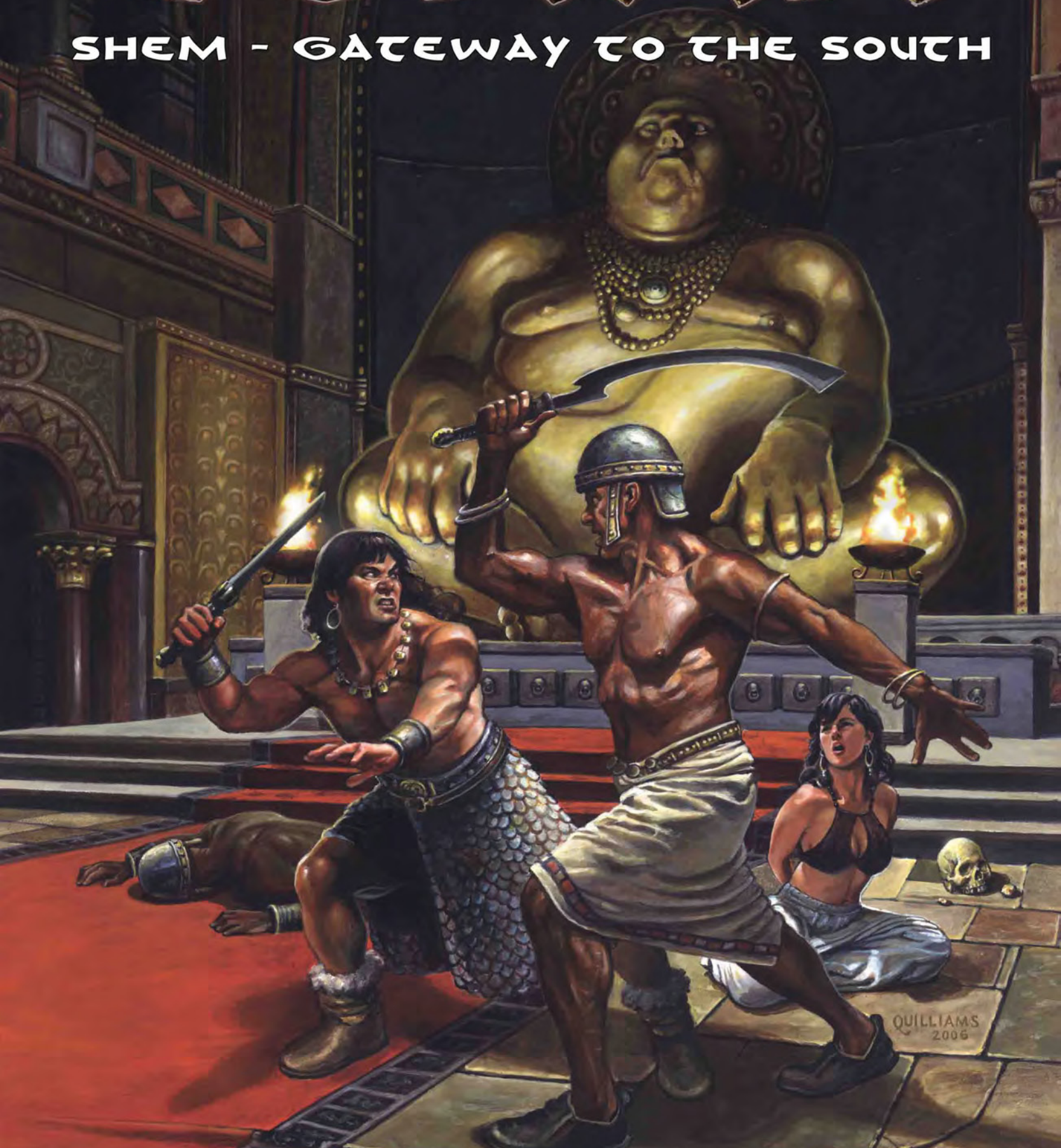


# CONAN<sup>®</sup>

SHEM - GATEWAY TO THE SOUTH



QUILLIAMS  
2006



# CONAN<sup>®</sup>

## SHEM - GATEWAY TO THE SOUTH

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### Credits

#### **AUTHOR**

Vincent Darlage

#### **EDITOR**

Richard Ford

#### **COVER ART**

Chris Quilliams

#### **INTERIOR ARTISTS**

Jesus Barony, Iordanis Lazaridis, Danilo Moretti, Phil Renne, Chad Sergesketter & Pascal Quidault

#### **PUBLICATIONS MANAGER**

Ian Belcher

#### **PRODUCTION DIRECTOR**

Alexander Fennell

#### **PROOFREADING**

Ron Bedison

#### **PLAYTESTERS**

Tina Cook, Craig Freeman, Darryl Guignon, Richard Haines, Brain Herrell, Lucas Mackay, Kevin Peterson & Robert Poulin

#### **SPECIAL THANKS**

Ian Barstow, Thommy Wojciechowski & Fredrik Malmberg

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# Introduction

**SHEM, A NATION** split by two cultures but united by a common ancestry, is a non-Hyborian land of decadent despots in the west and fierce nomads to the east. This influential nation of over fifteen million people is a powerful commercial engine, drawing in wealth through overland trade via the well-travelled caravan routes that criss-cross the arid deserts and pastoral meadowlands. Trade is the life of Shem and the debauched city-states seem to specialise in their manufacture of goods, living off of the unending camel trains. The luxuriant kingdoms are constantly at war with each other, each trying to steal domination of various trade routes, trying to destroy competition in search of ever elusive monopolies in some good or another.

This sourcebook for Mongoose Publishing's *Conan the Roleplaying Game* has been researched using the Conan stories of Robert E. Howard first and foremost, followed by the best Conan and Hyborian Age stories by John C. Hocking, L. Sprague de Camp, Lin Carter, Roy Thomas, Sean A. Moore and John Maddox Roberts. The early chapters of the book discuss what being a Shemite is all about, including details of appearance, the role of women, how property is acquired and the social strata of Shem.

The Shemite Military details information about the *asshuri* and military might of Shem.

In the next chapter, Medicine & Health in Shem, sickness and healing in Shem, both for the nomads and the city-dwellers, are discussed. This is followed by Shemite Religion which gives a précis on religion in Shem.

Sorcery & Alchemy discusses the role of magic in this split nation. Information concerning government and politics, Shemite history, law, military as well as information on the inclusion of Shem in your games can be found in Governance & Law.

After that is an expanded gazetteer, building upon the information found in *Conan: The Road of Kings*. A short chapter on new uses for skills and a few new feats follows.

Foes & Fiends is a bestiary detailing Shemite monsters and threats from the stories. The following chapter gives the Games Master a plethora of Non-Player Characters to use in campaigns.

The clues and statements about the various nations in the stories and books about Conan and the Hyborian Age serve as a springboard for the imagination. As even a casual perusal of the Hyborian Age shows, these are not stagnant cultures, forever framed by a single phrase in a story. These cultures and kingdoms should live and breathe. Borders should change and waver. Every Games Master should not fear to put a bit of themselves into this world. Take Howard's seeds and see what grows from your own imagination. Not everyone's Shem needs to be the same, with the same borders and culture. If you want Shem to wipe Stygia off the map, then do it. If you want Asgalun to burn to the ground, then let it burn.

*As you know, good Alcemides, the countries of these barbarians are divided into a western meadowlands which stretch to the distant ocean, and in which rise the cities of the town-dwellers, and the eastern deserts, where the lean nomads hold sway; there is incessant warfare between the dwellers of the cities and the dwellers of the desert.*

Robert E. Howard, *A Witch Shall Be Born*



# Life in Shem

**SHEM'S PEOPLE ARE** diverse, practically split into two distinct types, the nomads of the east and the urbanites of the west. These trading kingdoms are the homes of the meadow Shemites, who are generally of medium height with hook noses, dark eyes and blue-black hair. Some families have Stygian blood, however, and they are gigantic, broadly and strongly built, with the same sort of facial features as the shorter Shemites.

## CLOTHING STYLES

**Western Shem:** Meadow Shemite and Pelishtim clothing is made from wool or flax, except for priests and dignitaries, who may wear linen garments. In the winter, the clothing is thicker and coarser. Poor, urban Meadow Shemites usually go bare-chested and wear sheep-skin skirts tied at the waist, or wear simple sashed or belted tunics that are about knee-length. Women either add a shawl thrown over the left shoulder or long shawls which cover their entire bodies as a dress, but their right arm and shoulder are always left bare. Most men wear their hair long and parted in the middle. Some have curled black-blue beards but many also go clean-shaven. Women also wear their hair long, but they usually braid it into one long braid and wrap it on top of their heads in a coil. Women of all ranks usually wear headdresses when entertaining guests.

In addition to linen skirts, the wealthy, urban male Meadow Shemites may choose to wear loose, floor-length robes with sleeves, usually made of expensive and luxurious materials such as linen and, for the ultra-wealthy, silk. The robes are usually embroidered and may be made of dyed fabric and trimmed with cloth-of-gold. The clothing of wealthy women is colourful and bright. Upper class women may also go bare-breasted or wear bejewelled straps crossing between their breasts, although they rarely forego their elaborate headdresses. A wealthy Shemite's clothing smells of perfumes and incense. A Shemite will pay a fragrance's weight in gold to obtain it, as perfumes and incense are rare and a sign of wealth.

Only the wealthy can afford weaponry and they do not favour straight-blades. The Shemites of the cities fight with curved scimitars of bronze, iron or steel, depending on their

wealth or preference. Their gods designed the scimitar, or so the priests claim, and the straight blade is seen as offensive to the gods by some Shemites. Shemite bows, a gift from the gods also, are used by the nobles.

Treasures, riches and beautiful things cause the hearts and souls of the Shemites to soar. They live to accumulate wealth and beauty, surrounding themselves with jewellery, so both men and women of the Meadow Shemites wear earrings and necklaces. Earrings and bracelets are commonly of gold and silver; necklaces are usually set with precious stones. During periods of celebration even more jewellery is worn. The display of exotic and beautiful jewellery (Games Master's discretion) may earn a Meadow Shemite a +1 bonus to Reputation among other Meadow Shemites.

**Eastern Shem:** The nomads of the east favour loose robes for clothing, which are useful in catching the wind and in retaining heat at night. The standard dress for one of the nomad men is a white, girdled *khilat*, a robe with full open sleeves, linen, cotton or silken breeches and a flowing head-dress that falls to the shoulders called a *kafieh* and is banded about the temples with a triple circlet of braided camel-hair. The amount of embroidery on the *khilat* or *kafieh* indicates the relative position and wealth of the wearer. Cloaks are of camel hair and are solid coloured. They also wear turbans wrapped around spiked helmets.

The women wear a *chador*, or a full-body over-dress that includes a *ghutra*. Beneath the *chador*, the women wear a body-shirt made of white gauze and voluminous bloomers. The outfit is complete with a broad, red and black hand-woven belt, *ghutra*, a head-band and cloak. The *chador* has broad sleeves ending in a flap that can cover the hands. The necklines are high. The belt allows the dress to be hitched up to free the ankles. Their cloaks are identical to those worn by men except for being striped. Wealthier women own jackets or silk kaftans, which can be worn over the *chador*. Those nomads nearer the mountains, where it is cooler, wear *thwabs* instead of *chadors*. The clothing is loose and flowing to allow for easy movement and child-bearing, although the *thwabs* are a bit more form-fitting than the *chador* because of the cooler climate near the mountains. A woman often carries her entire wealth in



Soon the character of the coastline changed. No longer they sailed past steep cliffs with blue hills marching behind them. Now the shore was the edge of broad meadowlands which barely rose above the water's edge and swept away into the hazy distance. Here were few harbours and fewer ports, but the green plain was dotted with the cities of the Shemites: green sea, lapping the rim of the green plains, and the zikkurats of the cities gleaming whitely in the sun, some small in the distance.

Through the grazing-lands moved the herds of cattle and squat, broad riders with cylindrical helmets and curled blue-black beards, with bows in their hands. This was the shore of the lands of Shem, where there was no law save as each city-state could enforce on its own. Far to the eastward, Conan knew, the meadowlands gave way to the desert, where there were no cities and the nomadic tribes roamed unhindered.

Robert E. Howard, *The Hour of the Dragon*

the form of silver jewellery and is permitted to dispose of her jewellery in any way she sees fit. Some Shemite tribes practice the art of tattooing for their women.

A wealthy Shemite nomad's clothing smells of perfumes and incense. A Shemite will pay a fragrance's weight in gold to obtain it, as perfumes and incense are rare and a sign of wealth. Shemite nomads fight in melee battles with scimitars and tulwars. Even their daggers are curved and are called *jambiyas*. Otherwise the keen-eyed desert warriors fight with Shemite bows.

Clothing is important to Shemite characters. Wearing proper desert garments grants the wearer a +1 bonus to all Survival checks in the desert. Traditionally, the garments of the deceased are left on the grave for needy travellers to take.

## CLOTHING

Clothing is always assumed to be of minimum quality unless more money is spent to buy higher-quality clothing. The only colour available for common clothing is white, the colour of the linen used. The prices are for strangers purchasing such clothes in the cities. Native nomads make their own clothing and do not purchase them. As a side note, if a character is going out among the nomads in native clothing, they will not make any special allowances for the character. Most nomads are willing to forgive foreigners a certain amount of rudeness and etiquette breaches but not if the strangers are dressed in traditional desert garb. Also as a word of advice for foreigners travelling among the Shemites, dress in the best clothing affordable. The Shemite nomads place a lot of store in the quality of one's clothes.

## Shemite Clothing Costs

Item	Cost	Weight
A'gal	5 sp	—
Attars	10 sp	1 oz.
Chador	8 sp	1 lb.
Ghutra	½ sp	½ lb.
Kafieh (flowing headdress)	½ sp	½ lb.
Khilat	7 sp	1 lb.
Make-up	7 sp	—
Thwab	10 sp	1 lb.
Woman's Bloomers	2 sp	1 lb.
Woman's Body-Shirt	1 sp	1 lb.

**A'gal:** A triple circlet of braided camel-hair used to band a *kafieh* about one's head. The price listed above is for a basic band. More expensive versions may be made of braided silk. Jewelled, beaded or otherwise ornate versions cost considerably more. These coils symbolise a man's ability to abide by his obligations and his responsibilities.

**Attars:** These are the aromatics, the perfumes and incense that often radiate from the clothes of the wealthy. Frankincense, myrrh, musk, henna, amber, jasmine, lavender and lemon grass are all popular attars in Shem. The attar derived from the henna flower is an excellent anti-perspirant.

**Chador:** The women of the nomad tribes wear a *chador*, or a full-body over-dress that includes a hood and veil. The *chador* has broad sleeves ending in a flap that can cover the hands. The necklines are high. The dress is one yard longer than the wearer and is usually made of six yards of fabric total.



**Ghutra:** A headdress that serves the functions of hat, veil and shawl. Married women add a black cloth to wrap around their forehead. The cloth is known as an *asaba*.

**Kafieh:** The *kafieh* is a flowing headdress designed to allow the ends of the cloth to be wrapped around the face as a shield against sand, heat or cold.

**Khilat:** The *khilat* is an embroidered robe with full, open sleeves. It is usually monochromatic other than on the edges, which are embroidered in patterns. The usual colour is white, although black and brown are also favourites. The garment is closed at the waist with a girdle or sash. The amount and type of embroidery reflect the status and wealth of the wearer. Sheiks of powerful nomad tribes often wear *khilats* embroidered with gold thread. The cost in the table above is for a basic, poor-man's version. Highly embroidered *khilats* can cost as much as 110 to 220 silver coins.

**Make-up:** In Shem, women use eye shadow made of finely ground malachite, a green-blue mineral. Kohl is used as eyeliner. Kohl is a ground up mineral compound mixed with olive oil. It gives a dark line and is used by both men and women on the desert to control the sun's glare. Lip colours and rouge come from berries and cherries mixed with oil and a red mineral. Henna is used for body-art for ceremonies or important occasions; henna stays on the body about twenty or thirty days. Black henna is used on the feet and red henna is used on the hands and fingernails.

**Thwab:** An ankle-length Shemite gown worn by mountain nomads. These cotton gowns have narrow sleeves of rich embroidery, often with geometric designs. The wrist-edges have silver bells. The sleeves are so ornate that they are used over and over while the body of the dress is replaced when it wears out. If the dress colour changes, rectangles of cloth are applied just above the elbow to match the new body colour. Rose and orange silk patches often decorate the shoulders of these gowns regardless of the overall colour.

**Woman's Bloomers:** These voluminous white trousers, made in a manner similar to the mode of dress seen by Iranistani slave-girls, are sometimes worn beneath the *chador* and are held in place by a cord.

**Woman's Body-Shirt:** Worn beneath a *chador*, this is a white gauze blouse-like undergarment. The garment is held together in front by detachable buttons. More expensive versions include skilled lacework and gold buttons.

## EQUIPMENT

Other equipment is also available to Shemites in addition to the items listed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

**Coffee Kit:** Coffee making equipment is prized by the nomads, sometimes as much as swords. This is one of their few possessions they can share with guests. Coffee beans are roasted on a shallow metal dish with a long handle, then cooled in a wooden dish. Once cooled, the beans are put in a mortar and pounded with a pestle. Once pounded, the mush is boiled in an old battered and blackened pot with cardamom. Once boiled, the syrupy coffee is poured into a second, shiny coffee pot for serving. The kit includes tiny cups, mortar and pestle, utensils for stirring, a long-handled, shallow metal dish for roasting the beans and two coffee pots.

**Cylinder Seal:** These are cylindrical stones, often just an inch-long, with an image carved onto their curved surface. The cylinder seal is rolled over a soft piece of clay, leaving an impression of the curved image, which identifies the owner. The most popular subject is a scene in which the seal owner is presented to a god by another god, often the owner's patron deity. Other images include animals, real or imagined, and plants.

**Nomad Tent:** The nomads of Shem live, argue, sing and mend among lines of long, black, camel-hair tents. A Shemite tent is supported by tall central poles whilst the front, back and sides are supported on lower poles. The sides and backs can be rolled up during midday to allow breezes to pass through. The more expensive tents have more poles, a sign of wealth and social standing among the nomads. The floor is covered by rugs and cushions. Water and food are stored at the back. A Shemite tent is divided into two sections. The first section, called the 'sitting-place', is reserved for the men and for guest-reception. The second section, the 'place of the women', is where the women cook and receive female guests. This is also where the family lives, sleeps and cooks. The women can watch the men and their visitors by looking over the dividing curtain. The dividing curtain is known as a *ma'nad*. The tent can be packed up within an hour by any nomad or anyone who has lived among the nomads. The camel hair it is sewn from expands when wet, making the tent waterproof. It is fairly easy to repair when damaged.

**Rababa:** This one-stringed violin is a traditional instrument of the Shemites. The belly of the instrument is a membrane of animal skin or wood. There is no fingerboard and it has a rectangular body. It has a rich, thick sound comprised of both high and low tones.



**Shabbaba:** This is a traditional instrument of the nomad tribes. It is a metal pipe similar to a flute.

**Trumpet:** Trumpets are not used for music but for communicating orders across the battlefield.

**Other Music Instruments:** Other instruments used by the Shemites include single pipes, double pipes, whistles, lyres, nine-stringed harps, lutes, cymbals and bells. Hand drums, similar to tambourines, are also used, as are kettledrums. A drum in the shape of an hour-glass is used by temple priests to appease their patron god in religious ceremonies.

## HONOUR & ALLEGIANCE

Meadow Shemites and Pelishtim often hold to a civilised code of honour (see rules in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*) or, in the case of the *asshuri*, they follow the *asshuri* code (see page 28) or, perhaps, the mercenary code of honour presented in *Conan: Aquilonia – Flower of the West*. Many of the Meadow Shemites and Pelishtim, however, do not follow codes of honour.

**Code of Honour:** The nomad tribes almost always follow the barbaric code of honour (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). Eastern Shemites are not controlled by fear or guilt. Nomadic Shemites are more worried about shame. To shame one's family, clan, tribe or nation is the most dreaded thing the Shemite nomads can imagine. The opposite of shame is honour, so all Shemite characters should follow the barbaric code of honour. Note that breaking the law is not necessarily shameful or even evil. Being caught in a shameful act is far worse than being caught simply breaking the law. There are three basic values of a Shemite tribe: shame, honour and revenge. Many clans will attempt to cover up shame, but if it is found out, then the clan must opt for vengeance. The values of the nomad tribes are vested in this code of honour; those who do not may find themselves stripped of their *a'gals* or, worse, find themselves thrown out of their tribes, a sentence of almost certain death. The fear of dishonour, not only of self but of family, virtually ensures individual nomads comply with the wishes of the majority. Honour and shame can provide many adventure hooks. Some aspects of nomadic honour include the certain traditions of clan, hospitality and vengeance.

**Clan:** The centre of nomadic Shemite society is the clan. A clan is a collection of families and each has its own tent. A number of clans create a tribe. The Zuagir tribe, for example, is comprised of several clans flung throughout the desert. The tribe as

a whole rarely gathers. People living in the same clan are considered to be family, of the same blood, and are usually automatically treated as honourable allies. Clans are led by sheikhs. They adjudicate matters of conflict, shame, honour and revenge. Clan councils determine the distribution of water and the use of water resources. All men in a clan are considered equal, although the elders are accorded extra respect because of their experience. A Shemite nomad is expected to have total loyalty for the tribe and to uphold the survival of the tribe. Shemite characters with a code of honour should always have an Allegiance to their immediate family first and foremost, followed by an Allegiance to their clan (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules concerning Allegiance).

**Hospitality:** The hospitality of Shemite nomads is legendary. Strangers are often met with displays of courtesy and respect. Those who betray or insult the nomads, however, are treated as dishonourable (note that actually *asking* for hospitality is insulting to a nomad). Those who trespass against the nomads are not easily forgiven or forgotten. The nomads are also expected to be generous to guests, giving up their last meal if necessary. Shemite nomads value one thing above all else – water. They never waste water and the sharing of water is a sure sign of friendship and trust. When guests arrive, the men receive them on one side of their tent. The women's quarters are kept shielded from view by a woven curtain. If the guests arrive on horseback, the Shemite master asks permission to feed the horse himself. Once everyone is in the tent, they settle down for coffee, which traditionally is prepared by the host and includes three cups of coffee. The first cup is tasted by the host to make the guest feel safe. The second cup is poured and tasted by the guest. The third cup is poured by the host and drunk by the guest. Once the third cup is finished, the guest hands it back to his host. Once coffee is drunk by a stranger or guest, that stranger is under the protection of the host and is, for purposes of the barbaric code of honour, treated as an honourable ally. Shemite characters with a code of honour should always have an Allegiance toward the category of people known as guests (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules concerning Allegiance).

**Revenge:** The concept of vengeance is important to the nomads, providing them with a social check against transgressions. As Robert E. Howard wrote in *The Tower of the Elephant*, 'civilized men are more discourteous than savages because they know they can be impolite without having their skulls split, as a general thing.' This is true of the savage nomad tribes of Shem – as a rule they are not as discourteous as their civilised western brethren because of the threat of having one's skull split in a blood feud. Blood feuds are common among the nomads; their honour demands such





things. When one family insults or dishonours another, the insulted family may justifiably kill the offender. The family of the slain man may disagree about the justification of the killing and feel insulted, so they kill a member of the other family, which, in turn, insults again the original family and so on. Any Shemite nomad with a code of honour is bound to spill the blood of those who insult them and these often escalate into full-scale tribal wars which require a third party to settle by naming a blood price to be paid by one or the other party. Vengeance allows nomads to pursue individual rights to the death, bringing their entire clan into the conflict, regardless of how small or large the initial slight was. The fear of retribution by friends and relatives causes individual nomads to refrain from rudeness, restraining passionate quarrels.

**Patronage:** The nomads also have a system of guardianship known as patronage. The rules of vengeance can often work against the weak, who may not be able to enact their right of revenge. The weak, then, must turn to the strong for protection. Thus, weaker warriors plead to *sheiks* and other powerful men for patronage. If a sheik or other powerful warrior grants patronage, it is a pledge the sheik is honour-bound to fulfil. Any slights against his man become slights against the patron. Thus, the nomads are polite and honourable toward the weak, lest their patron enact revenge.

## WOMEN IN SHEM

**Meadow Shemites:** Women have important rights in Shem, although they are hardly treated as the equivalent of men by the culture. Women are considered part of the fruits of war, a sexual reward for the soldiers who fight so gallantly, so women must be considered less than men for this to be so. A woman is free to engage in trade and business and may own property, however, if married, she must guard against seeming free with other men or making fun of her husband, to avoid a divorce. Women can choose which son gets her inheritance. Even if they are but slaves, if they give birth to a free Meadow Shemite's children, they are given several protections by the law, such as care by the man's father or brother should the man die. However, a woman's only power is often only the sway her personality may have within her family. Virtually any woman is vulnerable to sexual slavery, for any woman can be captured in war or sold by their husband or father to pay off debts. The vulnerability of women to be captured in war as concubine slaves makes women in Shem dependent upon the armed might of the city-state for their protection.

In general, a woman's place in Meadow Shemite society is in the home. Her duty is to bear children, keep the home in order and obey her spouse.

**Nomadic Shemites:** Among the nomad tribes, women play a central role and are full partners in the household. They help to build and dismantle tents, care for the flocks, raise any crops, perform any needed weaving and make or repair clothing. Most women do chores during the day, such as milking animals, caring for young children, spinning wool, weaving cloth, tending flocks, cooking, drawing water and mending tents and clothing. They are usually old and worn out by forty. Some Shemite tribes have matrilineal inheritance. Women can marry more than once and are not secluded for the most part. The advice of women are sought in clan councils and many are authors of clan poetry.

Women of the nomad tribes enjoy more freedom and power than Meadow Shemite women. They are protected by a strict code of honour held by the men. They can move about freely and can talk to other men without fear or shame. Some rare few who show the aptitude can even become raiders and warriors.

Women of the nomad tribes are also vulnerable to sexual slavery and concubinage. Any woman taken in a raid becomes the legal property of the victor – and becoming property is the same as becoming a slave.



## LOVE & MARRIAGE

**Meadow Shemites:** Marriages are arranged in Shem because it is the merging of two families, not just the union of two individuals. The consent of the bride's family is the most important deciding factor in any marriage contract. Children are often arranged to be married by the time the brides are six years old, although the marriage never takes place before she reaches womanhood. Once she reaches puberty, usually around the age of eleven, the marriage can take place. Few self-respecting females in Shem remain unmarried long after the onset of puberty. There is virtually no premarital sex among the girls; once a family determines the girl is fertile and of age, she is given to marriage, either to a person or to a god by making her a sacred prostitute of the temple.

The marriage ceremony itself is colourful and musical. The women from the bride's side of the family display the girl's clothes, gifts from the groom's family, her jewellery and other personal effects as the bride is pampered and prepared. There is a lot of dancing and food as the wedding gets underway. Meadow Shemite marriages are recorded by the priests in a sealed contract. After the wedding, the marriage party sign this contract. Without the contract, there is no legal marriage. Husbands make bridal payments and wives pay a dowry, all of which are governed by strict laws and regulations that vary from city-state to city-state.

Marriage is monogamous among the urban Shemites of the west; a wife's adultery is punishable by death. In any marriage, the male is the patriarch and he is in charge of the family and the household slaves. Divorces are also common and regulated by law. A woman's place in Meadow Shemite society is in the home, and failure to perform her duties (including bearing children) is grounds for divorce. In these cases the man would have to repay the dowry. If a woman is divorced without good reason, she gets her dowry back. If the wife wants to leave the home to engage in business, the man may divorce her and keep the dowry. Wives who neglect their home, have extramarital affairs or otherwise embarrass their husbands may be legally drowned.

**Nomadic Shemites:** Although marriages are also pre-arranged among the nomads, the young people know each other and are permitted some say in the matter. Among the nomads, at least half the marriages are with first cousins, their father's brother's child. The cousin of any woman has the first right to any girl's hand; if she wants to marry another she must have her cousins' permission. Polygamy is permitted among the nomadic

Shemites. The more wives one has, the higher his social standing. Additional wives help each other with the chores and may help the husband find new brides. A husband must have the approval of all the other wives before he can have a wedding.

Divorces are simple among the nomads. The man merely states three times that he wants a divorce and it is done. If a woman wants a divorce, she simply goes back to her parents' tent. There is no shame or social stigma for either and they are free to marry again. Children over eight years old remain with their father in the case of a divorce but the mother may freely visit them.

The Shemite nomads adore love stories and insist that each have a happy ending.

## PROPERTY

Treasures, riches and beautiful things cause the hearts and souls of the Shemites to soar. They live to accumulate wealth and beauty, surrounding themselves with jewellery and lovely slaves. However, despite that similarity, there are a few differences between the sub-races and their views on private property.

**Meadow Shemites and Pelishtim:** Land and property are sources of wealth and social prestige in western Shem. Shem has a thriving industry in both agriculture and trade. Property is held by the temples, the kings and the private citizens, including herds of sheep and goats, farms and vineyards. Most property is controlled by the patriarch of a family, but women are allowed to own property, even if it is controlled by a husband or father.

**Eastern Nomads:** Among the nomads of eastern Shem, there is no private ownership of land as each tribe holds its land and water resources in common with the rest of the tribe. Nomads value the ability to move and they look down upon people who own too much beyond herds of animals and portable property. The idea of owning a permanent house and permanent land is anathema to the nomads, who often dislike their long stays at their summer camps. Wealth is measured by the number of wives and the size of one's herds. Wealth is displayed through jewellery and via the embroidery and embellishments on one's clothes and *a'gal*. A nomad generally owns a tent if he is a patriarch of a family, as well as a coffee set. There is no concept of private ownership of the basic necessities of survival. Food, water, shelter and clothing are the right of every nomad. If a nomad needs these things, then they are provided to the nomad if it is at all possible.



## Shemite Urban Occupations

Alchemist	Armourer	Artist	Astrologer	Baker
Barber	Basket Maker	Beggar	Blacksmith	Book seller
Bookbinder	Bowyer/Fletcher	Brewer	Brothel Keeper	Buckle Maker
Butcher	Carpenter	Carter	Cartographer	Chandler
Clothier, New	Clothier, Used	Cobbler	Coffee-Maker	Cooper
Copyist	Craft Merchant	Cutler	Dairy Seller	Diplomat
Distiller	Domestic Servant	Dye Makers	Dyer	Engineer
Engraver	Fishmonger	Fuller	Furniture Maker	Furrier
Gardener	Girdler	Glass Maker	Glove Maker	Goldsmith
Governess	Grain Merchant	Grocer	Guard	Guide/Tout
Haberdasher	Harness Maker	Hay Merchant	Historian	Importer
Instrument Maker	Jeweller	Judge	Kidnapper	Laundress
Leatherworker	Lock Smith	Lotus Merchant	Mason	Mercer
Official	Painter	Pastry Maker	Pawnbroker	Perfumer
Potter	Prostitute	Purse Maker	Rat Catcher	Road Mender
Rope Maker	Rug Maker	Saddler	Satirist	Scabbard Maker
Scholar	Sculptor	Servants	Silversmith	Skinner
Slave	Soap Maker	Soothsayer	Spice Merchant	Student
Tailor	Tanner	Tax Collector	Taxidermist	Thief
Tiler	Tinker	Vestment Maker	Vintner	Warehouser
Weaponsmith	Weaver	Wheelwright	Wood Carver	Wool Gatherer

## OCCUPATIONS & ROUTINES

**Meadow Shemites and Pelishtim:** The people of western Shem occupy their time with many different vocations. Although originally an agricultural society in western Shem, success in trading surplus and negotiating deficits have brought about an increase in specialised skills through the centuries. Unlike the Hyborian nations, Zingara and Zamora, guilds have not risen in Shem to dominate trade.

Of all the vocations possible in western Shem, only the brewmaster is placed under divine protection by goddesses (see page 82 for a feat available to those who can brew beer). Women play a dominant role in the brewing industry and as tavern keepers. Beer is one of the staples of Meadow Shemite economy. The Meadow Shemites sip beer from large vats, using bent straws to penetrate the layer of yeast foam and barley husks on the surface of the brew.

People in the listed professions or crafts can be of any class, though most are commoners. Each takes ranks in the appropriate Craft or Profession skill and the best craftsmen also take Skill Focus feats in their craft or profession. Diplomacy, Bluff and Sense Motive are also important skills for people making a living in Shemite cities. Characters who have a developed Profession or Craft skill gain a +1 bonus to Reputation while in Shem. Characters who are known to have no ability to make a regular living at all suffer a -1 penalty to Reputation while in Shem.

**Nomadic Shemites:** The nomads of the east have a fairly fixed daily routine. Two hours before dawn, one of the daughters of a family rises to prepare sour milk for the family by filling a goatskin with milk from sheep or camels and then rocking the skin to thicken the milk. An hour after she gets up, the rest of the family rises and washes. The first meal of the day is consumed, usually just some fruit and sour milk, perhaps some ash-baked cakes are included. The family then attends to the day's duties, including mending, herding, hunting, gathering, raiding and tracking. In the evening, the second meal of the day is eaten. They stay around the fire, telling tales, singing songs and listening to poetry. Note that the nomads do not sit as urban men might – they crouch with their weight on their heels. Within a tent, they may recline against saddles or upon carpets, but when gathered around a campfire, they all crouch. Two hours after sunset, the nomads wash and retire for the evening. Usually one member of the tribe is assigned to stay awake and keep watch on the camp and the herds.

In the summer, the nomads usually camp around an oasis or well. During the summer, the nomads organise trips into the cities for trade and diversion, as well as to get away from the crowded and hot conditions at the summer camp. Once autumn hits, bringing with it some sparse rain, the nomads break camp and are on the move for the next eight months, moving their camp every week to ten days, moving with their herds in search of pasture. Each tribe has its own territory, usually amounting to about 200 square miles, but



the borders are not absolute. As they move, they raid the settled communities and trade caravans. They also levy tolls against these communities and caravans in return for not raiding them. Grazing is at its best in the spring and the families begin to camp far apart for privacy, a rarity among the nomads. However, the family camps are close enough to hear warnings from a neighbour and everyone knows where each of their neighbours are and, if honourable, are bound to protect them. The tents are arranged in a wide circle, which makes raids difficult. As soon as raiders break into the circle, they are instantly surrounded and defeated.

Although predominantly pastoral herdsmen, some tribes have all but given up on herding animals as a way of life, embracing instead the slave-trade as a means to wealth. They travel as far as the Black Kingdoms to bring slaves to the Meadow Shemites. Many nomads are employed to drive caravans across the deserts and plains. In addition to working the caravan trails, many nomad tribes are paid safe conduct money by caravans and cities to protect and pacify the trade routes. The nomads are also highly sought after as scouts by the *asshuri* and the Turanian armies because they are excellent trackers and can find their way without a map or compass in the desert. The craftsmen of the nomad tribes are women. They do the weaving, sewing and basket-making of the clan.

Healers and shamans are also important occupations among the white-robed nomads of the east. Using primarily herbal medicines and a form of exorcism, the healers and shamans keep the tribe as healthy as possible. Many nomads will rarely seek aid for their maladies, having accepted their fate as handed to them by the gods.

## TRADE

Shemites live to accumulate wealth and beauty, surrounding themselves with jewellery and slaves. Some are content to gather their wealth via trade and mercantilism, although many Shemites have a roving mindset, willing to travel to find riches and slaves far from home.

This influential nation of over 15 million people is a powerful commercial engine, drawing in wealth through overland trade via the well-travelled caravan routes that criss-cross the arid deserts and pastoral meadowlands. Trade is the life of Shem and the debauched city-states seem to specialise in their manufacture of goods, living off the unending camel trains.

The nomads come into the cities to trade during the summer months when it is too hot to move around too much. They sell livestock, slaves, woven textiles, curd cheese and wool. They purchase rice, wheat, fruit, weapons, trinkets and finery.

## Caravans & Cargo

The basic unit of merchandise is the cargo – defined as an ambiguous unit equal to what a mid-sized caravan could carry. Cargos are generally bigger than a breadbasket, and somewhat smaller than a herd of elephants. A cargo is generally larger than anything one man could comfortably carry. A small or medium hulled sized-caravan can carry one cargo (barring modifications). Large caravans may carry as many as four cargoes. The Games Master is the arbiter of how many cargoes are carried by any given caravan.

Cargos fall into one of three categories of rarity: common, uncommon and exotic. Common cargoes are easily available within the region. Uncommon cargoes come from distant lands but are not unheard of. Exotic cargoes come from distant lands, passing from caravan to caravan before they finally end up in the Shem's caravans. Of the three, exotic cargoes generally bring the best price while common cargoes are readily available and can easily be both bought and sold.

The value of a cargo depends on its rarity in the market the individual brings it to. Some goods are always rare (gems, gold, silver, etc.) while others may be quite valuable in one place and almost worthless in another (silk, spices). The cargo tables below suggest values by region as well as listing various common, uncommon and exotic cargoes.

## Caravan Cargo Descriptions

The following entries give general descriptions of the cargoes mentioned above. When necessary the Games Master should feel free to invent whatever details seem necessary at the moment.

*Arms:* The caravan is carrying a load of weapons suitable to its country of origin. At the Games Master's option the caravan crew may break these weapons out when bandits attack, giving them access to better weapons than the average merchant caravan crew.

*Armour:* The caravan bulges with jerkins, shirts and hauberts made by local craftsmen. The merchants will not have time to break out the armour.

*Beer:* A somewhat bitter, somewhat sweet alcoholic beverage brewed with yeast and (if the drinker is fortunate) hops. Well-known breweries may sell their beer into other kingdoms, but most beers are locally brewed. Beer is one of the staples of Meadow Shemite economy. The Meadow Shemites sip beer from large vats, using bent straws to penetrate the layer of yeast foam and barley husks on the surface of the brew. A nomad bandit tribe finding a cargo of beer may not get incredibly rich, but they will have a solid liquid ration for a few weeks.

*Black Lotus:* Although called black lotus this cargo may include black, golden, green, grey, purple, white or yellow



## Cargo By Region

Region	Common (1000 sp)	Uncommon (10,000 sp)	Exotic (50,000 sp)
East	Dried Fish	Arms	Furs
	Dried Fruits	Armour	Ivory
	Exotic Feathers	Beer	Olive Oil
	Grain	Black Lotus	Shemite Wine
	Leather	Exotic Cloth	
	Lumber	Exotic Goods	
	Raw Metal	Fine Lumber	
	Regional Cloth	Gems	
	Regional Goods	Gold	
	Semi-precious stones	Incense	
	Silk	Silver	
	Spices	Slaves	
	Wine		
South	Common (1000 sp)	Uncommon (10,000 sp)	Exotic (50,000 sp)
	Beer/Wine	Arms	Black Lotus
	Dried Fish	Armour	Fine Lumber
	Dried Fruits	Exotic Cloth	Furs
	Exotic Feathers	Exotic Goods	Gems
	Grain	Gold	Incense
	Leather	Ivory	Olive Oil
	Raw Metal	Lumber	Shemite Wine
	Regional Cloth	Semi-precious stones	Silk
	Regional Goods	Spice	Silver
	Slaves		
West	Common (1000 sp)	Uncommon (10,000 sp)	Exotic (50,000 sp)
	Beer/Wine	Arms	Black Lotus
	Dried Fish	Armour	Fine Lumber
	Dried Fruit	Exotic Cloth	Gems
	Grain	Exotic Feathers	Gold
	Leather	Exotic Goods	Incense
	Lumber	Furs	Ivory
	Raw Metal	Olive Oil	Silk
	Regional Cloth	Semi-precious stones	Silver
	Regional Goods	Shemite Wine	Spices
		Slaves	
Vilayet Sea	Common (1000 sp)	Uncommon (10,000 sp)	Exotic (50,000 sp)
	Beer/Wine	Arms	Black Lotus
	Dried Fish	Armour	Fine Lumber
	Dried Fruits	Exotic Cloth	Furs
	Grain	Exotic Goods	Gold
	Incense	Gems	Ivory
	Leather	Silver	Olive Oil
	Lumber	Spices	Shemite Wine
	Regional Goods	Raw Metal	
	Semi-precious stones		
	Silk		
	Slaves		



**lotus.** A cargo of lotus is usually small enough to hide in some other 'junk' cargo like grain or lumber. The value of the trash cargo is figured into the value of lotus cargo. Finding the black lotus requires a Search check (DC 15).

**Dried Fish:** Dried, smoked and salt cured local fish. These cargos may not be terribly valuable but they do provide food for many days. A single cargo of dried fish contains 3,000 days of food.

**Dried Fruits:** Dried, sugar cured, or otherwise preserved fruits. These cargos may be somewhat valuable if taken outside of their originating region, but most preserved fruits do not travel very well at all.

**Exotic Cloth:** A caravan full of non-local cloth. A load of regional cloth taken to another region becomes exotic cloth. A load of exotic cloth taken back to its home region becomes regional cloth. When the Games Master establishes this cargo he must specify which region the cargo originally came from.

**Exotic Feathers:** A caravan full of colourful, exotic feathers. Although each feather may only sell for a few bits of silver (usually a half silver) but in mass they can be quite valuable. The majority of the cargo caravan is taken up with measures to prevent salt water from damaging the merchandise.

**Exotic Goods:** A caravan full of non-local worked goods (shoes, boots, belts, silverware, bells, etc). A load of regional goods taken to another region becomes exotic goods. A load of exotic goods taken back to its home region becomes regional goods. When the Games Master establishes this cargo he must specify which region the cargo originally came from. The Games Master should also feel free to describe the contents of the cargo, taking into account its region and country of origin.

**Fine Lumber:** A caravan full of fine-grained lumber. This lumber is not overly useful for making caravans or buildings, but makes fine furniture, statuary and other fancy work.

**Furs:** A massive load of fine furs from the northern lands. Furs are particularly valuable in many lands, as they can only be gathered from the furthest north, where few merchants dare to tread. Fur animals rarely have hide stout enough to make armour, but civilised people pay handsomely for tissue thin leather attached to a pretty pelt.

**Gems:** A chest of rubies, emeralds, pearls and other rare stones. The chest is hidden in a 'junk' cargo of common goods (usually lumber or regional goods). The value of the cargo is included in the gem price. Finding the gem cargo requires a Search check (DC 15).

**Gold:** A chest of worked and unworked gold. This is the ultimate bandit cargo, the great haul that they all dream of. The chest is hidden in a 'junk' cargo of common goods (usually lumber or grain). The value of the cargo is included in the gold value. Finding the gold cargo requires a Search check (DC 20).

**Grain:** A cargo caravan full of dried grain. These cargos are often used to mask more interesting, and valuable, cargos.

**Incense:** A cargo caravan full of aromatics, including several kinds of mixed incense. These cargos tend to be highly flammable and subject to water damage, but the reward can be tremendous.

**Ivory:** The raw tusks of elephants. Ivory is valued all over the world, although its largest market is currently the Hyborian nations.

**Leather:** Tanned animal hides, usually cattle but sometimes camel goat, or sheep as well. Finely tanned leather is an important regular trade item, but not something that many bandits consider worthy plunder.

**Lumber:** Dried lumber of various species and kinds.

**Olive Oil:** Large barrels of olive oil, used for waterproofing, cooking, and lamp oil. This oil is very valuable in most regions of the world, but is also hard to transport for any distance. Bandits know that Shemite caravans often carry a cargo of olive oil, and so target them whenever they may be headed to the east.

**Raw Metal:** The exact contents and type of a raw metal cargo must be defined when the Games Master places it. The metal has not yet been worked; instead it is headed to a larger market where craftsmen are more plentiful.

**Regional Cloth:** A caravan full of local cloth. A load of regional cloth taken to another region becomes exotic cloth. A load of exotic cloth taken back to its home region becomes regional cloth. When the Games Master establishes this cargo he must specify which region the cargo originally came from.

**Regional Goods:** A caravan full of local worked goods (shoes, boots, belts, silverware, bells, etc). A load of regional goods taken to another region becomes exotic goods. A load of exotic goods taken back to its home region becomes regional goods. When the Games Master establishes this cargo he must specify which region the cargo originally came from. The Games Master should also feel free to describe the contents of the cargo, taking into account its region and country of origin.



**Semi-Precious Stones:** A chest full of semi-precious stones (lapis-lazuli, opals, topaz, etc). The chest is hidden in a 'junk' cargo of common goods (usually lumber or regional goods). The value of the cargo is included in the stone's price. Finding the semi-precious stone cargo requires a Search check (DC 20).

**Shemite Wine:** The vineyards of Shem are known throughout the world for their fine wines. It is said that the people of the East will pay handsomely for even a flagon of their finest. Fortunately it comes a bit less dear to those who live in the west. A caravan full of Shemite wine contains dozens of casks, each containing enough well made wine to get a dozen men drunk.

**Silk:** A caravan full of bolts of silk cloth. Silk is very common in the East (where it is the regional cloth) but hardly seen at all in the West. A man who could get a caravan full of silk from the East all the way to Messantia would have his fortunes made.

**Silver:** A chest full of raw and worked silver. The chest is hidden in a 'junk' cargo of common goods (usually lumber or grain). The value of the cargo is included in the silver's price. Finding the silver cargo requires a Search check (DC 15).

**Slaves:** A cargo caravan full of human merchandise, usually in relatively good condition.

**Spices:** A small chest full of spices, worth their weight in gold. The chest is hidden in a 'junk' cargo of common goods (usually grain or lumber). The value of the cargo is included in the spice cargo price. Finding the spice cargo requires a Search check (DC 15).

**Wine:** Casks of good, drinkable wine. The casks are not worth much individually but there is a 5% chance that the character can fence this particular cargo for ten times its normal value to a collector or someone with a specific, seasonal need.

**City Storage Capacities for Cargo:** Settlements have quite a bit of space to store cargo. This cargo may be local products or items stored at the settlement for eventual shipment elsewhere. The level of importance attached to the settlement determines how many cargos it contains, as well as their potential value.

- ❏ Insignificant settlements can store up to three cargos. These will generally be common cargos for the region, rather than uncommon or exotic cargos. Note that a common cargo on the Black Coast (say, ivory) may be worth quite a bit elsewhere.
- ❏ Minor settlements can store up to six cargos. These will generally be common cargos, although one or two may

be uncommon or exotic cargos. There is a 10% chance that any given minor settlement will have one exotic cargo.

- ❏ Important settlements can store up to nine cargos. At least half of these are common cargos for the region. The other half is comprised equally of uncommon and exotic cargos.
- ❏ Any settlement may, at the Games Master's option, have a unique cargo of some kind. These cargos are always tied to specific story events that drive the characters ever deeper into the wild conflicts of the Hyborian Age.

## Shemite Bandits

Bandits and robbers are a danger to trade and traders in Shem as they are in most nations of this age. Bandits are raiders who ambush unwary travellers, extolling money and/or goods to maintain their free and violent lives.

*Conan: The Compendium* contains details of the bandit class. Players and Games Masters without this resource can create bandits from the core classes published in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Raiding nomads, displaced commoners, criminal thieves and deserter soldiers often make up the robber rabble plaguing the roads. Borderers, commoners, nomads, soldiers and thieves are all common classes among the bandits of Shem.

**Creating a Bandit Character:** Bandits rely on stealth and speed to bring down their prey. Nomad bandits are rarely out to kill and will not engage in sustained brawls and melees. Their goal is intimidation, to strike and vanish before a counterstroke can be engaged. Bandit characters emphasise their Dexterity scores. If a bandit does not begin play with a high Dexterity, he often begins raising the score with his allotted increases due to level improvements as described in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Charisma is important for the bandit chiefs to avoid unnecessary fights, while Strength and Constitution help the bandit defeat tougher foes.

Skills such as Bluff, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local), Ride and Survival are usually maximised. Gather Information and Knowledge (local) help the bandits find prey or succour. Hide aids in ambushing prey or avoiding patrols. Intimidate is useful to avoid some combats and to demoralise the opponent. Ride is essential because walking in the deserts of Shem is likely to be a death sentence. Survival is also necessary for the terrain. Most bandits would do well to multiclass into thief or the bandit class to avail themselves of the Sneak Attack ability. Bandits need to strike quickly and disable the foe; Sneak Attack works admirably toward this end.





Feats such as Improved Initiative, Menacing Aura, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Quick Draw, Stealthy, Steely Gaze, Striking Cobra and Track are often preferred feats for bandits, helping them to enhance their own abilities and to achieve their own goals.

### Shem's Trade Economy

Shem's economy is not as static as the equipment charts in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* might seem to indicate. In Shem there simply is no set price for any good or service. Every transaction is between a seller and a buyer so prices vary from transaction to transaction. Further, goods tend to be individualised and unique in Shem. Perhaps this broadsword has an engraving of a ram on its blade and perhaps that one has a gold pommel. No two items are alike, so it is unlikely prices will be alike. Price is determined by demand. Sellers do not put price tags on items. If a person wants it, that person will pay what is necessary to get it.

Buying and selling in Shem is usually a function of Diplomacy and Sense Motive, although Bluff, Intimidation or Profession (merchant) can be used as a substitution for those skills. Most merchants in Shem maximise all four of these skills to be sure they are on top of their game, buying for the lowest prices and selling for the highest prices.

**Buying in Shem:** To buy an item in Shem, a Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate check is required against a seller's Sense Motive or Profession (merchant). This check will either succeed or fail.

**If Check Succeeds:** If the buyer's initial Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate check is successful, then he finds a bargain, based on how well he beat the seller's roll; see Bargains table for details. Valerian Emilius, a Bossonian, approaches a sword smith to buy a broad sword (base price 125 sp) and begins negotiations. Gasparus, after all modifiers are applied, beats the smith's Sense Motive by 9 points. He gets the sword for 112.5 silver pieces ( $125 \text{ sp} \times 0.90$ ).

### Bargains

Skill Check Difference in Player Character's Favour	Price Modification Multiplier
24+	0.70
20-23	0.75
16-19	0.80
12-15	0.85
8-11	0.90
4-7	0.95
0-3	1.00

**If Check Fails:** If the seller's check is higher than the buyer's, then the buyer's initial offer (the base price offered in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*) is not accepted. The buyer may renegotiate with a +1 cumulative modifier with each check until a +6 modifier fails. At that point, no offer will be accepted or the item is unavailable. If a renegotiated check succeeds, the core price suggested in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* is multiplied by the Price Modification Multiplier found on the Hard Sell table below for the final price. Cordara de Oto, a Zingaran, approaches the sword smith to purchase a broad sword but fails on his Diplomacy check. He decides to renegotiate with a +1 modifier. Still he fails the following check. He renegotiates again with a +2 modifier. He succeeds this time and pays the smith 187.5 silver pieces for the sword ( $125 \text{ sp} \times 1.50$ ).

### Hard Sell

Buyer's Final Renegotiation Modifier	Price Modification Multiplier
+1	1.25
+2	1.50
+3	1.75
+4	2.00
+5	3.00
+6	4.00



# SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE MEADOW SHEMITES

Among the Meadow Shemites, the king of a given city-state is the ultimate ruler, the divine representative of the patron god of that city. Beneath the king, Meadow Shemite society has three classes of people. The upper class are aristocratic nobles, priests and military officers who have been awarded large estates. The middle class is comprised of traders, businessmen, tutors, artisans and farmers. The lower class are slaves.

## UPPER CLASS

### The King

The king, usually from the warrior class, is the monarch of a given city. There is no division between religious and secular power; the king of a Shemite city-state is an agent of the gods and is responsible to the gods to be a good leader by maintaining the city walls and the irrigation systems, by enforcing the laws and the social order, by leading wars and raids and by serving the patron god and the temples. His rule is accepted by divine providence and as part of the plan of the gods. He is advised by a council of elders and by the priests. The king is expected to be a warrior and a priest as well as a leader. He does not have total power; Shemite kings are not totalitarian dictators. There is no one king of Shem. Each city-state has its own king and its own laws. This aids Shem in keeping the city states competitive for a piece of the trading pie. Kingship is hereditary among the Meadow Shemites and Pelishtim. The king, being a religious, military and political leader, is more important than temple priests.

### Aristocracy

The aristocracy function as administrators, working for the king. There are no wealthy, lazy idlers living off the work of others in the manner that one might find a prince of Nemedra or an Aquilonian baron. Those who are aristocrats work as scribes and functionaries in the service of the king. The aristocrats are responsible for drafting commoners to work on community projects, collect taxes in the form of a percentage of their crops and to ensure the canals and other methods of irrigation are in constant repair. Further, the aristocrats divide up the grain they collect for the city to give to its soldiers or any others it supports. The aristocrats exempt themselves from all such duties.

### Priesthood

The priests are charged with maintaining the social status-quo. They tell the commoners their hard labours are necessary because they were created to serve the gods. The priests often sit on the city councils of elders alongside the aristocrats to help advise the king.

When Shem was first founded, the priests worked the fields alongside the farmers. With wealth, power and prestige, this has changed, although each temple still owns a considerable amount of farmland. The temples pay the poor to work their farms, allowing them a certain amount of the harvest to live on, storing a certain amount for the priests and loaning out the surplus to unlucky or failed farmers – hoping to either get repaid with the next harvest or to garner new farmland and new workers when the unlucky fail to repay the debt.

Schooling is associated with the priesthood. Virtually all tutors are hired by the priests and almost all schooling takes place in the temples. All students are male and they work from sunrise to sunset on their studies. This schooling is practical not theoretical. The complex grammar rules are studied and they practice writing. There are no studies into the intricacies of man, no philosophical disciplines and no theoretical sciences. The priests do not believe in change, being fatalistic by nature, so they do not permit any sort of exploratory disciplines. Students who are successful are praised. Students who fail are punished with lashes.

### Soldiers

Soldiers are an important part of Meadow Shemite society, part of their cultural identity. Called *asshuri*, the soldiers are proud defenders of their city-states and their culture. They are part of the warrior elite. Soldiers who excel at leadership often are granted estates and an opportunity to join the social elite, the aristocracy. Many soldiers can afford limited schooling in the temples.

## MIDDLE CLASS

The middle classes of Shem are comprised of merchants, traders, artisans and farmers, in that order of precedence.

### Merchants & Traders

Trade is the life-blood of Shem. Without growth of commerce, which requires initiative, imagination, cunning, diplomacy and luck, individual wealth cannot be earned. Successful traders put ranks in Appraise, Diplomacy, Bluff, Gather Information, Sense Motive and Profession (trader). Feats to enhance these skills are often taken by Shemite traders. Commerce



is seen as an individual effort in Shem, so they have not gathered into guilds such as might be found in Aquilonia or the other Hyborian nations of the north.

Merchants are known as the *dam-gar*. Some are employees of the temples, hired to negotiate trade for the priests as specialists. Others are entrepreneurial in nature and engage in the buying and selling of surplus for their own enrichment. They work in the *karum* of a given city-state, the 'harbour' where trade is handled. In addition to handling trade, the *dam-gar* also handle loans, sometimes as a state-appointed official and sometimes on their own. Dealing in trade and finance is risky in Shem. In times of recession, a temple can legally declare all debts cancelled, thus ruining many creditor *dam-gar*.

Perceptive players will no doubt recognise that there is considerable wealth to be made hauling cargo from one place to another. If the players wish to engage in long term play as merchants, Games Masters may find the following rules helpful:

1. A merchant character can buy a cargo (see page 11) for 100% of its local value. If he makes a Diplomacy skill check (DC 15) he can decrease this initial cost by 10%. For every five points by which he surpasses the DC, subtract an additional 10%.
2. A merchant character may sell a cargo for its full value, but it takes 30 days to find a buyer. The character may reduce this time by making a Diplomacy skill check (DC 15). Subtract the amount by which the skill check exceeded the DC from the total number of days spent selling the cargo, with a minimum of 15 days spent.

### Artisans

The Shemites have a class of artisans who primarily work for the temples. Most art in Shem is used to honour the nobility, the priesthood and the gods. Artisans often work in stone as sculptors. Statues, engravings, embossments and cylinder seals are common forms of art. Statues are often of rulers and gods. Shemite cities have schools of art run by the temples to train its artisans. The artisan class also includes smiths. Shemite smiths know and use almost all known techniques of forging and casting, including the complicated lost-wax method.

### Farmers

Unlike in Nemedia or Aquilonia, most farmers in Shem farm their own lands instead of some lord's manor lands. Successful farmers have lasting endurance, physical strength, good health, excellent plans and fair

luck. Those who manage to plant a surplus can loan that surplus to those farmers who fail to harvest enough to feed themselves and keep enough seed for next year's planting. Those who borrow this harvest hope to reap enough next harvest to repay those loans. Those who cannot repay their debts often have to give their lands to the lender or work for the lender. Farmers who surrender their lands to another often doom their descendants to be little more than sharecroppers, working on the farms of successful land-owners to survive.

Dependant upon irrigation from shadufs, canals, channels and reservoirs, Shemite farms grow barley, wheat, sesame, turnips, dates, onions, garlic, lintels, lettuce, mustard and leeks by flooding their fields, then draining the water. Oxen stomp the ground after the draining to kill weeds. The farmers then drag the field with their tools, savage implements that look like pickaxes. When the field is dry, the farmers plough and harrow the fields. Harvest is during the dry season. The farmers work in three-man teams – a reaper, a binder and a sheaf arranger. Threshing wagons separated the cereal heads from the stalks and threshing sleds free the grain. After the grain is freed, the combination of grain and chaff is winnowed.

Farmers also herd cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and oxen. Donkeys are a primary transport animal and oxen are used as beasts of burden.

## LOWER CLASSES

Nearly 50% of western Shem is comprised of slaves and servants, the lower classes of their society.

### Servants & Slaves

The Shemites are well-known as slavers, roving the Black Coast in slave ships, trading and raiding for 'human trade goods' to sell on the block in Shem. Virtually all Shemite cities and markets have a slave block. Dancing girls, servants, labourers, gladiators, eunuchs and pleasure girls are common. Hyborian women dread slavery in Shem, where the depraved desires of the decadent Shemites shame and humiliate them. The Shemites themselves are also sometimes taken as slaves – the founders of Gazal in the deserts of the Black Kingdoms used Shemite slaves. Also, the Black Corsairs often raid the coasts of Shem for plunder and slaves.

The Shemites justify slavery by claiming their gods have given them victory over an obviously inferior people. Children who disobey their parents risk being sold into slavery. A Shemite in debt can often settle that debt by selling his children and his wife into slavery for specified period of time. He can even sell himself into slavery to settle his debt. Other slaves are those captured in war or dispossessed farmers. Of these, if the slave is Shemite, the slavery term is temporary; if the slave is from



outside Shem, he is treated forever as a slave – or, worse, no different than a domesticated animal. Most slaves come to the cities via the nomads. Among the Pelishtim, most slaves can free themselves through service, usually in three years.

Slaves often work on the shadufs, canals, dykes and reservoirs, continually removing silt and performing various repairs to make sure the meadowlands produce enough agriculture. In addition to agricultural labour, slaves also practice artisan crafts. Slaves also build fortifications, temples, palaces and houses. Slave women often work as weavers, pressers, millers and even porters. In most of the larger cities of western Shem, the slaves make up the majority of the population and are responsible for every bit of manual labour. If not used as labourers or domestic servants, the slaves are used as concubines. Slaves owned by private citizens usually perform domestic chores. Masters of slaves are free to punish slaves however they wish. Cutting off an ear is a common punishment for slaves who try to escape. Slaves can hold property, borrow money, marry free citizens, business transactions and buy their own freedom.

### Social Mobility

Social mobility is not all that difficult in Shem when compared to the social structure of Aquilonia, Stygia or Vendhya. Wealth can move one up the ladder fairly easily – but acquiring that wealth is rarely a simple road to undertake. Cunning slaves can accumulate wealth and purchase their freedom. Successful merchants may buy an education at the temple and become a priest or they may buy estates and, in managing those estates, be made into a government functionary, earning them a place in the aristocracy. Soldiers who are successful may be granted great estates and be able to join the aristocracy.

## SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE NOMADIC SHEMITES

The nomads do not have the clear cut social organisation as the urban Shemites have. Desert survival requires an almost equality among all men and all women. A nomad tribe is a collection of clans. A clan is a collection of families. There are over a hundred tribes with up to a thousand members. Some few number up to 20,000 members (such as the Zuagir).

Precedence is a serious matter among the Shemite nomads. At the top of a clan's hierarchy is the sheikh. One's wealth also adds into the equation. The wealthiest families have the

most in terms of animals, wives and retainers. In addition, the main product of the tribes adds to overall position among the clans and tribes. Camel breeders are considered the noblest of the tribes, occupying the largest territories. Sheep and goat breeders are lower in rank, followed by cattle breeding nomads. The marsh nomads of Pelishtia are unique in that they have adapted to the swamps around the rivers of western Shem, herding and breeding water buffaloes.

The bottom of the social scale are the tinkers and trackers who live as separate families attached to other tribes. They mend pots, make saddles and act as entertainers. These attached families are often non-Shemite, but are foreigners who have adapted to live with the Shemite nomads. Most often they are Iranistani, Vendhyan, Turanian or Kothic.

### PRECEDENCE

Position and status is important among the nomads. Known as station or precedence, everyone has a social ranking based upon Reputation and occupation. Respect must be given to anyone with a higher level of precedence by those of lower levels of precedence. A young warrior must defer to an older warrior; a woman must defer to a man; an experienced desert raider must defer to a sheikh. A sheep herder must give deference to a camel herder. Among these desert barbarians, ignoring precedence can get one's skull split open, so only rarely is precedence ignored. Nomad characters (regardless of whether or not they have the nomad class) who have precedence over another nomad or group of nomads gains a +4 bonus to Charisma-based skills when speaking to the other nomad(s). Non-nomads generally are not permitted precedence over other nomads, although guests are always treated with respectful honour.

### SHEIKH

Sheikhs are usually the eldest son of a former sheikh, although being the son of a sheikh is no guarantee of power. Some tribes have elected sheikhs, chosen by a council of elders from noble families. In the desert, one cannot be weak or dishonourable. His job is to ensure that no tribe member goes hungry or cold unless all of them are going hungry and cold. He does not have absolute power, although his influence is considerable. He is limited by custom, honour, precedent and the advice of the council of elders. Nomad leaders must also watch their Reputation and strive to increase it, often by generously sharing their wealth. Leaders who lose Reputation without avenging that loss are often deposed. Many sheikhs are nomad/noble multiclassed characters such as the Sovereign concept presented in *Conan: Hyboria's Fiercest*. A sheikh would do well to put ranks into Diplomacy and Intimidate in order to influence his tribe better.



Negotiator and Persuasive are appropriate feats for sheikhs. If the sheikh does multiclass into the noble class, he should choose social abilities that will help him in a nomadic setting, such as Ally, Refuge and Reputation.

## PATRIARCH

The patriarch is to the family what the sheikh is to the clan. He is in charge of three generations of relatives and is responsible for all individual members in matters of honour. The eldest male is accepted as the ruler of any given family.

## COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The council of elders is an advising body made up of the oldest members of a tribe or clan. They are usually around 40 years old.

## THE SHEMITE CALENDAR

The beginning of the month in the Shemite calendar is determined by the priests of the town, who observe the young crescent moon at sunset after the New Moon. If weather inhibits the observation of the crescent, the Shemites usually begin the new month anyway after 30 days, but otherwise the Shemites wait until a religious authority declares the new month. The new year begins with the first visible crescent after the new moon following the Vernal Equinox. A 'full' month has 30 days. A 'hollow' month has 29 days in it. Their calendar also operates on a 19-year cycle, and six times during that cycle the priests added Addaru II as an intercalary full month to fix the error between lunar years and solar years, but never on the 17<sup>th</sup> year. Addaru II was usually added in years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14 and 19. Every 17<sup>th</sup> year in the cycle, a hollow Ululu II month is added right after Ululu I instead of an Addaru II. Every 342 years (18 cycles) an extra day is added in front of Addaru II to keep the lunar calendar in line with the solar calendar.

The years are named whenever some royal or notable exploit or event happens, such as 'The Year the Harbour of Bêcharadur Was Destroyed'. Until the naming, a year is described as the 'Year Following the Year the Temple of Eruk Was Built', or whatever event the prior year was named for.

## Shemite Calendar

Month	Appellation	Season	Days	Notes
Nisannu	The First	Spring	Full	Vernal Equinox
Aiyaru	Procession	Spring	Hollow	
Simannu	Brickmaking	Spring	Full	
Du'uzu	Tammuz	Summer	Hollow	Summer Solstice
Abu	Torches	Summer	Full	
Ululu	Purification	Summer	Hollow	
Tashritu	Beginnings	Autumn	Full	Autumnal Equinox
Arakhsamna	Eighth	Autumn	Hollow	
Kislimu		Autumn	Full	
Tebetu	Violent Rains	Winter	Hollow	Winter Solstice
Shabatu	Rain	Winter	Full	
Addaru	Threshing	Winter	Hollow	

The day is divided into six day-time hours and six night-time hours.

**Month:** This is the name the Shemites have given to this month.

**Appellation:** This is what the month is usually known as, such as Addaru, the Month of Threshing.

**Season:** This column indicates whether the month is in the spring, summer, autumn or winter.

**Days:** If a month is full, it has 30 days. If a month is hollow, it has 29 days.

## THE LABOUR CALENDAR

To add a bit of verisimilitude to your Shemite campaign, you can add labourer activities going on around the activities of the Player Characters. To understand the activities of the labouring order, a description of Shemite farming techniques needs to be shared. Early in Shem's history, when the Sons of Shem began to settle down and create the foundations of civilisation, the technique used for preparing farmland was the 'slash and burn' technique. A Shemite family or group of families moved into an area and just set fire to the forest and burned out a clearing. These people then planted and farmed for several years, planting the same crops in the same land year after year and finally leaving for newer pastures when the soil became exhausted of nutrients. This system eventually gave way to the two-field system of farming, wherein one part of the land was cultivated and the other part lay fallow for a year.

**Flooding:** Shemites flood their fields to prepare them for ploughing. The flooding leached the soil to remove salts and stabilise the water levels of the irrigation canals by relieving pressure in the various dikes because the other fields hold



## Labour Calendar Table

Month	Season	Field 1	Field 2
Nisannu	Spring	Flooding	Irrigation and Third Survey
Aiyaru	Spring	Introduction of Oxen	Harvest
Simannu	Spring	Survey	Thresh, winnow, dry and store
Du'uzu	Summer	Ploughing	Thresh, winnow, dry and store
Abu	Summer	Harrowing	Fallow
Ululu	Summer	Harrowing	Fallow
Tashritu	Autumn	Harrowing	Fallow
Arakhsamna	Autumn	Sowing	Fallow
Kislimu	Autumn	Sowing	Fallow
Tebet	Winter	First seedlings appear; irrigation	Fallow
Shabatu	Winter	Second Survey	Fallow
Addaru	Winter	Irrigation; field 1 becomes field 2	Fallow; field 2 becomes field 1

maturing crops. The flooding is completed by the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> month. This work is performed by slaves or hired workers.

**Introduction of Oxen:** After the fields are flooded but before they are drained, oxen with leather leggings soften the ground, crush weeds and reeds and fertilise the soil.

**Survey:** The priests, before the fields are drained, survey and record the area that has been prepared to be sure it is ready. If given the go-ahead, the land is given over to a manager and a work foreman.

**Ploughing:** In the fourth month, after the fields have been drained, the work foreman oversees the ploughing of the field. Ploughing is done by a three-man team of specialist cultivators, one or more pairs of oxen and a cumbersome plough. One man guides the oxen while the other two men weigh down the beam of the plough.

**Harrowing:** After the ploughing, the ground is harrowed, overseen by the same foreman who oversaw the ploughing. Harrowing was done to break up the clods of earth even more and would be repeated up to six times if necessary. The harrow is a primitive toothed tool. Three man specialist teams are also used with the oxen and the implement in harrowing just as in ploughing. This stage often lasted until the seventh month.

**Sowing:** In the seventh or eighth months of the year, the specialist cultivator teams sowed the crops. Both seed-drilling and broadcast sowing methods are utilised by the Shemites.

**First Seedlings Appear:** When the crops begin to appear, the farmers perform a ritual supposed to drive away mice and small birds.

**Second Survey:** The priests arrive after the sowing to complete a second survey. They record the area of each field by splitting them up into conceptual rectangles and triangles. They also recorded the name of the farm manager along with the field annotations.

**Irrigation:** The crops are irrigated.

**Third Survey:** The priests survey the standing crops to make an estimate of the harvest.

**Harvest:** The grains and crops are harvested by specialist cultivators. Harvesting is done in three man teams. One man cuts the grain, one man ties the sheaves, and one man organises the sheaves.

**Thresh, winnow, dry, and store:** Threshing and winnowing separate the individual grains from the ear, making chaff and straw to mix with the fodder. This involves a leather thong, a flail, a hand staff and beater and it does require an immense amount of pure physical labour. The grain is thrown on a winnowing sheet, allowing the wind or a winnowing fan to blow chaff and straw off the grain. Sieved and stored, grain lasts much longer than flour and is the preferred method of keeping grain. Peas and beans are thoroughly dried and stored. A rite for sheaves are done daily during this period.

**Fallow:** After the harvesting, the field is left to lie fallow. Nomads are usually permitted to graze their herds on these lands during this time, allowing the nomads a place to camp for the summer near water and allowing the farmer to hear news from other areas. Further, the nomadic herds effectively weed and fertilise the fields during this otherwise low-maintenance period.



# Shemite Sub-Races

**SHEMITE CHARACTERS HAVE** Shemite traits as detailed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. The core rulebook details a few of the sub-races, the Meadow Shemite and the Pelishtim. Another option is to play one of the Aphaki as seen in the story, *Drums of Tombalku*.

## APHAKI

The ruling caste of Tombalku, the mysterious city beyond the Southern Desert, were originally Shemites but have interbred with and taken on the culture of both the desert tribes and the folk of the southern Black Kingdoms. The Aphaki exist in a constant state of tension with the ordinary citizens of their land, who are closely related to the Suba tribe of the southern Black Kingdoms (and can be treated as Southern Islanders).

**Culture:** The Aphaki culture seems likely to be a curious mixture of Shemite and the Black Kingdoms, though precious little is known of Tombalku and its ways. Certainly its politics are highly factionalised.

**Names:** These seem to be based on traditional Ghanaian names. Examples: (male) Askia, Kordofo, Zehbeh. Suggestions: (male) Ato, Kofi, Kwaku; (female) Abena, Ama, Efua, Kisi.

**Religion:** As descendents of Shem, the Aphaki might revere Shemite gods, but their main god is Jhil.

Other than as follows, they are identical to the Shemites.

- ❖ +1 bonus to all attack and damage rolls when wielding a scimitar. These bonuses replace the usual Shemite bonuses with bows (though Aphaki still gain weapon familiarity with the Shemite bow). The Aphaki favour wild charges and hard scimitar blows, rather than standing off and shooting arrows.
- ❖ Martial Weapon Proficiencies: Scimitar. All Aphaki are proficient with the scimitar.
- ❖ Illiterate. Aphaki begin play without the ability to read and write, unless they choose to spend 2 skill points to gain it.

**Background Skills:** Handle Animal, Ride, Survival.

**Favoured Class:** Nomad or noble.

**Prohibited Classes:** None.

**Automatic Languages:** Tombalku.

**Bonus Languages:** Shemitish, Ghanatan, Tibu, Southern Islander.

## THE CLASSES IN SHEM

Rich or poor, nomad or urbanite, Shemites are renowned as unrepentant liars and tellers of tall tales, thus they tend to have high Bluff scores. Treasures, riches and beautiful things cause the hearts and souls of the Shemites to soar. They live to accumulate wealth and beauty, surrounding themselves with jewellery and lovely slaves. Regardless of their character class, Shemites tend to keep their Appraise scores relatively high.

## SHEMITE BARBARIANS

Shemite barbarians are usually part of a nomad or hillmen tribe, including the infamous Zuagirs. These tribes move from place to place, seeking new watering holes or grazing grounds for their herds. Shemite barbarians tend to keep Spot, Ride and Survival at maximum. They take feats such as Eagle-Eyed, Precise Shot, Mounted Archery and other feats to keep their reputation as keen eyed marksmen and impressive riders. They maintain barbarian codes of honour as discussed on page 6. Players with access to *Conan: Hyboria's Fiercest* will find several multiclass options for Shemite barbarians.

Those belonging to the nomad tribes tend to look upon themselves as proof of the perfection of creation. To these tribesmen, the Sons of Shem are the noblest of all people, with a noble ancestry. Most nomads, regardless of class, can trace his lineage back to the times of Shem. Nomadic Shemites tend to be open-minded and always interested in what is going on around him. Desert survival demands such attention to detail. Listen, Sense Motive, Spot and Search are always going to be important skills for a Shemite nomad, regardless of class. Nomadic Shemites also tend to be suspicious of strangers and will keep a low profile about his own background.



## SHEMITE BORDERERS

Most Shemites are prohibited from taking borderer at 1<sup>st</sup> level, however Meadow Shemites and Pelishtim are not, so this section focuses on these sub-races. Meadow Shemite and Pelishtim borderers are men who live in the wilds of Shem. Many of these Meadow Shemite borderers are little more than highwaymen, ambushing merchant caravans and the like. They are happiest when they are on the run and are openly scornful of those who choose an easier life – such as the life of a merchant. They do nothing half-heartedly, whether it be fighting, loving or looting, everything is done with vigour and without regret. Others are attached to *asshuri* or other military units as skirmishers or scouts.

Shemite borderers, whether Meadow Shemites, Pelishtim or nomadic Shemites who multiclass, usually choose the archery combat style. Their circumstance bonuses to terrain unfortunately do not stack with the favoured terrain bonuses of the borderer. Shemite borderers tend to keep Spot, Ride and Survival at maximum. They take feats such as Eagle-Eyed, Sniper's Eye, Precise Shot, Mounted Archery and other feats to keep their reputation as keen eyed marksmen and impressive riders. Most Shemite borderers have codes of honour. The borderers from the nomad tribes almost certainly maintain a barbaric code of honour. Players with access to *Conan: Hyboria's Fiercest* will find several multiclass options for Shemite borderers.

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## SHEMITE NOMADS

Roaming in their white-robed hordes, nomadic Shemites dwell in the eastern deserts. They raid their western cousins constantly, burning with a fierce hatred for their civilised kin. Many consider the cities, towns and villages of Shem to be little more than store houses for things until the nomads want them. Among the desert nomads, the most notorious, the largest and most widely travelled tribe are the Zuagir. These determined riders of the hot sands range from Zamboula to Zamora, fighting savage battles along the eastern edges

of the Hyborian nations, surviving through terrorism and plundering civilised lands. Other tribes include the Azilis. Almost all Shemite nomads have the barbaric code of honour presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Shemite nomads tend to keep Spot, Ride and Survival at maximum. They take feats such as Eagle-Eyed, Precise Shot, Mounted Archery and other feats to keep their reputation as keen eyed marksmen and impressive riders. Players with access to *Conan: Hyboria's Fiercest* will find several multiclass options for Shemite nomads.

Those belonging to the nomad tribes tend to look upon themselves as proof of the perfection of creation. To these tribesmen, the Sons of Shem are the noblest of all people, with a noble ancestry. Most nomads, regardless of class, can trace his lineage back to the times of Shem. Listen, Sense Motive, Spot and Search are always going to be important skills for a Shemite nomad, regardless of class. Nomadic Shemites also tend to be suspicious of strangers and will keep a low profile about his own background.

## SHEMITE NOBLES

Shemite nobles, devoid of compassion or mercy, are inveterate traders. Keen judges of character, Shemite nobles also have high ranks in Sense Motive. Shemite nobles, especially Meadow Shemites, also keep their Diplomacy skill high.

The Meadow Shemite nobles wear loose, floor-length robes with sleeves. The robes are embroidered and made of dyed fabric trimmed with cloth-of-gold. Shemites love to own slaves, but their manners with slave-girls tend to be shameful and humiliating for the slave.

Nomadic Shemite nobles, called sheiks or chiefs, wear white girdled robes with full open sleeves, silken breeches and a flowing headdress banded about the temples with an ornate, embroidered triple circlet of braided camel hair. The amount of embroidery on the clothing indicates the status and wealth of the wearer. These Shemites almost always have a barbaric code of honour as discussed in the core rules of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Shemite nobles are not totalitarian authorities but are almost democratic in their outlook.

Those belonging to the nomad tribes tend to look upon themselves as proof of the perfection of creation. To these tribesmen, the Sons of Shem are the noblest of all people, with a noble ancestry. Most nobles, regardless of class, can trace their lineage back to the times of Shem.

Players with access to *Conan: Hyboria's Finest* will find several multiclass options for Shemite nobles.





## SHEMITE SCHOLARS

Most Shemite scholars are either nomad shamans, city-state priests or Pelishtim wise men. Other Shemite scholars are scribes, accountants or merchants.

The nomad shamans of the east pay homage to Fate, and several of their gods and goddesses are deities of fate and destiny. The sons of Shem do not struggle against fates regarded as inevitable. The Shemites also believe in a just afterlife, a type of resurrection or reincarnation. The souls of evil men, according to the Shemites, are imprisoned in the bodies of apes as punishment for their wickedness. The nomad shamans usually have at

least two levels of nomad in addition to their scholar levels. They generally do not learn Oriental Magic, Necromancy or Summonings.

Equally as fatalistic as the nomads, the dark-haired Shemites of the city-states keep grotesque gods and erotic goddesses. Each city state worships some obscene fertility god or goddess as its patron, trusting that the horrible, squat brass idols actually hold the essence and presence of those gods and goddesses and believing prayers and sacrifices will influence them to bring blessings to man. Angered gods bring dooms, plagues and conquerors. Most of these fertility deities are Earth Mothers of the sort common to agricultural communities, and her subordinate lover gods. In many of these religions, the male consort is killed and reborn each year, coinciding with annual growing and harvest cycles. Many Shemite rituals involve enactments of this sacrifice and rebirth in caricatured, symbolic manners that often include human sacrifice and sexual rituals. Indeed, even coming before these awesome and feared gods, humanity must show humility, often requiring worshippers to approach on their hands and knees in the nude.

Most of these deities are simple in concept with elaborate and curious ceremonies dedicated to their worship. The gods are given copper or brass forms by skilled artisans who capture their obscene, pot-bellied forms with exaggerated sexual features. These idols are believed to be the actual god or goddess in question. The priests of the city-states often have the Ritual Sacrifice feat.

Shemite scholars are also healers of the sick and diviners of the will of the gods. The *Asu* healers prepare herbal remedies and set broken bones. They keep their herbal recipes a complete secret. They maintain maximum ranks in Craft (herbalism) and usually take Skill Focus (Craft (herbalism)) as a feat. *Ashipu* healers are exorcists who use incantations to drive demons (diseases) away from the patient, often driving the demon into swine, sheep or statues, which are then destroyed. Knowledge (religion) and Knowledge (arcane) is important for them. The *Ashipu* healers learn the Summoning sorcery style. *Baru* healers are diviners who can determine what sin or violation caused the creation of the demon that brought about the illness. *Baru* healers practice hepatoscopy, using animal livers to read the intent of the gods. The *baru* healers believe that if they can decipher the signs and portents from the gods, then humans can act wisely when the preordained events come to pass. The *baru* healers also develop occult arts and ritualistic formulas to influence the gods whose decisions determine human fate and to ward off demons. They learn the Divination sorcery style as well as the Counterspells style.



The Pelishtim wise men are steeped in sorcery. Bît-Yakin from Howard's *Jewels of Gwahlur* was a travelled Pelishtim scholar. The scholars of Pelishtia live for hundreds of years and may well possess the secret of eternal youth. Certainly the Pelishtim sorcerers are afforded respect even among the Stygians and Khitans, for they are learned in arcane secrets and wander far in search of knowledge. They strive to learn the Immortality sorcery style from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*. Many of the spells in that style require the Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice and Permanent Sorcery feats, so the Pelishtim usually learn those as early as possible. The Pelishtim accept the ideas of life after death, believing also in ghosts and the undead, knowing that a strong will can allow the dead to return to fulfil unfinished business.

Players with access to *Conan: Hyboria's Finest* will find several multiclass options for Shemite scholars.

## SHEMITE SOLDIERS

Meadow Shemite soldiers are often members of a city-state's *asshuri* and as such are part of the upper class of Shemite society. Each *asshuri* trains in archery, mounted warfare and swordplay. They ride horses supplied by the desert nomads in eastern Shem. In battle, they wear scale hauberks topped with steel caps. Most wield light lances, scimitars and Shemite bows. When they serve as scouts they carry a quiver of 40 arrows. When working as archers or mounted archers each *asshuri* carries a double load of arrows. Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Mounted Archery and Weapon Focus (Shemite bow) are extremely common feats for the *asshuri* to take. They will maximise their Ride skills and take at least five ranks in Handle Animal to earn the synergy bonus to Ride.

Shemite archers, armed with powerful bows, are capable of breaking the thunderous charges of armoured knights on their mighty horses. They can kill horses with their deadly shafts, or pick off the knights from their mounts, heedless of their armour, for every suit has weak points – something the keen eyed Shemites always manage to find with their stinging arrows. Shemite soldiers also maximise Spot if possible. One cannot shoot something (or someone) one cannot see.

Players with access to *Hyboria's Finest* will find several multiclass options for Shemite soldiers. More information about the *asshuri* can be found in later chapters of this book as well as in *Conan: The Free Companies*.

## SHEMITE PIRATE

Pirate is a prohibited class for 1<sup>st</sup> level Shemites, Meadow Shemites and Pelishtim, despite their harbours. For a Shemite to become a pirate, the Shemite must multiclass into it from some other class, just as Bêlit, a Pelishtim, did. Many Shemite and Pelishtim pirates are former Turanian slaves, so the Whip Weary feat (from *Conan: Pirate Isles*) would be appropriate. From there, the former-slaves-turned-pirate could take Heart of Hate, Hunted, Steel's Sacrifice and/or Unfettered (all from *Conan: Pirate Isles*).

## SHEMITE THIEF

The merciless Shemite thieves thrive on their profession. They are renowned as the greatest liars in the world. They love objects of beauty and great value, especially gems and jewellery. This love translates to a racial bonus to Appraise and Bluff. Roleplayers will want to keep these skills high. Likewise, Shemites are known to be keen-eyed, so make sure Spot is maximised. Their Shemite character will want to live up to their fame. To have their Shemite character fail to tell a successful lie or to not know the value of something or fail to see something in the distance would be like playing a Cimmerian who could not climb.

Burglars are most common in Shem. This includes those who steal corpses or belongings from graves. They usually try to avoid people, so they maximise their ranks in Hide and Move Silently. Escape Artist, Listen, Spot and Search are also useful to avoid capture. Open Locks and Disable Device are other skills some feel are needed for a successful career as a burglar but some do not mind just using a weapon to smash through barriers. Feats such as Stealthy and Nimble Fingers are common among the burglars. Penalties for burglary are considerable. If a thief steals from a temple, he is put to death and so is anyone receiving the stolen goods. If a thief steals from a private citizen and is caught, he has to make tenfold restitution or be put to death.

Due to the emphasis on slavery in Shem, many Shemite thieves become kidnappers. Kidnappers usually put maximum skill ranks into Gather Information, Diplomacy, Bluff, Intimidate and Sense Motive. Gather Information is essential to locate likely 'marks' for their trade. Kidnappers must be diplomatic in order to arrange visits with victims and, possibly, to correctly engage the victim for hire or otherwise entrap them. Bluff serves a similar purpose. They must pull off whatever fraud is necessary. Intimidate keeps



the victims in line once the kidnapping is apparent. They must be aware of people attempting to engage their services in order to entrap them or harm them, so Sense Motive is necessary to evade prosecution. Taking ranks in Forgery is also well advised for the career kidnapper, as are ranks in Disguise. Appropriate feats for the professional kidnapper include: Deceitful, Investigator, Negotiator, Persuasive and various Skill Focus feats.

Nomad thieves, like all Shemite nomads, usually have a barbaric code of honour as detailed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, especially if they live with the tribe. Those living in foreign lands sometimes discard their code, although even this is rare. A thief from the nomad tribes will not steal from anyone he has shared food with, even if the consumption is accidental.

Shemite thieves also usually take a bow for their first sneak attack style. Shemites are well regarded as archers, ranking with Bossonians for their skill. This takes advantage of their bonus to attack and damage as well as their free weapon familiarity with the powerful Shemite bow.

Many Shemite thieves are slavers or kidnappers. Retired Shemite thieves often work as fences or merchants. They will take skills and feats appropriate to their role in society. They worship Bel for the most part.

Players with access to *Conan: Hyboria's Fallen* will find several multiclass options for Shemite thieves.

## SHEMITE TEMPTRESS

Raven-haired Shemite temptresses are almost frightening. Acting without doubt and without mercy, these cold mistresses of dark rebellion and smouldering sensuality can lie and cheat better than most. Like Shemite thieves, they almost always retain maximum ranks in Appraise, Spot and Bluff. Shemite temptresses are often gold-diggers, living to accumulate wealth and beauty and surround themselves with jewellery and lovely slaves. Shemites appreciate tall tales and temptresses often play on this by taking ranks in Perform (storytelling).

Most Shemite temptresses are drawn to worship Ishtar above the other gods, although Bel, Preor and Adonis are also popular. Meadow Shemite and Pelishtim temptresses usually have a civilised code of honour and nomadic temptresses almost certainly have a barbaric code of honour (both codes can be found in detail in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*), although some have discarded the codes, living in foreign lands, rebelling against what they feel are restrictive lives lived by women in their homeland.

Players with access to *Conan: Hyboria's Finest* will find several multiclass options for Shemite temptresses.





# The Shemite Military

**THE SHEMITES, DRIVEN** to the west by the Stygians and battling them nearly every step of the way, founded great cities near the rivers, using swampland to insulate themselves as a natural barrier. As the cities expanded, the swamps were drained and slowly vanished. The city-states were insular and, like many other nations and places, more inclined to see their own needs and interests as more important and valuable than the needs and interests of others. The city-states fought over scarce resources primarily, such as land, labour and water, although conflicts for supremacy and sovereignty, especially against Stygia and the Hyborians, also took place. Interestingly, wars are portrayed by the priests as epic conflicts between the patron gods of the battling cities and the soldiers fighting the wars are the chosen warriors of the gods. Thus, heroism is accorded great honour and social prestige. To fight in these epic battles between the gods and earn the resulting glory, the Shemites maintain an impressive military.

The war machine of the Shemites is comprised primarily of professional soldiers, the *asshuri*. To make soldiering more attractive to people, the Shemite society has made them upper class, with benefits befitting their station. Commoners are taught that soldiers are the warriors of the patron god. The *asshuri* are more celebrated than the regular militia but both are well-trained units. Most of the city-states can provide 600 to 700 men in their standing armies of *asshuri*. If cities need more troops than they can provide themselves, they hire *asshuri* from other cities or even mercenary units from other nations.

*'From it seems that all you Shemites do is hole up in your little city-states and venture out once a year to try to conquer your neighbour. It is but a larger version of the clan feuds of my homeland. 'You fight a few battles and then slink back home with nothing gained. And this with 'Koth hungering at your border.'*

John C. Hocking, *Conan and the Emerald Lotus*

## SHEMITE MERCENARIES - ASSHURI

The mercenaries of Shem are considered to be men devoid of compassion or mercy. These cold-blooded killers for hire are inhumanly cruel, fighting with the ferocity and lust of wild beasts. They do not leave fallen foes behind, but kill the wounded and the downed with pitiless intensity. Although some of the Shemitish mercenaries were skilled with swords and spears, their archers were the most in demand. Extremely keen of eye, the Shemites are feared for their deadly archery skills. They are practically born with bows in hand and horses beneath them. Dressed in scale corselets and cylindrical helmets, the sons of Shem are always ready for war.

The *asshuri* are from the Meadow Cities in the western part of Shem. They draw their numbers from the free men of the city with good wages and a tradition of civic service. Also, by entering the ranks of the soldier, the free men become part of the upper class of society. The king of each city supplies his *asshuri* with the best equipment he can afford, as well as military training. A soldier may serve in the *asshuri* for as long as he wishes, though few choose to make a life of it. Most take the training and the equipment, earn their gold, then move on to more lucrative careers as a piece in Shem's merchant empires. They are famous for their ruthlessness in battle as well as for their skill with the bow.

A city-state in Shem can muster approximately 3 to 15 units (with about 200 men per unit) of *asshuri*. Of these, about 50% are assigned to mercenary duty. They can be recalled, but it may take months for them to return from their current assignment.

### Asshuri Company Names

The elite warriors of the meadow Shemites call themselves *asshuri*, and they do not refer to themselves as Shemites. They are members of whatever tribe or region they belong to. They are not Shemite *asshuri*, but the *asshuri* of Nippr or the *asshuri* of Eruk. A company of *asshuri* goes by a name combining both its



city of origin and its captain's name. For example, an *asshuri* company from Eruk under Captain Gabal would be Captain Gabal's Eruk *Asshuri*.

### Joining the *Asshuri*

Any free Shemite man may join the *asshuri* based in his home city during the one week recruiting festival held every spring. Foreigners and outsiders are not welcome among their ranks. For most, joining is as simple as signing their name on a piece of parchment. Staying in, however, will prove considerably more difficult. Recruits receive normal wages and training equipment for the duration of their service.

Each week, the *asshuri* force the recruits to go through tests of archery, horsemanship and sword work. Those who display sufficient progress are allowed to proceed to the next week's training exercises. Those who fail are allowed to pass on, but are placed on probation. Failing three times, or failing twice in a row, causes immediate expulsion.

This training continues for six months. At the end of this training period the recruits must pass one final test. This test typically involves at least one day of hard riding into the meadows and a variety of archery and swordsmanship contests. Those that fail are expelled. Those that pass may serve as *asshuri*.

### Serving as *Asshuri*

The *asshuri* serve countries as trusted mercenary forces. The Shemite companies long ago established a reputation for ruthless professionalism that allows them to get the choicest contracts. They work in garrisons, guard roads and ride patrols. *Asshuri* never serve as labourers; they are part of the upper class. Once a recruit passes his final test he joins his city's *asshuri* company as a full member. He receives a full kit and an assignment with one of the units just returned from a foreign contract, which often needs replacement members. The new *asshuri* is assigned a commanding partner known as a 'wing brother'. The new member must remain in the group for the next year, after which time he may request a transfer to any other unit currently within the city. Shemite *asshuri* do not haze new members – the testing procedure has already proven their worth.

Each *asshuri* must maintain his own personal gear and weapons. Older mercenaries, bored with this duty often offer new recruits 'extra duty' in return for an extra silver a day. They are also responsible for maintaining company equipment and overseeing the work of the slaves as they do camp work, such as cleaning, cooking, digging latrines and caring for the horses.

*Asshuri* do not mix with the locals. Instead, they live in segregated sections of whatever fortification is nearest to their assigned tasks. They have their own cooks, servants and even camp followers.

The *asshuri* give respect to a man based on the number of enemies he kills in battle. A man with ten kills receives a sword with an iron hawk on the pommel from his commander. One with a bronze hawk is given to a man with 20 kills. A man with 100 kills receives a blade with a gold hawk pommel. An 'iron man' can expect anyone who is not of his calibre to treat his word as final in all matters. Similarly, a bronze man can overrule an iron man, and a gold man can overrule either. This influence is mostly limited to interpersonal matters. However, even officers pause and listen when the gold men speak.

*Asshuri* not actively in battle still practice and drill, much more so than the armies of other nations. They must always be at their fighting best, so they are sent on practice campaigns, often just to try out tactics on new types of terrain, in order to remain efficient, fearless and impressive.

After serving in the *asshuri* for five years a soldier may request a discharge from the company. If the company's rotation places it in the home city, the captain cannot reasonably refuse the request. However, any request for discharge made while on foreign duty may require justification or even a pay off equal to the cost of hiring a trained mercenary for the remaining duration in the contract.

### Kit

An *asshuri* recruit wears a leather jerkin topped with a steel cap and wields a light lance and a scimitar. Any other equipment he might need he may borrow from the company until he completes his training. If he fails, he may keep the lot as payment for his time and service.

Once an *asshuri* graduates from recruit to full member he receives a scale hauberk, Shemite bow and a warhorse for his own use. Once per year he may request a replacement for any of this equipment, including his light lance or scimitar. When he goes on patrol or into battle the company issues him 80 arrows, which they do not expect returned.

Each *asshuri* receives seven silver a day for his service. The company provides his room and board in foreign countries. *Asshuri* serving local duty may store their belongings in the central barracks and often receive meal and lodging chits redeemable at any of the local inns.



Conan gritted his teeth. The Shemite was every measure a gold hawk swordsman. He had a maddening knack for countering every brutal blow that Conan struck. The *asshuri's* precise cuts and thrusts showed mastery of a style that prolonged combat and fatigued one's forearm: the attacks concentrated on Conan's scimitar, not Conan himself. The Cimmerian could have fought in this manner until sunset without growing weary. Of course, the Cimmerian had other concerns, namely the other mounted warrior, who was closing in. The beleaguered barbarian changed his tactics and began to back toward the supine Shemite, who lay unmoving.

The *asshuri* swordsman neither slowed nor pressed his attack. His eyes narrowed in suspicion, but he kept up his dizzying bladework. The longer he fought, the more complex his style became, until even Conan could not follow the endless series of remises, redoublements and ripostes. Conan's scimitar flashed in response, a blur of flickering steel. The Cimmerian's movements were purely instinctive: only his unwavering speed and agility made him a match for the masterly *asshuri*.

Sean A. Moore, *Conan and the Grim Grey God*

## Local Service

Each *asshuri* company always leaves half of its total numbers to garrison their home city. This service, called 'home service' or 'home guard' is a rotating duty performed in one year shifts. When engaged in local service the *asshuri* report to duty at the marshalling ground by dawn. They train daily, send out patrols and guard the city streets as law enforcement for the king. Each soldier serves two six-hour watches; he may take his leisure during the other two.

Tradition dictates that *asshuri* in their home city remain on their best behaviour. They must demonstrate courtesy to the local citizens and patience with foreigners. Young recruits who forget this rule will quickly find themselves taken out by one of the unit's iron or bronze men for a discussion that often results in a few broken bones.

As part of the upper echelon of Shemite society, the *asshuri* do not engage in manual labour. They are charged with taking care of a city's defences though, and usually allocate at least 10% of their foreign earnings into those defences and any projects concerning those defences. Many soldiers who have proven themselves in battle often work with the engineer units to advise or oversee various projects about the defences. Overseers traditionally receive about 10% of a project's cost back in the form of bribes, so oversight can be lucrative if properly managed, making such duties with the engineering units desirable for ambitious soldiers.

## Foreign Service

In order to secure the service of a unit of *asshuri* the petitioner must approach the company's city of origin. The local government will negotiate the contract, then pass it to the *asshuri* for fulfilment. This process can take days, weeks

or even years depending on how many bribes the petitioner pays. Once the government signs the contract, the *asshuri* do their best to meet its conditions without incurring undue losses.

The government has the right to sign any contract involving combat operations, garrison duty, guard duty or patrol duty. *Asshuri* never serve their employers as labourers; an employer suggesting such an insult immediately voids the contract binding the company to its service.

Ostensibly the *asshuri* fall under local jurisdiction when it comes to misdeeds while engaged in foreign duty. However, the *asshuri* look after their own. Any guardsman foolish enough to accuse an *asshuri* of criminal activity, whether it is true or not, will likely find himself hung from the nearest tree. Instead, local magistrates usually approach the captain of the mercenary unit directly, presenting what evidence they can muster. If it proves sufficient the *asshuri* will deal with the offender in accordance with the laws of their home city.

## Order of Battle

*Asshuri* units have the deepest command structure of any existing mercenary group, starting from the organising unit of a single 'wing'. When an *asshuri* joins the unit, he receives a 'wing brother' who holds command over him. In each two pairs (four soldiers), one man, usually an iron man, is designated as the 'hawk leader'. Up to four hawk leaders report to a 'flight leader' who reports to a captain who commands up to 12 flight leaders. Eight soldiers form the 'captain's flight', an elite guard within the unit dedicated to the captain's personal protection.



The captains report to a regional commander. The regional commander reports to the city government and maintains the company's archives, books and logistics. The local government appoints regional commanders.

The *asshuri* are talented cavalry, archers, and swordsmen. Their commanders listen to their employers, but will ignore them if they give ill-advised orders. *Asshuri* fight together as a coherent unit, and have the discipline to obey orders without question. They generally serve as either cavalry or mounted archery units, but sometimes dismount to serve as archers.

It is the responsibility of each soldier to ensure the mission is successful. If an officer falls, his replacement must pick up the reins without breaking stride. Each man knows his place in the chain of command, so that if everyone of a senior level dies the unit continues to function as if it were still well lead.

The *asshuri* do not take prisoners. When they win, they make it their responsibility to kill every member of the opposing army they can.

### The *Asshuri* Code

The *asshuri* follow the following code while working for their city. The company archivist reads this code every morning at dawn.

- ❏ Each *asshuri* is responsible for himself. If he is attacked he is allowed to defend himself. If he is stolen from, he may take back what is his.
- ❏ Each *asshuri* is responsible for his brothers. If his brother is attacked he may defend him. If his brother does wrong he must bear the punishment with him.
- ❏ Each *asshuri* is responsible for the contract. Violations of the contract will not be tolerated. Each violation is punished with one day without water.
- ❏ Each *asshuri* is responsible for his city. The *asshuri* represent their city in all things. They are guests, and must treat their employers as hosts.
- ❏ The *asshuri* are a people unto themselves. If a brother violates the law he will be returned to the city for punishment. His fate does not rest with those who do not share his blood.



## WAR FORMATIONS

Historically, the Meadow Shemites used formations of men armed with daggers and axes. Tightly packed, they lacked mobility. Ahead of the them, the heroes fought individual battles. Later, the Shemites introduced a primitive chariot which became a firing platform for their archers. They also learned that the formations worked better when entirely composed of trained, skilled soldiers. Slowly, the elite *asshuri* were developed. The chariot was improved and became even more mobile and was used more for mobility than as a firing platform. They learned to fight in all forms of weather and terrain and were practised constantly, even if there were no wars imminent. The *asshuri* became a lifestyle and a stratum of society. The ultimate in mobility was then developed – cavalry.

Today, the *asshuri* are among the most capable of armies. They can fight well in virtually any terrain and can mount siege operations in any sort of weather. They can build military pontoon bridges and their engineers can build bridges with vertical sides rapidly so horses can cross steep ravines without



the fear of the skittish animals bolting. *Asshuri* engineers can even divert rivers to deprive cities or fleets of water. They often use this tactic to enter into cities under the wall by walking along empty stream-beds resulting from the diversion. Many Shemite *asshuri* engineers are adjutants (see *Conan: The Free Companies* for the soldier/scholar multiclass option for the adjutant). As *asshuri*, the engineer squads do not actually labour – they oversee the labour of slaves assigned to them by the local government. More information about military engineers and siege engines can be found in *Conan: The Free Companies*.

### Infantry Formations

Using a mix of units in concert is one of the military strengths of the meadow Shemites, although infantry is still their major shock force. Meadow Shemite infantry units march to battle in a four-column formation. When they attack, they form a phalanx, which is a formation of tightly-packed infantry. The infantry is traditionally deployed in a rectangle of eleven-men-wide by six-men-deep, although units as large as 200 men are possible if the tactics of the moment require larger units. The wider side faces the enemy. Each man in the phalanx is armed with a melee weapon and a reach weapon. The particular type of weapon varies slightly from city to city in Shem. Thus the rear ranks of the phalanx can fight over the ranks on the front, giving between two and five fighting ranks at any one time. Armour, including shields, varies from city-state to city-state, depending on what the various kings can afford, but usually only the frontline carry shields, leaving the following ranks two free hands to hold the reach weapons. The right flank is the weakest point of any phalanx as well as its main thrusting side. Often the back rows of a phalanx in Shem are armed with Shemite bows to pepper any oncoming armies before the melee is engaged. The front ranks are essentially armed shield walls to protect the archers.

### Cavalry Formations

A unit of *asshuri* cavalry consists of 200 soldiers mounted on desert warhorses. The Shemites use light cavalry as skirmishers to outflank and disrupt enemy phalanxes. Horses are controlled by leg and heel pressure by the rider. The cavalry usually pins enemy flanks and blocks retreats, thus creating a force the infantry units can drive the enemy against. The cavalry is also used to destroy fleeing infantry units. The flexibility of the cavalry units make them essential for reconnaissance as well as flank support for marching infantry units. Shemites have also perfected the use of mounted archery.

### Chariot Formations

The Shemites also use chariots, although not as the Stygians use them. Shemite chariots are large and heavy, with four wheels, requiring three horses to pull and carrying a crew of four. The crew dismounts when the enemy is engaged, fighting on foot, making the chariot a form of armoured personnel carrier. The chariot quickly carries troops to other locations quickly in attempts to outflank or surprise the opponent.

### Archer Formations

Skilled bowmen are used to pick off officers, priests and kings. Shemite archers, armed with powerful bows, are capable of breaking the thunderous charges of armoured knights on their mighty horses. They can kill horses with their deadly shafts, or pick off the knights from their mounts, heedless of their armour, for every suit has weak points – something the keen eyed Shemites always manage to find with their stinging arrows. Only the Bossonians are regarded as better bowmen and only the Hyrkanians are considered superior horsemen, and both points are hotly contested by the cruel Shemites. Archers are often assembled behind infantry formations or sent across the battlefield to tactical points by chariot or even used as part of light cavalry units. Some cities even have complete archer units protected by shield-bearers holding aloft shields taller than men.

In addition to bowmen, Shemite archer units also include slingers, who can hurl stones and bullets with an amazing amount of force.

### Signals

Trumpets are used by the Shemites to communicate orders. Captains and higher commanders always keep trumpeters nearby.

### Aftermath of War

Wounds sustained in war often become infected because of unsanitary conditions on the battlefield and poor medical care. Army surgeons are not usually scholarly Nemedian healers. Even though many wounds, such as shattered bones, may heal on their own, the wounded soldier may be crippled for life. The Games Master may require any character involved in a major, prolonged combat to make Fortitude saves vs. infection or disease, presuming the character probably sustained at least a few physical wounds. This save is especially appropriate if the character is healed by a person with less than 10 ranks in Heal – or if the Heal check fails, regardless of ranks. Some likely illnesses include blood poisoning



(DC 10), gangrene (DC 14), malaria (DC 15), spotted fever (DC 17), sweating sickness (DC 16), tetanus (DC 14) or yellow fever (DC 14). A complete list of infections and diseases can be found on page 34.

## NOMAD RAIDS

The nomads of Shem are well-known for their raiding ways. Although known for their code of honour, theft of livestock or people is not dishonourable among the nomads. Raiding is actually an important means of income for a nomad tribe, especially in times of drought or other catastrophe for their livestock. To avoid raids, many cities and caravans pay tolls as protection money.

A nomad raid is expected to be swift and profitable. Both great cunning and stealthy guile are shown in virtually all nomad raids – sneak attacks at night are common, as are camel charges in ambush. The point of the raid is to obtain goods, usually trade goods and slaves, especially women and children. Any raided goods become the property of the successful raider. Successful raids also have minimum bloodshed. Most tribes have few members and too many deaths will destroy a tribe or a clan or a family – plus deaths may result in a blood feud.

Leading a successful raid builds up a commander's reputation among the nomads. For characters, this means an increase in Reputation by +2. Leading a raid that involves a lot of deaths involves a loss of Reputation by -1.

Nomads rarely fight head on. They usually fight using guerrilla tactics.

## MOUNTS

### HORSES

Horses and equipment are central to a nomad's success. Their life or death depends on the quality of their horses and equipment. Most nomads and other mounted characters usually have high ranks in Appraise and Animal Handling.

The Shemite horse is famous for its beauty and endurance.

It is used for fast travel and hunting.

Horses require half-grain and half-hay for feed. Grass can be substituted for hay at a ratio of three to one due to the high water content of grass compared to hay, which is dry. Grazing takes a considerable length of time, so horses cannot obtain much



forage while in service, either as a mode of transportation or on a military campaign. A horse takes around 8 minutes to eat a pound of grain from a nosebag (it requires about 12 pounds per day) and about 18 minutes to eat a pound of hay from a feed box (it requires around 12 lb. per day). A horse also requires about two hours of watering per day to get its daily requirement of 8-12 gallons. That same horse requires nearly thirty minutes per pound of green grass if it is grazing. A horse requires about 40 pounds of grass per day, so if a rider expects his horse to forage and graze for its food, it will spend most of the day feeding. If an army or horde required its horses to forage, the cavalry's range would be severely handicapped.

Thus, war commanders and nomad chieftains need to have their routes thoroughly scouted so that camps are established with plenty of available water. If hay can be found along the route (by moving the route through farms), then the packhorses only need to carry grain, extending their range out to ten days. Each additional packhorse per knight increased the range by two days, however most knights can only handle three additional packhorses at most. At best, a nomad prepared to fight at any time has an effective range of about 280 miles, which would take at least 14 days to cover. If a horse is to be kept combat-ready, it cannot be ridden for more than 20 miles per day. Searching for food and water



for a horse counts as a 'getting along in the wild' Survival check, but the character is specifically looking out for horse food as well as human food. For every two points over the DC (usually 10), the character finds either enough food for one human or for one horse. The maximum speed that can be travelled in this way is one-half the horse's overland speed, even if the character making the Survival check is foraging rather than hunting.

Probably the worst logistical part of any sort of large nomad horde involving horses is the waste. Horses produce about four and a half pounds of manure and half a gallon of urine per hundred pounds of body weight per day. A warhorse can conceivably produce 70 lb. of manure per day. Imagine a camp of several hundred horses and the problem of waste removal becomes evident or else health problems on the order of an epidemic will be the result. Even horses kept in cities, towns and other urban areas have to keep up with removal problems of horse waste.

Horses need to be constantly looked after. This takes an hour per horse per day. A Handle Animal skill check is daily made at DC 10 to do this. A horse which has taken damage from forced marching or hustling will also need a Heal check, DC 10, +2 per hour the horse was subjected to a forced march, +5 per hour the horse beyond the first the horse was hustled. Success indicates the animal is at least capable of going on the following day, though it does not in itself heal any damage.

A horse that does not get the attention it needs, whether it be lacking in grooming care, healing or food and water, has a risk of injuring itself the next day. It must make a Fortitude save when first ridden the following day, DC 15, +2 per day without proper care beyond the first. Failure indicates it has become lame and nothing will render it fit for anything other than the stew pot.

### Hooves & Horseshoes

Hooves are the part of the horse subjected to the most punishment. Some peoples, such as the Aquilonians and Nemedians, prefer to shoe their horse's hoofs, others do not. An unshod horse has better balance and climbing abilities, earning a +1 to all Balance and Climb checks. However, if an unshod horse is ridden on hard and unyielding terrain, such as cobblestone roads, mountains and the like, it may only be ridden for eight hours per day without damaging its hooves. Each hour beyond the eighth causes the horse 1d6 nonlethal damage. This is in addition to any damage from forced marches or hustling. Any unshod horse ridden hard or heavily worked for more than 60 out of 90 days will begin to take 1d3 lethal damage per day it is worked beyond that as its hooves will have worn down faster than their natural regrowth can make up for. The horse will need to rest at least 20 days before it can be worked again without damage.

## CAMELS

Camels have a well-deserved reputation for viciousness, stupidity and stubbornness. However, a well-trained camel with a familiar rider is unlikely to show these traits, making it an effective and versatile mount. In the desert, a well-trained camel even has advantages over a horse.

Camels are faster than horses in overland movement through the desert. Although a camel cannot beat a horse at a short distance race, a camel with an experienced rider can easily cover 75 miles a day over desert terrain. This is because they can travel for longer periods through the day without the fatigue and overheating that kills horses and because an experienced rider will carefully make use of the camel's ability to run at sustained high speeds for much of the day. Even an inexperienced rider can get the camel to move 50 miles per day over desert terrain, or 35 miles per day if it is carrying 301-900 lb. of load.

Camels can close their nostrils when sand is in the air and have longer lashes than horses to protect their eyes. Camels can walk for up to ten hours per day without becoming fatigued or injured. Furthermore, if the camel is carrying at most a light load, up to five hours of that daily movement can be hustling, so long as the camel has a chance to rest by spending an hour moving at normal speed after each hour of hustling. Hustling more often than this causes damage to the camel as usual for a mounted animal. A camel carrying a medium or heavy load may only hustle for at most one hour per day without damage.

Another advantage camels have over horses is their ability to travel without water and with minimal food. When water is available, it drinks faster than a horse, sucking up gallons of water in just a few seconds. Over time, a camel's food requirement is similar to a horse's, but the camel can go without any food or water for up to three days without injury or degradation of performance. However, at the end of the three days, it needs the full three days worth of food and water it missed. Some breeds of camel can even go for ten days without food and water, although they do suffer some degradation of performance after day three or four.

Another benefit of the camel is its ability to provide for the nomad. A nomad can survive for months on the milk of a camel and can even slaughter the camel for meat if necessary. Its hair is used for clothing and tents. Its dung is used for fuel. It can even be used to drag a plough. A camel is, without a doubt, a Shemite nomad's greatest investment. Most nomads will care for the needs of their camel before taking care of their own needs.



# Medicine & Health in Shem

**SHEMITE MEDICINE IS** in a horribly primitive state. Neither urban nor nomad Shemites have much in the way of physical theories of disease. Fate and gods determine all, so all disease is a punishment for shameful behaviour, usually caused by a demon. Medicine, therefore, is simply a means to absolve the shame and purify the soul.

## DIET

The Meadow Shemites and Pelishtim eat millet, barley and wheat, along with vegetables such as chick peas, beans, onions, garlic, cucumbers, leeks and lettuce. In Pelishtia, truffles are a special delicacy. Typical meals include some sort of barley meal with onions and beans. It is usually washed down with beer. Fish is often served, as is grilled goat, mutton and pork. Tough and stringy beef is popular in the urban centres if one is wealthy enough to afford it.

The nomads eat an almost monotonous regimen. Usually they eat wheat, barley or rice cereals with a bit of dried fruit. Milk, yoghurt and cheese, because of their herds, are a staple diet for the Shemite nomads. Mutton, or any other kind of meat, is a luxury and is usually only enjoyed during festive periods or when cooking for guests. Guests usually get to eat a meal of rice and meat (usually mutton) cooked with yoghurt and pine nuts. The nomads only eat twice per day – once at breakfast and once again in the evening.

## MEDICINE

**Meadow Shemites:** The big difference between Aquilonian, Nemedian or even Zamorian medicine when compared to Shemite medicine is the basic belief system of the fatalistic Shemites. The Shemites believe the body is attacked by a demon, which was created by sin on the part of the ill person, some violation of the civilised code of honour. The demon becomes trapped and must eat its way out. This is painful for the owner of the body, so the demon must be tricked or persuaded to leave the body. Since the body is being eaten, the Shemite healers try to make the body distasteful to the demon. This is done through medicine. Medicine can help to absolve the black sin.

If the person does not get well or dies, then the person must have offended the gods greatly

and the punishment of the gods was inevitable. In other words, he was doomed or fated to die from the start.

Meadow Shemite and Pelishtim medicines tend to be laxatives, purgatives and diuretics created by *Asu* healers. They maintain complex recipes for their secret salves and miracle medicines. For example, by mixing urine, lime, ash and salt, the Shemite healers can create a concoction that can now be mixed with all sorts of herbs and ingredients, such as milk, turtle shell, cassia, thyme, willow, fig, date or even snakeskin. These are then mixed with wine to make an unguent to be spread over a wound or external illness, or this mixture can be combined with beer to make an oral medicine. These often darksome recipes are kept strictly confidential and it is against the law for a non-physician to even read a medical recipe. The *Asu* also encourage frequent cleansing in water to keep the demons at bay, for they prefer the dingy and dirty. Shemites as a whole tend to be well-groomed and clean because of the efforts of the *Asu* healers. The *Asu* healer can also set broken bones or perform minor surgeries. He usually maintains maximum ranks in Heal and Craft (herbalism) with high ranks in Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather Information, which help him determine an appropriate diagnosis.

A second type of healer is also available, an *Ashipu*, or exorcist, who uses incantations to drive the demon off. Of course, disembodied demons are no fun either, so an *Ashipu* healer places a lamb or pig near the sick person so the demon can enter the animal. The animal is then slaughtered and the demon destroyed. If an animal is not available, then a statue is kept near the diseased individual so that the demon can occupy that. If the demon takes up residence in the statue, the statue is covered in bitumen and buried. He maintains high or maximum ranks in Knowledge (arcane) and Knowledge (religion), with high ranks in Perform (ritual), Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather Information.

The *Baru* is a ritual diviner as well as a healer, using hepatoscopy, or the art of reading omens from animal livers. Healers are thus consulted by kings and priests for their diplomatic or military needs, as well as by commoners for more medical matters. Of course, the patient wanting a reading has to provide the sheep or goat to be slaughtered, so the need must usually be great for the healer to be so consulted. He



maintains high or maximum ranks in Knowledge (arcane), Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (nobility), Knowledge (local) and Sense Motive, with high ranks in Perform (ritual), Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather Information.

Shemite medicine, whether performed by an *Asu*, *Ashipu* or *Baru*, is kept intensely secret and any documents written by the healers are usually cursed so that anyone who is not a healer will have a shortened life span – essentially a demon will enter the body and make him sick.

**Nomadic Shemites:** Shemite nomads, much like the Meadow Shemites, are notoriously fatalistic. This causes some problems in regards to treatment. Many Shemites will not even think to seek out treatment if they believe fate is involved in their illness. Still, the healer is important in the nomadic society. Most often, the treatments are herbal and the nomad healer knows more about the herbs of the deserts, grasslands and oases than any Nemedian scholar.

The nomads also do not have any sort of physical science to help them with cures. Their belief about illness is much like the beliefs of the Meadow Shemites. Demons are actually the culprit of poor health, physical or mental. If a nomad suffers pains, is confronted with sudden fear or otherwise acts contrary to his normal mode, then he goes to the healer to be relieved of the demon that has entered his body. Essentially, if a nomad suffers from Terror (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules on Terror), Corruption, magical effects or disease, he will go to a healer to have the demon exorcised. This belief in demons extends even to the aforementioned herbalism. The reason herbal medicine works is not because it alters a body's physical reactions but because it makes the body taste bad, which, in turn, makes the demon want to leave for a better body.

## DISEASES

When a character is placed at risk of disease, whether from attack, magic, being around an infectious character, or an infected area, he must make an immediate Fortitude saving throw. If he succeeds, the disease has no effect – his immune system fought off the infection. If he fails, he takes damage after an incubation period. Once per day afterward, he must make a successful Fortitude saving throw to avoid repeated damage. Two successful saving throws in a row indicate that he has fought off the disease and recovers, taking no more damage. These Fortitude saving throws can be rolled secretly so that the player does not know whether the disease has taken hold.

### Disease Descriptions

Diseases have various symptoms and are spread through a number of vectors. The characteristics of several typical

diseases are summarised on the *Shemite Diseases* table and defined below.

**Disease:** The name of the disease, or how it is commonly known, throughout Shem.

**Infection:** The disease's method of delivery: ingested, inhaled, via injury or contact. Keep in mind that some injury diseases may be transmitted by as small an injury as a flea bite and that most inhaled diseases can also be ingested (and vice versa).

**Infection DC:** The Difficulty Class for the Fortitude saving throws to prevent infection (if the character has been infected), to prevent each instance of repeated damage, and to recover from the disease.

**Incubation:** The time before damage begins.

**Damage:** The ability damage the character takes after incubation and each day afterward.

**Types of Diseases:** Typical diseases include the following:

**Anthrax:** Anthrax is an acute infectious disease occurring in cattle, sheep, goats and camels. Victims suffer different symptoms depending on how infection occurred. If the infection came from an injury, such as handling infected tissues with a cut, then the infection is a raised and itchy bump that grows into a painless ulcer with a black and dying area in the centre. If the disease was inhaled, then the symptoms resemble the common cold until it progresses to severe breathing problems and shock. If the disease was ingested, then the intestines will inflame and the victim will suffer nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, fever, abdominal pain, blood vomiting and diarrhoea.

**Bilious Fever:** Fever due to a liver disorder. Victims suffer fatigue, vomiting and headache. When damaged, another saving throw must be made or the character falls into a coma and, when damaged again, dies.

**Blood Poisoning:** Bacterial infection from wounds. Victims suffer high fever, chills and shivering, rapid breathing and headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, low blood pressure and possible loss of consciousness.

**Black Plague:** The victim gets the chills, a fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, and then their skin turns black. They shrivel and die right before people's eyes.

**Cholera:** An acute, infectious epidemic that is highly contagious. Victims have severe symptoms of nausea, vomiting, spasms, chills and thirst. It is caught from drinking infected water.

**Diphtheria:** This is a contagious disease of the throat.



## Shemite Diseases

Disease	Infection DC	Incubation	Damage
Anthrax	Inhaled/Injury/Ingested DC 16	1d2 days	1d4 Con <sup>1</sup>
Bilious fever	Ingested 13	1d4+1 days	1d3 Str
Blood poisoning	Injury 10	1 day	1d3 Str
Black plague	Inhaled 16, Contact 18	1d20+2 days	1d4 Dex, 1d6 Con
Cholera	Ingested 17	1d4-1 days	1d4 Dex <sup>2</sup>
Diphtheria	Inhaled 15, Contact 16	1d4+1 days	1d4 Con
Gangrene	Injury 14	1d4 days	1d6 Con
Leprosy	Contact 8	1d12 months	1d6 Con, 1d4 Str, 1d6 Dex, 1d8 Cha
Malaria	Injury 15	1d4 weeks	1d4 Int, 1d4 Con <sup>3</sup>
Measles	Inhaled 12	1 day	1d3 Str
Milk sickness	Ingested 16	1 day	1d4 Con
Shakes	Contact 13	1 day	1d8 Dex
Small pox	Contact 18	12 days <sup>4</sup>	1d4 Dex, 1d3 Int, 1d2 Con <sup>5,6</sup>
Spotted fever	Injury 17	1d8+6 days	1d3 Con, fatigue
Styx fever	Injury DC 12	1d4 days	1d2 Dex and 1d2 Con <sup>1</sup>
Tetanus	Injury 14	1d20+2 days	1d8 Dex <sup>7</sup>
Tuberculosis	Contact 13 <sup>8</sup>	1d6 weeks	1d4 Con <sup>4</sup>
Typhoid fever	Ingested 14	1d3 weeks	1d2 Int, 1d4 Con
Whooping cough	Contact 19	1d4 days	1d2 Con

<sup>1</sup> If damage is sustained, make a second saving throw to avoid 1 point being permanently drained (instead of damaged).

<sup>2</sup> When damaged, character must succeed on another saving throw or 1d4 points of temporary Con is lost in addition.

<sup>3</sup> Occurs when character suffers injury to the brain (Intelligence damage).

<sup>4</sup> There is very little variation in the incubation period. It is nearly always 12 days. Infection results in permanent scarring.

<sup>5</sup> Each time the victim takes 2 or more damage from the disease, he must make another Fortitude save or be permanently blinded.

<sup>6</sup> When damaged, character must succeed on another saving throw or 1 point of damage is permanent drain instead.

<sup>7</sup> Recovery from Tetanus is prolonged. Characters heal 1 point of ability damage per week instead of 1 per day.

<sup>8</sup> Save DC increases by 1 per day of continued contact.

**Gangrene:** Disease that kills tissues around it, resulting in either sweet-smelling or foul-smelling pus-discharges as it eats away at the flesh. Amputation stops the disease.

**Leprosy:** This horrible disease destroys nerve endings, blood vessels, ligaments, skin tissue and even bone, and can cause marked deformations of the extremities, face and voice because the body absorbs the calcium in the bones. These deformations often horrify others. Leprosy is only mildly contagious; transmission usually takes close contact over a prolonged period of time.

**Malaria:** Deadly disease that causes kidney failure, seizures, mental confusion, coma and death. It is transmitted by mosquitoes. This is the Shemite demon Pazuzu's favourite disease and it is born upon the south wind according to Shemite myth. This is probably not far from the truth. Most of the mosquitoes carrying malaria come from the Styx or south of it.

**Measles:** Victims, usually children, suffer fever, eye infections, sore throat, light sensitivity and headache. A rash appears 1d4+6 days after the victim was first exposed, but is contagious almost immediately.

**Milk Sickness:** Also known as puking fever or sloes. This disease comes from the milk from cattle which had eaten poisonous weeds.

**Shakes:** Causes involuntary twitches, tremors and fits.

**Smallpox:** Victim suffers fever, headache, backache, vomiting, marked prostration and even delirium from this contagious disease characterised by fever and blisters.

**Spotted Fever:** Also known as typhus or war fever, this disease is spread through fleas from rodents and from lice and ticks. This disease is especially known for following around wars. Causes stupor, and mortality nears 100% in epidemics.



Victims suffer from fever, headache, chills, and general pains that are followed by a rash on whole body except for the face, palms and soles of the feet. Once you get this disease you are immune to it forever more.

***Styx Fever:*** Carried by infected mosquitoes, humans catch this when bitten. Symptoms include high fever, headache, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and/or paralysis. Failing the save by 10 points results in one of the worse symptoms (coma, paralysis, blindness, etc) as chosen by the Games Master.

***Tetanus:*** Victims suffer stiffness of jaw, abdominal and back muscles, the contraction of facial muscles, fast pulse, fever, sweating, painful muscle spasms near the wound area, and will have difficulty swallowing.

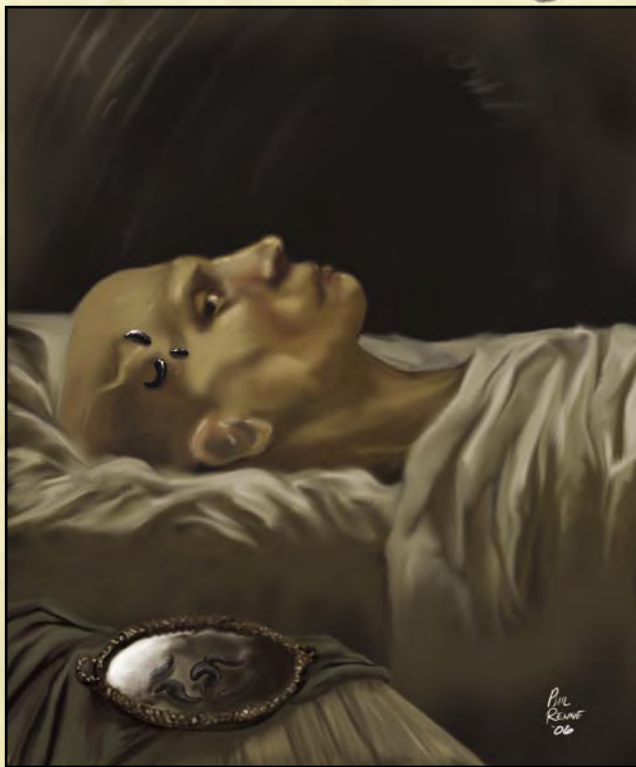
***Tuberculosis:*** Victims suffer prolonged cough, night sweats, unexplained weight loss, loss of appetite, weakness, fever/chills, and occasionally cough up blood. This disease is also called consumption.

***Typhoid Fever:*** Brought on by eating contaminated food handled by a carrier, this life threatening disease causes sustained fever, severe headache, nausea, severe loss of appetite, constipation or sometimes diarrhoea and mental dullness.

***Whooping Cough:*** Whooping cough is an extremely contagious disease marked by severe coughing. It is an upper respiratory infection spread by sneezing and coughing. It has symptoms similar to the common cold but the coughing ends with a whooping sound.

## DIAGNOSIS & HEALING

**Meadow Shemite:** Since Shemites do not consider disease to have physical causes, their healers do not really diagnose illnesses. The healer must first diagnose the violation or sin in order to work out the best means to absolve it and end the illness. This means the healer must be a diplomat. Ranks in Diplomacy, Gather Information and Sense Motive are as important to the healer as the Heal skill, if not more so. Diplomacy, Gather Information and Sense Motive are so important to a patient that if a healer has at least five ranks in all three of those skills, he gains a +2 synergy bonus to his Heal check. Since family notions run strong among the Shemites, family or city violations of ethics might also cause a person to be sick. Once the diagnosis is made by a *Baru* healer, the person is sent to one of the three types of healers



depending on his need. The *Baru* may send the man on a quest, or, if medicine will work to make the body distasteful to a demon, then the patient is sent to an *Asu* healer; if the demon needs to be driven out, then he is sent to an *Ashipu* healer.

**Nomadic Shemite:** Diagnosis among the nomads is pretty much a self-diagnosis. As far as nomadic healers are concerned, the patients are always right. If a nomad tells the healer his arm hurts, the healer believes him and makes the appropriate herbal medicine. If the patient tells him a demon has possessed him, the healer believes him and exorcises it. A nomad healer has maximum ranks in Craft (herbalism), Heal, Diplomacy and Gather Information to achieve his ends. Craft (herbalism) is required because the nomads use many herbal remedies (see *Conan: Hyboria's Fiercest* for a list of herbal remedies). Heal, of course, is necessary to actually help the patient. Diplomacy earns the trust of the patient; trust is so vital to success that the healer gains a +1 synergy bonus to Heal for every 5 ranks of Diplomacy he has. Belief in the healing has as much to do with the healing as the actual physical benefits (if any). Gather Information can be useful in extracting a self-diagnosis from even the most reticent nomad. Skill Focus feats in those three skills are appropriate to the nomad healer, as is Self-Sufficient and Negotiator.



# Shemite Religion

**THE SHEMITES HAVE** an inclination toward what others might characterise as obscene and horrible fertility gods and goddesses. Each city state has one or more as its patron, trusting that horrible, squat brass idols built in honour of those gods and goddesses of fecundity actually hold the essence and presence of those gods and goddesses. Crops grow because a male god mates with a female goddess. When the hot and dry summer arrives and the fields and meadows burn brown, they know the male gods are dying, but when the fields bloom in the autumn, their gods are resurrected. Thus it is in Shemite religions, the male consort is killed and reborn each year, coinciding with annual growing and harvest cycles. Many Shemite rituals involve enactments of this sacrifice and rebirth in caricatured, symbolic manners that often include human sacrifice and sexual rituals. Indeed, even coming before these awesome and feared gods, humanity must show humility, often requiring worshippers to approach on their hands and knees in the nude. Even prayer is handled in a manner of humility, done with the hands clasped across the chest.

More complete information, including information on the priesthood and zikkurats, can be found in *Conan: Faith & Fervour*.

## BORN TO SERVE

The Shemite priesthood of the meadow cities teach that humanity was created to serve the gods, to do the labour not befitting a god to do. They teach that the gods revealed to humanity all the skills and abilities they have and use, that the Shemites have no ability or skill without the gods and no chance at survival without the gods. All change comes about by divine revelation or inspiration, not from humanity's perspiration.

## INHERENT FATALISM OF THE SHEMITES

Shemites are fatalistic as a result of their religious concept of predestination. Shemites believe that when their day to die arrives then they can do nothing to change that outcome. Moreover, the Shemites do not fight against any outcome perceived to be preordained.

As with most religions, Shemite religion attempts to explain the reason for hardship, misfortune and ill-events. Essentially, all suffering is the fault of the people, the result of their sins falling back upon them, sins that essentially summon demons to wreak havoc in their lives. Sin is any act considered displeasing to the gods. The gods are considered to have a positive attitude toward the Shemites in general, but acts of sin force the gods to demonstrate their wrath. They do this by sending forth demons to afflict sinners. If the sin is grave enough, the demons will even torment the sinner's family, home or city by causing disease, plagues, madness, enemy conquerors, infant mortality, environmental disasters or even monsters.

Shemites are taught never to curse the gods when one suffers, but to glorify the gods in hopes of appeasing their displeasure, for the gods' better natures can be appealed to, perhaps the god will give deliverance. The Shemites teach that correct behaviour is better than correct belief, for the gods will smite those who behave in a sinful manner, regardless of their belief. Instead of complaining, Shemites either pray for pity and mercy or they simply accept the suffering the gods have seen fit to send them. All Shemites know that if a god has made a decision, then that decision will stand unless someone knows the correct ritual or says an appealing prayer to appease the god. Humanity is at the mercy of the gods, and if the god has made a decision, that decision will stand – unless the god decides to change its mind.

## RITUALS TO APPEASE THE GODS

The gods of Shem do listen to prayers and they can be swayed by ritual. Indeed, the sons of Shem argue that their very prosperity depends utterly on ceremony and ritual. The gods, after all, control all the events of life and the anger of the gods is likely to manifest as tidal waves, drought, earthquakes, volcanoes and other natural disasters.

Most magic in Shem falls in the category of sympathetic magic, not sorcery. Essentially, magic works because the recipient of the spell or ritual believes the magic works. Also, because the will of the gods is so important to a Shemite, divinatory magic is also practiced. Shemites tend to be



somewhat insecure because one can never fully know a god's intentions, so priests practise fortune-telling to relieve that insecurity, divining the will of the gods through various signs and portents. Sacrifice is an important part of magic to the Shemite. A Shemite will often bring an animal or a slave to a diviner in order to better please the gods and give clearer signs. The sacrifice of one's own first-born child is believed to be especially pleasing to the gods, giving the best in oracular advice and the best hope for atonement.

Although Shemite 'magic' plays a large role in Shemite society, spell use as described in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* is never seen in Shem as a daily event or as a means to modernise the Shemite civilisation. As mentioned elsewhere in this volume, the lawmakers of Shem are unaware of such spells as *mind reading* and *psychometry* and do not use them to solve crimes. Spells are strictly used to influence the gods not to manipulate men.

## GO TO ARALU!

The dead reside in a dark, nebulous land called Aralu, with no real differentiation between a Heaven or Hell. If a Shemite dies, the person is sent to this bleak afterworld, regardless of what the person did in life. Aralu is entered through several portals, such as caverns, tombs and similarly bleak places. Once the path is taken, the ghost of the dead must pass through seven gates, disrobing and disarming as they go, for Aralu must be entered in the nude. Past the seventh gate is the ferryman of the dead. Miserable, the ghosts of the dead wander aimlessly through Aralu. Aralu is ruled by Nergal and Ereskigal, although they, like the other gods, have no real power there beyond the establishing of a few rules, including the forbiddance of weapons and clothing. Even the gods cannot affect the ultimate fate – death. Prayers to the gods only help when one is alive. After death, there is no power in the universe that can help.

Aralu can be entered and exited through caverns, underground rivers, ruins and the like. If a ghost should find one of these exits, the ghost will haunt the living and feed like a vampire off of their relatives. In order to prevent ghosts from wandering too much, the Sons of Shem placate the dead with gifts of beer and food. Many ghosts seek to escape Aralu simply because they are angry with their descendants. Many illnesses are believed to be caused by forgetting dead ancestors and not appeasing their hungers.

Some Shemites believe that after an unspecified time in Aralu, the person may be reincarnated based on their prior lives; the souls of the wicked are imprisoned in the bodies of apes, for example.

## IDOLS

The Shemites worship their gods in the forms of idols. The gods are given copper or brass forms by skilled artisans who capture their obscene, pot-bellied forms with exaggerated sexual characteristics. These idols are often believed to be the actual god or goddess in question.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PATRONAGE

Shemite city-states identify themselves with one god over all others; this god is their patron. While the temple districts of the towns have shrines to many of the gods, usually a town only has one patron. Bel, for example, is the patron of Shumir, just as Pteor is the patron of Pelishtia. These patrons offer both religious and political power. A powerful king is believed to have the support of the patron, a weak one does not. If the people believe the patron god or goddess has withdrawn their support, the people will likewise withdraw their own support.

## SHEMITE ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER GODS

Shemites tend to be fairly tolerant of other gods, accepting other gods into their pantheon with ease. The god they have the most difficult time understanding is Mitra. Due to propinquity with the Hyborian nations, they come into contact with Mitran missionaries and votaries often, but the Hyborian religion virtually always fails to take root among the Shemites. Shemites believe in an annual renewal of the world, the spirit and even their lives, a ritual function that requires both the male and the female, so a religion that boasts only of a male god and no others is confusing to the Shemite. Just as one man alone must stagnate and die with nothing to his legacy, so too must a solitary male god suffer. The Mitran religion creates more questions than answers to the Shemite mind. How can the world be renewed if Mitra does not have access to a womb? Are females as useless in the Hyborian world as they are in the Hyborian cosmos? Further, the revealed nature of the Mitran religion also poses questions for the Shemite. If Mitra set down his rules once and for all, then what good is he now? Does he not have anything to say regarding the present? The laws of Mitra appear to the Shemite as stagnant and unchanging – which is not an accurate representation of life. While the Mitran priest may argue that new understandings of Mitra's laws reflect their power, the Shemite just wonders why Mitra did not make the laws clear enough in the first place so that their can only be one 'understanding'.



## THE GODS OF SHEM

Shemite deities are conceptually simple but their worship can often be quite complex and elaborate. Some of the more prominent gods and goddesses of the decadent sons of Shem are listed below. Many of the gods will have additional names listed parenthetically. Some cities will give the role of one god to another god for their own myths. The name is not all that important to the Shemites since correct behaviour is far more important than correct belief. Only the most well known deities are explored here; additional deities and additional information about these gods and goddesses can be found in *Conan: Faith & Fervour*.

### ANU

#### God of the Night Sky, Kings, Civilisation and Male Power

Worshipped throughout Shem, the night sky-god Anu is the god of the heavens above the winds (the winds are the domain of El-Lil). He is not particularly friendly toward commoners but is considered a friend of royalty. Anu is said to have the form of a bull, a symbol of male power, fury and virility, because the domestication of cattle is significant in the civilising of man, which makes Anu a god of civilisation. Cattle, oxen and bulls are sacred to him, and these are sacrificed to him. As oxen are used to till the earth to bring forth crops, so too is Anu considered a creator-god, tilling the universe to bring forth the gods. His bullish bellowing frightened the heavens into releasing its water, bringing forth rain upon the earth. Anything he can put into words becomes reality in that instant. He reminds the earth of his power via his horns, which make the crescent moon. He created soldiers to punish the wicked and placed them in the skies above to watch the earth; these soldiers are the stars.

Anu is a fearsome and distant god and does not want to be troubled with day-to-day concerns and will send forth his wrath and fury upon those who bother him lightly. He is prayed to in order to bring forth the rains, for his roars still frighten the heavens into releasing water. In some regions, Ishtar, his second consort and his daughter, is called upon to bring forth Anu's seed in the form of rain to fertilise the earth. This is often done with a public sexual ritual between the high priest of Anu and the high priestess of Ishtar. In the east, he is prayed to by the desert tribes to lessen the harshness of the sun, for the rising of his horns in the night sky brings coolness to the hot lands. His first consort, Antu, was replaced by their daughter, Ishtar. Antu and Anu created the demons before he replaced her. Antu is represented by the planet earth as a whole.

### BEL

#### God of Thieves and Commerce

As a god of commerce, Bel is favoured by many Shemites, a people who have a strong commercial aspect to their lives already. Bel's commercial aspect aligns him with boundaries in general, so it is only fitting that he is worshipped in Zamora and Brythunia, as well as in Shem. Because of his association with boundaries, he is often called upon for help with any form of boundary crossing – including the boundary between legal and illegal. He is often shown escorting ghosts from the land of the living to the land of the dead in many myths.

Bel is the patron of Shumir. His primary worship centre, his zikkurat, is in Shumir. He is sometimes identified with El-Lil, replacing that god entirely in the myths told in Shumir. Other myths tell of his many female conquests and the vast number of children, both mortal and immortal, he has sired.

He is typically depicted as an eagle carrying a forked bolt of lightning, hinting that he can steal the powers of the heavens if he so desires, stealing even the powers of the other gods. His worship does not involve animal or human sacrifice.

### DERKETO

#### Goddess of Seduction and Depraved Sexuality

Derketo is a temptress that attempts to win Pteor away from Ishtar. Her rites are among the most orgiastic of Shem's religions, even considering the sensual natures of Ishtar and Adonis' ceremonies. Certain dark ceremonies re-enact her masterful arranging of the rape of Ashnan by El-Lil because Derketo desired to be the goddess of grain and beer. Other ceremonies re-enact the mating of Dagon and Derketo. The exotic techniques taught in the temples of Derketo are extremely intense and can cause Corruption (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules on Corruption). Her sacred prostitutes are considered the embodiment of Derketo herself. She is a sexual predator who takes the vitality of her lovers into herself either as a sacrifice or a means of gratification of herself. She copulates with others, particularly young men, via deceptive guiles or illusions, sheer coercion or through her own personal attributes. She is the patron of Nippur.

### EL-LIL (ENLIL, ASHAR)

#### God of the Wind and Catadysms, Creator of Humanity

El-Lil is the fearsome son of Anu and Ki. As god of the wind, he separates day from night, and he created summer and winter. He shaped humanity from clay and breathed into them the winds of life. He also invented for them the pickaxe and the hoe so they could better serve the gods in place of



Ashnan, whom he loved. The early myths of the Sons of Shem tell of his raping of Ashnan and his banishment by Anu to the underworld. Ashnan fell in love with El-Lil and followed him to the underworld. He raped her at each of the seven gates, posing as the guardsmen of the gates. With each rape she gave birth to another god or monster. One of those offspring is Nergal and another is the moon. He returned to the kingdom of the gods when it was revealed that Derketo, in the guise of Ashnan, had actually seduced him and magically induced the rape(s). Ashnan understood this and became El-Lil's consort and brought him back to the heavens to rule over the winds. The rise and fall of El-Lil to the underworld and back is celebrated at the beginning and ending of the growing season in great parades and sexual morality plays, replacing the stories of Adonis/Pteor and Ishtar in some city-states, or running concurrently with those celebrations as a reinforcement of the gods' roles in shaping mortal events. In most city-states, however, his role has changed with the rise of Ishtar and Adonis in popularity. El-Lil is a god of dooms, the lord of wind-storms, floods and cataclysms, particularly in Pelishtia, Nippr and Eruk.

He is strong, powerful and utterly merciless. He is a favourite god among many units of *asshuri*, who strive to be as merciless as this great god of cataclysms and wind. He is the god who gave kings their positions, the father of Yakin-Ya, the first king of the Pelishtim. This also makes him a god of racial pride. He does not tolerate mixed marriages between the Sons of Shem and outsiders, and any offspring from such unions are thrown into the fires of his altar as abominations. His sacred number is 50. He was once the patron god of Nippr, but, because of his rape of Ashnan, he was supplanted by his true seducer, Derketo. He still has a small zikkurat in the larger temple complex dedicated to Derketo in Nippr. He is still the patron of Eruk. His temple there houses a great gong created from dark sorcery, a gong known as his Voice (see page 46). He is often pictured with the Tablets of Destiny, which gives him power of the fate of man. He also wears a horned crown to symbolise his power.

## GOLDEN PEACOCK

### God of Destruction, Rebellion and Vanity

The Golden Peacock of Sabatea derives from a Shemite god known to the nomads as Azazel. His name among the Meadow Shemites is Melek or Melek Taus. While the other gods gave man buildings and farming implements, the Golden Peacock gave mankind war implements and vanity tools, such as cosmetics. Just as the peacock is beautiful and prideful, so too are those who wear cosmetics and so must the Golden Peacock be, so he takes the form of a peacock. He invented copper smelting from an ore known as Melekite. He is also the founder of Shemite alchemy and is associated



with longevity. He is a being of light, which is why he is immortal. To live forever, one must be beyond time. To be beyond time, one must move at light's speed. At that point, past, future and present are all as one. His light body is multi-hued and streaking, much like a peacock's tail. The point of much of Sabatean alchemy is to change one's body of clay into a body of light in order to achieve godhood and immortality.

The Golden Peacock's colours are black and red. The main religious thrust of the Golden Peacock is that one must always question tradition and dogma. Fixed ideologies are the antithesis of this cult. Even the idea of Fate accepted by most Shemites is questioned and challenged by the Sabateans. Their ability to prod and destroy basic foundations of belief and trust form the background of the Sabatean reputation for interrogation and torture.

He is a tempter god and his followers refuse to follow 'right behaviour' as practised by most Shemites, desert or urban. Most Shemites consider the Golden Peacock to be a fallen god and, possibly, the originator of sin and the demons.





## ISHTAR (BELTIYA), QUEEN OF HEAVEN

### Goddess of Fertility and War

Ishtar is the ivory-bosomed goddess of Koth, Shem, Khauran and the East in general. She is the daughter of Anu, as well as his second consort. She is the Queen of Heaven. She is a goddess of desire and of the arts. As a goddess of the arts, she knows that the greatest art often comes from sorrow and pain, so she often sends such dooms to man in order to bolster the art of the world.

According to the Shemites, Ishtar is the daughter of Anu and the sister of Pteor, her lover. She is the dominant one of the pair, sexually aggressive as befits a fertile war goddess. She is usually depicted as having wings and is symbolised by the lion. She is said to have been birthed full-grown from a stone cracked open by a bolt of green lightning cast by Anu on the site where Asgalun now stands. Anu sends forth rain (his seed) to fertilise the earth at Ishtar's bidding. She rules the cosmos and the stars, the things that govern human behaviour. Her priesthood also believes sexuality also governs human behaviour, so she is also a goddess of sexuality. The Zodiac is her girdle and divination is an important aspect of her religion, practiced in the courts of Shem. Magic, often in the forms of charms or celestial horoscopes, is also worked by her priests and priestesses. Law, in lands watched over by Ishtar, is a form of magic, and the breaking of laws are tantamount to sacrilege. Thus the priests and priestesses of Ishtar work with the kings and queens of Shem, training people to follow the law of their rulers as a religious duty.

Ishtar's statues are approached in the nude. Clothing is tantamount to lying or deceiving in her eyes. Her rites are conducted as languid orgies in which cosmic congress is ensured by mortal enactments of the union of the gods. The priestess was believed to embody Ishtar during certain sensual rituals and bestows her favours on her followers to ensure prosperity and fertility. Sacred prostitutes aid in the rituals. The priests of Ishtar represent her sons and lovers and also aid in the rituals; if a woman was thought to be infertile, the priests would attempt to impregnate her, giving her a divinely-blessed child. If the various rituals of Ishtar are not followed, the worshippers fear that crops will wither and the urge to mate by man or beast will dwindle away. Ishtar's shrines and temples are exotic, lavish and ornate, in the fashion of the East, with bright colourful decorations and objects. Although Ishtar does not ask for human sacrifices, animal sacrifices are often part of her fertility rituals. Her temples include ivory idols, and she is believed to inhabit those idols. The idols are sensuous and are cared for by the priests and priestesses, often dressed and painted daily depending on the ritual needs of the day or season.

## NERGAL

### God of War, Famine and Plagues

Nergal, the god who prowls by night, is the god of the afterworld and the husband of dreaded Ereskigal. He is the husband of the goddess Ereskigal and is the son of El-Lil and Ashnan. He has the power to open passages to the afterworld to allow dead souls to enter his dark realm. He wields a scimitar and a lion-headed mace. He is a warrior god. Certain apocryphal tales discuss a magical talisman known as the Hand of Nergal, which can summon the shadows of Nergal, a type of demon. He is an enemy of Adonis (or Tammuz) in some stories. Some traditions hold he is merely the dark side of Adonis born from Adonis' death.

Nergal became the lord of the afterworld when Ereskigal attempted to punish him for being disrespectful to another god. He pulled her off her throne by her hair and threatened to cut her head off. Aroused, Ereskigal offered to make love to him. He slept with her for seven days and left. Ereskigal appealed to Anu and begged he send her Nergal to be her consort as she rarely asks for favours. Anu complied and made Nergal return to the underworld and marry Ereskigal.

Nergal commands seven demons known as the Sebitti. They help him to kill surplus populations, especially noisy surplus populations of people or animals. Nergal kills with disease. He also commands a demon called Irra, who is a god of disease. Nergal is associated with the noon-time sun, which





can destroy man. He is often pictured as a lion or a lion-headed colossus and is also associated with the planet Mars. He is more feared than worshipped and he has no known shrines or priests.

## PTEOR

### God of Fertility, the Night-Sky and Male Sexual Power

Pteor is the patron god of the Pelishtim and replaces both Adonis and El-Lil in their myths. He is otherwise a minor god in the pantheon, displayed by obscene idols that reflect the 'grossness' of his cult. He is the son of Anu. The Pelishtim live in a fertile region of Shem, a region of herdsmen. Pteor is usually symbolised by a ram or a sheep. A ram's horn symbolises male power. The male goat is often associated with sexual vigour. Pteor is represented as all-wise. The cult of Pteor celebrates sexuality and the phallus; their celebrations and rituals often descended into an orgy. Many of its festivals begin with a public show of nude performers followed by a ritual display of various people engaged in all manner of sex acts, including bestiality. Eventually the audience is invited to join.

In Asgalun, Pteor is a bull-headed god with obscenely exaggerated male characteristics. His temple in Asgalun sits on top of a great seven-storied zikkurat from which his priests read the will of the gods from the stars. The great idol of Pteor in Asgalun has a brazen door in his stomach where a great fire can be built and sacrifices thrown. Vents in his ears release the smoke. In times of crisis children are thrown into the belly of Pteor to win his pleasure.

## PANTHEON OF SHUSHAN

Shushan, although in Shem and largely Shemite in culture, has its own religious myths and gods apart from the rest of Shem. Much of this pantheon may have been imported from Iranistan, or it may have originated in Shushan and moved to Iranistan later. Regardless, Shushan has its own pantheon of gods. Shushan's gods are worshipped in temples featuring an eternal flame. The temple on the Zikkurat of Shushan has an Iranistani design instead of a Shemite one. Righteous people are believed to be able to pass through fire unharmed while the others are scalded. The people of Shushan believe the world will die in a massive conflagration after a rain of monsters fall upon the earth from the heavens; the people will be divided into good and evil, with the evil consigned to a world of molten metal (as opposed to Aralu) for three days, at which time they will be forgiven. The people of Shushan are beginning to understand the doctrine of free-will and are

slowly abandoning the standard Shemite belief in fate. More information on these gods can be found in *Conan: Faith & Fervour*.

## OTHER GODS

There are more Shemite gods and goddesses than can be covered and most of them are minor at best. Some do not even seem to have powers but are simply revered as their anger can still affect men. Many cities in Shem have shrines to these gods but no zikkurats.

## NOMADS & RELIGION

Less intense with their religion than the Meadow Shemites, the nomads still have religious beliefs. Their religion is highly animistic, with spirits and gods lurking in sacred caves, rock formations, oases, dunes and palm groves. To a degree, one can argue that the nomads worship the very stones around them. Even the night is haunted by spirits and angels. Ancestor worship is also common among the nomads. The heavenly triad of the Sun, the Moon and Venus also has importance among the tribes. Most tribes do not name their gods, keeping the spirits around them anonymous, but some worship the same gods as their city-dwelling brethren.

Some spirits are messengers between the gods and mortal man. These messengers are akin to the modern concept of angels. Lightning is the path travelled by these angels as they descend down from heaven to light upon the firmament. Known as serpents of fire, these beings of light, are known as Watchers in some clans.

Demons also exist in nomadic mythology. Disease and ill-luck are brought about by the hairy demons of the desert, the Se'irim (use Black Fiends from *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for statistics). Lurking in the ruins of fallen civilisations, the Se'irim follow the commands of their chief, Azazel. The dark and desolate regions of the Shemite desert are feared by the nomads – often with good reason.

Worship is handled by animal sacrifice, usually by immolation but sometimes animals are put to the knife. A sacrificed animal must not have its bones broken, and its blood is sprinkled around the altar. The altar is usually a rock formation or a pile of stones. Each man performs his own sacrifice; priests simply watch over the affair and interpret the will of the gods if the worshipping nomad does not feel up to the task himself.



# Sorcery & Alchemy

**MAGIC WORKS IN** the world of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Magic is not, however, a replacement for technology or a way to circumvent the existing technology to give the world a more modern edge. Magic does not even work in favour of the characters all the time. Magic is best used as a villainous obstacle. There are no practical day-to-day applications of sorcery in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Thus, the *asshuri* do not have access to *psychometry* spells to help them solve crimes. Judges cannot use *mind-reading* spells as some sort of lie-detector. The kings and law-makers of Shem probably do not even know these spells exist.

Rituals play a large part in daily Shemite life. Most Shemites have at least one rank in Perform (ritual) – they are taught basic home rites to keep the gods placated. However, only priests can do a full rite. If a full rite is wanted by a person, he brings a sacrifice to the temple and asks the priest or priestess to perform it. Most rites involve water, which is used to cleanse away demons that may cause illness; cleanliness is a large part of daily magical life. Flour is also used for most rites. Magic circles are drawn with it and gods are represented by piles of flour around the circle.

The earth-based rituals performed by the priests of Shem are, for the most part, non-magical. Most of the rituals are honorific or ceremonial, not magical, intended to solve immediate difficulties in life. Most of the priests of Shem are not sorcerers and cannot cast real spells; they take the non-sorcerous options for the scholar class, choosing bonus feats in lieu of new sorcery styles and bonus skill points instead of advanced spells. The non-sorcerous versions actually are the more skilled characters. Although the people of Shem believe something supernatural is happening during the rituals, nothing really is. Most divination used by the people of Shem amount to training and insight, much like a modern Tarot card reader. She knows what the cards represent and what the patterns they form mean but she does not cast true sorcery.

## FETISHES

Shemite magic often revolves around physical objects as a focus for magical energy. They provide something for patients to believe in and something for healers and sorcerers to likewise have faith in.

## AMULETS

Amulets are often given by healers to patients for wearing or bearing. To create the amulet, the healer must make a successful Craft (herbalism) check (DC 15) to figure out what herbs belong in the amulet, then he must perform the healing ritual over it (Perform (ritual) (DC 12) or set by opposed Sense Motive if subject has doubts). Creating an amulet gives a healer a +2 circumstance bonus to his Heal skill check or a +1 circumstance bonus to the patient's saving throw, whichever is the most helpful and/or appropriate. Certain gods have rivalries with other gods and having an amulet of a god gives a +1 against whatever the rival god might throw at a person. For example, pregnant women wear amulets of Pazuzu against Lamashtu. Lamashtu prey upon unborn children, so the amulet gives the women a +1 bonus to aid in the protection of the unborn child, be that a saving throw or a skill check or a defence value.

## MAGIC BOWLS

Many Shemite sorcerers and magicians write magical letters on bowls. These bowls are then buried or given to the temple for placement on or near the temple altar by the priests. By performing the correct ritual (Perform (ritual) (DC 18)), the person creating the magic bowl increases the potency of his magic, giving him a +2 to his Magic Attack roll on any one spell intended to be cast that day.

## POPPETS

Poppets are crude bread-people or animals made from a baked mixture of sacred flour and water intended to represent the target of a spell. The poppet must have a magical link

*But ever since he had watched  
half his troop swallowed screaming  
by a black cloud conjured up by a Zuagir  
shaman. Shamtare had no love of sorcery. It  
was unnatural, unmanly, and it turned his  
bones to water.*

John C. Hocking, *Conan and the Emerald Lotus*



cooked into it. After a poppet is baked it must be ritually named. These are used for sympathetic magic and aid in the casting of curses or divinations. The use of a properly prepared poppet (Craft (baking) (DC 5) followed by a Perform (ritual) (DC 12) or set by opposed Sense Motive if subject has doubts) confers a +1 to the Magic Attack roll on any spell from the Curses or Divination sorcery style. Using a poppet for healing gives a healer a +2 circumstance bonus to his Heal skill check or a +1 circumstance bonus to the patient's saving throw, whichever is the most helpful and/or appropriate. Sorcerers may cast spells at a poppet instead of at someone in person.

## STATUES

Doing a spell or skill in front of a statue of an appropriate god or goddess aids in the use of magic and rituals. The statue enhances belief in magic, giving sorcerers who cast a spell in front of a statue of an appropriate god a +1 circumstance bonus to their Magic Attack roll.

Other fetishes used by the Shemites have similar results. These fetishes may include the use of pigs to take away illnesses, holy relics, water from certain places, certain kinds of incense (especially incense from Sabatea), or just about anything else that seems to have a magical aspect to it (the Games Master is the final arbitrator of such things).

## NEW SORCERY SPELLS

This section includes new spells for the existing sorcery styles presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

### CURSES

Sorcerers are feared most of all not for the dark powers with whom they traffic or the strange artefacts they create, but for what they can do to ordinary folk, cursing them in a variety of cruel and horrid ways.

#### New Sorcery Spells

Sorcery Style	Spells	Prerequisites
Curses	Blistering Squall of Evil	Magic attack bonus +5, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i> , <i>warding</i>
	Curse of Solnarus*	<i>Curse of Yizil</i> , Permanent Sorcery
	Dream Plague*	Magic attack bonus +5, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i> , <i>black plague</i>
Weather Witching	Sandstorm	Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, <i>knot wind</i>

\* Spells marked with an asterisk are potentially world-changing ones that are especially likely to have runaway magic effects (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules concerning world-changing magic). The weather witching sorcery style was introduced in *Conan: Pirate Isles*.

Any character who is under the effects of a curse that does not have immediately obvious physical effects may attempt a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 10 + scholar level of the sorcerer who cast the spell) to determine that he is affected by a curse. If he succeeds by at least 20, he can also determine the precise nature of the curse and the name of the sorcerer who cast it.

## BLISTERING SQUALL OF EVIL

**PP Cost:** 6 points

**Components:** V, S, F

**Casting Time:** 1 hour

**Range:** Touch

**Area:** 10' radius circle per scholar level

**Duration:** Discharge, plus 1 minute per scholar level

**Saving Throw:** See below

**Prerequisites:** Magic attack bonus +5, *lesser ill-fortune*, *warding*

**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets DC for target's saving throw

This spell is used to guard certain artefacts or areas. If anyone sets foot inside a preordained circle or opens a cursed book or box, great winds shoot from the centre, a frigid gale of evil from the frigid gulfs of cosmic blackness between the stars. The wind blows at approximately 160 miles per hour, a hurricane force wind. Listen checks are impossible, all characters can hear is the roaring of the wind. All fires are extinguished. Characters in the wind must first make a Fort Save (DC 20) every round or be knocked prone and rolled 1d4×10 feet, taking 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per 10 feet. If that save is made, then the character can move against the wind at half speed. The wind is extremely cold, colder than the arctic gales from the north that blow into the forbidden reaches of Nordheim and it draws heat out of a person. The first round, if another Fortitude save (set by the sorcerer's Magic Attack roll) is failed, the characters in the area of effect start to freeze stiff as ice forms around their bodies; characters take 2d6 points of cold damage per round until they leave the area or end the spell. A successful save halves the damage and permits three-quarters movement.



## CURSE OF SOLNARUS

**PP Cost:** 20 points

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 hour

**Range:** Evil Eye, Touch or Magical Link

**Area:** One city-sized area

**Duration:** Discharge, plus 23 days; residual curse is permanent

**Saving Throw:** None and Fort negates

**Prerequisites:** *Curse of Yizil*, Permanent Sorcery

**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets DC for target's saving throw

This is a dying curse. When the spell is cast, the sorcerer becomes the Focus of the spell. When he dies, the spell takes effect immediately – affecting the sorcerer first. The specific effect of the spell depends upon the terrain around the sorcerer. If the sorcerer is around a bog, he will turn into peat when he dies, instead of bleeding. If the sorcerer is near a volcano, he will spill lava from his innards instead of blood. If the sorcerer is in a desert, he will bleed sand. When the sorcerer falls, then the true curse happens. The area around him, the size of a metropolis, becomes consumed by the terrain. The bog will swallow the land, a volcano will instantly cover the land in a blanket of ash or lava, the desert will send waves of sand over it – in any case, a terrible storm lasting 23 days. Everyone in the area is destroyed.

The residual curse is that anyone coming to the cursed area must make a Fortitude save or pick up the curse themselves. Their innards will, over the course of the next 23 days, become whatever is appropriate for the terrain. If a bog is the terrain, the victim will slowly rot and putrefy inside, turning into peat. If in a desert, the victim will slowly turn to sand. This is a painful process, doing 1 point of permanent Con damage per day. The character dies when he reaches 0 Constitution.

The spell was first cast by Solnarus, the Priest-King of Nithia when the City of Brass fell to Acheron, after a power ritual with his lay priests. It is a Final Curse, one that begins with the death of the caster. When this spell was cast and the Priest-King killed, the city of Nithia was swallowed by the sands and all within died. Those who approach the ruins lose their flesh and their innards transform into sand.

## DREAM PLAGUE

**PP Cost:** 8 points

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 2 rounds

**Range:** Touch, Evil Eye or Magical Link

**Target:** 1 creature

**Duration:** Mortal

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Prerequisites:** Magic attack bonus +8, *lesser ill-fortune*, *black plague*

**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets DC for target's saving throw

The dreams are caused by an ill humour, an infectious vapour passing from one individual to the next. Once unleashed, the epidemic spreads of its own accord, leaving the sleeper's minds open and vulnerable to the direst sort of spectral invasion. It is often deployed as an instrument of revenge. There is but one cure – a sleeping infusion produced from the petals of the silver lotus, described on page 50.

The spell first attacks a single person, who must make a Will save (DC set by sorcerer's Magical Attack roll). The spell causes horrific nightmares. You send a hideous and unsettling phantasmal vision to a specific creature that you name or otherwise specifically designate. The *dream plague* prevents restful sleep and causes 1d10 points of nonlethal damage. The subject is then fatigued (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules on fatigue). Further, the dream plague is contagious. Each person the infected person comes into contact with must make the same saving throw. The plague can quickly get out of hand and have a serious impact on the world if care is not taken.

The difficulty of the save is modified depending how well the sorcerer knows the subject and what sort of magical link to the subject (if any) is possessed.

Knowledge	Magic Attack Roll Modifier
None <sup>1</sup>	–10
Second-hand (you have heard of the subject)	–5
Firsthand (you have met the subject)	+0
Familiar (you know the subject well)	+5

<sup>1</sup>You must have some sort of magical link to a creature you have no knowledge of.

Magical Link	Magic Attack Roll Modifier
Likeness or picture	+2
Possession or garment	+4
Body part, lock of hair, bit of nail, etc.	+10

## WEATHER WITCHING

First introduced in *Conan: Pirate Isles*, the Weather Witching sorcery style controls the weather. Weather forms a constant reminder of man's subservience to nature itself. Crops only grow where the whim of the wind allows; cities come and



go with the sudden clap of thunder and unending rain. A sorcerer who masters the weather can shape nations to his whim, destroy armies and cause the people to bow down before him in proper reverence and awe.

## SANDSTORM

**PP Cost:** Power points gained from *draw forth the soul* + 2

**Components:** V, S, M, XP

**Casting Time:** 1 hour

**Area:** 1 mile/scholar level radius around caster

**Duration:** 2d4–1 hours

**Saving Throw:** See text

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, *knot wind*

Wind speeds are severe (30 to 50 mph) and visibility is cut by three-quarters. The combined effects of sand and wind that accompany this sandstorm reduce visibility ranges by three quarters, imposing a –8 penalty on Spot, Search and Listen checks. Sandstorms make ranged weapon attacks impossible, except for those using siege weapons, which have a –4 penalty on attack rolls. This storm automatically extinguishes candles, torches and similar unprotected flames. They cause protected flames, such as those of lanterns, to dance wildly and have a 50% chance to extinguish these lights. The wind causes characters who fail a Fortitude save (DC 15) to be checked. Checked creatures are unable to move forward against the force of the wind. Flying creatures are blown back 1d6×5 feet. In addition to the wind, sandstorms leave 1d6 inches of sand on the ground afterward.

**Material Component:** There must be a reasonable amount sand in the area for this spell to work. The sand is not consumed.

**Experience Point Cost:** 50 XP per mile radius affected.

## MAGICAL ITEMS

Characters in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* cannot make the items in this section; the knowledge has been lost for centuries and so the specific items must be discovered.

## THE GRIM GREY GOD

The Grim Grey God is a grotesque statue. This statue carved from a dull, silvery pearl twice the size of a man's head, squats toad-like on its pedestal. It is an evil thing, accursed with the power of chaos and anarchy. It dates back to ancient Atlantis. No sorcerer or priest can undo the effects of the forces brought about by this unholy artefact. It is written in the Eleventh Codex of Eibon that 'No one, neither man nor woman, may harm it nor any thing of the world do it injury. And should the world be rid of it, the ancient gods within shall be reborn, and their ancient evil shall again darken the

lands.' Thus, if it is destroyed, then darkness will fall across the lands, a cataclysm of evil unlike any other. The Grim Grey God has six names. Speaking three of its names can awaken the god – but does not control it. Use of all six names grants total power over the god. It can be destroyed if these six names are spoken backwards. Three of the names are recorded in the book, *Acheronian Arcana*, written by none other than Xaltotun. Thoth-Amon owns the half-charred original text and there are no known copies. The priests of Ibis know the other three names.

Awakening and controlling the Grim Grey God is essentially the same as entering into a Greater Demonic Pact, whether one knows the spell or not. A power ritual done in the presence of the awakened and controlled Grim Grey God, even if there are no other participants, is enhanced. The Grim Grey God is treated as 50 participants for the purpose of determining how many Power Points are gained per hour. See *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules on power rituals. The Grim Grey God has a Charisma of 50 (+18) and a base Magic Attack score of +10 for the purposes of calculating Corruption saves for possessing or using the Grim Grey God. A sorcerer using the awakened and controlled Grim Grey God may use the statue's Charisma and Magic Attack scores in place of his own when casting spells, but this forces an immediate Corruption save every time this is done. The Grim Grey God knows all the spells from the Curses, Divination, Necromancy, Prestidigitation, Summonings and Weather Witching sorcery styles and can cast them at the command of the sorcerer controlling it. If uncontrolled, it can cast them at will. Counterspells are ineffective against any spell cast by the Grim Grey God.

## THE PHANTOM SWORD OF ONOTHIMANTOS

This item was once a sword long since broken off near the bronze hilt. The stub of the blade is black with decay and jagged with corrosion. The sword kills souls without killing the body or the mind. One does not strike with the broken blade but with the vanished section of sword – and the victim loses his soul and all moral convictions. Any codes of honour are automatically removed from the character so struck. Any Allegiances are also removed from the character. The victim of the sword's blade may never acquire a code of honour or an Allegiance, save to the demon Votantha. The character also is immune to fear and Terror effects. He is also immune to Corruption as he no longer has a soul to corrupt. The striking of the victim hurts, even though there is no blade, and he takes damage as if struck by a greatsword. The sword is also a bane weapon against the demon Votantha's manifestations (see *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos* for rules concerning bane weapons).



## STONE OF VOTANTHA

In three adjacent mines in the mountains around the Sea of Shartoum green, radioactive ore is mined. The stones radiate heat. When characters are exposed to this radioactive ore, they may be afflicted with radiation sickness. Radiation sickness functions exactly like exposure to any other disease, following the normal rules for diseases. If less than ten minutes in a given day is spent in the presence of this ore, then the character has only to make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or suffer daily damage of 1d4–2 Con (minimum 0 Con damage). The incubation period for such a mild exposure is one day. If a character spends more than ten minutes with the material in a given day, then the character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer daily 1d6–1 Con damage (minimum 0 Con damage). This exposure level has an incubation period of 4d6 hours.

## THE VOICE OF EL-LIL

The Voice of El-Lil is a huge jade-like gong that catches starlight in a silver net. It is the symbol of El-Lil. When struck lightly with a golden hammer, the sound flows outward like a wave, suffocating listeners with its exotic sweetness that is almost orgasmic. It is usually struck by a deaf slave. As it rings, a dancer dancing for the gods gains a +20 circumstance bonus to her Perform (dance) check and effectively casts an *entrance* spell that is not limited by Hit Dice.

The striker of the voice can also strike the gong to create torture. When struck for this effect, the sound is, at first, a low, mellow whisper. The deep sound swiftly grows in intensity. The sound becomes unbearable for anyone within 30 feet, *stunning* all listeners save the deaf (Will save DC 15 negates). The sound is more than just sound – it is a vibration that enters into every nerve, wracking the nerves apart. The sound grows louder and louder until, after three rounds of ringing, one feels that the most desirable thing in the world is complete deafness. At this point, though, even the deaf suffer half of the effects of the gong. The brain-shattering cataclysm of sound echoes even in the soul, so deafness is only a mild respite from the great and horrible voice of the god El-Lil, a voice which is death. There is neither mercy, pity nor weakness in the roar of the gong. Listeners must make a Will save or be unable to take any actions for the

duration of the ringing, due to the extreme pain and suffering to which this spell subjects them. Listeners are also dealt 1d4 nonlethal damage per round from the pain (no save), further stunning the characters to an extent that will last 4d4 rounds after the ringing unless a Will save (DC 20) is made. Further, Terror checks (DC 20) must also be made. After two rounds of ringing, the sound affects everyone out to 60 feet in the same manner. After two more rounds, the sound affects everyone out to 120 feet. The sound can be heard for miles, but listeners at that distance are safe from the magical effects. After four rounds of listening to the torturous effects of the gong (based on when the effect reaches the listeners) listeners must start making Will saves (DC 15) or go insane (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* rules on sanity). Each round thereafter the DC increases cumulatively by +1 until the ringing stops (after 8 rounds).

## ANCIENT TOMES

Most Hyborian Age texts are written on scrolls or stone/clay tablets. However, the sorcerous works of the era are usually described as 'iron-bound', indicating they are actually books in the modern, bound sense. Of course, even this is disputed by scholars, some of whom believe these iron-bound 'books' are merely collections of scrolls kept within iron chests for protection. The Games Master is free to choose whichever interpretation pleases him – it is actually unimportant. That there exist collections of sorcerous knowledge is the important piece of information. Do not be afraid to tie these ancient tomes (or the other magic items listed in this volume and the other sourcebooks for the *Conan the Roleplaying Game* line) into an adventure or campaign.

## THE TOMES OF SABATEA OF THE GOLDEN PEACOCK

These 'evil-reeking' books of black magic, written in envenomed ink, discuss the uses of torture in magic and spellcasting. There are three volumes. A character who studies the *Tomes of Sabatea of the Golden Peacock*, which will take four weeks per volume and require a Decipher Script check as well as a Corruption save, has a chance to discover new knowledge.





## Volume 1: The Tortures of the Golden Peacock

### Decipher Script

Check Result	Benefit
18 or less	No Benefit, but the character becomes Obsessed to take the Tormented Sacrifice feat at the next available opportunity unless he already has it.
19-23	+2 Competence Bonus to all Perform (ritual) checks for the next month.
24-28	The character gains the benefits of the Tormented Sacrifice feat for the next ritual he completes, even if he does not meet the prerequisites. If the character does not have the feat but is Obsessed to obtain it, then he is temporarily relieved of the penalty. If the character already has the feat, he gains 2 PP per hit point drained from the victim up to the character's maximum instead of 1.
29-33	All curses cast by the character for the next month have a +1 bonus to the Magic Attack roll and the victims suffer great pain whenever the curse afflicts them (for example, the victim of <i>lesser ill-fortune</i> suffers pain whenever he has to make an attack roll, a saving throw, an ability check or a skill check).
34+	Character can use the book to cast <i>torment</i> (from <i>Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos</i> ) even if he does not meet the prerequisites (casting time increases to 1 full round) or can learn it if he has an available slot and meets the prerequisites.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 56,000 sp; 5,600 xp each volume; must own a copy of the appropriate *Tome of Sabatea of the Golden Peacock* to copy from.

## Volume 2: The Blood of the Golden Peacock

### Decipher Script

Check Result	Benefit
19 or less	No Benefit, but the character becomes Obsessed to take the Bleed Dry* feat at the next available opportunity unless he already has it.
20-23	Character gains a +2 competence bonus to Intimidate checks for the next month.
24-27	+2 Competence Bonus to all Magic Attack rolls for the next month for all spell cast involving human sacrifice.
28-31	The character gains the benefits of the Bleed Dry feat for the next ritual he completes, even if he does not meet the prerequisites. If the character does not have the feat but is Obsessed to obtain it, then he is temporarily relieved of the penalty. If the character already has the feat, he treats all victims as if they had +20 hit points more than they actually had for his next sacrifice only.
32+	Character can cast <i>draw forth the heart</i> or <i>agonising doom</i> from the book even if he does not meet the prerequisites, but immediately gains a point of Corruption and it takes a full-round action to cast, or can learn either if he has available slots and meets the prerequisites.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 104,000 sp; 10,400 xp each volume; must own a copy of the appropriate *Tome of Sabatea of the Golden Peacock* to copy from.





## Volume 3: The Poisons of the Golden Peacock

### Decipher Script

Check Result	Benefit
21 or less	No Benefit but the character becomes Obsessed to take the Loathsome Weapon feat* at the next available opportunity unless he already has it.
22-27	+4 Competence Bonus to all Craft (herbalism or alchemy) checks for the next month
28-33	The character can increase the potency of any poison concocted in the next month, increasing its save DCs by +2.
34-39	The character can increase the potency of any poison concocted in the next month, increasing its save DCs by +4 and any victim slain by the poison is treated by the sorcerer as if he had ritually sacrificed him as if through the Tormented Sacrifice feat.
40+	Character can cast <i>dread serpent</i> from the book even if he does not meet the prerequisites, but it takes a full-round action to cast, or can learn either if he has available slots and meets the prerequisites.

\*Feat found in *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 159,000 sp; 15,900 xp each volume; must own a copy of the appropriate *Tome of Sabatea of the Golden Peacock* to copy from.

## ENUMA ANU ENLIL

The Enuma Anu Enlil is a collection of clay tablets from antiquity with astrological data on it. These tablets have observations of stars, planets, weather and any other celestial or terrestrial occurrences as might be worthy of note, such as eclipses and earthquakes. These observations span hundreds and hundreds of years. There are over a thousand tablets in this 'book'. They are used to interpret the meaning of various auspicious events and omens and how these things will affect the king and the city-state. In many ways, this text functions as an almanac. Virtually all the main temples have this collection or one similar. Anyone who is not a priest of a Shemite god reading this is subject to a *greater ill-fortune* curse with a Magical Attack bonus of +10.

### The Enuma Anu Enlil

#### Decipher Script

Check Result	Benefit
10 or less	No Benefit, but the character notes what the weather should be like for the next week or so.
11-14	+2 Competence Bonus to all Knowledge (nature) checks for the next month.
15-19	+2 Competence Bonus to all Knowledge (astrology) checks for the next month.
20-24	The next casting of <i>astrological prediction</i> has double its usual bonus.
25+	Character can use the book to cast <i>astrological prediction</i> even if he does not meet the prerequisites (casting time increases to 1 full round) or can learn it if he has an available slot and meets the prerequisites. If he already knows the spell, his next casting of it has triple its usual bonus.

## THE SHUMMA ALU TEXTS

This series of clay tablets discusses omens – the meaning and consequences of everyday things that happen. While the Enuma Anu Enlil relates to cosmic omens, this text is more down-to-earth. According to this text, even spilling a bit of water may be an important even in someone's life. This text advises the reader about the meanings of omens and how to avoid any negative consequences or how to take advantage of auspicious omens. This text can be checked for oneself or for another subject. The benefit applies to whomever the omen is read for. Virtually all the main temples have this collection or one similar. Anyone who is not a priest of a Shemite god reading this is subject to a *greater ill-fortune* curse with a magical attack bonus of +8.



## The Shumma Alu Texts

### Decipher Script

Check Result	Benefit
10 or less	No Benefit.
11-12	Good omen: +1 morale bonus to one saving throw.
13-14	Bad omen: judgement is clouded (-1 to one Spot check).
15-16	Bad omen: ancestry will cause an unjust prejudice against you (-2 to one Charisma check).
17-18	A bad day for travel (one day of overland movement halved).
19-20	Unexpected magical aid from the gods (+2 luck bonus to one Will saving throw).
21-22	A slip at a crucial moment (-2 to one Dex check or Dex-based skill check).
23-24	The path is clear and uneventful (one day of overland movement is doubled).
25-26	A displeased god disrupts affairs in subtle ways (-1 to all rolls today).
27-28	Locals share the same ideals (+2 to one Diplomacy or Gather Information check).
29-30	Potential contagion does not spread (+2 to one Diplomacy or Gather Information check).
31-32	A competitor reaches a goal first (-2 to one opposed check) or a challenge long sought is finally found (+2 to one opposed check); 50% chance of either result.
33-36	The character's reading of omens gives a subject a special insight bonus of +1 to one die roll which will apply to a situation today. The Games Master will tell the subject which situation when the situation arises.
37-40	The character's reading of omens gives a subject a special insight bonus of +2 to one die roll which will apply to a situation within today. The Games Master will tell the subject which situation when the situation arises.
41-45	The character's reading of omens gives a subject a special insight bonus of +3 to one die roll which will apply to a situation within the next week. The Games Master will tell the subject which situation when the situation arises.
46+	The character's reading of omens gives a subject a special insight bonus of +4 to one die roll which will apply to a situation within the next month. The Games Master will tell the subject which situation when the situation arises.

## DRUGS, POISONS AND HERBAL PREPARATIONS

The raw materials for herbal items are generally very tricky to obtain and the final substances are also often difficult and time-consuming to manufacture. Rather than buying the raw ingredients, a herbalist will usually need to search for them himself. It is rare to find unprepared herbs for sale, since anyone who knows which herbs to pick also knows there is far more profit to be had in selling the various extracts and drugs that can be made from them than selling the herb by itself.

Full rules for crafting herbal items can be found in the Skills section in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

## NARCINTHE

Narcinthe is the wine of jasmine petals. It is a heady wine brewed in Samara, a city in Turan west of the Misty Mountains, but brought to Shem for the benefit of its divinations. It is expensive (on the order of 30 sp for one drink) and, if a character can cast spells from the Divination sorcery style, it enhances their abilities by giving them a +1 bonus to some aspect of the spell as deemed appropriate by the Games Master. If a +1 bonus is not helpful or appropriate, the drink may reduce the Power Points needed to cast a divination spell instead. It is an addictive substance for sorcerers. Narcinthe addiction functions much like a disease. Any time a sorcerer imbibes narcinthe, the character must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10) or become addicted. Narcinthe has a satiation period of 2 days, the length of time a single dose remains effective in the character's system. Addiction will proceed like a disease if not satisfied by further doses of the drug. Each day the sorcerer takes 1d4 Dex and 1d4 Wis ability damage unless he succeeds on another Fortitude save. A sorcerer addicted to narcinthe becomes obsessed (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for the Rule of Obsession and its effect on sorcerers).



## SILVER LOTUS

The beautiful silver lotus is only grown in two places in the whole world: at the source of the River Styx and at the Shemite city of Baalur. The vast majority of the fragile silver blossoms grow at the source of the River Styx in volcanic rock. The gardens of Baalur are only able to grow a relatively small amount. The lotus has flamboyant silver petals and downy, grey-green leaves. The petals have a medicinal effect. First, a tea made from the fine petals cures bad dreams, even the *dream plague* (see page 44). Second, if made a bit stronger, it can create a sleeping draught (Will save DC 20 negates). Sleeping creatures are *helpless*. Slapping or wounding awakens an affected creature, but normal noise does not. Awakening a creature is a standard action (an application of the aid another action). To make the dream plague cure, one must have a supply of silver lotus leaves and make a Craft (herbalism) check (DC 10) or a Craft (alchemy) check (DC 12). To make the sleeping draught, one must make a Craft (herbalism) check (DC 22) or a Craft (alchemy) check (DC 18).

**Cost:** 5,000 sp/dose outside of Baalur; 2 sp per dose in the city of Baalur. Seeds and whole plants cannot legally be purchased. Baalur only exports a small quantity of leaves per year.

## ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

Alchemical items are quite similar in nature to herbal preparations, except that they require more extensive tools, usually a fully functional alchemist's laboratory. Full rules for crafting alchemical items can be found in the Skills chapter in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Note that alchemical items marked with an asterisk (\*) can be used in conjunction with the *greater telekinesis* spell.



## DISEASE DUST

Alchemists in the Hyborian Age may not understand the concept of bacteria but they do know how to break diseased matter down to a raw, powder form. This small glass vial or orb is filled with the distillate of an inhaled or contact disease (see page 34 for a list of diseases). When thrown directly at a character or onto the ground, it bursts into a 10-foot by 10-foot area of infection. Characters must make a Fort save (DC based on the type of disease +4) to avoid catching the illness. For example, if a sorcerer throws a vial of anthrax dust at a character, that character must make a Fortitude save against DC 20 to avoid catching anthrax (DC 16 +4).

**Cost:** 1,000 sp. **Raw Materials:** Diseased matter. **Requirements:** Craft (alchemy) 10 ranks.



# Governance & Law

**A CENTRAL REGULATING** power is essential to organise specialised occupations, such as warriors, merchants, farmers and artisans. In Shem, that regulating power lies in the temples and their chosen king. Shemite cities are ruled by kings who govern the armies and the commerce passing through the cities. There is no one King of Shem. Instead, each city-state in Shem has its own king and government, although most of the cities have similar customs and traditions in regards to government and politics. This aids Shem in keeping the city states competitive trade to the benefit of all; thus no city gets left out because it has fallen out of royal favour with a specific king. Likewise, there is no one single Sheikh of Sheikhs, ruler of all the nomad tribes. Each tribe is governed separately, but a shared culture creates marked similarities from tribe to tribe.

## CITY-STATE GOVERNMENT

Shemite city-states are essentially theocracies. Although there is a hereditary aristocracy and a king, the temples are in charge of the city-state. There is no separation between religious and secular power.

The kings of Shem claim a religious and a historical right to rule. Not only are they the representative of their patron god on Earth, they are also the sons of kings, part of a lineage stretching back to the Great Cataclysm. Kingship is hereditary among the Meadow Shemites and Pelishtim. The king is most often from the warrior class, for he must be able to defend the city, enforce the laws, maintain the social order and lead wars. He must also take part in the religious ceremonies of the city-state. Thus he is a warrior and a priest. Many kings of Shem are essentially deified. The wife of the king is a queen, and she is often the high priestess of the city-state, or the personification of a goddess. A king rules often by employing terror. They ruthlessly suppress rebellions through the *asshuri*. They deport rebellious populations from their city-state if needed, making them wander in the desert to die. They even treat the people they conquer brutally. Despite the employment of cruelty and violence, a Shemite king does not have totalitarian power.

The king of a Shemite city-state is advised by a council of elders and by the priests. The aristocracy function as administrators, working for the king. The aristocrats work as scribes and functionaries in the service of the king. The aristocrats are responsible for drafting commoners to work on community projects, collect taxes in the form of a percentage of their crops and to ensure the canals and other methods of irrigation are in constant repair. Further, the aristocrats divide up the grain they collect for the city to give to its soldiers or any others it supports. The aristocrats exempt themselves from physical labour, however, there is no system for sycophants and hangers-on; each aristocrat has a duty to the king, the temple and the city-state.

The priests are charged with maintaining the social status-quo. They tell the commoners their hard labours are necessary because they were created to serve the gods. The priests often sit on the city councils of elders alongside the aristocrats to help advise the king. They help to maintain social order by teaching right belief means nothing, but right behaviour is the key to being blessed by the gods.

## NOMAD TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

The nomad tribes of Shem are essentially republics governed by opinion and tradition. No one can decree sovereign law to the nomads. No one can even enforce the popular opinion. If a clan feels honour bound to act differently than the rest of the tribe decrees, they are allowed to do so.

Honour and revenge is the highest law and the highest government. By placing such importance on honour, the individual nomad is compelled to uphold the name and respect of his family, clan and tribe. The fear of dishonour, not only of self but of family, virtually ensures individual nomads comply with the wishes of the majority. The importance of vengeance allows nomads to pursue individual rights to the death, bringing their entire clan into the conflict, regardless of how small or large the initial slight was. The fear of retribution by friends and relatives causes individual nomads to refrain from rudeness, restraining passionate quarrels. Thus social order among the nomads is maintained.



Still, the tribes maintain an informal chain of command based on a concept of precedence.

The highest rank of precedence are the commanders of the nomads. The Shemite nomads are commanded by *sheiks*, or chiefs, who dwell in large, silk-walled tents hung with gilt-worked tapestries and littered with rich carpets and velvet cushions.

The *sheiks*, or *shaykhs*, are elected by a council of elders from the family of the prior *sheik*. The power does not pass automatically to the eldest son as it would in Nemediā or Aquilonia. The councils of elders chooses from the entire family, a system that often leads to violence between brothers as each tries to win the favour of the elders. Reputation, reputation type and Charisma play a large part in the selection of a *sheik*. The *sheiks* are not dictators; they rule by consensus, negotiation, tradition and, occasionally, arbitration. Nomads have no respect for authority such as would be seen in civilisation; indeed they meet their sheiks on even footing, so long as the proper respect is shown. The nomads are the most democratic of all people during the Hyborian age. The nomads follow only successful leaders and some, such as the Zuagirs, tend to have more faith in foreigners to lead them than in one of their own race. They want loot and they will follow the chief who will lead them to it.

The council of elders determine how water resources are used and distributed. The sheik presides over the council but he is not a supreme authority. However, their position gives them an advantage in swaying councils and tribes. Their expression of opinion, more often than not, became the tribe's de facto opinion, such is the esteem the sheiks are held.

## CITY-STATE ECONOMICS

The Shemite economy is largely a market economy tempered by redistributive temple policies brought about by reciprocal societal obligations. The economy of the Shemite city-states is inextricably bound to the politics of the city-states, for the politics of a city determines how specialised occupations, such as warriors, merchants, farmers and artisans, exist. As the Shemites developed their agriculture, they created a surplus of staple items. If everyone was a farmer, then the surplus would go to waste.

Early on in societal development, the people found out that the surplus could be used to bargain with the Stygians and other races around them, as well as with other rising Shemite city-states. Also, they found a need to defend their surpluses from others, so warriors were needed. However, if



warriors needed to grow their own staples, then they could not specialise in combat – so the surplus was often given to those who volunteered to fight. Slowly a social order developed. If surplus was to be distributed, an agency was needed to handle the distribution. Priests and, ultimately, kings arose to handle the bureaucracy. The temples and kings found they could also distribute goods and food in exchange for other goods and, most importantly, labour.

The elite of Shemite society control the surplus of the society, which allows them to control the specialists, thus sustaining their own power in the city-state. The elite have little actual need of the surplus but they do need to maintain their social standing and their reputation. By redistributing the goods as needed for their society, they maintain both standing and reputation. However, there is still surplus. This surplus is sold and is controlled by supply and demand concerns. A city-state with a plentiful harvest will not pay a lot for grain but a city-state whose fields have suffered will pay a premium. Prices fluctuate frequently and with much variance; a single silver coin can buy 120 quarts of barley in a particularly good agricultural year but only purchase maybe 10 quarts of barley in a horrific year.

Most trade in Shem is with other Shemite cities, approximately 85% of all trade. Fish, grain, oil, slaves, leather and wool are the primary imports and exports between the Shemites. The remaining 15% of trade is comprised of foreign goods, such as fruits, metals, slaves, weapons and spices.



Loans are one of the keystones to trade in Shem. Caravans require substantial backing in the form of supplies, animals, guards and, of course, cargo. Loans are often made in the form of silver, the standard of exchange in Shem. The temples finance most of these transactions although wealthy merchants can also do this but this is risky for any individual merchant. In times of depression, in order to boost the economy, the temples sometimes cancel and nullify all outstanding loans, which often financially ruins individual creditors.

## NOMAD ECONOMICS

Like the Meadow Shemites, the nomads have a redistributive economy handled by the *sheiks* and councils. Those in need are cared for and given what is needed. Wealth is held in the form of jewellery, wives and livestock. They do not own land. The primary standard of trade is the camel, probably the most valuable form of property a nomad will ever own. White camels are particularly prized.

Nomads often sell slaves to the city-states in return for weaponry, grain, camels and other items difficult to manufacture in a nomadic culture and lifestyle.

## SHEMITE HISTORY

The history of Shem begins with the nomadic savages known to the early people of the age as the Sons of Shem. Where they came from and who they were is unknown, but it is known that they appeared to the east of Shem. The existence of zikkurats suggest they used to worship at mountains so many scholars theorise they originated in a mountainous region, or at least in a region within sight of mountains.

The Stygians ravaged and persecuted the Sons of Shem unmercifully, for they were unwashed savages to the Stygians, fit only for slavery and slaughter on their darkened altars of even darker gods. For centuries the Stygians preyed upon them, driving them from the east into the west, through Stygia, which at that time bordered Acheron, not having yet been driven south of the Styx. The Sons of Shem settled in the pastoral meadowlands they found in the west, lands claimed by Stygia at that time. The nomadic Sons of Shem, finding a beautiful climate and plenty of arable land, plenty

of water and plenty of other natural resources, started to settle. The Pelishti tribe was the first to make a settlement. They found the rivers dangerous because of flooding so they set about to change the environment around them with canals. The nomadic people learned agriculture. At first, they gathered what grew naturally in the area. The Pelishti did not take long to learn that seeds dropped on the ground near their storage bins grew during the next season. They started sprinkling seeds to grow crops. Soon they learned to use tools to aid in the sowing of seeds.

Continued persecution by the Stygians and the Acheronians gave the Pelishti tribe a need to build protective walls and create an actual army. Thus were the seeds of civilisation sown. They learned how to store and preserve grain – allowing food to be had even when harvests were poor. The storage of grain and the need for protective enclosures fostered sedentary settlements and then brought about the growth of those permanent residences. As the Pelishti people grew more and more powerful, other tribes of Shem began also to settle. After a few generations, the settled tribesmen became a slightly shorter people than their nomadic cousins but they also had a longer lifespan. With more people being born than dying, the culture began to grow and thus cities developed. This longer lifespan intrigued the Pelishti and their priests and mystics often tried to find out the source of eternal life.

Meanwhile, the Hyborians, burning and pillaging their way between the mighty nations of Acheron and Zamora, settled in the region north of these pastoral lands and forged the land of Koth. The Kothian Escarpment provided a natural border between the Sons of Shem and the Kothians; however, the Kothian Hyborians established relations with the nomads. Slowly, inexorably, the Sons of Shem became more and more civilised from their contact with Stygia and Koth. Those who refused the civilising influences of their neighbours were forced into the east where their lives as nomads continued. These nomads also continued to prey upon and be preyed by the Stygians.

Labour was divided and specialised, and the creation of social orders and stratum were devised to organise the needs of the civilisations. Agricultural surplus created the opportunity for trade which created a further need for an elite stratum in the society to control that trade. Social stratification was born. The artisans became part of a social elite, supported by the surplus of the farmers. The *dam-gar* class was created to make sure the surplus of the farmers was fairly divided up. The early Meadow Shemites realised their fates rested with the harvest and the weather. They believed these things to be supernatural so they needed some way to communicate to the powers controlling these forces. Their basic animistic religion began to give rise to more

*Far to the south dreams the ancient mysterious kingdom of Shem. On its eastern borders wander clans of nomadic savages, already known as the Sons of Shem.*

Robert E. Howard, *The Hyborian Age*



complex forms to communicate to the supernatural powers, gods, to explain history and reality, to maintain and to justify the burgeoning social order. A priestly class was created to organise rituals that pleased the gods.

Shem laboured under the overlords of Stygia, who used the Shemites to plunder their own lands and send streams of wealth to their masters. Stygia was a harsh mistress to the Shemites and when the Kothians decided to war against the mighty serpent of the south, the Shemites were there, bows in hand, to drive back their hated rulers behind the foul River Styx. Still, the Shemites only managed to exchange the yoke of the Stygians for the less galling subjugation by the Kothians. The Kothians, no matter what they tried, were unable to rein in the proud nomad tribes and take them under their firm control.

The concept of kings arose in the cities, which were now becoming city-states. The kings evolved from the military leaders of the temples. Wars over resources such as water and land required warlords who fought in the name of their patron gods. These battles assumed a mythological significance with the patron gods of two warring cities also being at war in the myths. Soon the kings became even more important than the priests.

The Shemites had congress with Argos after the fall of Acheron, as well as with Koth. After a little more than four hundred years of Kothian oppression, the Sons of Shem rose, united, and made themselves an independent nation. The unity was, unfortunately, unsustainable among the proud Shemite kings, all of whom wanted to be the High King. Thus it is today. Shem remains an unstable collection of squabbling city-states and nomadic tribes.

## SHEMITE LAW

Civilisations thrive on laws to maintain public order and justice. The Sons of Shem, whether urban Meadow Shemites and Pelishtim or the nomadic Shemites, also have laws. These laws are almost universally accepted by the various city-states; although there are regional differences the spirit of these laws tends to remain. Tradition is important to the Shemites of all kinds, so their laws tend to be upheld by those in power in order to maintain a sense of continuity and tradition.

### THE LAWS OF THE MEADOW SHEMITES AND PELISHTIM

The kings uphold pre-existing law because much of their power is sustained through

*Nay, the asshuri, as Conan recalled, preferred to rope a man by wrists and ankles to four strong horses and spur the beasts as one to a gallop, popping the captive's bones from their sockets before ripping away the limbs. The victim might howl for a span of time as he bled to death, and that span must seem an eternity to one torn asunder so violently.*

*These Shemites made this savage drawing-and-quartering into a public affair. Women and children attended, that all might see how enemies of the state fared. Conan had once seen men wager on which arm or leg would first be torn off. And men of this region thought Cimmerians barbaric! Conan's people were indeed savages, but they dispatched enemies with sinew and steel, not with decadent tortures that slowly sucked the life from their foes.*

Sean A. Moore, *Conan and the Grim Grey God*

the application of the law and it makes for more tranquil transitions of power. The various city-states of Shem have their own unique codes of law but they do have common themes. The only laws in these cities are the ones enforced by the individual kings. What is against the law in one city-state may well be perfectly legal in the next. The list below is by no means exhaustive. Instead of listing a 'universal' code of law, a list of common elements is provided. Games Masters can then add and subtract from there to create a unique code of law for whatever city-state the Player Characters are in while still retaining the flavour of Shem and its culture.

Shemites generally do not imprison people, but the merciless *asshuri* do keep underground dungeons in case holding someone is necessary. The *asshuri* sometimes act as both judges and executioners if the accused are obviously guilty. Otherwise, officials stand in judgement of the accused.

One aspect of Shemite law always taken into consideration is the wealth and status of an individual involved with the law. The law determines one's status by occupation. Any offence against an upper class member is always punished with much more severity than an offence against one of the lower classes.



**Retaliation:** The principle of ‘an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth’ is common among all Shemite codes of law and is always applied when members of the same social class are involved. However, if a member of a higher social order commits a wrong against a social inferior, a payment in barley or silver is made instead. The amount varies by crime, city and, sometimes, the economics of the city.

**Theft:** Stealing something from one of the temples is considered heinous and results in a death penalty. Burglary against a private citizen requires the thief to pay the citizen back tenfold – or be put to death if the payment is impossible. Fire is a serious concern in the cities. All citizens are expected to help out but if someone is caught looting a burning building that looter is thrown into the fire to burn for abandoning his civic duty. It is the job of the king and his officials to catch thieves. If they cannot catch them, then the officials are responsible for undertaking the fine of the thief. This ensures that public officials do not take their duties lightly.

**Murder:** Murder is punishable by death. The burden of proof lies on the accuser. If he can prove his case, the murderer is killed. If he cannot, the accuser is killed for giving false testimony. Anyone found giving false testimony, especially in regards to a murder case, can be given the death sentence. If a body is found to have been murdered, public officials are responsible for finding a murderer. If a murderer is not found, then the officials have to pay blood-money to the relatives of the deceased. The amount varies depending upon the status and wealth of the deceased and by city-state to city-state. The amount may be paid in silver or barley – or by the personal enslavement of the official to the bereaved family. Again, Shemite officials do not just look the other way if a local Shemite is murdered by Player Characters or anyone else.

**War:** Soldiers, especially the *asshuri*, are expected to do their jobs. If a soldier hires someone to go to war in his stead, that soldier is put to death and the substitute is given his arms, wives, lands and wealth. A deserter also loses his arms, wives, lands and wealth and is put to death when found.

**Construction:** A builder is responsible for whatever they construct. If a building collapses and kills someone, the builder is put to death. If goods are destroyed by the collapse of a building, then the builder must replace the goods and rebuild the building at his own expense.

**Debt Slavery:** Any man may sell his children and wife into slavery for various lengths of time to end his debts. In most city-states a man may even sell himself into slavery to settle a debt. Most slave-debtors are enslaved for three to five years.

**Familial Discipline:** Right familial behaviour is stressed. Striking an older brother can be punished by enslavement. A son striking his father may have his hand cut off. Physically abusing one’s mother can be punished by enslavement. Failing to obey one’s father is punishable by enslavement. Fathers may also disinherit their children.

**Treatment of Slaves:** The law allows a master of slaves to cut off an ear of his slave. This is often done to prove the sincerity of a man who offers himself or his relatives as slaves. If a man submits to his ear being cut off, then the master knows the man is sincere in the offer of slavery. Slaves are also allowed by law to own property (so a man selling himself into slavery for three years does not have to surrender his house or lands), participate in business concerns, marry and purchase his freedom. The city states put their own individual spins on each of these matters, especially in the price of freedom.

**Land Use and Abuse:** The law is usually strict as to the use of land around the city-state, dictating what crops may be sown and how irrigation is to be handled. Dikes are expected to kept in good repair and, if a farmer fails to keep his section in repair, he must pay for any grain destroyed or, if he cannot make the payment, be sold into slavery and his goods sold and divided among all the injured parties.

**Wages:** Some city-states, but not all, specify the wages of labourers and artisans.

**Loans:** If a lender, including the temple itself, changes an interest rate after making a loan, the entire loan is lost to the creditor.

**Marriage and Divorce:** Laws concerning dowries and bridal payments are numerous. Marriages must be recorded in contracts to be legal. Although a woman is free to conduct business, a man can divorce her for doing so and keep the dowry. Women can be drowned for making fun of or otherwise humiliating her husband. A barren woman can also be divorced but the dowry must be repaid. Any divorce for unjust grounds grants the woman her dowry back.

## THE LAWS OF THE NOMAD

Nomadic law is based on the traditions of their ancestors and is called the *Sunnah*. Most law is maintained by the concepts of honour and vengeance. Most conflicts can be handled by going to one’s older brother or uncle and asking them to speak to the older brother or uncle of the person who did the wrong. Nomadic law is rarely written down. Here are some common elements.



**Revenge:** The number one law of the nomads decrees that the relatives of a man murdered must kill the murderer or one of his relatives. This creates a blood feud as the murderer's relatives, if they feel the charge is unjust or that the original murder perfectly just, retaliate in kind. The only way to stop a blood feud is for a third party to negotiate the acceptance of blood-money by the most injured party. Also the nomads are not in any hurry to exact revenge. They are quite capable of taking their time if necessary. Stories are told over coffee about the Shemite who, after 40 years of tracking down his enemy, finally killed the man who insulted him, then exclaimed that he was hasty.

**Avoid the Trappings of Civilisation:** The nomads disdain civilisation and many of the tribes forbid its members to sow plants, build permanent houses or to drink wine. Civilisation is seen as a weakness or a decadence and to fall into decadence often meant death or, worse, dishonour. Wine and houses are symbols of civilisation. Agriculture, a civilising influence, is also beneath the dignity of a nomad.

**Betrayal:** The cruel code of the desert demands the Death of Five Stakes for a man who betrays his tribe and leads them into an ambush. Tribes are usually small and the loss of numbers because of a crime is as bad as murder if not worse. This is a slow, gruesome death of intense torture involving disembowelment and worse. It can be done to the treacherous nomad or to a member of his family should the betrayer escape the clutches of the betrayed.

**Marriage:** A nomad woman is only allowed to ride a horse while on her way to see her groom. Her cousins get the first chances to marry her and are allowed to pull her off her horse even as she is heading toward her groom if they decide they want her.

**Murder:** Murder is especially damaging to tribes as it weakens the tribe. The crime is never forgiven and usually results in a blood-feud. The first five ranks of cousins of the deceased are *obligated* to seek out the murderer and kill him. If the murderer cannot be found, then a member of the murderer's people is killed. If anyone harbours or detains the murderer, the nomads are justified in attacking those who are protecting the murderer.

**The Killing of Women:** The killing of women and young children (8 years old or younger) is expressly forbidden among the nomads. This act is never forgiven by any tribe. As with any murder, the first five ranks of cousins of the deceased are *obligated* to seek out the murderer and kill

him. If the murderer cannot be found, then a member of the murderer's people is killed. If anyone harbours or detains the murderer, the nomads are justified in attacking those who are protecting the murderer. Rape is treated in the same manner. Many towns and cities have found themselves unexpectedly attacked by nomad tribes simply because a murderer or rapist has hidden in the town.

**Theft:** The thief must repay the victim four-fold the value of what was stolen, unless the thief is poor. If the thief is poor, he must pay three-fold the value with his tribe making up anything the thief cannot personally pay.

**Trials:** Trials are completely voluntary among the nomads. If necessary, up to three judges can be called in. Trials include complex rules and ceremonies. Evidence and testimony may not be given by criminals, cowards or drunks. Also women who have no children may not testify. Most courts try to mediate between two parties and do not try to establish guilt. One witness is all that is required to convict unless that witness is contested. One of the most famous rituals is the Bisha Ceremony, wherein the accused chooses to prove his innocence by pressing his tongue against a piece of red- or white-hot iron. If the tongue is unscathed, he is indeed innocent, otherwise he is guilty. The Bisha ceremony is virtually never used when the crime is witnessed. The guilty are always given the maximum sentence lest a judge is accused of being partial or weak. Some sample punishments and fines for certain injuries are listed (Note: Any of the following injuries to a woman is subject to four times the fine listed below):

- ❖ **Dishonourable sexual activity:** Both man and woman are beaten.
- ❖ **Facial injury:** 2 camels
- ❖ **Finger severed:** 1 baby camel
- ❖ **Foot severed:** 20 camels
- ❖ **Hand severed:** 40 camels
- ❖ **Hearing Loss:** 3 goats and 2 kids
- ❖ **Loss of both eyes:** Guilty party is beaten, then fined 300 sp if there is no extenuating circumstances. If the loss is justified in some manner, then a 15 camel fine may be imposed.
- ❖ **Loss of one eye:** Death if there is no extenuating circumstances. If the loss is justified in some manner, then a 30 camel fine may be imposed.
- ❖ **Rib broken:** 1 camel
- ❖ **Superficial wound:** 1 camel
- ❖ **Sword wound:** 10 camels
- ❖ **The loss of an arm:** 10 camels



# Shemite Gazetteer

**SHEM IS A** large nation, lying betwixt Koth and Stygia. To the west and to the east are Argos and Turan, respectively. In the west, Shem is meadowland. In the east, desert. The division seems to occur at the hills that rise between the Mountains of Fire on the border of Koth and the Ford of Bubastes on the Styx.

The deserts of Shem are vast and cover a wide variety of terrain. Sandy dunes to sun-baked mud to savannah to salt plains. Salt lakes are common in some portions, with attendant pillars of salt and ancient ruins rise out of the hot plains in other places. Ancient tombs can be found buried in the sands or burning on the baked savannahs, silent and grim testaments to the time when Stygia ruled this land.

This section lists the largest and most important city-states of Shem. Lists of natural features found in Shem can be found in *Conan: The Road of Kings* and a list of ruins found in Shem can be found in *Conan: Ruins of Hyboria*.

## CITY STRUCTURE

Shem is home to some 34 cities, 180 towns and over 19,000 villages or nomad encampments. Most of the cities and towns are in the west. The cities tend to be the seats of power for each city-state, ruling attendant towns and villages. The cities are constantly at war with each other, even though few, if any, of them are economically stable enough to exist without the trade that passes between the cities, for each city has specialised in some tradable good or other, such as weaponry, wines or the herding of animals. Shemite cities are characterised by white zikkurats and gleaming towers. The only laws in these cities are the ones enforced by the individual kings. What is against the law in one city-state may well be perfectly legal in the next.

Shemite cities, often surrounded by high, wide, rectangular walls, are centred on a zikkurat dedicated to a god, for a god either owns the city or comes from the city. Smaller zikkurats may surround the largest one. Broad avenues lead from the city gates to the central zikkurat. The zikkurat is a terraced pyramid; the terraces are often planted with trees, shrubs and other plants, forming gardens. On the top of each zikkurat is a shrine to a god or goddess.

Near the central zikkurat the king and the nobles live in grand palaces complete with spacious gardens and open courtyards. The wealthy citizens have white-washed, two story houses with around a dozen rooms and servant quarters. The buildings of the wealthy are white-washed inside and out to present affluence and an appearance of cleanliness. Some actually have mausoleums on the grounds. The homes of the middle classes, still clustered tightly amid the web of thin alleys, are usually one story with a central court amid several rooms. The common people, slaves mostly, live in small mud-brick houses packed together as tightly as possible in a hodgepodge. Narrow lanes serve as streets. Craftsmen who practice the same trade live and work on the same street. These streets are lined with shops and stalls for these craftsmen, serving as a type of bazaar for that particular type of good.

Many of the cities have canals to serve as harbours for boats. Each city also has one or more 'ports of trade', called *karum*. The *karum* may be actual harbours, if the city has a riverfront or is on the sea, or the *karum* may be a harbour for caravans. In addition to being a centre of commerce, the *karums* also housed foreign traders, keeping them segregated from the arrogant Sons of Shem.

## ABBADRAH

Abbadrah is a minor city-state of southern Shem. Several caravan roads pass through this walled city, leading to Eruk to the north and to Asgalun to the west. This small city exports pomegranates, dates and mercenaries in exchange for common trade goods. Abbadrah has a thick, battlemented wall but many of its districts lie outside that wall. It has one main gate. The main gate is a massive construction, a fortification inlaid with coloured tiles. One side of the city is against the local hills but is not well defended. Its *asshuri* is commanded by a 14<sup>th</sup> level soldier, the regional commander. Beneath him, are the 660 members of the Abbadrah *asshuri*. The mercenary half of the Abbadrah *asshuri* is led by a 12<sup>th</sup> level soldier (a captain) and he routinely utilises around 300 of the available soldiers. This half of the *asshuri* may or may not be present at any given time. Two 6<sup>th</sup> level flight leaders answer to the captain. Four 3<sup>rd</sup> level hawk leaders command the remaining 2<sup>nd</sup> level mercenary soldiers. The home



guard is commanded by a 7<sup>th</sup> level soldier captain. Beneath the home guard captain are two 4<sup>th</sup> level flight leaders. Eight 2<sup>nd</sup> level hawk leaders command the rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> level men, answering to the flight leaders. While the mercenaries dress in traditional *asshuri* garb, the home guard generally wear a dark cape, a brass-belted girdle, a kilt and sandals, with the officers wearing a golden circlet on their brows.

Queen Afrit, High Priestess of Ellael, rules here. Her brother was accidentally killed by Conan in an apocryphal tale when he knocked aside a poisoned dagger held by the prince and it cut the prince's own ear. Her father, King Ebnezub, was murdered in his own tomb when a commoner named Asrafel knocked over boiling oil and sent it under the feet of the king's litter-bearers, who slipped and dropped him off the heights of the tomb to his death. Afrit had her own problems ascending the throne. Her step-mother wanted her son to become king while most of the nobles supported Afrit. Through the actions of Conan and some grave-robbers, all the opposition was slain and Princess Afrit was placed securely on the throne as queen. The Temple of Ellael the Sun-God holds sway here.

Abbadrah is a city of huddled white domes and zikkurats among the green bottomland and a cedar forest provided by the fertile flooding of the River Styx. The city is surprisingly upright and compact. Like most Shemite cities it is square-shaped. Countless irrigation channels bring water to the orchards of pomegranates and dates.

There are many craftsman districts in the city, and are about 8.5 acres combined, each stretching along the wide avenues and narrow lanes of the city where the craftsmen live in a spider-web network of minor craft bazaars. There are 420 structures supporting 2,500 people, most of whom are slaves. Many are foreign (but still Shemite) craftsmen from other Shemite cities. Near the tomb district dwell the prosperous tomb-craftsmen.

Suburbs sprawl outside the wall, villages and towns that support the main city, growing barley and harvesting the trees. These tenements are unplanned and undefended. Near the crocodile-laden Styx, the shanty-town villages are built on stilts against the annual flooding. On the inland side, more buildings and avenues reach into the hills. The pyramid tombs of Stygia can be seen from Abbadrah. A former king of Abbadrah, enamoured of Stygian architecture, built his own necropolis outside the city, with each noble's tomb supposedly laden with wealth and treasure. An ornate metal gate separates the city of the dead, the tomb-district, from the city of the living. It lies along a canal dug for the transport of large stones. This is a vast necropolis of white stone edifices. The cramped processional roads extend to

the nearby foothills and some wind into ravines. Many of the tombs are built like mock houses; others are portals sunk into the sides of the hills, entryways into deeper tombs; yet others are built as towers and small zikkurats. The largest zikkurat-style tomb, inspired by the Stygians' pyramids, is the tomb of King Ebnezub. Unbeknownst to the citizens of Abbadrah, the tomb-district is riddled with underground tunnels moving from tomb to tomb. There are about 480 structures here but no one lives here.

## AKBITANA CITY OF STEEL

Akbitana is a city-state of gleaming domes and a powerful zikkurat on the caravan route between Kizil-Bezzin and Tamba-Syn. Another route from Akbitana takes caravans to Nippr to the west. A third route goes toward Khoraja, passing by the Well of Altaku. It is located not far from a great salt flat. Akbitana specialises in fine steel weapons and armour. Its blacksmiths are the best in the world. Forges great and small line many of the streets and the heat there rivals that of the surrounding deserts and plains. Great plumes of smoke rise from the city from the forges. Would-be apprentices from many lands travel here in hopes of learning the skills of the Akbitanan smiths. Akbitana is a noisy, hot city, filled with the clang of hammers and the heat of molten metals. Akbitana is home to almost 11,000 inhabitants, not including the five towns and over a hundred villages that pay tribute to the Akbitanan king for the protection of his *asshuri*.

To the north of the city are great stone outcroppings and hills which eventually give rise to the Mountains of Fire. To the south of the city, past the irrigated fields, is sandy desert. Far beneath the city is an underwater river that feeds the oases of the area. Great demons/genies guard fabulous treasures in castles within this river according to local myths. The water of the oases is directed through a network of skilfully designed man-made tunnels and channels to provide irrigation to the fields surrounding the walled city, allowing clover, barley, wheat, dates and other crops to be grown. The city is well known for its fields of clover and its goat herds, as well as for its steel.

**Population:** 10,987 (96% Meadow Shemite, 2% Shemite, 1% Kothian, 1% Other)

**Size:** Small City (79 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 140 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 45 structures per acre (approx. 3,535 structures total)

**Wealth Limit:** 150,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 82,500,000 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the Temple:** 412,500 silver coins per year



**Religion:** Ishtar is the patron goddess; Shemite pantheon

**Imports:** Trade Goods, especially gold, silver, grain, wood and coal

**Exports:** Steel, weapons, armour, mercenaries, coins, clover, goats

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

## Fortifications and Military Strength

Built on a barely fertile area around the Choaspes River, Akbitana has a thick, battlemented wall, although this is actually a new addition to the city, built within the last decade. It has three main gates decorated in lion motifs. The main gates are all massive constructions, fortifications inlaid with coloured tiles. Its *asshuri* is commanded by a 16<sup>th</sup> level scholar-soldier, the regional commander. Beneath him, are the 1,000 members of the Akbitana *asshuri*. The mercenary half of the Akbitana *asshuri* is led by a 15<sup>th</sup> level soldier/noble (a captain) and he routinely utilises around 500 of the available soldiers. This half of the *asshuri* may or may not be present at any given time. Two 9<sup>th</sup> level flight leaders answer to the captain. Four 6<sup>th</sup> level hawk leaders command the remaining 3<sup>rd</sup> level mercenary soldiers. The home guard is commanded by a 15<sup>th</sup> level soldier/noble captain. Beneath the home guard captain are two 7<sup>th</sup> level flight leaders. Four 3<sup>rd</sup> level hawk leaders command the rest of the 2<sup>nd</sup> level men, answering to the flight leaders. All Akbitanan *asshuri* units use weapons and armour made of Akbitanan steel.

## Administration and Power Centres

**Ruler:** Akbitana is ruled by a king. The king, like any Shemite king, is expected to fulfil his religious, military and social duties without fail, including annual or bi-annual sexual rituals with the high priestess of Ishtar. The king of Akbitana is usually a noble/soldier/scholar multiclassed character.

**Temple:** The Temple of Ishtar is the primary zikkurat in Akbitana. Originally, a god of healing reigned supreme in seven-walled Akbitana, but as the city grew and the original seven walled palace became a zikkurat, the patron god was defeated and Melek Taus took its place. Melek Taus was the patron god until he became identified with Azazel (the Golden Peacock). Akbitanan myths tell how Melek Taus, who taught the Akbitanans how to smelt bronze and forge weapons, fell from the heavens for vanity and rebelliousness after a great war led by Ishtar. The fallen Melek became the peacock-angel known as Azazel. Ishtar then came and taught the Akbitanans the passions of life – loving and fighting. As a goddess of war, the association between Ishtar and Akbitana has made the lion a popular form to depict in the city, for the lion is associated with Ishtar.

## Layout of Akbitana

The temples and palaces of Akbitana are built around a large oasis of small ponds, canals and lakes fed by the Choaspes River, which runs just off the outer wall. Canals from the Choaspes cut through the city in two directions to water the fields outside. Temples and shrines rise up in scattered places throughout the city, and the other 'wards' mingle and entangle throughout a maze of alleys cutting and twisting between the main streets. The middle and lower classes live in low mud-brick cities around the larger buildings. The whole city is surrounded by a thick square wall with three main gates and five minor gates. The main gates are decorated with symbols of the god the gate is named after, as well as symbols of Lugal-irra, the god of doorways and gates. The minor gates are decorated with emblems representing Neti, the brother of Lugal-irra.

There are 23 main streets in Akbitana. They are narrow and irregular, hemmed in by high windowless walls on either side. The streets are 4 to 20 feet wide. The largest street is the Processional Street, which is paved and decorated with lion statues and lion moulds in the sun-glazed bricks. Processional Street, which passes from the Ishtar Gate to Ishtar's Zikkurat, is lower than the other streets of Akbitana and is kept clean. The other streets are built from clay and garbage. There is no sewage system, so garbage is thrown to the streets. When the streets become unmanageable, the garbage is buried underneath a layer of clay. When the street rises high enough, people tear down their houses and build up the foundation and a new house on the higher ground. Huge aqueducts carry water throughout the city.

## Districts of Akbitana

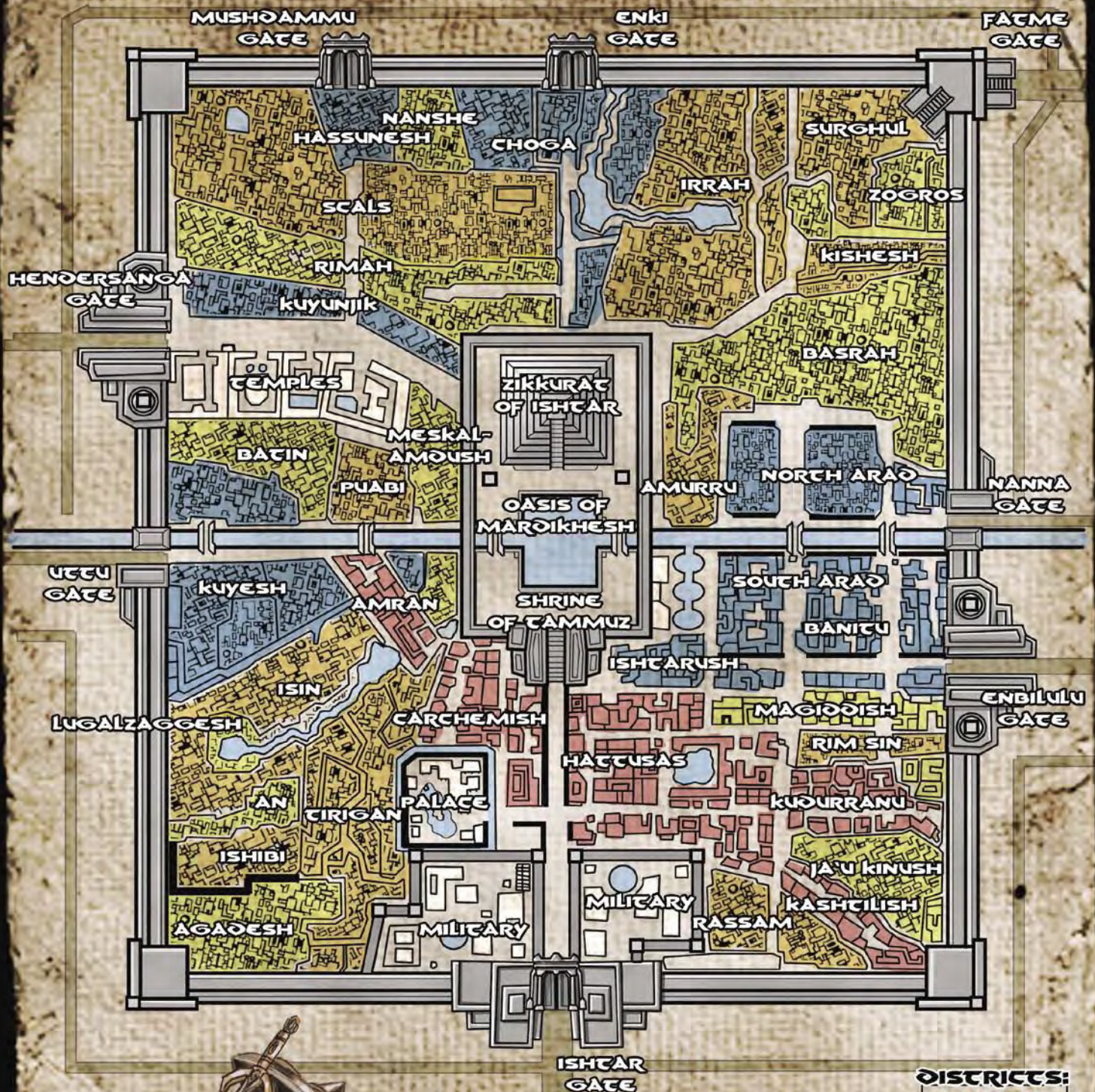
Akbitana is segregated into sprawling wards and districts used to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods. People in these wards and districts know each other, vouch for each other, celebrate with each other and work with each other. People native to a particular ward with Knowledge (local) of at least one rank know everyone else in the ward, so Reputation bonuses always apply when a character is in his home ward and dealing with other natives of that same ward.

**Slum Wards:** The slum 'wards' cover 20.49 acres of the city, boasting a total of 1,229 small mud-brick tenements and other structures throughout the city to house the city's 3,278 poorest adult labourers and slaves.

✶ **Amurru:** This slum houses many of the slaves and labourers dedicated to the Ishtar Temple and its work. This is a fairly clean part of Akbitana. The buildings here are usually given fresh coat of white-wash or a thorough cleaning about once per month. Guards regularly patrol Amurru.



# AKBITANA CITY OF STEEL



DISTRICTS:  
SWORD  
CRAFTSMAN  
KARUM  
SLUM



❖ **Banitu:** This slum is contained within the *karum* of Arad. Although designated a slum, there are two 'mansions' located here in the midst of the hovels. About 200 years ago, this part of the city burnt down, killing over 300 people. People sensitive to psychic phenomena sometimes claim to occasionally see phantom flames licking over this part of town in the dead of night. It is said that to dream of fire while sleeping in the Banitu district is a warning of a painful death within the next month. The buildings here are usually given fresh coats of white-wash or a thorough cleaning about once per month. There is little garbage to be seen. Guards regularly patrol Banitu.

❖ **Irrah:** This slum, like Surghul and Kishesh, houses mostly agricultural and canal labourers. Fishermen also live here, selling their surplus to fishmonger *damgar* from the Choga *karum*. This district is generally taken care of responsibly and the buildings show signs of routine maintenance. There is usually some new construction going on.

❖ **Ishibi:** The people from this ward are regarded as weird and are often ascribed a certain sinister *look*. Few citizens not native to this ward ever venture here and strangers who have the courage to explore this mass of winding, serpentine alleys rarely come out again. The craftsmen from An and Agadesh always travel through the Tirigan ward and do not venture into this frightening district. The *asshuri* do not patrol this area and, moreover, will not go here even if an alarm is raised or if a chase moves into this area. The *asshuri* know full well that those who run here are almost never seen again. Even the thieves and kidnappers of Akbitana will not go here without an extremely pressing reason – although many gangs often dare newcomers to steal something from here to prove their Allegiance. A darksome temple to the demon-goddess Ishiti can be found in this run-down ward of strange people, although few outside the district know about it (Knowledge (local) check DC 18). It is said, however, that certain Pelishtim make pilgrimages to this district to speak to the locals here – although few are interested in knowing what these discussions concern. The Pelishtim pilgrims seem to be able to come and go as they please, although they do not seem to leave *exactly* the same as they went in.

❖ **Isin:** This slum houses the city's building labourers, those who maintain and build houses, temples and walls at the direction of the craftsmen. The buildings here are usually given fresh coats of white-wash or a thorough cleaning about once per month in most parts. There is little garbage to be seen in most of this district. Guards regularly patrol Isin. The streets, alleys and buildings nearest Kuyesh, however, get progressively dirtier and rougher.

❖ **Kishesh:** This slum houses many of the farming labourers and slaves. In the cemetery of Kishesh, there is a great stone lion, known as the Lion of Akbitana,

which is reputed to have supernatural powers; the people believe that if the lion is anointed with oil, the person doing the anointing will find a good spouse soon afterward. The buildings here are a bit run down and trash has piled up in many places, especially in the alleys. A few areas keep the garbage under control. Beggars can be found here but they do not generally live on the streets in Kishesh; they come in from other districts for the most part.

❖ **Puabi:** Many caravaneers and labourers for the caravans live in this slum. The buildings are old and battered but are regularly maintained. A bridge crosses the canal to Axe Street, which runs along the south side of the canal. The smaller, spidery alleys are piled with trash, animal dung and refuse but the main streets and the fronts of the buildings are kept clean. Large stables for animals, especially camels and donkeys, can be found here.

❖ **Rassam:** This district, against the city-wall and south of the sword districts, is split into east and west portions. The people are more apt to speak of West Rassam or East Rassam than merely Rassam as a whole. A few mansions of the wealthy rise above the crude houses of the poor. A small cemetery in the district is avoided by most; it has either 13 or 11 grave markers – depending on which way the markers are counted. The buildings here are all relatively new, having been rebuilt within the past one to ten years. The alleys are dirty but not excessively so. Guards patrol here on a fairly regular basis.

❖ **Rim Sin:** This slum is nestled between Kudurranu (sword district) and Magiddish (craft district). Several mansions can be found here, the homes of wealthy men who have bought up nearby houses and connected them. There is also a haunted home here. It is usually untenanted and the rumours claim no one will live in that mud-brick house for more than two months. The house is also the sight of many suicides. No one knows why, but many Akbitanans trying to kill themselves seek out this house to commit the suicide there. The suicides are always found hanging by the neck from the rafters without any feet – both feet are always gnawed off by the time the body is discovered by the neighbours. This district is well maintained and the buildings show signs of routine maintenance. There are some new constructions as abandoned houses are rebuilt by new owners.

❖ **Scals:** This is the foreign ward, where mercenaries are usually stabled, as well as Shemites who are not native to Akbitana. Although designated as a 'foreign' ward, most of the inhabitants are actually locals born and bred in Akbitana but are the sons and daughters of foreigners who lived in or passed through this district. Many Shemite half-breeds live here. To call someone a 'scal' in Akbitana is an insult for it means the person is not really



a Son or Daughter of Shem. Most of the non-religious prostitutes in the city can be found here, attempting to eke out a bare living in a city otherwise hostile toward them. This is a rough area. Street gangs are dominant here. Trash is piled along the buildings and alleys but the main streets are reasonably clear.

☒ **Surghul:** Just inside the minor Farmer's Gate, this slum of low-roofed buildings is home to farm labourers and farm slaves. The buildings here are a bit run down and trash has piled up in many places, especially in the alleys. A few areas keep the garbage under control. Beggars can be found here but they do not generally live on the streets in Surghul; they come in from other districts for the most part.

☒ **Tirigan:** This ward is an amalgamation of all the slum wards, consisting of mostly labourers of various types. Few who live here are free men. Most are enslaved to the craftsmen and do their bidding. This district is almost unimaginably filthy. Garbage litters the street at almost every footstep, beggars sleep in the alleys and wild dogs, pigs and chickens run loose. Prostitutes openly seek customers and many of the houses here are abandoned or lived in by the otherwise homeless. This is a district of abject poverty and almost total misery. Silver Street bisects the district, connecting the street around the palace moat to Brick Way.

**Karum Wards:** 59 caravanserais, taverns, brothels and inns can be found in the *karums* of Akbitana, as well as hundreds of *dam-gar* stalls and small market-places. A *karum* lies inside and outside each of gates save the Ishtar Gate, which is mostly just a military fort. The city gates are massive, double-towered constructions, fortifications inlaid with coloured tiles and decorated with colossal figures of gods and sphinxes. Another two *karums* are along the main canals. The *karums* of Akbitana take up a combined 15.2 acres. 2,098 people live and work here (approximately 455 of them are *dam-gar*) amid 821 different structures.

☒ **Choga:** Located just inside the minor Enki Gate, many water *dam-gar* are located here because of the natural springs, as well as bathhouses and healers. Most of the city's best public healers can be found here, as well as many temples, including shrines to Enki, Tammuz, Anu, Ashtoreth and Derketo. One street is a fishmonger street, selling albino fish caught in the oases water and the canals, which are fed by an underground river. The small alleys are piled with trash, animal dung and refuse but the main streets and the fronts of the buildings are kept clean. The smell of water and fish is strong. Large stables for animals, especially camels and donkeys, can be found here.

☒ **Hassunesh:** In one of the most inefficient situations to be found in Akbitana, the *dam-gar* selling bricks and housing, often working for the craftsmen in Agadesh and An, do their

chores and selling here on the north by the minor Mashdamu Gate, although the craftsman wards they work for are on the south side of the city. The buildings here are a bit run down and trash has piled up in many places, especially in the alleys. A few areas keep the garbage under control. Beggars can be found here but they do not generally live on the streets in Hassunesh; they come in from other districts for the most part.

☒ **Ishtarush:** This *karum* is primarily used by the temple of Ishtar and is mostly an open plaza with stalls and tents. It is meticulously clean and there are always plenty of guards present.

☒ **Kuyesh:** This ward has stables and care for horses and camels, as well as *dam-gar* who sell the goods produced in Batin, especially saddles and harnesses. They also sell imported goods relating to mounts and they buy and sell feed. Several caravanserais are in this district, despite being located near a minor gate. Unlike the Arad *karums*, there is no wall around the canal here, making it ideal for mounts. A large temple to Uttu lies in this district, near the canal. Two bridges cross the canal in this district. Except along Axe Street, which runs alongside the canal, garbage litters the street at almost every footstep, beggars sleep in the alleys and wild dogs, pigs and chickens run loose. Prostitutes openly seek customers and many of the houses here are abandoned or lived in by the otherwise homeless. Axe Street and Brick Way, however, are routinely patrolled by guards and is a much cleaner environment. Brick Way runs along the wall toward the south and is the road used by building craftsmen and the *asshuri*.

☒ **Kuyunjik:** Situated right across from the major temple district, the Kuyunjik *karum* sells the products produced in the Rimah ward, mostly cloth, linens, baskets, parchment, papyrus and clay tablets. This is one of the nicest *karums* in the city; all of the buildings are cleaned or repainted monthly and guards are virtually omnipresent. Little garbage can be seen and even the alleys to Rimah are comfortable, clean and fairly safe.

☒ **North Arad:** This *karum* is located around the minor Nanna Gate and the canal. It is mostly bound by the walls of the canal and the Enbilulu Street. They mostly trade in the goods made in Basrah. Sometimes people walking alone in these streets at night report being chased by rider-less horses. There are no horse stables in this ward. This is one of the oldest *karums* in Akbitana. The buildings here are older than normal and a bit run down. Trash has piled up in some places but is mostly kept under control. Beggars move through the streets and alleys but do not actually live here.

☒ **South Arad:** This *karum* is located around the Enbilulu Gate and the canal. It is mostly bound by the walls of the canal and the Enbilulu Street. It also contains the small slum ward of Banitu. They trade mostly goods found in Magiddish and Kudurranu, as well as surplus brought in from the fields and from foreign traders



via the Enbilulu Gate. This is a popular entrance into Akbitana and many of the city's caravanserais can be found here, often with their own wells and oasis contained within the compounds. This is one of the oldest *karums* in Akbitana. The buildings here are older than normal and a bit run down. Trash has piled up in some places but is mostly kept under control. Beggars move through the streets and alleys but do not actually live here.

**Craftsman Districts:** There are many craftsman districts in the city interspersed throughout the slum wards, and are about 11 acres combined, each stretching along the wide avenues and narrow lanes of the city where the craftsmen live in a spider-web network of minor craft bazaars. There are 550 structures supporting 1,210 people, most of whom are slaves working for the craftsmen and artisans. Twelve master Goldsmiths, sixteen master silversmiths and a pair of expert bell-makers work hard amid the heat generated in a few of these districts.

❧ **Agadesh:** This craftsman ward holds 63 of Shem's most renowned bricklayers and brickmakers. Great furnaces heat this region up. Clay and straw are brought in through the minor Uttu Gate, brought along the Brick Way, to these furnaces to make bricks for building projects. At great risk, the people of this district built a wall between their district and the loathsome district of Ishibi over a hundred or more years ago. Stories are still told about the horrors the builders of that wall encountered and faced as they built that great façade. There is a fairly large shrine to Kabta in this district. The buildings are battered but are regularly maintained. The thin alleys are generally piled with trash and refuse but the main streets and the fronts of the buildings are kept clean, especially along Brick Way, which runs along the west and south walls.

❧ **An:** Tilers, plasterers and roofers make their homes and shops here. They constantly beg to have a wall built between their ward and the horrific district of Ishibi. Those whose shops and houses abut that weird district do not have windows or doors facing the district, and their house-walls are doubly as thick as most other houses in the city. They live in extreme horror of those from the Ishibi district and will not discuss it with outsiders for fear of dooming themselves. Silver Street bisects the district, connecting the street around the palace moat to Brick Way. This is a rough and tumble area and few guards can be found here. The craftsmen either hire mercenaries to protect them or, on some streets, form gangs for vigilante-style justice when needed. A well-known pub, The Moon Over The Tower, can be found in this district. It is one of the roughest pubs in the city but has some of the finest beers imported in from all over Shem.

❧ **Basrah:** This craftsman ward consists of free artisans and crafters of all sorts. Toward the east, bakers, brewers

and slaughterers are mostly concentrated. A particularly large beer brewery dominates this section amid a swirl of smaller beer brewers. In the middle of Basrah, one finds pottery workers. Toward the west, near Amurru, one finds clothing-makers, as well as some of the finest women's headdresses to be found in Akbitana. *Damgar* from North Arad can often be found in this area, transporting surplus goods to be sold in their district.

❧ **Batin:** This ward focuses on mounts, creating harnesses, saddles for camels and horses, hitches, horseshoes and nails. This district is well-maintained and reasonably well patrolled by the guards.

❧ **Ja'u Kinush:** This district is largely comprised of forges for the moulding and crafting of precious metals. Goldworkers, bronze smiths and silversmiths make up most of the craftsmasters. Two large mints operate in this city, and they are responsible for most Shemite coins. Kings send gold, silver and bronze here to be minted into coins. Caravan protection of these shipments to and fro are paramount concerns and mercenaries in need of employment can readily find it here as a caravan guard.

❧ **Lugalzaggesh:** This craft ward specialises in laundry and soap. On foggy nights a strange apparition of a man holding a bouquet of flowers can be seen walking the streets alone. The people of this district avoid him and believe anyone speaking to him is doomed. Some believe if they put food down in his path and do not speak to him they have good luck the next day. Prostitutes usually live in this district and openly ply their trade here.

❧ **Magiddish:** This ward is a leather-working district for the most part, generating scabbards and leather wraps for the swords and other weapons created in the nearby sword districts. There are three arches here beneath three aqueducts passing near each other in this quarter. It is said that if a person passes beneath all three arches late at night he will meet an apparition. If the apparition has his back to the person, that person will have a prosperous life. If the apparition is facing the person, he is doomed for the rest of his life.

❧ **Meskalamdush:** This ward supports the temple with its crafts, manufacturing or repairing statues, pottery and other temple needs. This district is well-maintained and reasonably well patrolled by the guards.

❧ **Nanshe:** This ward builds wagons, chariots, furniture and other wooden goods. This is a rougher district but the battered buildings are regularly maintained for the most part.

❧ **Rimah:** This ward turns agricultural products into cloth and linens, as well as parchment, papyrus and clay tablets. 55 weavers, 44 basket makers, 7 rug makers and 9 fullers can be found among the workers here. This district seems newer than most, having been recently



rebuilt (recent meaning within the last decade). The alleys are a bit dirty but few of them are overrun with garbage. It is regularly patrolled and few beggars bother to come here because of the guards.

- ❖ **Zogros:** This craftsman ward, nearest the minor Farmer's Gate, mostly does crafts for the farmers. This district is almost unimaginably filthy. Garbage litters the street at almost every footstep, beggars sleep in the alleys and wild dogs, pigs and chickens run loose. Prostitutes openly seek customers and many of the houses here are abandoned or lived in by the otherwise homeless.

**Sword Districts:** The forging of Akbitanan steel weapons takes place in these famous districts. Technically just more craftsman districts, the distinction of Akbitanan steel makes them stand out. Covering a huge 13.49 acres, over 1,821 people, including smiths, *dam-gar* and slaves, work to fill the demand for the incredible weapons. There are 675 structures here. Six politically powerful master weaponsmiths, five wealthy master armourers and 12 master blacksmiths dominate this trio of streets. Their apprentices and journeymen fill the streets in this district with their forges as they fine-tune their craft. Nine cutlers and 16 scabbard makers can also be found here. These smiths do not allow foreign smiths to learn their trade. Indeed, they will not train anyone they feel will not stay in the city and may well hire an assassin to track and kill any journeyman who leaves with their secrets. Rules for Akbitanan weapons can be found in the core rules of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

- ❖ **Amran:** This is the westernmost sword district and holds a fearsome shrine to Hendersanga, the god of fire. This district was once an Acheronian graveyard over three thousand years ago, although few know this. Strange ghosts sometimes are seen and disappearances occasionally occur, stirring up old rumours and legends.
- ❖ **Carchemish:** This district is located to the west of the Ishtar Road. A school of scribes run by the temple is located in this district. They keep track of financial records of all five sword districts and maintain an archive of this sort of information dating back nearly a century and a half.
- ❖ **Hattusas:** This district is located just to the east of the Ishtar Road. It has the large forge of Master Ninkarrak, who is set up around the Mushku Oasis.
- ❖ **Kashtilish:** Master Igmil-Sin and Master Ibbi-Sin work in this spur, which extends out of the south-eastern corner of Hattusas. There is a certain well in this district where the seriously diseased were thrown long before the Shemites came. It is said their ghosts still haunt the well and their screams can still be heard on particular nights.

- ❖ **Kudurranu:** This spur of the sword district extends to the east of Hattusas. The forge of Master Lachish dominates this district. A

beautiful fountain depicting Ishtar's birth is a highlight of this district; it is said that barren people fornicating on this site are gifted with a beautiful child born to be a warrior, regardless of sex.

**Temple Districts:** In the centre of the city, overlooking the largest oasis is the zikkurat dedicated to the war-goddess, Ishtar. It is also a major market centre for the temple of Ishtar. Also minor shrines to other Shemite gods and goddesses are located throughout the city. Nearly 15.13 acres are devoted to temples and to palaces and is the home of 1,891 people and 605 total structures. The temples are headed by a 10<sup>th</sup> level scholar-priestess and an 8<sup>th</sup> level scholar-priest. 218 other priests and priestesses, including temple prostitutes, live and work among the people here. The palaces of the rich and the king are included in these areas of the city.

- ❖ **The Zikkurat of Ishtar:** This is an eight tiered zikkurat of impressive design and multiple colours. Many of the glazed bricks coating the outside of the great pile are embossed with golden lions. It overlooks the largest spring of the oasis, which has been modified into a square pool. Two canals run from this pool through the city to the fields outside. The space around the zikkurat and the pool is a massive and lush garden.

The first tier of the temple, coloured white, is 109 feet high and 300 × 300 feet in area. There is no interior to the first tier – it is built of mud-bricks and is solid, as are all the tiers but the final one. The second tier is also white and is 60 feet high and 256 × 256 feet in area. The three main stairs go to the top of this tier into a double-towered gate built on the tier. Stairs extend from the back of this gate to the top of the third tier, where more stairs lead people from tier to tier. The third tier, coloured with red glazed bricks, is 20 feet high, 197 × 197 feet in area. The fourth tier is blue and is also 20 feet high, 167 × 167 feet in area. The fifth tier is bronzed, is 20 feet high and is 138 × 138 feet in area. The sixth tier, silver, is 20 feet high and 108 feet on each side. The seventh tier, gold, is 50 feet high and is 69 feet wide and 80 feet long. This final tier is actually the temple and has an interior. The gypsum walls and cedar ceiling are plated with gold. The altar, throne, footstool and statue of Ishtar is also gold. There is about 16 tons of gold in this upper temple all totalled.

The temple has a courtyard enclosure to protect the shrine and oasis from the city. The quarters for the priests and priestesses are contained within the thick enclosure wall. The temple needs constant maintenance because it is made of mud and straw for the most part.

- ❖ **Palace of the King:** The palace of the king of Akbitana is a grand building dwarfing the modest homes of the people. Located just inside the Ishtar Gate, it is protected by the military fort outside. A moat from the oasis protects the wall of the palace inside the



city should an invader make it past the fortress. The palace is built around seven courtyards surrounded by apartments and suites. The harem of the king is also found in the palace. The guards have room around the first courtyard entered through the main gate. A well in that courtyard is used for ritual cleansing, for none may approach the king of Akbitana unwashed. Drains around the well divert spilt water into the moat. The guards here also confiscate any weapons brought into the palace. The fourth courtyard, a grand garden, opens into the king's throne room and his suites and rooms. This palace once housed the physical body of Thugra Khotan during some of the events of Howard's *Black Colossus*. The original palace, located where the zikkurat now stands, had seven concentric walls around it but as the town grew, these walls were built over and eventually became the zikkurat.

❖ **Shrine of Tammuz:** This shrine is a small but elaborate temple across from the zikkurat. It is basically a long hall with a small room on one end. This room, which cannot be entered save by the high priests or the king, contains a golden statue of Tammuz. It is decorated in a similar manner to the Ishtar temple but it does not have tiers of elevation. It contains about 10 tons of gold. Strange lights are sometimes reported gliding in and out of the shrine on certain nights of the year. The priests have no explanation and generally attempt to squelch any knowledge of this among the general population, although occasionally one or two priests try to promote the idea that the lights are servants of Tammuz.

❖ **Nanna Palace:** This is a home to priests and priestesses and their servants. Rooms and areas are set aside for temple prostitution. A shrine to Nanna the moon can be found here also. There are rumours of ghosts wandering its ancient halls. The most prominent ghost tale regards the appearance of a priestly spectre said to be the High Priest Etel-Pi-Ekekum, who committed suicide just over a century past.

❖ **Enkimidu Palace:** This is a home to priests and priestesses and their servants. Rooms and areas are set aside for temple prostitution. This palace has a secret passage to the canals and to the subterranean river that feeds the oases of Akbitana. The palace enclosure also includes an elaborate shrine to Enkimidu, the god of canals. Temple administration is largely handled here including a Hall of Judgement. The religious archives of Akbitana are kept in this palace.

❖ **Ellaël Palace:** This is a home to priests and priestesses and their servants. Rooms and areas are set aside for temple prostitution. A bright temple to the sun god is contained within this enclosure. A strange disembodied purple head haunts the palace according to some of the servants. Also, there is a skull displayed prominently in the second foyer; it is said that if this skull is removed it screams at night until it is replaced.

❖ **Ashtoreth Palace:** This is a home to priests and priestesses and their servants. Rooms and areas are set aside for temple prostitution. This is essentially little more than a huge pleasure palace.

**Military Compound:** Akbitana's military have their own training and living area in a fortress around the Ishtar Gate. It covers 3.69 acres and houses 688 people when the mercenary half of their army is gone. 162 separate structures can be found here. One of the structures is a temple to Ninurta. Another structure is a temple to Narunte.

## AKHLAT

Akhlat 'the Accursed' is built on a fertile oasis of green trees and lotus pools in the Makan-e-Mordan (Place of Ghosts) region of the Shan-e-Sorkh (the Red Waste). It is a stuccoed-walled city of stone, small in size, with bulging domes and squat guard towers. Once power-mad sorcerers dwelled here, until they called down a demoness from Beyond to serve as a goddess to the people, who then destroyed the sorcerers and the region, ruling as a tyrant over the people. Conan destroyed the evil *gorgon* and now caravan travel has begun to traverse the once haunted Red Waste. Akhlat has a population of a mere three and a half thousand people, but it is growing. It is an extremely poor community now but it has a lot of potential. Many ghosts are reported here, the victims of the undying gorgon in her centuries of feeding. Akhlat imports trade goods, especially grain, wood and coal, and exports steel, weapons, armour and mercenaries.

The stuccoed walls with their squat guard towers are somewhat in disrepair but still strong. Shaykh Enosh has hired 36 *asshuri* mercenaries to shore up his military strength. The city has 71 warriors of its own but they are not *asshuri* nor are they trained in *asshuri* methods. The centuries of isolation has caused the city to lose a lot of their traditional methods. The warriors are training with the mercenaries to achieve that level of expertise.

It is ruled by Shaykh Enosh and his daughter, Zillah. He rules as a monarch and so far has not adopted a state religion or patron god as he is understandably reluctant to deal with gods and priests again. He realises, however, that he may have to accept a patron as the city grows.

Akhlat, like most Shemite cities, has a rectangular, thick wall. The city gate is a massive, double-towered construction with bronzed hinges on the bronze valves, a fortification inlaid with coloured tiles and decorated with colossal figures of gods and sphinxes. There is no proper zikkurat in Akhlat but there is the Black Temple (see separate description). The still fertile valley Akhlat lies within is in the middle of a vast wasteland but, since the death of the gorgon, it has slowly





been regenerating through the use of the old canals. Most of the city is still in ruins but, with the coming of caravans, is slowly being rebuilt. Akhlat has a lot of acreage because the city used to hold a lot more people than it currently does. Most of the streets and buildings are in disrepair but work is commencing to repair most of the sections. Many of the streets are seemingly deserted because of the small population. The labourers of Akhlat work hard to restore the city walls, structures and canals. Many also work as farm hands as they try to bring life back to the wasteland. A thin, non-navigable river from the oases runs through the city, eventually draining into the Styx to the south.

Surrounding the city are the encampments of the nomads. This tribe had wandered in during the reign of the goddess and became trapped. They still herd animals in the area. There are well over a thousand of these nomads, including the Shaykh and his daughter.

The fearsome Black Temple of Akhlat is now closed off by the rulers of the city. A great wall surrounding the ten acres of temple land has been sealed. There are still secret passages into this area. The ones the shaykh knows about have been sealed, although he knows there are surely others. It was once home to the living goddess of Akhlat before it was supposedly killed by Conan in the apocryphal tale, *Black Tears*. A dank dungeon once held prisoners of the goddess before their sacrifice to her. The goddess dwelled in a hall of polished marble and had a golden throne. Horrible statues crumble in the gloom, the victims of the former goddess. This temple is not a zikkurat. Akhlat was founded

and met its doom long before the Shemites started building zikkurats to their gods.

## Akkharia

Akkharia is a southerly city-state in the meadowlands of Shem on the caravan route out of Luxur. Trade routes also connect Akkharia to Anakia and Eruk. A haunted castle once stood outside Akkharia; the ghost of a sorcerer had possessed a dog, and it ruled the castle for a decade until slain by Conan. The castle has since crumbled, leaving a barren scar upon the earth that still does not grow but the most deformed of crops. King Sumuabi does not like strangers entering the city after dark, so unless travellers can adequately bribe the guards at night, they will have to sleep in one of the outlying villages or manses until morning. In the temple district, along with shrines to squat, horrible Shemitish gods, can be found a temple of Ibis. The Margidda River, which flows into the Styx and has its source in an oasis at Sark, passes through Akkharia, feeding its canals and irrigating its land. The city exports beer and imports grain and weapons.

The city is walled by a massive fortification of sun-bleached brick rising over 24 feet in height. King Sumuabi kept four mercenary armies on hand in addition to his own *asshuri* when he was planning his attack on Anakia (see the novel *Conan and the Emerald Lotus* and the short story *Hawks Over Shem* for details), but he typically employs around 112 mercenaries in times of relative peace. His home guard of *asshuri* number around 225 soldiers led by a 14<sup>th</sup> level regional commander, a 13<sup>th</sup> level captain and a 7<sup>th</sup> level captain, as well as four 6<sup>th</sup> level flight leaders. His foreign units of *asshuri* have the same numbers but are slightly higher level.

Akkharia is ruled by King Sumuabi. Unlike most city-states, King Sumuabi's court includes a court wizard who does not have to be part of the established priesthood. He also maintains quite a stable of Sabatean torturers to help him enforce his will. Sumuabi is interested in having some control over Anaki, either by installing a weak, controllable king or by conquering it the hard way. The temples are the true power of Akkharia. The high priestess of Ashnan in Akkharia is typically a 2<sup>nd</sup> level soldier / 10<sup>th</sup> level scholar.

Akkharia lies on the Caravan Road to Sabatea. Two days' travel to the east and the Caravan Road forks north and east. A northward branch travels through Sark to prosperous Eruk. The other fork continues east toward Sabatea, with small branch roads connecting to small villages along the Styx.

Akkharia is segregated into sprawling wards and districts used to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods. People in these wards and districts know



each other, vouch for each other, celebrate with each other and work with each other. People native to a particular ward with Knowledge (local) of at least one rank know everyone else in the ward, so Reputation bonuses always apply when a character is in his home ward and dealing with other natives of that same ward. The Amaru Canal cuts across the town at nearly the centre point.

**Slum Residential Wards:** The slum 'wards' cover 48.3 acres of the city, boasting a total of 2,850 small mud-brick tenements and other structures throughout the city to house the city's 5,750 poorest adult labourers and slaves. Some of the wealthier inhabitants actually have mansions in these wards. Ashayshum, Ashar, Hegal, Kabbi, Subat and Ze-ur are the main residential wards of Akkharia.

**Karum Wards:** 61 caravanserais, taverns, brothels and inns can be found in the *karums* of Akkharia, as well as hundreds of *dam-gar* stalls, warehouses and small market-places. A *karum* lies inside each of gates. The city gates are massive, double-towered constructions, fortifications inlaid with coloured tiles and decorated with colossal figures of gods and sphinxes. The great Caravan Gate is decorated in inlaid tiles of vivid blue with two golden dragons struggling above the arched gate in bas relief. Another two *karums* are along the main canals. The *karums* of Akkharia take up a combined 18.2 acres. 2,000 people live and work here (approximately 455 of them are *dam-gar*) amid 1,000 different structures. Ashranum, Gigid, Kaskas, Namur Sag and Masku are the primary *karums* in Akkharia.

**Craftsman Districts:** There are many craftsman districts in the city interspersed throughout the slum wards, and are about 9 acres combined, each stretching along the wide avenues and narrow lanes of the city where the craftsmen live in a spider-web network of minor craft bazaars. There are 450 structures supporting 1,215 people, most of whom are slaves working for the craftsmen and artisans. 18 highly ranked *dam-gar* control the trade in beer; 12 of them work for the Ashnan Temple. Some of the districts are Damban, Daki-Aggani, Itinum, Lathtanum, Šuhub Gu and Zid.

**Temple Districts:** In the centre of the city, overlooking the largest oasis is the zikkurat dedicated to the war-goddess, Ishtar. It is also a major market centre for the temple of Ishtar. Also minor shrines to other Shemite gods and goddesses are located throughout the city. Nearly seven acres are devoted to temples and to palaces and is the home of 875 people and 280 total structures. The temples are headed by a 12<sup>th</sup> level scholar-priestess and an 8<sup>th</sup> level scholar-priest of El-Lil. 223 other priests and priestesses, including temple prostitutes, live and work among the people here. The palaces of the rich and the king are included in these areas of the city. There is a shrine to El-Lil and the Moon that are prominent here. There is also a temple to Ibis.

## ANAKIA

Anakia is a city-state of the meadowlands of Shem. It is on the caravan route between Akkharia and Asgalun. The people of Anakia tend to be versatile and ambitious, although they seem slightly less diplomatic than most Shemite kingdoms. They often tend to alienate others. They are self-confident as a people and as individuals; they are also noted for their perseverance. The Anaki, however, tend to be creative and artistic. Their pottery is in demand all over Shem and beyond. Their music tends to break the boundaries. As a whole, they are a rebellious lot and tend not to have relaxed, harmonious relations with other city-states – or even within their own city-state. Othbaal, from the Conan story *Hawks Over Shem*, is an Anaki. The city is known for its production of pottery, art, paint, music, instruments

Anakia is surrounded by a large, thick wall with battlements. 200 *asshuri* are part of the home guard of Anakia, and another 200 *asshuri* are used as mercenaries. The city also uses 67 mercenary engineers to assist the *asshuri* when needed as an engineering unit. The *asshuri* are led by a 14<sup>th</sup> level regional commander.

Anakia is ruled by a foolish relative of a former Pelishtim, King Akhîrom. His rule is notably treacherous. He is part of the theocracy and represents the temple as the head of government and as the earthly representative of Tammuz (Adonis). Anakia has problems with rebels who despise their stupid king.

The Anaki do not put a lot of importance on diplomacy, so most Anaki do not put a lot of ranks in the skill. Crafts and arts are important to them, so most Anaki have at least a few ranks in a Craft or Perform skill. The Anaki also break from tradition in terms of dress; the Anaki wear silken kilts and velvet vests.

Temples and shrines rise up in scattered places throughout the city, and the other 'wards' mingle and entangle throughout a maze of alleys cutting and twisting between the main streets. The middle and lower classes live in low mud-brick cities around the larger buildings. The whole city is surrounded by a thick square wall with two main gates and three minor gates. The main gates are decorated with symbols of the god the gate is named after, as well as symbols of Lugal-irra, the god of doorways and gates. The minor gates are decorated with emblems representing Neti, the brother of Lugal-irra.

There are 12 main streets in Anakia. They are narrow and irregular, hemmed in by high windowless walls on either side. The streets are 3 to 15 feet wide. The largest street, which passes from the Ishtar Gate to Tammuz's Zikkurat, is lower



than the other streets of Anakia and is kept clean. The other streets are built from clay and garbage. There is no sewage system, so garbage is thrown to the streets. When the streets become unmanageable, the garbage is buried underneath a layer of clay. When the street rises high enough, people tear down their houses and build up the foundation and a new house on the higher ground. Huge aqueducts carry water throughout the city.

The slum wards are named Arku, Kar, Kukuga, Markasu, Shar, Rugu and Usan. Rugu is known as the most rebellious of the districts and is now routinely patrolled by the *asshuri* and the mercenaries. The *karum* district names are Dulum, Iduga, Sug, Suh, Sulu and Usu-us. Galu, Iku, Lukugla, Lul, Suhur-Mash and Usim are the names of the main craftsman districts.

The temple district features a 114 foot tall zikkurat of Tammuz, a white zikkurat with six tiers. The temple complex also features smaller shrines to most of the rest of the Shemite gods. A temple to Ishtar sits across from the zikkurat. There are three palaces for the king. The Enton Palace is used by the king after the autumnal equinox. It has extra thick walls, few windows, smaller courtyards than the Emesh Palace and has more storage compartments for food. Fire places and furnaces can be found in most living quarters and official chambers. The Emesh Palace is used by the king after the vernal equinox. It is a light and airy palace, designed for breezes to pass through. The pleasure palace is used by the king to house his seraglio. It lies between the Enton and Emesh Palace. The palace also houses most of the district's temple prostitutes, who live here. One wing of the palace has public access for the prostitutes and their customers, although the rest of the palace is sealed off from the public. Several shrines to Derketo and Ishtar can be found in this palace.

## ASGAKIN

Asgakin, located near the Kothian Hills in the northern part of Pelishtia, is a city-state that has specialised in the working of copper. The statues of many of the Shemitish temples are created by Asgakinim artisans. Many zikkurats, more than would be normal for a city of its size, dominate the city, for the working of divine idols is a religious task of much importance. Asgakin stays out of most Shemite politics; it is mostly just a religious centre. Kings in other city-states often seek Asgakin approval as proof of their divine right to rule. Asgakin has a population of almost nine thousand people, not counting the two towns and a dozen villages that support it by working the copper mines. The city exports copper and divine idols. The coppersmiths in the city control a reasonable amount of the wealth and the labour of the city and usually have say in the city's affairs.

Like most Shemite cities, this one is surrounded by a huge, thick wall with battlements and ornamentation. A unit of 200 *asshuri* make up the home guard and another unit of 200 *asshuri* serve in foreign wars. An average of 90 mercenaries bolster the strength of the home guard *asshuri*.

Asgakin is ruled by the temples and its king. It mostly stays out of politics and the king is a high priest of the Shemite pantheon, having never chosen a particular patron. Like most Shemite kings, he is also from the soldier class and is a capable warrior. His queen is usually a high priestess of Derketo.

Zikkurats, temples and shrines rise up in scattered places throughout the city, and the other 'wards' mingle and entangle throughout a maze of alleys cutting and twisting between the main streets. A river cuts through the east side of the city and it is bridged by arched walkways. Several canals cut through the city from the river. A few of the canals pass beneath the masses of the zikkurats, leading to underground shrines. Asgakin is the only city with shrines beneath the zikkurats. The middle and lower classes live in low mud-brick cities around the larger buildings.

The whole city is surrounded by a thick square wall with two main gates and four minor gates. The main gates are decorated with symbols of the god the gate is named after, as well as symbols of Lugal-irra, the god of doorways and gates. The minor gates are decorated with emblems representing Neti, the brother of Lugal-irra. There are 10 main streets in Asgakin. They are narrow and irregular, hemmed in by high windowless walls on either side. The streets are 3 to 25 feet wide. The largest street is the Processional Street, which is paved and decorated with lion statues and lion moulds in the sun-glazed bricks. Processional Street, which passes from the Copper God Gate to the central zikkurat district, is lower than the other streets of Asgakin and is kept clean. The other streets are built from clay and garbage. There is no sewage system, so garbage is thrown to the streets. When the streets become unmanageable, the garbage is buried underneath a layer of clay. When the street rises high enough, people tear down their houses and build up the foundation and a new house on the higher ground. Huge aqueducts carry water throughout the city.

Some of the residential districts include Belet-Mahsartim, Dâlum, Emudbalum and Garashum. The district of Dâlum is known for the Ededum House, which is built next to an old graveyard; the house was built for the inhabitants of the graveyard. People entering the Ededum House often report hearing voices. Interspersed throughout the residential and market wards are the craftsman wards. It is in the craftsman districts that the great copper or bronze statues of Shem are made. Ten master coppersmiths oversee most of the work for the temples. Two of these smiths are 10<sup>th</sup> level commoners/8<sup>th</sup> level scholars. Four are 10<sup>th</sup> level commoners/4<sup>th</sup> level



scholars. Two are 9<sup>th</sup> level commoners and two are 9<sup>th</sup> level scholars. There is also a 140-foot tall zikkurat in the main craftsman district devoted to craftsman gods.

The temple district features seven 114-foot tall zikkurats. Anu, Ashar, Adonis, Ishtar, Pteor, Bel and Derketo each have a zikkurat in their honour. The temple complex also features smaller shrines to most of the rest of the Shemite gods.

## ASGALUN

Asgalun is the capital of Pelishtia and Shem's most important seaport. Built on the mouth of a river amid the Libnum Hills, Asgalun lies on the coast of Shem on one of its few natural harbours. The reeking alleys and narrow, winding streets move travellers through older, decaying sectors of the city to newer, respectable portions. The city is a contrast of splendour and decay. Opulent palaces of the wealthy and sumptuous temples to horrible, squat Shemitish gods sit amid crumbling ruins of buildings from forgotten ages. Bêlit, the Queen of the Black Coast, was descended from Asgalanim kings. The inner city is built behind great walls of sun-dried brick and is forbidden to commoners who are not servants to the rich and have not a pass. The king and his nobles dwell in their lavish palaces and pleasure houses within the forbidden section with their mercenary defenders. Canals bring water from the river to the inner city. Asgalun is home to 40,500 people, although many hundreds of villages and seventeen towns pay tribute to this powerful metropolis. The city employs mercenary Kushites to support its Pelishtim *asshuri*. The city is currently ruled by a feeble nephew of former king Akhîrom, but the real power behind the throne is General Mazdak the Hyrkanian, a cold, unfeeling warrior. He recently had a wall built around the outer city to make the city more defensible and has been funnelling money into rebuilding the ruins and shanties. This entry describes the city after the events of *Hawks Over Shem*. Asgalun imports trade goods, especially grain and wood. It exports steel, weapons, armour and mercenaries

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Built on the mouth of a great river, Asgalun has a thick, battlemented wall. It has three main gates decorated in lion motifs. The main gates are all massive constructions, fortifications inlaid with coloured tiles. Its *asshuri* is commanded by General Mazdak, an Hyrkanian and the regional commander. Beneath him, are the 1,620 members of the Asgalunim *asshuri*. The mercenary half of the Asgalunim *asshuri* is led by a 20<sup>th</sup> level soldier (a captain) and he routinely utilises around 800 of the available soldiers. This half of the *asshuri* may or may not be present at any given time.

In addition to the Asgalunim *asshuri*, General Mazdak retains 400 Hyrkanian cavalry as mercenary units. The

Hyrkanians usually began battles with archery, filling the air with as many arrows as possible. If the enemy charges, they light dung fires to create smoke and the archers melt away on their horses to be replaced by Hyrkanian cavalry with long lances and sharp sabres who hide within the smoke to surprise the oncoming knights. Kettledrums are also used to create a fearsome din that echoes above the horse-beats of their onrushing hordes. These mercenaries are divided up in squads of ten, troops of 50 and companies of 100. The 40 squads of 3<sup>rd</sup> level nomads and soldiers are commanded by 10<sup>th</sup> level commanders. The eight troops are commanded by 9<sup>th</sup> level commanders. The four companies are led by 18<sup>th</sup> level commanders. Commanders signal with flags during the day and with lanterns in the nights. They armour themselves in urine-hardened horsehide, wearing a tightly woven silk shirt beneath robes to blunt the damage of enemy arrows, and use a small shield to protect their face. A spiked steel cap with dangling earflaps protects the skull and iron squares are sewn into the fabric of their boots to protect their calves. Much of their armour and clothing is trimmed in fur. These mercenaries carry double-curved bows of wood, sinew and horn and up to three quivers of arrows. They also carry hooked lances, a scimitar or sabre hooked to his belt or saddle and a dagger strapped to their left arms.

### Culture

Asgalun is part of Pelishtia and its people are of the Pelishtim tribe of the Sons of Shem. Pelishtia is the westernmost kingdom in Shem. The Pelishtim are renowned for their hardy *asshuri*, bold adventurers and curious wise men. Shem is an ancient kingdom and the Pelishtim are steeped in sorcery. The scholars of Pelishtia live for hundreds of years and may well possess the secret of eternal youth. Certainly the Pelishtim sorcerers are afforded respect even among the Stygians and Khitans, for they are learned in arcane secrets and wander far in search of knowledge. The *asshuri* of Pelishtia travel as far as Zingara in the west and Turan in the east in search for employment and adventure. They worship Pteor as patron, although the other Shemitish gods are not ignored and are sometimes afforded more reverence than their own supposed patron. The Pelishtim accept the ideas of life after death, believing also in ghosts and the undead, knowing that a strong will can allow the dead to return to fulfil unfinished business. The Temple of Pteor is the primary zikkurat in Asgalun.

Like other Shemitish city-states, Asgalun is ruled by a king. General Mazdak, a Hyrkanian opportunist who helped bring about the downfall of mad King Akhîrom, is the King of Asgalun. The king, like any Shemite king, is expected to fulfil his religious, military and social duties without fail, including annual or bi-annual sexual rituals with the high priestess of Ishtar. The Crown of



Pelishtia, once donned, can never be renounced. If a king abdicates, the mob will slay the king. Only death can free a king from his duty and his responsibilities.

The temples and palaces of Ashalun are built around the mouth of a large river. Canals cut through the city in two directions to water the fields outside. The whole city is surrounded by a thick square wall with three main gates and five minor gates. There are 24 main streets in Ashalun, running parallel and perpendicular from the river. The main streets are hemmed in by high windowless walls on either side. The reeking alleys between the main streets are winding, narrow and irregular. The streets are variable in width, and are anywhere from 4 to 20 feet wide.

The largest street is the Processional Street, which is paved and decorated with obscene statues and leering moulds of Pteor's gross face in the sun-glazed bricks. Processional Street, which passes from the Gate of Ishtar to the forbidden inner city, is lower than the other streets of Ashalun and is kept clean. The centre of the Processional Street is laid with massive flagstones of limestone. On either side of the flagstones are blocks of volcanic breccia slabs from the Mountains of Fire region. Veins of impact breccia stones are found on the walls of the street in patterns holy to Pteor and Ishtar. Over 150 statues of bulls and lions with white bodies and copper manes or horns line this street.

Another street is Aibur-shabu, which passes parallel with the river through several districts between high walls. Gods are often carried along this street during celebrations. The other streets are built from clay and garbage. There is no sewage system, so garbage is thrown to the streets. When the streets become unmanageable, the garbage is buried underneath a layer of clay. When the street rises high enough, people tear down their houses and build up the foundation and a new house on the higher ground.

The central section of the city, forbidden to all unless they have permission from the king, is set off from the rest of the city by a massive retaining wall. The ruins of previous incarnations of Ashalun surround this wall. The palaces of the rich and the king are included in this area of the city.

- ❖ **The Zikkurat of Pteor:** This is a seven-tiered white zikkurat of impressive design and multiple colours. Many of the glazed bricks coating the outside are embossed with golden bulls. It overlooks a huge garden courtyard. The first tier of the temple is 92 feet high and 256 × 256 feet in area. There is no interior to the first tier – it is built of mud-bricks and is solid, as are all the tiers but the final one. The second tier is 50 feet high and 197 × 197 feet in area. The three main stairs go to the top of this tier into a double-towered gate built on the tier. Stairs extend from the back of this

gate to the top of the third tier, where more stairs lead people from tier to tier. The third tier is 20 feet high, 167 × 167 feet in area. The fourth tier is also 20 feet high, 107 × 107 feet in area. The fifth tier is 20 feet high, 96 × 96 feet in area. The sixth tier is only 12 feet high and, 80 × 80 feet square. The seventh tier is bronzed, is 50 feet high and is 59 feet wide and 70 feet long. This final tier is actually the temple and has an interior. The gypsum walls and limestone ceiling are plated with gold and impact braccia. The altar, throne, footstool and pot-bellied statue of Pteor are all copper. The temple needs constant maintenance because it is made of mud and straw for the most part.

## ASHABAL

This is a small town a morning's walk to the west of Nakhmet. It is located on the north bank of the River Styx and has an extensive wharf district. A zikkurat to Ashar, god of winds, is a dominant structure, boasting the widest dome in all of Shem, as well as beautiful gilded spires. Ashabal imports trade goods, especially Stygian artefacts and products, and exports surplus grain, papyrus and fish

Like most Shemite cities, this one is surrounded by a huge, thick wall with battlements and ornamentation. Ashabal can afford 38 *asshuri* mercenaries hired from nearby city-states to help protect it. It also has 76 of its own townsmembers making up a militia. This militia tend to be soldier/pirates and patrol the Styx in the proximity of Ashabal. Ashabal is ruled by the city-state of Abbadra. An official from Abbadra, a priest of Ashar, has a residence here.

Several canals cut through the city from the river. The middle and lower classes live in low mud-brick cities around the larger buildings. The whole town, save the waterfront, is surrounded by a thick square wall with a single main gate and two minor gates. The main gate is decorated with symbols of the Ashar, as well as symbols of Lugal-irra, the god of doorways and gates. The minor gates are decorated with emblems representing Neti, the brother of Lugal-irra. There are four main streets in Ashabal. The streets are 3 to 12 feet wide. There is no sewage system, so garbage is thrown to the streets. When the streets become unmanageable, the garbage is buried underneath a layer of clay. When the street rises high enough, people tear down their houses and build up the foundation and a new house on the higher ground. Huge aqueducts carry water throughout the city.

- ❖ **The Ashar Zikkurat:** A zikkurat to Ashar, god of winds, is a dominant structure in the town, boasting the widest dome in all of Shem, as well as beautiful gilded spires. It has four tiers and is 71 feet tall. The bottom tier is 26 feet tall and the remaining tiers are 15 feet tall each.
- ❖ **The Inn of Four Winds:** This inn can be found near the temple. It has open air eating tables.



## ASWANA

Aswana is a small, quiet village. It has a sister just across the Styx called Bel-Phar (see Bel-Phar's entry in *Conan: Stygia – Serpent of the South*). It is a good place to cross the River Styx without drawing a lot of attention. It is an unwallled village of white mud buildings. The town is small enough that everyone knows everyone else. Strangers attract attention. The village imports trade goods, especially Stygian artefacts and products, and exports surplus emmer wheat and barley, as well as papyrus.

Aswana has no wall, 24 guards and 12 mercenary soldiers make up its military strength. If the town fears a Stygian invasion, the high priest of Aswana sends riders to the nearest city-states, who then immediately supply all the *asshuri* they can spare. Aswana is ruled by the high priest of Anshan, also a noted warrior among the people.

Aswana sits upon a low, artificial plateau lifted from the canal-crossed fields. A raised road runs like a snake around the various fields and, finally, to the raised uplands away from the fertile fields around the Styx. Structures nearer to the Styx are built on stilts. The streets of this town are cobbled instead of clay. The lower classes dwell in single-story huts or single-story white-washed mud-brick houses. The middle class tend to have two-story houses of white-washed mud-brick. The streets are cobble-stoned. Beer brewers and papyrus-makers are among the wealthiest of the craftsmen here. A single ferry takes people across to Stygia. The ferryman has a royal seal allowing him to transport people across the Styx to Bel-Phar. Anyone else caught transporting people across the Styx are arrested on the other side.

## BAALUR

The eight-sided, sheer-walled city of Baalur, due to a curse in its past, has uncommon fears and nightmares. It lies in the Pyrrhenian foothills. The countryside around the city is fertile valleys and rolling fields, all watered by snows and showers from the mountains. Baalur is the richest city of Shem insofar as crops and husbandry goes. Caravans to and from the southern nations pass through the city, as it sits on the convergence of several trade routes. The trade routes make the city quite cosmopolitan and people from a score of nations can be found here, either passing through or making a living here. The people are finely dressed, displaying the wealth of the region. From seeds brought back from the far depths of the Black Kingdom, the city grows small plots of the rare silver lotus. Tea made from this lotus is popular here. Baalur is home to a population of nearly 35,000 people, not including the network of towns and villages that work the lands and fields. Baalur exports surplus grains, wine, fruit, silver lotus.

Baalur has a sheer, eight-sided wall. Baalur's Regional Commander, General Furio, has 700 *asshuri* in his home-guard and 700 *asshuri* in his foreign legions. They also routinely employ 350 mercenary soldiers to further bolster their strength. General Furio is an 18<sup>th</sup> level soldier/noble/scholar. He is aided by seven captains who are typically 14<sup>th</sup> level soldiers / 1<sup>st</sup> level nobles, each with his own flight of bodyguards. Approximately 80 9<sup>th</sup> level flight leaders command 300 6<sup>th</sup> level hawk leaders, who command the remainder of the men.

This city-state is ruled by the aged King Aphrates and Queen Rufia. Their daughter, Princess Ismaia, rumoured to be the daughter of Conan, will ascend the throne upon their deaths. Queen Rufia is the same Rufia from the story *Hawks Over Shem*, by Robert E. Howard and L. Sprague de Camp. The temples, led by the Temple of Mardur (Pteor/Adonis under a different name), hold a considerable amount of the wealth and political clout in the city. Currently they support the king and his daughter.

General Furio is the regional commander of the *asshuri*, he is an accomplished warrior, succeeding his predecessor, Shalmanezzer, after returning from a legendary journey to find the headwaters of the River Styx, bringing back the seeds for the silver lotus. He currently supports King Aphrates, Queen Rufia and Princess Ismaia.

The minarets are leaved with gold and the window lights glitter with jewels. Narrow, angular lanes criss-cross throughout the city. Baalur is too small to have much in the way of segregated districts. However, for ease of description there are some vague areas of the town. The city boasts of a Temple of Mitra, one of the few in Shem.

## DAN-MARCAH

Dan-marcah is a coastal city of Pelishtia, on the coast of Shem. It is not a large city, but is self-sufficient in that it does not serve a larger city. Its economy is based on ship-building. Forests lie to the north of Dan-marcah and are used for ship building. Over 6,000 people live in Dan-marcah and many villages support its logging and forestry industries.

Like most Shemite cities, this one is surrounded by a huge, thick wall with battlements and ornamentation. A unit of 122 *asshuri* make up the home guard. An average of 61 mercenaries bolster the strength of the home guard *asshuri*. Their regional commander is a 12<sup>th</sup> level soldier/pirate.

Dan-marcah is ruled by the temples and its king. Like most Shemite kings, he is from the soldier class and is a capable warrior; he is also a priest of Dagon. He wants to



# ERUK CITY OF ASSHURI





build a Class 4 dock as defined in *Conan: Pirate Isles*. Dan-marcah is a shipyard first and foremost. The town is walled but centred around the ocean shore. As a Pelishti port, it has the same access difficulties as Asgalun (see *Conan: Pirate Isles* for the Port Access Difficulties Table). Dan-marcah is also a port of call with many of the resources discussed in *Conan: Pirate Isles*, including a Class 3 dock. Virtually all the town's resources are devoted to logging, shipbuilding and trade.

## ERUK

Eruk is a city-state of Shem whose *asshuri* are famed for their skill at arms. Located on the caravan trail from Akkharia into Koth, Eruk is built on the meadowlands near the hills that separate the grasslands from the eastern deserts. Eruk began as two separate villages, named Kulabba and Eannah, which later grew together and became Eruk. Eruk specialises in copper production and the smelting of iron, although Eruki steel is not as famed or as strong as Akbitanan steel. Another caravan trail from Stygia, via the Ford of Bubastes, passes through or near Eruk on its winding route to Shumir. Eruk has a population of almost 20,000 people, not including the four towns and many villages that are subject to its king. An amazing amount of the city is dedicated to gardens and temples. Eruk imports grains and exports copper, iron, steel and bitter wine

Like most Shemite cities, this one is surrounded by a huge, thick wall with battlements and ornamentation. A unit of 400 *asshuri* make up the home guard and another unit of 400 *asshuri* serve in foreign wars. An average of 200 mercenaries (or Free Companies) bolster the strength of the home guard *asshuri*. Eruki *asshuri* tend to be, on average, a level or two higher than most *asshuri* of similar rank.

Eruk is built upon a series of irregular hills. The temples and palaces are mostly upon these hills. The slums are on the plains beneath the hills. Zikkurats, temples and shrines rise up in scattered places throughout the city, and the other 'wards' mingle and entangle throughout a maze of alleys cutting and twisting between the main streets. In some parts of the city, the canals operate as streets, much like modern-day Venice. The middle and lower classes live in low mud-brick cities around the larger buildings.

The whole city is surrounded by a thick square wall with two main gates and four minor gates. The main gates are decorated with symbols of the god the gate is named after, as well as symbols of Lugal-irra, the god of doorways and gates. The minor gates are decorated with emblems representing Neti, the brother of Lugal-irra. There are 21 main streets in Eruk. They are narrow and irregular, hemmed in by high windowless walls on either side. The streets are 3 to 25 feet wide. The largest street is the Processional Street, which is paved and decorated with lion statues and lion moulds in the sun-glazed bricks. Processional Street, which passes

from the Akitu Gate to the central zikkurat district, is lower than the other streets of Eruk and is kept clean. The other streets are built from clay and garbage. There is no sewage system, so garbage is thrown to the streets. When the streets become unmanageable, the garbage is buried underneath a layer of clay. When the street rises high enough, people tear down their houses and build up the foundation and a new house on the higher ground. Huge aqueducts carry water throughout the city.

☒ **The White Temple of El-Lil:** This temple, built upon a brick terrace, is 73 × 57 feet in size instead of the standard 20 × 20 feet seen in most Shemite temples. The temple has three doors. The main entrance faces toward the south. Although not built on as tall of a zikkurat as many Shemite temples, none dispute that the White Temple is one of the most beautiful temples in all of Shem.

☒ **The Zikkurat of Ishtar:** This is a seven-tiered white zikkurat of impressive design and multiple colours. Many of the glazed bricks coating the outside are embossed with golden lions. The first tier of the temple is 92 feet high and 256 × 256 feet in area. There is no interior to the first tier – it is built of mud-bricks and is solid, as are all the tiers but the final one. The second tier is 50 feet high and 197 × 197 feet in area. The three main stairs go to the top of this tier into a double-towered gate built on the tier. Stairs extend from the back of this gate to the top of the third tier, where more stairs lead people from tier to tier. The third tier is 20 feet high, 167 × 167 feet in area. The fourth tier is also 20 feet high, 107 × 107 feet in area. The fifth tier is 20 feet high, 96 × 96 feet in area. The sixth tier is only 12 feet high and, 80 × 80 feet square. The seventh tier is bronzed, is 50 feet high and is 59 feet wide and 70 feet long. This final tier is actually the temple and has an interior. The gypsum walls and limestone ceiling are plated with gold and impact braccia. The altar, throne, footstool and large-breasted, nude statue of Ishtar are all copper. The temple needs constant maintenance because it is made of mud and straw for the most part.

## GHAZA

Ghaza is a city-state of Shem that has built its zikkurats on the western fork of the Asgalun River. This city has specialised in vineyards and wine, competing with Kyros, a city not far from Ghaza. Ghaza's population approaches 11,000 people. Four towns and many villages supply the labourers for the vineyards in the region.

The city is walled by a massive fortification of sun-bleached brick rising over 22 feet in height. Ghaza routinely employs just over a hundred mercenaries to bolster their 200-man *asshuri* home guard. Ghaza



also has 200 *asshuri* in their foreign legion, employed in other cities. The temples are the true power of Ghaza. The high priestess of Ninkasi, the goddess of wine, in Ghaza is typically a 2<sup>nd</sup> level soldier / 10<sup>th</sup> level scholar. The king of Ghaza, Reygnu, chosen by the high priestess, is a soldier/scholar/noble multiclassed character. King Reygnu is typically controlled by the high priestess through large amounts of wine and sex.

Ghaza lies amid hundreds of acres of vineyard. The Asgalun River passes through the city and feeds its canals. The city itself is laid out in typical Shemite fashion. The city is surprisingly upright and compact. Like most Shemite cities it is square-shaped. Suburbs sprawl outside the wall, villages and towns that support the main city, growing barley and harvesting the trees. These tenements are unplanned and undefended. Near the Asgalun River, the shanty-town villages are built on stilts against the annual flooding. Countless irrigation channels bring water to the orchards of olives and grapes. The grapes are for oil, not for food. There is a myth that if a woman rolls an olive on a floor, it will approach the man she is destined to be with. The craftsmen of Ghaza specialise in the making of wines.

## KHYFA

Khyfa is a mountainous city-state that inexplicably worships Mitra with fervent devotion. They export stone and wood. Khyfa is surrounded by a large, thick wall with battlements. 100 *asshuri* are part of the home guard of Khyfa, and another 100 *asshuri* are used as mercenaries. The city also uses 62 mercenary soldiers from Koth and a small unit of ten local hillmen for scouts. Khyfa is ruled by a relative of a former Pelishtim king, King Akhîrom. He is a warrior king of noble Shemite blood and wants to see Shemite gods back in power in Khyfa. He and his Shemites cannot comprehend the worth of a single male god whose laws are stagnant. He worships Pteor and Ishtar and believes many of his city's problems (minor rebellions and such) come from his city's refusal to accept a Shemitish patron deity. Khyfa has a huge problem with its Kothian population, many of whom want the city to belong to Koth. The leader of the Kothian community is a 12<sup>th</sup> level Mitran priest.

Temples and shrines rise up in scattered places throughout the city, and the other 'wards' mingle and entangle throughout a maze of alleys cutting and twisting between the main streets. The middle and lower classes live in low mud-brick cities around the larger buildings. The whole city is surrounded by a thick square wall with two main gates and three minor gates. The main gates are decorated with symbols of the god the gate is named after, as well as symbols of Lugal-irra, the god of

doorways and gates. The minor gates are decorated with emblems representing Neti, the brother of Lugal-irra. Two small mountain streams provide most of the water.

## KYROS

Kyros is another city-state located on the Asgalun River, competing with Ghaza for domination of the wine trade. The *asshuri* of Kyros use a fighting style that favours prolonged combat designed to fatigue the foe until that foe makes a mistake. The lush vineyards around Kyros bear the fabulous grapes that make the finest wine of all Shem and even of all the Hyborian Kingdoms to the north. The royal family of Kyros is immensely wealthy, hiring armies of *asshuri* to defend the source of their wealth, the vineyards. Kyros has a population of over 13,000 people living around its white zikkurats, not counting the seven towns and uncounted villages that work the vineyards for the city.

Like most Shemite cities, this one is surrounded by a huge, thick wall with battlements and ornamentation. A unit of 400 *asshuri* make up the home guard and another unit of 400 *asshuri* serve in foreign wars. An average of 200 mercenaries (or Free Companies) bolster the strength of the home guard *asshuri*. Their regional commander is an 18<sup>th</sup> level scholar/soldier/noble. He is aided by four captains who are typically 14<sup>th</sup> level soldiers / 1<sup>st</sup> level nobles, each with his own flight of bodyguards. Approximately 40 9<sup>th</sup> level flight leaders command 100 or so 6<sup>th</sup> level hawk leaders, who command the remainder of the men. The *asshuri* reside in a fortress within the city known as 'The Virgin's Castle'.

Kyros is ruled by the temples and its king. Like most Shemite kings, he is also from the soldier class and is a capable warrior; he is also a priest of Pagestindug. His queen is a high priestess of Ninkasi. Balvadek was a king of Kyros but was killed by Conan.

The entire region around Kyros is vineyards and canals. The Asgalun River flows through Kyros and feeds its irrigation canals. The whole city is surrounded by a thick square wall with two main gates and four minor gates. The main gates are decorated with symbols of the god the gate is named after, as well as symbols of Lugal-irra, the god of doorways and gates. The minor gates are decorated with emblems representing Neti, the brother of Lugal-irra. The streets are built from clay and garbage. There is no sewage system, so garbage is thrown to the streets. When the streets become unmanageable, the garbage is buried underneath a layer of clay. When the street rises high enough, people tear down their houses and build up the foundation and a new house on the higher ground. Huge aqueducts carry water throughout the city.



## NAKHMET

Despite its Stygian name, this is a Shemitish town. Nakhmet is a small village sitting upon a low, artificial plateau lifted from the canal-crossed fields. It is located on the north bank of the River Styx a half-day's walk from Ashabal. The town has a zikkurat to an obscure Shemitish god named Baal-Sepa, and its temple boasts more statues of Baal-Sepa than any other Shemitish temple. The town is located across from the Stygian Khopshef Province. They import Stygian artefacts and products and export surplus emmer wheat and barley, as well as papyrus. Nakhmet has no wall. 24 guards and 12 mercenary soldiers make up the military strength of Nakhmet. If the town fears a Stygian invasion, the high priest of Nakhmet sends riders to the nearest city-states, who then immediately supply all the *asshuri* they can spare. Nakhmet is ruled by the high priest of Baal-Sepa.

A raised road runs like a snake around the various fields and, finally, to the raised uplands away from the fertile fields around the Styx. Structures nearer to the Styx are built on stilts. The streets of this town are cobbled instead of clay. The lower classes dwell in single-story huts or single-story white-washed mud-brick houses. The middle class tend to have two-story houses of white-washed mud-brick. A single ferry takes people across to Stygia. The ferryman has a royal seal allowing him to transport people across the Styx to Bel-Phar. Anyone else caught transporting people across the Styx are arrested on the other side.

## NEDREZZAR

Nedrezzar is a Shemitish city-state between Baalur and Asgalun in western Shem. It borders Baalur, sharing a portion of the Asgalun River. Nedrezzar sits on the Incense Road and is a farming community with ties to the Temple of Dagon. The whole city is surrounded by a thick square wall with one main gate and two minor gates. It enforces a toll on trade passing over the bridge over the Asgalun. Many caravans avoid the toll by passing through a ford a few leagues to the east. The Nedrezzim are regarded as especially keen dealers, which is saying something among the Shemites. Nedrezzar is one of the smaller nations, with a population of over eight thousand people in its capital and only a couple of towns and a handful of villages maintain its primary trading specialisation, farming. It is set on the Incense Road. They export farmed goods, especially grains, corn and other vegetables.

Like most Shemite cities, this one is surrounded by a huge, thick wall with battlements and ornamentation. A unit of 200 *asshuri* make up the home guard. An average of 83 mercenaries (or free companies) bolster the strength of the home guard *asshuri*. Nedrezzar is ruled by the temples and its king. Like most Shemite kings, he is also from the soldier class and is a capable warrior; he is also a priest of Sidduri.

## NIPPR

Nippr is a desert city-state well-known for the ferocity of its *asshuri*. Nippr lies south of the Kothian Escarpment and Khoraja, on the caravan trail connecting Shumir and Akbitana. Another trail headed southerly toward the Styx, then follows the Styx to the Ford of Bubastes. The city is home to over eleven thousand people, dominating five smaller towns and several outlying villages. Built around the Choaspes River, Nippr and its villages serve as a market for the loot and booty brought in by the nomadic tribes, such as the Zuagir. Occasionally the nomads have tried to take Nippr but its impressive *asshuri* have thus far managed to defend their home and its attendant towns. Nippr's patron is an earth-mother goddess known as Derketo, the seducer of Adonis, a queen of the underworld and fertility goddess. The largest of its zikkurats is dedicated to her worship. The Nippr are fond of figurines of people, gods and animals. They import and export loot and stolen goods, and export dates as well.

Like most Shemite cities, this one is surrounded by a huge, thick wall with battlements and ornamentation. A unit of 400 *asshuri* make up the home guard and another unit of 400 *asshuri* serve in foreign wars. An average of 200 nomad mercenaries bolster the strength of the home guard *asshuri* when needed. Their Regional Commander is an 18<sup>th</sup> level noble/scholar/soldier. He is aided by four captains who are typically 14<sup>th</sup> level soldiers / 1<sup>st</sup> level nobles, each with his own flight of bodyguards. Approximately 40 9<sup>th</sup> level flight leaders command 100 or so 6<sup>th</sup> level hawk leaders, who command the remainder of the men.

Nippr is built on a marsh around the Choaspes River during the age of Acheron. Floods and fires destroyed the original villages on the site many times before the urban centre was able to be built as a city because of the accumulation of debris. The first temple here, built before the zikkurats, was created for the purpose of burning the dead of the aboriginal peoples. Later, as the Sons of Shem arrived in the area and their religion developed, the first of the zikkurats was built over an original cruciform-shaped temple. As wealth or conquerors poured into the burgeoning city, greater zikkurats were built upon the older shrines.

The Choaspes River cuts through the centre of the city, fed by several oases that were connected by the canals. The city is built upon several great mounds in the desert, causing those who enter Nippr to look up to it when approaching. The plateau mounds are caused by the constant building and rebuilding the city over the millennia. One flat mound holds the professional quarters, where the craftsmen of Nippr dwell as well as the temple administrators. The religious



quarters holds the temples of El-Lil and the other gods, as well as the zikkurat of Derketo.

The Choaspes River is 160 feet across on average. Occasionally, usually late at night, the sound of a woman screaming and crying is heard, the ghost of a woman who lost her son in the canal. The storehouses of the city are close to the bank of the canal. Smaller irrigation canals lead off the Shathen to the grain fields and the date orchards.

- ❖ **Temple of Derketo:** This zikkurat is impressive beyond most. It was once the temple of El-Lil. The first stage is 36 feet high, and is about 1,090 feet per side in length and breadth. The corners are oriented toward the cardinal compass points. Near the north-western corner of this platform, three more mud-brick stages rise up, faced with baked bricks cemented with bitumen. Each stage is set in about 13 feet. The zikkurat reaches a total height of 90 feet.
- ❖ **House of Bel:** To the north-east of the three-staged zikkurat, on the base platform, is the House of Bel.
- ❖ **House of Murash:** In this palace the commercial agents of the temple and government live. Also in the palace the archives of the temple is maintained, storing thousands of clay tablets upon which are written the records of farms, personnel, sales and lists of goods contained in the treasuries.
- ❖ **Sakaylum Palace:** This is the place of the temple prostitutes of Derketo.

## PASHTUN

Pashtun is a town built on a large island just north of the centre line of the River Styx. It is located near a confluence of tributaries flowing into the Styx. In the centre of the island is a high rock outcropping where several inns have been built. The Khopshef province is to the west of Pashtun. Pashtun is not claimed by Shem or Stygia for the convenience of both. It serves as a river port and clearing-house for goods travelling or crossing the river. Prices are generally high on the island. The town imports and exports Stygian/Shemite artefacts and products. Pashtun has no wall and no military strength beyond 19 or 20 mercenaries hired to keep the peace. Pashtun is ruled by the high priest of Nina, also a noted warrior among the people. He is advised by a High Priest of Set.

## QJARA

Qjara is a city-state in the eastern portions of Shem with golden-tan walls. It specialises in salt. A river provides water for the town along its north side, creating a river marsh. The Mountains of Desperation lies to the north. Another mountain range is to the south-east, a low range that runs

easterly. The priests here make the wealthy share with the poor. They export salt. Qjara is surrounded by a large, thick wall with battlements, although the town has a decidedly unmilitary aspect to it. 150 *asshuri* (called Temple Warriors) are part of the home guard of Qjara. The city also uses 76 mercenary soldiers. The *asshuri* are led by a 13<sup>th</sup> level regional commander.

Qjara is ruled by a typical Shemitish king, King Semiarchos. The king of Qjara traditionally marries the high priestess of Saditha. Currently, Semiarchos is married to Queen Regula. They have a daughter named Afriandra. If there is no male heir, then the princess must marry the highest ranking male priest. Turan and its representatives have a lot of power in Qjara, protecting their trade interests.

Qjara is laid out as most Shemitish city-states: a square-wall, a lot of temples and sprawling residential districts. The caravan quarter of Qjara is just a fringe of low buildings, watering troughs and stables for a half dozen caravans. The caravansaries and inns of this quarter are open stalls with canopies. There are three gates, the Tariff Gate, which opens into the caravan quarter, the north postern door and the Old Gate, which faces south, the eldest and grandest of the city's three portals. It is little used since the caravan quarter and the Tariff Gate was built along the river. The Old Gate leads into the merchant quarter (and an old, disused *karum*) along a boulevard lined with the stately villas of Qjara's wealthiest families. Internally, the 'lightly guarded and seldom closed' Trellis Gate leads into the temple quarter. The temple quarter is set off by a wall as tall and thick as the outer wall. The Agora is set just inside the garlanded Trellis Gate and is a civil meeting place enclosed by the high, colonnaded facades of Saditha's temple and the king's palace.

## SABATEA

Sabatea is a city-state on the border of Stygia near the Taian Mountains to the west of the Shan-e-Sorkh. The Sabateans worship the Golden Peacock and have a dark reputation for torture, abominable rites and a home for the wizards of the Black Ring. Most Shemitish city-states hire Sabatean torturers for their expertise in that field excels. Sabatea was once a city of the giant-kings who once ruled the lands now known as Stygia. It is ruled by King Hadhramout and the temple of the Golden Peacock.

Like most Shemite cities, this one is surrounded by a huge, thick wall with battlements and ornamentation. A unit of 226 *asshuri* make up the home guard. Another unit of 226 *asshuri* swoops around the territory controlled by Sabatea, protecting caravan trains of incense and rounding up potential slaves or sacrifices. Smuggling or deviating from an assigned and established trade route are both punishable by



**Variant Rule:** Sabateans are more accomplished torturers than they are soldiers. Sabatean Meadow Shemites have a favoured class of scholar. Soldier is not a favoured class for Sabateans. Also, their background is a little less stereotypical, so their background skills are Intimidate, Knowledge (arcana) and Sense Motive. Otherwise, Sabateans conform to the Meadow Shemite racial characteristics.

torture and death; the *asshuri* carry out the law. An average of 113 Stygian mercenaries bolster the strength of the home guard *asshuri*. Their Regional Commander is an 18<sup>th</sup> level Stygian soldier/noble/scholar.

The Black Ring is the main sorcerous coven in Stygia. It is made up of former or current priests of Set, formerly independent sorcerers whose infamy and power draws the attention of the senior wizards of the Black Ring, and acolytes of the Black Ring (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). There is no honour among members of the Black Ring, just a naked desire for control over others and sorcerous knowledge. Sorcerers join the Black Ring because they seek raw magical power. Sorcerers of the Black Ring are feared wherever they go, even in Stygia itself. Even the threat of their wrath is generally enough to bring their cowering inferiors back into line.

The coven of torturers in Sabatea hold a lot of wealth and power. Other than incense, Sabatea is probably best known for its torturers. These torturers learn how to reach deep into a person's psyche and find the means to force that person to submit, forcing the person to enter into a complete mindset of submission. They understand how to use physical and psychological pain, humiliation, bondage and ritualistic behaviour to bend to the will of others. The torturers can be of any character class, although scholar and thief are the most common.

Hot and sulphurous springs can be found all over Sabatea, usually enclosed in courtyards or even in the houses. The city has six land gates and three water gates. The water gates are fed by canals from the River Styx. There are two harbours in the land-locked city. Raw materials for incense are brought in daily for the craftsmen. Most of the craftsmen are involved in the manufacture of incense and incense burners – as well as torture equipment. The temple district, which is enclosed in its own defensive wall, includes the Zikkurat of the Golden Peacock, the Sabatean headquarters for the Black Ring, the school of torture, shrines to other Shemite gods and a special shrine to Set. The Palace of the King is also located in the central district.

## SARIDIS

Saridis lies a half-a-day's ride from Varhia. The town serves wayfarers, merchants and *asshuri* of all callings, sitting upon a crossing of diverse roads. It is located at the borders of four city-states: Ghaza, Kyros, Anakia and Akkharia. These four often fight over control of Saridis. Apple orchards grow around Saridis for the making of specialised wines, its chief export. The palace here has a chamber known as the Amethyst Room for entertaining guests of state. Sardis imports grain, weapons, armour and beer, and exports apples and specialised wines

Sardis is surrounded by a large, thick wall, about six feet high with battlements. A wooden gate is set into the wall. 63 *asshuri* are part of the home guard of Sardis. The city also employs 43 mercenary soldiers. The *asshuri* are led by a 11<sup>th</sup> level regional commander. Sardis is ruled by a one of the four city-states it borders, or it may be independently ruled by the High Priest of the temple during brief periods of non-rule. Sardis is laid out as most Shemitish city-states: a low wall, a lot of temples and sprawling residential districts. The tallest building is the citadel in the centre, which is surrounded by shrines and temples.

## SARK

Sark is a small city-state in the deserts of Shem far to the south of Qjara. The soldiers of Sark wear bronze armour and wield bronze spears. They worship extremely blood-thirsty god Votantha. They are rivals of Qjara, which lies many leagues to the north and east. Clothing here consists of a vest, kirtle and a pleated kilt. The city-state commands volcanic forges in the south and mines in the mountains. Sark has a population of over 10,000. They import grain, weapons, armour and export volcanic rock (including obsidian) and metals forged in the volcanoes of the south, mined goods. Sark is surrounded by a large, thick wall with battlements. 202 *asshuri* are part of the home guard of Sark. The city also uses 100 mercenary soldiers.

Sark is ruled by a typical Shemitish king and he is aided by the High Priest of Votantha. The kings of Sark do not live very long. The kingdom is under a curse which gives each king since King Anaximander a wasting disease. The people and the priests believe this is proof of Votantha's displeasure. In truth, the bed the kings sleep in has four radioactive stones set in the bedposts – and the radioactivity is killing the kings. Sark is laid out as most Shemitish city-states: a square-wall, a lot of temples and sprawling residential districts. The buildings of Sark have tiled roofs, white zikkurats, white-washed domes and are all protected by battlemented walls.



## SENDAJ

Sendaj is a squalid, riverside hamlet of western Shem. Once per year it hosts a fair in the market square. It exports dried fish and imports grain. Sendaj has no wall and no strength. Six commoners are part of the home guard of Sendaj. The city also uses 3 mercenary soldiers from local city-states to maintain the peace. Sendaj is laid out as most Shemitish city-states: a lot of temples and sprawling residential districts.

## SHUMIR

Shumir is an ancient city-state in the east where Bel, the god of thieves, was born. Shumir lies on a juncture of caravan trails from Eruk to the west and Nippr to the south. Khoraja is just to the north-east. Shumir provides splendid *asshuri*, well trained in the arts of war, especially at fighting desert nomads such as the Zuagir. Shumir is home to over thirteen thousand people and is noted also as a city of thieves, as befits the birthplace of Bel. It is situated on a large expanse of plains. Shumir imports grain, weapons, armour and beer, and exports camels.

Shumir is surrounded by a large, thick wall with battlements. 300 *asshuri* are part of the home guard of Shumir, and another 300 *asshuri* are used as mercenaries. The city also uses 132 mercenaries to assist the *asshuri* when needed. The *asshuri* are led by a 14<sup>th</sup> level regional commander. Many of the *asshuri* have a level of thief in addition to soldier levels and make excellent guerrilla warriors. Shumir is ruled by a Shemitish king, although he usually has at least a few levels in thief and has several thief skills. He is aided by the priests and priestesses of Bel.

Shumir is laid out as most Shemitish city-states: a square-wall, a lot of temples and sprawling residential districts. It is built around a series of desert oases upon great mounds. The plateau mounds are caused by the constant building and rebuilding the city over the millennia.

## SHUSHAN

Shushan, where the people dress in barbaric splendour, is the largest of the eastern city-states. It sits upon the Choaspes River. Instead of kings, the rulers of this massive state call themselves emperors. The city is north of the Taia mountains in Stygia, where the Styx makes its 90 degree turn. It has a population that exceeds 30,000 people and nine towns, a vast number of villages and whole hosts of nomadic tribes pay tribute to this wealthy trading nation. The women wear jewelled breastplates with slender chains to hold them in place, gold anklets and jewelled

bracelets, jade pendants from golden earrings and gem-crusted girdles that support nearly transparent silken skirts. Its gardens contained prized lilies and lotus flowers. Shushan imports loot, grain, weapons, armour and beer. It exports dates and lemons.

Shushan is surrounded by a large, thick wall with battlements. 700 *asshuri* are part of the home guard of Shushan, and another 700 *asshuri* are used as mercenaries. The city also uses 356 mercenaries to assist the *asshuri* when needed. Mercenaries are paid in food and beer. The *asshuri* are led by a 20<sup>th</sup> level regional commander. These *asshuri* are almost always at war, bringing in trains of tribute and spoils of war from neighbouring Shemite cities and from the local nomad tribes.

Shushan is ruled by an aggressive 20<sup>th</sup> level 'emperor' named Untash Gal, seventh in the Shimash dynasty. He is a strong believer in blood feuds (as well as other aspects of nomadic law) and is fond of saying, 'And without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin'. The king is backed up by the temples and priests of Shushan, who have their own near unique pantheon of gods based on a mixture of Iranistani and Shemite gods. Because Shushan has a fairly large population of Turanian merchants and mercenaries, the envoy of Turan wields considerable influence over the king. Iranistan also has a relatively large presence in Shushan, including about 20% of the mercenaries in Shushan. The envoy representing the interests of Anshan is an influential part of the court and in city politics.

Shushan, as most Shemitish city-states, has a lot of temples and sprawling residential districts. It is built between the Choaspes and Shushan Rivers. The city is an imposing site, built upon four huge plateaus of mud and brick, with great citadels and columns rearing above the orchards around the plateaus. Great groves of date, konar and lemon trees surround the city. The groves are in turn surrounded by pastures for livestock and fields of corn. The two rivers water the land so well that canal irrigation is unnecessary. The first mound is the acropolis. Here live the labourers and the *dam-gar* of the city, as well as the fortress of the *asshuri*. The houses of Shushan are laid out around courtyards, as are most Shemite houses, and also have large reception halls. The largest mound is the Royal Town, which is the quarter of the officials. Northwest of the Royal Town is the Apadana District, where the King's three palaces are built. The fourth mound is the Artisan's Town, where the craftsmen dwell. Below the mounds, near the river, are great sprawling temple complexes. These temples display the city's wealth. Gold and silver statues abound of Shushan gods wearing animal heads or horned crowns.



❖ **Zikkurat of Inshushinak:** This white zikkurat has five tiers. The first is 188 × 188 feet and is 26 feet high. The second tier is 146 × 146 feet and is only 15 feet high. The third tier is 104 × 104 feet in area and 15 feet in height. The fourth tier is 62 × 62 feet and is also 15 feet tall. The fifth tier, the actual temple, is layered in gold and is 20 × 20 feet in area. This zikkurat actually has rooms inside of its tiers. The walls of the zikkurat are pierced by monumental doors surrounded by griffons and bulls and lions. The exterior walls are 26 feet thick. Stairways inside link the different floors.

## TEL-AMMON

Tel-Ammon is a small city-state on the Choaspes River somewhere between Akkharria and Yamman. It imports grain, weapons, armour and beer, and exports fruit. Tel-Ammon is surrounded by a large, thick wall with battlements. 209 *asshuri* are part of the home guard of Tel-Ammon. The city also uses 106 mercenary soldiers to help keep down the rabble. The *asshuri* are led by a 13<sup>th</sup> level regional commander who also serves as the Chancellor. Chancellor Ibram is the right-hand man of King Nebuhan. He makes sure most of the unpleasantness of the city does not reach the ears of the tyrant king. He is also the Regional Commander of the Tel-Ammon *asshuri*.

Tel-Ammon is ruled by a tyrannical Shemitish king named Nebuhan. Nebuhan is soulless, his soul having been placed in amber, which is held in a topless tower known as the Tower of Bet-Shaid. He murdered his wife, the Queen of Tel-Ammon, as she gave birth to a son. Unknown to the king, she had already given birth to the twin daughter moments before. The daughter was spirited out to the nomads, where the midwife had kin. The daughter, Ayalet, is prophesied to reclaim the throne on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Ayalet has a lion birthmark on her left shoulder and is about four or five years old when Conan takes the throne of Aquilonia. The amber is protected by a *blistering squall of evil* spell (see page 43). In order to kill Nebuhan, the amber containing his soul must be thrown into fire – and anyone taking the throne of Tel-Ammon will have Ayalet to deal with when she comes of age. King Nebuhan loves watching people get eaten by the crocodiles in the river.

Like any city governed by a tyrant, there are rebel factions. They routinely make fruitless assassination attempts and are beginning to believe King Nebuhan is a sorcerer because no matter what they do to the king, he always lives through the supposedly fatal event. Tel-Ammon is laid out as most Shemitish city-states: a thick wall, a lot of temples and sprawling residential districts.

## THUJARA

Thujara is a town of western Shem just above the source of the Habur River. Its sun-baked mud walls rise above its grain fields and pastures, the source of its income for trade. Thujara is surrounded by a large, thick wall with battlements. 69 soldiers are part of the home guard of Thujara. The city also uses 35 mercenary *asshuri*. Thujara is ruled by one of the neighbouring large city-states. Thujara is laid out as most Shemitish city-states: a square-wall, a lot of temples and sprawling residential districts. 2,304 people live in its ten acres of slums, 275 people live in the *karum* and 500 people live in the craftsman district. The remaining live among the temples and official buildings.

## VARHIA

Varhia is a small village between Ghaza and Kyros and is a satellite village of Ghaza. They export a regional variety of wine. Varhia has 18 guards who work during the day and usually has 9 mercenaries hired as a night-time peacekeeping force inside the town. There are no actual fortifications. Varhia is ruled by the city-state of Ghaza. Varhia is laid out as most Shemitish city-states: a square-wall, a lot of temples and sprawling residential districts. There are two taverns in the village. Two inns noted in the sag is the Sooty Boar and the Grape and Thistle.

## YAMMAN

Yamman lies southwest of Khoraja and is a small city-state of white washed adobe and stone. The city surrendered itself to the Stygian prince that followed Natohk during his war against Khoraja. Yamman is surrounded by a large, thick wall with battlements. 156 *asshuri* are part of the home guard of Yamman. The city also uses 78 mercenary soldiers from Koth. The *asshuri* are led by a 10<sup>th</sup> level regional commander. Yamman is ruled by King Ikthan. After the fall of Natohk, the threw off the Stygian yoke he found himself and his city in and resumed rule. Khoraja and Shushan dictate much of the fate of the city, which is too small to be truly independent. Yamman is laid out as most Shemitish city-states: a square-wall, a lot of temples and sprawling residential districts.



# Skills, Feats & Manoeuvres

**SHEM IS AN** ancient land with its own traditions and ways of doing things. Some skills are used differently, certain feats are performed more readily and the *asshuri* are always looking for violent new combat manoeuvres to give them the edge over an opponent. This chapter reveals unique Shemite traditions.

## NEW USES FOR OLD SKILLS

Although these skill uses discussed herein can technically be used by anyone, it is recommended they be used in these manners by Shemite characters to maintain a distinctness about the characters, especially the new use for Heal, which depends entirely on the Shemite take on illness and disease (discussed in detail on page 35).

### APPRAISE

Appraise does not have to apply only to physical objects but can also apply to intangibles such as trade offers, treaties and political deals. With an Appraise check (DC 20) any hidden clauses or other consequences your character may regret are apparent. With an Appraise check (DC 30) you can get the information as it applies to another character. If you fail, the Games Master can give you inaccurate information. This use of the skill is particularly important for *dam-gar*, priests and kings.

### HEAL

Heal can be used by Shemite healers to heal Terror, Corruption, magical effects as well as poison and disease (as per the rules in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). These healing functions, basically exorcisms, only works on those who believe in the healing powers of the Shemite healers (usually only other Shemites). See page 35 for information regarding Shemite healers.

### Shemite Heal Check DCs

Task	DC
Relieve Terror	20
End Magical Effect	Set by caster's Magical Attack roll
Remove 1 point of Corruption	35 + the number of Corruption points the victim has

## INTIMIDATE

**Avoid Leaving Marks:** Humans are eternally inventive. Unfortunately, they are just as creative when it comes to inflicting physical and psychological pain, coming up with new ways to torment the body or mind of a creature. It has long been known that a victim who you are trying to interrogate will break much more easily if you rough him up a bit. This not only shows that you are serious and that he is in genuine danger, it provides an incentive to cough up the information you want, as the promise of future beatings hangs over his head if he does not co-operate. The only trouble is that a battered victim can go straight to a sympathetic friend or even to the forces of law and order (presuming the forces of law and order are not the ones doing this), show his bruises and have his tale of woe confirmed. It is much better if a victim can be roughed up without having any evidence of this on his body. For this reason, certain human interrogators have developed a science of inflicting damage that does not leave a mark.

**Check:** The victim of this use of the Intimidate skill must be helpless. An Intimidate check (DC 10 + victim's Constitution modifier) is made. A Sabatean acolyte has a +2 on this check. If the check is successful, you may inflict damage upon the victim as if you had made an unarmed attack. This damage is nonlethal by default. You may inflict lethal damage if you choose, but this adds 4 to the DC of the check. Damage inflicted in this way does not leave marks upon the body.

**Retry:** If you fail the skill check, you leave a mark. You may, however, make as many skill checks as you like, possibly reducing the victim to unconsciousness or even death.



*Action:* Inflicting damage upon a helpless opponent without leaving marks requires a full-round action and demands concentration upon the task.

## KNOWLEDGE (ASTROLOGY)

Shemites set a lot of store in astrology. Knowledge of astrology can accomplish many things, although the most practical use is identifying the exact moment to maximise the casting of sorcery. To determine the exact date and the significance of the night sky, a character need only roll against a difficulty 20. Also, as a free action, an astrologer may roll against a DC of 10 and determine the exact time provided he has a clear view of the stars.

**Nativities:** By casting a horoscope and creating a nativity chart, an astrologer can tell certain things about a person. To compute a horoscope, you must have access to astrological equipment, such as star charts. Nativities are powerful things and can be computed for creatures or objects. To create a nativity for a creature, you must know the exact time and place the creature was born. For objects, you must know the exact time and place the object's creation began. If the nativity is created accurately (see DC chart), different bonuses can be gleaned. Complete familiarity is one of the most frightening aspects of a nativity – for any spell requiring familiarity with the subject, the nativity provides the greatest familiarity possible. A nativity can expose weaknesses of the subject, causing Curses and Hypnotism spells cast by the astrologer to have a +1 circumstance bonus to the magical attack roll. When someone or something becomes an open book, skill checks used against the creature (such as Sense Motive or Bluff) or within the building (such as Hide) or to the object (such as Craft to repair it), the check is made with a +5 circumstance bonus. The Games Master is to determine if a skill meets the criteria.

### Nativity DCs

Task	Difficulty Class
Complete Familiarity	25
Exposed Weaknesses	30
An Open Book	35

**Power of Astrology:** The passage of the world around the sun can have an effect on certain spells and rituals. On Equinoxes and Solstices, a successful Knowledge (astrology) check gives the character a +1 astrological bonus to Perform (ritual) per 5 points over the DC if the rituals are performed around noon. The month of the Vernal Equinox is ruled by the red planet and influences violent spells, raising their save DCs by +1 if cast on this date with a successful Knowledge (astrology) check. The Summer Solstice is auspicious for hypnotisms and summonings, raising any save DCs for these spells by +1 if cast on this date with a successful Knowledge (astrology) check. Rituals performed during various phases of the moons can also create an astrological bonus if the Knowledge (astrology) check is made. During the New Moon, Necromancy, Immortality and Summonings spells gain a +1 astrological bonus to Magic Attack rolls. During the Crescent Moon, scholars gain a +1 astrological bonus to Divination spells to Magic Attack rolls. During the Half Moon, Hypnotism and Nature Magic spells earn the +1 astrological bonus to Magic Attack rolls. During the Gibbous Moon, Counterspells and Oriental Magic gain the +1 astrological bonus to Magic Attack rolls. During the Full Moon, Curses and Prestidigitation spells earn the +1 astrological bonus to Magic Attack rolls.

**Check:** The power of astrology can be utilised by making a Knowledge (astrology) check (DC 15), with success indicating he enjoys the benefits and drawbacks of the stars for his sorcery for the rest of the day. These benefits and drawbacks are noted as an astrological bonus to determine if bonuses stack together.





**Retry:** In general, no. There are no re-tries unless a new chart is drawn up or new resources are drawn upon, which takes at least a couple of hours.

## FEATS

All characters within *Conan the Roleplaying Game* will select at least one feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level, and more as they rise in levels. Feat selection is a crucial part of customising each Shemite character and care should be taken to choose feats that complement the character's class features, racial traits and other capabilities.

### ASSHURI TECHNIQUE MASTERY (GENERAL)

You are a master of tricky combat manoeuvres. You have trained to become the best of the best.

**Prerequisites:** Meadow Shemite or Pelishtim, base attack bonus +6, Weapon Focus (any)

**Benefit:** The character gains a +2 bonus to all attack and damage rolls, skill and ability checks involved in performing any one Combat Manoeuvre the character qualifies for.

**Special:** This feat may only be taken as a bonus feat for having a favoured class. This feat may be taken more than once but each time it is taken, the character must select a different Combat Manoeuvre.

### AURA OF AUTHORITY (GENERAL)

You have been trained as a torturer and exude an air of power that demands respect.

**Prerequisites:** Sabatean, Intimidate 5 ranks

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus on both Intimidate checks and to Will saves (except in regards to Corruption). This bonus increases to +3 when you gain 8 ranks in Intimidate and increases again to +4 when you gain 11 ranks in Intimidate.

**Special:** Sabatean scholars may select this feat as a bonus feat in lieu of a new sorcery style.

### BREWMASTER OF SHEM (GENERAL)

Of all the vocations possible in western Shem, only the beer brewer is placed under divine protection by goddesses.

**Prerequisites:** Shemite, Craft (brewer) 4 ranks, Skill Focus (Craft (brewer))

**Benefit:** Brewers in a Shemite city earn minor magical protection from the temples. The brewer gains a +2 resistance bonus to all saving throws against spells and spell-like effects, whether the required roll is a Will, Reflex or Fortitude saving throw.

### BRONZE MAN (GENERAL)

Your reputation as a warrior strengthens your brothers' fighting spirit.

**Prerequisites:** Shemite, 20 confirmed kills in war

**Benefit:** When your followers and cohorts are uniformly of Shemite descent you gain a +4 bonus to your Leadership score. Anyone of Shemite blood within 30 feet of your position gains a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls each round you make a full attack.

**Special:** This feat can be selected as a soldier bonus feat.

### EXTRAORDINARY FEROCITY (GENERAL)

Even when dead, you are a dauntless warrior.

**Prerequisites:** Meadow Shemite or Pelishtim, Fervour of the *Asshuri*, Ferocity of the *Asshuri*, Con 15

**Benefit:** When dying (reduced to -1 hit points or below), you may continue to fight without penalty until you reach a negative hit point value equal to your Constitution score. You may not roll to see if you stabilise if you continue to fight. If you fall below -10 hit points, you are considered dead, but you may still fight until you pass a negative score equal to your Constitution score.

**Special:** Eruki *asshuri* do not need to meet the feat prerequisites to take this feat.

### FEROCITY OF THE ASSHURI (GENERAL)

You continue to fight when others would have succumbed to their wounds.

**Prerequisites:** Meadow Shemite or Pelishtim, Fervour of the *Asshuri*, Con 15

**Benefit:** You may continue to fight without penalty even when disabled or dying (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for details on these conditions).



## FERVOUR OF THE ASSHURI (GENERAL)

Even if grievously wounded, you continue to fight.

**Prerequisites:** Meadow Shemite or Pelishtim, Con 15, Toughness

**Benefit:** You fight without penalty until reduced to negative hit points equal to your Constitution modifier. For example, if Mutaga the *asshuri* has a +3 Constitution modifier, he may fight without penalty until reduced below -3 hit points.

## GOLD MAN (GENERAL)

Your reputation makes you a living banner for the Shemite *asshuri*. So long as you stand your brothers will not allow themselves to fail.

**Prerequisites:** Shemite, Bronze Man, 100 confirmed kills in war

**Benefit:** When your followers and cohorts are uniformly of Shemite descent you gain another +4 bonus to your Leadership score. When you make a full attack any Shemite within a 60-foot radius who suffers from a morale penalty may make a Will save (DC 10 + the total penalty). If he succeeds he throws the penalty off for the next round.

**Special:** This feat can be selected as a soldier bonus feat.

## IMPROVED ASSHURI TECHNIQUE MASTERY (ASSHURI)

You are a master of tricky combat manoeuvres. You have trained to become the best of the best.

**Prerequisites:** Meadow Shemite or Pelishtim, base attack bonus +14, Weapon Focus (any)

**Benefit:** The character gains a +2 bonus to all attack and damage rolls, skill and ability checks involved in performing any Combat Manoeuvre the character qualifies for. This stacks with *Asshuri* Technique Mastery.

## LIVE IN THE SADDLE (GENERAL)

You can do nearly anything in the saddle, including getting a good night's sleep.

**Prerequisite:** Ride 4 ranks

**Benefits:** You may substitute your Ride skill rank for your Concentration skill rank for any Concentration skill check you must make while riding a camel or a horse. You may also make a Ride skill check (DC 15) to sleep peacefully

in the saddle. This later trick allows nomads to travel for long distances by alternating sleeping and leading with other members of the tribe.

## MANIFEST ATTACK (GENERAL)

Many outsiders have the ability to manifest at will, allowing them to journey across the planes with ease. Such creatures that regularly engage in battle learn to use this talent to outflank opponents and catch them by surprise.

**Prerequisites:** Ability to manifest

**Benefit:** A creature may use its manifest ability to appear next to an opponent and deal a surprise attack against its foe. When using a standard action to manifest, the creature is allowed to take a partial action to make a melee attack, and only a melee attack, after arriving at a destination that is within its line of sight. The target of this attack loses his Dexterity bonus to Dodge Defence. This partial action is in place of the creature's normal move-equivalent one.

**Special:** This feat requires the creature to use a standard action to manifest. Thus, the creature cannot take a five-foot step, manifest, then use this feat. You may only make a five-foot step as part of a full-round action.

## MIGHT MAKES RIGHT (GENERAL)

Your fighting ability makes you famous and draws people to serve you.

**Prerequisites:** Leadership

**Benefit:** You may add your Strength score (if positive) to your Leadership value.

## SECRET OF THE ACOLYTE SABATEAN TORTURER (GENERAL)

You have been trained as a torturer and you know how to make a person more compliant.

**Prerequisites:** Sabatean, Background (acolyte), Perform (ritual) 4 ranks

**Benefit:** You may perform a ritual of humiliation, control and dominance over a creature. The creature must be restricted or helpless in some way, such as tied up, caged or magically restrained. The ritual takes 8 hours to perform, minus 1 hour per your Charisma modifier. Once complete, the target must make a Will save (DC 10 + ½ torturer's scholar level + Charisma modifier). If the



target fails the save he is both successfully demoralised and successfully intimidated (see skill description for Intimidate in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). He also suffers a -2 penalty to his Will saves for the duration of the Intimidation.

**Special:** Sabatean scholars may select this feat as a bonus feat in lieu of a new sorcery style.

## SECRET OF THE EXPERT SABATEAN TORTURER (GENERAL)

You know the secret of inflicting exquisite pain in others.

**Prerequisites:** Sabatean, Background (acolyte), Perform (ritual) 7 ranks, Secret of the Acolyte Sabatean Torturer

**Benefit:** You may make a touch attack against an opponent. If you succeed, the target is overcome with wracking pains that reduce Dexterity by 2 and impose a -4 penalty on attack rolls, skill and ability checks and Will saves (Fortitude save negates; DC 10 + your Constitution modifier + your class levels). All effects last a number of rounds equal to your scholar level.

**Special:** Sabatean scholars may select this feat as a bonus feat in lieu of a new sorcery style.

## SECRET OF THE MASTER SABATEAN TORTURER (GENERAL)

Your understanding of pain and punishment are unsurpassed.

**Prerequisites:** Sabatean, Background (acolyte), Perform (ritual) 13 ranks, Secret of the Acolyte Sabatean Torturer, Secret of the Expert Sabatean Torturer

**Benefit:** You may cause ability damage. If you spend at least two hours with a helpless opponent, you can choose to cause 1d6 points of ability damage to the target's Strength, Dexterity or Constitution (Fortitude save (DC 20) negates). This ability can be channelled through a whip or other instrument of torture.

**Special:** Sabatean scholars may select this feat as a bonus feat in lieu of a new sorcery style.

## SUMMONED ATTACK (GENERAL)

Outsiders that rely on summoning allies and reinforcements can deliver their summoned minions onto the battlefield in a tactically advantageous manner.

**Prerequisites:** *Summon demon* or similar spell or power

**Benefit:** When summoning allies via sorcery or an innate ability, those allies gain the ability to pounce on foes on their first action in the encounter. Pounce allows a creature to use a full-attack action even if it used a movement action, such as charging, during its round. The summoning creature opens a portal to another world/dimension in such a manner that its allies may leap upon its enemies and attack in one motion. For example, the summoned demons may appear above their foes or attack from an unexpected direction.

## TRIBAL CHAMPION

Shemites place great stock in the fighting prowess of their warriors and even offer great respect to the most gifted warriors of other nomad tribes, even those who are bitter enemies. You are the foremost warrior of your people, a war leader and exemplar of courage, skill and vengeance.

**Prerequisites:** Leadership, base attack bonus 9 or above, Reputation 13

**Benefit:** You command the respect and allegiance of all the warriors of your tribe and have earned a reputation for your prowess that extends to all the nomad tribes and city-states of Shem – and the surrounding kingdoms of Turan, Koth and Stygia. You gain a +2 bonus to your Leadership score and a +4 circumstance bonus to all Intimidate skill checks and to Charisma or Diplomacy checks made to influence the attitudes of Non-Player Character members of your tribe or kingdom. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all Intimidate skill checks and to all checks to influence the attitudes of members of other nomad tribes.

The benefits of this feat apply to all members of a nomad tribe or kingdom, not just to those who are members of the nomad character class. A character with this feat is world famous, his name and reputation having been spread far and wide. Though the Games Master can, if he chooses, rule that the character's Reputation is not known to a particular nomad tribe, this is not encouraged.

## TRIBAL SPOKESMAN

You are known for your exceptional ability to mediate disputes and influence others to your way of thinking. For your continued wisdom and your ability to guide your people to good fortune, you have earned a place among your tribe's council of elders and, more importantly, the role of mediator between your tribe and other, nearby tribes and nations.

**Prerequisites:** Cha 13, Wis 11, Must be a member of a nomad tribe (not necessarily of the nomad class)

**Benefit:** You gain the Diplomacy and Sense Motive skills as class skills and gain a +4 insight bonus to all Diplomacy and Sense Motive skill checks which involve members of nomad tribes.





## COMBAT MANOEUVRES

Although presented with the *asshuri* in mind, the following are specialised combat manoeuvres that may be performed by anyone who meets their requirements. Unless otherwise stated, you may only perform one of the following Combat Manoeuvres per turn.

Unless otherwise noted, the following combat manoeuvres can only be used in melee combat.

### COMBINE DAMAGE

Your speed allows you to readily dispatch opponents.

**Prerequisite:** More than one attack per round, Combat Expertise, Quick Draw, Wis 13, Dex 13

**Circumstance:** You must make a Full Attack action and all the attacks must succeed and be directed against the same target.

**Effect:** You can string your full-attack action attacks together, striking with such speed that all the damage from the different attacks count as if they were dealt in a single attack. Since the attacks are more based on speed than power, this manoeuvre cannot be used in conjunction with Power Attack or any feats in its chain. Also, each attack suffers a  $-2$  penalty to damage and the armour piercing rating of the weapon is reduced by two.

## FATIGUE AND EXHAUST THE FOE

You wind your foe severely, imposing fatigue by wearing him down.

**Prerequisites:** Endurance

**Circumstance:** Must sacrifice two points of damage per fatiguing attack.

**Effect:** When your attacks connect, the target must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC  $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  your character level + Str modifier) or be rendered unable to run or charge and take a  $-2$  penalty to Strength and Dexterity. If struck a second time, the target has a  $+4$  bonus to its saving throw and is rendered exhausted if it fails. It moves at half speed and takes a  $-6$  penalty to Strength and Dexterity. Both conditions vanish at the end of the encounter (if the target manages to survive, that is). Each fatiguing stroke does 2 points less damage than it would otherwise do and the armour piercing rating of the weapon is reduced by

one. These strikes are intended to wear down the foe, not rip him apart.

## UNBALANCING ATTACK

You know how to throw an opponent off-balance.

**Prerequisites:** Balance 1 rank

**Circumstance:** You must be in melee combat, make a full-attack action and succeed at a Balance check (DC 15) as a free action.

**Effect:** By using one of your attacks, the target does not suffer damage when struck, but the force of the blow throws him off-balance. The target makes a Reflex saving throw (DC  $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  the attacker's character level + Str modifier) or lose his Dexterity bonus to Dodge Defence. If you fail the Balance check, you must make the same Reflex save or suffer the same consequence.



# Foes & Fiends

**SHEM IS HOME** to many fearsome things – some natural, others not so natural, such as demons.

## BESTIAL THINGS OF YB

**Medium Monstrous Humanoid**

**Hit Dice:** 2d8+2 (11 hp)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 11 (+1 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 1

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+7

**Attack:** Primitive club or ax +7 melee (1d8+6) or rock +1 ranged (1d4+6)

**Full Attack:** Primitive club or ax +7 melee (1d8+6) or rock +1 ranged (1d4+6)

**Special Qualities:** Mutated

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

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0

**Abilities:** Str 22, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

**Skills:** Listen +3, Spot +5, Survival +2

**Feats:** Alertness

**Climate/Terrain:** Yb and the surrounding desert in Shem

**Organisation:** Solitary, team (2-4), or horde (5-20).

**Advancement:** By character class (favoured class: barbarian)

Yb was an ancient city destroyed by a manifestation of Votantha. Their cannibal descendents still lurk in the mountainous crags around the ruin. They come down to find food but avoid the open desert. They wear filthy hides and have a musty odour. Ape-like in appearance, they suffer from hideous mutations.

### Combat

The bestial things of Yb fight with tooth, nail and claw, as well as with primitive weapons. They are unnaturally strong. They cooperate to a degree when fighting.

**Mutated (Ex):** Struck with sorcery (actually radiation), the people of Yb became mutated and gave birth to even worse mutations. Some common mutations found among the remnants of Yb include extra digits, fins, forked tongues, horns, scaly skin, thin fur coats, unnatural eyes, unnatural skin colouration, unnatural hair,

claws, darkvision, fangs, gills, scent, tails and/or webbed digits. Some have many mutations, some have few. Some have mutations that give them extra skills, such as jumper mutations which give the bestial man of Yb a +20 bonus to Jump or a climbing mutation that does the same for Climb.



## GORGON (THE THING FROM BEYOND)

**Medium Outsider (demon)**

**Hit Dice:** 6d8+12 (39 hp)

**Initiative:** +11 (+2 Dex, +5 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 17 (+2 Dex, +1 Dodge, +4 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** –

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+7

**Attack:** Unarmed strike +7 melee (1d4+1) or alchemical weapon +8 ranged

**Full Attack:** Unarmed strike +7 melee (1d4+1) or alchemical weapon +8 ranged

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

**Special Attacks:** Paralysis, petrify

**Special Qualities:** Immunities, manifest, weakness

**Power Points:** 13 (base 10, +3 Wis)

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +12 (+3 natural, +9 Charisma)



*'Withered hands were clasped over a sunken breast. From throat to heel, the thin body was wrapped in dusty cerements. A thin mask of beaten gold, worked in the likeness of a woman of unearthly beauty, lay over the features... between the brows of that golden mask, a tremendous sapphire glowed like a third eye. It was an astounding gem, worth a prince's ransom....*

*The eyes were carved as if closed in slumber. Sweet and beautiful slept the drowsy, full-lipped mouth in that lovely golden face. The huge, dark sapphire flashed with sultry fires as he reached for it. With trembling fingers, the Zamorian snatched the mask away. Beneath it lay a brown, withered face. The cheeks had fallen in; the flesh was hard, dry and leathery. He shuddered at the malevolent expression on the features of that death's head. Then it opened its eyes and looked at him.*

*He staggered back with a scream, the mask falling from nerveless fingers to clatter against the marble pave. The dead eyes in the skull-face leered into his own. Then the Thing opened its third eye...*

*It flushed from dead, leathery brown to the warm flesh tones of life. With every vampiric draught of vital energy that the Gorgon drained from Vardanes' body, her own body became imbued with life.... Now her body was filling out. She bloomed: a soft rondure of hip and thigh stretched the dull cerements. Her woman's breasts swelled, straining the thin fabric. She stretched firm, youthful arms. Her moist, crimson mouth opened in another peal of laughter - this time, the musical, voluptuous laughter of a full-bodied woman.*

L. Sprague de Camp and Lin Carter, *Black Tears*

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 29

**Skills:** Bluff +18, Craft (alchemy) +13, Craft (herbalism) +9, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +18, Hide +11, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (religion) +13, Move Silently +11, Perform (ritual) +18, Spot +12, Sense Motive +13

**Feats:** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Steely Gaze

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Advancement:** By character class (usually scholar)

The gorgon of Akhlat was summoned by a wily Shemitish sorcerer who had set himself up as a priest and prophet of the Unknown Gods. He insisted that one of the gods would descend to earth to rule over Akhlat the Holy in person. With vile and nameless rites, he conjured a demoness from the Outside to serve as goddess of the people. For a while, he retained sorcerous control of the gorgon, but she soon destroyed the sorcerer and ruled in his place. For centuries she ruled Akhlat. She may rule there still, although a certain apocryphal tale insists Conan slew the creature. Of course, there may be others in the dark places of the world.

Her face, when filled with life vitality, is a mask of inhuman beauty. Her lips, soft and moist, are full and crimson. Glossy ebon hair tumbles across shoulders of glowing pearl, to fall in tides of silken night through which thrust the round moons of her breasts. She was beauty incarnate – save for the great

dark orb between her brows. The third eye is totally black – no white, no iris, no other colour.

The secret to the gorgon's power is that she leaches the life force from others. She can steal energy from plants, animals and people, draining them to dry husks. She needs to feed daily and can spend minutes, days, weeks or even a month to drain a person dry. Her vampiric thirst for energy drains entire lands dry, turning fertile valleys and pastures into the worst of deserts. She is said to be invulnerable and unkillable. Her flesh is composed of matter drawn to her and held together by her own vile will. It is a trifling matter for her to repair her flesh. The life forces she drains from others gives her an incalculable store of energy to make such repairs. Further, she shields herself with dark powers of hellish magic. Any she looks upon is transfixed by paralysis to serve as a human banquet. She maintains the rest of the town as slaves, using magic to keep them from leaving the boundaries.

Most gorgons are also scholars, often of considerable power. They favour the Hypnotism sorcery style, particularly *domination*. Gorgons speak Demonic, Old Shemitish, Old Stygian and Acheronian.

A gorgon can be summoned with a *summon demon* spell. Alternatively, it makes a good subject for a *demonic pact* spell. Even gorgons who are not themselves scholars will have knowledge of (though not the ability



to cast) 1d4+1 sorcery styles and the usual Summoning spells. Gorgon scholars can add the spells they personally know to that.

### Combat

Gorgons immobilise their prey and then drain off their vital energies.

**Immunities (Su):** Gorgons are immune to all physical damage, except that dealt by either fire or objects made from silver or objects striking directly at their black third eye. Silver weapons are not generally manufactured during the Hyborian Age, though improvised weapons made from silver benches, candlesticks, mugs etc. could be used. If a critical hit is struck, presume it struck the third eye.

**Manifest (Su):** As a standard action, the gorgon can either leave Earth and return to its home place, or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

**Paralysis (Su):** Any creature who meets the gaze of its third eye is immobilised unless a Will save (DC 15) is made.

**Petrify (Su):** Creatures paralysed by the gorgon are slowly petrified as she drains away their vital energies.

**Weakness (Su):** If the third eye is struck, the creature will wither away and either die or return to its home plane.

## LAMASHTU, THE ONE WHO ERASES

### Huge Outsider (demon)

**Hit Dice:** 20d8+100 (190 hp)

**Initiative:** +22 (+10 Dex, +12 Reflex)

**Speed:** 60 ft

**Dodge Defence:** 33 (–2 Size, +10 Dex, +15 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 15 (demon lord)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +20/+36

**Attack:** Bite+26 melee (2d8+8, AP 15)

**Full Attack:** Bite +26 melee (2d8+8, AP 15)

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft. (3)/15 ft. (3)

**Special Attacks:** Stillbirth, spells, contaminate water or milk

**Special Qualities:** Immunities, manifest

**Power Points:** 58 (base 50, +8 Wis)

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +15 (+10 natural, +5 Charisma)

**Saves:** Fort +20, Ref +22, Will +20

**Abilities:** Str 27, Dex 30, Con 20, Int 24, Wis 27, Cha 21

**Skills:** Bluff +33, Craft (alchemy) +29, Craft (herbalism) +29, Decipher Script +29, Handle Animal +20, Heal +31, Hide +33, Intimidate +33, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (nature) +29,

Listen +31, Move Silently +33, Perform (ritual) +33, Search +14, Sense Motive +31, Spot +31

**Feats:** Cleave, Manifest Attack, Menacing Aura, Poison Use, Power Attack, Snatch, Steely Gaze

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Advancement:** —

Lamashtu is a cruel, raging Shemite demoness, a horrible predatory monster who preys upon unborn and newly born babies, torturing and killing them. A daughter of Anu, she is portrayed as having a donkey's body, a lioness' head (sometimes with a donkey's teeth and ears). She has long fingers and fingernails and the feet of a bird with hideously long, sharp talons. Her hands are described as net-like and her embrace is death. She roars like a lion, constantly howling. She is usually portrayed standing or kneeling on a donkey while nursing both a pig and a dog. As she nurses, she also holds snakes. She has no children of her own, which is one of the reasons she resents pregnant women and children.

She poisons water with disease and brings nightmares, but her primary duty is to kill children. She moves as silently as a ghost, passing into the house of a pregnant woman. Once inside the house, she attempts to touch the woman's stomach seven times, which kills the foetus. If she does not make it during the pregnancy, she strikes by abducting the child from the home and nursing it with her own milk, which is the worst poison imaginable. She also kills mothers when all else fails. Fathers (or any other male) of the children who get in her way become meals – she eats them and drinks their blood. To protect themselves from Lamashtu, pregnant women are advised to wear amulets of the demon Pazuzu, who stops her from hurting the children. Like most other Shemite demons, Lamashtu has no known temples, shrines or zikkurats.

Lamashtu can generally be affected by such spells as *summon demon*, *demonic pact* and *greater demonic pact* from *Conan the Roleplaying Game* and its supplements. As well as functioning as effective patrons for sorcerers, Lamashtu is often worshipped as gods by those who know no better. She does not offer quite the same benefits as the more established religions, but can prove useful for those well-versed in evil. She can identify and offer an antidote for any poison.

Unlike true gods, Lamashtu can have an incarnate form on Earth, and can potentially be slain in that form, particularly with the assistance of spells such as the *incantation of Amalric's witchman* (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). Lamashtu is capable of teaching all spells, both those found in this book and those found in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* and its supplements. Note that Lamashtu need not need to meet the same prerequisites as human scholars.



## Combat

**Manifest (Su):** As a standard action, Lamashtu can either leave Earth and return to her home place or appear on Earth. In either case, she manifests at the new location at the end of his action.

**Stillbirth (Su):** By touching a pregnant woman's abdomen seven times, she can kill any and all unborn children in the womb.

**Contaminate Water or Milk (Su):** Pazuzu sends disease on the wings of the air; Lamashtu sends disease through water or milk. Any water or milk she sees she can contaminate with a disease of her choice as a free action, although she usually only bothers if she thinks an expectant mother or a newborn will drink the liquid.

**Spells:** Lamashtu can cast any spell from the Curses or Necromancy sorcery styles, whether she meets the prerequisites or not as though she were a 20<sup>th</sup> level scholar. The usual Power Point and other costs apply.

## MINION OF HOTATH AND HELGOR (THE FIEND FROM THE FORGOTTEN CITY)

### Gargantuan Outsider (demon)

**Hit Dice:** 12d8+96 (150 hp)

**Initiative:** +8 (+8 Reflex)

**Speed:** 50 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 15 (-4 Size, +9 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 9 (thick skin)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +12/+36

**Attack:** Gore +21 melee (3d8+13)

**Full Attack:** Gore +21 melee (3d8+13) and 2 claws +19 melee (3d6+13)

**Space/Reach:** 20 ft. (4)/20 ft. (4)

**Special Qualities:** Immunities, manifest

**Power Points:** 13 (base 10, +3 Wis)

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +11 (+6 natural, +5 Charisma)

**Saves:** Fort +16, Ref +8, Will +11

**Abilities:** Str 37, Dex 10, Con 27, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 21

**Skills:** Craft (alchemy) +13, Craft (herbalism) +16, Hide +5, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Move Silently +25, Perform (drums) +14, Sense Motive +6

**Feats:** Cleave, Great Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack, Steely Gaze

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Advancement:** By character class (usually scholar)

The minion of Hotath and Helgor is a 48-foot tall black fiend from the depths of Hell. He is manlike, although gargantuan, complete with horns, pointed ears and other demonic features. He speaks Demonic, Old Stygian and Acheronian.



He serves Hotath and Helgor, ancient gods of Valusia during the time of King Kull.

The minion of Hotath and Helgor can be summoned with a *summon demon* spell. Alternatively, it makes a good subject for a *demonic pact* spell. The minion of Hotath and Helgor has knowledge of (though not the ability to cast) 1d4+1 sorcery styles and the usual Summoning spells.

## Combat

The minion of Hotath and Helgor is at home in direct combat to get the job done.

**Immunities (Su):** The minion of Hotath and Helgor is immune to all physical damage, except that dealt by either fire or objects made from silver. Silver weapons are not generally manufactured during the Hyborian Age, though improvised weapons made from silver benches, candlesticks, mugs etc. could be used.

**Manifest (Su):** As a standard action, The minion of Hotath and Helgor can either leave Earth and return to its home place, or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

**Skills:** The minion of Hotath and Helgor's padded feet, coupled with its





innate sneakiness and cunning, give it a +8 bonus to all Move Silently checks.

## PAZUZU, LORD OF FEVERS AND PLAGUE

### Huge Outsider (demon)

**Hit Dice:** 20d8+160 (250 hp)

**Initiative:** +22 (+10 Dex, +12 Reflex)

**Speed:** 50 ft / fly 60 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 33 (–2 Size, +10 Dex, +15 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 15 (demon lord)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +20/+36

**Attack:** Claw +26 melee (2d6+8, AP 9)

**Full Attack:** 4 Claws +26 melee (2d6+8, AP 9), Bite +21 melee (2d8+8, AP 16), Scorpion Tail +21 melee (2d6+8 plus poison, AP 9)

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft. (3)/15 ft. (3)

**Special Attacks:** Howl of pestilence, spells, rip armour, improved grapple

**Special Qualities:** Immunities, manifest

**Power Points:** 58 (base 50, +8 Wis)

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +20 (+10 natural, +10 Charisma)

**Saves:** Fort +20, Ref +22, Will +20

**Abilities:** Str 27, Dex 30, Con 27, Int 22, Wis 27, Cha 31

**Skills:** Bluff +33, Craft (alchemy) +29, Craft (herbalism) +29, Decipher Script +29, Heal +31, Intimidate +33, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (nature) +29, Listen +31, Move Silently +33, Perform (ritual) +33, Search +29, Sense Motive +31, Spot +31

**Feats:** Cleave, Manifest Attack, Menacing Aura, Power Attack, Snatch, Steely Gaze, Summoned Attack

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Advancement:** —

Pazuzu, the Dark Angel of the Four Winds, is a Shemite demon with a fleshless skull of a dog for a head, bulging eyes, a scaled body, lion's paws for hands, four bird wings, a scorpion's tail, bird talons and a snake-shaped penis. He does not wear clothes nor shoes. He is always depicted with his right hand raised (creation/life) and his left hand downward (destruction/death). He is sometimes described as having rotting genitals. He also has sharpened teeth and is described as howling over stricken cities. He is a demon and has no temples, sanctuaries or zikkurats. He is, however, represented with statues and amulets. He is opposed to Lamashtu, a demonic goddess who slays little babies with disease and violence. Pazuzu frustrates her by protecting babies from disease. He is charged with the power to control the southwest wind. He brings droughts and famine during dry seasons; he brings locusts during rainy seasons. He is a desert scavenger and a bringer of desolation. In dreams, Pazuzu

is often represented as a hairy black creature haunting the desert wastelands or as a vast swarm of locusts presaging a period of destruction and starvation just prior to an age of reconstruction and plenty. He is often portrayed as a child of El-Lil. The Stygians see Pazuzu as the Messenger of Set. He is often accompanied by the Utuzzu, a horde of ghouls who serve him.

Pazuzu can generally be affected by such spells as *summon demon*, *demonic pact* and *greater demonic pact* from *Conan the Roleplaying Game* and its supplements. As well as functioning as effective patrons for sorcerers, Pazuzu is often worshipped as gods by those who know no better. He does not offer quite the same benefits as the more established religions, but can prove useful for those well-versed in evil. He can identify and heal any disease.

Unlike true gods, Pazuzu can have an incarnate form on Earth, and can potentially be slain in that form, particularly with the assistance of spells such as the *incantation of Amalric's witchman* (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). Pazuzu is capable of teaching all spells, both those found in this book and those found in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* and its supplements. Note that Pazuzu need not need to meet the same prerequisites as human scholars.

### Combat

**Howl of Pestilence:** Pazuzu's howl, a dry and fiery breath weapon, brings forth the desert wind, a hot blast of southern wind carrying disease upon its wings. This gust of writhing winds is so hot the ground it passes over is scorched. All living creatures within the area of effect must make a Fortitude save or become exhausted. Those that make this saving throw must make it again one minute later to avoid the disease (any disease Pazuzu desires; malaria and typhoid fever are his favourite choices). Crops caught within the area of effect wither into nothing. Furthermore there is a 20% chance that any stretch of grassland or forest will catch on fire, sparking a natural disaster of incredible proportions. The save DC for both the wind and the disease is set by Pazuzu's magic attack roll. The wind reaches anywhere he can see regardless of distance. The howl of Pazuzu can also create any sort of wind strength he desires to check or knock down opponents.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** If Pazuzu hits with his claw attack, he deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the opposed grapple check, he gets a hold and may rip armour.

**Poison (Ex):** Pazuzu has a poisonous sting. It does 1d6 points of Con damage (Fort save DC 18 negates).

**Manifest (Su):** As a standard action, Pazuzu can either leave Earth and return to his home place, or appear on Earth. In either case, he manifests at the new location at the end of his action.



**Rip Armour (Ex):** When Pazuzu is grappling an enemy, he may elect to make a claw attack directly against his enemy's armour rather than against the enemy himself. He makes a standard melee attack roll and if successful any damage he deals is subtracted permanently from the armour's Damage Reduction, as he simply tears it off with his free claw.

**Spells:** Pazuzu can cast any spell from the Counterspells, Curses, Necromancy, Summoning and Weather Witching sorcery styles, whether he meets the prerequisites or not as though he were a 20<sup>th</sup> level scholar. The usual Power Point and other costs apply.

## VOTANTHA, THE TREE OF MOUTHS

**Huge Outsider (demon)**

**Hit Dice:** 20d8+160 (250 hp)

**Initiative:** +12 (+12 Reflex)

**Speed:** 5 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 23 (-2 Size, +15 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 15 (demon lord)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +20/+46

**Attack:** Bite +36 melee (2d6+18, AP 19)

**Full Attack:** 5d8 Bites +36 melee (2d6+18, AP 19)

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft. (3)/15 ft. (3)

**Special Attacks:** Heat defence, tormenting din, blossom of living fire

**Special Qualities:** Immunities, manifest

**Power Points:** 58 (base 50, +8 Wis)

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +20 (+10 natural, +10 Charisma)

**Saves:** Fort +20, Ref +22, Will +20

**Abilities:** Str 47, Dex 10, Con 27, Int 13, Wis 27, Cha 31

**Skills:** Bluff +33, Intimidate +33, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (nature) +29, Listen +31, Perform (ritual) +33, Search +29, Sense Motive +31, Spot +31

**Feats:** Cleave, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Menacing Aura, Power Attack, Steely Gaze

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Advancement:** —

The people of Sark worship an extremely blood-thirsty god known as Votanthe, the Tree of Mouths. He is reputed to have blasted cities and empires into oblivion for their sins and wrongful behaviour. He demands human sacrifices. He is considered a stern law-giver, as well as a hero, fire-bringer and trickster. He is often portrayed as a handsome warrior but his truest form is that of a hideous fiery tree of mouths. He has 5d8 heads on the end of prehensile limbs that breath fire, each head with a snarling, biting mouth and no eyes, all offering a chaos of grating, bellowing cries.

Votanthe can generally be affected by such spells as *summon demon*, *demonic pact* and *greater demonic pact* from *Conan the*

*Roleplaying Game* and its supplements. As well as functioning as effective patrons for sorcerers, Votanthe is often worshipped as gods by those who know no better. He does not offer quite the same benefits as the more established religions, but can prove useful for those well-versed in evil. He is most easily summoned if an effigy is made from radioactive stone found near Sark. This effigy is made in three parts – and when the three parts are brought together with the proper ritual, Votanthe arrives. He transforms the radioactive effigy into his own manifestation. If killed on the mortal realm, the radioactive effigy returns. He destroyed the city of Yb and was last seen in the city of Qjara. A suit of golden armour, proof against the god's powers, is on display in Qjara as a memorial to Conan. Votanthe is the patron 'god' of Sark.

Unlike true gods, Votanthe can have an incarnate form on Earth, and can potentially be slain in that form, particularly with the assistance of spells such as the *incantation of Amalric's witchman* (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). Votanthe is capable of teaching all spells, both those found in this book and those found in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* and its supplements. Note that Votanthe need not need to meet the same prerequisites as human scholars.

### Combat

**Immunities (Su):** Votanthe immune to all physical damage, except that dealt by objects made from gold or bronze or by the *Sword of Onothimantos*. Gold weapons and armour are not generally manufactured during the Hyborian Age, though improvised weapons made from silver benches, candlesticks, mugs etc. could be used. If a critical hit is struck, presume it struck the third eye.

**Heat Defence (Su):** Votanthe is surrounded by such an intense heat that steel will melt. Anyone approaching within 30 feet of the god will take 1d8 points of heat damage per round and their clothing will catch on fire. If wearing metal armour, the armour will melt after 1d4 rounds and the character will take 20d8 points of damage. Steel or iron weapons are instantly destroyed. Only gold and bronze are unaffected by the heat. Indeed, gold armour will protect a person from the heat.

**Tormenting Din (Su):** The heads of the Tree of Mouths scream and utter horrible, gibbering elemental insanities. Those who hear this receive a momentary glimpse into the harsh truths of reality. Civilised men must make a Will save or become flatfooted. Characters from races with the barbarian favoured class, who have already faced the worst the world has to offer, are immune to this effect.

**Manifest (Su):** As a standard action, Votanthe can either leave Earth and return to its home place, or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.



# Non-Player Characters

**WITH SO MANY** people living and working in Shem, it is impossible to create every person in a city a Player Character may decide to interact with, so this section provides additional Non-Player Characters for the Games Master to use in his games, either directly or as inspiration.

The Non-Player Characters used in this sourcebook are not given Fate Points or languages. There are several reasons for this omission. First, if Non-Player Characters' use Fate Points as much as Player Characters, no one would ever get killed and the Player Characters' jobs will be that much harder. Fate Points exist primarily as an opportunity for players to influence the game in a favourable direction. Games Masters do not need that particular contrivance. Second, who knows what a Non-Player Character has been through in his life? In both cases, the Games Master's discretion is required. If the Games Master wants to give the Non-Player Characters described throughout this book Fate Points, he is at leave to do so. Languages function in a similar manner. If the Games Master wants a character to speak a given language or not, then the character speaks or does not speak the given language. The needs of the game is paramount here, not a whimsical choice of mine. Thus, both Fate Points and Languages are left off the stat blocks of the characters throughout this text.

## CONAN THE ZUAGIR CHIEFTAIN

**Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian barbarian 9/thief 1/ soldier 1/pirate 1)**

**Hit Dice:** 8d10+2d8+40+6 (98 hit points)

**Initiative:** +15 (+5 Dex, +10 Ref)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 21 (+6 level, +5 Dex)

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

**Damage Reduction:** 5 (black mail-shirt)

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +10/+17

**Attack:** Scimitar +17 melee

**Full Attack:** Scimitar +17/+12 melee

**Damage:** Scimitar 1d8+7/ 18-20 x2/ AP 9

**Special Attacks:** Ferocious attack, versatility (no penalty), crimson mist, sneak attack +1d6/+1d8, sneak attack style (broadsword)

**Special Qualities:** Cimmerian traits, fearless, bite sword, trap sense

+3, uncanny dodge, mobility, seamanship +1, trap disarming, improved uncanny dodge

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +14, Ref +15, Will +9 (+12 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 20, Con 19, Int 17, Wis 17, Cha 18

**Skills:** Balance +10, Bluff +12, Climb +18, Craft (blacksmith) +5, Gather Information +6, Hide +12, Intimidate +11, Jump +17, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (geography) +7, Listen +14, Move Silently +18, Profession (sailor) +4, Ride +8, Search +6, Spot +14, Survival +10, Tumble +7

**Feats:** Brawl, Combat Expertise, Diehard <sup>bonus</sup>, Endurance <sup>bonus</sup>, Fighting-Madness, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Navigation, Power Attack, Sleep Mastery, Track <sup>bonus</sup>

**Reputation:** 18 (Brave) (+3 bonus to Bluff and Intimidate checks, -1 penalty to Disguise checks)

**Leadership:** 18 (9<sup>th</sup> level Zuagir sub-chief; 100 1<sup>st</sup> level nomads, 4 2<sup>nd</sup> level nomads, 2 3<sup>rd</sup> level nomads and 1 4<sup>th</sup> level nomad)

**Code of Honour:** Barbaric

**Allegiances:** Zuagir tribe

**Possessions:** Desert nomad clothing, black mail-shirt, scimitar in shagreen scabbard and gilt-worked leather boots.

Conan is fair, and, true to his barbaric heritage, somewhat blunt in his dealings with others. His diplomacy skills are minimal at best; he will attempt to dominate and control anyone who lets him. He tries to be just but will do what is necessary for the good of his kingdom. He cares about the people of his kingdom and is intensely loyal to them, but he is suspicious and wary of others at first. He is reluctant to trust anyone fully but once he does, that trust is vibrantly intense. He adheres to high principles, his barbaric code of honour, and is a positive force for helping others. Even as king, Conan is still very much a man of action. If he discovers a threat to his rule, he will tend to ride out and meet it head-on – though these days he may ride out at the head of many thousands of armoured knights. He has learnt a certain degree of caution, and will certainly act in a manner befitting his high Intelligence; but given no other options, he would sooner be acting than sitting about in a council meeting.

Conan is very different from most Cimmerians, despite his doomed moodiness. Most Cimmerians are depressive and dismal all the time and not usually given to wanderlust. Conan's mirth is as gigantic as his depressions are deep and, as stated earlier, Conan is a wanderer. As one of Conan's



councillors says in *The Phoenix on the Sword*, 'I never saw another Cimmerian who drank aught but water, or who ever laughed, or ever sang save to chant dismal dirges.' Conan, in many ways, is more like the Æsir than he is like the typical Cimmerian.

**Conan's History to This Point:** Conan was born on a battlefield, according to Robert E. Howard in a letter to P.S. Miller, during a fight between his Cimmerian tribe and a horde of raiding Vanir. The country claimed by and roved over by his clan lay in the northwest of Cimmeria, but Conan was of mixed blood, although a pure-bred Cimmerian. His grandfather was of a southern tribe who had fled from his own people due to a blood feud. The tales of his grandfather, who had taken part in many raids of the southern Hyborian kingdoms, roused Conan's interest in travelling. His father was a blacksmith (hence Conan's ranks in Craft (blacksmith)). Presumably he learned some of the craft from his father). At Venarium, Conan was about 15 years old and was already a formidable barbarian warrior, growing in reputation. He soon encountered *The Frost Giant's Daughter* when he fought with the Æsir against the Vanir. Captured by Hyperboreans, he escaped and made his way into Zamora.

In Arenjun, a 2<sup>nd</sup> level barbarian/1<sup>st</sup> level thief, he learned something of thievery and encountered *The Tower of the Elephant*. Still in Zamora, he investigated *The Hall of the Dead* and then travelled to the west of Zamora where he had the adventure related by Howard as *Rogues in the House*. Later still, he tried thievery again in Nemedia and encountered *The God in the Bowl*.

As a 5<sup>th</sup> level barbarian/1<sup>st</sup> level thief, Conan travelled to Argos and joined with Bêlit, *The Queen of the Black Coast*. He sailed with her for nearly three years and ended up on foot in the Black Kingdoms. He raised a small kingdom of black tribesmen just before *The Vale of Lost Women*, lost his kingdom and made his way to Kush in *The Snout in the Dark*. He becomes a mercenary, earning the name Conan the Throat-Slitter, and ends up in Khoraja in time to battle Natohk's horde in *Black Colossus*. His stint as a mercenary adds soldier levels to his total. He is now a barbarian 9/pirate 1/soldier 1/thief 1. He continues as mercenary, making his way to Khauran for the events told in *A Witch Shall Be Born*. Conan then becomes a member of a Zuagir tribe after being rescued by the Zuagirs from crucifixion. He treacherously betrays Olgerd Vladislav, the chief of the Zuagirs, seven months later to take his place as a Zuagir chieftain himself. Conan wields the Zuagirs as a weapon against the Turanians, raiding incessantly. Some scholars have suggested he may have even considered sacking Zamboula. The apocryphal *Hawks Over Shem* would have happened during this time period; he worked in the army of King Sumuabi of Akkharia for a while.



## GENERAL OTHBAAL THE ANAKI

**Medium Humanoid (Meadow Shemite Noble 2 / Soldier 10)**

**Hit Dice:** 2d8+8d10+6+0 (59 hp)

**Initiative:** +18 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex save, -1 racial penalty to Ref, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Lightning Reflexes)

**Speed:** 25 ft. (mail hauberk and breastplate)

**Dodge Defence:** 17 (+5 level, +2 Dex)

**Parry Defence:** 27 (+8 level, +4 Str, +1 Parry, +4 large shield) (may parry if flat-footed)

**Damage Reduction:** 10 (+8 mail hauberk and breastplate, +2 great helm)

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +11/+15

**Attack:** Scimitar +15 melee; or Shemite bow +15 ranged

**Full Attack:** Scimitar +15/+10 melee; or Shemite bow +13/+8/+13 ranged

**Damage:** Scimitar 1d8+4, or Shemite bow 1d10+4

**Special Attacks:** Shemite Regional Feature (+1 bonus to attack rolls with Shemite longbow and scimitar), +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with any bow, combat formation (*heavy cavalry*, *heavy infantry*)

**Special Qualities:** Meadow Shemite racial features, Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth, Shemite Regional Feature +1

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

**Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +5



**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16  
**Skills:** Appraise +8, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +15, Ride +17, Search +3, Spot +2, Sense Motive +5

**Feats:** Carouser, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Parry, Persuasive, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Ranged Finesse, Rapid Shot, Reflexive Parry  
**Reputation:** 62 (villain) (He may add a +7 bonus to his Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information checks)

**Leadership:** 15 (7<sup>th</sup> level cohort; 60 1<sup>st</sup> level, 2 2<sup>nd</sup> level, 1 3<sup>rd</sup> level)

**Code of Honour:** None

**Allegiances:** Anakia (Shemite city), King Akhîrom of Asgalun, Anakian *asshuri* mercenary force

**Possessions:** Shemite scimitar, Anakim mail hauberk and breastplate, Shemite bow, large shield, silken kilt, velvet vest.

*Othbaal was a tall, lusty man, his thick black hair gathered in a knot at his nape and his black beard oiled, curled, and precisely trimmed. Late as the hour was, he was fully clad in silken kilt and velvet vest, under which gleamed the links of a mailed shirt.*

Robert E. Howard and L. Sprague de Camp, *Hawks Over Shem*

Othbaal, the cousin to King Akhîrom, is the general of King Akhîrom's Anakian troops. Stationed in Asgalun, the Anaki leader managed to earn Conan's enmity when Othbaal, who was spearheading the revolt against the king of Anakia, requested assistance of the Akkhari, then betrayed them and caused their slaughter. Othbaal was slain by Conan during the events of *Hawks Over Shem*. Othbaal won an Ophirean slave-woman named Rufia from Mazdak, another mercenary general in Akhîrom's employ, in a game of chance.

Othbaal had a weakness for his favoured women and could be manipulated by them. Othbaal is ambitious, strong, vital and intelligent, as well as cruel and treacherous. Othbaal resided in the pleasure palace of King Uriaz, a former Asgalun king. Othbaal also acquired that house from Mazdak. Othbaal is a large man with a beard and moustache, wearing his long blue-black hair in a pony-tail. Conan tracked down and slew General Othbaal in Asgalun.

## KING MAZDAK OF ASGALUN (ALIAS: FAROUZ)

**Medium Humanoid** (Hyrkanian nomad 9/soldier 3/noble 1)

**Hit Dice:** 10d10+20+6+2 (88 hit points)

**Initiative:** +18 (+1 Dex, +7 Ref)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 16 (+5 level, +1 Dex)

**Parry Defence:** 20 (+6 level, +4 Str)

**Damage Reduction:** 6 (Scale Corselet and Helmet)

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +12/+16

**Attack:** Scimitar +17 melee or Hyrkanian longbow +14 ranged

**Full Attack:** Scimitar +17/+12 melee or Hyrkanian longbow +14/+9 ranged

**Damage:** Scimitar 1d8+4 or Hyrkanian longbow 1d10+4 / 19-20 x2/ AP 7

**Special Attacks:** Nomad Charge +1, Formation Combat (light cavalry)

**Special Qualities:** Hyrkanian traits, favoured terrain +3 (plains), born in the saddle, second favoured terrain +1 (desert), title (king), rank hath its privileges, wealth

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +9 (+7 vs. hypnotism)





**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 17  
**Skills:** Bluff +10, Craft (bowyer) +4, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +7, Gather Information +10, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (religion) +2, Knowledge (nobility) +2, Perform (ritual) +4, Ride +15, Search +5, Sense Motive +3, Spot +13, Survival +13  
**Feats:** Diehard, Endurance, Far Shot, Horde, Iron Will, Leadership, Mobility, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

**Reputation:** 20 (Brave)

**Leadership:** 20

**Code of Honour:** None

**Allegiances:** Asgalun, his Hyrkanian soldiers

**Possessions:** Cloak, scale corselet, helmet, scimitar, Hyrkanian longbow (+4), 20 arrows

Mazdak is described as a sardonic adventurer. He is cold and masterful with his relations with others, including women. Even as a commander of Hyrkanian mercenaries under King Akhîrom he kept a large harem, letting none command or influence him unduly. As king of Asgalun, his harem is even larger but he maintains the same cold distance from his women. He is a tough and clever warrior with enthusiasm and energy.

As king, he must partake of the rituals of the temples, so the clergy of Asgalun have been quietly and quickly teaching him the rituals and the religious knowledge he needs.

## OLGERD VLADISLAV

**Medium Humanoid (Hyrkanian Nomad 13)**

**Hit Dice:** 10d10+30+9 (99 hit points)

**Initiative:** +16 (+4 Dex, +8 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Dodge Defence:** 24 (+4 Dex, +6 Level, +4 Favoured Terrain)

**Parry Defence:** 19 (+3 Str, +6 level)

**Damage Reduction:** 5 (mail shirt)

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +13/+16

**Attack:** Chaldees knife (scimitar) +16 melee (1d8+3/18-20 x2/ AP 5) or Hyrkanian bow (+3) +19 (1d10+3/19-20 x2/ AP 6)

**Full Attack:** Chaldees knife (scimitar) +16/+11/+6 melee (1d8+3/18-20 x2/ AP 5) or Hyrkanian bow (+3) +19/+14/+9 (1d10+3/19-20 x2/ AP 6)

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft/5ft

**Special Attacks:** Nomad Charge +2

**Special Qualities:** Hyrkanian Traits, Favoured Terrain (Plains) +4, Born to the Saddle, Second Favoured Terrain (Desert) +1

**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +12, Will +5 (only +3 vs. Hypnotism)

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

**Skills:** Bluff +10, Climb +6, Craft (Bowyer) +4, Handle Animal +12, Hide +9, Listen +10, Move Silently +8, Ride +21, Search +8, Spot +9, Survival +15

**Feats:** Diehard, Endurance, Far Shot, Improved Initiative, Improved Mobility, Mobility, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Track, Trample, Weapon Focus (Hyrkanian bow)

**Reputation:** 82 (Cruel; +9 bonus to Intimidate and Bluff checks, not reflected in skills above)

**Corruption:** 0

**Allegiance:** None

**Code of Honour:** None

**Possession:** Cherkees knife, desert clothing (khalat and kafieh)

Olgerd Vladislav is a former hetman of the Zaporoskan kozaki turned chief of a Zuagir tribe. He is a hard man, and toughness is the only quality he respects in a man. He misjudges Conan, however, and Conan removes him from his position. Olgerd lives, however, and may return later to harass Conan in a search for vengeance.

He dresses well for a kozak and sometimes even wears a silk turban wrapped around a spired helmet (increase his DR appropriately if he is wearing his helmet).

**Note:** L. Sprague de Camp rewrote Howard's *Three-Bladed Doom* into *The Flame Knife* and placed this character in that story. Known as the Tiger in that apocryphal story, he was the power behind the throne of Yanaidar and was killed by Conan. As the story was not intended to be a Conan yarn by Howard, Games Masters may wish to consider the story as spurious, allowing an older Olgerd to be in power somewhere, perhaps plotting to bring Conan down from his Aquilonian throne. Even if the story is considered canonical in your campaign, Olgerd could still be of use. Perhaps he did not die as previously thought. Perhaps he haunts Drujistan as a ghost. Perhaps some Iranistani sorcerer has resurrected Olgerd.

### Combat

Olgerd Vladislav fights with his Chaldees knife (a type of scimitar), or with his bow.



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