

CONAN[®]

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME



SECOND EDITION



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Introduction

Welcome to the Hyborian Age

'Know, oh prince, that between the years when the oceans drank Atlantis and the gleaming cities, and the years of the rise of the Sons of Aryas, there was an Age undreamed of, when shining kingdoms lay spread across the world like blue mantles beneath the stars — Nemedia, Ophir, Brythunia, Hyperborea, Zamora with its dark-haired women and towers of spider-haunted mystery, Zingara with its chivalry, Koth that bordered on the pastoral lands of Shem, Stygia with its shadow-guarded tombs, Hyrkaria whose riders wore steel and silk and gold. But the proudest kingdom of the world was Aquilonia, reigning supreme in the dreaming west. Hither came Conan, the Cimmerian, black-haired, sullen-eyed, sword in hand, a thief, a reaver, a slayer, with gigantic melancholies and gigantic mirth, to tread the jeweled thrones of the Earth under his sandalled feet.'

— *The Nemedian Chronicles*
(from *The Phoenix on the Sword*)

The Hyborian Age refers to the scant few hundred years during which the kingdoms descended from the old Hyborian tribes became civilised and powerful, dominating the lands around them both economically and militarily. This is a mythical time thousands of years before recorded history, when even the continents were shaped differently than they are now.

Aquilonia, a richly fertile land, dominates the Hyborian kingdoms. It includes within its capacious borders some of the doughtiest soldiers in the world, including the fierce pikemen of Gunderland, the stalwart archers of the Bossonian Marches and the superb knights of Poitain. These men, armed by Aquilonia's highly skilled armourers, ensure that this nation is virtually unassailable and allow Aquilonia to get the best of the raiding in its sporadic wars with its traditional enemy, Nemedia.

Despite this, Aquilonia can sometimes be a victim of its own success. It is landlocked and its surplus

population has nowhere to expand without going to full-scale war with Nemedia. Various attempts to settle in Cimmeria and the Pictish Wilderness have been repulsed by the barbarians of those lands. Aquilonia's ordinary farmers and craftsmen look longingly upon the vast forested estates claimed by its nobles for their hunting. A strong leader who offers to cut down the forests and let the people settle there might one day gain enough popular support to wrest control from Aquilonia's ancient monarchy. Indeed, this is exactly how Conan eventually becomes King there.

Aquilonia's Hyborian neighbours are its old rival Nemedia, which is a civilisation almost as powerful and perhaps more ancient; Brythunia and Corinthia with their city-states; Argos, the great maritime trading nation; and Ophir and Koth, two kingdoms somewhat weakened morally by the influence of the pleasure-oriented culture of the east. Like Aquilonia, most of these countries revere Mitra, an enlightened, civilised god, though Koth and perhaps Ophir have allowed the Shemite pantheon to displace Mitra in their reverence.

The lands to the north and west of Aquilonia are beyond civilisation. The Pictish Wilderness extends up much of the continent's western coast and only the heavily fortified strip of land known as the Bossonian Marches prevents the Picts from surging into Aquilonia on constant raids. South of the Wilderness is Zingara, the lifelong rival of Argos for maritime trade and influence, a land of expert swordsmen, chivalry and frequent civil war. Just off its coast are the Baracha Isles. These are pirate strongholds largely settled by Argossean sailors, who regularly plunder Zingaran ports and do battle with Zingara's own buccaneers.

North of the Aquilonian province of Gunderland is Cimmeria. This misty, barbaric hill country is the original home of Conan himself. Beyond Cimmeria are the two nations of the Nordheimir: Asgard and Vanaheim. These are grim, icy lands populated by warriors who are grimmer still. Also to the north



INTRODUCTION

is Hyperborea, the culture of which mingles those of Nordheim and the Hyborians. The sparsely populated Border Kingdoms form a bulwark between Cimmeria and the Hyborian countries of Brythunia and Nemedra.

East of the Hyborian kingdoms is the ancient civilisation of Zamora. Bordering on Brythunia, Corinthia and Koth to the west and the trackless steppes between Shem and Turan to the east, Zamora is famed for its complex religion of spider-worship, its unequalled thieves and its superb Bhalkhana warhorses.

South of the Hyborian kingdoms is the vast expanse of Shem, with a pastoral meadowland of city-states to the west and desert populated by nomad tribes to the east. Shem has almost no maritime trade but Shemite merchants send caravans far to the north, east and south, across trackless desert, through jungle and to almost every nation of the world. South of Shem is the ancient sorcerous theocracy of Stygia. Beyond that lies the unexplored, savage continent of Kush.

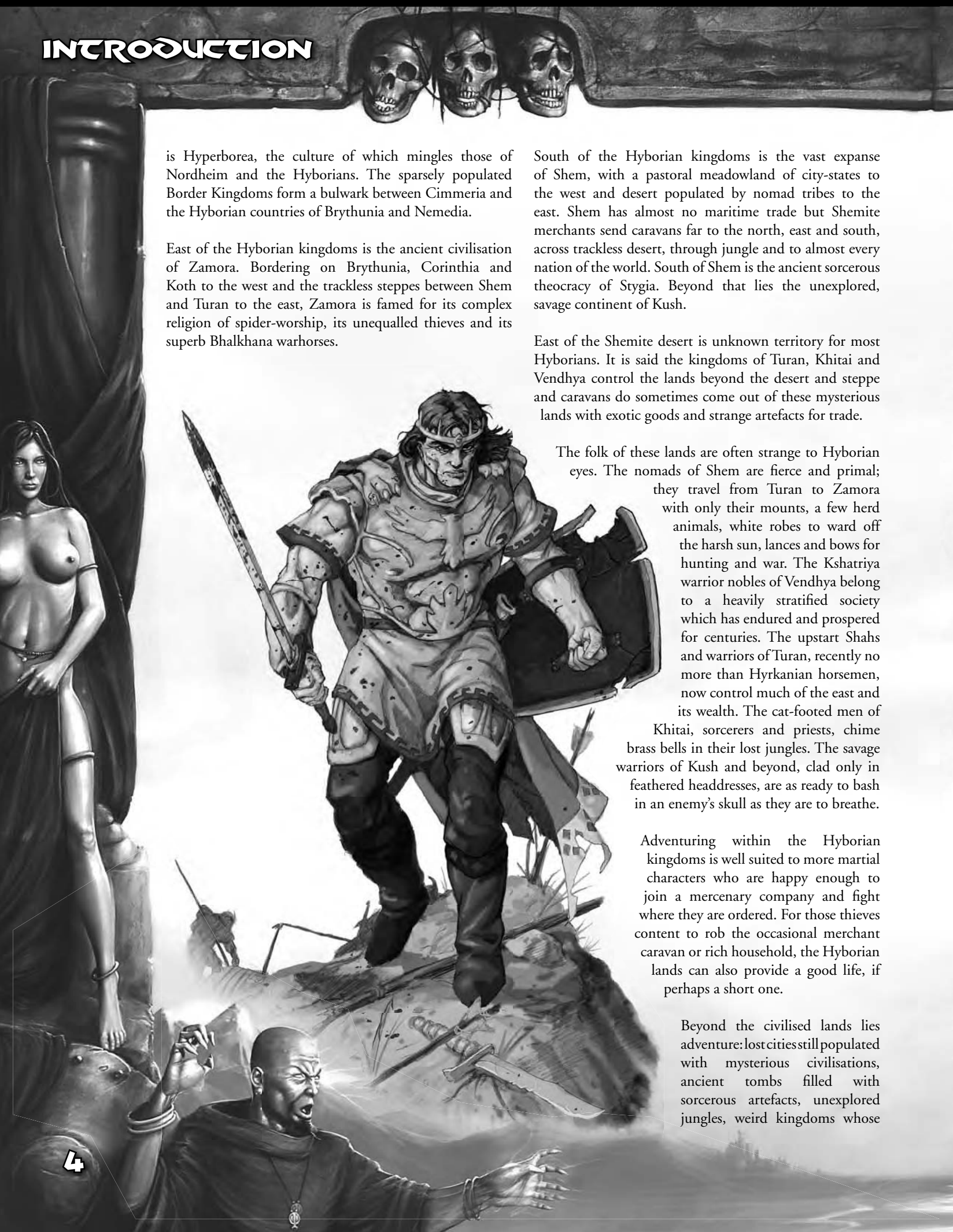
East of the Shemite desert is unknown territory for most Hyborians. It is said the kingdoms of Turan, Khitai and Vendhya control the lands beyond the desert and steppe and caravans do sometimes come out of these mysterious lands with exotic goods and strange artefacts for trade.

The folk of these lands are often strange to Hyborian eyes. The nomads of Shem are fierce and primal;

they travel from Turan to Zamora with only their mounts, a few herd animals, white robes to ward off the harsh sun, lances and bows for hunting and war. The Kshatriya warrior nobles of Vendhya belong to a heavily stratified society which has endured and prospered for centuries. The upstart Shahs and warriors of Turan, recently no more than Hyrkanian horsemen, now control much of the east and its wealth. The cat-footed men of Khitai, sorcerers and priests, chime brass bells in their lost jungles. The savage warriors of Kush and beyond, clad only in feathered headdresses, are as ready to bash in an enemy's skull as they are to breathe.

Adventuring within the Hyborian kingdoms is well suited to more martial characters who are happy enough to join a mercenary company and fight where they are ordered. For those thieves content to rob the occasional merchant caravan or rich household, the Hyborian lands can also provide a good life, if perhaps a short one.

Beyond the civilised lands lies adventure: lost cities still populated with mysterious civilisations, ancient tombs filled with sorcerous artefacts, unexplored jungles, weird kingdoms whose



customs and even language are utterly unlike anything known in Aquilonia. For those who are not afraid of the unknown and are prepared to risk everything on a wild venture, untold wealth awaits – riches from before the dawn of time, hidden pirate treasure-caches and the war chests of defeated kingdoms are there for the taking.

Here, too, can be found monsters – the legendary man-apes, the dragons of Kush, the primeval forest beasts of the Pictish Wilderness, the enormous serpents of Stygia and many a strange, unique creature, created or summoned by sorcery in past aeons. All these foes are terrifying to behold but it is said that most can be slain by a man with a stout heart, strong arm and sharp blade. The demons of the Outer Dark, called up by sorcery or trapped on Earth by bad luck, can be quite another matter.

The open seas provide another set of challenges. Pirates abound in the Western Sea, up and down the Black Coast and far to the east in the Vilayet Sea. So successful are these raiders that most are as confident about attacking a fortified port town as they are when simply taking merchant ships. Whether hired to guard against pirate attacks, engaged in a spot of buccaneering themselves or exploring the seas for mysterious islands and new continents, adventurers can get into a lot of trouble – and gain a lot of coin – sailing these blood-drenched waters.

On a more spiritual note, most nations have a religion of some kind. Few have any proof that their religions provide anything more than comfort for the soul but this does not stop them believing. The only folk who know of such matters with certainty are the sorcerers, who are for the most part assured of damnation.

Many of the movers and shakers of society, particularly in the sorcerous land of Stygia, are either sorcerers themselves or regularly employ sorcerers to get what they want. Occasionally a genuinely pious priest will learn a little sorcery to fox the wizards of his enemies but he must be careful. Sorcery carries a risk of corruption even for good-hearted folk, for sorcery is power. Those scholars driven to the study of magic purely by a quest for knowledge are often the first to abandon their lofty ideals when they develop a taste for the pure power of wizardry.

The sorcerers speak of other realms beyond the Earth of the Hyborian Age. The Outer Dark is home to demons; hell itself is home to more diabolic creatures and to lost souls. Beyond the Outer Dark are more planets, often cold and accursed, the sources of many a weird monster travelling through the void.

THE NATURE OF CONAN'S HYBORIA

Is the Hyborian Age a Low Magic or Low Fantasy Setting? Emphatically not. Most of the Conan stories, even those that focus predominantly on battling armies or conflicts between individual warriors, feature at least one evil sorcerer and often whole societies, priesthoods or covens of them.

Magical items abound too, though not the beneficial *swords of power* and useful *wands* of typical fantasy games. Almost all sorcerous objects are unique and come with their own price and risks. Likewise, strange creatures are relatively common in the lands beyond civilisation, whether created by foul magic, left over from an earlier age, or somehow degenerated from savage humans over the centuries. Though an ordinary citizen of Aquilonia may never encounter a sorcerer, weird ghoul or alchemical preparation, the adventurer will have to become used to such things.

However, Conan as originally visualised by Howard is not 'high fantasy' but sword-and-sorcery. It has much the same relationship to the works of Tolkien and his lesser imitators as the hard-boiled crime fiction of Raymond Chandler has to the more proper detective tales of Agatha Christie. This is visceral, dark, weird fantasy.

There are no elves, gnomes and dwarves to befriend. If one does meet a monster it will be a figure of terror, not a convenient way to garner a few experience points. Furthermore, characters do not begin the game with some great destiny to fulfil, as the descendant of a legendary kingdom or the inheritor of some great artefact. Each must wrest his destiny from life with his own mighty arms, or cut one from it with his sword!

It should also be noted that despite its apparently common presence in the Conan stories, the supernatural is always mysterious and terrifying. A supernatural element is deftly woven into the main plot but it is often scheming human foes whose plots provide Conan with his most dangerous adventures. The weird non-human creatures one meets must often be fled from rather than simply battled. On several occasions Conan elects to abandon any chance at a staggering bounty rather than be destroyed by its dreadful guardians. The wise adventurer should consider doing the same.



Overview

The Foundation of All Things

Welcome to the Hyborian Age, a time of mighty barbarians, evil sorcerers, corrupt priests, tyrannical kings and unnatural monsters. This is the first and most famous of all sword-and-sorcery worlds, the time of Conan the Cimmerian, a thief, a reaver, a slayer, yet destined one day to rule the most powerful nation of the age. The stories of Conan, as chronicled by the writer Robert E. Howard, form the basis and inspiration for the game you now hold in your hands: *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

The Hyborian Age is named for the Hyborian kingdoms, the pre-eminent powers of the age, which are the most culturally and technologically advanced lands on Earth; their kings' thrones are maintained through longbows, plate armour and feudalism. These kingdoms are more apt to make war against one another than against the real threats all around them, such as the wild Picts, the raiding northmen, the avaricious Hyrkanian nomads and the dread sorceries of Stygia to the south. Beyond Stygia and the plains of Shem lies the continent of Kush, a black and unknown land of jungles and deserts. Far to the east are more kingdoms, perhaps almost as advanced as the Hyborian lands but little more than legend, with Vendhya and Khitai being the most prominent.

CONAN THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

Conan the Roleplaying Game allows players to take the on the roles of Hyborians or any of the other myriad races who people this rich and vivid world. As Howard's hero did, characters can learn the skills of the thief, the mercenary soldier, the desert nomad and others on their way to greatness.

own imagination. One player takes the role of the Games Master, controlling the people and creatures who dwell within the land, whilst the other players become valiant heroes, outright rogues or corrupt demon-worshippers! The Games Master sets the Hyborian Age before the other players, allowing them to explore everywhere from the unknown islands west of Zingara to the semi-legendary kingdoms beyond the deserts and steppes of eastern Shem, from the frozen lands of the Æsir and Vanir to the lush jungles of Kush.

IF YOU HAVE NEVER PLAYED A ROLEPLAYING GAME BEFORE...

Welcome to *Conan the Roleplaying Game* and the shortest explanation of roleplaying ever written. One participant, the 'Games Master,' describes a scene and the players decide how their characters will react: 'You step into the torchlit cavern and spot a ferocious man-ape,' says the Games Master, 'which turns towards you and bares its fangs. What do you do?' Run? Hide? Charge the beast, hefting your broadsword with a ferocious battle cry? The Games Master, using the rules as a guideline, decides what results your actions have. Repeat all that over the course of a few hours, mixing in hideous ghouls, cryptic texts, sacrificial cults, corrupt sorcerers, nubile maidens, madness, horror, death and the greatest fantasy hero of all time and you have a session of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

CHARACTERS

By playing *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, you can create a character who lives both in the mythical land of the Hyborian Age and in his

THE CONAN RULEBOOK

This book provides players with everything they need to create and play characters in the time of Conan, as well as giving the Games Master enough information to accurately portray the Hyborian Age. The following chapters can be found within this book:

Chapter 1 – Introduction: Welcome to the Hyborian Age.

Chapter 2 – Overview: This chapter provides an overview of character creation and the Conan game system.

Chapter 3 – Races: The Hyborian age features a great diversity of peoples. In this chapter you may find rules that allow you to play a member of any strain of humanity that can be found from Cimmeria to Vendhya.

Chapter 4 – Classes: Do you want to explore the lands as a mercenary soldier? A self-sufficient barbarian? A curious scholar? Or some other adventurous archetype? This chapter tells you what you need to know.

Chapter 5 – Skills: This chapter includes a full list and detailing of the skills used in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Chapter 6 – Feats: This chapter explains all the tricks of sword and sorcery; all the ways that your character might take to get one up on his adversaries, or the methods they might use to get one up on him...

Chapter 7 – Equipment: Conan wields a variety of often bizarre weapons during his travels. These, along with armour to protect against them and other goods that might be of use or value to adventurers, are covered here.

Chapter 8 – Combat: Full rules for engaging in combat are covered in this chapter, whether you are a Cimmerian barbarian, Hyperborean mercenary or a pirate of the Red Brotherhood.

Chapter 9 – Sorcery: Sorcery is the magic of Conan's world. It is an ancient and subtly dangerous power that can include everything from simple curses to alchemy, mesmerism and even demonology. This chapter provides full tools for playing sorcerous characters, including the Rules of Sorcery, numerous Sorcery Styles and spells and a variety of magical, herbal and alchemical items.

Chapter 10 – The Hyborian Age: This chapter is a history of the Hyborian Age written by Robert E. Howard himself, the creator of the original Conan stories. He devised it as a tool to ensure that all his Conan tales were consistent with each other. It can serve precisely the same purpose for any Games Master.

Chapter 11 – Gazetteer: This chapter covers all the kingdoms and other regions of the late Hyborian Age in detail, including mysterious lost cities and other places ripe for plunder. It also features adventure hooks for many of the areas and an overview of Hyborian culture.

Chapter 12 – Religion: This chapter covers the various gods and goddesses of the Hyborian kingdoms and beyond, as well as the obligations and benefits that come from worshipping them.

Chapter 13 – Bestiary: This chapter details the creatures both mundane and magical that live in the Hyborian Age, from ordinary animals to the demons of the Outer Dark.

Chapter 14 – Campaigns: Conan is a sword-and-sorcery setting like no other and Games Masters will benefit from the information in this chapter, which will allow them to run truly unique campaigns in keeping with the style of the original stories.

NEW TO CONAN?

You are in for a real treat! Coming straight from the superb stories and novels of Robert E. Howard, the barbarian hero Conan lives in the Hyborian Age, a time when a strong right arm and a sharp blade can prevail against any wizardry, however diabolic. No other sword-and-sorcery setting draws on such powerfully written source material, still as fresh today as when it was written seventy years ago.

If you have never encountered Conan before, you are encouraged to start reading *Welcome to the Hyborian Age*, starting on page 3, before commencing with the main rules. This will give you a good introduction to the blend of roguish exploits, heroic deeds, fell sorcery, exotic culture and epic fantasy that make up the setting of Conan. From there, return to this chapter and start creating some characters to begin play with.

In many ways, Hyborian borderers, nobles and soldiers are the easiest characters with which to begin playing this game, as they have definite places in Hyborian culture and society, as well as a strong motivation to do great deeds in order to increase their reputations. In addition, they almost always have something to do, whether honing their combat skills, patrolling for barbarian raiders, spearheading an attack on a neighbouring land or defending their kingdom from invasion. Temptresses are combinations of noble and thief and tend to shine in urban or political adventures more than in the wilderness.

However, it is possible to play any class or race right from the start and barbarians, nomads, pirates and thieves can certainly be added to the mix without too much difficulty.

Scholars are a little trickier to play to begin with. They offer more choices during character creation and potentially more power than some of the other characters but at a terrible price. For this reason they are perhaps best left till both players and Games Masters are familiar with the Hyborian Age. *Conan the Roleplaying Game* does not require a 'balanced' party as some other d20 games might. If you want to play with a party composed entirely of Bossonian soldiers, this could work perfectly well.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

To begin playing *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, all you need is the following:

- ❖ One or more friends with whom to begin play and explore the Hyborian Age.
- ❖ A character sheet photocopied from this book or downloaded from our Web site.
- ❖ A pencil, eraser and spare paper.
- ❖ A full set of dice, including four-sided dice (d4), six-sided dice (d6), eight-sided dice (d8), ten-sided dice (d10), twelve-sided dice (d12) and twenty-sided dice (d20).

THE RULES

The first and most important rule of *Conan the Roleplaying Game* is that if you do not like it, change it. Games Masters and players should work together to create involving, exciting and above all fun stories. As such, it is not necessary to memorise every rule in this book in order to enjoy playing *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

DICE

Dice rolls are described with expressions such as '3d4+3,' which means 'roll three four-sided dice and add three,' which results in a number between six and 15. The first number indicates how many dice you should roll, adding the results together. The number immediately after the 'd' indicates the type of die to use. Any number after that indicates a quantity to be added or subtracted from the result.

CONAN OF CIMMERIA - A THIEF, A REAVER, A SLAYER, ONE DAY A KING

Conan strides through the pages of Howard's stories, a man of instinct and action rather than philosophy, always ready to avenge any perceived slight with a sharp sword or sledgehammer-like fist. He regularly gains riches, followers, military rank, royal favour and magical treasures, losing them again just as quickly. Over the years, though, he grows in cunning, leadership qualities and reputation, until he is one day ready to take on the greatest prize of all – seizing power as King of Aquilonia.

More on Conan can be found in Howard's original stories (see www.conan.com for a bibliography), extracts from which appear throughout this book to illustrate a variety of points about the game and the world.

The basic rule to remember is that any check made in d20 games – whether it is a Perform check to see how well your dancing went down at the feast or a ranged attack roll made to shoot a Hyrkanian bow – is made by rolling one twenty-sided die and adding the appropriate modifier found on your character sheet. For Perform checks, simply add the character's Perform skill bonus. For ranged attack rolls, add his ranged attack bonus and so on. The total of this roll is made against a target number, usually called a Difficulty Class (DC). If the total of the roll equals or exceeds this number, the character has succeeded in the action being attempted.

That, in a nutshell, is what the system of *Conan the Roleplaying Game* is all about.

d%: Percentile dice work a little differently. Generate a number between one and 100 by rolling two different ten-sided dice. One, which is designated before the roll, is the 'tens' digit. The other is the 'ones' digit. Two zeros represent 100.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, you can be a mighty barbarian, stalking the frozen North for vengeance, a lithe desert nomad, determined to forge the tribes into a

mighty alliance or a beautiful yet fell sorceress seeking the knowledge of the ancients.

THE PLAYERS' ROLE

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, players portray characters within the world of Hyboria. They are the heroes, the central focus of the story and game. Through their actions their characters can rise to greatness or fall to ruin.

THE GAMES MASTER'S ROLE

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, Games Masters are the storytellers. They portray the world of Hyboria both for and with their players, rule on the actions of the characters and present obstacles and challenges for them to test their mettle.

CREATING A CHARACTER

Review the chapters on Characters, Skills, Feats and Equipment, then follow the steps below to create a character:

- 1) Determine your concept. You should come up with your idea for your character in consultation with the other players and the Games Master.
- 2) Roll ability scores.
- 3) Choose class and race.
- 4) Assign and adjust ability scores.
- 5) Determine class and race features.
- 6) Pick skills and record them, including benefits from class, race and ability scores.
- 7) Select starting feats.
- 8) Select your equipment, either individually or from one of the equipment packages.
- 9) Finalise your character, including personalising the attributes to fully detail your Hyborian hero.

ABILITY SCORES

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, abilities determine the physical and mental characteristics of a character. Any of the methods below may be used to generate characters. players and Games Masters should agree beforehand on which method is to be used for all characters.

Standard Generation Method: To generate a set of ability scores for a character, roll 4d6 and discard the die with the lowest face value. This will create a score

between three (all four dice rolling ones) and 18 (three of the four dice coming up as sixes). Being able to remove the lowest number inclines the average value of each score and tends to create characters with higher than average abilities. Repeat this procedure five times. Once six values have been generated in this way, either assign them in the order rolled to the six corresponding ability scores or place them in any order desired until all six numbers have been used.

Heroic Character Generation: This variant creates heroes with high scores to simulate the characters' positions as exceptions to both the laws of nature and common humanity. While there is still some room for low scores in this method, each character created with it will generally have at least one very high ability and potentially more. Ability scores start at a value of eight and get a bonus equal to 1d10, rolled separately for each statistic. After generation, the values can be moved between the different categories. This method is very flexible but it can result in more powerful characters than any other generation variant, because characters cannot start with any ability penalties greater than -1.

Point Buy Generation: This variant is for players who have a very specific character concept in mind, or who dislike blind fortune having such an influence over



character creation. The character's ability scores begin at eight but no dice are used in this method at all. Instead, the player has a pool of 28 points with which to buy statistics. Each additional ability score point above eight costs one point, with scores above 14 costing two pool points per ability point to raise beyond that value. Optionally, dropping a score below eight gives one pool point for every ability score point below eight. Scores cannot be reduced below three or above 18. For Heroic point buy, give 32 points instead of 28.





ABILITY MODIFIERS

Score	Modifier
1	-5
2-3	-4
4-5	-3
6-7	-2
8-9	-1
10-11	0
12-13	+1
14-15	+2
16-17	+3
18-19	+4
20-21	+5
22-23	+6
24-25	+7
and so on...	

ABILITY MODIFIERS

Each ability, after changes made because of race, has a modifier ranging from -5 to +5. The Ability Modifiers table (see overleaf) shows the modifier for each score.

The modifier is the number that is applied to the die roll when a character tries to do something related to that ability. The modifier is also used with some numbers that are not die rolls. A positive modifier is called a bonus and a negative modifier is called a penalty.

THE ABILITIES

Each ability partially describes a character and affects some of his actions.

STRENGTH (STR)

Strength measures a character's muscle and physical power. This ability is especially important for barbarians and soldiers because it helps them prevail in combat. Strength also limits the amount of equipment a character can carry.

Apply a character's Strength modifier to:

- Melee attack rolls.
- Damage rolls when using a melee weapon or a thrown weapon, including a sling. *Exceptions:* off-hand attacks receive only one-half a character's Strength bonus, while two-handed attacks receive one and a half times the Strength bonus.
- Climb, Jump and Swim checks. These are the skills that have Strength as their key ability.
- Strength checks, for breaking down doors and the like.
- Parry Defence to fend off the blows of your enemies.

DEXTERITY (DEX)

Dexterity measures hand-eye co-ordination, agility, reflexes and balance. This ability is most important for thieves and pirates but it is also high on the list for characters who typically wear light or medium armour and who fight using the Finesse style.

Apply a character's Dexterity modifier to:

- Ranged attack rolls, including those for attacks made with bows, crossbows, javelins, throwing axes and other ranged weapons.
- Attack rolls when using finesse combat, in which you aim to bypass armour by striking through chinks and gaps.
- Initiative checks, to see who acts first.
- Reflex saving throws, for avoiding traps and other attacks that you can escape by moving quickly.
- Balance, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, Open Lock, Ride, Sleight of Hand, Tumble and Use Rope checks. These are the skills that have Dexterity as their key ability.
- If a character has a Dexterity bonus, apply it to Dodge Defence to avoid incoming attacks.
- If a character has a Dexterity penalty, apply it to Defence at all times.

CONSTITUTION (CON)

Constitution represents a character's health and stamina. A Constitution bonus increases a character's Hit points, so the ability is important for all classes.

Apply a character's Constitution modifier to:

- Each roll of a Hit Die, though a penalty can never drop a result below one. That is, a character always gains at least one hit point each time he advances in level.
- Fortitude saving throws, for resisting poison, massive damage and similar threats.



- ✱ Concentration checks. Concentration is a skill that is important to sorcerers and has Constitution as its key ability.
- ✱ If a character's Constitution score changes enough to alter his Constitution modifier, the character's Hit points also increase or decrease accordingly.

INTELLIGENCE (INT)

Intelligence determines how well a character learns and reasons. This ability is important for any character who wants to have a wide assortment of skills.

Apply a character's Intelligence modifier to:

- ✱ The number of languages a character knows at the start of the game.
- ✱ The number of skill points gained each level. A character always gains at least one skill point per level, even if his Intelligence modifier is zero or a negative value.
- ✱ Appraise, Craft, Decipher Script, Disable Device, Forgery, Knowledge and Search checks. These are the skills that have Intelligence as their key ability.

Animals have an Intelligence score of one or two. A creature of humanlike intelligence has a score of at least three.

WISDOM (WIS)

Wisdom describes a character's willpower, common sense, perception and intuition. While Intelligence represents your ability to analyse information, Wisdom represents being in tune with and aware of your surroundings. For a character to have acute senses he must have a high score in Wisdom. Every creature has a Wisdom score.

Apply a character's Wisdom modifier to:

- ✱ Will saving throws, for negating the effect of hypnotism and other mind-affecting sorceries.
- ✱ Heal, Listen, Profession, Sense Motive, Spot and Survival checks. These are the skills that have Wisdom as their key ability.

CHARISMA (CHA)

Charisma measures a character's force of personality, persuasiveness, personal magnetism, ability to lead and physical attractiveness. This ability represents actual strength of personality, not merely how you are perceived by others in a social setting. Every creature has a Charisma score.

Apply a character's Charisma modifier to:

- ✱ Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Intimidate and Perform checks. These are the skills that have Charisma as their key ability.
- ✱ Checks that represent attempts to influence others.

When an ability score changes, all attributes associated with that score change accordingly. The sole exception is that a character does not retroactively get additional skill points for previous levels if he increases his Intelligence.

CHANGING ABILITY SCORES

In the original Howard stories, Conan changes perceptibly over the years. Even as a middle-aged king he has lost none of his youthful strength, speed and vitality and has gained enormously in tactical ability, education, leadership qualities and common sense. He is often capable of what would seem to be superhuman actions to the weak folk of a later age, such as raising a vast block of stone above his head. Time and again he demonstrates himself to be the fastest and strongest hero of his times. Player Characters in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* can become similarly powerful if they survive as long as Conan.

As there is relatively little permanent magic available to benefit characters in the Hyborian Age and as characters should mature in most respects as they become more experienced, characters in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* may increase their ability scores as follows:

- ✱ At 4th level and every four levels thereafter (8th, 12th, 16th and 20th levels) each character gains a permanent +1 increase to any one of his ability scores, as selected by the player.
- ✱ At 6th level and every four levels thereafter (10th, 14th and 18th levels) each character gains a permanent +1 increase to *all* his ability scores.

ADVANCED CHARACTERS

1st level characters are young and untried adventurers who have just completed basic training in their chosen professions. A 1st level barbarian is a young brave, hot-blooded and unseasoned. A 1st level pirate is a lowly deckswab, eager to make his first fortune. A 1st level noble has barely come of age and is still not worthy





to inherit the authority that is his birthright. Conan, for example, was probably only first or second level when he first braved *The Tower of the Elephant*.

Instead of starting out at the beginning of a character's career, the Games Master may choose to start the campaign with higher-level characters. 4th level characters, for example, are more established and are already a cut above average men. A 4th level nomad, for instance, is one of the finest warriors in a warband; a 4th level soldier has been on the front lines of a battlefield several times.

8th level characters are skilled adventurers, famed across the land. At this level, characters can be dropped into any land or any danger and have a good chance of survival. An 8th level scholar has mastered three different forms of magic and can invoke potent magics like demon-summoning. An 8th level thief can kill even the strongest man with a single well-placed blow and has the skills to sneak through a whole temple full of worshippers without being seen.

12th or higher level characters are exceedingly rare – these are legendary figures whose deeds will be remembered for generations to come.

NONABILITIES

Some fell creatures lack certain ability scores. These creatures do not have an ability score of 0—they lack the ability altogether. The modifier for a nonability is +0. Other effects of nonabilities are detailed below.

STRENGTH

Any creature that can physically manipulate other objects has at least 1 point of Strength. A creature with no Strength score can't exert force, usually because it has no physical body or because it doesn't move. The creature automatically fails Strength checks. If the creature can attack, it uses finesse combat (see page 171).

DEXTERITY

Any creature that can move has at least 1 point of Dexterity. A creature with no Dexterity score can't move. If it can perform actions (such as casting spells), it applies its Intelligence modifier to initiative checks instead of a Dexterity modifier. The creature automatically fails Reflex saves and Dexterity checks.

CONSTITUTION

Any living creature has at least 1 point of Constitution. A creature with no Constitution has no body or no metabolism. It is immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless the effect works on objects or is harmless. The creature is also immune to ability damage, ability drain and automatically fails Constitution checks. A creature with no Constitution never tires.

INTELLIGENCE

Any creature that can think, learn, or remember has at least 1 point of Intelligence. A creature with no Intelligence score is mindless, an automaton operating on simple instincts or programmed instructions. It has immunity to mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects) and automatically fails Intelligence checks.

Mindless creatures do not gain feats or skills, although they may have bonus feats or racial skill bonuses.

WISDOM

Any creature that can perceive its environment in any fashion has at least 1 point of Wisdom. Anything with no Wisdom score is an object, not a creature. Anything without a Wisdom score also has no Charisma score.

CHARISMA

Any creature capable of telling the difference between itself and things that are not itself has at least 1 point of Charisma. Anything with no Charisma score is an object, not a creature. Anything without a Charisma score also has no Wisdom score.



Peoples of the Hyborian Age

Native rogues were the dominant element – dark-skinned, dark-eyed Zamorians, with daggers at their girdles and guile in their hearts. But there were wolves of half a dozen outland nations there as well. There was a giant Hyperborean renegade, taciturn, dangerous, with a broadsword strapped to his great gaunt frame – for men wore steel openly in the Maul. There was a Shemitish counterfeiter, with his hook nose and curled blue-black beard. There was a bold-eyed Brythunian wench, sitting on the knee of a tawny-haired Gunderman – a wandering mercenary soldier, a deserter from some defeated army.

– *The Tower of the Elephant*

The Hyborian Age is awash with colourful and unique cultures and civilisations both alien and yet strangely familiar. The peoples of Conan's world, from the hardy men of Nordheim's glacial wastes to the desert-dwelling peoples of Hyrkania and the ebon-skinned tribes hidden amid the verdant jungles of the Black Kingdoms, have learned to adapt to their different homelands. Each has overcome the challenges of geography and environment to become master of its own lands.

CHARACTER RACES

A great variety of humans people the land during the Hyborian Age and there is a still greater variety of cultures. Though *Conan the Roleplaying Game* does not include any non-human races as player Characters, it does present several variant human races. These are not intended to directly emulate or stereotype any real-world peoples or nations. They are presented only to simulate the various cultures and peoples described by Robert E. Howard in the Conan stories.

Many of the human races of Hyboria are categorised by particular stereotypes. As such,

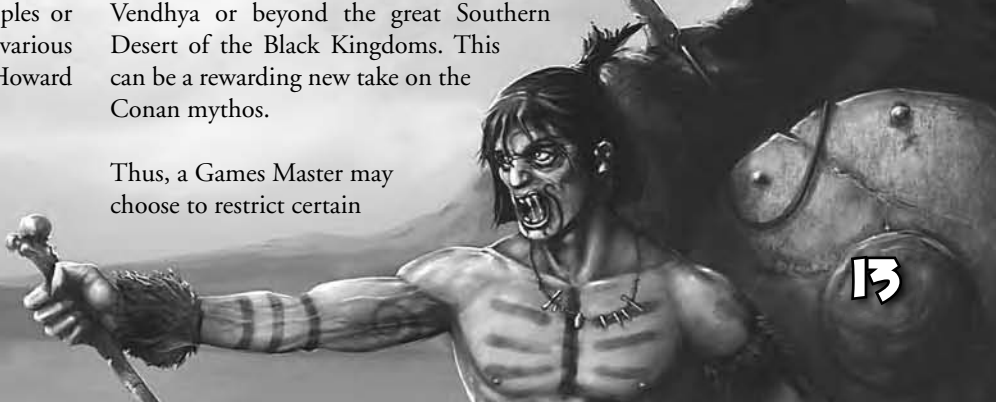
many have a favoured class (see page 14) and some advantages and qualities that make them distinct from other cultures and races.

This chapter provides only a brief overview of the races. As they are all essentially human, little description is needed and much can be inferred from the various special abilities and attributes of the different races. However, it is recommended race selection be made in conjunction with reading Chapter 10: Gazetteer. It is not necessary to read the chapter in its entirety, and indeed the Games Master may wish to restrict players from viewing some of the less well-known regions, but it is certainly useful to read the main entry for the region from which the character hails.

THE DOMINANCE OF THE HYBORIAN KINGDOMS

As might be expected from a game set in 'The Hyborian Age,' the dominant people throughout the western lands are the Hyborians. In most *Conan the Roleplaying Game* campaigns, the majority of the player Characters will either be Hyborians or from among the peoples living closest to the Hyborian kingdoms; that is, the Cimmerians, Shemites, Zamorians and Zingarans. However, the rules certainly do not preclude characters from other realms and the occasional Hyrkanian archer, Stygian sorcerer or corsair of the Southern Islands can enhance any campaign, even those set deep in the civilised Hyborian kingdoms of Aquilonia and Nemedia. Adventurers in the Hyborian age travel around a great deal. Conan himself, though a Cimmerian by birth, visits more or less every country in the world during the course of his adventures. Some Games Masters may prefer to start their *Conan the Roleplaying Game* campaigns far from the Hyborian lands, in distant Vendhya or beyond the great Southern Desert of the Black Kingdoms. This can be a rewarding new take on the Conan mythos.

Thus, a Games Master may choose to restrict certain





character races from play, depending on his plans for the campaign. For example, if a Games Master has a detailed campaign set in and around the Himelian mountains based around inter-tribal raids and the barbaric politics of the region, he may require all the characters to be Himelian tribesmen. Alternatively, he may need only one character to be a Himelian, so as to have at least some local connection, with the rest being exiles or wanderers from other lands. In most cases, it should be possible to allow a more or less free choice of race at the character generation stage, due to the aforementioned tendency of adventurers to wander. The Conan stories often feature mercenary or bandit groups comprising rag-tag bands of freelancers from all over the world. Certain organisations are almost invariably diverse, including pirate bands, Kozaks and Free Companies. See Chapter 11: Gazetteer for more information about such bands, as well as more on the various places and people of the Hyborian Age.

RACIAL DESCRIPTIONS

Each race has a paragraph or two of introductory description, then some notes on culture, religion and typical character names. The entry for religion should be read in conjunction with the entry for religion under the character class chosen by the player before a god or goddess (if any) is selected from those presented in Chapter 11: Religion in the Hyborian Age. The names section gives names drawn directly from the Conan stories and includes suggestions for similar names. The culture section describes the races' cultures briefly and includes for further reference the real-world cultures (if any) on which Howard based them.

BACKGROUND SKILLS

Each major race or variant race gains three or four Background Skills, as defined in this section. For each Background Skill in a racial Background Skill listing, a character of that race gains two ranks of the appropriate skill, whether or not it would usually be a class skill for him. Everyone gets Knowledge (local to represent the appropriate general knowledge picked up during a character's childhood.

For example, as a Southern Islander, Abaku gains the following Background Skills: Perform (dance), Profession (sailor) and Survival. He is a 1st level thief. Although Perform (dance) and Profession are thief class skills, Survival is not. Despite

this, Abaku has two ranks in each of Perform (dance), Profession (sailor) and Survival before he allocates his starting skill points.

Note that some races have bonuses to certain skills as well as having them as background skills. For example, a Pelishtim Shemite has a +2 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (arcana) skill checks and also has Knowledge (arcana) as a background skill, so a starting character from this race would have two ranks in Knowledge (arcana) *as well as* a +2 circumstance bonus to uses of the skill.

FAVOURERD CLASSES

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, each race has one or more favoured classes. Favoured classes grant bonus feats. A character who gains levels in the favoured class for his race gains one bonus feat at 1st level in that class, one at 5th level and one at 10th level. Note that it is always the character's class level that is considered for purposes of favoured class bonus feats, not his total character level.

For example, Garm is a Pictish barbarian. At 1st level he gains a bonus feat for belonging to his race's favoured class. Some time later, he also learns the ways of a shaman and becomes a 3rd level barbarian/2nd level scholar (Pictish shaman). Though he is now a 5th level character, he does not gain another favoured class bonus feat until he achieves 5th level in the barbarian class.

For races with two or more favoured classes, add a character's level in the favoured classes together to determine his favoured class level.

For example, Ankh-af-na-Khonsu is a Stygian noble. At 1st level he gains a bonus feat for being of his race's favoured class. Some time later he takes initiation into the priesthood of Set and learns sorcery, so that he becomes a 3rd level noble/2nd level scholar (priest of Set). Note that scholar is another favoured class for Stygians. Ankh-af-na-Khonsu adds the two class levels together to determine his favoured class level, which is 5th level. This allows him to gain another bonus feat.

PROHIBITED CLASSES

Certain races never produce members of a particular class, at least at low levels. Any class listed as a prohibited class for a particular race may never be selected as the initial, 1st level class for a character of that race. At the Games Master's discretion, a character may later be permitted to gain levels in a prohibited class, so long as he has sufficient opportunity.

For example, Cimmerians never produce characters of the Noble, Scholar, Pirate or Nomad



classes. Cimmerian chieftains are simply high-level barbarians and as a land-locked nation with no steppes or deserts, Cimmeria does not have the terrain to allow for either piracy or nomadic life. Likewise, there can be no Cimmerian scholars because there is no formalised system of teaching in Cimmeria; the country does not even have the shamans and primitive priests that might be expected in other barbaric nations, because Cimmerian gods are not worshipped. However, a Cimmerian who travels to other lands and has an opportunity to learn the skills of the appropriate profession may one day gain levels in these prohibited classes, just as Conan began as a barbarian and thief but later sailed with pirates, rode with nomads and even became a noble of Aquilonia.

LANGUAGES

Each race has one or two Automatic Languages and several Bonus Languages listed at the end of the race entry. Every character learns the Automatic Language or Languages for his race and may select a number of racial bonus languages, which he also knows, equal to his Intelligence modifier plus three, to a minimum of one. A character who learns all the racial bonus languages and still has some bonus languages left to learn may choose from any language in the game.

Furthermore, every character learns one new language at 1st level and every other level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th and so

on). This is known as a level bonus language and represents the necessity for all adventuring characters to rapidly learn the local language wherever they go. There is no 'common tongue' in the Hyborian Age, so all travellers typically know a large number of languages.

The Games Master usually selects this level bonus language for all characters. He most commonly chooses the language spoken in the area in which the scenario takes place.

Finally, it is always possible for a character to learn a new language through roleplay and effort. Typically, approximately two months are needed to learn a new language from scratch but someone who simply immerses himself in a culture that speaks the language exclusively can accomplish this in a shorter time.

BONUS FEATS

Some races allow players to select bonus feats. Unless otherwise specified, when selecting these ignore any prerequisite that requires a minimum of +1 in any given area. For example, the Dodge feat ordinarily requires a minimum Dex of 13 and a Dodge bonus of +1. When selected as a racial bonus feat, it requires only a minimum Dex of 13. Similarly, the Hexer feat requires the Curses sorcery style and a magic attack bonus of +1; when selected as a racial bonus feat, it requires only the Curses sorcery style.

MAJOR AND MINOR RACES OF THE HYBORIAN AGE

Major Races	Associated Variant Races	Nations
Cimmerian	—	Cimmeria
Himelian Tribesman	Wazuli	Kosala
Hyborian	Argossean/Barachan, Bossonian, Gunderman, Hyperborean, Khauran*, Tauran	Aquilonia, Nemedia, Ophir
Hyrkanian or Turanian	—	Turan, Hyrkania
Khitan	—	Khitai
Kushite or Northern Black Kingdom Tribesman	Chaga, Ghanata	Kush, Black Kingdoms, Punt
Nordheimer	—	Vanaheim, Asgard
Pict	—	Pictland
Shemite	Pelishtim, Meadow Shemite	Shem
Southern Islander or Southern Black Kingdom Tribesman	Darfari	Southern Isles, Darfar, Black Kingdoms
Stygian	—	Stygia
Vendhyan	—	Vendhya
Zamorian	—	Zamora
Zingaran	—	Zingara

* Non-Player Character race only. See page 351 in Chapter 13 for game statistics for the Khauran.



VARIANT RACES

Several of the major races include variations for specific regions. For example, the Shemites are generally renowned for their mastery of the desert. However, the Meadow Shemites actually live a pastoral life in their great Meadow Cities and so use the Meadow Shemite variant. Note that variant races are not usually given such detailed descriptions as their major races, since in most cases their culture, religion and names will be similar or identical to those of the major race. If you want to play a Meadow Shemite, you have all the bonuses and penalties of being a Shemite plus all the bonuses and penalties of being a Meadow Shemite.

Important Note: Variant races use all of the base race bonuses and penalties *in addition* to their own, except when specified otherwise in the descriptions. However, when variant races specify favoured or restricted classes that differ from those of the major race, these variant race classes supersede those given for the major race.

CIMMERIAN

Cimmerians are descended from the ancient Atlanteans. Their skin is on the dark side of fair and tans easily if ever they leave the gloomy mountains of their home. They have dark hair and blue or grey eyes. They are tall, physically powerful and very fierce, and are regarded by most Hyborians as one of the most barbaric races in the world. Unlike most Hyborian women the Cimmerian women fight alongside their menfolk, even in full-blown war. Cimmerians tend to be direct to the point of bluntness.

Culture: Cimmerian culture is survivalist and barbaric. Cimmerians are a race of fierce moody hill-men, dwelling as they do in a harsh, dreary and cloudy land. The Cimmerians despise weakness and the softness of Hyborian civilisation. They are feuding and war-like.

Names: Cimmerian names are based on old Irish or Scottish Celtic names, such as Conan. Here are some examples of names Howard intended to use for Cimmerians in stories he never completed. These names are presumably male: Eithriall, Eanbotha, Rotheachta, Giallachadh, Cruaidh, Eamhua, Cumal. Suggestions: (male) Amergin, Agh, Aodh, Brian, Cael, Cait, Cathal, Conor, Cuchullin, Cul, Comala, Daol, Dima, Doon, Duncan, Fingal, Finn, Fionn, Hydallan, Moghcorb, Morne, Murdoch, Oscur, Ossian, Rayne, Sláine and Usnach. The

'That man is no Hyborian!' exclaimed Xaltotun.

'No; he is a Cimmerian, one of those wild tribesmen who dwell in the gray hills of the north.'

'I fought his ancestors of old,' muttered Xaltotun. 'Not even the kings of Acheron could conquer them.'

'They still remain a terror to the nations of the south,' answered Orastes. 'He is a true son of that savage race, and has proved himself, thus far, unconquerable.'

— *The Hour of the Dragon*

following names are female: Credhe, Deirdre, Dersagrena, Mae, Melilcoma and Ros-Crana.

Religion: Crom, 'Lord of the Mound,' is the chief god of the gloomy Cimmerians. Others include Lir, the god of knowledge, Mannanan, the god of poetry and travel, Morrigan, the goddess of war, Badb, the goddess of fire and fury, Macha and Nemain 'The Venomous.' The Cimmerians do not truly worship these gods, believing that the gods despise weaklings who call on them for help. Creating the Cimmerian race was gift enough. As a result, Cimmerians are often sceptical of more demonstrative forms of worship.

Racial Features: All of the following are Cimmerian racial features:

- ✱ +2 Strength, -2 Intelligence: Cimmerians are a naturally tall and strong race, made stronger still, so they believe, by the gifts of Crom. Though many have a keen natural cunning, few Cimmerians are capable of a great deal of book learning, nor indeed do they have much opportunity for such education.
- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all Will saving throws: Courage even in the face of great adversity is another of Crom's gifts.
- ✱ +2 racial bonus to all Climb checks: Cimmerians are renowned as the finest climbers in the world. Most will have climbed at least one peak that non-Cimmerians would regard as impassable before even leaving their homeland.



✱ +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks made in temperate or cold hills and mountains: Cimmerians are masters of their environment in every respect.

✱ -2 racial penalty to all Diplomacy checks and verbal-based Bluff checks: Cimmerians are famously blunt and direct in their speech, a habit that has been known to get them into trouble on any number of occasions. Note that this penalty does not apply to Bluff checks based on body language, as Cimmerians are often excellent at feinting in combat and other non-verbal uses of Bluff. The natural cunning of their savage race has caused many a civilised opponent to fall to their tricks in combat.

✱ Cimmerians may not have any religion other than Crom and the Cimmerian pantheon and may never gain any benefit from worshipping that or another pantheon. Crom has no priests and offers no assistance to his worshippers, other than gifting them with mighty thews and courage at birth. He despises weaklings and expects his Cimmerians to stand alone against the world, without need for either gods or demons. If a Cimmerian ever does worship a non-Cimmerian god, he loses the gifts of Crom: his +2 bonus to Strength and +1 racial bonus to Will saving throws. Whether Crom or indeed any of the other gods is real is a philosophical point and beyond the scope of these rules; the point is that the Cimmerians, at least, believe it to be so.

Background Skills: Climb, Knowledge (local), Move Silently and Survival.

Favoured Class: Barbarian

Prohibited Classes: Noble, Nomad, Pirate, Scholar

Automatic Languages: Cimmerian

Bonus Languages: Nordheimer, Pictish, Aquilonian, Hyperborean

HIMELIAN TRIBESMAN

Between Vendhya and Hyrkania, far beyond the ken of most western folk, a vast and harsh mountain range rises, inhabited by a number of small tribes. These tribes consist of tall, hairy hill-men who are very strong and fierce. They are disdainful of civilised standards of

politeness and good behaviour, though many adhere to a barbaric code of honour. The tribes include the Afghulis, Irakzai, Galzai, Dagozai, Zhaibari and Khurakzai, among others.

Culture: Himelian culture resembles the tribal lifestyle of Afghanistan and northern India and is survivalist and barbaric in nature. The Vendhyans seem to refer to the lands facing their kingdom as Ghulistan; possibly there is an ancestor tribe called the Ghulis of which these modern tribes are branches. Some Himelian tribesmen are a curious race of intelligent, though stunted, aborigines, conquered by the Hyrkanians on their westward drift. These would correspond more to a Tibetan style culture.

Names: Himelian names are essentially a mix of Arabic, Mongol and Hunnish names. Modern Afghani names provide good, exotic-sounding bases for naming Himelian characters. Examples (male): Yar Afzal, Yateli. Suggestions: Ahmad, Asad, Dost, Faiz, Mohan, Shujah and Zemar for male characters, Anahita, Faryaal, Ghezal, Maryam and Samirah for female characters.

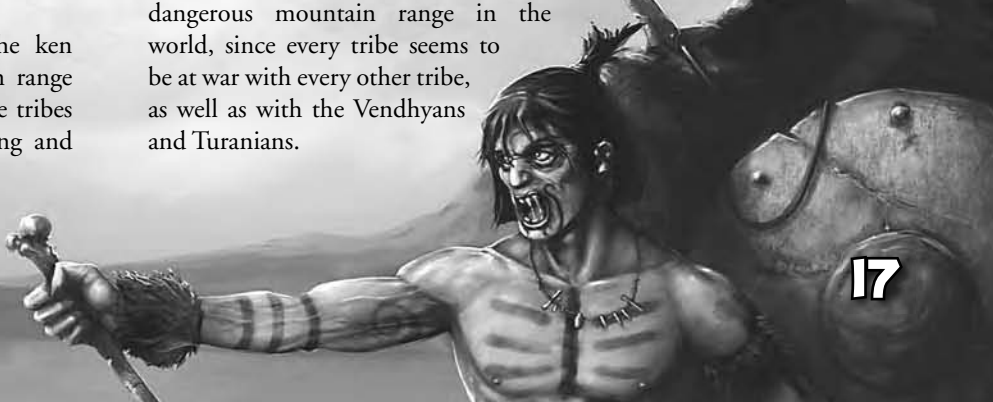
Religion: The savage Himelian tribesmen worship primitive totemistic deities and demons, such as Hanuman, the Ape God, in appeasement of the carnivorous apes of the area. Some may also worship Asura.

Racial Features: All of the following are Himelian racial features:

✱ +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks made in any hills and mountains: The Himelian tribes know every inch of their native hills and rarely descend from them except to raid the richer lands below.

✱ +1 racial bonus to all Hide and Move Silently checks: Though the tribes are occasionally led to open battle by a particularly charismatic chieftain, they prefer to attack their enemies with stealthy raids and midnight assassinations.

✱ +2 racial bonus to starting hit points: The Himelians are possibly the most dangerous mountain range in the world, since every tribe seems to be at war with every other tribe, as well as with the Vendhyans and Turanians.





✱ -2 racial penalty to save against hypnotism of any kind: This is for cultural reasons. The folk of the East have a long tradition of tales and superstitions regarding the power of hypnotism, which tends to reinforce the power of the hypnotist.

Background Skills: Climb, Hide and Move Silently.

Favoured Class: Barbarian

Prohibited Classes: Noble, Pirate, Temptress

Automatic Languages: Afghuli

Bonus Languages: Vendhyan, Hyrkanian, Iranistani

WAZULI

The Wazuli are typically the first hill tribe a traveller journeying north out of Vendhya in the night will encounter, for they are largely nocturnal and prefer to do their raiding during the hours of darkness. Like other Himelian tribesmen, they are a hardy and usually honourable folk, with strong traditions of loyalty and hospitality.

Wazuli culture, names and religion are similar to those of other Himelian tribesmen.

Racial Features: The Wazuli should be treated as standard Himelian tribesmen except as follows:

✱ Bonus feat: Eyes of the Cat: The Wazuli have probably the best night vision of any human peoples. They are the only military force to ever ambush Conan himself successfully, thanks to their superior knowledge of the terrain and unsurpassed low-light vision. They need not meet the usual prerequisites for the feat.

✱ +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Spot and Search checks made during conditions of darkness or dim light; that is, when they need to use their Eyes of the Cat feat.

✱ -1 morale penalty to all attack rolls and skill checks made during the hours of daylight: The Wazuli are so close to being nocturnal that they function poorly during the daytime.

Favoured Class: Barbarian

Prohibited Classes: Noble, Pirate, Temptress

Automatic Languages: Afghuli

Bonus Languages: Vendhyan, Hyrkanian, Iranistani

HYBORIAN

The Hyborian peoples are descended from the worshippers of the god Bori. These barbaric ancestors swept out of the north three millennia ago, destroying the ancient empire of Acheron and conquering all in their path. The Hyborian lands are Nemedia, Ophir, Aquilonia, Hyperborea, Argos, Corinthia, the Border Kingdoms, the Baracha Islands, Brythunia, the Bossonian Marches, Koth, Khauran and Khoraja. Note that in Khauran, the ruling caste should be treated as Hyborians but the commoners are a separate sub-race suitable for Non-Player Characters only (see page 351).

As a general rule, Hyborians identify themselves not as Hyborians per se but according to the nation from which they come. Thus, Player Characters are encouraged to call



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themselves Nemedians, Ophireans and so on, rather than simply 'Hyborians.' The Bori-worshipping barbarians of thousands of years ago have long since become highly civilised and sophisticated folk with strong nations of their own and would be scarcely recognisable to those who knew the Hyborians of old.

The original Hyborians were tawny-haired and grey-eyed, though by the time of Conan intermarriage has diversified this appearance considerably.

Culture: For the most part, culture in the Hyborian kingdoms is similar to that of the real-world medieval European countries, though some aspects, particularly in Nemedia, are more reminiscent of ancient Roman culture. The nations are run on the feudal system. This has often led to decadence as the nobility spend their time hunting and idling, unconcerned with the welfare of their subjects. As the nations have developed, the unity of the Hyborians has dissipated so that each kingdom has its own features, as follows:

Aquilonia: Together with its rival, Nemedia, Aquilonia is the most advanced, wealthy and powerful of the Hyborian kingdoms and its people are correspondingly proud. It most closely resembles Medieval France. The people of southern Aquilonia have mixed with the brown Zingarans until black hair and brown eyes are dominant in Poitain, the southernmost province. This is an area of rich farmland.

Brythunia: We know little of Brythunia, save that its women folk seem to be highly prized by slavers. There is evidence of a pastoral culture. The eastern Brythunians have intermarried with the dark-skinned Zamorians.

Corinthia: The many city-states of Corinthia bring to mind the city-states of Italy and the corresponding inter-state rivalries and espionage. Corinthia seems to be one of the more culturally advanced areas, with a developed nobility and priesthood.

Khauran: Kothic adventurers carved Khauran out of the lands of Shem and Khauran's culture reflects its beginnings. Fiercely independent, while maintaining many Kothic traditions and links, the people of Khauran fear that Koth will absorb the valuable kingdom. Its tiny fields and orchards yield three crops a year.

Koth: Koth, a vast meadowland north of Shem, is one of the oldest Hyborian kingdoms. It is famed for its metalworkers, partly due to the natural resources of its volcanic region of Khrosha. Kothic culture has suffered from the subtle admixture of Shemite and Stygian strains.

The simple ways of the Hyborians have been modified by the sensual, luxurious, yet despotic habits of the East. Koth uses slaves. Its capital is Khorshemish, which is known as the Queen of the South.

Nemedia: Nemedia is easily the second greatest Hyborian kingdom and maybe in the past even surpassed Aquilonia, its neighbour and rival. While Nemedia's people live in relative poverty, its wealthy citizens have the leisure to collect artefacts in museums. Built on the ruins of ancient Valusia and once a part of the sorcerous kingdom of Acheron, Nemedia has many hidden ruins that might contain fearful horrors.

Ophir: Ophir is a tapering wedge between the border of Aquilonia and the vast southern kingdom of Koth. It was probably part of Koth before it claimed independence back in the days of Acheron. The meadowlands of Ophir produce fine armies of gilt-mailed knights and warriors, suggesting a land of great mineral wealth, with probably the same strata as can be found in Koth. Once dominated by Acheron, Ophir seems to have taken the worst elements of Zamorian thievery and Shemite double-cross. It seems sometimes to be allied with Koth and sometimes with Aquilonia.

Names: The tribal nature of the early Hyborians means that there is no one overall naming style, although the civilised nations tend toward Latin style names.

Aquilonia: Aquilonian names tend to have a Latin air to them. Examples: (male) Amalric, Arpello, Athemides, Attelius, Balthus, Brant, Brocas, Drago, Dion, Dirk, Emilius, Epheus, Epeus, Epemitreus, Galannus, Galter, Gault, Gorm, Gromel, Hagar Hadrathus, Hakon, Jon, Karlus, Namedides, Nestor, Numedides, Otho, Pallantides, Prospero, Publius, Rinaldo, Scavonus, Servius, Soractus, Strom, Thasperas, Thespius, Tiberias, Tiberio, Trocero, Valannus, Valerian, Valerus, Valerius, Vilerus, Volmana; (female) Valeria, Zelata.

Brythunia: Brythunian names are Italian and Teutonic in tone. Examples: (male) Aratus; (female) Hildico, Natala.

Corinthia: Corinthian names tend to have a Latin, Byzantine or Italian air to them. Examples: (male) Athicus, Ivanos, Joka, Kalanthes, Murilo, Nabonidus, Petreus; (female) Muriela.

Khauran: Khauran names resemble Kothic names. Examples: (male) Ashkhaur, Valerius, Zang, Krallides; (female) Salome, Taramis.





Khoraja: Khorajan names owe a lot to Koth, as some crossover of names suggests, though the hillmen have a more Shemite sound to their names, such as Shupras. Examples: (male) Khossus, Taurus, Thespides; (female) Vateesa, Yasmela.

Koth: Kothic names are Middle Eastern, Byzantine, Etruscan and Biblical in tone. Examples: (male) Akkutho, Almulric, Altaro, Arbanus, Constantius, Galacus, Khossus, Pelias, Sergius, Strabonus, Tsotha-lanti, Zorathus; (female) Lissa.

Nemedia: Nemeditians tend to have Greek/Italian names, though some are more Germanic. King Numa gave his name to the city of Numalia. Examples: (male) Alcemides, Altaro, Amalric, Arideus, Arus, Astreas, Aztias, Bragoras, Brocas, Demetrio, Dionus, Enaro, Kalanthes, Kallian, Nimes, Numa, Orastes, Petanius, Posthumo, Promero, Publico, Tarascus, Taurus; (female) Diana, Octavia, Zenobia.

Ophir: Ophir's culture is halfway between that of Shem and the Hyborian culture and the names reflect this; most are Latin but some Middle Eastern style names are included. Examples: (male) Amalrus, Chelkus, Fronto, Theteles; (female) Livia, Olivia, Tina.

Religion: The worship of Mitra is overwhelmingly predominant in the Hyborian nations.

Aquilonia: Initially worshippers of the Hyborian ancestor god Bori, the Aquilonians at some point adopted Mitra-worship as something close to a state religion. The worship of other gods seems to have been suppressed, at least until the reign of King Conan. One such 'secret' cult is the eastern religion of Asura, although most Aquilonians regard these cultists as demon worshippers and Asura on a par with Set. It is probable that Ibis is also worshipped in secret in Aquilonia.

Brythunia: Mitra-worship, perhaps mixed with pockets of reverence for Bori and even the Zamorian gods, seems most likely.

Corinthia: It seems likely that Corinthians worship Mitra, as well as the other Hyborian gods, though Shemite gods such as Anu are also tolerated.

Khauran: Khaurans are essentially Kothic in their religious practices and are Ishtar-worshippers.

Koth: Koth has long since abandoned the worship of Mitra, forgetting the universal Hyborian god and driving out the last of his worshippers some 900 years before the time of Conan. The Shemite gods such as Ishtar are worshipped with awe and fear, as are all the gods of Koth, a sign of Koth's intertwined history with Shem.

Ishtar was subtly changed in the transfer to Koth, with animal sacrifice taking over from human sacrifice.

Nemedia: Nemedia worships Mitra as chief divinity, although other cults, including the Cult of Ibis, are mentioned. In fact, Nemedia is a more religiously tolerant country than Aquilonia until Conan's reign. There are even atheist philosophers in Nemedia, known as the sceptics, who believe that there are neither gods nor any kind of life after death.

Ophir: Ophir worships the Shemite gods such as Ishtar, as well as Mitra.

Racial Features: All of the following are Hyborian racial features:

- ✱ **Adaptability:** A Hyborian may choose two skills that for him are always treated as class skills, whatever his character class. Furthermore, he gains a +2 competence bonus to all checks with those two skills. Hyborians are one of the most adaptable races, capable of turning their hands to almost any profession. This is largely a matter of cultural and economic sophistication; the highly developed and wealthy Hyborian nations provide their citizens with excellent opportunities for learning all manner of skills.
- ✱ **Weapon Familiarity:** Hyborians can wield greatswords as though they were martial weapons rather than exotic weapons.
- ✱ **+1 racial bonus to Fate Points** (see page 75): As members of the leading culture in the time of Conan, the Hyborians are not only adaptable but lucky too.

Background Skills: Knowledge (local) and any other four skills, as chosen by the player.

Favoured Class: All classes. A Hyborian gains a favoured class bonus feat at 1st level, 5th level and 10th level, whatever his class or combination of classes. His levels in all his character classes are added together to determine his favoured class level, even if he is a multiclass character.

Automatic Languages: The language of whichever Hyborian kingdom the character lives in. This will be Bossonian, Nemeditian, Aquilonian, Brythunian, Ophirean, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Kothic or Argossean.

Bonus Languages: Stygian, Nemeditian, Aquilonian, Bossonian, Brythunian, Ophirean, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Zingaran, Zamorian, Pictish, Kothic, Argossean, Shemitish.



ARGOSSEAN OR BARACHAN

The Argosseans were originally a Hyborian people, though they have intermarried with many other races, particularly the Zingarans and to a lesser extent the Shemites. Most are short and stocky. They make superb sailors, traders and pirates. Renegade Argossean sailors have colonised the Baracha Islands, turning them into one of the greatest havens for piracy in all the seas.

Culture: Argos is a country of two contrasting cultures. All the seaports are cosmopolitan, with the capital, Messantia, being the most open-minded of all, while the inland provinces are filled with farmers, craftsmen and labourers who are friendly enough but wary of strangers. Argos is a noted trading nation of sharp-eyed silk-clad merchants, not all of whom remain strictly within the law – smuggling and piracy are often tolerated. The law is said to be lax, although occasionally an example is made of foreigners. Argos is regarded as a proud and avaricious kingdom. The racial admixture with the Zingarans is more extensive than with the Shemites in the Argossean Hyborians. Argos and Zingara have an ancient feud that works itself out in their attempts to become the dominant sea nation. Zingaran pirates raid the coast of Argos, just as the Argosseans and Barachans raid Zingara. Argos allies itself with Shem on occasion.

Names: Argossean names are Italian or Greek in tone, though as it is a major trading country a mix of names is possible. Examples: (male) Demetrio, Ortho, Publio, Servio, Tito, Trancos. Suggestions: (female) Alcina, Danae, Demitrea, Larissa, Polyxene.

Religion: Like most Hyborian kingdoms, Argos's main god is Mitra. However, its nature as a cosmopolitan trading nation means that pockets of worship of the Shemite and Kothic gods are also tolerated.

Racial Features: All of the following are Argossean racial features:

- ✱ +2 racial bonus to all Gather Information, Profession (sailor), Balance and Use Rope checks: The arts of ferreting out information about trading opportunities and taking by piracy whatever opportunities they cannot take by trade have been in the Argossean blood in almost equal measure for generations.

Background Skills: Gather Information, Knowledge (local), Profession (sailor) or Survival, Balance and Use Rope.

Favoured Class: Pirate

Prohibited Classes: Nomad

BOSSONIAN

The yeomen of the Bossonian Marches are renowned the world over for their archery skills and stalwart, well-nigh unconquerable defence.

They are of medium height and complexion and have brown or grey eyes. They are descended from an aboriginal race that was conquered by a tribe of Hyborians early in the first ages of the Hyborian drift. Many have a strong if rough sense of justice; the civilised code of honour is common among the Bossonian soldiery. The Bossonians are generally quite closely allied with Aquilonia but often see service as mercenaries throughout the world.

Culture: The Bossonians live mainly by agriculture, in large walled villages and are part of the Aquilonian kingdom. They are hardy, stubborn, defensive fighters. Centuries of warfare against northern and western barbarians have caused them to evolve a type of defence that is almost impregnable. The Bossonian Marches form a bulwark between Aquilonia and the woods of the Pictish Wilderness in the west, Cimmeria to the north and the Border Kingdom in the east, curving crescent-like around to Zingara in the Southwest.





Names: Several Bossonians are specifically named, although it is safe to assume that Aquilonian names in general would also be common. For example (male) Gromel.

Religion: As with the Aquilonians, the Bossonians were once worshippers of Bori but in more recent years have taken up Mitra-worship.

Racial Features: All of the following are Bossonian racial features:

- ✿ +1 racial bonus to all attack rolls with the Bossonian longbow: The Bossonians practise daily with their powerful bows from an early age. They hone that practice with regular experience, holding off hordes of Picts and battling in the armies of the neighbouring kingdom of Aquilonia.
- ✿ +2 racial bonus to Defence when fighting defensively or using the total defence action: The Bossonian fortitude in defence is almost legendary.
- ✿ No racial bonus to Fate Points (see page 75): Unlike other Hyborians, Bossonians get no particular bonus to Fate Points.
- ✿ Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Bossonian Longbow: All Bossonians learn to wield Bossonian longbows, since all must be ready to defend their homes against the Picts at any time. However, they do not gain weapon familiarity with the greatsword, unlike most Hyborian races, as they traditionally field archers rather than knights.

Background Skills: Craft (bowyer) or Survival, Knowledge (local), any two other skills chosen by the player.

Favoured Class: Borderer or Soldier

Prohibited Classes: Barbarian, Noble, Nomad, Pirate

Automatic Languages: Bossonian

Bonus Languages: Nemedian, Aquilonian, Zingaran, Pictish, Argossean



pure-blooded descendants of the original Hyborian tribes. Though Gunderland is technically a province of Aquilonia, it was an independent kingdom for so long that the Gundermen do not truly consider themselves Aquilonians and likely never will. However, they march willingly to Aquilonia's wars and are regarded as the finest heavy infantry in the known world.

Culture: Gunderland is east of the Bossonian Marches, on the wild borders of Aquilonia, facing Cimmeria. It seems likely that like the Bossonians, Gundermen live mainly by agriculture in walled compounds. Only in the province of Gunderland, where the people keep no slaves, is the pure Hyborian stock found unblemished.

Names: The names of Gunderland are similar to those of Aquilonia. Example (male): Nestor.

Religion: Occasional Gundermen still worship the old Hyborian god-hero Bori, though most have converted to Mitra-worship along with the rest of Aquilonia.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Gundermen:

GUNDERMAN

Universally tawny-haired and grey-eyed, the Gundermen are very nearly

- ✱ +1 racial bonus to attack and damage rolls with a pike: Gunderland's regiments of pikemen are one of the major factors in Aquilonia's military strength.
- ✱ Martial Weapon Proficiency: Pike: Even the least combat-oriented Gundermen have at least some training with the pike.
- ✱ No racial bonus to Fate Points (see page 75): Unlike other Hyborians, Gundermen get no particular bonus to Fate Points.
- ✱ +1 morale bonus to all Will saving throws: Gundermen are possibly the most reliable soldiers in the world.

Background Skills: Craft (weaponsmith) or Knowledge (military tactics), Knowledge (local) and any two other skills chosen by the player.

Favoured Class: Soldier

Prohibited Classes: Nomad, Pirate

HYPERBOREAN

Many Hyperboreans are still tawny-haired and grey-eyed like the original Hyperborean tribe, though the influence of Nordheimer blood has been strong for hundreds of years, ever since Hyperborea was invaded by conquerors of Æsir stock. Since then, some have married or captured Hyrkansians, Æsir and Zamorian women, so Hyperboreans can have a variety of skin, eye and hair colourings. All tend to be gaunt, big-boned, violent and slow of speech. Hyperborea is probably the least civilised of the Hyborian kingdoms, with the nearby barbarians of Asgard and Cimmeria raiding the region sufficiently often that the Hyperboreans have had to retain a certain savagery themselves.

Culture: Superstition dominates the Hyperborean way of life, leading countries such as Aquilonia to consider the stubborn, somewhat savage race to be backward. The majority of Hyperboreans live a serf-like existence in stone-walled villages, where they eke out a minimalistic way of life from the poor soil and the misbegotten cattle and reindeer that make up their herds.

Names: Nordheimer names are most common.

Religion: Most Hyperboreans still worship the old Hyborian god-hero Bori.

Racial Features: All of the following are Hyperborean racial features:

- ✱ +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma: Hyperboreans have a great deal of endurance in their long yet rangy limbs. They are, however, somewhat lacking in the strength of character required to excel as leaders.
- ✱ -1 racial penalty to all Diplomacy, Gather Information and verbal-oriented Perform or Bluff checks: The slow, often plodding speech of the Hyperborean does not lend itself well to fancy orations, singing or con tricks. Note that the penalty to Bluff checks does not apply to purely non-verbal uses of Bluff, such as feinting in combat. Likewise, the penalty to Perform checks applies only to such uses as song, chant, poetry and acting, rather than musical instruments or juggling, for example.
- ✱ No racial bonus to Fate Points (see page 75): Unlike other Hyborians, Hyperboreans get no particular bonus to Fate Points.
- ✱ +2 racial bonus to all Intimidate checks: Hyperboreans are renowned for their strength and aggressive nature, which goes a long way towards overcoming their lack of charm when it comes to intimidating others.

Background Skills: Craft (stone) or Knowledge (arcana), Intimidate, Knowledge (local), any one other skill chosen by the player.

Favoured Class: Soldier

Prohibited Classes: Pirate

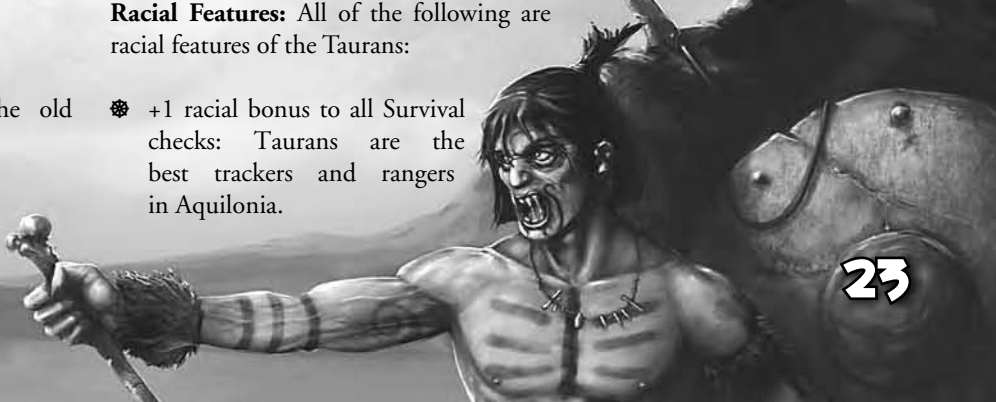
TAURAN

The Tauran region of Aquilonia is made up of a mixture of agricultural lands and wilderness and boasts no large settlements. Its people are regarded as somewhat backwards in comparison to the sophisticated and cosmopolitan Hyborians who live in the more densely populated and industrialised areas, though they do make excellent woodsmen.

Tauran culture, religion and names should be treated as for Aquilonia.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Taurans:

- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all Survival checks: Taurans are the best trackers and rangers in Aquilonia.





✿ +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks in temperate forest or temperate plains environments: Tauran woodcraft is the best of any of the civilised folk, though it cannot match that of a barbarian from a similar environment.

✿ No Weapon Familiarity: Unlike other Hyborians, the Taurans do not gain weapon familiarity with the greatsword. They are more used to smaller, lighter weapons that do not interfere with rapid movement through the woods.

Background Skills: Profession (farmer) or Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Knowledge (local), Survival and one other skill chosen by the player.

Favoured Class: Borderer

Prohibited Classes: Barbarian, Nomad, Pirate

HYRKANIAN OR TURANIAN

The Hyrkanians are dark and generally tall and slender, though a squat slant-eyed type exists, resulting from mixture with a curious race of intelligent, though stunted, aborigines who were conquered by the Hyrkanians among the mountains east of Vilayet. The Hyrkanians are descendants of the ancient Lemurians, who were in ages past enslaved by the ancestors of the Stygians. The most prominent Hyrkanian tribe is that of the Turanians, who have carved out a kingdom for themselves that will one day sweep aside many of the Western nations. All Hyrkanians are noted for their superb archery skills.

Culture: The Hyrkanians are by nature nomadic horsemen with a culture resembling that of the Huns and Mongols. However, the largest of the Hyrkanian tribes have settled and founded the Turanian Empire, which more closely resembles the Medieval Moorish Empire. In some respects the Turanians are superior to the West but at the same time they are still brutal when compared to the most enlightened of Hyborian kingdoms, many of which regard the Turanians as little better than their nomadic brethren. This belief is as widespread as it is mistaken. Turanians make cruel masters; it is no wonder that outlaw bands of Kozaks dwell at the margins

of their society. Under their kings Yildiz and his son Yezdigerd, the Turanian empire is expanding and will reach Zamora and eastern Shem during Conan's lifetime.

Names: The Hyrkanians evolve into the tribes known as Tatars, Huns, Mongols and Turks and their names reflect this. One man's horse is called 'Irem.' Rulers often have titles such as Agha, Shah and Khan incorporated into their names. Examples: (male) Alafdhah, Amurath, Angharzeb, Aram Baksh, Atalis, Ghaznavi, Isparana, Jehungir, Jelal Khan, Jehungir Agha, Jungir Khan, Kerim Shah, Khosrun Khan, Than, Yar Afzal, Yezdigerd, Yildiz. Suggestions: (female) Conchaka, Khultulun, Mandughai, Orqina.

Religion: There are two known deities in Turan. These are Tarim, who seems almost to be the patron god of the Turanians and Erlik, 'Lord of the Black Throne,' a god of Death. There are almost certainly other gods, possibly including Ishtar. In Zamboula, Hanuman the Ape God, a deified form of the carnivorous grey apes that live around the Vilayet Sea, is worshipped. As the 'Empire of the White Wolf,' Turan might also worship some wolf totem as well.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Hyrkanians:

- ✿ +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with all bows; that is, any weapon with 'bow' or 'longbow' in the name: Hyrkanians are renowned as the greatest archers in the East.
- ✿ +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls with any bow if the target is at least six range increments away: This bonus increases to +2 if the target is at least nine range increments away (Hyrkanians are especially accurate at great range). If a Hyrkanian also has the Far Shot feat, the minimum conditions required for gaining these +1 or +2 circumstance bonuses are reduced to four range increments and six range increments respectively. Hyrkanians are particularly superb at accurately shooting arrows across extreme ranges.
- ✿ Hyrkanians can select the Far Shot feat without having to meet any prerequisites.
- ✿ +2 circumstance bonus to all Diplomacy, Gather Information and Intimidate checks made anywhere east of Zamora, west of Khitai and north of Vendhya, so long as the Hyrkanian has a visible (though not necessarily drawn) martial weapon of any kind: Hyrkanian dominance of vast swathes of territory on all sides of the Vilayet Sea leaves ordinary travellers and aboriginal natives alike in near terror of any armed Hyrkanian.



- ✱ -2 racial penalty to save against hypnotism of any kind: This is for cultural reasons. The folk of the East have a long tradition of tales and superstitions of the power of hypnotism, which tends to reinforce the power of the hypnotist.
- ✱ Weapon Familiarity: Hyrkanians can wield tulwars and Hyrkanian bows as though they were martial weapons rather than exotic weapons.

Background Skills: Craft (bowyer) or Handle Animal, Knowledge (local), Ride, Survival.

Favoured Class: Nomad

Prohibited Classes: None

Automatic Languages: Hyrkanian

Bonus Languages: Brythunian, Zamorian, Kothic, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Vendhyan, Iranistani, Khitan, Yuetshi, Shemitish, Stygian

KHITAN

Many strange beings Publio had seen in his lifetime, but none before like these. They were tall and gaunt, black-robed, and their faces were dim yellow ovals in the shadows of their coifs. He could not tell much about their features and was unreasonably glad that he could not. Each bore a long, curiously mottled staff.

— *The Hour of the Dragon*

The Khitans are yellow-skinned and dark-haired and have what to Westerners is a quite unsettling, almost alien look. The game statistics given here reflect the Khitans who are most commonly encountered and spoken of in the Hyborian kingdoms, as these almost always seem to be sorcerers. It might be presumed that the majority of ordinary Khitans never leave their home jungles; few Hyborians travel far enough to know for sure.

Culture: Khitai in the Far East is little known to the Hyborians. Khitan caravans trade jade, cloth-of-gold and silk with Turan and lotus blossoms with Stygia. These caravans and a few exiled Khitans are Khitai's only contact with the West. The culture is essentially Chinese-like, with a powerful god-emperor in Paikang, a mighty city whose minarets rise amid the vine-festooned jungles of bamboo. The Khitans

often appear mysterious and secretive to Hyborian eyes. They are also renowned as wizards, with some boasting that the Eastern wizards are greater than the Western ones.

Names: Chinese-style names are best for Khitans. Suggestions: (male) Huan, Kun, Li, Rong, Wei, Wu; (female) Chan, Chang, Fang, Feng, Jia, Lei, Shan, Zhi.

Religion: Some Khitans worshipped the elephant god Yag-kosha for a while but worship a wide range of jungle animal gods as well. Yun also receives worship from haven-headed priests in the lost jungles of Khitai, perhaps through the ritual ringing of golden chimes; certainly some special ceremony requires such bells. There is an obscure hint that the Zamorian spider-cult might have originated in Khitai.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Khitans:

- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all Knowledge checks: Khitans are highly knowledgeable, particularly with regard to esoteric lore of all kinds. Their sorcerous temples are also schools of knowledge both common and obscure.
- ✱ +2 racial bonus to all Move Silently checks: The Khitans are notably cat-footed.
- ✱ Bonus feat: At 1st level, a Khitan may choose one feat from the following: Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (staff), Summoner, Ritual Sacrifice or Hexer.
- ✱ -2 racial penalty to save against hypnotism of any kind: This is for cultural reasons. The folk of the East have a long tradition of tales and superstitions of the power of hypnotism, which tends to reinforce the power of the hypnotist.

Background Skills: Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (any), Move Silently.

Favoured Class: Scholar

Prohibited Classes: Barbarian, Nomad

Automatic Languages: Khitan

Bonus Languages: Hyrkanian, Vendhyan, Afghuli, Shemitish, Demonic, Old Stygian, Stygian, Acheronian



KUSHITE OR NORTHERN BLACK KINGDOM TRIBESMAN

The Kushites are a slightly shorter than average, dark brown-skinned race with curly black hair. The Gallahs are the lower class and make up the majority of the population of Kush. Several other countries of the Black Kingdoms share similar racial and cultural characteristics to the Kushites, including the Keshani, Puntans and Zembabweans. To the folk of the Hyborian kingdoms, who are relatively ignorant of lands beyond civilisation, any black man is likely to be presumed a 'Kushite' and any land south of Stygia is considered to be 'Kush.'

Culture: The northern Black Kingdoms of Kush, Keshan, Punt and Zembabwei approximate to the North African states of Mali, Ethiopia and so on. There are also sub-tribes among these nations. Culturally, the Darfari are regarded as a southern nation, while the Ghanata and Tibu tribes of the desert south of Darfar and Kush are certainly northern in culture.

Aphaki: The Aphaki are the former ruling class of Tombalku. They are the descendents of a tribe from the Oasis of Aphaka in the Kharanum Desert in southeastern Shem, who moved southwest and interbred with the black people. The power of the Aphaki in Tombalku is dwindling.

Ghanata: The harsh southern desert south of Kush has bred a hardy nomadic people in the Ghanata.

Keshan: Lying in the eastern hinterland of Kush, where the broad grassland merges with the forests that roll up from the south, Keshan is ruled by a mixed race. This dusky nobility claims descent from an ancient group of Shemites and rules a population of blacks.

These rulers are said to have founded Alkmeenon,

which now houses the legendary treasure, the Teeth of Gwahlur. The current capital is Keshia. The Hyborians regard Keshan itself as a legend. Keshan is the hereditary enemy of Punt.

Kush: Western Kush is open savannah, where the black tribes graze their cattle. To the south and east lie thick steamy jungles filled with the ruins of bygone civilisations. Beyond the jungle is desert; to the north lies more desert. The Gallahs are the original black inhabitants of Kush, ruled over by the slightly more civilised Chagas, who are descendents of Stygian settlers. The capital is a Chaga city, Shumballa, also known as El Shebbeh. A relatively large shanty-town of labourers and craftsmen has grown around the core of Shumballa. This is known as Punt. Kush is home to a thin but hardy breed of horse. Kush contains the Mandingo coastal tribe; the Baghirmi; the Dangola and Bornu tribes of the grasslands; and the Tibu, a desert tribe intermixed with Stygian blood.

Punt: Some Gallahs of Kush moved into the small kingdom of Punt and settled, naming the whole land after the outer city of Kush. There is thick jungle south of Punt. Punt is also rich in gold, so much so that 'they wash gold out of the rivers in wicker baskets'.

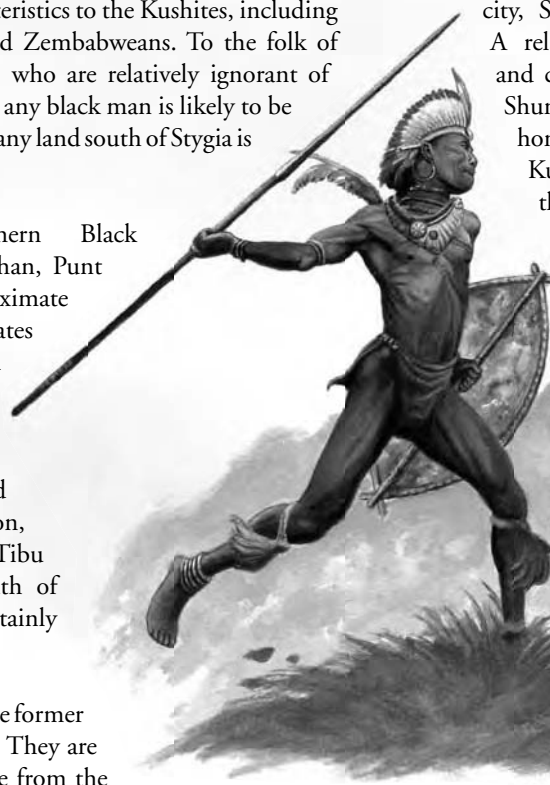
Zembabwei: Little is known of this land south of Punt. It is called a 'hybrid empire,' which suggests close ties with another culture, perhaps Iranistan. It has traders (probably including slavers) and fortresses. It has more than one king and hosts armies of black spearmen. The land seems to have links with Shem and with Iranistan, forming a link in the slave trade that feeds the Turanian Empire with black slaves via Zamboula.

Names: Names from Kush and the northern Black Kingdoms tend to be North African in nature, particularly Abyssinian.

Keshan: Examples: (male) Gorulga, Gwarunga; (female) Yelaya. Suggestions: (male) Naem, Tabari; (female) Latifa, Tapanga.

Kush: Examples: (male) Afari, Agerra, Ajaga, Amboola, Shubba, Shukeli; (female) Tananda.

Punt: There are no examples by Howard of specifically Puntish names. Ethiopian names have been



used here. Suggestions: (male) Bogale, Brehanu, Workne; (female) Kebedech, Lakech, Melke.

Zimbabwei: Zimbabwean names are also something of a mystery, with no examples given in the stories. It is assumed here that they are similar to modern Zimbabwean names. Suggestions: (male) Kaseko, Mthakathi, Ngone, Tuli, Zenzo; (female) Amadika, Nyasha, Sekai.

Religion: There are many local gods and devils worshipped among the black kingdoms, such as Ollum-onga and Thog. In addition, the following more-or-less national gods are known.

Keshan: Keshan has a number of bestial gods, although Gwahlur, the King of Darkness, is the only one known to the Hyborians.

Kush: The Shemite Derketo has been adopted by Kush as a result of contact with the north, though she is worshipped as Derketa, Queen of the Dead. The ruling class of Kush worship Set, while the common masses worship Jullah in opposition to Set.

Punt: The Ivory Goddess, possibly a variant of Ishtar, is worshipped in Punt.

Zimbabwei: Dagon and Derketo (interestingly under her Shemite name) are worshipped in Zimbabwei.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Kushites:

- ✱ +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks in all hot environments: The Kushites are at home in desert, plains and jungle alike.
- ✱ +1 racial bonus to damage rolls with spears of all types when used as melee weapons: Long years of practice with the spear combine with a certain innate savagery to make the Kushites some of the most dangerous spearmen around.
- ✱ Simple Weapon Proficiency: All Kushites are proficient with all simple weapons. There is an unforgiving culture where any who do not learn to defend themselves from an early age will simply not survive as anything other than slaves.
- ✱ Illiterate: Kushites begin play without the ability to read and write, unless they choose to spend two skill points to become literate.

Background Skills: Hide, Move Silently, Knowledge (local), Survival.

Favoured Class: Barbarian

Prohibited Classes: Noble

Automatic Languages: Kushite or Keshani, Puntan or Zimbabwean as appropriate to background

Bonus Languages: Stygian, Shemitish, Darfari, Puntan, Zimbabwean, Old Stygian, Keshani, Iranistani, Black Coast

CHAGA

The ruling caste of the Kushites, known as the Chagas, are of partially Stygian descent and are far taller than the ordinary Kushites. They have a quite different cultural background to the Gallahs and so do not gain any of the standard Kushite characteristics. They gain different characteristics as described below. The Chagas and Gallahs exist in a constant state of tension that could at any time break out into open conflict, with the Gallahs always at least a little wary of their Chaga rulers.

Culture: Chaga culture is uniquely its own. It is perhaps closer to Stygian than to Gallah culture, since the Chagas tend to be quite isolationist with respect to their subject people, the Gallahs. However, over the centuries since the Chagas left Stygia, they have developed their own culture distinct from that of their erstwhile homeland. The Chagas share the Stygian love of hunting but have taken it almost to the point of obsession. While their politics are also almost as convoluted and treacherous as those of Stygia, the Chagas are not a theocracy, which can allow for still more factionalism and betrayal.

Names: Most Chagas seem to have names of Stygian origin, though a few names may have been altered over the years to a more Kushite style. Examples: (male) Tuthmes; (female) Tananda.

Religion: It seems likely that most Chagas are Set-worshippers, though their religious beliefs probably include a hefty dose of a more Kushite style of superstition and witchcraft.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Chagas:

- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all Perform (ritual) and Craft (alchemy) checks: Though the Chagas have nothing like the arcane lore of their Stygian ancestors, those who do learn a little magic often prove highly talented.





- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all Sense Motive checks: The Chagas are quite distrustful of the ordinary Kushites who make up the majority of their subjects.
- ✱ +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks in all hot environments: Though the Chagas are not as adept at hunting as the Gallahs, they still learn to survive and live effectively in the jungles and deserts of Kush.
- ✱ Bonus feat: A Chaga may select one of the following bonus feats at 1st level, in addition to any bonus feat from a favoured class: Deceitful, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Stygian bow), Negotiator, or Track. He must meet the appropriate prerequisites as usual.

Background Skills: Knowledge (local), Sense Motive, and any two of Craft (alchemy), Diplomacy, Perform (ritual) and Spot.

Favoured Class: Noble

Prohibited Class: None

GHANATA

The Ghanatas are closely related to the folk of the northern Black Kingdoms, though in fact they live in the Southern Desert. They are illiterate, as are true Kushites but otherwise are quite different from most Kushites or other folk of the northern Black Kingdoms.

Culture: The Ghanatas are loosely organised into tribes and smaller groupings, with even less structure to their society than the original Kushites. Unlike many other tribes from harsh environments, the Ghanatas are not especially welcoming to strangers and are more likely to brutalise or attack wanderers from other lands than offer them hospitality.

Names: Ghanata names seem to be Nigerian in origin. Examples: (male) Gobir, Saidu, Tilutan. Suggestions: (male) Babatunde, Nna; (female) Amaka, Yewande.

Religion: Jhil, 'The Merciless,' is the god of the Ghanatas of the great southern desert.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Ghanatas:

- ✱ +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks in all hot desert environments: The Ghanatas rarely leave their native deserts. These bonuses replace the usual Kushite bonuses in hot climates.
- ✱ +1 racial bonus to damage rolls with scimitars or Ghanata knives: Spears are unsuited to the wild rush of Ghanata desert warfare, so the Ghanatas have learned to wield alternative weapons that are more lethal in close combat. They do not gain the usual Kushite bonuses to spear use.
- ✱ Martial Weapon Proficiencies: scimitar, Ghanata knife. All Ghanatas are proficient with all scimitars and Ghanata knives.
- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all Ride checks: The Ghanatas are expert riders of horses and camels alike.

Background Skills: Ride, Knowledge (local), Move Silently, Spot and Survival.

Favoured Class: Nomad

Prohibited Classes: Noble, Pirate

Automatic Languages: Ghanatan

Bonus Languages: Darfari, Keshani, Puntan, Zembabwean, Iranistani, Tibu, Tombalku

NORDHEIMER

'What manner of men are these northern folk?' asked Prospero.

'Tall and fair and blue-eyed. Their god is Ymir, the frost-giant, and each tribe has its own king. They are wayward and fierce. They fight all day and drink ale and roar their wild songs all night.'

— *The Phoenix on the Sword*

The Nordheimir (singular: Nordheimer) comprise two closely related races, the yellow-haired Æsir and red-haired Vanir. All are blue-eyed and pale-skinned,



with tall and powerful physiques. The Nordheimir in general are welcoming to peaceful strangers, though they constantly raid foreign lands and can be vicious when abroad on one of their forays. Though the Nordheimir women do not usually fight alongside the men in war, they are charged with the responsibility of managing and defending their longhouses while the warriors are away. Many a female Nordheimer has won renown by beating off a horde of raiders with a broadsword or battle-axe to protect her home and children.

Culture: Descendants of the pre-Cataclysmic nation of Thule (possibly with some Atlantean blood), the Nordheimir have a Nordic culture of tribes ruled by a king who lives in a great hall about which the tribal village is built. The Nordheimir are farmers and hunters and are quick to feud among themselves and their neighbours. The Æsir are friendly with the Cimmerians but hate the Vanir and the Hyperboreans. The Vanir hate the Æsir, the Cimmerians and the Hyperboreans.

Names: Nordheimir names tend to be Scandinavian and Germanic. It is likely that many of the Norse gods share names with the Nordheimir. Examples: (male) Bragi, Gorm, Haimdul, Hialmar, Horsa, Niord, Wulfhere. Suggestions: (male) Balder, Forseti, Frey, Grimnir, Heimdall, Hermod, Hodur, Honir, Lodur, Loki, Magni, Modi, Odhinn, Odur, Thorr, Tyr, Uller, Vali, Ve, Vili; (female) Erda, Eyra, Freya, Frigga, Fulla, Gefion, Gersemi, Hlin, Hnoss, Iduna, Lofn, Nanna, Nerthus, Nott, Ran, Saga, Sif, Sigyn.

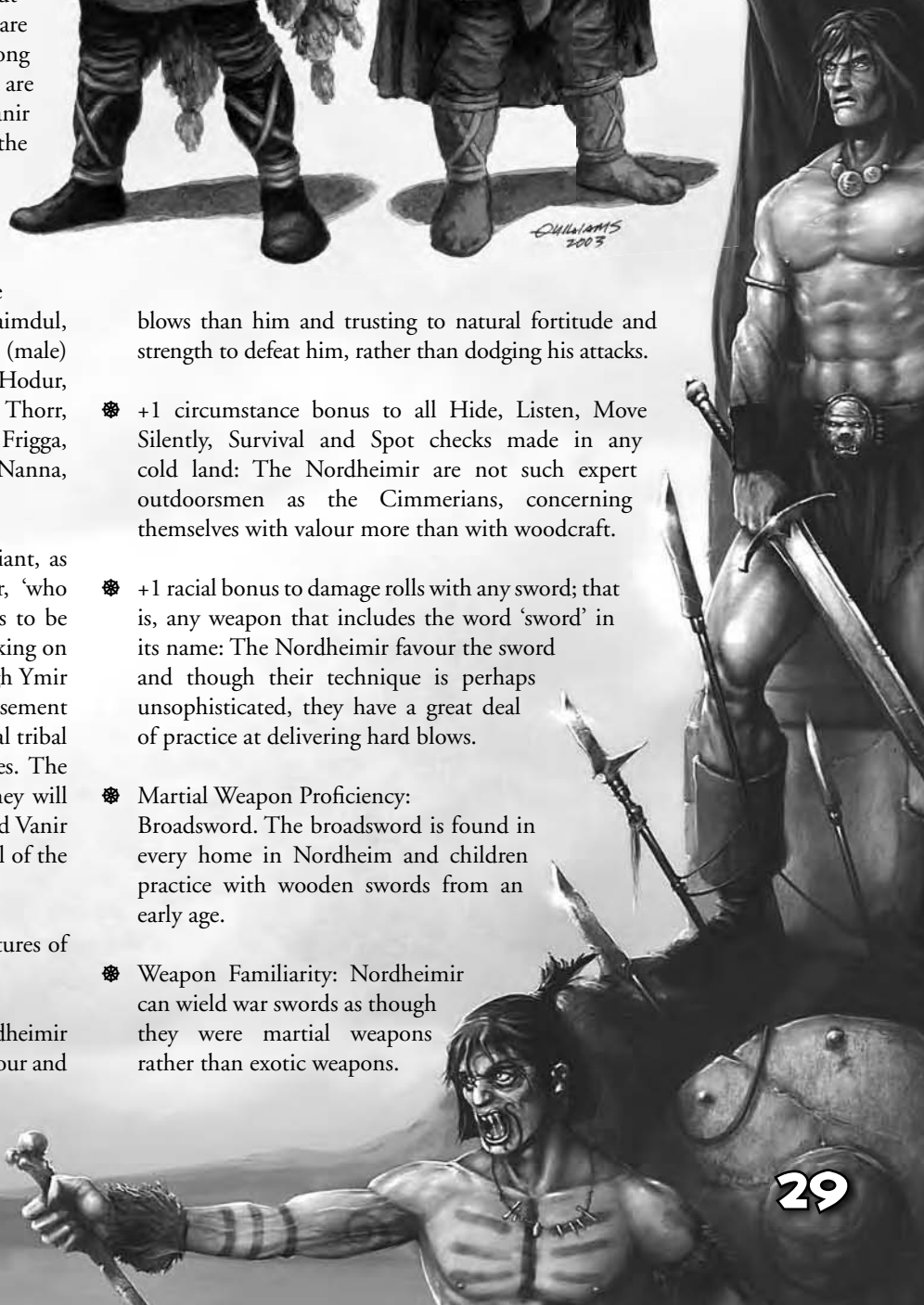
Religion: Nordheimir worship Ymir, the Frost Giant, as their chief god. Atali, the Frost-Giant's daughter, 'who lures men from stricken fields into the wastelands to be slain by her brothers, who lay men's red hearts smoking on Ymir's board' might also have worshippers, although Ymir and his family are probably worshipped for appeasement rather than out of love. There are probably also local tribal gods, perhaps deified ancestral heroes of the tribes. The Nordheimir believe in Valhalla, a place to which they will go if they die bravely in battle. The races of Æsir and Vanir will themselves be remembered as gods after the fall of the Hyborian Age.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Nordheimir:

- ✱ +2 Constitution, -2 Dexterity: The typical Nordheimir fighting style revolves around wearing heavy armour and hoping to outlast his opponent, striking heavier

blows than him and trusting to natural fortitude and strength to defeat him, rather than dodging his attacks.

- ✱ +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks made in any cold land: The Nordheimir are not such expert outdoorsmen as the Cimmerians, concerning themselves with valour more than with woodcraft.
- ✱ +1 racial bonus to damage rolls with any sword; that is, any weapon that includes the word 'sword' in its name: The Nordheimir favour the sword and though their technique is perhaps unsophisticated, they have a great deal of practice at delivering hard blows.
- ✱ Martial Weapon Proficiency: Broadsword. The broadsword is found in every home in Nordheim and children practice with wooden swords from an early age.
- ✱ Weapon Familiarity: Nordheimir can wield war swords as though they were martial weapons rather than exotic weapons.





Background Skills: Craft (any), Knowledge (local), Profession (farmer), Survival.

Favoured Class: Barbarian

Prohibited Classes: Noble, Nomad, Temptress

Automatic Languages: Nordheimir

Bonus Languages: Cimmerian, Aquilonian, Pictish, Hyperborean

PICT

The Picts are a short, broad, swarthy-skinned folk who use talking drums to communicate over long distances. They paint various designs on their faces and breasts to indicate to which tribe they belong and whether they are merely out hunting or on the warpath. Picts are among the most unremitting savages in the world. They are highly superstitious and are given to barbarous forms of human sacrifice and torture of strangers and enemy Pictish tribes alike. Fortunately for the Hyborian kingdoms, the different Pictish tribes rarely co-operate but the Bossonians who border their lands dread the possibility of a particularly powerful shaman or strong chieftain managing to unite several tribes.

Culture: The Picts have a Stone Age culture, one of the most primitive of the area. They dwell in tribes in the game-rich forests of western Hyboria, are noted as warriors and shamans and are highly feared for their savagery. They are also exceptional trackers and hunters. The more unpleasant features of Pictish life include such practices as human sacrifice, blood-feud and burning captives alive. The fierce blood-feud the Picts have with the Cimmerians pre-dates the Great Cataclysm. Picts are also feared by the Aquilonians but occasionally trade with the Zingarans.

Names: Pictish names take two forms: they are either Iroquois style names or descriptive names like 'Hawk.' Tribal names are also based on the tribal animal totems, for example the Wolf Clan. Examples: (male) Gorm, Sagayetha, Teyanoga, Zogar Sag. Suggestions: (male) Akando, Akonni; (female) Cara, Oheo, Orenda.

Religion: Pictish gods include the gorilla-god Gullah, 'The Hairy One Who Lives In The Moon,' and Jhebbal Sag, along with other pre-Cataclysmic gods and spirits such as the 'Children of Jhil' and the 'Four Brothers of the Night' who sleep beyond the Mountains of the Dead. We are told that Picts fear snakes, which might be a race memory of the Serpent-People of Valusia. Nonetheless, serpents do appear in their animalistic rites. The Picts believe that the souls of the dead haunt the black Mountains of the Dead in the uplands of the Dark Land.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Picts:

- ✱ +2 Dexterity, -2 Intelligence: Picts are extraordinarily stealthy and quick of movement, though they are generally poor at book learning.
- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all Tumble and Jump checks: Picts are highly agile.
- ✱ +1 circumstance bonus to attack and damage rolls made when attacking a creature of the Animal type: The Picts are one of the few races who manage to live entirely by hunting, without any need to farm or herd animals. Note that if using a ranged weapon, a Pict only gains the damage bonus if his prey is within one range increment of the weapon.
- ✱ +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks made in temperate or warm forest: The Picts are some of the best woodsmen in the world.



- ❖ **Illiterate:** Picts begin play without the ability to read and write, unless they choose to spend two skill points to become literate.

Background Skills: Jump, Hide, Knowledge (local), Move Silently and Tumble.

Favoured Class: Barbarian

Prohibited Classes: Noble, Nomad, Pirate

Automatic Languages: Pictish, Talking Drum

Bonus Languages: Aquilonian, Cimmerian, Nordheimer, Zingaran

SHEMITE

Shemitish archers, blue-bearded expert bowmen who wear light mail shirts and cylindrical helmets, are probably the best in the world. It is as if they are born with their deadly bows in their hands. They are good horsemen but can also fight as infantry if need be. Most Shemites roam the uncharted deserts in the eastern half of Shem and beyond as far as the kingdom of Turan, though the typical Hyborian is far more likely to meet a more settled Shemite from one of the many pastoral settlements to the west of that land. These latter people are of the variant race, the Meadow Shemite.

Culture: The desert-dwelling Shemites are predominantly nomadic, with individual tribes often ranging over truly vast areas. Perhaps the widest-travelled tribe is the Zuagir, who can be found from Zamboula to Zamora and the eastern edge of the Hyborian kingdoms. Tribal quarrels are common, though the tribes share a common hatred for their more civilised cousins, the Meadow Shemites. Shem is looked on without much favour by the Hyborian nations, perhaps because of its years as a satellite of Stygia, though it seems unlikely that the Stygians ever made many inroads into the vast eastern deserts where the nomadic Shemite tribes live.

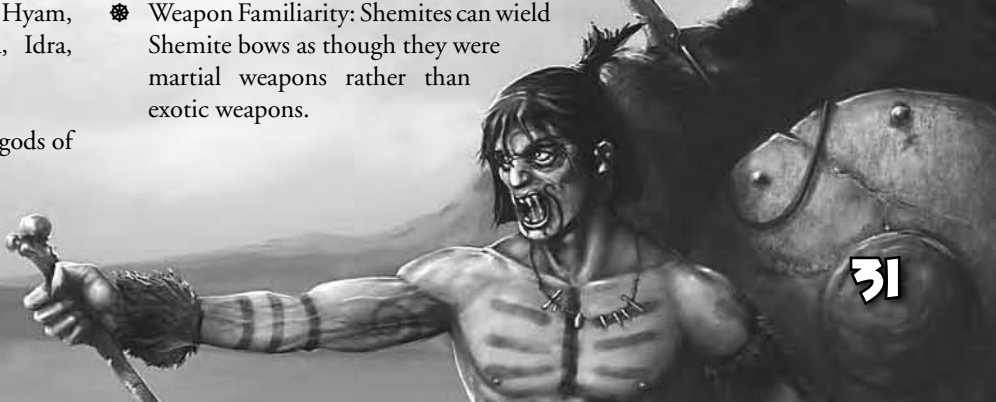
Names: Shemite names are Middle Eastern or Biblical in form. Examples: (male) Bît-Yakin, Gebal, Gilzan, Khumbanigash, Zargheba; (female) Bêlit. Suggestions: (male) Abaddon, Arvad, Baruch, Eban, Gabai, Hyam, Lamech, Noam, Yadon; (female) Alomit, Daya, Idra, Jamila, Talitha, Yael.

Religion: Ishtar, Anu and Bel seem to be the main gods of the Shemites, though it seems possible that some

members of the larger Meadow Shemite pantheon (see page 346) might also be worshipped among the desert-dwellers. One Shemite belief, also common to all the variant races, is that evil men are imprisoned in the bodies of apes, as a just punishment for their fell crimes.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Shemites:

- ❖ +2 racial bonus to Appraise, Spot and Bluff checks: Shemites are renowned as the greatest liars in the world. They love objects of beauty and great value, particularly gems and jewellery. They are noted for their keen sight, which is naturally good and is further honed by long travels in the desert.
- ❖ +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks in any desert environment: Note that the Spot bonuses stack with the appropriate racial bonuses mentioned above. Shemites have an unparalleled mastery of their desert homes.
- ❖ +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with any bow; that is, any weapon whose name includes the words 'bow' or 'longbow.' Shemite archery skills are as renowned as those of the Bossonian bowmen. Shemite mercenaries are in demand throughout the Hyborian kingdoms and beyond.
- ❖ +1 circumstance bonus to damage rolls with any bow against targets within one range increment, which is usually 100 feet: Though Shemite archers are most famed for the distance over which they can shoot their arrows, they are also deadly accurate at close ranges, sending arrows unerringly into their enemies' vitals.
- ❖ +1 circumstance bonus to damage rolls when performing a *coup de grace*: As merciless, stone-cold killers, the Shemites strike harder and more surely than more civilised folk when attempting to finish off a fallen foe. They show no trace of the compunction even hardened soldiers of the West are likely to feel.
- ❖ **Weapon Familiarity:** Shemites can wield Shemite bows as though they were martial weapons rather than exotic weapons.





✱ -1 racial penalty to all saving throws: Shemites are a fatalistic race and firmly believe that if today is their day to die, they will die, however much they may duck and weave and endure and otherwise cling to life.

Background Skills: Knowledge (local), Spot, Ride and Survival.

Favoured Class: Nomad

Prohibited Classes: Borderer, Pirate

Automatic Languages: Shemitish

Bonus Languages: Stygian, Ophirean, Kothic, Argossean, Hyrkanian

MEADOW SHEMITE

Most adventuring Shemites from the western meadow cities are mercenary soldiers rather than desert nomads. They are feared throughout the civilised world for their archery skills and fierceness in battle. Meadow Shemites usually consider themselves members of a particular tribe based around a city or region, rather than simply 'Meadow Shemites.' Meadow Shemite tribes include the Anakim and Akkharim. Meadow Shemites have a long-standing rivalry with eastern Shemites, who are the standard Shemites defined above.

Culture: The meadowlands of Shem have given rise to a group of independent city-states with strong trading links among them. The Meadow Shemites are generally of medium height, though those who have some Stygian blood may be gigantic, broad and strongly built, with hook noses, dark eyes and blue-black hair. These people make fine merchants and warriors.

Names: Meadow Shemite names are identical to those of other Shemites.

Religion: Western Shem is a land of many gods, as each of the city-states of the grasslands has its own patron deity. Bel, God of Thieves, is patron of Shumir, while Ashtoreth, Adonis and Derketo are patron gods of other unidentified city-states.

Most cities have temples to the Earth-Mother, who is known variously as Ishtar, Derketo and Ashtoreth and to the sky-god, Anu, who is symbolised

as a bull. These patron gods are worshipped in the form of copper idols. Many Shemite gods such as Dagon and Derketo have been taken up by other nations but only Ishtar has found worshippers among the Hyborians. Pockets of Set worship might survive from the days when Stygia dominated of Shem.

Racial Features: With the following exceptions, Meadow Shemites are treated as standard Shemites (see above):

✱ +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks in any plains environment (Note that the Spot bonuses stack with the appropriate racial bonuses mentioned above): Meadow Shemites know the plains far better than they know the desert. They do not receive special circumstance bonuses in the desert, as do their eastern counterparts.

✱ +2 racial bonus to all Diplomacy checks: With a slightly more sophisticated culture than their desert-dwelling kin, Meadow Shemites have learned to apply their expertise lying to politics as well as simple interpersonal relationships.

Background Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (local), Handle Animal and Ride.

Favoured Class: Soldier

Prohibited Classes: Pirate

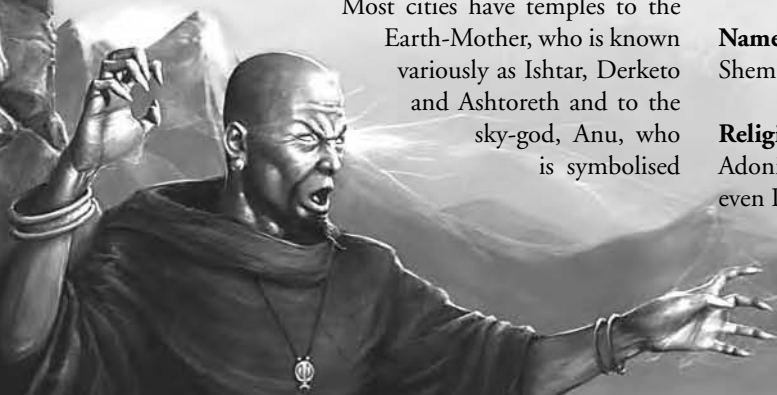
PELISHTIM

The ancient Pelishtia region of western Shem is home to the Pelishtim, a race of noted warriors and sorcerers. They can be found throughout the world, for their wise men often wander far in search of knowledge and their mercenaries will take service anywhere between Zingara and Turan. It is whispered that the Pelishtim sorcerers have the secret of eternal youth. Certainly, wizards of that land are among the most learned outside of Stygia and Khitai.

Culture: Pelishtim seems to breed adventurers and wanderers more than do the other Meadow Shemite regions. Pelishtia is also steeped in sorcery. Otherwise their culture is very similar to that of western Shem in general; see page 328.

Names: Pelishtim names are identical to those of other Shemites; see page 31.

Religion: Pteor is the patron god of Pelishtia, though Adonis, Ashtoreth, Derketo and Ishtar are revered above even Pteor. Bel is worshipped by thieves. Life after death is



generally an accepted fact among the Pelishtim, who also consider that a sufficiently strong will can allow the dead to come back as ghosts to complete unfinished business.

Racial Features: With the following exceptions, Pelishtim are treated as standard Shemites (see above):

- ✱ +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks in any plains environment (Note that the Spot bonuses stack with the appropriate racial bonuses mentioned above): the Pelishtim are Meadow Shemites of a sort and know the plains far better than they know the desert. They do not receive special circumstance bonuses in the desert, as do their eastern counterparts.

- ✱ +2 racial bonus to all Knowledge (arcana) checks. The Pelishtim are noted for their arcane secrets.

Background Skills: Handle Animal, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (any one).

Favoured Class: Soldier or Scholar

Prohibited Classes: Pirate

SOUTHERN ISLANDER OR SOUTHERN BLACK KINGDOM TRIBESMAN

Southern Islanders are very dark of skin, tall and well muscled. Their warriors wear white plumes in their hair but rarely bother with armour. The black corsairs of the Southern Islands are among the most feared pirates in the world, raiding up and down the Black Coast as far north as Stygia and even beyond. Many of the Black Kingdoms, including Darfar and the southern Black Kingdoms, are also home to similar people.

Culture: The Southern Blacks are tribal in nature and resemble great African tribes like the Zulus and the Bantu. They often go naked but may wear rings of ivory or precious metal in their noses, ears or lips. The black kingdoms of Amazon and the Atlaians are southern kingdoms. Other tribes include the Suba of the Black Coast, the Bakalah, who are just southeast of Kush and the Bamulas and Jihiji, both neighbours of the Bakalah. Darfar, although quite northerly in location, is culturally closer to the tribes that reside south of the River Zarkheba. Black Kingdom 'soldiers' are simply spearmen armed with ox-hide shields. Ritualistic displays

of aggression are often used to intimidate an opponent in an attempt to avoid all out war, since most tribes are too small to survive if they sustain heavy casualties. However, wars do sometimes occur and tend to be bloody when they do.

Names: The southern Black Kingdoms tend toward African names, particularly Zulu. Examples: (male) Aja, Ajonga, Amra, Askia, Bajujh, N'Gora, N'Yaga, Sakumbe, Yasunga. Suggestions: (male) Nkosi, Sabelo, Siphos; (female) Khanyisa, Lukanyo, Nande, Serigne, Thula.

Religion: The tribes of the Black Kingdoms worship mighty local gods and devils, such as Ollam-onga and Thog. The presence of creatures from the Outer Dark in many ancient lost cities and places like the Vale of Lost Women suggests that these creatures may be worshipped as local deities too. The Suba people worship Ajujo, the Dark One.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Southern Islanders:

- ✱ +2 to Strength, -2 to Charisma: Southern Islanders are almost as physically powerful as the Cimmerians of the north, though they rarely make effective leaders and are often led by chiefs from other regions.

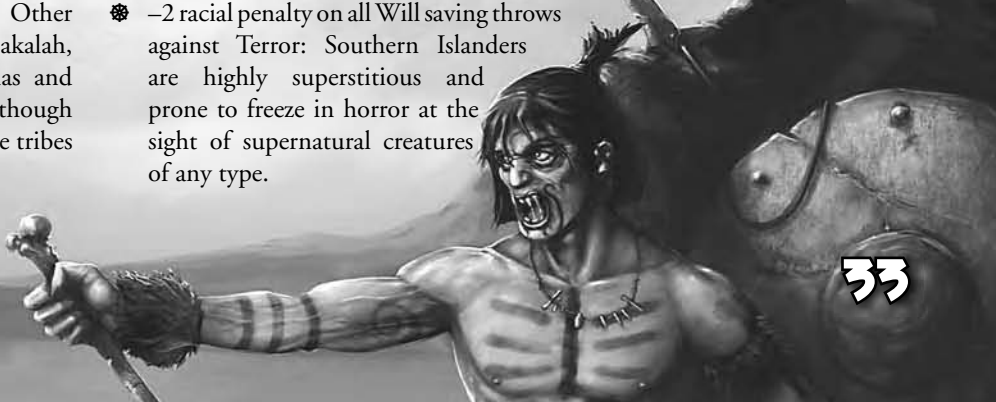
- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all attack rolls with any kind of spear or javelin: Southern Islanders are expert spearmen and rarely bother with any other weapon, save the occasional heavy war-club for close-in work.

- ✱ Simple Weapon Proficiencies: Hunting spear, club. Even the most peaceable Southern Islanders recognise the value of a spear or length of hardwood as a valid and traditional mode of political or personal debate.

- ✱ +2 racial bonus to all Perform (dance) checks: Southern Islanders seem to have a dance for every occasion, including war.

- ✱ +1 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence when unarmoured: The Southern Islanders usually do not wear armour and so have had to become expert at avoiding blows.

- ✱ -2 racial penalty on all Will saving throws against Terror: Southern Islanders are highly superstitious and prone to freeze in horror at the sight of supernatural creatures of any type.





❖ **Illiterate:** Southern Islanders begin play without the ability to read and write, unless they choose to spend two skill points to become literate.

Background Skills: Knowledge (local), Perform (dance), Profession (sailor) for Islanders or Intimidate or Perform (ritual) for others, and Survival

Favoured Class: Barbarian or Pirate

Prohibited Classes: Noble, Nomad

Automatic Languages: Southern Islander, Bakalah, Bamulah, Suba, or Wadai

Bonus Languages: Black Coast, Southern Islander, Bakalah, Bamulah, Suba, Wadai, Kushite, Stygian, Shemitish, Argossean, Zingaran, Tombalku, Tibu

DARFARI

Though Darfar must certainly be regarded as one of the northern Black Kingdoms, its inhabitants are similar both physically and culturally to the Southern Islanders and tribes of the southern Black Kingdoms. The Darfaris prefer bludgeons as weaponry but are otherwise extremely similar to the Southern Islanders. They are distinctive for their extremely kinky hair.

Culture: The Darfaris file their teeth. Whether this is as ornament or to aid in their cannibalism is unknown. They are savage bandits and murderers for the most part and their entire society is driven by an obsession with their evil religion.

Names: It seems likely that Howard based the name Darfari on Darfur, currently a part of Sudan, so non-Arabic Darfurian and Nubian names are probably best for Darfari names. Suggestions: (male) Adzete, Dahab, Nubu, Nunu, Oteku, Solon; (female) Ate, Dede, Tele, Tete, Terte.

Religion: Most Darfaris belong to a highly unpleasant cannibal cult. It is uncertain which god they revere; there is some suggestion that it might be the desert god, Yog, the Lord of the Empty Abodes, which would fit with the idea that Darfar is similar to modern Darfur in that it is comprised predominantly of plateaus and deserts.

Racial Features: With the following exceptions, the Darfari are treated as Southern Islanders.

❖ +1 racial bonus to all attack rolls with any kind of bludgeoning melee weapon: The Darfaris love nothing better than to beat their enemies to death or unconsciousness. They believe that this retains the flavour of the meat far better than allowing a victim's blood to spill upon the earth. This bonus replaces the usual Southern Islander bonus to attack rolls with spears and javelins.

❖ **Bite:** A Darfari who is grappling an opponent and performs the Damage Your Opponent action (see page 200) gains a +1 damage bonus and deals lethal piercing damage instead of the nonlethal bludgeoning damage that would be usual for this action.

❖ +1 racial bonus to all Perform (drums) checks: This replaces the usual Southern Islander bonus to Perform (dance).

Favoured Class: Barbarian

Prohibited Classes: Pirate, Noble

Automatic Languages: Darfari

Bonus Languages: Kushite, Stygian, Keshani, Shemitish, Puntan

STYGIAN

The modern ruling-caste Stygians are tall, broad and black-haired, with dusky skin and handsome, straight features. Members of the ruling caste of the Stygians are hereditary warriors, though the Stygian deserts and cities are almost as famous for producing powerful sorcerers. Most have fairly dark skin, though a few of the most ancient noble families have skin the colour of pale ivory.

Ordinary Stygians are a downtrodden mix of many different races, as most of them are descended from slaves. They should generally be treated as Kushites, Shemites, Southern Islanders, or even Hyborians, depending on their origins.

Culture: The Stygian society is essentially a theocracy. Heretics and criminals alike are punished with horrible torture, such as being skinned alive. According to legend, before the Lemurians arrived, the land of Stygia was inhabited by a race of giant-kings. The Lemurians bred with the giant-kings and, learning much of their ancient sorcery, became the Stygians. One



Stygian priest says that some mummies have lain in their tombs for 'ten thousand years'; this could be boasting to suggest Stygia is older than it is – or he may be referring to the tombs of the giant-kings.

Names: Stygian names are similar to Egyptian names. They are often combinations of several meaningful syllables, such as: Nafer, Nut, Thoth, Merkri, Ak, Mek, Amon, Mes, Ra, Mun, Ankh, Cris, Ri and Phon. Note that if additional names are researched, they should be derived from ancient Egyptian rather than modern Egyptian sources. Examples: (male) Ctesphon, Kutamun, Thoth-amon, Thothmekri, Thugra Khotan, Thutmekri, Thutothmes, Tothmekri, Totrasmek, Tuthamon, Tuthmes; (female) Thalís, Akivasha. Suggestions: (male) Bakt, Imhotep, Kamoses, Menes; (female) Ankhesenamun, Enehy, Hebeny, Imiu, Isetnophret, Kiya, Miw-Sher, Netikerty, Sadeh, Yunet.

Religion: By far the most widely worshipped Stygian god is Set, the Old Serpent. However, other dark 'hideous half-bestial' and 'apish' gods are worshipped as well, perhaps including Hanuman. There is a cult in Luxor that follows Derketo. There is a suggestion that Set's enemy Ibis was once worshipped in Stygia or Acheron but was driven out. Like the later Egyptians, the Stygians believe in bodily resurrection and that the soul, or Ka, is separated from the body to pass into the afterlife on death.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Stygians:

- ✱ +2 racial bonus to all Knowledge (arcane), Perform (ritual) and Craft (alchemy) checks: The Stygian ruling caste is steeped in arcane lore from a very early age.

- ✱ +1 racial bonus to attack rolls when wielding a Stygian bow: Stygian nobles are born to the hunt and to war. They routinely use the heavy bow of their country to bring down desert lions and other large prey

- ✱ -2 racial penalty to all saving throws against Corruption: Most Stygian sorcerers welcome corruption if there is a chance it will bring them a little more arcane power.

- ✱ Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Stygian bow. All true Stygians learn the techniques of the powerful Stygian bow.

Background Skills: Handle Animal, Knowledge (arcane), Knowledge (local) and Perform (ritual)

Favoured Class: Scholar, Noble or Temptress

Prohibited Classes: None

Automatic Languages: Stygian

Bonus Languages: Shemitish, Kushite, Keshani, Zembabwean, Puntan, Darfari, Khitan, Hyrkanian, Acheronian, Demonic, Old Stygian

VENDHYAN

Vendhyan societies are probably the most advanced outside of the West and Khitai and feature highly sophisticated systems of government and religion. Vendhyans tend to have light brown to mid-brown skin, straight black hair and large dark eyes. Vendhyan adventurers are almost always from the Kshatriya caste, the ancient warrior aristocracy of Vendhya.

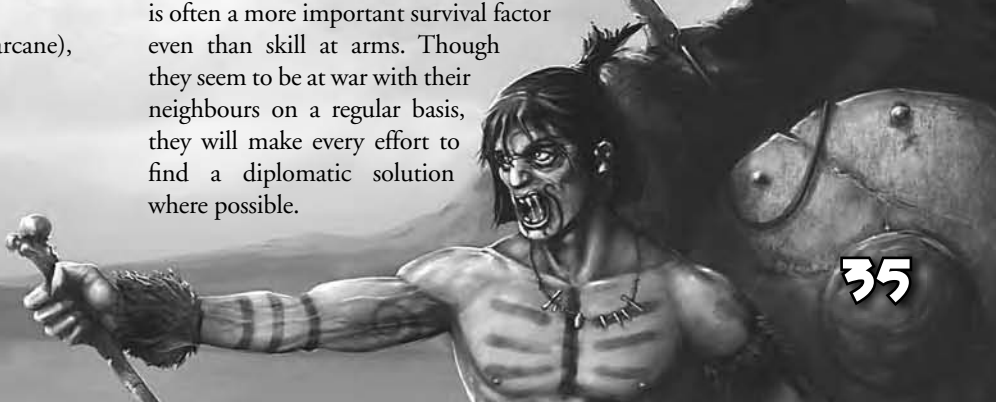
Culture: The rulers of the golden kingdoms south of the Himelian Mountains are considered little short of divine and operate a caste system. Vendhya's culture resembles that of the mythical India described in the *Vedas*.

Names: Vendhyan names tend to be Indian in origin. Examples: (male) Bunda, Chand, Chunder, Gitara, Khemsa, Khurum, Shan; (female) Yasmina. Suggestions: (male) Darshan, Iswara, Kintan, Purdy, Ravi; (female) Ambika, Bakula, Chandi, Dhanna, Hema, Indira, Malini, Rajni.

Religion: Vendhyans tend to revere the mystical religion of Asura and believe in a heaven, a hell and the judgment of souls. Vendhya also has a well-developed practice of astrology, suggesting a strong belief in fate. Ascetic hermits dwell in caves on the borders of Vendhya, where they meditate on the mysteries of the world.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Vendhyans:

- ✱ +2 racial bonus to all Diplomacy, Sense Motive and Knowledge (nobility) checks and +1 racial bonus to all Bluff, Gather Information and Knowledge (history) checks: The Vendhyans are an ancient, cultured and well-educated race. Particularly at the higher levels, their society is highly sophisticated and careful choice of words is often a more important survival factor even than skill at arms. Though they seem to be at war with their neighbours on a regular basis, they will make every effort to find a diplomatic solution where possible.





- ✱ **Martial Weapon Proficiency:** Light lance. Vendhyans gain a +1 circumstance bonus to attack and damage rolls made when performing a mounted charge with a light lance. Lancers form the core of the Vendhyan military and every citizen of the Kshatriya caste is an expert lancer.
- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all Will saving throws, except against hypnotism: Vendhyans have a structured and disciplined society, which tends to breed strong-willed citizens. However, Vendhyan resolve still breaks down more often against hypnotism than against any other cause.
- ✱ **Weapon Familiarity:** Vendhyans can wield tulwars as though they were martial weapons rather than exotic weapons.

Background Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (local), Sense Motive and Knowledge (nobility).

Favoured Class: Soldier or Noble

Prohibited Classes: Barbarian, Nomad

Automatic Languages: Vendhyan

Bonus Languages: Khitan, Hyrkanian, Afghuli, Iranistani, Kosalan

ZAMORIAN

Most Zamorians are black-haired and fairly dark of complexion. They are descended from the Zhemri, a mysterious race said to be one of the first human peoples. The Zamorians are regarded as an ancient and evil race.

Zamorians make the best thieves in the world and are known for keeping faith with their employers when thieving to order. This is not the same as a true Code of Honour (see page 77) but is simply a measure taken to ensure repeat business.

Culture: According to Yag-kosha in *The Tower of the Elephant*, the Zamorians are survivors of an ancient pre-Cataclysmic civilisation (probably Zarfhaana) and were one of the first civilisations to develop after the Great Cataclysm. The Zamorians' 3,000 year-old civilisation has long since sunk into decadence

and Zamorians have a reputation as criminals. Cities such as the 'City of Thieves' and 'Shadizar the Wicked' only serve to enhance this notoriety. In theory Zamora is a despotic state, though in fact strong priests and other courtiers have been known to hold the king in thrall.

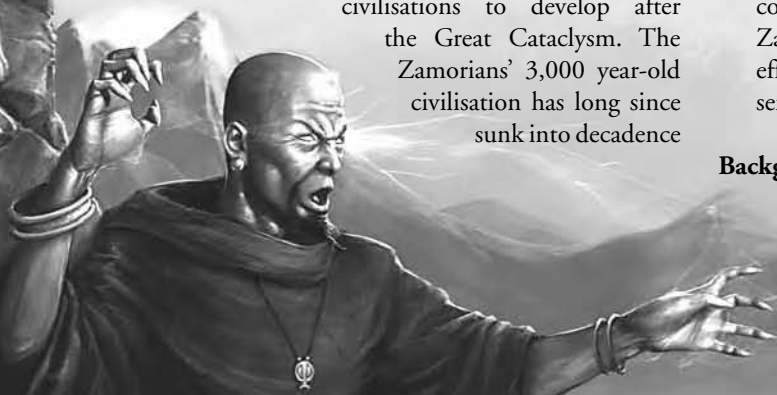
Names: Zamora is another melting pot of humankind, being on the crossroads of all land-based trade. Names from all over the world are probably appropriate. Of the two examples we have, one seems Spanish, the other Ukrainian; Ukrainian names are probably a better fit, given Zamora's geographical location. Examples: (male) Shevatas, Yara. Suggestions: (male) Bohdan, Buryan, Danyo, Petruso, Vanko, Yare; (female) Anichka, Ionna, Luba, Olena, Orynko, Oxana.

Religion: Zamora has a large and varied pantheon of many deities which interrelate in a complex manner quite impenetrable to outsiders. It is most famous for the Spider Cult centred on the city Yezud, where dancing girls cavort before a black stone spider that is their god. The Hyborians regard this god as abominable and its temples are forbidden outside Zamora. In addition, Bel, God of Thieves, is unsurprisingly popular, being one of the few non-Zamorian gods whose worship is permitted in Zamora.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Zamorians:

- ✱ +2 to Dexterity, -2 to Strength: Zamorians are wiry and lithe but lack the sheer muscle-power of some of the larger races.
- ✱ +2 racial bonus to all Open Lock, Disable Device and Sleight-of-Hand checks and +1 racial bonus to all Craft checks: Zamorians have the quickest and nimblest fingers in all the civilised lands.
- ✱ +2 circumstance bonus to all Gather Information checks that relate to theft, assassination and the locations or powers of legendary or magical objects: Zamorians seem to know where to find the deadliest poisons and most ancient artefacts, as well as the richest treasures.
- ✱ +1 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot checks in urban and underground conditions: Though they are no great woodsmen, Zamorians are adept at operating stealthily and efficiently in cities, tombs and similar locations and their senses are constantly on the alert in such conditions.

Background Skills: Knowledge (local), Knowledge (rumours), Open Lock, Disable Device and Sleight of Hand.



Favoured Class: Thief or Temptress

Prohibited Classes: Barbarian, Pirate

Automatic Languages: Zamorian

Bonus Languages: Hyrkanian, Brythunian, Corinthian, Kothic, Shemite

ZINGARAN

Most Zingarans are black-haired and dark of complexion. They are descended from a mixture of the Pictish and Hyborian people, along with the pre-Pictish inhabitants of Zingara, who are thought to be closely related to the Shemites. They are lean and dangerous-looking in appearance and have fiery tempers. The warriors of eastern Zingara sport black moustaches.

Culture: The Zingaran culture resembles that of Spain in the late medieval period. Zingaran nobility are noted for their skill with swords and their chivalry. However, the reputation of the commoners, mainly the abundant sailors, is less impressive. Black serfs toil in the plantations of southern Zingara under the whips of the slave-masters.

Names: Zingaran names tend to have a Spanish, or Gypsy, air to them. Names often end in 'o' for men and 'a' for women. Zapayo Da Kova is an interesting example of a full name, roughly translated it means 'Zapayo of Kova,' with Kova probably being the family estate. Examples: Beloso, Galbro, Gebbrelo, Gebellez, Valbroso, Valenso, Zapayo, Zaporavo, Zaron, Zingelito; (female) Belesa, Sancha. Suggestions: (male) Castel, Devante, Iago, Inigo; (female) Adoncia, Bonita, Catalina, Cochiti, Jachinta, Madra, Neva, Perla.

Religion: Zingaran gods are older than many other Hyborian gods but very little is known about the precise details of their worship. Many of the younger Zingarans have probably begun to worship Mitra, the main Hyborian god.

Racial Features: All of the following are racial features of the Zingarans:

- ✱ +2 Charisma, -2 Constitution: Zingarans are swaggering, flashy and have one of the most complex political structures outside of Vendhya. However, they are not as tough as most of the Hyborian races, as Conan readily demonstrates by killing an experienced Zingaran freebooter with a single punch to the jaw.

- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all Sense Motive checks but a -1 racial penalty to all Diplomacy checks: The Zingarans are naturally wary of others' motives and assume the worst about their own countrymen and foreigners alike. This suspicious nature can be useful at times but tends to cause negotiation to break down into mutual paranoia and hatred, making the Zingarans poor diplomats.

- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all Profession (sailor), Balance and Use Rope checks: The Zingarans do a fair amount of trading on the sea but indulge in even more raiding. Zingaran buccaneers are almost as feared as the pirates of the Baracha Islands.

- ✱ +1 racial bonus to all attack rolls made with the broadsword and arming sword: The Zingarans are among the most expert swordsmen of the known world. They employ a highly developed and scientific approach to the study of swordsmanship.

- ✱ Martial Weapon Proficiency: Arming sword. Zingaran swordsmanship is taught in both formal fencing-schools and the back streets of every city, which are no less strict; though many Zingarans learn to wield only the civilian arming sword rather than the more military broadsword.

- ✱ Sneak Attack: All Zingarans begin play with a +1d6 sneak attack. This is treated exactly like the thief class feature of the same name (see page 73). It stacks with the sneak attack class feature from the thief class or from any other class that grants it. Zingarans are regarded as untrustworthy, not because they are thieves like the Zamorians but because they will stab a man in the back as soon as look at him.

- ✱ Weapon Familiarity: Zingarans can wield greatswords as though they were martial weapons rather than exotic weapons.

Background Skills: Profession (sailor) or Bluff, Balance, Knowledge (local) and Use Rope.

Favoured Class: Soldier, Pirate or Temptress

Prohibited Classes: Barbarian, Nomad

Automatic Languages: Zingaran

Bonus Languages: Argossean, Pictish, Aquilonian, Shemitish, Ophirean





Heroes of the Hyborian Age

'I've been a mercenary captain, a corsair, a kozak, a penniless vagabond, a general – hell, I've been everything except a king of a civilized country, and I may be that, before I die.' The fancy pleased him, and he grinned hardly.

– *Beyond the Black River*

The Hyborian Age is a time of mighty heroes and churlish vagabonds, evil sorcerers and savage warriors, corrupt priests and master thieves. It is a time unlike any other and those who experience this time live the fullest lives imaginable, constantly striving against powerful foes and unnatural horrors and seeking out unimaginable wealth and ancient artefacts.

The classes of *Conan the Roleplaying Game* are presented in this chapter to assist players in creating their characters.

CHARACTER CLASSES

Heroes of the Hyborian age live lives of danger, excitement and adventure. Each chooses his path through life and the means by which he will seize fame, wealth or power.

A character's class is his vocation; it determines his strengths, his training and more. Along with race it determines, in game terms, who a character is.

HIT DIE

This is the die type used by characters of a class to determine the number of hit points gained with each level.

A player rolls one die of the given type each time his character gains a new level up to level 10. The character's

Constitution modifier is applied to the roll. Add the result to the character's hit point total. Even if the result is zero or lower, the character always gains at least one hit point. A 1st level character gets the maximum hit points rather than rolling, although the Constitution modifier is still applied.

From 11th level onwards, characters gain a fixed number of hit points per level instead of rolling. This number is +1 for gaining a level in a class that would usually give 1d6 hit points, +2 for a class with 1d8 hit points and +3 for a class with 1d10 hit points. Constitution bonuses are not added to these fixed hit points.

For example, Amulric is a 1st level noble with Constitution 16. Nobles usually have 1d8 hit points but at 1st level Amulric gains the maximum of eight hit points, +3 for his Constitution bonus for a total of 11.

By the time he is 10th level, assuming his Constitution has increased to 18 by this point, he will have eight (1st level maximum) + 9d8 (hit dice for levels two to 10) + 40 (Con bonus +4, times 10) = 88 hit points.

Each level thereafter, however, he gains only +2 hit points, so at 11th level he has only 90 hit points.

At 20th level, assuming a Constitution of 20, he will have eight (1st level maximum) + 9d8 (hit dice for levels two to nine) + 50 (Con bonus +5, times 10) + 20 (fixed hit points +2, times 10) = 118 hit points.

CLASS SKILLS

This section provides a list of class skills and gives the number of skill points a character starts with at 1st level, as well as the number of skill points gained each level thereafter. A character's Intelligence modifier is applied to determine the total skill points gained each level. A character always gains at least one point per level, even if he has an Intelligence penalty.

The maximum number of ranks a character can have in a skill is equal to the character's level +3. Note that cross-



class skills may be bought as high as class skills in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, but each rank will cost you twice as many skill points. For more information see page 86 in Chapter 5: Skills.

CLASS TABLE

This table details how a character improves as he attains higher levels in the class. It includes the following information:

- ✱ **Level:** The character's level in the class.
- ✱ **Base Attack Bonus:** The character's base attack bonus and number of attacks.
- ✱ **Fort Save:** The base save bonus for Fortitude saving throws. The character's Constitution modifier also applies.
- ✱ **Ref Save:** The base save bonus for Reflex saving throws. The character's Dexterity modifier also applies.
- ✱ **Will Save:** The base save bonus for Will saving throws. The character's Wisdom modifier also applies.
- ✱ **Class Features:** Level-dependent class features as explained in the section that follows.

CLASS AND LEVEL BONUSES

An attack roll or a saving throw is a combination of three numbers, each representing a different factor: a random element, which is the number you roll on the d20, a number representing the character's innate abilities, which is the ability modifier, plus a bonus representing the character's experience and training. This third factor depends on the character's class and level. Each class table summarises the figures for this third factor.

BASE ATTACK BONUS

Check the table for your character's class. On an attack roll, apply the number from the Base Attack Bonus column to the d20 die roll. Use the bonus that corresponds to the character's level. Numbers after a slash indicate additional attacks at reduced bonuses: '+12/+7/+2' means that a character of this level makes three attacks per round, with a base attack bonus of +12 for the first attack, +7 for the second and +2 for the third. Ability modifiers apply to all these attacks.

When a character's base attack bonus reaches +6, he is entitled to make an extra attack at a +1 base attack bonus. However, if the character's attack bonus only reaches +6 or higher because of modifiers, he does not get this extra attack.

For example, a 4th level soldier has a base attack bonus of +4. When using a crossbow or other ranged weapon, he adds his Dexterity modifier. Even if this increases his attack bonus to +6 or higher, he does not gain an additional attack. For these purposes, only the base attack bonus counts. If a character has more than one class, add the base attack bonuses for each class together to determine the character's base attack bonus. See the Multiclass Characters section for an example.

BASE DODGE BONUS

This number represents the amount added to a character's Dodge Defence. See the Combat chapter.

BASE PARRY BONUS

This number represents the amount added to a character's Parry Defence. See the Combat chapter.

BASE SAVING THROW BONUSES

Check the table for each character's class. The table lists the base saving throw bonuses for the three types of saving throws: Fortitude, Reflex and Will. Use the bonuses that correspond to the character's level. If a character has more than one class, add the base saving throw bonuses for each class to determine the character's base saving throw bonuses. See the Multiclass Characters section for an example.

LEVEL-DEPENDENT BENEFITS

In addition to attack bonuses and saving throw bonuses, all characters gain other benefits from advancing in level. The following summarises these additional benefits:

XP: This column shows the experience point total needed to achieve a given character level. As a character accumulates experience points through game play or by Games Master allowance, his level increases to match the one given on this chart. Unless specific campaign rules dictate otherwise, a new level is gained as soon as a character's experience point total equals or exceeds that level's threshold.



EXPERIENCE AND LEVEL DEPENDENT BENEFITS

Character Level	XP	Max Skill Ranks	Feats	Single Ability Increases	All Ability Increases
1 st	0	4	1 st	—	—
2 nd	1,000	5	—	—	—
3 rd	3,000	6	2 nd	—	—
4 th	6,000	7	—	1 st	—
5 th	10,000	8	—	—	—
6 th	15,000	9	3 rd	—	1 st
7 th	21,000	10	—	—	—
8 th	28,000	11	—	2 nd	—
9 th	36,000	12	4 th	—	—
10 th	45,000	13	—	—	2 nd
11 th	55,000	14	—	—	—
12 th	66,000	15	5 th	3 rd	—
13 th	78,000	16	—	—	—
14 th	91,000	17	—	—	3 rd
15 th	105,000	18	6 th	—	—
16 th	120,000	19	—	4 th	—
17 th	136,000	20	—	—	—
18 th	153,000	21	7 th	—	4 th
19 th	171,000	22	—	—	—
20 th	190,000	23	—	5 th	—

Max Skill Ranks: The maximum number of ranks a character can have in a skill is equal to his character level + 3. A class skill is a skill associated with a particular class and costs 1 skill point per rank. Cross-class skills cost 2 points per rank. Class skills are listed in each class description in this chapter.

Feats: This column indicates the levels at which a character gains feats: one at 1st level, one more at 3rd level and one more at every 3rd level thereafter. See the Feats Chapter for feat descriptions.

Ability Increases: This column indicates the levels at which a character gains ability score increases. At 4th level and every four levels thereafter (8th, 12th, 16th and 20th levels) a character gains a permanent +1 increase to any one of his ability scores.

The player chooses which ability score to improve. At 6th level and every four levels thereafter (10th, 14th and

18th levels) a character gains a permanent +1 increase to *all* his ability scores. The ability improvement is permanent. For multiclass characters, feats and ability score increases are gained according to character level, not class level. Thus, a 3rd level scholar/1st level soldier is a 4th level character and eligible for his first ability score boost.

For example, a noble with a starting Charisma of 16 who intends to improve his position at court might improve to Charisma 17 at 4th level. At 8th level, the same character might improve Charisma again from 18 to 19, it having increased to 18 at 6th level. This will occur even if the noble spends time as a scholar between 4th and 8th levels and is a 6th level noble/2nd level scholar.

CLASS FEATURES

This entry details special characteristics of each class, including bonus feats and unique talents that are gained as a character attains higher levels in a class.



MULTICLASSING

Any character can multiclass without penalty in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, so long as he is in a suitable environment to learn the necessary skills and talents of the class, in the Games Master's opinion. For some classes this may be quite tricky; a character who does not start out as a barbarian or nomad, for example, will need to live extensively with an appropriate barbarian tribe or nomad clan before he may reasonably take a level in that class. On the other hand, any character who joins a mercenary band or army could probably be permitted to multiclass into the soldier class if he wishes.

However, characters are encouraged to stick to one class for at least 10 levels so as to gain the maximum number of feats under the Favoured Classes rules (see page 14). This allows some players to create strongly archetypal characters and others to learn a little something from a large number of different character classes, just as Conan himself did.

Note that beyond 11th character level, hit points for multiclass characters work in much the same way as for single-classed characters. The character gains either +1, +2 or +3 as a fixed bonus to hit points for each class level gained between 11th and 20th, with the fixed bonus depending on the Hit Die type of the class in which a level has been gained.

For example, Conan is a 1st level barbarian with a Constitution of 18. He has $10 + 4 = 14$ hit points at 1st level.

By 10th level, he has taken two more levels of barbarian, as well as two levels of pirate, two of thief and three of soldier and his Constitution is now 20. His total hit points at this time are $10 + 2d10 + 2d8 + 2d8 + 3d10 + 50 = 105$.

From this point onwards, he will only get fixed bonus points rather than Hit Dice and Constitution bonuses when he advances a level. Thus at 11th level he decides to take another level of barbarian and gains +3 hit points for a total of 108. At 12th level he takes another level of pirate and adds +2 hit points for a total of 110. At 13th level he takes a level of nomad and adds +3 hit points for a total of 113.

BARBARIAN

Adventures: The Hyborian Age is a time of great opportunity for barbarians. The civilised nations that have developed across most of the Western world from the old Hyborian tribes are largely decadent and there are plenty of chances for a canny barbarian to steal from them – or even conquer them. Beyond the borders of the Hyborian lands lie many forgotten cities and

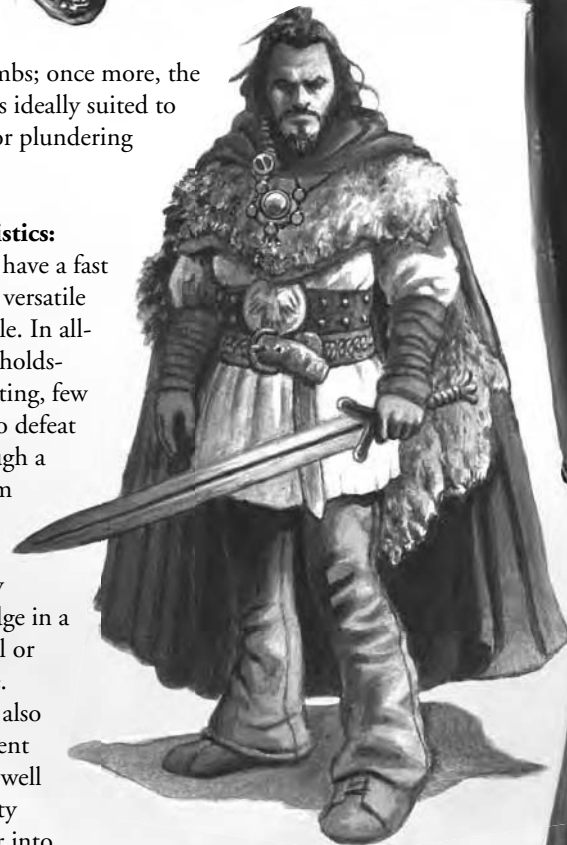
ancient tombs; once more, the barbarian is ideally suited to exploring or plundering such sites.

Characteristics:

Barbarians have a fast and highly versatile combat style. In all-round, no-holds-barred fighting, few can hope to defeat them, though a soldier from a more civilised nation may have the edge in a formal duel or mass battle. Barbarians also have excellent reflexes, as well as the ability to turn fear into anger; they can slice through supernatural foes in a red fury when other characters would flee in terror.

Religion: Barbarians usually follow the religion of their native land, whether it is the straightforward worship of Crom and his kin popular in Cimmeria, the grim faith of the Nordheimir, the worship of the savage and sacrifice-hungry gods of the Picts, or the awe of the witch-doctor's juju and the mysterious deities of the Black Kingdoms.

Background: Barbarians may come from almost any non-civilised land, though nomads are more common in the deserts and steppes. Likewise, they may follow almost any profession, with the exception of some of the more esoteric civilised trades. A Cimmerian might be the son of a blacksmith or warrior chief. A Pict could be a young hunter or shaman's apprentice and an Afghuli hillman has almost certainly spent much of his life raiding Vendhya and other civilised lands.





THE BARBARIAN

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	+0	Fearless, Track Versatility (-2 penalty)
2	+2	+1	+0	+0	+3	+3	+0	Bite Sword, Crimson Mist
3	+3	+2	+1	+0	+3	+3	+1	Trap Sense +1, Endurance
4	+4	+3	+1	+1	+4	+4	+1	Uncanny Dodge
5	+5	+3	+1	+1	+4	+4	+1	Mobility
6	+6/+1	+4	+2	+1	+5	+5	+2	Trap Sense +2, Dichard
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+1	+5	+5	+2	Versatility (no penalty)
8	+8/+3	+6	+3	+2	+6	+6	+2	Improved Uncanny Dodge
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+2	+6	+6	+3	Trap Sense +3
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+2	+7	+7	+3	Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-
11	+11/+6/+1	+8	+4	+2	+7	+7	+3	Greater Crimson Mist
12	+12/+7/+2	+9	+4	+3	+8	+8	+4	Trap Sense +4
13	+13/+8/+3	+9	+4	+3	+8	+8	+4	Damage Reduction 2/-
14	+14/+9/+4	+10	+5	+3	+9	+9	+4	Versatility (double threat range)
15	+15/+10/+5	+11	+5	+3	+9	+9	+5	Greater Mobility, Trap Sense +5
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+12	+6	+4	+10	+10	+5	Damage Reduction 3/-
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+12	+6	+4	+10	+10	+5	Unconquerable
18	+18/+13//+8/+3	+13	+6	+4	+11	+11	+6	Trap Sense +6, Wheel of Death
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+14	+7	+4	+11	+11	+6	Damage Reduction 4/-
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+15	+7	+5	+12	+12	+6	Versatility (triple threat range)

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: Strength, Dexterity and Constitution are all crucial for the barbarian. He must be capable of hitting hard and fast, dodging most enemy blows and simply taking blows that get past his guard. Furthermore, he should cultivate his Charisma if he plans to be a great leader of men, increase his Wisdom to ensure his senses are as keen as possible and develop his Intelligence so that he gains plenty of skills.

Hit Die: d10

CLASS SKILLS

The barbarian's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (herbalism)

(Int), Craft (any mundane) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis) and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) × 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level:
4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the barbarian:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A barbarian is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, two-weapon combat (barbarians effectively gain the Two-Weapon Combat feat for free) and light and medium armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight-of-Hand and Tumble skills.

Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment a barbarian carries.

Fearless: Barbarians gain a +2 resistance bonus to all Will saving throws against any type of fear effect, including Terror (see page 376).

Track: At 1st level the barbarian gains the Track feat for free. If the barbarian already has the Track feat, he instead gains Skill Focus (Survival).

Versatility: Barbarians have little time for the niceties of civilised swordplay but their unorthodox fighting style allows them to pick up and wield almost any weapon with ease or turn an everyday object such as a heavy bench or treasure chest into a deadly improvised weapon. All barbarians suffer only a -2 penalty when using a weapon with which they are not proficient, including exotic weapons, improvised weapons and melee weapons that cannot usually be thrown.

From 7th level onwards, the barbarian suffers no penalty at all when using weapons with which he is not proficient, whether they are exotic weapons, improvised weapons or melee weapons which cannot usually be thrown. In effect, he is proficient with all weapons.

At 14th level, the barbarian doubles the threat range when wielding any melee weapon, including simple, martial, exotic and improvised weapons, as well as unarmed attacks and grapples. At 20th level this threat range is tripled.

Bite Sword: The barbarian often finds it useful to carry his sword in his teeth, such as when he is suddenly plunged into icy water, clutching at a crumbling cliff-face or leaping over a palisade. When he finds he has no time to replace his blade in its scabbard he can instead hold it in his strong jaw. Up to once per round, as a free action, a barbarian of 2nd level or higher can place any light weapon or any one-handed slashing weapon in his mouth and carry it securely there for up to 3 + Strength modifier rounds, or 3 + Strength modifier minutes if it is a light weapon, before taking it back into his hand as a free action once more. While carrying his weapon in his mouth in this manner, the barbarian can act normally, though he may not attack with the weapon in his mouth and his speech is somewhat muffled.

Crimson Mist: Any time a barbarian of 2nd level or higher succeeds in a Will saving throw against Terror (see page 376), he flies into a furious anger instead of becoming terrified. This is treated in all respects as the Fighting-Madness feat (see page 126), including

the restriction that it may only occur once per day. A character who has the Fighting-Madness feat and is also a barbarian of 2nd level or higher may voluntarily go into a Fighting-Madness once per day and may also enter a crimson mist once per day if he succeeds in a Will saving throw against Terror.

From 11th level onwards, the barbarian's crimson mist becomes more powerful, with the bonus to Strength and Constitution increasing to +6 and the bonus to Will saving throws increasing to +3. Note that if the barbarian also has the Fighting-Madness feat, this improved crimson mist ability has no effect on his Fighting-Madness.

Trap Sense: At 3rd level, the barbarian gains a +1 bonus to Reflex saving throws made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence against traps. Every three levels thereafter these bonuses increase by +1. Trap sense bonuses gained from different classes stack.

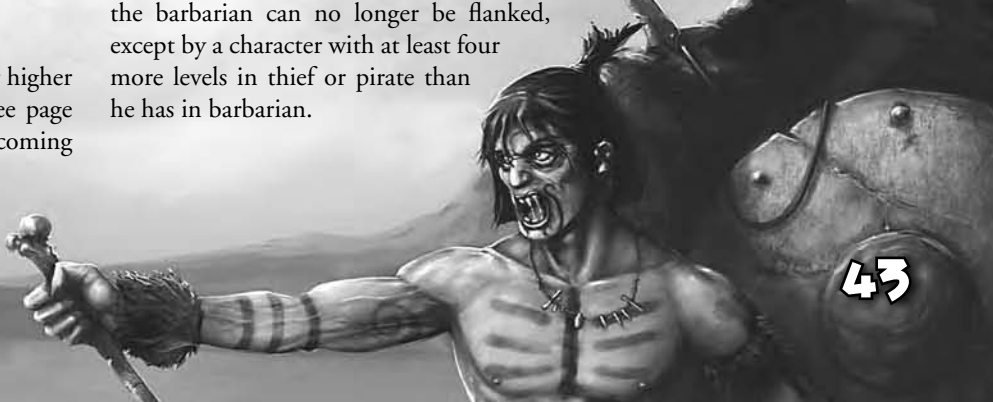
Endurance: At 3rd level, the barbarian gains Endurance as a bonus feat. If he already has Endurance, he instead gains Diehard.

Uncanny Dodge: From 4th level and above, the barbarian can still use Dodge Defence when caught flat-footed or when struck by an invisible attacker. If the barbarian already has uncanny dodge from some other source, such as from being a 4th level pirate already, he instead gains improved uncanny dodge (see below).

Mobility: From 5th level onwards, the barbarian gets a +4 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence against attacks of opportunity when he moves out of or within a threatened area. If the barbarian already has mobility from some other source, such as from being a 5th level nomad already, he instead gains improved mobility (see below). Note that mobility does not apply if the barbarian is mounted.

Diehard: At 6th level the barbarian gains Diehard as a bonus feat. If he already has Diehard, he instead gains Toughness.

Improved Uncanny Dodge: At 8th level, the barbarian can no longer be flanked, except by a character with at least four more levels in thief or pirate than he has in barbarian.





Improved Mobility: From 10th level onwards the barbarian never provokes attacks of opportunity so long as he moves at least 10 feet during that combat round. If the barbarian somehow already has improved mobility, he instead gains greater mobility (see below). Note that improved mobility does not apply if the barbarian is mounted.

Damage Reduction: Starting at 10th level, the barbarian gains the extraordinary ability to shrug off some amount of injury from each blow or attack. Subtract one from the damage the barbarian takes each time he is dealt damage. At 13th level, this damage reduction rises to two. At 16th, it rises to three. At 19th, it rises to four. Damage reduction can reduce damage to a minimum of zero.

Greater Mobility: From 15th level onwards the barbarian may move up to his normal speed as part of a full attack action rather than merely taking a five-foot step. He may move and attack in any order, so he might for example move five feet, attack once, move ten feet, attack twice more and then move again for the remaining fifteen feet of his movement. Note that greater mobility does not apply if the barbarian is mounted or wearing heavy armour.

Unconquerable: A barbarian of 17th level or higher who is reduced to less than zero hit points (but is still alive) no longer takes a point of damage for performing a standard action, as he usually would according to the Diehard feat. Furthermore, he does not die until he is reduced to a number of negative hit points equal to his class level and may continue to perform either a move action or a standard action each round until that point.

Wheel of Death: From 18th level, the barbarian gains a bonus attack at his highest attack bonus on any round in which he has no allies within five feet and at least three opponents within five feet.

may also sometimes contain appropriate conditions for borderers to find work. Some borderers may spend most of their time as gamekeepers in the great forests of the nobility protecting their lords' game animals from poachers. Others may live in border regions, acting as bulwarks against their land's enemies, while others still find employment with armies or mercenary bands as scouts and outriders.

Characteristics:

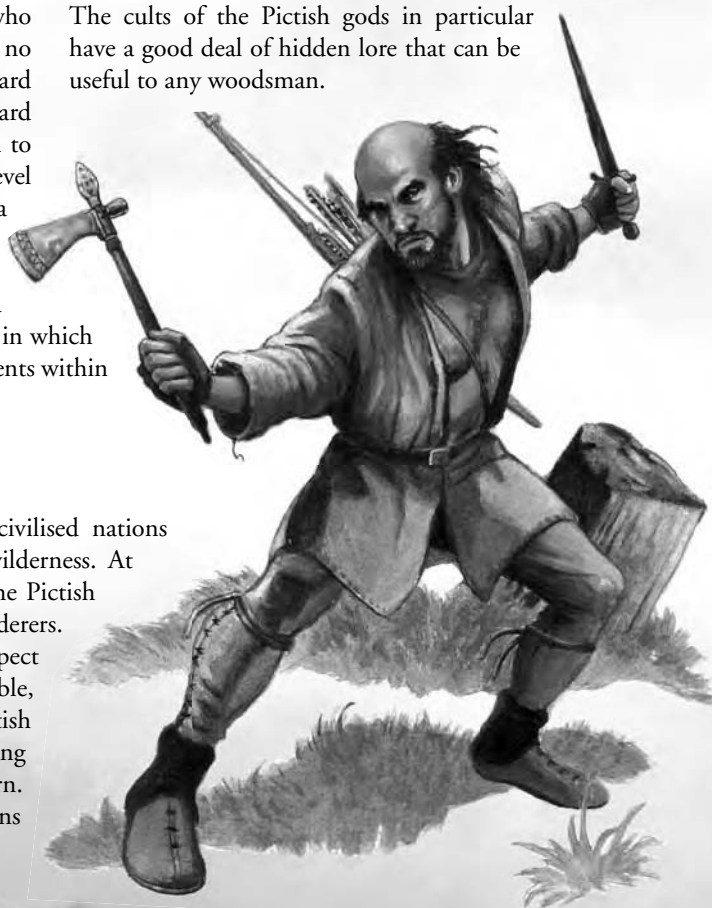
Borderers are especially at home in any woodland, including jungle, and gain a number of bonuses while in such terrain. The more experienced borderers also learn to take advantage of other terrain conditions. They learn suitable combat skills such as archery or the use of paired weapons for dealing with hit-and-run skirmishers. They are expert trackers and have almost unstoppable endurance, fighting on against overwhelming odds even at the cost of their own lives.

Religion: Most borderers revere the main deity or deities of their race—usually Mitra among the Hyborian peoples. Some learn a few of the secrets of their enemies' gods too, though this may alienate them from their own people. The cults of the Pictish gods in particular have a good deal of hidden lore that can be useful to any woodsman.

BORDERER

Adventures: Borderers are used in particular by civilised nations attempting to push back their boundaries into wilderness. At present Aquilonia, with its regular pushes into the Pictish Wilderness, is the primary sponsor of borderers.

Borderers in those new settlements can expect lives full of danger and trouble, constantly pushing back Pictish raids and counter-raiding Pictish villages in turn. Other civilised regions



Background: Most borderers are originally from regions that are relatively peaceful but which nonetheless have a good deal of wilderness as well as scattered farms and villages. Growing up in these relative backwaters, such as Tauran and the other western provinces of Aquilonia, borderers learn the woodcraft and hardiness necessary to excel at what they do.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: The abilities needed by a borderer are very much dependent on the precise role he is to play. If he is to be predominantly a skirmishing borderer, he will need to be very capable in combat, so Dexterity is probably his most crucial ability, particularly if he specialises in archery, with Strength and Constitution next. A more skill-oriented borderer will need a high Intelligence to gain plenty of skill points, as well as reasonable Wisdom, Dexterity and Charisma for the skills based on those abilities.

Hit Die: d10

CLASS SKILLS

The borderer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (herbalism) (Int), Craft (any mundane) (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (rumours) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Survival (Wis) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: $(4 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: $4 + \text{Int modifier}$

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the borderer:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A borderer is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, two-weapon combat (borderers effectively gain the Two-Weapon Combat feat for free), light armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight-of-Hand and Tumble skills. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment a borderer carries.

Track: At 1st level the borderer gains the Track feat for free. If he already has the Track feat, he instead gains the Skill Focus (Survival) feat.

Favoured Terrain: At 1st level, the borderer gains a favoured terrain type from among the following: Plains, Swamp, Hills, Forest or Mountains. Alternatively, he may choose a particular region as his favoured terrain, such as a province in Aquilonia or a particular clan's territory in Cimmeria. At 7th level, 13th level and 19th level he may choose an additional favoured terrain.

Any time a borderer is in one of his favoured terrains and wearing no heavier than light armour, he gains certain benefits as follows:

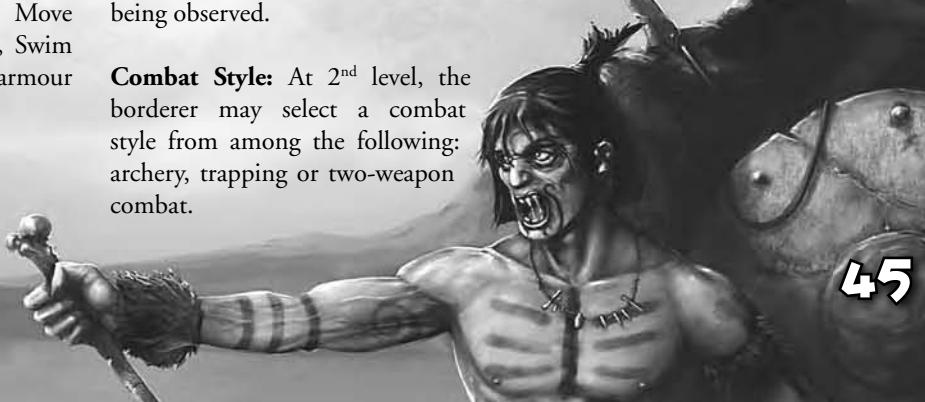
- ✱ +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Spot and Survival checks.
- ✱ +1 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence: The borderer is adept at using the natural features of the terrain to his advantage in combat.

If the borderer chose a particular region as his favoured terrain, he may add his favoured terrain bonus to his Reputation while in that region.

At 4th level and every four levels thereafter, the borderer's favoured terrain bonus for his first favoured terrain increases by +1. His second favoured terrain bonus increases by +1 at 12th and 17th levels and his third favoured terrain bonus increases by +1 at 19th level.

The borderer gains additional benefits as his favoured terrain bonuses increase. If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +2 for the terrain he is in, he gains a +10 feet circumstance bonus to his movement. If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +3 for the terrain he is in, he may use the Hide skill even if the terrain does not usually grant cover or concealment. If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +4 for the terrain he is in, his movement bonus within that terrain increases to +20 feet, replacing the +10 feet bonus gained at +2. If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +5 for the terrain he is in, he can use the Hide skill even while being observed.

Combat Style: At 2nd level, the borderer may select a combat style from among the following: archery, trapping or two-weapon combat.





THE BORDERER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	+0	Track, Favoured Terrain +1
2	+2	+1	+1	+0	+3	+3	+0	Combat Style
3	+3	+1	+1	+0	+3	+3	+1	Endurance
4	+4	+2	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	Favoured Terrain +2
5	+5	+2	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	Improved Combat Style
6	+6/+1	+3	+3	+1	+5	+5	+2	Diehard
7	+7/+2	+3	+3	+1	+5	+5	+2	2 nd Favoured Terrain +1, Guide
8	+8/+3	+4	+4	+2	+6	+6	+2	Favoured Terrain +3
9	+9/+4	+4	+4	+2	+6	+6	+3	Swift Tracker
10	+10/+5	+5	+5	+2	+7	+7	+3	Bonus Feat
11	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	+7	+7	+3	Combat Style Mastery
12	+12/+7/+2	+6	+6	+3	+8	+8	+4	2 nd Favoured Terrain +2, Favoured Terrain +4
13	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+3	+8	+8	+4	3 rd Favoured Terrain +1, Guide (fast movement)
14	+14/+9/+4	+7	+7	+3	+9	+9	+4	Bonus Feat
15	+15/+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	+9	+9	+5	Heroic Sacrifice
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+8	+8	+4	+10	+10	+5	Favoured Terrain +5
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	+10	+10	+5	2 nd Favoured Terrain +3
18	+18/+13//+8/+3	+9	+9	+4	+11	+11	+6	Bonus Feat, Swift Tracker (full speed)
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+4	+11	+11	+6	3 rd Favoured Terrain +2, 4 th Favoured Terrain +1
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+10	+10	+5	+12	+12	+6	Favoured Terrain +6, Guide (mounts)

If he selects archery, he is treated as having the Rapid Shot feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites for that feat.

If he selects two-weapon combat, he is treated as having the Two Weapon Defence feat.

If he selects trapping, he gains the Stealthy feat.

In any case, the borderer only gains the benefits of the feat when wearing no heavier than light armour.

Endurance: At 3rd level, the borderer gains Endurance as a bonus feat. If he already has Endurance, he instead gains Diehard.

Improved Combat Style: At 5th level, the borderer improves his knowledge of the combat style he previously selected at 2nd level.

If he selected archery, he is treated as having the Shot on the Run feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites for that feat.

If he selected trapping, he may prepare snares, traps and tricks in an area. For every twenty minutes spent preparing a site, the borderer may set up some trick that acts like an aid another action. The character does not have to specify what this trick is in advance – the player may choose in any round to take a free aid another action, as long as he can justify it with some trick the borderer could

have set up in advance. A character can have a maximum number of these tricks set up equal to his Wisdom. He also gains the Poison Use feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites for that feat.

If he selected two-weapon combat, he is treated as having the Improved Two-Weapon Combat feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites for that feat.

In any case, the borderer only gains the benefits of the feat when wearing light or no armour.

Diehard: At 6th level, the borderer gains Diehard as a bonus feat. If he already has Diehard, he instead gains Toughness.

Guide: At 7th level, the borderer learns to guide others expertly through any of the terrains he has mastered. Whenever he is leading or guiding other characters, to a maximum of one per two borderer levels, through a terrain for which he has the favoured terrain class feature, they all gain +1 circumstance bonuses to Move Silently, Survival and Search checks. By assisting the other characters in finding appropriate hiding places, the borderer can also grant them +1 circumstance bonuses to Hide checks, though he must spend one move action to assist with their attempt to hide.

At 13th level, any characters being guided as above also gain +10 feet circumstance bonuses to their movement, so long as the borderer has favoured terrain +2 or higher for the appropriate terrain.

At 20th level, the bonuses extend to any mounts being ridden by the characters the borderer is guiding.

Swift Tracker: A borderer of at least 9th level may move at his normal speed without penalty while tracking. He may move at up to twice his normal speed while following tracks and take only a -10 penalty, rather than the usual -20.

From 19th level, the borderer may track while moving at his run speed without penalty. His tracking abilities are legendary.

Bonus Feat: At 10th level and every four levels thereafter, the borderer may select a bonus feat from the following list: Toughness, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Self-Sufficient, Stealthy, Quick Draw, Alertness and Run.

Combat Style Mastery: At 11th level, the borderer masters the combat style he previously selected at 2nd level.

If he selected archery, he is treated as having the Improved Precise Shot feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites for that feat.

If he selected trapping, he gains the Monster Slayer feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites for that feat.

If he selected two-weapon combat, he is treated as having the Reflexive Parry feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites for that feat.

In any case, the borderer only gains the benefits of the feat when wearing no heavier than light armour.

Heroic Sacrifice: At 15th level the borderer gains the ability to sacrifice his life for the benefit of his friends, allies or dependents, allowing him to prevail even against overwhelming odds at the cost of his own life. When he is reduced to -10 hit points, he may elect to either continue fighting or collapse as though Left for Dead (see page 75).

If he chooses to continue fighting, his death is certain. Even after he is reduced to -10 hit points he may continue to take either a standard action or a move action each round, still barely clinging to life, until the end of a combat round during which he is not adjacent to any opponents. At that point he dies. He does not die from hit point damage or massive damage until that point, however much additional damage is inflicted upon him, though he could still potentially die from other means such as poison or sorcery.

Once the borderer reaches -10 hit points he may not be healed or otherwise restored to life by any means. He will definitely die at the end of the encounter, whatever measures may be taken to save him.

NOBLE

Adventures: Most nobles lead or hire groups of adventurers. Few will accept anything less than the position of party leader and front man. They are, however, eminently well suited for this role and unless a group contains an especially charismatic sorcerer, the noble will usually lead it. Hyborean nobles are born into rank



and privilege in the most civilised countries, yet they are political animals and political schemes will often lead them into adventure. Some nobles become adventurers simply because they have nothing better to do. They are usually not sufficiently skilled to earn a living doing a regular trade or craft and their training and relatively wealthy background can make them both well-equipped and ready to face a life of adventure. Other nobles quest for specific reasons, such as to seek revenge on an old family enemy or retrieve a lost hereditary artefact. Some nobles are exiles from their rightful estates, left to wander the world and avoid assassins' daggers. Some are usurpers and position themselves to gain enough money and influence to make a strike at power.

Characteristics: Nobles are the most courtly of characters and are often accompanied by a retinue. They frequently favour brains over brawn and will use others to achieve goals. They dislike being disobeyed. The nobles of each nation have slightly different characteristics to reflect the particular expectations that each nation has for its leaders. In addition, nobles may select a number of different social abilities during their careers to help differentiate themselves from other nobles. Noble characters can represent everything from pampered courtiers to battle-hardened border lords, with characteristics to match. What they do have in common is their powerful leadership qualities and the ability to command a certain degree of respect.

Religion: Nobles almost invariably follow the state religion or other main religion from their land of origin, at least in public. A few may have private religious practices that are far less mainstream. Indeed, many a noble from a supposedly civilised land turns to demon-worship when matters do not go entirely his way. Most nobles are not particularly pious; priests are often their political rivals.

Background: Nobles can be *bona fide* titled aristocrats or other upper-class characters such as poets or courtiers, though this is less common. All nobles begin their careers with the potential to be highly influential both locally and in their home country as a whole, though most



do not achieve that potential for some time. Typically, a noble is the younger son of a landed aristocrat rather than his heir.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: As born leaders, nobles usually rely on Charisma above all other attributes. For those nobles wishing to concentrate on political intrigues, high Wisdom and Intelligence scores are also vital, whereas for more martial nobles Dexterity, Strength and Constitution can all be very useful indeed.

Hit Die: d8

CLASS SKILLS

The noble's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (rumours) (Int), Knowledge (warfare) (Int), Perform (Cha), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis) and Survival (Wis).



Skill Points at 1st Level: $(4 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: $4 + \text{Int modifier}$

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the noble:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A noble is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with light, medium and heavy armour and with shields. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight-of-Hand and Tumble skills. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment a noble carries.

Title: The noble bears a title of nobility within his native country, giving him a Social Standing of $+5$. He comes from noble birth and family and can expect to ascend to his father's title if he is in the direct line of succession. If he is not in the direct line, he can still better his title by performing notable martial or diplomatic deeds of note. Sample titles suitable for a character include:

Knight

Baronet

Lord (direct heir or child of a landed noble)

It is not recommended that a beginning Player Character be a landed noble, such as a Patrician, Baron, Count or Duke. A landed noble has little time for adventuring, being more concerned with his position in court and his lands. A relative of a landed noble, however, has far more freedom and mobility and makes an excellent adventurer, albeit one who is likely to look down on less than salubrious inns and taverns.

Rank Hath Its Privileges: The character is a noble within his native land. As such he possesses all benefits and privileges bestowed on one of noble birth and title. Depending on his country, such benefits might include the right to bear arms, the right to have armed and liveried retainers, the right of hospitality in another noble's domain, the right to attend the king's court and the right of trial by his peers. Along with these benefits, however, comes the responsibility to uphold them. The character is expected to uphold the nobility of the land and support the king (or Queen, Khan, Prince or Duke as may be appropriate). As such he is expected to behave in a manner befitting his station, to remain free of the suspicion of treason and to appear, in all ways, to be a peer

of the realm. Should the character fail to uphold his status he will at best become a social outcast and at worst be executed for treason.

Wealth: The noble starts with amazing wealth for a first level character. In addition to his normal starting money and equipment, the noble receives $200 \text{ sp} + 200 \text{ sp}$ for every point of Charisma modifier he possesses (as long as the value is positive). Some or all of this initial bonus money can be added to the noble's starting equipment budget if desired. This money is a stipend from the noble's family and is provided to ensure the noble does not drag the family's name into the mud by appearing unkempt. The noble receives the same allowance each year. If he publicly squanders this money, however, he forfeits his allowance.

Special Regional Feature: At 2nd level, the noble gains a special regional feature that represents additional training or other bonuses he gains by virtue of his regional origin. As nobles are expected to be exemplars of their nation and race, this is usually tied in to the racial bonuses the character may have or to the weapons preferred by the nobility in that region. See the Noble Regional Features table overleaf for full information.

At 7th level and every five levels thereafter, all the bonuses associated with the special regional feature increase by $+1$.

Social Ability: The noble receives a social ability from the list below at levels 4, 9, 14 and 19. All gained abilities must be supported by roleplay and cannot be chosen without the approval of the Games Master. At the Games Master's discretion, a noble may declare that he is spending his time off hunting instead of socialising, in which case he may choose a bonus feat from the following list instead of a social ability: Alertness or Skill Focus (Handle Animal, Ride or Survival).

Ally: You have a close relationship with an influential individual who will go out of his way to aid you. Your ally holds some position of power, whether a noble title, position of influence within a temple or guild or some other rank that gives him influence over others. To gain the ally's aid you must address him personally or get word to him of your need for assistance. Bear in mind that if you are adventuring in a distant land, this may be time-consuming or even impossible.



The Games Master makes an Ally check based on 1d20 + your Charisma modifier + any applicable circumstance modifiers. Circumstance modifiers might include whether you have recently assisted your ally (+2), whether you have risked your life for your ally (+4) or whether you have personally saved your ally's life (+6 or higher).

The DC for the check depends upon the type of assistance requested. If it is a simple request, such as for an invitation to a social function, the loan of a small amount of money or the like, the DC is 10. Asking your ally to introduce you to someone of equal status to him might have a DC of 15. A request for physical assistance, such as asking for soldiers who are loyal to your ally to come to your aid, might be DC 25 or higher.

You may request aid from your ally once per month. However, for each request made in successive months, the DC rises by two.

The ally social feature may be selected more than once. Its benefits do not stack. Each new ally social feature represents a different ally.

Comeliness: You take a pride in your appearance and are naturally well dressed and groomed. You receive a +2 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks in situations where your appearance might be important.

Entertainer: You are highly regarded at court as much for your skills as a poet, singer or other entertainer as for your noble blood. You gain a +2 competence bonus to all Perform checks. Furthermore, you may use a performance of one of your works, such as a poem or play, to make a political point. Creating and performing such a work takes one week and requires a Perform check. By doing so, you may achieve one of the following effects:

- ✱ Attempt to alter the attitude of one or more people using your Perform check result as though it were a Diplomacy check result.
- ✱ Ruin another's Reputation: The DC for this is (10 + ¼ of target's Reputation). If successful, the target immediately loses 50% of his base Reputation (round up) until he can clear his name. This ability can also be used to restore a damaged Reputation.

- ✱ Increase the Reputation bonus from a particular deed by +1, to a maximum of +5. The DC is (10 + (the current Reputation bonus of the deed × 3)).

Etiquette: You may attempt to smooth over bad feelings from a social *faux pas* or vulgar breach of etiquette committed either by you, your companions or someone you take pity upon. You cannot undo the mistake but you can erase the social stigma from whoever committed the error.

For example, if Lord Stefano accidentally insults Baroness Demarque by mistaking her for the serving wench, you can step in to keep tempers from rising or tarnished pride from causing an over-hasty response by delivering a discourse on the merits of rational thought and forgiveness. If someone is intentionally trying to cause a social incident, make opposed

NOBLE REGIONAL FEATURES

Region	Special Regional Feature
Hyboria	+1 bonus to attack rolls with broadsword, hunting bow, heavy lance and war spear.
Hyrkania	+1 bonus to attack rolls with Hyrkanian longbow, scimitar and tulwar. +1 bonus to all Intimidate and Ride checks.
Khitai	+1 bonus to all magic attack rolls. +1 bonus to all Knowledge checks.
Kush	+1 bonus to attack rolls with war spear and hunting bow. +1 bonus to all Perform (ritual) and Craft (alchemy) checks.
Shem	+1 bonus to attack rolls with Shemite longbow and scimitar. +1 bonus to all Bluff and Sense Motive checks. +1 bonus to all Fortitude saving throws.
Stygia	+1 bonus to attack rolls with Stygian longbow. +1 bonus to all magic attack rolls. +1 bonus to all Handle Animal and Knowledge (arcana) checks.
Vendhya	+1 bonus to attack rolls with light lance and scimitar. +1 bonus to all Diplomacy, Knowledge (nobility), Gather Information and Sense Motive checks.
Zamora	+1 bonus to attack rolls with dagger, short sword and poniard. +1 bonus to all Reflex saving throws.
Zingara	+1 bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword. +1 bonus to Parry Defence.



THE NOBLE

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth
2	+1	+0	+1	+0	+0	+0	+3	Special Regional Feature +1
3	+2	+1	+1	+0	+1	+1	+3	
4	+3	+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	+4	Social Ability
5	+3	+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	+4	Lead By Example +2
6	+4	+2	+3	+1	+2	+2	+5	Enhanced Leadership
7	+5	+2	+3	+1	+2	+2	+5	Special Regional Feature +2
8	+6/+1	+3	+4	+2	+2	+2	+6	
9	+6/+1	+3	+4	+2	+3	+3	+6	Social Ability
10	+7/+2	+3	+5	+2	+3	+3	+7	Lead By Example +4
11	+8/+3	+4	+5	+2	+3	+3	+7	Do You Know Who I Am?
12	+9/+4	+4	+6	+3	+4	+4	+8	Special Regional Feature +3
13	+9/+4	+4	+6	+3	+4	+4	+8	
14	+10/+5	+5	+7	+3	+4	+4	+9	Social Ability
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+7	+3	+5	+5	+9	Lead By Example +6
16	+12/+7/+2	+6	+8	+4	+5	+5	+10	Rally
17	+12/+7/+2	+6	+8	+4	+5	+5	+10	Special Regional Feature +4
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+9	+4	+6	+6	+11	
19	+14/+9/+4	+7	+9	+4	+6	+6	+11	Social Ability
20	+15/+10/+5	+7	+10	+5	+6	+6	+12	Absolute Power, Lead By Example +8

Diplomacy checks with all relevant modifiers. Characters with the Etiquette ability gain a +2 bonus to this check.

You can use your Etiquette ability a number of times per day equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier (minimum one).

Family Ties: You have strong ties to your blood kin, such that they would delay important tasks to come to your aid. Of course, this cuts both ways; if someone kills your brother, you will have to hunt the murderer to the furthest reaches of the realm and beyond. To gain your family's aid, you must address a family member personally or get a message to him. As with the ally social ability (see page 49) this may prove difficult or impossible if you are adventuring thousands of miles away from your home country. The Games Master makes a family ties check based on 1d20 + your Charisma modifier + any applicable circumstance modifiers. If you have recently done a favour for your family, you might get a +2 circumstance bonus to the check. If you have recently risked your life for them, you might get a +4 or +6 bonus to the check, at the Games Master's discretion.

The DC for the check is based on the type of aid asked for. Asking to stay at a relative's house while you and your companions recover from an adventure might be a 10 or 15, depending on how well you know the relative. Requesting a cousin to meet you with armed retainers for a midnight raid on a bandit camp might be a 15 or 20, depending on whether your cousin has been personally affected by the bandits. Asking a relative to help you kidnap a baron and hold him for ransom would be a 35 to 40 and might get you and your relative disowned and attainted if you fail.

Your family might not have the high status or power that the ally feat provides but they are more loyal and persistent than an ally.

Improved Standing: You may increase your Social Standing by +2, to a maximum of +9. This also increases your Reputation.



Refuge: You have some hidden place where you will always be welcomed and can feel safe. Your refuge might be the home of another noble, a travelling merchant caravan or just a cave outfitted for your comfort. Whatever the case, it is almost always open to you, unless of course someone else gets there first.

Savoir-Faire: You have a certain flair, dashing style, élan or bravura that marks you as someone special. Everything you do is done with style, whether it be entering a room and turning heads, carving your initials into a tapestry with your rapier or even savouring a meal at a banquet to impress your host.

You can intentionally attempt to impress others with your style in any task. You may make any required checks normally but if your result is five or more levels higher than the required DC to succeed at the task, you have performed the deed with stunning flair. The Games Master is free to dictate any rules he wishes but some possible outcomes include gaining an initiative bonus on successive actions or a bonus to your Charisma-based skills to further impress those who witnessed your deed.

It is very hard to embarrass you, for you can turn even a fall into an elegant dance. Anytime you fail badly at something you can make a Bluff skill check as a free action to mitigate the failure and make it look intentional. The DC depends on the nature of what you have done wrong but it is usually 15 or 20. The higher your result, the better your reaction to failure appears.

As a free action, you may make a Diplomacy check to oppose anyone trying to embarrass you, even if you are unaware of what is going on. The Games Master can make the roll for you.

Smear Others: You can attempt to ruin another's good name or instil hostility toward him in certain people. It usually takes at least one night of socialising with the targeted audience, similar to a Gather Information check, in order to change their minds concerning the object of your smear campaign. Characters normally make Diplomacy checks to alter someone's attitude for the better. You can alter it for the worse with your own Diplomacy check. Whenever the object of your smear campaign arrives, people's initial

attitudes toward him reflect your influence. The audience does not need to personally know the person; reputation and name are enough.

Note: Add +5 to the DC if people in the crowd know the individual personally.

SMEAR ANOTHER

Initial Attitude	New Attitude			
	Hostile	Unfriendly	Indifferent	Friendly
Unfriendly	15	–	–	–
Indifferent	20	15	–	–
Friendly	25	20	15	–
Helpful	30	25	20	15

Secrets: You have information about some other famous or influential character. You can gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy or Intimidate checks against that character once per session. Alternatively, you can reveal this secret, which is invariably damaging to the character's reputation, standing, wealth or position in society. This social feature may be selected more than once. Its benefits do not stack. Each new secrets social feature represents a new victim of your blackmailing ways.

Lead By Example: At 5th level the noble may lead by example. When carrying out the aid another action, the noble performs particularly well. If the noble's attack roll is successful, the noble's ally receives a +4 bonus to his attack roll or a +4 bonus to his defence (noble's choice). At 10th level, this bonus increases to +6 to attack or defence, at 15th level it increases to +8 and at 20th level it increases to +10.

Enhanced Leadership: The noble receives the Leadership feat for free. However, given his natural status as a leader of men and peer of the realm, the noble gains a +1 bonus to his Leadership score for every full three noble class levels he has attained; that is, +2 at 6th to 8th levels, +3 at 9th to 11th levels, +4 at 12th to 14th levels, +5 at 15th to 17th levels and +6 at 18th level or higher.

Although in most cases the noble's followers and cohort will be something like hereditary retainers, loyal subjects or a division of his nation's army placed under his command, this need not always be the case. For example, Bêlit, known as Queen of the Black Coast, was a Pelishtim noblewoman who rose to become leader of a fleet of Southern Island pirates through a combination of force of personality, noble bearing and charisma that would have put a goddess to shame.



If the noble already has the Leadership feat by the time he reaches 6th level (through multiclassing), he instead gains Skill Focus (Diplomacy) as a bonus feat. He still gains the bonuses to his leadership for Enhanced Leadership and may indeed gain said bonuses earlier – if he already has the Leadership feat as a 3rd level noble, he will gain a +1 bonus to his Leadership score for Enhanced Leadership, since the bonus is +1 for every three class levels. For single-classed characters these bonuses are not counted until 6th level, as characters cannot take Leadership before 6th class level.

Rally: As a full round action, the noble can rally his allies. Allies within a 30-foot radius gain a +2 morale bonus to all attack rolls and saving throws. Furthermore, if they are already affected by Terror (see page 376), they may make new saving throws at their original DCs to attempt to shake off the terror. This ability lasts for one round per class level. If the noble is attacked while using this ability he must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + damage received) or the rally is ineffective.

Do You Know Who I Am?: The noble receives this ability at 11th level. As a full-round action, the noble character may loudly declare his name, titles and heritage to all who listen. Following this declaration any who wish to attack the noble, whether physically or verbally, must make a Will saving throw at DC 10 + the noble's class level + the noble's charisma modifier + the noble's bonus to skill checks from Reputation. Should the potential attackers fail this Will saving throw, they are unable to assault the noble. Even if they pass, those who are five or more levels lower than the noble are shaken, suffering a –2 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks for the duration of the combat. Potential attackers must be able to see and hear the noble for this ability to take effect. Furthermore, those affected must have some reason to be afraid of the power of the noble. Bandits, ruffians and the like should all have some fear for the rule of law within the noble's native land and rightfully be concerned about the consequences of assaulting him. This effect lasts until the victims have had a chance to go away and organise their thoughts, after which it may not be used on the same people again.

However, confirmed traitors to the throne, agents of a foreign power or wandering barbarians might well have little to fear, or at least little more to fear about adding the death of the noble to their list of crimes. Those who are of equal Social Standing to the noble and those at negative Social Standing relative to the noble are immune to this effect. The Games Master decides whether a listener is immune to this power through a lack of fear. In most cases, Player Characters should be unaffected, although the Games Master should feel free to at least remind them of the likely consequences if they do attack the noble.

Absolute Power: The noble is now in such a position of power as to be all but inviolate. The noble receives the benefits of the 11th level ability Do You Know Who I Am? without having to spend the full-round action to declare his name and heritage.

MULTICLASS NOBLES

Although there is no particular restriction on characters starting the game as nobles other than the usual prohibited class restrictions for certain character races, it is not possible for a non-noble to gain a level in the noble class once play has begun, except by special permission of the Games Master. This can happen if the character somehow becomes ennobled by game play, such as by seizing power (as Conan did) or by being knighted for valiant service to a local lord.

EX-NOBLES

Ex-nobles retain all class features and special abilities and may use them without penalty, except as follows: At the Games Master's discretion, a noble who is publicly exiled from the land from which his titles stem may lose some or all benefits of the class. Likewise, if a noble must flee the land in disgrace to avoid a worse fate, he may lose some or all of the noble class benefits. These matters should always be resolved on a case-by-case basis; for example, a noble with a code of honour (see page 77) who is exiled by a dishonourable king may find that the majority of his retainers (as represented by his Leadership score) voluntarily go with him into exile, while his family and allies may be more willing than ever to help him if it is perceived that his cause is just, though the nature of their help may need to be a good deal more subtle. Indeed, if the exiled noble uses his influence to mobilise support against the king, perhaps even starting a revolution, he may find himself with still more benefits from the noble class than he started off with – especially if he deposes the old regime and installs himself on the throne!

NOMAD

Adventures: Whether feuding with a rival, raiding a neighbouring tribe or taking service as a mercenary in one of the Hyborian Age's incessant wars, the nomad rarely has a quiet life! Simply surviving in his harsh desert or steppe environment can be an adventure in itself.



THE NOMAD

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	+0	Track, Favoured Terrain +1, Born to the Saddle
2	+2	+1	+1	+0	+3	+3	+0	Bonus Feat
3	+3	+1	+1	+0	+3	+3	+1	Endurance
4	+4	+2	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	Nomad Charge +1, Favoured Terrain +2
5	+5	+2	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	Mobility
6	+6/+1	+3	+3	+1	+5	+5	+2	Diehard
7	+7/+2	+3	+3	+1	+5	+5	+2	Bonus Feat
8	+8/+3	+4	+4	+2	+6	+6	+2	Favoured Terrain +3
9	+9/+4	+4	+4	+2	+6	+6	+3	Second Favoured Terrain +1
10	+10/+5	+5	+5	+2	+7	+7	+3	Improved Mobility
11	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	+7	+7	+3	Nomad Charge +2
12	+12/+7/+2	+6	+6	+3	+8	+8	+4	Bonus Feat, Favoured Terrain +4
13	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+3	+8	+8	+4	Born to the Saddle
14	+14/+9/+4	+7	+7	+3	+9	+9	+4	2 nd Favoured Terrain +2
15	+15/+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	+9	+9	+5	Greater Mobility
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+8	+8	+4	+10	+10	+5	Favoured Terrain +5
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	+10	+10	+5	Bonus Feat
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+9	+9	+4	+11	+11	+6	Nomad Charge +3
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+4	+11	+11	+6	2 nd Favoured Terrain +3
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+10	+10	+5	+12	+12	+6	Favoured Terrain +6, Mounted Mobility

By their nature, nomads are travellers and travellers tend to get involved in various risky ventures as well as whatever trouble is brewing in a given locale. Furthermore, there are many secrets out in the deep desert that can impinge on nomads' lives, whether as the objects of quests or the sources of danger.

Characteristics: Nomads are powerful combatants, excelling particularly in hit-and-run raids, guerrilla tactics and archery. Their travels also give them quite an edge over other characters when it comes to mounted combat and movement, as well as survival and ambush in the deserts and steppes.

Religion: Most nomads revere the gods of their region, usually the more eastern deities. These are typically

goddesses of love and pleasure, offering an easy afterlife of honey and hours that sharply contrasts the nomad's tough existence in life.

Background: There are two types of nomad: those who are born to it and those, like Conan, who spend years learning the customs to rise through nomad society. Almost all nomads come from the vast desert of Eastern Shem, the Southern Desert beyond Kush or the steppes and plains in and around Hyrkania and Turan. Born into families, clans, tribes or hordes, they are steeped in nomad traditions, culture and superstitions all their lives. However, it is also possible to become a nomad later in life. The nomad group known as the Kozaks is formed entirely of Hyborians and others from the western kingdoms who were brought together as slaves by the Turanians and escaped to band together and wreak vengeance on their former captors. Likewise, the eastern Shemite nomad tribes such as the Zuagirs often choose a foreigner to lead

them and an adventurer who has proved himself tough, capable and honourable may well be permitted to join a nomad group.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: Constitution is paramount for the nomad because his usual environment is one of the harshest on the planet. Dexterity comes a close second, as his combat style is usually based on archery and fast, furious melee fighting, though Strength is also useful. Many of the nomad's class skills are based on Wisdom, so the nomad who wishes to emphasise survival and scouting skills should concentrate on this.

Hit Die: d10

CLASS SKILLS

The nomad's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (herbalism) (Int), Craft (any mundane) (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (rumours) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis) and Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st Level:

(4 + Int modifier) × 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the nomad:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A nomad is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, two-weapon combat (nomads effectively gain the Two-Weapon Combat feat for free), light and medium armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight-of-Hand and Tumble skills. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment a nomad carries.

Track: At 1st level the nomad gains the Track feat for free. If he already has the Track feat, he instead gains the Skill Focus (Survival) feat.

Favoured Terrain: At 1st level the nomad selects either Plains or Desert as his favoured terrain. Alternatively, he may choose a particular region as his favoured terrain, such as a particular region in the Kozaki steppes or a particular tribe's territory in Pictland. At 9th level, he gains another terrain or region as a second favoured terrain.

Any time a nomad is in one of his favoured terrains and in light or no armour, he gains certain benefits as follows:

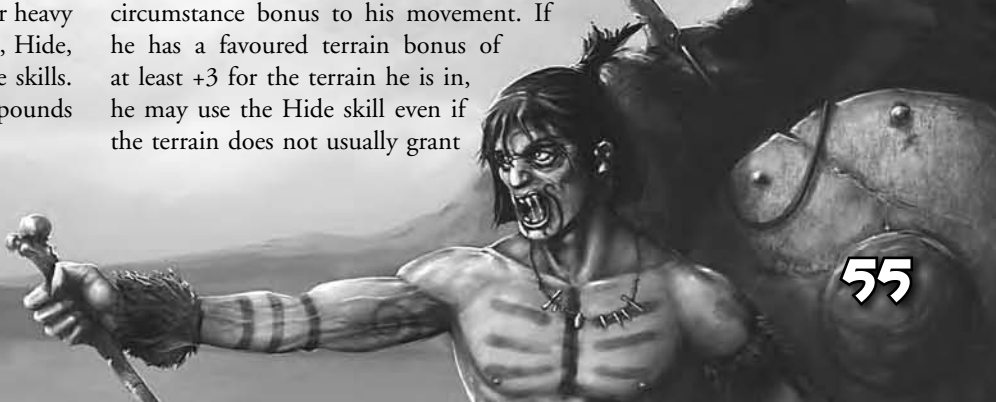
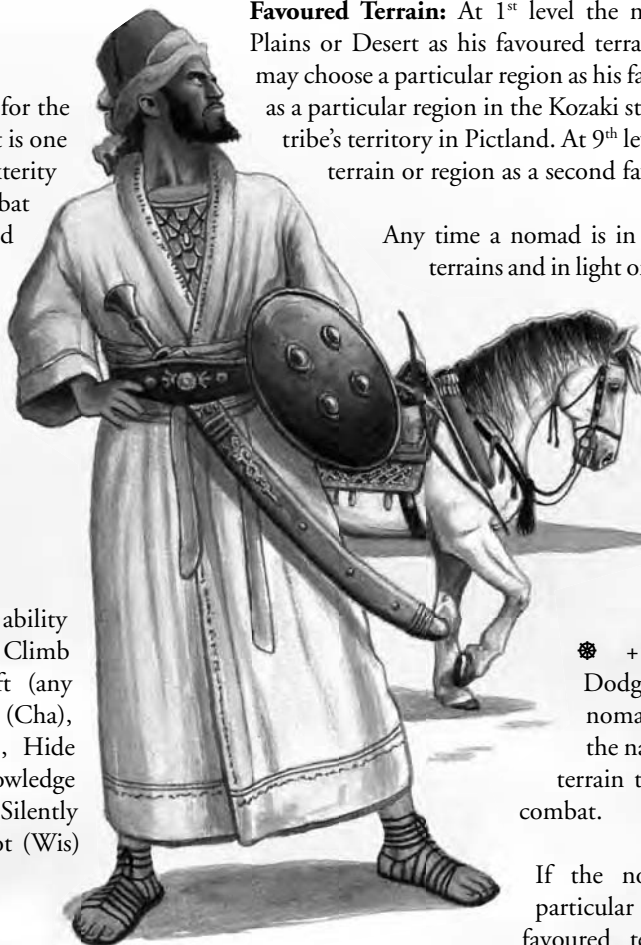
- ✱ +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Spot and Survival checks.

- ✱ +1 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence: The nomad is adept at using the natural features of the terrain to his advantage in combat.

If the nomad chooses a particular region as his favoured terrain, he may add his favoured terrain bonus to his Reputation while in that region.

At 4th level and every four levels thereafter, the nomad's first favoured terrain bonus increases by +1. His second favoured terrain bonus increases by +1 at 14th and 19th levels.

The nomad gains additional benefits as his favoured terrain bonuses increase. If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +2 for the terrain he is in, he gains a +10 feet circumstance bonus to his movement. If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +3 for the terrain he is in, he may use the Hide skill even if the terrain does not usually grant





cover or concealment. If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +4 for the terrain he is in, his movement bonus within that terrain increases to +20 feet, replacing the +10 feet bonus gained at +2. If he has a favoured terrain bonus of at least +5 for the terrain he is in, he can use the Hide skill even while being observed.

Born to the Saddle: Nomads devote an enormous amount of time to riding, studying, caring for and going to war with horses and camels. They are able to select the finest steeds, beasts with just the right blend of fierceness, speed and strength to be perfect mounts for battle. If a nomad makes a successful Handle Animal or Ride check (DC 15), he can discern the precise number of Hit Dice and hit points of any camel, horse or pony. This ability takes 1d6 rounds to perform and the nomad must be within five feet of the creature to be assessed.

From 7th level, the nomad can also determine the creature's precise ability scores (Strength, Dexterity and so forth) if he succeeds at the Handle Animal or Ride check.

At 13th level, the nomad can determine all the above information as a free action, a number of times per round equal to his Wisdom modifier + 3, for any riding animal that he can see.

Bonus Feat: At 2nd level and every five levels thereafter, the nomad gains a bonus feat selected from the following list: Far Shot, Great Fortitude, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Horde, Improved Precise Shot, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Ride-By Attack, Shot on the Run, Self-Sufficient, Spirited Charge, Stealthy, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar, tulwar, light lance or any bow). He must meet the prerequisites as usual.

Endurance: At 3rd level, the nomad gains Endurance as a bonus feat. If he already has Endurance, he instead gains Diehard.

Nomad Charge: A nomad of 4th level or higher gains a +1 circumstance bonus to attack and damage rolls for any charge attack he makes. The bonus applies whether he makes the charge on foot or upon a mount of some kind.

This bonus increases to +2 at 11th level and to +3 at 18th level.

Mobility: From 5th level onwards the nomad gets a +4 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence against attacks of opportunity when he moves out of or within a threatened area. If the nomad already has mobility from some other source, such as from being a 5th level barbarian, he instead gains improved mobility (see below). Note that mobility does not apply if the nomad is mounted.

Diehard: At 6th level, the nomad gains Diehard as a bonus feat. If he already has Diehard, he instead gains Toughness.

Improved Mobility: From 10th level onwards the nomad never provokes attacks of opportunity, whatever he does, so long as he moves at least 10 feet during that combat round. If the nomad somehow already has improved mobility, he instead gains greater mobility (see below). Note that improved mobility does not apply if the nomad is mounted.

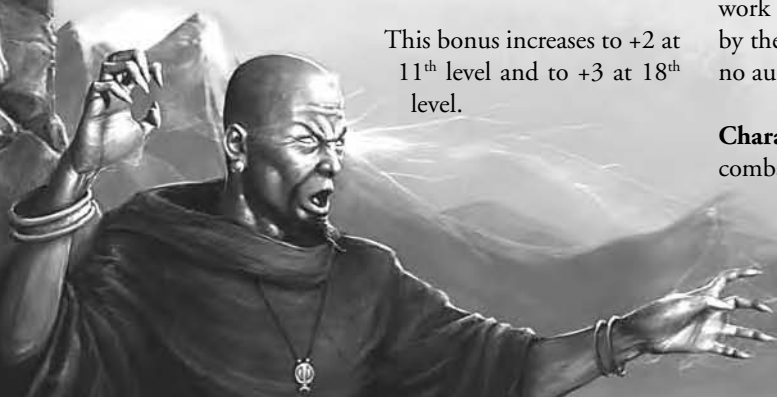
Greater Mobility: From 15th level onwards the nomad may move up to full speed as part of a full attack action rather than merely take a five-foot step. He may move and attack in any order, so he might for example move five feet, attack once, move five feet, attack twice more and then move again for the remaining 20 feet of his movement. If the nomad somehow already has greater mobility, he instead gains mounted mobility (see below). Note that greater mobility does not apply if the nomad is mounted or wearing heavy armour.

Mounted Mobility: When he reaches 20th level, the nomad may use the mobility, improved mobility and greater mobility class features even when he is mounted. All the benefits of those class features apply equally to his mount.

PIRATE

Adventures: Whether they are freebooters from the Baracha Isles raiding coast towns, Zingaran buccaneers attacking Argossean shipping, black corsairs plundering the southern seas or the ragged pirates of the Vilayet Sea preying on Hyrkanian vessels, pirates abound in the Hyborian Age. When they cannot get good freebooting work, many pirates turn to honest sailing aboard a merchantman or half-honest work as smugglers. A pirate's life is wild and free, untamed by the corrupt laws of the civilised lands. Pirates recognise no authority save that of their own elected captains.

Characteristics: The pirate is one of the fastest, most agile combatants around, combining a powerful sneak attack ability with excellent mobility and defensive





dodges. His initial attacks are so frenzied as to often lay low or terrify his foes before they even have a chance to strike back. He is even more dangerous on board ship and knows how to use the peculiar features of shipboard existence to his advantage.

Religion: Some pirates are conventionally religious but many take to the worship of the devils of their own lands, feeling that as outcasts they should have outcast gods. Others, especially those that sail with the corsairs of the Black Coast, may revere the strange and dark deities of that barbaric land.

Background: Many pirates start off as sailors. The Baracha isles are full of former

Argossean merchant crew, while most of the Zingaran buccaneers were once legitimate sailors too. However, pirate ships are not too fussy as to what their recruits used to do and many a soldier or barbarian finds his way into a pirate crew. Most pirates value a man's courage and fighting ability more than they care for his seamanship, for sailors are easy enough to find. Both the pirates of the Baracha isles and those of the Vilayet sea call themselves the Red Brotherhood, perhaps pointing to a shared culture between the two groups, since so many of the Vilayet pirates are originally from the Hyborian nations.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: A pirate usually relies on Dexterity for his fast-moving combat style and many of his skills, though Strength and Constitution are also useful for any character who expects to get into combat. Charisma is also handy to enhance the Ferocious Attack class feature and for several of the pirate's skills.

Hit Die: d8

CLASS SKILLS

The pirate's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (any mundane) (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (rumours) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: $(4 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$

Skill Points at Each Additional Level:
4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the pirate:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A pirate is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, two-weapon combat (pirates effectively gain the Two-Weapon Combat feat for free) and light armour. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the





THE PIRATE

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	+0	Seamanship +1, Ferocious Attack
2	+1	+1	+1	+0	+3	+3	+0	Pirate Code, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter
3	+2	+2	+1	+0	+3	+3	+1	Sneak Attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual
4	+3	+3	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	Uncanny Dodge
5	+3	+3	+2	+1	+4	+4	+1	Mobility
6	+4	+4	+3	+1	+5	+5	+2	Sneak Attack +2d6, Seamanship +2
7	+5	+5	+3	+1	+5	+5	+2	Bite Sword, Ferocious Attack (additional attack)
8	+6/+1	+6	+4	+2	+6	+6	+2	Improved Uncanny Dodge, Poison Resistance +1
9	+6/+1	+6	+4	+2	+6	+6	+3	Sneak Attack +3d6
10	+7/+2	+7	+5	+2	+7	+7	+3	Improved Mobility, Navigation
11	+8/+3	+8	+5	+2	+7	+7	+3	Seamanship +3
12	+9/+4	+9	+6	+3	+8	+8	+4	Sneak Attack +4d6
13	+9/+4	+9	+6	+3	+8	+8	+4	Ferocious Attack (stun, blood & slaughter)
14	+10/+5	+10	+7	+3	+9	+9	+4	Poison Resistance +2
15	+11/+6/+1	+11	+7	+3	+9	+9	+5	Sneak Attack +5d6, Greater Mobility
16	+12/+7/+2	+12	+8	+4	+10	+10	+5	Seamanship +4
17	+12/+7/+2	+12	+8	+4	+10	+10	+5	
18	+13/+8/+3	+13	+9	+4	+11	+11	+6	Sneak Attack +6d6
19	+14/+9/+4	+14	+9	+4	+11	+11	+6	Ferocious Attack (fear)
20	+15/+10/+5	+15	+10	+5	+12	+12	+6	Poison Resistance +3 (and half effect)

Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight-of-Hand and Tumble skills. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment a pirate carries.

Seamanship: A 1st level pirate gains a +1 circumstance bonus to all Climb, Profession (sailor), Use Rope and Balance checks, as well as to Defence, so long as he is aboard a ship or boat at sea.

These bonuses increase by +1 every five levels after 1st level.

Ferocious Attack: The pirate's ferocity tends to rapidly overwhelm almost any opponent. On the first round of any combat,

the pirate may declare a ferocious attack. He gains a +2 bonus to his Initiative check and all melee attack and damage rolls that round. However, he is unable to defend himself very effectively during the ferocious attack and has a -2 penalty to his Defence during the first round of combat. Furthermore, he may not make any sneak attacks during the round in which he declares a ferocious attack.

At 7th level the bonuses to Initiative, attack and damage rolls increase to +4 and the penalties increase to -4. Furthermore, the pirate gains an additional attack on the first round of combat at his highest attack bonus.

At 13th level the bonuses increase to +6 and the penalties increase to -6. Furthermore, any opponent struck and damaged by the pirate during the first round of combat must make a Will saving throw (DC = 10 + ½ pirate's class level + pirate's Charisma bonus) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds due to fear of the pirate. Note that if the pirate is also able to somehow perform a successful coup de grace

on the first round of combat, any Will saving throws called for by the ferocious attack class feature have their DC increased by +2.

At 19th level the bonuses increase to +8 and the penalties increase to -8. In addition, if the pirate strikes any opponent during the first round of combat, any of that opponent's allies who observe the ferocious attack must make Will saving throws (DC = 10 + ½ pirate's class level + pirate's Charisma bonus) or suffer a penalty of -2 to attack rolls for 1d4 rounds.

Pirate Code: A 2nd level pirate may select one pirate code from the following: Barachan Smoke and Rockets, Black Coast Drums, Vilayet Sea Flags or Zingaran Trumpets. Effectively, knowing one of these codes is like knowing an additional language, allowing for communication with other pirates who know the code at distances of up to several thousand feet, depending on weather, visibility conditions and the pirates' resources to produce the code. See Chapter 14: Campaigns in the Hyborian Age for full information about pirate signalling methods.

To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter: A pirate of 2nd level or higher may perform a *coup de grace* as a free action up to once per round. This *coup de grace* never provokes an attack of opportunity, as the pirate is so used to dispatching helpless opponents that he can do so before they can react. Furthermore, the pirate gains a +4 circumstance bonus to any Intimidate checks he makes for one round immediately following the performance of the *coup de grace*, if it was successful.

Sneak Attack: From 3rd level onwards, the pirate gains the sneak attack ability. This functions just like the thief ability of the same name (see page 73).

Sneak Subdual: At 3rd level, the pirate gains the Sneak Subdual feat for free.

Uncanny Dodge: From 4th level and above, the pirate can still dodge if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. If the pirate already has uncanny dodge from some other source, such as from being a 4th level barbarian already, he gains improved uncanny dodge instead (see below).

Mobility: From 5th level onwards, the pirate gets a +4 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence against attacks of opportunity that occur when he moves out of or within a threatened area. If the pirate already has mobility from some other source, such as from being a 5th level nomad already, he

gains improved mobility instead (see below). Note that mobility does not apply if the pirate is mounted.

Bite Sword: The pirate often finds it useful to carry his cutlass in his teeth when boarding an enemy ship or clambering up the walls of a coastal fortress on a night raid. He has no time to replace the blade in its scabbard but he has learned how to hold it in his jaws. Up to once per round, as a free action, a pirate of 7th level or higher can place any light weapon or any one-handed slashing weapon in his mouth and carry it securely there for up to 3 + Strength modifier rounds (3 + Strength modifier minutes if it is a light weapon), before taking it back into his hand as a free action. While carrying his weapon in his mouth in this manner, the pirate can act normally, though he may not attack with the weapon in his mouth and his speech may be somewhat muffled.

Poison Resistance: At 8th level, the pirate gains a +1 resistance bonus on all Fortitude saving throws against poisons, drugs and alcohol. His dissolute lifestyle has allowed him to build up an incredible tolerance to almost any poison or drug known to man.

At 14th level this resistance bonus increases to +2 and at 20th level to +3. Furthermore, at 20th level the pirate only suffers half effect (rounded down) from any poison or drug, even if he fails his saving throw against it.

Improved Uncanny Dodge: At 8th level, the pirate can no longer be flanked except by a character with four more levels in thief or pirate than the pirate has pirate levels.

Improved Mobility: From 10th level onwards the pirate never provokes attacks of opportunity, no matter what he does, so long as he moves at least 10 feet during that combat round. If the pirate somehow already has improved mobility, he gains greater mobility instead (see below). Note that improved mobility does not apply if the pirate is mounted.

Navigation: At 10th level the pirate gains Navigation as a bonus feat. He need not meet the prerequisites for the feat. If he already has Navigation, he gains Skill Focus (Profession (sailor)).

Greater Mobility: From 15th level onwards the pirate may move up to full speed as part of a full



attack action, rather than merely take a five-foot step. He may move and attack in any order; he might for example move five feet, attack once, move fifteen feet, attack twice more and then move again for the remaining ten feet of his movement. Note that greater mobility does not apply if the pirate is mounted or wearing heavy armour.

SCHOLAR

Adventures: Scholars in the Hyborian Age must often quest for knowledge, for there are few formal academies or other teaching processes from which to learn and perhaps draw an income. For many scholars, digging around in dusty tombs or leading expeditions deep into the jungles of Khitai is not just a way of life, it is a way to make a living, since both ancient artefacts and rare knowledge can be valuable. Those who attach themselves to one or another religion as priests or shamans are commonly expected to work not just at translating old manuscripts or preaching to the faithful but undergoing hazardous pilgrimages to carry out strange rituals in faraway shrines, getting involved in the power-politics of the royal court and warring rival religions either actively or by intrigue. Wandering independents are almost by definition adventurers, while those who have given their minds, bodies and souls in thrall to some superior, whether earthly or demonic, are at their coven or master's beck and call.

Characteristics: The scholar is defined not merely by his broad knowledge but more importantly by his access to sorcery, if he desires it. Truly mastering sorcery requires precisely the kind of focused, intense study that only scholars can achieve. As the scholar becomes more experienced, he learns a greater variety of spells, including some of potentially devastating power.

Religion: Many scholars are irreligious, their supreme arrogance preventing them from bowing down to either men or gods. Even priests are not always religious, having joined the clergy of their religion not out of genuine piety but because of the perceived easy life of a priest, and opportunities for bribery and blackmail or as a cover for their secret practices of the most evil sorcery.

However, some priests are genuinely devout and may gain a great deal of encouragement and inner strength from their religion. For those scholars who come from a primitive background, such as the shamans of the Pictish Wilderness and the witchmen of Kush, their superstitious

religion is inextricably intertwined with their sorcerous knowledge. Then there are those who actively align themselves with the demons and dark gods; whether their devotion is truly religious or merely an indication of their corrupt ambitions is a moot point.

Background: Scholars can come from any number of backgrounds but all share a thirst for knowledge and often for power. Most are reliant on a teacher of some kind, such as a higher-ranking priest, coven leader, master sorcerer, or even some demonic entity. A few brave or foolhardy souls elect to learn their magic by their own efforts entirely. Many scholars are more mundane and never learn sorcery at all. These scholars, however, rarely adventure.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: The scholar who concentrates on pure knowledge and skills will probably prioritise a high Intelligence. A more sorcerous scholar will certainly need Charisma in order to magically attack his enemies, deal with demons and summon servitors. He will also need Wisdom for sheer magical power. Some of the Eastern scholars who learn mystical combat arts will also benefit from a high Wisdom as well as Dexterity.

Hit Die: d6

CLASS SKILLS

The scholar's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Craft (herbalism) (Int), Craft (any mundane) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Search (Int) and Sense Motive (Wis).

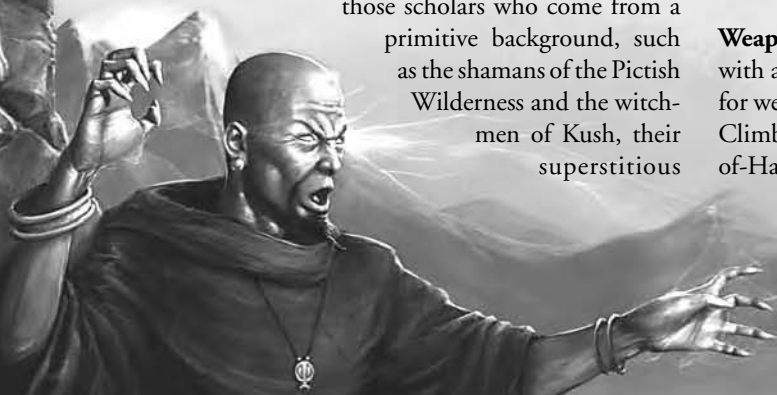
Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Int modifier) × 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the scholar:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A scholar is proficient with all simple weapons. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight-of-Hand and Tumble skills. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment a scholar carries.



THE SCHOLAR

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	New Sorcery Style, Scholar, Background, Base Power Points, Knowledge Is Power
2	+1	+0	+0	+1	+0	+0	+3	+1 Power Point, New Sorcery Style
3	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+3	Advanced Spell, Bonus Spell
4	+3	+1	+1	+2	+1	+1	+4	Advanced Spell, New Sorcery Style
5	+3	+1	+1	+2	+1	+1	+4	Advanced Spell, Iron Will
6	+4	+2	+2	+3	+2	+2	+5	Advanced Spell, +1 Power Point, Increased Maximum Power Points (triple)
7	+5	+2	+2	+3	+2	+2	+5	Advanced Spell, Bonus Spell
8	+6/+1	+3	+3	+4	+2	+2	+6	Advanced Spell, New Sorcery Style
9	+6/+1	+3	+3	+4	+3	+3	+6	Advanced Spell
10	+7/+2	+3	+3	+5	+3	+3	+7	Advanced Spell, +1 Power Point
11	+8/+3	+4	+4	+5	+3	+3	+7	Advanced Spell, Bonus Spell
12	+9/+4	+4	+4	+6	+4	+4	+8	Advanced Spell, New Sorcery Style
13	+9/+4	+4	+4	+6	+4	+4	+8	Advanced Spell, Increased Maximum Power Points (quadruple)
14	+10/+5	+5	+5	+7	+4	+4	+9	Advanced Spell, +1 Power Point
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+7	+5	+5	+9	Advanced Spell, Bonus Spell
16	+12/+7/+2	+6	+6	+8	+5	+5	+10	Advanced Spell, New Sorcery Style
17	+12/+7/+2	+6	+6	+8	+5	+5	+10	Advanced Spell
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+9	+6	+6	+11	Advanced Spell, +1 Power Point
19	+14/+9/+4	+7	+7	+9	+6	+6	+11	Advanced Spell, Bonus Spell
20	+15/+10/+5	+7	+7	+10	+6	+6	+12	Advanced Spell, New Sorcery Style, Increased Maximum Power Points (quintuple)

Scholar: All scholars have a special restriction when spending skill points. They must spend at least 12 skill points on Knowledge skills at 1st level and at least three skill points on Knowledge skills at each subsequent level.

Background: Every scholar must choose a background at 1st level. The background indicates the manner in which he came by his knowledge.

A scholar may only ever begin the game with one background but at the Games Master's discretion he may gain an additional background or backgrounds during play. For example, an independent may call up a demon and make a pact with it, then some time later be accepted as an acolyte by a sorcerous society. Likewise, a lay priest or acolyte may conduct a little independent research as though he were an independent himself but

in most cases his religion or covenant would at best frown upon such impertinence and at worst put him to death if they caught him.

The choice of background should be made in conjunction with the Games Master, who will inform the player of the options available in his campaign.

Acolyte: Acolytes are members of a sorcerous society or are occasionally apprenticed to a lone sorcerer. They are usually in thrall to their covenant leaders, though they can gain a great deal of power this way. The drawback is that they rarely understand the power without their masters' direct assistance.



An acolyte must always select a specific group to join or a master to whom he may apprentice himself. An acolyte may only ever learn new sorcery styles or advanced spells (see below) known to his masters. Depending on his superiors and the nature of the society, he may be able to choose which of the various styles and spells he wishes to learn or he may always have his sorcery styles and spells chosen for him. Most sorcerous societies require a student to follow a strict curriculum of specific spells for the first 10 levels but allow him to learn whatever he wills after that, so long as they can teach it to him or he can discover it for himself.

Sorcerers from civilised lands often take on apprentices. This is an accepted method of learning from Stygia to Khitai, even if one cannot find a larger sorcerous society to join. Some of the more primitive regions such as Kush also have village sorcerers, along with more shamanic or witch-doctor style priests; these sorcerers, also known as Witchmen or Witch-Finders, are employed on a freelance basis to cast spells for clients and often take on apprentices to whom they can pass on their skills.

Independent: Independents are the most versatile variety of scholar, since they have no particular ties to any authority. However, they also have no one to teach them or to guide them along their sorcerous paths and so must work a good deal harder than other scholars to gain access to any true secrets. Though at best his advancement can be highly flexible, at worst it is simply haphazard, with the independent scholar simply picking up a little knowledge here and there as he goes.

Every time an independent gains the new sorcery style or advanced spell class features, he must make a Knowledge (arcana) check. The DC is 15 for new sorcery styles or 20 for advanced spells. Success indicates that he may choose the style he wishes to learn. Failure means that the Games Master will select a style or spell for him at random from among those he does not currently know but for

which he meets the prerequisites. If his check result is less than 10, he does not gain a sorcery style or spell at all but must select a bonus feat or skill points instead, as appropriate. See the new sorcery style and advanced spell class features.

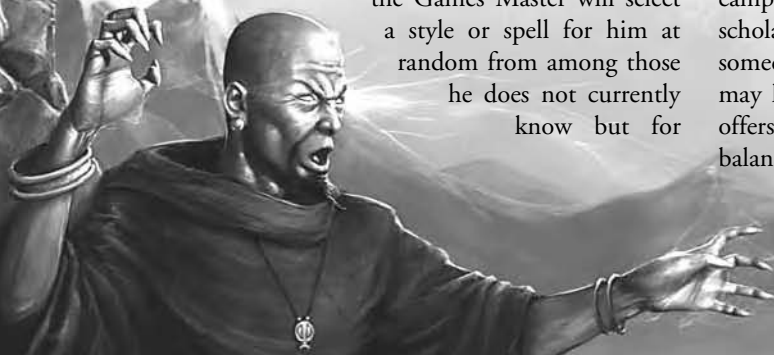
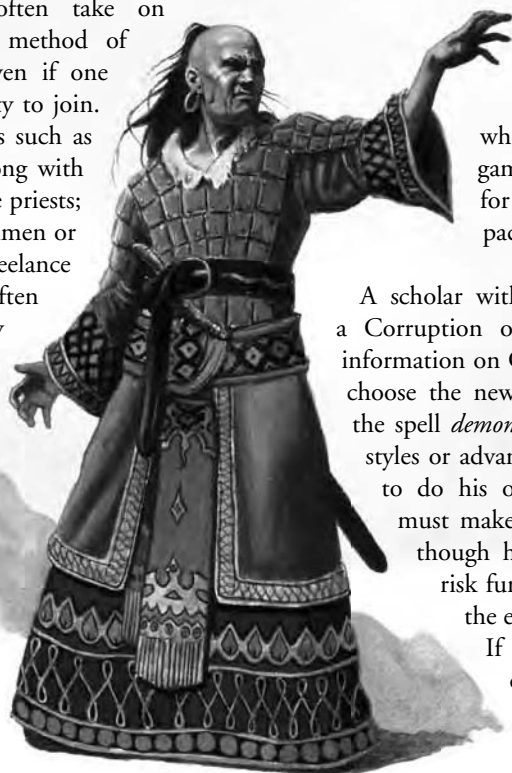
Pact: A scholar who makes a pact with a demonic entity or other dark force to learn sorcery is in a very similar state to that of an acolyte to a sorcerers' ring or coven, since he is often effectively in thrall to the source of his knowledge. He has a lot more choice as to what he learns

but the master has no human compunctions to prevent him from forcing the poor scholar to perform the direst of acts. Furthermore, the scholar who makes a pact will begin the game at least somewhat corrupt, for no truly decent sorcerer makes pacts with demons.

A scholar with a pact begins the game with a Corruption of one (see page 82 for more information on Corruption). At 1st level, he must choose the new sorcery style: Summoning and the spell *demonic pact*. On gaining new sorcery styles or advanced spells, he may choose either to do his own research, in which case he must make a Knowledge (arcana) check as though he were an independent, or else risk further Corruption by calling upon the entity with whom he has the pact. If he does the latter, he may freely choose which style or spell he learns, so long as it is one the entity knows; however, he must also make a Corruption check for dealing with the demon once more.

A scholar with a pact also starts the game with one additional bonus language available, as well as those offered him by his race. This is Demonic. He must expend a language slot as usual to learn to speak it.

The Games Master is always free to rule that Player Character scholars may not begin the game with pacts. This is particularly appropriate in short-term or one-off campaigns, where the natural disadvantage of the pact scholar (namely the Corruption he gains, which will someday almost certainly doom him one way or another) may have little impact on play. This background, which offers immediate power at the cost of one's soul, is better balanced for long-term campaigns.



Lay Priest: Scholars who choose the lay priest background are attached to a temple for purposes of study but have little or no religious authority. If they wish, they can work their way up to become fully ordained priests (see Chapter 6: Feats), a position which brings with it a number of benefits and responsibilities.

Priests, whether they are lay priests or fully ordained priests, do not usually have access to sorcery at all; if they do, it is most commonly to some form or other of counter-sorcery with which to combat evil cults. The precise nature of each priest and which magical abilities (if any) are available to him will vary depending on both the deity he worships and his own honesty – or lack thereof. More information on the cults of the various gods can be found in Chapter 12: Religion in the Hyborian Age.

Priests are treated as acolytes in that they must gain sorcery styles known to their religion. They do not usually need to learn the styles in a specific order but in most cases their religion will offer only a very limited selection of styles in the first place. Most higher-level priests have either conducted secret independent studies themselves or have even more secretly made a pact with a demon or joined a sorcerous society.

The shamans found in barbaric regions such as the Pictish wilderness can usually be treated as lay priests, though each tribe or village usually has only two or three shamans at any one time. A shaman might have the Priest feat (see page 135) but will not have had any official ordination and may have an apprentice or two.

New Sorcery Style: At 1st level, 2nd level, 4th level and every four levels thereafter, the scholar gains a new sorcery style from the table in the Sorcery chapter on pages 239–240, along with the basic spell associated with it. The sorcery styles are more fully explained in Chapter 9: Sorcery.

At any time at which he is eligible to gain a new sorcery style, the scholar may instead gain a bonus feat from the following list: Skill Focus (any), Diligent, Iron Will, Investigator, Negotiator, Priest or any Sorcery feat. If the sorcerer knows the *calm of the adept* spell from the Oriental Magic sorcery style, he may also select from Brawl, Defensive Martial Arts, Improved Critical (staff or unarmed strike), Stunning Attack or Weapon Focus (staff or unarmed strike). In all cases, the scholar must meet the usual prerequisites for the feat.

Note that the scholar may or may not be permitted to choose his new sorcery style himself, depending on his background class feature.

Knowledge Is Power: A scholar may make a special scholarly knowledge check with a bonus equal to his level + his Intelligence modifier to see whether he knows some relevant information about local notable people, legendary items or noteworthy places. This check will not reveal the powers of a magic item but may give a hint as to its general function. The scholar may never take 10 or take 20 on this check; this sort of knowledge is essentially random. The Games Master should determine the Difficulty Class of the check by referring to the table below.

DC	Type of Knowledge
10	Common, known by a substantial minority of the local population at least.
20	Uncommon but available, known by only a few people in the area.
25	Obscure, known by few, hard to come by.
30	Extremely obscure, known by very few, possibly forgotten by most who once knew it, possibly known only by those who do not understand the significance of the knowledge.

Base Power Points: A 1st level scholar learns to access his own personal magical energy. This is referred to as Base Power Points, or Base PP.

A beginning scholar has Base PP equal to 4 + Wisdom Modifier, to a minimum of one point.

Power Points are used when casting spells and creating magical objects. They can be regained by rest or through the use of various lotus concoctions (see Drugs and Herbal Preparations, page 275) or temporarily increased by various means, most commonly by sacrificing one or more humans. For most characters, their Power Points can rise to a maximum of double their Base Power Points. See Chapter 9: Sorcery for more on Power Points and their use.

If for some reason a character already has Base Power Points when he becomes a scholar, such as through the Dabbler feat, he does not gain 'new' Base Power Points as above. Instead, he receives a one-time bonus of +2 to his already acquired Base Power Points.

+1 Power Point: At 2nd level and every four levels thereafter, the scholar's Base Power Points increase by +1.



Advanced Spell: At 3rd level and every level thereafter, the scholar improves his knowledge of any one of the sorcery styles he already knows by gaining any one of the advanced spells listed under the style. More information about advanced spells can be found in Chapter 9: Sorcery. Alternatively, at any time at which he is eligible to gain an advanced spell, the scholar can instead gain two skill points. As with the new sorcery style class feature, the scholar may or may not be permitted to choose his advanced spell himself, depending on his Background class feature.

Note that when a sorcerer gains advanced spell and new sorcery style simultaneously upon gaining a new level, he may choose to gain the advanced spell in the new sorcery style.

Bonus Spell: From 3rd level the scholar becomes eligible for a small number of bonus advanced spells, depending on his Intelligence. His maximum possible number of bonus spells is equal to his Intelligence bonus, if any. However, he can gain only one bonus spell at 3rd level and an additional bonus spell every four levels thereafter, whatever his Intelligence. This is summarised on the Scholar Bonus Spells table.

SCHOLAR BONUS SPELLS

Scholar Level	Intelligence Bonus				
	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5 or higher
3 rd	Bonus Spell	Bonus Spell	Bonus Spell	Bonus Spell	Bonus Spell
7 th	—	Bonus Spell	Bonus Spell	Bonus Spell	Bonus Spell
11 th	—	—	Bonus Spell	Bonus Spell	Bonus Spell
15 th	—	—	—	Bonus Spell	Bonus Spell
19 th	—	—	—	—	Bonus Spell

Iron Will: At 5th level, the scholar gains Iron Will as a bonus feat. If he already has Iron Will, he may instead select any Sorcery feat for which he meets the prerequisites as a bonus feat.

Increased Maximum Power

Points: As scholars become more experienced and knowledgeable, they become able to store far more

magical power in their bodies, so long as it is available to them by means of sacrifice or some artefact or other. At 6th level, a scholar's maximum Power Points rise to triple his Base Power Points, rather than double as is usual for most characters. At 13th level it rises again to quadruple his Base Power Points and at 20th level it rises to quintuple his Base Power Points.

For example, Thothmekeri is a 1st level scholar with Wisdom 14. His Base PP is 6 (4, +2 Wis) and his Maximum PP is 12 (double his Base PP). By the time he is 6th level, his Base PP is 8 (4, +2 Wis, +2 scholar class feature) and his Maximum PP is 24 (three times his Base PP).

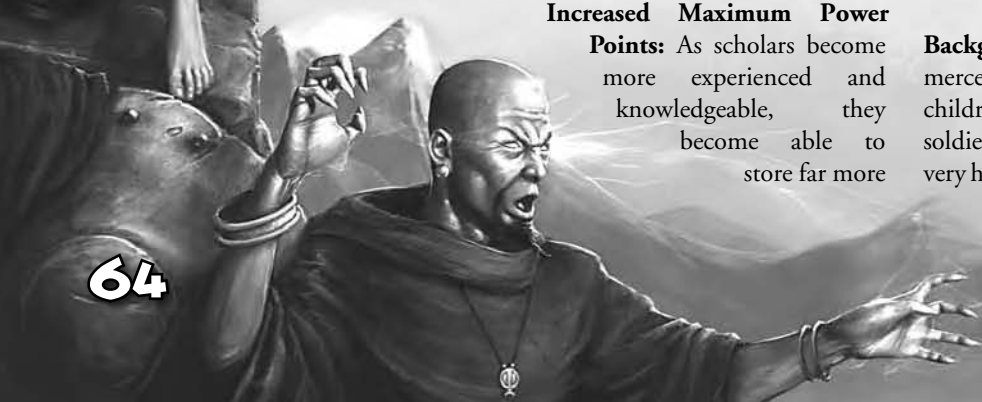
SOLDIER

Adventures: In the grim, war-torn kingdoms of the Hyborian Age, there is always work for a soldier. When there is no proper military work in the region, a soldier skills can be put to just as good a use as a brigand, guard or hired thug; or he can simply join a similar band of footloose mercenaries and travel to a nearby land where there is a war going on.

Characteristics: Soldiers gain far more feats than any other character class and have the freedom to select them from an enormous variety of combat-oriented feats. In addition, they gain certain benefits when fighting alongside others in a formation – this is particularly useful in mass combat but can also come in handy in an adventuring party that contains three or more characters who all have at least three levels in the soldier class, or one character with a high Leadership score.

Religion: Soldiers are frequently superstitious but rarely practise a particular religion devoutly. Most would rather rely on their own strong arms and the support of their comrades than put too much faith in the gods, who may not even exist and certainly show no inclination to intervene in the world even if they do. Despite this, few soldiers will refuse the aid of a priest if offered. Their lifestyles are so risky and uncertain that they will take any support they can get, even potentially spurious spiritual assistance. After all, if you bow to receive a blessing, you lose nothing if it does not work; and if it does work, it might just save your life.

Background: Most soldiers join either an army or a mercenary company at a very young age, sometimes as children, as pages, squires or servants to more experienced soldiers. These soldiers know no other life and often seem very hard and grim for their age. Some soldiers may not have access to such a formal military background



but may simply come from particularly war-torn regions or raiding cultures such as Cimmeria, Asgard or Vanaheim.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: Strength and Dexterity are vital for the soldier. Though most stress Strength above all else, Dexterity is vital for archers and skirmishers and even the most stalwart pikeman may find it useful on occasion. All soldiers require Constitution, whatever their role, if they are to survive the long marches and bitter wars that are every soldier's lot. Those who have ambitions to rise to positions of command would do well to have a reasonably high Charisma too.

Hit Die: d10

CLASS SKILLS

The soldier's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (rumours) (Int), Knowledge (warfare) (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex) and Search (Int).

Skill Points at 1st Level: $(2 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: $2 + \text{Int modifier}$

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the soldier:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A soldier is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, two-weapon combat (soldiers effectively gain the Two-Weapon Combat feat for free), light, medium and heavy armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight-of-Hand and Tumble skills. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment a soldier carries.

Bonus Feats: At 1st level, the soldier gets a bonus feat in addition to the feat that any 1st level character gets and any bonus feats granted by his race. The soldier gains an additional bonus feat at 2nd level and every two levels thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th and so on). The feats that may be selected as soldier bonus feats are indicated in the Feats table in the Feats chapter. A soldier must meet all prerequisites for a feat, including ability score and base attack bonus minimums.



Formation Combat: At 3rd level the soldier learns to fight as part of a formation rather than as an individual. He may select one of the following formations. An improved formation can only be selected if the character has the corresponding basic formation:

Heavy Cavalry: Whenever the soldier is mounted and has two mounted and allied soldiers who have also selected heavy cavalry within 20 feet of him, he gains a +1 circumstance bonus to his Armour Piercing rating with any melee weapon. All three soldiers must be mounted and in medium or heavy armour.

Improved Heavy Cavalry: Whenever the soldier is mounted and has two mounted and allied soldiers who have also selected improved heavy cavalry within 20 feet of him, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his Armour Piercing rating and to damage with any melee weapon. All three soldiers must be mounted and in medium or heavy armour.





THE SOLDIER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+0	+0	Bonus Feat
2	+2	+1	+1	+0	+3	+0	+0	Bonus Feat
3	+3	+1	+2	+0	+3	+1	+1	Formation Combat
4	+4	+2	+3	+1	+4	+1	+1	Bonus Feat
5	+5	+2	+3	+1	+4	+1	+1	Officer
6	+6/+1	+3	+4	+1	+5	+2	+2	Bonus Feat
7	+7/+2	+3	+5	+1	+5	+2	+2	Formation Combat
8	+8/+3	+4	+6	+2	+6	+2	+2	Bonus Feat
9	+9/+4	+4	+6	+2	+6	+3	+3	Officer +1
10	+10/+5	+5	+7	+2	+7	+3	+3	Bonus Feat
11	+11/+6/+1	+5	+8	+2	+7	+3	+3	Formation Combat
12	+12/+7/+2	+6	+9	+3	+8	+4	+4	Bonus Feat
13	+13/+8/+3	+6	+9	+3	+8	+4	+4	Officer +2
14	+14/+9/+4	+7	+10	+3	+9	+4	+4	Bonus Feat
15	+15/+10/+5	+7	+11	+3	+9	+5	+5	Formation Combat
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+8	+12	+4	+10	+5	+5	Bonus Feat
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+8	+12	+4	+10	+5	+5	Officer +3
18	+18/+13//+8/+3	+9	+13	+4	+11	+6	+6	Bonus Feat
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+9	+14	+4	+11	+6	+6	Formation Combat
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+10	+15	+5	+12	+6	+6	Bonus Feat

Heavy Infantry: Whenever the soldier has two allied soldiers who have also selected heavy infantry adjacent to him, he gains a +1 circumstance bonus to his damage rolls with any melee weapon. All three soldiers must be on foot and in medium or heavy armour.

Improved Heavy Infantry: Whenever the soldier has two allied soldiers who have also selected improved heavy infantry adjacent to him, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his damage rolls with any melee weapon and a +2 bonus to his Parry score when using a shield. All three soldiers must be on foot and in medium or heavy armour.

Light Cavalry: Whenever the soldier has two and allied soldiers who have also selected light cavalry within 20 feet of him, he gains a +1 circumstance bonus to all melee attack rolls. All three soldiers must be mounted and in light or no armour.

Improved Light Cavalry: Whenever the soldier has two and allied soldiers

who have also selected improved light cavalry within 20 feet of him, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all melee and ranged attack rolls. All three soldiers must be mounted and in light or no armour.

Skirmisher: Whenever the soldier has two allied soldiers who have also selected skirmisher within 10 feet of him, he gains a +1 circumstance bonus to Defence. All three soldiers must be on foot and in light or no armour.

Improved Skirmisher: Whenever the soldier has two allied soldiers who have also selected improved skirmisher within 10 feet of him, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Defence and a +2 bonus to Initiative. All three soldiers must be on foot and in light or no armour.

Fighting Spirit: Whenever the soldier has two allied soldiers who have also selected fighting spirit within 30 feet of him, he gains a +1 bonus to Will saves and Fortitude saves.

Improved Fighting Spirit: Whenever the soldier has two allied soldiers who have also selected improved fighting

spirit within 30 feet of him, he gains a +2 bonus to Will saves and Fortitude saves.

The soldier may select a new formation at 7th, 11th, 15th and 19th levels.

Officer: Starting at 5th level, the soldier gains the ability to co-ordinate and command others. He may temporarily allow other people to count as a soldiers with a specific formation, so long as the characters in question are of equal or lower level to the soldier with the officer class feature. For example, a 5th level soldier and a 3rd level soldier both have the skirmisher formation. Under normal circumstances, they would be unable to benefit from this formation. However, by using the officer ability, the 5th level soldier could extend the formation to a third character, allowing the three to enter skirmisher formation. This ability can affect a number of people at any one time equal to the soldier's Intelligence bonus.

To use this ability, the soldier must spend a free action every round shouting orders. Those using the formation must obey those commands. If a character uses Fighting-Madness, crimson mist or another effect that is incompatible with disciplined fighting, or falls victim to fear or terror, that character does not count as part of the formation for the duration of the effect.

The soldier can target other soldiers with this ability to give them formations that they do not possess. A soldier can only use the officer ability to share improved formations if the target already possesses the basic version of the formation.

At 9th, 13th and 17th levels, the number of people the soldier can affect with his officer ability increases by +1.

THE TEMPTRESS

The overwhelming majority of temptresses are women, but very occasionally a man takes up the mantle of tempter.

Adventures: Fostering beauty and charm, the temptress uses sensuality and sexuality as irresistible lures to bring others to their doom. The Hyborian Age is a time of great opportunity for temptresses. The world seems to be a place of male domination, where men wage wars and conduct the business of the world. However, temptresses are ideally suited to taking advantage of these men, proving that beauty is stronger than physical power. They ensure that the 'world of men' is nothing of the sort.

While the majority of temptresses use sex as their primary route to power, they can also be political power brokers, crime lords or even sorceresses.

Characteristics: Temptresses use their bodies and their seduction techniques to further their own ends. They use their charm to get men and women to do their bidding; their sexuality is as honed as a weapon, as keen and deadly as any sword. Like a noble, the temptress favours brain over brawn – and knows full well that sexuality can overcome both the minds and brawn of her enemies.

Religion: Temptresses usually follow the religion of their native land, although they can choose the most provocative of the available gods and goddesses of that land.

Background: Temptresses usually come from urban settings, although some come from more rural areas. In any case, the culture around them must oppress women in some manner, pigeonholing them into some role. It is this limitation and oppression that births the temptress. She is a shadow cast by these cultural rules.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: Charisma, Wisdom and Intelligence are all crucial to the temptress. She must be able to slip past the resistance of others to see her will done. She is cunning, manipulative and ambitious. Furthermore, she should cultivate her Dexterity if she plans to be lithe and quick, her Constitution to ensure she can endure as long as possible and her Strength so that she is not unduly overpowered.

Hit Die: d6

CLASS SKILLS

The temptress' class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Local) (Int), Knowledge (Nobility) (Int), Knowledge (rumours) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Rope (Dex).



Skill Points at 1st Level: $(8 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: $8 + \text{Int modifier}$

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the temptress:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A temptress is proficient with all simple weapons and whips. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble skills. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment the temptress carries.

Comeliness: A temptress takes a pride in her appearance and is naturally well-dressed and groomed. She also has an exceptionally well-formed body. She receives a $+2$ circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks in situations where her appearance might play a part. Her Base Reputation increases by $+2$.

Savoir-Faire: The temptress has a certain flair, dashing style, élan or bravura that marks her as someone special. Everything she does is performed with style, whether it be entering a room and turning heads, carving her initials into a tapestry with her rapier or even savouring a meal at a banquet to impress her host.

The temptress can intentionally attempt to impress others with her style in any task. The temptress may make any required checks normally but if her result is five or more higher than the required DC to succeed at the task, she has performed the deed with stunning flair. She gets a $+2$ circumstance bonus to her next Charisma-based skill check.

It is very hard to embarrass the temptress, for she can turn even a fall into an elegant dance. Anytime she fails badly at something she can make a Bluff skill check as a free action to mitigate the failure and make it look intentional. The DC depends on the nature of what she has done wrong but it is usually 15 or 20. The higher the result, the better her reaction to failure appears.

As a free action, the temptress may make a Diplomacy check to oppose anyone who tries to embarrass her, even if she is unaware of what is going on.

The Games Master can make the roll for her.

Seductive Art: A temptress gains an inherent understanding of sexuality as it pertains to social situations. She gains a $+1$ competence bonus on Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Perform and Sense Motive checks at 2nd level. This bonus also applies to her magic attack bonus if she takes the Sorcery Secret art at third level. This bonus increases by $+1$ every four levels thereafter. Further, the temptress relishes the conquest of new types of people. Whenever the temptress successfully seduces a person who is of a race and class combination not previously seduced by her, she receives a $+2$ bonus to all attack rolls, magic attack rolls, damage rolls and saving throws for the whole of the next day. She also has a $+2$ bonus to Reputation for the next week.

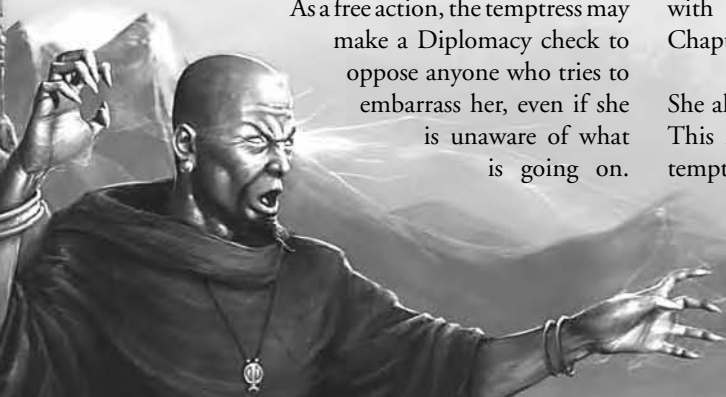
Compelling Performance: A temptress with five or more ranks in Perform (any) can cause all those within 30 feet of her who are attracted to her gender (and not otherwise distracted, such as in combat) to become fascinated with her. The targets are allowed a Will save (DC $10 +$ her Perform skill modifier). Those who become fascinated receive a -4 penalty to Listen and Spot checks so long as the temptress keeps performing. Should a target make its save, the temptress cannot attempt to fascinate that same target again for 24 hours. If the temptress has 10 or more ranks in Perform, the fascinated audience's penalty to Listen and Spot checks is further increased to -6 ; if she has 15 or more ranks in Perform the fascinated audience's penalty to Listen and Spot checks is further increased to -8 . The temptress must be wearing no armour to use compelling performance. At 2nd level, she can use this ability once per day; this increases as she gains levels.

Secret Art: At third level, the temptress must choose one secret art. She has three options – sneak attack, sorcery or politics.

If she selects sneak attack, she gains the sneak attack ability, which functions just like the thief ability of the same name (see page 73). The temptress has a sneak attack of $+1d6$.

If she selects sorcery, she gains one sorcery style from the table in the sorcery chapter on pages 239–240 along with the basic spell (but not the defensive blast) associated with it. The sorcery styles are more fully explained in Chapter 9: Sorcery.

She also learns to access her own personal magical energy. This is referred to as Base Power Points, or Base PP. A temptress has Base PP equal to $2 +$ Wisdom Modifier, to a minimum of one point. If for some reason

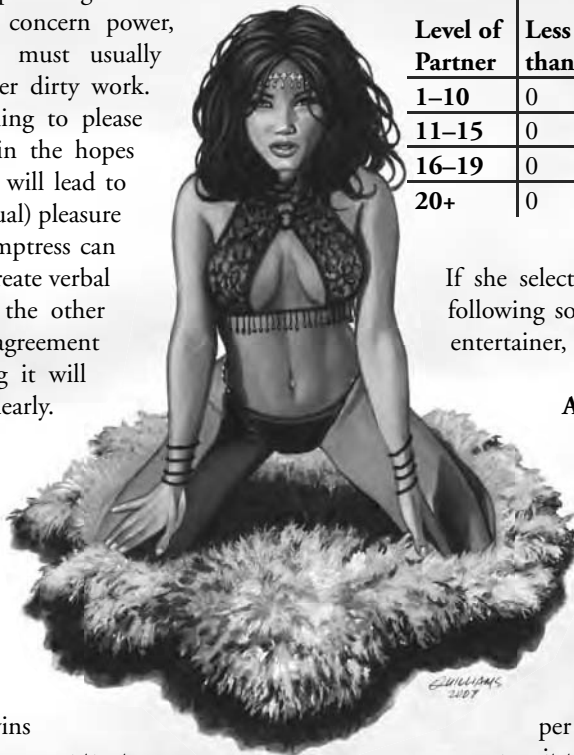


a character already has Base Power Points when she gains this ability, such as through the Dabbler feat, she does not gain 'new' Base Power Points as above. Instead, she receives a one-time bonus of +2 to her already acquired Base Power Points.

If the temptress selects politics, she may select one of the following social abilities from the noble class: ally, entertainer, improved standing, refuge, smear others or secrets.

Seductive Savant: A temptress has a gift for using sex to enhance a single skill, using her sensual nature to dampen the resistance of others. The temptress adds a competence bonus equal to half her temptress class level when making checks with one skill chosen from the following list: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate or Perform. This does not stack with seductive art but can supersede it for the chosen skill.

Binding Contract: Temptresses are usually temptresses because they have specific goals. These goals, which usually concern power, mean the temptress must usually enlist others to do her dirty work. People will do anything to please a temptress, usually in the hopes that their compliance will lead to more mutual (and sexual) pleasure in the future. The temptress can use this weakness to create verbal contracts so binding the other party must hold to the agreement for fear that breaking it will ultimately cost them dearly. Creating a binding contract requires an opposed Diplomacy check between the temptress and the primary party responsible for the other side of the deal. If the temptress wins this contest, she creates a contract the other party must uphold. If the temptress fails the contest, then negotiations have fallen through and may not be resumed for at least another day. There is a special effect if this is used against a sorcerer: a sorcerer who enters a binding contract with a temptress becomes subject to the Rule of Obsession (see page 230), either with the fulfilment of the contract or with the temptress.



Improved Secret Art: At 7th level, the temptress' secret art improves.

If she selected sneak attack, her sneak attack increases to +2d6. She also gains the ability to feint as a free action by flashing an appropriate body part, sending a smouldering stare or putting on a particularly fetching pout. If she makes a successful Bluff check in combat, opposed by Sense Motive, her target becomes flat-footed. This free feint can only be used once per fight.

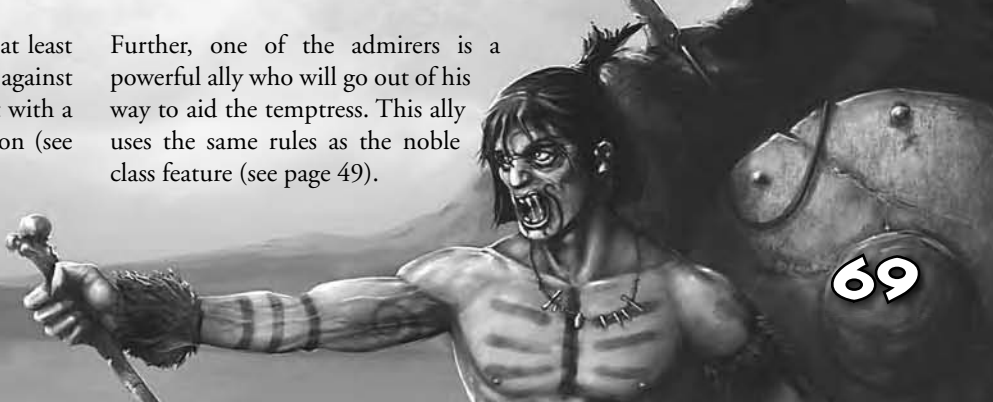
If she selected sorcery, she gains an advanced spell from her school of sorcery. She also gains the ability to generate Power Points through sex – for every hour of ritual passion with a suitable partner, the temptress may make a Perform (ritual) check. She gains Power Points based on the level of her partner and the result of the Perform check. The partner suffers temporary Wisdom damage equal to the number of Power Points gained.

Level of Partner	Less than 10	Perform Check Result			
		10–14	15–19	20–24	25+
1–10	0	1	2	3	4
11–15	0	2	4	6	8
16–19	0	3	6	9	12
20+	0	4	8	12	16

If she selected politics, she may select one of the following social abilities from the noble class: ally, entertainer, refuge, smear others or secrets.

Admirers: The temptress has built up a regular group of admirers, hangers on or customers who provide her with certain benefits. She gains a +2 bonus to Gather Information checks around her social clique and receives a stipend from her admirers of 100 sp per point of Charisma per month. If she leaves a given area, it takes her a month to rebuild her clique.

Further, one of the admirers is a powerful ally who will go out of his way to aid the temptress. This ally uses the same rules as the noble class feature (see page 49).





THE TEMPTRESS

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	Comeliness, Savoir-Faire
2	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+3	+3	Seductive Art +1, Compelling Performance 1/day
3	+2	+1	+1	+0	+1	+3	+3	Secret Art
4	+3	+2	+1	+1	+1	+4	+4	Seductive Savant
5	+3	+2	+1	+1	+1	+4	+4	Binding Contract
6	+4	+3	+2	+1	+2	+5	+5	Seductive Art +2, Compelling Performance 2/day
7	+5	+3	+2	+1	+2	+5	+5	Improved Secret Art, Admirers
8	+6/+1	+4	+3	+2	+2	+6	+6	Inspire
9	+6/+1	+4	+3	+2	+3	+6	+6	Outrageous Flattery
10	+7/+2	+5	+3	+2	+3	+7	+7	Seductive Art +3, Compelling Performance 3/day
11	+8/+3	+5	+4	+2	+3	+7	+7	Advanced Secret Art, Exquisite
12	+9/+4	+6	+4	+3	+4	+8	+8	
13	+9/+4	+6	+4	+3	+4	+8	+8	Use Weakness as Strength
14	+10/+5	+7	+5	+3	+4	+9	+9	Seductive Art +4, Compelling Performance 4/day
15	+11/+6/+1	+7	+5	+3	+5	+9	+9	
16	+12/+7/+2	+8	+6	+4	+5	+10	+10	Veiled In Darkness
17	+12/+7/+2	+8	+6	+4	+5	+10	+10	Perfected Secret Art
18	+13/+8/+3	+9	+6	+4	+6	+11	+11	Seductive Art +5
19	+14/+9/+4	+9	+7	+4	+6	+11	+11	Compelling Performance 5/day
20	+15/+10/+5	+10	+7	+5	+6	+12	+12	Glorious

Inspire: The temptress often inspires others to perform beyond their normal abilities. People want to impress the temptress and her presence brings out their best. The temptress knows how to use this desire. During the temptress' action, she can designate an ally within 30 feet of her to receive a +2 morale bonus on all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks. This is a free action on her part. If the ally is actively defending the temptress (not just fighting alongside her), he may also add a +2 circumstance bonus to his Defence (Dodge or Parry).

Outrageous Flattery: From 9th level and above, the temptress has faked sincerity countless times. When she says that a person has a lovely physique or

an impressive stance, her statements sound completely plausible, regardless of how hackneyed her words may be. So convincing is her power that she may sometimes use it on the most unlikely of targets. She may attempt to flatter any one target who could be plausibly attracted to her with an Intelligence greater than three and that can understand her. While the temptress is making compliments, the target must succeed in a Will save (DC 10 + half the temptress' class level + her Charisma modifier) in order to take any hostile action toward her at all. This may be because the target is genuinely flattered or it may be out of complete bemusement and shock. If the temptress attempts to use this ability while in combat, the target receives a +2 circumstance bonus to his saving throw. If the saving throw result totals more than 10 above the required number, the target is massively offended at what he perceives as mockery. If this takes place in a combat situation, the intended target subsequently attacks the temptress in preference to other targets for at least one round.

Exquisite: A temptress at 11th level is no longer merely comely and pretty. Experience has made her an exquisite creature. She receives a +4 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks in situations where her appearance might play a part. She also receives a one-time bonus of +2 to her Base Reputation as her beauty is highly remarked upon wherever she goes. This supersedes the comeliness ability.

Advanced Secret Art: At 11th level, the temptress' secret art improves.

If she selected sneak attack, her sneak attack increases to +3d6.

If she selected Sorcery, she gains an advanced spell from her school of sorcery and +2 base power points.

If she selected politics, she may select one of the following social abilities from the noble class: ally, entertainer, refuge, smear others or secrets. She also becomes above suspicion – she is effectively untouchable for lesser crimes and will not suffer arrest or interrogation for anything short of premeditated murder. In her case, beauty and sexuality hath its privileges. Investigators will automatically assume she is an innocent party. If the temptress desires, she can actually shift the investigator toward another target by making a successful opposed Diplomacy check against the investigator's Sense Motive roll. Failure has no adverse effect unless the crime is premeditated murder, in which case the investigator becomes sure the temptress is the culprit.

Use Weakness as Strength: The temptress is accomplished at using the weaknesses of her opponents to get the better of them. When making an opposed Charisma, Intelligence or Wisdom based check against the temptress, the opponent must use the lowest of these three abilities as his modifier. For example, if a temptress is attempting to Bluff another character, and that character has Wisdom 16 (+3), Intelligence 10 (+0) and Charisma 8 (–1), that character must use his –1 Charisma modifier instead of his Wisdom modifier on his Sense Motive check.

Veiled In Darkness: A temptress of 16th level or higher puts people off their guard. A willing partner in one of her romantic or sexual endeavours may not act until the *second* round of combat if the temptress attacks him. A Will save (DC set by Bluff check) allows him to avoid this fate.

She may also have sex with a partner that is so energetic and exhausting that her partner may fall into a deep slumber. After having sex with a temptress with

this ability, the partner must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half temptress' level + temptress' Charisma modifier) or fall into a deep, peaceful sleep. Nothing short of violence (or a bucket of water, or the equivalent) will rouse the target of this ability for 1d6+4 hours.

Perfect Secret Art: At 17th level, the temptress' secret art improves.

If she selected sneak attack, her sneak attack increases to +4d6.

If she selected sorcery, she gains an advanced spell from her school of sorcery and +2 base power points.

If she selected politics, she may select one of the following social abilities from the noble class: ally, entertainer, refuge, smear others or secrets.

Glorious: A temptress at 20th level is a legendary beauty and adventuress. She is graceful in her age and more attractive than ever. She receives a +6 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks in situations where her appearance might play a part. This supersedes the exquisite ability. She gains another +2 bonus to her Base Reputation.

THIEF

Adventures: Whether cracking open a long-forgotten tomb in Stygia, raiding a Khitan caravan or stealing sacred jewels from a Zembabwean jungle temple, the thief lives a risky but hopefully profitable life wherever he goes. Thieves are common in Hyboria and are often low born adventurers who use their wits to rob others. Zamora is almost a state of thieves. Shem, Koth and Zingara also have their fair share of thieves. A thief who has acquired a reputation, or even one foolhardy enough to go where others will not, is likely to be hired to break into sorcerers' homes or tombs. He might be asked to gather rare artefacts, such as poison from the snakes of the swamps of Zingara or lotus blooms from a far eastern land. Some thieves are hired to capture particularly valuable slaves. Teams of thieves might work on the more difficult tasks but there are no formalised 'Thieves' Guilds' even in notoriously lawless regions such as the Maul in Zamora. Nobles will often hire thieves as spies and assassins. When work is not readily available thieves



will seek out legendary treasures for their own profit. As a member of an adventuring team, a thief's role can be that of scout, negotiator, assassin or anything else which suits his particular choice of skills.

Characteristics: The thief is expert at stabbing his enemies in the back and with a well-planned sneak attack he can be far more devastating than the most stalwart greatsword-wielding mercenary. His greatest strength, though, is in the breadth and depth of skills to which he has access, allowing him to generalise or specialise as he chooses in any of a variety of different fields of expertise.



Religion:

The best-known thieves' god is Bel, originally a Shemitish deity but now worshipped almost everywhere Shemites are found, from the Hyborian kingdoms to Stygia, Zamora and Turan. Thieves from many places have been quick to adopt Bel as their patron, with his priests' promises of an easy life of plunder and excess. However, there are other gods who favour thieves, including several in the extensive and complex Zamorian pantheon. Thieves from the East and South, such as Vendhya and Kush, tend to

worship their own gods. Many thieves, though, prefer to avoid religion entirely, perhaps fearing that if they give too much credence to the gods they will never be able to break into tombs or rob temple coffers again.

Background: Many thieves come from the sprawling western cities in the Hyborian kingdoms or the notorious slums and back streets of Zamora. However, not all thieves are from urban regions and the nomadic tribes of Shem, Hyrkania and other lands can also produce effective rogues, as can the barbaric lands of Cimmeria and Nordheim. Often a wanderer into the Hyborian kingdoms will find employment as a thief before moving on to other things, since anyone with a quick mind and nimble fingers can turn his hands to thievery.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: For most thieves, Dexterity is paramount. It lets them strike first, before their opponents can properly defend against a sneak attack. It also drives most of their skills. Intelligence should also be a priority, for an intelligent thief is better able to acquire a range of the skills that are so crucial to this class. The thief who wishes to make his mark as a conman or fixer rather than a straight robber or burglar would do well to have a high Charisma, so as to better dupe his marks or make his deals.

Hit Die: d8

CLASS SKILLS

The thief's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (herbalism) (Int), Craft (any mundane) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility) (Int), Knowledge (rumours) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Int modifier) × 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier

THE THIEF

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	+0	Sneak Attack Style, Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Trap Disarming
2	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+3	+0	Eyes of the Cat
3	+2	+1	+1	+0	+1	+3	+1	Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Trap Sense +1
4	+3	+2	+2	+1	+1	+4	+1	Sneak Attack Style, Light-Footed
5	+3	+2	+2	+1	+1	+4	+1	Sneak Attack +3d6/+3d8
6	+4	+3	+3	+1	+2	+5	+2	Trap Sense +2, Special Ability
7	+5	+3	+3	+1	+2	+5	+2	Sneak Attack +4d6/+4d8
8	+6/+1	+4	+4	+2	+2	+6	+2	Sneak Attack Style, Poison Use
9	+6/+1	+4	+4	+2	+3	+6	+3	Sneak Attack +5d6/+5d8, Trap Sense +3
10	+7/+2	+5	+5	+2	+3	+7	+3	Special Ability
11	+8/+3	+5	+5	+2	+3	+7	+3	Sneak Attack +6d6/+6d8
12	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	+4	+8	+4	Sneak Attack Style, Trap Sense +4
13	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	+4	+8	+4	Sneak Attack +7d6/+7d8
14	+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	+4	+9	+4	Special Ability
15	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+3	+5	+9	+5	Sneak Attack +8d6/+8d8, Trap Sense +5
16	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	+5	+10	+5	Sneak Attack Style
17	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	+5	+10	+5	Sneak Attack +9d6/+9d8
18	+13/+8/+3	+9	+9	+4	+6	+11	+6	Trap Sense +6, Special Ability
19	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+4	+6	+11	+6	Sneak Attack +10d6/+10d8
20	+15/+10/+5	+10	+10	+5	+6	+12	+6	Sneak Attack Style

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the thief:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A thief is proficient with all simple weapons, all light and one-handed martial weapons and light armour. Note that armour check penalties for wearing medium or heavy armour apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight-of-Hand and Tumble skills. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every five pounds of armour and equipment the thief carries.

Sneak Attack: Any time at which the thief's target is unable to dodge or parry, or when the thief flanks the target, the thief's attack deals extra damage if it damages the target. The extra damage is +1d6/+1d8 at 1st level and an additional 1d6/+1d8 every two levels thereafter. The number before the slash indicates the extra damage dealt by most weaponry; the number after the slash indicates

the extra damage dealt by any weapon that is one of the thief's sneak attack styles. (Use *either* the first figure *or* the second according to whether the thief is using a weapon that is one of his styles or not. Do not add the d6 and the d8 damage.) Should the thief score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. The extra sneak attack damage is only dealt if the thief either bypasses the foe's armour or pierces the armour without the benefit of the extra damage.

Ranged attacks only count as sneak attacks if the target is within 30 feet. The thief cannot strike with deadly accuracy from beyond that range.



With a sap or an unarmed strike, the thief can make a sneak attack that deals subdual damage instead of normal damage. The thief cannot use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal subdual damage in a sneak attack, even with the usual -4 penalty to attack rolls.

A thief can only sneak attack a living creature with a discernible anatomy. Any creature that is immune to critical hits is also not vulnerable to sneak attacks. The thief must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot that he can reach. The thief cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment or the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

Sneak Attack Style: At 1st level, the thief chooses a sneak attack style. This can be any one weapon with which he is proficient, including unarmed strikes and missile weapons. Whenever he makes a sneak attack (see below) using his chosen weapon, he inflicts greater damage and gains a +1 circumstance bonus on his attack roll. At 4th level and every four levels thereafter, the thief gains an additional sneak attack style. Note that if the thief has sneak attack as a class feature from another class, the increased damage only applies to the damage from the sneak attack class feature acquired by taking thief levels. For example, a 4th level thief/5th level pirate whose sneak attack style is poniard deals 1d6+2d8+1d6 damage when he sneak attacks with a poniard; 1d6 for the poniard's base damage, 2d8 for the sneak attack damage from the thief levels (poniard style) and 1d6 for the sneak attack damage from the pirate levels.

Trap Disarming: Thieves (and only thieves) can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a Difficulty Class higher than 20.

A thief who beats the DC of a trap by 10 or more with his Disable Device check can, if he chooses, bypass it rather than disarm it. He may lead his allies past it at their normal speed without risk.

Eyes of the Cat: At 2nd level, the thief gains the Eyes of the Cat feat as a bonus feat. He need not meet the usual prerequisites for the feat. If he already has Eyes of the Cat, he gains Alertness instead.

Trap Sense: At 3rd level, the thief gains a +1 bonus to Reflex saving throws made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to

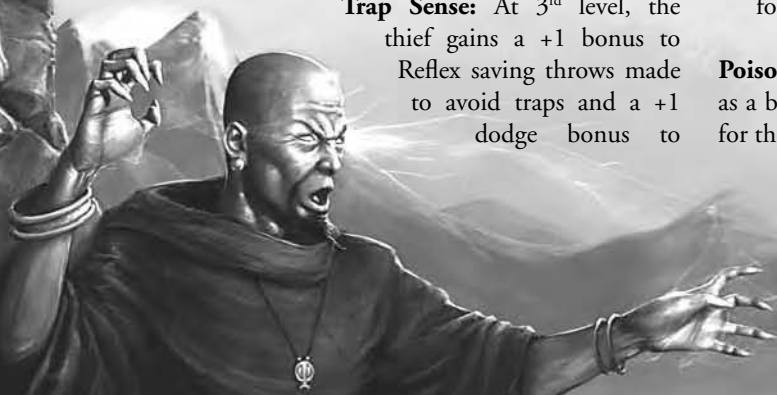
Dodge Defence against attacks by traps. Every three levels thereafter, these bonuses increase by +1. Trap sense bonuses gained from different classes stack.

Light-Footed: At 4th level, the thief gains the Light-Footed feat as a bonus feat. He need not meet the usual prerequisites for the feat. If he already has Light-Footed, he gains Fleet-Footed instead.

Special Ability: At 6th level and every four levels thereafter, the thief may select a special ability from the following list:

- ✱ *Crippling Strike:* When the thief damages an opponent with a sneak attack, the target also takes two points of Strength damage.
- ✱ *Evasion:* If the thief is exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, he takes no damage with a successful saving throw. Evasion can only be used if the thief is wearing light armour or no armour.
- ✱ *Jack-of-all-trades:* The thief gains a +2 bonus on all Craft and Profession skill checks.
- ✱ *Opportunist:* Once per round, the thief can make an attack of opportunity against an opponent who has just been struck for damage by another character. This attack counts as the thief's attack of opportunity for that round. Even a thief with the Combat Reflexes feat may not use the opportunist ability more than once per round.
- ✱ *Skill Mastery:* The thief selects a number of skills equal to 3 + his Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check with one of these skills, the thief may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so. The thief may gain this special ability multiple times, selecting additional skills to apply to it each time.
- ✱ *Sorcerous Protection:* Experienced thieves often arrange for minor magical protection or learn to create their own defences, so as to more safely plunder cursed tombs or Stygian caravans. The thief gains a +2 resistance bonus to all saving throws against spells and spell-like effects, whether the required roll is a Will, Reflex or Fortitude saving throw.
- ✱ *Feat:* The thief may select a bonus feat in place of a special ability, so long as he meets the usual prerequisites for the feat selected.

Poison Use: At 8th level the thief gains the Poison Use feat as a bonus feat. He need not meet the usual prerequisites for the feat.



ROUNDING OUT YOUR CHARACTER

As part of the character generation process, the following stages enable a player to find out a little more about his characters beyond his class, race, feats and skills.

FATE POINTS

Fate Points are a narrative device that enable players to bring creative input to bear in the game, beyond merely describing their own actions and throwing the dice. With Fate Points, players can alter the game world in some way so as to benefit their characters. Fate Points are intended to offer players the chance to add to the story of their characters, adapting the events around them or the circumstances that befall them so as to improve the game and give it a more 'Conanesque' feel.

At the start of his career, a player has three Fate Points.

These Fate Points are extremely precious, since they can save a character's life. You can achieve this by opting to be 'left for dead' rather than killed outright.

Fate Points have three other uses as well; but saving your life is definitely the most crucial, so it is recommended that you always keep one or two Fate Points reserved for that purpose alone. Of course, the angle might be perfect for a Mighty Blow (see below) instead, even if that leaves one desperately short of Fate Points; that is a decision the player must make. Magical resurrection is so scarce as to be almost unattainable in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, though a character who has a major task left unfulfilled or a loved one to protect from imminent peril has a chance of making a brief return as a ghost (see Chapter 13: A Hyborian Bestiary). Despite this, it is usually best to simply not die.

Some significant Non-Player Characters may also have Fate Points, at the Games Master's discretion.

USING FATE POINTS

There are seven standard uses for Fate Points: Left for Dead, Mighty Blow, Parry or Dodge, Reroll, Resist Terror, Repentance and Destiny. The Games Master may allow other uses, so check with him before play.

Left for Dead: In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, characters become unconscious when reduced to -1 hit points and die when reduced to -10 or fewer hit points. See Chapter 8: Combat. However, when a character's

hit points reach -10 or less by any means, he may spend one Fate Point to avoid being killed outright. He is instead 'left for dead.'

A character who is Left for Dead appears dead upon casual examination, though he still has a chance of recovering, particularly if attended quickly by a character with the Heal skill (see page 105). If he is healed of at least one point of damage within one hour of being Left for Dead, either with the Heal skill or by sorcerous or other means, he is considered to be stable and at -9 hit points (see page 190). If he is not healed, he must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) after one hour. If successful, he stabilises himself and is at -9 hit points. If he fails, he is finally and irrevocably dead, whether he has any Fate Points left or not.

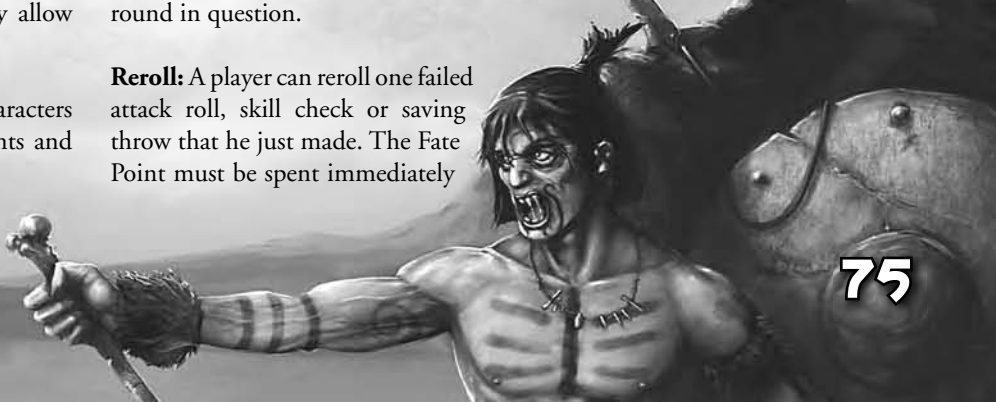
A character who dies through Constitution loss may also save himself by using Left for Dead; in such a case, the effect that was damaging his Constitution stops when he has a Constitution score of one point.

Left for Dead cannot be used against effects that leave no possibility whatsoever of the character surviving, such as *draw forth the heart*.

Mighty Blow: Rather than rolling the damage dice on any successful hit or damaging magical attack, a player can elect to declare a Mighty Blow at the cost of one Fate Point. A Mighty Blow always deals the maximum possible damage. This includes any bonus damage, such as that rolled for sneak attacks. A primitive or standard quality melee weapon always shatters irreparably when used to deliver a Mighty Blow. Even an Akbitanan weapon used to deliver a Mighty Blow has a 50% chance of snapping in two, though if it does, it is usually possible to use the broken blade as an improvised weapon. It will not be completely destroyed.

Parry or Dodge: A player may spend a Fate Point to parry or dodge normally for one round, even in circumstances where he would normally be unable to dodge or parry (such as when blinded or taken by surprise). The player gets a +5 luck bonus to his Parry or Dodge score for the round in question.

Reroll: A player can reroll one failed attack roll, skill check or saving throw that he just made. The Fate Point must be spent immediately





after rolling the dice, and the player is bound by the result of the second roll – he cannot reroll again by any means.

Resist Terror: A player can spend a Fate Point to ignore the Terror of the Unknown.

Repentance: A player can spend one or more Fate Points to leave behind his old, evil life and make an effort to start afresh. Each Fate Point spent in this way removes one point of Corruption.

Destiny: A player can at any time spend one or more Fate Points, with the agreement of the Games Master, to alter the world in some minor way. Essentially, this allows the player to have some input into the story, over and above the actions of his character. This change must be one that is plausible, minor and not overwhelmingly beneficial to the Player Characters. It may well assist them to accomplish their goals but they must still accomplish those goals by their own strength and wits, not simply by spending Fate Points!

For example, a character captured by the law and imprisoned might spend a Fate Point to have a chance at escape, such as a comrade or slave-girl smuggling him a dagger or a guard becoming drunk on duty, or the discovery of a loose chunk of granite with which to smash open his ankle-chain. He may not, however, have his escape handed to him on a plate, such as by a sorcerer magically putting all the guards to sleep and bursting his door open.

Another option for this use of a Fate Point is to alter a character in some minor way by revealing a new facet of his past. This might include knowing a language that he did not know before, which proves useful in his current situation or having a contact in the area from his previous dealings in the region.

One good use of Destiny is when the players are at a dead end in an adventure. Perhaps they have missed some crucial clue or failed to puzzle out where to go next. A single Fate Point in this case is usually enough for the Games Master to offer some kind of in-game hint.

Preferably, this will not be so blatant as to have a friendly Non-Player Character give the Player Characters the answer outright but, instead, might be something more along the lines of the background information often given out in Conan stories. For example,

a lotus-dream could reveal a vision of the past history of creatures and places crucial to the plot; or an ancient scroll could be uncovered that, with a Decipher Script check and a bit of logic, could provide a hint as to where to look next.

The Games Master will be more likely to accept proposed uses of Destiny which could plausibly relate to a character's own future destiny, as reflected by his goals. For example, in the story *Black Colossus*, Conan is offered the position of commander of a nation's armies and given a fine suit of plate armour as an indication of his position. Everyone around observes a regal quality about him which they had not seen before. This is a deliberate foreshadowing of his destiny to one day be King of Aquilonia. Had Conan's player always made it clear that his ambition was to one day be king, the Games Master might allow him to be made commander for just one Fate Point, since it would allow that very foreshadowing.

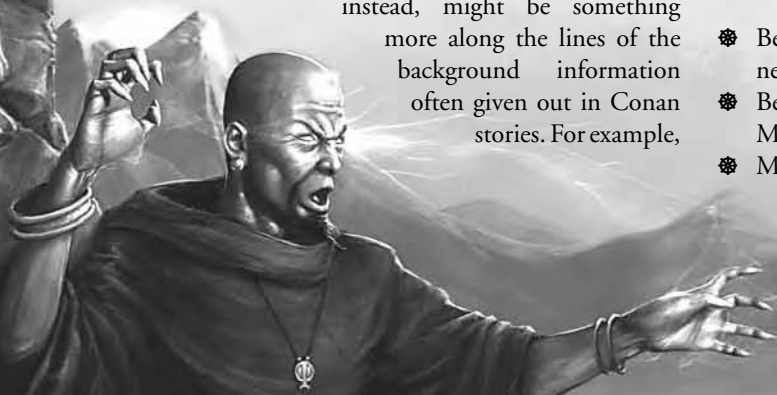
GAINING MORE FATE POINTS

When a player spends a Fate Point, it is gone forever. It does not recover with time, nor does the player automatically gain new Fate Points as he advances in level.

Fate Points may be regained by Foreshadowing. To Foreshadow, a player lists up to three situations on his character sheet. These can be anything from 'my character slays one of his hated foes' to 'my character is knocked unconscious and taken prisoner' to 'my character gets into a humorously compromising situation with a beautiful maiden' to 'my character finds strength through his faith in Mitra.' If the situation comes up in the course of an adventure, the player gains one Fate Point. Players can only gain one Fate Point per situation and they should change their Foreshadowed situations after each adventure. (Foreshadowed situations are basically a way for players to tell the Games Master what they would like to see in the game.) An adventure generally lasts for two to four game sessions.

For example, imagine that the events of *The Tower of the Elephant* comprised Conan's first adventure as a Player Character. Conan's player might have Foreshadowed these events:

- ✱ Being mocked for being a barbarian (to show that the new character is a barbarian)
- ✱ Being attacked from behind (showing the Games Master that he wants combat and nasty tricks)
- ✱ Making a new ally (to ensure that the party gets together)



Conan would have picked up one Fate Point when he was mocked in the inn, another when he agreed to help the thief Taurus steal the gemstone and a third when he was attacked by spiders in the tower. He would not have gotten a fourth Fate Point when he allied himself with the demon Yag-Kosha, as he had already picked up the Fate Point for 'making a new ally' by allying himself with Taurus.

Alternatively, each time a character accomplishes a major goal, either personally or as part of an adventuring party, he gains from one or two Fate Points, always at the discretion of the Games Master. Usually this occurs only at the successful conclusion of an adventure. An entirely unsuccessful adventure tends to mean that players do not gain any Fate Points.

EQUIPMENT AND MONEY

Each character begins the game with a very small budget with which to buy equipment. This is usually just sufficient to buy a weapon or two and cheap, light armour. A character's starting equipment budget is dependent on character class. The budget can be spent on any of the goods for sale in Chapter 7. If he can afford them, a scholar character may choose to spend some or all of his budget on items from Chapter 9: Sorcery.

Note that this budget is not the same as starting money. If the budget is not used, the character does *not* get to keep the money. The budget represents items he has managed to acquire and keep for himself over the years prior to the game beginning.

Any player can choose to have a starting equipment package for his character *instead* of a starting equipment budget. These are similar in value to the appropriate budgets.

STARTING MONEY

In addition to his starting equipment, each character has 2d6-2 silver coins at the start of the game. At the Games Master's discretion, this may be reduced to zero if he wishes to start a campaign in which the characters begin desperately short of money, rather than just very short!

CODES OF HONOUR

Generally speaking, deciding what is moral and what immoral is up to the individual. However, certain dark, corrupting forces can turn humans into

cowed slaves or gibbering madmen. Holding to a code of honour, however primitive, is one way by which heroes can avoid such a fate.

The most common codes of honour are given over the page. At the Games Master's discretion, variant codes of honour may be permitted but it is strongly recommended that they be based on those given here. For example, the Games Master may agree with a player that a variant barbaric code of honour is better suited to the Vanir character he wishes to play, given that the standard barbaric code of honour is based more on Cimmerian morality.

However, there should be no 'thief code of honour' or 'pirate code of honour.' As portrayed in the Conan stories, most such characters are inherently without honour, though they may occasionally feign honour for their own purposes. Any who do have a code of honour have retained a civilised or barbaric code from their earlier lives but they are in the minority and most lose even that honour sooner or later. Conan is a rarity, a barbarian so strong-willed he upholds his honour even when among the most treacherous and amoral rogues and corsairs.

BENEFITS OF A CODE OF HONOUR

Any character can begin the game with a code of honour at no cost. Any character with a code of honour gains a +3 morale bonus on all Will saving throws, rising to +6 if the Will saving throw is against Corruption (see page 82). Furthermore, he gains a +2 bonus to Reputation (also on page 82).

However, living by any code of honour requires certain restrictions on what the character can and cannot do and breaking a code of honour usually means the loss of its benefits forever.

BARBARIC CODE OF HONOUR

This is Conan's style of morality, such as it is.

The barbaric code of honour is common only in lands with harsh climates, such as Cimmeria, Vanaheim and Asgard in the north and Ghulistan in the east. It is also found among some of the Shemites and Kozaks who live in the great deserts that stretch over many of the southern and eastern lands. Here

SCARING EQUIPMENT BY CHARACTER CLASS

Class	Starting Budget	Starting Equipment Packages (Choose One)*		
Barbarian	100 + 10d6 sp	Broadsword, dagger, loincloth, belt pouch, sandals, belt	Bow (any +0) and 20 arrows, arming sword or cutlass, poniard, loincloth, belt pouch, sandals, belt	Bow (any, up to +2) and 20 arrows, battleaxe or war spear or war club, leather jerkin, steel cap, loincloth, belt pouch, sandals or feathered head-dress, belt
Borderer	150 + 10d6 sp	Arming sword, axe, hunting bow (+0), 20 arrows, dagger, quilted jerkin, cloak, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, hood, costrel, herbalist's kit, belt pouch, kit bag, belt	Short sword, battleaxe, hunting bow (+0), 20 arrows, dagger, quilted jerkin, steel cap, cloak, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, hood, costrel, herbalist's kit, belt pouch, kit bag, belt	Bow (any, up to +2) and 40 arrows, short sword, battleaxe, leather jerkin, dagger, cloak, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, hood, costrel, herbalist's kit, belt pouch, kit bag, belt
Noble	500 + 10d6 sp	Arming sword, dagger, steel cap, mail shirt, buckler, doublet and hose, riding boots, shirt and braes, belt pouch, belt	Arming sword, dagger, buckler, noble's outfit (all of noble quality, i.e. cost is 50 times normal: coat, hat, doublet and hose, riding boots, shirt and braes, belt pouch, knight's belt)	Short sword, light lance, steel cap, brigandine coat, large shield, riding horse, riding saddle, poniard, warhammer, bow (any +0), 20 arrows, doublet and hose, riding boots, shirt and braes, cloak, hood, costrel, belt pouch, knight's belt
Nomad	150 + 10d6 sp	Riding horse, riding saddle, scimitar, hunting bow, 20 arrows, dagger, belt, saddlebags, robes, sandals	Riding camel, riding saddle, scimitar, bow (any, up to +1), 40 arrows, dagger, belt, saddlebags, robes, sandals	Riding horse, riding saddle, light lance, short sword, bow (any, up to +1), 40 arrows, dagger, belt, saddlebags, robes, sandals
Pirate	100 + 10d6 sp	Arming sword, silk breeks, poniard, buckler, leather jerkin, sling and 10 bullets	Bow (any, up to +5) and 20 arrows, war spear or war club, loincloth, belt pouch, belt, feathered head-dress	Cutlass, silk breeks, dagger, looted fancy coat and riding boots (coat and boots of good merchant quality, i.e. cost is 10 times normal), belt, belt pouch
Scholar	100 + 10d6 sp	Dagger, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, cloak, hood, costrel, spell component pouch, belt pouch, belt, quill, ink, parchment, herbalist's kit, one dose yellow lotus resin	Stiletto, robes, belt, belt pouch, spell component pouch, shoes, priestly trappings (small idol or holy symbol, jewellery of rank, prayer beads and so on to a value of 75 sp), incense worth 50 sp, ink, quill, parchment	Dagger, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, cloak, hood, costrel, spell component pouch, belt pouch, belt, incense worth 100 sp, herbalist's kit, quill, ink, 10 sheets parchment, crafter's tools (any)
Soldier	200 + 10d6 sp	Broadsword, poniard, any shield, steel cap, quilted jerkin, cloak, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, hood, costrel, belt pouch, kit bag, belt	Bill, arming sword, crossbow, 10 bolts, poniard, any shield, steel cap, quilted jerkin, cloak, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, hood, costrel, belt pouch, kit bag, belt	War sword, poniard, bow (any +0), 20 arrows, any shield, steel cap, leather jerkin, cloak, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, hood, costrel, belt pouch, kit bag, belt
Temptress	100 + 10d6 sp	Stiletto, masterwork thieves' tools, shift, dress or doublet and hose, cloak, shoes, hat, kit bag, belt, belt pouch.	Thieves' tools, stiletto, shift, shoes, noble's dress.	Dagger, shift, robes or dress, spell component pouch, belt, belt pouch, shoes, quill, ink, 10 sheets parchment, herbalist's kit.
Thief	100 + 10d6 sp	Arming sword, thieves' tools, cloak, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, hood, costrel, belt pouch, kit bag, belt	Masterwork thieves' tools, poniard, cloak, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, hood, costrel, belt pouch, kit bag, belt	Short sword, dagger, sling, 10 bullets, thieves' tools, quilted jack, cloak, doublet and hose, work boots, shirt and braes, hood, costrel, belt pouch, kit bag, belt

even strangers are given hospitality and fallen foes are extended mercy if they ask for it, since it is recognised that humanity must to some extent work together against the bitter cold or suffocating heat. Barbarian tribes who have a relatively easy time of it, such as the Picts in their lush forests, do not usually have a need for a code of honour, for their environment is not sufficiently deadly as to be their most dangerous enemy. It could be argued that the presence of a code of honour is what separates a barbarian from a mere savage.

A character with a barbaric code of honour will:

- ✱ Respect alliances with other honourable characters.
- ✱ Ignore an alliance with a dishonourable character, even pre-emptively, if it suits him.
- ✱ Abide loyally by a contract of employment, even with a dishonourable employer, so long as the character is well-treated and shown loyalty in return.
- ✱ Slay a dishonourable foe, even if that foe is helpless.
- ✱ Slay an honourable foe who is not helpless.
- ✱ Protect those weaker than himself, at least from physical dangers, if such protection is requested. This includes ordinary folk such as peasants captured for interrogation who will be set free once it is safe to do so and rewarded if they were of assistance, as well as children and most women. A woman who has demonstrated herself to be more capable in war than the average man need not be protected, though the typical male with a barbaric code of honour will probably attempt to protect her anyway.
- ✱ Offer his allegiance only to an honourable leader who is clearly stronger and better suited for power than himself, or to a greater cause of some kind; once allegiance is granted, the character must be utterly loyal so long as his leader remains honourable and loyal to him in return. Note that a character with a barbaric code of honour need not necessarily retain an allegiance that was always intended to be temporary, such as a mercenary contract, after its conditions are fulfilled.
- ✱ Plunder and rob anyone other than honourable allies.
- ✱ Lie, cheat and con anyone other than honourable allies.
- ✱ Have no in-principle objection to slavery, being willing to keep or free slaves as suits his purposes.
- ✱ Grudgingly respect genuine piety but despise venal priests and the typical trappings of civilised 'religion.'
- ✱ Like or dislike others based on their honour and their actions, not their religion or race.
- ✱ Be hospitable and generous to those in need, even to strangers. It is said that no man starves in Cimmeria unless there is a famine and all starve, because every family will give of their own food to anyone without.

- ✱ Respect the hospitality shown him.
- ✱ Avenge any seriously intended insult with immediate and lethal force, if at all possible. Note that barbarians new to civilisation are likely to avenge even a jesting insult in the same way, not having yet learnt the subtleties of civilised behaviour, which can allow a man to insult another without the imminent danger of having his skull split.
- ✱ Avenge any physical harm done him at his earliest opportunity in a manner fitting his sense of balance and justice.

A character with a barbaric code of honour will not:

- ✱ Slay a wild animal or any other creature for sport alone. He may slay in self-defence, for revenge or to get food or other resources and he may slay a sworn enemy.
- ✱ Slay an honourable foe who offers a ransom or throws himself on the character's mercy.
- ✱ Slay or steal from someone who has shown him hospitality in his own house, even if he turns out to be an enemy, unless the other breaks hospitality first.
- ✱ Harm anyone currently under his protection or receiving his hospitality, even if he turns out to be an enemy, unless the other breaks faith first.
- ✱ Assist the authorities with any information about his friends or allies, even if refusing to do so puts him at risk.
- ✱ Desert his henchmen or retainers, even if they appear to desert him. If he ever achieves the position of chieftain or a similar authority, he feels he must set an example to his followers. Even if they doubt him, he must prove himself to them, particularly if they need him.

CIVILISED CODE OF HONOUR

This is the code of honour practiced by most knights and nobles from the civilised lands. Some civilised warriors, soldiers and mercenaries also practice this code of honour. A character with a civilised code of honour will:

- ✱ Respect alliances with other honourable civilised characters. He may also respect alliances with honourable barbaric characters but this is not required.



- ✱ Respect an alliance with a dishonourable civilised character until that character breaks the alliance.
- ✱ Offer his allegiance to any leader who might be regarded as a legitimate authority, or to a greater cause of some kind; once he grants his allegiance, the character must be utterly loyal, so long as his leader or cause remains honourable and loyal to him in return. Note that a character with a civilised code of honour need not necessarily retain an allegiance that was always intended to be temporary, such as a mercenary contract, after the conditions are fulfilled.



- ✱ Obey the laws of his homeland and co-operate with lawful authorities in other lands wherever possible, unless at war with those lands. This applies even if such behaviour would be to the detriment of his friends or allies.
- ✱ Have no in-principle objection to slavery, being willing to keep or free slaves as suits his purposes.
- ✱ Respect religious authorities.
- ✱ If religious, make war upon the enemies of his religion without showing mercy or offering quarter.

A character with a civilised code of honour will not:

- ✱ Break the law of the land, unless he has formally thrown in his lot with an organised and (in his opinion) legitimate force of rebels.
- ✱ Slay an honourable foe who offers a ransom or throws himself on the character's mercy, unless ordered to do so by a legitimate authority. Even in the latter case, if the character believes that such an order indicates that the authority is no longer legitimate, he may at the Games Master's discretion be able to avoid killing the foe, so long as he immediately attempts to remove the illegitimate authority from power; this may involve something along the lines of the rebellion mentioned above.
- ✱ Slay a dishonourable foe of noble birth who offers a ransom or throws himself on the character's mercy, unless ordered to do so by a legitimate authority.
- ✱ Knowingly work for a dishonourable employer.
- ✱ Attack peasants or ordinary civilians and tradesmen, unless those folk have openly rebelled against a lawful authority.

MERCENARY CODE OF HONOUR

Although they wander far to make their way as 'sellswords,' many mercenaries live by a code of honour. Ruthless but not without principles, these mercenaries are highly sought after and renowned for always fulfilling their contracts to the letter.

A character with a mercenary code of honour will:

- ✱ If seriously insulted, demand a formal duel at the next suitable opportunity. Honour may also be satisfied with sincere and profuse apologies, at the discretion of the insulted party.
- ✱ Protect those weaker than himself, if such protection is formally requested and if the person requesting protection is highborn.

- ✱ Demand half of all promised payment up front if payment is to be a lump sum.
- ✱ Demand two months' payment in advance if payment is to be monthly.
- ✱ Notify other mercenaries if a client does not pay.
- ✱ Require the client to spell out exactly what will satisfy the requirements of employment, preferably in writing.
- ✱ Fulfil all requirements of employment.

- ✱ Maintain confidentiality concerning who hired him and what he is asked to do.
- ✱ Only work for competing employers after 30 days of a contract's expiry.

A character with a mercenary code of honour will not:

- ✱ Betray or disobey his employer, no matter what his master asks of him or what bribes are offered.
- ✱ Violate any explicitly stated requirements of employment.
- ✱ Violate the confidentiality of his employer including revealing what he was hired to do.
- ✱ Take assignments from his employer's competitors before 30 days have elapsed.
- ✱ Take any risks or perform any difficult deeds without payment (in money or in kind), unless those deeds bring immediate personal reward to the mercenary.

LOSING A CODE OF HONOUR

Any character who voluntarily breaks his code of honour immediately loses its benefits.

The character may regain his code of honour if he seeks out a priest who can provide atonement (see page 339), so long as he worships the same gods as that priest and the priest has a code of honour of his own. The priest will set the character a task which must be fulfilled before full atonement can take place.

An irreligious character or one who cannot find a suitable priest may attempt to right a wrong himself somehow. The Games Master will always be the judge of how much needs to be done in this case before the code of honour can be regained but generally it should be at least as much of a challenge as a task set by a priest.

ALLEGIANCE

A character may have up to three allegiances, listed in order from most important to least important. These allegiances are indications of what the character values in life and may encompass people, organisations or ideals. A character may have no allegiances, being either a free spirit or a lone wolf, or may change allegiances as he goes through life. Also, just because a character fits into a certain category of people does not mean he has to have that category as an allegiance.

If a character acts in a way that is detrimental to his allegiance, the Games Master may choose to strip

the character of that allegiance and all its benefits and assign an allegiance more suitable to those actions.

PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE

A character's allegiance can take the form of loyalty to a person, an organisation, a belief system or a nation.

In general, a character can discard an allegiance at any time but may only gain a new allegiance after attaining a new level. However, a character who also has a code of honour (see above) may gain a new allegiance at any time, subject to the Games Master's veto. This reflects the inherent trustworthiness of a character with a code of honour. Characters with codes of honour may also find it difficult to discard their allegiances without losing their honour, though, so they should select allegiances with care.

Having an allegiance implies having sufficient intelligence and wisdom to make a moral or ethical choice. As a result, a character must have Intelligence and Wisdom scores of three or higher in order to select allegiances.

Allegiances include but are not limited to the following:

Person or Group: This includes a leader or superior, a family, a group of linked individuals such as a band of adventurers or a discrete unit within a larger organisation, such as members of the character's watch on a ship or individuals for whose safety the character is responsible.

Organisation: This may be a secret society, a caravan train, a pirate ship or brotherhood, a local temple, a city, a guild, a mercenary company, an employer or an otherwise established authority.

Nation: This may or may not be the nation in which the hero currently resides. It may be where the individual was born or where the hero resides after emigrating to a new home.

Religion: This is always a particular faith or religion, though it need not necessarily be limited to one god. For example, a Pictish shaman is more likely to have allegiance to all the multitudinous deities and obscure spirits of his pantheon, rather than to just one particular entity. Conversely, most sorcerers make pacts with specific demons or dark gods.



ALLEGIANCES AND INFLUENCE

An allegiance can create an empathic bond with others of the same allegiance. With the Games Master's permission, the character gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with someone of the same allegiance, so long as the character concerned has had some interaction with the other character, allowing the connections to be discovered and thus bring the bonus into play.

CORRUPTION

Almost all characters in the Hyborian Age are capable of being corrupted if they face sufficiently severe challenges to their integrity. Indeed, many begin with no integrity whatsoever and seem to seek out self-corruption. Even those with stringent codes of honour may fall from their principled stance, usually without any hope of regaining it.

This is because the worldview portrayed in the Conan stories is essentially bleak. There are no cosmic forces for 'Good.' Even the supposedly good gods, such as Mitra, may be no more than creations of the priesthood. The only good is that which can be found in a few human beings of high moral standing, though even they are far scarcer than the self-serving or actively evil humans who make up the majority of ordinary people and great heroes and villains alike.

On the other hand, 'Evil' exists in a very real and concrete manner. Dark forces are always afoot. The foul sorcerous knowledge of evil priests and the vile demons they conjure up are far more powerful than any magics or defensive prayers to which their supposedly 'Good' counterparts might have access. Many folk who might otherwise be moral take the first steps on the road to damnation when they realise that even if they behave virtuously, there is no paradise in the next life, no guarantee of salvation; they might as well take what they can here and now.

Corruption is a more serious problem for magicians and other scholars than for most characters. Scholars' research typically causes them to make more saving throws against corruption than most adventurers; moreover, even those who successfully avoid being corrupted have a tendency to grow madder and madder as they gain more and more unnatural knowledge.

CORRUPTION SAVES

Any time a character comes into contact with a demon, evil god or an unusually powerful and corrupt sorcerer, except in the context of actively attacking it or fleeing from it in terror, he must make a corruption saving throw. This is essentially a Will saving throw.

Certain magical artefacts and sorcerous practices can also force corruption saving throws; see Chapter 9: Sorcery.

All corruption saving throws are made against a DC set by the entity, sorcerer or object's magic attack roll.

A character's current Corruption is applied as a circumstance penalty to all corruption saving throws. Once you start on the steady slope towards corruption, it becomes more and more difficult to stop.

A character who successfully saves against corruption usually need not make another saving throw due to the presence of the same creature on the same day. However, if the character has close, peaceful contact with the creature, the Games Master may call for another corruption saving throw every hour.

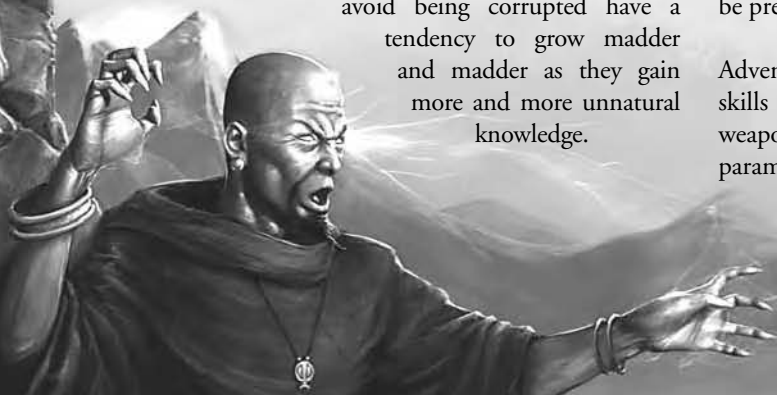
CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

Each time he fails a Corruption saving throw, a character gains one point of Corruption. There are further effects that will not be immediately obvious to the character: these are given on page 402 in the Campaigns section.

REPUTATION

During a typical campaign of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, characters will amass fewer tangible rewards for their efforts (such as gold, land and magical items) than characters in most fantasy settings. They are more likely to flee a country after an adventure than receive a land grant, unless perhaps at high levels they seize control of an entire nation as Conan himself did. Gold, if they ever gain it, will slip through their fingers in the taverns, gaming-houses and bordellos of the nearest city within a matter of a few weeks. Magical items are few and far between; unless a character is a sorcerer, he would be well advised to steer clear of these items, for most come with a price few would be prepared to pay.

Adventurers in the Hyborean Age must rely on their own skills over and above expensive equipment or magical weaponry. Their experience and combat prowess are paramount, though their reputation can also be of enormous benefit. A character's reputation, though, is



always with him, even when he is a penniless wanderer or a captured prisoner. For example, in the Conan novel *The Hour of the Dragon*, Conan is able to use his reputation as a chief of the black corsairs to cause a slave revolt, allowing him to defeat an entire shipload of Argossean sailors.

The following rules provide a mechanic to reflect the effects of reputation in day-to-day situations. These rules should never be regarded as a substitute for roleplaying but can make minor encounters run much more smoothly.

Reputation works a little like the Charisma ability score. It helps characters influence situations through the use of skills such as Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information, as well as helping them recruit mercenaries and followers. The nature of a character's Reputation affects the way it may be used. For example, a lowly Zamboulan street thug known for his bloodthirsty behaviour is likely to get a very different response when negotiating with another thief than with a virtuous priest of Mitra. In addition, this section permits characters to cultivate different Reputations in several different cities or nations. For example, King Conan is loved in Aquilonia for deposing the old, repressive dynasty and ruling wisely and justly, yet among the black corsairs he is Amra, the lion, the most bloodthirsty and successful pirate leader they have ever had.

While Reputation works much like an ability score, it rises and falls frequently, often after each scenario a character completes.

The Reputation score measures how well known a character is among the general population of a region or town. A high Reputation means that many people have heard impressive things about the character, such as tales of his exploits in escaping the law or his theft of a heavily guarded and incredibly expensive artefact. A low Reputation shows that either few people have heard of the character's exploits or that they have heard terrible things about him, such as his propensity to murder innocents at whim or his defeat at the hands of a lone peasant. However, Reputation is not always an honest assessment of a character's skills or exploits. As word travels of his accomplishments, some bending of the truth takes place as rumour builds upon rumour. Despite this, unless someone deliberately spreads misleading lies, a character's Reputation is largely based on his actual actions.

A character applies Reputation to:

- ✱ Attempts to influence others with skills such as Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information.
- ✱ Attempts to see whether a person knows who the character is.

AVERAGE REPUTATION SCORES

Example	Reputation Score
A young, inexperienced thief	1
A newly recruited guardsman	2
A bookish but well-thought-of scholar	3
A priest who has worked among the people of the area	4–5
A person known to be a thief or thug	6–7
An old soldier in a local lord's retinue	8–9
A scarred and battle-tested mercenary	10–15
A sorcerer-for-hire	16–25
A person who averted a major disaster	26–35
A gifted assassin	36–55
A priest renowned for his successful and active opposition to the worshippers of Set	56–75
A nomad chieftain at the head of a powerful horde that has plundered several settlements	76–90
An evil wizard who has returned from the dead to topple kingdoms and slay the living	90+

GENERATING REPUTATION

A character's base Reputation score equals his character level plus his Charisma modifier, though it can never drop below one. Thus, each time a character gains a level, his Reputation usually goes up by one, though a low level character with a negative Charisma modifier may have to work hard before his Reputation can increase above one. A character's Base Reputation score never changes.

Actions a character undertakes also modify his Reputation. Defeating enemies, overthrowing tyrants, slaying evil sorcerers and completing other difficult or heroic tasks all help boost a character's Reputation. On the other hand, a character who temporarily retires from adventuring or who departs to a distant city for many years loses Reputation.



Truly legendary characters' stories may continue to live on as popular songs and myths but the exploits of most fade with time.

A character may choose one deed per level that adds to his Reputation. This deed is rated from +1 to +5, and is added to his total Reputation score. Dealing with bandits might only be only a +1 deed, while slaying the king of Aquilonia and seizing the throne is definitely worth +5. In general, the level of deeds a character is capable of is proportional to his level – beginning characters will only get +1 Reputation per level on average, while a 10th level character might do a deed worth of a +3 or even +4 ranking. (As a rule of thumb, divide a character's level by four to get the measure of their average deeds.)

The more famous a deed is, the more Reputation it gives. Finding the lost Gem of the Prophets will win a character no renown if no-one knows he has it. For example, some of Conan's deeds include:

- ✱ *Rogues in the House, The Frost Giant's Daughter*: +1 (local tales, victories with few witnesses)
- ✱ *Red Nails*: +2 (again, few witnesses and few survive to tell the tale, but a great victory)
- ✱ *The Tower of the Elephant*: +3 (cosmic horrors, a famous landmark crashing into dust and a fine prize)
- ✱ *The Queen of the Black Coast*: +4 (Conan's pillaging won him the enmity of the Stygians)
- ✱ *The Hour of the Dragon*: +5 (massive battles and high sorcery across all Aquilonia)

Each deed has a type and a location associated with it. The location is simply the region where the deed is done – Tarantia, the Bossonian Marches, Purple Lotus Swamp and so forth. The type is the type of story that will be told of the deed, the impression that people will get of the character from the deeds. Common types include: Heroic, Dangerous, Mighty Sorcerer, Noble, Unholy, Rich, Treacherous, Brave, Enemy of the Picts, Friend of Aquilonia, Traitorous, Demon-Worshipper and so forth – whatever the dominant element of the character's actions was.

A character's social position also affects his Reputation.

SOCIAL STANDING

Modifier	Examples
-2	Those of a distant or hated race
-1	Criminals, foreigners
+0	Barbarian, peasant, commoner
+1	Notable barbarian warrior, local landowner, craftsman, acolyte
+2	Priest, man-at-arms, guild member
+3	Guild master, important priest
+4	Knight, respected adventurer
+5	Baron, barbarian chieftain
+6	Wealthy baron
+7	Duke, high priest.
+8	Prince
+9	King of a lesser country
+10	Emperor or mighty king

A character cannot get a social standing of +5 or higher without getting a noble title, or at least pretending to have a noble title and having the wealth and finery to back up such a claim!

Both Social Standing and deeds are affected by distance. The further a character travels, the less important his title and the more remote his deeds become. A character's Standing and all his deeds are affected by distance as follows:

DISTANCE AND REPUTATION

Location	Modifier
Different country	-1
Different region of the world (Nordheim, the Hyborian kingdoms, the Black Coast, the desert kingdoms and so on)	-2
Very different region (the far East, beyond the Vilayet sea and so on)	-4

A deed cannot be reduced below zero. Standing, however, can be reduced to a negative level.

For example, when young Conan travels from Zamora to Cimmeria, the deed of *The Tower of the Elephant* is reduced by -2, so it only increases his Reputation by +1. The sullen barbarians of the north have little interest in his wild tales of magic jewels and elephantine demons. By contrast, his deed of *The Frost Giant's Daughter* would be dismissed as nothing but a tall tale in the inns of spider-haunted Zamora, but would carry its full Reputation bonus in the cold north, where the name of Ymir has power.



REPUTATION OVER TIME

Deeds can be forgotten over time. A deed's Reputation bonus decreases by one after a number of years equal to the current bonus have elapsed. So, a deed worth only +1 is forgotten after a year, while a deed worth +5 is reduced to +4 after five years, +3 after another four years, +2 after three more years, +1 after another two years. It is finally forgotten another year after that, having lasted fifteen years in all! Only deeds are affected in this fashion.

USING REPUTATION

A character's Reputation can be a tremendous asset among mercenaries, nomads and thieves. When a character encounters a person for the first time, the character should make a Reputation check to determine if the person has heard of him. To make a Reputation check, roll 1d20 and add the character's Reputation score. If this matches or equals the check's DC, the person has heard of the character. The standard DC for a Reputation check is 25.

If a person has heard of the character, the character may use his Reputation score to provide a bonus when using the following skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Perform and Gather Information. The bonus gained from Reputation is based on its overall score and is shown on the table below. Generally, any skill used in social situations may use Reputation as a bonus, so long as those who the character is trying to impress those who recognise him.

A character's deeds affect his Reputation. Only those deeds that actually reflect what he is trying to accomplish will aid him and others may even hinder him, reducing his Reputation. For example, if a character is trying to convince a noble lord that he is trustworthy and honourable, his +5 *'betrayed his king and code of honour by turning traitor'* will obviously be of no benefit! This means that a character may be recognised and have his reputation work against him.

At the Games Master's discretion, the penalty to Disguise Checks in the table above is applied whenever a character disguises himself in a location where he is well known. It may be reduced if he is popularly believed to be dead or far away.

REPUTATION EFFECTS

Reputation Score	Modifier to Skill Checks	Penalty to Disguise Checks*
1-4	+0	-
5-10	+1	-
11-17	+2	-1
18-25	+3	-1
26-34	+4	-2
35-44	+5	-2
45-55	+6	-3
56-67	+7	-3
68-80	+8	-4
81-94	+9	-4
95+	+10	-5

ALIASES

An alias acquires its own Reputation, generated separately from a character's true identity. When travelling under an alias, any bonuses earned to Reputation apply only to the alias's Reputation score. If a character gains a level because of actions taken while under his alias, or if he earns the majority of the experience points he needs for a level whilst using it, his alias earns the Reputation bonus. Thus, while a character's true personality is barely known by anyone, his alias could be the leading villain (or hero) in the city.

If a character's alias is ever revealed, the higher of his own and his alias's Reputation becomes his true Reputation score. In addition, he gains half of his lower score as a one-time bonus to his new Reputation, reflecting the uproar and interest surrounding the revelation of his identity. However, the character only modifies his Reputation score in this way if the general populace learns of his alias. If only a few close friends or a very limited number of people are in on the secret, his alias is secure.

Aliases work best as a roleplaying tool. The heroic outlaw who dons a disguise and struggles against a corrupt and autocratic priest, or the common thief who desperately tries to keep his activities hidden from the local lords or police are two examples of how aliases may be used. Aliases add depth to a character's background and supply some interesting roleplaying opportunities. If a player feels an alias is appropriate to his character, he should consult with the Games Master about adopting one.





Skills

The Difference Between Life and Death

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, all characters are self-sufficient, highly capable of turning their hands to just about anything. Though almost all specialise in particular areas of expertise, many also pick up certain skills along the way which might be useful for their roles as adventurers, such as sneaking about, clambering up cliff-faces, spotting an assassin in the night and puzzling out the meanings of ancient rolls of parchment. A barbarian might not be quite so knowledgeable about religion as a priest; nonetheless, even a barbarian will probably pick up bits and pieces of information here and there if he is the typical cosmopolitan, observant adventurer depicted in the Conan stories.

For this reason, although all characters have to worry about class and cross-class skills when allocating skill points gained from their class, any bonus skill points gained through a high Intelligence are more flexible. These bonus skill points may be spent on *any* skill without penalty. In effect, all skills are treated as class skills for the various skill points gained through having a high Intelligence. This applies both at 1st level and at subsequent levels.

PURCHASING SKILLS

If a Player buys a class skill, his character gets one rank (equal to a +1 bonus on checks with that skill) for each skill point. If you buy skills not on your class list (cross-class skills) with the skill points you gain from class, as opposed to bonus skill points from a high Intelligence, you must spend 2 skill points to get 1 rank. Character class descriptions indicate which skills can be purchased as class skills and how many skill points are gained when a character takes a level in that class.

A character's maximum rank in a skill, whether class or cross-class, is your character level + 3.

Using Skills: To make a skill check, roll: 1d20 + skill modifier. The skill modifier is equal to skill rank + ability modifier + miscellaneous

modifiers. This roll works just like an attack roll or a saving throw; the higher the roll, the better. Either a character is trying to match or exceed a certain Difficulty Class (DC), or he is trying to beat another character's check result.

Skill Ranks: A character's number of ranks in a skill is based on how many skill points he has invested in it. Many skills can be used even if the character has no ranks in them; this is called making an untrained skill check.

Ability Modifier: The ability modifier used in a skill check is the modifier for the skill's key ability, that is, the ability associated with the skill's use. The key ability of each skill is noted in its description.

Miscellaneous Modifiers: Miscellaneous modifiers include racial bonuses, armour check penalties and bonuses provided by feats, among others.

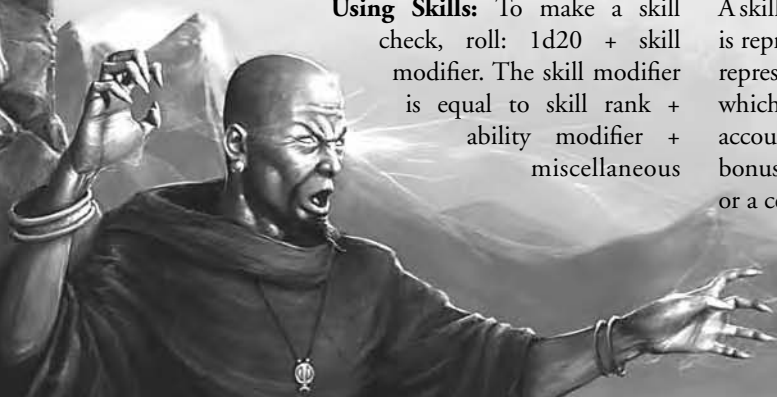
USING A SKILL

When a character uses a skill, the Player makes a skill check to see how well he performs. The higher the result of the skill check, the better. Based on the circumstances, the result must match or beat a particular number (a DC or the result of an opposed skill check) for the check to be successful. The harder the task, the higher the number a Player needs to roll.

Circumstances can affect this check. A character that is free to work without distractions can make a careful attempt and avoid simple mistakes. A character who has lots of time can try over and over again, thereby assuring the best outcome. If others help him, the character may succeed where otherwise he would fail.

SKILL CHECKS

A skill check takes into account a character's training, which is represented by his skill rank, his natural talent, which is represented by the ability modifier and an element of luck, which is represented by the die roll. It may also take into account his race's knack for doing certain things (a racial bonus), what armour he is wearing (armour check penalty) or a certain feat he possesses, among other things.



To make a skill check, roll 1d20 and add the character's skill modifier for that skill. The skill modifier incorporates the character's ranks in that skill and the ability modifier for that skill's key ability, plus any other miscellaneous modifiers that may apply, including racial bonuses and armour check penalties. The higher the result, the better the character performs. A natural roll of 20 on the d20 is not an automatic success and a natural roll of 1 is not an automatic failure, unlike some combat rolls.

DIFFICULTY CLASS

Some checks are made against a Difficulty Class or DC. The DC is a number that is set using the skill rules as a guideline. A skill check must be equal to or higher than the DC in order to succeed.

DIFFICULTY CLASS EXAMPLES

Difficulty (DC)	Example (Skill Used)
Very Easy (0)	Notice something large in plain sight (Spot)
Easy (5)	Climb a knotted rope (Climb)
Average (10)	Hear an approaching guard (Listen)
Tough (15)	Rig a wagon wheel to fall off (Disable Device)
Challenging (20)	Swim in stormy water (Swim)
Formidable (25)	Open an above-average lock (Open Lock)
Heroic (30)	Leap across a 30-foot chasm (Jump)
Nearly Impossible (40)	Track a squad of nomads across hard ground after 24 hours of rainfall (Survival)

TRYING AGAIN

In general, a character can try a skill check again if he fails and can keep trying indefinitely. Some skills, however, have consequences of failure that must be taken into account. A few skills are virtually useless once a check has failed on an attempt to accomplish a particular task. For most skills, when a character has succeeded once at a given task, additional successes are meaningless.

TIME AND SKILL CHECKS

Using a skill might take a round, take no time or take several rounds or even longer. Most skill uses are standard actions, move actions or full-round actions. Types of actions define how long activities take

to perform within the framework of a combat round (six seconds) and how movement is treated with respect to the activity. Some skill checks are instant and represent reactions to an event or are included as part of an action. These skill checks are not actions. Other skill checks represent part of movement.

FAVOURABLE AND UNFAVOURABLE CONDITIONS

Some situations may make a skill easier or harder to use, resulting in a bonus or penalty to the skill modifier for a skill check or a change to the DC of the skill check. The chance of success can be altered in four ways to take into account exceptional circumstances:

- ✱ Give the skill user a +2 circumstance bonus to represent conditions that improve performance, such as having the perfect tool for the job, getting help from another character (see Combining Skill Attempts) or possessing unusually accurate information.
- ✱ Give the skill user a -2 circumstance penalty to represent conditions that hamper performance, such as being forced to use improvised tools or having misleading information.
- ✱ Reduce the DC by two to represent circumstances that make the task easier, such as having a friendly audience or doing work that does not have to meet a basic standard.
- ✱ Increase the DC by two to represent circumstances that make the task harder, such as having an uncooperative audience or doing work that must be flawless.

Conditions that affect a character's ability to perform a skill change the skill modifier. Conditions that modify how well the character has to perform a skill change the DC. A bonus to the skill modifier and a reduction in the check's DC achieve the same result. Each creates a better chance of success. However, they represent different circumstances and sometimes that difference is important.



CHECKS WITHOUT ROLLS

A skill check represents an attempt to accomplish some goal, usually while under some sort of time pressure or distraction. Sometimes, though, a character can use a skill under more favourable conditions and eliminate the luck factor.

OPPOSED CHECKS

An opposed check is a check the success or failure of which is determined by comparing the check result to another character's check result. In an opposed check, the higher result succeeds, while the lower result fails. In case of a tie, the character with the higher skill modifier wins. If the character's skill modifier scores are the same, the players must roll again to break the tie.

EXAMPLES OF OPPOSED CHECKS

Task	Skill (Key Ability)	Opposing Skill (Key Ability)
Con someone	Bluff (Cha)	Sense Motive (Wis)
Pretend to be someone else	Disguise (Cha)	Spot (Wis)
Create a false map	Forgery (Int)	Forgery (Int)
Hide from someone	Hide (Dex)	Spot (Wis)
Make a bully back down	Intimidate (Cha)	Special ¹
Sneak up on someone	Move Silently (Dex)	Listen (Wis)
Steal a coin pouch	Sleight of Hand (Dex)	Spot (Wis)
Tie a prisoner securely	Use Rope (Dex)	Escape Artist (Dex)

¹ An Intimidate check is opposed by a modified level check, not by a skill check. See the Intimidate skill description for more information.

TAKING 10

When a character is not being threatened or distracted, his Player may choose to take 10. Instead of rolling 1d20 for a skill check, calculate the result as if you had rolled a 10. Taking 10 makes many routine tasks automatically successful. Distractions or threats, such as combat, make it impossible for a character to take 10. In most cases, taking 10 is purely a safety measure; the Player knows or expects that an average roll will succeed but fears that a poor roll might fail, so he elects to settle for the average roll, a 10. Taking 10 is especially useful in situations where a particularly high roll would not help.

TAKING 20

When a Player has plenty of time, which generally means two minutes for a skill that can normally be checked in one round, one full-round action or one standard action, is faced with no threats or distractions and the skill being attempted carries no penalties for failure, he can take 20. In other words, he would eventually roll a 20 on 1d20 if he rolled enough times. So, instead of rolling 1d20 for a skill check, he simply calculates his result as if he had rolled a 20.

Taking 20 means that a Player has the time and the inclination to roll repeatedly until he gets a 20. It assumes that he will fail many times before succeeding. Taking 20 takes twenty times as long as making a single check would take. Since taking 20 assumes that the character will fail many times before succeeding, if he did attempt to take 20 on a skill that carries penalties for failure, his character would automatically incur those penalties before he could

complete the task. Common 'take 20' skills include Escape Artist, Open Lock and Search.

ABILITY CHECKS AND CASTER LEVEL CHECKS

The normal take 10 and take 20 rules apply for ability checks. Neither rule applies to caster level checks.

COMBINING SKILL CHECKS

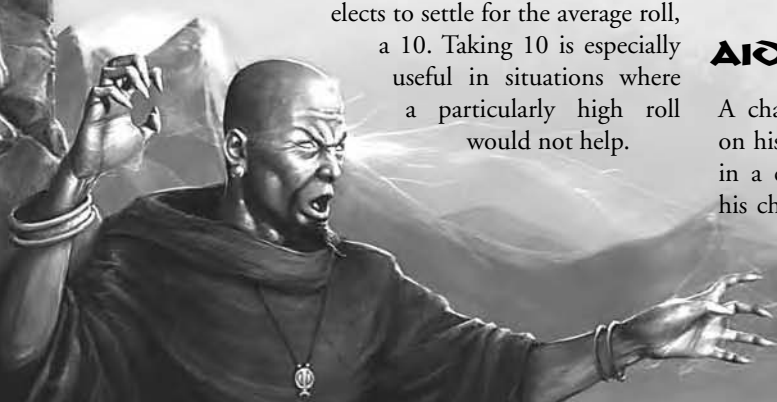
When more than one character tries the same skill at the same time and for the same purpose, their efforts may overlap. This can be done in several different ways; each combination is subject to its own set of rules.

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Often, several characters attempt some action and each succeeds or fails independently. The result of one character's Climb check does not influence the results of other characters' Climb checks.

AID ANOTHER

A character can help another character achieve success on his skill check by making the same kind of skill check in a co-operative effort. If the helper beats DC 10 on his check, the character he is helping gets a +2 bonus to



his check, as per the rule for favourable conditions. A character cannot take 10 on a skill check to aid another character. In many cases, a character's help will not be beneficial, or only a limited number of characters can help at once. In cases where the skill restricts who can achieve certain results, one character cannot aid another to grant a bonus to a task that the helper's character could not achieve alone.

UNTRAINED SKILLS

Generally, if a character attempts to use a skill he does not possess, he makes a skill check as normal. The skill modifier does not include a skill rank because the character has no ranks in the skill. Any other applicable modifiers, such as the modifier for the skill's key ability, are applied to the check.

Any character may attempt any task, even if he has no formal training (skill ranks) in the appropriate skill. Heroes are highly adaptable, after all. However, he may never achieve more than the most basic success with an untrained skill, however naturally adept he might be, if that skill has 'trained only' in its description.

To use a 'trained only' skill untrained, the character simply rolls 1d20 and adds his key ability modifier along with any other applicable modifiers. Any die roll result of 10 or above is treated as a result of 10. You cannot take 10 on a check for an untrained skill.

For example, the Vendhyan noble Aisha is trying to read an inscription on a crumbling wall above a narrow ledge. Her first task is to make her way to the end of the ledge to reach the inscription, which calls for a Balance check. Aisha has no ranks in the Balance skill. Balance is not a 'trained only' skill, so she simply rolls 1d20 and adds her Dexterity modifier of +2. The d20 roll is 16, which with +2 for her Dex modifier gives a check result of 18. She easily negotiates the ledge. Reading the inscription is another matter. It makes reference to several formulas involving the binding of demon lords and calls for a Knowledge (arcana) check. Aisha has no ranks in Knowledge (arcana), which is a 'trained only' skill. Her Intelligence is 17, for a +3 modifier. She rolls 18 on the d20 but because she is using Knowledge (arcana) untrained, this is reduced to 10, for an overall result of 13. The Games Master rules that she understands the basic gist of the inscription but does not glean its full meaning.

SKILL SYNERGY

It is possible for a character to have two skills that work well together. In general, five or more ranks

in one skill gives the character a +2 bonus on skill checks for each of its synergistic skills, as noted in the skill description. In some cases, this bonus applies only to specific uses of the skill in question and not to all checks. Some skills provide benefits on other checks made by a character, such as those checks required to use certain class features.

5 ranks in...	+2 Synergy bonus to...
Bluff	Diplomacy, Disguise checks when acting in character, Intimidate, Sleight of Hand
Any craft	Appraise checks relating to that craft
Craft (alchemy)	Craft (herbalism)
Craft (herbalism)	Craft (alchemy), Heal
Decipher Script	Knowledge (arcana)
Escape Artist	Use Rope checks to bind people
Handle Animal	Ride
Jump	Tumble
Knowledge (architecture and engineering)	Search checks for secret doors and compartments
Knowledge (geography)	Survival
Knowledge (local)	Gather Information
Knowledge (nature)	Craft (herbalism)
Knowledge (nobility)	Diplomacy
Search	Survival checks when following tracks
Sense Motive	Diplomacy
Survival	Knowledge (nature)
Tumble	Balance, Jump
Use Rope	Climb checks when using a rope, Escape Artist checks when escaping from rope bonds

ABILITY CHECKS

Sometimes a character tries to do something to which no specific skill really applies. In these cases, he must make an ability check. An ability check is a roll of 1d20 plus the appropriate ability modifier. Essentially, the character is making an untrained skill check, since using a skill for which a character does not have any skill ranks is effectively an unmodified ability check.

In some cases, an action is a straight test of one's ability and there is no luck involved.



Just as characters would not make a Height check to see who is taller, they would also not make Strength checks to see who is stronger. The Games Master is responsible for determining what situations call for ability checks, which ones use skill checks instead and which ones require no rolls at all.

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

This section describes each skill, including its common uses and typical modifiers. Characters can sometimes use skills for purposes other than those noted here. Here is the format for skill descriptions:

SKILL NAME

The skill name line includes the following information, in addition to the name of the skill:

- ✱ **Key Ability:** The abbreviation of the ability whose modifier applies to the skill check.
- ✱ **Trained Only:** If this notation is included in the skill name line, an untrained character can attempt it but can never score a result higher than 10; see above. If any special notes apply to trained or untrained use, they are covered in the Untrained section below.
- ✱ **Armour Check Penalty:** An armour penalty applies to checks using this skill if this notation is included in the skill name line. If this notation is absent, an armour check penalty does not apply.

The skill name line is followed by a general description of what a use of the skill represents. After the description are a few other types of information:

- ✱ **Check:** What a character ('you' in the skill description) can do with a successful skill check and the check's DC.
- ✱ **Action:** The type of action that a use of the skill requires, or the amount of time required for a check.
- ✱ **Try Again:** Any conditions that apply to repeat attempts to use the skill successfully. If the skill does not allow a character to attempt the same task more than once, or if failure carries an inherent penalty (such as in the case of the Climb skill), the Player cannot take 20. If this paragraph is omitted, the skill can be retried without any penalty other than the additional time required.

- ✱ **Special:** Any extra considerations that apply to the skill, such as special effects deriving from its use or bonuses that certain characters receive because of class, feat choices or race.
- ✱ **Synergy:** Some skills grant a bonus to the use of one or more other skills because of a synergistic effect. This entry, when present, indicates this bonus.
- ✱ **Restriction:** The full utility of certain skills is restricted to characters of certain classes or characters who possess certain feats. This entry indicates whether any such restrictions exist for the skill.

THE SKILLS

APPRAISE (INT)

As he rode, he drew from his belt a ring in which gleamed a jewel that snared the starlight in a shimmering iridescence. He held it up to admire it, turning it this way and that. The compact bag of gold pieces clinked gently at his saddle-bow, like a promise of the greater riches to come.

— *Shadows in Zamboula*

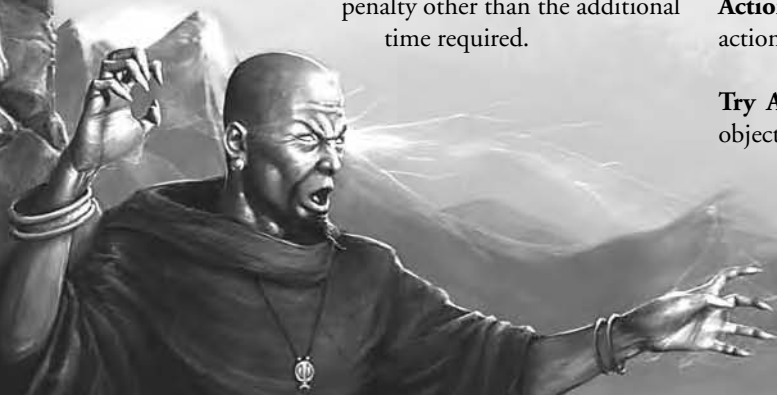
Check: You can appraise common or well-known objects with a DC 12 Appraise check. Failure means that you estimate an object's value at 50% to 150% (2d6+3 × 10%) of its actual value.

Appraising a rare or exotic item requires a successful check against DC 15, 20 or higher. If the check is successful, you estimate the object's value correctly; if the check fails, you are unable to estimate the item's value.

A magnifying glass gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Appraise checks involving any item that is small or highly detailed, such as a gem. A merchant's scale gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Appraise checks involving any items that are valued by weight, including anything made of precious metals. These bonuses stack.

Action: Appraising an item takes 10 consecutive full-round actions, a total of one minute.

Try Again: Appraise cannot be tried again on the same object, regardless of success.



skills by class

Skill	Barbarian	Borderer	Commoner (see page 351)	Noble	Nomad	Pirate	Scholar	Soldier	Temptress	Thief	Key Ability
Appraise	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	C	C	cc	C	C	Int
Balance*	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	C	Dex
Bluff	C	cc	cc	C	C	C	C	cc	C	C	Cha
Climb*	C	C	C	cc	C	C	cc	C	cc	C	Str
Concentration	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	Con
Craft (alchemy)	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	C	cc	Int
Craft (herbalism)	C	C	cc	cc	C	cc	C	cc	C	C	Int
Craft (any mundane)	C	C	C	cc	C	C	C	C	C	C	Int
Decipher Script	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	Int
Diplomacy	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	C	Cha
Disable Device	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	Int
Disguise	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	C	Cha
Escape Artist*	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	C	Dex
Forgery	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	C	C	Int
Gather Information	cc	C	cc	C	C	C	C	cc	C	C	Cha
Handle Animal	C	C	C	C	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	Cha
Heal	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	C	cc	C	cc	Wis
Hide*	C	C	cc	C	C	cc	cc	cc	C	C	Dex
Intimidate	C	cc	cc	C	cc	C	C	C	C	C	Cha
Jump*	C	C	C	cc	cc	C	cc	C	cc	C	Str
Knowledge (arcana)	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	Int
Knowledge (geography)	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	C	C	C	cc	cc	Int
Knowledge (history)	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	Int
Knowledge (local)	cc	C	cc	C	C	cc	C	C	C	C	Int
Knowledge (nobility)	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	cc	C	C	Int
Knowledge (religion)	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	Int
Knowledge (rumours)	cc	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	Int
Listen	C	C	C	cc	C	cc	C	cc	C	C	Wis
Move Silently*	C	C	cc	cc	C	C	C	cc	C	C	Dex
Open Lock	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	Dex
Perform	C	cc	cc	C	cc	C	C	C	C	C	Cha
Profession	C	C	C	cc	cc	C	C	C	C	C	Wis
Ride	C	C	C	C	C	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	Dex
Search	cc	C	cc	cc	C	C	C	C	C	C	Int
Sense Motive	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	cc	C	C	Wis
Sleight of Hand*	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	C	Dex
Spot	C	C	C	C	C	C	cc	cc	C	C	Wis
Survival	C	C	cc	C	C	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	Wis
Swim	C	C	C	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	cc	Str
Tumble*	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	C	Dex
Use Rope	cc	C	C	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	C	Dex

*This skill is affected by the Armour Check Penalty.

C = Class Skill

cc = Cross-Class Skill



Special: A Shemite gets a +2 racial bonus on Appraise checks that are related to gems or jewellery because Shemites are familiar with valuable items of all kinds

A character with the Diligent feat gets a +2 bonus on Appraise checks.

Synergy: If you have 5 ranks in any Craft skill, you gain a +2 bonus on Appraise checks related to items made with that Craft skill.

Untrained: For common items, failure on an untrained check means no estimate. For rare items, success means an estimate of 50% to 150% (2d6+3 × 10%) of the item's value.

BALANCE (DEX; ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY)

Check: You can walk on a precarious surface. A successful check lets you move at half your speed along the surface for one round. A failure by four or less means you cannot move for one round. A failure by five or more means you fall. The difficulty varies with the surface, as follows:

NARROW SURFACE MODIFIERS

Surface	DC Modifier ¹
Lightly obstructed	+2
Severely obstructed	+5
Lightly slippery	+2
Severely slippery	+5
Sloped or angled	+2

¹ Add the appropriate modifier to the Balance DC of a narrow surface. These modifiers stack.

Being Attacked while Balancing: You cannot move to avoid a blow while balancing, so you cannot dodge an attack. You can, however, use your Parry Defence to defend yourself, though you cannot add your Strength bonus without putting yourself at risk. (If you parry an attack and use your Strength bonus, you must make another Balance check against the same DC to remain standing.) You have no effective defence and can therefore be sneak attacked.

If you have five or more ranks in Balance, you can dodge or parry while balancing and can use your Strength bonus to Parry

Defence without risk. If you take damage while balancing, you must make another Balance check against the same DC to remain standing.

Width/Condition	Balance DC ¹
Uneven flagstone	10 ²
7–12 inches wide	10
Hewn stone floor	10 ²
Sloped or angled floor	10 ²
2–6 inches wide	15
Less than 2 inches wide	20

¹ Add modifiers from Narrow Surface Modifiers, below, as appropriate.

² Only if running or charging. Failure by four or less means the character cannot run or charge but may otherwise act normally.

Accelerated Movement: You can try to walk across a precarious surface more quickly than normal. If you accept a –5 penalty, you can move your full speed as a move action. Moving twice your speed in a round requires two Balance checks, one for each move action used. You may also accept this penalty in order to charge across a precarious surface; charging requires one Balance check for each multiple of your speed or fraction thereof that you charge.

Action: None. A Balance check does not require an action; it is made as part of another action or as a reaction to a situation.

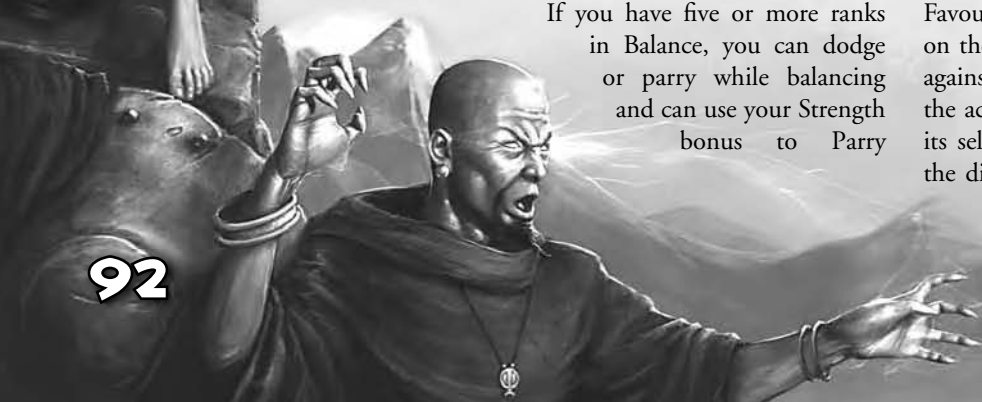
Special: If you have the Agile feat, you get a +2 bonus on Balance checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Tumble, you get a +2 bonus on Balance checks.

BLUFF (CHA)

Check: A Bluff check is opposed by the target's Sense Motive check. See the accompanying table for examples of different kinds of bluffs and the modifier to the target's Sense Motive check for each one.

Favourable and unfavourable circumstances weigh heavily on the outcome of a bluff. Two circumstances can weigh against you: the bluff may be inherently hard to believe, or the action that the target is asked to take may go against its self-interest, nature, personality, orders or the like. If the difference is important, you can distinguish between a bluff that fails because the target does not



believe it and one that fails because it just asks too much of the target. For instance, if the target gets a +10 bonus on its Sense Motive check because the bluff demands something risky and the Sense Motive check succeeds by 10 or less, the target did not so much see through the bluff as prove reluctant to go along with it. A target that succeeds by 11 or more has seen through the bluff.

A successful Bluff check indicates that the target reacts as you wish, at least for a short time (usually one round or less) or believes something that you want it to believe. Bluff, however, is not a *domination* spell.

A bluff requires interaction between you and the target. Creatures that are unaware of you cannot be bluffed.

Feinting in Combat: You can also use Bluff to mislead an opponent in melee combat to prevent him from dodging your next attack effectively. To feint, make a Bluff check opposed by your target's Sense Motive check. In this case, the target may add its base attack bonus to the roll along with any other applicable modifiers.

If your Bluff check result exceeds this special Sense Motive check result, the target is unable to dodge or parry the next melee attack you make against it. This attack must be made on or before your next turn.

Feinting in this way against a non-humanoid is difficult because it is harder to read a strange creature's body language; therefore, you take a -4 penalty on your Bluff check. Against a creature of animal Intelligence (1 or 2) the task is even harder; you take a -8 penalty. Against a non-intelligent creature, feinting is impossible.

Feinting in combat does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Creating a Diversion to Hide: You can use the Bluff skill to help you hide. A successful Bluff check gives you the momentary diversion you need to attempt a Hide check while people are aware of you. This usage does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Delivering a Secret Message: You can use Bluff to get a message across to another character without others understanding it. The DC is 15 for simple messages or 20 for complex messages, especially those that impart new information. Failure by four or less means you cannot get the message across. Failure by five or more means that you have accidentally implied false information, or the receiver has inferred the same. Anyone listening to the exchange can make a Sense Motive check

opposed by the Bluff check you made to transmit in order to intercept your message; see Sense Motive.

Action: Varies. A Bluff check made as part of general interaction always takes at least one round and is at least a full-round action, though it can take much longer if you try something elaborate. A Bluff check made to feint in combat or create a diversion to hide is a standard action. A Bluff check made to deliver a secret message does not take an action; it is part of normal communication.

Try Again: Varies. Generally, a failed Bluff check in social interaction makes the target too suspicious for you to try again in the same circumstances, though you may retry freely on Bluff checks made to feint in combat. Retries are also allowed when you are trying to send a message but you may only be attempted once per round. Each retry carries the same chance of miscommunication.

Special: If you have the Persuasive feat, you get a +2 bonus on Bluff checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Bluff, you get a +2 bonus on Diplomacy, Intimidate and Sleight of Hand checks, as well as on Disguise checks made when you know you are being observed and you try to act in character.

BLUFF EXAMPLES

Example Circumstances	Sense Motive Modifier
The target wants to believe you.	-5
The bluff is believable and does not affect the target much.	+0
The bluff is a little hard to believe or puts the target at some risk.	+5
The bluff is hard to believe or puts the target at significant risk.	+10
The bluff is way out there, almost too incredible to consider.	+20

CLIMB (STR; ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY)

Check: With a successful Climb check, you can advance up, down, or across a slope, a wall, or some other steep incline, or even a ceiling with handholds, at one-quarter your normal speed. A slope is considered to be any incline less than 60 degrees; a wall is any incline measuring 60 degrees or more.



A Climb check that fails by four or less means that you makes no progress. A Climb check that fails by five or more means that you fall from whatever height you have already attained.

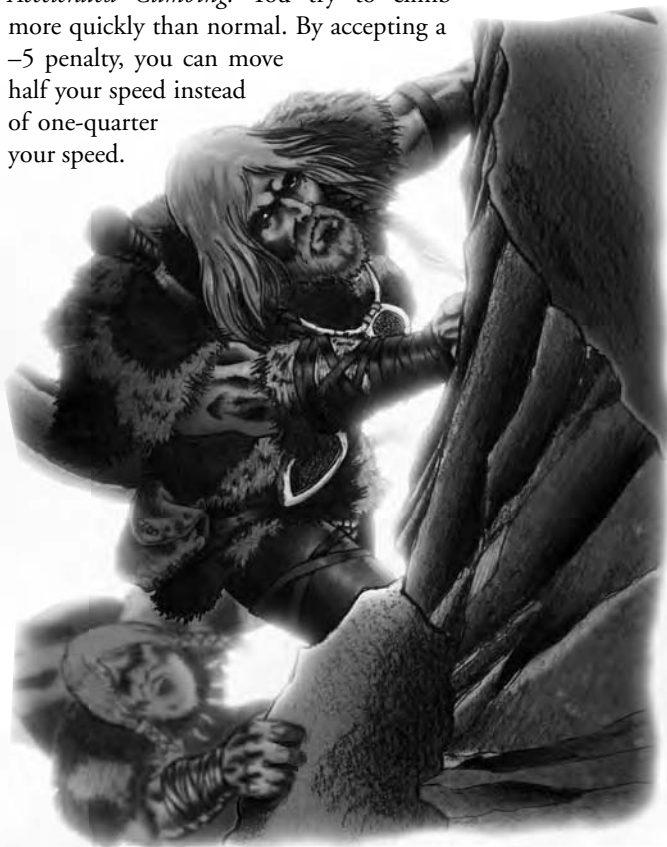
A climber's kit gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Climb checks.

The DC of the check depends on the conditions of the climb. Compare the task with those on the following table to determine an appropriate DC.

You need both hands free to climb, though you may cling to a wall with one hand while you cast a spell or take some other action that requires only one hand. While climbing, you cannot move to avoid a blow, so you cannot dodge. You can parry as normal while holding on (assuming you are wielding a one handed weapon) but you cannot make any climb checks to ascend until you stop parrying. You also cannot use a shield while climbing.

Any time you take damage while climbing, make a Climb check against the DC of the slope or wall. Failure means you fall from your current height and sustains the appropriate falling damage.

Accelerated Climbing: You try to climb more quickly than normal. By accepting a -5 penalty, you can move half your speed instead of one-quarter your speed.



CLIMBING CHECKS

Climb DC	Example Surface or Activity
0	A slope too steep to walk up, or a knotted rope with a wall to brace against
5	A rope with a wall to brace against, or a knotted rope
10	A surface with ledges to hold on to and stand on, such as a very rough wall or a ship's rigging
15	Any surface with adequate handholds and footholds (natural or artificial), such as a very rough natural rock surface or a tree, or an unknotted rope, or pulling yourself up when dangling by your hands
20	An uneven surface with some narrow handholds and footholds, such as a typical dungeon or ruin wall
25	A rough surface, such as a natural rock wall or a brick wall
25	An overhang or ceiling with handholds but no footholds
—	A perfectly smooth, flat, vertical surface cannot be climbed

Climb DC Modifier ¹	Example Surface or Activity
-10	Climbing a chimney (artificial or natural) or other location where you can brace against two opposite walls (reduces DC by 10)
-5	Climbing a corner where you can brace against perpendicular walls (reduces DC by five)
+5	Surface is slippery (increases DC by five)

¹ These modifiers are cumulative; use all that apply.



Making Your Own Handholds and Footholds: You can make your own handholds and footholds by pounding pitons into a wall. Doing so takes one minute per piton and one piton is needed per three feet of distance. As with any surface that offers handholds and footholds, a wall with pitons in it has a DC of 15. In the same way, a climber with a hand axe or similar implement can cut handholds in an ice wall.

Catching Yourself When Falling: It is practically impossible to catch yourself on a wall while falling. Make a Climb check (DC = wall's DC + 20) to do so. It is much easier to catch yourself on a slope (DC = slope's DC + 10).

Catching a Falling Character While Climbing: If someone climbing above you or adjacent to you falls, you can attempt to catch the falling character if he is within your reach. Doing so requires a successful melee touch attack against the falling character, though he can voluntarily refuse to dodge if desired, so that you can catch him more easily. If you hit, you must immediately attempt a Climb check (DC = wall's DC + 10). Success indicates that you catch the falling character but his total weight, including equipment, cannot exceed your heavy load limit or you automatically fall. If you fail your Climb check by four or less, you fail to stop the character's fall but do not lose your grip on the wall. If you fails by five or more, you fail to stop the character's fall and begin falling as well.

Action: Climbing is part of movement, so it is generally part of a move action and may be combined with other types of movement in a move action. Each move action that includes climbing requires a separate Climb check. Catching yourself or another falling character does not take an action.

Special: You can use a rope to haul a character upward (or lower a character) through sheer strength. You can lift double your maximum load in this manner.

A Cimmerian has a +2 racial bonus on Climb checks because Cimmerians are agile and surefooted.

Zamorians gain a +1 racial bonus on Climb checks when in urban or underground surroundings.

If a character has the Athletic feat, he gets a +2 bonus on Climb checks.

A creature with a climb speed has a +8 racial bonus on all Climb checks. The creature must make a Climb check

to climb any wall or slope with a DC higher than zero. It always can choose to take 10, however, even if rushed or threatened while climbing. If a creature with a climb speed chooses an accelerated climb (see above), it moves at double its climb speed (or at its land speed, whichever is slower) and makes a single Climb check at a -5 penalty. Such a creature can still dodge while climbing and opponents get no special bonuses to their attacks against it. It cannot, however, use the run action while climbing.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Use Rope, you get a +2 bonus on Climb checks made to climb a rope, a knotted rope or a rope-and-wall combination.

CONCENTRATION (CON)

Check: You must make a Concentration check whenever you might potentially be distracted (by taking damage, by harsh weather and so on) while engaged in some action that requires your full attention. Such actions include casting a spell, concentrating on an active spell, directing a spell, using a spell-like ability, or using a skill that would provoke an attack of opportunity. In general, if an action would not normally provoke an attack of opportunity, you need not make a Concentration check to avoid being distracted.

If the Concentration check succeeds, you may continue with the action as normal. If the check fails, the action automatically fails and is wasted. If you were in the process of casting a spell, the spell is lost. If you were concentrating on an active spell, the spell ends as if you had ceased concentrating on it. If you were directing a spell, the direction fails but the spell remains active. If you were using a spell-like ability, that use of the ability is lost. A skill use also fails. In some cases a failed skill check may have other ramifications as well.

The table below summarises various types of distractions that require you to make a Concentration check. If the distraction occurs while you are trying to cast a spell, you must add the PP cost of the spell you are trying to cast to the appropriate Concentration DC. If more than one type of distraction is present, make a check for each one; any failed Concentration check indicates that the task is not completed.



Concentration DC ¹	Distraction
10 + damage dealt	Damaged during the action. ²
10 + half of continuous damage	Taking continuous damage during the action. ³
Distracting spell's save DC	Distracted by non-damaging spell. ⁴
10	Vigorous motion, such as on a moving mount, taking a bouncy wagon ride, in a small boat in rough water or below decks in a storm-tossed ship.
15	Violent motion, such as on a galloping horse, taking a very rough wagon ride, in a small boat in rapids, on the deck of a storm-tossed ship.
20	Extraordinarily violent motion, such as an earthquake.
15	Entangled.
20	Grappling or pinned. You can only cast spells without somatic components, and only if you have any required material components in hand.
5	Weather is a high wind carrying blinding rain or sleet.
10	Weather is wind-driven hail, dust, or debris.
Distracting spell's save DC	Weather caused by a spell.

¹ If you are trying to cast, concentrate on or direct a spell when the distraction occurs, add the PP cost of the spell to the indicated DC.

² For example, damage occurs during the casting of a spell with a casting time of one round or more or the execution of an activity that takes more than a single full-round action, such as Disable Device. Damage may also stem from an attack of opportunity or readied attack made in response to the spell being cast (for spells with a casting time of one action) or the action being taken (for activities requiring no more than a full-round action). See also Distracting Sorcerers, page 210.

³ For example, damage is caused by a puncture wound caused by a sabre-toothed tiger.

⁴ If the spell allows no saving throw, use the save DC it would have if it did allow a save.

Action: None. Making a Concentration check does not take an action; it is either a free action when attempted reactively or part of another action when attempted actively.

Try Again: A Concentration check may be tried again, though a success does not cancel the effect of a previous failure, such as the loss of a spell you were casting or the disruption of a spell on which you were concentrating.

Special: You can use Concentration to cast a spell, use a spell-like ability or use a skill defensively so as to avoid attacks of opportunity altogether. This does not apply to other actions that might provoke attacks of opportunity.

The DC of the check is 15 plus the spell's PP cost, if casting a spell or using a spell-like ability defensively. If the Concentration check succeeds, you may attempt the action normally without provoking any attacks of opportunity. A successful Concentration check still does not allow you to take 10 on another check if you are in a stressful situation; you must make the check normally. If the Concentration check fails, the related action also automatically fails (with any appropriate ramifications) and the action is wasted, just as if your concentration was disrupted by a distraction.

CRAFT (INT)

Like Knowledge, Perform and Profession, Craft is actually a number of separate skills. You could have several Craft skills, each with its own ranks, each purchased as a separate skill.

A Craft skill is specifically focused on creating something. If nothing is created through the use of a skill, it probably falls under the heading of a Profession skill.

Check: When you are simply attempting to earn a living by your craft, you make a Craft check every week and earn a number of silver pieces equal to your check result. Untrained labourers and assistants earn an average of ½ sp per day.

The basic function of the Craft skill, however, is to allow you to make an item. The DC depends on the complexity of the item to be created. The DC, your check results and price determine how long it takes to make a particular item. The item's finished price also determines the cost of raw materials.

When you are attempting to Craft a specific item, you roll a Craft check each week multiplied by the DC required



to create the item. You need a total of five times the item's value in silver pieces to complete it, except if you are carrying out herbalism (see below).

All crafts require artisan's tools for the best chance of success. If improvised tools are used, the Craft check is made with a -2 circumstance penalty. On the other hand, masterwork artisan's tools provide a +2 circumstance bonus on the check.

To determine how much time and money it takes to make an item, follow these steps:

1. Find the item's price.
2. Find the DC in the table below.
3. Pay one-third of the item's price for the cost of raw materials.
4. Make an appropriate Craft check representing one week's work. If the check succeeds, multiply your check result by the DC. If the result times the DC equals five times the price of the item in silver pieces, you have completed the item. If the result times the DC equals 10 times the price of the item in silver pieces, you have completed the task in one-half the time. Other multiples of five times the DC reduce the time in the same manner.

If the result times the DC does not equal five times the price, it represents the progress you have made in one week. Record the result and make a new Craft check for the next week. You make more progress each week until your total reaches five times the price of the item in silver pieces.

If you fail a check by four or less, you make no progress that week.

If you fail by five or more, you ruin half the raw materials and have to pay half the original raw material cost again.

The DCs for specific items are listed in the above table.

Creating Masterwork Items: A masterwork item is a tool that provides a bonus based on its exceptional craftsmanship, not through being magical. To create a masterwork item, you must create the masterwork component as if it were a separate item in addition to the standard item. The masterwork component has its own price (100 sp) and a Craft DC of 20. Once both the standard component and the masterwork component are completed, the masterwork item is finished. *Note:* The cost of the masterwork component is one-third of the given amount, just as it is for raw materials.

Creating High-Quality Weapons: High-quality weapons are made according to the normal Craft rules but the smith must have at least 10 ranks in Craft (weaponsmithing) to make them.

Creating Akbitanan Swords or Superior Armour: A character with the appropriate feat can create weapons or armour of legendary status. See the Feats chapter for details.

Repairing Items: Generally, you can repair an item by making checks against the same DC that it took to make the item in the first place. The cost of repairing an item is one-fifth of the item's price.

Action: Does not apply. Craft checks are made by the day or week; see above.

Try Again: You may try again but each time you miss by five or more, you ruin half the raw materials and have to pay half the original raw material cost again.

Special: You may voluntarily add +10 to the indicated DC to craft an item. This allows you to create the item more quickly, since you will be multiplying this higher DC by your Craft check result to determine progress. You must decide whether to increase the DC before you make each weekly or daily check.

Craft (herbalism) and Craft (alchemy): Two Craft skills, Craft (alchemy) and Craft (herbalism), are slightly different from the other Craft skills. These skills are not open to all characters, since in the Hyborian kingdoms they are widely regarded as belonging to sorcerers and witches. They have separate entries on the Skills by Class table for this reason. Craft (alchemy) involves making magical preparations, while Craft (herbalism) involves making purely herbal potions as well as other natural products such as serpent venom.

A character with five or more ranks in Craft (alchemy) gains a +2 synergy bonus to all Craft (herbalism) checks. Likewise, a character with five or more ranks in Craft (herbalism) gains a +2 synergy bonus to all Craft (alchemy) checks. Furthermore, a character with five or more ranks of Knowledge (nature) gains a +2 synergy bonus to all Craft (herbalism) checks and vice versa.

Craft (herbalism) is also unusual in that the raw materials for it are not usually available for



Item	Craft Skill	Craft DC
Stygian Tomb-Dust, Flame-Powder	Alchemy	15
Acheronian Demon-Fire, Kothic Demon-Fire	Alchemy	20
Golden Wine of Xuthal, Lotus Smoke (any)	Alchemy	25
Armour or shield	Armourer	10 + DR
Hunting bow	Bowyer	12
Any other bow	Bowyer*	15
Any bow with high strength rating	Bowyer*	15 + (2 × rating)
Crossbow or Arbalest	Bowyer	15
Yellow Lotus Resin	Herbalism	15
Black Lotus Juice, Grey Lotus Blossom, Black Lotus Wine, Black Lotus Powder	Herbalism	20
Black Lotus Blossom, Green Lotus Blossom, Purple Lotus Juice, Golden Lotus Juice	Herbalism	25
Simple melee or thrown weapon	Weaponsmith	12
Martial melee or thrown weapon	Weaponsmith	15
Exotic melee or thrown weapon	Weaponsmith	18
Mechanical trap	Trapmaking	15 or higher
Superior weapon or armour**	Varies	+5
Very simple item (wooden spoon)	Varies	5
Typical item (iron pot)	Varies	10
High-quality item (bell)	Varies	15
Complex or superior item (lock)	Varies	20

*If you are making a named racial bow such as a Bossonian longbow and you are not a member of the race in question, take a -4 racial penalty to your Craft (bowyer) skill.

**You must have the appropriate feat (either Superior Armourer or Akbitanan Smith) to make superior armour or weapons.

purchase but must be gathered by the herbalist himself. This means, in effect, that there is no cost for raw materials but that the character with the Craft (herbalism) skill must spend a day or more foraging for raw materials before he begins the actual manufacture of the herbal preparation. This foraging must take place in an environment and area in which the requisite plants actually grow, of course. Thus, it is often necessary to spend a certain amount of time travelling before materials may be gathered and the character may well face various problems, at the discretion of the Games Master, including hostile natives, predatory animals, weird monsters, ghosts, demons and other difficulties.

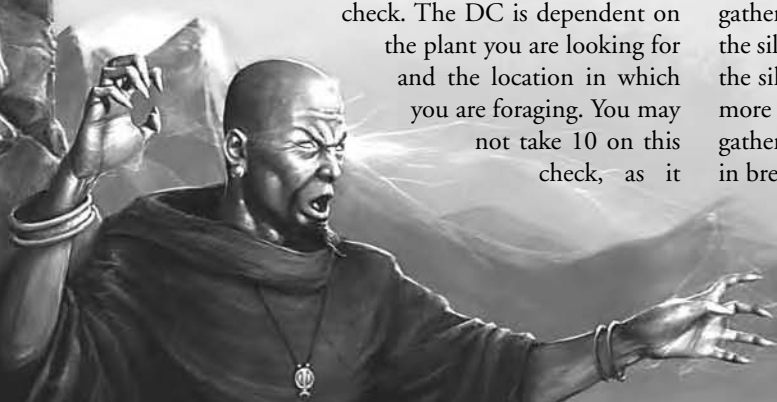
Each day you spend foraging, assuming you are in the right place, make a Craft (herbalism) check. The DC is dependent on the plant you are looking for and the location in which you are foraging. You may not take 10 on this check, as it

is essentially random whether the plant you are looking for is available in the area you are searching. If you succeed, you have found and gathered sufficient quantities of the plant to make one dose of the appropriate drug; if you roll more than the DC, you have found enough for one additional dose for each +1 that you roll over and above the amount required. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to this check for each day beyond the first that you spend looking for the plants, as you narrow your searching area.

If you are in a location in which several different useful plants grow, you can gather several different plants during the same day. Make a

separate Craft (herbalism) check for each type of plant, though you suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to each check for each type of plant beyond the first.

In most cases, fresh herbs must be turned into the final preparation within 2d6 weeks of being picked or they deteriorate and become completely worthless. If you do not have time to prepare your finds right away, you can spend a day with a Craft (herbalism) check (DC 15) to dry them out so as to preserve them for up to a year. In this case, you will need to make a further Craft check to transform the herbs into the final preparation. This final Craft check is made like any other Craft check, with the check result being compared to the DC and the total cost of the herbal preparation. The only difference is that there is no raw materials cost, since the raw materials have already been gathered. Furthermore, you need only roll a total equal to the silver piece value of the products, rather than five times the silver piece value. The high price of herbal products is more a reflection of the dangers and difficulties involved in gathering their ingredients than the time and skill involved in brewing them up.



Note that it is possible to prepare a large batch of an herbal product at once, such as when you have large quantities of the plant and need to begin Crafting it into a preparation right away before it rots. However, if you do this, you will not have any finished product until you have made the whole batch. In effect, you are simmering the whole lot together in one cauldron and cannot draw off any for use until it is all prepared.

For versatile plants such as the black lotus, which can be used for a variety of different preparations, each plant you gather will provide enough to make one dose of each of the various preparations.

Plant or Animal	DC to gather (by location)
Apples of Derketa	20 (jungles of northern Black Kingdoms)
Black Lotus	25 (jungles of northern Black Kingdoms), or 20 (banks of Zarkheba River)
Golden Lotus	30 (jungles of Khitai)
Green Lotus	20 (jungles of Khitai)
Grey Lotus	25 (Swamps of the Dead beyond Khitai)
Purple Lotus	25 (ghost-haunted swamps of southern Stygia)
Yellow Lotus	15 (jungles of northern Black Kingdoms)

For example, Ankh-af-na-Khonsu is searching for the dreaded black lotus on the banks of the Zarkheba River. His Craft (herbalism) skill is +19 and he rolls a 13 for a total of 32 on the first day, finding 13 doses of lotus: one for meeting the DC, +12 for rolling 12 above the DC. He has come a long way, so he braves the man-apes, poisonous foliage, were-beasts and demons of that notorious jungle for a second day and rolls a 4, +1, for a total of 24. He thus finds five more plants: one for meeting the DC, +4 for getting 4 above the DC. With a total of eighteen black lotus plants in his basket, he heads north for the relative civilisation of Kush.

Ankh-af-na-Khonsu decides to pause and make up his various preparations before his plants begin to rot. He plans to make black lotus wine, black lotus juice, black lotus blossoms and black lotus powder. First of all, he spends a day drying his finds with another Herbalism check (DC 15), which he passes by taking 10.

He makes up batches of 18 doses of each preparation and simmers away. The total time it will take him to make these is dependent on his Craft (herbalism) skill checks

but in effect he needs to make a total of 42,300 sp worth of preparations: $18 \times 300 \text{ sp} = 5,400 \text{ sp}$ for the black lotus powder, $18 \times 50 \text{ sp} = 900 \text{ sp}$ for the black lotus wine, $18 \times 1,250 \text{ sp} = 22,500 \text{ sp}$ for the black lotus blossoms and $18 \times 750 \text{ sp} = 13,500 \text{ sp}$ for the black lotus juice.

Ankh-af-na-Khonsu is simply going to take 10 with each roll so as to save time and reduce his margin of error. He starts with the powder. He rolls $10 + 19 = 29$ each week, allowing him to make $29 \times 20 = 580 \text{ sp}$ worth of progress each week. It takes him a total of 10 weeks to make 18 doses of black lotus powder. Next he makes the blossoms, making $29 \times 25 = 725 \text{ sp}$ worth of progress each week. It takes him another 32 weeks to make the full 22,500 worth of blossoms. Next he makes the wine, which is also DC 20, so again he makes 580 sp worth of progress per week; two weeks later he has 18 doses of the wine. Finally he makes the juice, again a DC 20 job, which takes him 24 weeks more. In total, he has spent over a year and a quarter on making herbal preparations, plus gathering and travelling time. On the upside, he has enough black lotus powder to last him for several bouts of intense sorcery, enough wine to sell to fund his journey back to Stygia in style, enough blossoms to have 18 wild lotus-dreams and enough juice to poison all his superiors in the Black Ring sorcerous society, if he can just find someone to deliver the doses...

Synergy: If you have five ranks in a Craft skill, you get a +2 bonus on Appraise checks related to items made with that Craft skill.

DECIPHER SCRIPT (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

Check: You can decipher writing in an unfamiliar language or a message written in an incomplete or archaic form. The base DC is 20 for the simplest messages, 25 for standard texts and 30 or higher for intricate, exotic or very old writing. If the check succeeds, you understand the general content of approximately one page of writing or the equivalent. If the check fails, make a DC 5 Wisdom check to determine whether you draw a false conclusion about the text. Success means you do not draw a false conclusion; failure means you do.

Both the Decipher Script check and (if necessary) the Wisdom check are made secretly so you cannot tell whether the conclusion you draw is true or false.



Action: Deciphering the equivalent of a single page of script takes 10 consecutive full-round actions, which is a total of one minute.

Try Again: You may not try this check again.

Special: A character with the Diligent feat gets a +2 bonus on Decipher Script checks.

Synergy: A character with five or more ranks in Decipher Script gets a +2 bonus on Knowledge (arcana) checks.

DIPLMACY (CHA)

'You scum of the western hills,' he muttered, 'have you dared seek to undermine my power?'

'I didn't have to,' answered Conan. 'You lied when you said I had nothing to do with bringing in the new recruits. I had everything to do with it. They took your orders, but they fought for me. There is not room for two chiefs of the Zuagirs. They know I am the stronger man. I understand them better than you, and they, me; because I am a barbarian too.'

'And what will they say when you ask them to fight for Khauran?' asked Olgerd sardonically.

'They'll follow me. I'll promise them a camel-train of gold from the palace. Khauran will be willing to pay that as a guerdon for getting rid of Constantius. After that, I'll lead them against the Turanians as you have planned. They want loot, and they'd as soon fight Constantius for it as anybody.'

— *A Witch Shall be Born*

Check: You can change the attitudes of others (Non-Player Characters) with a successful Diplomacy check; see the sidebar below for basic DCs. In

negotiations, participants roll opposed Diplomacy checks and the winner gains the advantage. Opposed checks also resolve situations when two advocates or diplomats plead opposite cases in a hearing before a third party.

Action: Changing others' attitudes with Diplomacy generally takes at least 10 consecutive full-round actions, which is a total of one minute. In some situations, this time requirement may greatly increase. A rushed Diplomacy check can be made as a full-round action but you take a –10 penalty on the check.

Try Again: Retries are optional but not recommended because they usually do not work. Even if the initial Diplomacy check succeeds, the other character can be persuaded only so far and a retry may do more harm than good. If the initial check fails, the other character has probably become more firmly committed to his position and a retry is futile.

Special: A Meadow Shemite has a +2 racial bonus on Diplomacy checks.

If you have the Negotiator feat, you get a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Bluff, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) or Sense Motive, you get a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks.

Attitude	Means	Possible Actions
Hostile	Will take risks to hurt you	Attack, interfere, berate, flee
Unfriendly	Wishes you ill	Mislead, gossip, avoid, watch suspiciously, insult
Indifferent	Does not much care	Socially expected interaction
Friendly	Wishes you well	Chat, advise, offer limited help, advocate
Helpful	Will take risks to help you	Protect, back up, heal, aid

Initial Attitude	New Attitude (DC to achieve)				
	Hostile	Unfriendly	Indifferent	Friendly	Helpful
Hostile	—	20	25	35	50
Unfriendly	—	—	15	25	40
Indifferent	—	—	—	15	30
Friendly	—	—	—	—	20
Helpful	—	—	—	—	—



DISABLE DEVICE (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

Check: The Disable Device check is made secretly so you do not necessarily know whether you have succeeded. The DC depends on how tricky the device is. Disabling (or rigging or jamming) a fairly simple device has a DC of 10; more intricate and complex devices have higher DCs.

If the check succeeds, you disable the device. If it fails by four or less, you have failed but can try again. If you fail by five or more, something goes wrong. If the device is a trap, you spring it. If you are attempting some sort of sabotage, you think the device is disabled when it is not.

You also can rig simple devices such as saddles or wagon wheels to work normally for a while and then fail or fall off some time later, usually after 1d4 rounds or minutes of use.

Action: The amount of time needed to make a Disable Device check depends on the task, as noted above. Disabling a simple device takes one round and is a full-round action. An intricate or complex device requires 1d4 or 2d4 rounds.

Try Again: You can retry if you miss the check by four or less, though you must be aware that you failed in order to try again.

Special: If you have the Nimble Fingers feat, you get a +2 bonus on Disable Device checks.

Device	Time	Disable Device DC ¹	Example
Simple	1 round	10	Jam a lock
Tricky	1d4 rounds	15	Sabotage a wagon wheel
Difficult	2d4 rounds	20	Disarm a trap, reset a trap
Wicked	2d4 rounds	25	Disarm a complex trap, cleverly sabotage a clockwork device

¹If you attempt to leave behind no trace of your tampering, add five to the DC.

OTHER WAYS TO AVOID TRAPS

It is possible to ruin many traps without making a Disable Device check.

- ✱ **Ranged Attack Traps:** Once a trap's location is known, the obvious way to ruin it is to smash the mechanism, assuming the mechanism can be accessed. Failing that, it is possible to plug up the holes from which the projectiles emerge. Doing this prevents the trap from firing unless its ammunition deals enough damage to break through the plugs.
- ✱ **Melee Attack Traps:** You can thwart these devices by smashing the mechanism or blocking the weapons, as noted above. Alternatively, if a character studies the trap as it triggers, he might be able to time his dodges just right to avoid damage. A character who is doing nothing but studying a trap when it first goes off gains a +4 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence against its attacks if it is triggered again within the next minute.
- ✱ **Pits:** Disabling a pit trap generally ruins only the trapdoor, turning the trap into an uncovered pit. Filling in the pit or building a makeshift bridge across it is an application of manual labour and does not require the Disable Device skill. Characters could neutralise any spikes at the bottom of a pit by attacking them, since they break just as daggers do.

DISGUISE (CHA)

Check: Your Disguise check result determines how good your disguise is. It is opposed by others' Spot check results. If you do not draw any attention to yourself, others do not get to make Spot checks. If you come to the attention of a person who is suspicious of you, such as a guard who watches commoners walking through a city gate, it can be assumed that person has taken 10 on his Spot checks.

You get only one Disguise check per use of the skill, even if several people make Spot checks against it. The Disguise check is made secretly so you cannot be sure how good the result is.

The effectiveness of your disguise depends in part on how much you attempt to change your appearance.





Disguise	Disguise Check Modifier
Minor details only	+5
Disguised as different gender ¹	-2
Disguised as different race ¹	-2
Disguised as different age category ¹	-2 ²

¹These modifiers are cumulative; use any that apply.

²Per step of difference between your actual age category and your disguised age category. The steps are: young (younger than adulthood), adulthood, middle age, old and venerable.

If you impersonate a particular individual, those who know what that person looks like get a bonus on their Spot checks according to the table below. Furthermore, they are automatically considered to be suspicious of you, so opposed checks are always called for.

Familiarity	Viewer's Spot Check Bonus
Recognises on sight	+4
Friends or associates	+6
Close friends	+8
Intimate	+10

Usually, an individual makes a Spot check to see through your disguise immediately upon meeting you and each hour thereafter. If you casually meet many different creatures, each for a short time, check once per day or hour using an average Spot modifier for the group.

Action: Creating a disguise requires 1d3 × 10 minutes of work.

Try Again: You may try to reapply a failed disguise but once others know that a disguise was attempted, they will be more suspicious.

If you have the Deceptive feat, you get a +2 bonus on Disguise checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Bluff, you get a +2 bonus on Disguise checks when you know you are being observed and you try to act in character.

ESCAPE ARTIST (DEX; ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY)

Check: The table below gives the DCs for escaping various forms of restraints.

Ropes: Your Escape Artist check is opposed by the binder's Use Rope check. As it is easier to tie someone up than to escape, the binder gets a +10 bonus on his check.

Manacles and Masterwork Manacles: The DC for manacles is set by their construction.

Tight Space: The DC noted in the table is for getting through a space through which your head fits but your shoulders do not. If the space is long you may need to make multiple checks. You cannot get through a space through which your head does not fit.

Grappler: You can make an Escape Artist check opposed by your enemy's grapple check to get out of a grapple or get unpinned, so that you are only grappling.

Restraint	Escape Artist DC
Ropes	Binder's Use Rope check at +10
Net	20
Manacles	30
Tight space	30
Masterwork manacles	35
Grappler	Grappler's grapple check result

Action: Making an Escape Artist check to escape from rope bindings, manacles or other restraints (except a grappler) requires one minute of work. Escaping from a net is a full-round action. Escaping from a grapple or pin is a standard action. Squeezing through a tight space takes at least one minute depending on how long the space is.

Try Again: You can make another check after a failed check if you are squeezing your way through a tight space, which requires multiple checks. If the situation permits, you can make additional checks, or even take 20, as long as you are not being actively opposed.

Special: If you have the Agile feat, you get a +2 bonus on Escape Artist checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Escape Artist, you get a +2 bonus on Use Rope checks to bind someone. If you have five or more ranks in Use Rope, you get a +2 bonus on Escape Artist checks when escaping from rope bonds.



FORGERY (INT)

Check: Forgery requires writing materials appropriate to the document being forged, enough light or sufficient visual acuity to see the details of what you are writing, wax for seals if appropriate and some time. To forge a document on which the handwriting is not specific to a person, such as military orders, a government decree, a business ledger or the like, you need only to have seen a similar document before and you gain a +8 bonus on your check. To forge a signature, you need an autograph of that person to copy and you gain a +4 bonus on the check. To forge a longer document written in the hand of some particular person, a large sample of that person's handwriting is needed.

The Forgery check is made secretly so you are not sure how good your forgery is. As with Disguise, you do not even need to make a check until someone examines the work. Your Forgery check is opposed by the Forgery check of the person who examines the document's authenticity. The examiner gains modifiers on his check if any of the conditions on the table below apply:

Condition	Reader's Forgery Check Modifier
Type of document unknown to reader	-2
Type of document somewhat known to reader	+0
Type of document well known to reader	+2
Handwriting not known to reader	-2
Handwriting somewhat known to reader	+0
Handwriting intimately known to reader	+2
Reader only casually reviews the document	-2

A document that contradicts procedure, orders or previous knowledge, or that requires sacrifice on the part of the person checking the document, can increase that character's suspicion and thus create favourable circumstances for the checker's opposing Forgery check.

Action: Forging a very short and simple document takes about one minute. A longer or more complex document takes 1d4 minutes per page.

Try Again: Retries are usually not permitted. A retry is never possible after a particular reader detects a particular forgery. The document created by the forger might still fool someone else, however. The result of a Forgery check for a particular document must be used every time a different reader examines the document. No reader can attempt to detect a particular forgery more than once; if the one opposed check goes in favour of the forger, the reader cannot try using his own skill again, even if he is suspicious about the document.

Special: If you have the Deceitful feat, you get a +2 bonus on Forgery checks.

Restriction: Forgery is language-dependent; thus, to forge documents and detect forgeries, you must be able to read and write the language in question. A character cannot learn the Forgery skill unless he has learned to read and write.

GATHER INFORMATION (CHA)

Check: An evening's time, a few silver pieces for buying drinks and making friends and a DC 10 Gather Information check will gain you a general idea of a city's major news items, assuming there are no obvious reasons why the information would be withheld. The higher your check result, the better the information.

If you want to find out about a specific rumour or a specific item, obtain a map or do something else along those lines, the DC for the check is at least 15 to 25.

Action: A typical Gather Information check takes 1d4+1 hours.

Try Again: You may try this check again but it takes time. Furthermore, you may draw attention to yourself if you repeatedly pursue a certain type of information.

Special: If you have the Investigator feat, you get a +2 bonus on Gather Information checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Knowledge (rumours), you get a +2 bonus on Gather Information checks.



HANDLE ANIMAL (CHA; TRAINED ONLY)

Check: The DC depends on what you are trying to do.

Task	Handle Animal DC
Handle an animal	10
'Push' an animal	25
Teach an animal a trick	15 or 20 ¹
Train an animal for a general purpose	15 or 20 ¹
Rear a wild animal	15 + HD of animal

¹See the specific trick or purpose below.

General Purpose	DC	General Purpose	DC
Combat riding	20	Hunting	20
Fighting	20	Performance	15
Guarding	20	Riding	15
Heavy labour	15		

Handle an Animal: This task involves commanding an animal to perform a task or trick that it knows. If the animal is wounded or has taken any nonlethal damage or ability score damage, the DC increases by two. If your check succeeds, the animal performs the task or trick on its next action.

'Push' an Animal: To push an animal means to get it to perform a task or trick that it does not know but is physically capable of performing. This category also covers making an animal perform a forced march or forcing it to hustle for more than one hour between sleep cycles. If the animal is wounded or has taken any nonlethal damage or ability score damage, the DC increases by two. If your check succeeds, the animal performs the task or trick on its next action.

Teach an Animal a Trick: You can teach an animal a specific trick with one week of work and a successful Handle Animal check against the indicated DC. An animal with an Intelligence score of one can learn a maximum of three tricks, while an animal with an Intelligence score of two can learn a maximum of six tricks. Possible tricks and their associated DCs include but are not necessarily limited to:

Attack (DC 20): The animal attacks apparent enemies.

You may point to a particular creature that you wish the animal to attack and it will comply if able. Normally, an animal will attack only humanoids, monstrous humanoids, giants or other animals. Teaching an animal to attack all creatures, including such unnatural creatures as demons, counts as two tricks.

Come (DC 15): The animal comes to you, even if it normally would not do so.

Defend (DC 20): The animal defends you or is ready to defend you if no threat is currently present, even without any command being given. Alternatively, you can command the animal to defend a specific other character.

Down (DC 15): The animal breaks off from combat or otherwise backs down. An animal that does not know this trick continues to fight until it must flee (due to injury, a fear effect or the like) or its opponent is defeated.

Fetch (DC 15): The animal goes and gets something. If you do not point out a specific item, the animal fetches some random object.

Guard (DC 20): The animal stays in place and prevents others from approaching.

Heel (DC 15): The animal follows you closely, even to places where it normally would not go.

Perform (DC 15): The animal performs a variety of simple tricks, such as sitting up, rolling over, roaring, barking and so on.

Seek (DC 15): The animal moves into an area and looks around for anything that is obviously alive or animate.

Stay (DC 15): The animal stays in place, waiting for you to return. It does not challenge other creatures that come by, though it still defends itself if it needs to.

Track (DC 20): The animal tracks the scent presented to it. The animal must have the scent ability.

Work (DC 15): The animal pulls or pushes a medium or heavy load.

Train an Animal for a Purpose: Rather than teaching an animal individual tricks, you can simply train it for a general purpose. Essentially, an animal's purpose represents a preselected set of known tricks that fit into a common scheme, such as guarding or heavy labour. The animal must meet all the normal prerequisites for all tricks included in the training package. If the package includes more than three tricks, the animal must have an Intelligence score of two.

An animal can be trained for only one general purpose, though if the creature is capable of learning additional tricks, it may do so. Training an animal for a purpose requires fewer checks than teaching individual tricks but takes the same amount of time.



Combat Riding (DC 20): An animal trained to bear a rider into combat knows the tricks *attack*, *come*, *defend*, *down*, *guard* and *heel*. Training an animal for combat riding takes six weeks. You may also 'upgrade' an animal trained for riding to one trained for combat riding by spending three weeks and making a successful DC 20 Handle Animal check. The new general purpose and tricks completely replace the animal's previous purpose and any tricks it once knew. Warhorses are already trained to bear riders into combat and do not require any additional training for this purpose.

Fighting (DC 20): An animal trained to engage in combat knows the tricks *attack*, *down* and *stay*. Training an animal for fighting takes three weeks.

Guarding (DC 20): An animal trained to guard knows the tricks *attack*, *defend*, *down* and *guard*. Training an animal for guarding takes four weeks.

Heavy Labour (DC 15): An animal trained for heavy labour knows the tricks *come* and *work*. Training an animal for heavy labour takes two weeks.

Hunting (DC 20): An animal trained for hunting knows the tricks *attack*, *down*, *fetch*, *heel*, *seek* and *track*. Training an animal for hunting takes six weeks.

Performance (DC 15): An animal trained for performance knows the tricks *come*, *fetch*, *heel*, *perform* and *stay*. Training an animal for performance takes five weeks.

Riding (DC 15): An animal trained to bear a rider knows the tricks *come*, *heel* and *stay*. Training an animal for riding takes three weeks.

Rearing a Wild Animal: To rear an animal means to raise a wild creature from infancy so that it becomes domesticated. A handler can rear as many as three creatures of the same kind at once. A successfully domesticated animal can be taught tricks at the same time that it is being raised or it can be taught as a domesticated animal later.

Action: Handling an animal is a move action, while pushing an animal is a full-round action. For tasks with specific time frames, you must spend half this time (at the rate of three hours per day per animal being handled) working toward completion of the task before you attempt the Handle Animal check. If the check fails, your attempt to teach, rear or train the animal fails and you need not complete the teaching, rearing or training time. If the check succeeds, you must invest the remainder of the time to complete the teaching, rearing or training. If the time is interrupted or the task is not followed through to completion, the attempt to teach, rear or train the animal automatically fails.

Try Again: You may try again, except when you are rearing an animal.

Special: You can use this skill on a creature that is not an animal, so long as the creature has an Intelligence score of one or two. The DC of any such check increases by five. Such creatures have the same limit on known tricks as animals do.

If you have the Animal Affinity feat, you get a +2 bonus on Handle Animal checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Handle Animal, you get a +2 bonus on Ride checks.

Untrained: If you have no ranks in Handle Animal, you can use a Charisma check to handle and push domestic animals but you cannot teach, rear or train animals.

HEAL (WIS)

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, magical healing is extremely rare; therefore, most characters are tougher, hardier and derive more benefit from simple doctoring than their counterparts in other fantasy games.

Check: The DC and effect depend on the task.

Task	DC
First aid	15
Long-term care	15
Short-term care	15
Treat poison	Poison's DC
Treat disease	Disease's DC

First Aid: Administering first aid means saving a dying character. If a character has negative hit points and is losing hit points (at one per round, one per hour or one per day), the healing character can make him stable. The injured character regains no hit points but he does stop losing them. The check is a standard action.

Long-term Care: Providing long-term care means treating a wounded person for a day or more. If successful, the character lets the patient recover hit points or ability score points (lost to temporary damage) at twice the normal rate. See the Healing rules, page 191. The healing character can tend up to six patients at a time. He needs a few items and supplies (bandages, salves and so on) that are easy to come by in settled lands.



Giving long-term care counts as light activity for the healer. A character cannot give long-term care to himself.

A healer's kit gives a +2 circumstance bonus to Heal checks.

Short-term Care: Providing short-term care means spending 10 minutes cleaning and sewing up wounds, applying herbal poultices and so on. After each combat in which a creature is wounded, up to one character may give him short-term care. If the Heal check is successful, the patient regains (one per character level) + Con modifier in hit points (minimum one).

Treat Poison: Treating poison means tending a single character who has been poisoned and who is going to take more damage from the poison or suffer some other effect. Every time the poisoned character makes a saving throw against the poison, the healing character makes a Heal check. The poisoned character uses the healing character's result in place of his saving throw if the healing character's Heal result is higher.

Treat Disease: Treating a disease means tending a diseased character. Every time the diseased character makes a saving throw against disease effects, the healing character makes a Heal check. The diseased character uses the healing character's result in place of his saving throw if the healing character's Heal result is higher.

Synergy: If a character has five or more ranks in Craft (herbalism) he gets a +2 synergy bonus on Heal checks.

HIDE (DEX; ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY)

Check: Your Hide check is opposed by the Spot check of anyone who might see you. You can move up to one-half your normal speed and hide at no penalty. When moving at a speed faster than one-half but slower than your normal speed, you take a -5 penalty. It is practically impossible (-20 penalty) to hide while attacking, running or charging.

A creature larger or smaller than Medium takes a size bonus or penalty on Hide checks depending on its size category, as follows: Fine +16, Diminutive +12, Tiny +8, Small +4, Large -4, Huge -8, Gargantuan -12, Colossal -16.



You need cover or concealment in order to attempt a Hide check. Total cover or total concealment usually (but not always; see Special, below) obviates the need for a Hide check, since nothing can see you anyway.

If people are observing you, even casually, you cannot hide. You can run around a corner or behind cover so that you are out of sight and then hide but those who are watching you will at least know where you went.

If your observers are momentarily distracted (such as by a Bluff check; see below), you can attempt to hide. When the others turn their attention from you, you can attempt a Hide check if you can get to a hiding place of some kind. As a general guideline, the hiding place has to be within one foot per rank you have in Hide. This check, however, is made at a -10 penalty because you have to move fast.

Sniping: If you are successfully hidden at least 10 feet from your target, you can make one ranged attack, then immediately hide again. You take a -20 penalty on your Hide check to conceal yourself after the shot.

Creating a Diversion to Hide: You can use Bluff to help you hide. A successful Bluff check can give you the momentary diversion you need to attempt a Hide check while people are aware of you.



Action: Normally, you make a Hide check as part of movement, so it does not take a separate action. However, hiding immediately after a ranged attack (see Sniping, above) is a move action.

Special: If you are invisible, you gain a +40 bonus on Hide checks if you are immobile, or a +20 bonus on Hide checks if you are moving.

If you have the Stealthy feat, you get a +2 bonus on Hide checks.

INTIMIDATE (CHA)

Check: You can change another's behaviour with a successful Intimidate check. Your Intimidate check is opposed by the target's modified level check. This is resolved as 1d20 + character level or Hit Dice + target's Wisdom bonus (if any) + target's modifiers on saving throws against fear. If you beat your target's check result, you may treat the target as friendly but only for the purpose of actions taken while it remains intimidated. That is, the target retains its normal attitude but will chat, advise, offer limited help or advocate on your behalf while intimidated. See the Diplomacy skill, above, for additional details. The effect lasts as long as the target remains in your presence and for 1d6×10 minutes afterward. After this time, the target's default attitude toward you shifts to unfriendly or, if normally unfriendly, to hostile.

If you fail the check by five or more, the target provides you with incorrect or useless information, or otherwise frustrates your efforts.

Demoralise Opponent: You can also use Intimidate to weaken an opponent's resolve in combat. To do so, make an Intimidate check opposed by the target's modified level check (see above). If you win, the target becomes shaken for one round. A shaken character takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, ability checks and saving throws. You can intimidate only an opponent that you threaten in melee combat and that can see you.

Action: Changing another's behaviour requires one minute of interaction. Intimidating an opponent in combat is a standard action.

Try Again: Trying again is optional but not recommended because retries usually do not work. Even if the initial check succeeds, the other character can be intimidated only so far and a retry does not help. If the initial check fails, the other character has become more firmly resolved to resist the intimidator and a retry is futile.

Special: You gain a +4 bonus on your Intimidate check for every size category that you are larger than your target. Conversely, you take a -4 penalty on your Intimidate check for every size category that you are smaller than your target.

Character immune to fear and non-intelligent creatures cannot be intimidated.

If you have the Persuasive feat, you get a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Bluff, you get a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks.

JUMP (STR; ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY)

Check: The DC and the distance you can cover vary according to the type of jump you are attempting.

Your Jump check is modified by your speed. If your speed is 30 feet, no modifier based on speed applies to the check. If your speed is less than 30 feet, you take a -6 penalty for every 10 feet of speed less than 30 feet. If your speed is greater than 30 feet, you gain a +4 bonus for every 10 feet beyond 30 feet.

All Jump DCs given here assume that you get a running start, which requires that you move at least 20 feet in a straight line before attempting the jump. If you do not get a running start, the DC for the jump is doubled.

Distance moved by jumping is counted against your normal maximum movement in a round.

If you have ranks in Jump and you succeed on a Jump check, you land on your feet, when appropriate. If you attempt a Jump check untrained, you land prone unless you beat the DC by five or more.

Long Jump: A long jump is a horizontal jump made across a gap like a chasm or stream. At the midpoint of the jump, you attain a vertical height equal to one-quarter of the horizontal distance. The DC for the jump is equal to the distance jumped in feet.

If your check succeeds, you land on your feet at the far end. If you fail the check by less than



five, you do not clear the distance but you can make a DC 15 Reflex saving throw to grab the far edge of the gap. You end your movement grasping the far edge. If that leaves you dangling over a chasm or gap, getting up requires a move action and a DC 15 Climb check.

Long Jump Distance	Jump DC ¹
5 feet	5
10 feet	10
15 feet	15
20 feet	20
25 feet	25
30 feet	30

¹Requires a 20-foot running start. Without a running start, double the DC.

High Jump: A high jump is a vertical leap to reach a ledge high above or to grasp something overhead. The DC is equal to four times the distance to be cleared.

If you jump up to grab something, a successful check indicates that you reach the desired height. If you wish to pull yourself up, you can do so with a move action and a DC 15 Climb check. If you fail the Jump check, you do not reach the height and you land on your feet in the same spot from which you jumped. As with a long jump, the DC is doubled if you do not get a running start of at least 20 feet.

High Jump Distance ¹	Jump DC ²
1 foot	4
2 feet	8
3 feet	12
4 feet	16
5 feet	20
6 feet	24
7 feet	28
8 feet	32

¹ Not including vertical reach; see below.

² Requires a 20-foot running start. Without a running start, double the DC.

Obviously, the difficulty of reaching a given height varies according to the size of the character or creature. The maximum vertical reach (the

height the creature can reach without jumping) for an average creature of a given size is shown on the table below. As a Medium-size creature, a typical human can reach eight feet without jumping.

Quadrupedal creatures do not have the same vertical reach as a bipedal creature. Treat them as being one size category smaller than they are.

Creature Size	Vertical Reach
Colossal	128 ft.
Gargantuan	64 ft.
Huge	32 ft.
Large	16 ft.
Medium	8 ft.
Small	4 ft.
Tiny	2 ft.
Diminutive	1 ft.
Fine	1/2 ft.

Hop Up: You can jump up onto an object as tall as your waist, such as a table or small boulder, with a DC 10 Jump check. Doing so counts as 10 feet of movement, so if your speed is 30 feet, you could move 20 feet and then hop up onto a table. You do not need to get a running start to hop up, so the DC is not doubled if you do not get a running start.

Jumping Down: If you intentionally jump from a height, you take less damage than when you accidentally fall. The DC to jump down from a height is 15. You do not have to get a running start to jump down, so the DC is not doubled if you do not get a running start.

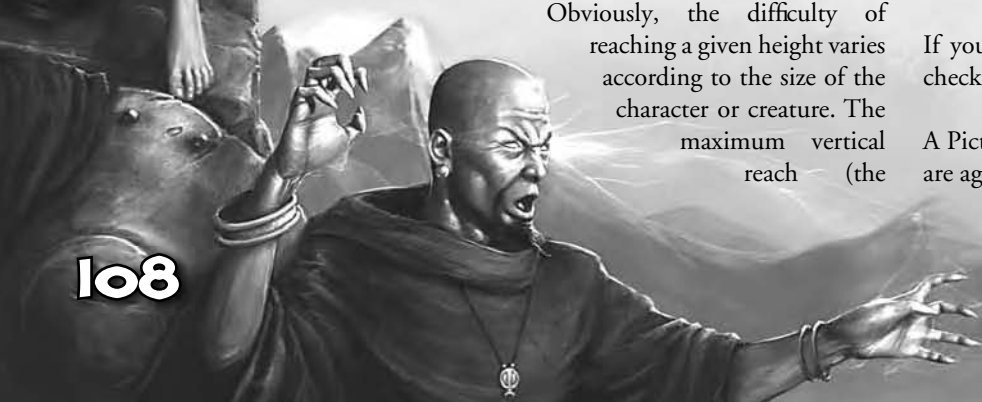
If you succeed on the check, you take falling damage as if you had dropped 10 fewer feet than you actually did.

Action: A Jump check is included in your movement, so it is part of a move action. If you run out of movement mid-jump, your next action (on your next turn if necessary) must be a move action to complete the jump.

Special: Effects that increase your movement also increase your jumping distance since your check is modified by your speed.

If you have the Run feat, you get a +4 bonus on Jump checks for any jumps made after a running start.

A Pict has a +2 racial bonus on Jump checks because Picts are agile and athletic.



If you have the Acrobatic feat, you get a +2 bonus on Jump checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Tumble, you get a +2 bonus on Jump checks. If you have five or more ranks in Jump, you get a +2 bonus on Tumble checks.

KNOWLEDGE (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

Like the Craft and Profession skills, Knowledge actually encompasses a number of unrelated skills. Knowledge represents a study of some body of lore, possibly an academic or even scientific discipline.

Below are listed typical fields of study.

- ✱ Arcana (ancient mysteries, magic traditions and societies, arcane symbols, cryptic phrases, summoning, binding, demons)
- ✱ Architecture and engineering (buildings, aqueducts, bridges, fortifications)
- ✱ Geography (lands, terrain, climate, people)
- ✱ History (leaders, wars, migrations, founding of cities and nations)
- ✱ Local (particular regions; This skill can be used in place of Geography, History, Nature, Nobility & Royalty, Religion or Rumours for questions relating to a specific region)
- ✱ Nature (animals, plants, seasons and cycles, weather, vermin, were-beasts)
- ✱ Nobility and royalty (lineages, heraldry, family trees, mottoes, personalities)
- ✱ Religion (gods and goddesses, mythic history, ecclesiastic tradition)

USING RUMOURS

The Knowledge (rumours) skill works a little differently to the other Knowledge skills. It is basically a way for the Games Master to pass on hints to the players if they are stuck and do not know what to do. The Knowledge (rumours) skill will never solve a problem – if the characters are trying to find a kidnapped girl, for instance, then the Knowledge (rumours) skill will never tell them where she is being held. However, a character could make a Knowledge (rumours) check to see if he has heard tell of a den of thieves and slavers in the south.

- ✱ Rumours (legends, personalities, inhabitants, laws, customs, traditions)
- ✱ Warfare (tactics, battle formations, leading armies)

Check: Answering really easy questions within your field of study has a DC of 10, answering basic questions has a DC of 15 and answering really tough questions ranges DC 20 to DC 30.

In many cases, you can use this skill to identify monsters and their special powers or vulnerabilities. In general, the DC of such a check equals 10 + the monster's Hit Dice. A successful check allows you to remember a bit of useful information about that monster.

For every five points by which your check result exceeds the DC, you recall another piece of useful information.

Action: In most cases, making a Knowledge check does not take an action; you simply know the answer or you do not.

Try Again: The check represents what you know. Thinking about a topic a second time does not let you know something that you never learned in the first place.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Knowledge (architecture and engineering), you get a +2 bonus on Search checks made to find secret doors or hidden compartments.

If you have five or more ranks in Knowledge (geography), you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks made to keep from getting lost or avoiding natural hazards.

If you have five or more ranks in Knowledge (nature), you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks made in aboveground natural environments: aquatic, desert, forest, hill, marsh, mountains or plains.

If you have five or more ranks in Knowledge (nobility and royalty), you get a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks.

If you have five or more ranks in Survival, you get a +2 bonus on Knowledge (nature) checks.

If you have five or more ranks in Knowledge (rumours), you get a +2 bonus on Gather Information checks.



LISTEN (WIS)

Check: Your Listen check is made against either a DC that reflects how quiet the noise is that you might hear, or opposed to your target's Move Silently check.

Listen DC	Sound
-10	A battle
0	People talking ¹
5	A person in medium armour walking at a slow pace (10 ft./round) trying not to make any noise
10	An unarmoured person walking at a slow pace (15 ft./round) trying not to make any noise
15	A 1 st level thief using Move Silently to sneak past the listener
15	People whispering ¹
19	A cat stalking
30	An owl gliding in for a kill

¹If you beat the DC by 10 or more, you can make out what is being said, assuming you understand the language.

Listen DC Modifier	Condition
+5	Through a door
+15	Through a stone wall
+1	Per 10 feet of distance
+5	Listener distracted

In the case of people trying to be quiet, the DCs given in the table could be replaced by Move Silently checks where the indicated DCs would be the people's average check results.

Action: Every time you have a chance to hear something in a reactive manner, such as when someone makes a noise or you move into a new area, you can make a Listen check without using an action. Trying to hear something you failed to hear previously is a move action.

Try Again: You can try again to hear something you failed to hear previously with no penalty.

Special: When several characters are listening to the same thing, a single 1d20 roll can be used for all the individuals' Listen checks.

If you have the Alertness feat, you get a +2 bonus on Listen checks.

A sleeping character may make Listen checks at a -10 penalty. A successful check awakens the sleeper.

MOVE SILENTLY (DEX; ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY)

Check: Your Move Silently check is opposed by the Listen check of anyone who might hear you. You can move up to one-half your normal speed at no penalty. When moving at a speed greater than one-half but less than your full speed, you take a -5 penalty. It is practically impossible (-20 penalty) to move silently while running or charging.

Noisy surfaces, such as bogs or undergrowth, are difficult to move across silently. When you try to sneak across such a surface, you take a penalty on your Move Silently check as indicated below.

Surface	Check Modifier
Noisy (scree, shallow or deep bog, undergrowth, dense rubble)	-2
Very noisy (dense undergrowth, deep snow)	-5

Action: A Move Silently check is included in your movement or other activity, so it is part of another action.

Special: If you have the Stealthy feat, you get a +2 bonus on Move Silently checks.

OPEN LOCK (DEX; TRAINED ONLY)

Attempting an Open Lock check without a set of thieves' tools imposes a -2 circumstance penalty on the check, even if a simple tool is employed. If you use masterwork thieves' tools, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus on the check.

Check: The DC for opening a lock varies from 20 to 40, depending on the quality of the lock, as given on the table below.

Lock	DC	Lock	DC
Very simple lock	10	Good lock	30
Average lock	20	Amazing lock	40

Action: Opening a lock is a full-round action.



Special: If you have the Nimble Fingers feat, you get a +2 bonus on Open Lock checks.

PERFORM (CHA)

Like Craft, Knowledge and Profession, Perform is actually comprised of a number of separate skills.

You may have several Perform skills, each with its own ranks, each purchased as a separate skill.

Each of the nine categories of the Perform skill includes a variety of methods, instruments or techniques, a small list of which is provided for each category below.

- ✱ Act (comedy, drama, mime)
- ✱ Comedy (buffoonery, limericks, joke-telling)
- ✱ Dance (ballet, waltz, jig)
- ✱ Oratory (epic, ode, storytelling)
- ✱ Percussion instruments (bells, chimes, drums, gong)
- ✱ String instruments (fiddle, harp, lute, mandolin)
- ✱ Wind instruments (flute, pan pipes, recorder, shawm, trumpet)
- ✱ Sing (ballad, chant, melody)
- ✱ Ritual (civic ceremony, religion, sorcerous)

Check: You can impress audiences with your talent and skill.

Perform DC	Performance
10	Routine performance. Trying to earn money by playing in public is essentially begging. You can earn 1d4 silver quarters per day.
15	Enjoyable performance. In a prosperous city, you can earn 2d6 silver quarters per day.
20	Great performance. In a prosperous city, you can earn 1d8 silver pieces per day. In time, you may be invited to join a professional troupe and may develop a regional reputation.
25	Memorable performance. In a prosperous city, you can earn 3d6 silver pieces per day. In time, you may come to the attention of noble patrons and develop a national reputation.
30	Extraordinary performance. In a prosperous city, you can earn 6d6 silver pieces per day. In time, you may draw attention from distant potential patrons or even from demons of other worlds.

A masterwork musical instrument gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Perform checks that involve its use.

Perform (ritual): This skill cannot be used to impress an audience, unlike the other Perform skills. Its use is restricted to ceremonial rites and sorcerous gatherings. In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, it is most commonly used in power rituals to increase the might of a sorcerer. See the Sorcery chapter for details.

Action: Trying to earn money by playing in public requires anywhere from an evening's work to a full day's performance.

Try Again: Retries are allowed but they do not negate previous failures. An audience that has been unimpressed in the past is likely to be prejudiced against future performances. Increase the DC by two for each previous failure.

Special: In addition to using the Perform skill, you can entertain people with Sleight of Hand, Tumbling, tightrope walking, gladiatorial combat and feats of bravery.

PROFESSION (WIS; TRAINED ONLY)

Like Craft, Knowledge and Perform, Profession is actually comprised of a number of separate skills. You may have several Profession skills, each with its own ranks, each purchased as a separate skill. While a Craft skill represents ability in creating or making an item, a Profession skill represents an aptitude in a vocation that requires a broader range of less specific knowledge.

Check: You can practice your trade and make a decent living, earning about half your Profession check result in silver pieces per week of dedicated work. You know how to use the tools of your trade, how to perform the profession's daily tasks, how to supervise helpers and how to handle common problems.

Action: A single check generally represents a week of work.

Try Again: An attempt to use a Profession skill to earn an income cannot be retried. You are stuck with whatever weekly wage your check result brings you. Another check may be





made after a week to determine a new income for the next period of time. An attempt to accomplish some specific task can usually be retried.

Untrained: Untrained labourers and assistants (that is, characters without any ranks in Profession) earn an average of half a silver piece per day.

RIDE (DEX)

If you attempt to ride a creature that is ill suited as a mount, you take a -5 penalty on your Ride checks.

Check: Typical riding actions do not require checks. You can saddle, mount, ride and dismount from a mount without a problem.

The following tasks do require checks:

Task	Ride DC	Task	Ride DC
Guide with knees	5	Leap	15
Stay in saddle	5	Spur mount	15
Fight with warhorse	10	Control mount in battle	20
Cover	15	Fast mount or dismount	20 ¹
Soft fall	15		

¹ Armour check penalty applies.

Guide with Knees: You can react instantly to guide your mount with your knees so that you can use both hands in combat. Make your Ride check at the start of your turn. If you fail, you can use only one hand in the round because you need to use the other to control your mount.

Stay in Saddle: You can react instantly to try to avoid falling when your mount rears or bolts unexpectedly or when you take damage. This does not take an action.

Fight with Warhorse: If you direct your war-trained mount to attack in battle, you can still make your own attack or attacks normally. This is a free action.

Cover: You can react instantly to drop down and hang alongside your mount, using it as cover. You cannot

attack or cast spells while using your mount as cover. If you fail your Ride check, you do not get the cover benefit. This does not take an action.

Soft Fall: You can react instantly to try to take no damage when you fall off a mount, such as when it is killed or when it falls. If you fail your Ride check, you take 1d6 points of falling damage. This does not take an action.

Leap: You can get your mount to leap obstacles as part of its movement. Use your Ride modifier or the mount's Jump modifier, whichever is lower, to see how far the creature can jump. If you fail your Ride check, you fall off the mount and take the appropriate falling damage, which is at least 1d6 points, when it leaps. This does not take an action but is part of the mount's movement.

Spur Mount: You can spur your mount to greater speed with a move action. A successful Ride check increases the mount's speed by 10 feet for one round but deals one point of damage to the creature. You can use this ability every round but each consecutive round of additional speed deals twice as much damage to the mount as the previous round: two points, four points, eight points and so on.

Control Mount in Battle: As a move action, you can attempt to control a light horse, workhorse or other mount not trained for combat riding while in battle. If you fail the Ride check, you can do nothing else in that round. You do not need to roll for warhorses.

Fast Mount or Dismount: You can attempt to mount or dismount from a mount of up to one size category larger than yourself as a free action, provided that you still have a move action available that round. If you fail the Ride check, mounting or dismounting is a move action. You cannot use fast mount or dismount on a mount more than one size category larger than yourself.

Action: Mounting or dismounting normally is a move action. Other checks are move actions, free actions or no action at all, as noted above.

Special: If you are riding bareback, you take a -5 penalty on Ride checks.

If your mount has a military saddle you get a +2 circumstance bonus on Ride checks related to staying in the saddle.

The Ride skill is a prerequisite for the feats Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge and Trample.



If you have the Animal Affinity feat, you get a +2 bonus on Ride checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Handle Animal, you get a +2 bonus on Ride checks.

SEARCH (INT)

Check: You must generally be within 10 feet of the object or surface to be searched. The table below gives DCs for typical tasks involving the Search skill.

Task	Search DC
Ransack a chest full of junk to find a certain item	10
Notice a typical secret door or a simple trap	20
Find a difficult non-magical trap (thief only)	21 or higher
Notice a well-hidden secret door	30
Find a footprint	Varies ¹

¹A successful Search check can find a footprint or similar sign of a creature's passage but will not let you find or follow a trail. See the Track feat for the appropriate DC.

Action: It takes a full-round action to search a five foot by five foot area or a volume of goods five feet on a side.

Special: At first level, a borderer gains a +1 circumstance bonus to Search checks when within his favoured terrain.

If you have the Investigator feat, you get a +2 bonus on Search checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Search, you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks to find or follow tracks. If you have five or more ranks in Knowledge (architecture and engineering), you get a +2 bonus on Search checks to find secret doors or hidden compartments.

Restriction: While anyone can use Search to find a trap the DC of which is 20 or lower, only a thief can find traps with higher DCs.

SENSE MOTIVE (WIS)

Check: A successful check lets you avoid being bluffed; see the Bluff skill above. You can also use this skill to determine

when 'something is up' (that is, when something odd is going on) or to assess someone's trustworthiness.

Task	Sense Motive DC
Hunch	20
Sense hypnotism	20
Discern secret message	Varies

Hunch: This use of the skill involves making a gut assessment of a social situation. You may get the feeling from another's behaviour that something is wrong, such as when you are talking to an impostor. Alternatively, you may get the feeling that someone is trustworthy.

Sense Hypnotism: You can tell that someone's behaviour is being influenced by a hypnotism effect (see Sorcery) even if that person is not aware of it.

Discern Secret Message: You may use Sense Motive to detect that a hidden message is being transmitted via the Bluff skill. In this case, your Sense Motive check is opposed by the Bluff check of the character transmitting the message. For each piece of information you are missing relating to the message, take a -2 penalty on your Sense Motive check. If you succeed by four or less, you know that something hidden is being communicated but you cannot learn anything specific about its content. If you beat the DC by five or more, you intercept and understand the message. If you fail by four or less, you do not detect any hidden communication. If you fail by five or more, you infer some false information.

Action: Trying to gain information with Sense Motive generally takes at least one minute. You could spend a whole evening trying to get a sense of the people around you.

Try Again: You may not try this check again, though you may make a Sense Motive check for each Bluff check made against you.

Special: If you have the Negotiator feat, you get a +2 bonus on Sense Motive checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Sense Motive, you get a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks.





SLEIGHT OF HAND (DEX; TRAINED ONLY; ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY)

Check: A DC 10 Sleight of Hand check lets you palm a coin-sized, unattended object. Performing a minor feat of legerdemain, such as making a coin disappear, also has a DC of 10 unless an observer is determined to note where the item went. When you use this skill under close observation, your skill check is opposed by the observer's Spot check. The observer's success does not prevent you from performing the action, just from doing it unnoticed.

You can hide a small object (including a light weapon or an easily concealed ranged weapon, such as a dart or sling) on your body. Your Sleight of Hand check is opposed by the Spot check of anyone observing you or the Search check of anyone frisking you. In the latter case, the searcher gains a +4 bonus on the Search check, since it is generally easier to find such an object than to hide it.

A dagger is easier to hide than most light weapons and grants you a +2 bonus on your Sleight of Hand check to conceal it. An extraordinarily small object, such as a coin, shuriken or ring grants you a +4 bonus on your Sleight of Hand check to conceal it. Heavy or baggy clothing (such as a cloak) grants you a +2 bonus on the check.

Drawing a hidden weapon is a standard action and does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

If you try to take something from another creature, you must make a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to obtain it. The opponent makes a Spot check to detect the attempt, opposed by the same Sleight of Hand check result you achieved when you tried to grab the item. An opponent who succeeds on this check notices the attempt, regardless of whether you got the item.

You can also use Sleight of Hand to entertain an audience as though you were using the Perform skill. In such a case, your 'act' encompasses elements of legerdemain, juggling and the like.

Action: Any Sleight of Hand check is normally a standard action. However, you may perform a Sleight of Hand check as a free action by taking a -20 penalty on the check.

Try Again: You may try this check

again but after an initial failure, a second Sleight of Hand attempt against the same target (or while you are being watched by the same observer who noticed your previous attempt) increases the DC for the task by 10.

Special: If you have the Deft Hands feat, you get a +2 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Bluff, you get a +2 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks.

Untrained: An untrained Sleight of Hand check is simply a Dexterity check. Without actual training, you cannot succeed on any Sleight of Hand check with a DC higher than 10, except for hiding an object on your body.

Sleight of Hand DC	Task
10	Palm a coin-sized object, make a coin disappear
20	Lift a small object from a person

SPOT (WIS)

Check: The Spot skill is used primarily to detect characters or creatures who are hiding. Typically, your Spot check is opposed by the Hide check of the creature trying not to be seen. Sometimes a creature is not intentionally hiding but is still difficult to see, so a successful Spot check is necessary to notice it.

A Spot check result higher than 20 generally lets you become aware of an invisible creature near you, though you cannot actually see it.

Spot is also used to detect someone in disguise (see the Disguise skill) and to read lips when you cannot hear or understand what someone is saying.

Spot checks may be called for to determine the distance at which an encounter begins. A penalty applies on such checks, depending on the distance between the two individuals or groups and an additional penalty may apply if the character making the Spot check is distracted and not concentrating on being observant.

Condition	Penalty
Per 10 feet of distance	-1
Spotter distracted	-5



Read Lips: To understand what someone is saying by reading lips, you must be within 30 feet of the speaker, be able to see him speak and understand the speaker's language. This use of the skill is language-dependent. The base DC is 15 but it increases for complex speech or an inarticulate speaker. You must maintain a line of sight to the lips you are trying to read.

If your Spot check succeeds, you can understand the general content of a minute's worth of speaking but you still usually miss certain details. If the check fails by four or less, you cannot read the speaker's lips. If the check fails by five or more, you draw some incorrect conclusion about the speech. The check is rolled secretly in this case, so that you do not know whether you succeeded or missed by five.

Action: Every time you have a chance to spot something in a reactive manner you can make a Spot check without using an action. Trying to spot something you failed to see previously is a move action. To read lips, you must concentrate for a full minute before making a Spot check and you cannot perform any other action (other than moving at up to half speed) during this minute.

Try Again: You can try to spot something that you failed to see previously at no penalty. You can attempt to read lips once per minute.

Special: A fascinated creature takes a -4 penalty on Spot checks made as reactions.

If you have the Alertness feat, you get a +2 bonus on Spot checks.

SURVIVAL (wis)

Check: You can keep yourself and others safe and fed in the wild. The table overleaf gives the DCs for various tasks that require Survival checks.

Survival does not allow you to follow difficult tracks unless you have the Track feat. See the Restriction section below.

Action: A single Survival check may represent activity over the course of hours or a full day. A Survival check made to find tracks is at least a full-round action and may take even longer.

Try Again: For getting along in the wild or for gaining the Fortitude saving throw bonus noted in the table above, make a Survival check once every 24 hours. The result of that check applies until the next check is made. To avoid getting lost or avoid natural hazards, make a Survival check whenever the situation calls for one.

Retries to avoid getting lost in a specific situation or to avoid a specific natural hazard are not allowed. You can retry a failed check for finding tracks after one hour (outdoors) or 10 minutes (indoors) of searching.

Restriction: While anyone can use Survival to find tracks (regardless of the DC) or to follow tracks when the DC for the task is 10 or lower, only a character with the Track feat can use Survival to follow tracks when the task has a higher DC.

Special: If you have five or more ranks in Survival, you can automatically determine where true north lies in relation to your position.

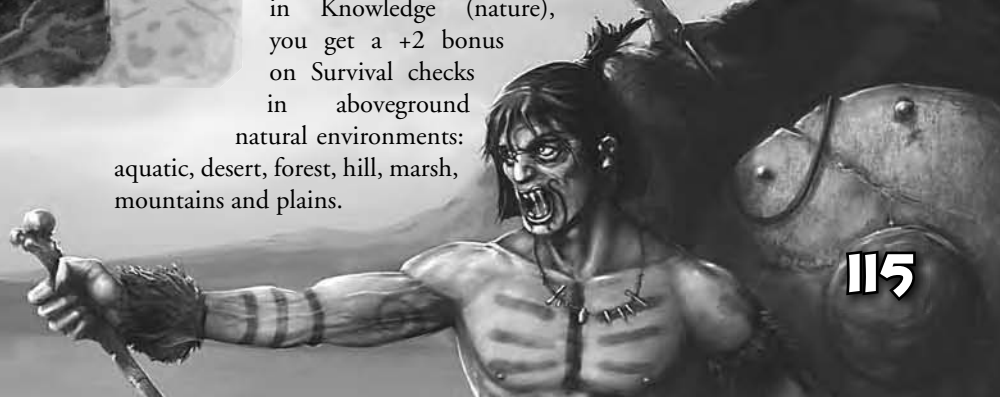
If you have the Self-Sufficient feat, you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Survival, you get a +2 bonus on Knowledge (nature) checks.

If you have five or more ranks in Knowledge (nature), you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks in aboveground

natural environments:

aquatic, desert, forest, hill, marsh, mountains and plains.





If you have five or more ranks in Knowledge (geography), you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks to keep from getting lost or to avoid natural hazards.

If you have five or more ranks in Search, you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks to find or follow tracks.

Survival DC	Task
10	Get along in the wild. Move up to one-half your overland speed while hunting and foraging, thus removing the need for food or water supplies for yourself. You can provide food and water for one other person for every two points by which your check result exceeds 10.
15	Gain a +2 bonus on all Fortitude saving throws against severe weather while moving up to one-half your overland speed or gain a +4 bonus if you remain stationary. You may grant the same bonus to one other character for every point by which your Survival check result exceeds 15.
15	Keep from getting lost or avoid natural hazards, such as quicksand.
15	Predict the weather up to 24 hours in advance. For every five points by which your Survival check result exceeds 15, you can predict the weather for one additional day.
Varies	Follow tracks (see the Track feat).

SWIM (STR; ARMOUR PENALTY)

Check: Make a Swim check once per round while you are in the water. Success means you may swim at up to one-half your speed as a full-round action or at one-quarter your speed as a move action. If you fail by four or less, you make no progress through the water. If you fail by five or more, you go underwater.

If you are underwater, either because you failed a Swim check or because you are swimming underwater intentionally, you must hold your breath. You can hold your breath for a number of rounds equal to your

Then he saw something else: bronze ladders extending from the ledges to the water's surface at regular intervals, and there was one just ahead of him. Instantly he struck out for it, fighting the current that would have held him to the middle of the stream. It dragged at him as with tangible, animate, slimy hands, but he buffeted the rushing surge with the strength of desperation and drew closer and closer inshore, fighting furiously for every inch. Now he was even with the ladder and with a fierce, gasping plunge he gripped the bottom rung and hung on, breathless.

— *Jewels of Gwahlur*

Constitution score but only if you do nothing other than take move actions or free actions. If you take a standard action or a full-round action, such as making an attack, the remainder of the time you can hold your breath is reduced by one round. Effectively, if you are in combat you can hold your breath only half as long as normal. After that period of time, you must make a DC 10 Constitution check every round to continue holding your breath. The DC for that check increases by one each round. If you fail the Constitution check, you begin to drown.

The DC for the Swim check depends on the water, as given on the table below.

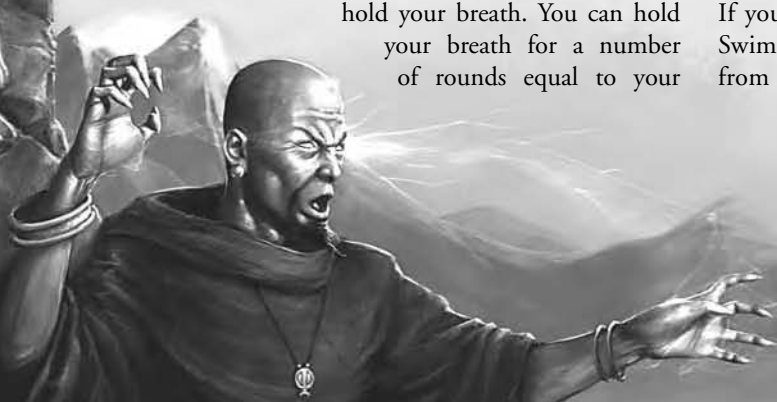
Each hour that you swim, you must make a DC 20 Swim check or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from fatigue.

Action: A successful Swim check allows you to swim one-quarter of your speed as a move action or one-half your speed as a full-round action.

Special: Swim checks are subject to double the normal armour check penalty and encumbrance penalty.

If you have the Athletic feat, you get a +2 bonus on Swim checks.

If you have the Endurance feat, you get a +4 bonus on Swim checks made to avoid taking nonlethal damage from fatigue.



A creature with a swim speed can move through water at its indicated speed without making Swim checks. It gains a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. The creature always can choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered when swimming. Such a creature can use the run action while swimming, provided that it swims in a straight line.

TUMBLE (DEX; TRAINED ONLY; ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY)

You cannot use this skill if your speed has been reduced by armour, excess equipment or loot.

Check: You can land softly when you fall or tumble past opponents. You can also tumble to entertain an audience as though using the Perform skill. The DCs for various tasks involving the Tumble skill are given in the table below.

Tumble DC	Task
15	Treat a fall as if it were 10 feet shorter than it really is when determining damage.
15	Tumble at one-half speed as part of normal movement, provoking no attacks of opportunity while doing so. Failure means you provoke attacks of opportunity normally. Check separately for each opponent you move past, in the order in which you pass them (Player's choice of order in case of a tie). Each additional enemy after the first adds +2 to the Tumble DC.
25	Tumble at one-half speed through an area occupied by an enemy (over, under or around the opponent) as part of normal movement, provoking no attacks of opportunity while doing so. Failure means you stop before entering the enemy-occupied area and provoke an attack of opportunity from that enemy. Check separately for each opponent. Each additional enemy after the first adds +2 to the Tumble DC.

Obstructed or otherwise treacherous surfaces, such as natural cavern floors or undergrowth, are tough to tumble through. The DC for any Tumble check made to tumble on these surfaces is modified as indicated.

Surface Is ...	DC Modifier
Lightly obstructed (scree, light rubble, shallow bog*, undergrowth)	+2
Severely obstructed (natural cavern floor, dense rubble, dense undergrowth)	+5
Lightly slippery (wet floor)	+2
Severely slippery (ice sheet)	+5
Sloped or angled	+2

*Tumbling is impossible in a deep bog.

Accelerated Tumbling: You try to tumble past or through enemies more quickly than normal. By accepting a -10 penalty on your Tumble checks, you can move at your full speed instead of one-half your speed.

Action: Tumbling is part of movement, so a Tumble check is part of a move action.

Try Again: An audience, once it has judged a tumbler as an uninteresting performer, is not receptive to repeat performances. You can try to reduce damage from a fall as an instant reaction only once per fall.

Special: If you have five or more ranks in Tumble, you gain an additional +1 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence when fighting defensively, as well as the usual +2 bonus to Defence.

If you have five or more ranks in Tumble, you gain an additional +2 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence when executing the total defence standard action as well as the usual +4 bonus to Defence.

If you have the Acrobatic feat, you get a +2 bonus on Tumble checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Tumble, you get a +2 bonus on Balance and Jump checks.

If you have five or more ranks in Jump, you get a +2 bonus on Tumble checks.



USE ROPE (DEX)

Check: Most tasks with a rope are relatively simple. The DCs for various tasks utilising this skill are summarised on the table below.

Use Rope DC	Task
10	Tie a firm knot
10*	Secure a grappling hook
15	Tie a special knot, such as one that slips, slides slowly or loosens with a tug
15	Tie a rope around yourself one-handed
15	Splice two ropes together
Varies	Bind a character

* Add two to the DC for every 10 feet the hook is thrown; see below.

Secure a Grappling Hook: Securing a grappling hook requires a Use Rope check, with a DC of 10, +2 for every 10 feet of distance the grappling hook is thrown, to a maximum DC of 20 at 50 feet. Failure by four or less indicates that the hook fails to catch and falls, allowing you to try again. Failure by five or more indicates that the grappling hook initially holds but comes loose after 1d4 rounds of supporting weight. This check is made secretly so you do not know whether the rope will hold your weight.

Bind a Character: When you bind another character with a rope, any Escape Artist check that the bound character makes is opposed by your Use Rope check. You get a +10 bonus on this check because it is easier to bind someone than to escape from bonds. You do not even make your Use Rope check until someone tries to escape.

Action: Throwing a grappling hook is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Tying a knot, tying a special knot or tying a rope around yourself one-handed is a full-round action that provokes an attack of

opportunity. Splicing two ropes together takes five minutes. Binding a character takes one minute.

Special: A silk rope gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Use Rope checks.

If you have the Deft Hands feat, you get a +2 bonus on Use Rope checks.

Synergy: If you have five or more ranks in Use Rope, you get a +2 bonus on Climb checks made to climb a rope, a knotted rope or a rope-and-wall combination.

If you have five or more ranks in Use Rope, you get a +2 bonus on Escape Artist checks when escaping from rope bonds.

If you have five or more ranks in Escape Artist, you get a +2 bonus on checks made to bind someone.





Feats

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, feats are an intrinsic part of the creation and advancement of every player Character and Non-Player Character alike. Feats represent special abilities or enhancements that further distinguish a character from less adventurous individuals of his race. Feats in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* can offer additional bonuses to a character's skills, combat abilities or magical prowess.

All characters within *Conan the Roleplaying Game* will select at least one feat at 1st level and more as they rise in levels. Feat selection is a crucial part of customising each character and care should be taken to choose feats that complement the character's class features, racial traits and other capabilities.

A full list of all feats is given in the Feats Table, along with the prerequisites needed to acquire each feat.

FEAT DESCRIPTIONS

Apart from a brief summary of the feat's function, the key points of each feat are laid out as follows. Not all feat descriptions contain all points:

FEATS

Here is the format for feat descriptions:

FEAT NAME (TYPE OF FEAT)

Prerequisite: A prerequisite is a minimum ability score, another feat or feats, a minimum Base attack bonus, a minimum number of ranks in one or more skills or a class level that a character must have in order to acquire a feat. This entry is absent if a feat has no prerequisite. A feat may have more than one prerequisite.

Benefit: The benefit is what the feat enables the character ('you' in the feat description) to do. If a character has the same feat more than once, its benefits do not stack unless indicated in the description. In general, having a feat twice is the same as having it once.

Normal: 'Normal' refers to what a character who does not have a feat is limited to or restricted from doing. If not having the feat causes no particular drawback, this entry is absent.

Special: 'Special' refers to additional facts about a feat that may be helpful when a player decides whether to acquire the feat.

ACROBATIC (GENERAL)

You have great coordination and control of your movement.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Jump checks and Tumble checks.

AGILE (GENERAL)

Your flexibility is the talk of the town.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Balance checks and Escape Artist checks.

ADEPT (SORCERY)

You have honed your mastery of a sorcery style to the utmost precision and speed.

Prerequisites: Scholar level 12, must know three spells from same sorcery style.

Benefit: Choose a sorcery style in which you know at least three spells. Whenever you cast a spell from that sorcery style, the casting time is halved. An appropriate spell that would usually take one round to cast may be cast as a standard action. An appropriate spell that would usually take a standard action to cast may be cast as a free action but you may still not cast more than one spell per round.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new sorcery style.

FEATS

Feat	Prerequisites	Benefits
Acrobatic	—	+2 bonus on Jump and Tumble checks
Agile	—	+2 bonus on Balance and Escape Artist checks
Akbitanan Smith	Shemite, Craft (weaponsmith) 12 ranks	Create items of Akbitanan quality
Alertness	—	+2 bonus to Listen and Spot checks
Animal Affinity	—	+2 bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks
Armour Proficiency (light)	—	No armour check penalty on attack rolls
Armour Proficiency (medium)	Armour Proficiency (light)	No armour check penalty on attack rolls
Armour Proficiency (heavy)	Armour Proficiency (medium)	No armour check penalty on attack rolls
Athletic	—	+2 bonus on Climb and Swim checks
Blind-Fight ^s	—	Reroll miss chance from concealment
Brawl ^s	—	Inflict more damage with unarmed attacks
Carouser	Constitution 13, character level 5	Resist drunkenness, get social bonuses while drunk
Combat Expertise ^s	Int 13	Reduce attack rolls to add to defence
Improved Disarm ^s	Combat Expertise	+4 bonus on disarm attempts; no attack of opportunity
Improved Feint ^s	Combat Expertise	Feint as a move action
Improved Trip ^s	Combat Expertise	+4 bonus on trip attempts; no attack of opportunity; free attack on tripped foe
Whirlwind Attack ^s	Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, base attack bonus +4	Attack everyone within reach
Combat Reflexes ^s	—	Make additional attacks of opportunity
Web of Death	Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus, base attack bonus +5	Make attacks of opportunity on people who attack you
Dabbler	Int 13, Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks	Minor magical ability
Deceitful	—	+2 bonus on Disguise and Forgery checks
Defensive Martial Arts ^s	Khitan, Vendhyan or Himelian <i>or</i> must have the <i>calm of the adept</i> spell	Bonuses to fighting defensively, trips, overruns and grapples
Deft Hands	—	+2 bonus on Sleight of Hand and Use Rope checks
Demon Killer	Must have single-handedly defeated a monster of any kind, Iron Will	+2 bonus to Terror saves, immune to Terror from defeated monsters
Diligent	—	+2 bonus on Appraise and Decipher Script checks
Dodge ^s	Dex 13, base dodge bonus +1	+1 bonus to Dodge Defence
Archer's Bane ^s	Dodge, base dodge bonus +6	Improve Dodge Defence against ranged attacks
Mobility ^s	Dodge	+4 bonus to Dodge Defence against some attacks of opportunity
Endurance ^s	—	+4 bonus on checks or saves to resist nonlethal damage
Diehard ^s	Endurance	Fight while dying
Exotic Weapon Proficiency*	Base attack bonus +1	Avoid nonproficiency penalty with one weapon
Eyes of the Cat	Spot 1 rank	Gain low-light vision
Fighting-Madness	Cimmerian, Himelian, Wazuli, Kushite, Nordheimr, Pict, Southern Islander, Darfari or Tlazitlan, Con 13, base attack bonus +1	Fight like a berserker
Fleet-Footed ^s	—	+10 feet base movement
Flyby Attack	Fly speed	Attack in the middle of flying move
Great Fortitude	—	+2 bonus on Fortitude saves
Gunderland Pike-and-Shield Fighting ^s	Gunderman, base attack bonus +1, Shield Proficiency, Martial Weapon Proficiency (pike)	Use a shield while fighting with a pike
Improved Critical*	Base attack bonus +8	Double threat range with one weapon
Greater Critical ^{s*}	Improved Critical, base attack bonus +16	Triple threat range with one weapon
Improved Unarmed Strike ^s	—	Make unarmed attacks without penalty
Improved Grapple ^s	Dex 13, Improved Unarmed Strike	+4 bonus on grapple checks
Crushing Grip ^s	Str 17, Improved Grapple, base attack bonus +8	Inflict ability score damage with a grapple
Improved Initiative ^s	—	+4 bonus on initiative checks
Investigator	—	+2 bonus on Gather Information and Search checks
Iron Will	—	+2 bonus on Will saves
Knowledgeable	Int 13	+2 bonus on all Knowledge checks
Leadership	Character level 6	Gain followers
Horde	Cha 13, Leadership, nomad or barbarian level 12	Gain lots of followers
Light-Footed	Hide 1 rank, Move Silently 1 rank, sneak attack +1d6	Bonuses while unarmoured
Lightning Reflexes	—	+2 bonus on Reflex saves
Martial Weapon Proficiency	—	Avoid nonproficiency penalty with one weapon
Mounted Combat ^s	Ride 1 rank	Negate hits on your mount with a Ride check
Mounted Archery ^s	Mounted Combat	Half penalties for firing while mounted
Ride-By Attack ^s	Mounted Combat	Move before and after mounted attack
Spirited Charge ^s	Ride-By Attack	Deal extra damage with a mounted charge
Trample ^s	Mounted Combat	Bonuses to mounted overrun attacks
Multiattack	Three or more natural weapons	Easier to attack with multiple natural weapons
Navigation	Int 13, Profession (sailor) 12 ranks	Never get lost at sea
Negotiator	—	+2 bonus on Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks
Nimble Fingers	—	+2 bonus on Disable Device and Open Lock checks
No Honour	Must not have a code of honour	+3 bonus to Will saves, but easy to corrupt
Parry ^s	Str 13, base parry bonus +1	+1 bonus to Parry Defence
Intricate Swordplay ^s	Weapon Focus, Parry, Combat Expertise, Cha 13	Add Charisma bonus to Parry Defence
Reflexive Parry ^s	Dex 15, Combat Reflexes, Parry, base parry bonus +8	Parry even while flat-footed

Feat	Prerequisites	Benefits
Performer	Cha 13	+2 bonus on all Perform checks
Persuasive	—	+2 bonus on Bluff and Intimidate checks
Pirate Code Expert	Int 13, pirate level 2	Extensive knowledge of pirate codes
Point Blank Shot ^s	—	+1 bonus to attack and damage within 30 feet
Far Shot ^s	Point Blank Shot	Increase range increments on fired and thrown weapons
Precise Shot ^s	Point Blank Shot	No penalties for firing into melee
Improved Precise Shot ^s	Dex 19, Precise Shot, base attack bonus +11	Ignore cover and concealment less than total.
Ranged Finesse ^s	Precise Shot	Make finesse attacks with a ranged weapon
Rapid Shot ^s	Dex 13, Point Blank Shot	One extra ranged attack each round
Shot On The Run ^s	Dex 13, Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, base attack bonus +4	Move before and after ranged attack
Poison Use	Dex 13, base attack bonus +6	Use poison easily
Power Attack ^s	Str 13	Reduce attack rolls to add to damage
Cleave ^s	Power Attack	Free attack when you slay an enemy
Great Cleave ^s	Cleave	Cleave an unlimited number of times per round
Improved Bull Rush ^s	Power Attack	+4 bonus on bull rushes; no attack of opportunity
Improved Overrun ^s	Power Attack	+4 bonus on overruns; opponent cannot avoid you
Improved Sunder ^s	Power Attack	+4 bonus on attack rolls against held objects; no attack of opportunity
Greater Sunder ^s	Improved Sunder, base attack bonus +6	Free attack if you destroy an opponent's weapon
Monster Slayer ^s	Power Attack, base attack bonus +3	More damage while Power Attacking big creatures
Priest	Scholar level 4, scholar background: lay priest, other requirements by religion	Varied benefits when dealing with the faithful
Quick Draw ^s	Base attack bonus +1	Draw a weapon as a free action
Run ^s	—	Move five times normal speed as a full-round action
Self-Sufficient	—	+2 bonus on Heal and Survival checks
Shield Proficiency	—	No armour check penalty on attack rolls
Simple Weapon Proficiency*	—	Avoid nonproficiency penalties
Skill Focus*	—	+3 bonus to checks using a single skill
Sleep Mastery	Wis 13, Con 13	Gain sleep-related benefits
Sneak Subdual	Sneak attack +1d6, base attack bonus +1	Deal nonlethal damage with sneak attacks
Spawn of Dagoth Hill	Kothian or Zamorian, 1 st level only	Become inhuman
Stealthy	—	+2 bonus to Hide and Move Silently
Armoured Stealth	Dex 13, Hide 4 ranks, Move Silently 1 rank, Armour Proficiency (Light), Stealthy	Avoid light armour check penalties to stealth
Steely Gaze ^s	Intimidate 8 ranks, Cha 13	Demoralise opponents as a free action
Menacing Aura ^s	Cha 15, Intimidate 16 ranks, Steely Gaze	—
Striking Cobra ^s	Dex 15, Cha 13, Bluff 6 ranks, base attack bonus +6	Gain a surprise round all to yourself
Stunning Attack ^s	Dex 13, Str 13, base attack bonus +8	Stun opponent with attack
Superior Armourer	Aquilonian, Kothian, Hyrkanian/Turanian or Zingaran, Craft (armourer) 12 ranks	Create superior quality armour
Toughness ^s	—	Gain bonus hit points
Track	—	Follow tracks with the Survival skill
Two-Weapon Combat	Base attack bonus +1	Fight with a weapon in each hand
Improved Two-Weapon Combat ^s	Two-Weapon Combat, base attack bonus +6	Fight better with a weapon in each hand
Two-Weapon Defence ^s	Parry, Two-Weapon Combat	Trade off-hand attacks for bonus to Parry Defence
Weapon Focus ^s	Base attack bonus +1	+1 bonus to attack rolls with one weapon
Weapon Specialisation* ^s	Weapon Focus, soldier level 4	+2 bonus to damage rolls with one weapon
Greater Weapon Focus* ^s	Weapon Focus, soldier level 8	Further +1 bonus to attack rolls with one weapon
Greater Weapon Specialisation* ^s	Weapon Specialisation, Weapon Focus, Greater Weapon Focus, soldier level 12	Further +2 bonus to damage rolls with one weapon
Zingaran Surprise ^s	Zingaran, base attack bonus +4, sneak attack +3d6	Bypass Uncanny Dodge more easily
Sorcery Feats		
Adept*	Scholar level 12+, must know three spells from one sorcery style	Halve casting time for one style
Focused Magical Link	Hexer, magic attack bonus +3, Craft (fine art, sculpture, or similar) 1 rank	Create magical links to your victims
Hexer	Magic attack bonus +1, Sorcery Style: Curses	+2 bonus to magic attack rolls with the Curses style
Ritual Sacrifice	Magic attack bonus +1, base attack bonus +1	Gain power points from killing victims
Opportunistic Sacrifice	Magic attack bonus +3, base attack bonus +3, Base PP 4, Ritual Sacrifice	Gain sacrifice benefits from anyone you kill
Tortured Sacrifice	Ritual Sacrifice, magic attack bonus +2, base attack bonus +2	Gain extra power points by prolonging death
Sorcerer's Boon*	Int 13, Scholar level 4, must know two or more sorcery styles	Gain an advanced spell
Summoner	Magic attack bonus +1, Sorcery Style: Summoning	+2 bonus to magic attack rolls
Augment Summoning	Summoner, magic attack bonus +4	Summoned creatures gain +4 to Strength and Constitution

* A character may gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack and instead apply to a new weapon or skill.

^s A soldier may select this feat as one of his soldier bonus feats.



AKBITANAN SMITH (GENERAL)

You have been trained in the fabled smithcraft of Akbitan.
Prerequisites: Must be a Shemite, Craft (weaponsmith) 12 ranks.

Benefit: You may create weapons of Akbitanan quality, though this takes significantly longer than usual due to their very high cost. Creating a weapon of Akbitanan quality follows the usual rules for the Craft skill (see page 96).

Special: You will require a source of Akbitanan (or similarly high quality) steel to perform your craft. Furthermore, if you manufacture Akbitanan quality weapons outside Akbitan itself, you are likely to incur the enmity of the smiths of the city.

ALERTNESS (GENERAL)

You are rarely caught off guard.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Listen and Spot checks.

ANIMAL AFFINITY (GENERAL)

You have a knack for dealing with animals.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Handle Animal and Ride checks.

ARCHER'S BANE (GENERAL)

You are expert at dodging arrows and other ranged weapons, particularly those hurled or shot great distances, taking advantage of the missile's flight time to ensure you are not in its path.

Prerequisites: Dodge, base dodge bonus +6.

Benefit: You gain a +1 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence against all ranged weapons for each range increment through which the weapon must be shot or thrown to reach you. This dodge bonus is doubled if you are fighting defensively or executing the total defence standard action.

ARMOUR PROFICIENCY (HEAVY) (GENERAL)

You know how to wear and move in plate, scale and the other heavy armours.

Prerequisite: Armour Proficiency (medium).

Benefit: See Armour Proficiency (light).

Normal: See Armour Proficiency (light).

ARMOUR PROFICIENCY (LIGHT) (GENERAL)

You know how to best wear and move in light armour.

Benefit: When you wear a type of armour with which you are proficient, the armour check penalty for that armour applies only to Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble checks.

Normal: A character who is wearing armour with which he is not proficient applies its armour check penalty to attack rolls and to all skill checks that involve moving, including Ride.

ARMOUR PROFICIENCY (MEDIUM) (GENERAL)

You know how best to wear brigandine and other medium armour.

Prerequisite: Armour Proficiency (light).

Benefit: See Armour Proficiency (light).

Normal: See Armour Proficiency (light).

ARMoured STEALTH (GENERAL)

Even in armour, your tread makes no more sound than that of a panther. This is accomplished through a mixture of native sneakiness and cunningly padding, oiling and blackening your armour.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Hide 4 ranks, Move Silently 1 rank, Armour Proficiency (Light), Stealthy.

Benefit: Whenever you are wearing light armour that you have personally prepared, you do not apply its armour check penalty (if any) to Move Silently or Hide checks. To prepare light armour for stealth initially requires one hour and materials worth 5 sp, then ten minutes per day in maintenance time.

ATHLETIC (GENERAL)

You have a natural talent for athletics.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Climb and Swim checks.

AUGMENT SUMMONING (SORCERY)

The creatures you summon are especially strong and tough.

Prerequisites: Summoner, magic attack bonus +4.



Benefit: Each creature you conjure with any spell from the Summoning sorcery style gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength and Constitution for the duration of the spell that summoned it.

BLIND-FIGHT (GENERAL)

You know how to fight when you are unable to see.

Benefit: In melee, if you miss because of concealment, you can reroll your miss chance once to see if you actually hit. An invisible attacker gets no advantages related to hitting you in melee. That is, you can still dodge or parry your assailant and he does not get the usual +2 bonus to melee attack rolls for being invisible. The invisible attacker's bonuses do still apply for ranged attacks, however. You take only half the usual penalty to speed for being unable to see. Darkness and poor visibility in general reduces your speed to three-quarters of normal, instead of one-half.

Normal: Regular attack roll modifiers for invisible attackers trying to hit you apply and you cannot dodge or parry your attacker. The speed reduction for darkness and poor visibility also applies.

BRAWL (GENERAL)

'Will you mock me and then lay hands on me?' grated the barbarian, his quick rage leaping up; and he returned the push with an open-handed blow that knocked his tormentor back against the rude-hewn table.

— *The Tower of the Elephant*

You are an expert brawler or martial artist, often knocking out or even killing an opponent with a single punch.

Benefit: You deal 1d6 + Strength modifier points of damage with an unarmed strike. You may elect to inflict either lethal or nonlethal damage with no penalty.

Normal: Without this feat, a character deals only 1d3 points of nonlethal damage with an unarmed strike.

CAROUSER (GENERAL)

You can drink others under the table and are never too drunk to fight.

Prerequisites: Constitution 13, character level 5.

Benefit: You suffer no penalties for drunkenness, however much alcohol you drink. Furthermore, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all Bluff and Gather Information checks related to your drinking companions after at least two hours of heavy drinking. In addition,

after a night of wenching, drinking or other partying, you heal normally as though you had had a full night's rest.

Normal: Drunk characters have at least a –2 penalty to attack rolls and Defence.

Special: Note that this feat does not assist with resisting drugs other than alcohol, including lotus-based preparations of any kind such as Black Lotus Wine (see page 275).

CLEAVE (GENERAL)

You know how to follow up a mighty blow.

Prerequisite: Power Attack.

Benefit: If you deal a creature enough damage to take it out of the fight, typically by dropping it to below zero hit points or killing it, you get an immediate, extra melee attack against another creature within reach. You cannot take a five foot step before making this extra attack. The extra attack must be with the same weapon and is at the same bonus as the attack that dropped the previous creature. You can use this ability once per round.

COMBAT EXPERTISE (GENERAL)

You are an expert at fighting cautiously so as to minimise the risk of being hit.

Prerequisite: Int 13.

Benefit: When you use the attack action or full attack action in melee, you can take a penalty of as much as –5 on your attack and add the same number (up to +5) to your Defence. This number may not exceed your base attack bonus. The changes to attack rolls and Defence last until your next action.

Special: If you use combat expertise while fighting defensively, the bonuses are cumulative.

COMBAT REFLEXES (GENERAL)

You are skilled at taking advantage of your opponent's mistakes.

Benefit: You may make a number of additional attacks of opportunity equal to your Dexterity bonus. This feat also allows you to make attacks of opportunity while flat-footed.

Normal: A character without this feat can make only one attack of opportunity per round and cannot make attacks of opportunity while flat-footed.

Special: The Combat Reflexes feat does not allow a thief who has the opportunist special ability to use it more than once per round.



CRUSHING GRIP (GENERAL)

The mighty thews of your hand and arm can crush a man's limb or neck in moments if you can get a grip on him.

Prerequisites: Str 17, Improved Grapple, base attack bonus +8.

Benefit: If you manage to grapple an opponent and inflict damage on him, you may choose to inflict some or all of the rolled damage as damage to his Constitution, Dexterity or Strength, at your choice. He gets a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + your Strength bonus + ½ your Base attack bonus) for half damage. Crushing Grip may be continued from round to round, so long as you are grappling your opponent and inflicting damage upon him.

DABBLER (GENERAL)

Though you might not be a formally trained sorcerer, you have learned a little magic here and there, enough to perhaps get you out of a tight spot or two – if it works.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks.

Benefit: Choose a sorcery style from the following: Counterspells, Curses or Divination. Up to once during any given month, you may make a Knowledge (arcana) check to recall a small amount of sorcerous lore that could prove useful to your current situation. You do not have a true, permanent understanding of the style you access in this way but you are able to remember just enough to attempt to use the sorcery in question. You need not meet any prerequisites for the style except those that require a certain number of ranks in a particular skill. If your skill check beats DC 15, the Games Master will select an appropriate sorcerous effect from among the basic spells to which you are granted temporary access – enough to cast once and once only. The effect will be something useful to your situation, though in most cases it will not be sufficient to completely defeat your opposition on its own. If your Knowledge (arcana) check beats DC 25, the sorcerous effect may be drawn from the advanced spells of a style you dabble in. You may also spend a Fate Point to cast a spell using this feat. If you do so, you do not need to make a Knowledge (arcana) check – the spell may be basic or advanced – and this does not count towards your limit of one spell per month.

Special: You expend Power Points to cast the spell as usual. If you do not already have any Power Points when you select this feat, you immediately acquire Base Power Points of 2 + Wisdom modifier.

DECEITFUL (GENERAL)

You live a life of underhanded dealings and deceit.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Disguise and Forgery checks.

DEFENSIVE MARTIAL ARTS (GENERAL)

You have been trained to avoid blows and other attacks directed at you in battle.

Prerequisites: Must be Khitan, Vendhyan or Himelian *or* must have the *calm of the adept* spell (see page 262).

Benefit: You gain an additional +2 bonus to Defence when fighting defensively or using the total defence action. This grants you a total of +4 bonus to Defence when fighting defensively and a total of +6 bonus to Defence when using the total defence action. Furthermore, you gain a +2 bonus to opposed Strength and Dexterity checks any time you make trip, overrun or grapple attacks or when you try to avoid trips, overruns and grapples made against you.

Normal: A character using the total defence action without this feat gains a +2 bonus to Defence when fighting defensively and a +4 bonus to Defence when using the total defence action.

DEFT HANDS (GENERAL)

Your hands are naturally dextrous.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Sleight of Hand and Use Rope checks.

DEMON KILLER (GENERAL)

You have hardened yourself to supernatural terrors.

Prerequisites: Iron Will, must have single-handedly defeated a monster of any kind. Not available to Southern Islanders or Tlazitlans.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Will saves versus Terror. Each time that you defeat a new monster, you become immune to the Terror effect of that creature and others like it. You are immune to any fear effects used by a creature of a type you have slain.

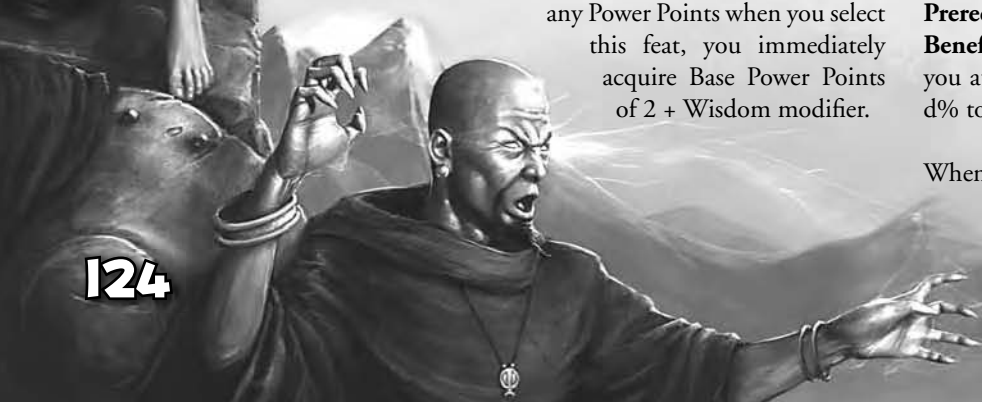
DIEHARD (GENERAL)

You can endure wounds that would drop another man.

Prerequisite: Endurance.

Benefit: When reduced to between –1 and –9 hit points, you automatically become stable. You do not have to roll d% to see if you lose one Hit Point each round.

When reduced to negative hit points, you may choose to act as if you are disabled, rather than dying.





You must make this decision as soon as you are reduced to negative hit points, even if it is not your turn. If you do not choose to act as if you are disabled, you immediately fall unconscious.

When using this feat, you can take either a single move or standard action each turn but not both. You cannot take a full round action. You can take a move action without further injuring yourself, though if you perform any standard action (or any other action deemed as strenuous, including some free actions) you take one point of damage after completing the act. If you reach -10 hit points, you die.

Normal: A character without this feat that is reduced to between -1 and -9 hit points is unconscious and dying.

DILIGENT (GENERAL)

You are skilled at evaluating objects and writing.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Appraise and Decipher Script checks.

DODGE (GENERAL)

You are very nimble on your feet, ducking and weaving in and out of combat to avoid your enemies' attacks.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, base dodge bonus +1.

Benefit: You gain a +1 dodge bonus to your Dodge Defence.

ENDURANCE (GENERAL)

You have incredible stamina.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on the following checks and saving throws: Swim checks made to resist nonlethal damage, Constitution checks made to continue running, Constitution checks made to avoid nonlethal damage from a forced march, Constitution checks made to hold your breath, Constitution checks made to avoid nonlethal damage from starvation or thirst, Fortitude saving throws made to avoid nonlethal damage from hot or cold environments and Fortitude saving throws made to resist damage from suffocation. In addition, you may sleep in light or medium armour without becoming fatigued.

Normal: A character without this feat who sleeps in medium or heavier armour is automatically fatigued the next day.

EXOTIC WEAPON PROFICIENCY (GENERAL)

You have learned how to use one of the more unusual weapons of the Hyborian age.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: Pick a single exotic weapon. You may make attack rolls with that weapon without a nonproficiency penalty.

Normal: A character who uses a weapon with which he is not proficient takes a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain Exotic Weapon Proficiency multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new type of exotic weapon.

EYES OF THE CAT (GENERAL)

You see more clearly in the dark than many men can in full daylight.

Prerequisites: Spot 1 rank, may only be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You gain low-light vision. That is, you can see twice as far as ordinary humans by starlight, moonlight, torchlight or other conditions of poor illumination. You can even distinguish colour and detail under these low-light conditions.





FAR SHOT (GENERAL)

You are skilled in shooting at very long ranges.

Prerequisite: Point Blank Shot.

Benefit: When you use a projectile weapon, such as a bow, its range increment increases by one-half (multiply by 1.5). When you use a thrown weapon, its range increment doubles.

Special: A Hyrkanian or Turanian need not have the Point Blank Shot feat before selecting this feat.

FIGHTING-MADNESS (GENERAL)

You can enter a powerful, enraged state.

Prerequisites: Must be a Cimmerian, Himelian Tribesman, Wazuli, Kushite, Nordheimr, Pict, Southern Islander, Darfari or Tlazitlan, Con 13, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: Up to once per day, you can enter a fighting-madness as a free action. You temporarily gain +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution and a +2 morale bonus on Will saving throws but suffer a -2 penalty to Defence. While in a fighting-madness, you cannot use skills or abilities that require patience and concentration, including sneak attacks and finesse fighting. You can use any feat you might have except for Combat Expertise, sorcery feats and Skill Focus, if the latter is tied to a skill that requires patience or concentration. A fighting-madness lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + your newly improved Constitution bonus. The increase in Constitution grants additional hit points but these hit points go away when the fighting-madness ends, possibly killing the warrior! You may voluntarily end the fighting-madness at any time. You may not enter a fighting-madness if you are under the effect of the barbarian class feature Crimson Mist and vice versa.

FLEET-FOOTED (GENERAL)

You are fast on your feet.

Benefit: You gain an enhancement bonus of +10 feet to your speed when wearing light or no armour (and not carrying a heavy load) or an enhancement bonus of +5 feet to your speed when wearing medium or heavy armour.

Special: You can select this feat more than once, up to a maximum of three times. Its benefits stack.

FLYBY ATTACK (GENERAL)

This feat allows a creature to hit as it flies past.

Prerequisite: Fly speed.

Benefit: When flying, you can take a move action (including a dive) and another standard action at any point during the move. You cannot take a second move action during a round when you make a flyby attack.

Normal: Without this feat, the creature takes a standard action either before or after its move.

FOCUSED MAGICAL LINK (SORCERY)

You are capable of creating a 'voodoo doll' or similar focus so as to break down a target's resistance to your curses.

Prerequisites: Craft (fine art, sculpture or similar) 1 rank, Hexer, magic attack bonus +3.

Benefit: You may enhance your magical link (see page 237) by crafting a representation of your victim, such as a doll or a painting, then adding additional connections to the victim. You take one full day, with a raw materials cost of 10 silver pieces, after which you may make an appropriate Craft check and refer to the table below to determine the result.

Craft Check Result	Bonus To Magical Attack Rolls
14 or less	No bonus; all materials used are wasted (lost), including any magical links
15–24	+1
25–34	+2
35–44	+3
And so on	And so on

Furthermore, for each additional object you incorporate into the representation, up to a maximum of four, the enhancement bonus increases by +1. Each object must be one that by itself could be used as a magical link to the victim.

GREAT CLEAVE (GENERAL)

Your blows are the stuff of legends.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Cleave, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: This feat works as Cleave, except there is no limit to the number of times you can use it per round.



GREATER CRITICAL (GENERAL)

Select one weapon that you have already applied the Improved Critical feat to. You have learned to wield that weapon with such skill as to inflict devastating amounts of damage on a regular basis.

Prerequisites: Improved Critical, base attack bonus +16.

Benefit: When using the weapon you selected, your threat range is tripled. This supersedes the doubling provided by the Improved Critical feat.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon. A character who has seven or more levels of the barbarian class may not select this feat. If a character with this feat ever gains seven or more levels in the barbarian class, he immediately and permanently loses this feat.

GREAT FORTITUDE (GENERAL)

You are harder than most other people of your race.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Fortitude saving throws.

GREATER SUNDER (GENERAL)

As a follow-up to sundering an opponent's weapon, you can make an immediate attack on him.

Prerequisites: Improved Sunder, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: If you completely destroy an opponent's weapon in melee combat, you immediately get a melee attack against that opponent as if you had not used that attack to sunder the weapon.

GREATER WEAPON FOCUS (GENERAL)

Choose one type of weapon for which you have already selected Weapon Focus. You are extraordinarily skilled with this weapon.

Prerequisites: Weapon Focus, soldier level 8.

Benefit: You add +1 to all attack rolls you make using the selected weapon. This bonus stacks with other bonuses to attack rolls, including the bonus granted by the Weapon Focus feat.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon. A character who has seven or more levels of the barbarian class may not select this feat. If a character with this feat ever gains seven or more levels in the barbarian class, he immediately and permanently loses this feat.

GREATER WEAPON SPECIALISATION (GENERAL)

Choose one type of weapon for which you have already selected Weapon Specialisation and Greater Weapon Focus. You are supremely good at inflicting damage with this weapon.

Prerequisites: Weapon Specialisation, Greater Weapon Focus, soldier level 12.

Benefit: You add +2 to all damage dealt by the weapon with which you have specialised. This bonus stacks with other damage bonuses, including the bonus granted by the Weapon Specialisation feat.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon. A character who has seven or more levels of the barbarian class may not select this feat. If a character with this feat ever gains seven or more levels in the barbarian class, he immediately and permanently loses this feat.

GUNDERLAND PIKE-AND-SHIELD FIGHTING (GENERAL)

You have trained in Gunderland's pike-and-shield techniques, learning to control your shield with just a few movements of your body and arm while both your hands grip the pike.

Prerequisites: Gunderman, Martial Weapon Proficiency (pike), Shield Proficiency, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: You may wield a large shield and pike simultaneously, without penalty to the use of the pike. The large shield only grants a +3 shield bonus to Parry Defence rather than the usual +4. The shield confers its full +4 shield bonus to your Dodge Defence when dodging ranged attacks.

Normal: A large shield can be strapped to the back or shoulder to allow for use of a two-handed weapon but the bonus to Parry Defence is reduced to +0 and the shield bonus to Dodge Defence against ranged attacks is reduced to +2.

Special: The Games Master may permit a non-Gunderman to select this feat if he trains and fights in a Gunderland pike regiment.



HEXER (SORCERY)

You are particularly adept at cursing your opponents.

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +1, Sorcery Style: Curses.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to your magic attack roll whenever you cast a spell from the Curses sorcery style.

HORDE (GENERAL)

"I came into Ghulistan to raise a horde and plunder the kingdoms to the south – your own among them. Being a chief of the Afghulis was only a start. If I can conciliate them, I'll have a dozen tribes following me within a year. But if I can't I'll ride back to the steppes and loot the Turanian borders with the kozaki."

– The People of the Black Circle

In addition to your own followers, you can call upon a great horde of allied tribes, clans or nomad bands to assist you with your dreams of raiding or conquest – so long as they are assured there will be plenty of plunder for all involved and so long as your leadership is strong and successful.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Leadership, nomad level 12 or barbarian level 12.

Benefit: You may assemble a horde of barbarians or nomads in addition to the followers granted by your Leadership feat. You must publicise your planned cause by sending out messengers to a number of tribes, at a cost per month of one week of your time and 100 gold lunas in gifts and other expense. If you do so, you will gain a number of additional followers each month equal to the followers gained solely from your Leadership feat. These additional followers have less loyalty to you than do your personal followers but will follow you for as long as your horde is successful in battles and raids. You must feed the horde and provide it with plenty of opportunities for plunder or it will disperse.

Furthermore, there is a straight 20% chance per month that a rival leader of 1d3 levels lower than you will challenge your leadership, usually in an informal duel.

If you lose this challenge, the majority of the horde goes off with its new leader, leaving you with only your original followers. If you lose your horde by inactivity or challenge, you may not attempt to call another horde for at least three months.

Special: A character with levels in both the barbarian and nomad classes may combine the two class levels together for purposes of qualifying for this feat, so an 8th level barbarian/4th level nomad would qualify, for example.

IMPROVED BULL RUSH (GENERAL)

You rarely slip when pushing an enemy before you.

Prerequisite: Power Attack.

Benefit: When you perform a bull rush you do not provoke an attack of opportunity from the defender. You also gain a +4 bonus on the opposed Strength check you make to push back the defender.

IMPROVED CRITICAL (GENERAL)

Select one type of weapon that you are proficient with. You have learned to wield that weapon with such skill as to inflict devastating quantities of damage very frequently.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +8.

Benefit: When using the weapon you selected, your threat range is doubled.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon. A character who has seven or more levels of the barbarian class may not select this feat. If a character with this feat ever gains seven or more levels in the barbarian class, he immediately and permanently loses this feat.

IMPROVED DISARM (GENERAL)

You are skilled at sending your opponent's weapon flying.

Prerequisite: Combat Expertise.

Benefit: You do not provoke an attack of opportunity when you attempt to disarm an opponent, nor does the opponent have a chance to disarm you. You also gain a +4 bonus on the opposed attack roll you make to disarm your opponent.

Normal: See the normal disarm rules (page 206).

IMPROVED FEINT (GENERAL)

You make a tricky opponent for anyone.

Prerequisite: Combat Expertise.

Benefit: You can feint in combat as a move action.

Normal: Feinting in combat is a standard action (see page 207).



IMPROVED GRAPPLE (GENERAL)

You have a knack for grabbing and keeping hold of your opponents.

Prerequisite: Dex 13, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Benefit: You do not provoke an attack of opportunity when you make a touch attack to start a grapple. You also gain a +4 bonus on all grapple checks, regardless of whether you started the grapple.

Normal: Without this feat, you provoke an attack of opportunity when you make a touch attack to start a grapple.

IMPROVED INITIATIVE (GENERAL)

You are fast to react to any threat.

Benefit: You get a +4 bonus on initiative checks.

IMPROVED OVERRUN (GENERAL)

You barrel over your opponents with ease.

Prerequisite: Power Attack.

Benefit: When you attempt to overrun an opponent, the target may not choose to avoid you. You also gain a +4 bonus on your Strength check to knock down your opponent.

Normal: Without this feat, the target of an overrun can choose to avoid you or block you.

IMPROVED PRECISE SHOT (GENERAL)

You can put your shots exactly where you want them.

Prerequisites: Dex 19, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, base attack bonus +11.

Benefit: Your ranged attacks ignore the bonus to Defence granted to targets by anything less than total cover. It also ignores the miss chance granted to targets by anything less than total concealment. Total cover and total concealment provide their normal benefits against your ranged attacks. In addition, when you shoot or throw ranged weapons at a grappling opponent you automatically strike at the opponent you have chosen.

Normal: See the normal rules on the effects of cover and concealment on pages 196–197. Without this feat, a character who shoots or throws a ranged weapon at a target involved in a grapple must roll randomly to see which grappling combatant the attack strikes.

IMPROVED SUNDER (GENERAL)

You are skilled at hitting weapons, shields or anything held in your opponent's hands.



Prerequisite: Power Attack.

Benefit: When you strike at an object held or carried by an opponent (such as a weapon or shield) you do not provoke an attack of opportunity. You also gain a +4 bonus on any attack roll made to attack an object held or carried by another character.

Normal: Without this feat, you provoke an attack of opportunity when you strike at an object held or carried by another character.

IMPROVED TRIP (GENERAL)

You know how to knock your opponents down and hit them while they are there.

Prerequisite: Combat Expertise.

Benefit: You do not provoke an attack of opportunity when you attempt to trip an opponent while you are unarmed. You also gain a +4 bonus on your Strength check to trip your opponent. If you trip an opponent in melee combat, you immediately get a melee attack against that opponent as if you had not used that attack for the trip attempt.





Normal: Without this feat, you provoke an attack of opportunity when you attempt to trip an opponent while you are unarmed.

IMPROVED TWO-WEAPON COMBAT (GENERAL)

You are an expert at fighting with a weapon in each hand.



Prerequisites: Two-Weapon Combat, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: When you fight with two weapons and take a full attack action, you may make a second attack with the off-hand weapon, albeit at a -5 penalty. For every five points of base attack bonus you have above +6, you may make one additional attack with your off-hand weapon when taking a full attack action, to a maximum of four attacks at a Base attack bonus of +16. However, for each attack after the first, the attack bonus is reduced by a further -5 penalty. For example, a 20th level soldier with base attacks of +20/+15/+10/+5 who is wielding an arming sword and poniard may make attacks with the arming sword at a base of +20/+15/+10/+5 and with the poniard at a base of +20/+15/+10/+5.

Normal: A character wielding a weapon in each hand may only make one attack per round with the off-hand weapon.

IMPROVED UNARMED STRIKE (GENERAL)

You are skilled at fighting without weapons.

Benefit: You are considered to be armed even when you are unarmed; that is, you do not provoke attacks of opportunity from armed opponents when you attack them while unarmed and you may make attacks of opportunity as if you have a weapon in hand. In addition, your unarmed strikes can deal lethal or nonlethal damage, at your option. You may also parry attacks without penalty when you do not have a weapon, shield or other object in your hands.

Normal: Without this feat, you are considered unarmed when attacking with an unarmed strike and you can deal only nonlethal damage with such an attack. You suffer a -4 penalty to Parry Defence when parrying unarmed.

INTRICATE SWORDPLAY (GENERAL)

You have been trained in the flashy, Western style of swordplay, perhaps at one of the great fencing schools of Zingara or Aquilonia.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Weapon Focus (broadsword or arming sword), Parry, Combat Expertise.

Benefit: Whenever you have a broadsword or arming sword in one hand and are wearing no heavier than medium armour, you may add your Charisma bonus as a parry bonus to your Parry Defence.

Special: A character who has seven or more levels of the barbarian class may not select this feat. If a character with this feat ever gains seven or more levels in the barbarian class, he immediately and permanently loses this feat.

INVESTIGATOR (GENERAL)

You look past the obvious to see what is really going on.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Gather Information and Search checks.

IRON WILL (GENERAL)

You have a formidable sense of self-control.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Will saving throws.

KNOWLEDGEABLE (GENERAL)

You are a natural scholar.

Prerequisite: Int 13.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Knowledge checks.



LEADERSHIP (GENERAL)

Your powerful leadership qualities enable you to draw a band of loyal followers to your side.

Prerequisite: Character level 6th.

Benefits: Having this feat enables a character to attract loyal companions and devoted followers to assist him. You gain a single cohort – a ‘sidekick’ close to your ability – and a variable number of lesser followers according to the table below. Your base Leadership score is equal to your character level + your Charisma modifier.

Leadership Modifiers: Several factors can affect a character’s Leadership score, causing it to vary from the base score. The noble class feature Enhanced Leadership gives a bonus to a character’s Leadership score. A character’s Reputation modifier to skill checks (see page 85) applies to his Leadership score for cohorts only. Other forms of reputation affect the Leadership score as shown on the table below.

Leader’s Reputation	Modifier
Great renown	+2
Fairness and generosity	+1
Special power	+1
Failure	–1
Aloofness	–1
Cruelty	–2



Other modifiers apply to attracting followers only:

The Leader...	Modifier
Has a stronghold, base of operations, temple, or the like	+2
Has the Priest feat	+1
Is a king, shah, or other supreme rank in a nation	+4*
Moves around a lot	–1
Caused the death of other followers	–1

*A king will doubtless have other armies under his command as well as his own followers; however, the only forces he can trust implicitly are those he gains directly through the Leadership feat.

Leadership Score	Cohort Level	Number of Followers by Level					
		1st	2 nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1 or lower	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	1 st	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	1 st	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	2 nd	1	—	—	—	—	—
5	2 nd	2	—	—	—	—	—
6	3 rd	3	—	—	—	—	—
7	3 rd	5	—	—	—	—	—
8	4 th	8	—	—	—	—	—
9	4 th	12	—	—	—	—	—
10	5 th	18	—	—	—	—	—
11	5 th	25	—	—	—	—	—
12	6 th	32	1	—	—	—	—
13	6 th	40	1	—	—	—	—
14	7 th	50	2	1	—	—	—
15	7 th	60	2	1	—	—	—
16	8 th	70	3	1	—	—	—
17	8 th	85	3	1	—	—	—
18	9 th	100	4	2	1	—	—
19	9 th	120	5	2	1	—	—
20	10 th	150	6	3	1	—	—
21	10 th	200	8	3	1	—	—
22	11 th	250	10	4	2	1	—
23	11 th	300	12	4	2	1	—
24	12 th	350	14	5	2	1	—
25	12 th	400	16	5	2	1	—
26	13 th	500	20	6	3	1	—
27	13 th	600	24	6	3	1	—
28	14 th	800	32	8	4	2	1
29	14 th	1000	40	10	4	2	1
30	15 th	1250	50	13	5	2	1
31	15 th	1500	60	15	5	2	1
32	16 th	2000	80	20	6	3	1
33	16 th	2500	100	25	7	3	1
34	17 th	3000	120	30	8	4	2
35 or higher	17 th	4000	160	40	10	4	2

Cohorts have different priorities. When the character tries to attract a cohort, use any of the following modifiers that apply.

The Leader...	Modifier
Has a <i>demonic pact</i>	–2*
Has a code of honour different from that of the cohort	–1
Has no code of honour, but the cohort does (or vice versa)	–2
Caused the death of a cohort	–2**

* This penalty only applies if the cohort fears and mistrusts those allied with demons.

** Cumulative per cohort killed.





Leadership Score: A character's base Leadership score equals his level plus any Charisma modifier he has. In order to take into account negative Charisma modifiers, this table allows for very low Leadership scores but the character must still be 6th level or higher in order to gain the Leadership feat. Outside factors can affect a character's Leadership score, as detailed above.

Cohort Level: The character can attract a cohort of up to this level. Regardless of a character's Leadership score, he can only recruit a cohort who is two or more levels lower than himself. A character can try to attract a cohort of a particular race, class and code of honour.

Cohorts earn XP as follows:

The cohort does not count as a party member when determining the party's XP.

Divide the cohort's level by the level of the character who attracted him with the Leadership feat.

Multiply this result by the total XP awarded to this character and add that number of Experience Points to the cohort's total.

If a cohort gains enough XP to bring it to a level one lower than the associated character's level, the cohort does not gain the new level; its new XP total is one fewer than the amount needed to attain the next level.

Number of Followers by Level: The character can lead up to the indicated number of characters of each level. Followers are similar to cohorts, except they are generally low-level Non-player Characters. As they are usually five or more levels behind the character they follow, they are not as effective in one-on-one combat as the player Characters but can be a formidable force for waging large-scale war.

Followers do not earn experience and thus do not gain levels. However, when a character with Leadership attains a new level, the player consults the table above to determine if he has acquired more followers, some of which may be higher level than the existing followers. He does not consult the table to see if his cohort gains levels, however, because cohorts earn experience on their own.

LIGHT-FOOTED (GENERAL)

You dislike armour and are significantly more effective without it.

Prerequisites: Hide 1 rank, Move Silently 1 rank, sneak attack +1d6.

Benefit: Whenever you are unarmoured and carrying at most 20 pounds of gear in total, you gain an extra +1 die to your Sneak Attack damage (either d6 or d8 as appropriate), a +1 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence and a +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide and Move Silently checks.

LIGHTNING REFLEXES (GENERAL)

You can leap aside from danger at a moment's notice.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Reflex saving throws.

MARTIAL WEAPON PROFICIENCY (GENERAL)

Choose a type of martial weapon. You understand how to use that type of martial weapon in combat.

Benefit: You make attack rolls with the selected weapon normally.

Normal: When using a weapon with which you are not proficient, you take a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain Martial Weapon Proficiency multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new type of weapon.

MENACING AURA (GENERAL)

You project a constant, imposing aura of menace that gives many of your opponents pause before they even get a chance to attack you.

Prerequisites: Cha 15, Intimidate 16 ranks, Steely Gaze.

Benefit: You may make a demoralise opponent attempt (see the Intimidate skill on page 107) as a free action against any opponent who comes within 15 feet of you, whether or not it is your turn to act. You may do this against any number of opponents each round.

MOBILITY (GENERAL)

You are better able to defend yourself when on the move.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Dodge.

Benefit: You get a +4 dodge bonus to your Dodge Defence against attacks of opportunity caused when you move out of or within a threatened area. If you cannot dodge, this bonus has no effect. Dodge bonuses stack, unlike most types of bonuses.



MONSTER SLAYER (GENERAL)

Through long practice and bitter experience, you have learned a number of techniques for killing monsters quickly so as to risk as little damage to yourself as possible.

Prerequisites: Power Attack, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: When making a Power Attack against a foe of Large size or greater, you add twice as much to your damage roll as you subtract from your attack roll, rather than the same amount as is usual for Power Attack. For example, you can use your Power Attack to gain a +2 to damage for a -1 penalty to your attack roll, or a +6 bonus to damage for a -3 penalty to attack or even a +10 bonus to damage for a -5 penalty to attack. As ever with Power Attack, the bonuses and penalties apply to all your attacks in a round. The total damage bonus gained may not exceed your base attack bonus.

Special: When using this feat with a two-handed weapon, or with a one-handed weapon wielded in two hands, instead add three times the number subtracted from your attack rolls. The total damage bonus gained still may not exceed your base attack bonus.

MOUNTED ARCHERY (GENERAL)

You can use a bow even while guiding your mount with your knees alone.

Prerequisite: Mounted Combat.

Benefit: The penalty you take when using a ranged weapon while mounted is halved: -2 instead of -4 if your mount is taking a double move and -4 instead of -8 if your mount is running.

MOUNTED COMBAT (GENERAL)

Your skill at arms on horseback has been honed and trained until it is second nature.

Prerequisite: Ride 1 rank.

Benefit: Once per round when your mount is hit in combat, you may attempt a Ride check (as a reaction) to negate the hit. The hit is negated if your Ride check result is greater than the opponent's attack roll. For the rest of the round the Ride check result becomes the mount's Dodge Defence if it is higher than the mount's regular Dodge Defence.

MULTIATTACK (GENERAL)

Some creatures are particularly adept at using multiple natural weapons.

Prerequisite: Three or more natural weapons.

Benefit: The creature's secondary attacks with natural weapons suffer only a -2 penalty.

Normal: Without this feat, the creature's secondary natural attacks suffer a -5 penalty.

NAVIGATION (GENERAL)

Along with a small number of brave captains around the world, you have learned the secrets of deep-sea navigation.

Prerequisites: Int 13. Profession (sailor) 12 ranks.

Benefit: You automatically know where you are at sea, even in the deep sea out of sight of land. You have a detailed mental map of all the lands you have already visited and know how to get there from where you are.

Normal: A character who is out of sight of land and does not have this feat may attempt a Profession (sailor) check (DC 20) once per day to stay approximately on course for his destination. However, if he ever fails a check, he becomes lost and strays off course; he must make a more difficult check the following day (DC 25 + 1 per additional day since a successful check) or remain lost and off-course.

NEGOTIATOR (GENERAL)

You can haggle with the best of them.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks.

NIMBLE FINGERS (GENERAL)

You have a gift for working with locks and other mechanisms.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Disable Device and Open Lock checks.

NO HONOUR (GENERAL)

You have accepted that you have no honour whatsoever and revel in your wickedness and dishonour. This acceptance fortifies you in much the same manner as though you had a code of honour yourself, except in cases where your very soul is at stake...

Prerequisites: Must not have a code of honour, or must have lost a code of honour.

Benefit: You gain a +3 morale bonus on all Will saving throws except those made against Corruption.

Special: You may never gain or regain a code of honour.



OPPORTUNISTIC SACRIFICE (SORCERY)

You can take advantage of a chance to slay an opponent by sorcery or combat and gain magical energy from so doing, just as though you had ritually sacrificed him in a more formal manner, by simply dedicating his death to your dark gods or your own power.

Prerequisites: Ritual Sacrifice, magic attack bonus +3, base attack bonus +3, base PP 4.

Benefit: You gain the benefits of the Ritual Sacrifice feat any time you slay an enemy, whether by magic, melee or ranged attacks.

Normal: You must slay a helpless opponent with a coup de grace to gain the benefits of the Ritual Sacrifice feat.

Special: This feat may not be used together with Tormented Sacrifice on the same victim, except in the case of certain spells as described in Chapter 6: Sorcery. It is simply not possible for most spells or weapons to cause sufficient pain to allow the benefits of Tormented Sacrifice to work when slaying a victim in a quick and businesslike manner, as with Opportunistic Sacrifice.

You cannot use Opportunistic Sacrifice after slaying a foe with a Defensive Blast.

PARRY (GENERAL)

You are experienced and effective at parrying your enemies' attacks.

Prerequisites: Str 13, base parry bonus +1.

Benefit: You gain a +1 parry bonus to Parry Defence.

PERFORMER (GENERAL)

You are a natural performer.

Prerequisite: Cha 13.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Perform checks.

PERSUASIVE (GENERAL)

You are very hard to turn down when you set your mind on something.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Bluff and Intimidate checks.

PIRATE CODE EXPERT (GENERAL)

You have travelled the world on many different pirate vessels, shipping with the Red Brotherhood of the Vilayet Sea, the Corsairs of the Black Coast, the Freebooters of Zingara and the Pirates of the Baracha Islands. You have learned the codes for all these different groups, enabling you to easily communicate with any pirate ship.

Prerequisites: Int 13, pirate level 2.

Benefit: You know all four of the pirate codes listed under the Pirate Code class feature (see page 59). Furthermore, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks and Charisma checks when dealing with any character who has at least two levels in the pirate character class.

POINT BLANK SHOT (GENERAL)

At close range, your skill with a ranged weapon is deadly.

Benefit: You get a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls with ranged weapons at ranges of up to 30 feet.

POISON USE (GENERAL)

You are an experienced poison-user.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: You never suffer the usual 5% chance of poisoning yourself if you use poison, nor do you risk accidentally poisoning yourself when attacking with a poisoned weapon. Furthermore, you gain a +1 resistance bonus to all Fortitude saves against poison, as your frequent exposure to low doses of a variety of poisons has given your body a certain degree of habituation to poisons of all kinds. Finally, you can take poisons directly from such sources as the glands of a dead Ghost Snake (see page 373) or the juice of an Apple of Derketa (see page 275) without needing to make any particular skill checks. Note that this feat does not help with finding such poison sources, only extracting them.

POWER ATTACK (GENERAL)

You can pour your strength into your blows to wreak devastation upon your enemies.

Prerequisite: Str 13.

Benefit: On your action, before making attack rolls for a round, you may choose to subtract a number from all melee attack rolls and add the same number to all melee damage



rolls. This number may not exceed your base attack bonus. The penalty on attacks and bonus on damage both apply until your next turn.

Special: If you attack with a two-handed weapon, or with a one-handed weapon wielded in two hands, you instead add twice the number subtracted from your attack rolls. You cannot add the bonus from Power Attack to the damage dealt with a light weapon (except for unarmed strikes or natural weapon attacks), though the penalty on attack rolls still applies.

PRECISE SHOT (GENERAL)

Your friends need not fear your missiles when you shoot past them.

Prerequisite: Point Blank Shot.

Benefit: You can shoot or throw ranged weapons at an opponent engaged in melee without taking the standard -4 penalty on your attack roll.

PRIEST (GENERAL)

You have taken full ordination into the temple of your chosen religion.

Prerequisites: Scholar level 4, scholar background: lay priest. Most religions have additional requirements that must be met before a priest can be ordained; see Chapter 12 for details.

Benefit: You are an ordained priest. This brings a number of social and political benefits, as well as some restrictions. Many of these benefits and restrictions are dependent on your religion. See Chapter 12: Religion in the Hyborean Age. These benefits always include the right to command followers of the same religion, allowing priests to gain bonuses to their Leadership scores (see page 131). Furthermore, the priest gains a +1 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information and Intimidate checks when dealing with other characters who follow the same religious path as he does. In some regions, this can mean entire nations. This bonus is cumulative with the similar bonus from having the same Allegiance as the target, if applicable. Finally, the priest has certain duties at temple that fully occupy him for at least six months of every year; it is his choice as to when he fulfils these duties. In return for fulfilling his duties, the priest gains an annual stipend of 10 sp/scholar level, as well as free room and board at a temple of his religion whenever he is working there.

QUICK DRAW (GENERAL)

Just because your weapon is sheathed, it does not mean you are defenceless.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: You can draw a weapon as a free action instead of as a move action. So long as you are able to parry an attack (when you are not flat-footed, for example) you can draw a weapon in response to being attacked, enabling you to use your full Parry Defence against the attack even if you did not have a weapon drawn before. You can draw a hidden weapon (see the Sleight of Hand skill) as a move action. A character who has selected this feat may throw weapons at his full normal rate of attack, much like a character with a bow.

Normal: Without this feat, you may draw a weapon as a move action or, if your base attack bonus is +1 or higher, as a free action as part of movement. Without this feat, you can draw a hidden weapon as a standard action.

RANGED FINESSE (GENERAL)

For answer the Count made a quick gesture with his hand below the points of the palisade. Almost instantly a shaft hummed venomously through a loop-hole and splintered on Strom's breastplate. The pirate yelled ferociously, bounded back and ran toward the beach, with arrows whistling all about him. His men roared and came on like a wave, blades gleaming in the sun.

'Curse you, dog!' raved the Count, felling the offending archer with his iron-clad fist. 'Why did you not strike his throat above the gorget? Ready with your bows, men - here they come!'

— *The Black Stranger*

Given sufficient time to aim, your ranged attacks find their way between gaps in your foes' armour.

Prerequisite: Precise Shot.

Benefit: You may take a move action to line up an attack with a ranged weapon. You must aim at a specific target. The act of aiming provokes an attack of opportunity, just as if you had attacked with the weapon. If, on your next turn, that target is within 30 feet and has not moved more than 30 feet since his last action, you may attempt to finesse past his armour



with your ranged attack. You can also ready an attack while aiming but you must have been aiming at the same target continuously for at least one round in order to attempt to finesse. If you lose sight of your target or attack a different target, your aim is broken. Aiming requires your full concentration and you must make a Concentration skill check if you suffer distraction (see page 95). If you are able to make more than one attack in a round, only your first attack benefits from any aiming and subsequent attacks may not be made as finesse attempts. If you are using a bow, you can continue to aim for a number of rounds equal to 5 + your Strength modifier, after which you take one point of nonlethal damage for every round during which you continue to aim.

Normal: Ranged attacks cannot ordinarily be finessed.

RAPID SHOT (GENERAL)

You can have another arrow in the air before the first has hit its target.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Point Blank Shot.

Benefit: You can get one extra attack per round with a ranged weapon. The attack is at your highest base attack bonus but each attack you make in that round (the extra one and the normal ones) takes a -2 penalty. You must use the full attack action to use this feat.

REFLEXIVE PARRY (GENERAL)

Though you may not have time to dodge a surprise attack, you will at least have a chance to bring up your weapon or shield in a desperate, instinctive parry.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Combat Reflexes, Parry, base parry bonus +8.

Benefit: You can still parry if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. You are not able to parry when grappled or helpless, however.

RIDE-BY ATTACK (GENERAL)

You can slash at an opponent as you spur your mount past.

Prerequisite: Mounted Combat.

Benefit: When you are mounted and use the charge action, you may move and attack as if with a standard charge and then move again, continuing the straight line of the charge.

Your total movement for the round cannot exceed double your mounted speed. You and your mount do not provoke an attack of opportunity from the opponent you attack.

RITUAL SACRIFICE (SORCERY)

You have been trained to ritually kill a helpless opponent to gain sorcerous power.

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +1, base attack bonus +1, base PP 4.

Benefit: If you attempt a coup de grace on a helpless character or creature (see page 198), the victim gets a -2 circumstance penalty on his Fortitude saving throw to avoid dying. In addition, you may move one step down on the Sacrifice Table when calculating the number of PP gained. See page 228 for the Sacrifice Table.

Normal: If you kill a creature by coup de grace but do not know this feat, you may still gain some power points by dedicating its death to your gods or to your own personal power. See page 228.

RUN (GENERAL)

Your pace is phenomenal.

Benefit: When running, you move at five times your normal speed. You may only do this if wearing light or no armour and carrying no more than a light load. You may move at four times your speed if wearing medium or heavy armour or carrying a medium or heavy load. If you make a jump after a running start (see the Jump skill description) you gain a +4 bonus on your Jump check. You can dodge while running.

Normal: You move at four times your speed while running (if wearing light or no armour and carrying no more than a light load) or at three times your speed (if wearing medium or heavy armour or carrying a medium or heavy load) and you are not able to dodge.

SELF-SUFFICIENT (GENERAL)

You can survive in the wild with little fear.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Heal and Survival checks.

SHIELD PROFICIENCY (GENERAL)

You are adept at using a shield to parry blows.

Benefit: You can use a shield and take only the standard penalties.



Normal: When you are using a shield with which you are not proficient, you take the shield's armour check penalty on attack rolls and on all skill checks that involve moving, including Ride checks.

SHOT ON THE RUN (GENERAL)

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: When using the attack action with a ranged weapon, you can move both before and after the attack, provided that the total distance moved is not greater than your speed.

Normal: When using the attack action you must make your attack before or after you move.

SIMPLE WEAPON PROFICIENCY (GENERAL)

You are competent at wielding less demanding weapons.

Benefit: You make attack rolls with simple weapons normally.

Normal: When using a weapon with which you are not proficient, you take a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

SKILL FOCUS (GENERAL)

You have a particular knack for one task or another.

Benefit: You get a +3 bonus on all checks involving that skill.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new skill.

SLEEP MASTERY (GENERAL)

You have almost total control of your body's sleep patterns and your waking and sleeping habits.

Prerequisites: Con 13, Wis 13.

Benefit: You need only sleep for six hours a night to awaken fully rested. Up to once per week, you may spend one full night without any sleep, with no penalties, so long as you get at least twelve hours of sleep the following night. In addition, you may make Listen checks as though you were awake if any untoward sounds occur as you sleep; if you succeed at such a Listen check, you may become fully awake as a free action. Finally, you gain a +2 bonus on all saving throws against spells, supernatural effects, drugs and poisons that would cause you to sleep or prevent you from waking.

SNEAK SUBDUAL (GENERAL)

You can make sneak attacks that subdue your enemies.

Prerequisites: Sneak attack +1d6, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: You can use a weapon that deals normal damage to deal nonlethal damage in a sneak attack, with the usual -4 penalty. Alternatively, when sneak attacking with any bludgeoning weapon, you can elect to deal half normal damage and half nonlethal damage (round down) with no penalty.

Normal: Sneak attacks can only deal nonlethal damage if made with an unarmed strike or sap.

SORCERER'S BOON (SORCERY)

You have spent many years studying sorcery.

Prerequisites: Int 13, scholar level 4, must know at least two sorcery styles.

Benefit: You gain one advanced spell of your choice. You must meet any prerequisites of the spell as usual, including knowledge of the sorcery style in question. However, unlike the usual spells you gain as class features, you are not restricted by your background class feature – you may choose any spell for which you meet the prerequisites without needing to learn it from your masters.

Special: This feat may be taken more than once – you gain a different spell each time.

SPAWN OF DAGOTH HILL (GENERAL)

You are only half human, one of your parents having been a demonic pre-human creature.

Prerequisites: Must be Kothian or Zamorian, may only be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You apply the Spawn of Dagoth Hill template to your character (see page 388).

SPIRITED CHARGE (GENERAL)

You can spur your mount into the charge and brace yourself to strike a powerful blow.

Prerequisites: Ride-By Attack.

Benefit: When mounted and using the charge action, you deal double damage with a melee weapon or triple damage with a lance.



STEALTHY (GENERAL)

You have a knack for moving sneakily.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Hide and Move Silently checks.

STEELY GAZE (GENERAL)

One glance from you is enough to make lesser opponents quail in terror.



Prerequisites: Cha 13, Intimidate 8 ranks.

Benefit: You may perform the demoralise opponent action (see page 107) as a free action once per round.

STRIKING COBRA (GENERAL)

You can make surprise attacks even when your opponents are aware of your presence, using your body language to convince them you are no threat, then attacking with the speed and suddenness of a striking cobra.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Cha 13, Bluff 6 ranks, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: So long as combat has not yet begun, you

may attempt a Bluff check opposed by your opponents' Sense Motive checks. If you succeed, they are surprised and you may make a full round of actions in the surprise round when combat begins. An opponent who had readied an action will lose that action if he does not beat your Bluff check with his Sense Motive check. Opponents who do beat your Bluff check gain a standard action in the surprise round as usual.

STUNNING ATTACK (GENERAL)

Your punches (and similar attacks) are so accurate and powerful that you can stun your enemies.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Dex 13, base attack bonus +8.

Benefit: You may use this feat with any of the following weapons: unarmed strike, buckler, gauntlet or pommel. You must declare that you are using the feat before making an attack roll; a missed attack roll ruins the attempt. It forces a foe damaged by your attack to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + ½ your level + your Str modifier), in addition to dealing damage normally. If the defender fails his saving throw, he is stunned for one round, until just before your next action. A stunned character may not act and can neither dodge nor parry. Attackers get a +2 bonus on attack rolls against a stunned opponent. You may attempt a stunning attack once per day for every four levels you have attained. You may not attempt a stunning attack more than once per round.

SUMMONER (SORCERY)

You are particularly adept at summoning demons and elementals.

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +1, Sorcery Style: Summoning.

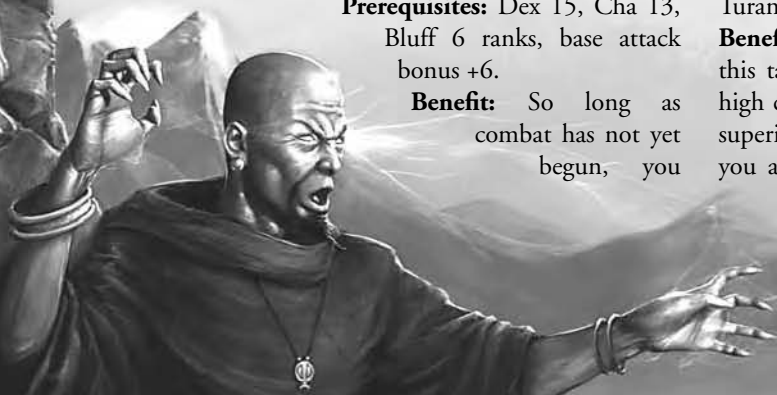
Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to your magic attack roll whenever you cast a spell from the Summoning sorcery style.

SUPERIOR ARMOURER (GENERAL)

You have been trained in producing Aquilonian style plate armour, Kothic scale or Hyrkanian mail.

Prerequisites: Must be an Aquilonian, Kothian, Hyrkanian/Turanian or Zingaran, Craft (armourer) 12 ranks.

Benefit: You may create superior quality armour, though this takes significantly longer than usual due to its very high cost. If you are an Aquilonian, you may only create superior visored helms, breastplates and plate armour; if you are a Hyrkanian or Turanian, you may only create superior steel caps, mail hauberks and mail



shirts; if you are a Kothian, you may only create superior scale corselets, scale hauberks and great helms; if you are a Zingaran, you may only create superior quality leather jerkins. Creating a suit of superior quality armour follows the usual rules for the Craft skill (see page 96).

TOUGHNESS (GENERAL)

You can shrug off blows that would cripple or kill a normal man.

Benefit: You gain bonus hit points equal to +1 per character level or Hit Die, up to a maximum of +10.

Special: Each time your character level increases, if your new level is 10th or below you gain another +1 bonus Hit Point.

TORTURED SACRIFICE (SORCERY)

You may draw a huge quantity of magical power from a creature by painstakingly sacrificing it over a period of several hours. You may bleed it to death, whip it or otherwise inflict great torture on it. Different sorcerers may have preferred methods of performing a sacrifice. In every case, though, the point is to maximize the magical power you gain from a single ritual sacrifice.

Prerequisites: Ritual Sacrifice, magic attack bonus +2, base attack bonus +2.

Benefit: If you take at least 15 minutes to torture a victim to death in a ritualistic manner you can move two steps down on the Sacrifice Table (see page 228). If you are able to spin the process out for an hour or more, you can move three steps down on the Sacrifice Table. The victim must be bound or otherwise helpless during the sacrifice. If for some reason you need to know how much damage you have inflicted on your victim part way through the process (for example, if the victim is rescued before you finish him off), assume that you inflicted at least a minimum of 1d3 hit points damage per five minutes. If you prefer, you could inflict as much as your standard melee attack damage every round if desired (this latter damage assumes that you either have a particularly tough opponent or that you choose to kill him quickly because he is about to be rescued). You may also choose any amount of damage in between. If you kill your victim before the 15 minutes is up, you only gain the normal Power Points for a Ritual Sacrifice.

TRACK (GENERAL)

You can track beast or man across the land.

Benefit: To find tracks or to follow them for one mile requires a successful Survival check. You must make another Survival check every time the tracks become difficult to follow. While tracking, you

In what had seemed a curtain of solid marble, a thin perpendicular crack showed and in the crack hung a wisp of silk. In an instant he was bending over it. That shred was from Muriela's torn skirt. The implication was unmistakable. It had been caught in the closing door and torn off as she was borne through the opening by whatever grim beings were her captors. The bit of clothing had prevented the door from fitting perfectly into its frame.

— *Jewels of Gwahlur*

either move at half your normal speed, at your normal speed with a –5 penalty on the check or at up to twice your normal speed with a –20 penalty on the check. The DC depends on the surface and the prevailing conditions, as given in the table below:

TRACK MODIFIERS

Condition	Survival DC Modifier
Every three creatures in the group being tracked	–1
Size of creature or creatures being tracked: ¹	
Fine	+8
Diminutive	+4
Tiny	+2
Small	+1
Medium	+0
Large	–1
Huge	–2
Gargantuan	–4
Colossal	–8
Every 24 hours since the trail was made	+1
Every hour of rain since the trail was made	+1
Fresh snow cover since the trail was made	+10
Poor visibility: ²	
Overcast or moonless night	+6
Moonlight	+3
Fog or precipitation	+3
Tracked party hides trail (and moves at half speed)	+5

¹ For a group of mixed sizes, apply only the modifier for the largest size category.

² Apply only the largest modifier from this category.



Surface	Survival DC
Very soft ground	5
Soft ground	10
Firm ground	15
Hard ground	20

Very Soft Ground: Any surface, such as fresh snow, thick dust or wet mud which holds deep, clear impressions of footprints.

Soft Ground: Any surface soft enough to yield to pressure, but firmer than wet mud or fresh snow, in which a creature leaves frequent but shallow footprints.

Firm Ground: Most normal outdoor surfaces, such as lawns, fields, woods and the like, or exceptionally soft or dirty indoor surfaces, such as thick rugs and very dirty or dusty floors. A creature might leave some traces of its passing, such as broken branches or tufts of hair but it leaves only occasional or partial footprints.

Hard Ground: Any surface that does not hold footprints at all, such as bare rock or an indoor floor. Most streambeds fall into this category, since any footprints left behind are obscured or washed away. A creature leaves only traces of its passing, such as scuffmarks or displaced pebbles.

If you fail a Survival check, you can retry after one hour (outdoors) or 10 minutes (indoors) of searching.

Normal: Without this feat, you can use the Survival skill to find tracks but you can follow them only if the DC for the task is 10 or lower. Alternatively, you can use the Search skill to find a footprint or similar sign of a creature's passage using the DCs given above. You cannot use Search to follow tracks, even if someone else has already found them.

TRAMPLE (GENERAL)

You can urge your horse to lash out with its hooves as it rides over an opponent.

Prerequisite: Mounted Combat.

Benefit: When you attempt to overrun an opponent while mounted, your target may not choose to avoid you. Your mount may make one hoof attack against any target you knock down, gaining the standard +4 bonus on attack rolls against prone targets.

TWO-WEAPON COMBAT (GENERAL)

You can fight effectively with a weapon in each hand.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: When you fight with two weapons, you take no penalty to your attack rolls so long as at least one of the weapons is a light weapon. You take only a -4 penalty to all attack rolls if both weapons are one-handed.

Normal: A character who is not proficient in two-weapon combat has a -2 penalty to attack rolls if using a light or one-handed weapon in his primary hand and a light weapon in his secondary hand, or -6 if using a one-handed weapon in each hand.

TWO-WEAPON DEFENCE (GENERAL)

When wielding a weapon in each hand, you are an expert at defensive parrying.

Prerequisites: Parry, Two-Weapon Combat.

Benefit: When you fight with two weapons, you can give up one attack at your highest attack bonus with one of the weapons to gain a parry bonus to Parry Defence for one full round after you would have made the attack. This parry bonus is +2 if the weapon is light, or +3 if the weapon is one-handed.

Special: Two-Weapon Defence can also apply to shields if you use a shield to make shield bash attacks rather than for parrying.

WEAPON FOCUS (GENERAL)

Choose one type of weapon that you are proficient with. If desired, this weapon could be 'unarmed strike' or 'grapple.' You are highly skilled with this weapon.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: You add +1 to all attack rolls you make using the selected weapon.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon. A character who has seven or more levels of the barbarian class may not select this feat. If a character with this feat ever gains seven or more levels in the barbarian class, he immediately and permanently loses this feat.

WEB OF DEATH (GENERAL)

You can spin your blade and endanger any opponents who dare attack you.

Prerequisites: Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus, base attack bonus +5.



Benefit: When taking a total defence action, you spin your weapon so skilfully that you can make an attack of opportunity against anyone who attacks you. The normal rules for attacks of opportunity apply. This attack is resolved after your opponent's.

Special: A character that has seven or more levels of the barbarian class may not select this feat. If a character with this feat ever gains seven or more levels in the barbarian class, he immediately and permanently loses this feat.

WEAPON SPECIALISATION (GENERAL)

Choose one type of weapon that you already have Weapon Focus with. If desired, this weapon could be 'unarmed strike' or 'grapple.' You are especially good at inflicting damage with this weapon.

Prerequisites: Weapon Focus, soldier level 4.

Benefit: You add +2 to all damage dealt with the weapon you have specialised with.

Special: This feat can be gained multiple times. The effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon. A character who has seven or more levels of the barbarian class may not select this feat. If a character with this feat ever gains seven or more levels in the barbarian class, he immediately and permanently loses this feat.

WHIRLWIND ATTACK (GENERAL)

You lash out at any available target, dispatching foes all around you with terrifying speed.

The clangor of steel rose deafeningly; the black-mailed figure of the western king loomed among his swarming foes, dealing blows like a butcher wielding a great cleaver. Riderless horses raced down the field; about his iron-clad feet grew a ring of mangled corpses. His attackers drew back from his desperate savagery, panting and livid.

— *The Scarlet Citadel*

Prerequisites: Dodge, Mobility, Combat Expertise, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: When you use the full attack action, you can give up your regular attacks and instead make one melee attack at your full base attack bonus against each opponent within your threatened area. When you use the Whirlwind Attack feat, you forfeit any bonuses or extra attacks granted by other feats, spells or abilities.

ZINGARAN SURPRISE (GENERAL)

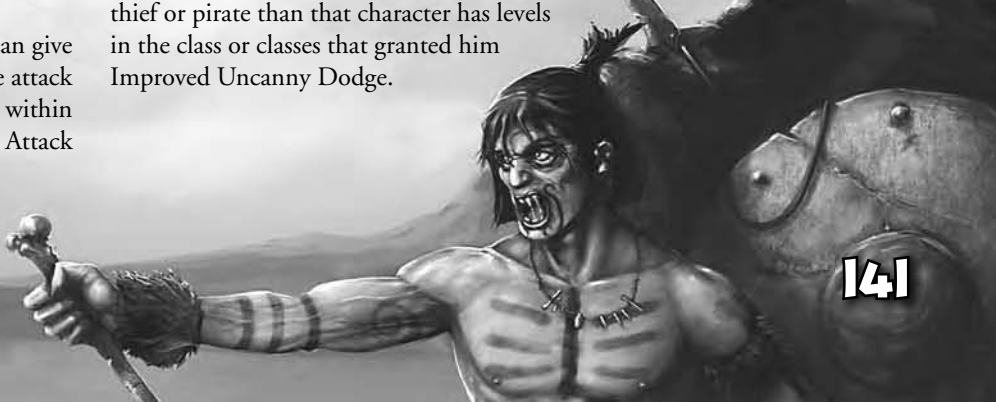
Though the Zingarans are famed for swordplay, they are perhaps still more famed for their willingness to take advantage of any momentary distraction on the part of an ally to give him a blow to the head from behind, rob him and leave him for dead. Even Zingarans who are not primarily thieves or pirates are often expert with the sneak attack.



Prerequisites: Must be Zingaran, sneak attack +3d6, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: For purposes of determining whether or not you are able to sneak attack an opponent who has the Improved Uncanny Dodge class feature, you may use your character level, rather than your thief or pirate class level. Furthermore, if your opponent is distracted at the time of your sneak attack, you may use double your character level, rather than your pirate or thief class level, for this purpose. You could potentially contrive to create a suitable distraction with a Bluff versus Sense Motive check or you could take advantage of a distraction such as a suddenly revealed treasure or bizarre happenstance.

Normal: Usually you may only sneak attack a character who has Improved Uncanny Dodge if you have four more levels as a thief or pirate than that character has levels in the class or classes that granted him Improved Uncanny Dodge.





Equipment

Loot, Coin and the Spoils of War

THE VALUE OF MONEY

Acquiring wealth and objects of value is a central theme in many adventures. However, spending it is a good deal less interesting. Conan does not seem to go shopping for new weapons, armour or other 'sensible' equipment choices when he succeeds in stealing a hoard of treasure. Rather, he spends the lot on high living.

'What do you call yourself? You haven't enough money to buy a new seat for your breeches. Your disdain doesn't deceive me. You know I've commanded bigger ships and more men than you ever did in your life. As for being penniless – what rover isn't, most of the time? I've squandered enough gold in the seaports of the world to fill a galeon. You know that, too.'

"Where are the fine ships and the bold lads you commanded now?" she sneered.

"At the bottom of the sea, mostly," he replied cheerfully.

– *Red Nails*

The only times money should be especially useful to your characters are when their weapons or armour are lost or destroyed and when it could be useful to them to buy influence or power, usually in the form of followers. Certainly there should be no need to have players keep track of every last silver piece in their purses. Either they have enough money to get by or it is time to go adventuring again.

Nothing that is truly valuable can be bought and sold. Time and again in the stories we are told of an object, venom or lotus preparation that proved crucial for success in a particular adventure – and required its own lengthy and dangerous adventure to acquire in the first place. Golden lunas can be no substitute for a personal trip to the fiend-haunted jungles of Khitai if you are in search of lotus blossoms...

HIGH LIVING

It is in the nature of adventurers to spend money like water whenever they have it. Folk who regularly risk their lives in the hope of gaining unimaginable wealth live for today, spending their gains on gambling, good company, expensive food, fine wines and spirits in enormous quantity and even more frivolous pursuits. The Games Master should feel free to enforce the High Living rule whenever characters have a large quantity of cash and no definite plans for spending it:

EVERY WEEK, ALL CHARACTERS WILL SPEND A MINIMUM OF 50% OF THEIR CURRENT WEALTH ON HIGH LIVING, IF THAT WEALTH IS CURRENTLY OVER 50 SILVER PIECES.

This expenditure includes all ordinary living costs such as food and accommodation. The Games Master should also consider granting circumstance bonuses to Gather Information tests made by adventurers who spend particularly large amounts of cash.

Nobles' and scholars' expenditure on high living can, at times, be somewhat less wasteful than that of other classes. Once a month a noble or scholar may designate that his high living expenditure for that week be spent on networking parties (for the noble) and unusual scrolls or access to other information (for the scholar). During this more useful week, the noble may receive a +2 circumstance modifier to any Charisma based skill tests to do with socialising, politics, gathering information and the like; the scholar may receive a +2 circumstance bonus to all Knowledge tests during this same week.



It will be seen that even vast fortunes will rapidly be eaten up by the wasteful nature of every adventurer. Some adventurers may have specific things they spend their cash on but everyone has some vice or vices – otherwise why would they bother adventuring? Even a sorcerer is likely to spend a small fortune on ancient scrolls or other obscure research materials, most of which will prove worthless in the long run.

CURRENCY

The most common coin among adventuring types is the piece of silver, usually abbreviated 'sp.'

Large quantities of money are paid as golden lunas (gl). There are 10 pieces of silver to one golden luna. Technically only Aquilonia mints golden lunas but they are common throughout the Hyborian nations. Many other countries issue gold coins of similar size and purity which are regarded as equal in worth to the golden luna.

Pieces of silver are scored so as to allow them to be easily cut or broken into halves or quarters. This enables purchases valued at less than one sp to be made. For items valued at less than ¼ sp, barter or buying in bulk are the only real options.

SELLING LOOT

In general, a character can sell something for half its listed price.

It is possible that Player Characters – especially thieves and pirates – may get their hands on valuable items that can command a greater proportion of their true value when sold. These commodities are the stock-in-trade of merchants from one end of the world to the other and include everything from dried foodstuffs, cloth, metal, tanned hides, lumber and slaves through to more exotic cargoes like Shemite wine, ivory, silk, spices, gems, incense and even raw lotus blossoms from various sources. In many nations only members of certain social classes are even allowed to conduct trade on this scale.

The value of these trade goods varies greatly with demand and distance from their land of origin and it is far beyond the scope of these rules to simulate an economy. If the characters manage to lay their hands on some ill-gotten gains and manage to find a buyer you can assume that they will receive 100–300 pieces of silver for a common cargo and 1000–3000 silver for a rarer one. The most unusual goods, such as lotus or precious metals, are never just 'sold' and exchanging them for money is often a complicated process of negotiation.

WEAPONS

Few adventurers ever manage to retain long-term ownership of weapons or other martial equipment. Combat breakages, thefts and accidents all take their toll on weaponry and often characters will need to rely on daggers and other secondary weapons, loot weapons from fallen foes or simply pick up found objects and use them to bludgeon their enemies to death.

Despite this, many adventurers have weapons they especially prefer and there are certainly advantages and disadvantages to various types of weapons. The weapons table gives full statistics for all weapons used in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

WEAPON CATEGORIES

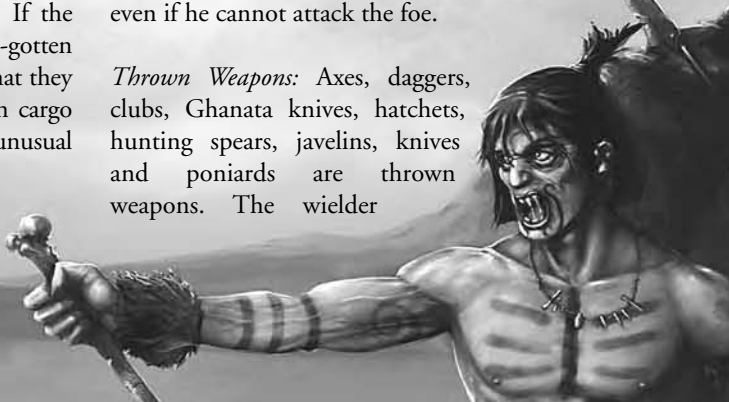
Weapons are grouped into several interlocking sets of categories. These categories pertain to what training is needed to become proficient in a weapon's use (simple, martial or exotic), the weapon's usefulness either in close combat (melee) or at a distance (ranged, which includes both thrown and projectile weapons) and its relative encumbrance (light, one-handed or two-handed).

Simple, Martial and Exotic Weapons: All player classes are proficient with all simple weapons. Many – the soldier and barbarian, for example – are also proficient with all martial weapons. A character who uses a weapon with which he is not proficient takes a –4 penalty on attack rolls.

Melee and Ranged Weapons: Melee weapons are used for making melee attacks, though some of them can be thrown as well. Ranged weapons are thrown weapons or projectile weapons that are not effective in melee.

Reach Weapons: Lances, pikes, staves, war spears and whips are reach weapons. A reach weapon is a melee weapon that allows its wielder to strike at targets that are not adjacent to him. Most reach weapons double the wielder's natural reach, meaning that a typical Medium wielder of such a weapon can attack a creature 10 feet away but not a creature in an adjacent square. The wielder of a reach weapon can still parry an adjacent foe's attacks with it, even if he cannot attack the foe.

Thrown Weapons: Axes, daggers, clubs, Ghanata knives, hatchets, hunting spears, javelins, knives and poniards are thrown weapons. The wielder





applies his Strength modifier to damage dealt by thrown weapons, except for splash weapons. It is possible to throw a weapon that is not designed to be thrown, that is, a melee weapon that does not have a numeric entry in the Range Increment column on the Weapons table; however, a character who does so takes a -4 penalty on the attack roll. Throwing a light or one-handed weapon is a standard action, while throwing a two-handed weapon is a full-round action. Regardless of the type of weapon, such an attack scores a threat only on a natural roll of 20 and deals double damage on a critical hit. Such a weapon has a range increment of 10 feet.

Ranged Weapons: Arbalests, bows, crossbows, longbows and slings are projectile weapons. Most projectile weapons require two hands to use; see specific weapon descriptions. A character gets no Strength bonus on damage rolls with a ranged weapon unless it is specially built to grant such.

Ammunition: Ranged weapons use ammunition: arrows (for bows), bolts (for crossbows) or sling bullets (for slings). When using a bow, a character can draw ammunition as a free action; crossbows and slings require an action for reloading. Generally speaking, ammunition that hits its target is destroyed or rendered useless, while normal ammunition that misses has a 50% chance of being destroyed or lost.

Light, One-Handed and Two-Handed Melee Weapons: This designation is a measure of how much effort it takes to wield a weapon in combat. It indicates whether a melee weapon is considered a light weapon, a one-handed weapon or a two-handed weapon.

Light: A light weapon is easier to use in your off hand than a one-handed weapon and can be used while grappling. A light weapon is used in one hand. Add the wielder's Strength bonus (if any) to damage rolls for melee attacks with a light weapon if it is used in the primary hand, or one-half the wielder's Strength bonus if it is used in the off hand. Using two hands to wield a light weapon gives no advantage to damage; the Strength bonus applies as though the weapon were held in the wielder's primary hand only.

An unarmed strike is always considered a light weapon.

One-Handed: A one-handed weapon can be used in either the primary hand or the

off hand. Add the wielder's Strength bonus to damage rolls for melee attacks with a one-handed weapon if it is used in the primary hand, or ½ his Strength bonus if it is used in the off hand. If a one-handed weapon is wielded with two hands during melee combat, add 1½ times the character's Strength bonus to damage rolls.

Two-Handed: Two hands are required to use a two-handed melee weapon effectively. Apply 1½ times the character's Strength bonus to damage rolls for melee attacks with such a weapon.

Improvised Weapons: Sometimes objects not crafted to be weapons nonetheless see use in combat. As such objects are not designed for this use, any creature that uses one in combat is considered to be nonproficient with it and takes a -4 penalty on attack rolls made with that object. Using an improvised weapon to parry also applies a -1 penalty to your Parry Defence. To determine the appropriate damage for an improvised weapon, compare its relative size and damage potential to the weapon list to find a reasonable match. An improvised weapon scores a threat on a natural roll of 20 and deals double damage on a critical hit. An improvised thrown weapon has a range increment of 10 feet.

WEAPON QUALITIES

Here is the format for weapon entries, given as column headings on the Weapons table below:

Cost: This value is the weapon's cost in silver pieces (sp). The cost includes miscellaneous gear that goes with the weapon.

Damage: The damage column gives the damage dealt by the weapon on a successful hit.

Critical: The entry in this column notes how the weapon is used with the rules for critical hits. When your character scores a critical hit roll the damage two, three or four times, as indicated by the weapon's critical multiplier, using all applicable modifiers on each roll. Add all the results together.

Exception: Extra *dice* of damage – sneak attack damage, for example – over and above a weapon's normal damage are not multiplied when you score a critical hit.

×2: The weapon deals double damage on a critical hit.

×3: The weapon deals triple damage on a critical hit.

×4: The weapon deals quadruple damage on a critical hit.

19–20/x2: The weapon scores a threat on a natural roll of 19 or 20 (instead of just 20) and deals double damage on a critical hit. The weapon has a threat range of 19–20.

18–20/x2: The weapon scores a threat on a natural roll of 18, 19 or 20 (instead of just 20) and deals double damage on a critical hit. The weapon has a threat range of 18–20.

Armour Piercing: The entry in this column indicates the number added to the wielder's Strength modifier to determine the final armour piercing score of a successful blow and its effects on the opponent's damage reduction.

Range Increment: Any weapon that is designed to be fired or thrown has a range increment. An attack at less than this distance is not penalized for range. However, each full range increment imposes a cumulative –2 penalty on the attack roll. A thrown weapon has a maximum range of five range increments. A projectile weapon can shoot out to 10 range increments.

Weight: This column gives the weight of the weapon.

Hardness: Hardness is, essentially, damage reduction for objects. Any damage done to a weapon or other object is reduced by its hardness. Armour Piercing never applies against an object's hardness.

Hit Points: The number of Hit Points the weapon has. If reduced to zero, the weapon can be considered destroyed.

Type: Weapons are classified according to the type of damage they deal: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing. Some monsters may be resistant or immune to attacks from certain types of weapons.

Some weapons can deal two types of damage. For example, a short sword can deal slashing or piercing damage. In a situation when the damage type is significant, the wielder can choose which type of damage to deal with such a weapon.

SIMPLE WEAPONS

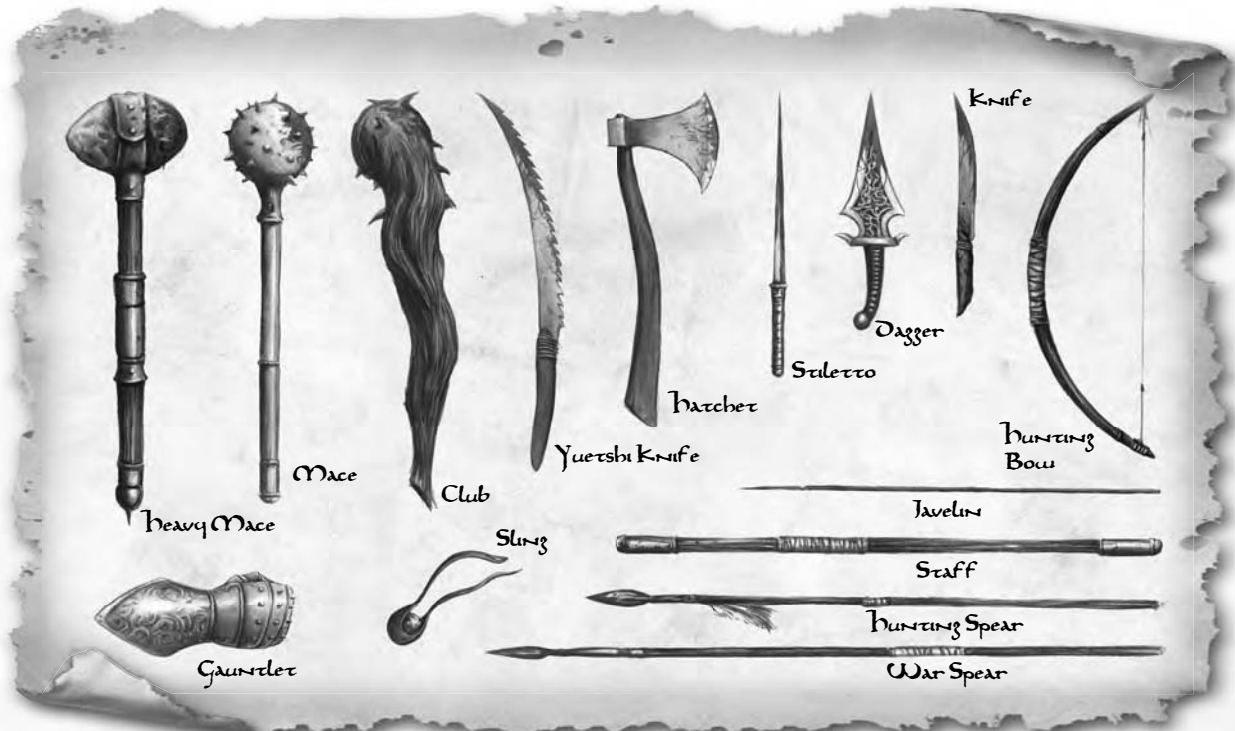
Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Armour Piercing	Range Increment	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
<i>Unarmed Attacks</i>									
Gauntlet ^F	5 sp*	1d6	x2	1	—	10	1	1 lb.	Bludgeoning
Unarmed Strike ^F	—	1d3	x2	—	—	—	—	—	Bludgeoning
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>									
Dagger ^F	3 sp	1d4	19–20/x2	1**	10 ft.	10	1	1 lb.	Piercing
Hatchet ^F	2 sp	1d6	x3	1**	10 ft.	5	2	2 lb.	Slashing
Knife ^F	1 sp	1d4	x2	—	10 ft.	8	1	1 lb.	Slashing
Knife, Yuetshi ^F	1 sp	1d6	x2	1	—	8	1	1 lb.	Slashing
Stiletto ^F	2 sp	1d4	x4	1	—	8	1	½ lb.	Piercing
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Club	—	1d8	x2	1**	10 ft.	5	4	2 lb.	Bludgeoning
Mace, Heavy	3 sp	1d10	x2	4	—	7	5	4 lb.	Bludgeoning
Mace, Light	2 sp	1d8	x2	2	—	7	3	2½ lb.	Bludgeoning
Spear, Hunting	2 sp	1d8	x2	1**	10 ft.	5	4	2 lb.	Piercing
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Spear, War ^{F R}	3 sp	1d10	x3	2	—	7	4	5 lb.	Piercing
Staff ^{F R}	—	2d4	x2	1	—	5	5	3 lb.	Bludgeoning
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>									
Bow, Hunting	3 sp	1d8	x2	1**	50 ft.	5	2	1 lb.	Piercing
Arrows (20)	1 sp	—	—	—	—	5	1	3 lb.	—
Javelin	3 sp	1d8	x2	1**	30 ft.	5	3	2 lb.	Piercing
Sling	1 sp	1d8	x2	1**	40 ft.	—	—	—	Bludgeoning
Sling Bullets (10)	1 sp	—	—	—	—	—	—	5 lb.	—

* See the weapon description for special rules.

** The Armour Piercing score for all ranged weapons is reduced by one for each range increment beyond the first.

^F Finesse weapon

^R Reach weapon



WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Arbalest: This is a heavy and powerful steel-framed crossbow, designed for penetrating armour and long-range effectiveness. An arbalest is very slow to load, as it must be braced against the ground and laboriously 'spanned' with a mechanical device called a cranequin before a new bolt can be loaded in place. Reloading takes three full-round actions, so few adventurers bother to reload their arbalests during combat. An arbalest must be wielded with both hands.

Axe: The axe is an effective off-hand weapon or backup weapon, easily carried in a loop on the belt and reasonably effective against armour. It can also be used to hook enemy weapons.

Bardiche: The bardiche is a heavy axe-blade mounted on a thick ash shaft some four to six feet long. Though the blade is also quite large, it is highly curved so as to concentrate the initial impact in a very small area. This combination allows for both excellent armour penetration and the possibility of dealing heavy damage. The long double-handed war-axes of the Aesir and Vanir can also be treated as bardiches.

Battleaxe: The battleaxe is a powerful weapon, ideal for dealing deadly overhead blows from horseback but also sufficiently well-balanced for fast-moving

melee combat. Mounted mercenaries favour it especially, since it is relatively cheap but highly effective against armoured enemies.

Bill: This versatile polearm was originally derived from a hedging tool mounted on a long shaft but is in common use by heavy infantry and city watchmen alike. Nemedian soldiers, police and mercenaries favour its use. A bill has a spearhead, curved axe-head and hook, all forged from a single blade and mounted on a shaft around six feet long. In better quality weapons the shaft is protected by steel langets that extend down most of its length from the head. You can use a ready action to set a bill against a charge, in which case it deals double damage on a successful hit against a charging character. A bill may be used to make trip attempts. A character who is wielding a bill and who is tripped while making a trip attempt may drop the bill to avoid being tripped in return.

Bow, Hunting: These small, simple bows are used around the world, for both hunting and combat. Any bow other than one of the regional longbows can be treated as a hunting bow. Hunting bows require two hands for use. They may be used while mounted. Hunting bows always have an effective strength rating of +0 (see sidebar).

Bow, Hyrkanian: The Hyrkanian bow is a composite bow made from horn, wood and sinew. A Hyrkanian bow requires both hands to shoot and may be used while mounted. All Hyrkanian bows have strength ratings (see boxed text).

STRENGTH RATINGS FOR BOWS

All bows are made with a certain 'pull'. The greater the pull, the more force can be put behind the arrow but the harder the bow is to draw. In game terms, all bows are made with a strength rating. A strength rating is given as the Strength modifier the weapon is ideally suited for and is given in brackets after the bow. For example, a Bossonian longbow made for a character of Strength 8 to 9 would be written as a 'Bossonian longbow (-1)' whereas a Shemite bow made for a character of Strength 16 or 17 would be written as a 'Shemite bow (+3)'.

The strength rating of a bow indicates the maximum amount of additional damage from Strength that can be added to the damage of its arrows. A character shooting a bow always modifies damage and Armour Piercing ratings with the *worse* of his Strength modifier and the strength rating of the bow. In addition, a character whose Strength modifier is less than the strength rating of the bow has a -2 circumstance penalty on his attack rolls with that bow.

For longbows with strength ratings of +1 or above, the cost to buy the bow is increased by +20 sp for each +1 of the strength rating.

For example, a character of Strength 16 has a Strength bonus of +3. If he were proficient with the Bossonian longbow, the ideal weapon for him to wield would be a Bossonian longbow (+3), at a cost of 80 sp. He would deal 1d10+3 damage with this weapon and it would have an Armour Piercing value of 8. If he instead chose a Bossonian longbow (+2) at a cost of 60 sp, he would only deal 1d10+2 damage (AP 7). If he picked up a Bossonian longbow (+4), he would still deal only 1d10+3 damage (AP 8) and suffer a -2 penalty on his attack rolls with it.

If, on the other hand, a character with Strength 8 picked up a Bossonian longbow (+1) he would deal 1d10-1 damage with an Armour Piercing value of 4, *and* suffer a -2 penalty on his attack rolls with it.

Bow, Shemite: The Shemite bow is very similar to the Hyrkanian bow. A Shemite bow requires both hands to shoot and may be used while mounted. All Shemite bows have strength ratings (see boxed text).

Bow, Stygian: The Stygian bow is heavy and powerful, shooting a long, weighty arrow that does a great deal of damage but does not travel as far as most other arrows. A Stygian bow requires both hands to shoot and may not be used while mounted, though the Stygian nobility often use them from chariots. All Stygian bows have strength ratings (see boxed text).

Broadsword: This heavy, slightly tapered sword is intended for battlefield use and is often wielded by knights expecting to face lightly armoured enemies. It is too expensive for most mercenaries but many adventurers favour broadswords for their good balance and reasonable effectiveness against armour. Though the broadsword's handgrip is clearly only long enough for one hand to grip it comfortably, the pommel is large and often disc-shaped, allowing for a warrior to get his second hand behind the blow if need be and use the weapon two-handed. A broadsword being wielded two-handed can be used as a finesse weapon if desired.

Club: The club is perhaps the simplest of man-made weapons. It is most often found in primitive countries but may also be used by peasants and city mobs in more civilised nations.

Club, War: War clubs are used by warriors who cannot afford anything better or who live in areas where better weapons are not generally manufactured.

Crossbow: Crossbows are favoured by countries that do not have many troops capable of wielding any type of longbow, which includes many of the Hyborian nations. A crossbow is effective but the experienced warrior will find that a bow of any kind allows a far more rapid rate of fire. A crossbow requires two hands to fire. It may be reloaded as a full-round action.

Cutlass: Cutlasses are shorter than broadswords but almost as heavy and damaging. For this reason they are much-used by pirates, who need a weapon that is not likely to get entangled in rigging or stuck in the low ceilings below



MARCIAL WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Armour Piercing	Range Increment	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>									
Axe ^F	3 sp	1d8	×3	1**	10 ft.	5	3	2 lb.	Slashing
Knife, Ghanata ^F	2 sp	1d8	×2	1**	10 ft.	8	3	2 lb.	Slashing
Pommel*	*	1d4	×2	1	—	*	*	*	Bludgeoning
Poniard ^F	10 sp	1d6	19–20/×2	1**	5 ft.	10	2	1 lb.	Piercing
Sword, Short ^F	50 sp	1d8	19–20/×2	1	—	10	3	1½ lb.	Slashing or Piercing
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Battleaxe	5 sp	1d10	×3	4	—	7	5	3 lb.	Slashing
Broadsword*	125 sp	1d10	19–20/×2	3	—	10	5	2½ lb.	Slashing
Cutlass	50 sp	1d10	19–20/×2	2	—	8	5	2 lb.	Slashing
Knife, Zhaibar	25 sp	1d12	×2	1	—	8	6	3 lb.	Slashing
Lance, Heavy*	7 sp	1d10	×3	3	—	5	8	7 lb.	Piercing
Lance, Light*	5 sp	1d10	×3	2	—	5	5	4 lb.	Piercing
Scimitar	75 sp	1d8	18–20/×2	2	—	10	5	2½ lb.	Slashing
Sword, Arming ^F	100 sp	1d10	19–20/×2	2	—	10	4	2 lb.	Slashing or Piercing
Warhammer	7 sp	1d6	×3	7	—	7	4	4 lb.	Bludgeoning or Piercing
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Bardiche	8 sp	1d10+1d8	×3	5	—	7	10	7 lb.	Slashing
Bill*	7 sp	2d8	×3	6	—	7	10	6 lb.	Slashing or Piercing
Club, War	3 sp	2d6	×2	4	—	5	10	6 lb.	Bludgeoning
Pike* ^R	5 sp	2d6	×3	2	—	5	8	10 lb.	Piercing
Pollaxe*	8 sp	2d6	×3	8	—	7	10	7 lb.	Slashing or Piercing
Sword, War* ^F	150 sp	1d12	19–20/×2	3	—	10	8	4 lb.	Slashing or Piercing
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>									
Arbalest	15 sp	2d8	×2	6**	70 ft.	6	5	20 lb.	Piercing
Bolts (10)	3 sp	—	—	—	—	5	1	2 lb.	—
Crossbow	12 sp	2d6	×2	4**	60 ft.	5	4	15 lb.	Piercing
Bolts (10)	2 sp	—	—	—	—	5	1	1 lb.	—

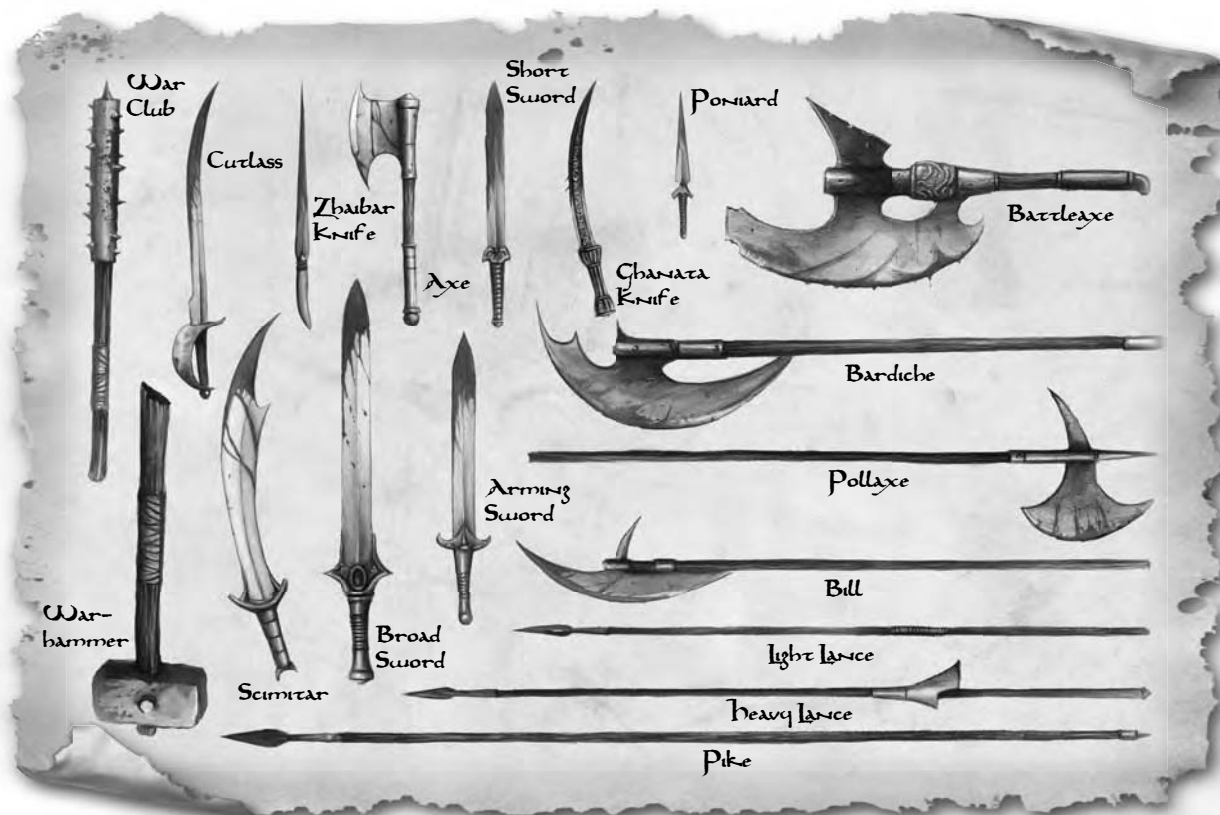
* See the weapon description for special rules.

^F Finesse weapon

^R Reach weapon

** The Armour Piercing score for all ranged weapons is reduced by one for each range increment beyond the first.





decks. Any one-handed weapon larger than the cutlass that is wielded in a low-ceilinged environment is used with a -2 circumstance penalty to the attack roll.

Dagger: The dagger is an all-purpose weapon and tool that is carried by almost everyone in the Hyborian countries over the age of 10 or so. Most daggers have double-edged blades, making them more useful for stabbing than cutting but they are still short and handy enough to have many roles outside of combat.

Gauntlet: Gauntlets come free with all medium and heavy armours but some characters may elect to buy a gauntlet by itself as a weapon. A gauntlet cannot be removed with a disarm action (see page 206).

Greatsword: Possibly the most powerful weapon fielded on the battlefield by most Hyborian nations, the greatsword is a large, no-nonsense killing sword. Adventurers of Nemedia are particularly noted for wielding greatswords but most other Hyborian armies arm at least a few knights with this deadly weapon.

Hatchet: The hatchet is more of a woodsman's tool than a weapon, though it is often pressed into service in combat. Many armies carry a number of hatchets too, simply for cutting firewood, though a lowly man-at-arms or mercenary may certainly carry one onto the battlefield.

Javelin: The javelin is a light throwing spear that is rarely seen among the Hyborian military but that is sometimes used by more primitive armies. It is

rather better balanced for throwing than the hunting spear but is a little too fragile for effective use in melee combat.

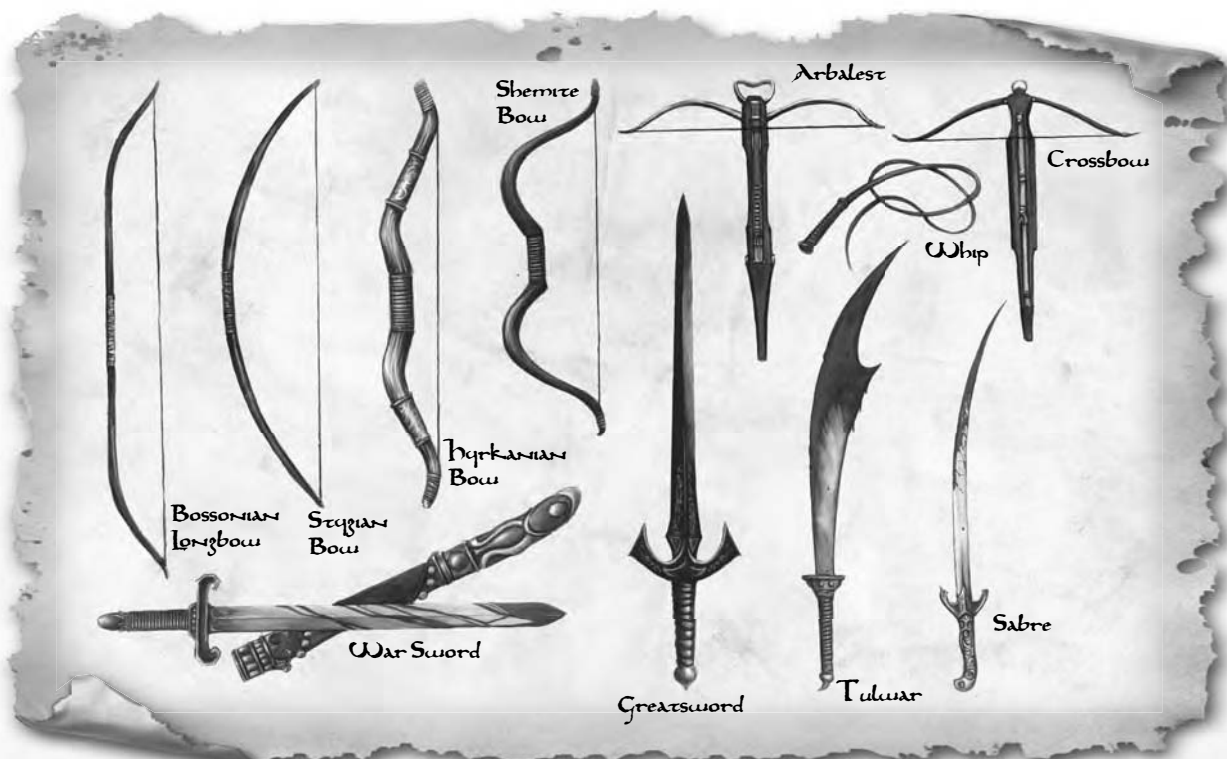
Knife: A short, single-edged cutting tool, the knife can only really be effective as a weapon against unarmoured or defenceless foes.

Knife, Ghanata: The Ghanata knife is commonly used by the tribesmen of the Southern Desert. It is two feet long, heavy, razor-sharp and slightly curved.

Knife, Yuetshi: The Yuetshi knife is a long, saw-edged knife with a crescent-shaped blade. It is wielded by the Yuetshi fishermen of the southern Vilayet sea.

Knife, Zhaibar: The Zhaibar knife is as long as most swords, though it is shaped very much like a large knife and has a thicker blade than any sword. It is used throughout Ghulistan. Its blade is three feet long, triangular and intended for slashing rather than thrusting. Most Zhaibar knives are bone-handled.

Lance, Heavy: A heavy lance used from the back of a charging mount does double damage and has a +2 circumstance bonus to its Armour Piercing rating. A heavy lance has reach: one can use it against opponents 10 feet away but not against an adjacent enemy. Heavy lances are intended for use when mounted and are



unbalanced for use on foot; if used while dismounted, treat a heavy lance as a war spear with a -2 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls.

Lance, Light: A light lance used from the back of a charging mount does double damage and has a $+1$ circumstance bonus to its Armour Piercing rating. Light lances are intended for use when mounted but can still be reasonably effective on foot; if used while dismounted, treat a light lance as a hunting spear.

Longbow, Bossonian: The Bossonian longbow has justly made the Bossonian Marches famous for the quality and deadliness of their archers. This massive yew bow does not have quite the range of the Hyrkanian or Shemite bows but the Bossonian archers make up for this with deadly accuracy when the enemy is within range and utter steadfastness when he is not. A Bossonian longbow requires both hands to shoot and may not be used while mounted. All Bossonian longbows have strength ratings (see page 147).

Mace, Heavy or Light: The mace consists of a wooden or metal shaft topped with a heavy, blunt striking surface, usually flanged or ball-shaped.

It is very effective against armour, crushing both the protection and the warrior inside it.

Pike: Pikes are extremely long spears, highly effective in massed ranks but very

unwieldy in close combat. A pike is a special variety of reach weapon. A character wielding a pike can attack opponents who are 20 feet away but cannot attack opponents closer than that.

Pollaxe: With an axe-head backed by a warhammer-head, the whole thing surmounted by a spear-point, the pollaxe is a versatile if heavy weapon. The ash shaft is usually around four to five feet long and is protected by steel langets. A character can use a ready action to set a pollaxe against a charge, in which case it deals double damage on a successful hit against a charging character.

Pommel: A pommel is the heavy steel counterweight on every sword-hilt. The following weapons can all be used to make pommel attacks: dagger, poniard, Ghanata knife, short sword, Zhaibar knife, arming sword, broad sword, scimitar, cutlass, sabre, war sword, greatsword and tulwar. Pommel attacks are useful when one wishes to make a bludgeoning attack or when one needs to use a light weapon – for example, when grappling an enemy. A pommel can also be used to make a stun attempt using the Stunning Attack feat if a character has it.

Poniard: The poniard is a heavy, long dagger designed for war and favoured by fighting men as an off-hand or secondary weapon. The blade is usually fifteen to nineteen inches long, with the pommel, guard and handle bringing the total size of the weapon to over two feet.

Sabre: The sabre is a common cavalry weapon in the East. It is intended for one-handed use from horseback

EXOTIC WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Armour Piercing	Range Increment	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Sabre	125 sp	1d10	18–20/x2	2	—	10	8	4 lb.	Slashing
Sword, War*	150 sp	1d12	19–20/x2	3	—	10	8	4 lb.	Slashing
Whip* ^F	2 sp	1d4	x2	—	—	2	2	1 lb.	Slashing
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Greatsword	200 sp	1d10+1d8	19–20/x2	4	—	10	10	6 lb.	Slashing or Piercing
Tulwar	150 sp	2d8	18–20/x2	3	—	10	10	6 lb.	Slashing
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>									
Bow, Hyrkanian	25 sp	1d10	19–20/x2	3**	100 ft.	5	3	2 lb.	Piercing
Arrows (20)	3 sp	—	—	—	—	5	1	3 lb.	—
Bow, Shemite	25 sp	1d10	x3	4**	100 ft.	5	3	2 lb.	Piercing
Arrows (20)	3 sp	—	—	—	—	5	1	3 lb.	—
Bow, Stygian	30 sp	1d12	19–20/x2	2**	60 ft.	5	4	3 lb.	Piercing
Arrows (20)	4 sp	—	—	—	—	5	1	4 lb.	—
Longbow, Bossonian	20 sp	1d12	x3	5**	80 ft.	5	3	2 lb.	Piercing
Arrows (20)	3 sp	—	—	—	—	5	1	3 lb.	—

* See the weapon description for special rules.

^F Finesse weapon

^R Reach weapon

** The Armour Piercing score for all ranged weapons is reduced by one for each range increment beyond the first.

or two-handed use on foot. Although it is classified as an exotic weapon, it may be wielded as a martial weapon by a mounted character or by a character using it in both hands.

Scimitar: The scimitar is the Eastern equivalent of the sword, with a heavy, curved blade that provides extreme cutting power. It is the most common weapon among Hyrkanian and Shemite nomads.

Sling: The second most basic projectile weapon – one step up from throwing rocks – the sling is still highly effective, hurling lead bullets capable of breaking limbs or smashing skulls.

Spear, Hunting: The hunting spear is light enough to be wielded with one hand and is commonly used in pairs, with the first spear being flung and the second used to finish off the wounded animal. Some warriors from primitive countries use a hunting spear and shield in war.

Spear, War: The war spear is a long, heavy spear with a broad, often leaf-shaped head. The war spear is a reach weapon; a character wielding it may attack foes who are 10 feet away but may not attack adjacent enemies.

Staff: The staff is a thick piece of oak or ash fully eight or nine feet long and usually shod at each end with iron. When wielded with both hands close to the butt it provides a good five to six feet of striking length when it is held towards the enemy and used for thrusts, sweeps and swings. A staff is a reach weapon but unlike

more usual reach weapons it may be used freely to attack both adjacent opponents and those who are 10 feet away.

Stiletto: This is a long, narrow-bladed dagger, favoured at court and much used by noble ladies and assassins.

Sword, Arming: The arming sword resembles the broadsword but is slightly shorter and lighter and often not quite so well made. Knights and mercenaries whose main weapon is a broadsword, battleaxe, heavy mace or two-handed weapon carry an arming sword as a backup weapon and some archers and crossbowmen also use it. Furthermore, it is the only weapon in its class light enough to be a finesse weapon (see page 171). Well made, fancy-looking versions of the arming sword are often worn about town by nobles and other well-to-do types, since it does not attract quite so much attention as the more obviously military broadsword.

Sword, Short: The short sword is somewhere between the arming sword and poniard in length, with a blade some two feet long or a little longer. It is handy, concealable and can be used as a finesse weapon, making it much favoured by thieves and skirmishers.

Sword, War: Also known as a bastard sword or hand-and-a-half sword, the war sword



is intended for one-handed use from horseback or two-handed use on foot. Although it is classified as an exotic weapon, it may be wielded as a martial weapon by a mounted character or by a character using it in both hands. Any time a war sword is being wielded in two hands, it may be used as a finesse weapon and to make piercing attacks. The table below summarises the various uses of the war sword.

Movement	Hands Used	Classification	Finesse?
Mounted	One Handed	Martial	No
Mounted	Two Handed	Exotic	Yes
On Foot	One Handed	Exotic	No
On Foot	Two Handed	Martial	Yes

Tulwar: This two-handed, heavy curved sword resembles a massive scimitar. It is wielded for its sheer cutting power and sometimes as symbol of rank among warriors of the East.

Unarmed Strike: When you have lost your broadsword and poniard, or when you just want to prove a point, a fist to the jaw can be a devastatingly effective weapon.

Warhammer: Though referred to as a warhammer, this weapon has a head that more closely resembles a meat tenderiser, which is used for bashing in the joints of an armoured opponent. The spike on the reverse of the head looks a little like a pickaxe blade and can be used to pierce right through heavy armour. The head is mounted on a three-foot long shaft of ash, allowing for good leverage.

Whip: A whip deals nonlethal damage, though if it inflicts four or more damage in a single blow one point of this damage is considered to be lethal damage. It deals no damage to any creature with damage reduction of three or higher, whether from armour or natural DR. The whip is treated as a melee weapon with 15-foot reach, though one does not threaten the area into which one can make an attack. In addition, unlike most other weapons with reach, one can use the whip against foes anywhere within reach, including adjacent foes. Using a whip provokes an attack of opportunity, just as if one had used a ranged weapon.

A character can make trip attacks with a whip. If one is tripped during his own trip attempt, he can drop the whip to avoid being tripped. When using a whip, a character gets a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an opponent, including the roll to keep from being disarmed if the attack fails. Whips are finesse weapons.

A whip can also be used to torture captives, granting a +2 circumstance bonus to all Profession

(torturer) tests. The whip is assumed to be a large bullwhip, capable of inflicting serious pain and some injury; a cheaper cat o' nine tails or similar light whip can be made for one sp. This light whip is not a weapon but can be used to deal one point of lethal damage and 1d4 nonlethal damage per minute on an unarmoured, helpless opponent.

WEAPON AVAILABILITY

The standard weapons listed on the weapons table are available in most regions, including all the Hyborian kingdoms and most of the Eastern nations. However, weapons with a region as part of their name, such as the Bossonian longbow and Ghanata knife, are usually only available in or around that region.

Likewise, exotic weapons are usually scarce outside of the regions in which most people have Weapon Familiarity with them. For example, tulwars are scarce in the Hyborian kingdoms but greatswords are scarce beyond them. It is always up to the Games Master to determine which weapons are available in specific regions.

WEAPON QUALITY

There are almost no specifically 'magical' weapons in the Hyborian age. However, weapons of superior and inferior quality are sometimes available.

The standard weapons listed in the Weapons table are assumed to be of average quality. On occasion, it may be necessary to wield weapons of lesser quality; conversely, an adventurer who is fortunate enough to get his hands on a better quality weapon will likely not give it up until it is prised from his dead fingers or lost in the corpse of his enemy.

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, the hierarchy of weapon quality is as follows: primitive weapons, standard weapons, high-quality weapons, Akbitanan weapons. Primitive weapons are the poorest quality and Akbitanan weapons are the best quality available short of the extremely scarce magical weapons.

PRIMITIVE WEAPONS

Primitive weapons are found in any place where it is hard to get good quality materials or where the craftsmen are relatively low skilled or, more commonly, both. This is particularly the case throughout the Pictish Wilderness and in many of the Black Kingdoms. Occasionally, primitive weapons can be found in more advanced nations, especially in frontier or isolated regions



PRIMITIVE WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Armour Piercing	Range Increment	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>									
Hatchet ^F	1 sp	1d6	×2	—	10 ft.	2	2	2 lb.	Slashing
Knife ^F	½ sp	1d4	×2	—	10 ft.	4	1	1 lb.	Slashing
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Club	—	1d8	×2	—	10 ft.	2	4	2 lb.	Bludgeoning
Spear, Hunting	1 sp	1d8	×2	—	10 ft.	2	4	2 lb.	Piercing
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Spear, War ^{F R}	1 sp	1d10	×3	—	—	3	4	5 lb.	Piercing
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>									
Bow, Hunting	1 sp	1d8	×2	—	50 ft.	2	2	1 lb.	Piercing
Arrows (20)	½ sp	—	—	—	—	2	1	3 lb.	—
Javelin	1 sp	1d8	×2	—	30 ft.	2	3	2 lb.	Piercing

AKETANAN WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Armour Piercing	Range Increment	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
<i>SIMPLE WEAPONS</i>									
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>									
Dagger ^F	50 sp	1d4	19–20/×2	3**	10 ft.	15	2	1 lb.	Piercing
Stiletto ^F	50 sp	1d4	×4	3	—	12	2	½ lb.	Piercing
<i>MARTIAL WEAPONS</i>									
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>									
Poniard ^F	50 sp	1d6	19–20/×2	3**	5 ft.	15	4	1 lb.	Piercing
Sword, Short ^F	250 sp	1d8	19–20/×2	3	—	15	6	1½ lb.	Slashing or Piercing
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Broadsword*	625 sp	1d10	19–20/×2	5	—	15	10	2½ lb.	Slashing
Scimitar	375 sp	1d8	18–20/×2	4	—	15	10	2½ lb.	Slashing
Sword, Arming*	500 sp	1d10	19–20/×2	4	—	15	8	2 lb.	Slashing or Piercing
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Sword, War* ^F	750 sp	1d12	19–20/×2	5	—	15	16	4 lb.	Slashing or Piercing
<i>EXOTIC WEAPONS</i>									
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Sabre	625 sp	1d10	18–20/×2	4	—	15	16	4 lb.	Slashing
Sword, War*	750 sp	1d12	19–20/×2	5	—	15	16	4 lb.	Slashing
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>									
Greatsword	1000 sp	1d10+1d8	19–20/×2	6	—	15	20	6 lb.	Slashing or Piercing
Tulwar	750 sp	2d8	18–20/×2	5	—	15	20	6 lb.	Slashing

* See the weapon description for special rules.

** The Armour Piercing score for all ranged weapons is reduced by one for each range increment beyond the first.

^F Finesse weapon

^R Reach weapon



where both materials and smiths may be of low quality. Primitive weapons are usually only simple weapons, though occasionally primitive martial weapons are made. None of the exotic weapons can be made as primitive weapons. All primitive weapons are brittle and tend not to be as durable or keep as good edges as standard weapons. They are usually made from stone, copper, bronze or poor quality iron.

Primitive weapons have only half the Hardness of standard weapons (rounded down) and their Armour Piercing value is reduced by two, to a minimum of zero.

Furthermore, primitive weapons break if they strike completely ineffectively against a metal-armoured character; that is, if the armour's DR reduces the primitive weapon's damage to zero, the weapon is broken.

Primitive weapons cost only one-half the cost listed in the Weapons table, rounded down.

For example: A primitive war spear still does d10 damage with a $\times 3$ critical. However, its Armour Piercing value is zero and its hardness is only three. It costs only one sp.

A list of the most common primitive weapons is provided in the Primitive Weapons Table.

HIGH-QUALITY WEAPONS

High-quality weapons are made by master-smiths and wielded by the greatest of warriors and wealthiest of nobles. They are a cut above common blades but do not match the legendary hardness or sharpness of the fabled blades of Akbitan.

High-quality weapons have a +1 bonus to Armour Piercing and +1 Hardness. They cost twice as much as normal weapons.

AKBITANAN WEAPONS

The expertise of the Akbitanan smiths combines with superb locally mined high-grade steel mined to produce weapons that have near-perfect balance, unsurpassed hardness and a strength and flexibility that renders them almost indestructible. Akbitanan weapons can generally be found for sale only in Akbitan itself;

these weapons are so famed that the smiths of that city have more than enough business without actively exporting their wares.

Thrusting his dagger-point into the crack, Conan exerted leverage with a corded forearm. The blade bent, but it was of unbreakable Akbitanan steel. The marble door opened.

— Jewels of Gwahlur

Almost all Akbitanan-manufactured weapons are martial or exotic. Bladed arms such as daggers, swords and scimitars are the Akbitanan smiths' preferred products. It might just be possible to persuade an Akbitanan smith to manufacture another weapon but he is unlikely to be willing to make a hafted weapon such as a spear or axe. This is because such a weapon must necessarily rely on a wooden shaft for much of its strength and no smith can guarantee the strength of wood.

Akbitanan weapons grant an enhancement bonus of +1 to attack rolls and +2 to Armour Piercing. Furthermore, they have 1.5 times the usual Hardness and double the usual Hit Points for the weapon type (round down). An Akbitanan weapon costs five times the cost of the base weapon (minimum 50 sp).

For example, an Akbitanan war sword gives +1 to all attack rolls, has an Armour Piercing of 5, a Hardness of 15 and 16 Hit Points. It costs 750 sp.

A list of the most common Akbitanan weapons is provided in the Akbitanan Weapons Table.

BROKEN WEAPONS

Broken weapons count as improvised and so bestow a -4 nonproficiency penalty to attack rolls and a -1 penalty to Parry Defence when used to parry. A weapon must be at least a one-handed melee weapon to be usable when broken. Light weapons are destroyed outright.

Treat a broken one-handed bladed weapon as a poniard and a broken two-handed bladed weapon as a scimitar or arming sword, depending on its size. Broken weapons only ever inflict slashing damage, as they no longer have sharp points. A broken weapon retains its original hardness and has the same number of Hit Points as a poniard or scimitar. All broken weapons (like all improvised weapons) score critical threats only on unmodified rolls of 20.

ARMOUR

ARMOUR QUALITIES

To wear heavier armour effectively, a character can select the Armour Proficiency feats; however, most classes are automatically proficient with the armours that work best for them. If you wear armour that you do not have a proficiency for, you apply its armour check penalty to all attack rolls and all Strength-based and Dexterity-based skill checks.

A character who sleeps in medium or heavy armour is automatically fatigued the next day. He takes a -2 penalty on Strength and Dexterity and cannot charge or run. Sleeping in light armour does not cause fatigue.

Armour and shields can take damage from some types of attacks.

Here is the format for armour entries:

Cost: This column shows the cost of the armour.

Damage Reduction: Whenever a character is hit in combat, whether by a melee or ranged weapon, the damage reduction (DR) score of any armour he is wearing at the time is deducted from the damage rolled by the weapon.

Maximum Dex Bonus: This number is the maximum Dexterity bonus to Dodge Defence that this type of armour allows. The Dexterity bonus that is added to a character's Dodge Defence cannot exceed this number while he is wearing the armour. Heavier armours limit mobility, reducing the wearer's ability to dodge blows. This restriction does not affect any other Dexterity-related abilities. The character's Parry Defence is unaffected by the armour he is wearing.

Even if a character's Dodge Defence is effectively +0 because of armour, the character can still dodge. He is not counted as 'unable to dodge' for the purposes of sneak attacks.

A character's encumbrance (the amount of gear he carries) may also restrict the maximum Dexterity bonus to Dodge Defence that he can use.

Shields: Shields do not affect a character's maximum Dexterity bonus to Dodge Defence.

Armour Check Penalty: Any armour heavier than a quilted jerkin penalises a character's ability to use some skills. An armour check penalty number is

the penalty that applies to Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble tests when a character is wearing a certain kind of armour. Double the normal armour check penalty is applied to Swim tests. A character's encumbrance (the amount of gear he is carrying, including armour) may also apply an armour check penalty.

Shields: If a character is wearing armour and using a shield, the armour check penalties stack.

Helmets: A helmet's armour check penalty is applied to Listen and Spot checks instead.

Nonproficient with Armour Worn: A character who wears armour and/or uses a shield with which he is not proficient takes the armour's (and/or shield's) armour check penalty on attack rolls and on all Strength-based and Dexterity-based ability and skill tests. The penalty for nonproficiency with armour stacks with the penalty for nonproficiency with shields.

Sorcery Failure: Armour interferes with the gestures that a sorcerer must make to cast an arcane spell that has a somatic component. Sorcerers thus face the possibility of sorcery failure if they are wearing armour.

Casting a Spell in Armour: A character who casts a spell while wearing armour must usually make a sorcery failure roll. The number in the Sorcery Failure column on the Armour table is the chance that the spell fails and is ruined. If the spell lacks a somatic component, however, it can be cast with no chance of sorcery failure.

Shields: If a character is wearing armour and using a shield, add the two numbers together to get a single sorcery failure chance.

Speed: Medium or heavy armour slows the wearer down. The number on the Armour table is the character's speed while wearing the armour.

Shields: Shields do not affect a character's speed.

Weight: This column gives the weight of the armour.

ARMOUR TABLE

Armour	Cost	Damage Reduction	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armour Check Penalty	Sorcery Failure	Speed	Weight
<i>Light Armour</i>							
Leather Jerkin	10 sp	4	+6	-1	40%	30 ft.	5 lb.
Mail Shirt	400 sp	5	+4	-3	60%	30 ft.	20 lb.
Quilted Jerkin	45 sp	3	+7	—	30%	30 ft.	2 lb.
<i>Medium Armour</i>							
Brigandine Coat	300 sp	6	+2	-5	70%	25 ft.	30 lb.
Scale Corselet	100 sp	5	+3	-4	75%	25 ft.	25 lb.
Mail Hauberk	800 sp	6	+3	-4	80%	25 ft.	35 lb.
Breastplate	2,000 sp	6	+4	-4	70%	25 ft.	20 lb.
<i>Heavy Armour</i>							
Mail Hauberk and Breastplate	2,800 sp	9	+1	-8	95%	25 ft.	55 lb.
Mail Hauberk and Brigandine Coat	1,100 sp	9	+0	-9	95%	25 ft.	65 lb.
Mail Hauberk and Scale Corselet	900 sp	8	+0	-8	90%	25 ft.	60 lb.
Mail Hauberk and Scale Hauberk	1,000 sp	9	+0	-10	100%	25 ft.	75 lb.
Mail Shirt and Breastplate	2,400 sp	8	+2	-7	85%	25 ft.	40 lb.
Mail Shirt and Brigandine Coat	700 sp	8	+1	-8	85%	25 ft.	50 lb.
Mail Shirt and Scale Corselet	500 sp	7	+1	-7	80%	25 ft.	45 lb.
Mail Shirt and Scale Hauberk	600 sp	8	+0	-9	100%	25 ft.	60 lb.
Plate Armour	6,500 sp	10	+2	-6	95%	25 ft.	55 lb.
Scale Hauberk	200 sp	6	+1	-6	90%	25 ft.	40 lb.
<i>Helmets</i>							
Steel Cap	+40 sp	+1	—	—	10%	—	3 lb.
Great Helm	+350 sp	+2	—	-2	20%	—	7 lb.
Visored Helm	+450 sp	+1/+2	—	-/-2	20%	—	5 lb.

ARMOUR DESCRIPTIONS

Breastplate: Worn over a quilted jerkin (included in the cost), the breastplate gives maximum protection to the torso and still allows for rapid movement.

Brigandine Coat: A brigandine coat or 'coat-of-plates' uses large, overlapping steel plates sandwiched between two layers of heavy cloth or leather and riveted together. It provides heavy but effective protection to the torso.

Great Helm: A great helm is a heavy steel helmet that protects the entire head. Many are elaborately decorated. The armour penalty for a great helm applies to Listen and Spot tests only.

Leather Jerkin: This is a cheap and simply made jacket of cowhide.

It is thick enough to stop a glancing blow but can be a little encumbering.

Mail Shirt: The mail shirt only protects the torso. The arms and perhaps the hips are protected by quilted cloth or heavy leather.

Mail Hauberk: A mail hauberk covers the torso, arms and upper legs with mail armour and comes with greaves of steel plate to protect the lower legs. Mail hauberks are found throughout the world, though the best are made in Turan.

Plate Armour: The ultimate in protection, plate armour consists of shaped steel plates that cover the entire body, from the tips of the toes to the crown of the head. Plate armour is always made to fit the wearer, a process that takes several months and usually require a sizable deposit upfront. There is a straight 20% chance that any given suit will *almost* fit a particular character, in which case it can be worn but with a maximum Dex bonus of +0. A suit that almost fits in this manner can be re-sized to fit the character perfectly, as though it were made-to-measure. This takes 1d4 weeks and costs 500 sp per week.

Quilted Jerkin: Painstakingly hand-sewn from twenty or more layers of linen, the quilted jerkin is light and usually fits well, allowing for almost completely unencumbered movement but not offering as much protection as a good suit of mail or scale armour.

Scale Corselet: This armour protects the torso only and is made from overlapping layers of small oval metal scales held together by woven laces. It is usually worn with some light limb protection such as thick boiled leather plates or even multiple layers of quilted linen or wool. Scale corselets are common among mercenary bands and some of the Shemite nomads and Hyrkanian warriors.

Scale Hauberk: A scale hauberk covers the arms, torso and legs almost to the knee with metal scales similar to those used for a scale corselet. The lower legs may be protected by light mail armour, steel greaves or hardened leather plates.

Steel Cap: All open-faced helmets, such as the morion helms favoured by Argossean soldiers and sailors, the horned helmets of the Nordheimr and the plain conical helms worn by the nomads of Shem are considered steel caps. Most steel caps are simple, mass-produced items intended to protect the ordinary soldiery from glancing blows.

Visored Helm: Visored helms include any helmets which have some means of opening out to allow the wearer to more easily see and breathe. Sallets, close-helmets and armets are examples of visored helms. The armour penalty for a visored helm applies to Listen and Spot tests only. The penalty to Spot tests does not apply if the visor is worn up but in that case the visored helm only grants +1 damage reduction, rather than +2. If the wearer has a free hand, he may put the visor up or down once per round as a free action.

HELMETS

When a helmet is worn with a suit of armour, the two damage reduction scores are added together for all purposes. If it becomes necessary to determine which of the two is left intact after an attack, assume that the helmet is the last piece of armour to be destroyed, unless the Games Master's description of the combat specifies otherwise.

LAYERING ARMOUR

Certain types of armour may be layered together to increase protection. Often the bulk and weight of two layers of armour makes this an impractical solution, though for heavy combat it may almost be worth it. All the combinations of armour that may be layered together are given their own entries in the Armour table. Layered armour is always considered heavy armour.

ARMOUR QUALITY AND AVAILABILITY

Like weapons, armour has something of a hierarchy of quality, with armour from the best smiths being both better-fitting and offering more protection. There is no especially primitive armour; primitive nations such as the Black Kingdoms often have only leather or quilted jerkins available but these are not inferior in quality to those typically found throughout the Hyborian kingdoms. Breastplates, plate armour and brigandine coats, even those of standard quality, are generally only available in the Hyborian nations, though nobles from other regions may travel to the north to have plate armour made.

SUPERIOR ARMOUR

Superior armour is only manufactured in a small number of regions, as follows:

Aquilonia: Breastplate, plate armour, visored helmet.

Koth: Scale corselet, scale hauberk, great helm.

Turan and Hyrkania: Mail shirt, mail hauberk, steel cap.

Zingara: Leather jerkin.

Note that no other kinds of superior armour are available.

Superior armour has a maximum Dexterity bonus that is +1 higher than usual for the armour and weighs 10% less than standard armour. More importantly, it is significantly harder and will only be damaged if the wearer is dealt 25 Hit Points of damage rather than the usual 20 Hit Points (see page 179). Superior armour costs three times as much as an equivalent suit of armour.

If two suits of armour are combined, such as a mail hauberk and a breastplate, the increase to maximum Dex bonus applies only if both suits of armour are superior. Superior quality armour must always be tailored to fit the wearer – a looted suit of superior armour can be reworked to fit its new owner but unless a Craft (armourer) test (DC 30) is made, the resulting armour will no longer be superior.

GETTING INTO AND OUT OF ARMOUR

The time required to don armour depends on its type; see the Donning Armour table.

Mail Shirt

Brigandine Coat



Leather Jerkin



Quilted Jerkin



Mail Hauberk



Scale Corselet



Large Shield



Targe



Buckler



Breastplate

DONNING ARMOUR

Armour Type	Don	Don Hastily	Remove
Shield (any)	1 move action	n/a	1 move action
Leather jerkin, mail shirt, quilted jerkin, brigandine coat	1 minute	5 rounds	1 minute ¹
Scale hauberk, mail hauberk, breastplate	4 minutes ¹	1 minute	1 minute ¹
Plate armour, scale hauberk, all heavy armour combinations	4 minutes ²	4 minutes ¹	1d4+1 minutes ¹

¹ If the character has some help, cut this time in half. A single character doing nothing else can help one or two adjacent characters. Two characters cannot help each other don armour at the same time.

² The wearer must have help to don this armour. Without help, it can only be donned hastily.

Don: This column tells how long it takes a character to put the armour on. One minute is 10 rounds. Readyng (strapping on) a shield is only a move action.

Don Hastily: This column tells how long it takes to put the armour on in a hurry. The armour check penalty and damage reduction for hastily donned armour are each one point worse than normal.

Remove: This column tells how long it takes to get the armour off. Loosing a shield (removing it from the arm and dropping it) is only a move action.

SHIELDS

Shields share some characteristics with armour and weapons, as well as having some qualities entirely their own.

All shields have a shield bonus. This is added to the Parry Defence of any character who is parrying; see page 173.

In addition, the shield bonus is added to the Dodge Defence of any character who is dodging a ranged attack. This represents the relative ease of ducking behind a shield to evade missiles.

All shields can be used to make shield bash attacks if desired but a shield used in this way does not add its parry bonus to the character's Parry Defence that round. Shields deal damage as shown on the shield table.

SHIELDS

Shield	Cost	Shield Bonus	Armour Check Penalty	Sorcery Failure	Damage	Critical	Armour Piercing	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
Buckler	5 sp	+2	-1	20%	1d6	x2	1	10	4	2 lb.	Bludgeoning
Large Shield	7 sp	+4	-4	15%	1d4	x2	—	6	10	8 lb.	Bludgeoning
Targe	3 sp	+3	-2	30%	1d4	x2	—	6	6	4 lb.	Bludgeoning

All shields have armour check penalties listed. If a character wears armour and carries a shield, add the relevant armour check penalties together.

Buckler: This is a small, round shield made from steel and designed to deflect attacks rather than stop them directly. The buckler is held in the fist by a single handle. It is versatile enough to make an effective weapon, too, since it is relatively light and agile but also very hard. A buckler is classed as a light weapon if used to make shield bash attacks.

Large Shield: The term 'large shield' covers everything from a knight's triangular shield to the large round shields favoured by the Gundermen and Nordheimers. All large shields are made of layers of wood and softer materials such as canvas, rawhide and leather. Sometimes a large shield will have a steel boss in the centre. A large shield is usually strapped to the left arm and held by a handgrip in the left hand. It may instead be strapped to the shoulder to allow for two weapons or a two-handed weapon to be

used, in which case it no longer confers a shield bonus to a character's Parry Defence. It does however does confer a +2 shield bonus to Dodge Defence when dodging ranged attacks, rather than the usual +4. A shield strapped to the shoulder allows the wearer to parry attacks if he should be left without a weapon in hand, although it conveys no shield bonus to Parry Defence. Alternatively, a large shield may be strapped to the back, in which case it may not be used to parry with at all and confers no bonus to dodging ranged attacks but instead gives +2 DR against one opponent per round when the wearer is flanked. A large shield is classed as a one-handed weapon if used to make shield bash attacks.

Targe: The targe is a small, round wooden shield covered in a layer of thick leather and studded with steel. It has two straps, one of which goes over the forearm, with the second being held in the hand. This allows for an off-hand weapon to be held in the same hand as the targe, though if this is done the targe's shield bonus to Parry Defence is reduced

to +1. The shield bonus to Dodge Defence against ranged attacks is unaffected. A targe is classed as a one-handed weapon if used to make shield bash attacks.



GOODS

Various other items are available in the Hyborian Age. As ever, their availability can be wildly variable and tracking down goods can be very nearly be an adventure in itself.

In any case, characters are not encouraged to burden themselves down with everything but the kitchen sink on the off chance that these things might come in useful on an adventure. *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, in keeping with the stories, encourages characters to be larger-than-life action heroes capable of achieving their ends with little more than a broadsword and whatever can be found around them. The Games Master is always at liberty to cross items off a character's character sheet in between adventures without compensation if characters begin to become laden down with junk. After all, if they really need something, they can always steal it. However, for those who cannot resist going shopping when in a large city, the following pages give an indication of what can be acquired.

It is important to note that supply and demand make an enormous difference to cost. The beautiful Brythunian slave girl may be worth little more than a dozen silvers in the slave markets of Turan but may be worth as many as three hundred to the rich Kothian who has ordered her kidnapped to be his wife; it might turn out that she is a king's daughter and her safe return could be worth a thousand gold lunas to her father. The prices given here are only guidelines. In the end, an item is worth whatever a buyer is willing to pay for it.

Weights for the items listed on the goods and services table below are filled weights, except where otherwise designated.

SPELLS FOR HIRE

It costs PP cost \times scholar level \times 50 sp to have a spell cast, although many scholars are either very difficult to find or will impose their own complications – few are brave or foolish enough to try and simply buy the favours of a priest of Set!

PROPERTY

Item	Cost
Hovel	5 gl
Small house	50 gl
Great house	250 gl
Manor House	950 gl
Lord's castle	3,000 gl
King's castle	12,000 gl

CLOTHING

Item	Cost	Weight
Belt	1 sp	½ lb.
Belt, Knight's or Lady's	5 sp	½ lb.
Boots, Riding	6 sp	1 lb.
Boots, Work	1 sp	1 lb.
Breeks, Silk	5 sp	—
Cloak	1 sp	1 lb.
Doublet	2 sp	½ lb.
Feathered Head-Dress	1 sp	—
Hat, Hood or Bonnet	1 sp	—
Hose or Stockings	½ sp	½ lb.
Jacket or Coat	2 sp	½ lb.
Kirtle or Dress	2 sp	1 lb.
Loincloth	¼ sp	—
Merchant's Clothing	See text	See text
Noble's Clothing	See text	See text
Pattens	½ sp	½ lb.
Robe	4 sp	2 lb.
Sandals	½ sp	½ lb.
Shirt and Braes, or Shift	½ sp	—
Shoes	2 sp	½ lb.
Tunic	½ sp	½ lb.
Winter clothing	$\times 2$	$\times 1.5$

CLASS TOOLS AND SKILL KITS

Item	Cost	Weight
Crafter's tools	20 sp	5 lb.
Crafter's tools, masterwork	120 sp	7 lb.
Healer's kit	50 sp	1 lb.
Herbalist's kit	2 sp	4 lb.
Musical instrument, any brass	18 sp	3 lb.
Musical instrument, drum	3 sp	2 lb.
Musical instrument, any pipes or woodwind	8 sp	3 lb.
Musical instrument, any stringed	20 sp	5 lb.
Musical instrument, horn	5 sp	3 lb.
Musical instrument, masterwork	+100 sp	—
Scale, merchant's	2 sp	1 lb.
Thieves' tools	30 sp	1 lb.
Thieves' tools, masterwork	130 sp	2 lb.
Tools, masterwork	+100 sp	*

– Either too heavy or too light to be concerned with.

* Ten of these items together weigh one pound.

ADVENTURING GEAR

Item	Cost	Weight
Bedroll	½ sp	5 lb.
Candles, ten	1 sp	1 lb.
Case, for parchment	2 sp	½ lb.
Chain (10 ft.)	15 sp	2 lb.
Chalk, 10 pieces	1 sp	1 lb.
Crowbar	2 sp	5 lb.
Firewood (per week)	2 sp	100 lb.
Fishhook	¼ sp	*
Fishing net, 25 sq. ft.	1 sp	5 lb.
Flint and steel	½ sp	*
Grappling hook	1 sp	4 lb.
Hammer	1 sp	2 lb.
Ink (1 oz. vial)	1 sp	*
Ink quill	½ sp	*
Ladder, 10-foot	1 sp	20 lb.
Lantern, candle	½ sp	3 lb.
Lock		
Very simple	5 sp	1 lb.
Average	5 sp	1 lb.
Good	100 sp	1 lb.
Amazing	500 sp	1 lb.
Manacles	5 sp	2 lb.
Manacles, masterwork	105 sp	2 lb.
Mirror, small steel	10 sp	½ lb.
Parchment (sheet)	½ sp	*
Rope, hemp (50 ft.)	1 sp	10 lb.
Rope, silk (50 ft.)	20 sp	5 lb.
Sewing needle	½ sp	*
Slave collar	1 sp	2 lb.
Soap (per lb.)	1 sp	1 lb.
Spade or shovel	1 sp	6 lb.
Tent	2 sp	20 lb.
Torch	¼ sp	1 lb.
Whetstone	¼ sp	1 lb.

SLAVES

Item	Cost
Slave, female, beautiful	60 sp
Slave, female, common	30 sp
Slave, female, high-born, educated, beautiful	150 sp
Slave, male, rebellious savage	5 sp
Slave, male, work-shy criminal	8 sp
Slave, male, hard-working and submissive	15 sp

FOOD, DRINK, AND LODGING

Item	Cost	Weight
Ale		
Gallon	2 sp	8 lb.
Mug	¼ sp	1 lb.
Banquet (per person)	2 sp	—
Bread, three loaves	¼ sp	3 lb.
Cheese, hunk of	½ sp	½ lb.
Inn stay (per day)		
Good	3 sp	—
Common	1 sp	—
Poor	¼ sp	—
Meals (per day)		
Good	3 sp	—
Common	1 sp	—
Poor	¼ sp	—
Meat, chunk of	½ sp	½ lb.
Rations, trail (per day)	1 sp	1 lb.
Wine		
Ghazan (gallon)	4 sp	8 lb.
Kyros (mug)	2 sp	1 lb.

MOUNTS AND RELATED GEAR

Item	Cost	Weight
Bit and bridle	1 sp	1 lb.
Camel, racing	750 sp	—
Camel, riding	80 sp	—
Camel, pack	60 sp	—
Carrier Pigeon	1 sp	—
Dog, pet	½ sp	—
Dog, war	50 sp	—
Feed (per day)	½ sp	10 lb.
Horse, riding	100 sp	—
Horse, work	75 sp	—
Warhorse, Bhalkana	2,500 sp	—
Warhorse, Hyborian	800 sp	—
Warhorse, Kushite	200 sp	—
Warhorse, Stygian	1,500 sp	—
Warhorse, Turanian Desert	750 sp	—
Saddle, pack	¼ sp	15 lb.
Saddle, riding	5 sp	25 lb.
Stabling (per day)	½ sp	—

VEHICLES

Item	Cost	Weight	Carries
Cart	100 sp	200 lb.	½ ton
Carack	75,000 sp	—	130 tons
Galley, Corsair	60,000 sp	—	80 tons
Galley, Stygian	20,000 sp	—	35 tons
Galley, Trading	15,000 sp	—	40 tons
Gondola, Stygian	4,600 sp	—	10 tons
Wagon	300 sp	400 lb.	2 tons

CONTAINERS AND CARRIERS

DRY GOODS

Item	Cost	Weight	Carries
Barrel	2 sp	20 lb.	10 cu. ft.
Basket	¼ sp	1 lb.	2 cu. ft.
Bucket, canvas	¼ sp	*	1 cu. ft.
Chest	3 sp	15 lb.	3 cu. ft.
Flask	1 sp	½ lb.	1 pint
Kit bag, canvas	1 sp	½ lb.	1 cu. ft.
Pouch, belt	½ sp	½ lb.	¼ cu. ft.
Sack	½ sp	½ lb.	1 cu. ft.
Spell component pouch	1 sp	¼ lb.	1/8 cu. ft.

LIQUIDS

Item	Cost	Weight	Volume
Bowl, wooden	¼ sp	*	1 pint
Costrel, leather	½ sp	*	2 pints
Drinking-jack, leather	¼ sp	*	1 pint
Jug, clay	1 sp	1 lb.	1 gallon
Mug/tankard, clay	½ sp	½ lb.	1 pint
Mug/tankard, pewter	2 sp	*	1 pint
Pot, iron	½ sp	2 lb.	1 gallon
Vial, ink or potion	1 sp	*	1 ounce
Waterskin	1 sp	*	½ gallon

— Either too heavy or too light to be concerned with.

* Ten of these items together weigh one pound.

CLOTHING

Clothing is always assumed to be of minimum quality unless more money is spent to buy higher-quality clothing; see Merchant's Clothing and Noble's Clothing. The only colours available for common clothing are various shades of brown and pale green, since these can be made with simple dyes derived from oak-bark or weld.

Belt: A broad leather belt, fastened with a buckle.

Belt, Knight's or Lady's: A narrow, fancy belt with a very long end designed to dangle decoratively. The belt is enhanced with decorative metal studs or sometimes gems.

Boots, Riding: High leather boots with flat soles, designed to be comfortable for a day in the saddle.

Boots, Work: Low leather boots suitable for spending all day on your feet. A favourite of peasants and infantry soldiers alike.

Breeks, Silk: Baggy, brightly coloured silk pants extending to just below the knee. Traditional pirate wear.

Cloak: A warm woollen cloak, worn for protection against the elements or to demonstrate status.

Doublet: A simple, close-fitting coat made from lightly padded wool and extending just past the waist. It opens up the front and is fastened by buttons and loops, long 'points' made from leather or catgut thongs tipped in metal. The more expensive the garment, the tighter the fit of the doublet and the more layers of padding it has. This is the standard male garment in the Hyborian kingdoms.

Feathered Head-Dress: Worn by savages from the Black Coast to the Pictish Wilderness, this simple leather-headband has one or more common feathers and beads attached. More expensive versions may be made from copper and have great ostrich plumes but these are more expensive.

Hat, Hood or Bonnet: A plain, simple head-covering made of wool, felt or linen. These items are worn to keep the rain and sun off or just for fashion.

Hose or Stockings: Woollen stockings or leggings that extend from the foot to just below the waist. Hose or stockings are either tied onto the doublet with more 'points' or held up with garters.

Kirtle or Dress: A long plain garment made of wool.

Loin-Cloth: The loin cloth is the bare minimum you can wear in polite company. It is a simple woollen, linen or leather covering for the loin area. It is usually worn suspended from a belt on both front and back in classic barbarian fashion.

Merchant's Clothing: Quality clothing fit for a merchant, classy whore, wealthy guildmaster or off-duty mercenary commander is available for between five and twenty times the cost of regular clothing. Merchant's clothing is made from higher quality wool and sometimes features metal



buttons and other ornaments. It is available in more colours than standard clothing, including red, orange and pink.

Noble's Clothing: Noble's clothing is made from fine and beautiful varieties of cloth, such as silk or velvet. It uses high quality dyes and silver buttons, jewelled pins and fine brooches. Often huge quantities of cloth are used to denote status and the collar and cuffs on noble's clothing may well be trimmed with fur. Clothing suitable for a noble costs at least fifty times as much as standard clothing. King's garb costs at least 100 times as much as standard clothing. Noble's clothing is available in all colours, including blue and even purple.

Pattens: Pattens are wooden overshoes designed to save expensive or delicate footwear from muddy puddles.

Robe: A robe is a plain, dark woollen garment worn by priests or scholars. More expensive versions, priced as per merchant's or noble's clothing, are available for particularly vain sorcerers or wealthy priests.

Sandals: Simple leather footwear.

Shirt and Braes, or Shift: This is linen underwear and nightwear; Men wear shirt and 'braes' (shorts) and women wear shifts (long, simply cut underdresses).

Shoes: Footwear intended more for fashion than practicality.

Tunic: Worn only by the very poor or those from primitive nations, the tunic is a simple woollen garment for the body and sometimes the arms.

Winter Clothing: All the above garments save the loincloth, shirt, braes, shift and

footwear are available in heavier wool winter versions. The winter cloak is much more voluminous than the summer version. It is also thicker, enabling it to be used as a makeshift tent or bedroll if need be.

ADVENTURING GEAR

Bedroll: A thick roll of blankets for those who cannot be sure where they will sleep each night.

Candle: A candle clearly illuminates a five foot radius and burns for one hour.

Case, for parchment: A wooden tube with a tightly capped end, for rolling one or two pieces of parchment.

Chain: Chain has a hardness of 10 and five Hit Points. It can be burst with a DC 26 Strength check.

Chalk: Stubs of white chalk, suitable for making simple marks on labyrinth walls or crushing up and rubbing on the hands for improved grip.

Crowbar: The classic implement for tearing open doors and even pulling apart brickwork. Provides a +2 bonus to all attempts to break down doors. If used in combat, treat as an improvised club.



Firewood: Dry oak, fruit-wood or other hardwood. 'Firewood' refers mainly to large logs that burn all night but also includes smaller kindling to start the fire and get it going.

Fishhook: A hook used to catch fish, though the cruel-minded adventurer will doubtless devise other uses.

Fishing Net: Can be used either from a boat or to block off a river and catch all the fish that would usually swim down it.

Flint and Steel: Striking the steel and flint together creates sparks. By knocking sparks into tinder, a character can create a small flame. Lighting a torch with flint and steel is a full-round action and lighting any other fire with them takes at least that long.

Grappling Hook: A three- or four-bladed hook, with a loop to tie a rope to. A grappling hook is intended for use when scaling a building or other tall obstacle but could also be used to tear down spars or ropes on a ship.

Hammer: For knocking in nails and spikes. If used in combat, treat as an improvised club.

Ink: This is black ink. Ink in other colours costs twice as much.

Ink Quill: This simple, shaped quill is derived from a feather and will last long enough to write twenty or thirty

pages quite neatly or perhaps fifty if the scribe does not care too much about legibility.

Ladder, 10-foot: Ideal for scaling low walls, this ladder could also be used as a makeshift bridge or even an uncomfortable but serviceable stretcher.

Lantern, candle: A candle lantern helps protect a candle from being blown out and prevents hot wax from dripping on the carrier's hand. A lantern can be carried in one hand.

Lock: A lock is worked with a large, bulky key. The DC to open this kind of lock with the Open Locks skill depends on the lock's quality: very simple (DC 10), average (DC 20), good (DC 30) or amazing (DC 40).

Manacles (including masterwork manacles): These manacles can bind a Medium-size creature. The manacled character can use the Escape Artist skill to slip free (DC 30 for regular manacles; DC 35 for masterwork manacles). Breaking the manacles requires success at a Strength test (DC 26 for regular manacles; DC 28 for masterwork manacles). Manacles have a hardness of 10 and 10 Hit Points. Most manacles have locks; add the cost of the lock to the cost of the manacles.

Mirror, small steel: This highly polished circle of steel is excellent for shaving, signalling or peering around corners. It must be kept oiled against rust and wiped clean before every use.

Parchment: Heavy-duty paper suitable for scribing maps, edicts or notes. Parchment is usually made from fine goatskin.

Rope, hemp: This rope has two Hit Points and can be burst with a successful Strength test (DC 23).

Rope, silk: This rope has four Hit Points and can be burst with a DC 24 Strength test. It is so supple that it provides a +2 circumstance bonus on Use Rope tests.

Sewing Needle: Very useful for repairing clothes, sails and even footwear. Also handy for poking holes in objects.

Slave Collar: Show the world who is boss by collaring all your slaves. Comes with a solidly implanted ring to allow for easy fixture to a chain or rope.

Soap: When you have just spent three weeks in the jungle and are due to meet the King of Brythunia, nothing is quite so useful as a bit of soap.

Spade or Shovel: Use this for digging up treasure, clearing snow, making pit traps or carrying coal to the fire.

Tent: This simple tent sleeps two.

Torch: A wooden rod capped with twisted flax soaked in tallow or something similar. A torch clearly illuminates a 20-foot radius and burns for one hour.

Whetstone: If you have a sword, dagger or even a small fruit knife, you will need a whetstone sooner or later to keep it sharp.

CONTAINERS AND CARRIERS

Barrel: Used for transporting both wet and dry goods aboard ships or carts, the barrel is designed to be easy to manoeuvre despite its weight.

Basket: Perfect for carrying herbs, plants, flowers, fruit, berries or other gathered goods.

Bowl, wooden: This can be used for either eating food or drinking ale and so is popular with mercenaries and others who prefer to travel light.

Bucket, canvas: When you need to carry water for short distances and pour it out quickly at your destination, nothing does the job so efficiently as a bucket. This one is light due to being made from heavy, watertight canvas.

Chest: A small lidded box with a hasp for a lock, suitable for storing treasure or holding your personal possessions on a long voyage. More expensive chests come with built-in drawers and hanging-rails, allowing them to be placed on end and used as small wardrobes when travelling.

Costrel, leather: This pitch-lined leather container is like a wide, stoppered bottle with carrying straps, allowing for water or ale to be carried easily and accessibly.

Drinking-Jack, leather: Those who cannot afford a pewter tankard and do not want the weight of a clay one often buy simple drinking-jacks made from pitch-lined leather. A drinking-jack can be tied to a sword-belt, so the wearer is always as ready for a drink as he is for a fight. The drinking jack does not get in the way or weigh the wearer down.

Flask: A ceramic, glass or metal container fitted with a tight stopper. A flask holds one pint of liquid.

Jug, clay: A basic ceramic jug fitted with a stopper. A clay jug holds one gallon of liquid.

Kit Bag, canvas: Rather like a sack but with a carrying strap, the kit bag lets a soldier carry his plate, bowl, drinking-jack and a handful of trail rations.

Mug/tankard, clay: A versatile, sturdy and stylish drinking-vessel, the clay tankard is also useful as a one-use improvised weapon; treat it as a gauntlet that automatically breaks on a successful hit. Unlike a pewter tankard, it can be used for hot and cold drinks alike.

Mug/tankard, pewter: Although this metal tankard can be very fancy-looking, it is no use for hot drinks as it is likely to heat up and burn your mouth whilst simultaneously cooling the drink down. Furthermore, it is not practical for an adventuring or even hard-drinking lifestyle, because as soon as you fall over on it, it will bend right out of shape and no longer look particularly impressive.

Pot, iron: A simple three-legged cauldron for hanging on a chain over a fire or simply placing on hot embers.

Pouch, belt: A simple leather pouch for carrying money. Usually worn by soldiers and adventurers underneath clothes to make it more difficult for their enemies to find when they are left for dead.

Spell Component Pouch: A small, watertight leather belt pouch with several small compartments for different varieties of incense and room for some magical links for cursing your enemies, this pouch is a must for any sorcerer. A sorcerer with a spell component pouch is assumed to have all the material components and focuses he needs except those that have a listed cost or that would not fit in a pouch.

Sack: This simple hessian sack has no carrying handle but can be easily folded into another container or pushed through the belt when empty or slung over the shoulder when filled with loot. It is popular with thieves and adventurers alike.

Vial: A small ceramic or metal container fitted with a tight stopper. The vial usually is no more than one inch wide and three inches high. It holds one ounce of liquid.

Waterskin: Essential travelling gear, the waterskin looks right at home whether slung over your back or dangling from your saddlebow.

CLASS TOOLS AND SKILL KITS

Crafter's Tools: This is the set of special tools needed for any craft. Without these tools, a character has to use improvised tools (-2 penalty on the Craft test) if the job can be done at all.



Crafter's Tools, masterwork: A better quality of crafter's tools, these are the perfect tools for any crafting job, so the character gets a +2 circumstance bonus on the Craft test.

Healer's Kit: This kit is full of herbs, salves, bandages and other useful materials. It is the perfect tool for anyone who attempts a Heal test and adds a +2 circumstance bonus to the test. It is exhausted after 10 uses.

Herbalist's Kit: The herbalist's kit contains a pair of shears and a hooked stick for gathering herbs, a couple of small iron pots for boiling, a simple colander for straining and a small net-like arrangement of cords which can be tied up in a sunny, windy place for drying herbs.

Musical Instrument, common or masterwork: Most medieval-style musical instruments are available in the Hyborian Age, including harps, lutes, horns, trumpets, drums, hurdy-gurdies, fiddles, bagpipes, shawms, psalteries and tabors. A masterwork instrument is of superior make. It adds a +2 circumstance bonus to Perform tests and serves as a mark of status.

Thieves' Tools: These are the tools needed to use the Disable Device and Open Lock skills. The kit includes one or more skeleton keys, long metal picks and pries, a long-nosed clamp, a small hand saw and a small wedge and hammer. Without these tools, a character will have to improvise tools and suffer a -2 circumstance penalty on Disable Device and Open Locks tests.

Thieves' Tools, masterwork: This kit contains extra tools and tools of better make, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Disable Device and Open Lock tests.

Tools, masterwork: These well-made items are the perfect tool for the job and add a +2 circumstance bonus to a related skill test (if any). Bonuses provided by multiple masterwork items used toward the same skill test do not stack.

Scale, merchant's: This scale includes a small balance and pans and a suitable assortment of weights. A scale grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Appraise tests involving items that are valued by weight, including anything made of a precious metal.

PROPERTY

Hovel: This one-room basic hut is made from mud or scrap, with a roof that barely keeps the rain off and no chimney.

Small House: This one-room house is made of wood and mud and has a thatched roof. The hearth is in the centre of the house so as to reduce the risk of uncontrolled fires and warm the room evenly. There are no windows,

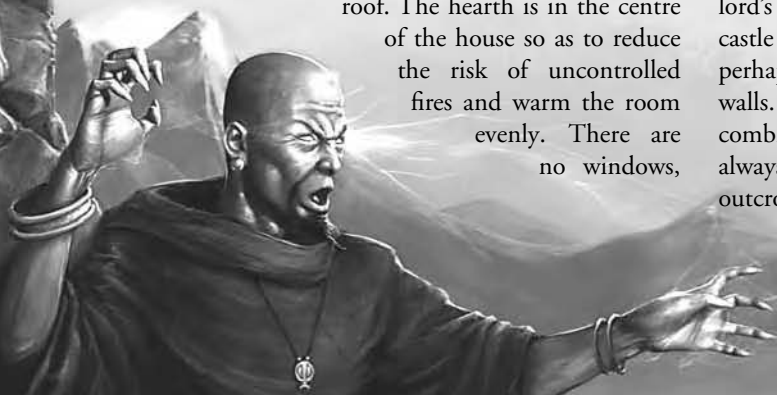
though a pair of simple wooden shutters may be set into one wall to provide a bit of light and air on sunny days. The small house comes with benches that line the walls, both for sitting on and sleeping on and a simple wooden door with a latch and wooden bolt but no lock.

Great House: This two- to four-room house is made of wood or even stone and has a thatched roof. This style of house is generally only found in cities or large towns. The great house has simple windows called fenestral windows, made from resin-soaked linen and supported by a wooden lattice framework. The sturdy wooden door has a hasp for a lock and two large metal bolts. This house comes with trestle tables, stools and benches, straw beds and an outdoor privy.

Manor House: This is a fortified two-storey house made from stone, with perhaps four to six rooms. The ground floor has no windows save for narrow arrow slits. The upper floor has simple windows made from strips of processed horn, which let in a little light but are translucent and cannot be seen through. The roof is surmounted by a crenellated battlement, which can be accessed from a stair up from the upper floor. A large storage cellar beneath the ground floor can hold sufficient food and water to withstand a brief siege. The door is a stout, iron-bound oak affair with a massive wooden bar to secure it and a second iron door of open grillwork behind it. The manor house comes with furniture similar to that of the great house, except that the lord of the manor has a four-poster feather bed and his own wooden chair. The privy is indoors for maximum luxury.

Lord's Castle: This stone castle has a central keep with a great hall for feasting and meetings and around six to eight rooms above. A curtain wall surrounds the keep, with round towers at each corner and a heavily fortified gatehouse in the centre of one wall. Also in the courtyard are stables, kitchens, storage cellars and workshops. All the outer walls are crenellated and defended by arrow-slits, as are the lower floors of the keep. The upper floors of the keep may have small glass windows. The outer wall is surrounded by a moat, which is crossed by a permanent bridge or a drawbridge from the gatehouse. The gatehouse has thick iron-bound oak double doors, two portcullises, murder holes and guard rooms. The keep comes with feather beds in the upper rooms and a high and low table, benches, a chair and straw pallets in the great hall. The indoor privy opens out over the moat.

King's Castle: The king's castle is very similar to the lord's castle except in its scale and grandeur. The king's castle will usually have an inner and outer courtyard, with perhaps eight or so towers on both the inner and outer walls. The keep may be three or four stories high so as to combine defence and luxury. The king's castle is almost always built on a heavily defensible site, such as a granite outcrop or rocky island.



SPELLS FOR HIRE

Spell: This is how much it costs to get a spellcaster to cast a spell for hire. This cost assumes that a character can go to the spellcaster and have the spell cast at the character's convenience. Generally speaking, only independent scholars or priests making a little cash on the side will cast spells for hire. Pious priests or shamans may cast a spell for someone in the same religion or tribe whose religious duties and obligations are in good standing but this will depend on the request and the reason for which the request is made. It may or may not also require a donation similar to the cost given above. All scholars tend to require payment in kind rather than cash; for example, they may ask the customer to track down and slay a certain variety of giant man-ape and bring back his teeth in return for casting the spell.

The cost listed is for a spell with no cost for a material component or focus component and no XP cost. If the spell includes a material component, add the cost of the component to the cost of the spell. If the spell requires a focus component add 1/10 the cost of the focus to the cost of the spell. If the spell requires an XP cost, add 10 sp per XP lost.

FOOD, DRINK AND LODGING

Ale: Most of the Aquilonian countries brew ale or beer of some sort, as do neighbouring countries such as Zingara, Zamora, Cimmeria, Asgard and Vanaheim. The strength and quality of these beverages vary but drink enough and sooner or later you will become insensible.

Inn: Poor accommodations at an inn amount to a place on the floor near the hearth plus the use of a blanket. Common accommodations include a place on a raised, heated floor, the use of a blanket and a pillow and the presence of a higher class of company. Good accommodations include a small, private room with one bed, some amenities and a covered chamber pot in the corner.

Meals: Poor meals might be composed of bread, baked turnips, onions and water. Common meals might consist of bread, chicken stew (easy on the chicken), carrots and watered-down ale. Good meals might be composed of bread and pastries, beef, peas and ale or wine.

Rations, trail: Designed to keep well and be easily eaten without stopping, trail rations include dried fruit and salted meat, small dense oatcakes and biscuits and other concentrated food.

Wine: Shem, Zingara and the southern Hyborian kingdoms produce wine. The best quality wine is from the Shemite city of Kyros. Cheaper wines also abound and the wine produced by Ghaza is the standard for rough vinegary wine, the only benefit of which is inebriation, which is often more than good enough for down-at-heels adventurers.

VEHICLES

Note that all the ships mentioned here can manage with much smaller crews, down to one-half the usual requirement, in emergencies. In such a case, speed is halved and none of the crew is likely to get a lot of rest.

Cart: A two-wheeled vehicle drawn by a single horse or other beast of burden. It comes with a harness.

Carack: This three-masted ship also has eighteen oars on each side. It needs a crew of forty. A carack is 120 feet long and 20 feet wide, and it can carry 130 tons of cargo or 200 soldiers. This ship is designed for long sea voyages, since it can carry plenty of supplies and so is a favourite of merchants, pirates and explorers alike. It moves about two miles per hour when being rowed or three miles per hour under full sail. It has a full-length deck with a forecastle ahead and an aftercastle behind. Caracks are made in both Argos and Zingara.

Galley, Corsair: Similar to a scaled-up Stygian galley, the corsair galley is favoured by the Black Corsairs of the Southern Islands. At 120 feet long and only 12 feet wide, it glides through the water like a great snake. It has 40 oars on each side, a single mast and a crew of 85, though it often carries far more. It can carry 80 tons of cargo or 120 pirates. It moves about two miles an hour under sail or four miles an hour with all the rowers rowing. The prow of the ship is steel for improved ramming capabilities.

Galley, Stygian: Stygian galleys are long, low and slender, with black-painted hulls. Traditionally their prows are in the form of serpents. A Stygian galley has fourteen oars on each side and one mast and requires a total crew of 32. A Stygian galley is 65 feet long and 10 feet wide and can carry 35 tons of cargo or 50 soldiers. This ship moves about three miles per hour when being rowed or under sail. It has a single mast with a narrow black silk sail, a smaller jibsail and a sweep for steering. Accommodation is on deck or between the rowers' benches and is protected from the elements by silken canopies.

Galley, Trading: This one-masted ship has 10 oars on each side and requires a total crew of 24. A trading galley is 50 feet long and 15 feet wide and can carry 40 tons of cargo or 60 soldiers. This ship moves about 2½ miles per hour when being rowed or under sail. It has a single mast with a broad, striped silk sail, a smaller jibsail and a sweep for steering. Accommodation is on deck or between the rowers' benches and is protected from the elements by silken canopies. Vessels with these characteristics are made in



Argos, Zingara and Turan alike, though an experienced seaman can easily tell the difference between the three styles of vessel.

Gondola, Stygian: This small, one-masted boat has three oars per side and is used for transporting people and cargo from shore to ship. It has a crew of seven and can carry 10 tons of cargo or 20 soldiers. Its top speed is around 1½ miles per hour. The gondola cannot make voyages on the open sea and must stay close to shore.

Rowboat: This eight- to 12-foot-long boat has a crew of one and holds one or two additional Medium passengers. It moves at about 1½ miles per hour.

Wagon: This is a four-wheeled, open vehicle for transporting heavy loads. In general, two horses (or other beasts of burden) draw it. It comes with the harness needed to pull it.

MOUNTS AND RELATED GEAR

See the Bestiary chapter for information about particular mounts and other creatures.

Bit and Bridle: Essential gear for any mount.

Carrier Pigeon: This bird is bought as a chick and trained by its owner using the Handle Animal skill to carry messages to specific places. It can carry a single small message (anything the player can write on a one inch by four inch piece of paper is probably about right) at speeds of between 50 and 60 miles per hour, flying up to 500 miles in a day if need be. For kings, courtiers and spies, these small birds deliver messages more reliably and securely than the local sorcerer.

Feed: Horses, donkeys, mules and ponies can graze to sustain themselves but providing feed (such as oats) for them provides a more concentrated form of energy, especially if the animal is exerting itself. War dogs must be fed some meat, which may cost more or less than the given amount.

Saddle, pack: A pack saddle holds gear and supplies, not a rider. A pack saddle holds as much gear as the mount can carry.

Saddle, riding: The standard riding saddle supports a rider.

Stabling: Includes a stable, feed and grooming.

SLAVES

These range in price from a handful of silver pieces for a surly, dangerous savage to 300 silver pieces for a beautiful, educated, high-class female kidnapped to order. Any slave bought to order costs double the standard price but the buyer can specify details such as nationality, hair and eye colour and physique.

Slavery is not much practised in the Hyborian nations, though the serfs and peasants of these supposedly civilised lands are virtually enslaved by their feudal overlords. Shem, Zamora and the lands beyond them practise slavery openly and without compunction, keeping their slaves cowed with regular beatings.

The Hyrkanians are particularly keen to capture slaves, though at present the slave markets of Turan are glutted with produce, so successful have the Hyrkanian slavers been. In Turan, assume all slave prices are 1/10 of normal.

MOUNTS AND VEHICLES

Mount/Vehicle	Per Hour	Per Day
<i>Mount (carrying load)</i>		
Camel, Pack	3 ½ miles	35 miles
Camel, Pack (401–1200 lb.) ¹	3 ½ miles	35 miles
Camel, Racing	5 miles	50 miles
Camel, Racing (201–600 lb.) ¹	3 ½ miles	35 miles
Camel, Riding	5 miles	50 miles
Camel, Riding (301–900 lb.) ¹	3 ½ miles	35 miles
Light horse or light warhorse	6 miles	48 miles
Light horse (151–450 lb.) ¹	4 miles	32 miles
Light warhorse (231–690 lb.) ¹	4 miles	32 miles
Heavy horse or heavy warhorse	5 miles	40 miles
Heavy horse (201–600 lb.) ¹	3 ½ miles	28 miles
Heavy warhorse (301–900 lb.) ¹	3 ½ miles	28 miles
Cart or wagon	2 miles	16 miles
<i>Ship</i>		
Carack (rowed)	2 miles	20 miles
Carack (sailed)	3 miles	72 miles
Galley, Corsair (rowed)	4 miles	40 miles
Galley, Corsair (sailed)	2 miles	48 miles
Galley, Stygian (rowed)	3 miles	30 miles
Galley, Stygian (sailed)	3 miles	72 miles
Galley, Trading (rowed)	2 ½ miles	25 miles
Galley, Trading (sailed)	2 ½ miles	60 miles
Gondola, Stygian (sailed)	1 ½ miles	36 miles
Rowboat (rowed)	1 ½ miles	15 miles

¹ Quadrupeds, such as horses and camels, can carry heavier loads than characters. See page 214 for more information.

Combat and Adventure

Steel, Sineu, Blood and Bone

Sooner or later – and probably sooner – all characters who explore the world of the Hyborian Age are going to be involved in some kind of combat. Whether it is taking on a Hyrkanian patrol, conducting a pirate raid on a Zingaran trading ship or battling the Picts beyond Thunder River, the life of an adventurer is almost always a violent one. As such, *Conan the Roleplaying Game* has a detailed and comprehensive set of rules for adjudicating personal combat with ranged, melee and unarmed attacks. These rules cover everything from how much damage living creatures, unnatural flesh and inanimate objects can withstand to combat manoeuvres, dodging and parrying. If an action involves making one's point with a massive blunt object, rapidly moving metal or a balled up fist, this chapter covers it from the first swing to the last gasp.

HOW COMBAT WORKS

Combat is cyclical; everybody acts in turn in a regular cycle of rounds. Combat follows this sequence:

- ✱ Each combatant starts out flat-footed. Once a combatant acts, he is no longer flat-footed.
- ✱ Determine which characters are aware of their opponents at the start of the battle. If some but not all of the combatants are aware of their opponents, a surprise round happens before regular rounds of combat begin. The combatants who are aware of their opponents can act in the surprise round; they roll for initiative. In initiative order, highest to lowest, combatants who start the battle aware of their opponents each take one action (either a standard action or a move action) during the surprise round. Combatants who are unaware of their opponents do not get to act in the surprise round. If no one or everyone starts the battle aware, there is no surprise round.
- ✱ Combatants who have not yet rolled initiative do so. All combatants are now ready to begin their first regular round of combat.
- ✱ Combatants act in initiative order, highest to lowest. This is a single round of combat.
- ✱ When everyone has had a turn, the combatants act in initiative order again, in another round of combat. Rounds continue until combat is over.

COMBAT STATISTICS

This section summarises the rules and attributes that determine success in combat and details how to use them in sequential order to resolve any combat situation.

ATTACK ROLL

An attack roll represents a character's attempt to strike an opponent in a round. When one makes an attack roll, he rolls a d20 and adds his attack bonus. Other modifiers may also apply to this roll. If the result equals or beats the target's Dodge Defence or Parry Defence, depending on which they are using, the attack hits. (If the target is unable to dodge or parry, then the attacker only has to beat the target's Base Defence.) After hitting his opponent, the attacker determines whether his target is wearing armour, whether he has penetrated his target's armour or whether the armour was bypassed in the case of finesse fighting. The attacker then deals damage.

Automatic Misses and Hits: A natural one (the d20 comes up one) on an attack roll is always a miss. A natural 20 (the d20 comes up 20) is always a hit. A natural 20 is also a threat—a possible critical hit. This is an exception to the general rule that there are no automatic successes and failures in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

HOW TO CALCULATE AN ATTACK BONUS

The attack bonus with a melee weapon is:

BASE ATTACK BONUS +
STRENGTH MODIFIER +
SIZE MODIFIER +
OTHER APPLICABLE MODIFIERS

With a ranged weapon, the attack bonus is:

BASE ATTACK BONUS +
DEXTERITY MODIFIER +
SIZE MODIFIER +
RANGE PENALTY +
OTHER APPLICABLE MODIFIERS



SIZE MODIFIERS

Size	Modifier
Colossal	-8
Gargantuan	-4
Huge	-2
Large	-1
Medium	+0
Small	+1
Tiny	+2
Diminutive	+4
Fine	+8

All Player Characters in Conan the Roleplaying Game are Medium size. The other sizes are used for animals and monsters that they may come across on their adventures.

DAMAGE

When a character's attack succeeds, he deals damage, some or all of which may be negated by his opponent's armour. The type of weapon used determines the amount of damage dealt. Effects that modify weapon damage apply to unarmed strikes and the natural physical attack forms of creatures. Damage reduces a target's current hit points. The following special considerations apply to damage:

- ✱ *Minimum Damage:* If penalties reduce the damage result to fewer than one, a hit still deals one point of damage.
- ✱ *Strength Bonus:* When you hit with a melee or thrown weapon, including a sling, you add your Strength modifier to the damage result. Some bows are made with particular Strength ratings, which affect how much of your Strength modifier you can apply to the damage result. See page 147 in the Equipment chapter for details.
- ✱ *Off-Hand Weapon:* When you deal damage with a weapon in your off hand, you add only ½ your Strength bonus.
- ✱ *Wielding a Weapon Two-Handed:* When you deal damage with a weapon that he is wielding two-handed, he adds 1½ times his Strength bonus. However, this higher Strength bonus does not apply when a character uses a light weapon with two hands.

✱ *Multiplying Damage:* Sometimes damage is multiplied by some factor, such as on a critical hit. Roll the damage (with all modifiers) multiple times and total the results. *Note:* When damage is multiplied more than once, do not multiply the multiples together. Instead, think of it as 'adding dice' instead. For example, a hunting spear hits a charging opponent (×2 damage) and scores a critical hit (×2 damage). This does not result in ×4 damage, but in ×3 damage. Essentially the spear gets an extra die of damage from being set against a charging opponent and another extra die from the critical hit, for a total of three dice of damage. Each die gets all the usual damage bonuses added to it.

✱ *Exception:* Extra damage dice over and above a weapon's normal damage are never multiplied.

✱ *Ability Damage:* Certain creatures, feats and magical effects can cause temporary ability damage, that is, a reduction to an ability score.

DEFENCE

To determine how difficult it is to hit a character, a set of scores called the Defence values is used. In addition to his base Defence, a character has two Defence values, all calculated as follows:

$$\text{BASE DEFENCE} = 10 + \text{SIZE MODIFIER}$$

(Base Defence is always 10 for Medium-size characters.)

$$\text{DODGE DEFENCE} = \text{BASE DEFENCE} + \text{DEXTERITY BONUS} + \text{DODGE BONUS}$$

$$\text{PARRY DEFENCE} = \text{BASE DEFENCE} + \text{STRENGTH BONUS} + \text{PARRY BONUS}$$

Some modifiers lower a character's Dodge or Parry defence. For example, if a character is surrounded on all sides and cannot dodge effectively, he suffers a -2 penalty to Dodge Defence. Such modifiers only affect the kind of Defence they refer to. For example, if the character were surrounded on all sides and suffering a -2 penalty to Dodge Defence, his Parry Defence would not be affected.

A modifier that simply affects a character's 'Defence' (without specifying Dodge or Parry) is added no matter what kind of Defence he is using and also applies when he cannot dodge or parry. For example, the character suffers a -2 penalty to Defence when charging.



FINESSE

Valeria fought beside him, her lips smiling and her eyes blazing. She was stronger than the average man, and far quicker and more ferocious. Her sword was like a living thing in her hand. Where Conan beat down opposition by the sheer weight and power of his blows, breaking spears, splitting skulls and cleaving bosoms to the breastbone, Valeria brought into action a finesse of swordplay that dazzled and bewildered her antagonists before it slew them. Again and again a warrior, heaving high his heavy blade, found her point in his jugular before he could strike. Conan, towering above the field, strode through the welter smiting right and left, but Valeria moved like an illusive phantom, constantly shifting, and thrusting and slashing as she shifted. Swords missed her again and again as the wielders flailed the empty air and died with her point in their hearts or throats, and her mocking laughter in their ears.

— *Red Nails*

Certain melee weapons are as well suited to finesse as to brute force. These include all light weapons and several one-handed or two-handed piercing weapons. These weapons are known as finesse weapons. For convenience, finesse weapons are identified by a ^F symbol in the Weapons table.

Any character who is armed with a finesse weapon may use his Dexterity modifier instead of his Strength modifier on attack rolls with that weapon. A character who does so is known as a finesse fighter. Finesse fighters use skill and precision to bypass armour instead of the more common brute force approach (see page 180 for details on the differences).

Note that it is possible for a character to alter his combat technique during a combat, switching from using his Dexterity modifier to using his Strength modifier. Most characters will prefer to use one or the other technique more or less continuously but a player may, if desired, declare which technique he will use at the beginning of each combat round.

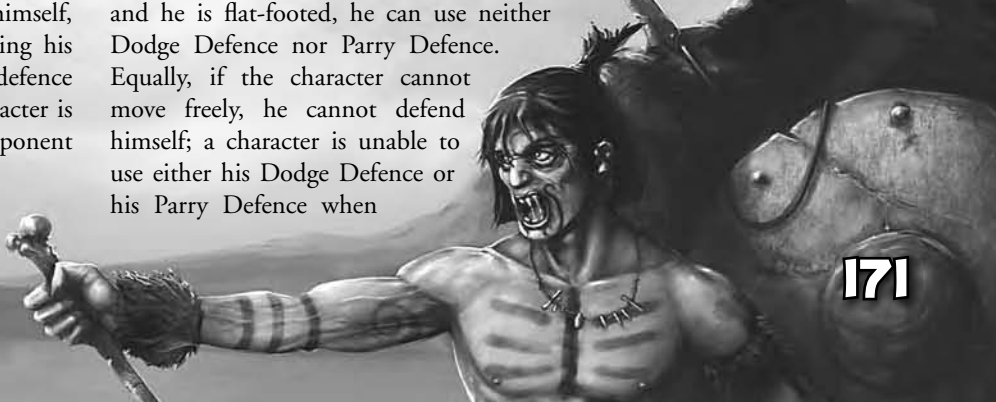
Ranged weapons may never be used with finesse combat, as they already rely on Dexterity rather than Strength. The sole exception is when a character has the Ranged Finesse feat.

If one ever has a Dexterity penalty rather than a bonus, this penalty is applied to his Defence, not just his Dodge Defence. For example, a Medium-size character whose Dexterity has been reduced to five by poison would apply a -3 penalty to his Defence. A sleeping or unconscious character has an effective Dexterity of zero, as he is not moving at all, so he has a -5 penalty to his Defence.

Whenever a character has a chance to defend himself, he must declare whether he is dodging or parrying his enemies. Changing between the two modes of defence is a free action. It can be done each time the character is attacked if desired but must be done before the opponent makes his attack roll. The Dodging and Parrying sections, below, explain how to calculate the Parry and Dodge Bonuses.

Note that armour limits Dexterity bonus, so if a character is wearing armour, he might not be able to apply his whole Dexterity bonus to his Dodge Defence.

Sometimes a character cannot dodge or parry at all. If he cannot react to a blow, such as when an opponent takes him by surprise and he is flat-footed, he can use neither Dodge Defence nor Parry Defence. Equally, if the character cannot move freely, he cannot defend himself; a character is unable to use either his Dodge Defence or his Parry Defence when





DEFENCE MODIFIERS

Defender is...	Defence vs. Melee	Defence vs. Ranged
Behind cover	+4	+4
Blinded	-2 ¹	-2 ¹
Concealed or invisible	— See Concealment, page 197 —	
Entangled	+0 ²	+0 ²
Flat-footed (such as when surprised)	+0 ¹	+0 ¹
Grappling (but attacker is not)	+0 ¹	+0 ^{1, 3}
Helpless (such as paralysed, sleeping, or bound)	-4 ⁴	+0 ⁴
Kneeling or sitting	-2	+2
Pinned	-4 ⁴	+0 ⁴
Prone	-4	+4
Squeezing through a space	-4	-4
Stunned	-2 ¹	-2 ¹

¹ The defender cannot dodge or parry.

² An entangled character takes a -4 penalty to Dexterity. Characters who are entangled from above, such as by a thrown net, take a -4 penalty to Parry Defence when parrying with weapons larger than daggers; characters who are entangled from below, such as by walking into a web, can still parry at no penalty.

³ Roll randomly to see which grappling combatant is stricken. That defender can neither dodge nor parry.

⁴ Treat the defender's Dexterity as zero (-5 modifier to Defence).

Sneak attacks can be made against helpless or pinned defenders.



he is clinging for life on the edge of a mile-high cliff-top, for example. Under these circumstances, the character is vulnerable to sneak attacks.

Other Modifiers: Many other factors modify Dodge and Parry Defences.

✱ *Dodge Bonuses:* Some other bonuses represent actively avoiding blows. These bonuses are called dodge bonuses. Wearing armour does not limit these bonuses the way it limits a Dexterity bonus to Dodge Defence. Unlike most sorts of bonuses, dodge bonuses stack with each other. Dodge bonuses only apply to a character's Dodge Defence. They do not add to the character's Parry Defence at all. If one is in a situation where he cannot dodge, his dodge bonuses do not apply.

✱ *Equipment:* One can parry more efficiently with a shield than with a weapon, as the shield is designed to block attacks. Shields give a character a bonus to his Parry Defence.

DODGING

A character's total Dodge Bonus is calculated by adding together his base dodge bonus (derived from his character class) and any other dodge bonuses, such as from the Dodge feat.

A dodging character needs at least one adjacent square to either be unoccupied or be occupied by friendly creatures to be able to dodge effectively. He need not necessarily move into the space as part of his dodge but he does need a certain amount of room to move around in. If at least one adjacent square is not unoccupied or friendly, the character has a -2 penalty to his Dodge Defence.

DODGE BONUS = **BASE DODGE BONUS** +
ADDITIONAL DODGE BONUSES

PARRYING

A character's total Parry Bonus is calculated by adding together his base parry bonus (derived from his character class) and any other parry bonuses, such as from the Parry feat.

A parrying character must wield a weapon, shield or at the very least an object of some kind in order to fend off his opponents' blows effectively. It is possible to deflect blows without having an item in hand; however, if a character is completely unarmed, he receives a

-4 penalty to his Parry Defence. Characters with the Improved Unarmed Strike feat count as armed for the purpose of using Parry Defence.

If a character attempts to parry with a weapon with which he is not proficient, or with an improvised weapon such as a bar stool or length of firewood, he suffers a -1 penalty to his Parry Defence. A character from the barbarian class with the Versatility ability suffers no penalty under such circumstances, as barbarians are so adept with improvised weapons. The Games Master is at liberty to apply additional bonuses to a character's Parry Defence when he uses especially suitable or obstructive improvised blocking weapons.

If a character is using a reach weapon, he can parry an adjacent attacker with it even if he is not able to attack the adjacent attacker.

It is not normally possible to parry an attack from a thrown or ranged weapon.

PARRY BONUS = **BASE PARRY BONUS** +
ADDITIONAL PARRY BONUSES

TOUCH ATTACKS AND FLAT-FOOTED DEFENCE VALUES

A 'touch attack' is an attack in which the assailant only needs to make physical contact with some part of the target in order to attack successfully. Many spells, for example, are delivered with touch attacks. It is not necessary to calculate separate Defence values for use against touch attacks or when caught flat-footed. Touch attacks can only be dodged (not parried), as a touch that connects with a weapon or shield will deliver the attack. Thus, a character's Dodge Defence is always used against a touch attack.

When characters are caught flat-footed, they cannot dodge or parry, so they can use neither their Dodge Defence nor their Parry Defence. They have not yet gathered their wits and so cannot defend themselves actively, though they are still far from being sitting ducks. They must use their Base Defence, which will always be 10 in the case of normal humans. Nightmare creatures may have a higher or lower Base Defence if they are larger



OPTIONAL PARRYING RULES

The following rules may be used in addition to those given for parrying. They may slow down combat but can add an increased level of realism to the game. The Games Master should make sure that all players are in agreement as to which rules are to be used before the game begins.

WEAPON BREAKAGE

Under the ordinary parrying rules, a character's weapon is not at risk no matter how many times he parries an opponent's blow with it. Only if the character's opponent makes a sunder attack against it is the weapon threatened. Under the optional weapon breakage rule, every time the attack roll *exactly equals* the opponent's Parry Defence, proceed as if the attacker had made a successful sunder attempt against the opponent's weapon instead of hitting the defender. This does not provoke attacks of opportunity and reflects the way the attacking weapon happened to smash against the parrying one. This rule makes parrying more effective but also makes it more likely that weapons will be damaged and broken.

WEAPON LENGTH

For the sake of simplicity, the standard rules do not take the differences in weapon length into account. If players wish to incorporate weapon length, they should proceed as follows. For every step in size difference between the attacking and the defending weapon, apply a +1 bonus or a -1 penalty to the defender's Parry Defence, according to whether the defending weapon is larger or smaller than the attacking one. The order of size is as follows: Light, One-Handed, Two-Handed. A character armed with a dagger (light) would thus have a -2 penalty to his Parry Defence when fending off a character armed with a greatsword (two-handed), while the greatsword wielder would have a +2 bonus to his Parry Defence against the dagger bearer.

PARRY OR DODGE?

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, every character must decide in combat whether to defend by Dodging or Parrying. Most characters will have a preferred method of defence and it is often easiest to assume that these preferred methods are in use each round unless the players specify otherwise.

It should be noted that the terms 'parry' and 'dodge' are inevitably abstractions. A character who is dodging is more likely to make use of his knowledge of his enemy's reach to stay just out of distance than he is to simply hurl himself to one side. Likewise, though the word 'parry' is used because it is familiar to most gamers and fantasy fans, both Conan and real-world medieval fencing-masters would have been more familiar with the idea of 'setting aside' an enemy's weapon – deflecting an attack so as to ensure it just misses, while setting oneself up to deliver a counterattack. Inevitably, the lines between parrying and dodging blur and many techniques will use a little of both.

Thus, declaring that one is parrying or dodging is more a reflection of combat style – either fluid and footwork-based, or aggressive and steadfast respectively – than a precise description of one's actions.



or smaller than normal. The Uncanny Dodge class feature and the Reflexive Parry feat allow flat-footed characters to defend themselves with Dodge Defence and Parry Defence respectively.

ARMOUR

Characters in the *Conan* stories are effectively invulnerable to many weapons if wearing sufficient armour. Armour absorbs damage rather than making characters harder to hit.

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, armour can reduce the amount of damage a struck character suffers. Instead of making a character harder to hit, particularly strong armour will actually absorb and deflect incoming damage, granting a great deal of protection. However, many weapons, such as warhammers, Bossonian longbows and pollaxes, are exceptionally powerful and are fully capable of piercing through all but the strongest of protection. Every type of armour in the game, from the humble quilted jerkin to full plate armour, has a damage reduction score. A mail hauberk, for example, has damage reduction 6.

Any type of armour may have its damage reduction score increased by wearing a helmet with it.

Some creatures, and even some classes (like barbarians), have their own damage reduction, which stacks with the protection given by armour. A 13th level Barbarian with DR 2 wearing a mail hauberk would subtract eight from any damage inflicted on him.

HIT POINTS

All characters and objects have a certain number of hit points, determined by Hit Dice, character levels or construction. Hit points represent inherent resistance to injury and, in the case of living beings, the ability to avoid critical damage through exertion and skill. Hit points are an abstract concept and do not always reflect the true physical condition of a creature. Instead, a being's hit point total is a sum measurement of health, fatigue and combat awareness. When a character's hit point total reaches zero, he is disabled. When hit points reach -1, he is dying. When the value gets to -10, the character is dead.

Furthermore, exceptionally damaging blows can also cause a creature to die without reducing his hit points to -10. See page 189 for more details on massive damage.

Encountered enemies are technically killed at zero hit points but a Games Master may optionally allow named villains or important Non-Player Characters to

descend as low as -10 if their continued existence in the campaign is desirable or if Player Characters wish to show mercy or question prisoners.

SPEED

Speed tells a character how far he can move in a round and still do something, such as attack or cast a spell. Speed depends mostly on what armour a character is wearing. If he uses two move actions in a round (sometimes called a 'double move' action), a character can move up to double his speed. If he spends the entire round running all out, he can move up to quadruple his speed, or triple if he is in heavy armour.

Without armour, humans have a base movement speed of 30 feet.

SAVING THROWS

Generally, when a character is subject to an unusual or magical attack, he gets a saving throw to avoid or reduce the effect. Like an attack roll, a saving throw is a d20 roll plus a bonus based on the character's class, level and an ability score. Calculate the saving throw modifier as:

$$\text{SAVING THROW} = \text{BASE SAVING THROW BONUS} + \\ \text{ABILITY MODIFIER (CON, DEX OR WIS)} + \\ \text{RELEVANT FEATS OR BONUSES}$$

SAVING THROW TYPES

The three different kinds of saving throws are Fortitude, Reflex and Will:

- ✱ *Fortitude:* These saving throws measure one's ability to stand up to physical punishment or attacks against one's vitality and health. Apply the character's Constitution modifier to his Fortitude saving throws.
- ✱ *Reflex:* These saving throws check one's ability to dodge area attacks. Apply the character's Dexterity modifier to his Reflex saving throws.
- ✱ *Will:* These saving throws reflect one's resistance to mental influence as well as many magical effects. Apply the character's Wisdom modifier to his Will saving throws.



SAVING THROW DIFFICULTY CLASS

The DC for a saving throw is determined by the attack itself. Various effects, such as feats, ability scores in the case of special abilities (with Difficulty Classes calculated on a creature by creature basis) and other enhancements can influence DCs dramatically.

AUTOMATIC FAILURES AND SUCCESSSES

A natural one (the d20 comes up one) on a saving throw is always a failure. A natural 20 (the d20 comes up 20) is always a success. This is a notable exception to the basic rule that natural rolls of one and 20 on a d20 do not automatically indicate failure or success respectively.

INITIATIVE

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game* as in the stories, striking first can mean the difference between life and death. To reflect this, higher level characters are significantly quicker-witted than those of lower levels:

INITIATIVE CHECKS

At the start of a battle, each combatant makes an initiative check. An initiative check is, effectively, a Reflex save, so roll 1d20 and add the character's Reflex save bonus (his base Reflex save bonus from classes, plus his Dexterity modifier, plus any other factors like feats that affect his Reflex save). Characters act in order, counting down from highest result to lowest. In every round that follows, the characters act in the same order unless a character takes an action that results in his initiative changing. If two or more combatants have the same initiative check result, the combatants who are tied act in order of total initiative modifier, with the highest going first. If there is still a tie, the tied characters should roll again to determine which one of them goes before the other.

INITIATIVE CHECK =
1D20 + REFLEX SAVE BONUS +
ANY RELEVANT FEATS OR OTHER BONUSES
(IMPROVED INITIATIVE AND SO ON)

FLAT-FOOTED

At the start of a battle, before one has had a chance to act (specifically, before one's first turn in the initiative order), he is flat-footed. A character cannot dodge or parry while flat-footed. Some classes have the Uncanny Dodge ability, which allows them to dodge while flat-footed.

A flat-footed character cannot make attacks of opportunity.

INACTION

Even if a character cannot take actions, he retains his initiative score for the duration of the encounter. This may be necessary to determine when an effect occurs for the character in a given round or when he may overcome some adverse condition.

SURPRISE

When a combat starts, if a character is not aware of his opponents and they are aware of him, the character is surprised. Conversely, careful tactics or blind luck can provide the opportunity for Player Characters to achieve surprise on unprepared or unsuspecting opponents. Generally, surprise does not occur often, as most people are constantly wary when they are in the kinds of situations where combat is likely to occur. A Games Master is the final authority on when surprise occurs for any given encounter, if at all.

DETERMINING AWARENESS

Sometimes all the combatants on a side are aware of their opponents, sometimes none are and sometimes only some of them are. Sometimes a few combatants on each side are aware and the other combatants on both sides are unaware.

Determining awareness may call for Listen checks, Spot checks or other checks.

THE SURPRISE ROUND

If some but not all of the combatants are aware of their opponents, a surprise round takes place before regular rounds begin. Any combatants who are aware of their opponents can act in the surprise round, so they roll for initiative. In initiative order (highest to lowest), combatants who start the battle aware of their opponents each take a standard action during the surprise round. Free actions may also be taken during the surprise round. If no one or everyone is surprised, no surprise round occurs.



UNAWARE COMBATANTS

Combatants who are unaware at the start of battle do not get to act in the surprise round. Unaware combatants are flat-footed because they have not yet acted, so they can neither dodge nor parry.

ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

Sometimes a combatant in a melee lets his guard down. In this case, combatants nearby can take advantage of his lapse in defence to attack him for free. These free attacks are called attacks of opportunity.

THREATENED SQUARES

A Player Character threatens all squares into which he can make a melee attack, even when it is not his action. Generally, that includes everything in all squares adjacent and diagonal to the character's space. An enemy that takes certain actions while in a threatened square provokes an attack of opportunity; however, if one is unarmed, one does not normally threaten any squares and thus cannot make attacks of opportunity.

- ✱ *Reach Weapons:* Most creatures of Medium or smaller size have a reach of only five feet. This means they can make melee attacks only against creatures up to five feet (one square) away. However, characters wielding reach weapons threaten more squares than typical creatures. In addition, many creatures larger than Medium have a natural reach of 10 feet or more.

REACH

When armed with a broad sword or other non-reach weapon, Conan only threatens the squares coloured dark grey.



When armed with a war spear or other reach weapon, he only threatens the squares coloured light grey.

PROVOKING AN ATTACK OF OPPORTUNITY

Two kinds of actions can provoke attacks of opportunity: moving out of a threatened square and performing a particular action within a threatened square.

- ✱ *Moving:* Moving out of a threatened square provokes an attack of opportunity from the threatening opponent. The most common method of avoiding this is the five-foot step (see below) so long as no other action that would provoke an attack of opportunity is taken. A five-foot step reflects the pause that often occurs between combatants as they take stock of each other.

- ✱ *Performing a Distracting Act:* Some actions, when performed in a threatened square, provoke attacks of opportunity as one diverts his attention from the battle. The Actions in Combat table notes many of the actions that provoke attacks of opportunity.

Remember that there may be exceptions even to actions that normally provoke attacks of opportunity.

MAKING AN ATTACK OF OPPORTUNITY

An attack of opportunity is a single melee attack and can only be made once per round. A character does not have to make an attack of opportunity if he does not want to. Characters get only a single attack of opportunity every round (unless they take the Combat Reflexes feat; see page 123) regardless of how many attacks they can normally make. An attack of opportunity is always made at the character's highest normal base attack bonus.

An attack of opportunity 'interrupts' the normal flow of actions in the round. If an attack of opportunity is provoked, immediately resolve the attack of opportunity before continuing with the next character's turn; if the attack of opportunity is provoked in the midst of a character's turn, complete the turn before resolving the attack of opportunity.



✱ **Combat Reflexes and Additional Attacks of Opportunity:** If a character has the Combat Reflexes feat, he can add his Dexterity modifier to the number of attacks of opportunity he can make in a round. This feat does not let the character make more than one attack for a given opportunity but if the same opponent provokes two attacks of opportunity, the character could make two separate attacks of opportunity, since each one represents a different opportunity. Moving out of more than one square threatened by the same opponent in the same round does not count as more than one opportunity for that opponent. All these attacks are at the character's full normal attack bonus.

SIMPLIFYING ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

Some players find attacks of opportunity to be too fiddly and complex to suit the fast-flowing combat of *Conan* adventures. It is best to keep attacks of opportunity for special combat manoeuvres (Disarm, Grapple, Sunder, Unarmed Strike, Overrun, Spellcasting and so forth), as these are very simple to adjudicate – if a character tries one of these moves when next to an armed foe, the armed foe gets to try to hit that character with a melee attack.

The other provocation of attacks of opportunity – moving out of threatened squares – can be simplified to two rules:

- ✱ If a character flees a combat, he risks an attack of opportunity. He can withdraw as a full-round action but he cannot attack and withdraw without risking an attack.
- ✱ A character cannot move past an opponent in a tight space without risking an attack of opportunity. He can circle round a foe on an open battlefield or in a forest but a dungeon corridor or castle battlement is too cramped to allow free movement.

ARMOUR AND DAMAGE REDUCTION

Whenever a character is hit in combat, whether with a melee or a ranged weapon, the damage reduction (DR) score of any armour he is wearing at the time is deducted from the damage rolled by the weapon. Certain creatures have an innate damage reduction due to their thick skin, scales or unnatural flesh. These things are treated like armour with regard to penetration in all respects unless specifically noted in the creature's statistics.

For example, Moyle is fighting a group of Aesir warriors whilst wearing his scale hauberk, mail shirt and steel cap. He is struck by a war spear, which deals 10 points of damage. However, his armour deducts nine points from this because of its DR score of nine, resulting in Moyle taking just one point of damage.

ARMOUR PIERCING

Powerful weapons have the capability of penetrating through many types of armour in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, bursting mail links or smashing through plate. Every type of weapon has an Armour Piercing (AP) score. The character wielding the weapon adds his Strength modifier to this AP score if he is also able to add his Strength modifier or some multiple of it to his damage roll with the weapon.

Finesse fighters use a different system for attacking armoured characters – see page 180.

If a character suffers a hit from a weapon with a total Armour Piercing score which equals or exceeds the damage reduction score of his armour, the damage reduction provided by the armour is halved (rounded down) for that blow.

Some weapons, notably unarmed strikes, have no AP score. These weapons will always be fully affected by all damage reduction scores. Furthermore, a weapon with no AP score does not benefit from any Strength modifier to its Armour Piercing score. It is simply incapable of battering through armour, however hard it is swung.

In the example above, we left Moyle battling the Aesir warband. Because his armour has a DR of nine and the war spear that hit him has an AP of four (base two, plus two for the Aesir warrior's Strength bonus), his armour provided him with a great deal of protection. However, a second warrior now swings a bardiche at Moyle. The bardiche has an AP of nine (base five, plus four for the Aesir warrior's Strength bonus), which exceeds the armour's DR of eight. The bardiche



OPTIONAL RULE: MINIMUM DAMAGE

Although the stories show how phenomenally effective armour can be at protecting one from damage, some Games Masters will prefer to have armour-wearing characters be a little more vulnerable to prevent them from strolling blithely through enemy armies and coming out without a single scratch. Even if one is left without any major traumas, those bumps, bruises and minor concussions all add up.

If damage reduction from armour reduces the damage of a successful attack to less than one, a successful hit still deals one point of nonlethal damage. (If the Games Master prefers, this damage can be lethal damage.) Primitive weapons still break if they strike ineffectively against metal armoured characters; that is, if the armour's DR reduces the primitive weapon's damage to zero before the minimum damage rule is applied.

Sneak attacks only deal extra damage if the damage inflicted is at least one point after reduction.

will therefore halve the armour's DR to four when damage is rolled. Moyle is hit for 11 points of damage by the bardiche and only four points are deducted from this amount, leaving him badly wounded.

MULTIPLE ATTACKS AND CRITICAL HITS

If a character is hit by the same weapon several times in a single round because his enemy can attack more than once, any damage deducted by a suit of armour's damage reduction score applies to each attack.

However, if a critical hit is scored and damage multiplied as a result, any damage reduction granted by the armour applies only once to the total damage rolled. As a rule of thumb, any possible damage reduction applies once to each attack roll made against a target.

It should be noted that all rules concerning Defence and damage reduction apply equally to monsters and animals.



ARMOUR DAMAGE AND REPAIR

Each time a suit of armour is struck by a weapon that inflicts 20 points or more of damage to the character wearing the armour (before the armour is taken into account), its DR is reduced by 1d4.

Armour that has had its DR reduced may be repaired by anyone with the Craft (armourer) skill at a cost of 20% of the original cost of the armour per one DR damage. This cost is halved if the character does the repairs himself; this requires either a Craft (armourer) check (DC 10) or Craft (blacksmith) check (DC 15) and 10 minutes of time for each 1 DR repaired. However, if armour is reduced to 0 DR, it is completely destroyed and may not be repaired, though it may have some value as scrap metal. Brigandine, for example, is commonly made by cutting up damaged sections from more expensive harnesses such as a breastplate or two.

For example, Gwaeth is wearing a mail hauberk, breastplate and steel cap, for a total DR of 10. He is attacked by Fergus, who is wielding a broadsword. Fergus has a Strength of 15 and has the Weapon Specialisation feat, so the sword will be dealing d8+4 damage and have an Armour Piercing value of five, not enough to penetrate Gwaeth's armour. Fergus must hope for a lucky hit to do significant harm to his enemy. He





gets his lucky break, scoring a critical hit against Gwaeth for a total of 22 points damage. Twelve points get through the armour and are dealt to Gwaeth. In addition, such a mighty blow rends Gwaeth's breastplate to the tune of 3 DR. Gwaeth's new total DR is 7, which makes it more likely that Fergus will be able to significantly hurt his opponent in future rounds.

FINESSE AND ARMOUR

Finesse fighters do not seek to batter their way through armour but rather to find the crevices and chinks that even the finest armour must have. For example, a finesse fighter might strike between two lames (plates) of plate armour, thrusting his weapon up through a joint, or he might simply attack the face of an opponent wearing an open-faced helmet such as a steel cap.

Finesse fighters never add their Strength modifier to the Armour Piercing rating of their weapon. However, if a finesse fighter's attack roll beats the target's chosen Defence by a number equal to at least the DR of the armour, that armour is completely ignored.

Furthermore, finesse fighters never damage armour when making their attacks, even when they do not bypass it entirely.

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

THE ANATOMY OF A COMBAT ROUND

Each round represents six seconds in the game world. A round presents an opportunity for each character involved in a combat situation to take an action. Each round's activity begins with the character with the highest initiative result and proceeds, in order, from there. Each round of a combat uses the same initiative order. When a character's turn comes up in the initiative sequence, the character performs his entire round's worth of actions.

For exceptions, see Attacks of Opportunity and Special Initiative Actions.

For almost all purposes, there is no relevance to the beginning or the end of a round. A round can be a segment of game time starting with the first character to act and ending with the last but it usually represents a span of time from

one round to the same initiative count in the next round. Effects that last a certain number of rounds end just before the same initiative count on which they began.

ACTION TYPES

An action's type essentially indicates how long the action takes to perform (within the framework of the six-second combat round) and how movement is treated. There are four types of actions: standard actions, move actions, full-round actions and free actions. In a normal round, a character can perform a standard action and a move action or he can perform a full-round action. He can also perform one or more free actions and he can always take a move action in place of a standard action.

In some situations, such as in a surprise round, one may be limited to taking only a single move action or standard action.

✱ **Standard Action:** A standard action allows a character to do something, most commonly make an attack or cast a spell. See the Actions in Combat table for other standard actions.

✱ **Move Action:** A move action allows a character to move at normal speed or perform an action that takes a similar amount of time. See the Actions in Combat table.

A character can take a move action in place of a standard action. If he moves no actual distance in a round, commonly because he has swapped his move for one or more equivalent actions, he can take one five-foot step before, during or after the action.

✱ **Full-Round Action:** A full-round action consumes all of a character's effort during a round. The only movement he can take during a full-round action is a five-foot step before, during or after the action. He can also perform free actions; see below.

Some full-round actions do not allow a character to take a five-foot step. Some full-round actions can be taken as standard actions but only in situations when a character is limited to performing only a standard action during the round. The descriptions of specific actions, below, detail which actions allow this option:

✱ **Free Action:** Free actions consume a very small amount of time and effort. A character can perform one or more free actions while taking another action normally. However, there are reasonable limits on what one can really do for free.



- ✱ **Immediate Action:** An immediate action is a free action that can be taken at any time, even during another character's turn. A character cannot take an immediate action while flat-footed. Some spells are immediate actions, like the various Defensive Blasts. A readied action is also, effectively, an immediate action.
- ✱ **Not an Action:** Some activities are so minor that they are not even considered free actions. They literally do not take any time at all to do and are considered inherent parts of doing something else.
- ✱ **Restricted Activity:** In some situations, a character may be unable to take a full round's worth of actions. In such cases, the character is restricted to taking only a single standard action or a single move action, plus free actions as normal. He cannot take a full-round action, though he can start or complete a full-round action by using a standard action; see page 186.
- ✱ **Attacks of Opportunity:** Attacking unarmed provokes an attack of opportunity from the character one attacks, provided the target is armed. The attack of opportunity comes before the unarmed attack. An unarmed attack does not provoke attacks of opportunity from other foes, nor does it provoke an attack of opportunity from an unarmed foe. An unarmed character cannot take attacks of opportunity, though see 'Armed' Unarmed Attacks, below.
- ✱ **'Armed' Unarmed Attacks:** Sometimes a character's or creature's unarmed attack counts as an armed attack. A character with the Improved Unarmed Strike feat, a sorcerer delivering a touch attack spell and a creature with natural physical weapons all count as being armed. Note that being armed counts for both offence and defence; the character can make attacks of opportunity.
- ✱ **Unarmed Strike Damage:** An unarmed strike deals 1d3 points of damage plus Strength modifier, as normal. All damage from unarmed strikes is nonlethal. Unarmed strikes count as light weapons, for purposes of two-weapon attack penalties and so on.
- ✱ **Dealing Lethal Damage:** A character can specify that his unarmed strike will deal lethal damage before he makes his attack roll but he takes a -4 penalty on his attack roll if he does so. If the character has the Improved Unarmed Strike feat, he can deal lethal damage with an unarmed strike without taking a penalty on the attack roll.

STANDARD ACTIONS

These are the basic things characters and creatures can do during a combat round. Basic attacks are covered under this type of action, as is the activation of normal items and devices. Most actions taken by combatants are standard actions, though timing or outside influences might change this status.

ATTACK

Making an attack is a standard action. There are three kinds of basic attack: melee, unarmed and ranged. Melee covers the use of close-combat weapons. Unarmed attacks are any offensive use of natural parts of a creature's body. This covers everything from a brawler's fists to a lion's claws. Ranged attacks run the gamut from the hefty missiles of an arbalest to more conventional weapons such as bows and slings.

MELEE ATTACKS

With a normal melee weapon, one can strike any opponent within five feet. Opponents within five feet are considered adjacent to a character. Some melee weapons have reach, as indicated in their descriptions. With a typical reach weapon, one can strike opponents 10 feet away but cannot strike adjacent foes, that is, those within five feet.

UNARMED ATTACKS

Striking for damage with punches, kicks and head butts is much like attacking with a melee weapon, except for the following complications:

RANGED ATTACKS

With a ranged weapon, one can shoot or throw at any target that is within the weapon's maximum range and in line of sight. The maximum range for a thrown weapon is five range increments. For projectile weapons, it is ten range increments. Some ranged weapons have shorter maximum ranges, as specified in their descriptions.



ACTIONS IN COMBAT

Standard Action	Attack of Opportunity ¹
Attack (melee)	No
Attack (ranged)	Yes
Attack (unarmed)	Yes
Aid another	Maybe ²
Bull rush	Yes
Cast a spell (one standard action casting time)	Yes
Concentrate to maintain an active spell	No
Dismiss a spell	No
Draw a hidden weapon (see Sleight of Hand skill)	No
Escape a grapple	No
Feint	No
Light a torch from a burning taper	Yes
Make a dying friend stable (see Heal skill)	Yes
Overrun	No
Ready (triggers a standard action)	No
Sunder a weapon (attack)	Yes
Sunder an object (attack)	Maybe ³
Total defence	No
Use special ability	No
Use skill that takes one action	Usually

Move Action	Attack of Opportunity ¹
Move	Yes
Control a frightened mount	Yes
Direct or redirect an active spell	No
Draw a weapon ⁴	No
Open or close a door	No
Mount a horse or dismount	No
Move a heavy object	Yes
Pick up an item	Yes
Sheathe a weapon	Yes
Stand up from prone	Yes
Ready or loose a shield ⁴	No
Retrieve a stored item	Yes

Free Action	Attack of Opportunity ¹
Cease concentration on a spell	No
Drop an item	No
Drop to the floor	No
Prepare spell components to cast a spell ⁶	No
Speak	No

Full-Round Action	Attack of Opportunity ¹
Full attack	No
Charge ⁵	No
Deliver coup de grace	Yes
Escape from a net	Yes
Extinguish flames	No
Light a torch with flint and tinder	Yes
Load a crossbow	Yes
Prepare to throw splash weapon	Yes
Run	Yes
Use skill that takes one round	Usually
Use touch spell on up to six friends	Yes
Withdraw ⁵	Maybe

No Action	Attack of Opportunity ¹
Delay	No
Five-foot step	Maybe ⁷

Action Type Varies	Attack of Opportunity ¹
Disarm ⁸	Yes
Grapple ⁸	Yes
Trip an opponent ⁸	Yes
Use feat ⁹	Varies

¹ Regardless of the action, if a character moves out of a threatened square, he usually provokes an attack of opportunity. This column indicates whether the action itself, rather than the moving, provokes an attack of opportunity.

² If a character aids someone performing an action that would normally provoke an attack of opportunity, the act of aiding that person provokes an attack of opportunity as well.

³ If the object is being held, carried or worn by a creature, yes. If not, no.

⁴ If a character has a base attack bonus of +1 or higher, he can combine one of these actions with a regular move. If he has the Two-Weapon Fighting feat, he can draw two light or one-handed weapons in the time it would normally take to draw one.

⁵ May be taken as a standard action if the character is limited to taking only a single action in a round.

⁶ Unless the component is an extremely large or awkward item.

⁷ A five-foot step provokes an attack of opportunity if it is made as part of (or combined with) another action that would do so, such as using the Full Attack action with a bow. Otherwise, it does not.

⁸ These attack forms substitute for melee attacks, not actions. As melee attacks, they can be used once in an attack or charge action, one or more times in a full attack action or even as attacks of opportunity.

⁹ The description of a feat defines its effect.

ATTACK ROLLS

An attack roll represents a character's attempts to strike an opponent.

MELEE ATTACK ROLL = 1d20 +
BASE ATTACK BONUS +
STRENGTH MODIFIER +
SIZE MODIFIER

RANGED ATTACK ROLL = 1d20 +
BASE ATTACK BONUS +
DEXTERITY MODIFIER +
SIZE MODIFIER +
RANGE PENALTY

Some characters may prefer to use their Dexterity modifiers rather than their Strength modifiers in melee combat. The procedure for this is explained in the finesse section (see page 171).

An attack roll must equal or exceed a target's Dodge Defence or Parry Defence in order to score a hit, depending on which the target is using to defend himself. If the target cannot dodge or parry, the attack roll only needs to equal or exceed the target's Base Defence.

AUTOMATIC MISSES AND HITS

A natural one (the d20 comes up one) on the attack roll is always a miss. A natural 20 (the d20 comes up 20) is always a hit. A natural 20 is also a threat – a possible critical hit. This is another notable exception to the natural 1 and 20 rules.

DAMAGE ROLLS

If the attack roll result equals or exceeds the target's chosen Defence, the attack hits. Roll the appropriate damage for the weapon and reduce the damage by the damage reduction of the target after any modification for Armour Piercing. Damage is deducted from the target's current hit points.

MULTIPLE ATTACKS

A character who can make more than one attack per round must use the full attack action (see Full-Round Actions, below) in order to get more than one attack. This applies to characters wielding two weapons, characters with high base attack bonuses and any other method of gaining more than one attack.

SHOOTING OR THROWING INTO A MELEE

If one shoots or throws a ranged weapon at a target engaged in melee with a friendly character, one takes a –4 penalty on one's attack roll. Two characters are engaged in melee if they are enemies of each other and either threatens the other. An unconscious or otherwise immobile character is not considered engaged unless he is actually being attacked.

If a character's target (or the part of his target he is aiming at, if it is a big target) is at least 10 feet away from the nearest friendly character, the shooting character can avoid the –4 penalty, even if the creature he is aiming at is engaged in melee with a friendly character.

- ✱ *Precise Shot*: If a character has the Precise Shot feat he may fire into melee without a penalty.





FIGHTING DEFENSIVELY AS A STANDARD ACTION

A character can choose to fight defensively when attacking. This means that he focuses his attention on keeping his own hide intact at the expense of offensive potential. The character who chooses to fight defensively takes a -4 penalty on all attacks in a round to gain a +2 bonus to Defence for the same round.

CRITICAL HITS

When a player makes an attack roll and gets a natural 20 (the d20 shows 20), he hits regardless of his target's Defence and scores a threat. The hit might be a critical hit. To find out if it is a critical hit, the attacker immediately makes a critical roll, which is another attack roll with all the same modifiers as the attack roll he just made. If the critical roll also results in a hit against the target's Defence, the original hit is a critical hit. (The critical roll just needs to hit to result in a critical hit. It does not need to come up 20 again.) If the critical roll is a miss, the original hit is just a regular hit. A critical hit means that the target rolls his damage more than once, with all his usual bonuses, and adds the rolls together. Unless otherwise specified, the threat range for a critical hit on an attack roll is 20 and the multiplier is $\times 2$.

- ✱ *Exception:* Extra dice of damage over and above a weapon's normal damage is not multiplied when one scores a critical hit. This includes additional dice from magical effects or class features such as sneak attack.
- ✱ *Increased Threat Range:* Sometimes a character's threat range is greater than 20. That is, he can score a threat on a lower number. In such cases, a roll of lower than 20 is not an automatic hit. Any attack roll that does not result in a hit is not a threat.
- ✱ *Increased Critical Multiplier:* Some weapons deal greater than double damage on a critical hit.

FIGHTING ON THE RUN

When using the attack action with a melee weapon, any character can move both before and after the attack, provided that the total distance the character

moves is not greater than the character's speed. Moving in this way provokes attacks of opportunity as normal.

CAST A SPELL

Most spells require one standard action to cast. A character can cast such a spell either before or after he takes a move action.

- ✱ *Note:* A character can still dodge while casting. He can also parry unless the spell has a somatic (S) component.

SPELL COMPONENTS

To cast a spell with a verbal (V) component, a character must speak in a firm voice. If he is gagged or otherwise prevented from speaking (such as by being pinned in a grapple) he cannot cast a spell with a verbal (V) component. A sorcerer who has been deafened has a 20% chance of spoiling any spell he tries to cast if that spell has a verbal component.

To cast a spell with a somatic (S) component, the character must gesture freely with at least one hand. One cannot cast a spell of this type while bound, grappling or with both one's hands full or occupied.

To cast a spell with a material (M) or focus (F) component, a character has to have the proper materials as described by the spell. Unless these materials are elaborate, preparing them is a free action. For material components and foci for which costs are not listed, the character can assume he has them if he has a spell component pouch.

Some spells have an Experience Point (XP) component and involve an Experience Point cost. A character cannot spend enough XP to lose a level, so he cannot cast the spell unless he has enough XP to spare. However, he may, on gaining enough XP to achieve a new level, immediately spend the XP on casting the spell rather than keeping it to advance a level. The XP are expended when the spell is cast, whether or not the casting succeeds.

CONCENTRATION

One must concentrate to cast a spell. If the caster cannot concentrate, he cannot cast a spell. If a character starts casting a spell but something interferes with his concentration, he must make a Concentration check or lose the spell. The check's DC depends on what is threatening his concentration; see the Concentration skill. If he fails, the spell dissipates with no effect and he loses the PP that would have powered the spell.



CONCENTRATING TO MAINTAIN A SPELL

Some spells require continued concentration to keep them going. Concentrating to maintain a spell is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Anything that could break a character's concentration when casting a spell can keep him from concentrating on maintaining a spell. If the caster's concentration breaks, the spell ends.

CASTING TIME

Spells take effect immediately after their casting time is complete.

ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

Generally, if a character casts a spell, he provokes attacks of opportunity from threatening enemies. If he takes damage from an attack of opportunity, he must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + points of damage taken + PP cost of the spell) or lose the spell. Spells that require only a free action to cast do not provoke attacks of opportunity.

CASTING ON THE DEFENSIVE

Casting a spell while on the defensive does not provoke an attack of opportunity. It does, however, require a Concentration check (DC 15 + PP cost of the spell) to pull off. Failure means that the PP spent to power the spell are lost.

TOUCH SPELLS IN COMBAT

Many spells have a range of 'touch.' To use these spells, the character casts the spell and then touches the subject, either in the same round or any time later. In the same round that the spell is cast, the character may also touch (or attempt to touch) the target. The character may take his move before casting the spell, after touching the target or between casting

the spell and touching the target. He can automatically touch one friend or use the spell on himself but to touch an opponent, he must succeed on an attack roll.

✱ *Touch Attacks:* Touching an opponent with a touch spell is considered an armed attack and therefore does not provoke attacks of opportunity. However, the act of casting a spell does provoke an attack of opportunity. Touch attacks come in two types: melee touch attacks and ranged touch attacks. An opponent can only attempt to defend against a touch attack with his Dodge Defence, as parrying does not work against touch attacks.

✱ *Holding the Charge:* If a spell is not discharged in the round it is cast, the caster can hold the discharge of the spell (hold the charge) indefinitely. He can continue to make touch attacks round after round. He can touch one friend as a standard action or up to six friends as a full-round action. If he touches anything or anyone while holding a charge, even unintentionally, the spell discharges. If he casts another spell, the touch spell dissipates. Alternatively, the character may make a normal unarmed attack (or an attack with a natural weapon) while holding a charge. In this case, he is not considered armed and he provokes attacks of opportunity as normal for the attack. (If his unarmed attack or natural weapon attack does not provoke attacks of opportunity, neither does this attack.) If the attack hits, he deals normal damage for his unarmed attack or natural weapon and the spell discharges. If the attack misses, the character still holds the charge.

DISMISS A SPELL

Dismissing an active spell is a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

USE SPECIAL ABILITY

Using a special ability is usually a standard action but whether it is a standard action, a full-round action or not an action at all is defined by the ability.

TOTAL DEFENCE

A character can defend himself as a standard action. He gets a +4 bonus to his Defence for one round. This bonus applies from the start of this action.





The character cannot combine total defence with fighting defensively or with the benefit of the Combat Expertise feat, since both of those require that an attack or full attack be declared. A character cannot make attacks of opportunity while using total defence.

START OR COMPLETE FULL-ROUND ACTION

The 'start full-round action' standard action lets a character start undertaking a full-round action, which he can complete in the following round by using another standard action. He cannot use this action to start or complete a full attack, charge, run or withdraw.

MOVE ACTIONS

With the exception of specific movement-related skills, most move actions do not require a check. As the title of this type of action suggests, all move actions centre around locomotion or body movements, though not all of them involve a character physically moving from its current location.

MOVE

The simplest move action is moving at speed. If a character takes this kind of move action during his turn, he cannot also take a five-foot step. Many non-standard modes of movement are covered under this category, including climbing and swimming up to one-quarter speed.

ACCELERATED CLIMBING

A character can climb one-half his speed as a move action by accepting a -5 penalty on his Climb check.

CRAWLING

A character can crawl five feet as a move action. Crawling incurs attacks of opportunity from any attackers who threaten the character at any point during his crawl.

DRAW OR SHEATHE A WEAPON

Drawing a weapon for use in combat to parry or strike or putting it away to free up a hand requires a move action. If a weapon or weapon-

like object is stored in a pack or otherwise out of easy reach, treat this action as retrieving a stored item.

If a character has a base attack bonus of +1 or higher, he may draw a weapon as a free action combined with a regular move. If he has the Two-Weapon Fighting feat, he can draw two light or one-handed weapons in the time it would normally take to draw one.

Drawing ammunition (such as arrows, bolts or sling bullets) for use with a ranged weapon is a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

READY OR LOOSE A SHIELD

Strapping a shield to one's arm to gain its shield bonus to one's Parry Defence or unstrapping and dropping a shield to use one's shield hand for another purpose requires a move action. If a character has a base attack bonus of +1 or higher, he can ready or loose a shield as a free action combined with a regular move.

Dropping a carried (but not worn) shield is a free action.

MANIPULATE AN ITEM

In most cases, moving or manipulating an item is a move action. This includes retrieving or putting away a stored item, picking up an item, moving a heavy object and opening a door. Examples of this kind of action, along with whether they incur an attack of opportunity, are given in the Actions in Combat table.

DIRECT OR REDIRECT A SPELL

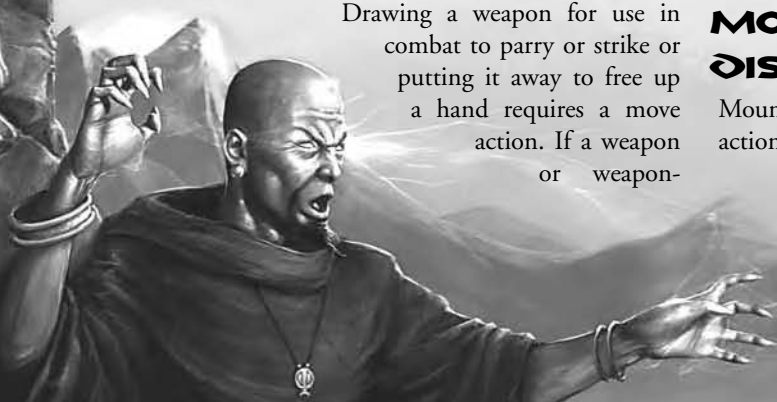
Some spells allow a character to redirect a spell's effect to new targets or areas after the spell is cast. Redirecting a spell requires a move action and does not provoke attacks of opportunity or require concentration.

STAND UP

Standing up from a prone position requires a move action and provokes attacks of opportunity.

MOUNT OR DISMOUNT A STEED

Mounting or dismounting from a steed requires a move action.



FAST MOUNT OR DISMOUNT

A character can mount or dismount as a free action with a DC 20 Ride check; his armour check penalty, if any, applies to this check. If the character fails the check, mounting or dismounting is a move action instead. He cannot attempt a fast mount or fast dismount unless he can perform the mount or dismount as a move action in the current round.

FULL-ROUND ACTIONS

A full-round action requires an entire round to complete. Thus, it cannot be coupled with a standard or a move action, though if it does not involve moving any distance, the character can take a five-foot step.

FULL ATTACK

If a character gets more than one attack per round because his base attack bonus is high enough, because he fights with two weapons or for some other special reason, he must use a full-round action to get his additional attacks. The character does not need to specify his targets ahead of time. He can wait to see how the earlier attacks turn out before assigning the later ones. The only movement he can take during a full attack is a five-foot step. The step may be taken before, after or between attacks.

If a character gets multiple attacks because his base attack bonus is high enough, he must make the attacks in order from highest bonus to lowest. If he is using two weapons, he can strike with either weapon first.

DECIDING BETWEEN AN ATTACK AND A FULL ATTACK

After his first attack, a player can decide to take a move action instead of making his remaining attacks, depending on how the first attack turns out. If he has already taken a five-foot step, he cannot use his move action to move any distance but he could still use a different kind of move action.

FIGHTING DEFENSIVELY AS A FULL-ROUND ACTION

A character can choose to fight defensively when taking a full attack action. In this case, take a -4 penalty on all attacks in a round to gain a +2 bonus to Defence for the same round.

CLEAVE

The extra attacks granted by the Cleave feat or Great Cleave feat can be taken whenever they apply. This is an exception to the normal limit to the number of attacks one can take when not using a full attack action.

CAST A SPELL

A spell that takes one round to cast is a full-round action. It comes into effect just before the beginning of the caster's turn in the round after the spell is cast. The caster can act normally after the spell is completed. A spell that takes one minute to cast comes into effect just before the caster's turn one minute later; for each of those 10 rounds, the spell is cast as a full-round action. These actions must be consecutive and uninterrupted or the spell automatically fails.

When a spell that takes one round or longer is cast, the caster must continue the invocations, gestures and concentration from one round to just before his turn in the next round at least. If he loses concentration after starting the spell and before it is complete, the spell fails and he loses the PP.

A character who casts a spell only provoke attacks of opportunity when he begins casting the spell, even though he might continue casting for at least one full round. The character does not threaten any squares around him when casting a spell. This action is otherwise identical to the Cast a Spell action described under Standard Actions.

USE SPECIAL ABILITY

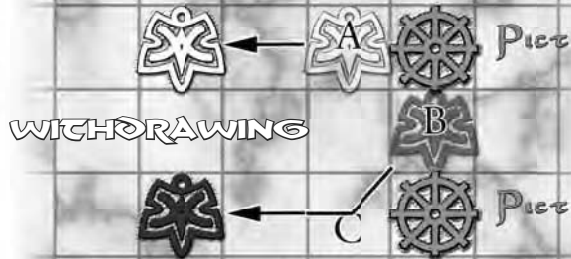
Using a special ability is usually a standard action but some may be full-round actions, as defined by the ability.

WITHDRAW

Withdrawing from melee combat is a full-round action. When a character withdraws, he can move up to double his speed. The square he starts out in is not considered threatened by any opponent he can see and therefore visible enemies do not get attacks of opportunity against the character when he moves from that square. Invisible enemies still get attacks of opportunity against the character and he cannot withdraw from combat if he is blinded. A character cannot take a five-foot step during the same round in which he withdraws.



Valeria withdraws, doing nothing but moving, so the pict does not get an attack of opportunity when she leaves his threatened square (A).



Conan withdraws, doing nothing but moving. When withdrawing, the square he starts in is not considered to be threatened so he does not provoke an attack of opportunity for leaving square B. When he leaves square C, however, the pict can attack him.

If, during the process of withdrawing, a character moves out of a threatened square (other than the one he started in), enemies get attacks of opportunity as normal. Note that despite the name of this action, the character does not actually have to leave combat entirely.

RESTRICTED WITHDRAW

If one is limited to taking only a standard or move action each round, one can withdraw as a standard action. In this case, the character may only move up to his speed rather than up to double his speed.

RUN

A character can run as a full-round action, in which case he does not also get a five-foot step. The character can run up to four times his speed in a straight line or three times his speed if he is in heavy armour. He cannot dodge or parry at all while running unless he has the Run feat, in which case he can dodge. Running represents a speed of about 12 miles per hour for an unencumbered human.

A character can run for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution score but after that must make a DC 10 Constitution check to continue running. The DC of this check increases by one for each previous check and

a check must be made every round the character continues to run. When he fails this check, he must stop running and must rest for one minute (10 rounds) before running again. During a rest period, a character can move no faster in a single round than his base speed.

A character cannot run across difficult terrain or if he cannot see where he is going.

MOVE FIVE FEET THROUGH DIFFICULT TERRAIN

In some situations, a character's movement may be so hampered that he cannot move even five feet, that is, a single square. In such a case, the character may spend a full-round action to move five feet (one square) in any direction, even diagonally. Even though this looks like a five-foot step, it is not and thus it provokes attacks of opportunity normally.

FREE ACTIONS

Free actions do not take any time at all, though there may be limits to the number of free actions one can perform in a turn. Free actions rarely incur attacks of opportunity. Some common free actions are described below.

DROP AN ITEM

Dropping an item in one's own space or into an adjacent square is a free action.

DROP PRONE

Dropping to a prone position in one's own space is a free action.

SPEAK

In general, speaking is a free action that a character can perform even when it is not his turn. Speaking more than a few sentences is generally beyond the limit of a free action. In general, if a phrase takes longer than six seconds to say, it requires a standard action to complete; this is a matter for a Games Master's discretion.

CEASE CONCENTRATION

A character can stop concentrating on an active spell as a free action.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIONS

TAKE FIVE-FOOT STEP

A character can move five feet in any round when he does not perform any other kind of movement. Taking this five-foot step does not provoke an attack of opportunity unless it is combined with another action that does (such as casting a spell with a one round casting time). A character cannot take more than one five-foot step in a round and he cannot take a five-foot step in a round when he moves any distance.

A character may not take a five-foot step using a form of movement for which he does not have a listed speed.

USE FEAT

Certain feats allow for special actions in combat. Other feats do not require actions themselves but instead give a character a bonus when he attempts to do something he can already do. Some feats are not intended for use within the framework of combat. Refer to the individual feat descriptions for more information.

USE SKILL

Most skill uses are standard actions but some might be move actions, full-round actions, free actions or something else entirely. Refer to the individual skill descriptions for more information. Most skill uses in combat provoke attacks of opportunity.

WOUNDS, HEALING AND RECOVERY

Hit points measure how hard a character is to kill. No matter how many hit points a character loses, he is not hindered in any way until his hit points drop to zero or lower. Hit points are summarised above but the full rules regarding them are listed in this section.

LOSS OF HIT POINTS

The most common way that a character gets hurt is to take lethal damage and lose hit points.

WHAT HIT POINTS REPRESENT

Hit points represent two things in the game world: the ability to take physical punishment and keep going and the ability to turn a serious blow into a less serious one.

EFFECTS OF HIT POINT DAMAGE

Damage does not slow a character down until his hit points reach zero or lower. At zero hit points, a character is disabled.

- ✱ From -1 to -9 hit points, the character is dying.
- ✱ At -10 or lower, he is dead unless he spends a fate point to be Left for Dead (see overleaf).

MASSIVE DAMAGE

If a character ever sustains damage so massive that 20 points of damage or more are inflicted in one deduction and the character is not reduced below zero hit points outright, he must make a Fortitude saving throw.

MASSIVE DAMAGE

SAVING THROW DC = $10 + (\frac{1}{2} \text{ DAMAGE DEALT})$

If this saving throw fails, the character's hit point total is reduced to -1d10 hit points (i.e. -1 hit points to -10 hit points) immediately regardless of his previous hit points. If this reduces him to -10 hit points he can still spend a fate point to be 'Left for Dead' instead of killed outright; see below.

If the character fails his saving throw and some or all of the damage dealt by the attack is nonlethal, the character is instead knocked unconscious (and is helpless) for 3d6 rounds.

DISABLED (ZERO HIT POINTS)

When a character's hit points drop to exactly zero, he is disabled. He can take either a single move or a standard action each turn and he cannot take full-round actions. The character can take move actions without further injuring himself but if he performs any standard action or other strenuous action, he takes one point of damage after completing the act. Unless the character's activity increases his hit points, he has -1 hit points and is dying.



Healing that raises a character's hit points above zero makes him fully functional again, just as if he had never been reduced to zero or fewer hit points. A character can also become disabled when recovering from dying. In this case, becoming disabled is a step toward recovery and the character can have fewer than zero hit points. See Stable Characters and Recovery, below.

DYING (-1 TO -9 HIT POINTS)

When a character's hit points drop to between -1 and -9 inclusive, he is dying. A dying character immediately falls unconscious and can take no actions. A dying character loses one hit point every round. This continues until the character dies or becomes stable; see below. When a sorcerer or other character with Power Points is brought to less than zero hit points, he immediately loses all stored Power Points and must check to see if his spells and constructions survive without his will to power them. See page 229 for details.

DEAD (-10 HIT POINTS OR LOWER)

When a character's hit points drop to -10 or lower he is dead. A character can also die from taking ability damage that reduces his Constitution to zero.

LEFT FOR DEAD

When a character's hit points reach -10 by any means, he may spend one fate point to avoid being killed outright. He is instead 'Left for Dead.'

A character who is Left for Dead appears dead to a casual examination, though he still has a chance of recovering, particularly if quickly attended by a character with the Heal skill (see page 105). If he is healed of at least one point of damage within one hour of being left for dead, either with the Heal skill or by some sorcerous means, he is considered to be stable and at -9 hit points (see above). If he is not healed, he must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) after one hour. If successful, he stabilises himself and is at -9 hit points. If he fails, he is finally and irrevocably dead, whether or not he has any fate points left.

STABLE CHARACTERS AND RECOVERY

On the turn after a character is reduced to between -1 and -9 hit points and on all subsequent turns, roll d% to see whether the dying character becomes stable. He has a 10% chance of becoming stable. If he does not, he loses one hit point. A character who is unconscious or dying cannot delay his death by using any special action that changes the initiative count on which his action occurs.

If the character's hit points drop to -10 or lower, he immediately dies unless he spends a fate point to be Left for Dead.

One can keep a dying character from losing any more hit points and make him stable with a DC 15 Heal check. If any sort of healing cures the dying character of even one point of damage, he stops losing hit points and becomes stable. Healing that raises the dying character's hit points to zero makes him conscious and disabled. Healing that raises his hit points to one or more makes him fully functional again, just as if he had never been reduced to zero or lower. A sorcerer who is brought back to one or more hit points does not immediately recover any Power Points lost when he dropped to less than zero hit points; he must regain these at the usual rate.

A stable character who has been tended by a healer or who has been magically healed eventually regains consciousness and recovers hit points naturally. If the character has no one to tend him, however, his life remains in danger and he may yet succumb to his injuries and slip away.

RECOVERING WITH HELP

One hour after a tended, dying character becomes stable, roll d%. The character has a 10% chance of becoming conscious, at which point he is disabled as if he had zero hit points. If he remains unconscious, he has the same chance of reviving and becoming disabled every hour. Even if unconscious, he recovers hit points naturally. He is back to normal when his hit points rise to one or more.

RECOVERING WITHOUT HELP

A severely wounded character who is left alone usually dies. He has a small chance, however, of recovering on his own. A character who becomes stable on his own (by making the 10% roll while dying) and who has no one to tend to him still loses hit points, just at a slower rate. He has a 10% chance each hour of becoming conscious.



Each time he misses his hourly roll to become conscious, he loses one hit point. He also does not recover hit points through natural healing.

Even once he becomes conscious and is disabled, an unaided character still does not recover hit points naturally. Instead, he has a 10% chance each day of recovering hit points naturally, starting with that day; if he does not recover hit points, he loses one hit point instead.

Once an unaided character starts recovering hit points naturally, he is no longer in danger of naturally losing hit points even if his current hit point total is negative.

HEALING

A character who has taken damage can recover hit points through natural healing or through sorcerous healing. In any case, he cannot regain more hit points than his normal hit point total.

NATURAL HEALING

A character recovers (3 + Constitution modifier + 1 per character level, minimum 1) hit points per day of rest. If the character undergoes complete bed rest and does nothing for an entire day, he recovers double that (minimum 2 hit points).

A FLAGON OF WINE

A character who is disabled (on exactly zero hit points) may be restored to one hit point by drinking at least a pint of strong wine or other powerful liquor.

MAGICAL HEALING

A very few sorcerous means of healing exist. These usually work instantly and cannot be further improved by resting or the use of the Heal skill.

HEALING LIMITS

A character can never recover more hit points than he has lost. Magical and natural healing cannot increase a character's current hit points to more than his full, normal hit point total.

ABILITY SCORE LOSS AND HEALING

Various attacks cause ability score loss, either ability damage or ability drain.

Heroes in the *Conan* stories recover rapidly from being poisoned or otherwise reduced in capability. Ability damage returns at the rate of (1 + Constitution bonus, if any) points per hour of rest, which means a character can perform only light activity with no combat or sorcery. Complete bed rest restores (2 + Constitution bonus, if any) points per hour.

Ability *drain*, however, is permanent, though Golden Wine of Xuthal (see page 280) can restore even those lost ability score points.

While any loss is debilitating, losing all points in an ability score can be devastating.

- ✱ Strength 0 means that the character cannot move at all. He lies helpless on the ground.
- ✱ Dexterity 0 means that the character cannot move at all. He slumps motionless on the ground, helpless.
- ✱ Constitution 0 means that the character is dead.
- ✱ Intelligence 0 means that the character cannot think and is in a coma-like stupor, helpless.
- ✱ Wisdom 0 means that the character has withdrawn into a deep sleep filled with nightmares, helpless.
- ✱ Charisma 0 means that the character has withdrawn into a catatonic, coma-like stupor, helpless.

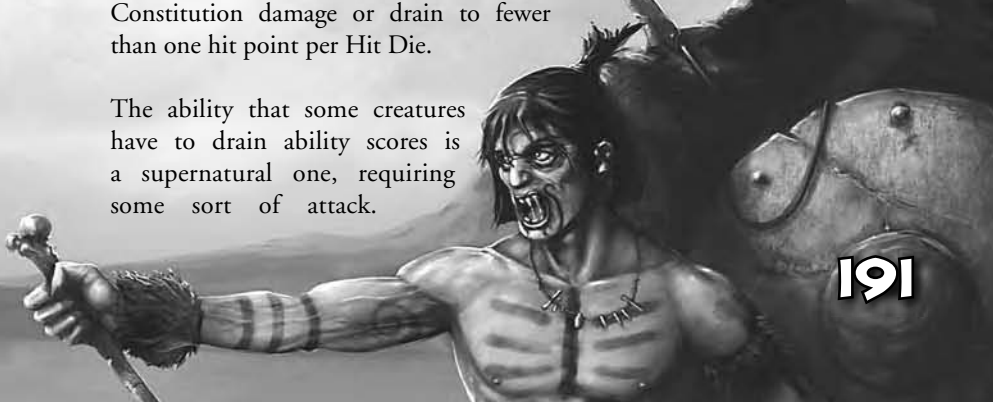
A character's ability scores may not drop below zero.

Having a score of zero in an ability is different from having no ability score whatsoever. See page 12 for details.

Some spells or abilities may impose an effective ability score reduction, which is different from ability score damage. Any such reduction disappears at the end of the spell's or ability's duration and the ability score immediately returns to its former value.

If a character's Constitution score drops, he loses one hit point per Hit Die for every point by which his Constitution modifier drops. For this purpose, levels above 10 do not count as Hit Dice, since no Constitution modifier is applied to a character's bonus hit points for achieving levels above 10 anyway. A hit point score may not be reduced by Constitution damage or drain to fewer than one hit point per Hit Die.

The ability that some creatures have to drain ability scores is a supernatural one, requiring some sort of attack.





Such creatures do not drain abilities from enemies when enemies strike them, even with unarmed attacks or natural weapons.

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Certain effects give a character temporary hit points. When a character gains temporary hit points, note his current hit point total. When the temporary hit points go away, the character's hit points drop to his current hit point total. If the character's hit points are fewer than his current hit point total at that time, all the temporary hit points have already been lost and the character's hit point total does not drop further. When temporary hit points are lost, they cannot be restored as hit point, even by magic.

INCREASES IN CONSTITUTION SCORE AND CURRENT HIT POINTS

An increase in a character's Constitution score, even a temporary one, can give him more hit points (an effective hit point increase) but these are not temporary hit points. They can be restored and they are not lost the same way as temporary hit points are. When a boost to a character's or creature's Constitution score ends, the additional hit points granted by the boost are immediately subtracted from the character's current total. This can disable or kill a character if the subtracted number sufficiently exceeds the creature's hit point total.

STUNNED CHARACTERS

Some circumstances, such as sorcery or certain feats, can cause a character to become stunned. The character cannot dodge or parry and can take no actions. He is not, however, classed as helpless.

NONLETHAL DAMAGE

Certain attacks deal nonlethal damage. Other effects, such as exposure to heat or being exhausted, also deal nonlethal damage. When a character takes nonlethal damage, the player should keep a running total of how much damage the character has accumulated. *Do not deduct the nonlethal damage number from the character's current hit points. It is not 'real' damage.* Instead,

when the character's nonlethal damage equals his current hit points, he is staggered; when it exceeds his current hit points, he falls unconscious. It does not matter whether the nonlethal damage equals or exceeds the character's current hit points due to the nonlethal damage going up or his current hit points going down.

- ✱ *Nonlethal Damage with a Weapon that Deals Lethal Damage:* A character can use a melee weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage instead at a -4 penalty on his attack roll.
- ✱ *Lethal Damage with a Weapon that Deals Nonlethal Damage:* A character can use a weapon that deals nonlethal damage, including an unarmed strike, to deal lethal damage instead at a -4 penalty on his attack roll.

STAGGERED AND UNCONSCIOUS

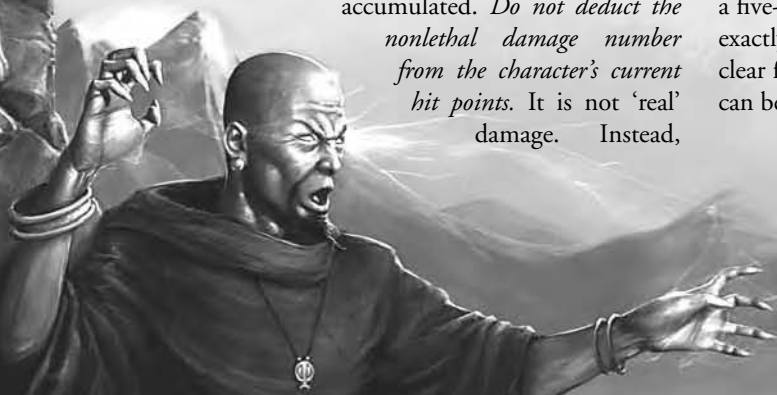
When a character's nonlethal damage equals his current hit points, he is staggered. He can only take a standard action or a move action in each round. The character ceases being staggered when his current hit points once again exceed his nonlethal damage. When the character's nonlethal damage exceeds his current hit points, he falls unconscious. The character is helpless when he is unconscious. Sorcerers who fall unconscious from nonlethal damage do not lose their Power Points.

HEALING NONLETHAL DAMAGE

Nonlethal damage is healed at the rate of one hit point per character level per hour. When a spell or a magical power cures hit point damage, it also removes an equal amount of nonlethal damage.

MOVEMENT, POSITION AND DISTANCE

Miniatures are on the 30mm scale—a miniature figure of a six-foot-tall human is approximately 30mm tall. A square on the battle grid is one inch across, representing a five-foot-by-five-foot area. While miniatures may not be exactly to scale, as long as a tactical map is divided into clear five-foot sections, the movement rules in this section can be implemented easily.



TACTICAL MOVEMENT

HOW FAR CAN A CHARACTER MOVE?

A character's speed is determined mainly by his armour. A character's speed while unarmoured is equal to his listed base land speed.

ENCUMBRANCE

A character encumbered by a large amount of gear, treasure or fallen comrades may move slower than normal.

HAMPERED MOVEMENT

Difficult terrain, obstacles or poor visibility can hamper movement. Certain magical effects, movement rates and class features can modify or bypass these hindrances.

MOVEMENT IN COMBAT

Generally, a character can move at his base speed in a round and still do something. In other words, he can take a move action and a standard action. Alternatively he can move twice as fast by taking both his actions as movement and doing nothing else.

If a character spends the entire round running, he can move at quadruple his speed. If he does something that requires a full round, he can only take a five-foot step.

BONUSES TO SPEED

Always apply any modifiers before adjusting a character's speed based on armour or encumbrance.

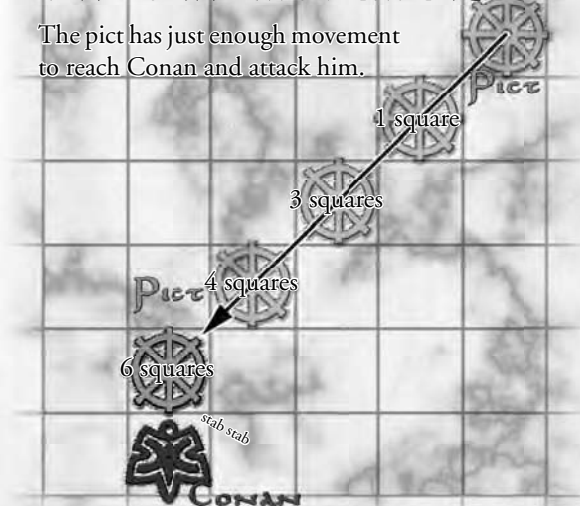
MEASURING DISTANCE ON A TACTICAL GRID

DIAGONALS

When measuring distance, the first diagonal counts as one square, the second counts as two squares, the third counts as one, the fourth as two and so on. A character cannot move diagonally past a corner, even by taking a five-foot step. He can move diagonally past a creature, even an opponent. He can also move diagonally past other impassable obstacles, such as pits, assuming there is a route by which to do so.

DIAGONAL MOVEMENT

The pict has just enough movement to reach Conan and attack him.



CLOSEST CREATURE

When it is important to determine the closest square or creature to a location and if two squares or creatures are equally close, randomly determine which one counts as closest by rolling a die.

MOVING THROUGH AN OCCUPIED SQUARE

FRIENDLY OCCUPATION

Unless he is charging, a character can move through a square occupied by a friendly character. When you move through a square occupied by a friendly character, that character does not provide you with cover.

OPPONENT'S OCCUPATION

A character cannot move through a square occupied by an opponent, unless the opponent is helpless. One can move through a square occupied by a helpless opponent without penalty. Some creatures, particularly very large ones, may present an obstacle even when helpless. In such cases, each square counts as difficult terrain.



ENDING YOUR MOVEMENT

A character cannot end his movement in the same square as another creature unless it is helpless.

OVERRUN

During a character's movement or as part of a charge, he can attempt to move through a square occupied by an opponent. See page 209 for details.

TUMBLING

A trained character can attempt to tumble through a square occupied by an opponent; see the Tumble skill, page 117. Failure typically ends a character's movement and opens him up to an attack of opportunity.

VERY SMALL CREATURES

A Fine, Diminutive or Tiny creature can move into or through an occupied square. The creature provokes attacks of opportunity when doing so.

Any creature can move through a square occupied by a creature three size categories larger than itself. A big creature can move through a square occupied by a creature three size categories smaller than itself.

DESIGNATED EXCEPTIONS

Some creatures break the above rules. A creature that completely fills the squares it occupies cannot be bypassed, even with the Tumble skill or similar special abilities.

TERRAIN AND OBSTACLES

DIFFICULT TERRAIN

Difficult terrain hampers movement. Each square of difficult terrain counts as two squares of movement. Each diagonal move into a difficult terrain square counts as three squares. A character cannot run or charge across difficult terrain. If he occupies squares with different kinds of terrain, he can move only as fast as the most difficult terrain will allow.

Flying creatures are not hampered by difficult terrain.



OBSTACLES

Like difficult terrain, obstacles can hamper movement. If an obstacle hampers movement but does not completely block it, each obstructed square or obstacle between squares counts as two squares of movement. A character must pay the cost to cross the barrier in addition to the cost to move into the square on the other side. If he does not have sufficient movement to cross the barrier and move into the square on the other side, he cannot cross the barrier. Some obstacles may also require a skill check to cross. On the other hand, some obstacles block movement entirely. A character cannot move through a blocking obstacle.

Flying creatures can avoid most obstacles.

SQUEEZING

In some cases, a character may have to squeeze into or through an area that is smaller than he is. A character can squeeze through or into a space that is at least half as wide as he is. Each move into or through a narrow space counts as if it were two squares. A -4 penalty on attack rolls and a -4 penalty to Dodge Defence applies when a character is squeezed into a narrow space. This penalty incorporates the penalty for having inadequate dodging room; see Dodging above. The character also suffers a -2 penalty to Parry Defence if he is using a weapon larger than a cutlass.

When a Large creature (which normally takes up four squares) squeezes into a space that is one square wide, the creature's miniature figure occupies two squares, centred on the line between the two squares. For a bigger creature, centre the creature likewise in the area it squeezes into.

A creature can squeeze past an opponent while moving but it cannot end its movement in an occupied square.



To squeeze through or into a space smaller than half your space's width, a character must use the Escape Artist skill. He cannot attack while using the Escape Artist skill to squeeze through or into a narrow space, nor can he dodge. He also suffers a -4 penalty to Defence. He may still parry with light weapons, such as knives or daggers, but not with any larger weapons or with shields.

SPECIAL MOVEMENT RULES

These rules cover special movement situations.

ACCIDENTALLY ENDING A MOVE IN AN ILLEGAL SPACE

Sometimes a character ends its movement while moving through a space where it is not allowed to stop. When that happens, put the miniature in the last legal position the character occupied or the closest legal position, whichever is closer.

DOUBLE MOVEMENT COST

When a character's movement is hampered in some way, his movement usually costs double. See difficult terrain on the opposite page for an example. If movement cost is doubled twice, then each square counts as four squares, or six for diagonal movement. If movement cost is doubled three times, then each square counts as eight squares (12 if diagonal) and so on. This is an exception to the general rule that two doublings are equivalent to a tripling.

MINIMUM MOVEMENT

Despite penalties to movement, a character can take a full-round action to move five feet (one square) in any direction, even diagonally. This rule does not allow the character to move through impassable terrain or to move when all movement is prohibited. Such movement provokes attacks of opportunity as normal since despite the distance travelled, the movement is not technically a five-foot step. Note also that this special kind of movement does not apply to characters that are frozen in place by a hypnotism effect or otherwise completely unable to move due to some outside force.

BIG AND LITTLE CREATURES IN COMBAT

Creatures smaller than Small or larger than Medium are subject to special rules relating to position.

TINY, DIMINUTIVE AND FINE CREATURES

Very small creatures take up less than one square of space. This means that more than one such creature can fit into a single square. A Tiny creature typically occupies a space only 2-1/2 feet across, so four Tiny creatures can fit into a single square. Twenty-five Diminutive creatures or 100 Fine creatures can fit into a single square. Creatures that take up less than one square of space typically have a natural reach of zero feet, meaning they cannot reach into adjacent squares. They must enter an opponent's square to attack in melee. This provokes an attack of opportunity from the opponent. A character can attack within his own square if need be so he can attack such creatures normally. Since they have no natural reach, they do not threaten the squares around them. A character can move past them without provoking attacks of opportunity. They also cannot flank an enemy.

LARGE, HUGE, GARGANTUAN AND COLOSSAL CREATURES

Very large creatures take up more than one square. Creatures that take up more than one square typically have a natural reach of 10 feet or more, meaning that they can reach targets even if they are not in adjacent squares. A creature with a greater than normal natural reach (more than five feet) threatens squares adjacent to it, unlike when someone uses a reach weapon. A creature with greater than normal natural reach usually gets an attack of opportunity against anyone who approaches it, because that character must enter and move within the range of the creature's reach before he can attack it. This attack of opportunity is not provoked if a character takes a five-foot step.

Large or larger creatures using reach weapons can strike up to double their natural reach but cannot strike at their natural reach or less.





COMBAT MODIFIERS

Basic combat is covered by the rules above but there are numerous instances and conditions that can complicate a battle. Tactically minded players can use these to their advantage, while those with the skills or abilities to do so may impose them against their foes. In any case, these factors can combine to make nearly impossible battles merely difficult and to make invulnerable enemies vulnerable to a strategically planned assault. The true art of combat exists in understanding and taking advantage of these modifiers.

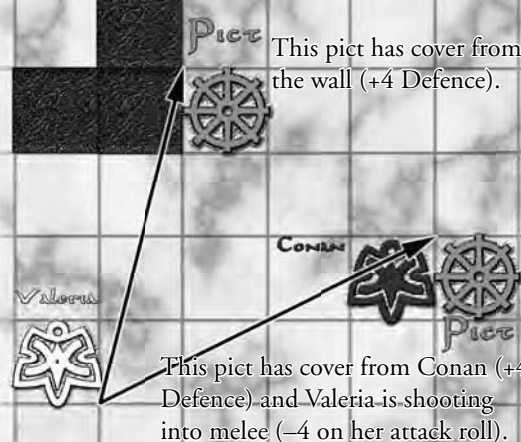
COVER

Cover makes a target harder to hit by introducing an obstacle between an attack and its destination.

COVER AGAINST RANGED ATTACKS

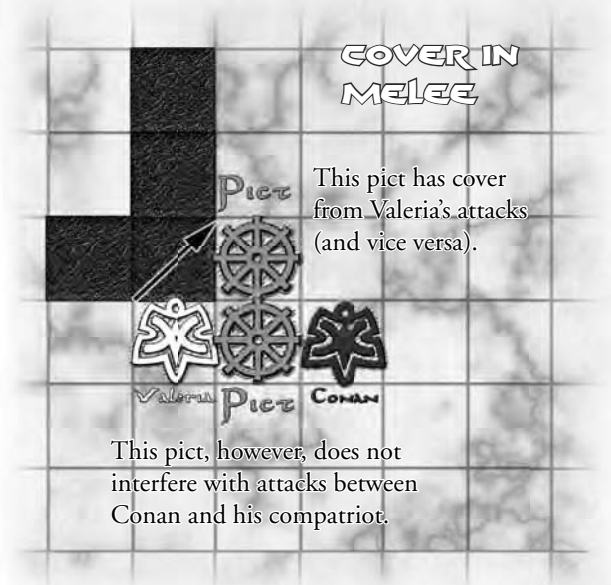
To determine whether a target has cover from a ranged attack, choose a corner of the attacker's square. If any line from this corner to any corner of the target's square passes through a square or border that blocks the line or provides cover, or passes through a square occupied by a creature, the target has cover and gains a +4 cover bonus to his Defence against the attack.

COVER FROM RANGED ATTACKS



COVER AGAINST MELEE ATTACKS

When making a melee attack against an adjacent target, the target has cover if any line from the attacker's square to the target's square goes through a wall, including a low wall. When making a melee attack against a target that is not adjacent to the attacker, such as with a reach weapon, use the rules for determining cover from ranged attacks. Again, cover grants a +4 cover bonus to Defence.



LOW OBSTACLES AND COVER

A low obstacle, such as a wall no higher than half the attacker's height, provides cover but only to creatures within 30 feet (six squares) of it. The attacker can ignore the cover if he is closer to the obstacle than his target is.

COVER AND ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

A character cannot execute an attack of opportunity against an opponent that has cover.

COVER AND REFLEX SAVING THROWS

Cover grants a +2 cover bonus on Reflex saving throws against attacks that originate or burst out from a point on the other side of the cover. Note that a spread effect can extend around corners and thus negate this cover bonus.

COVER AND HIDE CHECKS

A character can use cover to make a Hide check. Without cover, he usually needs concealment (see below) to make a Hide check.

SOFT COVER

Creatures, even one's enemies, can provide one with cover against ranged attacks, granting a +4 bonus to Defence. However, such soft cover provides no bonus on Reflex saving throws, nor does soft cover allow one to make a Hide check.

BIG CREATURES AND COVER

Any creature that takes up a space larger than five feet (one square) determines cover against melee attacks slightly differently than smaller creatures. Such a creature can choose any square that it occupies to determine if an opponent has cover against its melee attacks. Similarly, when making a melee attack against such a creature, the attacker can pick any of the squares it occupies to determine whether it has cover.

TOTAL COVER

If a player cannot draw a straight line between his square and any part of his target, the target is considered to have total cover. Attacks cannot be made against a target that has total cover.

VARYING DEGREES OF COVER

In some cases, cover may provide a greater bonus to Defence and Reflex saving throws. In such situations the normal cover bonuses to Defence and Reflex saving throws are doubled, to +8 and +4, respectively. A creature with this improved cover takes no damage at all if he successfully saves against any attack to which the Reflex saving throw bonus applies. Even if he fails, he takes only half damage. Furthermore, improved cover provides a +10 bonus on Hide checks.

CONCEALMENT

To determine whether a target has concealment from a ranged attack, choose a corner of the attacker's square. If the line from this corner to any corner of the target's square passes through a square or border that provides concealment, the target has concealment.

When making a melee attack against an adjacent target, the target has concealment if his space is entirely within an effect that grants

concealment. When a character makes a melee attack against a target that is not adjacent to him, use the rules for determining concealment from ranged attacks. In addition, some magical effects provide concealment against all attacks, regardless of whether any intervening concealment exists.

CONCEALMENT MISS CHANCE

Concealment gives the object of a successful attack a 20% chance that the attacker missed because of the concealment. If the attack hits, the defender must make a miss chance percentile roll to avoid being struck. Multiple concealment conditions do not stack.

CONCEALMENT AND HIDING

In the absence of cover a character can use concealment to make a Hide check.

TOTAL CONCEALMENT

If a character does not have line of sight to a target that he could otherwise attack, the target is considered to have total concealment. A character cannot attack an opponent that has total concealment, though he can attack into a specific square if his adversary is suspected to be there. A successful attack into a square occupied by an enemy with total concealment has a 50% miss chance instead of the normal 20% miss chance for an opponent with concealment. A character cannot execute an attack of opportunity against an opponent who has total concealment, even if the attacker knows what square or squares the opponent occupies.

IGNORING CONCEALMENT

Concealment is not always effective. Although invisibility provides total concealment, sighted opponents may still make Spot checks to notice the location of an invisible character. An invisible character who is moving gains a +20 bonus on Hide checks; he gains a +40 bonus on Hide checks when he is stationary. Even though opponents cannot see a character, they might be able to figure out where he is from other visual clues.

VARYING DEGREES OF CONCEALMENT

Certain situations may provide more or less than the typical level of concealment and modify the miss chance accordingly.

FLANKING

When making a melee attack, a character gets a +2 flanking bonus to the attack roll if his opponent is threatened by a character or creature friendly to the attacker on the opponent's opposite border or opposite corner. When in doubt about whether two friendly characters flank an opponent, trace an imaginary line between the two friendly characters' centres. If the line passes through opposite borders of the opponent's space, including corners of those borders, then the opponent is flanked. Being flanked does not render a character unable to dodge or parry, but it does render the victim susceptible to sneak attacks.

✱ *Exception:* If a flanker takes up more than one square, it gets the flanking bonus if any square it occupies counts for flanking. Only a creature or character that threatens the defender can help an attacker get a flanking bonus. Creatures with a reach of zero feet cannot flank an opponent.



HELPLESS DEFENDERS

A helpless opponent is someone who is bound, sleeping, paralysed, unconscious, or otherwise at your mercy.

REGULAR ATTACK

A helpless character can neither dodge nor parry. A thief or pirate can therefore sneak attack him. He has an effective Dexterity of zero, for a -5 penalty to Defence. He suffers

SNEAK ATTACK

Only characters with levels in certain classes, such as temptress, thief or pirate, or from certain races, such as Zingaran, can make sneak attacks. A sneak attack can only be made against a character who is unable to use Dodge Defence or Parry Defence to defend himself, or who is being flanked. A character who is blinded, flat-footed, stunned, helpless, the victim of a successful feint or pinned can thus be sneak attacked. A sneak attack only deals its extra damage if the attack either bypasses the target's armour or pierces the armour without adding extra damage.

If a character is able to defend himself with either Dodge Defence or Parry Defence (such as a character with the Reflexive Parry feat who is attacked when flat-footed), he is not susceptible to a sneak attack unless the sneak attack is of a kind that the chosen defence cannot help against. For example, a flat-footed character with Reflexive Parry could still be sneak attacked by a character using a ranged weapon, because ranged attacks cannot be parried.

an additional -4 penalty to his Defence against melee attacks but no additional penalty against ranged attacks.

COUP DE GRACE

As a full-round action, a character can use a melee weapon to deliver a coup de grace to a helpless opponent. He can also use a bow or crossbow, provided he is adjacent to the target. He automatically hits and scores a critical hit. If the defender survives the damage, he must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die. Thieves and pirates also get their extra sneak attack damage against a helpless opponent when delivering a coup de grace.

Delivering a coup de grace provokes attacks of opportunity from threatening opponents. One cannot deliver a coup de grace against a creature that is immune to critical hits. One can deliver a coup de grace against a creature with total concealment but doing this requires two consecutive full-round actions: one to 'find' the creature once the attacker has determined what square it is in and one to deliver the coup de grace.

SPECIAL COMBAT SITUATIONS

GRAPPLE

All forms of offensive holding, including the ancient art of wrestling, are considered actions of the grapple type. These actions can bind up a dangerous opponent or subdue someone when normal combat methods are ineffective.

GRAPPLE CHECKS

One needs to make grapple checks repeatedly during a grapple. These are like melee attack rolls and are made against an opponent's Grapple Defence.

A character's Grapple Attack Bonus when making a grapple check is:

**BASE ATTACK BONUS +
STRENGTH MODIFIER +
SPECIAL SIZE MODIFIER +
OTHER MODIFIERS**

A character's Grapple Defence is calculated as follows:

**10 + BASE ATTACK BONUS +
STRENGTH MODIFIER +
SPECIAL SIZE MODIFIER +
OTHER MODIFIERS**

Special Size Modifier: The special size modifier for a grapple check is as follows: Colossal +16, Gargantuan +12, Huge +8, Large +4, Medium +0, Small -4, Tiny -8, Diminutive -12, Fine -16. Use these numbers in place of a character's normal size modifier when making an attack roll or calculating Defence.

Grapple checks may be turned into opposed grapple rolls simply by basing Grapple Defence on a roll of 1d20 rather than a flat value of 10.

STARTING A GRAPPLE

To start a grapple, a character must grab and hold his target. Starting a grapple requires a successful melee touch attack roll. If a character has multiple attacks, he can attempt to start a grapple multiple times at successively lower base attack bonuses.

❖ **Step 1: Attack of Opportunity.** A character provokes an attack of opportunity from the target he is trying to grapple. If the attack of opportunity deals damage, the grapple attempt fails. (Certain monsters, such as the sons of Set, do not provoke attacks of opportunity when they attempt to grapple, nor do characters with the Improved Grapple feat.) If the attack of opportunity misses or fails to deal damage, proceed to Step 2.

❖ **Step 2: Grapple.** The character makes a grapple check against his opponent's Grapple Defence or Dodge Defence (opponent's choice). If the grapple check succeeds, the character and his target are now grappling. If it fails, the attacker fails to start the grapple. He automatically loses this contest if the target is two or more size categories larger than he is.

❖ **Step 3: Maintain Grapple.** To maintain the grapple for later rounds, the attacker must move into the target's space. This movement is free and does not count as part of the character's movement in the round. Moving, as normal, provokes attacks of opportunity from threatening opponents but not from the target. If the attacker cannot move into his target's space, he cannot maintain the grapple and must immediately let go of the target. To grapple again, he must begin at Step 1.

GRAPPLING CONSEQUENCES

While a character is grappling, his ability to attack others and defend himself is limited. He is using most of his concentration and every available limb to try and impede his opponent's movements, making it very difficult to spare any attention or effort against any other foe. A grappling character can only defend himself against melee or ranged attacks with Dodge Defence. It is impossible to use Parry Defence while grappling.

No Threatened Squares: A character does not threaten any squares while grappling.

No Dodge: A character is unable to dodge opponents that he is not grappling. He can still dodge opponents that he is grappling.

No Parry: A character cannot parry attacks while grappling, unless he performs the Human Shield combat move (see page 208).

No Movement: A character cannot move normally while grappling. He may, however, make a grapple check against his opponent's Grapple Defence (see the rules for doing so below) to move while grappling.

IF A CHARACTER IS GRAPPLING

When a character is grappling, regardless of who started the grapple, he can perform any of the actions listed below.

✱ *Attack an Opponent:* A character can make an attack with an unarmed strike, natural weapon or light weapon against another character that he is grappling. He takes a -4 penalty on such attacks. (This type of attack is made with a normal melee attack roll, not a grapple check.) He cannot attack with two weapons while grappling, even if both are light weapons. This is a standard action.

✱ *Cast a Spell:* A character can attempt to cast a spell while grappling or even while pinned (see below), provided the spell's casting time is no more than one standard action, it has no somatic component and the caster has in hand any material components or foci he might need. No spell that requires precise and careful action may be cast by a character who is grappling or being pinned. If the spell is one that a character can cast while grappling, he must make a Concentration check (DC 20 + PP cost) or fail to cast the spell and lose the PP spent. He does not have to make a successful grapple check to cast the spell.

✱ *Damage an Opponent:* While grappling, a character can deal damage to his opponent equivalent to an unarmed strike. The character should make a grapple check against his opponent's Grapple Defence in place of an attack. If the attacker wins, he deals nonlethal damage as normal for his unarmed strike: 1d3 points for Medium-size attackers, plus Strength modifiers. This damage ignores any DR from armour but takes account of DR derived from other sources, such as the class features of a barbarian. If the attacker wants to deal lethal damage, he takes a -4 penalty on his grapple check. This is a full-round action, and characters with suitably high base attack bonuses may make multiple grapple attacks in this manner.

✱ *Draw a Light Weapon:* A grappling character can draw a light weapon as a move action with a successful grapple check against his opponent's Grapple Defence.

✱ *Escape from Grapple:* A grappling character can escape a grapple by making a successful grapple check against his opponent's Grapple Defence in place of making an attack. He can choose to make an Escape Artist check in place of his grapple check but this requires a standard action. If more than one opponent is grappling a character, his grapple check result has to beat all their individual Grapple Defence values for him to escape. (Opponents do not have to try to hold the character if they do not want to.) If the character escapes, he finishes the action by moving into any space adjacent to his opponent(s). This is a full-round action.

✱ *Move:* A grappling character can move half his speed (bringing all others engaged in the grapple with him) by making a successful grapple check against his opponent's Grapple Defence. This requires a standard action and the character must beat all the other individual Grapple Defence values to move the grapple. *Note:* The character gets a +4 bonus on his grapple check to move a pinned opponent but only if no one else is involved in the grapple.

✱ *Retrieve a Spell Component:* A grappling character can produce a spell component from his pouch by using a full-round action. Doing so does not require a successful grapple check.

✱ *Pin an Opponent:* A grappling character can hold his opponent immobile for one round by making a successful grapple check against his Grapple Defence in place of an attack. Once his opponent is pinned, the character has a few additional options available to him; see below. This is a full-round action, and characters with suitably high base attack bonuses may make multiple grapple attacks in this manner.

✱ *Break Another's Pin:* If a character is grappling an opponent who has another character pinned, he can make a grapple check against that opponent's Grapple Defence in place of an attack. If the character who makes the grapple check wins, he breaks the hold the opponent has over the other character. The character is still grappling, but is no longer pinned. This is a full-round action, and characters with suitably high base attack bonuses may make multiple grapple checks in this manner.

✱ *Use Opponent's Weapon:* A character can use his opponent's light weapon to attack him. The character makes a grapple check against his opponent's Grapple Defence in place of an attack. If he wins, he makes an attack roll with the weapon with a -4 penalty. This is a standard action. The character does not gain possession of the weapon by performing this action.

IF YOU ARE PINNING YOUR OPPONENT

A character who is pinning an opponent can attempt can attempt any of the actions described above. The character may also prevent a pinned opponent from speaking if they wish. This is not an action.

A character can use a disarm action to try to remove or grab a well-secured object from a pinned opponent but the opponent gets a +4 bonus on his roll to resist the character's attempt; see Disarm on page 206.

A character may voluntarily release a pinned character as a free action. If this occurs, the two are no longer considered to be grappling and one character – the releasing character's choice – must be moved to an adjacent 5 foot square.

A character cannot draw or use a weapon (against the pinned character or any other character), escape another's grapple, retrieve a spell component, pin another character or break another's pin while pinning an opponent.

IF YOU ARE PINNED BY AN OPPONENT

A character is pinned is held immobile (but not helpless) for one round. While he is pinned, he cannot dodge or parry. His effective Dexterity is zero, which gives him a -5 penalty to Defence. He also takes a -4 penalty to his Defence against opponents other than the one pinning him. (Effectively, if the character is a normal human, his Defence in such a situation is 5 against the person grappling him and 1 against other opponents.) At his opponent's option, the character may also be unable to speak. He can try to escape the pin on his turn by making a grapple check against his opponent's Grapple Defence in place of an attack. He can also make an Escape Artist check against his Grapple Defence (in place of his grapple check) but this requires a standard action. If the character wins, he escapes the pin but is still grappling.

JOINING A GRAPPLE

If a character's target is already grappling someone else, the character can use an attack to start a grapple, as above, except that the target does not get an attack of opportunity against him and his grab automatically succeeds. He still has to make a successful grapple check against his opponent's Grapple Defence to become part of the grapple.

If there are multiple opponents involved in the grapple, pick one to make the grapple check against.

MULTIPLE GRAPPLERS

Several combatants can be involved in a single grapple. Up to four combatants can grapple a single opponent in a given round. Creatures that are one or more size categories smaller than you count for half, creatures that are one size category larger than you count double and creatures two or more size categories larger count quadruple. When a character is grappling with multiple opponents, he should choose one opponent to make a grapple check against. If he wishes instead to escape the grapple, his grapple check must beat the Grapple Defence of each of his opponents.

MOUNTED COMBAT

HORSES IN COMBAT

Warhorses can readily serve as combat steeds. Light horses and workhorses, however, are frightened by combat. Unless he dismounts, a character must make a DC 20 Ride check each round as a move action to control such a horse. If he succeeds, he can perform a standard action after the move action. If he fails, the move action becomes a full round action and he cannot do anything else until his next turn.

A character's mount acts on his initiative count as he directs it. The character moves at the mount's speed but the mount uses its action to move. A horse is a Large creature and thus takes up a 10 foot by 10 foot space. For simplicity, assume that a character shares his mount's space during combat.

COMBAT WHILE MOUNTED

With a DC 5 Ride check, a character can guide his mount with his knees so as to use both hands to attack or defend himself. This is a free action. When attacking from a mounted position



you will usually gain the +1 bonus on melee attacks for being on higher ground when attacking foot soldiers. This bonus does not apply if your target is as large as your mount or larger. If a character's mount moves more than five feet, he can only make a single melee attack. Essentially, the character has to wait until the mount gets to his enemy before he can attack. Even at his mount's full speed, a character does not take any penalty on melee attacks while mounted.

If a character's mount charges, he must also take the penalty to Defence associated with a charge. If he makes an attack at the end of the charge, he receives the bonus gained from the charge. A character who charges on horseback deals double damage with a lance; see Charge on page 204.

A character can use ranged weapons while his mount is taking a double move but takes a -4 penalty on the attack roll if he does so. He can use ranged weapons at a -8 penalty while his mount is running (quadruple speed). In either case, the character makes the attack roll when his mount has completed half its movement. He can make a full attack with a ranged weapon while his mount is moving. Likewise, he can take move actions normally.

CASTING SPELLS WHILE MOUNTED

A character can cast a spell normally if his mount moves up to a normal move (its speed) either before or after the spell is cast. If a character has his mount move both before and after he casts a spell, then the spell is cast while the mount is moving and the character has to make

a Concentration check due to the vigorous motion (DC 10 + PP cost) or lose the spell. If the mount is running (quadruple speed), the Concentration check is more difficult due to the violent motion (DC 15 + PP cost).

IF A MOUNT FALLS IN BATTLE

If a character's mount falls, the character has to succeed on a DC 15 Ride check to make a soft fall and take no damage. If the check fails, he takes 1d6 points of damage.

IF A CHARACTER IS WOUNDED

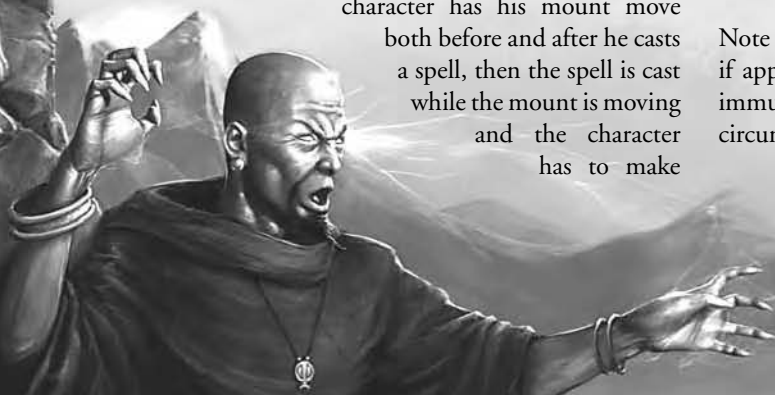
If a character is knocked unconscious, he has a 50% chance of staying in the saddle. Otherwise, he falls and takes 1d6 points of damage. Without a rider to guide it, the character's mount avoids combat unless it is of greater than animal intelligence. In that case, the mount acts like a creature of its abilities and intellect and is generally controlled by the Games Master.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

Even Conan fears being attacked by multiple foes, especially if they are at all well-trained. As well as the potential reduction in Dodge Defence for a character who is crowded in on all sides (see the Parry and Dodge sections, page 173), there is always a danger that halfway competent foes will attack in concert, making it hard to defend against them all at once.

During each round of combat, if several characters use melee weapons to attack one enemy in the same round, each of the attackers after the first to attack gains a cumulative +1 circumstance bonus on attack rolls. These bonuses only ever apply to melee attacks.

Note that these bonuses are in addition to flanking bonuses if applicable. Class features or feats that make characters immune to being flanked do not affect the cumulative +1 circumstance bonus for multiple opponents.



For example: Llyr is a high-level pirate with a Dodge Defence of 24. He is attacked by 10 low-level thugs armed with scimitars. In the first round, due to a wall in their path, only five can reach him to attack – if they survive that long. They each have a +2 base attack bonus and attack once per round. In the first round, the first attacker rolls $d20+2$ for his attack, the second $d20+3$, the third $d20+4$, the fourth $d20+5$ and the fifth $d20+6$. Llyr readies his war sword, having slain one of his enemies and dispatching another two of his foes on his own action, before sidestepping to get his back to the wall.

On the second round, though all his enemies are now close by, only five of them will be able to attack Llyr again, since the wall prevents any more than that from hitting him. This time, however, Llyr's Dodge Defence has a -2 circumstance penalty, as he does not have room to manoeuvre properly. Despite being of far higher level than his opponents, he is hit three times but manages to slay another two enemies. Round three begins under the same circumstances, since the remaining two foes close up the gaps but at least this time Llyr knows that if he can kill one of them he will be able to move away once more and avoid the penalty to Dodge Defence once he does.

TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

If a combatant wields a second weapon in his off hand, that combatant can get one extra attack per round with that weapon when he takes a full attack action.

Fighting in this way is very hard, however and a combatant suffers a -6 penalty to both his main weapon and his off-hand weapon attack rolls.

A combatant can reduce these stiff penalties in two ways:

- ✱ If at least one of a combatant's weapons is light, the penalty is reduced to -2 . An unarmed strike is always considered light.
- ✱ The Two-Weapon Combat Proficiency feat reduces the penalties associated with two-weapon fighting by two. Thus a character with this feat has only a -4 penalty to both attacks if using two one-handed weapons or no penalty at all if at least one of his weapons is light.

For example, a 7th level soldier with a base attack bonus of $+7/+2$ could make two attacks with his primary weapon at $+7$ and $+2$ respectively. Alternatively, he could make two attacks with his primary weapon at $+3$ and -2 and one attack with a one-handed secondary weapon at $+3$ (all soldiers are proficient with two-weapon combat). If he wished to use a light weapon in his off hand, he could make two attacks with his primary weapon at $+7/+2$ and one attack with the light secondary weapon at $+7$.

DOUBLE THROWN WEAPONS

The same rules apply when a weapon is thrown from each hand.





SPECIAL ATTACKS AND MANOEUVRES

AID ANOTHER

You help a friend attack or defend by distracting or interfering with their opponent.

Action: Standard

Circumstance: A character is in position to make a melee attack on an opponent that is engaging a friend in melee combat.

Effect: The character can attempt to aid his friend as a standard action by making an attack roll against a Defence of 10. If he succeeds, his friend gains either a +2 bonus on his next attack roll against that opponent, or a +2 bonus to Defence against that opponent's next attack (character's choice), as long as that attack comes before the beginning of the character's next turn. Multiple characters can aid the same friend and similar bonuses stack.

A character can also use this manoeuvre to help a friend in other ways, such as when he is affected by a spell or to assist another character's skill check.

AIM

You prepare to loose an especially accurate arrow.

Action: Full-round

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1.

Circumstance: The character uses a bow or crossbow.

Effect: The character gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his next ranged attack. This ranged attack must be taken as his first action in the round following the one in which he takes the Aim action.

BULL RUSH

You charge into a foe, knocking him back.

Action: Standard

Effect: A character can make a bull rush as a standard action (an attack) or as part of a charge (see Charge, below). When he makes a bull rush, he attempts to push an opponent straight back instead of damaging him. A character can only bull rush an opponent who is one size category larger than himself, the same size or smaller.

First, move into the defender's space. Doing this provokes an attack of

opportunity from each opponent that threatens the rushing character, including the defender. If he has the Improved Bull Rush feat, he does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the defender.

Next, the rusher and the defender make opposed Strength checks. Each adds a +4 bonus for each size category he is larger than Medium or a -4 penalty for each size category he is smaller than Medium. The rusher gets a +2 bonus if he is charging. The defender gets a +4 bonus if he has more than two legs or is otherwise exceptionally stable.

If the rusher beats the defender's Strength check result, the defender is pushed him back five feet. If the rusher wishes to move with the defender, he can push the defender back an additional five feet for each five points by which his check result is greater than the defender's check result. He cannot, however, exceed his normal movement limit. The defender provokes attacks of opportunity if he is moved. So does the attacker, if he moves with him. The two of you do not provoke attacks of opportunity from each other, however. Any attack of opportunity made by anyone other than the defender during this stage of a bull rush has a 25% chance of accidentally targeting the defender instead. Similarly, any attack of opportunity by anyone other than the rusher against the defender has a 25% chance of accidentally targeting the rusher. When someone makes an attack of opportunity, make the attack roll and then roll to see whether the attack goes astray. If you fail to beat the defender's Strength check result, you move 5 feet straight back to where you were before you moved into his space. If that space is occupied, you fall prone in that space.

CAT'S PARRY

You parry your opponent's wrist rather than his blade.

Action: Immediate

Prerequisite: Base parry bonus +3.

Circumstance: Must be parrying.

Effect: The attacker gains a +4 circumstance bonus to his attack roll but if he misses the defender may immediately make an attack of opportunity against him.

CHARGE

You hurl yourself into the fray!

Action: Full-round

Circumstance: The character has line of sight to a foe and moves at least 10 feet towards him as part of the charge.

Effect: Charging is a special full-round action that allows a character to move up to twice his speed and attack during the action. However, it carries tight restrictions on how you can move.



The character must move before his attack, not after. He must move at least 10 feet (two squares) and may move up to double his speed directly toward his designated opponent. He must have a clear path toward the opponent and nothing can hinder the charging character's movement, such as difficult terrain or obstacles. A clear path is defined as follows. First, the character must move to the closest space from which he can attack his opponent. If this space is occupied or otherwise blocked, the character cannot charge. Second, if any line from his starting space to the ending space passes through a square that blocks movement, slows movement or contains a creature (even an ally), the character cannot charge. Helpless creatures do not stop a charge.

If a player does not have line of sight to the opponent at the start of his turn, he cannot charge that opponent. He cannot take a five-foot step in the same round as a charge. If he is able to take only a standard action or a move action on his turn, he can still charge but is only allowed to move up to his speed instead of up to double speed. A player cannot use this option unless he is restricted to taking only a standard action or move action on his turn.

After moving, a player may make a single melee attack. He gets a +2 bonus on the attack roll and takes a -2 penalty to Defence until the start of his next turn. Even if he has extra attacks, such as from having a high enough base attack bonus or from using multiple weapons, he only gets to make one attack during a charge.

A charging character gets a +2 bonus on the Strength check made to bull rush or overrun an opponent. See Bull Rush, left and Overrun, page 209.

BULL'S CHARGE

A low charge can allow a character to get under his enemy's guard to stab deep into his belly. However, doing so renders the charging character very vulnerable to a counterattack.

Action: Full-round

Prerequisite: Str 13, Power Attack.

Circumstance: A character must be wielding a slashing or piercing weapon and charging.

Effect: The character gains a +2 bonus on his damage roll when charging but provokes an attack of opportunity from his target before he can make his attack roll.

LEAPING CHARGE

Action: Charge

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6, Jump 1 rank.

Effect: When a character makes a charge attack, he may make a second attack at his highest base attack bonus, though both attacks are at a -2 circumstance penalty. The circumstance penalty to Defence for charging is increased from the usual -2 to -4.

DANCE ASIDE

You move while dodging.

Action: Immediate

Prerequisite: Dex 13.

Circumstance: An opponent's attack roll is less than half the dodging character's Dodge Defence.

Effect: The dodging character may immediately take a five-foot step, as he nimbly dances out of the way of an opponent's attack.

DECAPITATING SLASH

You take advantage of an opponent's dropped defences to slice his head clean off. This leaves you open to counterattack and so is usually only done if you are fighting only one opponent.

Action: Immediate

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +10.

Circumstance: The character's opponent provokes an attack of opportunity.

Effect: The character attempts a particularly devastating attack of opportunity. If he scores a critical hit against his opponent, the opponent must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC = 5 + total damage dealt, after taking into account damage reduction) or be instantly killed, his head severed. The attacking character suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to Defence for the one round immediately following his attack of opportunity.

DELAY

You wait for the right time to act.

Action: Special

Effect: The character takes no action and then acts normally when he decides to act. When a character delays, he voluntarily reduces his own initiative result for the rest of the combat. When his new, lower initiative count comes up later in the same round, he can act normally. The player can specify this new initiative result or wait until some time later in the round to act, thus fixing his new initiative count at that point. He does not get back



the time spent waiting, nor can he interrupt anyone else's action. If he wants to interrupt or pre-empt an action, see Ready on page 210.

If a player comes to his next action and has not yet performed an action, he does not get to take a delayed action, though he can delay again. If he takes a delayed action in the next round, before his regular turn comes up, his initiative count rises to that new point in the order of battle and he does not get his regular action that round.

DESPERATE STAB

You make a stab for your opponent's heart or throat before combat has otherwise begun, relying on quickness but desperately gambling that the attack will be sufficient to slay them instantly, since it leaves you wide open to a counterattack.

Action: Standard

Prerequisite: Improved Initiative, base attack bonus +15.

Circumstance: It must be the first round of combat, the character's opponent must be unable to use Dodge Defence or Parry Defence through being flat-footed and the attack must be made with finesse.

Effect: As the first attack of the combat, a character may attempt to slay his enemy outright. The attack is made as normal. If it hits, the opponent must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC = damage dealt by the attack) or die instantly. If the opponent is still alive, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his attack rolls and damage against the attacker for the remainder of the round.

DEVASTATING SWEEP

A character can swing his weapon around, forcing his foes back to clear sufficient space for him to flee.

Action: Standard

Prerequisite: Whirlwind Attack.

Circumstance: The attacker must be wielding a slashing weapon, either one-handed or two-handed. At least five adjacent squares must be occupied. He must not attack with finesse.

Effect: As a standard action, a character may swing his weapon in a sweeping motion. Any characters within five feet have the option of immediately taking a five-foot step away as a free action, so as to be out of range. The attacking character gains an attack at his highest base attack bonus against any characters who do not choose to move away.

DISARM

You knock a weapon out of your foe's hand!

Action: Standard

Circumstance: The character is in melee combat with a foe.

Effect: As a melee attack, a character may attempt to disarm his opponent. If he uses a weapon to do so, he knocks the opponent's weapon out of his hands and to the ground. If the attacking character attempts to disarm an opponent while unarmed, he ends up with the weapon in his hand.

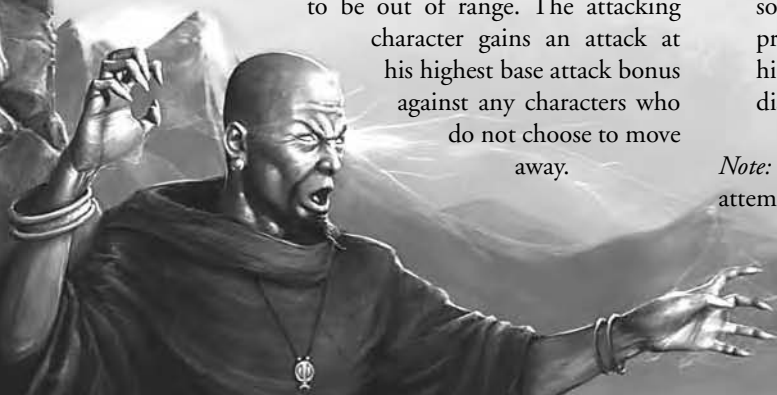
In attempting to disarm a melee weapon, follow the steps outlined here. If the item a character is attempting to disarm is something other than a melee weapon, such as an artefact that a sorcerer is shaking angrily, the defender may still oppose the attempt with an attack roll but takes a -4 penalty and cannot attempt to disarm the attacker in return if the disarm attempt fails.

✱ *Step 1: Attack of Opportunity:* The character provokes an attack of opportunity from the target he is trying to disarm. If the attacker has the Improved Disarm feat, he does not incur an attack of opportunity for making a disarm attempt. If the defender's attack of opportunity deals any damage, the disarm attempt fails.

✱ *Step 2: Opposed Rolls:* The attacker and the defender make opposed attack rolls with their respective weapons. The wielder of a two-handed weapon on a disarm attempt gets a +4 bonus on this roll and the wielder of a light weapon takes a -4 penalty. An unarmed strike is considered a light weapon so the attacker always take a penalty when trying to disarm an opponent using an unarmed strike. If the combatants are of different sizes, the larger combatant gets a bonus on the attack roll of +4 per difference in size category. If the targeted item is not a melee weapon, the defender takes a -4 penalty on the roll.

✱ *Step Three: Consequences:* If the attacker beats the defender, the defender is disarmed. If the disarm action was attempted unarmed, the attacker gains the weapon. If the attacker was armed, the defender's weapon is on the ground in the defender's square. If the disarm attempt failed, the defender may immediately react and attempt to disarm the attacker with the same sort of opposed melee attack roll. His attempt does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If the defender fails his disarm attempt, he does not subsequently get a free disarm attempt against him.

Note: Gauntlets cannot be removed with a disarm attempt.



DISARM AND GRABBING WEAPONS

A character can use a disarm action to snatch an item his target is wearing. The disarm must be made as an unarmed attack to take the item in hand. If the item is poorly secured or otherwise easy to snatch or cut away, the attacker gets a +4 bonus. Unlike on a normal disarm attempt, the defender may not attempt to disarm the attacker on a failed attempt. This otherwise functions identically to a disarm attempt, as noted above.

A character cannot snatch an item that is well secured unless he has pinned the wearer; see Grapple on page 199. Even then, the defender gains a +4 bonus on his roll to resist the attempt.

MASTERFUL DISARM

You knock your opponent's weapon from his grasp with one hand and catch it with the other.

Action: Standard

Prerequisite: Dex 13.

Circumstance: The attacker must be using a one-handed weapon and have his other hand free.

Effect: If the attacker beats his opponent in the opposed disarm roll by five or more, the attacker may immediately make a Dexterity check (DC 15). If he succeeds, he catches whatever object he just knocked out of his opponent's grasp in his other hand.

RANGED DISARM

Action: Standard

Prerequisite: Precise Shot, Improved Disarm.

Effect: You may make disarm attempts with a ranged weapon.



DISTRACTING ARROW

Your shot draws your foe's attention, putting him off his guard.

Action: Standard

Prerequisite: Precise Shot.

Circumstance: Firing at a foe.

Effect: The character must take a -4 penalty to his attack roll. If he still hits, his target suffers a -2 penalty to his Defence for the rest of the round.

FEINT

You fool your opponent by feinting one way, then attacking.

Action: Standard (or Move, with the Improved Feint feat)

Circumstance: A character is in combat with a foe.

Effect: To feint, make a Bluff check opposed by the target's Sense Motive check. The target may add his base attack bonus to this Sense Motive check. If the character's Bluff check result exceeds his target's Sense Motive check result, the target may not dodge or parry the next melee attack the character makes against him. This attack must be made on or before the attacker's next turn. Feinting is a favourite tactic of many finesse fighters.

When feinting in this way against a non-humanoid, the attacker takes a -4 penalty. Against a creature of animal Intelligence (1 or 2), he takes a -8 penalty. Feinting is impossible against a non-intelligent creature. Feinting in combat does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

With the Improved Feint feat, a character can attempt a feint as a move action instead of as a standard action.

FORCE BACK

You drive your foe back with the ferocity of your attack.

Action: Standard

Prerequisite: Power Attack.

Circumstance: The character is in melee combat with a foe.

Effect: The attacker takes a -4 penalty to his attack roll. If he hits, his opponent may move back one five-foot square. If the opponent does not move, he takes an extra 4 points of damage (8 damage if using a two-handed weapon or a one-handed weapon with two hands). If the opponent does move, the attacker may follow up for free without drawing attacks of opportunity. The opponent, on the other hand, does draw attacks of opportunity if he retreats.



FLING ASIDE

If you are sufficiently strong, you can simply pick up his enemy one-handed and hurl him aside.

Action: Standard

Prerequisite: Str 15, Improved Grapple, Improved Trip.

Circumstance: The attacker must have one hand free.

Effect: A character makes a melee touch attack to grab an opponent, then makes a grapple check against the opponent's Grapple Defence, just as though starting a grapple. If the grapple check succeeds, the attacker throws his opponent to the ground in any square adjacent to the attacker. The attacker is not grappling his opponent but the impact with the ground deals damage to him as though he had been hit with an unarmed strike and he is knocked prone. This is not a trip, and so does not entitle the attacker to a free attack from his Improved Trip feat.

HOOKING PARRY

You swing your axe (or similar martial weapon) around the shaft of your enemy's weapon, holding it out of line so it cannot be used.

Action: Immediate

Prerequisite: Dexterity 13, base parry bonus +1.

Circumstance: The character has just used an axe, battleaxe, bill, bardiche or polearm to parry an enemy's reach weapon.

Effect: So long as one does not use the parrying weapon for any other purpose (including making further attacks or parries) his opponent may not use his reach weapon for any purpose either. As a standard action the opponent may make an attack roll with his weapon opposed to the character's Parry Defence with his weapon. If the opponent is successful with this opposed attack roll, or if the character moves out of range of his reach weapon, he may wield his weapon normally again.

HUMAN SHIELD

You swing your distracted enemy around in an attempt to parry another enemy's attack with his body.

Action: Immediate

Prerequisite: Strength 13, Improved Grapple.

Circumstance: Earlier in the round the character has dealt damage to his opponent while grappling him and is now being attacked by another opponent while still grappling the first.

Effect: If the character succeeds in a grapple check, he may use his grappled

opponent to parry with, just as though he were a shield. This is an exception to the normal rule that one may not parry while in a grapple. The Parry Bonus the character gains from this action is equal to his Strength bonus -1, to a minimum of +0 and a maximum of +2 - the grappled opponent is large and is somewhat awkward to move about even when using both hands. If the character successfully parries the second opponent's attack, normal damage from that attack is dealt to the opponent he is grappling.

IMPROVISED ATTACK

You grab an object and use it as an improvised weapon as part of an attack.

Action: Free

Prerequisite: Str 13, Dex 13.

Circumstance: A character is making a melee attack on a foe and there is another enemy within reach. The character must have one hand free.

Effect: By taking a -2 circumstance penalty on his first attack roll against a target, the character may immediately make an extra attack at his highest base attack bonus on a second foe within reach. This second attack must use an improvised weapon. A character can only make one Improvised Attack per round and must use a different improvised weapon or select a different target each time.

KIP UP

You flip back up to your feet from a prone position.

Action: Immediate

Prerequisite: Jump 5 ranks or Tumble 5 ranks, Mobility.

Circumstance: The character has just been knocked prone.

Effect: The character may immediately make a Jump or Tumble check (DC 20) as a reaction to having been knocked over. If successful, he immediately regains his footing. He still draws attacks of opportunity when standing up.

LEAVE THEM FOR DEAD

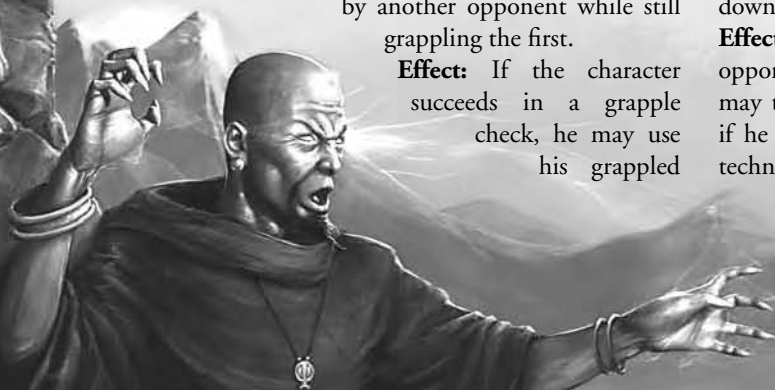
You ignore your lesser foes, trusting to your blade to sort them out!

Action: Free

Prerequisite: Cleave.

Circumstance: The character has just struck a foe but not downed him.

Effect: The opponent immediately gets an attack of opportunity with a +4 bonus to his attack roll. The attacker may then make a Cleave attack on another opponent as if he had downed the first opponent. You may use this technique in conjunction with Great Cleave, but can only attack each opponent within reach once.



LOCK WEAPONS

You and your foe lock your blades together and struggle for supremacy.

Action: Immediate

Circumstance: A character's attack roll is exactly equal to his opponent's Parry Defence or his Parry Defence is exactly equal to his opponent's attack roll.

Effect: The two combatants' weapons are locked together. Both characters make opposed grapple checks – the winner may choose to knock the loser back five feet. If the winner's score is 10 or more points higher than the loser's, the loser is also knocked prone in his new square.

OVERRUN

You run past – or over – a foe.

Action: Standard

Effect: The character can attempt an overrun as a standard action during his move or as part of a charge. In general, he cannot take a standard action during a move; overrun is an exception. With an overrun, the character attempts to plough past or over his opponent (and move through his square) as he moves. A character can only overrun an opponent who is one size category larger, the same size or smaller than himself. Only one overrun attempt can be made per round. Follow these steps to make an overrun attempt:

- ✱ *Step 1: Attack of Opportunity:* Since the attacker begins the overrun by moving into the defender's space, the attacker provokes an attack of opportunity from the defender.
- ✱ *Step 2: Opponent Avoids?* The defender may simply avoid the attacker. If he does so, he does not suffer any ill effect. If the attacker attempts the overrun as part of a charge, he may keep moving. (A character can always move through a square occupied by someone who lets him by.) In either case, the overrun attempt does not count against the attacker's actions this round, except for any movement required to enter the opponent's square. If the opponent does not avoid the attacker, move to Step 3.
- ✱ *Step 3: Opponent Blocks?* If the opponent blocks the attacker, the attacker makes a Strength check opposed by the defender's Dexterity or Strength check (defender chooses). A combatant gets a +4 bonus on the check for every size category he is larger than Medium or a -4 penalty for every size category he is smaller than Medium. The attacker gains a +2 bonus on his Strength check if he makes the overrun as part of a charge. The defender gets a +4 bonus on his check if he has more than two legs or is otherwise

more stable than a normal humanoid. If the attacker wins, the defender is knocked prone. If he loses, the defender may immediately react and make a Strength check opposed by the attacker's Dexterity or Strength check (attacker chooses), including the size modifiers noted above but no other modifiers, to try to knock the attacker prone.

- ✱ *Step 4: Consequences:* If the attacker succeeds in knocking his opponent prone, he can continue his movement as normal. If he fails and is knocked prone in turn, he must move five feet back the way he came and fall prone, ending his movement there. If he fails but is not knocked prone, he must move five feet back the way he came, ending his movement there. If that square is occupied, he falls prone in that square.

IMPROVED OVERRUN

If a character has the Improved Overrun feat, his target may not choose to avoid him.

MOUNTED OVERRUN (TRAMPLE)

If a character attempts an overrun while mounted, his mount makes the Strength check to determine the success or failure of the overrun attack and applies its size modifier in place of the character's. If the character has the Trample feat and attempts an overrun while mounted, the target may not choose to avoid him. If the attacker knocks his opponent prone with the overrun, the attacker's mount may make one hoof attack against the opponent.

PANTHERISH TWIST

When two attackers attempt to flank you, you may twist away at the last moment, forcing them to attack one another.

Action: Immediate

Prerequisite: Improved uncanny dodge.

Circumstance: The defending character must be dodging.

Effect: If two opponents move into positions which would usually allow them to flank an opponent, the opponent who has improved uncanny dodge can choose to force both of them to make opposed Dexterity checks with him. If one or both of the attackers lose the opposed Dexterity check, he or they must attack the other enemy instead of their intended opponent. However, if one or both of them win



the opposed Dexterity check, there is a +2 circumstance bonus on his or their attack and damage rolls against the opponent. These effects only ever apply to the first attack each opponent makes.

READY

You prepare a specific move to be unleashed when a certain trigger or event occurs.

Action: Special

Effect: The ready action lets a character prepare to take an action later, after his turn is over but before his next one has begun. Readying is a standard action. It does not provoke an attack of opportunity, though the action that is readied might do so.

READYING AN ACTION

A character can ready a standard action, a move action or a free action. To do so, he must specify the action he will take and the conditions under which he will take it. Then, any time before his next action, he may take the readied action in response to that condition. The readied action occurs just before the action that triggers it. If the triggered action is part of another character's activities, the readied action interrupts the other character. Assuming he is still capable of doing so, the interrupted character continues his actions once the readied action has been completed. The initiative result of the character who readied the action changes as noted below. For the rest of the encounter, his initiative result is the count on which he took the readied action and he acts immediately ahead of the character whose action triggered the readied action.

A character can take a five-foot step as part of his readied action but only if he does not otherwise move any distance during the round.

INITIATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF READYING

A character's initiative result becomes the count on which he takes the readied action. If he comes to his next action and has not yet performed his readied action, he does not get to take the readied action, though he can ready the same action again. If he takes his readied action in the next round, before his regular turn, his

initiative count rises to that new point in the order of battle and he does not get his regular action that round.

DISTRACTING SORCERERS

A character can ready an attack against a sorcerer with the trigger 'if he starts casting a spell.' If he is hit the sorcerer may lose the spell he was trying to cast, as determined by his Concentration check result.

READYING A WEAPON AGAINST A CHARGE

A character can ready certain piercing weapons by setting them to receive charges. A readied weapon of this type deals double damage if a character scores a hit with it against a charging opponent.

RIPOSTE

You parry with such skill that you open up your opponent's defences.

Action: Immediate

Prerequisite: Base parry bonus +4.

Circumstance: The opponent's attack is less than half of your total Parry Defence.

Effect: The character may immediately take an attack of opportunity against his foe.

ROLL

You throw yourself to one side.

Action: Immediate

Circumstance: A character is prone and being attacked in melee.

Effect: A character makes a Tumble check against a DC equal to his foe's attack roll. If successful, he does not suffer the normal -4 penalty to Defence for being prone.

SHIELD SLAM

A character blocks so forcefully that he knocks his opponent's blade far to one side, opening him up for a devastating counter-attack.

Action: Immediate

Prerequisite: Base parry bonus +2.

Circumstance: The character must be parrying with a shield.

Effect: When a character parries an opponent's attack, the defending character may make an opposed Strength check against his foe. If he loses, his opponent immediately damages the defender's shield as if he had succeeded in a



sunder attempt (see below). If he succeeds, his opponent suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to his Parry Defence until his next action.

SUNDER

With a mighty blow, you smash your foe's weapon to pieces!

Action: Standard

Circumstance: The character must be in melee combat with a foe who is using a weapon or shield.

Effect: The character can use a melee attack with a slashing or bludgeoning weapon to strike a weapon or shield that his opponent is holding. Follow the steps outlined here to attempt to sunder a weapon or shield. Attacking held objects other than weapons or shields is covered below.

✱ *Step 1: Attack of Opportunity:* The character provokes an attack of opportunity from the target whose weapon or shield he is trying to sunder. If the attacker has the Improved Sunder feat, he does not incur an attack of opportunity for making the attempt.

✱ *Step 2: Opposed Rolls:* The attacker and the defender make opposed attack rolls with their respective weapons. The wielder of a two-handed weapon on a sunder attempt gets a +4 bonus on this roll and the wielder of a light weapon takes a -4 penalty. If the combatants are of different sizes, the larger combatant gets a bonus of +4 per difference in size category on the attack roll.

✱ *Step 3: Consequences:* If the attacker beats the defender, the attacker rolls damage and deal it to the weapon or shield. See the Weapons, Primitive Weapons, Akbitanan Weapons and Shields tables in the Equipment chapter to determine how much damage must be dealt to destroy the weapon or shield. If the attacker fails the sunder attempt, he does not deal any damage. Note: A character may not use Armour Piercing when attacking an object, nor can he bypass its hardness with finesse. See Breaking Objects, page 217.

SUNDERING A CARRIED OR WORN OBJECT

A character does not use an opposed attack roll to damage a carried or worn object. Instead, he makes an attack roll against the object's Dodge Defence. A carried or worn object's Dodge Defence is equal to 10 + its size modifier + the Dexterity modifier of the carrying or wearing character. Attacking a carried or worn object provokes an attack of opportunity, just as attacking a

held object does. To attempt to snatch away an item worn by a defender rather than damage it, see Disarm on page 206. A character cannot sunder armour worn by another character.

SUNDERING PARRY

Rather than simply setting aside an opponent's weapon, you attempt to hack it through with your own.

Action: Immediate

Prerequisite: Improved Sunder, base parry bonus +1.

Circumstance: The character must be parrying.

Effect: The defender takes a -2 circumstance penalty to his Parry Defence. However, if he succeeds in parrying his enemy's weapon, he may immediately make a sunder attempt as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. All the usual modifiers apply (including the +4 bonus for the Improved Sunder feat) and the defender suffers an additional -2 circumstance penalty to the sundering attack roll.

THROW SPLASH WEAPON

You hurl a vial or grenade or other splash weapon at an enemy.

Action: Standard

Effect: A splash weapon is a ranged weapon that breaks on impact, splashing or scattering its contents over its target and nearby creatures or objects. To attack with a splash weapon, make a ranged touch attack against the target. Thrown weapons require no weapon proficiency, so do not take the -4 non-proficiency penalty. A hit deals direct hit damage to the target and splash damage to all creatures within five feet of the target.

A character can target a specific grid intersection instead of a specific object. Treat this as a ranged attack against a Defence of 5. However, if a grid intersection is targeted, creatures in all adjacent squares are dealt the splash damage and the direct hit damage is not dealt to any creature. A player cannot target a grid intersection occupied by a Large or larger creature; in this case, he is aiming at the creature.

If you miss the target, whether aiming at a creature or a grid intersection, roll 1d8.

This determines the misdirection of the throw, with 1 being straight back at you and 2 through 8 counting clockwise around the grid intersection or target



creature. Then, count a number of squares in the indicated direction equal to the range increment of the throw. After you determine where the weapon landed, it deals damage to the square it lands in and all adjacent squares as described above.

TO THE HILT

You take advantage of your enemy's lack of armour to plunge your weapon into his body and leave it buried in his flesh.

Action: Standard

Prerequisite: Power Attack.

Circumstance: The character must be attacking with a piercing or slashing weapon against an unarmoured opponent.

Effect: The attacker gains a +2 circumstance modifier to his damage roll. However, if the damage rolled with the weapon (before any modifiers for Strength, sneak attacks and bonuses of any kind) is higher than the character's Strength modifier, the weapon sticks into the enemy, whether he is living or dead.

The attacker or another character, including the one with the weapon stuck in him if he is still alive, can remove a stuck weapon by taking a full-round action and making a Strength check (DC 10). Often characters will find it easier and quicker to draw or pick up an alternate weapon.

A character with a weapon stuck in him sustains 1d6 damage every time he takes a move, standard or full-round action.

TRIP

You cunningly trip or otherwise topple a foe.

Action: Standard

Circumstance: The character must be in melee combat with a foe and using either an unarmed attack or a weapon that allows trip attacks.

Effect: The character can try to trip an opponent as an unarmed melee attack. He can only trip an opponent who is one size category larger, the same size, or smaller than himself.

MAKING A TRIP ATTACK

The character makes an unarmed melee touch attack against a target. This provokes an attack of opportunity from

the target as normal for unarmed attacks. If the attacker's attack succeeds, he makes a Strength check opposed by the defender's Dexterity or Strength check (defender's choice). A combatant gets a +4 bonus for every size category he is larger than Medium, or a -4 penalty for every size category he is smaller than Medium. The defender gets a +4 bonus on his check if he has more than two legs or is otherwise more stable than a normal humanoid. If the attacker wins, he trips the defender. If he loses, the defender may immediately react and make a Strength check opposed by the attacker's Dexterity or Strength check (attacker's choice) to try to trip the attacker.

✱ *Avoiding Attacks of Opportunity:* If the attacker has the Improved Trip feat or if he is tripping with a weapon (see below) he does not provoke an attack of opportunity for making a trip attack.

BEING TRIPPED (PRONE)

A tripped character is prone. Standing up is a move action and provokes an attack of opportunity.

TRIPPING A MOUNTED OPPONENT

A character may make a trip attack against a mounted opponent. The defender may make a Ride check in place of his Dexterity or Strength check. If the attacker succeeds, the rider is pulled from his mount.

TRIPPING WITH A WEAPON

Some weapons can be used to make trip attacks. In this case, a character makes a melee touch attack with the weapon instead of an unarmed melee touch attack and does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If the character fail his trip attempt, he can drop the weapon to avoid being tripped in return.

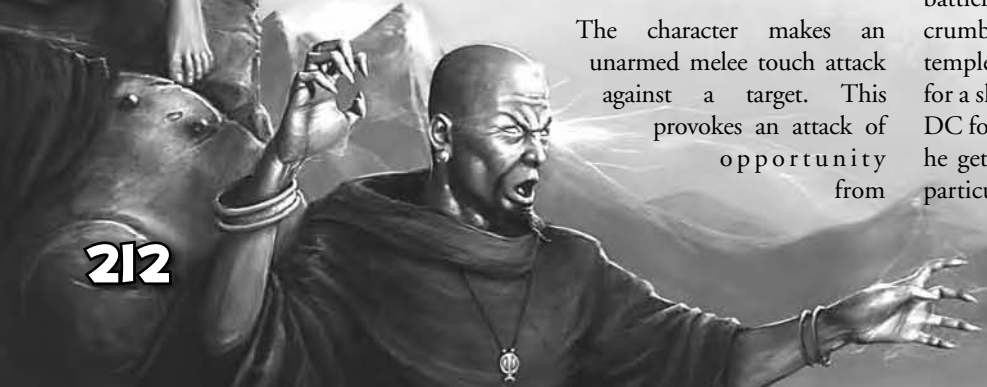
USE THE BATTLEFIELD

A character takes advantage of some quirk of the battlefield.

Action: Free

Circumstance: The character is in or is entering melee combat with a foe.

Effect: Describe how a character uses some quirk of the battlefield to his advantage, like forcing a foe up to the crumbling edge of a precipice or leaping off a statue in a temple to attack a high priest. The Games Master may call for a skill check, normally a Balance, Jump or Tumble. The DC for this check is generally 20. If the character succeeds, he gets a +2 circumstance bonus to his attacks against a particular foe in the round; if he fails, he draws an Attack of Opportunity from that foe.



ADVENTURING AND THE WILDERNESS

ENCUMBRANCE

Encumbrance rules are based largely on a character's Strength score and determine how much his armour and equipment slow him down. Encumbrance comes in two parts, namely encumbrance by armour and encumbrance by total weight. The former is not truly affected by Strength as it deals largely with the limits of mobility imposed by the armour itself. The latter is entirely based on Strength, as the stronger a character is, the greater the load he can handle without succumbing to the slowing effects of heavy and unwieldy burdens.

CARRYING CAPACITY

Strength Score	Light Load	Medium Load	Heavy Load
1	3 lb. or less	4–6 lb.	7–10 lb.
2	6 lb. or less	7–13 lb.	14–20 lb.
3	10 lb. or less	11–20 lb.	21–30 lb.
4	13 lb. or less	14–26 lb.	27–40 lb.
5	16 lb. or less	17–33 lb.	34–50 lb.
6	20 lb. or less	21–40 lb.	41–60 lb.
7	23 lb. or less	24–46 lb.	47–70 lb.
8	26 lb. or less	27–53 lb.	54–80 lb.
9	30 lb. or less	31–60 lb.	61–90 lb.
10	33 lb. or less	34–66 lb.	67–100 lb.
11	38 lb. or less	39–76 lb.	77–115 lb.
12	43 lb. or less	44–86 lb.	87–130 lb.
13	50 lb. or less	51–100 lb.	101–150 lb.
14	58 lb. or less	59–116 lb.	117–175 lb.
15	66 lb. or less	67–133 lb.	134–200 lb.
16	76 lb. or less	77–153 lb.	154–230 lb.
17	86 lb. or less	87–173 lb.	174–260 lb.
18	100 lb. or less	101–200 lb.	201–300 lb.
19	116 lb. or less	117–233 lb.	234–350 lb.
20	133 lb. or less	134–266 lb.	267–400 lb.
21	153 lb. or less	154–306 lb.	307–460 lb.
22	173 lb. or less	174–346 lb.	347–520 lb.
23	200 lb. or less	201–400 lb.	401–600 lb.
24	233 lb. or less	234–466 lb.	467–700 lb.
25	266 lb. or less	267–533 lb.	534–800 lb.
26	306 lb. or less	307–613 lb.	614–920 lb.
27	346 lb. or less	347–693 lb.	694–1,040 lb.
28	400 lb. or less	401–800 lb.	801–1,200 lb.
29	466 lb. or less	467–933 lb.	934–1,400 lb.
+10	×4	×4	×4

ENCUMBRANCE BY ARMOUR

A character's body armour defines his maximum Dexterity bonus to his Dodge Defence, armour check penalty, speed and running speed. Unless a character is weak or carrying a lot of gear, no further information is necessary. The extra gear a character carries will not usually slow him down any more than the armour already does. If, however, a character is weak or carrying a lot of gear, encumbrance is calculated by weight. This is most important when a character is trying to carry some heavy object.

WEIGHT

To determine whether a character's gear is heavy enough to slow him down more than his armour already does, total the weight of all the character's items, including armour, weapons and gear. Compare this total to the character's Strength on the Carrying Capacity table. Depending on how the weight compares to the character's carrying capacity, he may be carrying a Light, Medium or heavy load. Like armour, a character's load affects his maximum Dexterity bonus to Dodge Defence, carries a check penalty (which works like an armour check penalty), reduces the character's speed and affects how fast the character can run, as shown on the Carrying Loads table. A heavy load counts as heavy armour for the purpose of abilities or skills that are restricted by armour. Carrying a light load does not encumber a character.

If a character is wearing armour, use the worse figure (from armour or from load) for each category. Do not stack the penalties, as a character can only suffer from one set of encumbrance penalties at a given time.

LIFTING AND DRAGGING

A character can lift as much as his maximum load over his head. A character can lift as much as double his maximum load off the ground but he can only stagger around with it. While overloaded in this way, the character can neither dodge nor parry and can move only five feet per round as a full-round action. A character can generally push or drag a load along the ground as much as five times his maximum load. Favourable conditions can double these numbers, while bad circumstances can reduce them to one-half or lower.

CARRYING LOADS

Load	Max Dex	Check Penalty	Speed		
			(30 ft.)	(20 ft.)	Run
Medium	+3	-3	20 ft.	15 ft.	x4
Heavy	+1	-6	20 ft.	15 ft.	x3

BIGGER AND SMALLER CREATURES

The figures on the Carrying Capacity table are for Medium-size bipedal creatures. A larger bipedal creature can carry more weight depending on its size category, as follows: Large x2, Huge x4, Gargantuan x8, Colossal x16. A smaller creature can carry less weight depending on its size category, as follows: Small x3/4, Tiny x1/2, Diminutive x1/4, Fine x1/8.

Quadrupeds can carry heavier loads than characters can. Instead of the multipliers given above, multiply the value corresponding to the creature's Strength score on the Carrying Capacity table by the appropriate modifier, as follows: Fine x1/4, Diminutive x1/2, Tiny x3/4, Small x1, Medium x1.5, Large x3, Huge x6, Gargantuan x12, Colossal x24.

TREMENDOUS STRENGTH

For Strength scores not shown on the Carrying Capacity table, find the Strength score between 20 and 29 that has the same number in the 'ones' digit as the creature's Strength score does. Next, multiply these numbers by four for every 10 points by which the creature's Strength is above the score for that row.

ARMOUR AND ENCUMBRANCE FOR OTHER BASE SPEEDS

The table below provides reduced speed figures for all base speeds from 20 feet to 100 feet, in 10-foot increments.

Base Speed	Reduced Speed
20 ft.	15 ft.
30 ft.	20 ft.
40 ft.	30 ft.
50 ft.	35 ft.
60 ft.	40 ft.
70 ft.	50 ft.
80 ft.	55 ft.
90 ft.	60 ft.
100 ft.	70 ft.

MOVEMENT

There are three movement scales, as follows:

- ✱ Tactical, for combat; measured in feet (or squares) per round
- ✱ Local, for exploring an area; measured in feet per minute
- ✱ Overland, for travelling from place to place; measured in miles per hour or miles per day

Modes of Movement: While moving at the different movement scales, creatures generally walk, hustle or run. Each type of movement affects the character's speed and the types of action that can be performed at the same time.

MOVEMENT AND DISTANCE

	Speed			
	15 feet	20 feet	30 feet	40 feet
One Round (Tactical)*				
Walk	15 ft.	20 ft.	30 ft.	40 ft.
Hustle	30 ft.	40 ft.	60 ft.	80 ft.
Run (x3)	45 ft.	60 ft.	90 ft.	120 ft.
Run (x4)	60 ft.	80 ft.	120 ft.	160 ft.
One Minute (Local)				
Walk	150 ft.	200 ft.	300 ft.	400 ft.
Hustle	300 ft.	400 ft.	600 ft.	800 ft.
Run (x3)	450 ft.	600 ft.	900 ft.	1,200 ft.
Run (x4)	600 ft.	800 ft.	1,200 ft.	1,600 ft.
One Hour (Overland)				
Walk	1.5 miles	2 miles	3 miles	4 miles
Hustle	3 miles	4 miles	6 miles	8 miles
Run	—	—	—	—
One Day (Overland)				
Walk	12 miles	16 miles	24 miles	32 miles
Hustle	—	—	—	—
Run	—	—	—	—

* Tactical movement is often measured in squares on the battle grid (one square = five feet) rather than feet.

Walk: A walk represents unhurried but purposeful movement at about three miles per hour for an unencumbered person.

Hustle: A hustle is a jog at about six miles per hour for an unencumbered human. A character that moves his speed twice in a single round, or moves that speed in the same round he performs a standard action or another move action is hustling when he moves.

Run (×3): Moving at three times speed is a running pace for a character in heavy armour. It represents about nine miles per hour for a human in full plate or heavy combat armour.

Run (×4): Moving at four times speed is a running pace for a character in light or no armour. It represents about 12 miles per hour for an unencumbered human, or eight miles per hour for a human in chainmail or similar armour.

TACTICAL MOVEMENT

Use tactical movement for combat. Characters generally do not walk during combat. Instead, they hustle or run. A character who moves his speed and takes some action is hustling for about half the round and doing something else for the other half.

Hampered Movement: Difficult terrain, obstacles or poor visibility can hamper movement. When movement is hampered, each square a character moves into usually counts as two squares, effectively reducing the distance the character can cover in a move. If more than one condition applies, multiply together all additional costs that apply. This is a specific exception to the normal rule for doubling.

In some situations, a character's movement may be so hampered that he does not have sufficient speed to move even five feet or one square on the tactical map. In such a case, he may use a full-round action to move five feet (one square) in any direction, even diagonally. Although this looks like a five-foot step, it is not and thus provokes attacks of opportunity normally. A character cannot take advantage of this rule to move through impassable terrain or to move when all movement is prohibited to him.

A character cannot run or charge through any square that would hamper his movement.

HAMPERED MOVEMENT

Condition	Additional Movement Cost
Difficult terrain	×2
Obstacle*	×2
Poor visibility	×2
Impassable	—

* May require a skill check

LOCAL MOVEMENT

Characters exploring an area use local movement, measured in feet per minute.

Walk: A character can walk without a problem on the local scale.

Hustle: A character can hustle without a problem on the local scale. See Overland Movement, below, for movement measured in miles per hour.

Run: A character with a Constitution score of nine or higher can run for a minute without a problem. Generally, a character can run for a minute or two before having to rest for a minute.

OVERLAND MOVEMENT

Characters who are covering long distances cross-country use overland movement. Overland movement is measured in miles per hour or miles per day. A day represents eight hours of actual travel time. For rowed watercraft, a day represents 10 hours of rowing. For a sailing ship, it represents 24 hours of sailing.

WALK

A character can walk eight hours in a day of travel without a problem. Walking for longer than that can wear him out; see Forced March below.

HUSTLE

A character can hustle for one hour without a problem. Hustling for a second hour in between sleep cycles deals one point of nonlethal damage. Each additional hour deals twice the damage taken during the previous hour of hustling. A character who takes any nonlethal damage from hustling becomes fatigued.

A fatigued character cannot run or charge and takes a penalty of -2 to Strength and Dexterity. Eliminating the nonlethal damage also eliminates the fatigue.

RUN

A character cannot run for an extended period of time. Attempting to run and rest in cycles, which is the preferred method for long distance overland travel when time is not an important factor, effectively works out to a hustle.

TERRAIN

The terrain through which a character travels affects how much distance he can cover in an hour or a day; see Terrain and Overland Movement. A highway is



a straight, major, paved road. A road is typically a dirt or gravel track. A trail is like a road, except that it allows only single-file travel and does not benefit a party travelling with vehicles. Trackless terrain is a wild area with no paths.

TERRAIN AND OVERLAND MOVEMENT

Terrain	Highway	Road or Trail	Trackless
Desert, sandy	x1	x1/2	x1/2
Forest	x1	x1	x1/2
Hills	x1	x3/4	x1/2
Jungle	x1	x3/4	x1/4
Moor	x1	x1	x3/4
Mountains	x3/4	x3/4	x1/2
Plains	x1	x1	x3/4
Swamp	x1	x3/4	x1/2
Tundra, frozen	x1	x3/4	x3/4

FORCED MARCH

A character walks for eight hours in a single day of normal walking. The rest of the daylight time is spent making and breaking camp, resting and eating. A character can walk for more than eight hours in a day by making a forced march. For each hour of marching beyond eight hours, a Constitution check (DC 10, +2 per extra hour) is required. If the check fails, the character takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. A character who takes any nonlethal damage from a forced march becomes fatigued. Eliminating the nonlethal damage also eliminates the fatigue. It is quite possible for a character to march into unconsciousness by pushing himself too hard on a forced march.

MOUNTED MOVEMENT

A mount bearing a rider can move at a hustle. The damage it takes when doing so, however, is lethal damage. The creature can also be ridden in a forced march but its Constitution checks automatically fail. In addition to this, the damage it takes is lethal damage. Mounts also become fatigued when they take any damage from hustling or forced marches.

THE RULES OF EXPLORATION

VISION AND LIGHTING CONDITIONS

Several creatures have darkvision and can see in the dark. Characters without this quality need light to see by. See the table below for the area a light source illuminates and how long it lasts. In an area of bright light, all characters can see clearly. A creature cannot hide in an area of bright light unless it is invisible or has cover.

In an area of shadowy illumination, a character can see dimly. Creatures within this area have concealment relative to that character. A creature in an area of shadowy illumination can make a Hide check to conceal itself. In areas of total darkness, creatures without darkvision are effectively blinded. In addition to the obvious effects, a blinded creature has a 50% miss chance in combat since all opponents have total concealment, can neither dodge nor parry, takes a -2 penalty to Defence, moves at half speed and takes a -4 penalty on Search checks and many skill checks.

Creatures with low-light vision, such as the Wazuli and other characters with the Eyes of the Cat feat, can effectively double the given area of bright light and shadowy illumination when they use this equipment to light their way. For example, a Wazuli using a torch can see clearly out to a range of 40 feet and can see shadowy shapes out to 80 feet away. A normal man standing next to him can only see clearly out to 20 feet and cannot see at all beyond 40 feet.



LIGHT SOURCES AND ILLUMINATION

Object	Bright	Shadowy	Duration
Candle	n/a ¹	5 ft.	1 hour
Torch	20 ft.	40 ft.	1 hr.

¹A candle only provides shadowy illumination.

BREAKING OBJECTS

When attempting to break an object, a character has two choices: smash it with a weapon or break it with sheer strength. Objects can also be broken through the application of energy other than kinetic but the basic rules for doing so are largely unchanged. Exceptions to this principle are noted below when appropriate.

SMASHING AN OBJECT

The sunder attack is used for smashing a weapon or shield with a slashing or bludgeoning weapon; see the Combat chapter. Smashing an object is a lot like sundering a weapon or shield, except that the attack roll is made against the object's Base Defence. Generally, an object can only be smashed with a bludgeoning or slashing weapon.

BASE DEFENCE FOR OBJECTS

Objects are easier to hit than creatures because they usually do not move but many are tough enough to shrug off some damage from each blow. An object's Base Defence is equal to 10 + its size modifier + its Dexterity modifier. An inanimate object has not only a Dexterity of zero (–5 penalty to Defence) but an additional –2 penalty to its Defence. Furthermore, if a character takes a full-round action to line up a shot, he gets an automatic hit with a melee weapon and a +5 bonus on attack rolls with a ranged weapon.

Size	Base Defence Modifier
Colossal	–8
Gargantuan	–4
Huge	–2
Large	–1
Medium	+0
Small	+1
Tiny	+2
Diminutive	+4
Fine	+8

HARDNESS

Each object has hardness—a number that represents how well it resists damage. Whenever an object takes damage, subtract its hardness from the damage. Only damage in excess of its hardness is deducted from the object's hit points.

Object	Hardness	Hit Points	Break DC
Rope (one inch diameter)	0	2	23
Simple wooden door	5	10	13
Small chest	5	1	17
Good wooden door	5	15	18
Treasure chest	5	15	23
Strong wooden door	5	20	23
Masonry wall (one foot thick)	8	90	35
Hewn stone (three feet thick)	8	540	50
Chain	10	5	26
Manacles	10	10	26
Masterwork manacles	10	10	28
Iron door (two inches thick)	10	60	28

Substance	Hardness	Hit Points
Paper or cloth	0	2/inch of thickness
Rope	0	2/inch of thickness
Glass	1	1/inch of thickness
Ice	0	3/inch of thickness
Leather or hide	2	5/inch of thickness
Wood	5	10/inch of thickness
Stone	8	15/inch of thickness
Iron or steel	10	30/inch of thickness

HIT POINTS

An object's hit point total depends on what it is made of and how big it is. When an object's hit points reach zero, it is ruined. Very large objects, such as wagons or chariots, may have separate hit point totals for different sections or locations.

Energy Attacks: Acid attacks deal damage to most objects just as they do to creatures; roll damage and apply it normally after a successful hit. Fire attacks deal half damage to most objects; divide the damage dealt by two before applying the hardness.



Ranged Weapon Damage: Objects take half damage from ranged weapons unless the weapon is a siege engine or something similar. Divide the damage dealt by two before applying the object's hardness.

Ineffective Weapons: Certain weapons simply cannot effectively deal damage to certain other objects.

Immunities: Objects are immune to nonlethal damage and to critical hits.

Vulnerability to Certain Attacks: Certain attacks are especially successful against some objects. In such cases, attacks deal double their normal damage and may ignore the object's hardness.

Damaged Objects: A damaged object remains fully functional until the item's hit points are reduced to zero, at which point it is destroyed. Damaged (but not destroyed) objects can be repaired with the Craft skill.

BREAKING ITEMS

When a character tries to break something with sudden force rather than by dealing damage, use a Strength check (rather than an attack roll and damage roll, as with the sunder special attack) to see whether he succeeds. The DC depends more on the construction of the item than on the material. If an item has lost half or more of its hit points, the DC to break it drops by two.

Larger and smaller creatures get size bonuses and size penalties on Strength checks to break open doors as follows: Fine -16, Diminutive -12, Tiny -8, Small -4, Large +4, Huge +8, Gargantuan +12, Colossal +16.

Strength Check to:	DC
Break down simple door	13
Break down good door	18
Break down strong door	23
Burst rope bonds	23
Bend iron bars	24
Break down barred door	25
Burst chain bonds	26
Break down iron door	28

COLD AND EXPOSURE

Cold and exposure deal nonlethal damage to living creatures. This nonlethal damage cannot be recovered until a character gets out of the cold and warms up again. Once a character

is rendered unconscious through the accumulation of nonlethal damage, the cold and exposure begin to deal lethal damage at the same rate.

An unprotected character in cold weather (below 40° F) must make a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, + 1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. A character who has the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (see the skill Description).

Out across the white blinding plain the chase led. The trampled red field fell out of sight behind him, but still Conan kept on with the silent tenacity of his race. His mailed feet broke through the frozen crust; he sank deep in the drifts and forged through them by sheer strength. But the girl danced across the snow light as a feather floating across a pool; her naked feet barely left their imprint on the hoar-frost that overlaid the crust. In spite of the fire in his veins, the cold bit through the warrior's mail and fur-lined tunic; but the girl in her gossamer veil ran as lightly and as gaily as if she danced through the palm and rose gardens of Poitain.

— *The Frost Giant's Daughter*

In conditions of severe cold or exposure (below 0° F), an unprotected character must make a Fortitude save once every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check), taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage on each failed save. A character who has the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (see the skill description). Characters wearing winter clothing only need one check per hour for cold and exposure damage.

A character who takes any nonlethal damage from cold or exposure is beset by frostbite or hypothermia (treat as fatigued). These penalties end when the character recovers the nonlethal damage he took from the cold and exposure.

Extreme cold (below -20° F) deals 1d6 points of lethal damage per minute (no save). In addition, a character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage.

DARKNESS

In the lightless tombs of Stygia or the darkest hours of the night, some characters or monsters might be able to see, while others might be blinded. For purposes of the following points, a blinded creature is one who simply cannot see through the surrounding darkness.

- ✱ Creatures blinded by darkness lose the ability to deal extra damage due to precision (for example, a ranger's favoured enemy or a sneak attack).
- ✱ Blinded creatures are hampered in their movement and must halve their movement.
- ✱ All opponents have total concealment from blinded creatures, so a blinded creature has a 50% miss chance in combat. A blinded creature must first pinpoint the location of an opponent in order to attack the right square; if the blinded creature launches an attack without pinpointing its foe, it attacks a random square within its reach. For ranged attacks or spells against a foe whose location is not pinpointed, roll to determine which adjacent square the blinded creature is facing; its attack is directed at the closest target that lies in that direction.
- ✱ A blinded creature cannot Dodge or Parry.
- ✱ If a blinded creature is struck by an unseen foe, the blinded character pinpoints the location of the creature that struck him (until the unseen creature moves, of course). The only exception is if the unseen creature has a reach greater than five feet (in which case the blinded character knows the location of the unseen opponent but has not pinpointed him) or uses a ranged attack (in which case, the blinded character knows the general direction of the foe but not his location).
- ✱ A creature blinded by darkness can make a Listen check as a free action each round in order to locate foes (DC equal to opponents' Move Silently checks). A successful check lets a blinded character hear an unseen creature 'over there somewhere.' It is almost impossible to pinpoint the location of an unseen creature. A Listen check that beats the DC by 20 reveals the unseen creature's square but the unseen creature still has total concealment from the blinded creature.
- ✱ A blinded creature can grope about to find unseen creatures. A character can make a touch attack with his hands or a weapon into two adjacent squares using a standard action. If an unseen target is in the designated square, there is a 50% miss chance on the touch attack. If successful, the groping character deals no damage but pinpoints the unseen creature's current location. (If the unseen creature moves, its location is once again unknown.)
- ✱ A creature with the scent ability automatically pinpoints unseen creatures within five feet of its location.

- ✱ A blinded creature takes a -4 penalty on Search checks and most Strength- and Dexterity-based skill checks, including any with an armour check penalty. A creature blinded by darkness automatically fails any skill check relying on vision.

FALLING

Falling Damage: The basic rule is simple: 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen, to a maximum of 20d6.

If a character deliberately jumps instead of merely slipping or falling, the damage is the same but the first 1d6 is nonlethal damage. A DC 15 Jump check or DC 15 Tumble check allows the character to avoid any damage from the first 10 feet fallen and converts any damage from the second 10 feet to nonlethal damage. Thus, a character who slips from a ledge 30 feet up takes 3d6 damage. If the same character deliberately jumped, he takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and 2d6 points of lethal damage. If the character leaps down with a successful Jump or Tumble check, he takes only 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and 1d6 points of lethal damage from the plunge.

Falls onto yielding surfaces (soft ground, mud) also convert the first 1d6 of damage to nonlethal damage. This reduction is cumulative with deliberate jumps and the Jump skill.

Falling into Water: Falls into water are handled somewhat differently. If the water is at least 10 feet deep, the first 20 feet of falling do no damage. The next 20 feet do nonlethal damage (1d3 per 10-foot increment). Beyond that, falling damage is lethal damage (1d6 per additional 10-foot increment).

Characters who deliberately dive into water take no damage on a successful DC 15 Swim check or DC 15 Tumble check, so long as the water is at least 10 feet deep for every 30 feet fallen. However, the DC of the check increases by five for every 50 feet of the dive.

HEAT

In the deserts, there are sun-bleached bones that were once adventurers. Heat can be more deadly than any desert bandit. Heat deals nonlethal damage that cannot be recovered until the character cools off (reaches shade, survives until nightfall, gets doused in water and so forth). Once rendered



unconscious through the accumulation of nonlethal damage, the character begins to take lethal damage at the same rate.

A character in very hot conditions (above 90° F) must make a Fortitude saving throw each hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armour of any sort take a -4 penalty on their saves. A character with the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well (see the skill description). Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking lethal damage (1d4 points per hour).

In severe heat (above 110° F), a character must make a Fortitude save once every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or armour of any sort take a -4 penalty on their saves. A character with the Survival skill may receive a bonus on this saving throw and may be able to apply this bonus to other characters as well. Characters reduced to unconsciousness begin taking lethal damage (1d4 points per each 10-minute period).

A character who takes any nonlethal damage from heat exposure now suffers from heatstroke and is fatigued. These penalties end when the character recovers the nonlethal damage he took from the heat.

Extreme heat (air temperature over 140° F, fire, boiling water, lava) deals lethal damage. Breathing air in these temperatures deals 1d6 points of damage per minute (no save). In addition, a character must make a Fortitude save every five minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Those wearing heavy clothing or any sort of armour take a -4 penalty on their saves.

Boiling water deals 1d6 points of scalding damage unless the character is fully immersed, in which case it deals 10d6 points of damage per round of exposure.

A burning torch deals 1d6 points of damage if used as a weapon.

CATCHING FIRE

Characters exposed to burning oil, bonfires or other fires might find their clothes, hair or equipment on fire.

Characters at risk of catching fire are allowed a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid this fate. If a character's clothes or hair catch fire, he takes 1d8 points of damage immediately. In each subsequent round, the burning character must make another Reflex saving throw. Failure means he takes another 1d8 points of damage that round. Success means that the fire has gone out. (That is, once he succeeds on his saving throw, he is no longer on fire.)

A character who is on fire may automatically extinguish the flames by jumping into enough water to douse himself. If no body of water is at hand, a full-round action rolling on the ground or smothering the fire with cloaks or the like permits the character another save with a +4 bonus.

Those unlucky enough to have their clothes or equipment catch fire must make DC 15 Reflex saves for each item. Flammable items that fail take the same amount of damage as the character.

SMOKE

A character who breathes heavy smoke must make a Fortitude save each round (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or spend that round choking and coughing. A character who chokes for two consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Smoke obscures vision, giving concealment (20% miss chance) to characters within it.

STARVATION AND THIRST

Characters might find themselves without food or water and with no means to obtain them. In normal climates, Medium characters need at least a gallon of fluids and about a pound of decent food per day to avoid starvation. In very hot climates, characters need two or three times as much water to avoid dehydration.

A character can go without water for one day plus a number of hours equal to his Constitution score. After this time, the character must make a Constitution check each hour (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

A character can go without food for three days, in growing discomfort. After this time, the character must make a Constitution check each day (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.



Characters who have taken nonlethal damage from lack of food or water are fatigued. Nonlethal damage from thirst or starvation cannot be recovered until the character gets food or water, as needed – not even magic that restores hit points heals this damage.

SUFFOCATION

A character who has no air to breathe can hold his breath for two rounds per point of Constitution. After this period of time, the character must make a DC 10 Constitution check in order to continue holding his breath. The save must be repeated each round, with the DC increasing by +1 for each previous success.

When the character fails one of these Constitution checks, he begins to suffocate. In the first round, he falls unconscious (zero hit points). In the following round, he drops to -1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, he suffocates.

Slow Suffocation: A Medium character can breathe easily for six hours in a sealed chamber measuring 10 feet on a side. After that time, the character takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage every 15 minutes. Each additional Medium character or significant fire source (a torch, for example) proportionally reduces the time the air will last.

WATER AND DROWNING

Any character can wade in relatively calm water that does not go over his head with no check. Similarly, swimming in calm water only requires skill checks with a DC of 10. Trained swimmers can just take 10. (Remember, however, that armour or heavy gear makes any attempt at swimming much more difficult. See the Swim skill description on page 116.)

By contrast, fast-moving water is much more dangerous. On a successful DC 15 Swim check or a DC 15 Strength check, fast-moving water deals 1d3 points of nonlethal damage per round (1d6 points of lethal damage if flowing over rocks and cascades). On a failed check, the character takes the damage and must make another check that round to avoid going under.

Very deep water is not only generally pitch black, posing a navigational hazard but worse, it deals water pressure damage of 1d6 points per minute for every 100 feet the character is below the surface. A successful Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) means the diver takes no damage in that minute. Very cold water deals 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from hypothermia per minute of exposure.

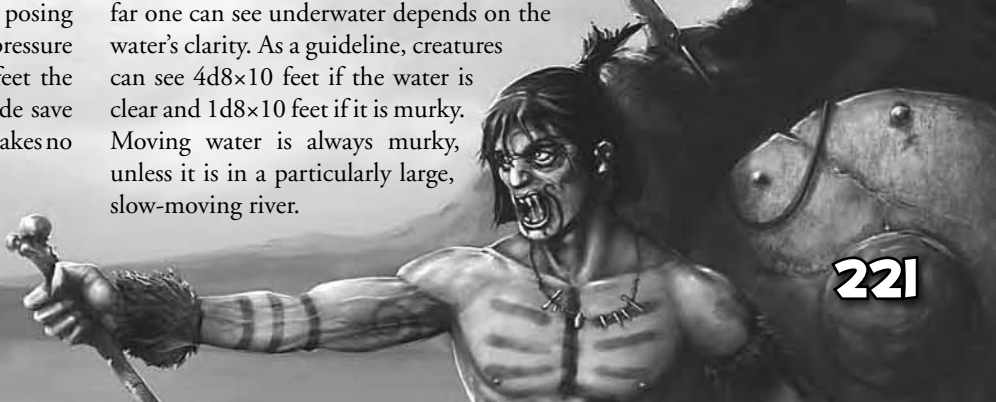


Any character can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to twice his Constitution score. After this period of time, the character must make a DC 10 Constitution check every round in order to continue holding his breath. Each round, the DC increases by one.

When the character finally fails his Constitution check, he begins to drown. In the first round, he falls unconscious (zero hit points). In the following round, he drops to -1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, he drowns.

It is possible to drown in substances other than water, such as sand, quicksand, fine dust and mysterious strangling gasses found in chasms surrounding sorcerous castles.

Stealth and Detection Underwater: How far one can see underwater depends on the water's clarity. As a guideline, creatures can see 4d8×10 feet if the water is clear and 1d8×10 feet if it is murky. Moving water is always murky, unless it is in a particularly large, slow-moving river.





COMBAT UNDERWATER

Attacks from Land: Characters swimming, floating or treading water on the surface, or wading in water at least chest deep, have cover (+4 bonus to Defence) from opponents on land.

Attacks Underwater: Characters suffer a -2 penalty to attacks and inflict only half damage on a successful attack when using slashing or bludgeoning weapons. Piercing weapons only suffer a -2 penalty to attacks.

Thrown weapons are ineffective underwater, even when launched from land. Attacks with other ranged weapons take a -2 penalty on attack rolls for every five feet of water they pass through, in addition to the normal penalties for range.

WEATHER

Natural conditions such as storms and snow can affect a battle.

RAIN, SNOW, SLEET AND HAIL

Rain: Rain reduces visibility ranges by half, resulting in a -4 penalty on Spot and Search checks. It has the same effect on flames, ranged weapon attacks and Listen checks as severe wind.

Snow: Falling snow has the same effects on visibility, ranged weapon attacks and skill checks as rain. It costs two squares of movement to enter a snow-covered square. A day of snowfall leaves 1d6 inches of snow on the ground.

Heavy Snow: Heavy snow has the same effects as normal snowfall but also restricts visibility as fog does (see Fog, below). A day of heavy snow leaves 1d4 feet of snow on the ground. It costs four squares of movement to enter a square covered with heavy snow. Heavy snow accompanied by strong or severe winds may result in snowdrifts 1d4x5 feet deep, especially in and around an object big enough to deflect the wind—a cabin or a large tent, for instance.

There is a 10% chance that a heavy snowfall will be accompanied by lightning (see Thunderstorm, below). Snow has the same effect on flames as moderate wind.

Sleet: Essentially frozen rain, sleet has the same effect as rain while falling (except that its chance to

extinguish protected flames is 75%) and the same effect as snow once on the ground.

Hail: Hail does not reduce visibility but the sound of falling hail makes Listen checks more difficult (-4 penalty). Sometimes (5% chance) hail can become large enough to deal one point of lethal damage (per storm) to anything in the open. Once on the ground, hail has the same effect on movement as snow.

STORMS

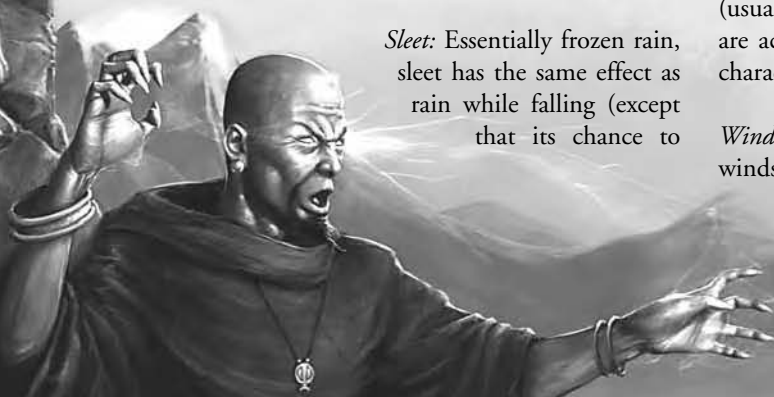
The raging winds and driving rain of a storm reduce visibility ranges by three quarters, imposing a -8 penalty on Spot, Search and Listen checks. Storms make ranged weapon attacks impossible, except for those that use siege weapons, which have a -4 penalty on attack rolls. Storms automatically extinguish candles, torches and similar unprotected flames. They cause protected flames, such as those of lanterns, to dance wildly and have a 50% chance of extinguishing these lights. See Table: Wind Effects for possible consequences to creatures caught outside without shelter during a storm. Storms are categorised according to the following three types:

Dust storm: Howling desert storms hurl sand across the sky. This obscures vision, smothers unprotected flames and can even choke protected flames (50% chance). Most dust storms are accompanied by severe winds and leave behind a deposit of 1d6 inches of sand. However, there is a 10% chance for a more severe dust storm to be accompanied by windstorm-magnitude winds (see Table: Wind Effects). These more severe dust storms deal 1d3 points of nonlethal damage each round to anyone caught out in the open without shelter and also pose a choking hazard (see Drowning—except that a character with a scarf or similar protection across his mouth and nose does not begin to choke until after a number of rounds equal to 10 x her Constitution score). More severe dust storms leave 2d3-1 feet of fine sand in their wake.

Snowstorm: In addition to the wind and precipitation common to other storms, snowstorms leave 1d6 inches of snow on the ground.

Thunderstorm: In addition to wind and precipitation (usually rain but sometimes also hail), thunderstorms are accompanied by lightning that can pose a hazard to characters who do not have proper shelter.

Windstorm: When accompanied by little or no precipitation, windstorms can cause considerable damage simply through the force of their wind.



Wind Force	Wind Speed	Ranged Attacks Normal/Siege Weapons	Wind Effect	Fort Save DC
Light	0–10 mph	—/—	—	—
Moderate	11–20 mph	—/—	—	—
Strong	21–30 mph	–2/—	—	10
Severe	31–50 mph	–4/—	Checked	15
Windstorm	51–74 mph	Impossible/–4	Knocked down	18
Hurricane	75–174 mph	Impossible/–8	Blown away	20
Tornado	175–300 mph	Impossible/impossible	Blown away	30

Checked: Creatures are unable to move forward against the force of the wind. Flying creatures are blown back 1d6×5 feet.

Knocked Down: Creatures are knocked prone by the force of the wind. Flying creatures are instead blown back 1d6×10 feet.

Blown Away: Creatures on the ground are knocked prone and rolled 1d4×10 feet, taking 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per 10 feet. Flying creatures are blown back 2d6×10 feet and take 2d6 points of nonlethal damage due to battering and buffeting.

Blizzard: The combination of high winds, heavy snow (typically 1d3 feet) and bitter cold make blizzards deadly for all who are unprepared for them.

Hurricane: In addition to very high winds and heavy rain, hurricanes are accompanied by floods. Most adventuring activity is impossible under such conditions.

Tornado: One in 10 thunderstorms is accompanied by a tornado.

Powerful Storms: Very high winds and torrential precipitation reduce visibility to zero, making Spot, Search and Listen checks and all ranged weapon attacks impossible. Unprotected flames are automatically extinguished and protected flames have a 75% chance of being doused. Creatures caught in area powerful storm must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or face the effects of the storm based on their size (see Table: Wind Effects). Powerful storms are divided into the following four types:

can even knock characters down (see the Wind Effects table), interfere with ranged attacks or impose penalties on some skill checks.

Light Wind: A gentle breeze, having little or no game effect.

Moderate Wind: A steady wind with a 50% chance of extinguishing small, unprotected flames, such as candles.

Strong Wind: Gusts that automatically extinguish unprotected flames (candles, torches and the like). Such gusts impose a –2 penalty on ranged attack rolls and on Listen checks.

Severe Wind: In addition to automatically extinguishing any unprotected flames, winds of this magnitude cause protected flames (such as those of lanterns) to dance wildly and have a 50% chance of extinguishing these lights. Ranged weapon attacks and Listen checks are at a –4 penalty.

Windstorm: Powerful enough to bring down branches if not whole trees, windstorms automatically extinguish unprotected flames and have a 75% chance of blowing out protected flames, such as those of lanterns. Ranged weapon attacks are impossible and even siege weapons have a –4 penalty on attack rolls. Listen checks are at a –8 penalty due to the howling of the wind.

FOG

Whether in the form of a low-lying cloud or a mist rising from the ground, fog obscures all sight beyond five feet. Characters have concealment when they are five feet away from other creatures (attacks by or against them have a 20% miss chance).

WINDS

The wind can create a stinging spray of sand or dust, fan a large fire, heel over a small boat and blow gases or vapours away. If powerful enough, it



Hurricane-Force Wind: All flames are extinguished. Ranged attacks are impossible (except with siege weapons, which have a -8 penalty on attack rolls). Listen checks are impossible: All characters can hear is the roaring of the wind. Hurricane-force winds often fell trees.

Tornado: All flames are extinguished. All ranged attacks are impossible (even with siege weapons), as are Listen checks. Instead of being blown away (see Table: Wind Effects), characters in close proximity to a tornado who fail their Fortitude saves are sucked toward the tornado. Those who come in contact with the actual funnel cloud are picked up and whirled around for 1d10 rounds, taking 6d8 points of damage per round, before being violently expelled (falling damage may apply). While a tornado's rotational speed can be as great as 300 mph, the funnel itself moves forward at an average of 30 mph (roughly 250 feet per round). A tornado uproots trees, destroys buildings and causes other similar forms of major destruction.

CONDITION SUMMARY

Blinded: The character cannot see. He takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class, loses his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any), moves at half speed, and takes a -4 penalty on Search checks and on most Strength- and Dexterity-based skill checks. All checks and activities that rely on vision (such as reading and Spot checks) automatically fail. All opponents are considered to have total concealment (50% miss chance) to the blinded character. Characters who remain blinded for a long time grow accustomed to these drawbacks and can overcome some of them.

Cowering: The character is frozen in fear and can take no actions. A cowering character takes a -2 penalty to Defence.

Dazed: The creature is unable to act normally. A dazed creature can take no actions but can still Dodge and Parry.

A dazed condition typically lasts one round.

Dazzled: The creature is unable to see well because of over-stimulation of the eyes. A dazzled creature takes a -1 penalty on attack rolls, Search checks and Spot checks.

Deafened: A deafened character cannot hear. He takes a -4 penalty on initiative checks, automatically fails Listen checks and has a 20% chance of spell failure when casting spells with verbal components. Characters who remain deafened for a long time grow accustomed to these drawbacks and can overcome some of them.

Disabled: A character with zero hit points or one who has negative hit points but has become stable and conscious, is disabled. A disabled character may take a single move action or standard action each round (but not both, nor can he take full-round actions). He moves at half speed. Move actions do not risk further injury but standard actions (or any other action the DM deems strenuous, including some free actions such as casting a quickened spell) deals one point of damage after the completion of the act. Unless the action increases the disabled character's hit points, he is now in negative hit points and dying.

A disabled character with negative hit points recovers hit points naturally if he is being helped. Otherwise, he has a 10% chance of recovering hit points naturally (starting with that day); otherwise, he loses one hit point per day. Once an unaided character starts recovering hit points naturally, he is no longer in danger of losing hit points (even if his current hit points are negative).

Dying: A dying character is unconscious and near death. He has -1 to -9 current hit points. A dying character can take no actions and is unconscious. At the end of each round (starting with the round in which the character dropped below zero hit points), the character rolls d% to see whether he becomes stable. He has a 10% chance of becoming stable. If he does not stabilise, he loses one hit point. If a dying character reaches -10 hit points, he is dead.

Entangled: The character is ensnared. Being entangled impedes movement, but does not entirely prevent it unless the bonds are anchored to an immobile object or tethered by an opposing force. An entangled creature moves at half speed, cannot run or charge and takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls and a -4 penalty to Dexterity. An entangled character who attempts to cast a spell must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + the spell's level) or lose the spell.



Exhausted: An exhausted character moves at half speed and takes a -6 penalty to Strength and Dexterity. After one hour of complete rest, an exhausted character becomes fatigued. A fatigued character becomes exhausted by doing something else that would normally cause fatigue.

Fatigued: A fatigued character can neither run nor charge and takes a -2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity. Anything that would normally cause fatigue causes the fatigued character to become exhausted. After eight hours of complete rest, fatigued characters are no longer fatigued.

Frightened: A frightened creature flees from the source of its fear as best it can. If unable to flee, it may fight. A frightened creature takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks.

Frightened is like shaken, except that the creature must flee if possible. Panicked is a more extreme state of fear.

Nauseated: The character experiences stomach distress. Nauseated creatures are unable to attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells or do anything else that require attention. The only action such a character can take is a single move action per turn.

Panicked: A panicked creature must drop anything it holds and flee at top speed from the source of its fear, as well as any other dangers it encounters, along a random path. It can not take any other actions. In addition, the creature takes a -2 penalty on all saving throws, skill checks and ability checks. If cornered, a panicked creature cowers and does not attack, typically using the total defence action in combat. A panicked creature can use special abilities, including spells, to flee; indeed, the creature must use such means if they are the only way to escape.

Panicked is a more extreme state of fear than shaken or frightened.

Pinned: The character is held immobile (but not helpless) in a grapple.

Prone: The character is on the ground. An attacker who is prone has a -4 penalty on melee attack rolls and cannot use a ranged weapon (except for a crossbow). A defender who is prone gains a +4 bonus to Defence against ranged attacks but takes a -4 penalty to Defence against melee attacks.

Standing up is a move-equivalent action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

Shaken: A shaken character takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks.

Shaken is a less severe state of fear than frightened or panicked.

Sickened: The character takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks.

Stable: A character who was dying but who has stopped losing hit points and still has negative hit points is stable. The character is no longer dying but he is still unconscious. If the character has become stable because of aid from another character (such as a Heal check or magical healing), he no longer loses hit points. He has a 10% chance each hour of becoming conscious and disabled (even though his hit points are still negative).

If the character became stable on his own and has not had help, he is still at risk of losing hit points. Each hour, he has a 10% chance of becoming conscious and disabled. Otherwise he loses one hit point.

Staggered: A character whose nonlethal damage exactly equals his current hit points is staggered. A staggered character may take a single move action or standard action each round (but not both, nor can he take full-round actions).

A character whose current hit points exceed his nonlethal damage is no longer staggered; a character whose nonlethal damage exceeds his hit points becomes unconscious.

Stunned: A stunned creature drops everything he is holding, cannot take actions and cannot Dodge or Parry.

Unconscious: The character is knocked out and helpless. Unconsciousness can result from having current hit points between -1 and -9 or from nonlethal damage in excess of current hit points.

Sorcery

Knowledge and Power

'Because blood aids great sorcery!' thundered Xaltotun, in a voice that made the rocks quiver. A lurid nimbus played about his awful head. 'Because no wizard wastes his strength thoughtlessly. Because I would conserve my powers for the great days to be, rather than employ them in a hill-country brawl. But now, by Set, I shall loose them to the uttermost! Watch, dog of Asura, false priest of an outworn god, and see a sight that shall blast your reason for evermore!'

— *The Hour of the Dragon*

There are only two possible reasons to study sorcery in the Hyborian Age – knowledge and power. Of the two, power is by far the most common motivation. True seekers of knowledge are scarce indeed, though often a scholar will convince himself he desires knowledge rather than power – and it may even be true, until he falls prey to the dreadful, corrupting influences of the dark forces with which he traffics.

What might be termed 'true' sorcery can be gained by one or more of the following methods: delving into the half-forgotten grimoires of a bygone age; contact with gods, demons or other spirits; and learning directly from another sorcerer. All three methods are risky. The first often puts the body at direct risk, for the grimoires that are not already in the possession of some adept or other are usually hidden away in ghost-haunted tombs or lotus-poisoned jungles. The latter two almost always require the sorcerer to put his mind, body and soul alike in thrall to the greater power from whom he learns.

This true knowledge grants such power, though, that it is almost always worth the price.

Along with true sorcery, which is spectacularly effective but usually quite exhausting to carry out, every sorcerer supplements his magic with trickery of one kind or another. Hypnotism and mesmerism are most common in Eastern regions and a strong-willed sorcerer can often use them to control others as though by magic. A more powerful sorcerer can supplement his mesmerising tricks with raw magical energy or use spells to hypnotise at a distance. Herbal potions and alchemical tricks, often infused with true sorcerous power, can be found throughout the world, though most can be used only by the sorcerer who made them or by another who has been given careful instruction by him.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SORCERY

A sorcerer must have one hand free; that is, he must not be carrying any weapons, shields or other objects in both hands. The only exceptions to this are as follows:

- ✱ When a spell requires a material component or focus of some kind, in which case the appropriate object must be held in one hand when the spell is cast
- ✱ When a spell affects an object or objects, in which case the spell may allow or require said objects to be touched or picked up

PREPARING SORCERY

Most sorcery requires lengthy preparation and is tiring in the extreme to the sorcerer. Generally only prestidigitation, counterspells, hypnotism and other relatively minor sorcery can be used more or less as required and even they benefit from advance preparation. Often sorcerers find it best to use their magic to create arcane powders or similar objects that can be wielded at need, since that way they have something that is useful in combat.

This necessary preparation time is reflected in the long casting times for the more serious magic.

WHAT IS A SORCERER?

In game terms, a sorcerer is any character who has learned at least one sorcery style as a class feature of the scholar or temptress class or who has gained partial access to at least one sorcery style as a result of taking the Dabbler feat. This is the definition used throughout this chapter.

Note that a scholar who always elects to choose a bonus feat instead of a sorcery style is not regarded as a sorcerer, unless of course he selects the Dabbler feat.

Of course, public perception of who is and is not a sorcerer may be very different. A worthy priest of Ibis (scholar class) who has spent years learning the Counterspells sorcery style may technically be a sorcerer according to these rules (and a powerful one at that) but the members of his congregation will certainly not consider him to be so. Doubtless, after all, he has been granted divine powers to help fight Ibis's old enemy Set. That, of course, is not sorcery – not in the popular perception. On the other hand, a dilettante noble who dabbles even slightly in the Summoning sorcery style may find himself hounded out of town for his foul magic, though his actual knowledge of sorcery may be far more limited than the priest's.

Each scholar starts out with four base Power Points, adjusted up or down by his Wisdom modifier (if any) and by any bonuses for class level. (If a sorcerer's Wisdom modifier increases, such as when he increases his Wisdom ability score by advancing in level, his base Power Points also increase.) Other characters who learn a small amount of sorcery through whatever means gain a mere 2 + Wisdom modifier Power Points for use.

These are the standard Power Points a sorcerer has available, assuming there are no special circumstances. This number may increase or decrease, usually depending on the magic the sorcerer casts, whether he loses or wins magical contests with other sorcerers, whether he ingests certain drugs and whether he sacrifices other creatures. The absolute maximum Power Points a character may have is equal to double his base Power Points unless otherwise specified.

POWER POINTS

All creatures have a certain amount of magical power flowing through them simply because they are alive. Sorcerers, who are usually but not always members of the scholar class, have learned to activate this magical power both in themselves and by draining the life force from others, either through sacrifice or some other means. Those who are sufficiently knowledgeable can use this power to create a variety of magical effects.

GAINING AND LOSING POWER POINTS

When a sorcerer's Power Points are higher than his base Power Points for any reason, they gradually begin to revert back to his base Power Points. Each hour that passes will cause the sorcerer's Power Point score to fall by one until it reaches his base Power Points again.

Power points are reduced whenever a sorcerer casts a spell, or sometimes if he is the victim of certain magical attacks. In addition,

if the sorcerer is ever reduced below one hit point by any means, his Power Points are also immediately reduced to zero. He cannot regain Power Points until he has been brought back to one hit point or above by some means.

A sorcerer can gain Power Points directly from the bodies of other living creatures, by sacrificing them or draining the life force out of their still-living bodies – see *Sacrifices* and *Energy Drains* overleaf.

If the sorcerer rests, he can regain Power Points that he has lost for any reason, up to his base Power Points as usual. One Power Point is regained per full two hours of rest.

A group of followers can help a sorcerer gain Power Points by assisting him with a ritual – see *Power Rituals* overleaf.



SACRIFICES AND ENERGY DRAINS

If a sorcerer sacrifices a creature by coup de grace, the sorcerer may gain power based on the hit points the creature had before being dealt damage by the coup de grace.

Sacrifice	Hit Points per Power Point
Animal	16 HP/1PP
Sacred Animal	8 HP/1 PP
Ordinary Person	8 HP/1 PP
Virgin Sacrifice	4 HP/1 PP
Ritually Prepared Virgin Sacrifice	3 HP/1 PP
Perfect Offering	2 HP/1 PP
Ritual Perfect Offering	1 HP/1 PP

A **sacred animal** is one associated with a particular God or with the enemies of that god. For example, the bull is sacred to Anu, the Shemite sky-god. A sacrificed bull would give twice the normal Power Points if sacrificed by a priest of Anu or by a sorcerer who is opposed to Anu and wishes to mock the god's power.

To qualify as a **virgin sacrifice**, the victim must be not only physically be a virgin, but must also be free of Corruption.

A **ritually prepared virgin sacrifice** must not only be a virgin but must be bathed and anointed and purified and must be wholly conscious and aware when the sacrifice takes place. A **perfect offering** is a virgin sacrifice that is, for some reason, particularly pleasing to the entities that are being propitiated – if a particular demon has a taste for blonde, blue-eyed girls from Brythunia, then those are perfect offerings to that demon. Targets of the Rule of Obsession also count as perfect offerings.

One can increase this amount by selecting Ritual Sacrifice and other feats; see Chapter 6: Tricks of Sword and Sorcery. These feats allow the sorcerer to move down the table to better rewards. For example, a sorcerer would normally get one Power Point per eight hit points when sacrificing an ordinary slave. With the Ritual Sacrifice feat, though, he may move one step down the table to the next row, which gives one Power Point per four hit points. It is always possible to sacrifice

a creature to a specific entity with which you have some kind of pact, in which case it gains the Power Points instead of the sorcerer.

If a sorcerer has a person helpless and under his power, the sorcerer may place his hand against his victim's skin and drain 1d4 Power Points from him as a full-round action. If the victim is a sorcerer, this is removed from his usual Power Points. If he is not a sorcerer, this drain causes him 2d6 Wisdom damage and he may not be drained again in this way until his Wisdom has returned to normal.

POWER RITUALS

A sorcerer may also gain Power Points by being at the centre of a large group ritual dedicated to granting him magical energy.

At least 10 celebrants must be involved. Each must have at least one rank in any Perform skill. At least 20% of the celebrants must have one or more ranks in Perform (ritual).

A power ritual takes at least one hour, during which time neither the celebrants nor the sorcerer can perform other actions, including sorcery. Each of the celebrants makes a Perform check, which must be Perform (ritual) for at least 20% of the celebrants. It is usual for the celebrants to take 10 on this check. The Games Master cross-references the average check result for the celebrants with the number of celebrants on the Power Rituals table to determine how many Power Points per hour the sorcerer gains from the power ritual.

A power ritual that continues for more than one hour allows the sorcerer to gain additional Power Points each additional hour.

If desired, two or more sorcerers can split the Power Points gained from a Power Ritual in any manner on which they can mutually agree.

POWER RITUALS (POWER POINTS GAINED PER HOUR)

Number of Celebrants	Average Check Result				
	Less than 10	10–14	15–19	20–24	25+
10–19	0	1	2	3	4
20–49	0	2	4	6	8
50–99	0	3	6	9	12
100+	0	4	8	12	16

PUSHING IT

It is possible, though not always advisable, for a sorcerer to reduce his Power Points below zero due as a result of an especially powerful piece of magic.

A sorcerer's Power Points can be reduced to a negative number equal to his base Power Points. For example, a sorcerer with a base Power Point score of seven could reduce his Power Points as low as -7. It is simply not possible to go below this number.

A sorcerer whose Power Points are below zero may regain them by rest, but only at the rate of one Power Point per full day of rest, until he is back at zero once again at which point the usual rapid restoration of Power Points begins. He may also regain them more quickly by the usual means of sacrifice, use of black lotus and so forth.

While his Power Points are below zero, the sorcerer may not cast any further spells (even if he could theoretically reduce his Power Points still further) and is considered to be fatigued (cannot run or charge, -2 to Strength and Dexterity) until his Power Points are somehow restored to zero or above once more.

THE RULES OF SORCERY

Though sorcery often seems mysterious to those who do not practice it, certain patterns can be gleaned from the descriptions given by Conan and his allies.

THE RULE OF SUCCESS

As Conan puts it, 'Sorcery thrives on success, not on failure.' Whenever a sorcerer is, broadly speaking, succeeding at what he is doing when in a high-stress situation (particularly combat), he becomes still more effective at what he is doing. At its most powerful, this can lead to a dreadful chain reaction that can make sorcerers almost unstoppable.

Every round in which a sorcerer successfully slays at least one opponent, either by sorcerous means or by combat, he gains a morale bonus to all attack rolls and magic attack

Enemies Killed	Morale Bonus
1	+1
2-4	+2
5-9	+3
10-19	+4
20-49	+5
50-99	+6
100-199	+7
200-499	+8
500-999	+9
1000+	+10

rolls made until the end of the round after the one in which he killed his opponent(s). This bonus can be read on the table to the bottom-left of this page.

The bonus is immediately cancelled if the sorcerer loses any hit points during the round following the actions that gave him the bonus.

Note that these benefits are in addition to any bonus Power Points the sorcerer may gain for having sacrificed one or more of his kills.

Furthermore, the rule of success makes it far easier for a sorcerer to repeat a successful spell. If he ever casts a spell that succeeds in all that it was intended to do, he may cast the same spell the following round at half the previous Power Point cost (rounded down) for the spell. This even affects spells with a casting time of greater than one round, so long as the spell is re-cast within one round of the end of the previous casting. A further success halves the Power Point cost again for the next casting, to a minimum Power Point cost of one.

For example, an *awful rite of the were-beast* only ever affects a single victim. Thus, any time a target fails his saving throw, it can be assumed that the spell is successful and the next casting expends only four Power Points if cast immediately after the first use of the spell.

The Games Master always has the final say as to whether a particular spell succeeds sufficiently well to grant this special bonus.

Both the magic attack bonus and the reduced Power Point cost from the Rule of Success can apply simultaneously, if applicable.

THE RULE OF IMPERMANENCE

Almost every spell or magic item is limited in duration. If nothing else, all sorcerous creations will cease functioning the moment the sorcerer who created them is killed, unless noted otherwise.

Any time a sorcerer is reduced below zero hit points, he must make a separate Will saving throw (DC 25) for each of his sorcerous creations. If



He felt an urge to hasten, not a mere blind panic, but an instinct of peril growing behind his back. He said nothing to Yasmina, and she seemed content to nestle her dark head against his arching breast and find security in the clasp of his iron arms. He paused an instant on the brink of the chasm, frowning down. The haze which danced in the gorge was no longer rose-hued and sparkling. It was smoky, dim, ghostly, like the life-tide that flickered thinly in a wounded man. The thought came vaguely to Conan that the spells of magicians were more closely bound to their personal beings than were the actions of common men to the actors.

— *The People of the Black Circle*

this is failed, the creation ceases functioning. Spells simply stop working. Magic items crumble into dust or shatter into tiny fragments, becoming not only non-magical but also non-existent.

Furthermore, if a sorcerer is killed or left for dead (see page 75), all his sorcerous creations immediately cease to function, as above, with no chance of being saved.

THE RULE OF DEFENCE

Sorcerers generally have plenty of close-range magic ideal for counter-attacks to ensure that any who attempt to kill them risk destruction themselves.

Any character who knows a spell so labelled is able to unleash a defensive blast, as follows, as a last-resort counter-attack:

- ✱ A defensive blast is an Immediate Action and can be taken at any time, as long as the sorcerer is not flat-footed.
- ✱ All the sorcerer's current Power Points are expended.
- ✱ The defensive blast is provoked only if the sorcerer is attacked in some fashion by a foe.

- ✱ Each Sorcery style has its own form of defensive blast. A scholar character gets the defensive blast for his first Sorcery style for free; Defensive Blasts for other styles that the sorcerer picks up later must be purchased separately as Advanced Spells. Temptresses who learn sorcery as their secret art do not learn the defensive blast for free and must acquire it as an advanced spell.

THE RULE OF OBSESSION

For most sorcerers, magic is an obsession that drives them on, constantly forcing them to seek out new sources of knowledge and new forms of power. Diluting that obsession by any means, whether by falling in love, pursuing a new career or demonstrating overmuch loyalty to a cause other than one's own sorcerous masters, tends to weaken a sorcerer's magic considerably. However, if he can somehow draw the source of the distraction into himself – for example, by sacrificing his loved one, succeeding at a major test in a new profession or rising to the top of a non-sorcerous organisation only to entice all its members to mass sacrifice – his power is significantly boosted.

In effect, the rule of obsession is played out somewhat like a minor quest or sub-plot alongside the main campaign. A sorcerer can always declare himself obsessed with something other than sorcery. If he does so, his base Power Points are reduced by –1 to –3, depending on the strength of the obsession. The sorcerer may only regain these points – with interest – by somehow drawing the object of the obsession into himself. Until that point, his base Power Points will remain penalised, though of course his current Power Points can still go up and down as usual. Maximum Power Points are calculated from the sorcerer's new base Power Points.

The Games Master may also rule that a sorcerer is obsessed, though he should do so with care. Usually the only two possible reasons for doing so are as follows:

- ✱ The sorcerer acquires an Allegiance (see page 81) to someone or some group other than his own sorcerous master or masters, or some demon or other.
- ✱ The sorcerer acquires more levels of some other class than he has levels of scholar.

On the other hand, it is said that observers can tell when someone is obsessed with something and that the obsessed usually cannot tell. This being the case, the Games Master is certainly permitted to make statements along the lines



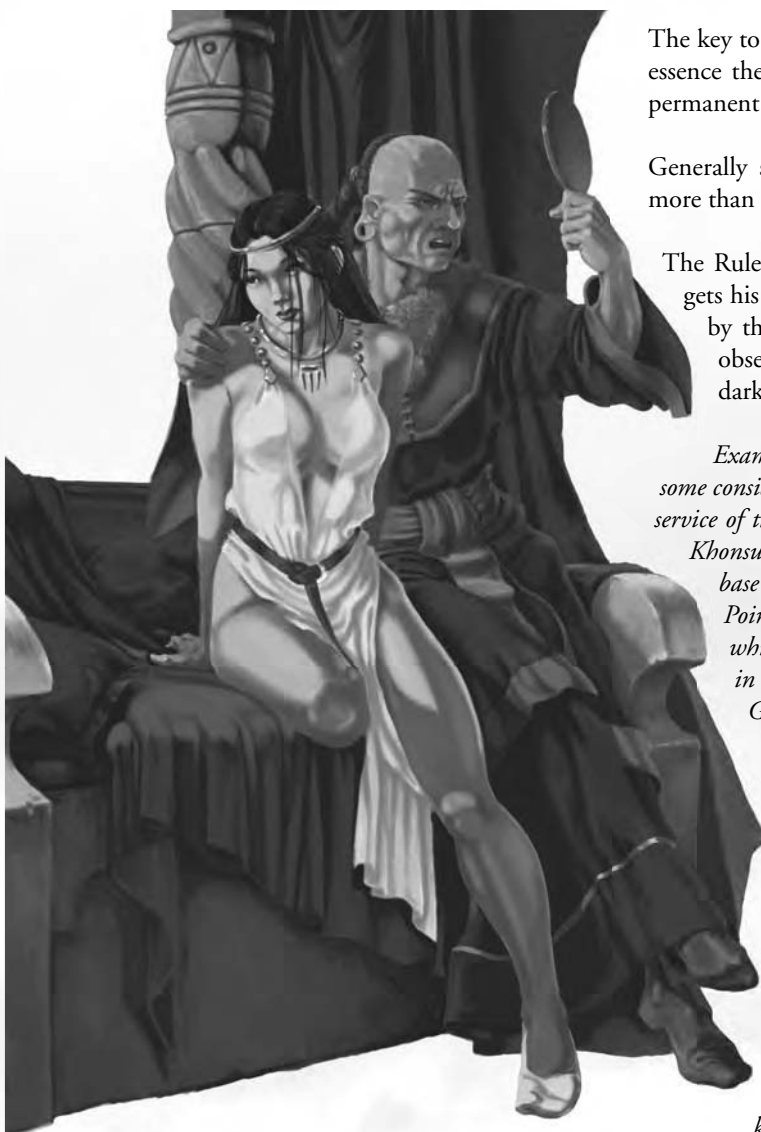


The key to understanding the Rule of Obsession is that in essence the sorcerer is 'gambling' between one and three permanent base Power Points.

Generally speaking, a sorcerer should not be permitted more than one obsession per year.

The Rule of Obsession never applies to a sorcerer who gets his power from the Dabbler feat. He is unaffected by the rule of obsession, as he is by definition not obsessed with sorcery but simply toying with its dark powers.

Example: Ankh-af-na-Khonsu is a Stygian sorcerer of some considerable repute but has found himself drawn to the service of the highly charismatic King of Koth. Ankh-af-na-Khonsu is a 12th level scholar with a Wisdom of 14, so his base Power Points are nine and his maximum Power Points are 27. The sorcerer has an Allegiance (Koth), which has developed over the years he has spent living in that land and working directly for the King. The Games Master decides this to be an obsession worth two base Power Points, so Ankh-af-na-Khonsu's base Power Points are reduced to seven and his maximum Power Points to 21. The sorcerer realises he must somehow draw the obsession back into himself and proposes a plan to the Games Master. He intends to hypnotise the King of Koth on a long-term and complete basis, forcing the unfortunate monarch to tear apart the kingdom of Koth in a series of futile wars, punitive taxes and bizarre laws. Eventually, when the kingdom is on the brink of revolt, the sorcerer intends to slay and ritually devour the king and seize power himself. If he succeeds, he will have drawn both king and country into himself and he will be in harmony once more. The Games Master agrees that if he succeeds, his lost two base Power Points will be returned and he will be further rewarded with a +2 bonus to his base Power Points for the increase in power gained by incorporating his obsession into himself, for a total of 11 base Power Points and 33 maximum Power Points. As it turns out, Ankh takes some years to achieve his aim and by the time he does so he is 14th level. This would usually give him 10 base Power Points and 40 maximum Power Points but while reduced he is on eight base Power Points and 32 maximum Power Points. Once he has succeeded in his aims, he will be at 12 base Power Points and 48 maximum Power Points.



of 'You are clearly obsessed with hunting this particular individual down – if this continues, I will certainly rule you to be Obsessed.'

The Games Master is also always at liberty to veto any obsession that the player chooses for his character to avoid abusive or just plain implausible obsessions.

A sorcerer with an obsession can regain his lost one to three base Power Points and gain a permanent increase equal to the same amount he originally lost, by somehow incorporating the essence of the obsession into himself and his sorcery – a form of symbolic (or in some cases literal) cannibalism. The precise nature of this incorporation depends on the obsession.





THE RULE OF THE MASTER

Two of the backgrounds for the scholar class involve the character being at least partially in thrall to a superior: acolyte and pact. Any character with one of these backgrounds, or who later joins a sorcerous society or learns the *demonic pact* spell, or who takes on apprentices of his own, is subject to the Rule of the Master.

The Rule of the Master concerns any character who has learned sorcery from a more powerful sorcerer or demon, who is known as the master. His apprentices, coven novices or other students are known as thralls.

The Rule of the Master has the following effects:

Manipulation: The master of any coven, sorcerous society or even just an apprentice or two always gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff and Intimidate checks targeting any of his thralls and a +1 circumstance bonus to magic attack rolls against them.

Power Transfer: The master may, at any time, attempt to remove or grant a number of Power Points to any or all of his thralls. This requires either physical touch or that the master has on his person some form of magical link to the apprentice; see page 237 for full details of magical links. Once per round as a free action, the master may take up to five Power Points from any one thrall for his own use, or grant said thrall up to five Power Points for the thrall's use. If desired, the thrall may attempt to resist this by making a Will saving throw with the DC set by the master's magic attack roll. If the master takes or grants more Power Points than the apprentice's Intelligence bonus, the apprentice takes one point of temporary Intelligence damage per excess point. For example, an apprentice with Intelligence 14 (a +2 modifier) could only transfer two points per round; transferring five points would inflict three points of temporary Intelligence damage on the apprentice.

Note: Most masters will ensure they gain some kind of magical link to the thrall before teaching him a single spell – perhaps a contract signed in blood or a lock of hair.

Ritual Spell: The master can perform ritual spells with his various thralls. Any spell he knows can be cast in a ritualistic manner.

The spell's casting time is equal to (one hour + 10 minutes

per participating thrall) or the spell's usual casting time, whichever is greater. Additional incenses, oils, smoke-powders and other accoutrements must be expended, to a cost of 50 silver pieces per participating thrall. The Power Point cost of the spell is raised by +2 per participating thrall, though this may be provided by power transfer (see above) as usual.

Each thrall who succeeds at a Perform (ritual) check (DC = 10 + total Power Point cost of casting the spell, including the +2 increase per participating thrall) grants the master a +1 bonus to the magic attack roll or skill roll he makes as part of the spell. For spells with a greater range than touch, each +1 bonus granted in this way also increases the range of the spell by +10%.

THE RULE OF THE SORCERER'S SOUL

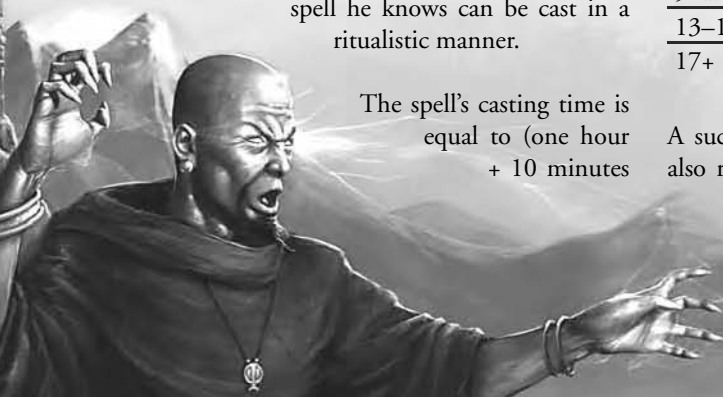
The very process of becoming a sorcerer wreaks permanent changes to the very soul of the arcanist, changes that other sorcerers and supernatural entities can detect just by looking at him.

Any sorcerer, magical beast or outsider who can meet the eyes of a sorcerer (if one can cast an Evil Eye range spell, one can meet the target's eyes) can immediately sense the latter's sorcerous nature. Furthermore, if he spends a standard action examining the sorcerer further, he may make a magic attack roll (opposed by the target's Will saving throw) to determine approximately how corrupt and powerful the sorcerer is, based on the following scales:

Corruption Points	Description
0	Uncorrupted
1–3	Mildly Corrupted
4–6	Corrupted
7–9	Totally Corrupted
10+	Diabolical

Current Power Points	Description
Less than 1	Drained
1–4	Very Weak
5–8	Weak
9–12	Strong
13–16	Very Strong
17+	Master

A successful magic attack roll made in this manner will also reveal the sorcerer's type and subtype. For example, a character with the Spawn of Dagoth



Hill feat will be revealed to another sorcerer as an outsider (native) if he fails his Will saving throw, while a character who has become a vampire will be revealed as undead (augmented humanoid).

SPELL FAILURE

If a sorcerer ever tries to cast a spell in conditions where the characteristics of the spell cannot be made to conform, the casting fails and the spell is wasted.

THE SPELL'S RESULT

Once a sorcerer knows which creatures (or objects or areas) are affected and whether those creatures have made successful saving throws (if any were allowed), he can apply whatever results a spell entails.

CONCENTRATION

To cast a spell, a sorcerer must concentrate. If something interrupts his concentration while he is casting, he must make a Concentration check or lose the Power Points casting the spell would have cost. Furthermore, if the spell is one that could cause Runaway Magic (see below) the sorcerer must make a Will saving throw (DC 15), with failure resulting in Runaway Magic as described on the next page. The more distracting the interruption and the higher the Power Point cost of the spell he is trying to cast, the higher the Concentration DC is. If the sorcerer fails the check, he loses the spell as if he had cast it to no effect.

Injury: If a sorcerer takes damage while trying to cast a spell, he must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + points of damage taken + Power Point cost). If he fails the check, he loses the Power Points he would have spent to cast the spell. The interrupting event strikes during spellcasting if it comes between when a spell is started and when it is completed. For spells that can be cast in a single action, this will only happen if the sorcerer is hit with an attack of opportunity provoked by the act of casting the spell or a contingent attack such as a readied action.

If a sorcerer is taking continuous damage, such as from fire or a from a spell, half the damage is considered to take place while he is casting a spell. The sorcerer must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + 1/2 the damage that the continuous source last dealt + Power Point cost of the spell). If the last damage dealt was the last damage that the effect could deal, the damage is over and does not distract the sorcerer.

Repeated damage, such as from being stabbed over and over by a savage pirate, does not count as continuous damage.

Spell: If a sorcerer is affected by a spell while attempting to cast a spell of his own, he must make a Concentration check or lose the Power Point cost. If the spell that affects him deals damage, the DC is 10 + points of damage + the Power Point cost of his own spell.

If the spell interferes with a sorcerer or distracts him in some other way, then the DC is the spell's saving throw DC + the Power Point cost of his own spell. For a spell with no saving throw, use the DC that the spell's saving throw would have if a saving throw were allowed – usually the sorcerer's magic attack roll.

Grappling or Pinned: The only spells one can cast while grappling or pinned are those without somatic components and whose material components (if any) one has in hand. Even so, the sorcerer must make a Concentration check (DC 20 + Power Point cost of the spell) or lose the Power Point cost.

Vigorous Motion: If a sorcerer is riding on a moving mount, taking a bouncy ride in a wagon, on a small boat in rough water, below-decks in a storm-tossed ship or simply being jostled in a similar fashion, he must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + Power Point cost of the spell) or lose the Power Point cost.

Violent Motion: If a sorcerer is on a galloping horse, taking a very rough ride in a wagon, on a small boat in rapids or in a storm, on deck in a storm-tossed ship or being tossed roughly about in a similar fashion, he must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + Power Point cost of the spell) or lose the Power Point cost.

Violent Weather: A sorcerer must make a Concentration check if he tries to cast a spell in violent weather. If he is in a high wind with blinding rain or sleet, the DC is 5 + Power Point cost of the spell. If he is in wind-driven hail, dust or debris, the DC is 10 + Power Point cost of the spell. In either case, the sorcerer loses the Power Point cost if he fails the Concentration check. If the weather is caused by a spell, use the rules in the Spell subsection above.



Casting Defensively: If a sorcerer wants to cast a spell without provoking any attacks of opportunity, he must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + Power Point cost of the spell) to succeed. He loses the Power Point cost if he fails.

Entangled: If a sorcerer wants to cast a spell while entangled in a net or some similar effect, he must make a DC 15 Concentration check to cast the spell. He loses the Power Point cost if he fails.

CONSEQUENCES OF MAGIC

Any force as powerful as sorcery can have consequences, some of them quite unintended by its practitioners. This section covers the two main risks of sorcery: casting a series of spells that lead to a magical chain reaction and becoming corrupt or going mad through contact with demonic entities.

MIGHTY SPELLS AND RUNAWAY MAGIC

Any time a particularly powerful spell is used, there is a risk that serious, world-wrenching consequences will result. This is particularly the case with the Summoning style, which has a real tendency to upset some kind of magical balance and set powerful, uncontrollable forces into motion.

All the spells that could potentially cause a runaway magic result are marked with an asterisk (*) in the Spells table (see page 239). These are known as mighty spells.

A sorcerer can cast up to one mighty spell per week without fear of dangerous consequences. Each time he casts a further mighty spell within seven days of the last one, he must make a Will saving throw. This Will saving throw starts out at DC 10 but the DC rises by +5 for each additional mighty spell cast within the last seven days.

If the Will saving throw is failed, roll 1d20 and consult the Runaway Magic table. Add the sorcerer's Corruption score to the roll, +1 for each point by which the Will saving throw was failed.

RUNAWAY MAGIC

Die Roll	Result
1–10	Minor Burnout! The sorcerer's magical energies are drained off to a place or person unknown. He loses 1d4 Power Points. If this reduces him below zero Power Points, he is instead reduced to zero Power Points and dealt 1d6 damage to Wisdom.
11–18	Major Burnout! The sorcerer's magical energies are drained off to a place or person unknown. He loses 2d6 Power Points. If this would reduce him below zero Power Points, he is instead reduced to zero Power Points and dealt 1d8 damage to Wisdom and 1d8 damage to Charisma.
19–24	Minor Sorcerous Implosion! Magical energies tear the sorcerer apart. His Power Points are reduced to zero and he is dealt 10d6 damage.
25–28	Major Sorcerous Implosion! Magical energies tear the sorcerer apart. His Power Points are reduced to zero and he is dealt 15d6 damage.
29–30	Rock the Universe! The sorcerer is killed outright by the forces that he has released. An area around him, 1d6 miles in radius, is devastated by earthquakes, storms, floods, lightning and meteorites, dealing 20d6 damage to all within the area and reshaping the landscape as the very Earth itself is rent and pounded.
31+	Fate Worse Than Death! As for Rock the Universe (29–30), plus as follows: A sorcerous rift into the Outer Dark is opened and a demon from that dread realm pulls the sorcerer's soul through the rift, severing the magical silver cord that binds his soul to his body. He is eternally damned and his body is either a lifeless husk or (at the Games Master's discretion) inhabited by a minion of the demon.

CORRUPTION AND INSANITY

For the amoral sorcerer who has some insight into just how powerful and dangerous the forces aligned against humanity are, there is a stark choice between simply giving in to those forces and giving in to despair or madness at the recognition that those forces will someday win. Almost every high-level sorcerer is likely to be either corrupt or mad, at least to some degree.



Insanity only may only affect sorcerers who already have at least one point of Corruption. Those who have managed to avoid being corrupted do not yet have the evil insights that can lead them to insanity if they later reject attempts to further corrupt them.

Each time an already corrupt sorcerer successfully saves against Corruption, he must make a second Corruption saving throw at the same DC as the first. Failure causes him to become shaken (-2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks) for 1d6 rounds and gain a permanent, minor insanity as determined from the list below (or from elsewhere if desired) by the player and the Games Master.

A sorcerer who already has a minor insanity and fails a second insanity saving throw becomes shaken once more, this time for 3d6 rounds. He also gains a permanent major insanity, as determined by the player and the Games Master from the list below.

It is always possible to opt to fail the save against Corruption if one would prefer to become corrupted rather than mad.

MINOR INSANITIES

Delusion: This is any belief that is not true, for example that the resurrected giant-kings of Old Stygia are plotting to overthrow the kingdom of Ophir, or that the Baracha pirates are a bunch of lovable rogues rather than black-hearted murderers. The delusion could be a mild form of paranoia, or simply a complete misunderstanding of one minor aspect of the way the world works.

Phobia: Choose one suitable phobia, such as snakes, apes, insects, spiders or plant creatures. Whenever the character is in the presence of a creature that could trigger the phobia, he must make a Will saving throw (DC 20) or be panicked (-2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks, must flee the cause of the panic) until he can no longer see it.

Sleeplessness: The character lies awake for several hours every night, unable to sleep or find rest. He must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) every morning or wake up fatigued (-2 to Strength and Dexterity, cannot run).

MAJOR INSANITIES

Paranoia: This is similar to *delusions* but far more severe. The sorcerer believes in a number of highly personalised delusions, all of them relating to persecution and treachery.

Voices: The character constantly hears voices, often insistently demanding that he perform particular actions. Any time he is in a stressful situation (at

the Games Master's discretion) he must make a Will saving throw (DC 20) or be controlled by the Games Master for 1D6 rounds, as he does the bidding of the voices.

Hallucinations: The character sees objects that are not there and sees objects that are there as distorted. He suffers a constant penalty of -2 to Spot and Search checks and to all attack rolls, whether melee or ranged.

RECOVERING FROM INSANITY

A character who does not practice any sorcery or have contact with Corrupting influences for three months may make a Will saving throw (DC 15 for minor insanity, DC 20 for major insanity) at the end of that time to completely recover from his insanity. A sorcerer may only recover from one insanity per three month hiatus.

SPELLS AND SPELLCASTING

Sorcerers in Hyboria are limited by their strength of will and command of magic. In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, this translates into their Power Points. Most spells have several prerequisites, in much the same way that feats do – a sorcerer must meet the prerequisites before learning the spell.

Many spells require either a magic attack roll or a skill check as part of the casting process. This is detailed as part of the entry for each spell.

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

The description of each spell is presented in a standard format. Each category of information is explained and defined below.

NAME

The first line of every spell description gives the name by which the spell is generally known.

POWER POINT COST

As described above, each spell in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* has a Power Point cost that must be paid by the sorcerer who wishes to cast it.



COMPONENTS

A spell's components are what one must do or possess to cast the spell. The Components entry in a spell description includes abbreviations that list the spell's components. Specifics for material, focus and Experience Point components are given at the end of the descriptive text. Usually one does not need to worry about components but when one cannot use a component for some reason or when a material or focus component is expensive, the components become important.

Verbal (V): A verbal component is a spoken incantation. To provide a verbal component, the sorcerer must be able to speak in a strong voice. A gag or some other obstruction to speaking spoils the incantation and thus the spell. A spellcaster who has been deafened has a 20% chance of spoiling any spell with a verbal component that he tries to cast.

Somatic (S): A somatic component is a measured and precise movement of the hand. A sorcerer must have a hand free to provide a somatic component.

Material (M): A material component is one or more physical substances or objects that are annihilated by the spell energies in the casting process. Unless a cost is given for a material component, the cost is negligible. Do not bother to keep track of material components with negligible cost. These components may be assumed to be in the sorcerer's spell component pouch (if he has it).

Focus (F): A focus component is a prop of some sort. Unlike a material component, a focus is not consumed when the spell is cast and can be reused. As with material components, the cost for a focus is negligible unless a price is given. Assume that focus components of negligible cost are in the sorcerer's spell component pouch.

XP Cost (XP): Some powerful spells entail an Experience Point cost to the caster. No spell can restore the Experience Points lost in this manner. A sorcerer cannot spend so many Experience Points that he loses a level, so he cannot cast the spell unless he has enough Experience Points to spare. However, he may, on gaining enough Experience Points to attain a new level, use those Experience Points for casting a spell rather than keeping them and advancing a level. Experience points are expended when a spell is cast, whether or not the casting succeeds.

CASTING TIME

Most spells have a casting time of one standard action. Some others take a different amount of time.

A spell that takes one round to cast is a full-round action. It comes into effect just before the beginning of the sorcerer's turn in the round after he begins casting the spell. He then acts normally after the spell is completed.

A spell that takes one minute to cast comes into effect just before the caster's turn one minute later; for each of those 10 rounds, the sorcerer is casting a spell as a full-round action as noted above for one-round casting times. These actions must be consecutive and uninterrupted or the spell automatically fails.

When a sorcerer begins a spell that takes one round or longer to cast, he must continue his concentration from the current round to just before his turn in the next round, at least. If he loses concentration before the casting is complete, he loses the Power Point cost.

A spell with a casting time of one free action does not count against the sorcerer's normal limit of one spell per round. However, he may cast such a spell only once per round. Casting a spell with a casting time of one free action does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

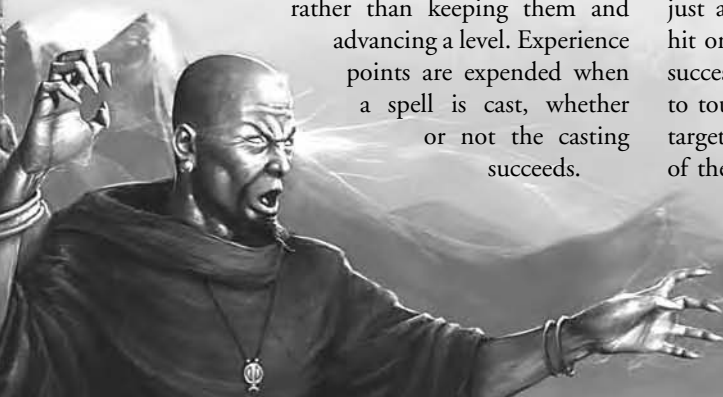
A sorcerer makes all pertinent decisions about a spell (range, target, area, effect, version and so forth) when the spell comes into effect.

SPELL RANGE

A spell's range indicates how far from the caster it can reach, as defined in the Range entry of the spell description. A spell's range is the maximum distance from the caster that the spell's effect can occur, as well as the maximum distance at which he can designate the spell's point of origin. If any portion of the spell's area would extend beyond this range, that area is wasted. Standard ranges include the following:

Personal: The spell affects only the caster.

Touch: The caster must touch a creature or object to affect it. A touch spell that deals damage can score a critical hit just as a weapon can. A touch spell threatens a critical hit on a natural roll of 20 and deals double damage on a successful critical hit. Some touch spells allow a sorcerer to touch multiple targets. He can touch as many willing targets as he can reach as part of the casting but all targets of the spell must be touched in the same round that the caster finishes casting the spell.



Close: The spell reaches as far as 25 feet away from the caster. The maximum range increases by five feet for every two full sorcerer levels.

Medium: The spell reaches as far as 100 feet + 10 feet per sorcerer level.

Long: The spell reaches as far as 400 feet + 40 feet per sorcerer level.

The Evil Eye: Some spells require the sorcerer to meet the target's eyes. This can affect a target within 30 ft. The caster simply chooses a target within range and that opponent must attempt a saving throw. If the target has already specified that he is averting his eyes from the sorcerer's face by some means, the target has a 50% chance of not having to make a saving throw. In this case the sorcerer gains one-half concealment against the target, so any attack the target makes against the sorcerer has a 20% miss chance.

A target who has specified that he has shut his eyes or turned his back on the caster or is wearing a blindfold does not need to make a saving throw. He is immune to evil eye spells and other gaze attacks. The sorcerer gains total concealment against the target as if the sorcerer were invisible. Thus, any attack the target makes against the sorcerer has a 50% miss chance and the opponent cannot use sight to target attacks.

If visibility is limited (by dim lighting, a fog or the like) so that it results in concealment, there is a percentage chance equal to the normal miss chance for that amount of concealment that the target will not need to make a saving throw. This chance is not cumulative with chances to avoid the evil eye but instead is rolled separately.

If the target is able to avoid meeting the sorcerer's gaze during the round the spell is cast, the evil eye spell has no effect.

Unlimited: The spell reaches anywhere in the world.

Magical Link: Anyone with even a vague, half-mythical understanding of sorcery – and that includes almost everyone in the Hyborian Age – knows of several highly sinister methods a sorcerer has of sending a spell out to his victim. The sorcerer uses an item that has an intimate connection with the victim, such as a fragment of his clothing, a discarded sandal, a nail-clipping or lock of hair or some bodily fluid or other. Whatever the method used, this is known as the magical link

If a magical link is available, the sorcerer may use certain spells (those with a range listed as 'magical link') against the victim from any range, even if he is unable to see the victim. The sorcerer must hold the magical link in his hand when casting the spell to gain these benefits and retain it about his person for the duration of the spell or the spell instantly ends.

Range Expressed in Feet: Some spells have no standard range category, just a range expressed in feet.

SPELL DURATION

A spell's Duration entry indicates how long the magical energy of the spell lasts.

Timed Durations: Many durations are measured in rounds, minutes, hours or some other increment. When the time is up, the magic goes away and the spell ends. If a spell's duration is variable, the duration is rolled secretly. The sorcerer does not know how long the spell will last.

Instantaneous: The spell energy comes and goes the instant the spell is cast, though the consequences might be long-lasting.

Permanent: The energy remains as long as the effect does.

Mortal: Due to the Law of Impermanence, permanent effects are almost impossible for most sorcerers to create. Long-lasting spells instead work for a duration of 'mortal'. This lasts for as long as the sorcerer himself is alive, though the Law of Impermanence may affect it as usual if he is badly injured.

Concentration: The spell lasts as long as the caster concentrates on it. Concentrating to maintain a spell is a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Anything that could break the caster's concentration when casting a spell can also break his concentration while he is maintaining one, causing the spell to end.

A sorcerer cannot cast a spell while concentrating on another one. Sometimes a spell lasts for a short time after the caster ceases concentrating.

Power Points: A spell with a duration of Power Points will last as long as the sorcerer continues to pay the Power Point cost as required.



Discharge: Occasionally a spell lasts for a set duration or until triggered or discharged.

(D) Dismissible: If the Duration line ends with '(D),' the spell can be dismissed at will. The caster must be within range of the spell's effect and must speak words of dismissal, which are usually a modified form of the spell's verbal component. If the spell has no verbal component, the sorcerer can dismiss the effect with a gesture. Dismissing a spell is a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

A spell that depends on concentration is dismissible by its very nature. Dismissing it does not take an action, since all a sorcerer has to do to end the spell is to stop concentrating on his turn.

Subjects, Effects and Areas: If a spell affects creatures directly, the result travels with the subjects for the spell's duration. If the spell creates an effect, the effect lasts for the duration. The effect might move or remain still. Such an effect can be destroyed prior to when its duration ends. If the spell affects an area, the spell stays within that area for its duration.

Creatures become subject to a spell when they enter an affected area and are no longer subject to it when they leave.

Touch Spells and Holding the Charge: In most cases, if a sorcerer does not discharge a touch spell on the round he casts it, he can hold the charge (postpone the discharge of the spell) indefinitely. The sorcerer can make touch attacks round after round. If he casts another spell, the touch spell dissipates.

Some touch spells allow the caster to touch multiple targets as part of the spell. He cannot hold the charge of such a spell; he must touch all targets of the spell in the same round that he finishes casting the spell.

THE MAGIC ATTACK ROLL

A magic attack roll is made whenever a sorcerer attempts to injure another with his magic and in most cases when he attempts to compel another. It is made as follows:

1D20 +
MAGIC ATTACK BONUS +
CHARISMA MODIFIER

In most cases this is opposed by the victim's relevant saving throw. If a spell has multiple targets, the same Magic Attack roll is used for all of them.

OVERCHARGING A SPELL

A sorcerer can put more of his power into a spell than normal. For every extra Power Point spent on a spell, the sorcerer gets a +1 bonus to his magic attack roll.

COUNTERSPELLS

Counterspells are highly sought-after by almost all sorcerers, since a rival wizard can be even deadlier to the typical sorcerer than a sword-wielding Cimmerian. Many scholars who do not otherwise practice sorcery learn counterspells, just to have a weapon of sufficient power to allow them to fight enemy sorcerers.

WARDING (BASIC COUNTERSPELL)

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Personal

Target: One or more spells already affecting you, or one spell about to affect you

Duration: Instantaneous

Magic Attack Roll: Opposes opponent's magic attack roll

LEVELS?

When a spell's description mentions 'level' – such as a duration of '1 round/level' or 'a maximum number of targets equal to your level' – it can be taken to mean the number of levels of scholar that the caster has. If a temptress knows the sorcery secret art, then her temptress levels count as scholar levels for this purpose. For example, a 6th level scholar, a 6th level temptress, a 4th level scholar/2nd level temptress and a 6th level scholar/8th level soldier would all have an effective level of 6 for the purposes of spell effects.

Where spell descriptions mention specific class levels, such as many Oriental magic spells, temptress levels do not count as scholar levels.



SORCERY STYLES

The following styles of sorcery are available to scholar and temptress characters in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Some of them may also be gained in a limited form by non-scholar or temptress characters by characters who select the Dabbler feat (see page 124). Spells marked with an asterisk (*) are Mighty spells; potentially world-changing incantations that are especially likely to have runaway magic effects (see page 234).

Sorcery Style	Spells	Prerequisites
Counterspells	Warding (Basic Counterspell)	—
	Desperate Ward (Defensive Blast)	—
	Greater Warding	Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks, <i>warding</i>
	Incantation of Amalric's Witchman	Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, <i>warding</i>
	Rune of Jhebbal Sag	Wis 13, Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 6 ranks, <i>warding</i>
	Ward Dwelling	Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, <i>warding</i>
	Ward by Will	Knowledge (arcana) 7 ranks, <i>warding</i>
Curses	Lesser Ill-Fortune (Basic Curse)	—
	Weapon Curse (Defensive Blast)	—
	Awful Rite of the Were-Beast	Magic attack bonus +6, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i>
	Curse of Yizil	Magic attack bonus +4, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i> , <i>warding</i>
	Dance of the Changing Serpent	Must be a Pict, magic attack bonus +4, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i>
	Draw Forth the Soul	Ritual Sacrifice, Tormented Sacrifice, magic attack bonus +7, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i>
	Gelid Bones	Magic attack bonus +2, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i> , <i>calm of the adept</i>
	Greater Ill-Fortune	Magic attack bonus +3, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i>
	Ill-Fortune	<i>Lesser ill-fortune</i>
	Doom	Magic attack bonus +2, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i>
Divination	Astrological Prediction (Basic Divination)	Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks
	Not This Day (Defensive Blast)	—
	Blessing of Fate	Knowledge (arcane) 4 ranks, <i>astrological prediction</i>
	Dream of Wisdom	Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks, knowledge is power class feature, <i>astrological prediction</i> , <i>visions</i>
	Mind-Reading	Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, <i>astrological prediction</i>
	Psychometry	Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks, <i>astrological prediction</i> ,
	Sorcerous News	Knowledge (arcana) 12 ranks, <i>astrological prediction</i>
	Greater Sorcerous News	Knowledge (arcana) 16 ranks, <i>astrological prediction</i> , <i>sorcerous news</i>
	Visions	Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, <i>astrological prediction</i>
	Visions of Torment and Enlightenment	Knowledge (arcana) 12 ranks, magic attack bonus +5, <i>astrological prediction</i> , <i>visions</i> , <i>entrance</i>
Hypnotism	Entrance (Basic Hypnotism)	—
	Terrible Fascination (Defensive Blast)	—
	Dance of the Cobras	Perform (any musical instrument) 8 ranks, Ritual Sacrifice, must be a worshipper of Hanuman, <i>entrance</i> , <i>telekinesis</i>
	Domination	Magic attack bonus +3, <i>entrance</i>
	Dread Serpent	Magic attack bonus +4, <i>entrance</i>
	Hypnotic Suggestion	Magic attack bonus +2, <i>entrance</i>
	Mass Hypnotic Suggestion	Magic attack bonus +5, <i>entrance</i> , <i>hypnotic suggestion</i>
	Ranged Hypnotism	Magic attack bonus +5, <i>entrance</i> , <i>hypnotic suggestion</i>
	Savage Beast	Magic attack bonus +3, <i>entrance</i> , <i>hypnotic suggestion</i>



Sorcery Style	Spells	Prerequisites
Nature Magic	Summon Beast (Basic Nature Magic)	Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks
	Animal Intercessor (Defensive Blast)	—
	Animal Ally	Knowledge (nature) 6 ranks, <i>summon beast</i>
	Children of the Night	Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, <i>summon beast</i>
	Greater Summon Beast	Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, <i>summon beast</i>
	Sorcerous Garden	Knowledge (nature) 10 ranks, Craft (herbalism) 12 ranks, <i>summon beast</i>
	Spirit of the Land	Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, <i>summon beast</i>
	Command Weather*	Knowledge (nature) 10 ranks, <i>spirit of the land</i>
Necromancy	Raise Corpse (Basic Necromancy)	Magic attack bonus +2
	Chill of the Grave (Defensive Blast)	—
	The Dead Speak	<i>Raise corpse</i>
	Agonising Doom	Magic attack bonus +6, <i>raise corpse</i> , <i>death touch</i>
	Black Plague*	Magic attack bonus +7, <i>raise corpse</i>
	Greater Black Plague*	Magic attack bonus +8, <i>raise corpse</i> , <i>black plague</i>
	Death Touch	Magic attack bonus +5, <i>raise corpse</i>
	Draw Forth the Heart	Ritual Sacrifice, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Tormented Sacrifice, magic attack bonus +7, <i>raise corpse</i> , <i>death touch</i> , <i>agonising doom</i> , <i>conjuring</i> , <i>telekinesis</i>
Oriental Magic	Calm of the Adept (Basic Oriental Magic)	Wis 13
	Vanish (Defensive Blast)	—
	Darting Serpent	Scholar level 3, <i>calm of the adept</i>
	Willow Dance	Scholar level 3, <i>calm of the adept</i>
	Shape-Shifter	Scholar level 12, <i>calm of the adept</i>
	Warrior Trance	Scholar level 3, <i>calm of the adept</i>
	Yimsha's Carpet	Scholar level 14, <i>calm of the adept</i> , <i>summon elemental</i>
Prestidigitation	Conjuring (Basic Prestidigitation)	Sleight of Hand 4 ranks
	Blast Wave (Defensive Blast)	—
	Burst Barrier	Scholar level 3, <i>conjuring</i>
	Conjure Item	<i>Conjuring</i>
	Telekinesis	Scholar level 3, Sleight of Hand 5 ranks, <i>conjuring</i>
	Greater Telekinesis	Scholar level 3, Sleight of Hand 6 ranks, Bluff 6 ranks, <i>conjuring</i> , <i>telekinesis</i>
	Deflection	Scholar level 3, <i>prestidigitation</i>
Summoning	Master-Words and Signs (Basic Summoning)	Knowledge (arcana) 15 ranks, magic attack bonus +6, must know at least four sorcery styles, must never have cast the <i>demonic pact</i> spell
	Master, Aid Me! (Defensive Blast)	—
	Demonic Pact (Basic Summoning)	Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks
	Greater Demonic Pact	Knowledge (arcana) 15 ranks, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice, magic attack bonus +6, <i>demonic pact</i> , must know at least four sorcery styles, must be subject to a <i>demonic pact</i>
	Summon Demon*	Magic attack bonus +4, <i>master-words and signs</i> or <i>demonic pact</i>
	Summon Elemental*	Perform (song or any musical instrument) 10 ranks, magic attack bonus +7, <i>master-words and signs</i> or <i>greater demonic pact</i>
	Channel Demon	<i>Demonic pact</i>



For each spell already affecting the sorcerer when it is cast, the sorcerer casting *warding* may make a magic attack roll opposed by a magic attack roll from the original sorcerer to cancel the spell completely. Furthermore, a warding can be prepared with a ready action, conditional on another sorcerer casting a spell, allowing for an opponent's spell to be cancelled before it even begins.

Other counterspells may not be affected by a *warding*.

DESPERATE WARD (DEFENSIVE BLAST)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points

Components: V

Casting Time: Immediate

Range: Personal

Target: One spell

Duration: Instantaneous

Magic Attack Roll: None required

This form of defensive blast only works against sorcery and can only be invoked when a hostile spell targets the sorcerer. Roll 1d6 for every Power Point expended and add the total of these rolls as a circumstance bonus to the caster's Saving Throw against the incoming spell.

GREATER WARDING

Power Point Cost: 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Touch

Target: One spell or creature

Duration: Instantaneous, up to one hour plus one hour/level or until used, depending on version chosen.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks, *warding*.

Magic Attack Roll: Opposes opponent's magic attack roll

Greater warding has two modes of use.

The first acts like a *warding* spell that can be cast on another creature, immediately countering any spell or spells affecting it if the sorcerer can succeed at a magic attack roll opposing the magic attack roll of the sorcerer who originally cast the spell.

The second use acts like a one-use *warding* spell that can be transferred to another creature. Unlike *warding* and the first use of *greater warding*, it may be cast in advance, in which case it comes into effect as soon as another sorcerer attempts to cast a spell on the subject. After one use, it stops working.

Material Component: Paints and oils worth 50 silver pieces with which to inscribe protective runes on the subject.

INCANTATION OF AMALRIC'S WITCHMAN

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: V

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: Mortal

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, *warding*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

This spell renders any god or demon who has taken on humanoid form to walk the earth partially human, with all the vulnerabilities of any other human. That is, any innate damage reduction it may have had is lost, as is any immunity to critical hits, sneak attacks and other attack forms. If the god or demon had any particular vulnerabilities, however, these are unaffected.

RUNE OF JHEBBAL SAG

Power Point Cost: 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Touch

Target: Any worshippers of Jhebbal Sag who come within 25 feet + 5 feet/level of the rune

Duration: Mortal

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 6 ranks, *warding*.

The *rune of Jhebbal Sag*, when inscribed or painted onto any surface, lets any worshippers of Jhebbal Sag (see Chapter 12: Religion) know that the sorcerer is friendly. Its most notable effect is to release the subject or subjects of a *summon beast* spell as soon as they come within range. However, all animals remember their god Jhebbal Sag and will become calm and non-aggressive if they come within range. Likewise, if any human or other intelligent worshippers of the god come within range, the sorcerer gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks regarding them. In effect, he is demonstrating an allegiance to Jhebbal Sag, though this allegiance need not be genuine.



WARD DWELLING

Power Point Cost: 2+
Components: S, M
Casting Time: One hour per Power Point
Range: Touch
Target: One dwelling
Duration: One month
Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, *warding*.
Magic Attack Roll: Opposes opponent's magic attack roll

This spell protects a structure from evil magic. Two Power Points must be expended to shield a small hut or cave from evil magic; four points would suffice for the average house, six for a large mansion, while a Stygian palace might require 10 or more Power Points. If anyone tries to cast a spell on a target inside the warded dwelling, or if a summoned or ensorcelled creature tries to enter the dwelling, the ward is triggered (as per *greater warding*). Each *ward dwelling* spell only works once, whether or not it blocks the hostile spell but a building can be protected by multiple wards.

The caster of the spell knows when his *ward dwelling* spell is triggered.

To cast *ward dwelling*, various arcane marks and runes must be carved into the threshold and pillars of the building. It is possible to 'disarm' a spell by removing the right marks (Knowledge (arcana) DC 15 to identify them).

Material Component: Paints and gem dusts worth 100 silver pieces per Power Point with which to inscribe protective runes on the subject.

WARD BY WILL

Power Point Cost: One Power Point per 2 damage reduction per round
Components: S
Casting Time: Free
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: One round
Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 7 ranks, *warding*.

This spell is a ward against physical blows. The caster gains two points of damage reduction for every Power Point expended on the spell.

Armour Piercing rules work normally.

CURSES

Sorcerers are feared most of all not for the dark powers with whom they traffic or the strange artefacts they create but for what they can do to ordinary folk: curse them in a variety of cruel and horrid ways.

Any character who is under the effects of a curse that does not have immediately obvious physical effects may attempt a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 10 + level of the sorcerer who cast the spell) to determine that he is affected by a curse. If he succeeds by at least 20, he can also determine the precise nature of the curse and the name of the sorcerer who cast it.

LESSER ILL-FORTUNE (BASIC CURSE)

Power Point Cost: 2
Components: V
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Evil Eye, Touch or Magical Link
Target: One creature
Duration: One day
Saving Throw: Will negates
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

A sorcerer places a curse on a victim. The victim suffers a -1 enhancement penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks and skill checks. This is not cumulative with the effects of *greater ill-fortune* or *ill-fortune* - only the most severe penalty applies.

WEAPON CURSE (DEFENSIVE BLAST)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points
Components: V
Casting Time: Immediate
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: One round
Saving Throw: None

Roll 1d6 for every Power Point expended when this spell is cast and note the total of these rolls. Whenever the caster takes damage from a weapon, the attacker takes the damage instead. For example, if a sorcerer is struck by a sword for 12 points of damage, the attacker takes 12 points of damage instead of the sorcerer. This effect persists for one round or until the total of the points roll is exhausted. *Weapon curse* only applies to damage taken from weapons.





spells and other direct attacks – a sorcerer could not use the *weapon curse* if he was trapped in a cave-in, for instance.

AWFUL RITE OF THE WERE-BEAST

Power Point Cost: 8

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: Five minutes

Range: Touch

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates and see below

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +6, *lesser ill-fortune*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

This dire ritual permanently changes a human into a were-creature of a variety chosen by the sorcerer (see page 391). The target may attempt a Will saving throw to completely negate the effects.

If the sorcerer has the Ritual Sacrifice feat, he gains Power Points as though he had sacrificed the target of the spell, assuming the target fails his save and becomes a were-creature. The magical energy released by this horrific transformation is at least as great as that released by killing the target outright.

The creature altered in this way is at least partially under the thrall of the sorcerer and will attempt to remain within 500 feet of the sorcerer at all times. However, any time

the sorcerer gives the target a direct order he must make a magic attack roll against the target's Will saving throw to compel him to obey. If the target succeeds in saving, he is temporarily released from the sorcerer's command for 1d6 rounds, after which time he may attempt another Will saving throw. Success on this save means he is permanently released, though he is still a were-creature; failure means he is once more under the sorcerer's thrall. At any time, the sorcerer can elect to permanently release the creature from his control, though he cannot reverse the spell.

Most sorcerers thus use this spell to create guards or just cause mischief, rather than in the hope of creating a legion of permanent servants; the risk of losing control is just too great and few were-creatures created by this spell will hold back if they get a chance to attack their erstwhile masters. However, for the sorcerer who rarely calls on his creations to carry out a direct order, were-creatures can make useful escorts or guards, perhaps for many years.

Material Component: Various rare essences and herbs to a value of 100 silver pieces.





CURSE OF YIZIL

Power Point Cost: 2+ points (see below)

Components: V

Casting Time: Free action

Range: Evil Eye, Touch or Magical Link

Target: One creature

Duration: One day

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +4, *lesser ill-fortune*, *warding*.

This spell is a dying curse, used by a sorcerer to weaken a rival. It may only be cast by a character who has between -1 and -9 hit points (inclusive) but it may be cast even if that character would usually be unconscious and unable to act – he manages, somehow, to use the last of his fading willpower to cast the spell. Immediately upon casting the spell, he dies, Fate Points notwithstanding.

The target of the spell suffers an enhancement penalty to his magic attack rolls equal to one-half the number of Power Points the sorcerer had left on casting the spell, rounded down. However, the *curse of Yizil* is so subtle that in most cases the sorcerer will have no idea it is affecting him.

Special Note: Any sorcerer who meets the prerequisites for this spell automatically knows it, without needing to select it with either the New Spell class feature or the Sorcerer's Boon feat.

DANCE OF THE CHANGING SERPENT

Power Point Cost: 5 points

Components: V, S, M, F

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Evil Eye

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous, but see below

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Must be a Pict, magic attack bonus +4, *lesser ill-fortune*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for targets' saving throws

This spell places a man's soul in a ghost snake's body and vice versa. However, unlike such spells as *awful rite of the were-beast*, the transposed

Again Balthus recognized the monster from ancient legends. He saw and knew the ancient and evil serpent which swayed there, its wedge-shaped head, huge as that of a horse, as high as a tall man's head, and its palely gleaming barrel rippling out behind it. A forked tongue darted in and out, and the firelight glittered on bared fangs.

Balthus became incapable of emotion. The horror of his fate paralyzed him. That was the reptile that the ancients called Ghost Snake, the pale, abominable terror that of old glided into huts by night to devour whole families. Like the python it crushed its victim, but unlike other constrictors its fangs bore venom that carried madness and death. It too had long been considered extinct.

– *Beyond the Black River*

souls are highly disorientated and have no insight into the correct way to control their new bodies. Both are regarded as helpless in all respects and if left alone will eventually die of starvation as they cannot even feed themselves. Both creatures get Will saving throws and if at least one of them succeeds, the spell fails.

If the sorcerer has the Ritual Sacrifice feat, he gains Power Points as though he had sacrificed the target of the spell, assuming the target fails his saving throw and changes souls with the great serpent. The magical energy released by this horrific swapping of essences is at least as great as that released by killing the target outright.

It is common among the Picts to immediately sacrifice both snake and man once it is clear the spell has worked. If this is done using the Ritual Sacrifice feat, the sorcerer gains Power Points as usual for the sacrifice. He also gains an enhancement bonus of +4 on all Intimidate checks against anyone who witnesses the whole ceremony. Furthermore, he gains a +1 enhancement bonus to all magic attack rolls due to the favour of his gods. These bonuses last for one day per scholar or temptress level.

Material Components: Smoke-powders worth at least 50 silver pieces, plus one ghost snake (see page 373). If desired, this can have been summoned by means of a *summon beast* spell.

Focus: A bonfire at least five feet by five feet in size.



DOOM

Power Point Cost: 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Evil Eye
Target: One creature
Duration: One round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +2, *lesser ill-fortune*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

The target must make an immediate Will saving throw or be unable to use Fate Points for the duration of the spell.

DRAW FORTH THE SOUL

Power Point Cost: 20 for the first hour, 10 per hour thereafter
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: One day
Range: Magical Link
Target: One creature
Duration: Up to one hour/level
Saving Throw: See below
Prerequisites: Ritual Sacrifice, Tormented Sacrifice, magic attack bonus +7, *lesser ill-fortune*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

Draw forth the soul pulls forth the very soul from a single target, an agonising and maddening process that can take several hours.

The victim makes a Will saving throw. If he succeeds, he is able to partially resist the effects of the spell – he is helpless for the next hour, though he is still able to speak in a somewhat rambling and pained manner. If he succeeds by 10 or more, he completely throws off the spell and the sorcerer may not attempt to cast it on him again for at least one day. If he fails, his body dies after 10 + 5d6 minutes (during which he rambles and is helpless, as above) and his soul is forced into a demonic entity, to spend eternity in torment.

A character who partially resists the spell must make another saving throw after the hour is up if the sorcerer elects to spend a further 10 Power Points on continuing the spell. The second save is at a penalty of –1 but otherwise has the same effects as the first. This process continues until the sorcerer chooses not to spend any more Power Points on the spell, the target succeeds by 10 or more or the target fails his saving throw. The save penalty increases by one for every hour of duration.

A target who is killed by this spell counts as having been sacrificed by the Tormented Sacrifice feat; his hit points and the time it took him to die determine the number of Power Points gained by the sorcerer as usual.

Material Component: A prized possession from the target of the spell and oils and powders worth at least 500 silver pieces.

GELID BONES

Power Point Cost: 1
Components: S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Target: One creature
Duration: One hour/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +2, *lesser ill-fortune*, *calm of the adept*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

Gebal halted short in his headlong plunge, as if he had encountered a solid barrier. His bull head toppled forward on his breast, the sword slipped from his fingers, and then he melted slowly to the floor. It was as if all the bones of his frame had suddenly become flabby.

– *Beyond the Black River*

The target must make an immediate Will saving throw or be paralysed for the duration of the spell, his bones unable to support his body.

ILL-FORTUNE

Power Point Cost: 4
Components: V
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Evil Eye, Touch or Magical Link
Target: One creature
Duration: One month
Saving Throw: Will negates
Prerequisite: *Lesser ill-fortune*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw



As with *lesser ill-fortune* but the enhancement penalty is increased to -2. This is not cumulative with the effects of *greater ill-fortune* or *lesser ill-fortune* – only the most severe penalty applies.

GREATER ILL-FORTUNE

Power Point Cost: 8
Components: V
Casting Time: One action
Range: Evil Eye, Touch or Magical Link
Target: One creature
Duration: One year
Saving Throw: Will negates
Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +3 or higher, *lesser ill-fortune*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

As with *ill-fortune* but the enhancement penalty is increased to -4. This is not cumulative with the effects of *ill-fortune* or *lesser ill-fortune* – only the most severe penalty applies.

DIVINATION

Almost every sorcerer can find a use for divination. Information and knowledge are crucial, whether as ends in their own right or to show a path to greater power.

ASTROLOGICAL PREDICTION (BASIC DIVINATION)

Power Point Cost: 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: Three hours
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: No (harmless)
Prerequisite: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks.
Skill Check: Knowledge (arcana) (DC 11)

In the Hyborian Age, little distinction is made between astrology and astronomy. If you know another character's date and hour of birth, you can use this spell to make a somewhat cryptic prediction about his immediate future. The subject of the spell gains a special insight bonus of +1 to one die roll.

An *astrological prediction* will apply to some situation within the next week;

the Games Master will inform the subject of the situation when it arises. This situation will typically be an encounter. Any one time the character must make a skill check, ability check, attack roll or saving throw during that encounter, he may apply the insight bonus to the roll. A character can only ever be the subject of one *astrological prediction* at a time. If the sorcerer's Knowledge (arcana) check is 20 or more greater than the DC (that is, if the roll is 31 or higher) the insight bonus is doubled to +2.

NOT THIS HOUR (DEFENSIVE BLAST)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points
Components: V
Casting Time: Immediate
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: One round
Saving Throw: None

It is not the caster's time to die! When this spell is cast, the caster gains 1d6 bonus hit points per Power Point expended. Any damage suffered during the round is taken from those bonus hit points first. At the end of the round, the bonus hit points vanish. Unlike most other Defensive Blasts, *Not This Hour* can be cast in response to any damage that affects the caster.

BLESSING OF FATE

Power Point Cost: 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Evil Eye
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None (harmless)
Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, *astrological prediction*.

As part of this spell, the sorcerer must perform various divinatory rituals, such as casting bones or drawing cards. The spell allows the caster to intuit some danger that will affect the target and gives the target the power to avoid it. The spell's effect is that the sorcerer transfers one of his Fate Points to another creature.

DREAM OF WISDOM

Power Point Cost: 6
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One hour



Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: Eight hours

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks, knowledge is power class feature, *astrological prediction*, *visions*.

The sorcerer casts this spell just before going to sleep at night. He dreams of significant events, places or people, depending on what he has decided the night before. When he wakes in the morning, he may have some sort of useful insight.

A *dream of wisdom* brings to the character's mind legends or other information concerning an important person, place or thing. If the person or thing is at hand, or if the character is in the place in question, then only one casting is necessary. If the character has only information on the person, place or thing, then 2d6 castings will be necessary over the course of successive nights. The resulting lore is also less complete and specific, though it often provides enough information to help the character find the person, place or thing, thus allowing for a better *dream of wisdom* next time. If the character knows only rumours, at least 2d6 × 10 castings will be necessary over successive nights. The resulting lore is also vague and incomplete, though it often directs the character to more detailed information, thus allowing for a better *dream of wisdom*.

When completed, the divination brings legends (if any) about the person, place or things to the character's mind. These may be legends that are still current, legends that have been forgotten or even information that has never been generally known. If the person, place or thing is not of legendary importance, the character gains no information. As a rule of thumb, characters of 11th level and higher are 'legendary,' as are the sorts of creatures they contend with, the major magic items they wield and the places where they perform their key deeds.

Material Component: A feather, placed under the sorcerer's pillow when he goes to sleep.

MIND-READING

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Evil Eye

Target: One creature

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 round plus 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, *astrological prediction*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

Unless the target succeeds at a Will saving throw, you are able to detect its emotional state and current surface thoughts, including its immediate intentions. This can only affect creatures that have an Intelligence score. Creatures of animal intelligence (Intelligence 1 or 2) will only have the simplest thoughts and most basic of emotions.

PSYCHOMETRY

Power Point Cost: 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One object

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes plus one minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks, *astrological prediction*.

Skill Check: Knowledge (arcana) (DC 11)

Psychometry allows the sorcerer to determine information about the previous owner of an object he touches. The

'We found the spot where the fight was fought,' they said. 'Blood was on the sand. But the king was gone.'

The fourth Khitan drew imaginary symbols upon the carpet with his staff, which glistened sealily in the lamplight.

'Did you read naught from the sands?' he asked.

'Aye,' they answered. 'The king lives, and he has gone southward in a ship.'

— *The Hour of the Dragon*

object may be a completely lifeless inanimate object, a body part or fluid previously 'owned' by a still-living creature. Examples of the latter include the hair of a wolf, found caught in thorn-bush or the blood of a king, spilled on the sand during a desperate fight to the death.

Each round the sorcerer concentrates on the object, he may make a Knowledge (arcana) check to learn one piece of information, as shown on the Psychometry table. If he fails, he may make



another attempt to determine the same information in the following round instead of moving directly on to the next piece of information.

Round	Information Learned
1	Last owner's species (human, man-ape, jaguar and so on)
2	Last owner's gender
3	Last owner's land of origin (Cimmeria, Hyrkania, the Vilayet Sea and so on)
4	Last owner's age
5	Last owner's current state of health
6	Last owner's current location and heading, if moving
7	Last owner's name, if any
8	How the last owner came by the object
9	How the last owner lost the object
10	Whether the last owner had any Corruption
11	Previous-to-last owner's species (human, man-ape, jaguar and so on)
12	Previous-to-last owner's gender
And so on	And so on

SORCEROUS NEWS

Power Point Cost: 2
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: One hour
Range: 2,000 miles plus 1,000 miles/level
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes plus one minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 12 ranks, *astrological prediction*.
Skill Check: Knowledge (arcana) (see below)

Certain animals, supernatural creatures and high-level sorcerers alike are connected by a sorcerous 'news network' that keeps them informed of major developments around the world. *Sorcerous news* allows the sorcerer to listen in on this network and send messages out. *Sorcerous news* may only be cast during the hours of darkness.

A Knowledge (arcana) check is made. The check result indicates the type of news gained:

Check Result	News
15	Movements of major artefacts such as the Heart of Ahriman
20	The sudden appearance or re-appearance of a sorcerer of great power (level 15+)
25	The death of a king
30	The plundering of an ancient tomb

The precise form and extent of the news given is always up to the Games Master but it should usually include the location and time-scale of any events covered.

Sending out a message with *sorcerous news* does not require a check. However, the news will not carry far unless the various messengers who pass it on regard it as highly interesting.

Material Component: Assorted incenses and powders worth 20 silver pieces

GREATER SORCEROUS NEWS

Power Point Cost: 4+ points
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: One hour
Range: 10,000 miles plus 2,000 miles/level
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes plus one minute/level
Saving Throw: See below
Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 16 ranks, *astrological prediction*, *sorcerous news*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw
Skill Check: Knowledge (arcana), Bluff, Intimidate or Diplomacy (see below)

This works much like *sorcerous news*, except as follows:

- ✱ The sorcerer gains a +2 bonus to the relevant Knowledge (arcana) check.
- ✱ By making a magic attack roll, the sorcerer can attempt to prevent a specific other sorcerer who has the *sorcerous news* spell from hearing a particular piece of news that night, or insert a piece of false news for that sorcerer's ears only. The target may make a Will saving throw to avoid this effect, in which case he also has a chance of discovering the attempted meddling when he uses *sorcerous news* himself and makes his Knowledge (arcana) check and beats DC 30.



✱ The sorcerer can extend the *sorcerous news* network to carry rumours or news to ordinary people, as well as the usual sorcerers and similar beings. For each city to which the news is to be carried, this process takes around one hour and costs an additional Power Point. The sorcerer can select specific pieces of news to deliver. This effect can be used to stir up trouble or calm it, depending on the news spread. In this case the sorcerer makes a Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate check, as agreed by the player and the Games Master, depending on the type of news to be spread. The DC is set by the Games Master and is usually between 15 and 35, depending on the size and nature of the city, the attitude the people may already have, any especial susceptibility or resistance they may have to sorcerous communications and any other factor determined to be relevant by the Games Master.

Material Component: Assorted incenses and powders worth 50 silver pieces.

VISIONS

Power Point Cost: 2/minute
Components: S, M or F
Casting Time: One full round
Range: 1,000 miles plus 100 miles/level
Effect: Magical sensor (see below)
Duration: Power Points
Saving Throw: None
Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, *astrological prediction*.
Skill Check: Knowledge (arcana), DC 10 + 1 per 100 miles distant the target is beyond the first 100 miles

You can see and hear events at any distance. This spell produces an invisible magical 'sensor' that sends a moving image back to your focus or material component, providing you with a view of the site or person upon which you wish to spy. This view can be very close up, as though through a human eye, or very far away and high up so as to see the whole of a battlefield or other wide scene, as though through a hawk's eye.

If desired, you may instantaneously move your magical sensor to any other point within range, up to once per minute.

Focus/Material Component: This spell requires a focus or alternatively a material component. One or the other will do; if you have a focus available, you have no need for a material component.

The focus can take the form of a crystal ball or a silver mirror (see page 274).

The material component can be either a handful of special herbs thrown onto an ordinary fire to produce green smoke in which the visions can be seen or a dose or two of a suitably hallucinogenic drug such as black lotus wine (see page 275). In either case, the cost is around 100 silver pieces.

VISIONS OF TORMENT AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Power Point Cost: 4 for the first minute, then 1/minute thereafter
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: One full round
Range: Touch or Evil Eye
Target: One sentient creature (Int 3+)
Duration: Power Points, up to a maximum of one minute per level
Saving Throw: See below
Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 12 ranks, magic attack bonus +5, *astrological prediction*, *visions*, *entrance*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

This spell enables the sorcerer to force a number of bizarre visions upon an unsuspecting victim, propelling him through past lives and ancestral memory in a wild mental voyage of self-discovery. This can be a highly disturbing experience and is often used in an attempt to either break prisoners or test potential recruits for sorcerous societies. Those who are overwhelmed by the spell are permanently impaired by what they have learned, while those who can steel themselves to learn something from their tormented visions may achieve some form of enlightenment.

The target is highly disoriented for the duration of the spell, with a penalty of -4 to all attack rolls, skill checks and Defence. At the end of the spell, he attempts a Will saving throw. If he fails, he suffers Wisdom damage depending on how long his visions lasted:

Duration of Spell (Minutes)	Wisdom Damage
1-6	1d4
7-11	1d6
12-15	1d8
16-18	1d10
19	2d6
20	2d8



If he succeeds and the spell lasted at least 10 minutes, he instead gains a permanent +1 bonus to Wisdom.

No character can be affected by Wisdom gains or losses from this spell more than once, though he will still be affected by the penalties to attack rolls and the like if he is targeted a second time.

Material Component: A dose of a suitable hallucinogenic drug such as lotus juice (see page 275), costing around 100 silver pieces. This must somehow be administered to the target before the spell can be cast.

HYPNOTISM

Hypnotism is extremely useful both as a direct means of attack and for far more subtle purposes. Though it may not be so quick as a hurled globe of demon-fire, it can still provide fairly rapid effects that are significantly more versatile than mere flaming destruction.

Hypnotism is not inherently sorcerous. Much hypnotism is simply mesmerism, an ability to take advantage of another's superstitious fears and unconscious willingness to be dominated. This type of hypnotism requires no expenditure of Power Points but simply takes time. It is for this reason that some scholars regard hypnotism as beneath themselves, considering it to be no true sorcery. However, many of the more advanced hypnotic spells do require sorcery, such as when it comes to forcing a victim to do one's bidding, or affecting him at distances where mere mesmerism would be quite unfeasible.

ENTRANCE (BASIC HYPNOTISM)

Power Point Cost: None

Components: S, M or F

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Evil Eye

Target: One creature

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: Will negates

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

When you cast this spell, the target creature must make a Will saving throw or be unable to take any actions for as long as you concentrate.

If the creature is attacked or sustains damage while entranced, it may attempt a saving throw again to throw off the effects of the spell. This second saving throw gets a bonus equal to the amount of damage inflicted.

This spell can only affect a creature that has six or fewer hit dice.

It is possible to boost the power of this spell by preparation. For each full round in which you do nothing but stare at the target creature before attempting to entrance it (whether or not you have eye-to-eye contact over that time) you can affect a creature of +2 HD and you gain a circumstance bonus of +1 on your magic attack roll.

Note that an entranced creature is not stunned, so attackers gain no special advantage against it.

Material Component or Focus: A shining object, such as a small mirror, suspended from a cord

TERRIBLE FASCINATION (DEFENSIVE BLAST)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points

Components: V

Casting Time: Immediate

Range: Personal

Area: 10 foot radius around the sorcerer

Duration: 1d4 rounds

Saving Throw: Will negates

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the victims' saving throw

When this spell is cast, all creatures within 10 feet of the sorcerer must make a Will saving throw or be entranced as if by the *entrance* spell. The entrancement lasts for 1D4 rounds and cannot be maintained longer than this, although the sorcerer may use the *entrance* spell on one of his victims while he is under the effect of *terrible fascination*.

DANCE OF THE COBRAS

Power Point Cost: 5

Components: S, M, F

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Evil Eye

Target: One humanoid creature

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: See below

Prerequisites: Perform (any musical instrument) 8 ranks, Ritual Sacrifice, must be a worshipper of Hanuman, *entrance*, *telekinesis*.





Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throws or Perform checks

The *dance of the cobras* is an extensive and elaborate but powerful ritual sacrifice that revolves around four pre-prepared, hypnotised snakes.

Four jars containing the snakes are smashed about the target. In effect, the snakes are inside the target's five-foot square, though at the very corners of it. For the first 1d6 rounds, the target must make a Reflex saving throw each round or be bitten by one of the snakes, suffering the usual damage and poison effects for such a bite (see page 375). If he chooses to spend the whole of each round just dodging snakes (similar to a Total Defence action in combat) he gains a +4 circumstance bonus to his Reflex saving throws. Note that the snakes do not make normal attack rolls against the target; they are, after all, hypnotised and even at this stage there is a strange, rhythmic quality to their rapid, darting movements. However, if the target attempts to leave the square, all four snakes immediately make attacks as normal. They are assumed to have attacks readied for just such an eventuality.

After the initial 1d6 rounds, the spell creates unearthly music sacred to the god Hanuman

and the hypnotised snakes begin to dance. The target may either continue to make Reflex saving throws to avoid them, with a +2 synergy bonus if he has at least five ranks of Perform (dance) or he may instead simply make Perform (dance) checks at the same DC.

If the victim dies from being bitten by the snakes, whether from direct damage or from poison, the sorcerer who cast the spell gains a number of benefits as follows:

- ✱ Power points as though the target had been slain by the sorcerer. One Power Point is gained for every three of the target's hit points, or one Power Point for every two of the target's hit points if the target was a human female.
- ✱ +2 morale bonus to all attack rolls and magic attack rolls for the next 24 hours.

If the victim somehow escapes or is rescued, the sorcerer instead suffers a -1 morale penalty to Defence and all saving throws for the next day.

Material Component: Four jade jars, worth at least 100 silver pieces each. With the snakes inside (see below), these must be balanced among the rafters of the room in which the spell is to be used or, if the sorcerer has *greater telekinesis* available, concealed somewhere in the room or about the person of the sorcerer.

Focus: Four cobras, of at least Small size. These must somehow be placed in jars before the spell is cast.

DOMINATION

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Evil Eye

Target: One humanoid who is already affected by your *entrance* spell

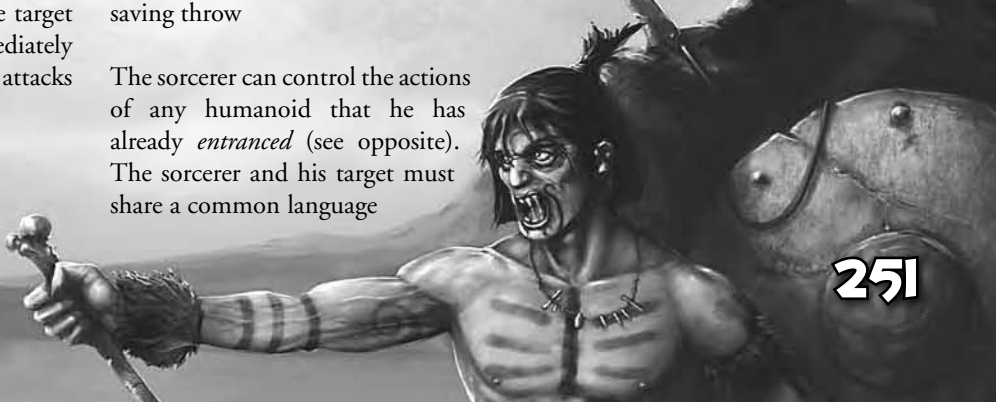
Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: See below

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +3, *entrance*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

The sorcerer can control the actions of any humanoid that he has already *entranced* (see opposite). The sorcerer and his target must share a common language





so the sorcerer can give instructions. Casting this spell ends the effects of the *entrance* spell, as *domination* immediately supersedes said spell. The target does not gain a saving throw to resist the *domination* except as follows:

This spell can only affect a creature with 8 or fewer Hit Dice.

Targets resist this control if forced to take actions against their nature. In this case they receive a Will saving throw with a bonus of +1 to +2, depending on the type of action required. Obviously self-destructive orders would be worth a +2 bonus.

Among other uses of this spell, the sorcerer can cause the target to fall asleep, as well as remove short-term memories from the target (such as the memory of having seen the sorcerer in the first place).

Once control is established, the range at which it can be exercised is unlimited but new orders can only be granted if the sorcerer is within shouting distance of the target (60 feet).

DREAD SERPENT

Power Point Cost: 3
Components: V, S, (F)
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Evil Eye
Target: One humanoid; usually one who is already affected by your *entrance* spell (but see below)
Duration: One round
Saving Throw: Will negates
Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +4, *entrance*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

This spell creates an illusionary snake or similarly dread, poisonous creature from another object. The illusion affects only the target, with any other observers seeing clearly that the object remains as it really is. *Dread serpent* can be used in one of two modes:

- ✱ Turn part of the target's clothing into a serpent. In this case, you must *entrance* the target before the spell is cast. Casting this spell ends the effects of the *entrance* spell, as *dread serpent* immediately supersedes said spell; this means that if the *dread serpent* fails, the target is no longer *entranced* either.

- ✱ Turn your own sorcerer's staff into a serpent, which you hurl at the target's feet. In this case the target must be within 20 feet of you, though you need not make an attack roll against him. The main advantage of this mode of the spell is that you need not have *entranced* the target before casting it.

The target receives a Will saving throw. If he fails, he perceives the serpent biting him and dies at once. If he makes his saving throw, he perceives himself slaying the serpent and the object reverts to its original state. In either case, making the saving throw (and, in the target's perception, fighting the snake) takes one round, during which time the target may not take any other actions and is at -2 to Defence due to distraction.

Focus: For the second mode of operation, this spell requires you to be carrying a staff worth at least 50 silver pieces, though it can functionally be quite mundane. It could be simply an ornate or decorated quarterstaff, or some kind of magical staff if you are willing to fling said staff at the feet of an enemy.

HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION

Power Point Cost: 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Evil Eye
Target: One living creature
Duration: 10 minutes plus one minute/level, or until completed
Saving Throw: Will negates
Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +2, *entrance*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throws

The character influences the actions of the enchanted creature by suggesting a course of activity, limited to a sentence or two. The suggestion must be worded in such a manner as to make the activity sound reasonable to the person. In effect, it can remove the influence of either the person's conscious will or his unconscious desires so that he will perform the suggested course of action that reason or instinct might otherwise have prevented.

This spell can only affect a creature that has 12 or fewer Hit Dice.

The suggested course of activity continues for the entire duration of the spell. If the suggested activity can be completed in a shorter time, the spell ends when the subject finishes what he was asked to do. The character can instead specify conditions that will trigger a special activity



during the duration of the spell. For example, the character might suggest that a noble knight give his warhorse to the first beggar he meets. If the condition is not met before the spell expires, the activity is not performed.

A very reasonable suggestion causes the saving throw to be made with a penalty (such as -1, -2 or such like) at the discretion of the Games Master.

Alternatively, the caster can suggest an illusion to the victim. This illusion cannot be damaging (*dread serpent* is required for that) but he could convince the victim that a blank scroll is actually a royal warrant or that the caster is actually dressed in rich robes, not rags. If the caster chooses to create an illusion, the victim's will is not affected, just his senses. An unreasonable illusion (say, that a horde of barbarians has just charged into the inn) will be dismissed instantly as false by the victim – the spell is capable of only subtle illusions.

MASS HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION

Power Point Cost: 8

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area: All creatures in a radius of 30 ft. + 5 ft. per level

Duration: 10 minutes plus one minute/level, or until completed

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +5, *entrance*, *hypnotic suggestion*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throws

As with *hypnotic suggestion*, except that the spell affects all creatures of 8 Hit Dice or below who can hear the sorcerer's voice.

Furthermore, the sorcerer is able to magically project his voice as though it were emanating from any point in the spell's range. Any creature within the area is affected, unless they are deaf or have stopped their ears in advance. Stopping their ears ahead of time allows opponents to avoid having to make saving throws against sound-based spells. Stopping one's ears is a full-round action and requires wax or other soundproof material to stuff into the ears.

RANGED HYPNOTISM

Power Point Cost: +4 points

Components: As per original spell, plus M

Casting Time: As per original spell, plus one full round

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft. per level) or Magical Link

Target: As per original spell

Duration: As per original spell

Saving Throw: As per original spell

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +5, *entrance*, *hypnotic suggestion*.

Magic Attack Roll: As per original spell

A hypnotist of sufficient power can expend a vast amount of energy to hypnotise someone at a distance. The victim must either be within line of sight, or connected to the sorcerer via a magical link (see page 237). Any of the standard hypnotism spells can be made ranged with this spell.

The components are as for the original spell, except as follows:

Material Component: In addition to any material components required by the original spell, ranged hypnotism requires various herbal powders to a total cost of 100 silver pieces.

SAVAGE BEAST

Power Point Cost: 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Evil Eye

Target: One living creature, plus see below

Duration: One round/level, plus see below

Saving Throw: Will negates

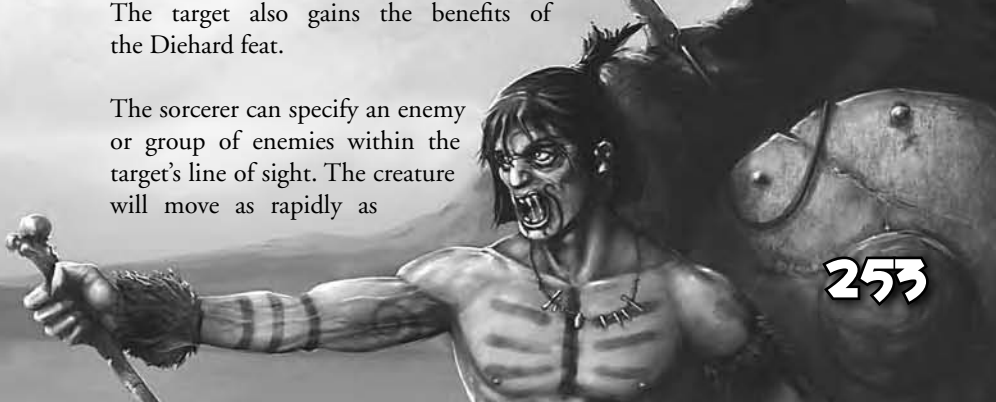
Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +3, *entrance*, *hypnotic suggestion*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throws

This spell turns an ordinary animal into a ravening and berserk monster, very difficult to kill and very dangerous to fight. The creature resembles a rabid animal when affected by the spell. This spell can only affect a creature that has 16 or fewer Hit Dice.

The target is affected as though it was in a state of fighting-madness, as if it had the Fighting-Madness feat (see page 126). The target also gains the benefits of the Dichard feat.

The sorcerer can specify an enemy or group of enemies within the target's line of sight. The creature will move as rapidly as





possible towards them and attack them ferociously. If no enemy or enemies are specified, it will simply attack the closest living creature to it.

In addition, the target's bite attack, if any, has the side effect of 'transmitting' the spell to any creature damaged by the bite. This acts in every way as though the creature damaged had the spell cast on it by the same sorcerer that cast it on the original target, though this creature is not affected until 2d10 rounds after being bitten.

NATURE MAGIC

Nature magic affects or summons plants and animals. It is commonly found among witches, wise women and shamans, since it is relatively simple to learn and highly effective in the wilderness or rural environments favoured by such scholars.

SUMMON BEAST (BASIC NATURE MAGIC)

Power Point Cost: 1+
Components: V, S, F, XP
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: One mile/level
Target: One animal that can be found in the local environment
Duration: One minute/level, plus see below
Saving Throw: Will partial (see below)
Prerequisite: Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

This spell summons a creature of the animal subtype, up to Medium-size, to serve the sorcerer. The Power Point cost is one for an animal of Small size or smaller and two for a Medium-size animal.

The sorcerer may specify the animal he wishes to summon. If that animal is not found within one mile, he may specify an alternate animal but this will take another action and require a different focus (see below). He may keep specifying alternate animals until he finds one that is within a mile. The Power Point cost is always paid for the animal that is actually summoned, regardless of whether that animal is the sorcerer's first choice.

The animal will serve the sorcerer without question,

including by attacking his enemies. However, summoned creatures may become uncontrolled if they sustain damage.

At the end of any round during which a summoned creature is dealt damage, it must make a Will saving throw (DC = 10 + damage sustained that round). Failure indicates that the creature's pain overcomes its desire to serve the sorcerer and it flees from the damage-dealing source as rapidly as possible.

For some reason, any animal summoned by a Pictish sorcerer has a pale, almost ghostly appearance. This has no particular game effect but simply appears to be a peculiarity of the Pictish style of sorcery.

Focus: A small image or carving of the animal to be summoned. This can be re-used on a later occasion.

Experience Point cost: 25 XP (50 XP for a Medium-size creature).

GREATER SUMMON BEAST

Power Point Cost: 4+
Components: V, S, F, XP
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: One mile/level
Target: One animal that can be found in the local environment
Duration: One minute/level, plus see below
Saving Throw: Will partial
Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, *summon beast*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

As for *summon beast*, except that an animal of up to Huge size can be summoned. The Power Point cost is four points for a Large creature, or eight points for a Huge creature.

Experience point cost: 100 XP (200 XP for a Huge creature)

ANIMAL INTERCESSOR (DEFENSIVE BLAST)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points
Components: V
Casting Time: Immediate
Range: One mile/level
Target: One animal that can be found in the local environment
Duration: One round
Saving Throw: None



This spell summons an animal from nearby, which arrives instantly to defend the caster from an attacker. The animal immediately makes a Reflex save against the attacker's Attack Roll. If the saving throw is successful, the animal places itself between the blow and the sorcerer and takes the damage instead. Regardless of whether or not the animal is struck, it makes one charge attack against the attacker before leaving.

If the caster expends fewer than four Power Points, he summons a Medium creature. If the caster expends between four and eight Power Points, he summons a Large creature. If the caster expends more than eight Power Points, he summons a Huge creature. The animal will make one attack on the caster's foe, then leave unless it is attacked again. The animal comes thundering out of the jungle or swooping out of the sky to protect the sorcerer for an instant; then it leaves.

If the animal is large enough to carry or be ridden by the sorcerer, he may make a Reflex save (DC 15) to mount the animal as it leaves.

ANIMAL ALLY

Power Point Cost: 6

Components: V, S, M, XP

Casting Time: One day

Range: One mile/level

Target: One animal that can be found in the local environment

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 6 ranks, *summon beast*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

The sorcerer gains an animal ally selected from the following list: badger, camel, dog, war dog, eagle, hawk, horse (any), owl, scorpion, snake (any of Medium size or smaller) or wolf. This animal is a loyal companion that accompanies the sorcerer on his adventures as appropriate for its kind.

A 1st level caster's ally is completely typical for its kind except as noted below. As a scholar advances in level, the animal's power increases as shown on the table.

If this spell is cast while the sorcerer already has an animal ally acquired by use of *animal ally*, the previous ally, if still alive, is released from service.

A sorcerer of 6th level or higher may select from alternative lists of animals (see below). Should he select an animal ally from one of these alternative lists,

the creature gains abilities as if the character's level were lower than it actually is. Subtract the value indicated in the appropriate list from the character's level and compare the result with the level entry on the table to determine the animal ally's powers. If this adjustment would reduce the scholar's effective level to zero or lower, he cannot have that animal as an ally.

An animal ally is different from a normal animal of its kind in many ways. The ally is treated as a magical beast, not an animal, though it retains an animal's HD, base attack bonus, saving throws, Skill Points and feats. It is superior to a normal animal of its kind and has special powers, as described below:

Animal Ally Basics: Use the base statistics for a creature of the ally's kind but make the following changes:

Class Level: The character's level.

Bonus HD: Extra eight-sided (d8) Hit Dice, each of which gains a Constitution modifier as normal. Remember that extra Hit Dice improve the animal ally's base attack, dodge and saving throw bonuses. An animal ally has good Fortitude, Will and Reflex saving throws; treat it as a character whose level equals the animal's HD. It gains +1 base attack bonus per Hit Die and +1 base dodge bonus for every two Hit Dice. An animal ally gains additional Skill Points and feats for bonus HD as normal for advancing a monster's Hit Dice.

Natural DR Adj.: The number noted here is an improvement to the animal ally's existing natural damage reduction.

Str/Dex Adj.: Add this value to the animal ally's Strength and Dexterity scores.

Bonus Tricks: The value given in this column is the total number of 'bonus' tricks that the animal knows in addition to any that the sorcerer might choose to teach it (see page 104). These bonus tricks do not require any training time or Handle Animal checks and they do not count against the normal number of tricks known by the animal. The sorcerer selects these bonus tricks; once selected, they cannot be changed.

Link: A sorcerer can handle his animal ally as a free action or push it as a move action, even if he does not have any ranks in the Handle Animal skill. The sorcerer gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all Ride and Handle Animal checks made regarding an animal ally.



Evasion: If an animal ally is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw.

Devotion: An animal ally gains a +4 morale bonus on Will saving throws against hypnotism spells and effects.

Multiattack: An animal ally gains Multiattack as a bonus feat if it has three or more natural attacks and does not already have that feat. If it does not have the requisite three or more natural attacks, the animal ally instead gains a second attack with its primary natural weapon, albeit at a -5 penalty.

Improved Evasion: When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, an animal ally takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and only half damage if the saving throw fails.

6th Level or Higher (Level -3)

Aurochs
Ape
Boar
Panther
Monitor Lizard
Snake, Large Viper

9th Level or Higher (Level -6)

Bear
Lion
Rhinoceros
Sabre-Tooth
Snake, Huge Viper

12th Level or Higher (Level -9)

Ghost Snake
Lesser Son of Set

15th Level or Higher (Level -12)

Elephant

Alternative Animal Allies: A scholar of sufficiently high level can select his animal ally from one of the following lists, applying the indicated adjustment to his level (in parentheses) for purposes of determining the ally's characteristics and special abilities.

ANIMAL ALLIES

Sorcerer Level	Bonus HD	Natural DR Adj.	Str/Dex Adj.	Bonus Tricks	Special
3 rd –5 th	+2	+1	+1	1	Link
6 th –8 th	+4	+2	+2	2	Evasion
9 th –11 th	+6	+3	+3	3	Devotion
12 th –14 th	+8	+4	+4	4	Multiattack
15 th –17 th	+10	+5	+5	5	
18 th –20 th	+12	+6	+6	6	Improved Evasion



Material Component: A small image or carving of the animal to be allied with, plus 100 silver pieces worth of incense and herbs.

Experience Point cost: 150 XP

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

Power Point Cost: 1/raven

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: One full round

Range: One mile/level

Target: One creature whose name or description is known to you, or to whom you have a magical link

Duration: One hour/level

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, *summon beast*.

Children of the night is designed as a tracking spell. It conjures up a semi-corporeal, supernatural raven to hover directly above the target's location, loudly squawking and drawing attention to him.

If the target is more than a mile away from the sorcerer, further raven-things appear and hover in the air directly between the sorcerer and the first raven at intervals of one mile. Each raven beyond the first costs an additional Power Point but appears automatically without the sorcerer needing to recast the spell or take any other action. The sorcerer can end the spell at any time rather than spend the extra Power Point needed to produce another raven.

The ravens always hover some 500 feet up, so as to be highly visible to the sorcerer but difficult to shoot down with ranged weapons; assume range increments for all weapons are halved when shooting directly upwards. The ravens have a Dodge Defence of 14 and have one hit point each but any raven that is slain is immediately replaced, at a cost of one Power Point as usual. It is possible for a target to end this spell by shooting down ravens but only by causing the sorcerer to run out of Power Points or by shooting down so many ravens that he chooses to end the spell anyway.

The target must be known to the sorcerer either by name or description, so there is some way for the magic of the spell to find him. Alternatively, a magical link to the target (see page 237) will do just as well.

Focus: A small image or carving of a raven. This can be reused on a later occasion.

SORCEROUS GARDEN

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: One action

Range: See below

Area: See below

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Craft (herbalism) 12 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 10 ranks, *summon beast*.

This spell enables the sorcerer to cultivate magical plant creatures or to grow a number of more ordinary plants rapidly. It has different effects depending on the version chosen.

Overgrowth: This effect causes normal vegetation (grasses, briars, bushes, creepers, thistles, trees, vines) within long range (400 feet + 40 feet per level) to become thick and overgrown. The plants entwine to form a thicket or jungle that creatures must hack or force a way through. Speed drops to 5 feet, or 10 feet for Large or larger creatures. The area must have brush and trees in it for this spell to take effect.

You may designate places within the area that are not affected.

Enrichment: This effect targets plants within a range of one-half mile, raising their potential productivity over the course of the next year to one-third above normal.

Magical Plant: This effect allows you to grow one or more plant creatures from seed or seedlings to full adult size rapidly. You can cause them to grow to a total size of up to one Hit Die per caster level. For example, a 15th level scholar could grow a single 15 HD yothga, or fifteen 1 HD black lotus blossoms. Each plant grows at a speed of one HD per round. Thus, in the above example the yothga would take fifteen rounds to reach its full 15 HD size but the black lotus blossoms would all grow to full one HD size within one round.

Material Component: Various special fertilisers and plant foods costing at least 40 silver pieces.



SPIRIT OF THE LAND

Power Point Cost: 4
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: 10 miles/level
Duration: 10 minutes/level
Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, *summon beast*.

By means of this spell, the caster projects his mind into the land around him. If in a forest, he becomes the trees and the small animals and the vermin. If in a desert, he becomes the sandstorm and the circling vultures. The caster can perceive what animals are within the area of effect; he can also dimly sense the presence of men but cannot see who they are or learn much more than their race and rough numbers. The caster also becomes aware of large-scale events, changes or unusual things like a forest fire, a raging battle or the location of a large structure like a castle in the depths of the forest.

While this spell is in effect the sorcerer's body is comatose and helpless as his mind wanders the land all around. He is aware of its location and if it suffers harm, but no more. He may return his mind to his body as an immediate action at any time.

COMMAND WEATHER

Power Point Cost: 8
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: 10 miles/level
Duration: 1d4 hours
Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 10 ranks, *spirit of the land*.

This spell allows the caster to control the weather in the surrounding area. He can summon up snowstorms or howling winds, quell the raging seas or pour so much rain into a river that it bursts its banks and floods a town.

The caster cannot call up any weather that is outside the possible range for a region in the current season; for example, he cannot create a snowstorm in the desert or at the height of summer.

NECROMANCY

The scholar who learns necromancy achieves limited mastery over the very mysteries of life and death. This is especially popular for those who wish to slay their enemies outright, rather than merely harming or inconveniencing them.

Afari shuddered visibly.

'How can a common man lie to that black devil? His eyes are like coals of red fire that look into depths unnameable. I have seen him make corpses rise and walk, and skulls champ and grind their naked jaws.'

— *The Snout in the Dark*

RAISE CORPSE (BASIC NECROMANCY)

Power Point Cost: 1/corpse
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)
Target: Up to one corpse/level
Duration: Concentration + 1d6 rounds
Saving Throw: See below
Prerequisite: Magic attack bonus +2.

This spell turns the bodies of dead creatures into undead zombies that follow the sorcerer's spoken commands. The zombies can follow the sorcerer, remain in an area and attack any creature (or just a specific type of creature) that enters the place or perform simple actions according to the sorcerer's commands. The zombies remain animated until they are destroyed. A destroyed zombie may not be animated again.

The zombies the sorcerer creates remain under his control for the duration of the spell. At the expiry of the spell, they become simple corpses once more, falling in lifeless heaps wherever they stand.

A zombie can be created only from the mostly intact corpse of a humanoid or animal and its statistics depend more upon the corpse it was created from than any abilities it had in life. See page 387 for details on the risen dead.



CHILL OF THE GRAVE (DEFENSIVE BLAST)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points
Components: V
Casting Time: Immediate
Range: Personal
Area: 10 foot radius around the sorcerer
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Fortitude half
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the victims' saving throw

All those within 10 feet of the sorcerer take 1d6 cold damage for every Power Point expended in the casting of this spell. A successful Fortitude save (DC = the result of the sorcerer's magic attack roll) means the victim takes half damage. The sorcerer himself is immune to the defensive blast, as are zombies and other undead creatures.

THE DEAD SPEAK

Power Point Cost: 1/corpse
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Target: One corpse
Duration: Concentration + 1d6 rounds
Saving Throw: See below
Prerequisites: Scholar level 4, *raise corpse*.

The necromancer forces a semblance of life back into a corpse or at least a head. The animated horror can speak and think and see as it did in life, assuming it still has the necessary body parts to do so (a severed head can still speak if it has a tongue and jaw and see if it has eyes). The spark of life lasts only a few moments but this may be long enough to interrogate a fallen guard or mock a defeated foe one last time.

AGONISING DOOM

Power Point Cost: 4/target
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One full round
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)
Target: One or more creatures, up to a maximum of one creature/two levels
Duration: 1d6 rounds
Saving Throw: Fort negates and see below
Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +6, *raise corpse*, *death touch*.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the targets' saving throws



Black tendrils of power shoot out from the sorcerer's hands, slaying his enemies agonisingly and rapidly. This spell only affects creatures with fewer than 8 HD.

The targets must all make Fortitude saving throws, with success completely negating the effects of the spell. A character who fails his saving throw begins to lose 4d6 hit points per round. Furthermore, he is in such extreme pain that he must make a Will saving throw on any round in which he wishes to act. Success means he may take either a move action or a standard action but not both; failure means he may not do anything that round other than lie prone in agony.

BLACK PLAGUE

Power Point Cost: 20
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: One day
Range: One mile per level
Area: One mile radius per level, or 10 foot radius per level; see below





Duration: One week/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +7, *raise corpse*.

This is a dreadful spell capable of driving hundreds or even thousands of victims to horrible, tormented deaths. It creates a great wind propelling a foul, stinking miasma which can strike down all within its path. The effects of this spell closely resemble a disease, though in fact sorcery is responsible for the victims' demise.

The black plague has two different forms: one is designed to strike terror into a population, the other is designed to wipe out the sorcerer's enemies wholesale.

In either case, once the plague strikes, it is rapid and lethal from its onset to the victims' death a few minutes later. A Fortitude saving throw (DC 17) must be made. Failure causes the targets 1d4 Constitution damage and turns their bodies purple. After 3d6 minutes they take another 1d4 Con damage and their bodies turn black. From that point onwards, they are dealt a further 1d4 Con damage per minute until they are dead.

The first form of *black plague* affects a random scattering of individual humans throughout the area of its effect (which is one mile radius per level) at a rate of one per the sorcerer's level per day. The sorcerer may not specify which individuals are affected in this way. This form of *black plague* tends to significantly demoralise the population through which it is sweeping, for they can see no comprehensible reason for its spread. This is likely to have a number of effects at the Games Master's discretion, including disruption to the area's economy, widespread looting or other lawlessness and an unwillingness among the population to become involved with other issues (such as fighting a war) until the problem of the plague is resolved.

A further side-effect of this form is that it gives the sorcerer a +4 bonus on any Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate checks he makes to deliver news by the *greater sorcerous news* spell (see page 248), so long as he can plausibly tie in the effects of the plague with the message he is attempting to communicate. This will usually be most effective if he is able to present the plague as a divine punishment or warning of some kind.

The devastation that this form of *black plague* inflicts on the community is

further heightened by the scorching, blasting effects of the wind that drives the disease-ridden miasma. This wind blasts corn in the fields and fruit in the trees alike, withering plants and slaying animals. The precise effects of this on crop plants are up to the Games Master but if nothing else all creatures of the animal subtype within the area of effect must make Fortitude saving throws just as the small number of humans did, or die themselves. In the often shaky economies of many Hyborian nations, such loss of food crops and animals can weaken or destroy entire communities even more effectively than the direct effects of the plague.

The second form of the spell is much more extreme in its devastation of humans but affects only a small area and has no effect on animals or plants. All humans within the specified area (a 10 foot radius per level of the sorcerer) must make Fortitude saving throws (DC 17) or die as above. A successful saving throw protects them for a week, but if they re-enter the area after that they must save again.

Furthermore, with this version of the spell, the sorcerer may concentrate to move the area of effect at a speed of up to four miles per hour. This requires almost all the sorcerer's attention, as is usual for a concentration type effect; also, Concentration checks may need to be made if he is attacked or otherwise distracted while moving the area of effect.

Note that the plague is not actually contagious in either version.

The plague will last for the entire duration of the spell. The only way for the sorcerer or anyone else to end it prematurely is by somehow taking control of the weather in the area and sweeping away the miasma with a great storm. Unlike with true diseases, conventional physicians using the Heal skill cannot alleviate the plague, though certain spells and magical objects may be useful for this.

Material Component: Essences collected from certain tombs in Stygia, to a value of 1,500 silver pieces.

GREATER BLACK PLAGUE

Power Point Cost: 15

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: One hour

Range: Magical Link

Target: Up to one creature per three levels

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates





Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +8, *black plague*, *raise corpse*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the targets' saving throws

This enhancement to *black plague* allows the sorcerer to target specific individuals, making it an ideal tool for magical assassination. It can only be cast while a standard *black plague* cast by the sorcerer is already in operation and can only affect targets within that spell's area of effect. Those targets must immediately make Fortitude saving throws as usual for *black plague*, except that the DC is set by the sorcerer's magic attack roll. These saving throws are in addition to any saving throws the victims may have already had to make for the *black plague* spell.

DEATH TOUCH

Power Point Cost: 2/touch

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One or more creatures touched, up to a maximum of one creature/level

Duration: One round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +5, *raise corpse*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the targets' saving throws

Any creature touched by a sorcerer's unarmed touch attack while *death touch* is active die instantly. A target is entitled to attempt a Fortitude saving throw to

resist the effect. If successful, he is instead stunned for one round. A stunned character may not act, nor may he use Dodge Defence or Parry Defence. Attackers get a +2 bonus on attack rolls against a stunned opponent.

Each sorcerer or sect has its own variant of this spell, differing only in the details. For example, the version used by the Priests of Set causes the sorcerer's hand to turn completely black and is known as the Black Hand of Set. Anyone slain with it has a black handprint burned on to his body with a cold, deathly fire. By contrast, Khitan sorcerers (who often wield a Staff of Death to deliver their death touches) turn the whole of an enemy corpse completely black when using this spell. The Games Master and players are encouraged to devise their own 'signature' effects when casting *death touch*.

DRAW FORTH THE HEART

Power Point Cost: 7

Components: S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Evil Eye

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

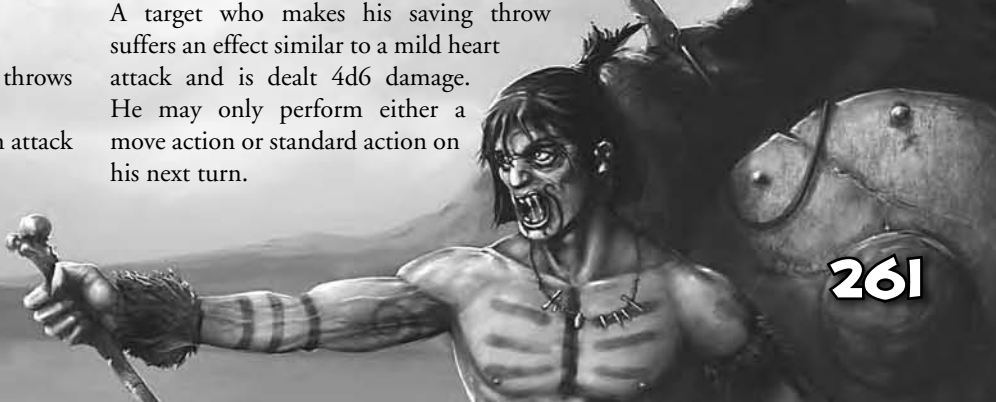
Prerequisites: Ritual Sacrifice, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Tormented Sacrifice, magic attack bonus +7, *raise corpse*, *death touch*, *agonising doom*, *conjuring*, *telekinesis*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the target's saving throw

This powerful spell can both dispose of an enemy and allow the sorcerer to recoup some or all of the Power Points used to cast it, with perhaps a few more besides if the victim was sufficiently tough.

If the target fails his saving throw, he dies, his heart pulled out of his body and into your hands by a magical force. The process is so painful to him that although he dies within moments, you immediately gain Power Points as though you had sacrificed him with the Tormented Sacrifice feat after torturing him for fifteen minutes.

A target who makes his saving throw suffers an effect similar to a mild heart attack and is dealt 4d6 damage. He may only perform either a move action or standard action on his next turn.





ORIENTAL MAGIC

Oriental magic is most commonly found in Khitai, Vendhya and the Himelias, though oriental sorcerers do travel the world like all their kind.

Generally, the Games Master should not overly restrict characters from non-oriental cultures from selecting Oriental Magic as a sorcery style, though in most cases they will need to learn it from another adept or demon or be a member of one of the oriental religions such as Asura, rather than research it independently. A character who does research it independently will likely need to travel to Khitai or similarly far afield to do so.

CALM OF THE ADEPT (BASIC ORIENTAL MAGIC)

Power Point Cost: 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: Three hours
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: 24 hours
Prerequisite: Wis 13.

By spending much of each morning in meditation, you are able to significantly enhance your mind, body and spirit for the remainder of the day. You gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity, Wisdom and Charisma for the duration of the spell. Furthermore, you gain a +2 bonus on any Will saves made to resist spells of the Hypnotism school or similar mesmeric effects.

VANISH (DEFENSIVE BLAST)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points
Components: V
Casting Time: Immediate
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: One round
Saving Throw: None

Roll 1d6 for every Power Point expended when this spell is cast. If the total is greater than the damage inflicted by the attack which provoked the defensive blast, the sorcerer takes no damage. Instead, the sorcerer vanishes from the

scene, leaving only his outer robes behind, which crumple to a heap where he was standing. The sorcerer reappears in a place chosen by the Games Master – normally a nearby sanctum, temple or garden or other tranquil, safe place. The sorcerer has no control over where he reappears.

DARTING SERPENT

Power Point Cost: 2+
Components: V, S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: One round/level
Prerequisites: Scholar level 3, *calm of the adept*.

For every two Power Points expended, you gain a +2 bonus to your Dexterity and an additional +1 enhancement bonus to all Initiative checks. You may expend up to two Power Points per level. If you use this spell during combat, your initiative score is adjusted by +1 per two Power Points you expended from the next round onwards. When the spell expires your initiative returns to its previous score.

WILLOW DANCE

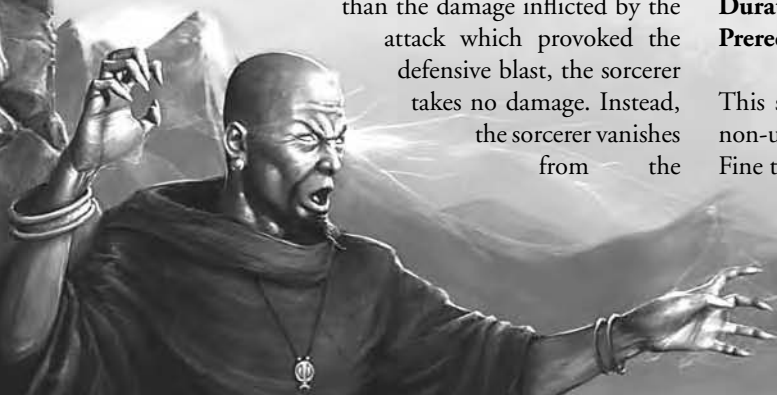
Power Point Cost: 2+
Components: S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: One round/level
Prerequisites: Scholar level 3, *calm of the adept*.

For every two Power Points expended, you may increase your base movement by five feet and gain a +2 bonus to Balance and Jump checks. You may expend up to two Power Point per level.

SHAPE-SHIFTER

Power Point Cost: 10
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: One full round
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: 10 minutes/level
Prerequisites: Scholar level 12, *calm of the adept*.

This spell enables you to assume the form of any single non-unique animal (any creature of the animal type) from Fine to Colossal size. The assumed form cannot have more than twice your scholar level in Hit Dice (to a maximum of 40 HD).



The scimitar-like beak was slashing for the Devi's soft neck, but Conan was quicker--a short run, a tigerish leap, the savage thrust of a dripping knife, and the vulture voiced a horribly human cry, pitched sideways and went tumbling down the cliffs to the rocks and river a thousand feet below. As it dropped, its black wings thrashing the air, it took on the semblance, not of a bird, but of a black-robed human body that fell, arms in wide black sleeves thrown abroad.

— *The People of the Black Circle*

Your creature type and subtype (if any) change to match the new form. You gain the Strength, Dexterity and Constitution scores of the new form but retain your own Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma scores. You gain all the non-supernatural abilities (both attacks and qualities) of the assumed form but lose your own ability to cast spells. The new form does not disorient you. Parts of your body or pieces of equipment that are separated from you do not revert to their original forms.

While you are in your new form, you can heal up to one hit point of damage per scholar level by spending one minute resting.

You can become just about anything you are familiar with. You can change form a number of times equal to your scholar level during the spell's duration, with each change of form being a full-round action.

If slain, you revert to your original form, though you remain dead.

Material Component: Assorted gems worth at least 500 silver pieces.

WARRIOR TRANCE

Power Point Cost: 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: One round/level

Prerequisites: Scholar level 3, *calm of the adept*.

Warrior trance gives one of the sorcerer's natural weapons a +2 enhancement bonus to attack

and damage rolls and gives the caster a +2 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence. The spell can affect a slam attack, fist, bite or other natural weapon. This spell does not change an unarmed strike's damage from nonlethal damage to normal damage. The dodge bonus and enhancement bonus are increased to +3 if the sorcerer is 6th level or higher and by another +1 each three levels thereafter.

YIMSHA'S CARPET

Power Point Cost: 20

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Personal

Area: Up to one foot radius per level

Duration: One minute/level (D)

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

Prerequisites: Scholar level 14, *calm of the adept*, *summon elemental*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the victims' saving throws

Yimsha's carpet is a supernatural cloud of gold-veined crimson that can transport, conceal and protect its occupants. It may also be used as an offensive weapon against the sorcerer's enemies. Powered by elemental energies, it extends outwards from the sorcerer like a vast crimson aura.

The cloud has four effects: concealment, protection, transport and stunning.

Concealment – the cloud grants concealment (see page 197). The sorcerer who created the cloud can see through this concealment normally but any other occupants of the cloud cannot. If there are more than five feet of cloud between two occupants, the concealment is total.

Protection – solid objects such as weapons have difficulty penetrating the cloud from without, giving the occupants an effective damage reduction of 4 against any attack that originates outside the cloud. This stacks with other forms of damage reduction normally. Attacks may be made out of or within the cloud without hindrance.

Transport – by concentrating, the sorcerer who cast the spell can make *Yimsha's carpet* fly with perfect manoeuvrability at the stately speed of 20 feet per



round. The sorcerer is automatically carried by the carpet, and he may bring along any number of passengers that fit entirely within its boundaries. If the sorcerer ceases concentrating the cloud continues to hover in place and support passengers, but moves no further.

Stunning – living things that enter the cloud must make a Fortitude saving throw or be dealt 1d6 nonlethal damage per two levels of the casting sorcerer and be stunned for 1d6 rounds. A stunned character may not act and cannot use Dodge Defence or Parry Defence; attackers get a +2 bonus on attack rolls against a stunned opponent. A success on the saving throw halves the damage and means the creature is only dazed, not stunned. A character may only be affected once by each casting of *Yimsha's carpet*.

The sorcerer who created the cloud may freely chose which creatures within the area of effect are friends and which are foes. Friends are protected, concealed and transported by the cloud and are immune to its stunning and damaging effects. Foes gain the effects of protection from outside attacks and benefit from concealment while within the cloud, but are not transported by it and must content with its stunning and damaging effects.

The sorcerer can 'switch on' and 'switch off' the cloud as a free action up to once per round during its duration. While switched off the cloud has no effects at all but any rounds it is switched off still count towards the duration.

Material Component: Gold dust and herbal smoke-powders to a total value of 850 silver pieces.

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisite: Sleight of Hand 4 ranks.

This spell allows the sorcerer to do minor acts of prestidigitation or illusion at a cost of one Power Point for each effect. Examples include suspending objects in mid-air or causing his eyes to glow red. The following effects are all possible uses of this sorcery style:

- ✱ Telekinetically move a small, unattended object (weighing up to five pounds), so long as it remains within the spell's range. The object can be moved at up to 20 feet per round.
- ✱ Place a small object (weighing up to 10 pounds) from your hands into midair and have it remain there suspended, so long as you remain within the spell's range. Note that in this case you cannot move the object. If you deliberately end the spell, you may spend one round concentrating on lowering the object gently to the ground. If your concentration is broken, the object simply falls to the ground with a crash.

Conan spat savagely at the word, and Xaltotun, ignoring his fury, took a crystal globe from a near-by table and placed it before him. He did not support it in any way, nor place it on anything, but it hung motionless in midair, as solidly as if it rested on an iron pedestal.

– *The Hour of the Dragon*

PRESTIDIGITATION

Prestidigitation is often one of the first sorcerous paths a scholar learns, since it allows the production of more or less immediate magical effects with which to impress or terrify ordinary folk.

CONJURING (BASIC PRESTIDIGITATION)

Power Point Cost: 1

Components: S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Effect: See below

- ✱ Telekinetically guide a cloud of smoke or gas up to 5 feet by 5 feet by 5 feet in size. This could include a venomous gas cloud or similar herbal or alchemical product. The smoke can be moved at up to 10 feet per round.
- ✱ Control a normal shadow up to 5 feet by 5 feet in size as though it were a puppet, potentially altering its shape and size as well as causing it to perform certain actions.
- ✱ Alter your appearance in one minor way. This is not sufficient to provide an effective disguise but if desired you could use it to gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks. Examples include growing horns, causing your eyes to appear reptilian and similar effects. This cannot grant you any bonuses to combat – horns or claws, for example, do not allow you to make any special attacks.



- ✱ Open or close a container or door at a distance. The object to be opened or closed must not be locked, barred, jammed or any larger or heavier than a standard, human-built door or chest.
- ✱ Colour, clean or soil objects (but not creatures) in a one-foot cube each round. For example, the sorcerer could turn a rose from white to red, or make a little whirlwind to sweep dust under a rug.
- ✱ Chill, warm or flavour one pound of nonliving material. This could be used to make a cheap meal more palatable or chill an expensive wine before serving.

BLAST WAVE (DEFENSIVE BLAST)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points
Components: V
Casting Time: Immediate
Range: Personal
Area: A 10 foot radius around the sorcerer
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC of the victims' saving throws

When this spell is cast, all characters within 10 feet of the caster are struck by an invisible wave of force. The characters are hurled back 1d6 feet for every Power Point expended when the spell is cast and take normal falling damage (1d6 point of damage per 10 feet fallen). This damage is doubled if the victims hit a wall or other barrier. Victims are hurled straight back away from the caster. A successful Reflex save (DC equals the caster's magic attack roll) means that the victims are only thrown half as far.

BURST BARRIER

Power Point Cost: 2
Components: S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)
Target: One door, portcullis, wall, chest or other barrier
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Prerequisites: Scholar level 3, *conjuring*.

The sorcerer creates a surge of magical force, as though a giant had shoulder-charged some barrier or other object that for some reason merits the sorcerer's displeasure. He makes a Strength check as though the object had been hit by a Huge creature (+8 size bonus to Strength checks) with a Strength equal to the sorcerer's level × 5.

Note that unlike a more physical attempt to break or burst an object, the magical force created by this spell is entirely silent. As a useful side effect, the spell also silences any noises that would usually be caused by its action. Even if the door falls to the ground, completely torn asunder from its hinges, no noise will be created.

CONJURE ITEM

Power Point Cost: 1+
Components: S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Effect: See below
Duration: 1d6 hours
Saving Throw: None
Magic Attack Roll: Sets Appraise DC
Prerequisite: *Conjuring*.

By means of this spell, the sorcerer can conjure up any simple, common item that he could fit in his pocket or bag, up to a maximum size of a one-handed weapon. The spell costs one Power Point for tiny items like daggers or keys; larger items like swords or helmets cost more points. He cannot create true gold or other precious metals or gemstones with the spell but he can make false valuables. An Appraise roll against a DC equal to the sorcerer's magic attack roll can be made to identify such conjured items. The sorcerer must be able to precisely visualise the item he desires. When the spell expires, the item is revealed to be what it truly is – twigs, folded paper, rusted scraps of metal or a handful of dust given shape by sorcery.

TELEKINESIS

Power Point Cost: 1
Components: S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: 120 ft
Effect: One object touched
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Special (see below)
Prerequisites: Scholar level 3, Sleight of Hand 5 ranks, *conjuring*.

The sorcerer can hurl an object from his hand at an opponent, expending personal sorcerous power to do so. Objects which can be thrown in this manner include all the herbal and alchemical items marked by an asterisk (*) later in this chapter, as well as such items as rocks, weapons and so on.



The sorcerer must make a ranged attack roll as normal to hit his target. The main advantage of telekinesis over simply throwing the object by hand is its increased accuracy, particularly at range. An object can be hurled up to 120 feet and is never affected by range penalties. Most objects will deal either their standard weapon damage or improvised weapon damage appropriate to their size and composition. Herbal or alchemical items will have their standard effects and may or may not require saving throws depending on the item.

GREATER TELEKINESIS

Power Point Cost: 1/object
Components: S
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: 120 ft
Effect: Up to one object/level within Close range (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Special
Prerequisites: Scholar level 3, Bluff 6 ranks, Sleight of Hand 6 ranks, *prestidigitation*, *telekinesis*.

This works like *telekinesis*, except as indicated above. Most notably the sorcerer may throw more than one object and he need not be touching the objects he hurls. Each object may have a separate target if the sorcerer so wishes. The sorcerer may also use *greater telekinesis* in a manner known as 'hidden death'.

When using hidden death, the sorcerer can affect a maximum of two objects which must both be on the sorcerer's person. He may draw and throw them both as part of the standard action taken to cast the spell, hurling one from each hand (and at separate targets if he wishes). If he succeeds in a Bluff check opposed by his target's Sense Motive check, the target loses any Dodge or Dexterity bonuses to his Dodge Defence. Otherwise, hidden death follows all the normal rules for *telekinesis* attacks.

DEFLECTION

Power Point Cost: 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: Immediate or one standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)
Target: One attack

Duration: Instantaneous
Prerequisites: Scholar level 3, *prestidigitation*.
Magic Attack Roll: Becomes Parry Defence

By means of this spell, the sorcerer can deflect incoming blows. The spell can be cast in two ways: as an immediate action to deflect a blow aimed at the sorcerer; or as a standard action (normally a readied action), in which case it can be used against any blow that falls within range regardless of target.

In either form the spell is cast after the attack roll is compared to the target's chosen Defence. The sorcerer's magic attack roll for this spell effectively functions as an extra Parry, deflecting the blow if the magic attack roll is higher than the attack roll.

This spell can be used to parry ranged attacks.

SUMMONING

Perhaps the gateway to the greatest magical power is through summoning otherworldly entities to do one's bidding. Demonic pacts in particular can offer the sorcerer almost unlimited power but only at the most dreadful price: the corruption of his very soul.

The Summoning sorcery style is unusual in that it offers a choice of two basic spells: *master-words and signs* and *demonic pact*. Put simply, the essential difference between these two spells is that *master-words and signs* compels a demon to work for you and *demonic pact* involves making a deal with a demon whereby you will work for it in return for certain assistance.

MASTER-WORDS AND SIGNS (BASIC SUMMONING)

Power Point Cost: 12
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: One week
Range: See below
Target: One demon lord
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 15 ranks, magic attack bonus +6, must know at least four sorcery styles, must never have cast the *demonic pact* spell.
Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC of the target's saving throw

Master-words and signs summons up a demon lord and forces it to instruct the sorcerer in the *master-words and signs* by which almost any entity ranked



below it can be compelled. The sorcerer is able to compel the demon lord by demonstrating his superior magical prowess over it.

Only fairly high-powered sorcerers can learn this spell and so most prefer the quick and easy path of a *demonic pact*. Though the demon lord will not serve the sorcerer directly, the knowledge of the *master-words and signs* can be used to force other demons and similar entities to work for the sorcerer, which is often more useful in any case. The sorcerer gains a permanent +2 circumstance bonus to any magic attack rolls made in connection with *summon demon*, *summon elemental* or any other Summoning spells or when targeting summoned creatures with other spells.

Furthermore, he may, up to once per round, use his knowledge of *master-words and signs* to formulate a simple spell based on either a single Verbal or a single Somatic component (his choice). This is cast as a free action, costs two Power Points and affects a single summoned creature within Evil Eye range. The summoned creature must immediately make a Will saving throw (DC set by the sorcerer's magic attack roll) or be instantly dismissed back to its home.

Essentially, this spell opens the door to (and enhances) other summoning spells and assists with dismissing creatures summoned by other scholars; it has no special effects other than that.

The demon lord gains a Will saving throw to resist the sorcerer's summoning and remain in its hellish home. For this purpose, its total Will saving throw bonus is assumed to be +12. If it succeeds, the sorcerer may not cast the spell again until his magic attack bonus has increased, which may be by a simple level increase or some other means such as a Charisma bonus increase.

Once you have successfully cast this spell once, you no longer have any particular need to cast it again.

Material Component: Powders, potions, incenses and other trappings to a total cost of 2,000 silver pieces.

DEMONIC PACT (BASIC SUMMONING)

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: One hour

Range: Effectively unlimited

Target: One demon

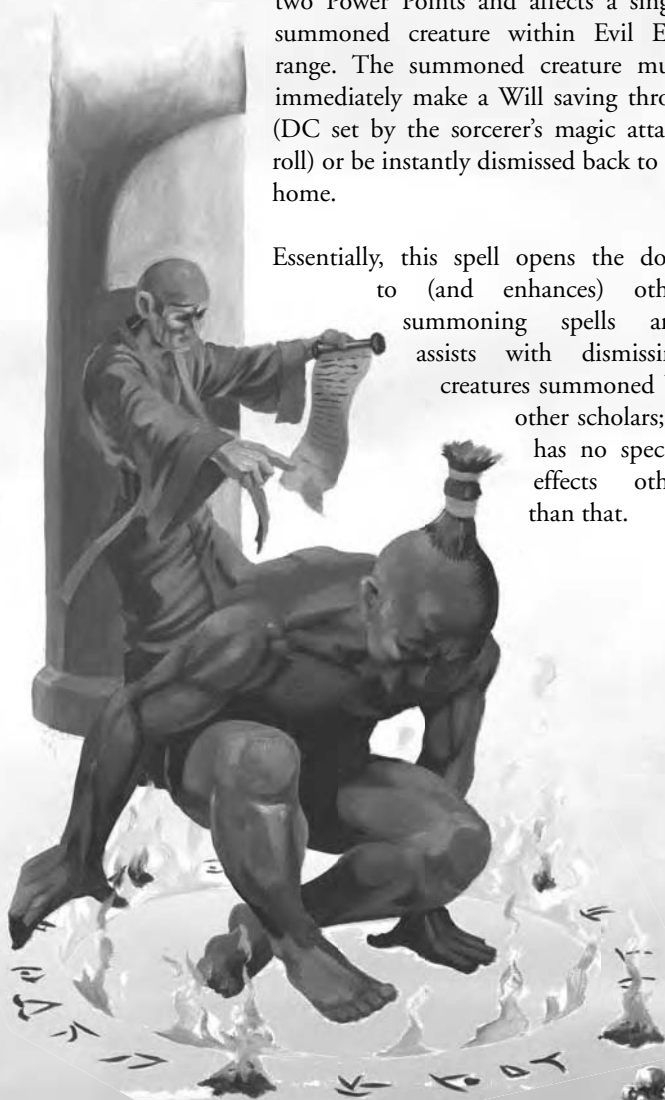
Duration: One hour/level or until task is fulfilled, but see below

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisite: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks.

The first time a sorcerer casts this spell, he voluntarily enters into a long-term pact with a demonic entity of medium power. The Games Master determines the precise nature of the demon, possibly in consultation with the player of the sorcerer character. The demon is usually chosen from among the types listed in Chapter 13: A Hyborian Bestiary.

Usually the demon will know all the spells from 1d4+1 sorcery styles (not including Summoning) in addition to *greater demonic pact*, *summon elemental* and *summon demon* from the Summoning style, though the precise number of styles known will be dependent on the type of demon with whom the pact is made. The demon will teach the sorcerer one of these spells or styles (of the sorcerer's choice) whenever he would normally be eligible to learn a new spell or sorcery style; however, the sorcerer will need to summon the demon by casting this spell once more. If the sorcerer waits until he is eligible for a new spell before casting *demonic pact* for the first time, he can learn the new spell when he summons the





demon; he does not have to re-cast *demonic pact*. The duration of *demonic pact* will always be sufficient for the sorcerer to learn a new spell from the demon.

Instead of learning a new spell, the sorcerer can call up the demon by casting *demonic pact* and make a deal that involves the demon performing a specific task for the sorcerer, such as attacking an enemy or scaring a rival. Such a task is always at the demon's discretion; it will not necessarily agree to the task sorcerer's asks for, or it may suggest an alternate task. Furthermore it will always demand a price of some kind, usually a human sacrifice, for performing the task. Finally, because it is a demon, it may well attempt to twist the sorcerer's words so that it performs the letter but not the spirit of the task.

The demon will also help the sorcerer in a more direct manner, by granting him a small talisman, tattoo or brand which he can touch as a free action

up to once per week in order to gain a +4 luck bonus on any skill check, ability check, attack roll or magic attack roll or to gain a +4 insight bonus to his Defence for one round. This talisman, tattoo or brand retains its power even when the demon is not present but it only works for the sorcerer himself. If ever a month goes by when the sorcerer does not either call up the demon or sacrifice a creature to it, the power of the talisman, tattoo or brand is lost until the next time he performs one of those actions. Worse, the demon will consider this a breach of contract; sooner or later, he will come for the sorcerer, to carry him off to hell...

Each time a sorcerer casts this spell, he must make a Corruption saving throw (see page 82) or gain one point of Corruption. The first time he casts the spell, he automatically fails this saving throw.

A character who has already cast this spell on his own behalf can also cast it for the benefit of another willing character. In that case the other character gains all the benefits and drawbacks of the spell, including the Corruption, although the casting sorcerer also has to make a Corruption save for casting the spell as usual.

As well as the usual effects of Corruption, the sorcerer applies his Corruption as a circumstance penalty to any Will saving throws he makes against the sorcery or supernatural abilities of the demonic entity with whom he has the pact. In addition, he applies his Corruption as a circumstance penalty to all magic attack rolls he makes against the demon with whom he has the pact.

Furthermore, if a sorcerer ever casts this spell for the benefit of another willing character the demon may use either character's Corruption against them in this way. Thus many sorcerers are reluctant to cast this spell on another's behalf, since the more people a sorcerer assists to make their own *demonic pacts*, the more demons there will be against whom his powers are weak.

No character can have a pact with more than one demon at any one time. If ever a sorcerer with a *demonic pact* should cast a *greater demonic pact* spell, the more powerful spell replaces the effects of the other.

Material Component: Powders, potions, incenses and other trappings to a total cost of 50 silver pieces.



MASTER, AID ME! (DEFENSIVE BLAST)

Power Point Cost: All remaining points

Components: V

Casting Time: Immediate

Range: 10 feet

Target: One or more demons (see below)

Duration: One round per Power Point expended

Saving Throw: None

This spell can only be cast if the sorcerer has already entered into a *demonic pact*. When this spell is cast, the sorcerer's demonic master appears instantly to defend its pawn. The demon appears anywhere within 10 feet of the sorcerer and acts immediately. The demon may choose to block the attack that provoked the casting of this defensive blast – if the demon chooses this option, it must make a Reflex saving throw against a DC equal to the attacker's attack roll. If the Reflex save is successful, the demon takes the damage from the attack instead of the sorcerer.

The demon remains for one round per Power Point expended or until it is slain or banished, using its powers as it sees fit.

The sorcerer automatically gains one Corruption Point when this spell is cast.

If the sorcerer is subject to a greater demonic pact when this spell is cast, he may use it to summon more than one demonic minion to his side. Each Power Point that powers the spell summons a single demon for a single round.

GREATER DEMONIC PACT

Power Point Cost: 8

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: Three hours

Range: Effectively unlimited

Target: One demon lord

Duration: One hour/level, or until task is fulfilled but see below

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 15 ranks, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice, magic attack bonus +6, *demonic pact*, must know at least four sorcery styles, must be subject to a *demonic pact*.

This spell works as for *demonic pact*, except as noted above and below.

The demon summoned is a demon lord, rather than a demon of medium power as for *demonic pact*. No game statistics are provided for demon lords in Chapter 12: A Hyborian Bestiary; in effect, they are more like minor demonic gods than mere monsters.

A demon lord knows all spells and all sorcery styles.

Rather than intervening personally on behalf of the sorcerer the demon lord summoned with *greater demonic pact* will send one or more minions, which can be any of the entities that could normally be summoned with the *summon demon* spell, up to a total maximum HD equal to twice the sorcerer's level. It is these minions that will respond to any casting of the spell *master, aid me!* as well.

The insight or luck bonus granted by its brand, tattoo or talisman is doubled to +8.

Each time a sorcerer casts this spell, he must make a Corruption saving throw or gain one point of Corruption, as for *demonic pact*. However, he does not he automatically fail this saving throw the first time he casts *greater demonic pact*.

It is impossible for one sorcerer to have a pact with more than one demon or demon lord at a time. The *greater demonic pact* replaces the *demonic pact* that is the prerequisite for the spell.

Material Component: Powders, potions, incenses and other trappings to a total cost of 500 silver pieces plus a virgin human female who is sacrificed to the demon lord during the casting of the spell.

SUMMON DEMON

Power Point Cost: 1 per HD of demon

Components: V, S, M, XP

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Effect: One demon, of maximum HD equal to the caster's level

Duration: One task, lasting up to one hour/level

Saving Throw: See below

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +4, *master-words and signs* or *demonic pact*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the demon's saving throw



This spell calls up a single demon to perform a specific task for the sorcerer. This could be as simple as 'defend me for the duration of the spell' or a good deal more complex. However, if the wording of the sorcerer's instructions allows for misunderstanding or wilful misinterpretation, it is likely that the demon will follow the letter of the agreement rather than the spirit.

As the sorcerer who casts this spell is instructing and ordering the demon in question, he need not make a Corruption saving throw. In effect, this does not count as 'making peaceful contact' with the demon – the sorcerer is using his own authority or that of the demon with whom he has a pact to force the summoned demon to co-operate, which is hardly either peaceful or in the demon's best interests.

The demon you are attempting to summon gains a Will saving throw (with a DC set by the magic attack roll) to resist the spell and remain in its own hell, or in the Outer Dark or wherever it abides.

Material Component: A pinch of powdered sulphur, cast into the air or onto the floor. The demon arises from the sulphur.

Experience Point Cost: 50 XP/HD of demon.

SUMMON ELEMENTAL

Power Point Cost: 2 per HD of elemental

Components: F or V, M, XP

Casting Time: One full round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per two levels)

Effect: One elemental, of maximum HD equal to twice the caster's level

Duration: One task, lasting up to one hour/level

Saving Throw: See below

Prerequisites: Perform (song or an appropriate musical instrument) 10 ranks, magic attack bonus +7, *master-words and signs* or *greater demonic pact*.

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the elemental's saving throw

This spell calls up a single elemental to perform a specific task for the sorcerer. This could be as simple as 'defend me for the duration of the spell' or a good deal more complex. In most cases,

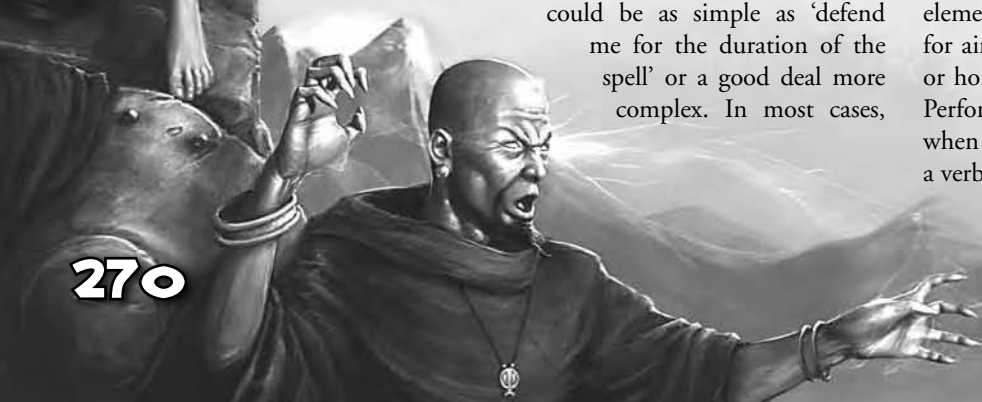
though, the elemental will perform the task to the best of its ability and understanding, rather than deliberately misunderstanding as a summoned demon usually would. The elemental is summoned up anywhere within line of sight of the sorcerer.

The task must never be more than one single mission. For example, an air elemental could carry the sorcerer's servant from Vendhya to Zembabwe but not wait around till he finishes his business there and bring him back. A water elemental could be summoned up to cause a river to flood, to destroy a specific ship (or even a whole fleet of ships) or to guard a port town and attack any black-sailed ships that come near it for the duration of the spell. However, it could not destroy a ship in the Western Ocean, rush over to the Baracha Isles to destroy another ship in the harbour at Tortage and then head to Argos to cause a storm. The elemental, as played by the Games Master, will never agree to any task that sounds like it is really two missions disguised as one. An elemental will regard any single use of one of its special attacks as a task in and of itself.

One option that always exists with elementals is to call them up on a contingency basis. In this case, the sorcerer casts the spell in advance, explains the task the elemental is to be called up for and the event that will trigger it, then dismisses the elemental again. If the triggering event occurs within the duration of the spell, the elemental will manifest automatically, perform the task and then leave. If the triggering event does not occur within the duration of the spell, the spell will be wasted and nothing will happen. When summoned up on a contingency basis in this way, the elemental will be unable to manifest unless the material component is present. The focus or verbal component, however, is only necessary when initially casting the spell.

The elemental you are attempting to summon gains a Will saving throw (with a DC set by the magic attack roll) to resist the spell and remain in its own strange home. If summoned up on a contingency basis, it may only make one Will saving throw when you call it up to begin the initial negotiations – if the contingency later occurs, it manifests without getting a saving throw to stay home.

Focus: A musical instrument, played by the sorcerer during the spell's casting time. This must be appropriate to the elemental called: a drum for water elementals, song or pipes for air elementals, stringed instrument for fire elementals or horn for earth elementals. A sorcerer with 10 ranks of Perform (song) does not need to use a separate instrument when calling up an air elemental (only), as his voice acts as a verbal component to replace the focus.



Material Component: A small quantity of the element to be summoned up. This need only be a token amount: a breath of air for an air elemental (which is usually provided by the air that forms the sound of the song or pipe music), a cupful of water for a water elemental, a small fire (such as is caused by a handful of flame-powder) for a fire elemental and at least four cubic inches of bare earth for an earth elemental.

Experience Point Cost: 50 XP/HD of elemental.

CHANNEL DEMON

Power Point Cost: 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Personal

Duration: One round per caster level

Prerequisites: *Demonic pact.*

When this spell is cast, the sorcerer's face contorts as his body is temporarily infused with demonic energies! He gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength and Constitution and his damage reduction increases by +2. Furthermore, he can use his hands as claws that deal 1d6 damage on a successful hit; these count as weapons for the purposes of attacks. The sorcerer automatically gains one Corruption point when he casts this spell.

THE WAR OF SOULS

A war of souls is a clash of pure will that is typically fought between sorcerers. Bodies remain motionless while minds strive for dominance. Those who gain the upper hand in a war of souls can sap the power of their rivals, leaving them unable to use sorcery. A group of sorcerers can collectively wage a war of souls upon a single victim, rapidly stripping away his power and leaving him senseless. Even demons can be subdued by a war of souls, though this process is dangerous.

WAR OF SOULS CHECK

A sorcerer in a war of souls will need to make opposed war of souls checks against an opponent. A war of souls check is a magic attack roll with two special modifiers that the sorcerer may benefit from: +2 for knowing the *entrance* spell and an additional +2 if at least one advanced hypnotism spell is known. Although sorcerers find it very difficult to use the Hypnotism spells *per se* against other sorcerers, many of the techniques taught under that sorcery style can be modified when fighting a war of souls.

Conan had witnessed hundreds of battles in his wild life, but never one like this, wherein four diabolical wills sought to beat down one lesser but equally devilish will that opposed them. But he only faintly sensed the monstrous quality of that hideous struggle. With his back to the wall, driven to bay by his former masters, Khemsa was fighting for his life with all the dark power, all the frightful knowledge they had taught him through long, grim years of neophytism and vassalage.

He was stronger than even he had guessed, and the free exercise of his powers in his own behalf had tapped unsuspected reservoirs of forces. And he was nerved to super-energy by frantic fear and desperation. He reeled before the merciless impact of those hypnotic eyes, but he held his ground. His features were distorted into a bestial grin of agony, and his limbs were twisted as on a rack. It was a war of souls, of frightful brains steeped in lore forbidden to men for a million years, of mentalities which had plumbed the abysses and explored the dark stars where spawn the shadows.

— *The People of the Black Circle*

STARTING A WAR OF SOULS

To start a war of souls, a sorcerer must engage his target mentally. Any sorcerer may declare a war of souls by challenging any other sorcerer who is within Evil Eye range (see page 237). This is a full-round action. The sorcerer makes a magic attack roll to lock his target in mental combat. If the target succeeds at his Will saving throw, the war of souls fails and is cancelled. If the target fails his Will saving throw, he and the sorcerer are now engaged in a war of souls.



WAR OF SOULS CONSEQUENCES

While a sorcerer is engaged in a war of souls, his ability to attack others and defend himself is limited.

No Threatened Squares: The sorcerer does not threaten any squares while engaged in a war of souls.

No Dodging Or Parrying: The sorcerer cannot dodge or parry while engaged in a war of souls.

No Movement: The sorcerer may not move normally while engaged in a war of souls.

No Spells: The sorcerer may not cast any spells while engaged in a war of souls.

IF A SORCERER IS ENGAGED IN A WAR OF SOULS

When a sorcerer is engaged in a war of souls (regardless of who started it) he can perform either of the following full-round actions:

DRAIN YOUR OPPONENT

While engaged in a war of souls, a sorcerer can drain Power Points from his opponent. He must make an opposed war of souls check. If he wins, he drains 1d6 Power Points from his opponent. The sorcerer gains any Power Points the target loses in this way. If this reduces the target's Power Points to zero or below, any further drain is applied to his Wisdom score instead. The sorcerer gains no particular benefit from damaging the target's Wisdom in this way, though of course if the target's Wisdom is reduced to zero he collapses, helpless.

Corruption: Staring into the eyes of a demon is a risky activity, for if one gazes into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into him. Any character engaging a demon of any kind in a War of Souls must make a Corruption check (standard DC for the demon) every time the demon successfully drains him.

BREAK OFF FROM WAR OF SOULS

A sorcerer can break off a war of souls by winning an opposed war of souls check. If more than one opponent is engaged in a war of souls with the sorcerer, the sorcerer's war of souls check

result has to beat all their individual check results to break off the war of souls. (Opponents do not have to try to keep the sorcerer engaged in the war of souls if they do not want to.) If the sorcerer wins the opposed war of souls check, he is no longer engaged in the war of souls.

JOINING A WAR OF SOULS

If a target is already engaged in a war of souls with someone else, the sorcerer can use a full-round action to join the war of souls as usual, as above. He still has to make a successful opposed war of souls check against his target to become part of the war of souls.

If there are multiple opponents involved in the war of souls, the sorcerer picks one to make the opposed war of souls check against.

MULTIPLE COMBATANTS IN A WAR OF SOULS

Several combatants can be in a single war of souls.

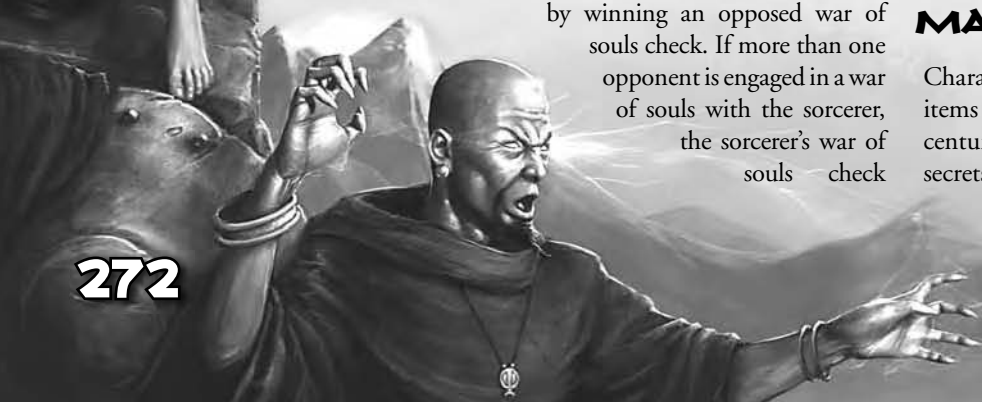
When a sorcerer is engaged in a war of souls with multiple opponents he may only drain one opponent at a time. Any opposed war of souls checks for draining are made against that opponent. In an attempt to break off the war of souls the sorcerer's war of souls check must beat the check results of each opponent or he remains locked in a war of souls with all of them.

MAGICAL, HERBAL AND ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

These items are not all magical in the usual sense of the word. Some are merely mysterious but are based on knowledge that only sorcerers tend to have, such as alchemy and certain similar crafts. However, to the ignorant, anything found here will be regarded as sorcery. Little distinction will be made between the person of the sorcerer, the items he carries and the magical effects he can produce.

MAGICAL ITEMS

Characters operating under these rules cannot make the items in this section; the knowledge has been lost for centuries and so the items must be found in person or the secrets of their manufacture searched out from ancient arcane sources.



BUYING AND SELLING MAGICAL, HERBAL AND ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

It is very nearly impossible to buy any of the items in this chapter in the normal sense, including the herbal preparations, poisons and alchemical items. Though some of the latter items are indeed bought and sold, the trade is almost always exclusive. Lotus plants and preparations, for example, are sent by caravan from Khitai to Stygia but they are all for the use of the priests and sorcerers who form the theocratic government of Stygia. These items are not for sale to adventurers.

The prices listed, then, are no more than guidelines. In most cases the listed price is the approximate price an item would cost if one was able to buy it legitimately somehow. There is no way for an average character to legitimately buy these items, so the prices given here are instead used to determine the cost and time of manufacture for those who gain the skills to make an item themselves (see page 96). A particularly rich adventurer might be able to afford to have special items stolen to order, at a cost of two or three times the listed amount – half up-front – with no guarantee that the thieves will ever make it back with the goods, or even alive.

It will usually be possible to sell items from this chapter at between 50% and 150% ($30\% + 2d6 \times 10\%$) of the nominal value if the seller is in a large city or has contacts with powerful sorcerers. Astute scholars will realise that it is possible to make a fair living travelling to exotic lands and gathering strange herbs for preparation, then selling them once back in civilisation. This is true, though it is not necessarily any less risky than any other adventurous undertaking!

Magical items proper, such as crystal balls, are never for sale. These artefacts are always in the hands of a sorcerer already or are remote from civilisation and so well guarded that no sorcerers in living memory have been able to get their hands on them.

BANE KNIFE OF KHOSATRAL KHEL

This heavy, curved knife was forged from meteoric iron with the specific intent of binding and then slaying Khosatral Khel, who was one of the most powerful sorcerer-gods of a bygone age a little over a thousand years ago. It is fashioned to resemble a Yuetshi knife, though it is far more elegant than those crude fishermens' blades. The pommel is jewelled and the hilt wrapped in shagreen leather.

The bane knife of Khosatral Khel can be used in three possible ways:

- ✱ A character holding this knife can cancel any spell cast by Khosatral Khel as a free action at the cost of one Power Point or one hit point (character's choice).
- ✱ If the knife touches Khosatral Khel, he is immediately paralysed (no saving throw) for 2d6 rounds or until the knife is removed from contact with him, whichever happens later.

- ✱ If the knife is used to attack Khosatral Khel directly, it does full damage for a Yuetshi knife, with an additional damage bonus of +1d6. Khosatral Khel's damage resistance has no effect against the bane knife.

The bane knife of Khosatral Khel can be taken as an example of the bane weapon, a weapon designed to slay a specific, named supernatural entity. Other bane weapons may be found with similar game statistics but each will be dedicated to fighting one individual creature, never a whole class of creatures such as 'all demons.'

CRYSTAL BALL

This shimmering crystal sphere is around six to eighteen inches in diameter. There is no particular advantage to crystal balls of varying sizes, other than





the obvious practical ones: increased detail for larger crystal balls but increased portability for smaller ones. Often a powerful sorcerer will try to have at least two crystal balls: a small one to carry and a larger one to use in his home.

In any case, a crystal ball grants a +4 enhancement bonus to the magic attack roll when using the *visions* spell.

CRYSTAL BALL OF SPEECH AND VISION

Certain crystal balls come as a set that includes one or more smaller crystal balls that are a mere three inches or so in diameter. The main crystal ball functions exactly like a standard crystal ball with additional properties:

A sorcerer who has a *visions* spell in operation may use the larger crystal ball to speak with the possessor of one of the smaller crystal balls, if that character is also present in the *visions*. A two-way conversation is possible. Speaking in this way expends an additional Power Points per minute. Note that other sounds are not transmitted, only speech between the sorcerer and one subject.

The smaller crystal balls do not function other than to act as means of communication with the main one. The only image they will ever show is the face of the sorcerer who is currently using the main crystal ball (if any).

SILVERY MIRROR

A silvery mirror is in effect something like a lower-quality version of the crystal ball, with the advantage that its magical properties are not immediately obvious. Most silvery mirrors are quite large, suitable for mounting on a wall, though smaller pocket-sized versions may also be found occasionally with concomitant gains in portability and losses in clarity of vision.

A silvery mirror grants a +2 enhancement bonus to the magic attack roll when using the *visions* spell.

SPELLBOOKS

Spellbooks are usually written on human skin that has been flayed from the flesh of living victims.

Sorcerers do not need spellbooks to cast their spells but may find useful arcane lore in some spellbooks; these tomes are often written to make the job of teaching acolytes less burdensome. Any one spellbook contains full information on 2d4 spells from one or more sorcery styles and adds a +4 bonus to the Knowledge (arcana) check made to research any of the spells detailed within it.

A sorcerer may attempt to cast a spell directly from a spellbook without learning the spell or having all the prerequisites for the spell, although this is exceedingly difficult and dangerous. Only spells with a casting time of one full round or more may be cast in this fashion.

Firstly, the sorcerer must make a Knowledge (arcana) check – see the table below for the DCs. If the check fails, he rolls on the Runaway Magic table and the spell cannot be cast. The +4 bonus to Knowledge (arcana) checks from the spellbook itself does not apply in this case.

The Spell Is	Knowledge (arcana) Check DC
A Basic Spell	20
An Advanced Spell from a style the Sorcerer knows	25
An Advanced Spell from a style the Sorcerer does not know	30
A Mighty Spell from any style	40

If the Knowledge (arcana) check is successful, the sorcerer may cast the spell from the book but it costs an extra 1d6 Power Points.

STAFF OF DEATH

This Khitan magical item resembles a quarterstaff. It can be used as a weapon, in which case it is treated as a quarterstaff but with a +1 enhancement bonus on all attack rolls made with it. In addition, it can be used to deliver spells that have a range of 'touch.' Used in this way, it activates the spell whenever it strikes an enemy, whether or not its regular melee damage penetrates his armour. The staff itself is said to be cut from 'the living Tree of Death' and must be crafted individually for each wielder. If stolen or otherwise acquired from the original wielder, the staff has no effect.



DRUGS, POISONS AND HERBAL PREPARATIONS

The raw materials for herbal items are generally very tricky to obtain and the final substances are also often difficult and time-consuming to manufacture. Rather than buying raw ingredients, a herbalist will usually need to search for them himself. It is rare to find unprepared herbs for sale, since anyone who knows which herbs to pick also knows there is far more profit to be had in selling the various extracts and drugs that can be made from them than selling the herbs alone.

The most notorious of all herbs are the feared lotus plants. Lotuses come in a number of varieties and some of these varieties have several different uses.

When gathering venom or other product that derives from a particular creature rather than a mere plant, the Games Master will require the character to play out at least one combat with it as well as simply finding it. These poisons are usually gathered with the Poison Use feat, rather than the Craft (herbalism) skill, since the latter only covers plant based products. Plant-based poisons such as the Apples of Derketa can be gathered with either the feat or the skill.

Full rules for crafting herbal items can be found in the Skills section (see page 97).

APPLES OF DERKETA

These large apple-like globes are dark crimson in colour and grow on a tree whose broad leaves are a rich and peculiarly vivid green. The trees grow in the lush jungles of Kush.

The apples are deadly poisonous if eaten, or if the fresh juice is smeared on weaponry. The juice even inflicts some damage if spilt onto skin. The apples need no particular preparation to be poisonous, so the Craft (herbalism) skill is not needed to make use of the poison, though it could be useful in finding a place where the trees grow.

If a character takes more than five points of Constitution damage from the apples, he is also blinded for 2d6 hours.

The juice's potency lasts only for an hour or so, though an apple could conceivably be carried for a week before losing its potency.

BLACK LOTUS BLOSSOM

The flowers of the black lotus give off a heady scent that causes dream-haunted slumber. Any

who inhale them must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 25) or fall fast asleep for 1d3 hours. However, this sleep can also be useful, for the dreams that result are often prophetic or otherwise highly informative in nature. Anyone who undergoes the sleep of the southern lotus may attempt a Knowledge (arcana) skill check once per hour to gain some useful insight into his current situation, at the Games Master's discretion. If this information tells of an immediate threat to his sleeping body, he may attempt to rouse himself through sheer willpower alone with a Will saving throw (DC 25).

BLACK LOTUS JUICE

This is a deadly poison, plain and simple. It immediately brings a man to his knees, weak as a kitten, and finishes him off soon after.

BLACK LOTUS POWDER

This incense-like stuff is burnt to provide dreamy, opium-like effects which can either boost a sorcerer's power or allow rapid recovery from major sorcerous efforts, at the cost of a distinct lack of function for a day or so.

A sorcerer who has reduced his Power Points below zero may return to full Base Power Points by burning one dose of the powder and then spending 4d6 hours completely helpless as he alternates between an unconscious stupor and wild waking dreams.

A sorcerer who is at zero Power Points or above when he burns the black lotus gains one Power Point per hour for 4d6 hours, up to his maximum Power Points. His Power Points will not begin to decay back to his Base Power Points until the black lotus powder wears off. He is not completely helpless during this time but will suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to all Listen and Spot checks.

Cost: 300 sp/dose

BLACK LOTUS WINE

Also known as lotus-juice (although it is nothing to do with Black Lotus Juice) this is a wine-like drink that is drunk for pleasure. It is a mixture of various extracts from the black lotus, steeped in a sizable quantity of strong wine. The quantities used in the recipe are a closely guarded secret, for if the balance is wrong the



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LOTUS

Various lotus plants can be found everywhere from Khitai to Kush. They seem to grow predominantly in jungle or swamp environments, though none grow in the Pictish Wilderness. Even among scholars, there is some confusion as to the nomenclature of the various types of lotus plant and the various preparations that can be made from them. The following system of classification is intended to be simple and comprehensive; it includes all the various lotus plants and preparations mentioned in the Conan stories.

Black Lotus: The most versatile and infamous of all the lotus plants is the black lotus. It is used by the denizens of the lost city of Xuthal, among other places, to make a variety of preparations and grows extensively in the jungles around the Zarkheba River. It seems likely that it also grows elsewhere in the Black Kingdoms, though probably nowhere so lushly as around that black-watered river. The plant itself is actively malevolent and semi-mobile, stooping to waft its poisonous perfume at anyone nearby: treat this as a touch attack with a modifier of +6, exposing victims to Black Lotus Blossom (see page 275) on contact. Those who can get close enough to harvest it without being overcome by its dread fumes can find a variety of uses for it, including the deadly poison Black Lotus Juice, the incense-like drug Black Lotus Powder, and the potent wine known as Black Lotus Wine. The fresh-cut flowers are known to retain their hallucinogenic scent and are particularly potent in their narcotic effects.

Golden Lotus: This lotus plant is something of a mystery. Its extract, Golden Lotus Juice (see opposite), is found in Zamboula and is perhaps the most beneficial of the various lotus preparations. However, if the plant itself is related to the other lotus plants then it must grow in a swamp or jungle, of which there are few near the steppes and deserts around Zamboula. It seems likely that this is another Khitan export, since Zamboula is on the main caravan route that extends from Khitai to Stygia. This would account for its relative rarity, as otherwise it seems odd that such a useful plant can not be found more commonly in the Hyborean kingdoms. Alternatively, it is certainly possible that the golden lotus is related to the white and black lotuses and so grows in Kush and the other Black Kingdoms. It could even be a swamp plant from southern Stygia, like the purple lotus. If it does indeed grow in Kush or Stygia, it must be scarce indeed, for it is highly prized.

Green Lotus: One of the two varieties of lotus found as far east as Khitai, the green lotus in its natural form is almost black in colour and so is sometimes called black lotus by the ignorant. Green lotus blossoms are cut from the lost jungles of Khitai by the priests of Yun, who dry the great flowers out and powder them into a fine dust for export by caravan to Stygia. This dust is known as Green Lotus Dust (see opposite) and is one of the deadliest poisons known to man.

Grey Lotus: Perhaps related to the green lotus, the grey lotus is also found close to Khitai but in the Swamps of the Dead beyond that mystical land. Its blossoms are cut, dried and powdered, then exported as far as Corinthia and perhaps elsewhere. Grey Lotus Dust (see opposite) sends any who breathe its dust immediately and murderously insane.

Purple Lotus: Found only in the ghost-haunted swamps of southern Stygia, the purple lotus has only one known use. The juice extracted from all parts of the plant forms a powerful paralytic poison, known as Purple Lotus Juice (see opposite).

White Lotus: The white lotus tree is larger than the other lotus plants and is surprisingly benign or at least harmless. It grows in Keshan and elsewhere in the northern Black Kingdoms but nowhere else. There are no particularly powerful uses known for the plant, though it is possible that it may have properties only brought out by combining it in another herbal preparation. Experimentation is the only way to find out for sure.

Yellow Lotus: The yellow lotus closely resembles the black lotus in its effects but is a far less potent plant. It secretes Yellow Lotus Resin (see opposite) but has no other particularly useful properties. It seems likely that it, like the black lotus, grows somewhere in the northern Black Kingdoms though it is used by sorcerers from around the world.



drinker may be made permanently insane or even killed by the lotus juices. When it is made correctly, lotus wine will render the drinker unconscious through alcohol poisoning before the quantity of lotus used kills him. The general effects are similar to those of burning black lotus powder, except that the wine offers no particular benefit to sorcerers – only hallucinations and drunkenness to dull the senses of the jaded. Black lotus wine is particularly common in the mad city of Xuthal (see page 330).

Cost: 50 sp/pint

STYGIAN BLACK SCORPION VENOM

A single drop of this deadly venom is enough to slay a strong man if it gets into his bloodstream.

GOLDEN LOTUS JUICE

This golden liquid is extremely scarce and valuable, for it provides instantaneous relief from all herbal and alchemical effects, including the slumber, paralysis or madness that may be caused by some of the other lotus varieties. Drinking a single dose of golden lotus juice will also cure 1d6 points of ability damage, if the drinker has any.

Cost: 1,200 sp/dose

GREAT SERPENT VENOM

This powerful poison is carefully 'milked' from the great serpents that infest the swamps of Zingara.

GREEN LOTUS DUST

This is often called black lotus, though it is not the same plant as the true black lotus of Xuthal and the Zarkheba River. The green lotus blossom is a greenish-yellow powder that kills when inhaled. It grows only in the jungles of Khitai but is exported in small quantities to Stygia by caravan.

GREY LOTUS DUST

Any who breathe in this dust and fail their Fortitude saving throws are not only dealt ability damage but also enter berserk furies identical to those described under the Fighting-Madness feat (see page 126). While infuriated, they will attack the nearest living creature.

PURPLE LOTUS JUICE

This is by far the most powerful paralytic poison known, capable of felling even the mighty Conan.

YELLOW LOTUS RESIN

This is something like a poor man's black lotus powder, a dark yellowish-brown resin scraped from the leaves and flowers of the yellow lotus. Yellow lotus resin is used by sorcerers for its strong hallucinogenic effect to provide visions and trances. Its effects last for 2d4 hours and it grants a +2 circumstance bonus to all Knowledge (arcana) checks made with relation to Divination. Furthermore, during its duration the sorcerer is considered to be resting for

purposes of regaining Power Points, whatever he is actually doing. However, he has a –2 penalty to Listen and Spot checks while affected by the resin and for 1d6 hours thereafter.

Cost: 125 sp/dose.





THE EFFECTS OF POISON

When a character takes damage from an attack with a poisoned weapon, touches an item smeared with contact poison, consumes poisoned food or drink or is otherwise poisoned, he must make a series of Fortitude saving throws. The number and timing of such throws depends on the poison – a fast-acting poison might require three throws in three successive rounds, while a slower, more long-lasting venom might require one saving throw every hour for twelve hours. The first time a character fails a saving throw, he takes damage from the poison which is normally ability score damage. Each time after that the character fails a saving throw against the poison, the die used increases by one step and he takes more damage. For example, a character is struck by a serpent whose poison deals 1d4 Constitution damage and requires one saving throw every fifteen minutes for one hour. He passes the first saving throw but fails the second, taking 1d4 Constitution damage. He then fails the third and fourth saving throws, taking 1d6 and 1d8 damage respectively, for a total of 1d4+1d6+1d8 Constitution damage.

One dose of poison smeared on a weapon or some other object affects just a single target. A poisoned weapon or object retains its venom until the weapon scores a hit or an object is touched, unless the poison is wiped off before a target comes in contact with it.

Poisons can be divided into four basic types according to the method by which their effects are delivered, as follows:

Contact: Merely touching this type of poison necessitates a saving throw. It can be actively delivered via a weapon or a touch attack. Even if a creature has sufficient damage reduction to avoid taking any damage from the attack, the poison can still affect it if the weapon contacts bare flesh. As a general rule, if the damage reduction from armour is enough to block all damage from a blow, the contact poison is wasted. A chest or other object can be smeared with contact poison as part of a trap.

Ingested: Ingested poisons are virtually impossible to utilise in a combat situation. A poisoner could administer a potion to an unconscious creature or attempt to dupe someone into drinking or eating something that has been poisoned. Thieves and other characters tend to use ingested poisons outside of combat.

Inhaled: Inhaled poisons are usually contained in fragile vials or eggshells. They can be thrown as a ranged attack with a range increment of 10 feet. When it strikes a hard surface (or is struck hard), the container releases its poison. One dose spreads to fill the volume of a 10-foot cube. Alternatively, four doses may be placed in a specially designed one-use blowpipe (cost 20 sp) to fill the volume of a 20-foot by 20-foot by 10-foot high cube; the blowpipe used in this way has a range increment of five feet. Each creature within the area must make a saving throw unless they had the foresight to hold their breath first. The cloud typically persists for 3d6 rounds, so it is possible for it to affect several creatures if they wander into range; furthermore, inhaled poisons are subject to being blown by the wind during this time and could potentially be blown back towards their users. At the Games Master's discretion, some inhaled poisons may have a lesser effect on victims who are holding their breath by being absorbed through tear ducts, nasal membranes and the like.

Injury: This poison must be delivered through a wound. If a creature has sufficient damage reduction to avoid taking any damage from the attack, the poison does not affect it. Traps that cause damage from weapons, needles and the like sometimes contain injury poisons.

The characteristics of poisons are summarised on the Poisons table. Terms on the table are defined below:

Type: The poison's method of delivery (contact, ingested, inhaled or via an injury) and the Fortitude saving throw DC to avoid the poison's damage.

Damage: The damage the character takes immediately upon failing his saving throw against the poison. Ability damage is temporary. Paralysis lasts for 2d6 minutes.

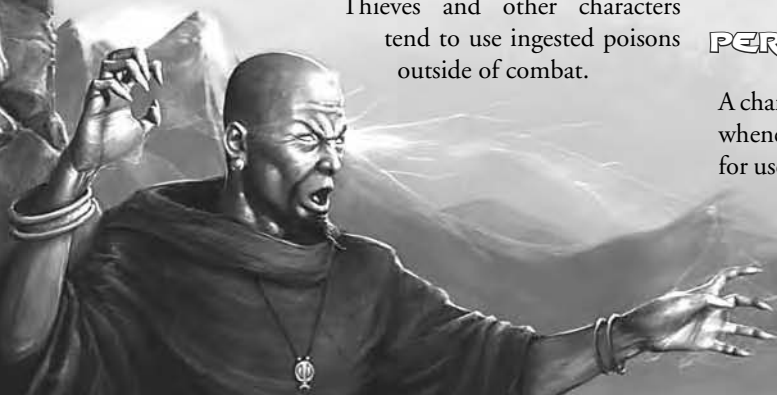
Saves Required: The number of saving throws required.

Save Interval: How often these saving throws occur.

Price: The cost of one dose (one vial) of the poison. It is not possible to use or apply poison in any quantity smaller than one dose. The purchase and possession of poison is always illegal. Even in big cities, poison can be obtained only from specialised, less than reputable sources.

PERILS OF USING POISON

A character has a 5% chance of exposing himself to a poison whenever he applies it to a weapon or otherwise readies it for use. Additionally, a character who rolls a natural one on an attack roll with a poisoned weapon must



Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval	Price
Apple of Derketa Juice	Contact DC 20	1d3 Con	4	1 round	500 sp
Apple of Derketa Juice	Injury DC 22	1d4 Con	4	1 round	500 sp
Apple of Derketa	Ingested DC 22	1d6 Con	4	Immediate/1 round/ 6 rounds/1 minute	500 sp
Black Lotus Blossom	Inhaled DC 25	1d3 Str + Hallucinations	Varies	Until failed or exposure ends	1,250 sp
Black Lotus Juice	Ingested DC 22	1d6 Str + 1d4 Con	4	1 round	750 sp
Black Strygian Scorpion Venom	Injury DC 23	1d6 Con + 1d6 Dex	4	1 round	1,000 sp
Great Serpent Venom	Injury DC 21	1d2 Con	10	Immediate/1 minute/ 1 hour/1 hour/1 hour/ 1 hour/1 hour/1 hour/ 1 hour/1 hour	850 sp
Green Lotus Dust	Inhaled DC 24	1d4 Con	1d6	1 round	1,500 sp
Grey Lotus Dust	Inhaled DC 22	2d6 Wis + Fighting- Madness (see description)	1	Immediate	800 sp
Purple Lotus Juice	Injury DC 28	1d6 Dex + Paralysis	1d6	1 round	2,500 sp

make a DC 15 Reflex saving throw or accidentally poison himself with the weapon. These penalties can be removed by selecting the Poison Use feat (see page 134).

alchemist is undisturbed, so a stout lock, a certain amount of isolation and guards of some kind are all recommended for an alchemist's laboratory.

POISON IMMUNITIES

Creatures with natural poison attacks are immune to their own poison. Nonliving creatures (constructs and undead) and creatures without metabolisms (such as elementals) are always immune to poison. Certain kinds of outsiders are also immune to poison, although conceivably special poisons could be concocted specifically to harm them.

ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

Alchemical items are quite similar in nature to herbal preparations, except that they require more extensive tools, usually a fully functional alchemist's laboratory. Full rules for crafting alchemical items can be found in the Skills chapter (see page 96).

Note that alchemical items marked with an asterisk (*) can be used in conjunction with the *greater telekinesis* spell.

OUTFITTING AN ALCHEMIST'S LABORATORY

Unlike the usual crafts, whose practitioners can often get by with portable toolkits, alchemy requires a great deal of equipment if one is to practice it at all, let alone successfully. At a bare minimum, a room around 10 feet by 10 feet is needed to be set up as a laboratory. Alchemical work can only be done if the

A basic laboratory can be set up for some 500 silver pieces so long as the above requirements are also met. The basic laboratory has only the bare minimum of equipment, such that in effect the alchemist is working with improvised tools (-2 to all Craft (alchemy) checks), though without even this minimal lab no work at all can be done.

For a more advanced laboratory, a 20-foot by 20-foot room is required, along with 1,500 silver pieces in equipment. This gives neither bonuses nor penalties to alchemy.

A masterwork laboratory requires a 30-foot by 30-foot room and equipment costing 5,000 silver pieces. This grants a +2 bonus to all Craft (alchemy) checks.

ACHERONIAN DEMON-FIRE*

This powerful demon-fire recipe, older and more subtle than Kothic Demon-Fire (see next page), is loaded into a glass orb which can be flung at an opponent. It can either be hurled directly at a character or thrown on to the ground. In either case it has a range increment of 10 feet.



If Acheronian demon-fire is thrown at a character, a ranged touch attack roll is made against his Dodge Defence. As usual for missile fire, Parry Defence cannot be used; a character who attempts to parry a demon-fire orb will simply set it off as soon as it contacts the parrying weapon. This demon-fire inflicts 1d6 fire damage and incapacitates (knocks unconscious) a character for 1d6 hours. He may make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 25) to avoid the incapacitation effect but not the damage.

If thrown at the ground, the Acheronian demon-fire affects a 10-foot by 10-foot area. Any character within the area affected must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) or sustain 1 point of fire damage and be stunned for 1d4 rounds. A stunned character can take no actions and can neither dodge nor parry. Opponents receive a +2 bonus to their attack rolls to hit him.

Cost: 1,500 sp.

Requirements: Craft (alchemy) 6 ranks.

FLAME-POWDER[®]

Flame-powder is something of a poor man's demon fire. It is magically treated sulphur, which will burst into flame as soon as it is struck hard or crushed. It can be hurled to the ground with some force but only immediately adjacent to the sorcerer who throws it. In this case it affects a five-foot by five-foot area within five feet of the sorcerer by bursting into small flames that last for one round and deal 1d4 fire damage to any creature within its square, as well as potentially starting fires. Alternatively, it can be simply poured out over a surface, so that the next creature weighing at least 200 pounds who steps on it while running (or who weighs 400 pounds or more but steps on it while walking) immediately triggers the effect. Used in this latter way, the flame-powder will lose its potency after one hour if no one steps on it.

Cost: 50 sp.

Requirements: Craft (alchemy) 4 ranks.

GOLDEN WINE OF XUTHAL

This nectar-like liquid heals wounds almost instantaneously and if drunk regularly prolongs life too. It is found only in the lost city of Xuthal, deep in the Southern Desert. It is possible that the golden wine is derived from

the golden lotus (see page 276) but this is no more than speculation – the secret of its manufacture is known only to the half-dreaming citizens of Xuthal.

A single dose of this wine is sufficient to instantly heal 2d8 + (2 × character level) hit points on any wounded character. It also instantly restores up to (1d6 + character level) ability score loss in each damaged ability.

Cost: 1,750 sp/dose.

Requirements: Craft (alchemy) 12 ranks, must discover the recipe from the Xuthallans or by other researches.

KOTHIC DEMON-FIRE[®]

This small glass orb is filled with a deadly combination of substances that ignite into heat and flame on contact with air. It can either be hurled directly at a character or thrown to the ground. In either case it has a range increment of 10 feet.

If thrown at a character, a ranged touch attack roll is made against his Dodge Defence. As usual for missile fire, Parry Defence cannot be used; a character who attempts to parry a demon-fire orb will simply set it off as soon as it contacts the parrying weapon. Against a character, it inflicts 5d6 fire damage and stuns him for one round. A stunned character can take no actions and can neither dodge nor parry. His opponents receive a +2 bonus to their attack rolls to hit him. He may make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) to avoid the stun effect but not the damage.

If thrown at the ground, the Kothic demon-fire affects a 10-foot by 10-foot area. Any character within the area affected must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) or be dealt 2d8 fire damage.

Cost: 500 sp.

Requirements: Craft (alchemy) 4 ranks.

LOTUS SMOKE[®]

Lotus smoke is a preparation derived from any powdered lotus blossom: green, grey or black. When cast on the ground (treat as a thrown weapon with a range increment of five feet) it sheds light in a 15 foot radius. One round later, it turns into a glowing ball that affects all who look on it (treat as an Evil Eye range spell) as though targeted by an *entrance* spell cast by the sorcerer who created the lotus smoke. The ball moves 10 feet in the same direction as it was initially thrown. One round later still, it turns into a cloud of smoke 15 feet by 15 feet by 15 feet in





size, which moves in the same direction again, this time at 20 feet per round for 2d6 rounds. In smoke form, it has exactly the same effect as the lotus blossom it was originally derived from.

Cost: Lotus blacksmoke, 3,750 sp; lotus greensmoke, 4,500 sp; lotus greysmoke, 2,400 sp.

Raw Materials: One dose of either green, grey or black lotus blossom (which is considered to replace the usual 1/3 cost for raw materials – see the Craft skill description on page 96).

Requirements: Craft (alchemy) 10 ranks, Craft (herbalism) 8 ranks, *entrance*.

SCYGIAN TOMB-DUST*

This dust causes temporary blindness when flung into the eyes. The target gets a Reflex saving throw (DC set by the thrower's magic attack roll) to avoid it completely.

If the target fails, he is blinded for 2d6 rounds. See page 224 for the effects of blindness.

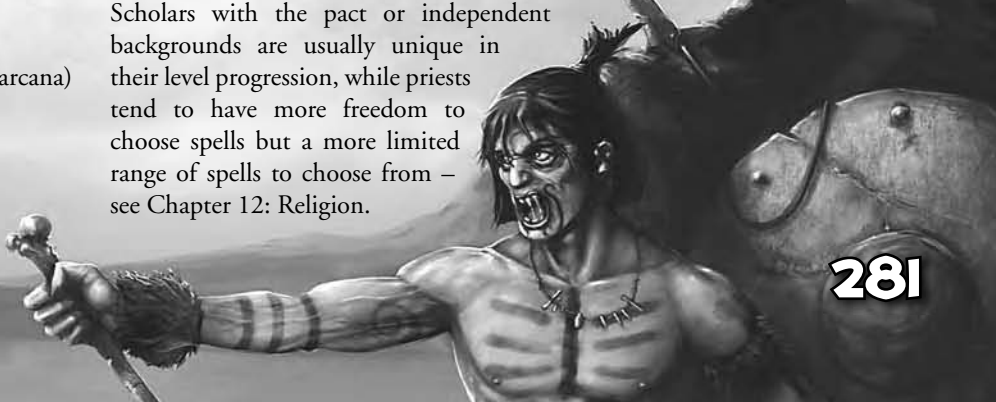
Cost: 400 sp.

Requirements: Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks.

EXPANDING THE ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

The following are examples of typical scholars who have the acolyte background. These represent the standard methods of teaching within the sorcerous societies listed; it is not usually possible for a character to deviate from these teaching methods once he has commenced them, though sometimes an individual master will alter the curriculum somewhat. A character who breaks away from his sorcerous society or who studies elsewhere in secret may certainly learn different spells with the agreement of the Games Master (usually as though he was independent or by making a pact with a demon) though this often has its own risks, such as covens wanting revenge if they discover their acolyte has rejected their teaching.

Scholars with the pact or independent backgrounds are usually unique in their level progression, while priests tend to have more freedom to choose spells but a more limited range of spells to choose from – see Chapter 12: Religion.





SPECIFIC ACOLYTE BACKGROUNDS

Level	Khitan Sorcerer	Kushite Witch-Finder	Pictish Shaman	Rakhsha	Wise-Woman or Cunning-Man	Sorcerer of the Black Ring
1	<i>Calm of the Adept</i>	<i>Astrological Prediction</i>	<i>Summon Beast</i>	<i>Entrance</i>	<i>Summon Beast</i>	<i>Conjuring</i>
2	<i>Astrological Prediction</i>	<i>Warding</i>	<i>Lesser Ill-Fortune</i>	<i>Calm of the Adept</i>	<i>Astrological Prediction</i>	<i>Lesser Ill-Fortune</i>
3	<i>Warrior Trance</i>	<i>Incantation of Amalric's Witchman</i>	<i>Greater Summon Beast</i>	<i>Darting Serpent</i>	<i>Animal Ally</i>	<i>Telekinesis</i>
4	<i>Psychometry, Raise Corpse</i>	<i>Lesser Ill-Fortune, Psychometry</i>	<i>Ill-Fortune, Warding</i>	<i>Warrior Trance, Warding</i>	<i>Greater Summon Beast, Warding</i>	<i>Warding, Greater Telekinesis</i>
5	<i>The Dead Speak</i>	<i>Rune of Jhebbal Sag</i>	<i>Rune of Jhebbal Sag</i>	<i>Hypnotic Suggestion</i>	<i>Visions</i>	<i>Ill-Fortune</i>
6	<i>Darting Serpent</i>	<i>Visions</i>	<i>Greater Ill-Fortune</i>	<i>Domination</i>	<i>Sorcerous Garden</i>	<i>Greater Ill-Fortune</i>
7	<i>Mind-Reading</i>	<i>Greater Warding</i>	<i>Greater Warding</i>	<i>Savage Beast</i>	<i>Dream of Wisdom</i>	<i>Greater Warding</i>
8	<i>Warding, Greater Warding</i>	Free Choice	<i>Dance of the Changing Serpent, Astrological Prediction</i>	<i>Lesser Ill-Fortune, Gelid Bones</i>	Free Choice	<i>Raise Corpse, Burst Barrier</i>
9	<i>Sorcerous News</i>	Free Choice	Free Choice	<i>Greater Warding</i>	Free Choice	Free Choice
10	<i>Death Touch</i>	Free Choice	Free Choice	<i>Mass Hypnotic Suggestion</i>	Free Choice	Free Choice

ACOLYTES

Khitan Sorcerer: Most Khitan sorcerers value information above all else and though they will not hesitate to slay those who deserve it or are their allotted targets, they prefer to avoid unnecessary deaths. They also learn Oriental magic and Curses, making them highly effective combatants.

These sorcerers usually wear hooded, wide-sleeved robes of a very dark grey or black material and sandals beneath their robes. They favour a staff as a weapon and, if they can get them, Staffs of Death (see page 274) to deliver their spells.

Khitan sorcerers almost always travel and train in small groups. One member of the group will be the senior sorcerer, who is responsible for teaching the others. He will usually be scrupulously fair but by no means a pushover.

Kushite Witch-Finder: The Kushite witch-doctors, witchmen or witchfinders are particularly famed for their countermagic abilities. Their duties are

to protect the tribe from rival witches, predict the future and curse tribal enemies, in approximately that order of importance.

Most favour feathers, bones and animal skins as their outfit, in classical shamanic style. Often they also sport long, wild dreadlocks.

The Kushite tradition of scholarship is in many respects far more open-minded than that of the more supposedly civilised nations. They are happy enough to share their knowledge with others, even those from distant lands. Likewise, their sorcerers rarely exert undue influence over their acolytes – though a senior witchman can be a harsh taskmaster, he is genuinely concerned for the welfare of his acolyte and desires to train him to be an asset to the tribe.

Pictish Shaman: The shamans of the Pictish Wilderness are a dangerous bunch, though fortunately they spend most of their time fighting each other rather than banding together and raiding the Hyborian kingdoms. Thus some of the earliest spells they learn are curses and they love practising such magic.

Like the witchmen of Kush, Pictish shamans favour feathers, bones and simple loin-clouts as their garb, though



the relatively light-skinned Picts also use war paint and other ceremonial colouring to show off their intent and call their spirits' attention.

Pictish shamans are wary of sharing their magic and this reticence even extends to their own tribe or even their families. An acolyte shaman had best be constantly on the alert to prove his loyalty or he is likely to find himself used as the next sacrifice to the weird Pictish gods.

Rakhsha: These Vendhyan and Himelian scholars are experts with Oriental magic. They usually combine this expertise with at least some knowledge of martial arts, to complement such spells as *warrior trance*. They are also skilled hypnotists, capable of defeating most foes without so much as lifting a finger or raising a sweat. Finally, most learn at least a measure of countermagic, recognising that another sorcerer is a far greater threat than most ordinary humans could ever be.

Most wear plain robes and appear unarmed, though they often have concealed weaponry or sorcerous objects hidden about their person.

Rakhshas are usually acolytes of far more powerful groups. Those from the Himelian mountains are usually apprenticed to the Seers of Yimsha and are regarded as completely expendable by their wicked masters.

Wise-Woman or Cunning-Man: These respected but elusive scholars are often called witches, though this is not strictly true. They tend to live an almost hermit-like existence, seeking wisdom in the

silences of the high places. They gain knowledge through herbal means such as the green smoke method of casting the *visions* spell or from their own dreams. They gain oracular knowledge from their gods, some of which they are permitted to communicate to others, some they must keep to themselves.

Most wise-women or cunning-men dress and act simply, favouring warm, practical clothing in neutral wools.

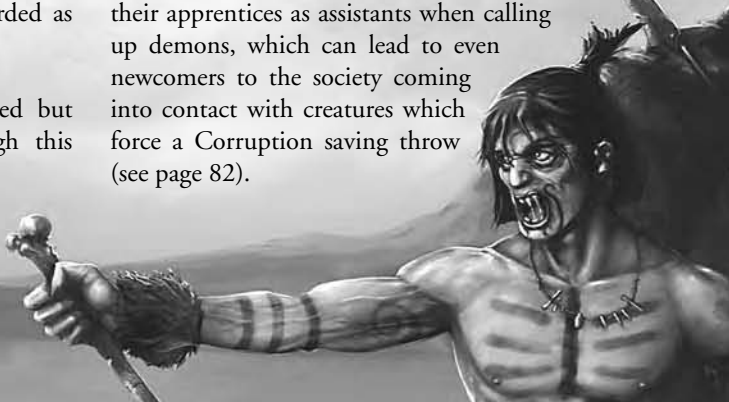
Wise-women and cunning-men are some of the fairest and kindest taskmasters when it comes to their apprentices, which is how they refer to their acolytes. Their genuine concern for the well being of their charges is on a par with their love for nature.

Sorcerer of the Black Ring:

The sorcerers of the Black Ring are some of the most accomplished prestidigitators of the Hyborian Age and seem to be constantly hurling demon-fire or tomb-dust at their foes. They also learn cursing, countermagic and the powerful magic of life and death.

Sorcerers of the Black Ring do not have a uniform dress code, though many wear dark-coloured robes.

The Black Ring is Stygia's foremost sorcerous society and those acolytes who apprentice themselves into its lower echelons must dedicate their lives to obeying their superiors in the society. Higher level sorcerers of the Black Ring almost always learn the Summoning sorcery style and often use their apprentices as assistants when calling up demons, which can lead to even newcomers to the society coming into contact with creatures which force a Corruption saving throw (see page 82).





The Hyborian Age

By Robert E. Howard

Of that epoch known by the Nemedian chroniclers as the Pre-Cataclysmic Age, little is known except the latter part, and that is veiled in the mists of legendry. Known history begins with the waning of the Pre-Cataclysmic civilization, dominated by the kingdoms of Kamelia, Valusia, Verulia, Grondar, Thule, and Commoria. These peoples spoke a similar language, arguing a common origin. There were other kingdoms, equally civilized, but inhabited by different, and apparently older races.

The barbarians of that age were the Picts, who lived on islands far out on the western ocean; the Atlanteans, who dwelt on a small continent between the Pictish Islands and the main, or Thurian Continent; and the Lemurians, who inhabited a chain, of large islands in the eastern hemisphere.

There were vast regions of unexplored land. The civilized kingdoms, though enormous in extent, occupied a comparatively small portion of the whole planet. Valusia was the westernmost kingdom of the Thurian Continent; Grondar the easternmost. East of Grondar, whose people were less highly cultured than those of their kindred kingdoms, stretched a wild and barren expanse of deserts. Among the less arid stretches of desert, in the jungles, and among the mountains, lived scattered clans and tribes of primitive savages. Far to the south there was a mysterious civilization, unconnected with the Thurian culture, and apparently pre-human in its nature. On the far eastern shores of the Continent there lived another race, human, but mysterious and non-Thurian, with which the Lemurians from time to time came in contact. They apparently came from a shadowy and nameless continent lying somewhere east of the Lemurian Islands.

The Thurian civilization was crumbling; their armies were composed largely of barbarian mercenaries. Picts, Atlanteans, and Lemurians were their generals, their statesmen, often their kings. Of the bickerings of the kingdoms, and the wars between Valusia and Commoria,

as well as the conquests by which the Atlanteans founded a kingdom on the mainland, there were more legends than accurate history.

Then the Cataclysm rocked the world. Atlantis and Lemuria sank, and the Pictish Islands were heaved up to form the mountain peaks of a new continent. Sections of the Thurian Continent vanished under the waves, or sinking, formed great inland lakes and seas. Volcanoes broke forth and terrific earthquakes shook down the shining cities of the empires. Whole nations were blotted out.

The barbarians fared a little better than the civilized races. The inhabitants of the Pictish Islands were destroyed, but a great colony of them, settled among the mountains of Valusia's southern frontier, to serve as a buffer against foreign invasion, was untouched. The Continental kingdom of the Atlanteans likewise escaped the common ruin, and to it came thousands of their tribesmen in ships from the sinking land. Many Lemurians escaped to the eastern coast of the Thurian Continent, which was comparatively untouched. There they were enslaved by the ancient race which already dwelt there, and their history, for thousands of years, is a history of brutal servitude.

In the western part of the Continent, changing conditions created strange forms of plant and animal life. Thick jungles covered the plains, great rivers cut their roads to the sea, wild mountains were heaved up, and lakes covered the ruins of old cities in fertile valleys. To the continental kingdom of the Atlanteans, from sunken areas, swarmed myriads of beasts and savages – ape-men and apes. Forced to battle continually for their lives, they yet managed to retain vestiges of their former state of highly advanced barbarism. Robbed of metals and ores, they became workers in stone like their distant ancestors, and had attained a real artistic level, when their struggling culture came into contact with the powerful Pictish nation. The Picts had also reverted to flint, but had advanced more rapidly in the matter of population and war-science. They had none of the Atlanteans' artistic nature; they were a ruder, more practical, more prolific race. They left no pictures painted or carved on ivory, as did their enemies, but they left remarkably efficient flint weapons in plenty.



These stone age kingdoms clashed, and in a series of bloody wars, the outnumbered Atlanteans were hurled back into a state of savagery, and the evolution of the Picts was halted. Five hundred years after the Cataclysm the barbaric kingdoms have vanished. It is now a nation of savages – the Picts – carrying on continual warfare with tribes of savages – the Atlanteans. The Picts had the advantage of numbers and unity, whereas the Atlanteans had fallen into loosely knit clans. That was the West of that day.

In the distant East, cut off from the rest of the world by the heaving up of gigantic mountains and the forming of a chain of vast lakes, the Lemurians are toiling as slaves of their ancient masters. The far south is still veiled in mystery. Untouched by the Cataclysm, its destiny is still pre-human. Of the civilized races of the Thurian Continent, a remnant of one of the non-Valusian nations dwells among the low mountains of the southeast – the Zhemri. Here and there about the world are scattered clans of apish savages, entirely ignorant of the rise and fall of the great civilizations. But in the far north another people are slowly coming into existence.

At the time of the Cataclysm, a band of savages, whose development was not much above that of the Neanderthal, fled to the north to escape destruction. They found the snow-countries inhabited only by a species of ferocious snow-apes – huge, shaggy, white animals, apparently native to that climate. These they fought and drove beyond the Arctic Circle, to perish, as the savages thought. The latter, then, adapted themselves to their hardy new environment and thrived.

After the Pictish-Atlantean wars had destroyed the beginnings of what might have been a new culture, another, lesser cataclysm further altered the appearance of the original continent, left a great inland sea where the chain of lakes had been, to further separate west from east, and the attendant earthquakes, floods and volcanoes completed the ruin of the barbarians which their tribal wars had begun.

A thousand years after the lesser cataclysm, the western world is seen to be a wild country of jungles and lakes and torrential rivers. Among the forest-covered hills of the northwest exist wandering bands of ape-men, without human speech, or the knowledge of fire or the use of implements. They are the descendants of the Atlanteans, sunk back into the squalling chaos of jungle-bestiality from which ages ago their ancestors so laboriously crawled. To the southwest dwell scattered clans of degraded, cave-dwelling savages, whose speech is of the most primitive form, yet who still retain the name of Picts, which has come to mean merely a term designating

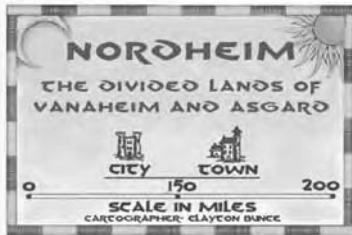
men – themselves, to distinguish them from the true beasts with which they contend for life and food. It is their only link with their former stage. Neither the squalid Picts nor the apish Atlanteans have any contact with other tribes or peoples.

Far to the east the Lemurians, leveled almost to a bestial plane themselves by the brutishness of their slavery, have risen and destroyed their masters. They are savages stalking among the ruins of a strange civilization. The survivors of that civilization, who have escaped the fury of their slaves, have come westward. They fall upon that mysterious pre-human kingdom of the south and overthrow it, substituting their own culture, modified by contact with the older one. The newer kingdom is called Stygia, and remnants of the older nation seemed to have survived, and even been worshiped, after the race as a whole had been destroyed.

Here and there in the world small groups of savages are showing signs of an upward trend; these are scattered and unclassified. But in the north, the tribes are growing. These people are called Hyborians, or Hybori; their god was Bori – some great chief, whom legend made even more ancient as the king who led them into the north, in the days of the great Cataclysm, which the tribes remember only in distorted folklore.

They have spread over the north and are pushing southward in leisurely treks. So far they have not come in contact with any other races; their wars have been with one another. Fifteen hundred years in the north country have made them a tall, tawny-haired, grey-eyed race, vigorous and warlike, and already exhibiting a well-defined artistry and poetism of nature. They still live mostly by the hunt, but the southern tribes have been raising cattle for some centuries. There is one exception in their so far complete isolation from other races: a wanderer into the far North returned with the news that the supposedly deserted ice wastes were inhabited by an extensive tribe of apelike men, descended, he swore, from the beasts driven out of the more habitable land by the ancestors of the Hyborians. He urged that a large war-party be sent beyond the Arctic Circle to exterminate these beasts, whom he swore were evolving into true men. He was jeered at; a small band of adventurous young warriors followed him into the North, but none returned.

But tribes of the Hyborians were drifting south, and as the population increased



this movement became extensive. The following age was an epoch of wandering and conquest. Across the history of the world tribes and drifts of tribes move and shift in an everchanging panorama.

Look at the world five hundred years later. Tribes of tawny-haired Hyborians have moved southward and westward, conquering and destroying many of the small unclassified clans. Absorbing the blood of conquered races, already the descendants of the older drifts have begun to show modified racial traits, and these mixed races are attacked fiercely by new, purer-blooded drifts, and swept before them, as a broom sweeps debris impartially, to become even more mixed and mingled in the tangled debris of races and tag-ends of races.

As yet the conquerors have not come in contact with the older races. To the southeast the descendants of the Zhemri, given impetus by new blood resulting from admixture with some unclassified tribe, are beginning to seek to revive some faint shadow of their ancient culture. To the west the apish Atlanteans are beginning the long climb upward. They have completed the cycle of existence; they have long forgotten their former existence as men; unaware of any other former state, they are starting the climb unhelped and unhindered by human memories. To the south of them the Picts remain savages, apparently defying the laws of Nature by neither progressing nor retrogressing. Far to the south dreams the ancient mysterious kingdom of Stygia. On its eastern borders wander clans of nomadic savages, already known as the Sons of Shem.

Next to the Picts, in the broad valley of Zingg, protected by great mountains, a nameless band of primitives, tentatively classified as akin to the Shemites, has evolved an advanced agricultural system and existence.

Another factor has added to the impetus of Hyborian drift. A tribe of that race has discovered the use of stone in building, and the first Hyborian kingdom has come into being – the rude and barbaric kingdom of Hyperborea, which had its beginning in a crude fortress of boulders heaped to repel tribal attack. The people of this tribe soon abandoned their horsehide tents for stone houses, crudely but mightily built, and thus protected, they grew strong. There are few more dramatic events in history than the rise of the rude, fierce kingdom of Hyperborea, whose people turned abruptly from their nomadic life to rear dwellings of naked stone, surrounded by cyclopean walls – a race scarcely emerged from the polished stone age, who had by a freak of chance, learned the first rude principles of architecture.

The rise of this kingdom drove forth many other tribes, for, defeated in the war, or refusing to become tributary to their castle-dwelling kinsmen, many clans set forth on long treks that took them halfway around the world. And already the more northern tribes are beginning to be harried by gigantic blond savages, not much more advanced than ape-men.

The tale of the next thousand years is the tale of the rise of the Hyborians, whose warlike tribes dominate the western world. Rude kingdoms are taking shape. The tawny-haired invaders have encountered the Picts, driving them into the barren lands of the West. To the northwest, the descendants of the Atlanteans, climbing unaided from apedom into primitive savagery, have not yet met the conquerors. Far to the east the Lemurians are evolving a strange semi-civilization of their own. To the south the Hyborians have founded the kingdom of Koth, on the borders of those pastoral countries known as the Lands of Shem, and the savages of those lands, partly through contact with the Hyborians, partly through contact with the Stygians who have ravaged them for centuries, are emerging from barbarism. The blond savages of the far north have grown in power and numbers so that the northern Hyborian tribes move southward, driving their kindred clans before them. The ancient kingdom of Hyperborea is overthrown by one of these northern tribes, which, however, retains the old name. Southeast of Hyperborea a kingdom of the Zhemri has come into being, under the name of Zamora. To the southwest, a tribe of Picts have invaded the fertile valley of Zingg, conquered the agricultural people there, and settled among them. This mixed race was in turn conquered later by a roving tribe of Hybori, and from these mingled elements came the kingdom of Zingara.

Five hundred years later the kingdoms of the world are clearly defined. The kingdoms of the Hyborians Aquilonia, Nemedia, Brythunia, Hyperborea, Koth, Ophir, Argos, Corinthia, and one known as the Border Kingdom – dominate the western world. Zamora lies to the east, and Zingara to the southwest of these kingdoms – people alike in darkness of complexion and exotic habits, but otherwise unrelated. Far to the south sleeps Stygia, untouched by foreign invasion, but the peoples of Shem have exchanged the Stygian yoke for the less galling one of Koth. The dusky masters have been driven south of the great river Styx, Nilus, or Nile, which, flowing north from the shadowy hinterlands, turns almost at right angles and



flows almost due west through the pastoral meadowlands of Shem, to empty into the great sea. North of Aquilonia, the westernmost Hyborian kingdom, are the Cimmerians, ferocious savages, untamed by the invaders, but advancing rapidly because of contact with them; they are the descendants of the Atlanteans, now progressing more steadily than their old enemies the Picts, who dwell in the wilderness west of Aquilonia.

Another five centuries and the Hybori peoples are the possessors of a civilization so virile that contact with it virtually snatched out of the wallow of savagery such tribes as it touched. The most powerful kingdom is Aquilonia, but others vie with it in strength and splendor. The Hyborians have become a considerably mixed race, the nearest to the ancient root-stock are the Gundermen of Gunderland, a northern province of Aquilonia. But this mixing has not weakened the race. They are supreme in the western world, though the barbarians of the wastelands are growing in strength.

In the north, golden-haired, blue-eyed barbarians, descendants of the blond arctic savages, have driven the remaining Hyborian tribes out of the snow countries, except the ancient kingdom of Hyperborea, which resists their onslaught. Their country is called Nordheim, and they are divided into the red-haired Vanir of Vanaheim, and the yellow-haired Æsir of Asgard.

Now the Lemurians enter history again as Hyrkanians. Through the centuries they have pushed steadily westward, and now a tribe skirts the southern end of the great inland sea – Vilayet – and establishes the kingdom of Turan on the southwestern shore. Between the inland sea and the eastern borders of the native kingdoms lie vast expanses of steppes and in the extreme north and extreme south, deserts. The non-Hyrkanian dwellers of these territories are scattered and pastoral, unclassified in the north, Shemitish in the south, aboriginal, with a thin strain of Hyborian blood from wandering conquerors. Toward the latter part of the period other Hyrkanian clans push westward, around the northern extremity of the inland sea, and clash with the eastern outposts of the Hyperboreans.

Glance briefly at the peoples of that age. The dominant Hyborians are no longer uniformly tawny-haired and grey-eyed. They have mixed with other races. There is a strong Shemitish, even a Stygian strain among the

peoples of Koth, and to a lesser extent, of Argos, while in the case of the latter, admixture with the Zingarans has been more extensive than with the Shemites. The eastern Brythunians have intermarried with the dark-skinned Zamorians, and the people of southern Aquilonia have mixed with the brown Zingarans until black hair and brown eyes are the dominant type in Poitain, the southernmost province. The ancient kingdom of Hyperborea is more aloof than the others, yet there is alien blood in plenty in its veins, from the capture of foreign women – Hyrkanians, Æsir, and Zamorians. Only in the province of Gunderland, where the people keep no slaves, is the pure Hyborian stock found unblemished. But the barbarians have kept their bloodstream pure; the Cimmerians are tall and powerful, with dark hair and blue or grey eyes. The people of Nordheim are of similar build, but with white skins, blue eyes, and golden or red hair. The Picts are of the same type as they always were – short, very dark, with black eyes and hair. The Hyrkanians are dark and generally tall and slender, though a squat slant-eyed type is more and more common among them, resulting from mixture with a curious race of intelligent, though stunted, aborigines, conquered by them among the mountains east of Vilayet, on their westward drift. The Shemites are generally of medium height, though sometimes when mixed with Stygian blood, gigantic, broadly and strongly built, with hook noses, dark eyes, and blue-black hair. The Stygians are tan and well-made, dusky, straight-featured – at least the ruling classes are of that type. The lower classes are a downtrodden, mongrel horde, a mixture of Negroid, Stygian, Shemitish, even Hyborian bloods. South of Stygia are the vast black kingdoms of the Amazons, the Kushites, the Atlaian, and the hybrid empire of Zimbabwe.

Between Aquilonia and the Pictish wilderness lie the Bossonian marches, peopled by descendants of an aboriginal race, conquered by a tribe of Hyborians, early in the first ages of the Hyborian drift. This mixed people never attained the civilization of the purer Hyborians, and was pushed by them to the very fringe of the civilized world. The Bossonians are of medium height and complexion, their eyes brown or grey, and they are mesocephalic. They live mainly by agriculture, in large walled villages, and are part of the Aquilonian kingdom. Their marches extend from the Border Kingdom in the North to Zingara in the Southwest, forming a bulwark for Aquilonia against both the Cimmerians and the Picts. They are stubborn defensive fighters, and centuries of warfare against northern and western barbarians have caused them to evolve a type of defense almost impregnable against direct attack.



Five hundred years later the Hyborian civilization was swept away. Its fall was unique in that it was not brought about by internal decay, but by the growing power of the barbarian nations and the Hyrkanians. The Hyborian peoples were overthrown while their vigorous culture was in its prime.

Yet it was Aquilonia's greed which brought about that overthrow, though indirectly. Wishing to extend their empire, her kings made war on their neighbors. Zingara, Argos and Ophir were annexed outright, with the western cities of Shem, which had, with their more eastern kindred, recently thrown off the yoke of Koth. Koth itself, with Corinthia and the eastern Shemitish tribes, was forced to pay Aquilonia tribute and lend aid in wars. An ancient feud had existed between Aquilonia and Hyperborea, and the latter now marched to meet the armies of her western rival. The plains of the Border Kingdom were the scene of a great and savage battle, in which the northern hosts were utterly defeated, and retreated into their snowy fastnesses, whither the victorious Aquilonians did not pursue them. Nemedia, which had successfully resisted the western kingdom for centuries, now drew Brythunia and Zamora, and secretly, Koth, into an alliance which bade fair to crush the rising empire. But before their armies could join battle, a new enemy appeared in the east, as the Hyrkanians made their first real thrust at the western world. Reinforced by adventurers from east of Vilayet, the riders of Turan swept over Zamora, devastated eastern Corinthia, and were met on the plains of Brythunia by the Aquilonians; who defeated them and hurled them flying eastward. But the back of the alliance was broken, and Nemedia took the defensive in future wars, aided occasionally by Brythunia and Hyperborea, and, secretly, as usual, by Koth. This defeat of the Hyrkanians showed the nations the real power of the western kingdom, whose splendid armies were augmented by mercenaries, many of them recruited among the alien Zingarans, and the barbaric Picts and Shemitites. Zamora was reconquered from the Hyrkanians, but the people discovered that they had merely exchanged an eastern master for a western master. Aquilonian soldiers were quartered there, not only to protect the ravaged country, but also to keep the people in subjection. The Hyrkanians were not convinced; three more invasions burst upon the Zamorian borders, and the Lands of Shem, and were hurled back by the Aquilonians, though the Turanian armies grew larger as hordes of steel-clad riders rode out of the east, skirting the southern extremity of the inland sea.

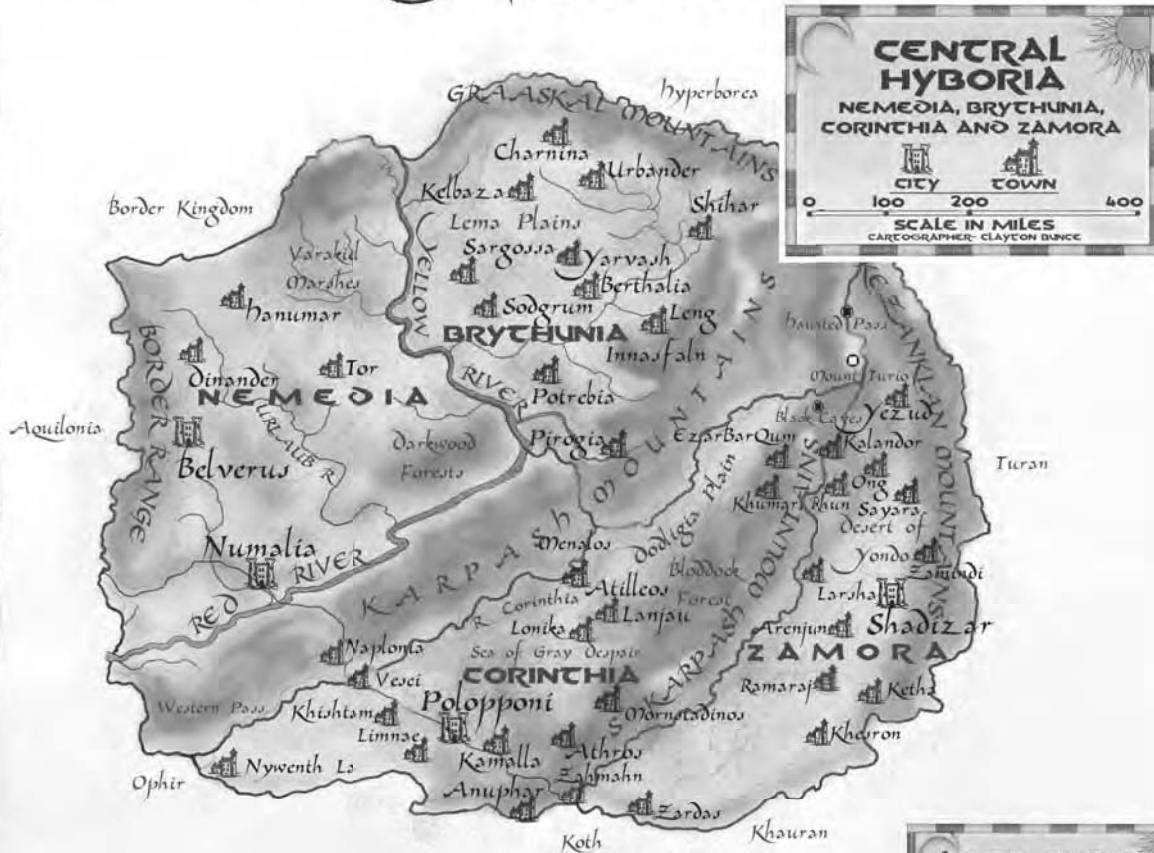
But it was in the west that a power was growing destined to throw down the kings of Aquilonia from their high places. In the north there was incessant bickering along the Cimmerian borders between the black-haired warriors and the Nordheimir; and the Æsir, between wars with the

Vanir, assailed Hyperborea and pushed back the frontier, destroying city after city. The Cimmerians also fought the Picts and Bossonians impartially, and several times raided into Aquilonia itself, but their wars were less invasions than mere plundering forays.

But the Picts were growing amazingly in population and power. By a strange twist of fate, it was largely due to the efforts of one man, and he an alien, that they set their feet upon the ways that led to eventual empire. This man was Arus, a Nemedian priest, a natural-born reformer. What turned his mind toward the Picts is not certain, but this much is history – he determined to go into the western wilderness and modify the rude ways of the heathen by the introduction of the gentle worship of Mitra. He was not daunted by the grisly tales of what had happened to traders and explorers before him, and by some whim of fate he came among the people he sought, alone and unarmed, and was not instantly speared.

The Picts had benefitted by contact with Hyborian civilization, but they had always fiercely resisted that contact. That is to say, they had learned to work crudely in copper and tin, which were found scantily in their country, and for which latter metal they raided into the mountains of Zingara, or traded hides, whale's teeth, walrus tusks and such few things as savages have to trade. They no longer lived in caves and tree-shelters, but built tents of hides, and crude huts, copied from those of the Bossonians. They still lived mainly by the chase, since their wilds swarmed with game of all sorts, and the rivers and sea with fish, but they had learned how to plant grain, which they did sketchily, preferring to steal it from their neighbors the Bossonians and Zingarans. They dwelt in clans which were generally at feud with each other, and their simple customs were blood-thirsty and utterly inexplicable to a civilized man, such as Arus of Nemedia. They had no direct contact with the Hyborians, since the Bossonians acted as a buffer between them. But Arus maintained that they were capable of progress, and events proved the truth of his assertion – though scarcely in the way he meant.

Arus was fortunate in being thrown in with a chief of more than usual intelligence – Gorm by name. Gorm cannot be explained, any more than Genghis Khan, Othman, Attila, or any of those individuals, who, born in naked lands among untutored barbarisms, yet possess the instinct for conquest and empire-building. In



a sort of bastard-Bossonian, the priest made the chief understand his purpose, and though extremely puzzled, Gorm gave him permission to remain among his tribe unbutchered – a case unique in the history of the race. Having learned the language Arus set himself to work to eliminate the more unpleasant phases of Pictish life – such as human sacrifice, bloodfeud, and the burning alive of captives. He harangued Gorm at length, whom he found to be an interested, if unresponsive listener. Imagination reconstructs the scene – the black-haired chief, in his tiger-skins and necklace of human teeth, squatting on the dirt floor of the wattle hut, listening intently to the eloquence of the priest, who probably sat on a carven, skin-covered block of mahogany provided in his honor – clad in the silken robes of a Nemedian priest, gesturing with his slender whim hands as he expounded the eternal rights and justices which were the truths of Mitra. Doubtless he pointed with repugnance at the rows of skulls which adorned the walls of the hut and urged Gorm to forgive his enemies instead of putting their bleached remnants to such use. Arus was the highest product of an innately artistic race, refined by centuries of civilization; Gorm had behind him a heritage of a hundred thousand years of screaming savagery – the pad of the tiger was in his stealthy step, the grip of the gorilla in his black-nailed hands, the fire that burns in a leopard's eyes burned in his.

Arus was a practical man. He appealed to the savage's sense of material gain; he pointed out the power and splendor of the Hyborian kingdoms, as an example of the power of Mitra, whose teachings and works had lifted them up to their high places. And he spoke of cities, and fertile plains, marble walls and iron chariots, jeweled towers, and horsemen in their glittering armour riding to battle. And Gorm, with the unerring instinct of the barbarian, passed over his words regarding gods and their teachings, and fixed on the material powers thus vividly described. There in that mud-floored wattle hut, with the silk-robed priest on the mahogany block, and the dark-skinned chief crouching in his tiger-hides, was laid the foundations of empire.

As has been said, Arus was a practical man. He dwelt among the Picts and found much that an intelligent man could do to aid humanity, even when that humanity was cloaked in tiger-skins and wore necklaces of human teeth. Like all priests of Mitra, he was instructed in many things. He found that there were vast deposits of iron ore in the Pictish hills, and he taught the natives to mine, smelt and work it into implements – agricultural implements, as he fondly believed. He instituted other reforms, but these were the most important things he did: he instilled in Gorm a desire to see the civilized lands of the world; he taught the Picts how to work in

iron; and he established contact between them and the civilized world. At the chief's request he conducted him and some of his warriors through the Bossonian marches, where the honest villagers stared in amazement, into the glittering outer world.

Arus no doubt thought that he was making converts right and left, because the Picts listened to him, and refrained from smiting him with their copper axes. But the Pict was little calculated to seriously regard teachings which bade him forgive his enemy and abandon the warpath for the ways of honest drudgery. It has been said that he lacked artistic sense; his whole nature led to war and slaughter. When the priest talked of the glories of the civilized nations, his dark-skinned listeners were intent, not on the ideals of his religion, but on the loot which he unconsciously described in the narration of rich cities and shining lands. When, he told how Mitra aided certain kings to overcome their enemies, they paid scant heed to the miracles of Mitra, but they hung on the description of battle-lines, mounted knights, and maneuvers of archers and spearmen. They harkened with keen dark eyes and inscrutable countenances, and they went their ways without comment, and heeded with flattering intentness his instructions as to the working of iron, and kindred arts.

Before his coming they had filched steel weapons and armour from the Bossonians and Zingarans, or had hammered out their own crude arms from copper and bronze. Now a new world opened to them, and the clang of sledges re-echoed throughout the land. And Gorm, by virtue of this new craft, began to assert his dominance over other clans, partly by war, partly by craft and diplomacy, in which latter art he excelled all other barbarians.

Picts now came and went freely into Aquilonia, under safe-conduct, and they returned with more information as to armour-forging and sword-making. More, they entered Aquilonia's mercenary armies, to the unspeakable disgust of the sturdy Bossonians. Aquilonia's kings toyed with the idea of playing the Picts against the Cimmerians, and possibly thus destroying both menaces, but they were too busy with their policies of aggression in the south and east to pay much heed to the vaguely known lands of the west, from which more and more stocky warriors swarmed to take service among the mercenaries.



These warriors, their service completed, went back to their wilderness with good ideas of civilized warfare, and that contempt for civilization which arises from familiarity with it. Drums began to beat in the hills, gathering-fires smoked on the heights, and savage sword-makers hammered their steel on a thousand anvils. By intrigues and forays too numerous and devious to enumerate, Gorm became chief of chiefs, the nearest approach to a king the Picts had had in thousands of years. He had waited long; he was past middle age. But now he moved against the frontiers, not in trade, but in war.

Arus saw his mistake too late; he had not touched the soul of the pagan, in which lurked the hard fierceness of all the ages. His persuasive eloquence had not caused a ripple in the Pictish conscience. Gorm wore a corselet of silvered mail now, instead of the tiger-skin, but underneath he was unchanged – the everlasting barbarian, unmoved by theology or philosophy, his instincts fixed unerringly on rapine and plunder.

The Picts burst on the Bossonian frontiers; with fire and sword, not clad in tiger-skins and brandishing copper axes as of yore, but in scale-mail, wielding weapons of keen steel. As for Arus, he was brained by a drunken Pict, while making a last effort to undo the work he had unwittingly done. Gorm was not without gratitude; he caused the skull of the slayer to be set on the top of the priest's cairn. And it is one of the grim ironies of the universe that the stones which covered Arus's body should have been adorned with that last touch of barbarity – above a man to whom violence and blood-vengeance were revolting.

But the newer weapons and mail were not enough to break the lines. For years the superior armaments and sturdy courage of the Bossonians held the invaders at bay, aided, when necessary, by imperial Aquilonian troops. During this time the Hyrkanians came and went, and Zamora was added to the empire.

Then treachery from an unexpected source broke the Bossonian lines. Before chronicling this treachery, it might be well to glance briefly at the Aquilonian empire. Always a rich kingdom, untold wealth had been rolled in by conquest, and sumptuous splendor had taken the place of simple and hardy living. But degeneracy had not yet sapped the kings and the people; though clad in silks and cloth-of-gold, they were still a vital, virile

race. But arrogance was supplanting their former simplicity. They treated less powerful people with growing contempt, levying more and more tributes on the conquered. Argos, Zingara, Ophir, Zamora and the Shemite countries were treated as subjugated provinces, which was especially galling to the proud Zingarans, who often revolted, despite savage retaliations.

Koth was practically tributary, being under Aquilonia's 'protection' against the Hyrkanians. But Nemedias the western empire had never been able to subdue, although the latter's triumphs were of the defensive sort, and were generally attained with the aid of Hyperborean armies. During this period Aquilonia's only defeats were: her failure to annex Nemedias; the rout of an army sent into Cimmeria; and the almost complete destruction of an army by the Æsir. Just as the Hyrkanians found themselves unable to withstand the heavy cavalry charges of the Aquilonians, so the latter, invading the snow-countries, were overwhelmed by the ferocious hand-to-hand fighting of the Nordics. But Aquilonia's conquests were pushed to the Nilus, where a Stygian army was defeated with great slaughter, and the king of Stygia sent tribute – once at least – to divert invasion of his kingdom. Brythunia was reduced in a series of whirlwind wars, and preparations were made to subjugate the ancient rival at last – Nemedias.

With their glittering hosts greatly increased by mercenaries, the Aquilonians moved against their old-time foe, and it seemed as if the thrust were destined to crush the last shadow of Nemedian independence. But contentions arose between the Aquilonians and their Bossonian auxiliaries.

As the inevitable result of imperial expansion, the Aquilonians had become haughty and intolerant. They derided the ruder, unsophisticated Bossonians and hard feeling grew between them – the Aquilonians despising the Bossonians and the latter resenting the attitude of their masters – who now boldly called themselves such, and treated the Bossonians like conquered subjects, taxing them exorbitantly, and conscripting them for their wars of territorial expansion – wars the profits of which the Bossonians shared little. Scarcely enough men were left in the marches to guard the frontier, and hearing of Pictish outrages in their homelands, whole Bossonian regiments quit the Nemedian campaign and marched to the western frontier, where they defeated the dark-skinned invaders in a great battle.

This desertion, however, was the direct cause of Aquilonia's defeat by the desperate Nemedians, and brought down on the Bossonians the cruel wrath of the imperialists – intolerant and short-sighted as imperialists



invariably are. Aquilonian regiments were secretly brought to the borders of the marches, the Bossonian chiefs were invited to attend a great conclave, and, in the guise of an expedition against the Picts, bands of savage Shemitish soldiers were quartered among the unsuspecting villagers. The unarmed chiefs were massacred, the Shemites turned on their stunned hosts with torch and sword, and the armoured imperial hosts, were hurled ruthlessly on the unsuspecting people. From north to south the marches were ravaged and the Aquilonian armies marched back from the borders, leaving a ruined and devastated land behind them.

And then the Pictish invasion burst in full power along those borders. It was no mere raid, but the concerted rush of a whole nation, led by chiefs who had served in Aquilonian armies, and planned and directed by Gorm – an old man now, but with the fire of his fierce ambition undimmed. This time there were no strong walled villages in their path, manned by sturdy archers, to hold back the rush until the imperial troops could be brought up. The remnants of the Bossonians were swept out of existence, and the blood-mad barbarians swarmed into Aquilonia, looting and burning, before the legions, warring again with the Nemedians, could be marched into the west. Zingara seized this opportunity to throw off the yoke, which example was followed by Corinthia and the Shemites. Whole regiments of mercenaries and vassals mutinied and marched back to their own countries, looting and burning as they went. The Picts surged irresistibly eastward, and host after host was trampled beneath their feet. Without their Bossonian archers the Aquilonians found themselves unable to cope with the terrible arrow-fire of the barbarians. From all parts of the empire legions were recalled to resist the onrush, while from the wilderness horde after horde swarmed forth, in apparently inexhaustible supply. And in the midst of this chaos, the Cimmerians swept down from their hills, completing the ruin. They looted cities, devastated the country, and retired into the hills with their plunder, but the Picts occupied the land they had over-run. And the Aquilonian empire went down in fire and blood.

Then again the Hyrkanians rode from the blue east. The withdrawal of the imperial legions from Zamora was their incitement. Zamora fell easy prey to their thrusts, and the Hyrkanian king established his capital in the largest city of the country. This invasion was from the ancient Hyrkanian kingdom of Turan, on the shores of the inland sea, but another, more savage Hyrkanian thrust came from the north. Hosts of steel-clad riders galloped around the northern extremity of the inland sea, traversed the icy deserts, entered the steppes, driving the aborigines before them, and launched themselves against

the western kingdoms. These newcomers were not at first allies with the Turanians, but skirmished with them as with the Hyborians; new drifts of eastern warriors bickered and fought, until all were united under a great chief, who came riding from the very shores of the eastern ocean. With no Aquilonian armies to oppose them, they were invincible. They swept over and subjugated Brythunia, and devastated southern Hyperborea, and Corinthia. They swept into the Cimmerian hills, driving the black-haired barbarians before them, but among the hills, where cavalry was less effectual, the Cimmerians turned on them, and only a disorderly retreat, at the end of a whole day of bloody fighting, saved the Hyrkanian hosts from complete annihilation.

While these events had been transpiring, the kingdoms of Shem had conquered their ancient master, Koth, and had been defeated in an attempted invasion of Stygia. But scarcely had they completed their degradation of Koth, when they were overrun by the Hyrkanians, and found themselves subjugated by sterner masters than the Hyborians had ever been. Meanwhile the Picts had made themselves complete masters of Aquilonia, practically blotting out the inhabitants. They had broken over the borders of Zingara, and thousands of Zingarans, fleeing the slaughter into Argos, threw themselves on the mercy of the westward-sweeping Hyrkanians, who settled them in Zamora as subjects. Behind them as they fled, Argos was enveloped in the flame and slaughter of Pictish conquest, and the slayers swept into Ophir and clashed with the westward-riding Hyrkanians. The latter, after their conquest of Shem, had overthrown a Stygian army at the Nilus and over-run the country as far south as the black kingdom of Amazon, of whose people they brought back thousands as captives, settling them among the Shemites. Possibly they would have completed their conquests in Stygia, adding it to their widening empire, but for the fierce thrusts of the Picts against their western conquests.

Nemedia, unconquerable by Hyborians, reeled between the riders of the east and the swordsmen of the west, when a tribe of Æsir, wandering down from their snowy lands, came into the kingdom, and were engaged as mercenaries; they proved such able warriors that they not only beat off the Hyrkanians, but halted the eastward advance of the Picts.

The world at that time presents some such picture: a vast Pictish empire, wild, rude and barbaric, stretches from the coasts of Vanaheim in the north to



the southern-most shores of Zingara. It stretches east to include all Aquilonia except Gunderland, the northern-most province, which, as a separate kingdom in the hills, survived the fall of the empire, and still maintains its independence. The Pictish empire also includes Argos, Ophir, the western part of Koth, and the western-most lands of Shem. Opposed to this barbaric empire is the empire of the Hyrkanians, of which the northern boundaries are the ravaged lines of Hyperborea, and the southern, the deserts south of the lands of Shem. Zamora, Brythunia, the Border Kingdom, Corinthia, most of Koth, and all the eastern lands of Shem are included in this empire. The borders of Cimmeria are intact; neither Pict nor Hyrkanian has been able to subdue these warlike barbarians. Nemedia, dominated by the Æsir mercenaries, resists all invasions. In the north Nordheim, Cimmeria and Nemedia separate the conquering races, but in the south, Koth has become a battle-ground where Picts and Hyrkanians war incessantly. Sometimes the eastern warriors expel the barbarians from the kingdom entirely; again the plains and cities are in the hands of the western invaders. In the far south, Stygia, shaken by the Hyrkanian invasion, is being encroached upon by the great black kingdoms. And in the far north, the Nordic tribes are restless, warring continually with the Cimmerians, and sweeping the Hyperborean frontiers.

Gorm was slain by Hialmar, a chief of the Nemedian Æsir. He was a very old man, nearly a hundred years old. In the seventy-five years which had elapsed since he first heard the tale of empires from the lips of Arus – a long time in the life of a man, but a brief space in the tale of nations – he had welded an empire from straying savage clans, he had overthrown a civilization. He who had been born in a mud-walled, wattle-roofed hut, in his old age sat on golden thrones, and gnawed joints of beef presented to him on golden dishes by naked slave-girls who were the daughters of kings. Conquest and the acquiring of wealth altered not the Pict; out of the ruins of the crushed civilization no new culture arose phoenix-like. The dark hands which shattered the artistic glories of the conquered never vied to copy them. Though he sat among the glittering ruins of shattered palaces and clad his hard body in the silks of vanquished kings, the Pict remained the eternal barbarian, ferocious, elemental, interested only in the naked primal principles of life, unchanging, unerring in his instincts which were all for war and plunder, and in which arts and the cultured progress of humanity had no place. Not so with the Æsir who settled in Nemedia. These soon adopted many of the ways of their civilized allies, modified powerfully, however, by their own intensely virile and alien culture.

For a short age Pict and Hyrkanian snarled at each other over the ruins of the world they had conquered. Then began the glacier ages, and the great Nordic drift. Before the southward moving ice-fields the northern tribes drifted, driving kindred clans before them. The Æsir blotted out the ancient kingdom of Hyperborea, and across its ruins came to grips with the Hyrkanians. Nemedia had already become a Nordic kingdom, ruled by the descendants of the Æsir mercenaries. Driven before the onrushing tides of Nordic invasion, the Cimmerians were on the march, and neither army nor city stood before them. They surged across and completely destroyed the kingdom of Gunderland, and marched across ancient Aquilonia, hewing their irresistible way through the Pictish hosts. They defeated the Nordic-Nemedians and sacked some of their cities, but did not halt. They continued eastward, over-throwing a Hyrkanian army on the borders of Brythunia.

Behind them hordes of Æsir and Vanir swarmed into the lands, and the Pictish empire reeled beneath their strokes. Nemedia was overthrown, and the half-civilized Nordics fled before their wilder kinsmen, leaving the cities of Nemedia ruined and deserted. These fleeing Nordics, who had adopted the name of the older kingdom, and to whom the term Nemedian henceforth refers, came into the ancient land of Koth, expelled both Picts and Hyrkanians, and aided the people of Shem to throw off the Hyrkanian yoke. All over the western world, the Picts and Hyrkanians were staggering before this younger, fiercer people. A band of Æsir drove the eastern riders from Brythunia and settled there themselves, adopting the name for themselves. The Nordics who had conquered Hyperborea assailed their eastern enemies so savagely that the dark-skinned descendants of the Lemurians retreated into the steppes, pushed irresistibly back toward Vilayet.

Meanwhile the Cimmerians, wandering southeastward, destroyed the ancient Hyrkanian kingdom of Turan, and settled on the southwestern shores of the inland sea. The power of the eastern conquerors was broken. Before the attacks of the Nordheim and the Cimmerians, they destroyed all their cities, butchered such captives as were not fit to make the long march, and then, herding thousands of slaves before them, rode back into the mysterious east, skirting the northern edge of the sea, and vanishing from western history, until they rode out of the east again, thousands of years later, as Huns,



Mongols, Tatars and Turks. With them in their retreat went thousands of Zamorians, and Zingarans, who were settled together far to the east, formed a mixed race, and emerged ages afterward as gypsies.

Meanwhile, also, a tribe of Vanir adventurers had passed along the Pictish coast southward, ravaged ancient Zingara, and come into Stygia, which, oppressed by a cruel aristocratic ruling class, was staggering under the thrusts of the black kingdoms to the south. The red-haired Vanir led the slaves in a general revolt, overthrew the reigning class, and set themselves up as a caste of conquerors. They subjugated the northernmost black kingdoms, and built a vast southern empire, which they called Egypt. From these red-haired conquerors the earlier pharaohs boasted descent.

The western world was now dominated by Nordic barbarians. The Picts still held Aquilonia and part of Zingara, and the western coast of the continent. But east to Vilayet, and from the Arctic circle to the lands of Shem, the only inhabitants were roving tribes of Nordheimr, excepting the Cimmerians, settled in the old Turanian kingdom. There were no cities anywhere, except in Stygia and the lands of Shem; the invading tides of Picts, Hyrkanians, Cimmerians and Nordics had leveled them in ruins, and the once dominant Hyborians had vanished from the earth, leaving scarcely a trace of their blood in the veins of their conquerors. Only a few names of lands, tribes and cities remained in the languages of the barbarians, to come down through the centuries connected with distorted legend and fable, until the whole history of the Hyborian age was lost sight of in a cloud of myths and fantasies. Thus in the speech of the gypsies lingered the terms Zingara, and Zamora; the Æsir who dominated Nemedia were called Nemeditians, and later figured in Irish history, and the Nordics who settled in Brythunia were known as Brythunians, Brythons or Britons.

There was no such thing, at that time, as a consolidated Nordic empire. As always, the tribes had each its own chief or king, and they fought savagely among themselves. What their destiny might have been will not be known, because another terrific convulsion of the earth, carving out the lands as they are known

to moderns, hurled all into chaos again. Great strips of the western coast sank; Vanaheim and western Asgard uninhabited and glacier-haunted wastes for a hundred years – vanished beneath the waves. The ocean flowed around the mountains of western Cimmeria to form the North Sea; these mountains became the islands later known as England, Scotland and Ireland, and the waves rolled over what had been the Pictish wilderness and the Bossonian marches. In the north the Baltic Sea was formed, cutting Asgard into the peninsulas later known as Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and far to the south the Stygian continent was broken away from the rest of the world, on the line of cleavage formed by the river Nilus in its westward trend. Over Argos, western Koth and the western lands of Shem, washed the blue ocean men later called the Mediterranean. But where land sank elsewhere, a vast expanse west of Stygia rose out of the waves, forming the whole western half of the continent of Africa.

The buckling of the land thrust up great mountain ranges in the central part of the northern continent. Whole Nordic tribes were blotted out, and the rest retreated eastward. The territory about the slowly drying inland sea was not affected, and there, on the western shores, the Nordic tribes began a pastoral existence, living in more or less peace with the Cimmerians, and gradually mixing with them. In the west the remnants of the Picts, reduced by the cataclysm once more to the status of stoneage savages, began, with the incredible virility of their race, once more to possess the land, until, at a later age, they were overthrown by the westward drift of the Cimmerians and Nordics. This was so long after the breaking-up of the continent that only meaningless legends told of former empires.

This drift comes within the reach of modern history and need not be repeated. It resulted from a growing population which thronged the steppes west of the inland sea – which still later, much reduced in size, was known as the Caspian – to such an extent that migration became an economic necessity. The tribes moved southward, northward and westward, into those lands now known as India, Asia Minor and central and western Europe.

They came into these countries as Aryans. But there were variations among these primitive Aryans, some of which are still recognized today, others which have long been forgotten. The blond Achæians, Gauls and Britons, for



A NOTE ON THE KINGDOM OF ACHERON

Howard's original essay on Hyborian history, reprinted in full in this chapter, omits to mention the kingdom of Acheron, which, according to the Conan novel *The Hour of the Dragon*, existed as a contemporary of Stygia. This section is an attempt to fill in the gaps.

Acheron was originally a Stygian colony. Stygians settled throughout the regions later known as Aquilonia and Nemedia, with the colony growing in size until it was able to throw off Stygian rule and become a kingdom in its own right. This kingdom was named Acheron. It came into existence just before the first Hyborian settlers began their conquest of the northern lands. For some years, Acheron retained its dominance over its ancient empire, though the Hyborians must have settled in pockets around Acheron – perhaps including Koth and Ophir, two of the oldest Hyborian kingdoms, which would at that time have been subject to Acheronian governance. For a time, Acheron's borders reached as far south as the north of Shem, which was under Stygian rule, so that the two evil empires shared a vast border of some 1500 miles in length.

The Hyborian tribes that had already settled in the area first conquered many of the Stygian outposts in Shem, probably including Kuthchemes; this is when Koth annexed Shem for the first time. Next, they rose up against Acheronian rule. It seems likely they were assisted in these endeavours by a new influx of Hyborian barbarians from the north. With strong iron weapons and good horsemanship, they took Acheronian city after Acheronian city, putting wizards to death wherever they found them.

instance, were descendants of pure-blooded Æsir. The Nemeditans of Irish legendry were the Nemeditan Æsir. The Danes were descendants of pure-blooded Vanir; the Goths – ancestors of the other Scandinavian and Germanic tribes, including the Anglo-Saxons – were descendants of a mixed race whose elements contained Vanir, Æsir and Cimmerian strains. The Gaels, ancestors of the Irish and Highland Scotch, descended from pure-blooded Cimmerian clans. The Cymric tribes of Britain were a mixed Nordic-Cimmerian race which preceded the purely Nordic Britons into the isles, and thus gave rise to a legend of Gaelic priority. The Cimbri who fought Rome were of the same blood, as well as the Gimmerai of the Assyrians and Grecians, and Gomer of the Hebrews. Other clans of the Cimmerians adventured east of the drying inland sea, and a few centuries later mixed with Hyrkanian blood, returned westward as Scythians. The original ancestors of the Gaels gave their name to modern Crimea.

The ancient Sumerians had no connection with the western race. They were a mixed people, of Hyrkanian and Shemitish bloods, who were not taken with the

conquerors in their retreat. Many tribes of Shem escaped that captivity, and from pure-blooded Shemites, or Shemites mixed with Hyborian or Nordic blood, were descended the Arabs, Israelites, and other straighter-featured Semites. The Canaanites, or Alpine Semites, traced their descent from Shemitish ancestors mixed with the Kushites settled among them by their Hyrkanian masters; the Elamites were a typical race of this type. The short, thick-limbed Etruscans, base of the Roman race, were descendants of a people of mixed Stygian, Hyrkanian and Pictish strains, and originally lived in the ancient kingdom of Koth. The Hyrkanians, retreating to the eastern shores of the continent, evolved into the tribes later known as Tatars, Huns, Mongols and Turks.

The origins of other races of the modern world may be similarly traced; in almost every case, older far than they realize, their history stretches back into the mists of the forgotten Hyborian age...



Conan's World

A Guide to the Hyborian Kingdoms and Beyond

Conan's world is a brutal, exotic setting filled with diverse nation-states, powerful sorcerers, ancient treasures and lost dungeons and cities. The lands of Hyboria offer the chance for both glory and death in equal measure.

CUSTOMS AND SOCIETY

LAW AND ORDER

Most countries use their armies rather than a dedicated police force to maintain order. Judges or magistrates are common but juries do not seem to be used. A judge's edicts are enforced through the nation's military might. In some regions, a governor or other authority may also take on the duties of a judge.

Punishment is usually simple and direct – a fine or imprisonment for lesser offences and execution for greater offenses. The most common methods of execution are hanging and beheading.



CALENDAR

The Hyborian calendar is similar to the real-world one, with twelve months of approximately thirty days each. The months have non-descriptive names, such as Yuluk. The years are also named; for example,

there have been the year of the Gazelle, the year of the Lion and year of the Dragon. In conversation a Hyborian might refer to 'the tenth of the month Yuluk, of the year of the Gazelle.'

The superstitious sometimes claim there is some special significance to the events of each year. For example, the year of the Lion might be regarded as auspicious for heroic acts, while the year of the Dragon is a suitable time for acts of powerful sorcery.

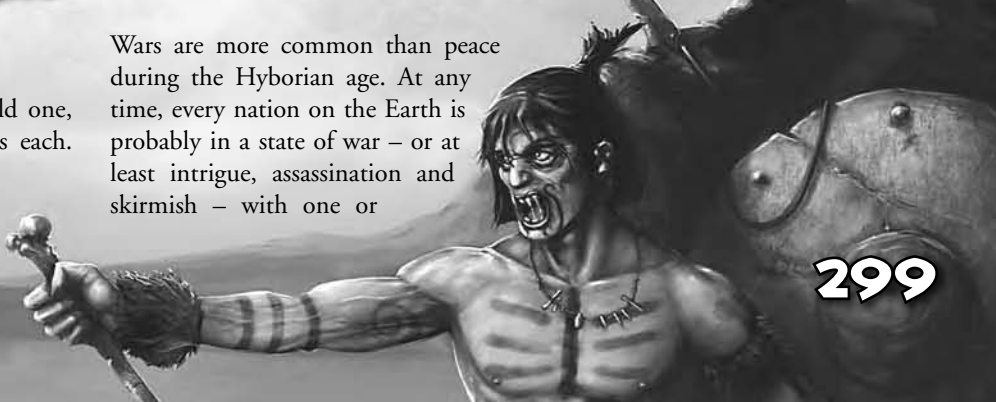
DRESS

In the Hyborian kingdoms most people wear clothing similar to that worn by folk in real-world late medieval Europe. The rich wear doublets and hose, often in expensive fabrics such as silk, satin and velvet. The poor wear simple unbuttoned tunics or sometimes short coats of wool or linen and rough hose to match. Women of all ranks wear kirtles, the material and cut of which demonstrate their wealth. In many nations it is traditional for whores to wear red, so this colour is avoided by respectable women.

WAR, PEACE AND ALLIANCE

A formal declaration of war is usually made as a prelude to an attack and in many cases two civilised countries will even agree on a time and a barren, open place that is well-known to both sides to do battle. This ensures that the much-prized lands the two are fighting over do not get destroyed by the battle and that the two armies can find one another!

Wars are more common than peace during the Hyborian age. At any time, every nation on the Earth is probably in a state of war – or at least intrigue, assassination and skirmish – with one or





more of its neighbours. Hereditary enemies such as Nemedia and Aquilonia have spent centuries waging sporadic war on one another, often over the border between them. Peace agreements rarely last long in such a situation.

Alliances too are often short-lived and made for reasons of political expediency without firm commitments. It often seems that the only reason some nations bother to make alliances is to have a chance at later gaining an advantage by betraying their erstwhile allies when the moment is right.

Mercenaries abound, the most well known being the various bands known as the Free Companies. Members of the Free Companies are known as Free Companions, and a leader of a Free Company or other mercenary group is called a Voivode. Band members may come from any race and will fight for any cause that pays well. Their typical garb is scarlet cloaks, plain morion helmets and mail hauberts, with pikes for footmen and swords and axes and maces for cavalry, though a successful or high-ranking mercenary may have better armour or equipment. A Free Companion who has taken service with a specific master will wear a heraldic surcoat given him by that master.

USING THE HYBORIAN GAZETTEER

The remainder of this chapter is divided into sections that break down the world of the Hyborian age into regions. Many of these regions correspond to a single nation but others may comprise several nations, depending on the amount of information available concerning the nation and the amount of detail that is likely to be required for adventuring there. Most regions are further broken down into provinces, cities, tribes and other places of interest, depending on the nature of the region.

One important point to note here is that the Hyborian Gazetteer is, of necessity, incomplete. We have attempted to include all the geographical information found in the Howard stories but that still leaves large gaps in our knowledge. As things stand, there is more than enough information about each region to give players a good feel for their characters' homelands and a general idea about places they will adventure in but not so much that the Games Master and players cannot add

new cities of their own, new sub-regions, new lost islands of the Vilayet Sea... If readers get particularly desperate for more information, they could look at some of the pastiche stories – Conan material not written by Robert E. Howard – for inspiration. Otherwise, they should simply take the material presented here and build on it for their own campaigns. Fill in the gaps with adventuring. This approach also allows the Games Master to throw in occasional surprises if he wishes, perhaps including whole new kingdoms which Conan never visited.

Howard deliberately left the nations south of Kush and east of the Vilayet Sea extremely vague, including Vendhya, Khitai, Hyrkania, the Black Kingdoms, Zembabwei, Punt, Ghulistan, Khosala and Iranistan. As he put it, 'in writing about them I feel a certain amount of license, since the inhabitants of the western Hyborian nations were about as ignorant concerning the peoples and countries of the south and east as the people of medieval Europe were ignorant of Africa and Asia.' Likewise, these regions have been left deliberately vague in this gazetteer; the Games Master and players are encouraged to chart these ill-defined regions themselves as best they can. The precise locations of these and even of the major cities are unknown to most Hyborian adventurers but lost cities, mysterious ancient races and demon-haunted wildernesses doubtless abound therein.

Furthermore, there are unnamed regions beyond what is marked on any Hyborian map. As R. E. Howard put it in a letter to P. Schuyler Miller, 'He travelled widely, not only before his kingship, but after he was king. He travelled to Khitai and Hyrkania, and to the even less known regions north of the latter and south of the former. He even visited a nameless continent in the western hemisphere, and roamed among the islands adjacent to it.' Thus, it seems that there are at least three major areas in the Hyborian Age about which almost nothing is known save that Conan ventured there. These regions roughly correspond to modern-day northern Russia (the region north of Hyrkania), south-east Asia (south of Khitai) and the Americas and Caribbean (the nameless continent in the western hemisphere and its islands). Again these can be fertile grounds for adventures and the Games Master has a free hand to develop them as he chooses if the players ever find they have explored every other part of the world!

As well as a detailed description and places of interest, each region includes the following entries:

Language: This gives the main language spoken in the region or among the tribe that lives there. If other languages are also commonly spoken in the region,



they are also listed here (in brackets). For regions broken down into tribes or nations that speak different languages from one another, each area may have a separate entry for Language and Related Languages.

Related Languages: Most of the regions that have an entry for Language also have an entry for Related Languages. Related Languages are close enough for those who speak one to make themselves understood in the other. Any character who speaks any of the Related Languages can understand and make himself understood in the main tongue of the region but with a -2 circumstance penalty to all skill checks that would rely on language, including many uses of Bluff, Diplomacy, Sense Motive and Perform.

MILITARY FORCES

This entry gives an indication of the composition, quality and numerical strength of a region's military forces. Note that numbers given are only approximate guidelines and will tend to vary enormously depending on the Games Master's interpretation of circumstances.

For example, if Nemedra marches its entire military force into Aquilonia and is soundly defeated, the military forces of both countries will be somewhat depleted, Nemedra more than Aquilonia, for several years to come.

The number of casualties will very much depend on the viciousness of the winning side. In a civil war, the victor may prefer to allow the common soldiery to live, executing only the nobility who led the losing army, since the common soldiery are unlikely to be unruly once their leaders are gone.

Conversely, in a war with a rival kingdom, the common soldiery are very much expendable: light cavalry may be used to cut down fleeing troops and the knives of the camp followers will attend to the fallen. The nobility may be killed if the hatred between the two nations is long-standing and severe but are more likely to be captured and ransomed.

After any depletion in numbers, one or both nations may employ mercenaries from other lands to swell their ranks once more, though of course in this case the composition of the military will likely alter. A country that employs mercenaries may be sowing the seeds of future problems, since mercenaries are notoriously fickle if the money runs out, the danger becomes too great or the opportunity for looting or staging a coup becomes too tempting.

The Turanian military, on the other hand, can replenish lost troops very rapidly and recruit vast numbers of additional troops for any large-scale campaign. This is because they have close contact with the rest of the Hyrkanian tribes, who seem happy enough to join the Turanians whenever the prospect of a good raid or war is likely. It would take a sustained and bloody campaign to significantly dent the numbers available to the Turanian generals.

Perhaps the most significant point to note about the armies of the Hyborian Age is the predominance of cavalry. Among the Hyborian kingdoms themselves, honour dictates that any man who can buy or steal a horse must do so. Infantry are seen as distinctly second-class – fit for peasant levies and those few areas that specialise in elite infantry (notably Gunderland and the Bossonian Marches) but not for professional Hyborian soldiers. In Shem, Turan and Hyrkania, more or less every warrior is mounted, though they are typically far less heavily armoured than Hyborian troops. Only in Stygia, Kush and the Black Kingdoms do infantry make up the majority of the military forces and Stygia at least has chariots to bear its most elite warriors.

Unless otherwise noted, it should be assumed that the majority of any nation's military forces is composed of 1st level soldiers, with lower-ranking officers being soldiers of 2nd to 5th level. Higher-ranking officers are usually nobles or multiclassed noble/soldiers. Few countries use peasant levies in any great numbers; when they do, these men are usually 1st level commoners armed with war spears.

TERRAIN FEATURES

From the deserts of the south to the icy mountains of Hyperborea, the natural world presents many hazards and terrain types. Canny fighters (especially borderers and nomads) will learn to take advantage of the unique qualities of each terrain. Descriptions of natural features are scattered throughout this chapter.

Deserts: Page 330
Forests: Page 311
Hills: Page 312
Marshes: Page 327
Mountains: Page 325
Plains: Page 307
Ruins: Overleaf



RUINS

Ruins are not, of course, a natural terrain type but they offer their own unique challenges and dangers.

Traps: All traps listed here are mechanical, activated by some trigger like a pressure plate or a concealed switch. Most traps list attack scores and the damage they inflict. Some traps can be parried, such as those that attack with a swinging blade but most can only be dodged. The Search and Disable Device DCs for each trap are also listed.

Dangerous Traps

Poison Dart Trap: Atk +8 ranged (1d4 plus poison, dart); poison (DC 12 Fortitude save resists, damage 1d4 temporary Constitution, Saves (4): Immediate/One Round/One Round/One Round); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 18.

Portcullis Trap: Atk +10 melee (3d6); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. *Note:* Damage applies only to those underneath the portcullis. Portcullis blocks passageway.

Rolling Rock Trap: Atk +10 melee (2d6, rock); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 22.

Scything Blade Trap: Atk +8 melee (1d8/x3); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 20.

Bricks from Ceiling: Atk +12 melee (2d6, bricks); multiple targets (all targets in two adjacent five-foot squares); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

Camouflaged Pit Trap: DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent five-foot squares); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 19.

Camouflaged Deep Pit Trap: DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 40 ft. deep (4d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent five-foot squares); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 17.

Lethal Traps

Flooding Room Trap: No attack roll necessary (see note below); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25. *Note:* Room floods completely in four rounds.

Built-to-Collapse Wall: Atk +20 melee (8d6, stone blocks); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-foot-by-10-foot area); Search DC 14; Disable Device DC 16.

Well-Camouflaged Pit Trap: DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 100 ft. deep (10d6, fall); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 18.

Dropping Ceiling: Ceiling moves down (12d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-foot-by-10-foot room); never miss; onset delay (one round); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 16.

Crushing Room: Walls move together (16d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-foot-by-10-foot room); never miss; onset delay (two rounds); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20.

Stealth and Detection in Ruins: The distance at which a foe can be spotted above ground depends on the surrounding terrain. Underground, detection is obviously limited by physical barriers – in the cramped conditions of a long-deserted Acheronian dungeon, a monster could be at an adventurer's throat almost before he sees it. That said, signs and spoors of creatures are protected from the weather in underground places, so it may be possible to find traces of creatures well before they are encountered.

Underground areas have no effect on Listen checks but darkness can make it much easier to hide.



ACHERON

Though the ancient, darkly magical empire of Acheron has long since vanished, it still sometimes makes its power felt, for its sorcerers do not always rest easy in their graves. Three thousand years ago Acheron presided over present-day Aquilonia, Nemedia and Argos but also ruled the nearby regions of Corinthia, Ophir and western Koth.

Aquilonia was most likely the site of Acheron's capital, Python, a mighty-walled city of colossal pylons and purple minarets, though the precise location of that sorcerous metropolis is unknown and its ruins have never been excavated. If they could be found, it is almost certain that long-forgotten artefacts of incredible power would be found among them, though the dangers faced by any would-be re-discoverers of Python would be extreme.

Some of the ancient Acheronians are alive still, especially in the mountainous regions of Nemedia, though they might also be found in any of the lands of what was once Acheron. They are highly secretive and are generally assumed to be no more than primitive hill villagers, though some still dream of rebuilding Acheron's glory once more.

Language: Acheronian

Related Languages: Old Stygian

AQUILONIA

Aquilonia is a Hyborian country, the most powerful and civilised in all the western world. Its climate is mild and pleasant and its soil rich and fertile, though much of the land is still covered with primeval forests that are used as hunting preserves by its nobility.

Aquilonia's hereditary enemy is Nemedia and Aquilonia regularly raids deep into that country, though Nemedia rarely attempts counterattacks against its stronger neighbour. The border between the two rivals, a mountain range running north-south along the eastern edge of Aquilonia, is heavily fortified on the Aquilonian side with a number of strong border castles dotting the mountaintops.

The other borders of Aquilonia include the hills of the north, which begin to rise in Gunderland and continue all the way through the northerly Bossonian Marches and on into Cimmeria. To the west, two great rivers, Thunder River and the Black River, separate Aquilonia from the untamed Pictish Wilderness; the precise border fluctuates between the two depending on Aquilonian settlement and Pictish incursion. The southwestern borders

are mountainous, beginning with the Poitain region and extending as far as the Alimane River between Aquilonia and Zingara. The River Tybor flows along the southeast border with Ophir as far as the Khorotas River.

During the events in *Wolves Beyond the Border*, King Conan seizes power by slaying the unpopular King Numedides in a bloody coup backed by a company of mercenaries, the armies of several nobles and many of the rebellious populace. His allies close to the capital are Prospero, his right-hand-man; Publius, the chancellor; and Countess Albiona, a local noblewoman.

Aquilonia's banner is dependent on the current king. King Vilerus' banner is a golden serpent on a scarlet field, while King Conan's is a golden lion on a black field.

Alimane River: The Alimane River separates Poitain from Zingara but is more a symbolic barrier than a real one. Though it has no bridges, it is easily and safely forded. Despite this, it is enthusiastically guarded by patrols on both sides, for the border has never been a peaceful one.

Attalus: Attalus is one of Aquilonia's most important provinces. It is located in the south-eastern part of that country. Its baron is Dion until he is slain by Conan during the events described in *The Phoenix on the Sword*. Attalus is regarded as the most culturally and commercially advanced region of Aquilonia.

Gunderland: Gunderland is the northernmost region of Aquilonia, though the Gundermen have never truly considered themselves to be Aquilonians, recalling their independent days perhaps too well. Gunderland is a region of steep hills and easily defended hilltop castles. At one time it was a kingdom in its own right and one day it will be so again; Aquilonian rule is no more than a passing phase and it is as if the Gundermen can somehow sense this truth.

The Gundermen are almost pure-blooded Hyborians, with the tawny hair and grey eyes of that folk. They once tried to push their border northwards into Cimmeria but were thrown back at the battle of Venarium. Their military forces are comprised predominantly of pikemen, who use pike and shield simultaneously and form a large part of Aquilonia's infantry.

Karaban: The count of Karaban is Volmana, until he is slain for his treachery by King Conan



during the events of *The Phoenix on the Sword*. Karaban was once a richly fertile province. Years of mismanagement and squandering by Volmana, as well as a lack of support for the region by King Conan, have left it poverty-stricken.

Khorotas River: This broad river flows all the way from Tarantia to the Argossean capital, Messantia, skirting the Poitanian mountains on the way. It is probably the most heavily used Aquilonian river, with merchant ships, fishing boats and Asuran funeral 'pilgrim boats' all taking advantage of its convenient route through the heart of the country.

Pellia: Pellia is an important region of Aquilonia, the only one still ruled by a prince. During the events of *The Scarlet Citadel*, Prince Arpello of Pellia attempts to seize power from King Conan. The prince, of course, inevitably dies at the hands of said king. Pellia seems to be situated between Tarantia and the Nemedian border on the eastern side of the country.

Poitain: Poitain is part of Aquilonia but the Poitanians are as fiercely independent as the Gundermen. This means that many ordinary Aquilonians are at least a little distrustful of Poitanians, remembering the old wars between the larger country and the province. Eastern Poitain is a highly mountainous country, rising up from the plains of Aquilonia into blue peaks heavily fortified with castles and towers. To the west, towards the Alimane river and the Zingaran border, the land is flatter and more fertile. Poitain's banner is a crimson leopard. Poitain's ruler, Count Trocero, is an enthusiastic supporter of King Conan and a highly warlike and chivalric knight.

Shamar: Shamar is a border city in the south of Aquilonia that defends the kingdom against incursions from Ophir. It is situated on the northern banks of the Tybor. Shamar is protected by stout walls and surrounded by a moat drawn from the river. Around the city are broad level plains and beyond the plains lie low hills to the north and west. A determined rider could push a fast horse from Shamar through Ophir to Khorshemish, capital of Koth, in only twelve hours or so. It is fully five days' ride from Shamar to Tarantia.

Shirki Valley and the Goralian Hills:

Northwest of Poitain is thinly settled hill country, much of which is still wilderness, leading on to the Bossonian Marches and the Westermarck

beyond. Several hill barons hold small, scattered castles and forts here and a few villages and towns eke out a living in the hills, though this country is nowhere near as fertile as most of the rest of Aquilonia.

The Shirki River itself is a tributary of the Thunder River. It is swift and turbulent at its source in the hills but becomes wide and deep as it flows toward the Thunder River. A natural low rock-bridge at the fortified village of Tanasul provides crossing as does a man-made bridge at Galparan. The Tanasul bridge dips below the level of the water in places, though these sections are shallow and easily forded so long as the river is not flooded. The Shirki valley is broad and flat, in stark contrast to the hills and crags on either side.

Approximately two miles north of the Shirki are the Goralian hills, which are extremely rugged and easily defensible. The Goralian hills have been the site of many an Aquilonian king's or rebel's last stand. The Goralian hills are labyrinthine, full of defiles, gorges, steep cliffs and other fine ambush sites. One notable feature within the hills is the Valley of Lions, a fan-shaped vale with low, wooded, naturally terraced hills to either side, so steep they are almost impassable from the valley.

Tarantia: Tarantia is Conan's capital and home to his palace and the royal hall, along with many a blue and golden tower. Its gates are vast and arched and its streets are well lit by bracketed torches. Many of the common people and older citizens still call the city by its old name of Tamar.



Outside the city, the corpses of traitors are left to rot at Traitor's Common. The Iron Tower is a prison and former keep close to the citadel. It has a secret underground entrance which can be reached from an abandoned watchtower some three streets away.

Tarantia is at the centre of a vast plain dotted with woods. The countryside around it is divided into small estates ruled by patricians from their villas.

The countryside between Tarantia and the Nemedian border is rich agricultural land with many small villages. It rises in the east to low foothills and high mountains.

Tauran: Tauran is an agricultural and forested region. Its inhabitants make some of the best woodsmen in all the Hyborian kingdoms.

The River Tybor: The wide, winding River Tybor separates Aquilonia from Ophir.

The River Valkia: Ten miles west of the mountain peaks that mark the Nemedian boundary, the River Valkia flows through a broad, shallow valley surrounded by rugged cliffs. Reeds and willows grow on the banks. This is the site of the Battle of Valkia that takes place during *The Hour of the Dragon*. The Valkia is easy enough to ford, even for a man on foot, because the banks slope right down to the water, which is slow-moving and shallow.

Westermarck: Westermarck is the region between the Bossonian Marches and the Pictish Wilderness. It has been settled in various waves by Aquilonians dissatisfied with the restrictions of the more feudal regions. Often the Picts rise up and take sections of the land back again.

Conajohara: At the time of *Beyond the Black River*, Conajohara is a newly opened-up frontier land. In all likelihood it is technically part of the Westermarck though it was previously part of the Pictish Wilderness and the territory is still in dispute. Only recently have Aquilonians begun to settle here in some numbers. Conajohara is situated between the Bossonian Marches and the Black River and is held by force against vengeful Pictish raiders. During the story *Beyond the Black River*, the Picts finally re-conquer this land, looting and burning the settlements and forts, forcing the settlers back across Thunder River.

The best land for settling is that which is close to Thunder River itself. The province is only some nineteen miles across north to south and east to west.

Velitrium is the capital city of this border region. It is sited on the eastern bank of Thunder River, nineteen miles east of Fort Tuscelan. Fort Tuscelan is a log border fort on the eastern bank of Black River. Tuscelan is effectively an early warning fort at the very limits of the territory claimed by Aquilonia.

Three creeks run across the territory of Conajohara: North Creek, South Creek and Scalp Creek. These creeks mark the borders of the settled land. North Creek runs into Black River in the east and is nine miles north of Fort Tuscelan, forming the northern border of Conajohara. Scalp Creek is some five miles east of Fort Tuscelan. It runs north-south and marks the beginning of the westernmost settlements, which lie between it and Velitrium. There are no settlements between Scalp Creek and Fort Tuscelan.

South Creek runs into Black River from the east close to the Bossonian and Pictish southern borders and forms the southern border of Conajohara. It is approximately 10 miles south of Fort Tuscelan. Beyond South Creek is a wide expanse of marshland that stretches throughout the land between the two rivers.

Language: Aquilonian

Related Languages: Bossonian, Nemedian, Brythunian, Ophirean, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Kothic and Argossean

MILITARY FORCES

Aquilonia has extensive military forces and is probably the most militarily powerful nation in all the Hyborian kingdoms. All in all, it could probably muster fifty-five thousand trained soldiers, including knights, archers and men-at-arms.

Aquilonian Archers: Although regarded as less expert than the Bossonian archers, these ordinary Aquilonian soldiers also train with the Bossonian longbow. Most are equipped only with leather or quilted jerkins and steel caps, along with their longbows and a variety of cheap but effective backup weapons. These men are a mix of 1st level soldiers and 1st level commoners (it is normal practice to levy any commoners who have spent a feat to learn how to use a Bossonian longbow) and number some 3,000 in total.



AQUILONIANS

The Aquilonians were a more or less pure-blooded race, though their bloodline was modified by contact with the Zingarans in the south and, much less extensively, with the Bossonians of the west and north. Aquilonia, as the westernmost of the Hyborian kingdoms, retained frontier traditions equalled only by the more ancient kingdom of Hyperborea and the Border Kingdom. Its most important provinces were Poitain in the south, Gunderland in the north and Attalus in the southeast. The Aquilonians were a tall race, averaging five feet, 10 and three-fourths inches in height and were generally inclined to be rangy, though in the last generations the city dwellers inclined towards portliness. They varied in complexion largely according to locality. Thus the people of Gunderland were uniformly tawny-haired and gray-eyed, while the people of Poitain were almost uniformly as dark as their neighbours the Zingarans. All were inclined to be dolichocephalic, except for a sprinkling of peasantry along the Bossonian border, whose type had been modified by admixture with the Bossonians and others in the more primitive parts of the kingdom where remnants of unclassified aboriginal races still existed, absorbed into the surrounding population. The people of Attalus boasted the greatest advances in commerce and culture, though the whole level of Aquilonian civilisation was enviable. Their language was much like the other Hyborian tongues and their chief god was Mitra. At the height of their power their religion was refined and imaginative and they did not practise human sacrifice. In war they relied largely upon their cavalry, heavily armed knights. Their pikemen and spearmen were mainly Gundermen, while their archers were supplied from the Bossonian Marches.

GUNDERMEN

Gunderland was once a separate kingdom but was brought into the larger kingdom less by conquest than through agreement. Its people never considered themselves to be Aquilonians and after the fall of the great kingdom Gunderland existed for several generations as a separate principality. Their ways in Gunderland were ruder and more primitively Hyborian than those in Aquilonia; their main concession to the ways of their more civilised southern neighbours was the adoption of the god Mitra in place of the primitive Bori – whom they worshipped once again, however, upon the fall of Aquilonia. The Gundermen were, next to the Hyperboreans, the tallest of the Hyborian races. They were fine soldiers and inclined to wander far. Gunderland mercenaries could be found in all the armies of the Hyborian kingdoms as well as in Zamora and the more powerful kingdoms of Shem.

Aquilonian Knights: These are ordinary knights from most of the Aquilonian provinces. These knights are generally equipped with heavy armour, often full plate, along with heavy lances, large shields and arming swords. Treat Aquilonian Knights as 2nd to 3rd level characters, with most having at least one level each of soldier and noble. There are some 6,500 Aquilonian knights in total.

Black Legion: This is the main Tarantian army and are the first enforcers of the King's will. They are commanded by Gromel, a Bossonian, until Conan slays him for his treachery in *The Phoenix on the Sword*. The Black Legion probably number approximately 5,000 in total,

including perhaps 1,000 knights (3rd level soldier/1st level noble), 2,500 mounted men-at-arms (3rd level soldiers), 500 pikemen (2nd level soldiers) and 1,000 archers (2nd level soldiers).

Black Dragons: King Conan's personal bodyguard is commanded by Pallantides and is responsible for guarding the royal palace at Tarantia as well as the King's person in time of war. Almost all are major supporters of Conan. The Black Dragons recruit only giants into their numbers (Strength and Constitution 15+, Height 6'2" +). Pallantides has kin in Ophir, so he is presumably Ophirean himself. The Black Dragons probably number only around five hundred but all are highly experienced, superbly disciplined and extremely well equipped. Treat each Black Dragon as a 5th level soldier at minimum; many are much more dangerous than that.

PLAINS

Undergrowth: Whether grown as crops or natural vegetation, the tall grasses of the plains function like light undergrowth in a forest. Particularly thick bushes form patches of heavy undergrowth that dot the landscape in grasslands.

Trench: Often dug before a battle to protect soldiers, a trench functions as a low wall except that it provides no cover against adjacent foes. It costs two squares of movement to leave a trench but nothing extra to enter one. Creatures outside a trench who make a melee attack against a creature inside the trench gain a +1 bonus on melee attacks because they have higher ground. In farm terrain, trenches are generally irrigation ditches.

Berm: A berm is a common defensive structure, a low, earthen wall that slows movement and provides a measure of cover. A character crossing a two-square berm travels uphill for one square, then downhill for one square. Two square berms provide cover as low walls for anyone standing behind them. Larger berms provide the low wall benefit for anyone standing one square downhill from the tops of the berms.

Fences: Wooden fences are generally used to contain livestock or impede oncoming soldiers. It costs an extra square of movement to cross a wooden fence. A stone fence provides a measure of cover as well, functioning as a low wall. Mounted characters can cross a fence without slowing their movement if they succeed on a DC 15 Ride check. If the check fails, the steed crosses the fence, but the rider falls from the saddle.

Stealth and Detection in Plains: In plains terrain, the maximum distance at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 6d6×40 feet, although the specifics of a particular area may restrict line of sight. Plains terrain provides no bonuses or penalties on Listen and Spot checks. Cover and concealment are not uncommon, so a good place of refuge is often nearby, if not right at hand.

Bossonian Archers: Bossonian archers wear mail hauberks or brigandines, both if they can afford it. They are armed with the Bossonian longbow and at least two dozen arrows, with long knives (treat as poniards) short swords or arming swords as their backup weapons. There are at least 5,000 Bossonian archers available in the Aquilonian armies; they are 2nd level on average, usually in some combination of soldier and borderer. Most are very experienced in war, thanks to spending most of their lives fighting Picts.

Gunderland Pikemen: Gunderland Pikemen wear steel caps or visored bascinets along with mail hauberks. They carry their famous pike and shield combination, plus some kind of backup weapon such as an arming sword or short sword. Most are 1st or 2nd level soldiers. Aquilonia's armies number at least 5,000 Gundermen, almost all of them pikemen.

Mounted Men-At-Arms: Knights in all but name and quality of equipment, most of Aquilonia's men-at-arms are clad in heavy armour of some kind and armed with heavy lances and large shields,

with either some kind of sword, mace or axe as a backup weapon. Aquilonia has approximately 15,000 mounted men-at-arms and uses them just as she uses her knights: to charge home into the enemy. Most are 2nd level soldiers.

Men-At-Arms: Most of Aquilonia's infantry wield pikes as the Gundermen do but without the protection of shields. Typically they will have at a minimum a quilted jack and steel cap but often manage to loot some better equipment. They number some 5,000 strong and are typically 1st level soldiers. Occasionally more men-at-arms can be recruited by levying the peasantry, though the kingdom needs to provide arms and armour for these recruits.

Poitanian Archers: The various Poitanian units are sufficiently distinct in style and identity



that they are not numbered among the regular Aquilonian forces. Poitain has fewer archers than the Bossonian Marches but all are trained with the Bossonian longbow and ranked as 1st level soldiers or 1st level borderers at a minimum. In total, Poitain could muster some 2,000 archers.

Poitainian Footmen: Poitain's infantry train with the war spear, the greatsword, the war sword or a large shield and a one-handed weapon such as an arming sword or hunting spear. They are somewhat less effective than the knights of their homeland but are still experienced and, perhaps more importantly, very numerous. Most are 1st to 2nd level soldiers. They number some 5,000 strong.

Poitainian Knights: Poitain's knights comprise of the most powerful military forces in all of Aquilonia. Kept in a constant state of readiness by Count Trocero and well experienced in combat due to the troubles with the Zingaran border, these knights have more than once proved a decisive factor in Aquilonia's wars. Poitainian knights often wear full plate and visored helms. Approximately half have heavy lances, shields and broadswords, with the other half wielding greatswords. Count Trocero could call on some 3,000 knights, typically 3rd to 4th level soldiers.

ARGOS

Argos has long held a dislike of Zingara. Their dispute began as a trading rivalry but often spills over into serious conflict. Argos is a Hyborean kingdom, though there is much intermarrying with Zingaran and occasionally Shemitish people.

The main Zingaran border roads are guarded at all times but the guard is increased when Zingara is at civil war. The border country is predominantly oak-forested hills that are haunted by dreadful flesh-eating ghouls (see page 386). The ghouls are probably one reason most of the conflict between Argos and Zingara has been expressed at sea.

Central Argos is a rich agricultural land of fields and orchards. It is friendly to travellers and has a great many inns. Southern Argos is less flat than the northern part of the area, with low blue hills that extend as far as the coast and cliffs plunging down to the sea.

City of the Ghouls: The City of Ghouls is somewhere deep within the primeval forests near the Zingaran border.

It is said that all the ghouls of the border country make their homes here, ranging out by night to capture and devour unwary travellers.

Messantia: This is the capital city of Argos. It is a great trading centre for good of all kinds, particularly small, high-value items such as gems, jewellery and works of art. It is unwallled, trusting to the sea itself and the many ships in its harbour for protection. Overlooking the harbour is a broad street of large white mansions, where those who have somehow struck it rich abide. Messantia is on the estuary of the Khorotas river. The seas to the south of Messantia are shark-infested.

Galleys travel southeast from Messantia to Shem trading mirrors, silk clothing, armour, weapons and shields. They also travel to Kush, trading beads, silks, sugar and weaponry for ivory, copra, copper ore, slaves and pearls. Argossean galleys use slaves, usually Kushites.

Language: Argossean

Related Languages: Nemedian, Brythunian, Ophirean, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Kothic, Zingaran, and Aquilonian

MILITARY FORCES

The precise extent and nature of Argos's military forces is never made entirely clear, though they certainly include Shemitish irregulars (1st and 2nd level nomads) hired for their archery skills. It seems likely that Argos has little in the way of a standing army – just enough to garrison its borders – and that it would rely on its trading wealth to hire a vast Shemitish mercenary army if it ever faced a serious threat. It does have impressive sea power (hundreds of ships manned by 1st level pirates) which could easily be bolstered by Barachan pirates if the need arose. There are almost certainly some armoured knights among the nobility who presumably command the border forts.

BARACHAN ISLES AND THE WESTERN OCEAN

The Barachan Isles are inhabited by pirates who prey on Zingaran shipping and ports. Many are former Argossean sailors turned outlaw. They are sometimes known as the Red Brotherhood.

The seas around the Isles are infested with sharks. The Barachan pirates are some of the few Hyborian folk to traffic with the Black Corsairs of the Southern Islands, though the two groups raid each other as often as they meet peacefully. The Barachan pirates have a continual feud with the Zingarans and prefer to attack Zingaran shipping and ports rather than other targets.

Though the pirates have no standing armies, they are excellent archers (often learning either the Bossonian longbow or Shemitish bow) and strong swordsmen. The more successful pirate crews sport breastplates and steel caps for protection. Most are 1st or 2nd level pirates.

Tortage: Tortage is a relatively small island among the Barachas that is significant to the pirates both for its large bay and naturally fortified anchorage and for the lawless port town that has grown up by the bay. Tortage is a favourite spot for both rendezvous and wild revelry.

Language: Argossean

Related Languages: Nemedian, Brythunian, Ophirean, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Kothic, Zingaran or Aquilonian

ISLE OF THE BLACK ONES

This island lies far to the west of the Baracha Isles proper. Inland the island is mountainous, with a number of grassy and lightly forested peaks. The highest summit is topped with the walls and towers of a rambling castle made from a shimmering green substance which blends almost perfectly with the green trees and grasses of the hills. The castle is inhabited by massive, wiry-looking black creatures known as the black ones, who are described in the *Book of Skelos* as holding the key to a great treasure.

The giant black demons live a bizarre and evil existence catching occasional lost sailors and hurling them to their weird dooms in a strange green pool which transforms anyone who touches it into a shrunken, desiccated statuette-like object, leached of all life. This is the case until the events described in *The Pool of the Black One*, during which all or most of the black ones are slain and the green castle is damaged or destroyed.

THE WESTERN OCEAN

Beyond the Isle of the Black Ones, it is uncertain precisely what lands may or may not be found. This is potentially highly fertile territory for adventure and exploration, given the rumours of what might be to the west (see below).

SCENARIO HOOKS

- Given that Conan and his buccaneer crew had to flee for their lives at the end of *The Pool of the Black One*, it remains uncertain as to precisely whether or not all the black ones are dead and whether the green pool can be restored to its former function. There may even be more of the demonic settlements on the remainder of the isle – and it is always possible that Zaporavo was right about the weird treasures guarded somewhere on its green shores. The characters may explore further in hopes of finding out more. This scenario could also occur before the events of *The Pool of the Black One*, with a low-level party attempting an entirely stealthy mission to the Isle of the Black Ones, knowing that if the black demons discover them certain death will be the result.

BORDER KINGDOM

The Border Kingdom is certainly the Hyborian kingdom about which least is revealed in Howard's writings. This presents us with something of a conundrum. It has been speculated that this kingdom is a deliberately established bulwark between the civilised lands of Nemedia and Brythunia to the south and Cimmeria to the north, fulfilling much the same function as Gunderland does for Aquilonia –keeping the Cimmerians out. In this case, it is presumably settled by undesirables and political exiles from the two Hyborian kingdoms, whose rulers are happy enough to permit this since the land is likely to be hilly and not particularly fertile. It is referred to as having plains, however, so presumably there is some useful land.

BOSSONIAN MARCHES

The Bossonian Marches are inhabited by villages of archers who are closely allied to Aquilonia but are not its subjects. Bossonians are of average height and have brown or grey eyes. They live primarily by agriculture, though most adult males bring in some extra money by spending at least a few years in the Aquilonian army. The Bossonian marches extend further south than the Shirki river, though the southern hill country is wild and difficult to defend even for these stalwart warriors, situated as it is between Zingara and the Pictish Wilderness.



The Bossonians fortify their lands, with every one of their villages being walled and defended by brave archers against the incursions of the Picts and Cimmerians. Bossonians are almost unbeatable in defence of castles or forts, so long as they have backup – traditionally, the Bossonians act as the first line of defence for Aquilonia against the barbarians but if ever a serious invasion or attack begins the Bossonians expect and receive heavy infantry and cavalry support from their Aquilonian allies

Bossonian archers have excellent morale and wear heavy mail hauberks or brigandines, sometimes both. They are armed with long knives as backup weapons. See the Bossonian Archers entry under Aquilonia's Military Forces for more information.

Language: Bossonian

Related Languages: Aquilonian

BRYTHUNIA

Brythunia is a Hyborian country that is possibly more of a collection of city-states similar to Corinthia than a true kingdom in its own right. Though it is believed to have a king, it seems likely that he has little real power and that local lords tend to ignore his pronouncements and simply get on with ruling their own cities. Given Brythunia's location and probable climate, it seems likely that herding and pastoral agriculture are more common here than growing fruits and vegetables in any quantity. Brythunia is mentioned as having plains, which would also fit this hypothesis.

Brythunian women are blonde and famous for their beauty, though the men of this land have no especial reputation for handsomeness.

Brythunian rogues often favour slings rather than the more usual bows. This may be because slingstones subdue one's enemies more easily than arrows.

Language: Brythunian

Related Languages: Nemedian, Ophirean, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Kothic, Argossean and Aquilonian

MILITARY FORCES

The precise military forces of Brythunia are a matter for speculation but presumably follow the standard Hyborian model of large numbers of cavalry, some stout pikemen or spearmen on foot and a force of missile troops armed with either hunting bows, slings or more likely crossbows and arbalests.

CIMMERIA

This northern land is shrouded in both mists and mystery. It is a hill country and produces some of the best climbers in the world, most of them somewhat dour and pleasureless. The individual tribes war with one another for preference, never uniting to conquer their enemies and only occasionally banding together for mutual self-defence. Externally, they are enemies of the other barbaric tribes nearby – the Picts, Æsir and Vanir. They rarely raid into the Bossonian Marches or Gunderland, perhaps because the folk there are far more likely to have extensive fortifications and the Cimmerians do not really have the temperament for besieging castles and walled towns.



Panthers and wolves are mentioned as living in Cimmeria. It seems likely that deer, elk, goats and bears would also inhabit the hills of this land.

Venarium: This is the ruin of a fort-town built by the invading Gundermen when Conan was but a boy. A great mass of Cimmerian warriors rose up in defiance of these unwanted settlers, attacking and burning down



FORESTS

Trees: The most important terrain element in a forest is the trees, obviously. A creature standing in the same square as a tree gains a +2 bonus to Defence and a +1 bonus on Reflex saves (these bonuses do not stack with cover bonuses from other sources). The presence of a tree does not otherwise affect a creature's fighting space, because it is assumed that the creature uses the tree to its advantage when it can. The trunk of a typical tree has Defence 4, hardness 5 and 150 hit points. A DC 15 Climb check is sufficient to climb a tree. Medium and dense forests have massive trees as well. These trees take up an entire square and provide cover to anyone behind them. They have Defence 3, hardness 5 and 600 hit points. Like their smaller counterparts, it takes a DC 15 Climb check to climb them.

Undergrowth: Vines, roots and short bushes cover much of the ground in a forest. It costs two squares of movement to move into a space covered with light undergrowth, which provides concealment. Undergrowth increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by two because the leaves and branches get in the way. It costs four squares of movement to move into heavy undergrowth, which provides concealment with a 30% miss chance (instead of the usual 20%). Heavy undergrowth increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by five. Heavy undergrowth is easy to hide in, granting a +5 circumstance bonus on Hide checks. Running or charging through heavy undergrowth is impossible. Squares with undergrowth are often clustered together. Undergrowth and trees are not mutually exclusive; it is common for a five-foot square to have both a tree and undergrowth.

Other Forest Terrain Elements: Fallen logs generally stand about three feet high and provide cover just as low walls do. They cost five feet of movement to cross. Forest streams are generally five to 10 feet wide and no more than five feet deep. Pathways wind through most forests, allowing normal movement and providing neither cover nor concealment. These paths are less common in dense forests but even unexplored forests will have occasional game trails.

Stealth and Detection in a Forest: In a sparse forest, the maximum distance at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 3d6×10 feet. In a medium forest, this distance is 2d8×10 feet and in a dense forest it is 2d6×10 feet.

Because any square with undergrowth provides concealment, it is usually easy for a creature to use the Hide skill in the forest. Logs and massive trees provide cover, which also makes hiding possible. The background noise in the forest makes Listen checks more difficult, increasing the DC of the check by two per 10 feet instead of the usual one.

the fort. The young Conan joined the battle and slew many a doughty foeman despite being no more than fifteen years of age.

Language: Cimmerian

Related Languages: None

MILITARY FORCES

Cimmeria does not truly have military forces as such but every adult (1st level barbarian) will pick up a sword or an axe to defend his home if need be and every male and many females will head out on raids. Thus,

it would be a very difficult land to conquer and has little to attract any conqueror in the first place.

CORINTHIA

Corinthia is an ancient Hyborian land that is broken up into a large number of city-states. Each city-state is ruled by its own king, though traditionally in Corinthia the high priest of Mitra in each city-state also wields a great deal of power. There is no one king who rules over



HILLS

Gradual Slope: This incline is not steep enough to affect movement but characters gain a +1 bonus on melee attacks against foes downhill from them.

Steep Slope: Characters moving uphill (to an adjacent square of higher elevation) must spend two squares of movement to enter each square of steep slope. Characters running or charging downhill (moving to an adjacent square of lower elevation) must succeed on a DC 10 Balance check upon entering the first steep slope square. Mounted characters make a DC 10 Ride check instead. Characters who fail this check stumble and must end their movement 1d2×5 feet later. Characters who fail by five or more fall prone in the square where they end their movement. A steep slope increases the DC of Tumble checks by two.

Cliff: A cliff typically requires a DC 15 Climb check to scale and is 1d4×10 feet tall.

Light Undergrowth: Sagebrush and other scrubby bushes grow on hills, although they rarely cover the landscape as they do in forests and marshes. Light undergrowth provides concealment and increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by two.

Stealth and Detection in Hills: In gentle hills, the maximum distance at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 2d10×10 feet. In rugged hills, this distance is 2d6×10 feet.

Hiding in hilly terrain can be difficult if there is no undergrowth around. A hilltop or ridge provides enough cover to hide from anyone below the hilltop or ridge. Hills do not affect Listen or Move Silently checks.

all the city-states, though it seems likely that the individual kings would band together in a confederacy to resist foreign invasion if need be.

The economy and geography of Corinthia are uncertain. Given the name of the country, ancient Greece is probably the best source of inspiration for Games Masters who wish to expand on Corinthia. This would mean the city-states were walled and surrounded by enough agricultural land as to be almost self-sufficient. There would be a strong division between the hereditary, land-owning citizen class and a serf or slave class that worked the fields and attended domestic tasks, leaving their masters plenty of time for both politics and war. This would mean most citizens would take at least a level or two of soldier and spend much of their time warring on rival city-states, with a shifting network of alliances governing which states were at war at any one time. Smaller cities might join together in semi-permanent leagues and limited democracy would probably be practised in some areas.

The king of the unnamed city-state depicted in the tale *Rogues in the House*



priest, in this case Nabonidus, to the extent that the king often spends his time drunk to escape his feelings of powerlessness. This city-state has a large thieves' quarter, known as The Maze.

Language: Corinthian

Related Languages: Nemedian, Ophirean, Brythunian, Hyperborean, Kothic, Argossean and Aquilonian

MILITARY FORCES

Corinthia probably has separate armed forces for each city, composed of free citizens who are expected to provide their own armaments and armour. Some may be as fanatical as the Spartans of Greek history. Most Corinthian troops are probably heavily armoured footmen who fight in phalanxes with long pikes, though it is equally possible that the Hyborian preference for cavalry prevails here too.

EASTERN DESERT

Beyond Shem's eastern borders lies a vast expanse of desert and steppe land extending as far as Turan. The northern part of the desert is mountainous and is home to the man-apes (see page 386). Usually this land is not truly ruled by any nation but is populated by tribes of nomads of Shemite, Hyrkanian or aboriginal descent, as well as wandering Kozaks from all nations.

Just before the events of *The Devil in Iron*, though, the Hyrkanians who rule Turan extend that kingdom's borders into and even beyond the Eastern Desert as far as the western Hyborian kingdoms. It seems likely that they do not actually conquer the nomads of the desert, though, particularly the Zuagirs. There is little value to these sandy wildernesses, save to other nomads. The Turanians seek the plunder of the eastern Hyborian kingdoms, not the meagre resources of the desert and so in all probability the nomads make little attempt beyond a few skirmishes to stop the Hyrkanians passing through en route to their true targets.

The region has three areas of note: the ancient ruin of Kuthchemes, the desert nation of Iranistan and the trading city of Zamboula.

KUTHCHEMES

Kuthchemes is a ruin of Old Stygian or perhaps Acheronian vintage. It was once a great city, a stronghold of sorcerous and military might, before the Hyborians swept down from the north and destroyed the old empires. Now all that remains is the sealed dome of Thugra

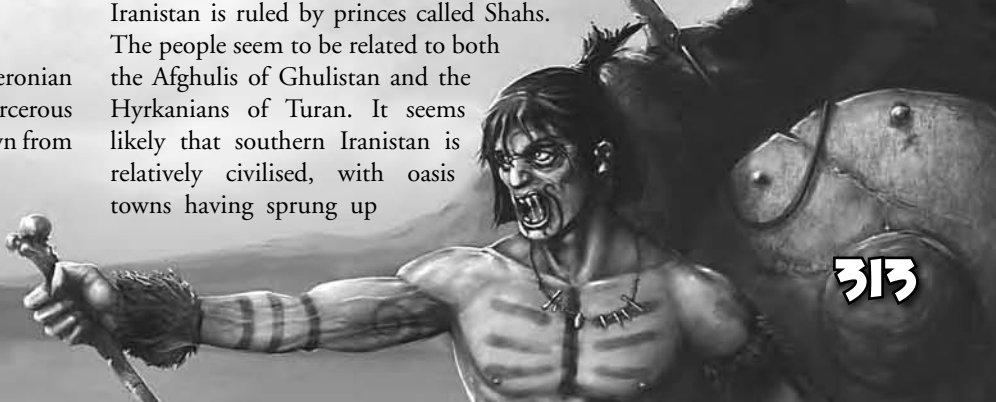


Khotan's tomb, which is said to hold the preserved body of Khotan, once the ruler of the city, along with a treasure beyond men's imaginings.

IRANISTAN

Iranistan is a vast desert country; its northern borders merge seamlessly with the Eastern Desert. Indeed, it seems likely that most travellers have no idea they are passing through Iranistan, since there is nothing to distinguish it from the greater desert to the north save that the nomads here call themselves Iranistanis rather than Zuagirs or Shemites. Iranistan is close to Ghulistan, Turan and Vendhya and probably extends to the west as far as Zembabwe.

Iranistan is ruled by princes called Shahs. The people seem to be related to both the Afghulis of Ghulistan and the Hyrkanians of Turan. It seems likely that southern Iranistan is relatively civilised, with oasis towns having sprung up





along caravan routes between Vendhya and Zembabwe. These are overshadowed by the more northerly caravan routes, though, so the casual traveller is never likely to get as far as Iranistan.

ZAMBOULA

Zamboula is currently under Turanian rule, though it was originally built by the Old Stygian Empire when that nation of dread sorcerers extended its might over most of the lands south of Ophir. The current lord is a Turanian, Jungir Khan, though it is whispered that Nafertari, his mistress (who by her name is probably of Stygian descent), holds the true power in the city. Most of the upper classes are of old Stygian blood and worship Set but the common people worship the evil god Hanuman.

Zamboula is a city of towers and minarets rising above the surrounding Kharamun desert. It is a city, too, of some paradoxes, particularly when it comes to the divisions between rich and poor. Beggars throng its streets and Ghazan wine is cheap and readily available at its guest-houses and taverns. Zamboula is a trading outpost, however, a city on one of the most profitable caravan routes in the world, the great east-west road that joins the Eastern lands to Shem and Stygia. Lesser caravan routes also pass by the great oasis here. Clearly someone is growing very rich in Zamboula, likely the Turanians and perhaps their collaborators among the Stygian nobility.

The common people are probably a mixture of many races including Shemites, blacks from Darfar and the other Black Kingdoms and folk of more or less Vendhyan descent. They are extremely poor; however, they are for the most part happy despite their desperate straits, caring little who rules them but simply getting on with their lives, parading about in gaudy clothes, drinking heavily, gambling and carousing.

Zamboula is regarded as an accursed city by the Zuagir nomads of the nearby desert. This is because many an honest nomad (if that is not a contradiction in terms) has vanished from the city, never to be seen again. Rumours abound that these hapless souls were given in sacrifice to Yog, the Lord of the Empty Abodes. These rumours are quite true. Darfari cannibal cultists roam the streets at night taking anyone they find at will.

Their foul practices are tolerated by commoner and Turanian ruler alike, who simply lock their doors and remain inside at night.

The city is patrolled by Pelishtim mercenary guards hired by the Turanians who regard such work as beneath them. The Pelishtim guards wield pikes and swords and sling broad brass shields on their backs to protect against stabs from behind. (Treat these as breastplates but only against foes that are, at the Games Master's discretion, attacking from behind.) This is sensible enough, for the Darfari cannibals will not hesitate to attack even a squad of armed soldiers if they think they can get away with it.

SCENARIO HOOKS

- ✱ During the events in *Black Colossus*, Thugra Khotan is awakened in his tomb at Kuthchemes and later slain; however, the treasures are never plundered and perhaps await still. Does this tomb have more guardians, more tombs? There is only one way to find out.
- ✱ At some point, if Zamboula's importance grows still further with the Turanian raids on much of eastern Hyboria, it will be a central point on the route successful plunderers take back to Turan, as well as on the trade route between Stygia and Khitai. Untold riches and slaves will come through Zamboula and it is likely that with this newfound wealth and power the Hyrkanian rulers of the city will finally want to do something about the cult of Yog once and for all. They will not stoop to such a profitless and ignoble task themselves, however. On the other hand, if a group of adventurers were to come to town, ignorant of the scale of the problem, they might make an ideal force to make a start on tracking down and slaying those involved with the cult, at least until their investigations make them unwilling participants at a sacrificial fire.

GHULISTAN

Barbaric tribes, the largest of which is known as the Afghuli tribe, populate this wild hill country north of Vendhya. Ghulistan forms the border between Vendhya and Turan and its presence is a powerful incentive for the Turanians not to attempt to conquer Vendhya, for they would need to fight their way through hordes of tribesmen to do so. The inhabitants of Ghulistan include relatively advanced city-dwellers to the north and wild barbarian hillmen in the southern mountains. A large number of related tribes also inhabit the crags around the southern border of Ghulistan.

The hill tribes live by raiding the Vendhyans, the Turanians and each other, as well as anyone else they can find. They are bandits, pure and simple, with their home villages practising limited agriculture but revealed as the bandit bases they truly are by the presence of heavily fortified strongholds.



Afghulistan: The southern portion of Ghulistan, inhabited by the Afghulis, is known as Afghulistan.

Ghor: This is the hill village where the Afghulis commanded by Conan at the time of *The People of the Black Circle* have their base. It is en route from Vendhya to Mount Yimsha.

Gurashah: This wide valley is close to Secunderam in the northern portion of the Himelians.

Hill Tribes: These include the Galzai, Dagozai, Khurakzai, Irakzai (the latter currently in the pay of the Turanians), Wazuli and Zhaibari.

Himelians: This range of tall, cold mountains includes Mount Yimsha (see below). The Himelians are full of small tribes, though the precise positioning of their borders depends on who is speaking – Ghulistan has historically claimed all the Himelians and the Zhaibar Pass as its own but the tribes who dwell in the region regard themselves as independent. To the Vendhyans, though, there is little or no distinction between an Afghuli and any other barbaric hillman.

Khorbhul: Khorbhul is a northern city currently under Turanian rule. It is speculated that the northern city-dwellers are closely related to the Himelian tribesmen and

probably resisted the Turanian invasion fiercely. Without their Himelian cousins' advantage of terrain, though, they could not stand up to the Turanians for long. If there is one thing the *Conan* saga teaches us, it is that cities and their people can never be so enduring as the wild hills and their fierce barbarians.

Khurum: Khurum is the hill village where the Wazuli tribe make their headquarters. It is named after the long-dead but still infamous Amir Khurum, who is spoken of in the fabled *Book of Skelos*. Khurum has also given his name to the valley below the village and the pass that runs through the valley.

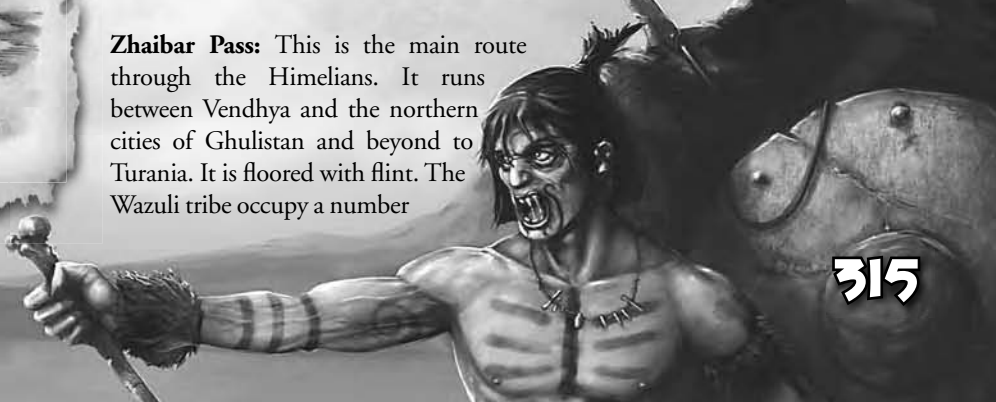
Mountain Passes: In addition to the main Zhaibar Pass between northern Vendhya and Turan, the Shalizah and Amir Jehun Passes also offer routes through the Himelians, though these routes are narrower and less direct. Amir Jehun Pass also travels straight through Afghulistan, which means it should be avoided by any who do not have some kind of safe conduct agreement with the Afghulis.

Mount Yimsha: This is the stronghold of the Black Seers of Yimsha, an evil sorcerous society. The Black Seers are said to be the controllers of the priests of Tarim in the temples of Turan, amongst other things. Their castle is high above the peaks of the Himelians. It is defended first by the jagged and labyrinthine nature of the terrain around; next by an outer guard tower, filled with apprentice sorcerers armed with a variety of strange magical weaponry; and finally by a moat-like ravine filled with poisonous mists that girdles the final peak itself. The inner castle is the home of the Master of Yimsha and his demonic henchmen, the Lords of the Black Circle.

During the story *The People of the Black Circle*, Conan is able to slay more or less all of the Seers and their acolytes and possibly even the Master of Yimsha himself. However, as is so often the case when dealing with sorcerers, all is not necessarily as it might seem.

Secunderam: This is one of the northern cities of Ghulistan. It has been occupied by the Turanians for some time before the events in *The People of the Black Circle*. Its governor is Khosru Khan.

Zhaibar Pass: This is the main route through the Himelians. It runs between Vendhya and the northern cities of Ghulistan and beyond to Turania. It is floored with flint. The Wazuli tribe occupy a number





of nearby hill villages and often sweep out to attack those who wander through the pass. There is also a local tribe, the Zhaibari, who are great enemies of the Wazuli.

Language: Afghuli

Related Languages: None

MILITARY FORCES

Every tribe is its own small army in Ghulistan. Usually lightly armoured or completely unarmoured, they are fierce warriors (1st and 2nd level barbarians) nonetheless, wielding the infamous Zhaibar knives in battle. Their leaders often use tulwars captured from the Vendhyans or Turanians. Ghulistani women are tough but are unlikely to take up arms and fight in open warfare; however, they will probably be very dangerous to fallen foes or when defending their homes.

SCENARIO HOOKS

✱ In the final scene of the story *The People of the Black Circle*, Conan apparently dispatches the vulture-formed Master of Yimsha. However, it cannot be assumed that this means permanent doom for the latter – he might easily have sent a surviving acolyte out to attack the Devi so that Conan would think he had seen the last of the Seers. Likewise, though the Master of Yimsha fell to his apparent death, Conan is quick to point out that sorcerers have many lives... Could the sorcerer be alive and up to his old tricks again, trying to take long-range control over the governments of both Turan and Vendhya? Or could another Master have arisen, taking control of Yimsha and the forbidden lore that is doubtless still contained within it – perhaps even summoning once more the dread Lords of the Black Circle? In any case, without Conan around to deal with these sorcerous threats, who will ride to Yimsha and destroy its doubtless weakened sorcerers? Who will take advantage of the perhaps considerable plunder since Conan did not wait around to loot the place?

HYPERBOREA

Hyperborea is the most ancient of the Hyborian kingdoms. The Hyperboreans of old were the first builders in stone, the first fortifiers and castle-constructors. The modern

Hyperborean kingdom, though, is ruled by a folk of mingled Old Hyperborean and Æsir descent. The Hyperboreans are slavers, which is unusual for a Hyborian realm and take Zamorian and Hyrkanian women when they can.

The climate of Hyperborea is probably a little milder than that of neighbouring Asgard, allowing for slightly more effective agriculture. Hyperborea still needs its old castles, for it has no strong natural borders – rivers tend to freeze over in winter and make for easy passage and mountains are little trouble to the Æsir and Cimmerians. To the east there is no real border at all; there are only the steppes to the north of the Eastern Desert. These are scantily populated though they are little barrier to the most likely raiders from that quarter, the Turanians.

Language: Hyperborean

Related Languages: Nemedian, Ophirean, Brythunian, Corinthian, Kothic, Argossean, Zamorian, Nordheimir and Aquilonian

MILITARY FORCES

Hyperborea's military is probably a mixture of Hyborian style heavy cavalry wearing full armour and carrying lances and shields and infantry armed in a more Nordheimir manner, with mail or scale armour and broadswords or axes.

HYRKANIA

Hyrkania is a land of steppes and wilderness, though it is defined more by its people, the nomadic Hyrkanian tribes, than by any particular geographical feature. This vast land stretches from the Vilayet Sea in the west to Khitai in the east.

Silk is very common in Hyrkania and is perhaps imported from Khitai. All classes of people wear it. It is likely that traders do pass through here, since Hyrkania is on the great Khitai to Stygia caravan route, though precisely what the Hyrkanians have to offer in trade is uncertain – perhaps meat, milk, the fermented mare's milk drink kvass, ivory and leather goods.

Thousands of elephants roam the Hyrkanian lands. Presumably, yaks, goats, sheep and horses can all be found in abundance here too.

Much of Hyrkania is uninhabited and extremely mountainous. The rest is predominantly steppe or desert land. This allows for little true agriculture but is well suited to the fairly nomadic, pastoral life favoured by the Hyrkanians.

Zaporoska River: This overgrown, marshy-banked river is a constant thorn in the side of the Turanians to the west due to the ease with which criminals can find places to hide here. Though it is nominally part of Hyrkania, it is not of interest to the Hyrkanian nomads, who cannot graze, herd or raid in swampland. As a result, both banks are inhabited by Kozaks.

Language: Hyrkanian

Related Languages: None

MILITARY FORCES

Every adult male Hyrkanian is an effective warrior (1st level nomad). Like most nomads, the Hyrkanians' lifestyle keeps them tough and allows them enough leisure time to practice combat riding, archery and fighting every day. Though it is unlikely that there would be organised resistance to an invasion, at least in the early days, every last Hyrkanian would fight for his freedom.

KHAURAN

The people here are the Khaurani, who are ruled by the Askhaurian dynasty. Like the Khorajians, the Khaurani ruling classes are originally of Kothic descent but wrested their kingdom from Koth's rule by force rather than carving it out of the Shemite lands.

The capital (and only) city here is also known as Khauran. The present ruler is Queen Taramis. During the events described in *A Witch Shall Be Born*, her rule was usurped by her twin sister Salome, the present incarnation of a legendarily evil witch who is reborn into the Askhaurian dynasty every generation.

Language: Kothic

Related Languages: Nemedian, Ophirean, Brythunian, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Argossean and Aquilonian

MILITARY FORCES

The ordinary folk, Khauran commoners (see page 351), are almost completely unsuited to fighting but the rulers of Khauran are essentially Kothian warriors as adept in the ways of the sword and lance as any Hyborian troops. Khauran could muster some three or four thousand of these troops, predominantly cavalry (2nd level soldiers), if necessary. The infantry would typically be equipped with broadswords, large shields, mail hauberks and steel caps and the cavalry would have plate armour, visored helmets, large shields, heavy lances and arming swords.

KHITAI

Far to the east of any other kingdom, Khitai is an ancient and sorcerous civilisation. It is just to the east of Hyrkania and likely stretches from there to a hypothetical eastern coast.



Khitai is a land of haunted jungles filled with forbidden knowledge. Many of its folk live within the jungles in mysterious temples, which are full of golden chimes ringing rich, vibrant tones. Some Khitan sorcerers travel as far as Stygia to learn from the magicians there and vice versa – Khitai is a regular stop for Western sorcerers seeking the knowledge of distant lands.

Paikang: Paikang is the capital of Khitai. This vast city of purple minarets trades raw silk, high-on indestructible silk carpets, fine jade and weird artefacts for goods from all over the world. Caravans set off from here and travel through Hyrkania and Turan to as far as Stygia, Shem and Zamora and return laden with the riches of the West.

Swamps of the Dead: This is believed to be the only place in the world where the grey lotus grows. Given the name of the



place and the typical conditions conducive to the growth of the lotus, it is likely that ghosts, ghouls and other fiends haunt these swamps.

Language: Khitan

Related Languages: None

MILITARY FORCES

The strength of Khitai's military is uncertain but it is likely they have a good deal of experience fighting off raiding Hyrkanian nomads. The military forces are likely comprised of large numbers of footmen and horsemen with mail armour, arming swords, Hyrkanian bows and crossbows.

KHORAJA

Khoraja was originally part of the Shemitish desert lands but was taken at sword-point by Kothic adventurers. It is now an enemy of Koth. Its ruler is King Khossus, whose sister is the beautiful Princess Yasmela.

Most of Khoraja is fertile meadowland but there is hill country to the south which borders the great deserts of eastern Shem. This hill country is populated by the Zaeemi and other tribes of Shemite stock but is loyal to Khoraja. The hills form a part of the Kothic Escarpment.

Khoraja: Khoraja's capital city is named for the kingdom itself. It has broad, torchlit streets and flat-roofed houses with fertile gardens.

The royal palace is incredibly opulent; it is built of solid marble and filled with gold and lapis lazuli. It has a large temple to Ishtar and the Shemitish pantheon, with a smaller one to Mitra that has largely fallen out of use though it is still well maintained by the remaining faithful.

Language: Kothic

Related Languages: Nemedian, Ophirean, Brythunian, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Argossean and Aquilonian

MILITARY FORCES

Knights: Khoraja's elite knights (1st level soldier/2nd level noble) wear burnished plate



armour and visored sallets. Their primary weapon is the lance, and they use arming swords or broadswords when the charge is done. There are 500 knights in Khoraja.

Hill Cavalry: Khoraja's light cavalry are typical hillmen, with mail hauberts, steel caps and Shemitish bows. For close-quarters combat they have scimitars or swords. Khoraja can muster some 5,000 hill cavalry (1st and 2nd level nomads).

Spearmen: These men are too poor to afford the full armour of the knights and mounted men-at-arms; nonetheless, their fierce pride and desperate wish to better themselves gives them a great deal of courage. Most have war spears, though some use hunting spears and shields. They are armoured in whatever they can get, usually light armour of some kind with steel caps. Khoraja has 500 spearmen.

Palace Guard: These are elite warriors armoured in silvered cuirasses (treat as breastplates), open-faced but crested helmets (steel caps) and gold-chased greaves. They wield bardiches, both for intimidation purposes and sheer destruction. Khoraja probably has fewer than 100 palace guards (3rd level soldiers). It seems likely that if they had warning of an attack on the palace itself, they would have access to full plate armour.

KOTH

Koth is a southern Hyborian kingdom that borders on Ophir, Corinthia and Zamora to the north and Argos and Shem to the south. To the south and east, the two small, independent kingdoms of Khoraja and Khauran have been taken from what was once Shemite territory by warlike Kothic adventurers. It is speculated that much of eastern Koth was once a part of the Eastern Desert and roamed over by Shemites, many of whom are now citizens of Koth.

Trade caravans cross Koth from Shem, Turan and Stygia to the remaining Hyborian kingdoms in the north. It seems likely that much of the nation's wealth comes from these caravans. Western Koth is a land of fertile meadows and orchards, probably somewhat similar in nature to the meadows of Shem to the south. It is here that Khorshemish, the capital, can be found straddling the main caravan route from Shem.

Koth's king is the black-armoured King Strabonus but it is whispered that he himself is ruled by Tsotha-lanti, half-human sorcerer of the dread Scarlet Citadel (see below). Strabonus is given to intrigue and ambition. He would conquer Khauran and Khoraja in an instant if he could but control his own barons first; he looks covetously upon the other Hyborian realms, too. Koth was more powerful in ancient days than it is in Conan's time, sometimes ruling Shem as well as having full control of its own eastern regions.

Eastern Koth is broken up into a dozen or so small, semi-independent principalities and baronies of similar size and nature to Khauran. These control the caravan routes to the East and so assume an importance out of all proportion to their size and population. They are still nominally part of Koth, unlike Khoraja and Khauran, but are able to resist too much domination from Khorshemish. Much of Koth's military might is often tied up in ensuring that these rebellious lands are kept under control. Eastern Koth is fertile hill country, though much of this must have been reclaimed from the desert hills with a long-term programme of irrigation.

Khrosha: This Kothic city is built close to a small range of active volcanoes, the Flaming Mountains of Khrosha, which are probably a part of the Kothic Escarpment. The master smiths of Khrosha use these volcanic fires to forge unusual items. They produce swords and other weapons almost as good as those of Akbitana but are most renowned for their matchless scale armour and nigh-on impregnable treasure chests.

Khorshemish: The capital city of Koth is Khorshemish, called the Queen of the South. Its streets are broad and white, thronged with mansions, markets, shops, temples and minaretted mosques. Khorshemish holds the Scarlet Citadel (see below), the sorcerous stronghold of Tsotha-Lanti.

Korveka: This is one of the semi-independent baronies in eastern Koth. Its capital is a city also named Korveka. Unlike the larger lands of Khoraja and Khauran, Korveka has not been able to fully break free of Koth's rule.

Kothic Escarpment: This range of almost sheer-walled hills forms the border between Koth, Khoraja and Khauran on the west and north and Shem and the Eastern Desert on the south and east. They cut off almost all access between Koth and Shem in this area, extending for a thousand miles with almost no breaks or passes. A number of Shemite tribes, the most prominent being the Zaheemi, occupy the hills. The Zaheemi are desert Shemites, though they are loyal to either Koth or Khoraja and perform a crucial function in guarding the hill country. Like most desert Shemites, the Zaheemi have a long-standing rivalry with the Meadow Shemites and particularly the Asshuri which occasionally degenerates into all-out war. The Pass of Shamla and a similar pass close to Khauran are the only routes through the Kothic Escarpment that are wide and easy enough for an army to pass through. These form the main caravan routes from the south and east respectively.

The Scarlet Citadel: The half-human, half-demon sorcerer Tsotha-lanti lives here and is at least as politically powerful as King Strabonus. The stairs of the Scarlet Citadel are marbled and worked in gold. Beneath the citadel are the Halls of Horror, where Tsotha-lanti carries out vile experiments. The Halls were first built many thousands of years in the past by a lost civilisation and contain a well that descends into hell itself. Tsotha's lieutenant and jailer is the eunuch Shukeli.

Language: Kothic

Related Languages: Nemedian, Ophirean, Brythunian, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Argossean and Aquilonian





MILITARY FORCES

Strabonus' general is named Arbanus.

Kothic Knights: Koth's knights (2nd level soldier) are generally only armoured in mail or scale, rather than in plate. Koth has approximately 6,000 knights. Koth makes little distinction between noble-born knights and professional cavalry soldiers – most of the true nobles find their way into the Royal Cavalry eventually.

Kothic Pikemen: Koth's main infantry forces are armoured with leather jerkins and steel caps. They are a mixture of professional soldiers (1st level soldiers) and peasant levies (1st level commoners). Koth has approximately 3,500 of these soldiers.

Kothic Spearman: These men-at arms are professional soldiers with mail shirts, large shields and hunting spears. Koth's armies include 2,000 of these infantry.

Shemitish Archers: Strabonus keeps a permanent company of 1,500 Shemite mercenary archers on the payroll.

Spahis: The Spahis are light cavalry, unarmoured but armed with Shemite bow, sword and lance. They are used primarily for raiding and ravaging. Most are probably half-civilised nomads (2nd level nomads) of old Shemitish stock, though some are Kothians (2nd level soldiers). They are volunteers who gain land grants for military service. Unlike the lands granted to knights by the feudal system, these lands are not hereditary; however, the Spahis do not need to be of noble birth. There are approximately 3,000 Spahis in the army.

Royal Cavalry: These are the elite knights (2nd level noble/2nd level soldier) of all Koth. They are armoured in full plate, with great helms, lances and shields. Koth can only muster some 2,000 of these superb knights.

SCENARIO HOOKS

- ✱ Though Conan escapes the Scarlet Citadel and is later able to slay Tsotha-lanti during the events in *The Scarlet Citadel*, he never returns to investigate that dread fortress. It is likely that he would have no wish to – though there is doubtless some wealth within the mysterious structure, there are certainly demons and other horrors as well as all manner of unnatural artefacts and

strange gateways. In any event, Conan is now a king and has less interest in looting the lairs of sorcerers than he once did! Pelias is the new master of the Scarlet Citadel and his intentions are unclear. Does he wish to dominate Koth, as Tsotha did before him? In that case, the new king of Koth might hire a capable band of mercenaries to assassinate him. Does Pelias prefer to simply work alone, continuing Tsotha's experiments? Other scholars may wish to visit him and learn from him, for he clearly knows much – a job might be available escorting a Stygian or Khitan sorcerer to an audience with the new master of the Scarlet Citadel. Pelias himself may even hire the characters to clear out his demon-haunted dungeons...

KUSH AND THE BLACK KINGDOMS

'Kush' is the term used by most Hyborians to refer to all the lands to the south of Stygia, though more properly it refers to the land of Kush itself. Care should be taken to determine which meaning is intended by examining the context in which the word is used and observing who is uttering it. Like most of the regions to the north of the Southern Desert (see page 329), Kush is predominantly verdant grassland and open savannahs, though the land also contains some jungle and desert.

Kush is divided into minor tribes and is only barely a nation. Most Kushites consider their first loyalty to be to themselves, the second to their tribal chief and the third if any to the nation of Kush as a whole or to other Kushites not from their tribe. Though the Kushite ruling caste, the Chagas, are descended from Stygians, Kushite raiders regularly plunder Stygian caravans and even raid their cities.

Kushite corsairs regularly plunder up and down the Stygian coast and beyond, though they are not as successful or as widely feared as the corsairs of the Southern Islands.

Kush exports ivory, ostrich feathers, copper, hides, pearls, slaves, gold dust and hammered gold ornaments. Occasionally, curious, whitely flaming crystals are found in its hills, though these are prized and rarely leave the country. To the south of Kush, near the beginnings of the great Southern Desert, are hills containing marble, lapis lazuli, silver, copper, gold and jade, though these are not generally mined by the Kushites due to their proximity to such dangers as the dragons of the Xuchotl region.

Shumballa: The capital of Kush is relatively civilised, with tapestries, silk-covered couches, carpets and jugs of wine. The gaol is the



Red Tower. The outer region of the city is called Punt and is separated from the inner region of Shumballa, known as El Shebbeh, by a tall, thick wall.

Zabhela: This is a coastal city, probably the most major on the Kushite portion of the Black Coast. Shemite merchants trade here, sending caravans east through Stygia (via the city of Sukhmet) and into Keshan, Shem and beyond.

Language: Kushite

Related Languages: Black Coast, Ghanata

THE BLACK COAST

The western coast of the Black Kingdoms is dominated by Kush itself and Stygia. The Suba tribe south of Kush and the corsairs of the Southern Islands regularly raid up and down the coast taking slaves, ivory and gold dust. This whole coast is known as the Black Coast and it stretches from Stygia as far south as the Southern Islands. A large number of fishing and trading settlements dot the coast south of Kush. Most of these are inhabited by small tribes without allegiance to any nation.

Abombi: Conan and Bêlit sacked this independent tribal settlement and slew one of its two chieftains on the steps of his own palace.

Zarkheba River: The Zarkheba is a broad, black river heading deep into the jungles between the northern and southern Black Kingdoms. Its waters are poisonous and filled with venomous reptiles. Legend tells of a weird city deep within the jungle on the banks of the black-watered river that is haunted by winged black demons and vampiric white hyenas.

Language: Black Coast

Related Languages: Kushite, Southern Islander, Suba

DARFAR

Darfar is a country of cannibals and a place of deadly peril to any traveller, who is likely to be next on the menu if he is not careful. Darfar is regularly raided by Shemite slavers, who sell captured Darfari as far afield as Zamboula. Darfar is likely a land of deserts in the north and jungle to the south.

Language: Darfari

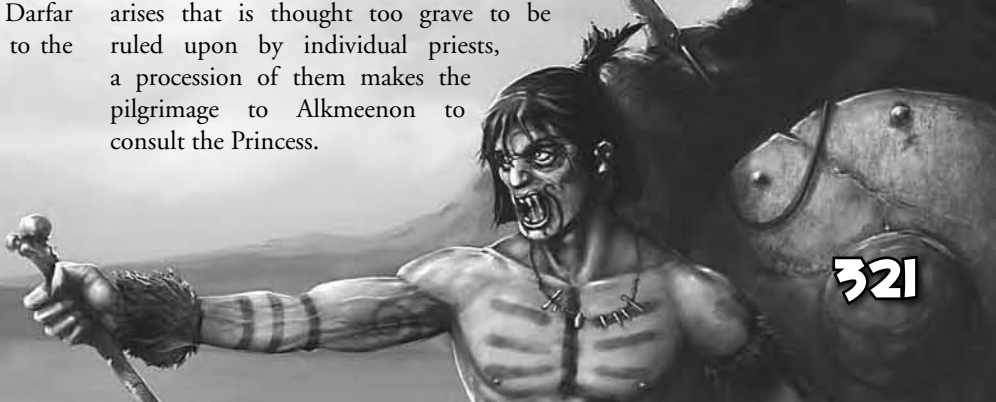
Related Languages: Suba, Southern Islander



KESHAN

The Keshani are generally regarded by Hyborians as identical to the Kushites. They are another black race but are ruled by a dusky nobility who claim descent from a more advanced civilisation, Alkmeenon.

Keshani religion is in theory broadly similar to that of Kush, with Jhebbal Sag and his animal kin revered alongside a number of more minor tribal spirits. However, the Keshani have formally ordained priests and all the corruption and empty ritual that accompanies a priestly caste. Though they have many gods that interact in complicated ways, for any other than the priests matters are simple enough in practice: the central belief of the Keshani is that the Oracle of Alkmeenon, the preserved, semi-divine Princess Yelaya, is the voice of the gods in all things. Whenever a matter arises that is thought too grave to be ruled upon by individual priests, a procession of them makes the pilgrimage to Alkmeenon to consult the Princess.





Keshan's hereditary enemy is Punt. It trades relatively peacefully with Zembabwei and probably with Darfar and Stygia.

Alkmeenon: This is the legendary oracular palace, hidden deep in the jungle behind a protective range of almost sheer hills in a circular formation. More than once, an interested party has been able to impersonate Yelaya for his own ends.

Keshia: The Keshani capital city consists of a palace of stone, mud and bamboo. There is a mud wall around it, and the thatched huts of the Keshian citizens are built around that.

Language: Keshani

Related Languages: Puntan, Zembabwean

PUNT

The Puntans worship an ivory goddess and have become rich through washing gold out of their rivers in wicker baskets. Their hereditary enemy is Keshan but Punt also has a strong rivalry with Zembabwei, presumably because the latter kingdom is envious of Punt's mineral wealth.

Language: Puntan

Related Languages: Keshani, Zembabwean

SOUTHERN BLACK KINGDOMS

Far to the south beyond the great Southern Desert (see page 329), the southern Black Kingdoms include Bakalah, Bamulah, Suba, Amazon, Atlaia and the Wadai. Most are no more than glorified tribes. The lands are richly fertile grasslands and jungles, starkly contrasting with the great Southern Desert to the north. The boats of the men of the Black Kingdoms are decorated with skulls on the prows.

Gold is fairly plentiful here. Silver and ivory can be found too. All these precious substances are used as jewellery.

Bamboo is a common construction material. Food is smoked meat, plantains, mealies, roasted yam and chunky bread, washed down with yarati

beer. Stools and chairs are rare luxuries, with most people sitting cross-legged on bamboo mats. Jackals are common, as are elephants, lions and other large jungle creatures.

Southern Isles: Far to the south of the Black Kingdoms, just off the Black Coast, lie the Southern Isles. This is where most of the black corsairs hail from.

Vale of Lost Women: Close by the land of the Bakalahs is the Vale of Lost Women, a bizarre yet peaceful land said to have been created centuries ago when a group of women fled there seeking sanctuary and were turned into white blossoms, safe from the depredations of men forever. Any woman who enters the Vale must make a Will saving throw (DC 22) or be impelled to stay there forever and wait for the mysterious creature that promises to turn her, too, into a blossom and let her stay forever... in fact, this creature is a demon of the Outer Dark and if it does come to her, her fate will be to lose her very soul.

Language: Bakalah, Bamulah, Suba, Wadai or Southern Islander

Related Languages: Bakalah, Bamulah, Suba, Wadai, Southern Islander, Suba, Tombalku

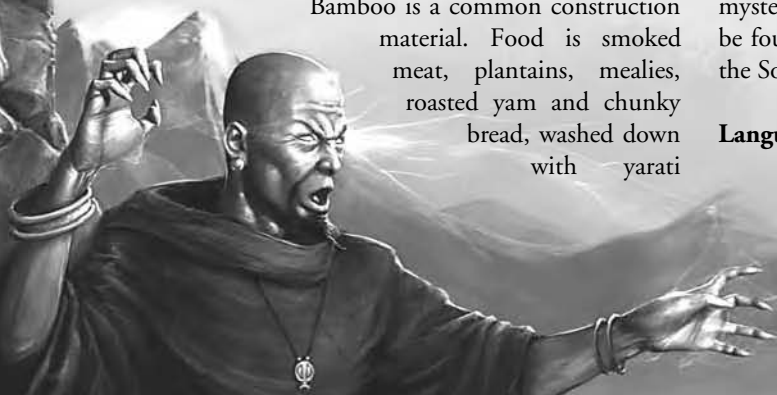
ZEMBABWEI

Zembabwei has designs on both Keshan and Punt. It is a major trading nation, making deals with the Irakzai, Puntans and Shemites, as well as the desert dwellers to the south. Zembabwei is ruled by twin kings, an arrangement which perhaps represents its twin deities, Derketo and Dagon, whose idols stand proudly outside its capital.

Zembabwei is referred to as a 'hybrid nation.' We can only speculate as to what this means; presumably the folk of Zembabwei are of mingled Kushite and some other origin. Shemite seems most likely, given that the Zembabweans and Shemites share a common deity, Derketo, known by the Kushites in a slightly different guise as Derketa. Another possibility is that the Zembabweans are actually related to the Yuetschi people who live far away on the shores of the Sea of Vilayet, given the connection with the name Dagon. This could indicate that both were once a part of a long-lost empire, perhaps the builders of the ancient and mysterious green-jade cities and other structures that can be found around the south from the Vilayet Sea through the Southern Desert as far as the Isle of the Black Ones.

Language: Zembabwean

Related Languages: Keshani, Puntan





MILITARY FORCES

Most of the nations of the Black Kingdoms have vast numbers of warriors available, though these men tend to be ill-equipped. Often they have no armour and wear only plumed headdresses and leopardskin loin-cloths. Some have simple shields of hide and wood; treat these as large shields. Most wield spears or clubs of one kind or another. Numbers are difficult to gauge but it seems likely that any Black Kingdom worthy of the name could muster at least 5,000 warriors (1st level barbarians) with ease and many more than that if they had time to send out runners.

NEMEDIA

Nemedia is a Hyborian country, a long-standing rival of Aquilonia. This rivalry has regularly spilled over into war over the past few hundred years.

King Nimed is the ruler of Nemedia. His banner is gold with a scarlet dragon. Prince Tarascus is the younger brother of the king and has designs on the throne. During the events in *The Hour of the Dragon*, Tarascus' allies slay Nimed by sorcery and Tarascus ascends the throne – but not for too long, given Conan's presence.

The richest Nemedians ride in golden chariots and collect fine art treasures from all over

the Earth, so it is presumed that Nemedia has some natural mineral wealth as well as productive agriculture. Nemedian mail armour is of very good quality, though not so good as that of Turan; still, it is likely exported all over the Hyborian kingdoms.

Belverus: Belverus is the capital city of Nemedia. It was once a vast fortress and still has elaborate dungeons and fortifications, half-disused, half turned over to more civilian uses. Even the once mighty walls are surrounded by gardens, orchards, vineyards, pleasure villas and trees and so are fairly easy to clamber up.

Between Belverus and the Aquilonian border are several more villas and grove-shaded towns, as well as more rugged country with keeps atop hills, testament to years of border warfare. Tamarisks grow in quantity on both sides of the border.

Numalia: Numalia is Nemedia's second largest city. The police wear scarlet tunics and carry short, stabbing swords and bills. Palias Way is the main street. The police are overseen by the Inquisitorial Council, whose chief is Demetrio. Demetrio still walks with a limp after an abortive attempt to arrest Conan for murder during *The God in the Bowl*. The nearby village Hanumar is the home of Kalanthes, a priest of Ibis and powerful sorcerer whose enemy is Thoth-Amon.

Tor: Tor is one of the baronies of Nemedia. Baron Amalric of Tor is a powerful baron with a certain amount of sympathy for sorcerers and an unyielding ambition for greater power – until he is slain by Conan during the events in *The Hour of the Dragon*.

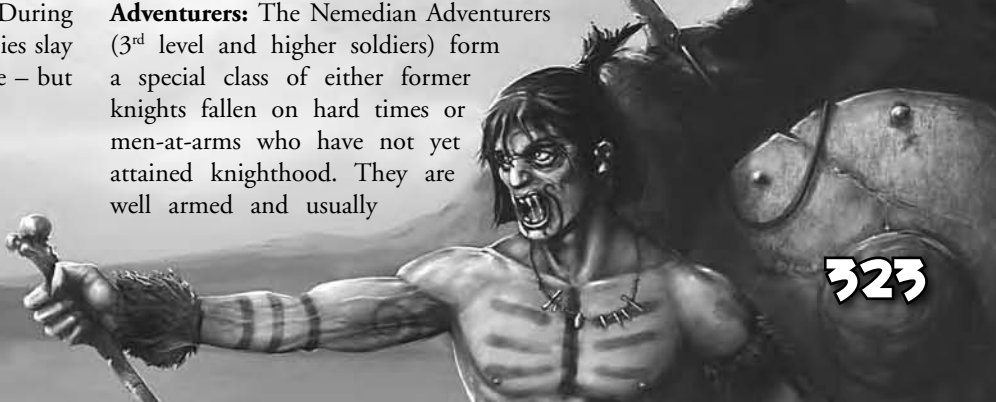
Language: Nemedian

Related Languages: Aquilonian, Brythunian, Ophirean, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Kothic and Argossean

MILITARY FORCES

Nemedia has a 50,000-strong army made up of the following:

Adventurers: The Nemedian Adventurers (3rd level and higher soldiers) form a special class of either former knights fallen on hard times or men-at-arms who have not yet attained knighthood. They are well armed and usually





armoured in grey mail hauberks and morion helmets; treat these as steel caps. They wield greatswords whether on foot or on horseback. All are highly experienced in the ways of war, often more so than most of the actual knights. 18,000 Nemedian Adventurers could be mustered if need be.

Crossbowmen: The Nemedian crossbowmen wear leather jerkins and, if they can afford them, steel caps. They carry arbalests and long poniards and have bucklers on their belts in case they come into close contact with the enemy. They number some 10,000 but have always been the weakest part of the army when going up against Aquilonia; their crossbows simply do not have the range of their enemies' Bossonian longbows.

Knights: Nemedian knights (2nd level soldier/1st level noble) wear full plate armour and wield lances and swords. There are 10,000 of them in the Nemedian army.

Pikemen: Nemedian's pikemen wear steel caps and brigandine coats and wield pikes or sometimes other polearms. They use arming swords as backup weapons. Nemedian has 12,000 pikemen.

NORDHEIM

Asgard and Vanaheim are twin barbarian nations. They are inhabited by the yellow-haired Æsir and the red-haired Vanir respectively. All are blue-eyed and pale-skinned. They are hardened by generations of living in near-arctic conditions and almost constant warfare with each other, the Cimmerians, the Hyperboreans and the Picts.

The Æsir and Vanir alike wear horned helmets, though of slightly different styles.

Wolraven: This is a border town between Asgard and Vanaheim. It was the scene of a fierce and legendary battle some years ago.

Language: Nordheimir

Related Languages: Hyperborean

MILITARY FORCES

Every adult male Nordheimer is a warrior (1st level barbarian) and will fight courageously to defend his country or go on a raid. These men

are typically armed with broadswords or war swords, or axes if they cannot afford better weapons. Most wear at a minimum a leather jerkin and horned helmet (steel cap), while the richer warriors sport mail hauberks, mail corselets or some form of scale armour in addition to the helmet.

OPHIR

Ophir is a Hyborian kingdom is comprised mostly of grassy meadows. It may well also have some mountains with mines for gold or other precious metals, since King Amalrus wears mail chased with gold.

The eastern half of Ophir is held by Amalrus' brother, in defiance of the king. Amalrus never gets a chance to take back his kingdom; after betraying Conan in *The Scarlet Citadel*, the king of Ophir gets his rightful comeuppance in the form of a gory death at the hands of Conan's right-hand man Prospero.

Ophir has traditionally enjoyed good relations with Stygia. It is presumed that the two nations have extensive trading links. Ophir is noted for making the most sumptuous cloaks in all of the Hyborian kingdoms, though it seems unlikely that these are exported anywhere as warm as Stygia.

Chelkus: This is a noble house of Ophir, famed for its scientists and sorcerers. Promising youngsters from the house of Chelkus are sent to study sorcery in Kheshatta (see page 332).

Language: Ophirean

Related Languages: Aquilonian, Brythunian, Nemedian, Corinthian, Hyperborean, Kothic and Argossean

MILITARY FORCES

Crossbowmen: Ophir's archers number some 5,000 and are armed with arbalests, steel caps and quilted jerkins.

Knights: Ophirean knights wear mail hauberks and carry heavy lances and broadswords. They are 7,000-strong and include both noble-born knights (1st level soldier/1st level noble) and men-at-arms (2nd level soldier) in equal numbers.

PICTISH WILDERNESS

This vast wilderness is very nearly a hunter's paradise. The jungles swarm with game of every size and kind, including prehistoric creatures that have long since died out in the rest of the world. Likewise the

MOUNTAINS

Chasm: Chasms are not hidden, so characters will rarely fall into them by accident (although bull rushes are another story). A typical chasm is 2d4×10 feet deep, at least 20 feet long and anywhere from five feet to 20 feet wide. It takes a DC 15 Climb check to climb out of a chasm. In forbidding mountain terrain, chasms are typically 2d8×10 feet deep.

Scree: Scree is field of shifting gravel that does not affect speed though it can be treacherous on a slope. The DC of Balance and Tumble checks increases by two if there is scree on a gradual slope and by five if there is scree on a steep slope. The DC of Move silently checks increases by two if the scree is on a slope of any kind.

Dense Rubble: The ground is covered with rocks of all sizes. It costs two squares of movement to enter a square with dense rubble. The DC of Balance and Tumble checks on dense rubble increases by five and the DC of Move Silently checks increases by +2.

Rock Wall: A vertical plane of stone, rock walls require DC 25 Climb checks to ascend. A typical rock wall is 2d4×10 feet tall in rugged mountains and 2d8×10 feet tall in forbidding mountains. Rock walls are drawn on the edges of squares, not in the squares themselves.

Other Mountain Terrain Features: Most alpine meadows begin above the tree line, so trees and other forest elements are rare in the mountains. Mountain terrain can include active streams (five to 10 feet wide and no more than five feet deep) and dry streambeds (treat as trenches five to 10 feet across). Particularly high-altitude areas tend to be colder than the lowland areas that surround them, so they may be covered in ice sheets.

Stealth and Detection in Mountains: As a guideline, the maximum distance in mountain terrain at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 4d10×10 feet. Certain peaks and ridgelines afford much better vantage points of course, and spotting distances in twisting valleys and canyons are much shorter. Because there is little vegetation to obstruct line of sight, the specifics on the map are one's best guide for the range at which an encounter could begin. As in hills terrain, a ridge or peak provides enough cover to hide from anyone below the high point.

It is easier to hear faraway sounds in the mountains. The DC of Listen checks increases by one per 20 feet between listener and source, not per 10 feet.

rivers are brim-full of fish, so the Picts have no great need of agriculture or animal husbandry. They do mine copper and tin in the hills to make bronze and occasionally raid the Zingaran tin mines for more metal. Some of the tribes also trade with merchants from the Hyborian lands or with Zingara, swapping mahogany, animal hides, walrus tusks and whale's teeth for the products of civilisation.

The Picts practise human sacrifice, blood-feuds and burning captured enemies or miscreants alive. They are headhunters, keeping the skulls of their foes as ornaments. Throwing a Pict into a prison cell is a heinous insult to him and is regarded as only slightly less severe than killing him when he is not wearing war-paint.

The Picts are divided into a large number of tribes, each one based on a particular animal totem. It seems likely that each tribe reveres its own unique animal god, a son of Jhebbal Sag largely unknown to scholars other than the shamans who lead his worship. These totem-gods are worshipped alongside the rest of Jhebbal Sag's animal spirit pantheon (see page 343).

Ghost Swamp: Deep in the Pictish Wilderness is the abode of the Wizard, a pre-Pictish shaman of great power who is consulted by the tribes at times of need. The



Tribe	Hair Ornament	Location	Notes
Cormorant	Cormorant feather	West Coast	—
Eagle	Eagle feather	Close to Westermarck	—
Hawk	Hawk feather	Close to Westermarck	Also known as Onayaga
Raven	Raven feather	Close to Westermarck	Sworn enemies of the Hawk Tribe
Sea-Falcon	Sea-falcon feather	West Coast	—
Shark	Shark teeth in hair	West Coast	—
Toucan	Toucan feather	West Coast	—
Turtle	Turtle-shell comb	Close to Westermarck	—
Wolf	Wolf-teeth in hair	Close to Westermarck	A vast alliance of many tribes

Wizard wields ghastly magic, even by Pictish standards; it is possible he is a Ligurean or even a surviving Atlantean.

Gwawela: This is the closest Pictish village to Conajohara. It is just across the Black River and slightly to the south from Fort Tuscelan.

Korvela Bay: This wide bay is situated on the western coast of the Pictish wilderness, a thousand miles north of the border with Zingara. It is close to the Tomb of Trancos.

Ligureans: This mysterious folk are a more white-skinned savage people who also dwell in the Pictish wilderness. They are usually at war with the Picts but sometimes ally with them. They may be related to the Cimmerians or to the people of Nordheimir.

Tomb of Trancos: This is a mound filled with treasure and strangely preserved pirates. It is guarded by a deadly poisonous smoke said to have drifted up from hell itself.

A NOTE ON PICTISH ORNAMENT

Each of the many Pictish tribes has a specific hair ornament that clearly demonstrates the tribal affiliation and rank of each Pict. These ornaments are usually tightly and permanently woven in to the Pict's hair, or in the case of feathers, worn drooping down from his copper headband.

Most Picts wear the copper headband, even if they are not from a bird-totem tribe, so as to wear feathers in it that indicate their rank and status. A tribal chieftain will wear a scarlet-tipped version of his usual ornament. Sorcerers and shamans sport ostrich feathers to denote their

profession. Finally, peace envoys wear white heron feathers as a sign of truce. Almost every Pictish tribe respects the white heron feather emblem, not so much out of any code of honour but because they fear the vengeance of the gods if they break a truce.

All Pictish warriors also wear body parts of their slain foes. For ordinary warriors, this is usually a necklace of teeth and many a Pict in the eastern portion of the Wilderness wear dozens of teeth taken from dead settlers and soldiers of the Westermarck. Pictish chiefs are entitled to wear the entire skins of creatures they have slain, usually powerful animals of the forest such as tigers or ghost-snakes.

Picts also paint various designs on their bodies to demonstrate a commitment to either a hunting expedition



MARSHES

Bogs: If a square is part of a shallow bog, it has deep mud or standing water approximately one foot deep. It costs two squares of movement to move into a square with a shallow bog and the DC of Tumble checks in such a square increase by two.

A square that is part of a deep bog has roughly four feet of standing water. It costs Medium or larger creatures four squares of movement to move into a square with a deep bog, or characters can swim if they wish. Small or smaller creatures must swim to move through a deep bog. Tumbling is impossible in a deep bog.

The water in a deep bog provides cover for Medium or larger creatures. Smaller creatures gain improved cover (+8 bonus to AC, +4 bonus on Reflex saves); Medium or larger creatures can crouch as a move action to gain this improved cover. Creatures with this improved cover take a -10 penalty on attacks against creatures that are not underwater.

Deep bog squares are usually clustered together and surrounded by an irregular ring of shallow bog squares. Both shallow and deep bogs increase the DC of Move Silently checks by two.

Undergrowth: The bushes, rushes and other tall grasses in marshes function the same as undergrowth in a forest (see page 311). A square that is part of a bog does not also have undergrowth.

Quicksand: Patches of quicksand present a deceptively solid appearance (appearing as undergrowth or open land) that may trap careless characters. A character approaching a patch of quicksand at a normal pace is entitled to a DC 8 Survival check to spot the danger before stepping in but charging or running characters do not have a chance to detect a hidden bog before blundering in. A typical patch of quicksand is 20 feet in diameter; the momentum of a charging or running character carries him 1d2×5 feet into the quicksand.

Effects of Quicksand: Characters in quicksand must make a DC 10 Swim check every round to simply tread water in place or a DC 15 Swim check to move five feet in whatever direction is desired. If a trapped character fails this check by five or more, he sinks below the surface and begins to drown when he can no longer hold his breath (see the Swim skill description on page 116).

Characters below the surface of a bog may swim back to the surface with a successful Swim check (DC 15, +1 per consecutive round of being under the surface).

Rescue: Pulling out a character trapped in quicksand can be difficult. A rescuer needs a branch, spear haft, rope or similar tool that he can extend toward the victim. The rescuer must make a DC 15 Strength check to successfully pull the victim and the victim must make a DC 10 Strength check to hold onto the branch, pole or rope. If the victim fails to hold on, he must make a DC 15 Swim check immediately to stay above the surface. If both checks succeed, the victim is pulled five feet closer to safety.

Stealth and Detection in a Marsh: In a moor, the maximum distance at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 6d6×10 feet. In a swamp, this distance is 2d8×10 feet. A marsh imposes no penalties on Listen checks and using the Move Silently skill is more difficult in both undergrowth and bogs.



or open warfare. A Pict wearing hunting paint (rather than war paint) should not be killed or else the vengeance of the tribe will be severe. The very worst insult one can give to a dead Pict is to have killed him when he was not in war paint, then stick his head up in a tree in the forest for the vultures to eat.

War paint is worn on the face and chest. When the Picts plan war on the folk of Aquilonia, they paint a white skull on their chests.

Pictish paint is generally difficult to remove. Scrubbing it off before it fades naturally in about four weeks requires serious scouring with an abrasive substance such as sand or rock. This takes 30 to 60 (1d4+2 × 10) minutes and deals one point of damage. The damage can be avoided with a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15).

SHEM

Shem is a pastoral country with wide meadows to the west and less fertile deserts to the east. It is well suited to the nomadism practised by the ancient ancestors of the Shemites, known then simply as the Sons of Shem. It also exports gold and copper ore by ship to Argos and its renowned Kyros wine all around the world.

Shem is sometimes ruled by Koth and sometimes by Stygia but when free of foreign rule each city or tribe is independent, often with its own laws and customs. The white-towered western cities are known collectively as the Meadow Cities. Shemitish buildings are usually in the form of ziggurats. Shem's one seacoast, to the west of the country, is not well-suited to harbours, having no large natural bays. Southwest Shem is a little less flat and featureless, with many small streams running between bare sandy hills to the west coast, their banks overgrown with lush fronds and palm trees.

The tribes of the east do not build cities but remain nomadic and live in tents like their ancestors did. Eastern Shem is predominantly sandy desert criss-crossed by caravan routes and nomad trails. North-east Shem has more hilly, broken regions but again these are hot and dry for the most part.

Shem does not have a major port town and has virtually no maritime power, with most Shemite merchants favouring overland caravans for

trade. Shemites are slave-traders among other things and discipline their female slaves by beating them with slippers or whipping them for particularly severe infractions. Occasional Shemite caravans travel as far as Turan, Hyrkania and even Khitai. Many of the desert Shemites of eastern Shem and the Eastern Desert raid any caravans that pass through these lands, either in small bands or occasionally massed together into full-blown nomad hordes.

Akbitana: Also known as Akbatana, this is a meadow city famed for the quality of its steel. Akbitanan smiths produce the best swords and scimitars in the world (see pages 153–154). Akbitana is just to the southwest of Khoraja and is one of the power-bases of the resurrected Stygian wizard Natokh in the story *Black Colossus*.

Aphaka: This is a large oasis in Western Shem. There is a major shrine to Set in Aphaka.

Asgalun: Asgalun rules Pelishtia, an ancient region of Shem from which hail the Pelishtim, a people that seem to produce almost as many mighty sorcerers as they do mercenaries. The Pelishtim worship Pteor alongside the usual gods of the Shemite pantheon.

Ghaza: Ghaza is a Meadow City close to the Eastern deserts. The cheap, rough wine of Ghaza is drunk from Shem to Zamboula by those who cannot afford the far superior wine of Kyros.

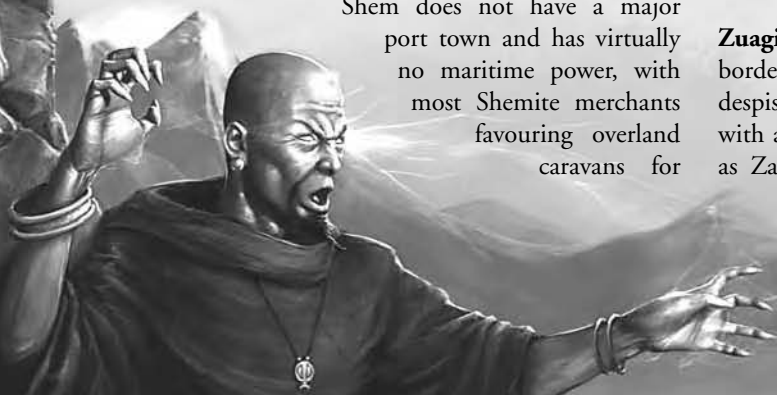
Kyros: One of the Meadow Cities, Kyros is famed for its vineyards and fine wines.

Other Meadow Cities: The other meadow cities include Anakim and Akkharim in the west and Nippr and Eruk in the east.

Shumir: One of the Meadow Cities, Shumir is also close to Koth and to Khoraja and so acts as an important crossroads of both trade and culture, with caravans heading out from it to criss-cross the desert between Stygia and the Hyborian Kingdoms.

Shushan: This is the western border of Turanian dominance and is effectively ruled by the King of Turan by the time of the events that take place in *Shadows in the Moonlight*.

Zuagir: The Zuagir are the tribe closest to the Khauran border. Like most of their Eastern compatriots, they despise the Western Shemites. They also regularly fight with and raid the Khaurans. The Zuagir also range as far as Zamboula and beyond on their travels, occasionally attacking Turanian caravans and forts.



MILITARY FORCES

Both meadow and desert Shemites tend to field horsemen who wear mail and sometimes scale armour and carry light lances and scimitars or swords. The warriors of the Meadow Cities wear cylindrical steel helmets, while the desert warriors usually wear steel caps under their turbans. The Asshuri are the Shemite warriors of the Meadow Cities and are used as mercenaries throughout the world. Most Meadow Cities have at least 2,000 to 3,000 Asshuri (1st or 2nd level soldier) but as many as half of these or even more could be away at any time, either employed as mercenaries for other kingdoms or working as caravan guards. The strength of the desert nomads (1st or 2nd level nomad) is hard to estimate, since the tribes are so mobile and often relatively secretive. It seems plausible though that given enough time a charismatic leader could recruit a horde as many as 30,000 strong or even larger. Depending on the severity of the terrain in which they operate, the eastern Shemites may ride horses like their western cousins, or camels.

SOUTHERN DESERT

This vast expanse of land cuts off Kush, Keshan and Punt from the mysterious southern Black Kingdoms. It is inhabited by desert antelope, jackals and half-wild desert tribes. The Southern Desert is often claimed to be a thousand miles across in each direction, though few have travelled its full length or breadth to be able to say with any certainty. In fact it does not extend beyond the Zarkheba River, which is lushly forested on both its banks by jungle and which forms a major portion of the boundary between the Southern Desert and the southern Black Kingdoms beyond. Likewise, the Southern Desert does not extend as far as the Black Coast, which is again a region of jungle.

GAZAL

This mysterious city is thought to be somewhere to the west of the Ghanata territory, perhaps due south of Kush or Darfar. It is situated beneath the palms of a pleasant oasis. Gazal was built some nine hundred years ago by the Gazali, refugee scholars from southern Koth, on the ruins of a far older city. Only a single red tower of the original city remains. In this shining, circular tower dwells a horror most dread, the god Ollam-Onga, who has mesmerised the remaining Gazali and made them dreamy and fatalistic so it can come in the night and devour them one by one.

Outwardly it might seem that the Gazali have prospered; though their Shemitish slaves fled the city one night, the Gazali learnt self-sufficiency, manufacturing their own foodstuffs by scientific or sorcerous means. However, they are a dying race and do not seem

to care about much. They would not be especially grateful for assistance, even if Ollam-Onga is somehow slain.

During the unfinished story *Drums of Tombalku*, Amalric, a comrade of Conan's, befriends Lissa, perhaps the only Gazali who is not content to simply await death. Amalric slays Ollam-Onga only to be pursued into the desert by the dread Riders of Ollam-Onga. It is not clear what happens to the remaining Gazali – it is possible that the city goes into accelerated decay after the loss of its resident god but it seems equally likely that the folk of Gazal recover somewhat from their passive, accepting demeanour and perhaps come to prosper once more. Certainly with their science they could become a power to be reckoned with in the Southern Desert, though it seems unlikely that they will ever desire to leave their city or devise any means to do so.

Language: Gazali

Related Language: Kothic

GHANATAS

The Ghanatas are a wild and fierce desert tribe, a mixed band of outlaws and robbers from Darfar, Keshan, Punt, Zembabwei and even Iranistan. They wear tattered silk clothing, wield scimitars and the great Ghanata knives and roam the eastern areas of the great southern desert. Most favour camels as mounts. Sometimes a Ghanata chieftain or champion will ride a horse as a status symbol but few horses last long in the deep hot deserts of the south.

Language: The Ghanatas speak Ghanatan, a patois derived from a mixture of all the languages of the regions mentioned above.

Related Languages: Darfari, Keshani, Puntan, Zembabwean, Iranistani

MANDINGO

The Mandingo are a tribe of fishermen who dwell on the western coast of the Southern Desert, where the true desert gives way to slightly more fertile country. Some Mandingos collaborate with the black corsairs of the Southern Islands, gathering information for them and offering places to hide if need be.



DESERTS

Sandstorms: A sandstorm reduces visibility to 1d10×5 feet and provides a -4 penalty on Listen, Search and Spot checks. A sandstorm deals 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per hour to any creatures caught in the open and leaves a thin coating of sand in its wake. Driving sand creeps in through all but the most secure seals and seams, to chafe skin and contaminate gear.

Stealth and Detection in the Desert: In general, the maximum distance in desert terrain at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 6d6×20 feet; beyond this distance, elevation changes and heat distortion makes spotting impossible. The presence of dunes in sandy deserts limits spotting distance to 6d6×10 feet.

The desert imposes neither bonuses nor penalties on Listen or Spot checks. The scarcity of undergrowth or other elements that offer concealment or cover makes hiding more difficult.

Language: Mandingo

Related Languages: Tombalku

TIBU

The Tibu are a mysterious tribe of desert-dwellers who live far to the south of the Ghanatas. They always wear masks, whether for religious reasons or simple desert survival practicality.

Language: Tibu

Related Languages: Ghanatan

TOMBALKU

The empire of Tombalku (considered mythical by some) lies far to the south of the civilised lands. It is either the most northerly kingdom of the Black Kingdoms or the most southerly territory of the Southern Desert, depending on one's perspective. The capital city is also known as Tombalku and has two kings, Zehbeh and Sakumbe. Zehbeh is a member of the Tombalku ruling caste, the Aphaki, a race of mixed Shemitish and black desert tribe descent that conquered these lands centuries ago. Sakumbe is the king of the native Tombalkus, though he himself is a Suba. The native Tombalkus are a black race and their power seems to be waxing as the Aphaki power wanes in the kingdom, largely due to the power and influence of the Suban witch-doctor Askia.

Though Tombalku is certainly the closest the Southern Desert gets to a civilised country, it is still inhabited by savages. Most of its military forces consist of wild, hawk-faced desert riders and both the Aphaki and the blacks are highly superstitious. The two cults of Jhil and Ajuju are constant rivals, backing Zehbeh and Sakumbe respectively. Most of the folk of Tombalku are completely under the sway of one cult or the other and will do anything their witch-doctor convinces them is their god's will.

Language: Tombalku

Related Languages: Mandingo

XUTHAL

This city of mad lotus-drinkers is made from smooth green stone and is situated amidst the Southern Desert, surrounded by sand in all directions. Its inhabitants are unpredictable, equally likely to attack strangers, attempt to seduce them or offer them a round of black lotus wine (see page 275). Xuthal is also the home of the fabled Golden Wine of Xuthal (see page 280). Any scholar who could uncover the recipe, or any trader who could convince the Xuthallans to sell him a wagonload or two, could make a small fortune. It is likely that this lost city holds other treasures, since Conan did not fully explore the place on his visit.

An oasis is said to lie one day's march due south from Xuthal. A day's march beyond that the grasslands begin, though a traveller wishing to take that route to the southern Black Kingdoms would need to somehow cross the Zarkheba River and the jungles surrounding it. East of Xuthal the desert continues for hundreds of miles.





Language: Unknown. The Xuthallans speak a language that even Conan does not recognise, though it may possibly be a version of Kosalan. Most of the folk of Xuthal know Stygian, fortunately for visitors, thanks to contact with a Stygian girl called Thalís who lives in the city.

Related Languages: None

XUCHOTL

Xuchotl is another lost city. At first glance it appears similar to Xuthal with its green jade-like construction. It is possible that the two cities, along with certain other ruins of green stone, are the remnants of a single, long-forgotten ancient civilisation.

Xuchotl is actually on the very northern edge of the desert, which beyond here is broken up by patches of hills, plains and jungle. Until recently the jungles to the north of Xuchotl held huge reptilian creatures known as dragons, which are long since extinct elsewhere. Conan killed the last of them when he passed through. However, it is said that these dragons were created by the magicians of old Xuchotl from the bones the original creatures had left behind aeons ago; they could potentially be created again by any who knew the secret of their rebirth. This secret is concealed within the *Book of Skelos*.

Until Conan gets there during the events of *Red Nails*, Xuchotl's vast halls are populated by only a handful of Tlazitlans divided into two viciously feuding factions. Beneath the city lie catacombs filled with many strange sorcerous artefacts and at least as many weird ghosts, mad sorcerers, demons and a fell creature known as the Crawler. By the time Conan leaves, the Tlazitlans are all dead, as are several of the denizens of the catacombs. The city is by no means fully plundered or fully explored, however.

Language: Stygian

Related Languages: Old Stygian, Acheronian

STYGIA

Stygia was founded by an ancient race that once lived far to the east and enslaved the Lemurians for many thousands of years but fled south and west to Stygia when the Lemurians rose up and cast off their chains. The surviving ancients settled in Stygia among the remnants of a still more ancient and mysterious pre-human, possibly semi-demonic race of giants that they worshipped. At one time, the Stygian Empire extended into Shem, Koth, Ophir and Corinthia, right up to the borders of the Acheronian Empire, though in this age Stygia is a decadent and declining power, a mere shadow of its former glory.

Stygia is mostly a closed state and is greatly feared by external kingdoms. Its trading power comes from its control of the southern lands. It takes raw materials from the black kingdoms and processes them into goods, which they release in small quantities only during the trading season. One of Stygia's exports is silk. That fine yet strong cloth, so valuable in other lands, is the most common fabric in Stygia and is worn by slave and sorcerer alike. Stygia also exports strange artefacts of all kinds, including mummies, amulets and idols, which go by caravan as far as Nemedía and Aquilonia.

With the exception of official ambassadors and licensed traders, foreigners are not welcome in Stygian cities. Even the licensed traders are not permitted into cities after dark but must do all their business by day and stay outside the city walls or on their ships in harbour. Boats of Stygian whores will often ply the waters just outside coastal Stygian towns looking for business among passing sailors.





Only the ruling warrior caste are permitted to bear swords, or any other martial or exotic weapons. Members of the ruling caste ride bronze chariots.

The women of southern Stygia file their teeth and wear rings in their noses. Whores go completely naked save for head-dresses of red blossoms or tall-plumed feathers.

Almost all the commoners and slaves are black-skinned and of average height, though many Shemite slaves also serve in Stygia. The Stygian nobility are for the most part well-shaped black giants.

Stygia is predominantly a desert land, except for narrow, settled strips a few miles wide around the River Styx and down the coast. These settled regions are intensively farmed. Southern Stygia has ghost-haunted swamps where the purple lotus grows. The region around Sukhmet, near the border with Darfar, is all grassland.

Somewhere in the hinterlands of Stygia is a black, giant-walled temple, beneath which are demon-haunted crypts which contain the sarcophagus of Xaltotun, a powerful sorcerer of Acheron from three thousand years ago.

Khemi: This is the main seaport of Stygia, though that nation possesses relatively little naval power in comparison to the number of its land-based warriors. It is located at the estuary of the River Styx and receives much trade along that ill-omened river as well as by sea. Khemi is black-walled and surrounded by sea-washed castles and towers. Its harbour is filled with merchant galleons, warships, tiny fishing boats and mysterious, sorcerous galleys. Stygian galleys are long, low, slender and black. They are often regarded with fear and superstition by Hyborians.

Khemi is ruled by the priesthood of Set and is their best-known centre of power. It is said though that far inland, near the bank of the Styx, is the abandoned city that holds their true religious centre. Thutothmes is the leader of the priests of Set in Khemi and so is the de facto lord of the city – and arguably of the whole of Stygia – as well.

Inland from Khemi is a band of primitive huts and lush groves and jungles, which provide some of the city's food. A mile or so out from the city, just beyond these huts and groves, the desert begins. Just within the desert is a great black pyramid.

Just south of Khemi is a small bay, well-hidden by marsh and mangrove and filled with bright birds and colourful lizards. This concealed anchorage is sometimes used by corsairs before or after they raid the city.

Kheshatta: Kheshatta is a city of sorcerers in southern Stygia. It is on a major north-south caravan route from Kush through Stygia, Koth and Ophir as far north as Nemedra. Kheshatta is often raided by nearby Kush, with wild bands of Kushites carrying off slaves and whatever else they can plunder.

Lake Zuad: This is a lake on the border with Kush. The Tlazitlans live on its shores.

Luxur: Luxur is technically the capital of Stygia; King Ctesphon's is located here. In practice, Khemi is more powerful than Luxur. Thoth-Amon, lord of the Black Ring, also dwells here. Luxur is presumed to be located on the southern shore of the River Styx, not far inland from Khemi and is most likely surrounded by fertile fields.



Sukhmet: Sukhmet is a walled border town intended to defend against Darfari raiders. It is full of mercenaries who are led by a grizzled veteran named Zarallo. The far southern Stygians are reminiscent of Darfari themselves, with dark skin, filed teeth and rings in their noses. Sukhmet is on an east-west caravan route from Zabehla in



Kush. It is presumed that the caravans go via southern Stygia on into Keshan to avoid travelling through Darfar.

The River Styx: No traveller to Stygia is likely to miss the broad river Styx, since he will likely have to cross it to get into the kingdom. In any event, the majority of Stygian settlements are found on the south side of the river where the land is kept fertile by the river's annual flooding. Beyond the narrow fertile band around the river, the land is featureless desert.

Language: Stygian

Related Languages: Old Stygian, Acheronian

MILITARY FORCES

During this relatively late phase of its history, Stygia prefers to rely on its sorcerous reputation to avoid too much conflict. When one's enemies know that a *black plague* spell could wipe out their entire army, they usually choose an easier target. However, no nation can rely on sorcery alone and there is often a need to use swords and spears to supplement even the most powerful spells.

Kushite Spearmen: Of necessity, Stygia uses slaves, pressed men and similar Kushite recruits to form the bulk of its army. Most are relatively inexperienced (1st level barbarians), ill-equipped and carry nothing more than large shields and hunting spears. Stygia could field 12,000 of these troops.

Mercenaries: Stygia often employs mercenaries to deal with dangerous situations. This includes securing the border with Darfar, since the Darfari raiders constantly plague southern Stygia and carry off any who come within their grasp to be sacrificed and eaten. At any time, there are likely to be approximately 2,000 mercenaries in and around Sukhmet. They are predominantly cavalry, hard-bitten veterans all (2nd level soldiers or higher).

Stygian Archers: Stygia's foot archers are less numerous than those who fight from chariots but perhaps no less effective (1st level soldiers). Most do not bother with armour, relying instead on their powerful Stygian bows and sheaf of thirty or more arrows to drop the majority of enemies long before they reach melee range. They have daggers or axes as backup weapons. There are approximately 3,000 archers.

Stygian War Chariots: Each chariot has a driver (2nd level soldier) and an archer (2nd level noble or higher). The drivers are usually unarmoured but will have whips and short swords. The archers have Stygian bows

and at least 40 arrows and have broadswords or battleaxes for close combat. Most archers will have some armour, with crescent-and-circle-adorned helmets at a minimum and heavy armour at a maximum. There are some 6,000 Stygian war chariots, each with its crew of two.

TURAN

Settlers from Hyrkania established Turan as a kingdom, though the region is also inhabited by Shemitish and other aboriginal people as well as by the Kozak wastrels. This is a land of steppes and, far to the south and north, deserts. Close to the Vilayet Sea the steppes give way to woodlands and then swamps.

The Turanians are slavers, taking slaves from Koth, Zamora, Brythunia and Shem, as well as travellers from further afield who are foolish enough to wander into the steppes. Once they begin to invade and pillage the western kingdoms on a more systematic basis, they will take slaves from as far as Corinthia, Ophir, Kush and Stygia too. Their slaves are utterly subjugated, far more so than even the slaves of the Shemites – where the Shemites might take a slipper to the behind of a rebellious slave, the Turanians employ professional torturers to teach their subjects to obey.

Female slaves are especially prized and the Turanian nobles' harems are common destinations for high-born Hyborean women captured on raids. Turanian harems are overseen by silk-pantalooned eunuch slaves.

Turan is ruled by shahs and like Hyrkania is the enemy of the Kozaks. The Turanian royal banner is a white wolf's head. The Turanian shahs are wealthy and gain much income from the many caravans that travel through Turan as well as the looted treasures of the lands they conquer and raid.

Aghrapur: Agraphur, the most major port city on the Vilayet Sea (see page 335), is the capital of Turan. Caravans from the west arrive here to have their goods shipped across the sea and on to Khitai, while Khitan goods arrive from Hyrkania on the other side of the sea. Agraphur is built on the estuary of the great Ilbars River. King Yezdigerd is the ruler of Turan and has his palace here.

Akif: This is a major Turanese city, possibly on the Ilbars River west of Agraphur.



Fort Ghor: This is the easternmost outpost of the Turanian kingdom and the location of a mighty castle on the utmost edge of the steppe.

Khawarizm: This is the largest city of the southern region of Turan. Its lord, Jehungir Agha, is responsible for the kingdom from the western border as far as the shores of the Vilayet Sea in the east. Jelal Khan is a friend of the Agha and has a castle of his own on the steppe east of Khawarizm, where he practices a variety of degenerate activities so vile as to scandalise even his fellow Turanian lords. Khawarizm is renowned even among the Hyrkanians for the quality of its archers.

Kozaks: The Kozaks come from almost every kingdom: the Hyborian lands of the northwest, Stygia and the Black Kingdoms of the southwest and the lands of the East. 'Kozak' is actually a name given them by their enemies. Although they take a certain amount of pride in the name, for it is an almost ironic demonstration of the Hyrkanians' underestimation of their prowess, they prefer to call themselves the Free People.

Kozaks are commanded by hetmans. The Kozaks roam the steppe between the Zaporoska river and the Ilbars River in Turan and sometimes beyond towards the Eastern Desert. The Hyrkanians war constantly with the Kozaks but often assume that any body of unknown armed riders is a band of Kozaks and thus attack them too.

Other Cities: Shapur, Sultanapur and Khorosu.

Vezek: This is a Turanian fort along the main caravan-route from Shem to the East. It is used as a large-scale tollbooth to ensure the Turanians get a good cut of any goods travelling either way.

Language: Hyrkanian

Related Languages: None

MILITARY FORCES

In addition to its powerful land-based forces, Turan boasts a fleet of purple-sailed war galleys with which it attempts to police the shipping on the Vilayet Sea, keeping it safe from pirates and Kozaks.

Horde: The bulk of the Turanian military is a vast army of

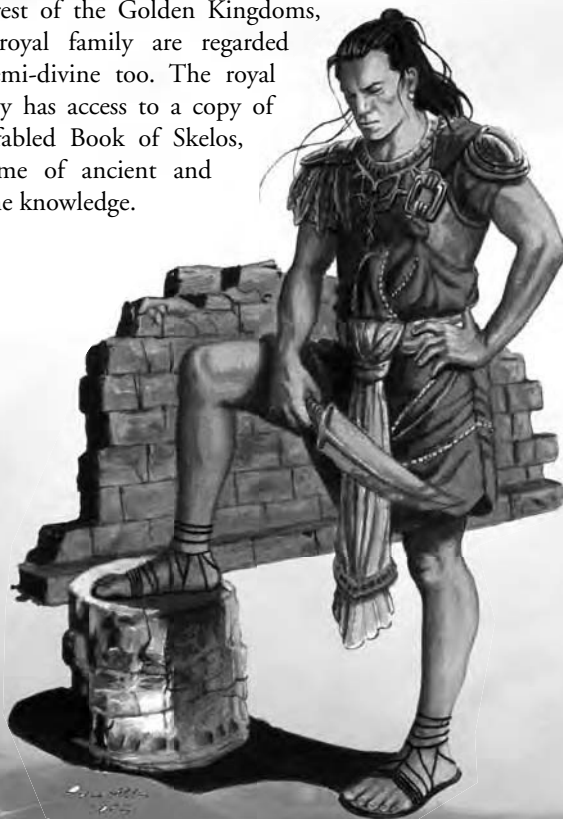
light cavalry (1st level nomads) who bear flaming torches, Hyrkanian bows and broadswords. They wear gilt open-faced helmets (steel caps) and sometimes mail or scale body protection. The Turanian horde is some 100,000 strong. Losses can easily be replenished by recruiting Hyrkanians (see page 316).

Mighty Archers: Turan's elite archers (4th level soldiers) wear spired helmets and leopardskin cloaks but no other armour. Each is armed with a Hyrkanian bow of at least +3 Strength and three dozen arrows.

VENDHYA

Vendhya is a great tropical peninsula to the south of Turan and the Himelian Mountains. Most of this kingdom is hot plains, all of it quite fertile for certain crops or at least for grazing cattle. The land is vast and the civilisation extremely ancient. The ruling, warrior caste of Vendhya is the Kshatriya, lancers who have defended this land for generations against Himelian hillmen and the more organised threat of the Turanians.

Bhunda Chand is the young king of this powerful but isolated nation. He is guarded at all times by fifty expert warriors and has twenty food and wine tasters to protect him from poisoning attempts. He is advised by the Wazam, an ancient and powerful noble. Vendhya is unusual in that its kings tend to be genuinely benevolent rulers, leading a genuine love for the royal family among its people. As with the rest of the Golden Kingdoms, the royal family are regarded as semi-divine too. The royal family has access to a copy of the fabled Book of Skelos, a tome of ancient and arcane knowledge.



Bhunda Chand's sister is the Devi Yasmina, a high-spirited and courageous young woman. During *The People of the Black Circle*, she slays the already dying Bhunda Chand at his request so he need not die of sorcerous torture. She then ascends to the throne herself.

Ayodhya: This is the capital city of Vendhya and home of the royal palace and seat of government. The Tower of Kites is the main prison and site of execution here. The skulls of traitors to the land are mounted upon it to bleach in the sun as a demonstration of Vendhya's might and a reminder of what it is to go against that might. Ayodhya's northern flank is defended by the broad sweep of the Jhumda river.

Golden Kingdoms: The Golden Kingdoms are Vendhya's closest allies. Only one of them, Kosala, is named in the stories. Far to the south of the Vilayet Sea and just to the west of Vendhya, Kosala is a small and mysterious region. The capital city, Yota-pong, is dominated by worship of Yajur, god of stranglers. Kosala enjoys excellent relations with Vendhya. It is ruled by a king and royal family who are regarded as semi-divine much like those of Vendhya.

Jhelai: Jhelai is a major city and religious centre. The caves below it are populated by many hundreds of hermits noted for their wisdom.

Peshkhauri: Peshkhauri is the northernmost city of Vendhya and is a powerful bulwark against the hill tribes. It rules the northern region of Vendhya, which holds the main caravan route north from the great peninsula, up through the Zhaibar Pass and on to Ghulistan, Iranistan and beyond. It is governed by Chunder Shan, who lives in a massive fortress just to the north of the city. To the north and west of Peshkhauri the crags of the Himelians begin. The prison quarters of Peshkhauri are separated from the rest of the city by a tall, thick wall with a single, guarded ironbound door for an entrance.

Language: Vendhyan or Kosalan

Related Languages: None

MILITARY FORCES

Kshatriya Elite: The noble warriors (3rd level noble or higher) of Vendhya wear polished helmets (treat as steel caps) and gold-chased corselets or hauberks of mail. On horseback they act as light lancers; on foot or for close combat they wield scimitars. Officers may use tulwars. Vendhya has approximately 15,000 Kshatriya warriors available to fight at any time.

Vendhyan Archers: The Vendhyans use only hunting bows and so their archers also have to be capable in hand-to-hand fighting (2nd level soldiers). Most wield battleaxes and small shields (treat as targes) if brought to close combat. Vendhya has only approximately 10,000 archers.

Vendhyan Warriors: These are usually spearmen (1st level soldier) armed with hunting spears and large shields. Vendhya has some 20,000 warriors of this kind but could probably recruit less experienced spearmen (1st level commoner) if need be.

VILAYET SEA

This vast inland sea splits the eastern world in two. Caravans from Khitai to the west must either be broken down and shipped across the sea by the Turanians or diverted along a wide detour to the north or west. For the most part the Vilayet Sea is under Hyrkanian and Turanian dominance but scattered pirate ships contest that sovereignty by regularly raiding shipping. These pirates form the Red Brotherhood of Vilayet.

The southern shores of the Vilayet Sea are plied by the Yuetshi fishers, an aboriginal people said to be descended from an ancient race that once dominated the region. Other than the various shipping of the Turanians, pirates and Yuetshi, the main feature of this sea is the large number of islands that seem to dot its southern half, each one covered in strange ruined structures. Dim legends hint of a connection between the ancestors of the Yuetshi and the builders of these island settlements.

Isle of Iron Statues: This is a mysterious island with a weird ruined town hidden within its forest. The centrepiece of the town is a temple filled with unnerving and lifelike black iron statues resembling angelic or demonic men. At least one great ape also roams the island.

The Red Brotherhood: The pirates of the Brotherhood are from all around the Vilayet Sea and beyond and include a number of former Kozaks among their ranks, as well as escaped slaves and wandering adventurers from as far afield as Shem and the Hyborian kingdoms. Perhaps the only thing they have in common is that they all regard the King of Turan as their enemy. Like so many pirate bands, they have rough and ready rules governing their conduct, though precise interpretation



of these rules is often as dependent on fighting ability as on persuasive words. The rules allow any member of the Red Brotherhood, even a raw recruit unproven by battle, to challenge the ship-captain to a duel for the captaincy. It seems likely that at least some of the Red Brotherhood are former pirates of the Baracha Isles, given the two bands' identical names.

Xapur: Another strange island of Vilayet, Xapur means 'the Fortified' and is named for its ancient ruined dome and other structures. At one time it held the great city of Dagon and was known as Dagonia. It is speculated that Xapur is the original home of the Zembabwean god Dagon.

Yuetshi: On the southern coast of the Vilayet Sea is a scattered region of fishing villages inhabited by the Yuetshi people, who are said to have some connection with the long-lost builders of the ruins on Xapur. The Yuetshi worship giant serpents and keep idols of them in sacred huts.

ZAMORA

Much of Zamora is rocky, broken country full of gorges, cliffs and plateaus. The land rises still more on the borders, providing natural barriers to any invasion of Zamora. Its southern border with Koth is the Bhalkhana mountains, home of the finest horses known to man. Great mountains rise to the east, forming a natural border with the Eastern Desert. These mountains are home to the man-apes (see page 386). Zamora still holds several lost cities of the ancients, especially in its more mountainous regions.

Zamora is an absolute despotism, where differing points of view are not tolerated, at least in theory. However, this depends very much on the personality of the king – until the events of *The Tower of the Elephant*, the sorcerer-priest Yara dominated the king.

Arenjun, City of Thieves: The City of Thieves is not entirely given over to roguery – who would the thieves steal from? However, it does boast the largest and most comprehensive thieves' quarter on Earth. This is called the Maul and comprises a mixture of rogues and ruffians from many lands, though few can match the native Zamorians in thievery. Here one can hire an expert in precisely the style of thievery one needs – a tomb robber, woman-stealer, second-storey-man, gem

thief or any other type of professional rogue. The thieves of Arenjun wear red silken loincloths; anything heavier is too burdensome for burglary.

Shadizar: Known as the City of Wickedness, or simply Shadizar the Wicked, Shadizar is perhaps the most degenerate of the civilised cities – just the kind of place to make even the relatively cosmopolitan Conan shake his head at the depths to which civilised folk can sink. Anything can be bought and sold here if the price is right. Though Shadizar is in theory the capital city of Zamora, it seems to have almost no laws, at least none that apply to the rich.

Shadizar has a public auction block for slave girls. Its free women are salacious and fat-lipped and laugh obscenely. Shadizar is also noted for its dancing girls generally, whether free or slave.

Close by are the pre-human, demon-haunted ruins of Dagoth Hill. It is whispered that vile demons still walk these dread structures, seeking out human women to continue their foul lineage.

Yaralet: This is an eastern Zamorian city that lies close to the northern steppes and hills of the Eastern Desert. Yaralet will one day be conquered by Turan, when that kingdom becomes an empire and begins to invade the West.

Yezud: Yezud is a highly religious city that holds the main temple to the spider-god Zath. Yezud, like Shadizar, is famed for the quality of its dancing girls, though those of Yezud are likely to be religious mystics rather than salacious floozies.

Language: Zamorian

Related Languages: None

MILITARY FORCES

It seems unlikely that Zamora has a very large standing army but there must be something more than thieves to defend the country. The Zamorian Royal Guard wear silvered armour (presumably breastplates) and crested helmets and wield spears and shields. In all probability the standing army is similarly armed, if perhaps with less ostentation. Zamora's army numbers no more than 12,000 at most and probably not even 10,000.

ZINGARA

Zingara is one vast, fertile river-valley surrounded and protected by great mountain ranges. It is a nation very advanced in agriculture. However, its richness has not brought it peace – it is constantly torn asunder by civil wars and at any time has typically half a dozen different princes, each at the head of a province and with a claim on the throne. The southern plantations use vast numbers of Kushite slaves to produce their harvests.

The Zingarans constantly war with the Aquilonians over the river Alimane – at least when they are not warring among themselves.

The southern border between Zingara and Argos is a range of low hills. Just within the Zingaran side of the border is a vast, gloomy and ancient forest that is uninhabited by humans but home to a great many shambling ghouls. It is said that somewhere within the forest is an ancient, accursed city filled with ghouls. It seems likely that Zingara's infamous fiend-haunted swamps are also near this southern border region. They are infested with the dreaded snakes known as Great Serpents. The borders, particular the south bank of the Alimane river that borders with Aquilonia, are patrolled constantly by companies of cavalry.

The northern border with the Pictish Wilderness is mountainous. A number of Zingaran miners work here, digging tin and other metals from the rock for trading and manufacture. Iron ore is probably found here too, as it seems likely that the Zingarans are more or less self-sufficient when it comes to the production of arms and armour.

Buccaneers: The buccaneers are Zingaran renegades who rival the Barathan pirates in robbing the traders of the high seas and raiding coastal towns. They call themselves the Fellowship of Freebooters, or simply the Freebooters, rather than admitting to being pirates. Freebooter law allows for specific members of the crew to challenge the captain to a formal duel to become captain; only fully accepted and battle-proven buccaneers have that right – a new recruit, however apparently capable, needs to prove himself worthy on at least three separate attacks on shipping or raids on coastal towns before he may challenge the captain without finding himself facing the entire crew as well!

Kordava: Kordava is the Zingaran royal court and capital city. It is famous for its high quality leatherwork and excellent schools of swordsmanship. The Duke of

Kordava's daughter, Sancha, is missing and presumed dead, though in fact she is lost to the buccaneers.

Korzetta Castle: This is the ancestral home of the Korzetta family, now owned by a private buyer. Some whisper that the Korzettas left due to debts but others claim the reason is more sinister still whisper of black sorcery in high places.

Valbroso Castle: This is the home of Count Valbroso. It overlooks the border close to Poitain and overlooks the Poitain-Messantia caravan trail. As with many of the border keeps, this castle looks more like a bandit's hold than the castle of a nobleman.

Language: Zingaran

Related Languages: None

MILITARY FORCES

Zingara is generally happy enough to hire out its soldiers as mercenaries to any who are willing to pay the fee.

Arbalesters: Zingara's crossbowmen wield the arbalest and have arming swords for melee combat. They wear either leather jerkins or mail shirts. Zingara has 2,000 arbalesters.

Knights: The flower of Zingara's chivalry and its most lethal military force are its knights (2nd level noble/2nd level soldier). The knights wear full plate armour and carry heavy lances and large shields and have broadswords at their belts. Zingara could muster 3,000 knights if they were not already busy killing one another in civil war!


Men-at-Arms: Like the knights, Zingara's men-at-arms (3rd level soldier) are usually mounted since the great valley is reasonably flat and good for riding. They are armed with light lances, arming swords and targes and wear mail hauberks and steel caps at the very least. In total, if all were to fight for the same side, Zingara would have 6,000 men-at-arms.

Soldiers: Zingara's infantry wield broadswords, pikes and battleaxes. At a minimum they wear leather jerkins and steel helms, with the richer soldiers preferring mail shirts or hauberks. There are 3,000 soldiers.



Religion

Prayer and Sacrifice in the Hyborian Age



He shrugged his shoulders. 'I have known many gods. He who denies them is as blind as he who trusts them too deeply. I seek not beyond death. It may be the blackness averred by the Nemedian skeptics, or Crom's realm of ice and cloud, or the snowy plains and vaulted halls of the Nordheimer's Valhalla. I know not, nor do I care. Let me live deep while I live; let me know the rich juices of red meat and stinging wine on my palate, the hot embrace of white arms, the mad exultation of battle when the blue blades flame and crimson, and I am content. Let teachers and priests and philosophers brood over questions of reality and illusion. I know this: if life is illusion, then I am no less an illusion, and being thus, the illusion is real to me. I live, I burn with life, I love, I slay, and am content.'

— *The Queen of the Black Coast*

In the Conan stories, whether the gods exist or not is left unclear. This is probably quite deliberate and Conan's conversations with Bêlit in *Queen of the Black Coast* are a good insight into the presence – or absence – of gods in the Hyborian Age. It is quite clear that demons and similar evil, powerful, supernatural entities exist and some of these are indeed worshipped. Likewise, priests often have power of some kind but whether this power truly comes from their gods is another matter, since they seem to have the same kind of spells as any other sorcerer.

There is no particular need, then, for a Games Master to decide whether the gods truly exist in his campaign or not. It is a philosophical point with no bearing on the real world inhabited by adventurers. Evil certainly exists, but good? Perhaps only mankind can make good,

with the might of their arms and the sharpness of their swords. There are good priests, sure enough and sometimes a powerful ghost will offer assistance but it is best not to expect too much help from the gods, if they are even real.

PANTHEONS AND GODS

Most of the gods are grouped together into pantheons, which are worshipped in particular regions. This is because those gods who are worshipped in more than one kingdom are often altered according to the perceptions and culture of their new worshippers. In effect, the Asura worshipped in the Hyborian kingdoms is not quite the same Asura worshipped as a part of the Vendhyan pantheon. Thus what appears to be the same god may be worshipped within different pantheons. While the worshippers of one might be respected and engaged by the priests of another, they do not consider themselves of the same faith.

Certain individual gods are sufficiently powerful in their own areas that they are the only ones worshipped by many people in those regions. These gods are given separate entries, apart from the pantheons. Sometimes these lone gods are worshipped alongside a more established local pantheon; other times they are suppressed, regarded as demons by the official state religion.

A character who is a worshipper or priest of an entire pantheon may well have a preferred god or gods within that pantheon though he will call upon whichever deity is most appropriate at the time. A priest of a pantheon can officiate over the services of any of the gods of that pantheon.

WORSHIP

A character may worship all the gods of one pantheon if he so chooses or he may pick a single god to revere. Some characters may be somewhat undecided as to religion, though there are few adventurers in the Hyborian Age who are genuinely atheistic. Many, like Conan, are wary of joining a cult but are still tolerant of every

different religion – so long as it does not adversely affect them, such as the fell worship of Set. Few adventurers would deny outright the existence of the supernatural; since they see evidence of sorcery and diabolism so often it is only natural to at least hope that good gods exist too.

REQUIREMENTS OF WORSHIP

To become a worshipper, a character must to meet certain conditions, depending on the cult. Usually this involves providing a certain number of sacrifices each year, donating money and goods to the cult's temple or simply giving up one's time to meditation and study. Most cults also demand that the worshipper offers allegiance to the cult (see page 81).

It is not usually possible to worship more than one pantheon or god, since priests take a dim view of worshippers who seem uncommitted. However, in certain cases evil cults actively encourage their worshippers to pose as orthodox members of the dominant religion in a land. That way they can maintain a socially acceptable front while continuing their diabolical practices in private.

Any character who regularly participates in religious services (if appropriate), pays any tithe required by the temple and generally acts in a manner appropriate to a worshipper of a particular god gains certain benefits.

BENEFITS OF WORSHIPPING A GOD

Each god or pantheon offers certain benefits to its worshippers, so long as they remain in good standing with the cult. The benefits tend to vary from god to god and are listed in the individual descriptions of each god or pantheon. Complete descriptions of the various benefits are given below. Note that no deity offers all the following benefits –check the individual entries to find out what each god offers. A character who fails to keep his tithes paid up loses the benefits of worship until his back dues are paid.

Atonement: A character who has broken the terms of his code of honour or who has broken one of the rules of his god may seek out an ordained priest of his deity and ask for atonement, if the deity offers this benefit. Usually the priest will expect a donation to the temple of around 50 sp multiplied by the character level of the character who desires atonement and then send him off on a suitable holy quest for the god. Once the quest is completed, the character regains his code of

honour or regains his standing as a worshipper of the god, as appropriate. The priest who assists with the atonement must be in good standing at the temple.

Note that deities whose cults have no particular requirements for their worshippers do not usually offer atonement either.

Faith: All worshippers of this god or pantheon gain a +2 morale bonus to all Will saving throws. This represents their faith in the religion, which can be a powerful source of spiritual strength in the face of evil sorcery or unnatural creatures.

Faith is generally offered only by the more 'civilised' religions – those which regard themselves as somewhat above the supernatural.

Spells: If spells are among the benefits of worshipping a certain god, priests, shamans or other representatives of the god are willing to cast any of the spells they know on a character's behalf at half the usual cost (see page 160). A parenthetical entry after 'Spells,' such as 'Spells (Counterspells, Divination),' indicates that only spells from those sorcery styles are approved by the religion.

BEYOND WORSHIP: PRIESTS

Priests come in all shapes and sizes and in every degree of piety from the most corrupt, black-hearted scoundrel to the most serious religious philosopher. In theory they have all the restrictions and benefits of worshippers (except for the requirement to pay a tithe) along with several more but in practice many priests simply use their position to gain political influence, bribes and other 'fringe benefits.'

Although scholars can choose the 'lay priest' background at 1st level, a fully ordained priest must have selected the Priest feat at 4th level or above. In either case, the priest may have access to certain forms of sorcery through the temple but will usually be banned from learning other types of sorcery.

Each temple may have specific requirements and benefits for its priests and specific means of enforcing its requirements. Usually the simplest punishment is to deny a character his



priestly status. If this is done, the priest immediately loses the benefits of the lay priest background and (if he has it) the Priest feat. These benefits can only be reinstated if the character goes to his high priest for atonement. Even then, the high priest may refuse to grant atonement if the character's transgressions are too severe.

Note that certain religions have no particular rules about priests abusing their authority and position to get rich. For some churches, this is simply the standard way for a priest to earn a crust. The more civilised religions usually frown upon such behaviour and if a priest is caught extorting money from his flock, or worse, offering to sell them salvation or spells without authorisation, he will quickly be punished.

GODS OF THE HYBORIAN AGE

The following gods and pantheons are worshipped either in the Hyborian kingdoms or further afield.

AJUJU

Ajuju, known as the Dark One, is the main god of the native people of Tombalku, though he is also worshipped in the southern Black Kingdoms, particularly Suba. His priests adorn themselves in feathers, bells and snakeskins.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth one sp/level/month to the priests of Ajuju.

Benefits of Worship: Spells.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must know at least two sorcery styles.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Hypnotism, Necromancy, Oriental Magic and Summonings).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Casting an *ill-fortune* spell on them.

ASURA

Asura is a sharp-eyed god who keeps things running smoothly in the world. To begin with, Asura controlled the weather – he was a sky god and was prayed to for

rain in times of drought. Today his remit has expanded somewhat to govern all correct action.

Asura is the chief god of Vendhya. He is the protector of the royal family wherever they have influence. Asuran priests are knowledgeable in sorcery and more importantly in the best ways in which to fight and foil the activities of sorcerers – for example, they were among the first major authorities to recommend that all the shorn hair, nail trimmings and other bodily wastes of the Vendhyan royal family be destroyed so as to ensure they could not be used as magical links against their former owners (see page 237). In Vendhya, the priests of Asura ritually gash themselves with copper knives as a sign of grief when a member of the royal family dies.

The religion of Asura is largely an underground, secretive one, since many Hyborians regard Asura as no more than a demon; however, his cult stretches over most of the world from Vendhya across all the Hyborian kingdoms and his worshippers meet in hidden safe-houses in every major city.

Aquilonia is home to one of these secretive cults of Asura, at least under King Vilerus – the later reformer King Conan extends freedom to all religions in Aquilonia, much to the disgust of many ordinary Mitra-worshippers who still fear the cult of Asura. Pilgrim boats carry the cult's dead out to the sea and down the great Khorotas river in symbolic recognition of the cult's historic connection with water. The cult's influence extends throughout Aquilonia but no further south than the Khorotas. The cult has a secret, highly magical communications and spying network that is based around the *sorcerous news* spell and other spells of the Divination sorcery style.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth three sp/level/month to the local priests of Asura; keep secret about membership in the cult; carry out duties for the priesthood as required; do not become Corrupt; oppose those who carry out human sacrifice or trafficking with demons.

Benefits of Worship: Atonement, Faith, Spells (Counterspells, Divination).

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Scrupulous honesty is required in all things except in the matter of concealing the existence of the cult from outsiders; members must work for the greater good of the cult and the god in everything they do; cult members must avoid becoming personally wealthy.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus the



following: Spot and Sense Motive become class skills (even if the priest gains levels in a non-scholar class); sorcery teaching is available (Counterspells, Divination, Oriental Magic, Prestidigitations, *master-words and signs* and *summon elemental* only).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Removal of priestly status.

BEL

Bel is the Shemitish god of thievery. Bel is worshipped elsewhere, particularly by well-travelled thieves who may find it a novelty to have a god devoted specifically to lawlessness. He is a minor part of the Shemite pantheon, in addition to having his own followers. The information below concerns Bel's cult when it is found outside of Shem.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth one sp/level/month to the local priests of Bel.

Benefits of Worship: Spells (Counterspells, Divination).

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must carry out at least one unusually daring theft each year.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus the following: Gather Information, Hide and Move Silently become class skills (even if the priest gains levels in a non-scholar class); sorcery teaching is available (Counterspells and Divination only); bribery and corruption are actively encouraged.

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Removal of priestly status.

BORI

Bori was the god of the all the Hyborian tribes when they were barbarians. Thought to be a deified chieftain, a powerful war-leader who led the tribes to victory in their days of conquest, he is an ancient god. He is still worshipped in Hyperborea and occasionally in Gunderland, though most Gundermen have adopted the worship of Aquilonia.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth two sp/level/month to the local priests of Bori.

Benefits of Worship: Atonement, Faith.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: May not take money directly from worshippers other than their regular tithes.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard.

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Removal of priestly status.

CROM AND THE CIMMERIAN PANTHEON

Crom is the main Cimmerian god. He grants no boons save strength of arm and will, which are his gifts to all Cimmerians. He and his pantheon do not truly have worshippers or priests. Every Cimmerian is a nominal follower of Crom but they have long since learned that the god takes pride in them only if they never, ever call on his aid. Cimmerians are expected to take what they want from life using Crom's gifts, not call on him for assistance every time they are in need. That would be weak and Crom despises weaklings – he would sooner see them dead than help them out.

'He was a man,' said Conan. 'I drink to his shade, and to the shade of the dog, who knew no fear.' He quaffed part of the wine, then emptied the rest upon the floor, with a curious heathen gesture, and smashed the goblet. 'The heads of ten Picts shall pay for his, and seven heads for the dog, who was a better warrior than many a man.'

And the forester, staring into the moody, smoldering blue eyes, knew the barbaric oath would be kept.

— *Beyond the Black River*

Cimmerian funerary customs are quick and deadly. The fallen are left where they fell or disposed of simply; it is no matter, since their shades have departed. A wake is held, with those present drinking a toast to the departed then pouring out the remainders of their beverages onto the ground for the dead. If revenge is called for – and the Cimmerians can feud like no-one but the Tlazitlans – the drinking-vessels are then smashed, with each warrior boasting of how he will personally take his revenge on behalf of the deceased. Such vengeance is usually expressed in number of heads, to be collected from the enemy tribe that slew the fallen Cimmerian. It seems possible that the Cimmerian tribes practice this headhunting of their fallen foes in a ritualistic manner, similar to that of their later Celtic descendants.



The other gods are similarly grim. To the Cimmerians, these gods' names are to be used when making a particularly strict oath or when cursing but never in a more religious context.

Badb: Badb is a goddess of war, a shape changer who favours the form of a crow. It is said that she gave the Cimmerians the gift of fury in battle.

Lir: Lir is the god of the sea in its primal, elemental form and the father of Mannanan Mac Lir.

Macha: Macha is the goddess of fertility and (inevitably for Cimmerian goddesses) of war.

Mannanan Mac Lir: The son of Lir, Mannanan Mac Lir is also a sea god in a more humanised, heroic form. He also governs the weather.

Morrigan: The primary Cimmerian war goddess is Morrigan. If the Cimmerians had philosophers or even priests, they might speculate that Badb, Macha and Nemain are aspects of Morrigan; however, ordinary Cimmerians do not much seem to care.

Nemain: Another war goddess, Nemain also governs sacred springs and wells. In battle she is known as 'the venomous.'

Requirements of Worship: Be a Cimmerian.

Benefits of Worship: None.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: None (There are no priests).

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: –

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: –

DAGON

Dagon is the Zembabwean god of the underworld, fertility and grain. He is worshipped in the form of a gold idol and is the most important god in Zembabwe, along with his consort Derketo.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth one sp/level/month to the priests of Dagon.

Benefits of Worship: Spells.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must know at least one sorcery style.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Hypnotism and Oriental Magic).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Sending a demon after them, or cursing them.

DERKETA

Derketa is the Kushite death goddess and Queen of the Dead. She is probably originally derived from the Derketo of Zembabwei, Stygia and Shem, though the attributes of the two goddesses are quite different.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth one sp/level/month to the priests of Derketa.

Benefits of Worship: Spells.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must know at least one sorcery style.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic and Summonings).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Send an assassin after them.

DERKETO

Derketo is a fertility goddess in every sense. She is worshipped to grant fertility to the land but also during great deviant orgies that last many weeks.

The Stygians have great temples to Derketo in Luxur, where they initiate young noble girls into the ways of pleasure and debauchery. Derketo is also a part of the Shemite pantheon and is worshipped in Zembabwei where she is the consort of Dagon, the underworld god.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth two sp/level/month to the priests of Derketo, participate in at least three orgies a year.

Benefits of Worship: Spells (Counterspells, Divination and Nature Magic only), orgies (at least once a month).

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must know at least one sorcery style.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (Counterspells, Divination and Nature Magic only). Perks include training noble girls in the ways of pleasure.

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: None.

HANUMAN

Hanuman is worshipped in Zamboula and presumably to a lesser extent in Turan and Vendhya. He is a bestial ape-god of extremely ill repute – even devout Set-worshippers fear him and his debased cult. Human sacrifice is common in the temples to Hanuman; in Zamboula, at least, its adherents enjoy considerable political influence which they are free to use and abuse as they see fit.





Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth two sp/level/month to the priests of Hanuman.

Benefits of Worship: Spells.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must know at least two sorcery styles, including Hypnotism. Must know the Ritual Sacrifice feat.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles), a +1 circumstance bonus to Charisma-based skill checks in Zamboula due to the unusual influence of the cult in that town. Bribery, corruption and abuse of power are positively encouraged.

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Capture them alive and sacrifice them.

IBIS

Worshipped in Nemedra, Ibis is an ancient foe of Set thought to have originated in Stygia itself. Ibis has a relatively small but respected cult and has cordial relations with the cult of Mitra in Nemedra. Their shared opposition to Set gives them a common cause but some of the priests of Mitra are unreasonably suspicious of the Ibis worshippers, distrusting anything that has such a close connection to the land of their enemies.

Ibis himself is a moon-god, a patron of scholars and those who seek to gain sorcerous knowledge but use it for moral ends. He has an abiding hatred of Set. It is whispered that worshippers of Ibis survive in Stygia itself, keeping their religion secret but ever eager to foil the schemes of Set and his followers at any opportunity.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth two sp/level/month to the priests of Ibis; report any Set-worship, sorcery or related activity to the nearest priest of Ibis as soon as possible; oppose those who carry out human sacrifice or trafficking with demons.

Benefits of Worship: Faith, Atonement, Spells (Counterspells and Divination only), may call on priests for protection against Set and his minions in general.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must know Counterspells sorcery style. Must be willing to fight Set and his minions wherever they are found, even at great personal risk. May not associate with demonic entities or minions of Set. May not learn the Curses, Necromancy or Summonings sorcery styles.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (Counterspells, Divination, Prestidigitation).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:

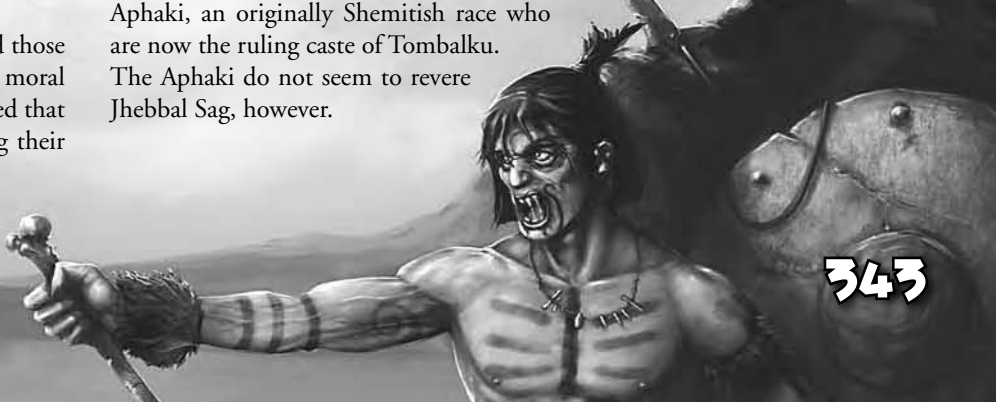
Excommunication, unless a disloyal priest has been associating with minions of Set, in which case capture and summary execution.

JHEBBAL SAG

This ancient nature god once received the worship of all living things, man and beast alike. Today it is thought that the only humans who still revere him are savages, the Picts and many of the Kushite and Black Kingdoms tribes, though a few scholars may know of his existence through evidence found all over the world in cave paintings or the very oldest manuscripts. It is said that the animals have not forgotten Jhebbal Sag and can still be controlled by his followers. He is known to have two sons, Gullah and Jhil, but in all likelihood has many more sons who are minor gods, one for each animal.

Gullah: Gullah is a gorilla-god, a son of Jhebbal Sag who lives on the Moon. Bull apes are sacred to him. He is also known as Jullah to folk called the Gallahs, the ordinary people of Kush.

Jhil: Jhil is another son of Jhebbal Sag, whose form is that of a raven. He is a bloodthirsty god, demanding that prisoners be flayed alive on his altar. His priests use dice as a means of divination. Jhil is also the main god of the Aphaki, an originally Shemitish race who are now the ruling caste of Tombalku. The Aphaki do not seem to revere Jhebbal Sag, however.





Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth two sp/level/month to the priests (Aphaki worshippers of Jhil only) or provide one human sacrifice per year (Aphaki, Picts or Kushites). The whole of Pictish and Kushite society is expected to contribute directly to the upkeep of their priests (who are usually known as shamans), building them their 'devil-devil huts' and giving them a portion of the game caught during every hunt.

Benefits of Worship: Spells (any except Oriental Magic).

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must know the Nature Magic sorcery style and the Tormented Sacrifice feat.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any except Oriental Magic).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Captured alive, then sacrificed.

KHITAN PANTHEON

The Khitan pantheon is as mysterious to Westerners as the whole of that distant nation. Shaven priests are said to have temples deep in the Khitan jungles and it seems likely that entirely religious communities exist there as well.

Yogah: Yogah is the strange, elephant-headed star-being from the story *The Tower of the Elephant*. His memory is worshipped still as a god in Khitai. He is probably a god of magic and sorcerous knowledge.

Yun: Yun is the main god worshipped in the jungle temples. He is probably the head of the Khitan pantheon but almost nothing is known of him save that his worship seems to involve music in the form of chimes or bells.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth three sp/level/month to the priests or serve at the temple full-time as a monk.

Benefits of Worship: Atonement, Faith, Spells (any).

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must know the Oriental Magic sorcery style; vows of obedience, poverty and chastity are common but not universal; expected to be scrupulously honest and a powerful leader.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:
Exiled from Khitai and set to wandering the Earth.

MITRA

Mitra is revered in almost all the Hyborian kingdoms, including Aquilonia, Ophir, Corinthia, Brythunia and Nemedia. Even most of the Zingarans have adopted his worship. He is a universal god among those people, who are for the most part highly suspicious of other cults.

Mitra demands that his worshippers stand upright before him rather than prostrating themselves and does not require either man or beast as a sacrifice. He is a god of rights and of justice; those kingdoms that have adopted his rule usually have at the very least some kind of minimal human rights that apply even to the lowliest of peasants, though the Zingarans get around this with some complex theology to allow them to continue owning slaves. Worshippers of Mitra are encouraged to battle oppression and seek out justice wherever they can. They are also encouraged to show mercy on the field of battle and forgive enemies. It is possible that this latter concept is the origin of chivalry among the Hyborians. Honest hard work is more appealing to Mitra than soldiering or raiding.

Temples to Mitra are plain almost to the point of austerity. Precious metals and stones may be used but only in simple forms; for example, a square altar could be made of solid jade but would otherwise remain undecorated. A single depiction of Mitra is normal in each temple and is usually set on a pedestal and depicted as a tall, handsome, bearded and very dignified man.

Epemitreus the Sage: Epemitreus was a powerful foe of Set and priest of Mitra fifteen hundred years before the time of Conan. He sleeps now beneath the mountain of Golamira but can appear in dreams to grant resistance to Set and his followers. He rarely does so unless there is a dire threat to Aquilonia but when he does he can inscribe his symbol, the phoenix, upon a mortal weapon to render it powerful against the demons of Set. See the boxed text for details.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth two sp/level/month to the local temple of Mitra. Live an honest and virtuous life. Oppose those who carry out human sacrifice or traffic with demons.

Benefits of Worship: Faith, Atonement.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must lead the faithful in prayer. Must not tolerate any other religion. Must lead a still more honest and virtuous life than the faithful. Must arbitrate fairly in disputes whenever asked. Must not fall into superstitious ways.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard.



THE PHOENIX ON THE SWORD

A weapon inscribed with this symbol inflicts +2d6 damage against any demons or +4d6 against demons summoned by or involved in a pact with worshippers of Set. Furthermore, if the inscribed weapon strikes a human worshipper of Set or a snake of any kind, it also deals +1d6 damage. Otherwise it is treated as a mundane weapon. The phoenix symbol's power lasts for as long as Epimitreus wishes to grant it but this is not usually more than one day. The symbol itself stays inscribed on the weapon's blade forever.

When the world was young and men were weak
and the fiends of the night walked free,
I strove with Set by fire and steel and the juice of the upas-tree;
Now that I sleep in the mount's black heart and the ages take their toll,
forget ye him who fought with the Snake to save the human soul?

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Usually excommunicated, but may be attacked by the virtuous worshippers of Mitra as a result.

OLLAM-ONGA

Ollam-Onga is the demonic god of the lost city of Gazal. He is also worshipped by diabolic cults in the dark jungles and along the dusky rivers of Kush. He stalks Gazal every night, taking and slaying its few inhabitants at will. It seems likely that his mad cultists perform similar activities.

Requirements of Worship: Obey priests of Ollam-Onga, sacrifice at least one human to the god per year.

Benefits of Worship: Spells.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must know at least three sorcery styles and the Ritual Sacrifice feat, must obey the high priest of Ollam-Onga, must sacrifice at least one human per month to Ollam-Onga.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Dedicate the entire resources of the cult to slaying them.

SET

Set is the old serpent-god of Stygia but he is also worshipped by the Chagas of Kush, certain degenerate cults of Shem and fell sorcerers across the Earth. Set's symbol is a scaled serpent, coiled with its tail in its mouth. Set is the mortal enemy of Mitra and of the Hyborian Kingdoms but he also hates his old Stygian enemy Ibis.

Set is worshipped in great festivals of sacrifice and also by more subtle means, such as by allowing a great serpent to wander the streets and declaring any who are eaten by it to be suitable offerings to the god. He may be willing to grant victory to one force on a battlefield if 500 or more virgin sacrifices are made to him the night before the battle.

Priests of Set terrify their subjects almost as much as they do their enemies. Many are corrupt, mad or both – and even the relatively sane ones are usually quite willing to sacrifice their own followers. The priests of Set form the entire government of Stygia.

Thugra Khotan: One of Set's most infamous worshippers, Thugra Khotan, is believed to have died 3,000 years ago but the Zugite cult that deifies him has survived into the modern era. The Zugites mark coins by stamping Thugra Khotan's likeness on them, then place them over the eyes of their dead before their last journey down the River Styx. It is said they will need their coins to pay the ferryman at the other end of the river, though in most cases it seems likely that the coins are stolen long before the bodies reach hell, if they ever do.

Requirements of Worship: Obey priests of Set, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe two sp/level/month to the local temple.

Benefits of Worship: Spells.



Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must know at least two sorcery styles and the Tormented Sacrifice feat, obey the high priest of Set, obey the laws of the land in Stygia (which are largely made by the priests of Set in any case).

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: +4 circumstance bonus to all Gather Information and Intimidate checks while in Stygia, and sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Slay them by sorcery at a distance if at all possible.

SHEMITE PANTHEON

Worshippers of the Shemite pantheon believe in resurrection and specifically that the souls of evil men are imprisoned in the bodies of apes after their deaths. However, Bêlit also mentions a belief in some kind of hell – this seems speculative, though, so may be a result of her exposure to other religions in her time as an adventurer.

The Shemite religion in general is highly fatalistic. Shemites believe everything to be predestined and so often seem unwilling to struggle against a fate they regard as inevitable. This, perhaps, is one reason neither the desert nor the meadow Shemites have ever embarked on great conquests of their own accord and do so only rarely under a foreign leader or foreign pay.

All the Shemite deities are worshipped in the form of idols, which are made from hollow brass and usually depicted in caricature with swollen bellies and sexual attributes. The Shemites believe their idols to literally be their gods.

Some of the southern Hyborian nations, including Koth and Khauran, have drifted away from the worship of Mitra and begun to revere the gods of Shem, particularly Ishtar the ivory-bosomed goddess of pleasure. Some of the Shemite gods are certainly known elsewhere, with Anu at least being revered in Corinthia.

Adonis: Adonis is the god of fertility and vegetation, the green hope and life of the Earth. In this context he is vital to the worship of the Meadow Shemites.

He is also the god of fertility in a more personal sense, as can be seen on the nude brass statues of him in his temples.

He was slain (some say by Ishtar's minions, some say by a wild boar) while out hunting. Ishtar travelled to

the underworld to bring him back and make him her mate and since then he has been condemned to spend six months of each year in the underworld. As a result, winter grips the once-fertile earth each year. Only in the spring does Adonis return. In the meadowlands, this is celebrated in a great spring festival, where Adonis' priests strip naked and gash themselves with knives, letting their blood spill onto the newly rejuvenated soil. The desert Shemites worship Adonis for personal fertility and pay more attention to the love he shares with Ishtar than they do to the myth of spring.

Anu: The sky-god is worshipped throughout Shem. He is regarded as taking on the form of a bull, so it seems likely that bulls are sacrificed to him. Anu is the creator god, whose will created both the gods and mankind. Though a philosopher might regard him as the head of the pantheon, in practice he is less popular than Ishtar and Adonis, who seem easier for most worshippers to relate to. Anu, as befits a creator and sky-god, is more distant from the day-to-day concerns of humanity. Among the eastern Shemites, he may be petitioned to lessen the harshness of the desert sun; in the meadowlands he is likely prayed to for rain in times of drought.

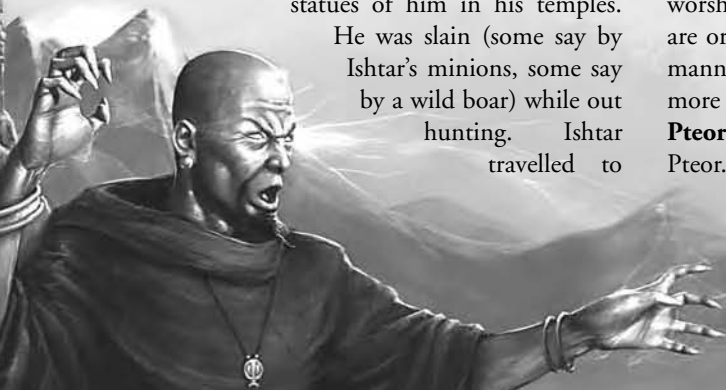
Ashtoreth: Ashtoreth is Ishtar's handmaiden, though in some versions of the myths she replaces Ishtar almost completely.

Bel: Though Bel, god of thieves, is worshipped elsewhere, he is still regarded as a part of the Shemite pantheon. He is sometimes depicted as an eagle carrying a forked bolt of lightning, as though hinting that he can steal even the traditional powers of other gods.

Derketo: Derketo is worshipped in Shem just as elsewhere, though here she is far more integrated with the rest of the pantheon. She is thought of as a temptress, constantly trying to steal Adonis from Ishtar. Priests who worship Derketo specifically, to the exclusion of the rest of the pantheon, should see the separate entry for this goddess on page 342.

Ishtar: Ishtar is the ivory-bosomed goddess of Koth, Shem, Khauran and the East in general. It seems likely that the ivory goddess of Punt is also Ishtar, perhaps under another name, though in that land she seems to have supplanted all other gods. In Shemite mythology, Ishtar is the daughter of Anu and so is the Queen of Heaven, a winged star goddess of fertility and war. She and Adonis are lovers but she is the dominant one and in most regions where she is worshipped she is revered above all other deities. Her rites are orgiastic in nature but not in the frenzied, desperate manner of the cult of Derketo; her worshippers are far more languid in their revels.

Pteor: The patron god of the Pelishtim peoples is called Pteor. He is a typical example of one of the minor gods of the Western Shemite city-states, revered



by the Pelishtim alongside the rest of the pantheon but regarded as subservient to the more major Shemite deities. Similar minor, local Shemite gods are found championing most of the city-states. It is possible that the Shemites of the eastern deserts and steppes also have local, tribal gods but they too are subservient to the main pantheon.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth one sp/level/month to the local temple; sacrifice at least one camel, one horse, one bull, two cows or six goats per year to the pantheon.

Benefits of Worship: Spells (any but Oriental Magic, Necromancy and Summonings).

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must have at least two levels in either the nomad class or the soldier class. (Shemite priests are expected to have 'served their time' in society before joining the priesthood.)

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic, Necromancy and Summonings).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Let them go; their families will sort them out one way or the other.

THE TURANIAN AND HYRKANIAN PANTHEON

The Turanian pantheon is centred around two gods, Tarim and Erlik. It seems possible that many more minor gods abound but certainly the ruling classes seem to revere none but Tarim and Erlik.

Erlik: Erlik is the main god of the Hyrkanians and Turanians. He is said to have been the first man on Earth, created by the now less important god Ulgen. How Erlik became the pre-eminent god of the Hyrkanians is uncertain and is the subject of much speculation outside of the Hyrkanian lands.

Tarim: Tarim is likely a god of herding and animal fertility. Some sources call him the 'Living Erlik,' as though he might be an avatar of Erlik himself. Tarim's high priests are under the hypnotic control of the Master of Yimsha.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth one sp/level/month.

Benefits of Worship: Atonement, Faith.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Knowledge (religion) 6 ranks.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard plus as follows: sorcery teaching available (Divinations and Nature magic only).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Cast out of the temple.

YOG

Yog is known as the Lord of the Empty Abodes. He is worshipped in Zamboula and Darfar by roasting and eating human victims, then immolating their bones. He is said to have dominion over all empty places, such as deserts and the Outer Dark. His worshippers are usually Darfari who live either in Darfar itself or far from home as slaves of the Turanian rulers of Zamboula. The Darfari's cannibalistic practices are known to the city authorities in Zamboula but it is felt that it is best to leave them be rather than provoke a slave rebellion. Native Zamboulans know to lock their doors and avoid wandering the streets at night; many a guest-house owner has reached an accommodation with the Yog-worshippers to provide them with suitable foreign travellers as victims.

Requirements of Worship: Eat human flesh at least once per month, participate in a raiding party to capture suitable victims at least once every three months.

Benefits of Worship: Spells (Counterspells, Curses, Divination and Summonings).

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Ritual Sacrifice feat.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (Counterspells, Curses, Divination and Summonings sorcery styles only).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Next on the fire.

YMIR AND THE NORDHEIMIR PANTHEON

Ymir is the primal frost-giant king and god of both the Aesir and Vanir. To the Nordheimir, he represents the Earth itself, which they perceive as formed entirely of ice and snow. He is worshipped not in elaborate rituals but by doing battle all day, then drinking and singing all night.

Ymir appears predominantly in the creation myth of the Nordheimir, who have little enough need for the gods save as sources for their tall tales and wild songs. He is said to have been the first living being, created from thawed ice just before the second creature, the primal cow Audhumla. His only nourishment came from milking Audhumla. Ymir's body produced the first humans, a man and a woman congealed from the sweat of his left armpit. From these sprang the races of Vanir and Aesir.



Atali: Ymir's daughter Atali is an enchantress who lures wounded men to their deaths in the ice. She has a number of brothers who resemble huge, rime-bearded Nordheimir warriors and who ambush her victims with their great axes if the poor mortals do not die of exposure.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth one sp/level/month to the local temple, increasing to eight sp/month during the raiding season (typically two months during autumn, after the harvest is in).

Benefits of Worship: Atonement, Faith.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood: Must have at least three levels in the barbarian class. Priests of Ymir are expected to be warriors first and foremost; many a raider has retired to become a priest after years of battle and slaying.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (Curses, Divinations and Nature Magic only).

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Banishment from the tribe.

ZAMORIAN PANTHEON

The complex array of deities worshipped by the Zamorians seems at best bewildering and at worst completely incomprehensible to an outsider. All Zamorian priests are expected to learn at least the basics of mesmerism so as to have the capability to enforce absolute obedience in their followers if need be.

Zath: The spider-god, Zath, has a pre-eminent position among the Zamorian gods. Zath's main temple dominates the city of Yezud and has a large stone statue of a spider at its centre. Sacred dancing girls wearing black jade bead pendants perform ritual dances around this weird idol.

Requirements of Worship: Pay a tithe worth two sp/level/month to the local temple.

Benefits of Worship: Faith.

Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:

Knowledge (religion) 10 ranks, must know the Hypnotism sorcery style.

Benefits of Ordained Priesthood: Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (Hypnotism only) and Zamorian priests gain a +2 competence bonus to all Knowledge (religion) checks due to the extensive amount of time they spend debating with each other.

Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests: Nothing more severe than public criticism.

COSMOLOGY

There are planets other than the Earth of the Hyborians. The planet Earth is surrounded by a belt of light but beyond that is the Outer Dark, home to many a strange demon.

Beyond the Outer Dark, deep within the emptiness of the void, lie several strange planets. The most notable one – and the one that seems to have the closest connection to the Earth – is Yag. It is described variously as a green planet and an accursed planet, presumably because it is covered with weird plant life that is inimically hostile to the life of Earth. At some point thousands of years ago, a great civil war shook Yag, which is when the god Yogah (see page 344) first came to Earth as an exile. More recently, the seeds of the vampiric plant Yothga drifted down to Earth, though they grow nowhere but in hell. Some scholars speculate that Yothga was sent in search of Yogah by the kings of Yag but it seems equally likely that this cosmic plant reproduces by casting its seeds far into the void.

More information about Yag and the creatures from it can be found in the mysterious tome known as the *Book of Skelos*.



Bestiary

Enemies Bestial, human and Other

CREATURES

All the creatures listed here are presented in the following format:

SIZE AND TYPE

This entry provides information on the creature's size and its creature type, which determine many of the creature's characteristics and abilities. A creature's size and type also affect how it interacts with the rules in some ways – for an example see the Monster Slayer feat (page 133).

HIT DICE

This entry gives the number and type of Hit Dice and any bonus hit points the creature has. The creature's average hit points are included in parentheses. A creature's Hit Dice total is also its level for purposes of determining how spells affect the creature, its rate of natural healing and its maximum ranks in a skill.

INITIATIVE

This entry shows the creature's modifier to initiative rolls. A parenthetical note explains where the modifier comes from.

SPEED

This entry gives the creature's tactical speed. If the creature wears armour that reduces its speed, this fact is given along with a parenthetical note indicating the armour type; the creature's base unarmoured speed follows.

DODGE DEFENCE

This entry gives the Dodge Defence rating for the creature and includes a parenthetical mention of the modifiers contributing to it, usually Dexterity and natural dodge bonuses. Size modifiers to Base Defence are also included here. All creatures are assumed to dodge rather than parry, as the use of weapons and armour is an entirely human convention. Creatures gain natural dodge bonuses based on their Hit Dice and Reflex Saves as follows:

Good Reflex Save: Barbarian progression for dodge bonus.

Poor Reflex Save: Scholar progression for dodge bonus.

DAMAGE REDUCTION

This entry indicates the creature's typical damage reduction score. Further information in parentheses shows the source of the damage reduction and specifies whether it is due to the creature's tough skin or other natural protection, manufactured armour, some entirely different factor or a combination of several factors.

Damage Reduction And Swallowing: Some creatures have the ability to swallow their enemies whole. Such creatures normally have half their usual damage reduction from the inside – most creatures have *no* damage reduction from the inside, but creatures that typically swallow prey whole tend to have very robust digestive systems.

ATTACKS AND DAMAGE

These entries give all the creature's physical attacks and the damage they deal. If any attacks also cause some special effect other than damage (poison, disease and the like), that information is given here. Natural attacks do not usually have an armour piercing effect but when they do, that information is given after the damage and includes the creature's Strength bonus.

SPACE/REACH

The number before the slash shows the space the creature takes up when fighting. The number after the slash is the area the creature threatens in combat.

SPECIAL ATTACKS AND QUALITIES

These entries give the creature's special attacks and qualities. One special defence not covered



elsewhere by these rules is invisibility, a quality possessed by some demons and similar creatures (see page 377).

Invisibility: Invisible creatures cannot be seen but they can be heard, smelled or felt. Invisibility makes a creature immune to extra damage from sneak attacks.

A creature can generally notice the presence of an active invisible creature within 30 feet with a DC 20 Spot check. The observer gains a hunch that 'something is there' but cannot see it or target it accurately with an attack. A creature holding still is very hard to notice (DC 30). An inanimate object, an unliving creature holding still or a completely immobile creature is even harder to spot (DC 40). It is practically impossible (+20 DC) to pinpoint an invisible creature's location with a Spot check; even if a character succeeds on such a check, the invisible creature still benefits from total concealment (50% miss chance). However, a creature can use hearing to find an invisible creature. A character can make a Listen check for this purpose as a free action each round. A Listen check result at least equal to the invisible creature's Move Silently check result reveals its presence. A successful check lets a character hear an invisible creature 'over there somewhere.' A Listen check that beats the DC by 20 pinpoints the invisible creature's location.

LISTEN CHECK DCs TO DETECT INVISIBLE CREATURES

Invisible Creature Is ...	DC
In combat or speaking	0
Moving at half speed	Move Silently check result
Moving at full speed	Move Silently check result -4
Running or charging	Move Silently check result -20
Some distance away	+1 per 10 feet
Behind an obstacle (door)	+5
Behind an obstacle (stone wall)	+15

A creature can grope about to find an invisible creature. A character can make a touch attack with his hands or a weapon into two adjacent five-foot squares using a standard action. If an invisible target is in the designated area, there is a 50% miss chance on the touch attack.

If successful, the groping character deals no damage but successfully pinpoints the invisible creature's current location. If the invisible creature moves, its location, obviously, is once again unknown.

If an invisible creature strikes a character, the character struck knows the location of the creature that struck him until, of course, the invisible creature moves. The only exception is if the invisible creature has a reach greater than five feet. In this case, the struck character knows the general location of the creature but cannot pinpoint its exact location.

If a character tries to attack an invisible creature whose location he has pinpointed, he attacks normally but the invisible creature still benefits from full concealment and a 50% miss chance. A particularly large and slow creature might get a smaller miss chance.

If a character tries to attack an invisible creature whose location he has not pinpointed, have the Player choose the space where the character will direct the attack. If the invisible creature is there, conduct the attack normally. If the enemy is not there, roll the miss chance as if it were there; do not let the Player see the result and tell him that the character has missed. That way the Player does not know whether the attack missed because the enemy is not there or because the miss chance was successfully rolled.

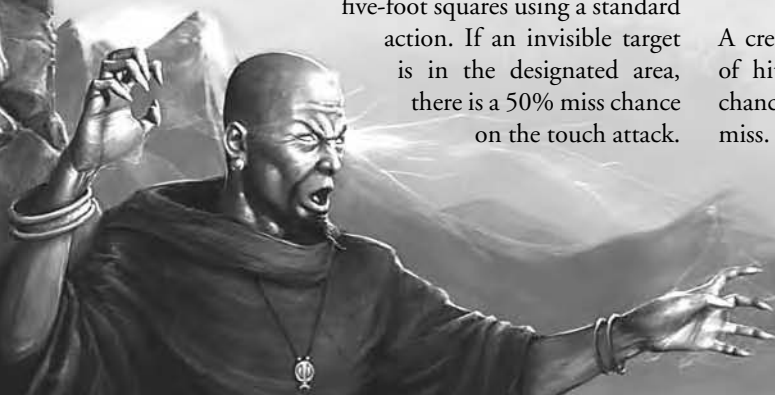
If an invisible character picks up a visible object, the object remains visible. One could coat an invisible object with flour to at least keep track of its position until the flour falls off or blows away. An invisible creature can pick up a small visible item and hide it on his person (tucked in a pocket or behind a cloak) and render it effectively invisible.

Invisible creatures leave tracks. They can be tracked normally. Footprints in sand, mud or other soft surfaces can give enemies clues to an invisible creature's location.

An invisible creature in the water displaces water, thus revealing its location. The invisible creature, however, is still hard to see and benefits from concealment.

A creature with the scent ability can detect an invisible creature as it would a visible one.

A creature with the Blind-Fight feat has a better chance of hitting an invisible creature. He may roll the miss chance twice and he misses only if both rolls indicate a miss. Alternatively, he may make one 25% miss chance



roll rather than two 50% miss chance rolls. A creature with blindsight can attack (and otherwise interact with) creatures regardless of invisibility.

Invisible creatures cannot use gaze attacks, including spells with a range of Evil Eye.

SAVES

This entry gives the creature's Fortitude, Reflex and Will saving throw modifiers.

SKILLS AND FEATS

These entries list all the creature's feats and skills by name along with each skill's score.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN

This entry describes the locales where the creature is most often found.

ORGANISATION

This line describes the kinds of groups the creature might form. A range of numbers in parentheses indicates how many combat-ready adults are in each type of group. Many groups also have a number of non-combatants; these are given as a percentage of the fighting population. Non-combatants can include young, the infirm, slaves or other individuals who are not inclined to fight. A creature's entry may include more details on non-combatants.

ADVANCEMENT

This book lists only the weakest and most common versions of each creature. The Advancement line shows how tough the creature can get, in terms of extra Hit Dice. This is not an absolute limit but exceptions are extremely rare.

HUMANS

By far the most common opponents Players will face in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* are humans. Whether warriors, sorcerers, mobs, buccaneers, police, thieves, cannibals, priests or some combination thereof, humans are the most populous and versatile race on the Earth of the Hyborian Age. They can be found from Khitai to the Baracha Isles and beyond; and wherever humans can be found, conflict is sure to follow.

This section gives new rules for certain Non-Player Character humans and lists a number of sample enemies.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTER RACE: KHAURAN

Khaurans are a Hyborian variant race and gain the usual Hyborian benefits (see page 18) except as noted in the following text. They are intended to be a Non-Player Character race as they are almost entirely unsuited for adventuring. The Khauran race profile, perhaps with minor modifications, can also be used for other races who have no martial training or inclination and who are almost invariably farmers, fishers or herders.

- ✱ +2 racial bonus to all Profession (farmer) and Handle Animal checks
- ✱ -1 racial penalty to all attack rolls. The Khaurani commoners are not merely untrained in the ways of war, they are completely unsuited to combat by virtue of their temperament. This penalty no longer applies if a Khauran ever gains a martial weapon proficiency.
- ✱ No Weapon Familiarity. Unlike other Hyborians, the Khaurani do not gain weapon familiarity with the greatsword.

Favoured Class: Commoner

Prohibited Classes: Barbarian, Borderer, Noble, Nomad, Pirate, Scholar, Soldier, Temptress, Thief

NON-PLAYER CHARACTER CLASS: COMMONER

Commoners are ordinary people, unused to adventuring or other dangers. This character class is intended for Non-Player Character use only, though some campaign types might suit all the players starting out as commoners and multi-classing from there (see Chapter 14: Campaigns).

Hit Die: d4

CLASS SKILLS

The commoner's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (any mundane) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str) and Use Rope (Dex).



THE COMMONER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	Illiteracy
2	+1	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0	
3	+1	+1	+1	+0	+1	+1	+1	
4	+2	+2	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	
5	+2	+2	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	Skill Focus
6	+3	+3	+3	+1	+2	+2	+2	
7	+3	+3	+3	+1	+2	+2	+2	
8	+4	+4	+4	+2	+2	+2	+2	
9	+4	+4	+4	+2	+3	+3	+3	
10	+5	+5	+5	+2	+3	+3	+3	Skill Focus

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) × 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: The commoner is proficient with one simple weapon. He is not proficient with any other weapons, nor is he proficient with any type of armour or shields.

Illiteracy: Commoners begin play without the ability to read and write, unless they choose to spend two skill points to become literate.

Skill Focus: At 5th and 10th levels, the commoner gains Skill Focus (any commoner class skill) as a bonus feat.

Hit Points: 11 (2 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will –1

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Hunting spear +5 (1d8+2, AP 3)

Ranged: Shemite bow +2 (1d10, ×3 critical, AP 4)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3

Special Attacks: Ferocious attack, to sail a road of blood and slaughter

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Southern Islander qualities, seamanship +1, pirate code (Black Coast drums)

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Shemite bow), Weapon Focus (hunting spear)

Skills: Balance +6, Knowledge (local) +2, Perform (dance) +6, Profession (sailor) +4, Survival +3, Swim +5, Use Rope +5

Possessions: Hunting spear, Shemite bow, 20 arrows, large hide shield, feathered head-dress, loincloth

Advancement: By character class (probably pirate or barbarian)

Variants: Some corsairs will be of lower or higher level though few will be higher than 3rd level, as Bêlit regards her crews as disposable, knowing that her infamy will easily let her recruit more. At least one per ship is likely to be a scholar or a multiclassed barbarian/scholar with plenty of ranks in Heal. Some corsairs will have alternate armaments – clubs are common for lower level corsairs, as are hunting spears for those who have not been armed with Bêlit's large but limited quantities of stolen Shemite bows. High-strength corsairs and leaders may have war

BÊLIT'S BLACK CORSAIRS

Medium Humanoid (2nd level Southern Islander pirate)

Climate/Terrain: Any sea

Organisation: Raiding party (6–10 plus one leader of 4th–7th level) or shipload (30–80 plus two lieutenants of 4th–7th level and one leader of 5th–10th level)

Initiative: +4

Senses: Listen –1, Spot –1

Languages: South Island

Dodge Defence: 13;

17 vs. ranged

Parry Defence: 17

spears or war clubs and disdain shields. Black corsairs from fleets other than Bêlit's may not have Shemite bows at all, though she trained so many corsairs while she was active that several ships are probably now captained by Shemite bow experts who may have passed on that knowledge to their crews.

SAVAGE CANNIBAL

Medium Humanoid (3rd level Southern Black Kingdoms barbarian)

Climate/Terrain: Temperate or warm forest

Organisation: Hunting party (6–10 plus one leader of 2nd–3rd level), war party (20–30 plus one leader of 4th–5th level) or village (200+, with assorted lieutenants and leaders)

Initiative: +3

Senses: Listen +0, Spot +6

Languages: Any one

Dodge Defence: 12; 16 vs. ranged

Parry Defence: 17

Hit Points: 22 (3 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Hunting spear +6 (1d8+2, AP 3)

Ranged: Thrown hunting spear +4 (1d8+2, AP 3)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3

Special Attacks: Versatility, crimson mist

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 7

Special Qualities: Southern Black Kingdoms qualities, trap sense +1, bite sword, illiterate, fearless

Feats: Endurance, Fighting-Madness, Power Attack, Toughness, Track

Skills: Move Silently +4, Knowledge (local) +1, Perform (dance) +0, Intimidate +4, Survival +6, Spot +6

Possessions: Large shield, two hunting spears, club

Advancement: By character class (probably barbarian)

Variants: The feared Darfari cannibals of the northern Black Kingdoms and Zamboula lack the +1 racial bonus to dodge defence and do not use shields, preferring instead mighty war clubs (2d6+4 damage, AP 6). They commonly take Weapon Focus (war club) instead of Fighting-Madness.

PICTS ON THE WARPATH

Medium Humanoid (1st level Pictish barbarian)

Climate/Terrain: Temperate or warm forest

Organisation: Raiding party (6–10 plus one leader of 2nd–3rd level), war party (20–30 plus one leader of 4th–5th level) or village (200+, with assorted lieutenants and leaders)

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen –1, Spot +1

Languages: Pictish

Dodge Defence: 13

Parry Defence: 11

Hit Points: 6 (1 HD);

DR –

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will –1

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Club +2 (1d8+1, AP 2)

Ranged:

Hunting bow +4 (1d8, AP 1)

Rapid Shot +2/+2

Base Atk +1;

Grp +2

Special Attacks:

Versatility (–2 penalty)

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 17,

Con 13, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 8

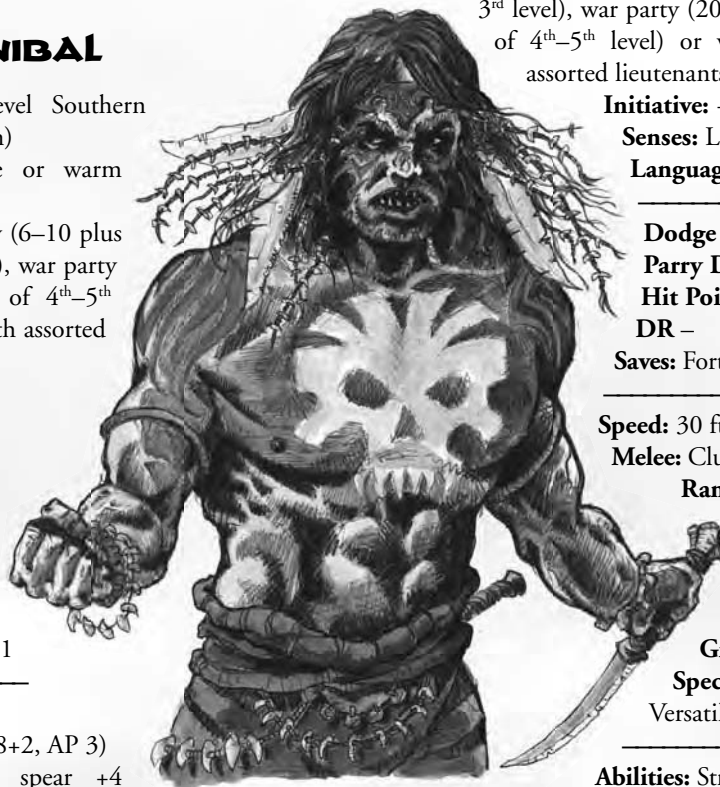
Special Qualities: Pict qualities, illiterate, fearless

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Track

Skills: Jump +6, Hide +6, Knowledge (local – tribal lands) +1, Listen –1, Move Silently +6, Spot +1, Survival +1 and Tumble +8

Possessions: Club, hunting bow, 12 arrows, primitive hatchet, appropriate hair ornaments, scary-looking warpaint

Advancement: By character class (probably barbarian)





THIEVES IN THE HOUSE

Medium Humanoid (2nd level Zamorian thief)

Climate/Terrain: Any urban

Organisation: Group (2–5), gang (6–10 plus one leader of 4th–7th level), or guild (30–80 plus two lieutenants of 4th–7th level and one leader of 5th–10th level)

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: Zamorian

Dodge Defence: 14 (including Light-Footed)

Parry Defence: 10

Hit Points: 11 (2 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +0

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Dagger +3 finesse (1d4–1, 19–20/x2 critical)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack Style (dagger), Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8 (+2d6/2d8 with Light-Footed)

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11

Special Qualities: Zamorian qualities, Trapfinding

Feats: Eyes of the Cat, Light-Footed, Stealthy

Skills: Balance +5, Bluff +3, Climb +6, Escape Artist +5, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +3, Hide +8 (+9 with Light Footed), Intimidate +2, Jump +2, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +8 (+9 with Light-Footed), Open Lock +6, Search +2, Sleight of Hand +4, Spot +4, Tumble +5, Use Rope +4

Possessions: Dagger, thieves' tools, dark cloak, stolen goods

Advancement: By character class (probably thief)

Variants: The thieves described above are Zamorian burglars. They are at home on the dark streets and alleyways of that spider-haunted city. They are among the best of thieves – the criminals of other lands are mere thugs by comparison. While the Zamorians described above use cat-burglary to enter the homes of rich nobles and merchants, other thieves might use disguises or just brute force to steal valuable items.

TURANIAN LIGHT CAVALRY

Medium Humanoid (2nd level Turanian soldier)

Climate/Terrain: Any plains, desert or hills

Organisation: Raiding party (6–10 plus one leader of 3rd–4th level), Shah entourage (20–30 plus one leader of 4th–7th level) or horde (1000+, with assorted lieutenants and leaders)

Initiative: +2

Senses: Listen –1, Spot +3

Languages: Hyrkanian

Dodge Defence: 13; 16 vs. ranged

Parry Defence: 15

Hit Points: 13 (2 HD); **DR** 7

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will –1



Speed: 25 ft.

Melee: Light lance +3 melee (1d10+1, x3 critical, AP 3)

Ranged: Hyrkanian bow +5 ranged (1d10, 19–20/x2 critical, AP 3)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9

Special Qualities: Turanian qualities

Feats: Far Shot, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery

Skills: Craft (bowyer) +3, Knowledge (local) +2, Intimidate +4, Ride +6, Spot +3, Survival +1

Possessions: Turanian desert warhorse, light lance, targe, mail hauberk, steel cap, scimitar, dagger

Advancement: By character class (probably nomad or soldier)

Variants: Hyrkanian light cavalry are similar but will be 2nd level nomads or 1st level nomads/1st level soldiers. They may only have mail corselets instead of hauberks.

HUMBLE PEASANT

Medium Humanoid (1st level Hyborian commoner)

Climate/Terrain: Any rural

Organisation: Single, family (2–5) or village (50–200)

Initiative: –1

Senses: Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages: Any one

Dodge Defence: 9

Parry Defence: 10

Hit Points: 3 (1 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +1, Ref –1, Will +0

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Improvised Weapon –4 (1d4 or 1d6, AP –)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +0

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Illiterate

Feats: Skill Focus (Craft or Handle Animal), Skill Focus (Profession)

Skills: Craft (any) +7 or Handle Animal, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nature) +4, Perform (any) +2, Profession (any) +7, Survival +2

Possessions: Simple clothing, appropriate tools for trade or farm

Advancement: By character class (any)

Variants: Poor peasants like this are the backbone of the Hyborian world. They toil on farms or tend herds on the

hillsides and meadows. Much of what they make is taken by their feudal lords or by bandits; the winter winds are cold and biting and the heat of summer is oppressive. Disease and famine run rife – but still, these hardy people persevere.

CANNY MERCHANT

Medium Humanoid (3rd level Hyborian commoner / 1st level scholar)

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organisation: Generally accompanied by 1d3 hireswords

Initiative: +1

Senses: Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages: Any two

Dodge Defence: 11

Parry Defence: 11

Hit Points: 10 (4 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Dagger +1 (1d4, 19–20/x2 critical, AP –)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 14

Special Qualities: Hyborian qualities, knowledge is power, background (independent)

Feats: Negotiator, Knowledgeable, Diligent, Persuasive

Skills: Appraise +10, Bluff +9, Decipher Script +3, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (rumours) +8, Sense Motive +10

Possessions: Dagger, fine clothing, 100+10d6 sp worth of trade goods

Advancement: By character class (probably scholar)

Variants: This is an especially clever merchant, one whose wealth and keen intellect enable him to study various books and ancient scrolls. He might even master a few simple sorcerous tricks (replace Negotiator or Diligent with Dabbler). A more mundane merchant would keep to the commoner class, replacing Diligent and dropping two ranks from Sense Motive, Diplomacy and Bluff. The rare merchant who masters sorcery would replace his Knowledge (rumours) with Knowledge (arcana) and take the Hypnotism sorcery style. A dishonest merchant, meanwhile, might take the thief class instead of the scholar class.



SORCERER

Medium Humanoid (4th level Hyborian scholar)

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organisation: Single, temple (2–5) or cult (10–20, plus cult leader), usually accompanied by hirelings, bodyguards, summoned horrors and other minions

Initiative: +1

Senses: See below

Languages: Any three

Dodge Defence: 11

Parry Defence: 10

Hit Points: 14 (4 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Dagger +3 finesse (1d4–1, 19–20/×2 critical)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 11

Special Qualities: Hyborian qualities, knowledge is power, background (see below)

Feats: See below

Skills: See below

Possessions: Robes, dagger or staff

Advancement: By character class (probably scholar)

Variants: This is a sorcerer who is just beginning to come into his power. Depending on his background and style of sorcery, the character might have several very different sets of skills and feats.

WISE PRIEST

Not every priest in a temple is going to be a master of the arcane arts but there are gods whose mysteries contain strange and potent rituals and some priests delve into magic as part of their own private studies. The sorcery styles chosen by this priest indicate that he is a follower of Asura or Ibis.

Background: Lay Priest

Feats: Diligent, Investigator, Knowledgeable, Priest

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +5, Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +7, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +2, Heal +8, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (rumours) +9, Knowledge (history) +9, Profession (priest) +9, Perform (ritual) +7, Search +9, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +4

Spells: Counterspells – *warding, ward by will, desperate ward*; Divination – *astrological prediction, psychometry*.

DEMONOLOGIST

This foolish sorcerer has already delved too deeply into the black arts and sold his soul to an entity from the Outer Darkness. He has a great knowledge of arcane matters but lacks the wisdom to understand the higher secrets of the cosmos.

Background: Pact

Feats: Knowledgeable, Ritual Sacrifice, Summoner

Skills: Bluff +7, Craft (alchemy) +9, Diplomacy +2, Decipher Script +7, Heal +8, Listen +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (history) +10, Move Silently +5, Perform (ritual) +7, Search +7, Sleight of Hand +7

Spells: Summonings – *demonic pact, master, aid me!, channel demon*; Necromancy – *raise corpse, chill of the grave*; Divination – *astrological prediction*

CONJURER

This sorcerer is more suited to adventuring than most; with a shield to protect him while he throws spells at his foes, he delves into lost tombs in search of ancient treasures.

Background: Independent

Feats: Shield Proficiency, Combat Expertise, Hexer

Skills: Bluff +5, Concentration +7, Decipher Script +7, Gather Information +5, Heal +8, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +7, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (rumours) +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Search +7, Sleight of Hand +7

Spells: Prestidigitation – *conjuring, blast wave, burst barrier, telekinesis*; Nature Magic – *summon beast*; Curses – *lesser ill-fortune*



DANCING GIRL

Medium Humanoid (2nd level Zingaran temptress)

Climate/Terrain: Any civilised

Organisation: Single or orgy (3–12)

Initiative: +4

Senses: Listen +4, Spot +0

Languages: Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 15

Parry Defence: 10

Hit Points: 7 (2 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +3

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Stiletto +2 finesse (1d4, ×4 critical)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 16

Special Qualities: Zingaran qualities, comeliness, savoir-faire, seductive art

Feats: Light-Footed, Dodge

Skills: Bluff +7, Balance +3, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +9, Gather Information +9, Heal +4, Hide +5, Listen +4, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +4, Move Silently +5, Perform (dance) +9, Sense Motive +4, Use Rope +3

Possessions: Wisp of silk, bodice, stiletto

Advancement: By character class (probably temptress)

Variants: This temptress might be some noble's consort, a dancer in an inn or an escaped slave-girl. She is surprisingly deadly, thanks to her Zingaran heritage and the Light-Footed feat. For temptresses from other backgrounds, swap Light-Footed with Stealthy, Persuasive or another feat that plays to their racial strengths.

CITY GUARD

Medium Humanoid (2nd level Hyborian soldier)

Climate/Terrain: Any urban

Organisation: Single, pair or patrol (2–5)

Initiative: +0

Senses: Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages: Any one

Dodge Defence: 11; 14 vs. ranged

Parry Defence: 16

Hit Points: 13 (2 HD); **DR** 3

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Shortsword +4 (1d8+1, 19–20/×2 critical, AP 2)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Hyborian qualities

Feats: Investigator, Weapon Focus (shortsword), Parry

Skills: Gather Information +6, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (warfare) +2, Search +6, Sense Motive +4

Possessions: Simple clothing, quilted jerkin, shortsword, cosh, targe, dagger

Advancement: By character class (any)

Variants: A more aggressive guard would swap his Investigate feat for Weapon Specialisation (shortsword) or Power Attack. Poorer guards might carry a staff or cudgel instead of a sword. At night, one guard in a group would carry a torch instead of a shield. Guards of this sort are generally only encountered in rich, civilised cities and then only in wealthier neighbourhoods.

BANDIT

Medium Humanoid (2nd level Hyborian borderer)

Climate/Terrain: Any rural

Organisation: Ambush (2–5) or gang (3–18, plus one 5th level leader)

Initiative: +4

Senses: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Any one

Dodge Defence: 12

Parry Defence: 12

Hit Points: 11 (2 HD); **DR** 4

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Battleaxe +3 melee (1d10+1, ×3 critical, AP 5) and hand axe +3 melee (1d8, ×3 critical, AP 2)

Ranged: Hunting bow +3 ranged (1d8, AP 1)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Special Attacks: Two-Weapon Combat

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Hyborian qualities, favoured terrain (local)

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Stealthy, Track, Two-Weapon Defence

Skills: Handle Animal +3, Hide +5, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Ride +5, Spot +3, Survival +3



Possessions: Simple clothing, quilted jerkin, shortsword, cosh, targe, dagger

Advancement: By character class (any)

Variants: These bandits are woodwise; they often ambush travellers in the dense forests on the edges of civilisation. More aggressive raiders might take Cleave and Improved Initiative or Rapid Shot and Point-Blank Shot.

SELLSWORD

Medium Humanoid (2nd level Hyborian soldier / 2nd level borderer)

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organisation: Single, band (2–5) or mercenary company (5–100)

Initiative: +3

Senses: Listen +1, Spot +5

Languages: Any one

Dodge Defence: 13

Parry Defence: 15

Hit Points: 26 (4 HD); DR 5

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +0

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Broadsword +6 melee (1d10+2, 19–20/×2 critical, AP 6) and shortsword +6 melee (1d8+1, 19–20/×2 critical, AP 2)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6

Special Attacks: Two-Weapon Combat

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Hyborian qualities, favoured terrain (local)

Feats: Cleave, mounted combat, parry, power attack, spirited charge, track, two-weapon defence, two-weapon combat

Skills: Heal +5, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (geography) +2, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (warfare) +6, Ride +4, Spot +5, Survival +5

Possessions: Broadsword, shortsword, poniard, mail shirt, horse

Advancement: By character class (any)

Variants: This is a dangerous mercenary, a killer for hire. Switching feats allows for a variety of approaches to combat.

One could be a gladiator, an assassin (ranged combat style,

taking Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Ranged Finesse and Eyes of the Cat as well as the bonus Rapid Shot feat) or a duellist (Parry, Power Attack, Improved Sunder and Improved Initiative).

ANIMALS

A wide variety of animals can be found in the Hyborian Age, from the common bears, boars and stags of the forest to the gargantuan serpents that are sometimes discovered deep beneath the earth or in the darkest temples of Stygia.

Most animals have the following two special qualities:

Scent: The animal can detect opponents by smell, generally to a range of 30 feet. If the opponent is upwind, the range is 60 feet. If the opponent is downwind, the range is 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk, can be detected at three times these ranges. The animal detects another creature's presence but not its specific location. Noting the direction of the scent is a standard action. If the animal moves within five feet of the scent's source, it can pinpoint that source. The creature can also follow tracks by smell, making a Survival check to find or follow a track. The typical DC for a fresh trail is 10. The DC increases or decreases depending on how strong the quarry's odour is, the number of creatures and the age of the trail. For each hour that the trail is cold, the DC increases by two. The ability otherwise follows the rules for the Track feat. Animals tracking by scent ignore the effects of surface conditions and poor visibility. Animals can identify familiar odours just as humans do familiar sights. Water, particularly running water, ruins a trail. The presence of a powerful false odour also spoils the ability to properly detect or identify creatures and the base Survival DC to track becomes 20 rather than 10.

Low-light Vision: Animals can see outdoors on a moonlit night as well as they can during the day.

APE

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Warm forests

Organisation: Solitary, pair or gang (3–5)

Initiative: +6

Senses: Listen +6, Spot +6, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 14

Hit Points: 29 (4 HD); DR 3

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2



FLIGHT AND MANOEUVRABILITY

Many animals can fly, and three-dimensional movement increases complexity somewhat. Most flying creatures have to slow down at least a little to make a turn, and many are limited to fairly wide turns and must maintain a minimum forward speed. Each flying creature has a maneuverability, as shown on the Manoeuvrability Table. The entries on the table are defined below.

Minimum Forward Speed: If a flying creature fails to maintain its minimum forward speed, it must land at the end of its movement. If it is too high above the ground to land, it falls straight down, descending 150 feet in the first round of falling. If this distance brings it to the ground, it takes falling damage. If the fall doesn't bring the creature to the ground, it must spend its next turn recovering from the stall. It must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save to recover. Otherwise it falls another 300 feet. If it hits the ground, it takes falling damage. Otherwise, it has another chance to recover on its next turn.

Hover: The ability to stay in one place while airborne.

Move Backward: The ability to move backward without turning around.

Reverse: A creature with good maneuverability uses up 5 feet of its speed to start flying backward.

Turn: How much the creature can turn after covering the stated distance.

Turn in Place: A creature with good or average maneuverability can use some of its speed to turn in place.

Maximum Turn: How much the creature can turn in any one space.

Up Angle: The angle at which the creature can climb.

Up Speed: How fast the creature can climb.

Down Angle: The angle at which the creature can descend.

Down Speed: A flying creature can fly down at twice its normal flying speed.

Between Down and Up: An average, poor, or clumsy flier must fly level for a minimum distance after descending and before climbing. Any flier can begin descending after a climb without an intervening distance of level flight.

MANOEUVRABILITY TABLE

	Manoeuvrability				
	Perfect	Good	Average	Poor	Clumsy
Minimum forward speed	None	None	Half	Half	Half
Hover	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Move backward	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Reverse	Free	-5 ft.	No	No	No
Turn	Any	90°/5 ft.	45°/5 ft.	45°/5 ft.	45°/10 ft.
Turn in place	Any	+90°/-5 ft.	+45°/-5 ft.	No	No
Maximum turn	Any	Any	90°	45°	45°
Up angle	Any	Any	60°	45°	45°
Up speed	Full	Half	Half	Half	Half
Down angle	Any	Any	Any	45°	45°
Down speed	Double	Double	Double	Double	Double
Between down and up	0	0	5 ft.	10 ft.	20 ft.



Speed: 30 ft., climb 30 ft.
Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 10 ft.
Melee: 2 claws +7 (1d6+5, AP -) and bite +2 (1d6+2, AP -)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +13

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7
Feats: Alertness, Toughness
Skills: Climb +14, Listen +6, Spot +6
Advancement: 5–8 HD (Large)

Apes are omnivorous, territorial and aggressive. Shemites believe that evil men are reincarnated in the bodies of apes and torment the creatures whenever they can.

COMBAT

Apes typically try to wrap their victim in a crushing grip and gnaw on them until they die.

Skills: Apes have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

BADGER

Small Animal
Climate/Terrain: Temperate forest, hill, plains and underground
Organisation: Solitary or set (2–5)
Initiative: +5
Senses: Listen +4, Spot +4, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 14
Hit Points: 29 (4 HD); **DR** 3
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2

Speed: 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.
Melee: 2 claws +4 finesse (1d3) and bite -1 finesse (1d4)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** -4
Special Attacks: Rage

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
Feats: Track
Skills: Escape Artist +7, Listen +4, Spot +4
Advancement: 2 HD (Small)

Badgers are approximately two-and-a-half feet long and legendarily dangerous for their size.

COMBAT

Badgers are feared in combat for their rages, which they fly into whenever injured.

Rage: A badger that takes damage in combat flies into a berserk rage the following round, clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution and -2 Defence. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily.

BEAR

Large Animal
Climate/Terrain: Any forest, hill, mountains and underground
Organisation: Solitary or pair
Initiative: +6
Senses: Listen +4, Spot +7, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 14
Hit Points: 51 (6 HD); **DR** 5
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3

Speed: 40 ft.
Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 10 ft.
Melee: 2 claws +11 (1d10+8, AP 8) and bite +6 (2d8+4, AP 9)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +16
Special Attacks: Improved grab, bear hug

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
Feats: Endurance, Run, Track
Skills: Listen +4, Spot +7, Swim +14
Advancement: 7–10 HD (Large)

Bears are fairly common throughout the wilderness areas of the north. They can even be found wandering into settlements to try to steal food.

COMBAT

Bears can sometimes be frightened off by people making plenty of noise and showing no fear. This will cause the bear to make a Will saving throw (DC = number of people making noise, maximum DC 15) or flee if it can. A bear that is attacked while fleeing will be more angry than afraid and will fight back with all its strength.

Bear Hug: A bear that gets a hold can make a bear hug attack with a successful grapple check. The bear hug attack deals 3d10+12 damage to the target.





Improved Grab: To use this ability, a bear must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

BOAR

Medium Animal

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm forest

Organisation: Solitary, or sounder (20–40 females and 100–200 non-combatant young)

Initiative: +3

Senses: Listen +4, Spot +7, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 11

Hit Points: 25 (3 HD); DR 6

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2

Speed: 40 ft.

Melee: Gore +4 (1d10+3, AP 5)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 4

Feats: Alertness, Toughness

Skills: Listen +7, Spot +5

Advancement: 4–5 HD (Medium)

Boars are a common enough sight in the forests of the Hyborian kingdoms, the Pictish wilderness and Zingara. They are evil-tempered beasts, apt to attack travellers without warning or mercy. This savagery means that they are generally avoided rather than fought, though they are sometimes hunted by nobles.

COMBAT

Ferocity: A boar is such a tenacious combatant that it continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.

CAMEL

Camels are known for their ability to travel long distances without food or water. The only camels common in the Hyborian Age are the single-humped dromedaries.

Camels have a reputation for viciousness, stupidity and extreme stubbornness. All these stereotypes have an element of truth to them, though a well-trained camel with a known rider is unlikely to show any of the above qualities. Even a camel's apparent stupidity is more likely a result of laziness or stubbornness than an innate characteristic. A well-trained camel can make an effective and versatile mount, though it is only really in the desert that it enjoys significant advantages over the horse.

CAMEL MOVEMENT

Though the serious horse-lover may not like to hear it, camels are quite significantly faster than horses in overland movement through the desert. The main advantage to horses is their high galloping speed over short distances which the camel cannot match; however, a fit riding camel with an experienced rider can manage up to 75 miles a day over desert terrain, a good deal more than any horse. This is partly because a camel can travel for longer periods through the day without suffering from the fatigue and overheating that can kill a horse and partly because a well-trained rider will make use of the camel's ability to run at high speeds for much of each day.

If a camel is carrying at most a light load, up to half of its daily movement can be hustling so long as the camel has a chance to 'rest' by spending an hour moving at normal speed after each hour of hustling. Hustling more often than this causes damage to the camel as usual for a mounted animal. A camel carrying a medium or heavy load may only hustle for at most one hour per day without damage, like most other creatures.

CAMEL FOOD AND WATER

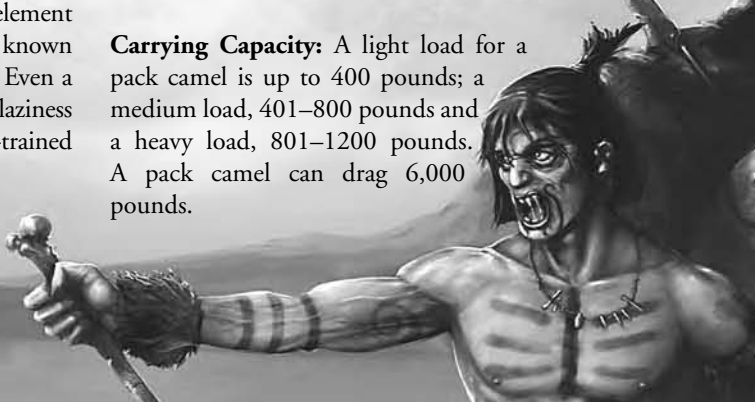
The other advantage a camel has over a horse is its ability to go without water and with minimal food – when it does find an oasis or other water source, it can drink far faster than a horse, too, literally sucking in gallons of water in a matter of a few seconds.

Over time, a camel's food requirements are very similar to a horse's but the camel can go without any food or water for up to three days without any risk of injury or even degradation of performance. However, at the end of the three days, it will need the full three days' worth of food and water it previously missed out on.

PACK CAMEL

Pack camels are used as beasts of burden and are also kept for their milk and meat. They can walk for up to 10 hours per day without becoming fatigued or injured. Furthermore, pack camel movement is not reduced for carrying medium or heavy loads.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a pack camel is up to 400 pounds; a medium load, 401–800 pounds and a heavy load, 801–1200 pounds. A pack camel can drag 6,000 pounds.





	Pack Camel	Racing Camel	Riding Camel
	Large Animal	Large Animal	Large Animal
Hit Dice:	3d8+6 (19 hp)	3d8+6 (19 hp)	3d8+6 (19 hp)
Initiative:	+6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex)	+6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex)	+6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex)
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares)	50 ft. (10 squares)	50 ft. (10 squares)
Dodge Defence:	14 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)	14 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)	14 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)
Damage Reduction:	1	1	1
Base Attack/Grapple:	+2/+10	+2/+10	+2/+10
Attack:	Bite +1 melee (1d4+2, AP –)	Bite –1 melee (1d4+1, AP –)	Bite +0 melee (1d4+2, AP –)
Full Attack:	Bite +1 melee (1d4+2, AP –)	Bite –1 melee (1d4+1, AP –)	Bite +0 melee (1d4+2, AP –)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	—	—	—
Special Qualities:	Low-light vision, scent	Low-light vision, scent	Low-light vision, scent
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1	Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1	Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 4	Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 4	Str 18, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 4
Skills:	Listen +5, Spot +5	Listen +5, Spot +5	Listen +5, Spot +5
Feats:	Alertness, Endurance	Alertness, Endurance, Run	Alertness, Endurance
Environment:	Warm deserts	Warm deserts	Warm deserts
Organisation:	Domesticated or herd (6–30)	Domesticated or herd (6–30)	Domesticated or herd (6–30)
Advancement:	—	—	—

RACING CAMEL

Racing camels are specially bred for fast movement. Though they do not have the staying power of riding and pack camels, they are very fast over short to medium distances and are often used by messengers or raiders.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a racing camel is up to 200 pounds; a medium load, 201–400 pounds; and a heavy load, 401–600 pounds. A racing camel can drag 3,000 pounds. Racing camels gain Run as a bonus feat.

RIDING CAMEL

Riding camels are used as everyday mounts in the desert and are also excellent for long treks. They can walk for up to 10 hours per day without becoming fatigued or injured.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a riding camel is up to 300 pounds; a medium load, 301–600 pounds; and a heavy load, 601–900 pounds. A riding camel can drag 4,500 pounds.

COMBAT

A camel's bite is treated as a secondary attack and adds only half the camel's Strength bonus to the damage roll.

CATTLE

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Any land

Organisation: Herd (12–28)

Initiative: +2

Senses: Listen +10, Spot +5, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 11

Hit Points: 36 (4 HD); **DR** 2

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2

Speed: 40 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 5 ft.

Melee: Gore +6 (1d8+4, AP 5) or bite +3 finesse (1d3+4)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +11

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 3

Feats: Alertness, Endurance

Skills: Listen +10, Spot +5

Advancement: 5–8 HD (Large)

Cattle are large creatures of stocky build. Most cows and bulls are over 10 feet long and can stand

up to six feet tall at the shoulder. An average cow or bull weighs 2,000 to 3,000 pounds. The statistics given here can be used for semi-domesticated cattle, as well as the wild aurochs and yaks that still graze in the open plains and steppes of Hyrkania. Adult aurochs and yaks generally have at least 5 Hit Dice but are otherwise treated as cattle.

All cattle are excellent sources of meat, milk and leather.

COMBAT

While both cows and bulls can be provoked to attack, in several varieties of cattle only the bulls have horns. A bull's horns can grow up to 18 inches in length.

Charging Gore: Cattle with horns deal double gore damage on a successful charge.

Stampede: If panicked or frightened, cows and bulls will first form a herd and then try to outrun any creatures attempting to provoke or surround them. If pressured the entire herd will turn on opponents and charge at them, trampling anything that stands in their way. Any creatures caught in a stampede that are the same size or smaller than the charging animals take 1d12 hit points of damage for each head of cattle in the herd. A successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15) halves the damage.

Depending on the sex and specific variety of cattle, the gore attack may not be present as the creature may not have horns.

DEER

Medium Animal

Climate/Terrain: Any cold or temperate land, or warm plains

Organisation: Herd (4–24)

Initiative: +6

Senses: Listen +7, Spot +5, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 14

Hit Points: 11 (2 HD); DR 1

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +0

Speed: 50 ft.

Melee: Butt +3 (1d8+2 or 1d4+2, AP –)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 4

Feats: Run

Skills: Listen +7, Spot +5

Advancement: 3–4 HD (Medium)

Deer are fast, well-muscled hoofed animals typically five to seven feet long and approximately 150 to 300 lbs. They usually avoid human contact where possible, though they will fight if cornered. An aggressive male may fight with little provocation, particularly during the autumn rutting season. Most of the time deer will be found in single-sex herds, though during autumn they will be in larger mixed-sex groups, double the size of the herd mentioned above. Deer can be found in one form or another almost anywhere within their climate/terrain, since these game statistics can also be used to represent the gazelles, antelope and similar fast-moving horned animals of Vendhya and Kush.

These statistics are for the typical red deer. In colder lands, reindeer and elk (see separate entry) predominate. Reindeer are a little larger than red deer (3 HD, Advancement 4–5 HD) and both males and females have antlers.

COMBAT

While all deer can be provoked to attack, in most varieties of deer only the stags have horns. A stag's antlers can span up to four feet. They are shed every winter and regrow in the spring.

Deer can always make a butt attack, whether or not they have antlers – the lower damage figure is for a butt from a non-antlered deer. Damage is bludgeoning and piercing in the case of antlered deer or bludgeoning only for non-antlered deer.

DOG

Small Animal

Climate/Terrain: Temperate plains

Organisation: Solitary, pair (jackals only), or pack (5–12)

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +5, Spot +5, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 14

Hit Points: 6 (1 HD); DR 2

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1

Speed: 40 ft.

Melee: Bite +4 finesse (1d4+1)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** –3

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6



Feats: Alertness, Track
Skills: Jump +7, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +1
Advancement: —

The statistics presented here describe a fairly small dog (between 20 and 50 pounds). They also can be used for small wild canines such as jackals and Kushite wild dogs.

COMBAT

Dogs generally hunt in packs, chasing and exhausting prey until they can drag it down. Jackals are more commonly found in pairs.

Skills: Dogs have a +4 racial bonus on Jump checks.

Dogs have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

EAGLE

Small Animal
Climate/Terrain: Temperate mountains
Organisation: Solitary, pair, or eyrie (5–12)
Initiative: +4
Senses: Listen +4, Spot +16, low-light vision

Dodge Defence: 13
Hit Points: 5 (1 HD); **DR** 1
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2

Speed: 10 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)
Melee: 2 talons +3 finesse (1d4) and bite –2 finesse (1d4)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** –4

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6
Feats: Alertness
Skills: Listen +4, Spot +16
Advancement: 2–3 HD (Medium)

Eagles inhabit nearly every kind of terrain although they prefer high, secluded nesting spots. These statistics can also be used to represent nearly any kind of large predatory bird.

COMBAT

Although not prone to attacking targets too large for them to eat, some sorcerers may have magical methods of compelling eagles to fight for them.

Skills: Eagles have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks.

ELK

Large Animal
Climate/Terrain: Any cold land
Organisation: Herd (4–24)
Initiative: +6
Senses: Listen +9, Spot +7, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 11
Hit Points: 30 (4 HD); **DR** 3
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +1

Speed: 50 ft.
Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 5 ft.
Melee: Butt +7 (1d10+5 or 1d6+5, AP –)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +12

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 4
Feats: Alertness, Endurance
Skills: Listen +9, Spot +7
Advancement: 5–7 HD (Large)

An elk is a large variety of deer. It is between eight and 11 ft. long and weighs approximately 1,100 to 1,500 pounds. Like deer elk prefer to avoid rather than fight humans but they are confident enough of their own sheer power that they can be a little more aggressive than other deer – again, particularly in rutting season. Elk can be found in Nordheim, Hyperborea and northerly lands to the East.

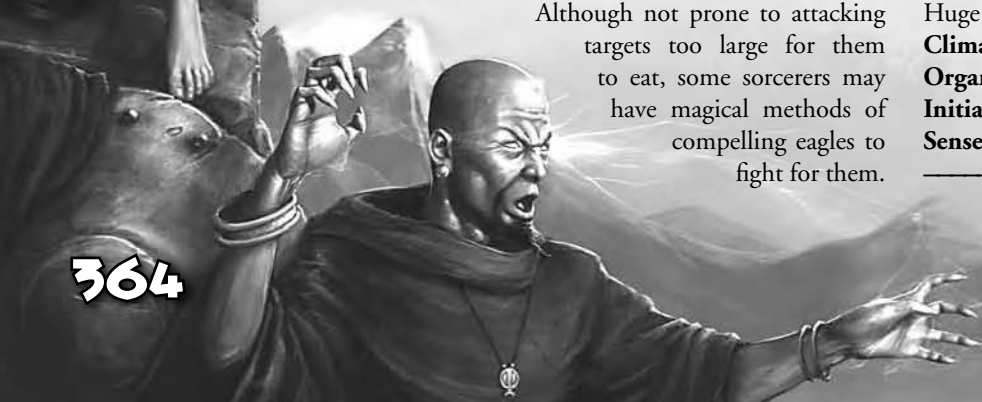
COMBAT

Only the elk stags have horns. An elk stag's antlers can span up to seven feet. They are shed every winter, re-growing in the spring.

Elks can always make a butt attack, whether or not they have antlers – the lower damage figure is for a butt from a non-antlered elk. Damage is bludgeoning and piercing in the case of antlered elks, or bludgeoning only for non-antlered elks.

ELEPHANT

Huge Animal
Climate/Terrain: Warm plains
Organisation: Solitary or herd (6–30)
Initiative: +7
Senses: Listen +12, Spot +10, low-light vision, scent



Dodge Defence: 12
Hit Points: 104 (11 HD); **DR** 7
Saves: Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +6

Speed: 40 ft.
Space: 15 ft.; **Reach:** 10 ft.
Melee: Slam +16 (2d6+10, AP -) and 2 stamps +11 (2d6+5, AP -); or gore +16 (2d8+15, AP 10)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +26
Special Attacks: Trample

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 7
Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Listen)
Skills: Listen +12, Spot +10
Advancement: 12–22 HD (Huge)

Elephants are unpredictable creatures but are nevertheless sometimes used as mounts or beasts of burden. These statistics can also represent prehistoric creatures such as mammoths and mastodons.

COMBAT

Elephants tend to charge at threatening creatures.

Trample: An elephant that makes a successful Overrun attack (see page 209) may make a single free stamp attack against any opponent it knocks over.

GIANT EAGLE

Large Animal
Climate/Terrain: Temperate mountains
Organisation: Solitary, pair, or eyrie (5–12)
Initiative: +7
Senses: Listen +6, Spot +15, low-light vision

Dodge Defence: 15
Hit Points: 22 (4 HD); **DR** 3
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +3

Speed: 10 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)
Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 5 ft.
Melee: 2 claws +7 (1d8+4, AP -) and bite +2 (1d10+2, AP 5)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +11

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 10
Special Qualities: Evasion
Feats: Alertness, Flyby Attack
Skills: Listen +6, Spot +15, Survival +3
Advancement: 5–8 HD (Large); 9–12 HD (Huge)

A typical giant eagle stands about 10 feet tall, has a wingspan of up to 20 feet and resembles its smaller cousins in nearly every way except size. It weighs about 500 pounds. Giant eagles are extremely scarce during Conan's time but sorcerers often shapeshift into them. Giant vultures are another favourite shapeshifting option for certain types of sorcerer (often Oriental Magic practitioners) and should be treated as giant eagles.

COMBAT

A giant eagle typically attacks from a great height, diving earthward at tremendous speed. When it cannot dive, it uses its powerful talons and slashing beak to strike at its target's head and eyes. A solitary giant eagle typically hunts or patrols in the vicinity of its nest and generally ignores creatures that do not appear threatening. A mated pair attacks in concert, making repeated diving attacks to drive away intruders and fights to the death to defend their nest or hatchlings.

Evasion: With a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a giant eagle takes no damage.

Skills: Giant eagles have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

GIANT SPIDER

Medium Vermin
Climate/Terrain: Temperate forests and underground
Organisation: Solitary or colony (2–5)
Initiative: +3
Senses: Listen +0, Spot +4, low-light vision

Dodge Defence: 14
Hit Points: 11 (2 HD); **DR** 1
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0

Speed: 30 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee: Bite +4 finesse (1d8 plus poison)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1
Special Attacks: Poison, web

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2
Special Qualities: Vermin traits, tremorsense 60 ft.
Skills: Climb +11, Hide +7, Spot +4
Advancement: 3 HD (Medium)



The giant spider is highly venomous, quick and sneaky. It is a web-builder, lying in wait on the ceiling of a room or up a tree until an unwary creature blunders past. Sorcerers sometimes use giant spiders to guard their abodes.

COMBAT

Poison: Injury, Fortitude DC 16, damage 1d6 Con or 1d6 Dex depending on species. Saves (5): Immediate/1 round/2 rounds/1 minute/10 minutes).

Web: Giant spiders often wait in their webs or in trees, lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap on passing prey. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Giant spiders can throw a web eight times per day. A web has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet and is effective against targets up to one size category larger than the spider. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 16) or burst the web with a Strength check (DC 20). Both are standard actions. The Strength check DC includes a +4 racial bonus. Giant spiders often create sheets of sticky webbing around 20 feet square. They usually position these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each five-foot section of web has 6 hit points and sheet webs have damage reduction 5. It is not possible to bypass this damage reduction with finesse. A giant spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

Tremorsense: A giant spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object that is in contact with the ground within 60 feet or in contact with its web at any distance.

Vermin Traits: All vermin possess the following traits (unless otherwise noted): No Intelligence score and immunity to all mind-affecting effects, such as hypnotism; darkvision to a range of 60 feet; proficient with natural weapons only; proficient with no armour; vermin eat, breathe and sleep.

Skills: Giant spiders have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks.

A giant spider can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Giant spiders use

their Dexterity modifier for Climb checks. Giant spiders have a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

GREY APE

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Warm forests

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +7

Senses: Listen +6, Spot +6, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 15

Hit Points: 35 (6 HD); DR 2

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3

Speed: 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 10 ft.

Melee: 2 claws +10 (1d8+7, AP -) and gore +5 (2d8+3, AP 8)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +15

Special Attacks: Improved grab, crush

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 15, Con 14,

Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Toughness

Skills: Climb +16, Listen +6, Spot +6

Advancement: 7–12 HD (Large)

In general outline it was not unlike a man. But its face, limned in the bright moonlight, was bestial, with close-set ears, flaring nostrils, and a great flabby-lipped mouth in which gleamed white tusk-like fangs. It was covered with shaggy grayish hair, shot with silver which shone in the moonlight, and its great misshapen paws hung nearly to the earth. Its bulk was tremendous; as it stood on its short bowed legs, its bullet-head rose above that of the man who faced it; the sweep of the hairy breast and giant shoulders was breathtaking; the huge arms were like knotted trees.

— *Shadows in the Moonlight*

These powerful omnivores resemble gorillas but are far more aggressive; they kill and eat anything they can catch. An adult male ape stands over six feet tall even in its usual knuckle-dragging crouch and weighs 400 to



	Riding Horse	Work Horse	Bhalkhana Warhorse
	Large Animal	Large Animal	Large Animal
Hit Dice:	3d8+6 (19 hp)	3d8+6 (19 hp)	5d8+10 (32 hp)
Initiative:	+4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflex)	+4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflex)	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflex)
Speed:	60 ft. (12 squares)	50 ft. (10 squares)	60 ft. (10 squares)
Dodge Defence:	12 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural)	12 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural)	13 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural)
DR:	1	2	3
Base Attack/Grapple:	+2/+8	+2/+9	+3/+12
Attack:	Hoof –2 melee (1d4+1, AP –)	Hoof –1 melee (1d8+1, AP –)	Hoof +7 melee (1d8+5, AP –)
Full Attack:	2 hooves –2 melee (1d4+1, AP –)	2 hooves –1 melee (1d8+1, AP –)	2 hooves +7 melee (1d8+5, AP –) and bite +5 melee (1d4+3, AP –)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	—	—	—
Special Qualities:	Low-light vision, scent	Low-light vision, scent	Low-light vision, scent
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2	Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2	Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6	Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6	Str 20, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6
Skills:	Listen +4, Spot +4	Listen +4, Spot +4	Listen +5, Spot +4
Feats:	Endurance, Run	Endurance, Run	Endurance, Run, Fleet-footed
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate plains	Temperate plains	Temperate plains
Organisation:	Domesticated or herd (6–30)	Domesticated	Domesticated
Advancement:	—	—	—

500 pounds. Unlike other apes, they have vast tusks that enable them to make gore attacks. They can be found in the East, particularly in the forests on the shores of the Vilayet Sea and in far Khitai.

COMBAT

Grey apes attack in a lumbering rush, goring and grappling a single target until it is dead then moving on to the next.

Crush: A grey ape that gets a hold can deal 4d8+14 damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab: To use this ability, a grey ape must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Skills: Grey apes have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

HORSES

BHALKHANA WARHORSE

Bhalkhana warhorses are large, fierce, strong and very fast over short to medium distances – they are perhaps the perfect

heavy warhorses. They are bred only in the Bhalkhana mountain region between Zamora and Koth, though they are in great demand by knowledgeable warriors the world over. Only very occasionally will a Bhalkhana warhorse be available for sale elsewhere and then only for a minimum of 10,000 sp. A Bhalkhana warhorse can fight while carrying a rider but the rider cannot also attack unless he succeeds at a Ride check (DC 10). Bhalkhana warhorses gain Fleet-footed as a bonus feat.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a Bhalkhana warhorse is up to 399 pounds; a medium load, 400–798 pounds; and a heavy load, 799–1,200 pounds. A Bhalkhana warhorse can drag 6,000 pounds.

HYBORIAN WARHORSE

These large, tough warhorses can be found throughout the Hyborean kingdoms and a little beyond. They are the standard mount of the warrior aristocracy of the Hyborean lands. A



	Hyborian Warhorse	Kushite Warhorse	Stygian Warhorse	Turanian Desert Warhorse
	Large Animal	Large Animal	Large Animal	Large Animal
Hit Dice:	4d8+12 (30 hp)	3d8+12 (25 hp)	4d8+8 (26 hp)	3d8+9 (22 hp)
Initiative:	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflex)	+4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflex)	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflex)	+4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflex)
Speed:	50 ft. (10 squares)	60 ft. (12 squares)	50 ft. (10 squares)	70 ft. (14 squares)
Dodge Defence:	13 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural)	12 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural)	13 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural)	12 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural)
DR:	3	2	3	2
Base Attack/Grapple:	+3/+11	+2/+8	+3/+12	+2/+9
Attack:	Hoof +6 melee (1d8+4, AP –)	Hoof +3 melee (1d6+2, AP –)	Hoof +7 melee (1d8+5, AP –)	Hoof +4 melee (1d6+3, AP –)
Full Attack:	2 hooves +6 melee (1d8+4, AP –) and bite +1 melee (1d4+2, AP –)	2 hooves +3 melee (1d6+2, AP –) and bite –2 melee (1d3+1, AP –)	2 hooves +7 melee (1d8+5, AP –) and bite +5 melee (1d4+3, AP –)	2 hooves +4 melee (1d6+3, AP –) and bite –1 melee (1d3+1, AP –)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	—	—	—	—
Special Qualities:	Low-light vision, scent	Low-light vision, scent	Low-light vision, scent	Low-light vision, scent
Saves:	Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2	Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +2	Fort +6 Ref +5, Will +2	Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 18, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6	Str 15, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6	Str 20, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6	Str 16, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6
Skills:	Listen +5, Spot +4	Listen +4, Spot +4	Listen +5, Spot +4	Listen +4, Spot +4
Feats:	Endurance, Run	Endurance, Run	Endurance, Run, Multiattack	Endurance, Run, Fleet-footed
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate plains	Temperate and warm plains	Temperate plains	Temperate plains and desert
Organisation:	Domesticated	Domesticated	Domesticated	Domesticated
Advancement:	—	—	—	—

Hyborian warhorse can fight while carrying a rider but the rider cannot also attack unless he succeeds at a Ride check (DC 10).

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a Hyborian warhorse is up to 300 pounds; a medium load, 301–600 pounds; and a heavy load, 601–900 pounds. A Hyborian warhorse can drag 4,500 pounds.

KUSHITE WARHORSE

Kushite warhorses are lean, wiry, easily spooked, almost tireless and found from Kush itself as far south as the Black Kingdoms. A Kushite warhorse can fight while carrying a rider but the rider cannot also attack unless he or she succeeds at a (DC 10) Ride check.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a Kushite warhorse is up to 198 pounds; a medium load, 199–399 pounds; a heavy load, 400–600 pounds. A Kushite warhorse can drag 3,000 pounds.

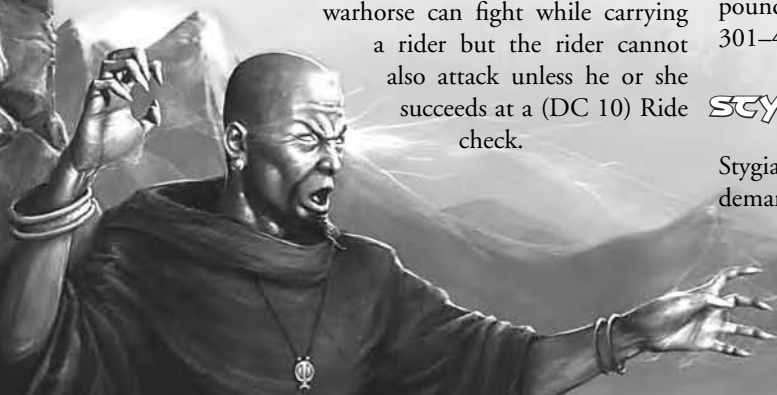
RIDING HORSE

The statistics presented here describe smaller breeds of working horses as well as wild horses. These animals are usually ready for useful work by age two. A riding horse cannot fight while carrying a rider.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a horse is up to 150 pounds; a medium load, 151–300 pounds; a heavy load, 301–450 pounds. A horse can drag 2,250 pounds.

STYGIAN WARHORSE

Stygian warhorses are unusually fierce and are in some demand among heavy cavalry in the south. They are used predominantly for pulling



chariots, though some Stygian nobles will harness Kushite warhorses to their vehicles if their preferred horses are unavailable. A Stygian warhorse can fight while carrying a rider but the rider cannot also attack unless he succeeds at a Ride check (DC 10). Stygian warhorses gain Multiattack as a bonus feat.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a Stygian warhorse is up to 399 pounds; a medium load, 400–798 pounds; and a heavy load, 799–1,200 pounds. A Stygian warhorse can drag 6,000 pounds.

TURANIAN DESERT WARHORSE

The slender-legged Turanian desert warhorses are almost unbeatable on the gallop over most distances and have matchless speed and excellent endurance. A Turanian desert warhorse can fight while carrying a rider but the rider cannot also attack unless he succeeds at a Ride check (DC 10). Turanian desert warhorses gain Fleet-footed as a bonus feat.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a Turanian desert warhorse is up to 230 pounds; a medium load, 231–460 pounds; a heavy load, 461–690 pounds. A Turanian desert warhorse can drag 3,450 pounds.

WORK HORSE

The statistics presented here describe larger breeds of working horses. These animals are usually ready for heavy work by age three. A heavy horse cannot fight while carrying a rider.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a work horse is up to 200 pounds; a medium load, 201–400 pounds; and a heavy load, 401–600 pounds. A work horse can drag 3,000 pounds.

HYENA

Medium Animal

Climate/Terrain: Warm desert and jungle

Organisation: Solitary, pair, or pack (40–50)

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +6, Spot +4, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 14

Hit Points: 19 (3 HD); DR 2

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2

Speed: 50 ft.

Melee: Bite +6 (1d8+6, AP –)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +6

Special Attacks: Trip

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats: Alertness, Track

Skills: Hide +3, Listen +6, Spot +4

Advancement: 3 HD (Medium); 4–5 HD (Large)

Hyenas are pack hunters infamous for their cunning and their unnerving vocalisations. The statistics presented here are for spotted hyenas, which are over four feet long and weigh up to 160 pounds. Spotted hyenas are feared both because they form the largest packs of any predator and because their large jaws are stronger than those of any other creature of similar size and weight. Hyenas can be found all over Kush. They are usually in deserts but can occasionally be found in southern jungles such as the region around the Zarkheba River.

COMBAT

A favourite tactic is to send a few individuals against its foe's front while the rest of the pack circles and attacks from the rear.

Trip: A hyena that hits with its bite attack can attempt to trip its opponent (+2 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the hyena.

Skills: Hyenas have a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth.

LION

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Warm plains

Organisation: Solitary or pride (6–10)

Initiative: +7

Senses: Listen +5, Spot +5, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 15

Hit Points: 32 (5 HD); DR 3

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2

Speed: 40 ft.

Melee: 2 claws +7 (1d4+5, AP –) and bite +2 (1d8+2, AP –)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +12



Special Attacks: Improved grab, pounce, rake 1d4+2

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats: Alertness, Run

Skills: Balance +7, Hide +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Spot +5

Advancement: 4–5 HD (Medium)

Lions are unusual among predatory felines in that they hunt in groups and use teamwork to bring down prey.

COMBAT

Improved Grab: To use this ability, a lion must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Pounce: If a lion charges, it can still make a full attack.

Rake: If a lion is grappling it may make a rake attack with its rear claws. This attack has an attack bonus of +7 and deals 1d4+2 damage with no AP. Rake attacks do not suffer the usual –4 penalty for attacking with weapons while grappling.

Skills: Lions have a +4 racial bonus on Balance, Hide and Move Silently checks. In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth the Hide bonus increases to +12.

MONITOR LIZARD

Medium Animal

Climate/Terrain: Warm forests

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +4, Spot +4, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 14

Hit Points: 22 (3 HD); **DR** 3

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2

Speed: 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee: Bite +5 (1d8+4, AP –)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Feats: Alertness, Run

Skills: Climb +7, Hide +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4, Swim +11

Advancement: 4–5 HD (Medium)

Monitor lizards are fairly large and carnivorous. Although not normally very aggressive they can be goaded into attacking and a hungry one may take on a lone enemy.

COMBAT

Monitor lizards attack in a straightforward manner, moving up to their opponents and savaging them with their powerful jaws.

Skills: Monitor lizards have a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks. The Hide bonus increases to +8 in forested or overgrown areas.

Monitor lizards have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks and can always choose to take 10 on Swim checks, even if rushed or threatened. It can use the Run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

OWL

Tiny Animal

Climate/Terrain: Temperate forests

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +4, Spot +4, low-light vision

Dodge Defence: 15

Hit Points: 4 (1 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2

Speed: 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Space: 2½ ft.; **Reach:** 0 ft.

Melee: Talon +5 finesse (1d4–3)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** –11

Abilities: Str 4, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4

Feats: Alertness

Skills: Listen +16, Move Silently +17, Spot +8

Advancement: 2 HD (Small)

Owls are nocturnal birds of prey common in the temperate regions of the Hyborian kingdoms.

COMBAT

Owls swoop silently down onto their targets to attack with their talons.

Skills: Owls have a +8 racial bonus on Listen checks and a +14 racial bonus on Move Silently checks. They have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks in areas of shadowy illumination.



PANTHER

Medium Animal

Climate/Terrain: Warm and temperate forest

Organisation: Solitary or pair

Initiative: +7

Senses: Listen +6, Spot +6, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 16

Hit Points: 19 (3 HD); DR 2

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2

Speed: 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee: Bite +6 finesse (1d8+3) and 2 claws +1 finesse (1d4+3)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5

Special Attacks: Improved grab, pounce, rake 1d4+1

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats: Alertness, Track

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +8, Jump +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6

Advancement: 4–5 HD (Medium)

These jungle cats are about four feet long and weigh about 120 pounds. They usually hunt at night. Panthers are found in the Pictish Wilderness but these game statistics can also be used for the leopards found throughout Kush.

COMBAT

Improved Grab: To use this ability, a panther must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Pounce: If a panther charges, it can still make a full attack.

Rake: If a panther is grappling it may make a rake attack with its rear claws. This attack is a finesse attack with an attack bonus of +6 and deals 1d4+1 damage. Rake attacks do not suffer the usual –4 penalty for attacking with weapons while grappling.

Skills: Panthers have a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks and a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks. Panthers have a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. A panther can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

RAVEN

Tiny Animal

Climate/Terrain: Any forest, hills, plains and mountains

Organisation: Solitary or pair

Initiative: +4

Senses: Listen +8, Spot +8, low-light vision

Dodge Defence: 14

Hit Points: 1 (¼ HD); DR –

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2

Speed: 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Space: 2½ ft.; **Reach:** 0 ft.

Melee: Bite +4 finesse (1d6–4)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** –12

Abilities: Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6

Feats: Alertness

Skills: Listen +8, Spot +8

Advancement: –

Ravens are large black carrion birds that typically weigh approximately three pounds. They are approximately two feet long and have a four-foot wingspan. Their beaks are long, fearsome and very quick, quite capable of pecking a smaller bird to death or pecking out the eye of a larger creature. Ravens, like their smaller cousins the crows, are a common sight on battlefields.

COMBAT

Ravens do not usually attack active, adult humans, though they might if cornered or magically compelled. A particularly obnoxious raven might well attack a wounded or apparently helpless man or an unaccompanied child.

RHINOCEROS

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Warm plains

Organisation: Solitary or herd (2–12)

Initiative: +6

Senses: Listen +14, Spot +3, low-light vision

Dodge Defence: 12

Hit Points: 84 (8 HD); DR 7

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +3

Speed: 30 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 5 ft.

Melee: Gore +13 (2d6+12)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +18

Special Attacks: Powerful charge

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 2

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Toughness

Skills: Listen +14, Spot +3



Advancement: 9–12 HD (Large); 13–24 HD (Huge)

Rhinoceroses are lumbering, bad-tempered herbivores notable for their thick skin and willingness to charge people who disturb them.

COMBAT

Powerful Charge: A rhinoceros that charges deals double damage with its gore attack.

SABRE-TOOTH

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm forest

Organisation: Solitary, pair or pack (4–9, plus 2–8 young)

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +5, Spot +5, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 13

Hit Points: 42 (5 HD); DR 4

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +3

Speed: 30 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 5 ft.

Melee: 2 claws +9 melee (1d10+7, AP –), bite +4 melee (2d10+3 plus puncture, AP 8)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +14

Special Attacks: Improved grab, pounce, rake 1d10+3, puncture, tooth breaking

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude

Skills: Balance +7, Hide +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Spot +5, Swim +12

Advancement: 6–10 HD (Large)

Sabre-tooths resemble tigers or other big cats in form but have minimal markings (their fur is typically a sandy colour all over) and extremely powerful forequarters in comparison to other big cats. Even their hindquarters are more powerful than those of a lion. This makes them very strong but their bulk makes them slower than most big cats and contributes to their quick and savage hunting style. Their most distinctive feature, though, is the pair of vast teeth that give them their name. These are huge curved fangs, bigger than daggers and capable of inflicting the most devastating injuries. Though these

fangs are enormously powerful weapons, they are far more brittle than smaller fangs and older sabre-tooths often have one or both of their great teeth broken off.

Sabre-tooths are not so common as in former times now that humanity and wild cats have spread over many of their old hunting grounds. They can still be found deep in the forests of the Pictish Wilderness and shamans of the Pictish race often call upon them as powerful allies.

COMBAT

Sabre-tooths prefer to stalk their prey. They will drop from a hidden position atop a tree or rock and slay their victims within instants. They will attack a large victim such as an elephant or bull until the sabre-tooth causes a puncture (see below), at which point the sabre-tooth will retreat until its victim bleeds to death. This allows the sabre-tooth to avoid the risk of injury, since although it is tough it must eat a fair amount to survive and any serious wound may impede its hunting ability to such a degree that it starves to death. In open combat with a determined and well-armed foe, the sabre-tooth will consider fleeing, particularly if it is injured.

Pounce: If a sabre-tooth charges during the first round of combat, it may make a full attack (plus two rake attacks) at the end of its movement.

Puncture: A bite attack from a sabre-tooth that scores a critical hit on an opponent is considered to have punctured a major blood vessel. The victim will lose one hit point per round (from blood loss) until the wound is treated (DC 15 Heal check) or they receive some sort of sorcerous healing.

Tooth Breaking: A sabre-tooth whose bite attack does maximum damage on a critical hit (that is, a roll of 16 on 2d8 on a critical hit) loses one of its large canine teeth. This sticks in the wound and causes an additional 1d6 damage but the sabre-tooth's bite damage drops to 2d6+3 and it can no longer deal a puncture effect (see above). It is possible for the second canine to break off if maximum damage is done a second time (12 on 2d6), in which case the sabre-tooth's bite damage drops to 2d4+3.

Improved Grab: To use this ability, a sabre-tooth must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Rake: If a sabre-tooth is grappling it may make a rake attack with its rear claws. This attack has an attack bonus of +9 and deals 1d10+3 damage with no AP. Rake attacks do not suffer the usual –4 penalty for attacking with weapons while grappling. If a sabre-tooth uses its pounce ability, it may make two rake attacks in addition to its normal attacks.



Skills: Sabre-tooths receive a +6 racial bonus to Balance, Hide and Move Silently checks.

In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus improves to +8.

SCORPION

Tiny Vermin

Climate/Terrain: Warm desert

Organisation: Colony (8–16)

Initiative: +0

Senses: Listen +0, Spot +4, low-light vision

Dodge Defence: 12

Hit Points: 4 (½ HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0

Speed: 20 ft.

Space: 2½ ft.; **Reach:** 0 ft.

Melee: Sting +2 finesse
(1d2–4 plus poison)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** –12

Special Attacks: Poison

Abilities: Str 3, Dex 10, Con 14, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2

Special Qualities: Vermin traits

Skills: Climb +0, Hide +12, Spot +4

Advancement: –

Contrary to popular belief, most scorpions are not excessively dangerous to humans. A notable exception is the Stygian black scorpion, which is not only highly aggressive but also possessed of a venom of extraordinary potency.

COMBAT

If threatened a scorpion typically runs and hides, only stinging to subdue prey or in self-defence. The notorious Stygian black scorpion is much more aggressive and will sting anything that comes close enough. When a black scorpion stings it delivers the far more potent black scorpion venom instead of the usual poison.

Poison: Injury, Fortitude DC 12, damage 1d2 temporary Constitution. Saves (4): Immediate/1 round/1 round/1 round.

Black Scorpion Venom: Injury, Fortitude DC 23, damage 1d6 temporary Constitution and 1d6 temporary Dexterity. Saves (4): Immediate/1 round/1 round/1 round.

Vermin Traits: All vermin possess the following traits (unless otherwise noted): No Intelligence score and immunity to all mind-affecting effects,

such as hypnotism; proficient with natural weapons only; proficient with no armour; vermin eat, breathe and sleep.

Skills: Scorpions have a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide and Spot checks.

SNAKES

GHOST SNAKE

The ghost snake resembles a massive python but has a deadly venom as well as the ability to constrict its prey. Its pale white colour gives it a nightmarish appearance, particularly to those who might regard it as no more than a legend.

The ghost snake is found only in the Pictish Wilderness, being regarded as extinct everywhere else. Certain Pictish shamans are able to summon ghost snakes to do their bidding.

COMBAT

Constrict: While grappling, a ghost snake can cause 1d8+9 damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab: To use this ability, a ghost snake must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

SON OF SET

The sons of Set are vast constrictor snakes, cruel and languid. Though they are scarce in the wild, the priests of Set and other sorcerers breed them in captivity, keeping them drugged most of the time. Drugged sons of Set adorn the altars of every major temple to Set and are let loose to feed among the local populace every few weeks or so.

The larger sons of Set are semi-intelligent and the greater son of Set approaches human levels of intellect. These creatures are regarded as having a direct connection to Set himself. A worshipper of Set who has the Ritual Sacrifice feat and who personally trains a son of Set of any size gains +1d6 Power Points every time the son of Set kills and devours a victim.

COMBAT

Sons of Set of all sizes hunt by grabbing prey with their mouths and then squeezing it with their powerful bodies.



	Snake, Ghost	Snake, Lesser Son of Set	Snake, Son of Set	Snake, Greater Son of Set
	Huge Animal	Huge Animal	Gargantuan Animal	Colossal Animal
Hit Dice:	12d8+34 (88 hp)	11d8+21 (70 hp)	22d8+76 (175 hp)	44d8+230 (428 hp)
Initiative:	+11 (+3 Dex, +8 Reflex)	+10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflex)	+15 (+2 Dex, +13 Reflex)	+26 (+2 Dex, +24 Reflex)
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.	20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.	30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.	30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.
Dodge Defence:	20 (–2 size, +3 Dex, +9 natural)	19 (–2 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural)	24 (–4 size, +2 Dex, +16 natural)	31 (–8 size, +2 Dex, +27 natural)
DR:	6	5	6	7
Base Attack/Grapple:	+9/+23	+8/+23	+16/+39	+33/+64
Attack:	Bite +14 melee (1d8+9 + poison)	Bite +13 melee (1d10+10)	Bite +23 melee (2d8+16)	Bite +40 melee (4d6+22)
Space/Reach:	15 ft./10 ft.	15 ft./10 ft.	20 ft./15 ft.	30 ft./20 ft.
Special Attacks:	Constrict 1d8+9 (AP 7), improved grab	Constrict 1d8+10 (AP 8), improved grab	Constrict 2d8+16 (AP 12), improved grab	Constrict 4d8+22 (AP 16), improved grab
Special Qualities:	Scent	Scent	Scent	Scent
Saves:	Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +5	Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +4	Fort +16, Ref +15, Will +8	Fort +29, Ref +26, Will +15
Abilities:	Str 23, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2	Str 25, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2	Str 33, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2	Str 41, Dex 14, Con 21, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 2
Skills:	Balance +11, Climb +17, Hide +10, Listen +9, Spot +9, Swim +16	Balance +11, Climb +17, Hide +10, Listen +9, Spot +9, Swim +16	Balance +11, Climb +22, Hide +14, Listen +9, Spot +9, Swim +16	Balance +16, Climb +28, Hide +18, Listen +9, Spot +14, Swim +16
Feats:	Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide), Toughness	Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide), Toughness	Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide), Toughness	Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide), Toughness
Climate/Terrain:	Warm forests	Warm forests	Warm forests	Warm forests
Organisation:	Solitary	Solitary	Solitary	Solitary
Advancement:	12–16 HD (Huge); 17–33 HD (Gargantuan)	12–16 HD (Huge); 17–33 HD (Gargantuan)	23–40 HD (Gargantuan)	45–60 HD (Colossal)

Constrict: While grappling, a son of Set can cause damage with a successful grapple check. The damage varies with the size of the snake: a lesser son of Set deals 1d8+10, a son of Set deals 2d8+16 and a greater son of Set deals 4d8+22.

Improved Grab: To use this ability, a son of Set must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

COMBAT

Poison: Injury, Fortitude DC 11 (for all sizes), damage 1d4 temporary Constitution. Saves (4): Immediate/1 round/1 round/1 round.

Skills: Vipers receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Listen and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus to Balance checks. They can use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is better.

VIPER

Vipers are an ever-present threat in the forests of the Hyborean Age.

Cobra or Viper?

In some hotter areas, particularly Stygia, Kush and Vendhya, cobras are more common than vipers. The two types of poisonous snake are sufficiently similar for most game purposes that viper statistics can be used for cobras, except as follows:

	Snake, Tiny Viper	Snake, Small Viper	Snake, Medium Viper	Snake, Large Viper
	Tiny Animal	Small Animal	Medium Animal	Large Animal
Hit Dice:	1/4 d8 (1 hp)	1d8 (4 hp)	2d8 (9 hp)	3d8 (13 hp)
Initiative:	+5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex)	+5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex)	+6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex)	+10 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.	20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.	20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.	20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.
Dodge Defence:	15 (+2 size, +3 Dex)	14 (+1 size, +3 Dex)	14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural)	14 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)
DR:	1	2	3	4
Base Attack/Grapple:	+0/–11	+0/–6	+1/+0	+2/+6
Attack:	Bite +5 finesse (poison)	Bite +4 finesse (1d3–2 and poison)	Bite +4 finesse (1d6–1 and poison)	Bite +4 finesse (1d6 plus poison)
Space/Reach:	2 ½ ft./0 ft.	5 ft./5 ft.	5 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Poison	Poison	Poison	Poison
Special Qualities:	Scent	Scent	Scent	Scent
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1	Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1	Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2	Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2	Str 8, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2	Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2
Skills:	Balance +11, Climb +12, Hide +18, Listen +8, Spot +8	Balance +11, Climb +12, Hide +15, Listen +9, Spot +9	Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +12, Listen +9, Spot +9	Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +5, Spot +6, Swim +8
Feats:	—	—	—	Improved Initiative
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate and warm land, aquatic and underground	Temperate and warm land, aquatic and underground	Temperate and warm land, aquatic and underground	Temperate marshes
Organisation:	Solitary	Solitary	Solitary	Solitary
Advancement:	—	—	—	—

Poison: Cobra poison acts directly on the central nervous system, whereas viper poison causes massive bleeding. For this reason, assume that cobra poison does damage as follows:

Damage: 1d2 temporary damage to Dexterity and 1d2 temporary damage to Constitution

Saves (9): Immediate/10 minutes/30 minutes/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour

Habitat

Cobras are adapted to warm conditions and do not cope with cold nearly as well as their more highly evolved viper cousins. A cobra in a region with a temperate or cold climate is considered fatigued at all times (–2 Strength and Dexterity, cannot run). Furthermore, cobras have a –4 racial penalty to all saving throws to resist the effects of cold conditions or cold-based attacks.

WOLF

Medium Animal

Climate/Terrain: Any forest, hill, plains and mountains

Organisation: Solitary, pair, or pack (7–16)

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +6, Spot +6, low-light vision, scent

Dodge Defence: 13

Hit Points: 13 (2 HD); DR 2

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1

Speed: 50 ft.

Melee: Bite +3 finesse (1d8+1, AP –)



Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2
Special Attacks: Trip

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats: Track

Skills: Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Survival +1

Advancement: 3 HD (Medium); 4–5 HD (Large)

Wolves are found particularly in the northerly lands, including the Pictish Wilderness, Cimmeria, Nordheim, Hyperborea and the northern parts of Aquilonia, Nemedia and Brythunia, as well as the mountains and hills to the north of the Eastern Desert. They can be found in smaller numbers throughout the area listed in their Climate/Terrain entry (above).

WAR DOGS

Some nations breed large, powerful dogs with wolves to create excellent attack dogs. These dogs have all the aggression and strength of wolves but are capable of being trained and domesticated. For game purposes, treat war dogs as wolves in every way, except that they are can be found for sale in open markets and are more easily trained.

COMBAT

Wolves rarely attack humans or prey of Large size unless the wolves are in a pack, in which case they work together extraordinarily well, harrying the prey until it is exhausted then tearing it to shreds.

Trip: A wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+1 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

Skills: Wolves receive a +4 racial bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.

MONSTERS

Many of the creatures Conan encounters seem to be more-or-less one-offs, either unique demonic entities, sorcerous experiments or weird creatures that are the last of their kind. For this reason the

Games Master should avoid overusing monsters from this section. It is rare that Conan must fight more than one or two different types of monster during one story. The Games Master is encouraged to follow this pattern and only introduce individual unnatural creatures in the latter stages of an adventure after a suitable buildup of tension. He is also encouraged to create new monsters or adapt monsters from other d20 sources to prevent his players from becoming jaded or overconfident.

TERROR OF THE UNKNOWN

Due to the individual nature of most monstrous foes, even the most hardened of adventurers may quail before them and flee in terror.

Any time a character encounters a monster he has not encountered before, he must make a Will saving throw. The DC is 10 + ½ creature's HD. If he fails, he is frightened for 3d6 rounds if he is of 3rd level or above or swoons if he is of 1st or 2nd level.

A frightened character takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks. He flees from the source of his fear as quickly as he can. He can choose the path of his flight. Other than that stipulation, once he is out of sight (or hearing) of the source of his fear, he can act as he wants. However, if the duration of the character's fear continues, he can be forced to flee once more if the source of his fear presents itself again. Characters unable to flee can fight, though they are still suffer the –2 penalty on their actions.

A character of less than 3rd level will swoon with terror rather than become frightened. He falls unconscious and helpless for 2d6 minutes.

Any character with less than 50% of his hit points remaining when he sees the creature has a –2 morale penalty to the Will saving throw.

A character can spend a Fate point to ignore the Terror of the Unknown.

All the monsters in this section force Terror saving throws. At the Games Master's discretion, some of the larger and more unusual creatures from the Animals section may force Terror saving throws. Certainly the great serpents of various kinds are terrifying enough and a grey ape or elephant may well scare a character who has never encountered one outside of legend.



DEMONS

Demons are variously said to come from hell, Earth or the Outer Dark. Most adventurers leave such speculations to the scholars who attempt to study demons and the sorcerers who summon them up. Who cares where these horrors come from, after all, so long as one knows whether he needs a powerfully swung sword or fire and silver to kill them?

Each entry for a demon indicates the spells sorcerers can use to interact with it. Most can be summoned by a *summon demon* spell and many offer several benefits when a *demonic pact* is made with them.

BODILESS SLIMER

Large Outsider (demon)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +11

Senses: Listen +11, Spot +11, darkvision

Languages: Demonic

Dodge Defence: 21

Hit Points: 44 (8 HD); **DR** 8; 16 vs. bludgeoning

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +6

Immunities: Critical hits

Speed: 30 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 10 ft.

Melee: Slimy grapple +12/+7 finesse (grapple)

Base Atk +8; **Gp** +17

Special Attacks: Fiery breath, telepathic mumblings

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 20, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 1

Special Qualities: Invisibility, darkvision, slimy resilience, semi-intangible, manifest

Feats: Brawl, Dodge, Toughness

Skills: Climb +11, Intimidate +6, Jump +11, Listen +11, Spot +11, Survival +1

Advancement: 9–12 HD (Large)

The bodiless slimer inhabits the weird underground levels deep beneath Tsotha-Lanti's Halls of Horror (see page 319). It is invisible, which makes it difficult to fight. It is also at least partially intangible, though a strong sword will cut it easily enough. The bodiless slimer constantly drips unpleasant, sticky slime and mouths obscenities at a level just below its opponent's conscious hearing but which are audible in the back of the mind. Its breath burns enemies in combat.

A bodiless slimer can be summoned with a *summon demon* spell. It would even be possible for a scholar to make a *demonic pact* with a bodiless slimer, though the creature is unlikely to be able to teach him any sorcery.

COMBAT

The bodiless slimer usually attacks with its slimy grapple, which works as a standard grapple attack except that the thick, sticky, irritant slime that coats the creature inflicts an additional +1d4 damage and gives it a +4 innate bonus to all grapple checks.

Darkvision: The bodiless slimer can see perfectly even in pitch darkness.

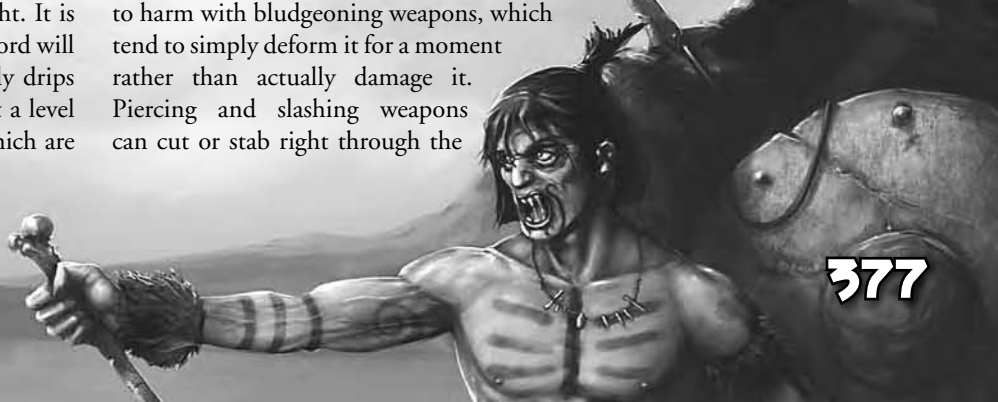
Fiery Breath: As a full-round action, the bodiless slimer can breathe fire at any one opponent within 20 feet. This fiery breath deals 2d8 damage. The target gets a Reflex saving throw (DC 19) for half damage.

Invisibility: The bodiless slimer is always invisible (see page 350).

Manifest: As a standard action, the bodiless slimer can either leave Earth and return to its home place or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

Semi-Intangible: The bodiless slimer is immune to critical hits, as it has no true form beyond a collection of ichorous strands.

Slimy Resilience: A bodiless slimer is formed from a resilient, cobwebby stuff that springs back into place when struck unless it is cut right through. This makes it very difficult to harm with bludgeoning weapons, which tend to simply deform it for a moment rather than actually damage it. Piercing and slashing weapons can cut or stab right through the





cobwebby stuff, separating it or poking through it into vital organs. A bodiless slimer's damage reduction is doubled (to 16) against bludgeoning attacks of any kind.

Telepathic Mumbblings: A bodiless slimer mumbles constantly and mouthlessly to itself. This muttering cannot be heard with the ears alone but is somewhat unnerving to anyone who is not somehow immune to telepathic contact, as it is heard within the very brains of all nearby. At the start of the slimer's turn each round, it targets all characters within 10 feet with a Demoralise Opponent attempt (see page 107). This is a free action and happens automatically. The slimer cannot cease mumbling, even if it wanted to. Fortunately its Intimidate skill is sufficiently low that most experienced enemies remain unaffected.

BLACK FIEND

Medium Outsider (demon)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +7

Senses: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Demonic, Old Stygian, Acheronian

Dodge Defence: 17

Hit Points: 39 (6 HD);

DR total/silver or fire

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +8

Immunities: All physical damage

Weaknesses: Fire and silver inflict harm normally

Speed: 40 ft.

Melee: Gore +9 finesse (1d8+1) and 2 claws +6 finesse (1d6+1)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +8

Sorcery: Knowledge of 1d4+1 styles

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 19

Special Qualities: Immunities, manifest

Feats: Dodge, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (gore)

Skills: Craft (herbalism) +10, Hide +19, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Move Silently +19, Perform (drums) +13

Advancement: By character class (usually scholar)

Black fiends are commonly called up either as assassins or to teach scholars a portion of their bountiful magical knowledge. At a distance or in the dark – their favoured environment in any case – they could pass for human, being of a similar size and general build. Up close their vile demonic features, horns and pointed ears make their true nature clear.

Most black fiends are also scholars, often of considerable power. They favour the Summoning sorcery style, particularly *summon elemental*.

A black fiend can be summoned with a *summon demon* spell. Alternatively, it makes a good subject for a *demonic pact* spell. Even black fiends who are not scholars themselves will have knowledge of (though not the ability to cast) 1d4+1 sorcery

styles and the usual Summoning spells. Black fiend scholars can add the spells they personally know to that.

COMBAT

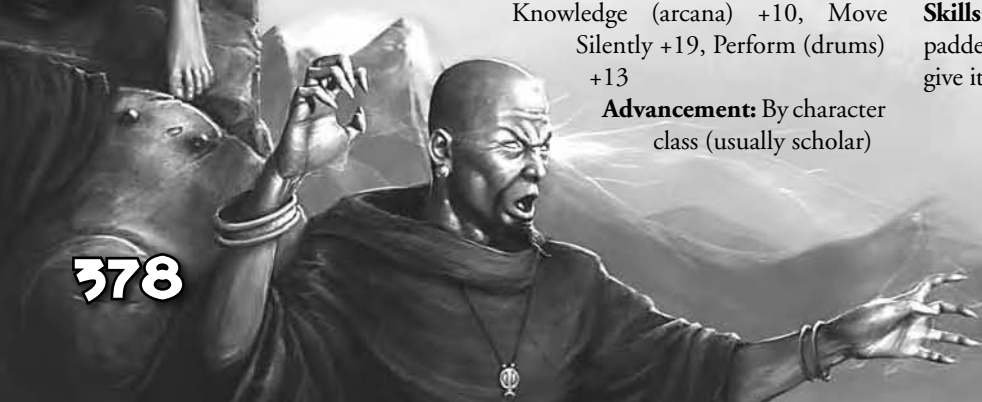
Black fiends are at home using direct combat, sneaky assassinations or sorcery to get the job done.

Immunities: Black fiends are immune to all physical damage, except that dealt by either fire or objects made from silver. Silver weapons are not generally manufactured during the Hyborian Age, though improvised weapons made from silver benches, candlesticks, mugs and so on could be used.

Manifest: As a standard action, the black fiend can either leave Earth and return to its home place or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of

its action.

Skills: The black fiend's black, non-reflective body and padded feet, coupled with its innate sneakiness and cunning, give it a +8 bonus to all Hide and Move Silently checks.



CHILD OF THE DARK

Medium Outsider (demon)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +14

Senses: Listen +16, Spot +16

Languages: Demonic

Dodge Defence: 31

Hit Points: 45 (10 HD); DR 5

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +14, Will +8

Speed: 60 ft.

Melee: 2 slams +18/+18 finesse (2d6 cold plus paralysis)

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +17

Sorcery: Knowledge of 1d3+1 styles

Special Attacks: Paralysis

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 24, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 18

Special Qualities: Shadows, manifest

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills: Hide +24, Intimidate +16, Listen +16, Move Silently +24, Spot +16

Advancement: By character class (usually scholar, soldier of thief)

Also known as a waif of outer space, the child of the dark appears rather like a diabolical and ancient mummified sorcerer, though in fact it is a demon of the Outer Dark. All children of the dark have a powerful connection to shadows and much of their magic is based on that connection.

Children of the dark speak Demonic.

Children of the dark are most commonly summoned to put an enemy out of action without killing him outright. They may also make reasonably useful teachers for sorcerers to enter into *demonic pacts* with, though they only know 1d3+1 sorcery styles in addition to the usual Summoning spells.

COMBAT

The very touch of a child of the dark burns with the icy cold of the Outer Dark. This touch results in cold damage rather than fire damage, though to those who have never experienced the cold of vacuum it feels more like a white-hot branding iron. It is so cold it can paralyse the entire body.

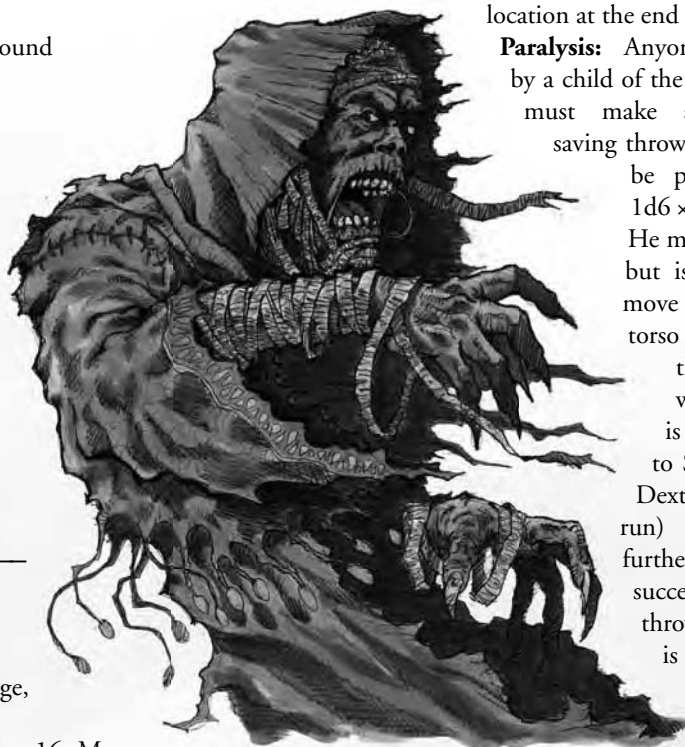
Manifest: As a standard action, the child of the dark can either leave Earth and return to its home place or appear on Earth. In

either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

Paralysis: Anyone damaged by a child of the dark's attack must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 19) or be paralysed for 1d6 × 10 minutes. He may still speak but is helpless to move his arms, torso or legs. After the paralysis wears off, he is fatigued (–2 to Strength and Dexterity, cannot run) for 1d6 further hours. A successful saving throw means he is unaffected by the paralysis.

Shadows: Whenever a child of the dark is in at least partial shadow, he gains a +4 concealment bonus to his Defence. Furthermore, he can use shadows as a means of transport. Up to three times per day, when in any shadow, he may pass into a shadowy realm as a full-round action and move from there to any other shadow. This movement is not instantaneous but is rather at a speed similar to a running horse, around 240 feet per round or six miles per hour. While moving via shadows in this way, the child of the dark is invisible and non-corporeal and may not affect or be affected by the material world in any way. It can remain in this state for up to one hour per Hit Die (usually 10 hours) before being rudely propelled back into the material world or home into the Outer Dark once more if there is no shadow nearby.

Skills: A child of the dark gains a +4 racial bonus to all Hide and Move Silently checks. This is increased to +8 if the child of the dark is in shadow of any kind.





SMOKE-SERPENT

Medium Outsider (demon)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +16

Senses: Listen +0, Spot +2

Languages: Demonic (understanding only)

Dodge Defence: 27

Hit Points: 39 (8 HD); **DR** total/silver

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +16, Will +6

Immunities: All physical damage

Weaknesses: Silver does normal damage

Speed: 40 ft.

Melee: Strangle +19 finesse (grapple)

Base Atk +8; **Gp** +18

Special Attacks: Grapple

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 30, Con –, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 1

Special Qualities: Immunities, manifest

Feats: Dodge, Toughness, Weapon Focus (strangle)

Skills: Hide +29, Move Silently +37, Spot +2

Advancement: 9–12 HD (Medium), 13–18 HD (Large), 19–24 HD (Huge), 25–30 HD (Gargantuan), 31–36 HD (Colossal)

Smoke-serpents are among the more unusual demons, with bodies composed of living smoke. They are usually blue in colour, though shades of green and purple have also been known.

Smoke-serpents are called up by sorcerers wishing to make public demonstrations of their power. They are also summoned to get access to enemies who are wearing heavy armour or protected by cover. They are not useful for teaching sorcery, as they cannot speak Demonic (though they understand it) and in any case know no sorcery styles.

COMBAT

The smoke-serpent is made for combat, or more properly for assassination, pure and simple. It strangles an opponent within moments by wrapping its length around its neck and squeezing mercilessly.

Grapple: The smoke-serpent's main attack is a grapple. It makes its grapple attempt as usual. If it succeeds, it latches on to its opponent's neck, flowing through his armour (if any) so as to completely bypass any protection it might offer. Once the smoke-serpent is around its opponent's neck, it becomes partially corporeal; in this state, it is able to do 2d6+3 damage to its opponent with a successful grapple check but it loses some of the benefits of its immunities (see below).

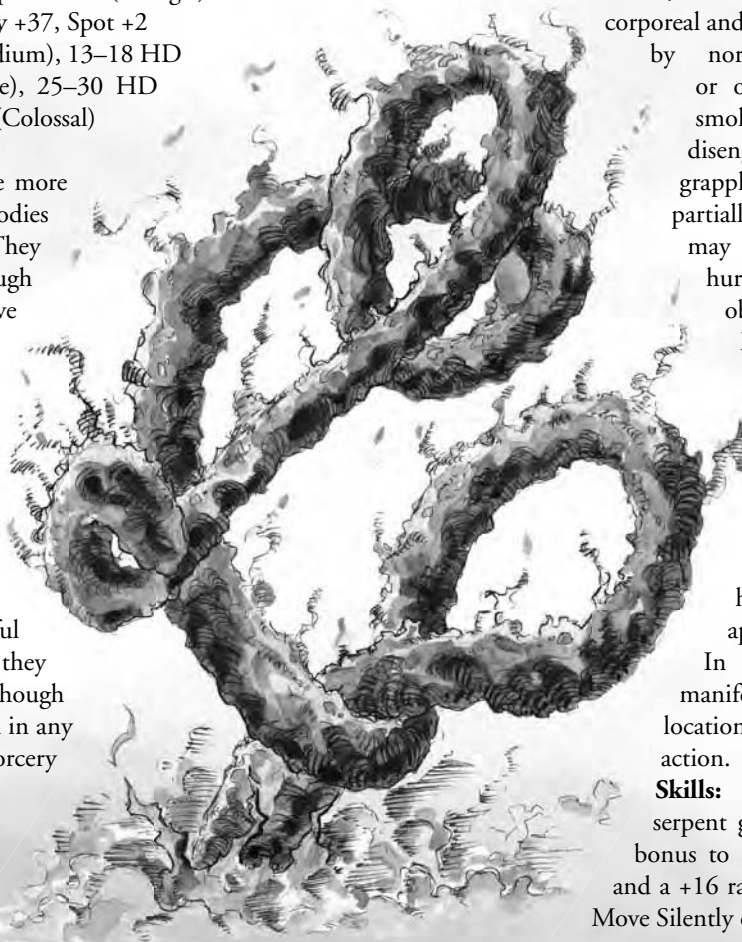
Immunities: Smoke-serpents are immune to all physical damage, except that dealt by objects made from silver. Silver weapons are not generally manufactured during the Hyborian Age, though improvised weapons made from silver benches, candlesticks, mugs and so on could be used. As soon as a smoke-serpent begins to deal damage,

however, it becomes partially corporeal and can be damaged by normal weaponry or other objects. A smoke-serpent that disengages from a grapple is no longer partially corporeal and may no longer be hurt by non-silver objects.

Manifest: As a standard action, the smoke-serpent can either leave Earth and return to its home place or appear on Earth.

In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

Skills: The smoke serpent gains a +8 racial bonus to all Hide checks, and a +16 racial bonus to all Move Silently checks.



UNCANNY STEED

Large Outsider (demon)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +10

Senses: Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages: Demonic

Dodge Defence: 20

Hit Points: 52 (8 HD); DR 10

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +5

Speed: 80 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 5 ft.

Melee: 2 hoofs +17 melee (2d6+10, AP 10), bite +15 (1d8+5, AP 5)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +22

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 12

Special Qualities: Flight, manifest

Feats: Dodge, Endurance, Multiattack

Skills: Climb +21, Intimidate +12, Jump +21, Listen +10, Spot +10

Advancement: 9–12 HD (Large)

This demon can take the form of either a camel or a horse but is always extremely muscular in form and stark black in colour. It sometimes sprouts ragged wings, though usually there is nothing save its colour and strength by which to tell it apart from an ordinary camel or horse.

Uncanny steeds are often summoned by scholars who need rapid transportation. An uncanny steed that has a *demonic pact* with a particular scholar will consider itself bound by that pact even after his death and will carry him to whatever hell awaits him once life passes from his body. Though uncanny steeds never know sorcery themselves, they can teach 1d3 sorcery styles plus the usual Summoning spells.

COMBAT

The uncanny steed considers combat to be somewhat beneath it – it is a steed and companion, not a defender or assassin – but will fight if need be or if ordered to by the scholar who summons it.

Flight: Up to once per day, an uncanny steed can sprout wings and fly at a speed of 120 feet with average manoeuvrability. It can continue flying for up to one minute per Hit Die (usually eight minutes) after which its wings vanish once more.

Manifest: As a standard action, the uncanny steed can either leave Earth and return to its home

place or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

ELEMENTALS

The most powerful of sorcerers call up elementals to perform tasks for them, such as destroying large structures or transporting them across distances of hundreds of miles.

AIR ELEMENTAL

Gargantuan Elemental (air)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and sea

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +22

Senses: Listen +28, Spot +26

Languages: Air plus any four

Dodge Defence: 32

Hit Points: 130 (20 HD); DR 6

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +22, Will +9

Speed: 20 ft., fly 220 ft. (perfect)

Space: 20 ft.; **Reach:** 20 ft.

Melee: Bite +18 melee (2d6+7, AP 7), 2 wing buffets +16 melee (1d8+3, AP –)

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +34

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 30, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 13

Special Qualities: Manifest

Feats: Alertness, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Endurance, Flyby Attack, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills: Listen +28, Spot +26

Advancement: 21–30 HD (Gargantuan)

The air elemental is an enormous flying creature with a 40-foot wingspan. It is not quite either bird or bat but is highly intelligent nonetheless.

Air elementals are usually summoned for transport, not combat. They can sustain a flying speed of around 50 miles per hour and maintain perfect manoeuvrability. The scholar must have some idea of his destination – air elementals are not bloodhounds and cannot track down a particular character, though the scholar could specify a well-known city or simply a direction. The air elemental will transport up to three individuals on its back, which can include the scholar but need not.



Air elementals are sometimes known as 'horses-of-air' to sorcerers from the East.

COMBAT

Air elementals prefer to avoid combat if at all possible, seeing no great use or profit in such an endeavour. They will not willingly fight on behalf of a sorcerer who summons them, though if attacked while transporting him or someone else on his behalf they will defend themselves, assuming it is impossible to flee.

Manifest: As a standard action, the air elemental can either leave Earth and return to its home place or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

EARTH ELEMENTAL

Gargantuan Elemental (air)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +22

Senses: Listen +25, Spot +21

Languages: Earth plus any two

Dodge Defence: 13

Hit Points: 160 (20 HD); **DR** 14

Saves: Fort +17, Ref +6, Will +10

Speed: 30 ft.

Space: 20 ft.; **Reach:** 20 ft.

Melee: 2 slams +26 melee (2d8+15, AP 16)

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +42

Special Attacks: Rock incarnate

Abilities: Str 40, Dex 10, Con 16,

Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Manifest

Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Greater Sunder, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills: Listen +25, Spot +21

Advancement: 21–30 HD (Gargantuan)

Earth elementals appear like massive, squat, thickly muscled humanoids. Their skin seems to be made from solid brown or grey rock and their bodies are extraordinarily strong and powerful.

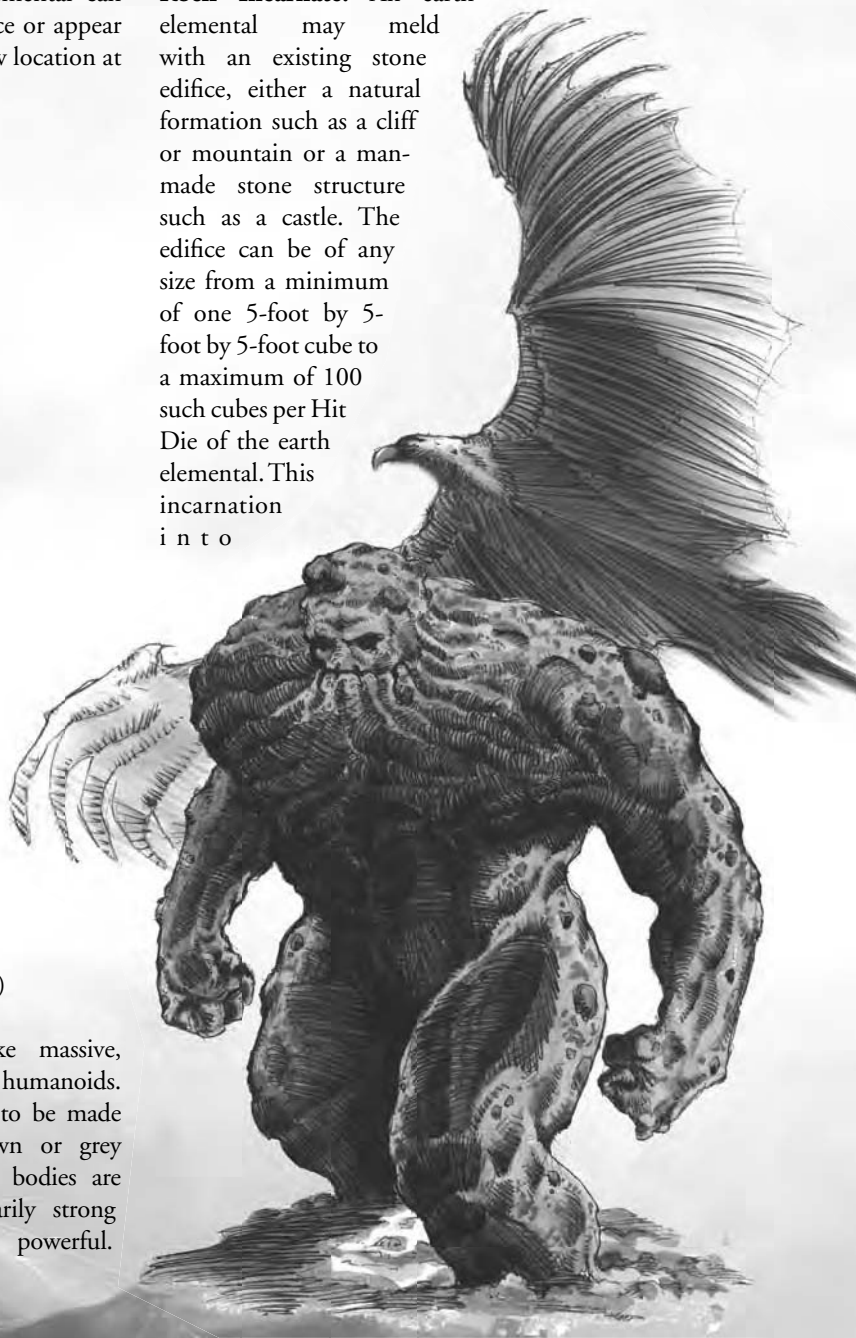
When an earth elemental speaks, it sounds like the cracking and splitting sounds caused by a mighty earthquake.

Sorcerers call upon earth elementals to destroy features of stone, whether castles or mountains, or simply to smash their opponents to smithereens with their huge fists.

COMBAT

Earth elementals relish combat, striding in with both fists flying.

Rock Incarnate: An earth elemental may meld with an existing stone edifice, either a natural formation such as a cliff or mountain or a man-made stone structure such as a castle. The edifice can be of any size from a minimum of one 5-foot by 5-foot by 5-foot cube to a maximum of 100 such cubes per Hit Die of the earth elemental. This incarnation





the very rock allows the earth elemental complete control of the rock but only within the limits of what could naturally occur given sufficient factors such as fault-lines. In effect, an earth elemental can cause either a major earthquake or a sudden landslide. Either way, anyone on or within 40 feet of the rock affected will be pounded with rubble and possibly trapped under rocks, taking a total of 1d6 damage per HD of the earth elemental, with a Reflex saving throw allowed for half damage (DC 20).

Manifest: As a standard action, the earth elemental can either leave Earth and return to its home place or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action. If desired, an earth elemental may both manifest to and return from a state of Rock Incarnate (see above).

FIRE ELEMENTAL

Gargantuan Elemental (fire)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +19

Senses: Listen +23, Spot +23

Languages: Fire plus any two

Dodge Defence: 29

Hit Points: 90 (20 HD); **DR** 10

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +19, Will +10

Speed: 50 ft.

Space: 20 ft.; **Reach:** 20 ft.

Melee: 2 slams +19 finesse (1d6+2 plus 2d10 fire)

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +34

Special Attacks: Flame incarnate

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 25, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Manifest, body of flame

Feats: Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills: Listen +23, Spot +23

Advancement: 21–30 HD (Gargantuan)

Fire elementals resemble enormous, flame-red salamanders, the lizards said to live in volcanoes. Their bodies are constantly wreathed in flame. A fire elemental's eyes resemble liquid pools of fire and no discernable pupil or any other feature is visible in the flames. When a fire elemental speaks, its voice resembles the roaring of a great fire.

Sorcerers call upon fire elementals when they wish to use the raw power of flame to destroy whole armies or devastate vast swathes of countryside.

COMBAT

Fire elementals prefer to avoid direct combat and use other flames to do their work for them.

Body of Flame: A fire elemental's body is covered in flames. Any creature in melee combat with it will be dealt 1d10 fire damage per round unless the creature is wielding a reach weapon.

Flame Incarnate: A fire elemental may take on a form of pure, incorporeal flame up to once per day for up to one minute (10 rounds). A large source of flame (covering at least four 5 foot by 5 foot squares) must be present for the fire elemental to use its flame incarnate power. The fire elemental becomes one with the source of flame, hugely amplifying its effects over the entire area it exists in, which can be a total of up to four 5 foot by 5 foot squares per Hit Die of the fire elemental, depending on the area covered by the initial source of flame. Any creature within the source of flame when the fire elemental becomes one with it will be dealt 4d10 fire damage per round, with a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) allowed for half damage.

Manifest: As a standard action, the fire elemental can either leave Earth and return to its home place or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action. If desired, a fire elemental may both manifest to and return from a state of Flame Incarnate (see above).

WATER ELEMENTAL

Gargantuan Elemental (water)

Climate/Terrain: Any land, underground and sea

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +11

Senses: Listen +27, Spot +19

Languages: Water plus any two

Dodge Defence: 19

Hit Points: 110 (20 HD); **DR** 10

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +10

Speed: 20 ft., swim 90 ft.

Space: 20 ft.; **Reach:** 20 ft.

Melee: Bite +21 melee (2d10+10, AP 11), 2 slams +19 melee (2d6+5, AP –)

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +37

Special Attacks: Improved grab, swallow whole, weather control, water control

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 8





Special Qualities: Manifest, body of flame

Feats: Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills: Listen +27, Spot +19

Advancement: 21–30 HD (Gargantuan)

This weird-looking and ugly creature is clearly amphibious but does not appear to be either a giant frog or great newt exactly. It has a deep, croaking voice like a louder version of a frog's call. A water elemental's skin is patterned with swirling dark blues and greens.

Sorcerers usually call up water elementals because they want a specific weather or tidal effect created. Water elementals can be highly effective at tasks from destroying ships to blocking river crossings.

COMBAT

Water elementals prefer to use the wind and waves to attack their enemies at a distance.

Improved Grab: To use this ability, a water elemental must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Manifest: As a standard action, the water elemental can either leave Earth and return to its home place or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

Swallow Whole: If a water elemental begins its turn with an opponent held it can swallow that opponent with a successful grapple check. If it succeeds, the opponent takes bite damage and is relocated to the elemental's stomach. Unless otherwise noted, the opponent can be up to one size category smaller than the water elemental. A swallowed creature is considered to be grappled, while the water elemental is not. A swallowed creature can try to cut its way free with any light slashing or piercing weapon (at least 20 points of cutting damage would need to be dealt before it could cut its way free) or it can just try to escape by crawling back up the gullet. If the swallowed creature succeeds on its grapple check it returns to the water elemental's mouth (still grappled), where it may be bitten or swallowed again.

Water Control: A water elemental can control a body of water up to a radius of 20 miles around its current location. This effect is a full-round action to initiate, but persists for 4d12 hours after the water elemental ceases concentrating. It changes the tides and waves in the local area. The water elemental can call forth great tsunamis to sink ships at sea, calm down choppy waters or anything in-between. Changes occur gradually, typically taking 10 to 20 minutes to fully manifest, depending



on how different the change is from the current tidal situation. The water elemental can control the general tendencies of the waves and tides, such as the direction and intensity of the current. However, this must be within the normal range for the behaviour of water – even a water elemental cannot reverse the flow of a river, for example, because this would cause water to flow uphill. It can also control specific applications of the weather – which ships get targeted by the tsunami, for example – but doing so requires it to concentrate continuously from the moment it first causes the effect to the moment when it wishes one or more specific applications to occur. When it selects a certain condition to occur within the water, the waves and tide assume that condition 10 to 20 minutes later, changing gradually, not abruptly. The situation continues as the water elemental leaves it for the full 4d12 hours or until the water elemental manifests the effect again. Simultaneous contradictory conditions are not possible – if two water elementals attempt to create different effects across the same body of water, neither is capable of affecting conditions significantly. This means that one water elemental can be used to negate the water control effects of another.

Weather Control: Up to three times per day, a water elemental can use a full-round action to control the weather selectively anywhere within a 20-mile radius of its current location. This effect persists for 4d12 hours after the water elemental ceases concentrating. It changes the weather in the local area. The water elemental can call forth weather appropriate to the climate and season of the area it is in. Changes occur gradually, typically taking 10 to 20 minutes to fully manifest, depending on how different the change is from the usual weather.

Season	Possible Weather
Spring	Tornado, thunderstorm, sleet storm, or hot weather
Summer	Torrential rain, heat wave, or hailstorm
Autumn	Hot or cold weather, fog, or sleet
Winter	Frigid cold, blizzard, or thaw
Late winter	Hurricane-force winds or early spring (coastal area)

The water elemental can control the general tendencies of the weather, such as the direction and intensity of the wind. It can also control specific applications of the weather – where lightning strikes, for example, or the exact path of a tornado – but doing so requires it to concentrate continuously from the moment it first causes the effect to the moment when it wishes one or more specific applications to occur. When it selects a certain weather

condition to occur, the weather assumes that condition 10 to 20 minutes later, changing gradually, not abruptly. The weather continues as the water elemental leaves it for the full 4d12 hours or until the water elemental manifests this effect again. Simultaneous contradictory conditions are not possible – if two water elementals attempt to create different effects across the same area, neither is capable of affecting conditions significantly. This means that one water elemental can be used to negate the weather control effects of another. The water elemental can do away with atmospheric phenomena (naturally occurring or otherwise) as well as create them.

GHOST

A ghost is formed when a human or other intelligent creature dies with a task unfinished or with the knowledge that a loved one is about to die. At the moment of his death, the creature may attempt a Will saving throw (DC 25, with various circumstance modifiers depending on level of the creature's commitment to the task or loved one) to return as a ghost.

A ghost has one chance and one chance only to alter the world of the living. He can manifest anywhere within one mile of his place of death and within one day of his time of death.

This manifestation can last for up to one round, plus one additional round per point of Wisdom bonus (if any). During that time the ghost can interact with other creatures and objects exactly as though he were alive but with the added effect that any opponent he strikes in melee (with a weapon or unarmed attack) must make a Will saving throw (DC 20 + ½ ghost's former class level + ghost's former Charisma modifier) or be affected as though he had failed a Terror saving throw (see page 376) for as long as the ghost is manifested.

At the end of the ghost's manifestation, it vanishes forever to whichever hell or paradise is its destination.



GHoul

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Climate/Terrain: Any land

Organisation: Solitary, patrol (2–4), or gang (5–20)

Initiative: +7

Senses: Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages: Any one

Dodge Defence: 16

Hit Points: 39 (6 HD); DR 2

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2

Speed: 40 ft.

Melee: 2 claws +9 (1d4+3, AP –) and bite +7 (1d8+1, AP 4)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9

Special Attacks: Improved grab, relentless jaws

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 1

Feats: Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills: Hide +13, Listen +5, Move Silently +13, Spot +5

Advancement: By character class (probably barbarian)

Ghouls are misshapen, grey humanoids of enormous strength and vitality. They eat human flesh. Ghouls live only in the ancient oak forests on the border between Zingara and Argos. It is whispered that the ghouls have a limited society of sorts in their primeval citadel deep within the forest, though travellers and scholars have never returned alive to confirm or deny these rumours.

Ghouls speak their own language of grunts, howls and screams. No non-ghoul has yet mastered it, largely due to the near-impossibility of dealing peacefully with these primal horrors.

COMBAT

Ghouls usually attack in a wild frenzy of claws and teeth, though against a more powerful foe they will use more careful hit-and-run tactics.

Improved Grab: To use this ability, a ghoul must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Relentless Jaws: As a full-round action a ghoul may deal automatic bite damage to any target it has grappled. This also gradually chews through its opponent's armour – each round the ghoul uses Relentless Jaws, including the first round, the AP rating of its bite increases by +1.

Skills: Ghouls have a +2 racial bonus to their Hide and Move Silently skills.

MAN-APE

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and cold mountains

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +7

Senses: Listen +5, Spot +5, low-light vision, scent

Languages: None

Dodge Defence: 15

Hit Points: 39 (6 HD); DR 5

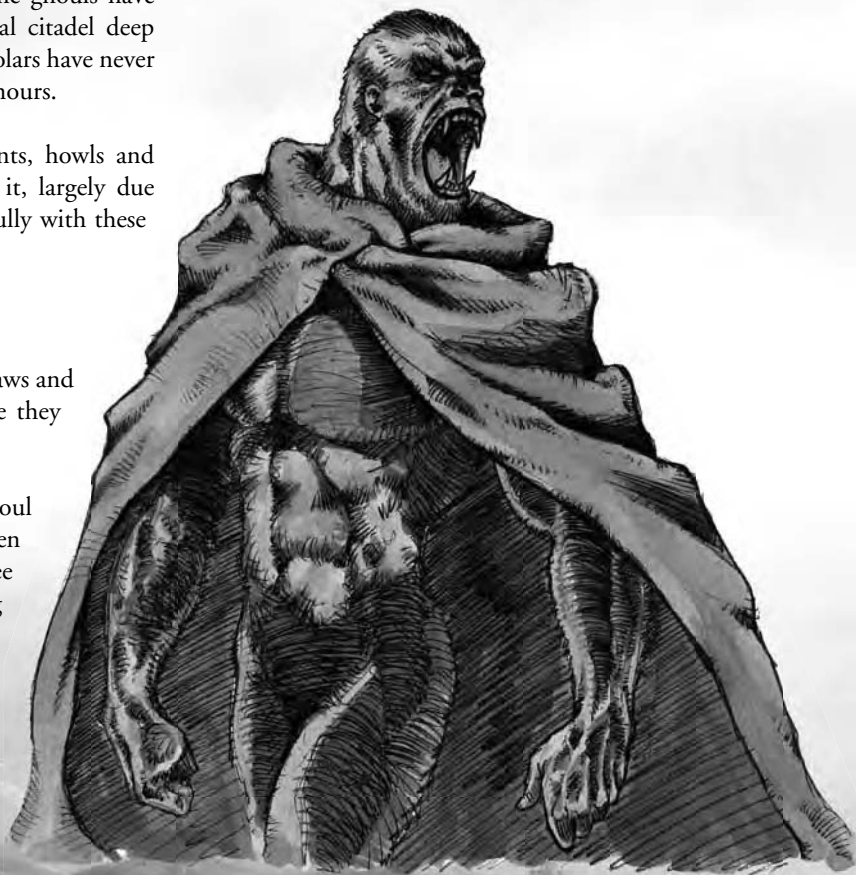
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3

Speed: 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; **Reach:** 10 ft.

Melee: 2 slams +11 (1d8+6, AP –) and bite +9 (1d10+3, AP –)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +16



Special Attacks: Improved grab, crush

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 7

Feats: Alertness, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills: Climb +12, Listen +5, Spot +5, Perform (mimic) +7, Search +2

Advancement: 7–10 HD (Large)

The man-ape has close to human intelligence and is almost as tough as a grey ape. Man-apes are actually descended from ancient Atlanteans, having degenerated from their human state to a more primitive one; they are not some kind of 'missing link.' An adult male man-ape is eight to nine feet tall and weighs around 350 pounds.

Man-apes do not have a true language of their own, though they are able to communicate basic concepts to one another with a combination of body language and simple vocalisations.

Man-apes are found only in the mountains to the east of Zamora on the fringes of the Eastern Desert. Certain Corinthian and Zamorian scholars occasionally travel to these mountains and attempt to train man-apes but because of the creatures' high intelligence such training always risks breaking down. This danger does not exist when training a true animal.

COMBAT

Man-apes attempt to grapple their victims, then settle down to crush and gnaw them at leisure.

Crush: A man-ape that gets a hold can deal 3d8+9 damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab: To use this ability, a man-ape must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Skills: Man-apes have a +6 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

RISEN DEAD

Medium Undead

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organisation: Gang (2–5), squad (6–10), or mob (11–20)

Initiative: +0

Senses: Listen +0, Spot +0

Dodge Defence: 10

Hit Points: 19 (3 HD); DR –

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +3

Speed: 20 ft.

Melee: Slam +4 (1d6+3, AP –)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +4

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 8, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1

Special Qualities: Undead, limp stumble

Advancement: 4–5 HD (Medium)

The risen dead plague many of the ruins and dark places of Hyboria. In particular, Stygia, Ghulistan, Hyperborea and Yimsha are all plagued with the unliving, primarily owing to the abundance of necromancers in those locales.

COMBAT

Risen dead usually attack unarmed, though they can be ordered to wield weapons.

Limp Stumble: The risen dead are highly ineffective in combat and indeed everything else. All that they do is characterised by slowness, clumsiness and brainlessness. Each round, they may take either a standard action or a move action but not both.





Undead: An undead creature possesses the following traits (unless otherwise noted): no Constitution score; darkvision out to 60 feet; immunity to all mind-affecting effects; immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning and disease; not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, or energy drain; immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion; cannot heal damage on its own; immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless); uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks; proficient with its natural weapons and all simple weapons; not proficient with armour or shields; undead do not breathe, eat, or sleep.

OTHER RISEN CREATURES

Occasionally necromancers desperate for material will animate corpses of things other than human. The most common creatures brought to a shambling semblance of life are large dogs or wolves, or occasionally jaguars or panthers if the terrain is right. Very rarely a necromancer will find the corpse of a great grey ape or other large creature and animate that, creating a mighty – if odorous – ally.

RISEN WOLF

Medium Undead

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organisation: Solitary or pack (2–5)

Initiative: +2

Senses: Listen +0, Spot +0

Dodge Defence: 14

Hit Points: 26 (4 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Bite +4 (1d8+2, AP –)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 13, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1

Special Qualities: Undead, limp stumble

Advancement: 5–6 HD (Medium)

RISEN GREY APE

Large Undead

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +0, Spot +0

Dodge Defence: 16

Hit Points: 78 (12 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +8

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: 2 claws +14 melee (1d8+8, AP –) and gore +9
melee (2d8+4, AP 9)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +14

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 13, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1

Special Qualities: Undead, limp stumble

Advancement: 13–14 HD (Large); 15–18 HD (Huge)

SPAWN OF DAGOTH HILL

It is whispered that the dreaded Kothian sorcerer, Tsothalandi, is no true man but a half-demon, spawned by the mating of a dancing-girl with a vile pre-human entity among the haunted ruins of Dagoth Hill. It seems likely Tsothalandi is not the only one.

CREATING A SPAWN OF DAGOTH HILL

‘Spawn of Dagoth Hill’ is a template that can be added to any living creature with an Intelligence score of four or more, referred to hereafter as the base creature. A Spawn of Dagoth Hill is something you are rather than something you become, so if the Games Master allows Player Character Spawn then they must have this template when they are created.

A spawn of Dagoth Hill uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature’s type changes to outsider. Do not recalculate Hit Dice, base attack bonus or saves. Size is unchanged. Spawn of Dagoth Hill are native outsiders.

Speed: Same as the base creature

Damage Reduction: Natural damage reduction improves by +1. This stacks with any natural damage reduction bonus the base creature already has.

Attacks: Same as the base creature

Special Attacks: Same as the base creature

Special Qualities: A spawn of Dagoth Hill has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.



- ☛ Darkvision to a range of 30 feet
- ☛ Immunity to poison

Spells: Although the spawn of Dagoth Hill gains no particular bonus spells, he is particularly effective with spells of the Summoning sorcery style. Whenever he casts a *summon demon* or *summon elemental* spell, his scholar class level is considered to be +2 for purposes of both the maximum Hit Dice of creature that can be summoned and the duration of the spell.

Favoured Class: Change to scholar

Base Power Points: Increase by +4

Abilities: Adjust from the base creature as follows:

Dex +2, Con -2

Fate Points: Reduce by -2

Languages: Spawn of Dagoth Hill automatically know Demonic in addition to any other languages they may know.

Corruption: Same as base creature +2

VAMPIRE

Vampires are created when scholars elect to undergo certain transformations hinted at in the fabled *Book of Skelos* by courting darkness in the shadowy places beneath the Earth and seeking death willingly so as to find eternal life. It is believed that the great pyramidal tombs of Stygia hold many a royal vampire, kings and queens of old who refused to die at the end of their reigns.

Vampires appear just as they did in life, though their flesh is cold and hard. Their gaze, too, may appear a little too steady and wide-eyed to be entirely human. Still, there are few certain means of identifying a vampire save by magic or feeling its bite! The only clear indicator that a creature is a vampire is that in the dark its eyes give off a golden glow; however, even this might as easily be achieved with a simple spell.

Vampires speak any languages they knew in life.

CREATING A VAMPIRE

'Vampire' is an acquired template that can be added to any humanoid creature, referred to hereafter as the base creature.

A vampire uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead (augmented humanoid). Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves or skill points. Size is unchanged.

Hit Dice: Increase all current and future Hit Dice to d12s.

Speed: Same as the base creature

Dodge/Parry Defence: Same as the base creature

Damage Reduction: 6

Attack: A vampire retains all the attacks of the base creature and also gains a slam attack if it did not already have one. If the base creature can use weapons, the vampire retains this ability. A creature with natural weapons retains those natural weapons. A vampire fighting without weapons uses either its slam attack or its primary natural weapon if it has any. A vampire armed with a weapon uses its slam attack or a weapon as it desires.

Full Attack: A vampire fighting without weapons uses either its slam attack (see above) or its natural weapons if it has any. If armed with a weapon, it usually uses the weapon as its primary attack along with a slam attack or other natural weapon as a natural secondary attack.

Damage: Vampires have slam attacks. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the appropriate damage value from the table below according to the vampire's size. Creatures that have other kinds of natural weapons retain their old damage values or use the appropriate value from the table below, whichever is better.

Size	Damage	Size	Damage
Fine	1d2	Large	2d6
Diminutive	1d3	Huge	2d8
Tiny	1d4	Gargantuan	4d6
Small	1d6	Colossal	4d8
Medium	1d8		

Special Attacks: A vampire retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains those described below.

Blood Drain: A vampire can use its fangs to suck blood from a living victim by making a successful grapple check against a held opponent. If it succeeds, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful drain, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points.

Children of the Night: Vampires command the lesser creatures of darkness and once per day can call forth 1d6+1 a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. (If the base creature is not terrestrial, this power might summon other creatures of similar power.) These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to one hour. A vampire can also command any mindless undead creatures it can see through a simple act of will (a free action). If the undead



is already under someone else's control the vampire must succeed in an opposed magic attack roll in order to make its commands heard.

Dominare: A vampire can crush an opponent's will just by looking onto his eyes. This is similar to an evil eye spell, except that the vampire must use a standard action and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a Will saving throw (DC set by a magic attack roll) or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by the *domination* spell (see page 251). This ability has a range of 30 feet.

Special Qualities: A vampire retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains those described below.

Fast Healing: A vampire heals 5 points of damage each round so long as it has at least 1 hit point. This is an exception to the normal rule that undead do not heal.

Immunities: A vampire is completely immune to cold.

Undead: An undead creature possesses the following traits (unless otherwise noted): no Constitution score; darkvision out to 60 feet; immunity to all mind-affecting effects; immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning and disease; not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, or energy drain; immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion; cannot heal damage on its own; immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless); uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks; proficient with its natural weapons and all simple weapons; not proficient with armour or shields; undead do not breathe, eat, or sleep.

Vampires are not immune to mind-affecting effects.

Abilities: The vampire's abilities are changed as follows: Str +6, Dex +4, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +4. As an undead creature, a vampire has no Constitution.

Skills: A vampire has a +8 racial bonus on Bluff, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive and Spot checks. Otherwise, its skills are the same as those of the base creature.

Feats: Vampires gain Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative and Lightning Reflexes, assuming the base creature meets the prerequisites and does not already have these feats.

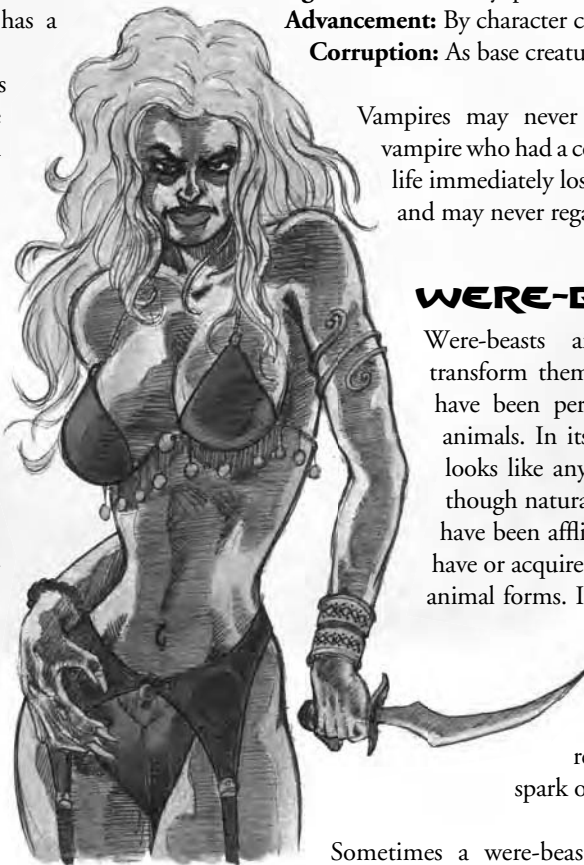
Environment: Any, usually the same as the base creature

Organisation: Solitary, pair, or gang (3–5)

Advancement: By character class

Corruption: As base creature +4

Vampires may never have codes of honour. A vampire who had a code of honour in his previous life immediately loses it on becoming a vampire and may never regain it.



WERE-BEAST

Were-beasts are humanoids who can transform themselves into animals or who have been permanently transformed into animals. In its natural form, a were-beast looks like any other member of its kind, though natural were-beasts and those who have been afflicted for a long time tend to have or acquire features reminiscent of their animal forms. In animal form, a were-beast resembles a powerful version of the normal animal but on close inspection, its eyes (which often glow red in the dark) show a faint spark of unnatural intelligence.

Sometimes a were-beast begins life as a normal humanoid who is transformed by the curse *awful rite of the were-beast*. Such a creature is called an afflicted were-beast. Other were-beasts are born as were-beasts and are known as natural were-beasts. Natural were-beasts – also sometimes known as 'true' were-beasts – are the only ones that can change form. Afflicted were-beasts will spend the rest of their lives in animal form if they cannot be somehow cured.

COMBAT

A were-beast in its humanoid form uses whatever tactics and weapons are favoured by others of its kind, though it tends to be slightly more aggressive. A were-beast in human form possesses the senses of its animal form, including scent and low-light vision. It also has a deep empathy for (and ability to communicate with) animals of its animal form.

	Were-hyena, Human Form	Were-hyena, Hyena Form
	Medium Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger)	Medium Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger)
Hit Dice:	1d10 plus 3d8 (19 hp)	1d10+2 plus 3d8+6 (25 hp)
Initiative:	+7 (+4 Improved Initiative, +3 Reflex)	+9 (+2Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +3 Reflex)
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)	50 ft. (10 squares)
Dodge Defence:	12 (+2 natural)	14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)
Parry Defence:	12 (+2 Str)	-
damage reduction:	4 (+4 were-hyena)	6 (+2 hyena, +4 were-hyena)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+3/+5	+3/+9
Attack:	War spear +5 melee (1d10+3/x3, AP 4) or hunting bow (+2) +3 ranged (1d8+2/x2, AP 1)	Bite +9 melee (1d8+9, AP -)
Full Attack:	War spear +5 melee (1d10+3/x3, AP 4) or hunting bow (+2) +3 ranged (1d8+2/x2, AP 1)	Bite +9 melee (1d8+9, AP -)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	-	Trip
Special Qualities:	Alternate form, hyena empathy, low-light vision, scent	Alternate form, hyena empathy, low-light vision, scent
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2	Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 10	Str 23, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 10
Skills:	Hide +5, Listen +9, Spot +7, Move Silently +4, Survival +3	Hide +5, Listen +9, Spot +7, Move Silently +4, Survival +3
Feats:	Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack	(same as human form)
Environment:	Warm desert and jungle	Warm desert and jungle
Organisation:	Solitary, pair, pack (40–50), or troupe (6–10 plus 20–30 hyenas)	(same as human form)
Advancement:	By character class	By character class

A were-beast in animal form fights like the animal it resembles. It is preternaturally cunning and strong.

WERE-HYENA

In hyena form, a were-hyena can trip just as a normal hyena does.

Alternate Form: A natural were-hyena can assume the form of a hyena or return to the form of a man.

Trip: A were-hyena in animal form that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip its opponent (+2 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the were-hyena.

Hyena Empathy: Communicate with hyenas; +4 racial bonus on Charisma-based checks against hyenas.

Skills: The were-hyena presented here is based on a 1st level Kushite barbarian and natural were-beast, using the following base ability scores: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 10. His Kushite heritage grants him a +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks made in any hot land.

WEREWOLF

In wolf form, a werewolf can trip just as a normal wolf does.

Alternate Form: A natural werewolf can assume the form of a wolf or return to the form of a man.

Trip: A werewolf in animal form that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip its opponent (+1 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the werewolf.

Wolf Empathy: Communicate with wolves and +4 racial bonus on Charisma-based checks against wolves.

Skills: A werewolf in wolf form gains a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

The werewolf presented here is based on a 1st-level Nordheimer barbarian and natural were-beast, using the following base



	Werewolf, Human Form	Werewolf, Wolf Form
	Medium Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger)	Medium Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger)
Hit Dice:	1d10+1 plus 2d8+4 (19 hp)	1d10+3 plus 2d8+6 (23 hp)
Initiative:	+7 (+4 Improved Initiative, +3 Reflex)	+9 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +3 Reflex)
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)	50 ft. (10 squares)
Dodge Defence:	12 (+2 natural)	14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)
Parry Defence:	11 (+1 Str)	-
damage reduction:	8 (+4 leather jerkin, +4 werewolf)	6 (+2 wolf, +4 werewolf)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+2/+3	+2/+4
Attack:	Broadsword +3 melee (1d10+1/19–20, AP 4) or hunting bow +2 ranged (1d8+2/×2, AP 1)	Bite +5 melee (1d8+3, AP –)
Full Attack:	Broadsword +3 melee (1d10+1/19–20, AP 4) or hunting bow +2 ranged (1d8+2/×2, AP 1)	Bite +5 melee (1d8+3, AP –)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	–	Trip
Special Qualities:	Alternate form, wolf empathy, low-light vision, scent	Alternate form, wolf empathy, low-light vision, scent
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2	Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8	Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8
Skills:	Craft (leatherworker) +2, Handle Animal +1, Hide +1, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Profession (farmer) +1, Spot +1, Survival +4	Craft (leatherworker) +2, Handle Animal +1, Hide +6, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +1, Move Silently +6, Profession (farmer) +1, Spot +1, Survival +4
Feats:	Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Stealthy, Track, Weapon Focus (bite)	(same as human form)
Environment:	Temperate forests	Temperate forests
Organisation:	Solitary, pair, pack (6–10), or troupe (2–5 plus 5–8 wolves)	(same as human form)
Advancement:	By character class	By character class

ability scores: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8. His Nordheimer heritage grants him a +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks made in any cold land.

CREATING A WERE-BEAST

‘Were-beast’ is a template that can be added to any humanoid, referred to hereafter as the base creature.

The were-beast template can be inherited (for natural were-beasts) or acquired (for afflicted were-beasts).

Becoming a were-beast is very much like multiclassing as an animal and gaining the appropriate Hit Dice.

Size and Type: The base creature’s type does not change but the creature gains

characteristics of some type of carnivorous or omnivorous creature of the animal type, referred to hereafter as the base animal. This animal can be any predator, scavenger or omnivore whose size is within one size category of the base creature’s size (Small, Medium or Large for a Medium-size base creature). A were-beast uses either the base creature’s or the base animal’s statistics and special abilities in addition to those described here.

Hit Dice and Hit Points: Same as the base creature plus those of the base animal. To calculate total hit points, apply Constitution modifiers according to the score the were-beast has in each form. This means a were-beast may have different hit point totals in human and animal form. Changing to a lower hit point form while wounded may kill the were-beast in the same way as a warrior coming down from a Fighting-Madness.

Speed: Same as the base creature or base animal, depending on which form the were-beast is using.

Dodge Defence: Same as the base creature or base animal, depending on the form the were-beast is

using, except as follows: In human form the were-beast adds the natural Dodge Defence bonus from the animal type as a dodge bonus to its Dodge Defence. In animal form the were-beast adds its human class-based dodge bonus to its Dodge Defence.

Damage Reduction: The base creature's natural damage reduction increases by +4 in all forms.

Base Attack/Grapple: Add the base attack bonus for the base animal to the base attack bonus for the base creature. The were-beast's grapple bonus uses its (new) base attack bonus and modifiers for Strength and size depending on the were-beast's form.

Attacks: Same as the base creature or base animal, depending on which form the were-beast is in.

Damage: Same as the base creature or base animal, depending on which form the were-beast is in.

Special Attacks: A were-beast retains the special attacks of the base creature or base animal, depending on which form it is using. A were-beast sorcerer cannot cast spells with verbal, somatic or material components while in animal form.

Special Qualities: A were-beast retains all the special qualities of the base creature and the base animal and also gains those described below:

Alternate Form: A natural were-beast can shift into animal form as though using the *shape-shifter* spell on itself, though its gear is not affected, it does not regain hit points for changing form and only the specific animal form indicated for the were-beast can be assumed. It does not assume the ability scores of the animal but instead adds the animal's physical ability score modifiers to its own ability scores. A slain were-beast reverts to its humanoid form (even an afflicted were-beast that could not voluntarily enter human form), although it remains dead. Separated body parts retain their animal form, however. Natural were-beasts have full control over this power.

Animal Empathy: In any form, were-beasts can communicate and empathise with normal animals of their animal form. This gives them a +4 racial bonus on checks when influencing the animal's attitude and allows the communication of simple concepts and (if the animal is friendly) commands, such as 'friend,' 'foe,' 'flee' and 'attack.'

Low-Light Vision: A were-beast has low-light vision in any form.

Scent: A were-beast has the scent ability in any form.

Base Save Bonuses: Add the base save bonuses of the base animal to the base save bonuses of the base creature.

Abilities: All were-beasts gain +2 to Wisdom. In addition, when in animal form, a were-beast's physical ability scores improve according to its kind, as set out in the table below. These adjustments are equal to the animal's normal ability scores -10 or -11. Furthermore, a were-beast may also gain an additional ability score increase by virtue of its extra Hit Dice.

Skills: A were-beast gains skill points equal to (2 + Int modifier, minimum 1) per Hit Die of its animal form, as if it had multiclassed into the animal type.

(Animal is never its first Hit Die though and it does not gain quadruple skill points for any animal Hit Die.) Any skill given in the animal's description is a class skill for the were-beast's animal levels. In any form, a were-beast also has any racial skill bonuses of the base creature and of the base animal, although conditional skill bonuses only apply in the associated form.

Feats: Add the base animal's feats to the base creature's feats. If this results in a were-beast having the same feat twice, the were-beast gains no additional benefit unless the feat can normally be taken more than once, in which case the duplicated feat works as noted in the feat description. This process may give the were-beast more feats than a character of its total Hit Dice would normally be entitled to; if this occurs, any 'extra' feats are denoted as bonus feats. It is possible that a were-beast cannot meet the prerequisites for all its feats when in humanoid form. If this occurs, the were-beast still has the feats but cannot use them when in humanoid form. A were-beast receives Iron Will as a bonus feat.

Environment: Same as either the base creature or base animal

Organisation: Solitary or pair, sometimes family (3-4), pack (6-10), or troupe (family plus related animals)

Advancement: By character class

COMMON WERE-BEASTS

Name	Animal Form	Animal Form Ability Modifiers
Werewolf	Wolf	Str +2, Dex +4, Con +4
Were-hyena	Hyena	Str +8, Dex +4, Con +4

CURING A WERE-BEAST

The only known way to cure the victim of an *awful rite of the were-beast* is to use the *greater warding* spell.

CHANGING FORM

The only were-creatures able to change form are natural were-creatures. Changing form is a standard action. Changing to animal form ruins the character's armour and clothing (including any items worn) if the new form is larger than the character's natural form; carried items are simply dropped. Characters can hastily doff clothing while changing but not armour. During the three nights of the full moon per month, a natural were-creature will change into animal form involuntarily and may not return to human form until dawn. Other than that, the natural were-creature has complete control over his transformations.

Campaigns

ADVENTURES

The first places to look for *Conan the Roleplaying Game* adventure ideas are the original Conan stories. Often the stories can be borrowed in their entirety, particularly if a Games Master is fortunate enough to have a group of players who have not read all the stories. Many of them are short enough to work as one- or two-session adventures, which can make for a great introduction to the game.

Other great sources for *Conan the Roleplaying Game* adventures are the unfinished stories and drafts left by Howard. These are *The Hall of the Dead*, *The Hand of Nergal*, *The Snout in the Dark*, *Drums of Tombalku* and *Wolves Beyond the Border*, all of which have now been printed in their original fragmentary forms. The advantage of these is that they often plant the seeds of an adventure: they specify the nature of the reward or challenge to be faced; they introduce several important Non-Player Characters; they give a hint as to the kind of opposition Conan is likely to face. Even players who have read these incomplete tales, will have no idea as to how the Games Master chooses to complete the adventure – the only minor advantage they may have is a better understanding of the adventure's background than players who have not read the stories.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The most important thing to remember when designing Non-Player Characters for a *Conan the Roleplaying Game* adventure is to make them larger than life! Exciting characters are more important than fully rounded or even entirely believable ones. The major ones should always have strong physical descriptions that often liken them to animals – hawks, wolves, bears, leopards, panthers, tigers or other predators.

The second most important thing is to ensure that most Non-Player Characters have both an allegiance or

two and a separate agenda of their own. See the Agents and Agendas section later in this chapter for more tips on achieving just that.

COMMENCING AN ADVENTURE

One of the devices Howard uses several times to get Conan into obscure regions of the world is to have him flee from a powerful enemy right from the start of the story and take refuge in a desert or lost city or forbidden island. Conan may have to escape the massacre of some mercenary army that loses its war and breaks up or is destroyed. However, there are plenty of ways of getting characters where they need to be; the Games Master does not even necessarily need to be all that precise about why his players are in Koth when last session they were in Turan, for example. They are adventurers, drifters; simple wanderlust, the need to flee town in a hurry or rumours of a priceless treasure are all good reasons for the characters to start off hundreds of miles from where they ended their last adventure.

One advantage to this is that the Games Master can quite reasonably assume that several months have passed between adventures – certainly sufficient time for the characters to have spent or lost all their ill-gotten gains from their last quest. Likewise, their equipment may well have altered. The Games Master is always at liberty to remove from (or add to) the characters' equipment lists between adventures. This is very much in keeping with the genre, which, after all, is about the people, not their collections of gadgets, gizmos and swords. Almost anything could happen between adventures and judging by the Conan stories, frequently does. Looking at the first few stories in chronological order, Conan has the following equipment at the start of each story:

- ✱ Cheap tunic, loincloth, belt, sword and almost no money (The Tower of the Elephant)
- ✱ Loincloth, sandals, belt, sword and almost no money (The God in the Bowl)
- ✱ Nothing save a loincloth and tunic – he is locked in a prison cell (Rogues in the House)
- ✱ Sword, helmet, mail armour (The Frost-Giant's Daughter)

- ❖ Broadsword, full armour and almost no money (Queen of the Black Coast)
- ❖ Loincloth, plumed head-dress, sword and an entire tribe of savage followers (The Vale of Lost Women)
- ❖ Sword, mail armour, cloak and a mercenary's pay (Black Colossus)
- ❖ Loincloth and sword (Shadows in the Moonlight)
- ❖ Nothing save a loincloth – he is nailed to a cross (A Witch Shall Be Born)
- ❖ Ragged nomad robes, sword and almost no money (Shadows in Zamboula)

As can be seen, there is no apparent progression or even relationship between Conan's equipment at the start of one adventure and his equipment at the start of the next. There is always time between adventures when his activities are less noteworthy but during which he gains or loses various bits and pieces of equipment. He rarely starts an adventure with more than one or two weapons and is often unarmoured – though if he expects open battle he will put on armour if he can get his hands on it.

Note that poverty is the most common starting condition for Conan and the same should certainly be true of any gaming group's characters.

A significant minority of the time, Conan starts off his adventure at a serious disadvantage – imprisoned, tortured and left for dead or caught by the police inside a building he is burgling. Again the Games Master has every right to start players off not just with no equipment but also in a compromising or otherwise disadvantageous situation. Games Masters should be guided first and foremost, as Howard was, by what makes a good story – it is no fun reading detailed descriptions of the manner by which Conan was captured. What is enjoyable is discovering how he is going to escape and the same goes for players of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

One additional point to bear in mind here is that characters often acquire what might be called human resources in addition to their weapons and equipment. These may be in the form of hired mercenaries, allies or family derived from the noble's Social Ability class feature or the cohort and followers acquired by selecting the Leadership feat.

As with equipment, these human resources may be taken from the characters at the Games Master's whim though a little more care must be taken here. If a character has 'paid' for these people with more than mere gold and silver, which is the case with the noble's class feature and with the Leadership feat, it is not fair to permanently deprive the character of them through no fault of

his own. Still, it may be necessary to do so for the duration of an adventure or two. Here are some ways of achieving this as fairly as possible:

- ❖ An adventure which takes place in a distant land may make it difficult for a noble to call on either his Ally or his Family, if he has them. So long as the Games Master is careful to ensure that a reasonable number of adventures occur in the noble's home country and that the Ally or Family are suitably effective there, this should not be a problem.
- ❖ The character may be separated from his followers. In this case, it is likely they will be searching for him and could prove very useful in a '7th Cavalry' role, arriving in the nick of time for the character to lead them to victory. A variant of this occurs in the story *The People of the Black Circle*, in which Conan arrives in the nick of time to save his army of Afghuli followers from destruction! The character's cohort may be with the character or with his followers. Often it is best, especially if the party size is relatively small, to allow the cohort to remain with the character.
- ❖ The character's followers, probably excluding the cohort, have all been killed. The Games Master should use this option very sparingly and only when he is willing to allow the character to recruit another batch of followers. Certainly the player should not be penalised in any way for the loss of the followers, since they were lost through no fault of his own. In *The Scarlet Citadel* Conan's eight thousand knights are lying dead about him right from the start of the tale.

One more factor to consider before starting an adventure is whether all the characters can speak the language of the area in which the game is to take place. If a significant break in the game's continuity has been arranged by the Games Master, such as when one adventure ends in Vendhya and the next one commences in Cimmeria, the Games Master should ensure that all the characters at least speak the language where the new adventure is to take place, unless he has very good plot-related reasons for not wanting them to be able to speak it.

In most cases this can be done by simple Games Master fiat: 'You have managed to pick up the Cimmerian tongue over the last few weeks, after some initial difficulty making yourselves understood



in the language of the Aesir when you first went before the Cimmerian chieftain.' This or something similar can be included as part of the Games Master's introduction to the adventure.

PACING

Although Conan is a superb tactician in the stories, he rarely sits around planning strategy, preferring instead to leap into the fray and trust to his superior tactics, skill and speed to decimate the opposition. It is essential that Games Masters keep their adventures moving, even more so than in most roleplaying games. If the players have time to discuss their strategies for half an hour or more with little action, it is probably time to change the situation dramatically, perhaps rendering all their discussions moot as the enemy finds them instead of the reverse.

On the other hand, long explanatory speeches or visions are fairly common to the genre. Although many adventures have characters puzzling out what is really going on, one piece at a time, many more have them simply deciphering an old scroll, having a lotus dream or talking to a rescued sorcerer to discover the truth of a situation. In these latter cases it is perfectly acceptable for players to be given a lot of information all at once, either through conversation, description or a player handout. This information is often enough for players to decide what to do next. The more investigative style of adventure, though enjoyable for many groups, may sometimes prove troublesome as it can destroy the pacing even more than a wholesale info-dump – if the players are completely stumped as to how to proceed, the adventure cannot progress. Thus, if a Games Master is running a puzzle- or a mystery-style scenario, he must ensure that he plans several optional encounters or events that can occur if his players are get stuck. Alternatively, there is nothing wrong with allowing a Non-Player Character to explain everything if need be in the event that the characters' investigations fail or falter for any reason.

Above all, never let the game drag. Frame scenes aggressively, cutting out the boring bits. If the characters arrive in a city, describe them riding in through the gates,

then cut to 'later that evening, in the inn' instead of laboriously describing every twist and turn of the streets. Cut to the interesting events, such as the combats and the actions, immediately.

Try to end a session on a cliff-hanger if the plot is going to continue into the next session or stop at a logical divide (as the characters arrive at a particular city or at the end of a story arc). Many adventures will fit into a single play session, while longer tales will require many sessions to complete. Use the original short stories as guides.

RUNNING COMBAT

After a thorough knowledge and understanding of the rules, the most vital ingredient for successfully running a combat in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* is an ability to come up with powerful descriptions of what the characters see as they fight. Read and re-read Howard's combat sequences. Perhaps most important of all is to ensure that there are some good descriptions ready for when a character inflicts a critical hit on an enemy. If thinking these up on the spur of the moment is difficult, try writing down a few key phrases. Here are some examples, more or less derived from the stories:



BLUDGEONING WEAPONS

'With a great, murderous blow, you crush in his breast.'
'You strike him a terrible blow and he keels over, his skull crushed in.'

PIERCING WEAPONS

'You wheel cat-like and thrust murderously into his groin.'
'Your blade sheathes itself in his throat above the gorget and slants downwards into his heart.'
'Your lance-head crashes through shield and breastplate to transfix his heart.'
'The sharp point tears through brass scales and bones and heart and the warrior dies at your feet.'
'You drive your dagger again and again into his body and with a final convulsive shudder he stiffens and then goes limp.'
'Your sword plunges through his body, the point quivering for a moment between his shoulders; you wrench back your steel and he falls heavily, face down and lies in a widening pool of blood.'

SLASHING WEAPONS

'Your axe crunches through his steel cuirass and he crumples, his whole left side caved in.'
'Your great blade lashes down, splitting helmet and skull.'
'Your sword shears through his skull as though through a ripe melon.'
'You strike too quickly for the eye to follow and blood and brains spatter as a corpse strikes the ground.'
'Your keen blade slashes again and again, licking through flesh and bone; his head falls one way, his half-sundered torso the other.'
'Your sword cleaves through flesh and bone and he falls heavily to the floor with a strangled cry.'

UNARMED STRIKES AND GRAPPLES

'Your hand locks upon his throat and tears open his windpipe.'
'Your hand leaps to his head and he falls away and writhes screaming on the floor, clutching a gaping red socket where an eye had been.'
'Your sledge-like fist crunches with terrible impact against his jaw and he catapults through the air to fall in a crumpled heap, his head at an unnatural angle.'
'You grip his wrist with a wrench that tears his arm clean out of its socket.'

Another crucial ingredient for successful combats is that the Games Master should ensure he mentions any suitable improvised weapons that are in a room. Weapons break or are lost fairly often in the *Conan* stories and picking up a handy bench or leg of beef should always be an option. Alternatively, the Games Master can allow players a little more latitude in describing their surroundings themselves. For example, if they are in a well-lit and gaudily festooned temple, it is reasonable to assume that an ornate, heavy candlestick is within reach – especially if the player describes his acquisition and use of it in suitably dramatic manner!

Try to vary the locations and conditions in which combat takes place. Another fight with a gang of Picts is dull if the characters just charge in and cut their foes down. If the fight takes place on, say, a narrow rope bridge over a raging chasm, or in a furious thunderstorm that has turned the ground underfoot into a treacherous morass, or under a hail of poisoned darts, things are much more interesting and exciting. Plan such set-pieces ahead if you can – come up with two or three places where dramatic confrontations can take place.

GROUP TACTICS

A common occurrence in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* is for a small number of heroes to face a larger number of inferior foes, such as a group of armoured characters facing a horde of savage Picts. In these circumstances, the Games Master should always play the opposition as if they were intelligent, taking full advantage of their weight of numbers. There is no sense in having Pict after Pict thumping ineffectively at an armoured character, only to eventually be cut down. In a real-world situation, the opposition would use their numbers more sensibly, swamping their opponents and bringing them to the ground. The following tactics should never be overlooked:

- ✱ Remember the Aid Another action in combat. Even if as few as three opponents are able to attack the same heavily armoured person, two opponents can use Aid Another to give the third a total +4 bonus to his attack roll, which makes a major difference when finessing past armour.
- ✱ Combatants should use the scenery to their advantage. If a mob can press a combatant up against a surface, such as a rock face or a tree, or even against a natural hazard such as the edge of a cliff, fewer attackers will be needed to surround the combatant.



- ✱ Multiple combatants should surround their enemies on all sides when they can. This prevents the enemy from dodging effectively (-2 penalty to Dodge Defence), places the combatants in a position to flank the enemy (+2 to attack rolls) and allows effective use of the Aid Another action, as more assailants can reach the target. If the surrounded character wants to try to break free and run away, he will have to attempt to move through one of his assailants' spaces with a Tumble or Overrun attempt.
- ✱ Large numbers of characters facing mounted opponents should try making Trip attacks to pull the riders down from their mounts. Not only do the riders end up dismounted, they end up prone on the ground as well...
- ✱ It only takes one character grappling an enemy to render that enemy unable to dodge any other opponent. Moreover, if a grappling character is pinned, it becomes even easier to attack him and finesse past his armour, as he can only use Base Defence, which is reduced to one in almost all cases; his Dexterity is effectively zero against opponents other than the one grappling him, for a -5 penalty to Defence and he suffers a further -4 penalty to Defence for being immobilised. Even a character in plate armour with a helm (DR 12) is in very serious trouble under such circumstances, as a finesse fighter need only beat a score of 13 on an attack roll to finesse past the armour. Thus, by far the best and most realistic way to simulate group assault on an armoured individual is for one or two strong characters to hold the individual down while others finesse past his armour and butcher him. Note that the grappled character must rely on sheer strength to help him escape, as his Escape Artist skill will be severely hampered by the armour's Armour Check Penalty.
- ✱ Remember the rules for fighting multiple opponents. The more characters that attack a single opponent, the easier it becomes for later attackers to hit him because of the steadily mounting bonus. Note that the mounting bonus applies *whether or not the attacks are successful* – they do not have to hit or do any damage; they just have to be attempted. Even if four characters attack an opponent with melee weapons and all miss, the fifth still receives his +4 circumstance bonus to his attack roll.

- ✱ If a group is facing a heavily armoured opponent and only one of them has a finessable weapon, make sure he attacks after several of his comrades have hit first. That way, the circumstance bonus to his attack roll will make it all the more likely that he will finesse past the opponent's armour.
- ✱ Any character who can sneak attack will be able to make mincemeat of an armoured character who has been grappled and pinned. Finessing past the armour should be no trouble and extra sneak attack damage applies, as the pinned character cannot dodge.
- ✱ Even in a relatively primitive group of combatants there will be a variety of different weapons in use. Most Picts, for example, carry a hatchet as well as a club.
- ✱ Prone characters are vulnerable. When a group is attacking a single person, 'knock him down and keep him down' is a good rule. Once a character is surrounded, one tough assailant can trip him and the others can bash him once he is prone. (If the tripping character can use a weapon to make the trip attack, so much the better. Doing so with a weapon does not provoke an attack of opportunity.) When the prone character attempts to get to his feet, he provokes an attack of opportunity, allowing all the opponents standing around him to hack at him again.

Another common situation is for the characters to be facing a single powerful foe, such as a monster or a vile sorcerer. In such cases, consider the following tactics for the villain:

- ✱ Minions and meat shields may pose little threat to the characters but can give a sorcerer time to cast some damaging spells.
- ✱ Disabling or stunning characters is just as good as killing them, as most battles will be over in only a few rounds. Poison gas or spells like *hypnotic suggestion* can remove a character from the conflict.
- ✱ Villains should move around the battlefield to ensure that they cannot be flanked or pinned down by multiple attackers.
- ✱ Powerful villains have Fate Points and should spend them on rerolls and mighty blows.
- ✱ Villains should try to avoid fighting all the characters at once. Take your cue from Nabonidus, Totrasmek or the Master of Yimsha and use secret doors and crystal walls to separate your opponents and overwhelm them one-on-one.
- ✱ Monsters, by contrast, should attack the most aggressive and dangerous characters first by using brute force attacks and grapples to overcome smaller foes.



'SPOTLIGHT TIME'

With three or more players, as is typical for most roleplaying games, it is essential to ensure that each character has a chance to 'steal the show' during a game session. Of course, they may choose not to take that offered chance; that is up to them. Even a character who is separated from the rest of the group and locked in a dungeon for the duration of the session should have a chance to play – and maybe to escape if he is sufficiently sharp-witted.

Spotlight time need not be so simplistic as providing one lock to pick or trap to disarm every adventure to keep the party thief happy – though that is certainly one option. Another option is to introduce a new sub-plot which may be resolved in one session or evolve later into a more major plot. For example, the thief may discover during the course of the adventure that an old friend is dead, or he may find himself hunted by an inquisitor or wronged party for a crime he committed in Nemedia some years ago, or he may fall in love (see page 405), or have an opportunity to pick a valuable and mysterious treasure from a passing scholar's pocket, or he may uncover useful information for his future criminal activities.

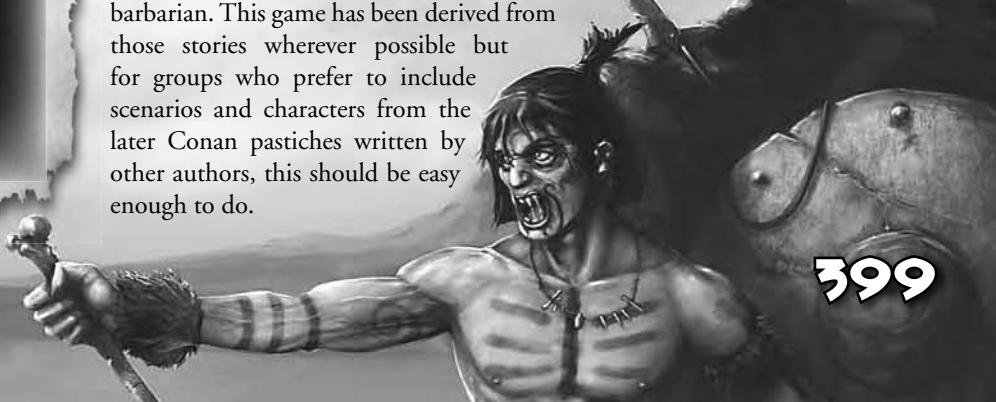
EXPERIENCE

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game* there are no instant tables to calculate the amount of experience to give to a group of characters on their completion of an adventure. In part this is to prevent the players second-guessing. Instead the Games Master is encouraged to set up the world of Hyboria as he wishes, allowing the players to make their own decisions as to which foes they think they are capable of dealing with and which they should avoid. Also, there is no absolute way, other than by a subjective judgement, to gauge the exact difficulty faced by a party and thus the amount of experience to award. How do you assess the challenge of an extraordinarily dangerous mass battle in which the characters play only a tiny part and kill only a dozen opponents each? What about an interrogation at the hand of an evil sorcerer who can kill a character with a touch if he chooses but will let him go free if he gives him the right answers?

So, the best way to give out Experience Points is to ensure that the party's level rises slowly but surely. Usually it should take at least an adventure or two or several short scenarios to rise a level. Give out perhaps 1,000 to 2,000 Experience Points for each game session players participate in to keep them advancing steadily in levels. It is a good idea to allow players to gain experience quickly to begin with and slow down a little as they grow more powerful. By the time characters reach middle to high levels (perhaps 10th to 15th levels) of experience, they should be finding their Reputations, Knowledge skills and contacts almost as useful as their swords or sorcery. Although the *Conan* stories feature plenty of action and combat and Conan is very much a direct-actionist, his knowledge of and place in the world increase considerably as he becomes more experienced and he is able to use this to his advantage one way or another in every story too.

CONAN AND CANON

This game has been designed to allow a Games Master to adhere to whichever *Conan* canon he wishes, or to none at all. For many *Conan* aficionados, the original Robert E. Howard stories are the only valid sources of information about the mighty-thewed barbarian. This game has been derived from those stories wherever possible but for groups who prefer to include scenarios and characters from the later *Conan* pastiches written by other authors, this should be easy enough to do.





Likewise, the time frame in which a Games Master sets his adventures is also up to him. The game is designed to cover the height of the Hyborian Age during Conan's active lifetime, since that is the period about which we have the most information. With a little effort, though, it could support pre-Hyborian or post-Hyborian campaigns.

One of the most important things a Games Master must decide before commencing a campaign is whether or not to include the character of Conan himself at all. If the Games Master is fortunate enough to have a group of players who are unfamiliar with the Conan stories, he can relentlessly plunder the Howard stories for adventure ideas – so long as he assumes that Conan is not around to slay all the foes he wishes to pit your characters against! Thus it is possible to follow the Howard canon in terms of including only Howard material in a campaign's background but assuming that Conan for some reason does not go on all his adventures, leaving at least some for the players to deal with.

Another rich source of story ideas is all the wealth that Conan almost acquired. For example, the treasures beneath Kuthchemes remain unplundered at the end of *Black Colossus*, as do the eponymous jewels at the end of *Jewels of Gwahlur* and the accursed riches of the demon-haunted city at the end of *Queen of the Black Coast*. Any of these locations could be used for adventures, with the party in search of the fabled treasures – perhaps after a hint from Conan himself. The old guardians may have returned or new ones could have been activated or taken over the site.

Alternatively, a Games Master can use the Howard tales as a starting point in creating his own forgotten cities and mysterious islands, his own ancient devil-gods and arcane treasure-guardians. For such a campaign he may wish to have Conan safely installed as King of Aquilonia so that the characters need not come up against him as a rival adventurer. However, he can also be effective in 'cameo' appearances during the party's adventures, perhaps as a part of the same failed mercenary army as they. The other advantage of setting a campaign before Conan ascends to the throne of Aquilonia is that the characters may at some point have a chance to become embroiled in the events that occur during *Wolves Beyond the Border*, perhaps joining Conan's faction or even fighting for the doomed King Vilerus.

AGENTS AND AGENDAS

From the point of view of running a *Conan the Roleplaying Game* campaign, one of the most notable features of the original Howard tales is the complexity of the politics involved in many of them. Take *The Jewels of Gwahlur* as an example. By the end of the tale it is possible to establish some five or six different factions or parties, each with its own agenda: Conan desires to steal the gemlike Teeth for himself, simply for the wealth they can bring; Zargheba and Thutmekri work for the Zembabweans to dupe the Teeth out of the folk of Keshan but quite possibly plan to dupe the Zembabweans in turn (Gwarunga certainly suspects Zargheba of this, or of double-crossing Thutmekri); Muriela starts out working for Zargheba and Thutmekri but throws in her lot with Conan; Gorulga, a rare honest priest wishes only to do the will of his non-existent gods; Gwarunga, a corrupt and violent priest, apparently an acolyte of Gorulga actually works for Thutmekri; and the servants of Bit-Yakin, powerful, savage, cunning and no longer entirely certain as to their own motivations for their near-ritualistic defence of the Teeth. *The People of the Black Circle* and several other stories have still more complex politics. This should be inspirational to any Games Master. If a Games Master is going to have his characters interact with kings, arch-sorcerers and other powerful folk – and there is no reason why they should not and many reasons why they should as the well-travelled mighty adventurers they will soon become – it is imperative that his own characters and plots be just as complex.

Take note, though, of the way in which Howard achieves this complexity. Most *Conan the Roleplaying Game* parties will have little interest in complex political intrigues if that is all the game focuses on and if they are thrown into the midst of them, though if that is what they want, there is certainly no harm in giving it them. Rather, the political side of a typical *Conan* game, as in the stories, is a side issue – a way to create strong Non-Player Characters who have powerful motivations and are not simply unthinking robots devoted to one 'side' or another. Each Non-Player Character will likely have his own strong agenda, as well as one or more Allegiances (see page 81) and probably even one or more faked Allegiances. The players will likely not be expected to digest great swathes of political background at once but will gradually discover the subtleties motivating the various characters they deal with – often in the course of brutally slaying those characters, or at least getting involved in similar action-packed activity. Politics should not usually be allowed to intrude into a *Conan the Roleplaying Game* adventure to such an extent that it distracts from the action or impedes the frantic pace of the story.



INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT

One avenue a Games Master may wish to explore is drawing players whose characters have quite different agendas from one another together by circumstance to fight against the same foe. The characters may have contrasting allegiances and strong, underlying differences as to what is to be done once that foe is defeated but until it is done they must work together. This is often the case when Conan works with other adventurers – they are generally allies of convenience, perhaps even enemies thrown together by the threat of a greater, supernatural foe and they know that sooner or later they must go their separate ways. Often there can only be one true victor in a case such as this, because the treasure sought by all is a single object that cannot be divided – so that it could be inconvenient if all parties were to survive the main ‘adventure,’ as they would still need to battle one another to determine who got to carry off the reward.

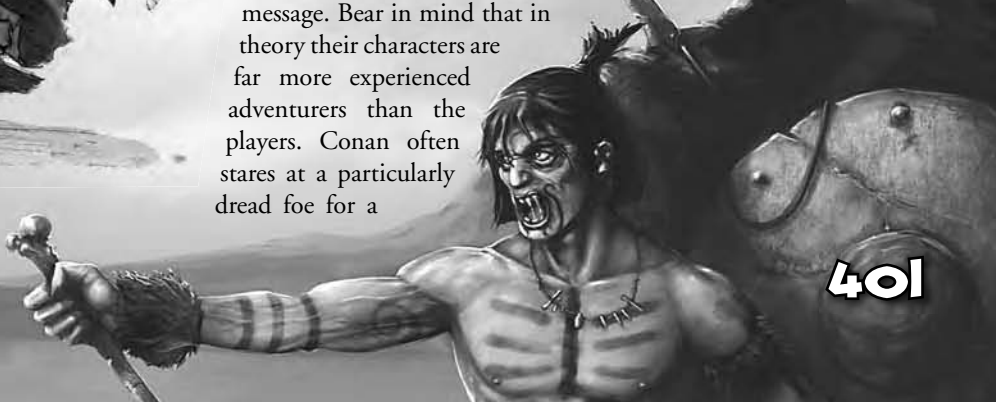
This type of scenario is likely to work best as a challenging one-off adventure with plenty of players and pre-generated characters specifically designed to both work together well against the main threat and oppose each other! For example, if there are six players, one might play a lone, powerful

hero, along the lines of Conan, who desires the treasure for himself or a buyer in a distant country. Two more might play a pair of adventurers, perhaps a couple who are temporarily working for a specific local political faction. Three others might represent a different political faction, perhaps the local priesthood. The Games Master must ensure that each of these three mini-factions is balanced against the others but also allow for the possibility of two factions working together to eliminate the third. Firstly, though, they must deal with the supernatural guardian of the ancient artefact they all seek – and the Games Master should include a variety of traps and other hazards to ensure that there is a fair chance that none of the characters survive, or at least that the adventure will finish with the last few bedraggled stragglers fleeing the guardian, happy enough to escape alive whether or not they have the treasure!

BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA UNEARTHLY RICHES AND UNEARTHLY DANGER

Conan frequently is within inches of having wealth and treasure beyond counting within his grasp. The ‘inches’ are vital here. By far the most likely end to any of Conan’s quests for incredible treasures is that he must flee at the last moment from some horror even he cannot defeat, or find the treasure destroyed by a quirk of circumstance and accept its loss with his usual easy-come, easy-go attitude. Escaping alive is always of far greater importance to him than gaining the loot and so it should be for the characters.

This may be difficult to grasp at first for players more used to a game system with easy resurrection spells and carefully balanced enemies whom they can just barely defeat. Do not be afraid to warn them once or twice, then have them horribly killed if they still fail to get the message. Bear in mind that in theory their characters are far more experienced adventurers than the players. Conan often stares at a particularly dread foe for a





while, sizing it up, before he comes to the conclusion that its arms are too strong and its claws too sharp for him to have a chance against it in a straight fight.

Non-Player Characters, though, are often so captivated by loot as to ignore the dangers. This leads almost invariably to their rapid and horrible deaths. Even players may find themselves easily distracted by unimaginable wealth.

Any character who finds a treasure worth at least as much as a king's ransom, here defined as 10,000 golden crescents or more, must immediately make a Will saving throw with a DC of 15 + 1 per additional 10,000 golden crescents beyond the first. Failure indicates that the character becomes distracted for the next 2d6 rounds, with a -4 circumstance penalty to all Listen, Spot and Search rolls that do not relate directly to the treasure.

Conan paused a moment on the very edge, fascinated by the great frosty jewels whose gleams dazzled his eyes — diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, turquoises, moonstones, set thick as stars in the shimmering silver. At a distance their different gleams had seemed to merge into a pulsing white glare; but now, at close range, they shimmered with a million rainbow tints and lights, hypnotizing him with their scintillations.

— *The Tower of the Elephant*

If the treasure in question is cursed or magically tainted in any way, such as in the example in the sidebar drawn from *Queen of the Black Coast*, this Will saving throw is considered to be a Corruption saving throw in every way, including the lack of bonus for the No Honour feat, the increased bonus for Code of Honour, the penalties for Corruption points and the Corruption gain if failed. In addition, any character who fails will become obsessed with the treasure on a more long-term basis and spend at least the next hour concerned only with securing, counting or looking at the treasure, as appropriate. While in this state he may only take either a move or a standard action each round and is at a -2 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls and skill checks other than Appraise checks. After an hour, he may attempt another save as before, success indicating that he shakes off his obsession.

Note that this can affect even the wealthiest characters. In the example given, Bêlit and her crew are already rich on the treasures plundered from dozens of coast towns and merchant ships along the Black Coast, yet they are still obsessed with acquiring more.

HONOUR

In addition to choosing between being rich and dead or poor and alive, Conan sometimes faces a test of honour — does he save the priceless treasure, or rescue the girl he has agreed to protect? Does he risk his life to save a friend, or give up his honour to keep his own neck intact?

This type of dilemma can be highly enjoyable to set up and play through. It is one of the Games Master's many duties to constantly challenge and test players whose characters hold to codes of honour. After all, the benefits of a code of honour are quite significant; if a code is used simply as a means of garnering a Will saving throw bonus, the Games Master is not doing his job correctly. There should almost always be a way for a character to act according to his code of honour if he wishes to do so but he should often have to lose or risk something else for doing so.

CORRUPTION

A character's current Corruption is applied as a penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks except Intimidation when dealing with another character who has a Code of Honour.

A character's current Corruption is applied as a bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with another character who has at least as many Corruption points as he does, or when dealing with a demon, evil god or similar powerful entity of evil. Corruption is also applied as a bonus to all Intimidate checks made against creatures of lesser Corruption.

A character's Corruption score cannot go above 13.

Furthermore, Corruption has additional effects: see the Physical Signs of Corruption table and the Corruption Effects table on the following pages.

INEVITABLE DEATH

Occasionally, it will seem that inexorable fate will slay one or more of the Player Characters and they may as well simply go out fighting — often due to a code of honour, which may require them to do so to give an ally or someone



Corruption	Effects
1–2	Troubled: The character may have occasional nightmares in which he commits atrocious acts, or may begin to develop a drinking problem or a taste for some lotus-derived drug (see page 276, Drugs and Herbal Preparations). Often this is not so much a direct effect of the corruption as a means of attempting to control it or avoid thinking about it.
3–4	Disturbed: The character begins to question the value of acting correctly or ethically and feels pessimistic about the future. He is likely to toy with the idea that it would be better to worship demons or evil gods than the established religions, feeling that at least evil is honest in its selfishness. Keeping to a Code of Honour becomes very difficult at this point.
5–6	Detached: The character no longer cares about others' feelings or comfort, seeing them as no more than tools to be used in his personal pursuit of pleasure, power, knowledge or whatever else it is that motivates him. The thought of a Code of Honour, if he ever had one, is quite ridiculous to him. He may add his Corruption as a circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks to manipulate Non-Player Characters for his own schemes, which can include Bluff, Diplomacy and Intimidate at the Games Master's discretion.
7–9	Corrupt: The character actively seeks out demonic creatures in the hope of making a pact with one, if he has not already done so. If the corrupted character is not a scholar already his next level will almost certainly be in scholar, with the demonic pact background. If the player who plays the character is unwilling to roleplay these kinds of change, the Games Master should consider taking over the character as a Non-Player Character. The character may add his Corruption as a circumstance bonus to all Intimidate checks, even those relating to demonic entities or similarly powerful creatures. Minor physical signs of his corruption will now be visible on at least part of his body: perhaps pasty-white skin, or glowing eyes, or fish-scales will appear on his belly. These signs first appear when the character reaches Corruption 7 and get progressively worse each time he gains another point of Corruption, until at 10 points he no longer able to hide his physical corruption. See the Physical Signs of Corruption table.
10+	At this point, if the character has not already made a pact with some demonic entity, he will instead be permanently and completely possessed by one, his own soul shooting off to hell or perhaps reaching a warped arrangement with its body's new owner. His personal corruption is now so complete that he begins to directly corrupt anyone who makes peaceful contact with him, just as though he were an evil god or demon himself. In any event, more major physical signs of his corruption will now be visible to most who observe him – horns, an apelike gait or something similar. Examples of these signs are given in the Physical Signs of Corruption table.

dependant on them time to escape. Superb roleplaying such as this should be rewarded – either with a last-minute reprieve or with a noble and heroic death. This is up to the Games Master, of course but it should be discussed with the players in advance if possible.

If a gaming group favours a game that truly emulates the tales of *Conan*, lead characters who perform heroic deeds should almost always have a chance to escape, whatever the odds. This is an excellent way to play, because if done properly it should not allow the players to become at all overconfident of their survival.

On the other hand, a group may prefer a game a little – or a lot – more grim, with the threat of death very real and immediate. Sometimes a middle ground is best, in which case the Games Master may wish to allow each character a limited number of miraculous escapes – perhaps around three – before he achieves his heroic death. Note that such miraculous escapes can only occur as a

result of noble sacrifices – a character who thoughtlessly attacks an overwhelmingly powerful enemy because he seems incapable of doing anything else should simply be cut down where he stands.

SAVED!

If the Games Master does decide to allow the character a chance to escape, it should be no more nor less than that – a chance to escape. Having the cavalry arrive in the nick of time, or the gods intervene or some other contrived situation, simply makes the players feel powerless and the game pointless. As with any other achievement in the Hyborian Age, any possible escape must be seized by a character with both hands, for no-one succeeds except by his own efforts. Thus though a lucky chance



PHYSICAL SIGNS OF CORRUPTION

Die Roll	Corruption 7-9	Corruption 10+
1	Arms become a little longer than usual and the character stoops slightly.	The character's apelike gait means he gains a +10 innate bonus to all Climb checks and a +5 feet innate bonus to his movement rate, so long as he runs on all fours and carries nothing in his hands.
2	The character's skin becomes pasty and pale, giving him an unhealthy, anaemic look.	The character's skin glows faintly, giving a shadowy illumination to a five feet radius around him but giving him a -4 innate penalty to all Hide checks unless he covers up every inch of skin on his body.
3	Odd, fluid-filled cysts form on the character's temples.	The character grows horns, gaining a natural gore attack form for 1d6 + Strength bonus damage.
4	The character's fingernails turn purplish-black and swell up, as though they had been hit with a hammer.	The character grows claws, enabling his unarmed attacks to deal 1d6 + Strength bonus lethal damage.
5	The character's teeth become elongated and sharply tapering.	The character grows great fangs, gaining a natural bite attack form for 1d6 + Strength bonus damage.
6	The character begins to put on a little excess weight.	The character's body becomes bloated and swollen. He gains +1d6 hit points but has a -1 innate penalty to all Dexterity-based skill checks.
7	The character becomes extremely thin.	The character is little more than a skin-covered skeleton. He gains a +2 innate bonus to Dexterity and a -2 innate penalty to Strength.
8	The character's head always seems to be covered in bruises and lumps.	The character's skull cracks open at the rear, his brain so swollen it pushes open the bone. His head is almost twice the size of any other human's. He gains a +2 innate bonus to Intelligence but a -2 innate penalty to Constitution.
9	Fish-like or serpentine scales appear on the character's belly.	The character's entire body is covered with small flesh-coloured scales, giving him +1 natural Damage Reduction (this stacks with any existing natural Damage Reduction if applicable).
10	The character's eyes are constantly swollen and bloodshot.	The character's eyes acquire a red glow. He gains darkvision out to 30 feet, or gains an innate bonus of +30 feet to his existing darkvision if applicable.

may (and probably should) play a part in an escape, unless the character takes immediate and decisive advantage of that lucky chance, he may well die anyway. Even then, dread challenges must likely be overcome before victory can be at hand.

HEROIC DEATH

On the other hand, unlike the hero of the Conan stories, the average gaming group probably comprises perhaps three to six adventurers. Though ideally all should feel like mighty heroes, the dynamic of a group story is already quite different to the *Conan* tales, which focus on one character and the occasional ally, girlfriend or temporary sidekick. A

group of two or more characters allows for the possibility of one of them dying without the story ending.

Thus the death of one of the group can bring a note of pathos and real danger to the game – especially if the one who dies has already achieved great things and the Games Master feels confident that he can give the character a death scene that will satisfy the player and be a fitting end to the character's life. Potentially one of the best experiences in a roleplaying game is that of the heroic, spectacular death that allows one's comrades to achieve victory or even merely escape; however, this must be handled with great care. The player should have a good idea that his actions will kill his character. Once he has expressed his willingness for his character to die, the Games Master can fudge the game mechanics to his heart's content to ensure he dies with a heap of the slain all about him, or after having dealt his demonic opponent a mortal wound.



There is a Japanese legend of a samurai warrior who was so determined to hold a bridge that even after being hit with arrow after arrow he stood there, shouting defiance, surrounded by the bodies of his foes until his surviving enemies withdrew, convinced they were facing a foe that was more than mortal. Eventually, several hours later, they plucked up the courage to advance upon him, where they found him dead but somehow still standing, his body riddled with at least forty arrows. His sacrifice had been sufficient to give his allies a chance to escape. The movie *El Cid* features a similarly heroic dilemma for the hero, who orders himself strapped to his horse rather than having his wounds treated so he can still lead the charge and win the day, if at the cost of his own life. There is no directly comparable moment in the *Conan* tales, simply because Conan is by far the most significant character and he does not die at any point, though the closest such scene is the death of Balthus in *Beyond the Black River*. Balthus consciously elects to die while holding off the ravaging Pictish hordes so as to give the Aquilonian women and children sufficient time to escape. If a Games Master can give his player such a truly epic death, he will not be sad to let go of his character – for he will soon be a legend himself.

LOVE FOUND AND LOST

In many of his adventures, Conan acquires a girlfriend of some kind. They never seem to last till the next adventure, though – presumably he tires of them, or they of him or perhaps they are eaten by some unseen demon or otherwise become casualties of Conan's risky life between stories. Conan had only one true love – Bêlit, the Queen of the Black Coast. The two of them plundered the seas and raided the coasts on a red tide of slaughter for many years before her unnatural death in the powerful tale *Queen of the Black Coast*. From that point on, it is clear that a major part of Conan is dead, too. He does not return to rove the seas for several years, finding them drab and empty after the death of his love, who defied death itself to aid him in his hour of need. Never again does he seem to find more than the temporary satisfaction of lust in a woman's arms, however hard he might try. No other woman, even the fiery Valeria in *Red Nails*, can even begin to compete with the ache that Bêlit's loss left in Conan's soul.

It is possible, though difficult, for a Games Master to model the same kind of epic love within his games. Take a leaf, as ever, from the way in which Howard achieves it. Bêlit is the perfect complement to Conan – though they are alike in their bloodlust, she is very much the brains of the operation and he the brawn. He has not yet achieved the powerful leadership and generalship

qualities he demonstrates in his later life and is quite happy to rely on Bêlit's expertise in planning the corsairs' piratical activities. Conan himself is not so demonstrative in love as Bêlit and the Games Master should not necessarily expect his relevant character to be either – but if he ensures that the Non-Player Character lover is sufficiently ardent in his or her declarations and proofs of passion, at least some of it should rub off on the Player Character.

Epic love is a tricky element to introduce into a roleplaying game. Often it will be far easier to simply have all the characters' romantic liaisons be fleeting, lusty ones, forged in the heat of peril but lasting no more than a week or two once that peril has passed, just as most of Conan's partnerships after Bêlit. Unless a Games Master is sufficiently confident in both his gamesmastering abilities and his players' roleplaying, epic love is probably best avoided. It is better not to handle it at all than to handle it badly. The Games Master also needs to know his players and their characters extremely well. Even then, unless he happens to have a gaming group that suits this style of play both in- and out-of-character, his efforts may fall flat.

One further issue here is that the character in love will likely have a great deal of 'spotlight time' as he plays out falling in love, being in love and that dread time when his love is lost to him forever. This need not be a problem, so long as the other characters have something to do. Again the quality and makeup of the group is a vital factor here. A gaming group that is happy to at least occasionally 'make its own entertainment,' with the characters roleplaying with one another rather than constantly pestering the Games Master to advance the story, will probably manage to cope with some loss of 'spotlight time' so long as the players know they will get their own turns as lead characters in some other story. One of the best ways to achieve this is to schedule the 'love story' game session immediately after the climax to a particularly major adventure. The characters, basking in their newfound renown, should be quite happy to spend most of a game session celebrating their glorious victory in style, even perhaps assisting the would-be lover to woo and win his love. Introducing the love interest in this relatively light-hearted manner (at least as far as the other characters are concerned – the character who is in love should be taking it all deathly seriously) also provides a powerful counterpoint to the later, almost inevitable, horrible death of the loved one.



Another device Howard uses in the Bêlit story is to have several years pass without portraying the action of that time in any great detail. In a roleplaying game, such a ploy neatly avoids many of the aforementioned spotlight time issues. A Games Master can tie the whole love story up in two game sessions between which two or three years pass and can also ensure that the story in which the loved one dies is one in which all the characters get some spotlight time. Perhaps more satisfyingly, he could create a three-session story arc – the first session celebrating a victory and introducing the love interest, the second developing the love interest a year or two down the line and the third, after another year or two, further developing then destroying it.

Introducing an epic love interest into a game requires care and planning and even then may not quite work. Unless the Games Master is very sure of his players' wishes, too, it may be worth talking to them in advance about how happy they would be with such a significant sub-plot. If it can be done well, though, epic love can be used to give one of the characters some serious depth, such as cannot be achieved by any other means.

THE PLUNDER OF THE SEAS

Though the romance and freedom of piracy is a recurring theme of the *Conan* stories, Howard rarely dwells upon the detailed nitty-gritty of nautical combat and movement, what exactly a spar or yard or capstan is or how many ships the pirates plunder in a year. Only once do we get a description of a ship-to-ship pirate raid on a merchant vessel, in *Queen of the Black Coast* – and then only from the perspective of Conan, aboard the beleaguered merchant ship and helping to defend it against the corsairs.

Pirates in the *Conan* stories are a symbol of excitement and liberty. They are also often means to an end, that end usually being either personal power for Conan at the head of a company of reavers, or as a plot device to get his protagonists into or out of a darkly magical situation. Most sea voyages in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* should be used in the same way. It is of course little fun to go on a sea voyage without a crew of pirates but the minutiae of raiding merchant ship after merchant ship can get very repetitive and it is far more in keeping with the genre to use the pirate ship as a means to get to a forgotten island or rapidly travel across the world in search of a lost artefact.

PIRATE CODES

All pirate characters learn at least one pirate code at 2nd level and may choose from Barachan Smoke & Rockets, Black Coast Drums, Vilayet Sea Flags and Zingaran Trumpets. Each type of code has its own advantages and disadvantages, largely due to the materials required to use it. The Games Master should bear these factors in mind when characters are communicating with pirate codes.

Barachan Smoke & Rockets: These can be very quick to use if one has plenty of signal rockets available and the signal rockets are also visible over a far larger distance than most other visual signals. However, signal rockets are expensive and often limited in supply and in any case only the simplest messages can be communicated with them. Smoke signals allow for more complex messages but usually take a good deal of time to perform and require a fair-sized bonfire or galley fire.

Black Coast Drums: These can be used in any visibility conditions but communicating complex concepts with them is relatively slow. As a sound-based signal they are also relatively short-range.

PIRATE CODES

Code Type	Range	Cost	Time/Message	Skill Check
Barachan Smoke and Rockets	Four miles	Rockets: 30 sp/message. Smoke: Zero	Rockets: 1 round Smoke: 10 rounds	Profession (sailor) DC 20
Black Coast Drums	1,000 feet	6 sp/ship (for two drums)	4 rounds	Perform (drums) DC 15
Vilayet Sea Flags	Two miles	150 sp/ship	2 rounds	Profession (sailor) DC 20
Zingaran Trumpets	500 feet	36 sp/ship (for two trumpets)	2 rounds	Perform (trumpet) DC 15



Vilayet Sea Flags: These are a fast and efficient system of signalling, though they are not visible for such long distances as smoke or rockets and require a well-maintained set of flags.

Zingaran Trumpets: These have a somewhat shorter range than Black Coast drums but allow for fairly complex communications in a short period of time.

Code Type: This lists the name of the code.

Range: This provides the average range of the code, given clear visibility and no competing sounds. The Games Master should reduce the range whenever other factors would logically make it more difficult to communicate by this method. Visual signals such as smoke, rockets and flags can only ever be seen within the limits of visibility, which in fog could be less than 100 feet. Audible signals such as drums or trumpets can only be heard within their full range if there are no other loud noises – raging seas or hurricanes will halve all ranges for these signals, though fortunately they are designed to sound above other loud clangour such as ship-to-ship battles.

Cost: This is the cost either per message (for rockets) or per ship on which the message system is placed (for other codes).

Time/Message: This is the time it takes to transmit a simple, one-sentence message, such as 'Attack the Stygian galley' or 'Send a boat out to the flagship for a captains' meeting.' More complex messages may need to be spelt out letter by letter, taking up to 10 times as long.

Skill Check: The skill check is attempted by the sender to ensure the message goes out clearly. For more complex messages, the DC may be raised by +5 or more at the Games Master's discretion.

THE JEWELLED THRONES OF THE EARTH

As he was always something of an all-American hero, it was perhaps inevitable that Conan should rise from humble beginnings to become leader of one of the most powerful nations on the planet. Once they start to reach 15th level or beyond, your players too are likely to want to seize the Aquilonian Dream with both hands and become kings, grand viziers, shahs or princes. This should not be discouraged.

In the tales *The Phoenix on the Sword*, *The Scarlet Citadel* and *The Hour of the Dragon*, it is made quite clear that a king can have personal adventures as exciting and dangerous as those of any mercenary. Indeed, the

risks are as high as the rewards at that level. Once more we see Howard's genius for handling politics and can draw lessons from the stories for running our own campaigns. Plotting and intrigue generally happens 'off-stage' and always leads quickly to direct action, such as assassination attempts or usurpers with powerful armies and sorcerous backup.

This action can be countered by a strong sword and stout thews, just as for almost any threat Conan ever faces. Thus time is not wasted getting bogged down in council meetings, court hearings or foreign diplomacy, any and all of which could slow down the plot, confuse the players and almost certainly be entirely unsuited to the skills of the characters. Even when Conan has been king for several years, he still seems more at home commanding a pirate ship than attending court functions or cultivating allies.

Though Conan seizes power in the background of another draft story, *Wolves Beyond the Border*, it is clearly a lot more satisfying to play out your Player Characters' rise to power in some detail as they deal with a combination of personal followers, hired mercenaries and popular unrest, just as Conan managed did. Astute players will have their characters spend many years performing brave and honourable deeds and to build up popular support.

Conan is a perfect example of this in *Beyond the Black River*. He is already thinking of kingship but for the moment is content to be a borderer defending Aquilonia's frontiers. It is made clear later that his achievements against the Picts, along with saving so many settlers, give him a power base which is crucial in allowing him to later take the throne. He is legendary to the folk of the Westernmarch and most will support him against the corrupt nobility from which they fled.

IN THE MIDST OF BATTLE

In several adventures, Conan finds himself leading whole armies against enemy hordes in the role of general or champion or king. At higher levels, Player Characters will probably end up in similar situations; at lower levels, they might be fighting in the vanguard of some greater host or in smaller skirmishes against bandits and raiders. While some groups may prefer to break out the miniatures and the wargaming tables for large-scale battles of this sort, Conan's battles are rarely decided by tactics alone. Individual acts of heroism



and significant deeds before or during the battle count for more than flanking and feints. Consider the first battle in *The Hour of the Dragon*, where the Nemedian army defeats the Aquilonians not because of superior numbers or positioning but because of the vile sorcery of Xaltotun. Battles should be the *backdrop* to the main action, not the main action itself. The meat of a game should involve the characters finding a way to win a battle before it starts – winning allies to a hopeless cause or finding the narrow pass in the mountains that will let them fall upon the foe from behind – or their deeds in the battle, slaying enemy generals and capturing standards.

In a battle between two evenly matched forces with no other factors, opposed Knowledge (warfare) checks can be used to determine which side has the edge in tactics. Keep in mind, though, that in the Hyborian world, battle comes down to strength of will and sinew.

RUNNING

A CAMPAIGN

Before starting a campaign, discuss the following topics with players – having a social contract in place before the game begins will make things run much more smoothly.

Style of the Campaign: What is the basic structure of the campaign? What will the characters be doing? Take a look at the types of campaign listed below and determine which of them appeals to the players. Are the characters

- ✱ Wandering Adventurers and Thieves
 - ✱ Battling against a particular nemesis
 - ✱ Mercenaries searching for employment
- Or something else?

Classes and Races: Are all classes and races allowed, or are some off limits? A wilderness-based game will provide more opportunities for borderer, nomads and barbarians to shine, while urban games are better suited to nobles, thieves and temptresses. Similarly, can characters come from any culture, or should the players focus on particular races? A party consisting of a Stygian sorcerer, a Cimmerian barbarian, an Aquilonian nobleman and a Zingaran pirate certainly has plenty of scope for different adventures but is also a strange and motley crew.

Inter-character Conflict: How much conflict is permissible between the Player Characters? Many adventurers are unworthy cut-throats, willing to sacrifice their companions to save their own skins. Conan himself often talks about survival being more important than his companions, although he is also quick to aid others (especially when there is a pretty girl involved). Some players dislike any inter-player character conflicts, while others thrive on having worthy foes and untrustworthy allies.

Death and Brutality: The Hyborian age is a savage one and life there is cheap – at least for most people. The characters, of course, are usually a cut above the common man. What rules apply to character death in the campaign? Also, what level of brutality is assumed? Are the characters expected to fight fair or is brutal maiming, rape or torture permissible? Are a character's Fate Points all that stand between him and death in any circumstances, or will the Games Master only kill Player Characters when it is dramatically appropriate?

Sexual Content: What level of sexual content are the players comfortable with in the campaign? At what point should a veil be drawn over events?

Treasure: As discussed above, Conan often begins each new adventure with little more than a loincloth and a sword. The players should be aware if the Games Master plans to start games off with the characters in similar circumstance so they do not become too invested in a particular situation.



Combat: While combat will be a part of every Conan adventure, how important will it be to the campaign as a whole? Will it be the main focus of every session?

Intrigue and Politics: Similarly, how will intrigue and politics be handled? Should all characters have skills in Bluff and Diplomacy, or will such interaction be handled through roleplaying? How much of a focus will intrigue have in the campaign?

TYPES OF CAMPAIGN

Many different types of campaign are possible on the Earth of the Hyborian Age. We have listed some of the most common here but of course Games Masters and players may well prefer to play something different or they may start one of these campaigns only to have it mutate into something else.

MERCENARY CAMPAIGN

By far the easiest campaign to run is the mercenary campaign. Usually the characters will be a part of a larger mercenary company and will go where that company travels, fighting in its wars and hoping to get paid at the end of it. This type of campaign makes the Games Master's job fairly easy, because at least to begin with he can choose where the company will take work and what adversaries they will face, though the players will have a basic lack of freedom.

Most of the characters will be soldiers, borderers or nomads, often from the same city-state, tribe or Hyborian kingdom, though any character class and race is possible. As *Conan the Roleplaying Game* allows for some flexibility in skills and multiclassing, it would even be possible to have everyone play the same character class and race, at least to begin with, multiclassing later if they wish. A mercenary campaign featuring a unit of Shemite nomads, for example, could give the characters some strong connections right from the start. On the other hand, the often rag-tag nature of Hyborian mercenary units can make for an enjoyable game, with former kozak pirates rubbing shoulders with Zingaran duelists, Hyperborean outlaws and Aesir berserks, all just barely kept in a coherent company by a gruff old exiled Nemedian baron.

ARMY CAMPAIGN

Similar to the more focused mercenary campaign, an army campaign revolves around a unit in a wider army. This could be anything from a company of Hyrkanian

nomads assigned to scout out new lands for conquest by the King of Turan, to a force of Bossonian archers assigned to protect their town from Pictish incursions.

The army campaign is even more disciplined than the mercenary campaign but this can make for a good, structured game. Even this kind of campaign can be altered if need be – the Hyrkanians might offend their Shah and be exiled to Khitai, or the Bossonians may all be conscripted into the Aquilonian army and only get a chance to desert when they are most of the way across Ophir at the head of an army ordered to teach the king of Koth a lesson.

RETINUE CAMPAIGN

This campaign has the characters assigned to protect and work for another player – usually a noble or possibly a scholar. In effect the campaign involves a mercenary company centred on a particular task or agenda, though often they are long-term retainers of the leader rather than hired swords. In some ways this may feel like a more focused version of the Wanderers and Thieves campaign (below), since the group will often be required to trek to the ends of the Earth to fulfil their leader's aims.

A retinue campaign led by a noble could certainly include another noble or two (the leader's family), soldiers (knights or other armed retainers), borderers, barbarians and nomads (foresters and woodsmen from the noble's estate) and scholars (advisors or teachers). Given that one of Count Valenso's retainers in *The Black Stranger* is a former buccaneer, pirates and thieves also seem possible.

WANDERERS AND THIEVES CAMPAIGN

This is very much the traditional fantasy roleplaying campaign and it certainly fits *Conan the Roleplaying Game* well. players have a more or less free hand creating characters, though if the Games Master wishes to run a relatively low-key campaign he may restrict them to a maximum of one scholar, perhaps a priest with only limited magical choices. The characters travel the world, getting into trouble, fleeing town, robbing tombs, slaying monsters and the like. Some may have barbaric codes of honour, though a civilised code of honour is unlikely to last long in such a setting.



ALL OF ONE CLASS

A more focussed version of the Mercenary/Army and Wanderers and Thieves campaign styles, this style revolves around all the characters having a few levels in a particular class. For example, a group might all be thieves of one sort or another but this could range from pure burglars to thief/barbarians like Conan, thief/temptresses, even thief/nobles or thief/scholars. Similarly, the group could be tied to a particular temple and embark on adventures in the service of a god – in this case they would all have the Priest feat or a level or two of scholar. Having a common purpose brings the characters together.

THE TRIBE

While this is only touched on in Howard's stories, one rewarding campaign structure is to include all the characters as part of the same clan or tribe. They could all be Cimmerians or Kozaki nomads or raiders from the Southern Islands. One character might be the chieftain, another the best hunter, another the tribal wisewoman or shaman, another the best diplomat and trader and so forth. As champions of the tribe, the characters would guide and protect their kinfolk. This structure can even be adapted to more civilised lands like Aquilonia, where it merges with the retinue campaign – instead of travelling all over the world in the service of a noble, the characters adventure and protect his holdings in lands closer to home.

HERO AND SIDEKICK

One potentially rewarding way to run a two player, one Games Master campaign is to have one of the characters play the hero – the primary character in effect – while the other plays his sidekick. The secondary character may be a long-running sidekick, in which case the two are more like adventuring partners than hero and sidekick. Swords and sorcery literature is rife with such partnerships and though they are largely absent from the Conan stories per se, they are certainly in keeping with the genre.

Alternatively, the secondary character may change from story to story. In TV serial terms, the second player plays the 'special guest star' character in each episode of the hero's show. In the Conan stories, Conan is the 'hero' and his sidekicks include Bêlit, Balthus, Yasmina, Muriela, Yasmela, Valerius and Nafertari, depending on the story. In some stories, hero and sidekick might be close allies; in others,

they might have at least some conflicts of interest and it would be intriguing to discover who gets away with the treasure. This approach may seem unfair to the sidekick player but some players may enjoy the challenge of playing a different counterpart to the hero each adventure and also like the fact that their skills, motivations and roles will be different each time. In some respects, the secondary character is in an intriguing grey area between a major Non-Player Character and a minor Player Character.

STORY TWISTS

The Games Master should be careful of lucky or unlucky dice rolls ruining the adventure during solo or duo play. Saving throws are one of the biggest dangers here. In most cases, it should be possible for the Games Master to turn even a failed save that results in incapacitation into something that advances the plot. There are several occasions when Conan is alone and when in game terms he 'fails a saving throw' by getting hit on the head and knocked out or being paralysed by magic. In every case, he turns the situation around sooner or later. If it is not possible to set up such a story twist, the Games Master should assume the lead character automatically succeeds at his saving throw. If the other character is a temporary, secondary one, it is usually quite acceptable for him to die horribly at this point, however!





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Character			Player	
Race	Class	Level	Experience	
Gender	Age	Height	Weight	Handedness
Hair	Eyes		Skin	
Code of Honour	Alliance #1		Alliance #2	

ABILITY SCORES				
	SCORE	MOD	TEMP SCORE	TEMP MOD
STR				
DEX				
CON				
INT				
WIS				
CHA				

SAVING THROWS										
		TOTAL		BASE		ABILITY MOD		MISC MOD		TEMP MOD
FORT	(CON)		=		+		+		+	
REF	(DEX)		=		+		+		+	
WILL	(WIS)		=		+		+		+	

<h1 style="margin: 0;">HIT POINTS</h1>	<h1 style="margin: 0;">/</h1>
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LIFT OVER HEAD <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; margin: 10px auto; width: 150px;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">1 × MAX LOAD</p>	LIFT OFF GROUND <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; margin: 10px auto; width: 150px;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">2 × MAX LOAD</p>	PUSH / DRAG <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; margin: 10px auto; width: 150px;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">5 × MAX LOAD</p>
---	--	--

LOAD <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; margin: 10px auto; width: 150px;"></div>	SPEED <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; margin: 10px auto; width: 150px;"></div>
---	--

		MAX LOAD	MAX DEX	CHK PEN	RUN
L			-	-	×4
M			+3	-3	×4
H			+1	-6	×3

BASE DEFENCE	=	10	+	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 8px;">MISC MOD</div> </div>						
PARRY DEFENCE	=	10	+	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 8px;">MISC MOD</div> </div>	+	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 8px;">CLASS MOD</div> </div>	+	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 8px;">STAT MOD</div> </div>		
DODGE DEFENCE	=	10	+	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 8px;">MISC MOD</div> </div>	+	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 8px;">CLASS MOD</div> </div>	+	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 8px;">STAT MOD</div> </div>		

INITIATIVE	=	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 8px;">DEX MOD</div> </div>	+	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 8px;">REFLEX MOD</div> </div>	+	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 8px;">MISC MOD</div> </div>
-------------------	---	--	---	---	---	---

ARMOUR AND PROTECTION	Type	DR	MAX DEX	CHK PEN	SPELL FAILURE	SPEED	WEIGHT

PROFICIENCIES: ☐ LIGHT ARMOUR ☐ HEAVY ARMOUR ☐ MEDIUM ARMOUR ☐ SHIELDS

ATTACK BONUSES		BASE ATTACK BONUS					
		TOTAL ATTACK BONUS		BASE ATTACK BONUS	ABILITY MOD	MISC MOD	TEMP MOD
MELEE	(Str)		=		+	+	+
FINESSE	(Dex)		=		+	+	+
RANGED	(Dex)		=		+	+	+

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES		<input type="checkbox"/> ALL SIMPLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ALL MARTIAL

[illegible]

<input type="checkbox"/> AIM	BAB +1	<input type="checkbox"/> DEVASTATING SWEEP	Whirlwind Attack	<input type="checkbox"/> IMPROVISED ATTACK	Str 13+, Dex 13+	<input type="checkbox"/> RANGED DISARM	Precise Shot, Improved Disarm
<input type="checkbox"/> BULL'S CHARGE	Str 13+, Power Attack	<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRACTING ARROW	Precise Shot	<input type="checkbox"/> KIP UP	Jump or Tumble 5+ ranks, Mobility	<input type="checkbox"/> RIPOSTE	Base Parry Bonus +4
<input type="checkbox"/> CAT'S PARRY	Base Parry Bonus +3	<input type="checkbox"/> FORCE BACK	Power Attack	<input type="checkbox"/> LEAPING CHARGE	BAB +6, Jump 1+ ranks	<input type="checkbox"/> SHIELD SLAM	Base Parry Bonus +2
<input type="checkbox"/> DANCE ASIDE	Dex 13+	<input type="checkbox"/> FLING ASIDE	Str 15+, Improved Grapple, Improved Trip	<input type="checkbox"/> LEAVE THEM FOR DEAD	Cleave	<input type="checkbox"/> SUNDERING PARRY	Improved Sunder, Base Parry Bonus +1
<input type="checkbox"/> DECAPITATING SLASH	BAB +10	<input type="checkbox"/> HOOKING PARRY	Dex 13+, Base Parry Bonus +1	<input type="checkbox"/> MASTERFUL DISARM	Dex 13+	<input type="checkbox"/> TO THE HILT	Power Attack
<input type="checkbox"/> DESPERATE STAB	BAB +15, Improved Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/> HUMAN SHIELD	Str 13+, Improved Grapple	<input type="checkbox"/> PANTHERISH TWIST	Improved Uncanny Dodge		

skills

--	--

ⓧ ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY APPLIES

APPRAISE		=		+		+		INT	<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (NOBILITY) ■		=			+		+		+		INT	<input type="checkbox"/>
BALANCE ☉		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (RELIGION) ■		=				+		+			INT	<input type="checkbox"/>
BLUFF		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE (RUMOURS) ■		=				+		+			INT	<input type="checkbox"/>
CLIMB ☉		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE () ■		=				+		+			INT	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONCENTRATION		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOWLEDGE () ■		=				+		+			INT	<input type="checkbox"/>
CRAFT (ALCHEMY)		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	LISTEN		=				+		+			WIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
CRAFT (HERBALISM)		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	MOVE SILENTLY ☉		=				+		+			DEX	<input type="checkbox"/>
CRAFT		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	OPEN LOCK ■		=				+		+			DEX	<input type="checkbox"/>
DECIPHER SCRIPT ■		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	PERFORM		=				+		+			CHA	<input type="checkbox"/>
DIPLOMACY		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	PROFESSION () ■		=				+		+			WIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
DISABLE DEVICE ■		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	PROFESSION () ■		=				+		+			WIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
DISGUISE		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	RIDE		=				+		+			DEX	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESCAPE ARTIST ☉		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	SEARCH		=				+		+			INT	<input type="checkbox"/>
FORGERY		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	SENSE MOTIVE		=				+		+			WIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
GATHER INFORMATION		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	SLEIGHT OF HAND ■		=				+		+			DEX	<input type="checkbox"/>
HANDLE ANIMAL ■		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	SPOT		=				+		+			WIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
HEAL		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	SURVIVAL ■		=				+		+			WIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIDE ☉		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	SWIM		=				+		+			STR	<input type="checkbox"/>
INTIMIDATE		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	TUMBLE ■ ☉		=				+		+			DEX	<input type="checkbox"/>
JUMP ☉		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>	USE ROPE		=				+		+			DEX	<input type="checkbox"/>
KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA) ■		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>			=				+		+			INT	<input type="checkbox"/>
KNOWLEDGE (GEOGRAPHY) ■		=			+		+		<input type="checkbox"/>			=				+		+			INT	<input type="checkbox"/>

[illegible]

LANGUAGES

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACHERONIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> HYRKANIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> PICTISH |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARGHULI | <input type="checkbox"/> IRANISTANI | <input type="checkbox"/> SEMITISH |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AQUILONIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> KESHANI | <input type="checkbox"/> SOUTH ISLAND |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARGOSSEAN | <input type="checkbox"/> KHITAN | <input type="checkbox"/> STYGIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BOSSONIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> KOSALAN | <input type="checkbox"/> TALKING DRUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BRYTHUNIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> KOTHIC | <input type="checkbox"/> TIBU |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CEMMERIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> KUSHITE | <input type="checkbox"/> VENDYHAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CORINTHIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> NEMEDIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> ZAMORIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DARFARIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> NORDHEIMR | <input type="checkbox"/> ZIMBABWEAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DEMONIC | <input type="checkbox"/> OLD STYGIAN | <input type="checkbox"/> ZINGARAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GHANATAN | <input type="checkbox"/> OHRIEAN | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HYPERBOREAN | <input type="checkbox"/> PUNTIAN | |

EQUIPMENT	LOCATION	WEIGHT
COPPER PIECES		
SILVER PIECES		

WEIGHT

SILVER PIECES

SPECIAL ABILITIES

FATE POINTS



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CONAN[®]

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

KNOW, OH PRINCE, THAT BETWEEN THE YEARS WHEN THE OCEANS DRANK ATLANTIS AND THE GLEAMING CITIES, AND THE YEARS OF THE RISE OF THE SONS OF ARYAS, THERE WAS AN AGE UNDREAMED OF, WHEN SHINING KINGDOMS LAY SPREAD ACROSS THE WORLD LIKE BLUE MANTLES BENEATH THE STARS - NEMEDIA, OPHIR, BRYTHUNIA, HYPERBOREA, ZAMORA WITH ITS DARK-HAIRED WOMEN AND TOWERS OF SPIDER-HAUNTED MYSTERY, ZINGARA WITH ITS CHIVALRY, KOTH THAT BORDERED ON THE PASTORAL LANDS OF SHEM, STYGIA WITH ITS SHADOW-GUARDED TOMBS, HYRKANIA WHOSE RIDERS WORE STEEL AND SILK AND GOLD, BUT THE PROUDEST KINGDOM OF THE WORLD WAS AQUILONIA, REIGNING SUPREME IN THE DREAMING WEST. HITHER CAME CONAN, THE CIMMERIAN, BLACK-HAIRED, SULLEN-EYED, SWORD IN HAND, A THIEF, A REAVER, A SLAYER, WITH GIGANTIC MELANCHOLIES AND GIGANTIC MIRTH, TO TREAD THE JEWELLED THRONES OF THE EARTH UNDER HIS SANDALLED FEET.

Surging from the pages of Howard's original works, *Conan the Roleplaying Game* lets you explore the world of the Hyborian Age and follow in the footsteps of Conan himself – cross blades with desperate thieves in darkened alleys, fight for your life as armies clash across blood-drenched battlefields, climb the highest peaks and explore the darkest ancient ruins, ever-watchful for the supernatural terrors that may come crawling forth at the behest of power-maddened sorcerers.

Conan the Roleplaying Game contains everything you need to begin playing, including complete systems for character creation and advancement, combat, sorcery, exploration and a bestiary of foes human, animal and fell. The setting of the Hyborian Age is covered in detail, from the unexplored islands of the western ocean to the spider-haunted jungles of Khitai in the east. The world of Conan stands before you. Are you ready?

This book contains material that may not be suitable for young readers.

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