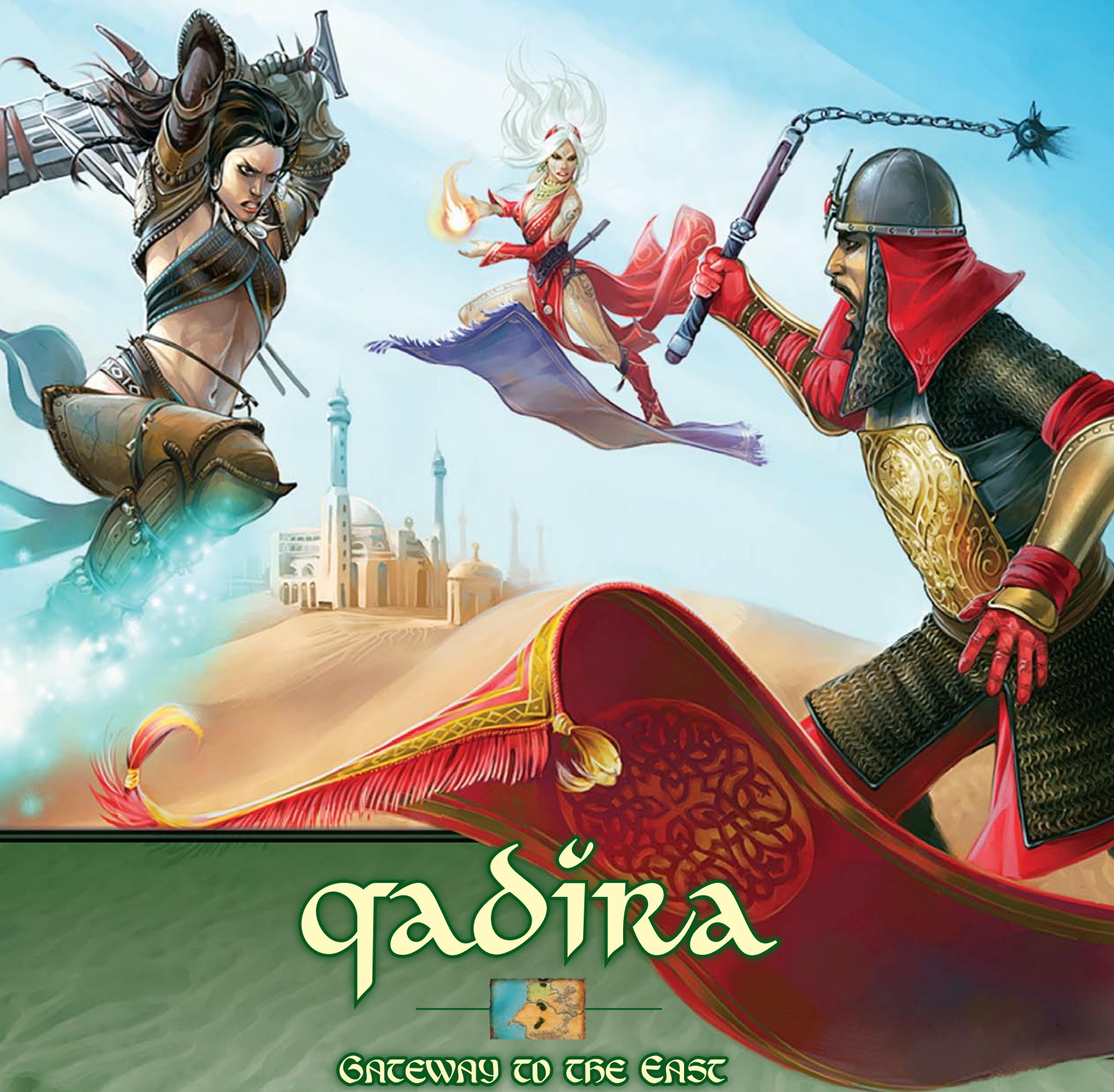


PATHFINDER[®]

COMPANION[™]



Qadira



GATEWAY TO THE EAST



0 30 60 90
MILES

SARAY COAST

JALRUNE RIVER

PLAINS OF PARES

RIVER LADAN

• Omas

• Katheer

• Koor

QADIRA

Tapur Forest

• Hatavit

PASHMAN RIVER

• Al-Bashir

KETZ DESERT

• Khoka

Tapur Forest

• Gurat

• Shadun

ZHO MOUNTAINS

MAHARAV RIVER

MERAZ RIVER

• Dimayen

• Okeno

• Sedeq

MERAZ DESERT

OBARI OCEAN

Qadira

gateway to the east

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Qadira

GATEWAY TO THE EAST

A land of whirling sands, sprawling coasts, great mountains, and ancient ruins, Qadira is but the western tip of a sprawling continental empire. Ruled by Satrap Xerbystes II in the name of the Padishah Emperor of Kelesh, Qadira is the larder, the trading post, and the sword of the great empire around the Inner Sea.

Situated at the southernmost end of Avistan, Qadira occupies all of the lands between the Inner Sea and Casmaron. It dominates trade from the eastern nations, and

its capital city of Katheer is rich beyond most imaginings, rivaling the wealth of any city on two continents.

The nation is called the Gateway to the East, the Emperor's Doorway, Den of Slavers, and (perhaps least complimentary) the Living Ruin for the abandoned cities, sprawling ruins, and sand-blasted wastes that disfigure its frontiers.

Although most of the Inner Sea views Qadira as a power that must be watched, its citizens see themselves

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as lesser members of a great and vast empire whose riches and untold pleasures are denied them as they live among the unwashed, unclean, and uncivilized dregs of Avistan and Garund.

Qadira is a land of great mountains and wide deserts, a land where rivers snake through seemingly lifeless wastelands inhabited by nomads, savage humanoids, and all manner of beasts that seem able to feed on sand and sun.

The power of Sarenrae shines down over the Gateway to the East, burning away iniquity and weakness. For the unprepared, the desert path to Katheer is a harsh, unforgiving road. For those who learn the secrets of the Living Ruin, untold riches await.

HISTORY

Little is known of the history of Qadira between the fall of Azlant and the coming of Sarenrae's missionaries. Most information regarding this time is derived from the tales of the merchants that first encountered the local nomadic peoples and came upon the already shining city of Katheer.

Pre-Padishah Empire Qadira (prior to -43 AR)

Before the armies of Kelesh came, Qadira was a far more sparsely populated land, empty of the teeming caravans that now dot its sands and plains. The native humans of the region, related to both the Keleshites and Garundi, were a wandering folk, goatherds and gatherers for the most part, abandoning one region when the sands came to wash them away, only to move their tents eastward toward the mountains in summer, or toward the sea in winter, as the winds took them.

Only in the city of Katheer was this wandering set aside. First a trademoot for the various nomads of the region, it became the site of a great annual horse race. At first the nomads made seasonal visits, but eventually some came to live there permanently, working the fertile land on either side of the River Pashman. Legends grew up around the place—that it was the site of great births and deaths, that its waters could heal even the mortally ill, that it was here that Sarenrae stepped forth to do battle with Rovagug in the time before recorded time.

It was the races along the river that first convinced Keleshite expeditionary caravans to consider the native Qadirans worthy of trade—and later conquest—rather than annihilation. Though the locals wore coarse clothing, used crude weapons, and spoke an awful, grating tongue, their love of horses earned the explorers' friendship. Unable to incorporate the soft "th" sound of the city's name, the explorers called the lands there Kadeera, which in turn was changed by the pens of the thousand court scribes of Kelesh to Qadira.

Keleshite Qadira (-78 AR to 1531 AR)

It was in the waning years of the Age of Destiny that merchants first led Keleshite war parties to Qadira. The lands there were similar to their own, and the warriors felt at home. Fine horses ran the plains of Paresch, and they claimed some of these animals as mounts for their companies. But it was the shining streets of Katheer, as the explorers had promised, that convinced the captains to stay.

Claiming the land in the name of Padishah Emperor Adalan IV, the soldiers of Kelesh raised the empire's green flag of conquest, the Black Blade of War crossing its field. After 2 years, when word returned from Casmaron that Adalan IV had approved the conquest, they added the Silver Blade of Kings to the flag. Formalizing their rule in -43 AR, Kelesh installed its first satrap, Cerush, and began to bring the rest of the region under its heel.

Transplanted Keleshites came in large numbers from the interior of Casmaron, expanding Katheer and bringing commerce, learning, and formalized temples to the city. They mixed well with the native Qadirans, adopting some of their place-names and customs while importing their language. The Keleshites took horses and land from the Qadirans, but in turn mixed so seamlessly with those people that now only a few stubborn nomadic tribes claim to be anything other than Keleshite.

It took the Keleshites less than a century to settle the Plains of Paresch and to expand northward to the border with Taldor, which sparked a series of minor conflicts. Fortifying the boundary with a hundred stone watchtowers and the fortified camp of Omash, Qadira's satraps waited, biding their time for their northern neighbor, this uncivilized "empire," to show weakness.

The satraps turned their attention southward and set about expanding. The southern city of Sedeq was created as a resort town, to show the emperor that life could be carved out of the desert and to grant relaxation and quiet to the nobles of Katheer. They founded other settlements as well, including Al-Bashir, the massive forge-city of Koor, and the logging town Hatavit, along with countless others lost beneath the sands. The philosophy of the emperors in that age, and thus the policy handed down to their satraps, was to create distinct settlements with discrete purposes, to increase the efficiency of the satrapy.

Rising Qadira (1531 AR to 4606 AR)

During the Age of Enthronement, Qadira's satraps again took up the Black Blade of War, seeking to spread the message and mission of Sarenrae, to expand the power of the Padishah Empire, and to enrich themselves and their favorites. This led to the conquest of the mountain

settlement of Gurat, further skirmishes with the Taldans, and—finally—a crossing of the Inner Sea in 1532 AR.

Qadiran dhows first unleashed their dervishes on the island of Okeno, letting their warriors fight their way across the land while the ships sailed around to meet them on the other side. The Keleshite zealots encountered little resistance and crossed into Osirion proper, relieving the nation of the slave revolts that Qadiran agents had engineered, conquering the land and overthrowing its native pharaoh in favor of a Qadiran—and by extension Keleshite—satrap.

That satrap, Xerbystes I (from whom the current satrap inherited both his name and his expansionist desires), was faced with a choice: he could maintain his loyalty to Kelesh and take Osirion as a vassal state, or he could break free and face the wrath of the empire. It was at this critical juncture that the now-ancient bargain was struck: Xerbystes would rule Qadira as a hereditary satrap, with absolute control over the interior of the satrapy, but the padishah emperor would install a vizier to advise Xerbystes and his successors, communicating the imperial will on matters of expansion, war, and trade.

Maintaining its rule over Osirion, Qadira turned its eyes outward for a time, until worship of Sarenrae—the very worship that had impelled Qadira to conquer the Garundi nation—inspired rebellion in the land of pharaohs. The satrap of Osirion exiled the cult of the Dawnflower, but the zealots returned soon after and overthrew him. The Qadirans were soon satisfied, however, when an Osirion-born Keleshite became sultan and maintained friendly ties with their cousins across the Inner Sea.

When a massive earthquake in 2920 AR killed tens of thousands in northern Qadira and nearly as many in Taldor, priests of Sarenrae declared this proof of Taldan allegiance with foul gods. Satrap Gheber II demanded leave to wipe Taldor off the face of Avistan and into the sea, but the emperor refused.

When tempers calmed, more than a millennium of relative peace rested over Qadira, and prosperity enriched many families to the point that they could petition the empire for grants of nobility. Peace and prosperity, however, also brought complacency and laziness. Too much gold and too few laborers meant that the city of Al-Bashir fell to shambles, the resort of Sedeq was abandoned to pirates, and attentive eyes turned from Osirion and Taldor. Qadira considered invading the Isle of Jalmeray, but—having been repelled twice before by the magics of Nex and the bound genies of the Vudrani lords—thought better of it.

In 4067 AR, a debate over the successor to the Padishah Emperor turned bloody, and forty princes left Katheer to contest their rightful claim to the throne of Kelesh. Gheber III made ready the armies of Qadira, in case any of

the factions wished to fight their battles on his territory. The satrap did not care which of the princes came out of the conflict victorious, only that the promise of Qadira's independence was maintained. The succession took nearly 15 years to resolve, during which time Taldor also faced trouble in the form of a power grab by the king of Cheliaz.

With the succession conflict forcing the imperial vizier to return to Kelesh to endorse a family claim, Satrap Gheber III leapt at the opportunity to strike Taldor at its weakest, and crossed the borders in 4079 AR with a force of more than 40,000 Qadiran and Keleshite soldiers. This proved a greater force than Taldor could contend with and keep its holdings, and the northern empire lost much of its influence in the area over the next decade. While most of Avistan notes this period for the Even-Tongued Conquest, in which Cheliaz and several other nations successfully threw off the yoke of the Taldan empire, Qadiran histories record these events as the Ghevran Victories.

Peace with Taldor was not achieved for another 500 years, with the final border appearing much as it had for millennia. The conflict sharpened Qadiran swords and whetted the nation's appetite for blood, however, and the Taldan peace left the satrapy with a bloated military that soon turned its eyes to homesteading, mercenary work, and slavery, though many soldiers were posted on the roads and rivers east into Casmaron, reinforcing safe trade with the heart of the empire.

Age of Lost Omens (4606 AR to present)

In the last century, Qadira has been greatly enriched by trade. The greater security along its caravan routes to the east means that Keleshite goods arrive with greater certainty, and less coin is lost on each trip. The priests of Sarenrae have warned for years of pending destruction from the north, and desire greatly to invade Taldor and create a larger Qadira that extends past the Jalrune River. Xerbystes has begun to study the writings of Gheber III in the hopes of finally discovering a pretense for invasion that will not violate the ancient pact of his namesake.

INTERNAL POLITICS

The Padishah Empire of Kelesh is ruled by its emperor, who in turn commands his governors and satraps. Qadira is one such satrapy.

Padishah Emperor: The current padishah emperor is Kalish XXII, an imposing, virile man approaching the age of 80 far more swiftly than he would like. He has more than 50 wives, and takes a new wife into his household with each year that passes in his reign, along with the countless concubines he receives as tribute from his satraps.

Satrap of Qadira, Xerbystes II: The ruler of Qadira is a young man barely entering his 30th year. The first

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satrap in generations to inherit without contest from any brothers or cousins—Xerbystes is, tragically, an only child—the ruler is a quiet, brooding man who desires glory and the favor of the emperor.

Other satraps within the empire are generally chosen by the emperor and his advisors, and serve for life unless they displease the royal court. The bargain struck by Xerbystes I has allowed his descendants to remain in power in Qadira without removal, and although the tribute that Qadira sends eastward is greater than most, the Qadiran satraps believe it is a small price to pay to maintain the family's rule.

Xerbystes has two older cousins, Feraz and Melchior, who though reluctant to challenge him would gladly replace him, as the satrap has no direct heirs of his own—indeed, he is still without a wife. He refuses to marry even the most beautiful of Emperor Kalish's daughters, reasoning that for Qadira to remain as independent as it has, he must find a Qadiran wife.

The satrap desperately longs for war. Taldor is his favorite target for conquest, but even an invasion from some other enemy force would sate his battle lust long enough to allow him to calm and turn his eyes to interior matters. Unable to quench his thirst for battle, he sends the Peerless out to hear tales of their exploits.

Hebizid Vraj, Imperial Vizier: By ancient arrangement, the satrap of Qadira has imperial authority to act as he will—within the borders of the satrapy. Outside those borders, decisions concerning trade, war, piracy, and expansion all affect the entire empire, and therefore require imperial approval. Xerbystes consults daily with his vizier, Hebizid Vraj, to learn what course the emperor commands, and Vraj communicates magically with advisors in heart of Kelesh to determine the imperial will. Vraj is swiftly growing tired of the satrap's incessant gripes about Taldor, and has begun to hire adventurers to stir the sands of the Ketz Desert to unearth what horrors lurk beneath, in the hopes of distracting his charge from this obsession.

The Peerless: This group of men and women numbers some two dozen, and represent every sort of success in Qadira—obscenely wealthy merchants, great generals, famous sailors, and brave adventurers all count themselves among the Peerless. This title is granted by the satrap to those who embody traits he considers virtues: bravery, loyalty, tactical prowess, mercantile instinct, and so on. In times of crisis, Xerbystes is meant to summon the Peerless as a council of advisors to determine the best course of action for Qadira. In the absence of a crisis, or in times of boredom—such as now—he instead sends them on impossible missions: to sail up the River Maharav and into the Zho mountains, to conquer the Plains of Paresch,

or to reroute the flow of the Pashman to turn useless desert into lush farmland. Most of the Peerless have their own plans and interests, and indulge the satrap's commands only enough to show they are obeying and only so long as his attention remains on the task, which means they often hire mercenaries and adventurers to fulfill these goals, then abandon them halfway through the project; Qadiran heroes agree to these things with the hopes that the abandonment happens just before they find a great treasure, leaving them full rights and profit.

The Keleshite Princes: The children of royalty, the nearly 200 princes and princesses that occupy much of Xerbystes' court are the sons and daughters of the padishah emperor, born of his many wives and concubines. None of these royal children stand any chance of inheriting a title on the death of their father, and though they are guaranteed some measure of wealth, many of them have already squandered it with promises and debts, and so live to enjoy the pleasures of the court to which they are assigned. Those that are sent to Qadira find themselves less than satisfied, because “Katheer is glass when all of Kelesh drowns in diamonds,” and because the independence of Xerbystes II to act within his realm means that the princes are less feared than they might be deeper within the empire.

The Satrap's Armies: The armies of Qadira are massive, numbering more than a hundred thousand trained soldiers and capable of swelling that count with slaves and conscripts with less than a week's notice. Horsemen and camel riders form the bulk of the nation's cavalry, and footmen carrying swords and spears stand ready to clash with Qadira's enemies. Elite cadres of carpet-riding archers and scouts patrol the borders and wastes, and bands of bribed and charmed ogres lurk in the Zho Mountains, ready to pounce on Taldan patrols, or merely any prey that does not seem like a loyal Keleshite soldier.

The most prominent officer in the Qadiran military is Zarathus, general of the northern reaches and commander of the military city of Omash. Aakfa Akif is a famous captain of the Qadiran navy, and sails the Inner Sea in search of pirates. He secretly sinks or captures slave-ships as well, returning their prisoners to Absalom or Katheer as poor laborers seeking new homes rather than returning them to slavery.

External Politics

Over its long years, Qadira has had positive and negative interactions with all of its neighbors.

Absalom: The City at the Center of the World is fortunate indeed that Qadira does not have permission from the padishah emperor to expand, for if the satrap had his way, Absalom would soon enough find itself

under a Keleshite yoke, and its trade entirely controlled by Katheer. The pasha Muhlia al-Jakri is the satrap's hand in Absalom, nominally his trade commissioner and overseer of ship manifests. In truth, Muhlia is a skilled assassin of proven loyalty, and continues her work as a Silent Blade even in this distant land (see sidebar on page 19).

Jalmeray: Qadira has a strange opinion of the island nation of Jalmeray, unsure of whether to respect, embrace, pity, or revile the monastic Vudrani. The Vudrani are, after all, capable of binding genies in the Keleshite fashion, and of directing them to build, construct, and improve the works of the humans around them. Yet they restrain themselves from fully exploiting their abilities, prompting Qadirans to believe that these folk are stupid, lazy, or—worst to the Keleshite mindset—so sure of their superiority that they don't bother proving themselves.

Katapesh: Katapesh holds no grudge against Qadira for past conquest, and trades freely across the Inner Sea and Obari Ocean. The two nations have an extremely active trade exchange, with eunuchs and laborers coming westward into Katapesh, and elven, halfling, and Mwangi slaves coming east to Sedeq or Katheer. Qadira considers the island city of Okeno more Qadiran than Katapeshi, however, and given the freedom to do so, would gladly snatch the center of slave trading back from its distant neighbor.

Osirion: While not staunch allies, Qadira and Osirion have reached an understanding of sorts since the return of a native ruler a century ago. No longer does the Keleshite satrapy look westward with hungry eyes toward its former vassal, and Osirion has turned its attention to more local matters, reordering the kingdom after millennia of chafing under foreign rule.

Taldor: Since the negotiation of peace a century ago, Qadiran relations with Taldor remain cool. Other than its lands and wealth, Taldor has nothing that Qadira wants, and what a Keleshite nation wants, it eventually takes—especially things within easy reach. Qadira has long sought to subvert the Ulfen Guard that protects Grand Prince Stavian, but with little luck; should Qadiran agents succeed in toppling the emperor of Taldor, they reason, it will be a simple matter of convincing the padishah emperor that Taldan lands are ripe for plucking.

TRADE

As the hub for all trade caravans traveling to or from the interior of Casmaron, Qadira has the unique position of being a nation through which nearly all manner of wealth and goods eventually pass. Not without its own needs and desires, Qadira uses its advantageous position to manipulate the market and predict what prices are best for its own interests.

GENIE BOONS

Genies are often moved by the beauty or skill of other races and from time to time have been known to grant an exceptional creature a boon, a gift of inherent genie magic. This is passed down over the years to bless the creature's offspring, much in the same way that a celestial bloodline may manifest itself generations later in the unexpected birth of an aasimar. The most fabled of creatures, and perhaps most prized in all of Qadira, is a shock-white genie-booned light horse or light warhorse. Any man that could catch and tame such a creature is said to be destined for untold fortunes and a life of great importance.

Qadiran Goods

Even without its connection to Kelesh, Qadira is a self-sustaining nation. Grains grow abundantly in the valleys of the Zho Mountains and along the southern shores of the Pashman. Small vegetable farms color the Plains of Paresch. Oases where dates and figs grow naturally dot the Ketz Desert, and the twin branches of the Tapur Forest hide numerous trees sprouting pomegranates and peaches. Cinnamon and coriander can be found growing wild in many places across Qadira, and the expensive heatstones—worthless to Qadirans except for trading to northerners—are found lying in the desert (see page 213 of the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*).

Gateway to the East

What trade goods Qadira cannot provide for itself it gains from Kelesh. Rare spices, teas, and silks are all in constant demand by the nations of Avistan and Garund. Salt arrives in abundance, traditionally harvested from seawater drawn up in buckets from ships crossing the Obari Ocean and Inner Sea. Incense of all kinds passes through Katheer, including the valuable healy myrrh (see page 19).

Needs

Qadiran traders are not without their own needs. Root vegetables are scarce in Qadira, as the land is more suitable for wheat, legumes, fruit trees, and (in the mountain highlands) coffee. Certain meats are in demand; cultured Qadirans have a sharper taste for lamb and beef than they do for chevon (goat meat), despite the countless goats that roam the land and are herded by its commoners. While Keleshite bronze work is still among the best in all Golarion, dwarves and elves forge steel more skillfully than Qadiran smiths, who turn to them for armor and weapons. Qadirans admire the strength and appearance of horses, and a fast, powerful, or merely beautiful horse might fetch twice or even five times its normal price in the markets of Qadira—assuming the owner is willing to part with the animal. More than

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these physical things, Qadirans crave knowledge. Books in strange tongues are highly prized (provided their topics are compelling), but not half as much as new spells or strange magic, whether purchased on paper or clay tablet, or taught directly by a knowledgeable spellcaster.

Slavery

No discussion of Qadiran trade is complete without mentioning the buying and selling of slaves. Not all slaves have a difficult life in Qadira, but most do, and portions of the markets in all major cities are devoted to the trade of sentient beings as though they were so much cattle. Slaves are priced in wildly varying amounts, from a handful of gold pieces to purchase a thin, sickly slave, to several thousand gold for a prized servant. A typical strong, healthy slave sells for 50–100 gp. No Keleshite will ever request or offer less than 2 gp for a slave, as a matter of superstition; they believe that the redemption price for each hand is at least 1 gp (anyone caught as a thief normally has a hand chopped off, but one can avoid this fate by paying a 1 gp fine, so a two-handed thief in theory is worth at least 2 gp).

PEOPLE

While Keleshites say there are a thousand levels of social status in Qadira, in truth there are only four: nobles, citizens, foreigners, and slaves.

Nobles

The nobles hold titles at the imperial court, are permitted to enter the palace of the satrap without invitation, and may purchase and sell property within Katheer without a writ from one of the court scribes. They are free from prosecution for crimes committed outside of the empire, and for crimes committed against their own slaves. Noble titles are hereditary, except for those attached to certain specific government positions (the vizier, for example, is a noble, though his children are not automatically nobles unless he was a noble before he was appointed vizier). There are no known nonhuman nobles in Qadira; even the wealthiest dwarf or elf who tries to buy a title of nobility finds his requests stalled in endless bureaucratic tangles.

Not all Keleshite nobles are wealthy, and the periods of time spent enjoying the hospitality of the satrap in his palace is generally an indicator of how poor a noble truly is—the poorer ones live off the generosity of the satrap more often than the wealthy ones come to visit.

Citizens

Any native-born Keleshite is a citizen, although in truth, the protections of this status only apply to those born within one of the empire's cities, where such records are kept. The native tribes of the Paresh claim this protection

loudly when offended by a noble or city-bound Qadiran, but otherwise see themselves as outside this hierarchy. Only a few nonhumans are citizens.

Citizens may own property, obtain writs to purchase property within Katheer (for a fee), join the glorious armies of the padishah emperor, and are permitted to carry weapons for defense.

Foreigners

Any free person born outside of the empire is a foreigner. Foreigners must register themselves upon entering Katheer, must state their intentions when making any large purchases (such as property or multiple slaves), and are required to pay homage to the satrap on both entering and leaving the satrapy—a “gift” for his “hospitality.” Foreigners are otherwise treated as citizens, with the key exception that they are subject to ejection from Qadira at any time if they should displease the satrap, forfeiting any immovable property in the process. All but a handful of nonhumans living in or visiting this country are classified as foreigners.



Slaves

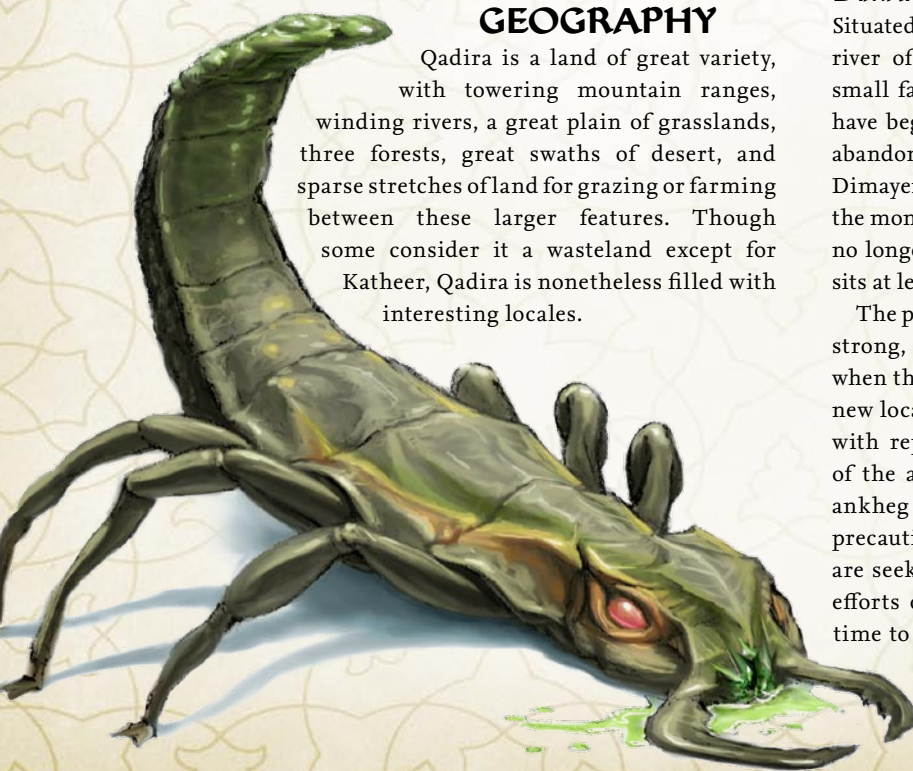
A slave is a person owned by another person. In Qadira, this is a lifetime ownership, except when the slavery is entered into willingly for a set period, such as in payment of a debt. Nobles, citizens, and registered foreigners cannot be enslaved within Qadira. The child of a slave and a noble is a citizen, the child of a slave and a citizen is considered a foreigner, and the child of a slave and a foreigner is a slave. Owners have the option of freeing their slaves, but this is a long, arduous process, and requires the placement of a special mark on the slave by the church of Sarenrae, to ensure that the freed person cannot be enslaved again.

Concubines: These female slaves have a special status. Their children adopt the legal status of the man to which they are concubines, and if a master dies with concubines in his possession, each of those concubines is entitled to a share of his household equal to half that of a wife. After 3 years, a master must release any concubine with which he has no children, freeing her completely, or else must take her as his wife. A concubine's legal status must be declared, either publicly (in front of wives, slaves, and kinsfolk) or in a document submitted to a court.

Eunuchs: These male guards serve as guardians of harems and other important treasures. They are castrated early in life as a means of reducing the temptation for betrayal. If a eunuch's master dies a violent death, he is expected to take his own life; if the master dies a natural death, he must serve the master's heir loyally. Should a eunuch's master and the heir both die natural deaths, he is free.

GEOGRAPHY

Qadira is a land of great variety, with towering mountain ranges, winding rivers, a great plain of grasslands, three forests, great swaths of desert, and sparse stretches of land for grazing or farming between these larger features. Though some consider it a wasteland except for Katheer, Qadira is nonetheless filled with interesting locales.



AL-BASHIR

The great city of Al-Bashir was more than 2,000 years old when peace and decadence brought it to decay. Giant minarets fell into the streets when knowledgeable craftsmen became scarce. Without laborers or planning, the city fell into ruin, its nobles left, and soon thereafter, the merchants abandoned the city. As with all Keleshite nations, once the merchants were gone, Al-Bashir became little more than a name in Qadira's histories.

For more than 500 years, broods of harpies have controlled the waste of Al-Bashir, roosting atop its towers and claiming districts of the city like bickering gangs, ruled by sorcerer matrons with demonic, genie, and rakshasa bloodlines. They care little for the gold that lines the walks and banisters of the ruins, preferring the heights for their hunting and the ruins for their ability to draw in new prey. Xerbystes' desire to reclaim the wealth of this ancient city is well known, and he has sent small armies of soldiers to the ruins, only to have their banners thrown back out of the gates like some great, belching beast.

Even if one were to get past the hundreds (some argue thousands) of harpies that call the ruin home, there are collapsed walks and under-levels to the city that human eyes have not seen in centuries. Rumors persist that the harpies were drawn there by some greater, even more powerful threat that enjoys watching the failures of the Qadiran armies, but craves the day when it will be able to taste the blood of those brave enough to best its pets.

DIMAYEN

Situated as it is in the eastern desert of Meraz, near the river of the same name, the irrigation canals of this small farming colony recently collapsed, and the sands have begun to swirl in, burying outlying buildings and abandoned farmsteads. Their crops are failing, and while Dimayen is not yet starving, its people are unable to make the money they once did by trade, and merchant caravans no longer stop to barter their wares. Now its population sits at less than 5,000.

The people of Dimayen consider themselves proud and strong, and so are not worried about what will happen when the farms finally collapse and they must move to a new location. Its elders, however, are deathly concerned with reports of large, ant-like burrows beneath some of the abandoned farms, confirming suspicions of an ankheg infestation nearby. While the elders have taken precautions against the monstrous arthropods, they are seeking advice from sages as to how to redirect the efforts of these beasts elsewhere, to buy them enough time to reconstruct the collapsed irrigation canals and restore some of the hope of their people rather than retreating back into central Qadira.

qadira: gateway to the east

GURAT

This small city has but a single, 8-foot wall ringing its hilly environs. Resting on one of the smallest and flattest of the Zho Mountains, Gurat is considered a sacred city by most Qadirans, who visit it in search of mystical enlightenment or spiritual guidance.

Gurat gained this reputation from the Mouthpiece, a cyclops living here for over 300 years. He and his predecessors have offered wisdom and guidance to the satraps of Qadira and the emperors of Kelesh for more than 3,000 years. The Mouthpiece has no proper name, being so old that he has forgotten it (some believe the city is named for one of his ancestors), and now speaks in riddles—sometimes not even in words—in the hopes that his cryptic visions will be answered.

Although it is an offense punishable by death for anyone but the satrap to approach the Mouthpiece, the aged cyclops welcomes all visitors, and a brave adventurer who manages to sneak past the thousand deafened eunuchs that guard his caves might manage to learn a secret or two about her destiny—or be driven mad by the answer. Some speculate that the cyclops has lost his power since the death of Aroden, but if he has, the Mouthpiece of Gurat has yet to lose the faith of Qadira's rulers, who continue to turn to him for advice and counsel.

Despite the mysteries surrounding the oracle, or perhaps because of them, many come to this mountain city to explore mysticism, to study philosophical teachings, or to proclaim their own powers of foresight. A number of schools of philosophy and astrology dot the city, their students often engaging in long, in-depth debates which crowd the streets. The city has a population of nearly 8,500, approximately half of which are permanent residents.

Gurati locals, known for their open-fire cooking and their weaving, often sit outside their homes, engaging in either of the two professions and selling their wares to passersby. Some less savory folk attempt to sell whatever a careless tourist will buy—a bit of string, a smooth stone, a shank bone from a fine meal—as tokens of luck and fate. Their carpets fetch high prices, it is true, but not all Gurati have that skill, or the patience to invest the time in the hopes of some foreign wizard wanting to buy it. Still, there are some who believe that the woven patterns of Gurati carpets hold secret prophecies, if one is merely wise enough to know which thread's path is their own.

OMASH

The peace treaty between Taldor and Qadira established a formal boundary between the two countries; Omash sits along that border, and is the easternmost stop for patrols

SOLDIER FEATS AND TRAITS

The Keleshite inhabitants of Qadira train constantly for battle. Even when it does not come, they are happy to practice their skills.

This section provides one new feat and three new character traits. Character traits are ways to customize a player character for a particular campaign; by supplying a list of appropriate traits, a GM can help players integrate their PCs into the story. For more information on traits, go to paizo.com/traits and download the free Pathfinder Character Traits Web Enhancement.

Mounted Blade [General]

You have learned to use the momentum of your mount to carry your weapon through one foe and into another.

Prerequisite: Ride 3 ranks, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, base attack bonus +1, Qadira affinity

Benefit: When you use the Ride-By Attack feat, if your attack hits, you may also make an attack against a target adjacent to your original target. This additional attack has a –5 penalty to the attack roll. You may use this feat whether riding a mount or using a flying item such as a *broom of flying* or *carpet of flying*.

Combat Trait

Strong Arm, Supple Wrist: You have been trained in the javelin and the spear, and know how to make the best use of your momentum. Whenever you move at least 10 feet before making an attack with a thrown weapon, you add 10 feet to the range increment of the weapon thrown. You can only gain this benefit once per round.

Regional Traits

Rider of Paresh (Qadira): You call the Plains of Paresh home, whether you were born among the plains' tribes or in the glittering towers of Katheer. The horses are your kin. When mounted and making a charge, your mount's speed is increased by 10 feet. You must have the Mounted Combat feat to take this trait.

Watching Taldor (Qadira): You have spent all of your adult life with eyes turned northward, waiting for the Taldan weaklings to give you an excuse to fight, ready to act at a moment's notice. You gain a +1 trait bonus to Initiative checks, and if you are able to act during the surprise round of an encounter, you can draw a weapon (but not a potion or magic item) as a free action during that round.

riding from the coast to the Zho Mountains. A sprawling fortress, Omash is the training ground for much of the Qadiran army. Few of its 27,000 residents are civilians.

Twelve schools of war split the massive, fortified campground that is Omash, each one specializing in a particular tactic or troop type. Schools for horse cavalry,

camel cavalry, carpet cavalry, archery, pike wielding, siege warfare, and castle-storming all fill the soldiers' time with new information, forging them into better weapons for the empire. Such weapons tarnish over time if not wielded, however, and so the padishah emperor often calls some of these troops eastward for use in his campaigns closer to the heart of Kelesh.

The commander of Omash, General Zarathus, longs for war with Taldor and constantly prods the satrap for permission to venture further into Taldan territory. To date, Xerbystes has denied this permission, though with each passing day both men grow more and more impatient, and each separately considers the possibility of staging a false attack from Taldor as pretense for war. The ogre raiding parties nestled in the mountains would be only too happy and willing to help instigate the conflict—from time to time Zarathus has to send patrols up into the foothills to quell the ogres' raging bloodlust, and he is unsurprised when his soldiers do not return.

Sedeq

As the saying goes, "every slave in the world passes through Katheer." This is not, strictly speaking, the truth. While it is true that every Qadiran slave that will be sold to foreigners goes through that port city at one point or another, it is in Sedeq, the beautiful, open-air city designed as a permanent oasis for the nobles of Kelesh when visiting Qadira, that these slaves are trained, prepared, and broken for their lives of servitude. More than half of the nearly 90,000 residents are slaves.

A perverse sanctuary of slavers and their chattel, Sedeq is a place of contradictions. Built for luxury and relaxation, Sedeq is blanketed with opulent gardens of every sort of flower imaginable, watered daily by slaves trained to the task. In the many plazas of the city, all methods of discipline are exerted to ensure the slaves fall into line with their keepers, from whipping to branding to starvation. Different handlers employ different means of marking their property, but a favorite among those in Sedeq is to shear a slave bald and tattoo their trainer's mark at the base of the skull. If the eventual owner is known, some identifying mark might be added as well.

The glorious scents of the Qalli Spice Market are a pleasant distraction from the screams of Sedeq's victims. Located in the southern quarter of Sedeq, it is larger itself than most cities, and the merchants here offer the best prices in all of Avistan, as well as the widest selection—including some items that otherwise cannot be found without crossing into Casmaron. The low prices and greater selection force merchants from across Golarion to stop and consider a purchase, and while they are there, the silver-tongued merchants of Sedeq often convince

them to make deals for goods bound for other ports. Those heading to Katheer are left alone, to save the cost of overland transport, but ships headed toward Katapesh or Absalom are cajoled, flattered, and haggled into submission by Qadiran merchants who simply will not take "no" as an answer.

Shadun

Shadun was once a massive city carved into the rock on either side of a crack in the Zho Mountains. Its lands were incredibly fertile, thanks to mineral sediments, frequent snowmelt, and softer soils due to the region being a watershed basin for the River Pashman. Its stepped farmlands produced plentiful food for Qadira, and its people lived in the homes they chiseled into the rock, or built upon their steps.

Nearly a millennium ago, the crack opened as the twin mountains of Zhobl and Zhonar erupted, belching volcanic ash down onto the inhabitants. Lava cut off all escape to the west, toward Gurat or Katheer. Those that survived the initial holocaust fled eastward through the mountains, eventually coming to the desert beyond. Beyond those initial camps, all traces of the refugees were lost within a month of the eruption. Their former homes are buried in soot or melted away, and some scholars believe that it will be centuries before the land is hospitable to human life again.

The rare visitors to Shadun sometimes notice fresh hyena or gnoll tracks, or the lifeless bodies of victims with canine bite marks, for the place is infested with gnolls. Some of the volcano survivors fled to the eastern deserts and faced starvation; a few turned to the flesh of hyenas and even their own dead for survival. Having forsaken all taboos and morals of their culture and faith, the cannibalistic Shadunai were cursed, transformed forevermore into hyena-things that craved the flesh of humans, and would be eternally outcast from their society. These gnolls soon turned on their former kinsfolk, wiping out all known pockets of Shadunai survivors in the area. Taking on the name Sat'un, they still wander the deserts—born, living, and dying as gnolls. Legend has it that some of them have feverish dreams of a means of reversing the transformation, but none have the courage or the will to rebuke their bloody hungers and turn back to the way of humans—or fear that these visions are a test or trap by Lamashtu for her chosen people.

It is common knowledge in Qadira that the gnolls of Shadun were once human and became beastmen after eating the flesh of their kin, and for this the gnolls are more reviled here than in other lands; even the rare merchant-gnoll has no place in civilized society. Some human descendants of the Shadun might remain, hidden in the mountains, but none can say for certain.

qadira: gateway to the east

Other Sites

There are places hidden in Qadira that few civilized folk see, warned off by past tragedy, strange curses, or marauding monsters.

Ketz Desert: Bound in the north by the harbor of Katheer, and to the south and east by the Zho Mountains, this raised desert is the hunting grounds for human and bugbear slavers searching for escaped thralls and lost travelers to add to their property. When thwarted by faster quarry, these slavers drive their prey toward the sea, where high, sharp cliffs prevent escape.

Hatavit: Founded as a work camp for sorting the bounty of the Tapur Forest, Hatavit is a post for woodworkers and carvers in the service of the satrap. Recently a great sandstorm, out of place for this region, broke the watchtowers of the camp, and the soldiers guarding Hatavit fled. Unwatched, the slaves ran northeast and lost themselves in the forest, and Katheer has had no contact with the town since.

Khoka: This roadside town is the last stop in Qadira proper for merchants traveling eastward into the heart of the empire, and the first way station for caravans entering the satrapy. Nestled on the southern shores of the Pashman River, the town of Khoka is packed with merchant caravans, shiftless mercenaries, interesting bargains, and—as one trader put it—“more rumors than could fill a hundred ears.”

Because it is the last stop within Qadira, and the only real trading post for many miles eastward, Khoka is often an ideal place for traveling merchants (and needy adventurers) to find excellent bargains on goods that must be sold by their purveyors before returning to Kelesh. Rumors of what supplies or goods are selling for the highest prices in Katheer are the most precious commodity, followed by provisions for hungry mounts and scruffy mercenaries willing to replace fallen guards.

Koor: This ancient forge-city is a broken ruin of stone and bronze, its foundries long cooled from lack of use, and its streets empty of anything but dust, broken ingot-molds, and whipping winds. The city was abandoned following the start of the Taldan wars, and has not been repopulated since. There are rumors of a guardian naga in the ruins of the city, winding through its streets and warning off any who approach. It is unknown whether the naga is attempting to keep intruders out, or some great terror in.

Plains of Paresh: These grassy plains north of Katheer are home to shepherds and tribes of horse-breeding nomads that trade with

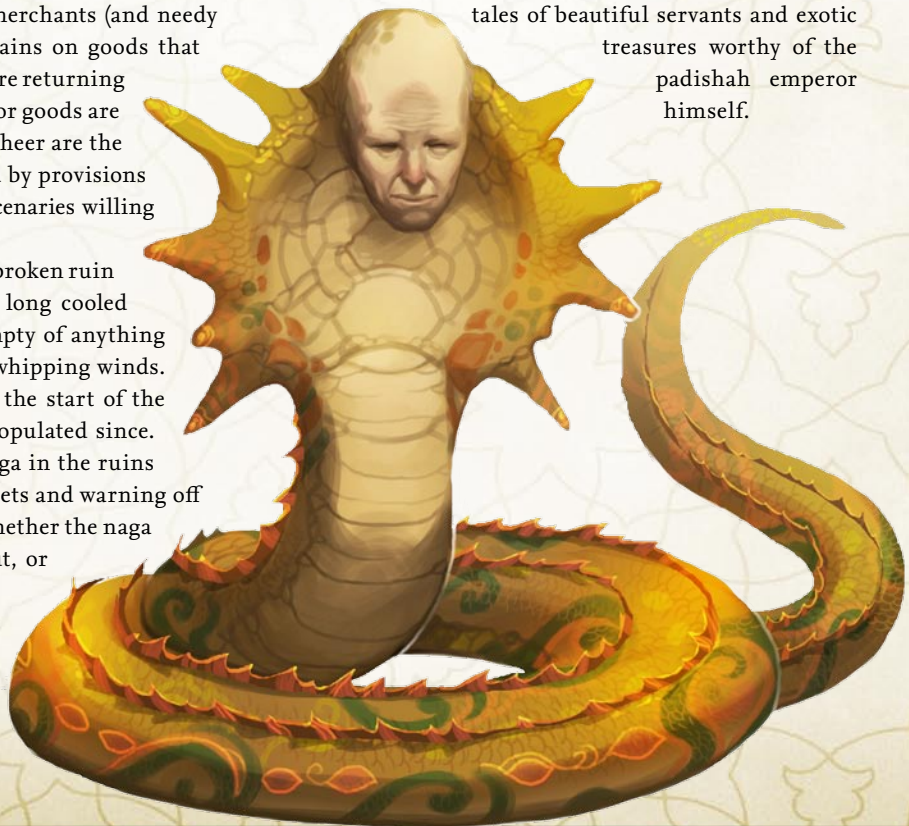
each other but rarely with outsiders. Fine mounts within the plains (such as those brought in by visitors) run the risk of being stolen from their owners by these nomads, who are only too happy to challenge outsiders to races in order to determine the rightful ownership of the steed. The self-styled king of the nomads rides a white stallion that he claims is genie-booned.

Tapur Forest: The shared name for two distinct regions of woodland, the northern Tapur is filled with fruit and other edibles (such as pears and pomegranates), while the southern spur of the forest contains strong wood that is favored for wagon axles and bows. All manner of inhospitable fey are rumored to inhabit the deeper reaches of both forests, and rarely do travelers who venture more than a bowshot into the woods return safely.

The Tents of Erukh: Somewhere south of the Zho Mountains, but well north of Sedeq, travelers report encountering this seemingly permanent encampment of strange, beautiful men and women. Perfectly hospitable, the greeting room (*zraka*) of the main tent is larger than most homes, and can host a hundred men or more. The leader of this tribe, Erukh, is said to be a genie of great power, and all in the tribe are his relations or descendants.

Erukh accepts no gifts to enter into his home, instead requesting a task from those who offer gifts. It is said that only the bravest accept his challenge in the hopes of sampling the pleasures of genie-kind. No verifiable tale tells of what is deeper in the tents, though many campfire

stories and bard songs claim fabulous tales of beautiful servants and exotic treasures worthy of the padishah emperor himself.





SOCIETY

There is much to be said of a nation as cosmopolitan as Qadira, resting on the edge of an empire that is so very near to ruling the world.

RACES

Nearly all races that dwell on the face of Golarion can be found in the streets of Katheer. As Keleshites are not shy about forming opinions of other groups, they naturally have their biases about those who visit their cities. What follows are the typical opinions Qadirans hold toward the other races of the world.

Humans

Qadirans are, by and large, Keleshites, with a very small minority of Garundi and mixed Garundi-Keleshite nomads that live in the plains of Pareshe. Natives of Qadira are better than all other beings, human or not, and among native Qadirans, they of course believe their own subgroup (Keleshite or Garundi, city-dweller or nomad) is the superior example. This is the natural, expected means of behavior, and no Qadiran begrudges another their sense of pride—at least, not outwardly. Other human groups, however, are viewed in a far different light, and a sample

of typical comments by Qadirans about other humans are listed below.

Azlanti: Poor wretches claiming the legacy of a fallen empire. Fortunate are we that Kelesh shall never die. Too prideful to be a proper slave, and too pitiful to be a proper enemy, a so-called Azlanti is better off as he began: a legend.

Chelaxian: Sarenrae protect us from falling so far from righteousness that we should turn to such foul behavior! Their operas please the ear, and their contracts stand the test, but suffer no Chelaxian to stand within your home.

Garundi: A people near to our own, and yet not worthy to be called equals. Not brethren, but we can yet embrace them as cousins, so long as they respect our borders and our ways.

Kellid: Naked animals. Properly clothed, taught a proper language, and brought into obedience before the gods, perhaps they would make good eunuchs or caravan guards. Bring one as a slave to Katheer, and he will at least carry your litter on his strong back.

Mwangi: Tall and beautiful are these tribesfolk, and yet most dangerous if their chains slip off. They are strong warriors, and perhaps shrewder than we admit. Let them stay in their tribes. Better that we meet them piecemeal than as a force raised against us.

Taldan: Pah! Let them stay in their homesteads and insult one another all day. We know which of us is the stronger, whose women the more beautiful, whose lands the true empire. The dog of Taldor barks, but knows his place when his master is roused to kick.

Tian: Pretty men and women, indeed, and they know the value of good silk (would that they did not!), and are willing to pay much silver for spices to liven up their rice. They are good businessmen, and far enough away that their coin is all we need concern ourselves with.

Ulfen: Tall and pale, they are light as the Mwangi are dark. They have no appreciation for the value of a decent slave, nor for the intricacies of haggling. Take their coin and let them leave; your time is better spent on other headaches. Offer them only politeness, for an Ulfen brooks an insult even worse than a Keleshite, and a heavy axe can shatter the most finely crafted sword.

Varisian: These travelers rarely see the shores or sands of Qadira, but those that come are an interesting lot, proclaiming their seer-sight and dancing their wondrous dances. Beware of the beguiling sway of Varisian music, for it may well be the song that drowns out the falling of your purse into another's hands.

Vudrani: Though their empire is nearly as grand as our own, these brutes cripple themselves by devaluing their daughters and coddling their sons. Blessed is the wealthy Keleshite house that has among its wives a Vudrani woman, but be sure to remind her of her responsibilities.

Dwarves

Qadirans embrace dwarves as good craftsmen, who—like Keleshites—value good business and good bargains. They also have a fondness for luxurious dwarven beards and (secretly) their beers and ales. Dwarven brewers, barbers, and smiths are most welcome in the streets of Katheer.

Elves and Half-Elves

Elves are viewed in a mixed light among Qadirans. On the one hand, they are not humans, and so lack some measure of Keleshite refinement and natural advantage. On the other hand, elven creations can be of such workmanship and beauty that Qadirans cannot help but to envy them somewhat. Elf-crafted swords are treasures in Qadira, particularly long, slender scimitars forged for elven hands.

Half-elves are looked at with less reverence than their full-blooded cousins, seen as half-breeds that have none of the beauty and grace of the elves and none of the carriage of a human. For this reason, many half-elves in Qadira disguise whichever side of their heritage is most easily concealed, hoping to pass as a full-blooded member of the other race. The sole exception are those half-elves of Keleshite heritage, who are revered as almost obscenely beautiful and are constantly gawked at while in public.

Gnomes

These small folk often come to Katheer seeking a respite from the Bleaching, and find solace for at least a year or two in the crushing throng of its markets. There are enough spices, new flavors, strange mechanisms, and rumors floating around Qadira to keep any gnome occupied for centuries, but many grow tired of the rush and move on after much less time than that. Qadirans welcome the little, curious folk, and the tales that they bring often lighten the mood of market stalls and taverns, but in truth, few gnomes find Katheer comfortable, and few Qadirans see them as anything more than a novelty.

Halflings

Halflings within Qadira generally come as slaves on Chelish ships or wandering bands of free halflings that travel to the desert nation to settle. The first group is welcomed as household slaves while the latter portion finds its way into Qadiran society as easily as any other human settlement. Often they serve as messengers, runners, servants, hawkers, nimble-thumbs (a Qadiran euphemism for a marketplace thief), or lucky mascots for mercenary bands, who take pride in treating their favorite halfling well after a successful campaign. Some halflings manage to gather multiple patrons in this fashion, and sit in taverns or outside temples, collecting their “earnings” without ever doing a day's work.

Orcs and Half-Orcs

Keleshite society makes no distinction whatsoever between orcs and their half-human kin; these creatures are fully inhuman to Qadiran eyes, and thus can only serve one of three purposes: slave, soldier, or enemy. As slaves, they are strong and powerful, but brutish and set to mindless tasks. As soldiers, they are used as shock troops, overwhelming with force before more capable combatants stride in with finer blades. As enemies, they are raiders and brigands, lurking in the mountains waiting for passing caravans. Orcs and half-orcs are not necessarily attacked on sight, but they should remember that Keleshites do not look kindly upon them, even in the best of circumstances.

ADVENTURERS

"He calls himself an adventurer? Then he is a fool, a braggart, or a fortunate man. Let us see which, at summer's end."

Qadirans see adventuring folk as oddities—brave, foolish creatures that risk their lives in the wilderness for riches that may not even exist. The Keleshite mindset favors bravery, but not so much as it favors skill and cunning. A year of adventuring might garner more wealth for the fortunate adventurer than a hundred years of careful trading, and so most Qadirans view successful adventurers with a wary eye.

Native Qadirans of all character classes exist, though in greatly varying numbers.

Barbarian: The Qadiran barbarian hides his rage behind a veil of civility and refinement, channeling violent impulses into duels of honor or to avenge insults. Affinity with animals serves him well, as his care for and empathy with the prized horses of the land is most respected. Outside of Katheer, Qadira's wilds can be harsh, unforgiving wastelands, and though the soft, perfumed inhabitants of the cities might shun the barbarian's presence, they have no choice but to consider his counsel.

Bard: Even more than the songs of their servants, the princes and merchants of Qadira cannot resist a properly performed dance. Qadiran bards often conceal their spellcasting within elaborately choreographed theatrical spectacles designed to sway an audience to their way of thinking. It's a delicate task, but the voice and body are powerful instruments, capable of captivating even the hardest of hearts and avoiding great battles with greater guile.

Cleric: Clerics in Qadira are of two sorts. The first is the quiet, solemn watcher, observing the populace to determine how best to advance her deity's aims. The other is the zealous warrior who takes the fight to the enemies of her faith, reclaims ruins, and combats infidels at every turn. Often it is difficult to tell the difference, as most clerics walk the middle road between these extremes, ready to offer a soothing word or a smiting sword, as the situation dictates.

Druid: In Qadira, the druid is among the loneliest of creatures, with no sympathy from those who live in the land's cities, and only fear from those that wander the wastes. His might be the voice of the desert, the warning rumble of the mountains, or the sudden rush of the river, but few heed him—to their detriment. He might seek alliance with the genies, who remain enslaved in the emperor's thrall, or seek to restore life to the frontiers where only ruins and sands currently lie.

Fighter: Fighters come in many different forms in Qadira. Scimitar-wielding dervishes and horsemen serve the temples of Sarenrae and as defenders of the horse-trading tribes of the Plains of Pares. Polearm-wielding eunuchs guard the courts and harems of the satrap and his nobles. Armored mercenaries of every land protect merchant caravans visiting the nation, and fighters specializing in the spear or the bow ride carpets and camels in defense of the satrapy. Qadiran as a group prefer smart, skillful fighting to brute force, and when given the chance enjoy playing up the theatrics of a battle, weaving complex nets of steel where a simple thrust will do.

Monk: Although most Keleshites are far more concerned with luxury than self-perfection, there exists within Qadira a respect and admiration for those who can set aside earthly pleasures and pursue a more spiritual existence. Vudrani travelers often seek to learn at the feet of the master of the nameless monastery in Katheer, where nearly all Qadiran monks eventually stop to study the way of perfecting their mystical arts.

Paladin: While there are a few paladins to Irori in the Emperor's Doorway, by far the greatest patron of paladins who hail from Qadira is Sarenrae, who impels her followers to take heed of the evil that constantly festers within the satrapy, to root out the followers of Rovagug, and to stand vigilant against all wickedness that might overtake those lands—from the west, the east, or within. Some paladins eventually take up the mantle of dervishes in the Dawnflower's cause, though most continue to employ the sturdier armor, heavier weapons, and stouter shields of their western brethren.

Ranger: Rangers of Qadira are varied in their outlooks. Some are wanderers of the desert or the sparse grasslands, nurturing the wildlife, guarding against interlopers and those who would destroy what few natural wonders have not already surrendered to the sands. Some serve in the satrap's armies, as camel-mounted archers prepared to strike down Qadira's foes. These camel-riders perhaps are the most deadly of all, combining the Keleshite's natural love of comfort (and annoyance at being removed from it) with a lethal knack for taking down enemies at range. A few Qadiran gnolls use their ranger skills to guard their own packs and fiercely defend their territory from interlopers.

Rogue: Few thieves are happier—or fatter—than those that live in the capital city of Katheer. With countless people shuffling past, there are a thousand purses within arm's reach every day, all teeming with copper, many with silver, and some even with gold. Others use their knowledge of locks and doors to improve security measures for the wealthy, and a few gain employment as keen-eyed lookouts or stealthy bodyguards for the paranoid.

Sorcerer: Often called jinni-blooded by their countrymen, sorcerers in Qadira are presumed to gain their powers from an elemental ancestry. Most sorcerers neither confirm nor deny these claims, preferring instead to retain the mystery surrounding their abilities—and the additional influence that it grants them.

Wizard: These arcane casters draw many of their traditions from ancient writings regarding the teachings, sayings, and binding of genies. Some powerful Qadiran wizards make their livings maintaining the bondage of genie-kind for the padishah emperor, while others are adventurers that brave the ruins of the empire's former folly. See the Magic chapter for more information on Qadiran magical traditions.

CUSTOMS AND QUIRKS

Below are details of Qadiran society that any visitor should be aware of, lest one offend the Keleshite sense of pride and ruin all hope of repair.

Hospitality

Qadiran hospitality is a peculiar thing. All homes—even the most base hovel of mud and branches—possess a greeting room, or *zraka*, where any visitor, be he a wealthy friend or a begging stranger, is welcomed into the house, offered water to drink and wash, and allowed to rest a while on pillows or a couch. If the visitor is polite and gracious, then he is wished well and sent on his way, but not before an hour or two have passed.

If, however, a guest offers a gift, no matter how meager, to his hosts, then he can expect to be invited into the home. Depending on the wealth of the host, a meal may be served, or the guest might be asked to stay the night. Money cannot be offered for such a gift, nor can clothing off a person's back, but the value of the gift to the guest usually determines the behavior of the host (a wealthy man giving a poor gift is an insult to the host, but the same gift from a poor man is a sign of great respect to the host). Qadirans make a great show of dropping in unannounced at friends' homes to offer opulent, sometimes luxuriously or needlessly expensive gifts in order to justify a visit.

On receiving such a gift, a Qadiran host is expected to go out of his way to make the guest comfortable and offer him

NEW SOCIAL TRAIT

Keleshite Princess (Qadiran Keleshite female): You have been raised to expect obedience from those around you, regardless of their station, and are not shy about demanding what you want. You gain a +1 trait bonus to Diplomacy and Intimidate checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

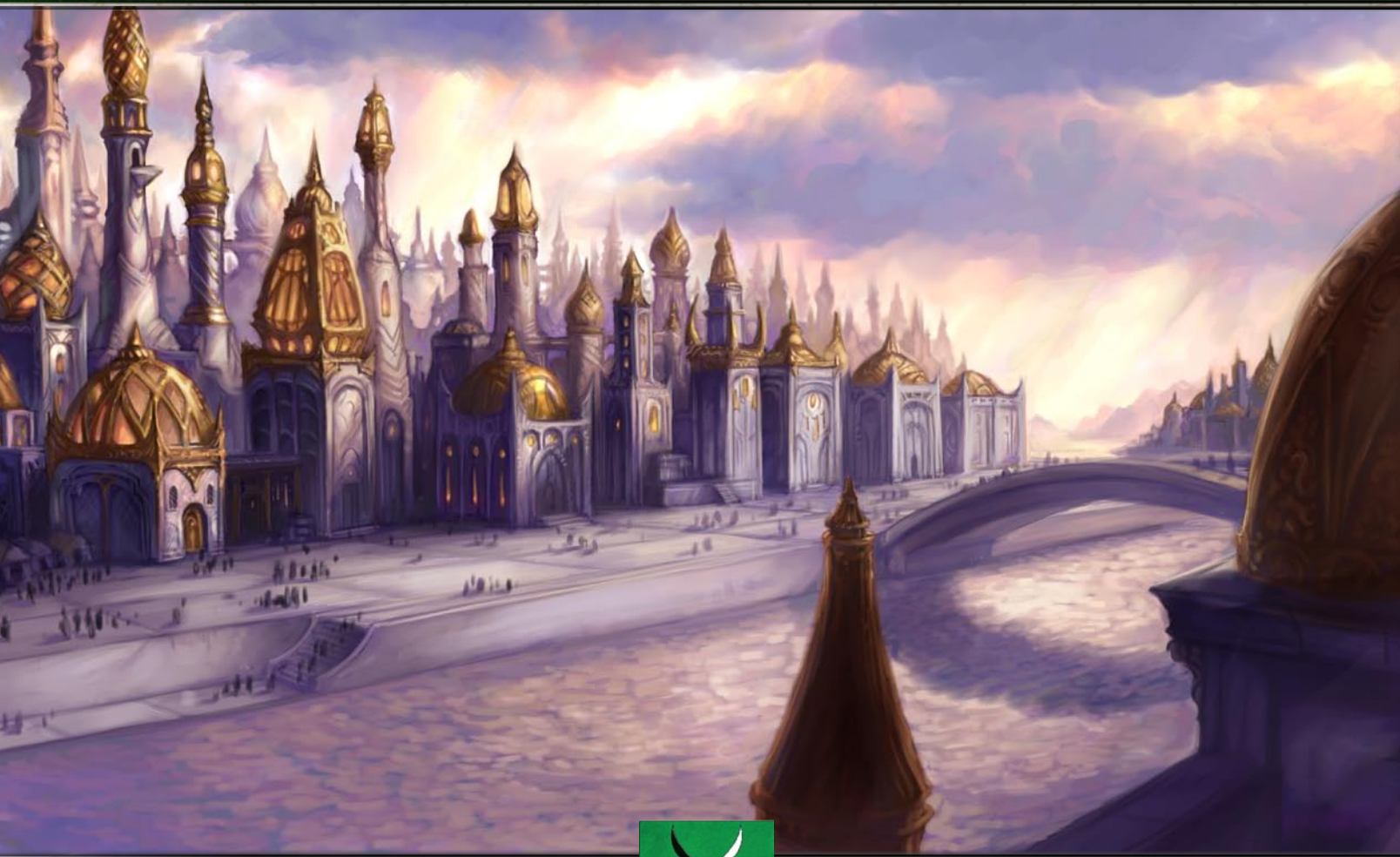
food. However, for unwelcome guests, many Qadirans only fulfill the minimum required for this custom rather than embracing the spirit of it, offering poor food, weak wine, or even spoiled meat.

Gender in Qadira

Keleshites treasure their women as priceless jewels, particularly among the upper classes, where wealth and status is traced through matrilineal descent. Men and women both pursue whatever professions they choose, though females do so with slightly more freedom, as their fathers prepare the way for them with gifts and guarantees of comfort no matter what wealth (if any at all) their choice of life will bring. No profession is barred to a Qadiran woman, and if she elects to become a weaver or a dervish, a wizard or a horse breeder, no proper Keleshite father or husband dares stand in her way.

A Qadiran man works much of his life to gain sufficient wealth and status to prove his worth as a husband. When he marries, his wealth is his. If he has but one wife, there is little problem in determining who will inherit his riches. If a man has multiple wives—which normally happens only if he is a prince of the royal house, or absurdly wealthy—then he must make annual assignments of his wealth to each of the wives in his household, for their use and for the inheritance of their children. If a woman has multiple husbands (an occurrence reserved for the richest women, and then only those *not* of the royal house), she is the keeper and assigner of their wealth. Most Keleshite women rarely find one husband adequate to their demands, and so will not tolerate a second incompetent.

When a Qadiran man dies, his wealth is divided according to his previous wishes among his wife and daughters; Qadiran sons inherit very little, though tradition stipulates that weaponry and horses go to sons first. A Keleshite house with no daughters is considered empty, and a widower who dies with only male heirs is considered cursed by the gods. In this case only does a son stand to inherit much of anything—including, almost immediately, the attentions of other Qadiran fathers seeking young, wealthy husbands for their daughters.



katheer

There are a thousand sayings about Katheer, each one speaking of its wealth, its age, or its teeming masses of merchants, slaves, and zealots. Few speak of the history or influence of this august city, or of the secrets that lurk just below its oiled and perfumed skin.

HISTORY

None truly know when human hands raised the first stone at Katheer, but all agree on the minimum age of the settlement, as it is recorded in the infinitely copied tales of the annual Histaqen horse races. The first year of the race

was 1290 AR; as such, Katheer has had over 3,400 races and is therefore at least that many years old.

In the time since the Histaqen began, much has changed on both sides of the Pashman. A great city has grown up next to that ceremonial ground, and a nation around it, supporting a distant empire. The Qadirans of the Plains of Pareshe are still able to ride freely, and can still run the Histaqen without interference, but none would claim that little has changed in these 3 millennia.

What began as a meeting ground soon turned into a trading camp, and around that camp grew up a city of stone

and mortar, where philosophers debated the nature of the site's appeal, the conflict between Sarenrae and Rovagug, or the currents of the great river. When the Keleshites came, they took the city for their own, and the name of the city for their new land. They built a pier for their ships to ferry supplies up and down the Pashman, saving their horses and camels for the roads to and from Casmaron. And they built government buildings: tax houses, scribes, courts, and wondrous palaces that in some places dared to block out the holy light of the Dawnflower.

In time, the pier grew into a harbor, and that harbor into one of the wealthiest ports on the Inner Sea. Ships docked there, and when they could not find mooring, more docks were built to accommodate them. The wealth of Avistan and Casmaron flowed through that port, further enriching an empire already wealthy beyond most mortal imagining.

The Port of Katheer

The Port of Katheer is a mile-long stretch of coastline, piers, and makeshift docks, capable of accommodating all manner of vessels. White-sailed dhows patrol the harbor, allowing known ships through and obstructing those that are prohibited by the satrap. Slaves and laborers work tirelessly to unload the multitude of ships, load them up with new cargo, and send them on their way.

When sailing past the ships that guard the port, a captain must offer the ship's manifest to the commander of the boat that stops him. This is a formality—no cargo is expressly prohibited in Katheer. A captain is also expected to offer two courtesies to the Qadiran commander: to invite an inspecting officer aboard, and to give a gift of salt. It is tradition, for captains sailing to Katheer, to collect buckets of water when entering and leaving each port they visit. After the water in these buckets evaporates, the residual salt is collected to be given as a gift to Qadiran sailors. The quality of the salt often determines the speed of inspections or a captain's ability to dock; insult or offense to the Qadiran commander can lead to being placed at the farthest docks, or worse, a slashing of the ship's sails and orders to ride the Pashman back out to sea.

Once in the port, a ship is faced with a seemingly infinite number of laborers and slave drovers offering to unload its cargo, merchants hoping to be the first to learn what is aboard so they can recalculate prices before the goods get to market, women offering companionship to the sailors, and priests hoping to sway wayward souls now that they are on dry land. Some captains find it more convenient to unload a particular cargo, reboard the ship, and sail farther along the port to unload the next type of goods, instead of paying for the transport of their goods by hand or cart along the cramped and crowded docks to the market. As the saying goes, "It is a rich man indeed who can afford to walk all of Katheer."

THE HISTAQEN

This ancient horse race runs along the length of the Pashman River, from its traditional starting point within Katheer, east all the way to a waypoint at the foot of the Zho Mountains, across the river, and then westward along the riverbank toward Katheer again. The prize for the race is revealed only to the winner by the Qadiran elders who organize the event, but two things are known about the Histaqen: that the victorious rider is a hero forevermore to the tribes of the Paresch, and that to cheat, either by magic or by skipping mandated stops, is punishable by death.

The Great Market

To the immediate north of the port, so near that the two are virtually indistinguishable, lies the Great Market of Katheer. The only discernable difference is that in the market permanent buildings stand side by side with the merchant stalls rather than being a chaotic mess of tents, overturned carts, and hawking children.

In the Great Market, all manner of things are sold: spices, jewelry, armor, weapons, pottery, and slaves. No goods are missing from Katheer, but no commodity is more precious to the buyers or sellers than secrets. There, among the makeshift stalls and more permanent open-air shops, nobles of the court whisper and plot, trading information in scraps to build their intrigues, each transaction carefully disguised as a haggling over some physical merchandise.

Secrets may be precious in Katheer, but no native Qadiran wants Keleshite secrets spread to foreign ears. Qadirans guard their privacy against non-Keleshites closely, often going to great lengths to conceal or deny that which is plainly true, speaking in euphemisms and code if foreigners are nearby.

Haggling in Qadira

Keleshite merchants take great pride in their ability to negotiate prices in their favor, and take greater joy in sparring with customers that can match them in guile. While most transactions should use the listed prices for a given item, GMs might decide to liven up an encounter with an NPC merchant. Haggling can be great fun, if you remember a few key tips.

Don't haggle for everything. If you quibble for every dagger or shirt you want, it bogs down the game and doesn't generally garner much benefit. Save your bargaining for important items, or transactions with a lot of gold on the line.

Haggling isn't a shakedown. Your charm, guile, and knowledge of the item you're haggling for are far more



important than whether or not a merchant is scared of you. Ranks in Appraise, Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive can all help you out when negotiating a price.

Getting greedy can backfire on you. If you're already getting a better price than you think you deserve, overreaching might result in the merchant selling you shoddy items, or tarnishing your good name in the city.

Common tactics when haggling in Katheer include the following: insulting the goods to be purchased ("my newborn son hammers a blade better!"), claiming that the price is more than you can afford, acting disinterested, and feigning interest in another item offered. Personal insults occasionally work, if you're prepared to suffer a few of your own.

The important thing to remember is that haggling over mundane items not only takes time away from the more exciting part of the game, but it also takes away from the more entertaining chances to engage in one of Qadira's favorite pastimes.

Temple-Monastery of Irori

This simple, unadorned structure has no proper name, and receives its support from the Open Palm of Sheehad

(see the Faith chapter), but is ironically built against the wall of the Satrap's Hall of Writs, where commissions for trade caravans and permits to purchase lands within the city are issued.

Venicaan College of Medicaments and Chirurgery

A sprawling complex of buildings in the shadow of the satrap's palace, the College of Medicaments stands at the center of a roiling mass of other schools and universities, whose students and instructors often lounge on their stone steps, shouting at the attendees of other institutions about the superiority of their ways of thinking. While Katheer is filled with schools of philosophy, astrology, engineering, and magic, it is the Venicaan school that stands above all. It was here that the famous healy myrrh was first perfected, and it is in these halls that the most powerful healing and curative magics are formed. The Taldans attempted to attack the college three separate times over the course of their war with Qadira, and three times they were repelled by common citizens of Katheer, who considered this place too important and selfless an edifice to be destroyed.

Zenith of the Dawnflower

This is a simple, windowless spire of white marble, crafted and polished over centuries so that only the most careful eye can discern where one block ends and the next begins. It rises nearly 200 feet into the air over Katheer, its interior a great, spiraling stairway from ground level to the top landing. At its apex, one can see from the Inner Sea to the base of the Zho Mountains, the only place in all of Katheer where such a feat is possible.

Sarenrae favors those who visit the Zenith in supplication; clerics and paladins of Sarenrae who make a pilgrimage to the Zenith gain one additional spell slot of their highest available spell level the next time they prepare spells. A particular spellcaster can only gain this benefit once per year.

CONTACTS

Foreigners visiting Katheer may find themselves noticed quickly, especially if they make no effort to blend in with the locals. One of the following individuals might take an interest in foreign adventurers wandering the city.

Aqshan Flamehair: This fiery-tempered evoker has no hair at all, having burned it off in a spell-duel more than a decade ago. Too powerful for the guards of the satrap to assault without greatly embarrassing the empire, Aqshan walks the streets of Katheer in his red-trimmed yellow robes, spouting nonsense that, some believe, actually holds great magical insights. He is prone to insane bursts of rage, immolating those around him when he grows frustrated with their inability to understand. Somewhere within the city he is rumored to have a large cache of magic items stored, but no Qadiran has yet been foolish enough to ask him where it's hidden.

Donesh, Lord of Whips: As his epithet suggests, Donesh is a master and seller of slaves, and is concerned with the protection of the slave trade within Qadira, for the collapse of the slave trade would be the end of his livelihood. Donesh is known to harass those who disrupt the buying, selling, acquisition, or training of slaves (whether they belong to him or another), and is always seeking strong arms and backs to add to his service—willingly or not.

Laqat: This old, seemingly frail woman is actually an experienced bard, and is aware of the comings and goings of nearly every sentient being of note within Katheer, as impossible as that seems. Laqat makes her living through the buying and selling of information, and the passing of that information to those with swords or spells that can reach where she can't or won't go. Any sort of mission might come from Laqat, but her occupation as a keeper of secrets and an anonymous passer of messages means that such a mission could come from any source imaginable.

Matviyyah: A devout and loyal dervish of the Dawnflower, Matviyyah is both a warrior and a priestess, and is one of the

NEW REGIONAL TRAITS

Natives of this great city enjoy some unique opportunities.

Merchant of Katheer (Qadira): You grew up among the market stalls of the greatest trading post in all the world, and can almost smell the value of an item before you touch it. You gain a +1 trait bonus to Appraise checks, and Appraise is always a class skill for you.

Venicaan Medic (Qadira): You have studied at the College of Medicaments and Chirurgery, and know by sight the signs of ailments and toxins you might encounter. You gain a +2 trait bonus to Heal checks to treat diseases or poisons, and Heal is always a class skill for you.

SILENT BLADES OF KATHEER

These thieves and assassins are the eyes, ears, and blades of the satrap when he wishes to act outside the authority of his office or the auspices of the imperial vizier. These loyal servants work for the betterment of Qadira, or so they believe, by slaying those who draw the Satrap's ire, or who betray him to the padishah emperor.

SWEET SMELLS OF HEALING

Much is made of the fabled healy myrrh that can be found only in the stalls of Katheer, but little is truly known of its origins, or how it gains its power.

HEALY MYRRH

Aura none; **CL** none

Slot none; **Price** 50 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

When you burn this powerful resin, it fills 8,000 cubic feet with faint smoke that persists for 8 full hours. Any creatures resting or receiving long-term care in the area while the healy myrrh is active regain 1 additional hit point per level. Multiple uses of healy myrrh in a 24-hour period do not stack.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks, Heal 5 ranks; **Cost** 25 gp

most prominent of Sarenrae's faithful in Katheer. Unlike many of her brethren, she does not wish for war with Taldor or any other nation, and believes that her fellows who press for conflict are ignoring their sacred duty to heal and spread knowledge. She tends to approach outlanders to have them secretly subvert the militaristic followers of her goddess, hoping that one day that the gentler warmth of the sun will touch her people.



PRESTIGE CLASS: DAIVRAT, THE GENIE'S FRIEND

The empire of Kelesh is built by genies, who create towering spires and opulent palaces for the padishah emperor in the hopes that a future ruler will set their kinsfolk free. But not all Qadiran mages see genies as creatures to be bested and enslaved. Instead of potential slaves, these *daivrat* (“brothers of genies”) treat genies as powerful allies, wise counselors, and comrades-in-arms. Though few are foolish enough to consider liberating the thralls of the emperor, each daivrat considers herself a soldier, servant, or cousin to the genies.

Many are the names of the genies, and so similar that most cannot discern them. Yet the daivrat knows a djinni from a janni and the difference between a half-janni and a sulji-janni. The daivrat is distinctly Qadiran, for no other land in Avistan or Garund has such a tradition of treating with the genie races. Good and neutral-aligned genies welcome a daivrat as a friend, and even hateful efreet know they can rely on their daivrat “friends,” sometimes to the daivrat’s detriment.

Role: Daivrat fill the same role as standard spellcasters, plus they are effective as diplomats among the genie races and those allied with genie-kind.

Alignment: Daivrat are respected by genies for their willingness to treat them as equals rather than potential slaves. They are never evil.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

In order to qualify to become a daivrat, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 7 ranks, Knowledge (planes) 7 ranks, Spellcraft 5 ranks.

Feats: Spell Focus (conjuration).

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 3rd-level spells.

Languages: Aquan, Auran, Ignan or Terran.

Special: The character must have had peaceful contact with a true genie (djinni, efreeti, marid, or shaitan).

Class Skills

The daivrat’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (planes) (Int), Linguistics (Int), Spellcraft (Int), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Ranks at each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

THE DAIVRAT

Level	Base				Special	Spells per Day
	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save		
1	+0	+0	+0	+1	Elemental focus, genie-tongue	—
2	+1	+1	+1	+1	Spell-fetch (3rd)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
3	+1	+1	+1	+2	Genie's friend (+2)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
4	+2	+1	+1	+2	Elemental attunement	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
5	+2	+2	+2	+3	Spell-fetch (6th)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
6	+3	+2	+2	+3	Zhyen familiar	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
7	+3	+2	+2	+4	Greater elemental focus	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
8	+4	+3	+3	+4	Spell-fetch (8th)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
9	+4	+3	+3	+5	Genie's friend (+4)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
10	+5	+3	+3	+5	Genie-kin	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class

Class Features

All of the following are Class Features of the daivrat prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A daivrat gains no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Spells: At the indicated levels, a daivrat gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. He does not gain other benefits a character of that class would have gained, except for additional spells per day, spells known (if he is a spontaneous spellcaster), and an increased effective level of spellcasting. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a daivrat, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day.

Elemental Focus (Su): At 1st level, the daivrat gains a measure of connection with elemental powers. Choose one of the following descriptors: acid, air, cold, earth, electricity, fire, or water. When casting spells of the chosen descriptor, the daivrat is considered to possess the Spell Focus feat for that spell. Only one Spell Focus or Greater Spell Focus applies to the casting of a spell.

Genie-Tongue: A daivrat is well-versed in communicating with genies and genie-kin. A daivrat gains a +2 bonus on Charisma-based checks to influence the attitudes of genies and allies of genies, and a +4 bonus to Knowledge checks regarding genies.

Spell-Fetch (Su): Once per day, while preparing spells (or spell slots, for spontaneous casters), a daivrat can conjure a minor genie to find an unusual spell for him. The daivrat chooses one spell he does not know, such as a spell from a prohibited school or from another class's spell list, and sends the genie to fetch magical energy matching that spell. The genie returns after 10 minutes and presents the daivrat with the matching spell energy.

If the daivrat casts spells like a wizard, for the next 24 hours he can prepare the fetched spell as if it were in his spellbook. If he casts spells like a sorcerer, for the next 24 hours he may cast the fetched spell as if he knew it.

At 2nd level, the genie can retrieve any spell of 3rd level or lower. At 5th level, the genie can retrieve any spell of 6th level or lower. At 8th level, the genie can retrieve any spell of 8th level or lower. The genie is incorporeal and has no other powers or abilities (it cannot be used to scout, send messages, and so on) and vanishes once it delivers the spell.

Preparing or casting the fetched spell is more difficult than using spells the daivrat actually knows. If the fetched spell is on the daivrat's spellcasting class's spell list, it is treated as 1 spell level higher than normal; otherwise it is treated as 2 spell levels higher than normal.

Genie's Friend (Su): At 3rd level, a daivrat gains a +2 bonus to his caster level when conjuring genies. At 9th level, this bonus increases to +4.

Elemental Attunement (Ex): At 4th level, the daivrat gains energy resistance 5 against acid, cold, electricity, or fire.

Zhyen Familiar: At 6th level, a daivrat can select a zhyen (see the Bestiary chapter) to serve as his familiar, replacing any familiar he already possesses, as if he had the Improved Familiar feat.

Greater Elemental Focus (Su): At 7th level, the daivrat's connection with his chosen element deepens. When casting spells with the descriptor chosen for his elemental focus ability, the daivrat is now considered to possess the Greater Spell Focus feat. Only one Spell Focus or Greater Spell Focus applies to the casting of a spell.

Genie-kin (Ex): At 10th level, the daivrat's type changes to outsider (native). He gains acid, cold, electricity, and fire resistance 5, resistance 10 against his chosen energy type from his elemental attunement ability, and damage reduction 5/—.

“Bow now before the fury of the Dawnflower, for her wrath is greater than her mercy.”
—Qadiran proverb

Qadirans are nothing if not a faithful people, and they, like all Keleshites, show primary devotion to the sun goddess Sarenrae. Her worship stands in direct opposition to the followers of Rovagug, who constantly attempt to sway the nation toward destruction. Between the two contending deities stands the stoic Irori and his monastic faithful. Beneath this constant bickering, the worshipers of other deities contend for the hearts and souls of the common folk, swaying them with charity, opulent temples, or the whip, depending on where such conversion takes place.

MAJOR FAITHS

The three primary faiths of Qadira are the priesthood of Irori, the insane cult of Rovagug, and the stern followers of Sarenrae.

Irori

In their unnamed temple-monastery in the heart of Katheer, far closer to the administrative buildings of the satrap than the swirling maelstrom of the markets, the faithful of Irori sit in quiet contemplation, their meditations encouraging inner peace within Qadira. Torn between their role as enlightened guides to self-perfection and the clear, overwhelming excesses of the people around them, many monks of Irori move on from the temple complex soon after arriving. Others see the luxurious opulence of Katheer as a test of their resolve and determination, for what better place to prove one's ability to resist the pleasures of the flesh than a city where all such pleasures rest within arm's reach and a coin's throw?

A handful of monasteries to Irori are scattered across Qadira, some with barely more than a few priests (and some with no clerics at all to speak of). The most influential of these is the Open Palm of Sheehad, located in the foothills of the Zho Mountains. Its monks and lay followers work the fertile land of the valley there, sending all its fruits to the temple in Katheer, keeping only that which is absolutely necessary to sustain the ascetics and provide a charitable pittance to visitors and lost travelers.

Rovagug

The cults of Rovagug thrive in Qadira for a number of reasons. Ancient legends persist that it was here, on the lands that Katheer now covers, that the god battled

Sarenrae. The church of the Dawnflower is so influential in the Keleshite nation that it draws secret cultists to oppose her good works. Some even say the land itself is so brutal and potentially destructive that Rovagug's followers cannot help but try to usher it along.

Rovagug is popular among mad humans, escaped slaves, humanoid tribes in the Zho Mountains, and more than a few insane folk who have become lost in the desert only to be visited by a mirage of destruction wrought on their enemies. Few of his followers are clever enough to turn their eyes eastward to the Empire of Kelesh, though some more insidious worshipers of the Rough Beast worm their way into the courts of Xerbystes, seeding his heart with hatred and restlessness that, they hope, will send Qadira back to war with Taldor.

Sarenrae

As Qadira is a Keleshite nation, the Dawnflower is understandably the primary deity for most citizens. Hers is the judging sun that beats down on the common folk day by day; hers is the flame that burns out liars and traitors; hers is the healing fire that purifies hearts or consumes those unwilling to be cleansed. Among Qadirans, it is whispered that the phoenix appears as a sign of Sarenrae's attention. Just as the sun can grant both life and death, and the Dawnflower's flame can as easily cleanse and kill, so too do Qadirans both fear and venerate the phoenix for its connection—true or imagined—to their most revered goddess.

All Qadirans are at least nominally faithful toward Sarenrae, for fear that she might unleash her wrath upon them. The aspect of the deity that Qadirans venerate is a harsh, sometimes pitiless goddess who can either heal or burn with her flame. Priests of Sarenrae have a great deal of political power at the court of the satrap, and push continually for conquest and expansion; in this, they are unknowingly in league with those few servants of Rovagug that can bear the sight of Katheer.

Sarenrae claims clerics, fighters, monks, and paladins among her faithful in Qadira, and although she is seen as a crueler deity here than she is in other lands, she still impels her worshipers toward kind and goodly deeds. A band of four sulji-janni adventurers (see the Bestiary chapter) known as the Dawnflower's Daughters rides the sands of the Ketz Desert, hunting down slavers in Sarenrae's name.

Dervishes of Sarenrae: The Dawnflower is served by whirling, dancing warriors known as dervishes. These zealots—drawn almost equally from the ranks of clerics, fighters, paladins, and rangers—wield scimitars and dance



across the battlefield, lightly armored but lethally armed, more than capable of taking down more heavily equipped foes. These dervishes stand outside the law within Qadira, and were it not for their faith in the goodly Sarenrae, they might wreak terrible havoc on the desert nation long before any could rise to stop them.

OTHER FAITHS

Qadirans may embrace “foreign” faiths, though it is not common and most still pay homage to at least Sarenrae in order to prevent suspicion among others in the religious community.

Abadar

This deity grows in influence within Katheer as each year of peace with Taldor passes. His faithful have gathered enough wealth in the city to construct a small temple to his worship. Located amidst the homes of wealthy merchants, each stone of gold-veined marble on its stairway entrance costs more than most Qadirans will see in a lifetime.

The priests of Abadar sometimes come into conflict with other faiths—not with the clerics of Sarenrae, who welcome the civilizing influence of this foreign god, but with the warrior-priests of Gorum, who resent the decline of their faith within Qadira over the last centuries, and their waning influence over the policies of the desert kingdom. A few paladins of Abadar have begun to serve the empire as captains within Qadira’s armies—odd, heavily armored knights marching or riding stout horses beside their more slender and lightly-equipped comrades.

Gorum

Though his influence wanes, Our Lord in Iron still retains a few vehement faithful in Qadira; army sergeants, guard captains, and agitators against Taldor all call on Gorum as their patron, and secretly whisper prayers for war to come, quick and bloody, to wash Katheer clean of its Taldan interlopers and the stink of its excesses.

Monks of the White Feather

These monastic wanderers from the East deny all suggestions that they are worshipers of a splinter faith or aspect of Irori. They claim only to follow the White Feather, a peaceful guiding spirit (some argue a deity) who impels them to spread a message of peaceful contemplation and self-improvement, abandoning the need for both material wealth and societal position. Given their outlook, it is little wonder that the satrap, who is already distrustful of new faiths entering Qadira, is doubly suspicious of any faith that preaches against the war he longs for with Taldor. Debate continues as to the identity of the White Feather. Some people (particularly

TOOLS OF THE FAITHFUL

Presented here are a new Faith trait for followers of Sarenrae, a magic item favored by the Dawnflower’s worshipers, and a new combat feat practiced by the zealous dervishes of Qadira.

Flame of the Dawnflower (Sarenrae): You have been raised to view yourself as a blade in Sarenrae’s service, or have taken that duty on for yourself. Whenever you score a critical hit with a scimitar, you deal an additional two points of fire damage to your target. If you ever abandon the worship of Sarenrae, you immediately lose access to this trait’s benefits.

WAR-KILT OF SARENRAE

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 9th

Slot waist; **Price** 13,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

A favored item among the dervishes of Sarenrae, this skirt of overlapping, brightly colored silk is magically reinforced, granting you increased durability and mobility. You gain a +2 natural armor bonus to AC and a +2 competence bonus on Acrobatics and Perform (dance) checks.

Once per day, when an adjacent foe attempts to take a 5-foot step away from you, you may make a 5-foot step as an immediate action so long as you end up adjacent to that foe. If you take this step, you cannot take a 5-foot step during your next turn. If you take an action to move during your next turn, subtract 5 feet from your total movement.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *expeditious retreat*; *barkskin* or *stoneskin*; **Cost** 6,500 gp

DERVISH DANCE COMBAT

You have learned to turn your speed into power, even with a heavier blade.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Weapon Finesse, Perform (dance) 2 ranks, proficient with scimitar.

Benefit: When wielding a scimitar with one hand, you can use your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier on melee attack and damage rolls. You treat the scimitar as a one-handed piercing weapon for all feats and class abilities that require such a weapon (such as a duelist’s precise strike ability). The scimitar must be for a creature of your size. You cannot use this feat if you are carrying a weapon or shield in your off hand.

Varisians) believe it is the Peacock Spirit, while others suggest it is a mostly forgotten entity called Roidira, Dark Sister of Knowledge. Still others contend that the White Feather is an aspect of a deity already known in Golarion, such as Apsu or Shelyn.



The magical traditions of Qadira are ancient, dating back to before the founding of the satrapy and the building of the great cities of Kelesh, where genies were bound to craft towering edifices displaying both the power and the pride of the padishah emperor.

TRADITIONS AND SCHOOLS

It would be fruitless to attempt to name every school and tutor of magic in the whole of Qadira. In Katheer alone, there are more than two dozen colleges and twice as many individual mages that proclaim themselves the instructors of the best, correct, or proper forms of magic. Most Keleshite colleges of magic fall into five broad traditions, each of which focuses on a different school of arcane magic. Each has a recommended spell, which Qadiran wizards are encouraged to select at 1st level.

Alchemical Magic

This school of magical study believes that all things are mutable and it only takes the right formula or process—be it an alchemical mixture or properly worded spell—to bend the world to one's will. With enough practice, a wizard of this school can transform himself, his allies, his enemies, and even the very world around him to fit his own desires. Alchemical mages favor the transmutation

school, and those who study this tradition learn *feather fall* as one of their initial spells.

Elemental Magic

The elemental mage seeks to control the world by learning its components. By mastering the elements and the forces that influence them, a mage is capable of wondrous things: burning down any obstacle, freezing great floodwaters, and calling down storms on one's enemies. Admittedly a destructive tradition, the elemental school does not teach control of one's surroundings. Rather, it encourages its students to blast away all that oppose them, and to remake what remains as they see fit. Elemental mages vastly prefer the evocation school and learn *burning hands* before they experience other spells.

Gen-Magic

Where the elemental mage seeks to burn the world down by tapping into primal forces, the gen-mage knows that no wizard can hope to master the elements to a greater degree than genie-kind, and so, rather than waste her time in blasting foes away, she calls upon allies to assist in her deeds. Gen-mages start by conjuring *unseen servants* and similar beings, but later in their careers, learn to call on great djinn, kindly jann, and powerful elementals.

Veil Magic

The mage of the veil does not seek to control his surroundings or to call down the elements. Instead, he seeks to blend in and observe, or to disappear entirely and be left alone. Some mages of the veil train themselves as scouts and infiltrators, learning secrets meant for others while lurking in strangers' halls. Other mages simply want to merge with the crowds of Katheer and fade from view, emerging where none know of their power or abilities. This tradition favors illusion magic, and teaches *disguise self* before revealing other spells to its adherents.

Warding Magic

With the various traditions seeking to change, summon, burn, or deceive, it is little wonder that the last of the Qadiran traditions is concerned with protection. Ward mages seek to guard against outside influence, to prevent the invasion of elemental forces or of alien beings, and to otherwise ward off the dangers inherent in living within the empire. This tradition guides its students toward the school of abjuration, and teaches them *endure elements* as their first warding spell.

Other Schools of Magic

Keleshites find the use of magic to control or contact the dead to be morbid at best, and an abhorrent sin against life at the worst. They do not believe that any being should be overly concerned with cryptic visions, nor do they relish the idea of any sort of spellcaster exploring or controlling the minds of their countrymen. These attitudes have prevented the growth of any influential Qadiran tradition based on the necromancy, divination, or enchantment schools. Individuals exist who prefer these topics, but they usually profess to follow one of the five traditional schools.

Sorcerers

Those who do not formally study magic are seldom guided toward one school or another. A sorcerer's supposed connection with genies would suggest that the philosophies of the elemental or gen traditions might appeal to them, but most Qadiran sorcerers ignore wizardly classifications.

QADIRAN ATTITUDES

Magic proliferates in Keleshite society, but that is not to say that all Qadirans are entirely comfortable with it. In Katheer and other cities, magic that builds, protects, or enforces one's will is seen as a positive; magic that disrupts order, interrupts trade, enslaves the mind, or destroys property is entirely unacceptable. The best form of magic is that which improves and enriches the life of the user by bringing luxury and comfort. The worst is magic that kills, maims, or steals that which should be earned by honest trade. The

NEW REGIONAL TRAITS

The following traits are available only to characters from Qadira.

Alchemical Prodigy: In your magical studies, you have learned to substitute the careful application of alchemical principles for spell knowledge. Choose one 1st-level spell from the bard, cleric, druid, or sorcerer/wizard spell list. If you have the Brew Potion feat, you may create potions of this spell as if it were on your spell list.

Elemental Pupil: You have studied at the feet of the masters of Katheer's colleges of magic, and so increased your own mastery of the elements. Choose one of the following energy types: acid, cold, electricity, or fire. When casting a spell of 1st level or higher that deals damage of your chosen energy type, the spell deals 1 extra point of damage of this type.

Genie-Caller: Your exploration of the magic for calling genies has increased your overall aptitude for summoning creatures. Once per day, you may cast one conjuration (summoning) spell as if your caster level were 2 higher than normal.

Keeper of the Veil: Even when not cloaked in magic, your training has taught you how to conceal your true nature. You gain a +1 competence bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

Walking Ward: Your training included constant exposure to elemental forces. Choose one of the following energy types: acid, cold, electricity, or fire; you gain a +1 bonus on saving throws against spells that deal damage of this type or have this subtype.

NEW SPECIAL MATERIAL

Silversheen: Blades made of this special metal count as alchemical silver weapons and are immune to rust, including that of rust monsters, the *rusting grasp* spell, and so on. They are always masterwork weapons—most often scimitars or longswords; the listed price includes the cost of the masterwork bonus.

No aura (nonmagical property); CL —; Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks, Craft (weaponsmithing) 5 ranks; Price +750 gp.

primary exception, of course, is that Keleshites are fine with the enslavement of other races via magic. It is, after all, how the spires of Kelesh were constructed, and how the emperor himself built his palace. Outside of the cities, Qadiran attitudes shift somewhat. Magic is accepted to bring water, drive off enemies, or provide food. It is not tolerated to use magic to settle disputes, eliminate rivals, or bend nature to one's will—tribal Qadirans believe that leads to trouble. The worst insult in all of Qadira is to use magic to cheat in the Histaqen race. The last rider to attempt it was thrown off a cliff into the Inner Sea.

Qadirans know well of the existence of the genies of the elements and their superior majesty. They also know of the mysterious jann, human-like genies that touch on all the elemental corners at once. Yet there exist other genies as well, some mixed with human blood, some willing to serve humans rather than toil beneath genie masters, and still others that answer summons purely to wreak mischief. Just as in other lands there are tales of celestial and fiendish beings touching the lives and bloodlines of mortal creatures, so too are there legends of genie-touched beasts, whose speed, grace and beauty exceed all others of their kind.



HALF-JANNI

Sitting serenely despite the swirling sands around her, this woman possesses an unearthly beauty and otherworldly calm.

Jann are the kind of genie closest to humans in interests and temperament, and are drawn to mingle with mortals. Sometimes these associations result in the birth of half-janni children. Beautiful and exotic, the elemental power that resides in these half-jann mixes with the unique potential of the human parent, sometimes rivaling or even exceeding that of their genie parent.

Half-jann often seek to sequester themselves on the edge of Keleshite civilizations, capable of observing their human kin without getting deeply involved in mortal affairs. Like their genie ancestors, however, the half-jann are fascinated by true humans, and often take them as mates, leading to generations of sulji-jann (see below).

No matter their human ancestry, half-jann are lovely to look upon, possessing deeply tanned bronze skin and intense eyes that sometimes seem to be swirling pools of elemental power.

ANWA OF THE SOFT STEP

CR 10

Female half-janni human rogue 8
CN Medium outsider (augmented humanoid, human, native)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural); improved uncanny dodge
hp 52 (8d8+16)
Fort +4, **Ref** +10, **Will** +2; evasion
Immune disease; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (good)
Melee masterwork short sword +11/+6 (1d6+1/19–20)
Ranged throwing dagger +10/+5 (1d4+1/19–20)
Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
3/day—*invisibility* (self only), *speaking with animals*
2/day—*enlarge person* (DC 14) or *reduce person* (DC 14)

TACTICS

Before Combat Anwa tries to avoid open combat, preferring to stick to the shadows and wait for her enemies to pass by. If conflict is unavoidable, she uses concealment or *invisibility* to set up a sneak attack.

During Combat Anwa is a shrewd combatant, but is most concerned with survival. She fights as dirty as necessary to win, including hiding, feinting, and using *invisibility* to get the upper hand on her opponents. If she has allies in combat, she exploits their skills and hides wherever in the fray she can, until she can line up another sneak attack.

Morale Unused to pain, Anwa tries to flee if she falls below 10 hit

points, using her *dust of disappearance* if she has expended all her uses of *invisibility*.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Quick Draw, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +15, Appraise +12, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Escape Artist +17, Fly +16, Perception +11, Perform (dance) +14, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +17

Languages Common, Kelish, Osiriani

SQ fast stealth, improved uncanny dodge, resiliency, trapfinding, trap sense +2, trap spotter

Combat Gear *dust of disappearance*, short sword, 6 throwing daggers; **Other Gear** *bracers of armor* +4

Ecology

Half-jann are the offspring of a janni and a mortal human. Most half-jann are born to human mothers, but a rare few are born to janni females. An expectant janni mother always knows if her child will be born a full genie or a half-janni, and most choose to keep their children in janni society, though several bard stories tell of a foundling child given to a noble to raise. A half-janni is almost always a single birth; twins are nearly unheard of, but considered a blessing to the parents, a sign that the children are destined for greatness.

Half-jann age at the same rates as humans, reaching sexual maturity alongside their peers. Once a half-janni is fully matured, however, her aging slows to that of a half-elf (which is often how a foundling half-janni realizes her unusual heritage).

Unlike their full genie kin, half-jann must eat food in order to survive. While a half-janni can rely on her genie parent's *create food and water* ability for sustenance, most consider this dependency a weakness and learn to provide for themselves as soon as they are able—some taking this to the extreme of exiling themselves upon reaching adulthood, avoiding their own kind for years to prove their independence.

Habitat & Society

Although physically and emotionally very similar to humans, half-jann are reminded from birth of their superior status, either by one of their parents, or the fully human folk around them. Half-jann are rare enough that there are no communities of any size of these beings, and most prefer to remain hidden among normal human populations or join the wandering tribes of their genie kinsfolk.

Most half-jann go decades without ever meeting another of their kind. Those half-jann that live among

humans often become powerful bards, fighters, or paladins; those who prefer janni society have no tendency toward one class over others. Half-jann tend to avoid extremes in alignment, and are usually neutral on at least one alignment axis (chaotic–lawful or good–evil). Whatever their morals, half-jann are passionate about their chosen paths—a combination of genie arrogance and Keleshite pride driving them to acts of renown or foolishness.

The largest suspected grouping of half-jann in Golarion is found among the tents of Erukh (see page 11), whose extended clan of jann and janni-kin challenges mortals to deeds of bravery and heroism in the southern deserts of Qadira.

Creating a Half-Janni

“Half-janni” is an inherited template that can be added to any human (referred to hereafter as the “base creature”).

A half-janni uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to outsider (augmented humanoid, human, native). Do not recalculate the base creature's Hit Dice, base attack bonus, or saves. Size is unchanged.

Speed: A half-janni gains the ability to fly, with a speed of 20 feet (good maneuverability).

Armor Class: The half-janni's natural armor improves by +1 (this stacks with any natural armor bonus the base creature has).

Spell-Like Abilities: A half-janni with an Intelligence or Wisdom score of 8 or higher has spell-like abilities, depending on its level, as indicated on the table below. The abilities are cumulative.

Caster level equals the creature's level, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

Level	Abilities
1–2	<i>Speak with animals</i> 3/day
3–6	<i>Enlarge person</i> or <i>reduce person</i> 2/day in any combination
7–8	<i>Invisibility</i> (self only) 3/day
9–14	<i>Create food and water</i> 1/day
15–16	<i>Ethereal jaunt</i> 1/day

Special Qualities: A half-janni has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

- Darkvision out to 60 feet
- Immunity to disease
- Fire resistance 10

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +2, Dex +2, Int +2, Wis +4, Cha +4

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +2



SULI

A fine-featured human stands resolute, muscles visible above the wide sash that holds his scimitar. His eyes flash, and suddenly his arms are sheathed in a blaze of crackling flames.

JAMSHID

Male suli ranger 1

N Medium outsider (native)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 7 (1d10+1)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** -1

Resistance acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

CR 1/2

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee scimitar +4 (1d6+3/18-20)

Ranged short bow +1 (1d6/x3)

Special Attack elemental assault

TACTICS

Before Combat When traveling alone, suli-jann avoid combat as best they can, unless they are certain they can defeat an opponent. With a larger group, suli-jann hide their otherworldly nature until it becomes necessary to employ their elemental powers for defense.

During Combat A suli-janni does his best to defeat an opponent without revealing his unusual heritage by resorting to elemental abilities. If the battle turns sour, a suli-janni unleashes an elemental assault to try and even the battle.

Morale Suli consider it a point of dishonor to flee a battle that has been honorably engaged, though they would rather flee than die from an ambush or trap. A wounded suli offered an honorable surrender usually accepts.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

Feats Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (geography) +4, Knowledge (nature) +4, Perception +3, Ride +5, Sense Motive +5, Survival +3

Languages Common, Kelish, any one elemental language

SQ favored enemy (human +2), track, wild empathy

Combat Gear chainmail, scimitar, short bow, 20 arrows

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Elemental Assault (Su): Once per day as a swift action, a suli can call on the elemental power lurking in his veins to shroud his arms in acid, cold, electricity, or fire. Unarmed strikes with his arms or hands (or attacks with weapons held in those hands) deal +1d6 damage of the appropriate energy damage, as if using a *flaming* or *frost weapon*. This lasts for 1 round per level. The suli can dismiss the elemental power as a free action.

The suli (or suli-jann) are minor offshoots of the jann that live among humans. They are tall and look like ordinary men and women but for the occasional flash of elemental light in their eyes. Though physically superior to and more attractive than normal humans, some suli-jann are unaware of their genie heritage until later in life, when contact with a full-blooded genie draws forth a portion of their elemental power.

Among the humans of Qadira, suli are considered blessed by their genie heritage, except among those who believe genies are only meant for enslavement (and who believe suli should be enslaved as well). The wandering bands of jann and half-jann that cross the desert welcome suli-jann as distant kinsfolk, offering them hospitality and kindness, but rarely (if ever) inviting them to join

their nomadic tribes, instead preferring their brethren to make their way among the Keleshites; they reason that if the suli can sway the Qadirans to accept part-genies as actual people rather than as potential slaves, then perhaps the bondage of other genies might lessen somewhat.

Qadiran suli take advantage of their strength and pursue classes with melee capabilities, but favor the wilderness-loving ranger most. Those who prefer the city often gravitate toward the paladin class, sometimes becoming servants of Sarenrae.

Ecology

Most suli are born of the union between a half-jann and a human. Rarely, a more distant descendant of genie blood will manifest the abilities of a suli, sometimes many generations after any evidence of his or her heritage has disappeared from the bloodline.

Suli age at the human rate and are physically identical to humans in terms of height and weight. During their youth, Suli tend to be slightly smaller than their fully human peers, but grow quickly to their full adult height upon reaching their teenage years. Despite their smaller size, they are prone to feats of greater strength than their fellows. Even those suli that know nothing of their genie blood possess a measure of personal pride, and a young suli's early life is often filled with fights with others who insult the suli's size.

Habitat & Society

Because most are born unaware of their heritage, suli tend to proceed through life much as any other humans of exceptional ability would, by taking advantage of their unique skills in order to survive and succeed. As they grow to adulthood among human children, suli find that their inherent strength and magnetism make them natural leaders among their peers. Some embrace their abilities, becoming commanders of small bands of mercenaries or adventurers. Others shirk the role and head out to the wilderness, preferring solitude to the constant responsibility of shepherding folk.

Those suli that learn of their janni blood often experience a period of self-reflection and indecision about whether to keep their human ties or to integrate themselves into genie society. In the end, most choose a middle path, living among humans but maintaining a relationship with their genie kin. Half-janni and janni relatives of a suli often exploit their kinsmen's more human nature to work stealthily for better views of genie-kind within Keleshite lands, where genies are often enslaved for their abilities. The padishah emperor likewise seeks known suli-jann as agents, in order to use them to better pacify his genie servitors and strengthen the *wish*-fueled growth of his empire.

Most suli-jann abhor the notion of being masters over other sentient beings—even more so than jann and half-jann do. Regardless of profession, it is very rare for a suli—even one employed in the binding of genies—to own slaves. Some speculate that this is a result of the suli's fears of slavery, while others think that the genie-blooded are terrified of becoming the vicious taskmasters evil genies are known to be.

Suli as Characters

Suli characters possess the following traits.

- +2 Strength, +2 Charisma
- Medium size
- Base speed 30 feet
- Low-light vision
- Racial Skills: Suli have a +2 racial bonus to Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks
- elemental assault (described above)
- Acid, cold, electricity, and fire resistance 5
- Automatic Languages: Common, Kelish, any one elemental language (Aquan, Auran, Ignan, or Terran); Bonus Languages: Aquan, Auran, Ignan, Terran
- CR Adjustment: +0

Undead Suli

Because the elemental power of the suli race is inherent in their flesh, undead created from a suli's body (or a suli who decides to become an undead such as a lich) usually retain some vestige of the suli's elemental power, creating alternate forms of common undead.

Ghoul: These creatures can manifest only one of the energy types available to living suli, usually cold or acid. They are often mistaken for ghuls by those ignorant of genie lore (see *Pathfinder Chronicles: Dark Markets, A Guide to Katapesh*), but they lack the donkey hooves of true ghuls.

Lich: A suli lich's melee touch attack deals either cold or electricity damage in addition to negative energy damage and paralysis.

Mummy: Though Qadirans do not practice mummification on their dead, suli servants of Osirian pharaohs have been mummified, always producing mummies that are not vulnerable to fire.

Skeleton: Usually, a suli animated as a skeleton has the ability to cause its arms to burst into flame, explaining why "burning skeletons" appear in genie folklore. Ice skeletons are less common, but some have been found lurking near shipwrecks, their bodies sheathed in armor made of frozen seawater.

Vampire: Suli vampires and vampire spawn are able to cross running water without difficulty, and immersing one causes it no harm.



ZHYEN

This short, genie-like creature floats in midair, barely a foot tall but possessing no legs with which to determine its true height. Wisps of elemental light trail from its eyes, and it bows, ready to serve.

ZHYEN

N Tiny outsider (air, earth, fire, or water)

Init +0; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +2 size)

hp 9 (2d8)

Fort +0, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Resist acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, and fire 5

OFFENSE

Spd 10 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect), swim 30 ft. (if a water zhyen)

CR 1/2

Melee +1 melee touch (1d4 acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd)

At will—*mage hand*, *mending*

1/day—*endure elements*, *touch of fatigue*

TACTICS

Before Combat Zhyen do not enter combat willingly unless summoned.

During Combat A zhyen prefers to avoid attacks with the total defense action, but if cornered it attacks until it can flee.

Morale Unused to combat, and generally unprepared for it, a zhyen attempts to flee when reduced to half of its hit points or less.

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** -3; **CMD** 9

Feats Run

Skills Fly +6, Knowledge (arcana) +0, Knowledge (the planes) +3,

Perception +6, Spellcraft +0, Stealth +14, Swim +6

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran

ECOLOGY

Environment any desert or elemental plane

Organization solitary or gang (1 zhyen and 2–4 mephits)

Treasure Value none

Advancement —

Level Adjustment —

The zhyen is a minor genie that serves as a messenger and servant to greater beings. Despite knowledge of their superior genie status as compared to mortal spellcasters, they often serve as familiars to powerful mages, especially the genie-friends known as daivrat (see page 20). They can be summoned with the *summon monster II* spell.

Each zhyen appears as a miniature djinni from the waist up, broadly muscular and attractive. Beneath the waist, the zhyen has no form at all, instead dissipating into a “tail” of the genie’s favored element: a wisp of mist for air, a flowing wave for water, a trail of flame for fire, or a seemingly endless shower of stone for earth. This appearance is reflected in the skin tone of the zhyen as well, but has no influence on the genie’s powers or abilities.

Ecology

Zhyen inhabit the elemental plane that corresponds to their elemental type. Some planar scholars believe that these miniature genies are portions of the planes that have grown sentience and broken off from the elemental fabric. Others declare them to be minor genies, a sort of offshoot of the greater races. Still others claim that a zhyen is created when a powerful genie desires a thinking, agreeable companion, not unlike the means by which human mages craft homunculi.

In truth, zhyen arise from all of these methods. Whatever the engine behind its creation, a zhyen appears fully formed and coherent, taking only minutes to acclimate to its surrounds and learn what's needed of it. If "born" near another sentient being, a zhyen forms a fond attachment to that creature, until such time as the companion demonstrates its unwillingness or inability to treat the zhyen kindly.

With no need to eat (though they enjoy it) and unfazed by harsh environments, zhyen tend not to keep permanent homes, instead choosing to wander the fringes of the elemental realms. They are curious beings, however, and endlessly seek diversion. On the planes, zhyen satisfy their curiosity by exploring the boundaries where one domain or element blends into another. This curiosity often finds them as captives to more powerful beings.

Zhyen are most drawn to places where opposing forces clash and meld into one another. On the Material Plane, they are drawn to shorelines and waterfalls, to great mountain peaks, and—curiously enough—tea kettles and soup pots. Most zhyen cannot remain on the Material Plane except in the service of a powerful spellcaster, but will gladly trade servitude of convenience over slavery to an efreeti or shaitan master.

Zhyen have no natural predators or prey. Although they may appear to be male or female, they are actually genderless, and do not breed. Zhyen do not age.

Habitat & Society

The smaller size and lesser power of zhyen among genie-kind make it nearly impossible for them to carve out any sort of society in the planes. As a result, most zhyen find themselves as servants to genies of greater power, employed as messengers and pets in the courts of greater genie races. Zhyen dislike such treatment, but given their relative weakness compared to other genies, they are unable to alter their status.

Occasionally, a zhyen summoned to the Material Plane is astounded by the diverse wonders of the mortal world, and seeks to return. Such zhyen respond to summonings and callings as often as possible, and may eventually seek to join the world entirely as a familiar to a daivrat. Service to a daivrat allows the zhyen to sate its curiosity and need for exploration, while gaining the benefit of a master capable of protecting it from greater genies looking to exploit a lesser creature.

Once conjured to the Material Plane, zhyen often seek ways to stay beyond the duration of the magic that brought them there. They sometimes find minor magic items that allow them to persist in the mortal world, and often maintain a watch over favored mortals and their descendants, providing minor aid when it is possible to do so without being detected.

Even on the Material Plane, zhyen do not seek the company of other zhyen of their own elemental type, and find zhyen of other elementals to be amusing oddities and curious acquaintances at best. They have an odd affinity for mephits, particularly those who represent mixed elements.

Jocta

Some zhyen are unfortunate enough to be enslaved by cruel, malicious genies or exploitive mortal masters, usually for the purpose of humiliating pranks or jester-like performances. Over time this weighs on a zhyen's spirit, corrupting it from within until the zhyen's body undergoes a physical transformation that reflects this inner suffering. The zhyen grows legs where its elemental half used to be and goes completely bald, and its skin assumes a duller, more human-like color and texture. The resulting creature is a petty genie-creature called a jocta. The change frees the jocta from whatever binding spells enslaved its as a zhyen; most immediately flee before they are bound again. Most jocta are chaotic neutral or neutral evil.

A jocta retains all of its zhyen abilities and can change from Tiny to Small size or back at will as a free action (this is a supernatural ability). A jocta may be summoned like a zhyen or even bound as a familiar, but it is sullen and uncooperative, enjoying nothing more than returning to a former "master" and snatching a few items of value or sentiment from him before slipping off once again.



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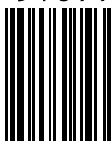
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