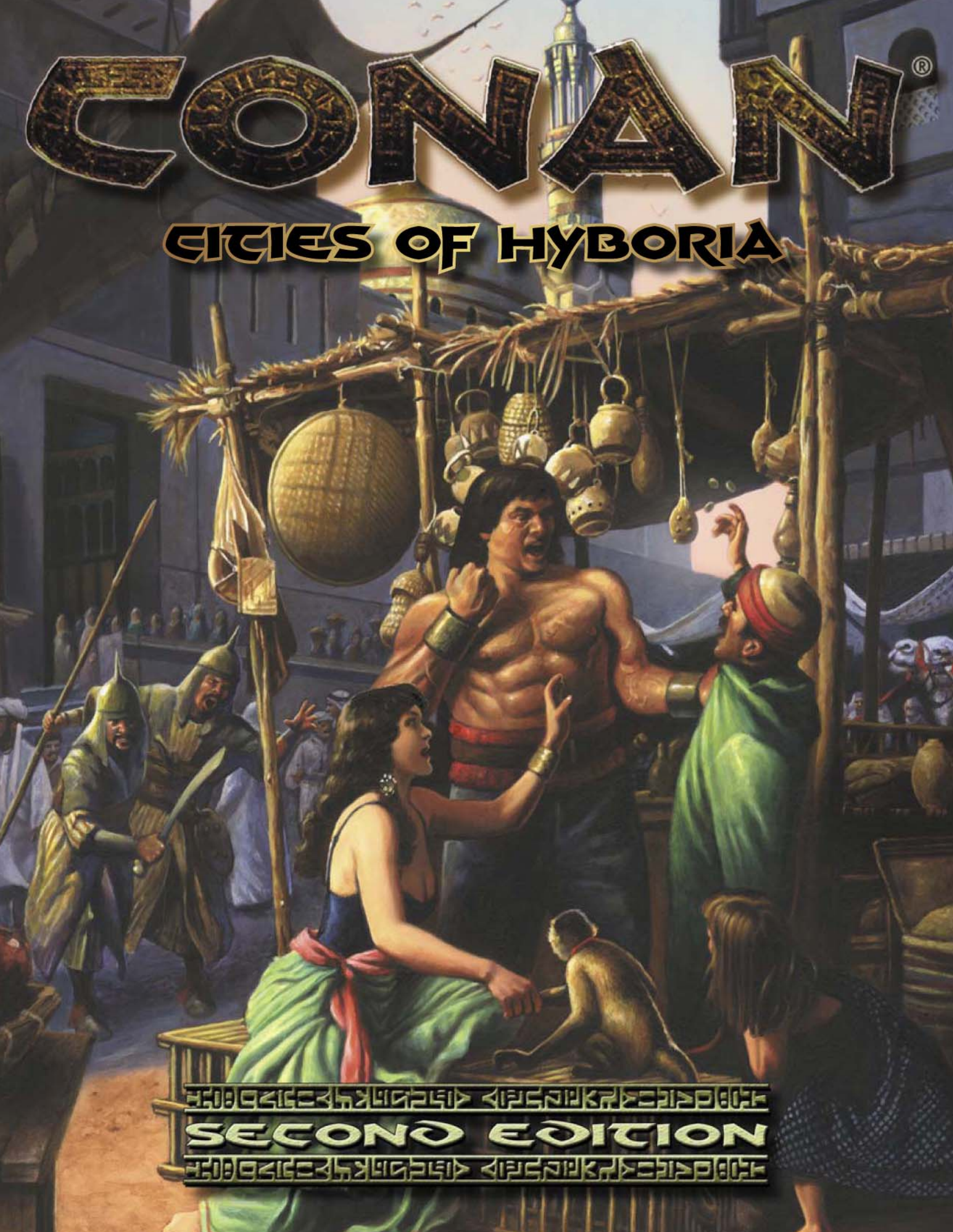


# CONAN<sup>®</sup>

## CITIES OF HYBORIA



SECOND EDITION



# CONAN<sup>®</sup>

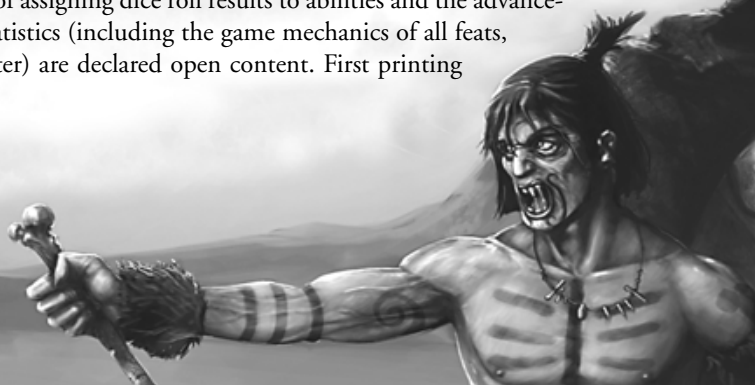
## CITIES OF HYBORIA

SECOND EDITION

# Contents

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>1 YEZUD</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>CREDITS</b>	<b>2 KHORSHEMISH</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3 ERUK</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>WHERE PEOPLE DWELL</b>	<b>5 YANGOYA</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>CITIES ACROSS NATIONS</b>	<b>51 ONAGRUL</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>HADRAPUT</b>	<b>73 INDEX</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>SEVEN STONES</b>	<b>84 LICENSE</b>	<b>132</b>

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# Introduction

The world of *Conan* through all of its many works, has painted a vivid picture of the people and places of the Hyborian Age, known occasionally and informally as 'Hyboria'. From towering ziggurats, waterlogged swamp villages and desert sprawls of tents and yurts; the fabulous world of Conan's age is an amazing place. It is a place of wonder, splendour and adventure.

Many of the stories and tales of Conan and his adventures have taken readers to massive cities like Messantia, Khemi and Shadizar – some of which we at Mongoose Publishing have detailed in previous *Conan the Roleplaying Game* supplements, sourcebooks and boxed sets. These products have given an excellent insight into specific locations but the whole of the Hyborian Age covers more than just these enormous metropolises.

*Cities of Hyboria* is a guide to the smaller cities, hamlets and towns that can be found during the course of roleplaying adventures. This book allows Games

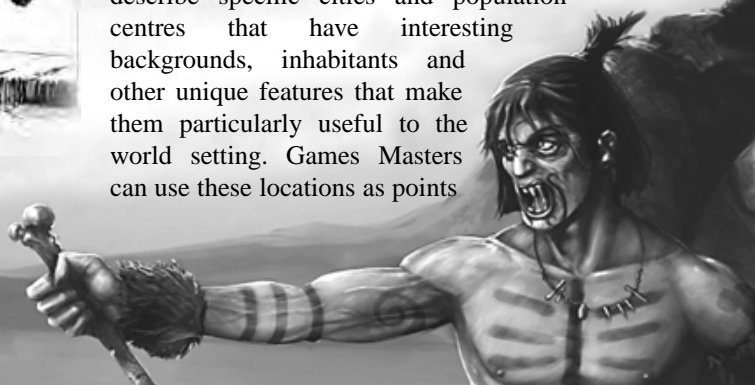
Masters to detail the settlements of the tiniest two-cow village to profitable merchant districts set in expansive urban comfort. No longer will every town the adventurers stroll into always have a tavern and a general store and perhaps they might find something special amongst the shops and alleyways. This book is a guide to creating and adventuring in the many cities of the Hyborian Age and a collection of several specific ready-made locations that Games Masters can add to their own game campaigns.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

*Cities of Hyboria* is designed not only as a collection of interesting pre-built city locations and the people that inhabit them; it is also a comprehensive system to allow Games Masters to randomly create new population centres and the various assets that make them up. Games Masters can use the random tables found in the first section of this book to create any number of interesting and unique locations. It covers the ability to determine important information like the size of the population in a given town or village, whether or not the characters could buy good steel and the most important thing – if there is a pub.

We then move on to discuss the general ideas of what cities, in the overall sense of the word, are like for the various nations and cultures of Hyboria. When a story takes a set of characters through foreign lands, sometimes it can be difficult for a Games Master to describe the various types of buildings and structures that these cultures create. With the generic information in this chapter, readers can better describe the setting of Hyborian cities.

The book then breaks into several smaller chapters that describe specific cities and population centres that have interesting backgrounds, inhabitants and other unique features that make them particularly useful to the world setting. Games Masters can use these locations as points





along a path like side-scenarios and plots or as the root of major storylines and campaigns.

The first city section details the infamous Hadraput, a nomadic 'village' in the red wastes of Turan, where raiders dwell and caravans pay homage to the secret gods of the desert. Finding Hadraput is only the first task; surviving the encounter with it is the real test.

Next is the sprawling clanholme of Clan Urrogh (Blue Fox), a site of ancient wisdoms and importance to the Cimmerians called Seven Stones Ridge. Named for the seven towering monoliths that are believed to be the grave markers of titans, Seven Stones is the birthplace of Blue Fox warriors and the birthplace of many adventurers. Why such a simple place breeds such strength and tenacity has been unknown – until now.

The chapter surrounding Yezud, the Zamorian home of the spider faith, is a creepy insight into the dark religion of Zamora and the order protecting it. As shown in *Conan and the Spider God*, Yezud is not for the faint of heart or the weak of will. Many Zamorians get their sinister stereotypes for all of the reasons displayed in Yezud.

Huge and splendid, the capital of Koth is a city called Khorshemish, as mentioned in *Conan and the Scarlet Citadel*. It is a beautiful and brilliant place that is home to the Scarlet Citadel and is rumoured to be the dwelling place of darker powers. The ruins of the ancient culture that lies below its groomed streets and silken banners still have influence, despite having been reduced to rubble 3,000 ago.

A city destroyed multiple times, Eruk of Shem was once the home to the warlike and powerful Asshuri warrior clan that rose to stand in the way of Kothian invasions. The city was ravaged by the dark machinations of Natohk, leaving it a pale comparison to its former greatness. Still, it offers a lot to the right adventurous souls, just as it did in *The Black Colossus*.

Yanyoga, the southernmost city on the tip of the Black Kingdoms, was shown to Conan fans in *Shadows in the Skull*, where King Conan and his army defeated a small army of Snake-men and the vile Thoth-Amon. This chapter looks at the dark city behind the stone skull and what it can mean to those passing nearby.

The last city looked upon in this book

is Onagrul, the Hyrkanian port sometimes referred to as the 'Tortage of the East'. It is a dangerous place that sees as much blood as it does coin flowing through its districts and a welcome sight to a river-weary pirate that has not seen shore in many weeks.

## CITIES IN THE HYBORIAN AGE

Throughout this book there will be many references using the term 'city'. Although not all population centres could be truthfully called cities by size, population and advancement of its structures, they are all gathered under the same title for the purposes of this book. Villages, hamlets, sprawls and the like are different than one another in many ways but for simplicity's sake we are collecting all of them under the one singular title unless otherwise stated.

### WHERE ARE THE OTHER METROPOLISES?

Mongoose Publishing has produced several boxed sets and sourcebooks surrounding some of the most influential and powerful cities of the Hyborian Age. One would think that a book dedicated to the cities of Hyboria would look at the other large and powerful locations of the world but *Cities of Hyboria* does not. We instead take a closer look at smaller locations; ones that many readers might question the importance of. Why would we do that?

Simple; we felt that the larger cities are assuredly going to form star roles in future boxed sets, sourcebooks or supplements and that to ignore the small places where adventures take place would be a travesty. Anyone can find action and excitement in places like Tarantia or Luxur; we felt that it was harder to know where to look in the less-known locales.

We hope you agree with our decision.

# Where People Dwell - City Creation

There are countless population centres throughout Hyborea; many of which have been mentioned or described in passing throughout the assorted works of Conan. Readers have been introduced to primitive villages and towering metropolises and many adventures have sprung from the simplest of surroundings.

Population centres are just as important to a band of wandering adventuring types as any treasure-packed set of ruins or lairs writhing with horribly dangerous beasts. A sickly farmer and his seven sons could be the root of a most fabulous journey and a good thief will find something of use anywhere that there are people to pilfer from. The world of Conan makes sure that even the least likely of places could have very deep and dark shadows lurking within them.

This chapter is designed to help Games Masters design population centres in the Hyborian Age. By following the steps as they are given in order, a complete Hyborian city can be created to serve the campaign's needs in just a few minutes of die rolling or selection by the Games Master. Alternatively, a player might use these rules to create the details of his home town, giving his character a better background than 'I am from this place in Cimmeria.'

Although all of the population centres created by this chapter are designed for *Conan the Roleplaying Game Second Edition*, they are not exactly culturally specific or set with a particular location in mind. The next chapter, *Cities Across the Nations*, will discuss how to alter these generic population centres to match specific Hyborian cultures better.

The following section covers the individual facets of creating a Hyborian city.

## BASIC CITY CREATION

This section shows readers how to build the basic outline of a Hyborian population centre. Games Masters should roll randomly or choose on the tables below to determine the various points of order about their impending 'city'.

## CLASSIFICATION OF CITY

The exact type of population centre that is encountered has a direct influence on all of the many parts of the creation process. There is a definite weighting of the die roll used to determine this, as there are countless small communities that have gathered across the wilderness for safety compared to the relatively few walled metropolises that appear on even the simplest of maps.

Roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine the approximate classification of the city being designed. Obviously, if the Games Master decides that the rolled choice is too big or small for his purposes he can re-roll or forego the roll altogether.

### City Classification

D20 Result	City Type
1 – 4	Commune
5 – 8	Hamlet
9 – 13	Village
14 – 16	Town
17 – 18	City
19	Urban Sprawl
20	Metropolis

**Commune:** This type of population is the smallest classification; numbering only a few families and their homes. Rarely is there much in the way of structures that are not dedicated to living space and most communities like this do not even have a name. They form because local families gather together for fresh water, farming opportunities and protection from the wilderness.

**Hamlet:** A small village-type of community that has grown to support several families and perhaps a few communal services. Goods and labour are frequently shared between the various hamlet inhabitants and individual families often take care of their own homes and surrounding fields. Little





happens inside of a hamlet without everyone that lives there knowing about it.

**Village:** The first living community that will assuredly have facilities of commerce and hired services, a village is the most common form of population centre in the Hyborian Age. Several families with different skills and talents to lend to the community have gathered together to build the village and it has likely become a local travelling point for adventurers and wayfarers. The village might even have some form of governing seat that keeps everything running smoothly but survival and quality of life are the true motivation of most villagers.

**Town:** When a village grows into a self-sufficient community of a certain size, it begins to consider itself a town. Towns have several hundred individuals living in them, with half-again that number of visitors often taking refuge from their wilderness travels. The amount of travellers that pass through towns of this size make it easy and profitable for inhabitants to set up shops, services

local governing body or an appointed head to serve in the name of a larger one; true cities are home to perhaps 1,000 people or more. Businesses, stores and labour guilds are likely to be prevalent. The use of local coin can be as prolific as barter or trade, peacekeeping or military services are frequently hired to protect the population and the city is likely well-known for one particular good or service. Local roads or paths will slowly adjust or avert from their original routes to get closer to true cities, turning even the smallest of cities into a hub of interaction for the whole local landscape.

**Urban Sprawl:** Safely tucked behind walls or other man-made boundaries, the urban sprawl is a city that has grown outward like a wine stain on cloth. Thousands upon thousands of people living amongst twisting streets and cramped buildings, this community type is rare in Hyboria. Much like a city in how it is governed and constructed, an urban sprawl is too large to be safe without appointed peacekeeping forces and crime is almost always a problem for the inhabitants. Businesses

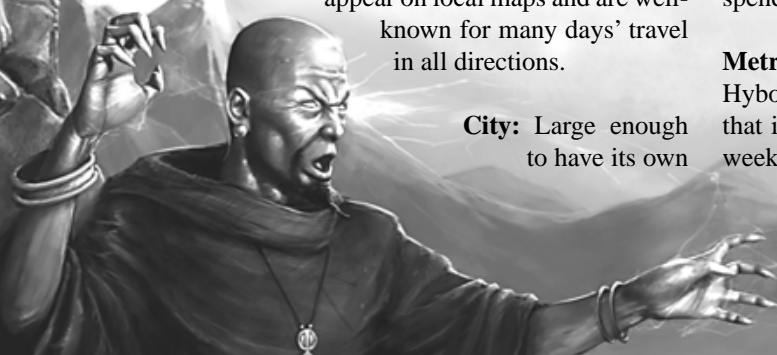


and facilities designed specifically to earn money and trade for the community. Towns appear on local maps and are well-known for many days' travel in all directions.

**City:** Large enough to have its own

are large and potentially owned by outsiders rather than its managers and travellers are welcomed to come and spend their foreign coin and loot.

**Metropolis:** The largest type of population centre in the Hyborian Age, a metropolis is a contained urban sprawl that is easily the largest community for several days or weeks by horseback. Tens of thousands of people live



in the staggering number of buildings that make the city what it is and foreign businesses often come to a metropolis to set up shop. Nearly anything can be found within the walls of a metropolis, as long as the seeker knows who to ask and where to look.

## POPULATION OF CITY

A city's inhabitants are the most important part of any community, as it cannot be considered a community without them. Sometimes the number of people in a community is an important point of interest in and of itself; sparse or overcrowded conditions alike can cause a community to need help from a group of wandering adventurers.

Roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine the general population of the community being designed. The table gives the term for the population level and the actual amount of inhabitants for each type of community. Obviously, if the Games Master decides that the rolled population is too large or thin for his purposes he can re-roll or forego the roll altogether.

### Community Population Levels

D20 Result	Population Level	Population by Classification of City						
		Commune	Hamlet	Village	Town	City	Urban Sprawl	Metropolis
1 – 2	Deserted	1d4-1	1d6	2d6-1	3d6	5d6	3d4 x 5	3d6 x 10
3 – 5	Sparse	2d3	2d4	3d6	2d6 x 3	2d3 x 10	3d6 x 10	3d6 x 50
6 – 8	Low	2d3+3	3d6	2d6 x 3	3d6 x 5	2d4 x 20	3d6 x 50	3d6 x 100
9 – 15	Average	2d6+4	2d4 x 3	2d4 x 10	2d10 x 10	2d6 x 100	2d4 x 1,000	3d6 x 1,000
16 – 17	High	3d6+5	2d6 x 5	2d6 x 10	3d8 x 10	3d6 x 100	2d8 x 1,000	3d8 x 1,000
18 – 19	Very High	2d4 x 4	3d6 x 5	3d6 x 10	3d8 x 15	2d10 x 100	3d6 x 1,000	3d8 x 1,250
20	Overcrowded	1d4 x 10	3d4 x 10	3d8 x 10	2d10 x 30	3d8 x 100	3d8 x 1,000	3d10 x 1,500

**Deserted:** Something has happened to the community that has caused its population levels to drop to near abandonment of the area. Those who have remained behind when the community was deserted are either those who physically could not leave or who decided to stay for their own reasons. At first look the community will seem eerily empty and could keep that image if travellers or inhabitants are not terribly inquisitive of the other.

**Sparse:** The community has a much lower population that its facilities could potentially support and

most of the city's structures are left vacant or in disrepair. This low population could be due to an outside situation (disease, war and so on) or simply because the majority of the population are transient or migratory. Whatever the reasons, the community has relatively few people living there.

**Low:** Light on the number of inhabitants but not alarmingly so, the community has a great deal of room for growth. It can expand without fear of outgrowing its boundaries but is still capable of staying self-reliant. Many communities are only temporarily low on population due to some kind of unexpected situation (monster attacks, military conscription and so on), which could lead them to seeking new citizens from happenstance visitors.

**Average:** This is the normal level of people that live in the community. Businesses and services are staffed well enough to run normal hours and there are few empty homes unless they are for sale. This is where most populations should be and is the default level for most pre-generated cities.

**High:** Either due to large families or good living conditions, the community has a thick population for its size and has little room for additional bodies without building outward. This is likely to mean that the community has an over abundance of workforce adults, which makes the community run smoothly – but leaves little in the way of employment for outsiders.

**Very High:** Beginning to be a problem, the population of the community is large enough to





cause some odd living arrangements and a moderate amount of homeless citizens. Businesses are inundated with potential workers and manual work pays very little (there are enough people to lower the wage). Food stores are tight and general supplies might be in short order, making such items a little more expensive and important. Prices and shortages might increase the amount of crime and if population growth continues people will begin to leave in favour of better conditions.

**Overcrowded:** Too many people have been jammed into the community for too long. There is a considerable homeless population, high crime rates due to lack of necessary supplies and the community suffers from a general lack of housing, work and services. Overcrowding in a city can make for a very hostile population, especially in a poor climate. Travellers will find an overcrowded community to be far less pleased to see them; they are just adding to the problem while they are visiting, after all.

## NUMBER AND TYPE OF STRUCTURES

Necessary for a community to actually house its population, a city must have a number of individual structures. Most of these structures will be used as family and grouped homes but in larger communities there will be numerous businesses and communal locations. The exact function of these additional types of structures and what they do for the community is detailed further in this chapter; this section determines how many individual buildings there are.

Roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine the number of structures making up the community being designed. Obviously, if the Games Master decides that the rolled number does not give enough or gives too many structures for his purposes he can re-roll or forego the roll altogether.



## Number of Structures

Number of Structures	Classification of City						
	Commune	Hamlet	Village	Town	City	Urban Sprawl	Metropolis
	2d3	2d4+1	2d6 + 5	3d8 + 10	(1d6 x 10) + 20	(2d6 x 10) + 20	(3d6 x 30) + 200

Once the number of structures has been determined, you must determine the *types* of buildings that make up the community. The vast majority of structures will always be homes and housing but as the community grows and develops new needs, other types of structures appear. The following table shows the ratio of non-housing buildings to all existing buildings for each type of community, separated by the classification of community. These ratios are designed for a *full* amount of buildings for each non-housing structure; so a Commune with a five buildings will only have one (1:4 ratio) non-housing building, not two.

## Types of Structures

Non-Housing Structure Type	Ratio of Non-Housing to Existing Structures by City Classification						
	Commune	Hamlet	Village	Town	City	Urban Sprawl	Metropolis
Storage	1:4	1:5	1:6	1:12	1:15	1:20	1:50
Gathering	—	1:4	1:6	1:15	1:20	1:25	1:40
Service	—	1:5	1:5	1:9	1:8	1:10	1:30
Commercial	—	—	1:10	1:12	1:12	1:15	1:30
Entertainment	—	—	—	1:25	1:30	1:35	1:50
Religious	—	1:8	1:8	1:15	1:30	1:40	1:70
Governing	—	—	1:15	1:25	1:40	1:60	1:90
Fantastique	—	—	—	1:32	1:70	1:100	1:140
Unique <sup>1</sup>	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%	4%	5%

<sup>1</sup> There is no ratio for Unique structures, but rather a percentage chance that one is present.

*For example, a Games Master's adventurer group is about to saunter into a new section of the world and he feels it is a good time to build a city for them to stop off in. After determining the city will actually be a Town [roll of 14], he discovers that it will be highly populated with over 200 [roll of 16; then 22 x 10 = 220] inhabitants. The people of this little town live amongst 28 buildings [roll of 18 + 10]. Amongst the structures the adventurers will have access to, there are two storehouses [1:12 ratio], a single gathering place [1:15 ratio], three individual*

*service locations [1:9 ratio], two commercial stores [1:12 ratio], a single entertainment site [1:25 ratio], one area of religious importance [1:15 ratio] and a single governing facility [1:25 ratio]. There are no locations pertaining to the fantastique however [1:32 ratio]. There is, oddly enough, a single unique structure as well [rolled a 2 on a d100, less than 3%].*

*After reducing the total number of structures by 11 [the number of non-housing structures], the Games Master determines that the town has 16 family and group homes, meaning that there would have to be an average of 14*

*people [220 ÷ 16 = 13.75, rounded up to 14] living in each building without resulting in homeless.*

## ADVANCED CITY DESCRIPTION

This section shows readers how to build upon the basic outline of a Hyborian city, adding all of the necessary touches that make it unique from all others (perhaps). Games Masters should roll randomly or choose on the tables below to determine the individual characteristics of the city.





## GENERAL MOOD OF POPULATION

When an adventuring group first comes into a city, it does not take long to get a feel for the disposition of the populace. Whether or not the locals are friendly could seriously affect trade prices, interaction benefits and even the safety of the adventurers. A happy population could turn even a tiny village into a veritable paradise for a weary soul but a hostile one can turn a small group of cabins into an unexpected ambush.

Roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine the overall mood and disposition of the population of the community. After the table are several modifiers that can affect this die roll. If the Games Master decides that the rolled mood will not work for his game's purposes, he can re-roll or forego the roll altogether.

### Population Mood

D20 Result	Average <sup>1</sup> Mood of Population by City Classification						
	Commune	Hamlet	Village	Town	City	Urban Sprawl	Metropolis
1 – 2	Avoidant	Hostile	Hostile	Hostile	Unfriendly	Unfriendly	Unfriendly
3 – 5	Unfriendly	Avoidant	Unfriendly	Unfriendly	Indifferent	Unfriendly	Unfriendly
6 – 9	Indifferent	Unfriendly	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent
10 – 14	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent
15 – 18	Friendly	Friendly	Friendly	Friendly	Friendly	Friendly	Indifferent
19 – 20	Helpful	Helpful	Helpful	Helpful	Friendly	Friendly	Friendly

<sup>1</sup> More than half of the commoner population of the city feels this way

- ✱ +1 for a city that has any Gathering structures
- ✱ +1 for a city that has any Religious structures
- ✱ +2 for a city that has any Entertainment structures
- ✱ -1 for a city that has two or more Governing structures
- ✱ +1 for a city that is classified as having a Low or Sparse population
- ✱ -3 for a city that is classified as having a Very High population
- ✱ -5 for a city that is classified as having an Overcrowded population

The above mood descriptions are all covered in part by the effects of the Diplomacy skill in *Conan the Roleplaying Game Second Edition* Page

100 and should be considered the same Attitude level of the majority of the people living in the city. Player Characters will want to use their Diplomacy skills to adjust this accordingly if they wish to.

Although the Attitudes are covered under the Diplomacy skill, there are a few interesting differences between one individual's Attitude and the overall mood of a population. They are described in greater detail below.

**Hostile:** The majority of the people in the community are one bad remark or social error away from grabbing their pitchforks and axes. They will congregate against the actions of the Player Characters and will go to average lengths to cause them harm or hindrance. A small population that knows they cannot beat the Player Characters in a straight fight may try to use deception and underhanded tricks to do them harm while acting differently but a well-placed ambush will not be too far from their thoughts.

**Avoidant:** Only an option for small populations that could try to hide their numbers when strangers come into their community, the Avoidant mood is the only option found here that is not represented by an individual Attitude. Avoidant is the same as being Unfriendly for all purposes except the following: Avoidant populations will go to great lengths to simply hide from and dodge any interactions with outsiders. They are likely to be afraid or shy enough to stray from all contact if they can help it, preferring to flee from all but the unavoidable situations. Only at the point where they cannot get away will they will likely become Unfriendly.





**Unfriendly:** The population has a general testiness and unpleasant attitude toward outsiders. This leads to ill wishes and negative interactions. People will enjoy causing the Player Characters problems; misleading them or speaking ill of them to others. Almost all prices of goods and services that the Player Characters look into while a citizen is Unfriendly will be *double* the normal amount.

**Indifferent:** The local populace simply does not feel anything special toward the Player Characters. They are treated like any other traveller or visitor and can expect nothing out of the ordinary from any of them. Goods and services will be priced normally but particularly loot-laden adventurers might be expected to pay slightly more if they display their wealth.

**Friendly:** The local people in the community are glad to see strangers and travellers and they will try their best to be kind to the Player Characters. They will happily give directions, warn about impending danger and freely give rumours or gossip that could aid the Player Characters.

So long as it is not in regards to any rare or unique item or service, costs are likely to be 5 – 10% cheaper.

**Helpful:** Only appearing in manageable populations, a Helpful mood can be very unsettling for weary and wary adventurers. The people of the community will go out of their way to aid the Player Characters, even protecting them from outside threats and tending to their wounds. Exactly why a community of strangers will help random travellers to this degree may be a mystery (religious beliefs, ulterior motives and so on.) but whatever it may be – the community will put itself at some risk to help the Player Characters. Most trade and barter for goods and services will be done at least with a 10% discount.

*As the example continues from above, the Games Master determines that the town he is creating for his player group must currently be dealing with some outside influences, because of their outward Friendly mood towards the Player Characters [roll of 12; + 1 + 1 + 2 (structures) = 16 = Friendly].*

## CRIME RATE IN CITY

Even the smallest of communities can have a criminal element within their borders; it is not a facet of Hyborean life that is limited to the sprawls and metropolises. From a single livestock thief of the local unnamed hamlet to the masterful crime lords of Shadizar – criminals spring up all over. Although it is possible for a city to be without crime, it is a very rare instance. The more souls you pack into a given community – the more likely it will be that one or more will be a criminal of some form.

Roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine the general crime rate found within the community. After the table are several modifiers that can affect this die roll based on community population and the existence of certain types of structures. If the Games Master decides that the rolled crime rate will not work for his game's purposes, he can re-roll or forego the roll altogether.







## Crime Rate

D20 Result

### Crime Rate by City Classification

	Commune	Hamlet	Village	Town	City	Urban Sprawl	Metropolis
1 – 2	None	None	Minor	Minor	Below Average	Below Average	Average
3 – 6	None	Minor	Minor	Below Average	Below Average	Average	Average
7 – 9	Minor	Minor	Below Average	Below Average	Average	Average	Above Average
10 – 13	Minor	Below Average	Below Average	Average	Average	Above Average	Above Average
14 – 18	Below Average	Below Average	Average	Average	Above Average	Major	Major
19 – 20	Below Average	Average	Average	Above Average	Major	Major	Hierarchal

- ✦ +1 for a city that has any Gathering structures
- ✦ +1 for a city that has any Entertainment structures
- ✦ +2 for a city that has any Commercial structures
- ✦ -1 for a city that has any Governing structures
- ✦ +1 for a city that has no Governing structures
- ✦ -5 for a city that is classified as having a Deserted population
- ✦ -3 for a city that is classified as having a Low or Sparse population
- ✦ +2 for a city that is classified as having a Very High population
- ✦ +4 for a city that is classified as having an Overcrowded population
- ✦ +1 for every full 10,000 people in the community's population

The above crime rates are estimations based on the overall criminal influence within the population. A major crime rate does not mean that every person living in the town is a thief or cutthroat just as a minor one does not mean that the alleys and streets are always safe. This crime rate is not a hard and fast rule to live by, merely a guideline for the Games Master to follow when it comes to encounters. The individual crime rates and what they mean are described in greater detail below.

**None:** There is no real criminal element in the community at all. The worst transgressions are the occasional drunken argument or farm animal gone missing and violent crime is almost unheard of unless it comes from an outside source. The Player Characters and their

possessions are safe in the community, barring them doing something to endanger them.

**Minor:** Crime in the community is extremely rare and limited to a few random occurrences each season; perhaps a minor theft, burglary or even the occasional rape or mugging. An armed and skilled warrior has nothing to fear from the so-called criminals that might exist within the community, especially if amongst a group of other seasoned adventurers. Crimes of this kind often go mostly unpunished due to a lack of legal enforcement and are left to the offended parties to sort out necessary justice – or vengeance.

**Below Average:** The community has a few individuals living in it that consider themselves good thieves or tough thugs and they have earned a local reputation that gives them a bit of credence. The community is not fearful of their streets, nor do they believe that their city is unsafe. They are simply aware that some unsavoury types call their community home and they will need to be careful from time to time. This could pose problems for new faces if they seem shady but the majority of the populace can be trusted.

**Average:** The people of the community are aware that there is a certain element to their area that makes the wealthy tie their purse strings that much tighter and the poor desperate enough to do otherwise illegal things to better their situation. Pickpockets lurk in crowded areas to nab loose coins, dark alleys might hide a mugger or two and not every merchant is selling the finest of wares for the price. The occasional body turns up with a slit throat or opened kidney, stripped of all their possessions.

A well-armed Player Character group might attract the attention of possible thieves and extortionists but they should have no trouble dealing with them.

**Above Average:** The community has begun to grow a seedier underworld of thieves, gang members and bandits. Dark streets and city corners are rarely safe for travel at night and seldom will an evening go by without the sound of a troubled traveller echoing in the air. Some local thieves and raiders with a decent amount of skill have likely banded like-minded individuals into a guild or cell to better protect themselves from vigilantes and law enforcement. The people of the community are well-aware of their crime problems and are often seeking new ways to try and make their town safer – unless the criminals are a better option than the governing power.

**Major:** Only large communities are able to claim to have a major criminal element and normally because of its sheer power within the city. Guilds, bands and gangs form several distinct sects of criminals within the confines of the city, most often waging a secret war against one another to claim the profits of the community. A few well-known names and faces have become local criminal legends and much of the community pays homage – or protection money – to them. Strangers to the area will not be able to claim ignorance of these criminal personalities for too long and a wealthy enough group of treasure-laden adventurers will attract their attentions in short order. Player Characters looking to keep the peace or serve the notion of justice or righteousness will definitely be battling an uphill battle here but they could earn the love and respect of the populace if they are able to topple even *one* of the crime lords.

**Hierarchal:** The community is so rife with crime and injustice that it permeates every level of the city's infrastructure – including its governing powers. City watchmen are mainly corrupt, magistrates are often in league with underworld rackets, the religious clergy could be common thieves in vestments and most of the city's people are somehow involved or directly affected by criminal activities. A city with a hierarchal criminal element can be the perfect paradise for miscreant Player Characters that enjoy the risk and excitement of a criminal's life or the single most arduous task for those characters bent on setting the world right. Cities that are so steeped in crime and danger like these are excellent places for action and adventure – but also bear the most risk to one's self and possessions.

## JUDGING A CITY'S CRIMINAL ELEMENT

Any character that spends even a small amount of time in a community will be able to pick up on the certain signals and situations that are signs to its criminal element. By recognising whether or not a city has a thick crime rate, they might be able to avoid getting into trouble themselves – or take advantage of the moral lacking of the community. For that reason alone thieves, bandits and pirates are especially good at taking note of these signs.

In order for a character to judge the estimated strength of a city's criminal element he must spend at least one full day dealing with the locals of a community. Eating, drinking, shopping; these are all good ways to spend that day while picking up on body language and commonly used terms. After one full day the character can begin to make daily Gather Information skill checks to get a good idea of the criminal element of the community. This check is made at DC 15, with success requiring the Games Master to explain the Crime Rate level of the community. Characters with levels in the Pirate or Thief class (or any other suitably *criminal* class at Games Master's discretion) can make this check at DC 12 instead.

*As the example continues from above, the Games Master discovers that the town he is creating has a serious problem for someplace its size with pickpockets and muggings, determining an Above Average crime rate [roll of 17; + 1 + 1 + 2 – 1 (modifiers) = 20 = Above Average].*





## THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRUCTURES

When building a new community for the Hyborian Age, it must be kept in mind that not every home will be a single-family cottage and not every place of gathering interest will be a pub. The many varieties of structures that can potentially make up a community are what make each city or village unique in their own ways.

This section is divided up into several subsections, each one designed to explain several different varieties of structure that fall into a greater category. Each subsection also gives details on specific structures, with each structure being noted as to the *minimum* size classification of the community required to be home to that type of structure. There is no maximum size, however. Cathedrals do not appear in villages but public altars can appear even in the largest of metropolises.

Games Masters should use the given examples as good ways to build their own communities in the game setting or roll upon the random tables provided.

## HOUSING

Some of the most important buildings in any community are the housing facilities for the people that live there. A lot can be learned from where a city's populace tends to live and Games Masters will want to have the right information at hand if his players decide to interact with them.

There are countless reasons why the housing elements of a community are important to a scenario that interacts with it but here are a few decent examples how a Player Character group could do so.

- ✱ Extremely bad weather forces the Player Characters to seek shelter within the first home that they encounter.
- ✱ Player Character thieves decide to try and burgle a few homes as they pass through a city.
- ✱ The Player Characters know that the man that they are hunting is hiding amongst the populace of the community, forcing them to stop and search every home.
- ✱ The Player Characters are on the run from a superior foe and duck into someone's home to avoid capture or conflict.

- ✱ The Player Characters are visiting friends or family members at their home when raiders or bandits of some kind attack the community, forcing them to defend the building from within.

The following are examples of different housing elements a community could support.

### Tent/Lean-to

**Minimum Size:** Commune

The simplest form of housing, tents and lean-tos are only considered structures in the most basic sense of the word. Primitive cultures or temporary communities are likely to be the only ones that will commonly use such flimsy and unprotected housing.

### Hut/Hovel/Shack

**Minimum Size:** Commune

Basic but inexpensive, these types of housing at least have four walls and a ceiling to help keep the elements out. The existence of huts, hovels or shacks as housing often shows either a general poverty level that cannot afford to create better structures or a culture lacking in the materials or skills to do so.



### Cabin/Cottage/House

**Minimum Size:** Commune

Built of stronger stuff for larger families, cabins and cottages are what most people think of as average Hyborian housing. Constructed from wood, stone or other durable materials, these buildings are much more permanent in the sense that they cannot be easily moved or rebuilt. Nomadic cultures rarely build cabins or houses and few sedentary cultures could exist without them.





**Homestead****Minimum Size:** Hamlet

Basically a large house for a large family with smaller structures attached to it to house animals, farming equipment or other necessary tools, a homestead is an evolved cottage. Most homesteads are home to eight to ten family members, servants and workers. Some use low fencing or walls to mark the territory attached to the homestead but rarely are these defensive in any way. The existence of homesteads in a community often means that there is some kind of industry or service being provided by the local populace.

**Group Home/Longhouse****Minimum Size:** Village

Similar to a hostel but built for non-transient inhabitants, group homes or longhouses are essentially nothing more than huge homesteads. Two dozen or more individual people all live under one roof here, likely from the same clan, family or business. A common interest – even as simple as the need for defence – brings these people to live together in a single building. Many Hyborian cultures evolved from the basic use of longhouses, staying familial and close-knit for a variety of reasons. These housing elements are often a sign of a clannish or survivalist culture.

**Lodge/Hostel****Minimum Size:** Town

Part housing and part service element to a community, lodges and hostels are larger buildings designed to house dozens of individuals at one time. Some are built for long term stays, others are little more than glorified inns. Communities with sizeable numbers of travellers and long-term visitors can arrange for these multi-room structures to house dozens of individuals nightly. They are rarely fancy or posh but they put a roof over one's head.

**Barracks/Dormitory****Minimum Size:** Town

Built to house dozens upon dozens of people in the community without much in the way of personal belongings, a barracks or dormitory is a huge structure with numerous sleeping areas in grouped rooms. Called a barracks when military or other martial personnel live there or a dormitory with civilians, these

buildings are not built for comfort or pleasure. They are practical places to hold a high number of inhabitants and are sparse and often bleak because of it.

**Estate/Manor****Minimum Size:** Town

When a homestead gathers enough territory and grows into a larger structure altogether, it becomes an estate or manor. Rarely owned by anything but the most affluent families, these housing elements are often used as local landmarks. They are mainly owned by the most powerful local families, becoming the hub of their influence and businesses. Estates and manors are a sign that a community at least has a higher social class that lives at a better quality of life than most others do.

**Mansion/Palace****Minimum Size:** City

The highest end of the housing element scale, mansions and palaces are truly enormous and fabulous living areas for relatively few people. The owning or inhabiting family, their guards, servants and other staff live in the grounds of the mansion or palace, often separated by a high wall or barrier from the rest of the community. Sometimes the home of the governing agent for the area, the appearance of a mansion or palace marks an important structure for the area – even if the locals may not agree.







## RANDOM HOUSING SELECTION

Games Masters will likely want to simply choose the housing elements for their random cities but we have devised this table to help those who want to keep to the utterly random nature of the process. Whether rolling to determine the average style of housing a city has or determining the nature of a specific structure being interacted with, roll the corresponding dice and consult the table below. The exact type of dice being rolled is determined by the size classification of the city.

A Commune rolls 1d6; a Hamlet 1d8; Village 1d10; Town 2d8; City or Urban Sprawl 3d6; and Metropolis 2d10.

### Random Housing Element

Roll Result	Housing Element
1	Tent/Lean-to
2 – 3	Hut/Hovel/Shack
4 – 7	Cabin/Cottage/House
8 – 9	Homestead
10 – 11	Group Home/Longhouse
12 – 13	Lodge/Hostel
14 – 15	Barracks/Dormitory
16 – 17	Estate/Manor
18 – 20	Mansion/Palace

For especially large communities it could be very daunting to randomly roll each and every housing element. We suggest rolling three times on the table; once for the majority of the community, once for the minority and once for a housing structure of note.

*As the example continues from above, the Games Master decides to roll randomly to determine the nature of his town's 16 housing structures. He decides that he will roll for 10 buildings, then five and then once for a single special structure where his local Non-Player Character will reside. The majority of people in his town live in 10 homesteads [roll of 8 on 2d8 for being a Town] and five longhouses [result of 10], while his NPC lives strangely alone in his manor [result of 16].*

## STORAGE

As a community grows it becomes needful of greater amounts of food, supplies and other goods. Commercial elements need places to stash their

wares; military forces need to put their swords and shields somewhere when they are not at war. To keep every person's home from becoming a closet for everything needed by the community, specific storage facilities must be constructed for this use.

There is a multitude of reasons why the storage elements of a community are important to a scenario that interacts with it but here are a few decent examples how a Player Character group could do so.

- ✱ A drought causes fields to dry up and crops to die, the local grain silos become tantalising targets for looting.
- ✱ A doomsday cultist has claimed to have poisoned food stores across the countryside and the Player Characters have been directed to go and destroy all of the food – much to the chagrin of the owners.
- ✱ The Player Characters have to break into a city's military armoury and steal all of the arrows and bolts before

the city's army can mobilise and attack their allies.

- ✱ A warehouse on the coast is said to be a facility for storing illegal slaves and the Player Characters have been told that there is a huge ransom for freed slaves.
- ✱ Player Character thieves discover that a treasure vault has a rare artefact in it.

The following are examples of different storage elements a community could support.

### **Barn/Shed**

**Minimum Size:** Commune

A simple structure with little in the way of internal walls or separated rooms, barns are above ground ways to lock up tools, supplies and other items or animals to keep them safe from the elements or outsiders. The community can keep these items safe without having to worry about keeping them inside their own homes, which can be difficult in the case of some livestock or farming supplies.

### **Grainhouse/Silo**

**Minimum Size:** Commune

A dedicated place to store food or livestock-grade grains and vegetables, grainhouses and silos are strictly agricultural storage structures. They are built solely with

the idea in mind that they will hold crates, bins and stacks of food materials for later use. They tend to be sources of vermin and fungus growth as well but a good farmhand can normally tell good grain from bad grain at a glance.

### **Food Cellar/Cool Storage**

**Minimum Size:** Hamlet

This storage facility is created by finding a malleable area of clay or mud that can be dug out to a depth of several metres, reinforced with support beams and then lined with shelving and tables. When deep enough into the ground and covered by doors and leather flaps, the whole cellar stays very cool. Churned butter, clay jars of wine or fruit, vegetable or berry preserves; all of these things can be kept cool enough to stay fresh for months in a properly maintained storage cellar. Some cellars are designed not only to keep things cool but also dry. These are decidedly harder to maintain but can even be used to store sensitive alchemical agents or items prone to rot. Any good cellar will have several water collection troughs nearby to help keep it from flooding but sometimes this cannot be helped.

### **Warehouse/Storehouse**

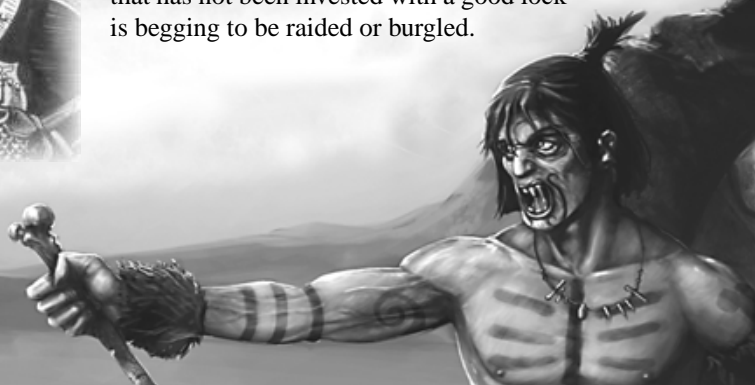
**Minimum Size:** Village

The most common form of external storage element in Hyborian communities, warehouses are simply large buildings that hold various items inside of them. Oftentimes a warehouse will have large doors for wagon or even shipside loading in and out of them and many even have segregated rooms within them to keep track of different items being stored. Warehouses and storehouses are also good places to store *people* and are used by slavers and hiding criminal elements frequently as makeshift housing facilities.

### **Armoury/Depot/Cache**

**Minimum Size:** Town

Varying in size depending on what exactly is being stored in them, armouries, depots and caches are storage elements built to hold expensive military or other martial equipment and supplies. A city watch's weapons, armour and forging materials for both; these are the sorts of things that a city's armoury might contain. A good storage building of this type will almost always be kept a close eye on by the equipments' owners and an armoury that has not been invested with a good lock is begging to be raided or burgled.







### Vault

#### Minimum Size: City

The finest and most expensive storage option, the vault is what happens when a cellar and an armoury are mixed and added with reinforced materials and better craftsmanship. A vault is designed to hold and protect the most valuable of items and equipment. All sorts of interesting and precious items can be locked away behind the often stone or bronze door of a vault, kept from prying eyes by expensive locking mechanisms that keep thieves at bay. Word always spreads when a true vault is discovered, especially if there are rumours as to what it contains and soon every underhanded soul looking to get into it will be headed to town. Depending on what a vault contains, owners will sometimes keep constant guard over the facility – even if it just holds memoirs and sentimental objects.

### GATHERING

The people of any given community do not go about their lives in solitude as a whole, ignoring their neighbours and staying away from others. For defence, survival and quality of life they will almost assuredly interact and become, unsurprisingly, *communal*. When a community is small enough they can gather in each others' homes and fields, spending time in that way. As the community grows however, it becomes apparent that dedicated places to gather become a huge social boon.

Player Characters will often seek out gathering elements of a community first and foremost to get 'a feel' for the town or city. There are many other reasons why gathering elements of a community are important to a scenario but here are a few decent examples of how a Player Character group might choose to do so.

## RANDOM STORAGE SELECTION

Games Masters may want to simply choose to arrange the storage elements for their random cities but we have devised this table to help those who want to randomise the process instead. When rolling to determine the types of storage facilities a community has access to, roll a die (or dice) and consult the table below. The exact type of dice being rolled is determined by the size classification of the city.

A Commune rolls 1d4; a Hamlet 1d6; Village 1d8; Town 2d6; City, Urban Sprawl or Metropolis 2d8.

### Random Storage Element

Roll Result	Storage Element
1 – 2	Barn/Shed
3 – 4	Grainhouse/Silo
5 – 6	Food Cellar/Cool Storage
7 – 10	Warehouse/Storehouse
11 – 12	Armoury/Depot/Cache
13 – 16	Vault

*As the example continues from above, the Games Master needs to roll randomly for both of his town's storage facilities. The first is a large warehouse [roll of 8 on 2d6 for being a Town] and the second is a large food cellar [roll of 6 on 2d6], which the Games Master decides contains all of the town's wine supplies.*

- ✱ The local constabulary are having serious problems with a group of travellers holed up in the local pub and the Player Characters are the only warriors seasoned enough have a chance at scaring them off.
- ✱ The city's magistrate has been made aware of a very vocal naysayer in a local village doing some rabble rousing at the amphitheatre and has asked that he be silenced – one way or the other.
- ✱ A beast has gotten free from the local collector and has made it to the public baths; the Player Characters

must deal with this dangerous creature before it harms more people.

- ✱ A vicious storm ripped several of the trees apart in the local gardens and the city needs strong arms to help clear away the detritus.
- ✱ After drinking a strange brew at the local pub, the Player Characters wake up stripped and looted in the local courtyard square – just as the morning bazaar is about to set up!

The following are examples of different gathering elements a community could support.

### Courtyard Square

**Minimum Size:** Hamlet

Not exactly a *structure* but rather an area set aside for the community to meet and such, a courtyard square is often just an empty patch of land. This area is not built upon in order to leave it for community access and sometimes is even laid with cobblestones or benches. It is a good place for groups to gather; that is, unless they are looking for something specific to do.

### Garden/Park

**Minimum Size:** Village

The evolution of a courtyard square, a garden or park is an area set aside for pleasant surroundings to be designed for communal visitation. Some have trees and flowers; others use sand and stone and even some use topiary sculptures. A garden or park in a community means that there will likely be some person or staff to tend to the area, their role to keep it from becoming overgrown or dishevelled. People often use gardens to calm themselves, sitting and enjoying the natural environment – even if it has been made by human hands.

### Pub/Tavern/Drinking Hall

**Minimum Size:** Village

Arguably the most important gathering place in any community, the stereotypical pub or tavern is actually partly a service location as well as a gathering element to any city. Community inhabitants use their local pubs and drinking halls as the best place to come together and enjoy one another's company, so they are better served as gathering elements than a simple service location. All walks of life come to the pubs of a community; sometimes for song and merriment, sometimes just for a stiff drink to wash away their day. Nowhere is better in a small community to learn what is going on than from the dark corner of a smoky tavern.



### Amphitheatre/Podium

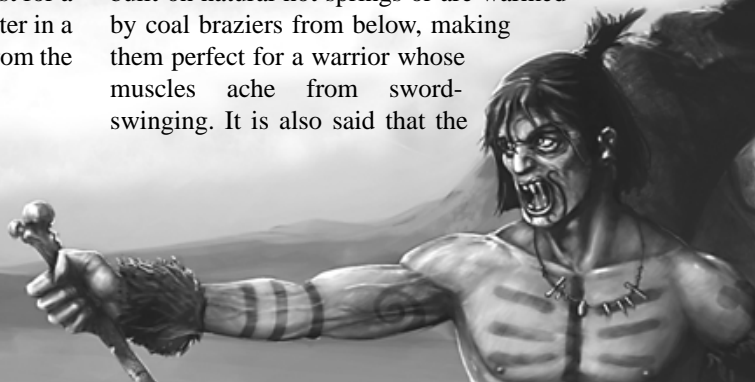
**Minimum Size:** Town

Not always used by the fine arts, this type of gathering element is designed to bring a single voice or set of voices to many people at once within the community. Either from a podium on a raised dais that allows for body language to be seen over a gathered crowd or up to the assembled masses sitting or standing at an amphitheatre, these structures are built for public addressing. They are only occasionally used by theatre troupes, poets or bards as entertainment for the masses.

### Public Bath

**Minimum Size:** City

Hygiene is rarely something that comes to mind when thinking about most of the people of Hyboria. In fact it is sometimes considered *unnatural* to wash regularly, choosing only to cleanse ones self of unexpected filth and grime when it occurs. This having been noted, some communities build huge open-air pools of circulated (at least churned) water and oils to be used by the locals to relax and bathe. Public baths are rarely the *cleanest* places in a town strangely enough but they are either built on natural hot springs or are warmed by coal braziers from below, making them perfect for a warrior whose muscles ache from sword-swinging. It is also said that the







public bath is a good place to meet an adversary, as that it is very difficult to wear any form of weaponry in the bath – making it highly unlikely that an ambush could go unnoticed.

## Promenade

**Minimum Size:** Urban Sprawl

Of the gathering elements of the Hyborian Age, the promenade is the least common by far. Created by setting aside a stretch of path or road that wind through an attractive environment, the promenade is often used by very small groups of people to enjoy their surroundings. Personal meetings, long business talks and secret rendezvous can make good use of a promenade – which is commonly found away from prying eyes. Some commercial elements will use the promenade to augment their shopping traffic by trying to get located close to the path it takes but a good promenade is secluded enough for a relaxing stroll.

## SERVICE

A community that grows to the point of being able to create goods and perform certain duties on their own will soon need to set aside specific locations to manufacture these goods or perform these duties. A smith needs a forge, a tailor needs a sewing space and prostitutes need brothels. These are the building blocks of larger communities, the services with which the city will sometimes be literally constructed from.

When a group of road-weary Player Characters have come upon a town or city, often they will have loot to spend and aspirations of items to buy. Besides the need to spend, there are many different plot-based reasons why service elements of a community are important to any scenario but here are a few other examples how a Player Character group might get involved with a service element.

## RANDOM GATHERING SELECTION

Games Masters may want to simply choose to decide what gathering elements their random cities will have available (particularly the presence of a pub) but we have created the following table to help those who want to randomise the process instead. When rolling to determine the types of gathering facilities a community has access to, roll a die (or dice) and consult the table below. The exact type of dice being rolled is determined by the size classification of the city.

A Hamlet rolls 1d4; a Village 1d8; Town 2d6; City 2d8; Urban Sprawl 3d6; Metropolis 2d10

### Random Gathering Element

Roll Result	Gathering Element
1 – 4	Courtyard Square
5 – 6	Garden/Park
7 – 12	Pub/Tavern/Drinking Hall
13 – 14	Amphitheatre/Podium
15 – 17	Public Bath
18	Promenade

*As the example continues from above, the Games Master needs to roll randomly for his town's gathering location. The Player Characters are in luck coming to this town, as that it is centralised around a single fantastic drinking hall [roll of 7 on 2d6 for being a Town].*

- ✱ The Player Characters are included in the inheritance of a local magistrate and they are suddenly swimming in coin. Knowing that they cannot handle this amount alone they seek out the local accounting guild to aid them.
- ✱ A local blacksmith is cutting corners at the forge and making substandard weapons for the militia, leaving them woefully under-armed against anyone looking to cause trouble.

- ❖ The stable is on fire and the community is frantic to save the horses and oxen inside, looking to the Player Characters for help.
- ❖ A sinister killer is targeting all of the women from the local brothels, leaving the Player Characters to stop him.
- ❖ After a strange and beneficial season, a vintner's vineyard is too heavily laden with grapes on the vine. The Player Characters are asked to come and help pick grapes or crush pulp, giving them a few extra silvers and a tun or two of a good vintage.

There are actually two categories of service elements in a community; goods and duties. Goods locations turn raw materials into goods through the application of certain skills and tools. Duty locations employ skilled people from the community to do something that the average customer will not or cannot do for themselves. All service locations are also partially commercial locations due to the money and trade that often takes place there but are classified differently due to the skills required for them to function.

The following two subsections divide the categories and discuss where these things can be found.

## GOODS LOCATIONS

### Grain Mill

#### Minimum Size: Hamlet

Either built nearby running water to allow the current to turn the wheel and stone mechanism inside or pushed by horses or even slaves, a grain mill grinds vegetation between two enormous stones to create a variety of different useful products. Flour, sorghum mash, sugars and so forth are ground down at mills like these across the Hyborian kingdoms.

### Bowyer/Fletcher

#### Minimum Size: Hamlet

Often owned and managed by a skilled archer who knows his own wares, a bowyer or fletcher creates and sells bows, crossbows and the ammunition to use them.

### Brewery

#### Minimum Size: Hamlet

From small cellar-based operations in small villages to huge keg-filling warehouses in cities, the brewery is one of the most popular goods services available in Hyborian communities. Breweries are where ale, spirits and other liquors are often created – some of the most commonly purchased goods in the entire Hyborian Age!

### Butcher Shop

#### Minimum Size: Hamlet

Turning animal carcasses into pre-meal cuts, hunters will sometimes sell their kills to the butchers and then the butchers sell the meat to the public. A good butcher can make meal-quality meat from nearly anything brought to them; sometimes hiding *exactly* what sort of animal the meat may have come from.

### Blacksmith's Forge

#### Minimum Size: Village

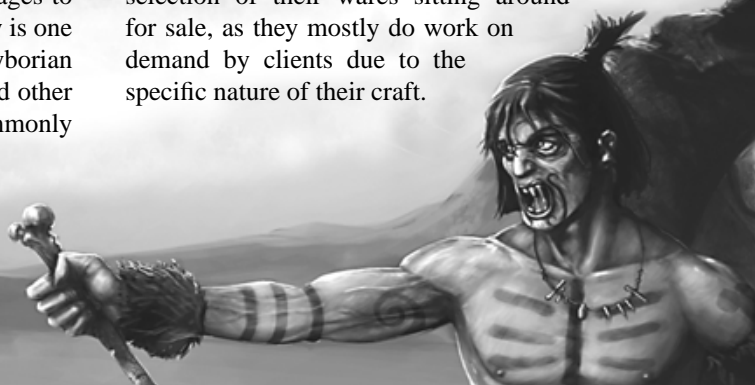
This is a typical forge and foundry that takes raw materials and turns them into basic metallic goods. Nails, horseshoes, iron bands, chain links and the like can be made and purchased in these locations.



### Carpenter

#### Minimum Size: Village

Hiring themselves out to build a variety of specific things made of wood, carpenters build homes and furniture alike. Few carpenter's shops will ever have a huge selection of their wares sitting around for sale, as they mostly do work on demand by clients due to the specific nature of their craft.







## **Potter's Kiln**

**Minimum Size:** Village

Specialised in turning clay into vases, pots and other sun or kiln-dried goods, a skilled potter can make things from utilitarian urns to expensive porcelain pitchers.

## **Soapmaker's Stove**

**Minimum Size:** Village

These sometimes foul-smelling locations boil down fat and lye to create harsh but powerful soaps that can be used for a variety of things. They create a variety of thick soaps for use on equipment as well as softer mixes that are better served for skin and hair.

## **Vineyard**

**Minimum Size:** Village

Varying in size and volume of products, a vineyard is where normally a family or collection of vintners turn grapes into wine and other sweet liquors. They are often a huge part of the local social circle, as anyone who makes their own wine generally is.

## **Apothecary Shop**

**Minimum Size:** Town

Where barbers and surgical healers get most of their natural supplies for the healing process, an apothecary shop is somewhat also a duty service. Not only can skilled healers get what they need to in these locations, the wounded or ill can sometimes hire the staff apothecary to help them.

## **Chandler's Shop**

**Minimum Size:** Town

Making and selling candles and an assortment of other waxen items, a chandler is also where raw beeswax can be found and purchased.

## **Cobbler's Workshop**

**Minimum Size:** Town

Cobblers make all of the boots, slippers, shoes and sandals that protect the feet of the Hyborian peoples. After taking a few semi-precise measurements, a good cobbler can put together a comfortable pair of footwear in just a few days.

## **Jewellery Shop**

**Minimum Size:** Town

Combining fine metals and precious stones to make beautiful and often exquisite jewellery, a goods service



such as a jeweller can turn a twist of copper and some seashells into something worth much, much more.

## **Metalsmith's Foundry**

**Minimum Size:** Town

A step up from basic blacksmithing, this location is home to a coppersmith, silversmith, tinsmith and so on. By refining their skills to deal with a specific type of metal or alloy, the foundry can create many more types of specialised goods – or at least raw ingots to sell to other service locations.

## **Sculptor's Workshop**

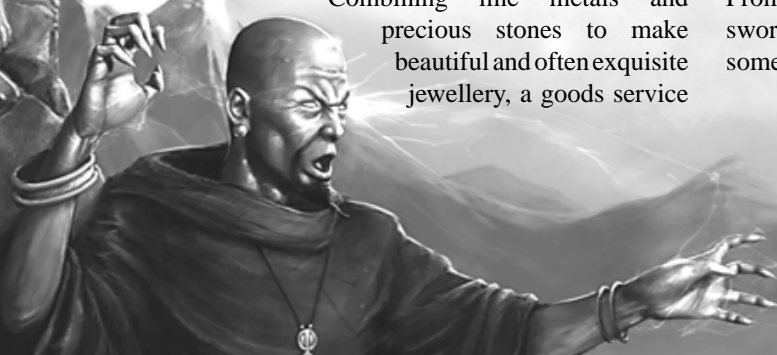
**Minimum Size:** Town

Skilled sculptors go about turning marble and stone into statues, pillars and pedestals for their clients. It takes a long time for them to craft something on order but it is often well worth the price being paid.

## **Weaponsmith's Forge**

**Minimum Size:** Town

This is a blacksmith's forge that has become specialised in the creation of, fixing and selling metallic weaponry. From simple arrowheads poured into moulds to skilled swordsmiths that make the finest great blades, these are some of the hardest working individuals in Hyboria.



**Armoursmith's Foundry****Minimum Size:** City

This is a blacksmith's forge location that is specialised in creating, fixing and selling metallic armours. It could also be considered a duty service for the purposes of repairs but exists mostly to sell new armour.

**Gemcutter's Workshop****Minimum Size:** City

Home of some of the most skilled individuals in Hyboria, a gemcutter turns raw gemstone and makes jewellery-grade gems from them. It is the skill found in these workshops that actually make gems worth as much as they are, which is why gemcutters tend to be paid very well for what they do.

**Paper Mill****Minimum Size:** City

Turning pulp or reed strands into sheets before soaking and drying them into paper products, a paper mill specialises in creating scrolls, books and artiste sheets. It is expensive and considered frivolous but many scholars could not perform their roles without them.

**Shipwright's Dock****Minimum Size:** City (water-access only)

Leaving simple rowboats and canoes to less skilled carpenters and amateurs, the shipwright's dock turns huge amounts of timber into large sailing vessels for lakes, rivers and the seas. It is a very long and expensive process but cities like Tortage and Khemi seem to have a dozen of them working at all times.

**Slave Market****Minimum Size:** Urban Sprawl

Buying people of various cultures and backgrounds from slavers can seem a dark and sinister thing for a place to be dedicated to but some kingdoms see no problems with the practice. There is a great deal of clout for the manager of a good slave market and much profit to be had. Most open markets of this kind are legal in local laws but this is not always the case.

**DUTY LOCATIONS****Farmer/Shepherd****Minimum Size:** Hamlet

This is a catch-all term for specifically profit-based farming and shepherding. Whether they are based on livestock or on tended fields, farms essentially perform their duties to turn natural materials into useful products and assets.

**Animal Training****Minimum Size:** Hamlet

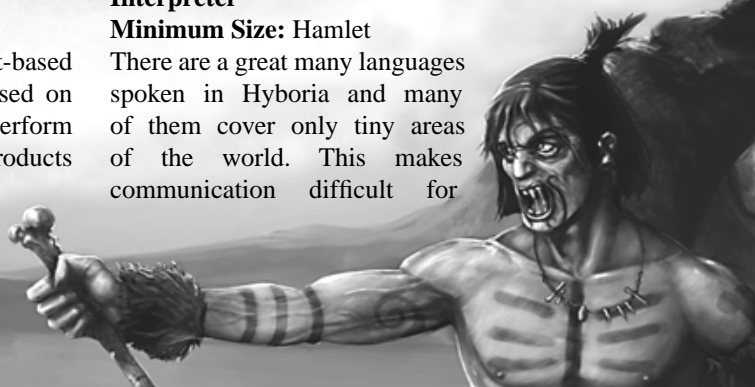
From Aquilonian hunting falcons and guard dogs to the watchful Stygian trained baboons, someone must break the natural instincts of these animals and domesticate them. Partially considered a goods service as well as a duty, an animal trainer often also sells his trained animals along with his training skills.

**Furrier/Tanner****Minimum Size:** Hamlet

Responsible for turning hides and pelts into useful leather and furs, a good furrier or tanner can make amazing products from animal skins. Many tanners are also low-grade armoursmiths, creating varying leather garments built to protect the wearer.

**Interpreter****Minimum Size:** Hamlet

There are a great many languages spoken in Hyboria and many of them cover only tiny areas of the world. This makes communication difficult for







many travellers faraway from their homelands. This service helps someone speak with and understand the locals in case of a language barrier.

## Labour

**Minimum Size:** Hamlet

The most basic service in existence – hiring someone to physically lift, move or carry objects. Hired labour rarely has to be smart or good conversationalists, they merely need to be able to do the job required of them.

## Driver's Bench

**Minimum Size:** Village

This is where someone could pay specifically for someone to drive and care for their wagon teams, carriage horses and the like.

## Midwife/Wet Nurse

**Minimum Size:** Village

The service of helping mothers deliver their children into the world is as old as the first communities in most cultures and some even help raise the infant for the first few months. This is not a high paid service but sometimes a necessary one.

## Seamstress/Tailor Shop

**Minimum Size:** Village

Using their skills to mend torn fabric or turn cloth or canvas into clothing and other useful items, a good tailor is one of the first stops a battle-weary adventurer should make in a new town. Long days of overland travel and battle with the wilds can tear a person's clothing to shreds and a seamstress or tailor is exactly what they need to look presentable again.

## Stables

**Minimum Size:** Village

A dedicated building for the storage, feeding and care of steeds and pack animals, a stable is essential for most Hyborian Age communities. Without a place to keep your horse, camel or what not, your visitors will always be 'just passing through'.

## Advisory

**Minimum Size:** Town

This is simply a location where someone is employed that considers themselves knowledgeable on a particular topic or group of topics. For a small fee an advisor will, unsurprisingly, advise someone upon their field of study.



## Barber of Dentistry

**Minimum Size:** Town

Although seen as a sometime unnecessary service, a barber takes care of the facial appearance and oral health of its clients. Getting a shave, a haircut and perhaps a chipped tooth removed is all in day's visit to the barber's chair.

## Brothel

**Minimum Size:** Town

Although prostitution takes place on an individual scale all over the Hyborian Age, madams and brothelsmen will often bring their employees together under one roof in order to keep them safe from slavers – and overeager clientele. The 'world's oldest profession' is very important to the dangerous world and professional brothels are very common throughout all of its lands.

## Locksmith

**Minimum Size:** Town

Although true locks are not all that common in the Hyborian Age, there are many rudimentary ones used to bar doors or secure chests and coffers. A locksmith can design these devices or be used to help open one for the right price.



## Undertaker/Gravedigger

**Minimum Size:** Town

The final service that anyone can receive, an undertaker's job is to arrange for a place to bury or inter the dead that is brought to him. This is sometimes placed on the shoulders of the local clergy as well but not always.

## Accounting Guild

**Minimum Size:** City

Home to skilled and hopefully trustworthy employees, an accounting guild helps clients manage their funds. Commercial entities will sometimes use accountants to buy huge loads of cargo or resources and individuals afraid that they could lose too much of their savings might use an accounting guild to hold their funds for them – for a small fee.



## Courier and Porter Service

**Minimum Size:** City

Using fast runners or mounted messengers, courier services fill a very simple role – take something from the client and deliver to someone else. Messages, items, money; all of these things can be sent via courier if the client trusts the service enough. It is a dangerous career however and most couriers are targeted by thieves and bandits throughout their routes.

## Engineering Guild

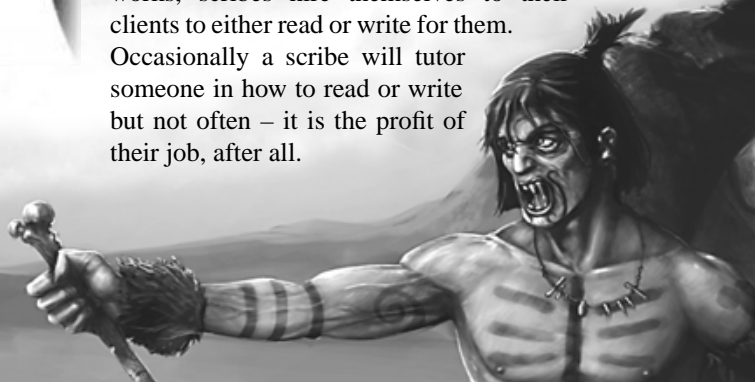
**Minimum Size:** City

War machines and mechanisms are built to order by the crafty and skilled engineers in the guild, selling their designs as much as they are the actual products that use them. This guild can also be hired to invent specific items but normally this is a very expensive order to fill.

## Scribe's Library

**Minimum Size:** City

Literacy is not common amongst the average people of the Hyborian Age but there are those who know of its importance. Working amongst collections of written works, scribes hire themselves to their clients to either read or write for them. Occasionally a scribe will tutor someone in how to read or write but not often – it is the profit of their job, after all.







## RANDOM SERVICE SELECTION

Games Masters may want to simply choose to decide what sorts of goods and duties their random cities will have available to travellers but we have created the following tables to help those who want to randomise the process instead. When rolling to determine the types of service facilities a community has access to, roll a d6 for each service element desired. If the die is even, the Games Master should roll on the Goods Services table; if it is odd, use the Duty Services instead. Then roll a die (or dice) and consult the proper table below. The exact type of dice being rolled is determined by the size classification of the city.

For Goods Services: A Hamlet rolls 1d6; a Village 2d6; Town 1d20; City 3d8; Urban Sprawl or Metropolis 3d10

### Random Goods Services

Roll Result	Gathering Element
1 – 3	Grain Mill
4	Brewery
5	Butcher Shop
6	Bowyer/Fletcher
7 – 8	Blacksmith's Forge
9	Carpenter
10	Potter's Kiln
11	Soapmaker's Stove
12	Vineyard
13	Apothecary's Shop
14	Chandler's Shop
15	Cobbler's Workshop
16	Jewellery Shop
17 – 18	Metalsmith's Foundry
19	Sculptor's Workshop
20	Weaponsmith's Forge
21	Armoursmith's Foundry
22	Gemcutter's Workshop
23	Paper Mill
24	Shipwright's Dock <sup>1</sup>
25	Slave Market

### Random Duty Services

Roll Result	Gathering Element
1 – 3	Farmer/Shepherd
4	Animal Training
6	Furrier/Tanner
6	Interpreter
7 – 8	Labour
9	Driver's Bench
10	Midwife/Wet Nurse
11	Seamstress/Tailor Shop
12 – 15	Stables
16	Advisory
17	Barber of Dentistry
18	Brothel
19	Locksmith
20	Undertaker/Gravedigger
21	Accounting Guild
22	Courier and Porter Service
23	Engineering Guild
24	Scribe's Library

For Duty Services: A Hamlet rolls 1d6; a Village 2d6; Town 1d20; City 3d8; Urban Sprawl or Metropolis 3d10

<sup>1</sup> Re-roll this result if city is land-locked



*As the example continues, the Games Master chooses to roll randomly on the tables for all three of his town's service element locations. At first he discovers that only one is a goods-producing structure, while the other two are duty-related [rolls 3d6, coming up with 4, 3, 5]. The Player Characters can hope to stock up on their flagons of wine at the vineyard [roll of 12 on 1d20 for Town], leave their horses at the local stable [roll of 14 on 1d20 for Town] and spend some of their loot on the finer things this small town has to offer in its seedy brothel [roll of 18 on 1d20 for Town].*

## COMMERCIAL

Communities that can create or purchase enough goods will soon find use for specific city elements designed for sales, barter and trade. Commercial elements in a city are often the only reason why travellers decide to stop in a community, to re-equip and re-supply. A community that focuses on commerce will rarely be a terribly small one and many cities and metropolises have entire quarters of their territory devoted to merchants, traders and sales.

Player Characters rarely need a reason to go and seek commercial city elements other than to shop. Aside from this desire to acquire, there can be many different plot-based reasons why the commercial elements of a community are important but here are a few alternate examples of how a Player Character group might get further involved with a commercial element.

- ✱ One of the Player Characters was just pick-pocketed and the culprit just ran into the masses of a bazaar.
- ✱ A local merchant is noted for being a demon-worshipper, selling tainted goods to unsuspecting buyers and now the Player Characters must find the truth of the matter.
- ✱ Word has spread that an assassin is going to strike at a wealthy noble at the local auction house.
- ✱ A trader's wagon has broken an axle just outside of town and he is willing to give heavy discounts to anyone who comes out and helps him repair his mobile shop.
- ✱ A cursed scarab brooch has ended up in the wares of a local antiquity shop and the Player Characters must find and destroy it before the demon lord sealed away inside of it possesses the next person to wear it.

The following are examples of different commercial elements a community could support.

### Trader Wagon/Tent

#### Minimum Size: Village

The simplest form of commercial element, this structure represents a transient or nomadic



sales location where a single trader or his family obtains goods in one place to sell or trade them in another. They rarely make enough money to stop in tiny communities but also know that they cannot compete with the stores and markets of large cities either.

### Barter House

#### Minimum Size: Village

A single location that is designed specifically to become the place where people can come together to trade their goods with one another, a barter house is rarely built to make any kind of profit. It is instead designed to help the community by creating a neutral place for the exchange of goods and services.

### Stall/Stand

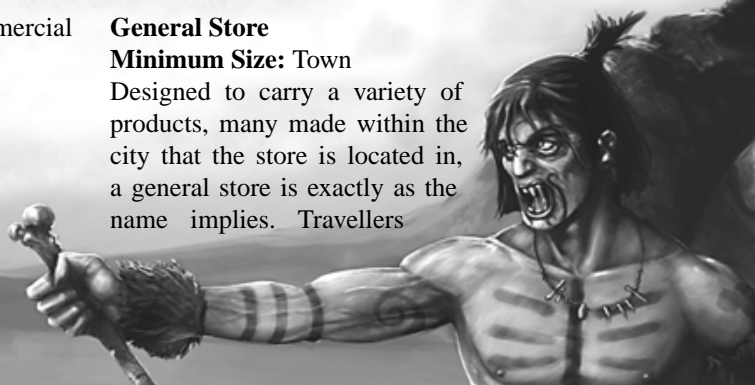
#### Minimum Size: Town

Small and often dedicated to a single selection of goods, stalls and stands are only permanent for as long as the goods and management hold out. A fishmonger's stall will stay in business while fishing is good; a fruit seller's stand has no reason to be open in the winter and so on. Hagglng and price adjustment is very common at a simple stand or stall.

### General Store

#### Minimum Size: Town

Designed to carry a variety of products, many made within the city that the store is located in, a general store is exactly as the name implies. Travellers







## RANDOM COMMERCIAL SELECTION

Games Masters will sometimes want to simply decide what commercial elements their random cities will offer to Player Characters visiting them but in the case where they want to draw up a truly random city we have created the following table. When rolling to determine the types of commercial structures a community has access to, roll a die (or dice) and consult the table below. The exact type of dice being rolled is determined by the size classification of the city.

A Village rolls 1d4; a Town 1d8; City 2d6; Urban Sprawl 2d8; Metropolis 2d10

### Random Commercial Element

Roll Result	Commercial Element
1 – 2	Trader Wagon/Tent
3 – 4	Barter House
5 – 6	Stall/Stand
7 – 9	General Store
10 – 11	Marketplace/Bazaar
12 – 14	Specialty Shop
15	Auction House
16	Clerk's Office

can get many of their material needs taken care of in one place, for a price. Rarely will general stores deal in trade or barter; they are mainly interested in coin and monetary wealth.

#### Marketplace/Bazaar

##### Minimum Size: City

A large collection of small shops, stalls and stands that have been placed in one convenient area for shoppers, a marketplace or bazaar is a busy place. Many goods, services and moneys change hands throughout business hours. Crowds are often thick in a marketplace or bazaar, which also means that shoppers should keep an eye on their purses and pouches just in case.

#### Specialty Shop

##### Minimum Size: City

A classification of shop or store that focuses on a particular type of goods to sell, specialty shops are a good way to find a specific item – but usually at a slightly higher price. Furniture, antiques, carpets, jewellery and the like are good examples of what might have specialty shops dedicated to them,

although *anything* could technically get a specialty shop to itself.

#### Auction House

##### Minimum Size: Urban Sprawl

Sometimes built as an interior auditorium of sorts where items can be auctioned off, otherwise designed to be an outside stage to gather a crowd, auction houses are used to get buyers to bid against one another. A small portion of the acquired sale prices are then given to the house, making a slight profit for the owners of the structure and business. Auction houses are frequently used for very expensive or rare items and also slaves.

#### Clerk's Office

##### Minimum Size: Urban Sprawl

Only available in places where large sums of money and huge loads of cargo are commonly traded, a clerk's office is much like a store that does not carry any goods in its stock. Instead, a buyer comes in and tells the staff clerk what they want, pays for it while the clerk makes notes in the logbook and eventually the goods are transferred to the buyer. Clerk's offices are used for huge orders and purchases, like two-hundred breastplates for an army or 15 wagons of grain for a shipment overseas. A clerk's office will no doubt have guards nearby – especially

when it comes time for a buyer to give the clerk tens of thousands of silvers for his purchase.

*As the example continues, the Games Master needs to roll randomly for both of his new town's commercial locations. The Player Characters might be able to make the most of this town, as they can buy what they need at the general store [roll of 7 on 1d8 for being a Town], then possible trade away what they do not at the older barter house [roll of 4].*

## ENTERTAINMENT

As a community's populace grows and grows, they soon become aware that they cannot simply work all day and sleep all night – such repetition would eventually lead to madness. The community will begin to form specific *distractions* from everyday life, many taking the form of frivolous entertainment elements of the town. These structures exist to give people something to do, watch or otherwise enjoy, and often cost some form of money to keep running and make it worthwhile to the city itself.

Entertainment elements of a city rarely take too long to become apparent to a group of Player Characters that is new to town. However there are several reasons unrelated to the entertainment type that can serve as different plot-based reasons why the entertainment elements of a community are important. Here are a few additional examples how a Player Character group might get further involved with an entertainment element.

- ✱ One of the dancers in a local troupe is actually a cunning poisoner looking to target one of the Player Characters' allies
- ✱ The actors in a travelling play have been particularly mocking of the local magistrate and there seems to be an abnormal number of town guards in the audience this evening...
- ✱ The arena is asking for challengers for their current gladiatorial champion and someone points out the Player Characters – who are now being goaded and scrutinised
- ✱ A dangerous predator has escaped from the menagerie and it must be put down before it gets to the marketplace crowds
- ✱ The fortune teller in the faire is being noted as having *true* powers of future sight and that she speaks of the fall of one of the Player Characters and what it means to the city

The following are examples of different entertainment elements a community could support.



### Game or Sport

#### Minimum Size: Town

This signifies a small local affair, perhaps a wrestling circuit or competition archery range. It can be as simple as an ongoing dice game or card table in a small shack, to a field devoted to throwing horseshoes or shot puts. It is remarkable what people will do for fun, especially in the Hyborian Age.

### Dance Hall/Ballroom

#### Minimum Size: Town

A large room within a specific building where bards and other players come to make a few silvers while they play for the masses, dance halls and ballrooms are often hired for private functions by nobles or other affluent individuals. Often used for festivals and weddings, these are structures that common folk sometimes long to be invited to.

### Mummer's Troupe/Actor's Guild

#### Minimum Size: Town

Travelling from place to place with their makeshift stages and wagon-borne curtains, this 'structure' is actually an entity that puts on shows for the public day in and out. Sometimes they build more







elaborate sets and stages for large shows but mostly they perform in the streets and empty lots in order to reach the common person and get them to part with a few coppers here and there.

## **Gambling Den/Casino**

### **Minimum Size:** City

A permanent home to dice, cards, feats of skill and the like, a devoted gambling den is an attraction for many travellers looking to make their fortunes. The lucky can turn a few dozen silvers into a pocketful of gold, whereas many slaves and indentured servants are created from debts to the house. Employees get a share of the house's take and some are even honest players about it! Gambling dens and casinos are also notoriously connected with local crime and criminals and Player Characters interacting with one should keep this in mind when bringing their winnings home after a particularly good night...

## **Theatrical Stage**

### **Minimum Size:** City

A permanent place built for actors, mummers and poets to put on their shows within the city, a theatrical stage is generally a raised wooden or stone platform where the show can be seen from all directions. Some have benches or seats surrounding it that the building's owner can make an audience pay for if the stage is behind closed doors. Theatrical stages can also be used as a public gathering point by the city if needs be, standing on the stage much like a common podium.

## **Menagerie/Zoo**

### **Minimum Size:** City

A collection of animal life placed in cages and habitats for paying customers to come and look upon, a menagerie is a rare sight for most communities – which are why they are such amazing attractions. Housing animals and beasts that children can be awestruck by, while possibly selling rare specimens to collectors, a good menagerie or zoo will keep several species of creatures on hand that locals cannot hope to see in their wilderness. Some menageries are actually travelling affairs but these are far less common than a privately owned collection in a city.

## **Circus/Faire**

### **Minimum Size:** City

A collection of games, attractions, freaks and the

extraordinary, circuses and the faire gather travellers from all around. People from many days' ride away might choose to come to a city if they know they can see circus freaks and unlikely exhibits at the faire. Some 'structures' of this kind are nomadic and move from location to location but when a faire finds a good and profitable city, they tend to make things a bit more permanent.

## **Artiste Museum**

### **Minimum Size:** Urban Sprawl

A structure dedicated solely to the housing, showing and selling of artistic endeavours, museums are seldom very large in the Hyborian Age. A few dozen items like sculptures, paintings, mosaics and tapestries are likely to be on display, each made with an astonishing level of skill that makes them truly works of art.

## **Arena**

### **Minimum Size:** Urban Sprawl

Gladiatorial combat, pit fights, bestiary matches and the like appeal to the basest natures of Hyborian peoples and this structure is exactly what the community needs to



hold these events. Men battle each other, battle beasts, exhibit feats of athleticism or strength and perform other exciting activities for the paying crowds assembled in the benches around the arena. Some arenas are built larger than others but the idea is the same – watch the action in the centre as it takes place.

### Coliseum

**Minimum Size:** Metropolis

The evolution of the arena to astronomical levels, a coliseum is an immense structure that is built with hundreds or even thousands of benches arranged around a central arena-like space but atop several layers of internal rooms, stalls and storage. A coliseum should have room for its fighters, bestiary, storage areas and staff quarters under its bench platforms, leaving room for huge hallways and access tunnels to the arena. Only enormous populations can hope to keep a coliseum working, using it to hold

*As the example from above continues, the Games Master now needs to roll randomly for his town's entertainment attraction. The hard-knuckled Player Character in his group laughs out loud when he hears that there is a brutal bare-fisted boxing game that goes in an old brewery at the edge of town [roll of 1 on 1d4 for being a Town].*

## RELIGIOUS

The gods of the Hyborian Age are many and varied, as is the worship of them. Once a community decides it is home to a permanent population, it will quickly move from household altars to community areas of worship. Religious sites are some of the most influential and important areas in any community, at least to its populace anyway.

## RANDOM ENTERTAINMENT SELECTION

A Games Master may sometimes want to simply choose what entertainment elements their cities will randomly offer to any Player Characters visiting. In a situation where they instead want to randomly determine this information, we have created the following random table. When rolling to determine the types of entertainment structures a community has access to, roll a die (or dice) and consult the table below. The exact type of dice being rolled is determined by the size classification of the city.

A Town rolls 1d4; City 2d6; Urban Sprawl 2d8–1; Metropolis 2d8

### Random Entertainment Element

Roll Result	Entertainment Element
1 – 2	Game or Sport
3	Dance Hall/Ballroom
4 – 5	Mummer's Troupe/Actor's Guild
6 – 8	Gambling Den/Casino
9 – 10	Theatrical Stage
11	Menagerie/Zoo
12	Circus/Faire
13	Artiste Museum
14 – 15	Arena
16	Coliseum

seasonal events that draw an audience from all across Hyboria between all of the local, minor events. For a silver or two, a common citizen might be able to see a legendary mammoth or captured Ymirish giant fight against the local gladiatorial heroes. It all depends on what the coliseum's management can arrange for, and what they think the public will pay to see.

Religious elements of a city are often important locales to Player Characters, especially if they are pious or faithful. There are many varied reasons for a group of Player Characters that would





cause them to interact with the religious elements of a community. Here are a few good examples how a Player Character group might get further involved with a community's religious element.

- ✱ There is an altar to dark forces in town – the enemy of the Player Characters' gods
- ✱ A shrine in town has been a recent target of horrible vandalising and the city needs help cleaning and sanctifying it again
- ✱ A missionary looks to build a mission in a blossoming town and needs extra sets of hands to help him
- ✱ A priest of the local patron god has received maddened visions and has since locked himself in the chapel. The populace fear for his sanity and safety, looking to the Player Characters to get him out
- ✱ The burial tombs surrounding the temple have become undead horrors that require destruction but is it the temple's influence that is causing them to rise?

The following are examples of different religious elements a community could support.

## Simple Shrine/Altar

**Minimum Size:** Hamlet

To some, the worship of the gods is a solemn and personal affair that can be handled at a simple construction. Simple shrines and altars are often little more than a small shack or stall that houses a holy carving or symbol of the faith. Simple as it is, it still serves the right purposes for the faithful.

## Prayer Ring

**Minimum Size:** Hamlet

Built with heavy stones, pillars or sometimes wooden idols, a prayer ring is a simple area for non-denominational worshippers to go and send their thoughts to their gods. They are generally only used in small or primitive communities but some multi-faith cities might arrange for them as well – if only to avoid religious conflict by allowing chapels and churches to be built.

## Mission

**Minimum Size:** Village

This type of religious structure is simple, yet it represents the will and desires of a single faith and its worshippers. Missions are small shrines built by servants of the faith in an effort to spread its word and hopefully garner new worshippers in the process. Some missions are peaceful and use gifts



to help sway the native populations, others are a bit more drastic and use underhanded techniques or sabotage against existing faiths to do so instead.

## Chapel

**Minimum Size:** Village

Permanent holy sites of the local faith, chapels are the home of the faith and almost always the ranking clergy as well. It is rare that a chapel is very extravagant, as it is designed to be home to the servants of the god and its worshippers but some can seem a bit more posh than others. There are chapels to darker faiths also, containing sacrificial altars and forbidden lore; these are often hidden from the rest of the god-fearing world.

## Greater Altar/Shrine

**Minimum Size:** Town

Created as a sign of a strong faith, these religious structures are larger versions of a common shrine or altar. The presence of the faithful is increased at the shrine's location, as is the existence of bigger and more elaborate idols and scripture. If the faith have holy warriors or guardians, pilgrimages to sites like these are common to show their belief in the religion, meaning that devout warriors are rarely far from a greater shrine or altar.







### **Sanctified Cemetery/Catacomb**

#### **Minimum Size:** Town

Not all faiths and cultures in the Hyborian Age believe in cremation or water-burial; some specifically inter their dead in mausoleums and cemeteries. In a world where dark forces are quite real and the walking dead are known to rise and harass the living, it makes sense that any of these depositories of the deceased would need to be watched over by the holy efforts of a local religion. Many cemeteries and catacombs are actually built as part of a shrine, church or temple in order to help retain the sanctity of the location.

### **Church/Fane**

#### **Minimum Size:** Town

Larger buildings devoted to their given religions, churches and fanes are the main structures in the chain of a faith's worship. Any city that has a large enough clerical and patronage population in the community will eventually build one of these structures. They vary wildly from faith to faith, serving as a home to all of the sundry religious workings and practices of the faith. All

churches tend to gather those strong in their beliefs and it is very rare to ever find a church or fane that is not well protected by the pious.

### **Temple**

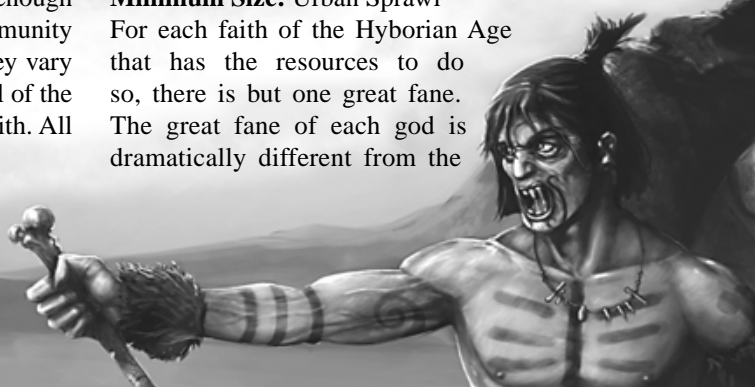
#### **Minimum Size:** City

Huge buildings devoted to a single faith, temples are considered to be an extension of the god's own territories. They are often modelled directly after the scriptures of the faith, forcing worshippers (or their slaves) to work for many uninterrupted decades to build the proper ziggurat, spire, dome or whatever. The worshippers of a faith that has access to a true temple can believe that they have a direct link to their gods, allowing them to truly work in its name.

### **Great Fane**

#### **Minimum Size:** Urban Sprawl

For each faith of the Hyborian Age that has the resources to do so, there is but one great fane. The great fane of each god is dramatically different from the





## RANDOM RELIGIOUS SELECTION

Religious structures are frequently very important to a Conan story but Games Masters will sometimes want to randomise the exact nature of the religious elements their cities can offer to the Player Characters that are there. In a situation where they indeed choose to randomly determine this information, we have created the following random table. When rolling to determine the types of religious structures a community has access to, roll a die (or dice) and consult the table below. The exact type of dice being rolled is determined by the size classification of the city.

A Hamlet rolls 1d4; Village 1d6; Town 2d6; City 2d8–1; Urban Sprawl 2d8 or Metropolis

### Random Religious Element

Roll Result	Religious Element
1 – 3	Simple Shrine/Altar
4	Prayer Ring
5	Mission
6	Chapel
7 – 8	Greater Altar/Shrine
9	Sanctified Cemetery/Catacomb
10 – 12	Church/Fane
14 – 15	Temple
16	Great Fane <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Games Masters should take note that there is only ever one Great Fane of any given religion and if one is rolled for an unimportant or insignificant city, perhaps it is the Great Fane of minor faith local to the area – otherwise treat it as a particularly large temple.

next, designed by revelations to the highest clergy in the early ages of the faith. The great fane of a god steeped in darkness could be carved from onyx or obsidian or dug deep under the earth to avoid the light. A great fane to a sky god will likely be a compound several acres wide without a ceiling in any of its buildings or structures. Each great fane is built to serve as the worldly home for the god, the heart of the faith itself and a location of unequalled importance to its worshippers.

*Continuing the creation example from above, the Games Master should now roll randomly for his town's religious element. The Player Characters shudder as the ride into town, seeing the many lined headstones and mausoleums of a large sanctified cemetery [roll of 9 on 2d6 for being a Town].*

## GOVERNING

Any community that grows in size and populace will eventually decide that it requires some law and order, even if it comes in the form of local justice gangs or vigilantes. A growing population means growth in crime rate and the need for greater organisational skills, forcing the community to govern itself – before a power from without chooses to govern it instead.

The governing elements of a city are decidedly important to Player Characters, who may not want to cross local peacekeepers or end up in the stocks. There are many good reasons for a group of Player Characters to deal directly with the governing elements of a community. Here are a few examples why a Player Character group might choose to become involved with a community's governing element.

- ✱ The streets of the city are only safe at night because of a vigilante group but the populace has started to fear them as much as they did the old night muggers
- ✱ The town watch is in dire need of assistance dealing

with a group of raiders that repeatedly strike at their marketplace

- ✱ The stockade is full, the magistrate has yet to fix the gallows and they are looking to the sharp swords of the Player Characters to help dispense a few necessary executions
- ✱ The king of the nation has sent a new magistrate to govern a somewhat lawless town and this new magistrate would like the Player Characters to protect him while he sets up his offices
- ✱ The judgment of the local arbiter has been seen as faulty by the common people of the town and his bench is in danger of being overrun by an angry mob

The following are examples of different governing elements a community could support.

### **Vigilante Meet**

**Minimum Size:** Village

The common name for the place that a justice-oriented gang gathers to plan their activities, a vigilante meet is rarely a well-known location to the public. There may be rumours as to where it exists but in order to avoid retribution from criminal groups and the like, its true location must be kept secret.

### **Common Room**

**Minimum Size:** Village

This is a small building, often near the centre of the community, where the decision-makers of the area gather with some of the population to make city policies. Community leaders talk with or to the populace, forming a dialogue to set local governing policy. In the case of common rooms appearing in larger communities, they are likely used by the local governing agents – like quarter managers or neighbourhood leaders.

### **Town Hall**

**Minimum Size:** Town

A central building where a community's leader or leaders gather to make and judge policy, a town hall tends to be the social and legislative hub of the entire community. This is where people can find postings for work, sales or maybe just announcements of local happenings. A community governed through a town hall will often be a smallish one; otherwise the 'town hall' becomes more of a quarter management office for a larger city.

### **Watch Patrol**

**Minimum Size:** Town

The first organised and recognised peacekeeping agency, a watch patrol is based out of a central office or guild house. Patrons of the watch are armed citizens paid by the community to patrol the streets and



alleys, keeping criminals in check and exacting justice – most often by cudgel or blade. They are seldom very well-trained but they can be all the difference for a farmer currently under a mugger's knife.

### **City Constabulary**

**Minimum Size:** City

A trained and organised force of peacekeepers, the constabulary is a centralised force of soldiers and warriors hired solely to protect and serve the people of their city. Based out of a single headquarters that is often attached to a small dungeon or similar penance-inspiring additions, the city constabulary is better armed and armoured than a common watch patrol – and they are rarely slow to use their skills and equipment to protect their city.

### **Magistrate's Office/Lord's Manor**

**Minimum Size:** City

When a community has a single entity governing it, either through a political rise or an outside appointment by a higher governing power, they are often placed in a public house or office. Citizens can come and try to petition or sway the opinions of the lord or magistrate, making this building a rather busy place. It is generally well protected by personal or city guards, as







an unpopular city official has to avoid the attacks and assassins of an unhappy populace. Structures of this kind found in huge communities are rarely the central lord's location but rather the offices of a city elder or district manager instead.

## **Stockade/Dungeon**

### **Minimum Size:** City

Not all cities of the Hyborian Age will deal with their thieves and miscreants through bloody displays on the street, some of the more civilised cultures instead jail their captured criminals in specifically designed structures. Made of stone and wrought metal more often than not, the stockades and dungeons of Hyboria are used to hold prisoners from all walks of life. Additionally, most of these structures are also used as sites for exacting justice and punishment on convicted (as much as that word means in some cultures) criminals; including headmen blocks, gallows, and even the occasional wrack or crucifixion.

## **Arbiter Court**

### **Minimum Size:** City

Designed to be a local advocate of law and order for the community, an arbiter's court is an appointed location where locals can come to bear grievances and city watchmen can bring criminals to be weighed by the arbiters. The local or larger governing power places the ability to judge others in the hands of these agents, making their word into the local law.

## **Army Compound**

### **Minimum Size:** Urban Sprawl

Although rarely used for the policing or governing of the community itself, an army compound settled into a highly grown city can bring a completely different aspect of the larger government to it. Knowing that several hundred or even thousands of trained soldiers and cavalry live just beyond the high wall of the compound can make even the most dastardly of criminals wary of practicing their trade. Any community that has a functioning army compound in the area will almost always have several dedicated blacksmiths and stables to keep the soldiers equipped and such. The compound itself will not likely be the most accessible location in the city but it will cast a social shadow on the entire area – especially with the number of soldiers that can be found in the city when they are not on duty.

## **Royal Seat**

### **Minimum Size:** Urban Sprawl

A large building constructed to house the emissary or agent of the king, lord or hierarch of a kingdom within a city, the royal seat is considered to be the extension of that ruler. The occupant of a royal seat often controls the city and much of the surrounding lands as well. These constructions tend to be fanciful and very extravagantly built, sometimes resembling the king's own palace to a certain degree – only smaller. Governmentally sponsored guards and soldiers are always on hand, keeping someone as important as a king's chosen delegate safe from his or his kingdom's enemies.

## **Royal Palace**

### **Minimum Size:** Metropolis

Home to the actual ruler(s) of the kingdom or nation,



## RANDOM GOVERNING SELECTION

For obvious reasons, governing structures are extremely important to a Hyborian Age community but Games Masters will sometimes want to randomise the exact nature of the governing elements of their cities. In a situation where the Games Master chooses to randomly determine this important information, we have created the following random table. When rolling to determine the types of governing structures a community has access to, roll a die (or dice) and consult the table below. The exact type of dice being rolled is determined by the size classification of the city.

A Village rolls 1d4; Town 1d8; City 2d6; Urban Sprawl 2d8-1; Metropolis 2d8

### Random Governing Element

Roll Result	Governing Element
1 – 3	Vigilante Meet
4	Common Room
5	Town Hall
6 – 7	Watch Patrol
8 – 9	City Constabulary
10	Magistrate's Office/Lord's Manor
11	Stockade/Dungeon
12 – 13	Arbiter Court
14	Army Compound
15	Royal Seat
16	Royal Palace <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Games Masters should take note that there is only ever one active Royal Palace of any given political region and if one is rolled for a city that is part of a nation or kingdom that already has a capital city elsewhere it should be re-rolled. Alternatively, the structure could be a former royal palace location, currently used by the local government but not as the nation's ruling point.

'royal palace' is a catch-all term for the highest governing structure for a kingdom, nation or grouped territory. It could be a Black Kingdoms ziggurat or a Stygian pyramid-like temple or a true wall-and-parapet keep in northern Bossonia. Exactly what form the royal palace takes is up to the culture; it is most important that it is recognised as the highest structure in the government. Royal palaces will be some of the most well-defended and influential buildings in their end of Hyboria.

*As the creation example from above continues, all the Games Master has to do now is roll randomly for his town's single governing element – the last non-housing structure in his city plan. The Player Characters nod at the two axe-wielding men in matching overshirts as they enter town, seeing that this place is protected by a basic city watch [roll of 7 on 1d8 for being a Town].*

## FANTASTIQUE

The Hyborian Age is ripe with oddities and the unique and the occasional community will attract these interesting facets of Conan's world to them – becoming the type of structure collectively called the *fantastique*. These locations are sometimes similar to other types of structures but all carry a certain mystic quality that makes them something else entirely...

Any community that has structures devoted to the fantastique will manage to appeal to the Player Characters, as they occur so rarely in common travels. While most of these locations will draw characters to them for unsurprising reasons, here are a few alternative examples why Player Characters could choose to seek out a community's element of the fantastique.

- ✱ One of the Player Characters believes himself to be





cursed and needs to use the supposed powers of a local witch to remove it

- ✱ A sorcerous enemy of the Player Characters has come to town and is no doubt headed to the alchemist to re-arm; they should get there first and arrange an ambush
- ✱ A group of fearful peasants has formed a mob outside the local scholarly library and the Player Characters need to get inside and speak to the magician who runs it
- ✱ *Something* has escaped from the exotic bestiary and the keeper claims that the Player Characters have until sunrise to re-capture it – or the city is doomed
- ✱ A community of non-humans thrives within the city and has done so for centuries but a new group of human supremacists have moved in and taken power, causing a dark and bloody civil war seem imminent

The following are examples of different fantastique elements a community could support.

## Witch/Druid/Shaman

### Minimum Size: Town

The community has a local legend living in a small house somewhere in town, known for his or her ability to wield ancient magics, charms and curses. Whether it is a witch, warlock, druid or shamanic expert, they all are mystic and enigmatic in how they help those who come to see them. They frequently ask for non-monetary compensation for their 'talents', up to and including a few *favours* here and there.

## Oracle/Soothsayer/Prophet

### Minimum Size: Town

Someone who believes that they have the gift of seeing hazily into the future has set up a shop where people can come, make a donation and get their future told to them. These locations are commonly shams built around a good actor and the ability to read what their customers want to hear but a few are truthfully attuned with the future and can see flashes of it. The blessings of an oracle can mean the difference between confidence and cowardice and many leaders seek out these fortune-tellers to help them make important decisions.

## Haunted Home

### Minimum Size: Town

A housing building in the community is considered to be a haunted location, riddled with at least one restless spirit or entity that tries to



harass the living when they come around. Some haunted locations are nothing but spooky and dilapidated old structures that commoners steer clear of, others are truthfully inhabited by dark forces or the restless dead. The latter form of haunted location can be a powerful reason why Player Characters investigate, especially if there may be a necromantic scholar amongst them...

## Teacher of the Unknown

### Minimum Size: Town

Someone within the community is considered a skilled teacher of some rare and interesting ability or school of thought. The exact nature of the rare skill varies but scholarly or magical training is the most frequent. Also included in these sorts of skills are certain martial arts, exotic weaponry, lore and even forbidden cult rituals and so forth. Whatever the skill or talent that this teacher has that so few others can claim, he will most assuredly turn away most students – if only to keep the skill as rare as it is.

## True Alchemist/Herbalist

### Minimum Size: City

The 'science' of alchemy is commonly thought of in the same light as witchcraft and faith healing throughout the Hyborian Age but those who have studied it well enough to make a living at it would speak volumes otherwise. Alchemy and herbalist botany is an important facet of many mystic schools of study and the ability to create



true potions, tinctures and powders that demonstrate nigh-magical effects is an undeniable boon. Those who know these skills can find everything they need to utilise them at a true alchemist's shop or they can simply buy the finished products for a greater price if the recipe is beyond them.

### Exotic Bestiary

#### Minimum Size: City

Where the animal attractions of a menagerie can mystify common folk, it is often harder to strike awe into a seasoned adventurer. An exotic bestiary is where the things that can even make their skin crawl are stashed away for viewing or – in rare instances – sale. Winged serpents, dinosaurs and giant beasts and the like are what an exotic bestiary are always on the lookout for, paying handsomely for their capture. While most bestiaries of this type are used for viewing attractions, there are

always those willing to spend a small fortune to say that they own the only dragon lizard outside of Khitai!

### Scholarly Library/Arcane Emporium

#### Minimum Size: City

A sizeable collection of scholarly writings, scrolls, tablets and artefacts that could help a knowledgeable researcher tap into the mysteries of the universe, a library or emporium is a hub of sorcerous learning. Dabblers and experts alike can find useful spells, recipes and facts about their craft in these structures and those seeking advice or protection from an enemy magic-wielder can sometimes find solace here. Nothing, not even research time, is cheap within these facilities and a great hardship will befall anyone foolish enough to try and steal or harm a house of the arcane; its owners and managers have much time to read and learn.







## RANDOM FANTASTIQUE SELECTION

Unless following a particular need for their game's story, a Games Masters will often want to randomise the exact nature of the elements of the fantastique in their cities. In a situation where the Games Master chooses to randomly determine this information, we have created the following random table. When rolling to determine the types of fantastique structures a community has access to, roll a die (or dice) and consult the table below. The exact type of dice being rolled is determined by the size classification of the city.

A Town rolls 1d6; City or Urban Sprawl 2d6; Metropolis 2d6+1

### Random Fantastique Element

Roll Result	Fantastique Element
1 – 3	Witch/Druid/Shaman
4	Oracle/Soothsayer/Prophet
5	Haunted Home
6 – 7	Teacher of the Unknown
8 – 9	True Alchemist/Herbalist
10	Exotic Bestiary
11	Scholarly Library/Arcane Emporium
12 – 13	Non-Human Community <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Every time this result is rolled, the size of the non-human community becomes larger, which should be randomly rolled as a separate city within the currently rolled city. Rolling this 'structure' once determines the community to be a Commune, twice makes it a Hamlet, three times makes it a Village and four times makes it a Town. Should an unlikely *fifth* time be rolled, there are actually two non-human communities – both considered Villages.

### Non-Human Community

#### Minimum Size: City

The city has a small population of non-human inhabitants that live within the area, like a community-within-a-community. Sometimes secretly hidden away in their own buildings and lairs under the proverbial noses of the city's normal inhabitants, these communities are seldom accepted by the local populace – many are considered wives' tales or urban legends. In the rare case that the non-human community is discovered and *allowed* to exist, outsiders will no doubt find the situation strange to say the least.

### UNIQUE NON-HOUSING STRUCTURES

In the rare case that a city is

determined to have a so-called *unique* structure in it, the Games Master has several options to fill this interesting role for the community. These sorts of structures and buildings are going to be something very special and will no doubt become part of any plot or storyline that encompasses the city being created. The Player Characters may very well be coming to the town specifically to interact with the unique structure.

Although each structure of this classification is indeed unique in what it means and does for the community and likely the lands surrounding, they still fall into somewhat general categories for Games Masters to design them. Unlike a specific church or tavern, which is the only one like it – there is not another known example of these places in the Hyborian Age.

It must be noted that there is not a specific city classification restriction for Unique structures. They occur wherever they happen to occur, making for

potentially odd or foreboding instances beyond the understanding of the normal Hyborian Age mind.

Games Masters should be very aware what adding one of these structures to their cities actually means – and consider themselves forewarned.

#### **Alien Artefact/Site**

The community was built on or around a mysterious object or location that, centuries before, fell from the heavens. It is made of materials that cannot be described or worked by Hyborian Age metallurgists and alchemists and seems to radiate warmth, cold or some other strange energetic field. It actually hails from the reaches of Outer Space and might have some connection to the mysterious races that call the void home (Visitors, Yaggitesn and so on).

#### **Ancient Unearthed Tomb**

Jutting up from the ground in the community is the entrance to a truly ancient race's tomb or catacomb. Whether it be Atlantean, Acheronian or the race of giants, this tomb somehow unearthed itself and has become a local point of interest. Something or *someone*

exists down in the dark, something that cannot be found anywhere else in the world and only through the dangerous exploration of such a place can these things be discovered. The question is – a should they be?

#### **Terrible Beast's Lair**

The community is unfortunate to be built upon or next to the lair of a truly terrible and powerful beast of the Hyborian world. The mouth to the lair has likely been walled off and is protected as best it can be to keep outsiders from enraging its inhabitant, but heroes looking to slay and villains looking to dominate the creature are never far away. No matter if it is a subterranean crawler or a beastly dragon, the community has had to come to terms with its existence – perhaps even sacrificing citizens to it in order to satisfy the thing's destructive urges.

#### **Mystic/Cursed Grove or Cavern**

Somewhere within or very close nearby there is a large mound or thicket that gives way to a magically-charged place unlike any other. Lotuses might grow huge and fruitfully in the middle of the desert, ancient powers seem to infuse the place and magic is almost palpable there. Exactly why this place is so powerful is unknown but even the most ignorant barbarian who ventures within can feel it.

#### **Demonic Foci**

A statue or idol rests in this city and as far as anyone can remember, it *always* has. The figure is a popular thing to look upon, as if it calls out to those around it to pay attention to it. The item is actually the binding place of an ancient demon or even demon lord, waiting for some scholar or foolish cultist to do the right service to the foci and release it into the world.

#### **Portal to Darkness**

The boundaries between dimensions are weak here, leaving a point where crossing between them is possible. These sorts of 'portals' are confined in a circle of standing stones, a seemingly bottomless well, a glimmering waterfall, a gate built in the side of an obelisk and similar odd constructions. Likely sealed by powerful sorcery, a dark portal can be opened by the right incantation – making their existence a dangerous and attractive resource for the insidious.







## RANDOM UNIQUE SELECTION

Most Games Masters will want to choose exactly which unique 'structure' inhabits a city they are designing in order to best fit their campaign but some might wish to be truly random in their creations. In order to randomise the exact nature of the unique element of their cities, we have created the following random table. When rolling to determine the type of unique structure a community must deal with, roll 2d6 and consult the table below.

### Random Unique Element

Roll Result	Unique Element
1	Alien Artefact/Site
2 – 4	Ancient Unearthed Tomb
5 – 6	Mystic/Cursed Grove or Cavern
7 – 9	Terrible Beast's Lair
10 – 11	Demonic Foci
12	Portal to Darkness

*Continuing the creation example from above, the Games Master laughs maniacally as he picks up the dice to randomly determine the unique structure within his random town and seeing the result – he smirks to himself. The Player Characters will need to be very careful in this seemingly innocent town, as the strange statue in the centre of town is actually the home to a dark and powerful demon [roll of 10 on 2d6]!*

## EXCEPTIONS TO MINIMUM CITY SIZES

Throughout this section there are dozens of structures and elements that are listed as having a minimum size classification to a city but Games Masters can choose to waive these requirements and restrictions if they feel it is best for their campaign. We encourage Games Masters to create the cities they need to for their games using this information and if that means making an exception to the minimum city sizes – go for it. Too many odd exceptions (a hamlet with a coliseum, a commune with a great fane and so on) can make a city simply seem *off*, however.

The final rule is to use this information how you need to in order to make your game best for you.

## CITY TRAITS AND PLOTS THE PERSONALITY OF THE COMMUNITY

Every city, no matter how small or large, has something about it that makes it unique in its own way. Even if it is the fact that the soil is particularly fertile compared to other local communities or perhaps the existence of an illegal demonic cult – something makes each Hyborian Age city special in its own (possible mundane) way. These special considerations are called City Traits and City Plots.

City Traits are specific things that help define the community to a certain extent and City Plots are events that are actively taking place when the city is encountered. City Traits should be determined when the city is created, while City Plots can be decided when the city becomes part of the Player Characters' story.

Once a city has been designed using the rules and tables found earlier in this chapter, the Games Master can use the following information to give his city life and personality.

### How Many Traits and Plots?

The number of City Traits and City Plots that a community should be given is determined randomly based on the city's size classification. The following table shows what should be rolled to determine how many Traits and Plots the city being created has. It should be noted that any number less than '1' rolled on this table means that there is not a significant Trait or Plot in the community at the time.

City Size Classification	Number of City Traits	Number of City Plots
Commune	1d2-1	1d4-3
Hamlet	1d2	1d4-2
Village	1d3	1d4-1
Town	1d4	1d3
City	2d3-1	1d3+1
Urban Sprawl	2d3	1d4+1
Metropolis	1d6+1	2d3

*The example town being generated in this chapter continues with the addition of City Traits and City Plots. The Games Master checks the table and rolls 2 City Traits [rolled on 1d4 for being a Town] and 2 City Plots [rolled on 1d3 for being a Town]*

*for his random town, setting the stage for his Player Characters to spend some time in his creation.*

## CITY TRAITS

There are several distinct things that can make a city special through its Traits but some are designed for much bigger and more influential Hyborian cities. Smaller communities just cannot feasibly support some Traits like larger cities can but the opposite is not true. In order to create a random way of determining Traits without creating seven different tables, all City Traits are rolled on the following table – but a city's size classification determines what die is used to roll upon it.

The dice used by a city are as follows: Commune 1d3; Hamlet 1d4; Village 1d6; Town 1d8; City 1d10; Urban Sprawl 1d12; Metropolis 3d6-2.

Roll Result	City Trait
1	Fertile Ground
2	Well-Defended
3	Devoutly Religious
4	Expanding
5	Secretive/Private
6	Controlled
7	Irrigated
8	Fortified
9	Impoverished
10	Walled/Moated
11	Filthy
12	Spread Too Thin
13	Protected
14	Bi-Cultural
15	Towering
16	Prophesised

### Fertile Ground

The city has some form of natural resources in their soil or potted gardens that allows for better agriculture than the surrounding areas. This can mean that their crops are particularly more efficient, their flowers more vibrant or in some special cases – their drugs and liquor more potent. Whatever the reason, the community is locally renowned for its ability to grow plantlife better than its neighbours.

### Well-Defended

The city has either patrol members or citizens that tend to be well-armed and well-skilled. Bandits and knowledgeable raiders





generally stay away from attacking the community due to this, as any interaction with the city can result in expensive casualties. This does not mean that the populace is necessarily militaristic or less-friendly; it merely shows that the community is capable of defending itself when the need calls for it. Visitors should be wary of any conflicts they choose to instigate.

## **Devoutly Religious**

The local population is thickly devout in their religious beliefs, taking time out of each day to observe holy rites or activities. Smaller communities might keep elaborate household shrines or altars that they pray to; larger cities might see teeming masses congregate at chapels and fanes. What the local faith may be can determine a great deal about the populace's specific zeal. Worshippers of Mitra could be pledged to aid others and seek peace through healing and 'the Light', where a city devoted to the hunting god Arensnuphis may seek to stalk and kill nightly in order to appease the jaguar-god. Depending on the religion being so faithfully followed, travellers in the community could be in for a strange and dangerous visit.

## **Expanding**

The city is becoming larger every day, with new peoples coming to live here all the time. Either out of desperation due to the surrounding area's situation, some kind of attractive feature of the community or perhaps even just coincidence, this city has to expand to deal with the increasing population. New housing is being planned or built, the locals are adjusting to all of the new faces, and the community is on the rise.

## **Secretive/Private**

Something is strange about the people living in this city. They are reclusive and secretive to the point of discomfort. Windows tend to be shuttered, doors closed and streets empty when outsiders are around. Those in the community that must interact with travelling visitors tend to be pensive and elusive, often coming off as rude or distracted by their own secrecy. A community with this level of social worry is either extremely insular – or there is actually something going on that they do not want others to find out about.

## **Controlled**

The community is directly controlled by a larger force, government or entity. It can be due to a larger city conquering its resources, an army

currently garrisoned nearby or even through the vile machinations of a powerful sorcerer. Whatever the case may be, the community is unable to think or act for itself except in private. Visitors will realise this quite quickly and will likely be expected to fall in line with the rest as soon as possible.

## **Irrigated**

The city has better-than-common irrigation techniques. Either through the existence of natural water sources such as rivers, lakes and oasis or because of stored reservoirs or wells, the city has very good access to fresh water. This water is good for plants and animals and it generally makes living in the community easier and a better environment for health.

## **Fortified**

Defensive structures have been built to help protect the city. Archer towers, spike-topped palisades and ambush points near the entrances and exist of the community mean that the city can call to arms when needed. Such structures are often manned by watchmen, soldiers or citizen guardsmen and the boundaries of the community are constantly under watch. A fortified city is militarily protected from within but not so thickly as to keep *everyone* out.

## **Impoverished**

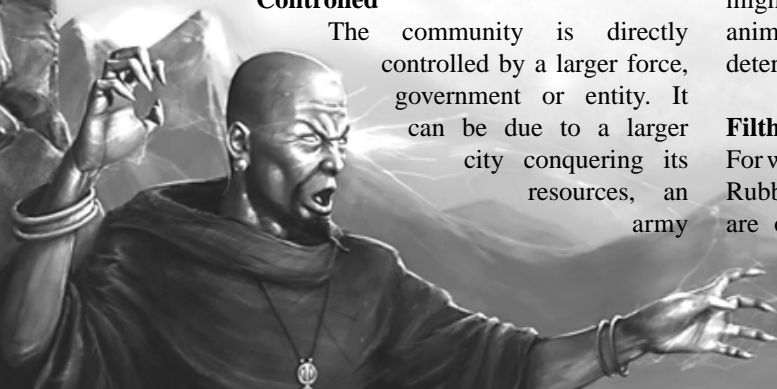
The mass majority of the city's inhabitants are poor, hungry and possibly even homeless. There is a decided lack of common employment in the community and only the upper class can afford the basic amenities of life. There is rarely a friendly feel to the masses but a few coins here and there can earn loyalty faster than nearly any act of kindness or mercy. Visitors should beware however, as any truly poor populace might be willing to do *anything* to acquire funds, goods or even just food.

## **Walled/Moated**

The community is protected by a stout wood or stone wall or perhaps a dug out moat wrapping around its accessible boundaries. These constructions are partly to monitor who can enter or leave the community through designated gates or bridges and partly to help make the city defensible from outside attacks. The walls are likely to be guarded or at least watched at the gates and moats might be filled with water, stakes or even predatory animals. However they are made, they are a good deterrent to raids and attacks.

## **Filthy**

For whatever reason, this city is covered in filth and grime. Rubbish rots away in the streets, the alleys and gutters are often splattered with discarded waste, buildings



grow mould and moss and the air is speckled with flies. Carrion crows are a common sight and rats scurry in the streets even in the midday sun. Overpopulation, weather conditions or disease might play their parts in making the city as filthy as it is. Whatever the cause, the community is a disgusting example of an ill-kept environment.

### Spread Too Thin

This city is a truly stretched out sprawl; the buildings are too far apart and sporadically placed, the streets are wide and winding and nothing seems easy to reach when travelling within the community. The whole city covers far too much territory for what it is and a great deal of inhabitable or agriculturally sound land is wasted on streets and empty lots. Although it makes the city seem a great deal larger than it is, a city that has spread itself too thin is simply not conducive to quick or efficient travel.

### Protected

The gods, demons and powers-that-be of the Hyborian Age are far more active than some might want to believe but this city cannot ignore it. Some force or higher (lower?) power is looking after the well-being of the community. This divine or infernal protection comes in many forms, from something as simple as perfect

weather all year to the presence of mystically devoted ward animals or demons. The populace of the city are likely aware of their otherworldly protection but some communities prefer to stay blind to the fact that they are somehow important to such powerful beings. Visitors beware – such a presence in a city should not be taken lightly, *ever*.

### Bi-Cultural

Hyborian Age communities tend to be a vastly mixed and varied as to their inhabiting populations but there is almost always a dominant culture. Within the boundaries of this community however, there is an even split between two cultures that make up the main body of its inhabitants. This could be due to the city's location near a border or perhaps one culture had dominated the other and created a huge slave population within the city. There may or may not be any tension between the two cultural halves of the city but the presence of both is immediately recognisable by visitors.

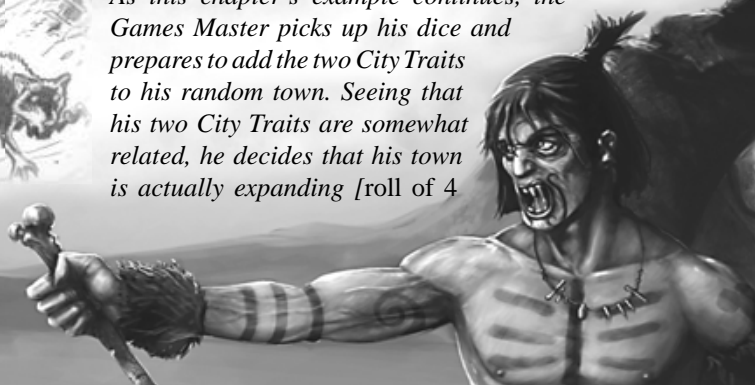
### Towering

Instead of building outward, this city chose to build *upward*. Buildings rise higher into the sky on built-up lower floors or natural foundations and the higher structures can likely be seen for many miles around. Cities built so high become local landmarks for travel and as a result, are frequently packed with visitors and travellers. High-altitude structures opens up interesting livelihood opportunities such as balcony-based falconry or direct-access weather magic but it also adds an element of danger in the form of falling.

### Prophesised

Something about this city is written in the fate of the world, even if it is on a local level. Through omens, prophecies or unearthed legends, this city has been marked to serve some greater purpose. The majority of the population will not have any idea that this is the case and most who do might not believe it. Whether or not the prophecy or destiny of the city is truthfully afoot is up to time to tell but those who do believe in the city's previously determined fate are likely to go to great and extreme lengths to see that destiny is fulfilled – one way or another.

*As this chapter's example continues, the Games Master picks up his dice and prepares to add the two City Traits to his random town. Seeing that his two City Traits are somewhat related, he decides that his town is actually expanding [roll of 4*







on 1d8 for being a Town] *because of the presence of several wells and springs, making the town's agriculture highly irrigated* [roll of 7].

## CITY PLOTS

The world of Conan should be one of adventure and excitement; with new stories boiling to the surface of an otherwise normal scene all the time. Heading into a new city should not be considered 'down time' but instead should have the possibility for even more action to unfold. Anytime a group of Player Characters enters a new city or community, there should be the potential for plots and schemes to be taking shape. In order to create a random way of determining these Plots without drawing up seven different tables, all City Plots are rolled on the following table – but a city's size classification determines what dice are used to roll upon it.

The dice used by a city are as follows: Commune and Hamlet 1d4; Village 1d6; Town 1d8; City 1d10; Urban Sprawl 1d12; Metropolis 1d20.

Roll Result	City Trait
1	Bountiful Harvest/Hunting
2	Voracious Predators
3	Unlikely Ally
4	Illness
5	Festival
6	Disease Epidemic
7	Raider/Bandit Attacks
8	Food Shortage
9	Sinister Villain
10	Unexplained Exodus
11	Disappearances
12	Bountiful Riches
13	Infestation
14	Holy Days
15	Blossoming Coup
16	Service Riots
17	Street Conflicts
18	Cult Rising
19	Assassination
20	Legendary Event

### Bountiful Harvest/Hunting

The community has seen a drastic increase in its food production. Either due to heavy



crop yields or extremely productive game hunting, the community is building a fantastic surplus of food stores. Visitors to the area can benefit from the bounty, as prices for food cannot be likely lower. However, such plentiful stores are always good targets for thieves and raiders.

### Voracious Predators

Something in the wild has stirred up a group of predatory beasts – be it bears, lions or crocodiles – and they have become brash and brazen. They have begun to attack the livestock of the community and are hungry or riled enough even to attack wandering travellers and citizens. No matter how many of these beasts are put down or chased off, something continues to rouse their numbers and their voracity. Exactly what has driven these creatures to such lengths could be the real issue in the city; not the animals themselves.

### Unlikely Ally

The Player Characters have a friend here in this community, even if they are not aware of it yet. Someone who is also visiting or perhaps a resident to the city is a stalwart ally that the Player Characters can meet and form a relationship with. Exactly how this mysterious and unexpected individual can serve as a good ally to them is yet to be seen but the stage is set for their paths to cross nonetheless.

### Illness

There is a mild sickness that is making its way through the local population and the Player Characters will



need to be careful or they too will be suffering from what ever rash or leaking orifices that the city is. This illness is not dangerous exactly but it can put serious tribulations into the travel plans of a group on the move. A few days of discomfort might be in store for anyone that comes to this city; or it could be the sign of worse things yet to pass.

### **Festival**

A joyous and exciting festival is active within this community at the moment, making the area pleasant and enjoyable. The festival is some kind of local affair, with games, contests and dances that visitors to the city can enjoy. Shopping prices are likely to be slightly lower during the festival, with tavern and housing places charging extra to make the most out of the additional people coming to the area.

### **Disease Epidemic**

There is a horrid pox or fever that is ripping through the local community. Anyone – including visitors like the Player Characters – that spends more than a few hours amongst the plagued populace might catch their affliction. The disease is quite possible fatal if not treated and the city is in dire need of anyone with true herbalist or alchemical talent. Without some external aid, the disease could wipe out the whole populace.

### **Raider/Bandit Attacks**

A band of heinous thieves, bandits and raiders have targeted the city for their attacks. The locals are in constant fear when they are travelling in low numbers and nobody wants to carry coin or wealth on their persons anymore. The raider band is brutal and seemingly relentless and no one is safe. It is unknown as to what or *who* brought the thieves to town but they are focussed and very hungry. Who the band actually serves could be the question, especially if the Player Characters have already made names for themselves elsewhere...

### **Food Shortage**

The city has been struck by some kind of tragedy or misfortune that has emptied or spoiled the food supply of the populace to the point of serious risk. The danger of starvation has forced the poorer populations of the community to become desperate and the upper class is facing the possibility of riots and potentially *worse* situations in the streets. Visitors to the city should beware, especially if they happen to be carrying food of any kind that they are not willing to share.

### **Sinister Villain**

The city is currently being harassed and victimised by a dastardly and evil person,



probably a sorcerer or sadistic warlord of some kind. This horrible villain knows some of the events that the Player Characters have been involved in from their pasts and now wonders why they happen to be moving on his territory. Perhaps he will offer them employment or maybe he is more worried they might try to stop him – making them his number one threat while they are in town.

### **Unexplained Exodus**

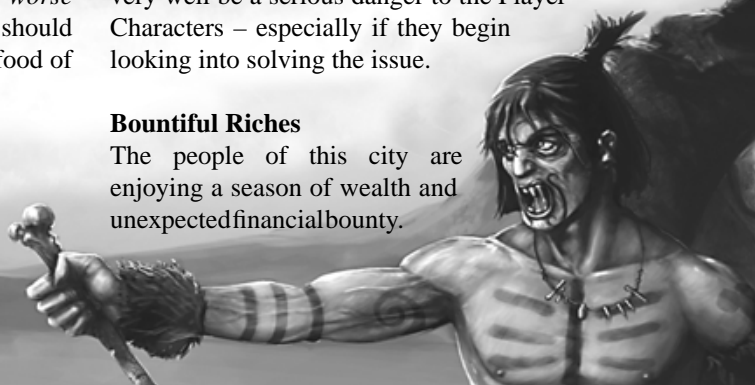
For some strange reason, the people of this city are leaving. Something is happening in the community and word has begun to spread about it in certain circles. Those who can, have already begun to pack their lives up and made the arrangements to relocate quickly. This has left the community in an awkward position and many stores and places of business have been shut down. Why this exodus is taking place cannot be immediately known by travellers coming to town but it cannot be long before they begin to understand what is wrong with this community.

### **Disappearances**

People from the city have begun to vanish from all walks of life recently and word on the lips of many is that it is all related in some way. One source, one reason, one *something* is taking the people of this city and making sure that they never surface again. The reason why these people are vanishing is the true plot here and could very well be a serious danger to the Player Characters – especially if they begin looking into solving the issue.

### **Bountiful Riches**

The people of this city are enjoying a season of wealth and unexpected financial bounty.







Either through a relaxation in taxes, a lucky strike in the mines or some other strange business windfall, there is a huge influx of monetary wealth in the main populace of the city. Merchants are enjoying the ability to raise prices, taverns are packed with paying patrons and the city glitters with silver. The Player Characters may find a way to enjoy this wealth, if they are smart about it.

## Infestation

A nest of some kind of vermin has veritably erupted in the streets and buildings of the city. This could be rats, flies, leeches, scorpions or any other numerous and horrible creatures that can plague the population. People are being attacked, food stores are being ravaged and anyone caught where these creatures can get to them will assuredly find themselves swarmed. These swarms of vermin are making life in the city difficult for those who live outside of fancy homes and the lower class population is suffering.

## Holy Days

The city is in the middle of a string of holy days, a time that has put a strange sense of peace into the faithful. Throngs of worshippers are parading in the streets and every holy site devoted to this religion is busy with the visitations of pious believers. If the religion is one that the Player Characters can get along with, or maybe are even a part of, their visit to the city should be a joyous one. If they are instead an enemy of the faith – never has there been a more dangerous time for them here.

## Blossoming Coup

The people of the city have begun to rise up against the local governing powers. The rumour of a full coup has begun to spread but no open violence has yet to occur. The Player Characters arrive in the city just in time to watch the last few days of preparation before the first attacks on the establishment truly begin. Whether or not they join the masses or attempt to defend the powers that be is the question and perhaps the only reason they are drawn to the city at all.

## Service Riots

One specific type of service or industry feels that it is being horribly mistreated in this city and its many workers and allies have taken to the streets to make their displeasure heard.

Those who are not willing to work with the affronted service are considered its enemies and anyone who



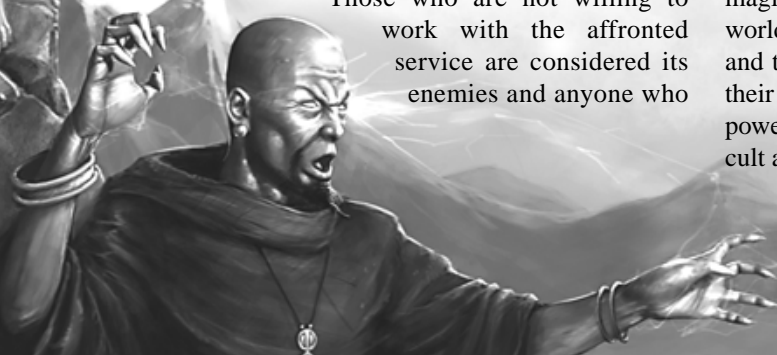
gets caught up in the spread of violent activity can expect to have to take a side. Either they become an enemy of the rioting workers or an enemy of whoever the service is rioting against.

## Street Conflicts

The streets and alleys of this city are not safe. Whether it is due to gangs and criminal activity or some other interesting reason for violence, fights are occurring throughout the community. Most of the violence has been fisticuffs and only minor weapon use but the potential for escalation is always evident. There could be a darker and more sinister reason behind this increase in street violence; when the Player Characters arrive in the city, maybe they will feel its influence as well.

## Cult Rising

A faith unlike any other in the city has begun to rise up from the depths – a demonic cult. The cult has dozens of members and several layers of budding hierarchy, including those who might have access to infernal magics and the rites to summon lesser evils to this world. The city is in danger of this cult growing further and the established faiths of the city have begun to see their congregations waver in the face of such a seductive power. The Player Characters could be targeted by the cult as potential enemies, sacrifices or even converts.





### Assassination

One of the leaders or other prominent figures in the community is about to be publicly assassinated by an unknown agent. The assassin is very good, very devoted and has no qualms at all about leaving a trail of bodies to escape the city once the job is done. The Player Characters could try and stop the deadly murderer or they could be asked to help discover why the act took place. Whether or not they believe the assassination was warranted, that is a different element of the plot as well.

### Legendary Event

Something is going to happen here that will be written in scrolls and books for centuries. An evil demigod will rise to lead his armies against King Conan, the local lake will boil under the light of a full eclipse or perhaps a beast from ancient mythologies will awaken to ravage the land. Prophets and soothsayers have been pointing toward this momentous occasion for years or even decades and only recently have the signs of this legendary moment have begun to come true. Whatever is about to happen here is something that will be remembered and the Player Characters are likely to be a part of it somehow.

*As this chapter's example concludes, the Games Master prepares his notes for the two City Plots that his random town will offer the Player Characters as they arrive. His Player Characters are going to need to be on their guard from the group of attacking bandits plaguing the town [roll of 7 on 1d8 for being a Town] but at least they will find some unlikely help from one of the locals, an unexpected ally [roll of 4].*

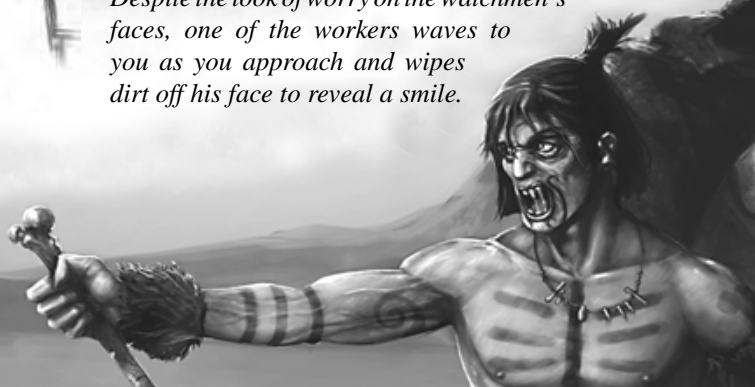
## INTRODUCING THE FINISHED CITY CREATION

Once all of the random elements of the city have been determined, all that remains is coming up with a fitting name and the right introduction for the characters to begin interaction with the new creation. This sort of information is good to have on hand before the Player Characters reach the city.

Using the town that we created throughout this chapter's examples, we have written the following introductory paragraphs that our Games Master could use to pull it into his gaming session. Some information would not be readily available until the Player Characters spent some additional time in the area, but a good introduction can contain many interesting subtle details – as the following example shows.

*Riding past a small unknown shrine at the centre of a simple cemetery, several fresh graves still marked by broken ground [Religious – Sanctified Cemetery], a small town unfolds before you. As the tall grasses give way to verdant fields and pond foliage [City Trait - Irrigated], you can see several groups of people working on building two new frames for what look like large homes [City Trait - Expanding], each site protected by a pair of axe-wielding guardsmen in matching indigo overshirts [Government Element – Watch Patrol] that look particularly wary of several nearby men not involved in the construction [Crime Rate – Above Average; City Plot – Raider/Bandit Attacks].*

*Despite the look of worry on the watchmen's faces, one of the workers waves to you as you approach and wipes dirt off his face to reveal a smile.*







'Welcome to Raveyna,' he says genuinely, 'we are not as large as the big cities north of here but the hall's wine is good and the cellars are full of yester season's crop [Gathering – Drinking Hall; Storage – Food Cellar], so come and spend some coin. Somebody has to pay for the new homesteads, you know? Anyway, if you are looking to stay a while, you will need to beg a room from one of the work homes. We had a few fires last year and we are stepping on one another these days. But not for too long I hope.' [Mood – Friendly; Housing – Longhouses; Population – High]

As you ride deeper into the two-dozen or so homesteads and halls [Housing – Homesteads], you allow the smell of fermenting grapes to draw you closer to the centre of town. A building laden with an assortment of equipment and barrels of wine bears a sign that proclaims sale

prices on a local vintage [Commercial – General Store; Service – Vineyard] and the shrill whinny of a mare being shoed announces where you will be able to keep your horses while you enjoy the town's amenities [Service – Stable].

'Hoy there!' a somewhat familiar voice shouts out to you, causing you to spin around. A battle-scarred man from the far north walks over to you, a sinister-looking statue of a man-beast looming in the town's courtyard behind him. Even as he begins to talk to you about a common friend [City Plot – Unexpected Ally] you have fighting in the Draw-Line Two [Entertainment – Game or Sport] outside of town, you cannot help but think that something is very wrong about that statue... [Unique – Demonic Foci]







# Cities Across the Nations

The world of the Hyborian Age is a large one, filled with wonderful cultures and places that attract adventurers from the four corners of the world. This makes the Hyborian population as fractious and distinct as the different notes in a single symphony; each separate and unique in their own way without losing touch of the whole.

This chapter looks at many of the various cultures and geographic locations of Conan's world and discusses many of the different aspects of cities found within them. These aspects are a good general rule but are by no means immutable. A city in eastern Shem could take on a touch of Turanian architecture; a village on the northern border of Cimmeria could feel like an Asgardian locale and so forth. With the information in this chapter will hopefully help Games Masters and players alike visualise Hyborian communities with a little more clarity.

Each entry briefly describes the types of communities and basic architecture ideology from the area on *average* but also gives minor details about a few important existing cities to the area, if any.

## AQUILONIA

This important and powerful nation of the Hyborian Age is also one of its most civilised, with a high number of populated villages scattered throughout the grassy plains and woodlands. Plentiful forests give large amounts of timber to build permanent housing and the existence of many patrolled roads and natural resources make larger communities likely in specific locations. Aquilonian communities tend to be based near baronial forts and castles but wilderness villages and towns exist as well.

Aquilonian architecture leans toward wooden cottages and individual buildings made for specific services or families. Group homes are not as common as they are farther north and city watches are rather commonplace – especially the closer one gets to the individual barons and dukes of the Aquilonian provinces. High, peaked rooftops and shuttered windows are commonplace; as are apprenticed workshops with large working bays for teaching to occur. Aquilonian governing structures are part of the baron-duke-king chain of command,

all eventually paying homage to the crown and throne in Tarantia.

The existence of Mitraeums – shrines and sanctuaries to Mitra – is a rather constant reminder of the faith's strength in Aquilonia. These chapels are sometimes the only reason a village exists at all, as the teachings of the Mitrans have brought many communities together. Other religious iconography is rarer but not disallowed and some larger towns or cities might have foreign faiths represented as well.

With the Road of Kings carving directly through Aquilonia, there are a number of other influences on architecture and structures along its path. The majority of Aquilonian communities are based out of familial wooden homesteads and cottages, with larger buildings forming the service and governing forces.

### Tarantia – Capital of Aquilonia

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Very High

**Crime Rate:** Above Average

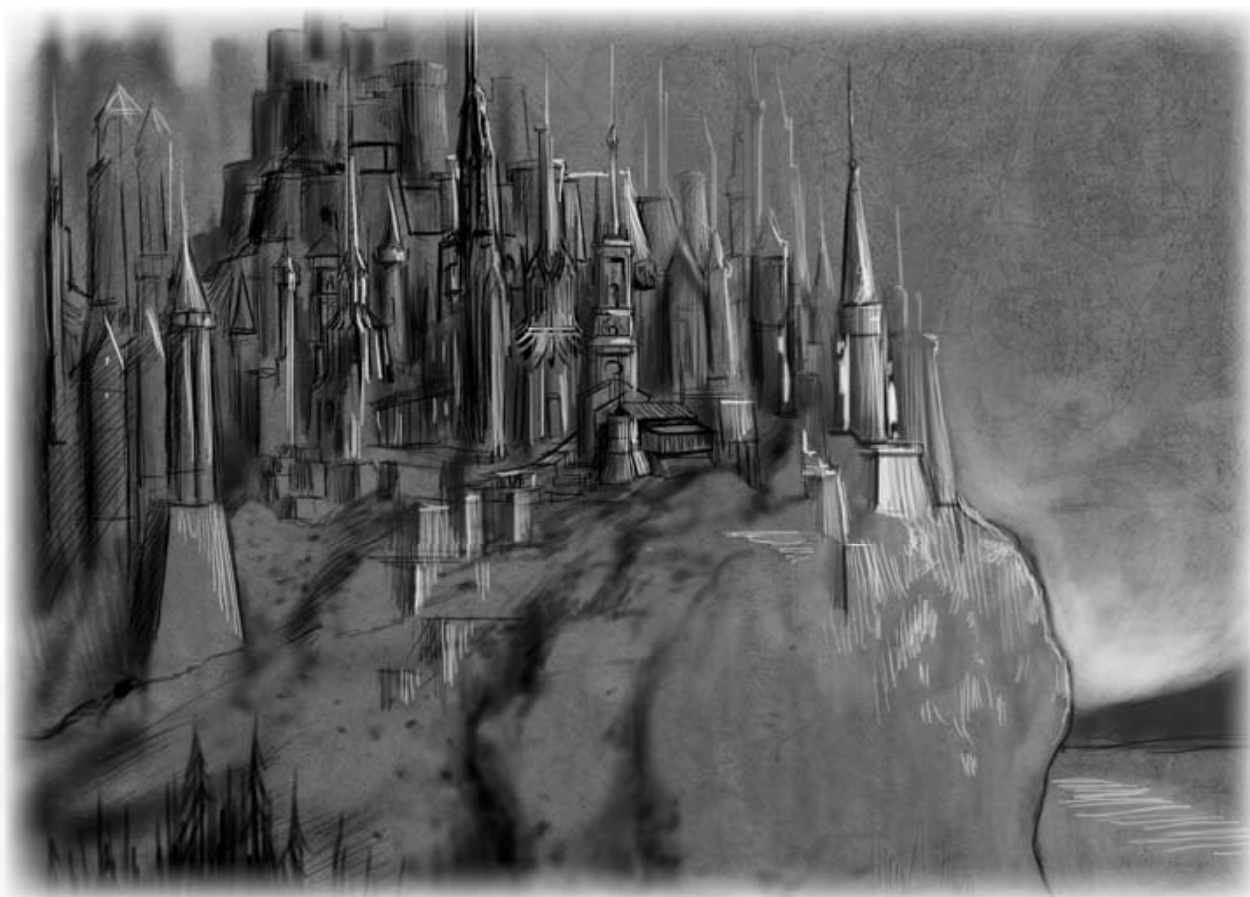
**Structures of Note:** Marketplace, Great Fane, Army Compound, Royal Palace

**City Traits:** Irrigated, Fortified, Walled/Moated, Towering, Prophesised

The longstanding home of the kings of Aquilonia, Tarantia is a city of indigo and golden towers set in the cliffs overlooking the Khorotas. It is split into several different quarters and sections depending on what sorts of mercantile services are offered and which guilds are in power at the time. It is a massively packed place containing over 30,000 residents, many of which have come to hopefully share in the wealth of the capital. The kings of Aquilonia rule from the throne in the upper city palace, even the barbarian king Conan, and there is a distinct separation between 'new' and 'old' Tarantia in the form of wealth and population density.

The Great Mitraeum is the heart of the worship of Mitra and home to the Archpriest, making





Tarantia the destination for Mitran pilgrimages all year long. Although other faiths are tolerated in Tarantia, there is no question that the Light of Mitra shines blindingly bright across the golden tops of the city.

## **Sicas – The City of Silver**

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population:** Low

**Crime Rate:** Major

**Structures of Note:** Metalsmith's Foundry (silver), Labour, Vineyard

**City Traits:** Controlled, Filthy, Spread Too Thin

A city built around the ore pulled up from the local silver mines, Sicas is a large sprawl of guilds and businesses making money from the silver operation.

Although Reeve to the crown of Aquilonia is technically the governing power in the city, it is well-known that the Merchant and Mining Guilds really rule. There are several primitive living areas based around the mines,

collectively called Shanty Town and much of the area's labour comes from the poor souls forced to live there.

## **ARGOS**

The phoenix out of the ashes of the Acheronian Empire, Argos is a nation based almost solely on the power of its naval assets. For this reason, most Argossean communities exist along the coast or banks of the mighty Tybor River – the last leg of the Khorotas. The rivalry between Argos and Zingara makes itself shown in the militaristic and brutal nature of most Argosseans and is also reflected in their utilitarian architecture.

With the exceptions of their entertainment styles and waterside structures, most Argossean buildings are unadorned and plain – despite the amount of trade and monetary wealth that the nation boasts. With the constant threat of piracy and thievery from their neighbouring enemies, it makes sense that they do not always flaunt their worth. Some buildings ignore this idea but most Argosseans prefer to show their wealth through their person and through their enjoyment of the excesses that life can offer.

Fruit orchards and farmed fields are plentiful in mainland Argos and small hamlets and villages exist as extensions of the larger trading ports, using the river to send barges of food and grain to Messantia for sale. Lumber from inland is also shipped to the coast but most of that is used for shipbuilding and the reinforcement of the most sea-worn buildings.

#### **Messantia – City of Riches**

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Overcrowded

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Coliseum, Shipwright's Dock, Clerk's Office, Royal Palace

**City Traits:** Fertile Ground, Well-Defended, Fortified

The wealthiest city of Argos and arguable the richest city in all of Hyboria, Messantia is considered the main port to the Western Sea. International trade takes place here on a truly massive scale and the sheer amount of wealth found amongst Messantians is mind-boggling. With somewhere around two *billion* silver coins in play on the streets and shops of the city at any given time, it makes sense why the city has earned its nickname.

Messantia is a mercantile and trade-based city, with many of its sectioned quarters devoted to the production or sale of various goods. The city constabulary are



well-armed and armoured and the crown of Argos keeps his naval forces watching over the coast at all times. Theft is one of the worst crimes to possibly take place in Messantia, mainly to spite the sticky-fingered Zingarans and criminals are almost always guaranteed to end up in the Grand Coliseum for their very public and brutal execution.

#### **BARACHAN ISLES**

The 'pirate isles' of the Barachans are thick with jungle on their interiors and covered in rocky beaches and jagged cliffs that make for excellent hidden coves. This combination of terrains makes for an interesting mix of primitive architecture from the tribes that live inland and eclectic wooden cabins and cottages along the coasts. Beach homesteads are popular but living away from the protection of groups is an invitation to tribal or pirate raids.

Most of the organised structures on the Barachan Isles are built along Zingaran designs but the ship's crews that go there are often well-travelled, so evidence of other influences can be found as well. To make the most of land cleared from the jungle, Barachan villages and cities tend to be crowded and constructed tightly together. Buildings will sometimes even share a wall with their neighbour to save on construction materials and usable ground. The coastal communities here are always based on access to the sea and many former pirate coves have become small pirate hamlets over the decades of their use.

The roving Pict tribe that boated down into the Barachans splintered into several smaller tribes, each one building their own communes and villages in the jungles. These small communities are often very similar to the villages found in the Pictish Wilderness, but cut from darker wood and woven from thicker foliage than can be found further north.

#### **Tortage – Pirate City**

**City Classification:** Urban Sprawl

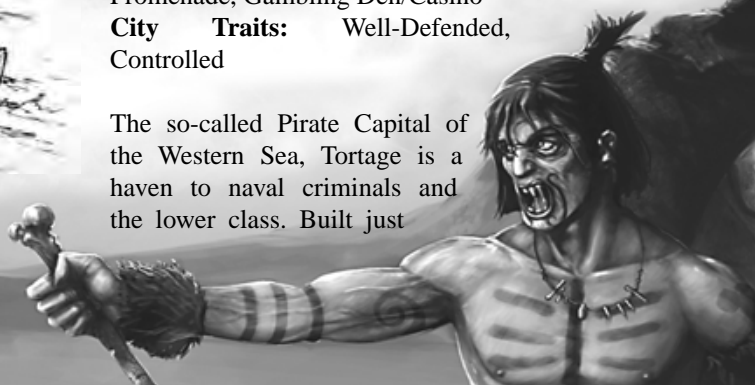
**Population Level:** Very High

**Crime Rate:** Major

**Structures of Note:** Vault, Shipwright's Dock, Promenade, Gambling Den/Casino

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Controlled

The so-called Pirate Capital of the Western Sea, Tortage is a haven to naval criminals and the lower class. Built just







off the beach around a deep inlet capable of bringing in sailing ships, the city caters to the pirate way of life. The cramped and crowded city is littered with taverns, gambling dens, informal fighting pits and several wharfs where ships can dock to drop off or pick up crewmen. Stolen or 'traded' loot is the primary form of coin in Tortage and the main form of law is that which can be upheld at the point of a cutlass.

The ruling factor of the town after King Conan assumes his own throne is Lord Strom and his scarlet-armoured sentinels from *The Red Hand*, his vessel. These draconian pirates are supposedly steeped in sorcery and dark magics that were used to augment the pirate Strom's abilities and eventually will even bring him back from the grave. They are a corrupt force that turns a blind eye to those he considers allies or pawns, and focuses undue attentions to anyone who might stand against his dark rule.

## THE BORDER KINGDOM

The generically-termed Border Kingdom between Cimmeria and Nemedia is a collection of many different Hyborian cultures and remnants of how often it has been controlled, attacked, conquered and then controlled again. There are many small villages and towns throughout the area, many of which are shadows of forces that once tried to claim the Kingdom.

This collection of different aspects and echoes of rulers long passed makes the Border Kingdom distinct in the fact that it has no overall architecture styles or construction formats to follow. One small hamlet could show heavy Cimmerian influence, the next could be a Hyperborean warlord camp. There is little pattern or reason behind what sort of architecture and layout the communities of the Border Kingdom might take and the older a community might be – the more different cultures likely contributed to it.

The one constant amongst nearly all Border Kingdom villages and cities is the fact that they all need to have strong fortifications and defences to help ward off the next 'Border Prince' that will assuredly come along and try to conquer them.

## BOSSONIAN MARCHES AND THE WESTERMARCK

Although technically part of Aquilonia and the Pictish Wilderness respectively, this area of western Hyboria is the veritable edge of civilisation. The only villages and communities along this area are forts and wilderness outposts for the most part and they are simple in their construction. Wooden walls and palisades are very common to keep the marauding Pictish tribes at bay while archers eliminate their raid leaders and hunting is the most common form of food service.

There are several larger castles throughout the area, where the appointed dukes and lords keep their royal seats but even these communities are small and simple compared to the larger population centres of Aquilonia. The barbaric Picts and the constant threat of their raids force anyone living in the area to stay on guard and ready to defend their homes, often leading to low walls and spiked fencing placed around the simplest of hamlets just in case.

### Schondara – The Town of Fort Kwanyara

**City Classification:** City

**Population Level:** Average

**Crime Rate:** Below Average



**Structures of Note:** Barracks, Courtyard Square, Bowyer/Fletcher, Magistrate's Office/Lord's Manor

**City Traits:** Irrigated, Controlled, Fortified, Walled/Moated

The smallish town located very near to the Aquilonian Fort Kwanyara in the Westernmarck, Schondara is where the soldiers of the fort live and thrive when they are not at the walls of the defendable line against the wilderness. Both the city and the fort are frontier primitive; built of split logs and hunted furs, with tarred thatch and leather shingles. It is a simple place where soldiers and their families live on livestock and minor farming in the tough soil. There are storehouses and crafting locations where the city makes and stores the goods required, ensuring the fort runs properly. The city is also the home of the master Bossonian bowyer Herhon.

## BRYTHUNIA

The livestock pastures and stout vineyards of these rocky foothills surround many small villages and city-states. There are surprisingly numerous small communities in the area, each one based around the 'ruling' family of an estate, manor or farming enterprise. The structures themselves are generally flat and simple, with only the estate manors themselves being set out as anything but basic. More often than not, the *only* building that is not a wood and stone homestead or workshop in these towns is the city-state's lordly family home.

Brythunian communities are built to survive harsh winters and incursions from Nemedian or Hyperborean attackers. They use their large flat stretches of pasture and boulder fields to allow for lookout towers, building stout fences to slow down raiding parties where the ground is level. The structures they build to house themselves, their horses and their livestock need to be thick-roofed and heavily insulated for when the winds and snows come down from the mountains. Because of this, Brythunian homesteads and village shops seem rather comfortable and inviting – even when sometimes their inhabitants are not.

There are a great many vineyards between the flint-laden boulder fields of Brythunia and the stretching plains and grasslands where most villages are formed. Farming and grazing is difficult higher in the foothills where mining can take place, making it necessary for several communities to send rotating mining caravans into the mountains to obtain usable and tradable resources while the remaining population makes sure that the community does not starve.

**Hyth – Last Castle of the Brythuns**

**City Classification:** Town

**Population Level:** Average

**Crime Rate:** Below Average

**Structures of Note:** Vineyard, Haunted Home

**City Traits:** Fortified

Hyth is a somewhat small community built within the confines of the last standing castle grounds left behind by the original people of the area, called Brythuns in passing by scholars and researchers. Using what remains of the original castle walls to protect them while building upon the heavy stone structures, the town is much sturdier than the common mining or farming villages common to the grasslands.

The central building of Hyth is the main remnants of the castle keep, mostly broken and worn by the centuries. When the town was founded the building was used as a storehouse and shelter but sightings of malicious spirits – claimed to be the souls of the destroyed Brythuns – have forced the people of Hyth to abandon it. Now the stone and mortar structure looms at the centre of town empty and foreboding, serving only as a landmark to the surrounding area as to where the small community lies.

## CIMMERIA

Gloomy and cold throughout much of the year, Cimmeria is a hard place to live that creates a harder people. The clans of Cimmeria are tightly knit and extremely familial in their dealings with one another, which show in their community structures. Without sufficient trees for lumber and such harsh environmental conditions, Cimmerian structures are made of stone, peat and thatch. They are often built large enough to serve tightly for extended families; cutting down on the amount of resources expended per community. This gives a small and somewhat primitive feel to Cimmerian villages, even if they are quite otherwise advanced.

The common Cimmerian community is rarely larger than a hamlet or small village, staying in low numbers in order to avoid attracting other clans or raiders from Nordheim or Nemed. There are a few larger communities throughout the 'nation', mostly in the form of clanholmes – uniting locations for extended clan families. These bigger towns do not alter the simple and utilitarian aspects of Cimmerian construction; they merely bring more of it together in one place. The clanholmes are often built up





around a significant land feature particularly important to the clan's history but the inter-clan battles and invader raids that take place sometimes make this difficult. A Cimmerian community that is destroyed or abandoned might be reclaimed later but is far more likely to simply be rebuilt elsewhere.

Cimmerian communities have a leaning toward the harder services and lifestyles of the Hyborian Age. Warriors from the moment they can walk, some would say, there is never a shortage of weaponsmiths, bowyers and huntsmen in a Cimmerian village. With so many dangerous neighbours about – Nordheimers, Nemedians and rival Cimmerian clans – these communities have no choice but to steel themselves against potential attack at all times.

## Lowcreek – The Ironholme

**City Classification:** Village

**Population Level:** Low

**Crime Rate:** Minor

**Structures of Note:** Group Home/Longhouse, Blacksmith's Forge

**City Traits:** Well-Defended

This typically small Cimmerian village located in the dried creek bed at the foot of the Eiglophian Mountains, Lowcreek is far more important to the clans than anyone would have originally thought when the tiny community was formed. The Cimmerians of Lowcreek, over the course of decades, have learned how to dredge materials up from the dry creek bed and local foothills to make a stout and dark iron. This 'black iron' is dense and heavy but it is not brittle like the wrought iron in the south, making it especially good for bludgeoning weaponry. It does little for the creation of blades but a maul or mace made from Lowcreek's black iron is considered as good as any sword off a southern anvil.

The existence of the black iron would normally make Lowcreek a target for constant raids out of the mountains but it also ironically arms the village with mighty weapons to defend it. Every Cimmerian in Lowcreek that is old enough to hold the weight of a weapon carries a sample of their forges' wares, making the small village an arduous and costly raid to say the least. That is not to say that the attempts are never made; only that it leaves the village littered with the broken and bloody bodies of the attackers.



## CORINTHIA

Throughout the city-states of this fractured nation, the many kings, barons and noble princes of the stretches between the mountain ranges bring their own style to their communities. There is a definite leaning of vaulted ceilings and high doorways from being so near to Zamora, spiking or bulbous rooftops from Ophir and Koth and wide streets friendly for cavalry. Corinthian communities are surprisingly large for such a tumultuous nation and many have stood for centuries.

Although the city-states consider all local villages and towns part of their territory, they are still more or less independently organised and governed by the local families and noble bloodlines. Controlling estates keep their own personal farmsteads and resources in case the larger city-state is overtaken by invaders but they commonly share their assets with one another to make the community stronger.

The city-states typically tried to keep their communities walled in around the governing body or estate, protecting and providing for them. Landowners and yeomen find that it is best when they live within the confines of the main area but are sometimes too spread out or somewhat distrusting of the estate's owners. This can leave small communities that form outside of city-state walls and



even some that believe that they are independent of being ruled – up until the harsh realisation how incorrect they are comes to remind them.

#### **Muron – House of Rogues**

**City Classification:** Urban Sprawl

**Population Level:** Very High

**Crime Rate:** Major

**Structures of Note:** Armoury/Depot/Cache, Temple, Stockade/Dungeon

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Controlled, Fortified, Walled/Moated, Royal Seat

This city (left unnamed in *Rogues in the House*) is a powerful Corinthian city-state once ruled in part by an aristocrat named Murilo and his rival, Nabonidus the Red Priest. Conan himself came to Muron on several occasions and even became embroiled in the bitter politics it seemed to be founded upon. Regardless of the Cimmerian's dealings, the city-state itself is still very important to the nation as a whole. Muron is home to many sects of thieves and powerful nobles all vying for control over the somewhat ineffectual 'king'.

Amongst the high roofed buildings and numerous pillar-laden streets there are many distinct areas of the city-state. Built like the quarters of a common city, there are sections devoted to the manufacture of goods, sale of finished products, storage of public resources and even an area dedicated to the numerous thief gangs and mercenaries called The Maze. It truly is a diverse place where a visitor can get swept up in internal politics or street-level gang violence.

#### **Nahab – The Karpash Wall**

**City Classification:** City

**Population Level:** High

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Estate/Manor, Stables, Brothel, Sanctified Cemetery/Catacomb, Church/Fane

**City Traits:** Devoutly Religious, Fortified, Walled/Moated, Terrible Beast's Lair

A smallish walled city built up at the point where the Karpash Mountain Way meets the Road of Kings, Nahab is considered the main point of defence against Nemedians from the north, having successfully turned away several waves of invaders at their high walls. It has always been a point of contention from the noble families, who all want to control the somewhat independent city; until the awakening of a horrible creature that hunts the city's streets and fields.

## **EASTERN DESERT**

This far-reaching area of arid and uninviting desert and steppes is not especially conducive to the building of permanent communities in the form of cities. Nomadic caravans and tent 'cities' are far more convenient and appear frequently in the arid wastes. The closest things to true cities that exist in the Eastern Desert realms are the small impromptu communities that occasionally spring up around the ruins of former constructions, long since devoured by the sand and worn by the sun and wind.

Communes and tent-based hamlets occur throughout the area but anyone looking to arrange for truly permanent housing in this harsh landscape will likely travel even farther east or south to Turan or Iranistan. There are only a few true cities within the blowing sands and heat, such as Zamboula and Kuthchemes but these only exist because of oasis-based water supplies and the sheer drive of those inhabiting them.

#### **Zamboula – Hanuman's Home**

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Overcrowded

**Crime Rate:** Above Average

**Structures of Note:** Slave Market, Labour, Arena, Temple

**City Traits:** Devoutly Religious, Controlled, Irrigated, Walled/Moated, Bi-Cultural, Towering

The largest of the true cities found in the wastes of the Eastern Desert, Zamboula is arguably the centre of the worship of Hanuman. This dark and sinister city is ruled in part by the Turanian government that came and claimed the ancient circle of towers and spires and partly by the worshippers of the dark god. Darfari cannibal slaves are allowed to stalk the streets at night and rumours of human sacrifices and undying Old Stygian sorcerers are heard in every corner of the city. The local nomads and raiders think the city is cursed and rightfully so, it seems.

A deep and crystal blue oasis keeps the desert heat and thirst at bay for most citizens and visitors, with some of the more vicious locals going so far as to flask thinned blood to sate their thirst as well. Mercenaries hired by the Turanian powers that exist in Zamboula serve as the city's patrolmen and peacekeeping force – even if they are governed by coin more so than duty. The city is a beautiful thing to behold amidst the dire sands of the desert; its ugliness only reveals itself to those who stay in it after sunset.





## GHULISTAN

The northern stretches of Ghulistan are home to scattered villages of large-framed peoples. These people are militant and strong, building their settlements as thick and as hard as they are. The hill tribes came down into the northern valley, learned how to create permanent communities from their new Hyrkanian neighbours and then formed an unknowing defence line for the rest of the area and Vendhya to the south.

The cities of the Ghulistani tribes are constructed normally in lines, built along a central path for their beloved horsemen to ride to battle. Nearly every building will no doubt have a small personal stable attached to it but also there will be a large storehouse used for weapons, shields, and cavalry gear. The tribal mentality of the hill-men has not left the 'civilised' Ghulistani; they still build their homes large enough for full families and keep storage for their equipment in central locations for the whole community to use when need be. Attackers and hostile visitors to Ghulistan should beware; drawing blood against one tribal is as good as drawing it from *all* of them.

### Shuran – Stallions and Archers

**City Classification:** Village

**Population Level:** Average

**Crime Rate:** Minor

**Structures of Note:** Bowyer/Fletcher, Stables, Warehouse/Storehouse

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Secretive/Private

A small community that has only existed for a decade or so, located in the greater valley of the Zaporoska River, Shuran is home to the last remnants of the Shoghal tribe – who were nearly wiped out by the Afghuli. The village buildings are tightly-packed, constructed around a single storehouse that holds their stolen Hyrkanian bows and war saddles. Each adult male has a single fast war stallion of his own and no fear of any mortal thing – but they are terribly afraid of anything even resembling what they call *wookarra*, known to the rest of the world as sorcery.



## HYPERBOREA

Built of pine wood and carved stone before being painted with boiled sap and shingled in leather to keep out the wind and cold, Hyperborean buildings are unattractive and built to last generations. Many of their communities are actually formed around the holy sites and castles of unknown ancient peoples that once claimed these lands for their own. Having to wage a constant battle for territory and resources with the Brythunians, Cimmerians and Aesir has forced nearly every Hyperborean community to rely heavily on the preparation for warfare to survive.

Farming the dense soil of their nation is difficult, growing only the hardest of tubers and grains. The Hyperboreans are dedicated hunters and gatherers however, using game animals, mushrooms and berries to augment their diets. Low food stores and cold environments mean the use of cellars is paramount to avoid starvation when the weather gets bad. The Hyperborean people are tough and adaptable and they make their communities into a reflection of their resourcefulness.

### Castle Haloga – The Witchmen's Kingdom

**City Classification:** City

**Population Level:** High

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Lodge/Hostel, Food Cellar/Cool Storage, Slave Market, Prayer Ring, Stockade/Dungeon

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Fortified, Walled/Moated

Located in the cold tundra of Hyperborea, Castle Haloga is one of the most infamous locations in the entire nation. Conan himself spent some of his young adult life in chains under the dark ruins of the ancient castle, overthrowing a horrible witch-queen called Vammatar.



Her influence is still felt within the confines of the city, especially when her undead minions occasionally resurface to harass the living. The sorcery she once used to raise a legion of the damned (shown in *Legions of the Dead*) permeates the place and any corpse that is not cremated or dismembered is sure to rise to stalk the streets at night.

## HYRKANIA

On the eastern side of the Vilayet Sea, Hyrkania is home to dozens of small communities along the various trade routes and caravan paths that cut across the enormous plains nation. When the nomads of the kingdom decide to settle down and abandon their roaming ways, they create spacious villages and towns made for their horses and their archery. The areas surrounding their communities are often used for grazing and herding of all sorts of useful animals, leaving the room within the village itself for their steeds alone.

Hyrkanian populations tend to focus their services on the manufacture and trade of a few specific goods, taking advantage of their location near trade or caravan routes. Silk is used heavily in their constructions; often as window coverings and doorways. They rely on herd farming and livestock to survive in this nation, storing up as much in the way of food as they can. Hyrkanians are not likely to survive on their own without the goods traded to them from the nomads and caravans, as that successful agriculture is all but impossible throughout much of their territory.

### Rhamdan – The Silken Port

**City Classification:** Urban Sprawl

**Population Level:** Average

**Crime Rate:** Above Average

**Structures of Note:** Marketplace/Bazaar, Seamstress/Tailor Shop, Shipwright's Dock, Barter House, Army Compound

**City Traits:** Fertile Ground, Well-Defended, Irrigated, Bi-Cultural

Sister city to the Turanian port of Khorosun, Rhamdan is the last Hyrkanian stop on the Silk Road from Khitai into the west. The city is filled with both Hyrkanian and Turanian traders and soldiers, creating a tension throughout the streets that is sated solely by the presence of coin and profit. When times are good in the city the people of the community are happy and the wine flows. When trade is bad however, the two factions within Rhamdan are one argument away from bloodshed.

Rhamdan is thick with soldiers and mercenaries from all over, many of

which use private carracks and flat-bottom boats as a mode of transport up and down the Vilayet in order to commit themselves to battles and contracted work as sellswords. Because of their constant presence in the city, Rhamdan always bears an outward resemblance to a military compound – even if the soldiers themselves rarely stick around for more than few weeks at a time before heading back out again.

## IRANISTAN

The stone buildings of Iranistan vary in size and shape depending on their age, set in their circular hub-style arrangement in their cities. The centre of each community is normally a garden or courtyard that also serves as the city's common meeting point. This garden plaza is sometimes covered by a columned awning, building off a general symmetry that is present throughout their culture.

The Iranistani are a people that enjoy art and honour in their constructions. They add mosaics and sculpture too much of their more important structures, hang familial tapestries from their walls, and enamel even the exterior of their buildings with rich colours. Their cities are often beautiful to behold once they grow beyond a village level, becoming a glittering stop along the trade routes for travellers.

Iranistan's many smaller towns in the open plains pale in comparison to their trade route sprawls but they try to uphold the culture's standard of rich living and family honour. Although these wilderness villages and towns cannot hope to support army forces of their own, they retain a firm sense of fierce and barbaric tenacity. Camel and horse cavalry are still quite prevalent as they are in the trade cities but private guards for wealthy men are far more common.

### Anshan – The Glittering Capital

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Very High

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Courtyard Square, Public Bath, Marketplace/Bazaar, Royal Palace, Army Compound, Scholarly Library/Arcane Emporium, Ancient Unearthed Tomb

**City Traits:** Expanding, Irrigated, Fortified, Walled/Moated

The truly enormous city of Anshan is the massive capital of all Iranistan, serving as the heart of the entire nation.





Nearly every family or bloodline can trace at least some of their lineage to the noble blood in Anshan, records of which are kept in the gilded library of Hunahr along with reams of sorcerous knowledge from both sides of the Hyborian lands.

Anshan is a sprawling hub of golden minarets and spires wrapped in a tall stone wall that is always patrolled by archers and pikemen. The streets are cobbled with sandstone and there is a dedicated guild kept to clean the streets of refuse – and eliminate the homeless. Deep, clay-lined wells and baths keep away the desert heat as well as help keep the nobles clean and fit. With a pocketful of coin a visitor to the city can expect to enjoy themselves for several days, they should just try to make it last or the sharp-knifed street guilds will come to *remove* them when their money runs out.

## **Yasisti – Dark Fire Kept Burning**

**City Classification:** Village

**Population Level:** Low

**Crime Rate:** Minor

**Structures of Note:** Courtyard Square, Chapel, Portal to Darkness

**City Traits:** Devoutly Religious, Controlled

A small circle of stone buildings surrounding a mystical chapel dedicated to the Eternal Fire, Yasisti is nothing special to the casual observer. It looks just like any other small Iranstani village; a sandy plaza surrounding a granite chapel, ringed by houses and lodges. The chapel keeps a holy oil fire burning at all times to celebrate the power and dedication of their faith, which they have done so for as long as anyone in the area can remember.

To most this practice is just another religious rite but the truth of the matter is that the priests of the Eternal Fire are keeping the brazier ablaze to keep the demons of the Outer Dark from seeping into this world through the strange portal that exists beneath the chapel. Should the fire ever actually go out, there is no way to know what evils will be unleashed upon the Hyborian Age.



## **KHITAI**

The far eastern realm of Khitai is a mysterious place surrounded by jungles and steamy swampland and their cities are something of a marvel. The Khitan people understand the dangers that are present in their nation's wilderness, so they tend to enjoy adding a high level of luxurious beauty to anything that they have claimed from it. Khitan cities are large and magnificent to behold on account of their love of exorbitant materials and an exquisite practice of the arts.

Khitan communities are as rigid in their construction as their rules concerning the buildings themselves. Blue-tiled temples must never face a certain direction, nor next to a tavern or drinking house. The homes of royalty must see the rising sun without shadow and city walls are often considered an afterthought in relation to the existence of gardens and topiaries. Enamelled walls in rich colours end in curved roofs, symmetry forming layered buildings into pagodas and brilliant tiered temples.

Smaller villages that are forced to cut an existence out of the jungle rarely have the funds, manpower or resources to create much more than thatched cabins and wooden cottages nestled away in the undergrowth. These hamlets and villages are often based on local agriculture, farming what they can in wet paddies and small fields. Larger cities controlled by noble families and wise scholars will often control these villages, but



through a sense of honour and duty rather than force or presence of arms.

### **Paikang – The Roar of Emperors and Lions**

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Average

**Crime Rate:** Below Average

**Structures of Note:** Mansion/Palace, Royal Palace, Promenade, Specialty Shop, Temple, Teacher of the Unknown, Exotic Bestiary

**City Traits:** Fortified, Protected, Towering, Prophesised

The capital of the Khitan Empire, Paikang is the root of everything that represents the Far East. The creations of the collective Khitan people begin their long journey to the west from the routes that start in Paikang. Jade, giant spider silk and a host of other crafts take on their shapes here in the sprawling collection of beautiful violet-topped pagodas and gilded towers. There are thousands of foreigners that make a seasonal home of the capital, living their lives and bringing their own cultures to the Khitan.

Paikang itself is a truly wondrous work of art cast in wood and stone, several miles of protected land that was cleared out of the jungle by the nation's earliest emperors. Huge towers that overlook the whole city and the surrounding farming villages stand at the four compass directions, symbolising the protection that the royal seat offers to all of Khitai.

Within the long and meticulously cared for streets of the city, there are expensive stores and rare workshops unlike anything found elsewhere in all of Hyboria. Travellers from the west that have come to Paikang claim that the people there know how to do things with their bodies and minds that rival the most powerful magics of Stygia or Zamora. Some even have said that there are places in Paikang where they can *learn* these talents as well.

## **KHORAJA**

Warrior villages set in the valleys north of Shem, between the mountains that form much of Koth's southern border, Khorajan communities are rarely very large. Dependent upon their strongest fighters to maintain their safety, as they are nestled between so many warring nations, the villages are commonly limited on non-military structures. Housing is kept simple and grouped together and looks much like the buildings found throughout eastern Shem.

Tribal societies dictate that the Khorajan people are insular and protective of their own, a tradition that is shown through their use of low,

spiked walls and narrow village paths to force cavalry to dismount and fight the Khorajans on their favoured terms – in close and brutal infantry combat. The ores that they dig out of the mountains around them allow for the use of bronze and raw iron in their weapons and armour, giving them an edge over most tribal societies.

With the exception of the nation's capital, which bears the same name as the kingdom, Khorajan cities are small and compact affairs that might seem insignificant to the uninformed. They are quite the opposite however and even a single Khorajan militia summoned from one of these tiny villages is worth an entire armed legion from many of their neighbours.

### **Jhunaj Ra'mi – City of the King's Hunt**

**City Classification:** Town

**Population Level:** Low

**Crime Rate:** Minor

**Structures of Note:** Barracks/Dormitory, Weaponsmith's Forge, Armoury/Depot/Cache

**City Traits:** Fortified, Secretive/Private, Controlled

The home of King Khossus' royal huntsmen, Jhunaj Ra'mi is a small fortification set up in the mountains. It is a well-known fact in the area that the king has a weakness for the meat of the white mountain rams that live in the high peaks, so this community was set up by the finest climbers and huntsmen Khoraja had to offer. The town is small and compact, tucked away in a rocky shelf about half way up into the mountain range north of Akbitana. The men of Jhunaj Ra'mi sleep together in large numbers to create more heat in their low-ceilinged barracks, wrapping themselves in fur and un-spun wool when working at their spear forges or stalking the wild ram herds through the snowy peaks.

## **KOTH**

The grassy meadowland kingdom of Koth is home to several dozen small communities scattered along the roads and pathways between the larger cities like Khorshemish or Khrosha. Except for these metropolitan examples of Kothic ingenuity, most villages and small towns are rather basic and simplistic. With Koth serving as a boundary between the northern and southern nations, all main roads must be monitored for trading caravans, advancing armies and anything else that King Strabonus could profit from.

Kothic villages and towns are designed around whatever services the community





can reliably work with; paying sizeable taxes and tithes to the king's governing agents. A village with skilled blacksmiths and ample materials will keep perhaps multiple forges actively running, a Kothic village with a large stables is assured to have good trainers and riders or even teams of shepherds for the hamlets on the best grazing fields. King Strabonus requires his people to be vigilant in their services to the crown; they are the foundation of what he hopes will be a forever-expanding kingdom.

The larger Kothic cities are actually similar in construction to Shemite structures, likely due to the number of Shemite tribes that have moved into and out of the nation over the centuries. Their buildings are based around wooden structures wrapped in mud or stone bricks and sandy mortar, making them quite resilient and easily repairable. Kothic architecture tends to be tall and uniform, built to last and serve the people for many generations. The use of a dark tan colour is prevalent throughout their structures, with streaks of gold or purple in anything having to do with the royal throne. The Kothic people might be ruled by a black-clad conqueror but enjoying his protection from roving bands of Shemites and Ophireans has made many of the small towns and cities throughout the nation *thankful* for King Strabonus' militant traditions.

#### **Korveka – The Weight of Silver**

**City Classification:** Urban Sprawl

**Population Level:** High

**Crime Rate:** Above Average

**Structures of Note:** Metalsmith's Foundry, Specialty Shop, Arbiter Court

**City Traits:** Fertile Ground, Well-Defended, Controlled, Irrigated

The site of a major battle against the queen's forces of Khauran, Korveka is the capital of the barony of the same name. It is located in the eastern side of the nation, resting between the mountain ranges leading to Zamora and Corinthia and the fast-flowing rivers that make rich agriculture possible. The city sprang up around the rich river banks, which are used by the city to aid in many tasks. Useful for its access to several small silver veins in the surrounding mountains, Korveka remains a conquered city under the thumb of the Kothic king.

## **KUSH AND THE BLACK KINGDOMS**

Stretching from the southern edge of Stygia to the edge of the world at the Southern Sea, Kush and its tribal neighbours are some of the wildest and most dangerous territories in the Hyborian Age. Dozens – perhaps hundreds – of individual tribes claim their stakes within the Black Kingdoms and the largest ones are said to build huge complexes and cities in the jungles and savannahs. Towering ziggurats hidden away by the thick tree canopies, altars used for human sacrifice and even pits where wild animals are kept are just a few of the stories to come out of the southern jungles.

The villages and towns of Kush are generally home to the ruling caste of the Kushites – the Chagas. They use the darker-skinned tribes of the area to build their communities, creating comfortable homesteads and hunting lodges while the slaves are forced to live in huts and shacks. Inter-tribe warfare is commonplace and the Chagas are constantly seeking other lesser tribes to subsume and put to work.

The constructions in Kush utilise the somewhat limited resources found in the savannah and grassland hills, accented by the general lack of architectural skills in the slaves. They frequently use grass-thatched huts, leather door flaps and window shades, making use of the renewable resources at their disposal.

The deeper into the jungles of the Black Kingdoms you venture, the more wood that is used in their constructions. Oddly enough however, the villages become farther and fewer between. Larger tribes can survive better in the dangerous wilderness, meaning that their villages grow to match. There are rare examples of true cities – often claimed ancient places from the age of Atlantis or older – being discovered within the dark jungles. These cities are treated as myths more often than not, as expeditions to find them again would be expensive and very *dangerous*.

#### **Kulalo – Juma's Kingdom**

**City Classification:** Village

**Population Level:** Average

**Crime Rate:** Below Average

**Structures of Note:** Hut/Hovel/Shack, Bowyer/Fletcher, Game or Sport

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Controlled

The coastal village of Kulalo is a simple accessible port for Black Corsairs to come and go as they please, often



trading their wares and loot for ostrich-feathered arrows and mangrove-wood bows carved and strung in the Turanian style. West of the lands of the Matamba tribe, Kulalo is the most famous and somewhat important community in the Kushite kingdom of Juma. Archery and spear-throwing is a very big piece of the area's traditions and visitors can always expect to see at least one contest of skills between warriors or hunters. Bitter rivalries are formed in this way, as a Kushite's aim and strength is a direct symbol of his worth to the tribe.

#### **Arensupu – Arensnuphis' Lair**

**City Classification:** Urban Sprawl

**Population Level:** Low

**Crime Rate:** Below Average

**Structures of Note:** Arena, Great Fane, Witch/Druid/Shaman, Non-Human Community

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Devoutly Religious, Secretive/Private

The root of the dark Kushite faith in the hunting Jaguar God, Arensupu is supposedly the resting place of the mighty god Arensnuphis. Built up sporadically around the central ivory and bone ziggurat that is the central core of the jaguar-faith, the city is actually two cities in one. The first city is the home to several thousand Kushite worshippers that live in huts on the ground level of the jungle; the servants of the learning priests of Arensnuphis. The second city is the one that stretches through the treetops and out from the ziggurat; the city of jaguar-men.



The highest echelons of the Arensnuphis faith have long since been transformed into the monstrous half-jaguars, including High Priest Gakumbu. They are the obvious elite caste in Arensupu, with the common Kushites serving an extremely subservient role. Within the teachings of the faith it is a sin to act against the jaguar-men, where they are allowed and *expected* to hunt and kill humans on a regular basis. Thankfully the city is located deep in the Black Kingdoms jungles; where the Children of the Jaguar are far from other populations.

## **NEMEDIA**

One of the richest kingdoms in all of Hyboria, Nemedia has benefited from a wealth of natural minerals and earned wealth from their alliances with neighbouring nations. Even with the constant upheaval of their lords, kings and barons throughout their nation, the Nemedians still enjoy a fantastic culture and tradition of pleasure.

Nemedian cities are rather similar in construction to Aquilonian cities, with a heavier leaning on bronze and hardwood in their buildings. They build tall and stalwart buildings that boast of the resilience of the Nemedian people, with broad doorways and vaulted ceilings. Support pillars are common in larger structures, with sculpture appearing on many columns. Gold and crimson are the two primary colours that appear in Nemedian architecture and they appear as accents on most upper class homes and businesses.

The sorts of noble excesses that led to the golden Nemedian chariots and pleasure gardens create a very steep scale of hedonism that exists within their communities. Smaller, more practical villages and towns look much like any other grassland Hyborian population centre; it is not until the noble families and mercenary generals can begin to flaunt their wealth does it become apparent. This is why the largest cities in Nemedia are some of the most extravagant known to Hyborian travellers.

#### **Belverus – Garden Capital of Nemedia**

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Very High

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Garden/Park, Amphitheatre/Podium, Promenade, Marketplace/Bazaar, Artists Museum, Stockade/Dungeon, Royal Palace







**City Traits:** Irrigated, Fortified, Walled/Moated, Towering

Belverus is the capital city of Nemedra, the home of the king of the nation. From within the golden walls of the palace the inner functions of Nemedra itself are dictated and schemed. The city was once a fortress built with a foundation that sinks deep into the Acheronian roots of the kingdom, giving it an anchor in history – both figuratively *and* literally. The palace itself is actually a rebuilt Acheronian manor and the subtle differences in architecture give it a somewhat mystifying ambiance.

The rest of the city is a lush and green place with dozens of individual gardens scattered throughout the city, inside and out of the tall stone walls that protect the capital. During the rule of King Nimed, Belverus saw great prosperity and many enjoyable things were built or shipped into the capital. Although the short reign of Tarascus (after Nimed's untimely death) did nothing to help add to the well-being of the Nemedian city, it was not long enough to seriously hinder it either and Belverus remains one of the finer cities to visit in western Hyboria.

## NORDHEIM

The twin nations of Asgard and Vanaheim make up the single lordless kingdom of Nordheim. The two halves, although they undeniably hate one another, are extremely similar in culture and architecture. In the near-arctic conditions that their cultures have developed in, the need for survival and protection far outweighs the need for individuality or artistic expression. Because of this, communities in Nordheim tend to be bleak and designed solely for their tenacity and resistance to the cold.

Group homes and longhouses are very common; allowing a single fire hearth to keep most of the community warm at once. Temples to the Nordheim gods are not often much more than a simple shrine in the corner of a lodge or longhouse, with a predominance of furs and woollen pelts used everywhere to keep out the biting cold. The cold in Nordheim is a surer killer than any enemy's axe or spear and every precaution is taken to try and keep it at bay.

Cold-forged iron and steel is a necessity, as a heated forge would waste far too much fuel. The skills and strength required to

pound weaponry out of raw metals are rare, but many villages in Nordheim have at least one *sleggerektor*, or 'hammer master'. Bare stone painted with animal fats and layered with furs and wool is used in their constructions, with lumber supports and pitons holding their buildings upright when the winds and snows threaten to smash their cities to rubble. Nordheim is a dangerous and hazardous place that is not meant for large cities or communities; it would just be too difficult to survive with so many mouths to feed and bodies to warm when winter comes.

## Wolraven – Ymir's Gate

**City Classification:** Town

**Population Level:** Low

**Crime Rate:** Below Average

**Structures of Note:** Group Home/Longhouse, Church/Fane, Town Hall, Terrible Beast's Lair

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Bi-Cultural

This small border town is located in a snowy pass on the line between Asgard and Vanaheim. Roughly half of the town is Vanir, the other half Aesir. This would normally turn the town into a constant war zone but the legendary



appearance of Ymir the Father of Frost Giants enforces a form of unsteady truce within the stone fence of the town. Anyone drawing a weapon within the confines of the stacked stone boundaries of Wolraven is supposed to draw the frost giants out of their mountainous dens to destroy all within the town.

Based around an ancient stone church that leads into a deep ice cave, Wolraven was the sight where the fabled daughter of Ymir – a giant-blooded warrior woman named Atali – tried to have Conan killed. It was during this terrible moment that Ymir is said to have shown himself. Ever since, all those of Nordheim keep the peace of Wolraven.

## OPHIR

Although the many baronies of Ophir pay heed to different governing bodies, they all retain a standard style similar to most western cultures. Simple homes and buildings for the most part, Ophirean local tradition places a large amount of emphasis in a family's social level dictating where in a community they should live. Already a feudal social structure, Ophir's cities and towns are based on keeping the poor with the poor, the rich with the rich and the warriors on the walls.

A basic Ophirean village, of which there are many in the grassy plains of the nation, is likely to be made up of several homesteads and farming cottages. The closer the communities get to the feet of the Karpash Mountains the less they focus on agriculture and shepherding in exchange for added interest in mining gold ore from the mountains. There are entire villages built around a single mine, working it for the good of the lord or baron controlling their lands.

There is a high reliance on armed soldiers, most of which calling themselves King Amalrus' Royal Army (later becoming just 'The King's Army', when Conan kills Amalrus). Any community larger than a few hundred people will likely have a small garrison of Ophir's bronze-mailed warriors staying with them, ready to push back the constant power struggles of the lower lords and barons in the king's name.

### Ianthe – The Scarlet Capital

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Very High

**Crime Rate:** Major

**Structures of Note:** Vault, Metalsmith's Foundry, Auction House, Church/Fane, Army Compound, Royal Palace, True Alchemist/Herbalist

**City Traits:** Expanding, Fortified, Walled/Moated

Ianthe, located just a few miles away from the western edge of the Karpash Mountains, is the capital of Ophir; at least as much as the king can hope to claim. The royal palace is a veritable fortress located at the southern end of the enormous city, with its own crimson-stained walls separating it from the rest of the populace. Within the walls of the palace lies the king's royal army barracks as well as his personal chemists and scientists; trying to assault the Ophirean palace is at best a foolish endeavour – suicidal, more likely.

The city follows the normal traditions of social segregation in Ophir. There are blocks within the city that are brightly coloured, pleasant places to visit and spend coin; there are also slums that see the death of a dozen starving homeless every day. Unless a citizen is willing to get work with the mining guilds, the army, or another suitable service option, they are destined to be regulated away from the nicer areas of town. Even after the brutal deaths of their heavy-handed kings, the Ophirean nobles barely paused before their social games began anew.

## PICTISH WILDERNESS

The wild lands of the Picts are not what any common Hyborian soul would ever consider as having much in the way of communities or cities – they would be wrong. The Pictish tribes are primitive and scattered but they are no less familial and communal. They build their villages across the enormous stretch of the Pictlands, with some tribes having more individual villages than the civilised Hyborian kingdoms. These tribal villages, when combined with the outposts from Zingara and Aquilonia, number in the hundreds.

Although there is little to no architectural differences between the tribes' communities, each Pict tribe decorates their villages differently. The Eagle Tribe will no doubt weave feathers into anything they have claimed and try to attract natural eagles to nest in or around them. Sea-Falcon or Shark Tribe villages will be built on or near the coast, using shells and sand heavily in their adornments. The Wolf Tribe is known for its wolf-pelt door flaps and window coverings. Whatever the tribe and whatever the reasoning, a Pict village will be a simple affair that serves their lifestyle well.

There are also outsider cities built in the Pictlands. It is rare that resources and manpower last long too far away from the Westermarck but with the help of the rare friendly Pict tribe, a





handful of forts and outposts have been positioned in the forests. These are nothing if not built for their utility but they give shelter and protection to scouts and warriors alike. Only a few of these settlements have ever lasted long enough to be drawn upon a map; they are often targeted by anti-Hyborian tribal attacks within *weeks* of being built.

## **Korvela – Zingara’s Northern Bay**

**City Classification:** Town

**Population Level:** Average

**Crime Rate:** Below Average

**Structures of Note:** Barracks/Dormitory, Warehouse/Storehouse, Barter House, Town Hall

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Fortified

Created by Zingaran sailors who boated their way up the coast to a navigable bay that they chose to call Korvela, the fort town of the same name is officially the northernmost occupied territory the Zingarans can claim. The fort is a simple palisade fence of sharpened tree trunks set in the ground around several housing structures. The bay is still used to bring supplies back and forth to Korvela from Zingara but whenever the local Pict tribes get unruly and throw themselves against the soldiers of the fort; these supplies never quite seem like enough.

There is some trade with the more friendly local tribes that occurs in a free-standing structure built a few hundred paces from the edge of the wall. This open-air trading shelter was built to keep the Picts from feeling ‘shut in’ within the fort but also specifically within the practical range of the forts archers and crossbowmen.

## **Gwawela – Black River Worship**

**City Classification:** Village

**Population Level:** Low

**Crime Rate:** Minor

**Structures of Note:** Hut/Hovel/Shack, Simple Shrine/Altar, Witch/Druid/Shaman

**City Traits:** Fertile Ground, Secretive/Private

Where the mother of the notorious Pictish witch doctor Zogar Sag was said to have been raised, Gwawela is considered a holy place by many local Pict tribes due to Sag’s near-complete dominance over so many of the smaller tribes. It is a simple place steeped in legend; it is a magical village because of the number of Pict shamans that make pilgrimages here. Whether or not Gwawela has any real mystic properties aside from the people who come to call it home is unknown, because the Picts would fight bitterly to protect its sanctity. The worship of Jhebbal Sag is obviously strong here and human sacrifice is the only real punishment found for outsiders making trouble in the ‘sacred place’.

## **SHEM**

This enormous stretch of savannah, desert and meadowlands is home to a myriad of fractious tribes of peoples that are collectively all called Shemites. Each tribe is different in their own way but they all hail from the same root culture of nomadic warriors and traders. Most of the tribes still retain their nomadic ways, living in wagons and tents wherever they travel and claiming their resources from the lands around them – sometimes even without raiding the less fortunate.

There are Shemite cities however. Communities in Shem are formed when a tribe finds a large enough oasis, a



vein of rich soil or some other precious resource that they cannot hope to abandon. Over the generations some of these cities have become ruins, often due to the raids or attacks from rival tribes but some weather the hardships and growing pains to become important locations in central Hyboria.

Any Shemite city that has survived the years to become a permanent fixture to the nation will have become a stop on the long trade routes that cut across Shem. Caravans need as many civilised places to rest and re-equip as they can when travelling across the harsh terrain of Shem or Stygia, making each and every stop along the way remarkably important. This forces most Shemite cities to offer trade, housing, animal care and similar services in large quantities. Because of this, some cities focus on a specific reason for caravans to go out of their way to stop and trade with them. Kyros has its prized wine, Ghaza has its cheaper vintages and Akbitana has its steel.

#### **Shimalun – The Crossroads of Shem**

**City Classification:** Urban Sprawl

**Population Level:** Overcrowded

**Crime Rate:** Major

**Structures of Note:** Courtyard Square, Driver's Bench, Marketplace/Bazaar, Menagerie/Zoo

**City Traits:** Expanding, Controlled, Irrigated, Spread Too Thin

Considered one of the fastest growing of the Meadow Cities, Shimalun is arguably the most trade-centric city in the entire nation. Located on several known caravan routes leading to and from Koth, Khoraja, Stygia and Argos, this city sees a staggering amount of travellers each day. Traders from the far east of Khitai meet with Zingaran knife smiths, Aquilonian tailors can see and touch Vendhyan silks for the first time. An uncountable level of coin changes hands each day in Shimalun; the locals profiting from the presence of so many travellers.

The city is not the safest place when outside of the central bazaars, as it has grown far beyond the expectations of the local nobles, who now find that their soldiers cannot hope to protect everyone. They hire warriors and tribal sellswords from the neighbouring Shemite villages of Eruk and Shushan. When thousands of new faces come and go weekly through the open pathways that lead to and from the city however, there are only so many patrols that can be paid for.

## **STYGIA**

The theocratic kingdom of the worshippers of Set, Stygia was built on the foundation laid by

the ancient Old Stygian giants in the ages before this one. The decadence and social extremes that are present in the larger communities of Stygia rival anything that has existed in all of the Hyborian Age. Prostitution, drugs, sadism, slavery – all of these things are commonplace sights in Stygia.

Even though the kingdom revolves around their zealous faith in the dark god Set as much as its people mire themselves in hedonism and excess, smaller Stygian communities are not what some would think. Most villages and towns are simply satellite communities to the nearest metropolis, of which Stygia is host to the highest number. The need to be near temples and pleasurable company overwhelms most Stygian peoples, bringing them to wherever they can find these things. This forces rapid expansion and urban growth in most cities and the need for slave labour to sate this territorial hunger.

Stygia has been more or less closed to outsiders on an official level for generations, only allowing traders into their walled metropolises. The rulers – both royal and theological – of the kingdom felt that too many outsiders were polluting their sacred lands with their ignorant and sacrilegious beliefs, so they made it illegal to not be an unbidden Stygian within the likes of Khemi, Luxur, Kheshatta and the like. Sneaking in and around a Stygian city will quickly earn the attentions of khopesh-wielding soldiers and well-trained archers.

The architecture of Stygia varies from place to place but the presence of Set's pantheon is omnipresent in all things. Even the simplest of houses will likely at least bear a glyph or carving dedicated to the gods of Stygia. Sand-mud bricks and constructions are common in smaller towns, with cut stone blocks replacing them in larger cities. Only where there are ample slaves to move these huge blocks around will they be used for major constructions. Most city streets avoid cobblestones or unpacked earth due to the Stygian reliance on horse-drawn chariots but footpaths are commonly layered in smooth gravel or beaten sand to accommodate the number of bare or lightly sandaled feet.

There is only one other common feature to all permanent Stygian communities – religion. Even the smallest hamlet will contain a small shrine or altar to Stygia's gods. Stygians are a highly religious and devoted people that know their gods and gods' servants walk the world amongst them and to ignore them is to force divine (or infernal) attrition. Even if the community has no pious





men amongst them, they will pay some form of homage to Set's pantheon in some way.

## **Luxur – Home of the Palace**

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Overcrowded

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Public Bath, Slave Market, Brothel, Marketplace/Bazaar, Clerk's Office, Menagerie/Zoo, Arena, Great Fane, Royal Palace, Oracle/Soothsayer/Prophet, True Alchemist/Herbalist, Scholarly Library/Arcane Emporium, Mystic/Cursed Grove or Cavern

**City Traits:** Devoutly Religious, Secretive/Private, Irrigated, Fortified, Walled/Moated, Protected, Towering

Even though the majority of the power in Stygia actually resides in Khemi to the west, Luxur is the true capital of Stygia. This is where the royal palace and Ivory Throne lies, home to the kings of Set's kingdom. This is also where the powerful sorcerer Thoth-Amon keeps his personal sanctuary and the Great Pyramid of Set looms over the city itself, visible even over the hundred-foot tall black walls that surround the city.

Luxur is one of the biggest cities in all of Hyborea, sprawling out over nearly 150 acres of land between its southern walls and northern river access. Huge Stygian crocodiles lazily lounge around the river dock waters, occasionally making a meal out of a clumsy slave or punished criminal. The city guards keep trained baboons and hyenas to help them discover and punish unwanted outsiders and violence in the streets barely draws attention from passers by.

It is a massive city of stone buildings and unforgiving people, separated into several quarters and districts that best serve the populace in their area. Poor areas breed more slaves and forced labour than anywhere else, noble sections are home to downright hedonistic ways and practices. The priests of Set are everywhere, an omnipresent force of the dark god's eyes and ears – all reporting to the masters of the Black Circle. There may be other powerful cities in Stygia but Luxur is the golden mask that the nation wears to conceal its corruption and vileness.



## **Seyan – Twin River Gardens**

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Overcrowded

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Warehouse/Storehouse, Garden/Park, Paper Mill, Public Bath, Promenade, Farmer/Shepherd, Greater Altar/Shrine, Sanctified Cemetery/Catacomb, Royal Seat

**City Traits:** Fertile Ground, Devoutly Religious, Expanding, Secretive/Private, Controlled, Irrigated

A large and powerful city located where the River Styx meets up with the Helu, Seyan is a fertile place that is as much an asset of resource production to the kingdom as it is a trading river port. The banks of the two rivers flood annually, surrounding the city with rich and fertile silt that makes for excellent farming. Grains, flax and papyrus are produced in enormous amounts, making Seyan a rather rich and industrious city.

As it is typical in most Stygian populations, the city is decadent and rather debased in its culture. Pleasure barges host both private and public orgies that are said to last for days just off the banks of Seyan. Prostitution is commonplace and several of the city's numerous gardens are designed with private alcoves and bathing fountains. Shemite wine from Kyros is boated in frequently and many noble estates are built on the backs of expensive Black Kingdoms slaves.



There is a large poor population clustered together in the southern end of the city but the promise of a slaver's whip or soldier's blade keep them from venturing too near to the pleasurable areas of the city – keeping them forever confined in their arduous existences.

## TURAN

The Turanian Empire, nestled against the western shore of the Vilayet Sea, has been a longstanding civilisation for a long time throughout the Hyborian Age. Building up their cities on the backs of Shemitish and Hyrkanean slaves, their architecture is a mixture of the two styles. Using silken sheets and awnings, the Turanians help make their communities comfortable as well as physically attractive.

There is a very strong sense of brotherhood and solidarity in most Turanian communities; at least, that is, amongst the Turanian populations. The poorest civilians and slaves are far less likely to care about the mighty Empire and unrest in the impoverished sections of cities is quite common.

Turanian cities are built from wood and brick, with more expensive or important buildings cut from stone and etched, polished or enamelled. The nation's wealth is legendary and they flaunt its use as often as they can in their public buildings. They enjoy the use of attractive and alternate materials in their constructions; things like Kusani blue clay bricks, mother-of-pearl and the liberal use of silver and gold. If something needs to truly stand out over the rest of its surroundings, a tall spire is built on top of it – and copper plating added to its top in order to glitter and shine in the sun.

The many rural villages and trade route towns that can be found away from the wealth of the Empire, traditional wood frames and clay bricking is used almost solely. Few Turanian peasants have the resources or the skills required to use more sophisticated or expensive materials, so most of their homes and public buildings are unadorned and look much like any eastern Shemitish construction.

### Vezek – The Empire Gets Its Due

**City Classification:** City

**Population Level:** Average

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Vault, Accounting Guild, Marketplace/Bazaar, Magistrate's Office/Lord's Manor

**City Traits:** Controlled, Fortified

This Turanian fort started out as nothing more than a few tax collectors living on the road from Shem to the Far East. When caravans, traders and travellers began using the road almost exclusively to avoid raids by the Kozaks, the tax collectors became some of the most powerful individuals for several miles around. The fort grew into a city on the coin and barter taking place in Vezek's sizeable central bazaar. In just a few decades the fort became a major economic force in the Turanian Empire, and everyone who comes through Turan on this road is sure to throw at least a few silvers into the Imperial coffers as they pass.

## VENDHYA

An ancient nation even by Hyborian standards, Vendyha is a secluded and powerful place that has seen its fair share of internal changes in politics, religion and culture over the generations. They have become a wealthy nation that controls a massive amount of fertile fields and grazing lands, ivory from hot plains elephants and several active gemstone mines throughout the northern mountains. Through this surmounting wealth and power the Vendyhans have created an interesting set of trends in their cities and structures.

A people that traditionally enjoy their privacy, single-family homes are common in Vendhya. They keep private rooms for waste removal that feed into subterranean sewer systems that are remarkably advanced for this age, although it pollutes their local rivers and lakes somewhat. Their temples are enormous stone structures that make those within feel terribly small – a trick of architecture to better reinforce religious superiority.

Even though they keep exquisite art and religious features, holding the state of their culture far higher than they do any other part of their society, they seem somewhat lax in their dealings with one another and outsiders. They believe strongly in a caste system that makes it forbidden to look upon those too high of standing in comparison to the onlooker, footwear of any kind is forbidden in Vendhyan religious places, and to touch someone's flesh unbidden is akin to spiritual rape. They are a strange and interesting people, which makes their communities just as strange and interesting.

### Ayodhya – Throne of Wonders

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Very High

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Warehouse/Storehouse, Public Bath,





Gemcutter's Workshop, Scribe's Library, Artiste Museum, Great Fane, Stockade/Dungeon, Royal Palace, Teacher of the Unknown

**City Traits:** Fertile Ground, Secretive/Private, Irrigated, Fortified, Towering

The mysterious and powerful capital of Vendhya, Ayodhya is nestled against the southern bank of the Jhumda River to allow its raging mountain waters to protect it from the north. The city is thick with Vendyhan traditions, especially surrounding the enormous granite temple to Asura, where it is illegal to look the massive stone statue of the goddess in her opal eyes – under penalty of blinding by fakir priest/guards nearby.

Other than the shining mahogany palace where the rulers of Vendhya keep their royal seat, the Tower of Kites

looms above the constant crowds in the streets of the city. Enemies of the throne are placed in the Tower for months or even years at a time, eventually being called upon by royal edict to be executed. The condemned have their heads and hands removed by way of a very sharp sword called a *kuchrai*. The body is thrown into the river to feed the earth, the hands are thrown to the crowds to undo any evils the criminal might have done to Vendhya and the head is cleaned to a skull and left to bleach in Asura's eternal light. Such a spectacle will draw people from all over the city to the base of the Tower; it is a grisly reminder that the 'enlightenment' of the Vendhyans is not without its barbaric practices.

Only 20 percent of Ayodhya's population are Kshatriya warrior-nobles, living in luxurious and comfortable homes throughout the wealthy quarters of the city. The rest are the unwashed peasantry of the lower castes, doing everything they can to make enough money to survive while keeping true to Asura's teachings so when they die they might be reborn at a higher caste level.

## ZAMORA

The mountainous region of Zamora has a reputation of being home to dark people, darker desires and even *darker* forces that rule beyond the veil of reality. Tales of Zamorian thieves, demons and the spawn of both have reached ears far and wide and few who come to the notorious nation can argue against such rumours. The king of Zamora – whoever it happens to be between domestic assassinations – brings his own beliefs and opinions into the overall culture of the nation. To go against the will and belief of the king invites a fate worse than death, if one gets caught.

The communities of Zamora tend to be large and powerful due to the need for protection against *other* Zamorian inhabitants. Brutish man-apes live in secluded cave villages in the mountains, raiders and thieves are as common as caravans on the roads and demons live in the wilderness. It is Zamorian tradition to rely on your wits and a sharp blade to get through most obstacles in their way, which often includes petty politics and other community-related problems.

It is the constant distrust and worry that turns nearly all Zamorian cities into dens of thieves, muggers and worshippers of dark forces. It is important for every Zamorian to take what power and influence he can and hold on to it with a white knuckled grip, which leads to the general amorality of the area. Although they are striking and gorgeous from afar, all glittering and sparkling with



luxury, Zamorian cities are dirty, confusing and filled with dangerous dead-ends and foreboding darkness.

### **Shadizar – City of Wickedness**

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Overcrowded

**Crime Rate:** Hierarchal

**Structures of Note:** Pub/Tavern/Drinking Hall, Slave Market, Brothel, Auction House, Dance Hall/Ballroom, Gambling Den/Casino, Church/Fane, Arbiter Court, Demonic Foci

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Impoverished, Walled/Moated, Filthy, Towering

The single most feared and notorious city in the Hyborian Age, Shadizar is the embodiment of Zamorian darkness – and all it brings with it. Thieves, murderers, slavers and worshippers of dark gods all call the City of Wickedness their home. It is a sprawling, confusing web of stacked buildings that is choked by refuse in the streets and threatening shadows around every corner. Only the bravest souls come to visit Shadizar, especially if they feel they have anything they might lose.

Slaving and prostitution is big business in the city and women frequently sell their bodies for a mere pittance in the marketplaces and streets. The law of the city is upheld by a sharp blade and a wary eye and bodies turn up in gutters and storehouses daily. Just because the city is located on the Road of Kings does not mean that it is anything but what its name implies – a wicked nest of vileness and dishonour.

Shadizar is much like the web of the spider god that the Zamorians worship; it attracts travellers on the road with its glittering alabaster towers, mysterious sounds and unique odours. Once past the walls of the City of Wickedness however, the spider's web has the traveller held fast. It is only a matter of time before Shadizar sucks the life from them, leaving them a dried husk floating through the streets and alleys.

## **ZINGARA**

The rival nation to Argos, Zingara is in possession of one of the most powerful naval forces in Hyboria – due to its relationship with pirates and privateers called Freebooters. They are constantly suffering from power squabbles and civil wars on the mainland, frequently over petty matters and land disputes. Their communities are steadfast and resilient, always wanting to survive through the next conflict no matter who might be their new governing power. When it is all said

and done, the Zingaran spirit is one of survival and overcoming adversity, even if it means playing a little dirty from time to time.

General lawlessness erupts on occasion due to the political unrest and governmental changes that wash over the kingdom periodically. This places a high importance on Zingaran cities protecting themselves when they have to, especially the closer they lie to the Aquilonian or Argossean borders. Enemy barons and would-be conquerors are always trying to push further into Zingara; a stout wall or palisade might be the only thing between freedom and servitude.

Zingaran homes and buildings are simple yet elegant in their design. Smaller cities are based around the trade and services they can provide to their neighbours, relying on what they can barter for from the larger cities and naval ports. Larger cities are almost always positioned on a port or river access, bringing all sorts of foreign goods and people to the area. Between their domestic squabbles, civil wars and constant authoritarian disagreements, the Zingaran answer to most problems is a steady sabre. This light but militaristic mentality shines through in their cities in many subtle ways, not the least of which is their swordsmanship schools.

### **Kordava – The Unbroken Shore**

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Very High

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Armoury/Depot/Cache, Amphitheatre/Podium, Shipwright's Dock, Specialty Shop, Clerk's Office, Stockade/Dungeon, Army Compound, Royal Palace, Teacher of the Unknown

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Irrigated, Fortified, Walled/Moated, Towering

The capital of Zingara, Kordava is located on the sheer banks of the Black River just as it feeds into the Western Sea. Ringed on all sides by high walls built up on reinforced shores, the city looks as though it looks down over the whole kingdom. Its lighthouse can be seen for miles, burning its fires to call Zingaran ships to port. There are thousands of citizen soldiers, Shemitish mercenaries and pikemen from Gunderland that help make the city safe within its 'impassable wall' but the real power of the city comes not from its military.

The real strength of Kordava is in the swordsmanship school of duelling Master Valerio. Any





Zingaran of noble birth (or anyone with enough coin to overlook such paperwork) can come and learn how to fight with the dagger and sabre style of the ancient Zingaran peoples. It is said that a true master, such as Valerio himself, cannot be killed so long as he has a blade in his hand. Such a claim is likely preposterous but it draws hundreds of would-be students to his school every season nonetheless.

The city is not unlike any other naval metropolis, except that it sees piracy against its enemies as a weapon to wield, just as most of Zingara feels that a thieving friend is a great boon instead of a worry. So long as the pirate knows what ships to attack and the thief knows which houses to burgle, a Zingaran has no qualms about making alliances with them. In Kordava the docks are filled with unsavoury types; most of which carry letters of charter from the Zingaran Freebooters union.

## OTHER NATIONS, TERRITORIES AND KINGDOMS

In this chapter we have covered the largest and most powerful of nations and cultures throughout the Hyborian Age, giving some insight as to what their communities might be like. There are literally dozens more tucked away in the stories, scenarios and tales of Conan's world. We could not hope to cover every instance of every corner of Hyboria in a single book, especially not in a single *chapter*.

So, for any places that we may have missed in this chapter, we apologise and encourage our Games Masters and readers out there to venture forth and put together their own ideas. The Hyborian Age is a wonderful place filled with splendour and adventure; we know that its readers can use the information in this book to add to it in their own ways, making it their own world as much as it ours.



# Hadraput - Wind City of Turan

In the wilds of the Turanian desert, just west of the Vilayet Sea, there exist the roving Kozaks – raiders and bandits – who call themselves Free Men in the face of the Turanian Empire. They represent a powerful force in the chaotic wastes of the Hyborian Age. The Kozaks have a secret place, a hidden city of tents and underground caves, called Hadraput.

## HADRAPUT

'You seem to have ridden down the path less-travelled, friend. Although you may never tell anyone what you have found here and keep your tongue, we hope that you will enjoy your stay and trade your wares with us nonetheless.'

**City Classification:** Town

**Population Level:** Average

**Crime Rate:** Below Average

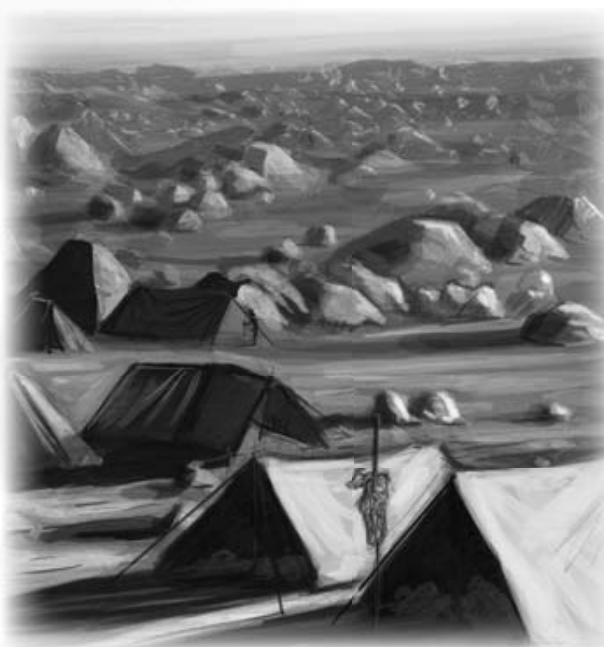
**Structures of Note:** Armoury/Depot/Cache, Weaponsmith's Forge, Stables, Simple Shrine/Altar, Town Hall

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Secretive/Private

## HISTORY

In the early days of the Turanian Empire, when the ancient Kings of Turan were little more than iron-fisted tyrants, freedom fighters and profiteers from all over the continent came to battle and take spoils. The myriad faces and cultures that came together at once under a similar ideology turned rapidly into a single cohesive force. This force, under the leadership of the strongest and most cunning amongst them, became feared and known throughout the western world.

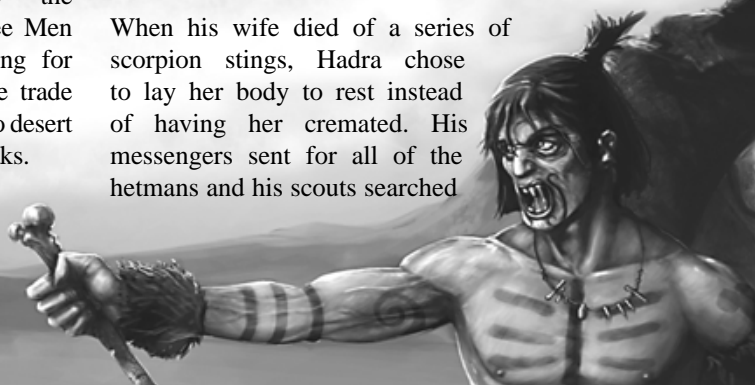
So infamous and relentless did these raiders become that their targets and their neighbours came up with an interesting term for the collective raiding force – the Kozaks. The Kozaks, calling themselves the Free Men of Turan, continued their attacks and pillaging for generations. They became the nightmares of the trade routes and small villages sacrificed small animals to desert gods in order to try and avoid the gaze of the Kozaks.



At the peak of the Kozak's power in Turan, when they had dozens of powerful *hetmans* (leaders by way of the sword) at the head of several groups of nomadic raiders, there rose a single individual that chose to lead them. A nation of nomads under this masterful swordsman and horseman, Hadra Sulan was considered by the Kozaks as the 'hetman of all hetmans'. Hadra took command of the Kozaks with only a few shows of bloody force and they followed his command.

During his tenure as master of the hetmans Hadra created an unheard of camaraderie that made the Kozaks more fierce and efficient than they had ever been before. It was not until the untimely death of his third wife (he remained married to the first two and his fourth but the third was special to him) did he truly do something *remarkable* with his 'people'.

When his wife died of a series of scorpion stings, Hadra chose to lay her body to rest instead of having her cremated. His messengers sent for all of the hetmans and his scouts searched







far and wide for the perfect place to inter her remains. They found a series of natural shale-caverns in the endless wastes of the desert, to which Hadra asked all of the Kozaks to come and pay their respects. In the months of celebrations, trading, boasting and contests that followed, an entire city of semi-permanent tent and canvas buildings were erected around the mouths of the caverns. The Kozaks chose to call this city Hadraput, meaning 'the bed of Hadra', to which the master of all Kozaks resides and orchestrates his loyal hetmans.

Since then Hadra has allowed his hetmans to bury their loved ones in the caverns as well and he himself has buried two sons and one more wife since the city's creation. One day he will be laid amongst his families – his blood and his brothers in arms.

## LAYOUT

Nicknamed 'the Wind City of Turan' because of its flapping canvas and silk buildings, which are in a constant state of blowing, Hadraput is considered a myth and a local legend – except for those remarkable individuals who have been there. For the few non-Kozaks who have found or been brought to Hadraput, it is a fabled centre of ill-gotten gains, interred raiders and potential fulfilled dreams. Located somewhere between one and three days ride west from the coast of the Vilayet, the city is built in two concentric circles of tent buildings and wooden frames built around the mouths of the spiralling caverns.

Hadraput is not a city in the traditional sense of the word, it is much more like a massive camp or tent-city in the middle of the desert. Several coal-forges burn in waxed-topped pavilion tents shape stolen metal into swords, shields and spears. Shrines to the various gods of the peoples making up the Kozaks are arranged all over Hadraput, including a sizeable onyx serpent statuette to Set, a carved stone of Asura and a dozen other minor idols to Shemitish household gods.

At the centre of the mix of housing tents and supply services there are three larger structures that form a three-sided complex around the main carved entrance into the burial tunnels under the city.

One tent, the only one that receives constant security from loyal Kozak soldiers, is the depository for communal loot brought in by the Free Men. The next structure is the planning area

for the hetman council, where all decisions are discussed and ratified in front of the collected leaders currently in Hadraput. The last structure, a yellow and blue silken tent with several layers and internal rooms, is Hadra Sulan's own home – where he and his remaining two wives raise their nine sons and six daughters to be the next leaders and wives of the Free Men.

The flapping and blowing tents of Hadraput are an interesting facet of the city but those who look closer will find another strange piece of the whole – the caverns beneath it. A spiralling network of shale-walled caverns that extend thousands of paces in every direction from the original opening where Hadra buried his wife, the tunnels have become home to over 100 important Kozaks. There is said to be desert ghouls living in the depths of the Hadraput catacombs but with how martial the people of the city tend to be this is rarely seen of as a true problem. If a ghoul would rise from the depths, it would be met by a hundred shining blades and spear points.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

The vast majority of the people in Hadraput are members of the Kozak raiding families. These 'Free Men' treat the resources of the city as their own, protecting each tent and pavilion as if their lives depended on it. The Kozaks pride themselves on their freedom and ability to survive against the odds, which they personify in their city's secrecy and protection.

The average soul in Hadraput is a skilled horseman and warrior, living from within their simple tents and dug out shelters. Unless assigned to a specific hetman for a mission against the traders and Imperial agents of Turan, the people in the city focus upon the upkeep of the community and all of its assets. Life in the desert is hard but the Kozaks due what they can to make it better however they can.

Women and young adults are busy throughout much of the day performing the service-related tasks of the city; tanning new leather for armour, keeping and edge to the soldier's weaponry, preparing food for local meals and travelling rations. They are not excluded from more militant jobs because of their age or gender but it is typical for the adult males to *want* to do those duties themselves.

Elder men spend most of their days filling Hadraput's stores with whatever weapons, equipment and armour they can build in their forges or claim in their raids.



Having to make their lives using these items, the warriors and soldiers of the Kozaks try to spend as much time with them as possible. When they are not on active patrols of the area or raids into Turanian settlements, Kozak warriors are likely behind a forge or sharpening stone.

The hetmans of the city are not given any special privileges in Hadrabut but they do have unequalled access to the city's restricted buildings and the catacomb caverns. Without the permission (coming in the form of a bronze ring worn on the thumb or forefinger) of a hetman, there are several places within Hadrabut that a common citizen cannot go – in an effort to avoid any visiting outsiders from going where they are not wanted.

Visitors, however rare they might be, to Hadrabut are allowed to stay in one of a half-dozen open-air awnings that contain several raised bed areas and communal cushions. The Kozaks do not charge outsiders for the use of these sleeping areas at all; preferring to ensure the ability to keep an eye on potential enemies or troublemakers over the ability to make some coin from them.

There are a few hundred people living in Hadrabut at any given time, with their exact population revolving constantly as the hetmans take their warriors out on raids that could take them as far away as Iranistan, Shem or the Zamorian mountains.

## PLACES OF NOTE

There are several specific locations in Hadrabut that Player Characters might find interesting or useful to note.

### HADRAS HOME

The largest 10 constructions in Hadrabut, Hadra Sulan's home are a multi-layered complex of silk and canvas that is designed along the same sorts as a common one-story building. It has several distinct rooms, furniture and doorways throughout the large flowing structure. Hadra, his two wives and five of his children all live in the indigo and yellow building, enjoying the privacy and seclusion of his silk and canvas palace.

Hadra himself is an older Turanian man, nearing his sixties but he is an accomplished and skilled swordsman that has defended his home and station dozens of times. If it is not a power hungry subordinate, it is an Imperial assassin looking to lay low the structure of the Kozaks. There is nothing that he prizes more than his family and his home is designed to help him protect them.

### DIVISION STOREHOUSE

There is a large building with stiff canvas walls wrapped around iron shod poles, bronze chains binding and protecting the external walls to give them weight and security. The division storehouse is where all of the Kozaks who come to Hadrabut deposit their loot and collected treasure, brought to the hetman in charge of the storehouse at the time. He then brings the loot to a team of sorters, which are often women or infirm warriors, who divide the loot into separate categories by their type and usefulness.

The categories are then placed in their own rooms within the building, creating stashes of like items that resemble a museum of stolen or locally manufactured items when being perused by the Kozaks. When something is needed from within the storehouse, the managing hetman is given a list by the requesting hetman; the list is gathered together and written in an equipment log. The log is used to gauge what the hetman is expected to bring back after his journey or raid.

### MEETING PAVILION

A tall and wide tented area with one wall behind a raised dais, the meeting pavilion is where the council of hetmans bring their people together to discuss the future of the Kozaks to the men sitting or standing in the soft sand of the pavilion. Hadra and his chosen leaders stand upon the dais and sometimes have to shout to be heard over the whipping of the wind or the general rumbling of the assembled Kozaks. When the need to be heard is paramount, Hadra has been known to bring out a brass gong from Khitai – banging against it until his men quiet enough to continue business.

### BRONZESMITHS FURNACE

Although steel is far more prized by the Kozak warriors, Hadrabut keeps their numbers armed and armoured with more affordable bronze. Dug from the sand and hardened with sun-dried mud, the bronzesmith's furnace is a high-ceilinged structure that is actually several feet below the surface of the ground. Practiced smiths spend long hours at the bellows to create blazing hot coal and manure fires to heat copper-lined furnaces.

Every day the furnaces of Hadrabut turn dozens of pounds of bronze to be poured into sawdust and lead moulds to create the base shapes and sizes for weapons, armour and pieces of equipment.





The smiths pound and shape the base bronze into their desired shape, creating the goods and items the city will put to good use.

## KOZAKI STABLE

The Hadraput stables are not like any other, consisting of a series of driven wooden poles into the sand and set in heavy lead weights. The horses of the Kozaks are tied to the posts and watered in a circular trough at the posts' base and fed using harnessed bags. There are often a handful of young men and women that work as daytime stable hands, each one working to manage and groom a post's worth of horses.

## ARMOURY HOLLOW

The weapon armoury of the Kozaks is one of the only buildings in Hadraput that is not built from fabric. In fact, it is not a tent at all – it is a section of the underground caverns that has been separated from the rest. There were several minor cave-ins after a series of bad tremors just after the city's founding; one of these created the solitary and shallow hollow that would become the Hadraput armoury.

A set of bronze gates were constructed to protect the collection of arms and

armour and patrolling Kozaks constantly visit its location as part of their duties. The gate is secured into the stone surrounding the cavern entrance, and locked with two master crafted turnkey systems. The keys for the locks are few, carried only by Hadra himself and three of his most trusted hetmans. The armoury contains dozens of barrels of spears, swords, axes and a vast collection of bows and ammunition.

## IDOL OF SET

A recent attraction in the past decade, a single ebony idol of a coiled snake – the image of the worship of Set- has become more and more popular amongst the Kozaks. Most find it very odd that the Free Men of Turan would accept, let alone worship, the slaving god of Stygia's darkness. It is an oddity however, that is likely due to the influx of formerly Stygian slaves to the community.

The idol is where many of the Stygian Kozaks and any converts they have swayed to their faith perform their prayers and leave their tithes to the serpent god. Animal remains, blood-soaked cloth torn from a dead enemy's clothing, and the occasional coin or gemstone is left in the shallow basin of the idol's body as offerings. Even in this city of raiders and brutal warriors these offerings are safe; no Kozak would dare risk the wrath of such a notorious god by stealing from his idol; not to mention the inherent danger in angering his followers.

## KAZAKI TOMB ACCESS

Although there are several small openings, often concealed by a three-sided tent that flaps in the front, the main access down into Hadra's original idea for a Kozaki tomb is located at the very centre of the city. Watched in shifts by loyal guards or warriors, the tomb is not open to anyone but mourners and family members of the interred.

Grave robbers would love to get down into the crypts and tunnel recesses to get at the jewellery and ceremonial items left with the dead. Hadra has placed a bronze placard above the entrance of the tomb as a warning to anyone foolish enough to try. Upon it reads *'The dead have earned their rest, let them slumber on pain of joining their Masses.'* Only a few ignorant souls have ever tested this warning and when they were caught they indeed joined the dead – but not until long hours of brutal torture at the hands of the most-skilled Kozaki paingivers.



## THE CAVERNS

Under the city of Hadraput lies several hundred metres of twisting tunnels of natural caverns and caves. Lined in limestone and shale, these tunnels are smooth and easily navigable, only a few metres below the sandy surface of the desert. The tunnels were likely originally formed through centuries of run-off from the infrequent rains or perhaps due to the digging actions of local animals. Whatever their origins may be, they serve as a good shelter for the Kozaks when sandstorms blow through the area, or for whenever an unlikely attack from their enemies might come.

In the caverns there are many hollows and recesses that the Kozaks use to store goods, get out of the heat or just find a little privacy. They are not alone down in the dark however; there are still tunnels in the cavern network that are uncharted and considered to be quite dangerous. There are *things* that live in those tunnels and even the Kozaks avoid those areas if they can help it.



## THE WIND WALLS

In an effort to cut down on blown over tents, cracked poles and the stinging sands of the whipping winds, the Kozaks build 'wind walls' around the city. Two poles dug deep into the ground with a sheet of waxed canvas hung between them, the wind walls are two men tall and are used to direct air currents and stiff winds around the outside and streets of Hadraput. The wind walls of Hadraput are an ingenious and useful addition to the city's layout, making sure that the desert winds do not constantly blow over the tent buildings or bother the city's inhabitants.

## PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following are important individuals found in the city of Hadraput. Each entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with them and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

### HADRA SULAN, HETMAN OF ALL HETMANS

The leader of the Kozaks and the creator of the Wind City of Turan, Hadra Sulan was raised in a warrior culture. He was taught to trust his instincts and the edge of his sword and it helped shape the future of the Free Men for generations to come.

**Medium Humanoid (Turanian Nomad 13 / Thief 2)**

**Initiative:** +19 (+4 Dex, +11 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Sensory Traits:** Low-light Vision, Listen +10, Spot +12

**Languages:** Aquilonian, Turanian (Literate), Kothic, Shemitish, Stygian, Hyrkanian, Zingaran

**Dodge Defence:** 21 (+4 Dex, +7 class)

**Parry Defence:** 20 (+3 Str, +7 class)

**DR:** 5 (+5 Light Mail Shirt)

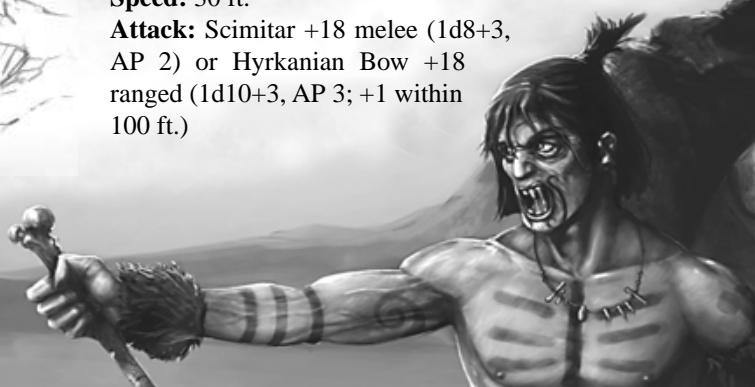
**Hit Points:** 99 hp

**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +15, Will +8 (+6 against Hypnotism)

**Defensive Specials:** Improved Mobility, Trap Disarming

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Scimitar +18 melee (1d8+3, AP 2) or Hyrkanian Bow +18 ranged (1d10+3, AP 3; +1 within 100 ft.)







**Full Attack:** Scimitar +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+3, AP 2) or Hyrkanian Bow +18/+13/+8 ranged (1d10+3, AP 3; +1 within 100 ft.)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +14/+9/+4

**Grapple:** +17

**Special Attacks:** +1 to hit with any Bow (+2 at six or higher range increments), Nomad Charge +2, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Ride-By Attack, Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Sneak Attack Style (Scimitar), Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Familiarity (tulwar and Hyrkanian bow), Weapon Focus (Scimitar)

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 17, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14

**Special Qualities:** Born to the Saddle II, Favoured Terrain (steppes) +1, Favoured Terrain (desert) +4

**Feats:** Diehard, Endurance, Far Shot, Improved Critical (scimitar), Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Poison Use, Track

**Skills:** Bluff +12, Climb +8, Craft (bowyer) +8, Disguise +10, Gather Information +12, Handle Animal +12, Hide +12, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (local) +12, Ride +19, Search +10, Survival +16

**Code of Honour:** Barbaric

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 18 (+3)

**Possessions:** Light Mail Shirt, Ivory-hilted Scimitar, Hyrkanian Bow (+3) with 12 Arrows, Turanian Galloper (light warhorse)

Hadra was raised in a nomadic Turanian tribe that was forced to roam around the desert to avoid getting caught by the growing Turanian Empire. He saw so many of his relatives and fellow tribals die on the spears and arrows of the nation's soldiers that he learned quickly the fragility of human life. He also learned how to hate the crown of Turan.

When he was old enough to swing a blade, Hadra stood his ground against anyone who would dare stand against his tribe. He knew the satisfaction of the kill and the pain of being wounded before his twelfth birthday.

The term 'Kozak' was not one that he would ever used to describe himself but when he noticed that others were calling him by the term, he took pride in it. By his twentieth year, he was glad to call himself a hetman.

Hadra lead countless raids on Turanian villages and caravans, slaughtering

his enemies without mercy or remorse. It was no surprise to anyone who had ever seen Hadra in action when he was elevated by his fellow hetmans to become their leader. He made more significant changes to the structure of the Kozaks than any other man or woman and the Free Men are happy to pay allegiance to him.

Hadra is a lean and muscular man with dark tan skin and long, braided black hair. Although he is greying slightly at the temples and in his pointed beard, he is still in amazing physical shape and is capable of besting warriors much younger than he is. He has several colourful tattoos scattered across his body, most of which he has received from his travels across Hyboria. The largest and most impressive is a Khitan dragon wrapped around his right shoulder, which is said to glow with sorcerous ink when he wields his blade.

## Combat

Hadra is a deadly efficient swordsman and archer, wielding a flashing scimitar or Hyrkanian bow with equal ease, killing his foes without pause or mercy. In his line of livelihood he wields his weapons with a cold precision that leaves his foes in ruin. He rarely has to come to arms because of his loyal Kozaks but is never afraid of doing so when called to it. Those who have seen Hadra in battle have called him a dervish, his determination and desire cutting a swathe in his enemies.



**Plot Hooks**

- ❖ One of the Player Characters is a close family member to one of the Kozaks; a personal friend of Hadra and his family. This Kozak has recently passed away and Hadra desires to place the remains in the cavern tombs but needs to give the man a proper burial. For that he needs the Player Character to come to Hadraput, sending a team of his Kozaks to *fetch* them personally.
- ❖ One of Hadra's children has run away into the desert after they had a particularly nasty argument and he wants to go and save him before his enemies in the Empire does. He cannot send his Kozaks in large numbers without drawing attention to his son's presence; he instead enlists the Player Characters to find his boy. If they do so, having Hadra as their ally and friend is a great and wonderful boon.

## SADDIL, BRONZESMITH AND SETS VOICE TO THE KOZAKS

The master of the forge and foundry in Hadraput, Saddil came to the city nearly a decade ago, bringing with him a mastery of bronzesmithing and the religion of Set to the Kozaks. Through his charismatic words and dealings, the Stygian god has made a powerful presence in the Wind City of Turan.

**Medium Humanoid (Stygian Soldier 7 / Scholar 1)****Initiative:** +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflexes)**Sensory Traits:** Listen +8, Spot +8**Languages:** Aquilonian, Turanian, Hyrkanian, Stygian (Literate)**Dodge Defence:** 14 (+1 Dex, +3 class)**Parry Defence:** 18 (+2 Str, +5 class, +1 Parry)**DR:** 7 (+7 Scale Shirt)**Hit Points:** 47 hp**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +9 (+6 against Corruption)**Defensive Specials:** Spells**Speed:** 25 ft.**Attack:** Scimitar +9 melee (1d8+1, AP 2)**Full Attack:** Scimitar +9/+4 melee (1d8+1, AP 2)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)**Base Attack:** +7/+2**Grapple:** +9**Special Attacks:** +1 to hit with Stygian Bow, Cleave, Formation Combat (Heavy Cavalry, Heavy Infantry), Power Attack, Spells**Sorcery Knowledge:** Summonings; 6 Power Points**Magic Attack Bonus:** +4 (+1 class, +3 Charisma)**Spells Known:** *Demonic Pact, Master, Help Me! (Defensive Blast)***Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 17**Special Qualities:** Background (Acolyte), Knowledge is Power, Officer (1), Scholar**Feats:** Combat Expertise, Leadership, Ritual Sacrifice, Weapon Focus (scimitar)**Skills:** Climb +8, Concentration +7, Craft (bronzesmith) +10, Decipher Script +6, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perform (ritual) +6, Profession (smith) +10, Ride +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +6**Code of Honour:** Civilised**Reputation and Social Standing:** 13 (+2)**Corruption and Insanity:** 1; None**Possessions:** Turanian Scale Shirt, Bronze Scimitar, Dagger, Bronzeworking tools

Coming to join the Kozaks on account of a demonic omen he saw in the fields outside of Pteion, Saddil journeyed into the desert with only his tools and his faith. His connection to the dark lords of the Great Beyond steered him through the deadly wastes, bringing him unerringly to the city of Hadraput. Once there, it was only a matter of a few shows of his bronzesmithing and his skill with a blade and he was officially a Kozak.

Saddil grew to become very important to the Kozaks and many of his creations filled the scabbards of his warriors and soldiers. Over the course of a year he carved and enamelled the idol of Set to serve as his shrine to his faith. As his piety rubbed off on his fellows – who are commonly looking for something to believe in the face of their harsh existences – and soon he was leading masses 20 to 30 patrons strong. His sorcerous gifts are not widely known amongst his friends but a select few actually help him talk to what he calls ‘the Shadows of Set’.

**Combat**

Having spent several years as an infantryman and charioteer in the Stygian army, Saddil is a skilled and worthy swordsman. He does not often go on Kozak raids but he is a prized asset when he can.

There are few things he likes more than slashing at those who stand in the way of Set's design but he knows better than to volunteer for too many missions – his place is behind an anvil, not a shield.





Turan, there are nearly 200 of these vicious and well-skilled horsemen living in Hadraput.

## Medium Humanoid (Turanian Nomad 3 / Thief 2)

**Initiative:** +9 (+3 Dex, +6 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Low-light Vision, Listen +6, Spot +6

**Languages:** Aquilonian, Turanian, Shemitish, Stygian

**Dodge Defence:** 15 (+3 Dex, +2 class)

**Parry Defence:** 15 (+3 Str, +2 class)

**DR:** 3 (+3 Quilted Jerkin)

**Hit Points:** 34 hp

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +5 (+3 against Hypnotism)

**Defensive Specials:** Trap Disarming

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Scimitar +8 melee (1d8+3, AP 2) or Hyrkanian Bow +8 ranged (1d10+3, AP 3; +1 within 100 ft.)

**Full Attack:** Scimitar +8 melee (1d8+3, AP 2) or Hyrkanian Bow +8 ranged (1d10+3, AP 3; +1 within 100 ft.)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +4

**Grapple:** +7

**Special Attacks:** +1 to hit with any Bow (+2 at six or higher range increments), Point Blank Shot, Ride-By Attack, Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Sneak Attack Style (Scimitar), Weapon Familiarity (tulwar and Hyrkanian bow), Weapon Focus (Scimitar)

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Special Qualities:** Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain (desert) +1

**Feats:** Endurance, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Poison Use, Track

**Skills:** Disguise +5, Handle Animal +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Ride +10, Search +4, Survival +8

**Code of Honour:** Barbaric

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 5 (–2)

**Possessions:** Quilted Jerkin, Bronze Scimitar, Hyrkanian Bow (+3) with 6 Arrows, Turanian Galloper (light warhorse)

## Plot Hooks

- ✦ Saddil has recently forged a bad batch of bronze ingots filled with imperfections and weaknesses due to bad materials. Not wanting to disappoint Hadra or his fellows, he has sent word to a Shemite city for more supplies – paying with his own funds – to be brought to him. When the supply merchant asks the Player Characters to bring the goods to Hadraput, they might not know what they are getting into.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures or Non-Player Characters are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in the Hadraput area.

## KOZAK RAIDER

The average raider warrior involved in the Free Men of

The average Turanian member of the Kozaks is a powerfully built horseman that wields a scimitar or bow

with equal skill, often wrapped in a red or black cowl and cloak when they ride down the targets of their raids. Considered criminals against the Turanian Empire, they generally hide their features in order to be able to interact with outsiders when they have to.

Most Kozaks believe deeply in the ideal of the Free Men; the freedom of riding across the desert and steppes without being taxed or harassed by Imperial agents. The slavery and oppression that is so rife in Turan, Stygia and Shem is the target of their primary attacks; freeing slaves, carving their profits from the flesh of their masters and gaining the adoration of the common people.

### Combat

A Kozak raider tends to fight in two ways; each style working in tandem with the other Kozaks in their attack. Two-thirds of the Kozaks in a raid will strike hard and fast from horseback, cutting down battle-worthy targets while trampling the wounded or fodder. The remaining third will hand back in a semi-circle around the targets, picking their targets carefully and letting fly with their deadly bows. It is one reason why the Kozaks will sometimes wear brilliantly coloured sashes or cowls around their necks or heads – to avoid being picked out as a potential target for Free Men archers.

## SAND SCORPION SWARM

Tiny Vermin (Swarm)

**Organization:** Solitary, tangle (2 – 6 swarms), or colony (7 – 12 swarms)

**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Spot +4

**Languages:** –

**Dodge Defence:** 12 (+2 size)

**DR:** –

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+8 (26 hp)

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1

**Defensive Specials:** Swarm traits

**Speed:** 20 ft.

**Attack:** Swarm (1d6 plus poison)

**Full Attack:** Swarm (1d6 plus poison)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft. (2) / 0 ft. (0)

**Base Attack:** +0

**Grapple:** –

**Special Attacks:** Distraction, Poison

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 3, Dex 10, Con 14, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2

**Special Qualities:** Swarm traits, Vermin traits

**Feats:** –

**Skills:** Climb +4, Hide +12

**Possessions:** –

**Advancement:** –

Sand scorpion swarms are typically the result of recent hatchings that are in search of mates or places to hide, working themselves into hunger frenzy due to close proximity with one another. Nothing that crosses their path is exactly safe, especially if it might be able to be eaten. The shale caverns beneath Hadraput are scattered with their nests.

For game mechanic purposes, a single swarm is treated as a single creature or entity with an occupied space of 10 feet. A swarm has a single pool of Hit Dice and Hit Points, a single initiative modifier, a single speed and a single speed and a single Defence Value. It is treated for all purposes as one beast.

Although swarms consist of dozens, hundreds or even tens of thousands of different individual creatures, they do not suffer individual casualties as they begin to take damage. They do suffer losses to their body mass but only when they lose their last Hit Point has the swarm suffered enough casualties to lose its cohesion and scatter.

### Swarm Combat

Swarms battle by coming into contact with their targets, inflicting numerous small attacks that add up to effectively one wound. They never provoke attacks of opportunity, nor can they make use of them. They always occupy four connected five-foot squares, with no breaking of the central mass of the swarm. Swarms maintain cohesion like this through any space and can never be moved through.

### Vulnerabilities of Swarms

Swarms are extremely difficult to destroy with common physical attacks, as weapons glide through the mass inflicting minor casualties on a huge number of creatures. They do have some specific vulnerabilities however.

A lit torch or similar flaming implement swung into a swarm inflicts 1d3 damage per hit.





A lit lantern or similarly contained fuel source used as a thrown weapon deals 1d4 points of damage to every five-foot square in and adjacent to where the object breaks.

A scorpion swarm crawls across warm bodies in search of flesh to sting, liquefy and eventually feast upon. The swarm deals 1d6 points of damage to any creature whose space it can occupy at the end of its move, requiring the requisite poison saves as detailed below.

**Distraction (Ex):** Any living creature that begins its turn with a scorpion swarm in its space must succeed in a Fortitude save DC 11 or be nauseated for 1 round by the overwhelming pricks of thousands of spiny legs, chitinous hairs and pincers.

**Poison (Ex):** Anything that suffers damage from a scorpion swarm's attack is also affected by the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Scorpion Toxin	Injury DC 14	1 Con	6	One per round



**Skills:** A scorpion swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide and Spot checks and uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks. A scorpion swarm can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +6

**Grapple:** +8

**Special Attacks:** Improved Grab, Laughter, Power Attack, Relentless jaws

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

## YIZIL - DESERT GHOUL

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

**Climate/Terrain:** Any warm desert

**Organization:** Solitary, patrol (3 – 5), or throng (6 – 12).

**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflex)

**Sensory Traits:** Low-light vision, Listen +5, Spot +5

**Languages:** Yizilpeak

**Dodge Defence:** 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)

**DR:** 2

**Hit Dice:** 7d8+14 (48 hp)

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2

**Defensive Specials:** –

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**Attack:** Claw +8 melee (1d4+2)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +8  
melee (1d4+2), bite +6  
melee (1d8+1, AP 4)

**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 1

**Special Qualities:** –

**Feats:** Multiattack, Toughness, Track

**Skills:** Hide +14, Jump +4, Move Silently +14, Survival +8

**Possessions:** Minor collected tomb-baubles (worth 4d6 x 10 silvers)

**Advancement:** By character class (favoured class: barbarian)

The Yizil are desert ghouls, instinctual tomb robbers and the gnawers of bones. They avoid the open desert, especially during the day. Like jackals, they prey upon what they can find in the tombs of the Stygians, living a twisted and horrible existence in the desert catacombs. Their mocking laughter is not unlike a hyena's, filling the air with screeches like that of a jackal. They oftentimes dress in the funerary trappings and baubles they find in the tombs, parading the spoils of their scavenging.



Yizil, like other ghouls, speak their own language of grunts, growls and screeches. No non-yizil has yet mastered it, largely due to how violent any dealing with them tends to be. It is very similar to the 'language' of the common ghoul but it has never been tested as to whether or not they could cross-communicate.

### Combat

Yizil prefer to ambush their prey in the darkness of a catacomb or under the cover of night, slashing with their sharp claws until they can get their strong jaws into their targets.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the yizil must hit with a bite. If it gets a hold, it can use its Relentless Jaws attack the following round.

**Laughter (Ex):** Due to the nature of their sick and bestial laughter, yizil impose a cumulative – 1 penalty to Will saves (per yizil) on targets within 30 feet on any turn they are not using their bite attack.

**Relentless Jaws (Ex):** Once a yizil has hold of an opponent in its jaws (see Improved Grab, above) it can continue biting him each round thereafter, dealing standard bite damage. This also gradually chews through its opponent's armour – each round the yizil uses Relentless Jaws, including the first round, the AP rating of its bite increases by +1.

**Skills:** Yizil have a +4 racial bonus to their Hide, Move Silently and Survival skills.

### PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounter with the city of Hadraput.

A vicious sandstorm unparalleled in many years has torn through the area and Hadraput is in dire need for new poles and canvas. The Kozaks cannot hope to simply go out and shop in Turan, so they frequently hire outsiders to serve as their buyers. The Player Characters have a chance to acquire a massive amount of Kozaki funds, leaving them with the option to make allies out of the notorious raiders through just a few trips to local markets.

The Kozaks are on a membership drive because of recent Imperial campaigns angled against them and the Player Characters are tapped and requested to come to Hadraput – perhaps even to join the ranks of the raiders. Hadra has begun to make arrangements to set forth the largest raider mission of Kozaks that Turan has ever seen and non-Kazaki scouts are required to clear the way for the hundred horsemen that will ride out of the city in a fortnight. The Player Characters are picked for this duty and they might be instrumental in the success of the mission.





## Seven Stones - The Clanholme of Blue Fox

One day's walk north from the Field of the Chiefs, there lays a field of seven staggered stone monoliths that rise 40 feet into the air from the cold, gray ground. These stones, the *prachaun grul* (translated from Cimmerian as 'titan headstones') overlook an interesting community from their position up on a raised ridge. The community is called Seven Stones Ridge or simply Seven Stones for locals and it is the root and clanholme of Clan Urrogh; the Blue Fox Clan.

### SEVEN STONES RIDGE

'When Crom felled the titans, he buried their bodies here and kept the heads for trophies. Their blood is in our wells and our soil and we Clan Urrogh grows strong from Crom's gift.'

**City Classification:** Town

**Population Level:** Average

**Crime Rate:** Below Average

**Structures of Note:** Food Cellar/Cool Storage, Blacksmith's Forge, Game or Sport, Town Hall, Witch/Druid/Shaman

**City Traits:** Fertile Ground, Well-Defended, Irrigated

### HISTORY

The Cimmerian clan of the Blue Fox, called Clan Urrogh (pronounced *ooh-rah*) in the native tongue, is named for the dark black – almost midnight blue – foxes that are prolific in the foothills and scrublands found centrally in the nation. The blue fox or *urro*, is a symbol of animalistic cleverness, agility and ferocity to Cimmerians. The blue fox is rarely hunted for its pelt by locals, believing that the animal is sacred to the lands it calls home. To have blue foxes live in your clan's territory is a great sign of the clan's power and prosperity. There is no place in Cimmeria where more blue foxes live than around Seven Stones Ridge.

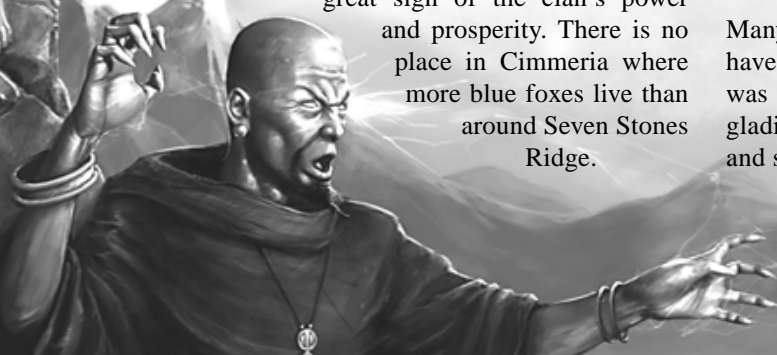
Clan Urrogh grew up in the shadow of the seven massive and mysterious monoliths, creating their clanholme around the flat gravel area around them. The ancient stories of Crom's dealings with the world tell of seven angry titans that came to punish him for having the secret of steel; which he used to tale the head of each titan one by one. He planted their bodies in the ground and drove seven heavy stones at the head of each grave to mark his victory. The seven monoliths at the clanholme are said to be these seven markers, a commonly believed myth amongst Clan Urrogh.

Either through a true mystic connection to the standing stones or simply the existence of several freshwater springs in the area, the people of Clan Urrogh tend to be larger and well-muscled – even in comparison to other Cimmerians. The clan's story singers claim that it is because of the titan's blood in the soil but most outsiders believe that it might simply be the existence of wells and water to grow vegetables and raise small livestock.

The Cimmerian people are not often considered farmers or shepherds but the numerous wells and springs make these endeavours possible. The ability to grow and store food has made Clan Urrogh into a powerful Cimmerian clan and one that does not need to resort to constant raiding for survival. It does not mean that they do not raid neighbouring clans and off into the Pictlands to supplement what they can make for themselves; it merely means that they do not have to.

Seven Stones Ridge has been a local landmark and an attractor of travellers for centuries, bringing more footpaths to lead to this community than the Urrogh would ever want. The Blue Foxes keep a constant guard and watch over the 'roads' that come into their clanholme and are wary of unknown faces come to their lands. The community does not react violently to outsiders but they also do not welcome them with open arms either.

Many famous (and infamous) Cimmerian wanderers have hailed from this clan and clanholme. Seven Stones was the birthplace of Orlan Moundragh, a well-loved gladiator in the Argossean arena circuit and the wily and seasoned Padraig, who lives and works as a tavern



owner in the seediest parts of Tortage. When asked of their homeland, they have the local motto as their common response: 'Seven Stones is where the titans bled and the blue fox bred. Long may they touch the world through me.'

## LAYOUT

Seven Stones Ridge is a somewhat simple town arranged at the foot of a 25 foot rise in the local hills. Atop the rise are the seven massive stone monoliths, each one rising six or seven men's height into the air. Each of the seven monoliths bears their own markings from generations of locals coming and carving the names of their loved ones upon them, marking forever their existence in stone. The stones themselves have been named for the fallen titans, which many Urrogh male children are named.

The village is made up of several dozen small family homes made of stacked stones, gravel mortar and thatched roofs. There are two weaponsmiths that pound out spears and axes out of traded metals from Nordheim serving in the same half-roofed forge at the centre of town. A few homesteads keep pens of goats or hogs and several small tuber gardens thrive around the communal wells. There is a single longhouse that serves as the village's town hall from which the current village fathers get together and talk about village resources, potential threats and enemies.

At the edge of town there is also one cabin that is left alone; no one in Clan Urrogh dares build where the building's shadow could fall upon them. This cabin is the home of the feared and respected Blue Fox Witch, a seer of magical signs and speaker of unknown truths. This witch is named Rutcrana and she is – by all estimations – well over 100 years old. She is said to command the weather and speaks to the fates; for just a shining silver coin and a single promise, she will bend fate to a visitor's wishes. No matter if she actually possesses this power is irrelevant; the Urrogh believe she does and they do not harass her in light of that.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

The people of Cimmeria are a hard culture, but the people of Seven Stones Ridge are forced to be more so. Just like the animals that they take their clan's name from, the Blue Foxes are clever and very aggressive when threatened. The Cimmerians of Seven Stones are used to being attacked, raided and tested for their place in such a comparatively pleasant locale. This means that

the carrying of weaponry and the wearing of armour is commonplace on the 'streets' of the village.

A common villager in Seven Stones will spend most of his or her day tending the vegetable gardens, the livestock pens and perhaps heading into the local hills and mountains in search of game or mushrooms. Those who are not on supply duty will be either on patrols of the local area for roving Picts, Vanir or even the huge mountain boar that might attack at any time.

There are always others who work most days to keep the clan in non-food supplies. Woodcarvers whittle and shape spear hafts and axe handles from pinewood lengths, hardening them in used ash and coals from the forge fires. Tanners make clothes and utilitarian items from pig and goatskin, using the leftovers from the butchering of game as well. Everyone contributes to the community in some way, even if it is just to serve as an extra pair of hands to one of the craftsmen.

The constant presence of the seven standing stones has helped mould a few of the clan's intricacies. Not only will they never sleep facing the stones, they pour a wine flask worth of pig's blood at the foot of each stone every full moon to represent the titan's blood seeping into the land. They have even devised a game amongst the young adults in Seven Stones that requires a naked Urrogh to climb the side of a standing stone (a painful experience it is said) with nothing but a knife in their teeth; once at the top they are to carve out a chip or flake of the stone. This chip is then worn as good luck around the neck on a leather thong for as long as the climber lives. This game, *grulklim*, is said to bring those who succeed great success and virility.

Seven Stones is a traditional Cimmerian community in almost every other way, training their youths to be hard warriors while making sure that they treasure the need for family and solidarity. Wanderlust sets in from time to time, especially if tales of what lies to the south reaches them but they will always feel a deep loyalty to their clanholme and the seven mighty monoliths they were raised to idolise.

## PLACES OF NOTE

There are several specific locations in Seven Stones Ridge that Player Characters might find interesting or useful to note.





## THE PRACHAUN GRUL THE SEVEN STONES

The namesake and drawing point to the entire community; these 40 to 45 foot tall slabs of engraved granite are the roots of the town as much as Clan Urrogh is. There are seven of the prachaun grul (pronounced *prah-conn grool*), each one named for the supposed titan that Crom buried beneath it. They are named *Thrallan*, *Padranag*, *Foilloch*, *Daolcohr*, *Huogh*, *Silaigne* and *Caelis*. It is said by storytellers that these were the engravings that were found on the top of each stone when the first members of Clan Urrogh came to settle the area.

Generations have passed and those engravings are now weathered and worn away, almost to the point of being unreadable. Even so, every member of the community who can speak knows the names of the seven stones and which titan their family line supposedly takes after. Although they do not add or detract from the town in any realistic way, the seven stones are a protected resource to the people of the Blue Fox Clan.

## BLUE FOX WARRENS

Although they typically live in dens throughout the whole Seven Stones area, appearing for miles around, the blue foxes native to this part of Cimmeria have a large communal warren on the outskirts of town, just beyond the ridge that hold up the stones. In the dawn and dusk hours there can be seen a half-dozen or more of the blue-black foxes playing and frolicking in the undergrowth and foliage, hunting down toads and small insects for their meals.

The blue fox warrens are considered a protected area to the people of Seven Stones. Not only are they a sort of 'totemic' animal to the clan but they are something of a local resource as much as they are a legend. The blue foxes act a certain way when the weather is to be good or bad, allowing for those who know what to look for to prepare appropriately. The blue foxes' pelts thicken or thin depending on the presence of added predators in the area; many of which will gladly attack a lone Cimmerian. The Urrogh need the blue foxes to protect their children as much as the Urrogh protect them.

## SPEAKING HALL

At the centre of the town is this large open-door building that can hold the fathers and mothers of every family living in Seven Stones. Once every new moon the parents and grandparents of the clan gather at the speaking hall to talk about village plans, current events and the doling out of village assets. The village elders take a position at



the centre of the hall and stand atop a few smoothed-out boulders so they can speak and a 'talking stick' wrapped in blue fox furs is passed around when the villagers need to be heard.

There are three rules that should not be broken at the speaking hall, under pain of punishment by deep cuts on the chest and thighs by the elders. The first rule is that a non-elder cannot speak without holding the talking stick. The second rule is that no weapons may be drawn while a moon gathering is taking place; only fists may cause bodily harm. The third and most important rule is that anything that is decided must be bled for; otherwise the clan will not adhere to it.

## DUNCOHR FORGE

The large iron foundry and forge located at the base of the ridge bellows smoke throughout most days. Built over 100 years ago by the revered Duncohr family, one of the Urrogh elder bloodlines, the town forge is the primary source for all of Seven Stone's metallic goods – so long as they can be moulded or pounded from bronze or steel. Currently the forge is run by Finn Duncohr, the master smith and one of the village elders.

## THE MOUND

When the village elders die on Clan Urrogh grounds the remains are brought to the raised gravel and peat mound at the edge of town and are buried with the bones of the clan's ancestors. The Mound – which goes by no other name out of respect for the deceased – is a solemn place where clan members can come to honour the fallen; all of those who came and went before.

There is always one Blue Fox Clansman watching over the area of the Mound, most often found sitting on one of the boulders ringing it. The garrisoning of a watchman is a very old tradition from one of the original Vanir raids that targeted Seven Stones. While the warriors battled the raiders valiantly in the main areas, Vanir thieves desecrated the Mound and stole the jewellery of the original elders – including the first Duncohr forged axe blade. Ever since that horrible event, there has *always* been a watchman at the Mound.

## ERABOLGH THE WITCHS CABIN

Exactly 100 and one paces from the outside of town (the builders ensure that distance is kept) is a ragged stone homestead surrounded by a weathered pinewood fence. The whole building is adorned



in fetishes, carcasses and strange objects, most of which are painted, pierced or tied in unique and interesting ways. It is the home of Rutcrana, the ancient witch of Seven Stones Ridge.

This building is a terrifying and secretive place that most Seven Stones residents avoid looking directly toward the witch's house, let alone come near it. Only when outsiders come to Seven Stones does anyone go near the old crone's home and it is normally the villagers' prerogative to try and warn them away.

## PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following are important individuals found in the town of Seven Stones Ridge. Each entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with them and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

### FINN DUNCOHR, VILLAGE ELDER AND MASTER SMITH

The current village elder from the Duncohr bloodline, Finn is almost six decades old and built with a barrel chest and bulging muscles from spending five of those decades behind an anvil or at a forge bellows. The twin-claw stamp of his bloodline can be found on his work far and wide throughout Cimmeria and







the northern kingdoms and nothing important happens in Seven Stones without his input.

## Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian Barbarian 7)

**Initiative:** +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Low-light Vision, Listen +8, Spot +11

**Languages:** Cimmerian, Nordheimer

**Dodge Defence:** 17 (+2 Dex, +5 class)

**Parry Defence:** 16 (+4 Str, +2 class)

**DR:** 6 (+6 Breastplate)

**Hit Points:** 75 hp

**Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +9

**Defensive Specials:** Fearless, Mobility, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Battleaxe +11 melee (1d10+6, AP 4)

**Full Attack:** Battleaxe +11/+6 melee (1d10+6, AP 4)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +7/+2

**Grapple:** +11

**Special Attacks:** Crimson Mist, Power Attack

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 17

**Special Qualities:** Bite Sword, Versatility (no penalty)

**Feats:** Brawl, Diehard, Endurance, Fighting Madness, Skill Focus (craft), Sleep Mastery, Track

**Skills:** Craft (weaponsmith) +15, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +8, Jump +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Profession (smith) +12, Search +8, Sense Motive +8, Survival +10, Swim +6

**Code of Honour:** Barbaric

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 8 (+2)

**Possessions:** Handcrafted Breastplate, Handcrafted Pine-handled Battleaxe, Smith's Tools

The son of Fionn, brother to his fellow smith Dael and father to the inheritor of the Duncohr legacy; Finn is a typical member of Clan Urrogh. He takes great pride in his family's history as the progenitors of the Blue Fox Clan and of his ancestors' role in the founding of Seven Stones Ridge. They take their family name from the fallen titan *Daolldcohr*, who was said to be the god's smithy before his death at the hands of Crom.

Finn is a fairly pleasant Cimmerian, enjoying a good stiff drink and

the company of his wife and family. He hates the Vanir for wounding his father and bringing on the fever that killed him. Bringing Vanir scalps, trophies or other loot from his enemies to the north can lower his prices for specialised work. Finn's younger brother is beginning to learn the ins and outs of their family trade, moving Finn to the finishing anvil to put final touches on all of the work they create.

## Combat

Finn fights like any strong-armed Cimmerian; with strength and cold-hearted fury. He is rarely found outside of the village but he is never seen without his massive battleaxe within arm's reach. This twin-bladed behemoth has split the chests and heads of dozens of enemies to the Blue Fox Clan. Finn knows that he could crush a man's skull easily enough with his smithy hammer but he prefers to separate his career tool from his battle tools.

## Plot Hooks

✿ Finn's latest work – a near-perfect broadsword – has gone missing from his workshop and Pict tracks have been seen in the area as of recently. The tracks lead off to the west toward the border and Finn plans on going after them to get his work back. The Player Characters are free to join him but he warns that his work is not to be harmed or taken except by his own hand.



- ✱ The master smith of Clan Urrogh has fallen quite ill and cannot stand being next to the forge's heat until his fever passes. The Vanir will not wait for him to return to work to attack again and war supplies are remarkably low. Finn needs to be brought quickly back to health and the remedy is located in the Westermarck. The Player Characters are bid to go and fetch it for him.
- ✱ The Player Characters want to buy a piece of Finn's work but he does not yet trust them. If they bring him the heads of three Vanir warriors he will think them worthy of carrying his steel.

## RUTCRAANA, WITCH OF SEVEN STONES

Over 100 years old, this ancient crone lives alone in her ramshackle homestead on the outskirts of Seven Stones Ridge with her trio of domesticated blue foxes; Sael, Rogh and Vulough (translated roughly to Past, Present and Future). She welcomes any who have the bravery to walk upon her warded home and offers her wisdom for just a few coins and a *promise*.

**Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian Barbarian 2 / Scholar 10)**

**Initiative:** +7 (+1 Dex, +6 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +12, Spot +8

**Languages:** Cimmerian, Nordheimer, Atlantean

**Dodge Defence:** 15 (+1 Dex, +4 class)

**Parry Defence:** 15 (+2 Str, +3 class)

**DR:** –

**Hit Points:** 84 hp

**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +15 (+9 against Corruption)

**Defensive Specials:** Fearless

**Speed:** 20 ft. (humped back)

**Attack:** Dagger +11 melee (1d4+2, AP 3)

**Full Attack:** Dagger +11/+6 melee (1d4+2, AP 3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +9/+4

**Grapple:** +11

**Special Attacks:** Crimson Mist,

**Sorcery Knowledge:** Curses, Divination, Hypnotism, Nature Magic; 11 Power Points

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +10 (+5 class, +5 Charisma)

**Spells Known:** *Animal Ally*, *Animal Intercessor* (*Defensive Blast*), *Astrological Prediction*, *Blessing of Fate*, *Dread Serpent*, *Entrance*, *Hypnotic Suggestion*,

*Ill-Fortune*, *Lesser Ill-Fortune*, *Psychometry*, *Sorcerous News*, *Summon Beast*, *Visions*

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 21

**Special Qualities:** Bite Sword, Versatility (–2 Penalty), Scholar, Background (Independent), Knowledge is Power, Increased Maximum Power Points (triple)

**Feats:** Iron Will, Knowledgeable, No Honour, Sleep Mastery, Sorcerer's Boon, Toughness, Track,

**Skills:** Appraise +8, Bluff +10, Climb +4, Concentration +13, Craft (alchemy) +10, Craft (herbalism) +14, Craft (domestic) +6, Decipher Script +6, Handle Animal +10, Heal +10, Knowledge (arcane) +14, Sense Motive +10, Survival +12

**Code of Honour:** Barbaric

**Corruption and Insanity:** 3; Agoraphobia

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 4 (+1)

**Possessions:** Fetishes and Charms, Dagger

Over a century ago a young woman with one brown eye and one grey eye walked into Seven Stones from the morning mists trailed by three blue foxes. She introduced herself as Rutcrana while playing happily with her three animal friends, explaining plainly that she was the voice of fate – and that she was to serve with Clan Urrogh. The village elders took her friendship with the *urro* as a good omen and although they were frightened of her witchery, they allowed her to live amongst them.

Through the years her mystic abilities grew and her willingness to leave her home diminished. She saw demons and spirits in the outside world; hearing their whispers and their calling to her. Using the charms and objects of the ancient ones she warded her home from these dark voices and soon she no longer left her homestead. Turning away from monetary payment in lieu of useful resources and favours in which she could call upon later, Rutcrana took on the role of 'witch' to the local populace.

Now people from far and wide come to see the ancient crone in order to have their fortunes told, their futures blessed and the mysteries of the arcane explained to them. She became a local legend and somewhat feared by the newest generation of Blue Fox clansmen. Those who come to borrow upon her talents can expect to pay in a few coins, a sack of grain and a yet-to-be-named *favour* that Rutcrana will surely collect upon at some point when the fates decree it necessary.





## Combat

Rutcrana despises direct conflict, preferring to use her spells and charms to avoid it altogether. If she sees conflict coming her way she normally can call upon some impressive magical defences if she has to but she prefers to call upon her favours from nearby warriors instead to protect her. If she is forced to do so, she can wield her wrought iron dagger but is much more likely to use her magic than her blade.

## PLOT HOOKS

✱ One of the Player Characters was told of Rutcrana's ability and has travelled a very long way to reach her. When he does she requested 50 pounds of food starches and the agreement of a special *favour*. Without knowing what this twisted old crone might want of him and his friends, will the Player Character agree or will he leave Seven Stones empty 'handed'.

✱ Rutcrana has seen something particularly devastating in one of her visions – something dire enough that she is willing to leave her home and travel into the wilderness to stop it from occurring. She is too old and twisted to make the journey alone and no one in Seven Stones is willing to help her, so she looks to the kindness of strangers. If they agree, the old crone will owe *them* a favour instead of the other way around for a change. If any of them survive the trip, of course.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures or non-player characters are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in the Seven Stones Ridge area.

### CLAN URROGH CLANSMAN

Most adolescent and adult clansmen of the Blue Foxes are proud barbarian warriors that are deadly in combat and skilled in some facet of keeping the town running properly. They are not to be trifled with an axe or spear in hand and they protect their village with every ounce of their beings.

**Medium Humanoid**  
(Cimmerian Barbarian 3)



**Initiative:** +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +4, Spot +4

**Languages:** Cimmerian, Nordheimer

**Dodge Defence:** 14 (+1 Dex, +2 class, +1 Dodge)

**Parry Defence:** 14 (+3 Str, +1 class)

**DR:** 4 (+4 Leather Jerkin)

**Hit Points:** 25 hp

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +5

**Defensive Specials:** Fearless, Trap Sense +1

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Battleaxe +6 melee (1d10+5, AP 4) or War Spear +6 melee (1d10+3, AP 2)

**Full Attack:** Battleaxe +6 melee (1d10+5, AP 4) or War Spear +6 melee (1d10+3, AP 2)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1) or 10 ft. (2) with War Spear

**Base Attack:** +3

**Grapple:** +6

**Special Attacks:** Brawler, Crimson Mist, Power Attack

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 17, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 11

**Special Qualities:** Bite Sword, Versatility (–2 penalty)

**Feats:** Endurance, Track

**Skills:** Bluff +2, Climb +6, Craft (varies) +5, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Survival +6

**Code of Honour:** Barbaric

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 3 (–1)

**Possessions:** Leather Jerkin, Battleaxe or War Spear



Surviving in Cimmeria requires the clansmen to be tough and ready to fight for their village. They are skilled warriors and thick-skinned barbarians, doing everything they can in order to survive in the harsh wilderness. A single Blue Fox clansman is just as capable with a garden hoe or shepherd's crook as he is with his axe and spear. They might have some strange clan-related practices but they are still Cimmerian through and through.

### Combat

The men and women of Clan Urrogh fight much like any typical Cimmerian warrior would – with sheer brutal force. Their blades are sharp steel and their muscles thick from years of working in the town's farms and local hunting grounds. When a Blue Fox clansman commits himself to a conflict he strikes to kill; with axe, spear or just bare fists. For the clan, battle and fighting is an everyday possibility, so they must be ready to defend themselves and their families from an early age.

## CIMMERIAN BLUE FOX

Small Animal

**Organization:** Solitary, pair or skulk (4 – 8)

**Initiative:** +7 (+4 Dex, +3 Reflex)

**Sensory Traits:** Low–light vision, Scent, Listen +8, Spot +6

**Languages:** –

**Dodge Defence:** 15 (+1 size, +4 Dex)

**DR:** –

**Hit Dice:** 1d8+2 (6 hp)

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +1

**Defensive Specials:** Luck

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**Attack:** Bite +1 melee (1d4) or Claw +2 melee (1d3)

**Full Attack:** Bite +1 melee (1d4) or 2 Claws +2 melee (1d3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +0

**Grapple:** – 4

**Special Attacks:** –

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 9

**Special Qualities:** Luck

**Feats:** Alertness, Track

**Skills:** Balance +9, Climb +7, Hide +9, Jump +5, Move Silently +9, Survival +6

**Possessions:** –

**Advancement:** 2 – 4 HD (Small)

Cimmerian blue foxes are a frequent sight in the Cimmerian highlands and are the totem animal for Clan Urrogh. Their seeming unerring ability to get out of trouble or be in the right place at the right time is nearly mystical and it has created dozens of local legends about them. They are clever animals that are easily some of the smartest creatures in Cimmeria.

Their dark blue, almost black, pelts are thick and soft to shelter the foxes from the bitter winds and cold rocks they live in and under. They have longer claws than a normal fox to aid in digging and climbing, which they can also use in a fight if they have to.

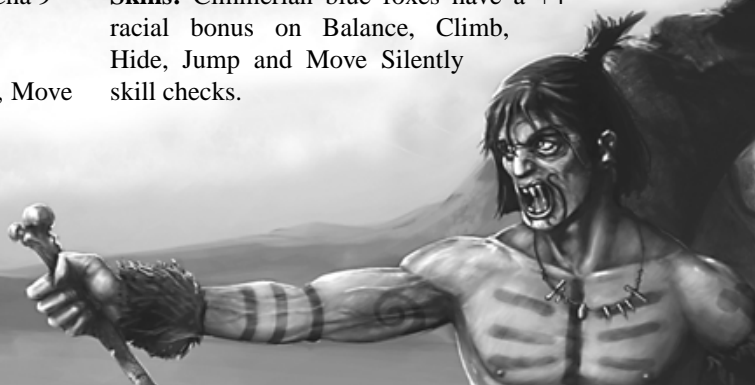
### Combat

Blue foxes prey on insects, grubs and any small game animals they might be able to catch in order to survive but are not willing to engage larger animals. They will defend themselves and their young against other predators and hunters when cornered but normally only long enough to bring their unearthly luck into play and escape.



**Luck (Ex):** Cimmerian blue foxes have a strange and powerful connection to the Fey luck of the ancient realms of Hyboria. Any time a blue fox rolls a d20 and it comes up a natural 1, the blue fox can re-roll the result once. Additionally, whenever someone makes a successful Critical Hit when attacking a blue fox, they must re-roll the attack die once.

**Skills:** Cimmerian blue foxes have a +4 racial bonus on Balance, Climb, Hide, Jump and Move Silently skill checks.







## MOUNTAIN BOAR

Medium Animal

**Organization:** Solitary, or sounder (6 – 8, with 6 – 24 females and 30 – 60 non-combatant young)

**Initiative:** +3 (Reflex)

**Sensory Traits:** Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +7, Spot +7

**Languages:** –

**Dodge Defence:** 12 (+2 natural)

**DR:** 7

**Hit Dice:** 3d8+15 (28 hp)

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +2

**Defensive Specials:** Ferocity

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**Attack:** Gore +5 melee (1d10+4, AP 5)

**Full Attack:** Gore +5 melee (1d10+4, AP 5)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +2

**Grapple:** +5

**Special Attacks:** Ferocity

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 17, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5

**Special Qualities:** –

**Feats:** Alertness, Toughness

**Skills:** Climb +5

**Possessions:** Some scraps of armour, clothing and jewellery that could not be digested

**Advancement:** 4 – 5 HD (Medium)

Mountain boars are a common sight throughout the foothills of Cimmeria, the Pictish wilderness and lower Nordheim. They are poorly tempered beasts, attacking travellers with only a warning of a few snorts before they charge. The boars are a powerful predator that are ferocious and deadly in order to survive and would be considered too lethal for average huntsmen – but are too precious a resource for the Cimmerians not to try nonetheless.

### Combat

A single mountain boar is a terribly powerful fighter that can disembowel a grown man with a single swipe of its sharp and jagged tusks. With survival being so difficult in Cimmeria, even armoured warriors are not above being attacked in the middle of the day. A mountain boar is considered an omnivore because it will eat nearly

anything but it is generally focussed on hunting down and killing *live* prey.

**Ferocity (Ex):** A mountain boar is such a tenacious combatant that it continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.

## PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounter with the town of Seven Stones Ridge.

There are not many large permanent settlements in Cimmeria and Seven Stones Ridge is well-known for its forged goods. The Player Characters could be hired as escorts to shipments from the wilds, as it is too dangerous for normal caravans to make the trip.

One of the Player Characters is a Cimmerian from the Blue Fox clan and his representative on the elder council has died over the winter. A messenger comes and finds him, bidding him to go to Seven Stones Ridge and take part in the town gathering to elevate a new member of his family to the position.

Meeting with a wounded Cimmerian on the road, far away from Cimmeria, the Player Characters are told by the man that he *must* be buried with his ancestors at the mound in Seven Stones Ridge. He knows he does not have long to live and all he wants is to be laid down in the shadow of his family's prachaun grul. If they are willing to take him or his remains to the town, his family will assuredly reward him as best they can – if they do not blame him for the wayward elder's demise, that is.



# Yezud - The Spider's Web of Zamora

At the foot of the meeting of the mountain ranges in Zamora there lies a sprawling city of dark wonders and unfathomable devotion to the spider god of the kingdom, Zath. Yezud is the centre of the strange and powerful faith and we are given a light introduction to the place in L. Sprague de Camp's *Conan and the Spider God*.

## YEZUD

'Come, come and see the splendour of Zath. It will hold you in its eight embracing arms, kissing you and injecting the love of the spider god in your veins. Soon you will be entwined in the web of our faith, where you will never want to escape from.'

**City Classification:** Urban Sprawl

**Population Level:** High

**Crime Rate:** Major

**Structures of Note:** Vault, Public Bath, Slave Market, Brothel, Dance Hall/Ballroom, Great Fane, Arbiter Court, True Alchemist/Herbalist, Non-Human Community, Terrible Beast's Lair

**City Traits:** Devoutly Religious, Fortified, Walled/Moated, Towering, Protected

## HISTORY

The home and centre of the religion of the spider god Zath, Yezud is a very old city that grew up around the lairs of the Zamorian giant spiders. The beasts were drawn to the location for its significance to their god and people were centuries to follow. The spiders created a network of tunnels and caverns that eventually became the catacombs that spread out from the Temple of Zath. The faith of the spider god drew worshippers from all over early Zamora, and they brought with them their families and allies. The spider tunnels became the roots of the city and Yezud grew rapidly around the black temple.

Ever since the cult of Zath became a major religion in Zamora, Yezud served as a congregation point for the spider god's worshippers. There is a large and sprawling city surrounding the black, spider-shaped temple,

many of whose inhabitants have no care whatsoever for the dark religion thriving around them. It is not a wise decision to assume that anyone is not a Zath cultist, however. Not all worshippers are cloak-clad priests spouting Zathian scripture; many are just common folk like butchers, dancers or blacksmiths that pay their faith to the spider god.

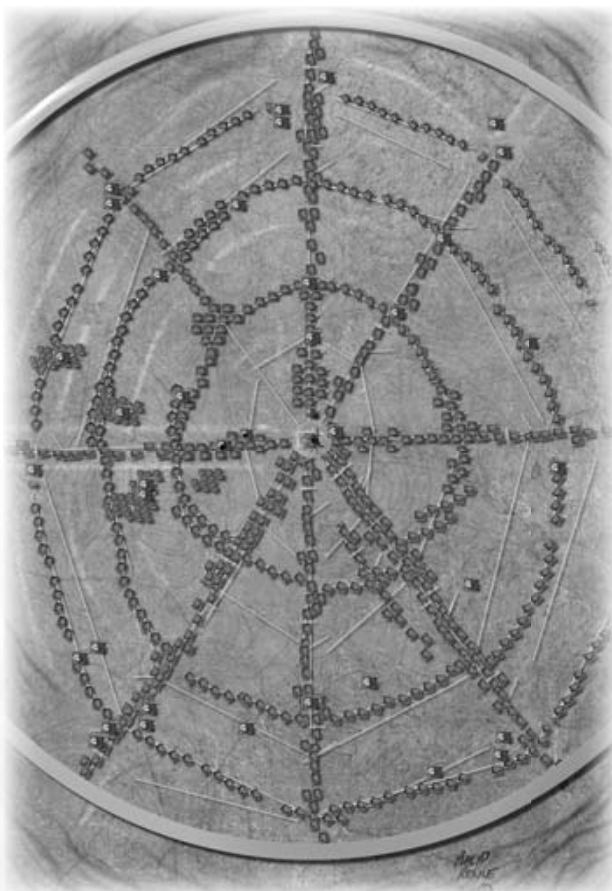
Although Shadizar is the capital of Zamora in all other things, Yezud is the heart and bastion of magic and faith. More scholars have sprung from the people of Yezud than any other Zamorian city, most of which trained by the priests and acolytes of Zath. It has never been a place to ever be mistaken for a safe city but the home of the spider god has protected its own for centuries. It is just the outsiders that must be very careful of the inhabitants; both the two and eight-legged ones.

## LAYOUT

The city of Yezud has been unsurprisingly laid out around the temple of Zath. There are a dozen landowning noble families that are actually attributed to building the city, each one creating a section of town to their desires and needs. Other than the overall theme of Zath's presence in the city, each of these sections has its own flavour and 'feel'. The streets of the House of Atrayis see much more prostitution and drug use than the territory of House Balyg, who is devoted to the creation of art and workmanship. Crossing from street area to the next could be like stepping over an invisible boundary, going from one ideology to another. Only the worship of Zath is a constant.

The temple itself is a towering black monastery carved with the image of a huge spider – the idol of Zath itself – and is covered in living spiders and spider webs of all shapes and sizes. The temple lies at the centre of every major street like the hub of a spoke wheel or rather – the spider at the centre of its web. Anyone looking up and along any of the major paths in Yezud will come eye-to-eyes with Zath's temple.





The larger buildings of Yezud are capped with rounded tops, normally with a spike reaching several feet into the air at its apex and are always the possessions of the noble families. Most are their familial manors or estates where they live in the lap of luxury, orchestrating their sizeable wealth using dozens of employees and slaves.

Apart from the two dozen or so towering structures, the rest of the city is much like a normal Zamorian city. The poorer areas use tents and lightly-built buildings to live and work within, with more permanent structures appearing in the profitable sections of the city. There is no shortage of beautiful women – most of which are entertainers, dancers or prostitutes – in the city and even the slums are home to houses of pleasure and companionship.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

Yezud is a very dangerous place for outsiders; especially those who cannot pay at least lip service to the faith of Zath.

Sacrifices are made daily to the eight-legged god and

outsiders that act contrary to the cult's goals are often the first to be chosen. This constant threat of being selected for sacrifice makes it very difficult for residents of the city to not pay homage to Zath (or at least its cult). The non-faithful spend their days carving out a living in a normal Zamorian city but they spend their nights locking their doors and looking over their shoulders.

A normal Zath-worshipping citizen has a much different average day. They begin their day much in the same way as anyone else would in their professions. A carpenter gets out his woodworking tools, a hunter grabs his traps and bow and heads into the wilderness, and so on. They work their various jobs all day, contributing whatever it is they can to their families and community. When the sun ducks below the mountains and casts the whole city in the purple glow of sunset, which is when the faithful make themselves known.

The cult of Zath spend the first few minutes of dusk in quiet contemplation, facing the direction of the temple (no matter where they might be) and clasping their hands low and in front of them. At the same time as the faithful send their prayers and devotions to the temple, the upper echelon of priests bathe and oil drugged sacrifices to the avatar of the spider god deep in the temple. Most of the sacrifices are simply purchased slaves or criminals but some are kidnapped outsiders or even *willing* zealots. It is said that this dedication is what keeps the faith strong and the priests powerful; in Yezud or otherwise.

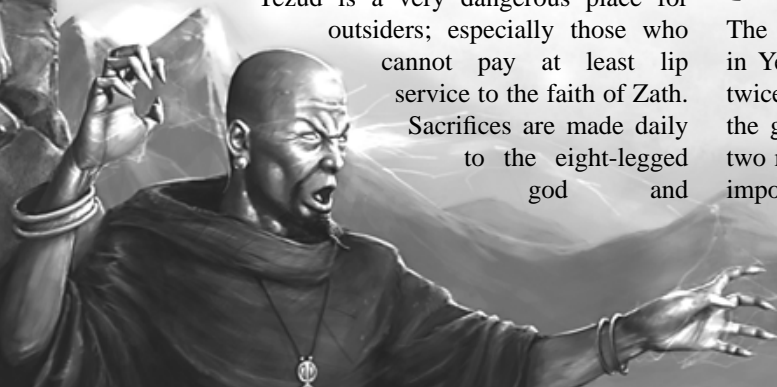
With the exception of holy days that might require congregation or streetwise activities, members of the faith have a few minutes each day that they spend in reflection of what the spider god gives them. With the exception of their faith's predilection for devotion over morality, the average citizen of Yezud is no more or less wicked than any other Zamorian.

## PLACES OF NOTE

There are several specific locations in Yezud that Player Characters might find interesting or useful to note.

## THE GREAT FANE OF ZATH, THE SPIDER GOD

The most recognisable and largest single construction in Yezud, the great temple is over 100 feet tall and twice that number *deep* into the ground. Made from the gray-black rock that can be found throughout the two mountain ranges surrounding Yezud, the fane is an imposing relief sculpture of a gigantic spider. The main



section of the towering building makes up the spider's body and abdomen, where its legs are the pillars that give the massive structure support. Beneath its hollow eyes are two 15 foot long fangs of polished ivory that serve as the gates leading into the temple.

The whole building crawls constantly with spiders of all shapes, sizes and varieties. The shadows seem to writhe, and sitting or leaning on something without care could be inviting a painful – or possibly fatal – bite. Considering it is illegal to harm any spider willingly within the city limits of Yezud, these temple inhabitants can make an unwanted visit to the temple a dangerous one.

At the centre of the main hall of the temple is the huge black idol to Zath – a massive stone statue with eight black opals set in it as eyes. Until the avatar of the god was slain by Conan in *Conan and the Spider God*, there was also a titanic giant tarantula-like spider that lived in the main hall. It is still home to hundreds of giant spiders, many as large as a horse but the avatar has not reborn...yet.



## THE MANSE OF HOUSE ATRAYIS

A family of noble socialites, hedonists and sensationalists from Shadizar, the House of Atrayis is the source of roughly half the crime and amorality found in Yezud. They import drugs, prostitutes, sadistic games, slaves and a host of other unique interests for their extensive web of family and friends. The Atrayis are infamously *not* Zath cultists and devote their lives to the furthering of pleasure and experience, garnering them a strange power from the darkness of pain, euphoria and indulgent practices.

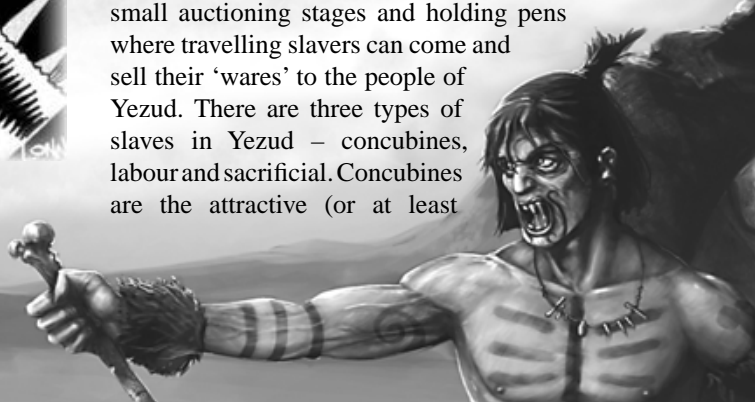
The main hall and courtyard of the Atrayis manse is a collection of orgies, smoking dens, dancing parlours and sitting gardens. They freely invite others to come and 'play' with them, paying for food, drink and company out of their own endless coffers. The only thing they ask in return from their guests is the occasional trip to the dungeon below the manse. Few ever escape once they have been taken down amongst the barbed chains, hot pokers and serrated leather strapping of the Atrayis' darkest pleasures. Those that do are broken and mad, telling tales of summoned demons and unspeakable horrors of the flesh.

## APOTHECARY HOUSE OF EHRLESTOC

The finest source for alchemical and natural poison remedies and medical supplies for weeks' worth of travel, the House of Ehrlestoc (named for the first owner and manager, long since dead) is well-known for having good prices and remarkable access to rare ingredients. This is, of course, because the business is also the finest source for the poisons and assassins' implements outside of Shadizar. During the day the clerks at the House sell salves, tinctures and cauterising irons. At night they sell viper's venom, blindwine and razor sharp blades meant for slitting throats.

## SLAVERS PENS AND BLOCKS

Located on the southern edge of the marketplace area of Yezud, the slaver's pens and blocks are a collection of small auctioning stages and holding pens where travelling slavers can come and sell their 'wares' to the people of Yezud. There are three types of slaves in Yezud – concubines, labour and sacrificial. Concubines are the attractive (or at least







exotic enough to be palatable) or skilled slaves that will be bought for the noble families or brothels found throughout the city. Labour slaves are purchased by the service industries, especially the ore mining projects that spend months up in the mountains. Sacrificial slaves are anyone purchased by the cult of Zath or a particularly zealous worshipper, for the sole purpose of being given to the spider god. Such practices are commonplace in Zamora and a large portion of Yezud's workforce is actually slaves.

## SPIDER CATACOMBS

Beneath the great fane and much of the northern half of the city, extending theoretically for miles around into the dense crust of the foothills and mountains, are spiralling tunnels filled with Zamorian giant spiders. 'From the depths of the world the spiders came' reads the scripture of Zath, and in Yezud these words are the literal truth. There are hundreds of miles of tunnels and they are home to a dozen different species of giant spider. Openings exist throughout the Yezud area, allowing the spiders to come and go freely in the city, the surrounding fields and the mountain hills.

## PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following are important individuals found in the city of Yezud. Each entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with them and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

### DESAYDA, HIGH PRIESTESS OF THE MANY-LEGGED GOD

After the havoc that Conan wreaked in *Conan and the Spider God*, the archpriests of the cult of Zath had to reorganise dramatically to repair the damage the Cimmerian had dealt. Acolytes were elevated to higher positions, the dead were fed to the spiders and Desayda took the reins of the cult over. It was her actions that kept the faith strong in light of the loss of their avatar.

**Medium Humanoid (Zamorian Scholar 14)**

**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +12, Spot +10

**Languages:**

Acheronian, Aquilonian (Literate), Nemedian (Literate), Old Stygian (Literate), Zingaran (Literate)

**Dodge Defence:** 17 (+2 Dex, +5 class)

**Parry Defence:** 15 (+0 Str, +5 class)

**DR:** -

**Hit Points:** 51 hp

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +16 (+5 against Corruption)

**Defensive Specials:** Spells

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Dagger +10 melee (1d4, AP 1)

**Full Attack:** Dagger +10/+5 melee (1d4, AP 1)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +10/+5

**Grapple:** +10

**Special Attacks:** Spells

**Sorcery Knowledge:** *Curses*, Hypnotism, Nature Magic, Necromancy, Summonings; 12 Power Points

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +13 (+15 with *Curses*) (+7 class, +6 Charisma; +2 Hexer)

**Spells Known:** *Animal Ally*, *Animal Intercessor (Defensive Blast)*, *Children of the Night*, *Chill of the Grave*, *Domination*, *Doom*, *Dread Serpent* (appears as a spider), *Entrance*, *Greater Ill-Fortune*, *Hypnotic Suggestion*, *Greater Summon Beast*, *Lesser Ill-Fortune*, *Master, Aid Me! (Defensive Blast)*, *Master-Words and Signs*, *Summon Beast*, *Terrible Fascination (Defensive Blast)*, *Weapon Curse (Defensive Blast)*

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 22

**Special Qualities:** Background (Lay Priest), Increased Maximum Power Points (quadruple), Knowledge is Power, Scholar

**Feats:** Adept (curses), Carouser, Hexer, Iron Will, Priest, No Honour

**Skills:** Appraise +10, Bluff +18, Concentration +16, Craft (alchemy) +18, Craft (poison) +18, Decipher Script +15, Gather Information +20, Handle Animal +10, Heal +12, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (nature) +15, Knowledge (religion) +16, Knowledge (Zamora) +15, Move Silently +12, Perform (oratory) +18, Sense Motive +12

**Code of Honour:** None

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 14 (+6)

**Corruption and Insanity:** 11

**Possessions:** Exquisite Priest's Outfit, Ivory Dagger, Green Bloodstone Ring of Zath

Born to one of the archpriests and a local dancer cultist, Desayda has always been a devout member of the faith.



She learned how to speak the ancient tongues at the same time she learned the language of the nation and she felt the kiss of the spiders before she ever knew the touch of a man. An excellent student and a pious worshipper, her devotion to the dark arts taught by the cult brethren grew to amazing levels.

It was natural for her to take charge when so many of her superiors died when Conan came through the temple. When all was chaos and the cult was wailing over the loss of the titanic spider they called the avatar of Zath, Desayda was gathering the strongest in the faith and culling the weakest. Although it cost the cult dearly in lives at the beginning, the spider families grew stronger and kept the cult alive. When the criminals in Shadizar came north to loot and pillage the 'broken temple', her actions were what kept the cult strong enough to fend them off – in turn turning them into the new sacrifices.

Desayda has now turned the focus of the Zath worshippers to not only rebuilding the power base and population of the cult but also urges them to hate outsiders more than ever before. Non-Zamorians have never been in more danger in Yezud since she took over the cult. Her desire to strengthen the god and the cult has increased the number of daily sacrifices and if the coffers run low from buying slaves it will be to travellers and outsiders she turns to next to fill the bellies of her god.

### Combat

Desayda is not a combatant; she relies on her more skilled and martial worshippers to defend her. When fellow cultists are not around, she commands the families of her god – the masses of the spiders surrounding her – to deal with her foes. Her magics are numerous and powerful but she knows the extent that it costs to wield it extensively. She will use her faith and her god as her shield and sword.

### Plot Hooks

- ✱ The avatar of Zath, the titanic spider that Conan killed, was not the only one of its kind. Desayda has been nurturing a hatchling of its breed since just after the avatar's murder. She needs small but potent sacrifices to help the tiny beast grow, so she employs the Player Characters to bring her a wagonload of young lambs from Koth. Of course, unless they convert to the faith, they will be next to be sacrificed!
- ✱ There are worshippers of Zath far and wide across Hyboria and they frequently make pilgrimages to Yezud. Sometimes these journeys are secretive, allowing for a Zath cultist to manipulate an entire caravan toward Yezud, treachery



and perhaps even *slavery*. Perhaps the Player Characters are who are being manipulated – or are the Zathian manipulators.

## LORD OSUKO ATRAYIS, THE SADIST OF YEZUD

The most powerful man in Yezud outside of the great fane, Lord Osuko is the driving force behind the sadism, debauchery and terror that occurs under the manse of House Atrayis. He is a man with a genteel surface covering a rotten and maggoty core that is darker than anything else in all of Yezud.

### Medium Humanoid (Zamorian Noble 12)

**Initiative:** +8 (+3 Dex, +5 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +10, Spot +12

**Languages:** Aquilonian (Literate), Argossean, Kothic, Nemedian, Zamorian (Literate)

**Dodge Defence:** 17 (+3 Dex, +4 class)

**Parry Defence:** 28 (+2 Str, +6 class)







**DR:** –

**Hit Points:** 72 hp

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +10 (+7 against Corruption)

**Defensive Specials:** –

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Serrated Dagger +14 melee (1d4+3, AP 2)

**Full Attack:** Serrated Dagger +14/+9 melee (1d4+3, AP 2)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +9/+4

**Grapple:** +11

**Special Attacks:** +3 to hit with Dagger, Short sword and Poniard, Improved Feint, Intricate Swordplay

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 19

**Special Qualities:** Do You Know Who I Am?, Enhanced Leadership, Lead By Example +4, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Social Ability (*ally, family ties*), Title (Lord), Wealth

**Feats:** Combat Expertise, Leadership, No Honour, Skill Focus (Craft (Torture))

**Skills:** Appraise +10, Balance +10, Bluff +16, Craft (Torture) +20, Diplomacy +18, Gather Information +14, Heal +12, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nobility) +14, Ride +6, Search +10, Sense Motive +16, Use Rope +12

**Code of Honour:** –

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 18 (+2)

**Corruption and Insanity:** 6; Compulsion to Sadism

**Possessions:** Superior Noble's Outfit, Serrated Dagger, Small Silk Pouch of Teeth

Lord Osuko Atrayis took the mantle of patriarch of his family from his father when he was 16 summers old; strangling the life from him with hands still sticky from his older brother's slit throat. In one fateful night a young and twisted lad became the commanding mind behind a fortune of brothel gold and drug-bought land in the city of Yezud.

He is a fast talker and a very attractive young man that is said to have taken a dozen different wives and birthed three times that number of whoresons and bastards. His want for suffering and pain knows seemingly no bounds, as he buys slaves by the week to

bring down into his manse's dungeons. There he strips to his strangely self-tattooed and branded flesh and sets to the long and horrible work of wringing *every* last scream from his 'guests'.

### Combat

Lord Atrayis does not often enjoy engaging in direct combat but he is no slouch with a dagger or poniard. His blade flashes quickly and deftly, seeking the most painful places on the human body to slice or jab. By the end of a fight or duel with Osuko the ground is soaked with blood and his opponent swaying with the weight of dozens of small wounds. Just as in his personal pleasures, the lord simply enjoys the sound of metal parting flesh.

### Plot Hooks

- ✱ Lord Atrayis is always in search of new implements and fearsome things to ply his secret pleasures, seeking them from all over Hyboria. Once he finds out about a torture device that supposedly came from the Great Darkness, he offers a huge ransom to the Player Characters to fetch it for him. His hopes, of course, are that he will get to use this device for the first time upon *them*.
- ✱ Osuko is very careful not to let his victims leave his dungeons; at least not with their tongues or sanity intact. One did however, and she has come to the Player Characters – strangers in Yezud – to try and seek escape from House Atrayis. When the lord discovers her missing, he will gladly pay handsomely for her return. The question becomes, will the Player Characters save or *ransom* her?

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures or non-player characters are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in the area of Yezud.

### GIANT ZAMORIAN SPIDER

Medium Animal (vermin)

**Organization:** Solitary or colony (4 – 6)

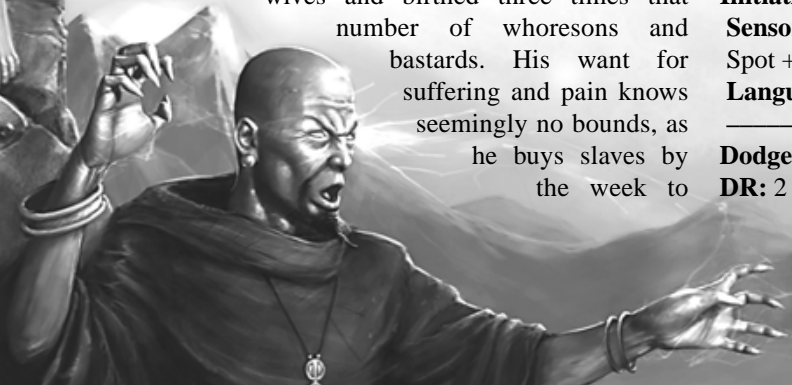
**Initiative:** +3 (+3 Dex)

**Sensory Traits:** Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Spot +4

**Languages:** –

**Dodge Defence:** 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)

**DR:** 2



**Hit Dice:** 3d8+6 (19 hp)

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0

**Defensive Specials:** –

**Speed:** 30 ft., 20 ft. climb

**Attack:** Bite +5 melee finesse (1d8+1 plus poison)

**Full Attack:** Bite +5 melee finesse (1d8+1 plus poison)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +1

**Grapple:** +2

**Special Attacks:** Poison, Web

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 17, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2

**Special Qualities:** Vermin traits

**Feats:** Toughness

**Skills:** Climb +11, Hide +6, Jump +12

**Possessions:** Armour, clothing, weapons from previous kills and sacrifices

**Advancement:** 4 – 6 HD (Medium)

The giant Zamorian spider is highly venomous, quick and lethal. Its spiny, fur-like exoskeleton is generally dark reddish brown or near black, speckled with yellow or orange flecks along its legs. It is a web-spinner, lying in wait in the tunnels under the Zamorian hillsides or in the streets of Yezud until an unwary creature blunders past. Zathian priests that can control them sometimes use the spiders to guard their abodes and shrines, allowing trespassers to become the beasts' next sacrifice.

### Combat

Giant Zamorian spiders tend to have two styles of fighting – ambush and trapping. When ambushing, the creature simply hides in wait for suitable prey and then leaps upon them, driving venomous fangs deeply into it. When trapping the spider arranges carefully placed web lines in places to entangle targets and then strike at them at their leisure.

**Poison (Ex):** Anything that suffers damage from a giant Zamorian spider's bite attack is also affected by the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Zamorian Spider Toxin	Injury DC 18	1d6 Con or 1d6 Dex	6	One per round

**Tremorsense (Ex):** A giant Zamorian spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

**Web (Ex):** Giant Zamorian spiders often wait in their webs or in trees, then lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap on to prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Giant Zamorian spiders can throw a web ten times per day. This has a maximum range of 40 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 Zamorian 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 5-foot section has 6 Hit Points and sheet webs have Damage Reduction 5. (It is not possible to bypass this Damage Reduction with finesse.) A giant Zamorian spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

**Skills:** Giant Zamorian 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 Zamorian spiders have a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs or scaling their tunnels.





## SPIDER SWARM

Diminutive Vermin (Swarm)

**Organization:** Solitary, tangle (2 – 4 swarms), or colony (5 – 12 swarms)

**Initiative:** +3 (+4 Dex)

**Sensory Traits:** Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 30 ft., Spot +4

**Languages:** –

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**Dodge Defence:** 17 (+4 size, +3 Dex)

**DR:** –

**Hit Dice:** 2d8 (9 hp)

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0

**Defensive Specials:** Swarm traits

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**Speed:** 20 ft., 20 ft. climb

**Attack:** Swarm (1d6 plus poison)

**Full Attack:** Swarm (1d6 plus poison)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft. (2) / 0 ft. (0)

**Base Attack:** +1

**Grapple:** –

**Special Attacks:** Distraction, Poison

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

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**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 17, Con 10, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2

**Special Qualities:** Swarm traits, Vermin traits

**Feats:** –

**Skills:** Climb +11

**Possessions:** –

**Advancement:** –

Spider swarms of black tarantulas and jumping spiders happen frequently in the Zamorian hills, tunnels and all of the fanes of Zath. They are often the principle animal servants of the temple of the spider god and they can be found wherever the pious exist. It may take days but a single swarm can make a long and painful meal from any sacrifice.

For game mechanic purposes, a single swarm is treated as a single creature or entity with an occupied space of 10 feet. A swarm has a single pool of Hit Dice and Hit Points, a single initiative modifier, a single speed and a single speed and a single Defence Value. It is treated for all purposes as one beast.

Although swarms consist of dozens, hundreds or even tens of thousands of different individual creatures, they do not suffer individual casualties as they begin to take damage. They do suffer losses to their body mass but only when they lose their last Hit Point has the swarm suffered enough casualties to lose its cohesion and scatter.

### Swarm Combat

Swarms battle by coming into contact with their targets, inflicting numerous small attacks that add up to effectively one wound. They never provoke attacks of opportunity, nor can they make use of them. They always occupy four connected five-foot squares, with no breaking of the central mass of the swarm. Swarms maintain cohesion like this through any space and can never be moved through.

A spider swarm crawls across warm bodies in order to bite and eventually paralyse, covering it later in webs to protect them for a slow and lengthy devouring. The swarm deals 1d6 points of damage to any creature whose space it can occupy at the end of its move, requiring the requisite poison saves as detailed below.

### Vulnerabilities of Swarms

Swarms are extremely difficult to destroy with common physical attacks, as weapons glide through the mass inflicting minor casualties on a huge number of creatures. They do have some specific vulnerabilities however.

A lit torch or similar flaming implement swung into a swarm inflicts 1d3 damage per hit.

A lit lantern or similarly contained fuel source used as a thrown weapon deals 1d4 points of damage to every five-foot square in and adjacent to where the object breaks.

**Distraction (Ex):** Any living creature that begins its turn with a spider swarm in its space must succeed in a Fortitude save DC 11 or be nauseated for 1 round by the prickly hairs and racing legs of the creatures passing over their bodies.

**Poison (Ex):** Anything that suffers damage from a spider swarm's attack is also affected by the following poison:



Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Spider Toxin	Injury DC 11	1d3 Str	2	One per round

**Skills:** A spider swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks, and uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks. A spider swarm can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

## PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounter with the city of Yezud.

Word has spread across the continent amongst the faithful of Zath that the great fane needs to be replenished after Conan's 'visit'. Now the spider worshippers are all streaming toward Yezud in large caravans. Wherever these caravans go however, they bring with them teeming swarms and masses of eight-legged horrors. The Player

Characters might wish to go and see to where they are going – and could be surprised at what they find.

The Player Characters are caught by slavers headed into Zamora and soon they stand on the blocks being bid upon by the local nobles. Luckily for them they are all bought by the same noble House. However will it be the hard working Balygs, the villainous Raskursi or some other collection of Zath-worshippers? What role will they serve and to what ends?

There is a recent slave revolt that has taken place in the mines north of Yezud and the Player Characters are asked to help put down the uprising. It is not abnormal for nobles to need aid in putting down these kinds of riots but when they reach the mines and discover that the unrest is coming from the horrible mistreatment of the labour slaves – will they continue to earn their wage from the nobles or will they fight to free the mistreated slaves?





## Khorshemish - Queen of the South

Tucked in the hot forests of Koth, the capital city of the kingdom is a painting of success and wealth placed over a dark and sinister secret. Although no different than most Hyborian Age cities, Khorshemish hides a powerful creature and its machinations. Khorshemish is an interesting city that could be the source of many adventures, as shown in R.E. Howard's *Conan and the Scarlet Citadel* and mentioned in John Maddox Roberts's *Conan and the Amazon*.

devoted to a cast of different gods and faiths have lined the wide streets for as long as anyone living in the city today and there is very little animosity between religions due to the space afforded to each one. Although there have been several scuffles and minor altercations over this and that, the Kothic army is ready to put down any real threats to the relative peace of the capital.

Conan came to Khorshemish on more than one occasion; as a pauper in his youth, a prisoner in his adulthood, and later as a king. Although the dark legends and rumours surrounding the Scarlet Citadel rooted in the city are not false, many people count their blessings to live in such a powerful and civilised city.

### KHORSHEMISH

'From the banks of the Asur River to the Scarlet Citadel to the walls of Periad, Khorshemish is the finest city in all of this world.'

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Very High

**Crime Rate:** Major

**Structures of Note:** Mansion/Palace, Promenade, Marketplace/Bazaar, Arena, Temple, Stockade/Dungeon, Army Compound, Royal Palace, Scholarly Library/Arcane Emporium, Portal to Darkness

**City Traits:** Controlled, Irrigated, Walled/Moated, Towering

### HISTORY

The capital city of Koth – where the most powerful individuals of the nation reside – has stood for many generations proud and tall amidst the forests of central Hyboria. It is where the many baronies of Koth send their emissaries and has served as the knot that holds the area together for centuries. Although kings have come and gone through the ages, Khorshemish has remained their strong seat of power.

Khorshemish has been the home to Kothic kings since its original days but it is also where the various religions of Koth build their finest temples and mosques. Tall buildings



## LAYOUT

Khorshemish is a very old city; meaning that it may have had a general plan for how it would be built up but it has long since lost track of it. Other than the Scarlet Citadel and the Royal Palace(s), most of the constructions that have taken place in Khorshemish were not planned at all. Between the wet soil of the Swamp and the erratic growth spurts of the city, buildings sprang up wherever they could physically fit.

The wide and well-kept streets are the only constant throughout the city, allowing for groups of horsemen or throngs of foot traffic to come and go with ease. There is a story that the first king of Koth had the streets build so wide so he could have his golden palanquin carried on the back of 50 slaves but historians find the claim dubious at best. It is more likely that the streets are wider to accommodate larger groups of soldiers, allowing them to quickly report to the city's walls and gates in the case of attack.

The murky Asur River, a minor stream that is mostly tree roots and mud, flows through the north-western edge of the city. It cuts under the city wall and runs along the side of the slums of Khorshemish, collectively called the Swamp. It bears this name for the muddy flooding that happens from the Asur, the thick reed patches that grow along the edge of the river and the numerous deadly water vipers that slither up from the water and into the streets to sun themselves. The Swamp is where the miscreants and less savoury types come to ply their trades.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

Most Khorshemish citizens and visitors live normal lives throughout the main portion of the city during the day. Shopkeepers open their stores and stalls, labourers go to work, and the masses file through the streets to undertake their daily duties. Other than the presence of armed soldiers here and there to keep the peace, the majority of the city is much like any other Hyborian metropolis.

In the Swamp however, things are a little different. Thieves, slavers, smugglers and other criminals thrive in the early morning fog that rolls off the river. The morning and dusk hours are their prime operating times for their illegal activities, with money lending and discount (probably stolen) goods taking over the mossy streets during midday. The constant presence and threat of water viper bites during the day leads to natives of Khorshemish wearing hard leather boots and watching the streets for basking serpents but the occasional

casualty will be found floating downriver – stripped of all its possession, of course.

When night falls however, Khorshemish is a city divided. Where there is firelight and burning lamps to chase away the darkness, there is great merriment and normal activity. Where the shadows are deep and most people cannot see but for a few feet, hideous creatures from beneath the Citadel lurk and hunt for their half-demon master. These beastmen are the minions of Tsotha-Lanti and although they cannot abide by the light of open flames, they are a powerful threat to anyone caught outside a torch's glow.

## PLACES OF NOTE

There are several specific locations in Khorshemish that Player Characters might find interesting or useful to note.

### THE SCARLET CITADEL

The deep red of the towering spire, its polished minaret reaching into the sky, is a subtle reminder of the ancient building's unique role in the city. The Scarlet Citadel was built over a bottomless well to Hell itself several thousand years ago, used currently by the half-demon Tsotha-Lanti to make horrible *things* out of men by sacrificing souls to the things in the Outer Dark. It is made of red stone that was not cut from any ground near Koth, as it is unlike anything found there. It has marble stairs and columns, golden filigree on everything and contains centuries' worth of collected sorcerous knowledge in its stacks.

Tsotha-Lanti is truly the power in Khorshemish, ruling even the king's decisions with his sorcery and beastmen minions. From the balconies of the Citadel he can overlook the entire city and use his dark sorcery upon its inhabitants. Although it is no secret that the Scarlet Citadel is a place of demons and evil, there is nothing the people of Khorshemish can hope to do – they believe it is holding back the full flow of evil the site is rumoured to host.

### HALL OF BARONS

There are many baronies in the kingdom of Koth, most of which paying homage and liege to King Strabonus. This large alabaster building is where the barons, dukes and warlords of the kingdom gather together





to speak their minds to the representative of the king. A huge banquet hall with a ring of exquisite cedar tables and enough room for every baron and their entourage to feast, the Hall of Barons hosts a monthly gathering. With the amount of wine and food consumed at these gatherings, they are expensive endeavours that do little more than list out any grievances the baronies might suffer from. The king believes that it makes his barons happy however, so these overgrown debaucheries will continue.

## THE SWAMP

An area of Khorshemish roughly five acres in total, the Swamp is the north-western slums of the city. Based on and around the banks of the Asur River that flows through that section of the city, the Swamp is riddled with mosquitoes, biting flies, poisonous snakes and a general odour of the reeds and mud. The area is where most illicit or illegal activities can be found readily in Khorshemish. If someone wants to borrow a few hundred silvers – only to pay it back at double rate in half the normal time – money lenders can be found sporadically in the dingy, mossy buildings.

Common brothels and taverns can be found here and there and anyone living in the Swamp for long will pick up their strange pidgin dialect of Kothic. A mixture of

slang, profanity and true Kothic language, 'Swampkoth' is an easy accent to acquire but a difficult one to hide once learned. Few of those raised in the Swamp manage to make much of themselves elsewhere in the city due to the prejudices that goes along with the accent.

## THE BLADESONG CIRCLE

Located near the city stables and just a few minutes' walk from the Kothic army barracks, the Bladesong Circle is a wood and brick ring of a building that serves as a pit fighting school and arena. For a paltry 50 silver coins the trainers, a trio of Argossean ex-gladiators, will teach anyone how to wield strange weapons, adopt flashy fighting styles, and hopefully win the heart of a crowd. At least twice a month the Circle hosts a local wrestling competition amongst the fighters it has trained, with lots of flowing ale and profitable gambling abound.

## THE OLD PALACE

Almost three generations before King Strabonus, there was a peasant uprising that toppled the throne and saw the royal family of Koth hung from the rafters of their royal palace. The next ruler had a new palace built far away from the old one, which he saw as an evil place filled with the spirits of the slain. The new palace is the current one that holds the throne of Koth but the old one still exists. The dilapidated old building is much smaller than even some of the noble manors of Khorshemish but it still bears a royal look to its three minarets and rusted portcullis.

It is said that the spirits of the old royal family – King Manaresch, Queen Besilde and their nine children – still haunt the old building. Common folk talk of eerie sounds and floating lights that can be seen through the waxed windows of the old palace and even the soldiers do not follow fugitives that dare to go inside to escape.

## PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following are important individuals found in the city of Khorshemish. Each entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with them and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

## TSOTHA-LANTI, THE BLOOD OF DARKNESS

Spawned from the womb of a Shadizar dancing slave and a creature of blackness from Dagoth Hill in Zamora, Tsotha-Lanti is the half-demon controller of the portal



to Hell at the base of the Scarlet Citadel. He is a former enemy of King Conan and despises any human lives he does not currently control.

## Medium Humanoid (Kothian/Spawn of Dagoth Hill Scholar 16)

**Initiative:** +8 (+3 Dex, +5 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Darkvision 30 ft., Listen +12, Spot +16

**Languages:** Acheronian (Literate), Aquilonian (Literate), Demonic, Kothic (Literate), Nemedian (Literate), Old Stygian (Literate), Stygian (Literate), Zamorian (Literate)

**Dodge Defence:** 19 (+3 Dex, +6 class)

**Parry Defence:** 20 (+4 Str, +6 class)

**DR:** 1 (+1 Natural)

**Hit Points:** 72 hp

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +17 (–1 against Corruption)

**Defensive Specials:** Immune to Poison, Spells

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**Attack:** Dagger +16 melee (1d4+4, AP 1) or Bite +14 melee (1d3+2, AP –)

**Full Attack:** Dagger +16/+11/+6 melee (1d4+4, AP 1) or Bite +14/+9/+4 melee (1d3+2, AP –)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +12/+7/+2

**Grapple:** +16

**Special Attacks:** Spells

**Sorcery Knowledge:** Counterspells. *Curses*, Nature Magic, Necromancy, Prestidigitation, Summonings; 14 Power Points

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +12 (+14 with Curses) (+8 class, +4 Charisma; +2 Hexer)

**Spells Known:** *Agonising Doom*, *Animal Ally*, *Animate Swords*<sup>1</sup>, *Awful Rite of the Were-Beast*, *Burst Barrier*, *Children of the Night*, *Conjuring*, *Curse of Yizil*, *Death Touch*, *Demonic Pact*, *Greater Ill-Fortune*, *Greater Summon Beast*, *Greater Telekinesis*, *Greater Warding*, *Ill-Fortune*, *Lesser Ill-Fortune*, *Magic Builder*<sup>1</sup>, *Master Warding*<sup>1</sup>, *Master Words and Signs*, *Raise Corpse*, *Spirit of the Land*, *Summon Demon*, *Telekinesis*, *Warding*, *Weapon Curse (Defensive Blast)*

**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18

**Special Qualities:** Adaptability (Knowledge (Arcana) and Sleight-of-Hand), Background (Pact), Increased Maximum Power Points (quadruple), Knowledge is Power, Scholar, Summoning Bonuses, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

**Feats:** Adept (Curses), Craft Magic Item<sup>1</sup>, Fleet-Footed, Hexer, Iron Will, No Honour, Ritual Sacrifice, Skill Focus (Knowledge (Nature)), Spawn of Dagoth Hill, Steely Gaze, Tortured Sacrifice

**Skills:** Bluff +16, Climb +10, Concentration +18, Craft (alchemy) +18, Craft (herbalism) +16, Decipher Script +20, Gather Information +14, Heal +10, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (nature) +22, Knowledge (religion) +14, Move Silently +12, Perform (ritual) +19, Search +12, Sense Motive +12, Sleight-of-Hand +15, Survival +10

**Code of Honour:** None

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 10 (+4)

**Corruption and Insanity:** 18; Utterly Befouled

**Possessions:** Man-leather Garments, Black Wool Cloak, Golden Sacrificial Dagger

<sup>1</sup> This feat or spell can be found in the *Secrets of Skelos* sourcebook.

Born of the unwilling coupling of demon and Kothic dancer, Tsotha-Lanti is a hideous monster of a man that lives on nothing else but his hatred for the human race and his wishes to plunge it collectively into Hell. Learning about the portal to the Great Darkness through his sorcerous talents, Tsotha-Lanti came to Khorshemish and broke into the ancient Scarlet Citadel.

Ever since he has used his sorcery and control over many factions within the city to continually feed the portal sacrifices of flesh. The unfathomable beings within, in turn, grant him additional power and the ability to create his servile army of beastmen. His plans were very nearly thwarted when the foolish nobles of Koth force King Conan to come to the aid of his friend Amalrus – during which time Tsotha-Lanti was struck down, only to be returned to life by the dark powers living beneath the tower.

## Combat

A powerful sorcerer, Tsotha-Lanti deals with most of his foes with a quick cursing or the summoning of deadly energies to assail them. His arcane words can flense flesh from bone or call evil spirits to the dead. Between his magical prowess and staff of servile beastmen and risen dead, few ever manage to get into martial combat with the half-demon. Those that do will not find a weak magician but a wiry creature that can call upon his demonic nature to defend himself just fine.

## Plot Hooks

❖ The beastmen of Khorshemish have suffered heavy





casualties in the last months and Tsotha-Lanti knows that he must have strong and healthy specimens to mutate into new ones. Sending a message to the Player Characters, he hopes to lure them into a trap where he can have them all sedated and brought to the portal beneath the Citadel.

- King Conan knows that Tsotha-Lanti survived their encounter somehow and he needs a group of strong and stalwart adventurers to go undercover and see what the old half-demon is up to. This is a dangerous mission but the Player Characters can earn the respect of Conan himself if they get the information he needs.

## CEDRIO THE IRONHANDED, MASTER PIT FIGHTER

The youngest of the three teachers at the Bladesong Circle, Cedrio is the friendliest and most active as well. He takes on all students who can pay his fee and he does not pull his punches in the ring – ever. It is said that he fought with King Conan once a long time ago but neither men remember such an event clearly.

### Medium Humanoid (Argossean Soldier 9)

**Initiative:** +15 (+3 Dex, +6 Reflexes, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +12, Spot +10

**Languages:** Aquilonian (Literate), Argossean, Kothic

**Dodge Defence:** 18 (+3 Dex, +5 class, +1 Dodge)

**Parry Defence:** 22 (+4 Str, +7 class, +1 Parry)

**DR:** 5 (+5 Breastplate)

**Hit Points:** 74 hp

**Saves:** Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +8

**Defensive Specials:** Dodge, Parry

**Speed:** 25 ft.

**Attack:** Bladed Cestus +14 melee (1d6+2, AP 3)

**Full Attack:** Bladed Cestus +14/+9 melee (1d6+2, AP 3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +9/+4

**Grapple:** +13

**Special Attacks:** Cleave, Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry, Skirmisher), Improved Feint, Power Attack, Weapon Specialisation (Cestus)

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 10

**Special Qualities:** Adaptability (Listen and Spot), Officer (2), Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

**Feats:** Alertness, Brawl, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Endurance, Negotiator, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (Cestus)

**Skills:** Bluff +8, Climb +8, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +10, Jump +8, Knowledge (local) +11, Move Silently +8, Perform (crowd-pleasing) +10, Profession (gladiator) +10, Search +10, Sense Motive +10, Survival +8

**Code of Honour:** Barbaric

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 8 (+4)

**Possessions:** Gladiatorial Bladed Cestus, Spiked Breastplate, High Quality Traveller's Clothes, Leather Half-mask

Once a common marine on board an Argossean naval ship, Cedrio was bucked overboard during a tumultuous



storm and ended up getting scooped up and out of the water by one of the Kordavan privateer vessels. Luckily for him his uniform had all but sloughed off his body in the saltwater and the lump on his head was all he had to remember his days in the navy.

Taking advantage of his strength, size and knack for bloodshed, Cedrio was given to the stables of pit fighters in the Black River circuits and he took to the concept very well. Eventually his memory returned to him and he escaped to Messantia – almost 10 years after his disappearance. His wife and son were gone, his brother dead and his ship supposedly sunk off the Barachans. Realising that he had nowhere else to go, he headed to the Coliseum and became one of the city's most famous gladiators.

After a few years of gathering their riches and courage, Cedrio and his two business partners – Umbylla and Ghurat – took a ferry upriver into Koth. Eventually they came to Khorshemish and organised the local boxing and wrestling clubs into the pit fighting circuit well known there now. Cedrio also runs a private street-fighting contest in the Swamp but this is strictly for the pleasure of the fight and not for any form of profits.

## Combat

Cedrio the Ironhanded is at home behind any weapon that he might find in his hands but he especially enjoys the feeling of his uniquely-crafted cestus when it tears off pieces of his foes. He is most comfortable in a conflict when he is at arm's length of his foes, smashing them into pulp. He is so used to fighting for sport however, that when he is involved in a real combat he must often remind himself not to stop and wait for the cheering or applause before finishing his foes.

## Plot Hooks

- ❖ The Player Characters could go and seek out Cedrio for fighting lessons or perhaps to challenge him in some kind of contest of martial prowess. He is a prideful man that accepts all challengers with a smile, so long as they are not looking to actually kill him. If he wins he will often be a gracious winner and if he loses he does so with a smile – but only if he does not feel he was cheated or tricked somehow.
- ❖ Word has reached Cedrio about the location of his long lost son; but it seems that it is much too far a distance for him to travel it alone. He asks the Player Characters to serve as his caravan all the way into northern Nemedra, where his wife supposedly took his son. Whether or not this rumour is true and Cedrio can find his family is yet to be seen but even agreeing to help him find out will earn the big man's gratitude for life.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures or non-player characters are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in the area of Khorshemish.

## ARMY OF KOTH SOLDIERS

These are the common soldiers of the Kothic Army, found throughout the city of Khorshemish as watchmen and constables. They are not trained to battle the supernatural (possibly on account of Tsotha-Lanti's influence upon their trainers) but they will stand against any mortal man or woman easily enough if called to do so.

### Medium Humanoid (Kothic Soldier 4)

**Initiative:** +5 (+0 Dex, +1 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +4, Spot +4

**Languages:** Kothic (45% also speak Aquilonian or Ophirean)

**Dodge Defence:** 12 (+0 Dex, +2 class)

**Parry Defence:** 16 (+3 Str, +3 class)

**DR:** 9 (+8 Mail Shirt and Breastplate, +1 Spiked Helm)

**Hit Points:** 36 hp

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +4

**Defensive Specials:** –

**Speed:** 25 ft.

**Attack:** Arming Sword +8 melee (1d10+5, AP 2) or Poleaxe +7 (2d6+6, AP 8)

**Full Attack:** Arming Sword +8 melee (1d10+5, AP 2) or Poleaxe +7 (2d6+6, AP 8)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +4

**Grapple:** +7

**Special Attacks:** Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

**Special Qualities:** Adaptability (Intimidate and Sense Motive), Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry)

**Feats:** Weapon Focus (Arming Sword), Weapon Focus (Poleaxe), Weapon Specialisation (Arming Sword)

**Skills:** Bluff +1, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local)





+4, Profession (soldier) +8, Ride +4, Search +4, Sense Motive +6

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 4 (+2)

**Possessions:** Kothic Mail Shirt, Breastplate and Spiked Helm, Kothic Arming Sword, Poleaxe

Most soldiers in the Kothic Army are loyal servants to King Strabonus but some can be bought with coin or fear. They are aware of the true threat that the beastmen of the night represent and they never go on night patrols without torches and lanterns aplenty.

## Combat

In any unit of Kothic army soldiers there will likely be half as many swordsmen as their will be poleaxe-armed warriors due to the expense in creating good swords. It is the poleaxers' job to deal with cavalry or high-vantage point enemies while the swordsmen finish off the wounded as they drop.

## BEASTMEN OF KHORSHEMISH

Large Monstrous Humanoid

**Organization:** Solitary or pair

**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Reflex)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +4, Spot +4

**Languages:** Kothic

**Dodge Defence:** 10 (-1 size, +1 natural)

**DR:** 2

**Hit Dice:** 3d12+6 (25hp)

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +1, Will -1

**Defensive Specials:** Thick-Skinned, Weakness to Flame/Light

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Axe +7 melee (1d12+6, AP 5) or Unarmed +7 melee (1d6+4)

**Full Attack:** Axe +7 melee (1d12+6, AP 5) or 2 Unarmed +7 melee (1d6+4)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +3

**Grapple:** +15

**Special Attacks:** Improved Grapple

**Sorcery Knowledge:** -

**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 6

**Special Qualities:** Subservient, Thick-

skinned

**Feats:** Brawl, Great Fortitude

**Skills:** Climb +5, Intimidate +10, Survival +5

**Possessions:** Crude Weaponry

**Advancement:** by character class (favoured class: barbarian)

Massive humanoids with bestial features and leathery limbs, the beastmen are the sorcerous creations of the half-demon sorcerer Tsotha-Lanti. They are the result of dipping a human man into the portal to Hell that exists at the root of the Scarlet Citadel. Their will is broken by the power of the Great Darkness and they always turn to Tsotha-Lanti to give them direction once the painful transformation is complete.

## Combat

Beastmen are simple creatures that understand simple combat tactics – crush or cleave. They are sometimes rewarded by their master with primitive axes to help them against the armoured soldiers of Khorshemish but they are also very skilled at simply overwhelming normal humans with their brute strength,

**Thick-skinned (Ex):** The flesh of a beastman is thick and leathery across most areas of the body, making them difficult to injure without a weapon. Beastmen are considered to have a DR of 5 against unarmed or natural attacks.

**Weakness to Flame/Light (Ex):** Due to their connection to the Great Darkness that created them, the presence of flame or light harms all beastmen. If a beastman is caught in direct sunlight he will suffer 1d6 points of unpreventable damage each combat round. If this light is reduced to a beacon lantern or bright campfire, the



damage is reduced to 1 point per combat round. If the light is simply a torch, candle or similar source the damage is prevented but the beastman suffers a -1 penalty to all d20 rolls for any purpose.

**Skills:** Due to their imposing stature and monstrous features, all beastmen gain a +8 racial bonus to the Intimidate skill.

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
River Viper Venom	Injury DC 12	1d3 Con	5	Immediate/ 1 round/ 1 round/ 1 round

## KOTHIC RIVER VIPER

**Medium Animal**

**Organization:** Solitary or nest (5 – 20)

**Initiative:** +6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex)

**Sensory Traits:** Scent, Listen +9, Spot +9

**Languages:** –

**Dodge Defence:** 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural)

**DR:** 3

**Hit Dice:** 2d8+2 (11hp)

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +1

**Defensive Specials:** –

**Speed:** 20 ft., 20 ft. climb, 20 ft. swim

**Attack:** Bite +4 melee finesse (1d6–1 and poison)

**Full Attack:** Bite +4 melee finesse (1d6–1 and poison)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) (coiled) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +1

**Grapple:** +0

**Special Attacks:** Poison

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

**Special Qualities:** –

**Feats:** –

**Skills:** Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +12, Swim +12

**Possessions:** –

**Advancement:** –

Kothic river vipers are dangerously poisonous snakes that are well known for their penchant for basking in populated areas and their willingness to strike at much larger targets than what they would consider a meal – especially if they are stepped on or molested when basking. Their slate-gray colouration makes them hard to see and their venom makes them hard to ignore; a horrid combination in a common pest in the Swamp.

### Combat

**Poison (Ex):** Anything that suffers damage from a Kothic river viper's bite attack is also affected by the following poison:

**Skills:** Kothic river vipers receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Listen and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus to Balance and Swim checks. They can use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks, whichever is better.

## PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounter with the city of Khorshemish.

The King of Koth is throwing a huge citywide carnival for the birth of his first grandchild and Khorshemish is in a state of chaotic preparation and joyous anarchy. It is the perfect time for criminals to thrive and villains to work their evil schemes – will the Player Characters try to stop them or *join* them?

One of Tsotha-Lanti's lackeys have discovered a new ritual to create reptilian beastmen that are somehow not damaged by the sun but he can only create them from a select stock of humans. One or more of the Player Characters happens to be of this stock and now they find themselves hunted by crocodile-esque monsters during the day and stalked by hideous beastmen at night. Only by stopping Tsotha-Lanti's lackey will they manage to be safe anywhere near Khorshemish again.

A friend of the Player Characters, a priest serving in one of the many fanes or temples in Khorshemish, sent them a letter to come and visit him for his holy days. When they arrive in the Kothic capital they find that their friend is missing and his church has been ransacked by what could only be cultists. If their friend is alive he may not have too much longer and they will need to head off into the dangerous streets of the Swamp to find and hopefully save him.



# Eruk - In the Shadow of Natohk

As it was mentioned in R.E. Howard's *Conan and the Black Colossus*, the walled city of the Asshuri is where the evil creature Natohk the Veiled One once tried to arrange for soldiers for his dark army. The Queen of Eruk refused him, instead sending her loyal Asshuri warriors to aid against the invasion of Kothic armies from the north. After the events in Howard's tale, Natohk turned his wrath upon the city and changed it forever.

## ERUK

'Like the shields of our Asshuri, our backs are strong and we can carry this burden until the end of time.'

**City Classification:** Metropolis

**Population Level:** Low

**Crime Rate:** Average

**Structures of Note:** Garden/Park, Shipwright's Dock, Marketplace/Bazaar, Temple, Army Compound, Royal Seat

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Irrigated, Walled/Moated, Filthy

## HISTORY

The city-state of Eruk was one of the most powerful communities in Shem in the earlier days of the nation. Springing up from two neighbouring villages – Eannah and Kulabba – in an effort to share the lush banks of the river while protecting one another from Kothic invaders and competing tribes. The two villages grew towards and eventually into one another, becoming the city of Eruk.

The tribal mercenary warriors of Shem, the Asshuri, rose up from the soldiers and survivalist warriors of the new city to better forge a force where profiteering enemies from Koth would break against. Like a wave upon the shore, Eruk would scatter northern invaders and turn them back. As the city grew in number and in influence, this ideal became a reality.

The city has seen countless tribal wars, foreign

invasions and floods from the river over its history; yet Eruk always rebuilds stronger atop the remains of its past. Buildings that are too damaged or can be made stronger are demolished, some of the materials used in the next construction and some left to serve as ground foundation. The new buildings of Eruk *literally* are constructed on top of the remains of the old buildings, which is why the whole city is a series of hills, canals and mounds.

When the evil and ancient sorcerer Natohk began his conquest of Shem by way of mountainous Khoraja, Eruk did not allow him to use its legion of Asshuri – instead they formed part of the force that would stand against him. Queen Tamuris had underestimated the power of the ancient warlock and her city paid dearly for it. Natohk



called up a powerful curse to be laid upon the waters of Eruk, of which there is a great deal because of the river it is built on and around, causing them to spill with slimy predators and dangerous river life all over the city.

The river and its many traversed canals turned into the leading danger in Eruk. The once time-saving and convenient rowboat system that brought people across town quickly and easily was turned into a feared and avoided network of predatory veins and arteries that cost hundreds of people their lives each year. Natohk may not have succeeded in his conquering of Hyboria but he left his stain upon the city and people of Eruk.

## LAYOUT

The city of Eruk was originally built around the joining of two small communities surrounding the banks of the river. The walls were built large and square around the two communities, later expanded to encapsulate a large section of the river itself, turning the entire north-western half of the city into a series of gardens and flood plains that were used for agriculture and animals. Since Natohk's cursing it has become overgrown and wild, bursting with savage predators that have either crawled up out of the cursed waters or into Eruk from many breaks in the western wall.

Canals were dug out from the main body of the river and sent spiralling out into the city as it grew, serving as a way to move people and goods around town. These too, like the gardens on the western bank of the river, are now dangerous places where predators lurk thanks to Natohk's magic.

The rest of the city is piled high on mounds and hills made of mud and former constructions set around the existing streets, temples and zikkurats. The city walls are dotted with large and small gates that were once constantly guarded by city watch and occasionally mercenary Asshuri but now most stand vacant and open due to a lack of manpower.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

The once-bustling city of Eruk still is home to many Shemites and travellers, even a sizeable population of Asshuri still remain. It is not the power that it once was by any means but Queen Tamuris and her most loyal of followers still live and thrive amidst the shadows of Natohk's curse.

People of Eruk still live and work as normal folk do but they are always aware of the closest

body of water that runs from the river. Weapons, often long-hafted spears or bows, are never far from their hand in the case that they spot a giant leech or mud hunter stalking around the streets. Snakes and river rats are common as well but pose far less a threat to the average Shemite as the gigantic predators.

Travellers sometimes come to go on safari within the formerly peaceful gardens of Gignum and Mazzashtum, seeking out the enormous man-eating pythons that live in the overgrown tree canopies and the trio of golden maneless lions that have been spotted along the river's banks by scouts. Most of these hunters underestimate the power of Natohk's summoning curse and soon their bones decorate one of these beasts' lairs.

Anyone choosing to live in Eruk does so at their own risk but with the right amount of caution and defensive-mindedness it can be done cheaply and in relative luxury. With so many people having been killed or left Eruk, many of the city's finest homes and manors are up for grabs rather cheaply.

## PLACES OF NOTE

There are several specific locations in Eruk that Player Characters might find interesting or useful to note.

### THE ZIKKURAT OF ISHTAR

Once famed for its sparkling, multi-coloured bricks and components, the zikkurat has fallen into serious disrepair through the years after Natohk's curse. As it is situated only a few dozen metres from the canals on three sides, the building was used as hunting and feeding grounds for thousands of different river beasts over the years. There presence, waste and feeding detritus has turned the surface of the zikkurat to a greenish-grey hue from all of the filth and even the copper statue of the goddess is coated with the green signs of tarnish and neglect.

### THE OVERGROWN GARDENS

The entire western bank of the river that runs through Eruk was once two groomed gardens that people could go and enjoy and many citizens used them for farming and small game hunting. Now these gardens are as thick as jungles and are filled with an assortment of dangerous beasts. Few who go into the gardens unprepared ever return, often choosing to leave Eruk





completely over or through the wall rather than trying to cross back over the deadly river again.

## THE PALACE OF THE QUEEN

Realising too late that her decision to stand against Notohk may have been a hasty choice, Queen Tamuris has since sheltered herself inside of her husband's palace to live out the rest of her days in depression and solitude. The palace is located very close to the eastern bank of the river, making it a frequent site for predator sightings and attacks. Her royal guard are almost all Asshuri, either from her city or hired from other tribes, so the palace grounds tend to be very well protected during the day. Night can be more dangerous but a ring of torches and expensive Hyrkanian oil lanterns help the guards from getting ambushed.

The palace itself is a sizeable structure that was once very beautiful to behold. Like much of recent Eruk however, it has gone to mould and filth over much of its surfaces. The city cannot hope to afford for proper limners and painters to upkeep something that seems so frivolous in the shadow of their other problems. Inside the palace is still a luxurious collection of rooms and halls that Tamuris mopes and wanders around in, always wondering whether or not she did the right thing so many years ago.

## THE ASSHURI YARDS

The Asshuri tradition teaches young men to be proud and strong warriors at an early age. This was once a practice that took place in the homes and fields of the tribe; fathers teaching sons the skills they will need until they were ready to join the units during Festival. With Eruk's current state, Festival is not a practical solution and the numbers of Asshuri in the city dwindled.

To combat this lack of trained elite soldiers, the entire military district was given by the Queen to the Asshuri. The compound, its armoury, the stores and the resources attached to it were all placed in the collective hands of the elite warriors. They began to train and take on new members at a steady rate. Although the Asshuri of other Shemite cities claim that Eruk's warriors are softer because of their lack of tradition, it is well-known the dangers and plights they must face here – and few who question their ability do so more than once.

## PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following is the most important individual found in the city of Eruk. The entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with her and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

### QUEEN TAMURIS, LAST RULER OF ERUK

Having lost her husband years ago, the Queen of Eruk took control of the city-state and all of its people without hesitation. She has been a firm but good ruler and only her decision to stand against Notohk haunts her. She feels that King Conan may very well owe her his life, especially considering the price her people had to pay for aiding him against the Veiled One.

#### Medium Humanoid (Meadow Shemite Noble 12)

**Initiative:** +8 (+3 Dex, +4 Reflexes, – 1 Shemetish)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +9, Spot +6

**Languages:** Aquilonian (literate), Shemetish (literate), Kothic, Stygian

**Dodge Defence:** 18 (+3 Dex, +4 class, +1 Dodge)

**Parry Defence:** 17 (+1 Str, +6 class)

**DR:** –

**Hit Points:** 48 hp

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +14

**Defensive Specials:** Dodge

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Dagger +10 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Shemite Bow +16 ranged (1d10+1, AP 4; +1 within 100 ft.)

**Full Attack:** Dagger +10/+5 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Shemite Bow +16/+11 ranged (1d10+1, AP 4; +1 within 100 ft.)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +9/+4

**Grapple:** +10

**Special Attacks:** +3 to hit with Shemite Bow and Scimitar, +1 to hit with any Bow, Point Blank Shot

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 16

**Special Qualities:** Do You Know Who I Am?, Enhanced Leadership, Lead by Example (+4), Rank Hath Its Privileges, Social Ability (*comeliness, refuge*), Title (Queen), Wealth

**Feats:** Carouser, Combat Reflexes, Leadership, Persuasive

**Skills:** Appraise +12, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +10, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate

+8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Perform (oratory) +12, Ride +5, Search +8, Sense Motive +10

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 50 (+8)

**Possessions:** Shemetish Dagger, Exquisite Noble's Clothing, Expensive Golden Jewellery

Queen Tamuris is the leader of the city-state of Eruk and has been for many years. Since her husband's death when she was a much younger woman, she has been the only royalty here. Effectively wearing the crowns of queen *and* king due to her inability to produce an heir and her unwillingness to remarry, Tamuris takes the full responsibility of everything that happens – and has happened – to the people and lands of Eruk.

The Queen of Eruk is a beautiful – if not a touch haggard – woman with long black hair that she frequently keeps tied into a trio of braids that loop behind her into an elaborate pattern down her back. She holds herself with an air of dignity and Shemetish pride common in the nobles of her culture and even in the face of what her decisions brought upon her people she remains strong of will. Until she passes from this world she will remain within her palace, stricken with malaise; leaving only when she has no other options.

### Combat

There are very few things that would ever cause Tamuris to draw the thin-bladed dagger she keeps in her belt sash, mostly due to her Asshuri bodyguards that are always present. She knows how to defend herself well enough but she leaves the combat to her men. Every morning however, she walks out onto the palace's northern balcony with her husband's bow and shoots any beasts she can see climbing out of the river, making her a rather skilled archer.

### Plot Hooks

- ✱ Tamuris' advisors have finally convinced her to take a new husband or so she would have them believe. They have sent for a dozen or more suitors, one or more of the Player Characters among them. She has plans of driving all of her suitors so crazy that they will never *want* to marry her. What she does not know is that one of the suitors is actually a Kothic assassin looking to take more than her hand in marriage...
- ✱ There is a magician in northern Stygia that claims he can undo the magics of any being woven in this realm; that his sorcery is guided by the eye of Ibis itself. Queen Tamuris has lost one too many of her loyal people to Natohk's curse and is ready

to entertain this magician's claims. The only issue is that she must go to him in person – across all of Shem. She wants professionals to help protect her caravan along with her Asshuri and she believes that the Player Characters are perfect for the job.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures or Non-Player Characters are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in the area of Eruk.

### ASSHURI MERCENARIES

These are the elite of the city-state armies of Shem. They are all that Eruk has to protect them anymore from outside threats and those that rise from the murky waters. Although they are eternally fraternal with one another, the Asshuri are not snobbish or rude to outsiders – they are too aware of their excellence to be bothered by another's skill or lack thereof.

#### Medium Humanoid (Meadow Shemite Soldier 6)

**Initiative:** +9 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflexes, – 1 Shemetish, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +6, Spot +6

**Languages:** Shemetish, Kothic

**Dodge Defence:** 15 (+2 Dex, +3 class)

**Parry Defence:** 22 (+3 Str, +4 class, +1 Parry, +4 Large Shield)

**DR:** 6 (+6 Mail Hauberk)

**Hit Points:** 48 hp

**Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +2

**Defensive Specials:** Parry

**Speed:** 25 ft.

**Attack:** War Spear +10 melee (1d10+5, AP 2) or Shemite Bow +9 ranged (1d10, AP 4; +1 within 100 ft.)

**Full Attack:** War Spear +10/+5 melee (1d10+5, AP 2) or Shemite Bow +9/+4 ranged (1d10, AP 4; +1 within 100 ft.)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +6/+1

**Grapple:** +9

**Special Attacks:** +1 to hit with any Bow, Combat Formation (heavy infantry), Improved Sunder, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot



**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 17, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12

**Special Qualities:** Officer (1)

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Mounted Archery, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (War Spear), Weapon Specialisation (War Spear)

**Skills:** Bluff +6, Climb +8, Diplomacy +5, Heal +5, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +6, Profession (mercenary) +5, Ride +4, Sense Motive +5, Swim +5

**Code of Honour:** Mercenary

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 6 (+2)

**Possessions:** Asshuri Mail Hauberk, 2 War Spears, Shemite Bow with 6 Arrows, Large Shield

The Asshuri of Eruk are not as numerous as they once were in the city's prime but their adaptation of old traditions in order to rebuild their strength has helped vastly in the recent months. They are tough warriors willing to die for their cause – whatever the coin that is paying them at the time says that should be.

**Combat**

Asshuri warriors are skilled combatants at close and ranged warfare. They happily use their bronze shod spears when a few paces from a foe but are not opposed to killing their enemies from 100 metres with a few well-placed arrows from their curved bows. So long as their target is made ineffective in the existing conflict, they have done well.

**GIANT LEECH**

Large Animal (vermin)

**Organization:** Solitary or swarm (3 – 10)

**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex)

**Sensory Traits:** Scent, Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Spot +8

**Languages:** –

**Dodge Defence:** 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

**DR:** 5

**Hit Dice:** 8d8+24 (64 hp)

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +1

**Defensive Specials:** Slime, Weakness to Fire / Salt

**Speed:** 20 ft., 10 ft. burrow, 30 ft. swim

**Attack:** Bite +9 melee (1d6+4 plus bleed damage, AP 10)

**Full Attack:** Bite +9 melee (1d6+4 plus bleed damage, AP 10)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft. (2) / 10 ft. (2)

**Base Attack:** +5

**Grapple:** +13

**Special Attacks:** Bleed

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 12, Con 16, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2

**Special Qualities:** Vermin traits

**Feats:** Die Hard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Track

**Skills:** Climb +12, Hide +11, Survival +8, Swim +14

**Possessions:** –

**Advancement:** 9 – 12 HD (Large), 13 – 15 HD (Huge)

The rivers of Shem do not normally produce such large and imposing invertebrates but dark sorcery has called these things to the muddy banks and damp streets to hunt for bloody meals. Giant leeches slide around in the muck and water, hunting their prey with the dedication of a proper predator. Where giant leeches can be found in large enough numbers, wildlife quickly begins to become rarer and drained bodies begin to surface all over.

Giant leeches are huge ropes of flexible invertebrate flesh that range in colour from various shades of green to grey and even black. They are eight to nine feet in length, a foot or so in diameter and weigh nearly 200 pounds and can stretch out their bodies much longer when they need to reach prey with their suckered mouth.

**Combat**

Giant leeches do battle as best as their cylindrical bodies can allow, darting forward in order to bite with their saw-toothed and suckered mouths; which produce a constant flow of anti-coagulant saliva that causes great gouts of blood to erupt from wounds they inflict. Giant leeches are ambush predators due to their clumsiness out of the water and commonly lurk in the shallow banks and mud in order to get the first strike in.

**Bleed (Ex):** Giant leeches secrete powerful digestive gels and anti-coagulants in their puckered mouths, turning the blood of their victims to the fluidity of wine. This adds 1d8 damage from bleeding to all bite attacks.

**Slime (Ex):** Giant leeches are covered in a thick mucous membrane that protects it from any sort of weaponry that cannot cut through it. Bludgeoning weapon attacks slide harmlessly off the creature and inflict half normal damage because of the slimy layer on the leech's body.



**Weaknesses (Ex):** Due to the nature of the giant leech's body structure it suffers terribly wounds from anything that rapidly dehydrate it. Fire or heat-based attacks inflict double normal damage.

**Skills:** Giant leeches have a +8 racial bonus on Climb, Hide and Swim checks. A giant leech can always choose to take 10 on Climb or Swim checks, even if rushed or threatened.

## MUD HUNTER - AQUATIC MANTID

Medium Animal

**Organization:** Solitary

**Initiative:** +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +6, Spot +12

**Languages:** –

**Dodge Defence:** 14 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)

**DR:** 3

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+20 (42 hp)

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2

**Defensive Specials:** –

**Speed:** 25 ft., 30 ft. swim

**Attack:** Foreclaw +9 melee (1d6+4, AP 4)

**Full Attack:** 2 foreclaws +9 melee (1d6+4, AP 4) and

bite +7 melee (1d8+2, AP 3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +5

**Grapple:** +13

**Special Attacks:** Crush, Improved Grab, Pounce

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 6

**Special Qualities:** –

**Feats:** Track

**Skills:** Climb +12, Hide +12, Jump +8, Move Silently +8, Survival +8, Swim +12

**Possessions:** –

**Advancement:** 6 – 10 HD (Large), 11 – 15 HD (Huge)

A relative of the giant mantids of Aquilonia, mud hunters are brown insects that live in the muddy banks of rivers and lakes, burrowing down to keep cool in the daytime and emerging to prowl at evening and night. They are excellent predators, often found snatching fish from the water in their savage claw-like limbs or ripping travellers off their feet who stray too close to the water's edge.

These insects are three or four feet long from the end of their abdomen to the tip of their triangular heads, and range in colour throughout the many shades of brown. They have folding foreclaws that make up their front legs, which they use to slice and capture prey to be devoured by their oversized mandibles. It should be noted that this breed of mantid does *not* have wings, having lost them to slim down their bodies for swimming.

### Combat

Mud hunters prefer to use momentum and surprise to catch their prey, grasping them in their serrated foreclaws before beginning to devour them with their slicing mandibles. Most mud hunters, like other mantids, dislike attacking humans unless other food sources are scarce; the ones in Eruk do not have this qualm at all.

**Crush (Ex):** A mud hunter that makes a successful grab can make a single crush attack in place of its two claw attacks. The crush attack automatically inflicts 3d6+12 damage on the target and needs not roll to hit.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a mud hunter must hit with its foreclaw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can crush or bite its target for free each round.







**Pounce (Ex):** If a mud hunter charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

**Skills:** Mud hunters have a +4 racial bonus to all Climb, Hide, Jump, Move Silently and Swim skill checks. They can always choose to take 10 on their Climb and Swim checks, even when rushed or threatened.

## PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounter with the city of Eruk.

The river predators and vicious gardens of Eruk have become known farther and farther as things have worsened over the years and a hunter's guild based out of the small village the Player Characters are staying in are paying 500 silver coins to any hunter, warrior, poacher

or scout willing to journey to Eruk and spend just one night camping on the banks of their river.

Another Kothic invasion force, mostly mercenaries and hired bandits, are aimed at attacking Eruk despite what they have been told of the 'curse'. The Player Characters are caught up in the warpath and can choose to help the Shemites defend their accursed city or run with the Kothic force and try to grab up some loot in the chaos of the ensuing battle.

A worshipper caravan of Ishtar are heading toward Eruk on a mission to clean the sacred zikkurat and cleanse the temples of evil. They are few in number and not well trained for combat but they have deep pockets and a willingness to spend their church's coin. The want the Player Characters to help them reach Eruk safely and watch over them as they set to cleaning the zikkurat – which could put them directly in the path of all sorts of hideous creatures and voracious beasts.



# Yanyoga - The City of the Skull

DeCamp and Carter's *Shadows in the Skull* showed readers a mystical and hidden city behind a gigantic stone skull at the bottom edge of the continent. This city was a refuge of the wizard Thoth-Amon and his serpent-men allies and the site where Conan's armies set upon the ancient evils and defeated them. The city was not destroyed in the process and the Hyborian Age has not heard the last of the inhabitants of Yanyoga.

## YANYOGA

'We have survived against humanity for eons. It is so utterly arrogant to believe that one filthy Cimmerian could topple an eternity of progress.'

**City Classification:** City

**Population Level:** Low

**Crime Rate:** Below Average

**Structures of Note:** Armoury/Depot/Cache, Public Bath, Temple, Scholarly Library/Arcane Emporium, Non-Human Community, Mystic/Cursed Grove or Cavern

**City Traits:** Well-Defended, Devoutly Religious, Secretive/Private, Fortified

## HISTORY

The stone skull of Yanyoga has looked out from its place in the cliffside of the World's Edge for hundreds of years. Its empty stone sockets have gazed upon the crashing waves of the Southern Sea long enough to see the beach form from the jagged rocks, worn away by the wind, salt and surf. By the time of the age of Atlantis and the Acheronian Empire came to pass Yanyoga was already an old city.

Created by the ancient and powerful serpent-men to serve as their watch post for the coming of the gods of the South, Yanyoga is a city carved painstakingly out of the solid rock of the mountain. Originally the shape of the gateway was an elaborate archway made to look like the face of Yig, one of the gods of the serpent-men. Over time, especially after the rise of mankind began to concern the serpent-men, the face was carved into that of a giant skull to warn away the 'barbaric' humans. The skull remained the visage of the gateway into the city for two centuries before the serpent-men were forced to pull away from their open conflict with humanity and although it is weathered and cracked now, the skull still remains.

The skull has kept outsiders from investigating Yanyoga for the most part, leaving the serpent-men and their devoted harems to their own secret ways. The occasional treasure hunter or adventurer would venture into the skull in search of riches and fame but upon discovering the luring women of Yanyoga they often only found their deaths.

Thoth-Amon, as the speaker and highest clergy of Set, was a great ally to the serpent-men and called Yanyoga one of his sorcerous refuges. His library away from Luxur was where the wicked sorcerer would go when the likes of Ctesphon and the Black Circle would grate upon him; when he simply needed the company of monsters over men. It was through the foolish actions of an associate of his, a double-crossing sorcerer named Nenaunir, why King Conan brought his army to Yanyoga and demolished the serpent-men in *Shadows in the Skull*.







The serpent-men were not all destroyed however and many of their kind still lived far away in other parts of Hyboria. Hearing that so many of their kin were destroyed, many because of the accursed words that *unweave*, they slowly returned to Yanyoga to rebuild their southern refuge. Now it is a place of preparation and secrecy in which the serpent-men are readying for their vengeance against King Conan.

## LAYOUT

The 50 foot tall stone skull gateway is carved out of the face of the mountain, its features worn and weathered away to barely resemble the rictus grin it was originally sculpted to wear. It is an unsteady but not too difficult climb up the 50 feet to the jagged teeth that were once its teeth, as it was designed for the preternatural agility of the serpent-men and their allies.

Behind the gaping mouth of the stone skull lies the city of Yanyoga. Stone and brick buildings rise up from the age-worn floor under a cavernous ceiling without a discernable pattern to how and where they were carved or constructed. The original serpent-men were following the omens and auguries of their shamans, all of whom were killed by Conan and his soldiers, meaning that no one alive knows what was intended by the dead-end alleys, vacant circles and oddly hollowed depressions in the ground. It is a city that defies human reason – because it was not built for humans.

The main portion of the city, the common buildings and such, are designed and laid out for the dozens of human women that make up the serpent-men's harems and breeding stock. The women are a mixture of drugged captives and devoted worshippers; they perform the majority of the commonplace activities in the city. To a normal onlooker, Yanyoga would seem much like a normal subterranean city.

Looking a little closer would reveal the sizeable tunnel and access entrances scattered in the external walls of the city. These are the doorways and hallways used by the serpent-men to go to and from their hidden lairs, pits and laboratories. They rarely emerge from these hidden areas wearing their natural shape (see below for their shapeshifting abilities) unless they are sure that there are no outsiders around but interact with their harems on a daily basis. Essentially there are several dozen



hidden layers of rooms that have been carved deeper in the mountain for their use, many of which hide ancient secrets or store relics and antiquity for late ruse.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

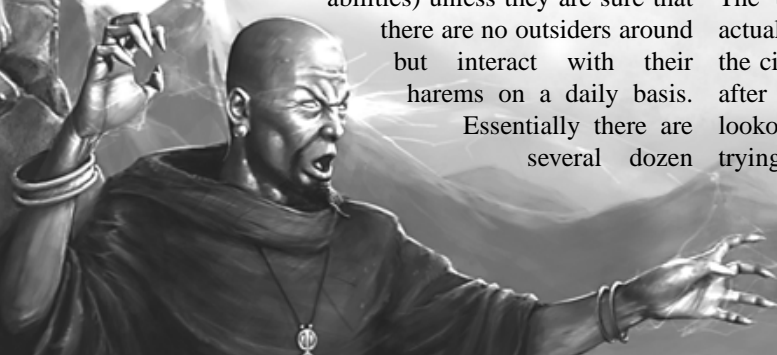
Yanyoga operates like any other normal Hyborian city for the most part. The many wives and servants of the serpent-men work in the craft houses, venture out into the jungles of the Black Kingdoms to forage and hunt for food and nearly all of the menial labour is performed by the true humans of the city. The serpent-men are far less likely to participate in anything that is not sorcerous or martial preparation for their revenge upon the humans who destroyed their society.

## PLACES OF NOTE

There are several specific locations in Yanyoga that Player Characters might find interesting or useful to note.

## THE EYES OF THE SKULL

The two dark depressions in the skull-gateway are actually balconies to tunnel accesses that lead up from the city. They were dug out by the orders of Ss'natyak after Conan's bloody attack, making two fantastic lookout points or murder holes for any future trespassers trying to enter the skull. There are always two archers,



often loyal harem members, posted as watchwomen at the eyes. Their eyes are sharp, their arrows poisoned and their legs fast to run them toward the city should real danger arrive.

Every seventh night the lookouts are replaced by serpent-man priests who give sacrifice to Set and Yig respectively, in order to make the city safe from scrying and enemy divination. Whether or not it works is a matter of faith but King Conan has not yet sent any forces to investigate the re-inhabited Yanyoga.

## THE LIBRARY OF THOTH-AMON

The only human allowed to venture into the caverns beyond the city, Thoth-Amon kept a workshop and reliquary in the secret halls behind the city filled with rare and wondrous elements, chemicals, objects and tomes. The leader of the serpent-men, Ss'natyak, has only recently broken the wards that Thoth had placed upon his library – giving him access to a myriad of powerful new lore and information that he never knew about before. The serpent-man is slowly acquiring the knowledge of the library, adding it to his own sizeable repertoire of talents.

No one else in the community is allowed inside of the library, not so much as because of Ss'natyak's territoriality but rather his fear that Thoth-Amon will somehow *feel* all of these intrusions. Wherever the dark sorcerer may be, angering him through these trespasses is not something that even the Children of Set want to test.

## SETS MAW

A deep pit dug out of the floor of Yanyoga, Set's Maw is located at the base of the temple to the dark god. It is a 40 foot deep sloping pit that is home to a massive Son of Set (Gargantuan size) that the serpent-men give their unholy sacrifices to. The snake that lives in the Maw is an amazing creature that somehow survived when Yanyoga was attacked; making meals of the wounded and dead that it could reach for several years until new inhabitants came and discovered the gigantic beast. The serpent-men believe that the snake survived through Set's blessing, awaiting their return to take care of the monstrous serpent.

## THE BREEDING PIT

Located behind four thick stone walls, the breeding pit of Yanyoga is a sickening sight

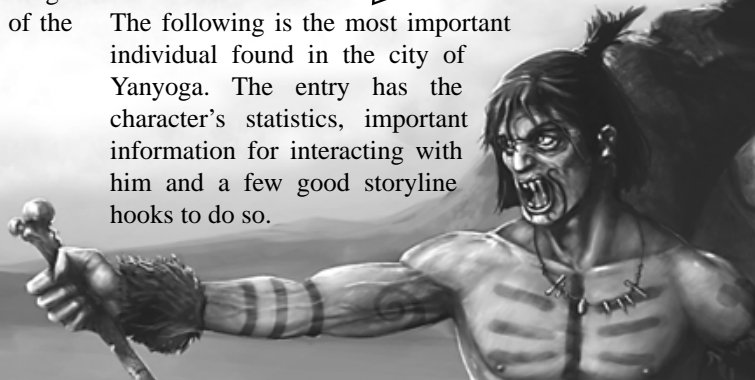


to all but the most devoted of Set's worshippers. It is an oval depression, only a few feet deep but it is filled with lukewarm water, crushed lotus pedals and *hundreds* of different euphoric snakes. This place is where the serpent-men bring their brides, willing or not, to undertake the mating rituals that will produce another serpent-man. The women are bitten dozens of times and would be destined for a painful venom-related demise but only if the pregnancy does not take. If the woman is carrying a serpent-man child, the growing foetus makes her immune to the copious amounts of venom in her veins. If not, Set has found her wanting and she will soon be dead.

Every year, on Set's holiest of evenings, the serpent-men bring a new wife to the breeding pit for a massive breeding orgy that can only be described as chaotic and horrible. By the end of the evening the room will be rank and thick with pheromones, waste, blood and *other* scents that are nothing short of bestial.

## PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following is the most important individual found in the city of Yanyoga. The entry has the character's statistics, important information for interacting with him and a few good storyline hooks to do so.







## SSNATYAK, VISIONARY OF YANYOGA

In *Shadows in the Skull*, Conan came and destroyed what he believed was the last of the serpent-men at Yanyoga. This was not true and the learned noble snake-man Ss'natyak proves this. Many of his brethren took heed from his words and headed back to Yanyoga to begin the preparations on a plan for vengeance.

### Medium Aberration (Serpent-Man Scholar 8)

**Initiative:** +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Reflex)

**Sensory Traits:** Darkvision 60 ft., Scent, Listen +14, Spot +14

**Languages:** Serpentine, Old Stygian

**Dodge Defence:** 18 (+3 Dex, +3 class, +1 natural, +1 Dodge)

**Parry Defence:** 15 (+2 Str, +3 class)

**DR:** –

**Hit Points:** 48 hp

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +11 (+0 against Corruption)

**Defensive Specials:** Dodge, Spells

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Bite +13 melee (1d4+1 plus poison) or Yig Knife +12 melee (1d6+2, AP 3)

**Full Attack:** Bite +13/+8 melee (1d4+1 plus poison) or Yig Knife +12/+6 melee (1d6+2, AP 3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +9/+4

**Grapple:** +11

**Special Attacks:** Poison (see *Serpent-Man* entry below)

**Sorcery Knowledge:** Curses, Hypnotism, Necromancy, Prestidigitation; 12 Power Points

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +15 (+17 with Curses) (+4 class, +6 Charisma, +3 Serpent-Man; +2 Hexer)

**Spells Known:** *Blast Wave (Defensive Blast)*, *Burst Barrier*, *Chill of the Grave (Defensive Blast)*, *Conjure Item*, *Conjuring*, *Domination*, *Entrance*, *Greater Ill-Fortune*, *Hypnotic Suggestion*, *Lesser Ill-Fortune*, *Mass Hypnotic Suggestion*, *Raise Corpse*, *Telekinesis*, *Torment*<sup>1</sup>

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 22

**Special Qualities:** Background (lay priest), Increased Maximum Power Points (triple), Knowledge is Power, Scholar (see

*Serpent-Man* entry below), Shape-shifting (see *Serpent-Man* entry below), Soul-enslavement (see *Serpent-Man* entry below)

**Feats:** Alertness, Hexer, Iron Will, No Honour, Skill Focus (Knowledge (arcana)), Ritual Sacrifice, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Skills:** Bluff +15, Craft (alchemy) +10, Diplomacy +10, Hide +10, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (Set's Mysteries) +14, Move Silently +8, Perform (ritual) +12, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +8, Survival +10

**Code of Honour:** None

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 25 (+2)

**Corruption and Insanity:** 11; Thirst for Vengeance

**Possessions:** Jewellery, toga, sacrificial dagger, Yig Knife

<sup>1</sup> This feat or spell can be found in the *Secrets of Skelos* sourcebook.

Ss'natyak lived in the swamps and jungles of Darfar for roughly two centuries before he saw the signs and omens of what was to take place in Yanyoga. Knowing that his people were about to suffer at the hands of an insolent barbarian king, he began the long journey south toward the City in the Skull. The trip was difficult and arduous for him, having to avoid detection and confrontation while trying to spread the word about what was to happen. He had gathered many of his brothers along the way and was ready to help with ancient magics from the enemy's flank.

They were too late however and Conan had already come and gone by the time Ss'natyak and his solemn allies arrived. They were overwhelmed by sadness and loss for their fallen kin and seeing so many eternal lives snuffed out on the spears and swords of mere mortals stirred a nightmarish rage in the serpent-men. He knew at that moment that he would then need to get vengeance for the fallen. If it took 1,000 years he would avenge the murdered, even if it meant exacting it upon Conan's great-great-grandchildren.

### Combat

Like most serpent-men, Ss'natyak prefers to use his sorcery, arcane abilities and poison to deal with his foes. He carries two blades with him at all times; an obsidian sacrificial dagger in the shape of two long fangs and an ancient bronze Yig knife that looks like a miniature scimitar. He will sometimes coat his blade in his venom if he has time before a battle but he relishes the feeling of delivering a fatal bite much more than trying to stab his victims.





## Plot Hook

- There was a tropical storm that smashed into the World's Edge, flooding parts of Yanyoga and causing several deaths amongst the harems. Now Ss'natyak needs new women to sate his peoples' needs and there are not many human settlements around to seduce or raid. Shifting his shape and venturing into the lands of humans, he crosses paths with the Player Characters – and tries to enlist their help in finding him new women for his 'brothel'.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures or Non-Player Characters are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in the area of Yanyoga.

### SERPENTMEN / SNAKEMEN, CHILDREN OF SET

Medium Aberration

**Organization:** Solitary or pair

**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Reflex)

**Sensory Traits:** Darkvision 60 ft., Scent, Listen +10, Spot +10

**Languages:** Serpentine, Old Stygian

**Dodge Defence:** 12 (+1 Dodge, +1 natural)

**DR:** –

**Hit Dice:** 4d8–4 (14 hp)

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +7

**Defensive Specials:** Dodge

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Bite +4 melee (1d4 plus poison) or by weapon

**Full Attack:** Bite +4 melee (1d4 plus poison) or by weapon

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +3

**Grapple:** +4

**Special Attacks:** Poison

**Sorcery Knowledge:** Hypnotism and Summoning. 12 Power Points

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +3 (+1 natural, +2 Charisma)

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 15

**Special Qualities:** Shape-shifting, Soul-enslavement

**Feats:** Alertness

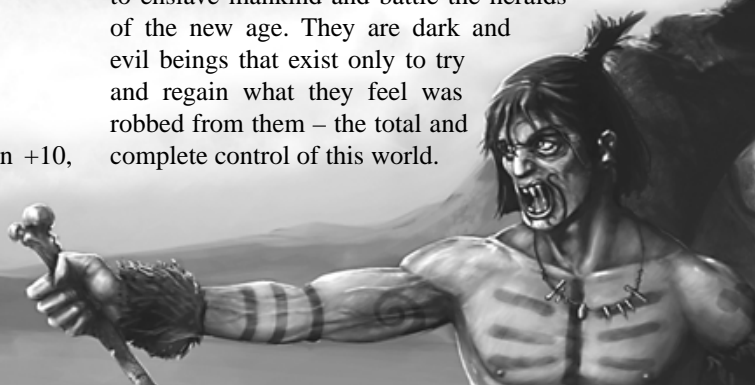
**Skills:** Bluff +7, Craft (alchemy) +5, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Sense Motive +10

**Possessions:** Jewellery, clothing, weaponry and occasional alchemical potions

**Advancement:** by character class (favoured class: scholar)

Ancient beings from the age before men, serpent-men are humanoid beings with the necks and heads of gigantic serpents growing from between their shoulders. Although extremely rare throughout the world, they have lived in the shadows of the world since the age where they ruled from their towers and cities. These abominations have tried to enslave the souls of mankind for generations upon generations from their secret lairs throughout Hyboria, mastering sorceries that only they have access to. From their ancient origins in the shadow of Yig and Set, the serpent-men are the truest children of the serpent god – even if the priests of Stygia would staunch at the idea of such 'blasphemy'.

Serpent-men live in secret from the rest of the world in places like Yanyoga, orchestrating their dark schemes to enslave mankind and battle the heralds of the new age. They are dark and evil beings that exist only to try and regain what they feel was robbed from them – the total and complete control of this world.







## Combat

Serpent-men that are forced to do direct battle with a foe use exquisitely crafted weaponry or their thick-fanged mouths to bite their foes. The poison inside of their glands is a potent and primordial cocktail of venoms, rotting flesh as well as robbing a target of breath *and* paralysing their nerves – making even the slightest scratch from their fangs can be fatal.

**Poison (Ex):** Anything that suffers damage from a serpent-man's bite attack is also affected by the following poison:

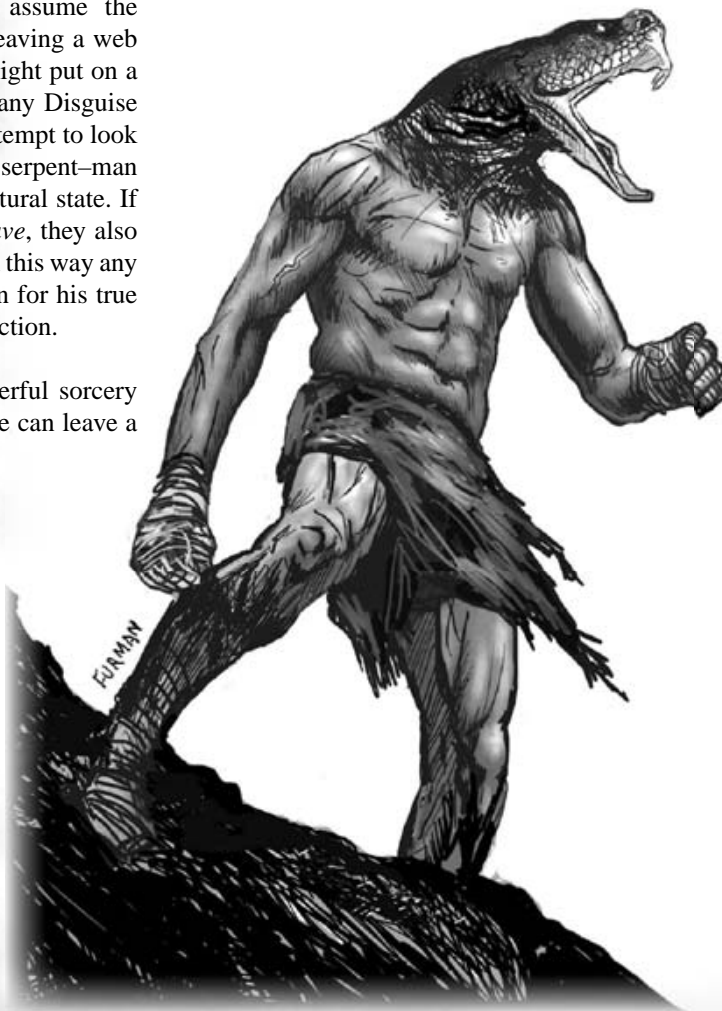
Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Serpent-man Venom	Injury DC 14 plus snake-man's Con bonus	2d4 Str and 1d6 Con	4	10 minutes / 1 minute / 1 minute / 1 minute

**Shape-shifting (Su):** Serpent-men can assume the shape of any human form they wish by weaving a web of sorcery around their faces as an actor might put on a mask. They gain a +10 magical bonus to any Disguise rolls they make during this time and *can* attempt to look like someone specific they have seen. If a serpent-man is killed, he automatically reverts to his natural state. If a serpent-man hears the *words that unweave*, they also revert to their normal face. While masked in this way any reflective surface will reveal a serpent-man for his true face but only to those who can see the reflection.

**Soul-enslavement (Su):** Such is the powerful sorcery of the serpent-men that being killed by one can leave a

spirit tethered to them for all eternity. Should someone be killed by the attack, poison or spell of a serpent-man and pass all the prerequisites to become a ghost or risen dead – they will automatically be bound to the will of the snake-man that killed them for all eternity.

**Skills:** Serpent-men have a powerful set of olfactory glands that sense vibrations in the air, heat changes and subtle scent variations in those around them. This gives them a +8 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks, and a +6 bonus to Sense Motive checks.



## PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounter with the hidden city of Yanyoga.

King Conan may not be the most scholarly person in Aquilonia but he has a very good memory. He knows the threat that the serpent-men represented and he has recently began to wonder whether or not he and his forces killed them all at Yanyoga. He sends his favourite freelancers, the Player Characters, to the World's Edge to investigate.

The worshippers of Set in Stygia are not happy that the serpent-men of Yanyoga consider themselves

the closest to Set's holy light and their seers have discovered the recent growth of their community. In an attempt to sabotage Ss'natyak and his new brood, the Black Circle is paying the Player Characters a great deal of coin and favours to go and seal a cave – a cave that looks like a skull – with some alchemical explosives they are to be given.

One of the Player Character's sisters has gone missing from an expedition to the southern Black Kingdoms and was supposedly carried off toward the south coast. They will have to travel far and through dangerous ground to get to where she is supposed to be made into a harem bride and mother to a serpent-man child!







## Onagrul - Port of Coin and Daggers

Along the eastern shores of the Vilayet Sea there are several minor ports and coves that pirates, thieves and profiteers call home. One, as mentioned in *Conan the Defiant*, is a dastardly little place called Onagrul. Bearing the same kind of infamy that other pirate-friendly ports such as Tortage and Kordava have but without being on an oceanic coast, Onagrul is a seaborne thief's dream come true.

### ONAGRUL

'Buying, selling or just moving on; they all cost somebody something here in Onagrul.'

**City Classification:** City

**Population Level:** Very High

**Crime Rate:** Major

**Structures of Note:** Lodge/Hostel, Brewery, Shipwright's Dock, Brothel, Gambling Den/Casino, Arbiter Court

**City Traits:** Controlled, Irrigated

### HISTORY

Like most other ports of call, Onagrul was formed when an old naval trader shored up his ship and ran out of the will to keep sailing. This particular trader was actually an old Argossean pirate named Harristae whose hold was full of Black Kingdoms ivory and Turanian gold when his crew mutinied and he supposedly saw them all at the end of his sword. His ship, the *Onagrul* (which means One Last Gold in Argossean), crashed into the shore of Hyrkania with Harristae acting as the only crewman.

Using the gold and ivory in his cargo and the very planks from his ship, Harristae built the dockhouse and the pier to his new port city...Onagrul.

Over the decades, other pirates and privateers like Harristae came and went from the growing port city. Some stayed and made their own businesses, others ventured further east and helped pound out the eastern trade routes to Vendhya and



Khitai. Criminals tend to attract criminals and within two generations of Harristae's original shipwreck, Onagrul had become a notorious and infamous host to smugglers and pirates.

### LAYOUT

As with any port city, Onagrul is based heavily around its sea access. From the original length of black piers and stony footpaths, the city extends outward in semi-circles. Each semi-circle is another main avenue, with the sorts of buildings and constructions that line it and its side streets appearing in the order of their importance to sailors, pirates and dockworkers.

The first avenue is the piers, shipwrights, storehouses, gambling dens and brothels (an important resource for Hyborian sailors); beckoning to the coin and booty of all those who pull up into the piers. Many ship crews that stop in to Onagrul rarely get off this first ring of their interests.

The second ring of buildings contains all of the drinking halls, taverns, pubs, food stalls and a few general stores. The closest area of the city that could be called a marketplace, the second way through town is a favourite



place of legitimate traders and caravan personnel coming in from the east. The is one tavern, the Pyg an Wissul, that is also a fully functioning and profiting ale brewery. The smell of slow-roasted hops and stewing barley can be smelled for blocks all around.

The third and largest ring of buildings is that of the crafts and skilled workshops. Sail cloth tailors, cutlass blade smiths and barrel-making coopers are scattered throughout the area. More than a few carpenters specialise in masthead carvings and at least one coppersmith claims that his gaff loops never bend. Although anyone can go to these shops and buy their wares, the Last Chance auction house is a good place here to try and get a better price on bulk goods; often surplus or abandoned special orders from the local craftsmen.

The rest of the city's outskirts, drawn up in rough semi-circles, contain the permanent residence houses and hostels for the people who live and work in Onagrul. Most of the city's inhabitants are seasonal crews for ships and caravans that come and go but there are a few hundred permanent residents to the city. Unless they live in their place of business, they can all be found in small and simple homesteads throughout the eastern edge of the city.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

What someone does for their daily routine in Onagrul depends greatly on what sort of business they are in. Sailors stick to the piers and docks, getting their ships and boats ready to sail out into the Vilayet. Taverns and pubs begin to cook up their stews and roast their evening beasts. Shops batten open their shutters and begin shouting their best deals to anyone with coin who will listen. Pirates and thieves look for the best places to sell or spend their loot. Music from a dozen cultures float out from the inns and street corners, mingling with the rumble of the masses to create a cacophony of activity and chaos.

At night the city is often blanketed in a knee-deep fog that rolls in off the post-sunset Vilayet, which is the perfect setting for the lively nightlife that erupts as soon as the normal shops close. The brothels begin to solicit their wares on their balconies, the gambling casinos open their shutters and set tables up on the street, sweet-smelling clouds roll out of smoking dens and the sound of sea shanties echo through the night. It is a dangerous time to be caught alone in an alley or down by the pier but it is an exciting and celebratory few hours for each



and every soul that is thankful for the strong sails on their ship, the buxom wench in their arms, and the stiff drink in their tankards – because they may not be so lucky in the morning.

## PLACES OF NOTE

There are several specific locations in Onagrul that Player Characters might find interesting or useful to note.

### BLACKWOOD DOCKHOUSE AND PIERS

The largest set of ship-worthy docks and piers, Denenzo Blackwood (an alias to be sure) created his shipping enterprise by catching and eliminating bad pirates for the sake of the skilled ones. By separating the chaff from the wheat so to speak, Denenzo earned the respect and a percentage from his patrons. This allowed him to build a series of large and well-constructed piers from expensive dark woods from Vendhya. These piers are noted as being the most sturdy in all of Onagrul, if not also the most expensive to have a mooring at.





## THE PYG AN WISSUL

Named for the only two things the original owner had with him when he came off the boat 20 years ago, the Pyg an Wissul (pronounced 'Pig and Whistle') is a brewery of strong, stout ales attached to a large alehouse. For a single silver a pitcher of 'Pyg Sweat Dark' or 'Stolen Gold Lager' can be poured from the huge brewing kegs that line the walls of the tavern, ensuring the freshest pour in town!

## THE LIARS WAGER

A premier Barachan gambling den located just a few paces off the second avenue, the Liar's Wager is a charming little dive that keeps enormous bouncers armed with iron-studded cudgels on hand at all times. This place has a bit of a reputation for being a haven for thieves, cutthroats and smugglers but it also has a reputation for being one of the richest locations in all of Onagrul. A man with a single silver coin and good enough luck could walk away a very rich man but most end up gambling their lives away to the house. The owner, a Hyperborean ex-slaver named Ivuhn, frequently walks the den amongst his patrons keeping a watchful eye out for cheaters or trouble – both of which he deals with using his Akbitanan hand axe, *Final Raise*.

## PEOPLE OF NOTE

The following are the most important individuals found in the city of Onagrul. The entry has the characters' statistics, important information for interacting with them and a few good storyline hooks to do so.

### DENENZO BLACKWOOD - ORIGINALLY ZANSO BENOBA

Once a member of Zingaran nobility, this pirate made enemies of the wrong people in his homeland and was soon chased away to a faraway land. Taking a new name and face, 'Dorenzo Blackwood' has managed to become one of the most powerful people in Onagrul.

**Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Noble 2 / Pirate 10)**

**Initiative:** +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +10, Spot +8

**Languages:** Aquilonian, Argossean (Literate), Hyrkanian, Zingaran (Literate)

**Dodge Defence:** 21 (+3 Dex, +7 class, +1 Dodge); 23 (+2 seamanship)

**Parry Defence:** 19 (+2 Str, +6 class, +1 Zingaran); 21 (+2 seamanship)

**DR:** –

**Hit Points:** 52 hp

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +9 (+6 versus Corruption)

**Defensive Specials:** Dodge, Improved Mobility, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Poison Resistance +1

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Broadsword +11 melee (1d10+2, AP 3) or Dagger +10 melee (1d4+2 plus poison, AP 1)

**Full Attack:** Broadsword +11/+6 melee (1d10+2, AP 3) or Dagger +10/+5 melee (1d4+2 plus poison, AP 1)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +8/+3

**Grapple:** +10

**Special Attacks:** Ferocious Attack (additional attack), +1 to hit with Broadsword and Arming Sword, Improved Critical (broadsword), Improved Feint, Improved Trip, Sneak Attack +4d6, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword), Zingaran Surprise

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 17

**Special Qualities:** Bite Sword, Pirate Code (Vilayet Sea Flags), Rank Hath Its Privileges, Sneak Subdual, Title (lost), To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Wealth

**Feats:** Leadership, Navigation, Combat Expertise, No Honour, Skill Focus (Disguise)

**Skills:** Balance +13 (+15 seamanship), Bluff +12, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +10, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (geography) +8, Profession (sailor) +10 (+12 seamanship), Sense Motive +10, Swim +8, Use Rope +10 (+12 seamanship)

**Code of Honour:** None

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 18 (+2)

**Possessions:** Fine Noble's Clothing, Barachan Broadsword, Hidden and Poisoned Zingaran Dagger, Expensive Jewellery

Born to a very affluent family in Zingara originally under the name of Zanso Benoba, 'Dorenzo' was forced to leave his homeland after his parents were assassinated and his family blamed for the sinking of several nationalist merchant ships – which Zanso was rather sure his family had nothing to do with. Whatever the truth of the matter was, he escaped onto a Barachan cutter that was heading to the Vendhyan coast. There he

stowed away with another trading ship sailing into the Vilayet Sea, where it was beset by pirates. During the attack Zanso quickly turned his allegiances and *helped* the pirates take the ship! In exchange for the unasked assistance and somewhat unorthodox methods in which he did so, the pirate captain took the Zingaran boy under his wing. When asked his name, Zanso stole the first name of the crewman he had just killed and the first thing he saw – a stack of Vendyhan dark timber. He became Denenzo Blackwood; pirate and opportunist.

Over the years he became a dangerous personality on the Vilayet and amongst land-based caravans heading out to the east. He and his loyal crew took whatever they wanted whenever they wanted but especially enjoyed targeting less-skilled pirate crews. He was told once that there was some kind of pirate code of ethics that was supposed to keep them from attacking one another – but restraint has never been Denenzo's strongest virtue.

### Combat

Denenzo is a brutal combatant that takes no prisoners and expects his crews to do the same. Trained from his days on the pirate ship with a slightly curving Barachan broadsword, he loves the free-footed style of fighting that it offers. His people's duelling style is lethal but

it is too much like a dance and not a chaotic clash of steel. Denenzo is a selfish and prideful fighter but he also knows that any victory is a good victory – so he keeps a poison-soaked dagger sheath under his belt. The victors get to write the history books and how he kills his foes is ultimately unimportant.

### Plot Hooks

- ✱ Denenzo is afraid that his disguise failed and someone from the home country – one of the Player Characters – has seen him for who he is. His slight paranoia about his family's enemies discovering him causes him to panic and he offers his crewmen one thousand silvers to bring him the Player Character's head.
- ✱ The crew of a ship moored at Blackwood Pier has gone missing, seemingly abandoning their ship. Denenzo is concerned that the ship might be some kind of trick or trap, so he does not want to send his own crew into the dismal-looking cargo cutter. Instead he hires the Player Characters to help him 'move out the cargo', knowing that if there are any traps, the Player Characters will trigger them.

## FULSIT HARRISTAE

The inheritor of Onagrul, this drug addled and penniless gambler lost everything that his great-grandfather built here. He is a sad man with bad luck in all things but he knows about something about the city that no one else possibly could – if he could only just *remember* where it is.

**Medium Humanoid (Argossean Commoner 4 / Pirate 3)**

**Initiative:** +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +5, Spot +4

**Languages:** Argossean, Barachan, Hyrkanian, Zingaran

**Dodge Defence:** 16 (+1 Dex, +4 class, +1 Dodge); 17 (+1 seamanship)

**Parry Defence:** 13 (+0 Str, +3 class); 14 (+1 seamanship)

**DR:** –

**Hit Points:** 23 hp

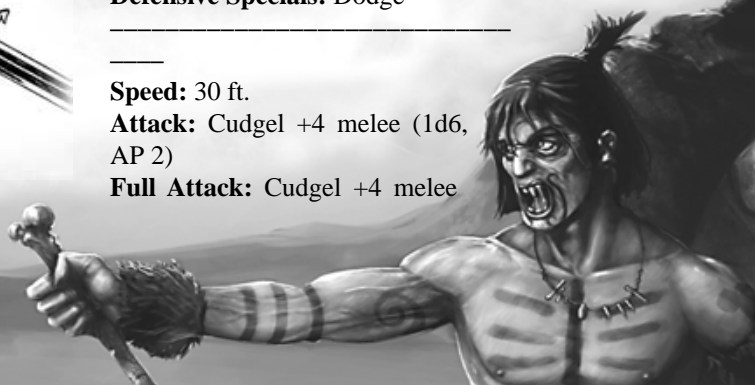
**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +6

**Defensive Specials:** Dodge

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Cudgel +4 melee (1d6, AP 2)

**Full Attack:** Cudgel +4 melee







(1d6, AP 2)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +4

**Grapple:** +4

**Special Attacks:** Ferocious Attack, Sneak Attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12

**Special Qualities:** Adaptability (Bluff and Sleight-of-Hand), Illiterate, Pirate Code (Vilayet Sea Flags), To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter

**Feats:** Persuasive, Skill Focus (Profession (gambler))

**Skills:** Appraise +5, Bluff +8, Climb +4 (+5 seamanship), Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (games) +5, Knowledge (local) +6, Profession (gambler) +8, Search +5, Sense Motive +4, Swim +6

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 8 (+1)

**Possessions:** Average Sailor's Outfit, Tarnished Dagger, Faded and Torn Treasure Map

Fulsit, the inheritor of the Harristae lands and resources, has managed to lose all but his tiny homestead in the seven years since his own father passed away. The dockhouse, the ship, the general store – all of it. He is a consummate drinker and dice player but he is only particularly good at the first. His face is well known around town and there have been many nights where the locals will carry poor Fulsit home to lay him down on his front doorstep, bottle still gripped with white-knuckles in his fist.

He has a plan however and it will 'bring him back into power in Onagrul'. His great-grandfather, the original Captain Harristae, supposedly buried a full wine keg of gold and silver somewhere under his growing town when it began to get larger than he expected. This keg has not been found and Fulsit thinks he has the key to its discovery. A letter from his great-grandfather to Fulsit's grandmother had some very strange drawings on the back; drawings that look a great deal like a navigational map. Fulsit hopes and prays that he will figure out how to read it, find the buried loot and be able to live out his days happily. Of course, it also means that he will be able to head down to the Liar's Wager more often, too...

## Combat

Fulsit is normally too inebriated or depressed to ever want to fight but on occasion he will drunkenly accuse someone of cheating him and the fists will fly. Most regulars in the town come to his aid out of respect to his family line of pirate captains but sometimes he is left to his own devices. He is not a *bad* fighter with a knife if blood must be spilled; yet he is not exactly a surgeon either.

## Plot Hooks

- ❖ Fulsit thinks he has discovered how to read the map and now he needs some extra hands to help him break into one of Blackwood's warehouses to dig under the floor. None of the locals would dare cross Denenzo Blackwood, so Fulsit has to go to outsiders – the Player Characters – instead. If they help him he claims he will make them rich but when they find nothing under the floorboards except for a dozen hidden corpses from a Hyrkanian trade caravan that went missing, what will they do?

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE AREA

The following creatures or Non-Player Characters are somewhat commonplace in the area and could be used in many encounters that could take place in the area of Onagrul.

## LOCAL SAILORS AND PATRONS

There are numerous ships moored at Onagrul at any given time and the crews from these ships spill out into the city to spend money, blow off some steam and generally enjoy their time ashore.

### Medium Humanoid (Hyrkanian Borderer 2 / Pirate 3)

**Initiative:** +7 (+1 Dex, +6 Reflexes)

**Sensory Traits:** Listen +5, Spot +6

**Languages:** Hyrkanian, Zingaran (75% also speak Aquilonian or Turanian)



**Dodge Defence:** 14 (+1 Dex, +3 class); 15 (+1 seamanship)

**Parry Defence:** 15 (+3 Str, +2 class); 16 (+1 seamanship)

**DR:** –

**Hit Points:** 34 hp

**Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +4

**Defensive Specials:** –

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Attack:** Unarmed Strike +7 melee (1d6+3 lethal or nonlethal) or Tulwar +8 melee (2d8+5, AP 3)

**Full Attack:** Unarmed Strike +7 melee (1d6+3 lethal or nonlethal) or Tulwar +8 melee (2d8+5, AP 3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

**Base Attack:** +4

**Grapple:** +7

**Special Attacks:** +1 attack bonus with all Bows, +1 to hit with Bows at longer ranges, Far Shot, Ferocious Attack, Sneak Attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual, Weapon Familiarity (tulwar)

**Sorcery Knowledge:** –

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13

**Special Qualities:** Combat Style (archery), Illiterate, Pirate Code (Vilayet Sea Flags), To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter

**Feats:** Brawl, Skill Focus (Profession (sailor)), Track, Weapon Focus (tulwar)

**Skills:** Appraise +4, Bluff +4, Climb +7 (+8 seamanship),

Craft (varies) +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Profession (sailor) +8 (+9 seamanship), Swim +8, Use Rope +5 (+6 seamanship)

**Code of Honour:** Barbaric

**Reputation and Social Standing:** 5 (+1)

**Possessions:** Average Sailor's Outfit, Knife, Hyrkanian Tulwar, Wineskin of Tortagan Rum or Kyros Wine

These sailors are normally just out looking for a good time but when the wine begins to flow and the women begin to tease things can get tense quickly. Money is always important to them, even if it is just the enjoyment of spending it quickly and happily. Each sailor or patron found in a city like Onagrul could be vastly different than the next but the regular visitors to the city – the locals – are mostly cut from the same cloth. They are loyal to their captain, their ship and themselves.

### Combat

Hyrkanian sailors learn early on how to fight with the heavy chopping blade of a tulwar, which is even useful on board a ship. Whether cutting enemy boarders or binding sail lines, a good steel edge is never far from the hard and calloused hands of a Onagrul sailor.

## PLOT HOOKS

The following are a few good scenario ideas that can bring the Player Characters into direct encounter with the hidden city of Onagrul.

The taverns and pubs of the city are a buzz with rumours of a 'ghost ship' sailing the port waters at night and most of the dockside crews are refusing to go out to sea until they know the sailing is clear. One crazy captain, a Vendhyan named Urlhu, says he will go and vanquish the ghosts in the name of his goddess Katar; who judges the souls of the dead. He needs a crew however and he offers the Player Characters a kukri of Vendhyan white steel to each that sails with him to Onagrul to send these restless souls back to the Underworld.

A ship that the Player Characters are on was attacked by pirates on the Vilayet and they were left for dead, adrift on hot winds filling rapidly with carrion flies. A trading vessel came by just before the Player





Characters were going to die of thirst or starvation and saved their lives. The trading vessel also brought news of their assailants' ship – which they know to be docked at Blackwood Pier in Onagrul. Perhaps it is time that the Player Characters went to the port of coin and daggers for a little vengeance.

A wealthy Hyrkanian merchant is sending a gift of expensive jewellery across the Vilayet Sea to his business partners in Turan and is rightfully worried about raiders

and pirates. He believes that the best way to stop pirates from attacking his goods is to hire pirates to escort it instead. Handing a veritable fortune of jewellery and coin to the Player Characters to pay for their journey, he asks them to hire a pirate captain in Onagrul to take them and the goods all the way to Aghrapur. Will they do as he asks and hope to find an *honest* pirate or will they simply walk away with a fortune and dodge his assassins the rest of their lives?





# Index

- Aquatic Mantid 115  
 Aquilonia 51  
 Argos 52  
 Asshuri Mercenaries 113  
 Asshuri Yards 112  
 Barachan Isles 53  
 Beastmen of Khorshemish 108  
 Blackwood Dockhouse 125  
 Blue Fox Warrens 86  
 Bossonian Marches 54  
 Breeding Pit 119  
 Bronzsmiths Furnace 75  
 Brythunia 55  
 Cedrio the Ironhanded 106  
 Children of Set 121  
 Cimmeria 55  
 Cimmerian Blue Fox 91  
 City Plots 46  
 City Traits 43  
 Commercial 27  
 Corinthia 56  
 Crime Rate 11  
 Denenzo Blackwood 126  
 Desayda 96  
 Duncohr Forge 87  
 Duty Locations 23  
 Eastern Desert 57  
 Entertainment 29  
 Erabolgh 87  
 Eruk 110  
 Eyes of the Skull 118  
 Fantastique 37  
 Finn Duncohr 87  
 Fulsit Harristae 127  
 Gathering 18  
 Ghulistan 58  
 Giant Leech 114  
 Giant Zamorian Spider 98  
 Goods Locations 21  
 Governing 34  
 Great Fane of Zath 94  
 Hadraput 73  
 Hadra Sulan, 77  
 Hall of Barons 103  
 House Atrayis 95  
 Housing 14  
 Hyperborea 58  
 Hyrkania 59  
 Idol of Set 76  
 Iranistan 59  
 Kazaki Tomb 76  
 Khitai 60  
 Khoraja 61  
 Khorshemish 102  
 Koth 61  
 Kothic River Viper 109  
 Koth Soldiers 107  
 Kozaki Stable 76  
 Kozak Raider 80  
 Kush 62  
 Library of Thoth-Amon 119  
 Lord Osuko Atrayis 97  
 Mountain Boar 92  
 Mud Hunter 115  
 Nemedra 63  
 Non-Housing Structures 40  
 Nordheim 64  
 Onagrul 124  
 Ophir 65  
 Overgrown Gardens 111  
 Palace of the Queen 112  
 Patrons 128  
 Pictish Wilderness 65  
 Queen Tamuris 112  
 Religious 31  
 Rutcrana 89  
 Saddil 79  
 Sand Scorpion 81  
 Serpentmen 121  
 Service 20  
 Sets Maw 119  
 Seven Stones Ridge 84  
 Shem 66  
 Spider Catacombs 96  
 Spider Swarm 100  
 Ssnatyak 120  
 Storage 16  
 Stygia 67  
 The Black Kingdoms 62  
 The Bladesong Circle 104  
 The Border Kingdom 54  
 The Liars Wager 126  
 The Old Palace 104  
 The Prachaun Grul 86  
 The Pyg an Wissul 126  
 The Scarlet Citadel 103  
 The Westermarck 54  
 The Wind Walls 77  
 Tsotha-Lanti 104  
 Turan 69  
 Urrogh Clansman 90  
 Vendhya 69  
 Yanyoga 117  
 Yezud 93  
 Yizil 82  
 Zamora 70  
 Zanso Benoba 126  
 Zikkurat of Ishtar 111  
 Zingara 71



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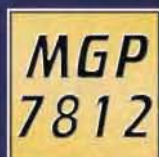
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