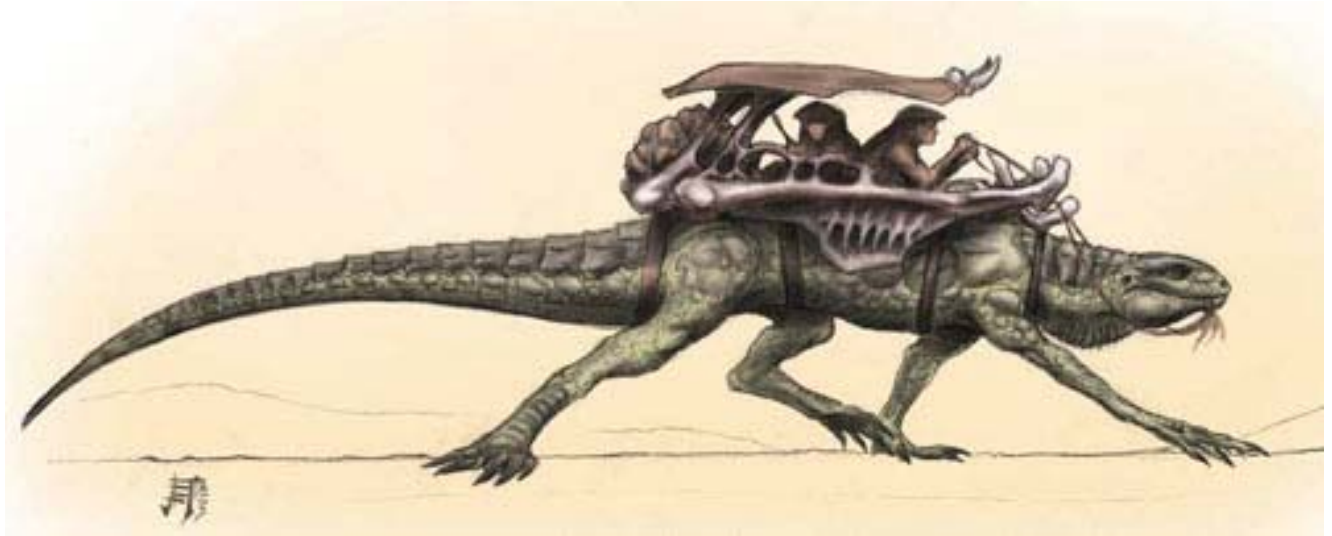


Trade Lords

- brax and Jon



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Introduction

Trade thrives because quantity and price varies from place to place. The following charts lists major trade items, along with guidelines for price and demand in each major market. These are only the most popular trade goods. Many others exist, and trade in these items may be established by the DM and players. The tables in this product give a city-by-city breakdown of the availability and prices for many common trade items on Athas. Most table entries include:

Base Cost: The average cost of a standard amount of the item. To determine the price of an item in a certain city, multiply the base cost by the multiplier given for the appropriate price code.

Price Code: A code indicating the trade item's price and availability in each city, as explained below. Note that the price codes listed represent the cities' current economic conditions. If the situation changes, the city's entire economic picture and its price codes may change. Such changes are entirely up to the DM.

- 1 means supply and demand are balanced, leaving prices approximately at the base cost;
- 0.9 means prices are approximately 10% below base costs;
- 1.1 means that prices are approximately 10% above base cost;
- 2 means that prices are approximately double base cost;
- 0.5 means that prices are approximately half base costs, etc.

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The following key applies to good pricing charts in this document:

Key:	
Red	It is <i>illegal</i> to traffic in this good in this city.
Black	This city <i>does not trade</i> these goods with other cities
Tan	This city <i>heavily regulates</i> traffic in these goods
↑	This price represents a <i>baseline</i> . Finer versions cost more money.

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Trade Goods, by the Pound

Most trade goods can be measured by the pound, e.g., 1 square yd. of silk, or 10 square yds. of shimmercloth, a mirror, 25 feet of hemp rope, and 50 feet of giant's hair or silk rope, all weigh exactly 1 pound each.

Good /1-pound unit	Price	Azeth's Rest	Draj	Kurn	Eldaarich	Oronha Valley	Saragar	Lost Scale	Raam	Urik	Balic	Gulg	Nibenay	Tyr
Agafari Wood	25 cp	1.3	1.1	1.5	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.7	0.5	1
Amber	8 gp	1	1.2	1	1	0.9	0.9	0.9	1	1	1	0.9	1.1	0.9
Bronze	7 sp	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.8	1	1	1.2	1	1.2	1.2	1	1	1
Candy	1 bit	1	1	2	1	3	0.5	2	0.5	1	1	2	2	0.5
Chalk	1 bit	1	3	1	1	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	1	2	1	0.5
Cheese	2 bit	2	3	0.5	2	0.5	0.5	3	4	1	1	1	1	2
Cinnabar	16 sp	1	1	1.1	0.9	1.2	1	0.9	1	0.9	1.2	1	1.1	1
Cloth, Silk /1 sq.yd.	10 cp	1	0.8	1.2	0.7	1	1	1.5	1	1	1.4	1.5	1	1
" , Shimmercloth /10 sq yd*	10 sp	0.9	1.2	0.8	2	1	0.1	1	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.4
Copper	5 sp	1	1.2	1.1	0.7	1	1	1.2	1	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.7	1
Cosmetics	16 sp	0.9	1	0.8	1	0.8	0.9	1	0.9	0.9	0.8	1	1	0.9
Cotton, Raw	2 cp	1	2	1	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	2	1	1	1	0.5
Drake Ivory	50 cp	1	1.2	1	1	0.8	1.3	0.7	1	1.3	1.3	1	1.5	1.3
Dyes/Pigments	16 sp	1	1.2	0.8	0.9	1	1	0.8	0.9	1.1	1	0.9	1	1
Fuel (dung, brush, or coal)	3 bit	0.3	1	1	3	1	2	1	2	0.3	1	0.3	1	2
Fuel, Smokeless (charcoal)	1 cp	0.4	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
Glass	1 sp	0.5	1	2	0.7	1	0.7	1.5	1	1	2	2	1	0.7
Gold	50 gp	1	0.9	1	0.8	1	1	1.2	0.9	1	1	1	1.2	1
Grain or Faro	3 bit	1	0.7	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2
Hardwood	15 cp	2	2	1	1.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	1	1.3	1	0.7	0.7	0.9
Incense	32 sp	1.1	1.1	1	1	0.9	1	1.2	0.9	0.9	1	1	1.1	1
Ink	64 cp	0.9	1.2	0.8	2	0.7	0.9	1.2	0.9	1	1	1.1	1.1	0.9
Iron	1 gp	2	1.1	3	5	3	0.8	2	1.1	1.1	1.7	1.1	1	0.8
Jade	1 sp	1	1	1	0.7	2	0.7	1.2	1	1	1	2	1	0.7
Kank Nectar	1 cp	1	0.4	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	0.4	2	1	2
Marble	4 cp	1	0.7	1	2	0.7	2	1	1	0.7	2	0.7	1	2
Medicines	8 gp	1	1.2	0.7	2	0.7	0.9	1	1.3	1	1	1	1	0.9

Mirrors, ea	1 sp	1	1	1.5	0.7	1	0.7	1.2	1	0.7	1	2	0.7	0.7
Nuts or Dried Fruit	1 cp	1	1	0.5	2	0.5	2	0.5	2	0.8	2	0.7	1	2
Obsidian	5 cp	1	2	2	1	1	1	1.2	2	0.8	2	1	1	1
Paper (100 ct)	20 cp	1	1.4	0.7	2	0.7	1	2	0.7	1	2	1	1	1
Perfume	8 sp	1	1	0.7	1.3	0.8	0.8	1	1	0.8	1.2	1	1.2	0.8
Rope, Giant's Hair /50 ft.	5 cp	1	2	2	0.8	3	1.5	2	1	1	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Rope, Hemp /25 ft.	5 bit	1	0.6	2	3	3	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1
Rope, Silk 50 ft	1 cp	1	0.7	2	1	2	0.5	2	1	1	2	0.7	2	0.5
Salt	2 bit	3	1	4	4	5	2	0.5	2	0.5	0.2	0.2	1	2
Sausage	3 bit	0.3	2	0.7	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	0.7	1	1
Silk (raw)	5 cp	1.2	1	2	1.4	1.6	0.8	1.4	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.2	1	0.6
Silver	5 gp	1	1	1	0.8	1.2	1	1	0.8	1.2	0.9	1.1	1	1
Sugar	4 bit	1	1	2	0.5	1	2	2	2	0.5	1	0.5	1	2
Wax	7 bit	1	1	0.4	2	1	0.6	1	0.4	1	1	2	1	0.6

*"Shimmercloth is known in Saragar as "puddingfish cloth." The cloth is only produced in the Lost Sea region, but Ssuuran merchants occasionally sell it in the Tablelands or in the Trembling Plains region. See *Lost Cities of the Trembling Plains* and *Faces of the Forgotten North* (2007) for details.



Figure 1: © Wizards of the Coast (2002), used by permission.

Liquids, by the Tun

Dune Traders purchase and sell following liquids by the tun. A tun contains 250 gallons, approximately 2000 lbs.

Item		Azeth's Rest	Draj	Kurn	Eldaarich	Oronha Valley	Saragar	Lost Scale	Raam	Urik	Balic	Gulg	Nibenay	Tyr
Ale	4 gp	2	2	0.5	3	0.5	0.5	2	0.5	1	1	1	1	0.5
Beer/Broy	10 gp	1	1	0.4	2	0.5	0.5	2	2	1	1	0.5	1	1
Cider	8 cp	1	1	0.5	2	0.5	0.5	1.5	2	1	2	0.5	1	1
Liquor (Fine) ↑	20 sp	2	3	0.7	1	0.6	0.4	2	1	1	0.7	1	1	1
Liquor (rotgut)	50 cp	1	2	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	2	0.7	0.7	0.7	1	0.7	1
Oil, Lamp	25 cp	1	0.5	1	1	1	2	0.5	1	1	1	2	2	1
Oil, Cooking	16 gp	1	1	0.5	2	0.5	1	2	2	1	1	0.5	0.5	2
Water	10 cp	0.5	1	1	2	0.1	0.1	0.5	2	1	2	1	0.5	2
Wine (Cheap)	20 cp	1	1	0.5	2	0.3	0.5	2	2	0.5	2	0.5	1	2
Wine (Fine)↑	95 cp	1	1	0.5	2	0.3	0.5	2	1	2	1	2	3	0.5



Figure 2: © Wizards of the Coast (2000), used by permission

Odd-Weight Items

This table lists items that are not easily grouped in pound units.

Item	Base Cost	(Approximate Weight)	Azeth's Rest	Draj	Kurn	Eldaarich	Oronha Valley	Saragar	Lost Scale	Raam	Urik	Balic	Gulg	Nibenay	Tyr
Ceramic Ware	1 bit	½ lb (1 pc)	1	1	2	1	1	0.7	1.2	0.7	1	2	1	2	0.7
Cloth Cotton.	4 cp	2 lb. (sq yd)	1	0.7	1	1	1	1	1.5	0.7	0.7	1	2	2	1
Cloth, Hemp	8 bit	2 lb	1	1	0.7	2	1	2	1.5	1	2	1	0.7	1	2
Feathers, Rare	5 sp	1/100 lb	1	2	0.7	2	1	1.1	0.5	0.7	0.7	2	0.7	1	2
", Common	3 bd	1/100 lb	1	2	0.7	1	1	1	1	1	0.7	1	0.7	1	0.7
Furs	2 sp	2 lb	1	1	0.7	1	0.7	1	0.5	0.7	0.7	2	2	1	1
Leather, Tanned	5 cp	4 lb. (sq yd)	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	1	2	1	2	2	0.7	1	1	1
Paintings	1 gp	2 lb	1	1	0.7	1	0.7	0.7	1.5	1	0.7	1	2	2	0.7
Rugs	1 gp	10 lb	1.2	2	1.5	0.7	1.2	1.4	1.5	1	0.7	0.7	1	2	0.7
Statues	1 gp	75 lb	1	2	0.7	0.7	1	1	0.7	1	0.7	1	1	2	1
Tools	1 cp	2 lb	0.7	1	0.5	1	1	1	1.2	2	1	0.7	1	0.7	2



Figure 3: © Wizards of the Coast (2002), used by permission

Animals and Mounts

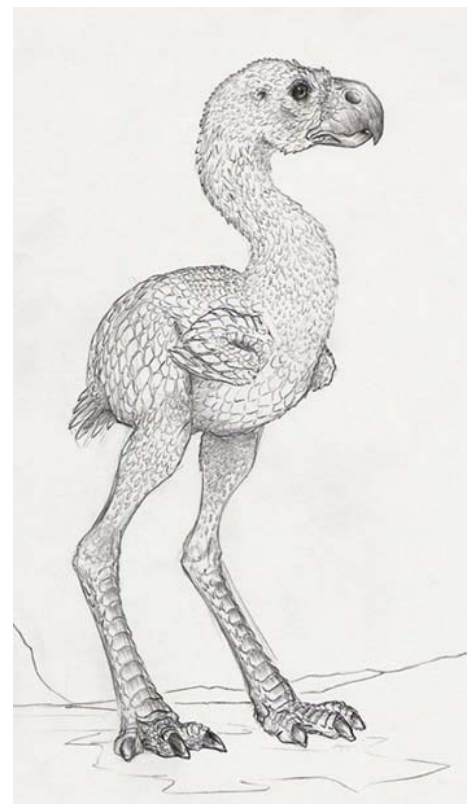
This chart lists the average price for creatures commonly trafficked between city-states.

Note: If an animal is not listed here, see "General Categories"

Creature	Price	Azeth's Rest	Draj	Kurn	Eldaarich	Oronha Valley	Saragar	Lost Scale	Raam	Urik	Balic	Gulg	Nibenay	Tyr
*Arena Creatures, *	*	1	1	1	2				1	1	2	0.7	1	1
Crodlu, Riding	2 gp	0.7	2	0.7	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Crodlu, Warmount	4 gp	1	1	0.7	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	0.7	1	0.7
Inix	1 gp	0.5	1.5	0.7	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1
Inix, Warmount↑	25 sp	0.7	1.2	0.8	2	0.7	1	1	1	1.2	1	1.2	1.2	1
Kanks, riding	12 sp	0.7	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	0.7	1	2	1
Kank, warmount	25 sp	1	1.2	1	1.3	1	1	1	1	1	0.8	0.8	2	1
Mekillot	2 gp	0.5	2	0.7	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0.7
Songbirds	1 cp	1	1	0.7	1	0.7	1	1.5	1	0.7	0.7	1	2	0.7

*Most cities will pay for live monsters captured for entertainment purposes in the arena or similar blood sports. The DM must determine whether the captured creature has appeal for blood sport purposes. To determine the base price for a live arena creature in good condition (in silver pieces), multiply the creature's CR by itself.

Figure 4: © John Thompson, 2006.



General Categories of Goods

This chart lists broad categories of items and creatures commonly traded between city-states. Weights, prices and individual availability will vary according to the item or creature. For example, the “vehicle” category includes items ranging from chariots to silt skimmers. The DM must determine whether a particular item is available or in demand in any particular city. For example, a city far from any body of silt will not purchase or sell silt skimmers.

	Azeth's Rest	Draj	Kum	Eldarich	Oronha Valley	Saragar	Lost Scale	Raam	Urik	Balic	Gulg	Nibenay	Tyr
Alchemical Items	1	2	0.7	0.7	0.7	1	1.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	1	0.7	1
Animals (pets)	1	0.7	1	1	2	1	1.2	1	1	2	0.7	1	1
Gems	2	1	1.2	1	1	1	0.7	0.7	0.7	1	1	2	0.7
Armor	1	1	0.7	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	0.7	0.7
Poisons	0.9	1.1	0.8	1	1	1.2	1	1	1.1	1	1.1	1	1
Psionic Items Services	1	0.7	0.7	2	0.7	0.8	0.7	2	1	1	1	1	2
Clothing	1	0.7	0.7	1	1	1	1.5	1	1	2	0.7	2	1
Finished Leather goods	1	0.7	0.7	1	1	2	1.2	1	2	1	1	1	1
Livestock, Bird	1	2	0.7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.5	0.7	0.7
Livestock, Insect	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0.7	0.7	2	1	0.7
Livestock, Mammal	0.5	1.5	0.8	2	1.2	0.7	1.5	2	1	1	1	1	1
Livestock, Reptile	0.5	2	0.7	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1
Magical Items/Services	1	1	0.7	1	1	2	1.5	1	1	1	1	1	1
Jewelwry	1	2	1	0.7	1	0.9	1.2	0.7	1	1	1	1	0.7
Vehicles	1	1	0.7	2	0.7	2	1.2	2	1	1	1	0.7	2
Slaves, labor	1	2	1	2				2	2	1	1	0.7	1.1
Slaves, specialty	1	2	1	2				0.8	1	1.5	1	0.7	2
Spell books	1	2	0.7	2	0.7	2	1.5	1	2	1	1	0.7	1
Spell components	1	0.7	1	1.5	1	2	1.5	1	1.2	1	1.5	0.5	1
Weapons	1	0.7	0.7	2	0.7	2	0.7	2	2	1	2	0.7	2

Perishable Goods

Unlike other trade goods, perishable items cannot be left out in the desert for weeks and months at a time without losing their value. These goods have a *half-life*. Assume that the total group of goods is half as valuable for every half-life increment that passes. For example, if someone purchased 80 lb of berries in Kurn for 40 CP and teleported with them to Draj and sold them a couple of days, they could sell the berries for about 240 Cp. However, if they brought them in a covered wagon to Draj, taking just over 12 days, the berries would only be worth 30 Cp, 1/8 of 240. The DM could explain that most of the berries had rotted, and the remaining ones looked dry and less appetizing, although still edible. In all, the berries have lost 7/8 of their value.

Perishable Item	Price	half-life (days)	Azeth's Rest	Draj	Kurn	Eldaarich	Oronha Valley	Saragar	Lost Scale	Raam	Urik	Balic	Gulg	Nibenay	Tyr
Animal Skin, Raw	5 cp	50	0.4	1.4	0.8	1	0.2	1	0.4	1	1	1	0.6	1	0.6
Berries, Fresh	1 cp	4	2	3	0.5	3	0.2	0.2	0.4	3	2	4	0.6	1	0.6
Bone, Raw	1 cp	100	0.5	2	0.8	1	1.2	1	1	1	1	1	1.5	1.2	1
Chitin, Raw	3 cp	100	1	2	1	1	1.4	1	0.7	1	1.2	1	1.2	0.7	1
Erdlu eggs, ea.	5 bit	30	1	2	0.7	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0.7	0.7
Figs	1 bit	20	0.7	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	0.7	1	2
Fruit	2 bit	10	1	1	0.7	2	0.7	0.5	1	2	1	1	0.7	1	2
Herbs	3 bit	100	1	1	0.3	1	0.3	0.3	0.3	2	0.7	0.7	1	1	2
Resins	12 gp	100	0.9	0.9	0.8	2	1	1	0.9	1	0.9	1	1	1	1.2
Spice, Common	1 cp	100	1	1	0.5	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	0.5	0.5	2
Spice, Exotic	15 cp	100	1	1	1	1	1.5	1	0.7	1	2	0.7	0.7	0.7	1
Spice, Uncommon	2 cp	100	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	0.5	0.5	2
Vegetables	2 bit	20	1	1	0.7	2	0.7	0.5	1	2	1	1	1	0.7	2

Trade outside the Cities

The economies of villages are almost always volatile. When buying or selling in a village or trading with a nomadic tribe, typically use the volatile category in the *random market fluctuation* table, and apply the result to the prices of the nearest city.

Several other villages are exceptions to the price volatility rule in other villages. These special communities are the source of major commodities and so have relatively fixed price codes. Those villages are listed below, along with the price codes for the items they produce. These codes fluctuate in the same manner as the codes of the city-states.

Altaruk:	Crodlu 0.8, Inix 0.8, Cloth, Silk 1
Azeth's Rest*:	Cosmetics 0.9, Fuel, (Charcoal) 0.4, Water 0.5, Wine (Fine) 1.
Celik:	Water 8, Cattle 2, Gold 0.8, Iron 0.9
Dimlands Craft Village:	[whatever good that village produces] 0.4
Fort Stench:	Leather .5, Leather Goods .
Ket: Beer/Broy:	0.7, Candy 0.3, Grain (Corn) 0.4, Water 1
Ledopolus (both):	Weapons 0.8, Grain (Wheat) 0.9
Makla:	Obsidian 0.3
Ogo:	Gems 0.9, Hardwood 0.3, Rare Feathers 0.9
Salt View:	Salt 0.1
Tradenest:	Shimmercloth: 0.5
Walis:	Gold 0.8, Copper 0.8
Waverly:	Marble 0.6
Winter's Nest:	Furs 0.5, Drake Ivory 0.9

*Azeth's Rest is a peculiar exception, because of the seasonal trade fairs. Azeth's Rest has volatile prices and low availability for most of the year, but during the trade fairs, has an economy as powerful as that of any city-state, because of the number of people bringing goods to trade. Additionally, during early Flamesky season, livestock can be purchased for half the normal price. See *Lost Cities of the Trembling Plains*.

** In contrast to Azeth's Rest, Celik has the economy of a fort rather than that of a city, since the city's primary industry is looting its own ruins. See *Wanderer's Chronicle*.

Trade Houses

House Name	Emblem	Holdings	Warriors	Slaves	Specialty Goods and Routes	Treatment of employees	Caravan Complement, Village & City, Emporiums & Outposts	Diplomacy & Tactics
Azeth	Golden lizard with a man's torso, standing between two palms	Azeth's Rest, Kurn, Draj, Fort Stench, Ket, Silt Side, Fort Meraan	250	2000	Livestock, bulky goods, liquids, hardwood, agafari. Routes include Kurn, Eldaarich, Draj, and the Trembling Plains.	Agents are family by blood, adoption, or marriage. Agent pay is low but all agents have a stake in the house. Some mercenaries are actually paid more than agents. They even pay their "slaves."	Very carefully trained teams such as the War Inix team, interacting in the large caravan group, drawing from Kurnan military tactics and organization. North of Azeth's Rest, heavy preserver magic protects the caravans.	Cooperative, cordial, diplomatic, and scrupulously studies and abides by laws and customs of the lands they deal in. Avoids arcane magic & spell components in the Tablelands, and pays full Kurnan taxes. Agents extremely well-equipped with Kurnan magical items. -See <i>Lost Cities of the Trembling Plains</i> .
Inika	A plain gold circle on a black field.	Gulg, Fort Adros, Fort Harbeth, Fort Skonz, Shazlim	500	2000	Small and valuable items such as Kola nuts, spices, gems, feathers. All 7 cities.	Average pay or less for starting agents, lavish with trusted agents. Agents & families well cared for. Slackers cut off quickly.	Scouts, Spies, Kank Riders, and lightly armed, fast-moving fighters. Very few (and well paid mages) and psionist hired only in dire need.	Nonconfrontational, cordial, polite. Rents space in forts, villages, & cities. Stays out of trouble and/or never gets caught. Manipulates prices deftly. Scrupulously lawkeeping. – See <i>Dune Trader</i> .
M'ke	A silver quill pen on a red field.	Raam, Ft. Firstwatch, Ft. Isus, Ft. Xalis, Jalaka, (secret caches of wealth in dangerous areas), Urik, Tyr, Balic	500		Weapons, food, metals, obsidian. Raam-Urik, Raam-Altaruk, Raam-Tyr, Raam-Balic, Tyr-Jalaka. (M'ke Used to carry other routes).	High paying but hazardous. 25-50% above average pay. Opportunities typically abound because of high mortality rate. Employees expected to die rather than compromise. Bonuses for bravery and cleverness.	20-30 Crodlu-mounted scouts, 6-10 medium-sized wagons, & (sometimes) up to 4 well-defended armored caravans. Crossbow-armed troops in caravan; foot soldiers walk alongside. Undermanned city offices.	Flexible: Friendly & helpful to the strong, ruthless & vicious to the weak. Respects SKs, never engages in smuggling, friendly with Hamanu and Tectutitlay. Masters of negotiation, intrigue, & diplomacy. Employs some Raamin Templars. Much forces concentration in Ft. Xalis to protect Urik route. – See <i>Dune Trader</i>
Shom	3 Silver Dragonflies on a red-and-black, diagonally divided field.	Nibenay, Ft. Melidor, Ft. Inix, Ft. Sunset, Cromlin, Balic.	2000		Nibenese Obsidian, Rice, Water, lumber, weapons, art, minor objects.	Wonderful pay, virtually no advancement, intrigue & double-dealing among employees. Nasty to competent new agents.	Kreen, halfling, armored giants, poor and varied organization.	Hardly recognize that other houses exist. Tends to move too little and too late. – See <i>Dune Trader</i>
Stel	Black & White Banner	Urik, Ft. Courage, Ft. Iron, Ft. Sandol; Single office in Balic, Altaruk, & Wallis	3000		Main routes to Ringing Forest, Ogo-Makla-Urik-Raam-Draj. exporting ceramics, gold, weapons, art & slaves; importing grains, iron.	United by prosperity.	Armored kank or crodlu riders, lightly armored scouts, elite raider mercenaries trained in stealth, elven archers, variety of troops. Outposts armed like fortresses. Major outposts in all northern cities & many villages; token presence in Balic & Southern towns.	Known for dealing in Urik's spoils of war: Gold, slaves, stolen cargo. Offer mercenary services and even dabble kidnapping for ransom. Awful relations with other trade houses, great relations with sorcerer kings, especially Hamanu. – See <i>Dune Trader</i>

Tlalaxa	Evil yellow eyes on black field	Draj, Ft. Ebon, Ft. Kalvis, Rumish's Rock, Ablath, Several northern villages.	1500	Exporting Draji hemp and grain. Artwork, ornate weapons, slaves Contraband dealings. Villages along Urik-Raam-Draj route.	Opportunities for spies and assassins. When Hirelings learn secrets, they are usually offered permanent employment -- or killed. Hire braxat, gith, love those with psionic skills.	12+crodlu riders, followed by 5-10 open wagons (light: 5000-10,000). Rarely uses armored caravans. If slaves there, they walk in a coffle w/ overseers. Distrust most mages, prefer psis.	Blackmail, Kidnapping, assassination, military harassment though mercenary raiding tribes. Cordial relations with Sorcerer kings. Openly exterminates small houses. Acts more stealthily against larger houses. Many illicit dealings. Monopolistic economic tricks. Not trusted. – See <i>Dune Trader</i>
Vordon	Black diamond on red-brown field	Tyr, Ft. Amber, Ft. Thamo, Mira's Halo	2000 + 1000 in front houses, e.g. <i>Troika</i>	Iron: Tyr-Altaruk, Tyr-Urik, Tyr-Balic routes.	Well-paid and loyal -- 50% above normal. Not hiring for Vordon, only for dummy houses. Loyal employees, quite professional.	Large, well-guarded caravans. 20+ armored crodlu riders, 50 archers on foot, 5-10 armored wagons. Half-giants and muls.	Largely seen as a has-been. – See <i>Dune Trader</i>
Wavir	Silver Jozhal on a blue field	Holdings in all 7 cities. Ft. Glamis, Ft. Thetis, Outpost Ten, Outpost 19		Every imaginable commodity.	Priests, especially water priests (15-20 sp/lvl). Preservers & psis (20 sp/lvl/month) employed frequently. No defilers and no slaves. Generous incentives to persuade agents & freelance adventurers to join.	Well-guarded caravans: Elf mercenaries & crodlu or kank-riding scouts. Lightly armed archers accompany the wagons & pack Inix. Typical: 25 elven scouts, 12 riders, 25 archers, and up to 10 wagons of varying size, up to 10 pack Inix & numerous kank and crodlu bearing cargo. Armored caravans on long or precious journeys. Paranoid security. Impressive magical, psionic, & military defenses. No slaves.	Magic and psionics used for espionage. Open battle with Tlalaxa, but cordial in public. Kind and generous to smaller houses. Contacts with Shadows, a mysterious elven tribe involved in smuggling, espionage, etc. Openly anti-slavery. – See <i>Dune Trader</i>
Ardian		Wallis	300				According to <i>Dune Trader</i> , Ardian owns Wallis and arrogantly waves it's gold monopoly in everyone's face. However, according to the later <i>Wanderer's Chronicle</i> and the earlier <i>Wanderer's Journal</i> , Tromblador owns Wallis.
Tromblador		Balic, Wallis, Altaruk			6 defilers in Wallis. King-ambitious House Head.		See <i>Dune Trader</i> , but according to <i>Wanderer's Chronicle</i> and the <i>Wanderer's Journal</i> , Tromblador owns Wallis. Did they take it from Ardian, or was there a merger/marriage of the houses?
Rees		Balic, Altaruk			Slave-driver personality, according to WC.		
Dedys Consortium		Draj, Dedys, 3 forts, 6 outposts.	500				Alliance of 3 small houses: Terg, Voyan, and Shakkur. Assisted by Wavir, hated by Tlalaxa. – See <i>Dune Trader</i> Discovered the Lost Cities route in FY 11 – See "Grave Circumstances" (<i>Dungeon Magazine</i> #56)
Fyra		Salt View, 1 fortress south		Salt			Brawling ex-slaves - <i>Dune Trader</i>
Ianto		Fort Ianto	200	Silk & Iron			

Kleithra	1 fort NW of Urik	150	"Numerous" slave archers.	Stel is trying to wipe Kleithra out, so Kleithra is planning to make a bolt for it. -See <i>Dune Trader</i>
Lamnos	no HQ	500		
Renythi League	4 fortresses, 8 outposts	200-300		
Sysra	Fort Sysra	~50		



Figure 5: Trade Caravan. © Wizards of the Coast (2002), used by permission.

Trade Forts and Emporiums

	Holding	House	Mercenaries	Slaves	Agents	Civilian	Notes
Ablath	Tlalaxa				500	500	"Trade village near oasis 20 miles SW of Silver Spring. Ablath is Tlalaxa's contact with tribes, and frequent stopover for caravans bound to and from Altaruk." -Dune Trader
Altaruk	Wavir						
Altaruk Office	Stel						"Token office." - <i>Dune Trader</i>
Azeth's Rest	Azeth		100	70	varies	varies	4 seasonal trade fairs raise the trade capacity of this fort to that of a city. - <i>Lost Cities of the Trembling Plains</i>
Balic Emporium	Shom						At one time smuggled Shaquat Beetles though other houses - <i>Merchant House of Amtech</i>
Balic HQ	Rees						According to WC, Rees rules as monarch over 1/3 of Balic.
Balic HQ	Troblador						According to WC, Troblador rules as monarch over 1/3 of Balic.
Balic Office	Stel						"Token office." - <i>Dune Trader</i>
Business in Balic	Shom						Undercover association/ownership of business - <i>Merchant House of Amtech</i>
Cromlin	Shom			300			"Trade Village located on the shore of the sea of silt, 30 miles west of Giustenal. Profitable skimmer routes, & serves as trading city for nomadic tribes. Other houses pay for Shom skimmers." - <i>Dune Trader</i>
Draj Emporium	Stel						
Draj HQ	Tlalaxa						"Disarmingly innocuous -- a simple walled villa with a couple of bored-looking guards lounging about. Appearances may be deceiving. The villa is protected by numerous traps, magical wards, & hidden snipers. The seemingly bored agents are elite senior agents. The structure is built atop solid rock, and most of its rooms are underground.... rumors of secret tunnels underground throughout Draj, etc." - <i>Dune Trader</i>

Fort Meraan	Azeth	-	5	8	20	"Holdings in the White Mountains" - <i>Wanderer's Chronicle</i> . Built into an ancient goblin ruin. - <i>Lost Cities of the Trembling Plains</i>
Ft. Adros	Inika	75	150	-	-	"Supply point between Walis and Altaruk. Often a target of attacks by Elves and Gith." - <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Ft. Amber	Vordon	75	100			Supply & storage point between Tyr and Altaruk. Refuge in case Tyr breaks into chaos. Well stocked with hidden supplies & reserves.
Ft. Courage	Stel	150	200			Supply point & military base near the Smoking Crown on the route between Urik and Makla. Discourages raids against caravans of Ogo-Makla-Urik route. - <i>Dune Trader</i>
Ft. Ebon	Tlalaxa	100	250			"Supply point between Raam & Draji -- a vital supply link for all Tlalaxa caravans." - <i>Dune Trader</i>
Ft. Firstwatch	M'ke	30	50			Storage & Supply point between Raam and Draji. Frequently raided by rivals and elf nomads" - <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Ft. Glamis	Wavir	150	0			Supply point at junction of Balic/Ledopolus road. Important crossroad between Balic and the rest of the region.
Ft. Harbeth	Inika	50	100	-	-	"Supply & storage point in the foothills to the southwest of the Mekillot Mountains, equidistant from Gulgi, Salt View, & North Ledopolus. A major trading post for the slaves of Salt View and a place to purchase dwarven items from Ledopolus." - <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Ft. Inix	Shom	75	200			"Supply & storage point 30 miles east of Nibenay. Maintained and richly supplied, but no longer useful -- no more major routes. Sometimes raided." - <i>Dune Trader</i> ... Belgoi captain of the guard - <i>Ivory Triangle</i> .
Ft. Iron	Stel	75	100			Supply point & military base 30 miles west of Silver Spring.- <i>Dune Trader</i>
Ft. Isus	M'ke	50	100			"Supply point & Trading post between Raam and Nibenay. Popular spot for trading with nomadic tribes. Thri-kreen often visit Issus, to trade with elves." - <i>Dune Trader</i>
Ft. Kalvis	Tlalaxa	50	125			"Supply & storage point, & trading post in verdant belt between Gulgi and Altaruk." - <i>Dune Trader</i>
Ft. Melidor	Shom	60	150			"Supply point 30 miles near Lost Oasis, north of Kalidnay. More of a resort for Shom Family than actual fortress. Overstaffed and idle." - <i>Dune Trader</i>
Ft. Sandol	Stel	20	50			"Outpost & Trading post ~5- miles north of Gulgi. Trade post for various nomads of all races, selling artwork, weapons, slaves taken in raids."- <i>Dune Trader</i>
Ft. Skonz	Inika	50	75	-	-	"Supply point at junction of three roads between Tur, Altaruk, & Silver Spring. An increasingly important position as trade links between Tyr and other cities begin to be re-established. Fort Skonz was threatened with occupation by Krik forces during the recent conflict between Tyr and Urik, but the threat failed to materialize." - <i>Dune Trader</i> .

Ft. Sunset	Shom	25	-		"Tiny outpost sheltered in the ringing mountains. Jevae Shom sent here to bury him. Occasionally useful & fights off a Gith attack." - <i>Dune Trader</i>
Ft. Thamo	Vordon	50	125		Supply & Storage point between Grak's pool and South Ledopolus. This fortress maintains an important link (critical to Iron flow) with the south, particularly Balic.
Ft. Thetis	Wavir	75	0		Supply point & trading post at southern end of mountains, 60 miles east of Walis. Wavir completely controls this gold route between Balic and Walis. Fort frequently attacked by gith & human tribes, as well as trade rivals such as Tlalaxa.
Ft. Xalis	M'ke	100	150		"Trading post, Supply point, & Military base near Black Waters, between Raam and Urik. Critical Obsidian and slave routes between Raam and Urik. Recently seriously damaged by unknown rival in combo raid of halfling, elf, and kreen mercenaries." - <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Gulg HQ	Inika				"Masterpiece of understated luxury. A deceptively calm structure, with few guards and little in the way of obvious defenses. As would-be intruders have discovered, however, Inika's guards are deadly fighters, and the mansion itself teems with traps and hazards throughout its hundred or more rooms." - <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Jalaka	M'ke		250	250	"Village on edge of Forest Ridge ~40 miles north of Tyr. Extremely difficult to maintain but profitable hardwood & other unique goods from forest haflings." - <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Makla emporium	Stel				
Mira's Halo	Qual	20	30		Outpost in sandy wastes between Tyr and Urik. Named for unusual rock formation. House Qual is a dummy house of Vordon. Important Iron flow spot.
Mira's Halo	Vordon	20	30		Outpost in sandy wastes between Tyr and Urik. Named for unusual rock formation. Officially owned by House Qual (dummy House). Important Iron flow spot.
Nibenay Emporium	Stel				
Nibenay HQ	Shom	?			Large Emporium bordering on Sage Square -Ivory Triangle: City-State of Nibenay.
Ogo Emporium	Stel				
Outpost Ninteen	Wavir	20	0		Outpost at northeastern end of Mekillot Mountains. Here Wavir supplies caravans & trades with the former slaves of Salt View. Wavir often trades weapons & other vital items to the slaves at unprofitable rates -- because of Wavir's hatred of slavery.
Outpost Ten	Wavir	15			Trading post located on western edge of bolder field, on the edge of the forest ridge, 70 miles SW of Tyr. Here Wavir maintains tenuous trading connections with the halflings, tradign hardwood, gems, & exotic animals for gold, spice, & weapons.































































Raam Emporium	Stel					
Raam HQ	M'ke					"Extremely well defended by troops of 6th level or higher" - <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Rumish's Rock	Tlalaxa	20	20			"Outpost & trading post 30 miles SE of Lost Oasis, ner Kalidnay. Small but important post where Tlalaxa obtains gold trading from Wallis."- <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Shazlim	Inika	1	-	500	500	"Trade Village located along the southern edge of Dragon's Bowl between Raam and Silver Spring. An important stopover and trade point in the area." - <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Silt Side	Azeth	*	*	*	*	Village site for trade with Kerillis of Eldaarich. 4 seasonal trade fairs, each lasting several days, with house Azeth agents, a few invited agents from other houses, Kerillis of Eldaarich's Kulag Order, a number of Kulag sailors and bards, and observers from the Eldaarish secret police and Red Guard. During the rest of the year, only a tiny Azeth crew remains. - <i>Lost Cities of the Trembling Plains</i> .
Stel's Gulg Office	Stel					"Token office."- <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Tyr Emporium	Stel					"Emporium for trading Iron north to Urik." - <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Urik HQ	Stel					
Walis HQ	Ardian					According to Dune Trader, Ardian owns Wallis and arrogantly waves it's gold monopoly in everyone's face. However, according to the later WC, Tromblador owns Wallis.
Walis Office	Stel					"Token office."- <i>Dune Trader</i> .
Wallis	Troblador					6 defilers. According to Wanderer's Chronicle, Tromblador owns Wallis. Did they take it from Ardian, or was there a merger/marriage of the houses?





















































Time and Moonlight





































Dune Traders and others that travel the wastes use the Two Moon Calendar to predict the moonlight on any given night. A *quinth*, meaning 75 days (a fifth of an Athasian Year), synchronizes Ral's 25-day phase cycle with Guthay's 15-dau phase cycle, and also coordinates the periods in which the moons rise and set. Using the two-moon calendar, one can determine how much light the moons will provide on any clear night.

The two-moon calendar also allows elves to determine which nights will give them the greatest advantage over races that do not enjoy low-light vision. Elves refer to the 9th and 10th, the 39th and 40th, and the 69th and 70th day of every Quinth as "Ral's Feast," two consecutive days for raiding those not fortunate enough to be born elven. Under the two-moon calendar, each night ends at dawn.

The calendar breaks the night up into "firstwatch" (starts at sunset), "secondwatch" (starts at midnight), and "thirdwatch" (starts at 4 AM). For example, "at secondwatch" means at midnight; "during firstwatch" means between sunset and midnight, and "at the end of thirdwatch" means at sunrise.

Day	Ral Phase	1st Watch	2nd Watch	3rd Watch	Guthay Phase	16		Dusk	Dusk	Dusk	
1		Daylight	Daylight	Daylight		17		Starlight	Starlight	Dusk	
2		Starlight	Moonlight	Daylight		18		Starlight	Dusk	Dusk	
3		Starlight	Dusk	Dusk		19		Dusk	Dusk	Dusk	
4		Daylight	Daylight	Daylight		20		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
5		Starlight	Moonlight	Moonlight		21		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
6		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight		22		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
7		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight		23		Starlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
8		Starlight	Moonlight	Moonlight		24		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
9		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight		25		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
10		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight		26		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
11		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight		27		Starlight	Starlight	Moonlight	
12		Starlight	Starlight	Moonlight		28		Moonlight	Dusk	Dusk	
13		Starlight	Moonlight	Moonlight		29		Dusk	Dusk	Dusk	
14		Dusk	Dusk	Dusk		30		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
15		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight		31		Daylight	Daylight	Daylight	

32		Starlight	Moonlight	Daylight	
33		Starlight	Dusk	Dusk	
34		Dusk	Dusk	Dusk	
35		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
36		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
37		Starlight	Starlight	Moonlight	
38		Starlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
39		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
40		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
41		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
42		Starlight	Starlight	Moonlight	
43		Starlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
44		Dusk	Dusk	Dusk	
45		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
46		Daylight	Daylight	Daylight	
47		Starlight	Moonlight	Daylight	
48		Starlight	Dusk	Dusk	
49		Dusk	Dusk	Dusk	
50		Starlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
51		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
52		Moonlight	Moonlight	Dusk	
53		Starlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
54		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
55		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
56		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
57		Starlight	Starlight	Moonlight	

58		Moonlight	Dusk	Dusk	
59		Dusk	Dusk	Dusk	
60		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
61		Daylight	Daylight	Daylight	
62		Starlight	Starlight	Dusk	
63		Starlight	Dusk	Dusk	
64		Dusk	Dusk	Dusk	
65		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
66		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
67		Starlight	Starlight	Moonlight	
68		Starlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
69		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
70		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	
71		Moonlight	Moonlight	Moonlight	
72		Starlight	Starlight	Moonlight	
73		Moonlight	Dusk	Dusk	
74		Dusk	Dusk	Dusk	
75		Starlight	Starlight	Starlight	

What is an Athasian “Week”?

Like a “league,” the length of a “week” depends on who is speaking. In addition to the most common 5-day “week,” at least three other definitions of “week” exist. In order of popularity, these include:

- The elven week, five-nights, follows Guthay’s pattern of rising and setting, as described above. Elven tribes, Eloy, Kurnans, and most communities of the Tablelands follow the five-night “week.”
- City-State of Draj’s fifteen-day week combines the elven week with Ral’s three-day pattern of rising and setting. Draj replaces the pedestrian names of the elven week’s nights with more visceral names: “Sand, Blade, Bone, Fang, and Blood.” Thus the Draji week runs as follows: Black Sand, Red Blade, Yellow Bone, Black Fang, Red Blood, Yellow Sand, Black Blade, Red Bone, Yellow Fang, Black Blood, Red Sand, Yellow Blade, Black Bone, Red Fang, and Yellow Blood. See *City-State of Draj*, page 11.
- The dwarven week, ten days, joins two elven weeks. In Urik, each day takes the name of one of Urik’s client villages. See *The Brazen Gambit*. Some travelers outside Urik also group days in tens, but to avoid confusion refer to them as a “tenday.”
- City-State of Nibenay’s six-day “week” (Onesday, Twosday, Threesday, Foursday, Fivesday, Sixday) combines two of Ral’s cycles into a six-day “week.” See *s*.
- The City-State of Eldaarich’s seven-day calendar. While the other “weeks” at least allow the traveler to determine the time at which one of the moons will rise; Eldaarich’s seven-day week seems to have no practical use, apparently based on nothing other than Daskinor’s obsession with the number seven. See *Lost Cities of the Trembling Plains*.

Merchants tend avoid ambiguous terms such as “week.” As the Wanderer pointed out, merchants prefer to identify days with more precise phrases such as “thirty five days past the high sun.” See *Wanderer’s Journal*, page 85.



Figure 6: Communication Problems. © Wizards of the Coast (2002). Used by permission.

Trade Across the Cultural Gap

This article introduces a new aspect to Athasian trade - the cross-cultural gap. The cultural differences between the various city states and races affect customs and rituals associated with trade. *Dune Trader* contains information on dealing with various races, but very little information on the cultural differences between the various city states.

How a trader should approach a fellow trader from another culture almost always varies greatly from city to city, regardless of race. The vast majority of traders are human, naturally since the majority of city dwellers are human. While it is important to be aware of any interracial differences of note when dealing with a member of another race, the culture in his or her city of origin will have affected her customs, beliefs and views to some degree – and this extends to the way in which trade, in his or her subjective opinion, *should be* conducted, as much as racial identity does.



Figure 7: Trade across the cultural gap © Wizards of the Coast (2002). Used by permission.

Of course, any discussion of culture and trade would be incomplete without addressing the elves, whose interest on trade grows even stronger as one moves away from the cities. Other races such as kreen also have their own trade customs, but these cultures have less of an impact on trade in the Tablelands and the Trembling Plains regions.

In other words, the saying “*When in Tyr, do as the Tyrians*”, applies to some extent.

Trade among Ten Athasian Cultures

The table below examines how the people of the nine city-states (Balicites, Draji, Eldaarish, Gulgs, Kurnans, Nibenese, Raamin s, Tyrians, and Urikites) interact in terms of two categories, Focus and Context. This grants us a total of four combinations: Deal focus & Low-context cultures, Relationship focus & High-context cultures, Deal focus & High-context cultures, and Relationship focus & Low-context cultures. Cultures who share the same focus and/or context have an easier time dealing with one another, than those who don't. For instance, the Gulgs (Relationship focus, Low-context) and the Urikites (Deal focus, High-context) tend to have more problems communicating efficiently and understanding each other, than for example the Tyrians and the Balicites, who both have deal-focused and low-context cultures.

In intercultural dealings, cultural mistakes create more serious problems for traders than linguistic mistakes. A simple linguistic mistake does little harm compared to what a cultural mistake might do. For instance, walking up to a stranger from a relationship-focused culture and making a business proposition gets you as far as a half-giant in a dwarven hut – nowhere.

People	Deal focus v Relationship focus	High-context v Low-context
Balicites	Deal focus	Low-context
Draji	Deal focus	Low-context
Eldaarish	Relationship focus	Low-context
Elves	Deal focus (but see text)	Low-context
Gulgs	Relationship focus	Low-context
Kurnans	Relationship focus	High-context
Nibenese	Relationship focus	High-context
Raamin s	Relationship focus	High-context
Tyrians	Deal focus	Low-context
Urikites	Deal focus	High-context

In deal-focused cultures a trader can make initial contact with a prospective buyer or trade partner *without any previous relationship or connection*. Having an introduction or referral is helpful but not essential. In relationship-focused cultures people prefer to deal with family, friends and persons or groups well known to them – people who can be trusted. Thus a third-party introduction is often necessary to break the ice. In the relationship-focused cultures a trader must first make an acquaintance, before he or she can make a trade proposition.

In a low-context culture people are generally direct, speak clearly, and communicating is relatively easy. The verbal aspect of communication is emphasized. What you say is what you mean. A high-context culture is the opposite. Communication is more difficult as it is permeated by culture specific codes and body language, often unknown to foreigners. Verbal communication is more vague and indirect. Low-context cultures often view high-context cultures as inscrutable, sometimes even untrustworthy. In return high-context cultures often perceive the direct approach of the low-context cultures to be rude and arrogant, and their emphasis on verbal communication to be childish and primitive.

Balicites

Balic in Free Year 11 is a divided metropolis run by trade lords, two of whom are plutarchs. Naturally commerce plays an important role in all levels of Balicite society when the city is run by merchants. The open markets of Balic have always been a forum for public gathering and socialization. Supply has traditionally exceeded demand in Balic, as exotic goods from all over the Tyr Region have found their way to the city's markets, the primary reason being the absence of sales taxes in Balic. Over the years a deal-focused culture has evolved. Balicite merchants have found it convenient to formalize relations with traders from different cultures with customs different from their own. A written standard contract was introduced several decades ago to avoid confusion between partners with different cultural backgrounds.

The contract is but a formality of little importance when dealing with relationship-focused traders, such as the Nibenese, but vital in negotiations with other deal-focused traders, especially the Urikites, who won't conduct business without one. And of course, you'd be naive to expect an elf to honor any form of a contract!

Traders usually get right down to business and haggle over prices until all parties are satisfied. Questions are promptly asked and answered during negotiations. Then the parties sign a trade contract and arrange time and place for transactions to take place. Deals are usually negotiated between senior agents of the merchant houses, and it is customary for the Balicite party to provide room and board for visiting traders. After a contract is signed, it is customary to share a bottle of wine or liquor to celebrate a successfully landed deal.

Balic has a low-context culture. In addition to being very direct, Balicites express themselves clearly language-wise to avoid unnecessary confusion with their trade partners. The limited use of body language is very simple, corresponding to general gestures and expressions used all over the Tablelands, a result of the cultural clash through king's ages with foreign traders seeking to enter the city's markets. The meaning of one particular local gesture is important to be aware of, though – if a Balicite tips his head back without saying a word, this is the non-verbal equivalent of saying no. In most other city states this gesture means yes. Also, waving an open hand with extended fingers at a Balicite is a gross insult. To a Balicite this gesture means “you're running around like an erdlu with its head chopped off”. The correct way of greeting someone at a distance, or to get their attention is to shout at them.

Draji

The warrior people of Draji view trade as something beneath the warrior ideal. The traders' important role in society is recognized, but their popularity is low, unless of course, the traders have marked themselves as decent warriors on occasions such as the Flowery Wars. Few want to socialize with average traders, and especially foreign ones. Based on these cultural facts, the draji have a deal-focused culture.

Draji traders put as much emphasis on the warrior ideal as any other citizen of Draji, even if they do not necessarily live up to it themselves. A draji trader will size up potential partners and customers based on their appearance. Strong-looking traders will impress the draji, and will be at an advantage when negotiating a deal. Similarly, a frail-looking trader will be at a disadvantage. Draji negotiate in loud voices, and they try to intimidate those whom they bargain with to bend

them to their will. If a draji trader detects weakness in an “opponent”, he will exploit that weakness to deal a “fatal blow” in the negotiations.

Written contracts are seldom used. Draji are used to oral contracts, and the spoken word *is* the agreement in Draj. Those who depend upon written contracts are those who are too weak to deal retribution on those who fail to fulfill their end of a bargain. Too bad for them. To demand a written contract from a draji trader is to say that you do not expect him to follow through on the deal – a provocation of the extreme, and one that has got many foreign traders into trouble.

Draji are aggressive negotiators, who stare their opponents straight in the eye and strike their fists together to emphasize their points. The draji culture is a low-context culture. Facial expressions and to some extent aggressive body language complement verbal communication in the draji tongue. It is not necessary to study draji culture in detail to understand what a draji is saying and what his feelings are on a particular subject. It shows all too well. Draji traders have trouble especially negotiating with Nibenese and Urikite traders. The draji’s aggressive approach to negotiations appall the Nibenese, and the violent body language and the loud speech of the draji – in addition to their tendency to lose their temper – make Urikites feel they lose face at the hands of the “immature” draji.

Elves

Elves that assimilate to a city’s culture, as often occurs in Urik, Kurn, and Balic, follow that city’s culture. And yet both in and out of the cities, many elves maintain their racial ways.



Figure 8: Trust me. © Wizards of the Coast (2002). Used by permission.

Elves represent a focus paradox. In dealings with all except their tribe and trusted companions, elves display a short-sighted opportunism that often prevents them from forming long term trade relationships. Elves will eagerly get down to business with those they do not trust and exploit the

situation to their maximum advantage, but the nature of the transaction changes drastically when they deal with persons that they trust. When dealing with members of their tribe and companions who have passed tests of trust, an elf is driven by relationship-focus, seeking a long-term relation and win-win situations.

An elf very rarely indulges in tests of trusts towards unfamiliar trade subjects, except when the elf is planning a much more important exchange that requires that he trust someone that has so far proven trustworthy.

Elven Trust Test: Example

Whenever they visited Kurn's merchant district, the Mirage Maker tribe dealt with the dwarf Envek Azeth, selling her the blue dye that the Mirage Makers cultivated farther north in the foothills of the Granite Spears mountains.

After Draji templars sacrificed several Mirage Makers for theft, some Mirage Makers began to wonder if they could trust Envek Azeth to represent their interests in Draji and sell the dye on their behalf. The tribe argued the matter for months. Envek had no idea that she was the topic of such intense discussion. Those among the Mirage Makers that wanted to trust Envek pointed out that for eighty years, she had always dealt with the Mirage Makers honestly and fairly, even when she exposed their attempts to cheat her. In elven eyes, Envek's eighty years of fair dealing could not on its own suffice to prove Envek's loyalty. She was, after all, a *dwarf*. But since the Mirage Makers *wanted* to trust Envek, the tribe devised a test of trust to allow Envek to prove her trustworthiness. The elves attempted to create the appearance that the Mirage Maker dye caravan had been ambushed by kreen. Some of the Mirage Makers actually inflicted real wounds on their own bodies, and killed some of their own kinks with chatchka, leaving them loaded up with hundreds of gold pieces worth in precious dye. If Envek helped the Mirage Makers, and did not attempt to take the dye, then they could trust her.

If Envek had passed the test, she would have been treated as a tribal member by the elf, and thus be subject to relationship oriented trade. Unfortunately for Azeth-Mirage Maker trade relations, Envek saw through the phony scene, realized that it was a setup, but mistakenly assumed that the Mirage Makers were trying to rob her. After the caravan passed, the Mirage Makers said, "can you believe that we almost trusted that stupid dwarf with our dye route?"

Eldaarish

In Silt Side, House Azeth agents (and occasionally, by invitation, agents of other houses) negotiate with Eldaarish templars under the watchful eye of the secret police and the Red Guard. Officially, there is no trade in the city-state of Eldaarich or in the Dim Lands, but unofficially, the people would have perished long ago if they truly had to rely completely on Daskinor's templars for all of their food and goods. Despite threats of enslavement and death for traders (particularly those who sell food!), trade on some level persists.

Negotiations with the Eldaarish is brief and low context. One usually cannot haggle lest the authorities become aware of the transaction. Eldaarish sign language does not make communications more subtle. The persistent grey death forces most Eldaarish to wear silters, and most people that deal with each other on a day to day basis have never seen each others' faces.

They identify each other by looking at each others left fingertips, where each Eldaarish citizen has their name branded. Eldaarish persons often raise their left hand in salute as they pass each other, to identify each other.

Relationship-oriented traders, the Eldaarish trust no one, but find some people less untrustworthy than others. The shady peddlers that hawk goods, food, or small children on the street often pass information to the secret police. But even Savak informants do not always report everything and everyone that they know; peddlers need to be loyal to their best customers, or else they would go out of business.

Gulgs

The Gulgs, through their community social structure, naturally have a relationship-focused culture. Trade is generally conducted between friends and acquaintances in and between the various dagadas. However, it is not uncustomary for a foreign trader to become an accepted trade partner. Gulgs are a practical lot, and trading any surplus goods not needed elsewhere in the city with foreign traders is encouraged to bring more wealth to the dagada and the city, and ultimately more taxes into the Oba's coffers.

It is customary to bring a gift to a representative of the dagada a trader wishes to conduct business with. An appropriate gift is one of monetary as well as symbolic and practical value. For instance a dasl or metal hammer would be an ideal gift for a member from a carpenter's dagada. It is durable - symbolizing the strength of the trade relation to be, an idol that represents the craft itself and it can be used in actual production by a carpenter. Once the gift has been delivered, inspected and approved, the trader and the representative from the dagada usually sit down in the representative's tree hut and converse for several hours. During the conversation, the parts exchange stories, test each other's wits, and engage in a friendly arm wrestling bout. After these bonding rituals, the trader is invited to dine with the Gulg and his family. Sometimes, if the trader is a representative from a large merchant house, a great feast is held where the trader is introduced to the entire dagada by the Gulg representative. Only after this meal will the Gulgs talk trade. Since the Gulgs have no literary traditions, oral agreements are the norm.



Gulgs are a straight-forward people. Their culture is a low-context culture. They communicate mostly verbally, and are very direct. If a Gulg has something on his mind – especially something he's dissatisfied with or finds strange, he blurts it out. This behavior can seem odd, even rude and arrogant to some peoples, such as the Urikites, who go to great lengths to conceal their emotions and keep face, so everyone's honor remains intact. Gulg also has a high-contact culture. After Gulgs get to know one another, male friends will shake hands lengthily and embrace, while women friends brush cheeks with a kissing motion of the lips. Gulgs readily pat each other's backs and touch each other's faces, but do not expect the same from their trade partners.

Kurnans

Kurnan clave structure emphasizes relationships and community. While individuals negotiate and trade extensively within the clave, trade outside the clave usually occurs through Clave speakers or their subordinates. With human Kurnans, these are usually women, because Kurnans do not generally trust men in matters of fine diplomacy and negotiation. Outsiders (including Kurnans from other claves as well as foreigners) may eventually become accepted trade partners, or may settle on a fixed price or course of dealing with regard to the clave's products. When that occurs, one might deal directly with the clave members, but if someone approaches a clave house and attempts to bargain with the artisans directly, the clave members usually take this as an attempt to corrupt individuals at the expense of the clave. Outside open trade areas in the merchant district, one is safer to purchase only from designated clave speakers, since others may be trafficking in stolen materials, or selling clave property without his clave's permission.

One may offer a gift to the clave that one is dealing with, but offering a gift specifically to the speaker, may anger the clave and insult the speaker's integrity. While Kurnans find little dishonorable in taking something from a stranger that wasn't looking, they have tremendous contempt for someone breaches trust, particularly one who cheats his own family or clave. The fact that someone did not intend to insult them does not make an attempted bribe less insulting. Kurnans do not become easily angry when a stranger questions their honesty or refuses to trust them. Relationship-focused, Kurnans believe that one must earn trust. If one has angered a Kurnan by making an unseemly offer, one may sometimes avoid a confrontation by saying something to the effect of "I was only testing you; I needed to be sure that you were trustworthy." One should not threaten a Kurnan speaker unless one is prepared to fight. Kurnan leadership depends on context. A Kurnan speaker only leads the community in matters of negotiation and diplomacy. If clave members — particularly the speaker — appear endangered, leadership shifts to the House Captain. At this point one does deal with the clave's males, often at spear point. Kurnan culture is a high-context culture. Body language is important, not only to the speaker but to other clave members. Clave warriors will pretend to not be paying attention to negotiations. If they feel that a stranger has insulted their speaker or their clave, they will not betray emotions. Younger clave members and others that have not learned to control their emotions will leave the room lest they undermine their speaker's authority with an annoyed look or a hissed breath. At most, clave members may glance to the house captain, to see if the leadership shifts. The speaker's words often contain double meanings – subtle cues to the clave captain and other clave members, wrapped up in carefully weighed terms addressed to the other side's negotiator.

Nibenese

The Nibenese have a relationship-focused culture that centers on the family. In Nibenay it is not a question as to who you are, but whom you know. Nibenese are generally polite, but wary of outsiders who are unfamiliar with their culture, and this has made it very difficult for foreign merchants to conduct trade in the city. The Nibenese will not deal with people they do not know if they can trust. A third-party introduction is necessary to bridge the relationship gap between a foreign trader and the person or house he wants to conduct business with. Ideally introduction should come from a family member, but any relationship will do. The Temple of Trade can arrange introductions for a fee. If no one will put in a good word for him, the trader can forget about the Nibenese market.

When or if a trader is introduced to his prospective partners or customers, he will first be asked questions about his family, interests, clothes, taste in music, taste in beverages etc. – everything is non trade-related. If the trader declines to answer the questions, or starts to talk about trade, he or she will be viewed as very rude and inappropriate to conduct trade with. If the meeting goes well, and the Nibenese are satisfied with the trader's answers, they will invite the trader to a second meeting. The second meeting usually takes place in comfortable surroundings and involves consuming considerable amounts of rice wine. Again it is inappropriate to mention trade matters – the Nibenese have invited the trader as a friend, not as a business partner. If the trader passes this ordeal, he will be invited to a third meeting where they will discuss trade.

The Nibenese also have a high-context culture. It is not as much what is said, but the context in which it is said that matters. Body language, especially hand gestures permeates the Nibenese way of communication, which can be tied to the cultural importance of dance as an expressional art form in Nibenay. Traders should be careful not to wave their hands about – while most Nibenese simply find it amusing when a stranger makes a gesture that changes the meaning of what he says to something incomprehensible, an unlucky trader could end up insulting someone gravely without even knowing it, ruining an otherwise promising deal. The Nibenese are very polite when conducting trade, and rather than show disinterest or say “no” directly, they will use phrases such as “That would be inconvenient.” and “We will have to look further into this”. Also, if a Nibenese suddenly becomes quiet and only nods her head as a response, it is a good indication that the negotiations are indeed over for her part, and the deal is off.

Raamin s

Raam is currently not a place traders want to visit to conduct trade because of the riots and fighting to gain control over the city between the various factions in the city. House M'ke, the most powerful merchant house based in Raam, has several outposts and compounds in the 7 cities, however, that traders can conduct business with. The Raamin traders are friendly towards possible trade partners and customers. However, their ways of conducting trade can be perceived as arrogant and peculiar to outsiders who are unfamiliar with the concept of castes, a system practiced in Raam with great impact on social structures and also how trade is conducted. The Raamin approach to trade is generally relationship focused.

In Raam the concept of haggling does not exist. A merchant's prices vary depending on the caste his customer belongs to. Customers of higher castes are granted exceptional service and lower

prices than those of lower castes. When dealing with outsiders, Raamin s will convey the memorable moments and deeds of their lives, and emphasize the status of their caste – and how they were born to fit that role. A non-Raamin is treated as casteless – and receives the worst treatment as a customer and less preferable treatment as a partner. However, a foreign trader who in turn tells his life story and brags about his own achievements will be viewed with esteem, assuming of course the achievements are on par with the Raamin counterpart's tale. In that case, the foreign trader will receive certain benefits, decided by the Raamin trader. It is not uncommon, "in the greatness of the Raamish", to extend the benefits of his caste to the foreign trader, as a sign of goodwill. This essentially means a better price and better service, and possibly better deals if introduced to another Raamin trader by the Raamin in question.

Before Abalach-Re's death at the hands of Sadira of Tyr, and the chaos following the arrival of the information on her death, Raam's racial ethnic diversity played a major role in trade patterns within the city. The fact that non-humans make up the majority of the city's population lead to the concept of racial market segmentation. The various races would focus on trade with their fellow race members, and limit trade with other races to a minimum. Raam's dwarves for instance would mostly conduct business with other dwarves in the city. Today there is no real trade situation within Raam's city walls, and the concept of racial segmentation has been abandoned in the battle for survival.

Raam is also a high-context culture. The Raamin s have a very advanced form of sign language – not only does the sign language cover all spoken words in the Raamin tongue, but also allows a very detailed level of emphasis and mood to be added to any word. The right hand is used for gestures that constitute words, while the left hand is used for punctuation, emphasis and mood. Foreigners who master the Raamin sign language are treated with great respect, for it is difficult to master and also forbidden to use by casteless Raamin s. The great majority of foreigners who do not know the intricate sign language are at a disadvantage at the trading table, as the Raamin s use their sign language to convey mood, emphasis and even pass on secret messages to one another.

Tyrians

Trade in the Free City is regulated by the Bureau of Finance, run by the templars. Since the time of Kalak's regime, the Bureau of Finance has been responsible for tax collection and controlling market fluctuations with floating sales taxes for different goods and strict quotas on exports, in particular the flow of iron. The liberation of Tyr's slave population created a vacuum in terms of supply and demand – and a shortage on many goods. The templars went to great lengths to keep the price level from rising on vital trade goods such as food, water and clothing, cutting back on sales taxes for those products, and increasing the sales taxes on luxury items to keep the city's income from sales taxes normalized. This encouraged traders to import necessities over luxury items, and also attracted several foreign merchants from other city states. Today the trade situation has normalized to some degree, and while demand is still greater than supply, the floating sales tax is more balanced in terms of taxation on necessities and luxury items.

All these events have conspired to twist the relationship-focused culture of historical Tyr to become a deal-focused culture tied to the Free City in the Age of Heroes. Relationships between

the great noble families and major trading houses still exist, and business conducted between these parties is dominated by disputes and alliances of old. However, among the smaller merchant houses and new traders to the city, such ties are almost non-existent, and just about anyone will trade with anyone who can throw a good deal on the table. Some markets, such as the iron trade, are difficult to gain access to, and having connections to the templars in the Bureau of Finance is undoubtedly a valuable asset. For those who do not enjoy the privilege of such relations, there is always the option of bribery. Greasing the wheels of bureaucracy is sometimes necessary. While foreign traders will have difficulties trying to gain a templar's favor, a Tyrian merchant of some reputation stands a fair chance of being able to influence the authorities in question.

Tyr has a low-context culture. Its population of ex-slaves comes from all over the Tablelands. Formal codes of communication tied to the specific cultures of the individual city states have vanished or been incorporated into the trade tongue. The spoken language is not all that different from the one spoken in Balic. Striking a deal with Tyrian traders is essentially an open-minded session of haggling back and forth until the parties come to acceptable terms. Negotiations start with all involved parties introducing themselves to one another, usually informally and on a first name basis. Deals are struck everywhere, at a merchant's stand in the marketplace, at a small tavern, in a back alley, or in the offices of a merchant house. A deal is completed with a handshake. While the importance of the handshake might seem to be a mere formality to outsiders, Tyrians believe they can learn a great deal about a person through the handshake. A firm handshake is attributed with dedication, sincerity, potency and strong spirit, while a frail handshake is associated with weakness, cowardice and lack of belief in oneself, and even lack in sexual ability.

Urikites

Trade in the city of Urik has become increasingly bureaucratic over the years. This has resulted in a deal-focused culture permeated by a rigid law system. Traders are aggressive and direct in their approach. In Urik it is not uncommon to strike a deal with a complete stranger. The written contract is a necessary formality – all mercantile activity is to be registered by Hamanu's templars, and written contracts are required by law. The contract outweighs the spoken word, and protects both parties involved in a transaction, as well as detailing the nature of the bargain and the amount of goods involved for templar records. The penalty for violating a written contract in Urik is fierce – the law requires the estimated values of the transaction and any financial losses to be compensated by the violating party, either in coin, goods or through labor – traders who cannot meet their end of a contracted bargain become slaves if they are unable to compensate their trade partners' losses.

As a proud warrior-people, the Urikites are concerned with honor and not losing face. Haggling is a central part of the Urikite trading traditions. Trade is viewed as a contest, but both parties must be content with a given bargain. It is important to keep both yours and your trade partner's honor intact. By offering a price far too low or ridiculously high, or make negative comments about your "opponent's" goods, you insult him. If a Urikite feels he has been insulted, he will politely smile before excusing himself and leave the scene – losing one's temper is viewed as childish and both parties lose face if such feelings are displayed openly.

The Urikites have a high context culture. Non-verbal communication is at least as important as the spoken language - unspoken codes and facial expressions dominate Urikite communication in all situations. The blink of an eye, touching one's nose with the index finger, or a polite but emotionless smile tells more about a Urikite's opinions than a hundred words. A polite way of informing someone that their offer is uninteresting is to raise one's eyebrows. In contrast, to tell someone verbally that their goods are of no interest to you is to insult and dishonor them. Many potential deals between Urikite and Gulg traders have faltered – the Gulgs do not see the point in a written contract, and the Urikites are easily offended by the Gulgs' bluntness.