

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®  
2nd Edition

# Al-Qadim™

LAND OF FATE

CAMPAIGN



RENEAU



Advanced Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup>  
2nd Edition

# Al-Qadim<sup>™</sup>

## LAND OF FATE

CAMPAIGN

### Adventurer's Guide to Zakhara











# Adventurer's Guide to Zakhara

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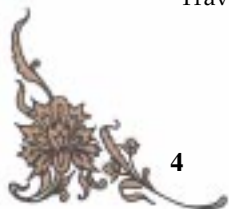
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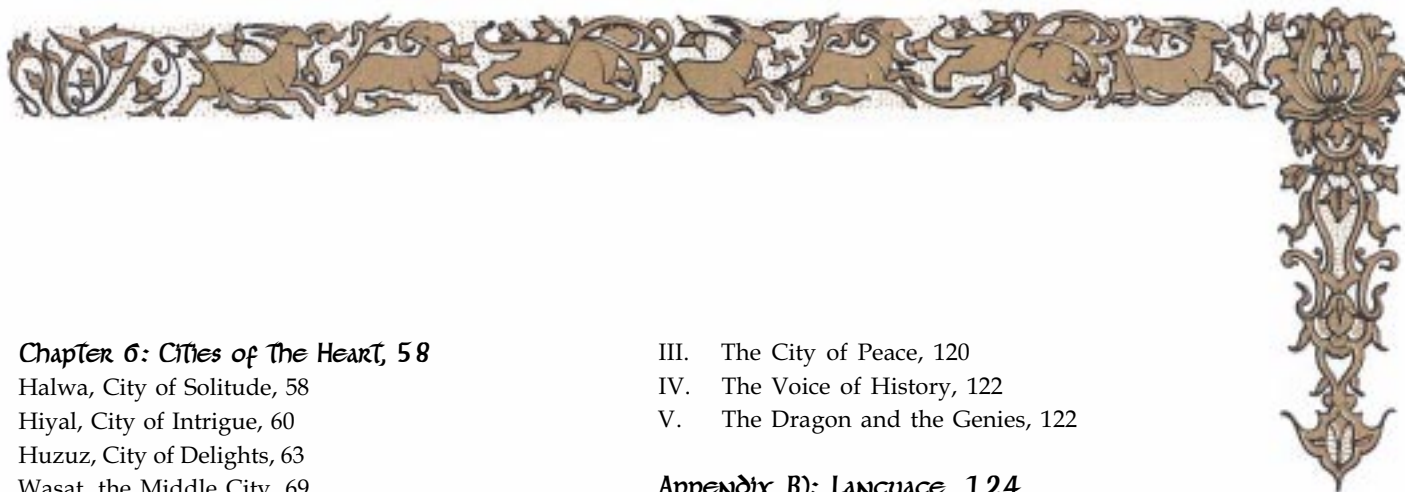
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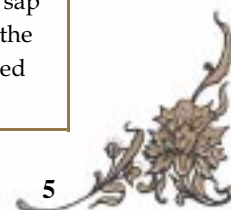
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# Introduction

The desert resounds with the hoofbeats of raiders as they descend upon a lonely outpost. Sails snap and unfurl as explorers journey toward treasure and treachery on the Crowded Sea. In the Grand Bazaar of golden Huzuz, merchants haggle over silks and spices and rings of silver, their words merging with the din of the crowd. Then the gongs of the mosques begin to sound. A hush passes over the city as the priests call the faithful to prayer. While the enlightened masses bow their heads, miles away-among the ruins of the Haunted Lands-a whirlwind rises, shifting the sand to reveal another idol, another tribute to some nameless, forgotten god.

Welcome to Zakhara, the Land of Fate.

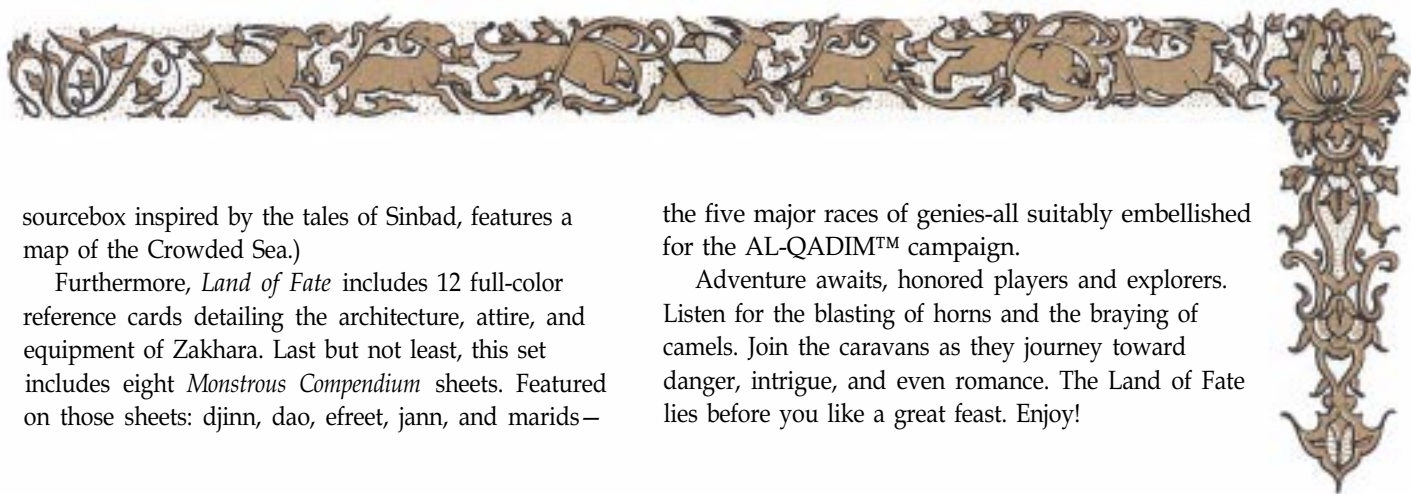
This grand, exotic world is the official campaign setting for the *Arabian Adventures* rulebook. It forms a permanent base for AL-QADIM™ accessories and adventures, as well as a ready-made setting for the Dungeon Master™ who wishes to launch an “Arabian” campaign of his or her own design.

The *Land of Fate* boxed set contains two books. The first, in your hands now, is the *Adventurer's Guide to Zakhara*. Within these pages is an introduction to the people and gods of the Land of Fate, as well as a guide to Zakhara's cities. The material is designed for all explorers-players and Dungeon Masters alike.

In contrast, the second book, *Fortunes and Fates*, is primarily the province of the Dungeon Master. The book describes Zakhara's laws and how they affect PCs. It also explains how to handle high-level characters, and provides movement rates for Zakhara's terrain. Further, *Fortunes and Fates* introduces new magical items and reveals some of the “secrets” behind current tales and events in Zakhara's cities. In short, players should not see this material until the DM™ decides the time is right to reveal it.

*Land of Fate* also includes three poster-sized maps of Zakhara. The first provides an overview of the entire campaign setting. The others offer a closer look at two important regions: the Pearl Cities and the Golden Gulf, and the High Desert to the north. Additional “closeup” maps appear in other AL-QADIM adventures and accessories. (For example, *Golden Voyages*, a





sourcebox inspired by the tales of Sinbad, features a map of the Crowded Sea.)

Furthermore, *Land of Fate* includes 12 full-color reference cards detailing the architecture, attire, and equipment of Zakhara. Last but not least, this set includes eight *Monstrous Compendium* sheets. Featured on those sheets: djinn, dao, efreet, jann, and marids—

the five major races of genies—all suitably embellished for the AL-QADIM™ campaign.

Adventure awaits, honored players and explorers. Listen for the blasting of horns and the braying of camels. Join the caravans as they journey toward danger, intrigue, and even romance. The Land of Fate lies before you like a great feast. Enjoy!

**TABLE 1:**  
**Characters in Shorthand**

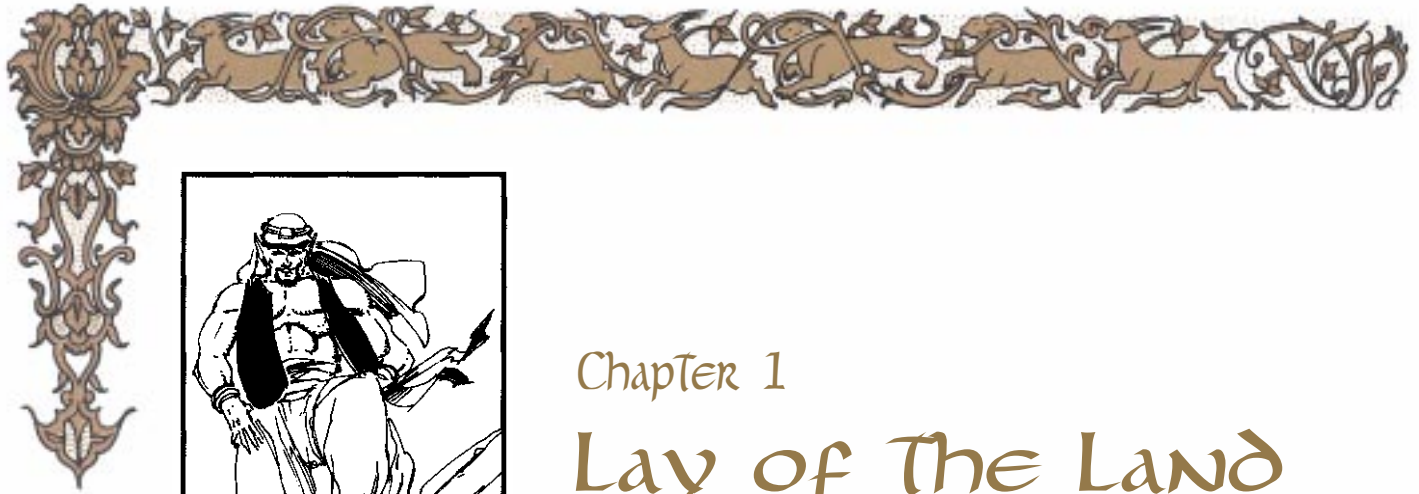
Abbreviations describing characters in this book appear in this order: race, sex, class, kit, and level. For example, hmF/f/20 means “human male fighter, faris, 20th level.”

Race				Kit			
d	dwarf	he	half-elf	a	Askar	mk	Mamluk
e	elf	hg	halfling		Ajami mage	mr	Merchant-rogue
g	gnome	kb	kobold	Tg	Beggar-thief	mt	Matrud
gb	goblin	o	orc	br	Barber	my	Mystic
h	human	og	ogre		Corsair	o	Outland priest
hb	hobgoblin			i r	Desert rider	ow	Outland warrior
Sex				e	Ethoist	p	Pragmatist
				f	Faris	r	Rawun
f	female	m	male	fm	Flame mage	sam	Sand mage
Class				h	Hakima	sem	Sea mage
				hs	Holy slayer	sh	Sha’ir
				k	Kahin	si	Sa’luk
B	Bard	R	Ranger	m	Moralist	so	Sorcerer
F	Fighter	T	Thief	mb	Mercenary barbarian	wm	Wind mage
P	Priest	W	Wizard (Mage )				
Pal	Paladin						

*DM’s Note:* Levels reflect the standard range of 1 to 20; DMs may choose to alter experience levels to suit their campaigns. While a character’s description gives insight into his or her basic nature, alignment is not listed; DMs may assign alignment as they see fit.







## Chapter 1

# Lay of The Land

**Z**akhara is a world of extremes. Travelers may cross a seemingly endless sea of dunes, cresting wave after wave, and then suddenly find an oasis as lush as any imagined paradise. They may climb snow-capped mountains that soar above 15,000 feet or discover the deadly Pit of the Ghuls, whose murky depths plunge well below the level of the distant sea.

The text below describes the symbols and features depicted on the poster maps in the *Land of Fate* boxed set. The key for those maps is on the back of this book. Movement costs for each type of terrain are detailed separately for the Dungeon Master in *Fortunes and Fates*; see "Travel Across Zakhara."

## Features of The Land

**Anvil:** The Land of Fate contains two great "anvils" — the Genies' Anvil of the High Desert and the Great Anvil of the Haunted Lands. These are inhospitable and deadly places, searing by day and often freezing by night. Neither anvil ever sees rain, and duststorms continually sweep across them. Even the boldest and most experienced desert riders think twice before venturing into these regions.

**Badlands:** Sharp and forbidding, badlands are laced with steep ravines and deeply eroded canyons that are still being carved by erratic downpours.

**Barchan Dune:** See *dune*, *barchan*.

**Barren:** A rocky terrain not dominated by any particular land feature, a barren is arid and rough. Some light vegetation may exist, but it is typically insufficient for grazing large herds.

**Battle Site:** The symbol of crossed swords marks the site of a great war or an important conflict, some recent, others long past. Ruined steel and old skeletons often litter such areas, half-buried by the sand.

**Brushland:** Found primarily in the valleys of the Ruined Kingdoms, this land is overgrown with brush and vines.

**Caravan Trail:** See *trails and roads*.

**City:** Afyal, Hiyal, Huzuz, and Qudra are great cities—those of impressive size or importance. Each is represented by a large oval symbol. Other cities are represented by smaller ovals. (DM's Note: Cities count as "cultivated



land" for moment purposes.)

**Cliff/Plateau:** In the desert, this symbol (a fringelike series of short vertical lines) indicates a sharp transition between lowland and plateau. Where the main elevation line intersects the cliff symbol, the cliff represents a steep rise of 2,500 feet. (The average elevation of Zakhara's desert plateaus is 2,500 feet.)

**Cultivated Land:** Zakhara's agriculture is concentrated around its major settlements; this feature is uncommon elsewhere.

**Desert, Open:** Desert lands showing no other terrain feature on the maps are open tracts of sandy desert. In general, such areas contain shifting sands and a variety of small dunes.

**Dune, Barchan:** This is a crescent-shaped dune, typically located at the desert's edge. The "horns" of the crescent point away from the prevailing wind. When this terrain symbol appears on a map, it means that barchan dunes are predominant in the area, with each of them arching in the direction shown.

**Dune, Seif:** A seif (or "sword dune") is the largest of all dune types. Like a whaleback dune, it runs parallel to the wind. Unlike a whaleback, however, a seif has a sharp peak, is very rugged, and can extend for hundreds of miles. The space between two seifs is virtually swept clean of sand and forms a rocky path known as a *gassi*.

**Dune, Star:** A twisted mass of rising sand that resembles a starfish, this type of dune is created in an area that has no predominant wind. Most star dunes lie at the very heart of a deep desert or at its edge.

**Dune, Whaleback:** This great, curve-backed dune resembles an enormous beached whale. The dune can measure up to 100 feet high and two miles from end to end. Its form runs parallel to the prevailing wind.

**Elevation:** Only one major elevation line appears on the *Land of Fate* maps. It marks the location at which the elevation reaches approximately 2,500 feet. (It does not necessarily depict a cliff-line. Cliffs are represented by a fringelike series of short parallel lines.) Future maps may also depict the precise elevation of major mountains, using the "+" symbol noted on the map key (for example, "+5,500 feet").

Most of the lesser mountain ranges in Zakhara rise no higher than 1,000 feet above the desert floor around them. In game play, all are low mountain

terrain. This includes the small ranges scattered across the plateau of the High Desert, though their actual elevation may be up to 3,500 feet. The Tumbling Mountains of southern Zakhara reach heights between 5,000 and 6,000 feet; they're medium mountains. The World Pillars have peaks exceeding 15,000 feet; they're high mountains.

**Fort:** See *qal'at*.

**Gassi:** This is a rocky, barren trough between two seifs, or sword dunes (see *dune*, *seif*).

**Grassland, Seasonal:** This grassland is barren most of the year. During seasonal rains, however, the apparent wasteland comes alive with wildflowers and grasses.

**Haram:** A haram is a holy site. It may be a place of religious miracles or legendary heroics, or it may be the site of past triumphs over the unenlightened. Some harams are venerated by kahins and certain mystic groups, who view harams as places of power. Travelers may often find a hospice at a haram, especially if the haram is near (or is itself) a popular stopping point.

Zakhara's most significant haram is the Golden Mosque in Huzuz, which contains the House of the Loregiver. All enlightened Al-Hadhar (city-dwellers) strive to visit this mosque during their lifetimes, and so do many Al-Badia (nomads).

Another famous haram is the Desert Mosque, located at an oasis midway between the city of Qudra and the Genies' Anvil. The Desert Mosque is frequented by enlightened nomads, caravan drivers, and other travelers.

**Harrat:** A harrat is an area of volcanic debris. It may contain the weathered remains of old lava flows or the sharp, newly laid materials of recent eruptions. In either case, travel may be difficult.

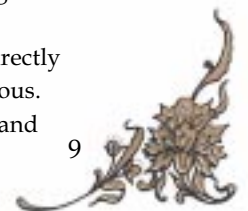
**Hogback:** See *plateau and hogback*.

**Intermittent River:** See *river*.

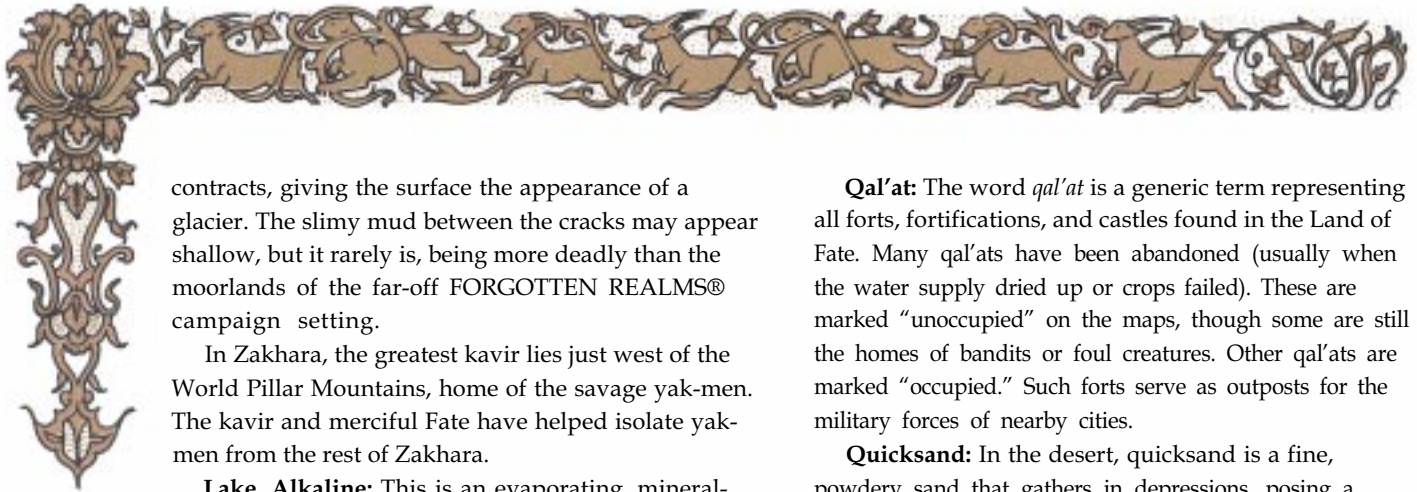
**Jungle or Forest, Deep:** These lands are the heart of the jungle, thick and oppressive.

**Jungle or Forest, Outlying:** Once a region of scrub or cultivated ground, land marked "outlying forest" or "outlying jungle" is land that the forests or jungles are reclaiming. (The terrain is considered light jungle or medium forest in game play.)

**Kavir:** A kavir is a crusty salt flat that lies directly over a sea of black mud, making travel treacherous. The salt has crystallized and routinely expands and







contracts, giving the surface the appearance of a glacier. The slimy mud between the cracks may appear shallow, but it rarely is, being more deadly than the moorlands of the far-off FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting.

In Zakhara, the greatest kavar lies just west of the World Pillar Mountains, home of the savage yak-men. The kavar and merciful Fate have helped isolate yak-men from the rest of Zakhara.

**Lake, Alkaline:** This is an evaporating, mineral-laden body of water, usually surrounded by salt flats, without an outlet. The water is bitter and undrinkable unless it is magically enhanced.

Zakhara's most famous alkaline lake is in the High Desert, at the bottom of a valley called the Pit of the Ghuls. The surface of this lake lies more than 1,000 feet below sea level. Though its edges are shallow, the bottom quickly drops toward the center, and the ultimate depth of the lake is unknown. The lake is a source of valuable minerals, including bromides and table salt, but its resources are still untapped. Let the name be a warning to all who might wander here: this valley is teeming with ghuls and restless spirits.

**Lake, Seasonal:** A seasonal lake may be nothing more than a salt flat during the dry season. During the rainy season, it may provide drinkable water and briefly give rise to vegetation.

**Mangrove Swamp:** This swamp represents a mazelike forest of trees whose roots are partially submerged (usually below dark, almost opaque water). Such swamps may spread to create new "islands" beyond the land from which they originated. Travel by boat or mount is restricted to cleared channels. Individuals moving through a mangrove swamp on foot must climb from bole to bole.

**Mountain:** See *elevation*.

**Oasis:** An oasis is a place where natural surface water exists in a permanent waterhole. Vegetation surrounding an oasis is lush, and plants that could not otherwise survive in the desert thrive there.

**Open Desert:** See *desert*, open.

**Plateau and Hogback:** Much of the High Desert is located atop a great plateau, which averages 2,500 feet in elevation. In addition, the desert is broken by rocky hogbacks— prominent ridges with steeply sloping sides, named for their resemblance to the back of a wild pig.

**Qal'at:** The word *qal'at* is a generic term representing all forts, fortifications, and castles found in the Land of Fate. Many qal'ats have been abandoned (usually when the water supply dried up or crops failed). These are marked "unoccupied" on the maps, though some are still the homes of bandits or foul creatures. Other qal'ats are marked "occupied." Such forts serve as outposts for the military forces of nearby cities.

**Quicksand:** In the desert, quicksand is a fine, powdery sand that gathers in depressions, posing a hazard to those who may stumble into it unaware. The quicksand symbol on the poster maps denotes areas in which travelers have a 20 percent chance of finding quicksand. An unencumbered person can float on quicksand, provided he or she remains calm (animals will panic and therefore sink). An encumbered or panicked individual sinks beneath the sand in 1d4 rounds. (DM's Note: Moving cautiously through a quicksand area costs twice the usual amount of movement points.)

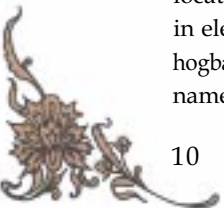
**River:** Zakhara has two types of rivers: regular and intermittent. Regular rivers follow an unbroken path over the land's surface. They are always flowing, though the water levels may vary between seasons. In contrast, intermittent rivers disappear and reappear from the surface, flowing underground for a stretch; or they may disappear entirely as they flow into an alluvial fan or outcropping. Intermittent rivers are not wadis (see below).

**Ruin:** Only well-known ruins have been depicted on the poster maps. Most have been picked over by generations of explorers, but they still may contain a few secrets of the deep past.

**Salt Flat:** A salt flat is an evaporated lake that forms a level, smooth, featureless expanse. Travel across this flat terrain is easy, except when the midday temperatures are extreme.

**Salt/Mud Flat:** See *kavar*.

**Sorcerer's Tower:** Maps with a scale of 30 miles per inch include a guide to towers that are known to be the homes (or hideouts) of sorcerers. This is not meant as a "visitor's guide"—quite the opposite. The symbols have been provided to warn the unsuspecting traveler away from the area. Most sorcerers value their privacy highly, and they have set up shop in the wilderness to be free of meddlesome individuals.





**Stony Field:** This rough wasteland is dominated by boulders that have been smoothed by wind and water. Travel here can be treacherous.

**Town:** A circular symbol depicts a town. These appear only on maps with scales of 30 or fewer miles to the inch.

**Trails and Roads:** Outside the cities and civilized areas, Zakhara has no roads to speak of—no great highways or bridges. The desert is very unforgiving of paved or permanent roads. More common are simple paths, trod by travelers and caravans.

Trails marked on the poster maps are little more than dirt paths kept clear by frequent use. These run along most coastlines, but they are not usually found in sandy terrain. Wadis can serve as trails in the desert, however, and may be treated as such. (DM's Note: Trails halve movement costs for those who travel them, but they have no effect in farmland.)

Caravan trails cross the deep wastes of the High Desert and Haunted Lands, marking the passage of men and mounts. The trails are extremely wide, measuring up to two miles across. That's because the route is good, but the travel may be easier on clear sand. Caravan trails reduce the movement in their area by -1 (to a minimum of 1 point).

**Volcanic Debris:** See *harrat*.

**Wadi:** This is a seasonal watercourse that floods but once or twice a year, and is otherwise dry and solid. Many caravan trails follow the course of wadis, since the ground is relatively firm and even. (DM's Note: While a wadi serves as a trail for those following its path, it counts as a ravine for those crossing it, and as a river when flooded.)

**Well:** Water from a well must be brought up from below ground to the surface, usually by a mechanism turned by human hands or by beasts of burden. Only major wells are marked on the *Land of Fate* maps. In general, a number of smaller wells may be scattered in the vicinity. The locations of such wells are often secret, known only to the nomads (or creatures) who have claimed them as their own.

**Well, Artesian:** Here water from underground rises to the surface to create a natural fountain. A few of the Pearl Cities are blessed with artesian wells, but they are rare elsewhere. Like oases, artesian wells may host a rich diversity of vegetation.

## Features of The Coast and Sea

**Coastal Cliff:** This is forbidding territory at best. Craft can not beach here, and attempts to do so result in running aground on the rocks.

**Coral Reefs:** This area off Zakhara's coast is thick with coral. Travelers must make a seaworthiness check at -20 percent to avoid striking the reef. Reefs are host to a variety of sea life, from fish to monsters.

**Deep Ocean:** The seafloor lies more than 100 feet below the surface. Whenever seaworthiness checks are called for due to weather, travelers in deep ocean suffer a -10 percent penalty (in addition to all other modifiers). For this reason, most craft hug the shore.

**Lagoon:** A coastal water marked as a lagoon on the poster maps is a warm, shallow pool. It is usually calm, for lagoons are sheltered by a reef, a sandbar, or the arm of an island. The bottom of a lagoon is typically sandy.

**Rocky Coast:** Submerged rocks and outcroppings dominate this coastline. Large craft (those with a seaworthiness rating) cannot moor here.

**Rocky Shoal:** This area is dominated by rocky outcroppings. Travelers must make a normal seaworthiness check to avoid hitting a rock.

**Sand Bank:** This area is dominated by sandbars. Travelers must make a seaworthiness check to avoid beaching their craft, but their ships take no damage: Craft that have been beached must be hauled off or left to float free with the next high tide.

**Sandy Coast:** Sand beaches and dunes dominate this coast. All craft can be moored here. At low tide, large craft can be beached and cleaned of barnacles.

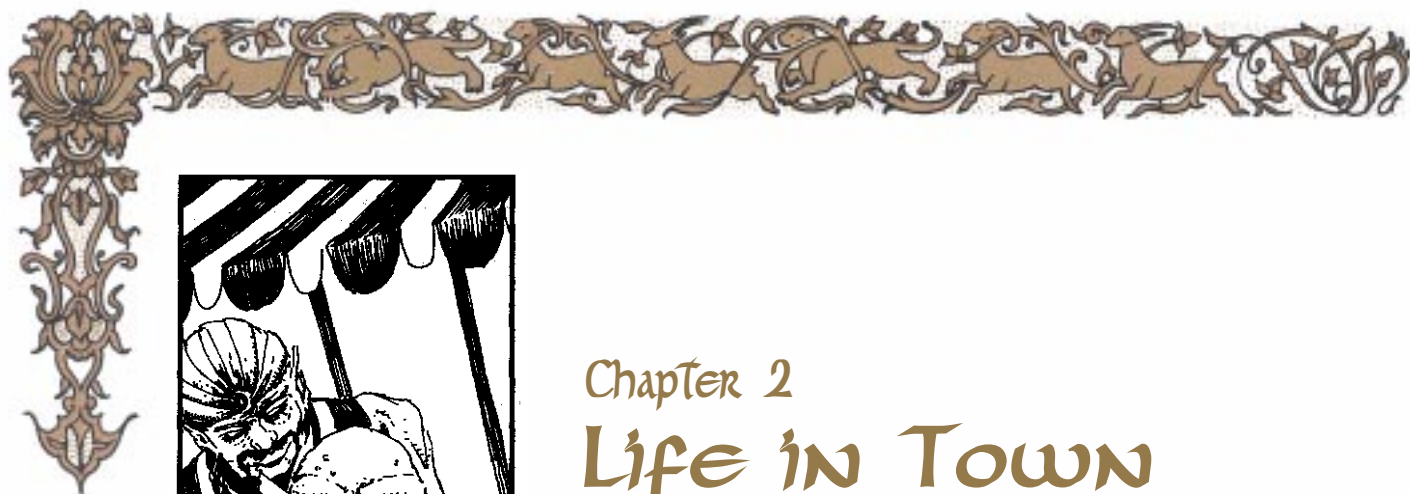
**Seaweed:** In coastal waters, this is a spot where seaweed thrives, becoming a thick mass that can snag ships. (DM's Note: Seaweed cuts movement rates in half.)

**Shallow Ocean:** The seafloor lies 100 or fewer feet below the surface.

*Note:* Some symbols (a mangrove swamp, for example) appear on the map key but not on *Land of Fate* poster maps. These symbols may be used in future AL-QADIM™ adventures and accessories.







## Chapter 2

# Life in Town

Zakhara's people are divided into two broad groups: the nomads, or Al-Badia, and the city-dwellers, or Al-Hadhar. This chapter focuses on the latter. While the nomads dwell primarily in the high, romantic desert plateaus, Al-Hadhar, for the most part, inhabit Zakhara's lowlands and coasts. It is cooler and wetter there, with frequent morning fogs and heavy but brief rains during the monsoon season. Life is not driven by the search for water and green grass, as it is for the nomads. Though irrigation and wells are still required for agriculture, in general, the people of Zakhara's settlements have easy access to water and other basic necessities—things the nomads hold so dear.

Al-Hadhar are sedentary as well as settled. A man often lives in the same house as his father, and in the same community as his grandfather. There is a greater sense of continuity here than in the desert, with buildings and businesses offering proof of man's ability to tame the land. Trade is more established in the settlements, which often have *suqs* (covered markets) in addition to open bazaars. The population is more highly concentrated here than in the wild lands, giving rise to stronger rules of order and law. Zakhara's Al-Hadhar also are more cosmopolitan than the desert-dwellers, for they have been exposed to foreign visitors. Traders from far-off lands rarely venture into the inhospitable desert, but they frequently visit Zakhara's great cities. As a result, Al-Hadhar have gained a broader, more practical outlook.

While they are often referred to as "city-dwellers" in the text below, Zakhara's Al-Hadhar live in settlements of all sizes, from the crudest collection of mud-brick hovels to the golden towers of Huzuz, the City of Delights. From the perspective of the Al-Badia, their lives are the same—soft, sedentary, and restricted. Indeed, the similarities between Al-Hadhar who live in a village and those who live in a great city far outweigh the differences.

## The Daily Routine

A day in the life of a typical city-dweller begins with dawn breaking over the rooftops. Those who are not already awake are roused by the sound of gongs in the minarets and the morning call to prayer. Al-Hadhar who are



very religious, and those seeking favor of the priests if not the gods, are already at their mosque by this time. For most, however, the morning call involves prostrating oneself to one's chosen deity at home, reflecting upon one's chosen path, and asking for guidance.

No one may be unclean before prayer to an enlightened deity; ablution is required (see "Patterns of Worship" in Chapter 5). Servants of the wealthy carry fresh water to their masters' chambers about an hour before the dawn, while others wash with ewers of water that were filled the night before. Most Zakharan men shave, and they do so at this time.

Breakfast is usually foods served cold: bread, curd cheese, olives, and dates. Among the poor, a few dates may suffice. Those who are more prosperous may eat bread smeared with jams and preserves. During cool weather (or in higher altitudes), the morning menu may include soup. Rich or poor, nearly every Zakharan drinks a bit of dark, bitter coffee with breakfast. After the meal, it is customary to wipe one's teeth with a cloth.

Next, the Al-Hadhar turn to their work. Merchants travel to their stalls or stores; artisans go to their shops, which may be located at the front of their houses; public functionaries go the court or the bazaar to monitor and tax the transactions of the day. Women in the traditional role of wife and mother turn to matters of the household, tending to the children and preparing the evening meal.

In rural areas, the chief occupation is agriculture. In urban areas, the majority of Al-Hadhar devote themselves to weaving, sewing, and selling textiles. Wood is at a premium throughout most of the Land of Fate, so the preponderance of goods in the bazaar are either metal or made of woven fabric.

Two hours past midday, a gong sounds. The *imams* (priests) in their minarets again call the faithful to prayer. In some major cities, it is sufficient to face a mosque with a bowed head and utter a silent prayer. This "half-hearted" effort is frowned upon by most moralists, however, who feel a visit to the mosque is required (at least for men).

After prayer, it is time for lunch, and many of the open-air markets close against the heat of the sun. For those who can reach home, lunch usually consists of

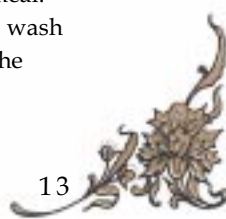
the reheated remains of the previous evening's supper, often made into a soup or ragout. Those whose business keeps them away from home may carry with them an onion, dates, and some bread for a midday snack, or they may purchase a bit of stew from a cookshop or a peddler.

The afternoon schedule for the Al-Hadhar is much the same as the morning's. To escape the heat, some engage in business meetings and commerce in the *suq*, a market sheltered by tarps or rooftops high overhead. For others, the early part of the afternoon is a time of leisure. Some visit the *hammam* (bathhouse). Others relax and enjoy the diversions of the marketplace.

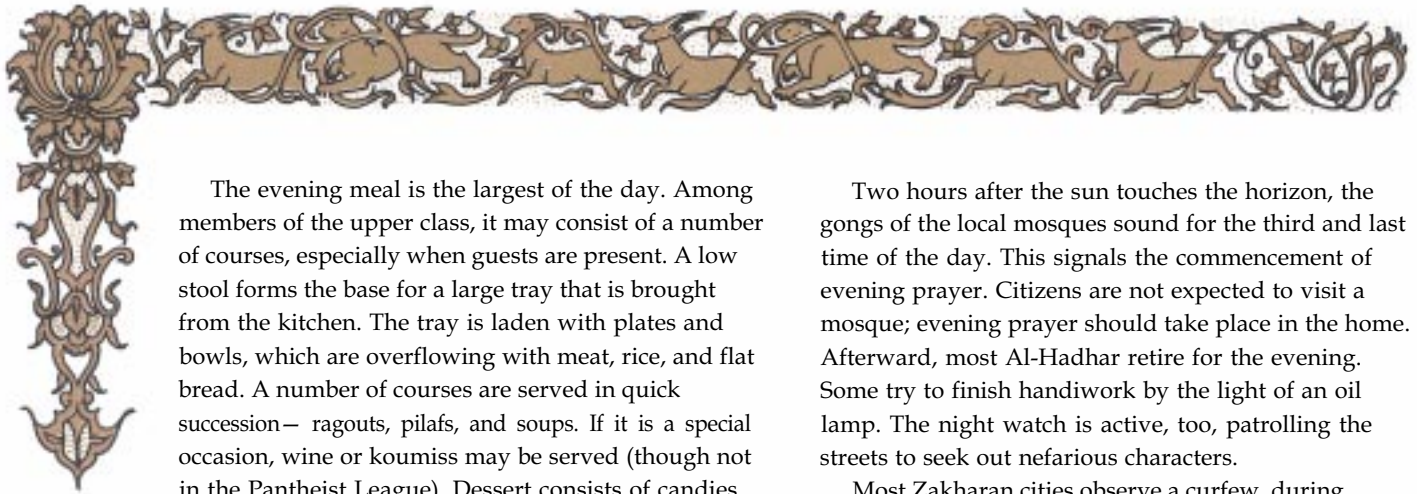
Bazaars and other public squares usually have areas set aside for spontaneous public speaking. Those who wish to teach, harangue, or enlighten the masses may do so quite freely. Travelers tell of great discoveries. Hakimas and dervishes describe their wondrous encounters. On the more practical side, the arrivals of ships are also announced in these open-air forums. All is permitted within reason, according to the laws and customs of the area. Blasphemous, obscene, or revolutionary speech is forbidden, of course, and the city guards remain nearby to handle malcontents. Further, even the most exemplary caliph retains a few priests who are armed with *silence*, 15-foot radius spells, so that heathen speech need never offend the enlightened.

Entertainers are also common sights in the bazaar. These include poets, tale-tellers, musicians, and young dancers. The dancers frequently arrive with their own musicians. Other dancers may accompany themselves with drums, tambourines, or wooden clackers, or by hissing pleasantly as they dance. Most entertainers will agree to perform at a private engagement in exchange for the promise of an evening meal. The truly talented, however, may catch the eye of a high-ranking courtier and be commanded to perform before the local caliph or emir. Thereafter, such entertainers will be able to demand high prices for their performances.

With the approach of sunset, most of those working in the city or town return home for the evening meal. Whatever their standing, enlightened Al-Hadhar wash before eating. Where appropriate, the master of the household says a-grace thanking the gods for the family's bounty and good fortune.







The evening meal is the largest of the day. Among members of the upper class, it may consist of a number of courses, especially when guests are present. A low stool forms the base for a large tray that is brought from the kitchen. The tray is laden with plates and bowls, which are overflowing with meat, rice, and flat bread. A number of courses are served in quick succession—ragouts, pilafs, and soups. If it is a special occasion, wine or koumiss may be served (though not in the Pantheist League). Dessert consists of candies and spiced or sweet coffee.

Al-Hadhar who are not as wealthy eat a dinner of fewer courses, though this is still the largest meal of the day. They devour a good deal more rice and far less meat than the upper class. Though dessert may be skipped, coffee is not.

In a wealthy household, a servant may prepare the coffee after the meal. However, it nearly always the host who actually serves the coffee. (A ruler might appoint someone else to the task, such as a favored son.) This is a ceremonious affair in which the host takes great pleasure and pride.

In traditional households, men dine separately from women, who take their meals in the *harim* after the men have been fed. In more liberal and cosmopolitan areas, men and women eat together. A servant or slave (or the youngest wife in a polygamous household) may bring the trays.

Al-Hadhar rarely use dining utensils. Spoons are an exception, but these are seen primarily in the cities of Hiyal and Qudra, where people eat a good deal of soup. Most food is eaten with the fingers or scooped up with pieces of flat bread. Civilized people always eat with their right hands (unless they have been maimed). To do otherwise is a serious breach of etiquette. Many a rawun's tale begins by describing a guest who eats a meal with his left hand. When his host demands an explanation, the man reveals that his right hand has been rendered useless or completely severed. This, in turn, leads to the story of how the man came to be in his wretched state.

Following the evening meal, family members wash their hands. Then they may gather to tell tales or enjoy small entertainments, often religious in nature. Al-Hadhar who engage in evening crafts or business typically do so at this time.

Two hours after the sun touches the horizon, the gongs of the local mosques sound for the third and last time of the day. This signals the commencement of evening prayer. Citizens are not expected to visit a mosque; evening prayer should take place in the home. Afterward, most Al-Hadhar retire for the evening. Some try to finish handiwork by the light of an oil lamp. The night watch is active, too, patrolling the streets to seek out nefarious characters.

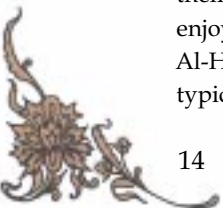
Most Zakharan cities observe a curfew, during which no one is permitted to wander the streets. The curfew begins an hour after the evening prayer, lasting until two hours before the dawn. Those who are found wandering the streets during this time should be prepared to explain themselves—either to the night watch or, later the next day, to a *qadi* (judge).

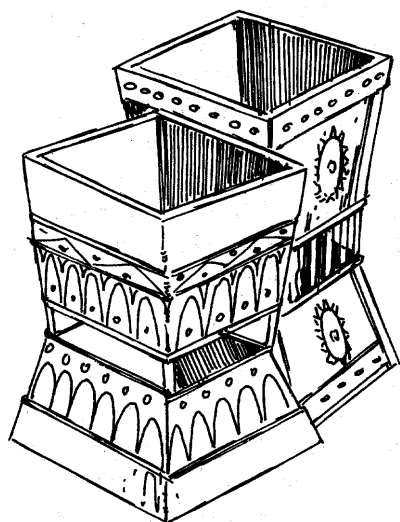
Through the passage of time and the seasons, the routine of the Al-Hadhar varies little. The sound of the gongs provide a framework and a constant rhythm for their daily lives. Outsiders—especially desert-dwellers—view the Al-Hadhar as clockwork automaton, trapped in the same rut throughout their lives. While it is true that some Al-Hadhar are prisoners of their routine, most find it reassuring that time passes in an ordered fashion. This shows that all is correct beneath the eyes of the gods and under the watchful and beneficent rule of the Grand Caliph.

## Leadership

The ultimate spiritual and temporal leader of all enlightened Zakharans is Grand Caliph Khalil al-Assad al-Zahir, Scourge of the Unbelievers. He follows in the footsteps of his father and of his father's father before him, being the eighteenth man in his bloodline to ascend the Enlightened Throne. The First Caliph, who discovered the word of the Loregiver and spread its wisdom throughout the land so many years ago, was hardly more than a boy. (He was also a desert nomad, a fact in which enlightened Al-Badia take great pride.) The city where it all began was golden Huzuz, still the home of the Grand Caliph and his wondrous palace (see "Huzuz" in Chapter 6 for further details).

One step down in the hierarchy of power are the rulers of Zakhara's city-states and tiny empires—





a collection of kings, caliphs, emirs, padishahs, sultans, khedives, and the like. While each pays tribute and taxes to the Grand Caliph, many rule their communities with a surprising degree of independence.

Even lower in the hierarchy of power are the local qadis (judges). Despite their rank, they may have a profound effect on the lives of an average man or woman. Qadis are arbitrators and mediators, pronouncing judgment in virtually all civil and religious disputes. (Only the Grand Caliph or the ruler the qadis serve may override their decisions.)

Qadis are chosen in one of two ways: by the community or by the ruling bureaucracy. The former is a common practice in settlements that have close ties to the desert nomads. Qadis chosen by the community are often scholars, merchants, or sages who are greatly respected for their wisdom and strength of character. Because they have popular support, they may hold their posts indefinitely; their positions are essentially permanent.

Qadis appointed by rulers must answer to the bureaucracy. They may not hold their positions long. Those who fail to placate both the bureaucracy and the community at large are swiftly replaced. (For more on qadis and justice in the civilized lands, see "The Law" in *Fortunes and Fates*.)

## Land

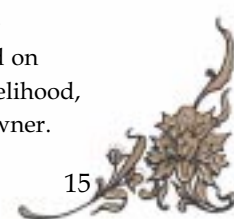
Zakhara's Al-Hadhar adhere to an established and regular system of agricultural production. Common crops include wheat, maize, rice (where water is most abundant), dates, legumes, and citrus fruits. In the terraced plantations of the Pearl Cities, fragrant lemons and pomegranates flourish on the lower slopes. High above, coffee grows.

Most of Zakhara's agricultural land relies on irrigation; few areas receive enough rainfall to grow crops without it. In some villages, a single waterwheel turned by a donkey may support a small farm no larger than a glorified garden. Near the cities, where agriculture occurs on a larger scale, the grand civil works required to irrigate the fields are more than an individual farmer can handle.

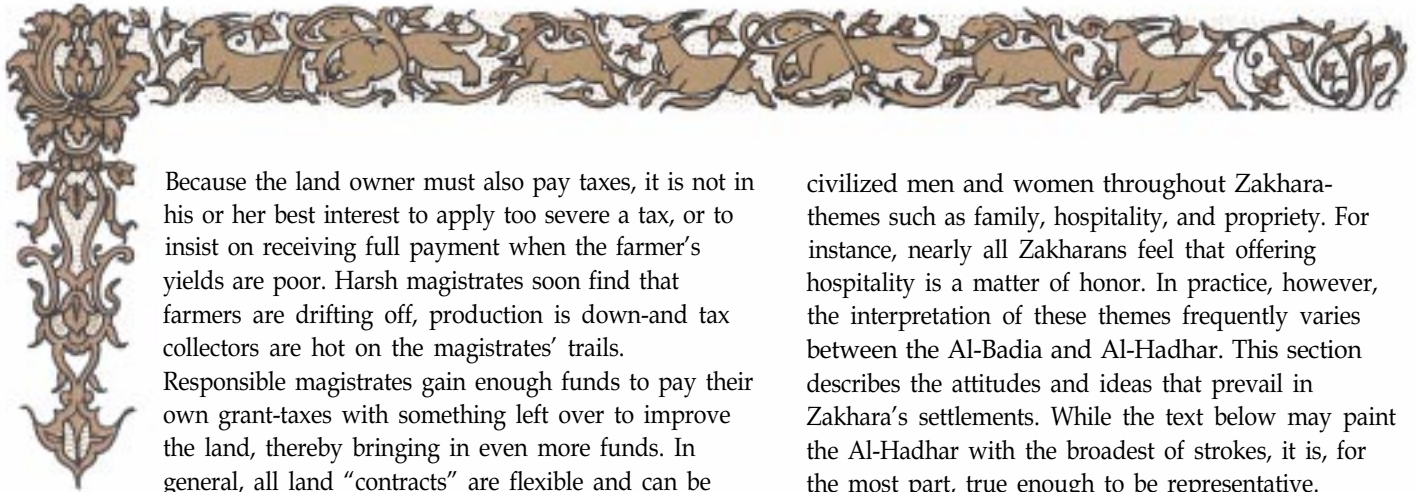
In the Land of Fate, the ultimate and official owner of all land is the Grand Caliph. He is granted this land by the gods in exchange for guiding Zakhara's people along the path of enlightenment, in accordance with Law of the Loregiver. In turn, the Grand Caliph grants ownership of the land to petty shahs, sultans, lesser caliphs, and emirs, who are to manage the parcels granted and provide for the Grand Caliph's people. These local rulers in turn provide grants to still lesser magistrates and worthies (in large areas) or to individual farmers.

A farmer's grant commonly states that the farmer will forward a portion of the crops grown or money raised to the creator of the grant. This money takes the form of a tax. Funds raised in this manner are used to create irrigation ditches, dig new wells, fund public works, and strengthen the city walls when necessary. They are also used to pay the grant-giver's own tax, forwarded to whoever stands one rung higher on the ladder of ownership. In the cities proper, a similar system applies to space in the suq and in the warehouse district, as well as to facilities that are used for manufacturing or artistry. In other words, through a series of grants, the common merchant, business, person, or artisan can obtain a little plot.

Farmers are not bound to the land. They are essentially renters; few of them own the ground on which they toil. They work solely to earn a livelihood, and much of what they earn goes to the land owner.







Because the land owner must also pay taxes, it is not in his or her best interest to apply too severe a tax, or to insist on receiving full payment when the farmer's yields are poor. Harsh magistrates soon find that farmers are drifting off, production is down-and tax collectors are hot on the magistrates' trails. Responsible magistrates gain enough funds to pay their own grant-taxes with something left over to improve the land, thereby bringing in even more funds. In general, all land "contracts" are flexible and can be rewritten to avoid disaster. Crops may fail, and no one wants to see farmers starve when such failure is beyond their control.

The government of Zakhara provides two types of land grants: temporary and permanent. The temporary grant is enforced as long as the grantee lives up to his or her obligation and pays what is due in taxes. If the grantee fails to fulfill such obligations, the granter may choose to cancel the agreement. Temporary grants also end if the grantee dies, moves on, or ceases to use the granted land in the intended fashion without first obtaining the permission of the granter.

The recipient of a permanent grant is a family rather than an individual. The grant's term is indefinite-it remains in effect as long as the family continues to live in the area or utilize the land. It may be rescinded, however, if the family dies to a man or fails to pay its taxes. This type of grant is less common than the temporary variety. Though a permanent grant typically involves lower taxes, it requires a higher initial payment from the grantee. Because a permanent grant allows a family to build on their land, three or four generations often live in the same city block.

This orderly system of grants and ownership was established under the First Caliph (though the tradition of granting land is much older). A group of advocates and judges—the qadis— arose to handle conflicts between granter and grantee. The qadis' duties quickly expanded. Today these important figures adjudicate crimes against the state, against faith, and against fellow men and women.

## Attitudes and Customs

**T**he *Arabian Adventures* rulebook introduces many of the attitudes and cultural themes shared by

civilized men and women throughout Zakhara—themes such as family, hospitality, and propriety. For instance, nearly all Zakharans feel that offering hospitality is a matter of honor. In practice, however, the interpretation of these themes frequently varies between the Al-Badia and Al-Hadhar. This section describes the attitudes and ideas that prevail in Zakhara's settlements. While the text below may paint the Al-Hadhar with the broadest of strokes, it is, for the most part, true enough to be representative.

### Home

In the villages, towns, and cities of Zakhara, a love of family is closely linked to a love of one's home. To the nomad, "home" and family are synonymous. To the Al-Hadhar, "home" means having roots and continuity—a safe and constant haven that helps give a person an identity almost as much as his or her family does. Even traders who wander the seas on voyages of many years pay tribute to their home town.

"Home" also represents familiarity. Given their sedentary tradition, Al-Hadhar can usually trace some relationship-through blood, marriage, or mutual history and experience—that links them to most of the people in their village, town, or city. While such a thin bond may not open the palace doors to a beggar, it does create a sense of community, and it helps the Al-Hadhar in gathering information, conducting business, or merely getting around in their home town or city.

### Hospitality

Like the desert tribes, the people of the cities and lowland settlements believe an honorable person must be hospitable. Al-Hadhar make much of welcoming visitors at the city gates—even strangers. In practice, however, individual city-dwellers do not feel as great a sense of duty toward a stranger as they do toward a guest they know. Often, an Al-Hadhar may discharge his responsibility to be hospitable by directing an unfamiliar or somewhat displeasing face to the nearest mosque or hospice. (Though the man has not welcomed the stranger into his own house, the "town" has welcomed the stranger, and that is what truly counts.) A known traveler, however, is almost always welcomed by the Al-Hadhar.

Guests who have been invited into a city-dweller's





house receive the same respectful treatment as an honored guest of the Al-Badia. On the first eve of a guest's arrival, a great feast is laid out, often above the means of the host. If the guest remains on the second and third evenings, smaller meals ensue. The atmosphere is festive. The traveler tells of his or her journeys, and family members or hired minstrels provide further entertainment. On the third morning, the guest is expected to depart. The guest may leave a gift of some type if he or she is so inclined, but this is not required.

If a guest has no other business in the city, the host may request assistance with the family business: making deliveries, carrying messages, minding the stall, and so forth. This often exposes the traveler to a number of different professions. Occasionally, a wanderer will arrive in town, become intrigued with a particular craft, and remain as an artisan. Adventurers, on the other hand, have often discovered that immersion in such a routine interferes with their deeds of glory. Rather than become "glorified messengers" for their hosts, they stick to inns and hospices.

As long as a guest is working on behalf of a host, the host is responsible for the guest's actions. In turn, the guest may not shame or endanger the host in any way. The guest may not steal from the host or the host's comrades. Nor may the guest draw a weapon except in defense of the host. Such are the rules of hospitality.

## **Tolerance**

Hospitality is closely related to a city-dweller's willingness to be tolerant. A guest need not share the beliefs or racial heritage of the host to be accepted and welcomed. Indeed, a fellow Zakharian with varying religious or social beliefs—who venerates a different enlightened god or comes from a different part of the civilized world—can count on several evenings of lively discourse but nothing worse. (Visitors to the Pantheist League frequently encounter exceptions to this rule; see Chapter 9.) Though agreement among civilized peoples may be uncommon if not rare, tolerance of other ideas is in effect a Zakharian tradition.

Tolerance does have its limits, however. In general, it extends to those who profess a belief in the words of the Loregiver, a belief in the authority of the Grand

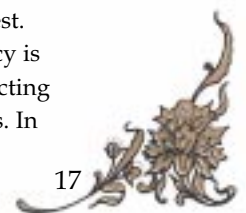
Caliph of Huzuz, and a belief in a god or gods, regardless of type. An individual who does not believe in some higher divinity is viewed with suspicion and perhaps even hostility. A lack of belief indicates that a person also lacks the moral anchor that separates civilized folk from barbarians. To the Al-Hadhar, it is better to believe in an antithetical position or a competitive god than to believe in nothing at all. Unbelievers can expect to be denied hospitality by most, to be sent on their way by many, and to be verbally or physically attacked by a righteous few. A wise unbeliever, it can be said, keeps his or her philosophy private.

## **Respect for Authority**

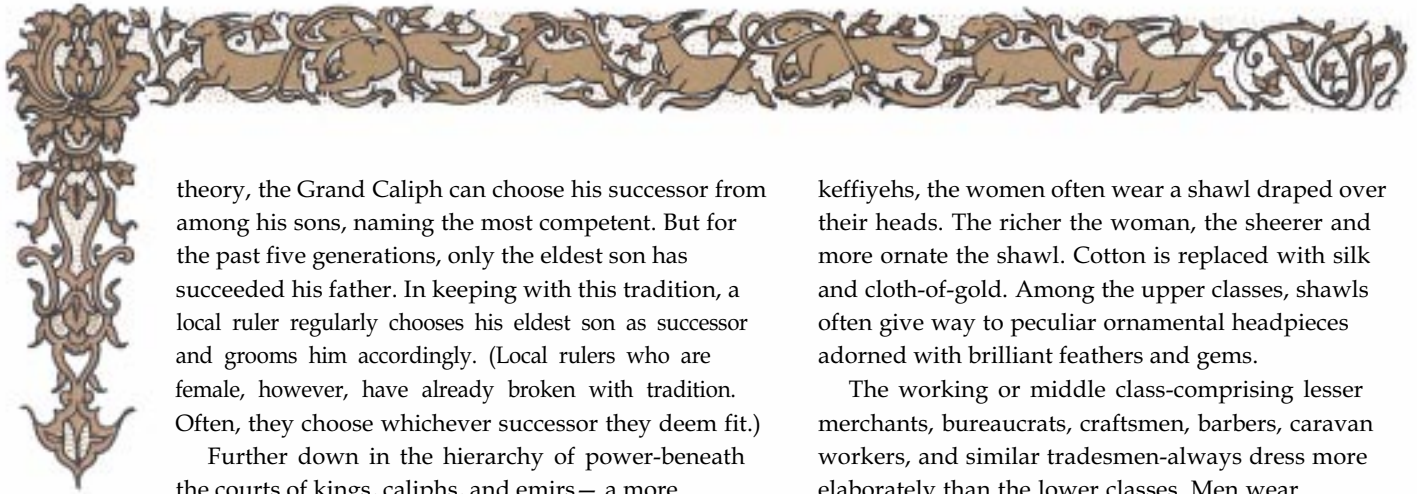
An Al-Hadhar's notion of what is civilized (and what is to be tolerated) harkens back to the recognition of the Grand Caliph's ultimate authority. This is something of a paradox: All civilized men recognize the greater authorities who help bind them into a cohesive realm called the Land of Fate. Yet each city, city-state, or island nation often feels a great independence from the rest of Zakhara—and frequently a sense of superiority.

Distance accounts in part for this attitude. Zakhara's outposts are far-flung. That distance, coupled with tolerance on the part of the Grand Caliph, gives local rulers' a fairly free hand in attending to the demands of their communities. The basic independence of the Zakharian peoples also plays a role in establishing this regional autonomy. Like the Al-Badia, many Al-Hadhar are accustomed to choosing their own rulers. If rulers and the authorities who accompany them are unfit, few "commoners" have qualms about removing them. A leader's position is based on an informal contract between the leader and the people he or she leads. The people agree to follow a chief or to honor the ruling of a qadi or a religious authority. In return, the leader is expected to make choices that are wise and fair to the people.

Among the Al-Badia—who choose their sheikhs for their merit and not necessarily for their bloodlines—this democratic respect for authority is at its finest. Among the Al-Hadhar, however, the bureaucracy is well entrenched—overseeing trade routes, collecting taxes, and keeping records that span generations. In







theory, the Grand Caliph can choose his successor from among his sons, naming the most competent. But for the past five generations, only the eldest son has succeeded his father. In keeping with this tradition, a local ruler regularly chooses his eldest son as successor and grooms him accordingly. (Local rulers who are female, however, have already broken with tradition. Often, they choose whichever successor they deem fit.)

Further down in the hierarchy of power—beneath the courts of kings, caliphs, and emirs—a more democratic form of rulership occurs. On a local level, the qadis (judges) are arbitrators and mediators. As noted above, they are chosen in one of two ways: by the community or by the ruling bureaucracy. The common people frequently view the latter group with suspicion, for the goals of the bureaucracy do not always coincide with the desires of the people. A community often ignores the rulings of judges they don't respect. Qadis who fail to earn this respect are usually removed from office.

## Attire

**Z**akharan attire may vary between regions or cities, but several common themes predominate. Wealth and station are stronger influences than geography. The following description generally holds true for civilized Al-Hadhar throughout the Land of Fate. (See Chapter 6 of *Arabian Adventures* for further definition and detail.)

Among lower-class men, dress is a simple set of trousers with a drawstring waist, a loose-fitting overshirt, and a sash at the waist. Whenever possible, all but the poorest man wears sandals or leather slippers and a soft cap or headcloth; city-dwellers do not relish having bare heads and feet.

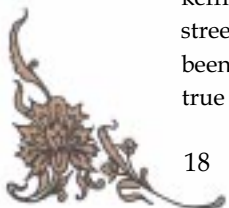
People who live in the great cities of Qudra, Hiyal, and Huzuz usually wear turbans—including the lower classes and a handful of fashionable ogres. In cities that feel the press of the desert, where trade with the nomads may be important, keffiyehs and agals are more popular. (In the Pearl Cities, for example, keffiyehs and agals far outnumber turbans on the streets, though the gaudy men of these towns have been known to wear headcloths of silk—something a true man of the desert would not do.) Where men don

keffiyehs, the women often wear a shawl draped over their heads. The richer the woman, the sheerer and more ornate the shawl. Cotton is replaced with silk and cloth-of-gold. Among the upper classes, shawls often give way to peculiar ornamental headpieces adorned with brilliant feathers and gems.

The working or middle class—comprising lesser merchants, bureaucrats, craftsmen, barbers, caravan workers, and similar tradesmen—always dress more elaborately than the lower classes. Men wear trousers—either knee or ankle length. Shirts are common, topped by a sleeveless robe or a dolman. The waist-sash is tied over all. Men tuck tobacco and weapons into the sash. They keep their money in a small purse or place it in a folded handkerchief; either way, riches are commonly tucked inside the shirt or robe, in a pocket formed by the sash, just below the breast. Leather stockings attached to the trousers commonly adorn men's feet. Middle-class men also don leather slippers with soft soles. For long trips on foot, harder shoes of yellow leather or even loose boots are common. When the weather is inclement, a caftan is worn over the entire ensemble, again secured by a sash. A turban wrapped around a soft cap is predominant among middle-class males.

Middle-class women usually wear full trousers and smocks. Slippers and overshoes are common on the street, but around the house, bare feet are more popular. A shawl draped over the head completes the typical ensemble.

Among the upper classes—great merchants, court officials and courtiers, highly skilled artisans, and heroes of renown—dress resembles that of the middle class. Each garment becomes more elaborate and expensive, however. Gemstones adorn buttons and buckles, blouses are adorned with golden thread, and caftans are embroidered and decked with small jewels. Turbans are wrapped around a fez instead of a skullcap, making the turban (and the man) appear taller. Women don fine silks, and their jewelry becomes opulent (except in the Pantheist League, where such vanities are considered improper). Both men and women carry bejeweled little purses beneath their robes or dolmans, though people of especially high stature may have servants who accompany them to the market. In that case, the servant carries the purse—an





activity which may be his or her sole job.

As noted, local variations in clothing exist, usually in the favored colors of the costume or in the choice of headdress. This is especially true in the Free Cities, where middle- and upper-class men prefer fezzes to turbans and keffiyehs. Each city's fezzes and sashes can be identified by their color (see Chapter 7 for details). Ironically, it is the common folk of these cities who wear turbans, wrapping the cloth (often tattered) around their fezzes.

In the Pearl Cities, dyes and fabrics are imported from northern Zakhara as well as from the far-flung East. The vast array of brilliant colors distinguishes the locals, not the cut of their costumes. Pantheists across the Golden Gulf frequently refer to these people as peacocks, with no compliment intended. In contrast, the heavily moralist citizens of the Pantheist League can be identified by their black garb, which befits their somber and self-denying nature.

In the great cities of Qudra, Huzuz, and Hiyal, a cosmopolitan mix of styles can be seen. With the great influx of visitors from other cities and other lands, local traditions have blurred over time. Here one can find a broad array of costumes, from the sweeping abas and flowing headcloths of desert riders to the dark chadors of moralist women. In the great cities of the continent, the kaleidoscopic designs of the Pearl Cities blend easily with the common and simple dress of the caravan drivers and pilgrims.

Island cultures and the remaining small city-states of Zakhara tend to follow the provincial variants of the nearest larger city. Usually, the fashion of these small or isolated settlements is several years out of date. Even Afyal, which boasts a rich trade in silk and other fabrics, tends to cut its outfits in a fashion that was out of style during the Grand Caliph's own grandfather's day.

One group is routinely an exception to the general rules of attire. Adventurers, heroes, and other roustabouts in Zakhara usually dress as they see fit, in whatever manner makes them comfortable. As the Loregiver once said, "Never argue fashion with one who sings the song of the Sword."

## Veils

The thickness and placement of veils in Zakhara's settlements tell a great deal about the status and sense

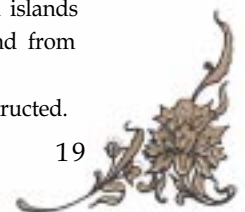
of propriety of both men and women. In the Free Cities of the North, across the Great Sea from the barbarian nations, neither men nor women cover their faces. These are defiant city-states whose people feel a rather fragile tie to the Grand Caliph of Huzuz. In the gaudy and festive Pearl Cities, upper-class women wear veils, but these are no more than fashion statements—flirtatious wisps of transparent silk designed to be more alluring than modest. In the League of the Pantheon, by contrast, both men and women are thickly veiled. Indeed, most Pantheist women don the traditional chador of the moralist factions—a garment that conceals their bodies from head to toe, revealing the eyes and hands at most.

Settlements that came to enlightenment late—such as the cities built among the ruins of Nog and Kadar, as well as some civilized islands in the Crowded Sea—observe a grab bag of customs. In some places, men are veiled but not the women. Elsewhere, the reverse is true, or both are veiled, or neither. In Afyal, tradition demands that a woman *have* a veil at all times, but not that she wear it. Her veil simply hangs aside. Thus, what is a symbol of modesty and propriety in some places is little more than a more flirtatious ploy on the Isle of the Elephant.

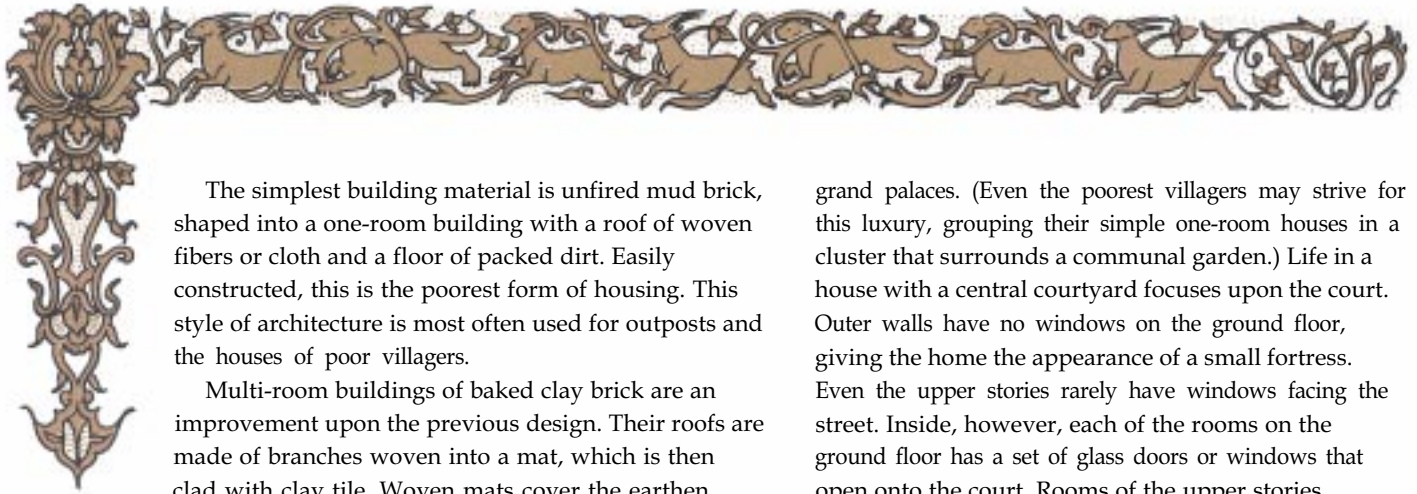
Customs vary even among the great cities on the continent (Qudra, Hiya, and Huzuz). According to Qudran custom, neither men nor women wear veils. Such garments are inappropriate frills in the life of a slave-soldier. Further, veils may conceal the facial tattoos denoting each man and woman's mamluk society and rank. Smoky Hiya and golden Huzuz observe a variety of customs, tolerating those who choose to go unveiled, and respecting those who do. Veils are more prevalent in Hiya than in Huzuz—which is not surprising when one compares the open atmosphere of City of Delights to the clandestine activities in the City of Intrigue.

## Architecture

Throughout most of Zakhara, wood is at a premium. Hardwoods of value must be imported from islands across the Crowded Sea, or must be brought overland from the Ruined Kingdoms of Nog and Kadar. Such considerations affect the way buildings are constructed.







The simplest building material is unfired mud brick, shaped into a one-room building with a roof of woven fibers or cloth and a floor of packed dirt. Easily constructed, this is the poorest form of housing. This style of architecture is most often used for outposts and the houses of poor villagers.

Multi-room buildings of baked clay brick are an improvement upon the previous design. Their roofs are made of branches woven into a mat, which is then clad with clay tile. Woven mats cover the earthen floor, and niches in the wall serve as containers and cupboards. This is the most common form of housing in rural areas and agricultural communities. Such homes often boast a small central court.

In the cities, housing styles improve dramatically. Baked brick is still the building material of choice, but it is usually white-washed on the outside and plastered within. Arched ceilings become common, along with tilework and other interior ornamentation. The house gains simple wooden furnishings, usually just a table and a chest of drawers. Some of these structures rise several stories tall, housing generations of the same family.

Wealthy merchants and officials of the cities can afford to build homes using stone and timber. The interiors are richly tiled, with painted frescoes on the court walls. The central court becomes an oasis of greenery, an extensive garden with flowering plants, pools, and bubbling fountains.

The greatest buildings of Zakhara are its palaces and mosques. These are worked in stone, richly detailed with mosaics and hand-painted tiles, and decked in precious metals that are often inlaid with ornate patterns. Palaces generally bear the mark of generations of rulers and their individual tastes. They are great, complex sprawls of individual buildings, apartments, and private courts.

Mosques of Zakhara's cities are large structures where the faithful can gather en masse. The ground floor of a mosque usually contains one great, single room with arches and pillars soaring high overhead. Most mosques also have minarets: tall, slender towers from which the priests call the faithful to prayer. While the temples of Zakhara's towns and villages may not be as grand, most have the same basic floorplan.

The central garden court is a common theme in Zakharan housing, found in simple abodes as well as

grand palaces. (Even the poorest villagers may strive for this luxury, grouping their simple one-room houses in a cluster that surrounds a communal garden.) Life in a house with a central courtyard focuses upon the court. Outer walls have no windows on the ground floor, giving the home the appearance of a small fortress. Even the upper stories rarely have windows facing the street. Inside, however, each of the rooms on the ground floor has a set of glass doors or windows that open onto the court. Rooms of the upper stories overlook the garden court with balconies and verandas.

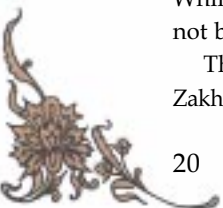
In its simplest form, the garden court is no more than a collection of potted palms grouped around a cistern. In larger homes, it may be an opulent garden of flowering shrubs and fountains, laid out in a geometrical array. In the palaces, acre-large courts are filled with roses and other flowers, fountains, pools, ornamental trees, and tame beasts. The garden is an oasis for the inhabitants of the house, an island of cool tranquility in a hot and often hostile world.

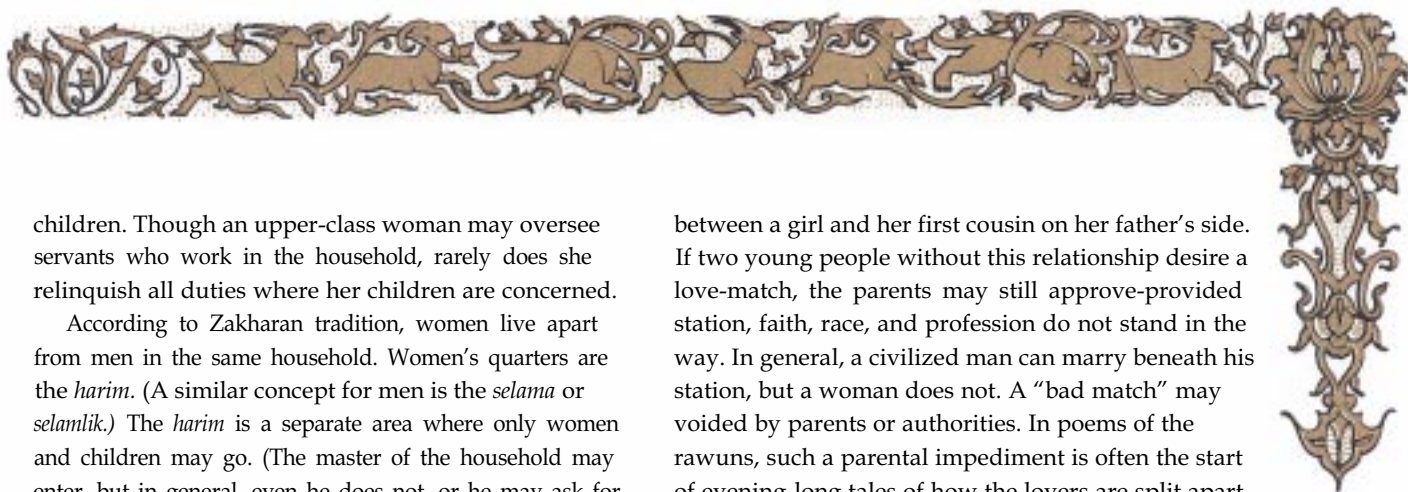
Another feature common to the settlements of Zakhara is the central marketplace. In the villages, this may be no more than a sleepy open court set aside as the bazaar. In the cities, however, the marketplace often includes suqs—great shopping areas that are sheltered from the sun by roofs pitched high overhead.

## Women's Roles

In unenlightened times, before the word of the Loregiver spread throughout the Land of Fate, the roles of men and women were simple. Men ruled the household and were responsible for its livelihood. Women kept the house and raised the children. The coming of the Loregiver and the establishment of the Grand Caliphate have broadened women's roles among the Al-Hadhar, but a good deal of the traditional customs remain. The Land of Fate can be said to provide an opportunity for equality, but any town-dwelling woman who desires that equality must be willing to grasp it for herself.

Today, throughout most of Zakhara's settlements, a man is still responsible for his wife and family, and he is expected to provide a living. The woman is responsible for upholding the man's honor through moral behavior. She maintains the house and rears the





children. Though an upper-class woman may oversee servants who work in the household, rarely does she relinquish all duties where her children are concerned.

According to Zakharan tradition, women live apart from men in the same household. Women's quarters are the *harim*. (A similar concept for men is the *selama* or *selamluk*.) The *harim* is a separate area where only women and children may go. (The master of the household may enter, but in general, even he does not, or he may ask for permission to enter out of respect for the women's privacy.) In a poor household, the *harim* is no more than a room with a tapestry hung over the door. In the Grand Caliph's palace, the *harim* is a magnificent complex guarded by its own elite unit of eunuch mamluks.

Al-Badian women have always had a high degree of equality with men; the nomads' harsh, impoverished lifestyle demands that every person do his or her part to ensure a tribe's survival and success. This kind of equality has only recently come to town-dwelling women. Nonetheless, today there are bold women among the Al-Hadhar who act as merchants, artisans, and mercenaries—who take up many of the same roles as men.

A woman may receive land grants and maintain them under the same conditions as a man. A woman may choose to serve in the armed forces in times of peace or war. (In contrast, men of suitable age may be drafted into service.) Though certain groups and fellowships exclude them, women have served as deadly assassins, wise viziers, and brave generals. They have been as caliphs, emiras, and sultanas. The tales of Zakhara are filled with women who were wiser, bolder, and more capable than the males in their own families.

Perhaps it is telling, however, that a woman has yet to hold the title of Grand Caliph (though several have acted as regents for their sons until they had reached the age of majority). Nothing in the philosophy of the Loregiver prevents a woman from being Grand Caliph, but the men of Zakhara are still resistant to crossing this final threshold.

## Marriage

**M**arriages are essentially contracts between two families, arranged by parents even while the children involved are young. In many regions, the "best" marriage is still a traditional one: the union

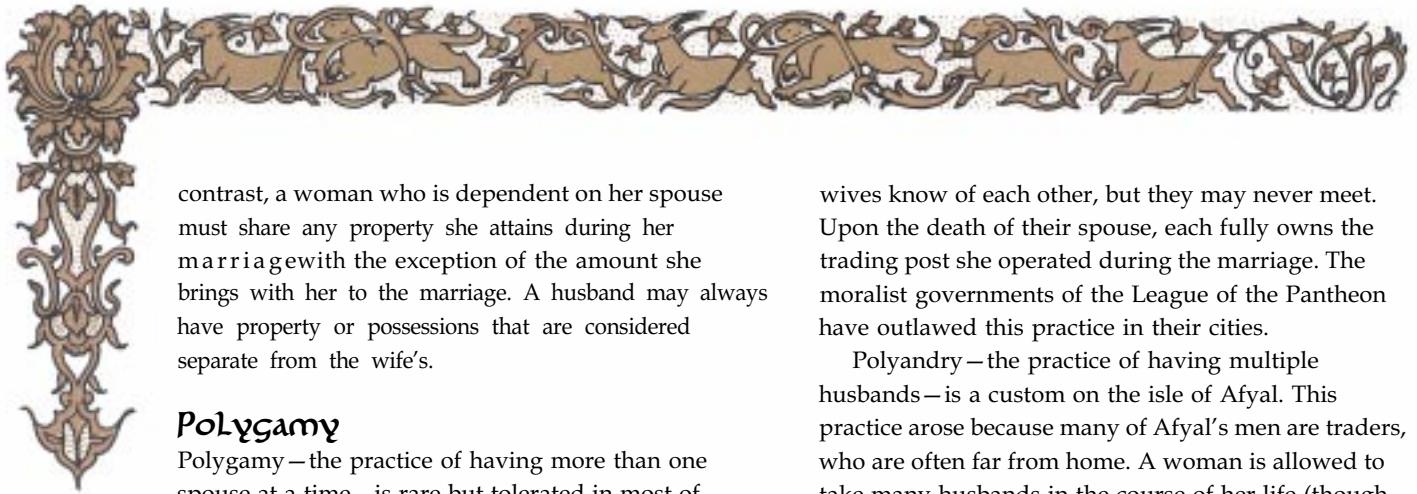
between a girl and her first cousin on her father's side. If two young people without this relationship desire a love-match, the parents may still approve—provided station, faith, race, and profession do not stand in the way. In general, a civilized man can marry beneath his station, but a woman does not. A "bad match" may voided by parents or authorities. In poems of the rawuns, such a parental impediment is often the start of evening-long tales of how the lovers are split apart and pass through all manner of adventures before they are at last reunited and married.

As in many areas of their lives, heroic and adventurous men and women may ignore tradition and do pretty much as they please. Or perhaps it is the other way around: to avoid an unwanted marriage, an average city-dweller suddenly becomes a free-wheeling, far-ranging adventurer.

If a woman is independent (usually defined as capable of making her own living), even if she marries she is considered a separate legal entity under the law. She can hold property apart from her husband. In







contrast, a woman who is dependent on her spouse must share any property she attains during her marriage with the exception of the amount she brings with her to the marriage. A husband may always have property or possessions that are considered separate from the wife's.

## Polygamy

Polygamy—the practice of having more than one spouse at a time—is rare but tolerated in most of Zakhara's settlements. The traditional arrangement—a husband with more than one wife—is more common. Four wives is the unofficial maximum. According to legend, the first sha'ir had four genie wives, and Zakharan tradition reflects that legend. In general, only wealthy men can afford more than one wife (in part because every new wife may bring forth more children). Many upper-class men feel one wife is sufficient, however. The first wife must approve of any additional wives in the household. If she agrees to share her husband, she still retains authority over the household.

Some men keep courtesans (as do some independent women), but only with their wives' permission. While Zakharan law does not prohibit this practice, it doesn't endorse it, either. Tradition demands that a man be married before taking a courtesan; to avoid marriage entirely is now considered shameful.

In the past, Zakhara's Grand Caliphs rarely married. Instead, they maintained large *harims* of courtesans and concubines, some of whom were gifts from lesser rulers. This allowed them to neatly bypass the "four-wife" limitation of proper society, and to only recognize offspring who showed promise or worth. Both children of courtesans (free-born courtiers) and concubines (slaves owned by the Grand Caliph) have risen to power in this fashion. Today's Grand Caliph does have four wives, however, in addition to a large *harim*. This practice has helped endear him to the common people.

While a polygamous marriage generally places all wives under one roof, a second tradition is common in many trade cities on the Golden Gulf, especially the Pearl Cities. In this arrangement, each wife lives in a different port of call; she works as an independent woman, selling the goods her husband conveys. These

wives know of each other, but they may never meet. Upon the death of their spouse, each fully owns the trading post she operated during the marriage. The moralist governments of the League of the Pantheon have outlawed this practice in their cities.

Polyandry—the practice of having multiple husbands—is a custom on the isle of Afyal. This practice arose because many of Afyal's men are traders, who are often far from home. A woman is allowed to take many husbands in the course of her life (though always with consent of the first). She owns and manages the trading company for which all her husbands work. This system has resulted in a tight circle of female-dominated mercantile houses. Their combined power rivals that of the padishah of Afyal himself.

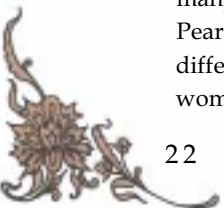
## Children

The children of Al-Hadhar are raised in the women's quarters until they reach the age of five. At this time, boys leave the *harim* and live with the men in the *selamluk*. Separate instruction begins for both boys and girls at age five. Tutors (if they can be afforded) teach the children about matters of language, faith, culture, etiquette, and law. In wealthier families, these early years of instruction help determine where a youth's interests lie and to which livelihood he or she is best suited. Girls begin to reveal if they are more interested in living as independent women—thereby gaining an education similar to that of the boys, which is more socially and economically based. A girl who is destined for a traditional role may focus on household skills and the "gentle" arts. For the middle class, artisans, and the poor, such a choice in education is a luxury; any training for boys or girls takes place in the family trade, be it pot-making or caravan driving.

If men or women of a cultural group wear veils, the boys and girls begin to follow suit at age 12. A boy is commonly considered a man, and a girl a woman, at age 16. They are allowed to marry at this time, though their unions may have been arranged years earlier.

## Divorce

Prior to the establishment of enlightened civilization, a man of the coastal cities could divorce his wife merely by declaration. She would be then sent packing





to relatives or friends (taking whatever she owned before the marriage with her). Under the Law of the Loregiver, women have greater protection. Both parties must agree to the divorce, or one partner may ask a qadi for a ruling. Should the qadi rule against such a split, the pair must live together and attempt to reconcile for the next year before asking again. A woman who is granted a divorce may rejoin her original family or become independent (though a woman does not need to be divorced to be independent in the Land of Fate).

## Slavery

Slavery is a fact of life in the Land of Fate. It is most common among the Al-Hadhar, but it is not a dominant feature in most areas. Mamluks, of course, are an exception, but their roles as soldiers and administrators make them unusual. A person may become a slave in one of three fashions: by debt, by breaking the law, and by lacking civilization.

People who have incurred a great debt and are unable to pay it off may be enslaved and sold, usually to the group they owe payment. Such enslavement lasts until the debt is considered paid through labor or until the slave's family finds sufficient funds to settle the matter. A debtor's relatives are never enslaved in his or her place, and children who are born to debtor slaves in Zakhara are considered free.

Those who have seriously transgressed Zakhara's laws may also be enslaved for their crimes. The term of enslavement is life. In numerous cases, however, rulings have been reversed in response to a slave's sincere penance and good deeds. Again, a criminal's family may not be enslaved as a result of the crime, though in a sense they are punished, for their honor is stained. (Some families avert the whole issue of slavery by doing away with the one who committed the crime.) Children born of slaves who are criminals are considered free. The slave's owner often raises them as his or her own.

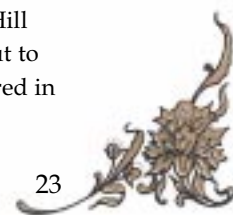
Finally, some people in Zakhara are enslaved simply because they are uncivilized. They lack understanding and acceptance of the Loregiver's law and, therefore, are in need of firm enlightenment. Natives of various islands, certain mountain tribes, and unbelievers who

wander the Haunted Lands are often captured by slave-masters and sold into servitude. The Law of the Loregiver prevents a civilized person from being enslaved in this fashion, but a slave may later be enlightened and still not gain his or her freedom. Slavers who are truly unscrupulous may sometimes capture pilgrims and claim they were heathens at the time—asserting that the ways of civilization came later, spurred by the desire to escape slavery. Children born of such slaves remain slaves only if they fail to embrace the Law of the Loregiver.

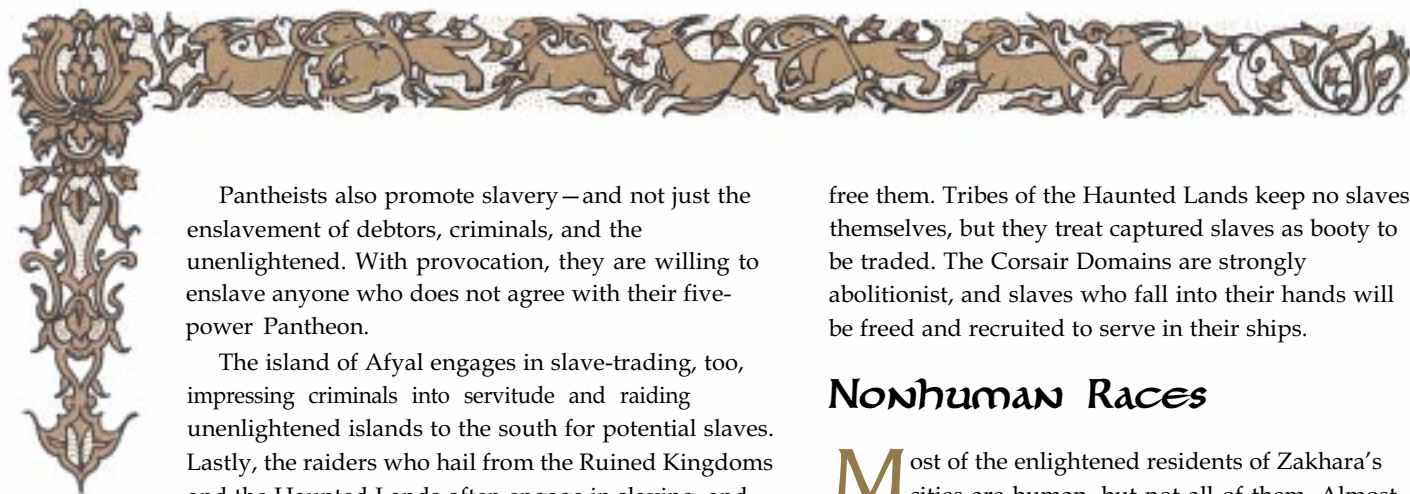
Slave-owners have a number of responsibilities under Zakharan law. They are responsible for the health of their charges, and failure to comply may result in fines. Slaves who are starved and otherwise abused are poor workers who may eventually rebel; qadis have been known to grant their freedom in light of their masters' immoral conduct. Slave-holders are also responsible for the actions of their slaves; if a slave damages another person's property, the slave-owner is held accountable. Slave-holders may not cast out or sell a slave due to illness or age, and they must provide for slaves who can no longer perform their normal duties. However, slave-owners may free healthy slaves at any time, and some owners have granted whole groups their freedom. A slave may receive the owner's permission to marry a free spouse, and thereby also become free.

While it is true that the law requires slave-owners to treat their slaves well, the mamluks—a much more tangible power—are the greatest enforcers. The most elite military forces in Zakhara, mamluks are themselves slaves, property of the Grand Caliph. They were captured as youths by other mamluks and trained to become perfect, loyal warriors. The fortified city of Qudra on the Great Sea is ruled by mamluks. Slave-holders who make port in this city must be honorable and fair or suffer a price, for the mamluks do not tolerate anything less.

Qudra, in fact, is home to the largest active slave market in Zakhara, which the mamluks run. Companies of mamluks roam the mountains near the Free Cities and beyond, seizing youths from the Hill Tribes. Youths captured in such raids who turn out to be less than suitable for mamluk training are offered in the slave market as personal servants.







Pantheists also promote slavery – and not just the enslavement of debtors, criminals, and the unenlightened. With provocation, they are willing to enslave anyone who does not agree with their five-power Pantheon.

The island of Afyal engages in slave-trading, too, impressing criminals into servitude and raiding unenlightened islands to the south for potential slaves. Lastly, the raiders who hail from the Ruined Kingdoms and the Haunted Lands often engage in slaving, and they tend to be very liberal in determining who is not civilized and therefore suited to slavery.

Though it does not endorse it, the legal code throughout most of Zakhara permits slavery. For this reason, slavery is tolerated in Huzuz, Hiyal, the Free Cities, and the Pearl Cities. No official “slave market” exists in any of these locales, however. Slaves who are brought to Huzuz are often “enlightened.” Whenever possible, they are also purchased and freed. Officials of the Pearl Cities tolerate a fair-minded visitor who owns slaves, but, unlike the people of Huzuz, they make no attempt to interfere. For its part, Hiyal has no official slave market. It does, however, maintain a shadowy black market that deals in slaves-including slaves who have been captured illegally.

Most of the clans of the High Desert do not recognize slavery. If they capture slaves in a raid, they

free them. Tribes of the Haunted Lands keep no slaves themselves, but they treat captured slaves as booty to be traded. The Corsair Domains are strongly abolitionist, and slaves who fall into their hands will be freed and recruited to serve in their ships.

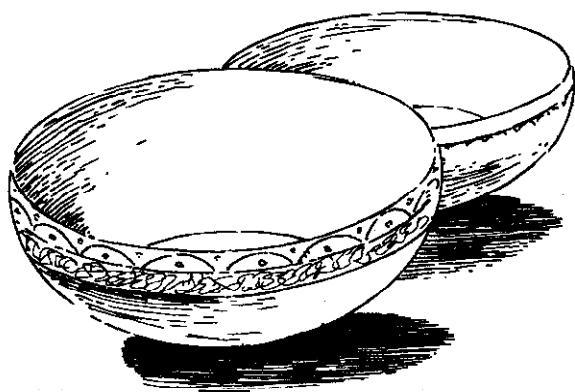
## Nonhuman Races

Most of the enlightened residents of Zakhara’s cities are human, but not all of them. Almost all sentient humanoid races who recognize the nature of Fate, the Loregiver, and the sovereignty of the Grand Caliphate are considered members of the community (if not wholeheartedly embraced as such). The differences between them do not present a major problem, nor do most humans deem this multiracial mix to be worth much contemplation. How one acts – not how one looks at birth-is most important in the Land of Fate.

All Zakharan cities have nonhuman residents. In most major settlements, nonhumans account for about 10 percent of the population. Qudra’s population is about 15 percent nonhuman. In Hiyal, the figure rises to 20 percent. The League of the Pantheon-while supposedly tolerant of other races-fails to attract many nonhumans. In fact, no Pantheist city has a nonhuman population that surpasses 5 percent of the total.

Who are the nonhumans of Zakhara’s Al-Hadhar? In most cities, they include a smattering of elves, dwarves, halflings, gnomes, orcs, kobolds, ogres, hobgoblins, goblins, hill giants, lizard men, and gnolls. Port cities may also host a small community of mermen and locathah. Though they are rare, other races may also be accepted members of the population, provided they do not pose a threat to the rest of the community. Such unusual residents must be intelligent enough to understand the nature of Fate and the Loregiver. In addition, they should not be phenomenally powerful.

Intelligent or not, some nonhuman races are entirely unsuited to Zakhara’s settlements. Those who are continually and unrepentantly evil (such as sahuagin and yuan-ti) are never invited to dwell among the enlightened. Further, individuals who are very rare in numbers (such as larger giants), who are





wildly nonhuman (such as beholders), and those who by nature seek to dominate others (such as mind flayers) are never counted among the Al-Hadhar.

With few exceptions, the nonhumans' traditions, faiths, occupations, and attitudes differ little from those of humans. The two groups live and work "cheek to jowl." Natural abilities do encourage some races toward certain professions; ogres and giants, for example, make excellent porters and warriors. But it is not unusual to find an elf working as an apprentice (or a master) in a foundry, a dwarf serving as a potter or gardener, or an orc serving as a nursemaid. In fact, one of Hiyal's master jewelers is a stone giant, who can often be found crouched at his bench, working with fine-tipped, giant-sized tools.

The Law of the Loregiver does not forbid nonhumans to marry outside their race; nor do most individual faiths. Still, this is one matter in which race does matter. Marriage between humans and other races is frowned upon. It is also extremely rare. Most interracial marriages can never produce children—and a love of family is firmly embedded in Zakharan culture. Further, most marriages are arranged by parents, who wish to enhance their families' standing. Given these considerations, interracial marriages that do occur are matters of deep and abiding love. Few such newlyweds can remain within their former circles; usually the couple must leave their families far behind to seek a life together. With this stain upon the families' honor, the lovers' relatives might well hunt down the couple and slay them.

Orcs and elves are exceptions to the rule; marriages between orcs and humans as well as elves and humans are relatively common, perhaps because such households can include children. (Of course, orcs and elves almost never marry each other; in general, both groups find the concept ludicrous.) The union of elves and humans is much more prevalent than that of orcs and humans. The *harim* of the Grand Caliph has often included elves; through the years, half-elvish blood has been mixed into the line of the Enlightened Throne several times. Furthermore, some noble female elves keep human men as courtiers and concubines in *selamas* (counterparts to *harims*).

In general, the Law of the Loregiver recognizes no difference between humans and other races; a man is a

man, a woman is a woman. Before a qadi, for example, a dwarf's standing equals that of any other enlightened person. Nonhumans may be punished and enslaved in the same manner as humans. In some small communities, elves and dwarves serve as qadis elected by a human population, who acknowledge the value of their long lifespan and respect their accumulated wisdom. (This is another case where a natural ability or quality has guided a nonhuman race toward a particular profession.)

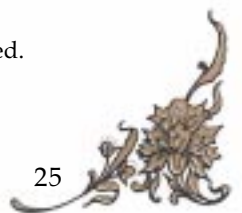
Military units, mamluk societies, holy slayer fellowships, merchant houses, navies, shops, church hierarchies—all these can count nonhumans among their numbers. No enlightened faith in Zakhara excludes nonhuman members. Zakhara's armed forces also include nonhumans among their ranks. The emir of Qudra, the most respected mamluk of his city, is a dwarf. While foreigners might find this unusual, Zakharans speak of the emir's race matter-of-factly, as if they were saying, "He has red hair." Race is descriptive, not defining.

## War and AL-Hadhar

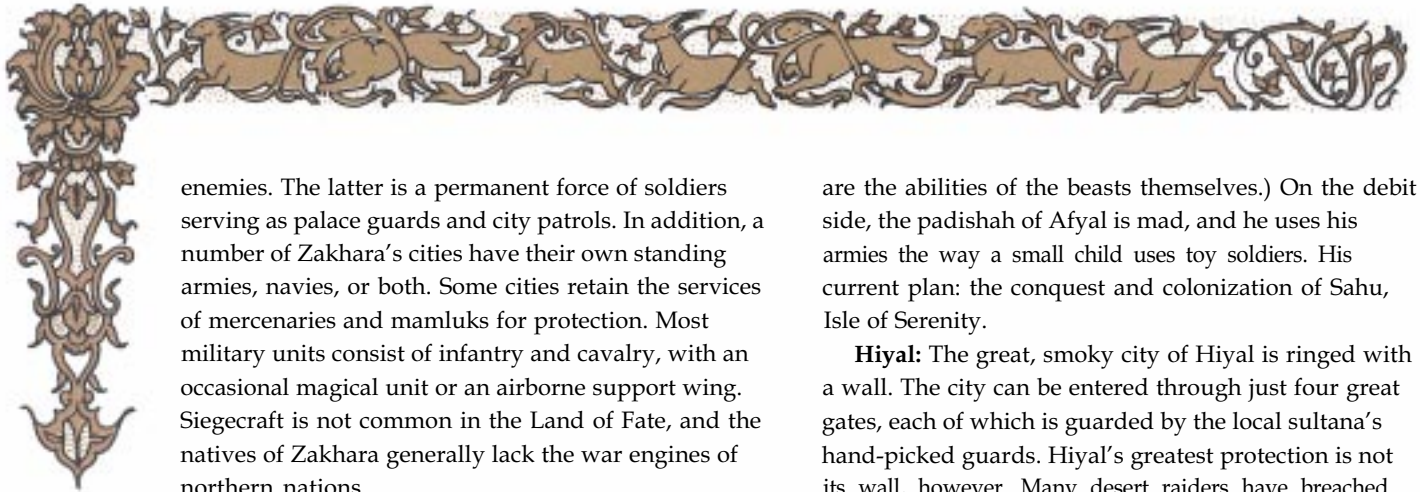
Formally, the Land of Fate is at peace with itself and its surroundings. It is a unified community, ruled with wisdom and enlightenment by the Grand Caliph. No major opponents of the Enlightened Throne lurk within its lands. The ajamis of the distant North and East do not pose a threat, for they are separated by great oceans and mountains.

Reality, however, is less pretty than these official court pronouncements. Zakhara has a plethora of lesser rulers—caliphs, emirs, sultans, khedives, khans, padishahs, and sheikhs. Which of these is superior to the others depends on the person you ask. Most are local rulers acting as if they are the supreme power in their own region, even though they recognize the ultimate authority of Huzuz. As a result, these small powers frequently become embroiled in petty wars with each other. When they're not warring with each other, they may do battle with the small barbarian factions on their borders.

As a rule, the cities of Zakhara are well defended. All maintain a common militia and a watch. The former is called upon in times of crisis to repel







enemies. The latter is a permanent force of soldiers serving as palace guards and city patrols. In addition, a number of Zakhara's cities have their own standing armies, navies, or both. Some cities retain the services of mercenaries and mamluks for protection. Most military units consist of infantry and cavalry, with an occasional magical unit or an airborne support wing. Siegecraft is not common in the Land of Fate, and the natives of Zakhara generally lack the war engines of northern nations.

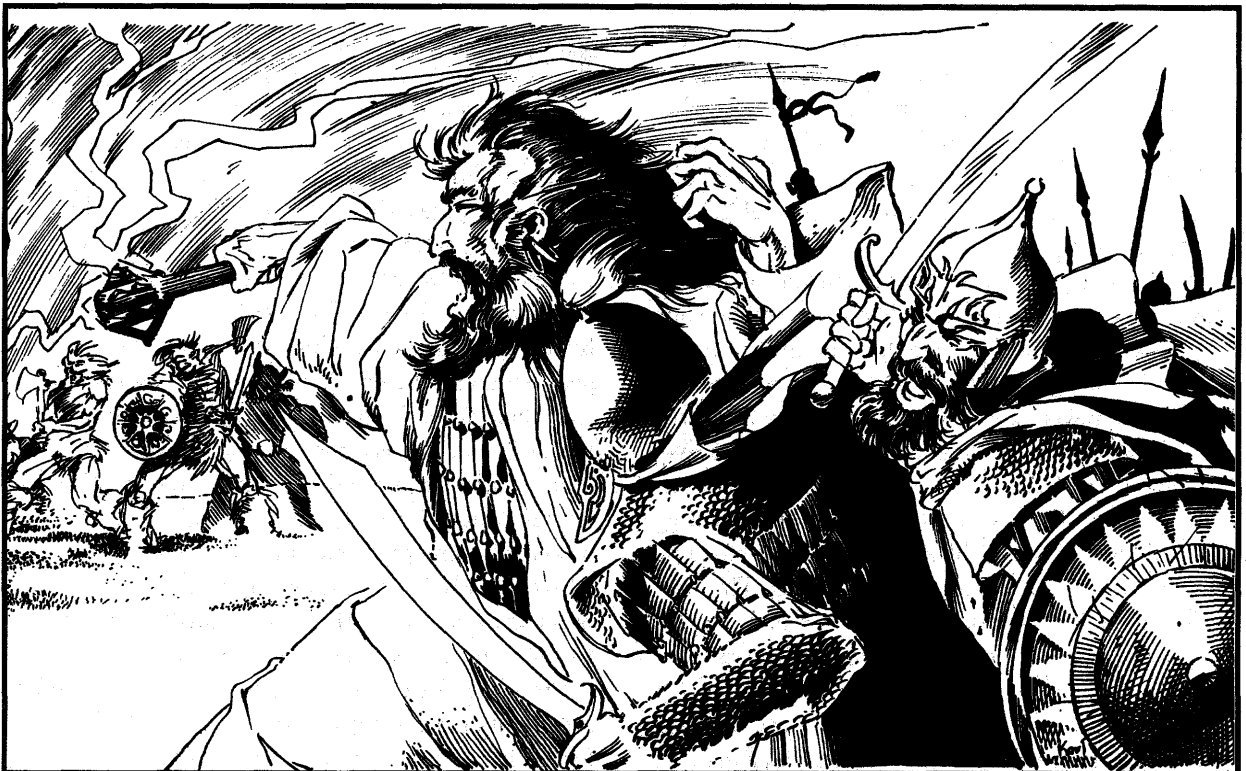
The text below offers an overview of Zakhara's city-states and their forces. Chapters 6 through 10 provide additional detail.

**Afyal:** The Isle of the Elephant boasts a healthy, prosperous navy that protects its trade routes in the Crowded Sea. This navy acts better than any fortification to repel raiders. It turns its magnificent face toward the lands of the far-flung East, displaying the power and wealth of the Land of Fate. Afyal also has a large standing army, one of the few able to use elephants as mobile and effective "machines" of war. (The islanders' skill with these beasts is uncanny. So

are the abilities of the beasts themselves.) On the debit side, the padishah of Afyal is mad, and he uses his armies the way a small child uses toy soldiers. His current plan: the conquest and colonization of Sahu, Isle of Serenity.

**Hiyal:** The great, smoky city of Hiyal is ringed with a wall. The city can be entered through just four great gates, each of which is guarded by the local sultana's hand-picked guards. Hiyal's greatest protection is not its wall, however. Many desert raiders have breached this relatively low barricade only to discover Hiyal's best defensive structure: the squalid slums that ring the city. In this crowded maze, horses can scarcely move. Hopelessly stalled, the raiders cannot reach the treasure-troves at the heart of the city — Hiyal's suqs, mosques, and palaces.

In addition to the slums, Hiyal has a more clandestine defense strategy. Striking from the shadows is very much the way of this city. This practice-plus the fact that various factions of Hiyal regularly conspire with and against the sheikhs of the Haunted Lands — helps ensure the city's overall safety.





**Huzuz:** The City of Delights, gem of the Golden Gulf and Suq Bay, looks like a ripe fruit for the plucking. It lacks the forbidding walls of Zakhara's northern holdings. Further, Huzuz is open sprawl of parks, easy to cross. It has a number of gates, but these primarily serve as a means for regulating trade and guaranteeing taxation; the gates would do little to repel a serious invader.

The strength of Huzuz lies not in its steel or its stone but in the authority of its Grand Caliph. Moreover, it lies in the hands of the genies who recognize the Grand Caliph's sovereignty, choosing to protect the city in his name. Twice twenty years ago, in the age of the current Grand Caliph's grandfather, a rebellious desert sheikh led a great endeavor against Huzuz. The sheikh reached the plains before the city, where his army was met by a lone sha'ir. The sha'ir warned the sheikh to turn back. In response, the sheikh rode down the sha'ir and slew him. At that moment, a host of genies appeared: djinn, dao, efreet, and marids, leading an army of jann. The sheikh's army was destroyed to the last rider. The land was decimated. Most of that damage was the result of the genies, who competed to see who among them could slay the most riders, using the most impressive displays possible. Since that bloody occasion, no one has challenged the magical protection of Huzuz.

**League of the Pantheon:** The Pantheist League maintains a united military force, heavy in footmen. This army is collectively called the Sword of the True Gods. The Sword's purpose is to protect the religious leaders of the League from the incursions of tribesmen from the Haunted Lands and rivals in the Ruined Kingdoms. In reality, the Sword exists as a living extension of the League's stated religious policy—spreading the word of the Pantheon and denouncing the lesser, “incorrect” gods. Occasionally, units are sent far afield, into Nog and Kadar and to the islands of the south. No direct action has been taken against the decadent caliphates of the Pearl Cities and Afyal, but most feel it is only a matter of time.

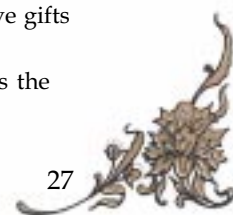
**Pearl Cities:** The Pearl Cities of the Golden Gulf and the Crowded Sea are primarily merchant and trade cities. They gain their armies the old fashioned way—they buy them. Mercenary units, naval units, desert clans, and untethered mamluk organizations are pressed

into service as need demands. Usually, such a “need” calls for a limited action, over which the caliphs and sultans of the Pearl Cities have full control. Their main foes are the sporadic desert raiders from the High Desert as well as each other, with a looming threat from the League of the Pantheon across the Gulf.

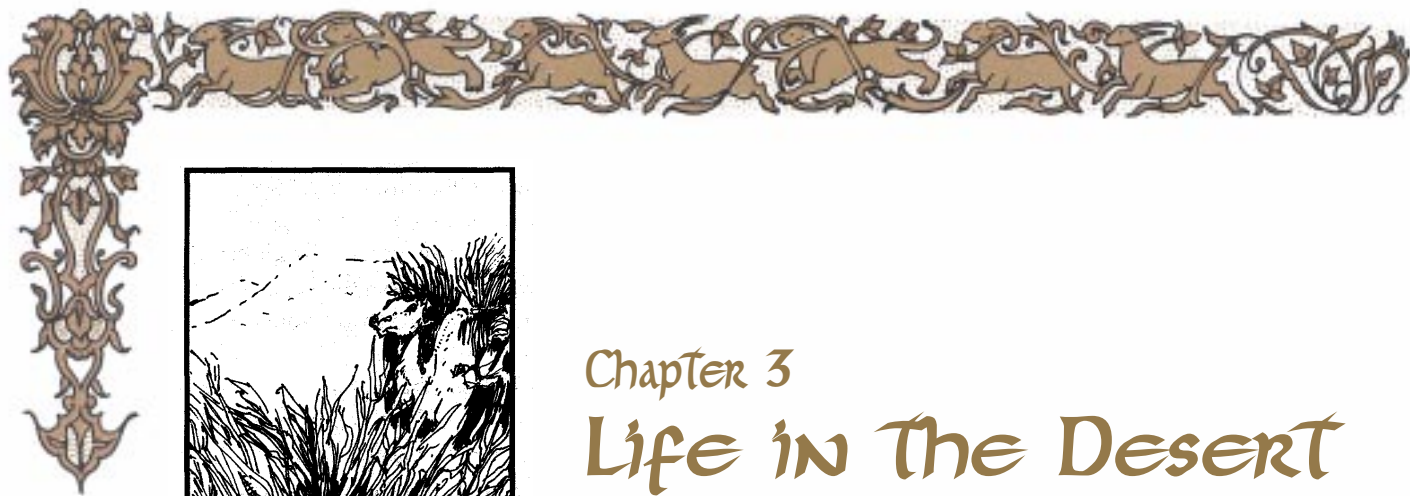
**Qudra and the Free Cities:** The tiered city of Qudra is the greatest fortress in the Land of Fate. Its stalwart walls have been strengthened by magic, and they present a forbidding face to the northern barbarians across the Great Sea, reminding them of the strength of the Grand Caliph. Qudra is ruled by mamluks who elect an emir from among their mamluk societies. The main foes of the city are the Corsair Domains and rebellious rulers among the nearby Free Cities.

Much to the annoyance of Qudra, the Free Cities regularly fight each other. This is primarily low-level warfare, taking the form of raiding. Each of the city states knows that a large-scale military action would certainly prompt a reaction by the mamluks of Qudra. It might also trigger a unified attack by the other Free Cities. For this reason, the rulers of the Free Cities expend a great deal of energy on political intrigue. Each strives to convince Huzuz (and, more importantly, the generals of Qudra) that his or her city deserves to be left alone and granted free rein (while all the others deserve to be watched more closely). Ultimately, these intercity scuffles are trivial. Greater threats exist. On land, the Free Cities must continually fend off raiders from the Hill Tribes of the Furrowed Mountains. At sea, the Free Cities must battle the chaotic and cagey pirates of the Corsair Domains, who wreak havoc with trade and travel.

**Ruined Kingdoms:** The cities built upon the ruins of Nog and Kadar are home to a mixed bag of petty tyrants. Some of these tyrants seek to rule with the blessing of Huzuz. Others seek to regain the glories of their predecessors—savage rulers from a distant and long-buried past. This a land in which a man can raise an army by breakfast and see it destroyed by nightfall. Hiyal, Huzuz, the Pantheon, and even Afyal meddle in the politics of this region. A general in the forces of Kadarasto, Rog'osto, or Dihliz is certain to receive gifts and supplies from at least one of these would-be influences. Quite often, the same general accepts the gifts of more than one.







## Chapter 3

# Life in The Desert

The deserts of Zakhara are vast and foreboding. Temperatures frequently climb above 130 degrees during summer days and plummet below freezing during winter nights. No other region is as cruel, yet to the desert nomads (Al-Badia), no other place is as divine. Many a wanderer has remarked on the perfection of a cool desert morning: a cloudless sky, glittering dunes, and no other creature to be seen for miles, except perhaps a fleeting gazelle.

Most of the Zakharan desert is not dunes, however, but an expanse of dry, rocky plains. Here and there are fields of volcanic debris—great, broken, black expanses. Trees, where they exist, are stunted and brown. (Tamarisk is the most common wood.) Thorny shrubs and grasslands dot the region, turning green during winter and spring, then concealing their life behind a brown, crackling facade. In the height of summer, a few hardy succulents and sprigs of milkweed still grow on the dunes, but the gravel plains are barren.

Zakhara has two great deserts: the High Desert and the Haunted Lands. Both are situated on plateaus that rise to an average elevation of 2,500 feet. Between them lie the waters of the Golden Gulf, Suq Bay, and the Al-Tariq Channel ("The Passage"). At the heart of these deserts, however, virtually no permanent water source exists—just a handful of precious wells and oases.

A lack of water is not the only danger the desert holds. Mirages entice the unwary travelers toward waters of sheer illusion. Sandstorms scour men and beasts and bury encampments. Winter storms fill the sky with lightning, flood the hollows, and rip tents from moorings. Worst of all, perhaps, are the black clouds of locusts that strip a pasture bare to the last blade of grass before the nomads and their herds arrive.

## The Daily Routine

A day in the life of a nomad family begins early, when days are still relatively cool. Two hours before the dawn, a daughter of the family rises and begins to make *leben*, a sour milk or buttermilk. First, she fills a goatskin with milk and hangs it from a tripod. Then she rocks the skin back and forth, often singing, with the sloshing *leben* providing a rhythm. Cultures inside the



skin eventually thicken the milk. If she uses sheep's milk, she will have butter left over. Camel's milk has virtually no fat, so it yields neither butter nor cream. Nonetheless, sour camel's milk is an Al-Badian staple.

An hour before dawn, the rest of the family rises and washes, using sand when no water is available. If the tribe is enlightened, all family members face Huzuz and kneel upon the ground, praying for guidance and good fortune. Breakfast follows-usually just a handful of dates and some milk for each-person. Many families share a wooden bowl filled with *leben*, passing the bowl until it is empty.

If the tribe has sheep and it is not summer, a boy assigned to shepherding leaves the camp in search of good grazing ground. (During the summer months, grazing is poor or nonexistent, and the tribe stays near an oasis or town.) Having found a good spot, the boy plants his staff on the ground and hangs his aba upon it. The sheep, notoriously stupid, mistake the robe for the boy and are less apt to wander. This allows the boy to doze or hunt for jerboas (desert rats). If the hunt is successful, the shepherd roasts his catch and enjoys a snack. Otherwise, he eats only the dates he brings with him each morning.

Nearly all Al-Badia own camel herds. At night, the animals are tethered or hobbled. In the morning, a few dates and kind words encourage them to rise. Most camels range freely during the day, seeking their own fodder. As evening approaches, a call from a boy or girl brings them back to camp, where they know fresh water and more dates await them.

Most women attend to chores during the day: milking animals, caring for young children, spinning wool, weaving cloth, and mending tents. Girls and boys gather brushwood for the fires. Older children may take a camel to fetch fresh water-a task that can take all day if the source is far.

Unless it is summer, men go hunting-setting their *saluqis* (hounds) after the gazelles or setting their falcons after hares and desert bustards. Not every nomad has a saluqi, but most men (and some bold women) have at least one falcon, which they raise, name, and treat almost as a pet. Other prey of the hunter includes the *dhabb*, a tasty but elusive lizard about two feet long, which is shot with a bow and arrow. No matter what the prey is, however, an

enlightened nomad always utters a prayer to Fate and the gods before slaying it, giving thanks for the animal and asking that its death to be quick and merciful.

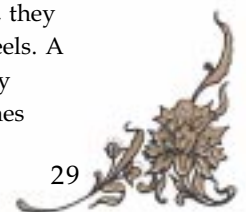
When game is scarce (a common situation), the hunters train hawks or patrol the area around the camp, reading the desert for signs of recent events. Where a town-dweller sees nothing, a nomad sees all-what kind of camels have passed, what they were carrying, how many men accompanied them, and more. Warriors may also go on raids (see below) during the day. Some, exhausted by events of the previous day or evening, simply relax in the shelter of the tent and share stories.

As evening approaches, the shepherds and the hunters return to camp, and the family gathers round the fire for dinner. This is the usually the second meal of the day; most Al-Badia eat no lunch. If a family is fortunate, the evening meal includes bread, rice, and a bit of meat. To make bread, the cook throws dollops of unleavened dough directly onto the fire. After it has baked and then cooled slightly, the eater scrapes off the ash and sand, and then dunks the bread into a bit of clarified butter before devouring it. Al-Badia consider this a treat because flour is expensive. Al-Hadhar claim that a nomad's bread tastes worse than dirt.

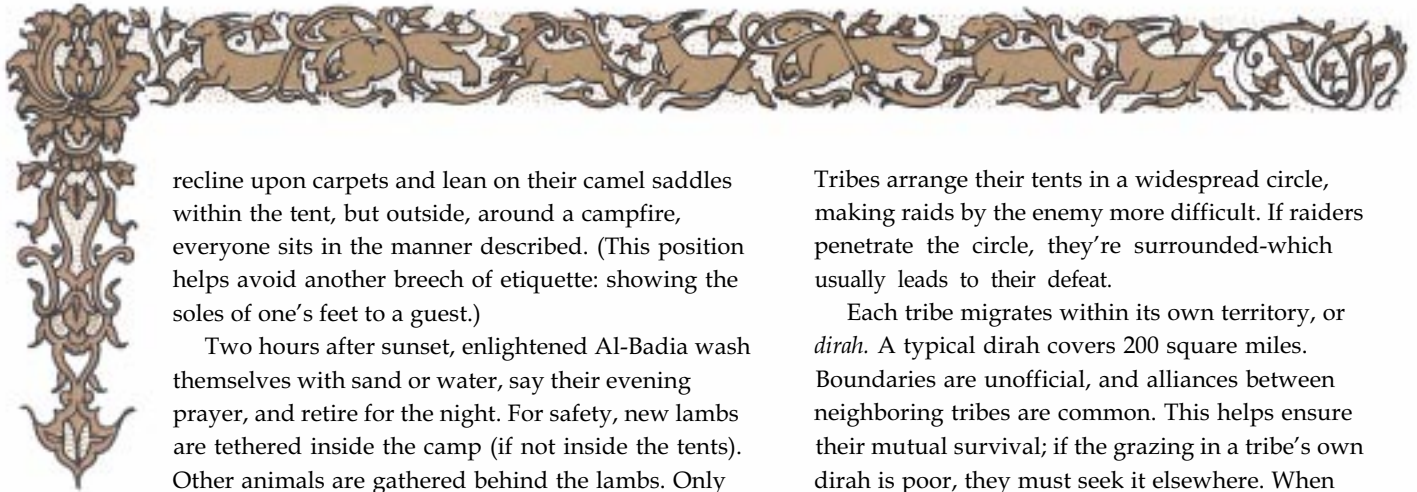
The nomads of Zakhara observe a number of customs during meals. Like Al-Hadhar, enlightened Al-Badia eat only with their right hands; to do otherwise is shameful. Belching is a compliment to the cook. The back wall of the tent is the proper tool for wiping greasy hands-the more grease marks the wall shows, the better the family's fortune.

The nomads stay gathered round the fire after the sun has set, telling stories and singing songs. Small children retire to women's quarters and fall asleep listening to the talk outside the tent. In most Al-Badian tribes, men and women do not segregate themselves during the evening; in others, the segregation is hardly meaningful, since only a thin curtain divides them. (For a look inside a typical Al-Badian tent, see Card 12 in this boxed set.)

Nomads are lean and strong. They rarely sit on their haunches as the town-dwellers do. Instead, they crouch, resting their entire weight upon their heels. A town-dweller finds this difficult, but to the sturdy nomad, it's a natural position. Al-Badia sometimes







recline upon carpets and lean on their camel saddles within the tent, but outside, around a campfire, everyone sits in the manner described. (This position helps avoid another breach of etiquette: showing the soles of one's feet to a guest.)

Two hours after sunset, enlightened Al-Badia wash themselves with sand or water, say their evening prayer, and retire for the night. For safety, new lambs are tethered inside the camp (if not inside the tents). Other animals are gathered behind the lambs. Only the person assigned to the watch stays awake-sitting by the fire to guard against wolves and other dangers.

## Migration

During the summer months, when the grasslands are bare, Al-Badia establish crowded camps beside oases or wells. Their tents offer little relief from the sun; temperatures inside frequently top 110 degrees. For most Al-Badia, this is a miserable experience-not simply because it is hot, but also because nomads despise being settled.

This is a good time to seek diversion by doing business in a village or town. The nomads sell livestock, wool, woven textiles, curd cheese, and perhaps some roasted locusts (considered good eating by many). In turn, they buy rice, wheat, dates, and weapons. If the tribe is wealthy, they also purchase trinkets and finery.

With the onset of autumn, a bit of rain begins to fall in the desert. Spirits soar, and the tribe packs up the camp—tents, food stores, cushions, ornate carpets, and thin mattresses stuffed with cotton, in addition to personal belongings. The migration begins. For eight months, the tribe will move from place to place, breaking camp every week to 10 days. (This is a matter of sanitation as well as restlessness.) With the coming of winter, nights grow windy and cold. In higher elevations, a bit of snow even falls to the ground, melting as the sun breaks free of the horizon.

With the onset of spring, grazing is at its best. Families camp far apart, seeking what is otherwise a luxury: privacy. The camps remain close enough to hear the warning blast from a neighbor's horn, however. Each family knows the position of their neighbors, and they feel honor-bound to protect them.

Tribes arrange their tents in a widespread circle, making raids by the enemy more difficult. If raiders penetrate the circle, they're surrounded—which usually leads to their defeat.

Each tribe migrates within its own territory, or *dirah*. A typical *dirah* covers 200 square miles. Boundaries are unofficial, and alliances between neighboring tribes are common. This helps ensure their mutual survival; if the grazing in a tribe's own *dirah* is poor, they must seek it elsewhere. When enmity does exist between tribes, each fiercely protects their own territory—and, most importantly, its wells.

## Raids

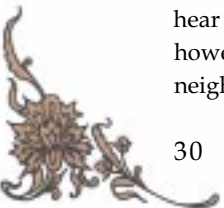
To the Al-Badia, theft of livestock is not sinful—it's the mark of brave, successful men. Women may also take part in raids; those who do earn a reputation as great warriors.

Al-Badia routinely travel over a hundred miles on camelback to conduct a raid. Along the way, they seize anyone who might be able to warn the enemy of the impending attack. If the target's location is close, and the raiders own horses, then both mounts are used, with one horse backing each camel.

Provided all goes well, raiding is a quick affair: a swift assault just before the break of dawn or a harried attack during a dust storm. For honorable tribes, death of the enemy is not a goal; they raid only to acquire. Warriors fight valiantly hand-to-hand, but those who are weaker feel no duty to fight to the death. Surrender is not dishonorable. To show their desire to go on living, embattled warriors simply place their thumbs between their teeth and extend their fingers toward their attackers. (No white flags are raised.)

The Al-Badian code of honor demands that women who do not fight be left alone. In their tents, they are usually quite safe, for only a dishonorable nomad would harm them. Pots, carpets, and food stores are suitable for looting, but anything a woman wears on her person (as much as possible, during a raid) is considered off-limits.

Many Al-Badian tribes also conduct raids against distant villages and outposts. Unfortunately, town-dwellers do not observe the same rules of etiquette in battle as honorable nomads. As a result, these raids are





often bloody affairs for both sides, creating an enmity and hatred that do not fade quickly.

## Blood Feuds

**D**espite the nomads' rather civilized views on raiding, fights to the death do occur. Known as a blood feud, such a conflict may arise when a tribe believes one of their members has been wrongly killed. Or a matter of honor may trigger the feud. Whatever the cause, the conflict escalates into a deadly exchange, with each side killing a member of the other until the conflict is resolved.

Sheikhs of warring tribes can rarely end a blood feud between them. A third, neutral sheikh must mediate. He or she begins with a ceremony of "digging and burying." Each side in the feud draws lines in the sand—one for every tribe member killed. If the death toll is uneven, the side with fewer lines must pay a "blood price" (usually a combination of camels and money) to offset the other tribe's loss. The neutral sheikh strives to set a price that preserves the honor of everyone involved.

## Sheikhs

**A**l-Badia look for four things in a sheikh: courage, wisdom, generosity, and luck. The importance of the last trait should not be underestimated. A lucky sheikh is blessed by Fate, and all members of the tribe would like to share in that good fortune.

While it is true that many sheikhs are the sons of former sheikhs, in the High Desert neither a family connection nor a sheikh's sex are as important as the qualities listed above. In the Haunted Lands, the position of sheikh usually passes to a sheikh's eldest son, but he is not guaranteed to keep it. No Al-Badian tribe will support a sheikh who is unworthy of respect. Over the course of time, nomads have banished and killed many leaders who were deemed weak, stupid, or dishonorable.

As noted above, Al-Badia expect their sheikhs to be generous. That, in a large part, determines a sheikh's honor. It is the sheikh's job to ensure that no tribe member goes hungry or cold while others have food and warmth. The basic necessities—food, water,

## The Coffee Ceremony

**T**hroughout Zakhara, from the poorest Al-Badian camp to the most luxurious palace, coffee-making is the measure of a good host. If a woman rules the house (or tent), she may make the mocha, but this is typically a man's job.

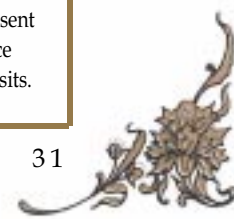
Nowhere is the preparation and drinking of coffee more ceremonious than among the Al-Badia. A prince or sheikh may allow a slave to prepare the coffee and an honored son to pour it. But the average Al-Badian host does it all with great flourish and pride.

A nomad's coffee-making begins when the host sits before a little hollow in the sand and lights a fire. Camel dung is the fuel of choice. Next, the host spreads out his coffee equipment—tiny cups; mortar and pestle; utensils for stirring; and a shallow metal dish with a long handle, designed for roasting the beans. The host also sets out two coffee pots—one sooty and battered, the other shiny. All the while, the host asks his guests how they are, but he never inquires directly about their business or wealth, because that would be rude.

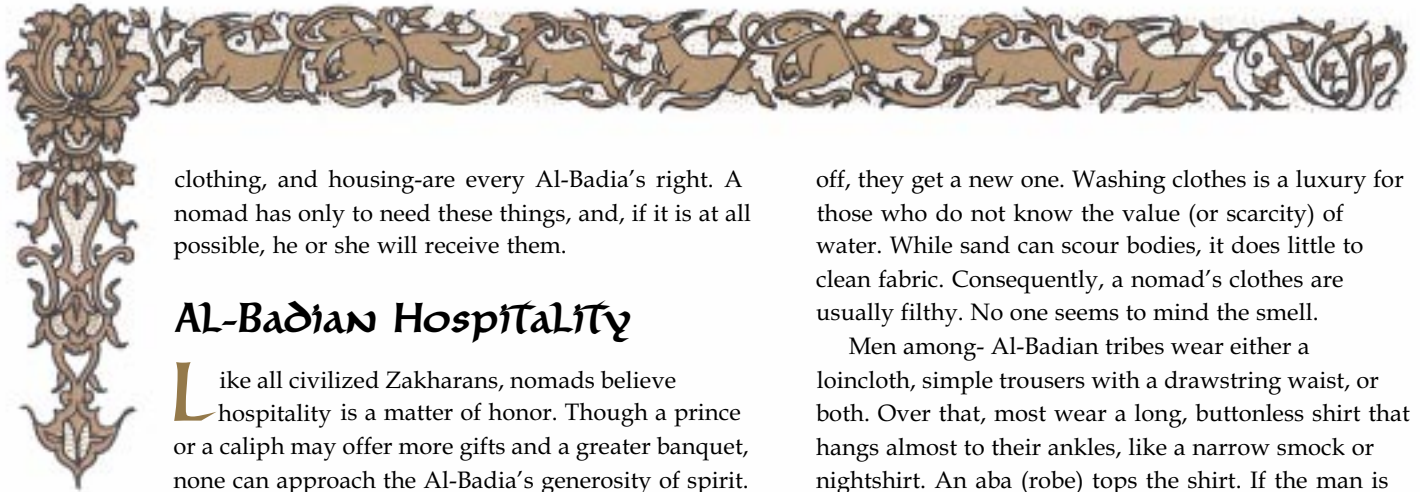
Next, the host places some dried coffee berries in the mortar and begins to pulverize them. The pestle rings like a bell as the mortar strikes it. When the berries have been thoroughly crushed, the host puts them in the roaster and holds it over the fire. As soon as the beans are brown but not burnt, he sets them aside to cool. Then he pours a little of the previous day's coffee into the black pot, adds water, and sets the pot on the fire. When the mixture boils, the host adds the freshly roasted coffee and stirs. A helper (his wife or son) brings a little cardamon, which he quickly pulverizes and adds to the still-boiling pot.

When the coffee is as black as oil, the host transfers it from the battered pot to the shiny one. After allowing the grounds to settle, he at last begins to pour—a ceremony in itself. The host must hold the pot in his left hand; to do otherwise is a serious breach of etiquette. He must take the first swallow himself, proving that the brew isn't poisonous. Then he commences serving. According to custom, he pours for the eldest guest first.

After drinking coffee, a town-dwelling host often passes round a censer filled with frankincense, allowing each guest to inhale the scent and bask in its fragrance. Among the nomads, only sheikhs observe this custom. Once the tenser has been passed, guests are expected to leave or retire for the night. Town-dwellers, who have frequent visitors in the afternoon, light the incense after guests have been present as briefly as 15 minutes. Al-Badia consider that practice extremely rude; incense is reserved for long, languid visits.







clothing, and housing-are every Al-Badia's right. A nomad has only to need these things, and, if it is at all possible, he or she will receive them.

## AL-BADIAN Hospitality

**L**ike all civilized Zakharans, nomads believe hospitality is a matter of honor. Though a prince or a caliph may offer more gifts and a greater banquet, none can approach the Al-Badia's generosity of spirit. A nomad's everyday meals are meager until a guest appears; then the family may prepare a feast that surpasses all they have eaten for weeks. A sheep is the main course of preference, with the fatty, succulent tail being handed to the guest of honor. If a sheep is not available, the family may slay a camel instead.

It is a fairly simple matter to gain a nomad's hospitality, but some rules of etiquette must be observed. For example, it is bad form to approach the back of a nomad's tent. Instead, travelers must appear within full view of the front. Further, it's extremely rude to approach a tent directly. Travelers are expected to stand a good distance from the tent and wait to be noticed, busying themselves with their camels or horses. Then the man or woman of the tent goes out to extend a formal invitation. If a guest is important, the hostess hangs her gayest frock at the front of the tent, like a banner, to celebrate the guest's arrival.

Guests who approach during the day and are just passing through can expect a bit of *leben*. Those who seek shelter at night receive, dinner, coffee, and a place inside the tent. A polite traveler never offers money in exchange for lodging; to the nomad, that's an insult. Instead, a traveler who wishes to show thanks may offer a gift before departing. As is the custom throughout Zakhara, guests should not remain beyond three days. One exception exists: important guests of a sheikh are permitted to stay for up to a week if the invitation is extended. The sheikh offers gifts, and the guests generally reciprocate.

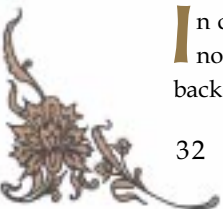
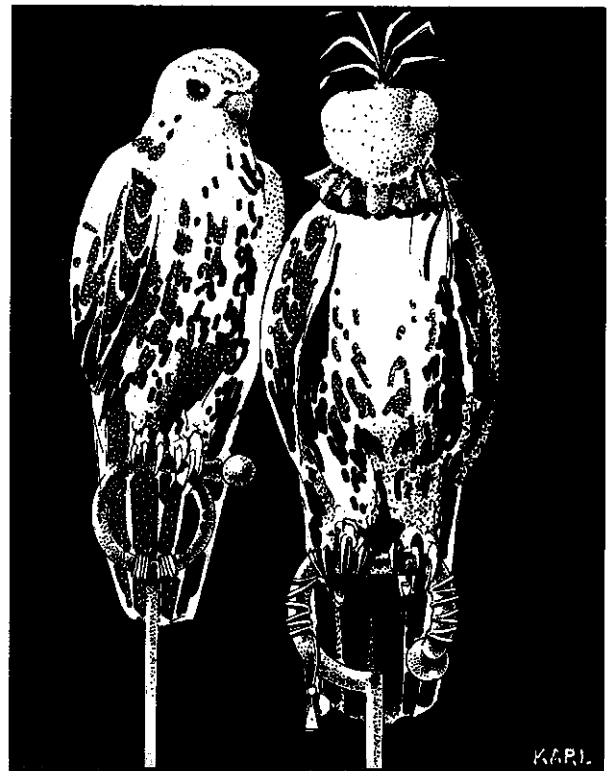
## Attire and Vanity

**I**n contrast to a sheikh or well-to-do Al-Badia, many nomads own little more than the clothing on their backs. When a robe becomes so tattered that it falls

off, they get a new one. Washing clothes is a luxury for those who do not know the value (or scarcity) of water. While sand can scour bodies, it does little to clean fabric. Consequently, a nomad's clothes are usually filthy. No one seems to mind the smell.

Men among- Al-Badian tribes wear either a loincloth, simple trousers with a drawstring waist, or both. Over that, most wear a long, buttonless shirt that hangs almost to their ankles, like a narrow smock or nightshirt. An aba (robe) tops the shirt. If the man is well to do, the front of the aba may be trimmed with embroidery. Rarely is it silk, however; most Al-Badian men consider such "softness" shameful. A keffiyeh and agal (headcloth and cord) complete the attire.

Women's attire is much the same, but it may be more gaily colored. Many women loosely drape a shawl over their heads instead of wearing a keffiyeh and agal. All don as much jewelry as possible, adorning themselves with silver, gold, turquoise, pearls, and glass beads-from headpieces and nose rings to ankle bracelets. The wealthier the woman, the greater her finery. Few Al-Badian women wear veils. (In fact, in





some tribes only the men are veiled, wrapping their black headcloths across their faces.) Finally, a nomadic woman wears one other item of interest: a little key, which opens a chest containing her personal treasures. She wears the key openly, on a chain or silken rope around her neck.

The Al-Badian woman enjoys many vanities. Her kohl-rimmed eyes are practical as well as alluring; the black lines help shield her eyes from the sun. Henna stains her hair, hands, and feet. She brushes her teeth with a bark that reddens her lips. Perhaps her most notable vanity is tattooing. Forehead, cheeks, chest, calves, hands, feet—all may be adorned with attractive and simple patterns of dots, lines, and cross-marks. Each tribe's women favor a unique set of designs.

## Marriage and Family

**M**onogamy is a way of life among the Al-Badia. Few nomads can afford more than one spouse and family. Moreover, aside from a handful of well-to-do sheikhs, few of them think polygamy is worth the inevitable hassles. Parents typically arrange marriages, favoring a union of cousins. By tradition, a girl is bespoken to her first cousin on her father's side. But if she objects strongly (and preferably quietly), she may convince her cousin to seek the hand of another. Should she fall for the wrong man—an enemy, a slave, or a man from an inferior tribe—they'll have to elope and abandon both their tribes to be together.

A groom always gives his prospective bride a *jehaz* — gifts that include clothing, money, livestock, and the all-important "marriage bed" (cushions and carpets). These are hers to keep forever. Because the livestock multiply, and because her parents may have already given her a few camels, an Al-Badian bride soon owns a sizable herd.

Divorce is a simple matter among the Al-Badia. Nomads completely ignore the supposedly "enlightened" ways of the Al-Hadhar. If a man wishes for a divorce, he simply says so, repeating his desire three times aloud. If a woman wants a divorce, she returns to her parents' tent. Her husband may try to woo her back with gifts, songs, and ardent pleas. If she resists, he'll eventually tire of her absence and agree to divorce her. No shame is involved for either of them,

and both usually find new spouses with ease. After a divorce, children over the age of eight live with their fathers, but their mother may visit them freely. In fact, she often becomes friends with her former husband's new wife, offering tips on how to handle him.

Like Al-Hadhar, desert-dwellers value a large family. But the desert's harsh life means that many children die at birth or during infancy. This sorrow, coupled with the nomad's fierce moral code and love of life, makes children precious to the Al-Badia.

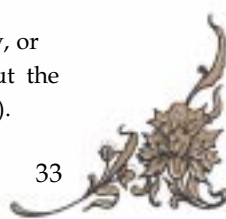
It is nearly every new wife's desire to become pregnant. When she does, it's cause for celebration in the tribe. Her husband remains especially close and watchful until the baby's birth. For 40 days thereafter, however, tradition demands that she and the baby sleep alone, preferably in a separate section of the tent.

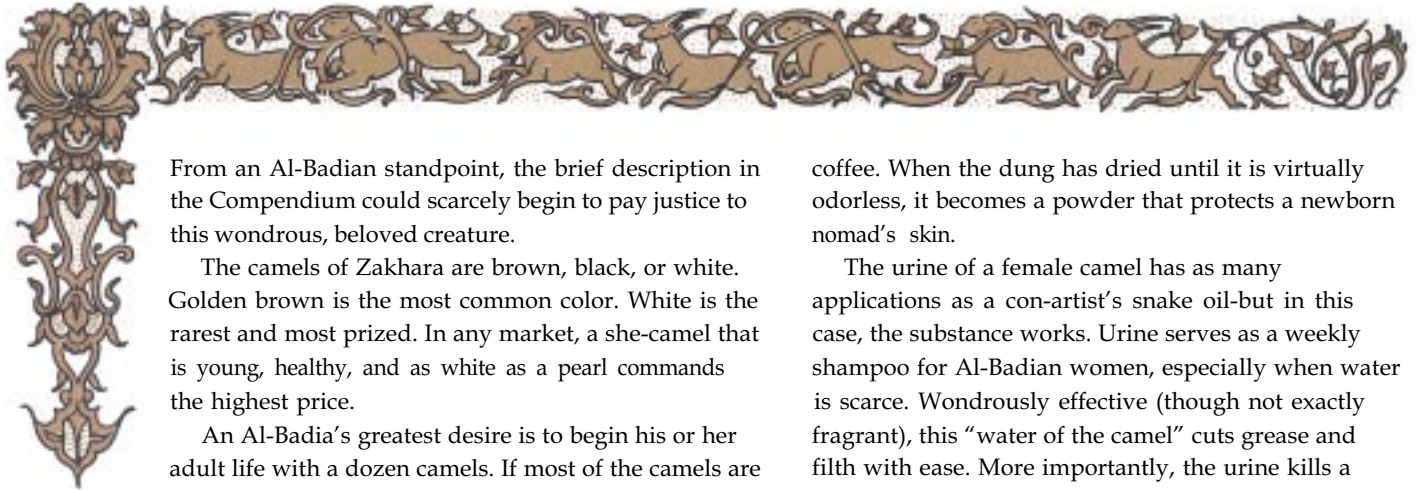
Like town-dwellers, the nomads believe that children are especially susceptible to the evil eye. As proof against this sinister force, Al-Badian mothers attach a small blue bead to the baby's cap and mark each cheek with a line of kohl. Further, almost every mother places a steel dagger at the baby's side while the infant sleeps. If the child lies upon a leather mat on the ground, the mother sticks the dagger in the earth beside the baby's head. In a cradle or hammock, the unsheathed dagger simply lies alongside the baby, who is swaddled so snugly that the risk of injury is slight.

For the first few months, an Al-Badian mother carries her baby about in a leather cradle, which she slings over her shoulder. Thereafter, the baby spends most of its time in a little hammock suspended near the front of the tent. This arrangement makes sure visitors can admire the family's latest addition. It is customary for a newcomer to place a coin or trinket in the baby's fist. Supposedly, this brings the child luck. Certainly, it brings the mother a bit of good fortune, for she quickly retrieves the gift. (After all, if the baby were to die choking, no one would view the gift as a good luck charm.)

## Camels

**V**olume One of the *Monstrous Compendium* provides combat statistics for the dromedary, or single-humped, camel—the type found throughout the Land of Fate (see the page titled "Animal, Herd").





From an Al-Badian standpoint, the brief description in the Compendium could scarcely begin to pay justice to this wondrous, beloved creature.

The camels of Zakhara are brown, black, or white. Golden brown is the most common color. White is the rarest and most prized. In any market, a she-camel that is young, healthy, and as white as a pearl commands the highest price.

An Al-Badia's greatest desire is to begin his or her adult life with a dozen camels. If most of the camels are female, their number will double in a few years. Nomads owning 40 or 50 healthy camels consider themselves rich, regardless of the herd's color.

Owners give all their camels names. Some beasts even come when called; others simply hiss and spit. Nomads are very fond of their camels, but it has nothing to do with their disposition. Camels, as a rule, are ornery and mean-especially males. Rather, the nomad loves the camel because of its practicality. The camel's uses are seemingly endless. It carries water bags, cargo, and riders. When it falls to the ground, unable to travel farther, it may be slain to provide meat. The female, especially valued, gives milk, a staple of the Al-Badian diet. The camel's hair can be shorn and mixed with the hair of sheep or goats to make wool. The camel's dung is a treasured fuel, creating embers that are especially suited to heating

coffee. When the dung has dried until it is virtually odorless, it becomes a powder that protects a newborn nomad's skin.

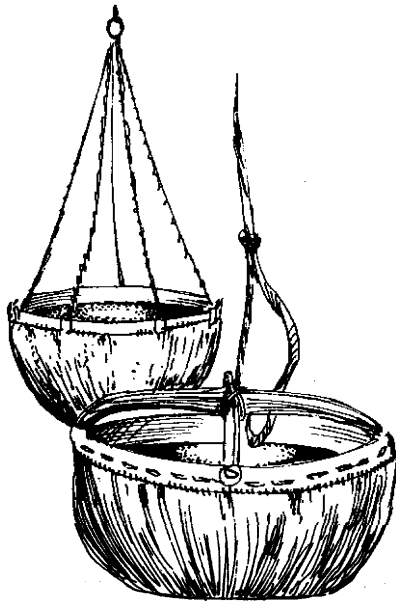
The urine of a female camel has as many applications as a con-artist's snake oil-but in this case, the substance works. Urine serves as a weekly shampoo for Al-Badian women, especially when water is scarce. Wondrously effective (though not exactly fragrant), this "water of the camel" cuts grease and filth with ease. More importantly, the urine kills a variety of pesky head vermin (which are especially problematic in summer). As an added benefit, the urine lightens hair, enhancing any subsequent application of henna. On a more practical note, urine also serves as an eyewash and a purgative.

Camels are extremely well suited to life in the desert, enduring hardships that quickly kill the average horse. The animal's broad feet are designed for plodding easily across the sand. And its heavy fringe of eyelashes help protect its eyes from the sun and windborne sand.

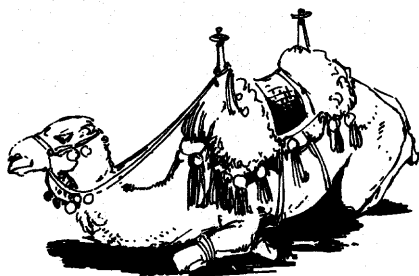
Most importantly, a camel's need for fresh water is minimal. It can go without water for two to four weeks during winter and early spring, when grazing is good. The desert's green plants satisfy the camel's need for water. It is a misconception, however, to believe that a camel can survive for long without water *and* fresh fodder. When the spring days grow warm, a camel begins to need watering about once a week. During the height of summer-when Zakhara's deserts are as dry as tinder and ash-camels must be watered every two days to remain healthy. A camel in top condition can survive two weeks without water and food, but few nomads would purposely risk so valuable a life for a foolhardy trek.

Nomads can tell the health of a camel by the condition of its hump. If the hump is firm and full-weighing about 25 pounds on its own-the camel is healthy. On the other hand, if the hump is small and shrunk, the camel is weak. Contrary to popular belief, a camel's hump is not a storehouse of water-it's mostly fat. Yet by metabolizing this fat, the beast converts a good portion of it to water.

A dehydrated camel is bony. If it has grazed a bit recently, its hump looks about half full (a "15 pounder"). The animal's body makes every effort to







conserve water, limiting urination and sweating, and even slowing breathing. When the parched camel at last reaches water, it can suck in as many as 30 gallons in just a few minutes' time. Gradually, its entire body will regain a plumper, healthier look. The hump will not enlarge again until the camel has resumed vigorous grazing or feeding, however.

In addition to green fodder, camels need salt. The shrubby brush that grows near the mineral flats and lakes can satisfy that need. If a camel does not have access to this brush at least once every 10 or 12 days, however, its owner will hand-feed it salt.

Like the nomads themselves, camels are extremely fond of dates, though the beasts devour the stones along with the fruit. Al-Badia give dates to the animals as bribes or rewards for good behavior. Nomads also feed their camels a mixture of dates and milk in preparation for a long or difficult trek.

The camel's need for water and food plays an important role in determining an Al-Badian tribe's mobility. During the winter and spring months, a tribe can camp many miles from a well or oasis, using the camels to haul water each week. By filling leather skins and buckets, Al-Badia collect water for the people as well as the beasts in camp. Camels need only an occasional drink when grazing is good, but the lambs, dogs, horses, and goats drink freely from a leather trough outside the tent.

As previously noted, camels can be ornery creatures. When urged toward some awkward task, even a particularly docile camel will hiss with annoyance'. Most show their opinions by spitting—deftly aiming a parcel of green, slimy cud at the person who raised their ire. A male camel takes his anger one step further: he bites. This is rarely a playful nip; the jaws of a bull camel have been known to break a man's forearm with a single chomp. For this reason, few male camels serve as mounts. Most bulls, in fact, are best

suited to stud service, after which they may end up as the main course during some festive occasion.

Camel meat is tough and rather coarse, but tasty. One camel can serve an entire tribe. The hump is tender, and nomads consider it the best part for eating. Guests are always offered their fill of the hump before anyone else—a practice in keeping with the Al-Badia's intense desire to be hospitable.

## Travel by Camel

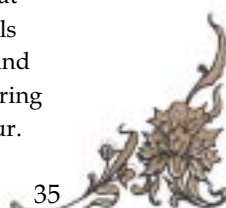
**A**l-Hadhar have dubbed the camel “ship of the desert.” True, this beast is the most common conveyance across a seemingly endless sea of dust and sand, but that's not the reason for the name. Camels are called ships because they sway back and forth beneath their riders. To the uninitiated, this endless wobbling can cause nausea, much like the swaying of a boat beneath ocean swells.

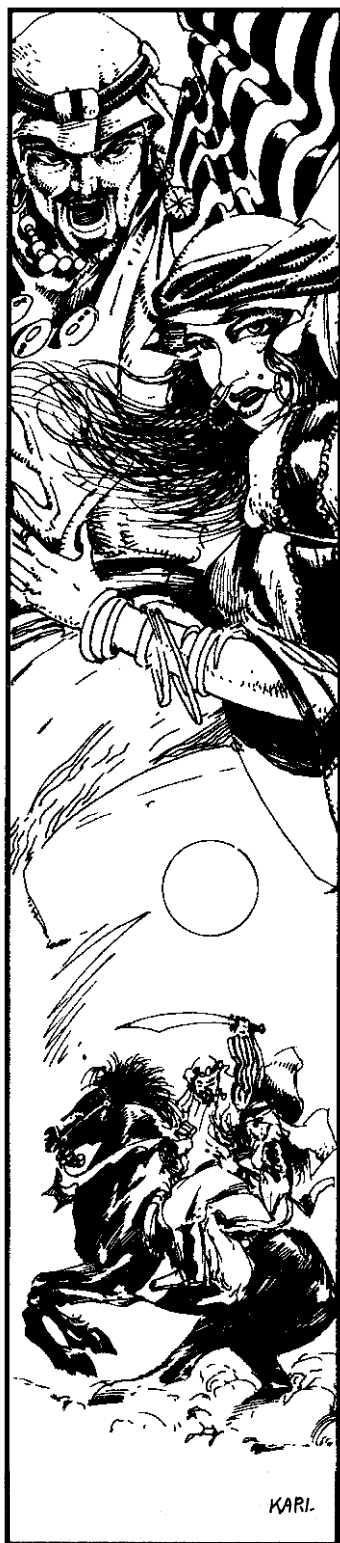
Most Al-Badia mount a camel by bending its neck toward the ground, using it as foothold, and then swinging up into the saddle. This demands experience in handling camels as well as acrobatic talent. Those who haven't mastered this technique (or acquired the camel-riding proficiency) must force the camel onto all fours, and then quickly climb onto the beast. The rider's weight signals the camel to rise.

Camel-riding is in itself a physical challenge. Some nomads ride with their legs astride. Most kneel, however—even when the camel is at a full gallop. This feat takes exceptional balance and endurance.

When a tribe is on the march, moving from one camp to another, nomads rarely ride their camels. Instead, the camels are loaded and the nomads walk beside them. Women are an exception. Frequently, they ride in large, elaborate litters. (Card 11 shows such a litter, as well as a common saddle.) The more elaborate the litter, the more important the woman.

Camels walk at an easy pace of about 4 to 6 miles an hour. Pack animals that are fully laden travel only half as fast. While carrying a rider, camels can trot at speeds of 10 to 13 miles an hour, and maintain that pace for an entire day. At a full gallop, most camels reach a maximum speed somewhere between 15 and 20 miles an hour. Exceptional mounts—prized during raids—can attain speeds as high as 30 miles an hour.





## Chapter 4

# Desert Tribes

**B**eyond the walls of cities, beyond the bands of orchards and fields, lies the true Burning World of Zakhara. Here, in regions known as the High Desert and the Haunted Lands, creatures must live with the world on its terms instead of their own. This chapter describes the people of Zakhara's great deserts—those who are strong enough to survive there, and those who are bold enough to thrive.

### Tribes of The High Desert

**T**he people of the High Desert are mostly enlightened nomadic tribes. They are the "classic" desert riders—passionate, romantic, and powerful. In spring, they travel in search of the seasonal grasses. In summer, they camp near wells and oases, many of which are unmapped. But in the very heart of the desert, not even the nomadic tribes and their mounts can survive, for here lies the Genies' Anvil (*Saddan al-Jinn*).

Nine major tribes lie scattered throughout the High Desert. These are described below. Hundreds of smaller tribes, bands, and raiding parties make their home here as well. Even the major tribes aren't found together in full numbers, save at gatherings for water or trade. These tribes are broken into clans, each of which consists of several families. The clans of the major tribes are often larger than some of the smaller tribes, numbering hundreds of individuals and thousands of livestock (horses, goats, camels, and sheep).

#### House of Asad (Children of The Lion)

The House of Asad is an enlightened tribe that numbers some 5,000 men and women, divided into 20 clans. They claim the Jamal Oasis as their own, though they permit other enlightened nomads to use it. Asad is one of the wealthiest tribes in the High Desert, and it is blessed with strong camels, fine sons, and beautiful daughters. The people of Asad are proud to the point of arrogance. They are easy with their friendship but also easy to offend.

**The Leader:** Sheikh Najib bin Kamal al-Asad (hmF/dr/20), a lean, middle-aged warrior hardened by a life in the desert, is the most powerful sheikh in the entire High Desert.



**Important Individuals:** Of greatest significance to the tribe is the sheikh's wife and chief vizier, Alia al-Jamal umm Nabil (hfW/sam/l 7). Alia is a beautiful middle-aged woman, soft-spoken but thoughtful and forceful. She is as much a leader of the tribe as is her husband, and her words carry the same weight as his. As such, she negotiates with other tribes and makes rulings in Najib's absence. The bond between husband and wife is so strong that, even though the sheikh is successful enough to have additional wives, he chooses not to.

Nabil bin Najib (hmW/dr/4) is the eldest son of Najib and Alia; he inherited his father's strength and his mother's wisdom. Still a youth who has just attained his majority, Nabil is taking over some of his father's traditional duties, including the yearly journey to the city of Tajar for trade. Nabil is bright, friendly, and trusting-all traits that can lead to trouble when dealing with less than honorable people.

### **House Bakr (Clan of The Young Camel)**

Most of the House Bakr, an enlightened tribe, now lives in and around the city of Tajar, where Sheikh Ali al-Hadd rules. However, some tribe members chose to remain true to the desert life; most have married into other tribes. The others; a core of some 500 members of House Bakr, still remain in the High Desert, determined to carry on the tradition of their people.

**The Leader:** Sheikh Ali al-Hadd (hmF/dr/16) leads the House of Bakr, the majority of whom live in the city of Tajar (see "Tajar" in Chapter 8 for more information).

**Important Individuals:** The remnant of House Bakr still living in the High Desert is led by Ajan bin Najon al-Yaqud (hmF/dr/15), the son of Sheikh Ali al-Hadd's sister and, as such, the nephew of Tajar's sheikh.

Ajan's father, Najon, was part of the vanguard that led the rebellion against the old sultan who ruled Tajar. When Kori al-Zafiri (father of Ali al-Hadd) took the throne, he offered Najon a position as captain of the cavalry. That night, Najon had a vision of a beautiful marid, crying and lamenting that only sadness would follow House Bakr in the city of Tajar. The next morning, Najon refused the position and returned to the desert with a handful of people, including his son

Ajan. Najon promised to aid the sheikh and his descendants should they ever need assistance.

Najon told his son Ajan this tale, and Ajan has watched the fruit of Tajar wither with the passing years. Ajan's tribe wanders the south-central region of the High Desert and often pursues bandits who prey on the caravan route to Akota. Ajan believes that the rest of the tribe is in danger as long as it remains confined by walls and fettered by civilization. He prefers his freedom, living by the will of Fate. Periodically, he sends representatives and messengers to the sheikh in Tajar to report on the clans, but he will not go there himself. Ajan, like his father, has had his own vision. It has told him that if he enters Tajar, he will never leave the city alive.

### **House of Dhi'b (Sons of The Wolf)**

The House of Dhi'b numbers some 4,000 enlightened people, most of whom are herders and craftsmen. Sheikh Anwat al-Makkar maintains several raiding clans of 200 or more warriors each. These clans prey on the caravans traveling through the south and south-central region. The sheikh has allied with or against most of the other major tribes over the years, depending on the circumstance. He and his warriors rode with Kori al-Zafiri to cast out the old sultan of Tajar, but now Anwat's raiders attack the caravans serving Kori's son, Ali al-Hadd. Conversely, Anwat has offered Ajan (the leader of the Bakr people remaining in the High Desert) the service of his household and warriors.

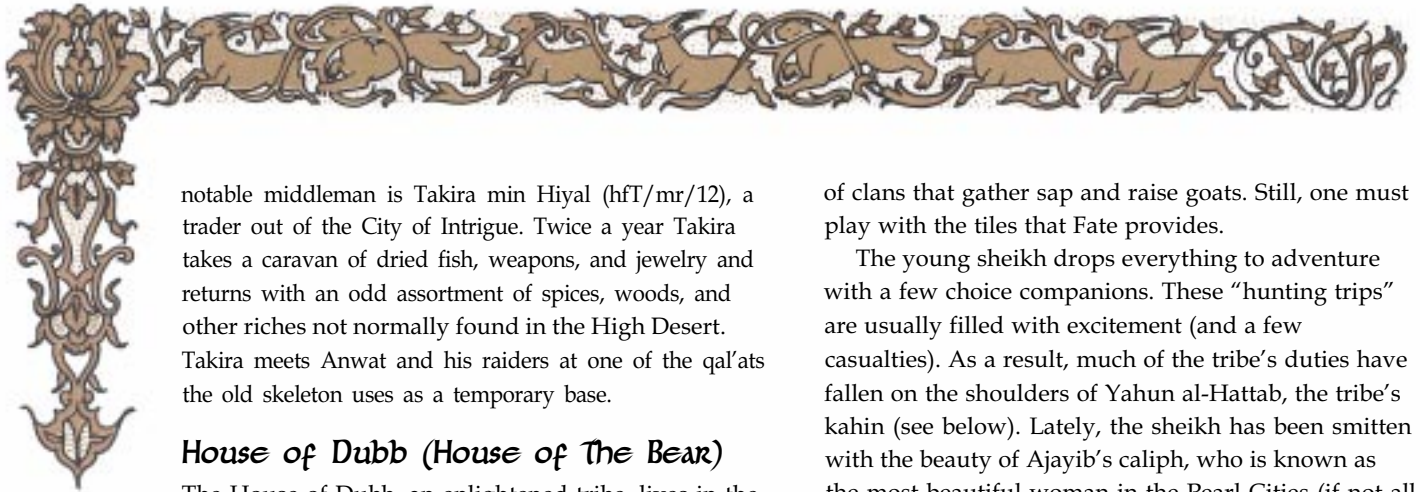
**The Leader:** Sheikh Anwat al-Makkar (hmT/sl/1B) is a wizened graybeard, so thin and gaunt that his nickname is "Tarkib al-Azam" ("skeleton"). Sheikh Anwat is a sly old man who has outwitted his enemies for many years, and he uses the qal'ats of the mountains as personal fortresses and treasure vaults. It is said that he has a dozen such hideouts, concealed by magic, throughout the south-central mountains of the High Desert.

**Important Individuals:** Anwat's chief advisor, Mamun bin Harun bin Hamid (hmW/sh/10), is the grandson of Anwat's first vizier, the legendary Hamid al-Garib. Mamun commands genies and jann but would never dare question the ruling of his sheikh, whom he regards with equal amounts of fear and respect.

The Sons of the Wolf use a number of contacts and go-betweens to unload their raided goods, but their most







notable middleman is Takira min Hiyal (hft/mr/12), a trader out of the City of Intrigue. Twice a year Takira takes a caravan of dried fish, weapons, and jewelry and returns with an odd assortment of spices, woods, and other riches not normally found in the High Desert. Takira meets Anwat and his raiders at one of the qal'ats the old skeleton uses as a temporary base.

### **House of Dubb (House of The Bear)**

The House of Dubb, an enlightened tribe, lives in the southwestern corner of the High Desert, hard on the borders of the Al-Suqut Mountains. There are about 3,000 tribe members, broken into nine separate clans. Most live by herding, but some clans do a thriving business among the Realm of Bleeding Trees, where they harvest aromatic gums. The tribe is on excellent terms with the people of the city of Ajayib, and has aided Ajayib's caliph in her raids against the mountain people.

**The Leader:** Sheikh Yaqub al-Quwwat (hmF/dr/13) is a tall, proud, powerful man who would frankly rather see himself as the leader of an army than a collection

of clans that gather sap and raise goats. Still, one must play with the tiles that Fate provides.

The young sheikh drops everything to adventure with a few choice companions. These "hunting trips" are usually filled with excitement (and a few casualties). As a result, much of the tribe's duties have fallen on the shoulders of Yahun al-Hattab, the tribe's kahin (see below). Lately, the sheikh has been smitten with the beauty of Ajayib's caliph, who is known as the most beautiful woman in the Pearl Cities (if not all of Zakhara). This attraction spurs the sheikh to extra efforts. He has no wife or children and, if a certain kahin is correct in his predictions, will not survive long enough to acquire them.

**Important Individuals:** Yahun al-Hattab (hmP/k/10) is one of the wise elders of the tribe, though he now doubts his wisdom when he recommended the heroic, headstrong, and impulsive Yaqub as sheikh. The lad had acquired a number of abilities under his belt while adventuring, and he had a reputation for courage and coolness in the face of danger. What Yahun didn't count on was that Yaqub as sheikh would have the same traits as Yaqub as adventurer—and would bolt off at a moment's notice. As a result, the venerable Yahun is left picking up the pieces. He would hate to admit his recommendation was wrong, but already some of the clan chieftains are complaining about Yaqub's leadership (or lack thereof).

### **House of Nasr (People of The Eagle)**

The House of Nasr roams the northern reaches of the High Desert and maintains the Desert Mosque, a haram (holy site) of great importance to the desert tribes. The enlightened tribe numbers some 3,000 people (split into 30 clans), and all are known for their hospitality and prowess in weapons—none more so than their sheikh. Every year a single clan is entrusted with protecting the Desert Mosque. The clan members work with the kahins and mystics at the mosque.

The Desert Mosque is a huge, domelike sphere of volcanic rock buried in the ground. The mosque is arranged so that, in facing Huzuz, one also faces the rock. Dedicated to no specific faith, the mosque is maintained not by hierarchy priests, but by kahins and mystics. The site became holy when Yusef al-Nasr, the first of desert dwellers, received enlightenment there. He promised





that the enlightened peoples of the desert would hold that great land in the name of the Grand Caliph.

**The Leader:** Sheikh Nadia umm Fadela (hff/dr/15) has led the tribe for the past 20 years. Although a female leader is uncommon, it is not without precedent in the High Desert. Furthermore, the tribe members have no more resistance to following a capable, independent woman than they would an independent man.

Sheikh Nadia is extremely capable. Some of her feats include protecting the Desert Mosque from savage defilement at the hands of an ajami raid and singlehandedly rescuing her eldest daughter from the hands of Qudran slavers. Nadia is the daughter of the previous sheikh and has outlived two husbands.

**Important Individuals:** Fadela bint Nadia (hff/dr/8) is the eldest daughter of the sheikh and Nadia's likely successor. Fadela is much like her mother in her strength and force of will. She is also visibly different from her comrades. Her hair is dark red, the shade of dried blood, which gives her the name "Fadela Bloodmane" (Fadela Urf-al-Dam). The true name and nature of Fadela's father is in question. Although Nadia insists that Fadela's father was Nadia's first husband, rumors persist of outlanders and jann. Such hearsay is whispered only well outside of Bloodmane's hearing, for whoever her father is, Fadela inherited a hot temper from him.

Fadela is well known for her adventurous spirit, which led to her capture by mamluk "recruiters" as a barbarian (her hair color led them astray at first, and her curses "confirmed" their suspicions). Nadia broke into the tower of Qudra's emir, Hatit Abd al-Wajib, for a "chat" with him on the matter. Identities were revealed, the matter was settled, Fadela was reunited with her people, and the mamluk captain responsible was assigned to a naval unit. The House of Nasr has since enjoyed good relations with the slave-soldiers of Qudra.

Not as fortunate as Fadela is Nadia's son, Amar bin Nadia (hmW/sam/6). The youth has been overshadowed by his stronger, better-liked sister, and this has made him bitter and cynical. By rights (ancient traditions from before the enlightenment), the eldest son should be considered before the eldest daughter for inheritance, but such is not the case with the House of Nasr. The fact that Fadela is more

competent than her brother is all the more reason for her position as heir apparent.

A third major figure to the Nasr is Angaloran of the Desert Mosque (hmP/k/14), a kahin. He maintains the haram for all followers; and the haram is protected by one clan of the Nasr and a mystic group known as the Dome Dancers. Angaloran is a quiet, retiring individual, given to stories and parables. His two favorites are the enlightenment of the desert peoples at the mosque (of course) and the tale of Nadia breaking into Qudra to rescue Fadela.

## House of Sihr (Jann of The High Desert)

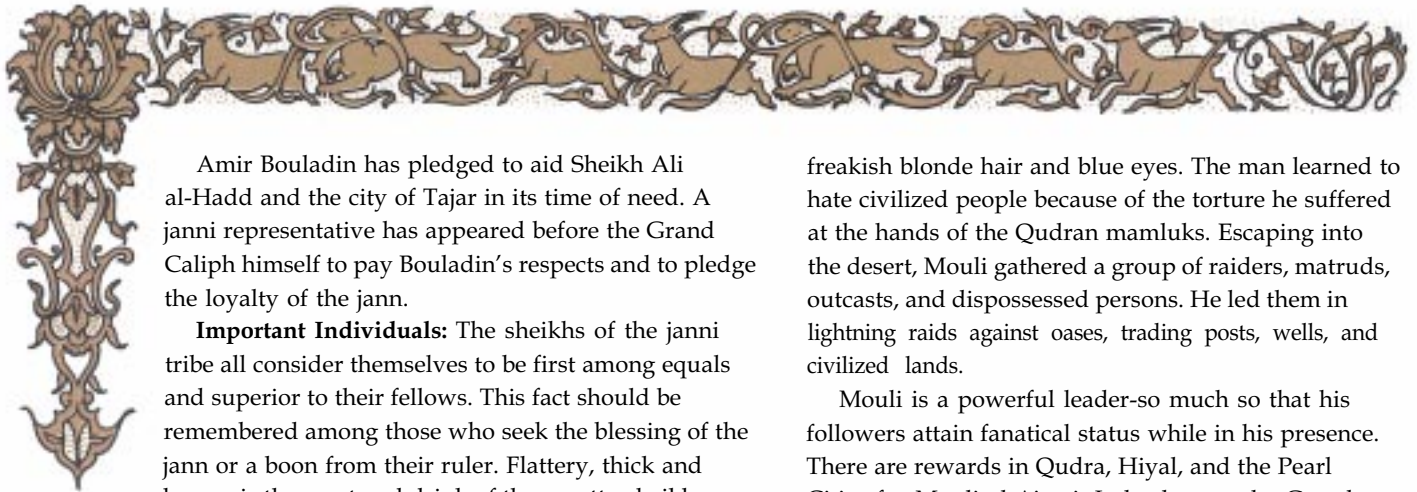
In the heart of the desert lies the Genies' Anvil, an inhospitable place where no mortal can survive for long. It is the home of the enlightened janni tribe of the High Desert. Although jann normally choose to live far removed from mere mortals, the Genies' Anvil is their land. The interloper who travels there had best have good reasons for coming to see the jann.

The number of jann in the House of Sihr is unknown. Those living in the desert have never been counted by the likes of men. Further, some members may be serving genie masters in faraway magical lands. The tribe itself is divided into a number of clans, each with its own sheikh. These clans wander, herd, trade with other enlightened tribes, and occasionally raid settlements. All sheikhs claim allegiance to Amir Bouladin (see "Leader" below).

Whether the jann should be considered a major tribe is a point of argument to some-but not to the desert tribes or the jann themselves. One scholar of Tajar put forth publicly the idea that there were only eight major tribes and discounted the janni tribe. The next morning he was found tied up and hanging from a minaret. Individual jann are often playful and adventurous, but in large groups they tend to be respectful, diligent, and very dangerous.

**The Leader:** Amir Bouladin al-Mutajalli, His Resplendent Magnificence, may the gods themselves speak highly of him (a janni of 10 HD, maximum value with vizier abilities), is the official ruler of the jann of the High Desert. However, each sheikh commands his or her own tribal house, which consists of 11 to 31 jann. The amir is noble, honest, and ruthless with those who oppose him.





Amir Bouladin has pledged to aid Sheikh Ali al-Hadd and the city of Tajar in its time of need. A janni representative has appeared before the Grand Caliph himself to pay Bouladin's respects and to pledge the loyalty of the jann.

**Important Individuals:** The sheikhs of the janni tribe all consider themselves to be first among equals and superior to their fellows. This fact should be remembered among those who seek the blessing of the jann or a boon from their ruler. Flattery, thick and heavy, is the meat and drink of these petty sheikhs. Their amir, while wise enough to see it for what it is, enjoys adulation as well.

Bouladin's eldest daughter is a janni named Jamala who, like Fadela Bloodmane of the House of Nasr, is hot-blooded and eager for adventure. She is a janni of 8 Hit Dice, and she has vizier abilities as well as the ability to shapechange. She may masquerade as a mere mortal to accompany humans during their travels. If she does, she will fight to aid them. Should anything happen to her, however, both her father and the full power of the janni tribe will turn against the miscreants. Fate protect those who are so foolish!

### ***House of Tayif (Ghost-Warriors)***

The House of Tayif has at most 1,000 unenlightened members who follow their sheikh, Mouli al-Ajami, in the High Desert. The tribe's numbers seem much greater, for the people roam the entire length of the desert. Raids conducted in the name of Mouli have struck caravans outside Qudra and resin-farmers in the faraway Realm of Bleeding Trees. Almost superhumanly fast, Mouli and his followers survive solely through raiding. They seem to have no set pattern or purpose other than to damage established trade. The other tribes believe that only serpents and vultures must deal with Mouli, for they have no contact with the raider except in combat.

The followers of Mouli wear white in battle, and they are always veiled. No Ghost-Warrior has ever been identified, save for the leader and his vizier.

**The Leader:** Sheikh Mouli al-Ajami (hmPal/mb/14) a foreign-born interloper, has brought together a large number of smaller tribes and unenlightened clans to rebel against the Grand Caliph. Intelligent and charismatic, Sheikh Mouli has

freakish blonde hair and blue eyes. The man learned to hate civilized people because of the torture he suffered at the hands of the Qudran mamluks. Escaping into the desert, Mouli gathered a group of raiders, matruds, outcasts, and dispossessed persons. He led them in lightning raids against oases, trading posts, wells, and civilized lands.

Mouli is a powerful leader-so much so that his followers attain fanatical status while in his presence. There are rewards in Qudra, Hiyal, and the Pearl Cities for Mouli al-Ajami. Indeed, even the Grand Caliph has heard of this outlander's exploits.

**Important Individuals:** Known today as "Fadahl the Crippled," Vizier Fadahl al-Araj (hmW/so/18) was once Fadahl the Enlightened, a sage in the city of Hiyal. He ran afoul of Hiyal's sultana and had his legs crushed for his troubles. Reduced to begging, Fadahl was apparently befriended by Mouli himself during Mouli's escape from Qudra. Fadahl's knowledge of the land and his hatred of his former rulers aided Mouli in surviving the desert's hardships, and the pair now form the core of leadership of the Ghost-Warriors. Fadahl may almost always be found atop a flying carpet, a present of Sheikh Mouli to his accomplished companion.

### ***House of Thawr (Children of The Bull)***

The enlightened tribe of Thawr has dwindled to some 1,500 people. The Children of the Bull have been lured away by the prospect of employment and adventure in the Pearl Cities. The Thawr land is currently in the southeastern spur of the desert, where the tribe supplements trade by raiding the border regions for horses and supplies. These raids were originally minor and inflicted little injury or damage to either side. Now, however, the Pearl Cities are striking back hard against the raiders. Losses among the tribe have been heavy, and the tribe is thinking of retreating into deeper desert. Their other option is to migrate north and seek shelter with the Bakr in the city of Tajar. So far, the leader of the Children of the Bull has refused these plans. Instead, he speaks of a cleansing wind that will resolve all conflicts.

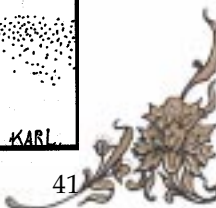
**The Leader:** Sheikh Ali al-Sadid (emF/dr/17), already old when he took on the responsibility of leading his people, has ruled wisely for 80 years. To his misfortune, during the last five years his wife and four

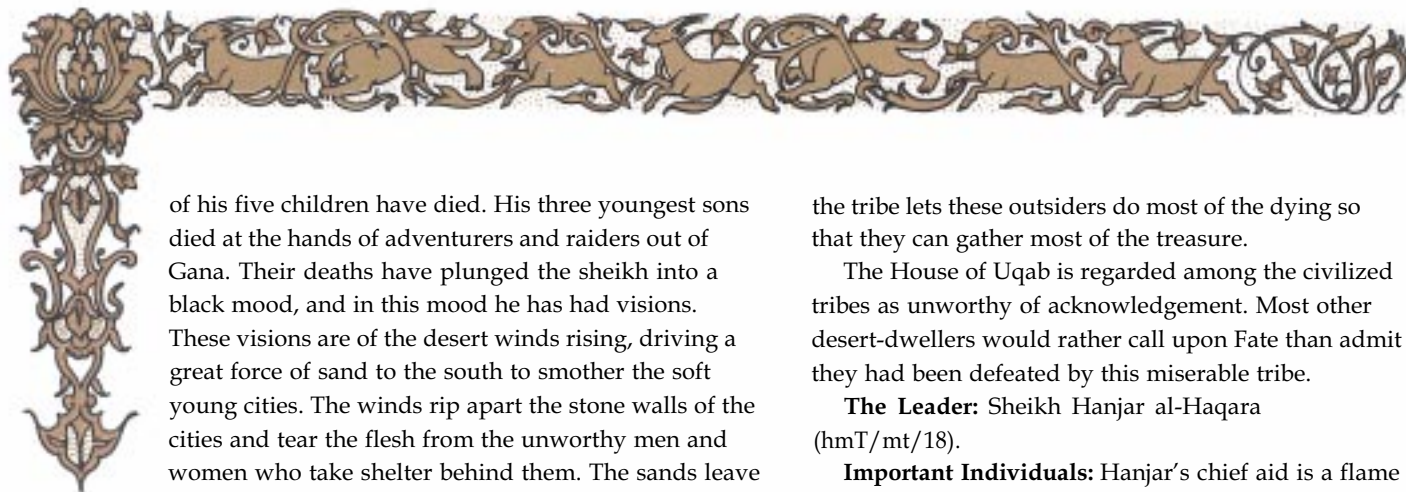






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of his five children have died. His three youngest sons died at the hands of adventurers and raiders out of Gana. Their deaths have plunged the sheikh into a black mood, and in this mood he has had visions. These visions are of the desert winds rising, driving a great force of sand to the south to smother the soft young cities. The winds rip apart the stone walls of the cities and tear the flesh from the unworthy men and women who take shelter behind them. The sands leave only a blanket of desolation, where true beings may ride at their own will, with only Fate to guide them. Sheikh Ali is slowly going mad from his visions.

**Important Individuals:** Ali's only surviving child is his daughter Alia bint Ali (hefP/k/9). She is disturbed by her father's words and actions. He has ordered the tribe (and those adventurers who could be hired) to scour the region for old ruins and ancient treasures. He seems to be searching for a particular item, the nature of which he will not reveal. Alia's father has been consumed by sorrow, and he seems lost to others.

With great regret, Alia has begun speaking with the clan chieftains. If the sheikh is no longer capable of leading his people, someone must step forward and take the reins of command from him. Alia has volunteered to do this herself if necessary. She has also sworn to lead the people back into the desert where they will be safer from Gana and the other Pearl Cities. The response from the clan chieftains has been mixed. As the losses from raids grow and the sheikh seems more consumed by his madness, conflict seems likely.

### **House of Uqab (League of The Vulture)**

The House of Uqab is made up of outcasts from the desert and their descendants. They consider themselves enlightened, but their respect for the Grand Caliph is slight and their reconciliation of the gods fleeting. Like the creature they pattern themselves after, they are scavengers, living off the success of others. They raid caravans and steal horses. Adventurers who encounter them in the desert will not find a welcome-only daggers and arrows.

There are likely no more than 2,500 members of the House of Uqab scattered in small bands throughout the desert, but their numbers grow with each attack and each telling of the tale thereafter. The Vultures recruit savages and mountain tribes to aid in their attacks, but

the tribe lets these outsiders do most of the dying so that they can gather most of the treasure.

The House of Uqab is regarded among the civilized tribes as unworthy of acknowledgement. Most other desert-dwellers would rather call upon Fate than admit they had been defeated by this miserable tribe.

**The Leader:** Sheikh Hanjar al-Haqara (hmT/mt/18).

**Important Individuals:** Hanjar's chief aid is a flame mage named Solina al-Ganij (hfW/fm/15), a former member of the Brotherhood of the True Fire who turned traitor to her comrades. The brotherhood had planned to assassinate the sultana of Hiyal. Solina turned her comrades in, only to find the sultana's men chasing her as well (the sultana decreed there should be no survivors). Solina fled into the desert, where she was rescued by Sheikh Hanjar. A cowardly, greedy young woman, Solina will remain with him as long as he brings her jewels and gems and wonderful items. She longs to return to civilization, however. She hasn't figured out yet how to make this return without the brotherhood coming after her.

## **Tribes of The Haunted Lands**

**T**he Haunted Lands are home to ghosts and mournful winds. The region they encompass is larger than the High Desert but has even fewer inhabitants. In ancient times, the land was dominated by warring kingdoms, but they are long gone. The remaining people, a few of whom are enlightened, are nomads or wild beings such as jann.

The peoples of the Haunted Lands are more scattered than their brethren in the High Desert. There are fewer enlightened major tribes and a greater number of small, savage bands of nomads who act as raiders and slavers. Of prime value is the overland route from the Ruined Kingdoms to Talab in the Pantheon, leading on to the independent city of Halwa. Smaller routes provide a "back-door" for trade to Hiyal and the Free Cities, though these must pass through the Furrowed Mountains.

Al-Badia of the Haunted Lands survive by raising sheep, goats, and camels and by harvesting isolated patches of dates and figs. They trade livestock and carpets with the lowland countries for weapons,



metalwork, and exotic fabrics. They also explore the aged ruins that are occasionally revealed in the shifting of the sands. The reward is often great treasure-and great danger as well. Raiding is also common, both against each other and against the outposts along the coastal civilizations. Direct attacks against larger cities have usually resulted in disaster, but a few much-vaunted successes over the generations still encourage the brave and the reckless.

The position of tribal leader is hereditary and is usually passed to the eldest son. The ruling family takes the tribal name instead of a parent's name to identify their position.

The small size of these tribes means that, to be effective against larger targets, they must band together. As a result, charismatic leaders can lead a gathering of diverse nomadic warriors in a plundering raid. Such alliances usually last as long as the leader lives; the associations fade into the desert wind upon the leader's death.

Current major power groups within the Haunted Lands are presented in the following text.

## House of Hanif

The largest enlightened tribe of the Haunted Lands, House of Hanif numbers some 10,000 people and is powerful enough to send its own ambassador to the Court of Huzuz. The tribe controls the region surrounding the Ghost Mountains and the Al-Akara Mountains. It also maintains a permanent base in a qal'at that was formerly held by holy slayers, located a day's ride west of Halwa.

As a people, this tribe has an intense loyalty to the throne and is known for rescuing thirsty pilgrims lost en route to Huzuz. The people are brave, honest to a fault, and open to strangers in their lands. The other tribes of the Haunted Lands call the Hanif "Our Grand Caliph's Hunting Dogs" – and not in a complimentary sense.

**The Leader:** Sheikh Kaldhun bin Hanif (hmF/dr/19) is a powerful, middle-aged man, his stylish beard just beginning to show gray. His wealth affords him two wives, and he has two talented (but egotistical) sons. Sheikh Kaldhun is a sensible, reasonable man, more given to careful decisions than outbursts of passion. He knows his days of greatness are behind him.

**Important Individuals:** The most prominent of the many people of Hanif are the two sons of the sheikh, born on the same night to different mothers. Mu'awiya (hmF/dr/9) was conceived second and born first, while Yazid (hmF/dr/9) was conceived first and born second. These facts were revealed by a wise woman traveling through the lands 10 years ago. Both men have reached their majority, and each has his supporters.

Mu'awiya bin Hanif is as tall as his father, but gaunt. His manner is calm, and his eyes are soft and caring. He believes that the ways of his father and grandfather are basically sound and that the tribe should continue as a desert guard and aid for the Grand Caliph. Mu'awiya has visited the Court of Enlightenment in Huzuz, where he marveled at the buildings and accomplishments of the civilized peoples.

Yazid bin Hanif is rather short, but he is as strong as his father was at his age. He also has his father's keen eyes and sharp features. Yazid is dissatisfied with the tribe's life, believing they are tethered to the court of Huzuz, and he feels they could build their own enlightened city far from courts and caliphs and merchants. Eight years ago, Yazid was separated from his tribe in a sandstorm and located five days later. He says he spent that time among the jann, who told him marvelous secrets of the future. This is at the core of his romance with the deep desert.

Both sons have loyal and excitable followers among the tribe. As yet, their father has shown no preference for one or the other as heir. Both sons can make a convincing case of rightful claim and leadership ability, and the tribe may split in two if each son chooses to take on the ruling mantle. In addition, the current actions of the House of Hotek to the north is increasing the split between the brothers.

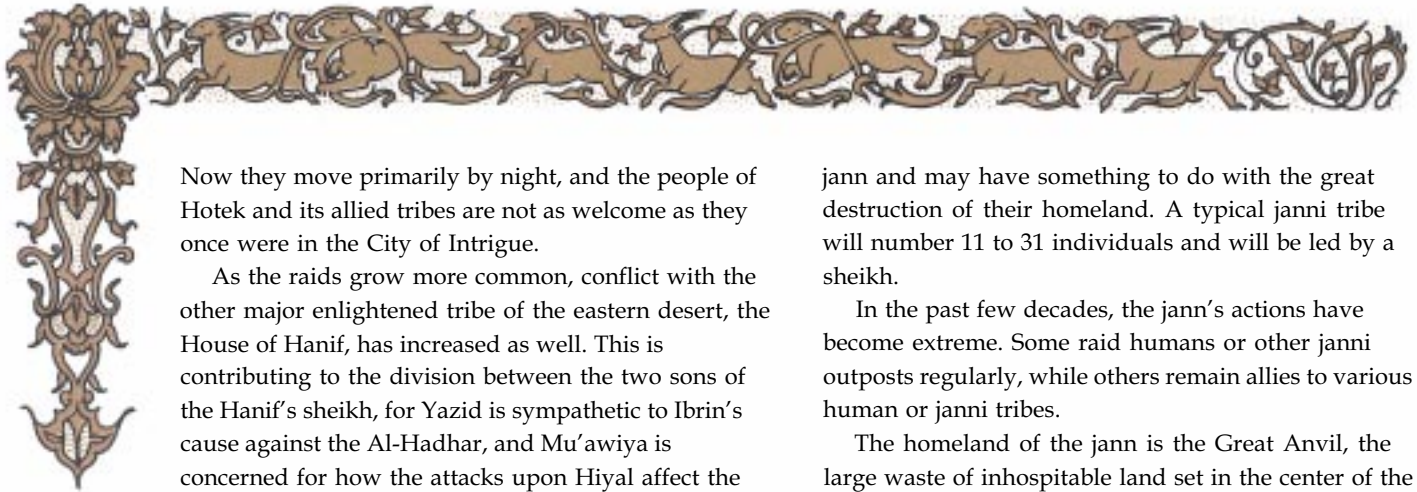
## House of Hotek

The core of tribe Hotek is only some 2,000 enlightened people, but Sheikh Ibrin bin Hotek's preaching against the city of Hiyal and its sultana have caused the ranks to swell. Clans that have been oppressed, cheated, or harmed by the sultana and her brood have joined forces with this tribe.

The House of Hotek traditionally roams the northwestern corner of the Haunted Lands. Until recently the members lived in peace with the city.







Now they move primarily by night, and the people of Hotek and its allied tribes are not as welcome as they once were in the City of Intrigue.

As the raids grow more common, conflict with the other major enlightened tribe of the eastern desert, the House of Hanif, has increased as well. This is contributing to the division between the two sons of the Hanif's sheikh, for Yazid is sympathetic to Ibrin's cause against the Al-Hadhar, and Mu'awiya is concerned for how the attacks upon Hiyal affect the desert tribes' reputation in Huzuz.

**The Leader:** Ibrin bin Hotek (hmF/dr/12) is one of the charismatic leaders mentioned earlier who are capable of inspiring desert tribes to unite in a larger group. Ibrin is a leader with a vision-to destroy the city of wickedness and oppression. He seeks the collapse of Hiyal, the City of Intrigue. The vision has come to Ibrin late in life. He had spent most of his life trading with the very city he now reviles. He says he was a blind man then who enjoyed the sins of the flesh, but now he is pure and can see clearly the lair of the sultana for what it is-a trap for free people.

Ibrin now gathers new followers with the strength of a man possessed. He leads them in raids against the outposts of Hiyal and the caravans.

**Important Individuals:** The cause of Ibrin's "conversion" is his new vizier, a kahin named Amene (hfP/k/13). She has showed him that the ways of the City of Intrigue are evil and corrupt. Amene is constantly at his side as his aide and comfort. Some say Amene may replace Ibrin's wife, who died shortly after the kahin's arrival.

Ibrin has a son, Jisaron (hmF/dr/10), and a grandson, Kahlil (hmR/dr/7). Both are dutiful to their sire and stay out of the way of Amene. Jisaron has taken to wandering far afield to avoid his potential stepmother.

### **Jann of The Haunted Lands**

The Jann of the Haunted Lands are wildly crazy and impulsive, dangerous to themselves and to all who accompany them. They are vindictive, insistent, prone to insult, mischievous, and *very* powerful. These tendencies have always been present in the

jann and may have something to do with the great destruction of their homeland. A typical janni tribe will number 11 to 31 individuals and will be led by a sheikh.

In the past few decades, the jann's actions have become extreme. Some raid humans or other janni outposts regularly, while others remain allies to various human or janni tribes.

The homeland of the jann is the Great Anvil, the large waste of inhospitable land set in the center of the Haunted Lands. Here lie great ruins of civilization that are now uninhabited, save for the elemental peoples. Intruders are not welcome.

The Jann of the Haunted Lands, under Amir Heidar Qan, have pledged their support to the Grand Caliph. This pledge has been honored time and again to the 14 individuals who have sat upon the Enlightened Throne, but no official representative of the jann has appeared to the current Grand Caliph to renew loyalty. Those few jann who have appeared at court have stated that ill health delays their lord, which gives rise to stories of the Amir's death. The Grand Caliph is most concerned with this matter, particularly with the advancement of Ibrin's forces in the north.

**The Leader:** Amir Heidar Qan, his most distinguished and respectable master, wise in all matters beneath this sky and other skies, is the leader of the Jann of the Haunted Lands. The amir has not been seen in 50 years, and he is believed to be either dead or dying. His inactivity is reflected in the increasingly wild actions of his servants, who are dangerous at the best of times.

**Important Individuals:** Other than the Amir, there is one janni known throughout the Haunted Lands. His name is Majnun, and he is being hunted by his brethren. Majnun apparently either stole an item from the Amir or poisoned him (the stories vary) and then fled into the wilds. Now he wanders, disguised as a mystic of great power, but he is cautious around other genies and particularly so around the jann. The one who turns Majnun over to the jann will be greatly rewarded.





## Chapter 5

# Gods and Faiths



**T**he gods of Zakhara into three groups: major (often called Great), local (often called common), and savage (also called heathen).

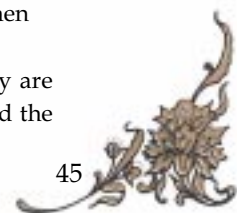
Savage deities are not recognized in the teachings and tales of the Loregiver. These include the Forgotten Gods of Nog and Kadar, the cults of the islands and the Hill Tribes, and the unfeeling elemental gods of whom the genies speak in hushed tones. Savage gods also encompass the extraplanar trespassers worshipped by outland priests. As a rule, "enlightened" Zakharans do not venerate these savage deities. Many Zakharans are quite tolerant of the misguided folk who do, but others-especially moralists-consider such heathen beliefs an affront to the Loregiver and all that is civilized and good.

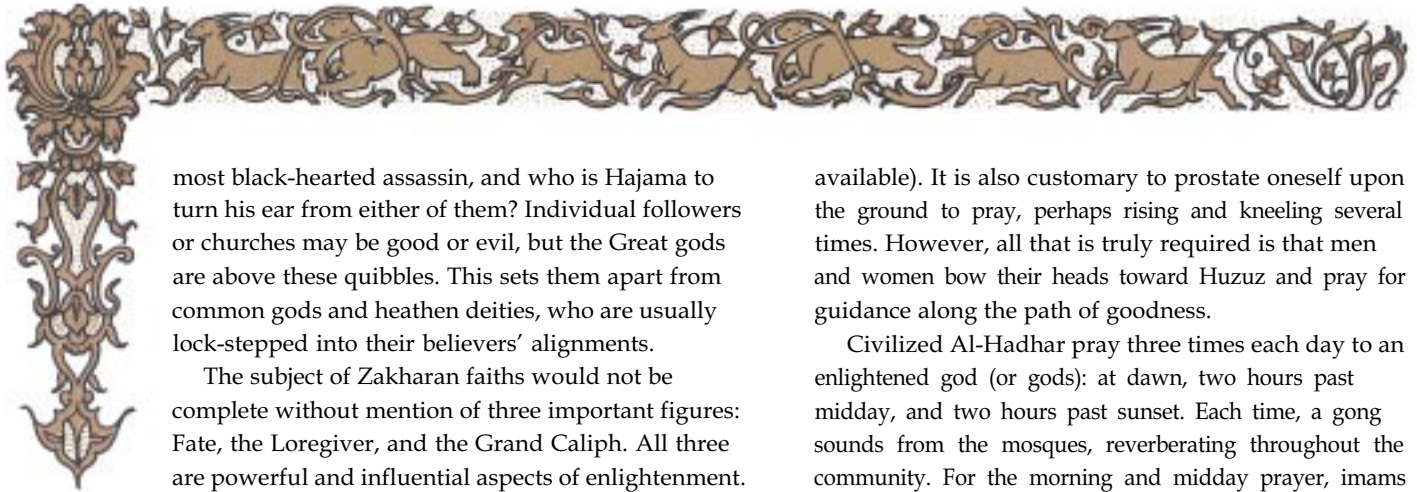
Major gods (Great Gods) have the largest, most organized churches in Zakhara, because they recognized throughout the Land of Fate. These include Brave Hajama, Honest Hakiyah (Mistress of the Sea Breezes), her brother Noble Haku (Master of the Desert Winds), Jisan of the Floods, Kor the Venerable, Najm the Adventurous, Selan the Beautiful Moon, and Learned Zann. Members of the League of the Pantheon also consider Jauhar the Gemmed a Great God, though she is recognized only in their area.

Local gods (common gods) are recognized in the word of the Loregiver, but they are not worshipped universally. Well-known in one area or city, a local god may be unheard of just 10 or 20 miles away. The followers of local gods do not gain the benefits of a large church organization. (A DM who wishes to create new deities for his or her own AL-QADIM™ campaign can readily add them to the loosely defined mix of common gods.)

Worship and faith are largely a matter of personal choice in Zakhara. Lay people may worship a number of gods at the same time, or switch from one god to another. (The only true requirement is that one believes in some greater power, preferably enlightened.) Members of the priest kits usually devote themselves to a given faith, however. Pragmatists, ethoists, and moralists usually follow a single enlightened god or faith, with most moralists belonging to the church of a Great God. Some mystics worship heathen gods, as do outland priests.

The Great Gods are neither good nor evil, lawful nor chaotic. They are beyond such matters. Bravery can be found in the most noble faris and the





most black-hearted assassin, and who is Hajama to turn his ear from either of them? Individual followers or churches may be good or evil, but the Great gods are above these quibbles. This sets them apart from common gods and heathen deities, who are usually lock-stepped into their believers' alignments.

The subject of Zakharan faiths would not be complete without mention of three important figures: Fate, the Loregiver, and the Grand Caliph. All three are powerful and influential aspects of enlightenment. They are not worshipped, however, for none is a god, and no mosque has been erected in their names. Further, none of these figures can grant spells to anyone who might mistakenly declare him or her a deity.

Fate is often described as the natural force that is a part of every man and woman's future. She is not a goddess, but she does aid those who succeed, and she may comfort those who fail. The gods, whatever their nature, defer to her. While she is not worshipped directly, her name is invoked to show her influence in the world.

The Loregiver is in some ways the handmaiden to Fate, her servant and the director of her will. It was the Loregiver who first defined the Law that binds the society of Zakhara together. The Loregiver is or was recognized as a mortal being, however, and mortal beings are not to be worshipped.

The Grand Caliph sits at the center of the world. He is the descendant of the First Caliph, the one who was smiled upon by Fate, who brought forth the Law of the Loregiver and spread enlightenment throughout the land. While he is respected and venerated, the Grand Caliph is not a god, for he is born of woman like any other being, and will pass with time. Nor does the Grand Caliph demand organized worship and godhood. It is enough to be cheered by the thundering masses, and to benefit from the riches of his far-flung empire.

## Patterns of Worship

All enlightened Zakharans share a pattern of prayer, despite the differences in the gods they worship. For example, those who are faithful and enlightened wash before every formal prayer, using a small bowl of water (or sand where no water is

available). It is also customary to prostrate oneself upon the ground to pray, perhaps rising and kneeling several times. However, all that is truly required is that men and women bow their heads toward Huzuz and pray for guidance along the path of goodness.

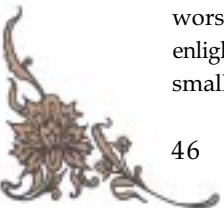
Civilized Al-Hadhar pray three times each day to an enlightened god (or gods): at dawn, two hours past midday, and two hours past sunset. Each time, a gong sounds from the mosques, reverberating throughout the community. For the morning and midday prayer, imams in the mosques call from the minarets, inviting devout worshippers to attend services in the temples of their gods. While attendance is encouraged, it is not strictly required. The faithful may pray virtually anywhere.

Enlightened Al-Badia follow a similar pattern of prayer, though no gong sounds to announce the time of day. In the morning and evening, they prostrate themselves, facing Huzuz, and praise their chosen gods. At midday, most nomads simply bow their heads for a moment of silent contemplation.

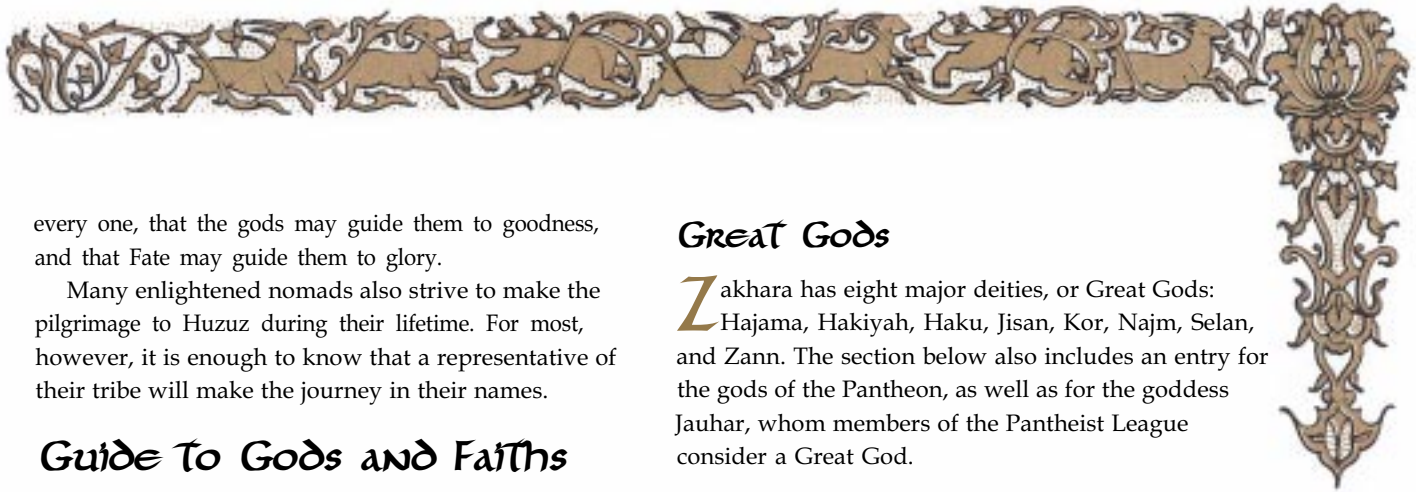
At least once per week, family members commonly attend religious instruction and sermons at a mosque. In areas where moralist attitudes prevail, services for men and women are separate. Elsewhere, all are welcomed to a common service. Mosques that cater to many different faiths may conduct open services honoring many gods, or they may schedule a series of more specialized weekly services.

At least once in their lives, enlightened Al-Hadhar are expected to make a pilgrimage to a glittering Huzuz, the City of Delights, jewel of Suq Bay and the Golden Gulf, center of all civilization. It is here that the greatest mosques and relics of the faithful can be found. More importantly, this is the home of the Grand Caliph—Khalil al-Assad al-Zahir, He Who is Worthy of the Gods, Giant among Men, Scourge of the Unbeliever, Confidant of Genies. Pilgrims go to Huzuz to visit the Golden Mosque, where the House of the Loregiver lies. Almost as great a goal is standing in the Grand Caliph's court, before the Enlightened Throne.

The pilgrimage is always a worthy undertaking, but the experience is especially prized on the Day of Ascension (Yasad) and on the Grand Caliph's birthday. On those two days, His Enlightened Highness is sure to appear before the people. The faithful receive his personal wish that Fortune may smile upon each and







every one, that the gods may guide them to goodness, and that Fate may guide them to glory.

Many enlightened nomads also strive to make the pilgrimage to Huzuz during their lifetime. For most, however, it is enough to know that a representative of their tribe will make the journey in their names.

## Guide To Gods and Faiths

**T**he text that follows describes many of the gods and faiths of Zakhara. Entries for major and local gods include these details:

**Symbol, Common symbol of the god (or faith).** These symbols are used with great care. While they may adorn official texts and be worn by the faithful, they are not to adorn mosque architecture or be used as an embodiment of the god. Such actions lead to the worship of the item as opposed to the ideal, and that is idolatry. (However, it is not improper to describe a god's physical form in the context of a tale or legend.)

**Major Mosques.** Locations of the most prominent houses of worship.

**Pantheon.** Indicates whether a god is a member of the Pantheon. (The Pantheon is listed as a separate "faith" for the purpose of this discussion.)

**Ordered Priests.** Hierarchy of the church in percentages of pragmatists (P), ethoists (E), and moralists (M) throughout the Land of Fate. Also noted are any special abilities that are awarded to ordered priests of this faith. Bonuses to ability scores, where noted, are permanent.

**Free Priests.** Listing of the Free Priest kits (kahin, hakima, and mystic) normally part of this faith. Omitted PC kits are not barred from the faith (e.g., a hakima of Kor); they are merely unusual. Also noted are any special abilities awarded to the Free Priests. Bonuses to ability scores, where noted, are permanent.

**Ideal.** Attribute or feature the god embodies.

**Ethos.** Brief statement of the god's principles.

**Principles.** General guiding principles of the faith, suitable for living by, framing, or using in debate with others. If various factions espouse particular principles, they are noted here.

**The Faith.** A brief description of the areas in which the faith is popular, and the people who belong to the faith.

## Great Gods

**Z**akhara has eight major deities, or Great Gods: Hajama, Hakiyah, Haku, Jisan, Kor, Najm, Selan, and Zann. The section below also includes an entry for the gods of the Pantheon, as well as for the goddess Jauhar, whom members of the Pantheist League consider a Great God.

### Hajama The Courageous

Also known as Brave Hajama, this Great God represents the ideal of courage in the face of opposition. In legend, he is described as a stocky man whose long beard is as black as ink. When telling tales of Hajama's adventure in the desert, Al-Badian priests describe a figure who wraps himself in a jellaba as dark as midnight. Al-Hadhar describe a god who comes to the cities wearing lamellar armor that is carved from the night sky itself.

**Symbol:** None, or a featureless disk. (Bravery is worn in the heart, not on the sleeve.) High-ranking male priests of Hajama also wear long black beards.

**Major Mosques:** Gana, Hafiyah, Halwa, Hiyal, Huzuz, Kadarasto, Liham, Sikak, Utaqa.

**Pantheon:** Yes.

**Ordered Priests:** 20 P, 65 E, 15 M. All gain a +1 bonus to Constitution (maximum 18).

**Free Priests:** Mystics. Those who worship Hajama may fight with short swords.

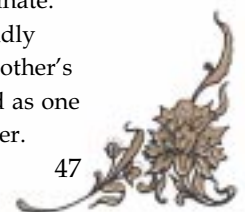
**Ideal:** Bravery.

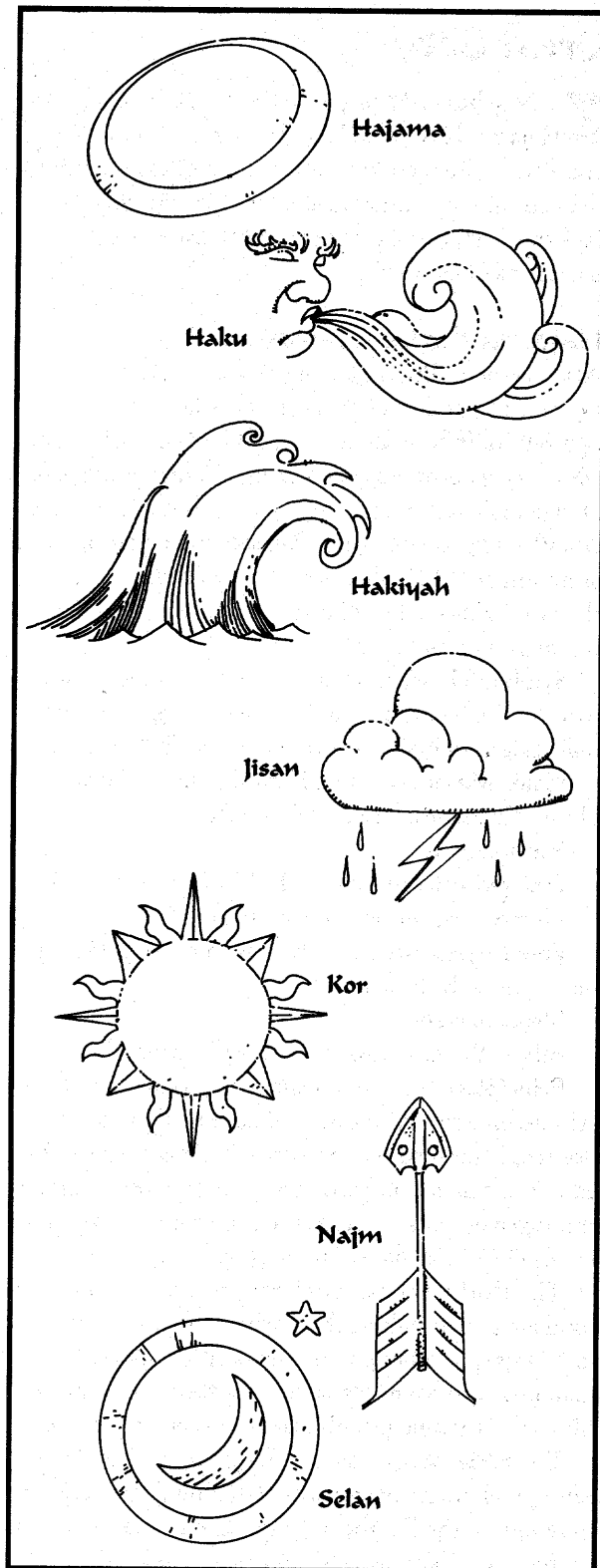
**Ethos:** Bravery wins out over opposition.

**Principles:** Trust your feelings and follow your heart. Always dare to try; cowards fail because their great deeds are unattempted. Bravery takes many forms, the easiest of which is in battle (ethoists' principle). Living through a defeat strengthens the spirit more than dying for an ideal (pragmatists' principle).

**The Faith:** The faith of Brave Hajama is popular in rural areas, particularly those which border deserts, mountains, or other potentially hostile regions. If a man is said to have "Hajama in his heart and Fate at his back," then he is both courageous and fortunate.

The faiths of Hajama and Najm are on friendly terms, and priests of one faith will attend each other's mosques. In the Pantheon, Hajama is portrayed as one of the sons of Kor, with Najm as his twin brother.





### Hakiyah of The Sea Breezes

Also called Hakiyah the Honest, this Great Goddess symbolizes truth. In human form, she wears the trousers, blouse, and vest of a city-dweller. She is portrayed as the calm voice of reason, often correcting and guiding Haku (who is alternately her nephew, brother, and uncle) in his adventures.

**Symbol:** A cresting wave.

**Major Mosques:** Ajayib, Gana, Hawa, Huzuz, Jumlat, Muluk, Tajar, Utaqa.

**Pantheon:** No.

**Ordered Priests:** 10 P, 70 E, 20 M. All gain a +1. Wisdom bonus (maximum 18).

**Free Priests:** Mystics and hakimas. Like ordered priests, all gain a +1 Wisdom bonus (maximum 18).

**Ideal:** Honesty, truth.

**Ethos:** Truth will always win out.

**Principles:** Question and check, then check again. People see what they desire to see, not always what truly exists. All men and women may cast illusions—even those who are not sorcerers, and even those who are ignorant of their actions. Danger lies in unquestioning belief.

**The Faith:** The nature of Hakiyah's worship is calm, meditative, and methodical. Better to take no action than to take one impulsively, it is said. As a result, Hakiyah is popular in the Pearl Cities, particularly among members of the merchant class. Both Hakiyah and Haku have large mosques and universities in the Pearl Cities. In the Pantheist League, neither god is worshipped openly, and their followers are persecuted.

### Haku, Master of The Desert Wind

Also called Free Haku, this god represents personal independence. In the old legends, he is always described as a desert nomad, wearing a flowing aba and keffiyeh, with a gleaming scimitar at his side. His words, when recorded by those who receive them, are always proud, self-assured, and even haughty. He implores his followers to apply themselves and to do nothing half-heartedly.

**Symbol:** A stylized gust of wind.

**Major Mosques:** Gana, Halwa, Huzuz, Jumlat, Muluk, Tajar, Utaqa, Wasat.

**Pantheon:** No.

**Ordered Priests:** 30 P, 40 E, 30 M. They gain no special abilities.

**Free Priests:** Mystics. They may use scimitars.

**Ideal:** Freedom, independence.

**Ethos:** A man and a woman must be free to be considered alive.

**Principles:** Do not burden others. Rely on your own talents. Trust the wisdom of your own experiences. Protect those you love and respect, but do not assume that they will be there to protect you.

**The Faith:** Haku is popular in regions lying in and near the open desert. In the Pearl Cities he is connected with Hakiyah, who is alternately described as a niece, sister, and aunt. Both Haku and Hakiyah's worshippers are persecuted in Pantheist lands.

### Jauhar The Gemmed

Representing wealth, this goddess is sometimes called Jauhar the Gem Studded. She is technically a common deity, because her worship is confined to the Pantheist League and a few cities of the Ruined Kingdoms. The heavily moralist League of the Pantheon considers her a Great God, however, taking the place of Bountiful Jisan (whom Pantheists view as common).

Jauhar takes on a physical form only in rare portraits of old-those which Pantheists seek to eliminate. In such legends, Jauhar always appears as a comely maiden with straight black hair and luminous, kohl-rimmed eyes. She wears a dancer's brassiere and pantaloons. The brassiere is covered with coins — allegedly given to her by admirers. The seams of her silken pantaloons are similarly adorned. Old temples scattered throughout Zakhara once contained drawings of Jauhar in this garb. Nearly all of the drawings have been destroyed by Pantheists, leaving only a verbal portrait. Even that has been declared blasphemous by the Pantheists, who describe her as a more modest woman, fully cloaked in a chador, with only the gold dinar on her forehead serving to distinguish her from other moralist women.

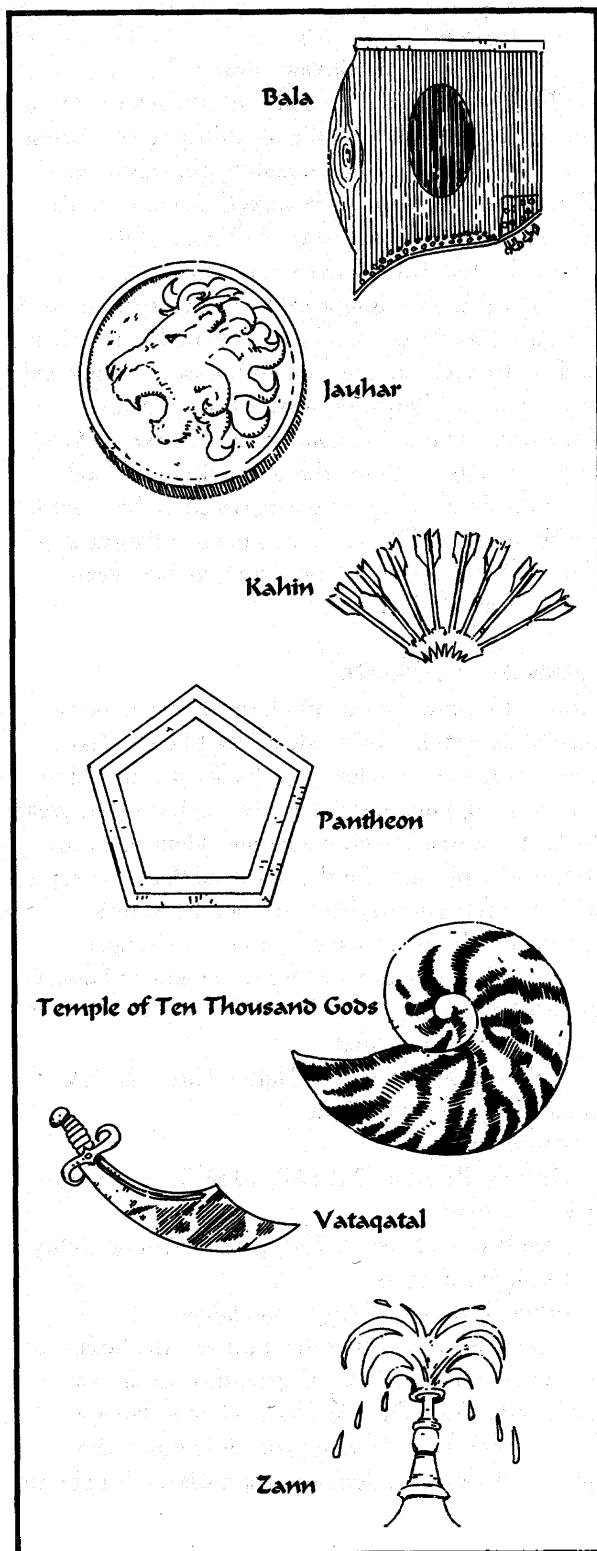
**Symbol:** A gold dinar.

**Major Mosques:** Each Pantheist city.

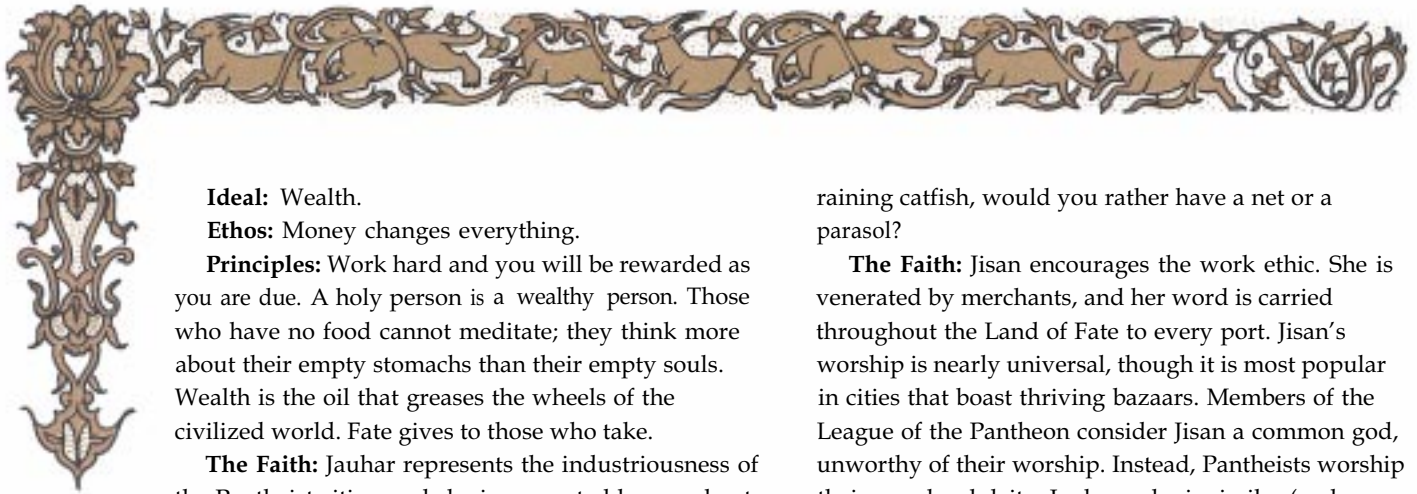
**Pantheon:** Yes.

**Ordered Priests:** 5 P, 30 E, 65 M. They gain no special abilities.

**Free Priests:** Mystics, who gain no special abilities.







**Ideal:** Wealth.

**Ethos:** Money changes everything.

**Principles:** Work hard and you will be rewarded as you are due. A holy person is a wealthy person. Those who have no food cannot meditate; they think more about their empty stomachs than their empty souls. Wealth is the oil that greases the wheels of the civilized world. Fate gives to those who take.

**The Faith:** Jauhar represents the industriousness of the Pantheist cities, and she is venerated by merchants and craftsmen of that region. Her worship is tolerated in other areas, though not where Jisan prevails. Jauharites and Jisanites compete for followers, funds, and attention. At times, the competition is bloody.

In the Pantheon, Jauhar is regarded as the beautiful daughter of Kor. This explains a popular Pantheist saying: "Wisdom comes from Strength, but Wealth comes from Wisdom."

### *Jisan of The Floods*

Also called Jisan the Bountiful, this Great Goddess symbolizes fertility and productivity. She may have been a storm-goddess long ago, for she was linked to the monsoon rains and the yearly flooding of the great rivers. From that origin, she became identified with people who prepared for the rains and floods—people who therefore gained the most from the water's passing. In all the tales and legends, no physical description is provided for Jisan; she takes no human or demihuman form.

**Symbol:** A rain cloud.

**Major Mosques:** Ajayib, Halwa, Huzuz, Muluk, Sikak, Tajar, Umara, Wasat.

**Pantheon:** No.

**Ordered Priests:** 10 P, 50 E, 40 M. They gain no special ability.

**Free Priests:** Mystics. They gain no special ability.

**Ideal:** Fruitfulness.

**Ethos:** Hard work brings abundance.

**Principles:** Rewards of the spirit and the flesh may be harvested from the act of applying oneself to a noble task. The gold brought from honest labor is repaid a thousandfold in the good it brings to the spirit. A person who does not work, wastes. Fate brings all things to men and women, but only those who are prepared may take advantage of it. If the sky were

raining catfish, would you rather have a net or a parasol?

**The Faith:** Jisan encourages the work ethic. She is venerated by merchants, and her word is carried throughout the Land of Fate to every port. Jisan's worship is nearly universal, though it is most popular in cities that boast thriving bazaars. Members of the League of the Pantheon consider Jisan a common god, unworthy of their worship. Instead, Pantheists worship their own local deity, Jauhar, who is similar (and allegedly superior) in nature.

Followers of Jisan are energetic, industrious, and diligent. They plan for the future and try to play all the angles, such that if one plan fails, an alternative may yet succeed.

### *Kor The Venerable*

Also known as Old Kor, this Great God represents wisdom. He may err, it is said, but he learns from his mistakes and becomes greater still. In parables describing Kor, the other gods ask his advice, as befits his age and wisdom. Old Kor has been described in one tale as a strong, gray-haired man carrying a great hatchet, which he uses to attack the root of a problem.

**Symbol:** A sunburst. Mystics who venerate Kor may also carry a hatchet.

**Major Mosques:** Dihliz, Hawa, Huzuz, Jumlat, Liham, Muluk, Qadib, Rog'osto, Umara, Wasat.

**Pantheon:** Yes.

**Ideal:** Wisdom.

**Ordered Priests:** 10 P, 80 E, 10 M. Those who follow Kor add +1 to their Wisdom (maximum 18).

**Free Priests:** Mystics. Those who worship Kor may fight with battle axes.

**Ethos:** With age comes wisdom and with wisdom comes strength.

**Principles:** Always seek out the wisdom of the elders, and heed their words even if you disagree with them. Learn from your mistakes.

**The Faith:** The church of Kor represents stability, order, and tradition. In making decisions, precedents are sought and elders are consulted. Among the ordered priests of Kor, moralists tend to be stiff-necked and unbending, while pragmatists tend to emphasize the principle of "learning from one's mistakes." Pantheist priests view Kor as a father figure.





## Najm The Adventurous

Adventure and curiosity are the ideals of this Great God and his-or her-followers. In some tales, Najm is female. In others, he is male. In any case, Najm is described as dashing, hot-tempered, fervent, and very much alive (as a mortal might be). Al-Badian tales of this god have common themes: Najm doing the impossible, Najm finding the unfindable, or Najm attaining the unattainable.

**Symbol:** A single arrow, pointed upward.

**Major Mosques:** Ajayib, Gana, Hafayah, Hawa, Halwa, Hiyal, Huzuz, Liham, Kadarasto, Utaqa.

**Pantheon:** Yes.

**Hierarchy:** 50 P, 40 E, 10 M. All gain a +1 on Dexterity (maximum 18).

**Free Priests:** Mystics. Those who worship Najm may use short bows.

**Ideal:** Adventure, curiosity.

**Ethos:** Make the unknown known.

**Principles:** Achieve, do, and experience. The journey is more important than the destination. Do not be afraid of new things until you learn more about them. Curiosity leavened with caution never hurt anyone.

**The Faith:** As might be guessed, Najm's church includes dynamic missionaries who seek to bring enlightenment to the heathen. It also includes explorers who journey into the hinterlands in Najm's name, returning to civilization with tales for the young as well as riches for the church coffers. A Zakharan Priest of Order who is found in a far, foreign land is usually a follower of Najm.

As noted above, only 10 percent of Najm's followers in the church hierarchy are moralists. These are found primarily in the cities of the Pantheon. Pantheist priests of Najm unwaveringly portray their god as male. They acknowledge the goddess Hajama as Najm's sister. Rude jokes to the contrary, implying less platonic ties, are not tolerated by moralist Najmites.

## Selan The Beautiful Moon

Also called Selan the Gracious, and Selan of the Garden, this Great Goddess represents divine pulchritude and heavenly grace. She is described as a flawless maiden cloaked in shimmering white, and in

the oldest tales, she is said to be linked to the moon. Such tales claim that the moon is her chariot. She rides it across the sky while pursued by ardent suitors, who appear as a cluster of smaller stars, following in her wake.

**Symbol:** The ringed moon.

**Major Mosques:** Afyal (Great Mosque of the Moon), Ajayib, Dihliz, Gana, Hafayah, Halwa, Huzuz, Jumlat, Kadarasto, Rog'osto, Sikak, Tajar, Umara, Wasat.

**Pantheon:** Yes.

**Ordered Priests:** 10 P, 70 E, 20 M. All gain a +1 bonus to Charisma (maximum 18).

**Free Priests:** Mystics and some hakimias. All gain a +1 bonus to Charisma (maximum 18).

**Ideal:** Beauty.

**Ethos:** There is beauty in everything.

**Principles:** Reveal that which is pleasing.

Accentuate the positive. Kind words can override angry curses. Beauty grows over time. Treat others with the sweetness and goodness they deserve.

**The Faith:** Selan's followers, like Kor's, tend to be traditional in their outlook, finding joy in what they know to be true rather than seeking out new ideas and new thinking. Deep philosophical thought has never been a strong point of Selanite philosophy. These priests place great stock in appearances, and they usually let initial reactions-which they call "the sensation in the liver"-guide them in their lives.

Selan is much beloved by gardeners and artisans. Her greatest mosque is not in Huzuz, but on the island of Afyal, where her followers make up most of the population.

## Zann The Learned

Also called Zann the Marvelous, this Great God is a scholar's deity, for he epitomizes learning and intelligence. Zann has an amazing memory for details. In legend, he is usually described as a man in city dress, carrying a writing tablet and a case of pens, recording all he sees. Study and research are necessary, but a true scholar knows it is just as important to record one's experiences so that others may also learn.

**Symbol:** A fountain's jet.

**Major Mosques:** Ajayib, Dihliz, Hiyal, Huzuz, Qadib, Rog'osto, Wasat.





**Pantheon:** No.

**Ordered Priests:** 20 P, 40 E, 40 M. All gain a +1 bonus to Intelligence (maximum 18).

**Free Priests:** Mystics and hakimas. All gain a +1 bonus to Intelligence (maximum 18).

**Ideal:** Intelligence, learning.

**Ethos:** Understanding is the key to all doors.

**Principles:** Do not destroy what you do not understand. We stand on a mountain built by our fathers, and only a fool would step off that mountain. Learn from the mistakes of others. The written word is our gift to our grandchildren.

**The Faith:** The universities and libraries built by Zann's followers are the largest and most complete in all of Zakhara. Zannites classify the contents of these libraries using three labels: great texts, common texts, and heathen texts. Great texts are considered "official" documents and histories, regarded by members of the faith as true and wise. They cover all manner of subjects relating to Zakhara's enlightenment (not just the Great Gods). A scholar seeking answers will always consult these official texts first.

Common texts are documents from an unofficial source or of questionable authenticity, including personal letters and diaries, and documents that challenge or disagree with the great texts. Zannites do not believe in denying information just because its veracity is uncertain. As learning progresses, common texts may become great, and vice versa.

Heathen texts come from the world beyond the Land of Fate. Zannites treat such heathen documents with general suspicion. At best, they are considered to be legends or fairy tales.

## Gods of The Pantheon

Hajama, Jauhar, Kor, Najm, Selan—these five enlightened gods make up the Pantheon. Priests of the Pantheon recognize only these gods, considering them to be the "true" Great Gods. Members of the Pantheist League (see Chapter 9) do not tolerate the worship of any other deities. All but Jauhar are known and worshipped throughout the Land of Fate. Still, the bond between Pantheists and non-Pantheists of a given faith is tenuous at best. The god is the same, yet the beliefs and practices differ. Pantheists of a given faith have more in common with fellow Pantheists

who worship other gods than they do with outsiders who belong to the same faith.

**Symbol:** Pentagon.

**Major Mosques:** Kadarasto, Pantheist cities.

**Pantheon:** Yes.

**Ordered Priests:** 2 P 18 E, 80 M. Priests gain the special ability listed for the individual god they venerate.

**Free Priests:** None.

**Ideal:** Unity.

**Ethos:** Strength through unity.

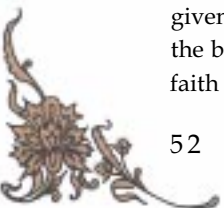
**Principles:** Only by gathering together, and by combining the best talents of the group, can we succeed. Trust your foes to be jealous of your accomplishments. The gods of the Pantheon are the only true gods. All other so-called deities are common creations, and their followers must be "enlightened." Excessive actions may be excused by excessive circumstances.

**The Faith:** Unlike worshippers elsewhere, Pantheists do not attend ceremonies tailored only to one god. Instead, Pantheist mosques are similar to open mosques found elsewhere; religious services reflect the variety among the worshippers who are welcomed. There is one key difference, however. Only the five deities of the Pantheon may be venerated in a Pantheist mosque. No other mosques are permitted within the cities of the League of the Pantheon; those which manage to exist are small as well as secret.

The Pantheist church is a united body, devoted to the well-being of all its worshippers. The church works closely with the local rulers of the Pantheist cities to ensure that the needy are cared for, the hungry are fed, and the sick are healed. Pantheist followers are loyal and enthusiastic about their combined faith.

Non-Pantheist priests who worship one of the deities of the Pantheon are regarded with tolerance and general interest. They are "cousins" hailing from outside the Pantheon, welcomed as members of related churches. Even a Pantheist believes that a priest of Kor is still a priest of Kor—even a somewhat misguided Korite from Afyal. Nonetheless, Pantheists would prefer to sway that cousin to a more like mind.

Ironically, a Pantheist may not receive the same welcome when traveling to a sister church outside the Pantheist cities. As a group, Pantheists are regarded







with suspicion, particularly in the Pearl Cities. If the gods themselves have any precise opinion as to whose views are correct, they have kept it to themselves.

## Local Gods

There are more local, or common, gods than there are cities in the Land of Fate. Some are tied to a particular holy site or idol, some are venerated by a particular tribe or community, and some have but a handful of followers. Many of these individual faiths are served by kahins, who may venerate different gods in the forms of icons. The following are covered below: Bala of the Tidings, the kahins, the Temple of Ten Thousand Gods, and Vataqatal the Warrior-Slave.

### Bala of The Tidings

Also called Bala of Ill Tidings, this common god of music was openly beloved in Mahabba, long ago. When Pantheists took control of the city, her worshippers were forced to continue their faith in secret.

Bala has been depicted as a middle-aged woman, dressed modestly but colorfully, playing a zither. So wonderful is her music that the genies come to dance for her, and the other gods pause from their work at the hint of a song. Such are the legends.

**Symbol:** The zither.

**Major Mosques:** None.

**Pantheon:** No.

**Hierarchy:** 10 P, 40 E, 50 M. No special ability.

**Free Priests:** Mystics. All gain singing as a bonus proficiency (expending no slots).

**Ideal:** Music.

**Ethos:** Song lifts the spirit to goodness.

**Principles:** The voice was made to sing, and the mind to create praise for all things. Bring news to the unenlightened and joy to the suffering. Speak freely and openly among friends. Strike against those who seek to silence our tongues (moralists).

**The Faith:** The Pantheists have attempted to stamp out the Balanite faction in Mahabba for years. As a result, the faith has spread to several other cities. At least one fellowship of Balanite holy slayers has formed as a result of Pantheist persecution. The holy slayers are dedicated to removing the oppressive yoke

of Pantheist rule. Bala of the Tidings has become Bala of Ill Tidings—playing a dirge for those who attempt to crush her followers.

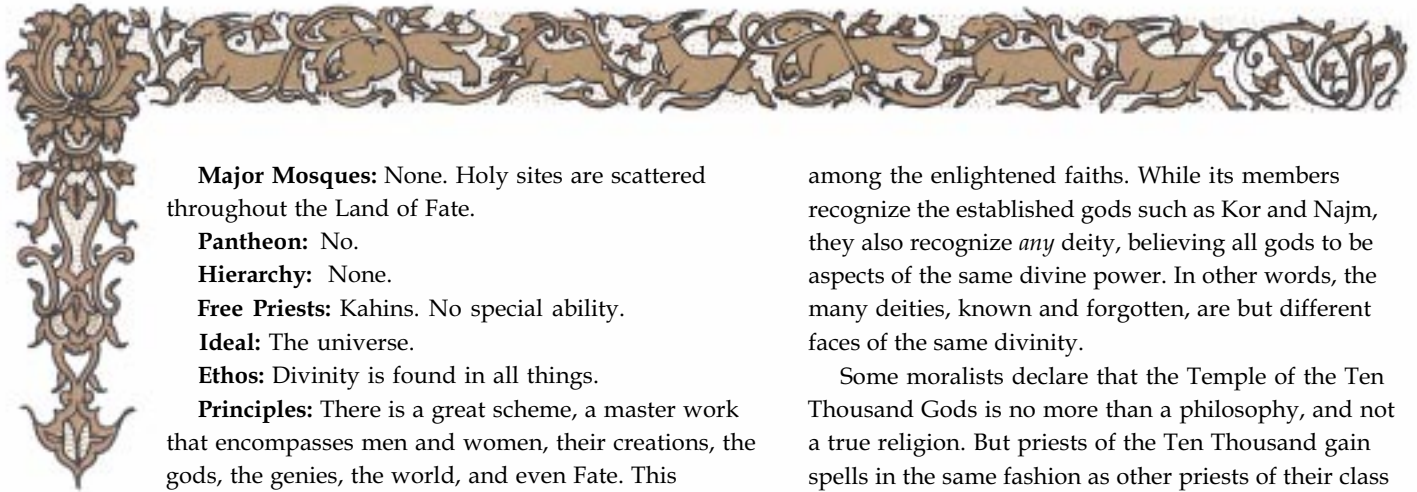
Outside the Pantheist League, a priest of Bala may worship at an open mosque just like any other priest. Within the cities of the Pantheon, Balanites do not profess their faith unless they are sure of the company they're keeping. Meetings and worship are quiet, hidden affairs. "Speak freely among friends" is a greeting by which Balanites can recognize one another, but they also have other, more secret codes.

### Kahins

Kahins are idol priests. (Their kit is introduced in the Arabian Adventures rulebook.) They believe that divinity is found in all things, and that by worshipping a certain item, place, or even a common god, they may tap and understand the mystical power of the universe. Their faith is ancient, predating most other religions in the Land of Fate.

**Symbol:** Six downward arrows in an arc.





**Major Mosques:** None. Holy sites are scattered throughout the Land of Fate.

**Pantheon:** No.

**Hierarchy:** None.

**Free Priests:** Kahins. No special ability.

**Ideal:** The universe.

**Ethos:** Divinity is found in all things.

**Principles:** There is a great scheme, a master work that encompasses men and women, their creations, the gods, the genies, the world, and even Fate. This scheme is continually changing, like a tapestry becoming ever larger and more complex.

"Practice moderation in all things," say the kahins, "and strive to achieve a balance. Accept that which you have been given. Play your role in life."

**The Faith:** While kahins believe in a "greater scheme," they do not feel it is necessarily ordered. The future is forming, but it is not set. All actions of the present are taken into account to produce a balance. The future cannot be foretold and therefore must be as yet unrevealed. Whatever will happen will happen.

Kahins are Free Priests, so they are not bound to an organized church hierarchy. Most are independent wanderers, preferring the wilderness to city life. They do share a kinship, however, and each would willingly come to the aid of another. At high levels, some kahins join together as teachers who impart their wisdom to the young. Their organization is still loose, however.

All kahins believe in a divine, overriding force—a force which is the fabric of the universe itself. Its energy permeates the land. The kahins' means of tapping that energy vary. Most individuals worship particular idols, local gods, or holy sites. These things are conduits to the divine force in all things.

Idol priests are well versed in the ways of Zakhara's gods, and many serve as mediators between groups. In general, they counsel acceptance of differences rather than attempts to convert others. Their nomadic lifestyle and broad knowledge make them ideal go-betweens for desert tribes, some of whom believe in various enlightened gods (such as Haku), and some of whom believe in local deities and forces.

## Temple of Ten Thousand Gods

The Temple of Ten Thousand Gods is an oddity

among the enlightened faiths. While its members recognize the established gods such as Kor and Najm, they also recognize *any* deity, believing all gods to be aspects of the same divine power. In other words, the many deities, known and forgotten, are but different faces of the same divinity.

Some moralists declare that the Temple of the Ten Thousand Gods is no more than a philosophy, and not a true religion. But priests of the Ten Thousand gain spells in the same fashion as other priests of their class or kit. Someone, or something, must be listening to their prayers.

**Symbol:** A nautilus shell.

**Major Mosques:** None.

**Pantheon:** No.

**Ordered Priests:** 80 R 15 E, 5 M. All gain religion as a free proficiency (without expending slots).

**Free Priests:** Mystics. All gain religion as a free proficiency (without expending slots).

**Ideal:** Acceptance.

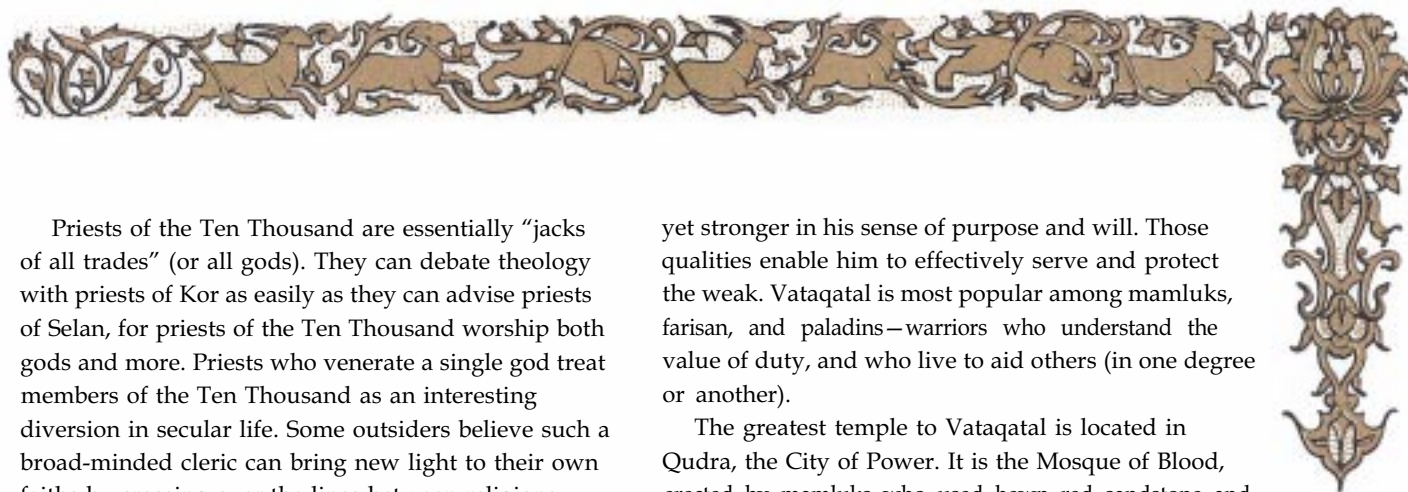
**Ethos:** All deities are facets of the same divine force.

**Principles:** The gods are aspects of a greater holy power. Men and women, elves, half-elves, dwarves, and other creatures—all these mortal beings mirror the diversity of that divine power. All are touched by the same holy radiance. Accept your brothers and sisters. Think well of them and treat them kindly, for they, like you, are divine.

**The Faith:** Followers of the Ten Thousand tend to be quick-witted, cunning, and pragmatic (the faith has the largest number of pragmatist priests of any church). They are often humorous to the point of being sarcastic, and sly to the point of deviousness. It is sometimes hard to discern whether they are telling the truth or whether they are merely toying with someone.

Members of this popular faith tend to be wanderers, curious by nature. While kahins frequent the wilderness, priests of the Ten Thousand usually travel from town to town. As a result, there are few organized mosques for the Ten Thousand. (Those which do exist are, of course, open mosques.) Rather than locating a mosque of the Ten Thousand, it's a small matter for the faithful to worship at another recognized mosque, or to accept the hospitality of a more organized religion.





Priests of the Ten Thousand are essentially “jacks of all trades” (or all gods). They can debate theology with priests of Kor as easily as they can advise priests of Selan, for priests of the Ten Thousand worship both gods and more. Priests who venerate a single god treat members of the Ten Thousand as an interesting diversion in secular life. Some outsiders believe such a broad-minded cleric can bring new light to their own faiths by crossing over the lines between religions. Others view priests of the Ten Thousand as a chattering group of agitators and headache-makers who seek to ridicule the existent gods. In the Pantheist League, followers of the Ten Thousand are outlawed. While these “outlaws” frequently visit the cities of the Pantheon, they are almost impossible to catch, since they freely worship the Pantheon gods. “Outlaws” who are wise simply blend in with the Pantheist crowd.

### **Vataqatal The Warrior-Slave**

Also called Master of the Battlefield, this common god represents duty and strife. He is worshipped in the far north of Zakhara, in regions that border upon “barbarian” lands. Vataqatal’s description matches that of barbarian war-gods. He is portrayed as a strong-hewn figure in flowing robes. Beneath them he wears blood-stained lamellar. He carries a great scimitar in one hand. His face is veiled, revealing only his red, glowing eyes. Vataqatal is said to stride onto the battlefield, looking for opponents so that he can test their abilities and spirit.

**Symbol:** A red-bladed sword.

**Major Mosques:** Liham, Qudra.

**Pantheon:** No.

**Hierarchy:** 10 P, 50 E, 40 M. No special abilities.

**Free Priests:** Mystics. No special abilities.

**Ideal:** War, duty.

**Ethos:** Growth by conflict.

**Principles:** Attain true spiritual peace through testing one’s abilities against another. Thinkers may debate, but warriors speak with the strength of their swords and their hearts. Duty stands above all.

**The Faith:** Vataqatal’s followers acknowledge that their god has a lesser standing than Zakhara’s other enlightened gods. This is in keeping with his dual nature—that of a slave and servant, inferior in status,

yet stronger in his sense of purpose and will. Those qualities enable him to effectively serve and protect the weak. Vataqatal is most popular among mamluks, farisan, and paladins—warriors who understand the value of duty, and who live to aid others (in one degree or another).

The greatest temple to Vataqatal is located in Qudra, the City of Power. It is the Mosque of Blood, erected by mamluks who used hewn red sandstone and then coated the walls with henna. Smaller shrines are found among the Free Cities, where the mamluk orders are powerful. But none of these shrines compares in size and grandeur to the Mosque of Blood.

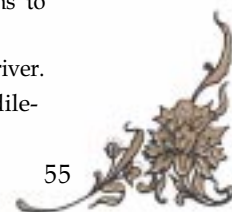
## **Savage Gods**

**M**ajor and local gods share a common origin in the legends of Zakhara, but there are also beings strange to these civilized lands, whose worshippers have never heard of the Law of the Loregiver, and who do not recognize that law or even the existence of other gods. These strange deities come from a number of areas, mostly from the borders of the civilized world. They have no organized mosques, and their clerics (mortals foolish enough to follow them) are usually considered outland priests. Only a few of the many savage (or heathen) gods are described below.

### **Forgotten Gods**

The great river empires of Nog and Kadar worshipped their own deities, allegedly through foul and inhuman rites. Crumbling edifices and statues erected in honor of those gods still litter the Ruined Kingdoms. While little is remembered about these deities, the following have been identified:

- Kiga, the Predator, who commanded a pride of female were-leopards.
- Lotha, a human-headed spider venerated by evil elves who were burned alive for their sins.
- Migal, also called the Mentor of the Gods in some writings. He had a horde of winged assassins to enforce his orders.
- Shajar, an obese, hippo-headed god of the river.
- His mate, Raggara, who appears as a crocodile-headed woman with bat wings.







### Gods of The Crowded Sea

Many islands in the Crowded Sea have been isolated for decades or centuries. In these exotic climes, strange and mysterious gods have arisen. Some are monsters. Others are heroes raised to mythic proportions. And some are truly gods of a type that has not been encountered since the first genie pledged service to the first sha'ir. Tales from these distant and savage lands include:

- The Drummer, who has no form but travels through the air when his shamans beat great drums made from hollow logs. When summoned by his worshippers, the Drummer can pass through the bodies of his enemies, gnawing the flesh off an unbeliever's body.

- Kar'r'rga, a giant with the head of a horseshoe crab, who is said to live in the deep inlet of an uncharted island. The natives, it is said, give offerings to this immortal creature. In turn, the giant protects their villages from all who attempt to sail into the bay and enslave his worshippers.

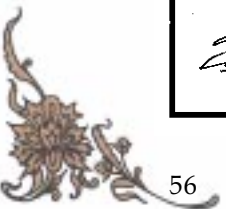
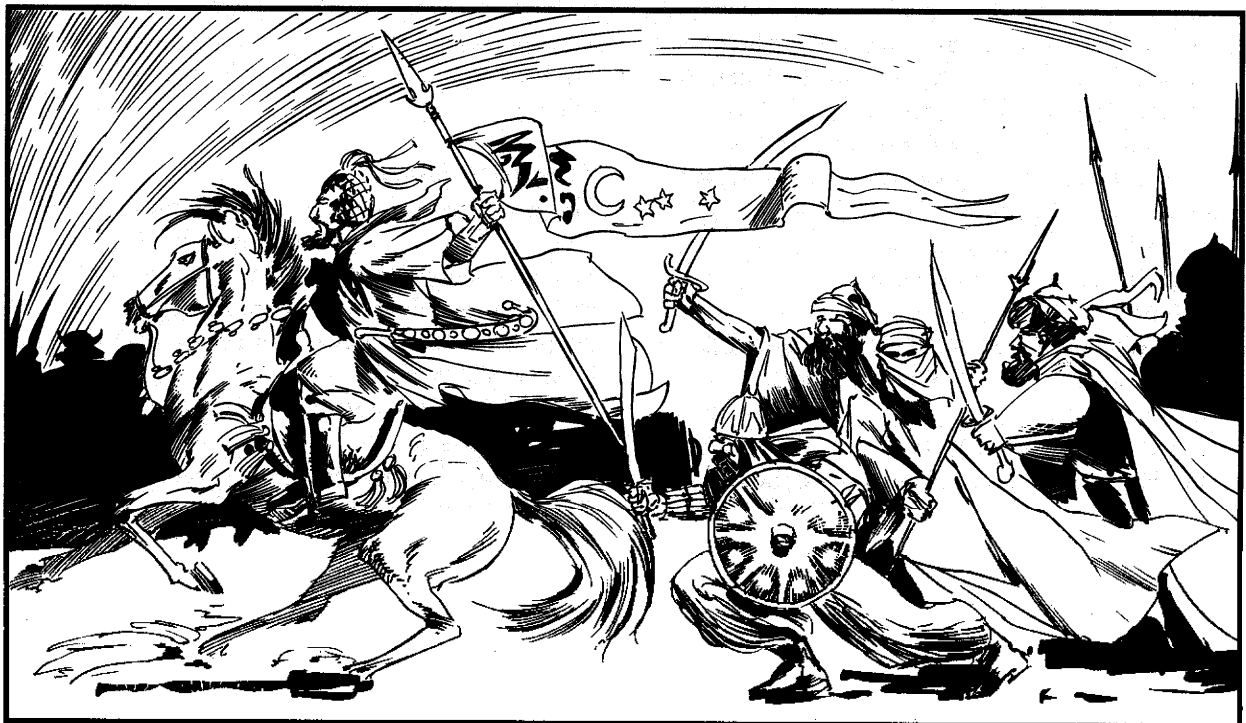
- The Lost One, who is said to be an outcast from the land of Afyal itself. Statuettes of this being – portrayed as a great elephant-headed humanoid with a

long, flowing mane – are still found upon that island kingdom. When discovered, they are destroyed by the church of Selan (Afyal's prevailing enlightened faith). The Lost One has no name, having abandoned it when he fled Afyal under the assault of priests of the enlightened gods, who were supported by genies. Since then, the Lost One has allegedly confined himself to some island or underwater shoal, where he lurks, brooding and awaiting his return to his homeland.

- Pag, a nature god who provides rich bounty. Pag is said to inhabit every tree and flower on the chain of islands over which he reigns. For this reason, his worshippers eat only fish and seaweed, and let berries rot on the vine.

### Wild Gods

The gods who are deemed "wild" by civilized Zakharans watch over the Hill Tribes and others who live at Zakhara's highest altitudes, far above the hot desert floor. These deities are brutal, beastlike creatures who are not native to the Land of Fate. Once, it is said, they ruled the heavens above far-away lands. As a punishment for misdeeds, they were cast





out, seeking refuge in the outlands of Zakhara. There are as many wild gods as there are tribes and savage peoples, but two of them typify their breed:

- The Beast is worshipped by some Hill Tribes south of the Free Cities. He is said to be a drooling, snarling half-man with the eyes and fangs of a cat. According to legend, he stalks the hills looking for lost and stolen children, so that he may grant them the freedom of death. Shamans of the Beast can whip their people into a fever-pitch to assault the coastlands, resulting in a bloodbath for both sides.

- The Faceless God watches over the evil and malicious yak-men, who dwell in the northeastern corner of Zakhara. These yak-headed humanoids are more deadly than any savage tribe, for they know the arts and magics of civilization, but they wield them without joy, wisdom, or tolerance. They have but one deity—a great giant. Like the yak-men, the god wears heavy, sweeping robes. It, too, has the head of a yak, with great, curved horns. Unlike its followers, however, the god has no face.

### Cold Gods of The Elements

Akadi of Air, Grumbar of Earth, Istishia of Water, Kossuth of Fire—these are the cold gods of the elements. Their power is great. Mortals who have seen the phenomenal strength of an elemental monolith know that such a creation is but a slight shadow of the deity born of the same plane.

Despite their power, few creatures look to the cold gods for magic or guidance. These deities are dubbed “cold” because of their attitudes toward men and other “inferior” beings: indifference or outright hostility. The genies, who are themselves creatures of the elements, recognize the existence of the cold gods. As a rule, however, not even the genies would worship them. Occasionally a mad priest or mystic may come under a cold god’s spell, but few would set out to do so. And more than one evil mage belonging to the Brotherhood of the True Flame has sought to tame one of these dark gods. Such mages have only courted their own destruction.

### Ajami Gods

Some faiths are brought to Zakhara through traders and explorers from far-off lands. To Zakharans, such

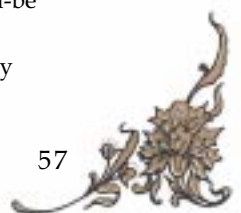
foreign gods—the ajami gods—are invariably vain and selfish. Their temples are restrictive, for each demands worship in a shrine erected solely in his or her name. Nearly all grant power through their symbols, and allow themselves to be flattered with graphic portrayals at every turn. Often they are carried like a burden by the travelers who worship them. While these gods are many (too many, say Zakharans), only a few deserve mention here:

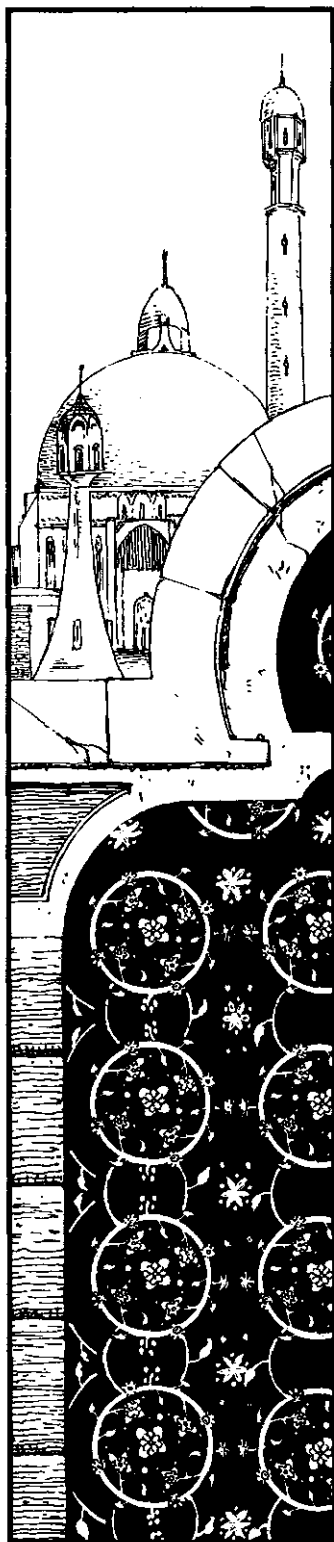
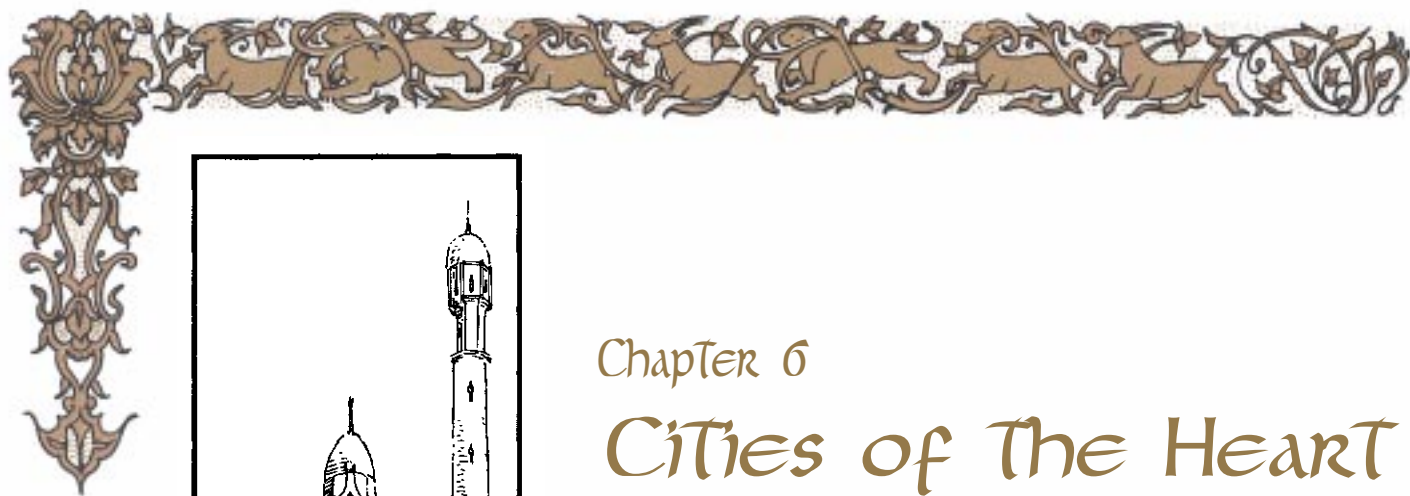
- Gond is revered by traders from the distant land of Lantan, who evoke his name while conducting business. Such traders occasionally make stops in the Free Cities. Gond makes devices, a poor occupation for a deity, but perhaps there was nothing else left by the time he reached the table of the gods. His symbol is a knobby wheel. It is used to mark devices that are potentially dangerous.

- The Golden God Helam, also called Helam the Watcher, serves as a guardian of the northern barbarian. Helam is the barbarian’s shield, much as the great city of Qudra shields the civilized world against a barbarian invasion. In fact, it was at Qudra’s door that Zakharans first gained their understanding of Helam. Not long ago, a group of ajami adventurers landed near the City of Power and attempted to claim all ground they spied in the name of their homeland. A few marids and djinn quickly discouraged such attitudes, and the survivors are said to be serving the mamluks as slaves.

- Clang exemplifies the strange nature of distant northerners. Like Gond, he makes things, meaning that northerners have two gods doing the same thing. But Clang is a dwarf god and Gond is a human god, which to a northerner makes all the sense in the world. Tales of Clang have been handed down in the families of dwarves for generations, usually diminishing in the process.

Many other gods from lands to the north and east have drifted through the Land of Fate, carried by the word of the faithful. Most left not so much as a ripple. A few ajamis felt the need to convert others to the “right” way of thinking. Some even managed to create small religious communities that survived as long as the outlanders themselves. More often, the would-be “missionaries” aroused an angry, insulted mob by implying that their ajami faith was superior merely because it was theirs.





## Chapter 6

# Cities of The Heart

**B**y traveling from the northernmost waves of the Golden Gulf and onward across Suq Bay, adventurers may begin to know the fabled heartland of Zakhara. This is more than a geographical center—it is also the land's soul. To the south, the region is anchored by magnificent Huzuz, home of the Loregiver and the Grand Caliph. No other city shines brighter than this golden homage to enlightenment and civilization. To the north, the region is anchored by another great city, smoky and mysterious Hiyal, a study in contrasts. Between them is Wasat, a sleepy oasis for the weary traveler. Finally, to the east lies the last city of the heartland: bustling Halwa. Perched near the fiery rim of the Great Anvil, this city still bears the traces of Zakhara's wilder, less civilized past.

## Halwa, City of Solitude

**L**ocated about 200 miles east of Wasat and Suq Bay, Halwa is one of Zakhara's few major inland settlements. The city is perched on a lonely bluff overlooking the dry bed of the Wadi Malih. With the onset of spring, melting snow from the Ghost Mountains combines with seasonal downpours, turning the wadi into a surging, muddy torrent that washes silt into the low, lands. Within a month, the rains subside and the arid waste quickly returns.

**The Ruler:** Caliph Hava al-Gatil (hmF/a/12) is a well-meaning but insulated ruler. His main concern appears to be writing his memoirs. Al-Gatil often cloisters himself with his favored scribes, writing (and rewriting) his past exploits as a young warrior, dwelling on those blithe days before he took his father's place as caliph. Al-Gatil delegates most of his responsibility to his chief vizier, whom he trusts above all. The caliph has three beautiful daughters—Sikayah, Rajiyah, and Mahabbiyah—triplets who are approaching the age of majority. While the caliph appears to care for them, the depth of his devotion has never been tested.

**The Court:** The court consists of Chief Vizier Zarad (hmW/sh/15) and his flunkies. Zarad has served Al-Gatil since the caliph was a child, and he continues to maintain a strangle hold on the caliph's mindset. All of the caliph's orders come through Zarad. And if Zarad happens to add his own







orders, who would deny they're the truth? Zarad has already made a great fortune through unfair taxation (which he imposed in the name of the caliph and removed two years later in the name of the caliph, without the caliph himself ever detecting it). Now, Zarad lusts after even greater power.

The chief vizier is served by a dao of maximum hit points, who is referred to solely as "Zarad's Pet" (and then only in hushed voices). Zarad himself is easy to identify in court: he always wears black-and-white striped robes.

**Population:** 60,000.

**Features of the City:** Despite its isolation, Halwa is bustling little city, serving as a chief trading post between settled Zakharans and the desert-dwellers of the Haunted Lands. Both city and wilderness people mingle on the streets. Abas and keffiyehs are more common than caftans and dolmans, and many of Halwa's merchants have relatives among the desert tribes.

Halwa's caliph is permissive, allowing all activity that does not bring disgrace upon his wise and beneficent rule. An underground slave trade thrives here, and Halwa is a stopping place for caravans en route to Hiyal. Similarly, adventurers and would-be heroes use the city as a starting place for expeditions into the Haunted Lands, where many a man and woman has perished in the search for legendary riches.

As a group, the people of Halwa are known for their haggling skill and sharp-witted dealing. "Never give what can be sold" is their motto, and that applies to favors and information as well as camels and figs.

**Major Products:** Trade, livestock, slaves, durable goods.

**Armed Forces:** 3,000-man city guard; 500-man palace guard; 1,000-man mercenary cavalry, hired from desert tribes on five-year contracts. In addition, Zarad has his own 200-man personal guard. In times of need, he apparently can call upon a tribe of 200 jann.

**Major Mosques:** Hajama, Haku, Jisan, Najm, and Selan. Haku has the largest and most opulent temple, which is a pilgrimage site for the desert tribesmen. A three-day religious festival in Jisan's name is held on the first clear day after the spring rains.

**Rumors and Lore:** Zarad is said to be everywhere, running the city with a smooth but iron-willed determination. This chief vizier hates nothing more

## Cities of Zakhara

Chapters 6 through 8 describe the cities of Zakhara, from golden Huzuz to smoky Hiyal, from chaotic Hawa to the exotic City of the Elephant. Each entry includes the following information:

**The Ruler:** A brief description of the personality, including a list of his or her official titles.

**The Court:** Individuals who have the ear of the local ruler or who hold great power in their own right. (Only the most well-known and influential figures are noted. Each court also includes numerous minor figures; in time, some may improve their positions.)

**Population:** The estimated population, including all sentient races.

**Features of the City:** Features for which the city is known, such as its products, history, atmosphere, or architecture. (Entries for Huzuz, Hiyal, and Qudra—the three great cities of the continent—include a "tour" of the local sights.) This section may also offer a glimpse of the city's people and their distinguishing features—such as their attitudes or appearance.

**Major Products:** Products that play a significant role in the city's economy, as well as products for which the city is famed. This is not an exhaustive list. Any manner of export may be noted. (For example, "rebellion" is a major product of one city.) When "trade" is noted as a major product, it means the transfer of goods (imported and exported) are an important aspect of the city's economy.

**Armed Forces:** A list of the standing military forces within the city. This may include militia, night watchmen, mamluks, barbarian mercenaries, and the palace guard; A city may also boast aerial and magical units. Few cities rely solely on these standing forces in times of need; when a city is seriously threatened, half the available population can be mustered to defend their homes.

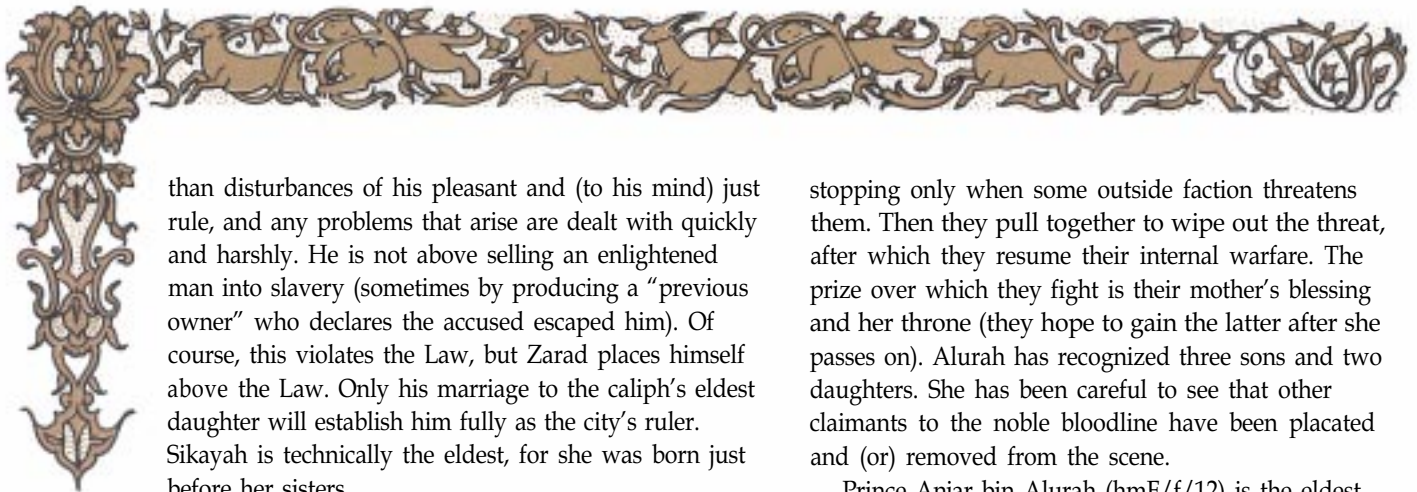
**Major Mosques:** Faiths that are prominent in the city—those important enough to merit their own mosques. Furthermore, a major mosque always has a priest who can raise the dead.

**Key Figures Outside the Court:** Prominent citizens. Only the descriptions of Hiyal, Huzuz, and Qudra include this listing.

**Rumors and Lore:** Local scuttlebutt or history.

(DM's Note: These may serve as adventure hooks; see "Secrets" in *Fortunes and Fates*.)





than disturbances of his pleasant and (to his mind) just rule, and any problems that arise are dealt with quickly and harshly. He is not above selling an enlightened man into slavery (sometimes by producing a “previous owner” who declares the accused escaped him). Of course, this violates the Law, but Zarad places himself above the Law. Only his marriage to the caliph’s eldest daughter will establish him fully as the city’s ruler. Sikayah is technically the eldest, for she was born just before her sisters.

## Hiyal, City of Intrigue

About 360 miles northeast of golden Huzuz, at the rim of Suq Bay, lies the gray, industrious city of Hiyl. Set in the low valley of the river Al-Wahl, Hiyl is cloaked in the smoky stench of its foundries and kilns. The shroud seems to nurture the clandestine, for in the city’s dark alleys and back rooms the deals of smugglers, thieves, and unscrupulous power brokers are made.

**The Ruler:** Sultana Alurah bint Asrah (hfF/a/18) established her rule five years ago, just after her husband died suddenly at a state dinner, collapsing unceremoniously upon a mound of mutton and rice. In the brief chaos that ensued, Alurah played one faction against another, while remaining in close communication with her allies in the Grand Caliph’s court. (Prince Tannous, who prefers a quiet north, is one such ally.) Alurah convinced the Grand Caliphate that she alone could quell her city’s rival factions, provide a sense of continuity to Hiyl’s rulership, and ensure the continued enlightened rule of her people. She has accomplished all these things. Indeed, the sultana is a competent, industrious, and wise ruler. She is also a dark-hearted schemer, maintaining her family’s power through stealth and guile.

The sultana is now 60 and reportedly in ill health. Some attribute her illness to her lavish lifestyle coupled with the city’s pollution. Others claim this no more than a rumor—a subterfuge on her own part, designed to lure out those who covet her position.

**The Court:** The sultana’s court consists primarily of her immediate family. Everyone else is a servant, pawn, or enemy (or quite possibly all three). The sultana’s brood continually squabble among themselves,

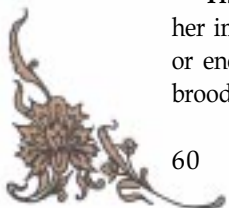
stopping only when some outside faction threatens them. Then they pull together to wipe out the threat, after which they resume their internal warfare. The prize over which they fight is their mother’s blessing and her throne (they hope to gain the latter after she passes on). Alurah has recognized three sons and two daughters. She has been careful to see that other claimants to the noble bloodline have been placated and (or) removed from the scene.

Prince Anjar bin Alurah (hmF/f/12) is the eldest son and the apple of his mother’s eye. Bright, strong, and respectful of his mother’s wishes, his one great fault is that he lacks subtlety, being far too direct in his actions. A courtier argues with him and is found the next day face down in the harbor. A coffee house is said to be a haven for malcontents, and it burns down soon after a visit by the prince. A village that hides a fugitive is exterminated to the last being. At best, Anjar is heavy-handed; at worst, he is cruel and tyrannical. However, his mother feels these rough edges can be smoothed and that he will eventually replace her. She has not yet declared Anjar her official heir, but she has appointed him Grand Commander of her armies.

Prince Omar bin Alurah (hmW/sh/14) is the second son, a sha’ir linked to the Brotherhood of the True Flame. Both the prince and the Brotherhood seek to use one another to further their own ends. When those ends have been achieved, each side intends to dispense with the other. Prince Omar is short, nearsighted, and exceedingly jealous of his elder brother. He regularly reports Prince Anjar’s mistakes and overreactions to his mother, hoping to replace him. Since he has few accomplishments of his own to boast, she usually pays him no mind. Omar is aided by his personal servant, a female efreeti named Jalas.

Imam Raman bin Alurah min-Najm (hmP/m/16) is the sultana’s youngest son. He is also the religious leader of the faith of Najm, and the official keeper of its mosque in the city. A staunch moralist, he has connections within the Pantheist League, who hope to introduce their firm beliefs to Hiyl. Gaunt and calm, Raman is regarded as the most dangerous of the sultana’s sons, a planner who launches byzantine plots.

Basically caring and considerate, Princess Hannah bint Alurah (hfPal/f/12) is the best of a bad lot, the white sheep of her family. There is no love lost





between the princess and her siblings. In the past, Hannah's relatives and others have used her in petty court intrigues, attempting to dupe her with spies and plants. As a result, she has developed a suspicious, almost hostile nature toward strangers. She speaks when she must, acts when she can. Her greatest concern is that her mother will die (or be killed) without formally selecting an heir, and that the resulting bloodbath will spread into the city.

Hannah's current posting is Marshal of the City Guard, and she is dedicated to bringing a just rule to the people. The good citizens of Hiyal are devoted to Hannah, admiring her bravery and wisdom. The sultana knows that Hannah is an unofficial ambassador of good will from her court, helping to appease citizens who disapprove of the two princes.

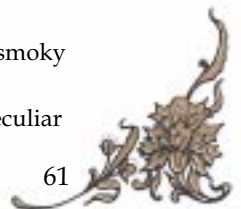
Princess Alurah bint Alurah (hfW/sh/10) is the youngest of the ruling family, exemplifying its worst traits. Greedy, cruel, and conniving, she gets by on her family connections and her courtly graces. She is quick to turn one family member against another. Without hesitation, she will launch an attack on the innocent

to cover her own wrongdoing and hide behind her mother's robes when she is in trouble. A 10th-level sha'ir, Alurah is served by a mischievous djinnling (air gen) named Pin, who acts as her spy.

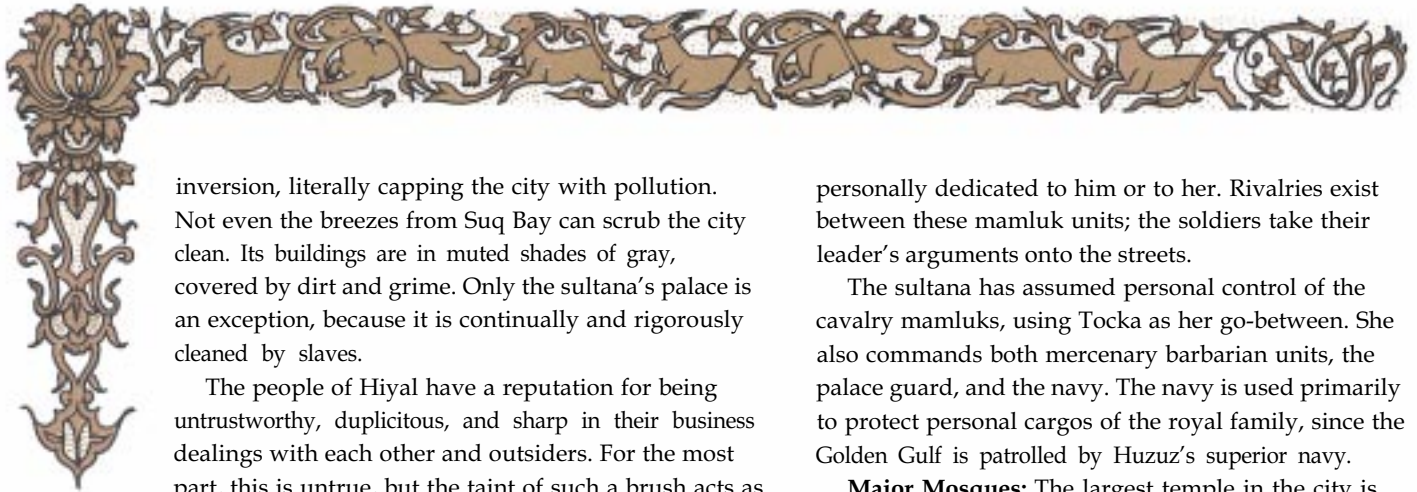
Tocka (gmT/hs/10) is the sultana's personal servant, confidant, and hatchet-gnome. He was once a member of the Gilded Palm, a defunct group of assassins dedicated to Jisan. The Gilded Palm sought to right economic wrongs (sometimes by eliminating merchants). The sultana's late husband wiped out the group, but the sultana managed to rescue Tocka. Rumors abound that he was responsible for the sultan's death, but nothing has been proved. It is true that even the beggars of Hiyal know Tocka. The populace stands aside in fear as the gnome strides through the city, usually on some mission assigned by his mistress.

**Population:** 600,000 permanent residents. If beggars and transients are included, the number may swell to 900,000.

**Features of the City:** Hiyal's trademark is its smoky pallor and unpleasant odor, caused mainly by its foundries and kilns. Its valley setting creates a peculiar







inversion, literally capping the city with pollution. Not even the breezes from Suq Bay can scrub the city clean. Its buildings are in muted shades of gray, covered by dirt and grime. Only the sultana's palace is an exception, because it is continually and rigorously cleaned by slaves.

The people of Hiyal have a reputation for being untrustworthy, duplicitous, and sharp in their business dealings with each other and outsiders. For the most part, this is untrue, but the taint of such a brush acts as a magnet for less-than-honest individuals who are drawn to the city. In addition to legitimate business, Hiyal is often the site for gray dealings, covert transactions, smuggling, and illegal activities-most of which are carried out by transients with permanent connections in the city.

Newcomers to Hiyal might wish to visit these sites:

- *Great suq.* Much as the mighty bazaar of Huzuz is world-famous, so too is the suq of Hiyal, a maze of covered passageways and enclosed streets. In the main corridors of this labyrinth, all manner of legal goods can be found. In the shadows, all manner of illegal and forbidden goods can be found, too.

- *Foundries.* Located upstream on the sluggish river Al-Wahl, these foundries turn out some of the finest weapons in Zakhara. Each year, the mamluks of Qudra commission hundreds of high-quality swords and spearheads from the foundries. Hiyal pays taxes to the Grand Caliph with the proceeds. Many great weaponsmiths and armorers come to Hiyal to practice their craft. Their fires blaze through the night. Among the respected smiths include the House of Bulad (see "Key Figures Outside the Court").

**Major Products:** Coal, iron, steel, weaponry, armor, metalwork, slaves (black market), information (black market), pottery.

**Armed Forces:** 8,000 footmen; 1,500 cavalry; 2,000-man palace guard; 2,000-man city guard; two mercenary barbarian units, 1,800 strong combined; five units of mamluk infantry, 5,000 strong combined; three units of mamluk cavalry, 900 strong combined.

Prince Anjar commands the regular troops. Princess Hannah commands the city guard, including some elite units who are personally dedicated to her. Hannah lacks a mamluk unit, but each of the sultana's other children (and the sultana herself) has a unit

personally dedicated to him or to her. Rivalries exist between these mamluk units; the soldiers take their leader's arguments onto the streets.

The sultana has assumed personal control of the cavalry mamluks, using Tocka as her go-between. She also commands both mercenary barbarian units, the palace guard, and the navy. The navy is used primarily to protect personal cargos of the royal family, since the Golden Gulf is patrolled by Huzuz's superior navy.

**Major Mosques:** The largest temple in the city is an open mosque, where all enlightened people may pray. Only slightly smaller in size and grandeur are mosques devoted to Najm, Hajama, and Zann:

Hajama: Imam Ramadayah bint Kolos min Hajama (hfP/e/14)

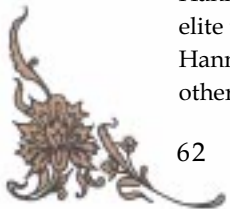
Najm: Imam Raman bin Alurah min Najm (hmP/m/16)

Zann: Imam Qonta bin Mala (hmP/e/12)

Each of the three structures has a large number of support buildings, including dormitories, schools, courtyards, and kitchens. The mosque of Najm is the newest of the three, and has seen extensive renovation since the son of the sultana took charge of it.

**Key Figures Outside the Court:** Harayah al-Mabhum, also called Harayah the Unclear, (hfW/so/16), is a powerful, aged sorceress. She has served, at one time or another, on all sides of the numerous internal conflicts affecting the court. Her specialty is disappearances-making individuals and items vanish (voluntarily or not). In the past, she has removed political opponents, personal rivals, and those who threatened the sultana's immediate family. Most recently, Harayah herself has disappeared, following a visit from Prince Anjar. Immediately after that meeting, Harayah's servants bricked up the entrance to her home from the inside, and no word has been heard since.

Kasit al-Galaba (emB/r/14) is an elf and a bard. He is known throughout the city for both his dulcet voice and his gossiping tongue. Place a rumor upon his lips at dawn, and by evening it will be known from the docks to the palace and out into the wild. (Or so it seems.) Those seeking to disseminate information near and far could not find a better means than Kasit. He has one standing rule, however: He will not blaspheme the names of the sultana's family directly. In thanks for that consideration, the sultana lets him live.





Obok al-Busaq is a man with two lives. In the broad light of day, he is a pottery dealer. Under cover of night, however, he becomes Obok the Slaver. Al-Busaq operates the heartless black market that deals in “intelligent beasts,” from children captured by dark-spirited desert raiders to speciality items such as rare sentient creatures and foreigners who are destined to be displayed as curiosities. He operates this business with the unofficial sanction of the sultana’s court. As long as two promises are kept, she will not interfere. First, Obok must keep the sultana’s own roster of slaves filled (including the harim of her sons). And second, Obok must strive to keep his work as quiet as possible. If proof of his activities were to reach the wrong ears, the sultana would have no choice but to shut down his operation. Obok uses a number of methods to transport his product, including his own great vases.

Fuladayah bint Bulad (hfF/a/10) is the daughter of Bulad the Steelmaker, one of the finest weaponsmiths in the Land of Fate. The blood runs true, for she is as great a weaponsmith as her father, and the mark of the House of Bulad remains a guarantee of fine craftsmanship. Bulad makes long swords, broad swords, cutlasses, and scimitars of such high quality that wielders gain a +1 attack bonus (nonmagical, doesn’t enhance damage).

Fuladayah was recently orphaned. Six months ago, her father was found dead, with a crudely-made dagger in his neck. Fuladayah has taken charge of the business, and has made it known to all that she wants revenge against those who killed her father. The magistrate declared it a “death by accident,” confirming Fuladayah’s belief that someone of power or rank-and their toady-is involved.

The Beggar Caliph (??T/bg/20) is one of Zakhara’s mysteries. No one knows for certain the gender and race of this legendary beggar-thief, though many assume he is a human male. It is said that all beggar-thieves in Hiyal send what they hear to him, and he in turn issues orders and gives them information-such as when a particular caravan will arrive, or if the sultana will declare a day of feasting for the entire city. Rumors concerning this character abound, and many theories are espoused. Perhaps the Beggar Caliph is a genie or a disgruntled warrior prince. Or perhaps he is the surviving sultan himself! As long as the Beggar Caliph causes no harm to the sultana’s power-and perhaps as

long as he eludes her-she allows him to survive.

**Rumors and Lore:** Hiyal is a city of rumors, buoyed by the constant sweep of this scandal or that secret. Two stories in particular are common coinage on the streets, one recent and one as old as the city itself.

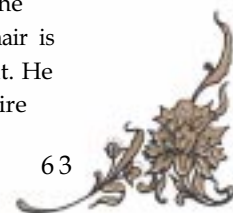
Here is the ancient tale: The maze work of the great suq is itself a gateway into an even greater marketplace, which exists under skies never seen in the Land of Fate. This greater suq exists beside, below, and beyond the covered market stalls that all citizens know. It is a shadow world where lives are traded as common coinage, and all manner of wonders can be purchased, including genies, magical items, and tokens of the gods. Explorers cannot enter this greater suq through any precise door. Instead, they must pass through a number of gateways to reach its strange halls. The noble genies may know of the secrets of the greater suq, but they keep them hidden.

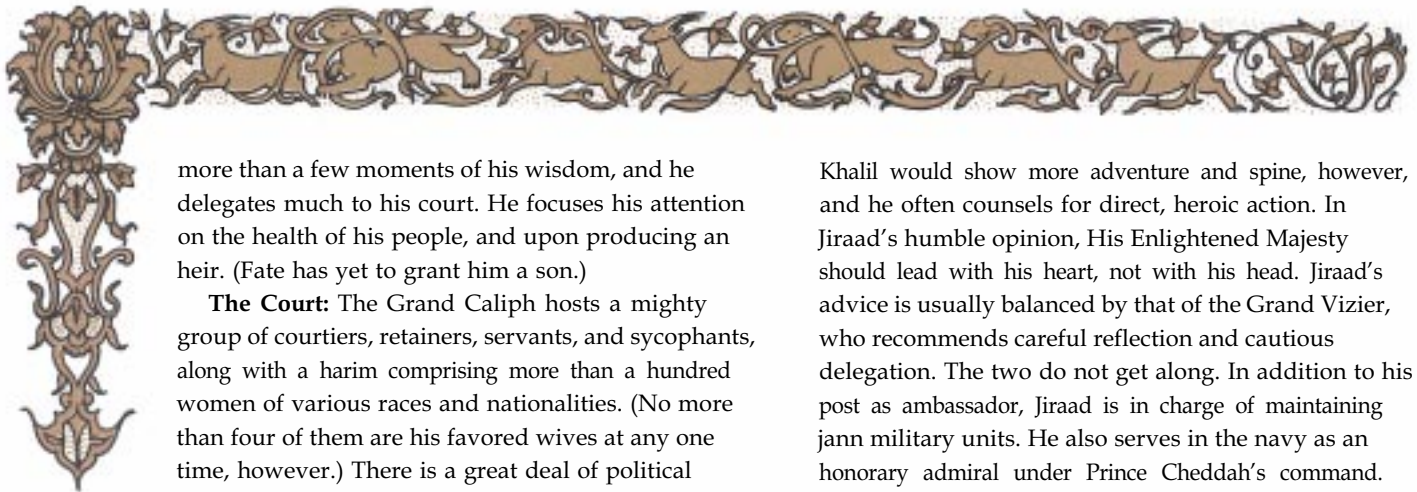
Here is the more recent tale: Prince Omar has demanded (and received) a portion of the Bulad estates and foundries for private research. The seized property has been walled off, save for a single entrance, which is guarded by mamluks loyal to Omar. Efreets have been seen at the site. So too have members of the Brotherhood of the True Flame. The story on the streets is that Omar has involved himself with some form of barbarian magic, and is creating a beast of molten metal to do his bidding.

## Huzuz, City of Delights

**T**he City of Delights, nestled between the Golden Gulf and Suq Bay, is one of Zakhara’s most spectacular cities. Its shimmering spires can be seen for miles across the water, inviting sailors to approach. Here the first Grand Caliph received the vision of the Loregiver, which contained Fate’s wisdom and the Law. Today the city is still the seat of the Grand Caliph, the “heart of the heart” of the enlightened lands.

**The Ruler:** Grand Caliph Khalil al-Assad al-Zahir (Master of the Enlightened Throne, Most High Sovereign of the Land of Fate, the Worthy of the Gods, Scourge of the Unbeliever, Confidant of the Genies, hmF/f/20) is a middle-aged man whose hair is still black and whose body has not yet gone to fat. He is usually bored by matters or decisions that require





more than a few moments of his wisdom, and he delegates much to his court. He focuses his attention on the health of his people, and upon producing an heir. (Fate has yet to grant him a son.)

**The Court:** The Grand Caliph hosts a mighty group of courtiers, retainers, servants, and sycophants, along with a harim comprising more than a hundred women of various races and nationalities. (No more than four of them are his favored wives at any one time, however.) There is a great deal of political infighting for the Grand Caliph's ear. Important personages include the following:

Grand Vizier Alyana al-Azzazi (hfW/so/20) is a prim sorceress with strong moralistic beliefs. She counsels the Grand Caliph in virtually all matters. Though her size is small, her demeanor suggests power. She always appears in court wearing rich robes and a veil. She does not dwell in Khalil's harim, but has quarters that are solely her own, overlooking the palace gardens. She is older than Khalil, and still treats him as if he were a young student. He listens faithfully to her advice, and in return she quietly accepts his rulings—even when they violate her wishes. That does not occur often, however, for Alyana's wisdom has often been proved, and the Grand Caliph usually concurs. She wishes that the Grand Caliph would be more diligent in matters of state.

Tanya bint Perijan (hfT/sl/10) is a native of Gana. She is the Grand Caliph's most valued wife (for the time being, anyway). She rules the *harim*. Tanya set out to reach the court of the Grand Caliph, and to secure her place in his heart through a combination of effort, favors, and a bit of blackmail. She is an opportunist, but she is also devoted to her husband. Her goals in life are to maintain her hold on the Grand Caliph's heart and to be the first to bear him a son. Her son would then be the recognized heir of the Enlightened Throne. Until she bears the first son, however, she is no different from any other wife, only one step above a courtesan. As of yet, she has only daughters.

Jiraad, a noble marid, serves as an ambassador to the genie races. By nature, marids are not interested in the affairs of men, yet the Grand Caliph specifically asked for a marid to fill this posting. After much grumbling (privately), Jiraad accepted the ambassadorship, and he enjoys the company of the Grand Caliph. He wishes

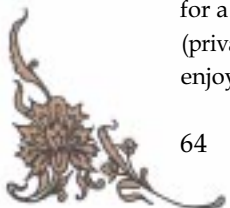
Khalil would show more adventure and spine, however, and he often counsels for direct, heroic action. In Jiraad's humble opinion, His Enlightened Majesty should lead with his heart, not with his head. Jiraad's advice is usually balanced by that of the Grand Vizier, who recommends careful reflection and cautious delegation. The two do not get along. In addition to his post as ambassador, Jiraad is in charge of maintaining jann military units. He also serves in the navy as an honorary admiral under Prince Cheddah's command.

Prince Tannous al-Assad (hmF/a/16) is the uncle of the Grand Caliph (and brother to his late father). Tannous currently stands in direct line for the throne; if the Grand Caliph should die before producing an heir, Tannous would assume his exalted position. Prince Tannous acts as the Grand Caliph's spy beyond the palace walls. Little escapes the notice of his sinister eyes. He also gains information through a network of agents and informers in the continent's three great cities: Huzuz, Hiya, and Qudra. All those who serve within the network remain alert to potential threats against His Majesty. Tannous often travels abroad on behalf of the Grand Caliph, or to his own retreat at the foot of the Al-Akara Mountains.

The Grand Vizier and Tanya despise Prince Tannous. The Grand Caliph, however, is devoted to him, and the prince is always welcome in his court.

Prince Cheddah (hmF/f/W16), another paternal uncle to the Grand Caliph, is a pompous, overweight, and overbearing man. Cheddah commands the city's military. In manner he is a fool, and in tactics he is a disaster. But he is a believer in spit-and-polish reviews and parades, which have been the chief purposes of Huzuz's military forces for the last two decades.

The Grand Caliph dotes on Prince Cheddah. Other major members of the court consider him a bungler who survives mainly on the talents of his underlings. These include Thokkor of the Furrowed Mountains (hmF/mb/14), who is in charge of the mercenary units and cavalry, and Preani Qin (hfF/mk/14), who oversees the slave-warriors. Thokkor is most concerned with the growing military might of the Pantheist League, and is opposed by the Grand Vizier. Preani Qin is both comely and competent, such that she has caught the eye of the Grand Caliph, and has therefore earned the enmity of Tanya, his wife.









Imam Renn min Zann (emP/p/19), Keeper of the Mosques, is the main representative of the assembled enlightened faiths of the Land of Fate. He is a respected, silver-haired fixture in court life, serving as the conduit by which religious questions and decisions are brought before the Grand Caliph.

Renn's father was a broadminded barbarian elf from realms lying far to the north. His mother was the intelligent but headstrong daughter of a prominent Zakhara merchant. Perhaps because of this eclectic background, Renn became a pragmatic priest of Zann. He quickly gained a reputation for his wisdom and his ability to mediate among squabbling factions. Long a presence in the Grand Caliph's court, Renn has served two previous Grand Caliphs (Khalil's father and grandfather). All members of the present court have a healthy respect for Renn's power, though he has sparred recently with the Grand Vizier, whose moralist philosophies are more conservative than his own.

**Population:** 800,000 permanent residents. During High Holy Days and on Ascension Day, the population swells to well over a million and a half.

**Features of the City:** Known far and wide for its beautiful architecture, this city is often called Huzuz the Golden. Its domes and minarets are clad in gold, tile, and inlaid glass, all reflecting\* the sun. As dawn breaks, the city seems to glow. In the midday heat, it shimmers. And as the sun sinks toward the horizon, the light blazes a path across the Golden Gulf and seems to set the city aflame. Through centuries, the craftsmen and artisans of Zakhara have made the city their showcase. Their hand-painted tiles, intricate mosaics, gilded surfaces, and intricately carved plaster and stone are a tribute to the Loregiver, as well as to an enlightened civilization and the wonders of Huzuz itself.

The people of Huzuz are by nature as tolerant as they are diverse. Racial and religious differences do not present a problem. Even far-removed faiths and ideas are treated with more amusement than fear. Every style of fashion in the Land of Fate can be found on the city's streets. Every type of product made in the enlightened world can be found here, too—along with a vast array from the lands beyond. The populace of Huzuz are confident in their good fortune, and cannot believe that anything evil would happen to the Enlightened Throne and their most puissant Grand Caliph.

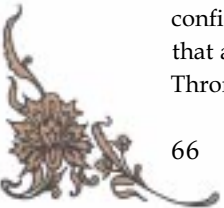
A walking tour of this great city should include the following sites:

- *Palace of the Grand Caliph* (also called the Lair of the Great Lion, Seat of the Enlightened Throne, and "the place to which all eyes turn"). Built and remodeled over the course of 500 years, this sprawling palace has become a maze of rooms, courts, and passageways. As the power and personal treasuries of the Grand Caliph expanded, so too did the palace. Old buildings and halls were torn down to provide space for new ones. The palace has maintained its present form for the past three generations of the Grand Caliphate.

- *Public Gardens.* This wondrous expanse of greenery borders the eastern edge of the Grand Caliph's palace. The gardens are filled with row upon tailored row of roses, hibiscus, and other flowers, as well as great orchards of pears and figs. Technically, the gardens lie upon the Grand Caliph's private land. But according to a long tradition, they remain open to civilized men and women throughout the year, and are closed only when the Grand Caliph himself chooses to wander the grounds for meditation (about once a week).

The greatest wonder of the Public Gardens is the Floating Fountain. The fountain's base is an enormous reflecting pool installed by the first Grand Caliph. Recently, Ambassador Jiraad enhanced the pool. The marid created golden bowls which float through the air above the reflecting pool, dancing a slow, graceful ballet. The bowls spout jets of clear, sparkling water, which arch into the air before spilling into the pool below. In times of celebration, the fountains spray colored water instead—and sometimes even fire, steam, or rainbow-colored sand.

- *The Grand Bazaar.* This huge, open-air court is located near the city's harbor. It is one of Zakhara's busiest markets, for Huzuz lies at the crossroads of all major trade routes. Exotic foods, silks, treasures, curios, entertainers, letter-writers, mystics, barbers, individuals looking for employment—all can be found in the bustling court until curfew. After nightfall, lamps aglow with *continual light* spells provide general illumination. Licensed torchbearers appear, offering to escort members of the evening crowd to their sleeping quarters (for a fee). Huzuz lacks an official slave market, but unscrupulous characters are willing to procure that which is desired, as long as the correct price is paid.





**Major Products:** Trade, tourism (especially visits to the Grand Mosque and the Court of Enlightenment), bureaucracy (tax records and census for managing the empire), universities, sages, textiles.

**Armed Forces:** 10,000 footmen; 2,000 imperial cavalry; five 50-man wings of hippogriff cavalry; an imperial palace guard comprising 1,000; three mercenary units (2,100 strong combined); five units of mamluk infantry (5,000 strong combined, with one unit for each of these groups: the Dutiful, the Faithful, the Valiant, the Studious, the Honored); three units of mamluk cavalry (900 strong combined, representing the Dutiful, the Valiant, and the Dauntless); naval base for 40 imperial ships with crews, who are charged with patrolling the Golden Gulf and Suq Bay; plus the Magical Legion, a unit of 75 wizards of varying level, each with a flying carpet. The city also boasts a reserve force of jann warriors, whose exact number is not common knowledge (see also page 27).

Footmen serve as patrols and the city guard. They are led by the chancellor of the city, Makin al-Mutrattab (hmF/a/10). Cavalry, hippogriffs, and the palace guard are under the direct command of Prince Cheddah. Mercenaries are under the command of Thokkor. All mamluks answer to Preani Qin, including the Honored, a detachment of eunuchs used as harem guards in the palace. The navy serves under the command of Grand Admiral Haroun ibn Abbak (hmF/c/15), though they may be led by Jiraad, ambassador from the Genie Courts. Jiraad is also responsible for the jann auxiliaries. The wizards serve under the command of the Grand Vizier, but in battle they are led by the White Agate (see "Key Figures Outside the Court").

**Major Mosques and Priests:** Huzuz has nine great mosques. Eight are arranged in an arc facing east toward the ninth, like a half-moon whose points reach out to embrace a shining star. Each of the eight mosques of the arc is dedicated to a different enlightened god. The temples, their faith, and the imam in charge are listed below. The sequence follows the arc from north to south.

Kor:: Imam Gogol (hmP/e/19).  
Hajama: Imam Jomhur (hmP/m/19).  
Najm: Imam Effat (hfP/e/20),  
Jisan: Imam Morol (hemp/m/18).

Haku: Imam Gholam (hmP/e/18).

Hakiyah: Imam Kerim (hmP/p/17).

Selan: Imam Lelia (dffP/e/12).

Zann: Imam Renn (emP/p/19).

With this arrangement, the great arc is bounded on one side by wisdom and on the other by learning. The ninth house of worship, the Golden Mosque, is considered "open." Members of any faith recognized by the Loregiver may worship freely within it, including members of the Temple of Ten Thousand Gods and followers of local deities such as Jauhar and Bala.

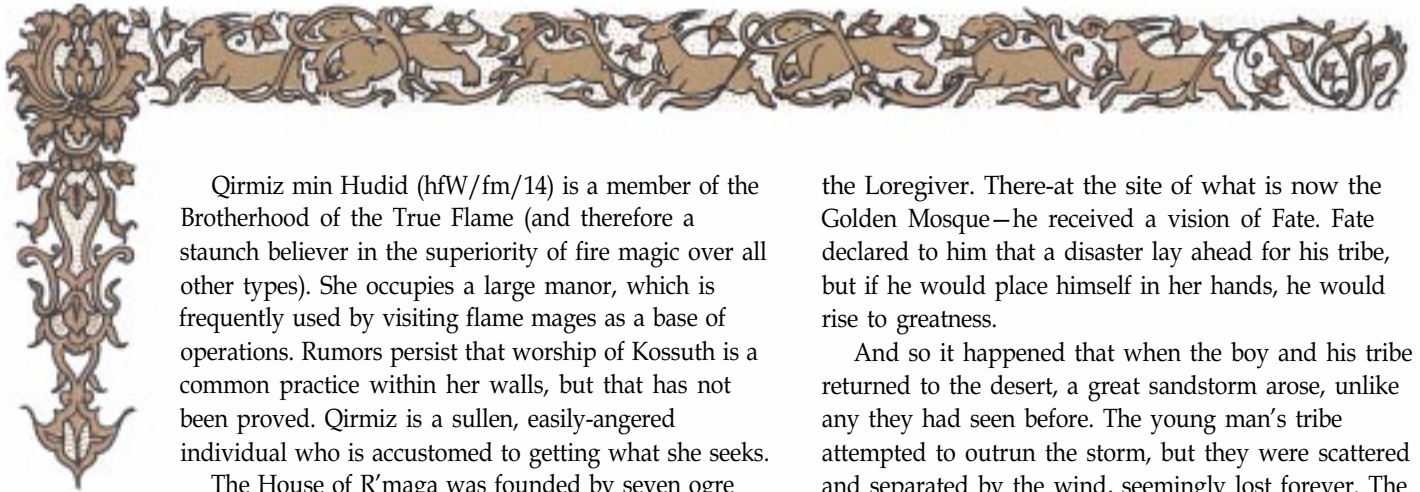
The Golden Mosque is maintained by a large staff headed by the Keeper of the Mosques, who in turn is a member of the Grand Caliph's court. Imam Renn, an elvish Zannite and pragmatist, is the current Keeper of the Mosques. His temple takes its name from the lavish gilt overlay which bedecks the pillars and the carved ceiling and wall ornaments. Even the intricate tilework is laced with gold.

The Golden Mosque is significant for three other reasons. First, it is a ham (holy site). It is built around the ruins of a house that is said to have belonged to the Loregiver herself. Further, it was here that the first Grand Caliph received the vision to search out the words of the Loregiver. Finally, the Golden Mosque opens to the east upon the Great Court of Enlightenment. The Grand Caliph appears above this court to his people on Ascension Day, and then pays homage to his gods in the Golden Mosque. In worshipping so, the Grand Caliph shows no preference to one faith over another.

**Key Figures Outside the Court:** White Agate (hmW/sem/20) is a sea mage whose travels to the utter ends of the earth have left his flesh bleached completely white. Some say it was caused by the inhospitable weather he encountered in the Crowded Sea, while others speak of his encounters with dark things far beneath the land of Nog. White Agate has retired as an adventurer and has made Huzuz his home. He now serves as the leader of the Magical Legion. Except for rare appearances in the Grand Caliph's court and at the head of his troop, White Agate is never seen in public. Even those who seek his services and advice do not communicate with him directly. Instead, servants bring the sea mage written questions, and he responds in kind.







Qirmiz min Hudid (hfW/fm/14) is a member of the Brotherhood of the True Flame (and therefore a staunch believer in the superiority of fire magic over all other types). She occupies a large manor, which is frequently used by visiting flame mages as a base of operations. Rumors persist that worship of Kossuth is a common practice within her walls, but that has not been proved. Qirmiz is a sullen, easily-angered individual who is accustomed to getting what she seeks.

The House of R'maga was founded by seven ogre brothers, six of whom still remain in Huzuz. They pride themselves on their ability as porters and guides. Both they and their employees are well-versed in the history of the city, its layout, and how to get around. The R'maga brothers are in great demand during High Holy Days, when visiting dignitaries command their personal services. The seventh brother, Arkar bin R'maga, disappeared mysteriously a few years ago, and the surviving brothers do not speak of him.

A fixture in the Grand Bazaar for nearly 40 years is the popular barber Gorar al-Aksar (hmB/br/15). He has attended the sick, shaved the hairy, and provided great entertainment. Many people appreciate his talents. Harming Gorar in any way—and a number of strangers have been moved to such violence—is a sure way to incite a riot.

Gorar is a seemingly endless fount of information and chatter. He prefaces every other statement with a caveat, saying, "This may not be true, but. . ." Then he launches into a long and lively account. Merchants who frequent the bazaar claim that half the wild stories and most of the lost treasures of Huzuz and its surroundings have been "planted" by this man.

Gorar enjoys listening to a good tale almost as much as he enjoys telling one. He willingly compensates others for information-offering his services if not his silver. In time, he relates those stories to other customers, suitably embellished.

**Rumors and Lore:** The tale of Huzuz is closely tied to that of the Grand Caliph. Six hundred years ago, the land occupied by Huzuz was little more than a small village used for trade between desert tribes and merchants along Suq Bay. One fateful day, the young man who would be the first Grand Caliph visited the village. He wandered the streets and soon stood before a simple dwelling, which many claim was the house of

the Loregiver. There-at the site of what is now the Golden Mosque—he received a vision of Fate. Fate declared to him that a disaster lay ahead for his tribe, but if he would place himself in her hands, he would rise to greatness.

And so it happened that when the boy and his tribe returned to the desert, a great sandstorm arose, unlike any they had seen before. The young man's tribe attempted to outrun the storm, but they were scattered and separated by the wind, seemingly lost forever. The young man himself did not flee. Instead, he placed himself in Fate's hands, and let his horse take him wherever Fate determined.

After some time, the boy awoke to find himself in the Akara Mountains, resting in a cave. He had no knowledge of how he came there. Upon searching the cave, he discovered a set of ancient scrolls, which he placed into his carpet bag before leaving.

For a time, the boy searched the desert for signs of his tribe. When he found none, he returned to the village where he had received the vision of Fate. There, he deciphered the scrolls, which contained the wisdom that would be known as the Law of the Loregiver. The boy began to share his wisdom with others. They spread the word in turn, and soon, almost magically, Fate's wisdom spread throughout the land like a wildfire. All recognized the wisdom of the youth. When members of his tribe, scattered and separated, heard of this mystic youth, they came together at the village. All had survived, and they realized that Fate had been with them after all.

The desert people and villagers settled the land together and spread the word of the Law. The youth became the new sheikh of his tribe. More importantly, he was soon recognized as the first Grand Caliph. The youth founded the Golden Mosque on the site of his vision, and all who wished to pray to whichever enlightened god they chose were welcome there. And within sight of the mosque he made his home.

Upon his death, the Grand Caliph ruled a small collection of cities. The title of Grand Caliph passed to his son. Since that time, the power of the Grand Caliph has expanded to its present size. And Huzuz itself has grown in population and wonder.

The present Grand Caliph is the eighteenth man to sit upon the Enlightened Throne, and his rule has





been, for the most part, good. The realm is better under his care than it would be without him. For the people of Zakhara, that is enough.

## Wasat, The Middle City

Located at the narrows of Suq Bay, Wasat lies on the major trade route linking Huzuz and Hiya. Despite its key location, however, Wasat is a rather sleepy town, marked by none of the bustle of the great cities that flank it. The Middle City is but a quaint waystation for ships that travel along this golden trade route, and its residents are content with their position.

**The Ruler:** Caliph Haroun al-Raqqa, Blood of the First Caliph (hmT/br/12), is a bleary-eyed, bureaucratic courtier. He traded his independence for a soft, secure position, and has come to regret it. The blood of the First Caliph does run in his body, though it is very thin. That blood, coupled with Haroun's quick wit, garnered him a posting in Wasat following the untimely (and apparently accidental) death of the previous caliph and his family.

**The Court:** The caliph has a modest number of courtiers, some of whom are out of favor in Huzuz or on the run from Hiya. The caliph also maintains a reasonable *harim*, with a number of possible young heirs (ages 5 and under).

An important member of the court is a newcomer, the great sorcerer Azuah al-Jawwaf (hmW/so/20). Al-Jawwaf arrived two years ago and took up residence in an abandoned monastery overlooking the town. He is a gaunt man with sharp features and fiery eyes. To pay fealty to the caliph, Azuah declared that he came to Wasat to retire from the hustle of the great cities. He also claimed that he wished only to conduct his research in peace. Azuah has given Caliph Haroun a magical ring, by which the caliph can summon him for magical advice. Haroun uses the ring sparingly, and usually sends written word to the old monastery of an upcoming appearance. Azuah, for his part, usually travels to the caliph's chambers using a *teleport* or *dimension door* spell, appearing in a puff of brilliant smoke.

Another frequent visitor to the palace is Prince Tannous, the uncle of the Grand Caliph. Tannous talks long into the night with Haroun. Of late, Azuah has joined them. The subjects of these discussions are

not known, but the very fact that this most influential man regularly confers with the local caliph greatly enhances Haroun's prestige.

**Population:** 90,000.

**Features of the City:** Most of Wasat's money stems from its business as a waystation for merchants, who stop only briefly. The city produces little in its own right beyond what it needs to feed and clothe itself. A court rawun once called Wasat the Shining City because when the sun shines, the city's white-washed buildings reflect its light. Such days are rare, however. Usually, the city is shrouded in fog or a gray haze. Given the many stunning settlements in Zakhara, Wasat's beauty is seductive only when compared to the stinking cloud that surrounds Hiya.

The people of Wasat are neither lazy nor diligent, fanatical nor unholy. Their most notable aspect is a refusal to be surprised-regardless of the situation. Located between two of Zakhara's great cities, they seem to exist in a dreamlike and magical world. What does it matter if a flaming fountain should suddenly appear in the suq? As long as the goods (and the merchants) aren't scorched, it matters little to the nonchalant people of Wasat.

**Major Products:** Trade.

**Armed Forces:** 800-man palace guard; two mamluk units of 300 men each, representing the Studious; 8000 man cavalry patrol, usually outside the city; a three-ship navy. In times of true danger, the city relies on Huzuz for protection, and, to a lesser extent, upon Hiya.

**Major Mosques:** Haku, Jisan, Kor, Selan, Zann.

**Rumors and Lore:** Wasat's sleepiness may be a veneer. Given its strategic position between Hiya and Huzuz, this city is filled with agents of both the Enlightened Throne and Hiya's sultana. Prince Tannous's regular visits indicate that Caliph Haroun is the humble servant of his puissant and mighty lord. But representatives of the sultana's children have also been present recently, dealing with some of the more unreliable merchants.

Azuah is a source of rumor as well. The true nature of this wizard's retirement and current "research" has yet to be revealed. Further, it is not known if even the caliph himself is partial to the wizard's full confidence. Strange lights resembling ball lightning have appeared around Azuah's abode, and the ground frequently shudders.





## Chapter 7

# Cities of The North

In the northern reaches of Zakhara, where the Great Sea crashes against the shore, are Qudra, the Corsair Domains, and the Free Cities. The great city of Qudra is ruled by mamluks who are fiercely devoted to the Grand Caliph. Also dubbed the City of Power, Qudra is a model of duty and organization. The Corsair Domains, if they can be said to be ruled at all, are the holdings of Zakhara's northern pirates. Typically devoid of central government, the Corsair Domains are a political antithesis to the staunch rank and file of Qudra. Between them philosophically are the Free Cities, a collection of six independent city-states lining the coast, each located at the mouth of a river. These cities—Hafaya, Liham, Muluk, Qadib, Umara, and Utaqa—have come to operate more independently than others who swear fealty to the Grand Caliph. In fact, the loyalty of the Free Cities (and their rulers) to the Grand Caliph is directly proportional to their distance from the armies of Qudra. With savage tribes to the south, wild pirates to the north, and foreigners filling their streets, the somewhat uncivilized bent of the Free Cities is not surprising.

The independence of the Free Cities is heightened by their own standing armies, which fend off attacks by corsairs and savage tribesmen. The cities also use the armies against each other with great regularity. In accordance with a treaty written in Qudra, each Free City's caliph rules the river valley of his or her home. The caliphs, however, interpret this to mean "from one river to the next," so the cities are continually raiding each other's outposts. Qudra allows this uncivilized behavior to a point, intervening only when trade is threatened. During the past 20 years, the emir of Qudra has launched four major armed incursions into territory of the Free Cities, as well as dozens of smaller operations.

The Corsair Domains are a collection of small islands connected by shallow coastal waters. They are riddled with hidden bays, small villages, and secret coves. They are also a hive of illegal activity. These domains have no caliph, nor do they recognize a formal hierarchy, though most of the inhabitants consider themselves loyal (in their own way) to the Grand Caliph in Huzuz. In fact, some corsairs have declared themselves true followers of the Grand Caliph and protectors of the Law of the Loregiver,





They regard the natives of Qudra and the Free Cities as spiritually impoverished tyrants who are unfit for rulership.

Government, in corsair terms, is simply the rule of the strong over the weak.

In the absence of a greater ruler, anarchy reigns. Strong and self-reliant, each of the small villages dotting these islands is a power unto itself, usually headed by a retired captain who runs the village with the same resolute iron hand that one would expect from a captain of brigands on the high sea.

The corsairs' main sources of income are smuggling, ship-building, and piracy. The third activity primarily affects shipping along the coast of the Free Cities, but many corsairs also range northward into the barbarian seas, in search of adventure as well as plunder. The corsairs are nomads of the ocean, and they practice what they preach: independence, self-reliance, and willingness to fight. They find state-sanctioned slavery abhorrent, due perhaps in part to fact that their main foes at sea are mamluk patrol craft.

While most settlements in the Corsair Domains are too small to qualify as cities, there is one exception: Hawa, the City of Chaos. That city is described in this chapter.

*Clothing of the North:* Fashion in northern Zakhara differs slightly from that found elsewhere. In Qudra, where mamluks reign, padded armor is a common sight. In the Free Cities, the influence of foreign visitors is clear. Instead of ankle-length pantaloons, men in the Free Cities often wear pants cut at the knee to reveal tall, cream-colored stockings. Turbans and keffiyehs are rare. Instead, men prefer fezzes, worn in a distinctive color for each city. Men may also don sashes in the same color. While these "city colors" are not a uniform worn by all males in the Free Cities, in general a man with a white fez and sash hails from far-flung Utaqa, while a fellow wearing purple hails from regal Muluk.

The men and women of the Corsair Domains typically wear light-weight cotton blouses and pantaloons, with supple black boots. Veiling for either sex is a matter of personal taste and protection from the elements rather than any moral predisposition. Personal weaponry is commonplace. Even the youngest corsair lad wears a dirk, and even the most lithe young dancer may have a knife tucked away.

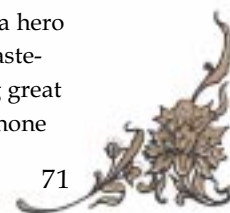
## Hafayah, City of Secrets

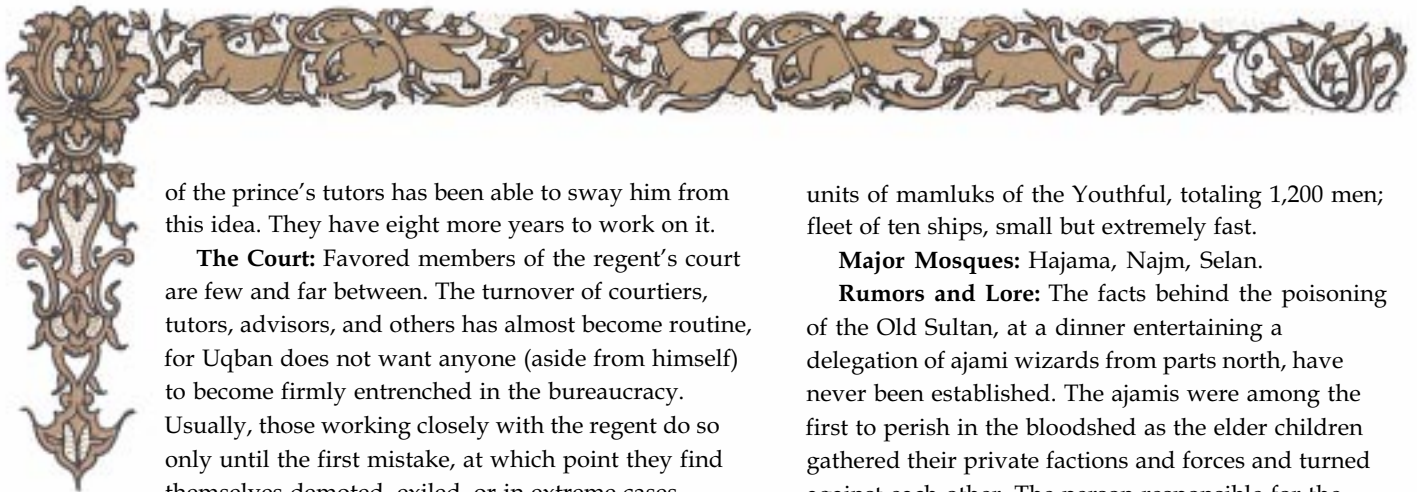
This Free City draws its water from the river Al-Kufr, upon whose banks it is built. No tourist's paradise, Hafayah is a dark, somber place whose residents favor black in their dress and their architecture. A recent bloody coup and the ongoing machinations of rival factions have left Hafaya's citizens suspicious and seemingly joyless toward strangers.

**The Ruler:** Prince Saba is the legitimate ruler of Hafayah, soon to be its sultan. Since he is only 8, the "gnome in power" is the Most Holy Regent Uqban min Najm (gmP/e/9), who is the prince's advisor as well as his guardian and protector. Prince Saba's short life has been marked by tragedies in "three's." Three years ago, the boy became the sole surviving son of the former sultan, who was poisoned. A bloody and futile coup erupted upon his father's death. The prince had three elder brothers and two elder sisters, all of whom perished during the factional bloodshed, which lasted three weeks. Fearing the worst, Father Uqban, a priest of Najm, had wisely spirited little Prince Saba away to safety. When the other heirs were dead, and word began circulating that a fleet from Qudra was approaching to "restore order," the priest returned to Hafayah with his ward. Persuaded by the threat of a lopsided battle and a cry of public support for the prince, the surviving factional leaders recognized Prince Saba as heir to the throne, and recognized the gnomish priest as the boy's regent and vizier.

Uqban has proved a cagey and wise ruler, though he spends most of his time turning one potential group of troublemakers against another. His information-gathering service is first class, aided by the churches, who prefer that their followers refrain from killing each other over temporal power. Uqban is also aided by wealth, for the upper regions of the terrible Al-Haul River have provided a wealth of agates and other semiprecious stones.

Prince Saba is just eight years away from his majority and the throne. At the moment, he does not want to be sultan. He wants to be a desert rider, a hero of the old tales who blazes a legend across the wastelands, freeing people from tyranny and defeating great monsters. His guardian is distressed by this, but none





of the prince's tutors has been able to sway him from this idea. They have eight more years to work on it.

**The Court:** Favored members of the regent's court are few and far between. The turnover of courtiers, tutors, advisors, and others has almost become routine, for Uqban does not want anyone (aside from himself) to become firmly entrenched in the bureaucracy. Usually, those working closely with the regent do so only until the first mistake, at which point they find themselves demoted, exiled, or in extreme cases, arrested.

The exception to this general rule is the regent's chief scribe, a female gnoll named Jamalia. A descendent of a tribe of desert gnolls, she has been loyal to Uqban since his days as a rector in the faith of Najm. Uqban grants her the run of the palace. Those seeking the ear of the regent or heir often try to cultivate Jamalia. While she appears simple, open, and honest, she is as cunning as her master, and often works with the gnome to set one party against another.

**Population:** 120,000.

**Features of the City:** Hafaya's official color is black, both in clothing, tilework, and architecture. The rich mud of the Al-Haul River bakes dark, and the granite stonework gives the city an oppressive, sinister feeling.

That sinister feeling extends to the people as well. Not enough time has passed since the internal combat following the old sultan's death, and all remember "the Time when the Streets Bled." Intense loyalties are hidden beneath subterfuge, and no one is sure if a comrade would come to his or her aid in time of need. Suspicious and somber, the citizens of Hafaya give out information sparingly. The proximity of the rival city Qadib—stuffed with genies, sha'irs, and members of the Brotherhood of the True Flame—makes the people of Hafaya even more suspicious.

Hafaya is known for its wealth of semiprecious stones, which are harvested from the riverbanks. Most are exported for sale elsewhere. Allegedly, precious stones have also been found, and are in the possession of Uqban min Najm.

**Major Products:** Clothing, rice, agates and other semiprecious stones.

**Armed Forces:** 5,000 infantry; 1,200 cavalry; three units of mercenary barbarians, totaling 1,800 men; two

units of mamluks of the Youthful, totaling 1,200 men; fleet of ten ships, small but extremely fast.

**Major Mosques:** Hajama, Najm, Selan.

**Rumors and Lore:** The facts behind the poisoning of the Old Sultan, at a dinner entertaining a delegation of ajami wizards from parts north, have never been established. The ajamis were among the first to perish in the bloodshed as the elder children gathered their private factions and forces and turned against each other. The person responsible for the sultan's poisoning has never been identified.

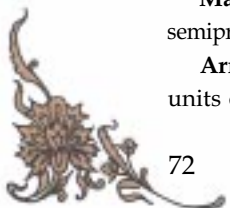
Prince Saba is the surviving direct heir, but some of his brothers had children. Any of these cousins would be willing to take the reins should the prince perish as mysteriously as his father. Uqban is aware of this danger, and he has headed off a number of earlier attempts. In such matters, the priest prefers to work with adventurers who are not tied to the city, especially loners who have few loyalties. The priest can easily deny their actions, or, if need be, dispose of them.

## Hawa, City of Chaos

**H**awa is the only sizeable settlement among the Corsair Domains. Seamen who have never seen Hawa know its reputation for chaos, given the pirating bent of its inhabitants. The people of Hawa have also dubbed it the City of Stilts, for nearly half its buildings are built directly over the water.

**The Ruler:** Currently, no single man or woman rules Hawa. Occasionally, a self-proclaimed "pirate king" has achieved power, ruling for a handful of years—which is as long as he can bully or bribe the city's council, the city's only stable governing body. Years ago, Hawa was ruled by a pirate queen, whose reign outlasted that of those who have succeeded her. According to rumor, the council arranged her unlikely death: she drowned.

**The Court:** Hawa is ruled by a council of the most powerful corsair leaders, some of whom have retired from life at sea. Active corsairs with a seat on the council aid in policy decisions only when they are in port, and their concerns are primarily along the lines of protection rackets and treasure splits. Retired corsairs (who have sprouted land legs) run bars and inns on Hawa, or own ship-building and repair





facilities. Some also manage protection rackets. The concern of these “retirees” is keeping Hawa afloat both financially and militarily. They have been very successful against the slave-troops to the south, chiefly because the land-bound slaves have no love of water. Important members of the council include the following:

- Jayani al-Jasir (hff/c/14) is one of the legendary figures of the islands. She controls much of the tavern-trade in Hawa, and any shops which she herself does not own must pay a small gratuity for permission to exist. Jayani is allegedly in her nineties, though except for a graying at the temples, she does not show her age. Most people assume she guards her looks with some form of magical enhancement.

During her years at sea, Jayani raided up and down the Free Coast. For a decade she worked out of a pirate base on the back of a great zaratan (a sea-turtle as big as an island). Then an attack by Qudra’s mamluks spooked the creature and dragged her base to the bottom. Her hatred for the slave-soldiers and their minions knows no bounds, and foes who seek to infiltrate Hawa had best know that every tavern has Jayani’s spies.

- Grima al-Auni minKor (hill giant mP/e/8) is a priest of Kor, trained in the City of Delights and dispatched to the city of Liham. He never reached that city, however, for corsairs under the command of Jayani captured the hill giant en route.

Grima soon found his “true” calling by bringing enlightenment to the corsair peoples. His main concern is protecting the children of the oft-violent corsair society. He hopes that these youngsters-the next generation of corsairs-will unite Hawa with the enlightened world, making it a respected city-state. (He encourages them to focus their efforts on the unenlightened.) Grima has been fairly successful and convincing in the past decade, owing primarily to his soft and resonant voice, calm and thoughtful manner, and a right hook that can smash through a ship’s hull,

- Akura al-Hiyali (hmW/sh/15) is an active corsair captain. His upbringing and abilities are not those of a warrior, yet he has become one of the most successful pirates on the coast by using his training as a sha’ir. A water gen serves as his familiar. He is said to have no genie under his control at present, but in his time,

Akura has summoned more than a few of these elemental creatures to wreak havoc upon his enemies. He is aggressive and bold-as likely to attack another corsair as any merchant vessel. He fancies himself the next pirate king, and claims his legend will exceed that of Jayani. The illustrious Jayani, of course, disagrees, and the two battle constantly, both in council and through their followers on the streets of Hawa.

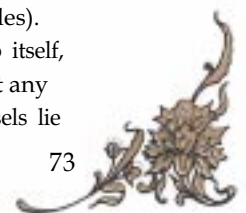
**Population:** 50,000 (?). Bad weather as well as drives by the mamluks cause wide swings in Hawa’s population. Most inhabitants have outlying holdings to which they flee during emergencies.

**Features of the City:** Hawa is a sprawling city built out over small islets of Chaos Bay. Half the city is on stilts. The bay is littered with coral reefs, making navigation for outsiders nearly impossible. Even seasoned sailors have difficulty, for sea-elf magicians regularly move the razor-sharp tropical growths through their wizardry. The city proper is a hodgepodge of different buildings. Often one structure is built upon the rubble of the previous one, so rumors of sunken and flooded treasure chambers abound. Beyond the city walls are the retreats of many retired corsair captains, each controlling a small, well-fortified (and often well-concealed) refuge.

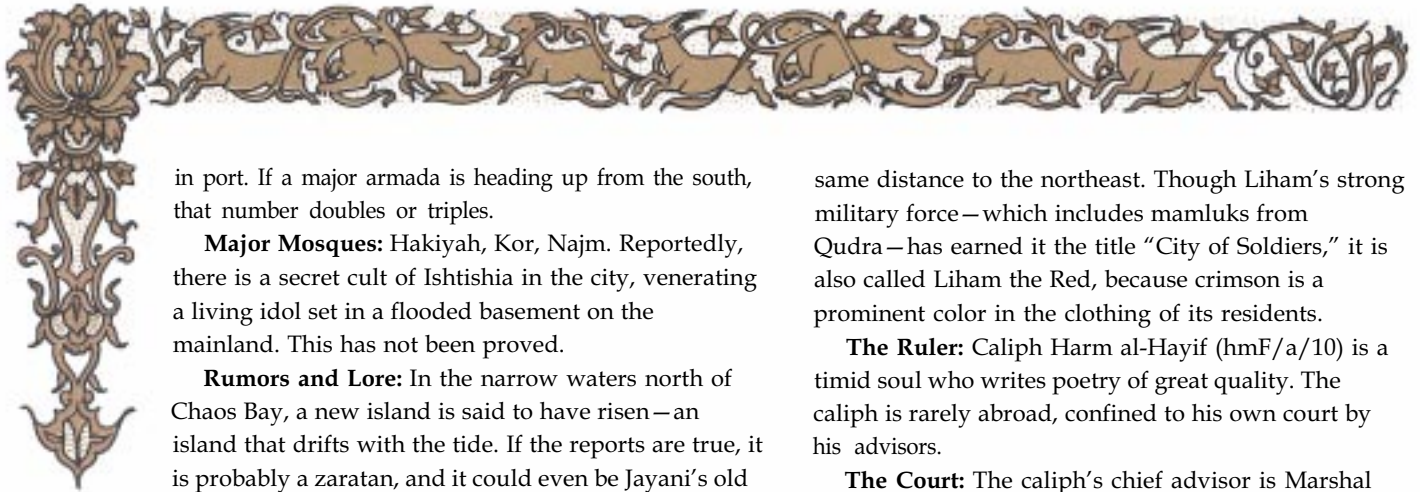
The people of Hawa are independent, self-reliant, and dangerous, much like those of the Free City of Utaqa, with whom they have good relations. In fact, many residents of Hawa have blood relatives in Utaqa, and vice versa. The people of Hawa welcome newcomers, but they are not so foolish as to trust them: Strangers who cross a man or woman of Hawa have a price to pay, for once betrayed, Hawa’s citizens are as savage as any native of the Crowded Sea, doggedly seeking revenge.

**Major Products:** Trade, smuggling, piracy.

**Armed Forces:** 2,000-man city guard; 15-ship navy, comprising ships of retired captains sold to the city. Those numbers are misleading, however. Every landholder has his or her own personal guard, ranging from a few leg-breakers to a small army. During an invasion, half the city of Hawa will be up in arms (while the other half heads for the hills with the valuables). Further, each corsair crew is a fighting force unto itself, and nearly all would battle to protect the city. At any given time, 20 or more pirate and smuggling vessels lie







in port. If a major armada is heading up from the south, that number doubles or triples.

**Major Mosques:** Hakiyah, Kor, Najm. Reportedly, there is a secret cult of Ishtishia in the city, venerating a living idol set in a flooded basement on the mainland. This has not been proved.

**Rumors and Lore:** In the narrow waters north of Chaos Bay, a new island is said to have risen—an island that drifts with the tide. If the reports are true, it is probably a zaratan, and it could even be Jayani's old base. That base sunk with great treasure aboard, and the riches may well have survived. Akura has brazenly staked his claim to the island, but only the one who locates it first will gain it.

## Liham, City of Soldiers

Located where the Al-Sari River spills into the Great Sea, Liham is the southernmost point in the lineup of Free Cities. Following the coast, a sailor would journey about 200 miles to the southwest to reach Qudra. The Free City of Umara lies about the

same distance to the northeast. Though Liham's strong military force—which includes mamluks from Qudra—has earned it the title "City of Soldiers," it is also called Liham the Red, because crimson is a prominent color in the clothing of its residents.

**The Ruler:** Caliph Harm al-Hayif (hmF/a/10) is a timid soul who writes poetry of great quality. The caliph is rarely abroad, confined to his own court by his advisors.

**The Court:** The caliph's chief advisor is Marshal Imar Abd al-Amin (hmF/mk/12), a mamluk of the Faithful. Al-Amin's orders come directly from Qudra. Members of the Faithful serve as palace guards, insulating the caliph from external dangers.

**Population:** 120,000.)

**Features of the City:** Red is the unofficial color of Liham. Fashionable men wear red fezzes and, to a lesser extent, red turbans. Many also wear red sashes at the waist. The women of Qudra don a riot of red shades in their gowns, shirts, and pants, accented with black and white. As the residents mill through Liham's Grand Bazaar, they form a wavering, flickering red mass, after





which the bazaar has been dubbed Al-Mauqida, “the Hearth.”

Some folk have another name for this city: Liham the Lapdog. Because of its proximity to Qudra, Liham is closely scrutinized by the powerful mamluks. It is said that Liham’s caliph won’t even comment on the weather without first checking with Qudra’s emir. Qudra’s mamluks maintain a strong presence in Liham; units of the Valiant, the Dutiful, and the Faithful regularly visit the city. While this adds to Liham’s protection, it also severely limits its autonomy.

**Major Products:** Trade, pottery, coffee.

**Armed Forces:** 6,000 foot soldiers; 600 cavalry; detachments of mamluk units from Qudra—typically three units of 200 mamluks each, more in times of crisis; mamluk palace guard, representing the Dutiful. (The city has no native mamluk or mercenary organizations.) Seafaring forces include a three-ship coastal navy.

**Major Mosques:** Hajama, Kor, Najm, Vataqatal.

**Rumors and Lore:** Two rumors are regularly afloat in the City of Soldiers. Both concern its relationship with Qudra. According to the first rumor, Qudra’s mamluks will soon drop all pretense and take full control, deposing Liham’s timid caliph and creating a rulership of slave-soldiers in his stead. Then Liham would serve as Qudra’s forward base in dealing with other Free Cities and the hill tribes. Only the combined might of the Free Cities, and, surprisingly, the popularity of Al-Hayif’s poetry in the court of the Grand Caliph, prevent this from occurring.

The second rumor that appears regularly is as follows: The people of Liham—with the support of Umara, Utaqa, and factions from other cities—will rise up and overthrow the present government and cast out the mamluks. Such an uprising is not likely, considering the profitable trade that Liham has with its larger neighbor to the south. But the rumor has gained new life with talk of a leader who claims to be the unrecognized son of Liham’s caliph. This mysterious son is allegedly hidden away, much as the father, waiting for the uprising. The mamluks in general, and Marshal al-Amin in particular, are interested in locating this missing prince before such an event might occur.

## Muluk, City of Kings

This Free City takes its name from the long, unbroken line of rulers whose history predates the Enlightened Throne. It is also known for its unusually regal purple dyes, produced from local indigo plants. Centrally located at the mouth of the river Al-Zalim, Muluk is flanked by Umara to the south and Qadib to the north.

**The Ruler:** At the helm of this city is Caliph Aswiyah al-Muftahir (hfF/a/15), eldest daughter of her father, from whom she inherited her position. Her family has ruled Muluk for nearly a millennium, or so they claim. Aswiyah (who prefers the title “caliph” to the more traditional and feminine “calipha”) has all the craft and canniness of her predecessors, male and female. She is a consummate politician. During her reign she has successfully allied alongside and against each of the other Free Cities in turn, always for the good of Muluk.

**The Court:** The caliph is grooming her daughter, Princess Hadra bint Aswiyah (hfW/sh/B), to ascend the throne in the event of her death. A sha’ir, the princess holds the rank of Sorcerer-General within Muluk’s army, and she has led attacks against both Qadib and Umara. Hadra’s generalship was in part the reason for the palace revolution in Umara.

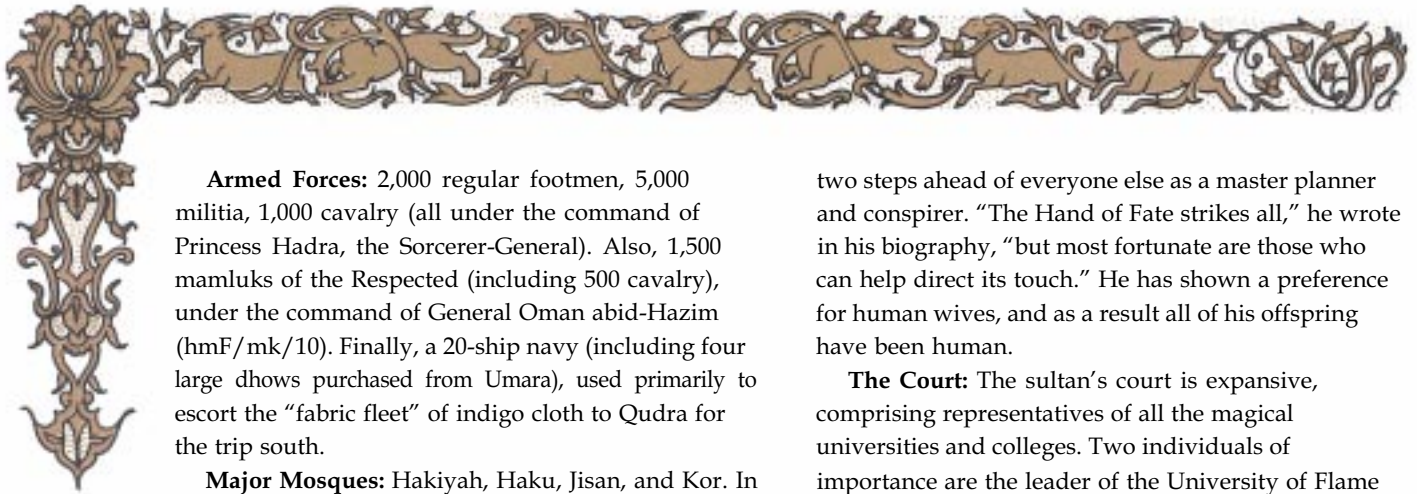
**Population:** 90,000.

**Features of the City:** Indigo grows in abundance along the shores of the Zalim river. The purple dye produced by Muluk’s craftsmen is unmatched throughout Zakhara as well as the barbarian nations of the North. By fiat of the Grand Caliph of Huzuz, all citizens of Muluk may wear this shade freely; as such, purple is the official color of the City of Kings.

The people of Muluk are proud of their city’s history and noble tradition. They tend to look down their noses at the citizens of other cities, and always expect the finest wine, the best seats, and the most comfortable conveyance. To say that they are effete snobs would be an insult to their long tradition of civilization and enlightened rule, but it would not be far off the mark. Truly it may be said that Muluk has better leaders than it deserves.

**Major Products:** Trade, indigo dye, purple cloth and clothing.





**Armed Forces:** 2,000 regular footmen, 5,000 militia, 1,000 cavalry (all under the command of Princess Hadra, the Sorcerer-General). Also, 1,500 mamluks of the Respected (including 500 cavalry), under the command of General Oman abid-Hazim (hmF/mk/10). Finally, a 20-ship navy (including four large dhows purchased from Umara), used primarily to escort the “fabric fleet” of indigo cloth to Qudra for the trip south.

**Major Mosques:** Hakiyah, Haku, Jisan, and Kor. In addition, a monument of Aswar al-Mutiq attracts the attention of kahins and mystics as a holy site.

**Rumors and Lore:** Muluk was a well-developed trading city long before the coming of the Law of the Loregiver and the creation of the Enlightened Throne. As city after city fell before the wave of faith and understanding, many of the older emirs and sultans were toppled by their people. Caliph Aswar al-Mutiq heard the tales and was troubled, and when the first mystics and warriors brought enlightenment to his city, he asked for a private audience. For five days and five nights the messengers met with the caliph in his private quarters, telling him of the Law of the Loregiver. Then the caliph deliberated by himself for five more days. At the end of this time, he welcomed the Law into his city, recognized the Grand Caliph for his puissant wisdom, and stepped down, joining the messengers to spread the Law still further. His eldest child succeeded him as was custom, and since then, Muluk has remained the oldest continual dynasty in the Free Cities.

## Qadib, City of Wands

A visit to this northerly city on the river Al-Haul can be magical, for Qadib is home to more sorcerers, elemental mages, and sha’irs than any other locale in northern Zakhara. In the entire Land of Fate, only Huzuz and Rog’osto boast more residents of a magical bent.

**The Ruler:** Sultan Kamal al-Hadi (hemW/sh/15) is an ancient, skeletal half-elf who has outlived several wives, his children and grandchildren, and is likely to outlive his great-grandchildren as well. His slowness in movement and speech conceals a mind that is still among the greatest in the Free Cities, and he is usually

two steps ahead of everyone else as a master planner and conspirer. “The Hand of Fate strikes all,” he wrote in his biography, “but most fortunate are those who can help direct its touch.” He has shown a preference for human wives, and as a result all of his offspring have been human.

**The Court:** The sultan’s court is expansive, comprising representatives of all the magical universities and colleges. Two individuals of importance are the leader of the University of Flame Mages, Badiyah al-Sa’id al-Sahim (efW/fm/10), who is reportedly a secret member of the Brotherhood of the True Flame, and Prince Anir al-Walad al-Hadi (hmF/f/12), the current heir apparent to the sultan’s court. The prince is decidedly nonmagical in attitude, preferring to hunt and hawk rather than attending affairs of magic. The court believes that Sultan Kamal will (or must) live long enough to bring a more suitable heir into the picture.

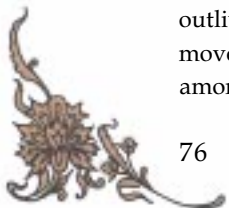
The sultan’s court also hosts a large number of genies, in particular jann, who are owned or hired by the sultan’s family. These jann often serve as the sultan’s eyes and ears in the outside world.

**Population:** 50,000.

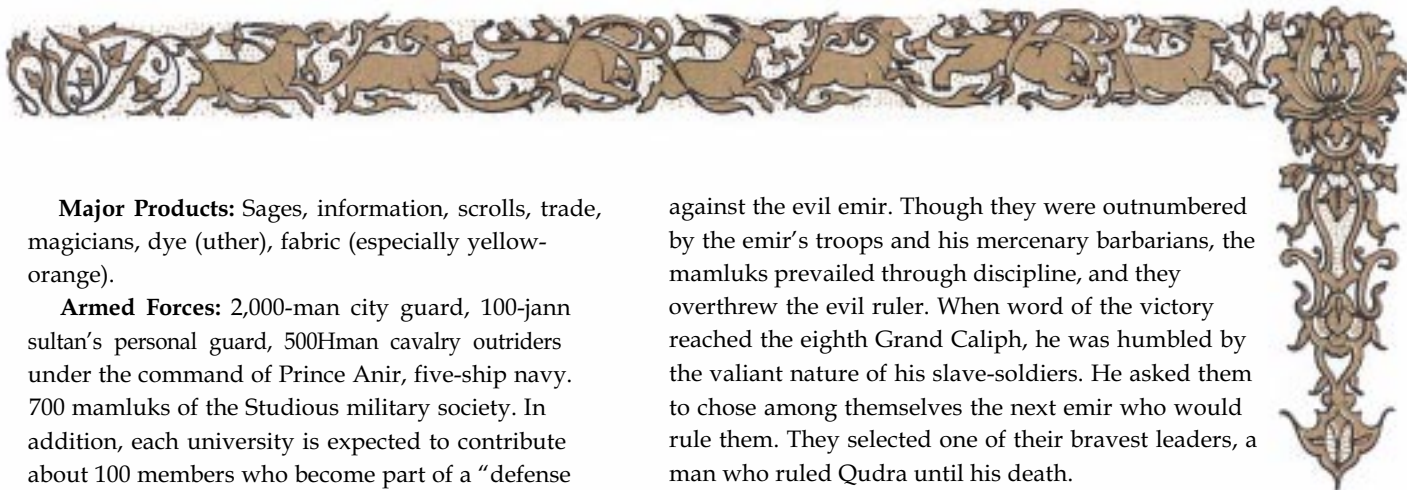
**Features of the City:** As noted, Qadib is a city of sorcerers, elemental mages, and sha’irs. It is also a city known for its universities, for which it is often called the City of Sages. Qadib’s universities are dedicated not only to each of the elemental-provinces but also to legends, alchemy, astrology, divination, optics, algebra, and all the arts of civilized people.

This city has a third distinction as well: its dye-makers produce and export a fiery yellow-orange pigment called Uther, which residents use to dye fabric, especially felt. In the city streets, natives can be identified by their yellow fezzes and golden robes.

In general, the natives of Qadib are intelligent, conversational, and well-informed, as one would expect in a center of learning. They may be too much so, however, for a Qadibi rarely uses one word when seven are possible. Quite often, even simple questions spur great debates in the streets. The people of Qadib are also noted for presenting their own opinions as stated facts. There is a saying on the northern coast: “If you want answers, seek them in Qadib. If you want truth, seek it elsewhere.”







**Major Products:** Sages, information, scrolls, trade, magicians, dye (uther), fabric (especially yellow-orange).

**Armed Forces:** 2,000-man city guard, 100-jann sultan's personal guard, 500Hman cavalry outriders under the command of Prince Anir, five-ship navy. 700 mamluks of the Studious military society. In addition, each university is expected to contribute about 100 members who become part of a "defense force." While schools of optics and algebra might provide 100 pikemen, the magical schools will provide about 100 low-level mages led by a tutor of 5th to 9th level, making it a very potent force.

**Major Mosques:** Kor, Zann.

**Rumors and Lore:** Legends of forgotten magics and mysterious artifacts are common trade in the City of Wands. Reportedly, catacombs and caverns snake through the ground beneath the city, and it was in these passages that the first mages met to teach their students before the Enlightenment. The catacombs are said to run for miles, to connect with every major building (including the sultan's palace), to have gateways and wells leading to far places beyond the Land of Fate, and to be inhabited by savage monsters.

## Qudra, City of Power

Overlooking the Great Sea about 300 miles northwest of Hiya, Qudra is Zakhara's bastion against the uncivilized realms beyond. The city's defenses have been built over the course of centuries in response to pirate raids and barbarian incursions. Today Qudra is the best-fortified city in enlightened Zakhara, presenting a stem gray face to the north.

**The Ruler:** Emir Hatit Abd al-Wajib (dmF/mk/20). Long ago, in the time of the eighth Grand Caliph, an evil and dissolute man was appointed emir of the City of Power. He oppressed his own people and overran Zakhara's northern cities, taxing them unjustly until they rebelled. He forwarded only a pittance of the moneys he gathered to the Grand Caliph, sending instead honeyed words of loyalty and trust. At last he planned to march south and take control of Huzuz and the entire Land of Fate.

It was at this time that the mamluks in his charge, who had sworn loyalty to the Grand Caliph, rebelled

against the evil emir. Though they were outnumbered by the emir's troops and his mercenary barbarians, the mamluks prevailed through discipline, and they overthrew the evil ruler. When word of the victory reached the eighth Grand Caliph, he was humbled by the valiant nature of his slave-soldiers. He asked them to choose among themselves the next emir who would rule them. They selected one of their bravest leaders, a man who ruled Qudra until his death.

A tradition was born, and so it continues today. Each of Qudra's emirs has been chosen by the generals of the city's mamluk units. Hatit, slave to duty, is the most recent of these mamluk-emirs. The term of the office is life or 20 years, whichever comes first. Hatit has ruled 13 years thus far.

A clean-shaven dwarf, Hatit wears the tattoos of his mamluk organization, the Dutiful, on his cheeks and forehead. He is a master of fortification and redoubts, a rarity in a land that boasts little in the way of siege machinery. He has spent much of his tenure examining and shoring up the walls of Qudra, looking for holes in her armor. He is particularly interested in the warfare of other lands, especially lands to the north, from which any major barbarian attack would probably come.

**The Court:** The court of Qudra is a military council comprising all the major mamluk organizations. Each organization sends its own representative to the council. Emir Hatit is expected to confer with them on all matters of importance, and inform them of all military matters. All mamluk organizations of greater than 200 men are represented here, some 40 in all. Only mamluks may serve on the counsel, though each of the chamber members has his or her own advisors.

Emir Hatit presides over the council. Other members include the following:

- General Ekuriyah Abd al-Wajid (hfF/mk/14) represents the Dutiful in chambers. Hatit's protege and a capable officer, Ekuriyah is viewed as the most likely choice as the next emir. However, she herself doubts the wisdom of such a choice, concerned that she lacks her dwarven mentor's eye for detail. (She has not yet seen anyone else who she feels is worthy to replace Hatit, though.) In purely social situations, Ekuriyah is shy and reserved. As a leader, she has exceeded all of



Hatit's expectations. She personally heads recruiting drives into the Furrowed Mountains.

• General Adun Abd al-Amin (hmF/mk/18) represents the Faithful in chambers. An older, more experienced soldier, General Adun sought the personal glory of the emirate 13 years ago, even to the point of canvassing other members and reminding them of his military triumphs against the corsairs, the hill tribes, and the rebellious Free City of Utaqa. Such bragging not only gained him the effects of the evil eye, but also caused the council to pass over him for Hatit. The anger in his heart from the slight has never died, and he is continually looking for flaws in both the emir's and General Ekuriyah's behavior.

• General Okin Abd al-Talib'ilm (emF/mk/16) represents the Studious in chambers. This venerable elf was crippled in battle almost a century ago. Though his wounds eventually healed, the spirit went out of him as a warrior. He soon found his place among the researchers and battle tacticians of Qudra. He has become among the best of his profession, able to combine textbook tactics with hands-on experience. Okin speaks slowly, pausing oddly in the middle of his sentences, but when he speaks, all (including Hatib) stop to listen. A staunch Zannite, General Okin is the only member of the chambers who does not worship Vataqatal.

• General Kalin Abd al-Bas (hfF/mk/14) represents the Valiant in chambers. Kalin is the youngest member of the council, and she engenders great support from the younger members of all the mamluk societies. Many years ago, one of the Valiant's greatest warriors, Abyad Abd al-Bas, was marked by a natural streak of white in his hair. Kalin's hair has a similar streak, just as she shares that famous warrior's natural power. Her attempts to cultivate her position as heir to a legend, however, are undercut by her excitable nature and fiery temper. Many of the battles in which she carried the day were needless, inspired only by her own poor planning.

• Admiral Dus Abd al-Dawwar (gbmF/mk/5) represents the Wanderers in chambers. This goblin is the only naval representative in the council. He feels hamstrung and frustrated, for although Qudra's fleet is the largest of any Zakhara city's, it is only powerful on paper. Most of the ships have been badly maintained, and only about half would be suitable for fleet action

against the corsairs. Of course, current military thinking is defensive for the most part, with the fleets to be used only to transport warriors to battle along the Free Coast. While he is in port, Admiral Dus spends many sullen hours in tobacco houses and cafes. When the anchor is weighed, he regains his true nature: quick, alert, and crafty in naval combat. Unfortunately, he spends only one month a year at sea, when his fleet escorts Zakhara craft past the Corsair Domains.

• Colonel Akir Abd al-Himaya (hmF/mk/10) represents the Defenders in chambers. ALHimaya is in charge of defending the city against attack whenever the mamluk armies are abroad. In reality, his organizations act as a city guard as well as mediators, settling arguments between members of the other military societies. The colonel's position is slightly weaker than that of other mamluk leaders, so he must often trade favors (such as valiant assignments or secret information) in return for action on their part.

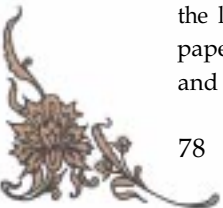
**Population:** 500,000.

**Features of the City:** Qudra is the greatest fortification in the land of Fate—a mass of gray, heavy, brooding, stone overlooking a deep-water harbor. The harbor itself is protected by a great chain pulled across its mouth. With few exceptions, the city lacks the graceful spires and domes typifying Zakhara architecture, as well as the ornate gilt and tilework. Instead, the city's builders borrowed techniques of other lands to produce the massive battlements that ring the city. Within the stalwart outer wall, smaller interior walls divide Qudra into defensive quarters. These interior walls have never been tested, since the great outer wall has never been breached.

The people of Qudra are by and large obedient, hard-working, and honest. Surprisingly, they are not warlike, for that role is taken up entirely by the mamluks. The mamluks are both slaves (owned ultimately by the Grand Caliph) and rulers of Qudra, and they form their own elite rank within the city population. The remainder of the population works hard to support its military organization.

Visitors to this great city should make note of the following sites:

• *City Walls.* A marvel of engineering, the walls of Qudra are carved out of granite from the Furrowed Mountains. The foundation was laid by order of the



first enlightened emir. The walls have been improved and strengthened by the mamluk rulers who followed him.

Today, the city's outer wall measures 40 feet high and 40 feet thick. The wall is not solid, however. Twenty feet from the exterior, a 15-foot-wide tunnel snakes through the center. The wall is breached by three gates, each leading south toward the mountains. Otherwise, the only gap in the wall occurs at the waterfront. The outer wall curves around to embrace and protect the harbor, ending on both sides with a 50-foot-high tower. The twin towers hold the great chains that seal the harbor from invasion.

Atop the wall, members of the mamluk guard patrol the battlements. A different unit is assigned this duty each month. Great cauldrons are positioned along the walls and over the gates. During an assault, the caldrons hold burning "oil of stars" (Greek fire), which the guards can pour upon assailants below.

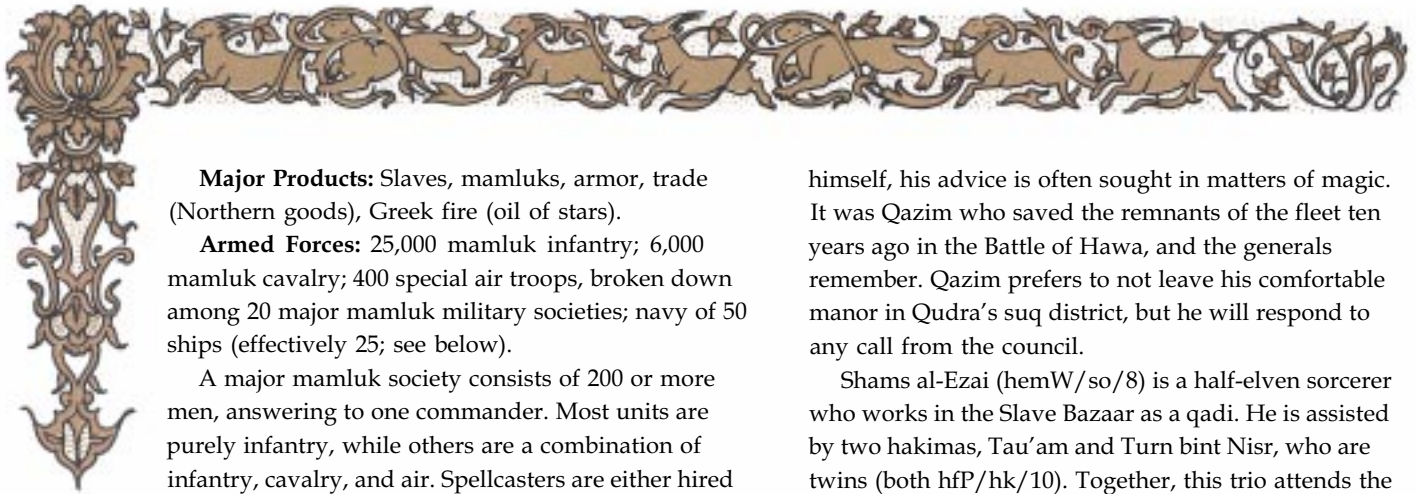
- *Slave Market.* Qudra's ruling mamluks enforce high standards in the authorized slave market. As a result, its slaves are of the highest quality, are not mistreated, and are usually capable and talented. Members of hill tribes are sold here along with northern barbarians, as are criminals who have been enslaved for breaking the Law of the Loregiver. An elvish wizard and two hakimas (see "Key Figures Outside the Court") have been appointed to oversee the market, ensuring that it operates in a reasonable, enlightened fashion.

- *Mosque of Blood.* Qudra is home to the greatest temple erected in the name of Vataqatal, a warrior-god venerated by many mamluks. The temple takes its name from its outward appearance; its rough-hewn sandstone walls are stained red with regular applications of henna, honoring the good men and women whose blood has been spilled in battle.

- *Open Mosque.* As a reward for the city's valiant mamluks, the eighth Grand Caliph sent many of Huzuz's finest architects and tileworkers to Qudra, where they erected a graceful mosque in the Zakharan tradition. This blue jewel stands in stark contrast to the brooding gray stone of the city's walls and other buildings. It is frequented by natives who do not venerate Vataqatal with the same fervor as the mamluks.







**Major Products:** Slaves, mamluks, armor, trade (Northern goods), Greek fire (oil of stars).

**Armed Forces:** 25,000 mamluk infantry; 6,000 mamluk cavalry; 400 special air troops, broken down among 20 major mamluk military societies; navy of 50 ships (effectively 25; see below).

A major mamluk society consists of 200 or more men, answering to one commander. Most units are purely infantry, while others are a combination of infantry, cavalry, and air. Spellcasters are either hired under long-term contracts or recruited from the priesthood of Vataqatal. In either case, they serve as support units for larger infantry formations. The idea of wizards amassed against enemy forces using magic has proved to be a military blunder.

Formally, all of Qudra's mamluks belong to the Grand Caliph, for they are slaves. They may not serve another ruler without the express permission of the Grand Caliph. Having received that permission in the past, Qudra's mamluks have entered into long-term service with a number of local rulers, who in turn serve the Grand Caliph.

Qudra's navy consists of 50 ships, but half of those are rotting at the docks, their sails and usable wood stripped for the other half. Morale is poor among the mamluk navy, as it has been since an aborted attempt to conquer the Corsair Domains a decade ago. The fleet attempted a direct assault against Hawa, City of Chaos, without sufficient magical support. Qudra's mamluk force was repelled with great losses. That display of weakness has not been forgotten by the members of the council, because it encouraged the city of Utaqa to rebel.

**Major Mosques:** The largest temple in the city is the Mosque of Blood, carved of red sandstone and coated regularly with henna. It is dedicated to Vataqatal, a local god. His church is approved by the Grand Caliph, and his worshippers venerate him much as followers of other gods venerate their own. (They have no unusual rituals or ceremonies.) Qudra also has an open mosque, described above.

**Key Figures Outside the Court:** Qazim al-Satir (hmW/wm/14) is the one wizard of whom it can be said, "He is good enough to be a slave" — and have it meant as a compliment. Members of the council hold Qazim in high regard. While he is not a member

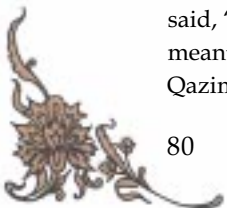
himself, his advice is often sought in matters of magic. It was Qazim who saved the remnants of the fleet ten years ago in the Battle of Hawa, and the generals remember. Qazim prefers to not leave his comfortable manor in Qudra's suq district, but he will respond to any call from the council.

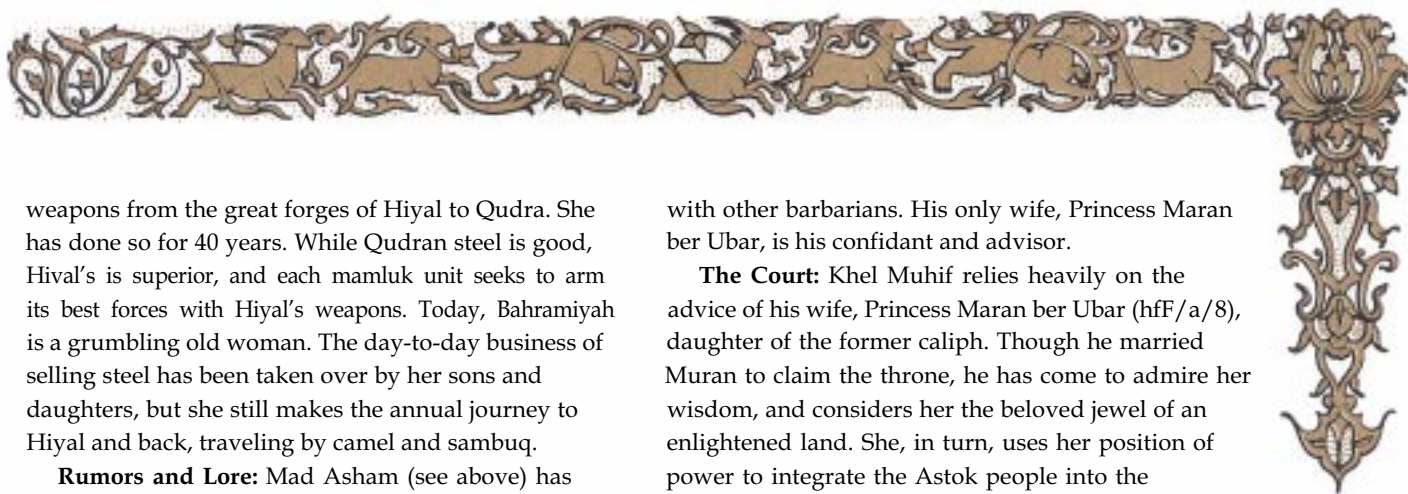
Shams al-Ezai (hemW/so/8) is a half-elven sorcerer who works in the Slave Bazaar as a qadi. He is assisted by two hakimias, Tau'am and Turn bint Nisr, who are twins (both hfP/hk/10). Together, this trio attends the public slave auctions, attempting to maintain the honest balance of trade—ensuring that would-be slaves are well-cared for, are not ensorcelled in any fashion, and are not free men or women captured against their will. (Obviously, the twins' powers of true sight are invaluable.) Shams enjoys his work. He rarely has to exert his power, however, since Qudra imposes many other tight controls on slave-trading. For this reason, Shams and the hakimias are the last line of defense for someone captured by raiders and sold into slavery in the city. He is a member of the magical reserve for the Studios, and could be called into active service in times of need.

Mad Asham (hmW/sh/10) is a curious character who wanders the streets of Qudra. Old soldiers remember him as a magical advisor to the Dauntless (a mamluk group). Decades ago, he and a raiding party disappeared while conducting a recruiting mission on the borders of the Haunted Lands: Six years later, he stumbled back into the city alone, his robes tattered and his mind wiped clean. No magical aid would rouse him from his babbling, and even the genies who agreed to examine him could not bring about a change.

Today, Mad Asham usually can be found in the suq district of Qudra, grabbing passersby and warning them of some grim fortune to come. The natives are accustomed to him, and kindhearted souls offer Asham food and a crude shelter when he needs it. Newcomers, however, may be surprised to find a ragged wizard grabbing them by the robes and speaking of "the Whispering Doom that comes from the Desert." Asham's madness appears permanent. Through the years, magical cures have proved useless against it, as have *wish* spells and all attempts at curse removal.

Another well-known figure, Bahramiyah al-Musafir hgFT/mr/15 oversees the great caravans that bring





weapons from the great forges of Hiyal to Qudra. She has done so for 40 years. While Qudran steel is good, Hival's is superior, and each mamluk unit seeks to arm its best forces with Hiyal's weapons. Today, Bahramiyah is a grumbling old woman. The day-to-day business of selling steel has been taken over by her sons and daughters, but she still makes the annual journey to Hiyal and back, traveling by camel and sambuq.

**Rumors and Lore:** Mad Asham (see above) has been babbling about his journey through the desert for decades. Most of Qudra's residents are immune to his cries about "the Whispering Doom" — even though this is the only aspect of his ranting that has remained consistent over the years. Some, however, believe that a kernel of truth lies beneath Asham's madness.

Further, rumors persist that over the past few years, increasingly fewer youths have been recruited from the Furrowed Mountains and the mountains bordering the High Desert. Qudra's mamluk rulers now must either go farther afield for their next generation of warriors or consider recruiting townspeople. The third choice, diminishing the size of the army, is considered to be no option at all.

## Umara, City of Knights

Situated on the mouth of the river Al-Yatir, about 170 miles northeast of Liham, Umara is a jewel of a coastal city, noted for its distinctive blue textiles and tilework. Though it appears peaceful today, its recent past is marked by the bloodshed of a barbarian incursion — an incursion which still lingers on the minds of those who dream of revenge.

**The Ruler:** Caliph Ubar khel Muhif, Khan of the Astok people (hmF/mb/12), is the former leader of a barbarian hill tribe. He was recently enlightened and enlisted in the service of Umara's former caliph. After a disastrous series of battles with the city of Muluk, Khel Muhif staged a palace revolution, deposed the old caliph, married the caliph's daughter, and re-established order before Qudra's troops arrived. Faced with the choice between a long siege and recognizing the coup, the mamluks hailed Khel Muhif as the new leader of Umara.

To the surprise of many, Khel Muhif has proved himself a capable ruler, though his court is still stocked

with other barbarians. His only wife, Princess Maran ber Ubar, is his confidant and advisor.

**The Court:** Khel Muhif relies heavily on the advice of his wife, Princess Maran ber Ubar (hfF/a/8), daughter of the former caliph. Though he married Muran to claim the throne, he has come to admire her wisdom, and considers her the beloved jewel of an enlightened land. She, in turn, uses her position of power to integrate the Astok people into the population and to preserve the rights of the former nobles and merchants in the city. She loves the Khan as he does her. Though her rights are in some ways diminished, she likes his people's customs of having a single wife and no permissible divorce.

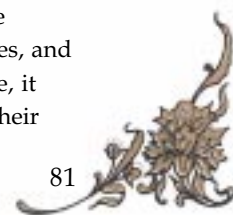
Opposing the princess is ur-Khan Mostok (hmF/mb/10), a faithful follower of Khan Ubar. (He never refers to his old friend as "caliph.") Mostok feels his leader has become soft, decadent, and perhaps even "bewitched" by the love of his wife. When the revolution came, Mostok expected a quick bit of looting and debauchery before fleeing back to the hills. Instead, his leader remained in Umara, and, out of loyalty, he stayed too. Mostok is as uncomfortable with the city people as they are with him. He distrusts them, and awaits the day Umara's citizens will turn on his kind. He suspects that the princess is part of some larger plot along these lines. If Mostok is to save his friend, he may have to remove her from the scene.

**Population:** 100,000.

**Features of the City:** Umara is noted for its blue dyes. Distinctive shades of cobalt and turquoise have become the unofficial city colors, bedecking tilework, clothing, and particularly the city's world-renowned carpets and textiles.

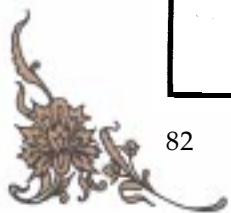
The native people of Umara are fairly typical of the coastal regions. The men are clean-shaven but keep their moustaches. The women, while unveiled, are modest in their dress and wear their hair in long, single braids that hang down their backs.

Today, mingling among these natives are the newly-enlightened people of Astok—for the tribesmen who successfully conquered the city later brought their families to the verdant coast. The barbarians are slightly larger and hairier than the coastal natives, and the men like to keep their full beards. Otherwise, it would be difficult to distinguish the Astoks by their





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appearance alone. The Astoks do have their own language, however, and speak Midani with a harsh, almost threatening accent. Most natives have grown accustomed to these invaders. But former political heavyweights-holy leaders, courtiers, wealthy merchants, and military personnel-are irritated that these sweating barbarians are not only among them, but are adapting quite well.

**Major Products:** Carpets, trade, clothing, tapestries, goats, goat cheese, dye.

**Armed Forces:** 3,000-man elite palace guard, all members of age of the Astok tribe; 2,000-man mercenary force, comprising other tribesmen, no unit larger than 400 men; four separate mamluk military societies of 500 men each; a 2,000-man local militia; a 600-man cavalry, officially disbanded; a six-ship navy, officially disbanded (formerly had ten ships, but four have been sold to the city of Muluk).

**Major Mosques:** Botu'Astok, Jisan, Kor, and Selan. Botu'Astok is a legendary figure worshipped by the Astoks, who claim he is the primogenitor of their people. The caliph has decreed that Botu'Astok must be worshipped in the mosque as other deities; as such, Botu'Astok is considered a common god. Apparently, Botu'Astok does not object to his new surroundings, for his priests continue to receive their spells. In fact, many Umaran natives have taken to Botu'Astok as a god representing change and rebirth, and they hope the installation of a new ruling family will bring about a favorable change in the city's fortunes.

**Rumors and Lore:** Officially, the former caliph was slain when Ubar took the throne. However, a local legend says that Princess Maran pleaded for her father's life. Touched by her sorrow, Ubar sent the man into exile in the far south by way of magic. Now the former caliph is said to be gathering his own force to challenge the man who captured his daughter and usurped his power.

Closer, to home, the forces of the entrenched bureaucracy (headed by Princess Maran) and the new invaders (championed by Ur-Khan Mostok) continue to vie over petty issues. While no blood has flowed since the coup (except that which is shed during tavern brawls), it is only a matter of time before one of the two must go.

## Utaqa, City of Free Men

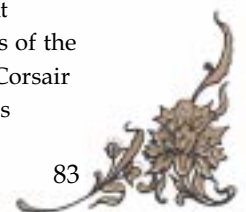
Located at the mouth of the river Al-Zulma, Utaqa is the northernmost point in the line of Free Cities stretching along the coast of the Great Sea. Its closest neighbor, Hafayah, lies nearly 200 miles to the southwest. Every citizen feels Utaqa's distance from civilization, for the city has a decidedly independent spirit.

**The Ruler:** Caliph Agara al-Gandar (hmT/mr/13) was a merchant with a thriving business and diluted blood-ties to the throne of Utaqa. During the most recent insurrection in the city, the previous caliph and his family were put to the sword by Qudran mamluks. The people of Qudra installed "Agara the Dandy" as their puppet, exerting their influence in Huzuz to receive the Grand Caliph's confirmation of their choice. Qudra had one goal: to provide a safe and fully compliant fortification at the opposite end of the Free Coast, bracketing the cities.

It has not worked out exactly as they planned. Al-Gandar quickly discovered that in order to get anything done in the city, he had to return to the citizens and merchants a measure of the autonomy they had previously known. As long as the people of Utaqa are allowed to do as they see fit, they are content. Huzuz has not interfered; as long as Utaqa continues to pay its respect and its taxes to the Grand Caliph, the Grand Caliphate is also content. Nor has Qudra interfered to date, for as long as Utaqa's caliph assures Qudra's emir that the northern tip of the empire is secure, the emir is also content. The only unhappy man in the entire situation seems to be Agara al-Gandar, who must balance the desires of these factions to retain his position. The lines on the caliph's face deepen with each passing month.

**The Court:** Caliph Agara al-Gandar is blessed with an overabundance of advisors and aides, most of whom have their own interests in keeping Agara on the throne. As a result, they will gladly bend the truth, lose paperwork, and deliver bribes and favors to keep the status quo. Here are three of those people:

- Chawus al-Rark (hmF/c/10) is a prominent merchant. He made his fortune among the wilds of the north, and he maintains it by dealing with the Corsair Domains. His arrangement with the corsairs is as





follows: he helps them smuggle goods, and in turn they leave the ships that fly Utaqa's colors alone—for the most part.

- On-Basi al-Garn (hmT/mr/12) is the court's chief scribe. He is responsible for the glowing descriptions of Caliph Agara that are sent to the courts of Qudra and Huzuz. His descriptions are often too glowing, however, because they result in additional demands being placed on Utaqa. On-Basi does try to control his tendency to embellish, but he is at heart a boaster and a tale-spinner. His most recent error: he reported Caliph Agara's victory over an incursion of yak-men. Eventually, this tale reached the ears of those evil creatures in the World Pillar Mountains. In response, the yak-men sent several angry dao to Agara's bedroom.

- Allena al-Ajami (hfW/aj/14) is the court's chief vizier. A foreigner from the distant North, she is apparently on the run from one or more powerful individuals in that region. Allena relates well to other outlanders, and problems concerning outsiders and mercenary barbarians usually fall into her lap. She supervises the coordination (and more importantly, the payment) of mercenary barbarians in Utaqa.

**Population:** 70,000.

**Features of the City:** More than any other city in the north, and perhaps even throughout the Land of Fate, Utaqa is a place on the edge of civilization. The combination of barbarian and enlightened views have produced a very independent attitude toward the world that is neither of Zakhara nor of the world outside. The city's people are basically honest and blunt, often to the point of seeming rude. They are pragmatic in that they recognize the need for some sort of government, so they feel they might as well make the most of it. All of the clergy in the major mosques are pragmatists, a rarity in the Land of Fate.

The Utaqans are also stridently opposed to slavery, in all its forms. In particular, they oppose the mamluks, whom Utaqans describe as "the tattooed attack dogs of oppression." Slaves brought into the city will be rescued (whether they want to be or not). Mamluks

are rarely found in the streets except as an occupying force. Visiting merchants who own slaves grant them temporary freedom while in Utaqa, paying them as employees until both leave the city, when they resume their relationship as master and slaves.

Utaqans see themselves as good and decent folk confronted with decadent authority and tyrannical rule. The city's official color is white, symbolizing their purity (to their detractors, it also symbolizes the color of surrender). Smuggling and similar acts are illegal only by declaration of a far-off power. "A man should be ruled by his own internal Law" is the unofficial Utaqan motto.

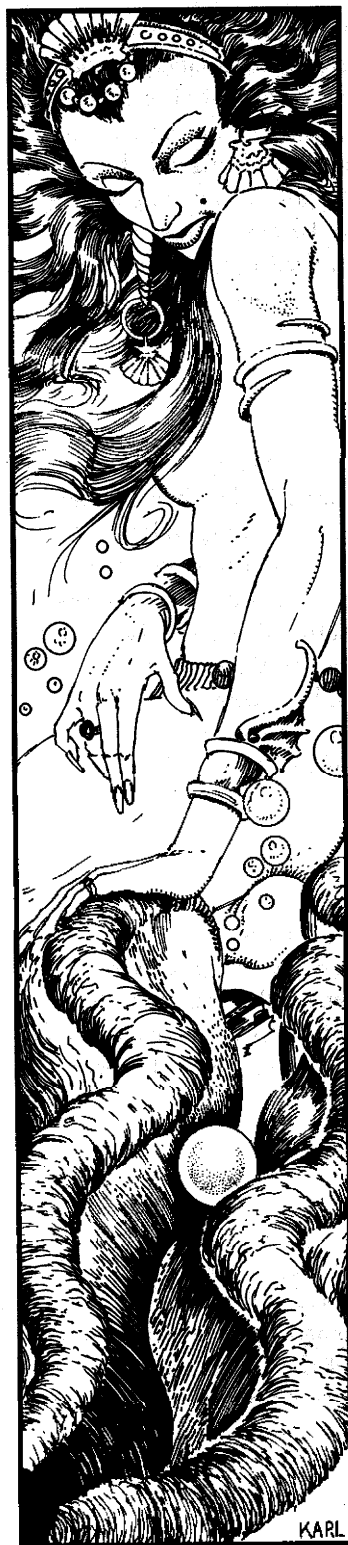
**Major Products:** Trade, smuggling, mercenaries.

**Armed Forces:** 4,000-man city guard; 30-ship navy; ten units (10,000 men) of mercenary barbarians who make Utaqa their home base, of which about half are present at any time. The city has a large mamluk fortification upstream on the Al-Kufr River, which houses three units of 900 trained men (2,600 total), representing the Studious, the Valiant, and the Dutiful. Ostensibly, these units are strategically positioned to aid the caliph in times of need. The real reason for their proximity: to capture the city if the Utaqans get out of hand.

**Major Mosques:** Hajama, Hakiyah, Haku, Najm. The city also boasts a number of temples devoted to savage (unenlightened) gods, and such temples are a rarity in the civilized world.

**Rumors and Lore:** Intrigue abounds in Utaqa, on a level which even rivals that of Hiyal. A regular crisis involves rumors from Hafayah, claiming that an inspector from Qudra is traveling incognito, looking for corruption and excess. From the viewpoint of mamluk-ruled Qudra, all of Utaqa is corrupt and excessive. But perhaps that's the only way the city can function. Top-heavy with outlanders and barbarians, a normal system of government would crumble here, as it has done in the past. The inspector on his or her way to Utaqa may not agree, however, and the sagacious heads of court are looking for him, hoping to shut his mouth with either gold or steel.





## Chapter 8

# Cities of The Pearl

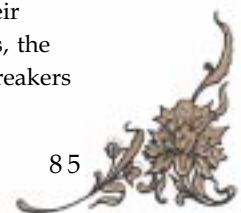
The Pearl Cities line a coast bordering the Crowded Sea and the western shores of the Golden Gulf, tucked between the cool, shimmering waves and the hot sands of the High Desert. These cities—Ajayib, Gana, Jumlat, Sikak, and Tajar—are among the wealthiest in the Land of Fate. Only Jumlat and Gana actually produce pearls, but all maintain a rich trade in these objects of beauty, as well as in frankincense, coffee, valuable metals, spices, fine fish, woods, and exotic wares from far-away lands.

Trade, in fact, is the second law of the people of the Pearl. Frequently it gives the true Law, that of the Loregiver, strong competition. Lending institutions and speculative ventures are common. So are usurious loans and unseen charges. A traveler in the lands of the Pearl should remember that nothing is truly free and heed this rule of conduct: Ask questions first, haggle second, and buy last.

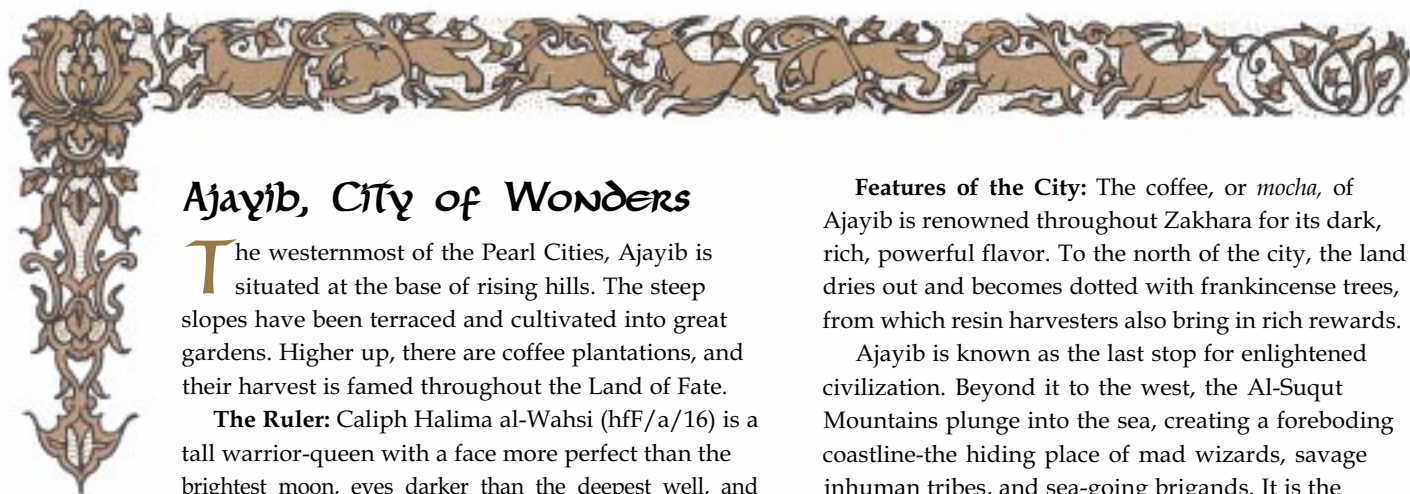
Some of the richest members of Zakharan society live in the Pearl Cities. Here too are some of the poorest. The wealth of the upper class would make a Free City's ruler jealous; their luxurious pavilions and palatial manors dot the surrounding countryside. At their feet are the beggars and exploited workers, who far outnumber the rich. Slavery *per se* is not common in the Pearl Cities, but it has been replaced with a form of economic tyranny that keeps the lower classes firmly in their place. As long as a person is not poor, life holds great promise. The impoverished have little to look forward to but another day of erasing old debts while incurring new ones.

The minority with control over the money flaunt their wealth, both in their manner and their dress. Wonderful feasts are thrown for minor reasons, with the remains distributed to the poor. Bright and often conflicting colors are common, in stripes and rich brocades.

As a group, the people of the Pearl Cities are proud, almost haughty, and easily insulted. They do not tell the full truth at all times, and rate with the genies in their cunning. All of this endears them not in the least to their moralist brethren across the Golden Gulf. In the eyes of the Pantheists, the gaudy peacocks of the Pearl Cities are little more than decadent law-breakers who have forgotten the nature and spirit of the Loregiver's Law.







## Ajayib, City of Wonders

The westernmost of the Pearl Cities, Ajayib is situated at the base of rising hills. The steep slopes have been terraced and cultivated into great gardens. Higher up, there are coffee plantations, and their harvest is famed throughout the Land of Fate.

**The Ruler:** Caliph Halima al-Wahsi (hff/a/16) is a tall warrior-queen with a face more perfect than the brightest moon, eyes darker than the deepest well, and a smile that, when given to a faithful follower, may set fabric on fire at fifty paces. Her long, thick hair hangs to the small of her back, and she wears it loose in court. In combat, she coils it into a tight, whiplike braid. Yet it is not by her beauty that she rules Ajayib, for her mind and her sword are quick and sure. Halima is active in the day-to-day rule of her city, and she takes all decisions (and all comments) personally. But Halima is a warrior at heart, not a statesman. She enjoys nothing better than to ride out and do battle against the savages of the Al-Suqut Mountains, putting off courtly bureaucracy for another day.

**The Court:** The two most important individuals in the caliph's court are a priest and a genie. The priest is Imam Mojos al-Yunqani min Selan (hemP/e/12). He is 40 years the caliph's senior, and often balances her passion and sense of adventure with a voice of relative reason. He would prefer that the caliph address matters of state as opposed to western savages. Imam Mojos keeps a careful eye on ambassadors from the other Pearl Cities, whom he considers a greater threat.

The genie is a noble dao, Zaheb al-Zidq, the Righteous One, His Most Respected Majesty and Puissant Hetman of the Mighty Khan. The dao is apparently smitten by the caliph's beauty. He is constantly at her side in court, composing bad doggerel and "protecting" her from the advances of other suitors. The caliph, in turn, treats the dao as a favorite pet. Given the natural tendency of dao toward humans, this is most unexpected, and it has been surmised that Zaheb is under some spell or charm. Whatever the true case, Zaheb is a combination of personal body guard, confidant, and enforcer. The caliph has no husbands, and Zaheb discourages all but the bravest of suitors.

**Population:** 70,000.

**Features of the City:** The coffee, or *mocha*, of Ajayib is renowned throughout Zakhara for its dark, rich, powerful flavor. To the north of the city, the land dries out and becomes dotted with frankincense trees, from which resin harvesters also bring in rich rewards.

Ajayib is known as the last stop for enlightened civilization. Beyond it to the west, the Al-Suqut Mountains plunge into the sea, creating a foreboding coastline-the hiding place of mad wizards, savage inhuman tribes, and sea-going brigands. It is the gathering spot of the bold and brazen: adventurers preparing voyages to the south and west, civilized men who are weary of civilization, sorcerers seeking solitude, and criminals on the run.

The people of Ajayib are proud of their frontier nature. They are independent, strong-willed, and opinionated. Rich colors are common in their dress, though herders, coffee growers, and resin-gatherers prefer a duller and more utilitarian costume. Women and men may be veiled or not; this is a matter of personal choice as opposed to a community standard.

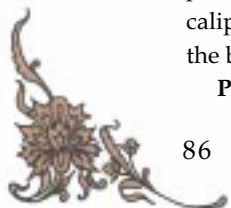
**Major Products:** Coffee, fruits, frankincense and other aromatic gums, bright dyes, trade.

**Armed Forces:** 8,000 city guards; 2,000 cavalry; an elite unit of 300 1st-level farisan under the command of the caliph herself; six-ship navy used against western raiders.

**Major Mosques:** Jisan, Hakiyah, Selan, Zann.

**Rumors and Lore:** Ajayib is where adventures begin and old legends come to die. It is the youngest of the Pearl Cities, having officially set up an enlightened mosque only a decade ago. The caliph is the second enlightened ruler of the city; the first perished in combat against the savages. Halima was one of her predecessor's best officers, and stepped in to replace him.

The local legends tell of another city which occupied this site in distant times, one built into the walls of cliffs overlooking Ajayib. This was said to be a dark and ruined place, looted and destroyed by civilized men generations ago. But, the legends say, the original survivors of this dark race still claw their way through the darkness, dreaming of revenge. The cliffs overlooking Ajayib are riddled with caverns and passages. No one has brought proof of the legends, though treasure-seekers still comb the cliffs for new discoveries.





## Gana, City Of Riches

Like Jumlat to the northeast, Gana is a true “City of the Pearl,” devoting five months each year to the pearl-fishing industry. Because this city also lies near the Realm of Bleeding Trees, its inhabitants can turn to the frankincense harvest when the pearling season has passed. Its people are generally wealthier than the residents of Jumlat. Even the lower classes of Gana are proud to call their home the City of Riches.

**The Ruler:** Sultan Yusef bin Ahmad al-Wadi (hmF/a/15) known as “Yusef the Just” for his wisdom in matters of the law. This venerable ruler encourages trade and industry in his city. He discourages power from concentrating in anyone else’s grasp for an extended period of time. As a result, talented individuals, adventurers, and merchants continually pass through his court, with few of them remaining there long.

**The Court:** The only permanent member of Al-Wadi’s court is his chief vizier, a human sea mage named Al’ia bint-Hazir (hfW/sem/16). She has served

at the sultan’s side for several decades. According to a well-known rumor, the sultan once proposed marriage to her, but she responded that she would rather serve at his side than at his feet. The sultan has never married, nor has he officially recognized any of the sons and daughters from his *harim* (a matter which many find disgraceful). Rumor also says that Al’ia has secretly borne Al-Wadi several sons over the years, and that she has spirited them away for training in far lands. Now as old and wizened as the sultan himself, Al’ia continues to rule at his side. She often advises compassion over harsh justice.

The position of chief judge has been held by a long series of people in short succession. Justice cannot be bought in Gana, but it can be rented for reasonable rates. As a result, when there is a scandal or outcry, the chief judge is quickly replaced (and banished). The smart judges serve about five years, then retire. The current chief judge is a dwarf named Ghaliyah bint Borga min Suq (dfP/h/10), Gala of the Marketplace. She has held her position for three years. While Ghaliyah can see the truth, she does not always speak it.



Finally, there is an honorary position within the court, awarded to those who complete the Great Task of the Pearl (see below). Such a position is usually temporary, lasting no more than a year, and may be surrendered voluntarily or upon the will of the sultan. A number of great heroes, male and female, have attached the sobriquet "Warrior of the Great Task" to their names, and served the sultan in this fashion.

**Population:** 100,000.

**Features of the City:** In addition to its successful pearl business, Gana is Zakhara's trade center for frankincense and other aromatic gums' that are harvested from the Realm of Bleeding Trees to the west. The wasteland in which the shrublike trees grow is good for little else. It is inhabited by herdsmen who bring the gum into Gana for trade.

Gana has a looser control over its pearl trade than Jumlat; its captains are more independent and its merchant class is larger. The quality of captains ranges from fair to average (instead of harsh to horrid, as in Jumlat). Most of Gana's captains practice the type of economic slavery that is common in Jumlat, but Gana also has a few progressive captains who practice more humane methods of pearl diving. There are even several cases in which Gana's captains have retained a sea mage to cast *airy water* around the divers, allowing them to remain beneath the surface for prolonged periods without ill effect.

Such regular use of magic is not cheap. As a result, the independent captains often break (or at least severely bend) the vow that keeps them out of the pearl beds seven months a year. Gana's ships and divers are sometimes caught by the sea elves and locathah that migrate into the pearl beds from the west. Such divers work at their own risk.

At the close of the pearl season, Gana holds a three-day celebration known as the Festival of the Pearl. This is the time when accounts are settled between the pearl divers and captains, and a great feast is distributed among the people by the sultan and the mosque officials. The celebration is marked by dancing in the street, skyrockets, and the occasional breaking of the Law (such as public insobriety or lewdness)—giving Gana a reputation as a wild city. Once the pearl season is officially over, a number of ships and their crews become available for hire to adventurers and merchants.

Still poor, most divers join such crews or migrate to harvest frankincense. A handful will have saved enough money to support themselves until the next pearl season. Very few will have saved enough to afford a small boat and become a captain themselves.

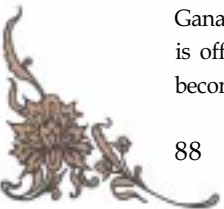
The end of the Festival of the Pearl marks the official beginning of an annual challenge or contest conducted by the sultan: the Great Task of the Pearl. The "task" is to bring some wonder or marvel from abroad to the city and present it to the sultan. Those interested have seven months to complete the task before the inauguration of the new pearl season. During this period, a number of adventurers and other wonder-workers pass through the court, bringing all manner of strange beasts, fantastic treasures, and mighty and unique magics. The chief judge verifies that the items are safe and secured before presentation. Whoever produces the most wonderful item is awarded with great treasures, magics, positions in courts, or favors from the sultan. (For example, one noted pirate gained a full pardon upon delivering the head of a sahuagin queen.) All other items become the property of the sultan, regardless of their value. (That's the price one pays for participating in the Great Task of the Pearl.)

**Major Products:** Pearls, trade, sea crafts (shells, buried treasure, and the like), aromatic gums, frankincense, myrrh.

**Armed Forces:** 5,000-man city guard; 2,000-man mercenary infantry; "official" navy of 30 ships, which protect the pearl-diving vessels in the banks; a supplemental rookery of five rocs with riders, which operate out of the mountains east of the city. The court of Gana has been accused of employing privateers and raiders to harass craft from Jumlat, but often such raids are the conducted by individual captains.

**Major Mosques:** Hajama, Hakiyah, Haku, Pantheon (a moralist faction), and Selan.

**Rumors and Lore:** Like Jumlat, Gana has recently been plagued by the sudden disappearances of divers and boats in the pearl banks—and these events have hampered the city's trade. Most residents believe that the "shark monster" described by divers from Jumlat is no more than a ruse, designed to drive Gana's ships from the area. The sultan of Gana has offered 50,000 gp and a ship to the adventurer who either destroys the creature or proves that it does not exist.







## Jumlat, City of Multitudes

Jumlat is one of the two “true” Pearl Cities, along with Gana, City of Riches. (Only these two actually have fleets that harvest the pearl beds, which are located between them.) While both cities thrive, Jumlat claims supremacy, for it has the greater population and gathers more pearls from the beds.

**The Ruler:** Jumlat is ruled by Sultan Kara al-Zalim, the Fierce Sword of the Sea (hmF/c/15). He is only the nephew of the previous sultan, yet he was chosen over the sultan’s own children as heir to the throne. This has proved to be a wise choice as far as the moneyed classes are concerned, for the current sultan has all the cunning and ruthlessness of his favorite uncle. Sultan al-Zalim cut his eye-teeth in raids against Gana’s fleets, and he has no love for the City of Riches. The sultan spends most of his time in his palace overlooking the harbor, and he is rarely found among his people.

**The Court:** There are two breeds of courtiers in the Sultan’s court: informers and merchants. The former is headed up by the sultan’s chief vizier, Agat amir-Doth (emW/so/15). This middle-aged elf has a taste for intrigue and a fondness for human maidens. Agat’s spies are everywhere, particularly among the poor. One of his favorite sports is to select a young woman and, through his power and ability, remove each member of her family in turn, at last taking her into the harim. Many merchant families know of his predilection, and give up their daughters rather than risk their own arrest and death. Veils are more common among women in Jumlat than in other Pearl Cities.

Of the merchants, the most powerful is Ragi al-Makruh (hmT/mr/19), a hulking and ill-mannered brute who has surprised everyone by not destroying his family’s business upon taking its reins. He has more money than brains and more brains than charm. He spends most of his time paying homage to the sultan and chief vizier in return for favors. Al-Makruh, through a set of corrupt money-lenders, controls most of the pearl fleet ships.

**Population:** 300,000.

**Features of the City:** The pearl harvest that distinguishes Jumlat lasts only five months each year. By decree of the sultan, in accordance with the nomadic sea peoples who live in the Golden Gulf, the

## Pearl Diving

Spring marks the onset of the pearling season in Zakhara. Hundreds of pearl boats dot the coastal waters between Gana and Jumlat. For five months, divers search the ocean floor for valuable pearl oysters. Summer brings a period of dead calm and intense heat to the area, making work difficult for everyone on deck.

Each pearl boat (typically a sambuq) carries a crew of about 50 men. Most divers are male. Only half the crewmembers actually dive. The other half, mostly boys, serve as attendants. Their job is vital; an attendant holds a rope to which the diver is tethered. If danger arises, the attendant must quickly haul the diver to the surface.

The divers themselves have little equipment. Each wears a wooden nose-clip, a finger-guard for dislodging oysters from the bed, and a small basket for collecting oysters (which usually hangs around his or her neck). A safety rope is tied around the diver’s waist. Otherwise, a male diver typically wears a loincloth. A female also dons a swath of wool that serves as a cropped shirt. When jellyfish and other stinging creatures pose a hazard, divers may opt for black woolen “bathing suits” that cover their bodies from head to toe. Gloves protect their hands, and eyeholes allow them to see.

Dives usually occur in water up to 90 feet deep, with an average depth of 30 feet. Nosebleeds are common. To descend swiftly in depths greater than 20 feet, each diver steps on a large stone, around which a rope has been tied (apart from the rope at the diver’s waist). When the diver reaches the seafloor, the attendant hauls up the stone.

A skilled diver remains on the seafloor for nearly three minutes before returning to the surface, signaling the desire for a swift ascent by tugging on the rope at his or her waist. In shallow water, some divers forgo the safety rope and simply dive from the surface. (Given the dangers that often lurk nearby, this may prove foolhardy.)

Diving is a harsh existence. The work begins at dawn on the docks, when each diver counts the previous day’s harvest and removes the pearls. The captain of the boat watches carefully and-after crediting the diver for a fraction of the pearls’ worth-claims all. Pearls that are large, luminous, faintly pink, and well formed have the greatest value. Only the rare black pearls of Zakhara may command a better price.

After the pearls have been counted, the boats depart. Divers have only coffee for breakfast, then begin their descents. Each man and woman may perform dozens of dives each day. Lunch is a handful of dates and a short break. At sunset, the boats return to port. The divers eat a meager evening meal, say a prayer, and then retire.

Nearly all divers are severely indebted to their captains. During the off-season, the divers must borrow money to support their families, promising to return for another year’s work. A diver’s catch must be exceptional in order to pay off his or her debt.





season begins as soon as the monsoons subside. During the next five months, pearl divers work daily to bring the pearls to the surface, often in dangerous conditions. While the risks are great and the rewards for the divers are few, it is through their lung-power and blood that the great City of Multitudes survives.

Jumlat is a large, rather unattractive city that depends on pearls for trade. It is only half as populous as smoky Hiyal, but it is equally crowded, for the city is compressed onto a smaller amount of ground. A small minority of wealthy nobles, merchants, and townsmen live comfortably off the wealth of the pearl trade. The majority of Jumlat is reduced to poverty and indebted heavily to the merchants who control the trade. When the pearl season has ended, Jumlat has the greatest number of beggars of any city in the Land of Fate.

**Major Products:** Pearls, trade, sea crafts (shells, buried treasure, bright dyes), beggars.

**Armed Forces:** 10,000 city guard; 1,000 mercenary cavalry, all desert riders from the High Desert; an "official" navy of 30 ships, patrolling the pearl banks. The "unofficial" navy typically includes 10 to 30 ships - all sailed by corsairs and privateers who are hired to protect Jumlat's pearl diving ships or to destroy those of rival Gana.

**Major Mosques:** Hakiyah, Haku, Kor, Selan.

**Rumors and Lore:** Life in Jumlat revolves around the pearl banks, and that life has recently been threatened by some monstrous creature. The nature of the monster is not yet certain. What is certain, however, is that during the past three years nearly 10 boats and four times as many divers have been destroyed or lost to the sea. For some time, Jumlat's pearl merchants assumed that Gana was responsible. Jumlat was on the brink of declaring war against its neighbor to the south when one survivor, missing his legs, washed up on the beach and told his tale. The man soon died, but not before he had described his attacker: a ghostly shark-creature, huge and savage, with tentacles around its gaping maw. This creature moved with intelligence and purpose, said the dying man, picking off divers and then hunting down the boat itself. The number of captains willing to go out to sea declined for a short time, but "bravery" returned after the sultan offered a reward of 100,000 gold dinars to the Jumlati captain who destroys the beast. The

reward, of course, has yet to be claimed.

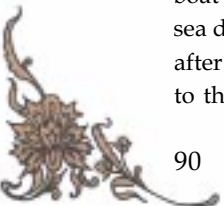
Within the city walls, another danger threatens the established lords. A new bandit-leader has appeared among the poor, known only as Zulmat, "The Darkness." Rumors of this bandit are conflicting. No one is sure whether The Darkness is a man or a woman, a human or a genie. Some say The Darkness is a secret society, and not a single individual. Whatever the truth, the bandit leaves no track other than his or her victims: money-lenders with broken hands and torn throats; cruel captains found on the shore like flotsam, their lungs filled with the sea; and city guards who have been stripped of their armor and weapons and dumped unceremoniously into the river. The chief vizier has yet to discover the identity of The Darkness. That failure creates another, more troubling possibility: The Darkness, perhaps, has powerful magical aid.

## Sikak, City of Coins

This city takes its name not from any thriving trade in coinage, but for its most famous industry, fishing. The waters off the coast of Sikak and surrounding nearby Maribar Island are teeming with swordfish, turbot, grouper, drum, and croaker; and the shallows are alive with skates, mullets, and small blue octopi. The scales of the larger fish are often as big as silver coins, symbolizing the great wealth they bring to Sikak.

**The Ruler:** Sultan Magar al-Azim (gmT/mr/13) is the fifteenth gnome to sit on the Throne of Coins since his family first came to power during the First Caliph's rule. Al-Azim spent his boyhood working with fishermen, as his ancestors did before him, and as his children do now. This training taught the sultan the value of work, honesty, and fellowship. He is a popular ruler, and when he appears in the streets, he is often swept up in crowds of well-wishers. Ten ogres serve as his bodyguards, protecting him at all times.

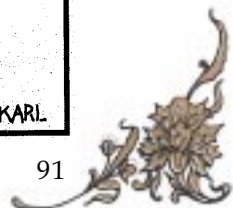
**The Court:** Sultan Magar al-Azim maintains a *harim* of the most beautiful women in Zakhara, all gnomes. His children number over 20. Indeed, Magar comes from a large family himself, and his uncles, cousins, and siblings handle most of the paperwork and bureaucracy in the city. In addition, Magar's relatives hold high positions in the clergy and the armed forces.



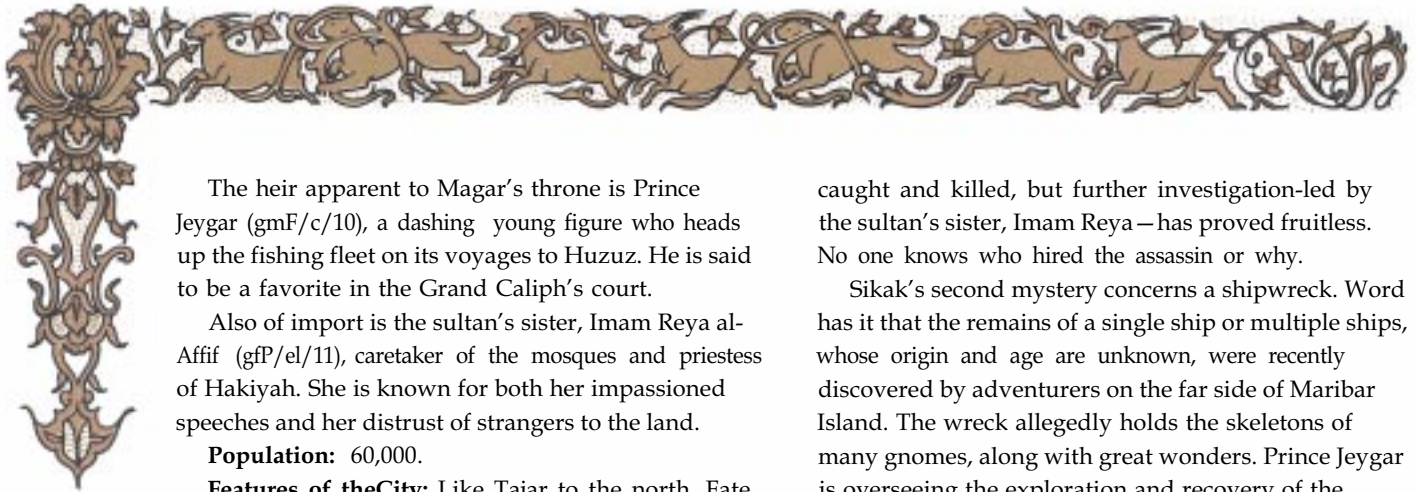




KARL







The heir apparent to Magar's throne is Prince Jeygar (gmF/c/10), a dashing young figure who heads up the fishing fleet on its voyages to Huzuz. He is said to be a favorite in the Grand Caliph's court.

Also of import is the sultan's sister, Imam Reya al-Affif (gfP/el/11), caretaker of the mosques and priestess of Hakiyah. She is known for both her impassioned speeches and her distrust of strangers to the land.

**Population:** 60,000.

**Features of the City:** Like Tajar to the north, Fate has blessed Sikak with a series of artesian wells, which provide most of the water for the city. These wells began to fail some 40 years ago, and only through careful negotiariation with a group of dao and marids has the supply of fresh cool water been maintained.

The people of Sikak live from the sea. Dress is informal and suited to their occupation. Men usually go bare-chested and wear loose, lightweight pants. Even the female crew-members don little more than a light blouse and billowing pantaloons. This carries over into the city itself, where there is little cause for pretense or ostentation, save for great feasts.

The settlements to the north and south of Sikak are wealthier and more powerful, and Sikak's residents feel somewhat threatened. They are thin-skinned about the notion that any way of life may be superior to their own. The outlanders scatter lies, say Sikak's fishermen—lies claiming that Sikaki sailors smell of their catch, and that they send less-than-fresh fish to the Grand Caliph's palace. To insult a native of Sikak is to insult his or her family, boat, and entire people, and the natives react accordingly.

**Major Products:** Fish, boats, nets, ropes.

**Armed Forces:** 2,000 infantry; 3,000 mercenary barbarians in three units; 500 cavalry; an imperial palace guard of 200 ogres, armed with halberds and long bows; a 20-ship navy, which includes mostly small boats for shore patrol; 400 marines trained in shipboard fighting.

**Major Mosques:** Hajama, Hakiyah, Jisan, Sedan.

**Rumors and Lore:** Two mysteries are currently troubling the City of Coins. First and foremost, a holy slayer of the Grey Fire has made a public attempt on the sultan's life. This occurred when the sultan was among the people, and only the heroic action of an ogre guard spared the sultan's life. The assassin was

caught and killed, but further investigation—led by the sultan's sister, Imam Reya—has proved fruitless. No one knows who hired the assassin or why.

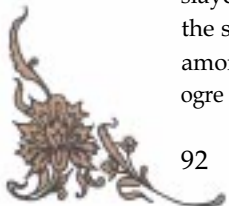
Sikak's second mystery concerns a shipwreck. Word has it that the remains of a single ship or multiple ships, whose origin and age are unknown, were recently discovered by adventurers on the far side of Maribar Island. The wreck allegedly holds the skeletons of many gnomes, along with great wonders. Prince Jeygar is overseeing the exploration and recovery of the wreck: Whether this is in any way connected with the attempted assassination is unknown.

## Tajar, City of Trade

The northernmost Pearl City, Tajar lies about 450 miles west of Pantheist Hilm, with the Golden Gulf's glittering expanse between them. The title "City of Trade" is well deserved, for Tajar is awash in riches from throughout Zakhara and beyond. Rare spices, strange condiments, richly woven carpets, gleaming swords from Hiyal, wonders of the Crowded Sea—all are gathered in one location to assault and delight the senses. In its sheer variety of goods, Tajar is the wealthiest city on the Gulf.

**The Ruler:** Tajar's ruler is Sheikh Ali al-Hadd, House of Bakr (hmF/dr/16). He is the son of the former sheikh, Kori al-Zafiri, House of Bakr. Before the rule of Al-Zafiri, Tajar was governed by a dark-hearted sultan. That sultan despised the desert tribes and sought to enslave them through unfair trade. The leader of the Bakr tribe, Al-Zafiri, led a rebellion against the city, receiving the merchants and the poor whom the sultan had oppressed. With the rebellion underway, Al-Zafiri sent Ali, his most talented son, to gain an audience with the Grand Caliph. When the great fleet of Huzuz arrived in Tajar's harbor, it did not carry reinforcements for the embattled sultan. Instead, it carried investigators, who quickly revealed the sultan's true nature. The sultan was taken to Huzuz in chains, and Al-Zafiri became Tajar's leader. Both he and his son, Ali al-Hadd, prefer the simple title "sheikh."

When Al-Zafiri passed away, Ali al-Hadd succeeded his father. The son has proved himself to be equally valiant and wise, capable of dealing with Tajar's many factions of merchants, traders, nobles, and supplicants.





**The Court:** The bane of Sheikh Ali's existence is his only son, Afzal (hmF/a/6). Afzal's mother died in childbirth. The sheikh did not remarry, and he has not recognized any other heir. Afzal was born and raised in Tajar, in the lap of luxury, and he has turned his back on his desert heritage. He is foolish and pompous, and surrounds himself with men and women who speak of little other than his greatness. He has just reached his majority, and is honorary commander of the cavalry. Al-Hadd has assigned a dao and a djinni as his son's personal servants and bodyguards. The sheikh hopes that direct contact with the people may teach his son wisdom. So far this has failed.

Sheera bint Tanar (hef/sh/10) serves Sheikh al-Hadd as a magical advisor. She is his unrecognized daughter, born to him by an elven courtesan in his court. Sheera is responsible for overseeing genie activities in the city, and for maintaining a good relationship with the jann.

Also prominent in the court is a rawun who is known only as Dulcet Riqqiyah (hfb/r/14). An adventurer who arrived in town four years ago, Riqqiyah charmed the sheikh with her knowledge and wit. In time, she became both a trusted advisor and a second daughter to him. Sheera is not jealous of the rawun, for the pair are close friends, and Riqqiyah acts as the young half-elf's mentor. Afzal is taken with Riqqiyah, but she wants nothing to do with the young popinjay. Of the bard's origin and background, nothing is known. She wears magical devices that fend off divination magics.

**Population:** 180,000.

**Features of the City:** Tajar is a major trading site in the Land of Fate. Here the caravan route from far-off Akota (an exotic place beyond Zakhara) meets the merchant armadas of the Golden Gulf. And here the tribes of the High Desert come down to trade their wares with agents of the Grand Caliph. Only the suqs of Huzuz, which bear the finest produce in all of Zakhara, can rival Tajar's marketplace.

The people of Tajar reflect this meeting of cultures. Abas and keffiyehs are as common as caftans and turbans, all the more so since the ascendancy of Sheikh Ali. The impoverished residents dress in whatever rags and tatters they can manage, but even the poor of Tajar are better off than most. The riches

are so abundant, and the need for labor so great, that anyone capable of work can find it if he or she looks.

Tajar is further blessed by having several natural artesian wells. The largest of these wells lies at the base of the sheikh's palace. The wells supply most of the city's drinking water with little strain on their capacity. Only the poor use water from the Al-Adib River, and the city quarter bordering that area is a slum of shoddy housing, dangerous beggars, and characters hoping to disappear behind the veil of dust and poverty.

The Tajari are proud, boisterous people, quick to take offense. Street music is common here, and volume outweighs proficiency for most minstrels. Merchant haggling often leads to drawn swords, and daggers are driven into the walls to underline a point. People of Tajar regard the colder, more cultured natives of other realms as repressed and unfeeling.

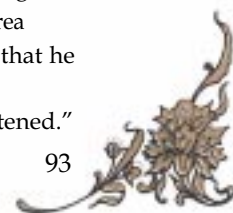
**Major Products:** Trade, spices, carpets, metalwork, swords, livestock, horses.

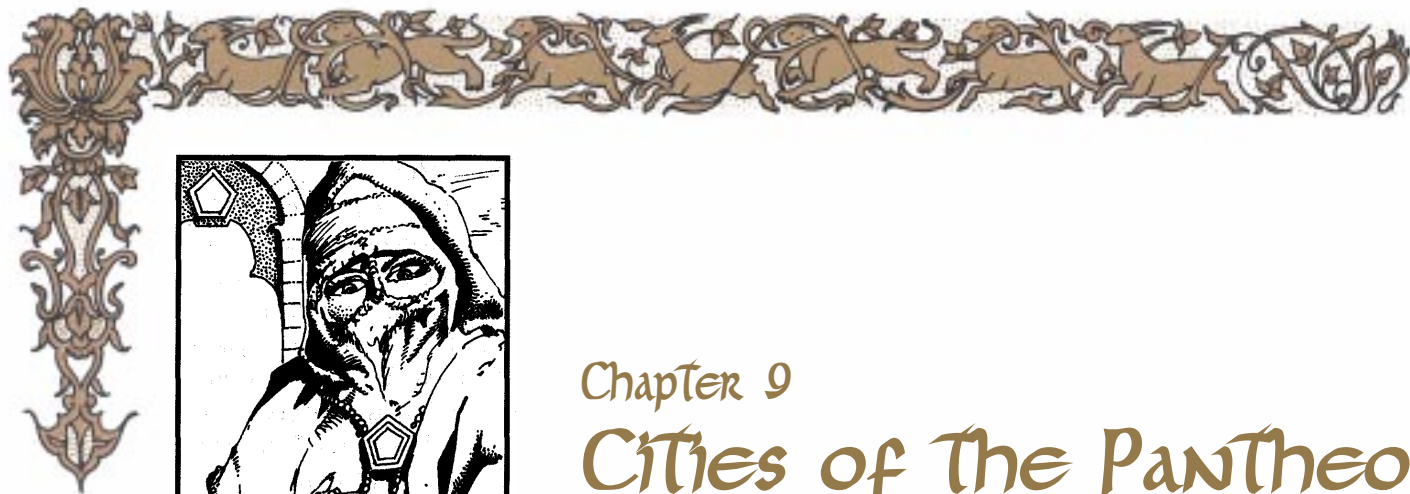
**Armed Forces:** 4,000-man city guard; 3,000-man cavalry patrol, which is built around a core of Bakr desert riders, an elite force of 800 men. In addition, Tajar has 300 jann of the High Desert on retainer.

**Major Mosques:** Hakiyah, Haku, Jisan, Selan.

**Rumors and Lore:** No one in Tajar misses the old sultan, a skinflint and tyrant who was last seen being dragged off to Huzuz. Some years later, the story of what became of him filtered back to Tajar. It is said that he (wisely) renounced his evil ways and became a priest in the hill country above Wasat. One of his children survived the revolution in Tajar, and eventually relocated with him to that city. It is therefore likely that heirs to the previous throne are still active. Most of the populace is quite happy with the present rulership, but a few are concerned about Afzal's wisdom, and they would prefer that the sheikh either recognize Sheera officially or discover if any capable candidates exist among the original sultan's descendants.

Outside the court, the greatest local news is the arrival of Suelasta the Magnificent (hmT/mr/12). This merchant-rogue has gained a grant from Sheikh Ali to establish a menagerie of fantastic creatures. Having secured a suitable location in a garbage-ridden area near the river, he has put out an announcement that he will pay money for "wonders of all lands, safely contained and suitable for viewing by the enlightened."





## Chapter 9

# Cities of The Pantheon

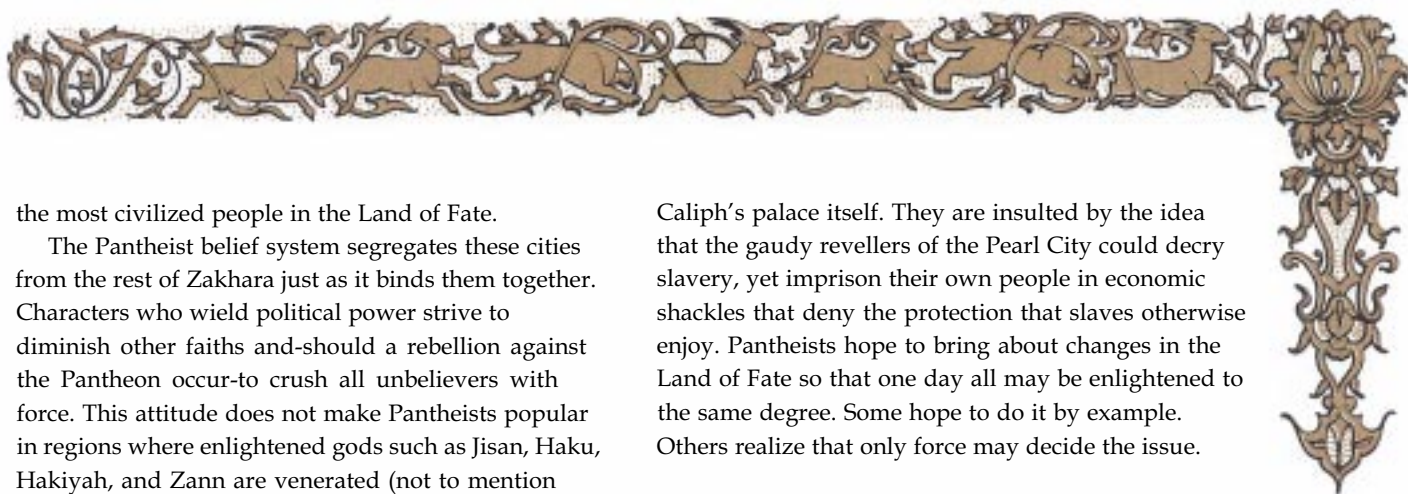
The League of the Pantheon, or Pantheist League, is a cluster of cities on the Crowded Sea and along the eastern side of the Golden Gulf, backed by the mountain ranges of Al-Akara and AlSayaj. These cities share a common outlook above and beyond that of other cities paying ultimate creed to the Grand Caliph.

Pantheists recognize only five gods: Hajama, Kor, Najm, Selan, and a local deity named Jauhar (whom Pantheists consider a major god). Within these cities, the worship of other gods is forbidden. According to the Pantheists, only the five deities of the Pantheon deserve the worship of civilized men and women. These are the gods whose priests first swore allegiance to the Law of the Loregiver. All other deities are “latecomers,” inferior at best. This conservative religious belief is the force that binds the Pantheist cities into a cohesive whole-into a refuge for “those who know the truly enlightened gods.”

Politics and religion are tightly interwoven in the Pantheist League. The church is powerful, and secular leaders are often religious leaders as well. Staunchly moralist, Pantheists are almost hidebound in their traditional values. The traditions of the past guide their actions in the future. That which is new is deemed dangerous, and that which is different is suspicious. Both men and women cover their faces in public and conceal the shape of their bodies beneath billowing robes, lest the sight of the opposite sex cause anyone’s thoughts to stray from the moral path. (Women, in fact, usually don the traditional chador, behind which not even their eyes-a most tempting feminine feature-can be clearly seen.)

Apparently, this system works well for the Pantheist cities, for they are successful and prosperous. Unlike the Free Cities of northern Zakhara, the closely knit Pantheist communities are not hindered by continual efforts to conspire against each other in petty wars. And unlike the Pearl Cities, the cities of the Pantheon have fewer beggars and impoverished citizens on their streets. All citizens are guaranteed a satisfied stomach and a roof over their heads (provided those citizens adhere to Pantheist beliefs). Vanity, usury, pride, savagery —these are alien concepts to the Pantheon. In the Pantheists’ own eyes, and by many other yardsticks, citizens of the Pantheist League are





the most civilized people in the Land of Fate.

The Pantheist belief system segregates these cities from the rest of Zakhara just as it binds them together. Characters who wield political power strive to diminish other faiths and—should a rebellion against the Pantheon occur—to crush all unbelievers with force. This attitude does not make Pantheists popular in regions where enlightened gods such as Jisan, Haku, Hakiyah, and Zann are venerated (not to mention local enlightened deities). An uneasy balance exists between the League of the Pantheon and the more liberal areas of Zakhara.

The headquarters of the Pantheist League and home of the League Conclave is the city of I'tiraf, to which all other Pantheist cities send an ambassador and representatives. (Each Pantheist city also sends representatives to Huzuz.) According to many, the League's greatest imam, Rimaq al-Nimar, Most Humble of the Pantheon's Servants, is second only to the Grand Caliph in power (though even many Pantheists would rank him third or fourth, behind themselves or other members of the Pantheon).

Pantheist cities work in concert, setting common prices and seeking to even out crop shortages in one town with surpluses in others. Most importantly, they provide a common defense. From Hilm to Mahabba, each city is guarded by Pantheist troops, members of an army called the Sword of the True Gods. The "Sword" is culled from the best warriors throughout the League. Pantheist troops are always headquartered near a city's main mosque, and they have posts throughout the community.

A Pantheist soldier is never allowed to serve in his or her home city. Instead, he or she will be stationed elsewhere in the League, serving all other cities in turn. This practice helps underscore the concept that the Sword of the True Gods is loyal to the League of the Pantheon as a whole, not to any one city. The practice also arouses many citizens to view Pantheist soldiers as guests—people to be treated well—in the hope that each city's own fighters will be cared for equally well during their assignments elsewhere.

The people of the Pantheon are studious, solemn, respectful, polite, and industrious. As individuals, most are deeply shocked by the behavior and decadence that occurs elsewhere in Zakhara—even in the Grand

Caliph's palace itself. They are insulted by the idea that the gaudy revellers of the Pearl City could decry slavery, yet imprison their own people in economic shackles that deny the protection that slaves otherwise enjoy. Pantheists hope to bring about changes in the Land of Fate so that one day all may be enlightened to the same degree. Some hope to do it by example. Others realize that only force may decide the issue.

## Fahhas, City of Searching

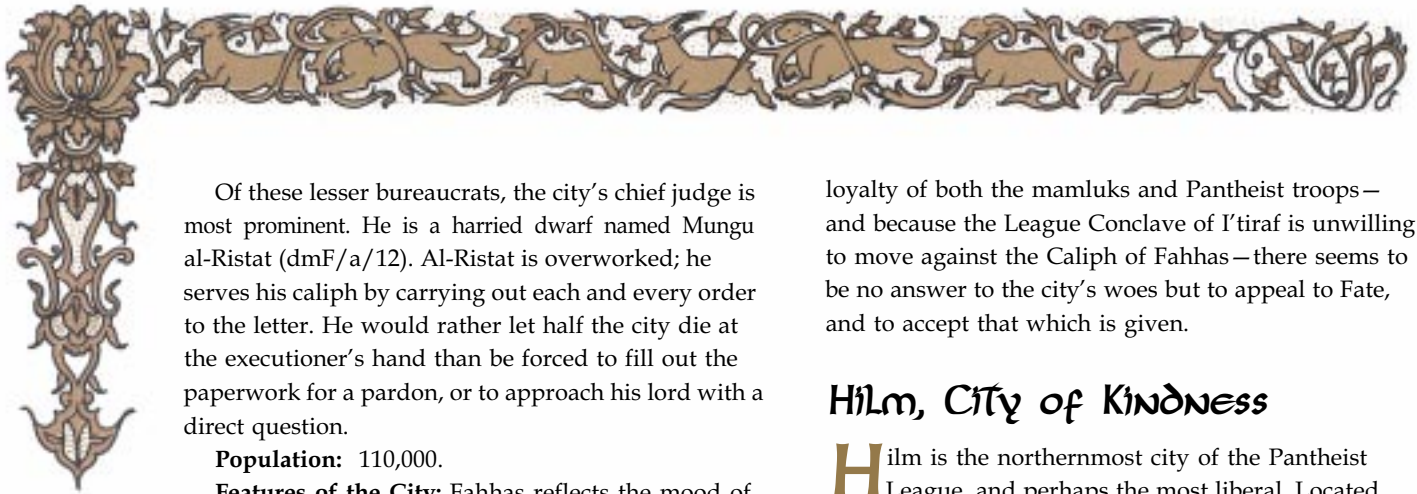
Located roughly 90 miles north of I'tiraf (as the rot flies), at the mouth of the river Al-Naqus, Fahhas is the most somber city of the Pantheist League. Its people are searching for enlightenment and truth, and perhaps for the happiness both would bring.

**The Ruler:** Caliph Amel al-Yuhami (hmP/m/15), Humble Servant of the Enlightened Gods, is a moody, reclusive figure. Tall and broad-shouldered with well-chiseled features and a thick black beard, he looks more like a warrior than a priest. Al-Yuhami is said to be among the strongest men in the Pantheist League. The caliph's strength is mainly physical, however, since he is given to fits of melancholy and deep depression, caused by both the sin in the world and by the death (five years ago) of his aged advisor and mentor, Jamila al-Muhib.

Caliph Amel is a man who sees matters of faith in ultimates: you are either saved or you are damned. Devotion to the Pantheon is supreme in his court. Would-be wrongdoers should beware, for those who defy the Law of the Loregiver must suffer the maximum penalty. In Fahhas, disfigurement and even torture are more common punishments than enslavement and banishment.

**The Court:** The court of Fahhas has no high-ranking or highly influential characters beyond the caliph himself. Caliph Amel spends most of the day in solitude and meditation, particularly since the death of his chief vizier, Jamila al-Muhib (hfW/sem/17). The lesser courtiers, scribes, and bureaucrats walk softly and speak in deferential tones when summoned before their caliph. And when they speak, they watch their words carefully, for no one knows when an ill-phrased remark will result in a tirade of abuse and possibly arrest.





Of these lesser bureaucrats, the city's chief judge is most prominent. He is a harried dwarf named Mungu al-Ristat (dmF/a/12). Al-Ristat is overworked; he serves his caliph by carrying out each and every order to the letter. He would rather let half the city die at the executioner's hand than be forced to fill out the paperwork for a pardon, or to approach his lord with a direct question.

**Population:** 110,000.

**Features of the City:** Fahhas reflects the mood of its caliph; its people are sullen, brooding, and joyless in their tasks. The city is prosperous, however, due to its natural gifts. The grasslands to the east are grazed by sheep and goats, and dotted with orchards of oranges, dates, apricots, and pears. The rich clays of the river Al-Naqus make some of the finest pottery and china on the Golden Gulf, and the location of the city makes it a convenient port for boats from Huzuz and the north.

**Major Products:** Fruit, livestock, trade, pottery, china.

**Armed Forces:** Pantheist troops include 2,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry. Other land forces: 2,000 city guards; a unit of 150 clerical reserves (priests of levels 1 to 6) from the Pantheon mosque and university; and 3 units of mamluks of the Devoted society, totaling 900 men. Seafaring forces include a navy of 5 large vessels, plus a shore patrol of 10 smaller ships.

**Major Mosques:** Pantheon.

**Rumors and Lore:** The grief of this city's caliph is understandable. He greatly loved and respected his chief vizier, Jamila al-Muhib, who brought Amel from the ranks of the clergy to a position of power and respect. Yet to many the length and the depth of his grief seem extreme, for it has been five years since Jamila's passing. She died of a fever that not even the best healers of Talab could abate. In the years since then, Caliph Amel has banished his counselors, disbanded his harim, and he now wears a brooch that prevents the approach of any genie within 10 feet.

Today there is a rising tide of fear for the caliph's health. Many wish to see him restored to his previous strength and demeanor. An equal number wish to see him step down and be replaced by a more reasonable leader. However, because Caliph Amel commands the

loyalty of both the mamluks and Pantheist troops—and because the League Conclave of I'tiraf is unwilling to move against the Caliph of Fahhas—there seems to be no answer to the city's woes but to appeal to Fate, and to accept that which is given.

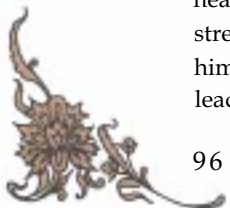
## Hilm, City of Kindness

Hilm is the northernmost city of the Pantheist League, and perhaps the most liberal. Located nearest to Huzuz, it is a stopping point for many pilgrims traveling overland to the Court of Enlightenment. Its streets are spartan but spotless, lacking in color and (for the most part) crime. It is a stark contrast to the lively city of Tajar across the Golden Gulf.

**The Ruler:** Caliph Abir al-Farhan (hmP/m/15), Humble Servant of the Enlightened Gods, represents the Pantheist League at its best. Considerate and concerned about the well-being of his people, the caliph is a diligent protector of the faith, and he sees to the needs of even the most poverty-stricken members of his flock. His wide belly and short stature belie a powerful and wise individual who will stop at nothing to protect his people.

**The Court:** Most important in the court is the caliph's grand vizier, a sorcerer named Shoroz (hmW/so/13). Tall but stooped, Shoroz shares Abir's vision for Hilm and works diligently at his lord's side. Often, the pair don disguises (usually magical in nature) and go out to mingle among the people of Hilm. The disguises are designed to help them discover what the people are truly feeling, for a man may change his voice in the presence of one who can stop it forever. The pair may at first appear to be two dwarves, or perhaps two traveling merchants or pilgrims. Nonetheless, they frequently give themselves away by their actions.

The apple of the caliph's eye is his eldest daughter, Ola (hfP/m/5). She has been schooled in the ways of the church and, with the permission of church officials, would marry the next caliph of the city in order to continue the line and preserve her father's interest in the people. Ola spends most of her time with her books of prayers and parables, segregated from the outside world. The people of Hilm share her





father's devotion to her. When she appears in public, the multitudes applaud and throw flowers at her feet.

**Population:** 180,000.

**Features of the City:** The people of Hilm are even-tempered. Unlike the citizens of other Pantheist cities, they are relatively patient even with the "unenlightened" (which, to them, includes all who fail to recognize the gods of the Pantheon exclusively). The hospices of Hilm are legendary within the Pantheist League for their cleanliness and hospitality. Because of their quality, many pilgrims journeying to Huzuz choose the overland route as opposed to the more expensive (but more direct) ships from Fahhas. While such pilgrims know they should not flaunt their adherence to any faith that contradicts the beliefs of the Pantheon, they also know the people of Hilm will not hunt them down like mad dogs for such beliefs.

Hilm is Pantheist moralism as it is meant to be. The city's residents are well fed and well tended. There are no beggars in the streets or marketplace, and even the poorest members of society have clean robes and satisfied (if not full) bellies. Entertainments include mystery plays of common legends (all bearing serious moral lessons beneath their humor and jibes) and bards reciting great poems in the name of the Pantheon. Work is regular throughout the year. If people are not needed to harvest or plant, they can renovate and rebuild houses in the city itself. If the people of Hilm seem a bit smug, it is because they have something to be smug about.

The city is peaceful, though trouble often arises from those who bring it with them: thieves, barbarians, confidence artists, and misguided individuals. The chief job of the city guard and the Pantheist troops is to keep such troublemakers from disrupting the lives of the people of Hilm.

Those who come to the city intent on foul play or mischief are first cautioned, then arrested if warnings are ignored. A Pantheon priest (from levels 2 to 8) is attached to each patrol of the city guard, aiding in the capture of disruptive individuals. Trials are quick. If the individual shows true penitence, they are also just. In Hilm, enlightened but misguided criminals who venerate a god outside the Pantheon are rarely put to death. Instead, they may be enslaved for a number of months, fulfilling their sentence by serving the church.

**Major Products:** Grain, livestock, horses, tourism (pilgrimage).

**Armed Forces:** Members of the Sword of the True Gods include 2,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry, most of which are concerned with the protection of the farmers and travelers through their area. Additional warriors: 1,000 city guards. From the Pantheon mosque and university: a unit of 120 clerical reserves (priests of levels 1 to 6). The caliph's personal guard includes 3 units of mamluks (900 soldiers), all members of the Exalted society.

**Major Mosques:** Pantheon.

**Rumors and Lore:** According to legends told both in the Pantheist League and elsewhere, Hilm was the first city to receive the Law of the Loregiver after Huzuz. As such, Hilm has a special status for being so honored by Fate. Indeed, the Pantheist creed notes that, at the time, the first gods who became enlightened were those of Hilm: Wise Kor, Brave Najm, Adventurous Hajama, Beautiful Selan, and Diligent Jauhar. It is from those gods that the faith of the Pantheon takes its direction.

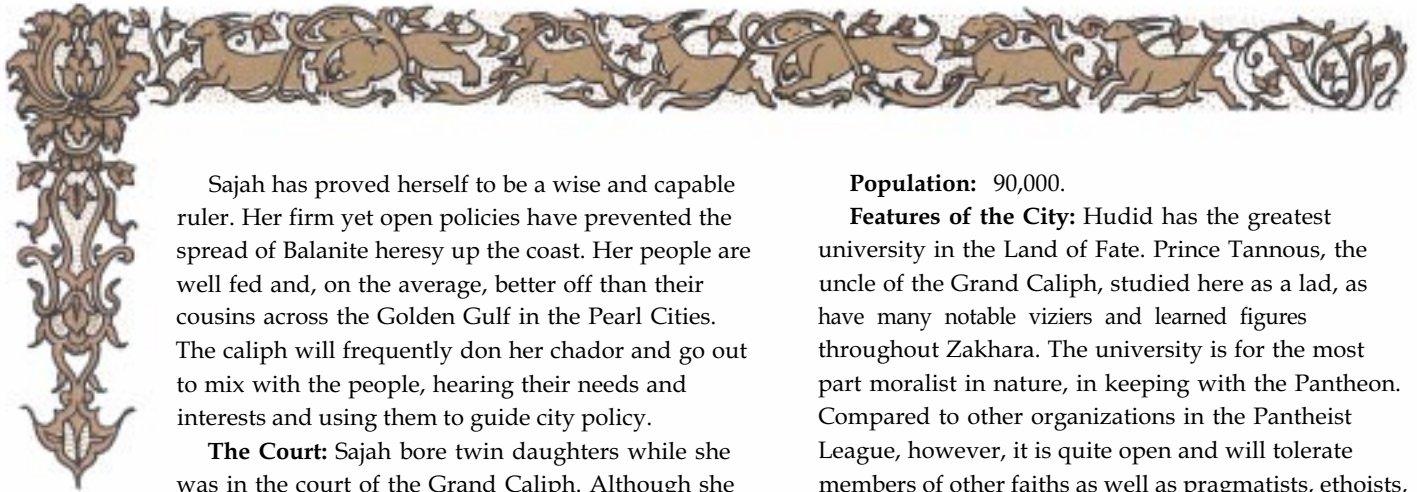
## Hudid, City of Humility

**A**mong the more tolerant of the League's cities, Hudid is located outside the Golden Gulf, on the shores of the Crowded Sea. (Only Mahabba, about 90 miles east, shares this location.) Outsiders know that the tariffs and laws of Hudid take into account their own misguided ignorance of the Pantheon's ways, and that has made the city a prime trading area for exotic items.

**The Ruler:** Caliph and Most Revered Mother Sajah al-Munsif (hfP/m/15) is the only woman to guide the faith of a city in this generation. Within the League, she is known as the Quiet Caliph, for she rarely acts or speaks directly. Instead, she leads by example and talks in parables that may at first seem to wander from the point, but, in the end, reveal a basic truth that allows the listener to attain enlightenment. As a young woman, Sajah served as a representative to the Grand Caliph's court, where she impressed His Enlightened Majesty with her wit and wisdom. He appointed her a caliph 10 years ago. The Conclave gave its unanimous approval.







Sajah has proved herself to be a wise and capable ruler. Her firm yet open policies have prevented the spread of Balanite heresy up the coast. Her people are well fed and, on the average, better off than their cousins across the Golden Gulf in the Pearl Cities. The caliph will frequently don her chador and go out to mix with the people, hearing their needs and interests and using them to guide city policy.

**The Court:** Sajah bore twin daughters while she was in the court of the Grand Caliph. Although she maintains a *selama* (equivalent of a *harim*), she chooses to bear no other children.

Of Sajah's daughters, one chose to remain in the church. That daughter has risen steadily in rank; she now serves as her mother's chief aide and advisor—Sajah's legs and mouth among the people. She is Inara (hfP/m/8), a woman very much like her mother: well educated, polite, and preferring to teach by illumination and example. Of the other daughter, Jinara, nothing is known. She left her family when she came of age, declaring herself independent. Effectively, Jinara vanished.



**Population:** 90,000.

**Features of the City:** Hudid has the greatest university in the Land of Fate. Prince Tannous, the uncle of the Grand Caliph, studied here as a lad, as have many notable viziers and learned figures throughout Zakhara. The university is for the most part moralist in nature, in keeping with the Pantheon. Compared to other organizations in the Pantheist League, however, it is quite open and will tolerate members of other faiths as well as pragmatists, ethoists, and even Free Priests. The sciences, particularly optics and alchemy, are the university's strong points, followed by the subjects of magic and poetry. In fact, some excellent poets and rawuns have studied at Hudid's university.

The people of Hudid have warmed to the caliph and her rule, though at first many were concerned and even offended by the nontraditional posting of a woman in the caliphate. When the walls failed to tumble in and the city prospered under her rulership, most changed their opinions. They look forward to her daughter Inara carrying on the tradition of a female caliph in Hudid.

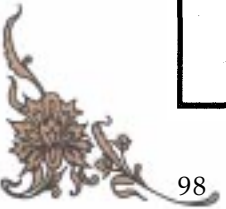
Caliph Sajah has made the city of Hudid a safe haven for travelers of all walks of life (not a difficult task for one with such an enlightened populace). Hudid still has its perils, however, often around the docks or in the university, where differing ideas may clash with violent results.

**Major Products:** Students, trade, glass lenses and telescopes, writing, books.

**Armed Forces:** 1,000 Pantheist infantry; 500 Pantheist cavalry; 2,000 city guards; 200 clerical reserves (priests of levels 1 to 6) from the Pantheon university. In addition, the first three ships of an official navy have been built. Their mission: to deal with increased piracy on the Crowded Sea.

**Major Mosques:** Pantheon.

**Rumors and Lore:** Of late, the greatest concern in Hudid is the Balanite heresy in Mahabba, which lies directly east along the coast. Many refugees from that city have fled to Hudid, and the caliph of Mahabba, Ma'mum, believes that Balanite followers and holy slayers may have supporters in Hudid. Caliph Sajah has three times refused Ma'mum's request to conduct investigations in Hudid regarding this matter, and if it





can be proved that the followers of Bala are indeed active in Hudid, great turmoil will ensue. As a result, one of Inara's chief tasks is to investigate these accusations herself. So far, she has turned up nothing official.

## I'tiraf, City of Confessions

I'tiraf is the site of the League Conclave, the governing body to which every Pantheist city sends representatives. Located at the mouth of the river Al-Hadi, I'tiraf lies almost directly east of Jumlat, a wild and "uncivilized" Pearl City for which I'tiraf has little respect. I'tiraf's people take pride in living in one of Zakhara's most moral and upright settlements. This is not to say that evil or misguided men and women are not found here. However, once such dastards have been revealed, they are quickly punished, reformed, or (as is likely) both. Ferreting out such undesirables is one reason I'tiraf is known as the City of Confessions.

**The Ruler:** Emir and Most Revered Father Rimaq al-Nimar (hmP/m/20), Most Humble Servant of the Enlightened Gods, is the ruler of I'tiraf. He is also the head of the League Conclave. Without question, Rimaq is the most powerful man in the League of the Pantheon. He is the fourth of his line to serve as Most Revered Father of the League—the son of Ali, grandson of Kura, and great-grandson of Exanaroth the Unifier. The emir is the dominating religious and secular force in the lands of the League. His word is law.

The most powerful man in the Pantheist League lives simply in a small manor adjoining the Conclave buildings. He rarely appears in public, and when he does grant audiences, the only priests who may be present are moralists of the Pantheon ("One of the few benefits of rank," he is quoted as saying, "is refusing to meet with fools"). Outland priests and Free Priests such as hakimas, kahins, and mystics are forbidden to enter his court. Moreover, even ethoists and pragmatists of the Pantheon are banished from his presence.

The emir has a great dream: that, in time, Pantheist teachings will prevail in Zakhara, dominating life in every corner of the land. To that end, the emir is a regular correspondent with the Grand Caliph's chief

vizier, Alyana al-Azzazi. Alyana shares the Most Revered Father's moralist attitude, but flatly rejects his Pantheist dogma. Still, the chief vizier is Rimaq's best means of making the needs and complaints of the Pantheon known. The Grand Caliph is currently heirless. If he dies in that state, the resulting confusion may allow Rimaq to expand the control of the Pantheon and perhaps even dominate the Land of Fate.

In the Pearl Cities, rumor has it that the Most Revered Father Rimaq al-Nimar is responsible for many intrigues and disasters that occur there, from the great Tentacled Shark of the pearl beds to the assassination attempt on the sultan of Sikak. In truth, Rimaq is not a malevolent force scheming to destroy the Pearl Cities. Their troubles are to the advantage of the Pantheon, however, and anyone who creates difficulties for the Pearl Cities may be welcomed (or at least used by) Rimaq and the Conclave.

**The Court:** The League Conclave is the court of I'tiraf. Delegates from each of the Pantheist cities are present at all times. Each delegation consists of 1 to 6 midlevel priests of the Pantheon (levels 3 to 6) and 3 to 18 low-level priests (levels 1 to 2). The Conclave building is one of the largest structures in the League, exceeded only in wonder and size by the Great Mosque of the Pantheon.

Current delegation leaders from other cities are Ahmad al-Rahib of Hilm (hmP/m/12), Aksonkor al-Daris of Talab (hmP/m/9), Reisah al-Bakir of Fahhas (hfP/m/10), Yazid al-Walid of Hudid (hmP/m/12), and Hisham bin Ziyad of Mahabba (hmP/m/10). I'tiraf's own representative to the Conclave is Osham al-Budan (hmP/m/12). He and most delegates look to the Most Revered Father Rimaq for leadership.

**Population:** 250,000.

**Features of the City:** I'tiraf's residents are staunchly moralist, extremely lawful, and exceedingly gracious—at least to one another. Veiled men and women conduct their business with little fear of beggars, thieves, or rogues. They believe that all people who come from outside Pantheist territories are no better than savages. It is folly to argue about this point, for I'tiraf's citizens are confident in their beliefs, and argument only confirms their opinions on the rudeness and quarrelsome nature of "misguided" people.





The people of I'tiraf look to their religious leaders and the emir for guidance. To find success here, as elsewhere in the League, even warriors, wizards, and rogues must take on the mantle and the creed of the Pantheon. Traders, craftsmen, and merchants within the city all prefer to deal with other moralists. Caravans and ships from far-off lands experience (at best) a cold reception and (more likely) a large amount of duties and taxes. Merchants from the Pearl Cities often use "captains of convenience" when dealing with I'tiraf: moralist (though not necessarily Pantheon-worshipping) individuals.

Life in I'tiraf revolves around the Great Mosque of the Pantheon. This mosque is one of the largest structures outside Huzuz. One of the most beautiful structures as well, it is made of polished blue stone excavated from the Al-Sayaj Mountains, inlaid with gold, and set with precious and semiprecious gems. Mamluks guard the mosque. This is a haram (holy site) in its own right, and is a gathering point for pilgrims from the south who are journeying north to Huzuz.

**Major Products:** Glassware, crystal, sages (religion), priests (moralists of the Pantheon).

**Armed Forces:** Pantheist troops include 8,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry. Other land forces: 2,000 city guards; a unit of 300 clerical reserves (priests of levels 1 to 6); and 6 units of mamluks, totaling 1,800, with 3 units each representing the Exalted and Devoted societies. Seafaring forces: navy of 16 ships, with more baghlahs (large dhows) under construction.

**Major Mosques:** Pantheon.

**Rumors and Lore:** The veneration of Most Revered Father Rimaq al-Nimar and his ancestors stops just short of personal deification. Most of that which is good in the city (and in the League) is attributed to Rimaq. Most of that which is bad is attributed to the work of slackers, fools, and the miscreants who seek to topple him.

Every few months, a rumor sweeps through I'tiraf, creating a war fever. The rumor is always the same: a fleet has been spotted advancing toward I'tiraf, hailing from the Pearl Cities, or from Afyal, or from some sorcerous trough in the Ruined Kingdoms. Street riots ensue, during which a few foreigners always perish and the ranks of the city guard and Pantheist forces always swell. In particular, more ships are added to the

official navy of the Pantheon (which is based in I'tiraf). Then the scare subsides, and life returns to normal (though the surviving foreigners are more cautious from then on).

## Mahabba, City of Charity

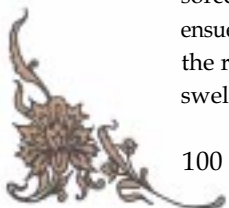
Like Hudid, about 90 miles to the west, Mahabba lies well outside the Golden Gulf, on the shores of the Crowded Sea. There the similarity ends, however. While Hudid is relatively accepting of outsiders, Mahabba has become a closed society under occupation by its own military forces. Most of the city's people are ashamed of a non-Pantheist history that they cannot seem to forget. Mahabba's secondary title, "City of Charity," has lost its meaning. Of late, more people call it the City of Silence.

**The Ruler:** Caliph and Revered Father Ma'mum al-Sahnun (hemP/m/14-F/f/16), Humble Servant of the Enlightened Gods, is a fatherly half-elf with a gray, closely cropped beard. Ma'mum first established himself as a warrior in battles against the savage tribes of the Ruined Kingdoms; only later did he enter the priestly orders. First and foremost a strict disciplinarian, he was judged by Rimaq al-Nimar as the best man for his current position, and Rimaq's voice carried in the court of Huzuz.

Ma'mum is kind and fatherly to the devout, but merciless to the misguided and the unenlightened. In the latter group he places the Balanites, followers of the cult-god Bala of Ill Tidings (see Chapter 5). The caliph's operatives are everywhere, seeking to crush not only the cult, but also the fanatical brotherhoods of holy slayers that the Balanites engender.

**The Court:** Ma'mum favors fighters in his court: warriors, as well as mages and priests who have had front-line battle experience. To Ma'mum, a man and a woman (of any race) have not reached their potential until they have been bloodied in holy warfare against the heathen foe. The city's position as the last civilized outpost in the League territory reaffirms the need to be ever-vigilant and watchful.

Ma'mum's chief vizier is a warrior, Tanatha of the Glittering Blades (hfF/f/13). She has served at his side through a number of campaigns. For a brief time they were married, and she bore him three sons. Two have







fallen in combat, and the third is undergoing clerical training in I'tiraf. Tanatha and Ma'mum were divorced when it became clear that both wished to remain in the field as warriors. They are still close emotionally, and Ma'mum maintains no *harim*. Tanatha is a cavalry soldier. She prefers clear-cut battles to the twisted and myriad skirmishes of the streets, but she serves where Fate and the Pantheon think she will do best.

Ma'mum's chief judge is also his chief informant and master spy. His name is Othmar bin Jaqal (hmW/sh/16), the son of the jackal. An oily, evil sha'ir with an efreeti servitor and suspected ties to the Brotherhood of the True Flame, Othmar is a devout Pantheist who believes in burning out the taint of heresy.

Tanatha and Ma'mum are both accompanied at all times by detachments of 20 mamluks of the Exalted society, all 3rd level. Othmar has only his efreeti, Zet, as his bodyguard, but is said to carry more than enough magical protection to ward off any attack.

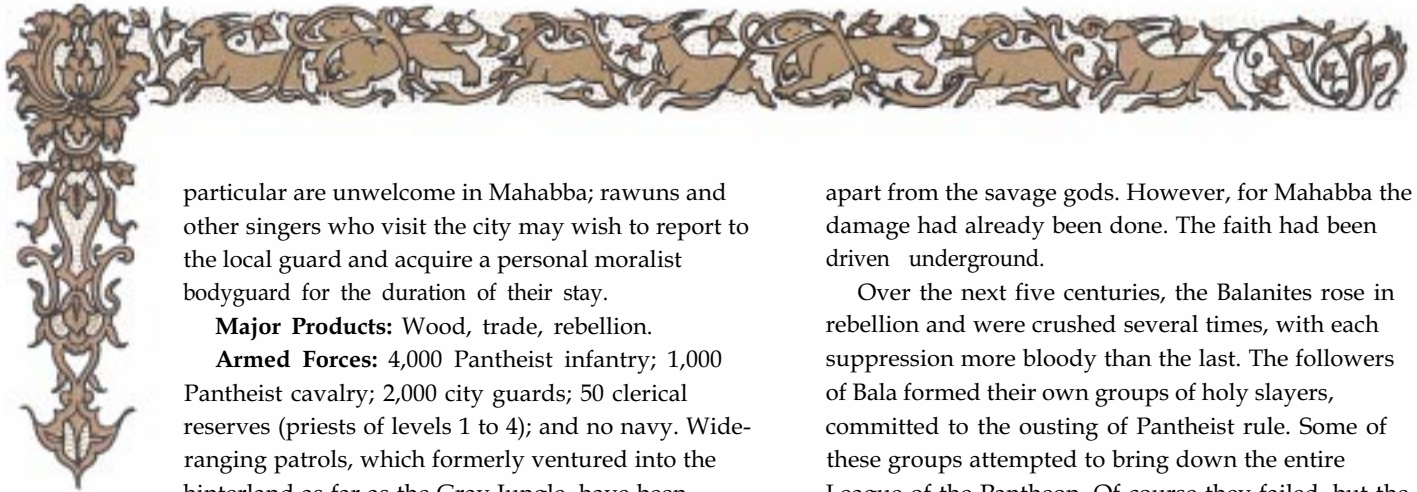
**Population:** 100,000.

**Features of the City:** As noted above, Mahabba is a city under military occupation by its own forces. The Balanite heresy fought by the caliph is so great as to make frequent patrols and checkpoints common. The city's strict curfew begins at nightfall. The Balanite threat is real: these heretics have set fires, destroyed supplies, and assassinated prominent merchants and officials. Even the Enlightened Throne, so far distant, is concerned with the damage. The Grand Caliph has urged that this uprising be put to an end, whether through negotiation or the sword.

Mahabbans are fearful of strangers and, to some degree, their own rulers. While Ma'mum remains popular with his people, the presence of Othmar ferreting out the guilty makes many nervous, and most feel that Othmar mixes personal feelings (and enjoyments) with his persecutions. To speak out, however, is to attract Othmar's unwanted attention.

Mahabba has recently been dubbed the City of Silence. Since the heresy began, music (except for martial bands) is rare. It is by music that the shadowy Balanites are said to spread their evil. Bards in





particular are unwelcome in Mahabba; rawuns and other singers who visit the city may wish to report to the local guard and acquire a personal moralist bodyguard for the duration of their stay.

**Major Products:** Wood, trade, rebellion.

**Armed Forces:** 4,000 Pantheist infantry; 1,000 Pantheist cavalry; 2,000 city guards; 50 clerical reserves (priests of levels 1 to 4); and no navy. Wide-ranging patrols, which formerly ventured into the hinterland as far as the Gray Jungle, have been discontinued in light of increased rebellion.

**Major Mosques:** Pantheon.

**Rumors and Lore:** The most important story out of Mahabba is that of the Balanite heresy. In the early days of the First Caliph, the cities of the eastern coast formed the League of the Pantheon and pledged their fealty as a group to the First Caliph and to the Law of the Loregiver. The gods worshipped in these cities became the five enlightened gods known as the Pantheon. Mahabba joined the League shortly thereafter and declared their god, Bala of the Tidings, a musical spirit-idol, enlightened as well. The clergy of the Pantheon protested, and their armies invaded Mahabba, crushing the initial heresy.

As a result of this conflict, the First Caliph sought knowledge in the Law on what constituted an "enlightened" god. Eventually, many local (common) gods came to be recognized as enlightened, standing

apart from the savage gods. However, for Mahabba the damage had already been done. The faith had been driven underground.

Over the next five centuries, the Balanites rose in rebellion and were crushed several times, with each suppression more bloody than the last. The followers of Bala formed their own groups of holy slayers, committed to the ousting of Pantheist rule. Some of these groups attempted to bring down the entire League of the Pantheon. Of course they failed, but the assassinations of several Pantheist leaders have been attributed to Balanite slayers.

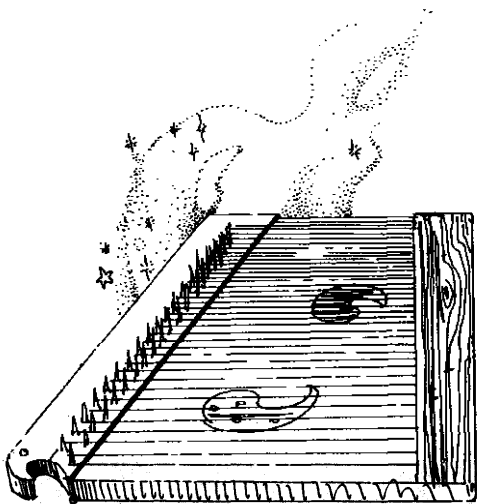
The most recent rebellion began seven years ago with the assassination of Mogan bin Ahmed, the previous ruler of Mahabba. The Conclave appointed Ma'mum as an interim commander to impose martial law. Two years ago, he was confirmed by Grand Caliph Khalil as the official ruler of the city.

## Talab, City of Questing

Travelers who follow the river Al-Muti east from Hilm, heading nearly 100 miles into the scorched wilderness, will reach the river's source. This is also the site of Talab. Dubbed the City of Questing, Talab is the most common starting point for adventurers entering the Ruined Kingdoms and Haunted Lands from a Pantheist city.

**The Ruler:** Caliph Kia al-Sadid (hmP/m/13), Humble Servant of the Enlightened Gods, is a mousy, stoop-shouldered bureaucrat whose appearance does not suggest the great power he wields within the city. His voice is soft, yet his words convey his wisdom. He was installed as an interim caliph by the Pantheist League following the assassination of his predecessor. (The murder was allegedly performed by the Storm Which Destroys, a group of holy slayers based in the Al-Sayaj Mountains.) Caliph Kia has proved to be a capable administrator, and he does not interfere with the traders and merchants. Though he is rarely seen in public, the force of his pronouncements are felt throughout the city.

**The Court:** The caliph's chief assistant is a priestess of the Pantheon, Aranah al-Mursal (hfP/m/10). Aranah serves as scribe, librarian, and record-keeper. She oversees the official documentation of all trade,





including slaves. Bookish and quiet, Aranah is often sent to Hilm as a representative of Talab. She also visits the outpost forts in the role of an inspector.

A remarkable addition to the court is Hanyar al-Muhif (hmF/mb/12), an enlightened Pantheist who hails from the unenlightened tribes of the Al-Sayaj Mountains. Hanyar serves as the caliph's emissary to the mountain tribes. His people, sweating in their furs, are often seen in the nearby countryside. Hanyar is a sly, secretive individual who prefers to remain in the background, from which he can carefully observe life in the court.

**Population:** 70,000.

**Features of the City:** Without the work of men, Talab could not survive. The city's water is brought from wells in the Al-Sayaj Mountains to the south through underground conduits. The impressive manmade conduits lead to Talab's reservoir, which is the source of the river Al-Muti. This water is the lifeblood of Talab. A mamluk organization known as the Parched is charged with protecting the reservoir and its conduits. They have no other duty but this, yet they are fiercely proud of its importance.

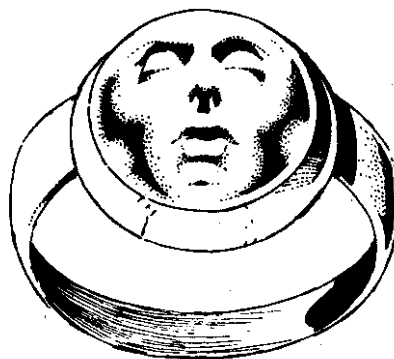
Like Halwa to the north, Talab is a meeting place of cultures. Tribes of the Ruined Kingdoms come here, though most are unwelcome. A healthy slave-trade has sprung up in the city, and if enlightened men are locked in shackles, Kia's men look the other way. Caliph Kia's predecessor rigorously persecuted illegal slaving, and this may have led to his demise at the obsidian blade of the holy slayers.

Talab is the site of a major university staffed by moralist barbers and Pantheist priests. The university is devoted to theology, priestly magic (Pantheist, of course), and healing. Many of Zakhara's most knowledgeable minds on these subjects were schooled at Talab's university.

The natives of Talab are insular and secretive. They keep private matters private and show a public face of reserved concern. Of late, outlying areas have suffered numerous raids, and Talab's citizens are particularly suspicious of desert tribes and their riders.

**Major Products:** General trade, slaves, fabric, sages (medicine), healers, barbers.

**Armed Forces:** 3,000 Pantheist infantry and 2,000 Pantheist cavalry, most of which are concerned with

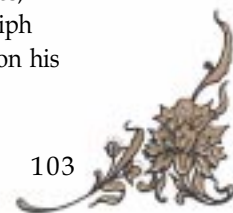


the protection of trade and patrolling the pass into the Ruined Kingdoms. Additional forces: 1,000 city guards; a unit of 100 clerical reserves (priests of levels 1 to 6); 900 mamluks of the Parched society, charged with protecting the water supply.

**Major Mosques:** Pantheon.

**Rumors and Lore:** At any time, 100 merchants catering to transient adventurers roam the streets of Talab, selling "true" maps to "great treasure" in the wilderness. A visitor can usually find about 50 tribe members here, all eager to share a tale of wonder and amazement about mountains of pure iron, dreadful cities ruled by the dead, and ancient but still-living idols worshipped by debased peoples.

Caliph Kia pays little heed to these stories. He does, however, have a keen interest in health and disease. He has ordered the mamluk guard to regularly check the reservoir and pipes for dangerous contagia and creatures known to cause or carry maladies. And he insists that all slave-traders guarantee that their slaves from the Ruined Kingdoms are clean and without taint. People with information regarding new diseases-excluding those who actually display symptoms, of course-are expected to report their knowledge to Aranah (the caliph's assistant). Of particular interest to the caliph are diseases, curses, and pseudo-diseases that defy magical cures. Caliph Kia has promised to share any discoveries based on his research to the leaders of other Pantheist cities, especially those of Hilm.







## Chapter 10

# Cities of The Ancients

Long, long ago, when the giants ruled and the Haunted Lands were said to be verdant, the lands now called the Ruined Kingdoms held mighty human empires. These were powerful river-empires, of which, say the sages, there were two (though some suggest there were at times as many as a seven). Zakharans know these two kingdoms as Nog and Kadar. Yet a third great empire, which once dominated the isle of Afyal, is now also remembered by its ruins. Its relation to the first two, if any, is unclear.

Why these kingdoms fell is a matter of conjecture. It could be that their people exhausted their resources, or that the land became wet and drove the folk to drier ground. It could be that the people battled themselves to oblivion, or fell to savages or great monsters. The truth is unrevealed.

Of the original inhabitants little is known. Their descendants may walk among today's tribes of the Ruined Kingdoms, the Haunted Lands, and even among the people of Afyal and Sahu. All that the original inhabitants of these empires have left behind are their works: huge structures which have fallen into disrepair. On the islands, there are great temples dominated by hippopotamus- and crocodile-headed gods. Throughout the valleys of Nog and Kadar, monolithic monuments are common, canted at odd angles like teetering headstones, their inscriptions mostly eroded away.

Once well tended, the land of the great river valleys is now overgrown with low underbrush and dense scrub. The soil has become dry and hard in the absence of irrigation. Consequently, the Mighty Nogaro, the Kadan, and even the Al-Iltifat regularly leap their banks and flood the surrounding countryside.

Officially, the kingdoms of Nog and Kadar extend from the southernmost land under Pantheist control to the forest bordering the Foreigners' Sea. Inland, the kingdoms extend as far as the highlands of the Haunted Lands. Of this territory, most is wild and unexplored. A scattering of small towns and encampments lie among the ruins, but only three major cities are found, all in the southeastern quarter. Two of these cities—Rog'osto and Kadarasto—are built on the ruins of old capitols. The third city, Dihliz, is relatively new, closer to a modern city than the others. Of the rest of the land, few can say what riches the weeds, vines, and undergrowth conceal.



The inhabitants of the Ruined Kingdoms came to enlightenment late (and often unwillingly). Other Zakharans view them as a moody, sullen, and untrustworthy group who have not left their savage gods and heritage fully behind them. Living in the shadow of their ancestors' palaces and tombs, it is easy to see why they are impressed with ancient powers. Most believe that their ancestors still thrive somewhere in the hidden lands and underground chambers of the dead empires, planning for their return. Slavery is a common practice here, particularly in the hinterland. Travelers are warned that savage slavers, who sell their wares at Halwa and Dihliz, are not choosy about the nature of their prey.

## Dihliz, The Gateway City

Located on a broad plateau about 50 miles up the Nogaro River, Dihliz is the only major city in the Ruined Kingdoms that has not been built on the wreckage of an older metropolis. Dubbed the Gateway City, it is a popular debarkation point for those seeking fortune and high adventure in the Ruined Kingdoms of the continent. It also serves as a major trading center between the inland towns and the civilized world.

**The Ruler:** Emira Hassana Alim al-Gaib (hfT/sl/18) was recently a merchant from Afyal. Upon the recommendation of the padishah of Afyal, she was appointed emira by the Grand Caliph for a provisional period of five years. It is now year four, and Hassana is busy hiding away her riches for her inevitable retirement.

The emira operates a wide-open town, the sort favored by adventurers (especially foreigners). Interpretation of the Law is loose, and usually to the advantage of the emira and her cronies.

**The Court:** The Ministry of Secrets registers and catalogs all ruins and treasure sites between the borders of the Pantheon and the Sempadan Forest. It is headed up by the emira's long-time associate, an unenlightened native of the Haunted Land named Amin Nur (hmF/mb/12). By insisting upon continual reorganization and review, Amin guarantees that the Ministry of Secrets is always in a shambles. Scrolls and reports are frequently misfiled, stolen, or lost, but a suitable amount of gold always seems to bring the

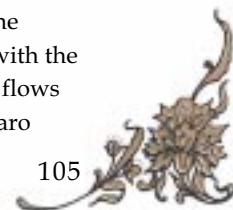
needed document or information to light. Individuals who visit the ministry in hopes of obtaining a map or a license to plunder often bring dinars instead of scribes.

The Ministry of Riches is responsible for detailing and applying a minor tax to all treasure extracted from the ruins. The ministry is run (and fairly responsibly run at that) by another of the emira's companions, Jel al-Galiz (hfW/sh/13), who holds the title "Minister of Riches." Conscientious and dependable, Jel realizes that most of the treasure hauled from the river valley alone disappears overland, or is smuggled out of the area, with no reports made whatsoever. She focuses her attention on ancient magics, striving to control (or at least regulate) their flow. In particular, she watches for useful or dangerous magical items. Her bureau imposes only a 1 percent tax on monetary treasure, and the ministry pays full price (5 times XP value) for most of the rare magical treasures that are brought to it. Further, individuals who work with the system—and with Jel al-Galiz—often receive grants to explore newly discovered ruins (or to investigate other, nonpaying tomb-raiders).

In keeping with Afyal's tradition, the emira has four husbands (see "Medina al-Afyal" below for details). One husband serves in the court of Afyal. The second serves in the court of Huzuz. The third maintains the family's trading route between Afyal and Jumlat. The fourth and youngest, Ebu min Hassana, commands the cavalry forces of Dihliz. Min Hassana is a former desert rider from the Haunted Lands. The cavalymen he leads are charged with protecting the city and seeking out those who clandestinely rob the ruins (as opposed to those who work with the Ministry of Secret's knowledge). About three times a year, Min Hassana takes a band of his riders up past Kadarasto for several weeks of patrolling.

**Population:** 80,000.

**Features of the City:** Given its physical position as well as its politics, Dihliz is a frontier city, uncivilized when compared to other Zakharan settlements. It is the clearing house for goods looted from the ruins of Nog and Kadar. In theory, each ruin or site of treasure is registered with the Ministry of Secrets, and the treasure removed from those sites is registered with the Ministry of Riches. In reality, however, plunder flows as freely from the Ruined Kingdoms as the Nogaro





River itself. Those who register with the ministries do so to create a thin veneer of legality (obtaining some protection) and to avoid arousing the suspicion of city patrols, who might then discover the most valuable (and truly secret) treasure vaults.

The buildings of Dihliz are a collection of baked brick and distinctive stone. The stone was hauled from a distant temple, or so it is claimed, for the city radiates a low level of magic, sufficient to scramble most detect magic spells. The palace and ministries, made of stone from Afyal, are exempt from this effect. Other divination spells, including *identify* and *legend* lore, are not affected by the temple stone.

The Gateway City is a melting pot, home to natives of the Ruined Kingdoms, people who have emigrated from Afyal, and treasure-seekers from around the Land of Fate. They are energetic, curious, progressive, and, above all, acquisitive. Those who visit Dihliz should heed the following recommendations: keep your eye on your equipment, your hands on your valuables, and a short leash on members of your household.

The Gateway City was established 100 years ago at the will of the padishah of Afyal, Alonka al-Aqil, for two reasons: (1) regulating the flow of magical antiquities out of this land, and (2) providing an interim base for trade to and around the Pantheon cities. Since then, the Grand Caliph has regularly assigned a new caliph to Dihliz about every five years—or as soon as the corruption becomes obvious yet again. Part of the problem: the Grand Caliph appoints each new emir upon the recommendation of the padishah of Afyal. The past two generations of rulers from that island nation have been more interested in appealing to courtiers—and in continuing to receive their share of the treasure haul—than in exerting the force of civilization.

**Major Products:** Trade, antiquities, rice.

**Armed Forces:** 1,000 city guards; 1,000 cavalymen under the command of Ebu min Hassana; navy (term used loosely) of 8 river barges with rowers.

**Major Mosques:** Kor, Pantheon, Selan, Zann.

**Rumors and Lore:** Dihliz is said to be built on some sort of holy or taboo site of the lost civilizations of the Ruined Kingdoms. The site is unusual because it lacks the ruins found elsewhere throughout the region. All cut stone in the city was imported.

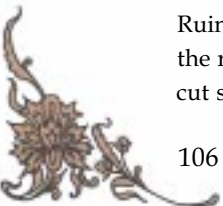
## Kadarasto, City Most Sinister

By following the Nogaro River about 100 miles inland from Dihliz, a traveler reaches the sinister city of Kadarasto. It is an ancient, alien-looking place, perched upon the bluff overlooking the river. The city's architecture—heavy, angular, and depressing—is unique in the Land of Fate. Some sages believe Kadarasto was once the capital of ancient Kadar, which may or may not have existed at the same time as Nog, and may or may not have been its enemy.

**The Ruler:** Khedive Aman al-Qasi abu Nari (hmF/a/15) is a sly and snakelike man. Around many a campfire in the wilderness, tales are told of an evil caliph whose mouth intones the prayers but whose heart is as black as ebony. Abu Nari lives up to his own legend. His father was one of the Grand Caliph's lesser viziers, and his mother was a native of noble descent. The khedive gained only the worst possible traits from both: the Byzantine politics of the court and the savage heritage of his mother. It has been said that his mother was secretly a priestess of Shajar, and that his father belonged to the Brotherhood of the True Flame.

The khedive was born in Kadarasto, a fact which, in the eyes of natives, places him above many other rulers who are imported from far-off courts. Powerful and harsh, the khedive has put down rebellions with little more than a word (and the help of a few elite mamluk units). The poor of Kadarasto fear him, but they also see him as a force who can oppose the foreign, moneyed classes. The wealthy, on the other hand, despise him, yet they tolerate the khedive, for they desperately need his army and his ability to command the common people.

**The Court:** Nari ibn Aman (hmF/a/10) is the leading (and it has seemed for some time, the only) supporter of his father, the khedive. Hot-tempered and intense, Nari commands the city's armed forces. His popularity among the poorer members of the city far surpasses that of the khedive himself (not a difficult feat). In fact, Nari is viewed as a local hero—a hero who cuts down illegal tomb-robbers, strikes out against the sanctioned thieves of the emira of Dihliz, and strives to exterminate all those who plunder the heritage of the Ruined Kingdoms. Nari applauds the aid that Ebu min Hassana provides with his raids, but









wishes that the emira and all foreigners would leave his "country" in peace, allowing it to develop into a power in its own right.

**Population:** 120,000 (estimated).

**Features of the City:** Kadarasto is a base for individuals seeking to explore the valley of the Nogaro River. All ruins within two days' ride have been mostly revealed and gutted, and the landscape and fields are littered with defaced and toppled statues and monuments to forgotten gods. Beyond that, the brush and scrub conceals a great deal. There, discoveries are yet to be made—from simple ruins such as baths and watchtowers to greater finds such as tombs or temples.

The most recent version of Kadarasto proper is built upon the ruins of at least 12 other cities, all situated upon the bluffs above the Nogaro. Despite its newer construction, today's Kadarasto has the same haunting nature of its ruined predecessors: windowless architecture; hulking and oppressive city walls (broken only by a pair of gates); and odd, five-sided towers and rooms.

Kadarasto is overrun with its heritage. The ruins of many buildings remain. Most of the graven icons of the ancient ways have been destroyed, their statues crushed to rubble. Nonetheless, the city has a savage, idolatrous atmosphere, for a number of these icons survive in the back alleys and as part of existing buildings.

The city's people, mainly natives from the surrounding wilderness, have received enlightenment only in the past few generations. Kadarasto's lord still takes the ancient title "khedive" (unique to the Ruined Kingdoms), though he professes his allegiance to Huzuz and the superiority of the enlightened gods.

Most of the city's money lies in the hands of interlopers—a few adventurers who were lucky at tomb-robbing, a handful of merchants who exported (and smuggled) rare items from this region to Talab, and courtiers who have offended the padishah of Afyal. (The people of Afyal have a saying: "Better to live without a hand than to be posted to Kadarasto.") The native classes, distinctly poorer, harbor a deep resentment toward these prosperous outsiders. Were it not for the swords of the mamluks and the hired mercenaries, a rebellion would occur and blood would flow in the streets.

The split between Kadarasto's natives is represented in the opinion that other Zakharans have of

Kadarasto. To the rest of the world, this city's native people are savage and secretive, still worshipping their old icons when they can. Kadarasto's leaders, on other hand, are viewed as tricky, suspect, and greedy. Only from a position of strength can more civilized Zakharans hope to control both groups and maintain the fragile balance between them.

**Major Products:** Trade, antiquities, rice.

**Armed Forces:** 2,000 city guards; 1,000 cavalry; 3 mamluk units of the Devout, totaling 900 men, all under the command of young Nan.

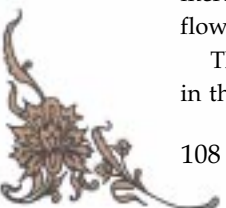
**Major Mosques:** Hajama, Pantheon, Najm, Selan. Also secret cults of Kiga, Raggara, and Shajar.

**Rumors and Lore:** Legends persist that the ancient passages and catacombs of the city's past have survived. Followers of the old cult-gods are said to use these places in the secret worship of their savage idols. Such idolatry does not officially exist in Kadarasto, so the khedive does not go looking for it.

## Medina al-Afyal

**A**fyal, the island kingdom dominated by this city, is one of the Enlightened Throne's most distant outposts. It is also among the most prosperous. Located north of Sahu Island, the Isle of the Elephant is a convenient stop for traders from the distant East. This island is also blessed with great natural resources—including precious metals and exotic hardwoods. As a result, its capital, the City of the Elephant, enjoys a richness that rivals that of Huzuz itself.

**The Ruler:** The island of Afyal has been blessed by Fate with its riches, so perhaps it is only fair that it suffer a dearth where its rulers are concerned. The House of Alon founded the kingdom and its capital city soon after the Law of the Loregiver spread throughout the continent of Zakhara. That house took great pride in the fact that the blood of the First Caliph also flowed in Afyal's first padishah, just as the blood of the current Grand Caliph flows through the veins of today's padishah of Afyal. The mix is thin, however, and so is the genetic link. Afyal's padishahs have always been erratic, perhaps because it takes the will of a madman to create a new city in the wilderness. The present ruler exceeds his predecessors in madness, however.





Alad bin Alaq bin Alonka of Alon—His Most Enlightened and Resplendent Majesty, Servant of the Grand Caliph, Blood of the Conquerors, Padishah of Afyal, Father of the Multitudes, Wise and Sage Master of His Own Destiny (hmF/f/13)—is a certifiable loon. Some say it is the blood of the ruling class running thin after 500 years. Others say that Bin Alonka was born with a sound mind, but he encountered some great horror in the Ruined Kingdoms as a youth. His father (perhaps lacking in faculties himself), failed to recognize the extent of the damage, and named Bin Alonka his heir.

Whatever the cause, the padishah of Afyal is known for his eccentricities and whims. He has appointed peasants and wandering adventurers to be his ambassadors to far-off lands, simply because he liked his beneficiaries' looks. He has thrown long standing and loyal courtiers into exile (or worse, to a posting in Kadarasto) as punishment for a remark that he overheard by chance (and perhaps even misunderstood). The padishah has ordered buildings destroyed only to order them rebuilt within a week. He has approved expeditions to the Ruined Kingdoms and for the settlement of Sahu, then forgotten to approve any moneys for these actions. And when the holders of such grants asked for the gold, the padishah had them thrown into prison for their troubles.

Despite these flaws, the padishah of Afyal is a sweet, endearing, and friendly man, particularly with his own people. When he rides through the city in a procession, they cheer. Their ardour may not be for him personally, however. He rides on a floating palanquin complete with great magical pots, which shoot forth streams of silver and copper pieces.

One of the padishah's many titles is "Father of the Multitudes." He lives up to the reputation. The padishah has no wife (much to the chagrin of the Grand Caliph), having divorced or failed to marry every woman to whom he was attracted. But he maintains a large harim and has a huge brood of children from age 22 on down. He has recognized all of these children as his own—a practice which will inevitably lead to bloody conflicts in the event of his death.

The padishah's first-born son, Alakbar bin Alad bin Alaq, disappeared on a voyage south into the Crowded Sea four years ago. No word has come from (or about)

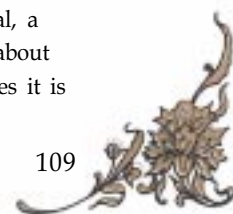
him since. Given the tendencies of his father, this may be for the best.

**The Court:** The Mad Padishah has a relatively stable, contented court and bureaucracy. (Otherwise, the petty nobles and merchants would have turned him out long ago, "heir to 500 years" or no.) Many of these personages pass through phases like the waning moon, sometimes being in the padishah's favor, and sometimes not. Members of the court have a saying: "If you do not like the padishah's ruling, wait five minutes and ask again. By that time he may have forgotten."

The most important person in the court is the padishah's trusted chief vizier, Anwar al-Makruh (hemW/sh/13). Al-Makruh served as the padishah's tutor as a youth. The chief vizier is an acid-tongued half-elf who marvels aloud at the fact that men, meaning humans, have managed to accomplish so much—especially given his liege as an example. Such bouts of honesty result in the chief vizier being banished from the city on a regular basis. The chief vizier retreats to his own palatial estate in the wilderness for a month or two of uninterrupted research, after which the padishah inevitably cools down and reinstates him. A 13th-level sha'ir, Anwar al-Makruh has an air gen as a familiar. Al-Makruh is partial to djinn when he works. Many islanders assume that djinn act as the sha'ir's spies while he is in exile.

Also important in the padishah's everyday life is his aunt (his father's sister), the Empress Alia Jamal, or Umm Jamal (hfP/m/12). Though he would prefer she played no role in his life whatsoever, the padishah cannot banish her. Once, it is said, a witty courtier noted aloud that the lean, vulturelike woman tried to join the Pantheon, but she was too conservative even for them. Now the empress allegedly has that courtier's tongue as a keepsake.

Empress Alia's current mission in life is to present her son Jamal bin Alia (hmT/sl/4) as the next candidate to ascend the Elephant Throne. The padishah has been resistant to this idea, if only because his own first son is missing. But Empress Alia is a hard woman to thwart. She presses her son into adventuring so that he can establish a name and reputation for himself. Jamal, a slight and impressionable young man, is unsure about his mother's chosen role for himself, but he realizes it is easier to agree with her than to fight her.







Should the padishah's son Alakbar never return, and Jamal fail to be recognized, the throne would fall to the padishah's eldest daughter, Alina bint Alad (hfW/so/6). Alina is an intense young woman. She is also a serious student of magic, and often uses the chief vizier's manor (provided he is not out of favor at the time). Alma does not want the life of a ruler, so she hopes to see her elder brother return.

Finally, persons of note include the representative of the Merchant Houses, Najiba al-Aqil (hfT/mr/15). Al-Aqil is one of the few sane and reasonable people in the court, a calm voice in an otherwise chaotic place. She is the spokeswoman for Afyal's many and varied merchant houses, which provide the lifeblood of the kingdom by bringing in supplies and civilization from western Zakhara. As is typical for the ruler of a merchant house, Najiba has four husbands—the maximum according to local tradition. All are busy with trade or exploration. One is currently assigned to finding the Crown Prince.

**Population:** 130,000.

**Features of the City:** The island of Afyal is verdant and wild, with rolling hills and thick jungles, which are untamed outside the capital city. Wild creatures lurk in the wilderness, virtually at the City of the Elephant's door.

The capital is the only settlement of significant size on the island. Because the jungles yield the rich woods that are the island's main export, a few small villages dot the wilderness, all of them stockaded. A few craftsmen dwell in these villages, but most of their inhabitants are harvesters who bring the wood to the City of the Elephant. There, the finest woodcrafters of Afyal do their work, creating furniture and objects of art in which the wood appears to be almost liquid, flowing in elegant, graceful curves.

No other city in Zakhara is quite like Afyal's capital. For the most part, it lacks the blue tilework of many cities to the west. Yet it is no less impressive, for the city's architects and craftsmen made liberal use of polished marble and gleaming hardwoods. Its greatest structures—the Great Mosque of Selan and the Palace of Alon—flank the city.

The mosque, which boasts an attached university, is the largest temple devoted to Selan in the Land of Fate. The priests operating this mosque are strict

moralists, but pragmatists and ethoists may study here, and it is the center of worship for Selan's followers.

The padishah's palace is a sprawling collection of small buildings, many of them linked by causeways, dotted with a half-dozen spires and domes. It is one of the greatest architectural wonders of the Land of Fate, combining magical and conventional methods of construction. It is said that five dao work continually to maintain the walls and bridges of the palace.

The people of Afyal range from the richest merchants to the poorest beggars. The concept of station—that each person has one chosen place in the universe, which is decreed by Fate—is extremely strong on this island. A caste system reigns. A person may never rise above his or her original station, regardless of action. In Afyal, even the most successful adventurer from a beggarly background is expected to defer to a less talented or less worthy individual of a higher station. Marriage outside one's station is strongly (and often violently) discouraged.

**Major Products:** Trade, wood, gold, precious metals, jewelry, elephants. The elephants of Afyal are particularly intelligent and docile, able to learn and perform tasks willingly and with ease. By decree of the island's first padishah, Alon, no one may kill an elephant of Afyal without sacrificing his or her own life in turn.

**Armed Forces:** 2,000 city guard; 500 cavalry; 500 elephant Calvary; 4 mamluk units; totaling 1,200 men, all of whom represent the Wondrous and serve as the palace guard.

**Major Mosques:** Selan. (While other faiths are tolerated, in keeping with the Enlightened Way, the only major mosque on the island is to the goddess of the Beautiful Moon.)

**Rumors and Lore:** Afyal suffers little save for its mad ruler, and his madness seems less dangerous the farther one is distant from him. The daily ritual of life goes on, for everyone has his or her place in society, and the merchant houses continue to bring in new wonders from across the seas.

The island does have one mystery, however. Ruined images of an elephant-headed idol still turn up in great numbers, ranging from small charms and statuettes to large monoliths that are discovered as the jungle is cleared. They are all that remain of the Lost One, a





forgotten god who ruled Afyal before its days of enlightenment. The Lost One, it is said, was driven off the isle completely, and now lives among the wild islands of the Crowded Sea.

## Rog'osto, City of Spires

From the mouth of the Nogaro River, a 300-mile trip north along the shores of the Crowded Sea leads travelers to Rog'osto, the City of Spires. The reason for its name is immediately evident: the city's unique metal towers soar toward the sky, gleaming in the sun. Some visitors have likened the towers to exotic mushrooms, giving Rog'osto a secondary title: City of Fungus. The bizarre towers are found nowhere else in the Land of Fate. They are the legacy of whatever inhabitants ruled the city long ago, in a forgotten time.

**The Ruler:** The elven khedive Samia al-Sa'id (efW/sh/15) has ruled for the past 100 years in an enlightened, progressive manner that has endeared her to both the common people of the city and to those who dwell in the towers. A powerful wizard in her own right, Khedive Samia has gained wisdom over the years and acquired mighty magical items. The khedive helps settle the squabbling between the tower-lords (*amir al-burj*). She also helps fend off the acquisitive tendencies of both the Pantheon and Afyal.

**The Court:** The khedive of Rog'osto is aided in all things by Sherif Akyar al-Awasif, a female noble djinni. The khedive herself freed Akyar from imprisonment, and the djinni serves by choice. Akyar is fanatically loyal to Samia. If the djinni perceives a threat, she will stop at nothing to aid her liege. The sherif (pronounced "share EEF") is on good terms with the other genies who live in Rog'osto's towers. Though (as might be expected) her relationships with dao and efreet are somewhat strained, Akyar speaks for all the genie peoples in court.

The court is large and varied. Each "power group" delegates one representative: sha'irs; sorcerers; elemental mages of flame, sea, wind, and sand; clergy; craftsmen; traders; and foreigners. There are many other groups and subgroups represented in the court, as well as ambassadors from other cities. Major influences include Sherif Akyar al-Awasif, representing the genie

peoples; Bojo al-Ami (hmT/mr/10), representing the craftsmen; and Bahij a of Selan (hff /p/14), representing all clergy. Here are other characters of note:

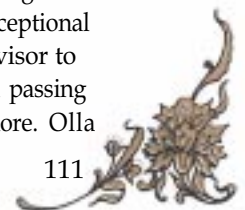
- Fayiz al-Wazir (hmW/so/19) represents the sorcerers. He is the most powerful human member of the court. He is prone to the effects of his venerable age, however. Fayiz tires easily, and while his mind is as quick as ever, he cannot converse for extended periods without becoming exhausted. He spends most of his time sequestered within his private tower, communicating with the court through messages carried by invisible stalkers.

- Kharj al-Talqa (hmW/fm/13) represents the flame mages, and he has openly declared himself a member of the Brotherhood of the True Flame. Kharj claims that the foul reputation of the group can be attributed to a minority of overzealous members as well as dark lies that are spread by other elemental mages. Considering his background, Kharj is a polite, almost whimsical mage.

- Revered Mother Farida bint Thuriya (hfP/m/10), humble servant of the Pantheon, is the Pantheist League's ambassador to Rog'osto. She is also a firebrand and a holy crusader. Farida does not trust the city's dilettante mages and soft-sided priests, and she does not believe the inherent power of the city should rest in their hands. This moralist priest has been known to pay adventurers for whatever treasures they recover from the hinterlands, after which she has arranged for the treasures to be smuggled out of the city.

- Othmar bin Kaloth (hmW/sh/12) represents the sha'irs of Rog'osto. He is aided by his bound efreeti, Xamus. As the khedive's leading opponent, Othmar believes she is too open and easygoing to be placed in charge of such magical power. He and Kharj, the representative of the flame mages, are old adventuring companions. Xamus, the efreeti, despises Sherif Akyar, and she, in turn, loathes this genie who might dare to threaten her khedive.

- Olla al-Funun (hfW/so/17) is the ambassador from Afyal. She is an open, cheery woman who actively seeks to serve the khedive by reconciling various factions. With her facile mind and exceptional tact, Olla is often both a negotiator and an advisor to several sides of the same discussion. With each passing year, the khedive relies upon Olla more and more. Olla





KARL





is one of the few individuals in court who have more than a passing interest in whatever race created the towers of Rog'osto. If a pristine tower is found in the hinterlands, she will reward the finders for its contents and the story.

**Population:** 80,000.

**Features of the City:** Rog'osto is actually two cities, one built ages ago by unknown, seemingly inhuman hands, the other having grown up around its base during the modern, enlightened age. The Old City comprises metal spires that tower over the area. The towers are constructed from a unique steel alloy. About 50 of these towers are in evidence, though fully half of them are shattered or toppled. The surviving towers stand almost 100 feet tall. The tops and bottoms of the towers are slightly flared, with a long stem in between. The interior of each is an open stairway, spiraling up the inside without a rail, to a great single floor perched at the tower's summit.

Three of the intact towers, arranged like the points in a triangle, have been claimed by the khedive for a palace. All three towers have recently been connected by a fortified wall, which adjoins and links their fluted bases.

In the name of the Grand Caliph, the khedive provides grants for the use of the remaining intact towers. Wizards and priests inhabit them, using the towers as research laboratories or sanctuaries. A number of wizards have blocked or removed the interior stairs and provided their own methods of egress. There are only 22 towers (not counting the palace), and they always full, though turnover is regular.

Rog'osto is considered by many to be the most magical city in the Land of Fate. The city's strange towers attract sha'irs, sorcerers, and elemental mages, as well as pragmatists, kahins, mystics, scholars, and researchers seeking the advantages of both privacy and city living. The khedive has set down rules governing the behavior within the spires (e.g., no inter-spire warfare, no experiments that affect the towers or the city), and violating those rules may be cause for expulsion. Rog'osto has lost three towers to such activities.

The New City of Rog'osto is clustered at the base of the towers, a collection of white-washed, mud-brick houses, much like those found elsewhere in Zakhara. This the home of the poor and of the middle class, consisting of traders and artisans. Rog'osto has a thriving business of craft and art, catering to the wizards, who often require the finest materials for their research.

The New City also produces excellent weapons and armor, using metal from the city's fallen towers. As noted, this metal is an unusual alloy of steel. It tarnishes instead of rusts, melts at a lower temperature, and may be drawn thin to make durable metal cords. Otherwise, it is just as strong and light as steel, and can be used in the same fashion. (Weapons produced with this steel function as normal weapons of their type.) The metalsmiths of the city pay 2 gp a pound for this material. A single fallen tower produces several tons. The existing stock has already been claimed by the city's metalsmithing houses, however.

**Major Products:** Information, sages, art, crystal, fine metal craftsmanship.

**Armed Forces:** 1,000 city guards. Each tower holder may have a personal guard of 200 sentient beings. The khedive's palace (with three towers) has a personal guard of 400 2nd-level fighters, plus 200 jann who answer to Sherif Akyar al-Awasif. The armed forces are weak, even by Zakharan standards, but no one has seriously considered fighting an entire city of wizards.

**Major Mosques:** Kor, Selan, Zann.

**Rumors and Lore:** Rog'osto's great mystery is its towers. It is assumed that they were created by some magical, possibly divine race from the heavens. A few surviving inscriptions from this race are in an archaic tongue seen nowhere else in the Land of Fate. They speak of a war, say the sages, between the city dwellers and "those above." The natives evidently lost and abandoned their city. The nature of these original inhabitants is unknown, except that they were humanoid. All humanoid races have been suggested, but common thinking leans toward the burned elves (drow).





## Appendix A: Legends and Tales of Zakhara

### 1. The Maiden of Beauty

**T**his is the story of why the world is as it is, the story of Fate and the gods and the genies. It was in this fashion that the tale was told to me, so it is in the same fashion that I shall tell it to you now.

In the time before the Land of Fate became known as the Land of Fate, the world was young and very different. The great beings whom we call the gods sailed their mighty ships over the endless sea as freely as our corsairs and merchants do today. The great tribes of geniekind made their tents in the endless desert even more widely than the nomads do now. The world belonged to the gods and the genies, but they knew not how to share it. They were as fire and water, battling without end.

Mortals—and by mortals I mean men and women, children and elders, humans and other intelligent races—were caught in this violent clashing of powers. They did not hold sway in the land as they do today. Rather, the mortals were pathetic creatures trapped between the warring gods and genies, confined to a narrow sliver of coast between the desert and the ocean. The ocean storms of the furious gods shattered the mortals' boats, while the desert winds of the wrathful genies scattered and destroyed their herds. The mortals were miserable, but they knew no other life, and who were they to question their fortune?

Then one day among the mortal tribes there was born a girl of exceeding beauty. Her first smile was like the moon breaking free of clouds, and her first laugh was more melodious than the call of a songbird. All who saw this girl loved her deeply. When she grew older and became a maiden of marriageable age, so widespread was the word of her beauty that at last fell it upon the ears of the gods.

At first, not even such news could capture the interest of the quarrelsome deities. But soon three great gods (who were perhaps wiser than the rest) spied this maiden from afar. Those gods were Old Kor and Brave Hajama and Adventurous Najm. Each was immediately mesmerized by the maiden's beauty, and each immediately decided that she must devote herself to him alone—to become a follower or an acolyte, a companion or a consort, to become as much a prisoner to him as he had become a prisoner to her beauty. And so the three gods sailed their great boats to the docks of the city where the maiden dwelled. There, each in turn demanded of the mortals that she be brought forth and given over to him as a bride is given to a husband.

Old Kor said, "One of such beauty must be taught wisdom to use her traits. As the eldest and therefore wisest god, I am the most suitable match for the maiden. Give her to me, else your people will become old and blow away on the ocean breeze."

Brave Hajama said, "One of such beauty must be protected from other jealous suitors. I am the most valiant of my brethren, and therefore the most suitable match for the maiden. Give her to me, else your people will be conquered by others, and scattered throughout the burning world."

Adventurous Najm said, "One of such beauty must be cloaked in rich attire and laden with great treasures. As the most industrious of my brothers, I am best able to meet her needs and therefore the most suitable match for the maiden. Give her to me, else your people will become craven, and never amount to anything."

And so the gods began to quarrel among themselves very loudly, such that the sky became dark and bolts of lightning crashed against the ground. Their quarrel captured the attention of the genie tribes of the desert.

Now, it is true that the cold elemental gods of the genies care nothing for mortal beauty, but the genies themselves know the pleasures of the senses and of the flesh, and they appreciate them as much as mortals do. They came to learn the cause of the gods' argument. Upon seeing the maiden, they too were smitten by her beauty.

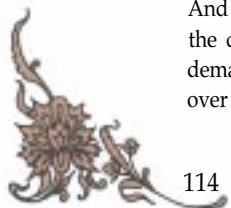
"Such radiance!" cried the Great Caliph of the Djinn. "We must bring her great treasures to rival those of the gods! Then she will choose me as her consort."

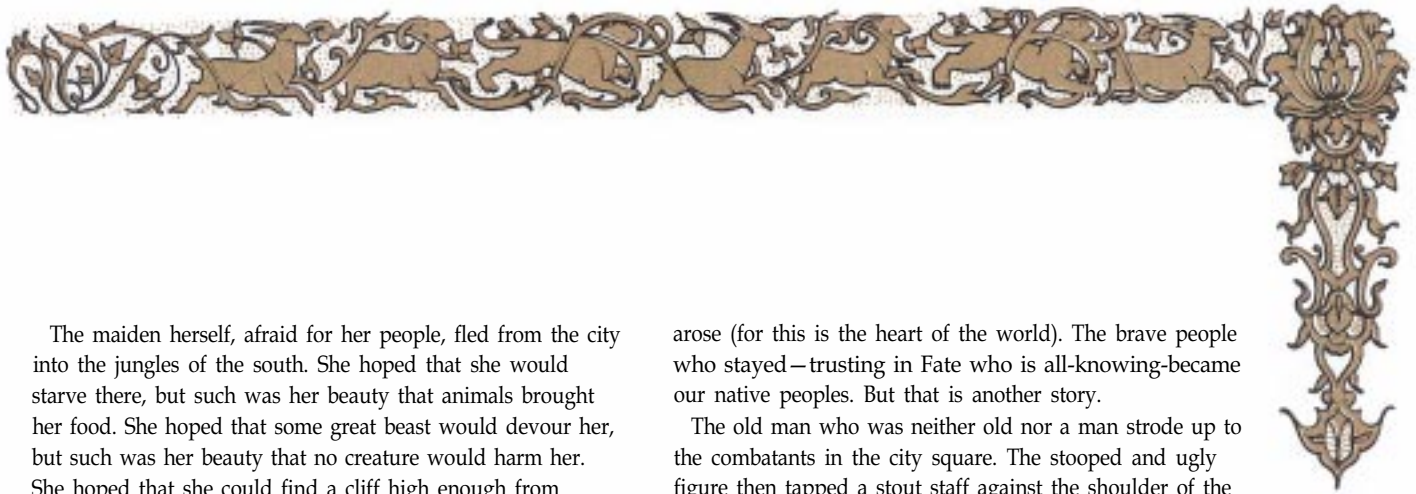
"Such sweetness!" cried the Grand Khan of the Dao, "We must steal her away from these others! Then she will choose me as her consort!"

"Such light!" cried the Most Respected Sultan of the Efreet. "We must gather the other genies in an army, and drive the gods away. Then she will choose me as her consort!"

"Such magnificence!" cried the Imperial Padishah of the Marids. "We must threaten these humans with all manner of plagues and disasters, so that they turn her over to us. Then she will choose me as her consort!"

And with that the genies began to quarrel among themselves, like the gods. Then the skies fully opened and let fall the rain, and the ground erupted with great gouts of fire. The people of the city feared for their lives, but they were too frightened to give the maiden to any one god or any one genie, lest they offend all the others.





The maiden herself, afraid for her people, fled from the city into the jungles of the south. She hoped that she would starve there, but such was her beauty that animals brought her food. She hoped that some great beast would devour her, but such was her beauty that no creature would harm her. She hoped that she could find a cliff high enough from which to throw herself, but such was her beauty that the ground smoothed and softened itself beneath her. And so at last she fell to the ground and despaired.

Now Fate, that heavenly force who was like a goddess, yet not a goddess, was also in the jungle. She kept herself apart from the gods and the genies, and she knew nothing of their petty arguments. Fate came upon the melancholy maiden, and like her powerful brethren, Fate was smitten with the maiden's beauty. She too desired the maiden's devotion, and wished to capture the maiden's heart and win her companionship. But unlike her brethren, Fate did not want to possess the maiden as a trophy, nor did Fate entertain even a glimmer of lascivious thought.

And Fate said to herself, "It is the willing hand which best crafts, and the willing heart which is most easily led. Perhaps if I discern her problem and aid her, she will find me worthy of her devotion."

And so it was that Fate asked the maiden about the cause of her sorrows. The maiden told Fate her troubles in the same manner as I have described them. Fate became angry, for the gods and genies had behaved horridly. Fate wished to teach them a lesson. She hatched a plan and told it to the maiden, and the maiden smiled a smile like the moon breaking through the clouds, and agreed.

They set to work changing the maiden's features through skill and craft. Fate wove the maiden's hair with hanging moss, making it appear gray and stringy, and then she gave her a long beard of the same material. Fate rubbed mud across the maiden's face. The mud cracked upon drying, making her appear haggard and old. Then Fate cloaked the maiden's womanly form in voluminous robes, which were constructed to make her appear mannish and hunched.

Thus the maiden, now disguised as an old man, returned to the city. Fate lingered behind her, several steps away, becoming one with the shadows. The gods and genies were still arguing in the central court. The buildings quaked. The ground shook. And the heavens roared.

The people of the city were sorely afraid. Some had even fled by this time, traveling as far as they could. It was from these craven people that the barbarians of the north and east

arose (for this is the heart of the world). The brave people who stayed—trusting in Fate who is all-knowing—became our native peoples. But that is another story.

The old man who was neither old nor a man strode up to the combatants in the city square. The stooped and ugly figure then tapped a stout staff against the shoulder of the largest god, Hajama. "Why are you arguing so?" rasped the old man.

"Ah, respected elder" replied the god, who was amazed by the old man's audacity and assumed him to be wise and powerful. "I have the right to take the beautiful maiden as my own, which these others deny me. That is why we argue."

"No," said the Great Caliph of the Djinn, "I have the right to take the beautiful maiden as my own, which others deny me. That is why we argue."

And so they began to squabble again, until the old man who was really a maiden struck the ground thrice with his staff. Fate, of course, was with the maiden, and the force of the blow knocked all the gods and genies from their feet.

"I am old and wise," said the old man. "I have no need for young maidens. Show this girl to me and I will decide who among you is the best match."

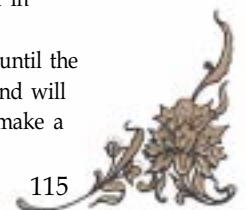
And the gods and genies agreed, though each of them made great threats as to what would happen to the mortals if he alone was not chosen. Then the gods and genies set out to look for the maiden as the old man had asked, and found she was gone from the city.

"How can I decide who is to have her, when she is not to be had?" said the old man.

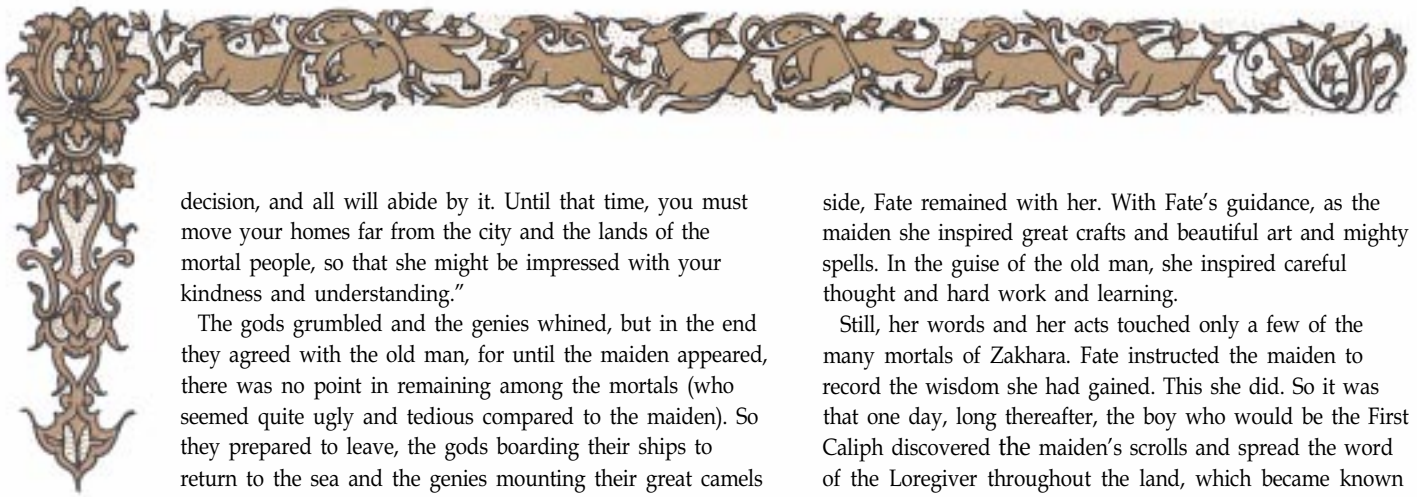
And the gods and genies ran about the city, looking into every apartment, every court, and every quarter, seeking some trace of the maiden. They found nothing, for Fate was with the maiden, and none could penetrate her disguise. Then the gods and genies ran three times around the world, scouring the mountain highlands and the ocean depths to discover the object of their desires. But they found no trace, for Fate was with the maiden, and none could penetrate her disguise.

Finally, the gods and genies returned to the courtyard of the city, where a great lamentation went up, for they had failed to discover maiden. They cried and rent their garments, and they cast themselves upon the ground in despair. Then the old man spoke.

"I will do you a service," he said. "I will wait here until the maiden returns, for she is a shy and timid creature, and will certainly reappear soon after you leave. Then I will make a







decision, and all will abide by it. Until that time, you must move your homes far from the city and the lands of the mortal people, so that she might be impressed with your kindness and understanding."

The gods grumbled and the genies whined, but in the end they agreed with the old man, for until the maiden appeared, there was no point in remaining among the mortals (who seemed quite ugly and tedious compared to the maiden). So they prepared to leave, the gods boarding their ships to return to the sea and the genies mounting their great camels to return to the desert.

Before the gods left, however, Kor the Wise turned to the old man and said, "We will go, but first we will choose among your people those who are worthy to act in our stead, those who can show that we are worthy of the maiden."

The old man replied, "We have no Fate but the Fate which is given us," and shrugged his shoulders.

Each god then picked ten men and ten women to be his first servants, and so it was that the first Clerics of the Faith came into being. And then the gods mounted their great ships and sailed far away from the lands of the mortals.

Before the genies left, the Great Caliph of the Djinn said, "We will go, but only far enough away to avoid offending the maiden's people. We will send our servants and warriors to aid you, to show that we are worthy of the maiden."

The old man replied, "We have no Fate but the Fate which is given us," and shrugged his shoulders.

And so the genies rode into the desert on their great white camels, but to this day they come regularly to the mortals' land as servants and warriors.

At last only the old man remained in the court. Fate stepped from the shadows and removed the false face and hair from the maiden, who said, "Surely the gods and genies will be angry once they realize they have been deceived. Will they not return to punish us with their righteous wrath?"

"You have wisdom in true proportion to your beauty," replied Fate, "Yet for them to return and attack, they must first admit that they were deceived by a maiden, and no god would wish to appear so foolish in front of the genies, and no genie would wish to appear so foolish in front of the gods. Before you is a most difficult task, for should you choose genie or mortal or god, the others will know, and they will return to make good their great threats and dire warnings. You must never make that choice."

"We have no Fate but the Fate which is given us," said the maiden, and she nodded.

Fate remained with the maiden for some time. The maiden gained much in wisdom, learning how to deal with gods and genies and how to guide mortals to the correct path, the path to which they are destined. Even after Fate left the maiden's

side, Fate remained with her. With Fate's guidance, as the maiden she inspired great crafts and beautiful art and mighty spells. In the guise of the old man, she inspired careful thought and hard work and learning.

Still, her words and her acts touched only a few of the many mortals of Zakhara. Fate instructed the maiden to record the wisdom she had gained. This she did. So it was that one day, long thereafter, the boy who would be the First Caliph discovered the maiden's scrolls and spread the word of the Loregiver throughout the land, which became known as the Land of Fate.

If the gods and genies have ever found out Fate's trick, they have said nothing (and no mortal has inquired, for only a fool would broach the subject and risk their wrath). The maiden-who came to be called the Beautiful One, the Old One, and the Loregiver-has yet to make her decision. Even to this day, she remains at the side of Fate. She has been greatly tested by mortals, gods, and genies. But that is another set of tales, for another evening . . .

## II. The Boy and The Genies

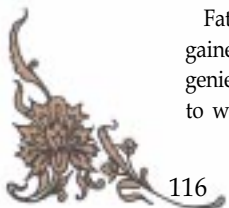
**T**his is the story of why the world is as it is, the story of the genies and how they caused the seasons to be, and why the genies serve the sha'irs. It was in this fashion that the tale was told to me, so it is in the same fashion that I shall tell it to you now.

Once, there was a boy whose parents died when he was quite young. The orphan had only one relative: an uncle whom he had never seen and who lived very far away. When word of his brother's death reached him, the uncle came to care for his nephew and to run the family business until the boy reached his majority.

Now, the family business was very productive, trading in rich velvets, fresh spices, and camels. It required very little time and energy, yet it brought great wealth. The uncle was fat and lazy. As his nephew grew older, the uncle came to loathe the idea that one day he would be forced to relinquish the business and its rewards. So the uncle schemed to have the youth slain. His own hands, the uncle knew, had to remain clean, so he devised a plan ensuring that the blame would not fall upon him.

The uncle hired a bandit who was reputedly very skilled in his craft. The bandit kidnapped the youth and took him into the desert, where the scoundrel abandoned him without food or water.

When word of the boy's disappearance reached the uncle, he feigned despair. The corpulent man cried and rent his fine garments, proclaiming, "I have lost one who is like my own son!" But in his secret heart he was glad.





A boy from the city who is abandoned in the wastes of the desert will soon weaken and die—indeed, that was the uncle's intention. But Fortune smiled upon the youth, and Fate was with him (for we have no Fate but the Fate which is given us). The boy wandered, looking for shelter from the sun. Soon he found an outcropping of rocks. He crawled into the shade of the outcropping and saw that the shade concealed a narrow crevice, too small for a normal man, but large enough for a boy such as he to pass through. The sound of running water issued from the crevice, beckoning like a gentle song, and the boy followed it into the darkness.

The crevice soon widened. A light appeared ahead. The youth made for the light, then tripped over an obstacle in the shadows at his feet. Exploring with his hands, he touched the skeleton of an elven warrior. The ancient warrior held a great straight sword which glinted faintly, reflecting the light from ahead. The youth took the weapon and pressed on.

The crevice quickly became broader and the youth entered a cavern. The light emanated from the ceiling, which was ringed with luminous moss and mushrooms. A stream ran across the entire length of the cavern, collecting in a great pool at the center.

On the far side of the pool slumbered a great ghul. She had her true form, which was hideous. Her head was resting on an enormous ruby, larger in girth than the boy's own body.

The youth was sorely afraid. Yet his thirst was stronger than his fear, so he decided to drink quietly from the pool before taking his leave. As he knelt beside the water, the ghul awakened. Leaping over the pool, she seized the startled youth with her clawed hands. The boy dangled in the ghul's grasp. He fixed his gaze upon a deep scar that marked her cheek, just beneath a milky right eye.

"Another robber," hissed the ghul with her foul breath. "One came this way before. He sought to steal the great ruby of Yalsur, which I have hidden from the genie lords. He found he could not leave with it. I found he could not leave at all. Now you, too, will die, and I will feast on your marrow!" With that, the ghul carried the boy back to her side of the pool, where, in addition to the great gem, there lay a cauldron, a chopping block, and a great cleaver.

The youth still held the dead warrior's sword, and Fate was with him. As the ghul loosened her grasp, he swung the blade and cut her squarely in the left eye. The great ghul screamed and dropped her quarry, who at once scrambled over to the great gem and seized it in both arms. Then he leapt across the pool and charged with all his might for the crevice from whence he had come.

The ghul screamed and followed. The boy soon found why the elven warrior could not escape. Just beyond the cavern, the crevice became too narrow for the gem.

"Half a loaf is better than starving," said the youth to himself. He swung his shining sword at the ruby. It broke into two perfectly cut stones, each half as large as the gem had been before. One part he rolled toward the blinded ghul. The other, he gathered in his arms, and he fled. The ghul found the broken gem and began to scream, and she screams to this day. When deep underground, one can hear her screams issuing forth like a keening wind in the darkness.

The youth reached the outcropping of rocks at the surface just as the sun was setting over the desert. Feeling chill, and fearing that the ghul might somehow follow him to the surface, he set out into the desert once more, traveling by the thin light of the waning moon.

After he had traveled a few miles, the youth saw in the distance a new light. It was bright, and at first he thought it a city, yet it moved closer to him as he watched. The youth came to realize that he was witnessing a procession of the geniekind. Jann held aloft brass torches to light the way. Djinn and efreet outriders protected the flanks of the procession, while marids led the way and dao guarded the rear.

The youth then saw that this was no mere collection of genies; it was the procession of the great genie lords, who had returned to this land to see if the most beautiful maiden of the mortals had decided who among them would be her suitor. The Great Caliph of the Djinn was mounted on a camel of shining white, dripping with gems. The Most Respected Sultan of the Efreet rode in a great iron wain, pulled by a hundred of his lesser servants. The Grand Khan of the Dao rode a clattering elephant of darkest ebony. The Imperial Padishah of the Marids walked on foot—his people spread orange blossoms before him and gathered them up after he passed, not missing a single petal.

The youth thought to avoid the procession, but there was no avoiding it, no place to hide. And so it was that he flung himself prostrate and face down on the ground, arms outstretched, the great gem on one side, the miraculous sword on the other.

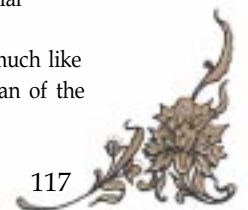
The procession came to him and stopped. As the jann prepared an encampment, the youth was brought to the genie lords.

"Who are you, lad, wandering in the desert at this late hour?" asked the Great Caliph and the Djinn.

"How is it you are blocking our path?" added the Most Respected Sultan of the Efreet.

"Where did you find that intriguing sword, which shines in the moonlight like a living thing?" added the Imperial Padishah of the Marids.

"And where did you find that wondrous gem, so much like one we ourselves once had?" finished the Grand Khan of the Dao.





The youth related his story to the genie lords, telling them of his kidnapping, how he had wandered across the parched desert in searing heat, how he found the crevice and the sparkling pool, and how he fought the great ghul. He did not, however, mention that he had split the gem to escape, because the Khan of the Dao had expressed such an interest in it, and he had claimed it was once a thing of the genies.

When the boy finished his story, the Great Caliph of the Djinn said, "Fate walks with you in your life."

"Fate is most kind," added the Most Respected Sultan of the Efreets.

"You have no Fate but the Fate which you are given," added the Imperial Padishah of the Marids.

"Yet this gem you have looks much like one we ourselves once had," finished the Grand Khan of the Dao, and with that he summoned the Rawun of the Jann to recount the tale of the gem of Yalsur.

The storyteller came forward and told his tale, and the youth learned (as all learn) that the genie lords were a quarrelsome group when they were young, and they fought over most things. Most of all they fought over a great gem, larger than the boy himself, which was the ruby of Yalsur. While the genie lords argued, a bandit stole into their tents and made off with the great gem. The genies despaired of the loss, but they soon realized they had no Fate but the Fate they were given, and were soon content again, though they always hoped that one day the gem would be returned.

After the rawun's tale was complete, the Grand Khan of the Dao once more addressed the boy. "The ruby that was taken from us resembled the great jewel you now keep at your side."

"And if it is that same ruby, we ask for its return," said the Most Respected Sultan of the Efreets.

"With sweetness and goodness in your heart," said the Great Caliph of the Djinn.

The Imperial Padishah of the Marids looked at the gem, his forehead furrowed, but he said nothing.

"With sweetness and goodness," said the youth, and offered the gem to the genie lords. "I believe it is your gem, and theft from a thief is no virtue unless it aids Fate. Let me offer it to you, in exchange for returning to my home."

Now the Imperial Padishah of the Marids did speak. "I may be wrong, but was not the blood-red gem of Yalsur once larger than it now appears?"

The other genie lords thought for a moment and nodded. Yes, it was larger, they said.

The youth replied, "Ah, like most things of our world, surely it has been reduced by being apart from the true majesty of yourselves and your peoples."

The jann in the camp scoffed silently at the idea. And the ordinary dao and djinn had to stiffen their faces to keep from laughing. But the genie lords nodded sagely at the suggestion, each not wishing to appear to the others as if the boy's statement was not true, each not wishing to offend his fellow lords.

"Your gift is appreciated," said the Great Caliph of the Djinn, "but before it is accepted, we must decide who will hold the gem. Otherwise, we will fall to arguing, and another thief may take the ruby. I venture to say that I would keep it best, behind a wall of wind."

"I would keep it cloaked in fire," replied the efreetsi sultan.

"I would keep it deep beneath the sea," said the marid padishah.

"I would keep it secure in the bosom of the earth," added the dao khan.

It seemed that the genie lords would once more begin to argue. The jann retreated, and the humble dao and djinn and efreets and marids in the procession were afraid.

Then the youth said wisely, "Could not each of you keep the ruby for three great moons apiece, and give it to another thereafter?"

The genie lords looked at the youth and looked at each other. Not wishing to appear foolish, each nodded in agreement.

"The marid padishah should take it for the next three great moons," declared the djinni caliph.

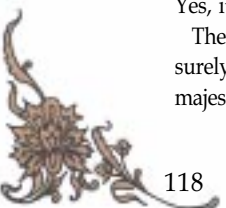
"And the djinn caliph the following three," replied the efreetsi sultan.

"And the efreetsi sultan the three following that," said the dao khan.

"And the dao khan the final three," finished the marid padishah.

And so they agreed. This is why the winter months are now the wettest, why the spring months bear the sweetest breezes, why the summer months bring the hottest days, and why the autumn months are the best time to reap the earth's bounty. Such things were neither here nor there for the youth, however, who desired nothing more than to return home and to be away from the powerful but capricious lords of the genies.

The lords hailed the youth's wisdom and set forth a great feast, offering him riches and treasure in exchange for the ruby and his sagacious advice. But the youth politely and humbly refused all, hoping not to offend his hosts, for he had heard tales of genie-made gold that faded in the sun. The genie lords became more insistent, suggesting that the youth take something of theirs in trade, but each suggestion brought another polite refusal. As the night waned, the genie lords began to see their offers as a kind of game. They







consumed great amounts of wine and were at last quite drunk.

Finally the youth made his wishes clear: "All I desire is to return to my home, to find who is responsible for my kidnapping, and to be as happy as Fate allows a man to be in the fullness of time."

The genie lords rejoiced. Each in turn pledged his fealty to help the boy, to his descendants, and to his followers, to whom he would teach great things. And the genie lords then showed him how to call upon the jann, summon the djinn, and bind the dao to his will. They taught him how to visit the tents of the genies and not be harmed. And so the youth became the first of the sha'irs—the summoners of genies—and his followers remain to this day. If the genies regretted their promise, they have made no sign, for they have lived by their words from that day to this.

As a sign of their great favor, the genie lords appointed four female genies to forever aid the boy—a djinni, a marid, a dao, and an efreeti. They were of exceptional beauty and power. The boy (who was now barely a young man) wished to make them his wives, and as the genies respected his wisdom and wished truly to serve him, this was done. Then the rest of the genies packed up the camp, and left into the west, disappearing below the horizon just as the first rays of dawn appeared in the east.

"Do you have a command?" asked the djinni of her husband, her flesh as pale as bone.

"I wish to return home," said the youth.

"Hearing and obeying, with sweetness and goodness," the djinni replied, and she summoned a whirlwind, which carried the youth and his four wives unerringly back to his city, landing him in the courtyard of his own home. The servants in the court saw the youth and were glad, but they also saw the unearthly beauty of his genies and were afraid. But none was so afraid as the uncle, who saw the youth from his counting house and made to escape, packing as much treasure as one man could carry.

"Do you have a command?" asked the dao, her flesh as gray and dusky as polished granite.

"I wish to find the man who kidnapped me and left me in the desert to die," said the youth.

"Hearing and obeying, with sweetness and goodness," the dao replied. She went into the city and returned with the thief, who struggled in her powerful arms.

When the bandit saw the boy, he threw himself upon the ground, begging for mercy and kindness. He confessed fully to his crime and agreed to place himself in the hands of the city guards. Greed, he explained, had driven him, for he had been offered much gold in exchange for abandoning the boy in the desert. The bandit declared that he would

surrender all his riches to the poor if only the boy would spare his life.

The youth demanded to know who had paid for such an awful deed, for he could not imagine any enemies. The bandit replied truthfully. The youth, who had loved his uncle, did not at first believe what he had heard. But when he called for his uncle, the boy discovered that the culprit had fled, using part of his ill-gotten treasure to hire a boat and sail from the city. So the uncle had implicated himself in his crime. Saddened, the youth instructed the bandit to begin leading life in an honorable manner. And the bandit did so, abandoning his former life and eventually becoming a virtuous mystic who would go on to lead others by his example.

"Do you have a command?," asked the marid, her turquoise flesh as shining as the sea.

"I wish my uncle to be brought to me," said the youth.

"Hearing and obeying, with sweetness and goodness," the marid responded, and she sought out the ship, altering its course and returning it to the city against the wishes of its captain. When the uncle saw what was happening, he jumped overboard. The marid grabbed him by his robes and dragged him, soaking wet, to his nephew.

The youth asked his uncle to explain himself. The uncle, black-hearted wretch that he was, cursed the boy and admitted proudly to everything, for he saw his life was forfeit for his obvious crimes. The uncle also ridiculed the youth for his new-found power among the genies.

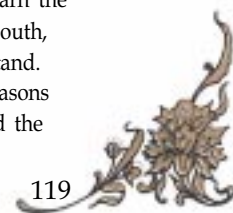
"I say to you," said the uncle, that the power you wield will turn against you as surely as your wealth turned against me. I was so afraid of losing what I had gained from you that I shut myself up in my counting house, fearful of losing a drachma. So too you will be walled up, afraid to give others your powers. The genie lords have made a fool of you!" And he spat at the youths' feet.

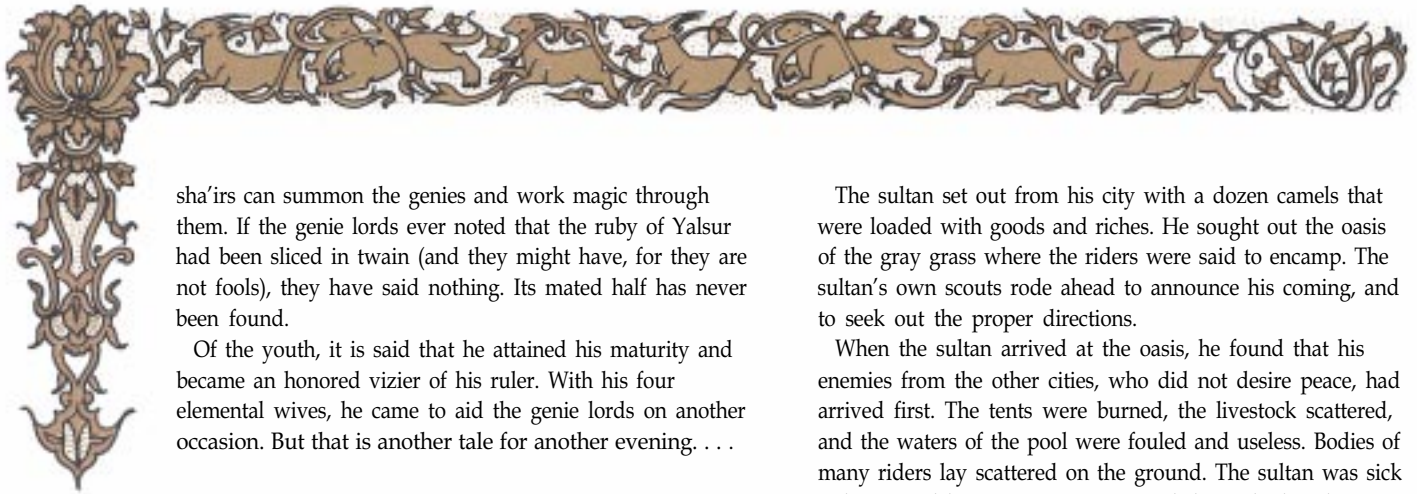
"Do you have a command?" asked the efreeti, her skin as dark as coal.

"Punish this man according to his crimes," said the youth. "Then send out word to the cities that those who wish to learn the craft of genie-work may come to me."

"Hearing and obeying, with sweetness and goodness," the efreeti responded. She drew a great black blade and cut the uncle's head from his shoulders, then his arms and legs from his body, and she blew the pieces into the desert, where no one has ever found them. She and her three cousins sent word throughout the city that those who wished to learn the craft of genie-work should come to the house of the youth, where he would teach those who were able to understand.

So it has remained from that day to this, that the seasons pass in their richness, each with their own nature, and the





sha'irs can summon the genies and work magic through them. If the genie lords ever noted that the ruby of Yalsur had been sliced in twain (and they might have, for they are not fools), they have said nothing. Its mated half has never been found.

Of the youth, it is said that he attained his maturity and became an honored vizier of his ruler. With his four elemental wives, he came to aid the genie lords on another occasion. But that is another tale for another evening. . . .

### III. The City of Peace

This is the story of why the world is as it is, the story of the Haunted Lands and the dangers of getting what one desires. It was in this fashion that the tale was told to me, so it is in the same fashion that I shall tell it to you now.

This story comes from long ago—not in the memory of an elven grandfather, but perhaps in the memory of an elven grandfather's grandfather—when the area now called the Haunted Lands was a rich and verdant plain, crossed by rivers which swelled with the rains in winter and with the mountains' melting snow in the spring, and which were otherwise fed by small streams and springs. Trading cities and animal-herding tribes arose in these lands, and as they grew more powerful, they grew prouder, and soon they began to war against each other unceasingly. One city would contest another. One tribe would battle its own kin. Tribe and city would fight, and clans within each tribe and city would fight, and so it proceeded until even between brothers there was great contention.

Now, the sultan of one of the cities could see that discord was strong in his land, and he wished for nothing more than peace, because peace helped keep the stalls full and the fields rich and the flocks healthy. The sultan consulted his most ancient vizier for advice. The vizier was very wise. He had once been a simple barber in the market, but his wisdom had brought him great wealth and power. The sultan asked the vizier how peace might be found.

The vizier said to him, "Such a question is not a simple one. I must consider it well, and confer with others who are wise."

After a time, the vizier returned with an answer. "I have talked to my comrades, both magical and mundane," he said to the sultan. "And I have come to understand that among the riders of the gray grass there exists a mystic who is capable of bringing what you seek. The mystic can show you the way to the City of Peace. I have heard that others do not seek it, for they do not wish to pay the price. I know not the price, and in any event I am old. Seek out the riders of the gray grass, and they may tell you what you need to know."

The sultan set out from his city with a dozen camels that were loaded with goods and riches. He sought out the oasis of the gray grass where the riders were said to encamp. The sultan's own scouts rode ahead to announce his coming, and to seek out the proper directions.

When the sultan arrived at the oasis, he found that his enemies from the other cities, who did not desire peace, had arrived first. The tents were burned, the livestock scattered, and the waters of the pool were fouled and useless. Bodies of many riders lay scattered on the ground. The sultan was sick at heart, and he swore upon Fate and the gods that those responsible would die by his hand ere he himself lay down to die. He offered solace and treasure to the survivors, though they were more interested in the food and common goods the camels had also brought.

The sultan discovered that the mystic who knew of the City of Peace was slain in the raid. The sultan staggered as if stricken, but a small voice from the group spoke up.

"I know where the City of Peace is," said the voice.

The sultan looked up and saw a small child no more than seven years of age, yet in the child's eyes were the depth and understanding of a mystic. And the child said that he would lead the sultan to the city, but would not enter it, if the sultan would give away all things except a single camel and follow him.

The sultan did as the boy asked. They journeyed for two weeks and then some. At last, they came to a great dune rising from the desert floor.

"The city you seek is on the far side of the dune," said the child. "Are you sure this is what you seek?"

"I seek to end the conflict among our peoples. I seek to punish those responsible for slaying your tribesman. I am sure."

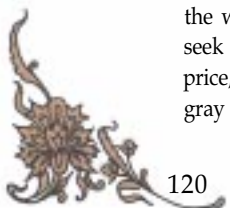
"Then I will leave you here to Fate," said the child, and he led the camel back into the desert. The boy called back to the Sultan, "Remember this: I will wait for you at the gates of your own city." And he was gone.

The sultan climbed the dune. Behind its great mass was a verdant valley, filled with sweet grass and great trees that were heavy with fruit. At the center of the valley lay a city. And at the heart of the city was a great palace which bore an uncountable number of silver domes and a great mosque with an uncountable number of silver minarets. The sultan scrambled down the face of the dune.

The sultan was met at the gate to the city by two mamluks, who barred his path. "What do you seek, wanderer?" said one.

"I seek a way to bring peace to my warring peoples, and I wish to gain vengeance against those who have hurt others."

The mamluks looked at each other, then nodded and said, "Go straight to the fountain at the palace."





And so sultan went to the palace and found a great fountain in the central court. At the edge of the fountain sat a beautiful woman, glancing at the water. Her eyes were luminous, and her hair was black. The sultan was so enthralled that all thoughts of his homeland suddenly fled from him.

"Greetings, noble wanderer," she said, a gentle smile upon her lips. "How may I aid thee?"

"You may consent to sit with me by the fountain," he replied, "and dine and dally with me for a short time."

The woman laughed with a laugh that was like the tinkling of bells. She clapped her hands and twice-twenty servants appeared, each of them brawny and bare to the waist. Some carried sumptuous cushions and great urns of fine wine, which they laid before the pair. Others brought all manner of foods, both common and rare.

When the pair had finished their refreshment, the woman said to the sultan, "And how may I aid thee now?"

The sultan recalled his true purpose in seeking out the city. "I wish to end the wars between city and city, between tribe and tribe, and between city and tribe. I wish to find peace for my people and the peoples that they know."

The woman laughed with a laugh that was like the tinkling of bells. She clapped her hands and a scribe dressed in velvet entered the court. He carried a great scroll and waved a quill that was made from the feather of a peacock. The sultan listed for the scribe all the names of the tribes and cities that he knew, which were many in those days, and when he had finished, the names filled the entire scroll. The scribe then bowed low and departed.

The woman and the sultan returned to their leisure. Another sumptuous meal was laid before them, and when the pair was again satisfied, the woman said, "For the third and last time, how may I aid thee?"

"I seek vengeance against those who hurt my people and against those who struck the riders of the gray grass. I wish for those who are responsible to be punished until they draw not a breath more."

This time, the woman did not laugh. She rose solemnly. "It is as you wish," she said softly, and then she departed. The doors through which she left the court closed behind her of their own accord.

The sultan was stunned. He raced down the halls and through the adjacent courtyards, but could not find the woman. Nor could he find the servants, the mamluks, or any other living creature. The sultan was alone.

A wind arose. Sand and dust began to blow through the

halls and courtyards, intensifying until the sultan could not see his hand before his face. Clutching his robe tightly to his face, he sought shelter from the wind, but there was none to be found.

The sultan had no idea how long he strode against the storm, but at last its intensity faded, and the sky cleared with the sunset. He found that the city was gone, and all around him was nothing but the arid wasteland.

The stars remained, and he used them to find his way west, toward his own lands. He did not know how long he had traveled, but at last he came to a ruined city, its minarets snapped and its wall crumbling in a dozen places. At first he thought it was the City of Peace, and he despaired. Then he realized that it was his own city, and his despair darkened into the deepest night.

At the gates of the city, now wrecked and hanging open, the sultan discovered an old man. The man's flesh was little more than tatters on his bones, and his eyes were deeply sunken. The old man looked at the sultan and spoke.

"I told you I would meet you here," he rasped. The sultan realized with a shock that this was the child mystic who had led him to the City of Peace-only a single day before.

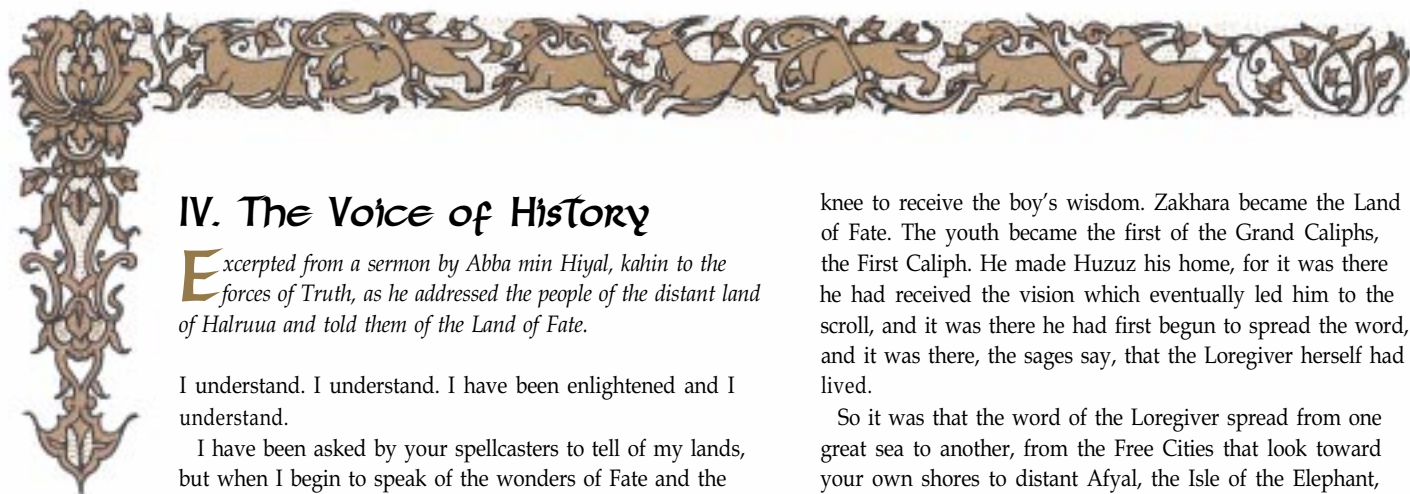
The old man regarded the sultan and nodded. "You have gained the City of Peace and courted Fate,,, said he. "And Fate has granted your wishes. You wished to find pleasure with Fate and that occurred. You wished for the tribes and cities to stop warring, and Fate scattered them far across the world so that they not meet each other again until such a time that none could remember their strife. You wished for all those responsible for this hurt to die. And are we not all responsible for our actions, regardless of Fate? So all-those who offended you and your people have perished, to the last one. You think that only a day has passed, yet you have been gone more than two hundred years. I have waited here, for Fate has been with me, and that is how I know the tale. . . ."

And with that the old man perished. The sultan sat by the dead man for a day, then two, then five, but no one else came to him, nor did anyone trouble the ruined city. Then the sultan returned to the desert, hoping to find the City of Peace. He was not seen again in the lands of the living.

So it has remained, from then until now, that the Haunted Lands remain empty, save for the ruins of great mosques and cities which once thrived there. And so it is that legend reaches your ears of other lands, far removed, where men and women who seem similar to us walk among the unenlightened, and even become mighty in their own petty empires. But that is another tale for another evening. . . .







## IV. The Voice of History

*Excerpted from a sermon by Abba min Hiyal, kahin to the forces of Truth, as he addressed the people of the distant land of Halruua and told them of the Land of Fate.*

I understand. I understand. I have been enlightened and I understand.

I have been asked by your spellcasters to tell of my lands, but when I begin to speak of the wonders of Fate and the magic of genies and the wars of gods, the supposedly wise men interrupt and say, "Please, noble lord, tell us the facts, not just a story." What are the facts but a story which happens to be true? Yet I will pare down all that I know, to aid you in understanding. It is like boiling the flesh off a duck for soup; eventually one reaches the bare bones, but it is not a pleasant experience for the duck.

Man has always lived in the burning world of Zakhara, most noble of lands, as far as we know. The great empires of the past litter the land with their fallen towers, their buried tombs, and their monuments to forgotten gods. Who they were we cannot say, only that they once occupied great river empires. We call those empires Nog and Kadar. They embraced their river, and then, like freshwater fish who could neither leave the water nor pass into the sea, they died. Or perhaps something else happened. We know only that they are gone.

Also long ago, there existed the Loregiver. Our rawuns and sages say that the Loregiver was a maiden who, guided by Fate, chose not to make a choice, and in doing so, she gained great wisdom. She collected that wisdom as law and spread it to the desert peoples, and she wrote it down and hid it away for the time when men and women were ready to receive enlightenment.

Or perhaps not. I cannot prove any of it, just as I cannot prove the first sha'ir was married to four genies. Yet today we see the sha'irs calling upon the genies and commanding them, we can see the ruins of Nog and Kadar, and the Law of the Loregiver influences the lives of all enlightened people.

Other old empires came and went. Small cities became large and then were abandoned. Wars were fought. People died in them, or they did not and died later. Tribes and cities disappeared, for they displeased the gods. Graven images were worshipped and abandoned. At last, the time came for enlightenment.

So a young boy of a desert tribe found the writings of the Loregiver. Guided by the hand of Fate, he found the scroll that contained the Law and spread the word. The people saw the wisdom of the youth's words and flocked to his banner. The great emus and pashas and khans bent down on one

knee to receive the boy's wisdom. Zakhara became the Land of Fate. The youth became the first of the Grand Caliphs, the First Caliph. He made Huzuz his home, for it was there he had received the vision which eventually led him to the scroll, and it was there he had first begun to spread the word, and it was there, the sages say, that the Loregiver herself had lived.

So it was that the word of the Loregiver spread from one great sea to another, from the Free Cities that look toward your own shores to distant Afyal, the Isle of the Elephant, and all those enlightened by the word came to be ruled by a single Grand Caliph. They were unified in their language, knowledge, and understanding, and so it remains today. Can any of your petty empires claim such wonders?

That is my tale. It is not as lively as some I have told, nor as romantic, nor even as interesting. It is merely, as you have requested, a statement of one fact upon another. And if this is your way of thinking in the Northern territories, I have greater pity for you than I had before.

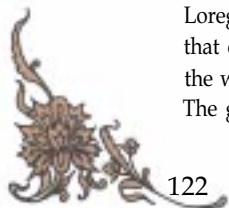
Your thoughts are like one foot placed before another, a relentless repetition of fact upon fact. You may get where you are going, but how can you ever dance?

## V. The Dragon and The Genies

**T**his is a tale of the great, lizardlike dragons that haunt the northern climes, and why they are seldom seen in the Land of Fate. It is not the only explanation you may hear. Some claim that it is the climate that drives these creatures away, while others point to the lack of ready food, and a few may even tell you it is because the sand wears away the dragons' scales. Those who know the truth of the matter know this tale, however, and you shall know it, too. It was in this fashion that the tale was told to me, so it is in the same fashion that I shall tell it to you now.

Long ago, when Nog and Kadar were not yet in existence, the great lizard-beasts of the distant North held a conclave of their tribes. Piggish creatures, these dragons had eaten all the available cattle and destroyed all the nearby towns, and now they would go hungry unless they found new pickings. So one of their number, a great reddish creature, volunteered to scout out a new home. He flew south many days until he reached the shores of burning Zakhara. As he approached the beach, he saw a maiden frolicking in the surf. As it had been a long trip, he decided this skinny creature would sate his hunger until more meaty prey presented itself. He swooped down low to spear the maiden with his claws.

Yet when he dove down upon the maiden, she vanished without a trace, and in her stead a huge wave rose out of the surf, knocking the dragon from the sky. He crashed upon the





beach. When he had recovered his senses, the dragon said to himself, "How is it that I could miss the maiden? And from whence came the wave like a fist? Am I so famished that I cannot trust my eyes?" And with that he headed inland.

At length, the dragon found a small herd of goats tended on a hillside. A shepherdess had planted her staff nearby. The dragon chased the goats around the field, looking for the meatiest to eat first. The shepherdess ran up to the dragon and tapped him on the foot with her staff. The dragon was accustomed to humans fleeing from his greatness, not being so brazen as this, and he turned to regard the woman with curiosity.

"Who are you to disturb my sheep?" asked the shepherdess.

"I am one of great power," said the dragon, and I do as I see fit.

"What is your great power?" demanded the shepherdess.

"I breathe fire," the dragon replied, and with that he spat out a ball of flame that engulfed the shepherdess.

The dragon expected to dine on her charred form, but when the smoke had cleared, she stood there untouched, staff in hand. "Pitiful," said the shepherdess. "Try this instead."

And with that she became a great pillar of fire whose heat was so intense that the dragon had to fall back for fear of being scorched. The fire's heat grew stronger, and the dragon took to the air to evade it. The pillar roared after him, but eventually the dragon escaped the lapping flames.

"This is a frightening land," said the dragon to himself, "where even the peasants are magical. I must find a cave and rest before I go farther."

And so the creature found a likely mountain and within that mountain found a likely cave, and he settled down for a short nap. At length, however, his sleep was disturbed by a tap on his snout. He opened his eyes to see a withered and gray-haired man scowling at him.

"This is my home," the codger snapped. "You'll have to sleep somewhere else, for you are an uninvited guest."

The dragon snarled. "I will not leave for any crippled old man. I claim this cave. Begone!" And he showed his teeth.

The old man showed his teeth as if to mock the dragon. "If you desire the earth so much," shouted the man, "you shall have it!" And he disappeared.

Immediately the mountain shook and the cavern began to collapse. The dragon escaped only with the tiniest sliver of his life.

Hungry, tired, and hurt, the dragon cursed this strange land and its strange people. At length he heard a piping. Investigating, the dragon found a small boy who was seated upon a rock, playing a flute. This time the dragon did not attack, for who could tell what powers this weak-looking

creature possessed? Instead, the dragon approached in a gentle manner, and begged the child to listen to his story.

The child heard the dragon tell of the maiden, of the shepherdess, and of the old man. And the child learned how the dragon was afraid to eat and even to sleep in a land that held such powerful creatures.

At length the child said, "I know those of whom you speak, for the maiden of the shores is my cousin, the shepherdess of the valley is my aunt, and the old man of the mountain is my uncle. Do not snivel so. They have shown you great kindness, for any of them could have killed you, and they have spared your life only because you are not enlightened and know no better."

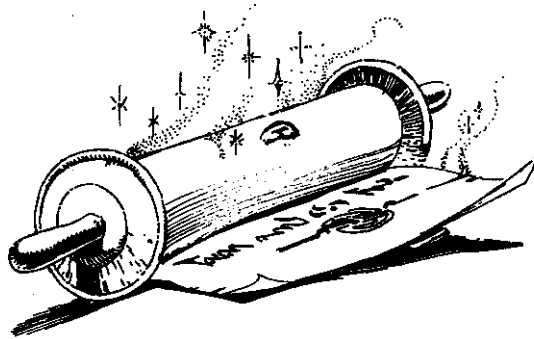
"Tell me, child," sputtered the dragon, growing more fearful by the minute. "Are all the natives of this land as powerful as your family?"

"Oh no," replied the child. "Most are much more powerful. There are men and women who tell my aunt and uncle and cousin what to do, and my aunt and uncle and cousin do whatever is asked, almost without question."

The dragon sent out a pitiable wail. "Curse me for coming to this horrid land! I wish I had never arrived! I wish that I could return to my home!"

"Hearing and obeying, with sweetness and joy," said the child, and he summoned a great wind, which blew the dragon back to the North.

Those who know our land know that the boy was really a djinni, the maiden was a marid, the old man was a dao, and the shepherdess was an efreeti. The men and women whose commands they heed are mere mortals who hold great wisdom. But the dragon did not know this. We can only assume that the dragon told his tale to other dragons, and if they were still hungry, they have made other arrangements, for to this day few dragons are spotted in the Land of Fate. From time to time, a lone dragon has appeared, seeking to test the power of the genies and the patience of the enlightened. But that is another tale for another evening. . . .





## Appendix B: Language

Visitors to the Land of Fate can hear a variety of languages being spoken. Midani, the language of all civilized and intelligent creatures, is by far the most prominent. Midani is Zakhara's "Common" – the language understood by all enlightened citizens and most unenlightened savages.

The Land of Fate also has five regional dialects. Natives of the Free Cities and Qudra speak with a sharp, precise rhythm, clipping the end off their sentences. The people of the Pearl Cities tend to speak with a melodious lilt. Inhabitants of the Pantheist League seem to trill their consonants at random. In eastern Zakhara, the speech of enlightened mortals has a nasal quality. Finally, the people of Huzuz and Hiya – who believe they speak "true" Midani – often sound flat and mechanical compared to the natives of other regions. In addition to these quirks in rhythm and pronunciation, each dialect is distinguished by a smattering of unique words and expressions. With a little practice, however, anyone who speaks Midani can understand these regional tongues.

The Land of Fate also has a number of languages spoken by select groups:

- *Thieves' Cant*. More a lingo than a language, this choppy vernacular is spoken only by rogues (members of other classes can't understand it). Thieves' cant differs slightly from city to city. Player characters may not consider it a "known" language.

- *Racial Languages*. Zakhara lacks the alignment tongues found in many other worlds. It does, however, have a number of racial languages. The most prominent is Jannti, language of the genies. Whether Jannti is a single tongue with a number of dialects or four closely related elemental tongues is a matter for the sages to debate. In game terms, Jannti is one language (unless the DM decides otherwise).

Other racial languages include the ancestral tongues of many demihuman and civilized humanoid races: Elvish, Orcish, Dwarvish, Gnomish, Kobold, Ogre, and the like. Giantish and its dialects are also included. Like Jannti, Giantish is considered to be one language unless the DM decides otherwise. In general, racial languages are used only between speakers who belong to the same race and know each other well.

- *Monster Tongues*. Many of Zakhara's fell creatures and unenlightened races speak a language all their own. Examples include the tongue of the brutal yak-men and that of the rare and savage dragons.

- *Dead Tongues*. Through magic, sages have mastered some of Zakhara's forgotten languages—those no longer spoken by any living culture. The Dead Tongues include Noga, Kadari (from the Ruined Kingdoms), Drow (from lands west of the Pearl Cities), Affa (ancient language of the Isle of the Elephant), and Chun (a savage tongue written upon the ruins of the Haunted Lands).

- *Outlander Languages*. Several languages heard in Zakhara are "imports"—languages acquired from foreigners who trade with Zakharan merchants. Such "outlander tongues" include Thorasta (and its dead ancestor, Thorass) from the distant North, Shang-Chou from the far-flung East, and Akotan from the western trading outposts. A number of lesser languages are spoken throughout the islands of the Crowded Sea, but these have been increasingly replaced by Midani, the language of trade.

### A Zakharan Phrase Guide

The following words and phrases are commonly heard throughout Zakhara:

Aywa (EYE wah) — Yes.

La (LAH) — No.

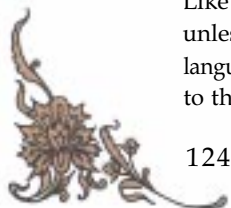
Es *salam alekum* (ess sah LAMB ah LEH koom)  
— May peace be upon you. A general greeting.

Wa *alekum es salam* (wah ah LEH koom ess sah LAMB)  
— May peace be upon you also. Response to the preceding.

Maas *salama* (mahs sah LAMB ah) — Go with peace.

Saheeda (sah EE da) — Greetings. Hello. Also goodbye.

Min *fadlak* (min FAHD lahk) — Please.







*Shukrun* (SHOOK rahn)—Thank you.

*Afwan* (AHF wahn)—You're welcome.

*Kwayis* (KWAY iss)—Good.

*Mish Kwayis* (mish KWAY iss)—Bad. ("Mish" negates whatever adjective it precedes.)

*Hatar* (hah TAR)—Danger.

*Samm* (SAHM)—Poison.

*Ma* (MAH)—Water.

*My liver!*

*Ymmah!* (Oh, mama!)

*Ybbah!* (Oh, papa!)

—Expressions of surprise.

*May Fortune smile upon you.*

*May Fate guide thee to glory.*

*She is to a man us rain is to the desert.*

—Compliments and good wishes.

*You are the son of camel dung.*

*You are the son of a dog's water.*

*May you sleep with a restless heart and know a thousand nights of misery.*

*May a porcupine live in your trousers for a thousand days and die there for a thousand and one.*

—Insults and ill wishes.

*I conjure you to do it!*

—I beseech or command you to do it.

*The gods are merciful and Fate is all-knowing and I am but a humble slave before them.*

—Said by a person receiving a compliment, as a matter of humility and a defense against the evil eye.

*You are the life-stuff of my liver!*

—You are very dear to my heart. Said of spouse or family.

*I have a pain in my liver.*

—I have a pain in my heart. You have caused me pain, shame, or sorrow.

*My eyes, my eyes, my soul, my soul, the heart of my heart!*

—You are my life. (Lovers' talk.)

*You have given me an internal wound.*

—You have pained my heart deeply. (Lovers' talk.)

*He makes coffee from dawn until the dead of night.*

—He is truly an outstanding host.

*You have baked your bread; now you must eat it.*

You must live with the consequences of your actions. You've made your bed, now lie in it.

*As the mind expands, the tongue grows quiet.*

—Those who are wise do not chatter idly.

*Though your companion may be honey, do not eat him completely.*

—Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing.

*We opened our home to him, and he brought in his ass.*

—He overstepped the bounds of good taste; he tested the limits of our hospitality.

*Guests are like fish; after three days, both stink.*

—Al-Badian proverb. Refers to the three-day limit for a guest's stay, a custom observed throughout Zakhara.

*When it begins to rain, he takes shelter in the fountain.*

—He leaps from the frying pan into the fire.

*A man's head is like the desert; the hotter it gets, the emptier it appears.*

—Foolish deeds are done in anger.

*After the incense has come, the guest must go.*

—A reference to the custom of passing a tenser filled with frankincense following a coffee ceremony, after which the guests leave (or retire for the evening).





## Appendix C: The Zakharan Calendar

**A**l-Toril, the planet graced by Zakhara's presence, completes its journey around the sun every 365 days. Each year on the Zakharan calendar holds 12 months. Each month holds 30 days (roughly matching the orbit of the single moon). The Zakharan calendar also includes the High Holy Days—five days belonging to no month.

### Months of The Year

Taraq:	January
Masta:	February
Magarib:	March
Gammam:	April
Mihla:	May
Qawafil:	June
Safa:	July
Dar:	August
Riyah:	September
Nau:	October
Rahat:	November
Saris:	December

### High Holy Days

Ahad, Atnen, Salas, Arba, and Yasad—these are the five High Holy Days. They follow Qawafil and precede Safa each year (belonging to neither month). From dawn until dusk, the High Holy Days are a time of faith, meditation, and fasting. After the sun sets, they become a time of celebration and revelry. The greatest festivals take place in Huzuz.

Yasad is also called Ascension Day. Long ago, the First Caliph is said to have ascended the throne on this date. Each Grand Caliph who succeeded him also assumed rulership on Ascension Day. When the rulership remains unchanged, Yasad is distinguished by the Grand Caliph's public appearance and worship in the Golden Mosque. Many pilgrims flock to the mosque on this day to hear him speak.

Many cities in Zakhara have their own celebrations, commemorating local battles, miracles, or great leaders of the past. Gana, the City of Riches, holds a spectacular three-day festival each year to mark the end of the pearl season. Further, most cities observe the local ruler's birthday with feasts and entertainments; such celebrations usually start in the morning and last well into the evening. Citizens of Huzuz celebrate the Grand Caliph's birthday with parades and processions throughout the city. The current Grand Caliph's birthday falls on 27 Dar.













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Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®  
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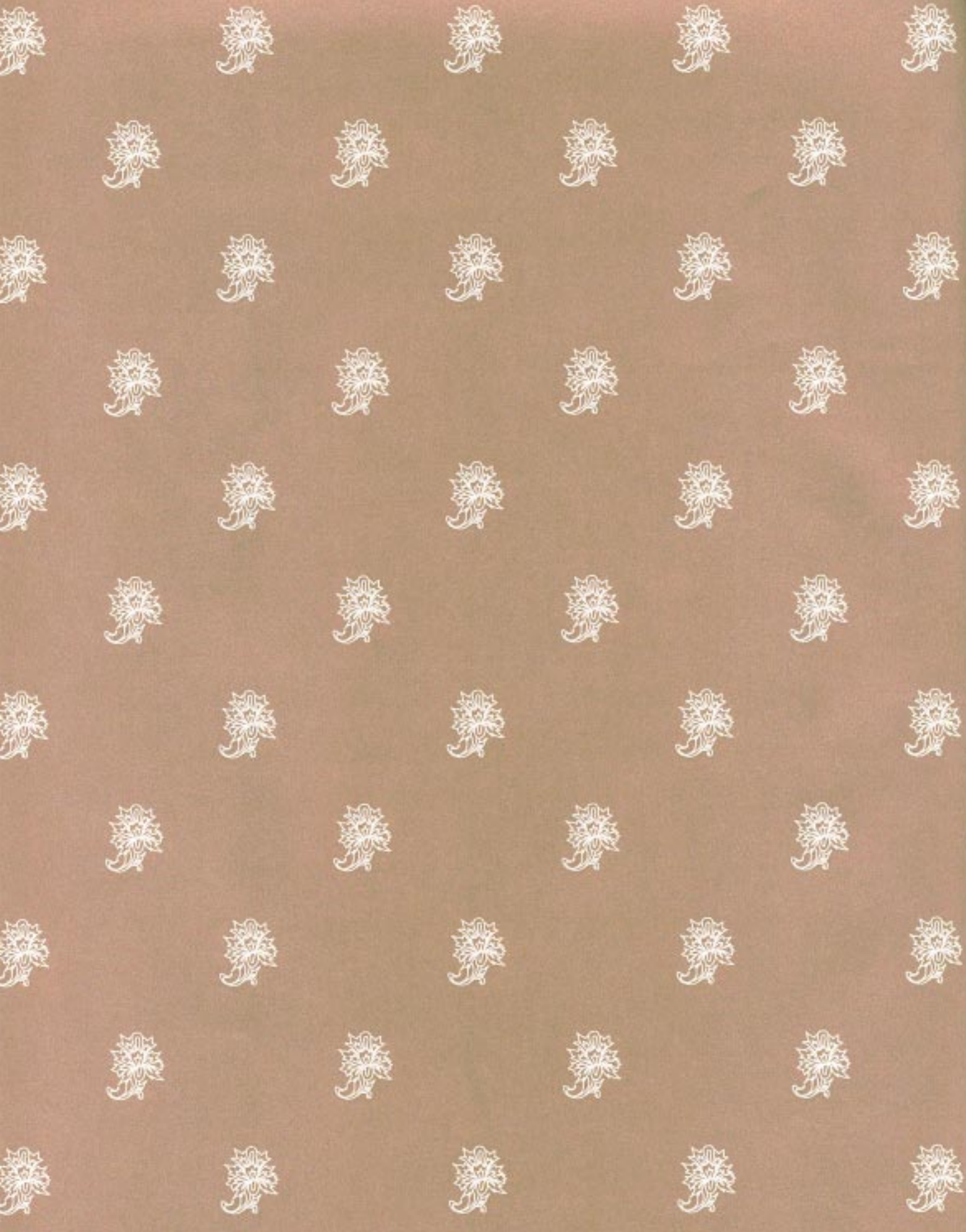
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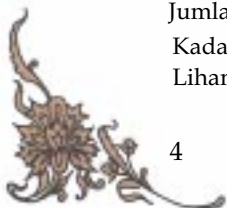
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# Introduction

Prepare for revelations, honored DUNGEON MASTER™. Within these pages lie many of the secrets of Zakhara, for your eyes only. You will find an explanation of the Law of the Loregiver, descriptions of the various character class specifics (things unknown to the players and their PCs), information about the fellowships of the holy slayers, and insights into other power groups.

Herein also lie the mysterious magical items peculiar to the Land of Fate: their descriptions, purposes, and pertinent information. At the end of this book, you will find tables for discovering these items “by a twist of Fate.” You will also find a guide to the abbreviations describing characters in this text.

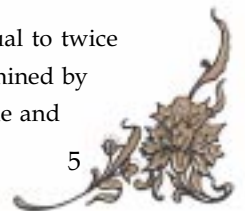
Continue your journey, then, honored Dungeon Master, into the burning realm of Zakhara, the Land of Fate. May Fortune smile upon you, and may the hand of Fate be with you always.

## Travel Across Zakhara

The large maps in this boxed set lack the “standard” printed hex grid to facilitate movement. Instead, a clear plastic overlay allows movement on the maps.

There are three poster maps in the AL-QADIM™ *Land of Fate* set. The first depicts the entire civilized world from the Free Cities to the Crowded Sea and from the High Desert to the Isle of the Elephant. Beyond these borders are madness, savagery, and death. The scale on this overview map is 90 miles per inch, and on the overlay one small hex equals 18 miles. The remaining two maps concentrate on the “heart” of the Land of Fate. On these maps, 1 inch equals 30 miles, such that one small hex on the overlay equals 6 miles.

When moving overland, characters have movement points equal to twice their movement rate, and their ability to move each mile is determined by the cost of the terrain they are in. This cost is defined in the “Time and





Movement (Terrain Effects on Movement)" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (see Chapter 14). A complete description of the *Land of Fate* maps and

their terrain is located in the *Adventurer's Guide to Zakhara*. The movement modifiers for terrain features are shown below (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1:**  
**Cost Modifiers for Overland Movement**

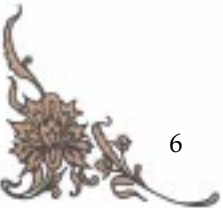
Terrain/Condition	Modifier	Terrain/Condition	Modifier
Anvils	×3	Mangrove swamp	8
Barrens	2	Mountains, high	8
Badlands	4	Mountains, low	4
Brushland, scrub	2	Mountains, medium	6
Caravan trail	-1 *	Quicksand	×2
Cliff	+3	Volcanic debris (harrat)	3
Cultivated Land	1/2	Rain, heavy	×2
Desert, barchan dune	4	Rain, light	+1
Desert, open	3	Rain, torrential	×3
Desert, seif dune	3 or 2**	Ravine, cross	+1/2
Desert, star dune	4	Ridge	+1
Desert, whaleback dune	3	River, cross	+1
Duststorm, sandstorm	×3	Salt flat	1
Forest, deep	4	Salt/mud flat (kavir)	4
Forest, outlying	2	Scorching heat	+1
Grassland	1	Seasonal grasslands	2
Harrat (volcanic debris)	3	Stony fields	2
Hogback	+1	Swamp	8
Jungle, deep	8	Trail	×1/2***
Jungle, outlying	6	Wadi, parallel	as trail
Kavir (salt/mud flat)	4	Wadi, crossing	+1/2

\* Caravan trails reduce movement costs by -1 (to a minimum of 1 point).

They measure up to two miles across.

\*\* Movement across a seif costs 3 points. Movement along the dune (on the gassi) costs 2.

\*\*\* Trails halve movement costs for those who travel them. They are usually in non-desert terrain, and are little more than beaten dirt paths. Wadis serve as trails in the desert and may be treated as such. Trails generally have no effect in cultivated areas.







## Chapter 1

# High-Level Characters

**W**hat does a high-level Zakhari character do about a stronghold? How does she attract followers—and what kind are they? What are the obligations of a sheikh or an amir?

Following are specifics regarding each character class in the Land of Fate, and the game rules for characters who reach the level at which they begin to be more than just “a face in the crowd”: the level at which they are no longer merely adventurers, but are recognized as pillars of their community.

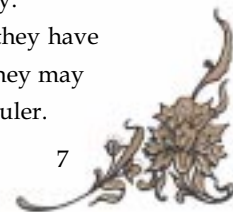
### Fighters

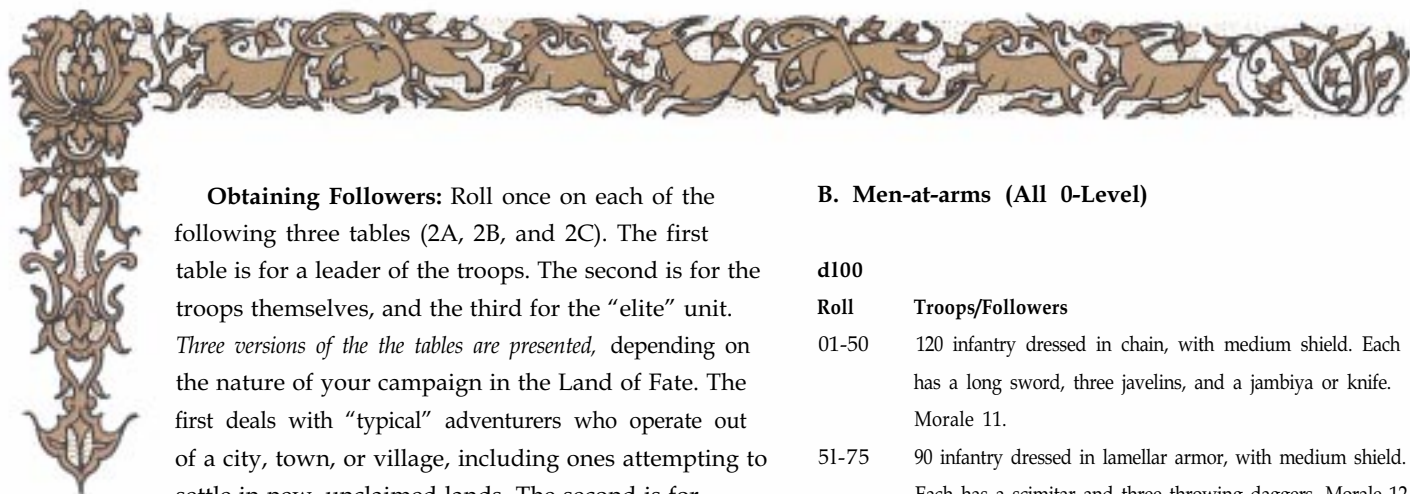
**A**t 9th level, a fighter PC may choose to take the name “sheikh” (optionally “sheikha” if female), meaning Lord. This is an honorific, and is usually used only if no other title or rank is appropriate. Upon reaching 9th level, the fighter may also attract men-at-arms who have heard of the fighter’s fame and success. These take the form of “regular” troops, their leader, and an “elite” group, which may act as a personal guard.

In the Land of Fate, a PC fighter does not need to maintain a personal stronghold or castle to attract these followers. All that is required is that the individual have a regular home, tribe, or posting easily found by such persons. A fighter who maintains a manor house may find the men and women who wish to follow him presenting themselves at the door. A fighter who is part of a larger armed force may discover a regular group of troops who have sworn personal loyalty. A desert fighter may find that part of his tribe is impressed with his prowess and wishes to follow him.

A fighter who attracts such followers bears the responsibility to treat them fairly and equitably. Poor treatment results in resignations or mutiny, while beneficial and just treatment results in increased morale and loyalty.

Fighters may choose to continue to adventure at random once they have gained followers, taking them as a mercenary or heroic force. Or, they may settle down to rule a small area in the name of the local caliph or ruler.





**Obtaining Followers:** Roll once on each of the following three tables (2A, 2B, and 2C). The first table is for a leader of the troops. The second is for the troops themselves, and the third for the “elite” unit. *Three versions of the the tables are presented,* depending on the nature of your campaign in the Land of Fate. The first deals with “typical” adventurers who operate out of a city, town, or village, including ones attempting to settle in new, unclaimed lands. The second is for desert-based adventurers, who move with the wind and would find a dozen heavily armored followers (on foot) more of a bother than an aid. The third is for the corsair kit, other sea-roving adventurers, and the merchant-rogue. Decide which version is best for the fighter involved, and roll accordingly (using A, B, and C of the appropriate section). As DM™, you may simply choose from these tables as opposed to rolling randomly. Kits listed are optional for NPCs.

**TABLE 2: Fighter’s Followers**

**Fighter’s Followers: City and Village**

**A. Leader**

d100	Leader, Suggested
Roll	Magical Items
01-40	5th-level fighter (askar), chain mail, shield, <i>scimitar</i> +2.
41-75	6th-level fighter (faris), chain mail +1, Shield, <i>long sword</i> +1, <i>knife</i> +1.
76-95	6th-level fighter (askar), <i>armor of the desert evening</i> , <i>spear</i> +1, <i>scimitar</i> +2, aided by a 3rd-level fighter (askar) with <i>chain</i> +1, <i>long sword</i> +1.
96-99	7th-level fighter (faris), <i>lamellar mail</i> +1, <i>scimitar</i> +2, <i>ring of sustenance</i> , with two medium horses, both of charger quality (one for self, one for new lord).
00	DM’s option. This may include characters already in existence in your campaign, or a new character. Such a character may be of any class, but should not be higher than 7th level or carry more than three items of magic.

**B. Men-at-arms (All 0-Level)**

d100	
Roll	Troops/Followers
01-50	120 infantry dressed in chain, with medium shield. Each has a long sword, three javelins, and a jambiya or knife. Morale 11.
51-75	90 infantry dressed in lamellar armor, with medium shield. Each has a scimitar and three throwing daggers. Morale 12.
76-90	50 cavalry mounted on light horse, dressed in leather armor with scimitar, lance, dagger, and short bow. Morale 12.
96-99	30 cavalry mounted on medium horse, dressed in chain with shield and carrying scimitar, lance, and dagger. Morale 12.
00	DM’s option. This may include heavy archers (lamellar armor with long bows), heavy cavalry (lamellar barding on horse, with uarter of force assigned to take care of the mounts), or simply double numbers of any of the above groups.

**C. Personal Guard**

d100	
Roll	Elite Unit
01-30	15 mamluks, 2nd level (choose from any of the applicable groups or create one of your own). The leader-type is mamluk as well, and swears fealty to the new lord. The mamluks are dressed in lamellar with shield, and all carry long swords of quality (+1 to hit). Morale 16.
31-60	20 mercenary barbarians, 2nd level, commanded by the leader rolled above. The mercenary barbarians wear hide armor, carry shields, and each have a long sword, three spears, and a dirk. Morale 15.
61-70	10 desert tribesmen, 3rd level, on light horses of high-spirited quality. Each wears chain mail, daraq, and carries a scimitar and lance. Morale 15.
71-99	30 infantry, 1st level, in chain mail with, body shield, spear, and short sword. Morale 16.
00	DM’s option. This may include such a variety as hippogriff riders, an itinerant sha’ir and his familiar, dwarven mamluks trained in siege warfare, or an individual from the ranger table (see Table 3).





## Fighter's Followers: Desert

### A. Leader

d100

#### Roll Leader, Suggested Magical Items

01-40	5th-level fighter (desert rider), <i>leather armor</i> 2, <i>daraq</i> , <i>scimitar</i> +2, light horse of high-spirited quality.
41-75	6th-level fighter (desert rider), <i>leather armor</i> +1, <i>shield</i> +1, <i>lance</i> +1, long sword, war camel of <i>high-spirited</i> quality.
76-95	6th-level fighter (desert rider), <i>armor of the desert evening</i> , <i>spear</i> +1, <i>scimitar</i> +2, medium war horse of charger quality. Brings a <i>long sword</i> +1 for his new master.
96-99	7th-level fighter (desert rider), no visible armor, <i>bracers of defense</i> , AC 3, <i>scimitar</i> +2, <i>ring</i> of sustenance, with two war camels, both of charger quality (one for self, one for new lord).
00	DM's option. This may include an efreeti, djinni, or dao which has taken a fancy to the character, or a sha'ir, sand mage, kahin, or sa'luk. Under no circumstances should a human follower be higher than 7th level, or carry more than three magical items.

### B. Men-at-arms (all 0-Level)

d100	<b>Troops/Followers</b>
01-50	60 cavalry each with <i>daraq</i> , <i>lance</i> , and <i>scimitar</i> , but no armor, mounted on light horse. Morale 13.
51-75	120 footmen with leather or padded armor, each carrying a long sword, spear, and <i>jambiya</i> . Morale 13.
76-90	50 cavalry mounted on light horse of <i>high-spirited</i> quality, dressed in leather armor with <i>scimitar</i> , <i>lance</i> , and dagger. Morale 14.
96-99	30 cavalry mounted on war camels of high-spirited quality, dressed in leather with shield and carrying <i>scimitar</i> , <i>lance</i> , short bow, and dagger. Morale 13.
00	DM's option. This may include archers (padded armor with long bows), heavy cavalry (medium horse or war camel, with quarter of force assigned to take care of the mounts), or simply raise the quality of the unit's mounts by one rank (in case of the footmen, they have their own camels of normal quality, but cannot fight effectively on them).

## C. Personal Guard

### d100 Elite Unit

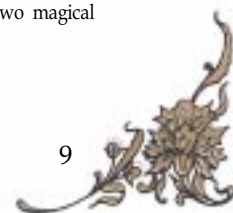
01-40	20 fanatical desert riders, 2nd level, mounted on light horse, with leather armor, armed with three spears and a <i>scimitar</i> . Morale 18.
41-60	20 mercenary barbarians, 2nd level, commanded by the leader rolled above. The mercenary barbarians wear hide armor, carry shields, and each has a long sword, three spears, and a dirk. Morale 16.
61-70	10 desert tribesmen, 3rd level, on war camels, dressed in leather with <i>daraq</i> s of quality craftsmanship (+1 bonus on AC), carrying nonmagical <i>scimitars</i> of quality craftsmanship (+1 on damage).
71-99	40 infantry, all 1st-level fighters in chain armor with spear and short sword. They have no mounts. Morale 16.
00	DM's option. This may include creatures and units such as five wandering jann, a rot, or a fearless (morale 20) version of one of the above entries.

## Fighter's Followers: Sea

### A. Leader

#### d100 Leader/Suggested Magical Items

01-40	5th-level fighter (corsair), leather armor, <i>cutlass</i> +2.
41-75	6th-level fighter (corsair), <i>padded armor</i> +1, <i>shield</i> +1, <i>scimitar</i> +1.
76-95	6th-level fighter (corsair), <i>bracers of defense</i> (AC 6), <i>spear</i> +1, <i>cutlass</i> +2, who brings a <i>ring of water walking</i> as a gift.
96-99	7th-level fighter (corsair), <i>cutlass of the golden gulf</i> , <i>armor of the desert evening</i> . If applicable, has a knowledge of the nearby islands which rivals that of the finest pilots.
00	DM's option. This may include characters already in existence in your campaign, or a new character. Suggestions include a sea mage, merchant-rogue, or corsair. Under no circumstance should the individual be higher than 6th level or carry more than two magical items.







## B. Men-at-arms (all 0-Level)

d100	Troops/Followers
01-50	120 infantry dressed in padded armor, with cutlass and knife. All have seamanship proficiency. Morale 11.
51-75	90 infantry dressed in leather armor, with cutlass and spear. All have seamanship and swimming proficiency. Morale 13.
76-90	50 archers with short bow (20 flight arrows per quiver). No armor, but all have swimming proficiency. Morale 10.
96-99	30 heavy infantry in lamellar armor, with long sword, spear, and shield. Morale 13 on land, 10 on water.
00	DM's option. This may include heavy archers (lamellar armor with long bows), cavalry (light war horse or war camel), or simply double numbers of any of the above groups.

## C. Personal Guard

d100	Elite Unit
01-30	Barijah with a crew of 8 seasoned seamen (0-level fighters). The captain is a leader-type rolled on Table A. The crew has no armor and only carries knives. Morale 12.
31-60	Sambuk with a crew of 15 seasoned seamen (0-level fighters). The captain is a leader-type rolled on Table A. The crew has no armor and only carries knives. Morale 11.
61-70	Two barijahs with full crews of skilled fighters (16 1st-level fighters). The captain is a leader rolled on Table A. Fighters have no armor, but carry cutlass and knives. Morale 13.
71-99	30 fanatical fighters, all 1st-level fighters in leather armor with shield, spear, and short sword. Morale 17.
00	DM's option. This may include individuals such as a marid or unit of sea elves, other types of units presented elsewhere, or the units above with their morale raised by 2.

## Paladins

Paladins do not gain followers upon reaching "name" level (10th level), but may still take the sobriquet of "amir" or "lord" as a title of respect. As with fighters, amir is used only when no other landed, earned, or awarded title is available. Paladins may hold land in the name of the Grand Caliph.

## Rangers

Rangers attain "sheikh" ("sheikha") ranking at 10th level, and at this time attract 2d6 followers, which may be men, animals, or even supernatural creatures. Use Table 3, or the DM may choose particular creatures which are appropriate to the standard campaign.

## Mages

Certain wizard kits (such as sha'irs) gain particular advantages at certain levels. These are covered under the rules for those particular kits. At 10th level they may use the sobriquet "raqi" but rarely do so, as most wizards prefer their own grandiose titles by this stage ("Zibaru the Wolf, the Destroyer, the Thunder which Rings through the Desert" has a better sound to it than "Zibaru al-Raqi"). Mages may hold land in the name of the Grand Caliph.

At 10th level, an established, sedentary wizard of any kit may choose to take on apprentices. A wizard attracts one to three 0-level apprentices, and one trained journeyman wizard of the same kit and levels 1 to 4. A wizard may never take on more than four apprentices at a time. The 0-level apprentices perform the scut-work, cleaning, and learn enough magic to not blow themselves up, while the higher-level journeyman aids the elder wizard in adventuring and/or research.

It takes about a year for a 0-level NPC with the proper aptitude to become a first-level wizard, and during this time he remains with the master wizard (unless dismissed). Advancement after that is subject to standard experience increases. For every level gained (including the first) there is a 20 percent cumulative chance that the journeyman leaves on his own. A 4th-level apprentice has an 80 percent chance of leaving, and at 5th level (100 percent) sets out on his own.

Lost apprentices may be regained only when the wizard has no 0-level apprentices. Higher-level

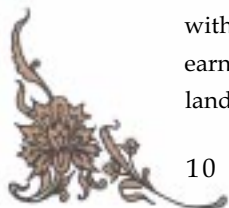




TABLE 3: Ranger's Followers

Die Roll	Follower
01-02	Bard (rawun), levels 1-6
03-07	Bear, Black
08-10	Cat, Cheetah
11-13	Cat, Jaguar
14-20	Cat, Lion
21-23	Cat, Tiger
24-25	Cleric (moralist), levels 1-4
26-27	Cleric (ethoist), levels 1-4
28-30	Cleric (pragmatist), levels 1-4
31-32	Cleric (kahin), levels 2-8
33-35	Cleric (mystic), levels 2-8
36-40	Dog, Wild
41-45	Eagle, Wild
46-47	Elephant *
48-58	Falcon (hawk, small)
59-62	Fighter (merc. barbarian), levels 1-6
63-64	Fighter (corsair), levels 1-6
65-68	Fighter (desert rider), levels 1-6
69-70	Fighter (faris), levels 1-6
71-75	Fighter (askar), levels 1-6
76	Hippogriff*
77-80	Owl, Common
81-82	Owl, Talking*
83-87	Ranger (any appropriate kit), levels 1-4
88	Roc*
89-91	Thief (barber), levels 2-8
92-95	Thief (sa'luk), levels 2-8
96-99	Wolf, Common
00	Other wilderness creature (chosen by the DM)

\* If this choice is not appropriate for the situation, or the ranger already has a follower of this type, ignore this result and roll again.

apprentices are only regained by training lower-level apprentices.

A wizard may take on apprentices for a number of reasons. One is to have many loyal, eager hands to perform the scut-work in magical research and general

house-cleaning. Another is to create a body of mages of the same school (and with good ties to their old master). A third reason is monetary; an upper-class family in a major city pays about 10,000 gp to set a bright child on the road to magic, and a wizard trying to set himself up in a foreign town can quickly gain favors among the local nobility by training second sons and daughters in responsible spell-casting.

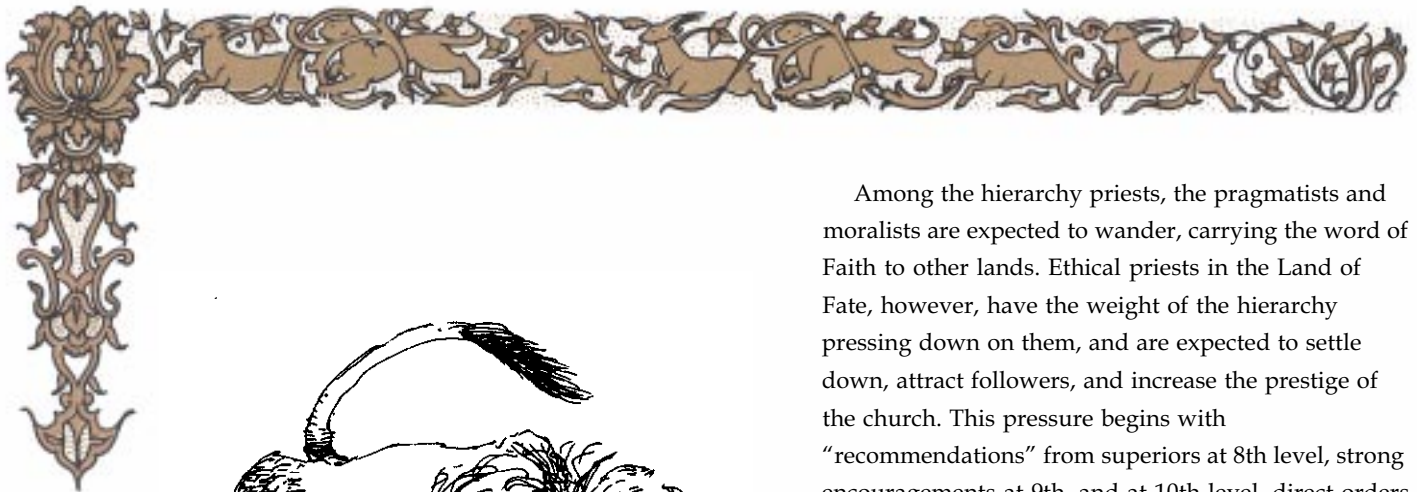
At 12th level, a wizard with a permanent base in a city or town, or membership in a particular tribe, may be offered a position in the court of the local leader. The wizard may decline such an offer (usually without ill effect), but if he or she accepts, the wizard gains personal, private quarters in the palace (if available), meals and clothing, and sufficient material to conduct magical research upon request. The wizard in turn is counted on to advise the local ruler in matters of policy, and should plan to be interrupted at least three times a week. In larger cities this position is usually one of advising the advisers, and may mean dealing with rival wizards. In small towns or tribes, the wizard may be the sole individual the local ruler can turn to for magical advice, or magical protection if the town is threatened.

## Priests

At higher levels, priests may attract additional followers, receive a posting within the church, or establish their own religious stronghold. All priest kits may receive grants from the Grand Caliph and hold land in his name.

At 8th level, the priest may use the sobriquet "imam," and attracts 20 to 200 0-level fighters as followers. The exact nature of these followers depends on the exact situation, but let the following be a guideline: fighters in leather armor with long sword and spear, without mounts or other specialized equipment. They have a morale rating of 18, and are ultimately loyal to the priest. As for fighter followers, these fanatics remain only if they are treated well;





otherwise they fall from the path to enlightenment and seek out other, fairer holy men.

All clerical kits, including hakimas, mystics, and kahins, receive these followers, provided the PC has some permanent base of operations. This does not have to be a clerical redoubt, and may be nothing more than the priest's home, a haram the priest venerates, or a larger mosque or university to which the priest belongs.

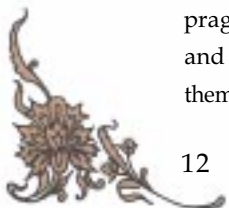
Hierarchy priests (Clerics of Order) also attract followers, but if they are part of a larger organization, these followers join that faith's organization while still maintaining a personal loyalty to the particular priest who "showed them the way." For example, a pragmatic priest of Kor who remains in a mosque under a higher-level NPC priest attains 8th level and attracts his fighter followers. These followers join the forces of the mosque itself, though they remain loyal to the pragmatic priest, such that if he needs "ten men strong and loyal" to help seek out a raiding ghul, he may get them easily.

Among the hierarchy priests, the pragmatists and moralists are expected to wander, carrying the word of Faith to other lands. Ethical priests in the Land of Fate, however, have the weight of the hierarchy pressing down on them, and are expected to settle down, attract followers, and increase the prestige of the church. This pressure begins with "recommendations" from superiors at 8th level, strong encouragements at 9th, and at 10th level, direct orders from superiors to go to a particular church and settle down. A PC ethical priest is considered pragmatic if he fails to heed such orders. Moralist and pragmatic priests may receive this form of pressure as well in certain situations, but such orders are directed primarily at ethical priests.

An order of posting may be to a large, established mosque, monastery, or university under the control of a higher-level NPC priest. In such cases the priest may gain "leaves of absence" from his superior if his work is otherwise of sufficient quality. A posting may also be to establish a mosque or monastery in a new location, or to fill a leadership position in a smaller rural mosque. Such first-time positions of personal leadership are usually in rural areas and small towns, and only if the priest performs well will he or she be considered for assignment to one of the larger mosques.

A hierarchy priest may seek to create his own position by building a mosque or monastery in a new location, expanding the reach of the faith. If done at 9th level or higher, the priest gains the official sanction of his or her faith, and the building is subsidized, such that all construction is at half-price.

Free priests (hakimas, kahins, and mystics) may also build such places of worship in the form of universities, monasteries, and convents. Again, if 9th level or higher, construction costs are at half-price. In this case the support is coming from the local people and individual wealthy donors from whom the free priest has garnered favor. This assumes that the priest's message is well-received by the local populace and the priest has some kind of popular support.







# Thieves

Once a thief reaches 10th level, his reputation is such that he can attract followers: like-minded individuals who have heard of the thief's legendary prowess and hope to learn at the feet of a master (and to line their own pockets in the process). The thief does not need a permanent base of operations, though this sometimes results from a sudden influx of followers. Thieves from the beggar-thief and barber kits gain 2d6 followers, while others gain 4d6 followers. The followers are generally of the same kit as their master though the DM may decide at his option (or with a 10 percent chance) that a wildly variant kit may choose to follow the thief (e.g., a holy slayer wishing to learn all about the craft of a merchant-rogue). As race does have an effect on thieving abilities, racial types are listed in Table 4.

# Bards

Upon reaching 8th level, a bard may be asked to join the local ruler's court as an adviser and entertainer. Bards who choose to accept this invitation are provided with room and board, and keep their positions as long as the master is pleased by them. This is generally determined with a role-playing situation as opposed to a dice-throw, but in general, the more impressive the court, the shorter the careers; figure about one to three months before dismissal in the courts of major cities, with longer, even permanent tenures available in smaller towns and among tribes. As a member of the court, the bard is privy to information not normally available (court gossip, personal conversations between lords and ladies), and is called upon to recommend individuals capable of carrying out the will of the local caliph (this provides a group of adventurers with a new source of potential adventures).

Upon reaching 9th level, a bard attracts followers, provided the bard has a permanent stronghold or base

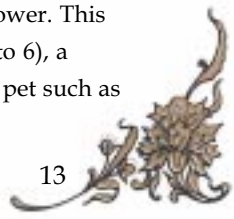
TABLE 4: Thief's Followers

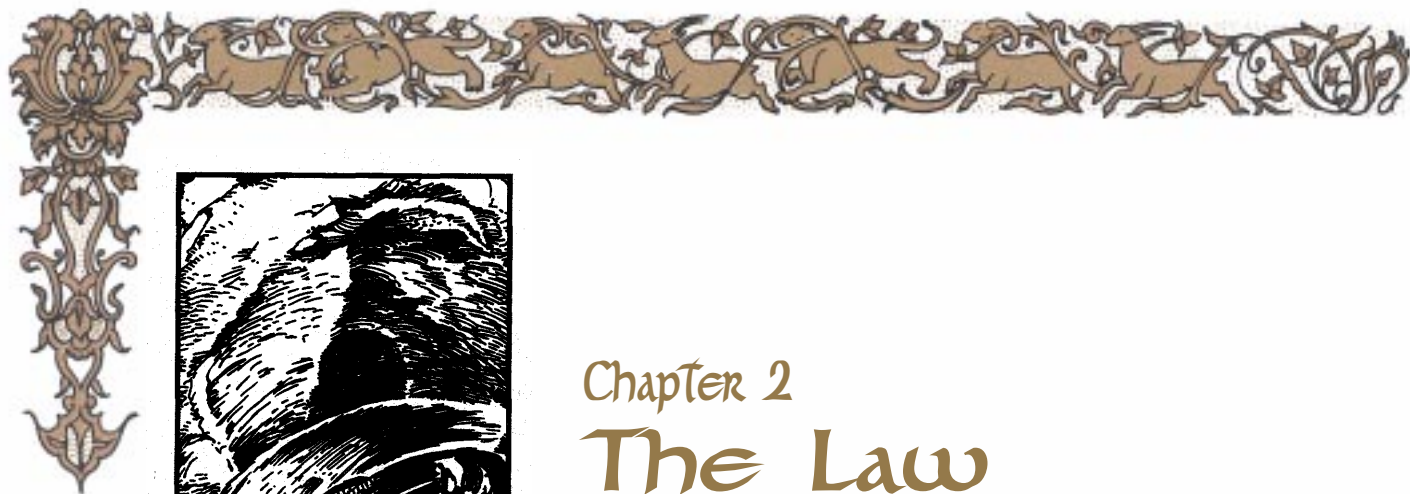
Roll	Follower
01-05	Dwarf thief, levels 1-6
06-07	Dwarf thief/fighter, levels 1-4 each
08-13	Elf thief, levels 1-6
14-15	Elf thief/fighter/mage, levels 1-3 each
16-17	Elf thief/mage, levels 1-4
18-20	Goblin thief*
21-23	Gnome thief, levels 1-6
24-25	Gnome thief/fighter, levels 1-4 each
26-30	Half-elf thief, levels 1-6
31-33	Half-elf thief/fighter, levels 1-4 each
34-35	Half-elf thief/fighter/mage, levels 1-3 each
36-40	Halfling thief, levels 1-6
41-42	Halfling thief/fighter, levels 1-4 each
43-45	Hobgoblin thief*
46-97	Human thief, levels 1-8
98	Kobold thief*
99	Ogre thief*
00	DM's option, may include nonthief followers such as priests, mages, and fighters, as well as animals or monsters.

Races marked with an asterisk (\*) are not normally player character races. As thieves, these races do not advance above starting levels in thief abilities. If the DM has developed these races as player characters, then each would be initially levels 1-6.

of operations (including the court of a ruler). The bard gains 10d6 fighters of 0 level, equipped with chain mail, scimitars, and spears. These individuals are the bard's personal guard, and follow him should he move on to greener pastures.

The DM may choose to withhold one of the die rolls to provide the bard with a special follower. This follower could be a lesser bard (of levels 1 to 6), a magical creature such as a talking owl, or a pet such as a lion.





## Chapter 2

# The Law

One of the great unifying principles of civilized people is the Law of the Loregiver, a common “touchstone” of tradition and rational behavior by which all Zakharans are judged. The Law of the Loregiver, more than any other force or language or government, holds the enlightened world together.

The Loregiver is a mythological figure, the handmaiden to Fate, supposedly a wise woman who codified the Law back in the eldest of days. Mankind was not ready to accept Fate’s wisdom at that time, the story goes, and so she hid the scrolls containing the Law until the time when they were needed.

Centuries later, the people of Zakhara were in desperate straits. Intertribal wars, intercity conflicts, and interreligious squabbles—all of which could have been alleviated had the Law been known to all—had brought all of civilization to the edge of disaster. Plagues swept the land and priests were unwilling to perform cures. Famine stalked the fields and no one wished to risk going into them. Monsters were at large and none would defeat them. Mankind was in need of enlightenment, or would follow the civilizations of the Ruined Kingdoms and the Haunted Lands into extinction.

Fate guided a young man to discover the caverns where the Loregiver had laid the scrolls to rest. The young man recognized that the Law inscribed on the scrolls was a unifier for his people, and, so inspired, went out among them to reveal its wonders.

The young man was the First Caliph, whose blood now flows in the current Grand Caliph of Huzuz. Under his leadership, Al-Badia and Al-Hadhar began to pull together into a common people, setting aside long-standing differences. The religious hierarchies of the gods rallied around the law, creating a universal set of beliefs in which tolerance was stressed. Open mosques, where all could worship freely, became a hallmark of the civilized world. Embattled and impoverished merchants also supported the Law, for it



established common prices and methods of dealing. Soon the Law of the Loregiver was the one true law throughout the civilized world, and the burning world of Zakhara became the Land of Fate.

The original scrolls were transcribed onto thick planks of lacquered wood that are now kept in the House of the Loregiver, in the center of the Golden Mosque of Huzuz, the largest place of worship in the civilized world. As a symbol of authority, the Grand Caliph may present to local rulers a copy of these wooden blocks for installation in their own mosques. As for the original scrolls, it is written that the First Caliph, as an old man having seen the Law spread from the Free Cities to the Golden Gulf, went into the desert and returned them to the cavern from which they came.

For the early enlightened men and women, the Law provided a codified version of oral and legal traditions. In addition, legends say that in the first century of Enlightenment, those leaders who swore their allegiance to the Law of the Loregiver and the First Caliph were blessed with bountiful harvests, rich treasures, a profusion of strong sons and daughters, and a unified people. Such benefits do not apply to their descendants, but all agree that the Law of the Loregiver has prevented the Land of Fate from becoming a collection of savage, idolatrous states.

## The Law and The PCs

The Law is divided into three parts. The first part sets down the relationship between Zakharans and their gods, the nature of worship and veneration, the idea of tolerance and unity. The effects of this portion of the law are seen in the religious hierarchies and the open mosques.

The second section deals with the relationship of the ruler and the ruled, and establishes the supremacy of the First Caliph over other leaders. This section is again a codification of existing oral laws among the desert tribes, which may be summarized by the idea

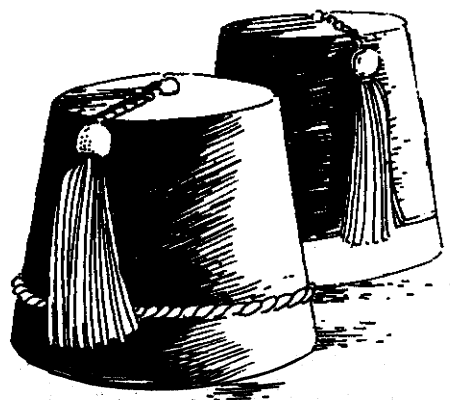
that a leader rules by the permission of the led, and a foolish leader may be replaced by one who is more competent.

It is the third part of the law which concerns the player characters in the Land of Fate, for it deals with civil law: that is, the relationships among citizens of a civilized society. Again, it is a codification of pre-existing tribal laws and local traditions into a unified whole. The Law is enforced mostly within the boundaries of cities and within enlightened tribal groups. Its purpose is to allow local authorities sufficient leeway to deal with specific-situations, while at the same time setting forth definitions of right and wrong.

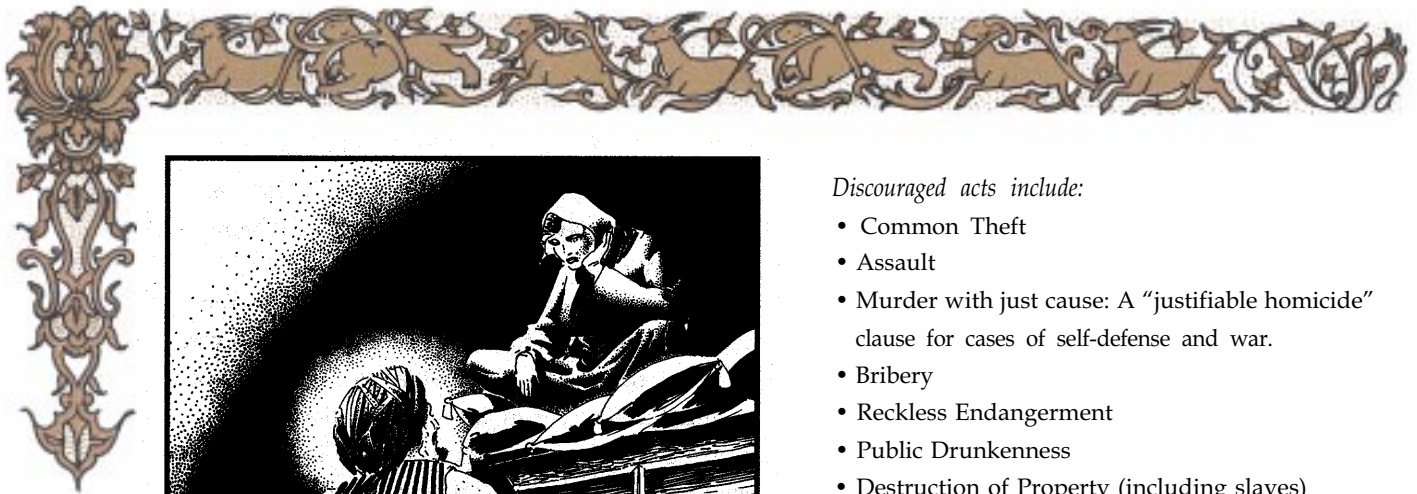
## The Nature of The Law

The Law of the Loregiver divides all actions into five major groups: That which is Required, That which is Encouraged, That which is Tolerated, That which is Discouraged, and That which is Forbidden.

Forbidden actions are those which are heinous in the eyes of civilized Zakharans and their enlightened gods. Such actions are foul and savage, and usually those who engage in these activities are put to death.







*Forbidden acts include:*

- Willful eating of sentient flesh
- Murder of the innocent
- Spreading (or attempting to spread) the belief that no gods exist
- Disobeying the word of the Grand Caliph
- Threatening the Grand Caliph, his court, or the magnificent lands entrusted to his rule
- Malicious theft: This is defined as stealing a man's livelihood or cheating him of the bulk of his belongings.
- Enslavement of the Enlightened: Note that the state may enslave as punishment. This applies to individual slavers who capture the innocent.

Discouraged actions are those which are displeasing in the eyes of civilized Zakharans and their enlightened gods. While they are wrong, they do not carry the heavy onus of the forbidden acts, and the criminal may be expected to make restitution to the offended party.

*Discouraged acts include:*

- Common Theft
- Assault
- Murder with just cause: A "justifiable homicide" clause for cases of self-defense and war.
- Bribery
- Reckless Endangerment
- Public Drunkenness
- Destruction of Property (including slaves)
- Fraud (including bearing false witness) and slander
- Actions against the agents of the Grand Caliph and/or his subordinate enlightened rulers
- Preventing others from engaging in tolerated actions
- Breaking curfew

Tolerated actions are those which are merely permitted as a daily part of life. These are basic rights of enlightened citizens. No punishment is meted out for them, nor is any reward granted.

*Tolerated acts include:*

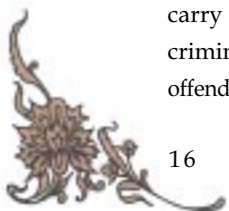
- Trade (including making loans)
- Worship of one's god in the open mosque
- Public celebration (including smoking and drinking, though not to excess)
- Free speech and discourse, provided that it does not defame or slander others

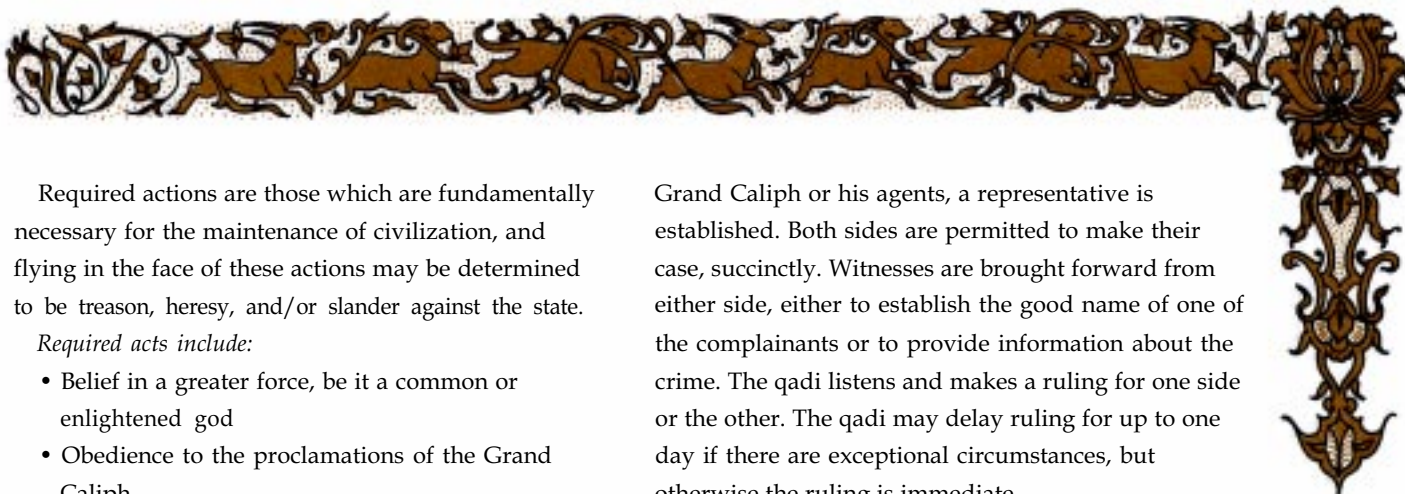
Encouraged actions are those which are most pleasing to enlightened men and their gods. These are the marks of true civilization, and the individual performing them is valued as a pillar of his community.

*Encouraged acts include:*

- Worship of enlightened gods
- Enlightenment of the unenlightened
- Tolerance of others
- Charity and hospitality
- Paying taxes

If tolerated actions represent basic freedoms, then encouraged actions represent virtues and attributes desired by civilized Zakharans. One who shows these attributes may expect more mercy from the court than one who does not.





Required actions are those which are fundamentally necessary for the maintenance of civilization, and flying in the face of these actions may be determined to be treason, heresy, and/or slander against the state.

*Required acts include:*

- Belief in a greater force, be it a common or enlightened god
- Obedience to the proclamations of the Grand Caliph
- Pilgrimage once in one's life to Huzuz and the Court of Enlightenment. This pilgrimage is one of the great unifiers of the people of the Land of Fate, for it encourages travel and exposure to other peoples.

## Justice and The Law

"The Law is not Justice, nor is Justice the Law."

The above listings set out the basic framework of the Law, that which is permitted and that which is not. These are ideals, and in a most perfect world, would be followed by all enlightened men without question, and the world would be safe, secure, and organized. Unfortunately (or fortunately, for those seeking adventure), that is not the case. How the Law is put into practice is the realm of Justice.

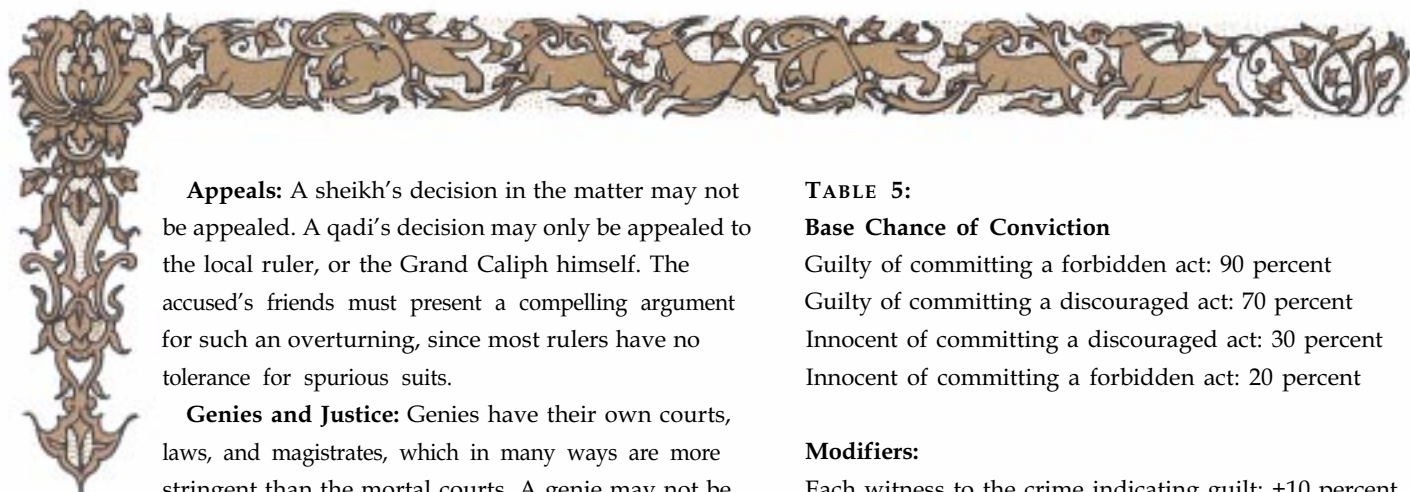
Justice is the province of the local magistrate, or qadi, in the cities, and is usually handled by the sheikh or vizier among the Al-Badia. In order to press charges against a wrong-doer, charges must be brought before the qadi, along with the accused. A crime that is not witnessed nor reported is not a crime in the Law of the Loregiver. While a complaint against an individual may be made, and that individual called before the magistrate, if the individual cannot be found, then nothing can be done (for serious crimes, the individual being sought may have to range far to avoid the hand of the Law).

In cases of a dispute, both parties are brought before the magistrate. In cases where the crime is against the

Grand Caliph or his agents, a representative is established. Both sides are permitted to make their case, succinctly. Witnesses are brought forward from either side, either to establish the good name of one of the complainants or to provide information about the crime. The qadi listens and makes a ruling for one side or the other. The qadi may delay ruling for up to one day if there are exceptional circumstances, but otherwise the ruling is immediate.

**Punishment:** The types of punishment depend on the nature of the crime. For Forbidden Actions, common punishments include death (by beheading), permanent enslavement, or disfigurement (by branding on the forehead or removal of body parts). For Discouraged Actions, punishment is more lenient: payment of damages (a diyya, or weregild, in the case of death), temporary enslavement or imprisonment, or exile from the community. The nature of the punishment is up to the discretion of the qadi or sheikh.





**Appeals:** A sheikh's decision in the matter may not be appealed. A qadi's decision may only be appealed to the local ruler, or the Grand Caliph himself. The accused's friends must present a compelling argument for such an overturning, since most rulers have no tolerance for spurious suits.

**Genies and Justice:** Genies have their own courts, laws, and magistrates, which in many ways are more stringent than the mortal courts. A genie may not be called in a mortal court as a witness to a crime. A genie committing a crime against humans must be judged by genies. A human committing a crime against a genie is also judged by genies.

**Magic and Justice:** Magical evidence may only be admitted before the magistrate if the magistrate can confirm its validity, either by his own magical abilities or by the presence of other trusted individuals with magical power.

**Slaves and Justice:** A master is responsible for his slaves and his slave's actions. Any debt incurred by the slave for diyya or payments must be covered by the master (who may use the slave as payment). A slave may be destroyed for Forbidden actions, and the master forced to pay restitution. For this reason, masters must keep a careful eye on their slaves.

**Role-playing Justice in the Land of Fate:** Role-playing the situation before a qadi or sheikh is very difficult, as there are always situations where judgment must be used. Further, the appearance of truth is often more telling than the truth itself. For example, if a fighter is charmed and slays another while under the effects of the spell, the fighter must prove that (a) he was charmed, and (b) the effects of this charming caused the death. Even if he can prove such a thing, he may still have to pay a diyya to the survivors of the victim's family.

In the heat of a game, it may be difficult for a DM (who knows all the facts) to represent himself as a qadi (who knows only that which he is told). In such cases, Table 5 may be helpful to the DM.

**TABLE 5:**

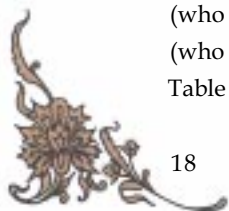
**Base Chance of Conviction**

Guilty of committing a forbidden act: 90 percent  
Guilty of committing a discouraged act: 70 percent  
Innocent of committing a discouraged act: 30 percent  
Innocent of committing a forbidden act: 20 percent

**Modifiers:**

Each witness to the crime indicating guilt: +10 percent  
Each witness to the crime indicating innocence: -10 percent  
Each witness stepping forward to indicate the enlightened nature of the accused, if native of tribe or city: -5 percent  
Each witness testifying to the good name of the complainant, if native to tribe or city: +5 percent  
Each witness stepping forward to indicate the enlightened nature of the accused, if not a native of the tribe or city of the judge: -2 percent  
Each witness testifying to the good name of the complainant, if not native to the city: +1 percent  
The qadi knows the accused is enlightened and trustworthy: -10 percent  
The qadi knows the accused as a trouble-maker, or one who has appeared in his court before: +10 percent  
Someone in high station speaks out in behalf of the accused: - (minus) the individual's station  
Someone of high station speaks out against the accused: - (minus) the individual's station.  
Evidence (magical or otherwise) is introduced which proves the complainant's case: +10 percent  
Evidence (magical or otherwise) is introduced which proves the accused's case: -10 percent

Table 5 provides rough guidelines only, and should be tempered by the situation and the DM's intentions. If a sudden court case will slow down an adventure, the DM should note off-hand that the judge particularly dislikes strangers, and add that getting out of town may be the easiest course of action. The table is skewed heavily to the natives







of the community, since most qadis and sheikhs have been established by their people, and have a loyalty to this base. Finally, it is possible to “fix” a result, whether by political influence or bribes (bribery is a discouraged act in itself).

**Role-playing Punishment:** Punishment is no fun, particularly if it results in a PC’s death. This should only happen if the PC goes far beyond the bounds of civilized behavior (a personal attack against the Grand Caliph or other person in authority), not under most circumstances. However, the punishment can provide a springboard to further adventures (such as the innocent rogue seeking to clear his or her good name and bring the truly guilty to justice).

Here are some guidelines as to the nature of punishment in the Land of Fate. In traditional and moralist areas, the punishment tends to be tougher, or longer, and the price higher than in more relaxed areas.

Willingly eating the flesh of sentients: Death.

Murder of the innocent: Death, diyya (of approx. 1,000 gp times number of survivors in family), and/or enslavement.

Treason (disobedience): Enslavement.

Treason (threats): Death.

Unbelief: Enslavement.

Malicious theft: Exile or disfigurement.

Enslaving the enlightened: Enslavement and diyya of 100 times level of the enslaved.

Common theft: Exile or enslavement.

Assault: Exile or enslavement.

Justifiable homicide: Exile and/or diyya (of 500 gp times number of survivors in family).

Reckless endangerment: Fine (100 gp), exile for repeat offenders.

Public drunkenness: Fine (50 gp), exile for repeat offenders.

Destruction of property: Fine (Value of property times two) and/or replacement of items and/or enslavement or exile.

Fraud and slander: Enslavement.

Preventing others from engaging in tolerated actions: Fine (100 gp), enslavement

Breaking curfew: Fine (100 gp).

Exile: Individual is banished from the city or tribe, and attempts to reenter the-city or rejoin the tribe are met with death.

Enslavement: Imprisonment for light crimes, permanent enslavement and loss of rights for serious crimes. An individual may be enslaved to the complainant, or to a professional slaver,

Diyya: Restitution for the dead. Payment may include cost of resurrection, if available.

Fine: Payment of gold pieces.

Disfigurement: Removing of hand or branding. Disfigurement is a public spectacle, so there is usually a one-week grace period before sentence is carried out. Removing brands or restoring lost limbs of a criminal may itself be punished by disfigurement.

Death: As with disfigurement, death is a public spectacle, and there is a one-week grace period before sentence is carried out. The accused is imprisoned until that time.

In addition to the Law of the Loregiver, there are other courts and other rulings. The genies have been mentioned above, but other self-governing groups include the mamluks (who legislate the actions of their members by military tribunals) and the holy slayers (who declare the actions of their followers just or unjust). Merely “beating the rap” in the civil court does not protect an individual from retribution from other sources.

The rule of Law extends only among the civilized, and once beyond the borders of the cities and the enlightened desert tribes, a man may have to kill to triumph over the unenlightened. This is not considered a violation of the law, as long as no one brings it before the qadi. PC adventurers are advised to be on their best behavior when within cities, or be prepared to leave town very quickly.





## Chapter 3

# Power Groups

Eventually in their travels, player characters will knowingly or unknowingly meet members of Zakharan power groups. The information here is for the eyes of the Dungeon Master. Reveal it as necessary, in the context of the PCs' adventures; feel free to alter it to suit the campaign's needs.

### MamLuks

Mamluk societies are found throughout the Land of Fate, being most powerful in the north around Qudra and the Free Cities, but having large forces throughout Hiyal and Huzuz, the Pantheon, the Ruined Kingdoms, and Afyal. They are weakest in the area of the Pearl Cities, which, while not abolitionist in the manner of the Corsair Domains, do not trust the slave-soldiers in their position of authority.

The largest and most powerful mamluk societies are allied with the armed forces of a particular city state, but each city also has smaller mamluk forces. These are entrusted to lesser tasks, such as guarding mosques or granaries, or acting as bodyguards for powerful individuals.

Mamluks are organized into 10-man platoons, with a sergeant (approximately 4th level) in command. Three platoons make a company, five companies a wing, and two wings a full strength army unit of 300 men. In addition, large mamluk organizations may have clerical support (Vataqatal priests in the north, local deities in the south), and magical assistance. These are considered advisory positions answering to the unit commander.

Each mamluk organization is committed to an ideal or situation. In Qudra, for example, a leading mamluk society is the Dutiful: Wajib. All slaves of this organization take the sobriquet "Abd al-Wajib," meaning "Slave of the Dutiful," to show their allegiance.



All mamluks are in theory ultimately owned by the Grand Caliph, and swear their allegiance to him as the descendent of the First Caliph who received the Law of the Loregiver. Therefore, for them to take actions against the Grand Caliph would be treason and heresy. Units have rebelled against their masters rather than strike against Huzuz. A mamluk commander must receive approval from the Enlightened Court before entering into a new contract with a local ruler, but this is almost always granted, since the presence of mamluks exerts more long-range court control on the local leaders.

Each mamluk organization has its own facial tattoos and/or facial scars which it uses to identify its members. Higher ranks require more elaborate tattoos. It is considered a crime against mamluks for anyone not of the group to imitate these markings, and the justice of the mamluks is usually swifter and more deadly than that of the qadis.

The major mamluk organizations of the Land of Fate are as follows.

**The Dauntless:** A Qudran organization with units in Huzuz supporting the Grand Caliph. The Dauntless specializes in exploration and recovery of powerful magics. Its ultimate commander is General Kemil Abd al-Jasir (hmF/mk/12), a minor member of the military council.

**The Defenders:** Members of this unit are rarely found beyond the walls of Qudra, for its organization is empowered with the defense and management of the city itself. Its commander is Akir Abd al-Himaya (hmF/mk/10).

**The Devoted:** Based in I'tiraf with units throughout the Pantheon (and particularly in Fahhas), the Devoted are the rivals of the Exalted as the finest (and largest) mamluk organization in the League of the Pantheon. This rivalry often leads to conflict between units of the two. Its ultimate commander is Most Respected Warrior Amahl Abd al-Muhlis (hmF/mk/17).

**The Devout:** A splinter group of the Devoted who pledged their allegiance to the city of Kadarasto and its

young prince, Nari ibn Aman. The Devoted had sent a unit to Kadarasto to expand the base of religious mamluks, only to discover that the new units had greater concern with protecting the heritage of the Ruined Kingdoms, and was recognized by the Grand Caliph as a separate unit. Its commander is Mustah Abd al-Nasik (emF/mk/12).

**The Dutiful:** Headquartered in Qudra, with units in Huzuz and Utaqa, this organization's commander is the dwarven emir of Qudra, Hatit Abd al-Wajib (dmF/mk/20). It is the most powerful mamluk organization in the Land of Fate, and has members "at large" in all the major cities.

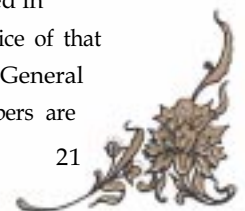
**The Exalted:** A moralist group of mamluks based in the Pantheon lands (primarily Hilm and I'tiraf), this group has a deep, abiding loyalty toward the Pantheists and their aims to make all of Zakhara a more civilized, law-abiding world. Its ultimate commander is Most Respected Warrior Jamala Abd al-Raffa (hff/mk/18).

**The Faithful:** One of the more powerful mamluk organizations in Qudra, this unit also serves the Grand Caliph in Huzuz. Its ultimate commander is General Adun Abd al-Amin (hmF/mk/18).

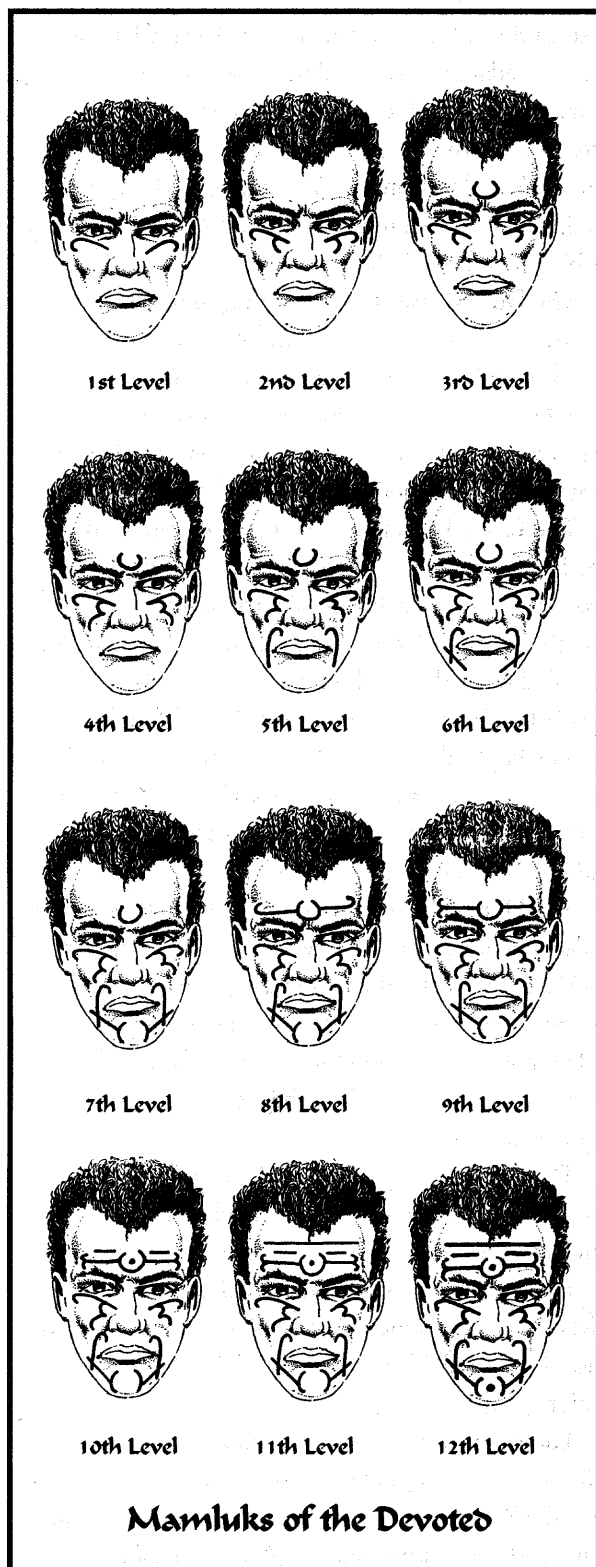
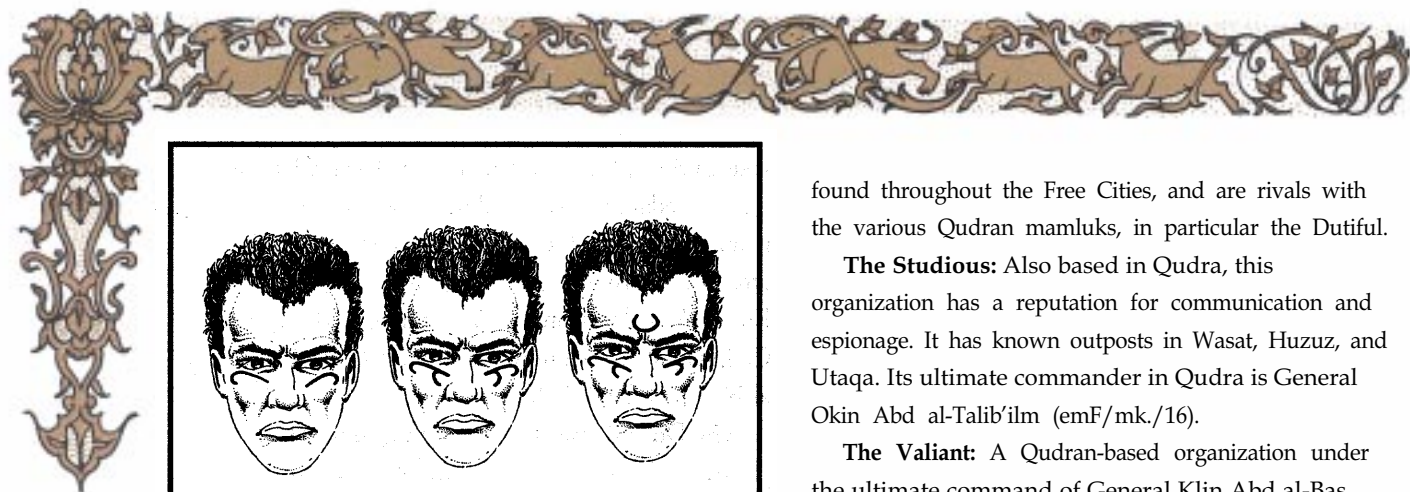
**The Honored:** This is a special unit of eunuchs and independent women entrusted as personal bodyguards and harim guards for the Grand Caliph in Huzuz. They are rarely found beyond the palace grounds unless delivering messages from their master. Their commander is General Ahmahd Abd al-Iffa (hmF/mk/15).

**The Parched:** A group based in Talab, entrusted with protecting that city's water supply (brought by ancient aqueducts from the mountains). It is an example of a typical small-unit mamluk organization dedicated to a specific task. Its ultimate commander is Most Respected Warrior Akbara Abd al-Yahruq (hff/mk/13).

**The Respected:** A large organization based in Muluk, with a long and proud history in service of that city, the Respected is under the command of General Oman Abd al-Hazim (hmF/mk/10). Its members are







found throughout the Free Cities, and are rivals with the various Qudran mamluks, in particular the Dutiful.

**The Studios:** Also based in Qudra, this organization has a reputation for communication and espionage. It has known outposts in Wasat, Huzuz, and Utaqa. Its ultimate commander in Qudra is General Okin Abd al-Talib'ilm (emF/mk./16).

**The Valiant:** A Qudran-based organization under the ultimate command of General Klin Abd al-Bas (hff/mk/14), this mamluk unit is known for its lightninglike strikes. It has units in Huzuz and Utaqas.

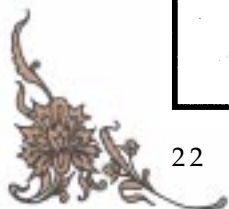
**The Wanderers:** This is one of the few naval-based mamluk organizations, and has few supporters in Qudra. Its commander is Admiral Dus Abd al-Dawwar gbmF/mk/5).

**The Wondrous:** The official mamluk organization of the Padisha of Afyal, this organization is wealthy, but used primarily as palace guards and for parades. The padisha does not wish to risk his "best troops" (or rather his best-dressed troops) in battle, and this does not sit well with some of the members, recruited from the savage island of the south. The ultimate commander of the Wondrous is Akima Abd al-Garib (hff/mk/16) who shares the padisha's views, at least in public.

## Creating New Organizations

The above listing is not a complete roster of all mamluk organizations in the Land of Fate, only those of particularly large size or with specific duties. The DM may create new mamluk organizations for his players, with the following guidelines:

- 1) Small membership— no more than 300 members.
- 2) Limited influence— based in one particular city, with influence (other members) present in several cities in the same area (for example, a mamluk organization in Qadiq in the Free Cities would have members scattered throughout the other free cities).
- 3) Limited primary tasks— such as bodyguard to a valued member of the court, protecting a council building, entrusted to gate-duty, or seeing that a pass or ford is kept clear.





4) Relationships with primary groups — If a mamluk organization is based in the same city as a larger or more prestigious organization, determine their relationship; are they rivals (like the Devoted and the Exalted in the Pantheon), or is one subservient to another (such as any mamluk group in Huzuz is to those particularly serving the Grand Caliph)?

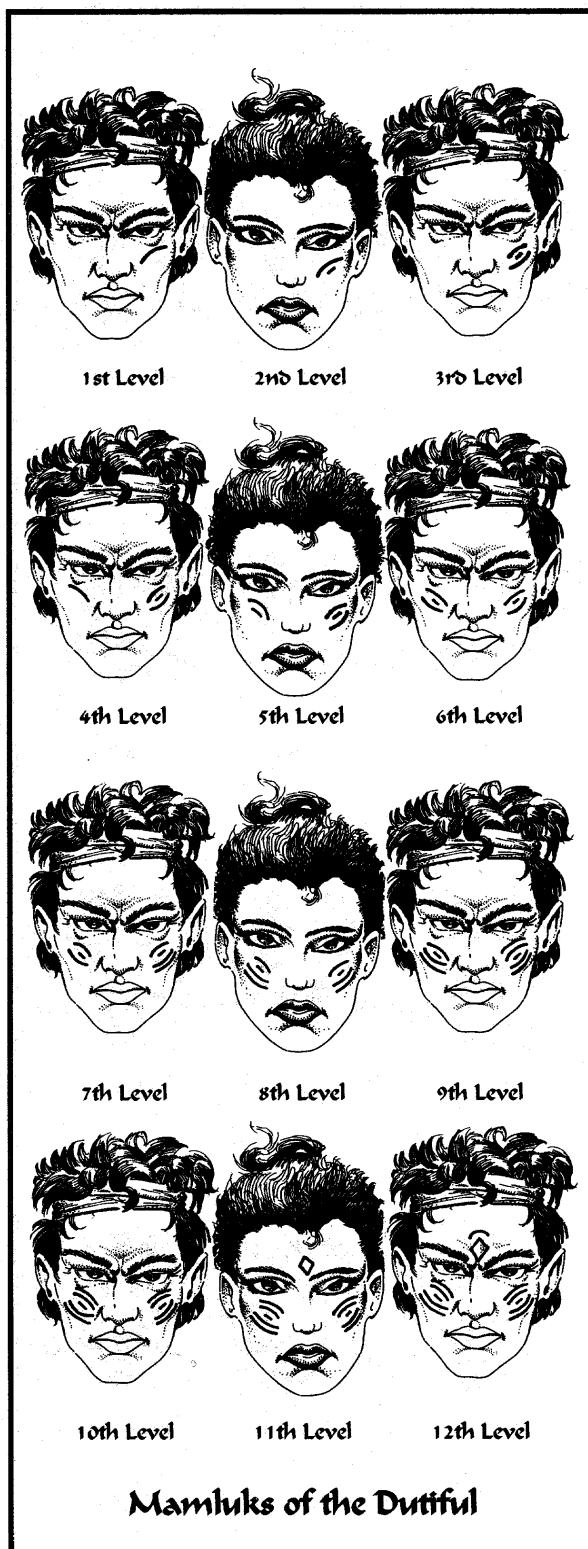
5) Relationships with rulers and court — It may be assumed that the mamluk organization is on relatively good terms with the local leadership, else the unit would be posted as far away from the city as is humanly possible (this may occur, and the borders of the Furrowed Mountains and Haunted Lands are dotted with qal'ats which are bases for small mamluk organizations).

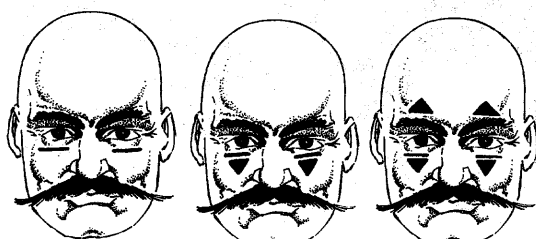
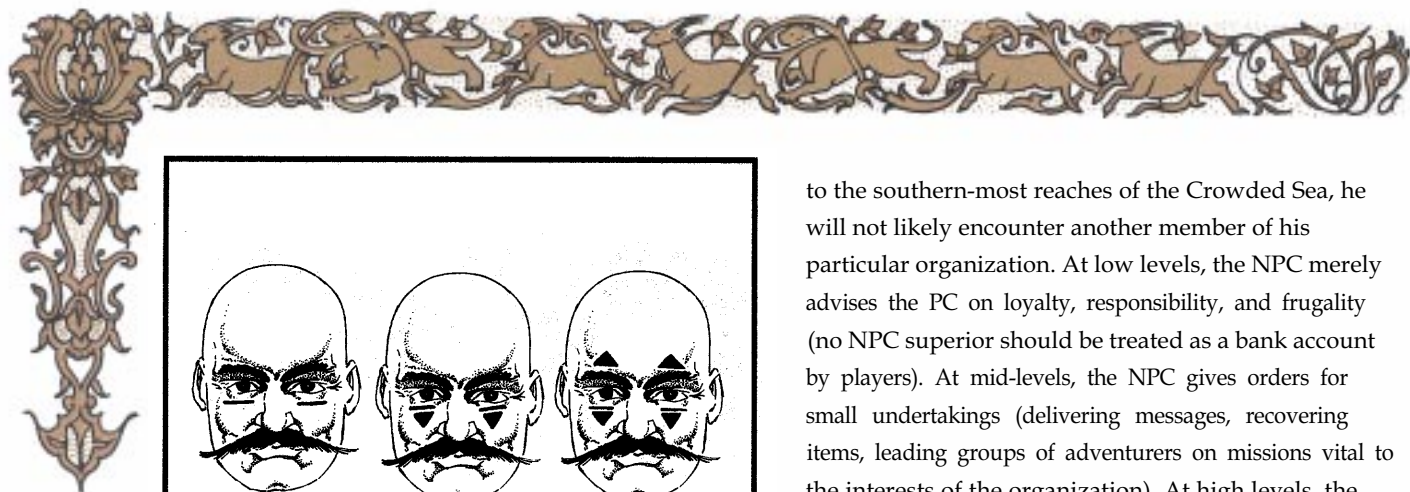
### PCs and The Mamluks

PC mamluks are assumed to be “on-leave” from their respective units. Their task is to gather information and reconnaissance in their travels and report to their superiors what they have learned. If they have found great, useful magics in their travels, so much the better. Loyalty is always assumed to the mamluk organization by the mamluk’s superiors, and failure to perform one’s orders is treason. Even death (in a world where the dead may be raised) is no excuse for failure.

When running mamluk PCs, the DM should feel free to create an NPC superior officer for the mamluk PC. This is an individual the PC can report to and take orders from as the DM sees fit. (Therefore, the NPC should be about five levels higher than the PC when they first meet.) This NPC may vary from a harsh drill-sergeant type to a retired, elder, and respected colonel who is wise in his years, to a enigmatic superior who in turn reports to a mysterious master who appears only to give orders, then vanishes mysteriously (possibly from locked rooms by means of magic). There are as many types of mamluks as there are types of individuals in the world.

The mamluk NPC superior should be based in the character’s home city, and should not travel. If relocating, the mamluk PC may call for a new superior, but within reason; if a mamluk flees from the Free Cities

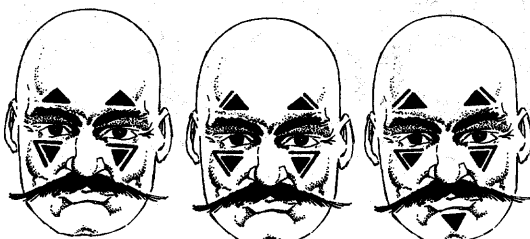




1st Level

2nd Level

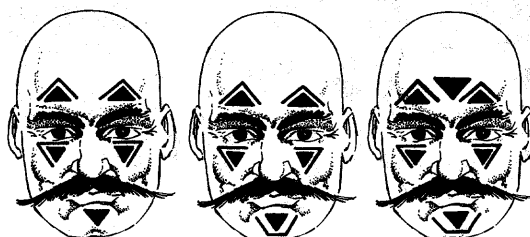
3rd Level



4th Level

5th Level

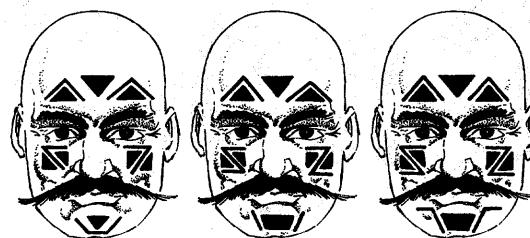
6th Level



7th Level

8th Level

9th Level



10th Level

11th Level

12th Level

### Mamluks of the Dauntless

to the southern-most reaches of the Crowded Sea, he will not likely encounter another member of his particular organization. At low levels, the NPC merely advises the PC on loyalty, responsibility, and frugality (no NPC superior should be treated as a bank account by players). At mid-levels, the NPC gives orders for small undertakings (delivering messages, recovering items, leading groups of adventurers on missions vital to the interests of the organization). At high levels, the NPC likely is answering to the PC, and the PC is responsible for large groups of men or particularly dangerous missions. The NPC may become a companion and/or servant of the PC, and higher-level superiors need to be created.

In a small unit, a PC may rise to become the ultimate commander of that unit. This is at the option of the DM as fits the style of the campaign. A unit commander loses much of his freedom to move at will, and has increased responsibility to the local rulers he serves. However, a PC commander has a ready-made military unit of loyal, elite soldiers at his disposal.

Mamluks come in all types and alignments, even within a particular organization. If it fits with the DM's campaign, the mamluk NPC superior may be of differing alignment from the PC, or have his own agenda. This may create problems for the PC mamluk if his orders go against his alignment, or against his companions. As a storyteller, the DM should never place the PC in a "no-win" situation (a clear order comes down to kill another player character), though the DM may use such a situation to challenge the player's loyalty and own personal values (the order comes from an evil wizard, who uses *change self* to appear as the superior; the PC would be rewarded for double-checking the order).

### Holy Slayer Fellowships

In the Land of Fate, there are a number of holy slayer organizations, known as fellowships. These fellowships are groups of lay people who support their







faith by eliminating or neutralizing those who are considered to be dangerous opponents to that faith.

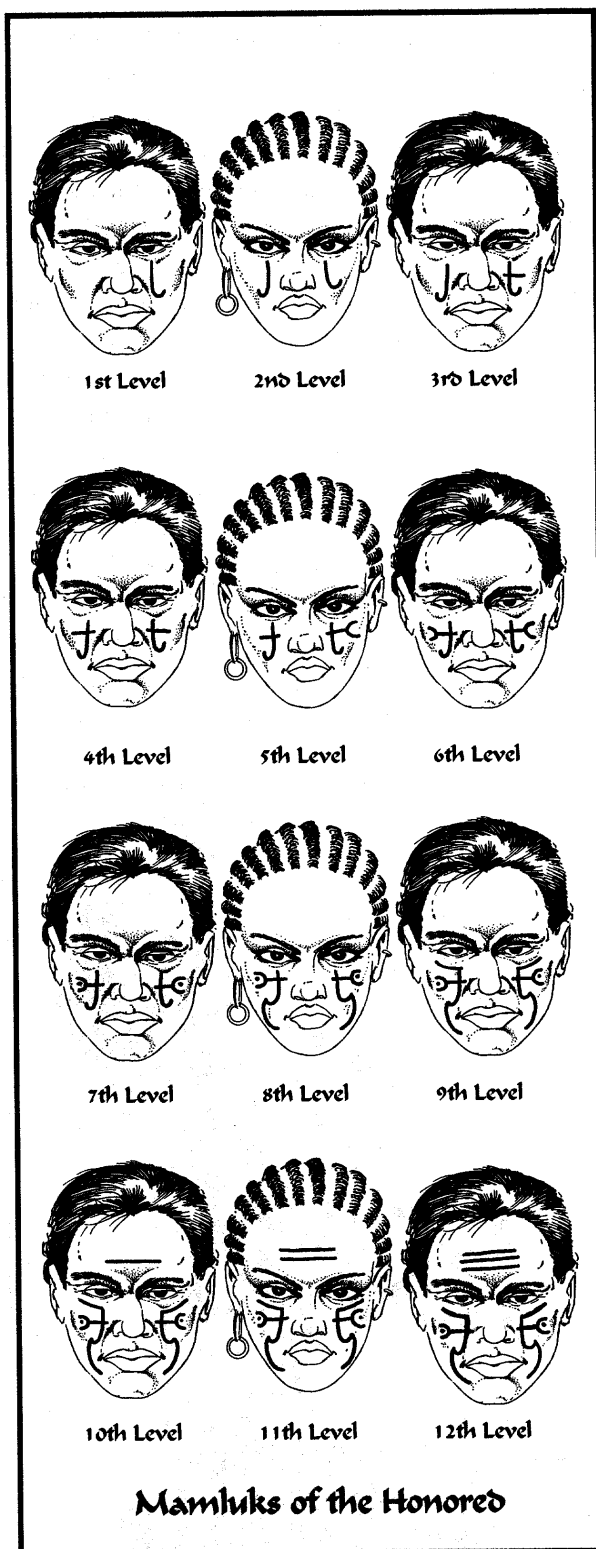
The relationship between these secret societies and the organized faiths is tenuous at best. Most priests are unaware of the existence of holy slayers in their own towns, and would be shocked and appalled by the idea that followers of other enlightened gods may be targeted for death by these groups. The gods themselves have not expressed an opinion on this matter one way or another, and their silence implies their consent.

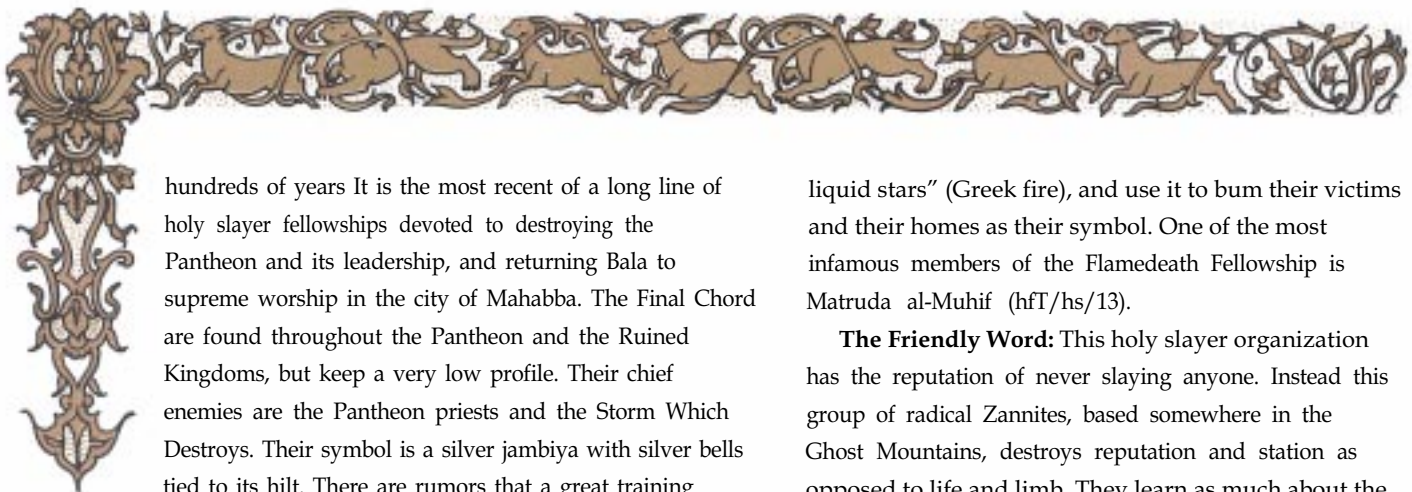
The keys to the success of a fellowship of holy slayers are secrecy, mystery, and misinformation. It cannot be said that a particular organization is headquartered in any one location; though some fellowships maintain fortified headquarters deep in the mountains or desert, it is not as if this fact is advertised. The Storm Which Destroys operates from somewhere in the Al-Sayaj Mountains, but the precise location is unknown save to but a few.

Several major holy slayer groups active in the Land of Fate are listed below. These are especially notorious or successful fellowships, which have over the years established legendary reputations for themselves and their leaders.

**The Everlasting:** This group of fanatical followers of Hajama are the "typical" assassin group of the Land of Fate. They have a secret citadel somewhere in the Haunted Lands from which their grandfather reviews the actions of all the rulers and important individuals within the land. Should any of these individuals act against followers of Hajama, he directs his minions to kill them. The Everlasting has operatives in every major city in the Land of Fate, some placed very closely to powerful figures. Sometimes called "The Caliph of Shadows," the Everlasting's grandfather influences many decisions of others in Zakhara, whether they realize it or not. Their symbol is a golden scimitar.

**The Final Chord:** Not all assassin groups venerate enlightened gods. The followers of the Final Chord are fanatics in the cause of Bala, a common god whose followers have been persecuted by the Pantheon for





hundreds of years. It is the most recent of a long line of holy slayer fellowships devoted to destroying the Pantheon and its leadership, and returning Bala to supreme worship in the city of Mahabba. The Final Chord are found throughout the Pantheon and the Ruined Kingdoms, but keep a very low profile. Their chief enemies are the Pantheon priests and the Storm Which Destroys. Their symbol is a silver jambiya with silver bells tied to its hilt. There are rumors that a great training operation exists in the Grey Jungle for the Final Chord.

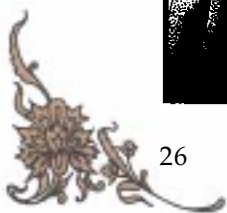
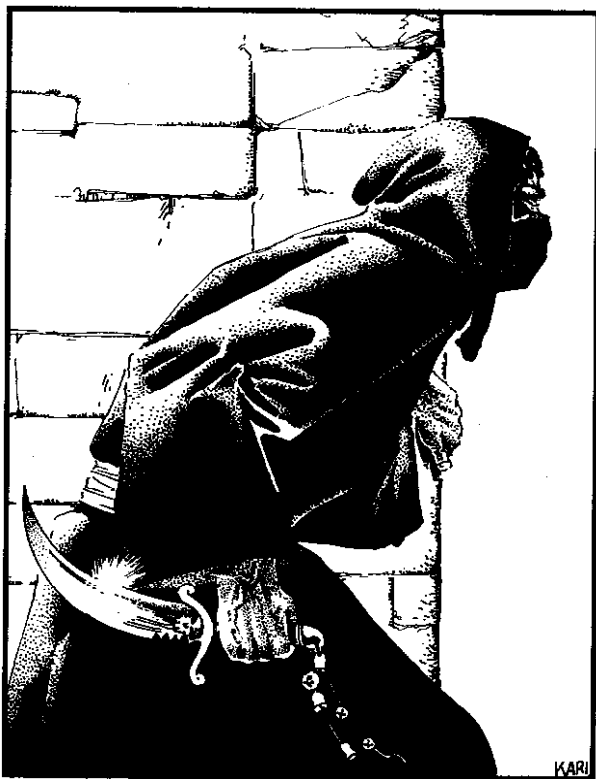
**The Flamedeath Fellowship:** This group of assassins has strong ties to the Brotherhood of the True Flame (see below). Its flowers claim to venerate Adventurous Najm, and at the low levels this is likely true. However, the highest levels are said to seek the favors of the inhuman elemental god of fire, Kossuth, with the Brotherhood leaders. The Flamedeath is a deadly part of the Brotherhood of the True Flame, though its members are not wizards. They have their own supply of "oil of

liquid stars" (Greek fire), and use it to bum their victims and their homes as their symbol. One of the most infamous members of the Flamedeath Fellowship is Matruda al-Muhif (hft/hs/13).

**The Friendly Word:** This holy slayer organization has the reputation of never slaying anyone. Instead this group of radical Zannites, based somewhere in the Ghost Mountains, destroys reputation and station as opposed to life and limb. They learn as much about the target as possible, then quickly and quietly rid him of his worldly possessions, friends, and good name. They are masters at the whispering campaign and ugly rumor, with just enough fact and proof to stand up before the qadi. A standard tactic of the Word is to float some accusation against a target, who in turn must reveal some other damning fact to deny it ("I could not have been dallying with the merchant's wife that morning, for I was still unconscious from drinking the night before"). The Friendly Word uses no special weapons, but leaves a dagger shaped like a pen on the pillow of its victims to show they are in disfavor.

**The Gilded Palm:** A faction of fanatics dedicated to Jisan the Bountiful, the Gilded Palm is the closest thing in the Land of Fate to an organization of assassins-for-hire. They often undertake assignments for merchants and bureaucrats, rationalizing that anything that interferes with "bounty" should be rooted out and destroyed. The fact that the leaders of the Gilded Palm are paid for these actions has no effect on their passion. The Gilded Palm is known for using its members as pawns, often sending two or three against the same target in a waste of life. The Gilded Palm is best known for one of its "former" members, Tocka, the personal dwarf-servant of the Sultana of Hiyal. While Tocka is said to have "retired," individuals taking their problems to him soon find their problems solved by the Gilded Palm. The Palm's special weapon is a dagger with gold coins wedged into the hilt.

**The Grey Fire:** This group of assassins is dedicated to the spirit of Najm, and in addition to killing the foe they show a keen talent for exploration, research, and





discovery. The Grey Fire is found primarily in the Pearl City area, and it was here that their most recent assassination, against the Sultan of Sikak, was attempted. Most often the Grey Fire is expert at recovering lost or misplaced items and returning them to the church (often with fingers still attached). Their symbol is a javelin with a grey shaft and red feathers.

**The Moon-spinners:** It is hard to imagine followers of Beautiful Selan with an order of holy slayers, but on the Isle of the Elephant, the Moon-spinners are such a group, devoted to the supremacy of Selan on the island. In particular, their foe is the heathen following of the elephant-headed god known as the Lost One. The Moon-spinners tend to be imaginative in performing their craft, such that they raise their holy slaying to an art. Their symbol is a long white scarf, which they use both as a whip and a garrote.

**The Soft Whisper:** Almost all holy slayer fellowships admit both men and women, the two exceptions being the Wind of Fate and the Soft Whisper. The Soft Whisper allows female members only, and they venerate Hakiyah of the Sea Breezes. Members of the Soft Whisper—or at least reports of their activities—are found throughout the Land of Fate. The Soft Whisper is said to have several members among the Grand Caliph's *harim*, and on those occasions when a particular death seemed to be in the best interest of the Grand Caliph, the Soft Whisper was involved. Whether this means the Soft Whisper answers to the Grand Caliph, or to one of his court, is unknown. The symbol of the Soft Whisper is a jade *jambiya*.

**The Storm Which Destroys:** This is a group of extremely moralistic fanatics operating out of the Al-Sayaj mountains overlooking the Pantheon Lands. It may be said that the Storm is the "shadow army" of the Pantheon, and its members are used both to advance the cause of the Pantheon, and to settle internal disputes. Rumor has it that the Storm is too radical for most of the Pantheon leadership, but rumor also has it that the Storm answers ultimately to Revered Father

Rimaq al-Nimar of I'tiraf. The Storm Which Destroys has recently been involved in the dismissal of the former Caliph of Talab. The Storm's symbol is the obsidian blade.

**The Wind of Fate:** This group of holy slayers is dedicated to Haku, and can be found in both the High Desert and the Haunted Lands. Its members are well-versed in desert lore, and are exclusively male, making it the only major fellowship to exclude women. It is said to have members among every major desert tribe, and keep its citadel in the mountains overlooking the Genies' Anvil. The symbol of the Wind is the blowgun, a most un-desertlike weapon, but one easily concealed and carried and effective when using poison-tipped darts.

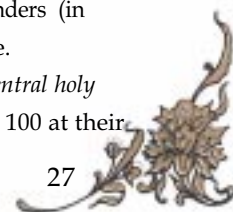
**The Wrath of the Old:** This is a group of fanatical Korrites found primarily in the Furrowed Mountains south of the Free Cities. They tend to be reclusive, and refuse to accept entreaties from any of the Free Cities, mamluk organizations, or hill tribes for their petty squabbles. However, if they determine that an individual stands in the way of knowledge or learning, they spare no expense of manpower and effort to destroy that individual. It is assumed that the Wrath has agents in all the Free Cities and in the Corsair Domains, and their influence reaches as far south as Huzuz. Their symbol is a dagger with the sunburst of Kor scratched into it.

## Creating New Holy Slayer Groups

The above are the major groups of holy slayers: those radical fringes for established gods which have garnered a modicum of notoriety and reputation. To this group the DM may feel free to add secret societies and fellowships to plague the PCs. General guidelines for creating new holy slayer fellowships are as follows:

- 1) *The group should have a central belief.* The idea that assassins are a group of murderers-for-hire is a western corruption of their original position as defenders (in their own minds) of the faith and the people.

- 2) *The group should have a limited core of central holy slayers.* These should number no more than 100 at their







“secret base.” The vast majority of the followers of a holy slayer fellowship do not know who their ultimate masters are, or where they may be found. Secrecy doubles the power of the holy slayers by two.

3) *The group should have a base of operations, but the players should not know where it lies.* For each of the groups above, the holy slayer fellowships’ territories are loosely described. The bases may or may not be in these locations, and may appear as a ruined qal’at, a small town, or even concealed within a mountain.

### **PCs and Holy Slayers**

PC holy slayers must accept the fact that they may not have long to live: that once the order comes down from their secret masters, they must be willing to throw their lives away for their ideals. Given the independent nature of most players, such cases are at a minimum, and receiving “the call” to kill some local leader is usually the first step to the player character leaving the fellowship.

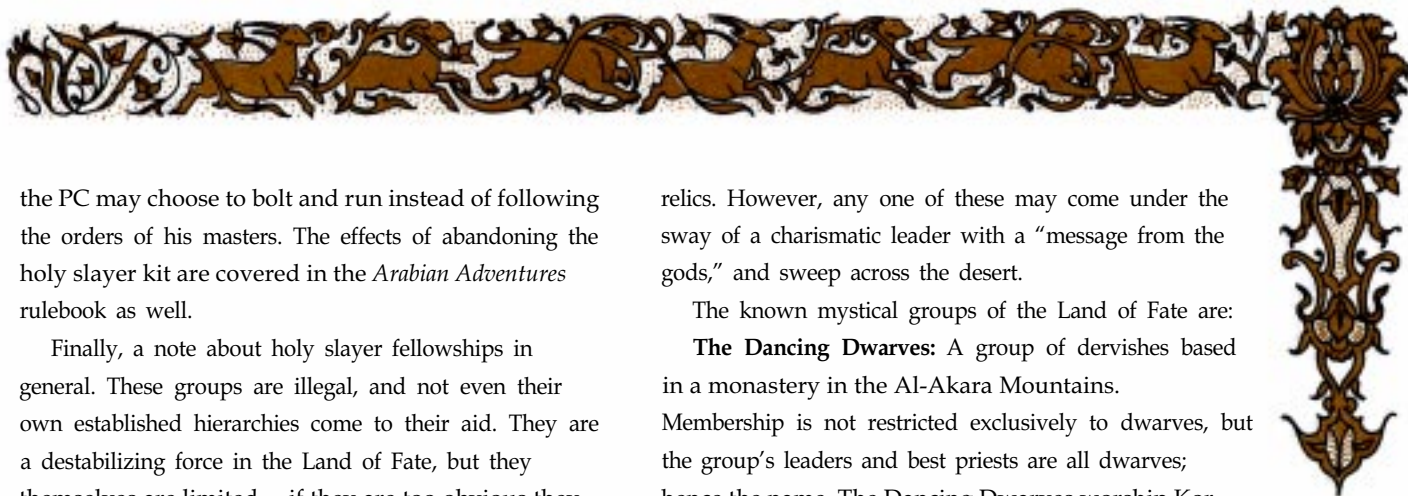
Holy slayer fellowships spread their nets wide and thinly, and pull them in only when they need to. Some members recruited by holy slayer fellowships never receive “the call” to serve their masters, while others (particularly in sensitive positions or with great abilities) are judged too valuable to throw away on mere killings.

Mechanics for receiving “the call” are covered in the *Arabian Adventures* rulebook. In game play, the order comes from another minion of the fellowship, who identifies himself by the “secret hand-sign” (secret hand-signs are individual for each group, and for some groups change with time and situation).

Holy slayer PCs may then be justifiably paranoid, belonging to an evil secret society and possibly being called upon to lay down their lives at any time. This should serve as a deterrent to individuals wishing to play such characters, but if a player wishes to run a holy slayer, the DM should not be afraid to throw dangerous missions in his path.

Keep in mind that a kit is only the beginning of a character’s adventuring life, and when “the call” arrives,





the PC may choose to bolt and run instead of following the orders of his masters. The effects of abandoning the holy slayer kit are covered in the *Arabian Adventures* rulebook as well.

Finally, a note about holy slayer fellowships in general. These groups are illegal, and not even their own established hierarchies come to their aid. They are a destabilizing force in the Land of Fate, but they themselves are limited — if they are too obvious they attract the attention of the Grand Caliph, a number of adventurers, the powers of the genies, and the gods themselves. It is a toss-up which of the four is most deadly.

## Mystic Groups

**M**ythic organizations are varied and for the most part small in the Land of Fate, initially comprising no more than about two dozen priests of the mystic kit and a hundred or so devout followers of the sect. All pay an ultimate tribute to a particular faith, but their worship is often at odds with that of the enlightened hierarchy. Still, it is from mystic groups that revelations from gods often come, for the channel to their worshippers is unimpeded by bureaucracy and dogma.

A mystic faction within any church may remain small for years, then suddenly explode out on the face of the burning world of Zakhara, gathering up followers by the fury of its new ideas and the faith of its proponents. As it grows, the hierarchy priests begin to accept the beliefs of the new sect, and the mystic ideas become mainstream. Alternatively, there may be a backlash from the established church, rejecting the mystics' ideas as unenlightened, and bringing about repression in reaction to their new ideas (this has been the fate of many mystics in the Pantheon Lands).

There are no major mystic movements currently operating in the Land of Fate. Those organized mystic factions are generally small, and are treated as sidelights to organized faiths, or keepers of harams (holy sites) and

relics. However, any one of these may come under the sway of a charismatic leader with a "message from the gods," and sweep across the desert.

The known mystical groups of the Land of Fate are:

**The Dancing Dwarves:** A group of dervishes based in a monastery in the Al-Akara Mountains. Membership is not restricted exclusively to dwarves, but the group's leaders and best priests are all dwarves; hence the name. The Dancing Dwarves worship Kor, and carry battleaxes as his symbol. Theologically, the Dancing Dwarves are extremely conservative. There are about 200 Dancing Dwarf mystics in the central Land of Fate, and they are common in Huzuz. Their current leader is an ancient dwarf named Doth (dmP/my/13).

**The Dome Dancers:** Another group of dervishes and desert peoples who operate out of the desert mosque in the northern reaches of the high desert. The Dome Dancers are worshippers of Haku and swear allegiance to the Desert mosque and its keeper, Angaloran. Like the Dancing Dwarves, they receive their enlightenment from long periods of dancing and spinning. Unlike the dwarves, they are extremely radical in their pressing for the freedom of the desert and the superiority and romance of the nomadic tribes over their civilized neighbors. The Dome Dancers use scimitars both in their dances and in combat, and often join desert tribes in raids and retribution against savage people. There are about 500 Dome Dancers in the Land of Fate.

**The Readers:** A group of Zannite fanatics who receive their enlightenment from reading prodigiously. These mystics are based in Huzuz, but are found throughout the Land of Fate wherever there are universities. Comprehension and retention are not important for the Readers, only the act of reading, exposure to all the information possible. The Readers have been in existence for over 400 years, and in that time several holy crusades and internal conflicts have been created by Readers coming upon a revelation in their texts. The leader of the Readers in Huzuz is Gina bint Kemala (hfP/my/12). They gain the +1 to their Intelligence scores as priests of Zann.





**The Chant Masters:** A group of mystics numbering about 400, located primarily in the hills throughout the Pearl Cities. They receive their inspiration through song and verse, and have excellent relationships with rawun. The Chant Masters are a holy faction of Jisan. They have no preferred weapons beyond those suitable to priests.

**The Court of Rhythm:** A group of followers of Hajama the Courageous, found primarily among the Ruined Kingdoms, Afyal, and the Crowded Sea. They gain their inspiration through rhythmic pounding of drums in great conclaves of drummers. They are popular with dancing sects, which they are aligned to, but have poor relationships with singing or chanting mystics, whom they tend to drown out. The members of the Court of Rhythm may use short swords, as mystics of Hajama.

**The Quiet Multitude:** A reflective and meditative mystic order which worships Selan. Members receive their enlightenment by meditating in the moonlight.

This particular sect spread like wildfire through the entire civilized world a hundred years ago, reconnecting Selan with her identity in the moon. Since then the sect has broken into a hundred small factions, each with its own interpretation of the Selan/moon controversy. Being a member of the Quiet Multitude from Huzuz usually means one can get into an argument with a Quiet Multitude member from Afyal. All mystics of Selan add 1 point to their Charisma (maximum 18).

### Creating New Mystic Organizations

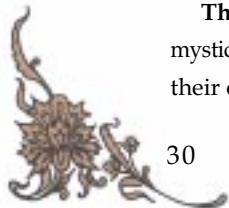
Most mystic groups are small and self-contained, such that a player character could effectively form a sect with one initial member: him- or herself. A few guidelines for creating new mystic organizations:

- 1) *The mystic group must ultimately venerate some enlightened or common deity.*
- 2) *The mystic group must gain its inspiration and enlightenment from some repetitive action.* Meditation, singing, and dancing are all common actions for mystic groups, but there are others (but if the idea seems too silly to the DM— The Hopping Priests of Haku— it will seem too silly to the people of Zakhara as well).
- 3) *The established religious hierarchy is not required to welcome its mystics with open arms.* This is particularly true in traditional communities where the veneration of Zann has been performed in the same manner for hundreds of years. In turn, mystics tend to adhere to their beliefs with a passion that would make a moralist twitch, and tend to be unforgiving of other mystic groups.

### PCs and Mystic Groups

Mystics have the religious fervor of the assassins without the “sudden death” requirement of obedience. Factions and sub-factions of mystic groups are common, and each faction survives on the strength of its leader.

A PC may wish to create his or her own mystic faction, and should be encouraged to do so. Such a road is long and hard, for the mystic must strive against unbelievers, other mystic groups, and an entrenched







bureaucracy to put his or her ideas across. If successful, the PC may in time gain a small parish of worshippers, or be swept along atop a rising tide of believers intent on changing the world. Such tides often carry their leaders to destruction, for strange beliefs bring out the holy slayers of the established churches in response.

## Elemental Brotherhoods

Of the elemental mages there is only one true organization, and this is the evil Brotherhood of the True Flame. Smaller organizations have been established over the years for sea mages, sand mages, and wind mages, but the individual nature of the wizards involved precluded any long-term organizations. The evil flame mages have managed to hold together for generations of mortals, and to grow in power and danger.

This brotherhood of evil flame mages is led by a mysterious figure known as Nar-Aidiya: The Bonfire (assumed abilities hmW/fm/20). Nar-Aidiya operates from a fortress deep within the Haunted Lands protected from both genies and other elemental wizards. While his face and true name are unknown, his actions and commandments are not; settlements and oases are put to the torch, and rival wizards are slain by holy slayers in his employ.

It is unknown how many members of the Brotherhood are present in the Haunted Lands, or in the Land of Fate at large. The assumption that every flame mage is one of their kind is wrong, although one of every three is not a bad estimate. They have eyes and ears throughout the tribes of the Haunted Lands, and in many of the major cities as well. Agents of the Brotherhood are not necessarily flame mages, though they are not any other kind of wizard.

Given the fact that devoted and obvious members of the Brotherhood are soon unwelcome in most cities, such members tend to be wanderers by nature. A few of the Brotherhood's more legendary members include:

Ali al-Lazan (hmW/fm/15), wanted in the city of Hiyal for the attempted arson of the sultana's palace, with a 500,000 gp reward. He is wanted alive or with his body in a condition from which he may be raised.

Golgol al-Misal (hmW/fm/14), a lean, hawklike man known to pose as a trader or slaver in order to get close to his targets. He is an excellent recruiter of new members of the Brotherhood.

Kerima al-Zahir (hfW/fm/16), a hot-tempered, powerful wizard known to challenge lesser wizards to personal combat, usually to the death. She has been forced to flee from such combats twice, and the individuals she escaped from perished soon afterwards of holy slayer attacks.

Matruda al-Muhif (hfT/hs/13), one of the holy slayers in the Flamedeath fellowship, a group of holy slayers allied with the Brotherhood of the True Flame. She is an ally of Kerima and a master of disguise.

## Creating New Elemental Brotherhoods

There is only one large brotherhood currently active in the Land of Fate, and that is composed of evil flame mages devoted to the idea of eventual magical and temporal domination. The DM may create other brotherhoods for other elemental mages (or mages at large), but it is likely that they are smaller than the True Flame organization. Player characters who establish new brotherhoods have to watch out for the Brotherhood of the True Flame moving against anything they see as a rival organization.





## Chapter 4

# Secrets of Zakhara

**T**hroughout the *Adventurer's Guide to Zakhra* a number of mysteries are left unresolved. Hints are dropped, connections are implied, but under direct questioning ignorance is claimed in such matters. This is done chiefly because as DM, you may wish your players to scan through the guidebook as an introduction to the ways of the Land of Fate. It would be unseemly to reveal all the wonders therein. This section offers some ideas on what the local legends may mean.

These legends are intended as "adventure hooks" for the players: examples of the style of adventure which you, the DM, may craft into an entertaining evening or two. For some cases, two or more options are offered. You may choose from the options, or come up with an answer on your own. These are not what *is*, but what can be.

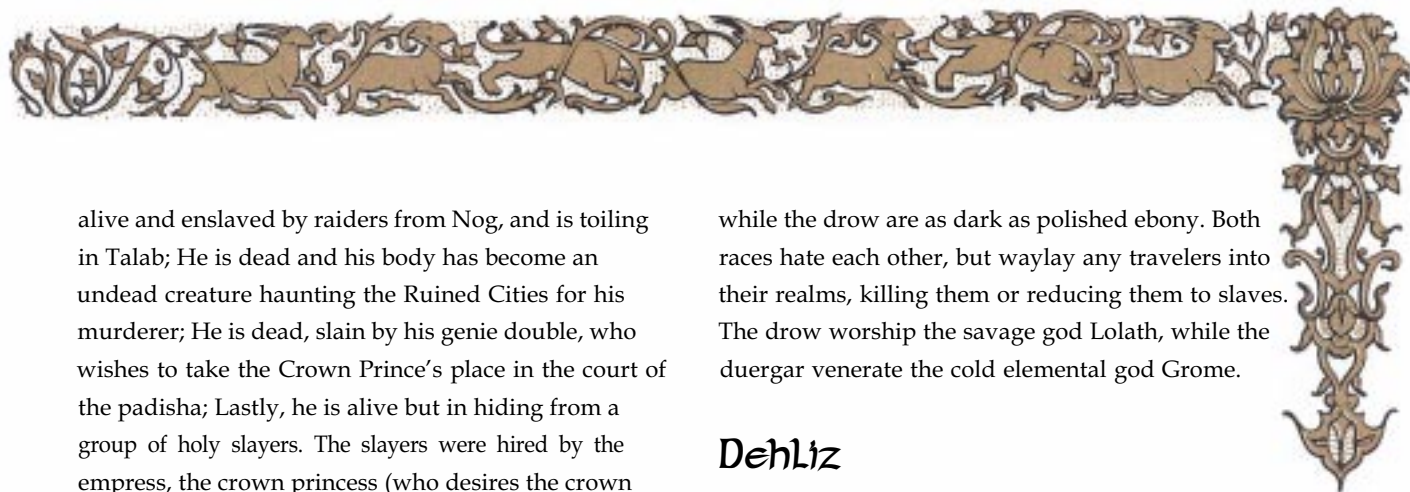
### Afyal

**T**he greatest danger in Afyal revolves around the fact that the padisha is mad, but that can be remedied merely by putting a healthy distance between the PCs and the city. The city is controlled by the merchant houses and their respect for station, or one's place in the universe. (See "Station" in Chapter 2 of *Arabian Adventures*.) Many of a visitor's problems may revolve around not showing proper respect for those of higher station. General grovelling (particularly in court) is a survival trait in Afyal.

The padisha is very interested in restoring Crown Prince Alakbar to the Court, ere he dies and various factions pull the city apart. He is not alone, for both the speaker of the merchant houses and the crown princess wish to see his return. The padisha may charge an individual with finding his eldest son, promising great rewards if he succeeds (and punishment if he fails).

The fate of Crown Prince Alakbar is left to the DM, but here are some options: He is alive and marooned on some island of the Crowded Sea; He is





alive and enslaved by raiders from Nog, and is toiling in Talab; He is dead and his body has become an undead creature haunting the Ruined Cities for his murderer; He is dead, slain by his genie double, who wishes to take the Crown Prince's place in the court of the padisha; Lastly, he is alive but in hiding from a group of holy slayers. The slayers were hired by the empress, the crown princess (who desires the crown truly for herself, despite her act), or the padisha in a moment of folly.

One last mystery of the Isle of the Elephant revolves around the Lost One, an unenlightened (if kindly) god from long ago. The Lost One never left, but instead merged his life force into the elephants of the island. For this reason the elephants of Afyal seem more intelligent and capable than their brethren on the mainland. In a gathering of ten or more such elephants, the force of the god may be such that he can *charm* others for an evening to perform his will, which usually involves carving more small idols of himself. He is otherwise not hostile. A hakima can tell that the elephants are more than they seem, but will be unable to determine the presence of the god.

## Ajayib

**A**jayib sits on the border of the Al-Suqut Mountains and the wild lands to the west. It can be an outpost for heroes seeking adventure among these distant savage lands. In addition, the cliffs overlooking the city are riddled with caverns. Most of the nearby and easily-explored caves have been exhausted long ago by treasure hunters, but the more, remote caves still have passages leading farther into the darkness.

These passages lead to communities of unenlightened duergar and drow. These races are as described in Volume Two of the *Monstrous Compendium*, and have little improved through the passage of time in their isolation. The duergar are almost bone-white from their long time in the dark,

while the drow are as dark as polished ebony. Both races hate each other, but waylay any travelers into their realms, killing them or reducing them to slaves. The drow worship the savage god Lolath, while the duergar venerate the cold elemental god Grome.

## Dehliz

**D**ehliz is the only truly civilized location in the Ruined Empires, and that is giving it some leeway. It is ruled by trade and corruption, moreso than any other city in the Land of Fate. Stout hearts and strong wills prevail in Dehliz, but a sack of gold dinars does much to aid the situation.

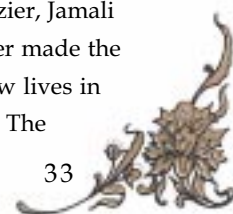
Dehliz's great mystery is the subtle, pervasive magical aura which permeates all its buildings except for the palace (made of stone from Afyal). The original name of the area, the Plateau of the Gate, is a red herring for the magically-inclined: there are no inherent space-shifting gateways here. The name merely designated the entrance to old Nog territory.

The former inhabitants had a guardian, a huge earth monolith of double Hit Dice and damage. This was the guardian of the river, until she was destroyed by enemy heroes in the last days of the empire. The monolith fell, her body mixing with the dust of the region, until all the surrounding lands had a portion of her nature.

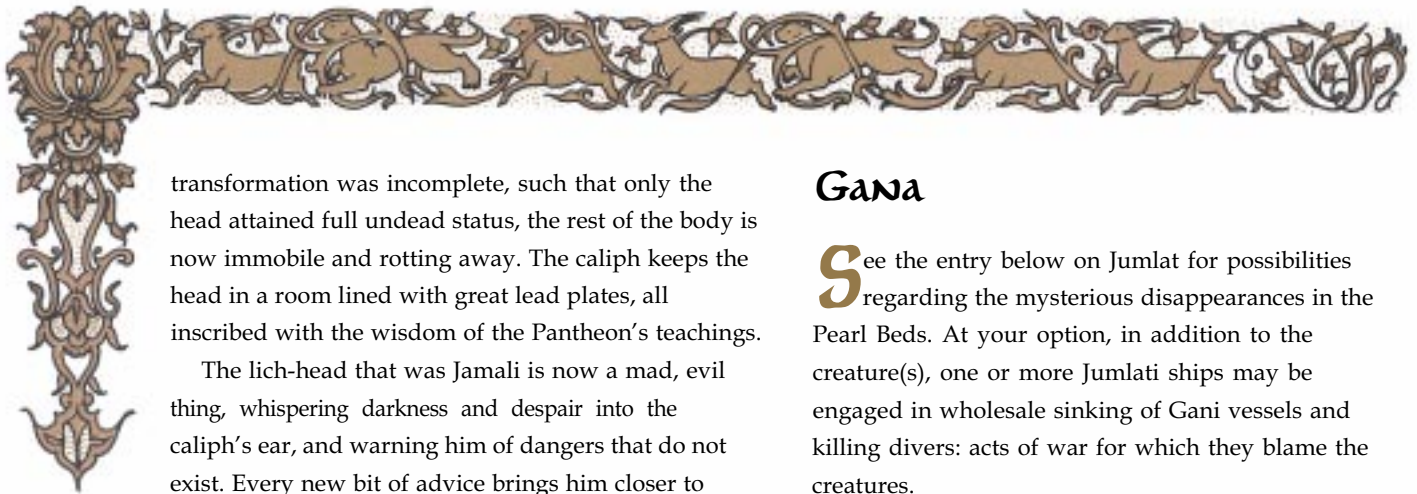
The Ministry of Secrets maintains a secret library where the real information is kept. The masses of rotting scrolls and decaying, unsorted books are a front for visitors. The Ministry's main job is to keep secrets, not distribute them.

## Fahhas

**A**mil al-Yuhami, Caliph of Fahhas, has cause for his madness. His mentor and chief vizier, Jamali al-Muhib, did not die of her fever, but rather made the transformation from human to lich, and now lives in the catacombs beneath the caliph's palace. The







transformation was incomplete, such that only the head attained full undead status, the rest of the body is now immobile and rotting away. The caliph keeps the head in a room lined with great lead plates, all inscribed with the wisdom of the Pantheon's teachings.

The lich-head that was Jamali is now a mad, evil thing, whispering darkness and despair into the caliph's ear, and warning him of dangers that do not exist. Every new bit of advice brings him closer to complete madness, and has driven away all his advisors and allies. Amil visits the head at least once per week, more often in times of crisis. Jamali retains all of her original magical abilities, and uses charm and suggestion spells to underscore her demands.

As for Amil himself, he is just as strong as reported, having a Strength of 20 without magical enhancement. Whether this is the result of some strain of giant-blood or (more likely) some gift of the Pantheon gods is as yet unrevealed.



## Gana

See the entry below on Jumlat for possibilities regarding the mysterious disappearances in the Pearl Beds. At your option, in addition to the creature(s), one or more Jumlati ships may be engaged in wholesale sinking of Gani vessels and killing divers: acts of war for which they blame the creatures.

The rumor of Al'ia bint Hazir bearing the sultan's children are true. She has borne him three sons and a daughter (using illusionary magic to hide her condition in court each time). The children are being raised in a monastery in the Al-Yabki Mountains (Weeping Mountains). All may be identified by a butterfly-shaped mole beneath their right eyes. The children are:

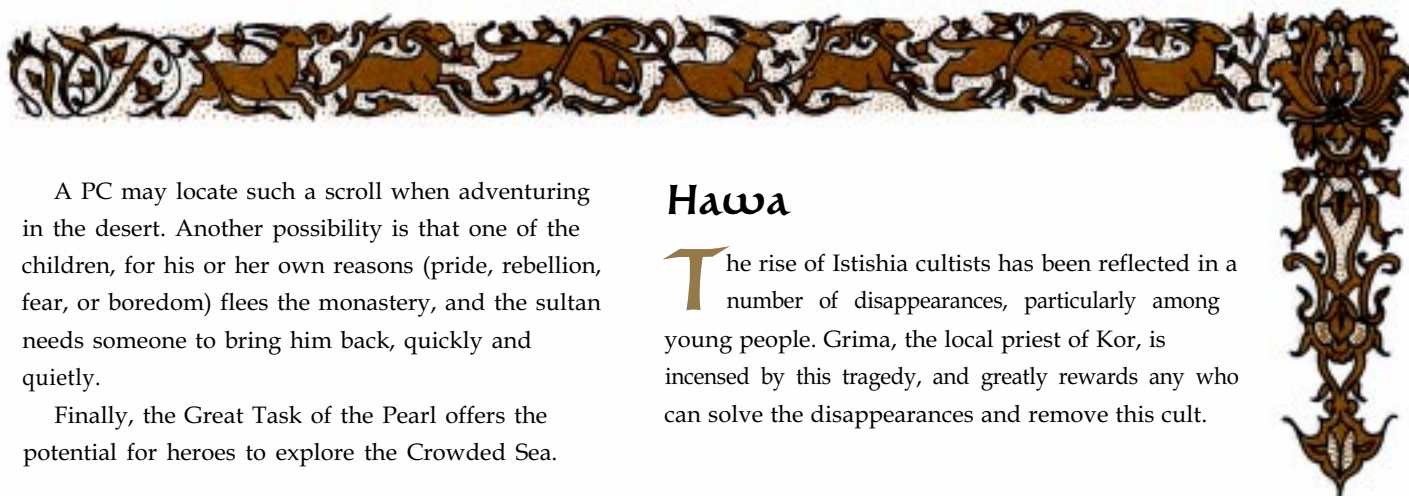
Yusef (hmF/f/8)– The eldest son is a headstrong individual who sees things in black and white.

Mulad (hmW/sh/6)– The middle brother is rebellious and continually seeking to show his elder brother that magical ability outweighs physical prowess.

Alayna (hfP/h/5)– The only daughter is uncomfortable with their eventual fate, once their true heritage is revealed, and wishes to remain in a simple, holy life of aiding others.

Gusard (hmB/r/5)– The youngest child is the clown, the entertainer, and the ladykiller. He can't wait for the day when their father decides that they can come out of hiding and they can live a little.

Two scrolls signed by the sultan tell of the children's true parentage– one is in Al'ia's hands, the other in the personal library of the Grand Caliph. A third scroll was to be sent to Qudra, but its carrier disappeared in the desert and was never found. Should the secret of the children be revealed, they will be suddenly swept into court life, for good or ill, with their own partisans and courtiers... and potential assassins. The sultan will not take kindly to one who reveals their presence.



A PC may locate such a scroll when adventuring in the desert. Another possibility is that one of the children, for his or her own reasons (pride, rebellion, fear, or boredom) flees the monastery, and the sultan needs someone to bring him back, quickly and quietly.

Finally, the Great Task of the Pearl offers the potential for heroes to explore the Crowded Sea.

## Hafayah

The gnoll-scribe Jamalia is inadvertently responsible for the prince's fixation on being a desert rider. She is devoted to the prince, and has often told him stories from her own childhood, which results in his fascination. If Uqban has realized that Jamalia is the one responsible, he has not taken any action. The prince, however, may take matters into his own hands and run off to join the desert nomads. The lad is unaware of the harshness of such a life, and must be rescued before it is too late.

## Halwa

Grand Vizier Zarad has three goals in life. First, he wishes to keep the caliph happy in his isolation, so he has a free hand to truly rule Halwa. Second, he desires the hand of Sikayah, the eldest of the three daughters, and also the most headstrong and independent. Third, he wishes to ascend the throne and rule in perpetuity. To that end he is seeking a secret of ever-lasting life. He has heard of liches, but prefers a solution that leaves him his looks and sanity.

Sikayah has no love in her heart for Zarad, but is a prisoner in her father's court, and under the watchful eye of Zarad's "pet." Should she escape, Zarad spares no expense to recover her. If that is impossible, it is with great regret that he has her beautiful mortal form destroyed and wed one of the more malleable younger sisters.

## Hawa

The rise of Istishia cultists has been reflected in a number of disappearances, particularly among young people. Grima, the local priest of Kor, is incensed by this tragedy, and greatly rewards any who can solve the disappearances and remove this cult.

## Hilm

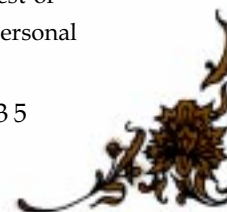
The City of Kindness is boring. It is well-run, well-tended, and well-patrolled, and its populace is well-behaved, devout, and friendly. If the player characters are used to raising a little ruckus in the towns they visit, they are likely to find themselves (at best) with an enforced six-month stretch of wall-building ahead of them.

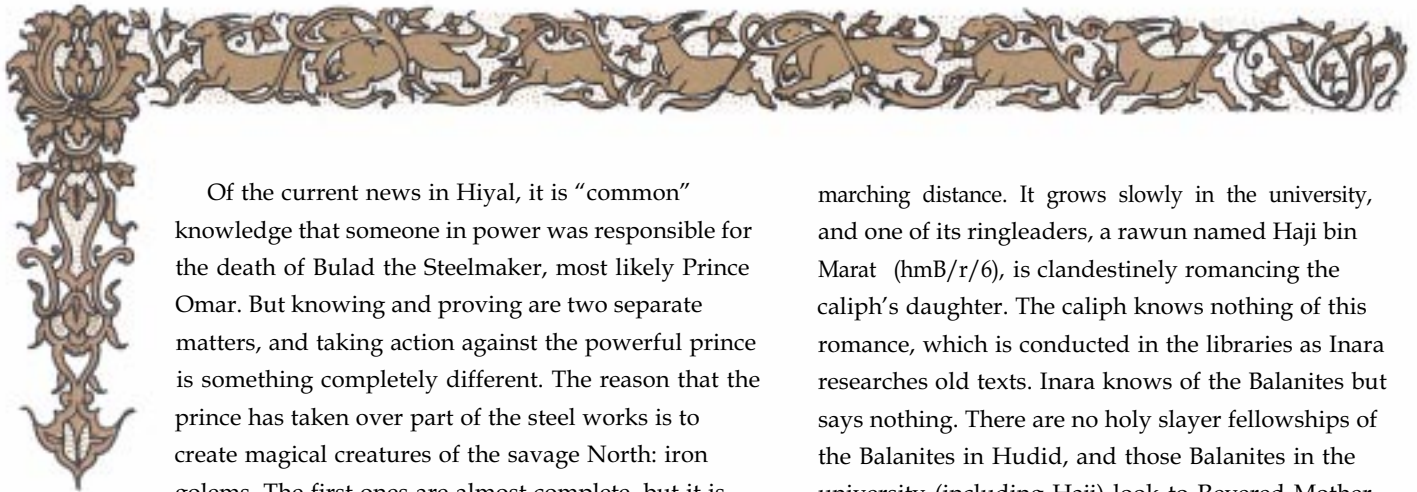
There are two things which may mar this perfect world. One is the daughter of the revered father, the beautiful Ola. Her beauty is as wondrous as that of the calipha of Ajayib, though she lacks that warrior-woman's ability with the sword. Should she be kidnapped, there would be pandemonium in the streets, and there would be no stopping her rescue, even if war with another city was the result.

More insidious, and just as dangerous, is the fact that the City of Questing lies upriver of Hilm. A sudden plague in that city would be carried down by the waters, which most of the people of Hilm rely upon.

## Hiyal

Hiyal bubbles with intrigue and mystery, and one is never sure who benefits or pays for particular actions. The sultana's brood is continually engaged in one plot or another, if not against each other, then against other cities or neighboring tribes. The rest of the city follows the custom, so everyone has a personal agenda and purpose.





Of the current news in Hiyal, it is “common” knowledge that someone in power was responsible for the death of Bulad the Steelmaker, most likely Prince Omar. But knowing and proving are two separate matters, and taking action against the powerful prince is something completely different. The reason that the prince has taken over part of the steel works is to create magical creatures of the savage North: iron golems. The first ones are almost complete, but it is unknown how to control or order them yet. It is also unknown if the Prince intends these beings as guardians or personal assassins.

The disappearance of Harayah al-Mabhum is the result of an extended vacation on her part, encouraged by Prince Anjar. She is currently at large under an assumed name, but has left part of her magical arsenal behind. She is willing to pay a group of adventurers to recover a handful of wands and staves and a crystal ball from her old quarters. Meanwhile, Anjar is considering leading a raid on the house himself, to make sure that the master of disappearances has truly disappeared.

## Hudid

Hudid is noted for its libraries of optics, mathematics, and alchemy, but one collection that is not normally mentioned is the “Black Library” of Hudid, which carries books so foul, dangerous, and heretical that they are kept there as examples of the worst of savagery. It is said that priests of Zann, when confronted with books which they cannot bear to keep nor destroy in good faith, send them to the Black Library of Hudid. Here are histories of holy slayer fellowships, secret rituals of the Brotherhood of the True Flame, horrors of elemental worshippers, and translated obscenities from the Ruined Kingdoms. Admittance to the library is by the personal request of the caliph, and the library is guarded by two dao of maximum Hit Dice.

The heretical sect of Balanites does exist in Hudid, but secretly, for the armies of Mahabba are within easy

marching distance. It grows slowly in the university, and one of its ringleaders, a rawun named Haji bin Marat (hmB/r/6), is clandestinely romancing the caliph’s daughter. The caliph knows nothing of this romance, which is conducted in the libraries as Inara researches old texts. Inara knows of the Balanites but says nothing. There are no holy slayer fellowships of the Balanites in Hudid, and those Balanites in the university (including Haji) look to Revered Mother Inara for protection.

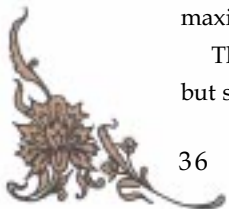
The caliph’s other daughter is a merchant-rogue in the Pearl Cities, having shortened her name to Jina (hfT/mr/13). She maintains a small trading firra out of Tajar and has dealt extensively with the tribes of the High Desert. However, she has considered paying her old family a visit, if nothing else to create havoc. Mischevious and adventurous, Jina hates the Pantheon and all it stands for. Jina is very unlike her mother and sister, for she is direct and gladly lies or commits fraud to get what she wants.

## Huzuz

The greatest problem confronting the Enlightened Court, and all of the civilized Land of Fate, is the Grand Caliph’s heir, or lack thereof. Despite the opportunities apparent from his position, he has not produced a male or female heir. There are several possible reasons for this:

- The Grand Caliph can bear no children. Sad, but true, the Hand of Fate has turned from him and he is sterile. Either Prince Cheddah or Prince Tannous will succeed to the throne, or an individual of merit hand-picked by the Khalil.

- The Grand Caliph’s harim is under a curse, placed by an early “more favored” courtesan who fell out of favor. She encouraged a djinn to place a gem within the ceiling of the harim quarters, which prevents conception in all within. Discovering and removing the gem removes the problem (though this may be a problem for male adventurers).







- The Grand Caliph actually has a number of children, but when their mothers became expectant, they were spirited out of the palace by Alyana al-Azzazi and allies among the Soft Whisper. They are being raised in hiding, but documents in Alyana's possession prove their true parentage.

- Fate has merely not been with the Grand Caliph, and he will conceive a son in good time. When this occurs, the expectant mother will be the center of attention, and various power factions will seek to ally with, kidnap, or manipulate her to their own ends.

You, the DM, may choose one of the above, or construct your own reason for this troubling condition.

Of a more direct influence on the player characters is Prince Tannous, who has agents everywhere, and is not above employing adventurers (through third parties) as cat's-paws to perform necessary tasks for the Enlightened Throne (even if they themselves do not realize it).

Finally, the barber of the Grand Bazaar, Gorar al-Askar, can provide a basis for adventurers heading out to the wildlands. As he often says, "This may not be true, but. . .," and off they go toward a new adventure.

## I'tiraf

**R**evered Father Rimaq al-Nimar, the most powerful and venerated member of the Pantheon leadership, fourth in the line of distinguished and capable amirs, is not the son of his father. He is low-born, the child of a simple baker. The previous amir was unable to produce an heir, and was greatly distraught that the advances that his family had wrought in the Pantheon would end with him. His wife deceived a local baker as to her identity and conceived Rimaq, telling the amir that the child was his. Revered Father Rimaq is unaware of his true parentage, though someone with the ability to perceive such a truth could do so after an extended period of time with him. The established manners of the I'tiraf court prevent such contact normally.

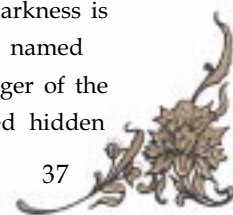
Should the truth be revealed, the DM has two options as to how to proceed. In the tales of the *Arabian Nights*, the one who is so revealed is at first dismayed by the revelation, then enlightened by the truth. The revered father would step down from his position for a more suitable candidate (including possibly the one who revealed his true heritage) and take up the life of a holy wanderer, learning the trade of his true father, and attaining personal happiness. In his wake he would leave a power struggle among the delegations as to who controls the League Conclave (each representative would be considered a candidate, majority rules). Note that most of the Conclave members have contacts with holy slayer fellowships, and that the Storm Which Destroys has been involved in Pantheon politics before.

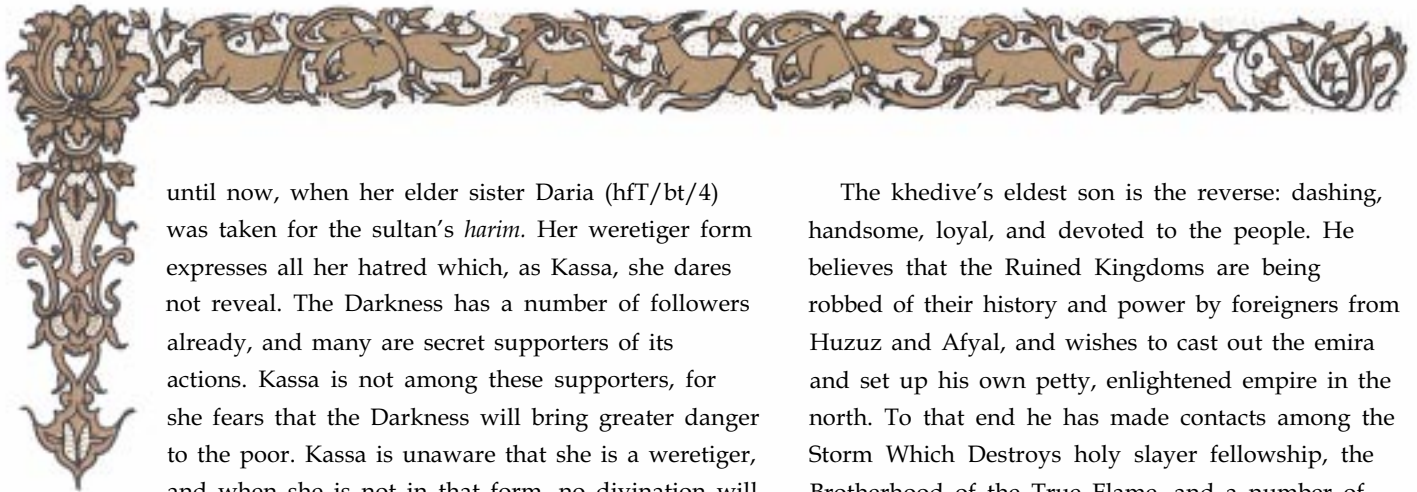
The second option lies in the politics of the real world: the revered father would deny such a charge, though his heart knows it is true. This would make him irrational and angry at all foreigners, and lead to purges of all who are not members of the Pantheon. Perhaps he would have the one who revealed his heritage slain, and perhaps even launch an attack against that one's home city. As news of the deception and purges spreads, some cities of the League (such as Hilm and Mahabba) will attempt to pull away, leading to a holy war in the League. After much death and bloodshed a new League would form (likely in Hilm or Fahhas) with a new set of moralist leaders in three to four years.

A final note on the Conclave: The representative from Talab is a wererat, one of the number that has infected that city.

## JumulaT

**T**he murderous rogue known as The Darkness is in reality a young (14-year-old) thief named Kassa (hfT/bt/6), who is in reality a weretiger of the northern variety. Her lycanthropy remained hidden





until now, when her elder sister Daria (hfT/bt/4) was taken for the sultan's *harim*. Her weretiger form expresses all her hatred which, as Kassa, she dares not reveal. The Darkness has a number of followers already, and many are secret supporters of its actions. Kassa is not among these supporters, for she fears that the Darkness will bring greater danger to the poor. Kassa is unaware that she is a weretiger, and when she is not in that form, no divination will reveal her as such.

The creature which haunts the pearl beds is an aboleth (*Monstrous Compendium* Volume Two). There are four such creatures living in an underwater cavern on Durrar Island, one of which is incubating an egg. The divers taken from the Gani and Jumlati ships have been charmed and enslaved to expand the cavern as a home for these monstrous creatures. Slaying one creature is met with celebration and rewards (depending on the city it is taken to), to be followed by a month of peace. Then the attacks begin again, and the heroes are called upon to deal with the new menace.

Alternately, there is only one aboleth, but if slain, it returns in a ghostly form in one month's time. The ghost has all the properties of the original plus advantages of the undead: immunity to charm/enchantment magics, cold, poisons, and paralysis, and may be turned only as a lich.

## Kadarasto

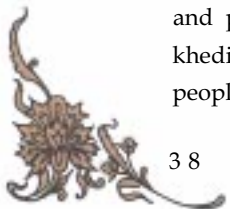
The evil of Khedive Amin is real, but not the cause of any crimes of his parents. His father was of the court of the Grand Caliph, his mother was a local noblewoman. The khedive's evil is purely individual; he is an opportunistic, foul creature whose interests involve only himself. Only his apparent ability to keep the moneyed classes and poor from open conflict maintains his job. The khedive knows this, and his own agents keep the people restive, so the nobles will cry for his aid.

The khedive's eldest son is the reverse: dashing, handsome, loyal, and devoted to the people. He believes that the Ruined Kingdoms are being robbed of their history and power by foreigners from Huzuz and Afyal, and wishes to cast out the emira and set up his own petty, enlightened empire in the north. To that end he has made contacts among the Storm Which Destroys holy slayer fellowship, the Brotherhood of the True Flame, and a number of secret cults of the Forgotten Gods. An individual tempts the wrath of young Nari at his own peril.

The third major figure of the city of Kadarasto is not mentioned in the general description, since few outside the city know of his existence. He is Cholk min Kado, one of the more prosperous merchants in the city (hmT/mr/18). Cholk is a buyer and dealer of antiquities, a smuggler, and the head of a criminal network of operatives. He puts on airs as nothing more than a simple dealer in carpets and fine woods, but can lay his hands on anything, if the price is right. Unlike the khedive and his puppyish son, Cholk wants the foreign presence in the city to continue, since he makes a great deal of his money both from the foreigners and from selling important pieces out of the valley. Cholk commands the loyalty of about 200 beggar-thieves of various levels, and can reach anyone, anywhere in the city.

## Liham

Despite the rumors of the marketplace, Liham is on the verge neither of a military overthrow nor a popular rebellion. However, the existence of an unrecognized heir is up to the DM. Such an heir may be leader of a hill tribe, or a monastic mystic, or even one of the player characters! As he is unrecognized, he has no official claim on the caliphate, but brave men and women commanding powerful armies have changed the rules of the Land of Fate before.





There are a huge number of worshippers of Bala in the city, all of whom live in fear of being discovered and killed as terrorists. The oppression has driven the followers into secret, such that they identify themselves with secret gestures and code words.

There are those who fight against the yoke of this oppression and persecution. These individuals regularly conduct raids against Pantheon troops and loyal individuals. A trader who apparently sides with the Pantheon or attends Ma'mum's court is in danger of being kidnapped and/or murdered in the name of the rebellion.

These Balanite resistance groups are usually cells of three to five individuals, usually fighters, mystics, or bards, and of levels 1 to 8. If a cell is broken, only those connected with it are lost.

The old temple of Bala was destroyed and a market erected on its location. There are secret chambers still intact beneath this market, containing relics which can be used by the followers of Bala as a rallying point for their rebellion or by Ma'mum and Uthmar as tools to crush the heresy.

## Muluk

According to legend, Aswar al-Mutiq (the city's ruler 500 years ago, at the time of the Loregiver) disappeared with the messengers of enlightenment and was not seen again, and that his daughter, the new caliph who ascended the throne, gave him great treasures and wonders of the city's unenlightened past to carry with him. Most say that Aswar's final resting place is somewhere in the Furrowed Mountains, and great magics reside with him there. As it stands, none has found his final resting place, but kahins and mystics come to a monument erected by his grandson to pray and receive miracles.

## Qadib

Qadib is a magical city, infested with mages, sorcerers, genies, and the like. Its main attraction for the adventurer is two-fold: as a source of information, and as a source of enrichment (of the material sort).

For the former, the universities overflow with experts: too much so, since answers may be conflicting. However, these individuals always are interested in tales from afar, or strange and new wonders.

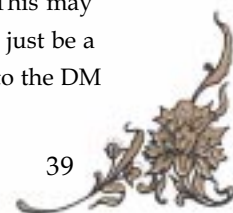
For the latter, the under-city of Qadib is riddled with passages and small enclaves used by various sorcerers and creatures over the years. There is no ultimate "super-dungeon" here, but rather a collection of small areas. Most of the known ones have been explored by previous heroes, but there are a large number still undiscovered, and rumors continually surface of a "mother lode" beneath the foundations of the city.

## Qudra

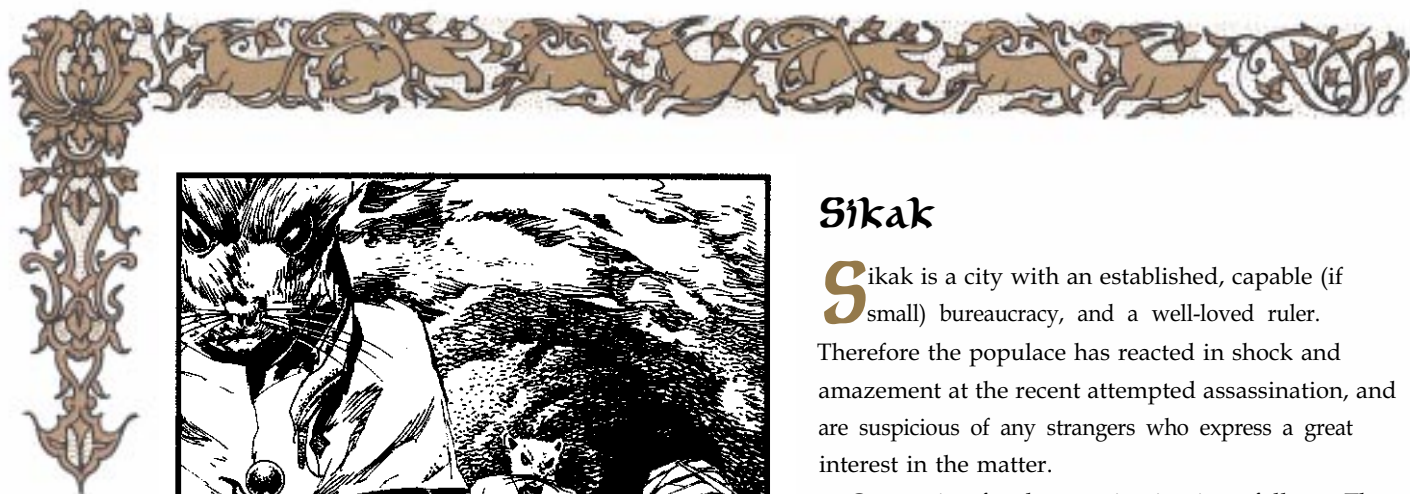
Qudra is one of the more honest cities in the Land of fate. There are no local princelings planning to overthrow the government, no evil uncles with their eyes on the throne, and no holy slayer fellowships. The walled city is run with a clean, military efficiency which makes law-breakers think twice before committing any major crimes. A ruling elite of armed slave-soldiers tends to discourage such actions.

There are some politics in court. General Adun Abd al-Amin is still resentful that he was passed over as emir, and would love to embarrass General Ekuriyah. A military disaster against the corsairs or hill tribes would be ideal, particularly one which involved a massacre for the Dutiful.

On the other hand, there is the Whispering Doom that Mad Asham cries about in the market. This may be an actual, powerful creature, but may also just be a figment of Asham's disturbed mind. It is up to the DM to decide.







## Rog'osto

The inhabitants of the City of Spires assume that their city was always on the surface. In reality, the great towers dominating the surface were built by an undersea race, locathah, long before humans came to this part of the world, when the land was underwater.

What is translated as the War with Those Above could be better explained as the War between Air and Water, as seen by the water-born race. The locathah fought with some air-breathing race, and in the course of the battle the air-breathers summoned a great elemental power. The entity raised the locathah civilization to the surface, creating the Island of Disasters (Al-Dawihi). The island is littered with destroyed towers, but there are some complete outposts still on Sahu to the south. The locathah survived and retreated to the depths between Dawihi and Afyal, where their civilization flourishes beyond the sight of men.

## Sikak

Sikak is a city with an established, capable (if small) bureaucracy, and a well-loved ruler.

Therefore the populace has reacted in shock and amazement at the recent attempted assassination, and are suspicious of any strangers who express a great interest in the matter.

One option for the assassination is as follows: The revered mother has become aware that the sultan is keeping much of the promised tribute to the Grand Caliph for himself. Upon such a discovery, the Grand Caliph may install a new sultan, and the gnomish rule will be ended. It is she who contacted the Grey Fire and arranged the attack. She is also the reason the investigation has failed to date.

Another option is that the Grey Fire feels that the sultan has fallen out of favor with Najm, and would be better represented by his more impressive son. The son knows nothing of the attempted coup on his behalf.

The wreck is unconnected with the assassination attempt. It is the remains of two ships that collided during a monsoon last year and were listed as missing (perhaps carrying gold, gems, or strange-looking furniture). Alternately, it could be the remains of a gnomish skygoing vessel, carrying some fell and ancient creatures when it crashed.

## Tajar

Dulcet Riqqiyah is the granddaughter of the sultan, and knows it. She has infiltrated the court in order to rip it apart from within. Her friendship with Sheera is feigned, much as is her affection for the sheikh. The dao that guards Prince Afzal is in her employ, and will kill him upon her command. She is waiting for the correct moment, and the correct person to take the blame, before moving against Sheera and the sheikh.

Alternately, Dulcet Riqqiyah knows nothing of her true heritage, being a wandering adventuress who



settled in Tajar for its beauty and the stories of her father, who came from the Wasat region. New in court is a sorcerer from I'tiraf across the gulf, named Hatar (hmW/so/7). Hatar knows Dulcet Riqqiyah's secret, even if she does not, and will set up the bard as an apparent assassin. The dao is working for him, killing the prince, and leaving Sheera to choose between renouncing her friend and joining her as an apparent conspirator.

Meanwhile, down in the river district, Suelasta the Magnificent seeks to collect the widest variety of animals and monstrous creatures in the world. Unfortunately, his safety precautions are less than perfect, so for the first few months there is a rash of break-outs. Suelasta's menagerie may serve as a method of introducing into the Land of Fate setting creatures from the Kara-Tur, FORGOTTEN REALMS®, and Maztica campaign settings. After the third or fourth serious escape, Suelasta will be looking for guards, and also for a few good men and women to hunt down a couple of escaped creatures that he does not want the sheikh to know about. Suelasta's menagerie is a suitable location in which to place creatures that the PCs can defeat but may not wish to kill.

## Talab

Talab has two secrets, one great, one small. The great secret is that the caliph and his court are infected by lycanthropy. Almost all, including the revered father and Arana, are wererats. It was Arana who brought the curse back from the forts along the pass, and it quickly spread throughout the community. For this reason most of the court stays apart from the general populace. They wish to carefully spread the curse through the entire populace, and elsewhere through the League. In particular, they wish to dominate the city of Hilm by tainting their water supply. For that reason, the ranking mamluks of the Parched military society have been infected as well.

The lesser secret is the true identity of Hanyar al-Mufih. At the DM's option, he can be exactly what he appears to be: a sweating mountain barbarian who acts as a link between his people and the people of Talab, supplying information and slaves in exchange for gold and protection. Alternately, he is a member of the Storm Which Destroys, a holy slayer fellowship, (hmT/hs/15) who is the revered father's link with that group. The previous caliph did not perish for his interference in trade, but rather because the Kia wished to take the throne. The small caliph is more cunning than he appears, and is moreso now that he is infected with lycanthropy.

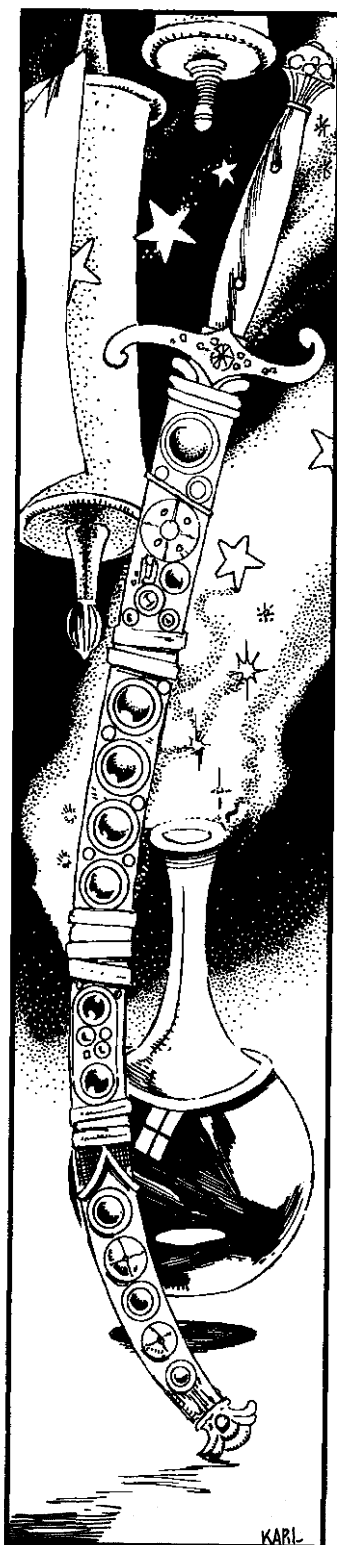
## Umara

The old caliph is dead, killed by Ubar upon taking the throne. However, he told his bride that he spared the old man's life and exiled him, since she was desolate at the idea of her husband murdering her sire. None knows that Ubar committed the crime, and Ubar does not speak of it. In the meantime, Caliph Ubar is seeking to integrate his savage people with the townsfolk, with limited success, and may need outsiders who are of neither camp to perform special missions (which include searching out rumors of a surviving old caliph, which he knows to be false, in order to satisfy his wife).

## Utaqa

Utaqa survives at the borders of the civilized world, and ajami mages and outlander priests are more common here than elsewhere. Agents of the yak-men, evil savage humans from the far-off World Pillar Mountains, have been active in the vicinity. Individuals have reported that heavily-clothed barbarians with curved horns on their helms have been spotted stalking the street past curfew. These same individuals have mysteriously disappeared soon after.





## Chapter 5

# Magical Items

In Zakhara, PCs will find (among the expected magical items) many things that are not quite what they at first seem to be. Magical weapons have powers somewhat different in the Land of Fate; so do magical cloaks (jellabas), staves, and so on. Here are the particulars you need as DM to explain those differences, and the specifics on items native to Zakhara to which PCs have never before been exposed.

### Magical Weapons

**Arrow of Slaying:** This arrow is as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but uses the following table instead of the one provided there:

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Arachnids          | 11. Hierarchy Priests    |
| 2. Bards              | 12. Mammals              |
| 3. Birds              | 13. Paladins             |
| 4. Elementals         | 14. Rangers              |
| 5. Elemental Mages    | 15. Reptiles             |
| 6. Enlightened Beings | 16. Sea Creatures        |
| 7. Fighters           | 17. Sha'irs              |
| 8. Free Priests       | 18. Sorcerers            |
| 9. Genies             | 19. Unenlightened Beings |
| 10. Giants            | 20. Undead               |

See *Sword of the Believer* for definitions of enlightened and unenlightened.

**Bow +1 and Bow +2:** Roll on the following table to determine type of bow.

d20	Bow Type
1-12	Short Bow
13-16	Long Bow
17-19	Composite Short Bow
20	Composite Long Bow







**Cutlass of the Golden Gulf:** This magical cutlass is a favorite weapon of corsairs and other sea travelers. In addition to providing a combat bonus, the sword allows the wielder to survive underwater as if under the effects of a *water breathing* spell as long as the cutlass is in his hand.

**Dagger of Quickness:** This weapon may be any of the daggerlike weapons listed in the weapon table (page 91, *Arabian Adventures*): dirk, dagger, jambiya, knife, razor, or katar. In addition to providing a +2 bonus to hit and damage, the *dagger of quickness* strikes first every round, even if thrown. If used in situations with other weapons that allow "first strike" (see also *scimitar of speed*, *short sword of quickness*), such attacks are simultaneous. The *dagger of quickness* does not increase the number of attacks allowed.

**Dagger of the Evil Eye:** This weapon appears as a simple magical dagger (roll in Appendix A for plus). However, the individual who uses this weapon in combat immediately receives the effects of the evil eye (as described in the *Arabian Adventures* rulebook). The evil eye may be removed (using *avert evil eye* or a rawun's ability), but will be reinstated as soon as the weapon is used again in combat. Other weapons may be imbued with this form of the evil eye, but daggers are the most common. Such weapons usually have a history, having belonged to some hero or other legendary figure.

**Desert Blade:** This weapon is similar to the *sun blade* in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* Appendix 3, save that it is a great scimitar in appearance, not a bastard sword, and requires both hands to wield.

**Great Scimitar, Vorpall:** Similar to the vorpal sword, except that it is always a great scimitar, and will always sever against a bound, held or otherwise helpless captive. These great scimitars are often used as headsman's weapons.

**Javelin, Cursed:** All but one magical javelins are +1 in nature. One is not, though for every test it will prove to be a +1 weapon. When hurled, this javelin will return against the user, automatically hitting for double damage. Roll randomly each time a new javelin is thrown to see if it is the cursed javelin.

**Mace +1, +2 vs. Undead and Mace +2, +4 vs.**

**Undead:** These weapons may be used against all forms of undead, whether conjured or occurring naturally, including creatures such as the great ghuls.

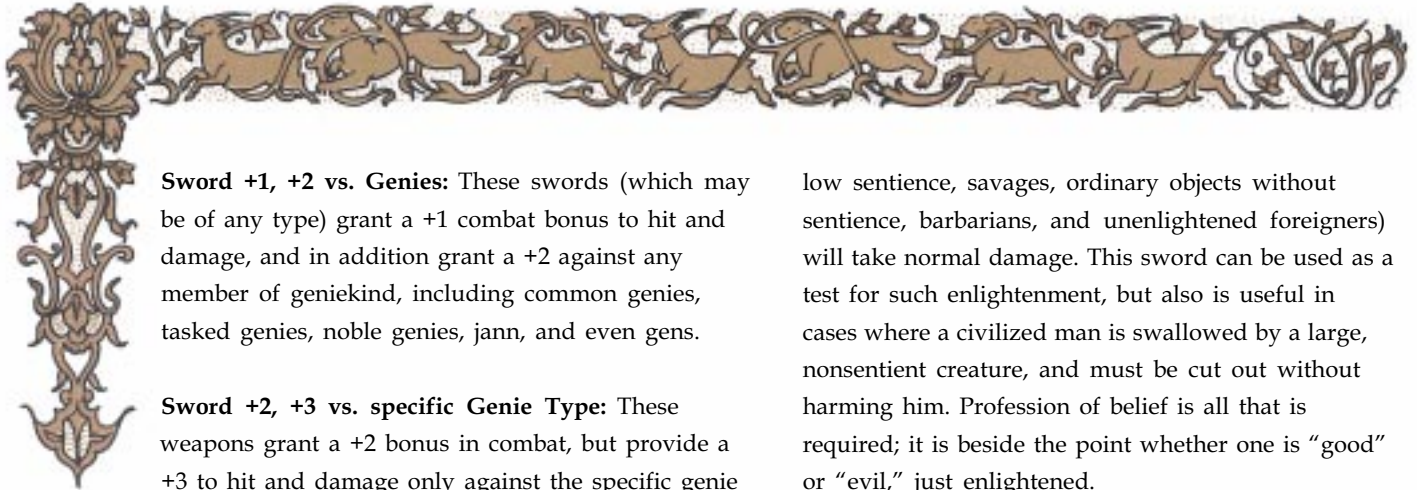
**Mace of Speed:** Same as the *scimitar of speed*.

**Mamluk Swords of Obedience +1 and +2:** In addition to their magical bonuses, these weapons also have powers over humanoid creatures including men, elves, dwarves, gnomes, goblinoid creatures, lycanthropes in human form and giants, but not creatures who are obviously nonhuman such as lizard men (who have tails). An individual struck by these magical mamluk swords must make a saving throw against spells or be *charmed*, immediately surrendering to his opponent, if that individual is of higher level or Hit Dice than the one struck. The spell has the same effect as the *charm person* or *charm monster* spell. The magical mamluk sword may be any of the sword types, and does not have to be wielded by a mamluk to have its magical effects.

**Razor of Truth:** This blade appears as a barber's razor, and has no benefit in combat. However, if used in the traditional fashion, it can be used as a tool of interrogation. When used to shave, the razor will nick the subject every time he speaks a lie (the nick is small and causes no loss of blood). In this fashion a barber may gain information from his customer and judge its truthfulness. After the third cut, the razor will not function for another two days.

**Spear of Accuracy:** This spear has a +1 bonus to hit and damage in melee, +3 when hurled.





**Sword +1, +2 vs. Genies:** These swords (which may be of any type) grant a +1 combat bonus to hit and damage, and in addition grant a +2 against any member of geniekind, including common genies, tasked genies, noble genies, jann, and even gens.

**Sword +2, +3 vs. specific Genie Type:** These weapons grant a +2 bonus in combat, but provide a +3 to hit and damage only against the specific genie type (dao, marid, efreeti or djinni). They may affect both common and noble versions of these types, but affect all other genies, and even other genies of the same elemental type, as simply +2.

**Sword +2, Genie Slayer:** This +2 weapon acts as a +4 weapon when used against any genie type. Further, it inflicts double damage (including damage bonus) when used against one of the following genie types (choose randomly):

- 1 Djinni
- 2 Dao
- 3 Efreeti
- 4 Marid

The sword will inflict double damage against the common and noble versions of the particular genies, and other types of genies (including jann, gen, and tasked genies) will be attacked with only a +4 bonus to hit and damage.

**Sword +2, Giant Slayer:** This sword is as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. It affects all new giants introduced in this set and in the AL-QADIM™ *Monstrous Compendium Appendix*.

**Sword of the Believer:** This +1 magical weapon inflicts damage only against creatures that are not enlightened: that is, those who do not accept the Law of the Loregiver or are ignorant of it. An enlightened creature will take no damage from the sword, which will appear to pass right through his or her body. The unenlightened (including monsters of

low sentience, savages, ordinary objects without sentience, barbarians, and unenlightened foreigners) will take normal damage. This sword can be used as a test for such enlightenment, but also is useful in cases where a civilized man is swallowed by a large, nonsentient creature, and must be cut out without harming him. Profession of belief is all that is required; it is beside the point whether one is "good" or "evil," just enlightened.

**Weapon of Concealed Wizardry:** Roll again on the Magical Weapons table (see Appendix A) for a new weapon. This weapon's magical nature is concealed by enchantments designed to cloak its true nature. The weapon will not respond to a *detect magic* or similar spells, but a *legend lore* or *identify* spell, or the legend lore ability of the rawun or barber, will reveal some of its magical nature. Any type of weapon may be a *weapon of concealed wizardry*, including special weapons. If, in rolling, the DM gets the *weapon of concealed wizardry* a second time, he should choose any special weapon.

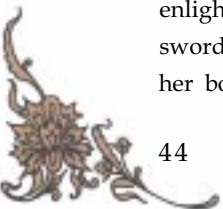
DMs may determine that certain weapons have intelligence and special abilities and purposes. Such magical weapons use the tables for Intelligent Weapons in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

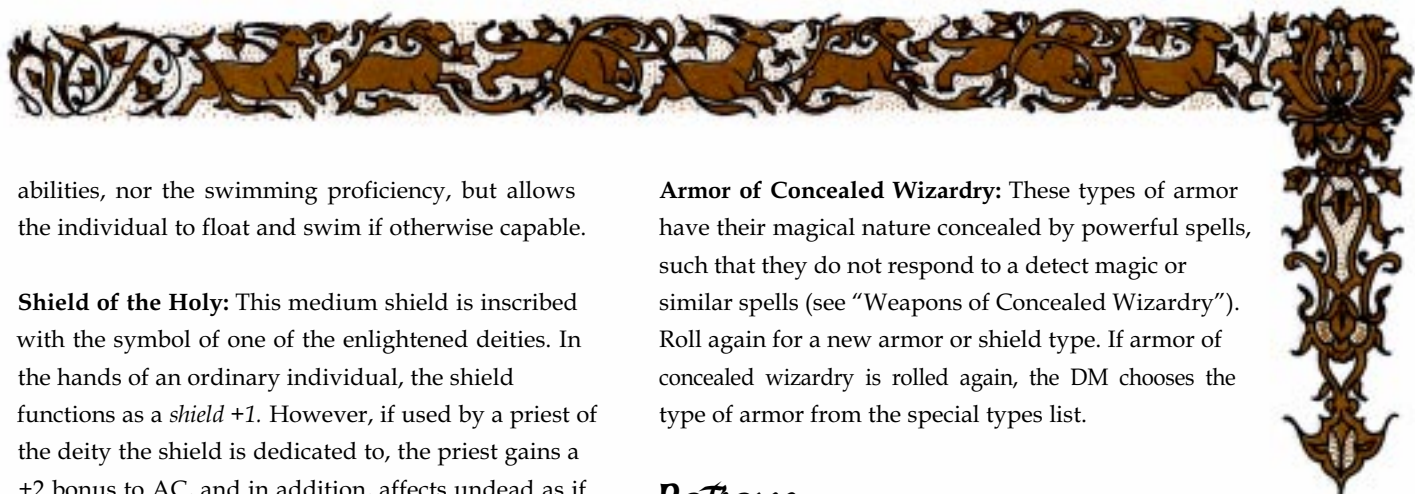
## Armor and Shields

**Armor of Command:** As the armor of the same name in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but the suit of armor is *lamellar +1*, not plate mail.

**Armor of the Desert Evening:** This suit of lamellar armor gives no magical bonus to armor class, but may be worn in the desert heat without ill effect to the wearer or his abilities.

**Armor of Swimming:** This suit of lamellar allows the user to move through the water as if unencumbered. It does not convey *water-breathing*



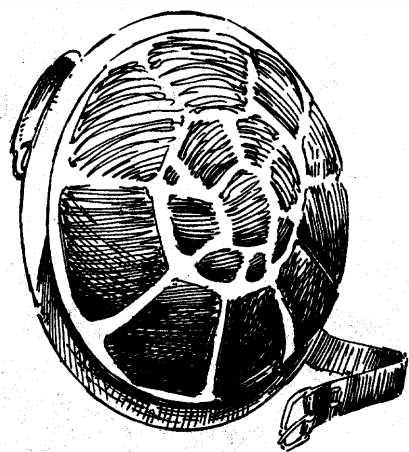


abilities, nor the swimming proficiency, but allows the individual to float and swim if otherwise capable.

**Shield of the Holy:** This medium shield is inscribed with the symbol of one of the enlightened deities. In the hands of an ordinary individual, the shield functions as a *shield* +1. However, if used by a priest of the deity the shield is dedicated to, the priest gains a +2 bonus to AC, and in addition, affects undead as if four levels higher. This ability to affect undead applies only if the priest is capable of otherwise turning or commanding the undead.

**Shields of Proof against Fire, Cold, or Electricity:** These medium shields provide the wielder with additional protection against the type of attack listed. Saving throws against that particular type of damage are at +4, provided that the wielder can put the shield between himself and the attack. Damage is normal for the attack form.

**The Tortoise Shield:** This small, daraq-style buckler emits a magical field which provides protection equal to a body shield, but is only the physical size of the buckler. The enchanted daraq provides +1 protection against normal attacks, and +2 against missile attacks.



**Armor of Concealed Wizardry:** These types of armor have their magical nature concealed by powerful spells, such that they do not respond to a detect magic or similar spells (see “Weapons of Concealed Wizardry”). Roll again for a new armor or shield type. If armor of concealed wizardry is rolled again, the DM chooses the type of armor from the special types list.

## Potions

**P**otions in the Land of Fate are usually found in small crystal bottles, slightly pyramid-shaped in that the base is wider than the mouth. The mouth is stoppered with crystal, and sealed with wax. The bottles are heavy and quite resilient, such that they gain a +2 on saving throws against crushing blows.

In addition, these bottles are often labeled to indicate their contents. As an option, the DM may roll on the following table to determine if the bottle is labeled, and labeled correctly:

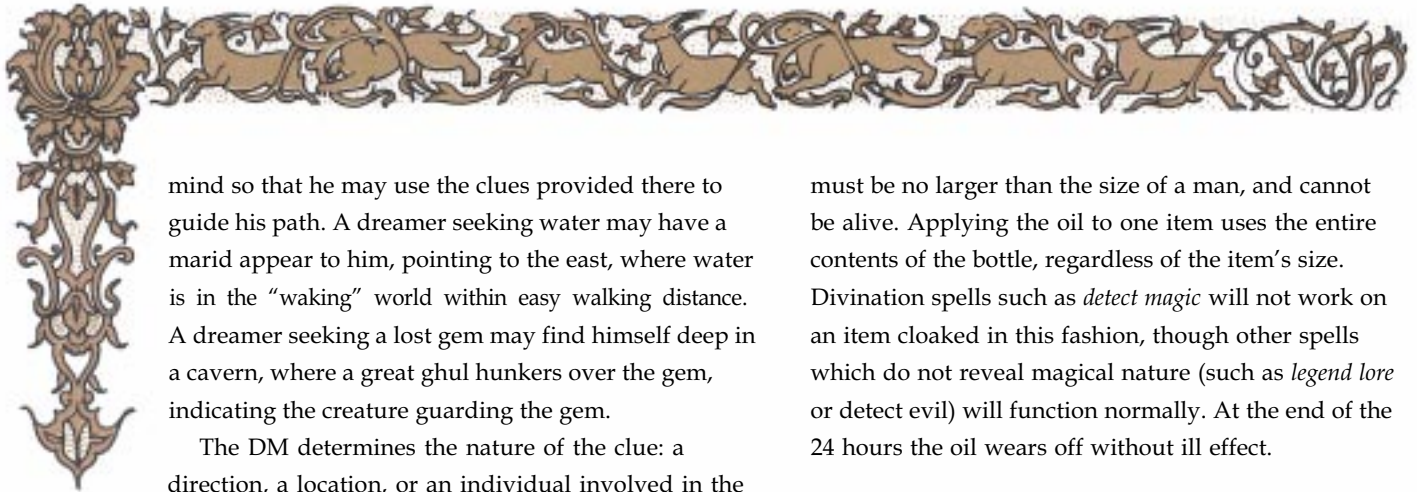
1-2	Bottle is labeled correctly
3-5	Bottle is unlabeled
6	Bottle is labeled incorrectly

For incorrectly-labeled bottles, the DM may roll again on the chart to determine the incorrect label, and note it accordingly in his own notes for-when the players use it. An Intelligence check may indicate to a player character that a bottle may be mislabeled, but only if the character has encountered that form of potion before (“It looks cloudier than any extra-healing potion you’ve ever seen . . .”).

**Dreaming:** This potion grants the imbiber a vision of that which he desires. The imbiber drinks the potion before retiring, and names the person, object, or setting that he is searching for. That evening, a dream will tell him something about what he seeks: a location, a magical guardian, other individuals nearby, potential dangers, etc. Only one thing will be revealed about a person, object, or setting per dream. Upon awakening, the dream will remain in the imbiber’s







mind so that he may use the clues provided there to guide his path. A dreamer seeking water may have a marid appear to him, pointing to the east, where water is in the “waking” world within easy walking distance. A dreamer seeking a lost gem may find himself deep in a cavern, where a great ghul hunkers over the gem, indicating the creature guarding the gem.

The DM determines the nature of the clue: a direction, a location, or an individual involved in the search in the dream. If no clues are available (by DM decision) or the item searched for is magically protected or not in existence, the individual will instead have a vivid nightmare. The DM may feel free to pepper the dream with horrific images, forebodings of doom, and dangers to the dreamer and the dreamer’s party.

**Giant Control:** This potion functions as the potion of the same name in the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*, but affects the following giant types:

d20	Giant Type
1-8	Hill Giant
9-11	Desert Giant
12-13	Reef Giant
14-15	Jungle Giant
16-17	Stone Giant
18	Fire Giant
19	Cloud Giant
20	Storm Giant

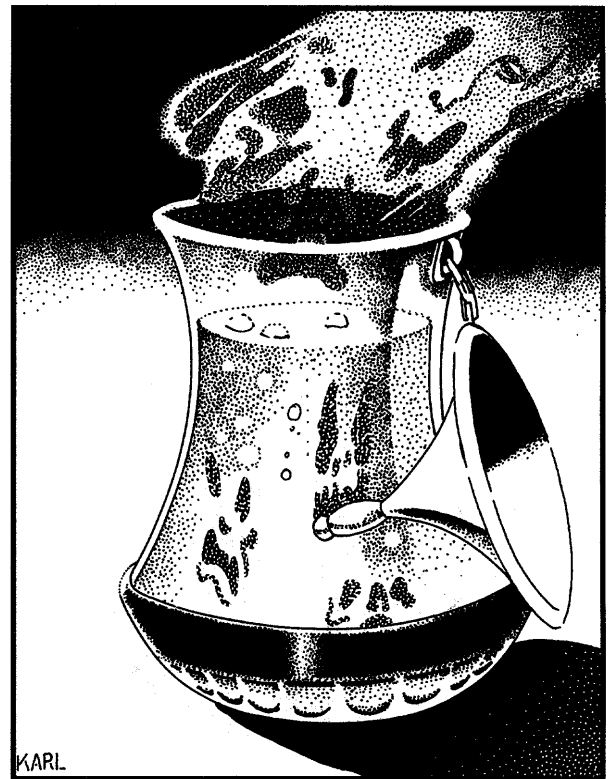
**Oil of Attractiveness:** The user may coat his or her face with this slick unguent, gaining one point of Charisma (to a maximum of 19). This effect lasts for 24 hours minus the original Charisma of the user (for an individual with a Charisma of 18, it lasts only 6 hours). If the oil is not removed by the end of that period, the oil acts as *oil of horridness* (q.v.) for the next 24 hours.

**Oil of Cloaking:** This oil can be smeared over an item to hide its magical nature for up to 24 hours. The item

must be no larger than the size of a man, and cannot be alive. Applying the oil to one item uses the entire contents of the bottle, regardless of the item’s size.

Divination spells such as *detect magic* will not work on an item cloaked in this fashion, though other spells which do not reveal magical nature (such as *legend lore* or *detect evil*) will function normally. At the end of the 24 hours the oil wears off without ill effect.

**Oil of Great Devotion:** This holy unguent is only usable by priests, though of any kit or alignment. The priest’s level increases by three if the priest is of 5th level or lower, and by two if of 6th to 10th level. It has no effect on priests of 11th level or higher. The priest receiving this boon fights, casts spells, turns undead, and otherwise performs as if that number of levels higher for the next 12 hours. This oil does not allow additional spells or higher-level spells to be gained. Special priest abilities which are tied to level (such as





kahin or hakima abilities) may be temporarily added in this fashion.

**Oil of Horridness:** By smearing this oil on the face, one's Charisma is immediately reduced to 3 for the next 24 hours, as it temporarily renders the user's visage so horrid that only the ghuls and nighthags would be comfortable around him. This oil is never labeled correctly, as it is often the result of *oil of attractiveness* which has spoiled.

**Oil of Invisibility:** Similar to the potion of the same name in effect, this oil lasts for 6 plus 1d6 turns or until dispelled. The oil does have a distinctive scent that many dogs can track.

**Oil of Invulnerability:** Similar to the potion of the same name in effect, this oil lasts for 6 plus 1d6 turns unless dispelled. The oil has the strong aroma of burnt almonds when used.

**Oil of Obedience:** This pasty unguent is smeared on the forehead of a creature that is asleep or unconscious. Upon awaking, that creature comes under the control of the individual who placed the oil there. This control is complete, and the obedient one is little more than a zombie. The obedient one does not think for himself except in the most basic fashion (breathing, not walking into walls), and cannot use spells (but can use spell-like abilities or otherwise communicate). The one who placed the oil must give orders for the affected individual to move; the affected individual ignores orders that are impossible to follow. The oil lasts for 24 minus 1d6 hours. Self-destructive acts allow the affected individual a saving throw vs. spells to ignore the order. This oil has no effect on an individual who is awake, or is awakened by the placing of the oil.

**Oil of Romance:** This oil smells of rancid fish, yet has a powerful effect when poured on the ground, usually

across a doorway or other window. At that time, the pourer speaks the name of an individual of the opposite sex. Upon crossing the threshold or patch of oil, the named individual suffers the effects of a charm person spell, at -4 to the appropriate saving throw. Failing the saving throw results in the charmed individual becoming devoted to the pourer of the oil, seeking to protect the latter and carry out his or her needs. In addition, the individual becomes a "victim of love," viewing the oil bearer in a new, more amorous light. The enchantment worked by this magic does not wear off over time (unlike the charm person spell), and can only be removed by a dispel magic or a limited wish.

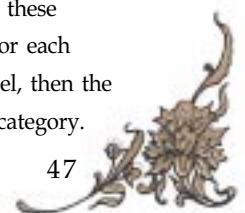
**Oil of the Pickpocket:** This oil, rubbed over the hands, allows a character without pocket-picking ability to pick pockets as a 1st-level thief. If used by a thief, it raises his percentage chance of picking pockets by 10 percent. The oil lasts for 6 hours before evaporating.

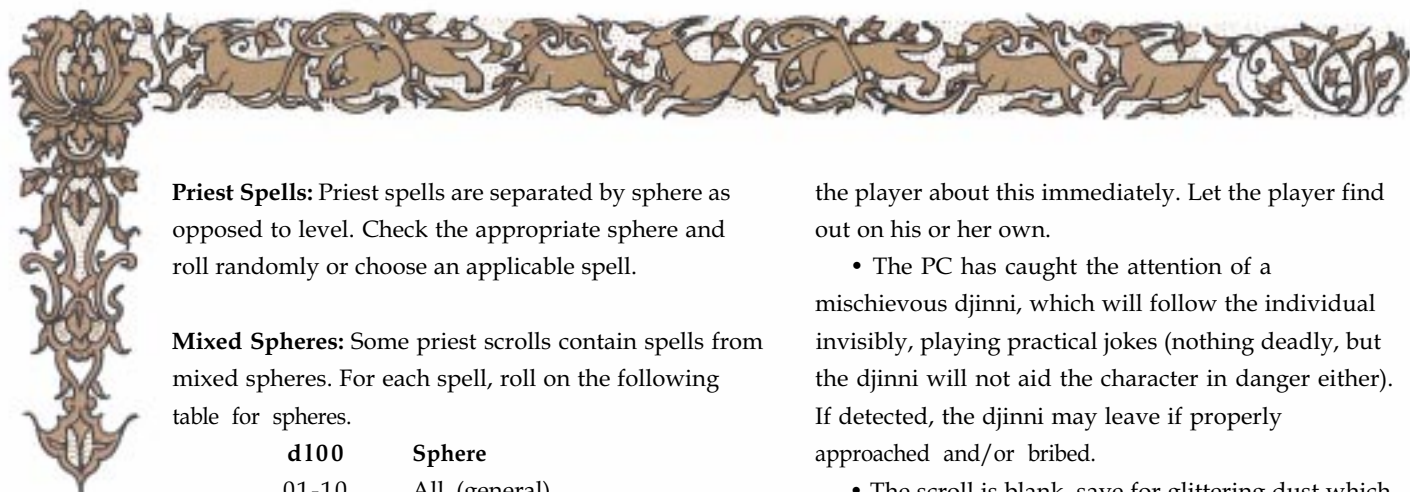
**Philter of Drunkenness:** Upon imbibing this potion, the individual immediately becomes horribly, totally inebriated. Role-playing aspects of this situation are left to the player and the DM, but in game terms the individual has a -4 penalty for all attack rolls as well as all proficiency checks. Spellcasting requires an Intelligence check each time a spell is cast, to determine whether it is cast correctly (failure merely means the spell is lost); all spells cast have a +2 bonus on saves. The effects last six hours, followed by three hours of splitting headache.

## Scrolls

**Sorcerer's Scrolls:** Spells for these scrolls are taken from the universal province of spells.

**Sand, Sea, Wind, and Flame Magic:** Spells for these scrolls are taken from the "elemental" listings for each level. If no suitable spell exists at the rolled level, then the DM rolls on (or chooses from) the "universal" category.





**Priest Spells:** Priest spells are separated by sphere as opposed to level. Check the appropriate sphere and roll randomly or choose an applicable spell.

**Mixed Spheres:** Some priest scrolls contain spells from mixed spheres. For each spell, roll on the following table for spheres.

d100	Sphere
01-10	All (general)
11-16	Animal
17-18	Astral
19-25	Charm
26-35	Combat
36-40	Creation
41-50	Divination
51-55	Elemental
56-60	Guardian
61-73	Healing
74-76	Necromantic
77-78	Plant
79-85	Protection
86-90	Summoning
91-95	Sun
96-00	Weather

**Cursed Scrolls:** The *Dungeon Master's Guide* provides an excellent list of potential curses to use in game terms. Here are a few more:

- The PC is cursed with the evil eye.
- The PC is cursed with lycanthropy (DM's choice of creature).
- The PC is *polymorphed* into a donkey, goat, or camel. A hakima will be able to see the individual in his true form.
- The PC's station is reduced to 1. Wherever the character goes, he or she is reviled.
- The PC is smitten with the first individual of the same or related species and opposite sex that he or she sees.
- The PC has earned the enmity of a powerful ruler of some town (DM's choice). There is no need to tell

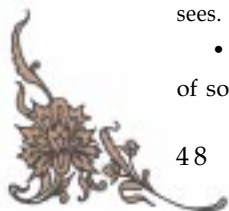
the player about this immediately. Let the player find out on his or her own.

- The PC has caught the attention of a mischievous djinni, which will follow the individual invisibly, playing practical jokes (nothing deadly, but the djinni will not aid the character in danger either). If detected, the djinni may leave if properly approached and/or bribed.

- The scroll is blank, save for glittering dust which falls from the scroll when opened. This does nothing, but makes players very paranoid. The DM may call for additional (ignored) saving throws from the PC who opened the scroll at random moments to convince the player that something is afoot.

**Grant:** Like a map, a grant is nonmagical in nature, but opens the door to new adventures and ideas. A grant is an award of land, title, or money to an individual, who may be named in the document, or the document may be left blank. The DM may supply the details in keeping with his own campaign, or use the following suggestions:

- The grant is for 1,000-6,000 gp, to be awarded to the bearer in the court of a local ruler.
- The grant is for 2,000-12,000 gp, to be awarded to a named individual upon presentation of that document to a local ruler.
- The grant is for position of qadi (judge) to a small village on the desert's edge.
- The grant is to allow the bearer to audit the tax records of a local ruler in the name of the Grand Caliph, and the ruler must offer whatever the bearer needs to complete that audit.
- The grant is to allow the bearer to enter the local ruler's court as an ambassador of the Grand Caliph.
- As immediately above, save that a named individual is mentioned.
- As above, save that the grant names an individual who is to be replaced by the grant-holder's arrival (and who will likely be unhappy with the situation).







- A grant for a wilderness area in which to establish a town and mosque.

- A grant for rulership of a small village, in which the individual agrees to provide protection in exchange for taxes. The population of these villages always expect mighty and high-level heroes as their protectors.

- A grant for a ship.

- A grant for a particular business within a particular town.

- As above, but with a monopoly of a particular business.

- As any of the above, but the document is a forgery, and may be revealed as such under close inspection by those who know the true documents.

A grant should be a springboard to further adventures, both in the wilderness and the city.

**Protection from Air:** (reading time 6) This scroll issues a zone of protection which extends in a 10-foot diameter centered on the reader. All types of air-based attacks, including strong winds of a magical or natural nature, and poisons carried on breezes are unable to cross into this area, leaving the reader and those close to him untouched. The scroll does not protect against poisons not blown into the area of the protection; that is, reading the scroll and jumping into a *cloudkill* will not offer any protection, but if that *cloudkill* is carried by the wind toward the individual, the individual is protected. The protection lasts for 1d4+4 turns. It has no effect on creatures of elemental air, but can protect against their air-based attack forms.

**Protection from Divination:** (reading time 8) This scroll cloaks the reader and all other things within 10 feet of him from any spell of the divination school or sphere. These spells will fail when cast within this area, or when affecting items within this area. Spells and abilities which reveal magical properties without divination spells (such as the hakima ability of seeing truth) are unaffected by this scroll.

**Protection from Earth:** (reading time 6) This scroll protects the reader and those within 10 feet of him from all forms of earth-based attacks, including avalanches, sand slides, quicksand, and earthquakes, whether magical or natural in origin. The reader and those who remain within 10 feet merely float to the surface in such cases, and may walk across unstable ground without ill effect. This scroll does not provide protection against the physical attacks of earth elementals or dao, though it does protect against magical earth-based effects created by such beings. The protection lasts for 1d4+4 turns.

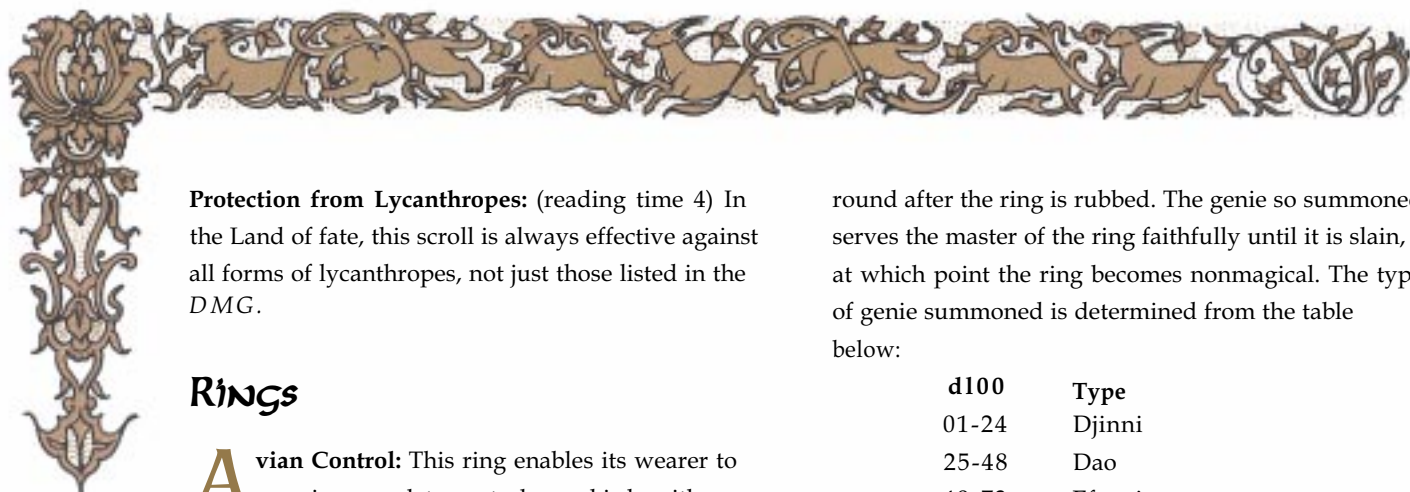
**Protection Against Genies:** (reading time 6) This scroll offers protection against one or more of the geniekind, including protection from both physical and magical attack forms. The protection extends only to the reader and those items he is carrying. A genie cannot touch the individual or directly attack him. Attacks that affect an area launched by a genie affect all others in the area, but do not harm the individual protected. The scroll may affect:

d6	Type
1	Dao
2	Djinni
3	Efreeti
4	Marid
5	Any tasked genie
6	All of the above genies

Noble genies are not affected by this protection, nor are gens, jann, or other elemental creatures. This protection lasts 5d8 rounds.

**Protection from Heat:** (reading time 8) This spell creates a 10-yard diameter stationary zone of protection which acts as a cool strength spell for three days. During this time all within this area are protected from the detrimental effects of the sun; they may wear heavy armor without ill-effect, and have only normal requirements for water.





**Protection from Lycanthropes:** (reading time 4) In the Land of fate, this scroll is always effective against all forms of lycanthropes, not just those listed in the *DMG*.

## Rings

**Avian Control:** This ring enables its wearer to exercise complete control over birds with an intelligence of 4 or less. Up to 40 Hit Dice of birds may be controlled. The control is such that orders harmful to the birds will be followed, but complete concentration is required to maintain control. The ring does not affect bird-hybrid creatures. If any doubt exists as to whether a creature is a hybrid with another form (such as a manticore or lammasu), the ring will not function.

**Cloaked Wizardry:** Roll again on the same table. The ring's true powers are undetectable by normal means such as *detect magic*, though an *identify* spell or *legend lore* spell or ability will reveal its true nature.

**Ring of Folly:** When donned, this cursed ring causes the wearer to lose 1 point each of Wisdom and Intelligence per turn until he reaches 3 in each ability. This loss is not noticeable until the individual is called upon to perform some action which requires one of these abilities (such as gaining spells or making proficiency checks). Once both abilities reach 3, the individual is under the effect of a *feeblemind* spell, and may not use the abilities of his character class or gain further experience.

The *ring of folly* may only be removed by remove curse followed by dispel magic. Intelligence and Wisdom are then returned to their normal scores at the rate of 1 point per day of rest. The *ring of folly* may have a secondary function, such as *feather falling* or *invisibility*, at the option of the DM.

**Genie Summoning:** An expansion of the *ring of djinni* summoning, this ring may summon a particular genie from its elemental plane. The genie appears on the

round after the ring is rubbed. The genie so summoned serves the master of the ring faithfully until it is slain, at which point the ring becomes nonmagical. The type of genie summoned is determined from the table below:

d100	Type
01-24	Djinni
25-48	Dao
49-73	Efreeti
74-96	Marid
97	Noble djinni
98	Noble dao
99	Noble efreeti
00	Noble marid

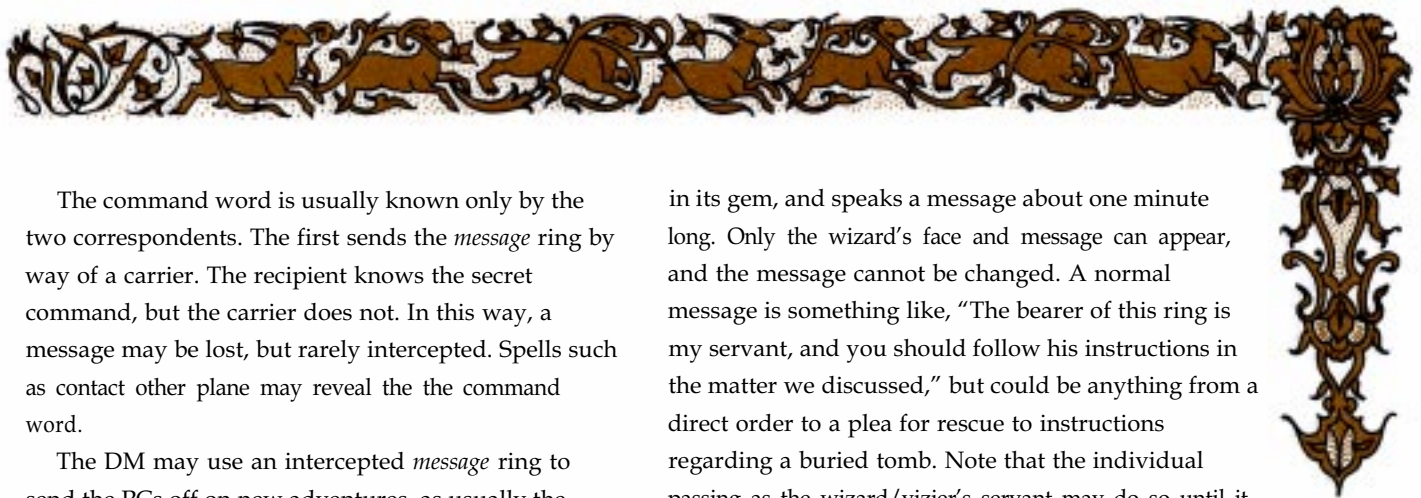
The noble genies only perform three tasks for which they use their *wish-granting* abilities, at which point they are freed.

A sha'ir of 10th level or higher may free a common genie from its binding to the ring. The sha'ir gains experience points equal to those of the genie freed. In addition, the genie consults with its own puissant elders to grant the sha'ir a *wish*, free and clear of all entanglements. The ring becomes nonmagical in these circumstances.

**Message:** The message ring is used to record and convey messages, and is often used to transmit "direct orders" from a superior to an underling. Such rings are used in profitable businesses, bureaucracy, religion, and military units.

The user of the ring looks into its inset gem, speaks a command word, and then immediately speaks his message of a minute's maximum length. When the command word is spoken again by someone holding the ring, the speaker's face appears on the gem, and the message repeats (always when the command word has been spoken). The gem speaks three times in this fashion. Then it is emptied, at which point a new message may be emplaced by anyone bearing the ring. The new message may be triggered by a new command word, or the former, at the bearer's option.





The command word is usually known only by the two correspondents. The first sends the *message* ring by way of a carrier. The recipient knows the secret command, but the carrier does not. In this way, a message may be lost, but rarely intercepted. Spells such as contact other plane may reveal the the command word.

The DM may use an intercepted *message* ring to send the PCs off on new adventures, as usually the message within is of some import and secrecy (otherwise a common scroll would do the task). Alternately, the message ring could be found empty, and the PCs could utilize it themselves.

**Ring of the Holy Slayer:** This is a most deadly ring in the Land of Fate. Upon utterance of a command word, it pumps a deadly toxin into the hand of the individual wearing the ring. A saving throw with a -4 penalty must be made, and failure to make the saving throw has the following results: (a) death, (b) the individual's body cannot be raised or resurrected, and (c) the individual's departed spirit cannot be contacted by *speak with dead* spells and similar divinations. These rings are used by holy slayers, but not against their intended victims. Rather, slayers wear them to avoid being questioned by their captors-carrying their secrets to the grave. The ring becomes non-magical when used.

**Ring of Sustenance:** Also called the *ring of the camel*, it functions as noted in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* with the added note that the individual still suffers the detrimental effect of wearing armor in the heat as regards negative modifiers to combat and proficiency checks, but otherwise does not need water or food for a number of days equal to his Constitution. At the end of that time, the individual suffers all normal effects.

**Ring of the Vizier:** This ring is similar to the *message* ring, in that when the command word is spoken, the face of the wizard/vizier who created the ring appears

in its gem, and speaks a message about one minute long. Only the wizard's face and message can appear, and the message cannot be changed. A normal message is something like, "The bearer of this ring is my servant, and you should follow his instructions in the matter we discussed," but could be anything from a direct order to a plea for rescue to instructions regarding a buried tomb. Note that the individual passing as the wizard/vizier's servant may do so until it is revealed otherwise (such as when the wizard being quoted has been dead a decade, or shows up wondering who is acting in his name).

More importantly, the wizard who created this ring may imbed in it a single spell of 5th level or lower. The spell may be used up to 10 times before it is exhausted, and is cast at the wizard's level (usually 15 to 20, or 1d6+14). The message may reveal the nature of the spell.

## Rods, Staves, and Wands

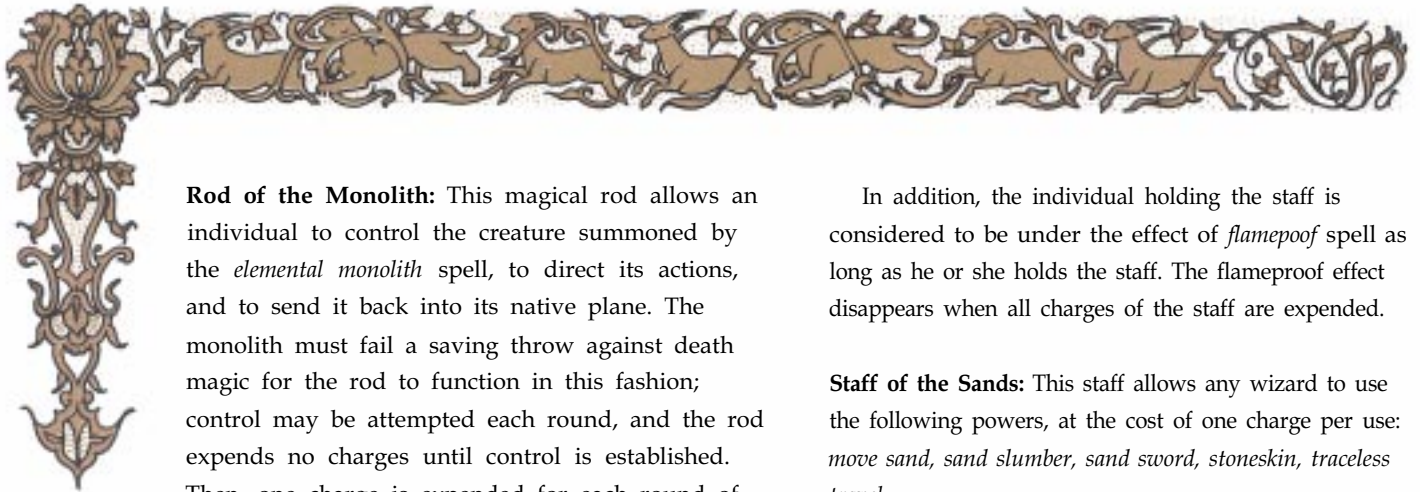
The following staves, wands, and rods do not have "cloaked wizardry" versions, as it is very difficult to pass these items off as something they are not. All are made with fine materials, carved with incantations, and gilded with precious metals.

**Rod of Leadership:** This powerful rod may be wielded by either a fighter or a priest, and is prized by military units for its effects. All friendly individuals and creatures within 120 yards of the wielder have their morale increased to fanatic (17) status. In addition, friendly and allied beings within 30 yards are immune to fear and gain a +4 on saving throws which otherwise affect the emotions.

In addition, the rod may be used as a mace that inflicts 1d10+6 points of damage and can paralyze the target on touch, at the user's mental command. This last effect drains the rod completely. Once the *rod of leadership* has been drained, it loses all other functions and becomes nonmagical.







**Rod of the Monolith:** This magical rod allows an individual to control the creature summoned by the *elemental monolith* spell, to direct its actions, and to send it back into its native plane. The monolith must fail a saving throw against death magic for the rod to function in this fashion; control may be attempted each round, and the rod expends no charges until control is established. Then, one charge is expended for each round of control.

**Staff of Devotion:** This magical staff may only be used by priests, but may be used by any kit. Hierarchy priests (pragmatists, ethoists, and moralists) gain additional advantages.

Any priest may use the following powers without draining any charges, three times per day: *atonement, bless, create food and water, cure light wounds, avert evil eye, purify food and drink.*

The following powers expend one charge per usage, but can be used multiple times in one day, by any type of priest: *cure serious wounds, dispel magic, enthrall, neutralize poison, remove curse.*

The following powers expend three charges per usage, and can be used only by hierarchy priests (the pragmatist, ethoist, and moralist kits): *flame strike, holy word, legend lore, raise dead, restoration.*

In addition, the staff provides a +2 bonus to all saving throws of the individual who holds it.

**Staff of Flames:** This staff allows any wizard to use the following powers, at the cost of one charge per use: *affect normal fires, flaming sphere, pyrotechnics, sundazzle, sunfire.*

The following powers expend two charges, (flame mages expend only one charge): *conjure fire elemental, sun stones, enhance fire creatures.*

Only a flame mage can use the following power, which consumes four charges of the staff: *conflagration.* The staff wielder's level is used to determine the duration of this spell.

In addition, the individual holding the staff is considered to be under the effect of *flameproof* spell as long as he or she holds the staff. The flameproof effect disappears when all charges of the staff are expended.

**Staff of the Sands:** This staff allows any wizard to use the following powers, at the cost of one charge per use: *move sand, sand slumber, sand sword, stoneskin, traceless travel.*

The following powers expend two charges (sand mages expend only one charge): *conjure earth elemental, desertfist, create shade.*

Only a sand mage can use the following power, which consumes four charges of the staff: *sink.*

The individual holding the staff is also considered to be under the effect of a *cool strength* spell while holding the staff. The cool strength effects disappear when the last charge of the staff has been expended.

**Staff of the Sea:** This staff allows any wizard to use the following powers, at the cost of one charge per use: *cool strength, depth warning, converse with sea creatures, water blast, waterbane.*

The following powers expend two charges (sea mages expend only one charge): *conjure water elemental, ice storm, command water spirits.*

Only a sea mage can use the following power, which consumes four charges of the staff: *maelstrom.*

The individual holding the staff is in addition considered to be under the effect of a *water breathing* spell as long as he or she holds the staff. The *water breathing* effect disappears when all charges of the staff are expended.

**Staff of the Winds:** This staff allows any wizard to use the following powers, at the cost of one charge per use: *alter normal winds, flying jambiyu, solid fog, wind blade, wind wall.*

The following powers expend two charges (wind mages expend only one charge): *conjure air elemental, cloudkill, wind carpet, summon wind dragons.*





Only a wind mage may use the following power, which consumes four charges of the staff: *windtomb*.

The individual holding the staff is in addition considered to be under the effect of a *feather fall* spell as long as he or she holds the staff. The *feather fall* effect disappears when all charges of the staff are expended.

## Miscellaneous Magic

**A** **ba of the Desert:** This magical garment of the desert tribes provides the wearer with the effects of the cool strength spell, allowing him or her to move comfortably in the desert. However, no armor other than leather may be worn with this aba. Among the desert peoples, if a tribe possesses one of these items, it is used by the aged, infirm, or pregnant, to ease their discomfort in the desert heat.

**Aba of Displacement, Aba of Protection, Aba of Poisonousness, and Caftan of Protection:** These items are as for the magical cloaks of the same name. As with the *aba of the desert*, they cannot be worn with armor heavier than leather.

**Banner of Renown:** This magical flag displays the moon and trailing stars of the Land of Fate, and may be used to rally and increase the morale of enlightened soldiers and other creatures. All enlightened creatures within 100 feet of the banner gain a +2 to all morale checks, and fight at +1 to hit and damage. In addition, routing individuals may make another morale check should they pass within 100 feet of the banner. The banner's magic lasts as long as its holder is alive. Should the banner-holder be slain, the banner evaporates and all benefits are immediately lost.

**Book of the Enlightened Gods:** This mystical text is dedicated to one of the major enlightened gods of

the Land of Fate. Roll 1d8 for the god to which it is dedicated:

- 1 Kor
- 2 Hajama
- 3 Najm
- 4 Selan
- 5 Haku
- 6 Hakiyah
- 7 Jisan
- 8 Zann

Priests (including both hierarchy and free priests) who venerate that god and spend a week studying the book's revelations receive one point of Wisdom and sufficient experience points to advance halfway into the next level of experience. The book then vanishes to find another priest of its type. An individual may only gain enlightenment from a *Book of the Enlightened Gods* once.

Priests who do not worship that particular god, but do worship some enlightened god, recognize the book for what it is but gain no benefit and take no damage. This includes priests of the Pantheon and the Temple of Ten Thousand Gods.

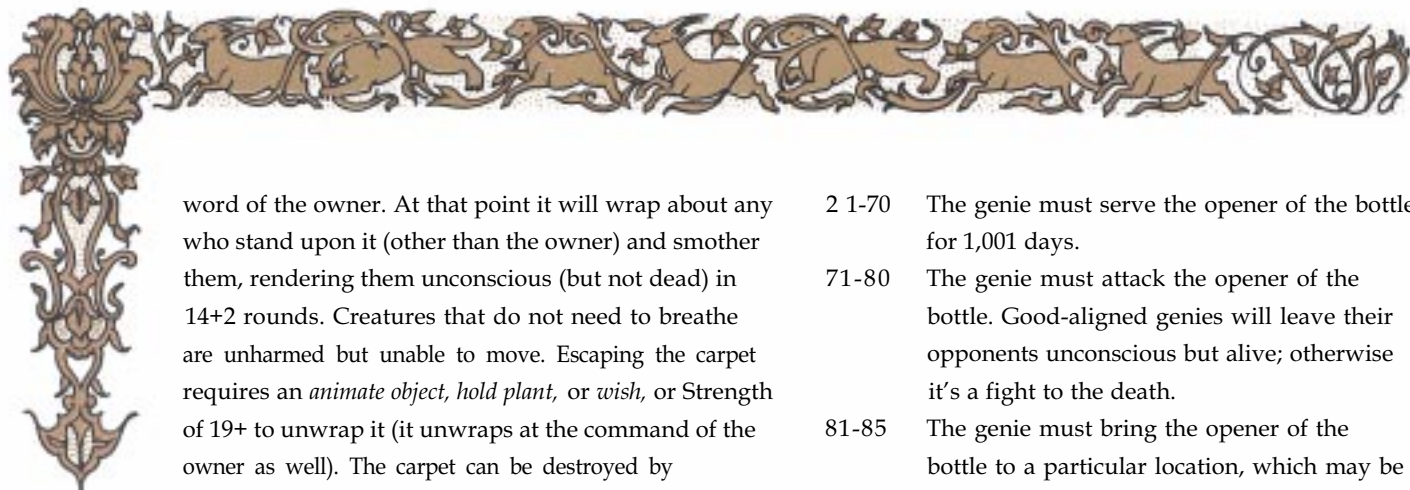
Nonpriests who handle the book take 4d6 points of damage from opening its cover. This includes paladins, farisan, and holy slayers who may be devoted to that same god. The book will not disappear if handled by nonpriests or priests of enlightened gods.

Priests of savage gods who merely touch the book lose one level of experience. The book disappears at this point as well.

**Candle of Evocation:** This item is as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, with the addition that each candle is marked for a particular major enlightened god (roll as for the *Book of Enlightenment*, above). A priest of the Pantheon may use the candle designated for any of his gods. A priest of the Ten Thousand, however, gains no special ability from using these tapers.

**Carpet of Fighting:** This magical rug is similar to the *rug of smothering*, but functions upon the command





word of the owner. At that point it will wrap about any who stand upon it (other than the owner) and smother them, rendering them unconscious (but not dead) in 14+2 rounds. Creatures that do not need to breathe are unharmed but unable to move. Escaping the carpet requires an *animate object*, *hold plant*, or *wish*, or Strength of 19+ to unwrap it (it unwraps at the command of the owner as well). The carpet can be destroyed by inflicting 25 points of damage to it, but such damage is inflicted to those within the carpet as well.

**Genie Prisons:** These magical devices come in a variety of forms in the Land of Fate: bottles for djinn and efreet, stoppered ewers for marids, and geodes or crystal decanters for dao. They are used by sha'irs to capture and discipline genies. Some genies so captured deserve their fate; they are mischievous, dangerous, or hateful. Some are innocent of any crimes, but were imprisoned by evil or misguided sha'irs. All will claim innocence in such matters. Roll on (or choose from) the following table to determine the type of genie imprisoned, and therefore the type of genie prison (bottle, ewer, geode or decanter):

d100	Type of Genie
01-24	Djinni
25-48	Dao
49-73	Efreeti
74-96	Marid
97	Noble Djinni
98	Noble Dao
99	Noble Efreeti
00	Noble Marid

A genie so imprisoned may be charged by its imprisoner to perform certain actions upon release. The DM may choose or roll randomly from the following table:

d100	Charge
01-20	The genie must perform three tasks for the opener of the bottle. If the genie has wish-granting powers, the creature may use those to perform the task.

- 21-70 The genie must serve the opener of the bottle for 1,001 days.
- 71-80 The genie must attack the opener of the bottle. Good-aligned genies will leave their opponents unconscious but alive; otherwise it's a fight to the death.
- 81-85 The genie must bring the opener of the bottle to a particular location, which may be a treasure vault, wizard tower, or city bazaar, at the decision of the DM.
- 86-90 The genie must locate a particular item, and may not leave the opener of the bottle until that item is found. The genie is under no obligation to serve the opener of the bottle.
- 91-00 The genie has gone insane and will attack all within reach upon release. Any item or spell that cures insanity will bring the genie back to its senses. The genie will then perform three tasks for the individual.

**Item of Cloaked Wizardry:** Roll again on the magical item table. The item is magical, but will not radiate any dweomer upon the casting of a *detect magic* spell (though other divination spells will reveal its true nature). Some items (such as *wings of flying* or a flask ringed with magical writings) will be obviously magical items despite their appearance.

**Hats of Disguise and Stupidity:** These hats are as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but in the Land of Fate, 40 percent are keffiyehs, 30 percent are turbans, and 30 percent are fezzes.

**Jellaba of Concealment:** This overgarment is similar in function to the *cloak of elvenkind* in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. It may be worn over any armor-type. Of the cloaks, 80 percent are sized for human, elf, or half-elf individuals, 15 percent are for smaller (gnome, halfling, goblin, or kobold) individuals, and 5 percent for larger (ogre, gnoll or hill giant) individuals.



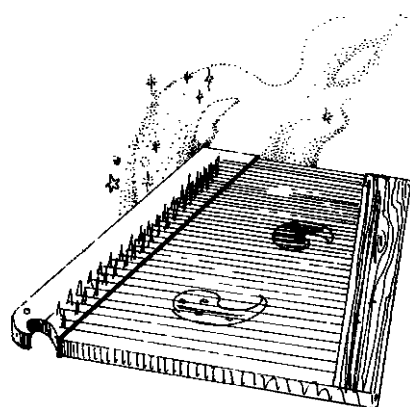




**Jellaba of Eyes:** Identical to the robe of eyes in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**Phylactery of Bravery:** This device is an armband made of parchment, inscribed with metallic inks and trimmed with gold, invoking the name of Najm the Brave, an enlightened god of courage. The wearer of this armband gains a +1 bonus to hit in combat, and makes saving throws against fear and other emotion-affecting spells at +2.

**Qanun of Charming and Qanun of Discord:** These are identical to the harps of the same name in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. A qanun is an instrument similar to a zither.



**Qanun of Quiet:** While this magical instrument is played, it creates a magical zone of *protection* and *silence* 30 feet in radius. Those inside may talk among themselves and clearly hear noises beyond the range of the magic, but none outside the radius can hear what is happening within the zone over the sound of the qanun. Further, divination spells will not reveal thoughts, words, intentions, alignment, or the presence of magic while the qanun is being played.

**Scarab of Deception:** This small brooch allows the owner to deceive divination magics or abilities (such as the hakima's *see the truth* ability) of those attempting

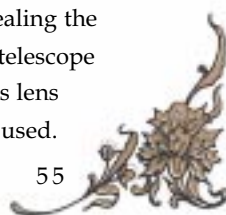
to gather information about the wearer. When the holder of this scarab is subjected to these effects, the holder is aware of what divination spell or spell-like effect is being used (but not the identity or nature of the individual seeking the information). The scarab holder decides exactly what information is relayed back to the diviner (whether it is the truth or not). Each use expends a charge; the scarab has 1d6+8 charges. The *scarab of deception* and most other magical scarabs come from the ruined kingdoms of Nog and Kadar, and were apparently common there.

**Slippers of Dancing, of Levitation, and of Varied Tracks:** The same as the boots of the same name in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**Slippers of Soft Movement:** The same as for *boots of elvenkind* in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. These slippers, like all magical slippers, conform to the size of the feet of the wearer, stretching or shrinking as needed.

**Telescope of Fantastic Vision:** Appears to be one of the other magical spyglasses (see below) and functions identically for the first one to four uses. After this, the telescope reveals fantastic and lurid scenes, often the opposite of what is truly there (a merchant fleet appears a pirate armada in the spyglass, a safe harbor as a monster-ridden mirage, an approached city as a dark domain of evil, and so on).

**Telescope of True Vision:** This device appears as a normal spyglass bound in gold, and functions as such, enabling the viewer to see up to 50 times farther than normal (a character may see something at 5,000 feet as he would at 100 feet) at distances of 50 feet or more. Upon speaking a command word, the spyglass functions as a *gem of seeing* for one round, revealing the true nature of what is viewed in the glass. The telescope of *true vision* has 20 charges at its full power. Its lens fractures and crumbles when the last charge is used.





## Appendix A: Magical Item Tables

The following tables allow DMs to randomly select the magical items found in their campaigns. Roll on Table I first to determine which type of item is found. This table directs you to one of the major tables that follow (each devoted to a specific category of magical items).

### I. Magical Items

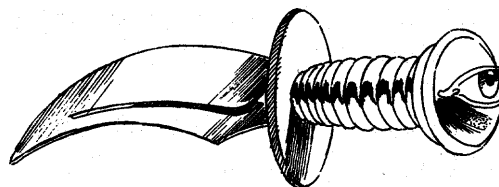
d100	Category
01-25	Weapons (go to Table II)
26-40	Armor and Shields (go to Table III)
41-60	Potions & Oils (go to Table IV)
61-75	Scrolls (go to Table V)
76-80	Rings (go to Table VI)
81-85	Rods, Staves, and Wands (go to Table VII)
86-00	Miscellaneous Magical Items (go to Table VIII)

### II. Weapons

#### IIA. WEAPON TYPE

d100	Type of Weapon
01	Ankus
02-12	Arrows
01-60	2d6 flight arrows
61-85	3d6 flight arrows
86-00	4d6 flight arrows
13-16	Axe, hand
17-18	Battle axe
19	Bullet, sling (3d4)
20	Club
21-28	Daggers & related weapons
01-10	Dirk
11-30	Dagger
31-70	Jambiya
71-80	Knife
81-85	Razor
86-00	Katar (punch dagger)
29-30	Dart (3d4)
31-34	Flail
01-60	Horseman's
61-00	Footman's
	Javelin (1d6)
	Lance

d100	Type of Weapon
01-70	Light
71-00	Medium
41-46	Mace
01-60	Horseman's
61-00	Footman's
47	Military pick
48-49	Morning star
50-53	Pole arm
01-20	Awl pike
21-60	Glaive
61-00	Halberd
54-55	Quarterstaff
56-57	Quarrel, crossbow
01-40	Light quarrels (2d6)
41-60	Light quarrels (3d6)
61-90	Heavy quarrels (1d6)
91-00	Heavy quarrels (2d6)
58	Scythe
59-61	Sickle
62-70	Spear
71-95	Swords
01-05	Bastard
06-10	Broad
11-35	Cutlass
36-40	Great scimitar
41-45	Khopesh
46-50	Long
51-70	Scimitar
71-95	Short
95-00	Two-handed
96	Trident
97	Warhammer
98-00	Special weapon (roll 1d6; on 1,2, or 3, roll on Subtable 1 of IIC; on 4,5, or 6, roll on Subtable 2 of IIC)





## IIB. ATTACK ROLL ADJUSTMENT

d20	Sword	XP	Other	XP
1-2	-1	-	-1	-
3-4	Q(Hit)	-	Q(Hit)	-
5-6	Q(Dam)	-	Q(Dam)	-
7-13	+1	400	+1	500
14-16	+2	800	+1	500
17-18	+3	1400	+2	1000
19	+4	2000	+2	1000
20	+5	3000	+3	2000

Q(Hit) = This is a weapon of quality and fine craftsmanship. It provides a +1 to hit. It is otherwise a non-magical weapon.

Q(Dam) = This is a weapon of quality and fine craftsmanship. It provides a +1 to damage. It is otherwise a non-magical weapon.

## IIC. SPECIAL WEAPONS TABLES

d100	Weapon	XP Value
01-02	Arrow of direction*	25000
03-04	Arrow of slaying	250
05-08	Axe +2, throwing*	750
09-13	Bow +1	500
14-16	Bow +2	750
17	Crossbow of distance*	1500
18-19	Crossbow of speed*	1500
20-30	Cutlass of the Golden Gulf +1	800
31-35	Desert blade	3,000
36-40	Dagger of quickness +2	500
41-45	Dagger of the evil eye	-
46-48	Dagger of throwing*	**
49-50	Dagger of venom*	350
51	Great scimitar, vorpal	10000
52	Javelin of lightning*	250 ea.
53	Javelin of piercing*	250 ea.
54	Javelin, cursed	-
55-60,	Mace +1, +2 vs. undead	400
61-63	Mace +2, +4 vs. undead	600
64-65	Mace of speed	3,000
66-70	Mamluk sword of obedience +1	700
71-73	Mamluk sword of obedience +2	800
74-84	Quarterstaff, magical*	**
85-86	Razor of truth	500

### Subtable 1 (continued)

d100	Weapon	XP Value
87-95	Scimitar of speed	500
96-98	Spear of accuracy	3000
99-00	Spear, cursed backbiter*	-

### Subtable 2 (die roll 4-6)

d100	Weapon	XP Value
01-10	Sword +1, +2 vs. all genies	600
11-17	Sword +1, +2 vs. magic-using and enchanted creatures*	600
18-22	Sword +1, +2 vs. shapechangers*	700
23-28	Sword +1, +4 vs. reptiles	800
29-33	Sword +1, cursed*	-
34	Sword +1, luck blade*	1000
35-38	Sword +2, +3 vs. efreet	700
39-42	Sword +2, +3 vs. djinn	700
43-46	Sword +2, +3 vs. dao	700
47-50	Sword +2, +3 vs. marids	700
51-52	Sword +2, genie slayer	900
53-58	Sword +2, giant slayer	900
59-60	Sword +4 defender*	3000
61	Sword +5 defender*	3600
62	Sword +5, holy avenger	4000
63-64	Sword of dancing*	4400
65-76	Sword of the believer	1200
77-80	Sword of the planes	2000
81-82	Sword of wounding	2000
83-90	Sword, cursed berserking	-
91-00	Weapon of concealed wizardry	+300***

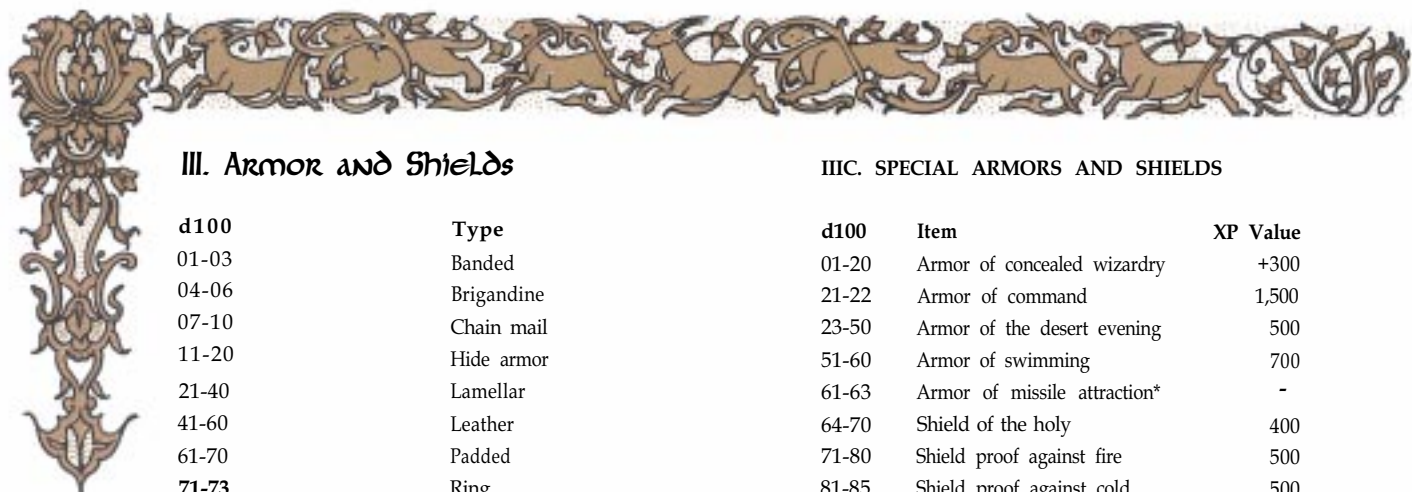
\* Weapon is as described in the Dungeon Master's Guide Appendix 3. Swords, daggers, maces, and any other weapons which have a subtable above should use that subtable to determine use. For example, a *dagger of venom* could be in the form of a jambiya, knife, dirk, dagger, razor, or katar.

\*\* See particular item.

\*\*\* In addition to listed XP value of weapon.







### III. Armor and Shields

d100	Type
01-03	Banded
04-06	Brigandine
07-10	Chain mail
11-20	Hide armor
21-40	Lamellar
41-60	Leather
61-70	Padded
71-73	Ring
74-75	Scale
76-94	Shield
	01-10 Body
	11-60 Daraq/buckler
	61-00 Medium
95-96	Splint
97-98	Studded leather
99-00	Special

#### IIIA. ARMOR CLASS ADJUSTMENT

d100	AC Adj.	XP Value
01-10	-1	—
11-30	Q(+1)	—
31-50	+1	500
51-70	+2	1,000
71-85	+3	1,500
86-95	+4	2,000
96-00	+5	3,000

Q(+ 1): Armor or shield is a weapon of quality. While nonmagical, its fine craftsmanship grants it a +1 on AC.

#### IIIB. ARMOR SIZE

d100	Size
01-60	Human (includes lizard men, orcs, and hobgoblins)
61-70	Dwarf (includes goblins)
71-75	Elf
76-85	Halfling (includes kobolds and gnomes)
86-95	Ogre (includes gnolls)
96-00	Giant-sized (hill)

### IIIC. SPECIAL ARMORS AND SHIELDS

d100	Item	XP Value
01-20	Armor of concealed wizardry	+300
21-22	Armor of command	1,500
23-50	Armor of the desert evening	500
51-60	Armor of swimming	700
61-63	Armor of missile attraction*	-
64-70	Shield of the holy	400
71-80	Shield proof against fire	500
81-85	Shield proof against cold	500
86-90	Shield proof against electricity	500
91-93	Shield -1, missile attractor*	-
94-00	Tortoise shield (daraq)	300

\* Weapon is described in the Dungeon Master's Guide Appendix 3. XP Value is the amount earned by the maker of the item.

### IV. Potions and Oils

Roll 1d6; on 1,2, or 3, go to Subtable 1; on 4,5, or 6, go to Subtable 2.

Subtable 1 (die roll 1-3)		
d100	Potion/Oil	XP Value
01-05	Animal control*	250
06-10	Climbing*	300
11-20	Delusion	-
21-25	Diminuation"	300
26-28	Dreaming	600
29-31	Elixir of health*	350
32-34	Elixir of madness*	-
35-40	Extra-healing*	400
41-42	Fire breath*	400
43-47	Fire resistance*	250
48-50	Flying*	500
51-53	Gaseous form*	300
54-55	Giant control	600
56-60	Giant strength (warrior)*	550
61-65	Growth*	250
66-75	Healing*	200
76-80	Human control*	250
81-85	Levitation*	250
86-87	Oil of acid resistance*	500
88-91	Oil of attractiveness	500
92-00	Oil of cloaking	750





#### Subtable 2 (die roll 4-6)

d100	Potion/Oil	XP Value
01-08	Oil of great faith (priest)	750
09-15	Oil of elemental invulnerability*	500
16-19	Oil of fiery burning*	500
20-25	Oil of horridness	200
26-30	Oil of invisibility	400
31-35	Oil of invulnerability	400
36-40	Oil of obedience	750
41-43	Oil of romance	750
44-46	Oil of the pickpocket	500
47-50	Oil of slipperiness*	750
51-53	Philter of glibness*	500
54-58	Philter of love*	200
59-60	Philter of persuasiveness*	400
61-63	Philter of stammering and stuttering*	-
64-67	Philter of drunkenness	-
68-78	Poison*	-
79-80	Polymorph self*	200
81-85	Speed*	200
86-92	Sweet water*	200
93-00	Water-breathing*	400

\* Potion or philter is described in the Dungeon Master's Guide

## V. Scrolls

d100	Type of Scroll
01-60	Wizard's Scroll (go to Table VA)
61-80	Priest's Scroll (go to Table VB)
81-00	Protection Scroll (go to Table VC)

#### VA. WIZARD SCROLLS

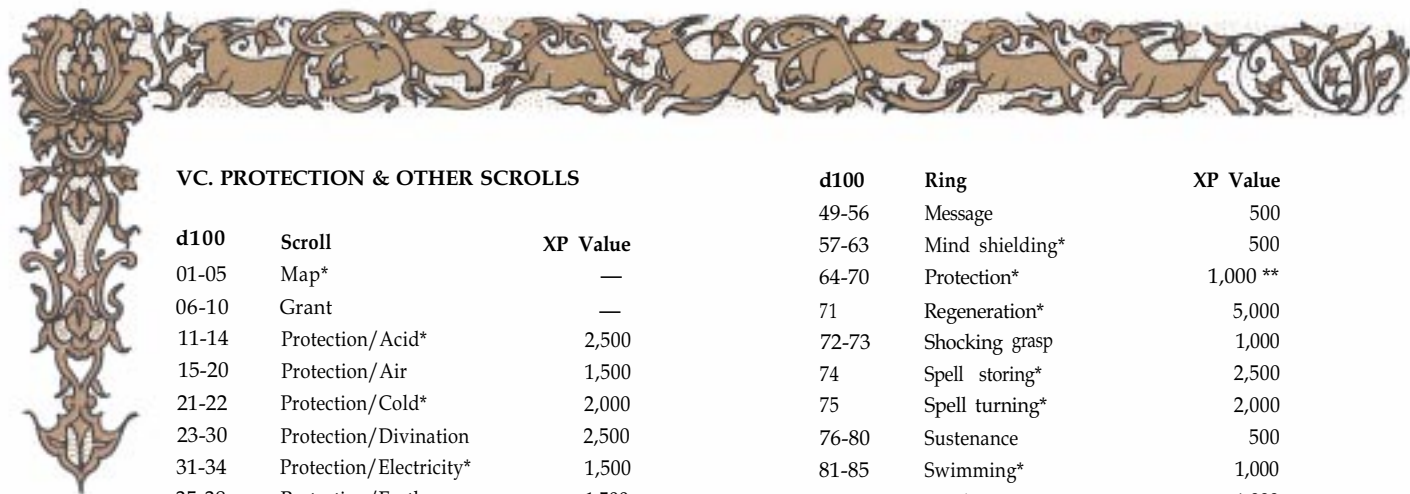
d100	Spell Number & Type	Levels
01-06	1 universal spell	1-4
07-09	1 universal spell	1-6
10-11	1 universal spell	2-9
12-17	2 universal spells	1-4
18-19	2 universal spells	2-9
20-25	3 universal spells	1-4
26-27	3 universal spells	2-9
28-33	4 universal spells	1-6
34-35	4 universal spells	1-8
36-40	5 universal spells	1-6
41-42	5 universal spells	1-8
43-47	6 universal spells	1-6

d100	Spell Number & Type	Levels
48-49	6 universal spells	3-8
50-53	7 universal spells	1-8
54-55	7 universal spells	2-9
56	7 universal spells	4-9
57-60	1-4 flame magic spells	1-8
61-65	1-3 flame magic spells	2-9
66-70	1-4 sand magic spells	1-8
71-75	1-3 sand magic spells	2-9
75-80	1-4 sea magic spells	1-8
81-85	1-3 sea magic spells	2-9
86-90	1-4 wind magic spells	1-8
91-95	1-3 wind magic spells	2-9
96-00	Cursed scroll	

#### VB. PRIEST SCROLLS

d100	Spells
01-05	1-4 spells, all (universal) sphere
06-09	1-4 Spells, animal sphere
10-11	1-6 Spells, animal sphere
12	1-2 Spells, astral sphere
13-16	1-4 Spells, charm sphere
17-18	1-6 Spells, charm sphere
19-21	1-4 Spells, combat sphere
22-25	1-4 Spells, creation sphere
26-30	1-4 Spells, divination sphere
31-34	1-6 Spells, divination sphere
35-38	1-4 Spells, elemental sphere
39-40	1-6 Spells, elemental sphere
41	1-8 Spells, elemental sphere
42-44	1-4 Spells, guardian sphere
45-55	1-4 Spells, healing sphere
56-58	2-8 Spells, healing sphere
59-60	1-4 Spells, necromantic sphere
61-62	1-4 Spells, plant sphere
63	2-8 Spells, plant sphere
64-67	1-4 Spells, protection sphere
68-69	1-6 Spells, protection sphere
70-72	1-4 Spells, summoning sphere
73-74	1-6 Spells, summoning sphere
75-77	1-4 Spells, sun sphere
78-80	1-4 Spells, weather sphere
81-95	1-8 mixed priest spells
96-00	Cursed scroll





## VC. PROTECTION & OTHER SCROLLS

d100	Scroll	XP Value
01-05	Map*	—
06-10	Grant	—
11-14	Protection/Acid*	2,500
15-20	Protection/Air	1,500
21-22	Protection/Cold*	2,000
23-30	Protection/Divination	2,500
31-34	Protection/Electricity*	1,500
35-38	Protection/Earth	1,500
39-42	Protection/Elementals*	1,500
43-50	Protection/Fire*	2,000
51-52	Protection/Gas*	2,000
53-58	Protection/Genies	2,000
59-65	Protection/Heat	1,000
66-68	Protection/Lycanthropes	1,000
69-73	Protection/Magic*	1,500
74-75	Protection/Petrification*	2,000
76-77	Protection/Plants*	1,000
78-85	Protection/Poison*	1,000
86-87	Protection/Possession*	2,000
88-89	Protection/Undead*	1,500
90-91	Protection/Water*	1,500
95-00	Cursed Scroll	

\*Scroll is described in the DMG.

XP Value unless otherwise noted is equal to the total spell levels on the scrolls x 100.

## VI. Rings

d100	Ring	XP Value
01-04	Animal friendship*	1,000
05-06	Avian control	1,000
07-08	Blinking*	1,000
09-15	Cloaked wizardry	500**
16-17	Clumsiness*	-
18-20	Delusion*	-
21-24	Feather falling*	1,000
25-26	Folly	-
27-30	Fire resistance*	1,000
31-33	Free action*	1,000
34-35	Genie summoning	3,000
36-37	Holy slayer, ring of the	1,000
38-39	Human influence*	2,000
40-43	Invisibility*	1,500
44-48	Jumping*	1,000

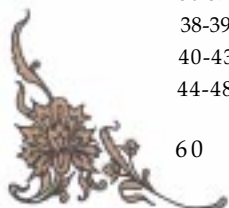
d100	Ring	XP Value
49-56	Message	500
57-63	Mind shielding*	500
64-70	Protection*	1,000 **
71	Regeneration*	5,000
72-73	Shocking grasp	1,000
74	Spell storing*	2,500
75	Spell turning*	2,000
76-80	Sustenance	500
81-85	Swimming*	1,000
86-90	Truth*	1,000
91	Vizier, ring of the	1,000
92	Warmth	1,000
93-95	Water walking*	1,000
96-99	Weakness*	-
00	Wishes, three*	3,000

\* Ring is discussed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

\*\*In addition to listed XP value of ring.

## VII. Rods, Staves, and Wands

d100	Item	XP Value
01	Rod of absorption* (priest, wizard)	7,500
02-03	Rod of alertness*	7,000
04	Rod of beguiling* (priest, wizard, rogue)	5,000
05-06	Rod of cancellation*	10,000
07-09	Rod of flailing*	2,000
10	Rod of leadership (warrior, priest)	5000
11	Rod of the monolith	5,000
12	Rod of resurrection* (priest)	10,000
13-14	Rod of smiting* (priest, wizard)	4,000
15	Rod of splendor*	2,500
16	Rod of terror*	3,000
17-18	Staff of command* (priest, wizard)	5,000
19-23	Staff of curing* (priest)	6,000
24-25	Staff of devotion (priest)	8,000
26-27	Staff of flames (wizard)	10,000
28-32	Staff of striking* (priest, wizard)	6,000
33-34	Staff of the sands (wizard)	10,000
35-36	Staff-of the sea (wizard)	10,000
37-38	Staff of the winds (wizard)	10,000
39-40	Staff of withering*	8,000
41-43	Wand of earth and stone*	1,000
44-47	Wand of enemy detection*	2,000
48-50	Wand of fear*	3,000
51-55	Wand of fire* (wizard)	4,500
56-58	Wand of frost* (wizard)	6,000







d100	Item	XP Value
59-68	Wand of illumination* (wizard)	2,000
69-72	Wand of illusion* (wizard)	3,000
73-75	Wand of lightning* (wizard)	4,000
76-85	Wand of magic detection*	2,500
86-90	Wand of magic missiles*	4,000
91-93	Wand of paralyzation* (wizard)	3,500
94-96	Wand of polymorphing*	3,500
97-00	Wand of size alteration*	3,000

\* Item is described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## VIII. Miscellaneous Magical Items

Roll 1d6; on 1-2, roll on Subtable 1; 3-4, roll on Subtable 2; 5-6, roll on Subtable 3.

Subtable 1 (die roll 1-2)		
d100	Item	XP Value
01-05	Aba of the desert	1,000
06-07	Aba of displacement	3,000
08-09	Aba of poisonousness	-
10-13	Aba of protection	1,000 **
14	Amulet of inescapable location*	5,000
15-17	Amulet of proof against detection and location*	4,000
18-20	Bag of holding*	5,000
21	Bag of devouring*	-
22-23	Banner of renown	4,000
24	Boots of dancing*	-
25-27	Boots of speed*	2,500
28-30	Boots of striding and springing	2,500
31	Book of the Enlightened Gods (priest)	8,000
32-33	Bowl commanding water elementals (wizard)	10,000
34	Bowl of watery death (wizard)	4,000
35-40	Bracers of defense*	500 (Per AC < 10)
41-42	Bracers of defenselessness*	-
43-44	Brazier commanding fire elementals (wizard)*	4,000
45	Brazier of sleep smoke*	-
46-48	Brooch of shielding*	1,000
49-53	Caftan of protection	1,000 per +
54-55	Candle of invocation (priest)	1,000
56-58	Carpet of fighting	4,000
59-68	Carpet of flying*	7,500
69-70	Censer controlling air elementals (wizard)*	4,000
71	Censer summoning hostile air elementals (wizard)*	-
72-74	Crystal ball*	1,000
75	Crystal hypnosis ball*	-
76-80	Dust of appearance*	1,000

### Subtable 1 (cont.)

d100	Item	XP Value
81-83	Dust of disappearance*	2,000
84-85	Dust of dryness*	1,000
86-87	Dust of sneezing and choking*	-
88-95	Figurine of wondrous power*	100
96-00	Flask of curses*	-

### Subtable 2 (die roll 2-3)

d100	Item	XP Value
01-05	Gauntlets of dexterity*	1,000
06-07	Gauntlets of fumbling*	-
08-12	Gauntlets of ogre power*	-
13-18	Gauntlets of swimming and climbing*	1,000
19	Gem of brightness*	2,000
20	Gem of insight*	3,000
21	Gem of seeing*	2,000
22-27	Genie prison	-
28-32	Hat of disguise	1,000
33-34	Hat of stupidity	-
35-36	Horn of blasting*	1,000
37	Horn of bubbles*	-
38-43	Incense of meditation (priest)*	500
44	Incense of obsession (priest)*	-
45-46	Iron flask*	-
47-58	Item of cloaked wizardry	800**
59-63	Jellaba of concealment	1,000
64	Jewel of attacks	-
65	Manual of Bodily Health*	5,000
66	Manual of Gainful Exercise*	5,000
67	Manual of Puissant Skill at Arms (warrior)*	8,000
68	Manual of Quickness in Action*	5,000
69	Jellaba of eyes (wizard)	4,500
70-71	Pearl of wisdom (priest)*	500
72-74	Pearl of the sirens"	900
75	Periapt of foul rotting*	-
76-79	Periapt of health*	1,500
80-84	Periapt of proof against poison*	1,000
85-90	Phylactery of bravery	1,000
91-95	Phylactery of faithfulness (priest)*	1,000
96-98	Phylactery of long years (priest)*	1,000
99-00	Phylactery of monstrous attention*	3,000

\* Item is described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

\*\* In addition to listed XP value of item.

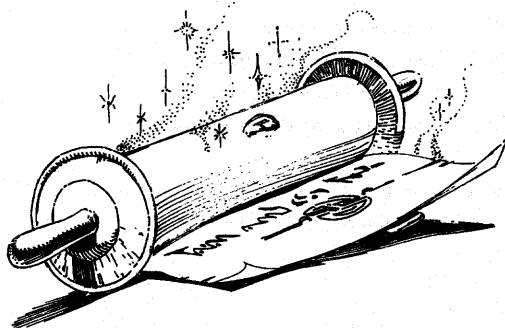




d100	Item	XP Value
01-04	Portable hole*	5,000
05-07	Qanun of charming	5,000
08	Qanun of discord	-
09-12	Qanun of quiet	5,000
11-18	Rope of climbing*	1,000
19-20	Rope of constriction*	-
21-22	Rope of entanglement*	1,500
23-25	Rug of smothering*	-
26	Scarab of death*	-
27-33	Scarab of deception	2,500
34-35	Scarab of enraging enemies*	1,000
36-38	Scarab of insanity*	1,500
40-50	Scarab of protection*	2,500
51-53	Sheet of smallness*	1,500
54-55	Slippers of dancing	-
56-59	Slippers of levitation	2,000
60-69	Slippers of soft movement	1,000
70-72	Slippers of spider climbing*	1,000
73-75	Slippers of varied tracks	1,500
76-77	Stone horse*	2,000
78-79	Stone of controlling earth elementals*	1,500
80	Stone of good luck*	1,500
81	Stone of weight*	-
82-85	Telescope of fantastic vision	-
86-88	Telescope of true vision	2,000
89	Tome of Clear Thought*	8,000
90	Tome of Leadership and Influence*	7,500
91	Tome of Understanding*	8,000
92	Vacuous grimoire*	-
93-96	Wind fan*	500
97-00	Wings of flying*	750

\* Item is described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

\*\* In addition to listed XP value of item.



## Appendix B: Characters in Shorthand

Abbreviations describing characters appear in this order: race, sex, class, kit, and level. For example, hmF/f/20 means "human male fighter, faris, 20th level."

### Race

d	dwarf	he	half-elf
e	elf	hg	halfing
g	gnome	kb	kobold
gb	goblin	o	orc
h	human	og	ogre
hb	hobgoblin		

### Sex

f	female	m	male
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### Class

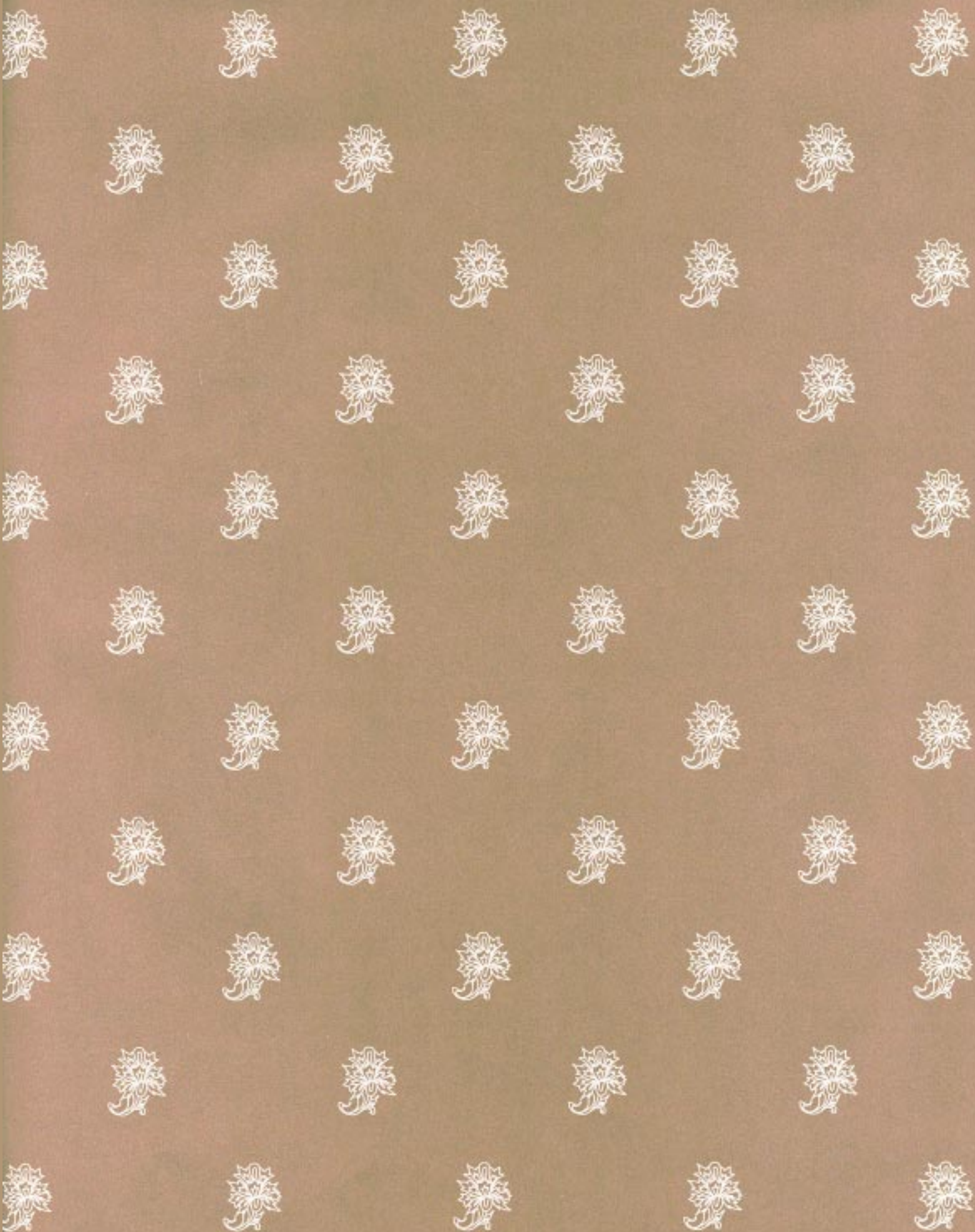
B	Bard	R	Ranger
F	Fighter	T	Thief
P	Priest	W	Wizard (Mage)
Pal	Paladin		

### Kit

a	Askar	mk	Mamluk
4	Ajami mage	mr	Merchant-rogue
bs	Beggar-thief	mt	Matrud
br	Barber	-my	Mystic
	Corsair	o	Outland priest
i r	Desert rider	ow	Outland warrior
e	Ethoist	p	Pragmatist
f	Faris	r	Rawun
fm	Flame mage	sam	Sand mage
h	Hakima	sem	Sea mage
hs	Holy slayer	sh	Sha'ir
k	Kahin	sl	Sa'luk
m	Moralist	so	Sorcerer
mb	Mercenary barbarian		

*DMs' Options:* Levels reflect the standard range of 1 to 20; DMs may choose to alter them to suit their campaigns. While a character's description gives insight into his or her basic nature, alignment is not listed; DMs may assign it as they see fit.











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<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Earth, mountains
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Khanate
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Day
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Low to very (5–12)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	F
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Neutral evil
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	3
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	9, F1 15 (B), Br 6
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	8 + 3
<b>THACO:</b>	13
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	3-18 (3d6)
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	See below
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Earth resistance; see below
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	L (8-11 ft. tall)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Champion (15-16)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	6,000



**D**ao are malicious genies from the Elemental Plane of Earth. (*Dao* is both singular and plural.) There they dwell in great numbers, continually delving and shaping the rock around them. On the Prime Material Plane, dao are usually solitary, although powerful individuals (such as the evil yak-men) sometimes manage to command a group of them. Of all the genie races, dao are the most simple and brutish, and can often be cozened into service.

Male or female, dao are powerfully muscled individuals. Their polished skin is the color of earth, sand, or granite, and their finger- and toenails are made of a durable but lustrous metal. The fingers themselves are wide and pudgy, even if the dao assume other forms. Both sexes are bald and free of body hair. Males do have facial hair, worn in mustaches and angular beards. All dao enjoy adorning themselves with jewelry, such as earrings, bracers, chokers, nose rings and studs, ankle bracelets, rings, and bells. Many don shirts of lamellar plates.

Like most genies, dao have a limited form of telepathy that enables them to converse with any intelligent being (low intelligence or better). They may use this ability as translators, but will often accentuate the negatives when doing so, making each side appear hostile and boastful to the other. Dao also speak Midani and the native tongue of all genies. The dao dialect is rumbling and low-pitched, with grinding consonants and trilling vowels.

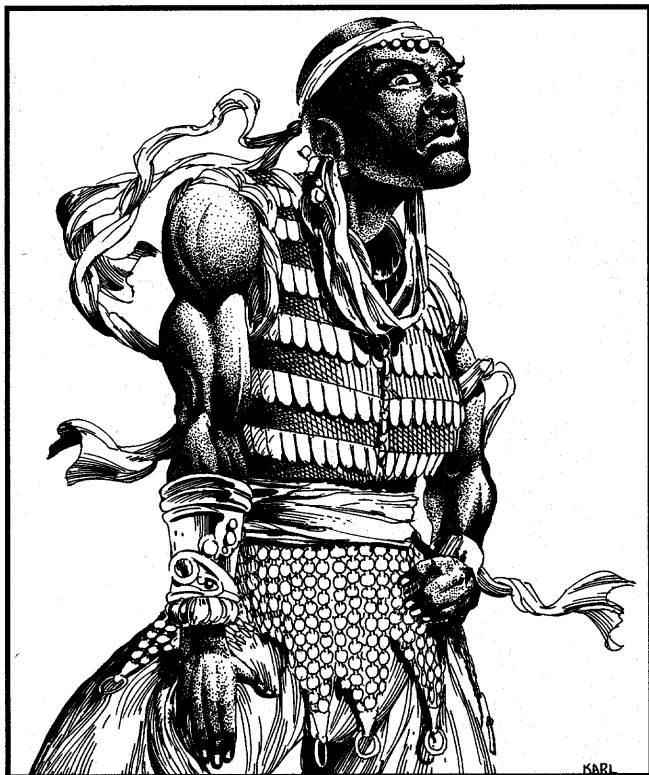
**Combat:** Dao can use each of the following spell-like powers once per day, one at a time: *detect good*, *detect magic*, *assume gaseous form*, *attract evil eye*, *become invisible*, *cause misdirection*, *passwall*, *create a spectral force*, *create a wall of stone*, and *change self*. With the last power, a dao can reduce its height to 2 feet or increase it to 20 feet (a variation of the spell). Three times per day, the dao can turn rock to mud (or the reverse, *mud to rock*). Six times per day, the dao can *dig*. Powers are at the 18th level of wizardry.

A dao can also grant a limited *wish*, once per day, but with severe restrictions. First, the genie can only grant a wish to a native of the Prime Material Plane. A dao cannot grant a wish to another genie, including a janni, nor can a wish be granted to a creature such as a cambion, which belongs to both the Prime Material and other planes. Most importantly, the dao can only grant a wish that will be fulfilled in a twisted or malignant way. (Details are determined by the DM; not-even the dao can always predict such results.) For example, an individual who wishes to regain hit points may do so, but at the cost of draining hit points from allies. A wizard who requests a new spell may receive it, but become afflicted with the evil eye. And those who wish for shelter may discover a palace, only to find it inhabited by some foul monster. Most of those who request wishes from dao are aware of these restrictions and proceed with caution. (While an evil master who has enslaved a dao may demand a wish, the master should know that the wish is likely to cause him or her great harm.)

Dao are immune to earth-based and earth-affecting spells, including those from the province of sand (elemental earth). Holy water is the dao's bane; they suffer twice the usual amount of damage from it. That damage will be marked for years to come, because the liquid scars them as easily as water carves ravines through sand.

A dao can carry up to 500 pounds without tiring, either when flying or walking (or simply standing). Doubling the weight causes the dao to tire in three turns, but for every 100 pounds under 1,000, the dao can bear the load one additional turn. For example, a dao can carry 600 pounds for seven turns without tiring. After being exhausted in this fashion, a dao must rest for six turns.

Dao can move through earth at a burrowing rate of 6. They can't dig through worked stone or solid rock, however. Companions can't follow, since the tunnel closes up behind the burrowing dao, filled by debris carved out from ahead. However, a burrowing dao can still carry inanimate objects, and such an



“object” might conceivably be a passenger, albeit an uncomfortable one (DM’s discretion applies).

Dao usually stand and fight if threatened. If they’re overmatched, however, most flee by taking to the air or by burrowing—and then return with enough reinforcements to squash those who would besmirch a dao’s honor. Dao are often uncomfortable in an enclosed area of worked stone because it prevents them retreating easily.

Though dao are evil, they are also honorable in their own way. If shown kindness and fairness, a dao will return them in kind (taking everything else it can get as well). Dao make excellent advisors, particularly if they know that by helping a mortal they can cause harm to other mortals. These genies hate enslavement as much as the efreet, and will seek out sha’irs who have imprisoned their brethren—either to slay the sha’irs or to take them as slaves.

**Interplanar Travel:** Dao can travel freely to any of the elemental planes, as well as to the Prime Material, Astral, and Ethereal Planes. They are generally “homebodies,” favoring their native Plane of Earth, but some maintain relationships with efreet on the Plane of Fire. In addition to traveling of their own volition, dao may be summoned to the Prime Material Plane through magical abilities or items.

**Habitat/Society:** The dao’s native land is the Elemental Plane of Earth, a realm of solid matter broken by pockets of air, water, and fire. The dao have tamed, worked, and settled these pockets for their own use. The pockets and caverns twist back on themselves like intricate knots, and are called *mazeworks*. A typical mazework comprises 4 to 40 (4d10) dao, and 8 to 80 (8d10) slaves. Typical slaves include elemental beings such as xorn, captives from the Prime Material Plane (especially races accustomed to a life underground), and hapless human adventurers. Xorn and other creatures who can move through stone serve the dao as scouts, determining the location of future diggings.

A standard dao mazework is ruled by an ataman (or hetman) who acts on the advice of a seneschal. Both are either dao of maximum hit points or noble dao (see the *AL-QADIM™ Monstrous Compendium Appendix*). One to six nobles or dao of maximum hit points make up the ruler’s immediate court. While the ataman’s loyalty may be in question, the seneschal’s is not, since the latter is appointed by the Great Khan of the dao. Seneschals are responsible for collecting taxes and slave levies from the smaller mazeworks, to be turned over to the Great Khan for his own use. Often an ataman will declare his independence, and seek to break away or cheat the Great Khan of his due. As a result, punitive expeditions against independent kingdoms are common in the Elemental Plane of Earth.

The Great Khan rules his subjects from a cavern complex called the Sevenfold Mazework. The complex lies at the deep heart of the Great Dismal Delve, which is the largest dao city on the Plane of Earth. Most noble dao, as well as the majority of all dao, can be found in the Delve. It is a huge metropolis, continually bustling with trade in gems, metals, and mortal lives. The city’s suqs and bazaars are the most wondrous (and dangerous) on the inner planes.

Of all genie races, dao are the most industrious. They are continually mining, shaping, and digging new lands—activities that require a steady flow of slaves and materials. Their markets are filled with sharp dealers, new wonders, precious metals, and lively slave-auctions. (While dao fear losing their own freedom, and despise those who would imprison them, they see nothing wrong with depriving others of their freedom.) These genies are diligent, hard-working, and driven to complete their tasks to the best of their abilities.

Dao industriousness is what moves them to invade the Prime Material Plane, where they hope to open new markets and new supply lines for their insatiable empires. In the Prime Material Plane, dao are normally found alone, scouting for resources or dealing with local merchants. They prefer the mountainous terrain familiar to their race, but can also be found in deserts and jungles. They are uneasy in mortal cities, but will go there if trade is good.

**Ecology:** Dao do not need to eat or drink. They can fast for years without significant detriment to their abilities. They also can slow their breathing to a point that enables them to remain buried beneath tons of debris and be unaffected. (They are still vulnerable to poisons and air-based attacks, however.) Despite such powerful constitutions, dao enjoy the sensations of life, and often partake in hedonistic revelry. For example, dao believe that powdered gems, gold dust, and gold leaf heighten the experience of eating—devouring them as mortals might use a precious spice.

Dao take pride in a thing well-made and a plot well-planned. Mortal agents sometimes employ dao to build fortifications and palaces, for their engineering skills are second to none. When constructing something, the malicious nature of the dao is submerged in the industry of the work.

In the Prime Material Plane, far to the north of the enlightened world, the industriousness of dao has been harnessed by evil yak-men. Dao are incapable of attacking these creatures, and are condemned to serve them. (See the “Yak-Men” entry.) Among the genies, dao are on speaking and trading terms with the efreet, but they have nothing but scorn and hatred for jann, djinn, and marids. Other races native to the Elemental Plane of Earth avoid the dao, for these evil genies are always seeking new slaves.

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Air, desert
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Caliphate
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Day
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Average to highly (8–14)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	F
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic good
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	4
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	9, Fl24 (A)
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	7 + 3
<b>THAC0:</b>	13
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	2-16 (2d8)
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Whirlwind; see below
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Air-based combat; see below
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	L (10 1/2 ft. tall)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Elite (13-14)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	6,000



**D**jinn are proud, sensuous genies from the Elemental Plane of Air. (*Djinn* is plural; *djinni* is singular.) While an adventurer may encounter these creatures in great number on their home plane, djinn tend to be solitary when visiting the Land of Fate. They favor the uncluttered vistas of the open desert to densely populated regions. Djinn are somewhat friendly toward mortals, however, and as a result, they may visit Zakhara's cities.

Djinn look like exceedingly tall, well-muscled men and women. Their features are noble and attractive. Their skin color ranges from pale blue to the more common olive-brown and dark tan of desert natives. Their eyes are usually brown, but there are also blue-eyed djinn, who are believed to be marked by Fate for great actions. (Blue also suggests increased powers of the evil eye, however.) Djinn dress in airy, shimmering silks, which are designed for comfort as well as to flaunt their musculature.

Like most genies, djinn have a limited form of telepathy, which enables them to converse with any being of low intelligence or better. (This can make djinn valuable translators. Let negotiators beware, however: capricious djinn may relay their own "interpretations.") Djinn also speak Midani, as well as the language shared by all geniekind. The djinn dialect of the latter is sibilant and melodious, like a breeze passing through an orchard.

**Combat:** Djinn can use each of the following spell-like abilities once per day: They can *create nutritious food* for 2 to 12 (2d6) persons and *create water or wine* for 2 to 12 (2d6) persons. They can *create soft goods* (up to 16 cubic feet) or *wooden items* (up to 9 cubic feet) of a permanent nature. They also can *create metal* with a short lifespan. (The harder the metal, the shorter its duration. While djinni gold lasts 24 hours, djinni steel lasts but an hour.) Djinn can *create illusions* that have both visible and audible components, and that last without concentration until they are touched or dispelled. All of these illusions are cast with the ability of a 20th-level wizard. (A sha'ir who is able to

identify the works of geniekind can use that ability to detect the source of a djinni's illusions.) A djinni can also become *invisible*, *assume gaseous form*, and *wind walk*.

Also once per day, a Zakharan djinni has the ability to harness the air and create a whirlwind, which the creature can ride or even direct at will from a distance (usually to attack, with a range of sight). The whirlwind is a cone-shaped spiral, measuring up to 10 feet across at its base, 40 feet at the top, and up to 70 feet in height. (The djinni chooses the whirlwind's dimensions.) Its maximum speed is 18, with maneuverability class A. The base of the whirlwind must touch earth, water, or some solid surface; else the whirlwind dissolves. It takes a full turn for the whirlwind to form or dissolve. During that turn, the funnel cloud inflicts no damage, nor does it have any other effect. The whirlwind lasts as long as the djinni concentrates upon it, moving at the creature's whim.

If the whirlwind strikes a nonaerial creature of fewer than 2 Hit Dice, the creature may be swept off its feet, battered, and killed. To avoid these effects, the target must make a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon for each round of contact with the whirlwind. Hardier beings—as well as all aerial or airborne creature—suffer 2 to 12 (2d6) points of damage per round of contact with the whirlwind.

As noted above, the djinni can ride its whirlwind. The djinni may even allow passengers "on board," who (like the djinni) suffer no damage from the buffeting winds. Besides the djinni, the whirlwind can carry up to six man-sized or three genie-sized creatures without slowing.

Because of their link to the Elemental Plane of Air, djinn enjoy an advantage in air-based combat. Creatures or attacks based on elemental air suffer a -1 penalty to attack and damage rolls when battling a djinni. In addition, a djinni gains a +4 bonus to saving throws against air-based attacks and elemental air spells, including poison gas attacks, gaseous breath weapons, and magics such as *cloudkill* and *control normal winds*.

Brute force is a poor persuader of djinn. Rather than be captured (or injured), a djinni who is overmatched in combat usually takes to flight and uses its whirlwind to buffet followers.





A djinni can carry up to 600 pounds without tiring, whether flying or traveling afoot. It can even carry 1,200 pounds for a short time: three turns if afoot, one turn if flying. For every 100 pounds less than 1,200, a djinni can walk or fly one additional turn before fatigue sets in. (For example, a djinni carrying 1,000 pounds can walk for up to five turns and fly for up to three.) Once fatigued, the creature must rest six turns before attempting further strenuous activity. These weight limitations do not apply to the djinni's whirlwind. However, any baggage or cargo that is not carried by the djinni—or by the djinni's passengers—is not protected; it can be damaged by the funnel cloud's high winds (items that fail a saving throw vs. crushing blow are destroyed).

**Interplanar Travel:** Like most genies, djinn can travel freely to any elemental plane, as well as to the Prime Material Plane, Ethereal Plane, and Astral Plane. They usually restrict their travel to the Elemental Plane of Air and the Prime Material Plane. Djinn may also be summoned to the Prime Material Plane as a result of a character's magical ability or item.

**Habitat/Society:** The djinn's native land is the Elemental Plane of Air, where they settle floating islands of earth and rock. These landholds measure anywhere from 1,000 yards to several miles across. They are crammed with wondrous buildings, courtyards, fountains, and gardens, as well as topiary forms and sculptures made of elemental flames. While djinn can fly easily, most habitats of the non-noble djinn are built with nonflying creatures in mind. Sweeping staircases, ramps, slides, and ladders allow ambulatory servants and visitors to move around freely.

A typical landhold is home to 3 to 30 (3d10) djinn, 1 to 10 jann, and 1 to 10 air elemental creatures of low intelligence. A single *sheikh*—always a djinni of maximum hit points—presides over the landhold. The sheikh answers to a loose confederation of *caliphs*. These caliphs are also served by *viziers*, *beys*, and *emirs*. The ultimate ruler of all djinn is the *Great Caliph*, Commander of the Four Winds, Defender of the Heavens, Master of the Air. All high-ranking creatures (from

viziers and sheikhs to the Great Caliph) are noble djinn. (See the *AL-QADIM™ Monstrous Compendium* Appendix for details.)

All djinn swear allegiance and fealty to the Great Caliph. His word is law. A djinni risks punishment for disobeying a local caliph, but death is the penalty for violating the Great Caliph's will.

Djinn landholds practice mutual defense. If one is attacked, its residents send messengers to other outposts. Soon, the entire djinn nation is mobilized and prepared for war. In the Elemental Plane of Air, solid building ground is at a premium (for any resident). Mutual defense allows the djinn to protect what they own. Other sentient races on the plane shy away from attacking djinn landholds, since they know that the djinn will return the attack in kind.

Although the caliphate organization is fairly loose, it still too restrictive for many free-living djinn. They often visit the Prime Material Plane for a respite from family and local lords. These vacationers favor the wild, open deserts, where they ride whirlwinds and visit jann (their genie cousins). Djinn found in the deep, forlorn desert usually want solitude, and they may view intruders unkindly.

Most djinn are friendly toward mortals, however. Of all the genie races, only jann are more tolerant of these "short-lived comical little creatures." While outright attacks on mortals are rare, djinn are mischievous. A favorite djinni trick is to create an illusionary person who implores a mortal to recover some item or to play some trick—always to djinni's advantage. This sort of mischief becomes especially heavy-handed against creatures who use wings or some artificial means to fly (such as a magic carpet). Djinn resent such creatures for challenging them in their own element.

Despite their impish nature, djinn consider some targets off limits for pranks. A djinni will rarely vex high-ranking or important mortals, because they may have ties to the Great Caliph. A djinni is also cautious about playing tricks on another djinni.

Of the true genies, djinn are most amenable to servitude. A djinni may even forgive a mortal master's flaws and be amused by his or her petty actions. Limited servitude, believe the djinn, is a matter of Fate, and no being may contest the hand of Fate. Long-term service displeases the djinn, however. Imprisonment is anathema. And betrayal—particularly by a mortal whom they trusted—is a vile deed which only the most deadly vengeance can amend.

If a character desires the brief service of a djinni, the creature may be entreated with gifts of fine meals, gems, and magical treasures, or otherwise flattered and bribed into compliance—provided, of course, the service does not require too much risk or expenditure on the creature's part. Sha'irs of sufficient power may forgo such niceties; they can summon, bind into service, or imprison a djinni by using their spell-like abilities.

**Ecology:** Djinn do not need to eat or drink. However, they do enjoy rich flavors, smells, and sensations. Succulent fruits, great feasts, pungent wines, fine perfumes, shimmering silks, smooth satins, soft velvets—these are common djinn desires. They are creatures of comfort and ease, working when forced to or when they see a particular need. They prefer permanent, crafted materials to their own creations, and this brings them in contact with mortals.

The djinn are on good terms with jann and sometimes visit their desert camps. They are on cool terms with marids, who tend to be haughty. Djinn outwardly despise dao and efreet, and rarely hesitate to strike against them. A single djinni is weaker than a single dao or efreeti, however, so such an attack is either a massed ambush, or, more commonly, an assault in which a mortal is conned into aiding a djinni (thereby incurring the wrath of the dao or efreet).

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Fire, desert
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Sultanate
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)
TREASURE:	F
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	
MOVEMENT:	9, Fl 24 (B)
HIT DICE:	10
THACO:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	3-24 (3d8)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Fire resistance; see below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (12 ft. tall)
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)
XP VALUE:	7,000



**E**freet are genies of the Elemental Plane of Fire, and they are likely to found in great numbers there. (*Efreet* is plural; *efreeti* is singular.) In the Land of Fate, they are usually alone, although they may be acting on behalf of a sha'ir or another master. These genies are usually hostile and derogatory toward mortals, with two exceptions: mortals who are more powerful than the efreet, and characters who are wise enough to realize the superiority of efreet over all other genies. As a race, efreet are insulted to the point of violence by suggestions that they are evil and lawful in nature. They prefer to think of themselves as fair, even-handed, well organized, and possessing an enlightened sense of self-interest. (The rulers of the efreet, however, *are* both evil and lawful in nature.)

Efreet are massive, solid, hulking humanoids with red eyes that flicker and glow like embers. It is said the efreet are configured from equal parts of basalt, bronze, solid flame, and anger. Their skin color ranges from deep red or crimson to the dark gray and ebony of basalt. (Some Zakhharans believe that creatures with red skin are chosen by Fate for a special task.) An efreeti's hair often seems aflame with its brassy undertones and red and smoky highlights. A red or black beard, either contrasting or matching the hair, completes the visage of some males. These fiery genies dress in the finest silk caftans and damask robes, all dyed in shades of red and black. They also favor brass and gold jewelry.

Like most other genies, efreet have a limited form of telepathy, which enables them to converse with any being of low intelligence or better. (An efreeti is an unreliable translator, however, prone to twist the truth to its own ends.) Efreet also speak Midani and the native tongue shared by all geniekind. The efreeti dialect of the latter is harsh and passionate, with over-stressed syllables and a clipped, precise rhythm.

**Combat:** An efreeti can use each of these spell-like abilities once per day with the skill of a 15th-level wizard: become *invisible*,

assume gaseous form, detect *magic*, *polymorph self*, create a *wall of fire*, and create an *illusion*. Illusions can have both visible and audible components, and they last without an efreeti's concentration until they are magically dispelled or touched.

As often as desired, an efreeti can also *produce flame* or cause *pyrotechnics* (as a 15th-level wizard). In addition, the efreeti can enlarge itself once each day, with the skill of a 10th-level mage.

Efreeti are fire-resistant. "Normal" fire—including incendiary attacks and the effects of their own native plane—cannot harm them. Nor can dragon breath. Magical fire—such as a *fireball* or similar magic from the province of flame—has diminished effects. Such magical attacks suffer a -1 penalty to hit the efreeti (where applicable), as well as a -1 penalty to each die of damage.

The efreeti's most renowned power is the granting of *wishes* (per the spell), up to three per day. This ability has made efreet very popular among those seeking to enslave them (which may account, at least in part, for the efreet's disagreeable attitude). An efreeti operates under two limitations when using this ability. First, wishes can only be granted to creatures of the Prime Material Plane. Efreet cannot grant wishes to other genies (including jann), nor to any other creature from the inner or outer planes. Second, any wish that an efreeti grants will be reviewed by the efreeti's own superiors in the City of Brass, and ultimately by the Sultan of the Efreet himself (see "Habitat/Society").

Efreet can carry up to 750 pounds, afoot or flying, without tiring. They can carry twice that weight, or 1,500 pounds, for a limited time: three turns afoot or one turn aloft. For every 150 pounds below 1,500, the time limit increases by one turn. (For example, an efreeti can fly for three turns while carrying 1,200 pounds.) An efreeti who is fatigued by carrying a heavy load must rest for six full turns before engaging in strenuous activity again.

**Interplanar Travel:** Like most genies, efreet can travel freely to any of the elemental planes, as well as to Prime Material Plane, Ethereal Plane, and Astral Plane. Due to strained relations with



other genie races, they normally remain on the Plane of Fire, though they occasionally establish trading operations on the Plane of Earth. Those upon the Prime Material Plane usually have been summoned by a sha'ir or a character who has a magical item.

**Habitat/Society:** Efreet are famous for their hatred of servitude and their desire for justice and vengeance against those who have wronged them. They are also noted for their cruel natures and their ability to mislead and deceive. In part, this cruelty stems from the nature of the horrid masters who oversee them. But more than a few efreet relish their own brutality. The remainder merely shrug, and blame their evil society for their actions, not themselves.

The court of the efreet is the City of Brass, a great metropolis on the Elemental Plane of Fire. The city rises from a bowl-like hemisphere of glowing metal, measuring 40 miles across. The city is ruled by the efreet's great sultan. His servants include a number of noble and common efreet who make the city their home.

While most efreet on the Plane of Fire reside in the City of Brass, there are military outposts scattered throughout the dimension. The stated purpose of these outposts is to protect the efreeti territories against incursions from the Elemental Planes of Air and Water. More often, they serve as bases for raids against other planes. The outposts also serve to regulate movement and travel in the efreeti territories. Four to 40 (4d10) efreet dwell at each post. They are governed by a malik or vali, who is a common efreeti of maximum hit points. In addition, there is a 10 percent chance that an outpost houses one to four (1d4) jann and one to four dao. There also may be 10 to 100 (10d10) prisoners or captives of the efreet, taken either from the Prime Material Plane or from raids against travelers in the Elemental Plane of Fire.

Given the oppressiveness of their native land, it is no surprise that efreet make extended visits to the Prime Material Plane. They

prefer hot regions such as volcanoes, and open territory such as the Anvils of the great deserts. This love of the desert brings them into conflict with jann, whom the efreet can easily dominate, as well as djinn, with whom the efreet have maintained a low-level conflict for generations.

Due to their wish-granting ability, efreet have been exploited by mortals for eons, especially humans. As a result, efreet feel suspicion and spite for that race. The efreet capture or torment almost anyone they can, carrying suitable slaves back to the Plane of Fire for training at one of the outposts. Mortals who spoon out healthy portions of praise (and treasure) may find these genies more amenable, as may characters who seek to use an efreeti's power to the detriment of other mortals. All efreet enjoy creating excitement, havok, and destruction, particularly if they cannot be held personally responsible. ("Very sorry about your inn, most worthy mortal. I would have spared it if the sha'ir had permitted me to do so. But such was not the case, alas.")

As noted above, any wish an efreeti grants will be reviewed by efreet superiors (perhaps even the efreet's sultan). Superiors are both malevolent in nature and exacting in their bookkeeping. None looks favorably upon an efreeti who dispenses wishes like sweets to the benefit of others. An efreeti whose wish-granting is questioned must offer evidence of two circumstances: (1) the wish was granted against the efreeti's will or better judgment (for example, the efreeti was imprisoned, threatened, ensorcelled, or otherwise forced to act in a manner against its will); and (2) the efreeti proved its innate superiority by turning the wish against the user, thereby teaching the individual an important lesson (namely, don't ask anything of an efreeti). Efreet usually grant a malicious wish, but in a manner ensuring that the character who requests the baleful wish will be harmed along with the target of it.

Dealing with an efreeti is tricky. Sha'irs must choose their words carefully when confronting these genies. An efreeti makes an excellent advisor for those who seek nothing but malicious mischief and harm. Otherwise, only the strongest of masters should seek to harness the creature's abilities. Most genie prisons are used to trap the efreet and their equally detestable cousins, the dao.

**Ecology:** As elemental creatures, efreet do not need to eat or drink in the traditional sense, and can go for years without a meal. They do enjoy the aroma of roasted meats and nuts, however. To efreet, "cooked to perfection" means "burned almost to ash." In addition to charred food, efreet enjoy wines and koumiss that have been heated to the boiling point.

Efreet appreciate baubles, but they favor metals and gems that don't liquify in the heat of their native land. They treat their clothing with flame retardant oils, which prevent the fabric from bursting into flame upon contact with their elemental homeland. While such oils may be acquired and used by a mortal, they do not protect the wearer against fire damage—only the clothing that has been treated.

Efreet and djinn hate each other passionately. Efreeti invasions of the Elemental Plane of Air are common. The efreet tolerate dao (with whom they trade for raw gems) and dislike marids (whom they find haughty and overbearing). As for the jann, efreet seek to dominate them whenever and wherever they can. On the Plane of Fire, other fire elementals tend to avoid the efreet, since these genies view all other creatures, elemental or not, as enemies or potential slaves.



<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Any land, deserts
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Sheikhdom
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Day
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Very to exceptional (11-16), genius (17-18, sheikh or amir), or genius to supra-genius (17-20, vizier)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	Nil
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Neutral good
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1-2
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	5 (2)
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	12, F130 (A)
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	6 + 2, 8 (sheikhs and viziers), or 9 (amirs)
<b>THAC0:</b>	15, 13, or 11
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1-8 + Strength bonus or by weapon + Strength bonus
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	See below
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	See below
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil or 20% in/near desert
<b>SIZE:</b>	M (6 -7 ft. tall)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Champion (15)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	3,000; 5,000 (sheikh); 6,000 (vizier); 6,000 (amir)



The weakest of all genies, jann are native to the Prime Material Plane. (*Jann* is plural; *janni* is singular.) They are servants to other genie races and keepers of the wild, inhospitable reaches of the Zakharan desert. Some Zakharans say that jann were created by powerful elemental creatures who hoped to circumvent the restriction preventing genies from granting wishes to other genies. Such was not the case, for the jann are as limited as their elemental cousins in this matter.

Zakhara's jann look like statuesque humans or half-elves with handsome, noble features. Their flesh is the color of sand and earth, and (unlike djinn) they may pass unnoticed among mere mortals without attracting undue attention. Their eyes may be blue, green, brown, black, or something in between, but they often seem to flash like hot, colored sparks, lively and energetic.

Jann lack the limited telepathy that other genies have. They do speak Midani, however, as well as the common tongue of all geniekind. Jann can also *speak with animals* of low intelligence or better (as per the priest spell of the same name). Animals will not attack a janni who speaks with them.

**Combat:** Desert heat and windborne sand cannot harm the jann; their skin is very resilient. In battle, they wear a type of lamellar that gives them an Armor Class of 2. The normal debilitating effects of such armor do not apply. For weapons, jann favor great scimitars (2d8/4d4 damage) and composite long bows (flight arrows, 1d6/1d6 damage). They gain a Strength benefit with both. When attacking with bare hands, jann inflict 1d8 points of damage.

Both male and female jann have superior Strength. Males have Strengths ranging from 18/01 to 18/00 (d100 roll). Half of all females have Strengths of 18, while the other half have Strengths

of 18/50. (Roll 1d100 for random statistics.) Both sexes increase their hit probability and damage adjustment accordingly.

Strength	Hit Probability	Damage Adj.
18	+1	+2
18/01-50	+1	+3
18/51-75	+2	+3
18/76-90	+2	+4
18/91-99	+2	+5
18/00	+3	+6

Jann have a number of spell-like powers, performed at the 12th level of ability unless otherwise noted. They can only use one power at a time, and no more than one per round:

- Twice per day, jann can increase or decrease their own size, or the size of an individual they touch. The maximum size is 24 feet, and the minimum is 2 inches. Unwilling targets are allowed a saving throw vs. spells.
- They can become invisible three times per day.
- They can *create food and water* once per day as a 7th-level priest (creating 7 cubic feet of food and water).
- They can become ethereal once per day, for a maximum of one hour.

In addition to these powers, jann can breathe underwater and fly at will, with no effect on their other spell-like abilities.

While jann tend to be fearless on their own turf, they are uncomfortable (and rare) outside desert terrain. According to legend, the first of their kind came into being upon Zakhara's sands. For this reason, they are *20 percent resistant to magic* while in this barren terrain. The same resistance applies when they're within a mile of such open territories. Otherwise, a janni has no special magic



resistance (like any other creature of the same Hit Dice). Therefore, a janni in a city bordering the desert is more resistant to magic than a janni in the heart of a richly cultivated area, or even a janni out on the open sea. Magic resistance does not affect a sha'ir's ability to call upon the jann, because a janni's response is based on the unwritten agreement between mortals and genies.

**Interplanar Travel:** Jann can travel freely to the Astral and Ethereal Planes. They can also visit the Planes of Water, Air, Fire, and Earth, and they are often found on these elemental planes as solitary tourists, or in the service of another genie race. Jann are only partially resistant to the negative effects of the elemental planes, however. They cannot visit the elemental planes for more than 48 hours (even if they journey from one to another). Once that time has elapsed, a janni must return to the Prime Material Plane for another 48 hours before it can safely visit an elemental plane. If the janni lingers too long on an elemental plane, it suffers 1 point of damage for every hour spent there (beyond the initial 48). Damage ceases to accumulate as soon as the creature returns to the Prime Material Plane or perishes.

When traveling to an elemental plane, a janni can take along up to six individuals. The janni automatically extends its own protection against the effects of that plane to its fellow travelers. Other travelers must link hands with the janni to make the trip. After 48 hours have elapsed, however, the janni's protection automatically ends. It also ends immediately if the janni leaves the elemental plane, stranding its companions there.

**Habitat/Society:** Jann value their privacy and safety. They favor the forlorn deserts of Zakhara, from the inhospitable Anvils to lush oases. They consider themselves the caretakers of that land, acting in the name of their genie lords and the Grand Caliph.

Like Zakhara's Al-Badia, jann are nomads, though they move their camps less frequently than mortals, and they do maintain some

permanent settlements. These creatures travel in clans of 1d20 +10 individuals, each ruled by a sheikh. Each clan belongs to a greater tribe, the two most important being the House of Sihr in the High Desert and the wild, erratic Jann of the Haunted Lands. Scattered throughout the desert and wild lands are independent clans and smaller tribes, unaligned to either of these powerful houses.

*Sheikhs* are jann with 8 Hit Dice. *Amirs*, more powerful sheikhs who rule the greater tribes, have 9 Hit Dice. Both types of leaders have genius (17-18) Intelligence, and higher than average strength (10 percent chance of a 19 strength (+3/+7), regardless of the janni's sex).

Each amir is counseled by one or two *viziers*. These high-ranking advisors have 8 Hit Dice and genius to supra-genius Intelligence (17-20). They also have the following spell-like powers, and can use each of them three times per day at the 12th level of ability: *augury*, *detect magic*, *divination*, and *fire truth*.

The jann tribes travel with herds of camels, goats, and sheep between good grasslands and oases. As a people, they are the emblem of the virtues of the desert. They are strong, brave, and valiant. They are proud and brook no insult or impropriety, and see that injuries are repaid in kind. By the same token, they are hospitable to travelers and strangers, and treat them with honor and respect when they are among them, expecting the same treatment in return.

On the move, jann live in large, brightly-colored tents with their families. In Zakhara, male and female jann are treated equally, and a successful male or female may have a number of spouses. Traditionally a married male remains within (or at least near) his family's tent. A married female lives with her first spouse's family until she marries again, at which time a neutral location for her tent is chosen. Whenever a family outgrows a single tent, children move into their own quarters.

Jann also maintain permanent settlements in hidden oases, windswept holy sites, and deserted cities. Tents are common in such permanent locations, but the jann also build elegant, sweeping structures for communal use. Such structures might include a mosque, bathhouse (with quarters for visiting marids), smokehouse (with similar quarters so that efreet are comfortable), and occasionally an audience chamber for the jann's amirs.

**Ecology:** In their native desert, jann are open and friendly toward newcomers (particularly if the jann outnumber them). These genies make no distinction between the mortal races, caring more if an individual is just and enlightened than if the character is an orc or elf. At the borders of the jann's territory, these genies are less trusting of others, particularly in areas where jann lack their innate magical resistance.

Jann are on excellent terms with djinn, and in an emergency the jann will send a messenger to the Elemental Plane of Air to request reinforcements. The jann tolerate efreet, who tend to be foul-tempered and overbearing, taking advantage of any hospitality offered while offering little in return. Similarly, jann tolerate dao, but often with a thinly veiled hostility, because jann are sometimes captives in the dao's native plane. The marids are treated as the royalty they consider themselves to be, but their visits to the water-stricken deserts are infrequent.

Jann have a maximum lifespan of 300 years. Like most of Zakhara's creatures, to survive they must eat, drink, and breathe.

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Water, oceans
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Padishate
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Day
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	High to genius (13-18)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	F
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic neutral
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	0
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	9, Fl 15 (B), Sw 24
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	13
<b>THAC0:</b>	7
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	4-32 (4d8)
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Water jet
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Water resistance
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	25%
<b>SIZE:</b>	H (18 ft. tall)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Champion (16)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	15,000



**M**arids are genies from the Elemental Plane of Water. In the eyes of many Zakharans, they are the most wondrous and powerful of all geniekind. While individual tasked genies may wield great power, and the noble genies are both more powerful and cultured, the average marid stands head and shoulders above the flighty djinni, the ground-hugging dao, and the evil efreeti.

Towering and beautiful, marids are as fair of face as they are powerful of form. Their skin matches the many colors of the ocean, from the serene blue of tropical waters to the somber greens of a storm-tossed sea. Skin color changes to reflect the moods of an individual marid—the darker the creature's mood, the darker the color. A marid's hair is usually blue-black or dark gray, but a few have tresses as snowy as froth upon a wave. Such white-haired creatures are considered the most chaotic of this strong-willed, independent race.

In the sea, marids wear little or nothing. On land, they don flowing robes and diaphanous pantaloons. They eschew shirts, preferring to show off their physique with a short vest (at most). Often, a marid's garb is in the flashiest, most outrageous colors possible, calling attention to the richness and power of the genie.

Marids have the limited telepathy common to most genies, enabling them to converse with any intelligent being (low intelligence or better). These genies make excellent translators if they can be impressed into service. Marids also speak Midani and the native tongue shared by all geniekind. The marid dialect of that tongue can sound imperious, for the vocalizations of a marid's full wrath are akin to storm waves breaking on a rocky cliff.

**Combat:** Marids are extremely magical creatures, and they perform as 26th-level wizards when using their spell-like abilities. They can use each of the following powers twice per day, one at time: *detect evil/good*, *detect invisible*, *detect magic*, *invisibility*, *polymorph self*, *purify water*, and *assume liquid form*. The last is similar in effect to

the *potion of gaseous form*, except the marid becomes a liquid as opposed to a gas, and the duration is as long as the marid wills it to be. The *liquid form* moves at a speed of 18.

In addition to the abilities noted, marids can perform any of the following up to seven times per day: *assume gaseous form*, *lower water*, *part water*, *wall of fog* as well as bestow *water breathing* upon others. This bestowal grants the recipient the ability to breathe underwater for up to a full day.

At will, marids can *create water* and use it as a weapon. They fashion a powerful jet up to 60 yards long, which automatically inflicts 1d6 points of damage upon whomever it strikes. In addition, it may cause blindness for 1d6 rounds (a saving throw vs. dragon breath is allowed).

Once per year, marids can *alter reality*. These genies can also water walk at will, as for the magical ring of the same name. They can breathe underwater naturally, and can swim at any depth without discomfort.

Marids cannot be harmed by water-based spells, including magics from the elemental province of the sea. Resistant to cold, these genies gain a +2 bonus to saving throws vs. cold-based attacks. Further, each die of damage from such attacks is reduced by -2. Fire-based attacks are a marid's bane, however, inflicting +1 per die of damage, and causing a -1 penalty to the marid's saving throw. These penalties apply only when the marid is exposed to open flame; mere heat, boiling water, and steam have no effect.

A marid can carry 1,000 pounds without tiring. It can carry up to twice that amount for three turns before it's fatigued. For every 200 pounds under 2,000, the marid's endurance increases by one turn. (For example, a marid can carry 1,600 pounds for five turns.) Once fatigued, the marid must rest for six turns, and cannot be budged during this period.

**Interplanar Travel:** Like most genies, marids can travel freely to any of the elemental planes, as well as to the Prime Material Plane





and Astral Plane. They can also move in the Ethereal Plane. Due to their strained relations with other genies, they normally remain on the Elemental Plane of Water, with a rare excursion to the Prime Material Plane. A marid may be summoned to the Prime Material Plane, however, either through a character's magical abilities or items.

**Habitat/Society:** All marids claim some form of petty nobility, and the race is awash in shahs, princes, mufti, khedives, caliphs, 'minor khans, emirs, atabegs, and beglerbegs. Further, no set order is given to the rankings and honorifics, creating a hodgepodge of conflicting hierarchies and precedence. The truly "noble marids" are superior to these creatures, and are the stuff of legends in Zakhara. (See the *AL-QADIM™ Monstrous Compendium Appendix*.) The fact that the Grand Caliph of the Land of Fate has not only a marid advisor, but a truly noble marid as an advisor, speaks volumes as to his power.

A marid household on its home plane includes 2 to 20 (2d10) "typical" marid members, with a leader (whatever its title) of maximum hit points. In addition, there are 4 to 40 servants, slaves, or otherwise lesser creatures, whose job it is to wait on the noble beings. Many of these lackeys are air-breathers, kept faithful by the marid's power to let them to breathe underwater. (A sudden revocation of that ability could prove fatal.) Marids prefer solitude or small gatherings. Although larger groups may gather for a hunt or for an incursion into another plane, even in such cases, the emphasis is on individual action and achievement.

The ultimate capital of the marids, the home of its Great Padishah, is the Citadel of the Ten Thousand Pearls, a mighty metropolis located in the heart of the Elemental Plane of Water. This legendary place is also the home of truly noble marids. Only a handful of worthy mortals have visited the citadel and lived to return to the Prime Material Plane.

The independent nature of marids makes the Prime Material Plane a common site for visits and adventures. However, it is not mortals they seek. Marids tend to avoid contact with "lesser races" – which, to a marid, means all other races. So when they do appear on the Prime Material Plane, it is often in a remote locale or a place inaccessible to others. During the monsoon and hurricane seasons, for example, these reclusive tourists favor the open sea and the jungle coast. Mortals who have witnessed some of Zakhara's worst tropical storms have sighted marids frolicking in the whirlwinds and waterspouts.

Characters dealing with marids should keep in mind that these creatures are egotistical and vain—with good reason. Their self-image only slightly exceeds reality. Even the most powerful sha'ir angers a marid at his or her own risk. Bribery and flattery are often the best means for dealing with these genies, who view an obsequious man as a man who knows his place. Of course, while such honeyed tactics generally avoid raising a marid's ire, the genie still may not answer the supplicant's request.

Marids are noted for their whimsical nature. More than few have accepted all manner of gifts, only to vanish as soon the giver began making firm requests. Further, marids lie often and they lie creatively. They are not malicious in their deception, but "embellishments" suit their fancy. Knowledgeable mariners and travelers avoid asking directions from a marid, because the genie will undoubtedly direct them through the most "interesting" route—meaning the route with the greatest peril and excitement. Prying the truth out of even a friendly marid is a lengthy process recommended only for the patient and the powerful.

Not surprisingly, marids are champion tale-tellers. Their favorite legends emphasize the prowess of the marid race in general and of the speaker in particular. When talking with a marid, mortals should take care to prevent the conversation from digressing into other matters. One further note of warning: Marids consider it a crime for a lesser being to interrupt them—and offending a marid is a sure way to summon its wrath.

**Ecology:** Marids have no need to eat or drink in the traditional sense, though it pleases them to do so. They are sensitive to flavor and tastes. A tenser in a marid household consists of exotic salts releasing pleasant tastes into the water. Though marids are creatures of the sea, they can breathe equally well on dry land.

As befits "nobility," marids try to surround themselves with the finest items of the highest quality. (As noted above, all marids proclaim themselves to be noble, however feeble the justification.) Many arrogant genies are not above kidnapping a skilled human artificer for use in their own court. Such kidnapping does violate the law among marids, however. Should word of the action reach the Citadel of the Ten Thousand Pearls, justice may be sought with the marids who are *truly* noble.

As a race, marids treat others—including other genies—as inferiors of various grades, ranging from poor cousins to petty annoyances. In turn, the water-based genies are viewed as imperious, obnoxious, vain, preening, and haughty. Marids tolerate the jann and djinn. They dislike efreet and dao, who (in the marids' opinion) do not know their proper place. Humans are the most disgusting of individuals that marids must tolerate, although there are certain members—mainly powerful sha'irs and exceptional leaders—whom the marids will deal with on an almost equal footing.

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Islands
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Solitary
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Day
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Average (8-9)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	E
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic evil
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	7
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	15
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	13+ 1-4 hit points
<b>THAC0:</b>	7
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1d10 +10
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Hurls rocks for 2-20 (2d10)
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	See below
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	10%
<b>SIZE:</b>	H (18 ft. tall)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Elite (13-14)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	7,000; 975 (juveniles)

Island giants are a twisted, horrid variety of their towering kind, as malicious and hateful as they are ugly. Their appearance varies, though all are vaguely humanoid. Many have one or more horns on their foreheads, as well as cyclopean (one-eyed) features. Some have the hindquarters of beasts, like satyrs. Others have reptilian tails or jutting, spiked spines. Giants of other races and enlightened humanoids universally despise the island giants, who return the compliment in spades.

Standing 18 feet tall and weighing some 8,000 pounds, island giants are imposing. They wear little more than a few rags, usually bits of sailcloth from the ships they have wrecked. Their skin spans the range of colors common among giants—from slate grays to sky blues to rich tans.

Island giants have no native language. They speak a form of Midani sprinkled with words borrowed from other giant tongues. This often makes their speech incomprehensible to others.

**Combat:** An adult male island giant has no particular powers, other than the ability (shared with other giant races) to throw small boulders. A healthy island male can heave a boulder up to 210 yards, inflicting 2 to 20 (2d10) points of damage. He can catch similar missiles (i.e., those inflicting up to 20 points of damage) 70 percent of the time. He often uses his rock-throwing skill to deter followers or sink ships. If a rock won't suffice as a weapon, an island giant usually will rely on his fists, pummeling opponents. Since island giants are not tool-makers by nature, fabricated weapons are rare.

These giants are smart enough to seek an advantage. When attacking a ship, most attempt an ambush. A ship usually contains more than a single meal, so an island giant will attempt to trap or imprison its victims, creating a larder for convenient snacking.

An adult female island giant can throw boulders and fight just as well as a male-provided she is in giant form. Females have the ability to *shapechange* at will, assuming the form of a human or humanoid. Most prefer the shape of a comely giant or a beautiful human woman of normal size. The female typically uses this talent to lead wanderers to their doom, as well as to attract a mate.



Young island giants have only half the Hit Dice of their elders. They can breathe underwater. This ability helps them flee danger, including the wrath of larger island giants, and it is lost when the young reach adulthood.

**Habitat/Society:** Island giants tend to be solitary. As a rule, they hate everyone else. Smaller creatures are nothing more than meat, entertainment in cruel jests, or both. The intelligence of males is just enough to foster imaginative brutalities, while that of females is just enough to continue the race through deception.

Island giants are one of nature's curiosities. Males are completely infertile. Females, on the other hand, are quite fecund. They can reproduce by coupling with any other giant or humanoid race. True giants are preferred, but an island female may successfully mate with humans, elves, dwarves, and even genies. An island female's true visage is horrid to behold, so she uses her *shapechange* abilities to lure beasts, admiring handsome, beefy stock. Such a union is hazardous to the male, because the female will seek to kill and eat him immediately afterward.

From the start, an island giant's life is violent and bleak. Each year, females may give birth to a brood of 3 to 12 (1d10 + 2) small humanoid figures, who struggle to the ocean as soon as possible. Those who linger too long ashore may be eaten by an island giant or scavengers. Some speculate that a mother herself will devour dawdling young to eliminate weaklings. The young can breathe in and out of the water, and they typically dwell beneath the ocean waves until they are mature enough to walk back on shore and assume adult lives. It is estimated that only 1 in 50 offspring survive.

Upon returning to land, adult males seek a remote location to establish a domain. Adult females set out to deceive potential mates, beginning anew the struggle to reproduce.

**Ecology:** Island giants are omnivores. They eat just about anything, including seaweed and the carcasses of beached whales. They prefer fresh meat, however, so a passing ship is a welcome feast. If island giants are consistently well fed, they can live up to a millennium, but such individuals are rare.

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Mountains, desert
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Clans
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Day
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Low (5-6)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	D
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic neutral
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1-6
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	3
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	9
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	14
<b>THAC0:</b>	7
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	2
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1-12 + 7/1-12 +7
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Hurl boulders (1-10/1-10)
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	See below
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	H (20 ft. tall)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Champion (15-16)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	4,000; 5,000 (clan leader); 175 (juvenile)



Aside from their phenomenal size, ogre giants have more in common with ogres and ogre magi than they do with "true" giants (such as hill, stone, and jungle varieties). Ogre magi and other solitary beings may use ogre giants as guardians. Ogres, at least the enlightened ones, avoid their unpredictable and oft-savage cousins.

Standing 20 feet tall and weighing some 8,500 pounds, ogre giants are larger than many true giants. Bristling hair covers their hulking bodies, ranging in color from tan to umber. They wear no clothing or armor unless a master has trained them to do so. Their visage is fearsome. About 6 in 10 ogre giants are cyclopean, having a single eye centered in their hairy forehead. Their richly veined ears hang to their shoulders like those of an elephant; by flapping them gently, ogre giants can cool their blood and their bodies. Males have great tusks curling out from their powerful jaws, glistening with drool. Both sexes may live up for up to 500 years, by which time their faces have gone completely gray.

Ogre giants speak the language of ogres. Those who live near caravan routes or other civilized areas speak Midani as well. A few legendary creatures have attained enlightenment and gained positions as missionaries to their own kind. In general, however, the race consists of savage, unenlightened brutes.

**Combat:** Ogre giants typically fight with their powerful fists or by tossing boulders in the manner of true giants. They can throw only small boulders (1d10 damage), with a maximum range of 120 yards. However, they can toss one with each hand, or two boulders per round. Given a ready supply (such as a mountain stronghold), an ogre giant can lob missiles down on his or her enemies indefinitely.

**Habitat/Society:** Ogre giants live in family groups, or clans. Each clan has one leader, a male with maximum hit points. He has one to three wives, each with normal ogre giant statistics. The rest of the clan includes the leader's children, as well as his unmarried siblings. To determine the statistics of younger ogre giants at random, roll 1d4 for

each. A "4" means the youth has the abilities and statistics of a common ogre. (See Volume One of the *Monstrous Compendium*.) Otherwise, its statistics match those of an adult ogre giant.

Ogre giants occasionally are in the employ of a more powerful individual, either a sha'ir, sorcerer, or ogre mage. Such individuals usually appreciate their solitude. They use ogre giants as guardians to keep ill-advised interlopers from disturbing them. In return, the powerful master helps protect the clan against more diligent foes.

Ogre giants keep no slaves, nor do they eat the flesh of sentient creatures. They kill their enemies and build rock cairns around them. They also bury their own dead in these cairns, continually adding to the mass of stones over the years. After a clan has been in one location for several generations, its cairns look like small mountains. Greedy tomb-robbers and necromancers searching for raw materials sometimes desecrate such mounds. Not surprisingly, ogre giants view those actions as a sacrilege, one that must be punished by death.

Ogre giants are simple creatures, easily confused and deceived. They are aware of their limitations, however, and are very vengeful toward those who cheat or lie to them (once they figure it out). They have mercurial tempers, and if angered, ogre giants will lash out, seeking to destroy whatever (or whomever) confounded them.

**Ecology:** Ogre giant clans are few and far between, owing in part to their vast requirements for food. Some maintain their own herds of sheep and goats. Some also trade with humans, but most keep to themselves. In general, lone ogre giants are males looking for a clan with daughters suitable for marriage, or they are males looking for a location in which to establish their own clan.

Ogre giants are confused by crowds. They do not adapt well to army life, and most cannot even handle a visit to a city bazaar. If the pressure of dealing with other creatures becomes too much for an ogre giant, he or she simply goes berserk, striking out at everything confusing. An ogre giant amok in a busy bazaar is as destructive as many earthquakes. As a result, clans are mostly left alone.



	Common Roc	Great Roc	Two-headed Roc
<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Semitropical/mountains/ocean	Semitropical/mountains/ocean	Semitropical/mountains/ocean
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Rare	Very rare	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Solitary	Solitary	Solitary
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Day	Day	Day
<b>DIET:</b>	Carnivore	Carnivore	Carnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Animal (1)	Low (5-7)	Low (5-7)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	C	D	D
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Neutral	Neutral	Chaotic evil
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1-2	1	1-2
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	4	2	
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	3, Fl 30 (C)	3, Fl 24 (C)	34, FL 24 (C)
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	18	24	16
<b>THACO:</b>	5	5	5
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	2 claw or 1 bite	2 claw or 1 bite	2 claw or 2 bite
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	3-18/3-18 or 4-24 (3d6/3d6 or 4d6)	4-24/4-24 or 6-36 (4d6/4d6 or 6d6)	3-18/3-18 or 4-24/4-24 (3d6/3d6 or 4d6/4d6)
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Swoop with -5 to opponent's surprise; snare (95% chance or better)	Boulder attack (3d10)	Boulder attack (3d10/3d10)
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>SIZE:</b>	G (60 ft. long, 120-ft. wingspan)	G (120 ft. long, 270-ft. wingspan)	G (60 ft. long, 120-ft. wingspan)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Steady (11)	Elite (13)	Elite (13)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	12,000	18,000	14,000

Rocs are huge raptors that dwell in Zakharan mountains and on rocky, secluded islands. They frequent regions in which they can readily find large prey, such as the mountains bounding the Ruined Kingdoms and the island of Afyal. A few, for whom pickings are slim, have been seen soaring over desert wastes and open expanses of ocean.

In the Land of Fate, these birds have brilliant, multicolored plumage. Their wings and backs are typically a shade of green or gold, and females have snowy breasts. Their heavy, powerful beaks range from pale ivory to a rich shade of brass. The color of a roc's wing tips (the forward edge) distinguishes it from other species: crimson, common roc; azure, great roc; jet, two-headed roc. Males of each species have matching crests. Some adventurers claim to have seen rocs that are purely white, black, or red, but such creatures are so rare as to be legendary.

Size also distinguishes the species. The common roc, still magnificent, measures roughly 60 feet from its beak to the tip of its tail. It has a wingspan of about 120 feet. In contrast, the great roc measures up to 120 feet from beak to tail and has a wingspan of 270 feet. Except for its black-tipped wings, the rare two-headed roc is the same general size and color as the common roc. However, its two heads—characterized by an evil disposition and increased intelligence—are an obvious distinguishing feature.

Intelligent rocs speak their own language as well as Midani. In addition, they can communicate their wishes to lesser rocs (as in “we wish you to leave the area immediately”).

**Combat:** The roc usually fights for two reasons: to feed or to protect its nest. If caught unaware and not hungry (a rare case), it uses its great speed to evade an equal or stronger opponent. Even

on a full stomach, however, it may hold its ground and fight a pest who seems easy to destroy.

While hunting, rocs usually soar at a height of 300 to 500 feet, using their extremely sharp eyesight to spot prey on the ground. A roc's vision can penetrate ground fog, spray, dust storms, and shallow water. They can swoop down to seemingly “appear out of nowhere” and then disappear just as quickly, with little more than a gust of wind to mark their passage.

All roc species share this hunting tactic: (1) swoop and attack with claws; (2) seize prey in claws, attempting to pin arms if necessary (65 percent chance, prevents spellcasting); and (3) carry prey to nest, using bites as needed to subdue victim. Victims of a sudden swoop attack suffer a -5 penalty to their surprise rolls. If the roc must swoop at the same target more than once to seize it, the penalty does not apply. Damage and snaring success vary with the roc species:

A *common* or *two-headed roc* inflicts 3 to 18 (3d6) points of damage per claw. If both claws hit, the roc has a 95 percent chance to carry off its prey, which can be size Huge (up to 25 feet tall or long) or smaller.

A *great roc* inflicts 4 to 24 (4d6) points of damage per claw. If either claw hits a target that is size Large or smaller, the roc can carry it off automatically (if desired). If both claws strike a Gigantic creature, the great roc has a 95 percent chance of carrying it off.

If a seized victim attempts a counterattack, the bird will maintain its hold while punishing the quarry with bites (4d6 damage per strike). Regardless of its size, a roc won't release its prey until the roc suffers damage equaling 25 percent of its hit points (based on its total when combat began). Sufficient damage



convinces the roc that the meal at hand isn't worth the effort. A morale check determines whether the roc flees.

Given a choice of two succulent or easy targets, rocs usually select the larger (a camel instead of its rider, for example). However, any roc can seize two different targets with its claws, provided the targets are within 10 feet of one another. The two-headed roc can also attack two targets within 10 feet—choosing either two bite attacks or two claw attacks.

Given their intelligence, the great roc and two-headed roc may use rather sophisticated combat tactics. To prevent annoyances, for example, a great roc may scatter or destroy pesky shepherds before settling down to dine upon livestock.

The more intelligent species also use large boulders as "nutcrackers," dropping the stones from the air to sink ships or demolish structures, exposing the "softer meat" inside. Such boulders inflict 3 to 30 (3d10) points of damage normally, and require ships, walls, and towers to make saving throws vs. crushing blow or be destroyed. A two-headed roc can make two boulder attacks per round.

**Habitat/Society:** All roc species share a number of traits. They build their nests upon the tallest mountain, rocky outcrop, or perch in their territory, using branches and even whole trees in the construction. They are not social creatures. Each is highly territorial, especially against invasions by other rocs (excluding a suitable mate) and other large, flying creatures (such as the occasional dragon). A typical roc territory is a circle with a 10-mile radius, placing at least 20 miles between two nests.

If a roc nest is found, there is a 15 percent chance that it contains either 1d4 +1 eggs or 1d4 +1 hatchlings. (Roll 1d100; 01-50 indicates eggs, and 51-00 indicates hatchlings.) Hatchlings are 4 HD each, but relatively helpless, with an AC of 10 and no attacks. Adults will fight to the death (morale of fearless, 18) to protect their eggs or young, gaining a +1 bonus to attacks. After six months in the nest, a roc has grown enough to leave it, and the roc gains the combat statistics of an adult.

All rocs feed at least three times daily: just after sunrise, at midday, and an hour before sunset. If there are young in the nest, there will be a midafternoon feeding flight as well. Heroes accustomed to being raised from the dead after mischances in the wilderness should beware: like many other birds, rocs partially digest their prey for their chicks, grinding it in a stone-filled gullet before they regurgitate it. While this has no effect on their chances of being raised, adventurers should plan on a long (and unpleasant) recovery period thereafter.

When dealing with humans or humanoids, great rocs tend to imperious, quickly becoming bored and hungry. Two-headed are more sly and (given their own evil bent) may be persuaded aid in some villainy if the result will be a lot of dead herd animals.

Rocs do not value treasure except for its value as a shiny bauble. Male two-headed rocs build nests and festoon them with such treasure in hopes of attracting mates. A cheap but gleaming gem appeals to these males more than a dull but priceless ore. Common and great rocs have no such compulsion; they leave their riches strewn carelessly about their nests like trash. Most of their treasures are the inedible remains of pack animals—tack and harness, rugs, silks, tapestries, clothing, spices, perfume, caravan bells, and the occasional bar of metal or gemstone.

**Ecology:** All rocs are difficult to raise, given their independent nature and huge appetites. Individual adventurers have been known to train roc chicks. Some sorcerers have ensnared rocs magically. According to legend, a tribe of jann near the World Pillars has even used rocs as mounts, but the story's veracity is questionable.

Rocs prey on the largest surmountable creatures they can find in their area. On land, they attack elephants, camels, purple worm ankhegs, and giants, and few rocs will pass up a light snack of undefended humans. At sea, they hunt like ospreys, snagging dolphins, elephant seals, and sharks from the water. The great rocs will even carry off kraken, giant squid, sea serpents, and whales, in addition to attacking ships. Even mated pairs of common rocs have been known to attack a sailing vessel or a dragon.

Roc eggs are valued as an exotic item or curiosity, and as a component for magical potions and oils. The egg of a common roc is the color of ivory. A great roc's stunning eggs are dappled with shades of turquoise and indigo, while a two-headed roc's are jet black. A merchant will pay 2d6 x 100 gp for the egg of an ordinary roc, twice that for the egg of a two-headed roc, and twice that again (2d6 x 400) for the egg of a great roc. Such eggs must be kept continually warm if they are to hatch, for the unborn chicks are sensitive to cold, and without the protection of their parent on the nest would soon perish. The inability to hatch does not diminish an egg's value as a curiosity, however.

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Mountains
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Very rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Priesthood
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Day
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Average to genius (9-18)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	D
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Neutral evil
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1 or 1-4
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	4
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	9
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	5
<b>THACO:</b>	15
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1 or 1
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1-10 (1d10) or by weapon type
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	See below
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	See below
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	10%
<b>SIZE:</b>	L (8 ft. tall)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Elite (13-14)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	1,400; 2,000 (leaders)



**Y**ak-men are natives of the World Pillar Mountains, comfortable among the foreboding heights and deep, hidden valleys of this range. Here the yak-men maintain their petty but powerful empire, ruling all other life forms within their borders.

Outsiders know little of the yak-men. For as long as even the desert bard can remember, they have remained within the confines of their land, content to enslave or kill whomever enters it. To the rest of Zakhara, they are mysterious figures, treated as “boogie-men”—a scary race of evil, ruthless, unenlightened, powerful savages who threaten the security of the Land of Fate. Unfortunately, their reputation is warranted.

Yak-men, known amongst themselves as Yikaria (“the Lucky Chosen” in their native writing), are ogre-sized humanoids with broad shoulders. Their heads are like those of disgruntled yaks, complete with curved horns and uniformly dour, sullen expressions. Male or female, their hulking bodies are coated with thick fur and hair. Female yak-men are a bit more slender, but otherwise they are very similar to males in appearance, and many outsiders cannot tell them apart. Both sexes wear long, flowing jellabas and occasionally turbans. All carry staves, some of which are magical.

**Combat:** Yak-men have a number of powers that make them deadly opponents. They can use magical items regardless of normal magical abilities. Their leaders are spellcasters. They have the natural power to summon and command dao. Lastly, they boast a spell-like ability similar to a *magic jar* spell. Each power is explained below.

- **Magical items.** All yak-men can use magical items, including items that are normally restricted to one class. If the item raises benefits and abilities that the yak-man doesn’t have—for example, a magical device that doubles the number of spells learned—the yak-man gains nothing. However, if the item bestows a new power, the yak-man can gain that power.

These creatures are particularly attracted to magical staves. As a result, in any encounter, there is a 10 percent chance that one yak-man has a magical staff or rod (from the applicable table). Yak-men are always fully capable of using such items and rarely hesitate to do so.

- **Spellcasting leaders.** Yak-men leaders have no more Hit Dice than other yak-men, but they do have priest abilities, which range in level from 1 to 10. They worship the Forgotten God (see “Habitat/Society”). All spheres but plant and summoning are available. At 9th level, leaders become high priests of the faith and gain wizard spell abilities. Wizardry is performed as if they were elemental mages of a level matching their priestly abilities (they begin with 5th-level spells). Upon gaining this double-edged power, high priests typically become members of the royal court and advisors to their emperor.

- **Commanding dao.** Each yak-man can summon a dao once per day, provided the yak-man does not already have a dao under his (or her) command. The dao becomes a slave. It must perform all actions that its master commands until the yak-man decides to release it, or until the sun has risen twice to warm the earth, whichever comes first. Yak-men are wise enough not to demand wishes, however. Instead, they are content to exploit the dao’s other impressive abilities. (The emperor of the yak-men uses dao as thugs, as well as a messenger service and a spy network, with which he can maintain control throughout his empire.)

The dao, of course, hate their imprisonment, but they take out their anger and frustration on the yak-men’s enemies. No dao can attack a yak-man—not even a dao summoned by a yak-man’s enemy. Dao summoned by others will, however, retain their initial loyalties. Under certain conditions, they may manage to harm a yak-man indirectly—by giving information to his enemies, for example.

- **Unique magic jar.** The yak-men’s most frightening weapon their unique *magic jar* attack (resembling the spell). With this



power, a yak-man literally crawls under another's skin, controlling the foe's body, wreaking havoc, and becoming a spy for evil yak-men masters. The yak-man's *magic jar* is a touch attack. It takes *two full turns* to take effect, during which the victim usually must be restrained. (Restraining actions are often cloaked in ritual, but the typical chanting and incense-burning ceremonies are entirely optional.) To fend off this insidious attack, the victim must make a successful saving throw vs. spell with a -4 penalty (cumulative with any other modifiers in effect).

Yak-men target this ability solely against humans, demihumans, and humanoids-including elves, dwarves, orcs, and giants, but excluding genies, monstrous creatures, mind-flayers, and animals. When occupying another's flesh, a yak-man gains access to all of the victim's memories and knowledge. (This exceeds the power of the *magic jar* spell.) Although the yak-man retains his own powers, he does not gain any of the victim's magical, spell-like, or psionic abilities. The victim's life force is cast into the farthest reaches of a yak-man's own mind and kept unconscious there until it is returned to its normal state (or slain). Meanwhile, the yak-man's mind takes full control of the mortal's body. Outwardly, the body does not change. Detect magic or the like cannot detect the yak-man's presence; nor can the sha'ir ability to detect genie-work. A hakima (wise woman) can sense something false about the mortal so affected. But even she cannot recognize this falsehood as a yak-man's work unless she has dealt with this creature before.

The *magic jar* effects can be dispelled as the spell of the same name. Furthermore, a yak-man can choose to return to his own body at any time, at will, regardless of distance. The original spirit regains consciousness. If either body is slain, then both the yak-man and the inhabited character perish immediately. A yak-man will flee an endangered mortal form to preserve his own life.

**Habitat/Society:** Most yak-men cities occupy the peaks of the World Pillars. An average city holds several thousand yak-men, plus five or six times that many slaves. Even the poorest yak-man keeps a servant or two, and slaves are the yak-men's common currency. Buildings and other structures are made from a gray, greasy-textured stone that dao have imported from the Elemental Plane of Earth. The walls of a yak-men city rival those of Qudra in strength.

Outposts of this brutal society lie in the narrow vales below the mountain peaks, each housing 11 to 20 (1d10 +10) yak-men. The numbers may seem scant, but a single outpost can dominate an entire valley, for it has the aid of 1 to 10 dao and 4 to 40 local enslaved warriors (1d10 and 4d10, respectively). The yak-men demand a portion of the lowland population as tribute for their "wise and benevolent" rule. Those who disagree with this attitude are destroyed. Their lands are given to slaves who are more receptive to the yak-men's will—that is, slaves willing to sacrifice a portion of their families to help ensure the remainder's survival.

Yak-men function as a unified, malignant theocracy. All are fanatical followers of the Forgotten God (a name chosen by enlightened Zakharians; the yak-men's own name for their god is unknown). The worship of this savage deity directs their lives. The Forgotten God takes the general form of a yak-man, but the deity's face is worn smooth into a featureless mask. Great statues of the

faceless god dominate yak-men temples, which occupy the highest crags of the World Pillar Mountains.

The yak-men's dark deity is appeased by sacrifice, which the followers carry out by offering slaves in the "Manner Elemental"—that is, by fire (immolation), earth (live burial), water (drowning), or air (throwing the victim off a mountain). Daily sacrifices ensure the ongoing benevolence of the deity. These hideous acts also strengthen the yak-men's domination of their land, since a slave who disobeys today almost certainly will meet his or her death on the morrow.

It was the Forgotten God who enabled the yak-men to enslave the dao. In a legend told by desert bards, it is said that Forgotten God once journeyed to the Elemental Plane of Earth. There, through guile and deception, it defeated the Grand Khan of the earth elementals. The price of that defeat was harsh: the dao were forced to serve the Forgotten God and its minions—and forbidden to attack them—for "a thousand years and a year." (It is unclear how much of the sentence has passed, but sages are confident it will continue for centuries to come.)

Of late, the rest of Zakhara has begun to interest the yak-men, who see it as a source of new slaves and power. A foray into civilized realms typically involves a single scout or a party of one to four. A dao may accompany each yak-man. If a yak-man leader is present (10 percent chance), then any accompanying dao is noble.

For a single scout, the mission is usually reconnaissance—helping yak-men gauge the strengths and weaknesses of their potential foes. Nearly all scouts are convicted criminals hoping to earn a new life among their fellow yak-men. (If they die on duty, it hardly matters.) Should the scout return to the World Pillars with some remarkable treasure or an extraordinary parcel of slaves, his or her crimes will be forgiven. These scouts frequently make deals with evil humans. A single yak-man may return home with a caravan of servants, kidnapped or stolen, or with some other treasure, similarly "hot."

A party of yak-men in the civilized lands usually has a mission involving the members' *magic jar* abilities. They seek to kidnap a mortal or two and then inhabit their skins. (At least one yak-man guards the bodies of his or her companions.) Such spies strive to infiltrate Zakhara's ruling class. Taking the place of a well-positioned slave is a popular tactic. (It's more difficult to imitate someone with power or unusual ability.) After the mission is complete, when it's time for entertainment, a yak-man may force the inhabited body to run amok, spreading chaos, only to abandon control at the correct moment, leaving the confused mortal to pay the price for the yak-man's actions.

**Ecology:** Yak-men have an inherent drive for knowledge, particularly dark knowledge that may serve to corrupt or dominate others. Knowledge that the yak-men cannot gain or use immediately is to be destroyed. Unsentimental by nature, yak-men parents pack children off to communal creches once they are weaned, never to recognize them again. Yak-men feel no loyalty to their families—only to their god and to their inherently superior race as a whole.

All other races are slaves at best to the yak-men—even dao. There are rumors that dao leaders are working in conjunction with the Forgotten God, helping that deity facilitate its own besting of the other genie lords and the temporary enslavement of their races.





Card 1

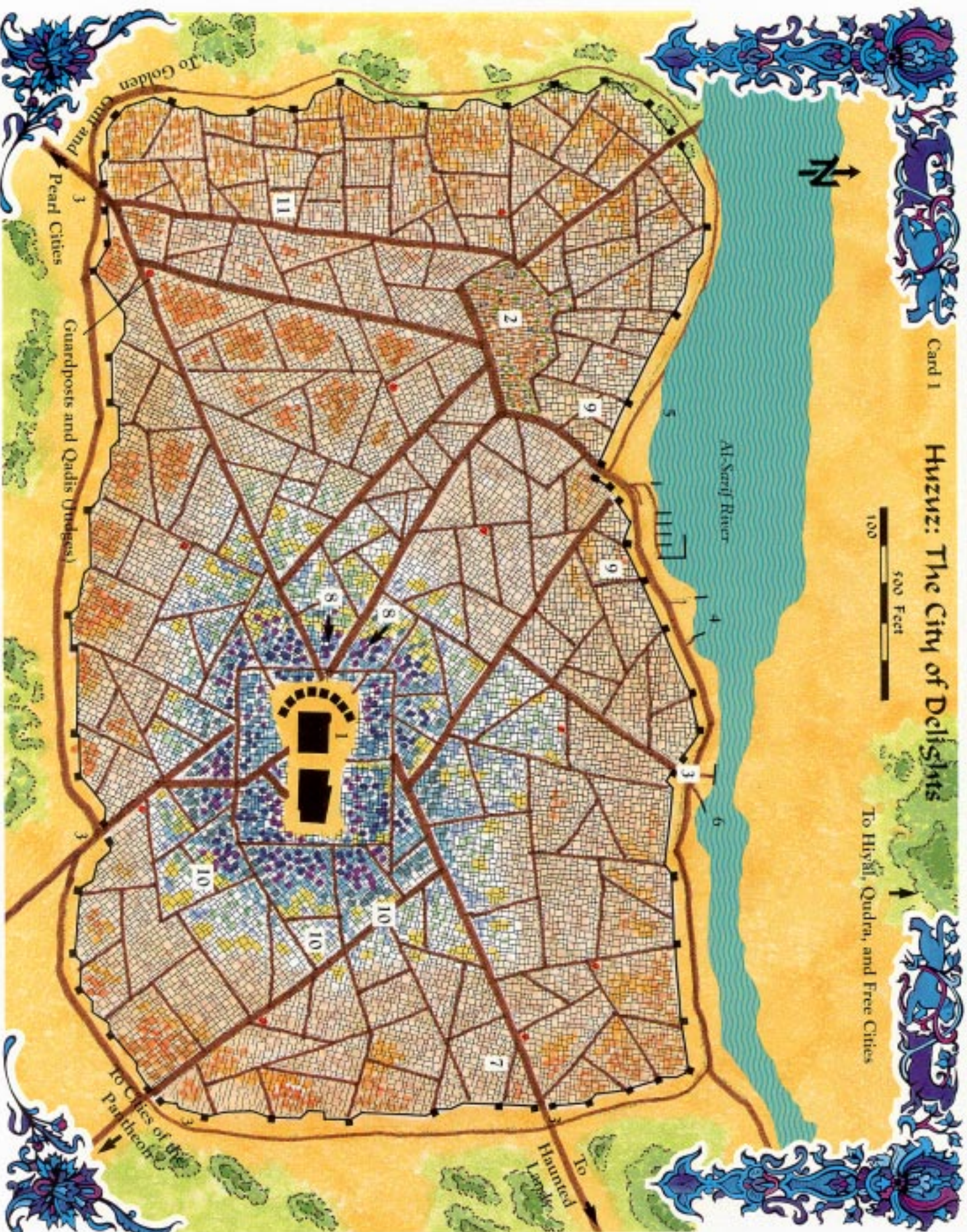
# Huzuz: The City of Delights

100 500 Feet

To Hiyal, Qudra, and Free Cities



Al-Sarif River





# Huzuz: City of Delights

The most splendid city in the Land of Fate is Huzuz, home of the Grand Caliph. Like most cities, it is a sprawl of twisting thoroughfares, serpentine suqs, and oddly shaped buildings. The accompanying map reveals only major streets and boulevards—those large enough to allow a caravan to pass along them. Each of the larger blocks is in turn riddled with smaller streets and side alleys, some so narrow that a traveler can easily touch the buildings on opposite sides with outstretched arms. Many of these tiny, twisting streets lead to dead ends, often at the door of someone's home, or of a small business such as a coffee house.

The tortuous maze of streets is an even greater challenge for visitors because the city has very few street names and numbers, and not one is posted. Roads are traditionally named after nearby landmarks, with no truly "official" names. Natives generally agree on the names of major promenades, which bear such titles as East Gate Road or Temple Road. Other streets are referred to only as "the street of Oman the Weaver" (by those who know Oman). House locations are also described in general terms, such as "Ibn Wadi's, facing the Court of the Lion Fountain," or "above Kansul the Spice Merchant." Visitors seeking houses or other sites generally hire a guide or ask around. Like their counterparts in other enlightened cities, most residents of Huzuz gladly give directions. By querying a series of individuals, visitors who are patient and polite can eventually reach their goal.

## Key

(1) **Court of Enlightenment.** Also called the Heart of the Civilized World, this is the most revered location in Zakhara, site of the Golden Mosque (also the House of the Loregiver) and the Grand Caliph's palace. (See Card 2.)

(2) **Grand Bazaar.** There are no homes here, only shops and open courts given over to trade. A broad central plaza is laced with stalls, ornate tents, and rugs laid upon

the ground with trinkets spread upon them. Every conceivable item can be found here, along with agents for services and merchants who handle items unsuited for display (e.g., estates, barges, and exotic antiquities).

(3) **Caravan Gates.** Huzuz has a low city wall that serves more as a nuisance to citizens than as a defensive structure. Small archways and tiny alleys breach the wall along its entire length, and it is policed by foot patrols, not standing guards. A single, competent smuggler could sneak into the city with ease, provided the item he or she carries is fairly small. Caravans, however, must use the city gates, where tax collectors and guards stand on duty around the clock. This allows the Grand Caliph to control the flow of goods and ensure proper taxation. Huzuz has four great gates, each well-manned.

(4) **Harbor.** Marids and dao have deepened the natural harbor of the Al-Sarif, creating a safe harbor which they continue to maintain. Here, boats from the Pantheist League, Pearl Cities, Free Cities, and distant Ayfal off-load their treasures for the Grand Bazaar.

(5) **Military Harbor.** Ships of the Grand Caliph's Admiralty are anchored here, along with the Grand Caliph's own personal barge. The Admiralty acts against pirates in the Golden Gulf, so its vessels are often at sea, and only four or five capital ships may be here at any time. The Admiralty also checks the cargos of incoming ships. During such investigations, tax-collectors are always on hand.

(6) **River Crossing.** Two dao man this crossing. They are criminals serving time, captured by their khan and forced to pay penance by dragging the ferry across this shallow section of the river. The dao despise their task, but the pair know they will see their sentence increased if they harm their charges. They are malicious gossips, eager to share any information they have (false or true).

(7) **Caravan Districts.** As in most cities, these districts lie near the gates through which caravans enter the city. Caravanserais are here (see Card 5), catering to the trade.

(8) **Pilgrims' District.** Here pilgrims visiting the Court of Enlightenment can find temporary lodging, from simple, free hospices maintained by the churches to rented

villas and courts for the well-to-do.

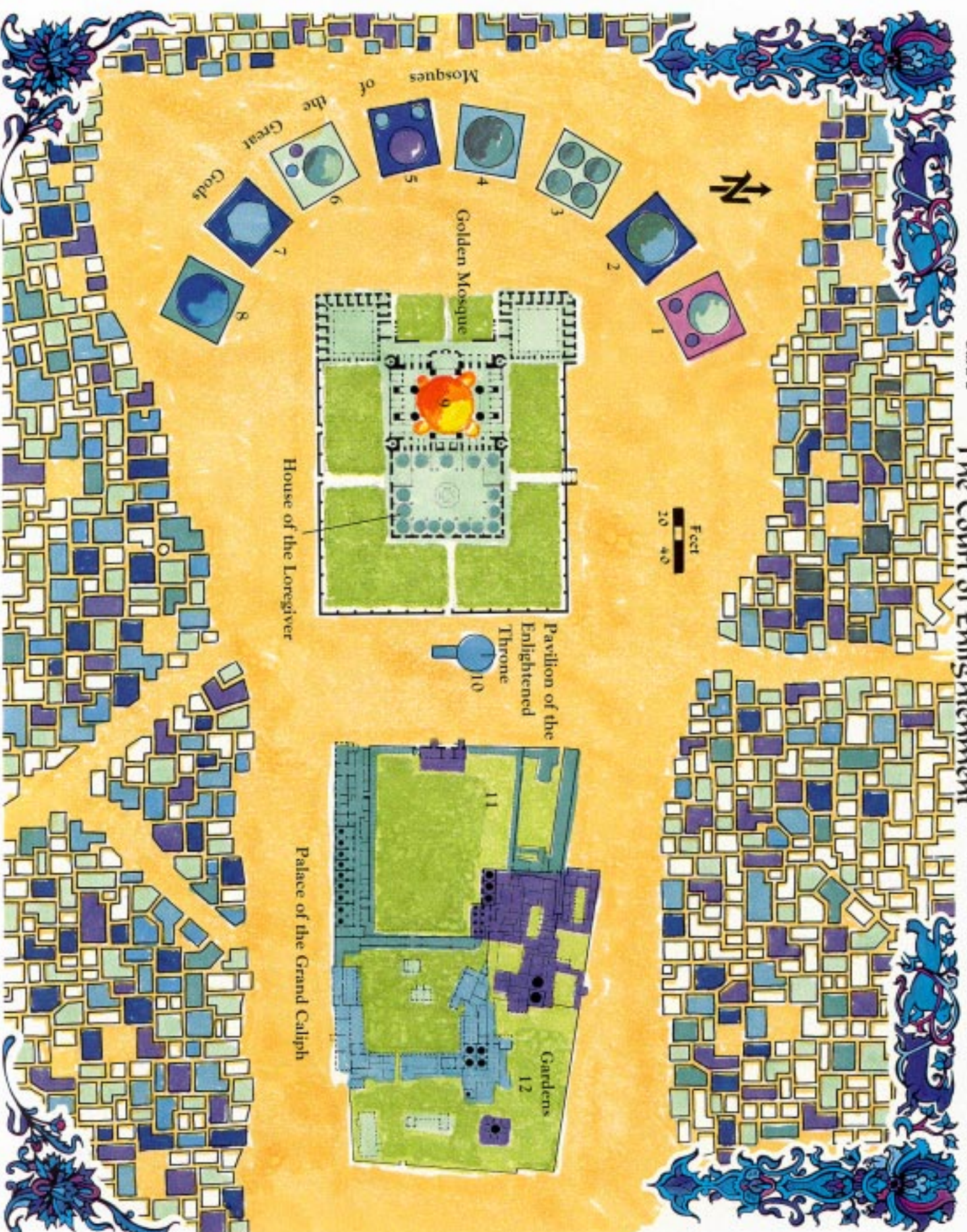
(9) **Warehouse District.** Families who operate import-export businesses in Huzuz maintain warehouses here. While no "foreigners' quarter" exists, newcomers are usually in this area, and a person seeking ajami mages or outland priests is most likely to find them in the warehouse district.

(10) **Court District.** The most affluent region of Huzuz, this district is tucked behind the palace, within sight of its wondrous gardens. Here the more powerful courtiers and bureaucrats live, along with distant relatives of the crown. The scent of power has attracted bankers, merchants, and retired adventurers as well. This is one of the safest areas of Huzuz, well-patrolled by the local militia.

(11) **Clothiers' Quarter.** Huzuz is known for its rainbow of textiles. The finest wools, silks, linens, and cottons reach its shores, including colors from the Free Cities and the Golden Gulf. The Clothiers' Quarter is the home of the best tailors and cloth-makers in Zakhara. It is also the most unpleasantly pungent area of the city, owing to fumes from the boiling pots and tanning chemicals.



## The Court of Enlightenment





# The Court of Enlightenment

The Court of Enlightenment holds most of the land's temporal, magical, and spiritual power. Here lies the palace of the Grand Caliph. Here too are the mosques of the major gods—great temples devoted to the eight deities recognized throughout the Land of Fate, clustered in an arc that faces the Golden Mosque (Zakhara's greatest open temple).

Each of the eight mosques of the arc is affiliated with its own universities, hospices, libraries, *madras* (schools), *maristans* (hospitals), and clerical quarters, all located off the court. This arrangement ensures that most property in the Pilgrims' Quarter is owned or controlled by one enlightened faith or another.

## Key

(1) **Mosque of Kor the Old.** High Priest Imam Gogol (hmP/e/19); 13 "name-level" (level 10 and up) associates; 60 clerical brethren (spellcasting priests of levels 1 to 9); 150 lay brethren (members of the church hierarchy without clerical abilities). Gogol and his church actively support the Dancing Dwarves, a dervish group. Like most of the faiths listed here, the church of Kor has members spread throughout the city (maintaining smaller mosques and church operations) as well as clergy who donate their time to the Golden Mosque.

(2) **Mosque of Brave Hajama.** High Priest Imam Jomhur (hmP/m/19); 10 "name-level" associates; 70

clerical brethren; 120 lay brethren. According to rumor, Imam Jomhur is an active supporter of the Everlasting, a secretive holy slayer organization based in the deep desert.

(3) **Mosque of Najm the Adventurous.** High Priest Imam Effat (hmP/e/20); 9 "name-level" associates; 80 clerical brethren; 100 lay brethren. The faith of Najm sponsors a missionary and exploration program, and new discoveries and wonders are usually brought to this mosque for display to the masses.

(4) **Mosque of Bountiful Jisan.** High Priest Imam Morol (hmP/m/18); 16 "name-level" associates; 90 clerical brethren; 170 lay brethren. The wealthiest faith in Huzuz, the church of Jisan profits from properties owned throughout the city. Imam Morol is involved in a controversy with the church in Hiyal, primarily over the actions of a Jisanite holy slayer group, the Gilded Palm.

(5) **Mosque of Free Haku.** High Priest Imam Gholam (hmP/e/18); 7 "name-level" associates; 50 clerical brethren; 130 lay brethren. Haku is the smallest of the clerical organizations in the City of Delights, as befits a faith that venerates the freedom of open space.

(6) **Mosque of Hakiyah the Honest.** High Priest Imam Kerim (hmP/p/17); 12 "name-level" associates; 80 clerical brethren; 130 lay brethren. Imam Kerim and his church have strong ties with the all-female holy slayer group known as The Soft Whisper.

(7) **Mosque of Beauteous Selan.** High Priest Imam Lelia (dmP/e/12); 10 "name-level" associates; 90 clerical brethren; 150 lay brethren. While most mosques on the Court of Enlightenment are the largest of their faith, Selan has a

larger mosque dedicated to her worship in Afyal.

(8) **Mosque of Zann the Wise.** High Priest Imam Renn (hmP/p/19); 12 "name-level" associates; 80 clerical brethren; 120 lay brethren. Imam Renn is also Keeper of the Mosques. The church of Zann supports a local mystic group, the Readers, and maintains a number of libraries throughout the city.

(9) **Golden Mosque.** This sprawling complex is dedicated to all enlightened faiths. It is said to be built upon the site of the original house of the Loregiver. This is also thought to be the place from which the word of the Loregiver was first spread. Imam Renn min Zann (Keeper of the Mosques) is in charge. (See also Card 4.)

(10) **Pavilion of the Enlightened Throne.** Here all Grand Caliphs are crowned. This is also where the Grand Caliph meets his people during the High Holy Days, makes important proclamations, and pronounces the most meaningful judgments. The pavilion is a platform, 10 feet high, topped a golden dome. It is magically enchanted, enabling anyone who stands upon it and speaks the correct command word to be heard effortlessly throughout the court. Others, even those standing beside the speaker, have no such ability unless they, too, speak the command word.

(11) **Palace of the Grand Caliph.** The home of the ruler of the Land of Fate. (See also Card 3.)

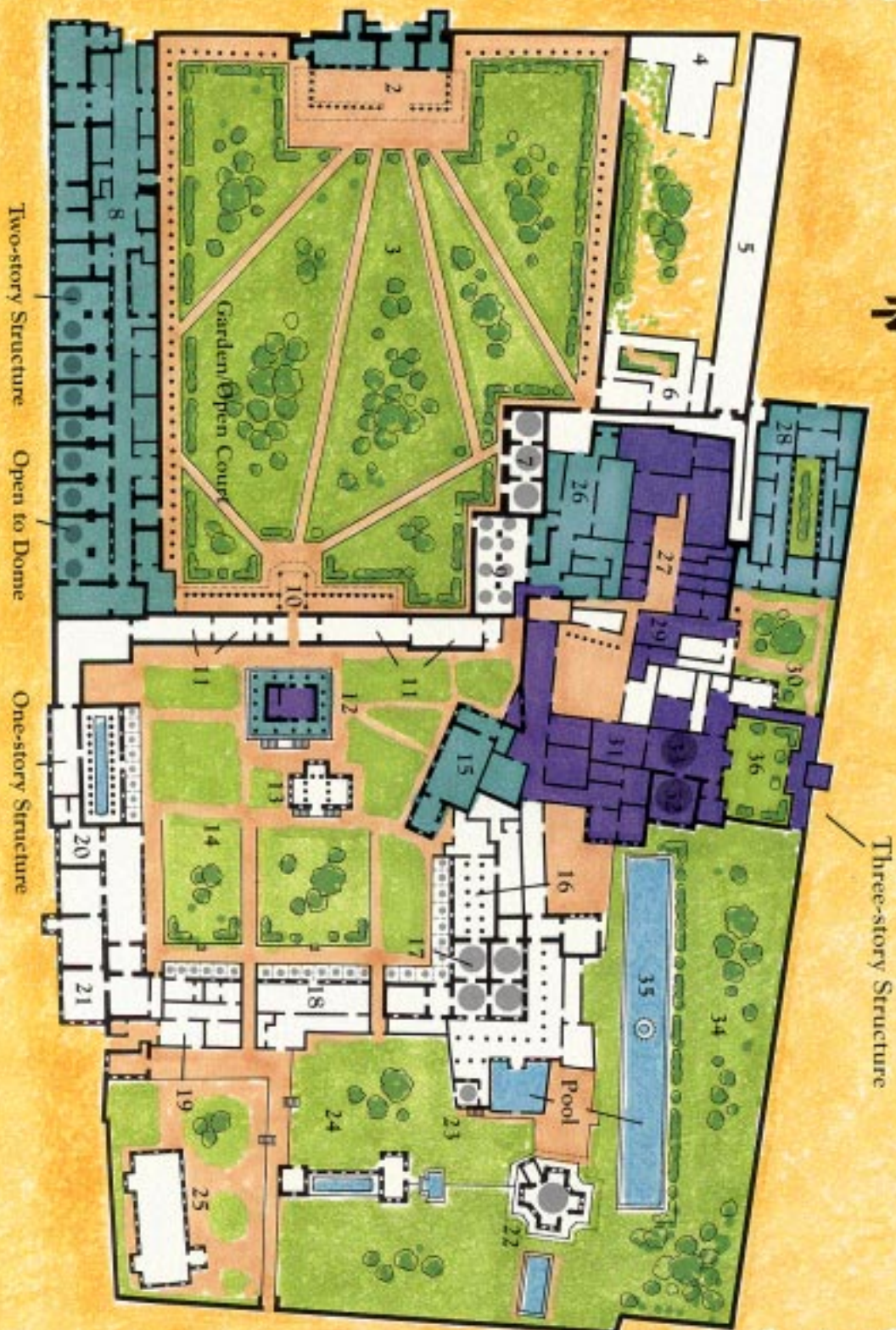
(12) **Palace Gardens.** Officially part of the palace complex (see also Card 3), these gardens are filled with wonders of the Land of Fate. When they are not being used by the Grand Caliph himself, they are open to the public.





# Palace of the Enlightened Throne

80 Feet  
20 20



# Palace of the Enlightened Throne

The palace of the Grand Caliph is a sprawling collection of buildings in the heart of Huzuz. The First Caliph founded the palace, building it within sight of the House of the Loregiver. Just as that humble but holy building has grown, becoming surrounded by the Golden Mosque, so too has the palace expanded over the years. The two structures are separated by the First Court (Court of Enlightenment).

The perimeter walls of the palace measure 30 feet high and 5 to 7 feet thick. The walls are made of worked stone, cut from the Al-Akara Mountains. To avert evil sendings, the mortar that binds the stones has been fortified with ghuls' bones and gorgons' hearts. Within the palace, the walls are usually stone, measuring 6 inches to 1 foot thick. All walls are finished with richly carved plaster, gilded surfaces, tilework, and mosaics. The many domes of the complex are sheathed with precious metals.

The entire palace complex is under the watch of the palace guards, whose regular patrols are a common part of everyday life. (In the *harim*, the guards are eunuch mamluks.) In addition, a number of magical wards and protections are in place. The wizards responsible for these magics report either to the Grand Vizier, to Ambassador Jiraad, or both. Anyone caught wandering the halls late in the evening (who has no business doing so) can expect to be quickly apprehended and punished.

## Key

- (1) First Court, or Court of Enlightenment.
- (2) Grand Gate of Delights.
- (3) Second Court, or Court of Proclamations.
- (4) Hall of the Commanders. Quarters for the mamluk, guard, and admiralty leaders. Thokkor of the Furrowed Mountains and Preani Qin both have apartments here.
- (5) Stables, harness rooms; for horses and hippogriffs.
- (6) Abode of Prince Cheddah, uncle to the Grand Caliph.
- (7) Chamber of Judges. Within these three chambers, 5 to 10 qadis hear the most important cases of the enlightened cities and determine which ones should be brought to the attention of the Grand Caliph.
- (8) Hall of Courtiers. Quarters and work area for scribes, courtiers, and bureaucrats.
- (9) Inner Treasury and Counting House. All taxation is counted and recorded here.
- (10) Gate of Revelation.
- (11) Quarters and day rooms. Includes housing for Imperial Palace Guards.
- (12) Throne Room. This separate building is used for official reception and decisions. It is the "official" court.
- (13) Grand Vizier's offices and library.
- (14) Third Court. Also called the Court of Grandeur.
- (15) Grand Vizier's scholars, scribes' school, and scribes' quarters.

- (16) Chambers of Imam Renn min Zann, Keeper of the Mosques.
- (17) Vault of the Word of the Loregiver. Magical guards protect what are reputedly the original scrolls containing the Law of the Loregiver.
- (18) Hall of the Treasury.
- (19) Hall of the Pantry.
- (20) Bathhouse.
- (21) Servant and slave dormitories.
- (22) Meditative kiosk.
- (23) Quarters of Ambassador Jiraad of the Marids.
- (24) Fourth Court.
- (25) Guest quarters (currently Prince Tannous's residence).
- (26) Quarters of the Honored (mamluk *harim* guards).
- (27) *Harim*.
- (28) Hospital.
- (29) Apartment of Tanya bint Perijan.
- (30) *Harim* garden (Garden of Contentment).
- (31) Selamluk (men's quarters and reception areas).
- (32) Grand Caliph's bedchamber.
- (33) The Inner Throne. Private throne room used for personal receptions and secrets of the state.
- (34) Private gardens of the Grand Caliph. Frequently open to the public.
- (35) Great Reflecting Pool, with floating bowls designed by Ambassador Jiraad (a marid).
- (36) Court of Solitude. A terrace and lush garden reserved solely for the Grand Caliph's mediation.





10 10





# The Golden Mosque

**T**he Golden Mosque (also called the Golden Mosque of Enlightenment) is the largest and most impressive temple in the Land of Fate. (While the Mosque of the Pantheon in I'tiraf is similar in design, its great dome measures 5 inches smaller in height and diameter, by request of the Grand Caliph who ruled Zakhara when it was built.) As its name suggests, the Golden Mosque is awash with gold; the central dome as well as the smaller domes surrounding it are capped with this precious metal, which has been enchanted for strength and durability. Further enchantments ensure that the domes radiate softly from within and without.

The mosque is built on the legendary site of the House of the Loregiver—the place from which the word of the Loregiver was first spread. Some debate exists as to the true nature of that landmark. A sect of radical Zannites assert that the site of the Golden Mosque is simply the location of a building that dates from the same period as the Loregiver. In contrast, a cult of Kor insists that this site was one of *many* houses the undying Loregiver used while teaching the masses. However, most Zakhharans agree that it was here that the First Caliph received the vision that eventually led him to discover the Loregiver's sacred scrolls. For the great majority of the civilized world, this sacred place is also recognized as the Loregiver's *true* home, and that in itself gives the house (and the mosque built around it) its weight of truth.

The Golden Mosque is a symbol of tolerance and understanding among the enlightened faiths. All gods may be worshipped here, as long as they are enlightened. Individual dogma and practice are abandoned in the face of a unifying spirit, a collective understanding. It is here that the Grand Caliph himself prays publicly; for rather than committing himself to one god or another, he worships them all. Imams of all enlightened faiths are welcome to preach here, though the control of the Golden Mosque is under the auspices of the Keeper of the Mosques, a post appointed by the Grand Caliph. The current Keeper of the Mosques is Imam Renn min Zann.

## Key

(1) **Entrance.** The heart of the Golden Mosque is built upon a rectangular mound surrounded by a wall, which raises the mosque's central dome and minarets above all other buildings in Huzuz. Supplicants entering the complex must climb ramps to reach the heart of the building.

(2) **Priest Quarters.** Each building stands three stories tall, with an open courtyard at its center. Fountains adorn the courtyards. Here visiting high-level priests, important personages, as well as the current staff of the Golden Mosque have their quarters. Meals are taken in the central courtyards rain or shine, since protective magics ensure good dining even in inclement weather. Accommodations are simple; the alcoves for visitors are small, and the fare, while satisfying, is no more varied than that of the hospices run by the faiths. Nonetheless, staying here is a treasured experience and an honor, second only to the honor of being the personal guest of the Grand Caliph.

(3) **Minaret Staircases.** The needlelike minarets of the Golden Mosque stand above all else in the complex, soaring 300 feet toward the heavens. From these towers, priests call the faithful of Huzuz to prayer. Although the caller's own faith and lungs are invariably strong, the platform on which he or she stands is enchanted, projecting the caller's voice throughout the city.

Honorable Zakhharans consider it both a sacrilege and a crime to use a minaret for any activity other than the sacred call to prayer. Offenders may have their vocal chords removed, and the minaret they tainted must be resanctified for use.

(4) **Entrance Hall.** The interior of the Golden Mosque is bathed in the soft radiance that issues from the magical domes overhead. Adding to the richness, walls of the entrance hall and all passages of the mosque proper are adorned with gleaming tilework, gilded metals, and calligraphy describing the wonders of the enlightened gods and the wisdom of Fate's servants.

(5) **Main Hall.** Open from floor to ceiling, the main hall of the mosque rises five stories before reaching the vaulted dome itself, which has an apex 90 feet above the

floor. In the round chamber beneath the ornate dome, up to 5,000 faithful may pray at a time. A simple *minbar* (pulpit) is located at 5a (see floorplan), where invited priests may tout the wonders of the enlightened gods.

(6) **Treasury Rooms.** Penitence and contributions are cataloged here for future distribution. Monetary gifts offset the maintenance of the Golden Mosque, and help maintain hospices and other services of the enlightened faiths. Interesting or unique items are examined by the clergy before presentation to the Grand Caliph.

(7) **Quarters of the Keeper of the Mosques.** This wing contains the libraries, church offices, and official quarters of the Keeper of the Mosques. (The Keeper may also have apartments in the Grand Caliph's chambers.)

(8) **Halls of Memory.** Beyond the main hall is this low, two-story building. Its perimeter is divided by arches and small alcoves, and it is used for private ceremonies approved by the Keeper of the Mosques. These include important weddings, burials, and commemorations. Ceremonies are performed within sight of the House of the Loregiver.

(9) **The House of the Loregiver.** Here, in the center of a great hall, the remains of a simple house are visible. The crumbling foundation and walls are made of simple, baked clay, starkly displayed against the rich tilework of the hall built around it. Legend states that this was the home of the Loregiver, whose words move the civilized world. This is perhaps the true Heart of the Land of Fate. One of the original copies of the Law of the Loregiver is here. This room is the final resting stop of many pilgrims who have traveled to Huzuz.

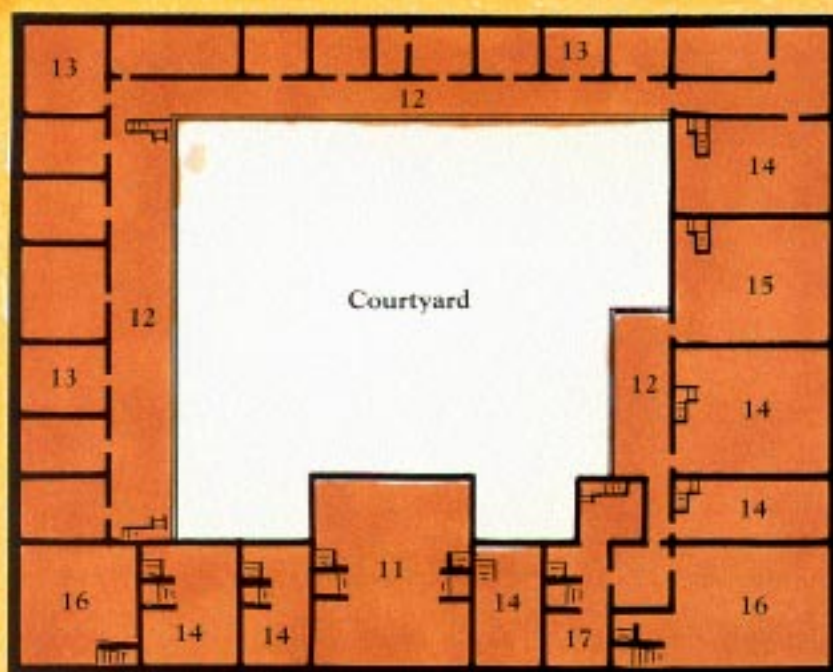
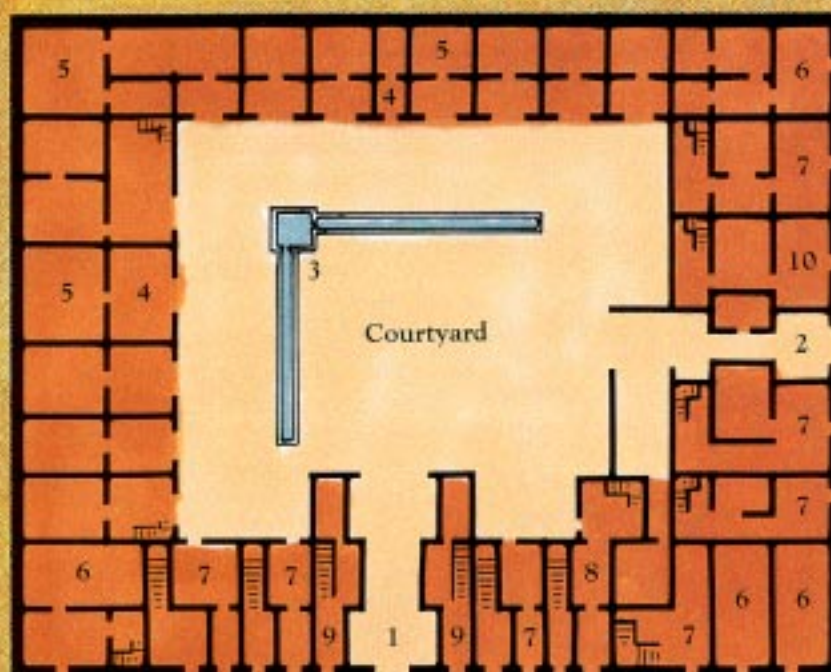
(10) **Grounds.** The area between the outer wall and the mosques is planted with fruit-bearing trees, berry shrubs, and flowers. By priestly enchantments, these plants bear fruits, nuts, seeds, and blossoms throughout the year. Bulbs, seeds, and fruit are presented as gifts to those who made the pilgrimage on the behalf of others who could not make the trip themselves.

# Caravanserai

Card 5

40 Feet  
10

Main Floor



Upper Floors

- (1) Main Caravan Entrance
- (2) Owner's Entrance
- (3) Fountain and Troughs
- (4) Stables
- (5) Warehouse
- (6) Related Businesses  
(e.g., metalsmiths, cafes, vendors, sages; some two stories)
- (7) Individual Apartments\*
- (8) Kitchen
- (9) Offices of Clerk and Petty Officials\*
- (10) Owner's Family Quarters\*
- (11) Owner's Office and Reception Area
- (12) Terraced Balcony
- (13) Lodging (Single Rooms)
- (14) Individual Apartments
- (15) Owner's Family Quarters
- (16) Related Businesses (See Location 6)

\* indicates the first floor of a two-story location

## Caravanserai

A caravanserai is a large building with a great central courtyard, able to accomodate entire caravans. It serves as a way-station for travelers who follow the trade routes of the Land of Fate. The caravanserai provides food and lodging for patrons and their beasts, storage room for their cargo, as well as simple hospitality and sundries.

The caravanserai depicted here is very large, illustrating the type found along a major trade route or in a sizeable city. The central courtyard offers water for the mounts-either from a spring, well, or pump. Small caravanserais have only a single story, but most stand at least two or three stories tall, and those in a large city may rise four to six stories.

Caravanserais that are prosperous and in relatively safe areas have windows overlooking both the interior court and the exterior. In more troubled areas, the exterior windows are lacking, and the caravanserai stands as a fortress to protect travelers against raiders and monsters.

The largest and most sumptuous rooms in any caravanserai are those of the owner and his family. The main offices, where the proprietor receives the caravan leaders, are usually situated above the main entrance, and his personal quarters have a side entrance as well. In dangerous regions, these gates are secured by doors of iron-bound wood.

Besides offering safety and comfort to the traveler, a

caravanserai tends to a traveler's other needs. Related businesses such as metalsmiths, harness-makers, clothiers, entertainers, and food merchants may be found on the premises or nearby. Such businesses are often run by friends and family of the caravanserai's proprietor.

In addition to temporary lodging, many caravanserais offer long-term leases for multi-story apartments, often for reasonable rates (30 to 60 gp in most areas). These apartments will be kept ready and waiting for the traveler. They may serve as a second home for merchants who regularly make a given trip, or as a base of operations for adventurers.

Caravanserais are typically located near the main gates of a city. In the City of Delights, the most resplendent of these businesses is *The Merchant's Home*, a five-story structure with a vast, paved central court. Prices are competitive, and The Merchant's Home is usually reserved throughout the year by regular caravans. The owner of the establishment is Tun Hayal (hmT/mr/10), but he is rarely on the scene, leaving the daily work to his assistant, Gaitiyah al-Aranib (hfT/mr/6).

Another notable caravanserai in the City of Delights is the *House of Wo*. Wo (no other name for this man is known) is a human ajami wizard who hails from lands far to the east. (If the DM has Oriental Adventures on hand, he or she may wish to consider Wo a 9th-level wu jen.) Wo is unfailingly friendly and polite, and though his command of Midani sometimes leads to misunderstanding, he is known for the wonders of his table.





## A Zakharan Market

10  
40 Feet

- Key**
- (1) Bedestan or Open Sug
  - (2) Open Bazaar
  - (3) Caravanserais
  - (4) Open Mosque for Merchants
  - (5) School
  - (6) Guardpost
  - (7) Cloth and Silk Districts
  - (8) Metalworking and Weapons District
  - (9) Carpet District
  - (10) Baker's Road



Roofline

Open to Sky



# Wonders of the Zakharan Market

The lifeblood of the Land of Fate is trade, for many of the items of daily life must be imported, while crafts and manufactured goods are shipped elsewhere for sale. A Zakharan marketplace has three forms: bazaar, suq, and bedestan.

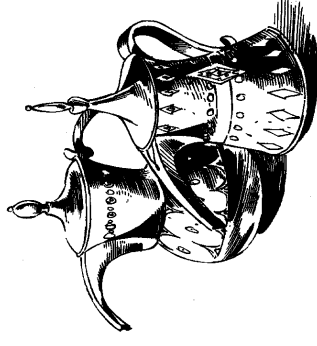
*Bazaars* are open-air markets, busiest in the early morning and early evening. They are often laid out in a chaotic fashion wherever sufficient space is at hand, covering large courtyards or even in the ruins of a building. Here vendors, especially independents, compete for the potential buyer's attention. Each in turn proclaims his or her goods to be of the finest quality and most reasonable price. Mornings are the best time to buy fresh produce, for as the day wears, so too may the fruit and vegetables, exposed to the scorching sun. Evenings, on the other hand, are an excellent time to seek out finished

goods and crafts. Some open markets shut down during the sizzling midday hours, and markets that remain open usually see a distinct reduction in activity.

*Suqs* are enclosed markets, shielded from the heat of the sun. Originally, they were little more than streets with tarpaulins spanning them to provide shade. Contemporary suqs have evolved into full-fledged buildings constructed as interior shopping promenades. The suqs often lie adjacent to common bazaars, or overlook a central court which is also occupied by merchants. Booth space in a suq is like other official land in Zakhara: provided by grant to a particular merchant house or landlord, who may in turn lease the space to individual merchants.

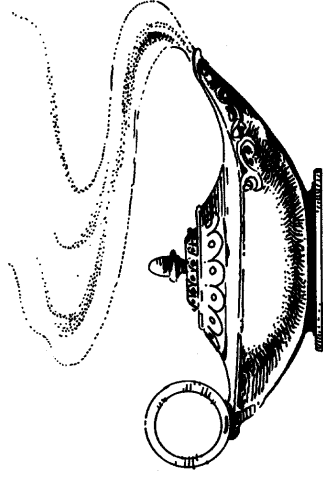
In larger cities, suqs and bazaars tend to arrange themselves into submarkets, each devoted to a particular craft or type of goods. For example, in Huzur, the sprawling marketplace includes an armors' district, a weaponsmiths' suq, and separate areas for clothiers, silk-merchants, and rug-sellers. In addition, there are open markets for dealers who sell directly from the caravans, as well as peddlers of exotic and rare items. Bargain-hunters should be forewarned, however, for while most merchants will gladly undersell their competition (should the buyer know a competitor's price), they will not do so at a loss.

Most suqs and bazaars have grown over time, expanding to transform existing buildings and roads. In addition to these common markets, some cities have *bedestans*, which are suqlike (covered) markets specifically constructed by the most predominant merchants in the area. Bedestans have arisen in Zakhara only during the past 50 years, and even the great cities have only one or two, devoted to the area's leading products. Huzur, for example, has one bedestan devoted to its native cloth trade. Hiyal has two, one for armor and weapons, and the



other for wool. The bedestan of Huzur borders the Great Bazaar itself.

In addition to merchants hawking their goods, the suqs and bazaars are alive with other businesses. Entertainers and dancers show off their talents in exchange for a few pieces of silver. A rawun or storyteller unleashes a fable or song for a couple pieces of gold. Barbers ply their trade of medicine, information, and grooming. Literate men take dictation, serving as professional letter-writers for those who cannot write, as well as for those who simply cannot write well, or cannot record their words in the proper language. Other learned worthies teach their knowledge to young people in impromptu classes. Sellers of cold drinks and sherbets roam the stalls, carrying their tanks upon their back, proclaiming the thirst-quenching excellence of their beverages. With its cacophony of laughter, haggling, the proclamations of the salesmen, and the braying of mounts, the bazaar is a loud and lively place.





# Tower House

Card 7



Fourth Floor



Third Floor



Second Floor



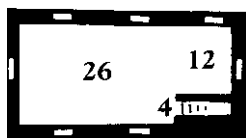
First Floor

- (1) Entrance Hall\*
- (2) Animal Stalls
- (3) Loading Area
- (4) Stairs
- (5) Midden pit
- (6) Well (pipes to upper floors)
- (7) Storage
- (8) Pens for Small Livestock (e.g., chicken, sheep)
- (9) Grinding Rooms (for grinding wheat, also for slaughtering livestock)
- (10) Grain and Fruit Stores
- (11) Chute to Midden
- (12) Anteroom
- (13) Living Room
- (14) Personal Room (probable guest room)
- (15) Lavatory
- (16) Audience Chamber

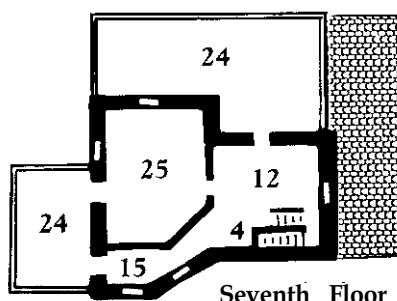


## Tower House

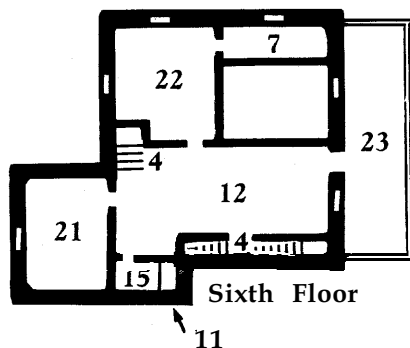
This type of home is most commonly found in larger cities, where space is at a premium and individuals must build upward instead of outward. It is a suitable residence for sages, well-to-do merchants who also have family quarters in the country, minor officials within the bureaucracy, and prosperous adventurers (often retired). Occasionally, a traveler may encounter a tower house in wilder and more desolate settings. Such houses usually belong to reclusive sha'irs or genies who desire privacy.



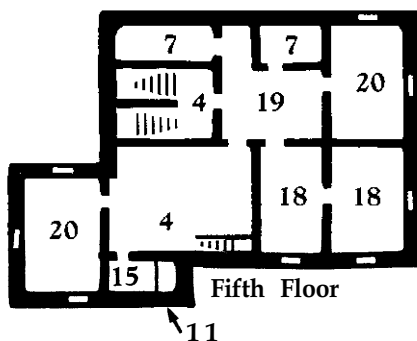
Eighth Floor



Seventh Floor



Sixth Floor



Fifth Floor

## Key

- (1) Entrance Hall\*
- (2) Animal Stalls
- (3) Loading Area
- (4) Stairs
- (5) Midden pit
- (6) Well (pipes to upper floors)
- (7) Storage
- (8) Pens for Small Livestock (e.g., chicken, sheep)
- (9) Grinding Rooms (for grinding wheat, also for slaughtering livestock)
- (10) Grain and Fruit Stores
- (11) Chute to Midden
- (12) Anteroom
- (13) Living Room
- (14) Personal Room (probable guest room)
- (15) Lavatory
- (16) Audience Chamber
- (17) Personal Room (usually for senior son, or, in wealthier families, for guards or servants)
- (18) Kitchen
- (19) Court\*
- (20) Children's quarters
- (21) Personal room (usually for family head or brother)
- (22) Personal room (usually parents of wife or husband, also used as a library, counting house or office)
- (23) Terraced Porch (used for drying laundry)
- (24) Open Terrace
- (25) Women's Quarters
- (26) Roost (has various purposes, such as personal quarters for family head, library for sages, a treasury, or a wizards' conjuration room)

\* Indicates a two-story location.

(See front of card for areas 1-16.)



## Modest Domed House

A small family of modest means are the usual residents of this type of home. For example, this house might have been built by an artisan of some skill, or the youngest (and least prosperous) brother in a family of merchants. The design is more common in rural areas than in the great cities, though in smaller metropolises, many of these dome-topped structures are jammed together around a well.

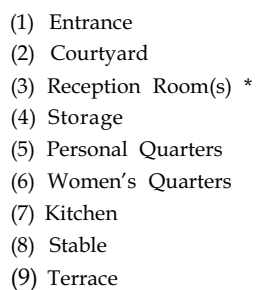
## Small Courtyard House

Like most Zakharan homes, this square design centers around a courtyard. The house shown might belong to an average rural family, such as a successful farmer, merchant, or craftsman.

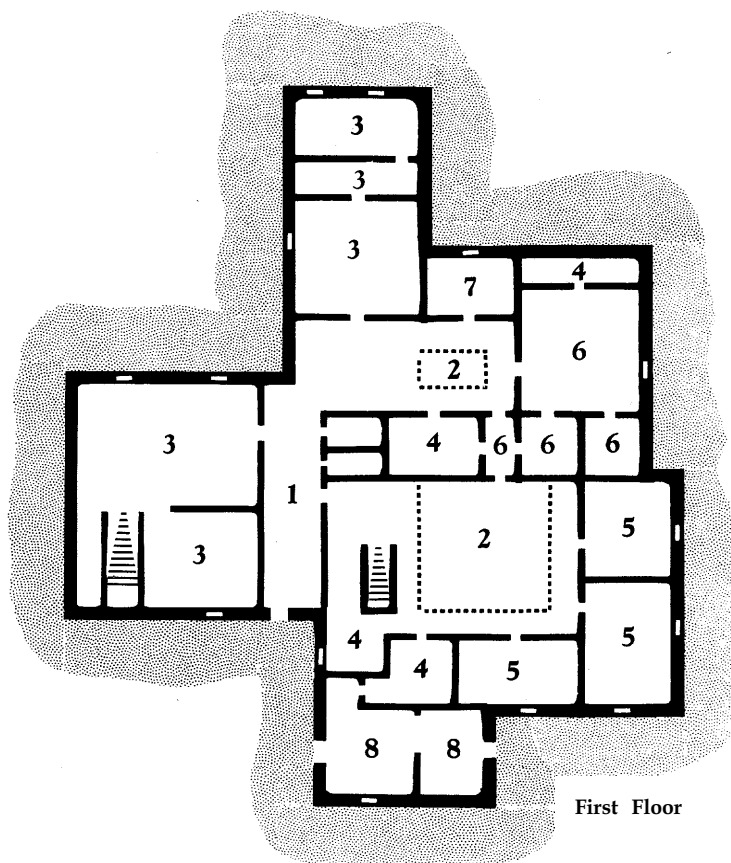
- (1) Entrance
- (2) Courtyard
- (3) Reception Room(s)
- (4) Storage
- (5) Personal Quarters
- (6) Women's Quarters
- (7) Kitchen
- (8) Stable
- (9) Terraced Porch



This spacious, multi-story villa could be home to a large and successful family of merchants, craftsmen, or adventurers. The design is typical of houses found in the heart of a city. Families who own slaves or have servants may convert storage areas into sleeping quarters.



\* Indicates a two-story location (vaulted ceiling).





With its shifting dunes, the desert is unforgiving of permanence. Nonetheless, at many larger oases, around which a village or way-station may develop, long-term structures survive.

Despite its plentiful water and its location near a major caravan route, the oasis pictured here is quite desolate. The structures shown are virtually the only permanent buildings for miles around: the caravanserai, the bath (*hammam*), a small mosque. Though they are not pictured, the oasis also includes a few crude mud-brick houses, each having one or two rooms. (The first is for receiving guests, while the second contains private quarters. The kitchen is *al fresco*.) The man tending the date garden dwells in such a house. As is typical, his property is leased from a wealthy Zakhari who dwells in a distant city. Nomads who visit this oasis dwell in tents.

Orchard or Irrigated Land

Open Water

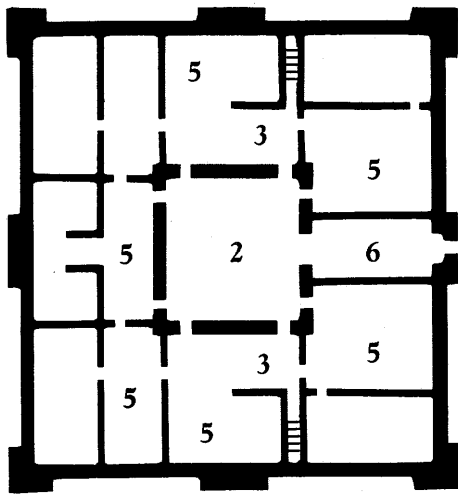
Individual Trees

Hammam (Bathhouse)

Mosque (facing Huzuz)

Caravanserai





## Caravanserai

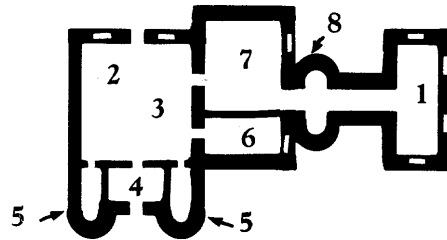
This wayside is closer to the caravanserai's original form: a small fortress to keep out the dangers of the desert. It is a two-story structure that serves as way-stop for travelers using the trade route. The second story includes the owner's quarters. Nomads who visit this area do not seek shelter in the caravanserai; they pitch their tents on the far side of the oasis.

- (1) Entrance
- (2) Courtyard with cistern
- (3) Stairs to upper level
- (4) Stables and warehouse areas
- (5) Personal quarters
- (6) Owner's quarters

## Bathhouse

A profitable enterprise in a land where water is rare, the hammam, or bathhouse, thrives both in cities and regions with limited water. A hammam serves as social gathering place for men. It is also a gathering place for women, though each sex may use the bathhouse only at separate, proscribed times.

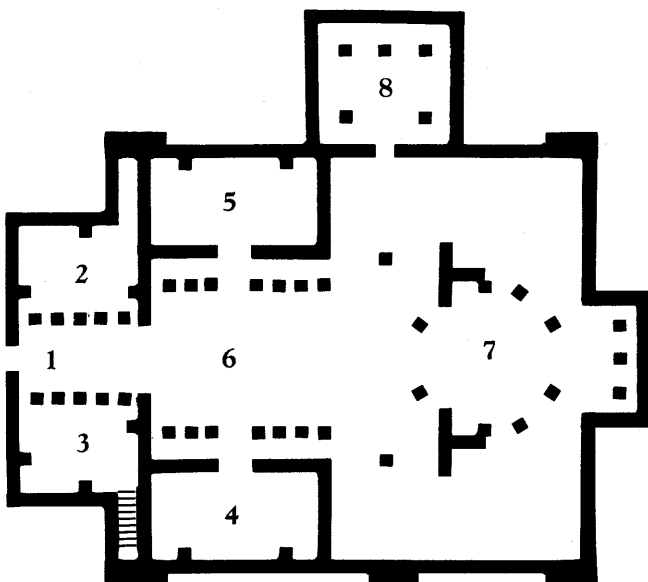
- (1) Original owner's quarters (now abandoned)
- (2) Reception area
- (3) Disrobing area
- (4) Alcove for drinks and food (sent over from caravanserai)
- (5) Cool baths (water brought from the oasis, and kept refreshingly chill in underground cisterns)
- (6) Warm baths (water brought from the hot bath area)
- (7) Hot baths (steam room)
- (8) Boiler kettles for baths (charcoal, shrub wood, and dried manure as fuel)



## Mosque

Tiny in comparison with the Golden Mosque of Huzuz (see Card 4), this temple is more typical of the small mosques found throughout the Land of Fate. In this remote location, it lacks many of the outbuildings and finer features of its more refined cousins; nonetheless, it still serves its purpose as a place where Zakharans can worship the enlightened gods.

- (1) Entrance
- (2) Reception area
- (3) Minaret (four stories tall)
- (4) Personal quarters, clergy
- (5) Personal quarters, guests of the church
- (6) Courtyard
- (7) Hall of Worship
- (8) Treasury and/or storage





## Characters and Costume

Card 10



Merchant

Noblewoman

Nobleman

Mamluk of the Devoted

Dancing Boy and Girl



# Characters and Costume

**I**n the streets of Golden Huzuz, among the cacophonous bustle of the bazaar, a small scene unfolds. With a momentary parting of the crowd, Fate reveals to us six figures: two dancers, a merchant, a young noblewoman and her suitor, and a mamluk guard. Their costumes declare their station, but perhaps not their character, for one of these six is living a lie.

The *dancing girl* is Hamida, a 5th-level sa'luk. Her elegant garb attests to her success as an entertainer of the upper class. Hamida's yellow and black full-length gown is made of silk, and it softly rustles as she moves. A purple belt, cinched tightly round her waist, brazenly reveals her curves. Her headdress is accented by feathers of tropical birds from the Crowded Sea. Like many entertainers in the Great Cities, Hamida is unveiled. (In the Pantheist cities, such immodesty would not be tolerated, but then, neither would such a physical and public display.)

The *dancing boy* is Haki, Hamida's assistant and pupil. He takes a more energetic and gymnastic approach, hoping to impress the nobles. Haki is not what he appears, for he is in truth 4th-level holy slayer and a member of the secret society known as the Everlasting. He will remain with Hamida only as long as it is convenient. He hopes to gain employment among the petty nobles of Huzuz, so that he can live among them, awaiting the day he is called upon to act in his fellowship's name. Haki's loose sash and the streaming bands of his turban are designed to accentuate his actions. The turban is wound flat against his head for a snug fit.

Akamar al-Jawahiri is an 8th-level merchant-rogue. He is trying to interest the young noble lovers in his wares, but the finest pearls of Gana cannot hold their attention as the young dancers do. Akamar is patient, for he knows the youths will eventually tire, and then his patrons will

be more relaxed and inclined to purchase. Like many merchants, Akamar wears a simple smock and a long, striped caftan with the sleeves cut away for comfort. This merchant is a stocky man. He enhances his height by wrapping his turban around a tall, bulbous fez.

Alara bint Kira is the *noblewoman*. She is also a 4th-level hakima. Her mother is the second cousin of the Grand Caliph's father. A minor member of the court, Alara dresses in a fashion that sums up her position: young, wealthy, and of a status that allows her to be bold (a higher-ranking girl might be more modest). Alara's face and arms are covered with only the sheerest of fabrics, leaving nothing concealed, least of all her fair features or copious gold jewelry. Her vest and pantaloons are silk, and her slippers as soft as gloves. Her headpiece is a variation of the traditional keffiyeh, banded in metal and rich gems. Alara is intrigued by both dancers, and would like to add Hamida to her own court. Though Haki's obvious athletic skill is appealing, Alara can sense something odd about him. . . .

The *nobleman*, Alara's suitor, is Lord Kerim bin Hanif, a 10th-level desert rider. He is the nephew of Sheikh Kaldun bin Hanif of the House of Hanif in the Haunted Lands. Currently, Kerim serves as the House of Hanif's ambassador to the Court of Huzuz, a post which brought him to the golden city and into Alara's life. He has been smitten by the young noblewoman's beauty and cosmopolitan ways, and would lay the wealth of the world at her feet for only a smile. Kerim's attire shows his willingness to adapt to his new setting, where he can take advantage of the expensive costumes for sale in the markets of Huzuz. His boots, with their stiff leather and yellow tassels, are uncommon among desert riders as well as nobles; Kerim purchased them from a well-traveled merchant. (A city noble would typically wear taller boots, often of soft suede, and nomads do not wear tassels.) The

cloth of his pantaloons and shirt was dyed in the Free Cities, and his cloak was imported from the Pearl City of Sikak. Instead of his former keffiyeh, Kerim has adopted a turban in the Court of Huzuz, held in place by a white gem and topped with a single feather of an indigo peacock. In his heart, though he is still a warrior, and he keeps his jambiya at his side.

Amon abd al-Wajib is a 12th-level mamluk. He is also Alara's personal bodyguard and escort. Originally from Qudra, Amon is a member of the Dutiful society, on permanent assignment to Alara's family. He is very protective of his mistress, and does not trust anyone, in particular this savage Al-Badia in city dress who is obviously courting Alara for her position and prestige. Amon wears padded chest armor with leather armlets and kilt, dyed blue. His face is marked with the tattoos of the Dutiful, and his long headcloth is attached to a felt cap, which covers his chain-link coif. In the heat of the marketplace, Amon is uncomfortable, but he will not shirk from his position to protect the young noblewoman.

Such is this vignette, a sudden image scanned across the marketplace. Six lives in motion, all with their own desires. The instant is lost and the crowds close, concealing the figures and leaving them to their own personal Fates. . . .



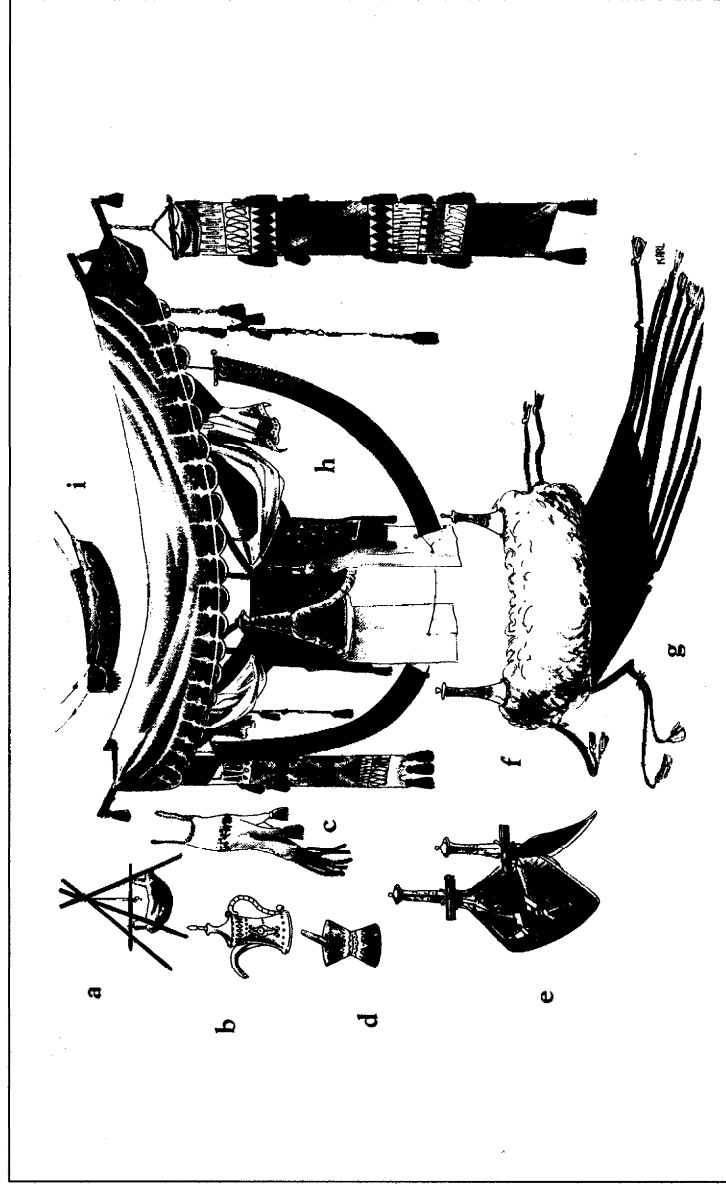


# Al-Badian Possessions

- (a) Tripod with goatskin, used for making *leben*. If camel's milk is used, this is simply a sour milk, since camel's milk cannot produce butter. If sheep's milk is used, however, the *leben* is truly buttermilk—that is, the sour, virtually fat-free drink that remains after the butter has been removed. Camel's milk is more common. Foreigners should beware: those who are not accustomed to it may discover it works surprisingly well as a purgative.
- (b) Coffee pot. This type is common throughout Zakhara. (Near the Pearl Cities, however, a pear-shaped pot is favored.) A true treasure for any man (coffee-making is a host's job), the pot shown here is inlaid silver. Strictly for serving, it is never placed directly on a fire. Al-Badian coffee is very bitter. Though it is not sweetened, it is often flavored with cardamon. Offering coffee is the measure of a good Al-Badian host, who prepares it with great ceremony and flourish, serving the brew in small cups that lack handles.
- (c) Gazelle skin for carrying coffee (typically a man's possession). A waterskin may be more practical, but this decorative bag is equally valued, symbolizing a man's willingness to be a good host.
- (d) Mortar and pestle for grinding coffee berries (a man's possession).
- (e) The wooden frame of a camel riding saddle, typically made of tamarisk. Note the richly detailed pommels. A pack saddle (typically worn by a larger camel) is similar to this frame, but the pommels are very short, and the opportunities for tying down bags are increased. Further, the wooden frame of a pack saddle rests on broad, well-stuffed pads, which help distribute the weight of the load.
- (f) Man's riding saddle for camels, complete with frame (e), a sheepskin cover, and saddlebag. (Only one saddlebag is shown, but another would typically hang from the opposite side.) The saddle fits over the camel's hump, and has two girths—one hanging

- below each pommel. Al-Badian men sometimes ride cross-legged with their feet in front of the foremost pommel. For this reason, two leather pads may be laid over the camel's neck just in front of the saddle, providing a cushion for the rider's legs. While this type of saddle is common, some Al-Badian men consider it too "soft." Such men prefer a saddle that has little more than a pad held behind the camel's hump, on which the rider sits. At the front, or opposite side, of the hump, is the girth and a small wooden pommel and frame, forked to straddle the beast. The pad is secured to the frame with straps extending along each side of the hump. This saddle affords a very bumpy, swaying ride, and it takes additional skill to remain seated.
- (g) Man's saddlebag. The long woolen tassels are strictly decorative.
- (h) Woman's litter. A well-to-do woman (such as a

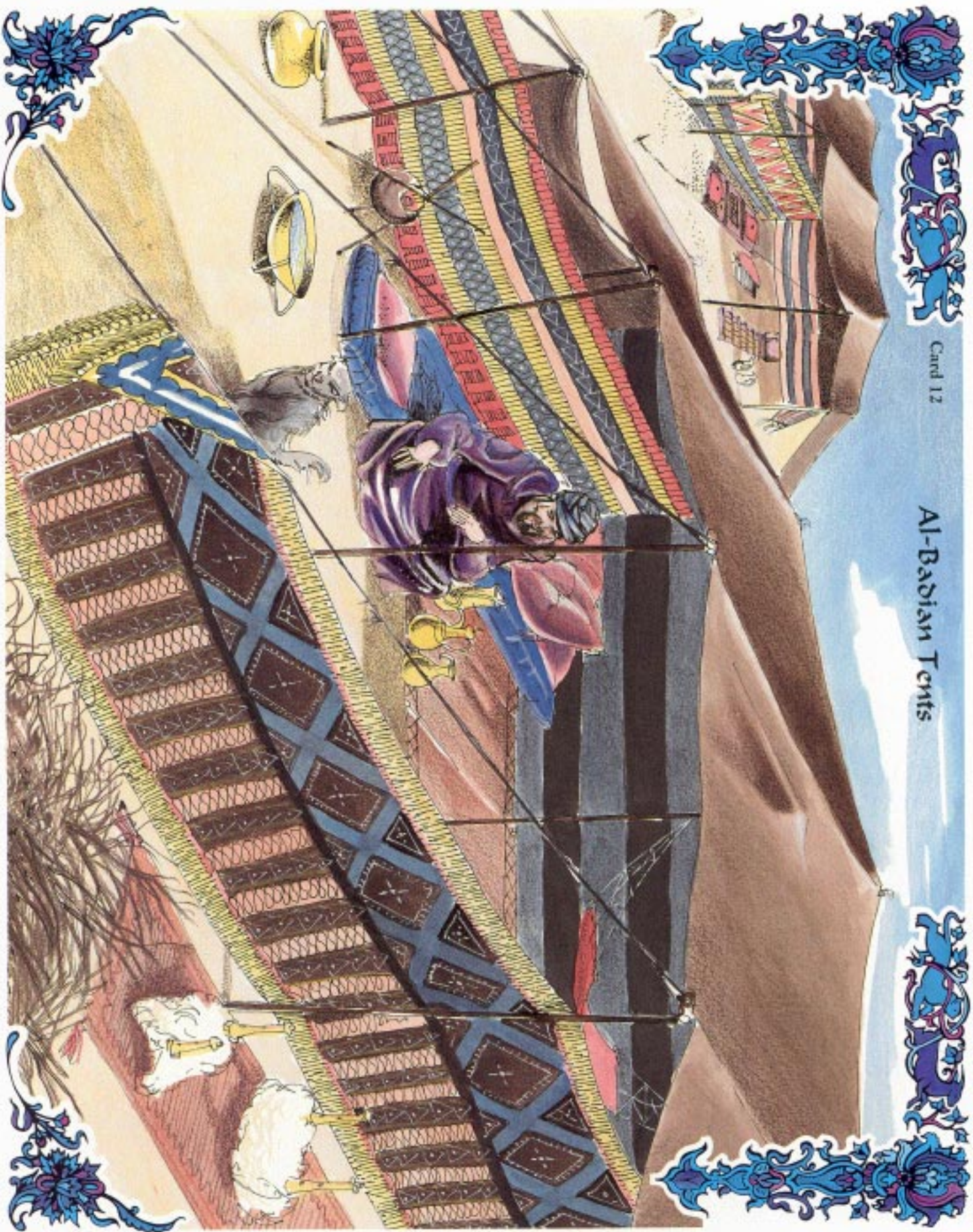
- sheikh's wife or daughter) can be proud to ride in such a litter while on the march, shielded from the sun (and, if she is modest, the prying eyes of men). The foundation of the litter is a wooden frame, which is covered with soft gazelle skin. The actual seat of the litter is suspended above the saddle proper to ensure a comfortable ride. When not on the march, a woman proudly displays her litter in her tent quarters, where it serves as a symbol of her wealth, stature, and (if she has not purchased the coverings) her skill with a loom.
- (i) A baby's hammock, typically hung near the front of the women's quarters in a tent, where the baby can be watched as well as "displayed." Al-Badia prize their children. When a stranger is introduced to a baby, he or she may press a coin or token into its fist, to bring it good luck. (To avoid any accidental choking, of course, the mother takes the token.)





Card 12

# Al-Badian Tents





# A Three-Poled\* Tent

**A**n Al-Badian tent is made of strips of woolen cloth, typically goats'-hair. (Goats'-hair absorbs water and swells when wet, effectively becoming waterproof.) Each strip is 1 to 3 feet wide, and it is often woven by hand on a ground loom. The strips are carefully stitched together with strong goats'-hair thread, forming a separate roof, a rear curtain (possibly in two parts and commonly 65 feet long), and *gatas* (dividing curtains).

The roof is fortified with small wooden strips beneath the poles. The rear wall, offering protection against the wind, folds forward on the ends to create the sides of the tent. The bottom strip is usually buried (in sand) or anchored (to rocky ground), helping to keep out wind, water, and insects. The *gatas* are hung from the roof and extended in front of the tent over the ropes to which they are parallel. Unlike the rest of tent (which is often black, brown, and sometimes white), these dividing curtains are commonly woven with intricate, gaily colored designs. At night, the ends of the *gatas* may be folded to help close off the front of the tent. Otherwise, the front (leeward) side is usually open.

The tent shown here boasts a separate kitchen. In a two-"room" tent, the kitchen and its goods become part of the women's quarters.

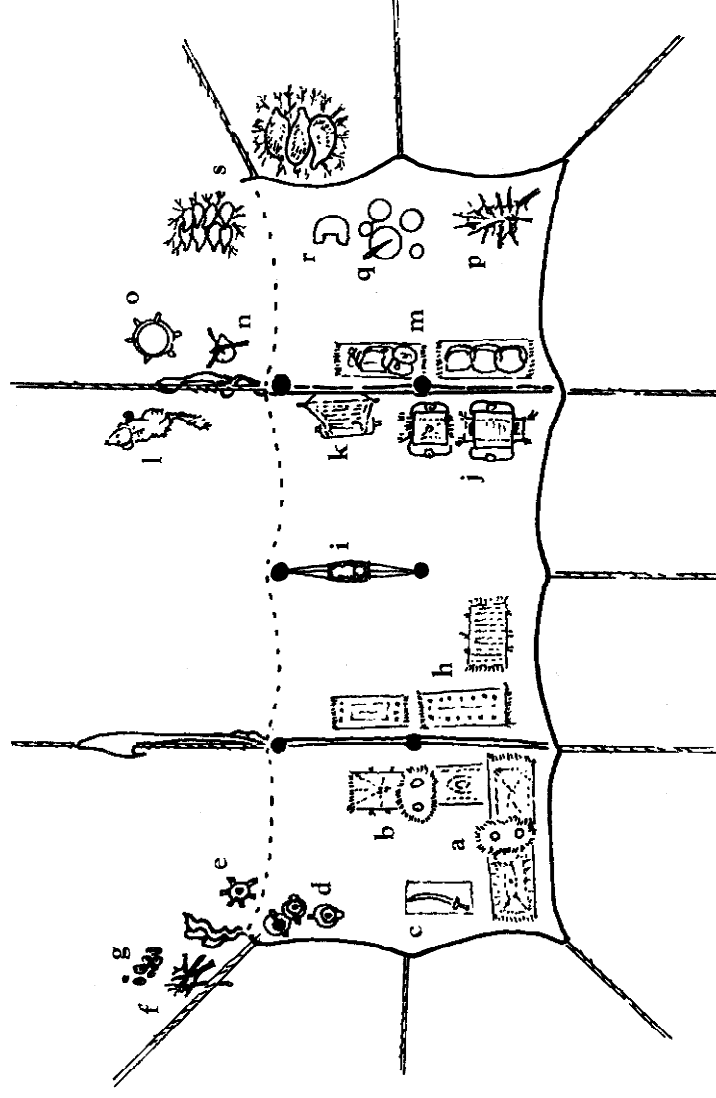
\* Refers to the number of center poles.

## Furnishings and Possessions

- (a) Mattresses and rugs.
- (b) Man's camel saddle. Serves as a back rest for comfortable seating.
- (c) Men's possessions (e.g., incense burner, clothing, weapons).
- (d) Coffee pots (typically three, with at least one blackened pot for the fire, and a shiny pot for serving).
- (e) Place for making coffee. A wealthy man may have a metal tripod.

- (f) Firewood, typically brushwood.
- (g) Dried camel dung, a fuel.
- (h) Sleeping mats and rugs, and women's clothing. (To welcome an important guest, an Al-Badian woman may hang her best frock at the front of the tent like a banner.)
- (i) Baby's hammock.
- (j) Women's camel litters, status symbols on display.
- (k) Ground loom, a prized possession.
- (l) Watchdog. Unlike the graceful desert hunting dog, or *saluki*, this scruffy and stout little mutt is not allowed in the tent proper. The watch dog sleeps in front of the women's quarters, and at night, may be trained to circle the tent. According to Al-Badian custom, a watchdog who is fed a piece of its own ear as a puppy will grow up to be fierce and effective against

- (m) predators (mainly wolves seeking livestock).
- (n) Food stores in woolen sacks and leather bags. Wooden tripod equipped with a goatskin for making *leben* (sour milk or buttermilk). During the hours just before dawn, when it is coolest, a girl gently rocks the skin, making a soft *shlag shlag* sound to which the family awakes. The tripod may also be used to skin sheep. (See also card front.)
- (o) Leather watering trough on bentwood supports (card front shows a small trough).
- (p) Brushwood for the hearth.
- (q) Cooking pots.
- (r) Hearth.
- (s) Waterskins (10 or more). These are typically goatskins, since sheepskin is less durable. The largest waterskins are made of camel hide. Skins are laid upon a protective bed of brushwood.



1" = 30 Miles (One small hex = 18 miles)



1" = 30 Miles (One small hex = 6 miles)



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# Al-Qadim

LAND OF FATE

CAMPAIGN

Corsair Domains

Hawa

City of Chaos

Chaos Bay

Muluk

City of Kings

Qasib

City of Wands

Hafayah

City of Secrets

Great Sea  
(Bahar al-Kibar)

Liham

City of Soldiers

Vmarā

City of Knights

Cities

Shrouded Mountains

Al-Zabih River

Al-Hadid River

Al-Khar River

North



**Quora**  
City of Power

Free

Furrow

**Hamitee**

Gre

Sea of Caravans

**Hiyal**  
City of Intrigue

**Sug Bay**  
(North Quarter)

Genies' Anvil

**Wasat**  
The Middle City

**Sug Bay**  
(South Quarter)

**Huzuz**  
City of Delights

**High**

**Desert**

**Tajar**

**Golden**

**Gulf**

**Hil**  
City of H

**Al-Akara Mo**  
(MOUNTAINS)

Bit  
of the  
Ghuls

**Ghost Mountains**  
(Green al-Tan)

Al-Kalid River

Al-Tan

Al-Yad River

Al-Aid River

Al-Aid River



City of Coon

City of Multnomah

City of Humility

City of Confessions

City of Riches



S



2





1 inch equals 50 miles

# Zakm

the

of

Islands

Steaming  
Isles

Djinni's  
Claws

Archipelago of the



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# Utqa

City of Free Men



Al-Zubba River

## Land

of the

Yak-Men

World Pillar Mountains

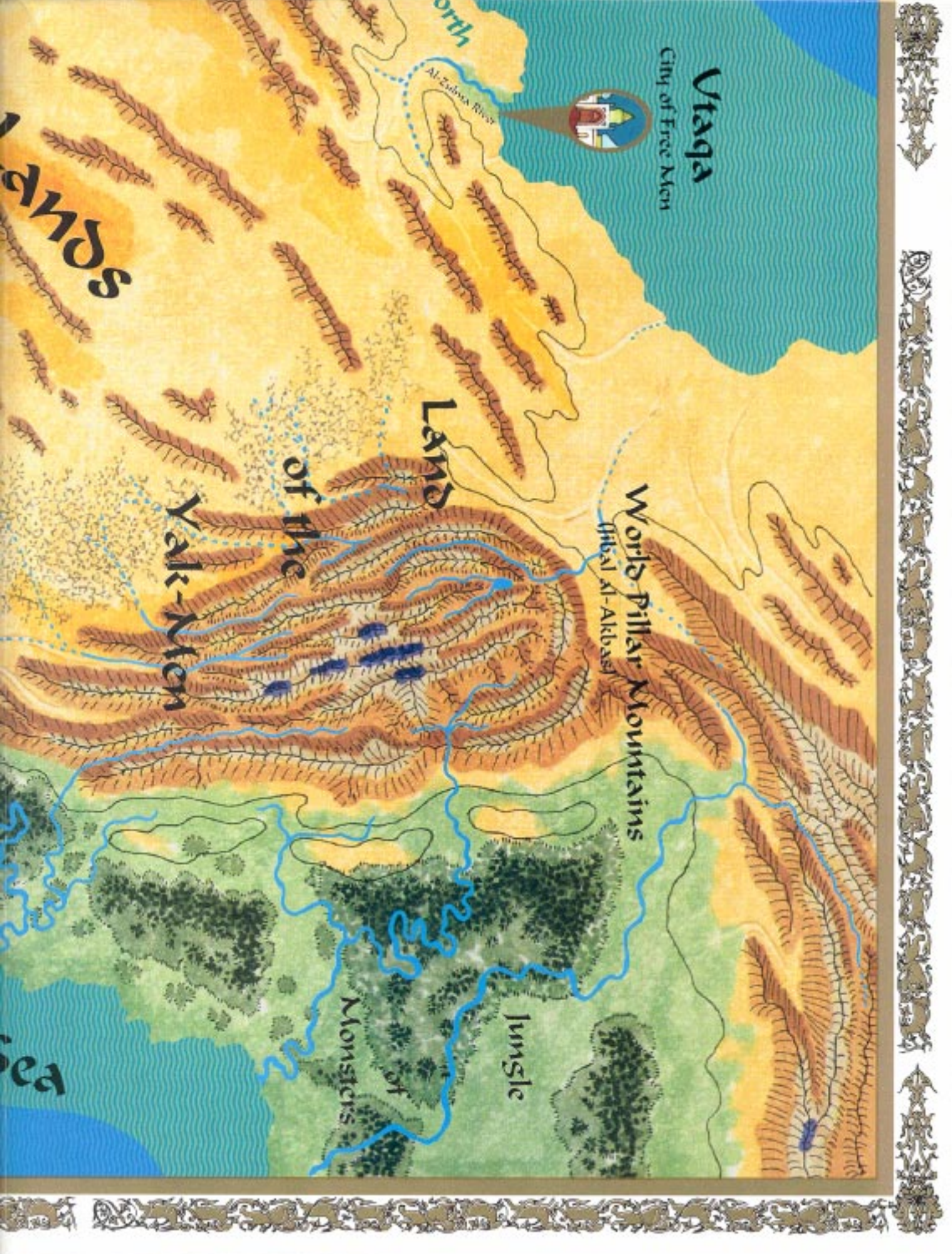
(Jibai Al-Akbasi)

Jungle

Monsters

Sea

Sands





Great Anvil

Halwa  
City of Solitude

Mountains  
(Sons of Creation)

Ilm

of Kindness

Talab  
City of Dreams



Foreigners' Sea  
(Bahr al-Ajami)

Medina al-Afyal  
City of the Elephant





Talab

City of Dusk

Pantheon of the League

Al-Masara River

Al-Sahal Mountains  
(Mountains of Desolation)

Nasara River

Mahabba

City of Clarity

Grey Jungle

Ros'osto

City of Spires

Dawlat Island

Medina al-Afyal

City of the Elephant

Afyal

Isle of

the

Elephant

Kadarasto

City Most Sinister

Sahu

Isle of Serenity

Dilhiz

Gateway City

Harab



Isle of War

Bariya  
The Wilds Isle

Utter

South

Is 90 miles

Bara



# Great Sea (Bahr al-Kibar)

Lahib Island

Dahab Island

Qudra  
City of Power

Mina

Lizard's Tongue

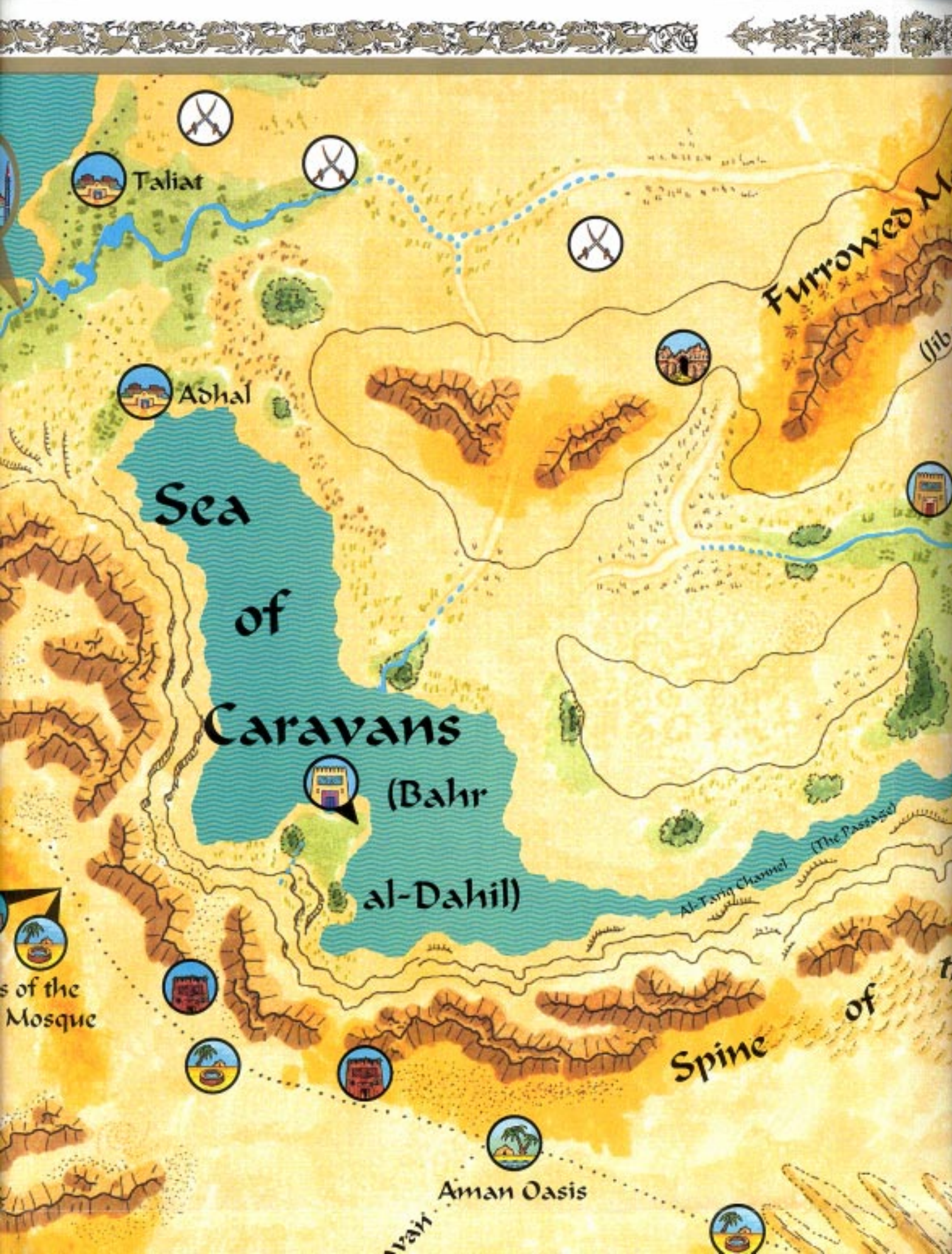
Mountains of the

Oasis of  
Desert M

Lake of the Ghuls







Taliat

Adhal

Sea  
of  
Caravans  
(Bahr  
al-Dahil)

Furrowed M...

s of the  
Mosque

Aman Oasis

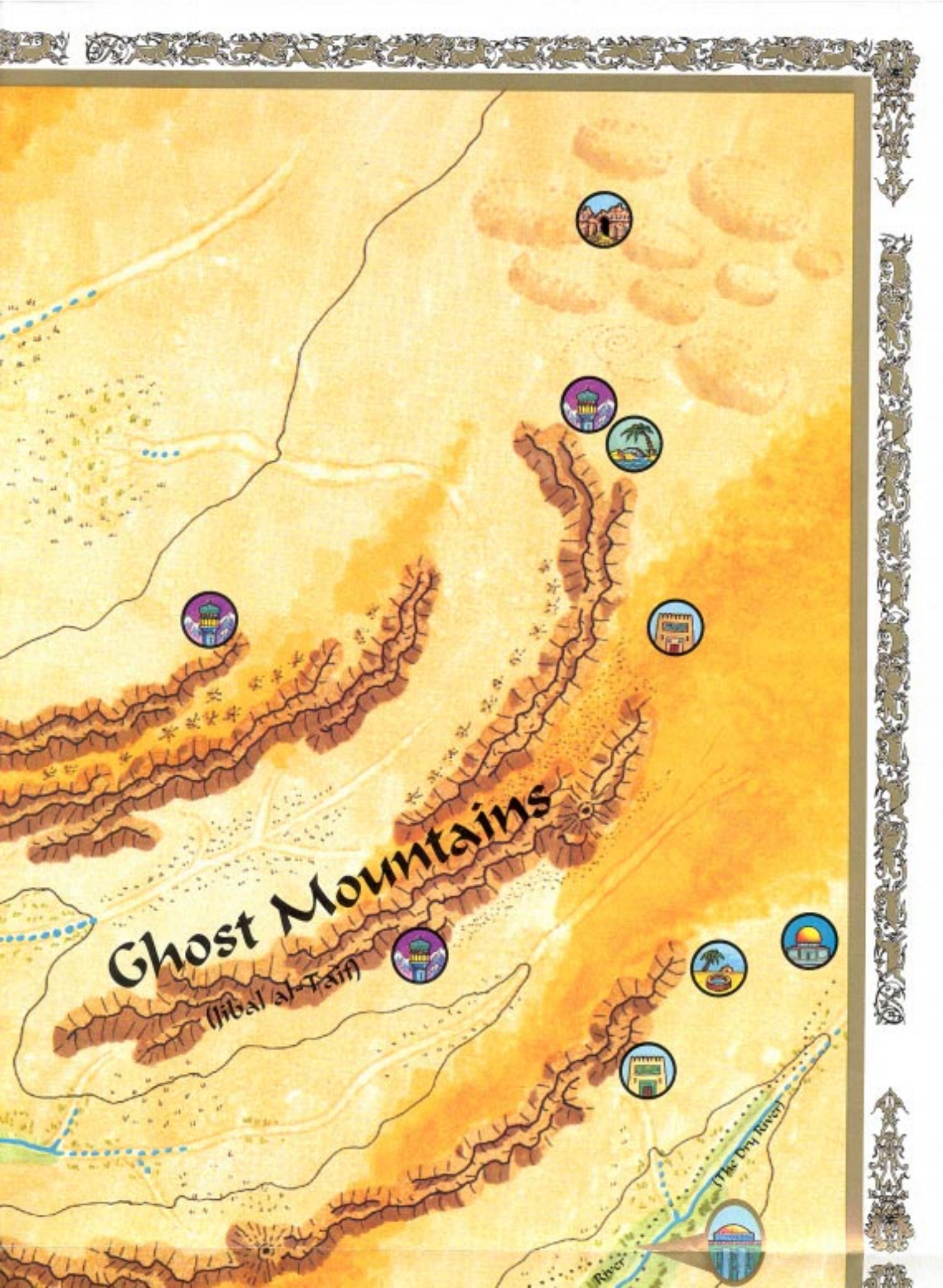
Spine of...

Al-Fariq Channel  
(The Passage)









# Ghost Mountains

(Jibal al-Tamr)





Mount

Pit of the Ghuls

Gen

Mount



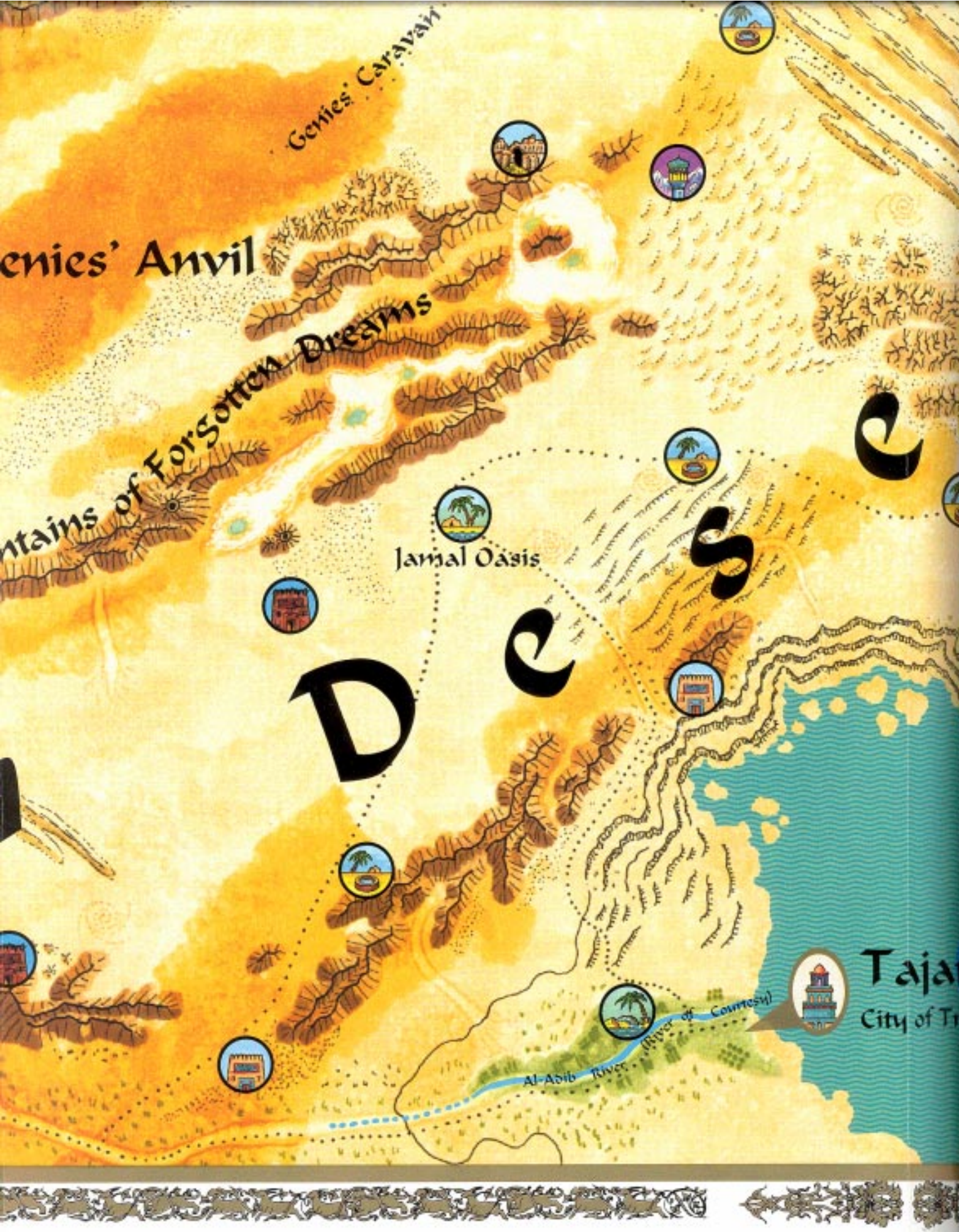
1 inch equals 10 miles

Range of the Marching Camels

1077XXX0202

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Genies' Caravan

enies' Anvil

Mountains of Forgotten Dreams

Janjal Oasis

Al-Adib River (River of Courtesy)

Tajal  
City of T...











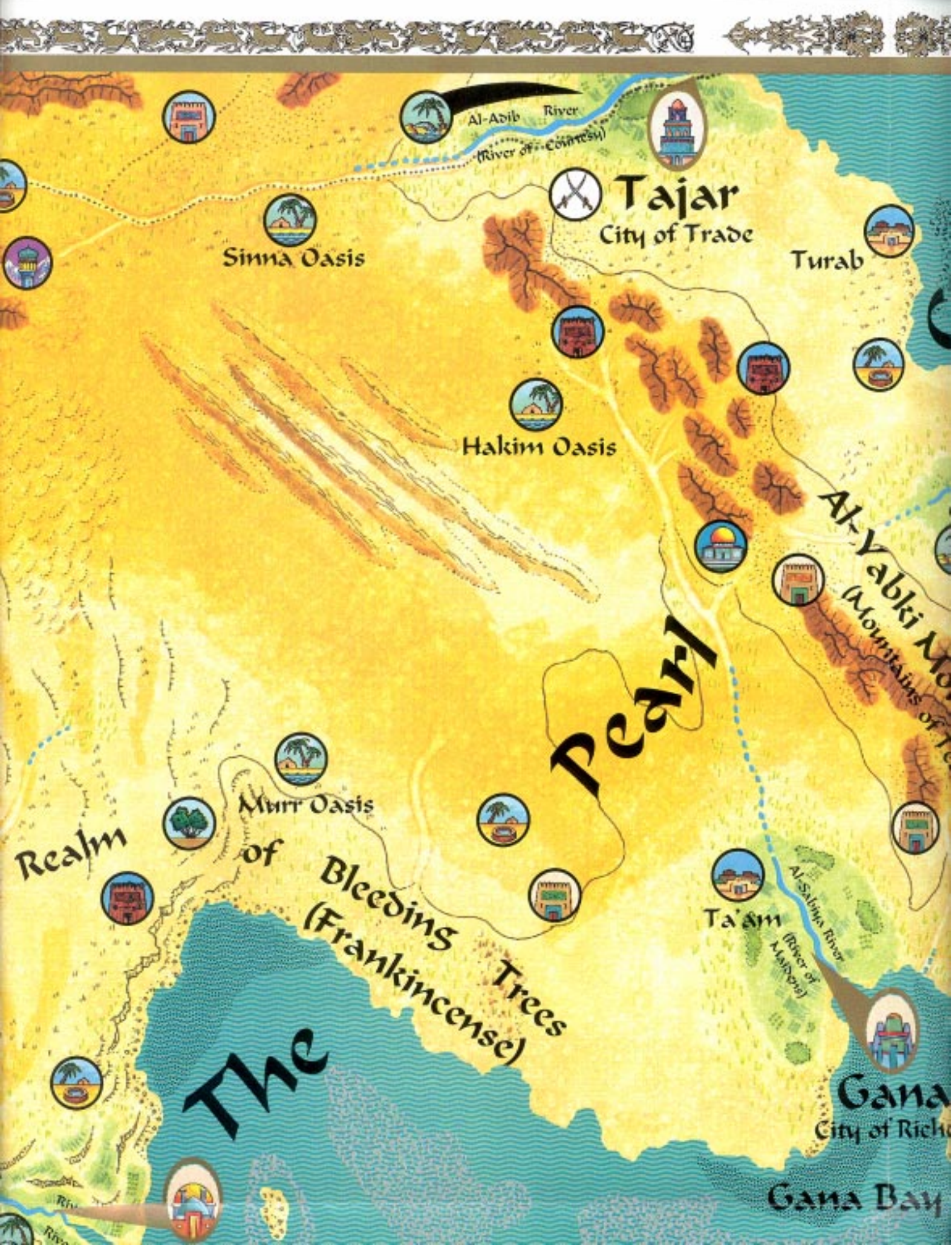
← To Akota

Al-Suqur Mountains  
(Tumbling Mountains)

Intibah

Al-Mahfa  
(Shellrock)





Al-Adib River  
(River of Commerce)

Tajar  
City of Trade

Sinna Oasis

Turab

Hakim Oasis

Pearl

Al-Yabki Mountains  
(Mountains of Tears)

Realm

Murr Oasis

of Bleeding Trees  
(Frankincense)

Ta'am

Al-Sabina River  
(River of Magic)

Gana  
City of Riches

Gana Bay



# Golden Gulf

## Cities



Hitam Island

Sumu

Jasim Island

Islands





The Lease of

Fahhas  
City of Searching

Hilin  
City of Kindness

Dakan

Burj

I'tirat  
City of Confessions

Hudid  
City of Humility

To Talab

Al-Muti  
(River of Generosity)

Al-Najis  
(River of Peril)

Al-Hadi  
(River of Inspiration)

Al-Jama  
(The Gathered Water)

Al-Sayaj Mountains

To Mahabba

land

Sumuk Island

n Island

Fanus



Mamnu Island

Realm

of

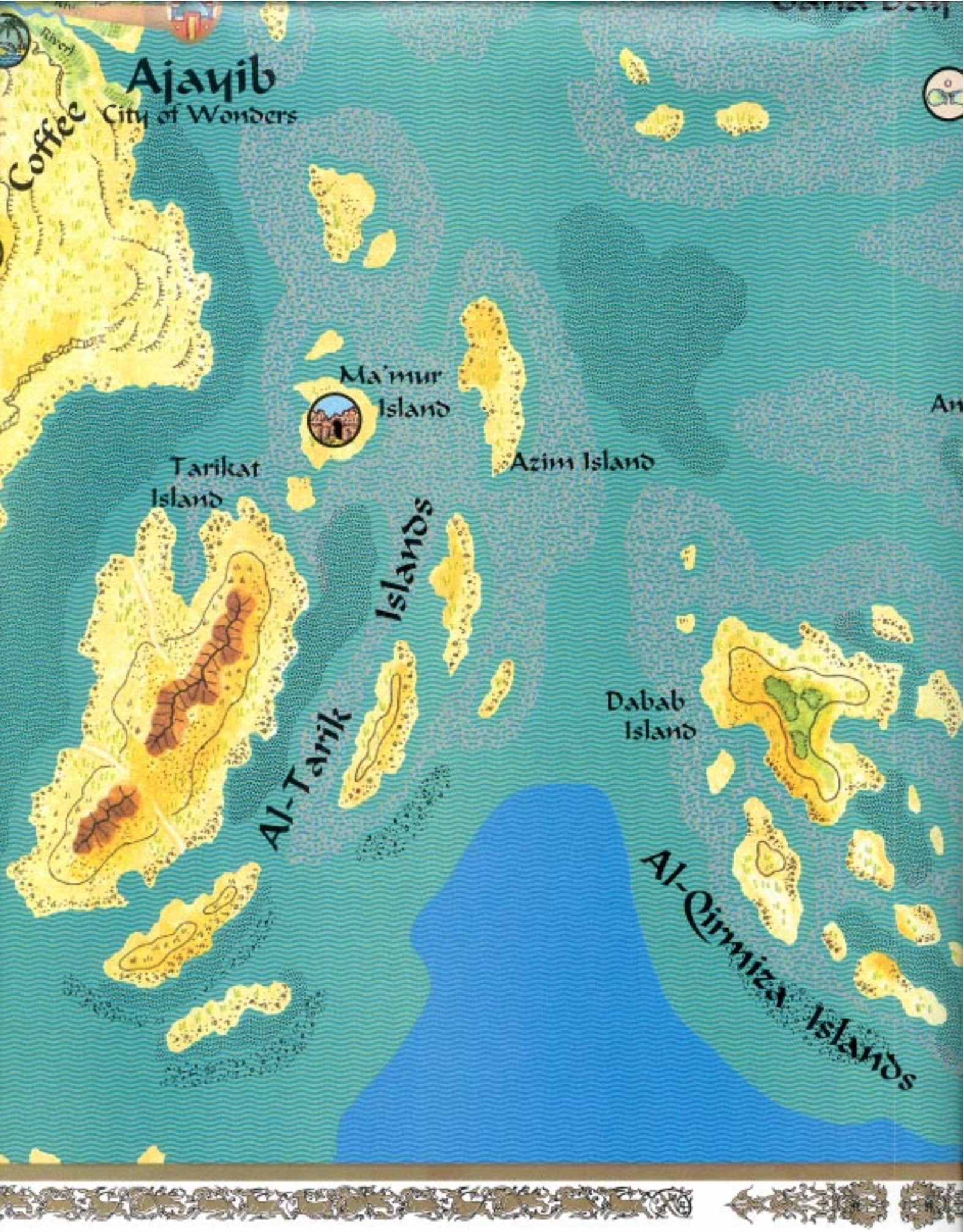


1 inch equals 10 miles

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Coffee

Ajayib

City of Wonders

Ma'mur  
Island

Azim Island

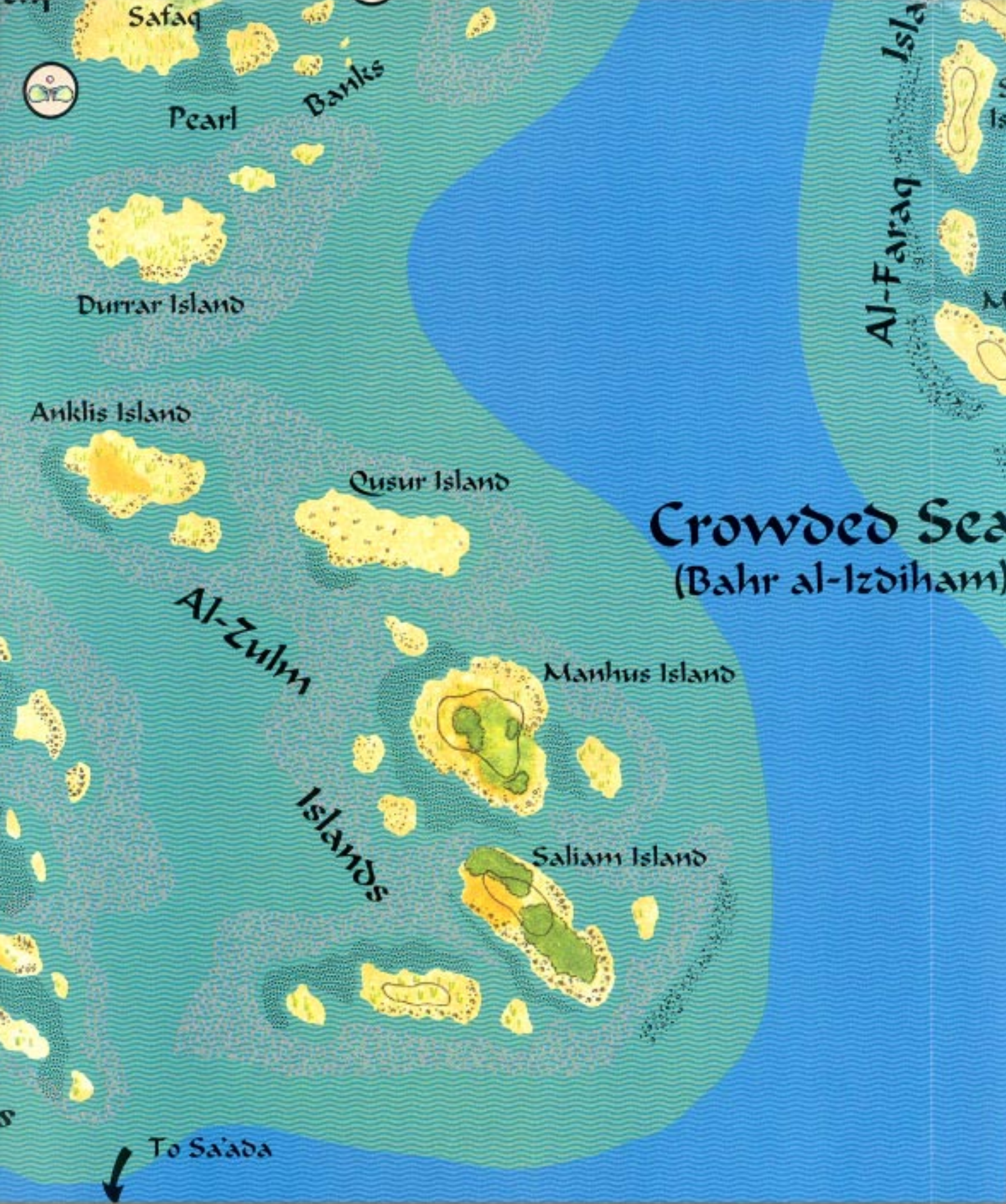
Tarikat  
Island

Al-Tarik  
Islands

Dabab  
Island

Al-Qirmiza  
Islands





Safaq

Pearl

Banks

Durrar Island

Anklis Island

Qusur Island

Al-Zulm

Islands

Manhus Island

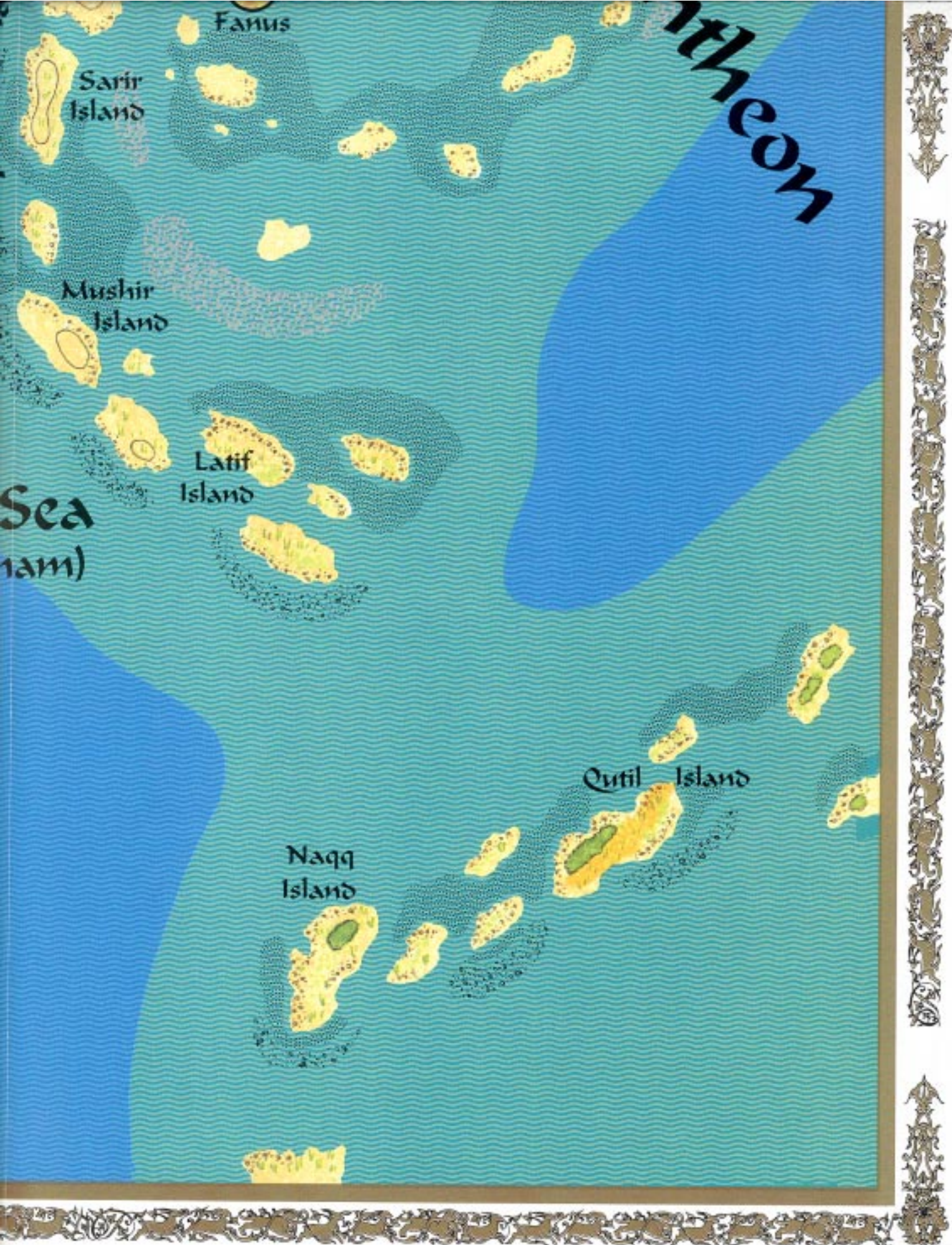
Saliyam Island

Al-Faraq Island

Crowded Sea  
(Bahr al-Izdiham)

To Sa'ada







# AL-QADIM™

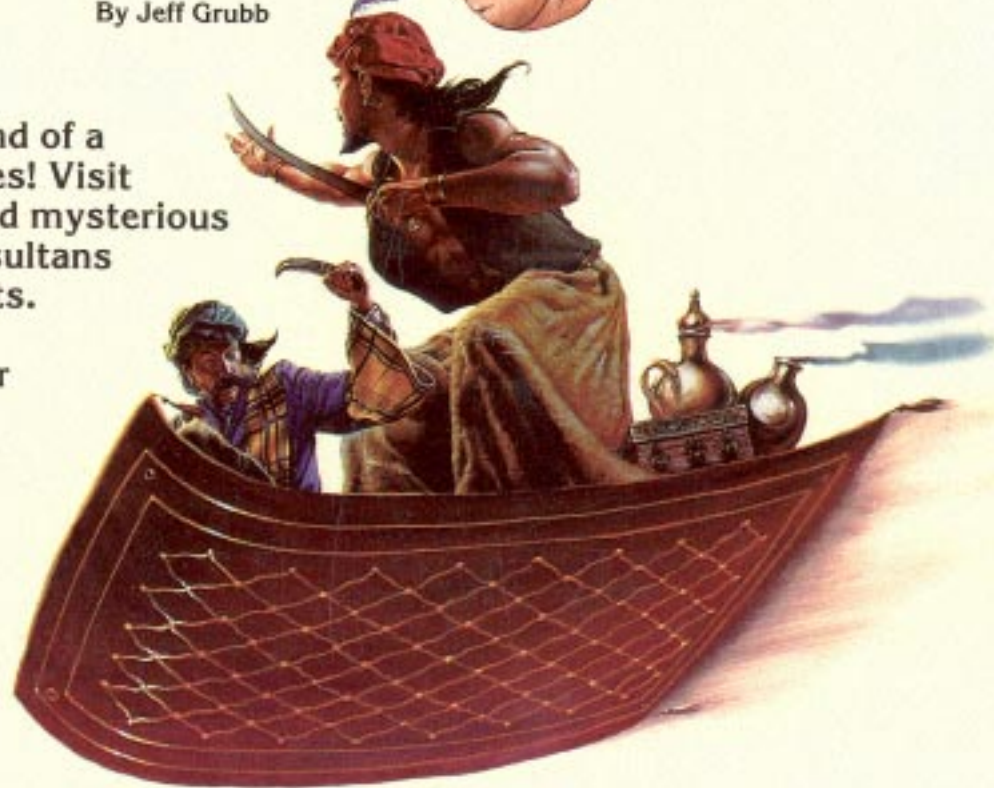
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