

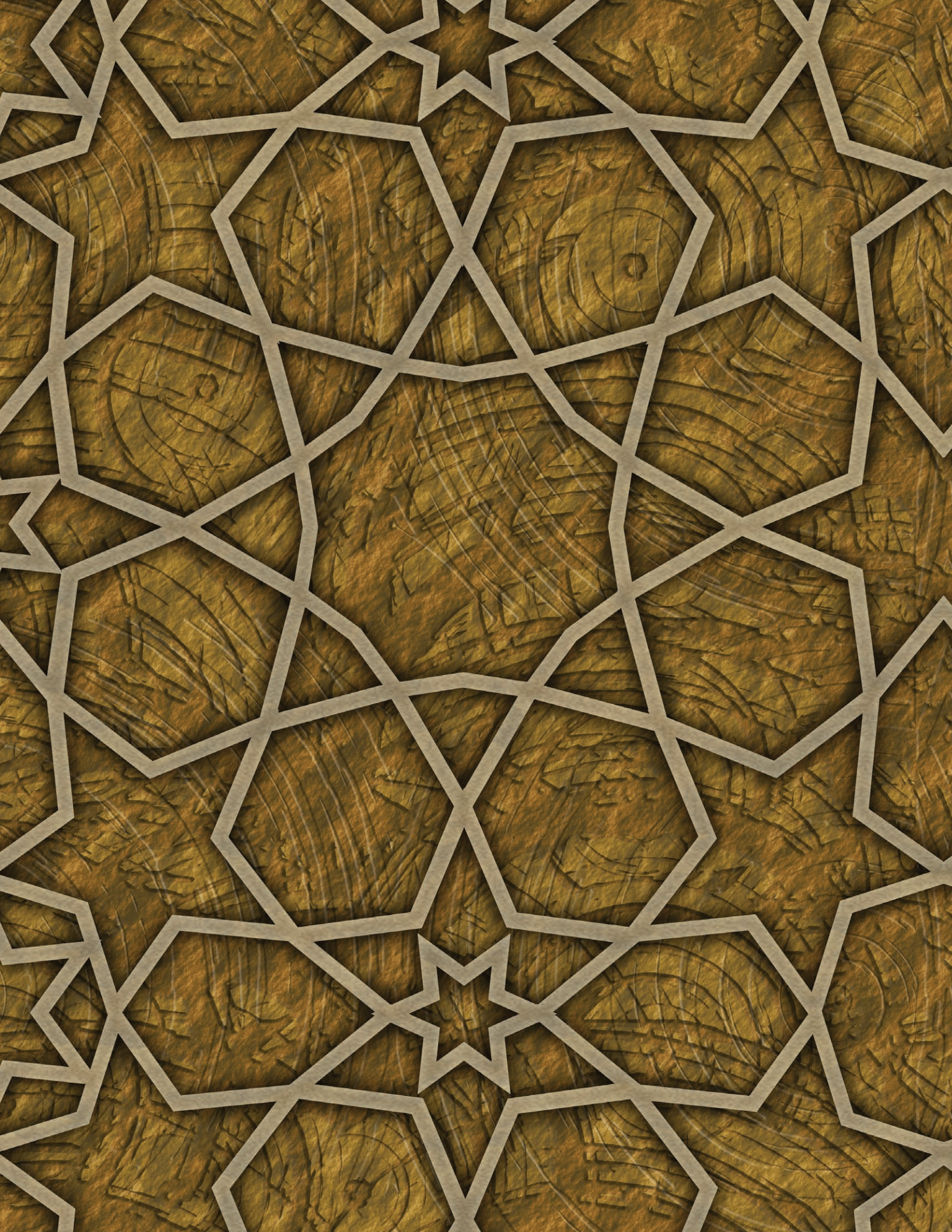
HELLFROST LAND OF FIRE

PLAYER'S GUIDE



PAUL "WIGGY" WADE-WILLIAMS





HELLFROST LAND OF FIRE

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Suleiman the Great (Devoted Version)

Hear now the triumph of Suleiman the Great, life, prosperity, health unto him, over the jinn and the downfall of the false gods, as told by Khaizuran the Poet, blessed of Suleiman.

Suleiman the Great, life, prosperity, health unto him now and always, was born unto woman, flesh and blood wrapped around a divine spirit. Great though he would become, Suleiman was born a slave like his father and his father's father before him back to the beginning.

In those dark days, before the Hagg-Bari (Light of Guidance) shone upon us, all beings save for the Sphinxes were slaves unto the jinn, the foulest of dark races.

Low was the lot of man, forced to work in the dark mines so the jinn could grow rich, forced to build vast monuments so the jinn would be remembered in glory, forced to fight wars like pieces on a chessboard so the jinn would not have to soil their hands with blood. For generations before the Prophet of the Light came, the gods of our peoples had spurned our cries for help. Unto this hardship was born Suleiman.

Suleiman, blessed be his name, was gifted with much wisdom, even as a child. Where others saw problems, Suleiman saw solutions. When others saw violence as a means to end disputes, Suleiman saw peace. It is said that Suleiman could speak the language of all races even as a baby, and the language of the beasts was also known to his ear.

So great was his knowledge that even the jinn were in awe, and he was elevated to the position of wizar, advisor to the Caliph of the jinn. Suleiman served the jinn well and learned much magic, but none which rivaled the jinn. As Suleiman meditated on the wonders of the universe, he saw in his mind's eye the Hagg-Bari, the way to defeat the jinn.

Armed with his new found knowledge, Suleiman approached his masters and ordered them to release his people. The jinn laughed and cast their magic, which had leveled cities of stone in the past, but Suleiman was unharmed. Unto the jinn Suleiman in return brought down many terrible curses, until at last they agreed to free the slaves.

Suleiman gathered the slaves and told them what had occurred. Many were blinded to the Hagg-Bari, and praised Suleiman as a priest of the Many Gods, whom men had worshipped in error since the Dawn of Time.

Angered at their blindness, Suleiman invoked the names of the Many Gods and called them to appear before him. By my own eyes, I, Khaizuran the Poet, witnessed the Many Gods appear and bow before Suleiman, calling him "Light of the Light," and "Word of the One." So it came to pass that the false light of the Many Gods fell from the eyes of men, who rejoiced in the Hagg-Bari.

Suleiman sought to lead the slaves into the desert in search of new lands, but the jinn, who speak no truth, sought to destroy them. Suleiman marched ahead of his followers and challenged the jinn. For forty days and forty nights the earth shook and the sky was the color of blood. Only then did Suleiman emerge from the desert, ready to lead his people to freedom, free from the pestilence of the jinn.

On the cusp of victory, Suleiman in his great wisdom, refrained from destroying the mighty jinn elders, for in death they would have no chance to repent their evil ways and find the eternal grace of ONENESS. They were cast into copper jars, which Suleiman sealed with a secret mark. These he cast across the known world, never to be opened again until the Day of Judging, when Suleiman, as chosen by Asha to lead his cause, would return to redeem them.

The lesser jinn he allowed to remain in the world, but they were now slaves to those followers of the Hagg-Bari who knew the words of power to control them.

All this, I swear in the name of Asha, is Truth.

Suleiman the Great (Faithful Version)

Hear now the triumph of Suleiman the Great, life, prosperity, health unto him, over the jinn and the return of the gods, as told by Fazir the Wise, blessed of Suleiman.

Suleiman the Great, life, prosperity, health unto him now and always, was born unto woman, flesh and blood wrapped around a divine spirit. Great though he would become, Suleiman was born a slave like his father and his father's father before him back to the beginning.

In those dark days, when men had turned from the gods, whom they thought had abandoned them, all beings save for the Sphinxes were slaves unto the jinn, the foulest of dark races.

Low was the lot of man, forced to work in the dark mines so the jinn could grow rich, forced to build vast monuments so the jinn would be remembered in glory, forced to fight wars like pieces on a chessboard so the jinn would not have to soil their hands with blood. For generations before the Great Prophet came, we had neglected the gods of our ancestors and suffered accordingly. Unto this hardship was born Suleiman.

Suleiman, blessed be his name, was gifted with much wisdom, even as a child. Where others saw problems, Suleiman saw solutions. When others saw violence as a means to end disputes, Suleiman saw peace. It is said that Suleiman could speak the language of all races even as a baby, and the language of the beasts was also known to his ear.

So great was his knowledge that even the jinn were in awe, and he was elevated to the position of wizar, advisor to the Caliph of the jinn. Suleiman served the jinn well and learned much wisdom, but none which rivaled the jinn. As Suleiman meditated on the wonders of the universe, he saw in his mind's eye that the gods were waiting his call, and through them was the way to defeat the jinn.

Armed with his new found knowledge, Suleiman approached his masters and ordered them to release his people. The jinn laughed and cast their magic, which had leveled cities of stone in the past, but Suleiman was unharmed. Unto the jinn Suleiman in return brought down many terrible curses, until at last they agreed to free the slaves.

Suleiman gathered the slaves and told them what had occurred. Many were blinded to the teachings of the gods, for they insisted the Many Gods had abandoned them to the jinn.

Angered at their blindness, Suleiman invoked the names of the Many Gods and begged them to appear before him. By my own eyes, I, Fazir the Wise, witnessed the Many Gods appear and saw Suleiman kneel before each save Iblis, who is the Great Deceiver, and welcome them into his heart. So it came to pass that the gods in unison hailed Suleiman as a prophet, and bestowed unto him their power, for he alone had faith in them.

Suleiman led the slaves into the desert in search of new lands, but the jinn, who speak no truth, sought to destroy them. Suleiman marched ahead of his followers and challenged the jinn. For forty days and forty nights the earth shook and the sky was the color of blood. Only then did Suleiman emerge from the desert and lead his people to freedom, free from the pestilence of the jinn.

On the cusp of victory, Suleiman in his great wisdom, refrained from destroying the mighty jinn elders, for in death they would have no chance to repent their evil ways and accept the benevolence of the gods. They were cast into copper jars, which Suleiman sealed with a secret mark. These he cast across the known world, never to be opened again until the Day of Judging, when Suleiman, as chosen by the gods, would return to judge the wicked.

The lesser jinn he banished from this mortal world, though those who saw not the wisdom of the Many Gods sought to traffic with them, for they had learned nothing and sought to be masters as once they were slaves.

All this, I swear in the name of the Many Gods, is Truth..

WELCOME TO THE DESERT



Land of Fire is an expansion to the *Hellfrost* setting. This volume details the cultures and realms of the vast desert region south of Rassilon, a realm known to locals as Al-Shirkuh ("The Land of Heat"). It contains new races, gear, forms of magic, gods, and beasts and archetypes, but it does not replicate material from the *Hellfrost Players' Guide* or *Hellfrost Bestiary*. As such, to fully utilize this book, you'll need the aforementioned volumes as well. The *Hellfrost Rassilon Expansion* is useful, but not essential. Many of the generic Edges from that supplement are already included in this volume.

🌀 The Land 🌀

Much of the desert is an expansive wasteland of burning sand and stone, active volcanoes and ash plains, baked mountain ranges, dank salt marshes, and glittering salt flats. Only around the coasts, along the banks of the major rivers, and at the scattered oases does one find fertile lands—and these are highly prized and fiercely defended. Here civilization not only exists, but prospers. Great cities and sprawling nomad encampments offer travelers protection and hospitality, though a friendly welcome is not always guaranteed.

Away from the coasts, which are kept cool by the effects of wind and sea, the daytime temperature of the sands can soar as high 120° Fahrenheit (40° C), depending on the time of year and one's location within the desert. At night, the temperature can plummet below freezing, giving rise to a different set of problems for desert travelers.

The Northern Winter

The region known as the Hellfrost may lie thousands of miles to the north of the desert core, but its effects are being felt in the desert. Temperatures have dropped,

though they are still high enough to kill the unwary within hours, the rains fall more often, and the sands of the desert have begun to encroach faster into the fertile regions. The desert is growing colder, but it is growing larger as well.

The Civilized Races

Within the desert realms dwell many sentient species, though only a few are referred to as civilized, despite their achievements throughout history.

Humans are the most populous of the races and comprise two main types. The Hadaree dwell in permanent buildings. Most live along the coasts and the banks of the rivers, though there are many villages and towns whose existence is sustained by wells or springs. Though once many people, each with their own culture, the Hadaree bloodlines are so intermingled they have become a single race made of many traditions. This is not to say there is no diversity among them, for the great coastal cities have developed unique cultures of their own. Like all the races, they are also divided by religion.

Amid the eternal sands live the Bedu, a nomadic people of tribes and clans bound by blood and oaths of friendship and animosity. Like the dunes, such oaths are rarely static, and a friend one day may be an enemy the next.

The Bedu do not live in the deserts unchallenged, for the jackal-headed cakali, remnants of an ancient empire destroyed by the jinn, and hyena-headed hyaenidae, quarrelsome raiders, make their homes here as well. Resources are scarce, too few to share without blood being spilled on occasion.

Sand goblins, a race many consider vermin, have adapted to city life, and the ways of the Devoted and Faithful. They are lazy and sneaky, both untrustworthy traits to all races except the hyaenidae.

The last race, the jinn blooded, are a branch of humanity, yet many see them as a separate race. Jinn blooded

Hellfrost: Land of Fire

have a natural affinity to one of the major types of jinn and possess strange powers over the elemental force associated with those supernatural entities. To some, they are a blessing from the greater powers. To others, they are evidence of a terrible curse.

DARK FOES

Sharing the desert are many hostile races and creatures. For every member of the civilized races who stands, scores of horrors stand against him.

Gatormen, who avoided the fate of their northern kin, dwell in the salt marshes in the ruined cities of their former empire, alongside small tribes of bufomi. Fire giants make their homes in the hellish inferno of the Heart of Fire and Plain of Ash. Scorpionmen lurk in barren, rocky wastes where once stood an ancient empire. The ophidae (a race of snakemen) haunt ancient cities deep in the burning sands, from where they plot the conquest of Al-Shirkuh. Arrogant sphinxes rule over a realm of human subjects, each plotting its ascendancy to godhood.



Fell undead have gathered their forces in Hekata, where once thrived a human empire. Jinn, survivors of the war against mankind, live in isolated regions, ever-vengeful toward the race of men. Dragons prowl the skies, claiming mastery of all they survey.

Magic & Faith

In Rassilon, those who work miracles are chosen by their god, whereas mages, who may believe and even worship the gods, simply know strange ways of manipulating reality. In the desert, however, both magic and miracles are “spiritual,” and the gap between has divided nations.

THE DUALITY OF FAITH

Long ago, before the age of Suleiman, before the jinn enslaved the land, the races worshipped a pantheon of gods and goddesses in which each deity was responsible for a small part of the universe. Indeed, these times are known today as the Days of Many Gods.

Suleiman, it is said by one creed, believed that true spiritual power came from within, not without. Worshipers needed no temples to honor any supreme force, though two exist in his dualist philosophy—Asha (“Order”) and Druj (“Chaos”). Anyone could achieve Oneness (a state where the soul achieves spiritual perfection and bonds with Asha) by living a life of both good thoughts and good deeds, and without the need for priests to intercede on behalf of the worshipper.

Suleiman also told that everything in the universe is touched by strands of magic. So long as one knows how to pluck the strings, one can literally alter the building blocks of creation and bend reality. Magic, he said, was not an arcane path restricted to just a few, but a spiritual path open to anyone with the strength of will to follow it. So long as one knows how to pluck the strings, one can literally alter the building blocks of creation and bend reality.

The ancient gods, according to Suleiman’s vision, were nothing but massive tangles of magical strands, from which humans who had “faith” could reshape the world. However, these clumps were but a small part of the greater whole.

Suleiman also saw that since everything is linked by magic, magic must be the true representation of the universe. Differences in magic styles had no relevance, for all were a path to the same end.

Despite going against millennia of tradition, the new teachings spread like wildfire. After all, where exactly were the gods when the jinn enslaved the other races? Through this teaching, men gained the ability to not only control their own destiny, but to alter the destiny of the very universe. Those people who follow this creed are called Devoted.

But not everyone agrees with this interpretation of Suleiman’s teachings—the old gods have existed since

Welcome to the Desert

the beginning of time and will exist forever. Although the number and names of the gods has changed over time, they still grant their faithful servants miraculous powers, and thus their existence cannot be denied. More importantly, Suleiman appears in the Faithful creed as a holy prophet who simultaneously worshipped every deity, and was granted miracles by them so as to defeat the tyrannical jinn.

Thus, while stories of his legendary abilities may vary immensely, Suleiman is a central figure in both the Devoted and Faithful creeds.

MAGIC

The art of magic is as rich here as it is in the north, if not richer, and likely far older in origin. Although Suleiman is regarded as the greatest mage who ever lived by Devoted, he was not the first wizard. When the northern peoples were still hunter-gatherers, great empires spanned the desert, and these ancient folk knew much of mystical ways of the universe.

Long before Suleiman's birth there were sand mages, who drew their power from the energy infusing the desert. There were also ushabti mages, who possessed the knowledge of how to awaken inanimate objects to do their bidding. Dervishes worked their magic by spinning like a top, literally weaving threads together through their circular motion. Lastly, there were practitioners of khem-hekau, or necromancy, an art created during the height of the cursed Hekatic Empire.

Though Suleiman mastered all these arts, he is best remembered among mages for developing jinn magic, by which means a sorcerer could command and control lesser jinn. Though the newest form of magic, it quickly became a symbol for Suleiman's new creed—the civilized were free, and where once the jinn were masters, they would now be slaves.

A sixth form of magic, wizir magic, developed comparatively recently. Wizir magicians draw their power from ties to noble bloodlines, using it to advise and protect their patrons.

ANCIENT MAGIC

The civilized races never mastered the art of weaving the strands of magic into solid items. The jinn certainly knew the secret, though they never shared their knowledge. Some scholars believe the ophidae had also learned the craft, though this is an unproven theory at present.

These days, khem-hekau and jinn mages have the ability to create a special form of relic. They bind dark spirits and lesser jinn into mundane objects, allowing those with sufficient willpower to force the captive jinni or spirit to work magic on their behalf. While the entities can produce wondrous powers, their abilities are not permanent. Unlike alchemical devices, however, such relics can be reused many times.

True relics, such as magic swords, flying carpets, suits of armor, and the like, do exist, though they are

SULEIMAN—MAGE OR CLERIC?

Whether Suleiman was a cleric or mage is subject to much argument across Al-Shirkuh. To the Devoted, he is the greatest mage who ever lived, having mastered all the old arts and then discovering the new art of jinn magic. He also founded a new creed, one which told the races were responsible for their own salvation. To the Faithful, he is a holy prophet and a priest of every deity simultaneously.

Only five centuries have passed since his death. To some, this may seem a relatively short period of time for the true teachings of such an important figure to have diversified.

The days following the liberation were ones of great turmoil—creating a new society was more important than how the freedom was actually earned. Storytellers told tales of events as they perceived them, but the first written histories came about many decades later. The division of the two faiths resulted in two sets of history, each altered to make its version the true account. One man's heresy became another man's faith.

At the end of the day, players can argue their characters' personal beliefs as much as they wish. The truth about Suleiman, however, remains a mystery, and neither side is right or wrong.

Reader's should note that Suleiman is loosely based on the figure of King Solomon, who, in Islamic teachings, defeated many jinn thanks to the grace of Allah. The Devoted creed owes its existence to the Zoroastrian concepts of order and chaos, although one term (imam) has been borrowed from Islam and used in its wider sense of a notable scholar.

extremely rare and highly sought after. Many believe the myriad ruins littering the desert contain either the secret knowledge of this art or house vast treasures stacked with relics. Fearsome beasts also inhabit these ruins—few who seek lost knowledge ever return, and those who do return to civilization are usually no more enlightened than when they began their quest.

Cults, Cabals, & Societies

Al-Shirkuh has many secret societies bent on some sinister goal. Assassins strike in the dark of night, their poisoned blades capable of changing the destiny of a city in one blow. Fanatical warriors strike down the remaining jinn and those who would traffic with them, while others seek to rebuild the jinn empire and willingly return themselves into slavery. An organization of women seeks to overthrow the rule of man. Slavers trade in flesh, caring little for what fate awaits their living cargo. Mages plot in secret to replace the nobility of the Sultanate with a magocracy.

◉ A Potted History of Al-Shirkuh ◉

- 5000?: The scorpion men and the ophidae fight a great war. It ends in stalemate, and both sides retreat to rebuild their strength.
- 2400?: Rise of the Hekatic Empire on the banks of the River Ankh.
- 2200?: The Hekatic pharaohs war against the scorpion men, destroying their empire and freeing the humans they had enslaved. The ophidae suffer many attacks in the decades to come, but remain unconquered.
- 2000?: Ophidae experiments to crossbreed with humans creates the medusae.
- 1925?: The medusae attempt to usurp the nagas. After a lengthy civil war the ophidae drive them into the desert, where they quickly settle around the Statue Hills.
- 1915?: Hekata invades the Snakelands. The ophidae retreat underground.
- 1800?: Seeking immortality, Hekatic mages discover necromancy and create khem-hekau.
- 1750?: Refugees fleeing Hekata build cities on the southeast coast, founding the Kingdom of Magor.
- 1334: Rise of the Sphinx Pharaohs. Humans living in the region are enslaved.
- 1187: The Hekatic Empire, already in its death throes, wars against the sphinxes but suffers several terrible defeats.
- 1085: The River Ankh dries up and the Hekatic Empire disintegrates. Empire destroyed by unknown disaster.
- 801: The jinn appear and quickly conquer the central lands, obliterating all who resist.
- 748: The jinn conquer the human lands in the southern desert, destroying their cities and enslaving the people under their tyrannical rule. The Kingdom of Magor ceases to exist.
- 505: Jinn invasion of the Kingdoms of the Sphinxes is thwarted with considerable losses. Jinn expansion is halted for many centuries.
- 492: The Anari Empire rises in Rassilon.
- 302: The Hekatic pharaohs awaken suddenly and launch a brutal but short-lived campaign against the sphinxes and the jinn.
- 232: Anari conquer the west coast of Al-Shirkuh, founding several trading cities in what is now the Free Emirates.
- c. -100: Suleiman is born. Though born a slave, he quickly becomes a trusted advisor to the jinn.
- 5: The War of Copper Jars begins. Suleiman's rebellion begins. Led by the great prophet, humans rise up against their jinn masters.
- 4: The Cakali Confederacy is destroyed by the jinn. The cakali side with the humans, and eventually become nomadic after the war ends.
- 0: The Battle of the Fallen Sun. Suleiman and the jinn elders clash in what is now the heart of the Mirrorsands. Great magic is unleashed, and the jinn leaders are defeated, bound into copper jars and scattered across the lands.
- 2 CJ: The former slaves wander the central desert. Most head south into what is now the Sultanate.
- 15 CJ: Suleiman dies of natural causes. Emissaries from the many tribes come to mourn the loss of the great leader. Suleiman's body is buried in a secret tomb, along with powerful relics taken from the jinn.
- 20 CJ: Anari abandon their southern cities, a result of pressure from hostile natives and growing strife in Rassilon.
- 22 CJ: Founding of the Free Emirate States.
- 23 CJ: Founding of the Sultanate. The Sultan prohibits worship of the old gods.
- 29 CJ: Citizens faithful to the old gods flee from religious persecution in the Sultanate.
- 32 CJ: Founding of the Caliphate. The first Caliph declares the teachings of the *Hamad al-Shuf* heretical.
- 50 CJ: The Ice Rising affects Rassilon to the north and the long winter begins. In the desert, it marks the beginning of a steady decrease in annual rainfall, a cooling of the high temperatures, and increased expansion of the desert. Trade ends with Rassilon. Jinn mages report a maddening wail emanating from jinn relics across Al-Shirkuh.
- 77 CJ: The War of Ideology marks the first hostility between the Sultanate and Caliphate.
- 129 CJ: The War of False Hopes between the Sultanate and Caliphate.
- 181 CJ: The Six Week War between the Sultanate and Caliphate. Both nations are led by military incompetents, and thousands die on the march to the distant battlefields. When the two sides eventually meet, both armies mutiny, slay their commanders, and return home claiming victory.
- 206 CJ: War of Bitter Water marks the last conflict between the Sultanate and Caliphate. Despite their differences, both nations agree to end hostilities. A new age of enlightenment begins.
- 391 CJ: The City of Iron built across the Silk Road. Overland trade to the east ceases.
- 394 CJ: The Battle of the Vultures' Feast ends in disaster for the denizens of Al-Shirkuh, and all attempts to reclaim the Silk Road are abandoned.
- 507 CJ: The ophidae emerge from their subterranean lairs and begin recolonizing their former lands.
- 520 CJ: The Siphoning begins. Tensions flare as the Devoted blame the Faithful's heretical creed for the loss of magic.
- 549 CJ: Current day.

CHARACTERS

We've given you a list of common archetypes to help you get into the right frame of mind. Once you've decided on the type of character you want to play, move straight on to Making Characters.

Assassin: Political intrigue is rife among the desert kingdoms. Daggers-for-hire can always find work, if they are prepared to put aside their morals.

Beggar: Some beggars are truly poor, but others are members of a secret organization dedicated to protecting the downtrodden masses.

Citizen: Pyramids grow from small foundations, as the saying goes, and sometimes heroes grow from average men and women. Whether an escaped slave seeking revenge on cruel masters or a farmer's son looking for adventure, the citizen has become embroiled in adventure.

Dervish: Also known as whirling dervishes, these mages are a blur of motion, capable of working magic by literally winding the threads of magic around themselves. Many are also expert swordsmen.

Entertainer: Jugglers, acrobats, and fire-eaters can make an honest living in the markets and bazaars. Some turn their acrobatic skills to more adventurous endeavors, hoping to achieve fortune and fame their market tricks cannot hope to deliver.

Explorer: Countless ruins from bygone ages litter the desert. Explorers are usually more interested in knowledge than wealth.

Fighter: Fighters cover everything from hardened mercenaries to devout bodyguards to green villagers looking to defend their homes.

Headsmen: Headsmen are professional executioners, trained at delivering well aimed blows to any part of the body.

Houri: A pretty girl can soften the hardest heart, so the nomads say. Houris are attractive women who use their wiles as spies, seductresses, and corruptors. A few are even assassins.

Jinn Mage: The lesser jinn (plural of jinni) are representatives of the four elements. Through bargaining

or intimidation, a jinn mage can use the power of the elements. Mages can master more than one type of jinni, but the jinn are selfish and dislike sharing power.

Khem-Hekau Mage: Also known as necromancers, these mages traffic with the souls of the dead, forcing them into service through words of power.

Noble: Many nobles live lives of opulent luxury, surrounded by servants, a harem, and political intrigue. Others are lesser sons, who seek adventure and glory among the burning sands.

Nomad: Traveling between the great cities and oases, nomads eke a living as traders, slavers, and mercenaries. They are governed by a strict code of hospitality.

Paladin: Whereas clerics guard the souls of the faithful, paladins guard their flesh. Some paladins are permanent residents at temples. Others travel the lands performing deeds in the name of their deity.

Pegasus Guard: Devout soldiers in the service of the Sultan, the Pegasus Guards cross the desert on pegasus, carrying out the Sultan's orders. They are part diplomat, part warrior, and part messenger, as required by their master.

Priest: The ancient cultures worshiped many gods. Today, only a few deities are worshipped, though the powers they grant their servants are no less formidable.

Sage: Those who study knowledge are called sages. There have been civilizations in the desert for thousands of years, and there is much knowledge that has been lost.

Sailor: Despite the vast tracts of desert, there is water. Watercraft regularly sail the many rivers and carry cargo between coastal cities.

Sand Mage: These mages work their magic by manipulating the energy within the desert. Some are defenders of the burning wastes, others seek to increase the rate at which the desert is expanding, regardless of what stands in their way.

Scout: With great knowledge of the dangers of the deserts, scouts hire their services to adventuring parties and caravans.

Hellfrost: Land of Fire

KNOWLEDGE SKILL

In addition to the Knowledge skills presented in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*, one additional skill is useful to those who travel the sands.

Nomads: The hero is learned in the many unwritten practices of the nomads, including their cultures and laws of hospitality. Bedu, cakali, and hyaenidae use Common Knowledge when dealing with other tribes or nomadic races.

CLARIFICATION

The great cities of Al-Shirkuh are part of the four major civilized realms, yet each has a unique history and laws. As such, a character native to one of the great cities uses Common Knowledge for folklore, heraldry, history, and law only concerning his home city. A -2 penalty is incurred for rolls concerning other cities within the same realm.

For instance, Ahmed comes from Akhmim, a city of the Sultanate. When making rolls regarding the city's folklore, heraldry, history, and law he uses Common Knowledge. When seeing what he knows about another city of the Sultanate, these rolls incur a -2 penalty. Outside of the Sultanate, his Common Knowledge is useless. If he wants to know anything about these topics, he needs to purchase the appropriate Knowledge skill.

GUTS SKILL

Land of Fire does not use the Guts skill. Where an existing *Hellfrost* ability grants a modifier to Guts, it now grants a modifier to Spirit rolls to resist Fear. Any reference to Guts in existing monster templates should be ignored. If you are planning to use existing characters native to Rassilon for adventure in the sands, characters with the Guts skill should be allowed to transfer the points invested in it to other skills.

Scribe: Writing documents may not be a glamorous job, but it's vital to the various bureaucracies. Scribes are often masters of several languages. Many have turned their talents to less honest endeavors, such as providing translations of ancient texts for tomb robbers.

Slave: Aside from the cakali, all of the cultures of the great desert practice slavery to some degree. Slaves may serve as warriors, laborers, or even as bedmates.

Street Urchin: Living in the alleys of the great cities are many street urchins, orphans who make a living acting as city guides, cutting purses, or selling information they have overheard.

Thief: There is an old saying that goes, "If the emirs do not want thieves in their cities, they should share their wealth." The markets and bazaars are home to many pickpockets, but the true thieves go after rich merchants and powerful nobles.

Tomb Raider: The deserts are full of half-buried tombs and cities, their inhabitants long dead, their bones turned to dust. Many ruins contain great treasures, protected by deadly traps and fearsome guardians.

Ushabti Mage: These unusual mages have few powers, and all involve the ability to animate objects. While most never rise above animating small statues, powerful mages can awaken colossal statues.

Wizir: Wizirs are counselors to Hadaree nobles. Some are skilled magicians, others merely skilled diplomats and manipulators. Second in power only to the ruling noble of a city, wizirs are powerful figures.

Making Characters

Creating heroes couldn't be easier. The only thing you need is a copy of the character sheet found at the back of this book or on our website, www.triplecegames.com. Once you've got your sheet, follow these steps to make your hero.

1) Race & Religion

In the *Land of Fire* setting, you can play cakali, humans, hyaenidae, jinn blooded, and sand goblins. Each race has its own advantages and disadvantages, as seen starting on page 10. Read through the various racial descriptions, then pick a race to play. Once the game begins, you can't change race, so choose wisely.

DEVOTED OR FAITHFUL

All characters in *Land of Fire* must be either Devoted (those who follow the *Haqq-Bari* teachings of Suleiman exclusively) or Faithful (those who follow the old gods and accept Suleiman as a prophet). Although some races favor certain teachings, player characters are never forced to comply with the masses. These two separate teachings are thoroughly ingrained at the very heart of desert life—a hero cannot elect to be neither or both.

The biggest factor this plays in game terms is for those who want an Arcane Background, for only Devoted work magic and only Faithful perform miracles. Arcane Backgrounds are detailed in the Devoted (p. 37) and Faithful (p. 45) chapters.

2) Traits

Now it's time to figure your hero's attributes and skills. Unless a racial description says otherwise, your character starts with a d4 in each of his five attributes: Agility, Smarts, Spirit, Strength, and Vigor. You then have 5 points to distribute among them as you choose. Rais-

LANGUAGES OF AL-SHIRKUH

Language	Spoken by/in	Alphabet
Al-Waziran	Sultanate of Al-Wazir	Cakali
Anari	Anari descendants, Free Emirates merchants	Anari
Beastspeech	Centaurs, harpies	Cakali
Beduan	Bedu	N/A
Black Tongue	Demons and sentient undead	Runic
Cakalic	Cakali	Cakali
Classical Anari	Scholars (mainly in the Free Emirates)	Anari
Draketongue	Dragons	Runic
Earthtongue	Gargoyles, trolls	Runic
Giant	Giants	Hieroglyphs
Hekatic	Undead of the Withered Dynasty, tomb robbers, scholars	Hieroglyphs
Holy Tongue	Caliphate of Al-Shirkuh	Cakali
Hyaendish	Hyaenidae	Pictograms
Jinn	Jinn; often considered the language of magic	Flowing script
Lesarde	Bufomi, gatormen, harpies, and lizardmen	Pictograms
Magorian	Scholars, tomb robbers (dead language)	Hieroglyphs
Orcish	Orcs, ogres, sand goblins	Hieroglyphs
Roguetongue	Thieves (sign language)	N/A
Scorpari	Scorpionmen	Hieroglyphs
Sandspeech	Humans, merchants, diplomats, Free Emirates	Cakali
Saxa	Spoken by Bedu who trade with Sutmark (rare elsewhere)	Saxa runic
Sphinx	Sphinxes	Hieroglyphs
Sslaniss	Ophidae, medusae	Hieroglyphs
Trader	Free Emirates merchants who deal with northern traders (rare elsewhere)	Anari

ing an attribute a die type costs 1 point, and you may not raise an attribute above d12.

You also have 15 points to buy your skills. Raising a skill by a die type costs 1 point as long as it's no higher than the attribute it's linked to. It costs 2 points per die type to raise a skill over its linked attribute.

All the standard skills are available except Driving and Piloting. Riding covers controlling animal-drawn conveyances, and Agility is used to control flying carpets and similar relics. Characters with an Arcane Background also have access to special arcane skills. These are detailed in Chapter 40.

LANGUAGES

Characters begin the game with a number of languages equal to half their Smarts die. So, a hero with a d6 Smarts knows three languages. Languages aren't rated by dice, and it's assumed a hero speaks the language flu-

ently enough to hold a conversation. Available languages are shown in the sidebar.

The first language a hero learns must be their racial tongue. Many heroes also speak Sandspeech, a language invented to make diplomacy and mercantile activities easier. (Though it shares the same purpose, it bares no resemblance to the common Trader language of the north). They must pick this with one of their available language slots, however.

Once play begins, a character can learn a new language by devoting an advancement to mastering the tongue—assume he's been practicing the language during his adventures, so he doesn't have to spend any "downtime" on this. Heroes learning languages this way can know more than their Smarts allows. Raising a hero's Smarts in play does not automatically grant him a new language.

Unless a character is illiterate (and many folk are), he can also read and write any language he speaks.

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OTHER NAMING CONVENTIONS

The naming conventions listed under each race are not the only ones used. Although the alternate conventions presented here are Hadaree in origin, they are no longer limited to humans.

Rather than listing one's ancestry or tribe, one might simply use "min" followed by one's place of origin. For instance, Azhar min Fashir means "Azhar from the city of Fashir."

Slaves and servants use "abd" followed by the name of their master after their given name. Even wizirs, often powerful men and women, may adopt this naming convention to show their loyalty to their lord. Clerics are permitted to use "abid" ("abida" for females), followed by the name of their patron deity to indicate their devotion to the faith. Abid literally means "worshipper."

"Abu" means "father of." Largely used as an honorific, so noting the father's siring of an heir, it is also used by fathers whose offspring have risen beyond them in reputation. "Umm" means "mother of."

"Beni" means "children or descendants of," and is always followed by the name of a famous ancestor. Rather than listing the male line, a family may adopt this as a sort of familial name. It is most commonly adopted by the children of the Sultans, Caliphs, and emirs of Al-Shirkuh.

DERIVED STATISTICS

Charisma is a measure of your hero's likeability, and is added to Persuasion and Streetwise rolls. Your Charisma modifier is +0 unless changed by Edges or Hindrances.

Pace is equal to 6", unless changed by Edges or Hindrances.

Parry is equal to 2 plus half your Fighting die type. Edges, Hindrances, and some types of equipment can modify your Parry score.

Toughness is equal to 2 plus half your Vigor die type. Edges, Hindrances, and Armor can modify your Toughness. Vigor can, in some cases, go above a d12. In such cases, all fractions are rounded down.

3) EDGES & HINDRANCES

Great heroes are far more than a collection of skills and attributes. It's their unique gifts, special powers, and tragic flaws that truly make them interesting characters.

You can take one Major Hindrance and two Minor Hindrances. A Major Hindrance is worth 2 points, and a Minor Hindrance is worth 1 point.

For 2 points you can:

* Raise an attribute one die type (you may raise your attributes before purchasing skills), or

* Choose an Edge.

For 1 point you can:

* Gain another skill point, or

* Gain additional money equal to your starting funds (if you start with 500 dinars, you gain an additional 500 dinars).

4) Gear

Next you need to purchase equipment. A list of gear can be found in Gear starting on page 27. Unless you've acquired Edges or Hindrances that change this, a hero starts with the clothes on his back and 500 dinars, the currency of the desert realms.

5) Background Details

Finish your character by filling in any history or background you care to. Ask yourself why your hero is where she is and what her goals are. Or you can just start playing and fill in these details as they become important.

Cakali

The cakali (pronounced "yack-AR-li," singular cakal) are humanoid jackals. They have fully dexterous fingers, but retain the legs and feet of jackals.

Originally there were three distinct sub-races of cakali, distinguished by their black, light brown, or reddish-brown fur. Centuries of interbreeding have merged these bloodlines to the point where the three sub-races are now one and the same.

The cakali once ruled over the now-ruined cities in the Plain of Ash (not to be confused with the Desert of Ash). They based their enlightened culture on the teachings of Anup, a philosopher-king who led the race from barbarity into civilization. They traded with the other races, abolished slavery, and invented the alphabet still used by many races today.

During the War of Copper Jars, the cakali sided first with the jinn, but switched allegiance to the humans when they discovered the jinn intended to use the cakali as suicide troops to save their own forces. In an act of total retribution, the jinn shattered the cakali cities and turned the sands of their homeland to ash, obliterating any hope the jackal men had of rebuilding their great kingdom.

With their kingdom gone, the cakali were forced into a nomadic existence, which they maintain to this day. Despite the hardships they endured, the race never forgot Anup's teachings, and maintains a strong sense of righteousness and honor. Suleiman's teachings were similar to those of Anup, and many cakali saw him as Anup's spirit, come back to lead the race forward in their darkest hour. For this reason, most cakali are Devoted.

Cakali are a pragmatic race, standing defiant in the face of superior odds, and seeing death as merely another journey the soul must undertake at some point.

When it comes to magic, cakali are first and foremost sand mages, though jinn and wizir magic are not unusual. Ushabti and dervish magic are rare among these nomadic folk, and khem-hekau is considered abhorrent. Those cakali who do follow the gods typically worship Duamutef, god of nomads. Qedeshet, god of knowledge, is popular, as is Upuaut, god of travel.

Although the cakali abolished slavery long ago, they do retain bondsmen. A bondsman is a person (of any race) who has agreed to serve the cakali in return for protection and basic provisions. Some bondsmen are fulfilling a life debt (such as being saved from the burning sands by the cakali). Others may be looking to escape from their past lives or be trying to cleanse their soul of some taint through hard work.

Bondsmen wear a leather bracelet bearing the name of their “master.” This isn’t a sign of ownership, but proof the bondsman is entitled to be treated fairly by other cakali.

Although regularly used as menial labor, a bondsman has some legal rights under cakali law. While under his master’s dominion, he is expected to serve loyally and without question, however. A few cakali even form true friendships with their bondsmen. A bondsman must serve a minimum of 10 years before he can ask to be released from his status. The cakali may cut the bondsman free at any time.

Cakali live for upward of 90 years.

Names: Abaza, Ajlan, Bayram, Durukan, Fukri, Ilhan, Necip, Oktay, Tabari, Ya’kub (male); Ajda, Denktash, Hanife, Roxelana, Suzan, Yelda (female).

Cakali do not use personal surnames, but use those of their tribe. Tribal names include Aricanli, Cetinok, Kasaba, Sevim, and Yanalak. Names are always given as personal name followed by alim- (“of the”) tribal name, such as “Ajlan alim-Sevim.”

RACIAL EDGES & HINDRANCES

* **Bite/Claws:** Str+d4.

* **Code of Honor:** Cakali live by a strict moral code, though they are swift to punish those who abuse their honor and hospitality. They have the Code of Honor Hindrance.

* **Fearless:** Cakali are immune to Intimidation and Fear, having no fear of death.

* **Nomad Ways:** Cakali have survived for centuries within the desert, and begin the game with a d6 in Survival.

🌀 HUMANS 🌀

Humans are the most populous race in the desert realms. Just two human branches exist in the deserts, these being the Bedu and the Hadaree. We’ll look at each

in turn below. Regardless of cultural stock, desert dwellers tend toward dark hair and eyes, and swarthy skin. The average lifespan is 70 years.

Bedu

The Bedu (plural and singular are the same) are the least numerous of the human cultures and live a predominantly nomadic existence. They are a clannish people with strong ties of blood. Families are grouped into clans, which in turn belong to a tribe. Clans within a tribe often share a common ancestor, though purely political alliances are not uncommon.

Many Bedu are traders, and their camel trains, which can stretch to over half a mile in length, are frequent sights in the great deserts. They produce little of their own, and serve as middle men between the disparate cities and cultures. A few, however, make a living as slavers, raiding small villages or attacking caravans, then selling captives in the Caliphate, Sultanate, or the Kingdoms of the Sphinxes. A few of the less scrupulous Bedu tribes



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SOME NOMAD RULES

The various nomad races have a bewildering list of rules governing their lives. Here are some of the more common ones travelers should remember.

- * Never eat with your left hand or offer it in friendship (Bedu use the left hand to clean themselves or handle unclean materials).
- * Never leave food on your plate (it implies the food is poor) and never ask for more (which implies the host is not generous).
- * Belching after a meal honors the host (and not belching is an insult).
- * A gift must be answered with a gift of equal or greater value (to offer a lesser value is an insult).
- * Business is never discussed until after coffee has been drunk.
- * Coffee is only drunk after small talk has occurred (it gives the host time to judge your character).
- * Speak only if you have something to say (nomads do not engage in idle chatter).
- * Never ask for a private meeting (it implies you have some bad desire in mind).
- * Never be alone with a nomad woman, married or unmarried, who is not of your family (liaisons must always take place with another member of her family present).

sell captives to the fell undead rulers of Hekata, scorpionmen, orcs, and other evil races, as well as corrupt Hadaree.

All tribes control one watering hole, where the tribal sheikh has a permanent tent encampment. Any visitors who come in peace are welcomed to an oasis as honored guests, though non-Bedu must sleep in a separate tented area to avoid “contaminating” the nomads.

The desert is a harsh mistress, and the Bedu have a strict code regarding hospitality. No one who asks for hospitality is ever refused, and they are treated as guests. However, they are also a pragmatic people, and, given the amount of precious food and water it would take to nurse a person back to health, unconscious travelers found in the desert may be left to their fate. Breaking the laws of hospitality is seen as a grave insult to one’s host and can result in guests being banished to the desert without food or water.

Given where they live, it is perhaps not surprising that sand magic is the most practiced arcane art. Jinn mages are common, as are dervishes. Ushabti mages are extremely rare. Most tribes can muster one wizar, usually serving as an advisor to the sheikh. Khem-hekau is outlawed, and anyone using it around a Bedu can expect to be beaten senseless and dragged into the desert to die.

Like the cakali, Faithful tribes most favor Duamutef and Upuaut, though all gods receive some veneration, for each governs the Bedu’s life in some way.

Names: Abdullah, Irfan, Jabbar, Mahmoud, Nasir, Qadir (male); Aminah, Bisar, Falak, Hala, Randa, Sulafah (female).

Bedu surnames encompass the family, clan, and tribe names, in that order. Each name is separated by “dar,” which means, “of.” For instance, a nomad may introduce himself as “Abdul dar-Farraj dar-Mazzin dar-Duamutishel.” Abishur is the individual’s name, Farraj is the name of the head of his family, Mazzin is the name of his clan sheikh, and Duamutishel the name of his tribe (which translates roughly as “Chosen of Duamutef”).

A mir (head of a clan) uses his personal name, that of his sheikh, and then his tribe. A sheikh uses only his personal and tribal names. The fewer names a nomad has, the more important he is.

Hadaree

Hadaree literally means “person or people of the town,” and is used to denote both singular and plural. Of Beduan origin, it is conferred on any human born in a village, town or city, and applies irrespective of their creed, heritage, and nationality. While some commonality exists between settlements in a given geographic region, the word does not truly describe any exact culture—in the same way Bedu tribes have cultural differences built around common social mores and customs, so the same is true of the denizens of permanent settlements. In essence, it simply means a non-nomad.

When it comes to magic, Devoted Hadaree prefer jinn magic to all other forms, this being the magic of Suleiman. Wizirs, while not found in large numbers, are common in most courts and the houses of the rich and powerful. Khem-hekau and ushabti mages are a tiny minority among the spellcasting community. Sand magic hasn’t been popular since before the War of Copper Jars, and many still treat it as rather backward. The same mentality similarly applies to dervish magic.

Faithful Hadaree have no particular bias, typically choosing a deity who will favor their occupation. The official state religion, however, is Shamash, and his temples can be found at the heart of every city.

Men with money prefer silk clothing, with extremely baggy pants being the current craze, while ladies wear silk dresses and veils. Poorer folk make do with cotton trousers and shirts or dresses, or simple floor-length robes. Footwear also varies with wealth, with the poor wearing open sandals or leather boots, and the wealthier citizens wearing silk slippers or fancy leather shoes.

Names: Ahmed, Azhar, Badr, Farhan, Hazim, Mush-taq, Ra’if, Zarif (male); Almas, Asiyah, Gharam, Husna, Juman, Nadia, Sirah (female).

Hadaree do not use familial names. Instead, they typically use the word “ibn” (“son of”) or “bint” (“daughter of”), followed by the name of their father. Though it is common among the lower classes to end here, nobles often list several ancestors, if only to show the unbroken line of their familial power.

A new trait is developing, however. Rather than us-

ing familial name strings, many folk have begun using their personal name followed by “the” and a self-given title, often relating to an occupation. Thus, one may find Ahmed the Beggar, Farhan the Guide, or Sirah the Wise. Some say this began long ago with a certain famous mariner, though others argue it stems from the mighty nobles who rule the great cities.

RACIAL EDGES & HINDRANCES

* **Diverse:** Humans of any culture start play with one free Edge of their choice or 2 extra skill points. They may not use this to take an extra attribute. The character must meet the requirements of any Edge as usual.

Hyaenidae

Whereas the cakali are jackal men, the hyaenidae (pronounced “high-EEN-eye-die”) are hyena men. Hyaenidae are consummate scavengers. They live a nomadic existence, traveling from oasis to oasis, looting ruins, and generally stealing anything not nailed down. They have been known to loot battlefields for weapons, having no metalworking crafts of their own. Tales of them driving off carnivores so they can steal their food are common in the taverns of the Sultanate, but no one who repeats these stories has witnessed such an act for themselves.

Some families have taken over parts of ruined cities, but since families refuse to cooperate with others of their kin, they have never been able to form their own settlements. Rarely a strong leader has merged families into a cohesive force, but these pacts end the moment the leader dies, is defeated, or fails to provide enough spoils.

Many people accuse them of stealing babies and children. While it is true they practice slavery, the hyaenidae have never resorted to child snatching. Still, mud sticks, and the race has a generally poor reputation.

Hyaenidae are family oriented, though they do not form clans or tribes. Resources are scarce in the desert, and families compete against each other. When two families meet over a valuable resource, be it water, food, or an intact tomb, there is a show of force. Usually one side backs down, but when they don’t violence is the only solution.

Religious views tend to be family oriented, and children who do not want to follow the family tradition leave to find a family of the same faith who will accept them.

When it comes to magic, sand and dervish mages dominate, with jinn mages close behind. Hyaenidae have little interest in courtly matters, making wizards redundant. Likewise, although they raid ruins, they rarely dwell in them, and have little need for ushabti magic. Khem-hekau is frowned upon, but only because it is little understood. As nomads, the Faithful among them favor Duamutef and Upuaut. Many follow Tamarni, in her guise as goddess of stealth and thieves.

Names: Arad, Belkashir, Ikaru, Ligish, Seluku, Uktannu (male); Ama, Erishti, Hamzutim, Sululi, Yalampa (female).

Because the hyaenidae do not form clans or tribes, they have little need for surnames. Every member in the family knows each other by sight, and its a stranger’s fault if he can’t tell one Ikaru from another.

RACIAL EDGES & HINDRANCES

* **Bad Reputation:** Hyaenidae have –2 Charisma when dealing with any race other than their own.

* **Bite:** Str+d6.

* **Greedy:** Hyaenidae hate sharing. They have the Minor Greedy Hindrance. If a character wants to increase this to the Major version, he treats it as buying a Minor Hindrance (since he’s just “upgrading”).

* **Laugh:** Hyaenidae have a yapping laugh, which is both annoying and disturbing. They begin with Taunt at a d6.

* **Low Light Vision:** Hyaenidae ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Lighting.

* **Tireless:** Accustomed to hardship and deprivation, hyaenidae have +1 to all Vigor rolls to resist Fatigue.

JINN BLOODED

The birth of children with strange powers has been reported among Devoted and Faithful humans since shortly after Suleiman’s death, and their numbers have been growing steadily over the centuries.

The origin of the race is open to much debate, and many suggestions have been proffered down the ages. Among Devoted, the most popular theory is that they are the descendants of Suleiman or his first disciples, many of whom were jinn mages. Whether they cavorted with jinn or merely became imbued with their power remains open to discussion. While a jinn blooded might not be a hereditary descendant of these ancient sorcerers, he is seen as a direct spiritual descendant. Most Faithful, and some Devoted, believe jinn blooded are the result of a terrible curse laid down by the jinn as their great empire was being systematically destroyed. While not seen as inherently evil, they are treated with great suspicion.

Jinn blooded are essentially human, but have the power to control very lesser jinn. They tend to have personalities related to the type of jinn they take after.

* **Ifrit blooded (fire)** often develop violent tendencies, which flare up without warning. They prefer to act quickly, throwing themselves into tasks with reckless abandon and little thought for the outcome.

* **Khamsin blooded (air)** are curious by nature, driven by an intense desire to experience new things. They are often imaginative and creative, but rarely finish anything they start, being easily distracted by new opportunities.

* **Majin blooded (earth)** are generally slow to act, preferring to think about matters before reaching a deci-

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sion. Once they have made up their minds, they stick with their decision for better or worse.

* **Marid blooded** (water) are traditionalists, following in the footsteps of those who came before them. Unimaginative and uncreative, they are sticklers for keeping the *status quo*.

Jinn blooded never form their own settlements, preferring to live instead among the culture into which they were born. Thus, there are Bedu and Hadaree jinn blooded. Jinn blooded mages favor jinn magic above all others, though they are not prohibited from learning other arts. Faithful generally worship the deity whose aspect matches their elemental form (such as Apsu for majin blooded). Again, this is not a firm rule.

Names: As the culture into which they were born.

RACIAL EDGES & HINDRANCES

* **Distrusted:** Jinn blooded are widely distrusted by Faithful creatures. They suffer -2 Charisma among Faithful (should their true nature ever become known).

* **Elemental Weakness:** Jinn blooded who become jinn mages *must* learn the same element as their racial type first. They may not take their opposite element until they have mastered the other three. Fire and water oppose each other, as do air and earth.

Thus, an ifrit jinn blooded must learn fire first, then air and earth (in any order), and finally water. Faithful cannot become clerics of a deity related to their opposite element. Neither khamsin (air) nor marid (water) jinn blooded can become clerics of Geb-Agni, god of fire and earth, for instance.

* **Jinn Blooded:** Jinn blooded have a natural affinity to one element, chosen from air, earth, fire, and water. This must match their elemental nature, and cannot be changed later.

The character can cast the *elemental manipulation* spell using his Spirit die as his arcane skill, but only with regard his chosen element. If the hero ever learns an arcane background which allows this spell, he may use the higher of his Spirit or arcane skill die, but only for his chosen element. A marid (water) jinn blooded must



Bedu



hadaree



Hyaenidae



Sand Goblin

always use his arcane skill if he ever learns *elemental manipulation (earth)*, for instance.

When he reaches Veteran, the character may devote an advancement to learning *summon jinn*. The spell is cast as above. Only lesser jinn *entirely* matching the character's element can be summoned. For instance, a majin (earth) jinn blooded can summon any type of earth elemental. He could not summon a mud elemental using this ability as it is a creature of both earth and water.

Regardless of whether they are Devoted or Faithful, these innate powers are subject to the Siphoning.

* **Still Human:** Jinn blooded still belong to a human culture, and must decide whether they are of Bedu or Hadaree extract. Despite their unearthly heritage, jinn blooded may be Devoted or Faithful.

One cannot be told apart from a normal human until he uses an innate power or he is subjected to a *detect arcana* spell. The latter is not foolproof, since any spell-caster appears supernatural to the spell. When using either of his innate powers, the jinn blooded displays his heritage in some overt manner. For instance, an ifrit blooded's hair may turn bright red and flicker like flame, while a marid blooded's clothes become soaking wet. These effects never have any associated game mechanics or uses—they are merely trappings.

☉ SAND GOBLINS ☉

Also known as camel goblins because of their unusual hunched appearance, sand goblins were once a nomadic race. Many have now switched to city life, finding it more comfortable—not that they live a great life. Sand goblins have an intense dislike of hard work, and so live as beggars, thieves, and scavengers, feeding off scraps and the few dinars they can make by selling stolen or scavenged goods. They tend to live together in cities, forming small, insular communities within the greater community. The crime rate in such areas is very high.

Mages favor sand magic, something the goblins claim to have invented (though this is heavily disputed by other races). A few try their hand at jinn magic, if only because it lets them bully something else into doing their work for them. Dervish magic is viewed as hard work, since it involves intense physical activity. Most other magic simply doesn't appeal to them.

Faithful goblins favor Apsu, god of water, Tamarni, goddess of stealth, and Duamutef, god of nomads, the latter left over from their nomadic days.

Sand goblins stand around 4' high, and have leathery brown skin. Their bodies are covered in coarse, brown hair, which molts during the height of summer. Their three-toed feet are wide, designed for walking on sand, and their strange appearance is finished with a small hump, which stores water in much the same way as a camel's does.

Names: Abid, Bahdin, Hirad, Jahan, Oshnar, Toutak (male); Atanaz, Daneh, Golar, Kotcha, Mamisa, Saba

(female). Sand goblins don't bother with surnames anymore, preferring to use nicknames instead.

RACIAL EDGES & HINDRANCES

* **Banned Edges:** Sand goblins cannot start play with the Noble or Rich Edges.

* **Camel:** Sand goblins require half the daily water intake of other creatures their size (p. 68). One who becomes a Disciple of Apsu (p. 20), requires just one-quarter of the usual amount.

* **Sand Walker:** Sand goblins' splayed feet help them move quickly over sand. They begin with the Sand Walker Edge (p. 19), regardless of their Agility.

* **Small:** Goblins average just 4' high. They are Size –1, which also gives them –1 Toughness. They can take the Small Hindrance, which represents reduced bulk.

* **Sneaky:** Sand goblins are renowned for their stealth, and start the game with a d6 in Stealth.

* **Untrustworthy:** Sensible folk mistrust sand goblins' words and deeds. They have –2 Charisma among races other than their own.

☉ HINDRANCES ☉

Unlike Rassilon, the peoples of the desert have known about lenses for some centuries. Thus, Bad Eyes can be taken as a Minor or Major Hindrance. A character who takes the Minor version is assumed to have a pair of corrective lenses.

The following Hindrances from the *Hellfrost Players' Guide* are prohibited in the desert: Black Sheep and Cold Blooded.

ANIMAL CURSE (MAJOR)

The character has been cursed by some powerful entity or misuse of a relic. For half the day, he lives his life as a normal mortal. For the other half, he transforms into an animal.

This Hindrance functions as per the *shape change* power, except the transformation is involuntarily (and cannot be foiled in any way), and the animal form must be a monkey or a small mundane animal such as those covered by the Small Animal entry in the *Hellfrost Bestiary*. Pick one animal when the Hindrance is taken. This cannot be changed later.

Decide whether the transformation occurs from sunrise to sunset (day) or sunset to sunrise (night). Once you've decided, this cannot be changed later.

CITY DWELLER (MINOR)

The character was born and raised in a large town or city. He has little understanding of the great outdoors. While in the wilderness or a natural subterranean environment (such as a cave system), the hero has –2 to

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Common Knowledge involving country life, Stealth, and Survival rolls.

Each time the character gains an advance, he may make a Smarts roll. With success, he may remove the Common Knowledge, Stealth, or Survival penalty. Once all three penalties are gone, the Hindrance is removed.

HATED TRIBE (MAJOR)

Only Bedu, cakali, or hyaenidae may take this Hindrance.

The hero's tribe is renowned for its inhospitality, wickedness, lies, treachery, and a string of other negative traits. The hero draws two cards when determining the feelings between a nomad tribe and his own and uses the least favorable (p. 69).

Regardless of the result, he always has a -2 Charisma penalty when dealing with other nomads—even his tribe's closest allies are loathe to deal with his people more than they must.

Other nomads with the hero must use the tribe's reaction to him unless there is someone with the Respected Tribe Edge (p. 17) in the group.

HEAT PRONE (MAJOR)

The character suffers badly from dehydration and cannot cope with high extremes of temperature. He has -2 to Vigor rolls to resist the effects of heat and needs to drink an extra 2 quarts of water a day.

INEPT (MINOR/MAJOR)

For some reason the character isn't as skilled as others. He might be lazy, stupid, a slow learner, or just raised in isolation. The hero receives 2 fewer Skill points with the Minor version and 4 fewer with the Major version. Points earned from taking this Hindrance cannot be spent on Skills.

SEA FEAR (MINOR/MAJOR)

Al-Shirkuh is a large continent. For some of those born in the burning wastes, the sight of seemingly endless expanses of open water causes intense terror.

When the character comes across a lake, a river whose opposite bank he cannot see, or the open sea, he must make a Spirit roll or suffer the effects of Fear for the next 24 hours or until the character is on dry land and the body of water is out of sight, whichever comes first. Covering one's eyes does not constitute as being out of sight of the water! If on a long voyage, the poor adventurer must make a Spirit roll each morning to overcome his fear.

Whether this Hindrance ranks as Minor or Major depends on the nature of the GM's campaign. In a game where water travel will be rare, it is a Minor Hindrance. In games where ship travel is to be frequent it counts as a Major Hindrance.

SHORT-LIVED MAGIC (MINOR/MAJOR)

Whether due to his inability to concentrate or correctly focus magic, a flaw in his training, or an ancient curse, the hero is unable to maintain spells for long periods.

With the Minor version, the character's Maintained spells automatically end after one hour (if not ended sooner by other means). Alchemical devices he creates containing Maintained spells end after 30 minutes.

The Major version allows the spellcaster to Maintain his spells for a maximum of one minute (10 combat rounds). His Maintained alchemical devices also last a mere one minute.

Edges

PROHIBITED EDGES

The following *Savage Worlds Deluxe* Edges may not be taken in this setting: Ace, Arcane Background (Psionics, Superpowers, and Weird Science), Brave, Martial Artist, Power Points, Rapid Recharge, Soul Drain, Wizard, or any Edges which list these as a requirement. Healer and Jack-of-all-Trades exist with different names and requirements. Check below and the *Hellfrost Player's Guide* for Edges that have been altered to fit the *Hellfrost* setting.

Desert characters cannot take the following *Hellfrost Players' Guide* Edges*: Augment Staff, Disciple Edges (any), Gray Legionary, Hearth Knight, Hellfreeze, Iron Guild Mercenary, Knight Hrafn, Old Family, Reliquary (any), Road Warden, Shieldwall, Sister of Mercy, Snow Walker, Warm Blooded, and Wood Warden. Any Edges with racial requirements for a race not in this book are also prohibited unless otherwise stated.

* GMs may choose to allow *Hellfrost Players' Guide* Professional Edges to be taken if a suitable backstory is created.

BACKGROUND EDGES

ANCESTRAL GUARDIAN

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+, cannot have negative Honor

The hero was visited by the spirit of an important or notable ancestor, who promised to aid him in times of need.

In times of need, the hero can spend a benny to gain a single Novice spell of his choice from *aim*, *armor*, *boost trait* (no *lower*), *deflection*, *environmental protection*, *farsight* or *warrior's gift*. These spells can only be cast on the hero. He activates the spell using Spirit as his arcane skill (even if he has an arcane skill). The hero only has one chance to activate the spell per benny spent. A

NOBLE TITLES

Anari	Sultanate & Caliphate (m/f)	Nomads (m/f)	Sphinx*
Knight	Effendi/Effenda	Bey/Beyah	Hakar
Banneret	(not used)	(not used)	(not used)
Baron	Pasha/Pashar	Mir/Mirah	Imy-Er
Count	Sirdar/Sirdara	(not used)	(not used)
Duke	Emir/Emira	Sheikh/Sheikhah	Sar-Nesu
Prince	Meliq/Meliqa	(not used)	Iry-Paht
King	Sultan/Sultana or Caliph/Calipha	(not used)	Pharaoh

* Included for reference only.

different spell may be chosen each time a benny is used in this manner.

Should the hero's Glory ever drop below zero, he temporarily loses this Edge, his ancestor being shamed by the character's actions.

ARCANE BACKGROUND

See **Devoted** on page 37 and **Faithful** on page 45 for more details on the types of spellcasters available. Note that some Arcane Backgrounds have other requirements. This Edge can be taken after character generation. A hero may only have one Arcane Background.

Most characters who take the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge automatically gain the Connections Edge with respect to the specific faith to which they belong. This represents access to the faith's infrastructure, as well as friends and colleagues. This does not count toward starting Edge limits.

In return, the hero also gains the Orders Hindrance with regard the organization. This does not count toward his starting Hindrance limits, nor does he earn any points during character generation for it.

BONDSMAN

Requirements: Novice, Cakali

The character has a bondsman, an indentured servant. The bondsman is an NPC Novice Wild Card character in his own right. The hero is fully responsible for safeguarding the life of his bondsman and for feeding and clothing him. Bondsmen have no starting money of their own, and rely on the character for equipment.

A bondsman may fill any role the character wishes. Some are warriors, but just as many are scholars, entertainers, or healers. A few are just used to carry the cakali's equipment and ensure his household is kept orderly.

If the bondsman is killed, the character is deemed to have broken his sacred oath to protect the bondsman. He receives no bennies at the start of a session until he advances to the next character Rank.

The character may take this Edge more than once in character generation, receiving a new bondsman each time. After character generation, additional bondsmen can only be acquired through role-playing.

DESERT BORN

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d8+

The hero accepts hot weather like he was born of the very desert. He has +2 to Vigor rolls to resist the effects of hot weather.

MERMAID BLOOD

Requirements: Novice

Several heroes of old were attributed mermaid blood, a trait the character seems to have inherited. The character's swimming Pace is equal to his Swimming die. In addition, he gains +2 to Swimming rolls.

NOBLE

Requirement: Novice, cannot come from the Kingdoms of the Sphinxes

This Edge is unchanged from the main rules, but requires a brief explanation on how it fits into *Land of Fire*. Typically, a character with this Edge has the lowest noble title (his father being one or two steps higher up the social ladder) and rules a small village or maybe a well or oasis. Only with the GM's permission may the character begin at a higher social status. See the sidebar above for more details. Further social promotions require family members to move aside (or die) to allow the character to assume a new title, and this should be worked into the campaign.

The "Anari" entry is for comparison only. The entry for "Nomads," covers Bedu, cakali, hyaenidae, and sand goblins, all of which use a similar system. Unless otherwise stated, all titles are used by male and female rulers.

RESPECTED TRIBE

Requirements: Novice, Bedu or cakali

Although tribal alliances are temporary, the hero's tribe is renowned across the desert for its honesty, integrity, hospitality, and other positive traits, earning them many friends.

The hero draws two cards when determining the feelings between a nomad tribe and his own and uses the most favorable (p. 69). So long as the result is Neutral or

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better, the hero gains the equivalent of the Connection Edge while dealing with the nomads. Note that cards are drawn each encounter, so the Connection is not permanent.

If the hero vouches for his comrades, other nomads in the party may use the tribe's reaction to the hero as their own. This does not apply to heroes who have the Hated Tribe Hindrance, who must always draw cards to determine another tribe's reaction to them. Other nomads in the party do not gain the Connection Edge.

WORLD-WISE

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+

Whether the hero journeyed extensively with his parents during his youth, listened to traveler's tales at the local caravanserai or docks, or had a good tutor, he is well-versed in the geography and cultures of Al-Shirkuh.

The adventurer has 5 extra skill points. These must be spent on a minimum of three different Knowledge (Area) skills. Remember, your home region is covered by Common Knowledge. Additionally, the hero may make unskilled Knowledge (Area) rolls for areas for which he has no skill.

At the GM's discretion, the Knowledge (Area) dice may be assigned to locations in Rassilon, instead.

Combat Edges

BODYGUARD

Requirements: Heroic, Agility d8+, Block, Shield-wall, Notice d8+

The hero has learned how to intercept blows meant for others. At the start of his turn the character may nominate one adjacent ally. So long as the ally remains adjacent, he uses the hero's Parry in place of his own. This benefit is immediately lost if the parrying character is rendered incapable of parrying a blow. Bodyguard and Shieldwall cannot be used on the same ally. However, the hero may use this Edge to aid one adjacent ally and Shieldwall to defend another ally simultaneously.

CHARGE

Requirements: Seasoned, Vigor d8+, Fighting d8+

The character knows how to deliver a well-aimed blow at the end of a charge.

If the hero performs a run action and ends his movement for the round adjacent to an opponent, he may make a single Fighting roll as a free action. This cannot be combined with Frenzy or Sweep.

FAST MOUNT

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Riding d6+

Mounting or dismounting a horse counts as an ac-

tion. An adventurer with this Edge can mount and dismount as a free action, but may only perform one of each maneuver per round. Thus, the character could mount and dismount in one round, but he couldn't mount, dismount, and remount in the same round.

FAST AND SILENT

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d8+, Stealth d8+

The character is both fast and silent on his feet, a deadly combination. When moving stealthily, the adventurer suffers no penalties to Stealth rolls for running. Outside of combat, each Stealth roll covers moving up to five times the character's Pace and his full running die.

FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL

Requirements: Veteran, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

The hero can defend himself even while running away. The character may run while using the Defend maneuver and move up to his Pace when using Full Defense.

LURKER

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Stealth d6+

The character is adept at using any available cover and concealment to bolster his defenses. When the hero uses the Full Defense maneuver, he may use his Stealth die in place of his Fighting die to calculate his Parry.

MOUNTED COMBATANT

Requirements: Novice, Riding d8+

The character has a knack for getting the best out of his mount. The hero gains the benefits of the Ace Edge, but only with regard to Riding rolls and Soaking for his mount. Furthermore, he may make a Riding roll at a -2 penalty (offsetting the bonus from this Edge) as an action to spur his mount to greater speeds. With success, the mount gains +2 Pace for this round. A failure causes the mount to gain no increase to its Pace and it suffers a level of Fatigue due to the exertion.

ONE STEP ONE KILL

Requirements: Veteran, Agility d8+

The hero has learned how to take a lightning quick step to circumvent his opponent's defenses and strike a lethal blow.

If the character moves no further than 1" on his turn, moving adjacent to a foe does not trigger First Strike. In addition, if the hero spends a benny while taking his one step, he gets the Drop on his target this round.

PATHFINDER

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d6+, Smarts d6+, Notice d6+, Survival d6+

The hero is trained to blaze trails for others to follow.

Allies who follow the hero's exact route treat each inch of difficult ground as 1.5" instead of 2" as normal. The hero does not gain any benefit from this Edge, beyond being able to clear a path for his comrades.

QUICK REACTIONS

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility or Smarts d6+

Whether he is always on edge, possessed of lightning reflexes or keen senses, or a survivor of too many ambushes, the adventurer knows how to react when battle begins unexpectedly. If the character fails his Notice roll and is Surprised, he is dealt an action card as normal. However, he may only take free actions, including moving up to his Pace, and use "reflexive" Edges like First Strike during the first round of combat.

RUNNING THROW

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d6+, Strength d8+, Throwing d8+

The hero knows how to use his momentum to boost the range of thrown weapons.

If the character moves at least half his Pace immediately before making a Throwing roll he increases the Range of his thrown weapon by 2/4/8. No other actions may be performed between moving and throwing, and the two maneuvers must be taken in the same round.

SAND WALKER

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+

The hero has learned to move easily over the worst sands. In ash or soft sand, every inch of movement counts as 1.5" instead of 2". When using Overland Travel, the hero treats sand as average terrain and ash as standard terrain with no trail.

IMPROVED SAND WALKER

Requirements: Seasoned, Sand Walker

The hero treats ash and soft sand as normal ground. When using Overland Travel, the hero treats sand as open plains and ash as average terrain.

SPEAR CATCH

Requirements: Veteran, Agility d8+, Throwing d6+

Snatching a spear from the air is no mean feat, but the hero has mastered the maneuver.

This Edge may be used once per round and off-hand penalties apply as normal.

In order for the Edge to work, an opponent must throw a spear at the hero and score a success on his Throwing roll. The character then makes an Agility roll vs. his opponent's Throwing total. With success, the character catches the spear. On a raise, he may throw it back in the same round as a free action. Should the catcher fail to intercept the weapon, it strikes him as normal.

SPEAR TWIST

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d8+, Throwing d8+

The character knows how to spin a throwing spear in flight, increasing the weapon's killing power.

When throwing a spear, the hero treats his Strength die as being one die higher for the purposes of damage. This is applied *after* factoring in any Minimum Strength penalties. Attempts to catch the spear are made at -2 and the weapon cannot be returned in the same round, even if the catcher scores a raise.

STEADY FEET

Requirements: Veteran, Agility d8+, Strength d8+, Giant Killer

The character knows how to brace properly when struck by large foes.

The hero treats the size difference on the Knockback Table as one level better (for him). For instance, against



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an ogre (Size +3), a Size +0 character suffers knockback as if the ogre were just one or fewer Sizes larger.

WALL RUNNER

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d8+, Strength d8+, Vigor d8+

The character has learned to run up vertical walls, but only for a short distance. The hero can walk up and along vertical walls, even perfectly smooth ones. While moving along or up a wall he moves as half his normal Pace. He can run as well, but his running die is also halved. If at the end of his movement the hero has not secured a suitable handhold (such as a deep crack or horizontal flagpole) or reached a suitable platform (such as a ledge or balcony) he automatically falls.

Disciple Edges

Not every god from Rassilon has an equal in the desert, though many do share similarities. This means there are some Disciple Edges found in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide* which are identical to ones available to desert priests. However, there are Disciple Edges here that do not exist in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*.

DISCIPLE OF APSU

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Vigor d8+, Faith d8+, Survival d8+, follower of Apsu

The character halves his daily water requirements. In addition, the character makes a Vigor roll every 12 hours after the first day without water instead of every six as normal. The hero has a +2 bonus to Survival rolls to find water.

DISCIPLE OF ASHTART

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Spirit d8+, Faith d8+, must know the *beast friend* power, follower of Ashtart

Once per day, the hero can summon an Extra swarm of bees by making a Faith roll as an action. If the Faith roll is a raise, treat the swarm as a Wild Card. The swarm is under the control of the cleric. However, they still sting every creature under the template save the summoner. The bees do not have to be present—Ashtart sends bees from her own garden to aid her follower. The swarm lasts until the next sunrise or sunset, whichever occurs first. In addition, the cleric may use the Champion and Holy Warrior Edges (as appropriate, and if he possesses them) against creatures with the Plant Special Ability.

DISCIPLE OF DUAMUTEF

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Faith d8+, Survival d8+, follower of Duamutef

Duamutef rewards his chosen followers with better insight into the workings of the desert. Priests gain +2 to Survival rolls within a hot desert (as opposed to a cold one). They also ignore the penalties imposed by the desert on Notice and Shooting rolls made over 12". In addition, the character may take the Mighty Shot Edge at Seasoned.

DISCIPLE OF GEB-AGNI

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Vigor d8+, Faith d8+, Survival d8+, follower of Geb-Agni

The hero gains limited resistance to fire and heat. The hero has +2 to Vigor rolls to resist the effects of Heat and +2 Toughness with regard damage caused by fire or heat (such as a fiery *blast* or a lava stream). While underground, they have +1 to all Survival rolls.

DISCIPLE OF IBLIS

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Faith d8+, follower of Iblis

Disciples of Iblis are expected to act chaotically. As such, their minds are protected against those who would try to enforce their will or any form of order upon them. They receive +2 to resist Tests of Will, as well as mind-affecting powers like *puppet*. This stacks with similar bonuses from other sources.

DISCIPLE OF KARMELOS

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Strength d8+, Vigor d8+, Faith d8+, Fighting d10+, follower of Karmelos

The character treats his character Rank as being one higher for the purposes of taking Combat Edges. He must meet all other requirements as normal.

In addition, he may cast spells and use Fighting in the same round, treating the combined actions as a single action. Thus, a paladin who runs, attacks with his sword, and casts a spell incurs just a -2 multi action penalty, not -4 as normal.

DISCIPLE OF MARQOD

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Spirit d8+, Faith d8+, Healing d6+, follower of Marqod

A character with this Edge adds +2 to all Healing rolls, whether natural or magical in nature. Up to five companions traveling with a Healer add the bonus to their natural Healing rolls as well.

DISCIPLE OF QEDESHET

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Smarts d10+, Faith d8+, Scholar, follower of Qedeshtet

Disciples of Qedeshet are renowned for their wisdom. The hero gains +1 on rolls for Knowledge skills he has at least a d4 in (including those covered by his Scholar Edge), as well as to Common Knowledge rolls. When rolling a Knowledge skill he does not have at least d4 in, he rolls a d4 instead of a d4-2. This Edge has no effect on other Smarts-linked skills. If he wishes to learn a new Knowledge skill, he must purchase it at a d4 as normal.

DISCIPLE OF SHAMASH

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Faith d8+, Notice d8+, follower of Shamash

The disciples of Shamash halve all penalties for poor lighting. In addition, they gain +2 to all Notice rolls to detect hidden objects or creatures, including those under an *invisibility* spell. Against foes cloaked in such a manner, they halve penalties to hit them (once they have detected them).

DISCIPLE OF TAMARNI

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Agility d8+, Faith d8+, Stealth d6+, follower of Tamarni

Tamarni grants her devoted followers the grace and stealth of a cat. They have +2 to Stealth rolls and +1 when performing or resisting Agility Tricks.

A character who takes the Beast Master Edge receives a Wild Card cat of some sort. No other form of animal is permitted. It earns experience as a player character and should be treated as an animal Sidekick. If killed, it is replaced after 2d6 weeks, if possible. The replacement has half the Experience Points of the previous cat.

DISCIPLE OF TAMMUZ

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Spirit d6+, Faith d8+, Fighting d8+, follower of Tammuz

Priests of the Lord of the Dead are expected to wage ceaseless war on the undead, though not suicidally (the undead far outnumber the clergy of Tammuz). Priests learn special combat techniques to help them overcome their foes.

The hero has +1 Parry against undead, and rolls a d8 damage instead of a d6 if he scores a raise on an attack roll against them. Should he have the Favored Foe (Undead) Edge as well, his Parry bonus rises to +2, and he rolls a d10 damage when his Fighting roll is a raise. To qualify as an undead, the creature must have the Undead Monstrous Ability.

DISCIPLE OF UPUAUT

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Miracles), Smarts d10+, Faith d8+, follower of Upuaut.

Upuaut is not called the Opener of the Ways for nothing. The "Ways" refer not to any mundane paths, but to

secret, unseen pathways which connect every place in the mortal realm and allow for instantaneous travel. To his most devout followers, Upuaut teaches knowledge of these routes.

In game terms, the cleric can *teleport* considerably further than other spellcasters, even at Seasoned Rank. The distances vary with the caster's Rank, as shown below. In addition, he also reduces the penalties for *teleporting* into unseen or unvisited locations.

Rank	Distance*	Penalties**
Seasoned	50 yards	-2/-4
Veteran	500 yards	-1/-4
Heroic	1 mile	0/-2
Legendary	5 miles	0/-1

* Per success and raise.

** The first number is for teleporting into somewhere the caster cannot see, the second for places he has never seen before.

Leadership Edges

BORN IN BATTLE

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Battle) d8+, Command

A good grasp of terrain and tactics, as well as knowledge of military history and enemy forces, can bring a general victory even when his troops are inferior to his enemy's. The character gets +2 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls. In addition, he gains a +2 bonus to all Common Knowledge rolls concerning military matters.

DROP!

Requirements: Seasoned, Notice d6+, Command

Once per round when an ally within the hero's command radius is targeted by a ranged weapon, the character may order him to drop to the ground. This allows the intended target to fall prone out of turn, even if he has acted already, gaining the benefits of Medium Cover.

FORCED MARCH

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d6+, Vigor d6+, Command

Speed matters in battle, and the character knows how to keep his allies a cohesive fighting force when advancing. When the adventurer runs, all allies within his command radius acting on his action card may use his Running die result.

HELP ME!

Requirements: Seasoned, Command

Once per round when a foe moves adjacent to the

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THE GOLEM UPRISING

The Golem Uprising which ravaged parts of Rassilon went largely unnoticed in Al-Shirkuh.

Although golems were popular among the old empires, the art had been all but eradicated by the jinn (no sphinxes ever practiced it). Hundreds, maybe thousands, of golems did go on the rampage, but they were never a cohesive force.

The vast majority of golems existed only in ruined cities. A few made their way into the Sphinx Empire, where they were destroyed. Most, however, seemed to answer some strange call, for they quietly made their way east along the Silk Road and vanished from Al-Shirkuh.

Over the past 150 years, however, the art has been rediscovered, and golems are once again seen walking the streets of the human realms. Unlike slaves, golems need not rest, nor do they require food or water, all traits which make them ideal for menial tasks, such as laboring or mining.

hero, the threatened character may call for help. One ally within the character's command radius who has not yet acted this turn may try to interrupt as if he were on Hold. With a success, the ally must attack the opponent who triggered this Edge.

TAKE AIM

Requirements: Veteran, Spirit d8+, Command

A good commander knows when to give the order to fire. By delaying the order to fire for a second, you give your troops extra time to steady their aim.

Those in the command radius add +1 to their Shooting or Throwing damage rolls. If combined with Coordinated Firepower, the hero inflicts 1d6+1 damage per raise.

Power Edges

ALCHEMY

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Any except Dervish and Ushabti), arcane skill d6+, Knowledge (Alchemy) d6+

Aside from the requirements, this Edge is unaltered.

DELAY SPELL

Requirements: Veteran, Arcane Background (any), arcane skill d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+

You know how to hold the magic in a cast spell back for a few short moments.

After successfully casting a spell you may choose to

have its effect activate 1 to 6 rounds later. The delay must be chosen once the spell is cast and it cannot be changed. You may cancel the spell before this time as a free action. The spell goes off on the round you designate on your action card, before you take any other actions.

Any modifiers to the casting roll must be determined when the arcane skill roll is made as normal, as must the determination of the intended recipient or target.

If something changes to make the delayed spell impossible to take effect, such as a target moving out of range or dying, it automatically fails.

Dispel and *negate arcana* both work as normal against a spell being delayed. A delayed spell counts as being Maintained until it activates, even if the spell cannot normally be Maintained (such as *blast*).

ENHANCED MAINTENANCE

Requirements: Veteran, Spirit d8+, Vigor d8+, arcane skill d8+

Constant practice allows the hero to Maintain spells even while asleep.

The character can Maintain a single spell while he sleeps. The spell must first be cast using the normal rules and be capable of being Maintained. As the hero falls asleep, he must make a Smarts roll or the spell ends as normal. The character cannot awaken and recast the spell if the Smarts roll fails, but may be roused by others if the spell has visible trappings they can observe. A similar roll must be made if the character is awoken suddenly, rather than waking in his own time.

This Edge provides no benefit if the hero is Incapacitated or rendered unconscious by damage, Fatigue, poison, gas, magic, or other methods—it functions solely for *natural* sleep.

This Edge may be taken more than once. Each additional Edge allows the hero to Maintain one additional spell while asleep, up to the maximum he is allowed to Maintain.

FIRESTORM

Requirements: Veteran, Arcane Background (Any that allows fire or heat trappings), arcane skill d10+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+

The character's damaging spells with a fire or heat trapping are far hotter than normal. They cause normal damage against creatures with Resistance (Heat) and half damage against creatures with Immunity (Heat).

Damage against creatures with Susceptible (Heat) is doubled (instead of granting a flat +4 bonus), and against creatures with Weakness (Heat) double the damage as normal and then add an extra +4 to the total.

GOLEM CREATOR

Requirements: Veteran, Arcane Background (Khem-Hekau, Sand Magic, or Ushabti), Smarts d10+, Knowledge (Arcana) d10+

The character has been taught the secrets of golem creation, an art lost to the northlanders of Rassilon following the Golem Ban Decree and little practiced in the barren wastes since the days of the old empires.

Basic Golem: Crafting a golem takes time and money. The initial cost is 5000 dinars. This gives the golem a d4 in all five attributes and a Size +0 body. Extra traits and abilities are priced as below. All time increments are consecutive and only one mage may work on a golem at any one time, but the mage may leave long gaps between augmentations (handy when you need to go adventuring to get more money to finish the project). Once a golem is declared finished by its creator, and thus ready to enter play, it may not be augmented through this Edge.

Traits: Each trait die (or point after d12) costs 750 dinars and takes one week to enchant. Smarts is limited to a d4. Skills begin with zero dice as for normal characters.

Size: Negative Size costs 500 dinars and adds one week per point. Size cannot go below Size -2. Each point of Size up to +3 costs 1500 dinars and adds a week to the construction time. Between Size +4 and +7, it costs 3000 dinars and requires two weeks per step. Between +8 and +10 it's 8000 dinars and three weeks per step. Each point thereafter costs 12,000 dinars and takes four weeks per step.

Golems receive the Small, Large, or Huge Monstrous Abilities for free when they reach the appropriate Size. They may never have the Gargantuan ability.

Monstrous Abilities/Edges: Golems receive the Construct and Fearless Monstrous Abilities for free. The Armor Monstrous Ability costs 2500 dinars per point, to a maximum of +3 over the base substance the golem is constructed from. A metal golem, for instance, has a +3 metal body (the same as plate armor) for free, and can go as high as +6.

Combat Edges or other Monstrous Abilities take a week each and cost 2500 dinars apiece. Golems can only learn Combat Edges. They need not meet the requirements, except those of other Edges. A golem must be given Block before it can have Improved Block, for instance.

Wild Card: Golems may be enchanted as Wild Cards. This costs 50,000 dinars and requires an entire year of work.

INSTINCTIVE DISPEL

Requirements: Veteran, arcane skill d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d10+, must know *dispel*

The character has an instinctive knack for dispelling enemy magic.

Once per turn, the hero gets a free use of *dispel* against a single foe who casts a spell, but only if the spell's immediate effect includes the hero. The foe must be within range of the *dispel* power at the time of casting. This affects both directly targeted spells (such as *bolt*) and spells with a Burst Template effect (such as *stun*). Thus, a character could *dispel* a casting of *blast* if he was a target

under the template, but he could not attempt to *dispel* a *prolonged blast* spell whose template ended 1" away from him.

This automatically interrupts the opponent's action, and does not cost the hero his action if he is on Hold or has not yet acted this round.

POTENT MAGIC

Requirements: Veteran, Arcane Background (any), arcane skill d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+

You have learned how to weave your spells in such complex patterns that they are more resistant to attempts to cancel or negate them.

Opponents receive one less point of bonuses from Arcane Resistance when targeted by your spells. Attempts to *dispel* your magic, including rolls made by Maerathril items or the *negate arcana* spell, suffer a -2 penalty. This stacks with the modifier for trying to *dispel* powers from a different type (i.e., magic vs. miracles).

SPELL FINESSE

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Any except Rune Magic), arcane skill d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+

The following new enhancement is available.

- **Altered Range:** Pick one spell with Range Touch and change that spell's Range to Smarts or pick one spell with Range Smarts or Spirit and change it to 12/24/48. Unlike other options, you may take this one twice for the same spell, allowing you (eventually) to increase a Touch spell to Range 12/24/48.

SPIRIT BINDING

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Jinn Magic or Khem-Hekau), arcane skill d10+, Knowledge (Arcana) d10+

Though no mage ever learned how to bind threads of magic into items, the withered mages of Hekata and Suleiman both learned how to bind spirits (lesser jinn for jinn mages) to create a form of relic.

When the hero acquires this Edge and each time the hero has an advance thereafter, he may pick one spell he knows and make an arcane skill roll at -4. With success, a spirit or jinni of a type appropriate to the spell and its trappings is bound into an item and compelled to work its magic on command. On a failure, the mage has failed to bind a spirit, but may automatically try again next time he advances. Each advance he delays making the roll, he gains a cumulative +1 bonus. This roll does not constitute using the advance—it is a free attempt.

Any sentient creature with above-animal intelligence can use the item, though he must first attune himself (even the creator must attune). The user makes a Spirit roll as an action to cast the spell. If the spell has optional modifiers, the hero must declare whether he wishes to use these before making his Spirit roll. Khem-hekau

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HELLFROST PROFESSIONAL EDGES

Some of the Professional Edges presented in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide* can be used in *Land of Fire*, but under a different name. The name in parentheses is the equivalent Edge for *Land of Fire*.

Lorekeeper (Sage): Although Lorekeepers are present in Al-Shirkuh, the same Edge represents native sages. Sages do not automatically gain the Connection Edge or Orders Hindrance.

Reliquis (Tomb Robber): The Reliquary have yet to fully extend their reach into the desert, but there are plenty of tomb robbers already there. Tomb robbers do not automatically gain the Connection Edge or Orders Hindrance.

Roadwarden (Hunter): There are no Roadwardens in the desert, but hunters can make use of this Edge. Hunters do not automatically gain the Connection Edge or Orders Hindrance.

magicians may use their Khem-Hekau skill when activating necromantic relics and jinn magicians may use Jinn Magic for jinn relics.

If the hero scores a success, the spell activates as normal. With a raise, the spell goes off as if cast with a raise, if applicable. Spells which can be Maintained are Maintained by the user (regardless of whether he has an Arcane Background or not), as he must continually enforce his will on the bound spirit.

On a failure, the spirit refuses to obey the command and the spell is not cast. On a roll of 1 on the Spirit die, regardless of Wild Die, or a critical failure, the user and spirit suffer the Siphoning as normal. The user suffers any physical effects, while the spirit suffers any loss of spellcasting abilities, rendering the relic temporarily inert.

If the Siphoning roll table is ever a 2, the user must make a Spirit roll at -2. With success, the spirit is rendered dormant for 1d6 days, during which time the relic cannot be used. On a failure, the spirit escapes its bondage instead of suffering a loss of arcane skill. This destroys the spirit relic, rendering it a mundane object.

PROFESSIONAL EDGES

Characters who take a Professional Edge marked "*" automatically gain the Connections Edge with respect to the specific organization to which they belong. This represents access to the organization's infrastructure, as well as friends and colleagues. This does not count toward starting Edge limits.

In return, the hero also gains the Orders Hindrance with regard to the organization. This does not count toward his starting Hindrance limits, nor does he earn any points during character generation for it. Answering to more than one master can lead to conflicts of interest.

Heroes who join an organization marked "*" after play begins must earn their Connections (by taking the Edge using an advancement)—it takes time to build a trustworthy reputation. They gain the Order Hindrance immediately, however.

BROTHERHOOD OF ASSASSINS*

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+, Stealth d8+, Assassin

While anyone can commit murder for money, a character who takes this Edge belongs to the much-feared Assassins, a sect of killers-for-hire. This Edge is as much a hindrance, for any Assassin who is identified faces instant execution.

The assassin is trained in deception. Assassins typically operate undercover for weeks or months before striking. This requires them to adopt an innocuous cover profession. At each character Rank the assassin develops one detailed background that will stand up to rigorous scrutiny (so long as it is plausible). The hero makes Common Knowledge rolls relating to the profession as if they were part of his background. For instance, an assassin may pose as a pilgrim faithful to Apsu, allowing him to make Common Knowledge rolls relating to that faith.

The character also has +2 to Stealth rolls.

DESERT SON

Requirements: Seasoned, Woodsman

This Edge replaces the Ranger Edge in the *Hellfrost: Rassilon Expansion*.

He has learned to move with minimal disturbance to the landscape—foes attempting to track him receive a -2 penalty to Tracking rolls. Extensive training and frequent practice gives the character a d8 Wild Die with Tracking, Survival, or Stealth.

The hero picks one skill when he takes this Edge and cannot change it later.

EXPERT HEALER

Requirements: Novice, Healing d8+

A character with this Edge can get wounded soldiers up and fighting again in seconds.

If the healer can get to a wounded Extra by the end of the round in which he was wounded, he can make an immediate Healing roll at -2. If the roll is successful, the patient is Shaken instead of wounded.

HEADSMAN*

Requirements: Novice, Devoted, Agility d8+, Strength d6+, Fighting d8+

Beheading is the favored form of execution, and other crimes, such as theft, also require the loss of a limb. The grisly deed is carried out by headsman, masked swordsmen belonging to the Guild of Headsman (p. 64). Headsman are hired as and when required, and many make a

living as itinerant executioners, though a few rich nobles have an executioner on permanent retainer.

If a headsman remains stationary during his turn and takes no other actions, he halves the penalties when making a Called Shot with an axe or sword. This cannot be combined with a Wild Attack.

A headsman wearing his mask, which protects his identity and keeps him safe from retribution, has +2 to Intimidation but -2 Charisma.

The Guild looks very poorly on others who impersonate them.

MAMELUK MERCENARY*

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+, Strength d6+, Vigor d6+, Fighting d6+, Shooting d6+, must have the Loyal Hindrance

Originally, mameluks were slaves raised from infancy to serve the jinn as warriors. Since the War of Copper Jar the practice has stayed alive in the form of independent mercenary companies, though with one major change—

rather than accepting slaves, the mameluks raise orphans within their ranks.

The hero gains +1 to Spirit rolls to resist Fear and +1 to resist Tests of Will because of his training.

When adjacent to an ally covered by the Loyalty Hindrance who has been rendered unconscious in the current battle, the mameluk gains +1 to Fighting rolls and +1 to his Parry. This ability kicks in even if the comrade is dead—mameluks never leave their dead on the field of battle.

MASTER MARINER

Requirements: Veteran, Smarts d8+, Boating d8+, Knowledge (The Seas) d8+

Years at sea and piloting a variety of ships have taught the sailor a few tricks.

He gains the benefits of the Ace Edge, but only with regard to Boating. In addition, any ship he captains has +1 Top Speed thanks to the character's knowledge of the tide and winds, and how to get the best from oarsmen.



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PEGASUS GUARD*

Requirements: Novice, Human or Jinn Blooded, Devoted, Agility d8+, Strength d8+, Fighting d8+, Riding d8+

The Pegasus Guards (p. 65) are an elite military force under the direct command of the Sultan.

Guards receive a combat trained pegasus (which never earns Experience Points), a pegasus saddle, scale hauberk, open helm, scimitar, lance, and medium shield on joining. Should the pegasus die, the hero must wait until he reaches the next character Rank *and* return to the Sultan's palace before he can acquire another from the Sultan. After Legendary, the hero must wait until he gains another 20 XPs from his current total.

Rider and mount form a close bond of friendship, allowing the hero to spend bennies for his mount and vice versa, but only when the guardsman is mounted. When mounted on his pegasus, the hero also gains the benefits of a +1 Gang Up bonus from his mount. Within the Sultanate, the Pegasus Guard is highly respected, and members have +1 Charisma.

If the hero quits the Guard, he must return his equipment and mount. Failure to do so not only makes him a criminal, it makes him a traitor to the Sultan he has sworn to protect.

Of all the Professional Edges attached to an organization, this one should be the most restrictive in terms of the Orders Hindrance. The Pegasus Guard serves only the Sultan and is expected to answer his summons without delay, though he often sends them on missions to other lands or into the wastes.

SEA LEGS

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

The mariner knows how a ship rolls, allowing him not only to retain his balance but also use the movement to his advantage in combat.

The character has the benefits of the Steady Hands Edge and +1 Parry (if unencumbered), but only while aboard a ship or boat.

SIEGE ENGINEER

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Siege Artillery) d8+

The hero has studied ballistics and knows how to spot weak points in enemy fortifications. Siege engineers increases the range of siege weapons they operate by 50%, and add +2 to any AP rating. Only the chief artillerist on a weapon needs the Edge. No increased benefit is gained if multiple artillerists have the Edge.

STORYTELLER

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Folklore) d8+, Streetwise d6+

Storytellers are popular entertainers with both the

nobility and the masses. They know all manner of tales, from morality tales to religious stories to gripping adventure stories involving magic lamps and flying carpets.

The hero has +1 to Knowledge (Folklore) rolls. In addition, they gain +1 to Streetwise rolls because people are willing to tell them interesting facts. A storyteller may use Knowledge (Folklore) in place of Persuasion when using the Reaction Table. Finally, they are treated as skalds for the purposes of determining Glory awards.

Other forms of entertainer, such as acrobats and belly-dancers can be handled with the Acrobat Edge and a cool character background.

UNFORTUNATE SOUL*

Requirements: Novice, Fighting d6+, Notice d6+, Stealth d6+, Streetwise d8+

Beggars are common throughout the cities of the Al-Shirkuh. Some are truly beggars, down on their luck, crippled in some manner, diseased, or insane. Others are actually members of a vigilante group known as the Brotherhood of Unfortunate Souls (p. 64).

Unfortunate Souls disguise themselves as harmless beggars, and are typically ignored by intelligent foes in favor of other targets. Until he takes an action beyond moving his Pace, any foe with above-animal intelligence wishing to attack him must make a Smarts roll versus the hero's Stealth as a free action. With success, the villain detects something "wrong" about the beggar and may attack normally. On a failure, the foe ignores the harmless beggar in favor of "proper" targets. The hero automatically gets the Drop against the first foe with non-animal intelligence he attacks in combat, so long as he has not revealed himself to be anything other than a common beggar. (No one is paying him much attention.)

When a hero takes this Edge he *must* pick one city. Within this city he has many contacts among the lower classes. He gains +2 to Streetwise rolls. Each time he reaches a new character Rank (or every 20 XPs above Legendary) his network of contacts extends to a new city of his choice.

Social Edges

HOURI

Requirements: Novice, Persuasion d8+, Charisma 0+, female

The character knows how to get the best out of the opposite sex, regardless of race, by using her looks.

The character may use Persuasion as a Trick against members of the opposite sex, pitting her looks and charm against a foe's Smarts. Against a different race, the hero has a -2 penalty to her rolls. Because the Test of Wills is no more than a flirtatious smile or wink, or a quick flash of skin, the houri may not add her Charisma bonus to this roll.

GEAR

Now that you've made your character, it's time to outfit him with arms, armor, and other gear. Below is a list of the most commonly sought-after goods and services, as well as armor and weaponry.

CURRENCY

The common coinage of the desert realms is the dinar, a small gold coin. The desert folk also use silver dirhams (there are 10 dirhams to one dinar). Dinars come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25, 50, and 100, and dirhams in values of 1 and 5 (being 0.1 and 0.5 dinars respectively). These coins are denoted "d" for dinars and "dh" for dirhams.

Individual cities mint their own coins, though those within a given domain share some similarity. Typically the "head" side has an image of the local potentate. The "tails" side has the city's symbol or a favored deity, and the monetary value.

Unless altered by Edges or Hindrances, your hero has 500 dinars to purchase equipment with. Some of the items for sale are quite expensive because they are rare or on the cutting edge.

AVAILABILITY

Caravanserais keep a stock of supplies, and are considered to be to villages except when there is a caravan stopping over. In this instance, they are treated as towns. Oases are also equivalent to villages, but the price of T availability goods is increased five fold (when they are available). There is no chance of purchasing City goods.

SPECIAL MATERIALS

Only star metal is known among the desert dwellers. Maerathril items must be imported from Rassilon at great expense—quadruple all Maerathril prices. Black ice melts too quickly to be of use in the scorching heat of the desert.

⦿ Gear Notes ⦿

Below are some notes on the gear in this chapter. If an item is not listed, it has no special rules associated with it and its use should be obvious. Many items are described in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*, and are not repeated here.

BRONZE Weapons & ARMOR

Although iron is used to make weapons and armor, bronze has only truly gone out of fashion in the last 100 years. As such, there are many bronze weapons and armors available from the markets. Weapons and armor found in many tombs (whether as grave goods or in the hands of animated guardians) are likely to be of bronze construction.

ARMOR

Bronze armor is relatively easy to shape to the wearer's profile, but can be dented and buckled. In game terms, any single blow which inflicts 2 or more wounds to the wearer in a single hit has damaged the armor, reducing its effectiveness by 1 point. If the armor reaches +0 Armor, it has been so badly damaged it is useless until repaired.

Repairing armor requires a Craft (Armoring) roll and one hour per point of Armor lost. Heroes with no skill can pay 50 dinars per Armor point to have their armor repaired (this still requires an hour per point).

Cost & Weight: Scale and plate armor and pot and full helms are available in bronze. The cost for these items is 75% of their iron equivalents (rounded down). For weight, subtract 1 pound from the listed weight for each 10 pounds or part thereof, to a minimum of 1 pound.

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ANIMALS & WATER

In order to remain healthy, riding horses require either 80 lbs. of fresh vegetation or 20 lbs. of grain and hay per day, plus four gallons of water. War horses and pegasi require 25% more, while mules require 25% less.

Camels, evolved to survive in arid conditions, can get by on 10 lbs. of food each day. Unlike horses, they are capable of eating tough desert plants. Ideally, a camel needs 5 gallons of water a day, but they can survive without any liquid for a week. When thirsty, they can drink up to 30 gallons at a time.

Characters with elephants need to supply them with 400 lbs. of fresh vegetation and 20 gallons of water every day.

The required food intake also affects travel rates. A camel needs to graze for only an hour to sate its needs, whereas horses and pegasi need 2-3 hours if eating fresh wild vegetation, and twice that if the vegetation is sparse. Elephants need around 10 hours of foraging with wild vegetation. These rates are halved if suitable provisions are available.

For instance, an iron plate corselet weighs 25 pounds, whereas a bronze one weighs 22 pounds.

WEAPONS

Bronze weapons inflict no less damage than regular weapons. Their weakness is not in their ability to deliver damage, but to withstand the pressure inflicted by striking blows.

Whenever the wielder rolls a 1 on his Fighting or Throwing die (regardless of his Wild Die), he has bent his weapon. This doesn't have to be the result of a catastrophic miss, with the weapon slamming into the ground or a nearby inanimate object. Maybe the weapon bent as it impacted the armor (for a Wild Die which indicated success), or perhaps the defender parried the blow in just the right place to damage the weapon. Whatever description you use, the result is the same—an unwieldy weapon. If the Wild Die indicates success, the weapon bends after inflicting damage.

Each time a weapon is bent, it subtracts 1 from the skill used to wield it (Fighting for melee weapons and Throwing for spears and axes). The penalty is cumulative to a maximum of -6.

Straightening a bronze weapon requires the use of brute strength. In pressure situations (any time you're using action cards), a successful Strength roll eliminates 1 point of penalty, plus 1 extra point on a raise. Each attempt takes an action, but during that time the character counts as an Unarmed Defender unless he takes a multi-action penalty. Penalties cannot be reduced below zero (you can never gain a bonus this way).

Cost & Weight: All melee weapons except lances,

snaketooth daggers, and staffs can be cast of bronze. The same cost and weight rules apply as for armor.

ARMOR

Silk: Silk isn't much good for stopping heavy axes or razor sharp swords, but it is very effective against arrows. When struck by an arrow, silk wraps itself around the arrowhead, making it easier to remove without tearing the surrounding flesh.

Rather than create a new set of rules for removing arrows, silk armor simply grants +1 Armor against arrows and other piercing weapons. Because it is so light (and has little impact on overall game play), it can be worn beneath other armors and its bonus stacks with other armor. Multiple sets of silk armor still only grant a +1 bonus, however.

WEAPONS

Chakram: A chakram is a metal ring with a sharp outer edge. It is thrown by twirling it around the index finger, which is then tucked in to release the weapon.

Snaketooth Dagger: Crafted from the tooth of a giant viper, snaketooth daggers can hold 5 doses of poison inside the bone blade, making them ideal weapons for assassins. Their high price covers both the difficulty in finding a seller, as well as the rarity of the materials used in their construction.

SIEGE WEAPONS

Boiling Oil/Hot Sand: Heated over intense fires, boiling oil or hot sand is a defensive siege weapon, designed to be poured over the battlements onto foes massed below. Only the *armor* spell provides protection, as the scorching liquid or particles easily penetrate gaps in worn armor. Natural protection works as normal, as does any form of complete overhead protection (like that provided by a covered ram). This weapon delivers heat damage for the purposes of resistances or immunities.

Flamethrower: Flamethrowers in the desert realms are similar to those described in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*. Rather than using icewood for fuel, however, they burn oil. One flask of oil (1 pint) is required per shot, and the reservoir can hold 10 pints.

Sunglobe: Only found within the Kingdoms of the Sphinxes, sunglobes are magical weapons. They comprise a large, vertical metal ring with a yellow, crystal orb in the center. Two handles allow a single user to maneuver the sunglobe.

The orb stores the power of the sun, and then releases it in a beam of intense light when a rune on both handles is touched. This weapon delivers heat damage for the purposes of resistances or immunities.

General Gear

Burnoose: A flowing, hooded robe worn over normal clothing. A hero wearing a burnoose when it is Hot or above treats the temperature as one level lower.

Caravanserai Lodgings: The cost is per person or mount. People stay in a common room, sharing with as many as ten others and must supply their own food. Mounts are stabled and fed. The higher price for people indicates the “luxury” of having the security of four stout walls in the wild desert. Caravanserai lodgings are only available in caravanserai.

Corrective Lenses: Held in a metal frame, these ground lenses allow those with visual impairments to see clearly. They offset the minor Bad Eyes Hindrance penalty.

Game Set: The races of the desert play a variety of boardgames. Chess is the most common, followed by senet, a game similar to backgammon, and dogs and jackals (similar to checkers). Each game requires a different set to be purchased.

Goggles: Goggles double the time period before the hero has to make rolls to avoid glare. Notice rolls involving sight are made at -2 because of the heavy tint.

Hashish: Hashish is a narcotic made from the cannabis plant. It is bought in blocks, which are then softened over heat and crumbled into pipes filled with tabac (see p. 30). A pipe of hashish takes 5 minutes to smoke. Once finished, the smoker becomes highly energized yet finds it difficult to concentrate on mental tasks. He gains +1 to bonus to Trait rolls linked to Agility, Strength, and Vigor, but suffers -1 to Trait rolls linked to Smarts and Spirit. The effects last for one hour. Habitual use may lead to the Major Habit Hindrance being developed (GM’s discretion).

Only the temples of Tamarni are allowed to grow and use hashish legally, and then only for religious purposes. Its use is illegal elsewhere, though the substance is commonly available on the black market. The first price is the highly inflated legal price, the second is for illegal hashish.

Icewood: Extremely expensive in the desert, ice-wood is imported from the frozen wastes of Rassilon. An icewood campfire (uses 1 pound per two hours) lowers the temperature by two levels in a Large Burst Template centered on the fire.

Jinn Relic: A jinn relic is a magic item containing a bound spirit. See page 35 for more details. Khem-hekau relics also exist, but the sale of these is prohibited by the civilized races.

Musical Instrument: Numbers in parentheses are cost and weight. Instruments include flutes (50 dinars/1 lb), long trumpets (75 dinars/3 lbs), mizwad (type of bagpipe; 50 dinars/2 lbs), pipes (35 dinars/1 lb), tanbura (bowl lyre; 55 dinars/2 lbs), drums (varying size; 30+ dinars/3 lbs), rattle/tambourine/sistrum (10 dinars/1 lb), tunbur (long-necked lute) or qanbus (short-necked lute; 200 dinars/3 lbs), and small harps (300 dinars/6 lbs).

Parasol: Leather or palm leaf parasols are used to

provide shade from the merciless sun. Characters using a parasol count as being in shade when making Vigor rolls to resist the effects of heat.

Pavilion: Pavilions are large, open-fronted tents used by nomads. They vary greatly in size, from small ones housing just four to six people, to those of the nobles, which can house over 50 people and have internal partitions. When in a pavilion, treat the temperature as two levels cooler during the day, to a minimum of Temperate, and two warmer at night, to a maximum of Temperate.

Pegasus: Pegasi are very rarely found for sale. Petitioners can apply to the Sultan, who maintains a herd of them.

Rope (10 yards): The rope can safely handle 300 pounds (400 pounds for silk rope) without worry. For every 50 pounds over that, roll 1d6 every minute or whenever the rope suffers a sudden stress. On a 6, the rope breaks under the strain. Silk rope can only be found for sale in towns or cities.

Saddle, Pegasus: A special saddle allowing the rider to remain on his pegasus during inverted maneuvers.



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A hero using a pegasus saddle, whether on a pegasus, camel, or horse, cannot be knocked from his saddle. However, getting into or out of the saddle counts as an action (in addition to actually mounting or dismounting the beast).

Sand Hood: A sand hood is a long scarf wrapped around the head to protect against sunstroke and keep sand out of one's mouth. Characters have +1 to Vigor rolls to resist the effect of high temperatures. It also grants +2 to rolls to resist gas or similar effects.

Tabac: Tabac is the common name of pipeleaf in Al-Shirkuh. Whether it originally grew in Al-Shirkuh and found its way north through trade or vice versa has been lost to history.

Tome of Learning: For a randomly discovered book in Al-Shirkuh, roll a d20 to determine the Arcane Background of the author.

d20	Arcane Background
1–2	Dervish Magic
3–5	Jinn Magic (Air)
6–8	Jinn Magic (Earth)
9–11	Jinn Magic (Fire)
12–14	Jinn Magic (Water)
15–16	Khem-Hekau
17–18	Sand Magic
19	Ushabti Magic
20	Wizir Magic

Trained Animal: The beast is trained to respond to basic commands appropriate to its use. Only war camels, war horses, and pegasi are trained for war.

Water Trap: A water trap is a specially coated piece of material. It is erected at night, and weighted with a stone to form a cone shape. Condensation forms on the trap at night, and slides into the well, where it can be collected in the morning.

Users must spend 10 minutes setting it up correctly. At dawn, whoever set up the trap may make a Survival roll for each trap. Penalties apply according to the region (see **Finding Good and Water**, p. 69). Add +4 if the temperature drops to Freezing or lower. Success gives 1d4+1 quarts of potable water and a raise 2d4+2 quarts.

Vehicles

Although the races make use of regular ships for sea and river voyages, the natives of the deep desert also make use of vehicles to get across the salt, sand, and glass flats in occasion. Stats for galleys, river barges, sledges, and war sledges, all used by the desert races, can be found in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*.

Sand Rigger: Sand riggers are fitted with outriggers mounting large skis, allowing the ship to traverse sand and salt. Areas of ash cannot be traversed, the ash being unable to support the weight of a ship, even with skis. The same applies to areas of soft or shifting sand. Sand riggers have three sails, one centrally and one sticking out from each side. The lateral sails are used to control direction.

CHARIOT, RACING

Chariots consist of a wicker or hide covered wooden frame with two wheels connected to a pair of horses or camels via a yoke. Occupants receive Light Cover (–1) when riding in a chariot.

Acc/Top Speed: Half animal's Pace/animal's Pace + running; **Handling:** +1; **Toughness:** 7 (1); **Crew:** 1+1 passenger; **Cost:** 250 dinars (not including animals); **Availability:** T

Notes: Drawn by 2 camels or horses

CHARIOT, WAR

War chariots are similar to a racing chariot, but are powered by four horses (or camels), much sturdier and heavier, and provides greater protection to the occupants. Crew and passengers receive Medium Cover (–2).

Acc/Top Speed: Half animal's Pace/animal's Pace + running; **Handling:** –1; **Toughness:** 9 (2); **Crew:** 1+2 passengers; **Cost:** 500 dinars (not including animals); **Availability:** T

Notes: Drawn by 4 camels or horses

DHOW

The dhow is a lateen-rigged ship, the type used by Sinbad in the movies. It has a covered cabin and hold. It is commonly used by merchants when trading across the ocean, though it handles poorly on the open seas. Reduce Handling by 1 when more than 10 miles from the coast.

Acc/Top Speed: 3/8; **Handling:** +0; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Crew:** 4+10; **Cost:** 3,000 dinars; **Availability:** T

Notes: —

FLYING CARPET

Although ushabti mages can make carpets fly, their magic is temporary. Most flying carpets in use (such as this one) are jinn relics, inhabited by enslaved khamsin (jinn of the air). Agility is used to pilot a flying carpet.

Acc/Top Speed: 8 (16 if raise); **Handling:** +1; **Toughness:** 7; **Crew:** 1+3; **Cost:** 10,000; **Availability:** S

Notes: See the sidebar Flying Carpets & Jinn Mages

SAND RIGGERS

Sand riggers are used by merchants and the military. Their expense means few owners are willing to risk them

in the open desert, and they are most often found traversing the outback regions of the settled domains. A few orc tribes make use of them, though whether they stole them or have designed their own is unknown.

Acc/Top Speed: 3/15; **Toughness:** 14 (2); **Handling:** +1; **Crew:** 4+20; **Cost:** 10,000 dinars; **Availability:** C

Notes: Sand Rigger

Weapons:

* Ballista, mounted on the prow

SOLAR BARQUE

Used only by the mighty and inhuman nobles of the Kingdoms of the Sphinxes, solar barques are flying ships. Only the jinn, who gifted the sphinxes with a number of ships when the two races eventually made peace, knew the magic used to construct them. They are irreplaceable items. They receive their power from the sun, and can fly only so long as the sun shines.

Acc/Top Speed: 4/32; **Toughness:** 14 (4); **Handling:** +0; **Crew:** 4+30; **Cost:** Not for sale; **Availability:** N/A

Notes: Heavy Armor

Weapons:

* Sunglobe

WARSHIP

This is a large sailed ship, designed for carrying troops across oceans or up rivers.

Acc/Top Speed: 4/16; **Toughness:** 16 (4); **Handling:** +1; **Crew:** 10+100; **Cost:** 25,000 dinars; **Availability:** C

Notes: Heavy Armor

Weapons:

* Trebuchet (mounted forward)

* 2 x ballistae (on swivel mount)

Fortifications

Fortifications do not have an availability code—such edifices are rarely found for sale anywhere. All fortifications in the *Hellfrost Player's Guide* save for hill forts can be found in Al-Shirkuh.

CARAVANSERAI

Caravanserais are common along the trade roads. They comprise a stout outer wall made of mud bricks or stone surrounding a large courtyard. Built against the sides of the walls are stables, warehouses, and accommodation blocks, as well as a barracks and a small shrine.

The resource rules presented in the *Hellfrost Rasilon Expansion* or *Resource Management* supplement are ideal for characters who wish to run a caravanserai.

Toughness: 16 (6); **Siege Bonus:** +1; **Defenders:** 40; **Supplies:** 3; **Cost:** 25,000 dinars

ARMOR

Type	Armor	Weight	Cost	Notes	Avail
Leather vest	+1	3	20	Covers torso	V
Leather	+1	10	50	Covers torso, arms, legs	V
Silk	+1	1	75	Covers torso and arms; see notes	C
Chain shirt	+2	10	200	Covers torso and arms	C
Scale hauberk	+2	25	150	Covers torso, arms, legs	T
Plate corselet	+3	20	400	Covers torso	C
Plate bracers	+3	8	300	Covers arms	C
Plate greaves	+3	12	200	Covers legs	C
Pot helm	+3	4	75	50% chance of protecting against head shot	T
Full helmet	+3	8	150	Covers head	C
Blessed Armor					
Blessed robes	+1	5	50	Covers torso, arms, and legs	S
Blessed armor	+3	30	500	Covers torso, arms, and legs	S
Shields					
Small shield	—	8	25	+1 Parry	V
Medium shield	—	12	50	+1 Parry, +2 Armor against ranged attacks	V
Large shield	—	20	200	+2 Parry, +2 Armor against ranged attacks	T
Barding					
Leather	+1	15	200	Covers head & torso; camel, horse, or pegasus	T

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Melee Weapons

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Notes	Avail
Blades					
Dagger	Str+d4	1	25		V
Flail	Str+d6	8	200	Ignores shield Parry bonus	V
Great scimitar	Str+d10	12	350	Parry -1; 2 hands	T
Scimitar	Str+d8	8	300		V
Short sword	Str+d6	4	200		V
Sickle	Str+d4	2	25		V
Snaketooth dagger	Str+d4	1	200	See notes	T
Axes					
Axe	Str+d6	2	200		V
Battle axe	Str+d8	10	300		V
Great axe	Str+d10	15	400	AP 1; Parry -1; 2 hands	T
Hammers & Maces					
Mace	Str+d6	2	200		V
Maul	Str+d8	20	400	AP 2 vs. rigid armor; Parry -1; 2 hands	V
Pole Arms					
Halberd	Str+d8	15	250	Reach 1; 2 hands	T
Lance	Str+d8	10	250	AP 2 when charging; Reach 2	T
Sickle staff	Str+d8	12	300	Reach 1; 2 hands	V
Spear, long	Str+d6	5	100	Parry +1; Reach 1; 2 hands	V
Spear, short	Str+d6	3	75	Reach 1	V
Staff	Str+d4	5	10	Parry +1; Reach 1; 2 hands	V

Siege Weapons

All siege weapons have an Availability of City, and even here they are rare items. They are never available for purchase in steads, villages, or towns.

Item	Range	Damage	Crew	Cost	Notes
Ballista	25/50/100	3d6	1	800	AP 3, can be used against individual troops, 1 action to reload
Boiling oil/hot sand	—	3d6	2	200	Medium Burst Template, area effect weapon, ignores armor, see notes
Catapult	50/100/200*	3d10	6	2000	AP 10, 4 actions to reload, Medium Burst Template; Heavy Weapon
Flamethrower	Cone/25"	2d10	1	3000	Ignores armor, as vehicular flamethrower, see notes
Ram, frame	—	1d6/yard	2/yard	750	AP 3; max length 10 yards
Ram, hand	—	1d6/yard	4/yard	400	AP 3; max length 10 yards
Siege Tower	—	—	20	3500	Pace 2; carries 30 troops
Sunglobe	30/60/120	3d10	2	N/A	Fires every other round; see notes
Trebuchet	24/48/96**	3d8	4	1600	AP 6, 2 actions to reload, Small Burst Template; Heavy Weapon

* Minimum range of 25".

** Minimum range of 12".

Ranged Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	ROF	Cost	Weight	Min Str.	Notes	Avail
Bow	12/24/48	2d6	1	100	3	d6		V
Chakram	3/6/12	Str+d6	1	50	2	—	See notes	T
Crossbow	15/30/60	2d6	1	300	10	d6	AP 2; 1 action to reload	T
Sling	4/8/16	Str+d4	1	10	1	—		V
Spear	3/6/12	Str+d6	1	75	5	d6		V
Throwing Knife	3/6/12	Str+d4	1	25	1	—		T



Scimitar



Bow & Arrow



Pot Helm



Shield

Snake-Toothed Dagger



Mace



Dagger



Leather Vest

Short Sword



Sickle



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AMMUNITION

Ammo	Weight	Cost	Notes	Avail
Arrow, armor piercing	1 lb/5	1	AP 2; may be recovered*	V
Arrow, fleshripper	1 lb/5	1	+2 damage; may be recovered*; see notes	V
Arrow, signaling	1 lb/5	2	May be recovered*; see notes	V
Arrow, standard	1 lb/5	1/2	May be recovered*	V
Ballista bolt	1	4	May be recovered*	T
Quarrel	1 lb/5	1	May be recovered*	T
Sling stone	1 lb/10	1/10	Can be found**	V

* Outdoors, arrows, bolts, and quarrels have a 4–6 on a d6 chance of being recovered. Underground or indoors, the chance is reduced to a roll of 5–6 to reflect the increased chance of breakage.

** Stones can be found for free with a Notice roll and 1d10 minutes searching, depending on terrain

MUNDANE GEAR

ANIMALS (TRAINED) & TACK

Item	Cost	Weight	Avail
Camel, riding	150	—	V
Camel, war	300	—	T
Hawk	350	—	T
Horse, riding	250	—	T
Horse, war	450	—	C
Pegasus (p. 29)	5,000	—	S
Saddle, normal	10	10	V
Saddle, pegasus*	200	10	S

CLOTHING

Normal clothing	10	—	V
Formal clothing	75	—	V
Tailored clothing	250	—	T
Burnoose*	50	3	V
Sand hood*	25	1	V

COMMON GOODS

Backpack	5	2	V
Bandolier	10	1	V
Bedroll	25	4	V
Blanket	10	4	V
Candle	0.5	1/5	V
Climbing gear	50	4	V
Corrective lenses*	50	—	C
Crowbar	10	2	V
Firewood (per pound)	5	1	V
Flask (ceramic)	5	1	V
Flask (metal)	10	1	T
Flint and steel	3	1	V

Game set*	50	1	V
Goggles*	25	2	T
Grappling hook	50	2	V
Hammer	10	1	V
Hashish, per smoke*	15/2	—	V
Healer's bag	100	2	V
Insect net, 1" square	15	3	V
Lantern	25	3	T
Lantern, bullseye	50	3	T
Lockpicks	100	1	T
Musical instrument*	25+	1+	V
Oil (1 pint)	2	1	V
Parchment (per sheet)	1	1/20	V
Parasol*	5	1	V
Pavilion*	200+	30+	T
Pick or shovel	5	5	V
Pipe, smoking	10+	1/5	V
Pouch (holds 1 pound)	2	1	V
Quiver (holds 20 arrows)	10	2	V
Rope (hemp, 5")*	30	7	V
Rope (silk, 5")*	10	10	T
Salt (in waterproof bag)	10	1	V
Sandglass	25	1	C
Satchel, waterproof	50	1	T
Scroll case, waterproof	5	1/2	T
Soap	1	1/5	V
Tabac, per 5 smokes, in pouch*	15	—	V
Tent (2-person)	30	10	V
Tent (4-person)	100	25	V
Torch	5	1	V
Water trap*	100	5	T
Waterskin (holds 2 quarts)	5	4	V
Whetstone	5	1	V
Whistle	2	—	V
Writing equipment	20	1	T
UNUSUAL GOODS			
Alchemical device	100/Rank	1	V
Alchemist's trunk	300	15	C
Herbalist kit	50	3	V
Herbs, dried	5	1	V
Icewood* (per pound)	200	1	C
Jinn relic	5000/Rank	1	S
Tome of learning	1000/Rank	1	C

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Tome of lore (+1 to +3)	200/point	1-3	T
Tome of lore (+4 to +6)	750/point	4-6	T

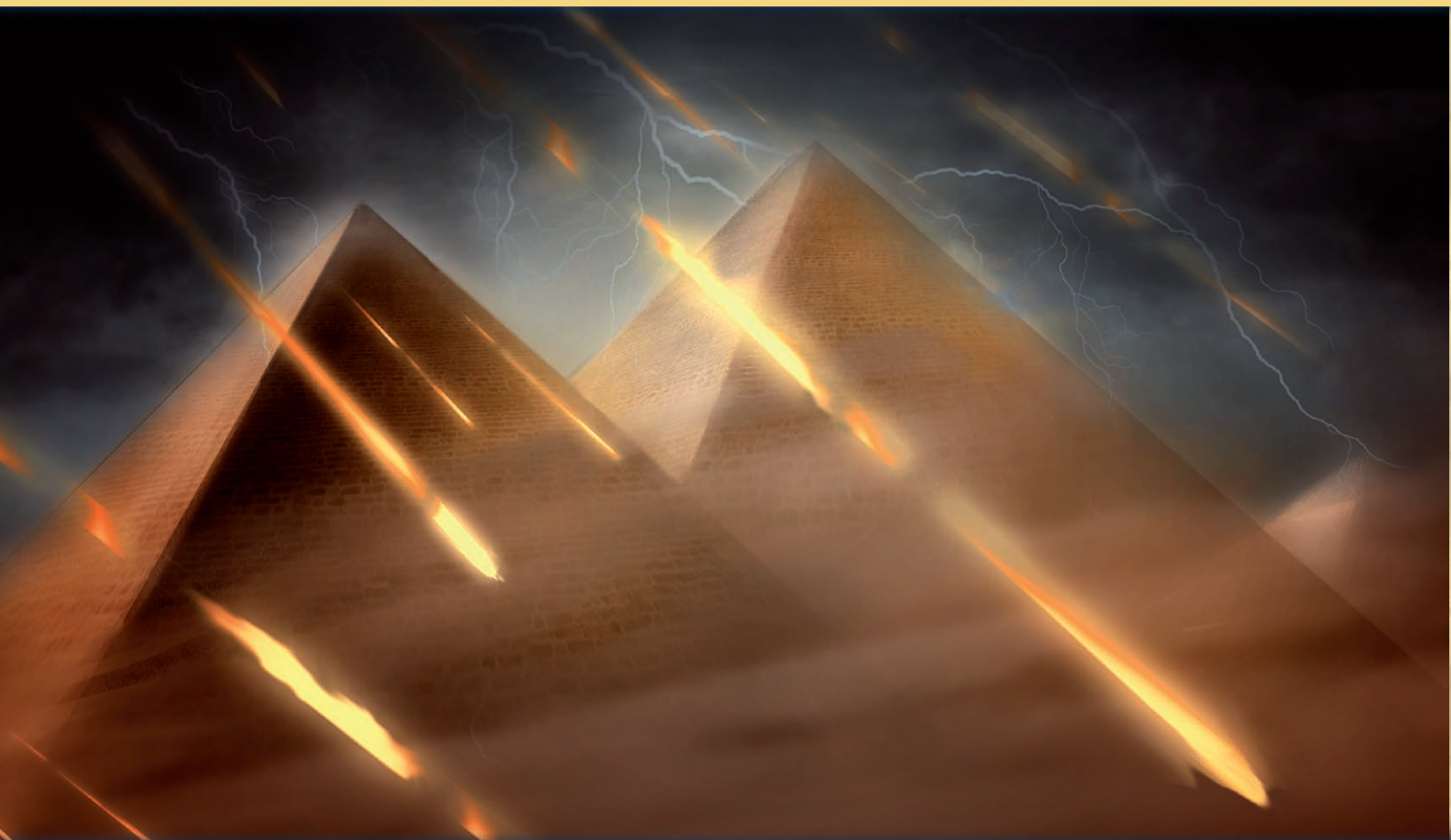
FOOD & SERVICES

Average meal	0.5	—	V
Cheap meal	0.2	—	V
Expensive meal	5+	—	T
Rations (1 week)	3	5	V
Drinking water (1 quart)	1	2	V
Bath	2	—	V
Caravanserai lodgings*	3	—	S

SLAVES

Type	Cost	Avail
Courtesan/bed wife	500 + 250 per point of positive Charisma	C
Domestic servant	200	V
Educated	1000 + 100 per die in Knowledge skills	C
Entertainer	500	T
Eunuch	300	T
Laborer	150 + 100 per point of Strength over d6	V

* See notes



THE DEVOTED

The Devoted are followers of what they see as the true teachings of Suleiman. In many ways, the Devoted follow a dualist philosophical path rather than a religious one, for they do not hold belief in any true gods. The closest they come is their belief in two opposed forces—Asha (“Order”) and Druj (“Chaos”).

These two forces have warred since the universe was created. According to Suleiman, the universe must end one day. If Asha emerges victorious, then the current universe will end and a new time will begin—an eternal age without want or suffering, where even those formerly damned will be reborn as pure spirits. Should Druj prevail, then the universe will be thrown into endless chaos and torment, and every soul will suffer misery.

Though fought on a cosmic scale, the war directly concerns the mortal races, for they have a vital part to play. In the early days, the two powers agreed upon a means of fighting their endless conflict. Druj created physical flesh, which was weak, temporal, and constantly craved. Asha created the spirit, which was eternal and needed nothing tangible to prosper.

Every mortal has a soul, known as the Self. At birth, the soul is completely neutral in its outlook, favoring neither Asha nor Druj. As the mortal grows, so his deeds directly affect his soul, tipping it toward Asha or Druj. Evil thoughts and acts, and succumbing to physical temptation and desires, give strength to Druj and taint the Self. Conversely, a life of abstinence, honesty, generosity, selflessness, and courage strengthen Asha and purify the Self. Given the current climatic changes occurring, many Devoted believe Druj is currently winning the conflict, for nothing else adequately explains the phenomena.

The vast, impersonal powers of Asha and Druj have no need of prayers or offerings, being succored by an individual’s deeds and thoughts. Thus, Devoted have no temples. Similarly, these entities are everywhere and everything, existing as the magical threads that create and bind all objects in the universe together. The inability to show the entire universe in its glory precludes the existence of religious art. The only physical representation

allowed is the word *Shuf* (“The One” or “All-Encompassing,” which refers solely to Asha).

Neither power has priests and therefore grants no miracles. Instead, those with the right aptitude, those who accept what Suleiman called the *Haqq-Bari* (“Light of Guidance”) into their lives, can manipulate the magical threads, and so work magic.

Note that being able to manipulate magic does not equate to righteousness—it simply means one has a deep understanding of the Self and how it connects to everything. In essence, it equates to self-belief and knowledge, not spiritual well-being or purity. As far as Devoted are concerned, priests are simply mages who believe their magic will fail unless they follow a very narrow set of rules. They lack faith in themselves, and use their god as a crutch when things go bad.

The nearest thing Devoted have to a sacred text is the *Hamad al-Shuf* (“Words of The One”). Rather than a true religious work, it covers matters of law, as well as guidelines on how to live one’s life so that after death one may strengthen Asha. Although the powers have no temples, there are kadas (“houses”), places where people gather to listen to readings of the *Hamad*. Imam, a term meaning “teacher or scholar,” is applied to any person learned in the *Hamad* and its greater intricacies.

The old gods of the Faithful are seen as nothing more than powerful clusters of magical energy, but no different from the energy in a palm tree or a stone. The gods are not unique entities, and therefore worshipping them is ignoring the presence of the true dual concepts of Asha and Druj.

Here is an analogy Suleiman supposedly used while preaching the new faith. “One can pick up a stone and say, ‘This is Asha and I will worship it,’ but one must also accept that the hand which holds the stone, the ground it once sat on, the air now surrounding it, are also equal parts of Asha. By picking just the stone to venerate, you ignore the whole picture, and blind yourself to the beauty of Oneness. The Faithful see only their stones; we see everything around the stone as well.”

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Indeed, the Faithful are often referred to as “walking through life with one eye shut and the other blinkered.”

The *Hamad* teaches that by following a path of righteousness and spiritual growth, anyone can find one’s way to Oneness, their version of the afterlife—there is no need to have a cleric intercede on one’s behalf. It is for this reason that many forms of magic exist—no one way of manipulating the magical energy is correct, as all lead to Oneness eventually.

Bedu, cakali, and hyaenidae number among the Devoted, as do the vast majority of citizens within the Sultanate.

THE AFTERLIFE

Neither Asha nor Druj have celestial realms where souls travel after death. Those who follow the teachings of Suleiman are rewarded on death by having their soul merge with Asha. In this state they become one with the ordered universe, and part of the magical field which touches every part of the world. Suleiman described this

state as, “Oneness,” attesting that he had received a vision of this state, and that it equated to a state of total awareness and bliss, free of pain and suffering.

Once the soul has left the body, the corpse is seen as a lump of meat, and is typically cremated to prevent its rot from affecting the world. Grave goods, common among the Faithful, serve no purpose, as those who have achieved Oneness have no desire for anything.

Those who ignore the teachings of the *Hamad* receive no heavenly second chance to repent their sins. They are consumed by Druj, where their spirits are constantly tormented by visions of the Oneness they failed to achieve. Until Asha is victorious, Oneness will be a hair’s breadth away, but unachievable.

These souls can also be stolen by necromancy and forced to inhabit corpses as playthings for necromancers. Though this may sound relatively pleasant compared to endless torment, at least while bound to Druj one could glimpse Oneness—stuck in a shriveled corpse, one loses even that.

☉The Magical Arts☉

Of all the forms of magic, jinn magic is the most widespread and accepted among the civilized races. With the majority of greater jinn bound into copper jars and hidden, the lesser jinn have little option but to answer the call of the jinn mages and serve them loyally. Although the jinn are mistrusted and despised for what they did in the past, none doubt that their enslavement is not only true providence, but is also eternal.

Sand magic is one of the oldest arts, and is common among the nomadic cultures. Some sand mages do use their magic to encourage the desert to expand, swallowing whole cities in its path, but these are few and far between, and most sand mages are guardians of the wastes.

Desert dwellers once saw dervish magic as a religious calling, practitioners typically following Upuaut, god of travel. These days, however, it has become part of Suleiman’s way. By spinning rapidly, a dervish winds the threads of magic around himself, drawing in power until he is ready to unleash his magic.

Wizir magic, while not overly common, is highly respected. Its members serve as advisors and bodyguards to nobles, merchant princes, and the like, steering them along the right course of action and ensuring the just remain in power. As with all magic, it is only as good or evil as the practitioner, and some wizirs have tarnished the reputation of the art by using their magic to usurp power.

Ushabti magic is an ancient form, much weaker now than in olden times, but still potent nonetheless. Whereas other forms of magic create effects from nothing, ushabti mages bring inanimate objects to life through a form of spirit transfer. From chairs and swords to colossal statues, the ushabti can bend anything to his will.



Finally, there is khem-hekau, an art most citizens fear. Khem-hekau is the darkest magic, and involves forcing the spirits of the deceased to work the summoner's will. Outside of the desert, such magic is known as necromancy, but within the wastes it is simply "black magic." Khem-hekau is an ancient art, once practiced by the mag- es of the Hekatic Empire. Today, the greatest exponents of the art are the liche-wizards and withered pharaohs of the Withered Dynasty.

Magicians and the Hellfrost Rules

This section looks at how the rules presented in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide* affect magicians in the desert. If a topic is not mentioned (such as the Siphoning), then it works exactly as per the *Hellfrost* rules.

ELEMENTAL REALMS

Unlike their counterparts in the north, the citizens of the desert do not hold any belief in the elemental realms as separate planes of existence.

Regardless of creed, the desert folk see the elements simply as manifestations of the jinn, who dwell in a single plane of existence only jinn mages know how to manipulate. When a jinn mage works magic, he is not tugging at the threads of magic connected to an elemental realm. Instead, he directly calls forth a jinni and forces it to perform a task, the result of which is seen in the mortal realm as the magical effect.

Elemental loci do exist in the desert, but again are not seen as manifestations of an elemental realm. Loci are believed to be places where the jinn held power before the War of Copper Jars, and are seen as sites which still resonate with jinn energy. As such, the rules for dealing with elemental loci are used without change—only the view on how they work is altered.

THE HELLFROST EFFECT

Should a spellcaster with a fire or heat trapping ever travel to Rassilon, he becomes subject to the Hellfrost effect as normal. The modifier also applies on the rare occasions the desert temperature drops to freezing or lower.

HRIMWISARDS AND HEAT

Hrimwisards, supreme masters of cold and ice, are very rarely found in the scorching sands of the desert, and for good reason. As the temperature rises, so hrimwisards find it increasingly difficult to invoke their magic. The Casting Modifier Table below shows the penalties hrimwisards suffer to their Hrimwisardry rolls as the temperature increases. When the temperature drops below 90 degrees, hrimwisards use the regular table from the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*.

CASTING MODIFIER TABLE

Temperature	Modifier
Hot	-1
Sweltering	-2
Stifling	-3
Very Hot	-4
Baking	-6
Scorching	-8
Infernal	-10

POWERS

As in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*, each Arcane Background type lists the powers available to a practitioner of the arts. Unless otherwise stated, all powers mentioned here which are not found in the *Savage Worlds* core rules are detailed in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*.

Trappings

The GM has the final word on when trapping bonuses apply, and whether a particular mage or cleric can use any given trapping. For instance, a fire trapping on *bolt* makes perfect sense, but a *confusion* spell shouldn't cause a foe to ignite. It may, though, cause him to be swathed in a harmless aura of flickering flame.

NEW TRAPPINGS

The new trapping is available to spellcasters (magical or miraculous) in *Land of Fire*.

Dust: Also covers ash, sand, and other fine particles. A mage using this trapping must pick one of the following effects when he casts a spell. He does not have to learn the spell twice. If using the Combine Spells Edge, both spells must use the same trapping choice.

Blinding: Anyone hit by an offensive spell must make an Agility roll to cover their eyes. Failure means victims are at -2 to actions related to sight (including Fighting and Shooting) for the next 10 minutes. This effect is cumulative up to a -6 penalty.

Flay: A damage-causing spell ignores any worn armor protection, as the fine particles blast through the smallest chinks. Natural armor (such as a dragon's scales) and *armor* spells are unaffected.

EXISTING TRAPPINGS

Of the trappings presented in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*, all are usable by magicians and priests in the desert realms, with the noted exception of cold, coldfire, and ice. Naturally, some types of Arcane Background, magical or miraculous, may favor or restrict certain trappings.

ARCANE **Backgrounds**

Heroes who take the Arcane Background (Magic) Edge must pick one of the arcane spellcaster types detailed below. This replaces the standard Arcane Background (Magic) Edge, which is not available to player characters in the *Land of Fire* setting.

Each arcane type has a specific arcane skill. This replaces the Spellcasting skill. The description also details the number of powers the character begins with when he takes the Edge, as well as which powers he may pick. Powers not on the list cannot be chosen. The standard rules for choosing powers apply. Most arcane types also have special rules.

Unless otherwise stated in the descriptions below, a spellcaster is free to pick any trapping available in this setting.

Dervish Magic

Arcane Skill: Dervish (Agility)

Starting Powers: 3

Powers: *Altered senses, armor, aura, boost trait, burrow, charismatic aura, deflection, dispel, elemental form, environmental protection, ethereal/corporeal (ethereal only), fly, growth/shrink, healing, invisibility, leaping, regenerate, quickness, sanctuary, shape change, smite, speed, sphere of might, succor, teleport, wilderness step.*

Dervishes, sometimes called whirling dervishes, work their magic by spinning their bodies like a toy top. As the mage spins, his arms initially outstretched, so he winds the threads of magic around him, gathering more and more the longer he spins.

Every spell has a unique style of spinning associated with it, though often these differences are very subtle, such as raising a thumb, or turning the hand a few degrees counterclockwise. When the mage eventually stops spinning, he draws his arms into his body, and the magical energy is released.

Casting: A dervish does not have to speak to work his magic, but he must have his arms and legs free and have room to spin. A dervish who does not spin cannot work magic.

Mechanics: A dervish has a -2 penalty to all Dervish rolls. However, the longer they spin, the greater precision they impart into their spells. For each action after the first spent spinning, the mage gains +1 to his arcane skill roll as he controls the magic to a finer degree.

The extra casting actions don't have to be declared in advance, but cannot exceed a number of actions equal to half the mage's Vigor die. If the mage suffers disruption while casting and fails his roll, or if he fails to spend an action each round spinning between starting and finish-

ing, the spell fails (with no backlash) A Shaken dervish automatically fails his spell—although he can still move half his Pace, he cannot maintain the necessary concentration.

For clarification, dervish may take other actions while spinning, but suffers a multi action penalty. He retains his full Parry while spinning. Note that the casting roll is made as part of the spinning motion. As such, the final spinning action and casting are a single action.

Example: *A dervish mage with d10 Vigor wants to cast sphere of might. If he tries to cast in a single round, he has a -2 penalty. The dervish spends 5 extra rounds spinning, the maximum he is permitted. On the sixth round he casts his spell at +3.*

Spells: Dervish magic is predominantly about seeking Oneness through movement and magic, and that means it is inward looking. All spells are treated as if they had Range Self. All other statistics and effects remain unchanged.

Edges: Dervishes can take the Bladedancer Edge from the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*, ignoring the racial requirements.

Trappings: Dervish spells always have a light trapping. In many cases, the mage actually glows slightly as the magic is drawn into his body.

JINN Magic

When Suleiman grasped the knowledge that magic touched everything, he gained insight into how to defeat the jinn. In doing so, he also founded the art of jinn magic. After the War of Copper Jars, he taught this knowledge to his disciples, who then spread it, and Suleiman's other teachings, across the desert to other cultures.

As the name implies, jinn magic involves forcing lesser jinn to perform some service for the mage. Greater jinn are far too powerful to be bound into service by such magic, though they may be affected by spells. Although the resultant effect is seen as magical, the mage himself works only the magic of summoning the jinn—the actual spell is cast by the enslaved elemental being.

Jinn mages who have mastered just one type of jinn are known as Students. Those who have tamed two types of jinn are called Adepts, three types Masters, and all four types as Grand Masters.

Among jinn mages there is, and has been since Suleiman's death, a constant discussion about their art. It revolves around one thing—in what order did he learn the ways of jinn magic? Suleiman took four Students once the War of Copper Jars finished, teaching each one a single fragment of jinn magic simultaneously, and then instructing them to learn from each other and pass on their knowledge to their own Students in turn. Suleiman never revealed to his Students which type of jinn he learned to dominate first.

Some mages believe that if one follows the same order Suleiman took, one can unlock immense power. Though the order has been forgotten, countless jinn

magicians since Suleiman's age have learned the arts, and in every conceivable order. None have ever professed having any great revelation or surge in power.

Game Mechanics: Jinn magic functions exactly as Elementalism in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*. The only real difference is that jinn magicians have no organized structure like the Convocation. Each Student is expected to find his own way to becoming a Grand Master.

Edges: The Elemental Mastery Edge is available to jinn magicians, but is known as Jinn Mastery. It otherwise remains unaltered.

Khem-Hekau

Arcane Skill: Khem-Hekau (Smarts)

Starting Powers: 3

Powers: *Altered senses, armor, aura, barrier, bolt, boost/lower trait, confusion, corpse senses, deflection, detect/conceal, dispel, enhance undead, entangle, ethereal/corporeal, fatigue, fear, fly, glyph, gravespeak, greater zombie, heat mask, nightmare, obscure, puppet, sacrifice, sanctuary, speak language, strength of the undead, telekinesis, voice on the wind, wandering senses, zombie.*

Hekau (which simply means "magic") is the oldest form of sorcery known to humans. It dates back to the distant days of the Hekatic Empire, from where it takes its name.

At first, practitioners summoned nature spirits to do their bidding, calling upon their true names to force service. But as the empire expanded so the great pharaohs feared their own mortality and sought to become true gods, immortal rulers over an eternal realm. Masters and students of the art were ordered to find the secret of immortality, and so began the journey down a dark path. When nature spirits could not provide the answer, the magicians turned their magic toward the spirits of the Bottomless Pit, for surely those who had passed beyond could help them in their quest.

From the realm of the dead, the magicians learned the secrets of creating mummies and the fell magic for trapping a soul in the withered husk. They also learned how to force spirits into lesser corpses, how to call forth dark swarms of spirits to protect them and harm others. Within a generation, the art had become khem-hekau ("black magic"), better known as necromancy.

Living students of the art are rare, for the darkest, most potent secrets of khem-hekau were lost when the Hekatic Empire ceased to exist. Current students know only the lesser spells, formidable in their own right, but a far step from the power magicians once wielded. Today, the greatest exponents of this art are the withered kings and liche-wizards of the Withered Dynasty, some of whom actually helped develop the art.

Casting: Khem-hekau magicians must be able to speak to work their magic.

Game Mechanics: When the character is in a graveyard, tomb, necropolis, or other area commonly associated with death, he gains +2 to all Khem-Hekau rolls. In addition, if the character scores two raises on his

NECROMANCY

In Rassilon, necromancy is the sole domain of priests of Hela, goddess of undeath, and never existed before her madness. Among the desert peoples, necromancy is practiced by khem-hekau magicians, as well as by priests of Iblis, lord of evil. Tammuz, the god of death, grants no necromantic powers, and is in fact opposed to undead.

Khem-Hekau roll when casting *zombie*, the undead are permanent, and remain active until destroyed. They cannot be *dispelled*.

Although not all khem-hekau magicians are evil, the art is greatly feared. All practitioners have a -2 Charisma penalty when dealing with the living.

Trappings: Spells must have a necromantic or darkness trapping whenever possible. Spells may also involve the spirits. *Deflection*, for instance, may be a shield of spirits, *fear* may summon a terrible spirit being, and *puppet* may be envisioned as temporary spirit possession of the victim.

Sand Magic

Arcane Skill: Sand Magic (Smarts)

Starting Powers: 3

Powers: *Armor, barrier, beast friend* (desert creatures only), *blast, bolt, bridge, burrow, burst, deflection, dispel, elemental form* (dust only), *elemental manipulation* (earth only), *entangle, ethereal/corporeal* (ethereal only), *fog cloud, hamper movement, knock-down, obscure, prolonged blast, sanctuary, sluggish reflexes, sphere of might, smite, storm* (sandstorm only), *summon demon* (pazuzu and sand only), *summon jinn* (dust only), *teleport, whirlwind, wilderness step* (deserts only).

Sand magic is the understanding of how to manipulate the magical energy flowing through the great deserts. Despite its name, it also covers ash and dust, though not other particulate matter, like snow. In many ways, it is a form of "desert druidism," though the term "druid" is unknown among desert dwellers.

Sand magic is an old art, and one which has been used for both good and evil. Today, practitioners typically fall into one of two camps. Neither is an organized culture, more a mindset shared by individuals.

The first group call themselves the Expansionists. Though they have always been present, numbers swelled when the first signs the deserts were expanding at a greater rate appeared. They believe that the desert wants to expand, and it is their sworn duty to obey those wishes. As such, they often engage in activities most folk see as abhorrent, such as polluting oases and wells, destroying irrigation channels, and so on—anything to prevent the desert being held back.

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FLYING CARPETS & USHABTI MAGES

Flying carpets are a staple of the Arabian fantasy genre. While jinn mages can bind khamsin into carpets, ushabti mages can use *fly* to achieve similar results.

Rather than get into pointless calculations about how many Sizes of heroes a flying carpet can carry, the GM is encouraged this simple guideline—a typical carpet can hold 16 creatures of Size –2, eight of Size –1, four of Size +0 or +1, two of Size +2 to +3, and one of Size +4. This allows for a typical adventuring party to share a single carpet.

Carpets move at Pace 8, or Pace 16 with a raise. Naturally, they ignore difficult ground penalties for terrestrial obstacles.

Their rivals, and the rivalry often leads to bloodshed, are the Protectors. They see the desert as a sacred area, one which must be protected. They focus on combating evil creatures polluting the purity of the desert with their presence, and ensuring that the natural beauty of the wastes is not spoiled.

Casting: Sand mages must have a pound of sand, ash, or dust adjacent to them for each spell they wish to cast. This is rarely a problem in the deserts, but within towns and cities, tombs, or on a boat, however, sand is not always present. If a mage does not have a pound of sand, he cannot cast a spell. The sand is thrown at the target, and consumed in the casting.

Trappings: Spells must have the dust trapping whenever possible. *Entangle* or *sluggish reflexes*, for instance, may cause sand to rise up and engulf the victim, *smite* may coat a weapon in razor-sharp sand, and *teleport* may cause the mage to disappear in a puff of sand.

Ushabti Magic

Arcane Skill: Ushabti (Smarts)

Starting Powers: 1 + *telekinesis*

Powers: *Animate object* (p. 43), *armor*, *barrier*, *bladebreaker*, *blast*, *bodyguard*, *bolt*, *bridge*, *deflection*, *entangle*, *fly*, *knockdown*, *lock/unlock*, *mend*, *speed*, *sphere of might*.

Ushabti mages are gifted with the ability to animate inanimate objects. They learn the secret names of every type of object and the charms necessary to impart a tiny fraction of their own essence into these forms.

The objects they awaken must be solid and non-living. Undead, plants, jinn, golems, and so on all count as living beings for this purpose, whereas stones, cut timber, and non-undead bones are not. While a mage could animate a cloak (a possible trapping of *deflection* or *entangle*), he could not animate a pile of sand for the same purpose.

Casting: An ushabti mage must have at least one hand free and be able to speak clearly in order to work his magic. The item to be animated must be touched as the spell is being cast.

Powers: Ushabti mages automatically learn the *telekinesis* power at Novice in addition to one other power. However, they can *only* use the telekinetic weapon option—they cannot levitate creatures.

Trappings: Ushabti magic should be treated as having an earth trapping when used offensively, purely because the objects they manipulate are solid. There is naturally a lot of leeway in ushabti trappings, however. A mage who wants to wield a floating sword in combat needs to use *telekinesis*, but if he merely wants a bunch of daggers to fly at a foe he can use *bolt* and have the daggers as trappings.

Unlike other types of magic, the mage must have his trapping at hand. He cannot, for instance, claim a cloak as a trapping of *deflection* unless he can touch a cloak. A blade does not spring into existence if he wants to use *telekinesis* to animate a weapon or fire arrows or daggers as part of a *bolt* spell, nor does *bridge* work without some sort of building materials at hand, such as a pile of timber or stones.

In essence, ushabti trappings are physical objects affected by the magic, not summoned manifestations of the magic.

Wizir Magic

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, Persuasion d8+ (Counselor) or Notice d8+ (Guardian)

Arcane Skill: Wizir Magic (Smarts)

Starting Powers: 3

Counselor Powers: *Altered senses*, *beast friend*, *bodyguard*, *boost/lower trait* (Smarts, Spirit, Intimidation, Knowledge (any), Persuasion, Streetwise, and Taunt only), *charismatic aura*, *confusion*, *detect/conceal*, *far-sight*, *fear*, *glyph*, *gravespeak*, *lock/unlock*, *mind rider*, *puppet*, *sanctuary*, *silence*, *speak language*, *summon demon* (librarian and revealer only), *teleport*, *voice on the wind*, *wandering senses*.

Guardian Powers: *Analyze foe*, *armor*, *bladebreaker*, *bodyguard*, *bolt*, *boost/lower trait* (Strength, Vigor, Fighting, Intimidation, Shooting, Stealth, and Throwing only), *deflection*, *detect/conceal*, *entangle*, *environmental protection*, *fatigue*, *fear*, *glyph*, *healing*, *knockdown*, *light*, *negate arcana*, *obscure*, *precognition*, *quickness*, *refuge*, *sentry*, *slumber*, *smite*, *speed*, *succor*.

To the unenlightened masses, wizirs are simply close advisors to nobles. That they can wield magic is common fact, and not treated as anything unusual. After all, what better way to protect yourself than have a powerful magician by your side?

Wizirs come in two distinct types. Those who act as advisors, spies, or similar are known as counselors, and are by far the more common type of wizir. Their magic is geared toward information gathering and courtly activities. Guardians, on the other hand, use their magic to

protect their lord from harm. Most disguise themselves as lesser courtiers or regular bodyguards, so as not to reveal their presence in advance to potential assassins. When a character decides to play a wizar, he must decide which type of mage he will play. Once chosen, this cannot be changed.

Wizirs do not belong to any brotherhood or organization. Individuals serve an apprenticeship under a master, and then go out into the world to find employment befitting their skills.

A character starting as a wizar is assumed to serve a patron (the GM and player should discuss exactly who this is) unless the player opts to be “unemployed.”

Wizirs do not have to swear oaths of allegiance to their patron (though many are made to), nor do they have to act as mindless lackeys or bootlickers (many stories exist about nobles who have had their throne usurped by their wizar). Generally, but not always, a wizar has near unlimited access to his patron, and may speak to him as if speaking to a close friend. A patron may be another player character or an NPC, but a wizar may not be his own patron.

Note that wizirs may be bound into service, forced to work as slaves, or otherwise coerced to serve a patron. Such service is highly dangerous as a hostile wizar could very easily turn on his lord and such an individual still suffers the modifiers and penalties above.

Mechanics: Trained as advisors and bodyguards, wizirs are strangely tied into “noble” blood, and draw power from it. A wizar who does not serve an important person, be it a noble, rich merchant, or such like (in game terms, the patron must have the Noble or Rich Edge) suffers a –1 penalty to his Wizar Magic rolls. When within 5” of their patron, their Wizar Magic rolls are made at +1. A patron may have multiple wizirs, but a wizar may only have a single patron at any one time.

Changing a patron requires one day of meditation in order to attune one’s magic to the new patron. The severed connection is immediately and automatically noticeable by the former patron. Wizirs who switch allegiances frequently may find themselves unable to find future employment—no one wants a counselor or bodyguard they cannot trust.

Casting: Wizirs do not need to make gestures to cast spells, but must be able to speak in a clear voice.

Cross Training: Counselors and guardians each have a specific spell list. A wizar’s starting spells must come solely from the list matching his chosen profession. However, once play begins, it is possible for a counselor to learn guardian spells, and vice versa. When picking a spell from the other

list, the spell’s Rank is treated as being one level higher. Thus, while a counselor can learn *mind rider* at Veteran Rank, a guardian must wait until he is Heroic before he can learn the spell.

Trappings: Wizirs may use any trappings except necromancy.

🌀 New Spells 🌀

All spells from the *Savage Worlds* rulebook are also available. Mages and clerics are restricted in which spells they may actually take by their Arcane Background.

ANIMATE OBJECT

Rank: Novice

Range: Touch

Duration: Maintained

Trappings: Glyphs, words of power, gestures, concentration

Animate object is often considered the signature power of ushabti mages, and only they may ever learn it. Animated objects must be a single object (a single grain of sand could be animated, for instance, but not a pile of sand), nonliving, and capable of some sort of independent movement. A statue has legs, as does a table or chair, which could bend to allow movement, but a sword



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ALTERED SPELLS

Some spells presented in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide* require a slight tweak for use in the desert. These changes affect both magic and miracle workers equally unless otherwise stated.

GREATER ZOMBIE

Desert spellcasters can use this spell to create flayed, ghûls, headless hunters, and mummies. It cannot be used to create other undead, though powerful NPCs may know more powerful versions of this spell. A desert spellcaster who visits other realms cannot use this spell to create undead unique to those regions. The same applies the other way round, of course.

REFUGE

In the desert, *refuge* lowers the temperature inside the shelter by two or four levels, providing cover from the scorching sun and burning winds, or raises it as normal (most often used during cold nights, though evil NPCs may use it as a form of torture).

STORM

Storm creates and dispels sandstorms, as well as rain storms. It cannot be used to create blizzards, even if the mage moves to Rassilon.

SUMMON DEMON

Two new demons, pazuzu and sand, are available in this setting—statistics can be found in Chapter 159. Pazuzu demons can be summoned with a -1 penalty and sand demons with -2.

SUMMON ELEMENTAL

The *summon elemental* spell is known to the desert mages as *summon jinn*, but the game mechanics are unaffected. Clerics in Al-Shirkuh view elementals as lesser servants of their god.

or lump of rock does not. To animate a sword or other such "static" item, the *telekinesis* power must be used instead. Objects already animated (including golems) cannot be affected by this spell.

To animate an object, the mage must touch it with a hand and make an Ushabti roll. The size of the object determines how difficult the target is to animate, as shown on the table below. Note that the caster's Rank limits the size of an object he can animate.

Objects remain animated as long as the character Maintains the spell. Animated objects follow the mage's verbal orders, but he must spend one action per round

controlling them (all of them are controlled via a single action, even if they take different actions) or they stand idle (Parry 2). They are not subject to Leadership Edges.

Objects with wings can fly at their listed Pace.

ANIMATED OBJECT TABLE

Mod (Rank)	Max Wt.	Strength	Size	Pace
0 (N)	10 lbs.	d4	-2	4
0 (N)	25 lbs.	d6	-1	4
0 (N)	50 lbs.	d6	0	6
-1 (S)	100 lbs.	d8	0	6
-1 (S)	250 lbs.	d10	+1	8
-1 (S)	500 lbs.	d12	+2	8
-2 (V)	1000 lbs.	d12+1	+3	10
-2 (V)	1 ton	d12+2	+4	10
-2 (V)	2 tons	d12+3	+5	12
-4 (H)	5 tons	d12+4	+6	12
-4 (H)	10 tons	d12+5	+7	14
-4 (H)	25 tons	d12+6	+8	14
-6 (L)	50 tons+	d12+7	+9	16

ANIMATED OBJECT

An animated object's Toughness and Armor are dependant on its Size. A Size +4 object would have Toughness 12 (2), for instance.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d4, Strength *, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Throwing d4

Pace: *; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 + Size (half Size)

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor:** Animated objects generally have armor equal to half their Size (rounded down; minimum of zero).
- * **Construct:** +2 to recover from Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.
- * **Mindless:** Immune to Tests of Will and Fear.
- * **Size (*):** As the table. Objects with a Size of 4-7 are Large, objects of size 8+ are Huge.

HAMPER MOVEMENT

Rank: Seasoned

Range: Smarts

Duration: Maintained

Trappings: Entangling plants, deep mud, buffeting winds, ice, grasping skeletal limbs, rip tide.

Hamper movement creates an area equal in size to a Medium Burst Template. All movement through the temple is treated as difficult ground. With a -2 penalty on the arcane skill roll, the template can be increased to a Large Burst Template. For a similar penalty, the area can be made especially difficult, preventing all creatures from running within the template. With a -4 penalty, both modifiers can be implemented simultaneously.

THE FAITHFUL

The Faithful are worshippers of the old gods. As is the way of gods and time, the number of deities has altered, with some falling from favor and others being raised in their place. Likewise, names change. Still, the Faithful have no doubt that there are multiple gods, and that the gods reward their clerics with miraculous powers. Those who follow the teachings of the gods are rewarded after death by being welcomed into their deity's celestial paradise. The Faithful worship in temples, venerate statues and images of the gods, and have priests to speak to the gods on their behalf. The sphinxes are members of the Faithful, as are the citizens of the Caliphate. Bedu, cakali, and hyaenidae tribes are Faithful, but their numbers are dwindling.

The God War

Clerics of the desert pantheon have a different take on the God War spoken of by clerics in Rassilon. Back before the gods created mankind, Iblis, the god of evil, sought to overthrow the heavenly order and fill the universe with chaos. Though a single deity, Iblis' powers far exceeded any other individual deity.

In order to defeat Iblis and cast him into the Bottomless Pit, the gods were forced to join forces. Naturally, gods of fire, heat, volcanoes, forges, and other heat-related aspects were inclined to side with each other. By the time the gods defeated Iblis, the various camps had developed strict hierarchies.

So, whereas there is now only one god of fire, he covers every aspect of fire. In the eyes of the Faithful, the other gods related to fire are still present, but are lower down the chain. As one worships the main god, so his followers also receive praise. For instance, if a cleric calls upon the god of fire to grant him the power to resist the heat of a lava flow, the god of volcanoes is automatically being worshipped as well—there is no need to pay homage to him separately. That said, it is possible for a cleric to honor a minor god as the sole form of worship.

The Compact

The desert gods also have an equivalent to the Compact. The pantheon long ago decided that mortals would have the right to free will and to fight their own battles. Each deity can give his most devout followers special powers and advice through omens and divinations, but does not involve himself in direct interference, less his fellows turn on him in a celestial war.

Even if mortals are unaware of it, the gods understand that one god alone cannot rule the universe, and all must exist in (relative) harmony if the universe is to run smoothly. Even Iblis, lord of evil, understands celestial balance, for who can be corrupted if everyone is evil? Still, he revels in making life difficult for his peers.

Suleiman

The Faithful accept Suleiman as the liberator of the enslaved races, but they cast a different slant on his religious views. The Faithful admit the gods ignored them during their centuries of slavery, but not because the gods had forsaken the races. After many generations under the lash of the jinn and with worship of the gods forbidden, the races had simply forgotten them. The heavenly compact forbade the gods from forcing the mortal races to worship them. The gods were, quite simply, powerless to act until a mortal asked them to intervene.

Suleiman, in his great wisdom, rediscovered the “lost” gods, and in doing so awoke the collective memory of the enslaved races. Whereas the Devoted insist Suleiman rejected the old gods in favor of one true god, the Faithful hold every god proclaimed Suleiman a high priest simultaneously and thus had access to the miraculous powers of every deity.

After their freedom from the jinn, the Faithful found themselves persecuted by a heretical faith (the Devoted) and fled the tyranny to found the Caliphate. There, Suleiman is still honored by every faith as a holy prophet.

The Afterlife

For the first three days, so it is believed, the soul resides in the body. This allows clerics to prepare the soul for its journey. Written spells are placed on the body's wrappings to prevent the soul wandering off and becoming lost.

Note that although the soul is present, the body is truly dead, and cannot be brought back to true life by magical or mundane means. Necromancers can still use the *zombie* power on the corpse, however. This terrible act forces the original soul from the corpse prematurely, causing it to wander lost forever on the mortal realm as a ghost. In its place is summoned a dark spirit, obedient to the commands of the necromancer.

After the three days, the soul is (hopefully) collected by Djemuti, the Charioteer of the Gods, in his celestial chariot, and carried up to the House of the Gods. It is only with the aid of priests of Tammuz's spells that the spirit can find the safe passage through the web of passages in the House to the door which will lead it to the Afterlife. The corpse is then mummified, for the Faithful believe the soul endures only as long as the body is intact.

Souls which have not been properly blessed are very likely to chose the wrong door, possibly damning themselves to the Bottomless Pit for eternity, becoming forever lost in the heavenly structure, tricked by the souls of the lost, killed by a trap, eaten by some fell spiritual beast, or enslaved by another god and forced to wait upon his followers until the end of time. None of these fates are particularly pleasant.

Even souls which reach the correct door are still not safe, though the hardest part of their journey is over. The desert dwellers have no belief in fate, but do hold true to the concept of cosmic balance, or Maat. Every good deed the soul committed on the mortal realm is balanced against its bad deeds (belief in the divine weighing of souls is a fairly common belief throughout the world). The balance is checked by Tammuz, lord of the dead. The balance can be tipped in favor of a positive result by the blessings of priests of the soul's chosen deity.

Souls found to be pure (or at least not evil) are allowed to pass through to the Afterlife that awaits them. One should note, of course, that a follower of an evil deity passes the test if his sins outweigh his virtues. Each god maintains its own celestial realm, and every Afterlife is different. Those who fail to pass the test are thrown into the Bottomless Pit, a realm of darkness and torment ruled over by demon lords, powerful servants of Iblis.

The guidelines on patron deities in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide* apply to worshippers of the desert gods as well.

The Gods

Although some of the desert gods bear close resemblance to those worshipped in the Hearthlands, the pantheons are completely separate. A cleric of Apsu may follow a similar path to a cleric of Neorthe, for instance,

but the scriptures, prayers, and other trappings of their faiths are vastly different. Despite this, some scholars believe that there is only one pantheon of gods in existence, and that the different names and attributes are merely cultural stamping. Clerics of the various pantheons strongly refute this heresy.

Minor deities may be worshipped as well. Note that when the text refers to temples and shrines being found in cities, it refers only to lands where the gods are worshipped—the Sultanate has very few such buildings.

Apsu

Titles: The Camel, Source of the Celestial River, Lord of the Inundation, Lord of Oases, Soul of the River, Life-giver, the Eternal Spring.

Aspects: Drinkable water, hippos, oases, wells, rivers, springs.

Symbol: A single drop of water.

Priesthood: Jugs of Apsu (priests); Bulls of Apsu (paladins).

Herald: Apsu's heralds appear as hippo-headed humans (see page 169).

Holy Days: Every Yaus al-Ittrou is a holy day. The first day of Amt Alak Arkhet is a high holy day.

Duties: Protect oases, wells and other sources of water, keep water sources pure.

Sins: (Minor) not sharing water with a "good" creature, not drinking your share of water each day, not cleansing a polluted water source, not helping a hippo in distress; (Major) allowing a water source under your direct protection to become polluted, wounding a hippo, failing to offer a quart of water to Apsu each morning; (Mortal) polluting a water source, killing a hippo.

Signature Power: *Elemental manipulation* (water only).

Powers: *Barrier, beast friend* (river creatures only), *boost/lower trait* (Vigor, Boating, and Swimming only), *burst, champion of the faith, elemental form* (water only), *energy immunity* (fire, heat, and water only), *environmental protection* (water only), *etherealness* (watery body, no corporeality), *fatigue, feast* (provides 2 quarts of water per Rank, but no food), *fog cloud, glyph, hamper movement, healing, sanctuary, shape change* (river creatures only), *sphere of might, stun, succor, summon beast* (river creatures only), *summon elemental* (water only), *summon herald, water walk*.

Trappings: Clergy must use water trappings whenever appropriate. They cannot take dust or earth trappings.

Without water, there would be no life in the desert. From the banks of the mighty rivers to the scattered oases, water is the lifeblood of the sands, and Apsu commands all potable water. It should be noted that Apsu has no control over the sea. Apsu is depicted as a human with a hippo's head carrying a jug of water.

Shrines exist at every oasis, even those controlled by Devoted tribes (though they do not worship at the shrine). Even wells are inscribed with the holy symbol to ensure

Apsu protects them. Temples are found in most major cities, as well as along the banks of rivers, and are built around a pool, in which wallow sacred hippos, or spring.

Apsu's clergy protect water supplies, whether they be a city's cisterns or some remote spring, and care for hippos (a somewhat dangerous task). Protecting and maintaining the irrigation channels is one of their most important jobs, and even nomadic clerics are expected to help with this. Many also travel the deep sands, looking for new sources of water or mapping the course of old water channels.

Each morning, clerics must pour a quart of water onto bare ground, in honor of their god. Failure to do so is a major sin, for it is commonly believed that water spilled on the ground helps fill the Celestial River, from which all oases, springs, and rivers are filled.

Most festivals revolve around ritual washing. After the celebrants have finished their ablutions, the water is poured onto the sands, carrying the sins of the washed with it.

Ashtart

Titles: The Celestial Palm, The Celestial Gardener, Plantmother, The Green One, The Bee Queen.

Aspects: Plants, herbs, crops, shade, fertility, birth, marriage, children.

Symbol: A palm tree.

Priesthood: Roots of Ashtart (priests); Stings of Ashtart (paladins).

Herald: Ashtart's heralds appear as a tangle of humanoid vines, but with a bee's stinger (see page 170).

Holy Days: Every Yaus al-Kemi is a holy day. The first day of Amt Alak Paret is a high holy day.

Duties: To bless and protect crops and children, conduct marriage ceremonies, act as midwives.

Sins: (Minor) eating meat, burning wood, drinking anything except water or *nehta*, allowing a child to be harmed (except chastisement), not assisting a childbirth; (Major) willfully hurting a child (except chastisement), allowing plants to be destroyed (except during harvest), breaking up a marriage; (Mortal) willfully destroying plants (harvesting does not count), killing a child.

Signature Power: *Feast*.

Powers: *Altered senses, armor, aura, barrier, beast friend* (bees only), *blast, bolt, champion of the faith, deflection, detect/conceal, elemental manipulation* (air and earth only), *entangle, feast* (no meat), *fly, glyph, healing, obscure, prolonged blast, smite, refuge, sanctuary, sentry, sphere of might, succor, summon herald, voice on the wind, wilderness step* (in vegetation only).

Trappings: Clergy must use plant or bee trappings whenever possible. For instance, *sphere of might* could be a swarm of bees, *voice on the wind* may send a bee messenger, and *elemental manipulation (air)* may create a spectral palm leaf when cooling someone.

Ashtart rules over all manner of plants, as well as the bees which pollinate them. She is also patron of marriage, birth, and children. She has no interest in love, as many marriages

GODS & MAGIC

Are there actually any gods in the desert, or was Suleiman's supposed preaching that the gods are just clumps of magical strands true? The truth, as always, is subjective.

The gods obviously do exist, because they grant their followers magical powers. However, followers of Suleiman would see this as a misguided form of magic, limited by the belief that each god controls only a small aspect of the universe.

As far as those with faith in the old gods go, the views on mages differ. Some Faithful see magicians as working with evil spirits, servants of Iblis, the Great Darkness. Mages are, therefore, evil in themselves. Others see mages as worshipers of the ancient goddess of magic, but ones who cannot see the truth behind their power. At best, mages are misguided priests. Many Faithful are also of the opinion that the Siphoning is evidence of the Devoted's heretical path. Suleiman is returning, they claim, to set the record straight once and for all.

In game terms, however one wishes to view the universe, both magic and miracles exist side by side, as they do in Rassilon and in other realms as yet unexplored.

are made for political reasons, even among the lower classes. When depicted, she appears as a young maiden with wheat sheaves for hair and a bee's stinger. In her right hand she carries palm leaf and in her left a small beehive.

Shrines to her can be found at any oasis where plants grow, as well as in cultivated fields. Her temples can be found in agricultural settlements, and comprise a sacred grove of palm trees. One palm is always painted white, and serves as the center of worship. Temples also maintain beehives, and swarms of bees are constantly present. Devout followers have little to fear, but those who enter a temple with evil in their hearts are likely to be attacked by angry swarms.

Her priests usually focus on blessing crops and children, acting as midwives and marriage councilors, and even as marriage arrangers. In large cities, they even run orphanages. Meanwhile, her paladins protect the crops and children. Those who beat or abuse children or their spouses may find themselves on the end of a severe beating by a paladin. Running to the authorities to report the paladin usually has little effect. Priests of Ashtart brew a mildly alcoholic drink made of honey, known as "*nehta*." It is intensely sweet and drinkable only in small quantities unless diluted with water or wine.

Ceremonies involve burning fragrant plants and incense to please the deity. A feast of fruit and vegetables is common after all major ceremonies. Worshipers believe that queen bees have a direct link to Ashtart. Whispering a prayer to a bee which lands on you is a sure way Ashtart will hear it. Being stung by a bee indicates the worshipper is out of favor and must make amends.

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Duamutef

Titles: The Heavenly Sheikh, Desert Master, The Endless One, Lord of the Dunes, Soul of the Desert.

Aspects: The desert, sand, nomads, hunters, archery, hospitality.

Symbol: A sand dune, breaking like a wave.

Priesthood: Sandwalkers (priests); Sandlords (paladins).

Herald: A black-furred cakali armed with a fearsome bow (see page 170).

Holy Days: The first Yaus al-Nefar of each month is a holy day.

Duties: To protect the desert from despoilers, to maintain the ancient customs of the nomads (all races), to protect one's family, clan, and tribe.

Sins: (Minor) allowing a nomad to be harmed (except one's tribal enemies), living in a town or city for more than a month, traveling by ship or flying carpet when one can walk the desert; (Major) unwittingly breaking the laws of hospitality, breaking the customs of one's tribe; (Mortal) knowingly breaking the laws of hospitality, planting trees or other hindrances to the expansion of the desert.

Signature Power: *Boost/lower trait* (Vigor, Persuasion, Riding, Shooting, Survival, and Tracking only).

Powers: *Aim, altered senses, analyze foe, banish, barrier, battle song, bolt, burrow, burst, champion of the faith, charismatic aura, deflection, detect/conceal, elemental form* (dust only), *elemental manipulation* (earth only), *entangle, farsight, hamper movement, heat mask, obscure, sentry, smite, storm* (sandstorm only), *summon demon* (pazuzu and sand only), *summon elemental* (dust only), *summon herald, wilderness step*.

Trappings: Clergy must use dust trappings whenever possible. They may never use water trappings.

Duamutef is the embodiment of the desert and the hardy folk who live in the sands. Although patron of all nomads, he is not an overly benevolent god, and offers little protection against the scorching heat or waterless wastes. Those who wish to survive the sands must do so on their own merits. Most images of him resemble a nomad of the worshippers' race carrying a staff in one hand and a pair of sandals in the other. Sometimes he is shown with a camel's head.

Shrines to Duamutef are commonplace, but rarely static. The nomadic tribes carry their shrines with them, setting them up outside the local noble's tent whenever camp is made. Most take the form of an heirloom, be it a sword, suit of armor, saddle, and such like. Typically, the item is somehow related to the founder of the family line. Temples are nonexistent, as the entire desert is seen as a temple to Duamutef.

Clergy are loyal to their family, clan, and then tribe before all other matters, and tend to act as advisors to the bey, mir, or sheikh. Priests often serve as mediators in intertribal disputes, trying to find a solution that avoids nomad blood being spilled in the sands. Paladins serve as family, clan, or tribal champions, as well as bodyguards to important personages. When diplomacy fails, it is time for the paladins to

settle matters. Both factions are also expected to be skilled hunters, capable of providing for their kin.

Like Apsu, festivals to Duamutef involve washing. However, followers scrub their bodies with sand, removing their sins while they pray. Going without water is common on holy days.

Geb-Agni

Titles: Backbone of Heaven, Strength of the Gods, Mastersmith, Firestorm, the Burning One, Lord of Incineration, Father of Fire Giants.

Aspects: Earth, strength, fire, volcanoes, lava, heat, smiths, fire giants.

Symbol: A black triangle with an inverted red triangle above it.

Priesthood: Earthlords (priests); Firelords (paladins).

Herald: A tall human with black, broken rock for skin beneath which can be seen glowing fire (see page 170).

Holy Days: Every Yaus al-Niwt during Alak Shemu.

Duties: To explore the subterranean realm, to use metal, to rekindle the heat of the desert.

Sins: (Minor) swimming when it can be avoided, eating uncooked food (except obvious foodstuffs, like fruit), washing more than once a week, using non-metal weapons or armor; (Major) damaging a hearth, forge, or other source of heat, sleeping outdoors when there is a cave or dwelling nearby; (Mortal) willfully despoiling a cavern or other underground feature, burying a corpse.

Signature Power: *Burrow* (Earthlords) or *deflection* (Firelords).

Powers: *Armor, barrier, beast friend* (land creatures only), *bladebreaker, bolt, boost/lower trait* (Strength, Vigor, Climbing, and Knowledge (smithing) only), *bridge, burrow, champion of the faith, deflection, elemental form* (earth, fire, and lava only), *elemental manipulation* (earth and fire only), *energy immunity* (air, cold, coldfire, earth, fire, heat, ice, and water), *environmental protection, fatigue, glyph, hamper movement, heat mask, light, quake, refuge, sanctuary, smite, sphere of might, summon elemental* (earth, fire, lava only), *summon herald, wilderness step*.

Trappings: Priests must use an earth trapping whenever possible, and paladins must use fire and heat. Neither may ever use air or water trappings.

Geb and Agni were once two separate entities, Geb being the god of earth and Agni the god of fire. After the discovery of the Heart of Fire, the two entities were merged into a single deity. The joint entity quickly attracted smiths, who utilize both earth and fire, as his core worshippers. Although most of his worshippers are metal workers, miners, and fire giants, he also receives adoration from soldiers and crafters who work with stone, clay, or earth.

The god is shown as a dark-skinned, bearded man wearing a smith's apron. In one hand he holds a miner's pick and in the other a smith's hammer.

Shrines are always carved from stone, basalt (a volcanic stone) being preferred. Shrines are common outside mines and deep caves, both gateways to Geb-Agni's subterranean palace. Temples are always built underground, ideally around a hot spring or mud pool. Whether or not these are available, the clergy ensure that roaring fires keep the temperature inside a stifling 100 degrees plus.

Traditionally, Geb-Agni's priests follow his earth aspect and wear brown robes, while his paladins follow his fire aspect and wear red robes. In reality, the clergy worship both aspects equally, the names being a leftover from the earliest days of the union. The clergy are a mixture of stoic resistance and furious rage, as befits their god, and one can never tell how a cleric will react to a given situation.

Ceremonies involve fire and sound. Celebrants jump over ritual fires, which release sins from their spirit. Others bang hammers on anvils or rocks to drive away the sins. Fire walking is considered necessary for followers who have committed grave sins.

Iblis

Titles: The Chaotic One, The Dark One, He Who Tips the Balance, Scourge of the Heavens, Evil-Worker, Night Fiend, Tempter of the Righteous.

Aspects: Chaos, evil, undead, destruction, darkness, corruption, disease.

Symbol: A black circle.

Priesthood: Voices of Chaos (priests); Hands of Chaos (paladins).

Herald: A mummified creature of the same race as the summoner carrying a two-handed, rune-etched scimitar (use the stats for a herald of Hela from the *Hellfrost Bestiary*).

Holy Days: The four nights of the new moon.

Duties: Perform evil acts, corrupt others, destroy order, bring chaos to the universe.

Sins: (Minor) performing a charitable act, refusing to aid or working against a Wild Card demon or undead, planning instead of acting, not committing treachery when the chance occurs; (Major) willfully slaying a lesser demon or undead, upholding or promoting law and order; (Mortal) willfully slaying a Wild Card demon or undead.

Signature Power: *Fear*.

Powers: *Altered senses, analyze foe, armor, barrier, bladebreaker, bless/panic (panic only), bolt, burrow, burst, champion of the faith, corpse senses, deflection, disease, dispel, enhance undead, entangle, ethereal/corporeal, fatigue, fly, glyph, gravespeak, greater zombie, heat mask, lower trait (no boost), luck/jinx (jinx only), nightmare, obscure, puppet, quickness, sanctuary, shape change, silence, smite, storm, summon demon, summon elemental (shadow only), summon herald, viper weapon, weapon immunity, zombie.*

Trappings: Clergy may use any trapping except light. Most favor darkness and necromantic.

Iblis is the only truly evil god in the desert pantheon. Others may have negative sides, but none revel in the chaos their worshippers cause to the extent of the Cha-

otic One. Iblis revels in chaos and upsetting the cosmic balance of Maat. He has no particular desire to conquer the world, only to ensure that universal order breaks down.

Iblis' form varies immensely. Some followers show him as a mummy, others as a demonic entity, while a few represent him with foul-smelling smoke. Iblis seems to care little.

It should be noted that although Iblis sides with the undead of the Withered Dynasty, few there pay him any homage. Their "gods" are their mighty, slumbering pharaohs. While servants of Iblis may strive to support the undead, whose very existence goes against universal order, the pharaohs have little compulsion about ordering their minions to attack or corrupt them.

Shrines and temples to Iblis are usually located in out of the way places, typically underground, so they cannot be easily detected. There is no standard design, of course. Shrines may be a skull in one locale and a mass of swirling lines scratched on a wall in another. Small temples may be a basement in a derelict building or cave, large ones might be a massive complex in the desert, filled with all manner of demonic and undead servants.

Priests are usually charged with spreading discourse through words, corrupting nobles, stirring up the masses, and so forth. Paladins perform chaotic acts, often violent ones, and fight alongside the forces of darkness.

Festivals take on various forms, but almost all involve the sacrifice of sentient beings. Demons are often summoned to take the soul of the victim straight to the Bottomless Pit. Naturally, all festivals are conducted at night and preferably during the new moon.

Karmelos

Titles: Champion of the Gods, General of the Heavenly Armies, The Supreme General, Honorable Victor, Warmonger.

Aspects: Battle, courage, war, honor, strategy.

Symbol: A scimitar dripping with blood.

Priesthood: Advisors (priests); Scimitars (paladins).

Herald: A lion headed warrior carrying a great scimitar (use the stats for a herald of Tiw from the *Hellfrost Bestiary*).

Holy Day: Every Yaus al-Nefar during Alak Shemu.

Duties: To fight with bravery and honor, lead armies to victory, protect those who seek your aid.

Sins: (Minor) showing mercy to an inferior foe, being beaten in combat by an equal or superior foe; (Major) fleeing a fight against an inferior opponent, being beaten in combat without good cause; (Mortal) surrendering without a fight.

Signature Power: *Armor* (Strategist) or *smite* (Scimitars).

Powers: *Aim, arcane resistance, armor, barrier, battle song, bladebreaker, blast, bodyguard, bolt, boost/lower trait (Spirit, Strength, Vigor, Fighting, Knowledge (Battle), Riding, Shooting, and Throwing), burst, champion of the faith, deflection, energy immunity, fatigue, gift of battle, knockdown, prolonged blast, quickness,*

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sluggish reflexes, sanctuary, smite, speed, stun, summon herald, warrior's gift, weapon immunity.

Trappings: Clergy may use any trapping except a necromantic one.

Karmelos is the god of warriors and generals alike, granting his faithful the power to lead men into battle and to deliver crushing defeats to individual foes. Virtually anyone who has to fight pays lip service to Karmelos at some point, though the nomads place Karmelos below Duamutef when it comes to warfare. Karmelos is shown as a warrior with six arms, each bearing a different weapon. He often has the head of a lion, a symbol of ferocity, courage, and honor.

Shrines can be static or mobile. Static ones are commonly found in guard barracks or military forts, and typically stand alongside carvings displaying the names of those fallen in battle from the building. This serves as a reminder of their sacrifice, and ensures their names are never forgotten. Mobile ones usually take the form of a war banner or some sort of sacred weapon, and are carried with the army, serving as a rallying point in battle.

Temples stand in most cities. The presence of a heavily armed, well-trained, organized army inside the city walls worries most rulers, and so temples are forced to be small affairs, housing just a few sleeping chambers, a mess hall, an armory, a few workshops, and a training room. Usually the city barracks is located nearby, just in case a rebellion occurs. To date, no cleric of Karmelos has led a rebellion against a just ruler.

Usually, but not always, priests tend to follow the strate-

gic aspect of Karmelos, acting as military advisors to generals and nobles. Paladins are much more inclined to take the hands on approach and join in with the troops. Neither type actively goes out looking for meaningless violence, for Karmelos is not a god of thugs. Once diplomacy has failed, however, there can be only one outcome—combat.

Ceremonies often take the form of ritual combats to first blood (though death has been known to occur). Sometimes these combats are scripted combats, tales of Karmelos' struggles against his demonic foes. Other times they are free-for-alls. Weapons are frequently sacrificed to the god of war by being bent or broken. It is believed such sacrifices go to arm the god's divine army and thus aid in the eternal struggle against Iblis' legions.

Marqod

Titles: Healer of the Gods, Peaceful One, She Who Wars with Words, Woundsoother

Aspects: Healing, protection, mercy, generosity, peace.

Symbol: A bunch of healing herbs.

Priesthood: Caregiver (priests); Cleansers (paladins).

Herald: A dove-headed female of the summoner's species carrying a quarterstaff (use the stats for a herald of Eira from the *Hellfrost Bestiary*).

Holy Days: Yaus al-Nefar.

Duties: To help those in need (not including obviously evil creatures like undead or demons), find peaceful solutions to problems.

Sins: (Minor) inflicting a wound on a creature when other options were available, refusing to heal a good person in need, taking the life of an evil creature, promoting violence through word, deed, or inaction; (Major) taking the life of a good creature, causing sickness or disease; (Mortal) willfully taking the life of a defenseless creature (good or evil).

Signature Power: *Healing.*

Powers: *Arcane resistance, armor, beast friend, bladebreaker, bless/panic (bless only), bodyguard, boost/lower trait (Vigor, Healing, and Persuasion only), champion of the faith, confusion, deflection, dispel, energy immunity, environmental protection, feast, glyph, greater healing, knockdown, refuge, regenerate, sanctuary, slumber, stun, succor, summon herald, warding, weapon immunity.*

Trappings: Clergy must never use a trapping that inflicts harm on others, such as acid, electricity, fire, and such like. They cannot take necromantic trappings.

Marqod is the chief goddess of the pantheon, and is considered the voice of reason in the heavens. Whereas the other gods' fol-



lowers wage war to gain supremacy, Marqod's clerics are there to pick up the pieces, knowing in their hearts that so long as one soul suffers, their goddess will always exist—and suffering is part of being alive.

Marqod is depicted as a young maiden holding a bundle of herbs in her right hand. In most statues, her left hand is held palm forward as a warning to cease inappropriate action. More militant factions show her with a club in this hand.

Temples are sanctuaries of healing and meditation, and often used by arguing factions as neutral grounds when trying to solve their differences. They also serve as doss-houses for the homeless, though “guests” are expected to work for their room and board, often serving as cleaners, gardeners, or orderlies. Every temple maintains a small herb garden, where medicinal plants are grown.

Her priests tend to be the actual healers and herbalists, while the paladins protect the priests and temples, and act as battlefield medics during times of war. While many mock the presence of paladins, knowing full well they will resort to lethal violence only in the direst circumstances, they often forget that Marqod does not prevent her paladins from giving someone a nonlethal beating.

Within the ranks of the paladins is a small group who have fallen from grace, but deliberately so. These few souls understand that while a peaceful solution is to be favored, there are times when violence and death is the only solution. Plague demons, for instance, exist only to spread suffering. No court in the land would dare to bring one to justice, and so they must be eradicated. The paladins, known as the Violent Hand of Marqod, are actually revered by their comrades, and are always given preferential treatment.

Festivals involve burning medicinal herbs and singing songs of peace and harmony. Celebrants often enter a meditative trance during ceremonies, intoning the hymns and prayers by rote while their spirit seeks harmony with the world around.

Qedeshet

Titles: Scribe of the Gods, The Celestial Wizir, Divine Diplomat, The Inventor, Well of Knowledge, Wellspring of Ingenuity, The Divine Trader, Keeper of the Celestial Library, He Who Knows All, Keeper of Lore.

Aspects: Literacy, invention, knowledge, diplomacy, wisdom, trade, divination.

Symbol: A blank papyrus scroll.

Priesthood: Scribes (priests); Quills (paladins).

Herald: An ibis-headed human carrying a huge roll of papyrus and a quarterstaff (use the stats for a herald of Hoenir from the *Hellfrost Bestiary*).

Holy Days: Yaus al-Sesht.

Duties: Preserve knowledge, find lost knowledge, spread knowledge and learning.

Sins: (Minor) allowing knowledge to be destroyed or concealed, allowing knowledge to be twisted, refusing to teach someone, not correcting an inaccuracy of impor-

tance; (Major) willfully concealing important knowledge, refusing to teach an illiterate person to read and write; (Mortal) willfully destroying important knowledge.

Signature Power: *Speak language*.

Powers: *Altered senses, analyze foe, arcane resistance, beast friend, bless/panic (bless only), bolt, boost/lower trait* (Smarts and Smarts-linked skills only), *champion of the faith, confusion, corpse senses, detect/conceal, dispel, farsight, glyph, gravespeak, insight, light, lock/unlock, mimic, mind rider, precognition, sanctuary, silence, stun, summon demon* (librarian and revealer only), *summon herald, voice on the wind, wandering senses, warding*.

Trappings: Clergy may use any trapping.

Other: Followers of Qedeshet cannot be Illiterate.

Qedeshet is the source of all knowledge, and is credited with giving the civilized races the skills they needed to build, maintain, and govern civilized societies. Scribes, nobles, wizirs, crafters, scholars, sages, explorers, and astrologers all pay some degree of homage to Qedeshet. The god is represented as a human with the head of an ibis. In his left hand is a quill and in his right an abacus.

Qedeshet has many temples in the cities of the Caliphate, where they serve as schools as well as libraries. Access is available to the public at no charge, but only during the hours of daylight. Scholars are allowed to copy from the books, but removing a book from a library is a serious offense. Given that many wizirs are followers of Qedeshet, and that these wizirs have the ears of the nobility, it isn't too hard for the clergy to get a “thief” punished in the most severe manner. Actual thieves, those who deliberately break in for the sole purpose of stealing knowledge, are dealt with in secret by the paladins.

Shrines tend to be erected by crafters, who place them in their shops, construction workers, who erect them to ensure the measurements are accurate and the walls they build are straight, and scribes, who see Qedeshet as their patron.

Qedeshet's paladins are more explorer than scholar. They scour the numerous ruins of the desert for lost knowledge, salvaging scrolls, copying engravings on the walls of tomb and temples, and talking to old nomads and recording their oral history. Priests are typically librarians, maintaining the temples, copying manuscripts or hastily drawn transcriptions brought back by paladins, and ensuring the wisdom of the ancients is available to future generations. Both types of clergy also serve as teachers, and the temple schools are renowned across the desert realms. Although Qedeshet is the god of trade, few of his clergy are full-time merchants.

The appearance of the Lorekeepers from Rassilon has opened up many new avenues of research for the clergy, who are now faced with recording the lore from another continent. Fortunately, the Lorekeepers have their own archives (though not very extensive compared to the libraries of Qedeshet), and the two factions are involved in a trade of material.

Ceremonies are always readings from the Book of Advancements, the collective teachings of Qedeshet. Hymns and prayers are commonplace. At many ceremo-

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nies, clergy unveil new inventions to the congregation, asking Qedeshet to bless their work.

Shamash

Titles: The Celestial Sultan, He of Two Eyes, The All-Seeing One, Light of Heaven, Celestial Watchman, Defender of the Faithful, The Burning One, Flesh Scorcher, Thirstmaker.

Aspects: Sun, nobility, vigilance, order, moon.

Symbol: A golden sun disk, partially overlaid by a lunar disk.

Priesthood: Eyes of Shamash (priests); Rays of Shamash (paladins).

Herald: A hawk-headed human carrying a mace (use the stats for a herald of Sigel from the *Hellfrost Bestiary*).

Holy Days: Priests hold a small ceremony each dawn and dusk.

Duties: To destroy the forces of darkness, to promote law and order.

Sins: (Minor) not welcoming the sun each morning, remaining underground for more than a day, performing a minor evil or immoral act, talking with a demon (except to Intimidate or Taunt it); (Major) knowingly befriending a follower of Iblis, permanently blinding a foe, refusing to fight the forces of darkness, not standing up against immoral behavior, committing a major evil or immoral act; (Mortal) willfully aiding the forces of darkness.

Signature Power: *Light*.

Powers: *Altered senses, analyze foe, aura, banish, bless/panic (bless only), bolt, boost/lower trait (Notice and Tracking only), burst, champion of the faith, deflection, elemental manipulation (fire only), energy immunity (cold, coldfire, darkness, heat, fire, ice, or water only), environmental protection (fire/heat only), farsight, fatigue, heat mask, invisibility, precognition, prolonged blast, sanctuary, sentry, smite, speed, sphere of might, stun, summon elemental (fire only), summon herald, wandering senses, warding*.

Trappings: Followers must have a light, heat, or fire trapping whenever possible. They cannot take darkness or necromantic trappings.

Father of the gods, Shamash is referred to as the All-Seeing One and He of Two Eyes (referring to the sun and moon). During the day, he focuses his attentions on the world of mortals, keeping only a cursory eye over the underworld. At night, he travels to the underworld to keep order while the moon watches over men.

Although magic is known to emanate from the moon, magic is not one of Shamash's aspects. That honor falls to Ishkar, Shamash's daughter. (Worship of Ishkar fell out of favor after Suleiman's death. She should be treated as a lesser deity.)

Shamash seeks only one thing for the mortal realm—harmony and order. However, in order for this to be achieved, he must first destroy the minions of Iblis, which basically includes anything evil or supernaturally evil. With

such a wide number of foes, Shamash expects his priests to wage continual war against the forces of Iblis.

Shrines to Shamash are rare, though most citizens have a holy symbol over their front door to ward off evil. Temples are typically rectangular structures aligned east to west. Large doors in the east are opened just before dawn, allowing the first rays of the day to shine onto one half of the altar. At dusk, the western gates are opened, to catch the last rays of the setting sun, which illuminates the other half of the altar.

The inside of the temple is decorated in gold and silver, the colors of the sun and moon, and mirrors positioned with great care and adjustable according to seasonal changes in the orbit of the sun and moon, allow the occupants to see day or night without use of lanterns. Only during the nights of the new moon is the temple cast in twilight, as the light from the stars provides the only illumination. During this time, the temple clergy pray almost continually, trying to ward off any evil unseen by their god.

Both paladins and priests are expected to be capable of martial combat, though paladins do the bulk of actual combat. Priests are required to research evil cults, people, or places, allowing the paladins to come up with a suitable plan for cleansing the stain.

Festivals always occur at dawn, midday, or dusk. Typically these times refer to the sun, but ceremonies under the full moon are also common. Worshippers are generally naked, allowing the heavenly light to cleanse their bodies of sin. Despite being a good god, Shamash accepts evil creatures as sacrifices.

Tamarni

Titles: Lady of Fortune, Claws of Heaven, Lady of Insatiable Pleasure, She Who Hunts in Shadows, Finder of Lost Secrets, Vermin Killer.

Aspects: Cats, pleasure, the home, stealth, curiosity, luck, thieves.

Symbol: A cat's paw.

Priesthood: Eyes of Tamarni (priests); Claws of Tamarni (paladins).

Herald: A cat-headed woman (see page 171).

Holy Days: Yaus al-Niwt.

Duties: Protect cats, discover secrets, enjoy the many pleasures life has to offer.

Sins: (Minor) failure to stroke a cat in your path, making excessive noise, refusing to enjoy a pleasure offered you when you have other obligations; (Major) accidentally killing a cat (includes lions, and such like), refusing to enjoy a pleasure offered you when you have no other obligations; (Mortal) willfully killing a cat (includes lions, and such like), being chaste, poor, or anything else which could deny you pleasure.

Signature Power: *Silence*.

Powers: *Altered senses, analyze foe, beast friend (cats only), bolt, boost/lower trait (Agility, Climbing, Lockpicking, Notice, Stealth, and Tracking only), cham-*

pion of the faith, charismatic aura, deflection, detect/conceal, ethereal/corporeal, fatigue, fortune's favored, invisibility, leaping, lock/unlock, luck/jinx, obscure, quickness, sanctuary, shape change (cats only), slumber, smite, speed, steal, summon herald.

Trappings: Clergy may use any trapping except a necromantic one. Most revolve around cats in some way, however. For instance, *bolt* may be spectral claws, *fortune's favored* may cause a black cat to appear, *slumber* may lull foes to sleep with gentle purring.

Tamarni is a popular god. Citizens in general praise her for her aspects of home and luck, and farmers pay homage to her to keep down the number of rats and other vermin that gnaw on their crops. She is also popular among thieves, spies, gamblers, and hedonists, as well as cat-lovers. Her form is that of a cat-headed maiden with a beautiful body. Often she is shown in seductive poses.

Shrines to her can be found in many fields, around granaries, in brothels, gambling dens, and in most homes. Her temples exist in many cities, and are generally called Houses of Pleasure, and any physical pleasure (some may say vice) is available—all manner of drugs, drink, and sex can be found here, for a suitable donation, of course. They are also home to a large number of cats, all of which are considered sacred beasts.

Her priests and paladins are a varied bunch. Some devote themselves purely to pleasure, traveling the desert in search of new delights. Others are naturally curious and are drawn toward exploring old tombs, or breaking into places they aren't allowed, just to see what's in there. One faction devotes itself to protecting homes (a sort of security service) and exterminating vermin. A growing number are actually thieves, using their talents to fatten their purses (and buy more pleasure).

Many festivals involve pleasurable activities, be this drinking, inhaling narcotic smoke, or sex. Although often referred to as orgies by outsiders, the general mood is actually very restrained. Acts involving pain to generate pleasure are forbidden. The sacrifice of rats is common among her cat-loving aspect, for this keeps her fed in her heavenly palace.

TAMMUZ

Titles: Lord of the Dead, Guardian of the Dead, Lord of the House, Weigher of Souls, The Final Judge, The Balance.

Aspects: Death, mummification, tombs, justice, balance.

Symbol: A set of balanced scales, one side light, the other dark.

Priesthood: Judges (priests); Executioners (paladins).

Herald: A vulture-headed human armed with a scimitar in one hand and a set of scales in the other (see page 171).

Holy Days: Yaus al-Maat.

Duties: Protect the dead, destroy undead, to maintain the cosmic balance, to ensure the dead receive proper burial rites.

Sins: (Minor) refusing to destroy an Extra undead, engaging in conversation with an undead (except to Intimidate or Taunt it), acting in a biased manner, not blessing a corpse, falsifying evidence; (Major) breaking the law, refusing to destroy a Wild Card undead; (Mortal) knowingly aiding an undead, convicted of a crime (innocent or otherwise).

Signature Power: *Weaken undead.*

Powers: *Arcane resistance, armor, banish, bladebreaker, bless/panic (bless only), bodyguard, bolt, boost/lower trait, champion of the faith, deflection, dispel, energy immunity (necromantic only), ethereal/corporeal (no ethereal), glyph, gravespeak, heat mask, immunity (necromantic only), invisibility, light, prolonged blast, quickness, sanctuary, smite, sphere of might, summon herald, warding (undead only), warrior's gift, weapon immunity.*

Trappings: Clergy may use any trapping except necromantic ones.

Tammuz is the god of death. The ancient Hekatics once worshipped him as their chief god. However, the Hekatics fell from his grace when their leaders sought to prolong their lives beyond their allotted span. Once the mages began creating undead, stealing souls from the Bottomless Pit, the withered survivors of the empire became Tammuz's sworn foes.

The god's three main focuses on the mortal realm are justice, which maintains the cosmic balance between right and wrong, ensuring the ancient funerary customs are properly maintained, and slaying undead, who are an anathema to Tammuz (and a source of celestial embarrassment). As such, his worshippers include judges and advocates, mortuary attendants, and holy warriors. Even headsmen follow this god, often finding employment as both executioners and slayers of undead.

Tammuz is shown as a mummy. In his left hand he carries a set of scales. In his right hand, he holds a key. The latter represents the key to the heavenly doors of the afterlife.

His temples are common in towns and cities, where they serve two functions. The upper levels, those above ground, are the courts of law, where criminals are brought for judgment by earthly authorities. Below ground are the city mortuaries, where the dead are brought to be prepared for their final journey. Shrines are found only in graveyards and tombs, where they allow the god to watch over the earthly remains of the dead.

Priests are expected to be judges as well as slayers, and should be well-versed in the law of the land. In order to maintain the cosmic balance, they are expected to show true neutrality in any matter. Paladins serve as executioners when called upon, but most serve their god by warring against the abominations which lurch out of Hekata.

Ceremonies are solemn affairs and usually only held at funerals. Mournful prayers and wails accompany the litany of the dead, ancient rites which ensure a soul can reach the afterlife unhindered. In some cases, the execution of legally condemned prisoners constitutes a sacrifice to Tammuz.

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Upuaut

Titles: Opener of the Ways, Lord of Winds, Voice of the Gods, The Celestial Wanderer, He Who Cannot be Shackled, He Who Looks into Dark Places, The Unchainer.

Aspects: Travel, wind, birds, secret places, freedom, messengers, personal choice, ships, chariots.

Symbol: A swirl of blue lines.

Priesthood: Journeymen (priests); Pathfinders (paladins).

Herald: A tall, muscular cakali with swirling green eyes and feathered wings (see page 171).

Holy Days: None. Priests make prayers whenever they must undertake a journey lasting two days or more.

Duties: To explore the world, oppose slavery and stagnation, ensure freedom, to bring new ideas to the masses, to ensure routes of communication remain open, to uncover secrets.

Sins: (Minor) owning a slave, sheltering from a storm or any sort of wind, staying in one place for more than a month, unwillingly delaying a messenger, misdirecting

a traveler; (Major) destroying maps or erasing signposts, willfully delaying a messenger, living in the same place for more than a season; (Mortal) supporting rigid and oppressive governments, living in the same place for more than a year.

Signature Power: *Wilderness step.*

Powers: *Beast friend, becalm, bolt, boost/lower trait* (Agility, Vigor, Boating, Climbing, Riding, Survival, and Swimming only), *bridge, champion of the faith, deflection, environmental protection, etherealness/corporeality, farsight, feast, fly, hamper movement, knockdown, leaping, mend, quickness, sanctuary, sentry, silence, speak language, speed, storm, summon elemental* (air only), *succor, summon demon* (steed only), *summon elemental* (air only), *summon herald, teleport, voice on the wind, wall walker, wandering senses, whirlwind, zephyr.*

Trappings: Clergy must use air trappings whenever applicable.

Upuaut is the burning wind from the Heart of Fire, the cooling north wind, the motion of the sea, the wheel of a chariot, the shoes of a horse, the sandals on your feet. He is all this, and much more beside. Any form of transportation falls under the watchful gaze of Upuaut, as does freedom, something not everyone in the desert enjoys. Originally a cakali deity, humans adopted Upuaut into their pantheon after the War of Copper Jars, when both races found themselves lost in the wastes. Today he is worshipped by anyone undertaking a journey, for the desert is a harsh environment and folk welcome any advantage they can get. He is also frequently mentioned in funeral rites, where he is asked to guide the soul on its final journey.

He is always shown as a cakali, with wind-swept robes. In his left hand he clutches a scroll, a symbol of communication. In his right he holds a key, the key to the mysterious routes across space.

Shrines are extremely common, and can be found just inside the gates of every settlement, close to harbors and wharves, next to marker posts along the trade routes, in caravanserais, in nomad camps, at oases, and so on. No temples exist, Upuaut having no wish to be tied to any single locale for long and rebuking his clergy who settle down.

Priests and paladins often serve as guides and messengers, his paladins taking on the more dangerous routes. They are also explorers, for Upuaut is a curious god, and wishes, through his followers' eyes, to see every location on or under the earth.

The god is also opposed to slavery, since this goes against his aspects of freedom and the right to choose. While many clergy are merely outspoken critics of slavery, others take a more militant stance, attacking slaves and conducting raids to free slaves. That some slaves do not wish to be freed is irrelevant to these fanatics.

Festivals are virtually unknown in this faith. Some worshippers dedicate one journey to their god. For every step they take, they kneel and pray. Such journeys are, naturally, very long but very spiritually cleansing. The destroying of manacles, a sign of slavery, is a common sacrifice to the god of freedom.



DESERT LIFE

The lands of the great desert, known locally as Al-Shirkuh, appear at first glance to be largely barren. The waters of the great rivers allow the lands along the banks to be irrigated, and numerous wells and oases dot parts of the desert, but much of the land is sand, rock, or ash, with regions of glass and salt.

Despite their appearance, the deserts of Al-Shirkuh are full of life. From tiny beetles and scorpions to huge sand dragons, life teems on, under, and above the blistering sands. It is also in this harsh, unforgiving environment that the Bedu, cakali, and hyaenidae make their homes.

The desert has changed many times throughout the ages. Flowing sand drowned entire empires whose names are now forgotten. Volcanoes spewed millions of tons of ash into the air, blanketing swathes of desert in black dust. A great lake dried up in antiquity, leaving behind a salt basin. Lush forest petrified over hundreds of centuries to form a forest of columns.

And now the desert is changing, evolving, again. The temperatures have dropped in the last 500 years. Though still scorching hot, the desert is more habitable than it has been for recorded history. Yet with this cooling comes not relief, but despair.

For the last five centuries, the records of dozens of scholars show lower and lower rainfalls. While the lands have always known periods of drought, these were once cyclical, following a pattern of five rich and five lean years. Allowances were made, with surpluses being stored for times of hardship. For the last seven years, each harvest has been worse than the one before, though famine has so far been avoided. Crops wither in the heat, the ground bakes as hard as iron, and the remaining stores are running dangerously low. Another year or two, and the harvests will not feed everyone who relies on them.

The great desert itself also seems restless. The sands have always moved, inch by inch across the millennia, covering all in their path. Yet now, the sands move many miles over the course of a year, and the towering dunes hover like frozen waves above the fertile regions. If the sand continues its relentless march, valuable agricultural

land, land which the races can ill-afford to lose, will vanish. The desert is changing, and it may be a change the civilized races cannot survive.

◎ Passage of Time ◎

All terms used here are the Sandspeech names, the standard among all the civilized races. Different races maintain their own terms.

Calendar

The cakali, whose astrologers mapped the stars countless centuries ago, laid down the first accurate calendar. Hekata adopted the calendar, their warriors and merchants spreading it across Al-Shirkuh. Despite religious and cultural differences, the civilized races have kept the same calendar, with only minor adjustments.

SEASONS & MONTHS

The year is broken down into three major seasons (see below), and a short “holy” season. The major seasons consist of four months of 32 days each. Within each season, the months are called Amt (First), Baot (Second), Anshi (Third), and Tamith (Fourth).

Holy season is a single 32 day month at the end of the calendar, and is called Alak Neteru (Season of the Gods) by the Faithful and Alak Suha (Season of Contemplation) by the Devoted.

Alak Arkhet (Flood): The year of the desert races begins in what northlanders would call late fall. Early fall storms in the mountains, caused by warm, moist air from the south, swell the rivers and a surge of water flows toward the lowlands. When it eventually reaches the low areas, the rivers often burst their banks, spilling the precious water over the fields. Once the waters die down,

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LUNAR PHASES BY DAY

Day	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Al-Maat	Teasing	Half Open	Unveiled	Half Veiled
Al-Kemi	Teasing	Flirting	Unveiled	Half Veiled
Al-Hamala	Teasing	Flirting	Passing	Half Veiled
Al-Sesht	Teasing	Flirting	Passing	Glimpsed
Al-Niwt	Half Open	Flirting	Passing	Glimpsed
Al-Ittrou	Half Open	Unveiled	Passing	Glimpsed
Al-Nefar	Half Open	Unveiled	Half Veiled	Glimpsed

The Veiled moon always falls on the four unnamed days at the start of a month.

farmers are quick to rush to the sodden fields, preparing the soil and planting as many crops as sunlight allows.

Alak Arkhet equates Fogmonan, Wulfmonan, Snaermonan, and Frostmonan in Rassilon.

Alak Paret (Harvest): Paret is the time of the main growing season and harvest, when the bulk of the staple crops are tendered and irrigated. Typically, the main cereal harvests occur in the last month of the season. Temperatures begin to rise steadily from their winter lows as the months pass.

Paret equates to the northern months of Eostremonan, Plohmonan, Sowanmonan, and Werremonan.

Alak Shemu (Dry): Shemu marks the time in the year when the sun is at its most fierce. The smaller riverbeds dry, irrigation channels shrink to a mere trickle, the soil hardens and cracks, and the hot desert winds scour the land. The season is not a holiday. Far from it, in fact—the farmers are often conscripted into work gangs to help repair state buildings, maintain roads, clear irrigation channels of sand and other blockages, and such like until the late summer harvest is ready to gather.

Shemu equates to northern months of Sceranmonan, Hegmonan, Haerfestmonan, and Falmonan.

Alak Neteru (Gods)/Suha (Contemplation): Alak Neteru (or Suha) is the “holy” season, a time when the farmers begin preparing for the rains which will bring the next floods, soldiers commence training. This month equates to Huntianmonan in Rassilon.

DAYS & WEEKS

Each month is broken down into four weeks of seven days, plus four extra days at the beginning. The weeks are numbered using the same notation as the four months of the each season.

The seven days of the week are called Yaus al-Maat (Day of Balance), Yaus al-Kemi (Day of Flour), Yaus al-Hamala (Day of Lambs), Yaus al-Sesht (Days of Scribes), Yaus al-Niwt (Days of Houses), Yaus al-Ittrou (Day of the River), and Yaus al-Nefar (Day of Freedom).

The first four days of each month, which always fall during the new moon, are sacred holidays, being considered very unfortunate times to do anything except pray

to the gods (Faithful) or contemplate the *Hamad* in order to ensure one is living in accordance with Asha’s way (Devoted). It is especially unlucky to conduct business deals, weddings, funerals, battles, or anything else of significance during this time. As a result, the four religious holidays have no name, and when citizens must refer to one of the four days, they do in general terms such as, “tomorrow” or “in two days.”

In game terms, the unfortunate nature of these days means characters receive one less benny than normal during the four days of the new moon.

CALENDRIAL NOTATION

In order to give a specific date, a desert dweller lists the week number, the day, the month number, and the season. For instance, Anshi Yaus al-Sesht Baot Alak Paret translates literally as, “The third Day of Scribes in the second month of Harvest Season.”

A year in the Great Desert is 416 days long, the same as in Rassilon. Years are numbered since the end of the War of Copper Jars, as set down by Suleiman, and carry the suffix “CJ” (short for for “After the War of Copper Jars”). The current year is 549 CJ.

TIMEKEEPING

Knowing when the inundation will come is vital to the survival of both the Sultanate and the Caliphate. As such, astrologers, astronomers, and scribes are employed by both nations to keep a careful eye on the heavens and to record the passing of days.

Sundials and moondials are both employed to record the hours of the day, and function remarkably well due to the general lack of clouds. Hourglasses are also utilized, and it is said the Sultan has a magical timepiece which instantly turns itself when the sands run out and chimes to record the passing of an hour. Truly rich citizens might possess a water clock, an immobile timepiece that relies on a supply of running water (a rarity in itself) to track the passage of time.

Astrologers have long known that the day can be divided into 24 hours, each consisting of 60 minutes. Ex-

actly why these numbers were chosen is lost in antiquity. While most citizens have little need for hours of minutes, typically going to work when the sun rises and coming home when it sets, astrologers need such information to track celestial events and to calculate horoscopes.

The Heavens

SUN & MOON

The sun and moon are known to the Faithful as the Eyes of Shamash (the god of the heavens). Devoted refer to them as the Lanterns of Asha. In Sandspeech, both creeds know them as Al-Yamun (The Bright One) and Al-Hemenat (The Cold One).

According to the religious belief of the Faithful, there were once two suns, and light filled the universe. Iblis (god of evil) partially blinded Shamash in one eye, accounting for why the moon is dimmer than the sun and why the night is darker than the day.

The Faithful also believe that Shamash watches over the mortal realm and the underworld, dividing his time, and his eyes, as best he can. He is also said to watch over the entire cosmos, though he uses his weak eye for this.

When the sun and moon are in the sky at the same time, it is considered a bad omen, for it means Shamash is not watching over the underworld, allowing demons to plot in secret. When neither is in the sky at the same time, it is another bad omen, for this means the darker forces of the world can act in secret. The new moon is yet another inauspicious time, for Shamash has turned his attention away from both the underworld and the mortal realm, gazing deep into the heavens. As one can tell, unfortunate days are fairly common in the desert.

Devoted hold that the daily rising and setting of the twin orbs is merely part of the celestial order set in place by Asha. The cold light of the moon exists because were it as hot as the sun, the world would ignite. Thus, the sun warms the world, while the moon cools it down. However, the phases of the moon are a warning that Druj is not yet defeated, and still wields tremendous power.

The months of the year are lunar, following the regular changes of the moon. The eight phases are named in relation to a celestial veil, through which the moon passes each month. To the Faithful, the veil is that of Iblis' servants, who seek to blind Shamash's weak eye altogether. In the Devoted belief system, the veil that falls across the celestial orb is a dark cloud of magical energy created by Druj, which traverses the heavens and through

which the moon passes during its monthly travels. The new moon is an ill time, for Druj's power is said to be at its highest.

The eight phases are known as Veiled (the new moon), Teasing (waxing quarter moon), Half Open (waxing half moon), Flirting (waxing gibbous moon), Unveiled (full moon), Passing (waning gibbous moon), Half Veiled (waning half moon), and Sliver (waning quarter moon).

CONSTELLATIONS

The ancient cakali mapped the heavens before the rise of the first human empires (despite objections by the ever-arrogant sphinxes), their knowledge filtering down through the ages. The patterns formed in the stars, and there are many hundreds in all, have individual names, and many have myths associated with them. Unfortunately, the passage of time and the misery wrought by the jinn has erased the true meaning of these myths, and today they are just stories, often altered to suit the storyteller's beliefs.

Of the many constellations, some of the most well known ones are the Scorpion (the tip of whose tail marks north), the Pharaoh's Daughter, the Chariot (which chases the Pharaoh's Daughter), the Crook, the Flail, the Celestial Pyramid (the rising of which marks the start of Alak Arkhet), and the Jackal (which ancient cultures believed ate and then regurgitate the moon).

The eternal movement of the constellations, combined with the motion of "moving stars" (another name



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for planets), the sun, moon, and random evens, such as shooting stars, are used by mages and priests to calculate horoscopes, detailing fortunate and unfortunate days.

☉ Daily Life ☉

The desert societies are broken down into social classes. Movement between a social class is relatively fluid, and as fortunes wax and wane so one can climb and fall between strata.

At the bottom are the *mushaf* ("tainted"), considered unclean either by dint of their profession, their finances, or their physical health. People who handle human and animal waste, the homeless, beggars, the lame, and those struck with diseases like leprosy fill this class.

Above them are the *barajam* ("ones who work without skill"), the farmers, laborers, and common soldiery. A vital part of the economy (and defense of the realms), they are nonetheless easily replaced. Next are the *jaleepa* ("talented"), a class dominated by crafters, scribes, and bureaucrats. These two strata form the lower classes.

Above them are the senior bureaucrats, wizirs, merchants, high-ranking military officers, and other folk who are well regarded because of their wealth, power, skills, social position, and such like. Collectively they are the *shabrum* ("favored"). Master craftsmen are often elevated to this level as a sign of their skill. The *shabrum* are the middle class. Among the Faithful, all priests are considered to be members of this caste, while mages fall under the *mushaf* stratum. Among Devoted, mages are *shabrum* and clerics treated as *jaleepa*.

Next are the *mak-shabrum* ("highly favored"), who form the upper class. Typically members are simply more influential members of the *shabrum*, who have powerful friends, vast fortunes, land, or a large business, but no blood ties to any noble house. Most are well connected, however.

Then there are the *battim* ("blooded"), the nobility. This is a fairly wide stratum, covering everything from the equivalents of knights up to counts. Beyond these are the higher nobles, the dukes, princes, and kings, known as the *muk-battim* ("high blooded").

Language

Regardless of race, the civilized beings of Al-Shirkuh are masters of flattery and self-depreciation in equal measure. When addressing someone of undeniably higher social status, greater wealth, or superior intellect or skill, it is expected that the lower personage use lofty phrases and titles toward his superior. One needn't know a luminary's official titles—it is quite acceptable to invent flattering terms. When talking about oneself to such luminaries, it is normal to play down one's importance. For instance, a merchant addressing a noble might start, "Oh majestic one, puissant master of men, hear the plea of this wretched worm!"

Humbleness and understatement is a prized trait and the mark of an enlightened being. A man who speaks of his "humble abode" might be speaking of anything from a simple hut to a lofty palace. Similarly, being invited to a "simple meal" might actually involve a 12 course banquet of exotic and expensive foodstuffs. Of course, the understatement should never be accepted at its depreciated value by the guest, who is expected to praise his host. In return, the host replies with phrases such as, "I do not grumble," or "It is adequate for my needs."

Similarly, people are expected to be humble when their deeds are recounted, thanking gods for their success, or claiming the deed was more trivial than made out by the storyteller. Boasting is seen as the mark of a wicked soul. This has no effect on Glory awards, for it is the telling, not the boasting, that earns recognition.

Diet

In the settled lands, the primary sources of meat are lamb, goat, mutton, duck, goose, and fish. Pigs are avoided because it is believed that pigs carry leprosy and other diseases, and cows are rare because of the resources it requires to raise them. Nomads keep herds of goats for their meat and milk, but also consume desert hare, antelope, mice, snakes, scorpions, and anything else they can kill. Meat is typically eaten only once or twice a week, protein being made up by various cheeses, beans, and eggs.

Cheese and yogurt are both important parts of the diet, being high in fat and protein. Goats' milk is the most popular, but sheep and camel milk works just as well. The staple carbohydrates are rice and unleavened bread. Both can be served plain, or mixed with nuts, dates, or chopped vegetables.

Fruit and vegetable crops are common in the cities and towns. Cucumbers, eggplants, lettuces, melons, oranges, garlic, onions, melons, cabbages, radishes, apples, pomegranates—and many more beside are served daily. Olives are primarily used to make olive oil, though they are eaten as well. Various crops are grown through the year, though naturally not every foodstuff is available during every season.

Dates and figs are part of every meal, especially for the nomads. They are cooked with meat to form a sweet stew, eaten as a dessert, dried for desert travel, and added to drinks as a sweetener. Wild varieties of onion and garlic are also part of the diet, as are a variety of nuts and berries. Most vegetables, however, must be grown at an oasis or bought from the settled cultures.

The major grain crops comprise wheat and barley. Wheat is ground to make bread and pastry, whereas barley is used to make porridge or mixed with hops to brew beer. Beer in Al-Shirkuh is rather lumpy, and more like a soup than a drink.

The Laws of Suleiman forbid Devoted from drinking alcohol, though only the most devote consider this a firm rule. Coffee (served very strong) and tea are the staple

VEGETABLES BY SEASON

Alak Arkhet	Alak Paret	Alak Shemu
Cucumber	Celery	Chickpeas
Dates	Chickpeas	Cucumber
Grapes	Garlic	Figs
Melon	Lettuce	Lettuce
Pomegranates	Lentils	Melons
	Onions	Nuts
	Peas	Onions
	Radishes	Peas
		Plums

drinks. Milk, typically from goats or camels, is popular with adults as well as children, and it can be used to make butter, yogurt, and cheese.

The Faithful have no restrictions about drinking alcohol. Grapes grow well in the warm, dry conditions, and wine is a common drink. Even the masses drink wine, though it is heavily watered down. No spirits are brewed. Mead, an alcoholic fermentation of honey, is also known, but not all that common among common folk.

Education

Education is compulsory in the Caliphate, Free Emirates, and Sultanate for all children between the ages of five and 12, but not exactly all-encompassing. Much of a youth's schooling is religious and cultural. The Devoted learn the writings of the *Hamad*, while the Faithful receiving a basic grounding in all the gods. History is commonly taught, as are the ways to behave in polite society. Children typically study for between two and four hours a day. For most children, when they reach the age of 12 they are sent out to work. Whatever else they need to learn, they learn on the job. Typically, children follow in their father's footsteps.

Only the rich can afford to have their children stay on in education. In advanced education, the child learns how to read and write, as well as the basics of mathematics, science, geography, politics, and such like. Typically a noble youth leaves school at around 17, well rounded in many subjects, but a master of none.

Among the Faithful, schooling is conducted by the priests of Qedeshet, god of knowledge, and usually within the nearest temple precinct. Most Faithful nomadic clans have a cleric of Qedeshet, who acts not only as teacher but as a historian, recalling and recording notable events, and a wizar to the noble.

Those who display a close connection to a deity are singled out and further educated, free of charge, in the hopes they have the faith to become a cleric. Those who pass the grade leave behind their old family and are welcomed into their new family—their respective sect.

Devoted are schooled at a maktab ("school") during their infancy, with advanced students going to one of the many universities which have cropped up throughout the Sultanate. Nomadic children are usually taught by the clan's wizar, if there is one, or some other type of mage, these being considered learned men, wise in the writings of the *Hamad*.

Devoted children who display a talent for magic, regardless of their social class, may be adopted by a mage. The child remains part of his birth family, but is taken away for advanced schooling and magical study. For many parents this is a multiple blessing. First, it is one less mouth to feed, second, it means the child has a strong spirit, and third, the child will hopefully grow powerful and rich, thus being able to provide for his parents as old age creeps upon them.

Marriage

Once a youth reaches 16 years old, the law considers him an adult, allowing him to marry. As with most matters, marriages are different for the Devoted and Faithful.

The Devoted believe that a marriage is a sacred bond that strengthens Asha. Individually, a mortal is chaotic in nature, prone to do as he wishes without thought for others. Bound together, the pair becomes more ordered. In many ways, marriage is akin to magic, for it joins separate strands together to make a more powerful whole, and brings the couple a step closer to Oneness. Marriage is considered a permanent union, and divorce is heavily frowned upon. By law, if a couple divorces, neither can remarry for a period of 10 years. Marriage ceremonies, however, are civil affairs, and can be performed by any imam, noble, or official appointed by a noble to conduct marriages.

Adultery is a serious crime, for it taints the bonding of strands. The typical punishment for adultery is loss of a certain limb for the male involved and banishment for the woman.

Among the Faithful, only priests of Ashtart can perform

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marriage ceremonies. As with the Devoted, marriages are for life, though for different reasons. To divorce means the union was somehow flawed, and since gods are by their nature infallible, this would mean Ashtart somehow made a mistake in blessing the union. Adulterers suffer similar punishments as for the Devoted.

In all cases, the type of ceremony varies by social class. Commoners may simply exchange vows and small gifts, and then partake of a simple meal together. Nobles, on the other hand, may hold sumptuous feasts for hundreds or thousands of guests, even declaring a public holiday so the masses can join in the festivities.

HAREMS

Citizens of the Caliphate, Sultanate, and Free Emirates and most nomads believe in monogamy, as did many of the cultures which came before them and on whose wisdom the ancient laws are based. However, a noble (and only a noble), may maintain a harem. It is worth noting that while the majority of harems are filled with woman,

no law prevents a female noble having an all-male harem. Since the majority is comprised of females, we refer to male nobles and harem girls for brevity.

Contrary to popular beliefs, harem girls are not usually sex slaves (that practice is more common among the uncivilized races). While it is true most are bought as slaves, as soon as they enter a harem they become “bed wives.”

A bed wife enters into a legal contract with the noble, providing him with physical favors in return for limited freedom. Bed wives have some legal rights (the right to food, shelter, protection, and such like), are accorded great respect among the citizenry and nobility, and must be given gifts worth a minimum of 100 dinars per year of service on the anniversary of their joining the harem. A noble with a large harem needs large coffers.

However, they are never entitled to inherit property or possessions of the noble, nor are any children they sire considered legitimate heirs until the noble names them as such. Likewise, they may place no demands on the noble, nor conspire against him. Despite the latter restriction, harems are notorious hotbeds of scheming, especially when it comes to ensuring a child is named as rightful heir.

A noble may discharge a bed wife from his service at any time simply by declaring this to a judge (or similar legal figure). A bed wife may only leave a noble's service with his express permission. Kidnapping a bed wife or helping one to escape is tantamount to kidnapping a member of the noble's family.

Among the poor it is a huge honor to have a daughter chosen to join a harem. However, society is slowly changing and women are becoming more independently-minded. Although harems are not likely to be consigned to history any time soon, fewer women are keen to accept the position of bed wife. Those who actively seek such a position are usually the ones best avoided, for they are likely to be scheming, greedy, and manipulative souls.

Festivals

The Devoted hold few festivals, though they do celebrate special days. Suleiman's birthday, the day he defeated the jinn, the day he ascended to Oneness, and such like are public holidays for all Devoted. In addition to these, every ruler has the right to instigate his own holidays throughout his domain. Typically these celebrate important matters in his life, or the life of his ancestors. The birth of a child may warrant a celebration, as may a marriage or funeral.

The Faithful have religious holidays. The high holy days of the gods are typically holidays, allowing the masses time to worship. Individual gods also have holy days, though festivals celebrating them are normally held in the evening, to prevent disruption to the working day. The Caliph also adds holidays to the calendar when important matters arise in his household. Typically, marriages, births, and funerals are public holidays, giving



the masses the opportunity to celebrate or mourn, as applicable.

Different races also have their own special days. The cakali, for instance, hold a festival of remembrance on the anniversary of the destruction of their former empire. Sphinxes celebrate Ascension Day, the day an individual noble became head of his house. The hyaenidae hold festivals on the first day of each season, allowing the various clans chance to meet in peace, trade goods, and arrange marriages.

Justice

For the Devoted, justice means following the laws laid down by Suleiman. These laws are harsh, but one must remember that when they were written, Suleiman aimed to shape a nation of repressed slaves into a civilization before they fell to barbarity. This required a hard hand, which Suleiman provided in his writings.

Judges are civil servants, appointed by the local ruling noble because of their in depth knowledge of the Laws of Suleiman. Among the nomads, the ruler of the clan or chief acts as judge, though wizirs advise him. In most criminal proceedings, the judge hears testimony from the accused, the defendant, and any witnesses, and then passes judgment in accordance with the ancient law. He has little leeway to bend the rules or to impose harsher or lighter sentences.

Criminals are allowed one appeal, which is heard by the highest ranking noble in the land. Such appeals are not rushed through the system, however, and until a hearing is convened the criminal languishes in jail. Many a criminal has died of old age waiting for the noble, his son, and even his son's son to hear his appeal.

Of course, money talks in the Sultanate, as does having influential friends. The rich and powerful are often able to escape justice, for the rot of corruption has spread throughout the land, and Suleiman's law applies more now to the poor than the rich.

Jail sentences as punishments are extremely rare. Some crimes, like murder and rape carry death penalties (beheading), whereas others, like theft, are punished by the loss of a limb. Many other crimes carry sentences of slavery, usually working for a state-sponsored project, such as building a new road or working in the mines. Occasionally, a criminal is enslaved for life, and the unfortunate soul can either become the property of the ruling noble or, more commonly, sold off to the highest bidder and the proceeds added to the state treasury (less a little bonus for the judge).

The nomads rarely impose slavery on their own, and instead outlaw the criminal, cutting him off from his support network. Some do find a new life elsewhere, either legitimately or as a bandit, but most wander off into the desert, never to return.

Judges in the Caliphate and among the Faithful tribes are usually priests of Tammuz (also the god of justice), though nomadic mirs and sheikhs can fulfill the role if

they have a good understanding of the law, as can clerics of Shamash at a push. The judges hear statements before retreating into the temple (or equivalent) to consult with the god. Sentence is then passed, and is deemed final—infalible gods do not make miscarriages of justice.

As in the Sultanate, jail time is unusual. It is believed that hard work cleanses the soul of the taint introduced by criminal activities, so slavery is preferred. The two systems of punishment are very similar, of course, as Suleiman drew on the ancient texts when forming his new codes of law.

SLAVERY

Slavery still exists with Al-Shirkuh, though not to the extent it once did. It is true that a few Bedu and hyaenidae tribes kidnap travelers and sell them into slavery, but most slaves within the Caliphate, Sultanate, and Free Emirates are legally enslaved.

Debtors become slaves to their creditors, but only until the debt is worked off. Unscrupulous creditors are careful to charge the debtor for everything—every mouthful of food, sip of water, item of clothing, wear and tear to tools, and so on—ensuring the unfortunate soul remains shackled for as long as possible. Other criminals can, as noted above, also be enslaved as punishment.

Soldiers captured in battle may also be enslaved. Many are actually conscripted into the armies of their captors, where they are treated little differently to native soldiers. In some cases, enslaved soldiers even rise through the ranks to become senior officers.

Slavery is much more common in the Kingdoms of the Sphinxes. Here armies of slaves labor in the fields and construct vast monuments in honor of their sphinx overlords. Although the sphinxes use the methods above to acquire slaves, they are not beyond kidnapping visitors to swell the population.

Slaves have no legal rights, but only a fool abuses them too severely. Hungry and tired slaves make for poor workers and excessive use of the lash encourages rebellion. While a slave has no rights, this does not mean anyone can kill one outright without facing justice. A slave belongs to somebody, and if the slave is killed his master is entitled to compensation. This typically amounts to the slave's initial cost, plus an extra 10% (cumulative) per year of service.

FUNERARY CUSTOMS

As noted elsewhere, the Faithful and Devoted have their own funerary beliefs as well.

The Faithful believe that while the soul joins with the gods, it remains safe from harm only so long as the body is intact. Thus, it must be preserved. The standard practice for nobles is to remove the internal organs, desiccate the corpse using natron (a form of salt), and then wrap it in specially prepared bandages. The body is then placed either in a grave or tomb, depending on the

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wealth of the individual. For most peasants, their corpse is just washed, wrapped in cloth, and buried in the sand to desiccate naturally.

Suleiman's laws dictate that it takes three days for the soul to unwind itself from the body it once inhabited and rejoin with everything in the universe. Only after this time can the body be wrapped and buried—any earlier, and the layers of bandages hinder progress of the soul. On the fourth day, the day the soul departs the flesh, a celebration is held, as the soul has now achieved its seat among the gods. During this time, prayers are said to Tammuz, god of death, and to the deceased's patron deity. These prayers ensure the soul reaches the Afterlife safely.

The Devoted hold that the body is just a shell, and that only the soul is important. However, they share the belief that it takes three days for the soul to leave the corpse. During this time, family and friends weep for the loss of the individual they knew.

Once the soul has departed, marked at sunrise on the fourth day, the corpse is just a lump of meat. It is cremated on a funeral pyre, and its ashes left to blow away in the wind. According to tradition, if the ashes are caught on the wind, it means the soul has entered a state of Oneness, and the family holds a feast to honor the deceased. If the ashes still remain in place after 24 hours, it is considered a bad omen, and a time of mourning.

Travel & Trade

Paved roads are common in the heavily settled, agricultural regions of the Kingdoms of the Sphinxes, Sultanate, and Caliphate, forming a link between neighboring cities and allowing for steady trade, but are nonexistent in the desert, where the sand quickly covers them.

Around the towns and cities the land is relatively free of bandits, but the guards can only patrol so far. The Pegasus Guard performs routine patrols along the roads, from a great height, but their numbers are too few to guarantee no bandits or desert beasts will threaten travelers. Outside of this area there is only the law of might, and caravans frequently gather at major cities, waiting for other groups to travel with, thus providing security in numbers.

OASES AND WELLS

Every oasis and well in the desert belongs to someone or something. Some belong to Bedu, cakali, or hyaenidae tribes, others to sand giants, some are even "owned" by monsters. Many oases have permanent encampments set up around them, primarily to protect the resource, but others, like wells, may have no signs of life for miles. They may not even be marked to show who owns them, but owned they are.

Most nomads allow strangers to take their water, but under strict conditions. Strangers may not take more than their fill (the water is for everyone), they may not pollute

the water in any way (which includes bathing in it), they must leave the water source and its surroundings as they found it, and they must leave proper tribute. While the exact nature of proper tribute varies from tribe to tribe, in game terms a gift of 1 dinar per quart of water used is considered acceptable. The nomads have a remarkable contact network, and any transgressors of their generosity is quickly found out and harshly dealt with.

Of course, there are some circumstances where taking water without expression permission constitutes an act of theft. Most monsters, and this includes "barbarian" races, may not freely take a tribes' water, nor may members of a rival tribe (and sometimes not even their allies).

TRADE ROUTES

In general, trade follows the roads and trails between cities, caravanserais, or oases. Long lines of camels, heavily-laden with their precious cargoes, make the long and perilous trips across the sands from distant areas, bringing goods such as salt, incense, and glass to the consumers of the cities. Where coastal cities exist, most trade is borne by ships. That said, the Caliphate, Free Emirates, Kingdoms and Sultanate each have their own coastal roads, linking the cities together.

There are several well-traveled trails through the desert, remnants of ancient travel networks. These are no longer true roads in any sense of the word, the sand having buried any paving, but the routes of these concealed roads are known to the nomads. Tall stone pillars, some standing proud, other poking through the top of a mighty dune, are all that is left of these roads. Many of the cities they point toward no longer exist. Although the trade routes are shown on the map, they do not exist on the ground.

The nomads, it is said, never get lost in the desert. It is true that a nomad may suddenly turn slightly east for no apparent reason, march ten miles, then turn slightly north and march another five miles across featureless terrain, arriving at a small oasis which by any other route would be invisible, hidden behind dunes. In truth, they are just more aware of their natural surroundings—what appears to be just another patch of grass or dune to a city-dweller is a major landmark to a nomad.

Several sea routes also exist. The Free Emirates trade with the Magocracy and, to a lesser extent, Drakeport. The sphinxes trade with Ostmark and the distant Jade Empire. Jadid, City of Trade, also has routes to the Jade Empire, much to the sphinxes' annoyance. The Caliphate and Sultanate trade with each other via sea lanes, as well as lands lying further south and east.

CARAVANSERAI

A caravanserai is the equivalent of a roadside inn, somewhere travelers can rest in relative comfort and safety. Within the borders of any of the four main realms, a caravanserai stands every 20 miles along the trade

roads (an average day's march for a camel train). They serve to provide security and act as marketplaces where nomads gather to trade with their city dwelling cousins. Once beyond the borders of the major domains, there are no caravanserais.

A typical caravanserai is a square structure with an open courtyard. Aligned along the trade road, which passes through the structure, the gatehouses are wide enough to accommodate heavily-laden camels or, more rarely, wagons. At night, during sandstorms, or when under threat of attack, the heavy gates are closed and barred.

Surrounding the courtyard are dozens of chambers, all open to the central courtyard. Some are stables for mounts, others sleeping chambers, meeting rooms in which traders can conduct business, warehouses for cargoes, and such like. Guests must provide their own food, but water is plentiful, as all caravanserais are built around a well. Most have both a kada and a temple, for the owners of the caravanserais do not discriminate when money is involved.

One set of rooms, usually those on the north wall, are reserved for the owner of the caravanserai, his family and servants, and the guards who protect the building. As well as sleeping areas, there are kitchens, dining halls, and maybe even baths. Honored guests are invited to dine with the owner.

Trade transactions conducted within a caravanserai typically levy a 3% tax, which is used to maintain the structure, pay the guards, and so forth. Given the risks of travel, even in a civilized domain, it is a tax few merchants complain about.

SOUKS & BAZAARS

Shops are typically located in a souk, a covered marketplace of narrow streets. Individual districts within a city each have small souks, typically selling food, pottery, and other household goods. The main souk is an important building, often located near the city center.

A souk is a square building, divided internally into zones by a network of straight streets. All traders of the same goods are located within the same zone, thus making it easier for shoppers to find what they want and ensuring healthy competition among the traders.

Souks sell a variety of goods, from raw materials (like bundles of cloth, plates of glass, or hides of leather) to food and drink to finished items (clothes, lanterns, tools, weapons, jewelry). Shops dealing with small goods, such as cobblers or jewelers, may have a small workshop attached. This is mainly so they can make repairs or slight alterations. The main workshops are located outside the souk, usually in a specialized manufacturing district.

Most shops open at dawn and close at dusk, though they are closed for two to three hours during the hottest part of the day. During Yaus al-Nefar shops open from dawn until midday only. Some shops are open for a few hours on festivals, but the vast majority are closed.

Weekly markets, or bazaars, are held both outdoors

in most settlements, usually on Yaus al-Kemi. Many local crafters have stalls in the market rather than owning a shop, but most are run by visiting traders, who bring with them a variety of goods. Hawkers walk the streets selling meat snacks (often of questionable origin), cups of water, small items, such as jewelry or daggers (often stolen), and so on. The streets are packed during market days, and pickpockets, beggars, and prostitutes are a common nuisance. Though the city guards patrol in force, they cannot be everywhere.

Bazaars are held daily at oases, even when there is little to sell. Under ancient Bedu law, any place of trade is neutral territory, and bloodshed is not permitted. Thus, having a bazaar always open means rival tribes can meet to swap goods without fear of attack.

MAGIC SHOPS

True relics are as rare in Al-Shirkuh as in Rassilon, and the chances of finding one for sale are extremely remote. Jinn relics are usually reserved for jinn mages (who make them) and nobles (who can afford to buy them). There is no law against owning a jinn relic, but anyone who uses one for criminal purposes faces a death penalty. Within the Caliphate, jinn relics are seen as tools of Iblis, and anyone caught using one in public faces summary execution after a brief trial (assuming a mob of outraged citizens don't tear him apart first). Of course, sometimes such objects may turn up on a trader's stall, but usually when the GM wants to lead the heroes into an epic adventure. Although khem-hekau and jinn relics use the same basic mechanics, those built using khem-hekau are tainted with necromancy. All of the civilized races consider the use of such relics abhorrent.

Potions, scrolls, talismans, and other alchemical devices, however, are relatively common. Throughout recorded history, mages and priests have always had the power to imbue objects with temporary power, and the trade continues to this day. Alchemists are most often found in the major cities, though a town may boast a single alchemist. Among the nomads, an alchemist is a valued member of the tribe (few tribes boast more than one).

COINAGE & BARTERING

The standard coin of the settled lands is the dinar, typically minted in gold. In the Sultanate, they are stamped with their value and the image of the current Sultan. In the Caliphate, the image of the Caliph is carried. Among the sphinxes, coins are minted bearing the image of the local pharaoh.

Coins are actually valued not on the numerical value stamped on them, but by weight. Coins wear down over the years as they pass from hand to hand, unscrupulous folk shave off slivers of metal, devaluing the coin, and inflation in one locale may mean that the face value of a coin is lower elsewhere. Merchants always carry a set of scales with them to weigh coins.

In game terms, however, if a hero has 200 dinars listed on his character sheet, then his coinage is worth 200 dinars, even if the face value of every coin adds up to 300 dinars. Characters are never shortchanged because of the difference in weight and face value, nor do they ever “gain” money.

Coins have little use among the nomads—what good is money a hundred miles from the nearest souk? Instead, they prefer to barter, swapping goods, or, more rarely services, of equal value. Nomads consider haggling a noble art, and refusing to participate offends the nomads’ honor.

Organizations

This section takes a quick look at some of the better known organizations found within the desert realms that characters can join. Other organizations, usually of a truly evil nature, are detailed in the GM section.

Assassins

The history of the Assassins stretches back to the days when the scorpionmen ruled a large swathe of the desert. Human subjects were dominated through powerful versions of *puppet*, trained as assassins, and sent out to kill the rulers of neighboring tribes, thus allowing the scorpionmen to conquer them with relative ease. When the Scorpionman Empire collapsed, the Assassins vanished from history, though fragmentary texts from the days of the Hekatic Empire mention, “men who could appear as scorpions and who struck terror at night.”

They reemerged during the Anari conquest of the western desert and subsequent subjugation of the native tribes, striking against Anari generals and nobles with impunity. Although the murders were not the sole reason for the eventual Anari abandonment of the coastal cities, they were a key factor.

Since those times, the Assassins have spread across Al-Shirkuh and are now a part of every society, albeit an unwelcome one. Ruled from a secret fortress deep in the desert, the Scorpion’s Nest, by a shadowy figure referred to only as the Black Scorpion, most members live a normal life within regular society. One never knows if the local baker, the friendly merchant, or the shy serving girl who smiles sweetly at you is actually an Assassin. Fear and paranoia are powerful weapons in those who know how to wield them. When their services are needed, Assassins are contacted by magic.

Despite accusations against them, the Assassins are not a truly evil organization. They are in many ways the epitome of strict neutrality, striking down both good and evil figures without thought of morality. If the forces of evil have more money to spend on assassinations, then more good people die, but eventually the balance will be restored, for that is the way of things in the universe.

Brotherhood of Unfortunate Souls

The poorest members of society are usually the ones with the fewest rights. Corrupt city guards harass them, thieves target them because they cannot afford protection or security, nobles tax them to excess, and the guards never investigate too hard when one is killed. Even in the most enlightened cities, the poor are downtrodden souls.

The Brotherhood of Unfortunate Souls is a secret vigilante network comprised of kindly folk who wish justice and equal rights for all. Beggars are a common sight in the many cities of Al-Shirkuh. Citizens may throw them a few dirhams out of pity, but in general they are ignored by the masses, and the Brotherhood uses this to its advantage.

Disguised as beggars (some are actually insane, diseased, or lame), they shuffle through the crowded streets, their senses alert to any lower class citizens in need of assistance. They fight muggers, thwart thieves, beat up corrupt city guards, rob from the rich to give to the poor, and such like, and just as quickly as they strike they disappear back into the crowd. The Brotherhood rarely helps those above *barajam* status.

No official organization exists, though Brothers do look after each other. Identifying themselves through hand signals and code words, a Brother in a strange city can quickly find a comrade by heading to the poorest sectors of town. Most common citizens know of the Brothers, even if they have no idea how to locate them. Brothers within their home city have a small network of safe houses and contacts among the poor, from where they can acquire food, shelter, and information.

As is often the case, one man’s hero is another man’s villain. Nobles across the desert consider the Brotherhood a threat to their rule. A few nobles, those of good heart, actually support the Brothers (in secret), but the vast majority consider them no better than common thieves and brigands. Unfortunately, the city guards cannot devote the time or manpower to arresting every beggar and questioning them—even if they didn’t mind touching a leper or dragging the scum-covered madman off to jail.

A few nobles have tried sending their own men undercover to root out the Brothers, but with no knowledge of the secret code and little understanding of how the Brothers operate, they stand out like sphinxes at a cakali social function.

Guild of Headsmen

Despite their name, the Guild doesn’t just decapitate criminals—it undertakes all forms of limb removal ordered by the courts or nobility with equal precision and pride. Although beheading is the most extreme form of physical punishment, certain crimes require the loss of

other limbs. Thieves, for instance, have a hand removed, male adulterers become eunuchs, escaped slaves lose an ear, and deserters lose a foot.

The Guild is a leftover from the Days of Many Gods, when they served as paladins for Tammuz in his role as the god of justice. After the Sultanate swept aside the gods, some paladins switched to the new creed and adapted, dumping their religious status and offering their services to the nobles as an independent body. Given their long service to justice, the nobles were quick to take the guild up on its offer. Within the Caliphate, the Guild does not exist as a separate entity, and executioners are a branch of the clergy of Tammuz. Despite their religious differences, the two factions maintain cordial ties.

Some nobles, usually the more despotic ones, keep a headsman on permanent retainer for performing quick executions. Most hire them as required. Many headsman simply wander the desert, offering their services as itinerant workers.

Guild members are required to wear a mask when performing their duties. Some criminals have powerful friends and allies, and the mask protects the executioner from recognition and retribution. The job, while necessary, is also an unclean profession, and the mask also conceals the headsman from family and friends who may otherwise shun him socially.

The Guild maintains a network of safe houses throughout the Sultanate, where visiting guild members in good stead can stay free of charge. They can be located by visiting the local courts and speaking to the Clerk of Executions.

Mameluk

Proud and arrogant, the jinn who once ruled the central desert waged many wars, both against their neighbors and each other. Rather than allow jinn to be slaughtered on the field of battle, they formed great armies from their slaves, armies indoctrinated into total loyalty to their unearthly masters. These obedient puppet soldiers were known as mameluks.

During the War of Copper Jars, most mameluks sided with the jinn. Knowing that they could never be rehabilitated, Suleiman ordered his armies to show the mameluks no mercy. Tens of thousands were butchered. Those who switched sides were generally newer recruits, still being indoctrinated into jinn servitude. They fought along the slaves, forming the core of Suleiman's army.

Although many mameluks later swore fealty to the nobility, a few chose to remain independent and formed mercenary companies based around the concept of total loyalty to one's brothers in arms. Where once they swore loyalty to the jinn, they now took oaths of obedience to their commander. Where once slaves were conscripted, the mameluks now adopted orphans, training them in the ways of battle. Mameluk companies do accept unwanted children (typically from poor families who cannot afford to keep their children), and a few even resort

to kidnapping. Mameluks never accept recruits older than 10 years of age.

Recruits first learn the concepts of obedience and faithfulness. Only when they are willing to die to protect one of their brothers are they taught how to use weapons. Although it is possible for a mameluk to retire, most find it hard to leave the only family they have ever known. Those made lame in battle find employment as strategists, recruiters, trainers, and logistical experts.

There are around two dozen mameluk companies in Al-Shirkuh. Of these, roughly half are in permanent employment. The remainder form independent companies, who hire their services to nobles and merchants as and when required.

Pegasus Guard

The Sultan maintains a large private army to protect the Sultanate from outside aggression, and himself from the ambitions of his emirs. Rated as his elite troops are the Pegasus Guard, highly trained cavalymen famed for



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their unusual mounts and willingness to engage foes other troops flee from in terror.

Sultan Faisal ibn Ahmed formed the guard in 217 CJ in response to orc raids occurring along the Jinn Wall Mountains. Traditional troops were unable to react to attacks in time to be of any use, and the cost of building, maintaining, and garrisoning a network of forts was prohibitive. Their aerial status allowed them to survey a wide area far quicker than a ground patrol, and terrain was no obstacle when mustering for an attack. After the orcs were driven back, the Guards were quickly elevated to higher status, becoming part of the Sultan's private army (and thus outside any control of the emirs).

A contingent of 500 Guards is permanently stationed in Al-Wazir, City of Spires, where they constantly patrol over the city and its surrounds on their winged mounts. They also act as the Sultan's bodyguards when he appears in public. Smaller forces, ranging from 10 to 100 men, are stationed in the other cities of the Sultanate to remind distant nobles that the Sultan's reach is long. Others are assigned to guard special caravans, escort dignitaries visiting other realms, or protect strategic caravanserai. The most renowned Guards are those tasked with hunting down threats to the Sultanate both within and without its borders. (The latter is the role in which player characters should typically serve.)

Serving Pegasus Guards are forbidden from marrying or siring children—their sole loyalty lies with the Sultan. While in the City of Spires, they can find free room and

board in the Guards' barracks. Elsewhere in the Sultanate, they must rely on their status and the generosity of the local nobility. Most often they are housed for free with the local soldiery, who are quick to gather round and hear the Guard's tales of heroism.

RANKS

Although part of the army, the Guard maintains a loose structure and deployment. One day a five man patrol may be commanded by a sergeant, the next it may be part of a larger unit commanded by a captain. Every soldier is trained to think like a leader, however, and thus the loss of a commander does not cause as much chaos as it does among regular units.

The bulk of the Guard is made up of Guardsmen, the common soldiery. Guards must be capable swordsmen and riders. They must also pass rigorous practical examinations before their pegasus is introduced to them.

Above the guardsmen are the Guard Sergeants. Typically there is one sergeant for every nine guardsmen. Sergeants wear a plume of blue-dyed horsehair from their helmets to mark their status. Few soldiers ever rise above the rank of sergeant. To become an officer requires more than just the ability to lead men, fight like a demon, and serve the Sultan faithfully—it also requires powerful connections in the court, if not noble blood in one's veins.

Guard Captains are the highest active ranking officers. A captain usually commands ten sergeants and the guardsmen beneath them. Captains wear red plumes on their helmets. In recognition of their service and duties, they are awarded the noble title of pasha as well. The vast majority of captains are given this rank without having worked their way up from the lower ranks—such is the benefit of noble blood.

The highest rank within the Guards is Commander of the Pegasus Guard. Personally appointed by the Sultan, the Commander runs the unit on his behalf. As a sign of his status not only in the military but also in the court, the commander is awarded the noble title of sirdar. His position usually means he is in court far more than he is in the field with his men, and military operations are left to his captains.

The current Commander of the Pegasus Guard is Sirdar Yusef ibn Sallah, a crotchety old warrior who is tiring of court intrigue and political games. He has served the Sultan faithfully for over 40 years, but now wishes to retire gracefully. The Sultan, however, has no wish to lose a close friend unafraid to speak his mind, and has constantly stymied his attempts to resign.



SETTING RULES

This section covers special rules for adventuring in the baking sands. GMs are free to use the rules as often as they wish, though none of them should get in the way of a good story if the heroes are taking sensible precautions.

Temperature & Water Consumption

The key to surviving the scorching heat of the desert is to drink plenty of water, carry a light load, and limit one's exertions to a bare minimum during the hottest part of the day. For convenience, we list temperature as a level defined by a keyword, rather than in exact degrees (though we give you a numerical equivalent in Fahrenheit and Centigrade so you can see what we're talking about). Rather than messing around with raising or lowering temperatures by X degrees, we refer to level changes. We likewise refer to temperatures in areas of

the desert in terms of these levels. The Water column lists the daily amount of water character must drink to resist the effects of Heat. The last column is the penalty to Vigor rolls should this quantity not be available (see *Savage Worlds*). If the entry says "Cold," refer to the *Savage Worlds* rules.

NIGHTTIME

At night, the temperature in the desert drops rapidly. Reduce it by 1d2+3 levels (min. Frigid). Even in high summer, the temperature in some areas regularly drops below freezing, allowing frost to form. In towns and cities and along rivers and coasts it drops just 1d2 levels.

SEASONAL CHANGES

Unless otherwise stated, temperatures are averages for Alak Paret, the time when most folk travel—even the farmers can do little while the crops are growing. During Alak Arkhet, the temperature is one category lower, while in Alak Shemu and Alak Neteru it is one level higher (to a maximum of Infernal).

Level	Temp (F)	Temp (C)	Water (quarts)	Vigor
Frigid	12 to -7	-11 to -21	2	Cold
Freezing	32 to 13	0 to -10	2	Cold
Temperate	33 to 68	1 to 20	2	0
Warm	69 to 89	21 to 32	2	0
Hot	90 to 94	33 to 34	4	0
Sweltering	95 to 99	35 to 37	4	-1
Stifling	100 to 104	38 to 40	4	-2
Very Hot	105 to 109	41 to 43	6	-3
Baking	110 to 114	44 to 45	6	-4
Scorching	115 to 119	46 to 48	6	-5
Infernal	120+	49+	8	-6

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SHELTER

Whether it is a cave, a house, a tent, or a *refuge* spell, shelter provides protection from the sun and desiccating winds. Shelter lowers the temperature by one to four levels, depending on how windproof and covered it is (min. Temperate). With a suitable fire, the temperature inside a sealed shelter at night rises to a comfortable level.

Water Consumption

Water is essential to life, and in the desert it is a precious commodity. At high temperatures, characters require more water to resist the effects of heat. As stated in the main *Savage Worlds* rules, characters have to make Vigor rolls for Heat only if they don't meet their daily water requirements.

Characters who travel at night and rest all day base their water consumption on the nighttime temperature. This reduces the likelihood of heat stroke, but may cause other problems, such as freezing temperatures and nocturnal foes.

REGION

Travel through certain areas, such as the arid Salt Basin or the windswept Desert of Ash, and jinn-blighted Plain of Ash, requires additional water due to the hot winds, bone-dry air, or choking ash particles.

Not every extra drop is required to be drunk—in the Mirrorsands, for instance, it may be used to wet the skin to encourage cooling, while in regions of ash it is used to wash away grime from one's face—but it still counts toward the daily amount required.

Region	Extra Water (quarts)
Desert of Ash or Plain of Ash	+2
Mirrorsands or Salt Basin	+4

SIZE

When it comes to water consumption, size matters. In most cases, animals and monsters get water from devouring their prey, rather than lapping it out of oases. Ignore them for the sake of fast play. Only horses and camels are important because of their use as mounts.

A Small character (such as a sand goblin) requires half the listed water per day. An Obese character increases the amount of daily water he must consume by +1 quart. This modifiers are applied before the benefits of any Edges (racial or otherwise).

Riding horses require +4 quarts a day, and war horses require +6 quarts. Camels typically require the same quantity of water as a Size 0 creature, but can go for long periods without water, consuming vast quantities when water becomes available.

FINDING FOOD & WATER

In order to survive the harsh wastes, one needs regular quantities of food and water. A hungry man quickly lacks the energy to search for water and a thirsty man has a life expectancy measured in hours.

Finding edible food and potable water in the desert uses the standard rules for Survival (see *Savage Worlds*), but with modifiers—neither food nor water is plentiful in the burning sands. Obviously, if one is at an oasis, well, or along a riverbank, finding water and some sort of food is automatic, and usually in plentiful quantities (though the resource may be owned by someone).

Mod	Region
+2	Fertile region
–2	Open desert (sandy or rocky)
–4	Dunes, Realm of the Medusae
–4	Mirrorsands (only when using a water trap; otherwise treat as N/A)
–6	Hekata
–8	Desert of Ash, Great Dune Sea, Plain of Ash, Salt Basin
N/A	Heart of Fire

MOVEMENT

These rules are used when playing out movement on the tabletop during combats. For tactical combat, all areas of ash, rock, or soft sand count as difficult terrain.

DESERT, MIRRORSANDS, & SALT BASIN

Flat, featureless terrain can easily fool a traveler into misjudging distances. With no landmarks to use as reference and constant heat shimmer, distances can seem much longer or shorter than they really are. In such locales Notice and Shooting rolls beyond 12" suffer a –2 penalty.

Other Rules

These rules cover other situations encountered in the desert wastes. Hazards, such as mirages and some types of deadly wind, are covered in the **Bestiary** chapter.

BASIC HELLFROST RULES

The Divine Aid rules from the *Hellfrost Players' Guide* apply in Al-Shirkuh. The Weregild rules are not used.

Glory works as normal save for one change. Charac-

ters from Rassilon who boast of their deeds, the standard practice of their cultures, suffer a –2 penalty to Persuasion rolls to earn Glory—boasting is seen as shameful, a way of playing up a lesser role. Desert-dwellers who go north and speak of their heroic deeds with humility receive a similar penalty.

Only after earning 20 XPs in the appropriate land is the penalty negated, the character being assumed to have adopted local customs, no matter how disdainful he finds them.

GLARE

The glare from the sun reflecting off the endless sand can blind travelers who do not take precautions. Note that Blind characters do not suffer from glare.

Every four hours of daylight spent in the open desert, two hours in the Salt Basin, or one hour in the Mirrorsands, the hero must make a Vigor roll. There is a cumulative –1 penalty for each additional period of similar length. On a failure, the victim suffers a –6 penalty to all trait rolls involving sight (including combat). His Parry drops to 2.

A hero who rests his eyes for one hour out of every four in the open desert and one hour out of every two in the Salt Basin can avoid this penalty, though it does slow down his progress. Resting one's eyes cannot be done in the Mirrorsands—the glare is too intense.

Recovery: Requires a successful Healing roll, and the hero must rest his eyes in total darkness for 24 hours. This roll may be attempted only once every 24 hours.

HEALING

The doctors and surgeons of Al-Shirkuh are well-versed in anatomy. Natural Healing rolls have a +1 bonus within any major city, so long as the heroes consult a qualified doctor (any healer with Healing d6+).

HERBALISM

The Herbalism rules require a slight change to account for Al-Shirkuh's climate.

Rarity: No plants grow in the Desert of Ash, Heart of Fire, Mirrorsands, or Plain of Ash. Plants in Hekata are toxic and contain no beneficial medicinal qualities. As such, rolls to locate medicinal plants cannot be made in these regions under any circumstances.

Season: In Alak Neteru/Suha and Alak Arkhet, there is a –1 penalty. There is no modifier in Alak Paret, and there is a –2 penalty in Alak Shemu.

Nomad Hospitality

The nomads' rules of hospitality are extremely complex, and few outsiders ever learn every unspoken rule. The situation is made more complex by the fact that every tribe has its own particular rules. One common rule

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is that of how to treat guests. The nomads have several grades of guest, and honor them accordingly.

How visiting heroes are treated depends largely on whether there are any nomads in the party (see Nomadic Tribal Alliances below). If there aren't any nomads, use the Reaction Table as normal but with a -2 penalty—nomads are wary of “soft” city folk who choose to travel the perilous desert wastes. The entries in parentheses indicate the Reaction Table result required to receive a certain level of hospitality. Note that in all cases, costs for food and drink are after three days of receiving free hospitality.

Honored Guests (Helpful) are typically those from other tribes or peoples currently allied to the local tribe and held in high favor with the sheikh. They are offered room among the tribe's tents (for protection) and welcomed as close friends. They may carry weapons openly, even in the presence of the sheikh. Food and water consumed at the oasis are free.

Welcomed Guests (Friendly) are usually those from other tribes or peoples currently allied to the local tribe. They are welcomed as friends. They may carry weapons openly, but never in front of the sheikh or his family. Space is set aside close to the tribe's tents. Food and water consumed at the oasis is charged at half price.

Accepted Guests (Neutral) are those neutral to the local tribe. They are allowed space within a short distance of the water source but not near the tribe's tents. They may carry daggers for personal protection, but

never in front of the sheikh or his family. Food and water consumed at the oasis is charged at the normal rate.

Tolerated Guests (Uncooperative) are those tribes or peoples hostile to the controlling tribe. These guests are given an area a long walk from the water, often without much shade. They are forbidden from carrying weapons other than a dagger (they must leave other weapons in their tents). Food and water consumed at the oasis is charged at the 150% of the normal rate.

Scorpion Guests (Hostile) are those tribes or peoples extremely hostile to the controlling tribe. As the old adage goes, “The scorpion may be an unwelcome guest, but it is still a guest.” Such guests are given an area of land far from the water, usually next to an anthill or scorpions' nest, and where there is no shade. They are forbidden from carrying weapons (they must leave them in their tents), and cannot go anywhere without an armed escort. Food and water consumed at the oasis is charged at double the normal rate.

NOMADIC TRIBAL ALLIANCES

There are many Bedu, cakali, hyaenidae, sand goblin, and sand giant (p. 163) tribes in the desert. Most are entwined in a complex pattern of alliances, neutrality, and hostility. Attitudes change as rapidly as the wind, and keeping track of them all is certainly no fun for the GM.

Any time a nomadic character interacts with a different tribe (regardless of race), draw a card from the action deck. (Don't bother rolling on the Reaction Table—tribal alliances and feuds go far beyond the individual.) Naturally, the GM can ignore this and simply pick a result—if he needs the tribe to be friendly, then they are friendly.

A red royal card (Jack through Ace) means the tribe is friendly to the hero's. They have a reaction of Friendly on the Reaction Table. A black royal card means the tribe is less welcoming, and has a reaction of Uncooperative. A numbered card of any color indicates neutrality—whether the tribe aids or hinders the hero depends on his actions and words. If a Joker is drawn, draw again. If the next card (redraw again if you get a second Joker) is a numbered card, the tribe remains neutral. A red royal card now indicates Helpful, and a black royal card the tribe is Hostile.

If you have multiple nomadic heroes in the part, you should draw one card for each player. A tribe may be friendly to one hero's tribe, yet hostile to another. Remember that the Hated Tribe Hindrance and Respected Tribe Edge modify these rules.



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