

Carrion Crown



Urgathoa

Urgathoa (ur-guh-THO-uh) is an utterly amoral, hedonistic goddess, concerned only with satiating her own interests regardless of the consequences for others. She was once a mortal woman full of a thirst for life, and somehow in death she found the strength to tear herself from Pharasma's endless line of souls and return to Golarion, becoming a divine being and the world's first undead creature. Her existence is a corruption of the natural order; some say her first divine footprints upon the soil of the Material Plane birthed plague and infection, and the first shadows and wraiths were born of her breath.

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The goddess's half-rotted form limits the sensations she can experience, so she makes up for this lack with gluttonous depravity—she has tasted the brains of human infants to savor their innocent thought-meats, torn the heart from the last living member of a race just to know the sensation of its hot blood on her hands, and brought low with boils and leprosy the most handsome princes just to see the unique patterns on royal flesh. She believes that the dull existence of a dead soul is pointless and tedious compared to the vibrant intensity of mortal or undead sensation, and that creatures should cram as much sensation into existence as possible. Asceticism is repugnant to her, and she particularly loathes those who follow the strict taboos of the Prophecies of Kalistrade.


From the waist up, Urgathoa appears as a beautiful, raven-haired woman—presumably much like her mortal self, though she is as pale as a hungry vampire. Her lower half is rotted and withered, becoming more decayed farther down until only blood-covered bones remain at her feet. When she walks, she leaves bloody, bony footprints. Although she sometimes manifests a naked avatar, she usually appears wearing a sheer red or black gown. From neck to toe, the gown is stained with patches of black, brown, and red, remnants of meals better left undescribed. On rare occasions, she assumes a monstrous shape similar to a daughter of Urgathoa, with one huge arm covered in fanged mouths and a tail made of multiple fused spinal columns.

Urgathoa's realm in the Great Beyond is a cluster of cities in a wasteland part of Abaddon, filled with undead residents indulging all of their mortal vices in great excess. She and hers are left alone by the daemons of that realm, observed but untouched—Urgathoa's focus is on the mortal realm and the pleasures of living, not the destruction of mortal souls. The main threat to her realm is attacks from Pharsma's minions, who intend to "repatriate" undead souls to the Boneyard and force them into their proper destination in the afterlife.

Though the Pallid Princess's church is interested primarily in undeath, some cults focus on her gluttonous aspect, indulging in decadent feasts of food, alcohol, drugs, or sex. Unfortunately, in many cases these "uncorrupted" cults decline into more depraved practices such as cannibalism, and this leads to necromantic profanities and conversion to ghouls, vampires, or similar creatures.

When Urgathoa is pleased, common food tastes like a delicious meal, water tastes like fine wine, and meals are

never so filling that the eater feels uncomfortable. She rarely uses animals as messengers, but sometimes sends a death's head moth (which she uses despite Desna's love of moths) to lead a devout worshiper to a reward or clouds of biting flies to warn away or punish a mortal. She sometimes rewards female clerics who serve her particularly well by transforming them after death into hideous undead creatures called the daughters of Urgathoa (see page 309 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*). Though she is not considered a provider deity, there are stories of starving members of the faith unexpectedly finding an injured or freshly killed animal suitable for butchering (or, in at least one story, humanoid meat under similar circumstances). When she is angry, she makes food and water taste like ash despite all seasonings, fills the belly with gnawing hunger that cannot be quenched, or inflicts rotting or swelling diseases that make it difficult to eat or speak. She has been known to render an offender's legs insensate or paralyzed so the victim must crawl, or reverse the taste of his food so that garbage and sewage are the only things he can manage to swallow. A person stricken by such a curse can usually alleviate



*"Seize what you can, tear it apart, and savor its sweet, bloody taste, for existence is dull without the blessing of sensation."
—Serving Your Hunger*

the condition by making a large sacrifice to Urgathoa, either at a temple or by providing some gluttonous feast, drug experience, or other orgiastic excess in her name. Rarely, the only way to alleviate the curse is by willingly engaging in cannibalism, an act that taints the offender's soul and all but guarantees allegiance to the Pallid Princess.

Urgathoa is neutral evil and her portfolio is gluttony, disease, and undeath. Her weapon is the scythe, a tool for reaping crops and a weapon traditionally associated with death. Her holy symbol is a death's head moth, often drawn so the skull-markings are exaggerated, or even depicted as a skull with moth wings, legs, and head. Her domains are Death, Evil, Magic, Strength, and War.

As all of her interests are often considered vices, she has very few nonevil followers. Her primary worshipers are dark necromancers, undead, and those who hope to become undead (including servants of vampires, spellcasters pursuing the path of the lich, and so on). This means that her faith is illegal in most lands, or at least shunned and driven out if discovered, and in these places her priests must keep their activities secret. Commoners are suspicious of even those who limit their worship to mere gluttony, as men and women who struggle to feed themselves in winter are envious of those who can afford to live in excess, and rumors are quick to follow anyone

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known to praise the goddess of undeath. Occasionally, a gluttonous prince or merchant may secretly keep a shrine in the goddess's name, praying for bounties of food, drink, sex, or other physical pleasures.

In some lands, desperate folk pray to Urgathoa to relieve symptoms of plague (much as they pray to the demon lord Pazuzu to protect infants from the demon goddess Lamashtu), but Sarenrae is usually a better choice for prayers of healing. Neutral necromancers may worship her and gain a measure of tolerance from their communities if they prove themselves useful by rounding up or putting to rest uncontrolled or destructive undead—better that the bones of the dead guard the hermit necromancer's tower than wander into town to harry the living.

In Geb, the Pallid Princess is worshiped openly and is practically one of the official religions of that country. Vampire barons, ghoulish counts, and various undead nobility pray to her in chapels at midnight, requesting that she keep them safe from the bright day, peasant uprisings, and abominations from the Mana Wastes. Living residents of Geb pray to her that they may gain her favor by becoming undead, that their deaths may be quick and painless, or that the too-common fate of being animated as a skeleton or zombie will turn out to be a truly mindless existence rather than an eternal prison for the mind in a corrupted body. Most worshipers in Geb pray to the Harlot Queen as a saint or proxy for the Pallid Princess—though the reanimated ruler has no divine tie to Urgathoa, the goddess accepts this as a quirk of her favored nation. Public temples are often guarded by bloody skeletons—usually called “sons of Urgathoa” because they also leave bloody footprints where they walk—who act as counterparts to the powerful, intelligent daughters of Urgathoa.

Prayer services to Urgathoa consist of susurrant whispers, quiet chants, and eerie moans. Music has almost no role in church services, though drums may be used to keep a beat or announce visitors and mealtimes. Services usually involve a meal or ritualistic consumption of a small amount of food blessed by a priest—anything from a sweetmeat to bread and gravy, animal flesh, or a living or cannibalistic meal, depending on the congregation. Wealthier churches provide lavish feasts for the faithful (sponsored by wealthy patrons or paid for by selling spells or undead labor), and it is not unheard of for a priest to move to a starving village and offer intoxicating foods to layfolk in the hopes of gaining followers.

The Pallid Princess has a strange view of marriage. As most of her faithful are undying, she believes that two people who bind themselves to each other are creating a union that can persist beyond death itself—marriages within the church do not include vowing “until death parts us”—and knows that sharing the pleasures of life and undeath makes them greater than experiencing

them alone. As such, she supports marriage among her followers—even between the living and the undead, as long as the undead partner plans to make the living one an undead, or at least to extend the living partner's life somehow (such as a vampire who feeds her blood to her husband to extend his life). As undead couples cannot bear children, Urgathoa doesn't care about the genders of the people, only that the commitment is true.

Adoption in the church is common, particularly by predatory undead who kill living parents and raise the offspring as their own; this increases the number of creatures worshiping the goddess. Divorce is frowned upon, as it shows disrespect to the partner and to the goddess herself. Murdering a spouse is an acceptable alternative, however, especially if the dead spouse remains in or near the home as a skeleton, zombie, or mummy (a widowed vampire priestess may be guarded by several of her own animated dead husbands during the day). Pregnancies are uncommon among the faithful, considering that most of them are undead and the church allows contraception to keep pregnancy from interfering with hedonistic pursuits, though many temples have at least one woman, called a “blood mother,” whose role is to bear children, either to raise them as members of the church or to offer them as sacrifices in horrid rituals. Urgathoa has no opinion on abortion or infant exposure; her rivalry with Pharasma (and the Lady of Graves' opposition to killing the unborn) has made her spiteful toward expectant mothers of that faith, and she teaches her priests minor curses and hexes that can harm or kill a fetus or birthing mother.

As the church embraces death if it leads to undeath, they have no prohibition against suicide, and taking one's own life in the goddess's name is thought to be a way to boost her opinion of you, or increase the chances of rising as some form of undead. Old priests with no means to turn themselves into undead may offer their spirits to the goddess while offering their flesh to the living. Though suicides are usually the purview of minor goddess Naderi (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Gods and Magic*), this ritualistic martyrdom invokes the power of Urgathoa. Devout worshipers expect to be raised as undead of some kind.

In the church, the date someone becomes an undead is a memorable event called ashemorn, commemorated annually like a birthday. For undead that cannot stand the light, it also represents the last time they saw daylight. Ashemorn is a solemn event and a time for personal reflection rather than sharing with others, especially as some undead don't know what day they turned (because of delays between dying and rising) or have been undead so long they no longer remember or have ceased to consider it relevant. A particularly sentimental undead who can create spawn may choose to convert a loyal minion on his own ashemorn as a gesture of affection.

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TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Each of the Pallid Princess's temples is built like a feathall, with a large central table serving as an altar and numerous chairs surrounding it; her hidden temples use this same setup, but with a less ambitious scale. Most temples are adjacent to a private graveyard or built over a crypt, and often inhabited by ghouls (which embody all three of the goddess's interests). Though the goddess does not use daemons as minions in her own realm, it is not unusual to find daemon servants and guardians in Urgathoa's most powerful temples. Her largest temple in Mechitar, the capital of Geb, is the Cathedral of Epiphenomena, which is staffed by priests both living and undead.

The church is organized as a matriarchy, with a powerful priestess (only rarely a priest) at the head of each temple. If the priestess is a daughter of Urgathoa, the entire temple is considered especially blessed. The rest of the congregation is divided into the ghula—members of privilege who may or may not be members of the priesthood—and the famished, initiate members acting as servants to the ghula until they prove themselves worthy of recognition by the church. If one of the famished is of higher social status outside the church than a ghula, a wise ghula treats the famished respectfully, lest they suffer repercussions outside the church or once the high-status famished becomes a ghula. Like most evil cults, the secret church is scattered and cell-based. The most powerful or charismatic priest in the area is the local leader, and there are few occasions where cells meet or combine.

When a priest gains the ability to create undead (typically with the *animate dead* spell, though a vampire, ghast, or shadow's ability to create spawn counts), he or she also gains the title of Necro-Lord. This gives the priest additional privileges (such as first choice of food and servants) and powers (such as immunity to disease and resistance to channeled energy) without any additional responsibilities.

Ceremonial clothing for a priest is a loose, gray, floor-length tunic with a bone-white or dark gray shoulder-cape clasped at the front. Traditionally, the lower half of the tunic is either shredded or adorned with strips of cloth or tassels to give the overall appearance of increased damage as it approaches the floor, mirroring the goddess's own decay. Some of these garments are heavily embroidered with tiny skulls and bones, and layered with carefully sewn cuts to flash hidden layers of red and white. Some priestesses wear corsets under their gowns, while others prefer clothes that can accommodate an engorged or pregnant belly.

A PRIEST'S ROLE

Two-thirds of Urgathoa's priests are clerics, and the other third are necromancers, witches, necromancy-inclined sorcerers (particularly those with the undead bloodline), antipaladins, and miscellaneous undead



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who rise to positions of power in the church whether or not they have magical ability. These priests have no duties to the church other than mutual protection and aiding those who wish to become undead, for Urgathoa is satisfied when mortals excessively consume in her name and is content with the rate at which undead propagate themselves. This doesn't stop cult cells from taking a more aggressive stance, such as planning to convert the population of an entire town to zombie slaves. More than half of her clergy are women, and this proportion is closer to three-quarters in lands where women are expected to be subservient to men, for this faith is a way for women to gain power.

Commoners often have little use for priests of Urgathoa, fearing their association with vice and undeath. However,

her priests remain useful despite this reticence. As they understand both bodies and souls, Urgathoan priests can advise how to bury a corpse to prevent it from rising as an undead on its own and how to protect it from predators. Her priests usually conceal their allegiance and find employment in jobs that allow them frequent access to dead bodies, such as gravedigger, mercenary, or (if desperate) butcher. Some have been known to pose as clerics of Pharasma, offering blessings and funereal rites to communities lacking a true priest of the Lady of Graves. Malicious members use this ruse to provide commoners with "newly invented" charms, tokens, fetishes, and gestures that supposedly ward off the undead, then direct undead allies to these communities for easy hunting. In lands suffering from plague, they may pass themselves off as knowledgeable healers, treating some of the sick and leaving others to die, or perhaps curing uncomfortable but harmless illnesses while infecting patients with quiet but deadly diseases.

Only in undead-controlled lands such as Geb do Urgathoa's priests practice their faith openly, where they serve all the normal functions that publicly respected priests hold in society, such as spiritual advisor, healer, government official, and so on.

HOLIDAYS

As a goddess who believes in celebrating existence every day and night, Urgathoa places no additional significance on certain dates. Her followers have attached special meaning to nights with no moon and celestial conjunctions with the undead-filled world Eox.

APHORISMS

Given that its cult includes living beings, feeding undead such as ghouls and vampires, and other creatures that do not need to feed at all (including bodiless undead), there are many different sayings among the countless cells of the faith, all created by mortals, for the goddess is more concerned with gratification than words. The two most common aphorisms of the church are as follows.

Feed Your Pain: The faithful recognize that eating fills a physical and emotional need, even for undead that do not have to consume anything to survive—it is the act of eating, of consuming and satisfying an urge, that is the reward. This phrase normally indicates the start of a meal, but priests sometimes say it encourages layfolk to distract themselves from their problems with food or other excesses.

By the Blood and the Mouth: This is an oath, a promise to keep a secret, with the expectation of punishment should the oath be broken. It is



usually accompanied by a gesture, touching a finger and thumb to the sides of the neck (almost like a sign for choking), followed by kissing or licking the first two fingers of that hand.

HOLY TEXT

Urgathoa's unholy book is *Serving Your Hunger*, penned by Dason, her first antipaladin. It explains her basic tenets, and also includes recipes for decadent foods (some copies include suggestions for cooking various humanoids) as well as common means of becoming undead (focusing mainly on vampires, ghouls, and wights).

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

For an evil deity, Urgathoa has few enemies. She is content to indulge her own needs, and as other powerful entities leave her to do that, she is involved in few divine conflicts. However, deities such as Pharasma and Sarenrae pursue her and her kind whenever they are found. The Pallid Princess reciprocates this attention, destroying divine minions and mortal followers of these goddesses in a petty tit-for-tat arrangement. Good-hearted Sarenrae isn't entirely hateful toward Urgathoa, and seeks ways to "heal" the undead goddess, which only throws fuel on the fire.

Urgathoa has a motherly relationship with two minor deities. Zyphus, the Grim Harvestman, keeps his divine realm within Urgathoa's territory. Zyphus is loyal to her, but does not belong to her, and she makes no longstanding claim on him. Their relationship is one of convenience and overlapping interests—he appreciates that sometimes a minor disease can unexpectedly turn fatal, suiting his morbid humor, and she appreciates that his priests often rise as undead to continue their work. Urgathoa is also trying to take the young goddess Naderi under her wing; as the patron of romantic suicides, the Lost Maiden believes that love endures beyond death, a sentiment that the Pallid Princess supports. This interest puts Urgathoa at odds with Shelyn, who was once Naderi's sovereign, but some priests also vaguely claim that the goddess of art has taken and hidden something from the goddess of the undead, intensifying their enmity. Urgathoa's relationship with ghoulish demon lord Kabriri and vampire demon lord Zura is strained—sometimes they are allies, sometimes enemies, and undead worshipers tend to drift between these cults.

As mentioned earlier, Urgathoa despises ascetics, and if the *Prophecies of Kalistrade* came from an actual deity, she would certainly oppose that entity. Instead, she is mildly annoyed by Irori's strict discipline, but can't actually make herself fight with him because he preaches moderation rather than abstinence (and some part of her wants to sample his physical perfection). The goddess supports the

CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Urgathoa's priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells.

Summon Monster I

Bloody human skeleton*

Summon Monster VII

Daughter of Urgathoa* (*The Inner Sea World Guide*)

* This creature has the extraplanar subtype but is otherwise normal for its kind.

Whispering Way, seeing the promotion of undeath as a good thing. However, her priests are allowed to form their own opinions of that organization. An undead or undead-allied priest may see the Whispering Way as a blessing and work with them, but a gluttony-priest may avoid interactions with the undeath cult out of squeamishness or divergent interests. Vampires and ghouls are in a unique position relating to the Whispering Way—they are undead creatures that must feed on the living, and if the cult manages to convert the entire world to undeath, some of these undead would starve, so they shun the cultists or even work to keep them from becoming too successful.

PLANAR ALLIES

Urgathoa's divine servants are usually undead creatures infused with divine power; some are more outsider than undead. Her herald is Mother's Maw, a flying fanged skull as large as an ogre, surrounded by a cloud of flies, trailing maggots, and dripping blood from its sharp teeth (see page 82 for more details). Counted among the ranks of her blessed minions are the following creatures.

Barasthangas: This pale devourer's undead flesh is so thin and tight that her white bones and gray connective tissues are visible. In addition to the normal abilities of a devourer, she can expend essence points to cast *contagion* (3rd), *gaseous form* (3rd), and *waves of fatigue* (5th). Her price for service is a suitably powerful creature whose soul she can devour.

Fjarn: This burly Ulfen man is gray like a corpse and has an unnerving rictus. Once a proud Linnorm King, he was tragically forced to kill and eat his own honor guard by a series of personal tragedies, and when he killed himself out of shame he rose as a ghastr in the service of Urgathoa. He still retains his barbarian powers, and likes to eat his fallen foes.