

= Libris Mortis =

Libris Mortis : The Book of Undead is a book which is an official supplement for the 3 @.@ 5 edition of the Dungeons and Dragons role @-@ playing game . It is about the fictional undead within the D & D universe and comprises seven chapters , introducing new content for Dungeon Masters and players , as well as providing general information about undead .

It was received positively by reviewers , with praise for its material for Dungeon Masters and its illustrations , but received criticism for its weak player @-@ oriented content . The book was the second in the series of books about specific monster types , the first being Draconomicon . Similar books published since include Lords of Madness . Libris Mortis included content from older books , such as Tome and Blood and the Book of Vile Darkness , that had been reworked .

= = Inspiration and production = =

Libris Mortis was written to present " a comprehensive overview of the undead " within the Dungeons & Dragons universe , offering new game rules and content , for both players and Dungeon Masters . The book is in the same format as the earlier published Draconomicon , which instead focused on Dragons , and was described as " a super @-@ sized monster ecology " by the Nuketown podcast . Similar books that have since been released include Fiendish Codex I : Hordes of the Abyss , Fiendish Codex II : Tyrants of the Nine Hells and Lords of Madness .

Inspiration for the book 's content came from numerous sources . In an interview posted on the Wizards of the Coast website , Collins said that inspiration came from Buffy the Vampire Slayer , Angel , various Dracula films , along with films The Mummy and The Mummy Returns . Cordell said that pop culture has " less impact on [his] conceptualizations of the undead " , but he did mention The Evil Dead , 28 Days Later and the novel Salem 's Lot . According to Collins , he and Cordell worked equally on the book , with Collins focusing more on material relating to character building , sample undead and running undead , while Cordell dealt with monster design and undead material , but he said that they " dabbled in each others ' " sections quite a bit as well " . He also mentioned a monster template designed by Matt Sernett that was originally written for the Monster Manual III and had been included in Libris Mortis .

= = Origin of the name = =

Libris Mortis was named after a book from within the Dungeons & Dragons universe written by an aasimar cleric of Pelor named Acrinus in a dialect of the Celestial language of good outsiders . The title of the fictional book probably translates into English as From the Books of Death , though the dialect is no longer used .

The title Libris Mortis ' was intended to be interpreted as Latin , but Book of the Dead would translate as Liber Mortuorum . On the subject of name , Collins was quoted as saying " I don 't have any insight on the naming process that produced Libris Mortis . I don 't know Latin and wasn 't involved in selecting that name . Regardless , I think what 's in the book is far more important than what name is attached to it . "

= = Content = =

Libris Mortis has seven chapters and an introduction . The chapters are named " All About Undead " , " Character Options " , " Prestige Classes " , " Spells " , " Equipment " , " New Monsters " and " Campaigns " .

= = = " All About Undead " = = =

The first chapter , " All About Undead " , contains general information about undead monsters . The chapter discusses the ecology of undead creatures , though this section was described as " very

small ", and talks about undead religion , introducing new deities . The chapter also discusses " stranger areas " , including the idea of undead citizenship in cosmopolitan cities . Variant rules are introduced for areas including hauntings and exorcisms , which were received positively , and for undead hunger and appetites . The section also includes advice on how to combat undead , but according to Casey Smith of D20 Magazine Rack , " veteran players probably won 't get much out of this part of the book " . Overall , the section was described by one reviewer as " one of the more interesting " .

= = = " Character Options " = = =

The second chapter , " Character Options " , lists 59 feats , discusses undead characters in the party , and offers rules for undead monster classes . Many of the feats are geared towards spellcasters , with few martial feats , a single Bardic feat and no feats geared specifically towards Druids or Barbarians . Different types of feats include the Corpsecrafter tree , for spellcasters to improve their undead , monstrous feats to modify the special abilities of undead creatures , and tomb @-@ tainted feats , allowing living characters to gain undead traits . Smith commended feats that Dungeon Masters may use , such as Spell Drain , Lifesense and Necrotic Reserves , but said that " feats that players might use aren 't nearly as interesting " . The discussion of and rules for undead characters was said to be the " weakest section of the book " . Five alternate base classes were introduced in the Savage Species " monsters as classes " format . These are classes for the Ghoul / Ghast , Mohrg , Mummy , Vampire Spawn and Wight .

= = = " Prestige Classes " = = =

Chapter three , " Prestige Classes " , introduces eleven new prestige classes .

Death 's Chosen , for mortals with undead masters .

The Dirgesinger is a Bard @-@ specific class , and a " personal favourite " of Smith .

Master of Radiance is a Druid specific class for fighting undead ,

Master of the Shrouds can summon incorporeal undead . 3 @.@ 5 edition versions of the Pale Master and the True Necromancer (originally from Tome and Blood) can also be found .

The chapter has four prestige classes specifically for undead :

Ephemeral Exemplar is a class for incorporeal undead

The Lurking Terror is a stealthy undead class

The Master Vampire strengthens the abilities already possessed by a vampire

The Tomb Warden is a prestige class designed for undead who guard tombs .

Kenneth Newquist , of Nuketown , said that the undead prestige classes " are excellent for turning traditional undead threats into something exceptional " , and said that his " only complaint with these prestige classes is that there aren 't enough of them " .

= = = " Spells " = = =

Chapter four , " Spells " , introduces 57 new spells . The spells mostly focus around the school of Necromancy , with many domain spells for the new deities introduced in the first chapter . Spells commented on by reviewers included Consumptive Field , Awaken Undead , Wither Limb , Avasculate , Necrotic Cyst (and related spells , including Necrotic Domination and Necrotic Bloat) , along with spells aimed at players , such as Spawn Screen and Mass Death Ward , described as " more pragmatic than exciting " . Some of the spells included in the chapter were version 3 @.@ 5 reworks of spells found in the Book of Vile Darkness .

= = = " Equipment " = = =

Chapter five , " Equipment " , contains sections on special items and alchemical substances , " positoxins " , magic items and undead grafts . Positoxins , poisons that affect undead , were poorly

received by reviewers , with the Nuketown podcast asking " we have plenty of folklore remedies for combating undead , why not create magical versions of those ? " Magic items included profane weapons , sacred weapons , ectoplasmic armor and specific items including the Ghoul Globe and Unholy Shroud . This section was also criticized by the Nuketown podcast , which said that the " Magic item section is only six pages ; I 'd like to have seen more magic items , particularly more unique ones alone with a few lesser artifacts " . The grafts section worked on rules introduced in the Book of Vile Darkness and the Fiend Folio , adding new undead " grafts " , but did not include rules for creating your own .

= = = " New Monsters " = = =

Chapter six , " New Monsters " , introduces 47 new monsters , the weakest of which is the Carcass Eater and the strongest of which is the Dream Vestige . Newquist praised ooze like Blood Animote , while the Nuketown podcast commended the Swarm templates . Smith praised the Brain in a Jar , swarm @-@ shifter templates , Necropolitan , Revived Fossil and Skulking Cyst , but called the Hulking Corpse and Murk " surprisingly benign " . Mike MacKenzie , of RPGnet , called the Skin Kite and Angel of Decay " ghastly " , the Revived Fossil and Necropolitan " less interesting " and the Half Vampire an " extraordinarily bad idea " .

= = = " Campaigns " = = =

The seventh and final chapter , " Campaigns " , includes tips on how to use undead in campaigns and adventures , as well as how to control specific undead monsters . It also has adventure sites and back @-@ stories for various cults . The chapter was well received , being called the " best section of the book " and being " better than I [the reviewer] expected " . The maps were commended by some , being called " useful right out of the box " but Mike MacKenzie , of RPGnet , said they were " basically a Book of Lairs for undead . Nothing terribly remarkable here . " The section includes statistics and back @-@ stories for alternatives classic undead monsters , including ten different ghosts , six liches , 19 skeletons , ten vampires , and fifteen zombies .

= = Illustrations = =

The Libris Mortis art staff comprises Dawn Murin as art director , Dee Barnett , Dawn Murin and Trich Yochum as graphic designers . The graphic production specialist was Angelika Lokotz , with Candice Baker as image technician . Cartography was provided by Dennis Kauth , with the cover designed by Tom Kidd . Interior illustrations were provided by Thomas Baxa , Steve Belledin , Jeff Easley , Steve Ellis , Wayne England , Emmanuelle Hunter , Jeremy Jarvis , Chuck Lukacs (who provided the images for the start of each chapter) , David Martin , Michael Phillippi , Steve Prescott , Wayne Reynolds and Brian Snoddy . The artwork was praised by Mike MacKenzie of RPGnet , who said that " the art is good . Its re @-@ assuring to see the quality we expect from WotC in this department . " He criticized the " unintentionally goofy " images of the Mohrg Barbarian and Wight archer , but commended the " sepia @-@ tinged " work of Wayne England as fitting the book 's mood . The work by Chuck Lukacs was also praised , as were the images by Jeremy Jarvis . Jarvis ' Angel of Decay and Atropal Scion were said to be " just as creepy as we would expect " .

= = Reviews = =

Libris Mortis was generally received positively by reviewers . Mike MacKenzie , of RPGnet , gave the book a 5 / 5 for style and a 4 / 5 for substance , with the summary comment : " As a DM , I personally think this is a great (creepy) book , especially the first and last chapters , and there is some good crunch to be found . " Casey Smith , of D20 Magazine Rack , gave the book 80 % " reviewer opinion " , averaging with other scores to give an overall grade of 82 % . Kenneth Newquist , of Nuketown , gave Libris Mortis a rating of 9 / 10 , with the comment " Libris Mortis isn 't an

essential source book , but it is a useful one . " The Nuketown podcast gave the book 8 / 10 , saying it was " good , but not essential . Worth picking up for anyone for whom the undead play a major role in their campaign . " Vincent Venturella , of Flames Rising Dot Com , gave the book 3 / 5 for style , 5 / 5 for substance and 4 / 5 overall .

The reviewer from Pyramid commented : " There 's a little more campaign advice here than in previous Wizards of the Coast products , though not a whole lot . You get a short introduction to what undead are and how they unlive , eat (eww) , and procreate . Theories on whence they come , examples of cities and religions for the cosmopolitan zombie , and advice on strategy when facing (or being) the dead (especially the self @-@ aware threats) make good reading , but these are sadly brief . "