

# *Five Ancient Kingdoms*

**Rules for Fantastic Adventures  
Of Imagination, Danger, and Romance**

**BECKER**



**DRAGON MASTER SECRETS**  
**Volume 3 of Three Booklets**

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# *Five Ancient Kingdoms*

Volume 3

## *Dragon Master Secrets*

By Jonathan Becker



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*FIVE ANCIENT KINGDOMS* would not have been possible without the works of **Dave Arneson** and **E. Gary Gygax**, **Andrew Lang** and **Henry J. Ford**, **Piers Anthony** (for "Hasan"), and **Ray Harryhausen**, not to mention the support of **Tim Morgan** and **Kayce Sizer** at Gary's Games in Seattle. This game is dedicated to my beloved son, **Diego Thomas**, who is God's greatest blessing in my life...all thanks to God!

## HISTORY AND WORLD OVERVIEW

Empires rise and fall, men live and die. Only **HALAH** is eternal.

The last empire to fall was that of mighty **RHYMA** after a reign of more than seven centuries. Golden Rhyma, whose territory was so vast it was said a man could not walk from its eastern border to its western coastline in a single lifetime. Rhyma's vast influence stretched like a shadow over all of known civilization...until weakness from within led to destruction from without, and the coming of the **northern barbarians** rendered all its wonders in ruins.

But that was 300 years ago. Having thrown off the yoke of empire, the heart of the civilized world is far removed from the wreckage that was Rhyma. **FIVE ANCIENT KINGDOMS** now rule with independence, as they did for centuries before the coming of Rhyma's legions. Though their own power is diminished (for in past centuries they were themselves empires, if none so great as Rhyma) their age, wealth, and wisdom still make them forces with which to be reckoned and exceedingly dangerous to those seeking to thwart their designs.

**BARICA** is the main setting for this game and is described in **Book 1**. Its capital, **BAGDABHA**, is the richest city in the world, boasting nearly one million inhabitants. Despite its size, Bagadabha is a young city, having been founded less than 40 years ago when the Caliph of the time decided a new location was needed as the seat of the nation's power. Its design was ambitious: a round city with triple brick walls rising hundreds of feet above the plain and surrounded by a deep moat; four huge gates open upon highways that spoke the length and breadth of the empire. Its skyline is filled with elegant spires, minarets, and towers while the great, green dome of the Caliph's palace (the city's tallest structure) dominates at the center. Many miles of wharves and storehouses with hundreds of vessels of all types line the great river on which the city is built. It is said that only decadent **Conzantium** rivals its splendor...but then Conzantium is almost three times the age of the nation itself!

Nearly two centuries ago, a **Bedouin**-born merchant of the venerable city **CHEM** began receiving angelic revelations concerning the true nature of **the One God, Halah**. This spiritual knowledge would become the teachings and tenets of the **Salama religion**. While initially persecuted by members of his own tribe (for the desert-dwelling Bedouins were inclined to the same multi-god idol worship of the **Assygarians**, and Chem itself was renowned as a holy site for their ancient desert gods), his teachings soon found traction among those drawn to his message: a rejection of polytheism, generosity to the poor, kindness for and emancipation of slaves, and the equality of men and women in the eyes of God. Though eventually exiled from Chem...which did a good business as a religious center and site of pilgrimage for the many gods...**the Prophet** (as he became known) continued to

preach and to attract followers, especially among the downtrodden and persecuted, as well as slaves, foreigners, and younger siblings unlikely to succeed to the position of patriarch within their own clans.

Over the next twenty years of his life, the Prophet's small band of followers grew into a mighty polity, due in no small part to his ability to unite previously feuding desert tribes under a single religious banner. Monotheism was not unheard of in Barica: the **CHISHOLM** religion of Rhyma, still a fundamental part of life in Conzantium, began in Barica six centuries before the coming of the Prophet; likewise, the **ARASEMIAN** people (from whom the Chisholm religion sprang), had wandered the deserts without a homeland since the sacking and destruction of their city-state by both the Assygarians and Rhyma. However, the Salama movement was not one of religious conversion so much as a call to unite under one banner with one Barican identity; a recognition of shared unity as a people based on tradition and language. A "conquest" by fellow Baricans (especially ones ready to extend the hand of peace before the sword) was far more palatable than the invasions and depredations of Assygaria and Rhyma. A charismatic individual, a longing for a shared identity, and a moment of weakness from outside forces all conspired to create the perfect storm of change. By the end of his life, the Prophet was able to return to holy Chem, and the Assygarians idols were torn from their temples and trampled into dust.

Since the Prophet's demise, the Salamaic state has continued to spread both east and west, taking the Barican way of life even into areas only previously civilized by the reach of Rhyma. The **Five Ancient Kingdoms** surround the young nation, gazing at it with envy and avarice, while barbarians continue to fight and squabble over the remains of the old empire, making the northwestern continent a no man's land lost in a Dark Age of axe and sword and blood. In Bagdabha, life and learning continue to thrive as artisans ply their craft, scholars share their knowledge, and merchants from all parts of the world trade their wares at market, enriching the coffers of the Caliph even as he acts to defend the nation and religion of Salama. Whether or not he can succeed, one thing is certain:

Empires rise and fall, men live and die. Only Halah is eternal.

The **Five Ancient Kingdoms** include the following:

**CONZANTIUM:** This northern kingdom claims itself the inheritor of the glory of Rhyma. Five centuries prior, a doting father split Rhyma between his two sons; Conzantium became the "eastern capital" of a divided empire. Now, the city-state is all that remains of the Rhyma's former glory. Cunning and manipulative, its people are an insular and decadent lot, distancing themselves from the barbaric west behind monolithic walls of stone, existing off the pillage of rich lands and the trade produced by their location between two inland seas. Conzantium holds itself aloof from the other kingdoms, and would seek conquest of lost territory if it weren't for

the threat of barbaric invasion from the west. Their religion is a perverted version of the True Faith, designed to keep the average man a slave to their gaudy temples and church-anointed nobility.

**KITAX:** To the north of Barica, east of Conzantium, lies cold and windswept grasslands; a vast ocean of steppes peopled by nomadic horse tribes, the equal in barbarity (if not stature) to the Northmen who wrought Rhyma's destruction. But for the most part, the steppes tribes direct their aggression at the kingdom of mighty Kitax, far to the east of the grass sea. Kitax counts its history in thousands of years, though its existence as a united kingdom is barely older than Conzantium. Mysterious and isolated by distance, the tales and stories that come from Kitax are nearly as fantastic as the trade goods brought back by the most daring adventurers and merchants. It is legendary as a source of sorcery, dragons, and godlessness.

**SINDAR:** Across the eastern sea, separated from both Kitax and the northern steppes by a range of mountains high enough to reach Heaven lies the ancient land of Sindar with its tiger-filled jungles, massive stone ruins, and fabulously wealthy maharajas. Some of the western Sindarans have converted to the True Faith, but the majority of the country is composed of spiritually devout heathens, praying to megalithic statues carved in an age obscured by the mists of time. Sindar is a land rife with both fantastic treasure and demonic entities.

**THELASHEBA:** Across the western sea lies the **SAVAGE WEST**, a continent mostly untamed save for its northern coastline (the latter belonging once to Rhyma, but now hotly contested). To outsiders, the majority of the Savage West appears to consist of nothing so much as dense wooded jungle populated with the largest assortment of monsters and giant beasts found anywhere in the world. Somewhere in its expanse is the fabled kingdom of Thelasheba, a people governed by a long line of queens renowned for their beauty, wealth, and terrible wrath. It is said that members of the royal family freely converse in the language of beasts and birds, that they ride massive war elephants to battle, and that their hidden mountains spill gold and diamonds down their slopes...but few indeed have ever returned from the Savage West to verify these rumors.

**ASSYGARIA:** An ancient and decadent empire that controlled most of the Barican peninsula for centuries before the Rhyma conquest. With the fall of Rhyma, the Assygarian sultans looked to consolidate their power and recreate the empire. However, before they had the chance to act a revolutionary religious movement arose, conquering the region both militarily and ideologically. The Salamaic nation has built a new paradigm on top of the old Assygarian culture, and it has continued to spread, even into the Savage West and east to the borders of Sindar. But while the rule of Assygaria has been supplanted by the Caliphate of the One True Faith, yet do the remnants of that ancient, wicked empire remain, buried beneath the new-built cities and mosques, lurking in the sands of the Barican desert.

## CREATING ADVENTURES

As the **Dragon Master (DM)** it is your responsibility to facilitate the game, describing the world to the players as their characters' "five senses." You determine the actions of **non-player characters (NPCs)**, both man and monster; you also act as referee and rules interpreter. By creating adventures and allowing the player characters free reign to interact with the setting, you help to create magnificent stories of fantastic adventure. While **Book 1** provides information every player should know, and **Book 2** details the supernatural elements of the **Five Ancient Kingdoms (SAK)**, it is this volume which provides the additional rules you need to run the game as the DM.

Your first step to running **SAK** (after finding some players) is crafting an **adventure** for the PCs to explore. Every game session is considered a single "adventure," and part of the DM's responsibility is pacing the game so that the session ends at a suitable "stopping point." **SAK** is designed for play in a serial format, with recurring characters (both PC and NPC) returning in subsequent game sessions, thereby creating a legacy of stories for YOUR particular game world. Such a series is called a **saga** or **campaign**.

An adventure revolves around a **scenario**, a theme or idea that provides a reason for adventure. Often an adventure is tied to the **motivations** of the PCs, and scenarios may also be consequential events of earlier adventures (for example, if the characters rob a sultan's treasure room in one adventure, their next adventure might involve evading pursuit!).

Adventure scenarios come in three types, described as **Basic**, **Expert**, and **Master**. The description refers to the challenge posed to the *players*, not their characters, and the general method of exploration.

A **basic adventure** involves going to an adventure site (like an ancient temple, lost tomb, or subterranean cavern complex) and exploring the static environment. Players need only concern themselves with outfitting their characters and interacting with the dangers posed by the DM. PCs might not even concern themselves with traveling to the site; the DM can simply say, "Okay, you've arrived; what do you do now?" The relative degree of danger and reward is adjusted commensurate with the PCs' level of experience (from "forgiving" up to "fiendish").

An **expert adventure** involves PCs moving OUT of the static adventure site and having more choice in how an adventure objective is approached. At low levels, it can involve exploration of a town or city, while at mid to high level it can involve exploration of the wilderness or other planets and dimensions! This scope of adventure requires PCs make adequate preparation for travel and provisioning, and may require hiring or consulting with guides and specialists to achieve their goals.

A **master adventure** is one in which no clear goal exists for the PCs, instead only a dilemma to be resolved. Oftentimes, it is players that determine the master adventure: My character wants to carve out a sultanate for herself; how do I do that? My character wants to be considered the foremost wizard of the realm; what do I need to do? My character desires to marry the princess; what is the way to her heart? Master adventures challenge the players to *create their own challenges* (with the DM's help), requiring both a high degree of self-motivation and an understanding of the game. As with basic and expert adventures, master adventures can be undertaken at any level of experience: if characters decide they want to "start a revolution," their approach at 1<sup>st</sup> level will be different from their approach at 10<sup>th</sup> but the possibility still exists.

### \*\*\*THE UNDERWORLD\*\*\*

DMs can begin their sagas in or around the city of **BASUR**, about 280 miles southeast of Bagdabha along the great river (new PCs don't usually begin a saga in Bagdabha because everyone in Bagdabha is fabulously wealthy and the cost of living is very high). Basur is itself a large city and thriving port, being located right on the edge of the eastern sea. Its coastline is extremely swampy and inhabited by the very poor, including foreigners and escaped slaves.

Basur proper was founded more than 150 years prior as an outpost of the Salamaic army, assigned to watch over the ruins of **SUUMAT**, an Assygarian city. Suumat had once been a thriving city, filled with decadent delights and terrible wonders, and well known as a center of necromantic lore. Long unconquered (even Rhyma had been content with restricting the city's territory and collecting a rich annual tribute) the Prophet's army laid siege to Suumat's basalt walls for 40 days, before bringing down its enchanted gates with the might of an angelic host. The city was razed and burned and trampled into the mud, and Basur established to guard that no foul abomination pulled itself from the smoldering crater that was once mighty Suumat.

Now, the military camp has grown to a city of nearly 100,000 and merchants pass regularly through its ports from Badabha to the sea and back again. Basur sprawls across the landscape, having long ago over-taken and covered the ruins of Suumat. From time-to-time, artifacts are found and sold at bazaar to wealthy collectors (though many of these are newly-minted counterfeits of old Assygarian trinkets). And it is not unheard of for basements or digging crews to accidentally break into long forgotten chambers, remnants of the original city. For the most part, the terrors of old Suumat are a common ghost story heard from the bazaar tale-tellers and in the Basur wine shops...but while the locals laugh in the light of day, few would dare to venture into the sewers beneath the city, or the caves found in the coastal swamp, as both are said to lead to the perilous **UNDERWORLD** that lies beneath Basur.





The Underworld serves as a **basic scenario** to challenge a new party of adventurers. It is a mystical subterranean wilderness, braved through a temple cellar, or the aforementioned sewers, or the trap door in some swamp hermit's hut. Ancient sub-basements and dark tunnels lead to the sunken ruins of old Suumat, now crawling with monstrous vermin and forbidden magic. Suumat itself had several levels of catacombs beneath it...dark corridors lined with bones, opening onto tombs and secret chambers where necromancers conducted dire experiments and communed

with hideous demons...places where fabulous treasure was left behind waiting to be discovered. And who's to say Suumat itself wasn't built upon the ruins of an even more ancient and wicked city?

In preparation for an adventure in the Underworld, the DM should draw a map of the area to be explored, including notes for points of egress (both to the surface and to deeper levels), monsters that might be lurking, treasure that might be found, and other hazards that might be encountered (traps and pitfalls, cave-ins and poisonous fungi, underground lakes and long-forgotten magic), as well as simple areas of interest to confound and astound a group of adventurous explorers. Because of the nature of the Underworld, it is possible for different entrances to be found throughout the city of Basur, each leading to a different labyrinth of wonders.

Graph paper is convenient to use for mapping purposes, as it is easy to tell scale by using its grid (1 square = 10 feet is the usual scale used in the Underworld, but DMs may choose a scale of 1 = 20' or 1 = 5' as befits their purpose). An adventure site map might resemble the example on the next page.

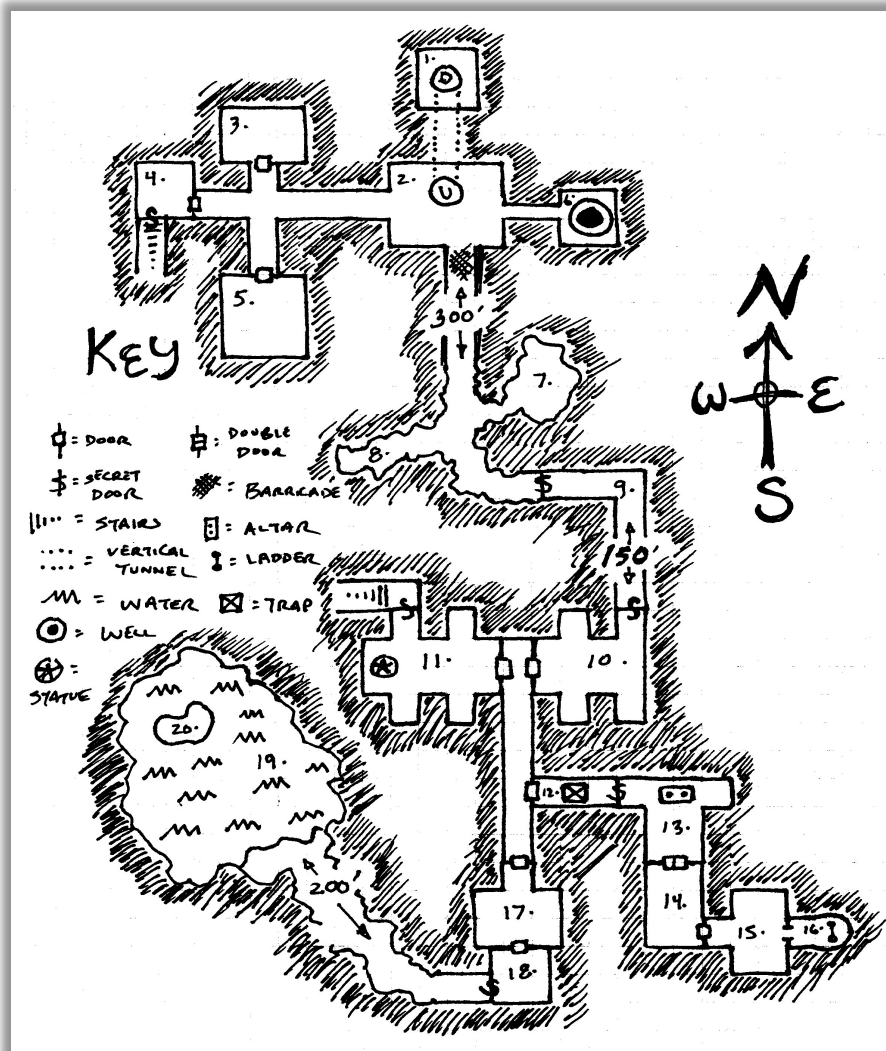
When stocking such a map, a good ratio of encounter areas is one-third "empty," one-third monsters (or NPCs), and one-third "special;" the latter divided equally between traps/hazards and unusual (if non-threatening) features. Treasure should be found about half the time in the presence of monsters, one-third the time in an encounter involving traps or danger, and one-sixth the time for empty areas. For DMs who want to randomly stock their map, the following table can be used:

D6 Roll	Encounter Area contains	Treasure Present?
0-2	Empty/Nothing of Note	D6 roll of 6
3-4	Monster	D6 roll of 4-6
5	Trap or Hazard	D6 roll of 5-6
6	Unusual or Obstacle	D6 roll of 6

DMs are not required to randomly stock their adventure sites, nor use this ratio; it is only presented for convenience. DMs can certainly place an ogre guarding a chest of gold and a magic sword anywhere he deems an appropriate location for such an encounter!

While monsters have suggested treasure (see **Book 2** for the **Treasure Hoard** code associated with each monster type), unguarded treasure found should correspond to the depth at which it is found, with lower levels of the Underworld having greater treasure to be discovered. For example, an unguarded treasure found on the 1<sup>st</sup> level of the Underworld (closest to the surface) would correspond to the amounts given for hoard code "A," while the second level (beneath the first) would correspond to hoard code "B," and so on. Hoard codes and treasure amounts are explained more fully in the **TREASURE HOARDS** section of this book.

# Under the Wine Shop



Numbered areas can be “keyed” with monsters, treasure, traps, etc. on a separate sheet of paper. Area #1, for example, acts as this particular adventure’s entrance to the Underworld and might have the note: **“1. Wine shop cellar – empty (all goods taken by bandits in areas 3 to 5); trap door down.”** Notes can be as detailed/specific as necessary to jog the DM’s memory in play: **“5. Bandit king’s lair (HD 2, likes pretty ladies, +1 mettle); 2000gd worth of silks; 80# chest with 4000gd and 2000ss; key to secret door at area 4.”**

## Exploring the Underworld

**Time in the Underworld is measured in 10 minute turns**, except during combat encounters (when time speeds up to 10 second rounds, as described in **Book 1**). Tracking time is important because part of Underground exploration is resource management: food, water, equipment, etc. Requiring players to consider their character's dwindling supplies drives home the seriousness of the undertaking.

Movement in the Underworld is 10 feet per inch (as figured in **Book 1**), limited to the slowest member of the adventuring party (unless stragglers are to be left behind!). **Adventurers may make two moves (using the normal movement allowance) per turn.** This speed of movement assumes adventurers are being reasonably cautious in the strange and otherworldly environment of the Underworld.

A party that stops to take actions of about five minutes (or less) can still make a single move at their normal movement allowance (though not running). This can include shifting gear or marching order, loading a pack with treasure, doing a cursory check for secret passages, etc. Map-making is presumed in the normal cautious movement, taking no additional time.

A thorough search of a 10' x 10' x 10' section of the Underworld takes one character ten minutes (a full turn). Two characters can search the same area in half the time (five minutes or half a turn). **If there is anything hidden or mysterious to be found, a search will detect it on a D6 roll of 5 or 6** (this includes booby-traps, secret doors, hidden treasure, unusual clues, etc.). The detection roll is modified by the searcher's INT bonus, if any. Thieves searching a specific object (a locked chest, a door, a statue, etc.) for **traps** may choose to use their *find traps* skill instead. The adventurers automatically miss (pass by) undetected objects; hidden traps that are not detected automatically trigger.

An adventuring party can throw caution to the wind and run flat-out at double their normal movement allowance, though this is dangerous and generally only done in pursuit or evasion situations; when doing so each party member rolls D6: on a **zero out** the character stumbles and falls, taking one hit of damage.

Any combat encounter that occurs in the Underworld is considered to take a full turn (ten minutes) regardless of the actual length of the combat. Combats are short but intense affairs and a period of rest always follows as the victors take stock of their gear, bind wounds, loot corpses, etc.

One full turn of rest must be taken for every hour spent in the Underworld (that is one turn in every six). If any part of the hour was spent running, as in evasion or pursuit, then two turns of rest are needed. Failing to rest results in characters being

**fatigued** and receiving a -1 penalty to all rolls for each rest period missed until rest is finally taken. Missing consecutive rest periods result in cumulative penalties.

Some sort of illumination is required for exploring the darkness. A torch provides light in a 30' radius, but only lasts for one hour; a lamp provides the same illumination for up to four hours with a single flask of oil. Also, adventurers must eat and sleep after eight full hours of exploration, or else suffer the effects of **fatigue** for an entire day.

## Encounters in the Underworld

The most perilous threat to life-and-limb in the Underworld comes from the hostile denizens found living in its darkness. Most creatures encountered are “residents,” and have extensive knowledge of their territory (i.e. they know how to avoid traps and circumvent obstacles, requiring no light sources or else staying to areas where it isn't needed due to fluorescent cave fungi and magical lighting effects, etc). Other encounters may be NPC adventurers exploring the Underworld; these may prove potential allies or may be at cross-purposes, depending on the PCs' objectives.

The DM determines if and where specific monsters or NPCs are encountered in the dungeon, though certain residents may be mobile (for example, hunters will leave their lair in order to procure food). It is useful for DMs to create a table of “random encounters” ahead of time to reflect the potential denizens PCs may come across. The standard process is to roll a D6 for every full turn spent in the Underworld, with a “0” indicating the party has stumbled into an encounter. Different sections of the DM's Underworld map can have different tables for different “territories.” An example might look like this:

<u>D6 Roll</u>	<u>Encounter</u>
0	Disease-ravaged minotaur, enraged
2	Beastman hunters (D6+1 encountered)
3	Solitary beastman hunter
4	2D6 giant rats gnawing on beastman corpse
5	Adventurers (friendly, D3+1 encountered)
6	Far-off, unnerving howl heard by PCs

Note that not everything on the chart is immediately hostile to the party or even a “monster,” per se. Random events of a “non-monster” nature can still be interesting and provide unnerving distractions for PCs.

When a group of PCs first encounters a creature(s) in the Underworld, there is the chance that one side or both will be **surprised**. A surprised individual (or group of individuals) is caught in a state of “flat-footedness;” if the other side is not surprised they have the opportunity to act before the surprised individuals can gather their wits. **In effect, they receive a free combat round during which the surprised side**

**does nothing.** If both sides are surprised, they simply waste a round gaping at each other.

To check for surprise, each side rolls a D6 (for the player characters, one player is nominated to roll for the whole party). A roll of 0 or 2 indicates the side is surprised. Some actions (like **moving stealthily**) can double the chance an opponent is surprised (to a 0 to 4 roll), and other effects (like being **invisible** or **hiding in shadows**) allow an individual or side to automatically achieve surprise (no roll necessary). Sometimes, there is no chance of a side being surprised. For example, creatures in the Underworld can see approaching light sources long before they have a chance of being surprised (unless the party comes bursting through a closed door; a character can break down a stuck or locked door on D6 roll of 5 or 6, modified by any STR adjustment possessed).

In the Underworld, encounters take place at a distance of  $2D6 \times 10'$  depending on the terrain (divide this distance by two if either party is surprised). If the DM is unclear how an NPC will react to the presence of the characters, allow the PCs to make a **reaction check** (obvious brandishing of openly carried weapons is always worth a -2 penalty), but most monsters in the Underworld, especially unintelligent ones, will attempt to pursue, kill, and eat interlopers.

If the party decides to attempt to **evade** an encounter, their chance of escape depends on the circumstance. If they managed to surprise the creature encountered (without being surprised in turn) evasion is automatic. If the Underworld denizens are aware of the adventurers, they may try to pursue based on temperament (or orders) or their chance of pursuit may be random (check **reaction** to determine their level of hostility). If the party is attempting to run from an active combat, opponents should almost always attempt pursuit unless laws, taboos, or territorial needs (like protecting their lair and/or young) prevent them.

In a pursuit situation, DMs should compare the speed of the two sides to determine if the pursuers have the ability to overtake their quarry. If the party decides to remain together, remember that the slowest member of the adventuring party determines their overall speed. Food or treasure dropped by the party have a 50% (roll of 4-6 on a D6) of distracting pursuers to the point that they'll break off pursuit...though unintelligent monsters usually cannot be distracted by treasure and intelligent creatures ignore food unless starving. If an adventurer **falls** during flight (see above) it also serves to distract pursuit, and dead companions count as "dropped food" to carnivorous, man-eating monsters.

In general, up to three human-sized individuals can walk abreast down a 10' wide corridor; however only two human-sized individuals have the space to melee in such an area unless fighting with thrusting weapons (spears, pole arms, and short swords).

## Traps, Hazards, and Obstacles

Any number of dangerous obstacles can be found in the Underworld: booby-traps and pitfalls, cave-ins and underground lakes, poisonous fungi and magical illusions, shifting passages and vision-obscuring mist. An **obstacle** is just that: something designed to prevent further exploration in a given direction. If the obstacle can injure adventurers in some way, it is considered a **hazard** as well.

**Traps** are obstacles designed to impact the adventurers in a specific way: to delay their movement (as with a cage, pit, hobbling trap, or caltrops); to damage and deplete them (spear launchers and poisoned darts, magical curses and disease contagion); or to channel them into specific areas (shifting walls, magical gates, and chutes/slides to other levels). As stated, an undetected trap always “goes off,” though the party member(s) affected may need to be randomly determined by the DM (if a trap is only triggered by a specific action than the person triggering it is obvious). In almost every case, adventurers should receive a **saving throw versus traps** to prevent or mitigate the impact of the trap. The save represents the awareness and intuition that allows a last second avoidance of a trip wire or the eating of a poisoned mushroom.

Only rarely should a trap ever be designed to cause immediate death: a chamber that locks and fills with water or sand, or pit that drops a character into lava, for example. Even when such is included a successful save should allow some heroic resource that prevents the adventurer’s untimely demise (the PC catches the edge of the pit or finds a way to unlock the chamber for example).

Even when a trap is detected, means must still be found to circumvent it. The thief skill **disarm traps** gives the savvy scoundrel the knowledge to avoid a trap’s impact: the handholds to help traverse a pit or the trigger to avoid, for instance. The successful thief can choose to share this knowledge with her companions or keep it to herself (allowing the trap to have its impact on others). Knowledge of how to disarm the trap’s effect does not prevent the trap from working in the future, and characters in flight or pursuit situation may well trigger traps they avoided earlier due to their lack of caution.

Obstacles and hazards usually don’t need to be detected; the challenge is figuring out how to overcome them (and with hazards, how to overcome them without injury). An example of an obstacle is an underground river (of water or lava) that needs to be traversed, or a yawning chasm. An exit from a cave may be placed high up a cavern wall and require climbing equipment (ropes and spikes, etc.) to reach it. Players will need to be clever in the building of rafts and bridges to continue their exploration; **disarm traps** isn’t a help in this regard.

As a general rule, falling from a height inflicts one hit of damage per ten feet fallen. Landing on sharpened stakes or spears inflicts one additional hit, unless a successful save versus traps is made to avoid impalement.

## Moving On

While the above information has been written specifically to apply to the subterranean kingdom of Basur's Underworld, most of it – including surprise, evasion, traps, mapping, and random encounters – applies to other Basic adventures. Once characters are ready to move out of Basur or feel they've exhausted its possibilities, DMs can create new adventure sites to explore: ancient ruins and long-forgotten tombs, castles belonging to jinn or giants, evil strongholds and cave complexes filled with dragons and the loot of a thousand brigands. Draw a map, stock it with things to discover (both perilous and precious), and provide the PCs with a reason to explore (tied to their motivations, if possible). Basic adventures, like the Underworld, are easy sessions to manage, even if the adventure itself is fiendishly clever in its challenges.

## \*\*\*THE WILDERNESS\*\*\*

Outside of urban areas like Basur and Bagdabha (and the civilized agricultural territory that surrounds them) player characters will find the **WILDERNESS**: harsh desert and broken terrain filled with brigands and monsters and an unforgiving landscape. Only the Bedouin tribes, the army of the Caliphate, and heavily armed caravans dare to walk the Wilderness with impunity, and even they can meet sudden destruction with poor luck. Merchants and adventurers that can survive the Wilderness stand to make enormous fortunes, but it is a risky undertaking.

## Exploring the Wilderness

Movement in the Wilderness is 1 mile per inch (as calculated in **Book 1**), again limited by the slowest member of the adventuring party. When mounted on riding animals, use the speed of the mount unless the creature is heavily burdened (in which case speed is halved). **One turn in the Wilderness is one day**, except during combat encounters (when time speeds up to 10 second rounds, as described in **Book 1**).

**Adventurers may make two moves (using the normal movement allowance) per turn.** These moves are broken up by a noontime rest period, when an adventuring party stops to eat and ward off fatigue. Daily speed over especially rough terrain (desert, mountains, swamp, etc.) is only one-half normal, and characters must be sure to carry enough water for themselves and any animals (on average, each needs one water skin per day in the Barican wilderness, though these can be refilled at oases and known wells). In other parts of the world, water may be easier to find. **A character loses two points of STR for every day without water, dying of thirst if their STR**



**reaches 0.** With water a character recovers quickly, regaining one point of STR for each hour of normal hydration.

Sometimes when a party or army traveling overland has a great need of speed it chooses to make a **forced march**, pausing only the bare minimum for rest. Doing this allows the group to take an extra move during the day; however, all participating are exhausted at the end of the march, counting as **fatigued** until they've rested a number of days equal to the days marched (a "rest" day can include no more than one move during the day). For an army to march on consecutive days, the DM must check **mettle** for the group every morning with a -1 penalty for each day of the march. PCs (who have no "mettle" trait) are limited to a number of consecutive days equal to their level of experience; after that, they may make a save versus death or succumb to exhaustion, halting their march. Mounts are not normally be force marched due to the chance of laming the animal (checked by having the animal save versus death); if a large group of cavalry is force marched, **D6x10%** will be lost during a day's march.

## Points of Interest

When creating wilderness adventures, DMs may wish to map a territory with hexagonal graph paper, using a scale of six miles to a hex (or 24 miles for the mapping of larger territories). However, the most important things to note are **points of interest**; few adventurers venture out into the wilds without purpose or an objective. If desired, points of interest can be stocked randomly using the same method given in the Underworld section.

Even with a rough map, DMs can note the general direction and distance between points of interest, including cities and villages, adventure sites, monster lairs, encamped armies, oases and wells, and lost travelers. Direction and distance (in either miles or "days of travel") are the most important things to note, not the exact contents of terrain between points of interest. DMs need to consider the Wilderness from the adventurers' point of view: just because Azoth the Dragon lairs in a cave "in the mountains east of here," doesn't mean characters are going to load up pack mules with the express purpose of scouring an entire range looking for its fabled hoard. Such a task is nigh impossible without a guide, a map, or at least the rumored landmarks needed to find the place...no one builds a clear road right to a dragon's lair!

Once the PCs decide they wish to try their hand at adventures outside of the Underworld, the DM need to invent points of interest for them, again using the PCs' own motivations and past adventures as a guide. Don't make PCs search for rumors of adventure; the people of Barica enjoy gossiping and telling tales, and PCs should hear the information they need to formulate a plan for exploration. Additional, practical knowledge of their objective may be harder to come by, but the basics of the scenario should not be.

**For example:** *PCs hear that brigands are waylaying overland caravans, and Gazim the merchant is willing to provide good wages for armed escort to a coastal port some 300 miles to the west (ten days by camel). Digging for gossip reveals rumors of supernatural danger as a prior caravan accompanied by the magician Mungo the Marvelous disappeared just as mysteriously as any of the others. What the locals don't know is the bandits are led by a necromancer and their numbers are bolstered by the zombie dead of the caravans they've destroyed.*

In the huge and barren landscape of Barica, the location of the occasional palm oasis and desert well is vital info that is always shared with travelers. As with the tradition of **hospitality** (described in **Book 1**), only the basest and most evil of miscreants would deny knowledge of water to a person in need, or allow someone to die of thirst...it is far more honorable to kill a man in mortal combat. This shared solidarity of need cuts across political ties and religious views.

## Encounters in the Wilderness

DMs can create random encounter tables for Wilderness adventures, just as for adventures in the Underworld. Depending on the terrain being traveled, other random events may include sand storms, rockslides, quick sand, and circling vultures. The method of checking for random encounters remains the same (D6 roll with a "0" indicating an event), but in dangerous areas DMs may need to check for a "nighttime encounter" as well; when such is indicated it occurs at the end of the day after the adventurers have stopped to make camp. Often, it is appropriate to create separate encounter tables for day and night.

**Surprise** is conducted the same as in Underworld encounters, but sighting distances are 4D6 x 10 yards (D6 x 10 yards when surprise occurs). Evasion and pursuit is handled a little differently, as wilderness terrain provides the opportunity for escape even from a faster pursuer. Each side rolls D6 and adds their combat movement (in inches; see **Book 1**) as a bonus, and an additional +2 if a side has achieved surprise. The side with the higher result determines whether or not the encounter is avoided.

Some monsters and opponents continue to track their quarry (via scent or sign) even after losing sight of them; when such is the case, they have a 2 in 6 chance (D6 roll of 5 or 6) of coming upon them by nightfall. Evaders can avoid *this* pursuit by being more than twice as fast as their pursuers, or by subjecting themselves to a **forced march** (see above).

## Hazards and Obstacles in the Wilderness

Traps are not encountered in the wilderness unless deliberately set for pursuers or prey (like pits and deadfalls). However, there are plenty of other obstacles for PCs to

encounter: cliffs and ravines, sandstorms, and even rivers and bodies of water that require crossing.

**Sandstorms** are a particularly violent and dangerous hazard of the arid Barican lands. They can last several minutes, hours, or even days, and can cause blindness and death by asphyxiation if individuals don't shelter themselves against the power of the sand. All PCs are presumed to know how to protect themselves when a sandstorm arises; the only question is how long they are delayed in their journey; roll D6: 0 – 1 = day plus D3 days; 2-4 = one day (two moves); 5-6 = half a day (one move).

If characters are forced into exposure for some reason, they take one hit (D6 HPs) of damage per minute (six combat rounds); once reduced to zero hits or HPs, the character must save versus poison every minute to avoid succumbing to asphyxiation and death. Characters wearing proper face coverings double the time they can survive exposure.



**Provisioning**, especially at sea (see **Maritime Travel**), is an important consideration of wilderness adventures. PCs must be sure to purchase enough rations to last during travel. Except in the desert or at sea, characters can spend one “move” to **forage** in the wilderness, finding enough food to feed D6 humans on a D6 roll of 6; PCs can also spend a full day **hunting** for large game, yielding 3D6 days’ worth of food on a D6 roll of 5+. Characters with the advantages **fisherman** and **tracker** receive a bonus of +3 to these rolls when appropriate, while **Bedouin** and **falconer** can allow PCs to forage or hunt in the desert, respectively. NPC hirelings must **check mettle** after three days of no food, and every day thereafter, abandoning their employer on a failed roll. At sea, this results in a **crew mutiny**.

## Maritime Travel

Eventually, most PCs want to journey by water, as many distant lands filled with adventure can only be reached via ship. While maritime travel avoids many of the hazards of overland crossings, it is still fraught with perils of its own.

Costs for ships are provided in **Book 1**, though PCs may be able to **charter passage** on a ship for a fraction of this cost (the usual negotiation is for a percentage of realized profits, plus wages and provisions). PCs with their own ship still need to hire a crew (depending on the number of PCs in a group with the **sailor** advantage), and if traveling on the open sea (as opposed to simple river or coastal travel) a **shipmaster** must be hired to navigate. Crew costs are given in the section for **Hirelings**. The following chart shows average crew numbers for all watercraft:

	Minimum Crew*	Usual Crew*	Rowers	Extra Troops (Marines)	Cargo Capacity
<b>Boat, small sailing</b>	1	1	-	-	1500#
<b>Galley (dromon), large</b>	10	20	120	50	4000#
<b>Galley (dromon), small</b>	5	10	50	20	2000#
<b>Merchant ship, large</b>	10	20	-	Up to 60	30,000#
<b>Merchant ship, small</b>	5	10	-	Up to 30	10,000#
<b>Raft</b>	-	-	-	-	600#
<b>River barge</b>	1	5	Up to 8	-	3000#

*\*Seamen, not counting a **shipmaster**; see **Hirelings, Slaves, and Specialists***

Maritime travel is different from other wilderness travel. Sailed ships (called “**dhow**”) can make good time due to having three turns for movement (assuming “usual crew” level which allows a “night shift”), but they are still somewhat at the mercy of the winds. Oared galleys (called “**dromons**”) can move quickly regardless of wind but are limited by the endurance of their rowers, requiring both rest and water (small galleys carry four days’ worth of fresh water, while large galleys carry eight).

For dhow, the DM determines a vessel’s speed for a week’s travel (or daily for shorter voyages). Roll 2D6 and divide the result by two to determine the average miles per hour. Large dhow (including galleys and river barges) subtract one mile per hour from this speed, and ships with minimal crew subtract an additional mile per hour. This average speed is multiplied by 168 hours of travel (or 112 hours if sleeping at night). A **zero** means the ship is **becalmed**, and only able to move with oars or a river current. Small boats and dromons may capsize in high winds (any wind roll of 9+); the shipmaster must roll a 4+ on a D6 to keep from sinking unless close to shore.

Dromons average five miles per hour (four miles per hour for large galleys) under oar, assuming no combat encounters occur. In combat and emergencies, dromons can

travel eight miles per hour, but must rest an extra turn (so only receive one movement turn for the day instead of two). River barges are half as fast as dromons depending on the river's current (plus or minus two miles per hour is standard). Small boats and other dhow, regardless of size, can move one mile per hour using oars or sweeps, or double that in combat and emergencies.

Random encounters at sea are only checked once per week (or once per journey for short voyages) though DMs may adjust this for high traffic areas (especially coastal areas known for pirate activity). The following table is only an example:

<u>D6 Roll</u>	<u>Result</u>
<b>0</b>	<b>Terrible Storm!</b> Ship is wrecked and sunk on a D6 roll of 0-4 unless able to weigh anchor. (dromons, barges, and small boats <b>subtract 1</b> from this roll).
<b>2</b>	Kraken or other Sea Monster (roll for surprise)
<b>3</b>	Aerial encounter (D6: 0 = dragon, 2-3 = roc, 4-5 = griffon, harpy, or wyvern if near shore, 6 = sea bird). Roll <b>reaction</b> .
<b>4</b>	Hostile Ship (roll for surprise)
<b>5</b>	Non-Hostile Ship (roll for surprise)
<b>6</b>	Light rain (replenish fresh water supply; good omen, reroll wind if <b>becalmed</b> ).

**Naval Combat:** in maritime encounters, one side often attempts to avoid the other. When this is the case, each side rolls D6 and adds their combat speed (in inches) to the roll; a side that has surprise may add +2 to the roll. For dhow, the DM checks wind for each individually (count miles per hour as inches); dromons and oared vessels may choose to use their combat rowing speed. If the results are tied, pursuit continues, though subsequent rolls do not add a bonus for surprise.

*For example, the PCs' small merchant ship encounters a kraken, and the crew (wisely) decides to attempt evasion. The DM rolls wind and finds the ship is currently traveling at three miles per hour. A kraken has a move of 12" which (per **Book 1**) means a combat speed of 4". The PCs achieve surprise and so roll D6 and add +3 (for movement) and +2 (for surprise), while the DM rolls D6 and adds +4 for the kraken. The PCs roll a 3+5 = 8 while the DM rolls 4+4 = 8; so pursuit continues for another round. The next round the PCs roll a 4+3 (no surprise bonus) = 7 while the kraken rolls a 5+4 = 9; the kraken catches the fleeing vessel and combat ensues.*

If evasion fails, combat occurs. Ship-to-ship combat always occurs in two phases: a **missile fire** phase (designed to soften the opposition) followed by a **boarding** phase. Each ship has a certain number of combat troops, including all adventurers and hired marines. Sailors are all fight-worthy, having HD 1, while **shipmasters** have D3 HD (a captain with HD 0 is old or peg-legged or otherwise deficient). One-half of non-slave

rowers are fight-worthy, while galley slaves (rowers) do not fight. Horses on-board cannot be ridden. The number of fight-worthy individuals on each vessel is important, as one side usually **surrenders** if outnumbered three to one (see below).

In the missile fire phase, each side rolls D6 plus an additional D6 for each **catapult** or **ballista** the side has (such weapons cost 250gd; a vessel may have one, or two if large in size). The result is the number of hits inflicted on fight-worthy troops (the side taking the hits decides how hits are distributed). One hit inflicts D6 damage on a PC.

In the boarding phase, the pursuing side rolls D6 to grapple the opposing ship, succeeding on a roll of 5+ (if the troops on the fight-worthy ship outnumber the troops on the evading ship, add +1 to the D6). If the grappling roll fails, another phase of missile fire is fought. If both sides want to board, both sides roll D6 with the higher roll choosing on which ship the melee occurs.

Once one ship has been boarded, a modified melee is fought until a side surrenders. Every round, each side rolls D6, adding +1 for each participating adventurer or +2 for each participating hero. The result is the number of hits inflicted in the round (distributed as in the **missile fire** phase). If one side is outnumbered three to one at the end of melee it automatically surrenders; PC adventurers need not surrender but any hits received in extended melee must be distributed to PCs. Only a vessel's shipmaster may command a crew to continue fighting; the crew obeys on a D6 roll of 6 (add +1 for CHA >14, or +2 if the shipmaster is a **leader of men**; if the shipmaster is an adventurer of the hero class, add an additional +1). Once a side surrenders, combat ends. Only one-half of the hits inflicted on crew are considered mortal injuries; survivors of the losing side can be taken prisoner or given the option of switching sides to shore up the losses of the winner.

Rounds in naval combat are **one minute long**; because of this, spell casters not involved in melee may cast any magnitude spell (though only one per round).

Naval combat versus monsters is handled like land combat except characters must enter the water to fight melee (except against **kraken**; see **Book 2**). Fight-worthy troops will not fight against monsters except with a catapult or ballista; such a weapon has a three in six chance (D6 roll of 4+) of inflicting one hit per round.

**Burning, Ramming, and Sinking:** when an attacker uses flaming shot and arrows, up to half of all hits inflicted in the missile fire phase may be assigned as **"fire hits."** The number of fire hits inflicted becomes the saving check that needs to be made by the shipmaster to prevent burning from getting out-of-control (check is made at the end of the missile phase). A ship on fire burns to the water line in 10 minutes + 2D6x10 minutes and its remains will sink thereafter. Victims of the Conzantium navy's special **fire-throwers** make their checks at a -2 penalty. Dragon fire inflicts a number of fire hits equal to the dragon's HD.

The old tactic of ramming is no longer used due to the lack of formal military training in most galley oarsmen; instead, rams have been designed with the intention of sheering oars and disabling ships (though galley captains are usually savvy enough to ship their oars to prevent this tactic). However, a dromon ram can still be used against a large sea monster, doing D6 hits for a small galley and 2D6 hits for a large galley.

A vessel that's taken severe damage, whether from fire or monster or magic attack, may be too badly damaged to stay afloat (as judged by the DM). It takes 3D6x10 minutes for such a craft to break-up and sink. On the open sea, PCs may save versus death to lash themselves to a piece of flotsam and prevent immediate drowning.

**Swimming:** all characters can swim, though there's always a chance of drowning in rough waters (**zero out** roll on a D6). Characters cannot swim in chainmail, helmets, greaves, or carrying a shield or more than one single-handed weapon. Roll **D6** for all others: subtract 2 or 3 when wearing lamellar or half-chain respectively, add or subtract 1 for high or low STR, subtract 1 if carrying a weapon larger than a dagger, and subtract 1 if wearing a backpack. Any result of **zero** (or less) indicates drowning.

## Aerial Travel

Flying creatures can travel a maximum number of miles per day equal to ten times their HD multiplied by its flying movement rate (a creature with HD 0 uses a multiplier of one-half). Creatures burdened with a rider or heavy load halve their speed, depending on the creature's size (DM's judgment). Magical artifacts that fly (broomsticks and carpets, for example) have a speed equal to a HD 3 monster with a 24" move, but subtract one HD for each additional passenger after the first. The DM will have to determine the speed of huge flying artifacts (like sailing ships and castles) on a case-by-case basis.

Random encounters are checked twice per day with the second encounter occurring at night (and possibly on the ground if the adventurers have landed and made camp).

**Aerial combat**, for the most part, is handled exactly like other outdoor combat, save that missile attacks suffer a **-2** penalty unless fired from a stable platform (characters mounted on the back of a flying creature are never stable). Flying creatures are forced to land if they suffer damage equal to or greater than half their HD (in hits). Falling from a height inflicts one hit per ten feet fallen.

Airborne creatures receive a +2 bonus to melee "swoop" attacks against grounded targets that are caught in the open without cover, but may only make one such swoop attack every other round (no additional charge bonus is received); instead of inflicting damage, flying creatures can carry-off opponents if the flyer's HD exceeds the target by at least three HD (for this purpose, all human sized characters are considered to be HD 0, or HD 1 if exceptionally large and/or heavily encumbered).

## \*\*\*THE PALACE\*\*\*

Adventurers are individuals of singular ability and ambition, and it will not be long before they are invited into **THE PALACE**, the halls of politics and power...even if they are not themselves of noble birth (there are rewards for saving princesses in distress and rescuing kingdoms in turmoil, after all!). Palace adventures involve intrigue and relationship building, as well as managing one's own castle and dominion.

While intrigue and corruption can be a part of courtly life, the setting of **SAK** assumes such is NOT the case with most sultans and nobles of Barica. DMs should remember the customs and values of the typical Barican (as described in **Book 1**) and consider the upper class to be exemplars of honor and tradition, even if they are not entirely selfless in their thoughts and deeds. **SAK** has a romantic, fairy tale view of chivalry and nobility, and it is presumed Halah would not allow a tyrant of evil disposition to long remain in power; however, it is certainly possible for the PCs to act as His divine tools in over-throwing such individuals where they are found. And such magnanimity of spirit need not be present in the other heathen kingdoms, nor among the barbarian chieftains that run roughshod over the northlands.

While the DM can draw maps of castles and palaces where PCs might explore, the main “map” that needs to be created is one of **relationships**, showing the people in power in a particular courtly setting and their relationship to each other, as well as the things they desire and ideas for how and why they might interact with the PCs. At low levels of experience this might involve asking favors that send the adventurers off on quests, like any other Underworld or Wilderness adventure; at high levels, “favors” might include making and breaking treaties, land divisions and troop movements, and alliances through arranged marriages. As with the other adventure types, Palace adventures grow in scope as the PCs grow more experienced.

There is no set game turn in Palace adventures, though DMs should keep track of game time (days, weeks, months, etc.). Players may decide they want an audience with a particular noble one day, a clandestine rendezvous with another in the evening, and then take a trip to inspect the sultan's game preserve the day following. Palace adventures do not involve much resource management (keeping track of torches and arrows, for example), except on the largest scale (taxes of the local population and tribute paid to invaders, for example). NPC **reaction checks** (as described in **Book 1**) and the actions PCs take to influence those checks is a more important game mechanic in Palace adventures than attack rolls.

Combat and murder can still occur in Palace settings, especially the poison in the goblet or the (literal) knife in the back. When checking to see if such dastardly actions are noticed, different game rules can be adapted to the situation. For example, any attempt to attack someone or slip a poison or powder into a dish should require a



normal **surprise** roll to see if the victim is caught unawares; a successful use of the **move stealthily** thief skill double this chance as usual. Characters still receive saving throws versus poison, of course, and success indicates a royal taster detects the poison, or that the substance is too diluted to do more than give the imbiber indigestion. When in doubt as to whether or not a specific piece of intrigue is accomplished or detected, unless some other roll would seem to apply, allow PCs to succeed on a D6 roll of 5+, possibly modified by a high DEX or CHA score. **For example**, if a PC wants to pass a folded note to an individual over the course of a royal banquet without being noticed, the DM should allow success on a D6 roll of 5 or 6, with the roll being modified by DEX. Thieves, on the other hand, might accomplish the same action with a successful **pick pockets** skill check. The DM has to be as creative in his adjudication as the players are in the actions attempted.

The following additional rules help round out Palace adventures:

### Acquiring of a Stronghold

At some point, most PCs want to acquire a home or base of operations, if only because there is a limit to how much treasure a camel can carry. Such a place, whether a small house or a palatial castle, is called a **stronghold**, and its owner (PC or otherwise) receives a +1 bonus to all rolls when acting in its defense.

There are many ways for PCs to acquire a stronghold, including theft, purchase, and construction. A modest two-story construction of wood costs about 5,000gd with a similar stone construction costing twice that amount. On the other hand, a kingly mansion – whether of wood or stone, and with a beautiful courtyard, servants quarters, and stables – would command five times that price or more, depending on location (in Bagdabha, where real estate is at a premium, all prices are doubled).

Characters that wish to construct a new building only pay half the amount they would for an existing structure, but need to acquire land, hire an **engineer** (see **Hirelings**), and wait for the construction to be completed: 2D6 months (double for stone or large construction; a **zero out** indicates some major disaster or fire has wrecked the project with all money lost). Additional features (secret doors and passages) cost extra.

**Castles** are another matter: assuming the local ruler gives permission to own a walled fortress, construction is usually the only option. Cost and time varies by size:

Large tower or small keep/castle: 1 year + 2D6 months

Small castle with outer and inner walls or medium castle: 2 years + 2D6 months

Medium castle with walls or large castle: 3 years + 2D6 months

Large, concentric castle: 5 years + 2D6 months

The cost for such a construction can be estimated at about 10,000gd per month.

# Emirates and Lordship

An **emirate** may be granted to any PC based on service to the local ruler, but is only automatically bestowed on a hero that reaches 9<sup>th</sup> level. The exact size of the land is left to the DM to determine, but a 24 mile hex (per the **Wilderness** rules above) is usual. There will be 2D6 communities within the area granted, each one containing 2D6x50 individuals (a **zero out** for a particular community indicates an abandoned village or nomadic group that refuses to acknowledge the emir). Every year, each community grows by D6x10 individuals, so long as invasions and natural disasters do not occur that slay or drive out the local populations. Rulers that build and invest in new infrastructure can expect a higher rate of population growth.

An emir receives 10gd per individual in annual revenue after all basic costs of running the emirate (not including additional construction, specialist hirelings, and personal purchases). This revenue is adjusted by a special annual **reaction check**; roll 2D6 and modify for CHA and actions that might sway the population as a whole:

Roll 2D6	EMIRATE REACTION
2 or less	<b>Open revolt:</b> no revenue received; population gathers arms to overthrow the emir
3-5	<b>Hostile:</b> one-half revenues; population decreases instead of increasing; monthly assassination attempts made
6-8	<b>Satisfied:</b> no adjustments
9-11	<b>Happy and productive:</b> +10% to all revenues and +D6x10 to population increase of all communities
12 or more	<b>Extremely confident:</b> as the <i>happy</i> result but also add +1 to mettle of all troops, conscripted or not

# Hirelings, Slaves, and Specialists

While **retainers** (described in **Book 1**) are trusted companions and fellow adventurers, PCs find it useful to employ other non-adventuring hirelings and specialists, especially as they build strongholds and earn emirates. While porters, guides, and local translators are useful hirelings for Underworld and Wilderness ventures, their costs are usually on a “per service” basis, which PCs can negotiate with the DM.

Specialists do not require the same reaction rolls to hire as retainers: if specialists are available, they work for any character that can pay. Since specialists don’t adventure, it isn’t necessary to give them **loyalty** scores (in special circumstances, such as when trying to bribe or “turn” a spy, the DM can determine loyalty as per **Book 1**). Mercenaries do not have loyalty scores, but make mettle checks based on their type.

The following specialists may not be available in every locale, but the prices given are standard for their craft:

**Alchemist (100gd/month):** are capable of brewing potions like magician if their employer provides them with the necessary materials (i.e. pays the price of brewing the potion). Alchemists know how to brew 3D6 types of potion, plus poisons.

**Animal Handler (250gd/month):** is needed to handle and train any type of animal other than horses or mules. Handlers specialize in a particular type of beast: dogs, hawks, oxen, etc. Exotic (mythical) animal trainers can be hired for **double** the normal cost.

**Armorer/Smith (100gd/25gd month):** are needed to maintain the arms and armor of men in a character's employ, and maintain the shoes of horses and mules. One armorer is needed for every 50 fighting men and one smith for every 50 animals. An armorer can make one suit of armor, three shields, or four weapons per month.

**Assassin (2000gd/mission):** is a hired killer, not an adventurer of the assassin class (the latter would be the equivalent of a **retainer**). The hiring does not earn XP, but has abilities equal to an assassin of 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> level (roll D3 and add the result to three).

**Engineer (500gd/month):** must be hired to construct a stronghold or conduct a siege.

**Marine/Mercenary (variable):** hired fighters used to garrison strongholds, act as troops in warfare, or act as guardsmen. The base cost of a professional soldier is 2gd per month (peasants and conscripts cost only 1gd but are in all ways equal to a HD 0 **normal human**). This cost is doubled for soldiers in heavy armor, and tripled for archers and crossbowmen. Mounted mercenaries cost ten times the basic cost (for example, 20gd for light armored horse and 40gd for heavy armored horse), and **elite troops** of any type double the total cost. A commander must lead each unit (HD 2 or HD 3 if elite) unless led by a PC or NPC retainer; such commanders cost ten times the cost of a single member of the unit commanded. Mettle checks for mercenaries are made at 7+; elite troops check at 6+, while peasants and conscripts check at 8+.

**Sage (2000gd/month):** an academic specializing in a specific field of knowledge; the more specialized the knowledge the more information possessed by the sage. Sages require time (D3 weeks of research) to find the answers an employer seeks.

**Seaman/Shipmaster (5gd/250gd/month):** a **seaman** acts as a crewmember or skilled (non-slave) oarsman; a **shipmaster** is required for any craft larger than a small boat or raft to command, navigate, and read charts (though high INT PCs with the **sailor** advantage can act as their own shipmaster). Seamen and shipmasters can (and often will) defer wages in exchange for a share of profits recognized in a voyage: 10% for the shipmaster and 10% for the crew (or 20% for the crew of a large vessel) is standard; for chartered vessels, this percentage is expected *in addition* to wages.

**Slave (variable):** cost varies by both skill and physical appearance. Domestic and galley slaves (rowers) cost 20-60gd, eunuchs double that, and slaves with former military training five times that. Slaves destined to be concubines have prices dependent on their beauty, five to ten times that of a domestic, with trained performers (dancers, singers, and artists) double that. In general, younger slaves are more expensive than older ones, females fetch higher prices than males, and eunuchs are more desirable than non-eunuchs. A **slave master** (10gd/month) is required for every twenty slaves owned. Most slaves found in Barica are foreigners captured in war; all will seek to earn their freedom if possible (or escape if not).

**Spy (500gd/month):** the price given can indicate the hiring of an actual infiltrator or simply the price to bribe someone in the enemy's camp.

# LOVE AND WAR

## Romance & Marriage

Players choose whether or not their character is married when the PC is first created; any married PC should have a good reason for not staying home (perhaps the PC is a widow and the only support for her children; perhaps the PC's spouse is imprisoned or tied down by business or the character's adventuring life is secret). Being married does not preclude a character from being an adventurer, but a character that is married needs to give their spouse *some* reason for beginning an adventuring career, rather than leading a settled life.

For unattached PCs, there is a chance to encounter a love interest in any adventure that brings contact with likely individuals (such as when PCs spend time in a populated area, or an adventure site featuring intelligent members of a compatible species...perhaps a person held prisoner or a shape-shifted monster!). At the beginning of an adventure, the DM rolls a D6, adding +1 if a particularly eligible encounter awaits the PCs in the adventure (a damsel in distress, a sultan looking for a wife, etc.). If the result is a **six or more**, one PC has the opportunity for a mutual love attraction during the adventure. If the result is a **zero**, one PC becomes **hopelessly smitten** with an individual who cannot return the love for one reason or another: the person is married or betrothed to another, or is enslaved, or is attracted to TWO player characters, not just one!

The PC affected can be chosen at random, or can be determined through a descending priority as follows: youth over age (see **Aging** below for info on age brackets) and high CHA over low. PCs already possessing a spouse or lover need not be affected (unless of non-Lawful alignment and interested in a dalliance), and PCs who have recently experienced a romance are ineligible until another character has "taken a turn."

Once the DM knows who the affected character is, 2D6 is secretly rolled to determine the social station of the potential love. Modify the roll by adding the PC's hit dice and any CHA adjustment, and modify for **age** (see below) and the PC's own SOC (+1 if high born, -1 if low born, -2 if SOC 0). Heroes receive a +1 bonus, saints receive a -1 penalty, and magicians receive a -2 penalty.

Roll 2D6	Love Interest Is...
0	...anything the DM chooses, but he/she will die tragically before the end of the adventure.
1-3	...a slave or non-human
4-6	...a lower born servant or laborer
7-9	...a middle class freeman (merchant or business owner)

<b>10-12</b>	...a wealthy freeman or lower tier nobility (landless nobles, younger siblings with no expected inheritance, etc.)
<b>13+</b>	...high born noble or royalty: roll D6 to determine noble rank (see <b>Book 2</b> ): 0 to 3 = 2 HD, 4 to 5 = 3 HD, 6 = 4 HD (outright royalty).

DMs may need to adjust the result based on availability during an adventure.

The DM tells the PC of his potential love interest when the two meet during the adventure, but should not give away the interest's social rank immediately (clues may be dropped by the DM, but this is something the PC will have to figure out through interaction and/or investigation). Unless the character is **hopelessly smitten** (see above), it is the player's choice whether or not to actively pursue the romantic interest, with the goal of entering a committed and consummated relationship: usually marriage, depending on the PC's religion and alignment.

During the course of the adventure, the smitten PC can choose to make a number of **romantic gestures** in an attempt to win the heart of her love. A romantic gesture can be **A)** some song, poem, or emphatic declaration of love, **B)** an act of valor, or self-sacrifice, or **C)** a gift. Gifts should be commensurate with the target of affection...at least 100gd value per HD for middle class, or 1000gd or 5000gd per HD for upper class and nobility, respectively. Each type of romantic gesture may be attempted once during a single adventure.

Romantic gestures must be made with the objective of impressing the love interest (and thus must be witnessed by the lover). For each gesture, the PC makes a standard **reaction** check to see the effect it has: any positive result (9+) earns a +1 bonus to the final **wooing roll** (see below) at the end of the adventure, while a negative result (5 or less) gives the character a -1 penalty.

At the end of the adventure, a **modified reaction check** is made to see how well the character has wooed the object of affection; the only adjustments applied are for CHA, age, beauty (if the PC possesses that advantage), and adjustments from romantic gestures. The table below shows the success of the romantic endeavor:

<b>2D6</b>	<b>Result of Wooing</b>
<b>2 or less</b>	Severe detriments to relationship
<b>3-5</b>	NPC spurns advance
<b>6-8</b>	NPC open to further wooing
<b>9-11</b>	NPC open to marriage, professes love
<b>12+</b>	NPC open to anything, including elopement, affairs, and impropriety!*

*\*the only way for a **hopelessly smitten** character to achieve success*

Characters achieving a **6-8** result may try again in the following session, making new and additional romantic gestures (the results of one session's gestures do not "carry over" to the next adventure). No more than three wooing attempts may be made for a particular NPC; if still unsuccessful after three sessions, the DM should treat the final result as a **3-5** ("spurns advance"), ending the PC's romance.

"Severe detriments" indicate forces outside the NPC's control interfere: the character is betrothed to another or promised as a sacrifice to the local dragon or is otherwise unable to consider the character's proposal. Unlike a 3-5 result, the PC may continue to woo the NPC with severe detriments, but can only achieve success with a **12+** result on wooing chart; also, the PC has only **ONE** session to "get it right," else the romance is doomed to end tragically.



A PC involved in a romance is allowed to change their **motivation** to **love** for the duration of the romance. If the romance is successful, it is up to the player to decide whether or not she returns to her prior motivation.

In the Barican tradition, a groom is expected to pay a **bride price** to his beloved prior to marriage; this should be an amount of gold two to twelve times the amount suggested for **gifts** (see above) and is the wife's to keep should they divorce. Female PCs should expect to receive a bride price of 1000gd per level (or double this if of high SOC) though the amount received is dependent on her fiancée's wealth.

## Warfare

The fighting system presented in **Book 1** is for small-scale ("heroic") combats. When dealing with large troop movements and warfare between hundreds or thousands of troops, a different system is used.

Each side of a battle must first divide its force into **units**. A unit is any number of individuals with the same HD, movement, armor type, and basic weaponry. Units may contain a maximum of 1000 individual fighters, not counting commanders.

Units have an armor class of *unarmored*, *light*, or *heavy*. Units are either *mounted* or not. Units may be one of three classifications: *conscript*, *regular*, or *elite*. **For purposes of warfare, all humans in a unit are considered to have HD 1 regardless of actual HD.** Humans with HD 2 or more (like amazons and hardened mercenaries) are simply classified as **elite troops**.

All movement is simplified in warfare: *unarmored* troops can move 12", *light* troops can move 9", *heavy* troops can move 6", and *mounted* troops can move **double** their armor type (24", 18", or 12"). When charging an enemy, troops may move an additional 3" (or 6" when mounted). Warfare normally occurs outdoors where 1" equates to ten yards. It is helpful to use miniatures or tokens to represent individual units when resolving warfare.

Each combat round in warfare is about **one minute** in length (as opposed to ten seconds as in small scale combat). The phases of the combat round are the same (melee, missile, movement, magic, and other), but are resolved differently:

1. Each unit rolls a number of **attack dice** determined by their unit strength. The number of attack dice rolled depends on the number of individual fighters: one die per 20 fighters up to 200, one die per 50 fighters up to 500, or one die per 100 fighters up to 1000 (round fractions up).
2. Except for archers, all units may attack in a single phase; archers may fire bows in the movement phase as well, so long as they did not move (nomads and other superior horsemen may move and fire during the movement phase). Crossbows cannot be fired twice, but do not wait to reload either (due to the longer round). All attacks by all sides are considered simultaneous within their phase; casualties are removed at the end of each phase.

3. When making an attack, each attack die is considered separately (they are not added together). The target needed to inflict casualties depends on the armor class of the defending unit: 4 for *unarmored*, 5 for *light*, 6 for *heavy*. *Elite* troops add +1 to their attack rolls while *conscripts* subtract 1; *mounted* troops add +1 when fighting in melee against non-mounted troops. Monsters with HD pips (like **barbarians** and **ogres**) add or subtract those pips. A human unit (even berserkers) will NOT attack or engage monsters of HD 5 or greater; if attacked by such a foe, they automatically **break morale**.
4. The number of successful attack dice is multiplied first by the HD of the unit, and then multiplied by the unit strength factor (20, 50, or 100). **This is the total number of hit dice of casualties inflicted by the unit during the phase.** Remember, for warfare all humans are considered to have only one hit die.
5. At the end of any phase in which a unit suffered casualties of more than 25% or in which a non-mounted unit was charged by a *mounted* force, the unit must check mettle, or else **break morale** and be put to rout. Units commanded by an adventurer add the character's CHA adjustment (if any) to their check, and characters with the **leader of men** advantage add an additional +1. Heroes may command (and confer their bonus) on a number of units equal to their actual HD; other adventurers may command a number of units equal to half their actual HD.

**Example of Warfare:** a 4<sup>th</sup> level hero has divided her forces into 200 archers, 300 heavy footmen, and 100 heavy horsemen (elite). She faces 800 barbaric Northmen, of which 100 are berserkers, and 50 ogre mercenaries. In the first round of combat she peppers the advancing barbarians with arrows, while both sides maneuver to come to melee with the other. She rolls ten attack dice in both the missile and movement phase and achieves two and four successes, respectively. This indicates casualties of 40 and 80 are inflicted, reducing the barbarians from 700 to 580 in total, but not forcing mettle checks in either phase.

In round two, the archers switch targets to the berserkers inflicting another 40 casualties, which is 40% of the unit's force; unfortunately, berserkers are fearless and never check mettle. In the movement phase, all units that can charge do so: the heavy foot charges the barbarians, and are in return charged by the berserkers. Meanwhile, the ogres intercept the heavy horsemen that were trying to flank the main barbarian horde. The archers loose once more at the berserkers inflicting another 40 casualties. Then the melees are resolved. The footmen inflict 100 casualties on the barbarians (with two successes) while sustaining 200 casualties in return (from two successes). The 20 berserkers that remain then reduce the footmen by another 20 with their single success. Finally, the heavy horse inflict 80 hits in casualties on the ogres, meaning an actual 20 die (having HD 4 each), while the ogres get two successes resulting in 160 hits (2x20xHD 4) completely destroying the horse unit! Only the footmen suffered losses of more than 25%, but the hero rolls a 12 for their mettle test, and their morale



*stays strong. As round three starts the hero retains 200 archers and 80 heavy footmen, while the horde has been reduced to 480 Northmen, 20 berserkers, and 30 ogres.*

## Additional Warfare Notes

**Melee phase:** Neither shields nor weapon type has any effect in warfare.

**Missile phase:** May not fire into melee. The only range penalty is -1 for ranges greater than one-half maximum.

**Movement phase:** No bonuses are granted for charging, except mounted lances. Only elite troops may withdraw. Characters in fortified positions (behind walls) subtract 1 from opponents' attack dice (no other bonus).

**Magic phase:** the warfare round is long enough to cast a spell of any magnitude, but always comes at the end of the round (only one spell may be cast).

**Monsters:** any monsters (including humans) that have HD 2 or greater are counted as "elite" and receive a +1 attack bonus in melee. The number of casualties inflicted is multiplied by their actual HD.

**Commanders:** unit commanders, adventurers, and other heroic types are never removed as "casualties." Once their unit (or units) are destroyed, they may be captured or flee the field. Adventurers can always choose to operate independently of their unit (in order to attack monsters and enemy adventurers).

## MANAGING PLAYER CHARACTERS

### Zero Outs and Catastrophes

In most cases, there is no additional penalty assessed when a dice roll results in a "zero out;" complete failure is penalty enough! However, in **melee combat** a zero out on an attack roll means the attacker's weapon has broken (melee is a chaotic affair and tremendously hard on even well-crafted weapons). This can be somewhat mitigated by purchasing high quality weapons (10 to 20 times the usual price...see the section for **Artifacts** in **TREASURE HOARDS** for more information). An unarmed character or monster that zeroes out in combat suffers no ill effects.

As explained in **Book 1**, player characters can attempt to "push" certain actions, putting extra "oomph" into the effort. When a pushed action fails (regardless of whether that failure is due to a low roll or a zero out), the PC suffers a **catastrophe**: a disaster due to the character's over-reaching. The DM decides the exact nature of the catastrophe, which can range from humorous to tragic but should never be immediately fatal. The following guidelines can be used based on the action pushed:

**Attack Rolls:** injures self or companion, stumbles or falls (lose one round's action), drops/loses weapon or ammunition, breaks missile weapon

**Magician Spells:** spell "misfires" acting in a way other than intended, or targets the wrong individual (the PC or a companion), spell effect is reversed, or PC is **cursed**

**Thief Skills:** PC is injured, equipment breaks, trap is triggered, or target is alerted

**Undead Turning:** all monsters are drawn to the saint like moths to a flame, ignoring other targets as they try to tear the PC apart

## **Additional Notes: Heroes**

Heroes are the courageous, lucky, and skilled warriors that populate the tales of fighting prowess and monster-slaying. They tend to be action-oriented, and are at their best in the forefront, especially in combat. Most warriors only wear armor and bristle with weapons when on expedition, so even a non-Salamaic hero should be able to own good equipment without getting in trouble. The laws regarding non-believers mainly exist to hassle fighters that flaunt their steel; even True Believers are likely to be stopped and questioned by city guards if they wander about town girded for war. On the other hand, in smaller towns or city-states where the sultan pays only lip service to the Caliphate, such questioning might never even occur.

While any character might become nobility by accident of birth or marriage into the right family, such does not automatically entitle the PC to lands and titles. However, a hero of high (9<sup>th</sup>) level is a warrior of great renown, and local rulers are anxious to have such an individual in their allegiance. The granting of an **emirate** to a character requires the PC to swear loyalty to the sultan or ruler, agreeing to lend aid in times of war and to serve faithfully. The hero cannot be sworn to the service of another lord, but the oath of allegiance does not preclude the hero from following the tenets of their faith (i.e. the True Faith in Barica, necessary if the hero is to carry weapons!) nor the laws and orders of the Caliph. The title always come with the land on which to build a castle or stronghold, and often includes an arranged marriage (which may or may not require the normal **romance** rules).

## **Additional Notes: Magicians**

The practice of magic is frowned upon and viewed with suspicion in Barica, and magicians are regarded with a mixture of superstition, awe, ridicule, dread, and derision. After all, there are charlatans and swindlers that claim wizardly skill as well as true sorcerers with the means to summon demons and create unnatural effects. True magic, powerful though it is, tends to be transient and impermanent; a recasting of the world in a form matching the mage's will, but only for a time (witches are able to accomplish saint-type miracles by tying their spells to the natural world through their use of spell components and "sympathetic magic"). However, even skeptics become welcoming patrons when the need for a magician arises.

Artifact creation is one means of fabricating real, permanent enchantments though there is always a chance of the creation process failing. The DM should roll D6 adding +1 for a INT >14, +1 if the magician's level is at least double the spell magnitude of the enchantment, and +1 if an apprentice (or another magician) assists. A result greater

than the spell magnitude of the enchantment means the artifact is successfully created; otherwise all time and money is lost (a **zero out** indicates an accident that results in a **cursed** item). Artifacts that duplicate a 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> magnitude spell (such as a helm of **teleportation**, a rod that **breaks enchantment**, or a ring that **summons a jinni**) should only be “one-shot,” single-use items...like a potion, except created using the artifact rules. DMs should feel free to place additional restrictions as necessary on the creation of potions and artifacts (including requiring special ingredients and/or materials) to prevent powerful items from spoiling the game.

## Additional Notes: Saints and Shamans

Saints and shamans are most likely to be motivated by duty, faith, or “nothing,” the latter being true instruments of their deity, tossed hither and yon by divine will. It’s important to note these individuals (and saints especially) are NOT usually clergy members, and can be from any walk of life; they are Chosen individuals, striving to do the will of Halah (or whomever), even when such goes against the normal tenets of their faith (i.e. some actions might actually be at odds with the regular followers or clergy members). DMs should feel free to offer extra motivation to PCs in the form of signs, omens, and dreams, and should be fairly ruthless about withholding divine favor (i.e. disallowing miracles) when a holy person acts counter to the deity’s will.

**SAK** is a game, not a device for spiritual teaching, but the NPCs of the setting take their religion seriously, and this should be remembered in play. A holy man or woman of a monotheistic religion is revered and respected by most Barican citizens (regardless of religious disposition), and known shamans are held in awe and fear (similar to a magician) except by their own culture or followers. The construction bonus for high-level PCs comes in the form of donations and free labor from “the faithful” being called to serve and provide aid, but proselytizing against the faith of the local majority is certain to be a source of political conflict!

## Additional Notes: Thieves

There are many bandits, brigands, pickpockets, and swindlers to be found in Barica, but none are “thieves” in the adventuring sense of the term. The thief adventurer is a driven individual of singular ambition and a crafty master of many arts, as rare a find as a hero, magician, or saint. Thieves risk limb and life because they lack the abilities of the other classes and the alternative—a life of common banality—is unimaginable.

The gang that thieves acquire at high level consists of like-minded individuals seeking to learn from a master. These apprentices “earn” D6x10gd per month under the PC’s tutelage (add +1 to the roll for apprentices with DEX >14) and gain an equal amount of XP. A **zero out** on this monthly roll means the student has been caught and will face the usual repercussions unless a rescue is staged. Apprentices do not accompany masters on adventures unless hired as a **retainer**, in which case the young thief

becomes an actual protégé. Non-retainer apprentices leave the master upon achieving 2<sup>nd</sup> level, though they may keep in contact (and thereby provide their former master with valuable information).

## The Nature of Adventurers: Motivation

Few citizens of Barica share the adventurous temperament of PCs. Individuals are born into a particular station of life and rarely do they move from that station except by tremendous fortune (good or bad). Men grow up learning the same trade as their fathers, be it soldier or shoemaker or sultan, and women are married off to someone of roughly equal status as their own parents, raising children and caring for a household (not to mention being their husbands' chief confidante and counselor).

Player characters (and NPC adventurers) are made of more ambitious stuff than this; and while their careers are fraught with all manner of hardship and peril, those that survive often find their situation improved with fortune and fame they would have missed in a more pedestrian career. The exact nature of an individual's hunger for adventure differs from PC to PC, but is based on one of the following motivations, chosen when the character is first created:

**Excitement/Curiosity:** the PC seeks experiences otherwise unavailable had she settled for her fated life; she wants to experience danger and thrills and the amazing sights told of by storytellers at the bazaar.

**Fortune:** the PC seeks money, pure and simple; perhaps she was born poor, or perhaps her elder sibling inherited the lion's share of the family fortune. She wishes to live opulently with plenty to spare.

**Knowledge:** the PC is driven by an intense thirst for knowledge and love of learning and seeks to broaden her mind through adventure. While similar to the **excitement/curiosity** motive, the desire for knowledge leads to investigations of lore, books, history, language, and culture.

**Family:** the PC has a family who is counting on her, whether it be her own parents and siblings, her children and spouse, or an extended familial tribe. Similar to the **fortune** motive, it usually means acquiring wealth to better the family circumstance, but it could also involve quests to aid relatives, recover family heirlooms, or lift some ancestral curse.

**Glory:** the PC seeks to win great renown and notoriety, such that her deeds live on long after herself. There are many roads to glory, but nearly all involve great courage on the part of the adventurer; not everyone is cut out for this path.

**Duty:** the PC is beholden to a particular organization, perhaps a guild or religion if not a powerful individual (like the Caliph himself!), and is regularly issued tasks that must be performed. When not acting on orders from higher-ups, the PC is a "free agent," choosing her own adventures, though always considering how her actions

impact her responsibilities. The DM should feel free to assign “extra tasks” pertaining to their duty during the course of an adventure.

**Love:** the PC seeks adventure as a means to woo the object of her desire. Similar to both the **fortune** and **glory** motives, the PC’s deeds are aimed at winning the heart of her romantic interest (who may or may not return her affection, at least initially).

**NOTE:** If the motive is ever fulfilled and the love consummated, the PC can choose to either retire or change her motive to **family**, above.

**Vengeance:** the PC feels the need to avenge some personal slight or wrong that has been done to her and/or her kin, and every action and adventure taken is with a mind towards achieving this goal. If the PC’s revenge is ever achieved, she must either retire or choose a new motive.

**Faith:** this is not simple devotion; the PC seeks adventure with the aim of spreading her beliefs and theology, and furthering the goals of her cult. This motive is similar to **duty** (as she must be mindful of the tenets of her faith) but the character is at all times an agent of her deity and doctrine, rather than that of her temple and religious hierarchy.

**Power:** the PC feels the need to acquire power and influence, usually by earning some high estate or title conferring dominion over others. Simple wealth is not enough but a means to an end; the acquisition of connections and favors are as important as magical items and renown.

**Revolution:** the PC is an iconoclast or rebel, seeking to overthrow a particular power or institution. As with the **power** motive, the PC seeks influence and contacts to aid in this, and acquiring **fortune** and fame may be important to recruiting like-minded followers.

**“Fool of Fate:”** the PC never really wanted to be an adventurer, but simply meandered into the occupation; she has no other useful skills and simply drifts as the winds of fate carry her.

Along with **alignment**, motivation provides a guide to a character’s personality, and is a tool to help players “get inside the head” of their characters. Part of the fun of playing a game like **SAK** is pretending to be someone other than our normal, daily selves, and it is the DM’s responsibility to encourage players to seize that opportunity by rewarding them with bonus experience points for citing their motivation for behavioral choices in play (this is explained in the next section, **AWARDING OF XP**).

DMs must understand motivation should not be a *restriction* for players; like alignment, motivation is chosen by the player and should be something the player *wants* to play. If a player finds during play that a different motivation is a better fit for a character, the DM should allow a switch; likewise, certain circumstances in play may prompt a PC to switch motivation (for example, to **love** or **vengeance**). However, motivations should only be switched between game sessions, not during the session!

NPC adventurers created by the DM should also have motivations.

## AWARDING OF EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP)

It is the Dragon Master's responsibility to calculate and award **experience points (XP)**. XP is the measure of a character's success as an adventurer; it reflects an increase in the character's confidence, knowledge, and awareness, leading to an increase in effectiveness in future adventures.

At the end of every adventure the DM calculates the basic XP pool based on the treasure found (or earned) and the opponents overcome during the session. Treasure awards 1 XP per 1 GD value; each monster award 100 XP per HD multiplied by the number of bonuses the creature has (opponents with HD 0 still award **50 XP**). The sum total of all treasure found, and all opponents overcome, **is then divided by the average hit dice of the PCs (not NPCs) in the party**. This base pool is further divided evenly between all surviving adventurers including **NPC retainers** (hired mercenaries and specialists do not receive a share of XP).



**For example**, a 4<sup>th</sup> level hero, a 1<sup>st</sup> level saint, and an 11<sup>th</sup> level magician (with her two 2<sup>nd</sup> level bodyguards) finish a session having managed to overcome an ogre (HD 4+1) and his bear companion (HD 4) as well as six bandits (HD 1 each) and a druj (HD 3\*). They also found a purse of 58 dinars, a small chest full of silver sequins (six thousand sequins), and a gold necklace (6500gd value). The value of monsters defeated equals  $(400+400+(100 \times 6)+(300 \times 2))= 2000$  XP while the value of treasure found equals

*(58+(6000/10)+6500=) 7158 XP for a grand total of 9158 XP. The average hit dice of PCs present is 5 (4+1+9 divided by three) so the total XP awarded to the party is 1832 divided amongst all five survivors (366 XP each). The magician's retainers each receive only half the calculated share (183) as they are NPCs and were only acting on the orders of their employer.*

Once each surviving party member's XP share has been determined, the DM may award individual XP bonuses. The following are the usual bonuses:

**Damage Sustained**

Total HP damage taken multiplied by 10 XP

**First Journeys (may only be earned once)**

Overland (500+ miles)	+1000 XP
Open sea (2+ weeks at sea)	+2000 XP
Via air (1000+ miles)	+5000 XP

**Magic Items Used (received only once per item)**

Drinking a potion	+100 XP
Using arms in combat	+250 XP
Using artifact properly	+1000 XP
Using cursed item	One-half normal award

**Milestone Accomplishment**

Automatically advance to next level

**Motivation Use (may be earned once per session)**

+200 XP, +300 XP, or +400 XP

**Successful Spell Research**

Magnitude of spell multiplied by 1000 XP

**Double XP** for NEW spells, not found in **Book 2**

**Visiting Strange Lands (1<sup>st</sup> time only)**

Visiting Capital* (1+ week)	+1000 XP
Visiting Capital* (1+ month)	+1000 XP
Visiting ruins of ancient Rhyma	+1000 XP
Successful return from Underworld	+500 XP
Visiting new world/dimension	+10,000 XP

*\*The capital cities that may be visited include Bagdabha, Conzantium, Kitax, Sindar, and Thelasheba as they are the hearts of their respective cultures, and much can be learned from both short and extended stays.*

**Motivation XP Awards:** PCs earn bonus XP by being “true to their nature.” Whenever a player states her character’s action or behavior is based on her character’s motivation (and the DM agrees), the DM should make a note of it. If the PC survives the adventure, she earns an individual bonus of 200 XP, or 400 XP if the behavior causes the PC to get into trouble. Players that use their motivation as a justification for a “**push**” or for rerolling a saving throw (as described in **Book 1**) receive 300 XP. A PC may only ever receive one of these motivation bonuses for a single adventure session (the highest bonus applicable) regardless of the number of times they cite their motivation in play.

## MILESTONES

As stated in **Book 1**, when a player character is judged to have achieved a **milestone**, *she immediately advances to the next level of experience, regardless of actual XP earned during the session*. A milestone represents a dramatic, “high point” event in a person’s life that helps shape self-identity and boosts self-confidence, two things measured by a character’s level of experience. In general, for an event to be a milestone it should have most (if not all) of the following qualities:

1. Should be an operation of player choice, rather than dice roll.
2. Represent a momentous accomplishment or singular event.
3. Involve danger, suffering, or self-sacrifice to achieve.
4. Culminate over multiple game sessions in purposeful fashion.

No milestone may be achieved more than once; a character derives no benefit from being **married** more than once, for example. No more than one milestone may be earned in a single game session; as stated earlier a character can never earn more than one level in a single session. Milestones are awarded at the end of the game session; the achieving PC begins the next game session at the new achieved level.

The following list is suggested; DMs may add or change milestones as appropriate.

**Coronation:** character is granted and accepts responsibility for some great leadership position; this can include a hereditary title, being granted a generalship, or being appointed the vizier of a sultanate.

**Domain Establishment:** PC completes construction of a castle stronghold, establishing uncontested control of the surrounding land and people.

**Guild Establishment (thieves only):** character establishes a secret guild for her unsavory profession in or near a large (100,000+) city. The guild must survive at least one year and have at least 100 members.

**Great Renown:** character accomplishes some heroic task so noteworthy that her name is known and discussed throughout Barica, and her life is a favorite of storytellers at the bazaar.



**Marriage:** the character consummates a grand romance by becoming permanently joined in wedded bliss with her True Love.

**New Magic (magicians only):** with the DM's approval, character invents a new spell not found in **Book 2**, one both original and thematically appropriate to the game.

**Resurrection:** the character is liberated from a period of terrible bondage (not less than one year) whether as a prisoner in a dungeon, or magically cursed to take on some inhuman form, or being forced to wander the lands of the dead.

**Temple Establishment (saints/shamans only):** character builds a new place of worship, attracting a congregation of at least 1,000 souls (hired or fanatic soldiers do not count towards this number).

**Vengeance:** character achieves dark revenge long sought for a real or imagined slight; only possible if PC has the **Vengeance** motivation.

**War Leader:** character leads a force of not less than 1,000 troops in battle and obtains a great victory over a superior foe.

**Wisdom of Years:** character reaches a ripe **old age** and has matured and gained knowledge in part by out-living her rivals. See section on **Aging**.

Some milestones may carry additional benefits and/or hindrances. A character that achieves the *Coronation* milestone may have access to additional resources (taxes, tribute) but has additional obligations as well. A character who has achieved *Great Renown* for acts against the kingdom of Conzantium may get a friendly reaction from its oppressed people but may find hired assassins stalking her heels.

## AGING, RETIREMENT, AND INHERITANCE

All PCs are considered to start their careers young and in the prime of life (roll D6 and add the result to 20 to determine a PC's age). As characters get older, adventuring becomes more difficult (the body isn't as willing as once it was). A *middle-aged* character (about the age of 40) suffers a **-1 penalty to all dice rolls except reaction** (including saves, attacks, HD, thief skills, spell casting, and any rolls related to **Romance**); it is as if the character is in a constant state of **fatigue** (and actual fatigue makes the effect worse). A character is considered *old* when they pass the age of 65, and age penalties increase to **-2**, though the character does earn the *Wisdom of Years* milestone. A character that reaches the age of 85 is considered truly *ancient*, and suffers a penalty of **-3** to all dice rolls. Ancient characters must save versus death at the end of every year or perish from old age.

Some players may wish to begin play with an older PC, rather than a 1<sup>st</sup> level youth. For every age bracket raised (*middle-aged*, *old*, or *ancient*), add **two** levels of experience to the PC and subtract 1 point from CON (to represent past misadventures). The character still has the same starting funds as a 1<sup>st</sup> level character (any additional wealth acquired since their youth having been spent or lost), though they might own a ship or modest residence at the DM's discretion. Magicians and

witches roll a D6 roll for each age bracket raised to determine the number of additional spells learned over the years, none of which may have a magnitude exceeding the adjusted level of the magician.

PCs that survive past their youth may consider retirement, especially those who have acquired vast fortunes, families, or multiple **major injuries** over the years. A player may create a new PC or designate one of the retiring PC's henchmen as her heir and protégé, and bestow up to 10% of her wealth as well as a single favorite piece of equipment on her successor (no XP is earned by the new PC for these gifts).

When PCs perish during an adventure, equipment, goods, and wealth recovered by the deceased's companions may be passed on to a designated heir in similar fashion. If the deceased PC had a wife and/or children, the inheritor receives 25% of all wealth recovered and a number of pieces of adventuring gear equal to one plus the roll of a D6. If the deceased has neither wife nor children, this increases to 50% of all wealth recovered and 2D6 pieces of gear or equipment, with the individual's remaining possessions being distributed to extended family members, regardless of the player's wishes in the matter.



# TREASURE HOARDS

The **hoard types** given for monsters in **Book 2** represent three things: the creatures’ basic avarice and desire for treasure, the creatures’ average ability to obtain treasure, and the creatures’ ability to retain that treasure and not lose it or spend it.

Treasure hoards are only rarely found outside a monster’s lair, where **multiples** of the creature reside: creatures with less than HD 2 are encountered in numbers of 4D6; creatures with less than HD 3 in numbers of 3D6; creatures with under HD 5 in numbers of 2D6; creatures under HD 8 in number of 1D6; and only 1D3 for creatures of HD 8 or more. Monsters with special abilities (represented by an \* next to their HD) are encountered in factors of one less for each \*; for example, only D3 gorgons (with HD 4\*\*) will be found in a single lair. Some powerful creatures, like dragons and giant worms, will only be encountered singly, unless accompanied by their young. On the other hand, humans may be found in numbers five or ten times the usual number. Other exceptions to the standard numbers are noted in **Book 2**.

The hoard type (**A** through **J**) provides a random method of determining the value of treasure found in a creature’s lair, as shown below:

Hoard Type	Treasure Value (in GD)*
<b>A</b>	1D3 x100 (average 183gd)
<b>B</b>	1D6 x100 (avg. 333gd)
<b>C</b>	1D3 x1000 (avg. 1833gd)
<b>D</b>	1D6 x1000 (avg. 3333gd)
<b>E</b>	2D6 x1000 (avg. 6667gd)
<b>F</b>	4D6 x1000 (avg. 13,333gd)
<b>G</b>	6D6 x1000 (avg. 20,000gd)
<b>H</b>	8D6 x1000 (avg. 26,667gd)
<b>I</b>	1D6 x100 + 1D3 magic items
<b>J</b>	1D6 x1000 + 1D6 magic items

*\*Note: **Rule Zero** still applies.*

This result of the die roll only shows the **value** of the treasure in a hoard; the DM still has to decide what exact items make up the treasure. Except with humans (and some monsters whose treasure is acquired from digesting humans), very little of a hoard should be coins; instead, it will consist of other precious items and commodities, including salt, silks, spices, trade goods, precious stones, rare woods, jewelry, finely crafted wares, etc. Even monsters that prefer coins (like dragons, who use the soft metal for their bedding) tend to have large, ancient coins from forgotten kingdoms, their value derived from novelty or as jewelry rather than any actual spending power.

Monetary treasure can be divided into three categories: *bulky*, *portable*, and *precious*. **Bulky** treasure should account for at least half of all treasure found, and on average weighs one pound for every 10gd value. **Portable** treasure (like coins, and items made of precious metals) weighs one pound for every 100gd value. **Precious** treasures are the most valuable treasures found, mainly in the form of jewelry, gemstones, or rare and exotic spices; it weighs about one pound for every 1000gd value. The weight assigned to a particular treasure type may be due in part to the item’s container (for example, a rare vintage wine is made heavier due to the cask or barrel in which it is contained. DMs can randomly determine a hoard’s makeup using the following table:

Roll D6	Treasure Type*
0-3	Bulky (1# per 10gd)
4-5	Portable (1# per 100gd)
6	Precious (1# per 1000gd)

*\*Weight may include treasure’s container*

A hoard may consist of a single type, or be divided into multiple categories. The type of treasure is important for cartage, and DMs should note how much treasure each PC is carrying, and its consequential movement penalty based on encumbrance. **Book 1** lists the capacities for bags and backpacks; a cart can haul 400# (or 800# if pulled by two animals), while wagons can haul 1500# or 2500# with two or four animals respectively. Carts and wagons move at a speed of 6” but are worthless in rough terrain (including desert, swamps, and mountains unless using an actual road). Two mules can be used in place of a single draft horse, and two horses can be replaced with a single ox.



**Magic Items:** the setting of **Five Ancient Kingdoms** is a magical one, and any creature that acquires treasure has a chance of having acquired magic items as well. Except for creatures with hoard type **I** or **J**, the following method is used to determine if a magical item is present: roll 2D6 and add one-half of a creature's HD (rounded **down**) to the result; if the result is **12 or more**, then there are 1D3 magic items present.

**Note:** because of *Rule Zero*, the D3 roll can still result in **no** magic items being found. If the roll is **exactly 12**, the DM might choose to substitute a **MAP** to treasure instead of the actual hoard...a good "hook" for a new adventure!

## POTIONS, ARTIFACTS, AND RELICS

The discovery of a magical item in an adventure is always an exciting moment for player characters, and while they should not be found in every hoard, they should not be so rare as to be legendary; PCs are the unusual individuals of their world, and they should encounter unusual items more often than the common man! Magical items in 5AK are divided into three categories: **potions**, **artifacts**, and **relics**.

A **potion** is any "one-shot" item that is consumed with use; it can include a vial of liquid, a pill, a piece of food or fruit, a tablet that needs to be broken, or a scroll that needs to be burned. An **artifact** is a major enchantment, created by a magician or jinni that provides a permanent magical effect at least once per day. A **relic** is the remains or former possession of a deceased holy man (or woman) that has been imprinted with magical power(s) based on its former owner's close affinity with the divine.

While magic items with specific abilities can (and often should) be created by DMs for adventures, the following rules are provided for randomly determining enchanted objects. First, roll D6 to determine the type of item present: 0 = a **cursed** item, 2-3 = a **potion**, 4-5 = and **artifact**, 6 = a **relic**. Cursed magic items are fairly common and can include magically created "booby-traps" designed to snare the unwary, as well as items that were fatally flawed in their design (these latter may still include some useful magical effects, though).

To determine the effect a potion bestows on its imbibor, roll **D6-1** to discover the magnitude; there is an even chance of the spell being either of saintly or magical variety (witches, who have the ability to create potions with spells that duplicate divine miracles, have a penchant for creating potions, and **healing potions** are in high demand). The DM chooses the specific spell. If the D6 roll is a **zero**, the potion has lost its potency...it is a "dud" (sometimes potions "go bad" and become virulent poisons, but these are more properly a type of **cursed** item).

For artifacts, the DM must first determine the form of the artifact from one of the following tables. Roll D6: 0-2 = use **Table I**; 3-4 = use **Table II**; 5-6 = use **Table III**. A **D66** roll is made on the appropriate table to determine the shape an artifact takes.

## MAGICAL ARTIFACTS

<u>D66</u>	<u>TABLE I</u>	<u>D66</u>	<u>TABLE II</u>	<u>D66</u>	<u>TABLE III</u>
00	Amulet	00	Cloth/Net	00	Mirror
02	Arrow(s)	02	Club	02	Nail
03	Axe	03	Coin	03	Necklace
04	Bag/Purse	04	Collar	04	Ointment
05	Ball/Sphere	05	Crown/Tiara	05	Pack/Sack
06	Basin/Bowl	06	Crystal	06	Painting
20	Basket	20	Cube	20	Pick/Shovel
22	Beast	22	Cup	22	Pitcher
23	Bed/Cushion	23	Dice/Game	23	Plate
24	Bell/Chimes	24	Dress/Gown	24	Prayer Beads
25	Belt/Girdle	25	Drum	25	Pyramid
26	Bird	26	Earring	26	Ring
30	Boat	30	Egg	30	Robe
32	Bone	32	Feather	32	Rope
33	Book	33	Fish	33	Saddle
34	Boots	34	Flail	34	Sandals
35	Bottle/Jar/Jug	35	Flute	35	Saw
36	Bow/Crossbow	36	Fork/Spoon	36	Scale Armor
40	Box/Coffer	40	Fountain	40	Scarf/Veil
42	Bracelet	42	Gloves	42	Scepter/Wand
43	Brazier	43	Greaves	43	Scroll/Tablet
44	Bridle	44	Hammer	44	Shield
45	Broach	45	Harness/Yoke	45	Skull
46	Broom	46	Harp/Lyre	46	Sling
50	Brush/Plume	50	Helmet	50	Slippers
52	Cage	52	Horn	52	Spear
53	Candle/Torch	53	Idol	53	Staff/Stick
54	Cap/Hat	54	Jacket	54	Statue
55	Cape/Cloak	55	Knife	55	Stone
56	Carpet/Rug	56	Lamp	56	String/Thread
60	Cart	60	Mail (half or full)	60	Sword
62	Carving	62	Manacles	62	Table
63	Chain	63	Map	63	Tooth
64	Chair/Throne	64	Mask	64	Tree
65	Chariot	65	Maul	65	Turban
66	Chest/Trunk	66	Mill Stone	66	Wheel

Most of the items on the list, with the notable exception of armor and weapons, have at least one spell-like power associated with them. One in every six items found (D6 roll of 6) are *double enchanted*, and one in six double enchanted items (second D6 roll

of 6) are *triple enchanted*. A double enchanted item has two powers that can be used once per day (or one power that can be used twice per day); a triple enchanted item has three powers that can be used once per day or a single power that can be used thrice. The magnitude of spell in an artifact is determined similar to determining the magnitude of a potion (**roll D6-1**); however, on a **zero** result the artifact is cursed, and on a 5 result a second D6 is rolled with the following result: 0 = double cursed, 2-3 = 5<sup>th</sup> magnitude, 4-5 = 6<sup>th</sup> magnitude, 6 = 7<sup>th</sup> magnitude. A double curse is an item really designed to make someone suffer, and should be especially fiendish, and not removable with a standard **remove curse** spell (***banish evil*** or ***break enchantment*** will also work, though the cursed individual will attempt to resist the spell with a save versus magic).

Armor (including shields) and weapons are different as they are usually designed with a specific purpose, namely preventing damage or inflicting it. If such an item is found, roll on the appropriate table below to determine its enchantment. For weapons, **subtract one from the D6 roll unless the weapon is a sword**.

Roll D6	Armor is...
0	Cursed
2	Quality
3-4	Enchanted
5	Double Enchanted
6	Artifact

Roll D6	Weapon is...
0	Cursed
1-2	Quality
3-4	Enchanted
5	Double or Artifact
6	Intelligent Sword

**Cursed armor** appears to be of high quality until the first time a character enters battle, at which time it shows its true nature when opponents automatically strike the character (regardless of actual attack roll). **Quality armor** is of expertly crafted and less bulky than armor of its normal type (the movement penalty is 1" less than normal) for the armor type. **Enchanted armor** functions as quality armor and also adds +1 to the number opponents need to roll to successfully attack the wearer; **double enchanted** armor is the same except that it adds +2 to the number. **Artifact armor** is treated as enchanted armor (+1), but also has a spell power like a normal artifact. Magical shields still add their enchantment bonus even when fighting against large monsters or flails that normally ignore shields. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** if a character wears more than one piece of enchanted armor, only the single largest bonus applies to the character's defense. For example a character wearing **enchanted half-chain**, **enchanted greaves**, and carrying a **double enchanted shield** would only add the +2 bonus from the shield (though the greaves and hauberk would still be lighter than normal). Enchanted armor must be worn to provide its bonuses.

**Cursed weapons** always fail to hit, or will injure the wielder, or bestow some berserker rage that causes the character to pick fights (to the death), even with friends. **Quality weapons** will not break on a **zero out** or failed **push** except in combat

against a weapon of equal quality or greater enchantment. **Enchanted weapons** count as quality weapons and add +1 to attack rolls (though only when wielding the weapon). **Double enchanted** weapons add +2 to attack rolls, but one-half of such items are **artifact weapons** instead which count as an enchanted weapon (+1) and also have a single spell power (determined as a normal artifact).

An **intelligent sword** is an unusual and highly potent weapon; the blade is not only enchanted and quality, but has a bound spirit stored within (usually a demon or jinni) which retains its sentience and personality. Alignment of such a weapon is determined randomly by a D6 roll: 0-2 = Chaotic; 3-4 = Neutral; 5-6 = Lawful. Characters of different alignment will find themselves at odds with the blade, which will try to exert control over its wielder to its own benefit and the owner's detriment. The wielder must save versus magic to resist (checked every time the wielder draws the blade or acts in a way counter the blade's alignment). Even wielders with the same alignment may be forced to fight for control when acting against the wishes of the sword. In battle, the sword adds an extra D6 to the character's melee attack roll; two in six (D6 roll of 5 or 6) intelligent swords are also **artifact weapons** (see above). If and how the sword communicates is left to the DM's discretion.

**Magician spells:** DMs may always choose to substitute the text of a magician spell for an artifact (the magnitude of the spell found is the same as that of the artifact that would have otherwise been discovered), especially when the form of an artifact indicates some sort of writing (books, scrolls, tablets, etc.). Such texts are valuable to those who read the language of magic (including **mountebanks**) as it adds to their repertoire of available spells.

**RELICS** have a personality and alignment like **intelligent swords**, though this is an imprint of the saint (or shaman) to whom the relic originally belonged. Like artifacts, relics have a spell power associated with them (almost always the equivalent of a divine miracle), but the form and fashion in which it functions is left entirely to the DM's discretion. Relics allow anyone, regardless of faith or alignment, to use their powers because the relic only exists as an extension of divine will and wants to win converts to its cause. Relic owners gradually shift alignment (within 2D6 weeks) to that of the item, and begin to follow the tenets of the relic's faith, eventually converting completely and settling down into the role of priest or caretaker for the item, building a shrine or temple to house it, and basically retiring from adventuring life. The complete process of conversion takes 6D6 months. Saints and shamans are immune to this effect, but recognize the relic of another faith and are loathe to use such an object; even a relic of the saint's own faith will be given away at the earliest opportunity in order to inspire the faithful and convert nonbelievers. A place of worship that houses a relic of its faith always counts as **sanctified** (as the saintly miracle) unless the relic is removed. Chaotic relics can be detected as **evil**.



## FROM MEDIEVAL TO ANCIENT

The setting of **Five Ancient Kingdoms**, especially the land of Barica, is based heavily on our own world history, specifically the Middle East circa 800 CE (the Golden Age of Islam), except that the game imagines a world where the Franks never converted to Catholicism, there is no Holy Roman Empire, and the Caliphate is a truly righteous place beset on all sides by ancient, strange, and/or wicked civilizations. The fantastical elements are largely derived from the folklore of the region (as found in the tales of the **Arabian Nights**) with a few European myths thrown in for good measure.

However, some folks may want to play in an even more fantastical setting, a mythical prehistoric setting like that described in the tales of **Robert E. Howard** and other “**sword & sorcery**” authors. Such a saga provides even more opportunity for adventure, as the lands are wilder and less settled, abounding with monsters and danger. While there is plenty of opportunity to carve out an emirate or sultanate for one’s character in the medieval world, the ancient, prehistoric world is “wide open,” specifically because so little is truly known about it. The following conversions are recommended for such a setting:

**ABILITY SCORES:** only characters with an INT >14 are literate, although any character can choose to exchange their random **advantage** (especially **poetic gift**) for **literacy**, so long as they have INT 7+. DMs must decide what languages are available in his ancient world setting.

**CLASSES AVAILABLE:** characters may still choose to be heroes, magicians, or thieves. There are no saints in such a setting, only shamans, and it is suggested that a shaman be treated like the **mystic** NPC (found in **Book 2**), requiring a *taboo* to be chosen at 1<sup>st</sup> level and an additional taboo being picked every two levels thereafter. A DM might allow Lawful shamans to **turn undead** like a saint.

**EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE:** bronze is more common (and desirable) than iron, and good steel is an extremely rare commodity, its forging known to only a few. Costs for both half-chain and full chainmail are **ten times the normal price**. However, characters may purchase **bronze breastplate armor** for a nominal 85gd; it counts as *heavy armor*, carries a movement penalty of -4”, and absorbs two hits. Characters may also purchase the equivalent of **barbarian armor** (as described **Book 1**) for 35gd. Imperial armor does not exist in the setting.

**MAGIC:** magic is even more guarded than in the 5AK setting, and beginning magicians are considered to have finished their apprenticeship at 1<sup>st</sup> level; no additional knowledge is offered by their masters beyond their starting spells. All further magic knowledge must be acquired through **spell research** (sorcery thus becomes a much more viable option in the setting).

**MONSTERS:** there are more monsters and unsettled wilderness, and far fewer humans. **Jinn** interaction is more common, and less friendly; those Jinn with knowledge of the True Faith are forbidden from discussing it, as Halah has not yet

given His revelation to the Prophet. Prehistoric animals (saber-tooth tigers, cave bears, dire wolves, etc.) are as their medieval equivalent but with +2 HD because of size and strength. **Demons** and **abominations** are more abundant as well.

**SUBCLASSES AVAILABLE:** instead of **temple knights**, shamans may choose to be **war priests** who are in all ways the same as temple knights except that they treat their level as **one-third** normal for spell casting and they may use the **brute fighting style**. There is no **northern barbarian** subclass (all heroes are pretty “barbaric” in the ancient setting); instead, the hero has a new subclass: the **beast master**.

**Beast Master (hero subclass):** character is untrained in swords, bows, and shields; character loses ALL special advantages when wearing armor (“the scent of man”) or when armed with a bow, crossbow, or sling (“the hunter’s weapons”). **Advantages:** character can commune with beasts, touching their minds with her own; PC receives +1 bonus to **reaction** rolls with non-magical animals, and with a positive reaction (9+) can entice the beast to become a **retainer**. The number of animal retainers is still limited by CHA and level (treat PC as one level higher to determine how many can be retained), and no animal may have HD greater than the PC. Beast masters may sense through the eyes, ears, etc. of an animal retainer, but can take no other action while doing so. Animal retainers are loyal unto death and never “leave service” voluntarily. Beasts expect to be fed, but otherwise require neither equipment nor pay.

**TREASURE:** for an ancient setting, the same currency found in **Book 1** is used, but coins should be considered at least twice as heavy as those listed, and it is left up to the DM to decide whether the coins are valued for their metal, or for stored value they represent in grain from the local government (if the latter, exchange rates may vary wildly between city-states and is only enforceable within reach of the local military). **Barter**, for goods or services, should be the main way of conducting transactions with the abstract value of treasure mainly being used for determining XP awards.

**UNDERWORLD ADVENTURES:** DMs may choose to set their “underworld” under any large, ancient city. Other places for adventure might include the “living tombs” of magi hibernating through the use of the **life after death** spell; their resting places are filled with traps and dangers to ward off treasure seekers.

**WILDERNESS ADVENTURES:** most of the landscape lacks human settlement, and all of it is dangerous, filled with hazards and monsters. Large merchant sailing ships are unavailable and open sea navigation should be an occult art, if available at all (ships should stay in sight of coastlines unless they have access to magic knowledge, like a bound jinni or demon). On the other hand, with more monsters, aerial travel (via winged mounts) may be *more* common.

**XP AWARDS:** most of the XP awards still apply, but an ancient setting is assumed to have taken place before the rise of Rhyma, and some of the ancient capitals may not yet exist. On the other hand, DMs can provide similar bonuses for visiting lands like Atlantis, Lemuria, and Zu that no longer exist in the medieval setting.

## FROM FIVE KINGDOMS TO OTHER WORLDS

While **5AK** is a game of fantasy, it is still one grounded in the history and mythology of the real world and doesn't include some of the tropes of other fantasy games (elves and dwarves, for example). That doesn't mean the rules can't be adapted to different settings – including the **Middle Earth** of **Tolkien** or the **Barsoom** of **Burroughs** – but doing so makes the game play very different from the way intended by the author.



DMs who wish to set their game on **Mars** should use the creatures in **Book 2** as models for the various monsters of Burroughs's novels; most "human-scale" Martians are the same as humans in this book, save that they have telepathic ability and their martial training gives even the normal citizen the equivalent of HD 1 (Earth humans transported to Mars receive a +2 bonus to melee attack rolls and increase their thrown weapon distance by a factor of three due to the difference in gravity). The **witch** subclass should replace all other magician classes with the magic rules standing in for Barsoomian super-science. **Maritime rules** can be adapted to Martian flying ships. Saints, shamans, and relics would be very unusual for this setting.

The following subclasses can be used in a “**high fantasy**” setting:

**Dwarf Adventurer (hero subclass):** character requires a **minimum CON of 9** and may reach a **maximum level of 12**. They may not use an *agile fighting style*. Dwarves are uncomfortable when not standing on firm ground and receive none of a hero's bonuses when mounted. Human rulers never grant emirates to dwarves. **Advantages:** dwarves speak their own language in addition to that of local humans. They are excellent miners and masons and can discern much about stonework simply by looking at it; likewise they can detect traps in the Underworld on a D6 roll of 4+. Dwarves never lose their sense of direction underground and receive a +2 bonus to all saves. Dwarves that reach 9<sup>th</sup> level either become **clan leaders** (same stronghold bonuses as a saint) or **priests of Thor** (with the ability to craft artifacts like magicians).

**High Elf (hero subclass):** character requires a **minimum INT of 9** and may reach a **maximum level of 10**; all experience costs to advance are DOUBLE normal. They may not use a *brute fighting style*. Human rulers never grant emirates to elves. **Advantages:** elves speak their own language in addition to that of local humans. High elves have all the magical abilities of the **witch** subclass, but **A)** they do not use spell components, and **B)** the number of spells they may use in a game session is limited in the same way as saints (i.e. use the saints' table of miracles found in **Book 2**, including the bonus spell for high WIS). Elven magic is inherent to their being (they do not require the “freedom of movement” of other magicians), but being tied to their life force it *is* a finite resource. Elves are unaffected by the special attacks of undead.

**Wee Folk Adventurer (hero subclass):** character requires a **minimum CON of 9** and a **maximum STR of 14**. They may reach a **maximum level of 6**; however, they use the higher cost to advance in level as magicians, rather than heroes. Wee folk are smaller even than dwarves and are unable to use two-handed weapons; most one-handed weapons require two hands for wee folk to use them. Bows, slings, short swords, and daggers may be wielded normally. They are untrained in the use of shields and are too small to ride horses, receiving no advantages when mounted. **Advantages:** wee folk receive a +2 bonus to all saves. Unless wearing armor, they move in near total silence, surprising opponents on a D6 roll of 2+. In the Underworld or wooded settings, wee folk that remain still and silent are nearly undetectable (D6 roll of 2+). Because of their small size, opponents suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls against wee folk.

**Wood Elf (hero subclass):** character requires a **minimum DEX of 9**. They have the same experience cost to advance as a magician and may achieve a **maximum level of 8**. **Advantages:** wood elves do not have the magical abilities of their high elf kin but have the other advantages listed for the high elf subclass. Wood elves enjoy the same bonus with a bow (not a crossbow) as the **archer** subclass, and can blend in with wooded surroundings the same as a **wee folk adventurer**.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Thus ends the final volume of this game. Although there is plenty of material within these three books to provide many hours of enjoyment, the author readily acknowledges it is impossible to provide rules to cover all eventualities that might arise in play...nor is such desirable! The rules were designed to provide the basic mechanics of play, but it is fully expected a DM will modify the rules (and add to them) to suit the needs of the saga. Ignore rules that don't work for you, or change them so they do!

During play it's not unusual that players will want their characters to do things that neither you, nor the rules, have considered. In these situations, it's best (i.e. **more fun**) to allow and *encourage* this type of improvisation. Part of the advantage games like **SAK** have over video games is the ability for players (and the DM) to step outside the normal parameters of the game. If an action is at all plausible, don't shoot it down just because it "isn't in the rules." Remember this is a fantasy game! In fairy tales, protagonists think of all sorts of clever ways to succeed at their goals. Part of the fun for a DM is getting caught up in players' flights of imagination. **Enjoy it!**





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