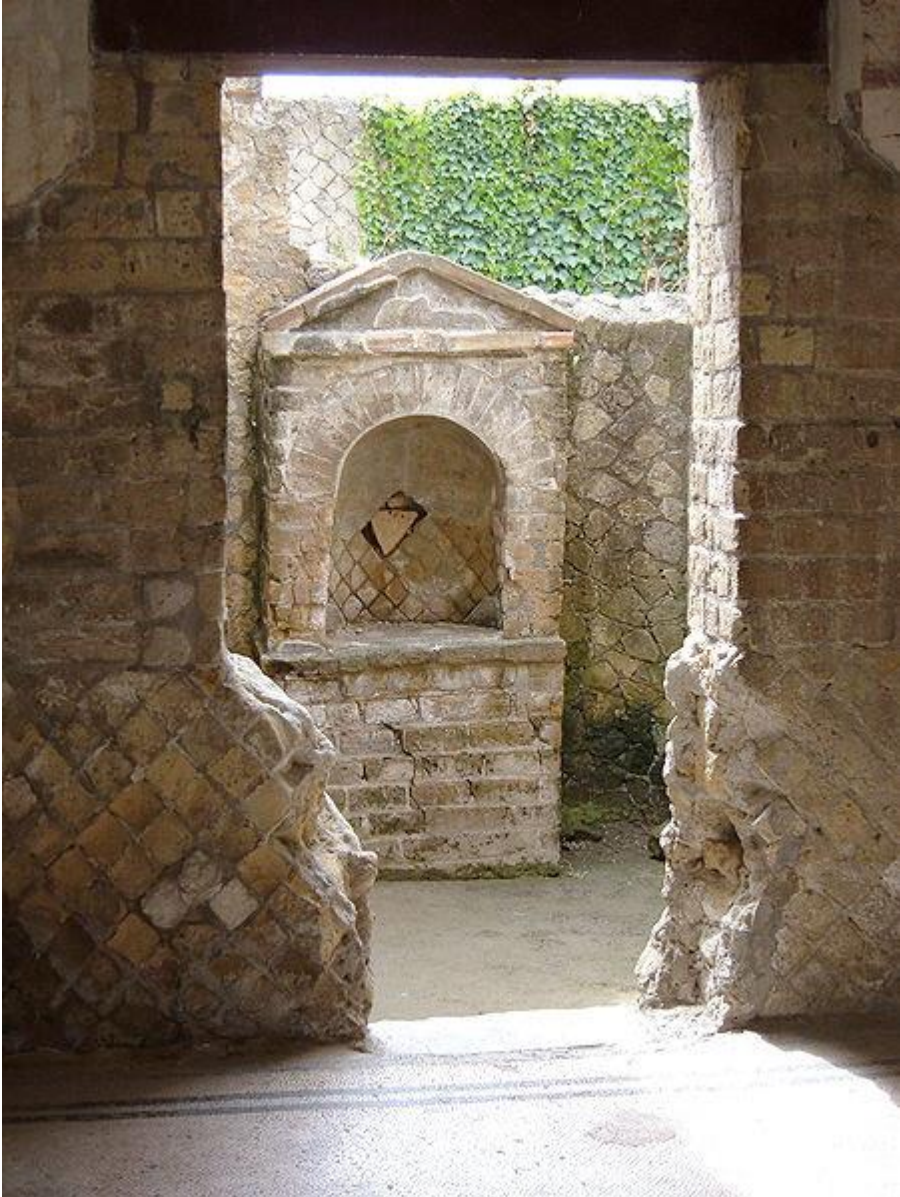






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The **Lar Familiaris** was a domestic guardian spirit who cared for the welfare and prosperity of a household. A household's **lararium**, a shrine to the Lar Familiaris, usually stood near the hearth or in a corner of the atrium. A lararium often had the appearance of a cupboard or a niche containing a small statue, a niche painted on a wall, or a small freestanding shrine. Sometimes the Genius of the head of the household, pictured as a bearded or crested snake, or as a man with the fold of his toga covering his head, is depicted with the Lar.