

Finalized Belkram Stats with *Desecrate* Buffs

Let's apply these benefits directly to Belkram's stats for clarity during play.

Belkram, the Drow-Corrupted (CR 13) - With Desecrate Buffs

hp 162 (13 HD + 26 from desecrate); fast healing 2

Male Cursed Dwarf Favored Soul 7/Fighter 6

CE Medium Undead (Augmented Humanoid)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon, Abyssal

AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 26

AC (Corrupted Frenzy) 26, touch 10, flat-footed 24 (See Corrupted Frenzy)

Immune cold, fire, turning, undead immunities

SR 20

Fort +15, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12; +2 against poison, spells, and spell-like abilities

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee (Standard) +3 *vicious unholy maul* +23/+18 (1d10+12 plus 2d6 vicious plus 2d6 unholy [vs good] /x3; Belkram takes 2d6 vile damage per hit)

Melee (Standard w/ Power Attack -2) +3 *vicious unholy maul* +21/+16 (1d10+14 plus 2d6 vicious plus 2d6 unholy [vs good] /x3; Belkram takes 2d6 vile damage per hit)

Melee (Corrupted Frenzy) +3 *vicious unholy maul* +26/+26/+21 (1d10+15 plus 2d6 vicious plus 2d6 unholy [vs good] /x3; Belkram takes 2d6 vile damage per hit)

Melee (Corrupted Frenzy w/ Power Attack -2) +3 *vicious unholy maul* +24/+24/+19 (1d10+17 plus 2d6 vicious plus 2d6 unholy [vs good] /x3; Belkram takes 2d6 vile damage per hit)

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +18 (+21 in Corrupted Frenzy)

Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack, Corrupted Frenzy 1/day, Diehard (bonus feat)

Combat Gear scroll of *divine power*

Favored Soul Spells Known (CL 7th):

3rd (5/day)—*contagion* (DC 16), *dispel magic*, *inflict serious wounds*

2nd (7/day)—*bull's strength*, *inflict moderate wounds*, *shatter* (DC 15), *silence* (DC 15)

1st (7/day)—*bane* (DC 14), *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 14), *inflict light wounds*

0 (6/day)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *inflict minor wounds*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Abilities Str 20 (26 in Frenzy), Dex 14, Con —, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 16

SQ stonecunning, stability, unkillable, undead traits, **+4 Turning Resistance (from desecrate)**

Feats Cleave, Diehard (bonus), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (maul), Weapon Specialization (maul)

Skills Climb +11 (+14 in Frenzy), Intimidate +10 (+13 in Frenzy), Jump +11 (+14 in Frenzy), Knowledge (religion) +4

Possessions +3 *full plate*, +3 *vicious unholy maul*, *belt of giant strength* +4, *cloak of charisma* +2, *periapt of wisdom* +4, **Adamantine Crown**

Belkram's Tactical Profile: The Mad Guardian

Belkram is no longer a strategic mastermind; his drow corruption has twisted his mind, making him a rage-filled, fanatical guardian. He doesn't think rounds ahead, but acts on primal fury and twisted devotion to Lolth. His actions are driven by instinct and a desperate need to protect the ritual and the crown.

1. Pre-Combat Preparation (Before Players Enter):

Belkram is likely in a state of semi-catatonia, idly caressing his worg, staring blankly. He is **not** actively casting spells before the players enter for a few reasons:

- **Mental State:** His madness means he's not proactively thinking about threats until they are present. His default is a twisted serenity.
- **Aura of Desecration:** The very ambience of the room (drow torches, corrupted shrine) already has an effect. He relies on that.
- **Player Perception:** If players "listen magic" or use *detect magic*, they might detect the lingering aura of *desecrate* (if active from the drow) or the portal, but not Belkram's personal buffs, which would tip them off prematurely.

2. Initiating Combat: The Awakened Fury

The battle for Belkram truly begins when the players make a hostile move, approach the throne, or break the "peace" of the desecrated shrine.

• Round 1 (Player's Initiative):

- **Belkram's Reaction:** He immediately registers the intrusion. His vacant stare snaps to the party. He lets out a guttural, inhuman roar, a twisted blasphemy against Moradin.
- **Action:** Belkram uses his **Corrupted Frenzy** as a free action. He then targets the most heavily armored, direct threat (likely a fighter or paladin) and charges forward, initiating a full attack with his +3 *vicious unholy maul* using **Power Attack (-2)**. His goal is to smash the front-liner.
- **Worg's Reaction:** The Corrupted Dire Worg instantly reacts to Belkram's roar and frenzy. It snarls, black drool dripping from its maw.

- **Action:** The worg will charge a different, lightly armored or spellcasting target if available, using its **Smite Good** against any obviously good-aligned character, then attempt to **Trip** them. If no clear alternative target, it focuses fire with Belkram.

3. Combat Tactics (During Corrupted Frenzy - Rounds 1-3):

- **Belkram's Focus:** During his frenzy, Belkram is a berserk engine of destruction. He *must* attack the nearest creature. He will relentlessly pursue and try to full attack his chosen target, maximizing his Power Attack damage. He has no tactical subtlety here, just pure, overwhelming offense.
- **Worg's Synergy:** The worg will continue to support Belkram, focusing on tripping dangerous opponents (especially spellcasters or those trying to flank Belkram) to set up attacks of opportunity for its master or itself, or simply piling on damage to Belkram's target. If a player tries to disengage from Belkram, the worg will harass them.
- **Spells (Very Low Priority):** Belkram's madness means he won't be casting spells during his frenzy. He's too consumed by rage. Even outside of frenzy, his spellcasting is reactive.

4. Combat Tactics (After Corrupted Frenzy - Rounds 4+):

- **Belkram's Post-Frenzy:** After 3 rounds, Belkram comes out of his frenzy. He's still mad, but a touch more lucid. The vile damage taken from his maul and frenzy will be noticeable on his form.
- **Action:**
 - **If the party is significantly weakened:** He might continue his melee assault, perhaps even attempting a *Contagion* or *Unholy Blight* on a group of weakened foes if he sees an opening where he wouldn't provoke an immediate, painful attack.
 - **If he's wounded but the party is still strong:** He may attempt to cast *InFLICT Serious Wounds* on himself if he sees an opportunity (though as undead, positive energy harms him, so he'd use an *inflict* spell on himself to heal, or ideally a *potion of inflict serious wounds* if he has one ready). He might also use *Divine Power* on himself if he feels he needs to maintain melee prowess, then re-engage. The *scroll of divine power* would be for this purpose.
 - **If he is severely injured:** He fights desperately, trusting his *Unkillable* trait. He will use his offensive spells (*Contagion*, *Unholy Blight*) to disrupt the party while continuing to swing his maul.

5. Worg's Post-Frenzy: The worg remains a loyal guard. It continues its strategy of tripping and biting, protecting Belkram fiercely. It has no magical abilities of its own, just brute force and cunning.

Key Considerations for the DM:

- **Perception of Madness:** Emphasize Belkram's madness. He might scream non-sequiturs, invoke Lolth's name, or make disturbing accusations.
- **Environmental Awareness:** Belkram and his worg will use the rubble for cover if forced into defensive positions, but primarily they are aggressive. They aren't going to hide behind columns.
- **Threat to Urialle:** Belkram's primary, subconscious directive is to protect the ritual and Urialle, who he sees as Lolth's high priestess. If the party tries to bypass him to attack Urialle, he will prioritize intercepting them. He is the guardian.

This tactical approach paints Belkram as a terrifying, single-minded guardian whose power comes with a price, making him a memorable and challenging first wave for the party.

Belkram's Maul Destruction Event

When Urialle is slain:

As Urialle's twisted form collapses, a final, guttural scream echoes not from her, but from a pulse of dark energy that emanates from Belkram's resting maul. The +3 *vicious unholy maul* begins to crackle with uncontrolled chaotic energy, visibly tearing itself apart. "The curse... broken!" a voice, perhaps Belkram's true voice, whispers faintly on the wind, before the weapon violently explodes in a burst of purple-green force, leaving only scorched stone and shrapnel where it once rested.

All creatures within a 10-foot radius of the maul must make a DC 15 Reflex save or take 4d6 points of unholy energy damage. Even on a successful save, they take half damage.

This adds a final burst of danger and reinforces the thematic connection between the villains and their evil magic.

Permanent *Desecrate* Effect (DMG p. 220)

Source: Cast by a Yochlol (CL 10th for the standard yochlols, CL 17th for Urialle) and made permanent. We'll use CL 17th as a strong baseline, as Urialle is the lead priestess.

Area: The entire shrine map (15m x 20m).

Effects on the Environment and Magic:

1. **Negative Energy Alignment:** The shrine is strongly aligned with negative energy. This manifests as a palpable sense of dread, cold spots, and an overall oppressive atmosphere.
2. **Magic Detection:**
 - **Detect Magic:** Any *detect magic* spell or similar ability will reveal a very strong aura of **Evil** and **Necromancy** magic emanating from the entire area. The source will be

pervasive, indicating a permanent effect rather than a single ongoing spell. Players will quickly realize the ground itself is unholy.

- **Other Divinations:** Spells like *discern lies* or *true seeing* might notice a subtle, malevolent distortion in the area's spiritual fabric, but the primary impact is on *detect magic*.

3. Invisibility & Illumination:

- **Invisibility:** *Desecrate* itself doesn't directly interact with *invisibility*. However, combined with the "drow-like torches that obfuscate view" (creating dim light conditions) and the numerous columns, hiding remains very effective. The *desecrate* effect enhances the general feeling of gloom and shadowed malevolence.
- **Obfuscating Torches:** These torches, as described, contribute to the dim light conditions, giving a 20% miss chance to those without low-light vision. This is a separate environmental effect, but *desecrate* deepens the unsettling feeling they create.

Benefits for Undead (Belkram and possibly the Worg):

- **Belkram (Undead):**

- **+2 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws:** This is a direct, significant buff.
- **+2 hit points per HD:** This effectively increases his already existing HP. Belkram has 13 HD, so he gains 26 additional hit points (13 x 2).
- **Turning Resistance:** Belkram gains +4 on his turning resistance check. While his "Unkillable" trait already makes him immune to standard turning effects, this reinforces his defiance against holy power and would be relevant if dealing with more advanced turning mechanics or specific holy attacks.

- **Corrupted Fiendish Dire Worg (Magical Beast):**

- **No direct benefit from *desecrate*:** *Desecrate* specifically benefits **undead** and creatures attempting to cast necromancy spells or summon undead. Magical Beasts, even fiendish or corrupted ones, do not gain these direct benefits. Its corruption is more an intrinsic template than alignment to undead properties.

Treasure Calculation (Revised with Maul Destruction)

With Belkram's maul being destroyed upon Urialle's defeat, its value no longer counts towards the party's treasure.

1. Recalculate Total Identified Magic Items Value (Excluding Maul):

- Belkram's Gear:
 - Full Plate: 17,650 gp
 - Belt: 16,000 gp
 - Cloak: 4,000 gp
 - Periapt: 16,000 gp
 - Scroll: 700 gp
 - Adamantine Crown: 75,000 gp (assuming minor artifact)
- Urialle's Gear:
 - Two-bladed sword: 32,000 gp
 - Half-plate: 1,750 gp

Revised Total from Villains' Personal Gear = 17,650 + 16,000 + 4,000 + 16,000 + 700 + 75,000 + 32,000 + 1,750 = 163,100 gp.

This new total is still significantly higher than the standard EL 16 treasure of 52,000 gp, primarily due to the inclusion of the Adamantine Crown (which is a plot item) and the high value of Urialle's sword and Belkram's remaining gear.

Final Treasure Summary (Revised):

- **Plot Item:** Adamantine Crown (value 75,000 gp for calculation, but functions as a quest reward).
- **Major Magic Items:**
 - *Periapt of wisdom* +4 (16,000 gp)
 - *Belt of giant strength* +4 (16,000 gp)
 - *+2 anarchic two-bladed sword* (32,000 gp)
- **Medium Magic Items:**
 - *+3 full plate* (17,650 gp)
- **Minor Magic Items:**
 - *Cloak of charisma* +2 (4,000 gp)
 - *Scroll of divine power* (700 gp)
- **Other Value:** 5,000 gp in scattered drow coins, corrupted religious artifacts, and perhaps a few dark gems.

New Total Calculated Value: ~168,100 gp (including the plot item).

This is a much more manageable amount while still feeling suitably epic for such a formidable encounter and the specific item the players are seeking.
