

MINOTAURS

A Treatise

*Snort

“You have bound me Wizard, and I have bound you. While you make your profane gestures and expend your will to hold me in this place. I have captured your scent and bound it to my soul. I know what your blood smells like and I the taste of your fear. My herd comes, you must escape with your wounded now to have any hope of fleeing. I can smell the fear on you, what will do you do when your focus breaks? What will you do when your magic is not strong enough? My blood is stronger than your magic. When I am free again there is no place you can hide that I will not find you.”

“My magic has stopped you now, and it will stop you again.”

“I KNOW YOUR SCENT! I WILL TASTE YOUR BLOOD! THE BLOOD IS STRONGER THAN MAGIC! I WILL CRUSH YOUR BONES!”

Introduction

Most adventurers know of Minotaurs as monstrous hybrid creatures, a large, bloodthirsty mixture of bull and man dedicated to the Horned One. Most adventurers would be completely accurate in this assessment of the Minotaur, most of the time. However there is more to the Minotaur than a mindless dedication to savage, bloodthirsty evil and through observation and study we can discover what really lay at the center of the labyrinth of fear regarding those who have been

gifted with the blessing of the Horned One.

Physiological Observations

Common Minotaur are large, hulking creatures, standing 10 feet tall and weighting over 86 stone. The head of the Minotaur resembles that of a large bull, usually with two horns. A large variation in the expression of the horns exists. Some Minotaur have horns that sweep forward to fine points. Other Minotaur have horns that extend out to the side beyond the shoulders. Below the head is a strong neck and broad shoulders. The entire body of the Minotaur ripples with muscle granted from the blessing of the Horned One. The weakest Minotaur is stronger than all but the most exceptional of common races. While pure blood orcs might seek out a Minotaur for a test of strength, this will not usually end well for the Orc.

The entire body of the Minotaur is covered with a thin fur coat that ranges in color, a transferred trait from the beasts that are imitated in the formation of a Minotaur. Minotaurs that are born naturally possess similar coloration in fur to the parents.

The arms of the Minotaur end in thick fingered hands. The metamorphological process that creates Minotaur usually binds two of the digits of the fingers. A Minotaur's hand has only three fingers and a thumb, in spite of this change Minotaurs can be observed using tools and possess average dexterity.

The legs of the Minotaur are powerfully muscled and long, terminating in large hooves. As with most hooved creatures it appears as if the knee of the Minotaur bends backwards. The truth is the hoof only represents the ends of the toes, with the thin portion of the leg above being the rest of the “foot”. The Joint above that would be the human ankle, then calf, then knee at the forward point on the leg, then powerful thighs. This means that the Minotaur, like all animals that have adapted to walking on toes or hooves can generate considerable power from the legs. The Minotaur uses this power in the legs to drive the body forward in aggressive charging attacks.

The diet of the common Minotaur is entirely carnivorous. The blessing of the Horned One makes the Minotaur incapable of consuming anything but flesh and bone, and it prefers the flesh of sentient creatures, the wide grinding teeth of the minotaur are capable of sheering bone and pulverizing it during eating. While many creatures who kill with such bloodlust do it in a frenzy of hunger and will stop to consume the fallen immediately, the Minotaur will prioritize hunting over killing and only stop to eat once all the quarry have been chased down. A Minotaur will never forget where it has left a kill, and will use trees, spikes, stalactites to impale a fallen foe while it hunts down the remainder of a group. This diet of blood and bone meal often mats and stains the fur and snout of the Minotaur and the breath of a Minotaur is like an

abattoir.

The Minotaur's ability to track is exceptional. They are compelled to hunt those who flee, and are implacable adversaries. Once a Minotaur has started to chase you, your only hope is to slay the beast or take flight to an area beyond the Minotaur's ability to pursue. A Minotaur will always remember the scent of prey that fled it, and will resume the chase immediately if the scent presents itself again. In addition a Minotaur can always recall a path it has traveled, they never become disoriented by surroundings or lost. This perfect direction sense even applies when magic or dungeon craft are used to alter the surroundings of the Minotaur, a Minotaur faced with a sudden unexpected obstacle will find the best way around the obstacle with perfect accuracy. As the observers at the Cult of the Great Maze learned, sometimes the Minotaur will prove that the best way around an obstacle is through. A Minotaur will not hesitate to charge through thin walls in pursuit of fleeing prey.

Minotaur's like the auroch can smell blood up to 3 miles away.

There is little difference between Bull and Cow Minotaur. While there might be a small size difference between the two, it is marginal at best. Unlike the animals they have inherited traits from the female Minotaur have no distinguishing sexual features, there are no udders for the nurturing of young, and both Bull and Cow Minotaur have horns. While Minotaur do possess pronounced gonads and genitalia they frequently cover these parts of the body with

thick hide skirts and aprons to protect them during battle.

Social Observations

Minotaur only socialize if they are hunting or breeding. Lacking any prey to hunt, they will wander apart in pursuit of prey or quickly start battling each other. With a presence of an outsider driving them to hunt, the Minotaur will be overwhelmed with the pursuit of the prey and will temporarily band together to run the prey to ground. Beyond this, the Minotaur have no mind for strategy or tactics, they will not cooperate to harry prey, and they do not flank, organize or execute pack tactics.

The foul breath and blood scent of the Minotaur has been observed to serve a social purpose. When encountering another Minotaur the two will spend several moments inspecting each other's scent markings. Each Minotaur can perceive these scents as a record of the blood the other Minotaur has tasted. The Minotaur rank each other based off these scent markings, the Minotaur who has feasted on the most blood might become the temporary leader of a hunting herd.

Minotaur breeding is a bloody, violent affair. When a herd gathers for a hunt, the female members can be identified quickly. The drive to hunt and bloodlust bleeds in to the process of mating, after any other prey is ran down the female Minotaurs are often perused. Males will fight among themselves during the breeding process and female Minotaur often fight as well to ensure that they survive. While Minotaur are driven to breed they do so chaotically and with no concern for the young offspring.

Minotaur can breed at any time, they have no seasonal needs. The blessing of the Horned One allows them to gestate and produce offspring quickly, within a single month's time. Minotaur calves are always born during the next full moon. Thankfully for all of the good races of the light, Minotaur calves do not often survive to adulthood. The Minotaur process no drive to care or nurture young. A hungry or excited Minotaur adult will consume a calf, even if that calf is its own offspring. Such callous bloodlust is not found often even among the most bloodthirsty of races.

Outside of a hunt, Minotaur will challenge another on absolutely any grounds. The same blessing that creates them and drives them makes them incapable of forming bonds with each other. Every Minotaur is an alpha in its own mind and will never bow or give itself over to the service of another. This unbroken will is almost supernatural in nature, and makes Minotaur impossible to enslave or organize. They do not respect even power capable of destroying them and do not form hierarchies of strength. A Minotaur put in a position of slavery will often kill its captors, and if completely incapable of killing its captors will lose itself to bloodlust to the point of its own heart exploding. A chained Minotaur will fight against its chains to the point of breaking its own neck.

Magical compulsion fares only slightly better, the Minotaur have a natural resistance from the strong will against such things and know that such forms of entrapment are temporary. A Minotaur caught in a

spell binding it in place will simply wait out the duration of the spell, drawing in deep breaths of the scent of its captor, once the Minotaur is free again, will pursue the magic user with great and violent prejudice.

Behavioral Observations

A Minotaur's horns are a source of power and pride for the Minotaur and it is common for them to dress the horns. When the Minotaur encounters something on a kill that it cannot consume, it might adorn itself with the item, especially if the quarry had demonstrated strength or cunning during the chase. Some Minotaur wear horn decorations made from golden armbands, or bloodstained pieces of armor.

When fighting, Minotaur will charge whenever possible, using momentum and horns break up groups of prey. The goring charge of a Minotaur can hit with more force than a charging lance strike and is enough to kill a common opponent. Those who are not killed are often knocked to the ground, the Minotaur will follow up with swings from a massive weapon, or even another charge attack.

Minotaur favor large weapons, they are commonly found with massive axes or mauls. Any weapon that allows them to deal considerable carnage is acceptable. Due to the size of the Minotaur and the preference for large weapons, a Minotaur can create a considerable presence in a fight. They will often wade in to the center of a fight recklessly, swinging their weapons at anything that still moves. For those who can stand bravely against the weather of blows, this presents

the best opportunity for survival. Since the Minotaur pays no mind to tactics, they can often be harried by opponents who are tactically prepared to exploit every advantage in combat.

Minotaurs spend their lives mostly in small groups of 5-10 individuals, usually hunting singly.

Inter-Species Observations

No discussion of the Minotaur would be complete without disclosure of the occult origins of the species. The first Minotaur are said to have been created by cults dedicated to the Horned One. The mythic survey of these cults seems to display an association with dark druidism and a desire to return the world to the Wild at any cost. The Horned One offered a means to do so, and a relationship was formed between the Horned One and the cults. Deep in the woods, great hunt rituals were undertaken. First, the cults were encouraged to hunt beasts naturally, chasing them down with claws and teeth. As the cultists completed the rituals hunting larger prey, soon the Horned One began asking for prey that was smarter. The cults started to abduct and chase sentient prey. The legends go that some of these cultists were rewarded, turned in to the first Minotaurs, creatures driven by bloodlust, consumed with the desire of the hunt, but most importantly, free of all the bonds of the modern world.

Many of these Cults are believed to still be active, in cities they conduct rituals in gardens, forgotten labyrinth catacombs and other mazes. In the wilderness, thick woods or twisting cave structures

are utilized. Every generation has those who want to seek strength, power, freedom or a return to the Wild. These cults offer corruptions of all of these things.

In other places, the Cults are no longer active, instead the labyrinths are the endless hunting grounds of the Minotaur themselves.

Variants:

Abrasaxian Minotaurs – These Minotaur have conquered their bloodlust and have sought the worship of divine concepts of peace and law, seeking to temper the violent bloodlust with tranquil meditation in glacial canyons far from conflict. They can be fanatical interpreters of law, and some are occasionally found as paladins serving gods of balance, justice and divine retribution. While the physical size of the Minotaur blood remains, they no longer suffer from the bloodlust and chaos of the common Minotaur. Instead they give themselves over to the service of Law and Order and find peace for themselves. It should be noted that they still love the hunt and are relentless pursuers of quarry making them excellent bounty hunters or avenging Templar.

Auroch – Socially and behaviorally these Minotaur are the same as common Minotaur. The primary difference is that they are much larger, the size of Hill Giant, and covered with a thick dense fur that grows in long bands. They have a stronger magical resistance and are more physically imposing. Found in higher mountains they frequently fight with Yeti for territory.

Eland Minotaur – Eland Minotaur

are still bloodthirsty hunters, but they are thinner and more cunning. With long twisting horns that extend straight up. They possess some innate ability for magic and have been known to detect magic, summon fog and move through the woods without trace some have been known to dispel magic or manipulate the woods in to ensnare or grasp prey.

Syncerus Minotaur – Black furred with smaller curved horns, the Syncerus is a Minotaur found in hotter regions. They are the size of a common Minotaur but have the same magical resistance of an Auroch. They also have pronounced resistance to wounds, with thicker hides that protect them from small

AUROCH

Natural Habitat: Caverns, Woods, Rough

Frequency: Very Rare **Number:** 1-6 (1)

Description: Socially and behaviorally these Minotaur are the same as common Minotaur. The primary difference is that they are much larger, the size of Hill Giant, and covered with a thick dense fur that grows in long bands. They have a stronger magical resistance and are more physically imposing. Found in higher mountains they frequently fight with Yeti for territory. **Talents, Skills, and Magic:** The auroch has no special magical abilities or talents. They are tool users and will sometimes use simple weapons. They can use giant weapons.

Movement Rates: Running: 300

PS: 25 – 30 **MD:** 18 – 20 **AG:** 14 – 17 **MA:** None

EN: 20 – 23 **FT:** 28 – 30 **WP:** 19 – 21 **PC:** 18-20

PB: 4 – 7 **TMR:** 6 **NA:** Hide absorbs 6 DP

Weapons: An auroch can attack by butting with his horns, biting, or attacking with a weapon. Butt: Base Chance of + 3 damage. Bite: Base Chance of 30%, - 1 damage. A minotaur will hold Rank 1-5 with whatever weapon it uses. The minotaur can use any combination of two of these attacks in any one pulse without penalty. In Close Combat the minotaur can use only his bite, but the Base Chance goes up to 50%.

Comments: Aurochs are particularly vicious, and will

weapons, allowing them to shrug off most damage.

Special Minotaur Combat attacks

- **Charge:** Minotaurs receive double benefits from charge (i.e. 40% to hit and double damage) Target must D100<3xAG or fall.
- **Impalement:** On a successful charge that is a critical hit, the target is impaled on the horns, taking gore damage every turn they are held. They must succeed at a grapple (against the minotaurs full hit dice) to escape
- **The Push:** Minotaurs are experts at knocking people

back and down. If their only action, they get a 20% bonus, or they may attempt it as part of a normal attack action.

- **Vengeance at Death:** Upon being reduced to 0 hit points or less, the minotaur can make one final attack with a bonus to hit, doing double damage against the nearest melee target.
- **Savage Ferocity:** Every time the minotaur attacks and misses, he becomes more angry, getting a cumulative +2 bonus on damage and +1D5 temporary hit points until the end of combat.

attack virtually anything that their dim intelligence tells them they have even a mediocre chance of beating. These beasts generally like the dark, and will only rarely be found in the open after sun up.

ELAND MINOTAUR

Natural Habitat: Caverns, Woods, Rough

Frequency: Very Rare **Number:** 1-6 (1)

Description: Socially and behaviorally these Minotaur are the same as common Minotaur.

Talents, Skills, and Magic: The eland minotaur has limited special magical abilities or talents (see below). They are tool users and will sometimes use simple weapons.

Movement Rates: Running: 300

PS: 22 – 26 **MD:** 18 – 20 **AG:** 14 – 17 **MA:** 1 – 5

EN: 14 – 16 **FT:** 22 – 25 **WP:** 14 – 16 **PC:** 18-20

PB: 4 – 7 **TMR:** 6 **NA:** Hide absorbs 6 DP

Weapons: An eland minotaur can attack by butting with his horns, biting, or attacking with a weapon. Butt: Base Chance of + 3 damage. Bite: Base Chance of 30%, - 1 damage. A minotaur will hold Rank 1-5 with whatever weapon it uses. The minotaur can use any combination of two of these attacks in any one pulse without penalty. In Close Combat the minotaur can use only his bite, but the Base Chance goes up to 50%.

Comments: Eland Minotaur are still bloodthirsty hunters, but they are thinner and more cunning. With long twisting horns that extend straight up. They possess some innate ability for magic and have been known to detect magic, summon fog and move through the woods without trace, some have been known to dispel magic or manipulate the woods in to ensnare or grasp prey.

T-1. Detect Enchantment

An eland minotaur may have the ability to determine whether an item, person, or area within 50 feet (+10/Rank) is currently under an enchantment. This enchantment may be an operating spell, a ward, an invested spell, or any other magical charm. Magical beings (conjured or summoned) may also be detected by this Talent. It does not tell what type of enchantment, only whether or not there is an enchantment. The Talent operates automatically with a Base Chance of 3×Magic Aptitude (+3 / Rank). The Experience Multiple for this talent is 150.

T-2. Pass Unknown

An eland minotaur may have the ability to move through the woods without trace. A Ranger subtracts 2x Rank of an eland minotaur's talent with Pass Unknown from any attempt to track him. Experience Multiple for this talent is 100.

1. Spell of Conjuring Mist (G-1)

RANGE: 20 feet + 20 additional/Rank

DURATION: 1 minute x D10 x Rank (x 1, if unranked)

EXPERIENCE MULTIPLE: 100

BASE CHANCE: 20%

RESIST: May not be resisted.

EFFECTS: The eland minotaur creates a 10 cubic foot volume of mist or fog. He may add an additional 10 cubic feet per Rank to this volume. However, all the fog must fall within the Adept's range. It may be of any shape and may be moved by the Adept so long as it is all within range. Subtract 1 from the Base Chance for each knot of wind currently blowing.

2. Dispell Magic (G-2)

RANGE: 25 feet + 25 additional/Rank

DURATION: [D+5] + 1 additional/Rank Minutes

EXP MULTIPLE: 400

BASE CHANCE: 20%

RESIST: May only be passively resisted

EFFECTS: The same as counterspell (see Book 2, pg 34) but affects all colleges.

3. Spell of Enchanting Plants (S-3)

RANGE: 10 feet +10 additional/Rank

DURATION: 1 day + 1 additional/Rank

EXPERIENCE MULTIPLE: 225

BASE CHANCE: 15%

RESIST: May not be resisted.

EFFECTS: The spell may impart partial mobility to a number of plants (including trees) equal to the caster's Rank. The plants may not uproot themselves, but may move their branches and leaves while remaining in the same spot. The plant's actions are always under the control of the caster so long as he maintains his concentration. If his concentration is broken, voluntarily or otherwise, the plants will be controlled by the GM until the caster reestablishes control and could conceivably attack the caster.

SYNCERUS MINOTAUR

Natural Habitat: Caverns, Woods, Rough

Frequency: Very Rare **Number:** 1-6 (1)

Description: Socially and behaviorally these Minotaur are the same as common Minotaur. They are black furred with smaller curved horns.

Talents, Skills, and Magic: The syncerus minotaur has no special magical abilities or talents. They are tool users and will sometimes use simple weapons.

Movement Rates: Running: 300

PS: 20 – 24 **MD:** 18 – 20 **AG:** 14 – 17 **MA:** None

EN: 13 – 15 **FT:** 21 – 24 **WP:** 19 – 21 **PC:** 18-20

PB: 4 – 7 **TMR:** 6 **NA:** Hide absorbs 8 DP

Weapons: An syncerus minotaur can attack by butting with his horns, biting, or attacking with a weapon.

Butt: Base Chance of + 3 damage. **Bite:** Base Chance of 30%, - 1 damage. A minotaur will hold Rank 1-5 with whatever weapon it uses. The minotaur can use any combination of two of these attacks in any one pulse without penalty. In Close Combat the minotaur can use only his bite, but the Base Chance goes up to 50%.

Comments: The syncerus is a minotaur found in hotter regions. They are the size of a common Minotaur but have the same magical resistance of an Auroch. They also have pronounced resistance to wounds, with thicker hides that protect them from small weapons, allowing them to shrug off most damage.

by Anthony Gerard

It was on the fifth of Fishspawn, in the year 425 of the Dancing Unicorn, when my caravan was attacked and taken by a large band of orcs. Amongst this horde were several ogres and minotaurs serving as mercenaries in the pay of the orcish chieftain, Garkun Three-Fingers, who was slain in the following month in the elven lands. After the caravan's defeat, several other unfortunates and I were given over to a large bull minotaur as part of the plunder, and thus began my captivity among the horned ones.

As I, more than any other human I know, have spent more time in the presence of minotaurs, I have taken it upon myself to write this brief narrative of their lives and habits. During my captivity, I observed in detail the society (such as it is) of these bestial folk, and was able to prolong my life by using this information to its best advantage in dealing with my lord and his monstrous people.

Of their appearance

For the benefit of the masses, I shall here note the obvious. The minotaur is a large, bipedal creature; a manlike beast with a bull's head, hooved feet, human hands, and thick, wiry hair on the head, forearms, lower abdomen, chest, and lower legs. Bull minotaurs often attain nine feet in height; females are generally somewhat shorter, perhaps seven feet on the average, but of no less savage a temperament.

The lower body and torso are similar in general appearance and build to those of ogres, although hairier. Females have breasts and

broad hips similar to those of most humanoid types. The minotaur's hands are massive and have thick yellow nails, which occasionally serve as claws, though they often break.

As is common knowledge, the head is bovine in appearance, but there are many differences to the careful observer. The snout is thicker and more drawn out than that of an actual ox. The teeth, particularly the canines, are large and pointed, for minotaurs are carnivores of the most fell sort and regularly bite at their enemies and prey. Occasionally, the canine teeth protrude even when the mouth is closed. The eyes are set more forward and closer together than those of actual cattle, granting minotaurs depth perception.

The head is heavily furred, with the hair color ranging from black to a light redbrown tone. Bodily hair is the same color as the head hair, although somewhat shorter and stiffer. The large, deep eyes are generally a dark brown. The horns of the minotaur are structurally similar to an ox, consisting of a horn sheath over a central bone core. Both sexes possess horns, although those of the male are larger and heavier.

The horns normally curve slightly forward, although they may be broken or bent at an odd angle from old injuries. I have heard that some minotaurs possess the tails of cattle, but those I knew had no tail at all. The horns of a bull minotaur are his pride. Certain free moments of his leisure time are spent polishing their length with old furs or rags, or sharpening their tips with stones. The color of the horn varies with

the color of the hair, although bicolor and tri-color horns are not uncommon. Dark-haired minotaurs generally have dark yellow or yellow-brown horns. The minotaurs I was among seemed to favor darker horns for cultural reasons, and to this end, they oiled and stained their horns to achieve a dark tone. The horns were often decorated in one manner or another, being often studded with decorative brass or silver tacks and spikes. I saw one minotaur whose left horn had apparently been severed by an axe blow; the horn had been rejoined and secured by an etched band of brass, through the artifices of a gray dwarf who served as the band's blacksmith.

Other than horn ornamentation, minotaurs wear little in the way of decorative jewelry. A few of my acquaintance wore studded gauntlets or waistbands, which obviously showed ogrish influence. Minotaurs are hardly above copying a style or mannerism used by other races, since they have so little to contribute on their own save their native barbarism. If a said decoration is seen to enhance one's fearsomeness, every minotaur who sees it will adopt it at the drop of a hoof.

Of their growth

Minotaurs breed and give birth throughout the year, and their society favors replenishment and increase of their numbers. A single minotaur is usually born to a cow; twins are rare and regarded as holy. By its second year, a young minotaur has fully developed horns and can fight an orc on equal footing. By its fifth year, a minotaur

is larger than a man, and by its tenth year, it has attained adult size and mannerisms. Sexual maturity comes early, even by the third year in some, and breeding likewise begins quickly for them. To bear a warrior son is the highest act to which a cow may aspire; to father a great many warriors is merely another social ornament for the male.

Young bulls are tutored in the use of weaponry by their sires and other males. The youths spend much of their time wrestling and fighting among themselves, as rivalry between bulls is fostered virtually from birth. Few cruelties are spared in their battles, and the scars from horn and tooth of one early battles with other minotaurs serve to strengthen the warlike charisma that the bulls prize so highly.

There is little maternal affection among minotaurs. A young bull shows respect to a female, even its mother, only as long as she is physically superior to him. The world of the minotaur is rooted in brutality and force of might, and females are barely more than slaves among them.

When he reaches maturity, a young bull may wander widely to avoid contact with older, stronger bulls. Solitary minotaur encounters are usually of this type. My master was fond of boasting about his exploits during this time of his life; he cared little for civilized marvels, being intent upon showing his mastery over the world at large through acts of wanton violence and destruction of the basest kind. No barbarian warlord has known the utterly bestial worship of a minotaur for that which we call wickedness.

The minotaur's lifespan may be as long as eighty years, but because of the violence inherent in their life-

styles, few live to even a ghost of this age. My master was a veteran of perhaps thirty winters, past his prime but still one to be feared and reckoned with by anyone of reason.

Of their society

To speak of minotaur society is perhaps as senseless a remark as to speak of the art of the orcs, yet certain traits become obvious to anyone even crudely familiar with this species. Particular practices vary to extremes between tribes of minotaurs, being snatches of other cultures and beings, adopted by minotaurs for a short time only to be discarded as soon as a new practice is seen. I witnessed the sudden appearance, spread, and disposal of a hundred practices during my captivity, borrowed from every source within imagination even from mortal enemies.

Polygamy suits minotaur bulls well; a strong bull may maintain a harem of up to six or seven females. Infanticide is rarely practiced by minotaurs, save for deformed births, despite their desire for more bulls. I have mentioned their concern with constant breeding and increase of their numbers. Even the birth of twin cows (considered an evil portent by some tribes) is better than no births at all. A cow, at least, can take her frustrations out upon the slaves kept either in common or by a particular bull. I have been too well acquainted with this practice myself, though I found ways of avoiding such unwanted attentions from the harem kept by my own master. I dwell more upon the lot of slaves elsewhere.

Bull minotaurs engage each other in combat over plunder, females, positions of authority, and any other possible point of friction that may

be imagined. The leader of a raiding party or the dominant bull in an area is always the largest and strongest, but not necessarily the most intelligent. In such combat, the antagonists grapple weaponless, seeking to kick, bite, or gore each other into submission or an early grave. One or both of the opponents in such a duel may end up fatally wounded which is often what was intended by the victor. A minotaur killing another in combat typically takes the left horn of his victim as a trophy. The tip of the horn is then removed so that it can be winded in battle or celebration. Such horns are highly prized; my captor owned four.

Slaves are usually supervised by females or young bulls and are employed in enlarging and adding to the labyrinthine minotaur lair. Minotaurs are not especially vigilant in overseeing their slaves. Escapes, at least temporary ones, are commonplace. The chief recreation of bull minotaurs (when not out raiding or drinking) is tracking escapees through the lair or overland. Perhaps one slave in two makes the escape a permanent one; of the one who fails, little can be said, save that perhaps it is better that minotaurs do not share the love of torture that other monstrosities (human and otherwise) relish. I digress, but here I shall note that a minotaur regards death as a holy thing that should come quickly, cleanly, and in combat. If the opponent has no weapons, at least the fight is ended much the sooner, and the victor can enjoy the status of another kill (though it will be of little worth, as they give more honor to kills against powerful and dangerous foes). A minotaur who has slain thirty men or orcs in a

battle would not be held in half the respect accorded one who killed an ogre or another minotaur fighting for the opposition.

Minotaur favor twisted mazes in places underground or in dense forests for their lairs. My captor was lord of an area commonly referred to as the Forest of Thorns, which was reputedly once an elven woodland burned by orcs. In this place, great thorn trees, thick as a man's thigh, grow and intertwine to the point that they block the very sun. Through this dismal wood, the minotaurs had chopped a great maze of tunnels and chambers, forming a nightmarish dwelling that seemed to have no end.

Yet, this series of passages, hopelessly confusing to a civilized mind, is navigated by the minotaur with surreal ease. I believe this ability is due largely to the minotaur's acute senses (especially the olfactory one), though perhaps an inborn trait is present which allows the minotaur to puzzle out geometry with the skill of the eldest mathematical savant of any university. A minotaur can retrace its own trail through an unknown area with uncanny accuracy, its nostrils flared and snorting at the scent that it leaves. Yet I heard of a minotaur called Faceless, which had suffered a severe facial wound that destroyed any sense of smell which it must have had, but was capable of the same feat.

In armed combat, minotaurs favor weapons that kill by concussion—a crude strategy, but one appropriate to their nature. Their favored weapon of choice is by far the two-handed poleaxe. Stoutly functional, these axes are rather crudely made. During my captivity, I never saw

any means by which the minotaurs might have produced these themselves; I believe they obtained their weapons in trade from orcs or hobgoblins. Minotaurs also employ massive two-handed hammers, clubs, or flails. Occasionally, they use stout, thick spears, although only as thrusting weapons; I have never seen a minotaur throw a spear or other weapon, save in frustration.

Minotaurs prefer the company of ogres or other minotaurs. They have a grudging respect for trolls and, one would assume, also for giants. They look down on the human, humanoid, and demi-human races, making little distinction between them, save as individual combatants whom the minotaurs must fight and conquer. True monsters, like dragons, are merely opponents.

Minotaurs are exceptionally fond of alcoholic drink, especially strong hard liquors and wines. Three times in the company of visiting ogres, I observed my captor drink himself into a stupor that lasted for several days (as, indeed, his brutish guests did as well).

The language of the minotaur is very similar to that of the ogre. As I was somewhat familiar with ogrish, I was soon able to overcome the differences between the two tongues. Aside from their actual spoken language, there are a few vocalizations common to minotaurs alone. When enraged or excited, a minotaur bellows in a manner reminiscent of an actual bull. When pursuing prey or searching for a hidden enemy, a minotaur gives out a snort every few seconds, in an attempt to acquire possible scents.

The majority of minotaurs worship the demon lord of their kind, Baphomet, to a greater or lesser degree. A Jovite high priest

has since told me that he believed them to be a special creation of Geryon from original ogrish stock, but I harbor my doubts. Other creatures mix the natures of two or more basic beasts, such as the centaur and the pegasus, yet we have no sure knowledge of how they came to be so, either. The gods will have their way. I never heard the name Geryon mentioned by any minotaur, though they freely called out the name of their own lord in curses, oaths, and taunts.

Minotaur bull-priests are easily recognized from other minotaurs. Their horns have series of crude pictograms carved into them; these runes are then darkened with blood, and the horn is coated with a dull yellow stain so that the carvings stand out in vivid contrast. In addition, the bull-priests have themselves painted with natural stains from earth and plant matter, and splash the blood of slain enemies upon themselves after battle. Gnoll blood is favored for some reason that I cannot explain, though some sage who has other knowledge of these beings may know the answer. Sacrifices are generally conducted in a central chamber of a bull-priest's labyrinth, usually before battle. Humans are the most common sacrifice, as they are the most easily available. It is reputed that if such a sacrifice is especially pleasing to the lord of minotaurs, it is consumed by a cold flame. The passageways leading to such sacrificial chambers are decorated with the bones of previous victims in curious, intricate patterns.

Minotaur bull-priests are given some measure of grudging respect by other minotaurs, but this is always dependent on the physical

strength of the priest himself. A battle horn made from a carved bull-priest's horn is highly regarded by minotaurs, so I assume the bull-priests may be slain by their fellows with the same facility as any other minotaur.

Overall, minotaurs are ignorant in the ways of magic. They are not curious, awed, or even amused by the ways of spell casters; magic is either a threat or arrogantly ignored. For this reason, minotaurs may be easily duped by even the simplest of magic, although illusions must be of the most superior sort to trick the minotaurs' keen senses. Minotaurs place no special value on magical items in a treasure hoard, although they may be aware of the items' value to other creatures. Magical items are soon traded for liquor or other prizes (unless the item is a weapon), so a minotaur's hoard rarely contains many such dweomered things.

Of my escape

For two years and two-hundred seventyone days, I dwelt amongst these bestial creatures, and I came to know them as well as perhaps any could. I knew their smell, their curses, their triumphs, and their rage. I can close my eyes now and see my old master, doubtless now a mere skeleton on a forgotten battlefield, his offspring raiding and looting with their own savage tribes.

Many slaves were taken by my master's folk, but only I was favored enough to be kept alive, even when food was in short supply and my master's massive frame shrank from starvation. I could not have run from him, having a disabled knee from the day of my capture, and I had no muscles with

which to fight him directly but I was a student of spatial geometry before I took up my father's business and became a merchantman, and my teachers said that my ability at drafting was uncommonly sharp.

Thus, I survived by teaching my master puzzles. From the first, trembling moment when I handed that evil beast-lord a scrap of parchment with a maze drawn thereon, to the next thousand nights that followed, my life was wholly dependent upon my ability to create a fresh, new maze for my master to solve. He could not use his nose to solve it, you see, so only his eyes and brain were of use truly a challenge for any of his kind. No man can imagine how slender a thread held me from destruction, save for my own terrorized ingenuity at creating brain-teasers, one per night, to keep that bull amused. Though he told me that he would slay me outright if any of my designs failed to challenge him, I believe that toward the end he came to be rather fond of me, and even kept other minotaurs who would have slain me for my poor meat away from my person at risk of his own life.

Such are the ways of the gods. When the scout force for Lord Darduin's dwarven legions rescued me in the heat of a pitched engagement, I had bettered my own understanding of mathematics to the highest degree, and now spend my days at this university, a teacher and scholar – and a free man.

Perhaps I should be grateful, but surely you understand if I wish it had been otherwise. When the weather changes and my knee aches, I sit and remember those days at my master's hooved feet,

and wish I could forget.

Additional notes

1. Minotaurs are very adept at tracking and trailing. They have a base 50% chance to trail a man-sized creature. This base is modified upward 5% for each additional man-sized creature in a tracked group. The base is modified downward for environmental and terrain factors, or a pursued party's effort to conceal its scent trail. A minotaur has a 20% chance to trail prey without the use of smell, using its other senses alone especially its 90% infravision. This base chance is decreased 2% for each melee round elapsed since the creature passed. The base is also modified (at the DM's option) for environmental and terrain factors.
2. Due to its keen senses of smell and hearing, a minotaur has a 20% chance to detect invisible creatures. The base chance is increased upward by 3% for each additional man-sized creature present.
3. A base 75% chance is given for a minotaur to retrace his trail through an unfamiliar area using all senses; without the use of smell, the base drops to 45%.
4. A base 25% chance is given for an individual fluent in ogrish to correctly interpret anything said by a minotaur.
5. Minotaur clerics reach a maximum of 3rd-level clerical ability. Such clerics

cannot cast healing spells. At 3rd level, they gain a spell identical to the second-level magic-user spell strength.

6. A minotaur's contempt of magic can work to its

disadvantage. For example, a minotaur would be loath to retreat from a magic-user even in the face of major offensive spells such as fireball. Its conceit for its ability would force it to

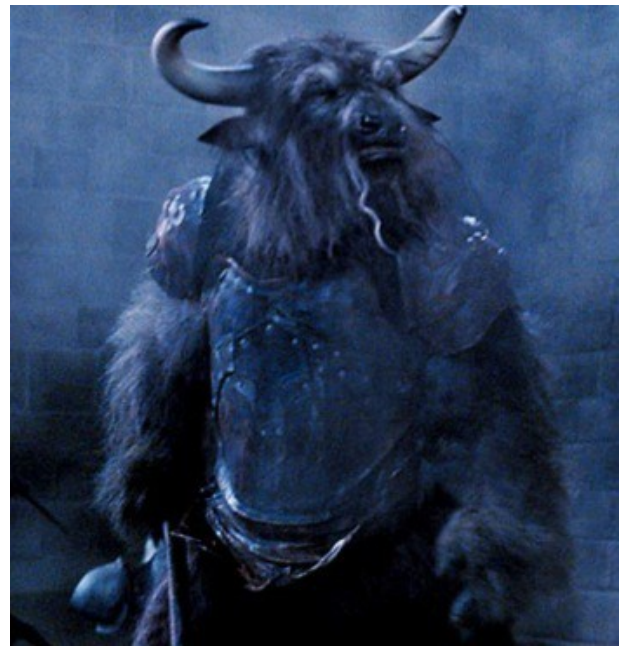
withstand the blast.

7. 7. A minotaur, in addition to biting and goring, may kick with one hoof with 30%, +2 or may strike out with one nailed fist for damage 35%, +1 damage at Rank 1 – 5.

Rumors and other whispers in the dark:

- It is very important that the labyrinth the minotaurs inhabit contain no furniture. They must be bare of decoration
- They are actually terrible at mazes. If they were any good, they'd all be living in sunny little villages retiring, eh? No minotaur has ever escaped from a maze and they are all a bit sore about it
- They fight and slay all intruders, because they are endlessly seeking someone worthy to end their eternal vigil over the infinite labyrinth
- Any mortal that isolates themselves over a long enough period will slowly change and shift into the form of a minotaur. Dwarves who do so turn into particularly powerful monsters, larger and more powerful than the default beast
- It isn't only isolation that causes the change in form. It's also stubbornness. This is the origin of the phrase, "bull-headed"
- Minotaurs are all autistic, hence the predilection for mazes
- Sometimes this happens quite quickly, the most famous incident was a Tartocrate the philosopher who transformed in the middle of a debate. His bewildering and confusing argumentation made of layers of unassailable facts manifested as a maze around him
- Minotaur shamans wear human masks for their ceremonies
- All minotaurs are hermaphrodites that can reproduce by parthenogenesis
- Though known for the axe, this is actually confusion of the word Labrys, considered to be more than just a word describing the narrow mazes they inhabit. They actually prefer daggers and poignards, weapons much for suitable for tight quarters

- The labyrinth is eternal, it is the equilibration matrix of the universe and minotaurs are its defense vectors, much like white blood cells



- They are actually mechanical and scientific geniuses, the labyrinth is a training ground for the young. They are so aggressive because they are young arrogant teens, who know their species is vastly more intelligent than other humanoids. And what they do in the labyrinth is never spoken of once they escape
- It is said were-minotaurs lair in the tangled groves of Kalabrinthia
- The construction of labyrinths is an insane compulsion that overcomes them, until such structures reach a certain size. After these unknown criteria are met they abandon their maze. More than one dungeon was created by this method.
- There's just one minotaur and just one labyrinth, but the labyrinth is very very large and the minotaur is very very good at playing

dead

- The labyrinth is a physical representation of their crazed mind, and changes and shifts with their schizophrenic thoughts. An entrance or exit only appears during the rare dawns of lucidity and it never lasts long. Once slain, the labyrinth is disconnected from reality, and as a chaotic thought it is transported to the plane of Limbo, where it will slowly degrade over time. . .
- Minotaurs aren't evil, just virile and well hung, causing writers and chroniclers (mostly male) to depict them as monsters, helping to exterminate them across Priapia.



- The first minotaur was a unsanctioned and terrible union between a god and a woman, but it was not a god of men, but one of beasts and the wilds that took her. This abomination at birth bred true with both beast and man. The labyrinths are their temples to their father, their savage rites honor their animal nature, their war, weapon, and brew craft, homages to the race of their mother. They are the true hybrid, both man and beast, mortal and divine
- The labyrinths of particularly devout minotaurs can serve as gateways to other realms
- Minotaurs are builders cursed into terrible shapes and obsessed with labyrinth building as punishment for cutting corners when building the temples of Zoes the Munificent and

Magnificent in Phthiria Minor

- Minotaur horns are indestructible. It is not possible to take one as a trophy. Other parts, however. . .
- Paying the gods: A minotaur feels compelled to peel the skin and pull the nerves and muscle fibers apart in their prey. They do this because they know the soul is aware of the body for days after death, and it clouds it's travel into the far planes, leaving it adrift. Such suffering feeds the taurian dark heart.
- Having the head of a bull, they also have the teeth. In order to swallow flesh, it must be in large chunks, hence the popularity of axes among their kind. They also have trouble digesting it, giving them foul breath and a terrible temper
- The (sunny?) disposition of the minotaur gives it an aura of inspiration, improving the morale of all bovine attacks and defenses within 35 feet
- They are usually quite pleasant and docile, but at some point they all turned anthropophage. This is attributed to the spread of mad minotaur disease
- The minotaur is a weak subspecies of a beast called a Majotaur which is 13 feet tall and breathes smoke and brimstone from its nostrils
- The devil-man city of Trumachi is the source of all minotaurs. The high king would not pay homage to their throne, instead wanting to cast down the battlements and shatter the dark tower. The king's sapper's who wore hides of the bull were fused to their trappings. They entered the devil maze beneath the tower and found that the tower went into them. Curses shot, crackling and ricocheting through their ranks. Both the high king and the city are hollow ruins, but this is still a great sorrow, for the wash of monsters fills the ancient guts of the broken unassailable fortress
- All minotaurs are actually vegan



NateHallinanArt

- Minotaurs have no sense of smell
- The Hurrian sages disagree, claiming it is by smell and hearing alone that the beady-eyed beasts navigate their mazes
- The Samnicians go one further, claiming minotaurs have the ears of bats and use echolocation
- They await the end-times, heralded by the coming of the great two-headed bull-man
- The Bull God Dongbah insisted that all bulls be given free range. When economy-minded humans (who cared about not having their children trampled and so on) began to pen them up, Dongbah punished them by creating prisons to herd humans, to see how THEY liked it. Now Dongbah is quite unintentionally the Gaol God, and the warders are vestigial symbols from his pastoral history, now long gone
- They all actually have the scrotum of a snake, but few know this
- Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, minotaurs never eat beef
- The arch mage Alsaziar was an arms dealer, specializing in organic siege engines. The minotaur was his greatest success, the ultimate berserker warrior that breeds true. The only way he found to control them was to lock them in mazes. Inevitably, Alsaziar was slain, and his island was left alone for many many years. A thousand years later, the minotaurs emerged, eyes brimming with magic and insanity of dark mazes, wielding massive shackles as weapons. Their mazes had grown dull, and they now sought new entertainments



Minotaur Guardian by *el-grimlock

- They are considered a delicacy by the Paztecas, eaten with pasta al dente
- The bellow of a Minotaur can attract cows from up to 3 miles away
- Female minotaur milk is said to be liquid gold, prized in the markets the world over
- The Daedelmar fleshcrafters blended men with horses to guard the plains and blended men with bulls to guard the mountains. They explained that all that was required was a burning heart of anger and a gut that trembles with lust for man-flesh. Sages pointed out that these things were not traits of bulls, the fleshcrafters mentioned that they spent long crafting the bulls before merging them with men. In the aeons since this event, minotaurs worked their way in and along the roots of the mountains and they are nothing but one large connected maze, bound by magic where it is not bound by stone
- Their tails are components of magical whips
- They don't construct mazes, but actually live in labyrinth-like towers.
- There is a rare subspecies of minotaur, the 'dwarf' or 'pygmy' minotaur; who's body is that of a halfling and head is that of a calf
- Emperor Flanyeer enjoyed board games, so he created the grandest game as creatures and men were coerced into costume to play at a life sized board. Mages would gain favor for creating the most spectacular pieces. Magus Dulwither created the minotaur which was considered a superb creation till it ran amok, killing and

eating several other pieces. Dulwither created several others to protect him, and that was the downfall of the empire. They smashed and destroyed that city, and now they still play the grand game, making up their own rules. But the minotaurs have transcended their roles, becoming referees in their own right

- They all have a third eye hidden under the skin on their foreheads, which allows them to see the true path through any maze or labyrinth
- Savage tribes wear masks to take on aspects of the spirits. When a tribe nears its end, those who go into the last battle or journey take the form permanently, and some always survive the death of their people.
- When rancher's moved in, spoiling the land of the peaceful halflings of Vestilech, they protested. The protests were of course ignored. The halflings captured the horsemen and painfully mated them with large stud bulls using powerful curses learned from the spider folk. The monsters that were made fear halflings as elephants fear mice, but hate humans with a burning passion. It was not long till the minotaurs managed the herds, treating the halflings with respect. The halflings are now long dead, but the minotaurs still tend the herds
- There is no such thing as a minotaur. It is just tribal shamans wearing masks.
- Boiled minotaur tongue is an aphrodisiac, sold in the markets of Farkathae, hence the rarity of said beasts today
- The first of them were spelunkers. Shamans would mark the known routes on a bull hide which they would meld into the explorer. They would become bigger, stronger, and have their explorations marked on the hide. Some few got trapped, the hide unremoveable, and with time became terrible beasts under the earth
- They are a nasty joke perpetrated by the god of fertility, while drinking in a bar where strippers rode a mechanical bull
- Some star-crossed lovers were involved in a theater production practicing out in the woods with fey watching. One of the fey enchanted the dour pimp of the group, giving him a bull head.

He was not a good sport, and he ended up slaying all the fey with his magic sword and grumbling off. That's how it all started...

- They all have EM sensors in their horns, which is how they navigate in pitch blackness
- They do not breed true. They are the product of human rape or curses placed on men
- Shulabu of Hulm created a chimeric creature, combining a minotaur and a gargantuan mantis shrimp, creating a deadly aquatic predator
- A prank by a fledgling god is the beginning of it, bulls were struck with lightning, holding great transformative power. The resulting creatures, minotaurs, were so fascinated by the lightning that they ever strove to recreate its complex patterns, digging out labyrinth after labyrinth.
- In the beginning was Minotaur, firstborn son of the All-Father, the Great Bull of Sky. When he rebelled against All-Father and ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge All-Father exiled him from the Pasture of Ease and split him into men and cattle, that his stolen knowledge would be scattered and lost. Now and again All-Father sends another divine minotaur son to see how the mortals live on the lost Earth. Some become bitter with their lot, others not. The greatest of the Messiah Minotaurs ascend bodily back to the All-Father with their judgements, others fall from grace and become demonic reavers
- They are all human, blessed by the evil Baphomet with strength and power
- Minotaurs like delftware and collect it in preference to all other valueables
- Minotaurs are actually cyborgs - robot heads mounted on the slain bodies of humans. For cost-cutting reasons the Elven Transhuescence Corporation decided to mount the hardware in a bull's head, because the extra space allowed for cheaper, off-the-shelf equipment
- The minotaurs of southern Tauriscia are organized in several crime syndicates collectively called the Corno Nostro. They are primarily active in smuggling dairy products, drugs and fermented mare's milk.

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