

The City of Dipur

Gateway to the East

(By Paul Kirk)

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City Overview

Dipur is a city of the Empire of Khazistan, lying 50 miles southwest of the Kharjah Pass. It is a garrison city, as well as a stopping off point for the many caravans travelling to, or from, Susrah and lands beyond. It is often referred to as 'The Gateway to the East' by the folk of Khazistan.

It is a city built from clay bricks. These and the mortar that holds them in place are made from the mud of the banks of the Oxartus River mixed with straw collected from fields of the myriad nameless villages that dot the southern foothills of the Zorab Mountains.

The city walls are not particularly high but they are broad and crenelated, patrolled by watchmen of the city's infamous Black Guard. Many of the buildings that cluster inside the walls are several storeys high and flat roofed, packed to the rafters with the urban poor of the city.

The river valley of the Oxartus is abundantly fertile and crops enough are grown to allow the feeding of the populace and for sizeable exports across the desert to Zul Bazzir.

The city has an urban population of some 8000 persons and provides a marketplace for a rural population of perhaps ten times that number who dwell nearby, in the valley of the Oxartus river and in the foothills of the city's hinterland.

Adartani mongrels account for roughly six in every ten of the urban population. There are roughly equal numbers of Khazistanis and Susrahmites, while a smaller Zorabi minority dwells almost exclusively in a district that lies in the shadow of the Back Gate, known locally as 'The Den'. The numbers of other ethnicities is much smaller among the rural population of the hinterland, which is now almost exclusively Khazistani.

The Satrapy of Dipur currently supports a military force of more than two thousand men, comprising many hundreds of Khazistani Horsemen, the elite soldiers of the Satrap's Guard, the City Watchmen of the Black Guard and the mercenary horsemen of Eskaros' Desert Patrol. Should the city itself be threatened, the Satrap could quickly press a further 400 'volunteers' into the ranks of the Black Guard.

The Authority Figure is

Tarkhan Bey, the Satrap of Dipur (Khazistani)

Other Notables include

Aram Anshal, the proprietor of the Gilded Palm (Susrahnite)

Balchak, Captain of the Black Guard and ex Crime Lord of the Dives(Khazistani)

Borak Cham, Hill Chief in exile, Crime Lord of the Den (Zorabi)

Brennar, the Captain of the Satrap's Guard (Tharag Thulan)

Ekrimala, Chief Devotee of Nakhramat and mother of Tarkhan Bey (Khazistani)

Elgamesh, Captain of the Sacred Band (Adartani Mongrel)

Haram Baal, a wealthy merchant of some renown (Susrahnite)

Ku Kao Chou, bodyguard and body servant to Wo Peng (Taikangian)

Malik Arshak, the Commander of the Tamari Horsemen of the Oxartus District(Khazistani)

Oktig Khan, the General of the Imperial Horsemen (Khazistani)

Roshamma, the High Priestess of the Moon Goddess (Adartani Mongrel)

Sutrahmunah, the Chief Concubine and mistress of Tarkhan Bey (Yar Ammonite)

Talham Ghor, 'the Bull', pit fighter (Zorabi)

Wo Peng, Inscrutable Sorcerer, Master of the Jade Serpent Temple and Vizier to the Satrap (Taikangian)

History

Dipur was originally a western city of the Susrahmites. It was founded nine hundred years before the present day by the hero, Martok Adartu and named Adartu in his honour. The sons and daughters of Martok Adartu ruled in the city for three hundred years until the the last King of that lineage, Jalmesh, was murdered by his own wife. Queen Lakarsha, known variously as the 'Tyrant of Adartu' and the 'Blood Queen' then ruled for three hundred years before she was finally deposed and destroyed by the Priests of Baal Khardah. The legends tell that she was no longer fully human and that her longevity was the result of some vile sorcerous pact.

The Priests of Baal Khardaah placed a young man named Tamnesh on the throne, claiming that he was of the line of Martok Adartu, whom they had hidden and kept safe all these years. Whether this Tamnesh was actually of the royal lineage or not, the people of Adartu rejoiced in the destruction of the Blood Queen and celebrated the coronation of King Tamnesh Adartu.

For a further two centuries, the descendants of Tamnesh sat upon the throne of Adartu unchallenged, until the coming of the Khazistani horde. The city was forced to capitulate to the Khazistanis after King Nahaburam Adartu and nine tenths of his soldiers were slain in battle on the banks of the Oxartus river.

In the intervening century, the make up of the population has changed dramatically. Many of the original Susrahnite inhabitants fled eastwards over the Kharjah Pass(including the family of the King), leaving behind only those with nothing to lose and those who feared to lose too much. The new rulers made deals with the wealthy merchants of the city and these were, for the most part, left unmolested. The poorer folk were not so lucky and were subjected to the whims of the conquerors for several days following the surrender of the city. The mongrel descendants of these forced unions, known as 'Adartanis' comprise more than half of the current city population and dwell in the sprawling slum district along the southern wall of the city, known as 'The Dives'.

New Player Race: Adartani

These people are the descendants of less wealthy Susrahmites who remained in Adartu following its surrender to the Khazistani Horde. Subjected to the whims of the conquerors, the racial make up of the city was altered forever as well as its name.

The Adartani are looked down upon as 'mongrels' by both the conquering Khazistanis and the remaining Susrahmites of Dipur. Finding gainful employment is difficult for them and many turn to crime or become Free Companions in the mercenary companies of Xoth.

Physical Description - Adartani are generally tall and lithe. They retain Susrahnite features but have a lighter skin tone, inherited from the Khazistanis.

Religion - Adartani favour the Gods of the Susrahmites. Belet Lil is a particular favourite, though many swear 'by Aklathu's Beard!'

Racial Traits - +1 Dex

The Wealthy District

The part of the city where rich merchants and noblemen live is separated from the rest by a high wall, its gate guarded day and night by watchmen of the infamous Black Guard.

Broad, palm tree lined, avenues are flanked by the walled enclosures of dozens of villas. These range in size and majesty from those that are merely comfortable to those of vast and opulent splendour.

The population of this district is split almost evenly between old Susrahnite Noble families and those of wealthy foreign merchants. A mere handful of Khazistani nobles dwell in the city, although several powerful families have large estates in the nearby valley of the Oxartus river.

Several of the wealthiest families maintain small groups of their own armed retainers, but Khazistani Law limits their numbers to a half dozen per household.

This is the most heavily patrolled district of the city. Travellers are not permitted to enter unless they have letters of introduction to, or from, one of the residents. Black Guardsmen routinely approach any strangers or vagrants who have managed to gain entrance. A swift beating followed by a forcible ejection is the fate of most of these undesirables.

The House of Haram Baal

Located in the wealthy district of Dipur, Haram Baal's home lies near the wall of the city, separated from it only by a narrow cobbled alleyway that runs between the two.

Within the whitewashed walls lies a garden with an ornamental pool and the villa itself (a flat roofed, two storey building). A second building contains living quarters for a half dozen servants and a quartet of armed watchmen (Use the Susrahnite Mercenaries from 'The Shadow of the Ragged King').

The Villa, itself, contains Haram's private rooms and offices, as well as a feasting hall, kitchens and eight guest bedrooms. Four of these are permanently occupied.

The first is shared by Dalram Baal and his wife Sintu. Dalram is Haram's brother who has fallen on hard times and lives here by virtue of their shared blood and Haram's good nature. Unknown to Haram Baal and the other members of the household, his brother has become a member of a clandestine group known as 'the Scions of Adartu' (See Dalram's Stats in that adventure)

The second is the chamber of their son, Baalam, who covets his uncle's wealth and good fortune. He prays that Haram will not return from his trip to Zul Bazzir and asks the Gods that some misfortune to befall his Uncle upon the road.

A third room belongs to Hadrubel, the Steward. Tall and almost impossibly handsome, Hadrubel is in charge of the running of the household in his master's absence. In this, he meets with much resistance to his efforts from young Baalam, who resents such power and position being in the hands of a mere servant. Baalam is starting to come to the conclusion that Hadrubel is more than a simple steward and may, in fact, be the reason why his uncle has never taken a wife.

The fourth and final, occupied, room is that of N'Gomba, the master's Azimba bodyguard.

The Palace of the Satrap

Perched upon a rocky crag at the city's northern edge, the Palace dominates the city skyline. Although there are tales of hidden passages that burrow through the sandstone to various locations throughout the city, the only apparent way to enter the palace is to climb the steep and narrow path that leads from the Square of the Grand Souk, through the King's Kasbah and up to the front gate.

The Palace itself contains the private chambers of the Satrap as well as the Seraglio, wherein live the ladies of the court who were previously his mistresses. There is also a large feasting hall where Tarkhan Bey holds court and sumptuously appointed guest rooms for a score or more of visitors.

The Vizier, Wo Peng has his private chambers here, as does Brennar the Northron who is Captain of the Guard. There are kitchens, sculleries and domiciles for almost two hundred servants and slaves who live and work within the palace confines. A barracks block contains the sleeping quarters and armoury for a company of the elite soldiers of the Palace Guard.

The palace also contains a temple to the Goddess Nakhramat, known as 'the Temple on the Rock'. This is a new addition to the palace, added since the Khazistani conquest. It is a single storey building, built in the Khazistani style, surmounted by a copper dome and with copper minarets at each corner.

Tarkhan Bey - Khazistani Satrap, the Hawk of Kharjah

A handsome and charismatic fellow with a neatly trimmed beard and moustache under a long aquiline nose, Tarkhan Bey is considered charming and witty, a man of culture. He is, however, also a man of war and has commanded a number of successful expeditions against recalcitrant Zorabis and forays into Susrah.

He is unmarried and was very popular with the ladies of the court, but recently a Yar Ammonite dancing girl named Sutramunah stole his heart and until her disappearance, she wielded considerable influence over him.

Whoever is behind the girl's disappearance, he seems surprisingly nonplussed by her absence. An observer, familiar with the Satrap, might even suggest that he is not quite himself at the moment.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|-----------------|---------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength. | 13. | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 2/5 |
| Constitution). | 12. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 2/5 |
| Size). | 13. | Improvement Mod | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 4/6 |
| Intelligence). | 14. | Magic Points. | 11. | 10-12. | Chest. | 4/7 |
| Power). | 11. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 2/4 |
| Dexterity). | 15. | Strike Rank. | 15(10). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 2/4 |
| Charisma). | 15. | | | 19-20. | Head | 5/5 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 58%, Brawn 45%, Culture(Khazistani) 73%, Dance 45, Evade 51%, Influence 90%, Insight 35%, Language(Khazistani) 84%, Lore(Khazistan) 61%, Perception 48%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 56%, Ride 72%, Sing 47%, Unarmed 82%

Advanced Skills

Art 42%, Courtesy 66%, Culture(Susrahnite) 41%, Culture (Yar Ammonite) 30%, Culture(Zorabi) 50%, Gambling 43%, Language(Susrahnite) 51%, Language(Yar Ammonite) 30%, Language(Zorabi) 52%, Lore(History) 59%, Lore(Dipur) 42%, Lore(Military Tactics) 37%, Oratory 61%, Play Instrument 35%, Seduction 57%, Streetwise 44%, Survival 41%,Track 29%

Equipment - Bronzed Scale Hauberk, Spired Helmet, Hard Leather Greaves and Bracers, Shamshir, Yataghan and Roundshield in battle. Blue silk robes and a turban with peacock feathers when holding court. Dozens of servants, scores of slaves, 200 household guards, a palace and personal wealth worth tens of thousands of silver coins. The Padishah's ring (A ring of gold worth 300 silver coins, but priceless to those who recognise it as the Satrap's badge of authority). A locket of gold containing a miniature portrait of Sutrahmunah. A braid of her hair worn as a bracelet. The locket is worth 20 gold coins to a fence but immeasurably more to the Satrap.

His armour and weapons are of excellent quality. Each possesses the highly desirable quality and they are inlaid with semi precious stones, silver wire and gold filigree.

Tactics - A brave and resourceful leader of men, he is an accomplished duellist who fights honourably. Brennar, his guard captain, considers his notions of honour to be foolish and it is probably fortunate that he has not had to partake in a duel for almost a dozen years. In battle he is surrounded by kettle drummers and the warriors of his mounted bodyguard and is difficult to approach. In battle, he realises his duty is to achieve victory with as few losses as possible. He has never known defeat and is known as 'the Hawk of Kharjah'.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Yataghan. | M. | M. | D6+2+D2. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Shamshir | L. | V | D10+D2. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed,Sunder,2H |
| Round Shield. | L. | S. | D4+D2. | 6/12. | Na. | Na |

Weapon Styles

Khazistani Officer.(Sword and Shield, 2H Sword) 91%

Heroic Abilities

Duellist, Heroic Aura, Linguist

Brennar - Captain of the Satrap's Guard

Brennar the Northron wandered down out of the frigid northlands some five years previously and took service as a mercenary in the employ of the King of Belthar. He fought at the battle of the Ophrat River, where the Tamari Horsemen of Khazistan routed a hastily assembled Susrahnite army that had gathered to oppose them.

He was the last man of the Susrahnite host to remain upon the field of battle, swinging his great battle-axe and surrounded by the heaped bodies of fallen riders.

Tarkhan Bey offered the Tarag Thulan life in return for his service. Ever pragmatic, Brennar accepted the offer and rose quickly through the ranks of the Satrap's Guard to become their Captain. There is a fair amount of hostility to this foreigner among the native Khazistanis of the guard but they follow his orders unquestioningly, if grudgingly.

Brennar is presently involved in a romantic liaison with the High Priestess of Belet Lil, but she does not love him and neither does he love her. He is well aware that she seeks to use him to regain her influence at court and to limit the power of the Vizier, Wo Peng.

Roshamma has actually asked him on several occasions to murder the 'Taikangian Devil' but so far he has simply laughed and denied her requests. The truth is that Brennar fears the power of the black sorcery that the Vizier is rumoured to wield.

He stands well over six feet tall with long fair hair and bright blue eyes. Strongly built yet graceful, he has an imposing presence. His hair is tied in a single braid at the back of his head and he is clean shaven. His armour consists of a sleeved Hauberk of ringmail and hard leather greaves. He wears no helmet unless going into battle, when he wears a savage looking cap of iron with bulls horns attached to it's sides (4Ap)

While loyal to Tarkhan Bey, he is a wanderer at heart. It would not take much convincing to have him take off on a life of wild adventure once more. He is somewhat perturbed by the Satrap's lack of concern over the recent disappearance of Sutramunah. Khazistani potentates are renowned for secretly disposing of those who offend them although, he had not imagined Tarkhan Bey to be the type, nor how Sutramunah might have given him offence.

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|----------------|-----|------------------|---------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 17. | Combat actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 2/7 |
| Constitution). | 16. | Damage Mod. | +D4. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 2/7 |
| Size). | 17. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 3/8 |
| Intelligence). | 14. | Magic Points. | 15. | 10-12. | Chest. | 3/9 |
| Power). | 15. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 3/6 |
| Dexterity) | 15. | Strike Rank. | 15(10). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 3/6 |
| Charisma). | 13 | | | 19-20. | Head. | 4/7 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 90%, Brawn 81%, Culture(Thulan) 60%, Evade 75%, Insight 41%, Language(Thulan) 83%, Lore(Tarag Thule) 60%, Perception 54%, Persistence 72%, Resilience 72%, Sleight 47%, Stealth 55%, Unarmed 75%

Advanced Skills

Courtesy 31%, Culture(Khazistani) 42%, Culture(Susrahnite) 41%, Gambling 53%, Language(Khazi) 47%, Language(Susrahnite) 38%, Lore(Dipur) 34%, Seduction 56%, Streetwise 49%, Survival 68%, Tracking 57%

Equipment - Horned helmet, sleeved ring mail Hauberk, hard leather greaves, battle-axe, knife, target shield, hatchet. 25 silver coins and 3 gold coins in a money belt. 1000 silver coins and 20 Gold invested with the Jairani Spice Merchant, Mulapha of Yemar, on the Street of a Hundred Bazaars.

Tactics - Kill or incapacitate his enemies as quickly as possible. Hit them as hard as possible, as often as possible, until they stop moving and making noises.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Battle-axe | M. | M. | D6+1+D4 | 4/8 | na. | Bleed |
| 2H Battle-axe. | M. | M. | D8+1+D4. | 4/8 | na. | Bleed, Sunder |
| Target Shield. | L. | S. | D6+D4 | 4/12. | na. | Impale |

Weapon Styles - Thulan Warrior (Dagger, 1H Sword, 2H Sword, Shield). 90%
Thulan Forester (1H Axe, 2H Axe). 90%

Heroic Abilities - Battle Fury, Mighty Blow, Tireless

The Temple on the Rock

The Temple of Nakhramat, is a part of the west wing of the Satrap's palace. It is the chief place of veneration of the Goddess to the Khazistani women of Dipur. Every day, dozens of Khazistani women enter the King's Kasbah and climb the steps to offer their devotions at the shrine.

The chief devotee of the temple is Ekrimala, the mother of Tarkhan Bey and the white marble steps that lead into the shrine's interior are guarded by a patrol of the Satrap's Guard at all times.

Ekrimala has her own personal quarters within, where she meets with her 'Kardeslik' agents and quarters for her six Handmaidens. The shrine itself is a circular chamber with several doors that lead to small cells for meditation and contemplation. It boasts a four foot tall statue of Nakhramat, carved from ebony wood, that sits upon an altar cast from gold. There is no love lost between those who pray here and those who worship at the Temple of the Moon Maidens.

Ekrimala - Devotee of Nakhramat and mother of the Satrap

Ekrimala is chief among the followers of Nakhramat in Dipur. Coldly beautiful and extremely seductive, her hair hangs to her waist and is a lustrous jet black in colour. Her clothing is also black and close fitting but unlike the priestesses of the Moon Goddess, there is no flesh on display. Ekrimala despises the wanton sexuality of the followers of the Moon Goddess and considers their rites to be depraved. Her machinations saw their cult proscribed for a time under the rule of the previous Satrap (her husband). However, the devious harlots simply melted away into the Dives, to resurface following his untimely death.

Her son, Tarkhan Bey, has proved less easy to manipulate than his father and the Cult of the Moon Goddess proselytises openly once again under his rule. Afraid that he had become a target for conquest by the wily Roshamma, High Priestess of Belet Lil, she took steps to ensure that her son would not be debauched.

Tarkhan Bey's penchant for women of exotic beauty was well known to her and it was she who hired the kidnappers that would eventually abduct Sutrahmunah and bring her to Dipur. Ekrimala fairly cackled with glee when Turhan Bey fell instantly and irrevocably in love with the Yar Ammonite. That the girl was a slave did not concern her, better that than a vile Moon Whore.

Sutrahmunah's disappearance and her son's apparent lack of concern has led Ekrimala to consider whether he has been ensorcelled. If so, is it the work of the Arch Harlot, Roshamma, or of the inscrutable Wo Peng? She is currently hiring men through her agents, the Kardeslik, to discover the whereabouts of the missing girl.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|---------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 11. | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution). | 16. | Damage Mod. | Na. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 10. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 0/7 |
| Intelligence). | 16. | Magic Points. | 18. | 10-12. | Chest. | 0/8 |
| Power). | 18. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 0/5 |
| Dexterity). | 12. | Strike Rank. | 14 (). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 0/5 |
| Charisma). | 15. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 0/6 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 43%, Culture(Khazistani) 82%, Evade 44%, First Aid 54%, Influence 71%, Insight 55%, Language(Khazi) 90%, Lore(Dipur) 65%, Perception 54%, Persistence 68%, Resilience 54%, Sing 65%

Advanced Skills.

Courtesy 88%, Healing 45%, Language(Susrahnite) 56%, Lore(Khazistan) 58%, Lore(Theology) 82%, Lore(Nakhramat) 80%, Lore(Apotropaics) 63%, Oratory 55%, Seduction 80%

Magical Skills

Grimoire 70%, Manipulation 64%, Meditation 54%

Equipment - Cowled ceremonial robe, Ivory mask(worth 100 gold coins), concealed knife, golden medallion on a chain(Symbol of Nakhramat), six acolytes, six agents of the Kardeslik, five soldiers of the Palace Guard.

Tactics - Ekrimala does not fight unless it is absolutely necessary. She relies upon her position as the Satrap's mother to keep her from harm and even in her role as Chief Devotee of Nakhramat she is accompanied by soldiers of the Palace guard.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Hp/Ap. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Knife. | S. | S. | D3. | 5/4. | Na. | Bleed, Impale |

Combat Style

Silent Kiss (Iris, Knife, Kris, Kunai, Dart Blade) 44%

Magic - Grimoire (Succour's Kiss) - see SGB

Special Ability - Imperious Gaze

Ekrimala gains a +20% to all Influence rolls for non violent intimidation of her social inferiors an those she considers as lesser mortals.

Palace Guards (160)

The soldiers of the Palace Guard are hand picked for their bravery and loyalty. They are organised into four companies of forty men and are trained in the use of bow, peyk and shamshir. (The Shamshir is a two handed scimitar and a Peyk is a form of Halberd.) They follow the commands of their Lord unquestioningly and their current Captain grudgingly. They are expected to lay down their lives to defend Tarkhan Bey and his family. In return, they live in the fairly luxurious surroundings of the King's Kasbah with their every need attended to.

Their spired helmets and scale armour are bronzed and their turbans and trows are a sky blue shade.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|-----------------|-------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 13 | Combat actions. | 2. | 1-3. | Right leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution). | 13. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 13. | Improvement Mod | na. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 4/7 |
| Intelligence). | 11. | Magic Points. | 10. | 10-12. | Chest. | 4/8 |
| Power). | 10. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 2/5 |
| Dexterity). | 12. | Strike Rank. | 12(8) | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 2/5 |
| Charisma). | 10. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 4/6 |

Common Skills

Athletics 45%, Brawn 46%, Culture(Khazistani) 52%, Evade 44%, Language(Khazi) 71%, Lore(Khazistani) 52%, Perception 41%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 46%

Advanced Skills

Courtesy 45%, Language(Susrahnite) 31%, Language(Zorabi) 30%, Lore(Dipur)31%, Lore(Kushraf Pass) 32%, Lore(Susrah) 30%, Survival 34%

Equipment - Scale Hauberk, Hard Leather Bracers, Spired Helmet(4Ap).The Satrap's guards carry Peyks or wield Shamshirs while on duty. Each carries 2d6 silver coins and D2 gold coins in a belt pouch.

Tactics - Interpose themselves between the Satrap or his mother and any, would be, assailants. At any given time, forty of these warriors are on duty. Ten are located at the main gate to the palace. Twenty men are stationed, either singly or in pairs, at guard posts in the palace grounds and buildings. Five men are always stationed in close proximity to the Satrap as his bodyguards and five more with his mother, Ekrimala.

Every fifth man is a sergeant at arms and is equipped with a Peyk that denotes his station. The remaining companies are to be found in the barracks or in the taverns and fleshpots of the city.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|-----------------|----|-----|----------|--------|--------|---------------------------|
| Peyk | L. | VL. | D8+2+D2. | 4/10. | Na. | Entangle,Impale,Sunder,2H |
| Shamshir | L. | L | D10+D2 | 6/10 | Na. | Bleed,Sunder,2H |
| Khazistani Bow. | M | na. | D6+1+D2. | 4/4 | 90m. | Impale |

Weapon Style

Guardsmen (Halberd, Tulwar, Khazi Bow) 65%

For Sergeants, add +5% to all skills and include an Influence skill of 30%

Khazistani Imperial Lancers (600)

It has been many years since the armies of the Pahlshah marched to a real war, yet these grim faced warriors are still veterans of a dozen minor conflicts. They are clad in scale hauberks with leather bracers and wear spired helmets wrapped with a faded red turban. Loose fitting trows that end just below the knee are the same colour as their turbans and each wears knee high boots of black felt, with upturned toes.

They have recently arrived in Dipur under the command of General Oktig and are there to support the locally raised Tamari forces, although rumours persist of impending war with Susrah.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|-----------------|-------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 13 | Combat actions. | 2. | 1-3. | Right leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution) | 13. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 13. | Improvement Mod | na. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 4/7 |
| Intelligence). | 11. | Magic Points. | 10. | 10-12. | Chest. | 4/8 |
| Power). | 10. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 2/5 |
| Dexterity). | 12. | Strike Rank. | 12(8) | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 2/5 |
| Charisma). | 10. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 4/6 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 45%, Brawn 47%, Culture(Khazistani) 52%, Evade 44%, Language(Khazi) 71%, Lore(Khazistan) 52%, Perception 41%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 46%, Ride 52%

Advanced Skills

Language(Susrahnite) 31%, Language(Zorabi) 30%, Lore(Kharjah Pass) 32%, Lore(Susrah) 30%, Lore(Dipur) 31%, Survival 34%

Equipment - Scale Hauberk, Hard Leather Bracers, Spired Helmet(4Ap). Yataghan and Round Shield, Lance, Khazi Bow and 2 x Quivers of 20 arrows. Mounted on a warhorse. Each carries 2d6 silver coins in a belt pouch.

Tactics - The men of General Oktig's command are trained in the normal methods of warfare for the Khazi horde. To the pounding of great kettle drums they attack in staggered waves of horsemen, loosing flights of arrows at their enemies. Only when the foe is close to breaking will they take up their lances and swords to engage in melee.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Yataghan | M. | M. | D6+2. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Round Shield. | L. | S. | D4+D2. | 6/12. | Na. | Na |
| Lance. | H. | VL. | D10+D2. | 4/10. | Na. | Impale |
| Khazistani Bow. | M | na. | D6+1+D2. | 4/4 | 90m. | Impale |

Weapon Styles

Lancer (1H Sword and Shield, Lance and Shield) 60%, Horse Archer (Khazi Bow) 60%

For Sergeants, add +5% to all skills and include an Influence skill of 30%

For Captains, add + 10% to all Weapon Skills and add an Influence of 50% as well as a Shamshir skill of 70%.

Khazistani Tamari Horsemen (800)

Raised from among the landowners(Tamari) of the Oxartus valley, these fellows are generally regarded as excellent horsemen, and hardy warriors. Khazistani law requires each landowner(Tamar) to present himself and a minimum of four armoured and mounted retainers should the Padishah, or one of his Satraps, require it.

Many of them are kin to one another, fathers and sons, uncles and brothers. It is these family ties that make them fight harder and show less inclination to abandon their fellows should the day go badly.

The richest of the landowners and their retainues are armed and equipped in similar fashion to the Imperial Lancers, while those from less wealthy backgrounds favour long jerkins of leather, studded with brass buttons. Less wealthy Tamari usually forego helmets in favour of simple turbans which they wrap tightly around their faces, leaving only the eyes visible. They are armed with bows, yataghans and round shields.

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----------------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 13 | Combat actions. | 2. | 1-3. | Right leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution) | 13. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 13. | Improvement Mod | na. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 3/7 |
| Intelligence) | 11. | Magic Points. | 10. | 10-12. | Chest. | 3/8 |
| Power). | 10. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 2/5 |
| Dexterity). | 12. | Strike Rank. | 12(10) | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 2/5 |
| Charisma). | 10. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 0/6 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 45%, Brawn 46%, Culture(Khazistani) 52%, Evade 44%,
Language(Khazi) 71%, Lore(Khazistan) 52%, Perception 41%, Persistence 40%,
Resilience 46%, Ride 52%

Advanced Skills

Language(Susrahnite) 31%, Language(Zorabi) 30%, Lore(Dipur) 31%,
Lore(Kushraf Pass) 32%, Lore(Susrah) 30%, Survival 36%

Equipment - Studded Leather Hauberk, Hard Leather Bracers, Yataghan and Round Shield, Khazi Shortbow and 2x Quivers of 20 arrows. D6 silver coins in a belt pouch. Mounted on a warhorse.(Use Imperial Lancer Stats for Wealthy Tamar Lords and retainers)

Tactics - These men are trained in the normal methods of warfare for the Khazistani horde.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Yataghan | M. | M. | D6+2. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Round Shield. | L. | S. | D4+D2. | 6/12. | Na. | Na |
| Khazistani Bow. | M | na. | D6+1+D2. | 4/4 | 90m. | Impale |

Weapon Style

Tamar Horseman(1H Sword and Shield, Khazi Bow) 55%

For Sergeants, add +5% to all skills and include an Influence skill of 30%

For Captains, add + 10% to all Weapon Skills and add an Influence of 50% as well as a Shamshir skill of 70%.

Palace Guard Lancers (40)

The men of the guard lancers are an elite company of mounted soldiers who garrison the fortress known as the King's Kasbah. When Tarkhen Bey travels abroad, these armoured riders form his mounted bodyguard. Like the men of the foot companies of the Palace Guard, these men are treated to every luxury that money can buy and they too will lay down their lives to protect their lord.

Their armour and helmets are bronzed and their uniforms are a pale blue shade.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|-----------------|-------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 13 | Combat actions. | 2. | 1-3. | Right leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution) | 13. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 13. | Improvement Mod | na. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 4/7 |
| Intelligence). | 11. | Magic Points. | 10. | 10-12. | Chest. | 4/8 |
| Power). | 10. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 4/5 |
| Dexterity). | 12. | Strike Rank. | 12(8) | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 4/5 |
| Charisma). | 10. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 4/6 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 45%, Brawn 46%, Culture(Khazistani). 52%, Evade 44%,
Language(Khazi) 71%, Lore(Khazistani) 52%, Perception 41%, Persistence 40%,
Resilience 46%, Ride 65%

Advanced Skills

Language(Susrahnite) 31%, Language(Zorabi) 30%, Lore(Dipur) 31%,
Lore(Kushraf Pass) 32%, Lore(Susrah) 30%, Survival 34%

Equipment - Sleeved Scale Hauberk, Spired Helmet(4Ap). Yataghan and Round Shield, Lance, Khazi Shortbow and 2 x Quivers of 20 arrows. Mounted on a warhorse. Each carries 2d6 silver coins and D2 Gold coins in a belt pouch.

Tactics - the Lancers of the Guard form up around the Satrap when he takes the field of battle or escort him when he travels outside the city walls. They are trained in standard Khazistani battle tactics but never leave their Lord's side. Every fifth man is a sergeant.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Yataghan | M. | M. | D6+2. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Round Shield. | L. | S. | D4+D2. | 6/12. | Na. | Na |
| Lance. | H. | VL. | D10+D2. | 4/10. | Na. | Impale |
| Khazistani Bow. | M | na. | D6+1+D2. | 4/4 | 90m. | Impale |

Weapon Style

Guard Lancer (1H Sword and Shield, Lance and Shield, Khazi Bow). 65%

For Sergeants, add +5% to all skills and include an Influence skill of 30%

For Captains, add + 10% to all Weapon Skills and add an Influence of 50% as well as a Shamshir skill of 70%.

The King's Kasbah

At the northern edge of the Square of the Grand Souk stands the fortified citadel known as the 'Kings Kasbah'. It protects the approach to the Palace and consists of a fortified gatehouse and barracks for the companies of the Satrap's Elite Guard, who man its bronze clad portals. A pair of ballistae are mounted on the battlements, overlooking the Square and there are always forty soldiers on duty at any given time. The remainder are to be found, off duty, in the barracks or carousing in the fleshpots and alehouses of the city. The Kings Kasbah also contains stabling for the horses of the Satrap's household and enough horses for the mounted company of his guards. Beyond the King's Kasbah, a narrow path snakes up the face of the crag to the main entrance of the palace where men of the Palace Guard are stationed at the gates.

The Great Kasbah and The Conquerors Kasbah

The Great Kasbah is the name for the citadel that buttresses the Desert Gate of the city. The Conquerors Kasbah lies along the south wall, beside the gate that shares its name. These two citadels are mighty bastions for the defence of the city and contain armouries, barracks and stable blocks for the warriors of the Padishah. The stable blocks of each Kasbah contain enough spaces for up to a hundred riders to be mounted immediately. The horses for the remainder of the garrison are usually being herded in the nearby hill country or corralled in great barns, built in the shadow of the walls. In times of serious threat, all mounts are to be brought into the city and picketed in the Square of the Grand Souk. Oktig Khan and the other officers under his command have their private quarters and stables within these citadels. Each has its own well and is well stocked with supplies. Both are capable of offering continued resistance to an enemy, even in the eventuality of the other, or the rest of the city having fallen.

The Black Kasbah (The Watch Barracks)

The watch barracks, known as 'the Black Kasbah' sits in the shadow of the Palace, beside the Black Gate, on the road to the Kharjah Pass. This fortress contains the cramped barracks and armouries for the watchmen of the Black Guard as well as the offices and private quarters of their commanders. It too has its own well and storage rooms. Underneath the main buildings are catacombs which serve as the city's prison. Long term prisoners are a rarity in Dipur. Felons are either quickly executed or sold into slavery on the auction block in the Old Caravanserai. Local quarry and mine owners are often invited into the Black Kasbah to choose from the strongest of the prisoners for their needs. A fair percentage of the coin paid over by these grandees does not make into the Padishah's coffers and is never accounted for.

Oktig Khan - Khazistani Imperial General

A greying and heavily bearded veteran of a hundred battles, Oktig commands an army in service to the Padishah. A half dozen captains and two score of sergeants deliver his orders and fully six hundred lancers stand under arms, ready to do his bidding.

The General has a secret. Once he was known as Malthaz and was the Captain of the Guard for the previous Satrap of Dipur. He was deemed to be negligent and responsible for his Lord's death at the hands of unknown assassins. Facing execution, he fled Dipur and joined the regular army as an enlisted man. Cream rises to the top, as the old saying goes, and it did not take him long to make a name for himself. He rose to the rank of General over a period of twenty years. Tarkhan Bey has failed to recognise him since his return, but then he was a much younger and healthier looking man when he departed and the Satrap was but a boy.

He routinely ignores requests from Tarkhan Bey to present himself at court and insists that he and his troops remain uninvolved in the day to day politics of the city.

However, were Tarkhan Bey in danger, Oktig would happily sacrifice himself and his whole command to repay the debt he believes that he owes him and find redemption.

As befits a General of the Padishah's host, his armour is of exceptional quality. His Hauberk and Helm possess the Highly Desirable quality and his yataghan and great scimitar possess the Highly Effective quality.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 14. | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution) | 14. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 12. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 5/7 |
| Intelligence). | 13. | Magic Points. | 10. | 10-12. | Chest. | 5/8 |
| Power). | 10. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm | 5/5 |
| Dexterity). | 13. | Strike Rank. | 13(8). | 16-18 | Left Arm. | 5/5 |
| Charisma). | 13. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 5/6 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 49%, Brawn 46%, Culture(Khazistani) 60%, Evade 56%, Influence 57%, Insight 43%, Language(Khazi) 81%, Lore(Khazistani) 59%, Persuade 39%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 59%, Ride 53%, Unarmed 57%

Advanced Skills

Courtesy 53%, Lore(Dipur) 51%, Lore(Military Tactics) 78%, Survival 36%

Equipment - Spired helm with mail aventail and a red turban, sleeved chain mail Hauberk, yataghan and round shield, Shamshir. A bottle of wine and a gold medallion(worth 100 silver coins). The medallion was a gift from the previous Satrap, Orkhan Bey, in recognition of his loyalty and friendship. Oktig never wears it but often gazes at it for hours on end when alcohol brings a maudlin mood upon him.

600+ soldiers, a citadel fortress and several thousand silver coins. He always carries at least 20 silvers on his person.

Tactics - These days, it would be very rare for the General to have to partake in personal combat. He is not the fighter that he once was but is quite the battlefield tactician. If the Satrap was imperilled, it would be the catalyst for him to draw his sword once again. He would not rush headlong into the fray like he once might have but, would summon a squad of his most trusted veterans to accompany him.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Yataghan. | M. | M. | D6+2+D2. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Round Shield. | L. | S. | D4+D2. | 6/12. | Na. | Na |
| Shamshir. | L. | L | D10+1+D2. | 4/10 | Na. | Bleed, Sunder |

Weapon Styles - Khazistani Officer(1H Sword and Shield, 2H Sword) 74%

Malik Arshak - Tamarkhan of the Oxartus District

Black of beard and blacker of heart, Malik Arshak is the Tamarkhan(commander) of the Tamari riders of the Oxartus valley. Although this is a position of great power, Oglu Khan resents the fact that he must defer all his military decisions to Tarkhan Bey. How can he ever hope to better his reputation as a battlefield commander in this intolerable situation? This resentment has turned to thoughts of treachery. Along with some of the officers and men under his command, he is beginning to hatch a plot to remove the Satrap and his interfering mother from power and take it for himself.

These traitors number a mere handful, several score of men at most, as the vast majority of the local soldiery are loyal to the Satrap and would follow the 'Hawk of Kharjah' through the gates of the Nine Hells if he commanded it. Many of the conspirators are criminals whose freedom has been bought from the catacombs under the Black Kasbah though, some few are Khazistanis of noble birth who feel that they have been slighted by the Satrap and that their talents would be better appreciated under a new ruler.

Unlike Oktig, Malik does indeed use his position to exert some influence in the politics of the city and has, upon occasion, turned his soldiers loose upon rioters and looters. This has led him into alliance with Balchak, the commander of the Black Guard. Malik believes that should he make his play for power, he could rely on Balchak and his men to support him. Malik is a native of the city and has his family own estates in the hinterland as well as an impressive walled villa in the wealthy district. He is the uncle of Captain Kilij Arshak at Fort Yirlat (see The Shadow of the Ragged King) although his nephew is completely unaware of his uncle's plotting. He maintains a small band of Azimban mercenaries as household guards at his villa in the wealthy district of the city. His personal Tamari retainers, based at his holdings to the north of the city, number more than a hundred riders.

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|------------------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 13. | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution) | 14. | Damage Mod | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 14. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 4/7 |
| Intelligence) | 13 | Magic Points. | 11. | 10-12. | Chest. | 4/8 |
| Power). | 11. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 4/5 |
| Dexterity). | 12. | Strike Rank. | 13(8). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 4/5 |
| Charisma). | 13. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 5/6 |

Common Skills

Athletics 45%, Brawn 47%, Culture(Khazistani) 63%, Evade 54%, Influence 55%, Insight 49%, Language(Khazi) 77%, Lore(Khazistan) 57%, Persuade 47%, Persistence 51%, Resilience 56%, Ride 51%, Stealth 53%, Unarmed 45%

Advanced Skills

Courtesy 57%, Lore(Dipur) 63%, Lore(Military Tactics) 70%, Streetwise 44%, Survival 37%

Equipment - Spired helmet with nasal guard, mail aventail. White turban and cloak. Sleeved scale Hauberk, Yataghan and round shield. Shamshir. 800+ soldiers, a country estate, a walled villa and several thousand silver coins. He always wears expensive and highly desirable clothes when not armoured and carries a pouch of assorted gold and silver coins. His arms and armour also possess the highly desirable quality.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Yataghan. | M. | M. | D6+2+D2. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Round Shield. | L. | S. | D4+D2. | 6/12. | Na. | Na |
| Shamshir. | L. | L | D10+1+D2. | 4/10 | Na. | Bleed, Sunder |

Tactics - Malik is a capable fighter and follows the Khazistani traditions of aggressive attacking, aimed at downing the foe as quickly as possible. Like most Khazistani officers and noblemen, his honour will prevent him from surrendering to any foe he considers to be socially inferior.

Weapon Styles - Khazistani Officer(1H Sword and Shield, 2H Sword) 80%

Watchman - the Black Guard of Dipur (400)

The city watch are referred to locally as 'the Black Guard' on account of the colour of their cloaks and uniforms. They are divided into four watches and each watch commander reports to their Captain, who is supposed to report directly to Tarkhan Bey. In reality their day to day command has been given over to the Vizier as the Satrap is usually much too busy with other, more important, matters.

The three watches are differentiated by a coloured strip of material, worn around the upper right arm. The Captain of the Black Guard is a villainous thug named Balchak and under his leadership they have become just as corrupt as the criminals they were recruited to oppose. The majority of the Black Guard are Adartani mongrels, this being one of the few military positions that the Khazistani overlords consider them to be fit for. A handful are Khazistanis by birth, representing the officers and a large percentage of the sergeants.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 12. | Combat Actions. | 2. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/5 |
| Constitution) | 11. | Damage Mod. | Na. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/5 |
| Size). | 12. | Improvement Mod. | Na | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 2/6 |
| Intelligence). | 10. | Magic Points. | 10. | 10-12. | Chest. | 2/7 |
| Power). | 10. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 2/4 |
| Dexterity). | 11. | Strike Rank. | 11(8). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 2/4 |
| Charisma). | 10. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 4/5 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 33%, Brawn 34%, Culture(Susrahnite) 51%, Evade 32%, Influence 25%, Insight 28%, Lang(Susrahnite) 50%, Lore(Dipur) 50%, Perception 31%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 38%, Stealth 31%

Advanced Skills

Gambling 31%, Lang(Khazi) 45%, Streetwise 47%

Equipment - Leather Scale Hauberk(2AP), Spired Helmet, Hard Leather Bracers, Target Shield, Club, Dagger, Shortbow and a dozen arrows. D4 silver coins in belt pouch, Whistle

Tactics - The Men of the Black Guard saunter around Dipur ready to quell unrest or arrest criminals. A watch patrol comprises five men including a sergeant. The sergeant carries a man catcher stave and will attempt to entangle an opponent. The spearmen act in unison to fend off other attackers while the bowman will loose arrows at any who are too difficult for his companions to detain. If they find the selves facing similar, or greater, numbers of foes they will withdraw and call for assistance. A further patrol is normally no more than minutes away.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Club. | M. | S. | D6. | 4/4. | Na. | Stun Location |
| Target Shield. | L. | S. | D6. | 4/12. | Na. | Impale |
| Short Bow | M. | Na. | D6. | 4/4. | 90m | Impale |
| Spear. | M. | L. | D8+1. | 4/5. | 25m | Impale |
| Mancatcher. | L. | VL. | D4. | 4/10. | Na. | Entangle |

Combat Styles - City Militia (Bow, Club, Mancatcher, Spear and Shield) 50%

Add +10% to all skills to represent Sergeants and add an Influence skill of 30%. Every fifth man carries a bow instead of a spear.

Balchak - Captain of the Black Guard

The tough and thuggish commander of the Black Guard, Balchak is short but stocky with broad shoulders and a barrel chest. He is bald headed with drooping moustaches and a vivid scar that bisects his right eyebrow onto his cheek. A permanent scowl is etched upon his face and he has an extremely violent disposition. Few who cross him live to regret it. A Khazistani of ignoble birth, he carries a wickedly curved scimitar with a flaring blade instead of the Yataghan normally favoured by other Khazistani officers.

His quarters are in the eastern watch tower of the Black Kasbah. These rooms are shared with Malthom, Burza and Yulzuk, his subordinates(chief sidekicks) although, each has their own private sleeping area.

Balchak has only been recently commissioned, appointed by the Vizier to replace the unfortunate Captain Yildirim, who was murdered in the Old Caravanserai by unknown assailants. Before this, he was the leader of a criminal gang in 'the Dives' district using the threat of violence to extort coin from their victims. More than two score of his watchmen are old members of this gang and he continues his extortion, now uninhibited by any authority. More and more of the Black Guard are turning to criminality as they see that their Captain is not inclined to stop them. Balchak is in the pocket of Wo Peng and the Vizier uses the men of the Black Guard to enforce his edicts.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|-------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 16. | Combat Actions. | 2. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution) | 18. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 10. | Improvement Mod. | Na. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 4/7 |
| Intelligence). | 11. | Magic Points. | 10. | 10-12. | Chest. | 4/8 |
| Power). | 10. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 2/5 |
| Dexterity). | 11. | Strike Rank. | 11(7) | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 2/5 |
| Charisma). | 10. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 4/6 |

Common Skills

Athletics 52%, Brawn 76%, Culture(Khazistani) 62%, Evade 52%, Evaluate 41%, Influence 44%, Insight 37%, Language(Khazi) 71%, Lore(Dipur) 62%, Perception 55%, Persistence 49%, Resilience 80%, Unarmed 80%

Advanced Skills

Courtesy 22%, Culture(Susrahnite) 36%, Gambling 47%, Language(Susrahnite) 42%, Streetwise 68%

Equipment - Scale Hauberk, Spired Helmet, Hard Leather Bracers, Scimitar, Target Shield. 24 silver and 3 gold coins in a belt pouch. Dozens of followers, 400 watchmen of the Black Guard and several thousand silver coins worth of ill gotten gains and loot.

Tactics - Brute force and ignorance are the watchwords for his style of combat. A barrage of ham fisted attacks with his scimitar, as he attempts to down his foe before they can strike back at him. Finesse is an alien concept to him.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Scimitar. | M | M. | D8+D2. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Target Shield. | L | S. | D6+D2. | 4/12. | Na. | Impale |

Combat Styles - Watch Captain (Scimitar, Shield) 78%

The Caravanserai District

Until recently, the Caravanserai district lay enclosed within the walls of Dipur itself. Traditionally, the surrounding area had been subject to raids from recalcitrant Zorabi Hillmen and occasional Khazrajite nomads. This is less of an issue now that the chieftains of the southern clans bend the knee to the Padishah and six hundred of his Imperial lancers garrison the city's Kasbahs

Over the last few years, a sizable community has sprung up outside the west wall of the city, in the shadow of the Great Kasbah, providing all the services that would be expected for travellers and merchants. Most of the buildings are ramshackle but, there are several large sturdy warehouses and a number of inns, taverns and workshops.

The barracks and stable blocks of General Eskaros'(see *The Shadow of a Ragged King*) mercenary horsemen are also located in this district. Although this unit of horsemen is more than six hundred strong, only eighty or so are present in the barracks any one time. General Eskaros is based at Fort Yirlat, which lies twelve days west of Dipur on the caravan trail to Zul Bazzir and the remainder are on desert patrol duties.

The Gilded Palm

The Street of the Desert Gate is the main thoroughfare from the Desert Gate to the Square of the Grand Souk. In the daylight hours it is thronged with travellers, traders and farmers, making their way to the Square from villages of the Oxartus valley.

The Gilded Palm, located on the Street of the Desert Gate, was once renowned as the finest establishment in all of Dipur. The owner and head cook is Aram Anshal, a Susrahnite and a close personal friend of Haram Baal(see *The Shadow of a Ragged King*). Such is its reputation that wealthy travellers are happy to pay over the odds to sample the culinary delights on offer here.

The truth is that the inn's fortunes are very much in decline. The frescoes upon the interior walls are old and faded and it has been several years since the outer walls have seen a coat of whitewash. The whole place has an air of fading splendour about it, even the metal fixtures have corroded and the gold leaf has been picked off. The staff has been reduced to four employees and these have not seen pay in months.

The inn can cater for up to a dozen guests at any time, though these days Aram is lucky to have a half that number at any given time. The quality of the food has declined as Aram uses cheaper sources, lesser cuts of meat and skimps on portions. To make matters worse, there are always several Zorabi rogues sitting in the Taproom, looking suspicious and making the clientele ill at ease.

Aram has an agreement with Jamukha the Ostler, whose stables lie directly behind the inn. A nights stay at the Gilded Palm thus includes stabling and fodder for a single steed or camel.

A number of young Susrahmites have taken to holding meetings in the cellar of the Gilded Palm. They are the sons of local merchants, accompanied by Haram Baal's brother and Aram has been led to believe that they are forming a Mercantile Cartel. He does not know that they are, in fact, seditious rebels. He is unaware that Arbeletu, his maid, is their leader(see *The Scions of Adartu*) and that the handful of staff who have remained are actually loyal to her and not him. Still, they pay well and Aram does not question their secrecy.

A secret tunnel has been excavated, without Aram Anshal's knowledge. It leads from the cellar and surfaces in one of the horse stalls of Jamukha's Ostlery. Jamukha, a native of Sarnad, has been paid well, in gold, for his silence about the passageway.

Aram Anshal - Susrahnite Proprietor of the Gilded Palm

Fawning and obsequious are the best terms to describe this Innkeeper although, cowardly and foolish would also be appropriate. Aram is a close friend of the merchant Haram Baal. He inherited the Gilded Palm from his father who, in turn, had inherited it from his father before him. Unlike his forebears, who had made it the finest establishment in the city, Aram seems to be doing his utmost to strip it of that accolade.

He has a hedonistic personality and makes quite substantial donations to the Temple of Belet Lil, spending a considerable amount of time in the company of the Moon Maidens by way of return.

His greatest folly is gambling, or more specifically, wagering large sums of coin at the pit fights. He owes Borak Cham a huge amount of silver and has taken to stripping the finery from his inn, in order to fund his next wager. He has made a number of very foolish bets, at long odds and suddenly his ownership of the Gilded Palm is looking very precarious.

Indeed, there are several Zorabi thugs constantly in the taproom of the Gilded Palm. It is as if Borak Cham considers the inn his property already.

He is considering the possibility of approaching Captain Balchak but, that would be a last resort. Balchak may be a much worse proposition than the Zorabi leader. Borak Cham, at least, appreciates culinary expertise. If only he could find someone to murder Borak Cham or better yet, to fight Talham Gor with a realistic chance of winning.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|-----|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 10. | Combat Actions. | 2. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution) | 12. | Damage Mod. | Na. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 16. | Improvement Mod. | Na. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 0/7 |
| Intelligence). | 12. | Magic Points. | 11 | 10-12. | Chest. | 0/8 |
| Power). | 11. | Movement. | 8. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 0/5 |
| Dexterity). | 10. | Strike Rank. | 11. | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 0/5 |
| Charisma). | 11. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 0/6 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 26%, Brawn 33%, Culture(Susrahnite) 56%, Evade 40%, Evaluate 65%, Influence 69%, Language(Susrahnite) 85%, Lore(Dipur) 65%, Perception 57%, Persistence 33%, Resilience 48%, Sleight 42%, Stealth 36%

Advanced Skills

Commerce 62%, Courtesy 63%, Craft(Cooking) 88%, Culture(Khazistani) 43%, Culture(Zorabi) 41%, Gambling 29%, Language(Khazi) 51%, Language(Zorabi) 50%, Lore(Herbs and Spices) 61%, Streetwise 47%

Equipment - The Gilded Palm Inn, four servants who have not been paid for several months. Expensive clothing that has become a little threadbare. Knife and 16 Silver Coins.

Tactics - Flee or Beg for mercy. Aram Anshal must succeed at a Difficult Persistence test to even attempt to raise his dagger to defend himself.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Knife. | S. | S. | D3. | 5/4. | Na. | Bleed, Impale |

Combat Styles - Dagger 21%

The Den

The Den is a lower class residential district that lies in the north east of the city. Sandwiched between the Palace and the Black Kasbah it's population is almost entirely Zorabi in it's ethnic makeup. The inhabitants of this district are notorious for their lack of respect for and adherence to the laws of their Khazistani overlords.

The Zorabis have their own taverns and businesses clustered on the south eastern edge of the Den, where it borders the Street of the Black Gate. They tend to stick to their own kind and do not encourage integration with the other peoples, unless it is unavoidable. Their businesses cater to their own folk. The Den has it's own inns, taverns and brothels, run by Zorabis and with an entirely Zorabi clientele.

The Pit

The Pit is a large building, located on the eastern edge of the Square of the Grand Souk. It is the location of the most prestigious Pit Fighting arena in all of Dipur. Pit masters bring their fighters from as far away as Taikang and Shoma to face Borak Cham's champion, Talham 'The Bull'. During the daylight hours, those who can afford to, can watch the men and women of his pit fighter stable go through their training routines.

By night, the Pit is a hive of activity, it's interior thronged with bloodthirsty fight spectators. Yet not all of Borak Cham's eggs are in a single basket. The Pit also functions as a drinking and gambling den and he has women who sell their favours in side rooms.

As well as the dozen or so pit fighters of his stable, there are always at least half a dozen of his Zorabi rogues in attendance. The Pit is a roughhouse and those who frequent it are not in search of an evening of fine wines and culture. What they demand is raw and visceral entertainment and 'The Pit' delivers exactly such a spectacle.

Zorabi Footpads - members of Borak Cham's gang (60+)

Leathery skinned, dark eyed and heavily bearded, they are clad in loose trews and kaftans over their armour and wear white turbans like those favoured by their mountain dwelling kin. The men of Borak Cham are virtually all ethnic Zorabis and they dominate the alleyways and small streets of the poor residential district, known as 'The Den'.

Unless encountered on caravan escort duty, they are normally only armed with curved Zorabi knives and knotted cudgels. They are the implacable enemies of the gangs from 'the Dives' and Borak Cham is currently importing extra warriors from the mountain villages to counter his rival, Balchak's sudden rise to power.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 12. | Combat Actions. | 2. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/5 |
| Constitution) | 13. | Damage Mod. | Na. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/5 |
| Size). | 12. | Improvement Mod. | Na. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 2/6 |
| Intelligence). | 10. | Magic Points. | 10. | 10-12. | Chest. | 2/7 |
| Power). | 10. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 0/4 |
| Dexterity). | 11. | Strike Rank. | 11(10) | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 0/4 |
| Charisma). | 10. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 0/5 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 43%, Brawn 34%, Culture(Zorabi) 51%, Evade 52%, Language(Zorabi) 71%, Lore(Dipur) 51%, Perception 40%, Persistence 41%, Resilience 47%, Sleight 31%, Stealth 53%

Advanced Skills

Gambling 30%, Language(Khazi) 42%, Lore(Zorab Mountains) 29%, Streetwise 47%

Equipment - Loose fitting clothes, Grey Turban, Studded Leather Hauberk(2Ap), Zorabi Knife, D4 silver coins in a belt pouch.

Tactics - Footpads and backstabbers. You should be less concerned about the Zorabi who is facing you in an alley than the one who is behind you, poised to slit your throat. Within the city, the Zorabis are rarely armed with anything more than their cultural weapon- the Zorabi Knife. If the authorities, in particular Balchak, move against them they will retreat to various locations throughout 'the Den' where Borak Cham has stashed enough weaponry to equip a small army.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special. |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Club. | M. | S. | D6. | 4/4. | Na. | Stun Location |
| Zorabi Knife. | M. | S. | D6+1. | 6/8. | Na. | Bleed |
| Scimitar. | M. | M. | D8. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Target Shield. | L. | S. | D6. | 4/12. | Na. | Impale |
| Shortbow. | L. | Na. | D6. | 4/4. | 80m. | Impale |

Combat Styles - Street Thug (Club, Dagger, Unarmed). 50%
Hillman Brigand (1H Sword, Shield, Shortbow) . 55%

Borak Cham - exiled Zorabi Chieftain

Borak Cham arrived in Dipur ten years ago, the deposed chieftain of the Zorghuli clan. He had not been a good ruler and had flaunted many of the traditions of his ancestors. It had not been difficult for his brother, Darak, to turn his people against him.

Borak Cham is his own man, paying homage to no other and scant regard to laws or traditions that do not suit his needs. He is ambitious and when he arrived in Dipur with a half dozen trusted followers, he set about uniting the quarrelling Zorabi gangs of the city into a cohesive group. Now, a decade later, even the bitterest of opponents have become his trusted allies. He is deemed a man of honour and all know that his word, once given, is as strong as Zadjite steel. The gangs of Guram Khal and Kharum Bhak, once vicious rivals, have now joined with him and accept his leadership.

His Lieutenant, Guram Khal 'the Toecutter', has recently disappeared. There are rumours that he has gone to Zul Bazzir on unexplained business and Borak Cham knows this to be the truth. He does not know that Guram did not depart as a part of a caravan, or that he had kidnapped the Satrap's lover and would never have agreed to it.

He is not a man to be trifled with, as the Susrahnite and Adartani gangs of the Dives have discovered to their regret. When the situation demands it, he leads his warriors from the front and is a more than capable swordsman.

His gang are now more than threescore strong and are recruiting heavily. The sudden rise in the fortunes of Balchak and the equally sudden demise of his own ally, Captain Yildirim, has forced him to greatly increase his strength in numbers.

He is handsome and charismatic with a neatly trimmed beard and moustache and wears a white turban and robes of samite and silk with an ivory handled Zorabi Knife(Highly desirable Quality) tucked into the waist sash. A bronze scale Hauberk and a spired Khazistani helmet are hidden in his private quarters.

He longs for the day when he can return to Zorghul and take it back from the usurper, but it would take ten times the men he currently leads and he is still far too proud to submit his people to the rule of the Pahdishah.

Borak Cham defies normal custom and the voices of hidebound Zorabi Elders. He actively encourages his people to mix with foreigners and has obtained a property on the edge of the Square of the Grand Souk, which he uses to run a drinking, gambling and pit fighting den.

He has also developed a recent interest in acquiring possession of the Inn of the Gilded Palm. It's owner is a foolish fellow who owes Borak Cham almost as much as the property is worth.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|---------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 12. | Combat actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/5 |
| Constitution) | 14. | Damage Mod. | Na. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/5 |
| Size). | 11. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 3/6 |
| Intelligence). | 14. | Magic Points. | 12. | 10-12. | Chest. | 3/7 |
| Power). | 12. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 0/4 |
| Dexterity). | 15. | Strike Rank. | 15(13). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 0/4 |
| Charisma). | 15. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 4/5 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 46%, Brawn 35%, Culture(Zorabi) 61%, Evade 60%, Evaluate 56%, Influence 71%, Insight 53%, Language(Zorabi) 82%, Lore(Dipur) 65%, Perception 49%, Persistence 58%, Resilience 67%, Ride 39%, Stealth 44%

Advanced Skills

Courtesy 45%, Commerce 61%, Culture(Khazistani) 54%, Culture(Susrahnite) 53%, Gambling 49%, Language(Khazi) 53%, Language(Susrahnite) 44%, Lore(Kharjah Pass) 70%, Oratory 43%, Streetwise 59%, Survival 37%

Equipment - Expensive clothing, Zorabi Knife, Scale Hauberk, Spired Helmet, Scimitar, Target Shield, Shortbow and 20 Arrows. 10 Gold and 10 Silver coins in a purse. 70+ followers including servants, footpads, thugs and pit fighters. Thousands of silver coins worth of trade goods.

Tactics - Borak Cham is a businessman. He rarely fights, except when he has to and then, he is a very dangerous opponent indeed. He never fights anyone alone and always tries to ensure that at least one of his minions is engaged with the same foe.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Scimitar. | M. | M. | D8. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Target Shield. | L. | S. | D6. | 4/12. | Na. | Impale |
| Zorabi Knife. | M. | S. | D6+1. | 6/8. | Na. | Bleed |

Weapon Styles - Hillman Chieftain (1H Sword,2H Sword, 1H Sword + Shield). 79%

Talham Ghor - 'The Bull' - Zorabi Pit Fighter

Talham is the current champion fighter at 'The Pit'. Tall and broad, he is known as 'the Bull' for his prodigious strength. He wears a grey turban and has a bushy beard that he wears in a single plait when he fights in the arena.

Outside of the arena, he is a surprisingly gentle soul with a placid demeanour and a warm smile. He enjoys painting and has a protective nature towards women and children. He does not use his strength to bully others but it has been said that he can fell a camel with a single blow from one of his anvil-like fists.

He has been the champion of the Pit for almost a year now. Aram Anshal, the innkeeper of the Gilded Palm bets heavily against him every time he fights and now owes Borak Cham a considerable amount of coin.

Talham is a free man, unlike many of the fighters of many other pit masters who are slave gladiators. He is ethnically Zorabi but, he has never travelled to his ancestral homelands in the mountains. It is his dream to travel there and help Borak Cham to recover his birthright.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|---------|--------|------------|------|
| Strength) | 20. | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/8 |
| Constitution) | 18. | Damage Mod. | +D6. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/8 |
| Size). | 18. | Improvement Mod. | Na. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 0/9 |
| Intelligence). | 12. | Magic Points. | 11. | 10-12. | Chest. | 0/10 |
| Power). | 11. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 0/7 |
| Dexterity). | 14. | Strike Rank. | 13(13). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 0/7 |
| Charisma). | 12. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 0/8 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 75%, Brawn 86%, Culture(Zorabi) 63%, Evade 78%, Language(Zorabi) 79%, Lore(Dipur) 56%, Perception 55%, Persistence 49%, Resilience 81%, Unarmed 90%

Advanced Skills

Art 54%, Courtesy 49%, Language(Khazi) 51%, Language(Susrahnite) 49%, Streetwise 57%

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|---------------|----|----|---------|--------|--------|---------|
| Punch Dagger. | S. | S. | D4+D6. | 6/8. | Na. | Impale |
| Buckler. | M. | S. | D3+D6. | 6/8. | Na. | Na |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Combat Styles - Pit Fighter (Buckler, Cestus, Dagger) | 92% |
| Zorabi Knife | 53% |

Heroic Abilities - Awesome Smash, Mighty Blow

Tactics - Talham wears nothing during his pit fighting bouts save for a loincloth and his turban. His favoured combination is a punch dagger in his right hand and a buckler on his left arm. He favours flashy and crowd pleasing manoeuvres like Trip Opponent.

The Dwellings

The district known as 'The Dwellings' stretches from the Square of the Grand Souk along the Street of Conquerors to the Conquerors Kasbah in the south of the city. To the north, it's boundaries are the Street of the Black Gate and the Black Kasbah. The people of this district are predominantly Khazistani Merchants and Craftsmen with a small number of Susrahmites, most of whom are in the business of moneylending and usury.

The Street of a Hundred Bazaars is located in this district, although it is a misnomer. There are actually around a dozen little covered side streets, containing the permanent shops and workshops of the local residents. There is little trust in this area for the men of the Black Guard, who most believe to be extortionists and no better than the criminals they purport to catch. The appointment of the gang leader, Balchak, as their Captain has done nothing to dispel these opinions.

Despite this, there is little actual criminality in this district. The people are, for the most part, decent and industrious. They are as honest as any shopkeeper can be expected to be but, are reactionary in the extreme. Petty criminals are occasionally lynched in the street, often in full view of Black Guard patrols. The people of this district despise their neighbours in 'the Dives' and have even less regard for the Zorabis of 'the Den'.

The Dives

Located west of the Old Caravanserai, along the south and west walls of the city, is the district known as 'the Dives'. This is where the great mass of the city's urban poor dwell, mainly Adartanis and Susrahmites living together in cramped and filthy squalor. The rows of tenement buildings are up to three storeys high with people crammed into every available nook and cranny. When plague or pestilence strikes the city it finds it's greatest foothold in 'The Dives'.

Violent crime and the survival of the fittest are everyday facts of life in the Dives. The strong take what they want from the weak and the Black Guard do not waste their time, attempting to patrol the labyrinthine alleys and courtyards. Few men have honest employment and fewer actively seek it. Most either join criminal gangs or take up begging on the Square of the Grand Souk.

Rioting is commonplace, especially if the traders of 'The Dwellings' have made an example of a petty criminal on the Street of a Hundred Bazaars. Should the Black Guard need to be called out to quell this trouble, the results are usually bloody and accompanied by a frenzy of looting on a grand scale.

It is here that the majority of Lotus Dens and Brothels of the city are to be found. It is not that the Khazistani overlords frown upon them and many Khazistanis can be found enjoying the delights they provide. It is the Cult of Nakhramat that insists that such premises be confined to the less salubrious districts of the city.

However, even the Cult of Nakhramat recognises that such distractions are necessary and that, along with the weekly dole of bread to the poor, they are instrumental in keeping the rabble of the Dives happy and generally subservient.

The House of Lucid Dreaming

A typical Lotus Den, it is run by 'One Eyed Gort', reputedly once a Ship's Captain among the Khorani Brotherhood. The story has it that he betrayed his crew, stole their loot and fled to Dipur to escape their vengeance. Whether there is any truth in this or not, Gort is not saying. The quality of the Lotus on sale here is reliably excellent and Gort has links to Merchant Venturers in Ghazor.

The Silk Purse

'The Silk Purse' is an expensive establishment, run by Viru of Jhaddar, catering to a mostly Khazistani and strictly male clientele. Violence against the girls in this brothel is strictly forbidden and only the Temple Prostitutes of Belit Lil are better protected. Viru has a half dozen bruisers on her payroll who will happily beat, maim or kill those who ignore her rules and harm her girls.

The House of Satin Caresses

A brothel that provides 'companionship' to both male and female customers. It is run by Boazh Tirlu, a native Adartani who prefers the company of his own sex to that of women. Scurrilous rumours have placed the merchant, Haram Baal, at this place upon certain occasions. Prices for companionship and refreshment are high.

The Palace of the Pale Princesses

Scarto of Lamra's Palace of the Pale Princesses is a specialist brothel. The girls are all Lamurans or other northerners, chosen for their fair skin. This place is hugely popular with wealthy clients who are looking for something different from the local girls.

Scarto has a captured girl from the Crow Clan of Tharag Thule in the basement of his brothel. Taking her from the Slavetakers of Yg was a risky venture and it appears that his coin was wasted. She is tall and statuesque, raven haired and alabaster skinned and would earn him much gold, if only he could break her spirit. However, at this time, there would be more chance of getting a client to lie with a she wolf. The girl has had to be beaten on several occasions and each time, she has seriously injured at least one of his men. They are terrified of her, as she gouged out Harek's left eye and there was a look of absolute relish on her face when she popped it in her mouth and ate it. They will not go into the basement alone and she has to be chained to the wall to prevent her from attacking them.

Kolchak's Bawdy House

This is a seedy tavern, by the Desert Gate, with several private rooms in the upper floors. Kolchak keeps several girls and caters only to a male clientele. The price of companionship is cheap and violence against the girls is discouraged, though a few extra coins to the proprietor will lessen the chances of repercussions. Kolchak is a small, stoutly built, Khazistani with a forked beard and heavily kohled eyes. He is the cousin of Captain Balchak of the Black Guard. The girls who work upstairs are also his tavern wenches and the place is often frequented by off duty guardsmen and criminal associates of Captain Balchak.

The Temple of the Moon Maidens

Situated where the Street of the Conquerors enters the Square of the Grand Souk, the temple of the Moon Goddess is a three storey Ziggurat of mud bricks, whitewashed against the heat of the sun. It is one of the most popular temples in the city due, in no small part, to the 'services' provided by it's 'Moon Maidens'. These are the junior priestesses of the cult but are also temple prostitutes.

A pair of ten feet wide staircases climbs twenty feet to the first floor of the Ziggurat. These are guarded by a pair of Warriors of the Sacred Band, imposing figures clad in black armour and carrying huge round shield emblazoned with the symbol of the crescent moon. During the day, a handful of priestesses lounge provocatively on these steps, hoping to lure new converts.

The entrance to the temple proper is a 10ft wide passageway leading to the Shrine of Belet Lil. A further pair of warriors of the Sacred Band stand guard over the entrance at all times.

The barracks of the Sacred Band lie immediately beyond the main entrance, on opposite sides of the entrance hall. Each of the the barrack rooms contain cots and chests for eight warriors.

A bronze scone on the wall, outside the barrack room door, opens a spiked pit. A similar scone on the opposite wall closes it again, trapping victims within the twenty feet deep pit. It has been triggered several times in the past to deter attackers and provide time for the priestesses to escape through the secret passageway into the Dives. There are always at least two, off duty, Sacred Band warriors in each barracks. Any who are not on duty, or here, will be found training in the great hall on the lower level.

The pillars that hold up the ceiling of the temple are of blue veined marble, imported from Susrah. Six of these hold up the ceiling of the Shrine of Belet Lil. An altar of the same marble is surmounted by a golden statue of the goddess, naked save for her Moon Crown. This is where the faithful make their offerings and the shrine is always attended, day and night, by a pair of Moon Maidens and overseen by an armour clad Senior Priestess of the Moon Dancers.

Doorways on opposite sides of this shrine lead to staircases that descend into the depths of the temple and small private chambers where the faithful can consummate their relationship with the Goddess through sexual congress with one, or more, of the Moon Maidens. The shrine itself and these small chambers are decorated with friezes and murals depicting the Goddess in assorted erotic poses.

Beneath the shrine is the Great Hall with it's bronze clad doors, leading to the Garden of Delights. Herein are the trestle tables and benches where the priestesses and their guardians feast upon the daily offerings of food, left in the shrine by the faithful of Belet Lil. The hall is also used for the military training of the Moon Dancers and the Sacred Band. It is lit by torches, held in bronze sconces and the floor is strewn with rugs and carpets from Laksha, Ghoma and distant Taikang.

Hidden beneath these rugs is a trapdoor, which drops into a tunnel that leads deep into the district of the city, known as 'The Dives'. Hidden along this passageway is a secret room that contains an ancient tome. This tome contains the spell for summoning a demonic entity, particular to the cult of Belet Lil.

Off to either side of the hall are located the dormitories of the priestesses. These rooms are well appointed with rugs and cushions, divans and carpets, benches and cots as well as chests for any personal belongings.

At the base of the staircases are two private rooms. One of these is an armoury and contains spares for all of the military equipment required by the temple guardians. The other is the quarters of the Captain of the Sacred Band.

The upper level of the temple is the private chamber of the High Priestess herself. This room is sumptuously appointed and a pair of Moon Maiden priestesses are always in attendance, even if the High Priestess herself is not. A pair of Sacred Band warriors guards the door into this lavish chamber.

A large walled enclosure, behind the Temple is known as the Garden of Delights. The Walls are roughly twenty feet high and it is within this 'Garden of Delights' that the orgiastic fertility rites of the cult are performed. A pair of Sacred Band warriors patrols this area to discourage intruders during daylight hours and a black panther prowls the gardens at night. The same panther can be found, filed up asleep, or lazing upon the High Priestess' bed during the daylight hours.

The Tower of Xantalos

A tall round tower of imported green stone sits within a walled garden on the southern edge of the Square of the Grand Souk. This was the home of the dreaded Necromancer, Xantalos Zul. About twenty years earlier the reclusive old man departed Dipur for parts unknown, never to return.

What became of him is anyone's guess, but in his absence, the plants of his garden have become overgrown and wild, the pathways choked with vines. None know whether Xantalos Zul left guardians to protect his tower, but any who have attempted to plunder it of its secrets have never been seen again.

The Sacred Band - Guardians of the Moon Maiden Temple (16)

In the Susrahnite City States lying east of the Kharjah pass, the cult of Belet Lil rarely finds itself imperilled and has never had the need of armed guardians. The temple of the Moon Maidens at Dipur finds itself in a more threatened situation. There are those among the Khazistani population within the city who do not agree with the open sensuality of the cult. They venerate Nakhramat and are openly hostile to the cult. Numerous times, over the years, the followers of the Moon Goddess have found themselves proscribed or under serious threat. It has become necessary for a militant order to be maintained for the protection of the temple environs and the High Priestess. The warriors of the Sacred Band are Apprentice level initiates of the cult and are exclusively male.

The sacred band wear hauberks of linen, dyed black to match their cloaks and the horsehair crests that adorn their bronze helmets(5Ap). They wear greaves and Bracers of boiled and shaped black leather and wield moon axes and short stabbing swords in combat.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 14. | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 2/5 |
| Constitution) | 12. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 2/5 |
| Size). | 12. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 2/6 |
| Intelligence). | 12 | Magic Points. | 13. | 10-12. | Chest. | 2/7 |
| Power). | 13. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 2/4 |
| Dexterity). | 13. | Strike Rank. | 13(9). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 2/4 |
| Charisma). | 13. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 6/5 |

Common Skills

Athletics 47%, Brawn 46%, Culture(Susrahnite) 57%, Evade 56%, Insight 40%, Influence 38%, Language(Susrahnite) 76%, Lore(Dipur) 56%, Perception 45%, Persistence 46%, Resilience 46%, Unarmed 47%

Advanced Skills

Courtesy 38%, Language(Khazi) 44%, Lore(Belet Lil) 51%, Lore(Theology) 34%, Teaching 42%, Seduction 37%

Equipment - Linen Hauberk(2Ap), Closed Helmet with Black Horsehair Crest(5Ap), Hard Leather Bracers and Greaves, Black cloak, Moon axe, Shortsword, Spear and Hoplite Shield.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Shortsword. | M. | S | D6+D2. | 6/8. | Na. | Bleed, Impale |
| Shortspear. | M. | L. | D8+1+D2. | 4/5. | | Impale |
| Hoplite Shield. | H. | S. | D4+D2. | 6/18. | Na. | Na |
| Moon Axe* | L. | L. | 2D6+D2. | 3/12. | Na. | Bleed |

*see Arms of Legend for special rules for this weapon.

Tactics - The bulk will form a shield wall to defend the main entrance to the temple. Elgamesh and two others will move to the flanks and attack any who dare approach with aggressive sorties using their moon axes. If their Imposing Presence special ability works, the others will launch a volley of thrown spears and draw their Shortswords to meet their enemies charge.

Combat Style - Sacred Band (Moon Axe, Shortsword, Short Spear and Hoplite Shield).
70%

Special Ability - Imposing Presence

The Bronze helmets of the Sacred Band cover their faces except for eye slits. This, combined with the tall horsehair crests that surmount them, serves to make the warriors of the Sacred Band an imposing sight. Before entering combat with one of these warriors, an opponent must succeed at a Persistence test against this intimidating visage. Failure will result in the inability to initiate melee until the following combat round.

Elgamesh - Captain of the Sacred Band

Elgamesh was born in the slum district of Dipur, known as 'the Dives'. A mongrel, of 'Adartani' blood, there were few avenues of opportunity open to him and he found himself running with a gang of Footpads led by a vicious thug named Balchak.

A failed raid against the Zorabi gangs of 'the Den' led to his near death and abandonment by his fellows. Sorely wounded, he crawled into the Temple of the Moon Maidens to seek shelter. The Zorabis were thwarted in their attempts to finish him off by intervention of the High Priestess and the black-clad warriors of the temple guard.

The High Priestess Roshamma had a voracious appetite for young men and Elgamesh was a handsome specimen indeed. She nursed him back to health and had him inducted into the ranks of the Sacred Band, protectors of the temple and her own personal companion guard. Taking advantage of his favour with the High Priestess, it did not take long for him to rise to the rank of Captain.

His hatred for Balchak, who he believes betrayed and abandoned him to the Zorabis, knows no bounds and he bided his time, waiting for the opportunity to extract his vengeance from the Captain of the Black Guard.

Yet, Roshamma's interest in Elgamesh waned over time and he found himself pushed to one side as she took other lovers to her bed. His desire for her knows no bounds and he rages in private, that Roshamma has now taken a Northron savage to her bed.

The recent failures of Roshamma to take part in fertility rites with the Sacred Band has weakened his belief in his own vows. The Goddess has not evoked divine retribution upon her for these failings and he wonders if his own vows, which prevent him from placing his duty to the temple above his own personal feelings, could be as easily set aside.

Brennar flaunts his relationship with the High Priestess openly, flinging insult in the teeth of the Sacred Band. Would the Goddess decide to take umbrage with him should he decide to gut the Tharag Thulan savage? Perhaps then his mistress would remember her sacred vows to them and renew the promissory rites she has reneged upon.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 15. | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 2/6 |
| Constitution) | 13. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 2/6 |
| Size). | 14. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 4/7 |
| Intelligence). | 13. | Magic Points. | 14. | 10-12. | Chest. | 4/8 |
| Power). | 14. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 2/5 |
| Dexterity). | 15. | Strike Rank. | 14(9). | 16-18. | Left Leg. | 2/5 |
| Charisma). | 16 | | | 19-20. | Head. | 6/6 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 55%, Brawn 54%, Culture(Susrahnite) 70%, Evade 60%, Insight 47%, Influence 44%, Language(Susrahnite) 83%, Lore(Dipur) 70%, Perception 51%, Persistence 63%, Resilience 61%, Unarmed 63%

Advanced Skills.

Courtesy 62%, Language(Khazistani) 51%, Lore(Belet Lil) 57%, Lore(Military Tactics) 44%, Lore(Theology) 53%, Seduction 66%, Teaching 59%

Equipment - Scale Hauberk, Closed Helmet with a black (transverse) Horsehair crest, black cloak, Hard Leather Greaves and Bracers, Moon Axe, Shortsword.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Shortsword. | M. | S. | D6+D2. | 6/8. | Na. | Bleed, Impale |
| Shortspear. | M. | L. | D8+1+D2. | 4/5. | 25m | Impale |
| Hoplite Shield. | H. | S. | D4+D2. | 6/18. | Na. | Na |
| Moon Axe.* | L. | L. | 2D6+D2. | 3/12. | Na. | Bleed |

*see Arms of Legend for special rules for this weapon.

Tactics - Elgamesh normally fights as part of a unit with his brothers and sisters in the Sacred Band and fights as described there. When fighting as an individual, he will show a preference for his Shortsword and Hoplite shield, after throwing his spear(if the opportunity presents itself).

Combat Style - Sacred Band (Moon Axe, Shortsword, Spear and Hoplite Shield). 92%
Street Bravo. (Club, Dagger, Unarmed). 75%

Heroic Abilities - Duellist, Severing Slash

Special Ability - Imposing Presence

The Bronze helmets of the Sacred Band cover their faces except for eye slits. This, combined with the tall horsehair crests that surmount them, serves to make the warriors of the Sacred Band an imposing sight. Before entering combat with one of these warriors, an opponent must succeed at a Persistence test against this intimidating visage. Failure will result in the inability to initiate melee until the following combat round.

Roshamma 'Thrice Blessed' - High Priestess of Belet Lil

The voluptuous and sensuous High Priestess of the Moon Goddess is an Adartani mixed blood, her ancestry a by product of those terrible days following the surrender of the city to the Khazistani horde.

Her mother was a Moon Maiden, an acolyte and temple prostitute, in service to the Goddess. She has known no life other than servitude to the Goddess. She is revered by the goddess' followers as 'thrice blessed', blessed to be a woman, blessed to have been born into the temple and blessed to be held high in the favour of her celestial mistress. She possesses an exotic beauty which has, in the past, enabled her to twist weak minded men around her little finger but she is vain and somewhat petulant. She does not react well to rejection and the arrival of Sutrahmunah at the court of the Satrap sent her into a near apoplectic rage. Her schemes concerning the Satrap in tatters, she has taken his guard captain-Brennar the Northron- to her bed in what could only be described as a vain attempt to arouse jealousy in him. Even though the Yar Ammonite slut has disappeared, he has still not sought the solace of her bedchamber and this causes her immense displeasure. If he does not submit to her soon, she might be forced to take drastic action.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 11. | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution) | 15. | Damage Mod. | Na. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 11. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 0/7 |
| Intelligence). | 18. | Magic Points. | 18. | 10-12. | Chest. | 0/8 |
| Power). | 18. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 0/5 |
| Dexterity). | 12. | Strike Rank. | 15(). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 0/5 |
| Charisma). | 17. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 0/6 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 43%, Brawn 32%, Culture(Adartani) 67%, Dance 79%, Evade 54%, Influence 67%, Insight 63%, Language(Susrahnite) 89%, Lore(Dipur) 71%, Perception 66%, Persistence 66%, Resilience 69%, Sing 44%, Stealth 60%

Advanced Skills.

Courtesy 75%, Language(Khazi) 63%, Language(Zorabi) 47%, Lore(Apotropaics) 58%, Lore(Belet Lil) 86%, Lore(Theology) 84%, Seduction 89%, Streetwise 41%, Teaching 76%

Magic Skills

Grimoire 90%, Manipulation 86%, Meditation 61%

Equipment - Ceremonial vestments and headdress, alluring gowns, concealed dagger.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Scimitar. | M. | M. | D8. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Dagger. | S. | S. | D4+1. | 6/8. | Na. | Bleed, Impale |

Tactics - Roshamma has no real fighting prowess and relies on her wits and considerable physical charms to protect her. She is also accompanied wherever she goes by a pair of warriors of the Sacred Band, who would willingly lay down their lives to protect her. In the event that she must fend for herself, she can fight with a scimitar in her right hand and a dagger in her off hand.

Combat Style - Moon Priestess (Scimitar,Dagger, Bow). 43%

Grimoire - Passion of the Moon - see SGB

Special - See the Section on the Gods and Religion. Roshamma has all advantages enjoyed by Adepts and High Priests of Belet Lil.

Salomeh 'The Wrath of Women Scorned' - Succubus

The entity named Salomeh is a supernatural servant of the Moon Goddess. Her task is to punish those of the male gender for transgressions against women and especially against those who are servants of Belet Lil. She can take the form of any person, appearing as the most alluring of women or even as the true love of the intended victim. Those knowledgeable of such things would name her 'Succubus' and know that her kiss steals the minds of her victims and her embrace, their very souls.

Hidden in the catacombs beneath the temple of the Moon Maidens is an ancient tome containing the ritual for summoning this immortal fiend. The High Priestess, Roshamma, is aware of the book's existence but as not yet found cause to learn the ritual.

Salomeh's true appearance is that of a raven haired, alabaster skinned woman with cloven hooves, a tail and bat wings. Small horns bud from her forehead and she has a mouth full of tiny, razor sharp, fangs. Trickle of blood drip down her cheeks from her black, soulless, eyes.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|--------|--------|-------------|-----|
| Strength). | 16. | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-2. | Right Leg. | 4/7 |
| Constitution) | 16. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 3-4. | Left Leg. | 4/7 |
| Size). | 12. | Improvement Mod. | +2. | 5-7. | Abdomen. | 4/8 |
| Intelligence). | 16. | Magic Points. | 18. | 8-10. | Chest. | 4/9 |
| Power). | 18. | Movement. | 8m/12m | 11-12. | Right Wing. | 4/6 |
| Dexterity). | 16. | Strike Rank. | 16. | 13-14. | Left Wing. | 4/6 |
| Charisma). | 23 | | | 15-16. | Right Arm. | 4/6 |
| | | | | 17-18. | Left Leg | 4/6 |
| | | | | 19-20. | Head. | 4/7 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 69%, Brawn 67%, Evade 66%, Influence 73%, Language(demonic) 90%, Perception 65%, Persistence 78%, Resilience 69%, Unarmed 54%

Advanced Skills

Courtesy 74%, Languages(All) 69%, Seduction 90%

Demonic Aura - 4Ap, no effect on encumbrance or Strike Rank, negated by Fire or Silver.

Formidable Natural Weapons - as per Monsters of Legend, only applies in true shape.

Kiss of Acquiescence - Any man who kisses Salomeh upon her lips must make a Hard(-40%) Persistence roll. A success means that the victim suffers no effect. A failure means that the victim is treated as being under the effect of a Dominate spell until the cock crows to signal the dawn. A Fumble means that the victim is treated as being permanently under the effects of a Dominate spell.

Life Leech - Any man who is subjected to the loving caresses of Salomeh loses a single point of POW every time that he fails a Difficult(-20%) Persistence roll. This roll must be made every hour. Salomeh must withdraw from any such encounter before the cock crows, signalling the dawn.

Dark sight - per Monsters of Legend

Fly - 12m per combat action

Assume Shape - Salomeh can assume the form of any woman she chooses for a length of time equal to one hour or magic point spent. If a single point of damage bypasses her Demonic Aura, she must succeed at a Difficult Persistence test or be forced to immediately revert to her true shape.

Equipment - ceremonial robes, alluring gowns.

| Weapon | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Bite. | S. | S. | D4+D2. | As Head. | Na. | Na |
| Claw. | S. | S. | D6+D2. | As Arm. | Na. | Bleed |

Combat Style - Tooth and Claw (Natural weapons) 60%

Tactics - Salomeh is a lover, not a fighter. It is almost inconceivable to her that any of her victims would want to attack her. In the unlikely event that she is forced to enter combat, she will assume her true form and fall upon her opponent in a frenzy of teeth and claws.

The Moon Maidens - Temple Prostitutes (18)

Chosen from among the most attractive of the female novices of the cult, the Moon Maidens are the initiates of the temple of the Moon Goddess.

The fertility rites of the Moon Goddess are great orgies of debauchery and wanton carnality. The Moon Maidens are also the Temple Prostitutes who perform in these rites. They provide similar services, on a daily basis, for those initiates who make a financial offering to the temple. This service makes the cult exceedingly popular among the Susrahnite and Adartani men of the city.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 11 | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 0/5 |
| Constitution) | 13. | Damage Mod. | Na. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 0/5 |
| Size). | 11. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 0/6 |
| Intelligence). | 14. | Magic Points | 12. | 10-12. | Chest. | 0/7 |
| Power). | 12. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 0/4 |
| Dexterity). | 12. | Strike Rank. | 13(). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 0/4 |
| Charisms). | 16. | | | 19-20. | Head | 0/5 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 33%, Culture(Adartani) 59%, Dance 48%, Evade 34%, Influence 41%, Insight 31%, Language(Susrahnite) 81%, Lore(Dipur) 61%, Perception 37%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 41%, Sing 40%, Sleight 34%, Stealth 34%, Unarmed 34%

Advanced Skills

Courtesy 51%, Language(Khazi) 54%, Lore(Atropopaics) 39%, Lore(Belet Lil) 48%, Lore(Theology) 43%, Seduction 66%, Streetwise 37%

Equipment - ceremonial vestments, alluring gowns, concealed knife

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Knife. | S. | S. | D3. | 5/4. | Na. | Bleed, Impale |

Tactics - The Moon Maidens do not normally make war and are ill prepared for it, should it become a necessity. They rely on the warriors of the Sacred Band to protect them and if all else fails, they remove their vestments and hide among the Susrahnite and Adartani populations of the city. At best they may scream and slash wildly with their knives before fleeing.

Combat Style - Ineffective Flailing (Dagger) 25%

The Moon Dancers - Priestesses of Belet Lil (6)

The Moon Dancers are the adepts of the Temple, trained to defend themselves and the Moon Maidens from those who would seek to abuse them and the services they provide. While they still take part in the fertility rites on Holy days, they are not obligated to provide similar services on a daily basis and instead, spend their time in contemplation of the sorcerous mysteries of the cult.

Their armour consists of close fitting plates of baked leather, dyed black prior to being worked into shape and embossed with the symbol of a crescent moon.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|--------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 12. | Combat Actions | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 2/6 |
| Constitution) | 15. | Damage Mod. | Na. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 2/6 |
| Size). | 12. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. | Abdomen. | 2/7 |
| Intelligence). | 15. | Magic Points. | 15. | 10-12. | Chest. | 2/8 |
| Power). | 15. | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 2/5 |
| Dexterity). | 13. | Strike Rank | 14(). | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 2/5 |
| Charisma). | 15. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 2/6 |

Common Skills

Athletics 48%, Brawn 44%, Culture(Susrahnite) 76%, Dance 65%, Evade 56%, Influence 51%, Insight 52%, Language(Susrahnite) 86%, Lore(Dipur) 65%, Perception 60%, Persistence 55%, Resilience 56%, Unarmed 54%

Advanced Skills

Courtesy 63%, Language(Khazi) 51%, Language(Zorabi) 36%, Lore(Apotropaics) 43%, Lore(Belet Lil) 79%, Lore(Theology) 67%, Seduction 73%, Streetwise 41%, Teaching 68%

Magic Skills

Grimoire 55%, Manipulation 51%, Meditation 42%

Equipment - alluring ceremonial vestments, hard leather bracers and greaves, Hauberk and cap, 2x scimitars, curved dagger and Moonbow with a quiver of 20 arrows.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Scimitar. | M. | M. | D8. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Curved Dagger. | S. | S. | D4+1. | 6/8. | Na. | Bleed |
| Moon Bow. | H. | Na. | D10. | 2/6. | 100m. | Impale |

Tactics - the Moon Dancer adepts will take position on raised levels of the Temple of the Moon maidens. They will use their bows until the temple environs are breached. In that eventuality they will move to block the entrance to the secret tunnels and fight with their scimitars and daggers to give Roshamma and the Moon Maidens time to escape.

Combat Style - Whirling Dervish (RH Scimitar, LH Scimitar, LH Dagger, Bow) 60%

Grimoire - Passion of the Moon - see SGB

Special - See the section on Gods and Religion. Adepts of the Moon Goddess.

The Shrine of the Keepers

This is the temple of the God of the Dead. The skull masked and silent priests perform the same function here as they do in every other city throughout Khazistan and Susrah. Every night they can be seen dragging their carts through the back alleys and avenues of Dipur, ringing their funerary bells to alert the recently bereaved to their approach.

The catacombs under the temple contain the tombs wherein the wealthy dead are interred. The poor are usually taken outside the city and burned on pyres in the surrounding hills. Their ashes are often sold to farmers who use it as fertiliser for their fields. The Khazistanis will not tolerate the infestation of the city catacombs by Ghouls and Necromancers, as is quite commonplace in Susrah and so the Keepers are required to dispose of all bodies within two days of their death.

Statistics for Keeper Priests and a map of a near identical shrine can be found in the adventure, 'The Necromancer's Knife'.

The Temple of Baal Khardah

On the northern edge of a grand plaza, where the Street of the Desert Gate meets the Square of the Grand Souk, stands the abandoned Ziggurat of Baal Khardah. Following the slaughter of King Nahaburam and his army on the banks of the Oxartus, the cult fell into disfavour with such few nobles as remained in the city. The Sun God's few remaining followers fled through secret ways and retreated across the Kharjah Pass in the company of Queen Naramu and the rest of the Royal Family. The few remaining Susrahnite nobles and merchants were of a less warlike nature and more inclined towards the worship of Belet Lil, the Moon Goddess. Thus, for almost two hundred years the temple has lain vacant, occupied only by pigeons and other vermin.

The Vizier, Wo Peng, has recently discovered a secret passage leading from the palace, through tunnels under the city to the catacombs under the temple. Herein lie the tombs of the Susrahnite Kings of Adartu, both of the lines of Martok and of Tamnesh, broken open and defiled by the warriors of the Padishah.

The upper levels of the temple are deserted and gathering dust, the frescoes defaced by occasional intruders. A dozen watchmen of the Black Guard maintain a vigil over the barricaded Temple entrance. Men of Captain Balchak's command, their orders are that no one is to be permitted to enter, on pain of death.

Boys from 'the Dives' regard spending a night in the 'haunted temple' as a rite of passage and there is still the occasional thief who dreams of finding a cache of hidden treasure but, it is generally accepted that such treasures as were not carried off by the priesthood were looted by the Khazistanis many years ago.

Beneath the temple, in the catacombs, Wo Peng has consecrated a **place of power** for his own Jade Dragon Temple. The catacombs are accessed by a flight of steps, 20 feet wide, leading down to a small hallway and a pair of great bronze portals.

These mighty doors are greened with the patina of age and are chained shut with a great length of Zadjite Steel and a huge padlock. The scattered links of an old bronze chain lie scattered about the floor.

A long forgotten secret passage leads from the catacombs, out of the city, to a small cave near the banks of the Oxartus river. This was the escape route used by the Priests of Baal Khardah and the Royal family when they abandoned Adartu to go into exile in Belthaar.

Wo Peng - Vizier and Master of the Jade Dragon Temple

Dressed entirely in voluminous robes of black silk, the Vizier of Dipur looks every inch the dastardly villain. His head is shaven and dark rings surround his eyes from sleep that is haunted by nightmares. He wears long moustaches and has a forked beard which combine with his arched eyebrows to give him a sardonic look.

He is softly spoken and rarely forceful, his voice the sibilant hissings of a snake. The Satrap's courtiers fear him and suspect that he exerts undue influence over their lord yet, none have the courage to voice these concerns. Even mighty Brennar, Captain of the Palace Guard, averts his gaze when under the scrutiny of the Vizier.

Wo Peng has been busy consolidating his hold on power in Dipur. He has disposed of the Slave Girl and weakened the hold that Tarken Bey's mother had over him. He also has Balchak, the new Captain of the Black Guard in his pocket. With his position fairly secure, he can finally turn to tracking down the treacherous Azam. Such a dreadful end he has planned for that traitorous dog, who dared steal the ring that holds his very soul.

Wo Peng is a powerful Sorcerer and the taint of the black magics he has employed have affected him deeply. He is a deviant who derives no pleasure from mortal relationships and finds gratification only in perverse liaisons with Demons and their spawn.

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|
| Strength). | 10. | Combat Actions. | 2. | 1-3. Right Leg. | 0/6 |
| Constitution) | 16. | Damage Mod. | na. | 4-6. Left Leg. | 0/6 |
| Size). | 14. | Improvement Mod. | +1. | 7-9. Abdomen. | 0/7 |
| Intelligence). | 19. | Magic Points. | 20. | 10-12. Chest. | 0/8 |
| Power). | 20 | Movement. | 8m. | 13-15. Right Arm. | 0/5 |
| Dexterity). | 15. | Strike Rank. | 17. | 16-18. Left Arm. | 0/5 |
| Charsma). | 16. | | | 19-20. Head. | 0/6 |

Common Skills.

Athletics 31%, Brawn 25%, Culture(Taikang) 90%, Evade 81%. Evaluate 79%, First Aid 63%, Influence 94%, Insight 75%, Language(Taikangese) 100%, Perception 68%, Persistence 85%, Resilience 70%, Sleight 90%, Stealth 74%, Unarmed 45%

Advanced Skills.

Art(Painting) 49%, Craft(Potions and Powders) 42%, Courtesy 81%, Healing 69%, Language(Demonic) 57%, Language(Khazi) 73%, Language(Susrahnite) 59%, Language(Zorabi) 64%, Lore(Alchemy) 54%, Lore(Art) 39%, Lore(Astronomy) 47%, Lore(Atropopaics) 70%, Lore(Dipur) 51%, Lore(Herbalism) 53%, Lore(The Infernal Court) 71%, Lore(Philosophy) 88%, Lore(Theology) 77%, Oratory 71%, Play Instrument 49%, Streetwise 37%, Teaching 85%

Magical Skills

Grimoire(Jade Serpent) 90%, Grimoire(Jade Dragon) 80%, Manipulation 88%, Meditation 75%, Summoning 73%

Equipment - Black robes, assorted powders and potions secreted about himself, concealed kris in his voluminous sleeves. A small enchanted jade statuette of a Taikangian Dragon worth 1000's of silver coins(it acts as a power crystal to retain Magic Points). A loyal bodyservant called Ku Kao Chou and the purchased loyalty of Captain Balchak and his Black Guardsmen.

Tactics - Wo Peng does not engage in combat unless it is, absolutely, the last option. If forced into melee, he is quite adept at fighting with the Kris that he conceals about his person. He prefers to leave such things to his servant, Ku Kao Chu and low life scum like Balchak and his thugs.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap/Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Kris | S. | S. | D4+1 | 3/6. | na. | Impale |

Combat Style: Dagger. 65%

Heroic Abilities - Linguist, Loremaster, Poison Immunity

Sorcery - Jade Serpent Grimoire (Dominate Human, Phantom Sound, Phantom Vision)
Jade Dragon Grimoire (Abjure Sleep, Castback, Damage Resistance, Holdfast, Mystic Vision, Palsy, Spell Resistance)

Taint Level - 11 points (Moderate) suffers from nightmares and deviant sexual preferences.

Special Ability - Ill at Ease

Wo Peng exudes a disconcerting aura that affects all persons in his presence. All those persons within 10 feet of the Vizier find themselves unable to meet his gaze, unless they make a successful opposed Persistence roll against this ability's Potency of 75. Failure means that action taken in his presence becomes Difficult (-20%).

In addition, any Npc who fails this test becomes more susceptible to the power of suggestion. All their opposed Persistence rolls to oppose Wo Peng's Persuade are Hard (-40%).

Special Item - The Jade Dragon Statuette

The Jade Dragon Statuette acts as a Power Crystal reservoir for Magic Points. It can hold up to the same number of Magic Points as the current owner normally possesses. In the case of Wo Peng, this amounts to 20 Magic Points stored.

The guardian of the Statuette is a supernatural entity which is summoned to destroy any who attempt its theft. It remains in combat for a number of rounds equal to the Magic Points remaining within.

The creature is draconic, but long and sinuous with slender arms and legs. A pair of horns sweep back from its head, lying almost flat along its body. Its fanged maw is surrounded by a mass of waving black tendrils, giving the appearance of a beard and moustaches while longer tendrils crown its head and stretch down between its shoulder blades. Its eyes are opalescent and more tendrils grow above them to give the impression of eyebrows. Its scales shimmer with iridescence in the light of the braziers that illuminate the great hall and the scent of Jasmine and Ginger hangs heavy in the, previously musty, air.

The Jade Dragon Guardian

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|-------|------------------|--------|------|
| Strength). | 39. | Combat Actions. | 3. | Tail. | 1-2. | 8/11 |
| Constitution) | 14. | Damage Modifier. | +2D8. | Right Hind Leg. | 3-4. | 8/11 |
| Size). | 39. | Magic Points. | 17. | Left Hind Leg. | 5-6. | 8/11 |
| Intelligence). | 11. | Movement | 6m. | Torso. | 7-14. | 8/12 |
| Power). | 17. | Strike Rank. | +12. | Right Front Leg. | 15-16. | 8/11 |
| Dexterity). | 13. | | | Left Font Leg. | 17-18. | 8/11 |
| Charisma). | 11. | | | Head. | 19-20 | 8/11 |

Traits - Darksight, Demonic(2AP), Crystalline(6Ap), No Armour Penalty, Formidable
Natural Weapons

Skills - Athletics 80%, Brawn 75%, Evade 65%, Influence 60%, Persistence 61%,
Resilience 52%

Combat Styles - Bite 85%

| Weapon. | Size. | Reach. | Damage. | Ap/Ap |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Bite. | H. | VL. | D10+2D8. | 8/11 |

Ku Kao Chou - Half Demon Bodyservant to the Vizier

Ku Kao Chou is the quiet and unassuming body servant to Wo Peng. He stands almost six feet tall but is lightly built with the sallow complexion common to his race. Like his master, his eyebrows are highly arched (which he emphasises with makeup) and he is clean shaven save for long drooping moustaches. His hair is long, reaching to his waist and worn in a single braid down his back. He moves with poise and grace and has a strangely effeminate and high pitched voice.

Ku Kao Chu is, in fact, the offspring of a liaison between his master and a cat demon summoned from the Infernal Court of Wa Ying, Emperor of Hell.

He has a pair of throwing knives secreted in the sleeves of his robes and is trained to fight in a number of styles. He is an accomplished knife fighter using a Taikangese combat style known as 'Cat's Claws' and in another called the 'Whirling Death', which utilises swords and unarmed strikes. Finally, he has received some sorcerous training as an apprentice in the Jade Serpent Temple from his master and father.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------|------|--------|------------|-----|
| Strength). | 12. | Combat Actions. | 3. | 1-3. | Right Leg. | 2/6 |
| Constitution) | 14. | Damage Mod. | +D2. | 4-6. | Left Leg. | 2/6 |
| Size). | 14. | Improvement Mod. | Na. | 7-9 | Abdomen. | 2/7 |
| Intelligence). | 15. | Magic Points. | 18. | 10-12. | Chest. | 2/8 |
| Power). | 18. | Movement. | 8m | 13-15. | Right Arm. | 2/5 |
| Dexterity). | 19 | Strike Rank. | 15 | 16-18. | Left Arm. | 2/5 |
| Charisma). | 10. | | | 19-20. | Head. | 2/6 |

Common Skills

Athletics 91%, Brawn 42%, Culture(Taikang) 67%, Dance 51%, Evade 88%, Influence 39%, Insight 44%, Language(Taikangese) 82%, Lore(Taikang) 70%, Perception 56%, Persistence 79%, Resilience 68%, Sing 44%, Sleight 61%, Stealth 94%.

Advanced Skills.

Art(Painting) 38%, Courtesy 79%, Craft(Juggling) 85%, Culture(Khazistani) 43%, Culture(Taraamite) 61%, Language(Demonic) 78%, Language(Khazi) 44%, Language(Taraam) 51%, Lore(The Infernal Court) 64%, Lore(Khazistan) 42%, Mechanisms 54%, Oratory 48%, Streetwise 47%, Survival 45%

Magic Skills

Grimoire 33%, Manipulation 37%, Meditation 50%

Equipment - Grey Robes. Kris, 2x Falchions, 2x Throwing Daggers, 2x Punch daggers.

Tactics - Ku Kao Chu plays on the fact that he appears to be a harmless manservant and most opponents underestimate his capability until it is too late. He starts combat by launching the throwing knives that are concealed in the sleeves of his robes. Then he attacks in a whirling rush of blows from Falchions, daggers or fists and feet.

| Weapon. | S. | R. | Damage. | Ap /Hp. | Range. | Special |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Falchion. | M. | M. | D6+2+D2. | 6/10. | Na. | Bleed |
| Punch Dagger. | S. | S. | D4+D2. | 6/8. | Na. | Bleed |
| Thrown Dagger. | S. | Na. | D4+D2. | 4/6. | Na. | Impale |
| Kris. | S. | S. | D4+1+D2. | 3/6. | Na. | Impale |

Combat Styles - Whirling Death (1H Sword, Twin 1H Sword, Unarmed). 90%
Cat's Claws (Dagger, Twin Daggers, Thrown Daggers). 90%

Heroic Abilities - Arrow Cutting, Dead Eye, Wall Leaping

Sorcery - Jade Serpent Grimoire (Dominate Human, Phantom Sound, Phantom Vision)

Special Ability - Night Sight

Because of his Demonic heritage, Ku Kao Chu can see in the dark, just like a cat. The rules for Nightsight are found in Monsters of Legend.

Special Ability - Demon Blood

2AP, no effect on Strike Rank or Encumbrance, negated by Fire or Silver

The Old Caravanserai

The Old Caravanserai district lies to the north of the Conquerors Kasbah. It is bordered, on its western edge, by the Street of Conquerors and by the mercantile district known as the Dwellings to the north.

It has fallen out of favour with travellers and Merchants over the last few years. The Satrap charged exorbitant taxes to admit caravans within the safety of the city walls. The arrival of an extra six hundred men under General Oktig has discouraged Zorabi raiders and now the Old Caravanserai is rarely used. A whole new Caravanserai has grown outside the Desert Gate.

The once bustling streets and alleys of the Old Caravanserai district are eerily quiet at night. Only the wealthiest of Merchants avail of its remaining active warehouses, stables and taverns which are found right on the edge of the Square of the Grand Souk.

It is here that the most infamous of Dipur's Brothels, 'The Dark Prince of Yaatana', can be found. It is said to be a dreadful place where any preference, no matter how vile and depraved, can be catered for as long as the price can be met.

Furtive figures are often seen to skulk around the abandoned lots of the area in the dead of night. Some of these warehouses and stockyards are rumoured to be the lairs of necromancers and demonologists. Others whisper of cannibal cults, ghouls, werebeasts and worse.....Susrahnite insurgents, plotting against the Padishah's Satrap.

The Square of the Grand Souk

This is the city's huge, open air, marketplace. Tinkers, Traders and merchants from places the length and breadth of the continent set up their stalls here on market days. Almost anything can be bought, from armour and weapons to clothing and trinkets. Livestock is penned for sale at the southern edge of the square and slaves are sold on the auction block at the northern edge. Foodstalls are set up around the square at various places, some selling fresh bread and soups, but most selling unrecognisable meats on wooden skewers. Inns and taverns surround the square, serving better fare but at vastly inflated prices on market days. The smells of livestock, cooking meat and throngs of unwashed humanity makes for a heady atmosphere.

Trade is not strictly limited to coin and like for like barter is common among the Khazistani farmers who bring their produce in from the surrounding hills and the valley of the Oxartus river.

Masses of people throng the square on Market days. Traders, Merchants and Farmers. Noblemen and Tinkers. Pickpockets, cutpurses and beggars abound and the soldiers of the Black Guard are hard pressed to keep criminal activities to a level that is acceptable to the Satrap. These villains are often disease ridden and verminous. There is a 20% chance that any one of these flea bitten individuals is carrying some sort of pestilence.

Each week, a convoy of wagons sets up on the grand plaza that surrounds the Ziggurat of Baal Khardah. These wagons contain grain from nearby farms, which is doled out to the urban poor to fill their bellies. While it is a costly exercise, The Satrap understands that citizens with full bellies are less prone to insurrection. These wagons are heavily guarded by watchmen of the Black Guard and a full troop of Tamari horsemen to deter, would be, trouble makers.

Using Dipur in 'Shadow of the Ragged King'.

Scattered through the descriptions of the Non Player Characters and locations are a number of possible plot hooks. These can potentially be used at both the beginning and the end if the proposed adventure in the Al Khazi and the ruins of Akharon.

One suggestion might be that the PCs become involved with Aram Anshal of the Inn of the Gilded Palm. Perhaps he considers that one of them might be a match in the fighting pits for 'Talham the Bull' or, perhaps he might attempt to hire them to rid himself of the henchmen of Borak Cham or even as assassins to murder the Zorabi leader himself.

Through Aram Anshal, they may become acquainted with Haram Baal and may sign on as guards for his caravan to Zul Bazzir.

Upon rescuing Sutrahmunah and Jamila, they have options to journey on to Zul Bazzir or, to return to Dipur. The Shaykh of the Al Jafari is as good as his word and let's them go free. They might be made honorary members of the Al Jafari as a token of respect for their bravery. Shaykh Muleh might also, perhaps, send word of the required ransom for Haram Baal back to Dipur with them.

Aram Anshal has the clout to get them past the Black Guard and into the wealthy district of the city but will he remain loyal to his friend or might the devious Balam convince him to throw in his lot with him, in return for the coin to pay off his debts to Borak Cham?

Returning to Dipur with Sutrahmunah also presents some interesting options. Wo Peng does not wish his influence with Tarkhan Bey to diminish and may use his alliance with Balchak to have the characters and the girl arrested and imprisoned in the Black Kasbah. If the characters have rescued the 'Toecutter', his links to Borak Cham may prove crucial if the Black Guard become involved.

Ekrimala has been hiring men to find the girl and the PCs may find themselves in her employ as she attempts to ascertain who ordered Sutrahmunah's abduction. Perhaps those she has already employed are overzealous in carrying out their duties and assume the PCs to be the kidnappers?

Neither will the High Priestess of the Moon Goddess react well to the return of Sutrahmunah and may either consider using Sorcerous means to force Brennar to murder his Lord or, she may descend into the catacombs and summon the demon, Salomeh.

Any attempt on the Satrap's life, whether successful or not, is likely to lead to strife and bloodshed as armed factions clash in the narrow streets and alleys of the city

Making Dipur come to life.

Encounters with the Satrap's Guard

These warriors are usually only encountered in the Palace or at the Gates of the King's Kasbah. If encountered outside these areas they are either off duty and carousing, acting as bodyguards to Tarkhan Bey, Sutrahmunah or Ekrimala, or undercover and on a secret mission for the Satrap.

They are two hundred strong and divided into five companies. Four of these companies provide security for the palace itself, while the fifth is a mounted company who provide escort for the Satrap and his family upon their journeys.

Encounters with the Soldiers of the Garrison

A troop of proud lancers rides out of the Great Kasbah, skirts the Square of the Grand Souk and departs the city, through the Black Gate and along the road towards the Kharjah pass.

Armoured bowmen can be seen manning the watchtowers on the Great Kasbah or the Conquerors Kasbah. They are alert for threats from without or within and are armed with powerful Khazi Short Bows.

There is a notable rivalry between the locally raised Tamari Horsemen and the Imperial Lancers who arrived under General Oktig's command. Violent disagreements regularly occur between the two groups. A brawl breaks out outside one of the taverns that surround the Square of the Grand Souk. The opponents are drunken and swaggering, off duty, soldiers. Several patrols of the Black Guard turn up to quell the unrest, led by the thuggish and vicious Captain Balchak himself.

Encounters with the Black Guards

A patrol of Black Guards stand idly by, while a mob from 'the Dwellings' lynch a petty thief from the Dives.

A patrol of Black Guards move through the Bazaar district extorting protection money from the shopkeepers and artisans. One victim is unable or unwilling to pay up and is subjected to a vicious beating.

Black Guards chase a young thief through the Square of the Grand Bazaar. As the miscreant disappears into the alleys of the Den, a dozen or so Zorabi gang members posture menacingly, their hands hovering near the hilts of their wickedly curved blades. The Zorabis and the Watchmen exchange catcalls before the latter decide that discretion is the better part of valour and withdraw before injury is added to insult.

An Encounter with Street Prostitutes

The characters are approached by a pair of scantily clad street girls. The two are wanton hussies who strike suggestive poses and make lewd suggestions to entice their victims into a nearby alley with promises of cheap, but cheerful, delights to be experienced. Several ruffians are lying in wait to rob the unfortunates. These footpads are quite prepared to resort to violence and even murder to achieve their goal.

An Encounter with a Damsel in Distress

While departing a tavern near 'the Den', a young Yar Ammonite woman runs toward the characters and collapses at their feet. She is near naked and is covered with welts and bruising. She begs them to aid her and promises them a reward. A pair of Zorabi thugs appear out of the gloom and try to retrieve the girl. They claim she is a slave who has run away from a brothel in the Den district of the city and they thank the characters for apprehending the fugitive. If the characters decide to help the girl, there is likely to be a fight. Several more Zorabis will appear out of the darkness. If facing defeat, the Zorabis retreat and threaten the vengeance of someone called the 'Toecutter'.

The girl, an Adartani named Narthu, claims to have been the maidservant of Sutrahmunah, the Governor's missing lover. Her mistress has been abducted and taken out of the city but, to where, she does not know. She was forced into prostitution in a den of iniquity known as 'The Pit'. There would be some reward for her rescue from Lady Ekrimala at the Palace and a much greater one for the rescue of her mistress. The girl does not reveal that she is an agent of 'The Kardeslik'.

An Encounter with Temple Prostitutes

While walking along the southern edge of the Square of the Grand Souk, the characters observe the Moon Maidens lounging on the steps of their ziggurat temple. Their movements are slow, languorous and quite deliberately seductive. Several male initiates of the cult watch passers by intently. Any signs of obvious interest in the priestesses lead to an approach and an invitation to join the cult.

An Encounter with a Beggar

The characters are approached by a single beggar. This will be a particularly loathesome fellow who will pester the characters until he is paid to leave them alone or is driven off by violence or threats thereof. If the characters are foolish enough to hand over coin to him they will find themselves swarmed by a dozen or more similar fellows who fawn over the great, merciful and generous characters until they too are paid off or driven off. If driven off they retreat and proceed to hurl curses, offal and stones at the characters. There is a 50% chance that any group of swarming beggars will include a cut purse with a Sleight skill of 60% among their number. There are also likely to be a number of the beggars who carry extremely virulent diseases. The beggars are likely to follow the characters, their numbers swelling, until a patrol of Black Guardsmen arrive to break up the disturbance.

Encountering some Street Urchins

The characters are swarmed by a group of orphaned beggar children. There will be at least one pick pocket amongst their number with a Sleight Skill of 55%. The leader of the group is a teenage boy, born and raised in the slums of Dipur and quite capable (45%) with a dagger. They will scatter if violence is threatened or if the Black Guard appear on the scene. They have heard rumours that the Black Guard are selling orphans to Yaatani slavers and each one of them dreads the fate that will await them at the hands of Yaatani catamites.

Falling victim to Footpads

While wander through a less salubrious district of the city, the characters find themselves confronted by a group of armed robbers. The robbers demand the characters coin pouches. If the characters attempt to fight them or flee, they will discover that a similar number of these footpads have blocked the street or alley behind them. This a favourite tactic among the Zorabi gangs of the Den.

A Cutpurse Strikes

Wandering through the Square of the Grand Souk or along the Street of a Hundred Bazaars, the characters become the victims of a cutpurse. The cutpurse has Sleight at 75% and Stealth at 70%. If spotted, he/she flees the characters and may lead them a merry dance across the city. He/She has Athletics at 70%, Brawn at 60%, Acrobatics at 60% and Evade at 70%. If caught the thief fights like a cornered animal with a Dagger skill of 55%.

The Processional

It is one of the high holy days of the cult of Belet Lil. With a beating of drums and the clashing of cymbals the priesthood and members of the cult proceed upon their way around the city walls. First, the Moon Maidens, leaping and twirling as they come. Clad in diaphanous silks with jingling bells at their wrists and ankles. They are followed a group of young men, a score or more with drums, bells and cymbals. Chosen from among the most physically attractive specimens of the cult membership, these precede a further group of a dozen who carry a platform upon their shoulders. Mounted on the platform is the golden statue of the goddess from the temple itself. The platform is flanked by whirling dervishes who are the Moon Dancer Adepts of the cult. Clad in close fitting leather armour and armed with glinting scimitars, they are almost as alarming as they are alluring. These are followed by the High Priestess herself, naked as a newborn babe, riding upon a chariot drawn by four pure white steeds. Her charioteer is a black armoured warrior and she is followed by seven similarly clad warriors and an impressive looking Captain with a transverse crest of black horsehair atop his helmet. Finally bringing up the rear are the initiates of the cult, several hundreds strong, drunken and cavorting. They know that one of their number will be chosen to enter the Garden of Delights that night as the consort of the High Priestess to undertake the fertility ritual. They know that once the rites are complete, this consort will become a blood sacrifice to ensure the continued fertility and wealth of the Oxartus valley.

Encountering Mercenaries

There are many mercenaries to be found in the taverns, fleshpots and Lotus Dens of Dipur. They are men (and women) of all nations and of none, although Jairanians and Zorabis are far and away the most numerous. Tarkhan Bey hires many sellswords for his expeditions against the Susrahnite city states to the east. He favours tribesmen from the barbaric Zorabi hill clans for such endeavours and hires Jairanians to guard and patrol the caravan routes to the west.

Local Khazistani merchants also favour Zorabi guards for their journeys across the Kharjah Pass into Susrah and the lands beyond.

Jairanians are favoured by merchants making the journey west, across the Al Khaz, to Zul Bazzir and on to Yar Ammon. They provide horsemen of similar quality to those of Khazistan who are equally capable of fighting on foot as medium infantrymen.

Captain Karanthes' Free Company - 'Karanthes' Red Swords'

In the Caravanserai by the Desert Gate, the characters encounter a company of mercenaries drumming up recruits. Three score of armed men are lounging around by the roadside. A red banner with a pair of crossed swords flaps lazily in the wind above their makeshift camp. A young boy bangs a drum incessantly until cuffed around the ear by a Sergeant who then proceeds to address all who have gathered. He is offering daily pay and regular food to entice volunteers to sign on to Captain Karanthes' Free Company. These notorious fellows are more commonly referred to as Karanthes' Red Swords and have a poor reputation in battle. Investigations will discover that this particular band, for all their bluster and hardened appearance, are little more than rapacious raiders and looters. The company are bound for Yar Ammon to take service with King Ekhartoum of Akhet. Ekhartoum intends to mount a punitive expedition against the slavers of Zadj and has need of experienced soldiers.

One story has it that Karanthes is an exiled Prince of Nabastis, but most other tales suggest a much less romantic background. Whatever it be, Karanthes is a cold hearted villain with little concern for his men. He will spend their lives recklessly and quite happily in pursuit of an even larger share of the coin and the favour of his masters.

Karanthes has overstayed his welcome in Dipur. It is rumoured that General Eskaros has taken great exception to an attempt by Karanthes to replace him as commander of the Satrap's Yemarite mercenaries. Thus it is that his company are actually facing the real possibility of an actual battle on the Borders of Zadj.

The majority of Karanthes' men are Adartanis. Use the Caravan Guard Stat blocks from 'The Shadow of a Ragged King' to represent 'Karanthes' Red Swords'.

Foolish Noblewomen

Several Khazistani women are in the Square of the Grand Souk, accompanied by their bodyguards. They are the wives and daughters of Khazistani Noblemen from rich estates in the valley of the Oxartus. They lack any kind of wisdom about the ways of the city and are a liability, victims for every merchant or trader whose wares take their fancy. They wear their wealth openly, flaunting it before every thief in Dipur and relying upon the skill and vigilance of their armed retainers to ensure their safety.

Meeting Farozh the Madman

Wild eyed and wild bearded, clad only in a filthy loincloth, Farozh whips himself into a frenzy on the steps of the Temple of Baal Khardah. He yells profanities at passers by and spits curses at any who attempt to silence him or move him along.

He rants about horrible fates awaiting the folk of Dipur and many of the locals laugh and jeer at him. Of late, his premonitions have been of death and destruction at the hands of an ancient evil and of a dark King dressed in rags of ochre yellow, wearing a crown of blackened iron. Other dreams have been of a, stick thin, woman with wild hair, glowing red eyes and a mouthful of jagged teeth. Around her a city drowns in blood.

He lives in a 'lean to' shack in the Dives district of the city and relies on the charity of it's few decent souls for his livelihood.

Tarkesh the Lame - Susrahnite Moneylender

Both the Khazistani and the Zorabis consider usury to be a career without honour and treat it's practitioners with disdain. The Susrahnites suffer no such compunctions and thus it is that the moneylenders of the Bazaar of the Coins are mostly of that breed.

It is also commonly known that most of the moneylenders of the Bazaar also act as fences to dispose of goods for the various criminal elements of the city.

Tarkesh is known as 'the Lame' and he hobbles around on a walking stick. It is rumoured that the cause of his limp is due to having made the mistake of trying to underpay Ghuram Khal for certain goods. 'The Toecutter' is not a man to be crossed.

Whatever the truth of this, it is certainly clear that the bulk of Tarkeshes business emanates from the Zorabis of the Den.

Jarku - Confidence Trickster and Agent of The Scions of Adartu

A shady looking Adartani fellow, named Jarku, sidles up to the characters and offers to sell them Lotus powder at a fraction of the price it would cost in a Lotus Den such as the House of Lucid Dreaming.

The fellow gives the characters a sample to test but switches the merchandise at the last moment using his Sleight of 80%. What the characters have paid for is poor quality at best and extremely dangerous at worst. If the characters manage to track down and confront the dealer, he will attempt to convince them that he works for Captain Balchak of the Black Guard to dissuade them from exacting any sort of revenge. That failing he will threaten them with 'The Bloody Red Hand'. Arbeletu despises Jarku, believing that he talks too much.

Skoll Bloodeye

Skoll is a tall and rangy fellow with long red hair from the semi mythical land of Yg that lies beyond the North Wind. He tries not draw attention to himself if at all possible but, that would be a difficult enough task among these southern folk, even if it were not for the livid scar that bisects his, permanently bloodshot, left eye. He is sullen and withdrawn and tells no one of his reasons for being in Dipur. He wears a lamellar hauberk and carries a broadsword and target shield. A silver pendant on a leather thong, fashioned in the shape of a wolf's head, is his only adornment. Is it purely ornamental or is it a badge of some sort? Skoll is presently accompanied by a trio of Susrahnite mercenaries. Use the Stats for Caravan Guards from 'The Shadow of the Ragged King'.

Batik the Tinker

An elderly Khazistani, he pushes a cart through the city streets, sharpening knives and mending pots and pans for the price of a few coppers. For the price of a silver coin he can put an incomparable edge on a dagger sized blade(D4+ or smaller). This blade adds +1 to damage rolls for the first twig 'successful' blows struck with the weapon. (Misses which the defender opts not to parry or attacks which are evaded are the only attacks which are classed as not being successful.)

Harmar 'the Muted One'

This young Khazrajite outcast from his clan wanders around the city in wide eyed and innocent wonder, an obvious victim for every villain in the city if ever there was one. Except for the fact that he is an exceptional swordsman, as anyone foolish enough to cross swords with him will find out. He has taken 'the Long Walk', having been driven out from his clan and has sworn a vow of silence until he has redeemed himself. He has become quite adept at getting his needs met through gestures and facial expressions.

Kumbagash the Swordsmith

Kumbagash is an expatriate Zadjite, dwelling on the Street of a Hundred Bazaars. He maintains a small shrine to 'the Living Flame' in his workshop and is an adept of that cult. Kumbagash's weapons are the best to be found in the entire city and are forged from Zadjite steel. The steel rules from Arms of Legend apply to swords forged by Kumbagash. He can mend weapons of iron but does not make them. Likewise he only makes swords and daggers, though he can mend spear blades at a pinch.

Nasir the Herbalist and Malu the Midwife

Nasir is a Adartani who dwells at the edge of the Dives, where it meets the Street of a Hundred Bazaars. He is renowned for his skill as a healer and for his ability to craft love philtres, herbal tonics, poultices and poison remedies. His wife, Malu, is a midwife. The prostitutes of the Dives frequent their shop to obtain potions to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Nasir is a middle aged man in brown robes, with a turban and a long, ringletted and heavily oiled, beard. His wife is a pure blooded Susrahnite with a sharp tongue and a severe temperament. She rules the roost and her word is the law in their household.

The Kardeslik

The Kardeslik are a small group, comprising a dozen or so spies in the service of Ekrimala and by default, the Empire of Khazistan. Kardeslik is a Khazi word that means 'brotherhood' and is somewhat of a misnomer as the members of the group are both male and female. Only one or two of them are Khazistani by birth and the majority are Adartanis, native to Dipur, the better to blend in with and uncover conspirators against the Satrap. This group features heavily in the adventure, 'The Scions of Adartu'.

The Scions of Adartu

This clandestine group exists with the purpose of expelling the Khazistani invaders from Adartu and reinstating the ancient line of Susrahnite Kings. Its symbol is 'The Bloody Red Hand'.

The group is comprised, in the main, of young and impressionable Susrahnite men along with a few career criminals and a handful of down at heel merchants, those whose poor business acumen has led to their financial ruin and who hope to better their lot if the Exile King can somehow be returned to power. It is a foolish notion, but desperate men need something to cling to.

The group gathered, until recently, in an abandoned caravanserai warehouse. The Kardeslik discovered its location and Black Guard thugs dragged off four of their members to meet a grisly fate.

The remnant have now relocated to the Inn of the Gilded Palm, where their leader has taken employment as a maidservant. They are awaiting an emissary from the Exile King in Belthaar.

Animals in Dipur

There are many animals to be found in the alleys, markets, palaces, paddocks and streets of Dipur. The slums are home to packs of rats that slink out of the catacombs and sewers after dark to feast upon the detritus of the day. These are preyed upon, in turn, by feral cats and packs of near wild dogs. Although these dogs occasionally present some small threat to children and the elderly, they are not generally driven away as they help with the vermin problem in the slums.

The nobles and wealthy merchants of the city own their own guard dogs and hunting dogs of various breeds. Cats too are popular, especially among the Susrahnite merchant class. Horses are afforded a special status within the city. It is forbidden for non Khazistanis to own or ride a horse within the city walls unless they pay a hefty ownership tax. Wealthy Susrahnites stable their horses outside the walls to avoid paying this tax.

Camels are the most common beasts of burden to be found although donkeys, asses and mules can also be found. Elephants are occasionally found accompanying caravans that have journeyed from Ghoma and other lands to the far east. These great beasts are smaller and much more placid than their kin who dwell in the lands of the Azimba, far to the south. Chickens, Goats and Sheep are the main sources of meat and dairy products in Dipur. Pigs and Cattle are much rarer but not unknown.

The Falcon

The characters are in the Square of the Grand Souk when a pair of Khazistani nobles, on horseback, exit the Wealthy district. They are accompanied by several armed servants and a pack of hounds. It is clear that they are going hunting in the surrounding hills. Perched on the arm of one of the noblemen is a, rare and striking, blue tailed falcon.

The following day, the characters spot the falcon perched on the roof of a nearby building. What can this mean? Has something happened to the Noblemen while they were hunting or has the Hawk simply escaped its captivity? If they return it to its owner, will he reward them or attempt to have them accused of theft and beaten by his retainers or the soldiers of the Black Guard.

Ape Escape!

In the Caravanserai district, a group of hunters from Zadj who specialise in capturing live animals have set up their camp and are drawing a lot of interest from the locals. Men, women and children flock around the cage wagons while hired labourers struggle to manhandle the cage of a huge, carnivorous, grey ape (use Gorilla from Monsters of Legend or Savage Ape from Eidolon of the Ape) to the ground. The beast roars its defiance and they drop the cage off the wagon in fright. The door to the cage breaks open and the ape leaps out into the scattering crowd. In their panicked flight they get in the way of the hunters. Only the characters are positioned to deal with the beast as it prepares to pounce on a hapless young woman and/or child.

If the ape is killed, the characters find that they are not well regarded by the Zadjites, who had hoped to recapture it alive. They insist that the characters owe them substantial damages for destroying their property and a further fight may well ensue.

The young woman might be the well-heeled wife of a Susrahnite Merchant or the spoilt daughter of a powerful Khazistani Noble.

Rats, Rats, the Size of Bloomin Cats

Packs of huge rats have begun to infest the Dives district of the city. The residents live in fear of the creatures, several children and animals have disappeared and the feral cats and packs of dogs have fled the district. What is the origin of these vile rodents and what of the persistent rumours of a gigantic, aberrant, specimen with three heads who seems to lead them?

Murder by Moonlight

A vicious animalistic predator stalks the benighted streets of Dipur and has murdered and partially devoured a dozen citizens over the last four months. No one is safe, the creature has killed rich men as well as poor ones. One man, who claims to have witnessed an attack, says it was the work of a huge black panther. He also says that the beast then stood up and walked upon its hind legs. Of course, he was drunk and he may have imagined that last part. Is it mere coincidence that all the murders have happened on nights of the Full Moon? Could there actually be a were creature loose in the city or, does someone just want the authorities to believe that one stalks the night shadows and if so, then why?

A Cheeky Monkey

The characters are walking through the Bazaar district when they hear a commotion. A group of locals are chasing what appears to be a monkey, wearing a brocade waistcoat through the streets. The monkey appears to have a golden charm bracelet grasped in its paw.

The monkey jumps on to the shoulder of one of the characters and screeches at its pursuers before dropping its prize at the character's feet. Locals surround the characters and a patrol of Black Guards look on with interest. The locals accuse the characters of being the owner of the monkey who has plagued them for weeks now.

They call for the guards to arrest the characters. If the characters manage to avoid, or escape, imprisonment in the Black Kasbah they will encounter the monkey several times more and have the distinct impression that it is following them. Why would that be the case and who is its master?

The Parrot

In a seedy drinking den, an old moth eaten parrot is perched on the bar. A character is at the bar when the parrot insults a huge outlander barbarian. The fellow cannot be convinced that the insult came from the bird and believes that not only did the character insult him but also now takes him for a fool. No matter what, the bird will not repeat the insult until after the encounter.