacle, from which he could survey his lands. His brother Sergei came to live with him in Castle Raven loft, becoming Strahd's adviser and constant companion. In his brother, Strahd saw everything he had lost. Sergei was handsome and young, while Strahd had become old and scarred. Resentment colored their relationship, eventually turning into hatred.

Strahd's beloved, Tatyana, spurned him for Sergei, whom she pledged to marry. In a desperate attempt to win Tatyana's heart, Strahd forged a pact with dark powers that made him immortal. At the wedding of Sergei and Tatyana, he confronted his brother and killed him. Tatyana fled and flung herself from Ravenloft's walls. Strahd's guards, seeing him for a monster, shot him with arrows. But he did not die. He became a vampire—the first vampire, according to many sages. In the centuries since his transformation, Strahd's lust for life and youth have only grown. He broods in his dark castle, cursing the living for stealing away what he lost, and never admitting his hand in the tragedy he created." And so did Strahd von Zarovich become the founder of his species consumed by darkness. But more

than that it is through him that one can understand much of how Vampires are created. To become a Vampire Lord such as Strahd von Zarovich requires a ritual of deep evil to be performed. This ritual can only be performed between sunset and the sunrise of the next morning and takes approximately 6 hours to perform.

As a part of the ritual, the vampire lord must share his blood with a lesser vampire and consume the blood of the lesser vampire. Then, the lesser vampire must be ritually buried in the ground. Then a prayer to Asmodeus seals the blessing of darkness unto the lesser vampire which will remain buried until the sunset of the following day finally a full vampire lord.

Normal Vampires are created more simply. First, a vampire lord or vampire may create spawn by sucking the blood of vampires without draining them of life fully. This injects the dark magic into the blood of the living creature, gruesomely and agonizingly killing them. After they have died, they awaken fully under the control of whichever vampire or vampire lord first bit them. They can become true vampires, with free will, when relinquished of the control by their master.

However, few vampires will grant this freedom, eager to keep control of their thrall. Spawn can also gain freedom if their master dies. Vampires do have weaknesses. They cannot enter religious institutions without invitation. Sunlight burns their skin. They are slowed and hurt by moving across or over running water. Contrary to the common myth, garlic has no effect on them other than to amuse or annoy them. Driving a stake through the heart of a vampire in its sleeping place will paralyze it. Additionally, Vampires are required to rest in their place of turning at least once every day

Vampires are creatures of lawful evil. They are consumed by selfish interests but abide by set principles. They are vain in

their dealings with others and extremely proud of their capabilities. They believe that they are the best of all species while secretly not admitting their jealousy of the mortals that they wish to regain the life from. They prefer to remain to themselves and only really interact with mortals to gain new spawn or for food. Other than this interaction, they stay away to avoid being consumed by envy.

Vampires are guided by a desire to regain all they lost when they converted to the undead. They desire the warmth of mortality, the love they lost, the ability to experience goodness. Guided by these desires and the knowledge they'll never regain what they lost; they conspire to deprive every other race of their joy. Vampires tend to be envious of the living because once they lose their mortality, they slowly become consumed by their darkest emotions.

For example, love turns into lust for some young beauty. Friendship devolves into extreme jealousy. They lose all ability to resist the darkness within.

Wight

A Wight was an undead creature given a semblance of life through sheer violence and hatred. They can drain the life energy out of victims by touch, turning them into new Wight's upon death. Wight's appear as a weird and twisted reflections of the forms they had in life.

Zombie

A zombie is an undead creature usually created by the re-animation of a corpse. Unlike animated skeletons, zombies still retained some flesh on their bodies, and gave off a horrid, rank smell. They were almost mindless, but could be given simple commands, such as "kill anyone who opens the treasure chest." Virtually any solid creature could be turned into a zombie; in addition to humanoids,

troglodytes, minotaur, ogres, and even beholders could be turned into zombies.

Incorporeal

This category is for creatures with no physical bodies. Such creatures can only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures or by magical means. They can pass through physical objects.

Ghost

A ghost was the spirit of a deceased sentient creature. This type of undead was incorporeal in nature and only vulnerable to conventional weapons on the Ethereal Plane. A ghost was a creature existing on two planes, the material and the Astral Plane.

A ghost's connection to the material plane was severed when destroyed, but in a few days the ghost would usually come back. Ghosts were a repetitive nuisance for those who lived in one's haunt. A ghost could also be controlled of wizards, sorcerers, liches, etc. In this case the ghost was finally put to rest when destroyed on the material plane or the master of the ghost died.

This was usually uncommon though, because to raise a ghost used a lot more magic than raising a regular undead. A ghost's weapons usually consisted of whatever weapons they carried in their mortal life, and maybe a spell or two if they were a wizard or sorcerer.

Shadow

Shadows were incorporeal and are hard to see in dark areas but were easy to see in brightly lit areas. Shadows hated life and light. Against living creatures, shadows were very aggressive and quick to attack, they were known to hesitate briefly when confronted with someone wearing a Silkstone.

Their favored victims were innocent creatures, who lived morally good lives.

Their touch sapped the strength of living creatures. They didn't need to do this to exist, for they entirely existed on negative energy, but they suffered from a craving for the strength of living creatures and if denied this too long, they were driven into a frenzy that made them charge enemies even if it was detrimental for their long-term survival.

The Shadow have been a curse on life since the first evil mortal took its last breath, birthing the first Shadow into the world of light.

They appear as mounds of darkness, formed in a warped shape of the mortals they once were. It is unknown why or how the shadow came to be, though many theories have come regarding their initial creation.

Many arcane scholars believe them to be a mass of necrotic energy that gained sentience by using the soul of an evil mortal as a sort of conduit and mold for self-creation. We believe them to be the evil in a soul, free from its mortal frame.

No matter the method of their initial creation, these creatures now exist only to hunt and extinguish the life of good men and women from this world, raising maleficent shadows from their bodies. Leaving us with the words of wise men to live by.

A single light may lead through the darkness, but the shadow cast will always be.

When mortals of evil hearts and souls die, a shadow splinters away, taking with it a hatred for life and light.

These creatures do not breed in a typical sense. Instead, they consume the life and strength of good-hearted men and women, and when there is no more life, a shadow is born from their bodies, and it seeks out more good-hearted men and women to continue the cycle.



A Shadow's body seem to nothing more than moving darkness to most, but upon closer inspection, one can tell that their bodies are a semi-solid mass of necrotic energy.

Which would explain how they can sap the strength of men by simply touching or embracing them. These bodies not only allow them to attack their prey by such simple measures but allow them to move through spaces and openings as small as a coin.

What is still being discussed is how this necrotic mass can create a set of eyes that allow the shadow to see and react as far as any man can. Some have theorized that it does not simply see light as we do, but that they instead see darkness in a similar fashion.

Shadows have no social structure that can be observed, so it is safe to assume that there is none to be found. When observed together, they do not react to one another, even

when hunting the same target, though they do seem to travel in similar directions when no life is present. Though this may be more since both sense life in a similar direction. Because of this, shadow hordes are a possibility, but they are in no way proof of any social organization. Behavioral Observations Shadows exist only to hunt down life and extinguish it. They always continue to move in the darkness, and immediately descend on life as soon as it sensed. They seem to ignore traps and obviously stronger creatures. They pay no heed to their own existence, or the existence of any creature other than their prey.

Specters

Specters are powerful undead that haunt the most desolate and deserted of places. They hate all life and light.

Specters appear as semitransparent beings and are often mistaken for haunts or ghosts. Unlike most undead, specters retain the semblance and manner of dress of their former life and can be recognized by old friends or through paintings of the persons they used to be.

Specters exist primarily on the Negative Material Plane and can therefore be attacked by beings on the Prime Material Plane only with magical weapons. Daylight makes specters powerless by weakening their ties to the Negative Material Plane.

The chilling touch of a specters drains energy from living creatures. A successful attack inflicts damage and drains life energy from the victim. Any being totally drained of life energy by a specter becomes a full-strength specter under the control of the specter which drained him. The victim loses all control of his personality and may become powerful than before, depending on his level and class before becoming a specter.

Specters are immune to all sleep, charm, hold, and cold-based spells, as well as

poisons and paralysis attacks. Holy water inflicts when it strikes a specter. The water can be splashed on a specter successfully. A raise dead spell apparently reverses the undead status, destroying the specters immediately if a saving throw versus spell is failed.

Most specters are solitary, but some enclaves exist where a particularly powerful or lucky specters has managed to drain mortals of life.

This lead specter is known as the master specters (always with maximum hit points per die), while the others are known collectively as the followers. In this arrangement, the master specters almost never engage enemies personally, but instead sends his minions in for the kill.

Mortals drained of life by follower specters are subservient to the master specters, not the followers.

Note that if the master specters are slain, all followers become independent and can travel anywhere they wish in hopes of becoming master specters themselves. Once a character becomes a specter, recovery is nearly impossible, requiring a special quest.

Specters hate light and all life, as both remind them of their undead existence. They are therefore encountered only in places of extreme darkness and desolation, like long-abandoned ruins, dungeons, and subterranean sewers.

Contrary to popular mythology, specters remain highly intelligent and generally rational after the transformation to undeath. Life makes them lament their Unlife, and they bear a strong hatred for all those lucky enough to live and truly die.





Specters have enough cunning to plan their attacks, and rival vampires in their skill at remaining hidden from the general populace.

No one knows who the first specters were or how it came to be; the few facts detailed above are all that is known with any degree of certainty.

Necromancy

The following provides an overview of common spells in the field of necromancy.

Chill Touch

This spell creates a ghostly, skeletal hand in the space of a creature within range. The creature to assail it with the chill of the grave. Until then, the hand clings to the target.

Sapping Sting

Saps the vitality of a creature you can see in range. The target may resist and takes harms and or falls prone.

Spare the Dying

Touch a living creature near death becomes stable but has no effect on undead or undying constructs.

Toll the Dead

May point at a creature that can be seen, and the sound of a dolorous bell fills the air around it for a moment. The target may resist, and can take harm

Cause Fear

May awaken the sense of mortality that can be seen. A construct or an undead is immune to this effect.

The target may resist or become frightened until the spell ends. The frightened target can attempt to resist multiple times.

False Life

Restores health for a temporary moment.

Ray of Sickness

A ray of sickening greenish energy lashes out toward a creature.

Blindness/Deafness

You can blind or deafen a foe.

Gentle Repose

Touch a corpse or other remains and is protected from decay and can't become undead. The spell also effectively extends the time limit on raising the target from the dead, since days spent under the influence of this spell don't count against the time limit of spells such as raise dead.

Ray of Enfeeblement

A black beam of enervating energy springs from your finger toward a creature nearby.

Animate Dead

This spell creates an undead servant. Choose a pile of bones or a corpse of a humanoid. The spell imbues the target with a foul mimicry of life, raising it as an undead creature. The target becomes a

skeleton if you chose bones or a zombie if you chose a corpse.

The creature is under your control for a day, after which it stops obeying any command you've given it. To maintain control of the creature for another day, you must cast this spell on the creature again before the current period ends.

Bestow Curse

Touch a creature, and that creature may resist or become cursed.

Feign Death

Touching a willing creature and putting it into a cataleptic state that is indistinguishable from death.

Until you use an action to touch the target and dismiss the spell, the target appears dead to all outward inspection and to spells used to determine the target's status.

Life Transference

The caster can sacrifice some of their own health to mend another creature's injuries.

Revivify

Touching a creature that has died within the last minute. That creature returns to life. This spell can't return to life a creature that has died of old age, nor can it restore any missing body parts.

Speak with Dead

You grant the semblance of life and intelligence to a corpse of your choice, allowing it to answer the questions you pose. The corpse must still have a mouth and can't be undead. The spell fails if the corpse was the target of this spell within the last 10 days. Until the spell ends, you can ask the corpse up to five questions.

The corpse knows only what it knew in life, including the languages it knew. Answers are usually brief, cryptic, or repetitive, and the corpse is under no compulsion to offer a truthful answer if you are hostile to it or

it recognizes you as an enemy. This spell doesn't return the creature's soul to its body, only its animating spirit.

Thus, the corpse can't learn new information, doesn't comprehend anything that has happened since it died, and can't speculate about future events.

Spirit Shroud

You call forth spirits of the dead, which flit around you for the spell's duration.

The spirits are intangible and invulnerable, and they are good or evil.

Until the spell ends, any attack you make deals harms when you hit a creature within 10 feet of you. This damage is radiant if the spirits are good and necrotic if they are evil.

Summon Undead Spirit

You call forth a restless spirit from beyond the grave.

The spirit manifests physically in an unoccupied space that you can see within range.

This corporeal form uses the Undead Spirit.

When you cast the spell, choose the creature's form:

- ❖ Ghostly, Putrid, or Skeletal.
- ❖ The creature physically resembles a humanoid with the chosen form.
- ❖ The creature disappears when it drops when the spell ends.
- ❖ The creature is friendly to you and your companions for the spell's duration. It obeys verbal commands that you issue to it.
- ❖ If you don't issue any, it defends itself but otherwise takes no action.



Unlife

A state of being that is not life (but may resemble it). Often considered to be constructs.

Types of Unlife

Constructs are either animated objects or any type of artificially constructed creatures. Most constructs are non-intelligent automatons with neither a soul nor a purpose beyond service to their creator. Because few constructs are truly alive, usually operated only by a "spark" of life, most are immune to attacks that target the living. These "dead" constructs possess low-light vision and dark-vision and are immune to mind-altering, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease-related, and death effects. Neither do these constructs require sleep or take part in any metabolic activities, such as eating or breathing

Golem

Golems are the spirit of beings from the Elemental Plane of Earth bound into a constructed body that is usually made of clay, flesh and bones, iron or stone that serve as protectors or guardians, and to serve their creators. Golems are also sometimes created with items that allow those who are not the creator to control them.

Barring flesh golems, whose size usually compares to that of humanoids, as it is made from their remains; golems tend to be hulking in both size and strength in addition to resilience.

Additionally, being constructed, they do not have any needs and don't have problems with staying active for very long times, even eternity. As such, they make great guardians for places like vaults and fortresses, so much so that even long after the death of their creators, such places are still protected.

Golems are usually only friendly towards their creator. They don't tend to gather up unless many are created for a single task. Even if observed or argued with, golems will simply try to execute their task. As such, trying to persuade a golem is impossible.

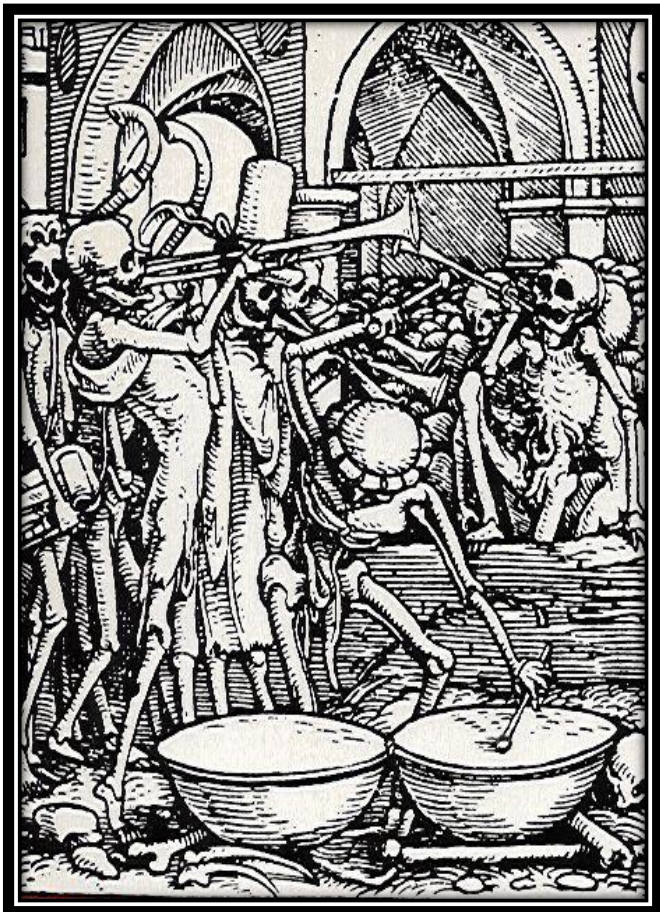
Golems have little intelligence and have problems with understanding. However, they are also able to understand a command or instruction from their creator. But, if it cannot finish its task, it might do nothing, become violent, or something else might happen, due to their inability to think about what to do. Golems, in fact, cannot think for themselves, or act for themselves. Even if their creator told them to jump off a bridge, they would be bound to do so. Despite all this, golems are great for performing assigned tasks. Because they can understand commands, they can be used to guard areas by commanding them to do such, allowing the protection of areas by the golem. This is perfect and meets the skill set of a golem, with their knack for resilience and strength, allowing them to prevent unwanted creatures from entering an area.

Golems are rarely killed, but when they are, it is usually by very powerful opponents, far more powerful than a commoner or a plain old soldier. However, if a golem is damaged, its elemental spirit contained within it might try to escape, wreaking havoc rather than following orders, unless something is done to repair or destroy it.

Golems were several types of magically created constructs. They were mindless, emotionless creations that only know how to fulfill the orders of their creators. The gods Azuth, Gond, Oghma, and Thoth favored golems and used them as servants. Clangeddin Silverbeard, Geb, Red Knight, and Segojan Earthcaller favored specifically stone golems, while iron

golems were used by Flandal Steelskin and gem golems by Nephthys. Velsharoon favored flesh golems.

They were tough, fearsome combatants with incredible defenses. Although they moved like living creatures, they were merely animated objects, giving them several advantages and disadvantages in battle. As constructs, golems were innately immune to several attacks; among these were mind-altering, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease and death effects as well as most spells. They never tired, got confused or distracted. Because they were mindless, golems lacked much in the way of creativity and initiative.



The creator of a golem was typically a wizard whom had control over the creature. They can issue simple commands if they are within range of the construct. The creation process involves a spirit from the Prime Material Plane was bound against its will into that of the golem. Thus, the control of certain golems had a chance of being voided in proportion

to the length of time that it was used in combat.

In some cultures, Golems are believed to be unfinished humans made from mud and dirt. A divine power had been making man and they did not allow all of them to gain true life. thus, most of them remained as golems. The first golem runes were in fact holy scriptures from the words of the gods. When the simian creator gods saw how humans were less adept at survival than the hard-skinned reptilians or dragonborn, they gave their hapless creations the secret to making golems of their own. Golems were inured to pain and resistant to much of the human condition, making them ideal servants. From the gods, humans learned to program and dominate their golems, and they made many of them beautiful or handsome to fulfill their desires as well as perform grunt work and guard duty.

Originally, only those close to the divine could create these original golems. Arcane manners popped up when people learned to manipulate earth and create fascinating alchemical beings of metal. These older fashioned golems lost their spot in the limelight. As they were nearly impervious to being destroyed unless the proper divine word was spoken, many just remained forgotten and left to roam.

Golems displayed a temper when they realized their purpose was all but gone and went on a rampage. To prevent their destructive tendencies, the gods intervened and stole from them their consciousness, rendering them utterly dumb and useless without commands. To this day, golems seek to undo this wretched curse which keeps them bound, but their minds falter much in this endeavor.

Golems, born to serve, have no society to call their own. They are forever tethered to a master until they can break the curse of the gods and regain their senses and

freedom. Most reside within the domiciles provided by their creator or master, where they perform housekeeping tasks, sentry duty, and the like. As they do not have taste like humans, and are much colder and more logical, they are not always trusted with certain chores, like that of babysitting. Golems without a master are doomed to roam without purpose due to the curse placed on their mind. Each one has an innate hope locked away to have a life and desire of their own, and the path to free this desire is treacherous.

As anthropogenic as they are, no golem is fully human without a god's intervention. They tend to speak in a mechanical or extremely objective manner, avoiding subjective terms like "I feel." Golems do not feel pain and are therefore very curious when confronted with human or soft-fleshed emotions stemming from harm. They also find things like entertainment and beauty superfluous, focused only on the practical and efficient ways of life. For all intents and purposes, golems are usually not very aware of their own living or death. They simply exist. This keeps them usually ignorant of self-preservation. Some aware of what is the nature of a construct may come to abhor those with "true life."

Flesh Golem

A flesh golem is a grisly assortment of humanoid body parts stitched and bolted together into a muscled brute imbued with formidable strength. Powerful enchantments protect it, deflecting spells and all but the most potent weapons.

Flesh golems are ghoulish, macabre horrors that walk and move with a stiff-jointed gait, as if not in complete control of their body. A flesh golem could not speak, although it could emit a hoarse roar of sorts. It will whatever clothing its creator wished, though usually it was just a ragged pair of trousers and normally carries no possessions or weapons. While

typically mindless, a flesh golem would sometimes possess the memories of the beings from which it was created. In such instances, they might eventually become an intelligent, free-willed being.

Flesh golems were constructed using the physical body parts of once-living creatures. These would have to be collected from at least six different corpses, one for the torso, head (including the brain), and each limb, though sometimes more bodies were needed. The bodies used were often of humanoids or monstrous humanoids, but any physical living creature's parts are usable. Special unguents and bindings were required to keep the flesh bound together during creation. Flesh golems, like other similar constructs, are immune to any Spell that could be resisted. Magical fire was capable of damaging flesh golems and cold was able to slow them. Magical electrical discharges may heal a damaged flesh golem, and if they were not damaged, they may grow in strength.

Clay Statue Golems

These may be used to follow simple instructions. They only obey commands related to the operation of the lift, such as: go up, go down, stop, lift this, wait. Any other command is disregarded.

These golems are construct creatures made of mud. They are all anthropogenic and shape in size, almost like an unfinished human. Usually, somewhere on their body, typically across their forehead or on their tongue, is a rune which contains the inscriptions from their creator and/or master. Golems are amazingly adaptive in appearance and most can pass as human so long as their quirks are not exposed.

Golems are named based on their creator's fancies. These original golems were usually made by those with divine connections, and so will have names of

religious importance. While golems have no real sexual organs to delineate gender, their creator usually fashions them after one of the two sexes and names them accordingly.

Animated Armor

Animated armor is a suit of armor that was crafted with magic to follow the command of its creators. This empty steel shell clamors as it moves, heavy plates banging and grinding against one another like the vengeful spirit of a fallen knight. Ponderous but persistent, this magical guardian is almost always a suit of plate armor. To add to its menace, animated armor is frequently enchanted with scripted speech, so the armor can utter warnings, demand passwords, or deliver riddles. Rare suits of animated armor can carry on an actual conversation. The word "Khazan" may activate animated armor.



Animated Object

An animated object was a simple construct created through magic such as the animate objects spell. The god of

craftsmanship, Gond, created animated furniture to do his bidding and to communicate with his followers. Both Torm and Garl Glittergold sometimes used animated weapons in a similar manner, and Cyrrollalee also animated objects for divine purposes.

Nearly any lifeless object could be animated with magic, so to describe all of them broadly would be nearly impossible. Since they were not made of flesh, they often were more difficult to damage with weapons, but this of course depended on their material. Animated objects always had the ability to see in the darkness and in dim light. Like other constructs, they did not need to eat, breathe, or rest; only magic kept them alive. They were immune to any effects that affected the mind and to such things as poison and disease.

What an animated object could do depended on what the object was. In general, most animated objects moved by lurching, rocking back and forth, or slithering.

If the object had legs, such as a statue or table, it could walk or run. Objects with two legs tended to move more quickly than most humanoids; objects with four or more legs moved even faster than that. Objects with wheels could roll quickly, while objects that could float could also "swim". Animated ropes could climb much like a snake, and sheet-like objects could clumsily fly.

Animated objects followed the will of their animator. If ordered to attack, most would slam themselves against their opponents. Different kinds of objects had other attacks available to them.

For example, a rug or tapestry might wrap itself around a foe's head, effectively blinding her or him, or it might roll around a foe or group of foes and constrict. Larger animated objects could trample or crush enemies with their bulky frames.

Shield Guardian

A shield guardian was a powerful construct created to defend arcane spellcasters. A Shield Guardian is magically bound to an Amulet. If the Guardian and its Amulet are in the same location it will obey the commands of the individual with the amulet.

Created by spellcasters to be bodyguards, shield guardians are constructs that protect their masters with spells and stamina. When it is fashioned, a shield guardian is keyed to a magical amulet. Henceforth, it regards the wearer of that amulet to be its master, protecting and following that individual everywhere (unless specifically commanded not to do so).



A shield guardian obeys its master's verbal commands to the best of its ability, although it is not good for much beyond combat and possibly simple manual labor. It can also be keyed to perform specific tasks at specific times or when certain conditions are met. The wearer of the

amulet can call the shield guardian from any distance, and it will.

A shield guardian is some 9 feet tall and weighs more than 1,200 pounds.

A shield guardian could not speak, but it could magically understand the commands of anyone controlling it through the amulet, no matter the speaker's language, even infernal. Moreover, the wearer of the amulet could summon the shield guardian magically from anywhere within the same location.

Though the guardian might have some difficulty making the journey, it would always know the location of its amulet.

The default behavior of a shield guardian was to follow its master everywhere and protect him or her. If given other orders, it would do its best to obey, though it was not adept at solving problems. One could be programmed to perform certain tasks at certain times or in response to certain stimuli.

It is believed that shield guardian can be built from wood, bronze, stone, and steel. The creature's master may assemble the body or hire someone else to do the job. Creating the body requires blacksmithing or carpentry.

The keyed amulet is fashioned at the same time, and after the body is sculpted, the shield guardian can be animated through an extended magical ritual that requires a specially prepared laboratory or workroom, like an alchemist's laboratory.

If the creator is personally constructing the creature's body, the building and the ritual can be performed together. If a shield guardian's amulet is destroyed, the guardian ceases to function until a new one is created.

If the wearer dies but the amulet is intact, the shield guardian carries out the last command it was given.

Undying

The Amber temple and the dark gifts housed in the amber sarcophagi...

Inside the Amber Temple evil resides. In each sarcophagus a sliver of pure evil is trapped. These seem to be the vestiges of what remains of entities of pure evil. They seem somewhat sentient and interact telepathically if someone touches the sarcophagi.

Perhaps the remaining evil has the willful intention to seduce the unwary with promises of power but may come with a high cost.

Amber is tree resin, which has been appreciated for its color and natural beauty since ancient times. Much valued from antiquity to the present as a gemstone, amber is made into a variety of decorative objects. Amber is used in jewelry. It has also been used as a healing agent in folk medicine.

There are five classes of amber, defined based on their chemical constituents. Because it originates as a soft, sticky tree resin, amber sometimes contains animal and plant material as inclusions and occurs in coal seams.

Amber is produced from a marrow discharged by trees belonging to the pine genus, like gum from the cherry, and resin from the ordinary pine. It is a liquid at first, which issues forth in considerable quantities, and is gradually hardened. Our forefathers, too, were of opinion that it is the juice of a tree, and for this reason gave it the name of "succinum" and one great proof that it is the product of a tree of the pine genus, is the fact that it emits a pine-like smell when rubbed, and that it burns, when ignited, with the odor and appearance of torch-pine wood.

Amber is a composition and consists of several resinous bodies soluble in alcohol,

associated with an insoluble bituminous substance.

When heated at a high temperatures, amber from the temple decomposes, yielding an oil of amber, and leaves a black residue which is known as "amber colophony", or "amber pitch"; when dissolved in oil or in plant oil this forms "amber varnish" or "amber lac".

High pressures and temperatures produced by overlying sediment, transforms the resin first into copal. Sustained heat and pressure drive off terpenes and results in the formation of amber. For this to happen, the resin must be resistant to decay.



Many trees produce resin, but in most cases this deposit is broken down by physical and biological processes. Exposure to sunlight, rain, and fungi, and extreme temperatures tends to disintegrate the resin. For the resin to survive long enough to become amber, it must be resistant to such forces or be produced under conditions that exclude them.

When gradually heated in an oil-bath, amber becomes soft and flexible. Two pieces of amber may be united by smearing the surfaces with plant oil, heating them, and then pressing them together while hot.

Amber occurs in a range of different colors. As well as the usual yellow-orange-brown that is associated with the color "amber", amber itself can range from a whitish color through a pale lemon yellow, to brown and almost black. Other uncommon colors include red amber. It is possible the red Amber Golems are possibly like Stone Golems but comprised of Red Amber.

Amber is a unique preservative of parts of natural creatures. Amber sometimes contains animals or plant matter that became caught in the resin as it was secreted. Insects, spiders and even their webs, and frogs.

The Amber temple was built by good wizards to guard evil entities' remains. Over time they were corrupted by the darkness inside and killed each other. Exethanter is an evil Archmage who seems to have accepted a dark gift and embraced Lichdom.

The temple is carved out of Mount Ghakis and it's in a permafrost state. Carved from a rock cliff face, it is considered one of the most remarkable cave temples because of its size, architecture and sculptural treatment.

The engineering that went into carving the temple out of one single piece of volcanic rock from the mountain side inwards.

A mystery revolves around how the temple was built. It is most notable for its horizontal excavation; the carvers began at the mountain side of the rock then carved their way in. This was a traditional excavation method that must have been overseen by a master architect.

The entrance to the temple courtyard has a hall which is a monumental room. In this statue line the walls.

It is possible that the original name for the temple may be from an important sculpture sitting in the main hall. This sculpture has it identify is obscured by a magic darkness spell.

Unfortunately, no one knows how long it took to carve the amber temple, or even how such a masterpiece was accomplished given the time period and resources available.

Only one thing is certain, that it will remain a great mystery and a marvel of engineering.



major tools involved are the blowpipe (or blow tube), the punty, bench, marver, blocks, jacks, paddles, tweezers, paper and a variety of shears.

A full range of glassblowing techniques was developed within decades of its invention. Before the invention of the metal blowpipes, the ancient glassworkers

made clay blowpipes, also known as mouth blowers, due to the accessibility and availability of the resources.

Two major methods of glassblowing are free-blowing and mold-blowing. Free-blowing technique held very important position in glass forming ever since its introduction and is still widely use nowadays. Mold-blowing was an alternate glassblowing technique that came after the invention of the free-blowing. This tools and techniques have changed very little over the centuries.



The glassblowing craft was passed from father to son or from master to apprentice. From its beginning, the formulas and procedures used in glassmaking were kept as secret and death was the penalty for disclosing secret technique.

The Wizard of Wines Winery run by the Martikov Family. Its drinks are Purple Grapemash No. 6, Red Dragon Crush, and Champagne Du Le Stomp. The wines are grown from three magic gems and could all

do with an improved presentation of their bottles, both in shape and in style.

The empty bottles we found in the Amber Temple could indeed commence an improved sale price to the nobility of Barovia... and perhaps I could herald a more gentrified era once that self-title dread lord Count Strahd von Zarovich is displaced. Perhaps we could seek the settlement of a glass blowing family and extend the trade to the region. Indeed, if wine can be grown from gems, we may be able to improve volumes.

Altering ball gowns...

Pinch the waist of the dress to determine how much to take in. Put on the dress like you normally would so you have a good idea of how it currently fits and how you'd like it to fit. Then, pinch both sides of your waist at the narrowest part until the waist is as tight as you like. Hold a ruler across the fabric you're pinching in order to see out how much fabric to take in.

To keep the waist even, you'll need to take in the same amount of fabric from each side seam.

Turn the dress inside out and insert pins along the seamline. Lay the inside out dress on a flat surface and locate the top of the side seams where they meet the armhole.

Then, place your ruler on the dress and insert pins so they lie in the direction of the seam. Measure the excess fabric from the newly pinned seamline to the old seam. It should match the measurement you took. Ensure that each pin goes through both sides of the dress.

Try on the dress and adjust the pins if needed. Before you begin cutting or sewing the dress, put it back on while it's inside out. The waist should fit the way you like since you've pinned the excess fabric.

If the waist is still too loose, adjust the pins to take in more fabric. If the dress feels too

tight, consider letting out some of the fabric at the waist.

Note: Pulling and tying the laces of a corset tight to give the wearer a desired shape; generally, along the lines of an hourglass, with a tightly pulled-in waist. This causes, of course, the familiar fainting to which fashionable young ladies were prone; they were often laced so tightly that they could barely breathe; to help her recover, those around her would loosen her stays (the laces), allowing air to flood back into her constricted lungs. This, however, was merely the most obvious of the health problems associated with tight lacing, and the garment.

Remove the dress and mark each side seam from the armhole to the waist. Once you're happy with how the pinned dress fits, take it off and lay it on your work surface. Use a piece of fabric chalk to draw along the line of pins. This will mark the new seam. Try to match the current curve of the seam line.

Taking in the side seams to the waist will prevent the waist from puckering when you remove the excess fabric. Sew a straight stitch along the seam lines you marked. Use your sewing machine loaded with thread that matches the dress to stitch the new seam line on each side of the dress. Remove the pins as you work.

If you're taking in a lined dress, snip the lining where it's attached to the fabric of the dress. Once you've sewn the new seam on the fabric of the dress, take in the same amount from the lining. Then, reattach the lining to the inside of the dress.

Hellhounds and their ilk...

A Hellhound is a supernatural dog in folklore that originates from the Underworld. A wide variety of ominous or hellish supernatural dogs occur in many cultures. The Hellhound is not specific to any one place, but they are commonly

associated with graveyards and the underworld.

While considered a bad omen, the hellhound has often helped many as well. The supernatural dog was said to warn people of danger and protect them when they needed it. The dog is often very loyal to those who call upon one and is said to be very watchful. While the creatures are often known as evil, they are not as evil as one would suggest. Some were believed to be benign. However, encountering them was still considered a sign of imminent death.

Seeing a hellhound or hearing one howl may be an omen or even a cause of death. Hellhounds are called the "Bearers of Death" because they were supposedly created by ancient demons to serve as heralds of death.

According to some legends, seeing one leads to a person's death. Sometimes it is said to be once; other times it requires three sightings for the curse to take effect and kill the victim. These factors make the Hellhound a feared symbol of bad things that are about to happen.



They often get assigned to guard the entrances to the world of the dead, such as graveyards and burial grounds or undertake other duties related to the afterlife or the supernatural.

Hellhounds not only are guards for cemeteries, but they are often seen as

helper dogs for those who are about to pass. But they also can show up to said loved ones and sort of inform them or a loved-one's passing.

Hellhounds have been said to be as black as coal and smell of burning brimstone. They tend to leave behind a burned area wherever they go. Their eyes are a deep, bright, and almost glowing red.

Other features that have been attributed to hellhounds include glowing red - or sometimes yellow - eyes, razor sharp teeth, super strength or speed, ghostly or phantom characteristics, foul odor, and sometimes even the ability to talk.

In cultures that associate the afterlife with fire, hellhounds may have fire-based abilities and appearance. While most pictures show the Hellhound as being evil and vicious, and I guess this is now confirmed.

Game Hunter's Pie Recipe

This recipe is based on a dish that hunters have been preparing in Candlekeep for many generations. It is comprised of the game available in the local area.

Game is any animal hunted for food and the meat of those animals. The type and range of animals hunted for food varies in different parts. You may replace some ingredients as needed.

It serves banquet of twenty. Cooking Time is two and a half hours, but the total preparation time (excluding the hunting) is approximately thirty hours.

For the marinade

- ❖ Three blades of mace
- ❖ Six whole cloves
- ❖ Ten black peppercorns
- ❖ Four fresh bay leaves
- ❖ A fifth of a bottle of port
- ❖ One sprig of thyme

For the filling

- ❖ Large portion venison
- ❖ Large portion partridge
- ❖ Large portion pheasant
- ❖ Medium portion chicken breasts
- ❖ Medium portion smoked bacon
- ❖ Large portion pork belly
- ❖ Small spoon of mixed spice

For the stock

- ❖ Bones and trimmings from game
- ❖ Two onions
- ❖ Small portion of carrots
- ❖ One large spoon black peppercorn
- ❖ Ten juniper berries lightly crushed
- ❖ A fifth of bottle of port
- ❖ Two jugs of water
- ❖ Six leaves of bone marrow and gristle

For the crust pastry

- ❖ Large plain flour
- ❖ Medium portion pork lard
- ❖ Medium portion unsalted butter
- ❖ Two spoons salt
- ❖ Four eggs
- ❖ A jug of water

To make the filling.

Crush slightly all the spices, mix with port, and add thyme.

Cut the game into thick slices, leave pork and bacon side. Put the game into bowl with marinade, mix to make sure the marinade reaches all pieces evenly. Cover with a lid and cool in the cellar or if snowing outside overnight. Ensure that the pot is well covered to stop vermin and if outside in a locked vessel to prevent predators such as wolves from being attracted to it.

For the filling

Mince the pork belly with a knife, and again place in the cellar or outdoors if snowing overnight.

For the stock.

Put all ingredients except for bone marrow and gristle into the pan, bring to boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for two hours till it's only a small portion of liquid is left. You'll need bone marrow and gristle at assembling point.



For the pastry.

Mix flour and salt in a bowl, make a well in the middle of flour. Whisk the eggs a little and pour into the well, cover with flour. Heat the water, butter and lard in the pan till the fat is melted. Pour the mixture over the flour and mix thoroughly until the dough forms. Make a ball and wrap in a cloth delicate handspun yarn. Cool for half an hour in the cellar or outside. Then let the dough cool for another half hour. Take a third of the dough and leave aside - it will make pie top. Roll the rest with rolling pin into a

large circle enough to cover a high the oven bowl made of clay including the sides up to the top. There should be some overlapping dough edges, do not trim it yet. Cool again in the cellar or outside for half an hour.

Assembling.

Into the tin with pastry put all the game and meat in layers in desired order. Season each layer with salt and pepper. Make sure there's at least one layer of pork belly on the top, so that melting fat will pour to the bottom, preventing the game from being dry.

Roll the remaining third of the dough and cover the pie. Seal the edges well, push the overlapping sides to the lid everywhere. Then trim the excess pastry with scissors. make sure you left at least a sealed pastry all the way round the bowl. Use trimmed pastry to make decorations if needed. Make a hole or two in the middle of the lid to let the steam out. Beat an egg and brush the lid.

Bake at as medium cooking temperature for thirty minutes, then lower the temperature to and bake for one and a half hours. Take the pie out of the bowl and bake for an hour to golden brown crust.

Leave to cool completely. Then heat the stock. Dissolve the bone marrow and gristle in it. Using a ladle to fill the pie with stock through the hole in lid. Continue pouring the stock in until pie is full. Place the pie into the cellar or outside to cool overnight.

Pulmonary Ventilation

Knowledge of the history of our surgical specialty may broaden our viewpoint for everyday practice. We illustrate the scientific progress made in recent times relevant to the vascular system and blood circulation, progress made despite prevailing religious and philosophical dogma. One of the impediments to

scientific progress in early times was the strong influence of religious and philosophical dogma on knowledge inherited from classical antiquity. As knowledge of medicine and surgery progressed, and especially as understanding of the vascular system and blood circulation improved, science dissociated itself from religious fears and beliefs.

Primarily the early discoveries in vascular anatomy and surgery that opened the way to scientific advancement, eventually leading to vascular surgical practice as we know it today.

Hence, we offer vascular surgeons an intriguing historical insight into the fundamental contribution of the vascular field in opening the way to scientific progress in medieval times.

Few physicians were authorized to dissect the human body in public, for the study of disease, and some have meticulously described the main arteries of the human cadaver, carefully distinguishing arteries from veins.

Variations in caliber and considered the heart as the driving force of the circulation. Nevertheless, as did his classical forebears, he believed that blood was contained principally in the veins and was produced by the liver, like the three other humors (phlegm, yellow bile—melancholy and black bile—choleric).

The role of the arteries was to carry pure air, considered as the harbinger of life: the vital spirit. All venous movements (from the liver to the right heart and from the heart to the whole body) and arterial movements (from the left heart to the whole body) were presumed to originate from heart beats and pulsation.

The pulmonary ventilation was thought to refresh the venous blood and the cardiac mechanism. The venous and arterial

systems were considered as two totally independent closed systems.

Noting that the wall between the right and left heart contains no pores, to explain the presence of blood in the arteries he disputed that the blood passes from the right to the left side of the heart and correctly stated that blood flowed through the anterior vein from the right heart, passed through the lungs and returned to the left heart through the anterior artery from whence, allegedly mixed with vital spirit, it was then distributed by the arteries throughout the body.



The condemnation of medical exploration and surgery as barbarian practices which spread blood (the church detests blood) was a fundamental impediment to scientific progress. This religious rule reflected the concept of venous blood as impure, and noxious (owing to an excess of humors), sometimes necessitating expulsion by purging, starving vomiting or bloodletting. This was a bloody practice often causing the patient to faint or to die from infection and was declared quackery

It also controversially reflected the fact that arterial blood mixed with vital spirit was considered as pure and untouchable. Despite these taboos about opening the body arteriotomies were performed occasionally, albeit rarely. Alchemists also, recommended distilling arterial blood to recapture vital spirit.

Disputes have continued over the precise role of blood. Philosophers, religious persons and physicians disagreed on the nourishing role of blood mixed with the other humors.

Philosophers have argued that blood had a purely nutritious role. Physicians argued that blood had a nutritious role only if associated with other tempers.

Controversy over the respective status of the various tempers and their specific roles persisted.

An original theory about blood and its role was considered that blood as a humor that nearly always mixed with the other humors to play the major role in nutrition.



