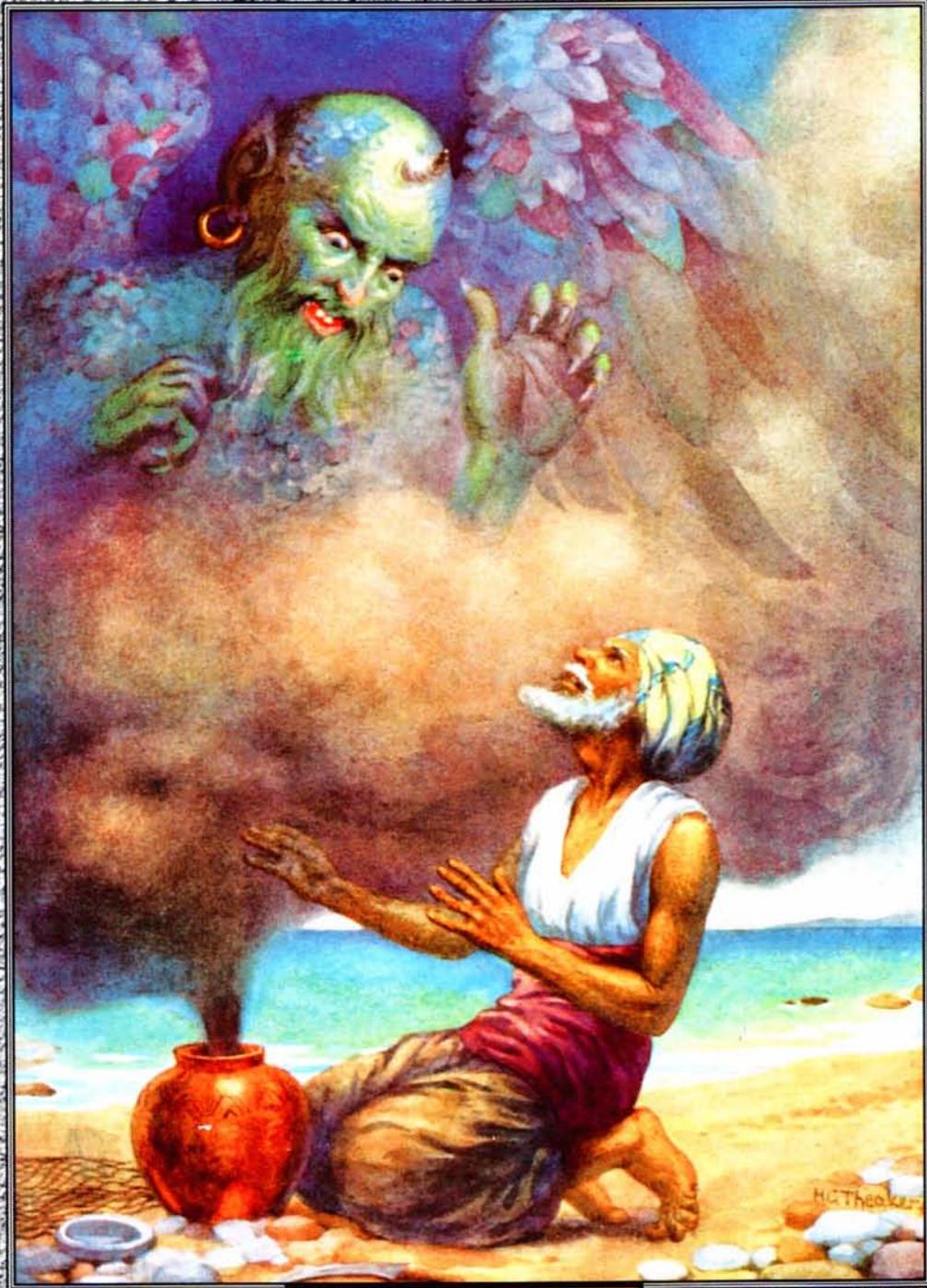


Arabian Nights™



by James L. Cambias



A Genre Book for **Rolemaster™**

ARABIAN NIGHTS™

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Author's Dedication: To my wife Diane

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1.0 INTRODUCTION



1.1 THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND A NIGHT

The collection of folk tales called the *Thousand and One Nights* (or the *Arabian Nights*) is one of the world's best-known works of fiction. In the original Arabic, it is familiar to readers throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and India. Translated to European languages in the Eighteenth Century, the Arabian Nights are now popular all over the world.

The stories are all told as part of a frame story, the tale of Scheherezade (or Shahrazad) and King Shahryar. In this story, King Shahryar is betrayed by an unfaithful wife, and thereby comes to hate all women. To avoid being betrayed ever again, he adopts the practice of marrying a new wife each day, then executing her the next morning. This goes on for several years, creating woe and terror among his subjects.

At last, Scheherezade, the clever daughter of the King's Vizier, comes up with a plan. She volunteers to marry the King, and arranges for her sister Dunyazad to visit her on her wedding-night. After Scheherezade and the King have finished the usual business of the marriage-bed (these are *not* children's stories), Dunyazad, feigning insomnia, asks Scheherezade to tell her a story. Scheherezade does so, spinning out a long yarn and ending at daybreak with a cliff-hanging conclusion. King Shahryar, who has been listening, cannot bear to miss the end of the story, and postpones his wife's execution for a day. The next night, Scheherezade finishes her tale, but immediately begins a second, which is left unresolved the next morning. The King again postpones her death in order to let her finish the story.

This goes on for a thousand and one nights, during which time Scheherezade bears the King three sons. At last, impressed by her intelligence, courage, and devotion, he abandons his policy of wife-killing, and lives out his days as a monarch revered for wise government.

The tales in the *Thousand and One Nights* come from a variety of sources. Some are pre-Muslim folk tales (the story of Sindbad the Sailor, for example, includes episodes lifted from the *Odyssey*). A number are ancient Persian stories. Others are probably fictionalized accounts of real events. There is no internal consistency, and the stories are jumbled together without any attempt at historical grounding. As an example: King Shahryar in the frame story is described as being one of the "Banu Sasan"—the Sassanid kings of pre-Muslim Persia. Yet his wife is telling him stories of the Abbasid Caliphate, two centuries in the future! They probably were put into their modern form by about the year 1400.

The stories were part of an oral tradition, and were often performed in the marketplace or coffeehouses by wandering storytellers. The entertainer would tell one night's worth at a time, concluding each session by taking up a collection of coins from the audience. The storyteller only needed to remember the rough

outline of the plot, and would improvise dialogue and descriptions on the spot. Much of the text is in the form of Arabic poetry, making it easier to recall.

A few printed versions were produced in various Muslim countries, and it was from these that European scholars made the first translations. There were wide differences among the various Arabic editions, and errors in the text were multiplied and made worse in translation.

The *Arabian Nights* were first introduced to Europe in the 18th century when Antoine Galland produced a French translation. It was a tremendous success, and sparked a wave of interest in "Oriental" styles. Several English versions were derived from Galland's. During the 19th century, various writers produced either scholarly or popular translations.

Possibly the best translation in English is the version produced by Sir Richard Burton, the famous explorer. It is worth reading, as much for Burton's notes and accompanying essay as for the text itself. He makes no effort to censor the stories, leaving them as ribald as they would be when told around a desert campfire. Burton also produced a thirteen-volume *Supplemental Nights*, containing alternate versions of some of the stories.



Surprisingly, one of the most famous Arab stories is actually not part of the *Arabian Nights*: the tale of Aladdin, recently made into a popular film by Disney, does not actually come from the *Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night*. It is an entirely separate story, but is part of the same Muslim folk-tale tradition, and was included by Galland in his first collection. Burton omitted it from his edition of the *Nights*, but included it in his Supplement.

USING THIS BOOK

This book is designed to allow players and Gamemasters to enjoy role playing adventures in the world of the *Arabian Nights* stories. While it was written for use with the *Rolemaster* game system, much of the information can be used with other role playing games. It is divided into three sections, the Campaign Book, the Sourcebook, and the Adventures. The Campaign book provides all the technical information and rules required to create characters and adventures for an *Arabian Nights* campaign using the *Rolemaster* system.

The Sourcebook consists of a Players' Section and a Gamemasters' Section. The Players' Section includes all the background information on medieval Islam which everyone involved in an *Arabian Nights* campaign might need. The Gamemasters' Section contains material which players should not initially know concerning the Islamic world, Baghdad, and opportunities for adventure.

The Adventures section provides three complete adventures for an *Arabian Nights* campaign, along with numerous short scenarios for Gamemasters to develop as they wish.

1.2 AUTHOR'S NOTES

This book is intended as a guide for fantasy role playing in the world of the *Arabian Nights* tales. To provide a proper background for players and Gamemasters, most of whom are not Muslims, the book includes a brief summary of Islamic history and belief. Let me assure any Muslims reading this book that any errors or misrepresentations are the result of ignorance on my part, not malice.

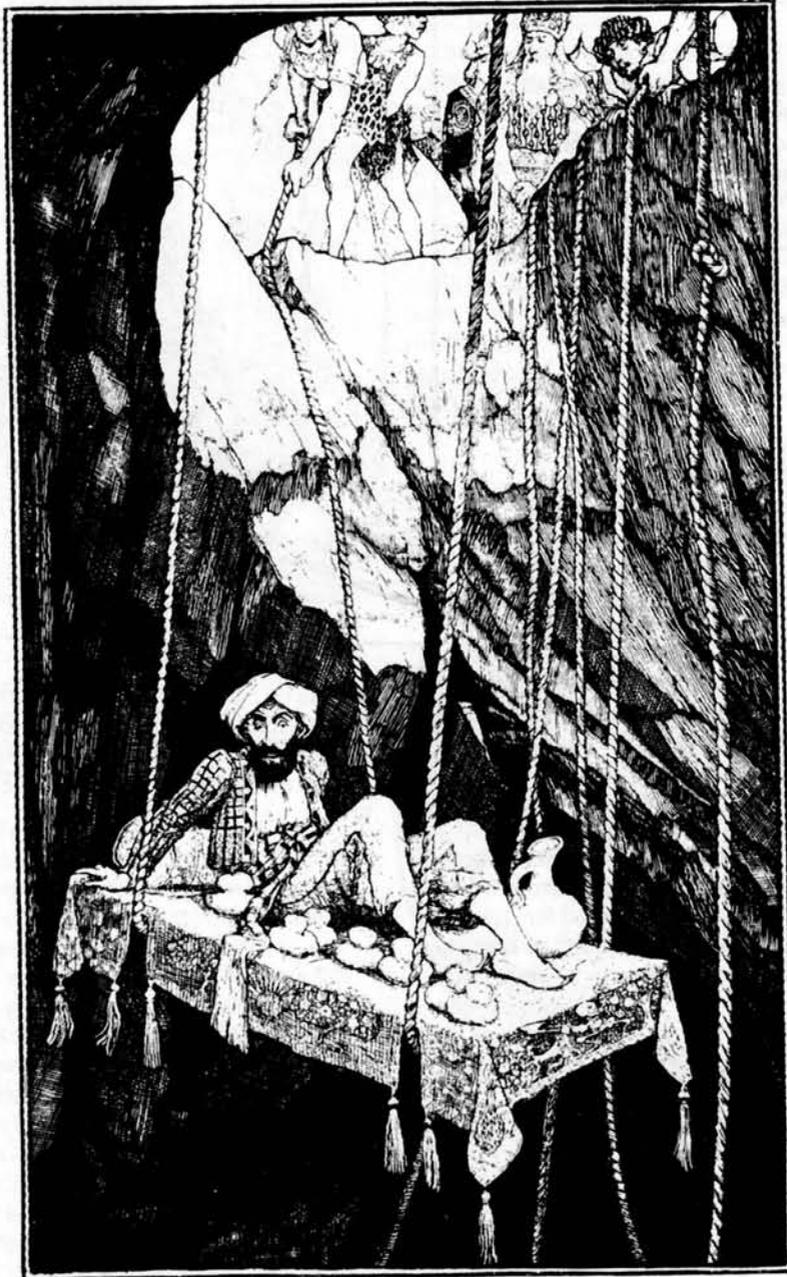
Similarly, any devout Christians, Jews, or followers of other faiths should understand that this book is intended merely to provide a background for entertaining fantasy adventures; I am not trying to convert anybody, or subvert their beliefs. If you find this book offensive to your own religion, then don't buy it. But don't try to keep other people from reading it.

Finally, students of Islamic civilization may find that this book contains a number of oversimplifications and factual errors. Some of these are deliberate, in the interest of playability and fun. It is my hope that players may become interested enough in the Muslim world to learn more about the subject; but this is a game, not a textbook.



A Note on Spelling: This book contains many words from Arabic. When a familiar English spelling exists, I have used it, even if the English spelling is not strictly accurate. I have left out all pronunciation marks, since this is a game supplement, not a linguistics text.

CAMPAIGN BOOK





2.0 CHARACTER CREATION

Creating characters for *Arabian Nights* role playing can be done using the existing *Rolemaster* rules, without much change. The *Rolemaster Companion* books are extremely helpful, as the skills and professions they introduce add much depth to the game.

2.1 ROLEMASTER PROFESSIONS IN THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

Characters may be of any profession from *Character Law* or the *Rolemaster Companion* books, subject to some restrictions. Professions not listed should be considered forbidden. As always, the Gamemaster has final say on what professions to allow.

PROFESSIONS FROM CHARACTER LAW (2.1.1)

Fighters: Warriors were probably the most highly-respected persons in medieval Islam. No alteration of the basic rules is needed. Note that a warrior's skills and weaponry varied, depending on his background. Nomads from the Asian steppes usually fought on horseback, with bows and spears as their primary weapons. Bedouins from the Arabian deserts rode camels, and used staffs and swords. The Bedouins were also expert at using slings and throwing stones. Regular soldiers of the Caliph's army were generally armed with swords and spears. The characteristic weapon of the Islamic countries was the scimitar. Armor was generally light—shields and helmets.

Thieves: Thieves are everywhere, of course, and fit into the *Arabian Nights* world without any changes. Since wealth in medieval Islam often existed in the form of goods rather than cash, a Thief must be able to sell his loot, making mercantile skills very useful. Urban Thieves would specialize in climbing, stealth, picking pockets, and opening locks, while bandits in the wilderness would have good combat abilities and outdoor skills.

Rogues: As with Thieves, Rogues can be used in an *Arabian Nights* campaign with no difficulty. Many bandits and desert robbers will be Rogues.

Warrior Monks: Specialists in unarmed combat were few and far between in medieval Islam, but there is no reason why they could not have existed. A Warrior Monk character would need an unusual background. He might be a Sufi, sworn never to harm another and using his skills for defense; or else he might be a foreigner, a martial-arts expert from the East.

Magicians, Illusionists, and Sorcerers: Users of magic were viewed with grave suspicion in Islam; in the *Arabian Nights* few magicians are benevolent. Gamemasters may well wish to completely prohibit players from using magical characters, saving spell users for villainous NPCs.

If such player characters are allowed, they must learn to keep a low profile or risk strong public disapproval.

Alchemists: Alchemy was a very important science in Islam, and there are many references in *The Book of a Thousand Nights and One Night* to potions and transmutations. An Alchemist would not suffer from as much public mistrust as other Spell Users, and might well be a respected and pious man.

Alchemists in a campaign which does not have much magic will probably be Scholars (from *Rolemaster Companion II*), with high skill levels in Alchemy, Metal Lore, and Poison Lore.

Clerics: Because Islam has no formal priesthood, Clerics are instead religious scholars whose wisdom and holiness gives them powers by the grace of Allah. This means that Cleric characters must be pious and good. The Gamemaster should decide whether or not to allow non-Muslim Clerics in an *Arabian Nights* campaign. See the notes on "True Religions" in Section 5.7.

A Cleric must be an *extremely* devout Muslim; the Gamemaster should allow *no* leeway about such things as religious observances, helping the poor and weak, and actively seeking the common good. All Muslim Clerics have to study the Philosophy/Religious Doctrine (Islamic) skill.

Animists: Nature-oriented Animists will probably not be Muslims, but instead pagan tribesmen or foreigners who belong to a nature-worshipping religion (but see the notes in Section 5.7 on which religions are "true" in the campaign). It would not be impossible to encounter an African shaman or a Malay witch-doctor in the Islamic world. Their status as infidels might cause problems, however. Pagans were often persecuted in Islam, and a pagan with magical powers might be executed as an evil sorcerer.

Healers and Lay Healers: The dividing line between doctors and magicians has always been faint, and this is especially true in the world of the *Arabian Nights*. Healers and Lay Healers can either be doctors, trained in medicine which includes the use of magical healing, or else can be Muslim holy men blessed with the healing touch (in which case see the notes on Clerics above). All healers will be well-respected, and should have no difficulty existing in Islamic society.

In a non-magical campaign, Gamemasters may wish to allow Healers and Lay Healers to learn spells from their respective Base Lists. These would represent medical treatments rather than actual magic.

Seers and Astrologers: These two professions would be lumped together by the general public as "soothsayers." They are either holy men blessed with the gift of prophecy, or else are users of strange magic. Actual Astrologers, using the movements of the planets to foretell the future, were quite common in Islam, and frequently dabbled in medicine and alchemy. Naturally, holy men will be more revered than fortune-tellers, but both would be tolerated.

PROFESSIONS FROM ROLEMASTER COMPANION I (2.1.2)

Archmage: Like the other magical professions, the Archmage would be hated and feared by the public. The great power of the Archmage's magic makes it even more unpopular, so that a character of this profession would almost certainly have to keep his identity secret. The fact that an Archmage can draw power from all three realms fits well with the relatively unspecialized depiction of spell-users in the *Arabian Nights*.

Barbarian: Turks from Central Asia, Bedouins from the Arabian desert, and Berbers from the Sahara could all be Barbarians, with a suitable specialization in Desert Lore skills. Likewise an African or European foreigner might also be a Barbarian. Muslim Barbarians would be accepted normally in Islamic society (and perhaps even admired a little), but infidels would face all the usual problems.

Burglar: Burglars would be all too common in a crowded, wealthy city like Baghdad. The Burglar profession's stealth and quickness of orientation is perfect for the *Arabian Nights* milieu. Experienced second-story men might earn extra money as spies, stealing only documents useful to their patrons. Of course, the penalties for theft were severe, so a Burglar had to be good to survive. Since locks were uncommon in medieval Islamic culture, Burglars would probably specialize more in climbing and stealth instead of opening locks.

High Warrior Monk: High Warrior Monks, like the Warrior Monks, should only be foreigners from the mysterious East. The martial-arts style of fighting they employ was foreign to

Islam. If the Gamemaster allows High Warrior Monk player characters, they should suffer greatly from prejudice against infidels. They would probably be best as NPC adversaries encountered by Muslim adventurers abroad.

Nightblade: Nightblades, with their combination of thieving abilities and spell use, would only be appropriate in a campaign with a very high magic level. Otherwise, use a Thief or other stealthy profession and leave spell-using to the professionals.

Paladin: Technically, all Muslim warriors were expected to fight for the faith, so in some sense all were Paladins. In particular, the Ghazis who fought against the infidels on the frontier would be excellent Paladin material. Even in a realistic campaign, with no spells allowed, Paladins should be encouraged because they learn religious skills easily (although their combat skill costs should be lowered in lieu of their loss of spells).

In a Crusades-era campaign, it would be quite possible to have large forces of Paladins on both sides, battling one another for control of the Holy Land. A partisan Gamemaster could decide that only the "good guys" are allowed to have Paladins, and that Infidels are never favored (see the discussion of true religion in Section 5.7).

In a campaign without magic, Seers and Astrologers might be frauds, claiming supernatural powers they do not actually possess. Or else they could be sincere students of "mystic arts" which unfortunately don't work. The Scholar profession would probably be best for Astrologers or diviners in a non-magical campaign.

Mystics: Mystics can be lumped together with the other magical professions as "Magicians," in which case they will be subject to strong prejudice. Or else the Gamemaster can make Mystics the profession for lone hermits, honing their mental and spiritual powers by meditation and prayer. In that case, a Mystic would be revered by other Muslims as a holy man. Such a religious Mystic must be pious and actively good, as with Clerics, and should be considered a Hybrid Spell User of Channeling and Mentalism.

Monks: The Monk profession fits perfectly with some of the mystical ascetic orders of Islam, such as the Sufis or the Dervishes. The Sufis were usually peaceful, and would only fight in self-defense, or in a good cause. Dervishes could be aggressive warriors against infidels, and used all types of weapons. The Gamemaster should decide which to allow.

Rangers: The nomadic tribesmen of the desert and the steppe were very wise in the ways of the land and the weather. Rangers in the *Arabian Nights* will almost always be from that background. As such they may have difficulty dealing with "sophisticated" city people.

The player and the Gamemaster should decide which region a Ranger comes from, as his skills will vary greatly depending on his place of origin. Berber or Bedouin characters from the Sahara or the Arabian desert will of course be experts at travel and survival in the desert environment. Turkish nomads from the steppes of Central Asia will be familiar with semi-arid grasslands. And mountaineers from Afghanistan or Iran will know how to get along in the highlands.

Bards: Singers and storytellers are a fundamental part of Islamic culture. Among Arab nomads, the poets are the custodians of all the tribe's knowledge. The *Book of a Thousand Nights and One Night* is a collection of stories from oral tradition, told by traveling storytellers. Bard characters can be played with no change from the basic rules needed. Poets occasionally became the favorites of rich men and rulers, and could mingle with all segments of society.



PROFESSIONS FROM ROLEMASTER COMPANION II (2.1.3)

Dancer: Dancers were common in medieval Islam. Most dancers were female; men didn't dance professionally. A talented dancing girl might attract the attention of a powerful noble, and so could move about in the highest levels of society. In the various intrigues that went on among the nobility, many dancing-girls were also spies and assassins. Dancers should also have high skill levels in music and poetry.

Dervish: The Dervish profession fits fairly closely with one of the historical Islamic sects called the Dervishes. However, it might be possible to have a character who is a member of the sect without following the Dervish profession. Many Fighters, Monks and Bashkars (see below) would be members of the Dervish sect. Gamemasters could decide to allow members of the Dervish sect who follow other professions access to the Dervish base spell lists.

The Dervish sect was known for their whirling, ecstatic dances; in a campaign without magic, members of the sect might choose the Dancer profession instead.

It should be noted that the "Whirling Dervish" sect was founded in the Thirteenth Century, nearly five hundred years after the time of Harun Al-Rashid and the *Arabian Nights*. Gamemasters running a strictly historical campaign should disallow Dervishes. Others may wish to alter history a little, since Dervishes are such a familiar part of the Western picture of Islam. (See Section 7.6 for a more complete discussion of the historical Dervishes.)

Necromancers, Conjurers, Runemasters, and Warlocks: As the descriptions of other spell casters above have noted, if these professions are allowed at all, they must keep their true nature secret or else face severe public disapproval. Most will be evil NPCs. Conjurers and Necromancers are the closest to the kinds of magicians described in the *Arabian Nights*.

Sage: Sages, like Seers and Astrologers, would be a socially accepted form of spell caster. Their great knowledge is especially appropriate for the Islamic religious scholars. Nobles and rulers might well consult with Sages about matters of importance. In a non-magical campaign all Sages merely become Scholars.

Scholar: Since all learning in medieval Islam began with the Koran, Scholars should probably have a religious bent to their studies. All Scholars should invest at least a few Development Points in the Philosophy/Religious Doctrine (Islamic) skill. Otherwise, the profession can be played as described. Many of the bureaucrats who ran the Caliph's government would probably be from the Scholar profession. Religious judges, or Qadis, would be Scholars, as would most theologians and philosophers. In a campaign without magic, most of the spell-using professions are replaced by Scholars.

Surprisingly, some of the historical Islamic scholars led very swashbuckling lives. Because there was no mechanical printing in medieval Islam, books were rare. Nor were there scientific journals. So a scholar had to travel extensively, visiting libraries in distant cities, and meeting with other scholars to teach and learn. The historian Ibn-Battuta wandered from Morocco to Indonesia and back again in the course of his career.

Shaman: As with Animists (described above), Shamans should be allowed only as foreigners. A Finn from northern Europe, an African tribal priest, or a Southeast Asian "witch-doctor" might have occasion to visit the realms of Islam. Naturally, such a strange foreigner with unnatural powers would inspire fear and hatred in good devout Muslims. (This also requires the Gamemaster to decide if other religions "work" in an Islamic campaign.)

Trader: The prophet Muhammad was a merchant in his youth, and so traders were well-respected in Islam. A merchant player character could mingle easily with all segments of society, and would have ample opportunity to encounter adventure at home or in distant lands. Traders can be anything from street peddlers to trading tycoons. Note that not all merchants will be from the Trader profession—some might be Fighters, Rangers, Sailors (see below), or even Montebancs (see below). Because of the relative ease of social mobility, many nobles and high officials could be drawn from the Trader profession, as men who made a fortune in business turned to politics.

PROFESSIONS FROM ROLEMASTER COMPANION III (2.1.4)

Assassin: Hired killers did good business in medieval Islam, as political factions stopped at nothing to silence opponents. Gamemasters might wish to make all Assassin characters members of the Order of Assassins (though it existed a few centuries later than the era of the *Arabian Nights*). Often, Assassins maintained a cover identity; Gamemasters may wish to allow the player of an Assassin character to keep his character's true profession secret from the other players.

Bashkar: The berserk warrior exists in every culture. Many Muslim fighters, particularly those who belonged to ecstatic sects, would work themselves into a frenzy before battle. Bashkars would be common among the Ghazis (holy warriors) along the frontiers of Islam. Members of the some Sufi sects also fought in an ecstatic state, and this made them widely feared.

Crafter: Crafters would exist only in a highly magical campaign, where magic is a pervasive part of daily life. Otherwise, use Craftsmen instead (see below). Most will be encountered as NPCs, rather than as adventurers.

Craftsman: Craftsmen would be concentrated in the larger cities, where there would be a good market for their skills. There were a great many in Baghdad. Outside the cities, only blacksmiths and carpenters would be found. Only in a very non-combat oriented campaign would Craftsmen be anything but NPCs. A Craftsman with a very high level of skill in an uncommon craft could be hired by a distant ruler for a project, leading to adventures.

Cavalier: The Cavalier is appropriate for Islam, particularly as a profession for noblemen. The upper classes were more concerned with personal honor than commoners. The chivalric tradition of Persia would make it especially appropriate for Cavaliers to be from that region. Infidel Cavalier NPCs would be encountered among the Greeks of the Byzantine Empire, and among the Rajputs of India. Paladins may be replaced by Cavaliers in non-magical campaigns.

Farmer: Needless to say, farmers were important in medieval Islam. Many were small tenant farmers working the holdings of great landowners. Few would have any skill with arms, and the weapon of choice would probably be clubs and stones. An important subspecialization of Farmers in an Islamic campaign would be herders, with high skill levels in Herding and outdoor survival skills.

Gypsy: The Gypsy profession can be used for two groups of people. The Gypsies themselves lived in Muslim lands at the time of the *Arabian Nights*; most in fact converted to Islam. The Gypsy profession could be used for members of the Gypsy people. Or the description of a nomadic class can be used for characters from a herding tribe of the desert fringe, such as the Bedouins or Kurds.

Magus: While all the notes about spell casters above apply to the Magus, the fact that this profession is also described as a "Cabbalist" required additional remarks. The medieval Cabbalists were primarily Jewish magical scholars, and many of them lived in Islamic countries. Gamemasters might wish to require any Magus character to be Jewish. See the sections about Infidels and "Protected Peoples" for more information.

Montebanc: Several of the stories in the *Arabian Nights* are about the exploits of clever con men. Some frauds reached the status of folk heroes, especially when they preyed only on the rich. In a non-magical campaign, a Montebanc would rely on his wits and charm rather than spells. The Gamemaster may wish to allow players of Montebancs to keep the character's true profession a secret from the other players.

Professional: NPCs created using the "Professional" variant can be used in an *Arabian Nights* campaign without any difficulty. Player characters of this type will be rare.

Sailor: Muslim seafarers dominated the Indian Ocean, ranging as far as China and Zanzibar. Characters with this profession could also be river boatmen on the Tigris-Euphrates, Indus, or Nile rivers. Sailors could encounter many strange and fantastic adventures in the unknown waters beyond sight of land.

Sleuth: There were no professional detectives in the time of the *Arabian Nights*. But often the police and judges would employ agents skilled at uncovering criminals. The Sleuth profession

could be used for such agents. Detectives of this sort would probably have another job, and Gamemasters may wish to make Sleuth characters spend Development Points on a trade.

In campaigns without spells, Sleuth characters become less useful, and players wishing to play detectives may decide to use a Fighter or Rogue with high levels of Perception skills instead.

Warrior: The dedicated Warrior was actually not very common in Islam. While a good fighter was respected, men were also expected to know about religion, good living, and perhaps trade. Warriors would only be encountered as professional soldiers, and would probably be thought of as rather dull fellows.

PROFESSIONS FROM ROLEMASTER COMPANION IV (2.1.5)

Leader: Members of the Leader profession will naturally be among the highest levels of society. But because Islam placed such a strong emphasis on religious learning and military ability, there will actually be very few pure Leaders. Most Muslims in positions of power would instead be Fighters, Clerics, or similar professions. Any Leader character should develop his abilities in one of those two directions.

PROFESSIONS FROM ROLEMASTER COMPANION V (2.1.6)

Forcemage, Wizard: In a highly magical campaign, both of these professions would be as viable as a Magician or Sorcerer. In an *Arabian Nights* game, they would have the same difficulties and societal limitations as their spell-casting comrades.

PROFESSIONS FROM ROLEMASTER COMPANION VI (2.1.7)

Romantic, Free Thinker: In almost any campaign, these non-spell casters would be appropriate Romantics would be found in and around the Caliph's court. Free Thinkers are the equivalent of scholars who are open to foreign ideas (these types of characters might be less religious than others).

Seeker: Very similar to the Sage, this semi-spell caster would not be uncommon as it would be easy to disguise Mentalism magic use).

Creator, Cultist: Both of these professions make for great villains. However, their association with "evil" magic would make them a poor choice for player characters.

PROFESSIONS FROM ROLEMASTER COMPANION VII (2.1.8)

Elementalist, Shadow Mage, Doppelganger: As above, these spell casters, if allowed at all, face a number of prejudices from the general populous.

Arms Master: This combat-oriented profession could be found in an *Arabian Nights* campaign as a military leader or as a famous hero, but would be extremely rare.



2.2 SKILLS

Any appropriate skill from *Character Law* or the *Rolemaster Companion* books can be taken by characters. The notes below provide extra information on certain skills.

Philosophy/Religious Doctrine: This skill is described in *Rolemaster Companion II*. Muslims should specify that the religion they are learning is Islamic. It is absolutely essential for any Cleric or similar religious character. Any educated person in Islam would know something about the subject, as all learning began with the study of the Koran, the Hadiths, and the Sunna (these concepts are described in the Players' Section of the Sourcebook). Almost all characters should have at least one Skill Rank in Islamic Philosophy/Religious Doctrine (Islamic).

Desert Lore: Though deserts all seem the same to outsiders, those who live and travel in the desert know that there are several kinds. The animals, plants, and weather are very different.

It is strongly recommended that characters use the Region and Climate system for outdoor skills, presented in *Rolemaster Companion II*. The chief types of desert encountered in the Middle East are: Stony Deserts, Sandy Deserts, and Desert Uplands. The first two environments correspond to the Arid Desert (Za) and Arid Waste (Wa) region and climate pairs. Desert Uplands require the introduction of a new region type: Piedmont/Hills (P). Desert Uplands are Arid Piedmont (Pa). Skills for each desert type are at half the normal skill rank in the other kinds of desert.

The Wadi region type should be ignored. A Wadi is an intermittent or seasonal waterway in a desert; anyone skilled at surviving in a Wadi would probably know about the desert around it, and vice versa.

Players should check the Islamic Gazetteer section to see what sort of desert their characters would be familiar with. Since much of what we call "desert" is in fact a dry grassland or steppe, characters might also want to develop their outdoor skills for the Arid Short Grasslands (Sa) environment.

Language: Because the Koran was dictated to Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel, according to Islamic tradition, it cannot be translated into other languages. English versions of the Koran are considered to be only a summary or explanation—the Koran itself exists only in Arabic. So a true Muslim must learn at least enough Arabic to understand the Koran and pray.

This gives the Abbassid Caliphate a real-life version of that great fantasy role playing game standard, the "Common Tongue." Though the peoples under the Caliph's rule spoke every language from Berber to Greek to Iranian to Turkish to Hindi, they all had to know Arabic, as well. This was one reason for the enormous expansion of trade under the Islamic Empire—suddenly everyone could communicate.

All player characters in an *Arabian Nights* campaign can be assumed to know Arabic at level of fluency one Skill Rank below that of their native language. Only infidel characters from outside of Islam will have trouble with the language.

The educated upper classes in Baghdad and members of the Caliph's court often knew Persian, and most poetry was composed in Persian. Unless a character is originally from Iran, where Persian is the native language, it must be learned like any other foreign tongue.

2.3 NEW SKILLS

Calligraphy (In/Ag): Calligraphy is the ability to write beautifully. In Islam, it was one of the most important visual arts. All educated Muslims studied calligraphy, and many craftsmen did so as well. Messages written in an ornate and elegant hand can occasionally influence the reader. So a letter to the Vizier begging him to pardon a criminal will be more effective if it is written nicely.

Level Bonus Category: General

1/4 Alchemist, Astrologer, Bard, Cleric, Conjurer, Free Thinker, Magician, Runemaster, Sage, Scholar, Seeker, Seer, and Sorcerer

3/7 Animist, Barbarian, Cultist, Shaman

2/6 All other professions

Etiquette (Pr/Me): This is the knowledge of "what fork to use." It governs correct behavior in a formal setting. This would be the proper skill to use when at the court of a monarch, with all kinds of intricate social rules to memorize.

If the characters will be doing a great deal of traveling in foreign lands, the Gamemaster should have them learn different types of Etiquette for different cultures. Europe, Islam, India, China, Japan, East Africa, and West Africa will all have different styles of Etiquette. There is almost no crossover in Etiquette rules between cultures; each must be learned as an entirely new skill. Failed Etiquette skill rolls in alien cultures can be very dangerous.

Level Bonus Category: Social

1/4 Bard, Cavalier, Dancer, Leader, Montebanc, Romantic, Sage, Scholar, and Trader

3/7 Barbarian, Cultist, Gypsie, and Farmer

2/6 All other professions

Jinn Lore (Me/Re): This skill provides knowledge of the different types of Jinn, their powers, their societies, and their psychology. Use of this skill would allow a character to identify a Jinn bottle, and would let a character tell hostile from benign Jinn. It could also be used when bargaining with one of the Jinn.

Level Bonus Category: Academic

cost as Demon/Devil Lore

Law-Islamic (Re/In or Re/Me): Law and theology were closely related in Medieval Islam. All law was based on the decisions of judges, and was traceable back to either statements or acts of the Prophet. Islamic Law skill is necessary for any *Qadi*, or religious judge. Most officials would know something about the subject.

Other cultures will have systems of law based on different principles. In a European context, law was derived from old Roman codes and Germanic tribal laws. European Law's Attributes are Reasoning and Memory.

Level Bonus Category: Social

1/4 Cleric, Leader, Sage, Scholar, Seeker

2/4 All other professions for Islamic Law

3/7 All other professions for European Law

2.4 PLAYING ISLAMIC CHARACTERS

Players should carefully read the sourcebook section before creating their characters. Muslim characters are not simply 20th-century Americans in funny clothes.

There may be aspects of the medieval Islamic world which modern players find distasteful—slavery, for example, or polygamy. If the Gamemaster notices that some things disturb his players, he can do his best to downplay or ignore those elements. It is a game, after all, and the purpose of a game is to be fun. Anything which isn't fun should be dropped.

Players should read some of the stories in the *Thousand and One Nights* to get some of the "feel" of how medieval Muslims thought and spoke. The florid style of dialogue may make players reluctant to speak "in character," but it can be a lot of fun once one gets used to it.

2.5 MAGIC

The *Arabian Nights* tales are full of fantastic magic and wondrous spells. But working that into a role playing game poses some difficulties. For one thing, almost all magic in the stories is performed by the "bad guys"—non-player characters. And much of it is of a sort not easily described by the *Rolemaster* Spell Lists. Game-masters should strongly consider forbidding player characters from using magic, reserving it for NPCs.

MAGIC IN ISLAMIC TRADITION (2.5.1)

Magic had a long history in Islamic tradition. In most tales, magicians are evil men, and magic is seen as underhanded and unfair. But there is no peril to the user's soul involved—magic was never seen as necessarily being the work of the Devil. And sufficiently holy men were reputed to perform miracles through their faith. The Sufi mystics were particularly renowned for their feats of self-discipline.

CHARACTER TYPES (2.5.2)

Most magicians were depicted as evil men. Consequently any magic-using player character would face very strong disapproval from the general public. If the Gamemaster allows player character magicians at all, they should be very adept at pretending to be simple warriors or whatever.

A few character types would be more socially acceptable. Alchemists, Astrologers, and Seers were all prevalent in medieval Islam. Most were frauds, of course, and a clever player character might conceal genuine powers by masquerading as a fraud.

Clerics and others whose spells came from piety and faith in Allah would be greatly respected and honored. In fact this could be troublesome, as a holy man would be constantly mobbed by people hoping to be healed or blessed. A Cleric might need to adopt a "secret identity" like a comic-book superhero, just to get a little privacy.

SPELL LISTS (2.5.3)

The standard *Spell Law* spell lists can be used in an *Arabian Nights* campaign without much alteration. One major change to several of the spell lists, however, has to do with demons. In the Islamic tradition there is little distinction made between demons and the Jinn. The evil Ifrits fill the role of demons, but are described as simply a form of Jinn, led by the rebellious angel Iblis.

Gamemasters can deal with this in two ways. They can keep the various kinds of demons described in the rules, and declare that these demons are simply very powerful Ifrits. Or they can replace all the demons with various types of Genies, as listed in *Creatures and Treasures*. Treat the Jann as Type I demons, the Jinn as Type II, Shaitans as Type III, Ifrits as Type IV, and Marids as Type V. See the notes on Jinn in the Bestiary (Section 18) for a further discussion.

CORRUPTION (2.5.4)

If GMs allow player characters to use magic (as opposed to keeping magic in the hands of villains), it is strongly recommended that this system for corruption be used. The basic premise of this system is that magic will eventually corrupt all who use it.

Everytime a spell failure occurs, the casting character must make an RR versus the level of the spell. If the RR is successful, the character accumulates half the level of the spell in Corruption Points (CPs), rounded down. If the RR fails, the character gains the level of spell in CPs.

If a character is ever faced with temptation, the character should make an open-ended roll adding the character's CPs. If the result is 100+, the character must give in to the temptation.

In addition, if the character is ever in the presence of an evil being, that character might be subject to following the commands of the being. The character must make an RR versus the level of the commanding being. The character's CPs act as a negative modifier to the RR and the character's SD bonus acts as a positive modifier. If the RR is failed, the character must obey the command. A separate RR is required for each command.

2.6 WOMEN CHARACTERS

To completely describe the role of women in Islam would require a very long book, as attitudes and practices have varied widely in different times and places. In the Abbassid Caliphate of the *Arabian Nights* period, women were definitely second-class citizens under the law.

Women of that time had to remain veiled and robed while in public, as it was considered the equivalent of adultery for a woman's face to be seen by a man other than her hus-



hand, male blood relatives, family slaves, or eunuchs. The penalty for adultery was flogging, and a husband who murdered an unfaithful wife was usually not punished. Only within the home, in the harem section of the house, could women appear unconcealed. Women bathed and prayed apart from men. Female slaves were under fewer restrictions—dancing girls and singers could entertain at banquets without their veils.

More importantly, in Islamic society women are expected to be subservient to men in general. An unmarried woman would stay in the household of a male relative and let him manage her affairs.

But this does not mean that they were powerless. The *Arabian Nights* are full of resourceful heroines, including a few stories of women adventuring disguised as men. And women could own property of their own, though it was usually managed by men.

Gamemasters should allow players to play female characters, for the advantages balance the handicaps. Women can speak freely to other women and enter the harem sections of a house, where no man can go. It is far easier for a woman to hide her identity when custom requires all women to cover their faces in public.

A woman character has the advantage that in a male-dominated society it is easy for her to be ignored—which can be a positive bonus at times. Who would expect a meek submissive woman to have a sword hidden under her robes? Or that she would know how to use it?

2.7 SLAVES

Slavery was prevalent in the Caliphate, and it would be quite possible for a player character to be a slave, either owned by another character, or else by an NPC. Slaves were allowed to carry weapons; during later centuries it was common to have whole armies of slaves. Slave characters must hand over all their earnings to their master, who in turn is responsible for supporting the slave.

Note that social class, wealth, and slavery were not necessarily connected in medieval Islam. It might be possible for a character to be a nobleman, yet still be a slave of a still greater aristocrat. (This was particularly true in the later Ottoman Empire.) And a slave might grow very rich serving a rich master. Nor was slavery restricted to any particular race. The Abbassid Caliphate imported slaves from Russia, Central Asia, India, and Africa.

Modern American players are likely to be uncomfortable with the thought of playing a character who is the slave of another, so in most campaigns, slaves will have to be NPCs.

Difficult though it may be for modern minds to comprehend, most slaves were apparently reasonably content with their lot. In several empires, large armies of slaves were organized, and they fought bravely and well to protect their masters.



2.8 INFIDELS

The Islamic empire included large numbers of non-Muslims. Special tolerance was extended to Christians, Jews, and occasionally Zoroastrians—the *Ahl Al-Kitab*, or “peoples of the Book.” They were known as *Dhimmi*, or “protected peoples.” Infidels paid special taxes, the *Jizya* (or head tax) and the *Kharaj* (or exemption tax), but were otherwise unmolested. Pagans were less well-treated. No non-Muslim was allowed to carry a sword in public.

Players may wish to run non-Muslim player characters; possibly European Christians adventuring in the Islamic lands. There would be no great obstacle to this, and the characters would encounter only the normal difficulties of strangers visiting a strange land. For infidel player characters, the Gamemaster should probably adhere to the existing *Rolemaster* rules for character creation.

Gamemasters must make a decision regarding the “validity” of non-Muslim religions in an Islamic campaign. This is discussed in more detail in Section 5.7.

2.9 NONHUMAN RACES

The milieu of the *Arabian Nights* stories does not include nonhuman races like Elves, Dwarves, Orcs, or Halflings. But this does not mean that players cannot use nonhuman characters in an *Arabian Nights* campaign.

In a realistic campaign, set in the Islamic world of the Eighth Century, all player characters will naturally be human. Nonhumans will either be completely legendary, or will exist only on lost islands or faraway lands. Nonhumans who are Muslims may be able to interact with player characters in a friendly manner, but infidel nonhumans will only be “monsters.”

If the Gamemaster has tried to combine *Arabian Nights* role-playing with a more conventional heroic fantasy background, then nonhumans may be more common. If the Islamic region is only one part of a larger fantasy game world which includes Dwarves and Elves, then characters can be nonhumans from “Peristan” (the land of the Fairy-folk) or something similar. In such cases nonhumans would be treated like all other infidel foreigners. After all, to an Arab, an Elf would be no more alien than a Viking warrior or a Japanese assassin.

A particularly interesting situation can arise if the Gamemaster tries to work nonhumans into an Islamic society in his game world. Are there Muslim Elves and Dwarves? If so, they would probably be assimilated into the larger society without much difficulty. Or if they remain infidels, the Gamemaster should decide if nonhumans qualify as *dhimmi*, or “protected people”—tolerated unbelievers. If not, they will be despised as idolaters and may be persecuted. Orcs and trolls will almost certainly end up as evil unbelievers, dwelling in the wastelands where even tough nomads cannot go.

3.0 GAMEMASTERING ARABIAN NIGHTS



The *Arabian Nights* milieu is very well suited for role-playing adventures. The culture of medieval Islam placed great importance on personal courage and daring. Individual talent was rewarded and respected, and social mobility was relatively easy. Large, wealthy cities flourished near uninhabited wastelands rich in ancient ruins. And Islamic beliefs about fate and predestination are perfect for Gamemasters.

3.1 GETTING STARTED

To play an *Arabian Nights* campaign, everyone should be acquainted with the basic *Rolemaster* rules. The *Rolemaster Companion* books are also very helpful. The Gamemaster should familiarize his players with the campaign background, perhaps by allowing them to read the Players' Section of the Sourcebook. He must help them create characters who can interact well with each other and who will be useful in the campaign.

It is usually best to have at least one game session devoted to character creation and background briefing before starting a new campaign. The Gamemaster should have a good idea of what sort of a campaign he plans to run before the players create their characters.

3.2 CREATING ARABIAN NIGHTS ADVENTURES

The stories in the *Thousand Nights and a Night* fall into three categories (with a great deal of overlap): there are love stories, usually involving princes and princesses; "little tailor" stories, telling how an ordinary person rose to wealth and fame through luck and cleverness; and marvel tales of fantastic journeys and magical happenings.

Role-playing scenarios for the player characters do not have to slavishly follow those patterns, but should give a satisfactory echo of the *feel* of the stories. Adventures should pit good against evil, and the player characters should be able to achieve splendid things and rich rewards.

Note that it need not be the player characters falling in love or rising to wealth and success. Instead, they may become involved with a non-player character—a prince who has fallen in love, or a beggar who has learned about a hidden treasure.

THE HOOK (3.2.1)

To begin an adventure, a "hook" is required. This is something or someone to get the player characters involved in the scenario. Perhaps a nobleman hires them for a job; perhaps a character finds a mysterious object; perhaps the characters hear that a merchant captain is setting sail for the East. The "hook" provides the characters with their ostensible goal for the adventure—what they *think* they are trying to accomplish.

Along with the hook, the Gamemaster should determine what the actual nature of the adventure is going to be. Usually there will be little difference. If the players have been hired to capture a fortress, then that's what the adventure will be about. There may be a few surprises, but the purpose is clear.



But occasionally the hook and the true nature of the adventure may be very different. The players may believe that their characters are going on a trading voyage to Zanzibar, and will have to cope with crooked merchants and difficult weather. But the Gamemaster may decide that their voyage will lead them to a mysterious island populated by one-eyed giants, so the characters' real task is to escape the giants and get off the island.

THE OPPOSITION (3.2.2)

Adventures also require adversaries. These are the people, creatures, or events which stand between the characters and their goal. They may be as simple as bandits trying to rob the PCs' caravan, or as subtle as a sorcerer trying to trick them into helping him get a fantastically powerful magic item. Adversaries need not even be human. Travelers in the wilderness must deal with dangerous animals, storms, thirst, and hostile terrain.

Adversary NPCs should be well-developed, and should have some good reason to oppose the player characters. Remember, hardly anyone thinks of himself as evil. This doesn't mean that the villains can't be dreadfully wicked, just that they should have a reason for being that way.

Most good adventures also include some kind of puzzle that the players must solve. Their characters may be stuck in a comic book-style deathtrap, requiring the players to think of a way to escape. Or there may be a criminal to be caught through detective work. Nor should there be a lack of intrigue. Wicked Viziers or magicians can concoct elaborate schemes, using lies and enchantments to mislead their foes. Clever swindlers might entangle the characters in a complicated web of tricks. These problems can compel the players to solve problems using their heads instead of simply fighting their way out.

The Gamemaster should be careful to have variety in his adventures. The campaign should not simply be an unending series of fights. Give the players lots of opportunity to really role play. There should be people to interact with, and interesting places to visit. There can be plenty of fun in doing business deals, acting as diplomats, or running a swindle. The Gamemaster will know that he has succeeded if the players get so involved in playing "tourist" in the game world that they ignore the actual adventure scenario.

THE SETTING (3.2.3)

Role playing adventures should not take place in a vacuum. The world around the player characters should be full of people and places with their own identity. Gamemasters should pay attention to the setting of a scenario. This means more than just drawing a detailed map of the dungeon the player characters intend to explore; it means making the locale and NPCs "real."



So when the party enters a town, the Gamemaster should know a few things about the place—it should have a name, a reason for being there, a society. Who is in charge? What kind of a person is he? How will the townsfolk react to a group of strange adventurers?

Because the *Arabian Nights* take place in a world very different from modern America, the Gamemaster should also work hard to give his players a sense of being in another time and place. Instead of telling them, "you enter a town," he should describe the town. He should tell them about the low buildings made of sun-dried brick, the narrow, dark streets, the veiled women peering through windows.

3.3 RUNNING AN ADVENTURE

The Gamemaster has the hardest part to play in a role playing game. He must control the entire Universe with which the player characters interact. He combines the duties of referee, author, story-teller, and source of information.

INFORMATION

Organization and preparation are extremely important. Have complete lists of NPCs written down, with appropriate stats and abilities. Have maps ready to show your players. The Gamemaster must have as much information as possible readily available. Readily available is the key concept—if a tense battle is delayed while the GM looks something up, the players will get bored quickly. Keep the information you *need* close at hand, and put the rest aside. Combat tables, NPC stats, and encounter lists are important. Price lists or "random dungeon tables" are not.

Referees should also feel free to improvise. You don't have to look up the exact rule for *everything*. A quick ruling that speeds play along and doesn't contradict the spirit of the game is perfectly all right. And if some of the players try to be rec-room lawyers, demanding you quote chapter and verse, you can show them this paragraph.



DESCRIPTION

As much as possible, the Gamemaster should strive to show, rather than merely tell. Instead of informing your players, "The merchant doesn't know where the Princess is hidden," act out the scene, taking on the character of the merchant: "*Greetings, nobly-born! I am honored that the quality of my wares has attracted your gaze. Would the noble sirs care to feel the weave of this carpet? Truly there is none finer. Only fifty dirhams! What's that? The Princess? Alas, O favored ones, I have no knowledge of her. Perhaps the nobly-born sirs would care to examine some silks from far-off Serendip? Don't go yet. . .*"

When you do describe, make your descriptions vivid, and give distinguishing details. If the party encounters a group of brigands, make one bandit tall, another short, and a third horribly scarred. That way the players will not become confused about who is doing what.

Be careful about the level of detail you use: if one room in a palace is simply described as "a big room with lots of tapestries" while the next is "a chamber fifty feet by twenty feet, with a marble floor of alternating black and red squares twelve inches on a side; in the center is a bronze statue with glass eyes facing north," then the players might suspect that the second room is more important than the first.

A useful tool for campaigns (particularly those set in exotic lands) is a list of personal names and descriptions for NPCs. This need be nothing more than a sheet of paper with entries like:

Abdallah	Grossly fat, bald, and sweaty
Basan	Tall, thin, and melancholy
Fazur	Short and very handsome
Hasan	Strong and muscular, with a big nose

For some reason, names and personal appearances are among the hardest things to come up with on the spur of the moment.

In a campaign world which is very different from modern America (like the *Arabian Nights* world), Gamemasters should occasionally drop in a telling detail to give their players the feel of the game world. For example: "*As you're negotiating with the mercenaries, suddenly the distant cry of the muezzins echoes through the streets, signaling that it is time for the mid-afternoon prayer. Immediately, everyone takes out his prayer-mat and faces toward Mecca to pray.*"

FLEXIBILITY

The Gamemaster must always be ready for the unexpected. Players are an inventive bunch, and are forever coming up with plans of action that weren't foreseen when the adventure was being written. Roll with the punches as much as possible. If your scenario calls for the PCs to discover a secret hidden in a desert tomb, and they decide to break into the Vizier's palace instead, don't argue with them; let them try. But since the Vizier is an important man, he'll probably have lots of guards. And when the PCs are discovered lurking around the palace, they'll have to flee with a whole mob of soldiers in pursuit. Perhaps the chase will lead them to a tomb in the desert...

Above all the game should be fun, both for the players and the Gamemaster. It should not be viewed as a contest between them. Always look for the most interesting and fun outcome, rather than trying to "win." The Gamemaster's job is to create an entertaining scenario for his players, not to defeat them.

IMAGINATION

The Gamemaster should think of himself as a movie director with an unlimited budget. Role playing adventures can have a cast of thousands, incredible sets, and fantastic special effects—all for free! This is a tremendous advantage which many Gamemasters tend to forget. Use that infinite budget! Don't content yourself with boring little street fights and ordinary buildings. Let your players witness huge battles, with armies of soldiers sweeping across the plains. Have them visit fantastic palaces with gold-covered walls, or explore titanic caverns full of jewels.

Try to make everything in the campaign more intense than in real life. Villains should be shockingly evil, heroines pure and good. Things should always be the tallest, biggest, and costliest—or the ugliest, dirtiest, and foulest. If the players want to see boring, everyday things they can watch TV.

ACCESSORIES

There are lots of accessories which Gamemasters can use in play. Miniature figures are commonly used, especially in large combats. They can be very useful in establishing which character is where, and who can do what to whom.

Unfortunately, there is a great shortage of miniatures suitable for an *Arabian Nights* campaign. Monsters are readily available, of course, but there are very few figures of Arabic-looking characters on the market.

Written play aids are also good—maps for the players to use, letters or messages to their characters, and pictures of people or things are all helpful. Players like to have things to look at, and the more you show, the less you need to tell. A modicum of drawing ability is needed to create such aids, of course.

BUT! Figures, play aids, and other toys can never be more than accessories. A good adventure can stand without them, and they will not rescue a bad one. They are decoration, not structure, and the Gamemaster who tries to depend on them will rapidly learn the difference.



4.0 THE ARABIAN NIGHTS' GENRE

A campaign based on the *Thousand and One Nights* will not be like other fantasy role playing campaigns. *The Arabian Nights* milieu is very rich, and has a number of unique features.

4.1 SETTING THE TONE

The Arabian Nights stories are folk tales from oral tradition. The Gamemaster should strive to be a storyteller, rather than simply a referee. One nice touch to begin play sessions is to use the words of Scheherazade: "And O King, men also tell the tale of how..."

Gamemasters might consider other touches such as having everyone sit on cushions, or perhaps getting pistachios and dates for snack food instead of Cheetos®. Requiring female players to wear veils would probably be going a bit too far.

The GM should try to get his players into the right mood. As much as possible, they should feel like medieval Muslims instead of modern Americans. They do not have to be deadly serious—a little humor improves any adventure. And certainly the high-blown eloquence of characters in the *Arabian Nights* is ripe for gentle parody. But it should not degenerate into a kind of "Abbot and Costello Go To Baghdad" scenario.

4.2 CLICHÉS

There are several recurring elements in the *Arabian Nights* stories. Judicious use of these by the Gamemaster can go a long way towards recreating the feel of the tales in a role playing adventure.

TALES WITHIN TALES

One distinguishing feature of the *Thousand Nights and a Night* is the constant "nesting" of stories. Scheherazade tells her husband the King a story about a fisherman who tells a Jinn a story about King Yunan telling a story about King Sindibad... and so on to the brink of madness. (The writer Jorgé Luis Borgés has noted that on the 602nd Night, one of these nested storytellers begins to tell the frame story of Scheherazade and King Shahryar, very nearly creating an infinite loop.)

While the Gamemaster must keep his story on only one level, he can give the players a taste of this by having NPCs frequently tell long stories, and occasionally stories-within-stories. If done too often, this may bore or confuse the players; Gamemasters must take care.

The tale-within-a-tale can be used as the excuse for adventures involving different characters, by having the players actually play through a story their characters are listening to. The player characters hear a story from an NPC. The Gamemaster passes out character sheets and has the players control the characters in the story. This way, the Gamemaster can run a fantasy adventure in a realistic campaign, or liven up a mercantile campaign with some romantic swashbuckling.

This can be more than just a change of pace scenario. It may be that some information vital to the player characters in the main campaign is hidden in such a tale. By playing out a nested story, the players can learn something of value for the main campaign.

WICKED VIZIERS

A Vizier (Wazir) is the Arabic term for a ruler's prime minister or chief bureaucrat. Throughout the *Arabian Nights* they are depicted as treacherous and scheming (probably because they had to handle all the unpleasant details of government while the king got all the glory). This convention embodies a subtle bit of Muslim racism, for viziers were usually recruited from the original inhabitants of an area, while the rulers were Arab conquerors.

The wicked vizier is so much of a cliché that a clever Gamemaster might want to invert it once in a while—have a Wazir NPC who is in fact honest and faithful. Certainly the most famous Vizier, Jafar the Barmecide, was well-loved by the people and governed justly and efficiently.

MEDDLING SPIRITS

Jinn, Ifrits, Marids, and other magical beings frequently meddle in human affairs, often with the flimsiest of motives. The Gamemaster can make great use of this in adventures—if things are getting slow, have a mighty Ifrit appear, claiming that a player character slew the Ifrit's only son by accidentally tossing away a date stone. The Ifrit can then demand that the characters undertake a quest to atone for the crime.

Or, even more arbitrarily, a magical spirit might simply carry the party off to some distant wilderness and leave them there; the adventure possibilities involved in simply getting home are superb.

The Gamemaster should be careful not to over-use magical meddlers; otherwise the campaign starts to resemble a bad *Star Trek* episode—"ho hum, another omnipotent energy being." Players dislike being shoved around with no control over the situation.

FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL SPOUSES

The stories of the *Thousand and One Nights* were not originally for children. Quite a few deal with unfaithful wives and jealous husbands. In some, the husband trusts his wife and learns to his dismay that she is cheating on him; in others, a virtuous wife is unjustly condemned by her husband and must prove her fidelity. Player characters can become involved in such affairs when the injured party needs help, or conceivably as participants.

Polygamy also leads to interesting domestic situations. The wives of powerful men competed with each other for influence, and on behalf of their children. Characters may become involved in a plot by one wife against another.

Romance is often hard to work into a campaign, particularly with younger players who might be embarrassed by "mushy stuff." In such cases the Gamemaster should probably leave any love

stories to non-player characters. But with mature players who can be trusted to enter into the spirit of things, a romantic tale of undying love overcoming impossible obstacles can be a great basis for a campaign. After all, it has worked in most of the world's great literature; why not in role playing games?

ROGUES AND CON MEN

A fair number of the stories follow the adventures of rogues, who do not hesitate to steal, cheat, and lie. The difference is that the swindlers are seen as fundamentally good-hearted—they trick the foolish and gullible, but remain good Muslims. Player character crooks should be true to this "Robin Hood"-style tradition, preying only on those who either deserve or can afford it. Muslims appreciate wit and cleverness. Several of the *Arabian Nights* tales of swindlers end with the con man being rewarded by the Caliph for being so clever.

4.3 MAGIC

What would the *Arabian Nights* be without magic? The vast majority of the stories in the *Thousand Nights and a Night* include some fantastic elements. But magic should never be a routine part of daily life—there should be no Magician's Guild, and Ahmed's Magic Shop shouldn't be found down the street. It should always be mysterious and extraordinary. Otherwise magic becomes just another kind of technology, as prosaic as a typewriter.

Magicians should be rare and powerful. If there are player character spell casters, the Gamemaster should allow NPCs to do things ordinarily impossible for characters using magic from the *SL* system. And magic-users should not be limited to just using magic—besides their spells, evil sorcerers can wield considerable power through hired warriors. Since magicians were almost always villains in the *Arabian Nights* stories, the Gamemaster may wish to prohibit player character users of magic. If not, the player character magician will rapidly get a reputation as a powerful wizard, and people will come from all over to beg favors.

ENCHANTMENTS (4.3.1)

Most magical spells in the *Arabian Nights* stories are not just "zap" spells—there are few directly destructive enchantments. Instead, the vast majority are those which transform or enchant people. They tend to be very powerful spells with a specific process needed to reverse them.

Transformations: Numerous stories in the *Thousand and One Nights* are about people transformed into dumb animals or even inanimate objects. These enchantments should be more powerful than the standard *SL* or *Rolemaster Companion* transformation magics from the Living Change, Changeling, or Metamorphose spell lists. Reversing such an enchantment should depend on one or more rare ingredients or mystic items, requiring an arduous quest to acquire.

Curses: Curses described in the *Arabian Nights* include such things as recurring nightmares, a man's legs being turned to stone, blindness, or loss of wealth and position. A particularly terrible curse is for a person to be fated to cause harm to a loved one. Some of these fit very well with spells from the Evil Cleric, Warlock, Moon Mage, or Dream Lord base lists.

Gamemasters may wish to introduce more powerful curses to the campaign, particularly if there are spell using characters who might be able to dispel normal curse spells. As with transformations, these "Gamemaster-only curses" should require difficult adventuring to remove.

MAGIC ITEMS (4.3.2)

Most magicians in the *Thousand and One Nights* get their power from magical items. The following list describes some of the better-known ones.

Aladdin's Lamp: Probably the most famous magic item in the *Arabian Nights* is the Lamp found by Aladdin. It appears to be nothing more than a beat-up, tarnished brass oil lamp. But if one rubs it, a mighty Jinn is released. The Jinn is bound to serve the owner of the lamp. Note that in the original story there was no limit on the number of wishes the owner could demand of the Jinn. However, there was one single task (which the Gamemaster should specify) that the Jinn will not undertake. If asked to perform the critical task, the Jinn, the lamp, and everything the Jinn has given or made for the character will vanish. The task can be as trivial as breaking an egg.

Alternatively, Gamemasters might want to adopt the "Disney Version" rule and have the Jinn grant only three wishes to any owner. Once the third wish has been granted, the Jinn and the lamp vanish forever (this prevents each player character from getting three wishes, then handing the lamp off to the next player character).

Flying Carpets: A flying carpet is a powerful item, and an extremely convenient mode of transportation. Carpets are usually four feet wide and eight feet long, capable of holding up to four adults (six in an emergency). A flying carpet can carry only 1,000 pounds. Cruising speed is 120 miles per hour. Since a flying carpet does not have a canopy or windshield, riding one is very much like flying in an open-cockpit plane. Carpets will bank as they turn to make sure their passengers do not fall off.

Magic carpets are voice-controlled; the rider need only state his destination and the carpet will take him there. The carpet will obey whoever is aboard it and speaks first. Note that the carpet can only go to a specific destination, rather than a hypothetical one. "Take me to Damascus" is an allowable command, while "take me someplace where I can find lots of jewels" is not. The carpet's knowledge is not limited by the character's, so it is indeed possible to command it to "Take me to the Princess Zubaida" even if the rider has no idea where Zubaida is. Of course, if the Princess is in a camp full of armed men, the carpet's passenger may regret it.

Because it follows spoken commands, a flying carpet is not a very good platform for aerial combat. All missile combat from aboard a flying carpet is at a penalty of -50.

The Magic Horse: Described in the tale of "The Ebony Horse," the Horse is an enchanted device which can fly through the air at great speeds. It is controlled by pegs set in the neck of the Horse. The Horse can travel at speeds up to 1,000 miles per hour. To control it requires a successful maneuver roll adding Agility, with a penalty to the roll equal to 1/10 of the Horse's speed in miles per hour. So at 400 mph, the pilot would roll adding his Agility bonus minus 40. When a control roll fails, the Gamemaster should roll on the following table:

- 01-05: Horse lands immediately
- 06-35: Horse continues in a straight line
- 36-65: Horse veers off in a random direction
- 66-80: Horse accelerates by 1D6 times 100 miles per hour
- 81-95: Horse accelerates and veers off in a random direction
- 96-00: Rider thrown off

Anyone who has learned to fight on horseback can fight from the saddle of the Ebony Horse. The usual penalties for mounted combat apply.

Magic Rings: A variety of magic rings are described in the *Arabian Nights*. Many had effects duplicated by magic rings from the *C&T* books. Some of the more familiar include a Jinn Ring, which allows the wearer to summon and control one specific Jinn. As with Aladdin's Lamp, this can either be permanent, or limited to three uses, depending on the Gamemaster's decision.

Genie Bottles: An Arab tradition held that King Solomon was a magician of such power that he was able to command all the Jinn and Marids to serve him and adore God. Those that refused he sealed up into bottles, marked with the Seal of Solomon. In the *Arabian Nights* people are forever running across these bottles—usually on the seashore.

A Jinn bottle is a large brass jug, usually tarnished and corroded by long years in the sea. The jug is stopped with a lead seal bearing the Seal of Solomon. If the seal is broken, a mighty Jinn will emerge. When released, the Jinn is *not* under any obligation to its rescuer. Some will grant a wish, others will try to slay whoever let them out, for having waited so long before doing so.

The Magic Mirror: This fabulous device was said to have belonged to the Emperors of Rum (Rome), who used it to keep track of all that went on in their vast realm. The mirror appears to be an ordinary full-size looking-glass, with an elaborately decorated frame. It is mounted on a pivot, and when turned so that the mirror lies flat, facing upward, the image in the glass changes. The normal reflections are replaced with an incredibly detailed map of the world.

If the user touches a spot on the map, the mirror “zooms in” on that location. It can display at any scale up to life-size. The mirror will remain at the given location until the user removes his finger, at which point the image will revert to the world map.

The mirror will also obey verbal commands. It can be told to show what is occurring at a specific place. The device can understand all languages, and knows all names of all places. But it can only find specific places, not people or things—it knows where the palace of Jafar the Barmecide is, but cannot locate Jafar himself. Nor can it locate hypothetical places.

POTIONS AND DRUGS (4.3.3)

The distinction between magic and medicine was still fuzzy during the Eighth Century. The most common potions, of course, were love potions and poisons. Most of the potions described in *C&T* or in the Alchemist and Witch spell lists can be used in an *Arabian Nights* game.

MAGICAL STATUES (4.3.4)

Several magical statues appear in the *Arabian Nights* stories. They are usually placed as unliving guards to protect tombs and treasures. Magical statues are simply Constructs or Golems (GM's decision), as described in *C&T*.

4.4 FANTASTIC PLACES

The Middle East has been called a “graveyard of Empires.” It has been home to many of the world's great civilizations, and almost all left their buildings behind them. Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Medes, Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, and Persians all left behind great ruins and abandoned cities in the desert. So it is not surprising that many of the *Arabian Nights* tales deal with mysterious lost cities, hidden tombs, or caverns full of treasure.

The Arabs were also great sailors, and ranged far and wide over the Indian Ocean and the China Seas, encountering many strange things. As a result, mysterious islands are another common element in the *Arabian Nights*.

Even in a realistic campaign the player characters can visit a variety of strange and fantastic places: old ruins, Egyptian tombs, Tibetan monasteries, and islands in the Indonesian archipelago. The Gamemaster who keeps his players in one place will deprive himself of one of the chief advantages of role playing games: the chance to visit exotic places without leaving the living room.

4.5 FATE

Fate plays a large role in the *Thousand Nights and a Night*. Luck and coincidence are as important as cleverness and piety. Islamic tradition held that everything was foreordained by Divine will. This was one cause of the legendary courage of Muslim warriors in battle—since Allah has already ordained when and how each man shall die, there is no reason to be cautious. This same concept creates a certain fatalism, however, for it follows logically that if your fate is predestined, nothing you do can change it, so why bother doing anything?

Gamemasters can take advantage of this to cover any necessary “fudging” of events. Fate may intervene to save the player characters when all seems lost, or else Fate may throw unforeseen obstacles in their way. If the players complain, the Gamemaster can simply explain that it is the will of Allah.

Whenever Fate takes a hand in things, there should always be some element of moral improvement involved. If the adventurers have committed a terrible crime, Fate should not intervene to save them from the consequences. But the Will of Allah might make it possible for the characters to correct or atone for their wrongdoing, usually by undertaking some arduous task.

It is possible to overuse this, of course. Players do dislike being obviously manipulated. Gamemasters should use Fate only to make things interesting and fun, not to push characters around arbitrarily. Similarly, if Fate intervenes to save the player characters whenever they do something suicidally stupid, after a while the players will start to depend on it.



5.0 AN ARABIAN NIGHTS CAMPAIGN



The *Arabian Nights* campaign material given here assumes that the characters will be in or around the city of Baghdad during the reign of the Caliph Harun Al-Rashid, in the years 785-800. Though Harun ruled until 809, the later years of his Caliphate lacked the glitter and splendor of the beginning. Information about that time and place is collected in the Gamemasters' Section of the Sourcebook.



PRINCE
CAMARALZAMAN DISCOVERS
THE CAVE

5.1 TONE AND SETTING

Even within the context of an *Arabian Nights* campaign, there are still wide possibilities for tone and setting. Are the player characters going to be warriors, fighting for the faith against infidels on the frontier? Or merchants, traveling to strange and exotic places? Or rogues, seeking their fortunes through wit and luck on the streets of Baghdad?

The Gamemaster should think carefully about what sorts of adventures he wishes to run. If you like sending your players through tomb complexes full of carefully-crafted deathtraps, then plan the campaign accordingly. Choose a setting appropriate to the scenarios you plan to run, and make sure your players create suitable characters.

5.2 PLAYER INPUT

The Gamemaster should find out from his players what sort of a campaign would best suit them. Compromise may be needed if there are disagreements. In exchange, the players must try to create characters that will fit well into the campaign. They need not all be identical, but should at least have some reason for being there. A Bedouin warrior, wise in the ways of the desert, will have little to do among a group of merchants sailing to Serendip to trade (unless the Gamemaster decides to have them shipwrecked on a desert coast).

The characters should also have some reason for hanging around together. A possibility for Islamic characters would be to have all the player characters be members of the same tribe or clan. They need not be close relatives, but ties of kinship were very strong, and even a distant cousin was "family."

An especially appropriate way of getting player characters together is to make them long-lost siblings, separated at birth by a wicked relative or careless nursemaid. This can often be related to the ongoing plot of the campaign, as the reunited brothers try to reclaim their rightful inheritance, or get revenge, or whatever.

5.3 LIMITED CAMPAIGNS

In a limited campaign, the characters have a single goal, and work toward achieving it over several game sessions. Once it is accomplished, the campaign ends. The advantage to such a structure is that the campaign can have a plot with a satisfactory resolution. The villains can be completely defeated, and the heroes can be lavishly rewarded. The Gamemaster can pull out all the stops for a rousing finale.

The trouble is that players get attached to their characters, particularly if the characters have become powerful in the game. There will always be the temptation to "find out what happened next." The Gamemaster will feel pressured to create a sequel, and as any moviegoer knows, the sequel is often not as much fun as the original.

5.4 CONTINUING CAMPAIGNS

In a continuing campaign, there is no single goal, but instead a series of them. (There may in fact be a stated goal, but it is something which will never be completely accomplished—for example, a lawman's goal is to defeat evil, but no matter how much he defeats, there is always more.) This kind of campaign allows the Gamemaster to develop his world background over time, and lets the player characters slowly improve in abilities and wealth.

The problem is that continuing campaigns run the danger of becoming just a series of episodes, like a television program. At the end of the show, the heroes go riding off into the sunset, without really changing anything.

Or if that peril is avoided, then the Gamemaster is faced with the problem of "escalation." After the players have defeated a two-headed dragon, they won't be satisfied by anything less than a three-headed one. And once they've found a hoard of a thousand gold pieces, the next hoard must have two thousand, and so on.

In a continuing campaign, the Gamemaster must plan not only individual adventure scenarios, but must also give thought to the overall pattern of the campaign. The players must encounter setbacks from time to time. Old adversaries should reappear to bedevil the player characters when they least expect it. And above all, their actions should have consequences. If an innocent bystander is killed during a fight, the characters must deal with the law, with irate relatives of the dead man, his grieving widow, and so forth.



Note that not all merchants must be from the Trader profession. Merchants might also be Sailors, and Fighters with good trading skills could certainly do well. Less reputable merchant characters could even be Thieves, Rogues, or Montebancs. Since most Islamic religious scholars had "day jobs," even a Cleric could be a merchant.

A merchant campaign is very free-form; the players are in control of where their characters go and what they do. The Gamemaster must be able to improvise or adapt scenarios in response to player decisions.

GHAZIS

As warriors for the faith, the characters will operate on the Greek or Indian frontiers. They will lead raids into enemy territory, and stave off attacks by infidels. Though combat and war are the main themes of the campaign, there will be plenty of espionage plots to unravel and commando-style missions to perform.

A military campaign will be fairly structured, with high-ranking NPCs assigning tasks to the player characters. The Ghazi campaign can focus on a single long-term objective—the capture of a city, say. All the characters' efforts will contribute to that ultimate goal.

Characters in a military campaign will probably be Fighters, Paladins, or Cavaliers. A few might follow professions like Bashkar or Dervish. Specialists in infiltration and espionage could be Thieves, Rogues, Assassins, or Warrior Monks. A Cleric would not be out of place in a holy war against the infidels.

POLITICS

The politics of the Abbassid Caliphate were complex, and the player characters could certainly find plenty of opportunity for adventure if they get involved. Low-level characters will probably be agents of powerful NPCs. Missions would include spying on rival factions, assassinations and light thuggery, and attempts to prevent similar moves by the opposition.

Higher-level characters who have amassed enough wealth and influence could try to become major players themselves. The dirty work would probably be left to hirelings and NPCs, and the player characters would instead do a lot of interacting with the Caliph and his court.

5.5 ARABIAN NIGHTS CAMPAIGN IDEAS

There are several different kinds of campaigns that can be run in an *Arabian Nights* setting. Some are outlined here, but Gamemasters are encouraged to come up with ideas of their own.

MERCHANTS

Player characters can simply be trying to amass great wealth by relatively honest means. They can be caravaners or seafarers. Their trading expeditions might be limited to Islamic lands, or might take them far into the unknown. The fact that the characters are merchants doesn't mean that all their adventures must involve trade. They still can explore ruins, fight bandits, survive in the wilderness, and encounter strange magic.

Characters from almost any profession could dabble in political intrigues. The only ones which might be unsuitable are the professions which function poorly in a civilized setting—Rangers, Barbarians, Gypsies, and Warriors. Such campaigns are usually best for professions with good interpersonal and stealth skills, such as Thieves, Traders, Dancers, Assassins, Bards, Montebancs, and Sleuths.

DETECTIVES

An interesting campaign could be built around an Islamic religious judge, or Ulema. His job is to provide justice, but he would need several agents who could learn the facts of a case to help him make his decision. The judge could either be a player character, or else the patron for a group of player characters. Because there was no Fifth Amendment in medieval Islam, detectives could have a great deal of latitude in their methods. Of course some crimes might lead to intrigues among powerful people—powerful enough to stop an investigation cold.

Detective characters could be drawn from almost any profession. Naturally, Sleuths would be the primary profession for a detective campaign, but there is room for others. The official police would consist mostly of soldiers—Fighters, Paladins, and the like. But undercover agents could be Dancers, Traders, or even Scholars and Clerics. And who would be better at catching thieves than a Thief?

THIEVES

Conversely, a campaign could center on the exploits of a gang of criminals. The player characters could be Thieves, Rogues, and Burglars, robbing people and places for loot. Or they could be Nightblades and Assassins committing mayhem for hire. As already noted above, many of the *Arabian Nights* tales recounted the adventures of con men.

A criminal campaign requires a lot of initiative on the part of the players, and great flexibility from the Gamemaster. Naturally, not all crimes will be simple; criminal characters could get embroiled in magical goings-on, or could be hired for political purposes. And if a bunch of crooks gets into trouble, where can they go for help?

Characters in a criminal campaign will mostly be drawn from the standard "criminal" professions: Thief, Rogue, Burglar, Assassin, or Montebanc. But a Fighter could easily work as "muscle," and a Trader or Dancer might well be involved in shady dealings. Clerics and other religious professions would never be criminals.

SCHOLARS

For an interesting change of pace from normal hack-and-slash gaming, the players might consider playing characters who are scholars. While this may sound a little odd, it was true that many of the scholars in medieval Islam led lives of high adventure. They traveled far and wide to learn from other savants and consult rare books. Along the way, of course, they often had hair-raising experiences.

A party of scholar-adventurers would move around from city to city, staying only long enough to exchange wisdom with the local learned men. Scholars were often employed by rulers as ambassadors—or as spies. And who better than a student of ancient lore would know where to look for hidden tombs full of treasure? (Remember all the experiences of Professor Jones in the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* movies!)

A scholarly party could easily include spell users of any variety. A Fighter or other Arms specialist would be of great help when the big brains run into something ferocious.

5.6 REALISM (AND THE LACK THEREOF)

The stories in the *Arabian Nights* vary in their realism. Some are very true to life while others are absurdly fantastic. In a campaign, the level of realism is set by the Gamemaster. He can choose whether or not to allow magic, what kinds of magic to allow, and what sort of adventures the player characters will have. This decision also determines whether or not nonhuman races like Orcs and Halflings are allowed, and controls the kinds of monsters the player characters can encounter.

GEOGRAPHY

One important aspect of realism is geography. What is the world like? Is it round or flat? There are several possibilities. The Gamemaster can use the real world of the Eighth Century, with all the real continents and kingdoms in their proper places. This background still allows for magic and fantasy elements, but ties everything down rather solidly.

Or else the Gamemaster can use the world as it was depicted in the *Arabian Nights* stories, which is very similar to the view held by the Europeans before Columbus. This is more completely described in the Gamemaster's section of the Sourcebook. In this world, the Gamemaster can make up kingdoms and cities at will, fitting them in wherever needed. There can be no limit to the number of enchanted islands in the ocean, and beyond the ocean lies unknown lands inhabited by headless men, unipods, or other fantastic beings.

MAGIC

Realism in a campaign also depends on the role of magic. It is up to the Gamemaster to decide what magic to allow. He can have a "high-magic" campaign, in which all magical character classes are allowed, with no restrictions on spell lists. He can prohibit certain classes, or limit them to non-player characters only.

It is possible to run an entirely realistic campaign, set in Baghdad during the Caliphate of Harun Al-Rashid. Even without spells, magic carpets or jinn, the characters can become involved in harem intrigues, political struggles, and trading ventures. And even in a realistic campaign, the characters won't know that there is no such thing as magic, so they can encounter fraudulent "magicians" and hear tales of enchantment. The "tales-within-tales" method mentioned above also lets Gamemasters run fantasy adventures in an otherwise solidly realistic campaign.

5.7 TRUE AND FALSE RELIGIONS

One very important decision which a Gamemaster must make is which religions are valid in his campaign. In the *Arabian Nights* world, which is based on the historical Middle East of the Ninth Century, this is especially important. Is Islam the only true religion in the campaign? Can only Muslims become Clerics, Paladins, Healers, and so forth? Or are all religions equally "true," so that a Muslim mullah, a Japanese Shinto priest, a Christian friar, and an Aztec priest are all Clerics with equal spells? There are three options suitable for an Islamic campaign.

The first option is for the Gamemaster to declare that all Channeling spells and other "religion-based" powers are derived from the individual's personal faith, rather than divine favor. All religions are equally valid, and the Channeling spell lists can be used by any religion. This is particularly useful if the player characters are foreign infidels traveling in Muslim country. (There is even some justification for this in Islamic theology, for in the Koran it is mentioned that all peoples are sent a messenger.)

The second option is to declare that only Islam is valid. All other religions are considered to be misguided (at best), or servants of evil (at worst). Thus only Muslims would have access to the Channeling spell lists. Non-Muslims could be Clerics, Shamans, or Animists, but without being allowed to use the spell lists. Occasionally, infidels could be evil clerics (this is highly appropriate in the genre, but is uncomfortably racist to modern ways of thinking) and be allowed appropriate spell lists.

A third option is something of a compromise. Drawn from certain aspects of Islamic theology, it is especially appropriate for a campaign involving many European characters. In medieval Islam, certain religions were held to be "Peoples of the Book." They were usually given a protected status and were free to practice their religion in Muslim lands. The Muslim theologians held that all the religions "of the Book" were precursors of Islam, and so had some degree of validity. Generally, the "Peoples of the Book" were the Christians, Jews, and Sabaeans. Occasionally the Zoroastrians were included. Gamemasters may rule that those religions are considered "true" in an Islamic campaign, and Channeling spell users of those faiths can gain spell lists normally. Characters from religions not on that list could have no spell lists (or could only be Evil Clerics, at the Gamemaster's option).

5.8 LIMITING REWARDS

Tales in the *Arabian Nights* frequently have characters rising to fantastic wealth and power, sometimes even becoming kings. This makes for difficult role playing, when player characters can afford to hire huge armies, and have no need to seek treasures.

If the Gamemaster is more interested in keeping his characters from getting rich too fast during adventures, the following point is worth considering. Much wealth in a pre-industrial world was not very portable—exactly how do you steal a solid gold throne encrusted with jewels? It probably weighs a ton or more. Kind of hard to fit that in a backpack. Other valuable but hard-to-carry items include huge tapestries and carpets, statues, or mosaic ceilings. In countries without paper money, even large sums of cash become difficult to handle, especially if the characters are fleeing for their lives from an enraged monster whose lair they've just robbed.

But even if the player characters manage to deal with these problems and get home with a huge load of goodies, there are still ways for the Gamemaster to keep them from getting too rich. First of all, there were no banks in medieval Islam. All riches were kept in cash at home. A thief could literally steal all of a person's wealth, or at least make a serious dent in it. Dishonest servants or slaves could embezzle huge sums.

Similarly, there were no investment funds or stocks. A man's money was simply cash to be spent. Sindbad the Sailor had to go on seven voyages because he kept spending all he made. (If the player characters seem too frugal, give them some extravagant relatives and wives.)

The only possible investment was real estate, either farmland or buildings in town. Both are subject to all sorts of costly disasters. Fires, floods, crop blights, or droughts can erase a rich character's properties very effectively.

There were taxes to pay. The basic tax was a land-tax, the Zakat, which was assessed at a rate of one-fifth of the value of the crop, or two-fifths of the crop if the land is irrigated by a government canal. Later, the tax was extended to money as well as land, and was levied at a rate of one fortieth of the value of money. And all pious Muslims were expected to give a fifth of their loot from a battle to the Caliph. Player characters who dabble in politics will have enormous entertainment expenses. A budding courtier must constantly give gifts to the Caliph, and must reward his supporters with gold. A character on the losing end of a political power struggle might find his estates and goods confiscated.

If all else fails, use magic. A djinn, insulted by a character, might simply make his wealth and palaces vanish into thin air. Or else a wicked enchanter could use magic to steal someone's fortune. This creates all sorts of adventure possibilities involved in getting it back.

It is also possible to use supernatural explanations to adjust the rewards of a given adventure, based on how hard the characters had to work for their money. If they are riding in the desert and stumble across a cave filled with gold and jewels, there isn't much effort involved. So the Gamemaster can simply have the treasure be just an illusion; when the player characters get back to the city with their saddlebags full of coins, they will find that they have nothing but some old brass junk. Conversely, if they had to battle a mighty Marid and a horde of ghouls for the treasure, then it should be real. They earned it.



SOURCEBOOK: PLAYER'S SECTION





6.0

AN OUTLINE OF ISLAMIC HISTORY

It is impossible to give a complete description of Islamic history in only a few dozen pages. Libraries full of huge thick books have been written on the subject, and even they must leave things out. It is strongly recommended that Gamemasters and players supplement the information here with additional reading. The sources listed in the Bibliography are a good place to start. Islam is a very "historical" religion—events which happened long ago are still vitally important, so a good grounding in Islamic history is vital to understanding Muslims and their culture.

6.1 THE WORLD BEFORE MUHAMMAD

Islam was born in Arabia at the beginning of the Seventh Century A.D. The Middle East of that time was a semi-civilized backwater which bordered on two mighty empires: the Byzantine Empire of Greece, and the Sassanid Empire of Persia.

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE (6.1.1)

North and west of Arabia was the Eastern Roman Empire, usually referred to as the Byzantine Empire. It consisted of the wealthy eastern half of the dominions of fallen Rome. While barbarians had overrun Britain, Gaul and Iberia, the Imperial grip was still firm in Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt. The Emperor Justinian had reconquered Italy, North Africa, and the southern part of Iberia during the Sixth Century as part of a plan to restore Imperial control to all of Rome's former possessions. The Byzantine capital at Constantinople was the biggest and most splendid city in the world during this period.

The Imperial rule was buttressed by the Orthodox Christian Church. But religious dissent had put cracks in this unity. Schisms had developed between the Orthodox church in Constantinople and the Monophysites of Egypt, Armenia, and Syria. To the east, the Nestorian Christians practiced yet another version of the creed. In an empire which depended on religious conformity for political unity, these schisms were extremely dangerous, and the emperors did not hesitate to suppress them with armed force. Needless to say, each suppression bred only more fervor among the dissenters.

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE (6.1.2)

Facing off against Byzantium was the Persian Empire (under the Sassanid dynasty). It ruled all of Iran, most of Iraq, and extended into Central Asia and modern Pakistan. The capital city was at Cteisphon, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Iraq. The Persian Empire was heir to one of the oldest civilizations on Earth, and was a wealthy and advanced state. It sat across the major routes linking the Mediterranean world with India and the Far East.

The official religion was a revival of the old Zoroastrian faith, which centered around a conflict between Ahura Mazda (or Ormuzd, the god of light), and Ahriman (Lord of Darkness); an

eternal struggle of good and evil. The Persian holy books were called the *Avestas*. The priests of Ahura Mazda were called Magi, who tended the sacred fires in their temples. (The Magi were thought to have great powers; the modern word, *magic*, derives from their name.) The religion also included a form of ancestor-worship, so that each family head was priest of the family cult. A small minority of Jews was tolerated. The Christians in Persia had suffered persecution, as the rulers feared they would support the Byzantines; this ended with the establishment of an independent Persian Christian Church free of control from Constantinople.

OTHER POWERS (6.1.3)

Besides the two great empires, there were other kingdoms whose influence extended into Arabia, and which shaped the birth of Islam. South of Byzantine Egypt lay the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia. The inhabitants had been converted to Coptic Christianity, and there was also a large population of Jews. Ethiopia had strong trading and cultural ties to Arabia.

The southern portion of the Arabian peninsula was dominated by the kingdom of Yemen. This arid coastal region was extremely wealthy from the production of frankincense, the rare scent used in religious rituals throughout the ancient world (readers may recall that frankincense was one of the three gifts the Magi brought to the infant Jesus). Yemen also controlled much of the seaborne trade between Egypt and the Indies. Ruled by the Persian-backed Himyarite dynasty, the Yemenis were pagan star-worshippers.

ARABIA (6.1.4)

The bulk of Arabia was populated by Bedouin tribes. They were mostly nomads, herding camels and goats in the more fertile areas of the peninsula. The oasis cities were of tremendous importance, and formed links in the caravan trade routes which led south to Yemen. The cities dominated the surrounding countryside. In the north, the Arab tribes were subsidized by the Byzantines and Persians, and acted as client-state allies to protect the borders of the two empires. The Arabs were a mix of Christians, Jews, and pagans. Certain cities had reputations as holy places, and Mecca in particular was revered because of the Ka'aba, a temple which held important pagan idols and the sacred Black Stone.

THE WAR (6.1.5)

In the early Seventh Century, a colossal war devastated both the Persian and the Byzantine empires. The Persian Emperor Chosroes took advantage of an internal power struggle at Constantinople to invade the Byzantine Empire. In 616 he conquered Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor, but could not take the city of Constantinople (because of its massive fortifications and the Byzantine navy). The loss of most of the Empire's richest provinces seriously weakened the Byzantines. They had to pull back their forces elsewhere, losing control of much of the Balkan Peninsula.



The Greek Emperor Heraclius fought back against the Persians tenaciously, launching a massive counter-offensive that bypassed their forces in Byzantine territory, and instead fell upon the undefended Persian homelands in Iraq. The capital city of Cteisphon was sacked, and the richest sections of the Persian Empire were laid waste. Chosroes was assassinated by a member of his family, and a peace settlement in 628 returned the borders to their original positions. But more than a decade of continual war had exhausted both empires and had devastated many of the most productive provinces. The crippling taxes levied to pay for the war increased popular discontent, even in areas not directly affected by the fighting.

6.2 MUHAMMAD AND THE ORIGINS OF ISLAM

The prophet Muhammad was born in the city of Mecca, around the year 570. He was a member of the Quraysh tribe—a trading family which frequently led caravans north to the Roman cities in Syria and Judea. The Quraysh were traditionally worshippers at the pagan sanctuary of Mecca, the Ka'aba, which housed the legendary Black Stone.

In his youth Muhammad worked for his uncle Abu Talib as a shepherd, and accompanied him on several trading expeditions to Syria and Jerusalem. Muhammad married a widow named Khadija in 595 and operated her trading business with some success. He became a prosperous and well-respected man; a pillar of the community.

At about age 40, Muhammad had a profound religious experience, in which he felt himself called upon to preach a new religion to the Arabs. For the rest of his life, Muhammad received divine revelations in the form of Arabic verses, called *Suras*. (These were copied down piecemeal, and only after his death were they collected into the final form of the Koran.)

Muhammad began preaching his new religion in Mecca. The first three converts were his wife Khadija, his cousin Ali, and a boy he adopted named Zeid. The Prophet subsequently made converts among the Quraysh, as well as client families, peasants, and slaves.

Opposition to the new faith grew among the leaders of Mecca, but Muhammad's family ties protected him. In particular, his uncle made sure that no action was taken.

In 619, Muhammad's wife Khadija and his uncle Abu Talib died. He and his followers began to fear for his safety. He made some converts among a party of merchants from the nearby city of Medina, and began to make plans to leave Mecca. In 622, the Quraysh leaders in Mecca finally decided to take action against the new religion. Muhammad and his followers left Mecca for Medina, one step ahead of the killers. This event is called the Hegira in Muslim tradition, and is considered to be the starting-point of the Islamic calendar.

Muhammad and his followers rapidly gained support in Medina, and began a combination religious crusade and trade war against Mecca. During the 620s, several battles were fought between the Prophet's forces and the Quraysh tribe, in which the Muslims finally gained the upper hand. At the same time, relations between Muhammad and the Jewish inhabitants of Medina turned sour—beginning a feud which still shows no sign of ending.

The battles eventually led to victory for Muhammad and his followers. In 629, the Quraysh agreed to let the Prophet's people conduct pilgrimages to Mecca; by 630, Muhammad was the effective ruler of both cities. He began to expand his influence by converting and fighting nearby tribes. Two years later, the Prophet died.

6.3 THE EARLY CALIPHS AND THE EXPANSION

In the wake of Muhammad's death, it became obvious that the community needed a new leader. Muhammad's friend and father-in-law Abu Bakr was the first successor (Khalifa or Caliph) of the Prophet. He solidified the Muslim grip on central Arabia and began a series of wars against the frontiers of the two empires to the north. Persia was in a state of anarchy at the time, as various successors claimed the throne in the wake of Chosroes' assassination while a plague ravaged the country.

Under the leadership of subsequent Caliphs, Syria was conquered in 636, and a bloody battle at Qadasiya, in 637, smashed the Persian army and left the empire open to conquest. By 638, all of Iraq was occupied. The Persians, unwilling to see one of their richest provinces stolen by a band of desert robbers, began re-arming to retake Iraq. In 642, a great battle was fought, ending with a Persian defeat. Over the next ten years Persia was pacified and absorbed.

In 639, the Arab general Amr ibn-Al-Aasi led a column into Egypt; the Caliph Omar had sent him a message instructing him to halt if he was not in Egypt, but to proceed with the conquest if he was already across the border. Amr ibn-al-Aasi guessed the message and waited to open it until he was on Egyptian soil. A series of battles against the Byzantine garrisons followed. Though Egypt was a rich and important province, its defenses were weak in the aftermath of the Persian war, and the people were discontent with Imperial rule. If the Emperor Heraclius was still alive he might have stopped Amr, but he died in Constantinople, and Egypt was conquered by 641. From there, Arab armies pushed westward along the Mediterranean coast towards Tunisia, converting and gaining the support of the Berbers of the Sahara.

In ten years the Muslims had gone from being an obscure sect in a remote town to a force that could beat the greatest powers in the region. The military camps of the conquering Arabs became new

cities—Basra, Kufa, Cairo, and others. Muslim warriors supplanted the old Persian and Greek nobles, forming a new aristocracy. The populace, by and large, accepted their new overlords, as the tax burden was lighter and religious persecutions were ended.

6.4 THE SUCCESSION CONFLICT

The third Caliph, Uthman, was murdered in 656 after the armies in Egypt and Iraq revolted and marched on Medina. Muhammad's son-in-law Ali proclaimed himself Caliph, and defeated some other claimants at the Battle of the Camel. Ali established himself in Iraq, facing opposition from Mu'awiya, the governor of Syria and a kinsman of Uthman. Ali was assassinated in 661.

His son Hasan succeeded him for a few months, and entered into negotiations with Mu'awiya. After much bargaining, Hasan agreed to abdicate in favor of Mu'awiya, though many of his supporters claim that the negotiators had been bribed. Hasan died in 680, possibly by poisoning.

Mu'awiya died at about the same time, and Ali's second son Husein challenged the right of Mu'awiya's son Yazid to succeed him as Caliph. But Husein was caught by Yazid's forces and killed near the city of Kerbala in Iraq. This event later became a somber religious holiday among Shi'ites, as they lament the fact that none of his followers came to help Husein.

This conflict was the source of the chief division among Muslims, between the Sunnis, following the tradition of the accepted succession of Caliphs, and the Shi'i, or the supporters of Ali. This division persists to the present, with the Sunnis predominating overall, while the Shi'i are most numerous in Iran.



6.5 THE UMMAYYAD CALIPHATE

The Caliphate became hereditary in Mu'awiya's family, known as the Umayyads. They ruled over all Islam for the next ninety years. The center of government shifted from Mecca to the rich city of Damascus, in Syria.

Rule from Damascus made expansion in the Mediterranean easier. In the west, armies were advancing through North Africa to Spain. On the east side of the empire, armies were entering Central Asia and India. The section of western India around the Indus River Valley (roughly corresponding to modern Pakistan) came under Muslim rule during the Umayyad reign.

Under the Umayyads, the style of government changed, adopting many of the conventions of the old Imperial states. Armies of volunteer holy warriors were supplemented and replaced by paid regulars, and battle plunder was replaced by taxes. Power shifted from the desert Bedouins to townsmen.

This period saw the first flowering of Muslim arts and architecture. Damascus became an extremely beautiful city as the Umayyad caliphs built splendid mosques and palaces. Poets and scholars flocked to the new court, and began combining the old

poetic forms of Arabia with the knowledge and philosophies of the Greek and Persian civilizations.

It was during the Umayyad Caliphate that the Muslim armies penetrated into Europe. The Berber general Tariq led an army across the Straits of Gibraltar into Spain. His forces defeated the Visigothic King Roderic in 712, and the entire Iberian Peninsula came under Muslim control. Tariq lent his name to the Rock of Gibraltar—the name originally was *Jebel-Tariq*, or "Tariq's Mountain."

A legend in Spain tells that King Roderic doomed himself by opening a locked tower which had stood in the capital city of Toledo for twenty generations. Within was a sealed urn holding the prophecy that whoever broke the seal was destined to be conquered by an army of Arabs.

6.6 THE ABBASSID CALIPHATE

But not everyone was happy with the way the Umayyads were running things. They had adopted too many of the trappings of Persian and Byzantine authority, and many Muslims saw this as evidence of a loss of faith in the Prophet's religion. Descendants of Muhammad's uncle Abbas, calling themselves the Abbassids, led a coalition of disaffected groups (including the supporters of Ali) against the Umayyads in 749-50. A bloody campaign of extermination wiped out the entire Umayyad family.

Only one Umayyad escaped, Abd-al-Rahman Al-Dakhil. He fled to Muslim Spain, which was in the middle of a civil war. Joining one of the factions there, he took power and established an Umayyad Emirate in the city of Cordoba. Eventually he was able to bring all of Spain under his rule.

A new family of rulers took over the rest of Islam. The first Caliph of the new dynasty was Abu-l-Abbas. The second Abbassid Caliph, Al-Mansur, moved his capital to the new city of Baghdad, built between 754 and 775. The transfer from Syria to Iraq reflected a new focus on the wealthier eastern half of the empire, instead of the relatively poor west.

The peak of Abbassid power came during the rule of Harun Al-Rashid, who reigned from 785 to 809. The empire was safe, unified, and rich. In later years, it came to be remembered as a golden age. The time of Harun is the time of the *Arabian Nights* campaign information, and is described in detail in the Gamemaster's Section.

6.7 DECLINE OF THE CALIPHATE

After Harun's death everything began to fall apart. First came a civil war between his sons Al-Amin and Al-Mamun for control weakened and impoverished the empire. The factional strife made it more difficult for the rulers to trust their soldiers, as several armies switched sides during the struggle. The problem of getting a loyal army was solved by recruiting Turks from the steppes of Asia. They had no ties to any of the factions, only to the Caliph.

The Caliph Al-Mutasim (833-842) moved the capital to Samarra, as Baghdad had become a center of opposition to Abbassid rule. This isolation gradually led to the Caliph falling under the control of his Turkish soldiers. More and more of the government's income was spent to keep the army happy; this only made popular discontent stronger. And as the people became more hostile, the Caliphs relied more on their Turkish soldiers for protection.

The weakness of the Caliphs meant that regional governors became more and more autonomous. They could expect little help from the central government in case of trouble, and began concentrating their own resources at home. Outlying provinces fell away from the empire. Governors began to take the title Emir or Sultan, and made succession hereditary in their families. Wars of rebellion and the proliferation of new states interfered with trade, and higher taxes impoverished the people.

By 945, a family of Turkish military leaders, the Buyids (or Buwayhids) took power in Baghdad itself, and reduced the Caliph to a mere figurehead. The Caliph lingered on as a symbol of power, dominated by various Turk clans and surrounded by elaborate rituals, until the coming of the Mongols in 1258.

6.8 LATER HISTORY

The subsequent history of the Muslim world is too complicated even to summarize. Empires rose and fell with alarming speed. Fierce warriors from the desert or the steppes would take over one of the more civilized regions, making themselves the new aristocracy; within only a few generations they would become decadent and weak—easy prey for a new set of barbarian conquerors. More and more of Islamic history began to be the result of events outside the Muslim world.

LATER ISLAMIC STATES (6.8.1)

Space does not allow mention of all the kingdoms which existed in the Islamic world over the past thousand years. But several are noteworthy, either for their influence on Islamic history, or for their contacts with Europe.

Fatimid Caliphate (909-1169): The Fatimid dynasty, claiming descent from Muhammad's daughter Fatima, dominated North Africa and conquered Egypt and the Levant in the Tenth century. The leaders fell into decadence and gradually the empire was reduced to just Egypt, before vanishing altogether. The Fatimids were the target of the first European Crusades.

Seljuk Empire (1037-1243): The Seljuks were a tribe of Turks who ruled a large empire centered in Iran and Anatolia. Their Sultan, Alp Arslan, won a great victory over the Byzantines, effectively ending their control of Anatolia and reducing the Eastern Roman Empire to a minor state. The Seljuks in turn were destroyed by the Mongols sweeping in from the Asian steppes.

Ayyubid Sultanate (1174-1260): Saladin was a Kurdish general in the service of the Fatimids in Egypt. He led the Muslim armies against the Crusaders in the Holy Land, and scored great victories against them. Saladin turned the Crusaders from conquerors to desperate defenders. Having defeated the Christians, he turned against his Fatimid masters and established a dynasty that ruled Egypt and the Near East until the Ayyubids were replaced by their own slave army commanders, the Mamelukes.

Mameluke Sultanate (1260-1517): The slave armies of the Ayyubids overthrew their masters and set themselves up as a military aristocracy in Egypt and the Holy Land. One of the first Muslim states to adopt firearms, the Mamelukes kept control of Egypt until the Ottoman Turks overthrew them. Mameluke Egypt had a good deal of contact with the West.

Timurid Empire (1363-1403): The Timurid Empire was a mighty state which lasted only a little longer than the lifetime of its founder, Timur the Lame (better known in the West as Tamerlane). From his capital at Samarkand, Timur led armies in all directions, subjugating Iran, Central Asia, and Iraq. He crushed the Ottoman Turks in Anatolia, ravaged all his neighbors, but did nothing to stabilize his dominion. When he died, his empire lasted for a while out of sheer inertia before disintegrating. Timur's fame reached even into Europe as an unstoppable conqueror.

Mogul Empire (1400-1700): The Moguls were a Muslim dynasty in India (the name "Mogul" is a corruption of "Mongol," from whom they were descended). Babur, founder of the dynasty, became king of a small state in northern India at the age of 12. He conquered Samarkand, Afghanistan, and Delhi, where he set up his capital and established an empire. The best Mogul rulers, Akbar and Shah Jehan can be counted among the greatest leaders in history. The worst, such as Jehangir, were bigoted and stupid, and brought about the collapse of their empire.

At its peak, the Mogul Empire controlled most of the Indian subcontinent, and was probably the richest state on Earth. Much of the most beautiful architecture in India dates from the Mogul centuries—including the famous Taj Mahal. The empire disintegrated after the death of the emperor Aurangzeb as a result of his persecutions of the Hindus, but claimants to the Imperial throne existed until the British conquest of India during the Eighteenth Century.

Ottoman Empire (1353-1918): The Ottoman Turks were a clan that produced some exceptional military leaders. As the front line fighters reducing the decrepit Byzantine Empire in Anatolia, they captured some of the old Empire's richest areas and soon were able to dominate their Muslim neighbors. They conquered Greece and Bulgaria, and took Constantinople in 1453. At its peak, the Ottoman empire rivaled the old Abbassid Caliphate in size, and very nearly reunited all of Islam under one rule. The empire included Egypt, Iraq, and the coasts of the Arabian Peninsula, and extended as far west as Algeria. It remained a mighty power in Europe and the Near East until it was finally dismembered by the Allies following World War I.



Safavid Persia (1501-1732): The Safavids were a native Persian dynasty who overthrew their Timurid overlords and established a strong state in Iran. To encourage national cohesion, they tried to evoke Persia's ancient greatness, and promoted the Shi'ite branch of Islam as a way of encouraging nationalism. It was through their efforts that Iran became a fervently Shi'ite country. Under the great king Shah Abbas, the Persians made peace with the Ottoman Turks and expanded into Khorasan and Afghanistan. The Safavid Shahs were deposed by an Afghan dynasty, but their kingdom was the direct ancestor of modern Iran.

THE CRUSADES (6.8.2)

During the decline of the Seljuk empire, the Christians began a series of campaigns aimed at recapturing the holy city of Jerusalem from the hands of the Muslims. Impoverished knights from all over Europe flocked to the Holy Land. The Pope hoped to regain the holy places of Christianity, the soldiers wanted to win lands for themselves, and the kings of Europe planned to get control of the important trade routes of the Levant.

The first Crusade was launched in 1097, and aimed to conquer the Holy Land. The Fatimids who ruled the region had halted Christian pilgrimage to the holy cities, and were oppressing their Christian subjects. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre had been destroyed by the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim in 1009. The Europeans made initial gains, capturing most of what is now Israel and Syria. But dissent among the Christian kings of Europe meant that the Crusaders were always poorly supported. When the Zangid Sultan Nureddin took over in Damascus, he was able to stop further expansion by the Christian Second Crusade, even while simultaneously fighting against the Fatimids for control of Egypt.

Over the next few centuries the Christians were gradually pushed out of the Holy Land again. The Kurdish general Saladin reduced the holdings of the Crusaders to a few tiny coastal enclaves at Acre, Antioch, and Tripoli. Saladin was well respected by his Christian opponents as a brave and honorable opponent. There is a famous account of the meeting between Saladin and Richard the Lionhearted. Richard showed off his prowess with the broadsword by cleaving an anvil in half. Saladin responded by tossing a silk pillow into the air, then slicing it in two with his razor-sharp scimitar—by far the more difficult feat.

More Crusades were called, but each one dissolved into factional squabbles, some even before they reached the Levant. The Third Crusade, in the late Twelfth Century, did prevent Saladin from completely eliminating the Crusader kingdoms, and conquered Cyprus, which was to serve as an important Christian base for centuries. The fourth and final Crusade in 1204 ended with the Venetians conspiring with the Crusaders to capture and sack Constantinople, which effectively destroyed the Byzantine Empire. Other wars against the Muslims were called Crusades in succeeding centuries, but they never again attracted the support of all Christendom.

The Crusades were an important phase in relations between Europe and Islam. Large-scale contact took place for the first time in centuries, and there was quite a bit of cultural exchange. The Europeans adopted Muslim techniques of fortification, creating the first true castles. The writings of ancient and Muslim scholars were reintroduced into Europe.

An important force in the Crusades were the semi-monastic knightly orders organized by the Christians. Groups like the Knights Templars, Knights of Malta, Knights of St. John, and Knights Hospitallers were born in the Crusades. They emphasized

discipline and courage, and in time they became extremely wealthy and powerful organizations; the Grand Masters of the Templars were the equal of kings. On the Muslim side, the Order of Assassins served a similar role.

THE MONGOLS (6.8.3)

In 1221, the first vanguard of the Mongol armies sent by Genghis Khan, the self-proclaimed "Lord of the Earth," entered Central Asia. The Mongols utterly crushed the Muslim kingdoms there, then moved into Persia. The Mongols destroyed the Seljuk Turks, eliminated the remnants of the Abbassid Caliphate, and dominated Iraq, Anatolia, and all points east. To the north, Mongol rule extended as far as the Ukraine, and most of the Russian states paid them tribute. At their peak, the Mongols controlled almost the entire Asian landmass north of the Himalayas, from the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic and Black Seas.

They were unable to penetrate into India, and were repelled by the Bedouins of Arabia. In 1260, the Mamelukes stopped them in the Holy Land; from then on Mongol power began to wane. Their vast domains were gradually broken up among different rulers. But almost all subsequent rulers in the lands they conquered claimed descent from the Mongols, and took the title of Khan.

THE SHADOW OF EUROPE (6.8.4)

During the Middle Ages, the best Europe could do against the Muslims was to gradually wear down the weak emirates in Spain, and occasionally launch a Crusade. Meanwhile, the Muslims took Constantinople and advanced to the gates of Vienna under the Ottoman Turks. Islam definitely held the upper hand.

That began to change with the development of European sea-power. The Portuguese set up a commercial empire in the Indian Ocean, cutting the Muslim middlemen out of trade between Europe and Asia. The Spaniards conquered the New World, and vast amounts of wealth flooded into Europe. Improvements in agriculture, finance, and scientific knowledge during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries for the first time made European power begin to rival that of the Muslims.

During the Eighteenth Century the Europeans began nibbling at the edges of Islam's realm: Dutch forces took control of Indonesia, the British began expanding their influence in India, and the Russians started to push into Central Asia. The French under Napoleon invaded Egypt (but were unable to hold it). In the heartlands of Islam, the Muslim power was still equal to the European.

With the Industrial Revolution, the power of European states began to dwarf that of the Islamic countries. Even obscure, far-off nations like America could defeat the forces of Muslim rulers in North Africa. During the 19th century, much of the Islamic world came under the control of European countries. Britain took Egypt, India, and Sind; France conquered all of North Africa. Even Italy subjugated Somalia and Libya. Only Turkey and Persia, the two strongest states, avoided direct conquest. But even they were economically dominated by European interests. In Africa, the Muslim trading empires were supplanted by European merchants.

This situation remained until the end of the Second World War. The exhausted European powers could no longer maintain their colonial empires in Muslim lands, and the horrors of Nazi racism made imperialism unpalatable even to its practitioners. At the same time, the creation of Israel, the superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the development of the Persian Gulf oil fields set the pattern for the Middle East of the present.

7.0 ISLAM



Role playing in the Arab world requires at least some knowledge of the Islamic religion. Muslim culture and religion cannot be separated. This discussion of the Islamic faith should not be taken as either an endorsement or an attack on it.

7.1 THE PROPHET

The Prophet Muhammad was undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in history. Islamic tradition holds that even as a boy, Muhammad showed signs of great piety and holiness. One story tells of how a flock of angels appeared to him one night, pulled out his heart, and washed away a tiny spot on it, representing the minuscule amount of sin in Muhammad's otherwise pure soul. On the Night of Power (or the Night of Destiny), the Angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad and called him to be the messenger of Allah. The essence of the Koran, the holy word of Allah, descended into the Prophet's being.

Some time after this, came the Night of Journeying, when Muhammad was carried on a "tour of the universe" by the magical horse Burak, guided by Gabriel. The prophet rose through the seven circles of Heaven to approach the Throne of Allah, before returning to Mecca to preach the word.

Muslim doctrine holds that though Muhammad was favored above all other men by Allah, he was still a mortal man. They consider the Christian belief in the divinity of Christ to be blasphemous, and that is the origin of the famous Muslim statement of faith *la ilaha illa Allah*—"there is no God but God." This emphasizes that God (or Allah) is single and indivisible, in contrast to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which Muslims consider polytheist and abominable.

7.2 THE KORAN

The Prophet delivered the Koran in sections over the course of twenty years. It consists of a number of chapters, called *Suras*, in the form of Arabic verses. The verses were copied down as he spoke them, but no attempt was made to place them in any order. Only after Muhammad's death did his followers collect the fragments that had been written down, and consult those who had known him and heard the *Suras* spoken, to produce the complete Koran.

In addition to the Koran, there is a body of lore handed down by tradition from those who knew the Prophet, dealing with topics not covered in the Koran. These traditions are called "*Hadiths*". Knowledge of the Hadiths is based on the word of the Prophet's companions, and their authenticity must be traced back through various commentators to whoever first heard the Prophet speak on the subject.

The Koran is considered by Muslims to be directly copied from a book in Heaven. This ideal Koran is written in perfect Arabic. Consequently, the language of the Koran is considered to be the most perfect and correct form of Arabic. And, because the Koran was transmitted to the Prophet in Arabic, Muslims believe that it cannot be translated into other languages without somehow diluting the message. Thus, all versions of the Koran in other tongues are held to be only summaries or explanations; there can be no real translations.

A person who has read the Old and New Testaments of the Bible will find much that is familiar in the Koran. It tells of the Creation, of Adam's naming all the creatures, and of Adam and Eve's fall from Paradise. It describes how Abraham fathered Ishmael, who was the father of all the Arabs. The story of Moses is included, and Jesus as well. Christians and Jews have in the past ridiculed Islam, claiming that Muhammad "stole" the material that went into the Koran. But that position is naive; the Arabs of Mecca had extensive contact with Christians and Jews, and knew much of the two religions. Muhammad could never have claimed that the material of the Koran was original. Rather, the Koran as presented by Muhammad is supposed to be the latest and most perfect revelation—superseding previous versions.



7.3 BASIC BELIEFS OF ISLAM

The fundamental tenet of Islam is that there is no God but God (the Arabic word is Allah), and that Muhammad is God's Prophet. This statement of faith is repeated by devout Muslims as they pray. In Arabic it is "*La ilaha illa-Allah*" ("There is no God but God") "*Muhammadun Rasulu*" ("and Muhammad is His Prophet").

Muslims recognize other prophets before Muhammad. These are all figures common to the Judeo-Christian tradition: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Zachariah, John, Elias, and Jesus. According to the Muslims, each Prophet was inspired by Allah, and the teachings of each superseded the previous ones. But Muhammad is the final and ultimate Prophet; there will be no others, and his word is definitive.

The Arabs held that they were descended from Abraham, and were the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Hagar. According to their tradition, Abraham built the holy Ka'aba at Mecca; and the well, Zemzem, which stands next to the Kaaba is where Hagar found water for her son.

Muslim beliefs about Allah are very similar to Jewish and Christian ideas about God. (Members of other faiths must wonder why there is such antipathy generated by the relatively minor differences in the three religions.) Allah is omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, and perfect. Because he is all-knowing, he is all-foreseeing, and has determined the destiny of each individual until the end of Time. Allah is the Creator of everything, and made the world in six days.

Muhammad preached that the Day of Judgment is coming, and on that day the world will be destroyed and the souls of all men, living or dead, will be gathered up and judged by Allah. The good will be admitted to Paradise, the wicked will be cast into Hell.

Allah is attended and served by a multitude of angels; of which, the chief one is Gabriel. It was Gabriel who transmitted the Koran to Muhammad. The angels are made of fire, as humans are made of clay. On the day Allah created Adam, he commanded all the multitude of angels to bow down to Adam. The four Archangels are Gabriel (Gibreel), who dictated the Koran to Muhammad; Michael (Mikal); Israfil, who will blow the horn to signal the end of the world; and Azrael, the Angel of Death.

Iblis is the closest Muslim equivalent to Satan in the Christian tradition. He is the leader of the evil jinn, an angel cast out of Paradise by Allah for refusing to bow down and pay homage to Adam. Iblis forever tries to lead men astray, to prove that they are inferior. It was Iblis who took the form of a serpent and tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden.

7.4 COSMOLOGY

"Lo! We have adorned the lowest heaven with an ornament, the planets...."—Koran, Sura XXXVII

Muslim cosmology is based on that of the ancients. The Earth is the center of the Universe, surrounded by crystal spheres bearing the planets. The Moon occupies the lowest sphere, then Venus, then Mercury, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the stars. Beyond the fixed stars lies Paradise and the throne of Allah.

The Muslim Paradise as described by Muhammad has much to recommend it. It is full of scented gardens and streams of cool water. Houris—angelic women who are perpetually virgin—serve every desire of the virtuous. And the pious can gaze eternally on the sublime visage of Allah. Paradise was where Adam and Eve dwelt before they sinned and were cast to Earth. The Muslims believe that Mecca was where the two lived after being expelled from Paradise.

The punishments of the damned are no less vividly described. Hell has seven levels, and sinners are cast into different levels based on the degree of their wickedness. The damned will stand in freezing winds, wearing shoes of fire, and their drink will be boiling water and filth. It has been suggested that Dante may have incorporated some Muslim ideas into his description of the Inferno (readers can consult that work for more information on Hell).

7.5 SUNNIS AND SHI'ITES

The two chief divisions of Islam are the Sunnis and the Shi'ites. The distinction between the two groups dates back to the succession conflict following the death of Uthman.

The party supporting Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law was known as the *Shiat-Ali*, or Party of Ali. They held that he was the rightful heir to the Prophet, rather than Mu'awiyah of the Umayyad clan. The followers of Ali became more fervent after his death and the death of his son Husein in AD 680. According to them, all the Caliphs after Ali were usurpers, and therefore evil.

In later centuries, the Shi'ites developed a theology which maintained that at all times there is a person on earth who is endowed with spiritual perfection and knowledge by Allah. That person is the Imam. The Imams after Muhammad were the Caliphs, until the succession dispute. With the deaths of Ali and his son, the world was deprived of the rightful Imam.

Differing sects of the Shi'ites believed that different people had been the Imam. To describe the various Shi'ite sects would require a huge book, and would only bore the reader. Suffice to say that there are many different Shi'ite groups, and each maintains that everyone else has got it wrong.

The larger, more orthodox group of Muslims are called the Sunni, which means the followers of the *Sunna*, or tradition. The Sunnat is a series of commentaries by theologians, seeking to apply Islamic thought to topics which the Prophet did not discuss in the Koran or the Hadiths. In this it resembles the Jewish Talmud.

7.6 MINOR SECTS

Besides the two major divisions, Islam has scores of smaller sects. Most are Shi'ite splinter groups, and the differences among them are unimportant. A few are worth noting.

SUFIS

The Sufis are an individualistic group of Muslims who seek a personal understanding of the divine. The Sufi tradition began in the early Eighth Century AD, with the writings of the theologian Hasan Al-Basri. They emphasized meditation and an ascetic lifestyle, and many Sufis are revered as saints.

The various Sufi schools are called Tariqah, or "Paths." Each Sufi seeks a Master who will guide him on the path to enlightenment. At one time the followers of the various Tariqahs wore special hats and garments to identify themselves as members. The groups were organized in a "lodge" arrangement, which has been compared with Freemasonry in the West. A Tariqah member could expect aid from other members, even in a distant city. The Tariqahs often claim extreme antiquity, listing Abraham or Moses as founders, but most began after the breakup of the Abbassid Caliphate.

Many of the Sufis were pacifists, living by begging like the monks of St. Francis. But others could be fierce fighters, working themselves up into an ecstatic state before battle. Some performed fantastic feats—firewalking, eating broken glass, and other oddities.

Because of their focus on a personal, transcendent form of faith, the Sufis do not fit into either of the two main branches of Islam. Sufis may follow the outward forms of one or the other, but are generally not bound by doctrine. At times, Sufis have found it necessary to conceal the true nature of their beliefs, pretending to follow the orthodox faith of their community.

DERVISHES

The name "Dervish" (*Darwish*) comes from a Persian word for "door." It either means that the Dervishes were door-to-door beggars, or that they sought to "open the door" to communion with Allah. The name was applied indiscriminately to all the various Sufi orders, but in particular to those which adopted a life of poverty. The terms *Fakirs* or *Calendars* refer to the same kind of religious mendicants.

The famous "Whirling Dervishes" are a Sufi group called the Maulawiyas, founded in the Thirteenth Century by Jalal Al-Din Al-Rumi, in Turkey. The Maulawiya Dervishes perform a fantastic whirling dance, during which they seek to experience personal union with the Divine. It is these "dancing Dervishes" which are most familiar to the West, but they are by no means the only group known by that name. (For the purposes of character creation, only the Maulawiyas would qualify as members of the *RM* Dervish profession; other Dervishes would be Mystics, Monks, Bashkars, or other professions.)

THE ASSASSINS

The Assassins were a group which flourished well after the Abbasid Caliphate of Harun Al-Rashid; and technically have no place in the world of the *Arabian Nights*. But they were a fascinating part of later medieval Islam, and are particularly well-known to Europeans. If the Gamemaster wishes to include the Assassins, they can be used in later historical adventures, or placed anachronistically in the time of Harun.

The Assassins were a group of Ismaili Shi'ites, called the Nizari branch, who adopted a policy of infiltration and terrorism to gain political power. The chief of the order was Hasan-i-Sabbah, who took charge in 1094. To Europeans he was famed as the "Old Man of the Mountains." Their headquarters was the impregnable fortress of Alamut in northern Iran. During the next century they gained control of other fortresses in Syria and the Levant. According to one legend, the fortress at Alamut held a garden full of trees and beautiful maidens, in imitation of Paradise. Recruits were placed in this garden to give them a foretaste of the reward awaiting them if they died in the service of the faith.

Nizari agents were sent to get positions of trust in the households of rulers and important officials throughout the Middle East. Any official who defied the Nizaris were assassinated. Because they were so good at infiltration and undercover work, no ruler could be certain that he was safe. The effect of one Nizari assassination was greatly magnified by the fear it inspired.

The name "Assassin" comes from the word "Hashish" or marijuana. The Ismailis might have used the drug to reward their followers, or else it was an insulting term coined by their enemies ("they're nothing but a gang of dope fiends"). The fear that their methods inspired was tremendous, and their fame spread to Europe as an all-pervasive insidious order of fanatics.



7.7 RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The four essential practices for Muslims are the daily prayer, the annual fast, the pilgrimage, and the giving of alms. These, along with belief in God and his Prophet Muhammad, are called the Five Pillars of Islam.

PRAYERS

Muslims pray five times a day. The first prayer is the salat as-suhb, at sunrise. Next comes the salat az-suhr, at noon. Midway between noon and sunset is the salat al-asr. The salat al-maghrib is observed at sunset. An hour and a half after sunset is the final prayer of the day, the salat al-isha. Frequently, the salat az-zuhr and the salat al-asr are combined, as are the salat al-maghrib and the salat al-isha.

If no mosque is available, Muslims pray alone. Before praying, a Muslim must purify himself by bathing; at a minimum he must wash his face, hands, and feet. Each mosque has a fountain for washing outside the door.

The summons to prayer is given by a cryer, or Muezzin, from the minarets of the mosque. This tradition began with one of Muhammad's converts, a black slave named Bilal, whose powerful voice summoned the Prophet's early followers to prayer in Mecca and Medina. (Muhammad disdained the use of bells, considering them a Christian affectation.)

Muslims pray facing Mecca; in mosques a special niche, called the Qibla, indicates the proper direction. The believers kneel and prostrate themselves in unison toward the sacred city. In Mecca itself, believers face towards the holy Kaaba.

RAMADAN

The month of Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, and is a period of fasting for Muslims. No food or drink may pass their lips during daylight; nor may they smoke or have contact with the opposite sex. The prohibition is only in force during the day; normal life can resume at night. The sick, infants, nursing mothers, and travelers are exempt from the restrictions. The especially pious spend the final ten nights of Ramadan in the mosque, for one of those nights is the Night of Power, when Muhammad received his revelation. The first day after Ramadan is a feast day, Id al-Fitr. It is observed by the giving of alms and gifts, and visits to the graves of the dead.

Because the Muslim calendar is not in synch with the seasons (see Section 7.9), Ramadan can occur at any time of the year. Over the course of thirty-two and a half years it moves through the seasons, so that sometimes it falls in the dead of winter, and other times at the hottest part of summer.

In his travels in Egypt and Arabia, Sir Richard Burton noted that men's tempers are often on edge during Ramadan, and that it becomes virtually impossible to conduct any business or get anything done during the month of fasting.

PILGRIMAGE

"And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine."—Koran, Sura XXII.

It is considered the duty of every Muslim to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his life. Those who do so are allowed to call themselves Hajji. For a period of ten days, the pilgrim visits sacred sites in Mecca and Medina, prays, and returns home with all his sins redeemed. Muslim doctrine requires that a pilgrim must be an adult, healthy enough to make the journey, and mentally sound. The usual season for pilgrimage is the last month of the year (see Section 7.9).

Protection of the pilgrimage is one of the chief duties of Muslim states, and especially of whichever government controls Mecca. It was also an important source of revenue for the Muslim empires; as the travelers must buy food, lodging, and supplies. Whichever state controls the holy cities gains a great deal of prestige among Islamic governments.

For safety, pilgrims traveled in large caravans. Harun al-Rashid's wife Zubaida sponsored a project to build way-stations along the road from Baghdad to Mecca, for the convenience of pilgrims. The main routes were either overland from Baghdad and Damascus to Medina, or by sea from Suez to Jiddah, then overland to Mecca.

Muslim tradition maintains that there are always 600,000 pilgrims each year, and that when the number of mortal pilgrims is too small, Allah sends angels to make up the difference. However, during the 19th century, Sir Richard Burton estimated that there were only about 50,000 visitors, which would probably be about the same number as in Harun Al-Rashid's day.

Pilgrims almost always visit both Mecca and Medina, and the two cities vied with one another in claims of holiness. Mecca has the holy Kaaba, and all Muslims bow towards Mecca when praying; but Medina is where Muhammad is buried, as well as his daughter Fatimah and other notables.

It is customary for pilgrims to offer an animal—usually a goat or lamb—in commemoration of the ram Allah sent to Abraham in place of Isaac (the animals killed are given to the poor). Muslims stress the fact that this offering is not a ritual sacrifice.

Muslims circle the holy Kaaba in Mecca, and try to kiss or touch the sacred Black Stone embedded in one corner of the building. The Kaaba is a small cubical building (once a pagan temple) which Muhammad made the center of Muslim prayer. It is rumored to be the first temple built by Abraham. The Kaaba stands in the courtyard of a huge mosque at Mecca, near the sacred well *Zemzem*.

The climax of the pilgrimage month is the feast of *Id-Al-Adha*. Muslims who cannot make the pilgrimage celebrate the feast at home, just as Muhammad did when he could not return to Mecca.

ALMS-GIVING

Islam encourages the giving of alms; the Prophet urged that each person give a fifth of their wealth to the poor. Under the Caliphate, this fifth became a form of taxation gathered by the state, but individuals were still expected to be generous. Europeans visiting Islamic countries, particularly in the Nineteenth Century, were shocked both by the apparent shamelessness of beggars and by the seeming wastefulness of the rich in giving alms. But both the rich and the poor were merely following good Muslim practice.

JIHAD

"Go forth, light-armed and heavy-armed, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the way of Allah!"—Koran, Sura IX.

Holy war against unbelievers was encouraged by Muhammad himself; his campaigns against the Quraysh of Mecca were battles for the faith. Muslims are supposed to regard each other as brothers, and fight only against unbelievers. Thus, the term for the Muslim realm is the *Dar-al-Islam*, or the "abode of peace," in which all men were supposed to live in friendship. Beyond, lay the "*Dar-al-Harb*," or abode of war, where devout Muslims could and did extend the faith at swordpoint. Those who fought for the faith were called *Ghazis*. Most were poor men with little to lose and everything to gain, for if they were successful they could win both salvation and loot.

SABBATH

For Muslims, Friday is the Sabbath-day. Those who ordinarily do not go to the mosque are encouraged to do so on Friday, and the noon prayer session lasts a full hour. Otherwise, business as usual is permitted on the Sabbath. Because Muslim practice tries to work religious observation into every aspect of daily life, the Sabbath-day is not as important as it is in Christianity. (Some have pointed out that this means that Muslims cannot save their religion for Sunday and ignore it the rest of the week, as many Christians do.)

DIETARY LAWS

The Koran specifically forbids Muslims to eat carrion, blood, pork, and any animal which has died through disease or accident. Animals which eat carrion are also forbidden. Only creatures which have died at the hand of man are considered wholesome. There are no limits on eating fish, and no rules about milk and meat, as in the Kosher restrictions of Judaism. Muslims are also forbidden to drink wine. Some of the Sufis practice vegetarianism, and Muslims in India have adopted many Hindu dietary practices.

7.8 THE MOSQUE

The mosque is the center of a Muslim's religious life. Like Christian churches, mosques are centers of education and social life as well as prayer.

Five times a day the Muezzins give the call to prayer from the mosque's minarets. (In some periods guns were fired to mark the time as well.) The faithful perform their ablutions (ritual cleansing) and file into the mosque, gathering in the central hall or courtyard. On Fridays the *shaykh* (sheikh—the leader) mounts a lectern to preach a sermon.

A niche in the wall of the mosque, called the *qibla*, indicates the direction of Mecca. Originally, the Prophet and his followers prayed facing towards Jerusalem, but a later revelation made him face his native city. Mosques are generally square, formed as a cloister (in the dry climates of most Islamic lands a roof is not required). Chambers opening onto the main court of the Mosque were used as classrooms and libraries.

In addition to the daily prayers, Muslims studied the Koran, socialized, and even conducted business in the mosque. Poor men could always bed down on the stones of the courtyard.

Mosques were often supported by an endowment (or *Waqf*). This was land given to the mosque. As with modern religious institutions, this land was tax-free. People would often donate property to the mosque as a way of trying to purchase salvation, particularly if they had no children. In many later Islamic states, the amount of *Waqf* land grew so large that the revenues of the ruler suffered, requiring expropriations.

Muslim practice forbids anyone to enter the mosque unless he or she is in a state of ritual purity. This is accomplished by performing the ablutions—bathing and cleaning the teeth. Baths were located near or connected to mosques for this purpose. It is also customary to remove one's shoes before entering a mosque (as in a private home).

7.9 THE CALENDAR

The Islamic calendar dates from the year of the Hegira, A.D. 622. A year consists of twelve lunar months, of alternately twenty-nine and thirty days each, for a total of 354 days. Consequently the Muslim calendar gains on the Gregorian at the rate of one extra year for every thirty-two and a half Gregorian. Muslim dates are prefixed with the letters A.H., meaning "year of the Hegira."

Harun Al-Rashid's reign as Caliph began in A.H. 168. The Muslim year 1414 begins on June 21, 1993, and 1415 starts on June 10, 1994.

THE DAYS AND MONTHS

The months of the Muslim calendar are evidently derived from an older solar calendar, as their names make specific references to seasons. In the lunar calendar used since Muhammad, such seasonal names are meaningless because the months move around through the seasons.

The months are:

1. *Muharram*, the "Sacred Month"
2. *Safar*, the "Void Month"
3. *Rabi Al-Awwal*, the "First Spring"
4. *Rabi Al-Thani*, the "Second Spring"
5. *Jumada-l-Ula*, the "First Month of Dryness"
6. *Jumada-th-Thaniyyah*, the "Second Month of Dryness"
7. *Rajab*, the "Revered Month"
8. *Shaban*, the "Month of Division"
9. *Ramadan*, the "Great Heat" (and fasting month)
10. *Shawwal*, the "Month of Hunting"
11. *Dhu-l-Qadah*, the "Month of Rest"
12. *Dhu-l-Hijjah*, the "Pilgrimage Month"

The Muslim calendar has seven days in the week, just like other Indo-European weeks. Though the Sabbath-day is Friday for Muslims, their week still begins on Sunday. The days of the week are:

<i>Yawm Al-Ahad:</i>	Sunday
<i>Yawm Al-Ithnayn:</i>	Monday
<i>Yawm Al-Thalatha:</i>	Tuesday
<i>Yawm Al-Arba:</i>	Wednesday
<i>Yawm Al-Khamis:</i>	Thursday
<i>Yawm Al-Jumah:</i>	Friday
<i>Yawm Al-Sabt:</i>	Saturday

IMPORTANT HOLIDAYS

The most important holidays for Muslims are the following:

Ras Al-Am: New Years' Day, on the 1st of Muharram. Often debts were due on the first of the year.

Ashura: The 10th of Muharram is a holy day with very different

meanings for Sunnis and Shi'ites. Among Sunnis it is a beneficent holy day. But for Shi'ites it is the day of mourning for the death of Husein, and is observed with great lamentation.

Mawlid Al-Nabi: The 12th of Rabi Al-Awwal is the Prophet's birthday. It is always a joyous celebration.

Laylat Al-Miraj: The 27th of Rajab is the anniversary of the Night Journey, when the Prophet was miraculously carried to Heaven and back. It is a festive occasion.

Laylat Al-Bara'ah: The 15th of Shaban is held to be the night on which the destinies of men are fixed for the coming year, and sins are absolved. Muslims spend this night in prayer.

Id Al-Fitr: The beginning of the month of Shawwal is a feast day, marking the end of Ramadan. Festivities usually last for three days.

Id Al-Adha: The Feast of Sacrifice, on the 10th of Dhu-l-Hijjah, is the most important feast day, as it commemorates the sacrifice of Abraham. This holiday is the climax of the pilgrimage month.

Id Al-Ghadir: The 18th of Dhu-l-Hijjah is a feast only for Shi'ites.



8.0 ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE



It marks the occasion when, according to the Shi'ites, the Prophet named Ali as his successor. Sunnis do not observe this holiday at all.

Because medieval Islam was very different from modern America, this part of the sourcebook is quite long and detailed. Gamemasters and players may wish to refer to this section frequently until they become familiar with the details of daily life in old Baghdad.

8.1 WOMEN IN ISLAM

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms..."—Koran, Sura XXIV

The place of women in medieval Islam was definitely secondary. A woman was always under the protection of her husband or a male relative. They could not perform any trades except those which were considered "women's work"—washing, sewing, and cooking. Of course, women were admitted to the Muslim faith, but none could become religious scholars. They were given no education beyond the most rudimentary level, though upper-class women might be literate, and courtesans might be trained in poetry.

Women were legally recognized as subordinate to men. In trials, the testimony of two women was considered to be equal to one man's word.

But it should not be thought that they were utterly subjugated and oppressed. It should also be noted that many of Muhammad's doctrines concerning women were far *more* enlightened and liberal than previous customs among the Arabs. The Koran specifically forbids female infanticide, for example. Before Muhammad it was customary among the Arabs to leave unwanted girl children on a hillside to be prey for scavengers. (It should be noted here that the Arabs were not the only ones to do this: it was common practice among the ancient Greeks, as well.)

Though women were generally expected to be subordinate to their husbands and to remain at home, a few notable women did not. Some dressed as men and fought in battles—usually to settle a personal score with one of the enemy. Such a disguise would be extremely difficult to maintain. (The public baths would pose a serious problem, for example.) It was common for men to take their wives on military campaigns. The women would cook, tend the wounded, and perhaps loot the dead, but could not fight.

No women served in the government bureaucracy or in the military, though this may have been more due to lack of education rather than any absolute prohibition. In later centuries, several Muslim states had female rulers, particularly in India. And even where women did not directly hold office, women of all classes were adept at persuading their husbands or male relatives to do what they wanted.

THE HAREM (8.1.1)

The Harem (the word literally means "sanctuary") refers to the section of an Arab's home reserved for his wives and children. In this place, the women need not go veiled from the eyes of men.

A woman was not to be seen unveiled by any man outside her own family. The family included her husband, her male blood relatives, any children, and the family slaves. Eunuchs were considered to be no longer men, and so women need not be concealed from them. Only these men could enter the harem.

The harem was not the place of debauchery so often depicted in the West. Each wife or concubine usually had her own quarters, at least in the houses of men who could afford the extra rooms. The wives kept busy at various domestic chores, taking care of the children, and so forth. The atmosphere was decidedly more homey than sensual.

POLYGAMY (8.1.2)

Islam strongly encourages marriage and procreation. Muslim men are allowed up to four wives. Their offspring are his legitimate heirs, and he may not divorce a wife without paying a settlement to her family. Note that this arrangement only works one way—Muslim women can have only one husband. They can remarry after divorce.

A husband was expected to give his wife a bridal gift called the *Mahr*. This was usually a substantial sum of money, and served as a kind of "marriage deposit." Among the Arabs of the desert a man had to pay a bride price to the girl's family, usually of 15 Dinars. This was generally made in livestock.

In the time of the *Arabian Nights* it was common for wealthy men to keep additional women as concubines. This was not considered unusual or immoral; even the Caliph, the leader of the Faithful, had hundreds of concubines. Concubines were frequently slaves, and their children were not legitimate heirs of the father. Children of a slave woman and a free man were automatically free.

One wife, usually the first, was the "senior" wife, who was in charge of managing the household. The other wives were expected to defer to her. In the houses of rich and powerful men, there was much intrigue among the wives for influence and favor.

Marriages were often arranged by the families when the couple were still children. (This is common worldwide.) According to some schools of Muslim law, a woman betrothed as a child could dissolve the marriage upon reaching adulthood. Of course, she would then have to return to her family, who had probably arranged the marriage in the first place—not a pleasant position to be in.

THE VEIL (8.1.3)

Women were required to remain veiled in public. The stringency of this has changed in various cultures and at various times in the history of Islam. In Harun's day, the veil was light, and was frequently left off. By contrast, among contemporary puritanical Muslim groups, only one eye can be exposed.

Slave women were usually exempt from the veil requirement, especially dancing-girls and others whose job required good looks. In farming areas, the peasant women laboring in the fields could get away with leaving off their veils while working.

Appearing unveiled to a young man was considered a great insult—it implied that he was still just a child, not a man. But to appear unveiled to a man outside the family was very serious indeed. In some cases, it was considered the equivalent of adultery, and punished accordingly. At other times, for a man to see a woman unveiled required him to marry her (and Gamemasters should just imagine the role playing possibilities in that situation)!

DIVORCE (8.1.4)

The Prophet allowed Muslims to divorce, as it put an end to the older Arab practice of murdering unwanted wives. There were three ways to obtain a divorce: a husband could repudiate his wife, the couple could separate by mutual consent, or a wife could ask a judge to grant her a divorce if her husband had abandoned her.

For a husband to unilaterally divorce his wife, he had to pronounce the “three divorces”, provided that the wife was not pregnant. For three months they had to remain together, and each month the husband pronounced, “I divorce you.” At the end of the third month, they were divorced. The waiting period allowed for reconciliation, and ensured that the wife was not pregnant.

A divorced wife kept the *Mahr*, or bride-gift, unless she asked to have the marriage dissolved. She usually returned to her own family after divorce. A woman without surviving relatives had to survive on her own, which was not easy. Happily, there was no prohibition against divorced women remarrying.

8.2 SOCIAL CLASSES

Islam is an egalitarian religion—all men are alike in the eyes of God. But human communities always have material and social inequalities among their members, and Islam is no exception. At the time of the *Arabian Nights*, the simple equality of the early Muslims had given way to a complicated structure of social classes.

NOBLES

The nobility of the Abbassid Caliphate was a mixed bunch. At the top was the Abbassid clan, many of whom occupied important positions in the government (generals and provincial governors). Other notables included the descendants of Ali, old Persian noble families (including the Barmecides), and aristocratic Arab clans such as the Hashemites. All members of the Prophet’s family were given the title Sherif, which roughly translates as “noble.” While they were still relatively few in number, the Caliph paid each one a stipend. The families of Muhammad’s early followers also enjoyed a certain elevated status.

Fundamentally, however, noble status correlated closely with wealth and power. The Arab conquest and then the Abbassid revolution had eliminated any “old families” unless they had the muscle to protect themselves. The Barmecides were one rare example of a family which went almost directly from being Persian nobility to being Muslim nobility. In later Muslim states, the nobility were always the barbarian invaders who had conquered the kingdom and set themselves up as rulers.

The upper classes were already becoming preoccupied with etiquette, style, and fashion. Their clothes had to be in the latest mode (Jafar the Barmecide was a leading trend-setter), their manners had to be perfect, and they vied with each other to throw elaborate banquets with rare and exotic dishes.

COMMONERS

The bulk of the common people were peasant farmers. Most were freemen, with their own land, but increasingly the burden of taxation was driving many to become tenant farmers or sharecroppers, working for a big landowner.

In the cities, a lively middle class existed, including everyone from street peddlers to shopkeepers to craftsmen to rich merchants. It was from this class that many of the government officials and religious scholars came.

Most of the *dhimmi*, or “Protected People”—Christians, Jews, and others—were commoners. A few especially talented infidels might gain enough wealth to be accepted by the upper classes. The Caliph’s personal physician was Jewish, but such men were rare.

SLAVES

Slavery was common in all countries at the time of the Arabian Nights. In Islam, it was slightly more prevalent than in Europe, where feudal serfdom was the norm. In some Muslim countries the



practice continued until the 1960s. Captives in war were usually enslaved, and occasionally entire conquered cities would be sold into slavery. Others were purchased from foreign dealers—chiefly in Russia, Greece, Turkestan, and Africa.

There were limits: the child of a free man and a slave woman was free, as was the child of a free woman and a slave man. The Caliph himself was the son of a slave mother. The Koran recommended good treatment of slaves, and it was considered pious to free a slave. A slave woman who bore her master a child was automatically freed. Usually freedmen remained as followers or clients of their former masters.

Few businesses used large numbers of slaves; most were used as household servants. There were no “plantations.” Probably the largest slave owner was the Caliph himself. Much of the government bureaucracy and army was made up of slaves, as foreign-born slaves had no allegiances other than to the Caliph. In time, this led to trouble as the Caliph increasingly became the slave of his own slaves.

NOMADS

In the deserts of Arabia, the steppes of Central Asia, and the Sahara, a large population of nomads remained. Their social position was unusual—the tribes were very nearly sovereign, and their chieftains dealt with the government as equals. But they were desperately poor, and had only their pride and ferocity to sustain them. Bedouins from Arabia, Berbers from North Africa, and Turks from the Asian steppes made up the bulk of the Muslim armies. Bedouins always had a reputation for prickly independence, personal honor, and courage in battle.

Among Arabs there was the feeling that the Bedouins were the “genuine article”—the ideal of Arabness. So even city-dwellers would listen to Bedouin poetry, and perhaps affect desert customs. Real Bedouins would look on such poseurs with scorn.

SOCIAL MOBILITY

“...So he said, ‘Thou hast neither cash nor rank nor family’; whereupon I pulled him out a purse of a thousand dinars, red gold, and said to him, ‘This is my rank and my family....’”—“*The Tale of Abu Mohammed Hight Lazybones.*”

Before he received the revelation from Allah, Muhammad was a merchant. Trade was always respectable in Islam. The lands that Islam conquered lay astride the major trade routes of the ancient world, and there was a great deal of wealth available to Muslims. Furthermore, that wealth was in the form of cash and goods, rather than land. So wealth and social position were never directly tied to land, as in medieval Europe. Consequently social mobility was greater. While there were aristocratic families, their social position was due largely to the wealth they controlled. Anyone gaining enough wealth would be accepted by the upper classes.

The sudden vast expansion of Muslim power during the Seventh Century meant that Bedouin soldiers who had owned nothing but the sword at their belt found themselves rulers of provinces, with palaces and scores of servants. In such a situation, snobbery is a little difficult. In fact, most of the snobbery consisted of desert Arabs looking down on the “soft” people they had conquered.

In this respect, medieval Islam is easier for modern Americans to understand than even Victorian England. Social classes were not rigidly fixed, and there was a great deal of social mobility. Men of talent could find social position to match their abilities relatively easily. The Caliphs often bestowed great honor on poets and artists. But such honors could be dangerous: one poet was made a general, until his dismal performance in the field cost him his job—and his head!

8.3 LAW, CRIME, AND PUNISHMENT

The legal system in the Abbassid Caliphate was very different from that of modern America. Legal principles which we take for granted—*habeas corpus*, presumption of innocence, juries, defense attorneys, or the right to remain silent—did not exist. There was a much greater emphasis on rendering justice in each case, rather than on adhering to a written code of law.

RELIGIOUS LAW (8.3.1)

Law, in Islam, is not created by governments, but instead is derived from the teachings of Muhammad. The Koran, the Hadiths, and the Sunnah are all sources of Islamic law. The tradition is similar to the English Common Law system, in that past decisions by judges are given great weight. But the fundamental concern in Islam has always been one of justice, rather than law.

The distinction may seem trivial, but it means that law was considered a tool for obtaining justice, rather than a mechanism of state control. When Islam was united under the Caliphate, this was less of an issue, since the Caliph appointed all the Qadis (religious judges) and himself served as a judge. But in later Muslim states, the Qadis served as a judiciary largely independent of the various governments. The law knew no borders—judges in one Sultanate often cited decisions made in another. (This has parallels in the common-law tradition in Britain and former British possessions.)

THE QADIS (8.3.2)

Justice is meted out by Qadis, or religious judges. (They were also known as *Muftis*.) These men (they were always men) are expected to be exceptionally learned in the *Shariah*, or Islamic legal tradition, derived from the Koran, the Hadiths, and the Sunna. They are also expected to be familiar with all the major legal decisions of previous Qadis, and to be adept at the process of legal reasoning, or *Fiqh*.

The job of a Qadi is to give judgment in civil and criminal cases, based on the evidence and on reasoning from the basic teachings of the Prophet. Juries were never thought necessary in trials.

In the time of Harun, the Qadis wore distinctive tall hats and a shawl-like garment called a *Taylasan* as a symbol of office. They were appointed by the Caliph and received a government stipend. Qadis were forbidden to engage in any business, for fear that it might bias their decisions or lead to corruption. The Caliph himself sat in judgment on occasion, and was considered to have final say on all legal decisions.

It should be noted that legal proceedings in Muslim countries were generally “inquisitorial” rather than “adversarial.” The judge’s job was to discover the truth, even if it meant using torture to extract a confession. There were no defense attorneys, though a defendant with enough money might hire an expert to present arguments drawn from the legal tradition.

DEATH, MUTILATION, ETC. (8.3.3)

If there’s one thing that modern Westerners know about the Muslim world it is that “they cut off your hands there for stealing.” It’s true: criminal penalties are severe nowadays, and in the past were even rougher. But to be fair, the fates of criminals in medieval Europe were just as barbaric. Even in the Colonial period in America, the bodies of hanged pirates were left suspended until they rotted away, as a warning to others.

Crimes such as murder, treason, or rape were all punishable by death (with occasional torture added). Theft was punished by the loss of a hand in the first instance, the loss of the other hand the second time, and death for the third offense (though how a man with no hands could steal anything boggles the imagination). Bear in mind that the limitations of medical knowledge at the time often meant that the first amputation led to death from infection. This penalty was generally only awarded for theft of a large amount. Petty larceny would be punished with flogging and imprisonment.

Minor offenses might be punished by a flogging, a fine, imprisonment, or enslavement of the criminal. The code varied from place to place. Adultery was punished by either a beating, or by stoning (but Muhammad declared that four witnesses were needed to prove adultery, so convictions were rare). As a general rule, offenses against property were punished with economic penalties—fines or enslavement—while offenses against persons received physical punishment.

It was often possible to pay a blood-price and thereby escape punishment for killing a man, especially if the victim died in a fair fight. The price would be several hundred Dinars, depending on the victim's status and the strength of his family. Such a fee might be paid in goods and livestock.

VENDETTA (8.3.4)

When there was no strong government to keep order and deal out justice, there was the code of vendetta. Among the Bedouins, all injuries had to be avenged. If one man insulted, robbed, or harmed another, the victim would fight the offender. When a woman was the injured party, her male relatives would fight in her place. If one man killed another, then the victim's family would seek revenge.

Of course, this sort of thing could get out of hand. A killing could spark an endless cycle of continual retribution between two families. The feud could go on for generations until either some other clan arranged peace, or one family was wiped out. This was one reason for the strong emphasis on justice in Islamic law—if someone felt that he was the victim of injustice, a bloodbath could ensue.

8.4 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

In the Middle Ages, the Islamic realm was quite likely the most scientifically advanced region on Earth. Europe was sunk in the depths of the Dark Ages, and even in relatively advanced places like Constantinople, the teachings of the Church were supreme.



Only in China was the level of scientific knowledge comparable to that in Islam. And during the reign of Harun Al-Rashid, China was embroiled in domestic turmoil, with little effort to spare for intellectual inquiry.

ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE (8.4.1)

Islam conquered many of the ancient cradles of civilization, and much of the ancient knowledge lost in Europe was preserved there. Though the Library of Alexandria no longer existed when the Muslim armies conquered Egypt, large numbers of ancient texts were kept in the cities of the Levant. The writings of Roman and Greek scholars such as Ptolemy, Galen, and Aristotle were all very familiar to educated Muslims.

The position of Islam between Europe and Asia meant that Muslim scholars had access to the knowledge of several civilizations. From India came the numbers we now call "Arabic," along with centuries of accumulated Indian scholarship. Contact by Muslim merchants with China brought Chinese scientific knowledge, particularly of astronomy and alchemy.

Building on this heritage, Islam produced a number of great scientists who made important contributions, especially in astronomy, medicine, mathematics, and alchemy. When Europe finally recovered from the Dark Ages and began the Renaissance of scientific learning, it was on a foundation of material translated from Arabic.

MUSLIM SCIENTISTS (8.4.2)

At the time of the Caliph Harun Al-Rashid, the first generation of Muslim scientists was becoming active. Perhaps the greatest was the alchemist Jabir ibn-Hayyan, a Syrian who was a member of the Sabeen religion. He was an alchemist, who broke with the old concept of the "four elements," postulating instead a theory that all metals were produced by a combination of varying amounts of sulfur and mercury. He was known to Europeans as "Geber," and affected the course of chemical research for centuries.

In the Ninth Century came the first great flowering of Muslim scholarship. The Caliph Al-Mamun, the son of Harun Al-Rashid, established a library and center for translations at Baghdad, and heavily subsidized scholarship of all kinds. The great philosopher and doctor Ibn-Sina (known in Europe as "Avicenna") was a favorite of the Caliph. He wrote commentaries on the ancient Greeks and corresponded with the astronomer Al-Biruni. The mathematician Al-Khwarizmi invented the algorithm, which is named after him. The alchemist Al-Razi ("Rhazes") continued the work of Jabir, and was very influential in Europe.

Later centuries produced other great scientists, including the geographer Al-Masudi in the 10th Century and the botanist Ibn-Baytar in the 13th Century. But as time went on, Islamic science declined. The reasons for this decline are by no means clear, but certainly by the 1400s Europe had absorbed all of Islam's scientific knowledge and was moving ahead.

TECHNOLOGY (8.4.3)

During the medieval period, technology in the Islamic countries was certainly among the most advanced in the world. That is not saying a great deal, however, for there had been little technical advancement in centuries.

Power: Energy production still relied mostly on muscle power. Both humans and animals were used. Porters and pack animals carried loads, turned treadmills, did heavy labor by hand. There were other sources: windmills ground flour, and ships used sails.

The lack of useful rivers made water power uncommon in the Middle East (except in the mountains of northern Syria and the plateau of Iran.

The most common fuels were wood, charcoal, and camel dung. Coal was burned as a fuel where it was available. (It should be remembered that when Marco Polo, five hundred years later, told Europeans about the use of coal in China, he was called a madman for saying rocks could burn.) Lamps were fueled with olive oil or animal fat. Naptha from the Arabian oil deposits was used to make torches and for waterproofing boats, but otherwise petroleum was used mostly as a medicine.

Materials: All materials were what we would call "100% natural." Buildings were made of wood or brick. Usually sun-dried brick made up the structure of the building, with more expensive kiln-fired brick used as a facing. (This meant that most Islamic buildings from the period have not survived.) Textiles were woven from flax, hemp, cotton, or wool. Dyes came from plants and shellfish.

Muslims were excellent smiths and metallurgists. Some of the best steelmaking in the world was done at Damascus, a tradition which lasted until the Industrial Revolution. The famous story of Saladin and Richard illustrates how good a Damascus sword could be. Muslim work in copper and brass is still of excellent quality and great beauty.

Paper making was introduced to Islam during the Eighth Century by Chinese prisoners in Samarkand. They began the manufacture of rag paper, which quickly replaced papyrus and parchment. The first bound books were produced during Harun Al-Rashid's reign, replacing scrolls.

Machinery: Muslim artisans could, on occasion, create very intricate machines. The Caliph sent the Emperor Charlemagne a water-powered clock, which no European of the period could copy. Complicated locks were made to protect treasures. But there was no such thing as mass-production, so any machinery would have to be hand-made at great expense. Among the general public there was little distinction between marvelous machinery and magic. Many "wizards" were simply stage magicians, working their wonders through clever gadgetry.

MEDICINE (8.4.4)

Islamic medicine was definitely the best in the world during the Middle Ages. Arab folk medicine was fairly crude, involving such remedies as camel urine and melted sheep fat. But when the Muslims conquered Persia and Egypt, they hit the jackpot of Greek and Indian medical knowledge.

Under the Umayyads, most doctors were still Christians and Jews. But Muslims began learning medicine in increasing numbers. The real flood began after Harun Al-Rashid's son Al-Mamun established an institute to translate works into Arabic.

There was no AMA, nor any kind of licensing for physicians. Doctors were regulated by "market forces"—a doctor whose patients healed got more patients. A doctor whose patients died went hungry. A common motif in the *Arabian Nights* stories involves a king offering a reward to whoever can cure an ailment which the court doctors cannot.

The Caliph Harun established a hospital at Baghdad, and other large Muslim cities followed suit. Hospitals treated the poor for free, but wealthy patients were expected to pay. The insane were confined in madhouses, called *Maristan*. These were often built near the shrine of an important saint, in the hope that the holiness of the location might have a beneficial effect.

EDUCATION (8.4.5)

By the middle of the Eighth Century, a system of elementary education existed in the Abbassid Caliphate. Most boys were given a fairly good basic education.

Primary schools were conducted either in a mosque, a shop, or the teacher's home. Up to forty boys would be taught by one instructor and his assistants. From ages six to ten, boys were taught to memorize the Koran, some arithmetic, penmanship, and proper religious practices. The vast majority of pupils never had any education after this.

A few went on to more advanced study. From ages ten to thirteen, some boys studied rhetoric, grammar, literature, and some history. These studies were usually to prepare boys for higher learning or for a government position.

At the higher levels, education was conducted either by private tutors, or at a Madrasah. A Madrasah was a religious academy, usually attached to a mosque. At the Madrasah, scholars studied theology and Islamic law, learning to become Ulema or Qadis. Though the emphasis was on religious learning, Madrasahs taught a few secular subjects as well—poetry, logic, mathematics.

Practical education was done by apprenticeship. At about age ten a boy would be apprenticed to a master craftsman, and would serve as an unpaid assistant in exchange for being taught the trade. Since most trades were tightly controlled by guilds, apprentices were usually relatives of the master or of another guild member.



8.5 MERCHANTS AND TRADE

Muslims were great traders; the domains of Islam sat astride all the major trade routes of the world, and the enormous free-trade zone of the Caliph's empire was ideal for merchants. Where a trader in Europe had to know dozens of languages and faced tariffs at each border, a Muslim merchant could go from Tripoli to Hyderabad without paying any duties, and could confidently expect to find someone speaking Arabic when he arrived.

CARAVANS (8.5.1)

The Islamic lands include some of the roughest terrain on the surface of the Earth. While some of the old Roman provinces had extensive networks of roads, most of the Caliphate was tied together by trails through deserts and highlands. Wagons and carts are useless in such places. So most commerce in the Islamic world was transported on the backs of camels and horses.

The depot for goods being shipped by caravan was the caravan-serai, or khan. This was usually a large rambling set of buildings; with warehouse space, accommodations for caravaneers, and shops. (A modern equivalent might be a railroad station.)

A caravan's normal rate of travel is about two miles per hour on level ground. Camels can keep up this pace for up to ten hours at a stretch, so a caravan can make twenty miles a day. Water-holes and outposts along important roads were spaced at intervals of a day's travel.

THE BAZAAR (8.5.2)

The bazaar was the marketplace section of every Muslim city. Another common name was the *Suq*, or Souk. The streets of the market section were often roofed by awnings as protection from the sun.

In a big city, the various trades and shops were grouped by type into separate neighborhoods. So one street might have nothing but glassmakers, while another would be full of rug dealers. All the merchants or craftsmen were organized into guilds, which main-

tained standards, resolved disputes among members—and monitored prices. Each guild was directed by a Sheikh, elected by the members.

The bazaar included restaurants and take-out food shops, very much like those we know today (though without the golden arches on top). Streets of shops were fitted with gates, so that the entire street could be locked up at night. In most cities, the tradesmen lived apart from the bazaar section—Baghdad was an exception, as the bazaar also included the homes of the merchants.

In smaller towns, the market might be nothing more than a collection of crude stalls, roofed with blankets or palm-leaves. Often peddlers went door-to-door selling relatively portable goods or offering services.

MUSLIMS AT SEA (8.5.3)

"His are the ships displayed upon the sea, like banners."
—Koran, Sura LV.

Though one generally thinks of Muslims as desert folk, they were surprisingly good seafarers. For centuries, Arab sailors ruled the Indian Ocean, ranging as far as Zanzibar and the China Sea.

SHIPS OF ISLAM

Arab ships came in a variety of sizes, with different names in different parts of the Muslim world. They shared some common features—most had a triangular "lateen" sail, which have good sailing qualities against the wind. This was important in the Indian Ocean, where the prevailing winds often blow in inconvenient directions.

Largest of the Arab ships was the Dhow, ranging from 50 to 500 tons. Dhows generally have two masts, a tall mainmast and a smaller mizzenmast astern. Larger dhows had covered decks, and sometimes a raised poopdeck in the stern, where the captain had his cabin. Dhows were the big freighters of the Caliphate, and it was these ships which performed the long trading voyages to India and the Far East.

The Baghlah, of fifty or more tons, was a two-masted ship with lateen sails, often with a raised poopdeck but otherwise open. A Baghlah is basically a small dhow. Passengers and cargo were all jumbled together in the open hull, while the "first-class" passengers could bed down on the less crowded poopdeck. Baghlahs were used mostly in the calm waters of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

The Sambuk was a smaller craft of fifteen to fifty tons, open-decked and usually single-masted. These were commonly used as fishing-boats or for short voyages.

The Muntafiyah, common along the African coast, was a broad-beamed boat of up to 20 tons. A Muntafiyah carried one mast, and was very fast. They were constructed without nails, using wooden pegs and rope instead (it is thought that this gave rise to the legend of the Magnetic Island, described in Section 13.10). They were used as fishing-boats, or for trade between the coastal islands and the African mainland.

NAVAL COMBAT

In the days before cannon, ship combat was conducted chiefly by ramming and boarding. A few ships mounted catapults or arbalests, but these were very inaccurate, especially when fired from the pitching deck of a ship at sea. War galleys mounted rams, to smash the oars and crush the hulls of enemy ships. The most common form of combat was to come alongside an enemy ship, bombard it with volleys of arrows, then grapple and board.



The Byzantine navy had a secret weapon, Greek Fire, which was used to set enemy ships aflame. This was launched by catapult either from shore or from the decks of a ship. Greek Fire consisted of a petroleum compound and either sulfur or phosphorus to make it burn. It was expensive and hard to make, so the Greeks used it sparingly.

NAVIGATION

The magnetic compass was not known to Muslims in Harun's day. Nor were there accurate shipboard clocks. So all navigation was done by the sun and stars, using extremely primitive instruments. Prudent mariners stayed within sight of land, and anchored at night. Arab seafarers hugged the coasts, and only the most skilled (or foolish) would try to sail for long distances across the open sea.

8.6 LITERATURE AND MUSIC

Most of Islam's literature and music was based on religious motifs derived from the Koran. Poets and musicians were scorned by the religious authorities, especially if they composed works on secular themes. But they were often great favorites of the powerful, and were unusually important in the politics of the Abbasid court.

POETRY

Muslim poetry was derived from the desert ballads of the Bedouin Arabs. At times, the use of these forms became almost ridiculous, as wealthy town-bred poets wrote odes about tents, camels, and the solitude of the desert.

Elements of old Persian and Indian literature were absorbed by the Muslims. One of these was the form which later gave birth to the *Arabian Nights*—the “parrot-book” in which a character in a frame story spins a series of tales. It was through this genre that old Persian fairy-tales and epics were recycled into Islamic literature.

LITERARY FIGURES

Poets and musicians attracted large public followings; they were the “media superstars” of the Middle Ages. At the court of the Caliph, the two leading poets were Abu Nowas and Abu-l-Atahiya. No two men could have been more unlike. Abu Nowas was a loose-living, free-thinking libertine, whose poems celebrated wine and women (though he became more reflective in his old age). Abu-l-Atahiya was an ascetic and philosophical man, whose poems were no less passionate, but dealt with topics of the mind and spirit, rather than the body.

Other notable literary figures at Baghdad included the linguist and antiquarian Abu Ubayda Mamar ibn-al-Muthanna, who was feared for his sarcastic wit and sharp tongue. In contrast to him was the urbane and sophisticated Abd-al-Malik ibn-Qurayb Al-Asmai, a critic and literary scholar.

MUSIC

Muslim music, like Muslim literature, came from the Arabs. Arabic music is, in a way, similar to Arabic art: both rely heavily on repetition of basic patterns, and on variations on a basic theme. Most music is vocal music, and songs can be quite long. Men and women both sing, although traditionally they perform different genres of music. During the Caliphate, singers were generally women and slaves, as it was thought that musicians were slightly disreputable. The Caliph Harun's brother Ibrahim was a very talented singer, but would only perform in private for his immediate family.

8.7 ART AND ARCHITECTURE:

“...a spacious ground-floor hall, built with admirable skill and beautified with all manner colours and carvings; with upper balconies and groined arches and galleries and cupboards and recesses whose curtains hung before them. In the midst stood a great basin full of water surrounding a fine fountain....”—*The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad.*

VISUAL ARTS

Islamic art is very rich and beautiful, and is especially known for the stunning and intricate abstract patterns used for decoration. Muslim tradition forbids the depiction of living things, so artists had to work with geometric forms and patterns. (Later Muslim cultures, particularly in Persia and Turkey, relaxed these strict limits.) Individual paintings were rare—artists worked in tile or by designing tapestries and carpets.

CALLIGRAPHY

One art form of particular interest to Muslims was calligraphy, or ornamental writing. In the absence of representative art, decorative writing was considered the most important form of visual art. Often verses from the Koran would be inlaid on walls or embroidered in garments. Scholars and nobles worked hard to develop an ornate and beautiful writing style, and to have a hand-lettered Koran was considered very tasteful. Hand-copied books were of course very expensive—a particularly well-done volume might cost as much as 2000 dinars.

ARCHITECTURE

Architecture was an important art. Muslim architects erected lovely buildings in Damascus, Baghdad, and elsewhere. All rulers were great builders; each Caliph built at least one new palace. Sadly, many of the finest Muslim buildings were made of unfired brick, and did not stand the test of time.

Most Muslim architecture concentrated on making beautiful interiors and living spaces, rather than imposing exteriors. From the outside, the Caliph's palace was much like any other mud brick building; the finery was all within.

8.8 DAILY LIFE

Amid all the wars, upheavals, and exciting events in history there are millions of ordinary people living ordinary lives. Sometimes the details of how normal people lived are more important than the excesses of kings.

THE HOME (8.8.1)

The average home in Baghdad was built of mud bricks, with a very plain and drab-looking exterior, fortified against brigands and thieves with barred windows and heavy shutters. Doorways and windows might be ornamented with tile.

Within was hidden all the splendor missing from the exterior. Larger houses usually were built around a garden, with fountains if the owner could afford them. Mosaics and tiles in intricate patterns decorated every surface. Tapestries hid drab walls and provided useful insulation in cold weather. Curtains kept out the fierce sunlight and provided privacy. Rooms were long and narrow, aligned to create air-flow for ventilation, and very high-ceilinged.

If the house was too small for a courtyard, the ground floor served as a vestibule and storage area; the first floor contained the public rooms; and the private family quarters were on upper floors. Often the ground floor was a shop or other business.

Roofs were flat, and were used for sleeping during the hottest part of the year. The roof was also used for such prosaic things as drying laundry, airing out carpets, and similar domesticities. Often a family would add on an extra story to the house when they needed new space, so homes tended to get taller with age.

There was little furniture; carpets on the floor were used for sitting, perhaps with some pillows to lean on. Chests were used for storage. Floors in rich households were stone or tile; poorer homes had floors of packed dirt, which was sprinkled with water to keep down the dust.

It was considered highly improper to wear shoes inside the home. There was a good reason for this—the streets were filthy, and the floors were where people sat, ate, and slept. The custom was a matter of simple hygiene.

Less prosperous residents lived in tenements, often grouped around a courtyard in imitation of private homes.



FOOD AND DRINK (8.8.2)

Medieval Muslims ate much the same things that their descendants do today. Meats were usually roasted, often with herbs. Lamb was the favorite, along with mutton and goat. Beef was less common, and pork was forbidden by Islamic law. Chicken and other poultry were eaten by both rich and poor. Fish were imported to Baghdad from the port of Basra, or caught in the waters of the river. Shellfish were another common food, as the Koran (unlike the Torah) does not forbid them.

The Vizier Jafar was especially fond of hornets, and employed servants to collect them. Locusts were eaten by the poor (they are an excellent source of protein), and were particularly popular among the nomads of the desert.

Breads were made in numerous shapes. Flat, round loaves, similar to the modern pita bread, were the most common. Many of the poorer residents of Baghdad ate nothing but bread and oil. The rich preferred bread of white flour, often made into very thin loaves like cloth (while this sounds odd to Americans, such bread is still common throughout the Middle East and India).

Rice was another staple food, particularly for the poor. It was often served with a coating of clarified butter. Some poor ate almost nothing else. Rice was a major crop in the well-watered valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Nuts and dates were a favorite snack. Apricots, melons and citrus fruits were eaten for dessert, sometimes with snow imported from the mountains of Iran. Pastry-making was already an art form. Sweets, made with sugar, honey, almond milk, coconut, or sesame, were popular. Sugar-cane by itself was a treat for the less affluent.

As a major center of trade, Baghdad had access to a wide variety of spices. Some were locally-grown, like coriander, thyme, saffron, and dill. Others were imported from India and Indonesia, including cinnamon, nutmeg, black pepper, ginger, and cloves. As in Europe, many foods were strongly flavored with spice to disguise the taint of decay.

Fruit juices and sugared water were the most popular beverages, and the rich could have snow imported from Iran to cool their drinks. Coffee, nowadays a Middle Eastern staple rivaling air in

importance, was unknown at the time of Harun Al-Rashid. It came into use only after the year 1000, slowly making its way north from Ethiopia. Tea was grown only in China, and was not very popular elsewhere. Infusions and herbal teas were known, but were not consumed except for medicinal purposes. Milk was a favorite drink of the Bedouins, but the more cultured residents of Baghdad disdained it. Milk, cheese, and curds were widely used in cooking, though.

Though wine was forbidden, it was widely consumed. Many of the tales in the *Arabian Nights* describe merry drinking-parties. Burton, in his notes to the *Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night*, observes that in his experience Muslims drank primarily to get drunk; there were no wine-tastings or interest in vintages.

A number of modern staple foods which originated in the Americas were missing. Red pepper, tomatoes, potatoes, peanuts, corn, and chocolate all were unknown in the Old World. Tobacco and smoking had also not yet crossed the Atlantic.

Among the nobility, cooking had already become a sign of status and prestige. The Caliph himself cooked as a hobby. Courtiers and nobles competed to serve the most exotic or elaborate dishes at their banquets. On one occasion the Caliph's brother Ibrahim spent over a thousand dirhams on fish tongues for a single dish.

People usually ate two meals a day—a midday meal an hour or so before the mid-afternoon prayer, and an evening meal after the sunset prayer. Many, both rich and poor, ate only one meal a day. Meals were served on the floor, spread on a tablecloth of linen, copper, or palm-leaves. There were no courses; the food was all brought out at once.

Knives and spoons were used, but otherwise food was eaten with the fingers or with pieces of bread. As a result, hand-washing before dinner was essential. Muslims ate with the right hand only; to use the left was impolite verging on obscene. And washing the hands after the meal was equally important. Plates were of wood or pottery for the poor, but the rich used fine glass, Chinese porcelain, or gold and silver. Usually a pair of diners would share a single large plate; at banquets often huge platters were used. Goblets of brass or glass held drinks for the rich, while the lower classes contented themselves with mugs.

DRESS (8.8.3)

Clothing among the Muslims of Baghdad varied widely. Each trade and profession had its characteristic costume, and people also dressed according to their ethnic background. Much of the clothing was worn by both men and women, the difference being in the style and how the garment was worn.

The most common headgear for men was the turban, either by itself, or wrapped around a brimless felt cap (a fez or tarbush). While the turban remained much the same, there were many styles of caps to wear inside the turban. Among the nobility, very tall conical hats were worn. It was considered highly improper for a man to go out without his turban. Government officials had to wear black turbans (black was the Abbassid color), and were not allowed to remove them while on duty. Rich men had turbans embroidered with gold and festooned with pearls and jewels. The non-Muslim "protected peoples" (mostly Christians and Jews) were forbidden to wear turbans.

Women usually wore a veil and a kind of kerchief on the head, known as a *Yashmak*. The Bedouins of the desert wore the familiar burnous, or a jellaba, over their heads as protection from the fierce sunlight.

Garments commonly worn were: the *izar*, a kind of kilt or loincloth wrapped around the waist and extending to the knees, worn by both men and women. Workmen would often wear nothing else on hot days. Poor people would wear a large woolen wrapper which could double as a blanket at night.

Cloaks were used to protect against wind, rain, sun, and dust. These were usually of wool, though very rich people would wear expensive silk cloaks, at least in summer. The Bedouins of the desert wore a heavy wool cloak called an *Aba*, as protection against wind and sun.

A long shirt was usually worn over the *izar*; these were "pull-overs" and could reach to the ground. They were collarless until Jafar the Barmecide started the fashion of wearing high collars. The wide sleeves served as pockets, and were used as handkerchiefs.

A long outer garment called the *Durra'a* or *Jubba*, usually made of wool, was worn over the shirt. These could be quite elaborate among the nobility, richly embroidered and covered with gems. Officials wore special ones as a badge of office. Officials also wore a close-fitting calf-length coat, adopted from the dress of the Turks. The religious judges or *qadis* wore a short cape or hood called the *taylasan*.

Trousers were worn by both men and women. They were usually very baggy, often gathered in at the ankles. Hunters, fishermen, and others who might get their pants dirty wore knee-length breeches instead.

Boots, often fur-lined, were worn in cold weather or in wartime. At home, people wore light sandals with socks. Many went barefoot everywhere. Since floors were used for eating and sleeping, dirty shoes were not allowed inside. One left one's shoes just inside the front door. Barefoot people would carefully wash their feet when entering a home.

Black was the color of the Abbassids, and almost all government officials wore black. There was no standard military uniform for soldiers. Green was traditionally the color associated with the Alids. Christians were sometimes required to wear yellow or "mustard-color," and Jews were made to dress in blue (these last restrictions were seldom enforced).

While on pilgrimage Muslims are required to wear a special garment called a *Rida*, which is a single large sheet of cotton without any seams or hems. The pilgrims wrap the cloth around themselves, as it is forbidden to pin or tie the *Rida*.

All Muslim men, without exception, wore beards. The only beardless men in Islam were boys too young to shave and eunuchs. As in Europe, it was a great insult to tug or pluck a man's beard.

PERSONAL NAMES (8.8.4)

A Muslim's name consisted of his personal name, followed usually by his father's name, and occasionally a clan name, tribal affiliation, or a name denoting his family's place of origin. So a man might be named Abdallah (slave of Allah) ibn-Hasan (son of Hasan) Al-Khorasani (from Khorasan). The Caliph's Vizier was Jafar ibn-Yahya Al-Barmak (Jafar, son of Yahya, of the Barmak clan).

Great men, such as the Caliphs and other nobles, might adopt a personal honorific. The Caliph Harun took the title Al-Rashid (the upright or well-guided). Commoners might be similarly known by a nickname, like "long-bearded," or "the clever." Those who had fought against the infidel in holy war could take the title Ghazi after their name. Similarly, those who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca could add the honorific Al-Hajji. (In places where it was common for people to have made the pilgrimage, nobody would bother with using the title Hajji. But in remote towns, where only the leading man of the village could afford to go to Mecca, the title would be very important.)

A clan or dynasty would be called after the founding member. The suffix "-id" denotes the "family of." So the Abbassids were the family of Muhammad's uncle Abbas. An alternative was to call the family the "Banu" (children of), followed by the founder's name. Thus, the Abbassids could also be called the Banu Abbas.

RECREATION (8.8.5)

The most popular amusements were those that involved horses. Horse races, polo, jousts. Pigeon racing enjoyed a vogue during Harun's reign, and fortunes were made and lost on the birds.

Archery contests were popular (and would provide an interesting way for skilled player characters to earn money). Other contests of skill were common. Boxing, wrestling, and feats of strength were often performed.

Board games like backgammon were played, and chess, newly introduced from India, was very popular. Harun al-Rashid may have been the first Caliph to play chess, and was reportedly very good at it. Gambling games with dice have been around since the Babylonians, and Muslims played them as well, even though the Koran discourages gambling. Cards were still unknown, or used only for fortune telling. There were no fantasy role playing games.

Storytelling was a major form of entertainment, and wandering bards would set up in the marketplace, telling fantastic tales and reciting poetry, then passing the hat for alms. It was just these storytellers who developed and preserved the *Thousand and One Nights*. Music and dancing, by both men and women, were often performed. Powerful nobles and rich men vied with one another to find talented slaves to entertain at banquets.

Hunting was extremely popular among the upper classes, in part because the skills developed in hunting were also useful during war. Aristocrats would hunt just about anything, depending on the region. Bows and slings were used to bring down small game, while spears were used against larger beasts. A number of hunting animals were employed, including hawks, hounds, and even cheetahs, which were carried on the hunter's saddle and turned loose to chase down small prey.

BATHS (8.8.6)

Because ritual ablutions are required before praying, Muslims bathe frequently. In Medieval Islam, this was commonly done in a public bath house. Baths were usually located near a mosque for convenience. Chroniclers claimed fifteen thousand baths in Baghdad at the time of Harun. They offered hot and cold water, perfumes, oils, and soap. There were masseurs, barbers, manicurists, and other attendants waiting to serve the bathers. Occasionally robbers would lurk in the baths, to steal the clothes and money of customers.

The baths were a center of social interaction, though men and women used them separately. Anyone looking for the latest gossip would find it at the baths. Popular superstition also held that the baths were often inhabited by jinn.

8.9 ISLAM AND OTHERS

Because the Islamic domains sat in the center of the Europe-Asia-Africa land mass, Muslims had more contact with outsiders than the inhabitants of Europe or China might have had.

INFIDELS IN ISLAM

Non-Muslims were tolerated in varying degrees within Islamic society. The most favored group of non-Muslims were the *Ahl Al-Kitab*, or "People of the Book." This group consisted of Jews, Christians, and Sabians. They had their own Revelations from God, and the Koran specifically states that they are to be tolerated by Muslims. It was thought that their faiths were part of the tradition which led to Muhammad, and that they were thus partially enlightened. At some times, the Zoroastrians were also considered to be "People of the Book" because of their holy writings, the *Avestas*.

Such tolerated infidels were called "Dhimmi," or "protected peoples." They could not be forcibly converted, and had their own law-courts, separate from the Muslim courts (though disputes between Muslims and infidels were decided by the Muslim judges).

They were required to pay a special head-tax, the *jizya*, and an "exemption tax" called the *Kharaj*, in place of the normal Muslim *Zakat*, but this was not crippling. The Muslims seldom destroyed or took over churches and synagogues, as they preferred to build new mosques (though there were some notable exceptions to this rule, including the Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople). In the first few centuries of Islam, tolerance was the norm. There were even churches and monasteries in Baghdad, the heart of the Caliphate. And the Holy Land was thick with abbeys and nunneries.

Non-Muslims were forbidden to carry swords (though knives were allowed). At times, special laws required them to wear distinctive dress, but these rules were seldom enforced with any rigor.

Not only did the Muslims tolerate other religions, they prevented the various non-Muslim sects in their empire from attacking each other. This attracted many Jews to Islamic countries, when the Christians in Europe were being unpleasant to the Jews or each other. In later periods, this toleration by the Muslims waned.

Muslim tolerance had its limits, of course. Non-Muslims were forbidden to set foot in a mosque. The penalty could range from a flogging to compulsory circumcision and conversion. Toleration

for non-Muslims varied as the power of the Muslim states relative to the infidels shifted. When Islam was strong, Christians were tolerated and protected. When Christendom grew in power, Muslim toleration declined. But when the Europeans grew strong enough, they were able to compel tolerance.

Actual pagans, however, were frowned upon. Often they were required to convert on pain of death or expulsion. The Prophet specifically forbade Muslim men to marry women who worshipped idols. Pagan temples were razed or converted to mosques. The conduct of the Muslim rulers in India was particularly intolerant, leading to the destruction of thousands of magnificent temples. The bad feeling created by this destruction persists today.

MUSLIMS ABROAD

Under Muslim doctrine, travel in infidel lands was considered wrong—something to be done only when absolutely necessary. The area under Muslim rule was the "Abode of Peace" while beyond the borders was the "Abode of War." Nevertheless, Muslim merchants voyaged widely in the Indian Ocean and China seas. Small colonies of Muslims existed all along the trade routes, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia. A group of merchants lived at Canton, in China.

Contact with Europe was less extensive because of the long history of war between Islam and Christendom. Europeans saw Muslims as devil-worshippers, while Muslims saw Christians as unenlightened barbarians. A Muslim traveling in Christian lands would face great hostility. And Europe was still impoverished and struggling to recover from the ravages of the fall of Rome. Consequently few Muslims traveled in Europe—there was nothing there to attract them, and they were not welcome.

RACE RELATIONS

Medieval Islam was infinitely more tolerant of other races and cultures than Europe at that time. The rapid expansion of the faith brought in Muslims of every color and race, and the Near East has always been an ethnic melting-pot. In the new cities like Cairo and Baghdad, citizens of every color lived peaceably together.

The widespread popularity of slave women among Muslim men meant that there was a great deal of racial mixing, as the slaves came from three continents. The same man could have children from a Russian woman, an African, and a Turk, and all three children would be equal.

This being said, it nevertheless remained true that people can always find something to dislike about each other, and race is a popular excuse. *The Arabian Nights* stories are full of disparaging remarks about Africans in particular. Often Muslims in the city would continue the tribal and clan rivalries of their homelands. The descendants of Arabs considered themselves superior to the peoples they had conquered. It was not Utopia.

In a fantasy campaign with non-human races, relations between Humans and Elves or Dwarves would be equally complex. Muslim non-humans might be treated as equals by human Muslims, especially if they proved worthy of respect. Since Dwarves are usually depicted as fierce fighters, they would quite probably have little trouble.

Elves, on the other hand, are generally depicted as peaceful, wine-drinking, and slightly decadent, which might open them to contempt on the part of Muslim Humans. Elves might suffer the same persecution at Muslim hands as the Hindus did historically.



9.0 MONEY AND PRICES

"Said she, 'O my son, thy sire is a merchant and Consul of the merchants in the land of Egypt and Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs. His slaves consult him not in selling aught whose price is less than one thousand gold pieces, but merchandise worth him an hundred and less they sell at their own discretion; nor doth any merchandise whatever, little or much, leave the country without passing through his hands and he disposeth of it as he pleaseth....'"
—*"The Tale of Ala Al-Din Abu Al-Shammah."*

9.1 MONEY

The currency of Abbassid Baghdad was the Dirham. Caliphal government accounts were kept in Dirhams, and most prices were expressed in terms of Dirhams. Other currencies were also circulated—pre-Islamic Persian and Roman coins, money from Byzantium, and coins from Spain and India.

A Dirham was made of silver, and was worth about twenty 1990s dollars, though the value fluctuated wildly with the changing financial policies of the Caliphs. A larger currency was the gold Dinar (the name is derived from the old Roman denarius), worth approximately 10 Dirhams. After the reign of Harun Al-Rashid the Dinar was worth 12 Dirhams, and during the civil war between his sons it reached 20 Dirhams per Dinar.

Smaller currencies existed: the Danik, the Kirat, the Fals, and the Habba. A complete listing of money is below, along with the conversion between medieval Islamic money and currencies from the *RM* price lists.

- 1 gold Dinar = 10 silver Dirhams = 3/5 Gold Pieces
- 1 Dirham = 6 Daniks = 3/5 Silver Pieces
- 1 Danik = 2 Kirats = 1 Bronze Piece
- 1 Kirat = 2 Fals = 5 Copper Pieces
- 1 Fals = 2 Habbas = 2.5 Copper Pieces
- 1 Habba = 1 Copper Piece

This is all complicated by the fact that the U.S. currency invented by Thomas Jefferson was the first money in the world to have values of coins fixed relative to each other on a logical scale. Previously, governments would issue money whose value depended on the metal content of the coins. When the government was short of cash, the currency would be debased. So the values of different coins issued by the same government could fluctuate relative to each other.

Gamemasters can either use the standard that 10 Dirhams equals 1 Dinar, or else can simply use the existing price structure described in *Campaign Law*, calling Gold Pieces Dinars, and Silver Pieces Dirhams.

9.2 SALARIES AND COST OF LIVING

The reign of Harun Al-Rashid was a time of prosperity for the Muslim world. Wealth was flowing into Islam, so wages were good and prices were low.

SALARIES

The minimum salary for a worker was around 20 dirhams per month. A skilled laborer, such as a carpenter or mason might earn 35 dirhams, up to 80 for a master at a craft.

Government officials were well-paid. Senior bureaucrats might earn 100-150 dirhams plus an allowance for food. The head of a government department might earn 300 dirhams per month. A judge was paid 200 dirhams; a superior judge 500 dinars.

The academic professions made good money. Elementary teachers might earn 2 to 3 dinars (20 to 30 dirhams) per month; a professor could earn 50 dinars. Famous scholars earned 200 dinars per month. During the reign of the intellectual Caliph Al-Mamun, leading scientists earned 500 dinars per month.

Doctors earned fantastic sums: the Caliph's physician earned 7000 dinars per year; a successful doctor could make 600 dirhams per month. Naturally, an untrained street physician would get by on far less.



The rulers knew that the army must be well paid. Soldiers in the infantry got 1 dinar per month; cavalry got twice that. Officers made enormous sums. The Commandant of the Caliph's Guard earned 15000 dinars per year. The head of the Caliph's espionage service got 25000 dinars annually.

Note that it was possible for a single person to earn multiple salaries. The Vizier Jafar held several positions at once, and drew high salaries for all of them. His income was in the millions.

COST OF LIVING

In Abbassid Baghdad the cost of living depended on one's social class. For the absolutely poor, a bare minimum was maybe 2 dirhams per month. This covered food and housing. A young artisan lived on 10-15 dirhams per month, but would get free lodging from his master. Working-class families got by on roughly 20 dirhams monthly.

A middle-class family might spend about 20 dinars per month, while an upper-middle-class household's expenses would total perhaps 30 dinars per month.

The upper classes spent incredible amounts. A nobleman's household would cost hundreds or even thousands of dinars each month, with dozens of slaves, employees, and family members to support. Nobles and courtiers often had multiple households, with an establishment in Baghdad and a country house.

9.3 PRICES

Much of the equipment characters would need in an Arabian Nights campaign is listed in the basic *Rolemaster* rules (though at 2 to 10 times the listed City Costs). Some useful items not covered there are given below. All prices should be considered negotiable, since haggling is a fundamental part of Middle Eastern business.

Bath: A bath (including hot water) cost a Kirat (5 cp). A cake of soap cost 2 Daniks.

Books: Books were expensive, costing from 10 dinars (7 gp) up to thousands for rare volumes. The services of a copyist would cost about 1 dirham (6 bp) for 10 pages.

Camel: Camels were slightly cheaper than the listed price in the *RM* price lists. Depending on the quality, a camel would cost anywhere from 5 to 10 dinars (3-6 gp). Females generally cost more than males, as a she-camel could provide its owner with calves and milk.

Cheetah: A trained hunting cheetahs cost 5 dinars (3 gp); a kitten would cost only 1 (6 sp).



Clothing: A simple tunic cost 2 dirhams (12 bp), while a full suit of ordinary clothes cost perhaps 15 (9 sp). An elegant outfit might run from 20 dirhams up to thousands.

Dogs: A top-quality hunting dog cost 40 dirhams (24 sp).

Food: Meat was expensive, because there was no way to refrigerate it. Mutton cost 2 daniks per pound (2 bp); a chicken cost 1 danik (1 bp); eggs cost 1 habba each (1 cp); fish was cheap at 1 fals per pound (2.5 cp). Vegetables at the market cost approximately 1 fals per pound (2.5 cp). Sugar was expensive, at 1 dirham per pound for white sugar (6 bp), 3 daniks per pound for brown (3 bp). Olive oil cost 3 habbas per pound (3 cp), while clarified butter cost 1 kirat per pound (5 cp). Bread cost 1 habba per pound (1 cp). Wine was expensive, at 2 daniks per bottle (2 bp).

Greek Fire: Since nobody really knows what Greek Fire was, it's hard to determine the price. But it must have been expensive—assume a medium catapult load of the stuff cost 10 dinars (6 gp).

Horse: Horses in Harun's Baghdad were more expensive than those listed in *RM* prices lists. A good medium horse would cost 60 dinars (36 gp), and prices for top-quality horses were vastly higher. A nobleman's warhorse

might cost a thousand dinars. Mules cost about 40 dinars (24 gp), but a donkey could be had for only 4 dirhams (24 bp).

House: Real estate in Baghdad was relatively cheap. A modest house cost 30 dinars (18 gp), a mansion could cost 3000 dinars (1800 gp), and the palace of a Caliph cost 20 million dirhams.

Monthly rent of a small house was about 5 dirhams (3 sp). A single room might be had for 1 dirham a month (6 bp). Overnight lodgings cost 1 kirat for a private room (5 cp), or a habba for a space on the floor of a communal room (1 cp). Note that it was more common for travelers to stay at the home of a friend or relative.

Paper: Paper was very expensive. A large sheet of papyrus cost 1 dirham (6 bp), and ink went for 3 kirats per pound (15 cp).

Porter: Hiring a porter could be done for one kirat (5 cp) per day, or one Habba (1 cp) for the interval between prayers (about two hours).

Scientific Instruments: Scientific instruments were expensive; an astrolabe cost 100 dirhams (6 gp). A celestial sphere built for a king cost 300 dinars (180 gp).

Water: Filling a skin full of water at a private well cost one Fals (2 1/2 cp), in the desert.

SOURCEBOOK: GAMEMASTER'S SECTION



"O ye who believe! Ask not of things which, if they were made known unto you, would trouble you...." —Koran, Sura V

This section contains information for Gamemasters only. Players should stop reading here. Do not say you weren't warned. The Gamemasters' Section of the Sourcebook provides data on the Abbassid Caliphate, along with some suggestions for campaigns set in other time periods.

The "default" assumptions for the *Arabian Nights* campaign is that it is set in and around Baghdad during the years AD 785 to 800. Magic exists, but is rare and viewed with suspicion. All religions are considered equally "true" for the purposes of religious Spell Lists. Player-characters will be Muslims (most of them, anyway). Geography and society are those of the "real world" of the period, with lost cities and mysterious islands added as necessary.

Referees should feel perfectly free to change or omit any of the facts to suit their own campaign. If you like the *Arabian Nights* "feel" but don't want to be tied down to the historical Caliphate, just set the campaign in a fantasy never-never-land, and change all the names.

The skills listed with each character are only the skills that the character has developed heavily. It is presumed that all characters have more skills than listed, just at minor levels of development.

The characters below were developed using the *Rolemaster Standard* rules. Where there are differences between the original rules and the Deluxe rules, there are two values given. The first value should be used if you are using the new rules. The second value should be used if you are using the original rules.

10.0 THE ABASSID CALIPHATE



The Abbassid Caliphate was one of the greatest empires in history. At its peak, under the Caliph Harun Al-Rashid, it controlled North Africa, Egypt, Arabia, the Levant, half of Anatolia, Iraq, Iran, Khorasan, and Sind. The Caliphate sat across the trade routes linking Europe, Asia, and Africa, and so became enormously rich and powerful.

This section will describe the government of the Caliphate, the notable individuals of the Caliph's court, and how they lived.

10.1 THE CALIPH

"...the Caliph, Harun Al-Rashid, had gone forth from the palace, as was his wont now and then, to solace himself in the city that night, and to see and hear what new thing was stirring; he was in merchant's gear, and he was attended by Jafar, his Wazir, and by Masrur his Swarder of Vengeance." — "The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad"

The Commander of the Faithful, Harun Al-Rashid, was the most powerful man in the world. He was absolute ruler of everything from Tunisia to India, and from Yemen to Khorasan. Harun was generally a good ruler, and his reign was remembered for centuries after as a golden age for Muslims.

He was born in 776 in the fortress of Ray, in Khorasan, the son of the Caliph Al-Mahdi. His mother was a slave girl from Yemen, named Khaizuran, who was Al-Mahdi's favorite.

The young prince received the finest education possible at the hands of scholars and poets. His chief tutor was Yahya the Barmecide, whom Harun called his "father." The older man accompanied Harun on expeditions against the Byzantines and helped the teenage prince govern the territories of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Harun's mother Khaizuran was another strong influence on him.

Harun became Caliph in the year 785, after the death of his older brother the Caliph Al-Hadi. Al-Hadi was not a popular ruler, and his death was sudden and mysterious—it was said that Al-Hadi was murdered by Harun's mother Khaizuran.

In the early years of his reign, Harun was apparently unsure of his own abilities, for he relied heavily on the aid of the Barmecide family in ruling his immense domains. As he grew older and more experienced, he took on more of the responsibilities of government himself, and eventually took steps to remove the Barmecides when he feared they threatened his power.

As Caliph, Harun was held by orthodox Muslims to be the political and spiritual heir of the Prophet Muhammad. He was expected to be pious, and to serve as an example of right behavior to all Muslims. But he was also the secular ruler of a huge empire, and on occasion the two jobs conflicted. In such cases, the demands of politics usually won out.

The stresses of such a job were enormous. Harun was responsible for conducting foreign policy, resolving disputes among his officials, commanding the army, and regulating trade. He constantly had to be on guard against assassins, as there were many who wished to take his place. To entertain him there were his wives and concubines, his Nadim, or inner circle, and all the delights that money could buy. And when these were not enough, he would put on a disguise and roam the streets of Baghdad to see how the common folk lived.

The Caliph grew more reclusive and solitary as he aged. He built a palace at Raqqa, north of Baghdad, and retired there with his concubines and soldiers. He tried to groom his sons to succeed him, and continued to plan wars against the Byzantines.



In 805, Harun led an army into Khorasan to suppress a revolt sparked by an incompetent viceroy. He was very sick, and suspected he was dying. His sons accompanied him, already jockeying for power. At the city of Tus he had to halt, and ordered the brutal execution of a rebel leader as punishment for having caused him to make such a long and painful journey while ill. A few days later he died.

Description: The Caliph is a brave and devout ruler, but is also a man who knows how to enjoy himself. He is a tall, well-built man, with light skin and curly black hair. Harun is quite handsome in a boyish way, with apple cheeks and a small mouth. He is strong and very nimble.

As the spiritual leader of Islam, Harun is of course extremely pious; during his life he took several pilgrimages to Mecca and studied the Koran extensively. Harun does indulge himself, however: he drinks wine, gambles, and occasionally roams the streets of Baghdad in disguise looking for adventure. Every night he dines with the members of his *nadim*, or inner circle, and they amuse him with poetry and fine conversation. His chief weakness is women—he has nearly two hundred concubines.

He is quite intelligent, with a great interest in poetry and the arts. One of his favorite activities is to gather a group of religious scholars together and discuss theology. Naturally, he has an extremely good education in all subjects, and is always delighted to learn more.

Harun is also known by the title "Al-Rashid" which means "the Upright" or "the well-guided." He tries very hard to be a just and fair ruler. Harun is personally very brave, sometimes to the point of foolishness. As Caliph and absolute ruler of a quarter of humanity he is used to getting his own way.

The Caliph generally wears black—the Abbassid color. He prefers to dress simply and comfortably, so his clothes often lack the incredible ornamentation favored by others. Naturally, his garments are always of matchless quality. Harun always carries a knife in his boot, and wears a sword in public. On ceremonial occasions, he wears the cloak of Muhammad and carries the Prophet's sword and staff.

THE CALIPH

Co: 85 Ag: 69 SD: 86
St: 90 Qu: 81 Pr: 94

Hits: 123
PP: 80/20

Skills:

Administration: 61
Athletic Games: 70
Calligraphy: 76
Cookery: 67
Diplomacy: 84
Disguise: 66
Etiquette: 97
General Perception: 75
Languages:
Greek, spoken: 37/3
Greek, written: 50/5
Persian, spoken: 92/9
Persian, written: 50/5
Law (Islamic): 71
Leadership: 91
Maneuver in Armor:
Chain: 105
Soft Leather: 35

LEVEL 20 PALADIN

Re: 93 Me: 85
Em: 75 In: 90

AT: 13 (chain shirt)
DB: +11/+5 (+6/+0 in armor)

Military Organization: 70
Philosophy/Religious Doctrine
(Islamic): 70
Poison Perception: 44
Public Speaking: 72
Riding:
Camel: 65
Horse: 85
Tactical Games (Chess): 86
Tactics (Strategic): 81
Weapons:
Knife: 96
Scimitar: 106
Short Bow: 96
Spear: 91
Lie Perception: 85



In a magical campaign, the Caliph has the following spell lists: Exorcism, Inspirations, Spell Breaker, and Communion/Communal Ways. The GM may also wish to give him a magical +15 scimitar that multiplies his PP by 2, giving him 40. More magical items, such as a +20 chain shirt and one or more Most Potent items from the *C&T* books may also be appropriate in a high-magic game.

If the campaign does not use magic, the Gamemaster should give the Caliph the following extra skills: Propaganda 50, Seduction 80.

MASRUR, THE CALIPH'S SWORDER

Wherever Harun Al-Rashid went, Masrur followed two steps behind. His job was to kill whomever the Caliph ordered dead. He also acted as a bodyguard. Masrur was a huge eunuch, armed with a great scimitar. He is not terribly bright, but is completely loyal to the Caliph. Everyone in Islam knows his reputation as a matchless swordsman. Masrur is not above a little petty graft and corruption, and occasionally takes gifts and favors in exchange for access to the Caliph, but would never knowingly do anything to put his master in danger.

MASRUR

Co: 94 Ag: 92 SD: 99
St: 99 Qu: 90 Pr: 95

Hits: 143

Skills:

Adrenal Defense: 30
Ad Move (Quick Draw): 85
Brawling: 157
Detect Traps: 70
Disarm Foe
Armed: 153
Unarmed: 153
First Aid: 78
General Perception: 74
Language
Persian, spoken: 77/7
Persian, written: 37/3

LEVEL 20 FIGHTER

Me: 45 Re: 31
Em: 40 In: 47

AT: 14 (chain shirt/greaves)
DB: +45/+40 (+5/+0 in armor)

Riding:
Camel: 55
Horse: 70
Sense Ambush/Assassin: ... 79
Stunned Maneuver: 139
Weapon:
Knife: 150
Scimitar: 150
2-Handed Sword: 150
Maneuver in Armor
Chain: 105
Soft Leather: 35

In a magical campaign, the Sworder would have a +20 scimitar that inflicts double damage, a +10 knife, and +10 armor.

10.2 THE NADIM

A select group of talented men formed the Caliph's inner circle, or *nadim*. These were the only people permitted to speak to him face-to-face. Of all the millions of Muslims under his rule, they were the only ones who might be called his friends. The men of the *nadim* were selected from the outstanding scholars, poets, theologians, and scientists of Islam. Each was paid a generous stipend, and held rank equal to the highest dignitaries. Their job was to amuse, interest, instruct, and advise the Caliph. They were expected to be able to provide expert advice on any subject from astronomy to cooking. In addition, they had to be good at the games Harun enjoyed: hunting, marksmanship, ball games, backgammon, and chess.

The men of the *nadim* wore special clothes of the finest silk, and gathered each evening in the gardens of the palace to dine and drink with the Caliph, and entertain him. Notable members of the *nadim* included the poet Ishak and his father, the musician Ibrahim Al-Mausili. Other poets in the group were Abu Al-Atahiyah, Abbas Al-Ahnaf, Salm Al-Kashir, and Marwan ibn-Abi Hafsah. Harun's half-brother Ibrahim frequently joined the Caliph and the members of the *Nadim* at their revels. The leading member of the group was the poet Abu Nowas.

Characters who get a reputation for wisdom or wit might well be invited to join the Caliph's *nadim*. This would be a great honor, and would make that character a person of great influence at Harun's court. Of course, a member of the *nadim* would be expected to entertain lavishly, and would constantly be approached by people asking for favors from the Caliph.

ABU NOWAS

The celebrated poet Abu Nowas was one of Harun al-Rashid's boon companions. The two of them spent many a night drinking, feasting, and wandering the streets of Baghdad in disguise, looking for adventure. Abu is extraordinarily clever and charming. He can come up with entertaining verses off the top of his head in any situation.

Abu Nowas' real name is Hasan ibn-Hani; his nickname Abu Nowas means "father of hair," and refers to his carefully-tended long hair. Abu Nowas is tall and good-looking. His clothing varies from day to day. Sometimes he wears the simple garb of an ascetic; other times he wears outrageous and flamboyant clothes—occasionally parodying the trend-setting outfits of Jafar the Barmecide. He is lazy and good-natured, much more interested in drinking and singing than in fighting.

ABU NOWAS

Co: 50 Ag: 61 SD: 35 Re: 76 Me: 94
St: 42 Qu: 69 Pr: 99 Em: 90 In: 78

Hits: 70 AT: 1 (none)
PP: 94/40 DB: +5/+0

Skills:

Athletic Games: 67	Play Instrument:
Brawling: 65	Lute: 105
Calligraphy: 73	Recorder: 90
Cookery: 89	Tambourine: 95
Dance: 79	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine
Disguise: 82	(Islamic): 92
Etiquette: 71	Poetic Improvisation: 102
Gambling: 64	Racial History: 92

LEVEL 20 BARD

Languages:	Riding (Horse): 70
Greek, spoken: 82/8	Seduction: 77
Greek, written: 109/10	Singing: 102
Persian, sp.: 107/10	Streetwise: 98
Persian, wr.: 104/10	Tactical Games (Chess): 76
Mimicry: 104	Tale Telling: 106
Mnemonics: 78	Weapon:
Music: 100	Knife: 63
	Scimitar: 83

In a magical campaign, Abu Nowas knows the Bard base spell lists and wields a +5 scimitar that casts Lord Sleep 3 times per day. He also has a magical lute that adds +10 to all spell rolls and acts as a +4 spell adder.

Gamemasters who are running a non-magical campaign should give Abu Nowas a +30 bonus with his Mnemonics skill.

PRINCE IBRAHIM

The Caliph's younger half-brother, Ibrahim was a respected member of Harun's inner circle. A talented poet and musician, he was known for his eccentricities and astounding extravagance with money. His brother occasionally has to reprimand him for spending outrageous sums on trivial luxuries. But Harun genuinely respects his learning and judgment, and knows that Ibrahim has no ambitions for the throne.

Prince Ibrahim is a big, ugly man, physically very strong despite a great appetite for food, wine, and women. Ibrahim is vain about his musical talents, and disdains other poets. He dresses elaborately and tried to be a style-setter, but has no real taste.

PRINCE IBRAHIM

Co: 90 Ag: 81 SD: 43 Re: 86 Me: 75
St: 97 Qu: 44 Pr: 63 Em: 40 In: 97

Hits: 125 AT: 14 (chain shirt/greaves)
DB: +0

Skills:

Athletic Games: 77	Military Organization: 64
Calligraphy: 70	Poetic Improvisation: 65
Cookery: 72	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine
Etiquette: 87	(Islamic): 64
Languages:	Racial History: 67
Greek, spoken: 35/3	Riding (Horse): 80
Greek, written: 90/9	Singing: 63
Persian, sp.: 95/9	Tactical Games(Chess): 35
Persian, wr.: 50/5	Tactics (Strategic): 63
Law (Islamic): 68	Weapons:
Maneuvering in Armor:	Knife: 91
Chain: 105	Scimitar: 96
Soft Leather: 35	Short Bow: 96
	Spear: 91

In a magical campaign, the prince will have +10, ornate versions of each of the weapons with which he has trained, as well as +10 armor that reduces all criticals by one level of severity.

10.3 THE CALIPH'S MOTHER

Though aging, and second in influence to the Caliph's, his mother Khaizuran was still a grand and formidable old lady. Born a slave in Yemen, she became the favorite of the Caliph Al-Mahdi, and ruthlessly strove to build her own influence. She was responsible for Harun's being on the throne—according to some accounts she poisoned his elder brother, the Caliph Al-Hadi.

Now in semi-retirement in the Palace of the Gilded Gate, she still has spies at court to keep an eye on things. Her main interest is to see that Harun keeps his throne and that the Abbassid clan prospers. She will act against perceived threats by warning Harun. But if he is acting unwisely, his mother may plot with others to help change the Caliph's mind. Khaizuran generally supports the Barmecides, recognizing their great abilities.

Khaizuran died in 789 A.D.; in adventures after that date Zubaida and Fadl ibn Al-Rabi will be more powerful, and the position of the Barmecides less firm.

Player-characters could be hired by Khaizuran as agents for one of her schemes. She is a hard but fair patron—failure is severely punished but success is richly rewarded. Typical missions for the Caliph's mother might include spying on either Fadl or the Barmecides, assassinating other members of the Abbassid clan who are plotting against Harun, or arranging to embarrass the princess Zubaida and thereby limit her influence.

Characters who find themselves opposed to Khaizuran will rapidly discover that she is ruthless and very hard to fool. Her agents are not numerous, but they are talented and loyal to her. Anyone who gets in the old woman's way will face threats, blackmail, assassination, or worse.

Description: Khaizuran was a great beauty in her youth, and even in her old age remains graceful and fit. Though she has slowed

down with age, she still remembers much from her days as a dancer in the harem of the Caliph. She dresses modestly, in simple clothes of the finest materials. On important occasions she wears elaborate and costly clothes, encrusted with a king's ransom in jewels.

KHAIZURAN

Co: 62 Ag: 41 SD: 91 Re: 69 Me: 81
St: 27 Qu: 58 Pr: 90 Em: 77 In: 94

Hits: 91
PP: 40/20

LEVEL 20 DANCER

AT: 1 (none)
DB: +56

Skills:

Adrenal Defense:	50	Leadership:	90
Adrenal Moves:		Lie Perception:	76
Balance:	60	Midwifery:	50
Leaping:	60	Pick Locks:	90
Speed:	60	Play Instrument	
Bribery:	90	(Tambourine):	50
Cookery:	60	Poison Lore:	50
Dance:	80	Poison Perception:	64
Detecting Traps:	64	Propaganda:	25
Drug Tolerance:	50	Seduction:	90
Duping:	90	Sense Ambush/Assassin: ...	60
Etiquette:	75	Singing:	60
Falsification:	95	Streetwise:	50
First Aid:	60	Use/Remove Poison:	50
Interrogation:	65	Weapon (Knife):	60
Language (Persian):	65		

If magic is allowed in the campaign, Khaizuran knows the Open Mentalism spell list Anticipations to 5th level. Otherwise she has Mnemonics 50 and Trickery 90.



10.4 THE CALIPH'S WIVES

The Caliph had four wives and innumerable concubines. His legitimate wives included Azizah, his first cousin on his mother's side; Ghadir, the widow of his brother Al-Hadi; and Zubaida, the daughter of his uncle Jafar. When Azizah and Ghadir died, he married three noblewomen for political reasons: Umm-Mohammad, Abbasah, and a girl of the house of Uthman. But there was never any doubt about which wife took precedence: Zubaida was always first and foremost.

The wives and concubines lived in the Harem section of the palace at Al-Khuld, each in separate apartments. They had scores of servants—all women, of course. Zubaida was always accompanied by at least twenty serving-maids. The only men who could enter the Harem were the Caliph and the eunuch guards. Male children were raised by their mothers only in infancy, after which they were handed over to scholars, poets, and generals for education.

THE PRINCESS ZUBAIDA

Zubaida is Harun Al-Rashid's favorite wife. Her name means "butter-pat" and refers to her flawless complexion. Though she remains most of the time within the harem of the Caliph's palace, she has agents and spies everywhere, keeping her informed. Zubaida's primary goal is to make sure that her son Mohammed will succeed his father as Caliph. She also works to maintain her position as Harun's favorite, even by presenting him with beautiful slave girls after her own looks start to fade. Women who seek to challenge her

position find the Princess to be a ruthless opponent, capable of using any means—including murder—to deal with rivals. Politically, Zubaida is opposed to Jafar the Barmecide, and also to the Caliph's mother Khaizuran.

It would be very difficult for male characters to have any direct contact with Zubaida. She can be an important patron, but works through intermediaries—usually serving-women or eunuchs from the Palace staff. Missions for the Princess can include plots to discredit or embarrass the Barmecides, schemes to kill or disfigure a concubine who has caught Harun's eye, or efforts to protect her son Muhammad against rivals.

Zubaida actually makes a better opponent than a patron. Player-characters could find themselves trying to protect a beautiful slave girl from the jealous Princess, or could become involved in one of her plots against Jafar the Barmecide.

Zubaida has a terrible temper, and when angry is quite capable of ordering her guards to slay those who offend her. She is extremely good at manipulating the Caliph, and is unequalled at the subtle social warfare of the Court. She has been spoiled all her life, and expects to get her own way. Yet Zubaida knows that all her power and privilege depends on keeping Harun's favor.

She is genuinely pious, and is well-known for her charities. Zubaida paid for the construction of way-stations for pilgrims on the road to Mecca, and in Baghdad she supports several holy men. She is generous to the poor, and occasionally takes an interest in a poor family, finding ways to help them become successful.

Description: The Princess Zubaida is an extremely beautiful woman, with smooth golden skin and wide dark eyes. She dresses in fantastic luxury, sometimes wearing garments so elaborately embroidered and encrusted with jewels that she can barely stand up in them. In public, of course, Zubaida wears a veil, but her lovely eyes can still be seen.

The Princess is almost never unattended. Even in her quarters she is accompanied by a dozen serving-maids, all chosen for their beauty and accomplishments. Outside the Palace she always has a score of guards with her.

ZUBAIDA

Co: 63 Ag: 81 SD: 92 Re: 64 Me: 56

St: 39 Qu: 52 Pr: 94 Em: 26 In: 84

Hits: 52

PP: 48/11

Skills:

Calligraphy: 53 Poison Perception: 75

Dance: 65 Poison Lore: 56

Duping: 65 Racial History: 65

Etiquette: 103 Riding (Camel): 62

First Aid: 47 Seduction: 75

Language: Sense Ambush/Assassin: ... 75

Persian, sp.: 85/8 Singing: 65

Persian, wr.: 71/7 Tale-Telling: 63

Lie Perception: 76 Weapon (Knife): 56

Pick Locks: 47 Philosophy/Religious Doctrine

(Islamic): 65

LEVEL 11 NO PROFESSION

AT: 1 (none)

DB: +0

If the campaign includes magic, Zubaida knows the following Mentalism spell lists: Spell Resistance to level 5, and Detections to Level 5. In a non-magical campaign, she will have the skills Detecting Trap 75 and Disarm Trap 75.

10.5 THE CALIPH'S SONS

Harun Al-Rashid had fourteen sons by various mothers. Of them, only the two oldest were considered possible successors. The others whiled away their time in comfortable idleness, or were given minor government posts.

The oldest boy, Abdallah, was the son of a Persian slave girl, Marajil, and was born on the night that Harun became Caliph. He eventually became Caliph under the name Al-Mamun. The next son was Mohammed, the son of Zubaida. He reigned as Caliph under the name Al-Amin. Both were carefully educated and prepared to succeed Harun as Caliph.

Of the two, Abdallah, the eldest, was much more promising. He was intelligent, stable, and strong-willed. Unfortunately, as the son of a slave girl, he was second in line for the throne after Mohammed. Mohammed was a constant worry to his father. He was impetuous, irresponsible, and dissipated. But his mother was Zubaida, Harun's favorite wife, and so Harun could not openly prefer Abdallah.

Because the rest of the Abbassid clan preferred Mohammed (perhaps because they all hoped a weak Caliph might improve their own chances to take over), Harun was forced to recognize him as his principal heir. But the Caliph tried to hedge his bets by naming Abdallah as the second heir after Mohammed.

Around the year 800, each was given an important post: Abdallah was made governor of Khorasan, and Mohammed was entrusted with Egypt. A third son, Qasim, was later appointed to rule Syria, and was placed in the line of succession. Each was given advisors to help with the tasks of governing.

When Harun died, Mohammed succeeded to the throne as the Caliph Al-Amin. But he was not a very good ruler, and his brother eventually decided to overthrow him. After a destructive civil war, Al-Amin was deposed and Abdallah became the Caliph Al-Mamun. Their conflict only hastened the collapse of the unified Caliphate.

During the period of the *Arabian Nights* campaign, the boys are entering early adolescence, and will be just starting to realize the enormous power and responsibility they may eventually wield. They are tremendously spoiled, of course—every whim is immediately gratified, and the resources of the greatest empire on Earth are available to amuse them.

Adventure possibilities involving the Caliph's sons are numerous. The Gamemaster might wish to try a "Prince and the Pauper"-style adventure, with one of the Caliph's heirs going incognito on the streets while a youthful player-character must deal with the dangers of Palace life. Or, the characters might become involved in a plot to kidnap or assassinate one heir, to ensure that the other becomes Caliph. If the PCs are well-connected politically, they might be "honored" by being entrusted with looking after the boys for an afternoon—spending a day with the two most spoiled brats in the known Universe might terrify even the most hardened adventurer.

ABDALLAH, THE CALIPH'S ELDEST SON

Abdallah is very much like his father, the Caliph. He is very good-looking, and quite strong and healthy. Like the Caliph, Abdallah is very strong-willed, which means he can be infuriatingly stubborn. But he is fundamentally good-natured, and even when misbehaving can be impishly charming. Like his father he chafes at the restrictions and routine of palace life, and slips out from time to time in search of adventure. He has a quick mind, and enjoys learning (as Caliph he established universities and supported scientific research).

His stat potentials are listed along with the current values.

ABDALLAH**LEVEL 1 FIGHTER**

Co: 74/89 Ag: 66/83 SD: 51/76 Re: 74/81 Me: 72/85
 St: 52/82 Qu: 65/82 Pr: 52/82 Em: 66/86 In: 71/81

Hits: 42

AT: 5 (leather shirt)

DB: +3/+0

Skills:

Calligraphy:	11	Perception (General):	15
Etiquette:	19	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine	
Languages:		(Islamic):	12
Persian, wr.:	37/3	Riding (Horse):	16
Persian, sp.:	22/2	Weapons:	
Law (Islamic):	11	Scimitar:	30
Maneuvering in Armor:		Short Bow:	30
Soft Leather:	25		
Music:	12		

MUHAMMAD, THE CALIPH'S SECOND SON

Muhammad is perhaps a trifle inbred. He is not as healthy or as good-looking as his older half-brother, nor is he as intelligent or stable. He is still a handsome boy, but is prone to frequent temper tantrums. And when he is in a good mood, he can be remarkably cruel. Only his cowardice and short attention span have kept him from really hurting someone.

His stat potentials are shown along with the current values.

MUHAMMAD**LEVEL 1 FIGHTER**

Co: 94/100 Ag: 47/80 SD: 26/69 Re: 75/95 Me: 38/80
 St: 96/100 Qu: 39/82 Pr: 41/87 Em: 33/63 In: 69/94

Hits: 58

AT: 1 (none)

DB: +0

Skills:

Languages:		Philosophy/Religious Doctrine	
Persian, sp.:	28/2	(Islamic):	19
Persian, wr.:	19/1	Public Speaking:	16
Law (Islamic):	13	Riding (Horse):	11
Maneuvering in Armor:		Weapons:	
Soft Leather:	25	Scimitar:	22
Music:	15	Short Bow:	25
Perception (General):	15		

10.6 THE BARMECIDES

The Barmecide (Barmak) family was an ancient clan of Persian aristocrats who came into the service of the Caliphs and rose to great power and importance. Khalid ibn-Barmak was secretary to the Caliph Muhammad Al-Mahdi, and eventually became his treasurer and trusted advisor. His grandson Jafar ibn-Yahya Al-Barmak was the right-hand man of Harun Al-Rashid, and was renowned for his wisdom.

Jafar was an extremely gifted and hard-working administrator, who commanded the caliph's guards, ran the intelligence service, operated the state-run textile factories, and directed the mint. He has an amazing capacity for hard work; it was common for Jafar to spend all night drinking and carousing with the Caliph, then go straight to business, pausing only to change clothes and make the morning prayer.

If player-characters have any encounters with Jafar, he should be portrayed as a wise and just man, extremely well-informed about everything. His vast network of spies and informers enables him to know even about things the characters have tried to keep secret.



Adventurers can be employed by Jafar as agents for any number of purposes: seeking out traitors within the Caliphate, dealing with foreign spies, acting as couriers, or working as agents to foil plots against the Caliph or the Barmecide family. He is a good patron, who does his best to reward and protect those who serve him.

As an adversary, Jafar is almost too powerful. His omnipresent spies and command of the machinery of government make him very difficult for ordinary characters to oppose. Only the Caliph himself can protect someone who has made an enemy of Jafar. Gamemasters who wish to use Jafar as a villain could conceivably adapt adventures from the works of Dumas (*The Three Musketeers*, et cetera), changing Cardinal Richelieu into Jafar, Anne of Austria into Zubaida, and Louis XIII into Harun (see the **RM** genre book *At Rapier's Point* for more on Dumas' characters).

THE FALL OF THE BARMECIDES

There are conflicting versions of how the Barmecide clan fell from power, but their fall was spectacular. The prosaic, doctoral-thesis view is that Harun became alarmed at the expanding influence of the Barmecides, and feared that with their connections to the old Persian nobility, they might be plotting to replace him either with another Abbassid, or else a new dynasty of Alids. Other factions at court, jealous of the Barmecides' wealth, connived to encourage the Caliph's suspicions.

The more romantic explanation is that Jafar Al-Barmak loved Harun's sister Abbasah. The Caliph disapproved of the match, and forbade them to see one another. But Jafar secretly married Abbasah, and sent her away to Mecca where she raised him two sons. At last Harun learned of the marriage and had Jafar beheaded by Masrur, his swordsman.

Perhaps both accounts are correct. Certainly Harun might have been worried about the growing power and wealth of the Barmecides, but not enough to take action. Then he discovered Jafar had married a princess of royal blood—this would give Jafar a possible claim to legitimacy if he tried to stage a coup. Harun would see this as a clear and present danger.

Whatever the cause, Harun either imprisoned or executed all of the Barmecides. Even distant relatives, women, and children were killed. Only the intervention of his wife Zubaida protected a few. After Harun's death, some were released, but the power of the Barmecide clan was forever broken.

It is said that after Jafar's death Harun slept badly, smiled seldom, and drank more. He shut himself up in his distant palace at Raqqa and left more of the work of administration in the hands of greedy and incompetent bureaucrats. The destruction of the Barmecides marked the end of the Abbassid Golden Age.

If the fall of the Barmecides occurs during an *Arabian Nights* campaign, it should be treated as a world-shaking catastrophe. The player-characters should fear being denounced as supporters of the Barmecides. Old enemies of theirs might suddenly gain high rank. And the streets will be full of angry mobs protesting the destruction of the generous and well-loved Vizier. The Gamemaster should try to convey something of the very real tragedy of the event: one of the best and noblest rulers of Islam executed his wisest counselor, then murdered dozens of others, all out of fear and distrust.

JAFAR THE BARMECIDE

Jafar is a small and slender man, extremely good-looking. His hair is dark and straight, and he has a very alert and penetrating gaze. Jafar is very eloquent, and strives to be polite to everyone. Those meeting him get the impression of enormous energy barely held in check by a powerful intellect and an iron will.

He has a lively and pleasant personality, and is a talented writer and calligrapher. But his real gift is for statecraft and administration. Jafar is the Caliph's right-hand man, and controls the entire government of the Caliphate. Where the Caliph is often hot-headed and impulsive, Jafar must be the voice of caution and restraint. He must constantly intrigue against those who are envious of his power and plot to cause his downfall.

Jafar has an astounding constitution. He can stay up all night drinking with the Caliph, and still be at his desk before his secretaries arrive for work in the morning. Characters who associate with Jafar will find it exhausting to try to match his pace. Despite all his many tasks, he still finds time to be a patron of the arts.

He is not, however, an extremely pious man. In fact, it is whispered by some that the Barmecides only pretended to convert to Islam, that they still really follow the Zoroastrian faith. Jafar is something of a free-thinker, with a great interest in the beliefs and doctrines of other faiths. Whatever his true beliefs, he is very charitable, giving away thousands of dirhams to the poor.

He is a great dandy, constantly setting new fashions at court with his clothes. Jafar often spends vast sums on new outfits, then gives them away after wearing them only once. Like any Muslim gentleman, he carries a sword, but in a fight he prefers to use his knife. Jafar prefers not to fight at all if he can help it.

JAFAR IBN-YAHYA AL-BARMAK LEVEL 20 SCHOLAR

Co: 94 Ag: 54 SD: 86 Re: 79 Me: 92
St: 58 Qu: 78 Pr: 86 Em: 33 In: 90

Hits: 78 AT: 1 (none)
PP: 78/20 DB: +9/+5

Skills:

Administration:	103	Law (Islamic):	94
Athletic Games:	23	Lie Perception:	92
Bribery:	89	Meditation:	102
Calligraphy:	89	Military Organization:	90
Cookery:	82	Mnemonics:	107
Basic Mathematics:	89	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine (Islamic):	72
Diplomacy:	95	Propaganda:	94
Etiquette:	96	Racial History:	99
Falsification:	78	Riding (Horse):	65
Interrogation:	86	Sense Ambush/Assassin: ...	89
Languages:		Tactical Games (Chess):	85
Greek, spoken:	83/8	Tactics (Strategic):	93
Greek, written:	109/10	Weapons:	
Latin, spoken:	68/6	Knife:	65
Latin, written:	109/10	Scimitar:	35
Hindustani, sp.:	94/9	Leadership:	85
Hindustani, wr.:	99/9		
Persian:	108/10		
Persian, wr.:	104/10		

In a campaign which includes magic, Jafar will have the Mentalism spell lists Anticipations and Spell Resistance to 5th level. He will also have in his possession a +30 Ring of Protection (adds to DB and RR), a +10 Knife which inflicts a Slaying critical once per day, and at least one other miscellaneous magical item of the GM's choice.

In a non-magical campaign, give Jafar an extra +25 with his Scimitar skill.

10.7 PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS

The provincial governors were becoming increasingly powerful and autonomous, especially in the more distant reaches of the empire. During Harun's reign, the province of Ifriqya (North Africa) was already effectively an independent state, as was Morocco. The local Aghlabid emirs still recognized Harun as sovereign, but the tie was about as binding as Australia's is to the Queen of England. The Idrisids were even more independent, claiming the title of Caliph for themselves.

Even loyal governors still intrigued for power. Each one had an agent at court to represent him and promote the interests of the governor and his province.

Important provinces were placed under the government of the Caliph's sons as they came of age, both to ensure the loyalty of the territories, and to train the young men in the arts of rulership. This worked as long as Harun lived, but led to civil war after his death, since each claimant for the throne had a large army under his command to back his claim.

Player-characters could be sent as observers from Baghdad to check up on a provincial governor, or else might get involved in a plot to discredit a governor and replace him with a rival. They might stumble across preparations for a revolt being made.

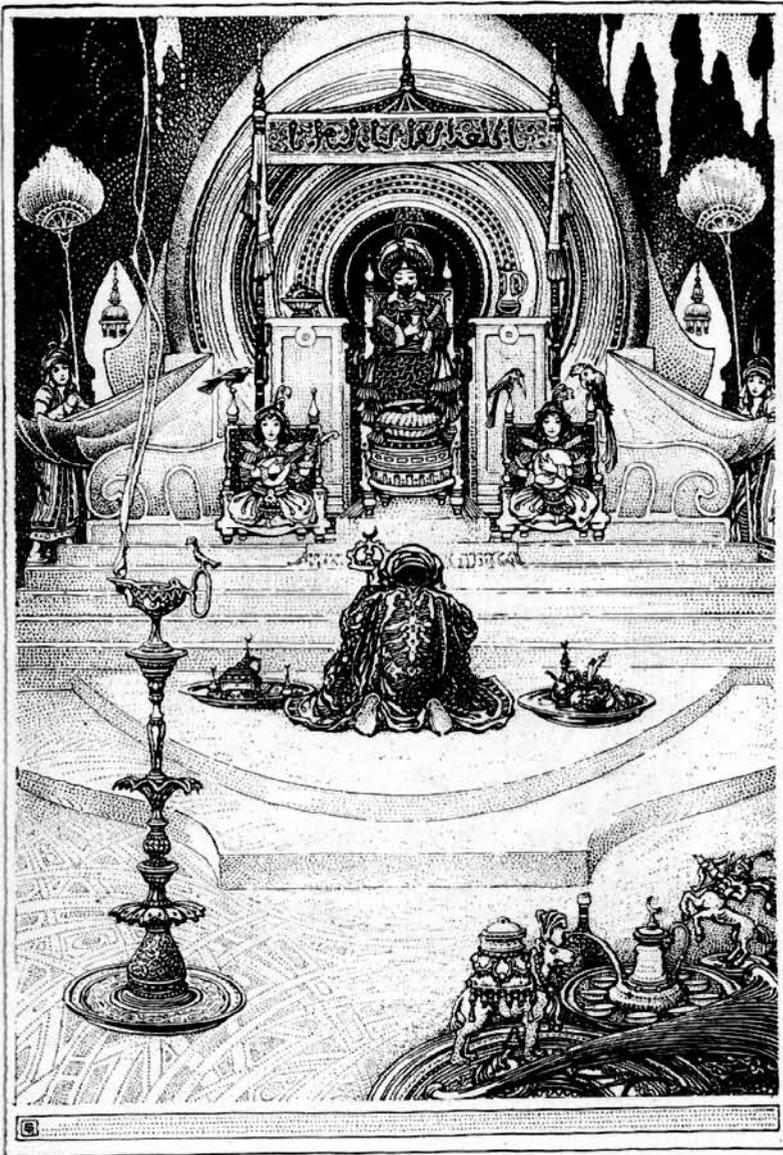
10.8 MILITARY FORCES

At the time of Harun Al-Rashid, the army was gigantic. A regular force of over a hundred thousand professional soldiers made up the core of the army, and could be supplemented with provincial forces, volunteers, and mercenaries.

On the frontier with Byzantium, a corps of religious warriors called Ghazis kept up a constant struggle against the Greeks. The Ghazis were usually impoverished men hoping to win lands, or at least Divine favor, on the frontier (in this they were very much like the later Christian crusaders).

ORGANIZATION

The Abbassid army was organized into large units, or Khamis, which roughly corresponded to an army corps. A Khamis was commanded by a general, who made up his own tactical plans to fit the strategy devised by the Emir, or commander-in-chief. The Caliph would assume the position of Emir when he led the army, but otherwise would delegate it to a nobleman.



SOLDIERS

The army's front rank usually consisted of archers and crossbowmen, using a variety of weapons. The crossbow was just coming into use during Harun's reign, alongside the longbow and composite bow. Catapults and ballistas served as a kind of heavy artillery, but were mostly used for siege warfare.

Protecting the bowmen were foot soldiers armed with spears or scimitars, carrying small shields. Most had no other armor, though there was no uniform standard of equipment, so a soldier could wear whatever armor he could afford.

The decisive striking arm was the cavalry. These were heavy cavalry armed with maces, spears, swords, and javelins. The men and their horses wore chainmail and light banded mail. Once the enemy's line was disorganized by arrow fire and infantry assaults, the cavalry would ride through the gap and destroy the enemy's flanks and rear—a tactic which was reborn centuries later as the armored *blitzkrieg*.

PLUNDER AND PILLAGE

The purpose of war was as much robbery as killing. Soldiers expected to get loot—they certainly didn't get rich on army pay. Often expeditions would be launched for no other purpose than to get loot. Women and boys were carried off as slaves, movable goods were taken, crops burned, and livestock driven off or slaughtered. The Caliph had claim to a fifth of the booty, but in the confusion after a battle soldiers grabbed what they could.

After a victorious campaign, the winning army would get further loot by demanding reparations from the enemy. This could amount to thousands of gold pieces, and was often paid partly in goods.

10.9 BUREAUCRACY

To manage the greatest empire in the world, an ever-increasing staff of bureaucrats were needed. Scribes (called *Khatibs*), clerks, and minor officials toiled in offices within the Round City of Baghdad, collecting taxes, paying soldiers, and carrying out the wishes of the Caliph. Many were slaves or freedmen of the Caliph, and the majority were not Arabs but of Persian descent.

Their corruption was legendary. Officials had to be bribed to do their jobs, or else paid not to do them. A feature of many tales in the *Arabian Nights* is the great lengths people must go to in order to make the Caliph aware of the misdeeds of his servants.

The officials of the Caliphate were class-conscious. A high official would never deal with a low-class person, even if his job required it. Instead, he would delegate the work to a lower official, who in turn might try to enhance his own prestige by delegating the job to a still-lower one. Citizens who make no attempt to fight this would end up dealing with a minor clerk or slave who knows nothing.

Player-characters might run afoul of a petty bureaucrat, who might then become a recurring adversary in the campaign. Or they could simply have to deal with the bureaucracy of the Caliphate.

FADL IBN-AL-RABI, THE CHAMBERLAIN

Among the more important officials of Abbassid Baghdad is the Caliph's Chamberlain, Fadl ibn-Al-Rabi. Fadl's job was initially that of a doorkeeper, controlling who was allowed in to see the Caliph. But since he effectively controls access to

Harun, he has rapidly become a very influential man. Nobles and other officials gave him gifts and large sums of money, and he has gradually accumulated other offices and perquisites.

Fadl constantly schemes against Jafar and the Barmecides, for he had ambitions of being Vizier himself (historically Fadl did become Vizier after Jafar's death). In this he has the support of Zubaida, the Caliph's senior wife, who also dislikes Jafar. Fadl is not as intelligent or hard-working as Jafar, but is very good at sucking up to his superiors and making himself look good at the expense of others.

Fadl is a tall, plump man, with a handsome face and shifty eyes. He dresses plainly in black, and has an oily, ingratiating way of speaking. If he takes a liking to the player-characters (or thinks they can be of use to him), he will be annoyingly friendly.

FADL IBN-AL-RABI

LEVEL 13 TRADER

Co: 62 Ag: 54 SD: 91 Re: 57 Me: 87
St: 17 Qu: 17 Pr: 86 Em: 81 In: 84

Hits: 73 AT: 1 (none)
PP: 47/13 DB: +0

SKILLS:

Acting: 74	Lie Perception: 93
Administration: 74	Lip Reading: 66
Appraisal: 70	Mnemonics: 62
Basic Math: 78	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine (Islamic): 78
Bribery: 75	Poison Lore: 70
Calligraphy: 77	Poison Perception: 93
Duping: 76	Propaganda: 96
Etiquette: 84	Riding (Camel): 71
Falsification: 75	Sense Ambush/Assassin: ... 93
Language (Persian): 95	Use/Remove Poison: 63
Persian, sp.: 90	Weapon (Knife): 62
Persian, wr.: 108	
Law (Islamic): 75	

In a magical campaign, Fadl knows the following Open Essence spell lists to 5th level: Spell Wall, Essence's Perceptions, and Unbarring Ways. He also wears an eyepiece giving him Woodsight and Stonesight (as on the Monk's Base List) once per day, and a Cloak of Shield (as the spell, three times per day). In a non-magical campaign, give him +50 to Picking Locks skill.

10.10 PALACE LIFE

Life in Harun's palaces was strictly regulated by etiquette and custom. Visitors to the palace had to wear black, had to prostrate themselves before the Caliph, and could not speak until he addressed them. After the Caliphs lost power and fell under the domination of the Buyid Sultans, the etiquette rules became incredibly intricate and time-consuming.

The luxury and ostentation of the Caliphs existed on a scale hard to imagine nowadays. At the wedding of Harun's son, more than a hundred million dirhams were spent on decoration, entertainment, and gifts for the guests. The celebration lasted more than two weeks. Modern readers may find it hard to believe some of the incredible descriptions of wealth and extravagance in the *Thousand and One Nights*; when in fact they may be understatements.

Within the Harem, all was gold, silver, silks, jewels, and rare perfumes. The chambers had the finest carpets, tapestries, and cushions of silk embroidered with gold. Fountains of scented water cooled the air.

Yet with all this formality and luxury, there was also cruelty and death. Harun once had his son Mohammed kill a prisoner, to see if the boy had learned to handle a sword properly. And wherever Harun went, his executioner Masrur followed.

Much palace intrigue was conducted via subtle insults—sending someone an obviously inferior gift, for example. Almost all maneuvering was aimed at getting the Caliph's favor or directing his wrath against an enemy. Players who have not had any personal experience with this sort of subtle social warfare will have a great deal of trouble.



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11.0 BAGHDAD

11.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY

Baghdad, the capital city of all Islam, was built during the reign of the Caliph Al-Mansur (754-775). It rapidly grew to become the center of all trade in the realm of the Caliphs, making it one of the wealthiest cities in the world. So during the reign of Harun Al-Rashid, it was a big and fast-growing city, full of splendid new buildings—sort of an Islamic Houston or Atlanta. It had a population of nearly one million, twice that of Constantinople, its nearest rival. “Baghdad” was the name of the little village which originally occupied the site. The official title was *Medinat Al-Salaam* (“the city of peace”), but never came into general use.

GENERAL LAYOUT (11.1.1)

The original city of Baghdad, built by the Caliph Al-Mansur, was a fortified military camp laid out on a circular plan. As Baghdad rapidly outgrew the walls, the old section became known as the Round City. A vast business district called Al-Kharkh grew up to the south, and another large section of town called Al-Rusafa sprawled across the Tigris river. Three pontoon bridges crossed the river, and a large network of canals crisscrossed the city, making it resemble Venice or Amsterdam.

Beyond the walls of the Round City, the street layout was random and confusing. Most streets were dead-end alleys leading off of the few major avenues.

CITY DISTRICTS (11.1.2)

The following areas are marked on the map of the city of Baghdad.

The Round City: The heart of Baghdad was surrounded by a triple wall, and laid out on a circular plan. The outer wall was five yards thick and forty feet tall, and was nearly a mile and a half in diameter. The huge palace and mosque built by Al-Mansur occupied the center of the city, surrounded by dwellings and official buildings. The residential quarter was reserved for senior officers, the Caliph’s trusted aides, his principal freedmen, and those who might be needed for official business. For security reasons, the markets were all moved out of the Round City, and access was restricted to officials, military officers, and those on government business.

Each of the Round City’s four gates is always guarded by at least a squad of soldiers. During the day, people can pass in and out without much trouble, but at night the gates are locked, and only a high-ranking officer or noble can get in or out. Anyone caught sneaking into the Round City will be arrested as a possible assassin.

The Palace of the Gilded Gate: At the center of the Round City was the Palace of the Gilded Gate, the home of the Caliphs. The palace was a huge square complex half a kilometer on a side, topped by a great green dome. It was connected to the Mosque of Al-Mansur.

The interiors of the palace were decorated with curtains of gold-embroidered silk, fine tapestries, carpets, and rugs. There were columns of marble, horses with saddles of gold and silver, elephants, lions, and trees filled with golden birds. A huge expanse of gardens surrounded the palace, extending out to a radius of half a mile.

The Great Mosque: The Mosque of Al-Mansur, inside the Round City, was restricted to those living inside the walls. It was used for occasions of great importance. Other mosques stood outside the walls for the public.

Al-Kharkh: The principal business district of Baghdad was at Al-Kharkh, outside the walls of the Round City to the southwest, covering a vast area. Each trade had its own section, and the merchants and tradesmen lived where they did business. The streets were named for the primary business conducted there. Since most of the streets were dead ends, they could be closed off at night for security. Canals threaded through the district, providing fresh water and easy transport for goods.

There were no sewers in Baghdad, either in the Round City or the outskirts. Some houses had latrines, but in the poorer sections, waste was simply tossed into the street or dumped into the canals. This made all the roads muddy and filthy—the real reason for the custom of removing one’s shoes upon entering a home or mosque. Sewage dumped into the water supply also made such diseases as cholera and dysentery common.

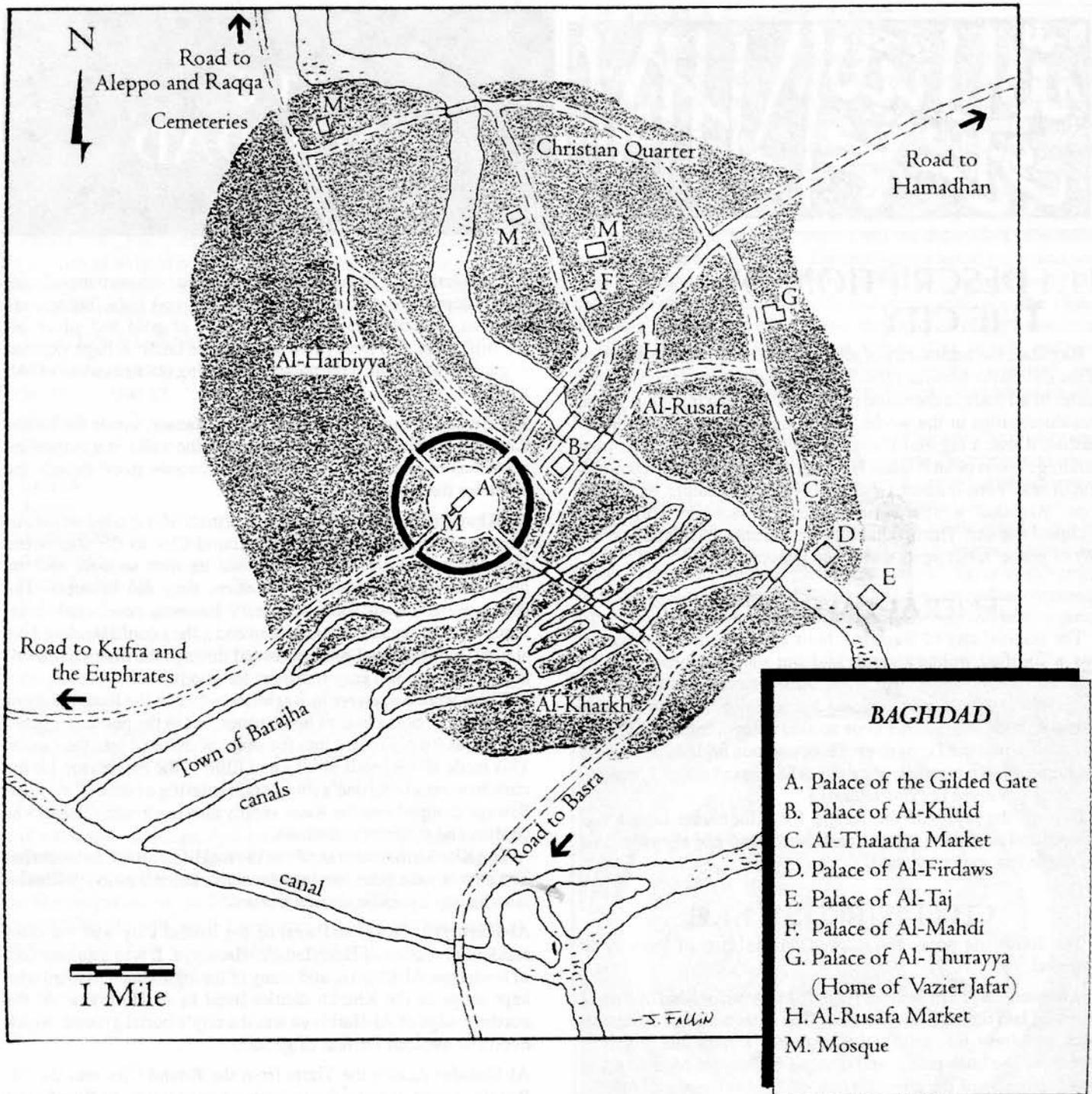
The Kharkh district was where the real life of Baghdad went on. The streets were busy late into the night, and it was in Al-Kharkh that the city’s middle classes worked.

Al-Harbiyya: North and west of the Round City was the chief residential section of Baghdad, Al-Harbiyya. It was a quieter part of town than Al-Kharkh, and many of the small businessmen who kept shops in the Kharkh district lived in Al-Harbiyya. At the northern edge of Al-Harbiyya was the city’s burial ground, which everyone avoided for fear of ghouls.

Al-Rusafa: Across the Tigris from the Round City was the Al-Rusafa district. It was a lively, varied part of town. Al-Rusafa was mostly commercial, with large market section. But many of the wealthy nobles had palaces by the river. The Vizier Jafar had an especially splendid house in Al-Rusafa, the Al-Thurayya palace. The neighborhood was linked to the rest of Baghdad by a pair of pontoon bridges.

The northern part of Al-Rusafa was the Christian quarter, inhabited by Christians and foreigners. At one time there was even a monastery in Baghdad.

Palaces: The Caliphs were great builders; each felt the desire to build an even more splendid palace than his predecessor. North of the city was the Palace of Blissful Eternity, on the banks of the Tigris. This was the primary residence of the Caliphs.



Just beyond the walls of the Round City, in the heart of Baghdad, was the Palace of Al-Khuld, built by Mansur's son Mohammad Al-Mahdi, father of Harun Al-Rashid. The palace had strong walls and towers, and was surrounded by delightful gardens. Banks of flowers were planted to spell out the words of poets; trees were decorated with bands of precious metal and jewels, ponds and waterfalls.

In 796, Harun built himself a residence at the town of Raqqa, on the banks of the upper Euphrates. Haroun built a palace there, the Kasr As-Salam (Palace of Peace). He spent the last thirteen years of his life there. It is thought that the move was motivated by

Haroun's increasing desire for privacy. The palace may also have served as a staging area and command post for a campaign against the Byzantines.

11.2 POLICE

The police force in Baghdad existed to preserve order and catch criminals. It was a part of the army garrison of Baghdad, ultimately under the command of the Caliph. The head of the police, Al-Sindi ibn-Shahak, was in charge of investigating crimes and suppressing revolt.

The police were only called out for major disturbances. Crime investigation was only undertaken when citizens complained to the police and had enough influence to get action. Much of the law enforcement in Baghdad was handled by the citizens.

The citizens fought crime themselves. There was no presumption of innocence, so an accused wrongdoer might be roughed up by a crowd of outraged citizens. An apprehended criminal would be hauled before a religious judge (Qadi).

11.3 ENCOUNTERS IN BAGHDAD

Encounters vary depending on the time of day and the neighborhood. Each table has an Encounter percentage listed. If an encounter occurs, then determine the nature of it by rolling a d10.

Soldier: a squad of 1-6 soldiers on guard duty or patrolling the area. They will detain anyone who doesn't seem to belong. Soldiers are Fighters of 1st or 3rd level. It may be possible to bribe or fool a group of soldiers, except within the Round City.

Officer: a military officer accompanied by a squad of soldiers. Officers are higher-level Fighters or Cavaliers (5th to 7th level), and will be harder to bribe or fool than plain soldiers. They are accompanied by 1-6 Soldiers (see above).

Bureaucrat: a slave or freedman official of the Caliph's government. He will be pompous and self-important, and will report anything unusual. Bureaucrats can be bribed to ignore strange goings-on. Bureaucrats are 1st- to 3rd-level Scholars or Traders.

Qadi: a religious judge in his distinctive attire, accompanied by 1-6 attendants (including at least one Fighter). A Qadi is a 7th-level Cleric or Sage.

Noble: a wealthy nobleman in extremely fashionable dress, accompanied by 1-6 attendants and guards. A Noble is a 7th or 10th-level Fighter (possibly a Cavalier or Paladin).

Courtier: Courtier encounters mean that the player-characters have run into one of the important NPCs of Harun's court (Harun, Jafar, Zubaidah, Ibrahim, or others). Usually a courtier will be attended by 10-100 guards and servants, and the Caliph will be accompanied by at least a company of soldiers. However, a

DAYTIME ENCOUNTERS

	<i>Round City</i> (80%)	<i>Al-Kharkh/ Al-Harbiyya</i> (90%)	<i>Al-Rusafa/ Christian Qtr.</i> (75%)	<i>Outskirts</i> (50%)
1.	Soldier	Beggar	Beggar	Creature
2.	Soldier	Thief	Thief	Slave
3.	Soldier	Peddler	Peddler	Peasant
4.	Officer	Slave	Slave	Peasant
5.	Officer	Shopkeeper	Shopkeeper	Soldier
6.	Bureaucrat	Shopkeeper	Soldier	Bandits
7.	Bureaucrat	Merchant	Bureaucrat	Merchant
8.	Qadi	Foreigner	Qadi	Foreigner
9.	Noble	Women	Noble	Hermit
10.	Courtier	Noble	Courtier	Noble

NIGHTTIME ENCOUNTERS

	<i>Round City</i> (75%)	<i>Al-Kharkh/ Al-Harbiyya</i> (50%)	<i>Al-Rusafa/ Christian Qtr.</i> (40%)	<i>Outskirts</i> (10%)
1.	Soldier	Creature	Creature	Creature
2.	Soldier	Beggar	Thief	Creature
3.	Soldier	Thief	Thief	Bandits
4.	Officer	Thief	Slave	Bandits
5.	Officer	Soldier	Soldier	Bedouin
6.	Bureaucrat	Drunkard	Drunkard	Foreigner
7.	Noble	Foreigner	Foreigner	Slave
8.	Noble	Merchant	Bureaucrat	Peasant
9.	Courtier	Noble	Noble	Hermit
10.	Courtier	Courtier	Courtier	Courtier

Courtier encounter outside the Round City, especially at night, may indicate that the NPC is in disguise. Roll again to determine the nature of the disguise.

Beggar: a ragged beggar, possibly diseased or mutilated. Beggars often see quite a bit, and can be good sources of information. Most will be 1st-level Thieves or Rogues, but some may be Bards.

Thief: a robber or pickpocket. During the day, in the city, thieves are almost always pickpockets, stealing by sleight of hand and stealth. At night they can be armed robbers, often in a group of 1-10. Pickpockets will be 3rd-level Thieves, while armed robbers will be 3rd to 5th-level Thieves or Rogues.

Peddler: 1-6 street vendors, selling every imaginable kind of merchandise. They will be very persistent. Peddlers are 1st to 3rd-level Traders, Craftsmen, or possibly Thieves.

Slave: a slave sent on an errand by his master. Slaves can be almost any character class (except a spell caster), and will seldom be over 1st level.

Shopkeeper: a small merchant with his own business. In the market section he will be in his shop soliciting customers; elsewhere he will be on an errand and may not wish to stop. Shopkeepers are 3rd to 5th-level Traders and Craftsmen.

Merchant: a rich merchant with 1-10 attendants and guards, and 1-10 camels laden with merchandise. He is either just setting out on a trade trip, or just arriving from a long journey. Merchants are 5th- or 7th-level Traders.

Foreigner: 1-6 visitors from a distant land. The Gamemaster should decide who they are and where they come from. They can be of any class and level.

Women: 1-6 women together. They can be peasant wives selling produce, middle-class women doing their marketing, or noble ladies accompanied by servants. They can be of any class and level.

Creature: an animal or monster. Creatures can be natural beasts like lions, cheetahs, snakes, or perhaps a wild bull. They can even be supernatural monsters like ghouls, ogres, nagas, or anything the Gamemaster wishes.

Peasant: 1-6 farm workers. They will usually be humble and helpful to strangers, but may be wary of funny-looking foreigners or possible bandits. They will be 0-level Farmers, Traders, or Craftsmen.

Bandit: 3-18 armed criminals, looking for a small group of wealthy travelers to rob. Bandits are 3rd- to 7th-level Rogues, Thieves, and Fighters.

Hermit: a religious recluse. He may be a Monk, Cleric, or other spell caster, or else may be a harmless nut. Level will either be very low (1st- or 2nd-level) or very high (15th- to 20th-level).

Drunkard: 1-6 drunk men returning home from a party. They will either be overly friendly or overly hostile. Because they are very drunk, treat them as completely unskilled (class and level are immaterial).

Bedouin: 1-6 desert nomads. They can either be simple herdsmen driving sheep or goats to market, or bandits looking for victims to rob. Bedouins are usually Fighters, Barbarians, or Rangers of 3rd- to 7th-level.

11.4 NPCS

The following are some notable inhabitants of Baghdad, who may be encountered by the player-characters in the course of adventures there.

SINDBAD THE SAILOR

This famous trader never once completed a merchant voyage successfully, but the extraordinary adventures he had along the way always brought him great wealth. He is a wiry man, his face deeply tanned by the sun and sea winds. He dresses in the normal clothing of a wealthy merchant. Sindbad is kind and generous, and loves to talk about his travels. He is clever and resourceful, but dislikes fighting.



SINDBAD**LEVEL 12 ROGUE**

Co: 71 Ag: 91 SD: 66 Re: 73 Me: 67

St: 75 Qu: 88 Pr: 71 Em: 35 In: 82

Hits: 103

AT: 5 (leather shirt)

DB: +14/+5

Skills:

Administration: 59	Loading: 35
Adrenal Move (Balance):25	Maneuvering in Armor
Appraisal: 61	Soft Leather: 25
Boat Pilot: 45	Navigation: 53
Brawling: 51	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine
Bribery: 41	(Islamic): 35
Climbing: 38	Region Lore (Oceans): 40
Direction Sense: 55	Riding (Camel): 46
Driving: 39	Rope Mastery: 55
First Aid: 34	Rowing: 27
Gambling: 45	Sailing: 35
General Perception: 62	Star-Gazing: 38
Grappling Hook: 45	Streetwise: 45
Languages:	Swimming: 27
Greek, spoken: 56/5	Trading: 55
Greek, written: 33/3	Trading Lore: 55
Hindustani, sp.: 56/5	Weapon:
Hindustani, wr.: 38/3	Knife: 86
Persian: 51/5	Scimitar: 96
Persian, written: 43/4	Weather-Watching: 35
Singhalese (Ceylonese):35	Lie Perception: 55

In a magical campaign (and it is hard to imagine Sindbad anywhere else), he wields a +10 scimitar that gives him an extra +25 DB if he parries with at least quarter of his skill.

ABD-AL-HAZRAD, MAGICIAN

Author of the dreaded magical tome *Al Azif*, this widely-feared sorcerer is rumored to be more than a century old. He seldom lives in one place for more than a few months, and constantly visits old libraries and secret tombs in search of ancient and forbidden lore. Abd-al-Hazrad is an incredibly old, wizened man with piercing eyes. He always seems to know much more than he tells.

ABD-AL-HAZRAD**LEVEL 20 SORCERER**

Co: 31 Ag: 36 SD: 91 Re: 82 Me: 81

St: 17 Qu: 21 Pr: 56 Em: 93 In: 88

Hits: 55

AT: 2 (robes)

PP: 136/40

DB: +0

Skills:

Channeling: 99	Mathematics: 54
Directed Spells:	Meditation (Sleep): 56
Transferal: 72	Perception: 82
Disruption (50'): 72	Riding (Camel): 45
Banishment: 57	Runes: 93
Languages:	Star-Gazing: 57
Egyptian, spoken: ... 77/7	Staves & Wands: 93
Egyptian, written: ... 62/6	Weapon:
Greek, spoken: 42/4	Staff: 52
Greek, written: 92/9	

Spell Lists: Flesh Destruction to 20th level, Lore (Channeling) to 20th level, Rune Mastery to 10th level, Spell Enhancement to 25th level, Gate Mastery to 20th level, Spell Reins to 10th level, Spell Wall to 20th level, Soul Destruction to 20th level.

In addition to the spell lists, he has a x3 PP multiplier (not figured in PPs listed above) in the form of a gold chain he wears around his neck.

In a non-magical campaign, Abd-al-Hazrad is a very convincing fraud, probably a high-level Scholar or Montebanc masquerading as a powerful magician.

SULEIMAN IBN-ISHAK, BARBER

Suleiman the Barber is an invaluable source of information in Baghdad. He is an extremely talkative and eccentric fellow, who advertises himself as the only barber learned in all the arts and sciences. Actually, he has learned a little about some scholarly disciplines, and thinks he knows everything. In the course of his work, he hears all the latest gossip and every rumor making the rounds. Unfortunately, he is a lousy barber. Suleiman is short and chubby, and wears cast-off clothing.

Note that his listed skill bonuses, low though they may be, are the total percentage bonus, not the skill rank.

SULEIMAN IBN-ISHAK**LEVEL 1 NO-PROFESSION****THE BARBER**

Co: 52 Ag: 96 SD: 88 Re: 82 Me: 90

St: 48 Qu: 64 Pr: 34 Em: 84 In: 84

Hits: 20

AT: 1 (none)

DB: +2/+0

Skills:

Advanced Math: 6	Mnemonics: 5
Alchemy: 11	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine
Appraisal: 6	(Islamic): 11
Astronomy: 11	Poetic Improvisation: 6
Basic Mathematics: 6	Racial History: 6
Begging: 6	Riding (Camel): 11
Cookery: 6	Star-Gazing: 6
Demon/Devil Lore: 6	Surgery: 5
Diagnostics: 5	Tactical Games (Chess): 6
Flora Lore (general): 11	Tale-Telling: 6
Language:	Weapon:
Persian, spoken: 25/2	Razor: 6

AL-SINDI IBN-SHAHAK, CHIEF OF POLICE

Al-Sindi commands the city police force in Baghdad. He is responsible for maintaining order and suppressing crime in the city. His force is under the command of the army, and he ultimately answers to the Caliph. Though a soldier, he follows the Sleuth profession. He is a short, fit man, who dresses in Abbassid black. Ibn-Shahak is devoted to his work, and when he learns of an interesting crime will not rest until the perpetrators have been discovered. What happens to them afterward does not interest him; it is unraveling the puzzle that obsesses Ibn-Shahak.

AL-SINDI IBN-SHAHAK

LEVEL 10 ROGUE

Co: 62 Ag: 74 SD: 74 Re: 85 Me: 76
St: 72 Qu: 58 Pr: 76 Em: 41 In: 84

Hits: 76 AT: 7 (reinforced-leather coat)
PP: 38/10 DB: +0

Skills:

Interrogation:	98	Perception:	95
Law (Islamic):	54	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine	
Leadership:	85	(Islamic):	56
Lie Perception:	95	Riding (Horse):	51
Linguistics:	65	Subduing:	75
Language:		Mnemonics:	56
Persian, sp.:	73/7	Surveillance:	95
Persian, wr.:	63/6	Streetwise:	70
Maneuvering in Armor		Weapons:	
Soft Leather:	83	Scimitar:	75
		Knife:	75

In a campaign with magic, Al-Sindi will know the Sleuth's Senses Spell List to 10th level. In a non-magical campaign, the Gamemaster should give Ibn-Shahak 10 Skill Ranks in Maneuvering in Armor (Chain).

MARJANAH, COURTESAN

Marjanah is a well-known and accomplished courtesan of Baghdad. She entertains in the houses of the nobility. Her accomplishments include singing, dancing, and reciting poetry. Marjanah is astonishingly beautiful, with a slender and agile dancer's body, long lustrous black hair, and large dark eyes.

Because she associates with many men of high rank and position, Marjanah is very well-informed about all the intrigues and secrets of the mighty. Her goal is to find a man who loves her for herself, rather than her looks and talent. Occasionally Marjanah needs protection when a jealous wife has hired agents to threaten or kill her.

MARJANAH

LEVEL 5 DANCER

Co: 70 Ag: 91 SD: 79 Re: 59 Me: 52
St: 31 Qu: 90 Pr: 72 Em: 85 In: 77

Hits: 65 AT: 1 (none)
DB: +35/+30

Skills:

Acting:	53	Play Lute:	27
Adrenal Defense:	20	Play Tambourine:	32
Cookery:	23	Poetic Improvisation:	35
Contortions:	67	Seduction:	72
Dance:	72	Singing:	31
Disarm Foe, Unarmed: ..	50	Tactical Games (Chess):	12
Etiquette:	30	Tale Telling:	32
Lie Perception:	15	Weapon:	
Languages:		Knife:	59
Persian, spoken:	30/3		
Persian, written:	13/1		





12.0 FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Though the Caliph's domains might have seemed endless to his subjects, he was not the only ruler on Earth. The Commander of the Faithful often had to deal with other states beyond his borders, either by war or diplomacy. Player-characters may hail from foreign parts, or else may travel in the course of their adventures.

12.1 RIVAL STATES

The Abbassid Caliphate was without a doubt the most powerful state on Earth. No other state could threaten it; the only question was whether or not they could resist conquest by the armies of the Prophet.

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

The Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne could barely control its own territory in France, Germany, and northern Italy, but was cultivated by the Caliph as a potentially useful ally against the Byzantines and the Spanish. The two powers were friendly, and the two monarchs frequently communicated. In 802, Harun sent Charlemagne a number of splendid gifts, including an elephant called Abul-abbas, and these were reciprocated. Charlemagne's rule brought peace and some prosperity to Western Europe, which had suffered from barbarian incursions for nearly four centuries.

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

The decrepit Byzantine Empire had withstood the Islamic flood, but could do nothing more. As the only major state to share a land border with the Caliphate, Byzantium had the most trade and contact with Islam. The Byzantines were the major foreign enemy of the Caliphate; relations between the two realms are described in more detail below.

UMMAYYAD SPAIN

During the first part of Harun's Caliphate, Spain was still ruled by the aging Umayyad Abd-al-Rahman, the only survivor of the Abbassid takeover. Abd-al-Rahman had consolidated his grip on the peninsula, and maintained his capital at the city of Cordoba, in southern Spain. His rule extended north to the Pyrenees and Asturias mountains, where a Christian remnant survived under the patronage of the Franks. A wide frontier zone of semi-autonomous petty states separated the two parts of the peninsula, across which raiding parties frequently rode.

The independence of the Aghlabid and Idrisid governors in North Africa meant that the Caliphate could not bring its power directly to bear upon Spain. The Pyrenees, inhabited by fiercely independent Basques, shielded Muslim Spain from the armies of Charlemagne. Though Umayyad Spain was hostile toward the Abbassid Caliphate, there was little the Emir could do against his enemy.

At this point, most of Abd-al-Rahman's subjects were still Christian. Only about 10 or 20 percent had converted to Islam. In such a country, the Muslim government had to be tolerant of other religions.

After Abd-al-Rahman's death in 796, the Umayyad Emir Al-Hakim took over and consolidated the gains of his father, establishing a professional army largely staffed by slaves from Northern Europe. He and his successors began making Cordoba one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.

INDIA

To the east, India was incredibly rich but fragmented into dozens of petty kingdoms, more interested in warring with each other than in opposing the Muslims. Two things protected India from conquest during the Abbassid period. One was the hostile Thar desert, separating India proper from the Muslim lands along the Indus River (modern Pakistan). The desert meant that all attempts at conquest had to be funneled through the northern part of the border, in the Punjab region.

India's second protection was the valiant military tradition of the Rajput rulers of central India. They repelled Muslim raids until the Tenth Century, when the Turks arrived and proved more able and merciless than the Arabs.

During Harun's period, cross-border raids into India were common, and the diplomatic dealings of the Caliphate with the various Indian city-states were extensive and complex. Player-characters might well find ample opportunity for adventure and intrigue in India.

CHINA

China was suffering through the end of a period of rebellion and anarchy. The ruling Tang dynasty had barely survived a revolt by Tatars from the western provinces in 762. The capital city at Ch'ang-an was sacked by rebels before the insurrection was put down. The Tatars in central Asia kept China separated from the Abbassid Caliphate, though it was still renowned as a great and wealthy kingdom. Muslim merchants traded at Canton, and had a small community there, but Muslims knew little about the rest of China.

Official contact between China and the government at Baghdad was limited. Harun sent ambassadors to China, bearing gifts and proclamations of goodwill. But the Chinese were too absorbed in their own affairs to have much interest in the Caliph's far-off realm.

ETHIOPIA

South of Egypt, Ethiopia remained as a Christian island in the Muslim sea. Natural barriers on all sides protected Ethiopia, and its wealth was not enough to make conquest worth the trouble. The kingdom traded with Yemen, but was careful not to trouble the mighty Caliphate. Ethiopia occasionally sent ambassadors to Baghdad, usually with professions of good will.

12.2 THE BYZANTINE FRONTIER

The Abbassid Caliphate shared a land border with only one major state: the Byzantine Empire. (The border with India was far from Baghdad and touched only minor city-states; the Byzantines were a great power directly bordering the Islamic heartland.) The frontier zone in eastern Anatolia was the scene of constant warfare. Even when the two empires were at peace, raiders were constantly testing the defenses of the enemy.

Along the frontier, the two empires appeared almost as weird mirror-images of each other. Both sides constructed elaborate systems of fortifications, allowing for multiple layers of defense. Both sides also used volunteers, warriors fighting for the faith in the hope of either worldly or spiritual rewards. Each considered the other to be heretics and barbarians. Each was heir to a great and advanced civilization.

THE BORDER ZONE (12.2.1)

The closest parallel to the Islamic-Byzantine frontier in modern times might be the now-defunct Iron Curtain. In each instance, two mighty military forces sat face-to-face, and a lively underground trade carried people, goods, and secrets back and forth across the border. Political exiles often fled across the border, and a steady stream of messengers and ambassadors carried threats, entreaties, and declarations of friendship between the two emperors in Baghdad and Constantinople.

One letter from Harun to the Byzantine Emperor Nicephoros, who succeeded the Empress Irene in 802, is especially interesting:

"In the name of Allah, the clement and merciful.

From Harun, Emir of the Believers, to Nicephoros, Dog of the Rum:

I have read your letter. O disloyal son. My answer will reach you sooner than you wish. Greetings!"

The note was followed by an all-out offensive.

FORTIFICATIONS (12.2.2)

The defenses along the Byzantine frontier consisted of a massive complex of castles and fortified towns. These served as defenses against enemy assaults, and as bases for raids into enemy territory.

The fortified line ran across Anatolia from the Mediterranean coast to Armenia, with the main forces gathered at Membidj, a town on the upper Euphrates. A system of fortresses, called Thughurs, made up the front line, with a belt of fortified cities behind them.

From behind this line, the Caliph's armies could launch offensives deep into Byzantine territory. Roughly the entire eastern half of Anatolia was subject to attack. Harun himself led an assault in 797 that penetrated as far as Ankara before turning back.

THE GHAZIS (12.2.3)

The warriors for Islam in the border region were mostly men with nothing to lose. They were poor, but infused with religious fervor. If they died in battle, they would be rewarded in Paradise; if they won victories, they might get rewards in this world. But they were not very amenable to discipline, and occasionally revolted against their commanders. The Caliph used the Ghazis as front-line troops to man the Thughur fortresses, but stationed more obedient regular troops as a second line to monitor the Ghazis.

THE GREEKS (12.2.4)

During the better part of Harun's Caliphate, the Byzantine ruler was the Empress Irene, acting as regent for her son Constantine. Irene was shrewd, cultured, and ruthless. After Constantine came of age in 790, he had her exiled, then recalled her after two years. For five years they ruled jointly, but increasing friction meant that one of them would have to go. In the end it was Constantine; Irene had him blinded and imprisoned, and ruled until 802 as Emperor. She avoided war and promoted internal unity by avoiding religious persecutions.

GREEK MILITARY FORCES

The Byzantine military was always built around a core of highly-skilled professional regulars. To this was added mercenaries and volunteers. A kind of holy warrior called *Akritai* were used as front-line volunteers. Like the Muslim Ghazis, the *Akritai* hoped to win salvation by fighting for the faith. Like the Ghazis, they were undisciplined and were chiefly used for raiding and as cover for the more dependable regular army.

The Greeks were equipped in a manner similar to the Muslim soldiers. Infantry armed with spears and bows made up the front line, while the heavy-hitting force consisted of armored cavalry called *Cataphracts*.

GREEK FIRE

One weapon which helped preserve the Byzantine Empire against more powerful adversaries was the substance known as "Greek Fire." The recipe for it has been lost, but we can make informed guesses about it based on contemporary descriptions. It was a form of liquid fire—medieval Napalm—which burned fiercely even on water. The best theory is that it was based on a petroleum compound, with sulfur and possibly phosphorus added as igniters.

Greek Fire was primarily a naval weapon. Byzantine galleys were armed with catapults to throw canisters of Greek Fire at enemy vessels. The main problem with Greek Fire was its scarcity. Most Byzantine ships would carry only one or two canisters of the stuff. So in battle they would launch it at the enemy only at close range, when a hit was almost certain.

NOTABLE NPCs (12.2.5)

Characters who are adventuring in the Byzantine frontier zone may have a chance to interact with some of the more important individuals of the region.

THE EMPRESS IRENE

Ruler of the Byzantine Empire (with interruptions) until 802, Irene was an extremely talented and ruthless woman. She was able to keep her throne in a male-dominated empire, and fended off foreign enemies on all sides. Irene carefully used the Empire's scarce resources, and did her best to avoid open war with the mighty armies of the Caliph.

Irene is a dowdy middle-aged woman, bony and hard-eyed. She wears elaborate Imperial regalia and thick layers of cosmetics. Irene is surrounded by slaves, guards, servants, and officials literally every second of her day. Just to be sure, though, she carries a concealed dagger.

IRENE **LEVEL 14 NO PROFESSION**

Co: 25 Ag: 45 SD: 83 Re: 89 Me: 96
 St: 25 Qu: 37 Pr: 90 Em: 33 In: 95
 Hits: 62 AT: 1 (none)
 DB: +0

Skills:
 Administration: 70 Leadership: 90
 Diplomacy: 90 Lie Perception: 90
 Etiquette: 82 Meditation: 50
 Languages: Military Organization: 70
 Arabic, spoken: 95/9 Mnemonics: 62
 Arabic, written: 44/4 Philosophy/Religious Doctrine
 Gothic, spoken: 70/7 (Orthodox Christian): 70
 Gothic, written: 64/6 Propaganda: 70
 Greek, spoken: 100/10 Public Speaking: 82
 Greek, wr: 109/10 Seduction: 90
 Latin, spoken: 60/6 Sense Ambush/Assassin: . 100
 Latin, written: 104/10 Tactics (Strategic): 86
 Law (Byzantine): 80 Weapon (Knife): 60

ABD-AL-MALIK GHAZI, MUSLIM COMMANDER

Abd-al-Malik is an Abbassid prince, the Caliph's cousin. From Membidj he commands the entire frontier sector. He is thought to be too old to have any ambitions at becoming Caliph, and so his young cousin has given him this position where he can be useful.

Abd-al-Malik is a competent soldier, who dislikes the intricate social maneuvering of court life. In command of an army, against a powerful enemy, he is quite content. Physically, he is a tall, lean man with a dour expression. He has a very dry wit and frequently makes subtle jokes, though he almost never laughs.

ABD-AL-MALIK GHAZI **LEVEL 15 PALADIN**

Co: 90 Ag: 72 SD: 74 Re: 65 Me: 47
 St: 83 Qu: 76 Pr: 74 Em: 36 In: 95
 Hits: 180 AT: 15 (full chain)
 PP: 89/30 DB: +8 (+0 in armor)/+5 (+0 in armor)

Skills:
 Administration: 53 Philosophy/Religious Doctrine
 Athletic Games: 62 (Islamic): 55
 Calligraphy: 54 Public Speaking: 51
 Cookery: 54 Region Lore (Ps): 35
 Diplomacy: 65 Riding (Horse): 50
 Etiquette: 65 Siege Engineering: 56
 Languages: Signaling: 45
 Greek, spoken: 37/3 Tactical Games (Chess): 45
 Greek, written: 79/7 Tactics (Siege): 54
 Persian, spoken: 77/7 Tactics (Strategic): 45
 Persian, written: 49/4 Weapons:
 Leadership: 65 Knife: 85
 Man In Armor (Chain): . 95 Scimitar: 95
 Mapping: 35 Short Bow: 85
 Military Organization: ... 59 Spear: 90
 Missile Artillery:
 Catapults: 95

Spell Lists: Inspirations to level 10, Arm's Way to level 10

GENERAL STEPHANOS

The Byzantine commander of the frontier zone, Stephanos has Imperial ambitions of his own. He hopes that by winning a great victory against the Muslims he can rally the army to support him and depose the Empress. The only obstacle to this plan is the Muslims, who obstinately refuse to be defeated by him.

Stephanos is a tall, handsome Greek nobleman. He dresses impeccably in the latest style of the court at Constantinople. The General is well-educated, witty, and has perfect manners. He does not especially enjoy military matters, but fights bravely in the field.

GENERAL STEPHANOS **LEVEL 10 CAVALIER**

Co: 90 Ag: 70 SD: 51 Re: 87 Me: 57
 St: 90 Qu: 80 Pr: 56 Em: 39 In: 57
 Hits: 140 AT: 16 (chain hauberk)
 DB: +10 (+0 in armor)/+5 (+0 in armor)

Skills:
 Administration: 40 Maneuvering in Armor:
 Bribery: 35 Chain: 105
 Etiquette: 50 Military Organization: 52
 Interrogation: 55 Philosophy/Religious Doctrine
 Languages: (Orthodox Christian): 52
 Arabic, spoken: 64/6 Propaganda: 15
 Arabic, written: 38/3 Public Speaking: 40
 Greek, spoken: 84/8 Riding (Horse): 20
 Greek, written: ... 108/10 Sailing: 50
 Latin, spoken: 34/3 Sense Ambush/Assassin: ... 25
 Latin, written: 83/8 Tactics (Strategic): 30
 Persian, spoken: 59/5 Weapons:
 Persian, written: 48/4 Broadsword: 92
 Leadership: 40 Knife: 92
 Lie Perception: 45 Spear: 92



JOHN THE THRACIAN

The frontier zone has a lively smuggling trade in people, goods, and information. Probably the leading smuggler is John the Thracian. He was originally a Greek soldier, who deserted after a battle and joined the Muslim side. At least, that's what he claims. Certainly he visits the mosque regularly and makes a great show of Muslim piety. But those who have seen him piously visiting churches on the Greek side of the border might wonder if it is all a pose.

John operates a small horse stable in the small border town of Hadath. He has contacts in the towns on the Greek side of the border, and has "understandings" with some of the commanders on the front. He can arrange for almost anything to get across in either direction—but the price has to be right. John has occasionally been known to "mislay" a shipment if it is valuable enough and he thinks he can get away with it.

Physically, John is short, dark, and roly-poly. He looks very jolly and harmless, and dresses in shabby clothes. John carries several concealed knives, and usually is guarded by one or two low-level Rogues and Fighters.

JOHN THE THRACIAN

LEVEL 7 ROGUE

Co: 77 Ag: 94 SD: 45 Re: 65 Me: 62

St: 74 Qu: 88 Pr: 91 Em: 38 In: 71

Hits: 69

AT: 5 (leather shirt)

DB: +14/+5

Skills:

Acting:	54	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine
Ambush:	30	(Islamic):
Brawling:	61	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine
Bribery:	44	(Orthodox Christian):
Driving:	35	Riding:
Languages:		Sense Ambush/Assassin: ...
Arabic, spoken:	41/4	Streetwise:
Arabic, written:	26/2	Trading:
Greek, spoken:	81/8	Weapons:
Greek, written:	101/10	Knife:
Maneuver In Armor:		Short Sword:
Soft Leather:	61	



ENCOUNTERS IN THE BORDER ZONE (12.2.6)

When characters are traveling through the fortified border zone between the Byzantine Empire and the Abbassid Caliphate, they may run into trouble. Roll for encounters on the table below, on percentile dice. The base encounter chance is 10%.

01-10: Animal

11-35: Patrol

36-60: Peasants

61-75: Raiding Party

76-85: Smugglers

86-95: Traveler

96-00: Supernatural Encounter

Animal: The party encounters some wild animals. Roll on the Steppe Encounter table in Section 16 to determine what sort of animal they find. Human encounters rolled on that table mean that the party has run across some farm animals gone wild.

Patrol: The players encounter a group of "friendly" soldiers. There are ten 1st-level Fighters, led by a 3rd-level Fighter or Cavalier. The men will be mounted on horseback, wearing chainmail and armed with swords and javelins. Patrols will stop and question anyone they encounter. If the party cannot explain what they are doing in the war zone, they will be taken into custody.

Peasants: A group of frightened civilians who have the misfortune to live in the frontier zone. There will be 1-6 of them, mostly 1st-level Farmers, with a few Fighters and Rangers. Peasants will try to avoid encounters, unless the party is obviously weaker than they are. They will be on foot, and unarmored, with only a few knives or clubs as weapons.

Raiding Party: A troop of enemy warriors, who have come in search of plunder. A raiding party consists of 1-100 men, all mounted. Most will be 1st-level Fighters, but some can be Rangers, Cavaliers, or even Bashkars. There will be 1-10 3rd-level characters in command, and large raiding parties will be led by an officer of 5th to 10th level. The soldiers will be wearing either chainmail or leather armor, and will be armed with swords, spears, and bows. Raiding parties will attack anyone they find.

Smugglers: The players encounter a group smuggling goods or secrets across the border. The smugglers will all be mounted, possibly with a wagon. There will be 1-10 smugglers. They will generally be 3rd-level characters, mostly Fighters, Rogues, Gypsies, or Traders. Large groups will be led by a higher-level Fighter or Rogue. They will wear leather armor, and carry swords and knives. Smugglers will try to avoid encounters, but may prey upon a weak group.

Traveler: A lone person or small group, traveling in the border zone for their own purposes. These will be characters of a level comparable to that of the player-characters. They can be of any class. Travelers will not attack, but will defend themselves vigorously. The Gamemaster should determine who they are and what their goals are. Traveler encounters may lead the player-characters into an adventure scenario.

Supernatural Encounter: The party runs into something magical. This can either be a supernatural creature, a ghost, a magical item, or possibly a person under an enchantment. The Gamemaster should determine the nature of the encounter. In a non-magical campaign, this is treated as a Traveler result.



13.0 GEOGRAPHY

Voyages to distant and exotic lands are a mainstay of the *Thousand Nights and a Night*. But the storytellers who created the tales were not very well-versed in geography or comparative cultures. They simply used the names of real places and made up everything else. Consequently gamemasters need not be too careful about geography, especially in a fantasy campaign. Cities, provinces, or even entire kingdoms can be invented without much trouble. Gamemasters running realistic campaigns may need the following information.

13.1 THE MEDIEVAL VIEW OF THE WORLD

There were two competing models of the world in the Medieval period. Scientists and learned men thought the world was a sphere, at the center of the universe. The less well-educated believed it was flat. The Gamemaster should decide which version to use.

THE ROUND WORLD

Medieval scholars and educated people had a view of the world which was relatively accurate. The ancient Greeks had deduced that the Earth is a sphere, and had calculated its diameter. The Romans with their road network had produced accurate maps of Europe and the Near East.

So an educated man in the Abbassid Caliphate would know that the Earth was round, and his geography for the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean regions would be effectively correct. But beyond those areas, knowledge was limited. It was thought that Africa connected to a large land mass south of the Equator in the Indian Ocean, which connected to the East Indies; making the Indian Ocean a landlocked sea. Beyond Japan, the world was completely unknown, and the lands surrounding the Atlantic were entirely a mystery.

THE FLAT WORLD

Among the less well-educated in the Medieval world, it was thought that the Earth was flat. The geography for the lands around the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean coasts was thought to be the same as it is in reality. But beyond the known world were mysterious lands, and then the edge of the world, where the seas flowed off into the void.

13.2 EUROPE

At the time of the Abbassid Caliphate, Europe had recovered from the fall of the western Roman Empire, and was entering a period of prosperity and strength. European civilization was centered in two survivals of the Roman Empire—Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire and the Greek Byzantine Empire. The Muslims knew the two realms as "Frangistan" (the land of the Franks),

and "Rum" (Rome). Both names were also used interchangeably to refer to Europe as a whole. "Frangistan" is still the Arabic term for Europe.

The Holy Roman Empire was centered in France and Germany, and extended down into northern Italy and the Pyrenees. The Emperor Charlemagne was friendly toward the Caliphate, as they had enemies in common.

The Byzantine Empire controlled Anatolia (modern Turkey), Greece, and the Balkan Peninsula. The capital city, Constantinople, was the greatest city in Europe, and was the center of trade between Europe and Asia.

Spain was under the control of the Umayyad Emirate, and was a center of culture and learning. (See Section 12.1.)

Britain and northern Europe were still very much in the Dark Ages. The British Isles were divided between Celts and invading Germanic tribes. Neither side had a central government, but instead were fragmented into several petty kingdoms. Scandinavia was in the heyday of the Vikings, who were raiding the coasts of Europe and sailing as far as Greenland.

Italy had recovered somewhat from the collapse of the Roman Empire and the incursion of the barbarians, and was once again becoming a center of wealth and culture. In Rome, the Pope ruled, backed by Charlemagne. Venice was becoming a major trading center, and her fleet dominated the Adriatic.

Eastern Europe was still controlled by groups of pagan barbarians. The Avars held what is now Hungary and Rumania, and their relatives the Bulgars had already occupied modern Bulgaria. The Ukraine was controlled by the nomadic Magyars (ancestors of the modern Hungarians), while the region from Poland to the Urals was inhabited by Slavs under various petty warlords. North of the Caucasus Mountains was the Khazar Khanate, another semi-nomadic tribe. The Swedes had subjugated the inhabitants of the Baltic shores, and were beginning to establish trade routes and colonies through Russia to the Black Sea.

To Muslims, the Europeans were semi-barbaric infidels. As Christians, they were not considered to be completely heathen, but were still not truly followers of the Faith. The European fondness for eating pork and drinking wine was particularly objectionable. The Muslims considered the Christian use of religious icons and art to be the equivalent of worshipping idols.

13.3 CHINA

China was known to the Muslims as a vast and wealthy kingdom. During the Eighth Century, it was ruled by the Tang Dynasty, and was plagued by internal revolts. There was little direct contact, as Tatar warlords in Central Asia controlled the trade routes. A small settlement of Muslim and Jewish merchants existed at Canton. Several of the stories in the *Book of a Thousand Nights and*

a Night are set in China, and portray it as being identical to any medieval Islamic land. Gamemasters can either use the real China, or follow the logic of the *Arabian Nights* fantasy world and make it another Muslim kingdom.

A visit to China by player-characters would be an epic journey, either by sea or by land. Overland, they would have to contend with hostile Tatars, deserts, the Himalayas, and whatever monsters the Gamemaster chooses to have them encounter. By sea, they would face pirates, storms, and sea monsters. Once in China, the strangeness of the local customs and the intricacies of court politics would be endlessly troublesome.

13.4 INDIA

India lay immediately to the East of the Islamic caliphate, and on the frontier, Muslim warriors were slowly beginning the conquest of the subcontinent. The Thar desert barred the way for armies to enter India from the province of Sind (modern Pakistan), so most military operations took the form of raids by Muslim armies through Punjab and northern India.

Though politically fragmented, India was fantastically rich. Each city-state was filled with palaces, temples, and gardens, all of surpassing beauty. The large number of petty states means that Gamemasters can easily invent kingdoms as needed.

Player-characters can visit India for a number of reasons; including trade, diplomacy, or war. Merchants visited India overland and sailed to Indian ports to trade for spices, cloths, gems, and ivory. The complexities of diplomacy with the various petty kingdoms provide good excuses for adventures with the player-characters employed as ambassadors, couriers, or spies. And military-minded players can send their characters along with raiding parties to steal some of the fabulous wealth of India for themselves.

13.5 SERENDIP

Known to its inhabitants as Simhala, and to us today as Sri Lanka or Ceylon, this island was inhabited by the Singhalese, a primarily Buddhist people of great attainments. It was independent during this period, and was little different from the states of the Indian subcontinent. Serendip is rich in jewels, particularly rubies and pearls, and so would be a prime destination for Muslim merchants.

13.6 TIBET

Tibet at this time was still an independent and powerful kingdom, controlling the entire Himalayan plateau and the modern region of Sinkiang. It was an inaccessible place, governed theocratically by the Buddhist monks of the mountain lamaseries. To Muslims it was a mysterious land of wizards, seldom visited.



13.7 AFRICA

Muslim traders had extensive contact with the east coast of Africa. Zanzibar was a major trading port, inhabited by Arabs, Africans, Persians, and Indians. The rulers were Arabs, and most of the city's trade was with Oman. From history, it is unclear whether or not Zanzibar was subject to the Caliph. The coasts were ruled by various local kings, some of whom were Muslims. Their allegiance varied.

In the west of Africa, the oasis cities of the Sahara had strong ties with the Muslims of the Mediterranean coast. Caravans reached south to the African kingdoms of Songhai, Mali, and Timbuktu.

Ethiopia remained Christian and stubbornly independent.

13.8 THE INDIES

The Indonesian archipelago was mostly inhabited by Hindus. The islands produced many spices which Muslims craved—cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, camphor, and pepper. Muslim traders called at many island ports on the islands of Java and Sumatra, as well as the Malay Peninsula. The island kingdoms were too powerful and too far away for the Muslims to conquer, but many of the merchants acted as part-time missionaries, and began to make converts. Others settled in Malaysia and raised families there. In time, the Muslims became the majority in Malaysia and much of Indonesia.

13.9 ELSEWHERE

At the time of Harun Al-Rashid, nothing was known of the world beyond the Europe-Asia-Africa land mass. Ambitious Gamemasters might send their players off to one of the undiscovered continents. A storm in the Indian Ocean could deposit travelers on the shores of Australia; perhaps powerful magic could send a party of Muslims to Aztec Mexico or Inca Peru. Ships sailing in the East Indies could venture out into the Pacific and land at the islands of Polynesia. Player-characters might even go on a voyage to Antarctica.

Gamemasters could also put completely imaginary continents in the blank spots on the map. If the player-characters are sailing west from Gibraltar hoping to discover America, imagine their surprise when they reach a land totally unlike what they expect—perhaps mythical Atlantis, or some of the lands of Middle-earth.

13.10 FANTASTIC PLACES

Many of the *Arabian Nights* stories involve visits to strange and fantastic places. Player-characters in an *Arabian Nights* campaign can also travel to unusual locations. Some of the more noteworthy locations of legend are described below.

THE CITY OF BRASS

Located somewhere in the Sahara Desert, this wondrous city is utterly abandoned. The inhabitants starved to death during a famine, but not before erecting powerful magic defenses to preserve their city from looters. The empty city is full of bodies and stone tablets carved with warnings against pride and sin.

IREM OF THE THOUSAND PILLARS

"With many-columned Irem, the like of which was not created in the lands...."—Koran, Sura LXXXIX

Irem was a mythical city of southern Arabia, said to have been cursed by Allah. A more complete description is given in the adventure "The Camel's Tale" (see Section 19).

THE MAGNETIC ISLAND

This strange island is somewhere in the Indian Ocean, off the coast of Africa. The island is a single huge mass of magnetic iron. Any ships passing nearby will be pulled towards it if they are built with iron nails. The shores of the island are covered with the wrecks of ships, many of them filled with valuable treasure. The interior of the island is a dangerous wilderness.

PETRA

This city is as fantastic as anything in legend, but actually exists in Jordan. It was built by the Nabataeans, a client kingdom of the

Roman Empire. Petra is an entire city carved from the rock walls of a hidden valley. There are houses, temples, and public buildings, all dug into the canyon walls, with elaborate Roman-style facades. The underground chambers and tunnels of Petra extend deep into the rock—who knows what strange creatures might lurk in the abandoned city?

THE ANTIPODES

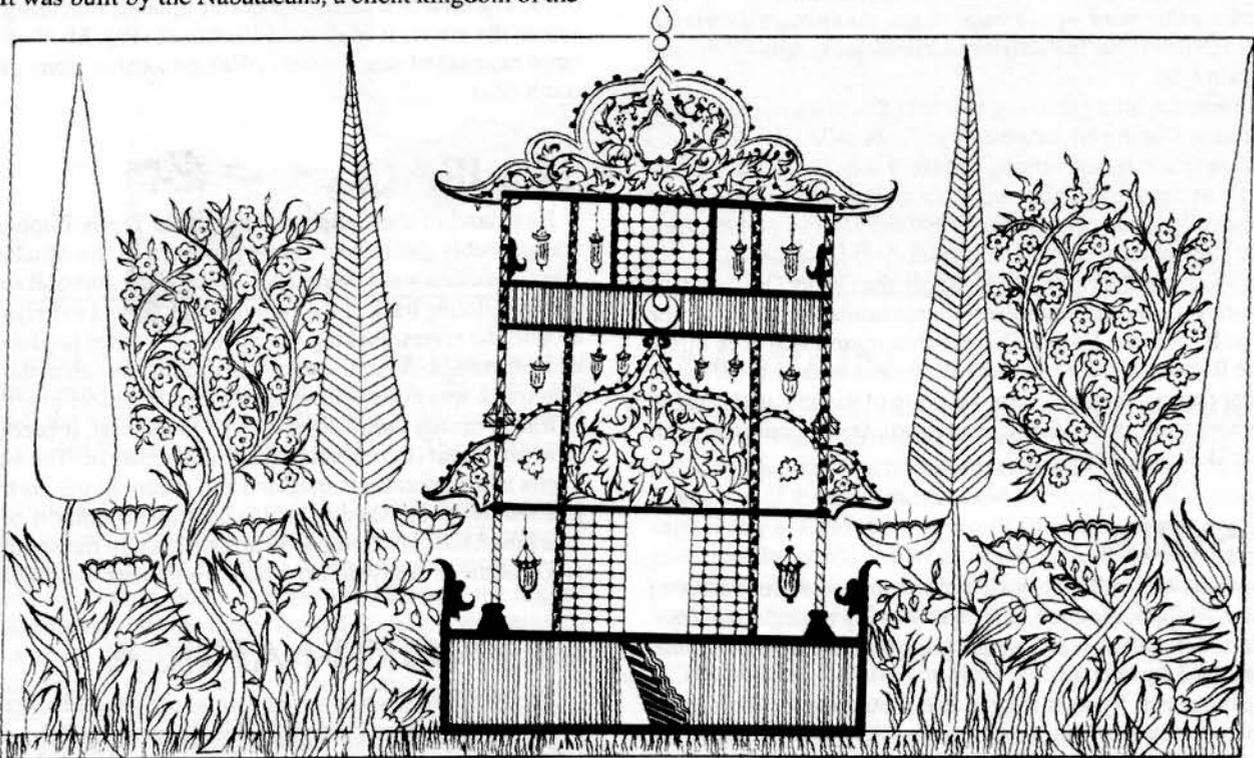
Beyond the oceans, lies the Antipodes, the land never visited by mortals. All manner of strange creatures dwell here—dog-headed men, or men with no heads. The Simurgh-bird dwells in the Antipodes, as do the kings of the Jinn and Marids. Intrepid explorers sailing to the Antipodes will have to survive all the perils of the sea, as well as the strange inhabitants of the lands they reach.

THE MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON

Somewhere in the interior of Africa is the mythical mountain range called the Mountains of the Moon. This range is the source of the Nile river, and is said to be the site of King Solomon's gold mines. But Africa is full of strange beasts and tribes of mighty warriors; a group of Muslim explorers would have to be very strong, brave, and clever. The Mountains of the Moon could either be the actual Ruwenzori range of the African Lake District, or a completely imaginary range of giant mountains.

GOG AND MAGOG

According to Arab legend, the emperor Iskander (Alexander the Great to Europeans) built a great wall far to the east (perhaps the Great Wall of China) to confine the terrible warlike peoples of Gog and Magog. Their great kingdoms still exist somewhere near the edge of the world.



14.0 AN ISLAMIC GAZETTEER



Even if the player-characters never travel beyond the lands inhabited by Muslims, they can still cover quite a bit of territory. The most important regions are described below.

14.1 ARABIA

Arabia was the birthplace of Islam, but by the time of the Abbassid Caliphs, it had lost its position as the center of Islamic civilization. Mecca and Medina remained important places of pilgrimage, and protection of the annual hajj was one of the chief duties of the Caliph's government.

Outside the pilgrimage cities, however, the Bedouin tribes had lapsed back into their original poverty. They herded camels and goats, fought with each other, and extracted tolls and protection money from travelers.

The landscape of Arabia is varied. In the west, along the coast of the Red Sea, lies the rocky Hejaz region. The Hejaz is very rough and uneven terrain, similar to the badlands of the American west. The Hejaz is volcanic in origin, and has large expanses of old lava flows or sharp basalt blocks. But the rough terrain hides springs and oases, so that most of the trade routes go through the Hejaz, rocky though it may be. In game terms, the Hejaz is Arid Piedmont/Hills terrain (Pa).

In the east, the hills give way to a vast flat plain of steppe and desert. The northern part, around Riyadh, is called the Nejd, and supports some scrub vegetation. The Nejd is actually a dry grassland, and is marginally habitable. Surrounding the Nejd is a belt of stony desert. It is an Arid Short Grassland (Sa) in game terms, while the surrounding stony desert is an Arid Desert (Za).

To the south lies the vast Rub-Al-Khali, the Empty Quarter. This titanic sandy desert is completely uninhabitable, even to the Bedouins. It is in the Empty Quarter that mythical places might hide. The Rub-Al-Khali is an Arid Waste environment (Wa).

Another expanse of sandy desert is north of Riyadh, in the Nafud desert, where modern Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia come together. It is an Arid Waste (Wa).

14.2 SYRIA

The Levant was still a very rich place; with the great cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Antioch, and Tyre serving as important trading centers. Jerusalem was a major pilgrimage site for Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike.

Along the coast, Syria is rugged and mountainous, with a thin strip of pleasant land on the Mediterranean side. In game terms, the coastal strip is Semi-Arid Piedmont (Ps), while the mountains are Arid Mountains (Ma). The interior of Syria is stony desert (Za). In the north it becomes a dry grassland (Sa). To the south lies the Nafud.

14.3 EGYPT

The incredible fertility of the Nile valley, and the industry of the Egyptian farmers, made the region a major "breadbasket."

The capital city was Al-Askar, near what is now modern Cairo (Cairo itself was founded in 969, and eventually swallowed up Al-Askar). It is primarily a military camp. Alexandria had entered a decline, and the famous Library there was destroyed during the Muslim invasion (the Muslims were not entirely to blame; the Library had suffered during the Byzantine-Persian war, and from Christian zealotry).

The splendors of ancient Egypt were still visible, though the Sphinx was buried in sand up to its neck. It was said that the Caliph Al-Mamun (Harun Al-Rashid's son) once tried to bore a shaft into the Great Pyramid, in search of treasure. He spend a hundred thousand dirhams on the project, and eventually uncovered a treasure chamber containing exactly a hundred thousand dirhams. Taking this as a sign from Allah, he abandoned the project.

The shores of the Nile are all rich fertile land, Semi-Arid Freshwater Banks (Fs). The river delta is a Humid Saltwater Coast (Oh). The Red Sea coast is a desert upland, mirroring the Hejaz across the water; it is all Arid Piedmont (Pa). Most of Egypt is a large expanse of sandy desert (Wa), becoming stony desert in the south (Za).

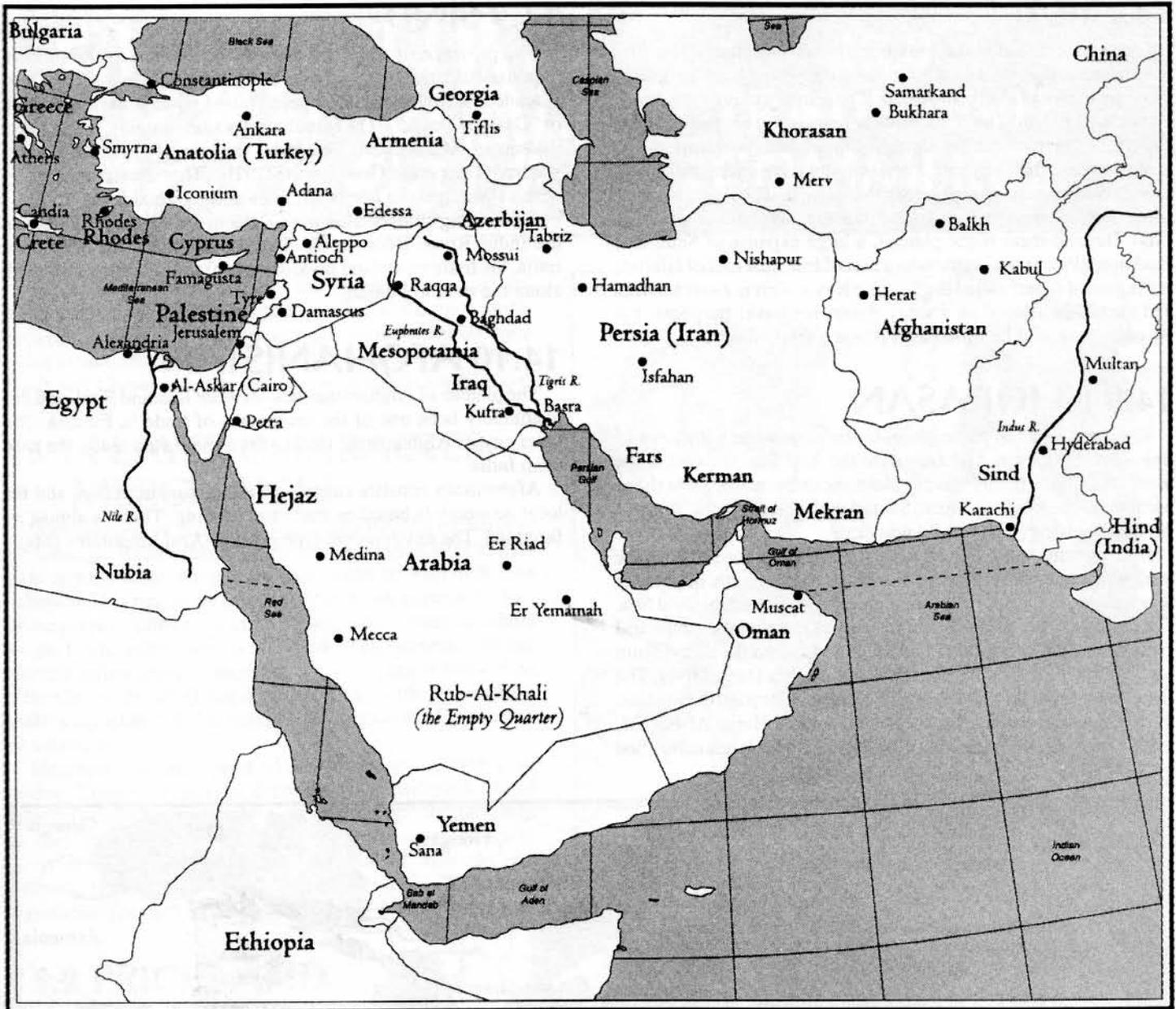
14.4 IRAQ

Heartland of the Caliphate, the fertile Tigris-Euphrates valley was probably the richest single province in the Muslim domain. The chief cities were Baghdad, Kufa, and the port of Basra. A canal network dating back to the Babylonians served to irrigate the land around the rivers, making the province a great producer of grain and vegetables. A large area of marsh at the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates was always hard for the central rulers to govern.

Iraq is mostly stony desert (Za). On the east, it becomes Semi-Arid piedmont (Ps), meeting the Iranian plateau. The valley of the Tigris and Euphrates is irrigated and green. In the north are some grasslands, in the shadow of the Taurus Mountains of Anatolia. The grasslands is a Semi-Arid steppe (Ss). In the southwest there is a section of sandy desert where Iraq meets the Nafud desert.

14.5 NORTH AFRICA

The North African coast, known as the Maghrib, was independent in all but name. The Aghlabid governors of the province of Ifriqya (Africa) sent a nominal tribute to the Caliph, but conducted their government without interference—even to the extent of sending their own ambassadors to the Emperor Charlemagne. Their capital was at Kairouan, in modern Tunisia, and their government extended over modern Libya, Tunisia, and part of Algeria. Major cities of Ifriqya included Tunis and Tripoli.



The Idrisid family of rulers in Morocco were more independent yet, with their own Caliph. They controlled modern Morocco and Algeria, and the caravan routes to the south. Major cities of Morocco included Marrakesh, Algiers, and Oran. The capital was Fez.

The coastline of North Africa is a strip of fertile land, widest in Algeria and Tunisia. It should be considered Temperate Piedmont/Hills terrain (Pm). In Libya, there is a large stretch of stony desert (Za) immediately inland, but in Algeria and Morocco the rugged Atlas Mountains separate the desert from the coast. The interior of Algeria is a sandy desert basin, the Great Erg. Far inland, in the center of the Sahara, is a region of desert uplands (Pa).

The Sahara is a relatively young desert—ten thousand years ago it was all grasslands. Modern satellites have detected signs of ancient civilization in the Sahara. Who knows what ruins await adventurers among the sands?

14.6 SPAIN

Under the Umayyad Emirs, Spain was a rich and prosperous country. It was insulated from the Caliphate by the Aghlabids of the Maghrib, and was protected from the Franks by the Pyrenees. It was one of the most tolerant and cultured places in Europe. The capital city at Cordoba was one of the most elegant and civilized places in the world. Most of Spain is temperate grasslands and piedmont. The Estremadura section on the Spanish-Portuguese border is a Semi-Arid piedmont (Ps). In the north, the Pyrenees are temperate mountains (Mm).

The political situation in Spain is described in Section 12.1.

14.7 IRAN

Iran was an important province to the Caliphate. The dry, mountainous plateau was a poor place for farming, but produced large quantities of sheep and goats. The primary cities were Rayy, Hamadan, Isfahan. The Iranians were heirs to a great and civilized culture, so many of them occupied important positions in the government of the Caliphate. Persian styles were a great influence.

Iran is mostly semi-arid rather than desert. The Zagros mountains, which separate Iran from Iraq, are Semi-arid mountains (Ms). Beyond them is the plateau, a large expanse of Semi-arid Piedmont (Ps). In the northeastern part of Iran, just east of Isfahan, is a region of desert called the Dasht-e Kavir. This is a vast salt flat, and should be treated as a stony desert for travel purposes, but encounters should be rolled as if it was a sandy desert.

14.8 KHORASAN

Khorasan was the name given to the region north and east of Iran, stretching from Afghanistan to the Aral Sea, and east to the borders of China. In this vast dry plain, the chief industry was sheep herding. In the cities of Merv, Samarkand, and Bokhara, some of the best weaving in the world was done.

In the southwestern part of Khorasan, where it borders Iran, the land is a sandy desert called the Kara Kum. North of there it becomes a semi-arid grassland, in the region around the Aral Sea. The valley of the Oxus (or Amu Darya) river is also semi-arid grassland. Another stretch of sandy desert called the Kyzyl Kum separates the Oxus valley from the Jaxartes (Syr Darya) river. The Jaxartes valley is also semi-arid and habitable. Beyond the Jaxartes the land becomes a huge steppe. At the time of Harun Al-Rashid, the Jaxartes was the border between Islam and the lands controlled by the Turks.

14.9 SIND

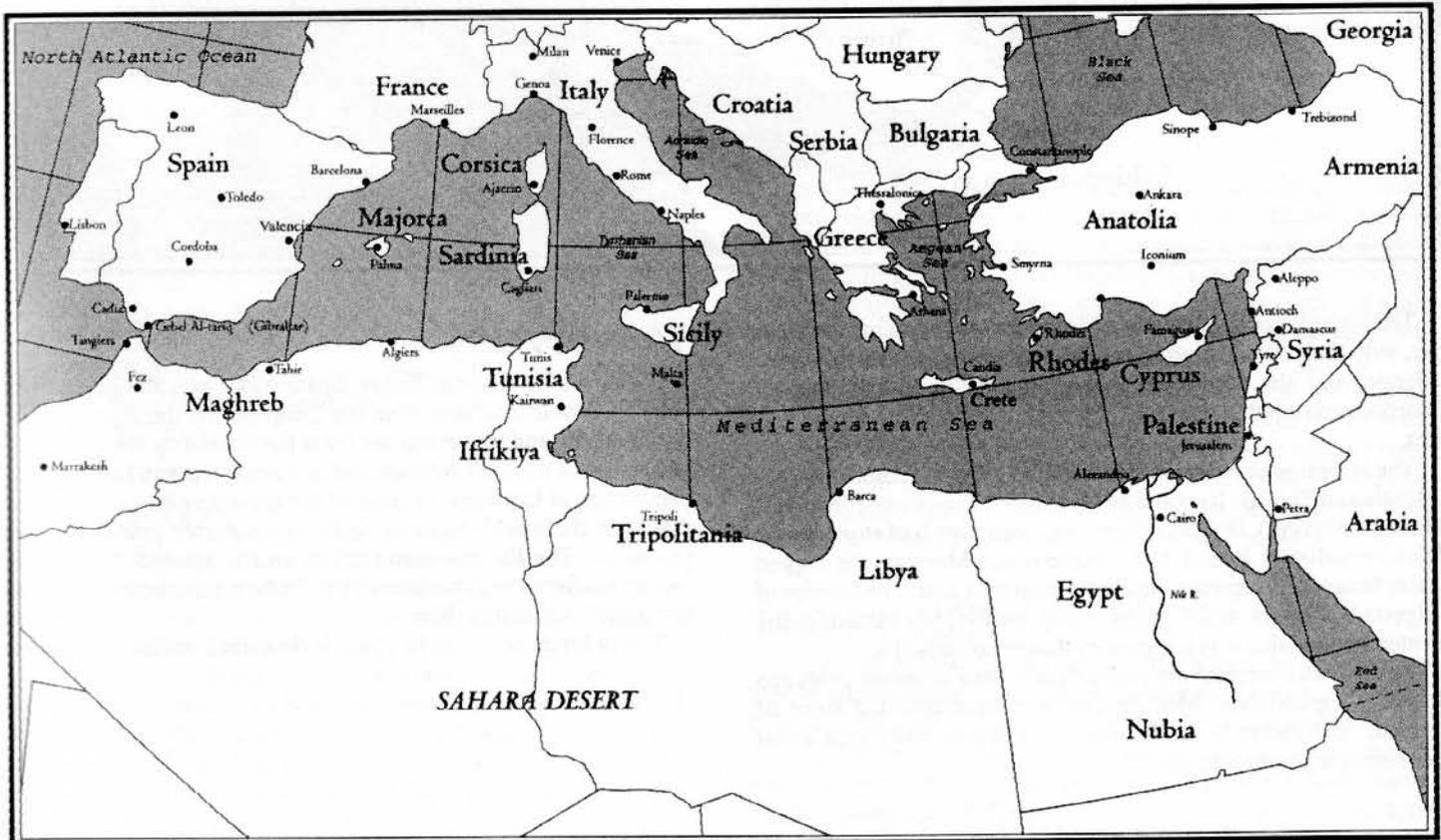
The province of Sind was roughly equivalent to the modern nation of Pakistan. It consisted of the valley of the Indus River, and extended eastward to the Thar desert (also known as the Marusthali, or "Oasis of Death"). The rest of Sind was mountains, rising to the plateau of Afghanistan. The Indus river valley was all a well-watered Temperate Grassland (St). The Thar Desert is a sandy desert (Wa), and the rest is all Semi-arid mountains (Ms).

The leading cities of Sind were Karachi and Hyderabad, both on the Indus River. Because the Thar Desert separates Sind from India, the trade route (and invasion route) to India stretched north along the river to Punjab.

14.10 AFGHANISTAN

The plateau of Afghanistan lies between Iran and Sind, and has historically been one of the crossroads of trade in Eurasia. The chief city of Afghanistan, Herat, was a main stop along the road from India.

Afghanistan consists entirely of mountainous terrain, and the local economy is based on trade and herding. There is almost no farmland. The environment type is Semi-Arid Mountains (Ms).





15.0 TRADE AND COMMERCE

The Muslims were probably the greatest traders of the Medieval period. The Caliphate controlled all the trade routes between Europe and the Orient, and Arab merchants were quick to take advantage of that. Muslim traders ranged as far as Spain and China, and ventured into Africa and Central Asia.

15.1 PLAYER CHARACTER MERCHANTS

Merchant player-characters must often take the initiative in a campaign. Rather than waiting for the Gamemaster to provide opportunities, the players must come up with their own schemes. This requires a fair amount of knowledge on the part of the players. They must know what goods to trade in, where to get them, and where to sell them. The Gamemaster can provide information—things the characters might know even if the players do not. But at some point one of the players must make a decision: "We're going to sell rugs to the Egyptians," or whatever.

Merchants will not spend all their time making money, of course. They will have to negotiate with foreigners, travel through hostile territory, and deal with corrupt officials. And as they travel, merchants will have ample opportunity to discover ruins, caves, and fortresses full of monsters and treasure. The experiences of Sindbad the Sailor can be taken as a guideline for such adventures.

15.2 PRICES AND BARGAINING

Prices for goods vary widely; that's how merchant make money by buying low and selling high. Players can use the system outlined in Section 7.3 of *CaL*. The Trading skill of the two participants in a deal are used as modifiers to the roll—the buyer's skill will act to lower the price, the seller's will raise it.

Most cities along trade routes will be Supplied Markets, with no modifier to the price of goods. Places that produce a specific commodity (listed below in the discussion of Trade Routes), are considered Oversupplied for that item. Cities not along trade routes are considered Undersupplied, or even Isolated markets.

Prices for items listed in *CaL* can be converted to Dirhams and Dinars at a rate of 1.6 Dinars per gold piece, or 0.6 gold pieces per Dinar. Unless the Gamemaster and the players want to take a course in medieval economics, use the fixed standard of 10 Dirhams to the Dinar. So the entire **RM** price structure converts to Muslim currency at a rate of 3 to 5. The simplest method to deal with money, of course, is to just call gold pieces Dirhams, and use the prices as given in *CaL*.



15.3 HAZARDS ON THE ROAD

Of course, very few merchant ventures go off without a hitch. There are a number of things that can go wrong in the course of a trading voyage, all of which provide interesting opportunities for role-playing.

BANDITS

Robbers were common on the road, and not merely because the authorities did little to stop them. In many places, the bandits *were* the authorities!

The Bedouin bandits of the desert were known for their sense of honor, even towards their victims. A Bedouin robber, after subduing the traveler, would claim that the goods he was taking were needed by a relative. If the victim agreed to "lend" the booty to the robber, he might be able to keep a few necessary items. But a victim who was not generous and tried to resist would be killed.

Other robbers were not so chivalrous, preferring to kill passing travelers from long range with arrow fire, and loot the bodies.

TOLLS AND PROTECTION MONEY

Many bandits or local brigands were clever enough to see that a dead merchant can only be robbed once, but a live one can be fleeced every time he passes through. Thus, many chieftains would accept a large bribe in exchange for not attacking caravans and protecting them against other brigands.

Among the Bedouins of the Arabian desert, the term was "Rifkah." A traveler would pay a fee to a member of the tribe, and in exchange that person would become the traveler's protector. The fee was usually only a Dinar, but of course an obviously wealthy traveler would be expected to pay more. Anyone without a protector was fair game to be robbed and murdered, but one who had paid the Rifkah was considered a member of the tribe, and the tribe would be honor-bound to avenge any injury.

ILLNESS

Disease was a fact of life in medieval times, and travelers were especially vulnerable as they were exposed to new strains of germs in their wanderings. Notable diseases of the era included smallpox, dysentery, tuberculosis, malaria, and leprosy. Syphilis was unknown, and other venereal diseases were rare.

While authentic, it is hardly sporting of the Gamemaster to simply tell his players "you've got the Black Plague. Sorry." But disease can be used as an effective plot device—if the Gamemaster needs to keep his players in town an extra week, have one of them get sick.



The term quarantine comes from the medieval practice of isolating newly-arrived travelers for forty days, to make certain they were not carrying disease. Muslim states practiced similar precautions, with varying degrees of success. Travelers might expect to spend long periods in quarantine as they travel from place to place.

15.4 TRADE GOODS

Because transport was mostly limited to animals and small ships, merchants tended to specialize in compact, high-value goods. The basic unit of measurement was the *Ratl*, roughly equal to a pound.

GRAIN

Grain was sold by the *Kurr*, equal to about 3 tons. Wheat prices varied widely depending on the harvest, but the base price for wheat was 5 Dinars per ton (3 gold pieces). The price of barley was about 3 Dinars per ton (2 gold pieces), and rice cost 1 dinar per ton (6 Sp). Milled flour cost 5 times the basic grain price. The price of beans and nuts was roughly twice that of wheat—at the wholesale level, anyway. Most grain in Islam was produced in the three "breadbasket" provinces (Egypt, Iraq, and Sind).

JEWELS

Amber came from the Baltic, transported by Viking traders along the Russian rivers. Rubies and emeralds came from Serendip (Ceylon), and pearls from the Andaman Islands. Ivory came from sub-Saharan Africa and from India.

The cost of jewels varies so much with size and quality that it is impossible to specify exact prices. They can be divided into three classes: Precious Stones, Semiprecious Stones, and Valuable Stones. Diamonds, rubies, and emeralds are typical Precious Stones. These are valued at 100-1000 Dinars per gram. Some examples of Semiprecious Stones are garnets, opals, and pearls. Semiprecious Stones are valued at 10-100 Dinars per gram. Valuable Stones are materials like amber and ivory, which are valued at about 1-10 Dinars per gram.

PORCELAIN

The best porcelains in the world came from China. The Muslim upper classes bought vast amounts of Chinese dishes and tableware, and paid alchemists (and other scientists) huge sums of money to try and duplicate the unique glazes. Chinese porcelains cost about 100 times the normal price of pottery.

TEXTILES

The primary industrial product in Islamic countries was cloth. There was a wide variety of textiles produced: wools from Persia and Khorasan, cotton from Egypt, linens were produced almost everywhere, silk was produced in China (though the Byzantines had imported silkworms and set up their own silk industry). Silk was always the most valuable of the textiles, though Muslims were forbidden to wear pure silk (and instead wove it mixed with other fibers).

Cotton cloth cost 1 Dirham per 2 square yards of material. Wool cost 1 Dirham per 3 square yards for coarse cloth, and 1 Dirham per square yard for fine wool. Linen cost about the same as coarse wool. Silk fetched about 5 Dirhams per square yard.

PERFUMES

Musk was a valuable commodity, valued as a perfume and as a cooking spice. Other scents included attar of roses, civet, ambergris, jasmine oil, aloe-wood, and extract of cinnamon. Frankincense was used as incense for Christian churches throughout Europe. It is produced from a kind of aloe plant which grows in Yemen. Perfumes generally cost 1 Dirham per gram.

SPICES

The spice trade with the Far East was one of the most lucrative businesses in the Middle Ages. Spices like cinnamon, cumin, coriander, cardamom, and pepper all were oversupplied in the East Indies, but undersupplied in the Muslim lands and unsupplied in Europe. The base cost for spices is 1 Dirham per gram.

The cheaper spices like sesame, mustard, poppy-seed, and caraway fetched a price of about 1 Dirham (or silver piece) per kilogram. These were produced all through Europe and the Middle East, and so would get little markup when imported.

SLAVES

Slaves came from Russia, Africa, and India. A highly talented slave girl, carefully trained in music and dance, might cost as much as two thousand Dinar. Domestic servant women cost 10 to 20 Dinar, while a trained and talented house slave might fetch twice that. Boys cost 5 dirham, girls a little more, and eunuchs cost a Dinar or more.

Because modern Americans consider the entire idea of slavery loathsome, player-characters will probably want to avoid dealing in slaves. In fact, if they are ever taken captive in battle, the PCs might find themselves being sold as slaves!

15.5 TRADE ROUTES

The trade routes in the Muslim world linked Europe, Asia and Africa, and carried a significant proportion of the world's merchant traffic.

From Africa, goods came either up the east coast of the continent by sea, or across the Sahara by caravan. The chief trade was in gold, ivory, and slaves. The sea route ended at Egypt, while the desert route went from the Niger river north to Fez in Morocco, then east along to coast to Al-Askar in Egypt. Most of the trade between Africa and the rest of the world went through Egypt.

Trade between Islam and Europe was mostly by sea. Venetian and Greek traders touched at ports in the Levant (particularly Antioch). The Greeks brought timber, slaves, furs, grain, fish, and amber from Russia. The Venetians carried wool, wine, grain, and metals from France and Germany.

From Asia, traffic came either overland along the Silk Road through Turkestan, or by sea via the Indian Ocean. The Silk Road led from China to Samarkand, then to Nishapur, and entered Iran



before winding up at Baghdad. The land route carried silk (of course), silver, gold, metals, slaves and paper from China. The sea route transported ivory, spices and wood from Indonesia and India, and jewels from Serendip. Some trade with India was conducted overland, via the Indus river valley and the Punjab region. But frequent wars and banditry made the sea route preferable.

Once trade goods reached the borders of the Caliphate, all roads led to Baghdad. Trade from Africa went through Cairo to Damascus and Aleppo, then east through the Fertile Crescent to Baghdad. Seaborne trade from Asia wound up at Basra, then was moved upriver by boat to Wasit and Baghdad. Land trade from Asia came through Hamadan and Isfahan in Iran. And from Damascus, Baghdad, and Basra the pilgrimage routes led south through the Arabian deserts to Mecca and Medina.

16.0 SURVIVAL AND TRAVEL IN THE DESERT



"It was a desert peopled only with echoes—a place of death for what little there is to die in it—a wilderness where, to use my companion's phrase, there is nothing but He."—Burton, Pilgrimage.

16.1 ABOUT DESERTS

A desert is a region where there is little rain, and consequently very little plant life. To outsiders, all deserts seem very much alike, but in fact there are several types of deserts. The three distinct kinds are: uplands, stony desert, and sandy desert. These correspond to the *RM* terrain types Arid Piedmont/Hill (Pa), Arid Desert (Za), and Arid Waste (Wa), respectively.



UPLANDS

Desert uplands consist of rugged, exposed mountains with little or no topsoil, constantly weathered and sculpted by rain and wind. Often the rocks in uplands are carved into bizarre shapes. The softer layers of limestone and sandstone give way easily, leaving bare the granite bones of the land. Desert uplands often have twisting channels cut by flash floods, and numerous hollows and caves. The Hejaz of western Arabia, the Jordan desert, and much of Iran and Syria consist of desert uplands. Surrounding the uplands are usually large tracts of smoothly-sloping land formed by debris that has washed down.

WADIS

A Wadi is a gully or canyon in the desert. (The separate Wadi environment skill listed in *RMC II* should be ignored—if you know about wadis, you know about the desert around them, and vice versa.) They often hold waterholes and have scrub vegetation.

But when it rains, a wadi can become a very dangerous place. Flash floods in the desert can be extremely powerful because there is no vegetation to hold the soil and slow down the flow of water. Water speeds of 7 meters per second (15 mph) have been measured in wadis in the Sahara.

LAKES AND OASES

Desert lakes are usually salty and surrounded by baked mud flats and plains of dried salt, unless there is a constant replenishment of the lake water. The Dead Sea is so salty as to be almost devoid of life. An oasis is either a small lake or a spring fed by underground aquifers. In the deserts of Arabia and the Sahara, oasis towns were vital stops along the trade routes. Tribes which controlled oases were very powerful. It is very rare to encounter an oasis which is not inhabited.

STONY DESERTS

Stony deserts are large flat expanses of closely-packed stones. The rocks range in size from gravel to boulders. There is very little vegetation. Expanses of boulder-sized rocks are called *Hamada* in Arabic, while gravel tracts are passable and are called *Reg* or *Serir*. In the Libyan Sahara are large areas of boulder-strewn desert; these are almost completely impassable, even to camels. Travel speed in a *Hamada* is halved for animals and walking men, and is impossible for wagons.

When most people think of deserts, they envision huge expanses of titanic sand dunes, whipping winds, and ceaseless sun. That is a sandy desert. Sandy deserts, while the most visually distinctive, are actually rare. Only 15 percent of the Sahara desert is sandy. The dune fields are known as *ergs*. Sandy deserts exist in flat stretches where there is almost no water at all, and the wind becomes the primary force shaping the land. Sand dunes halve all movement for walkers and animals, and are virtually impassable to wheeled vehicles.

CONDITIONS IN THE DESERT

The desert heats up rapidly after sunrise, but cools slowly at night. Consequently the highest temperature is between noon and 4 pm, while the coolest part of the night is just before dawn. During the day it gets hot—very hot. Temperatures in the Arabian desert have been recorded as high as 120° F. The morning dew can be very important in the desert; it is often the only source of water.

The winds increase with the temperature, so sandstorms usually arise in the afternoon. Desert winds can be very fierce, with speeds up to 50 miles per hour.

Rainstorms are usually rare, but intense. The rainy season in the Syrian desert is winter, with the most rain in January and February. Sudden rainstorms can create flash-floods in low-lying parts of the desert. Occasionally, a storm in one area can create flooding several miles away, as rainwater roars down watercourses.

The glare is always very strong in a desert. Gamemasters may wish to give characters a -10% penalty to all rolls for Perception and vision due to glare. This can create strange mirages when combined with blowing dust and heat shimmer. People can see ponds of water, cities, or strange creatures. If the person is partly dehydrated and desperate from thirst, a mirage can seem quite real.

16.2 HUMAN REQUIREMENTS

The chief requirement for humans in the desert is water. When the temperature is very high, humans sweat to keep cool, and lose enormous amounts of water. Because the humidity is so low, sweat evaporates instantly, so a person in the desert may not realize how much water he is losing.

THE NECESSARY MINIMUM (16.2.1)

How much water a person needs in the desert depends on what he is doing and what he is wearing. A man carrying a loaded pack (or doing hard work) requires nearly a quart of water per hour during the day; a man resting during the day needs only half as much. Doing an 8-hour shift of work during the day (and resting at night) causes a water requirement of nearly 3 gallons of water per day. Doing the same work during the night (and resting during the day) causes a water requirement of only 2 gallons of water per day.

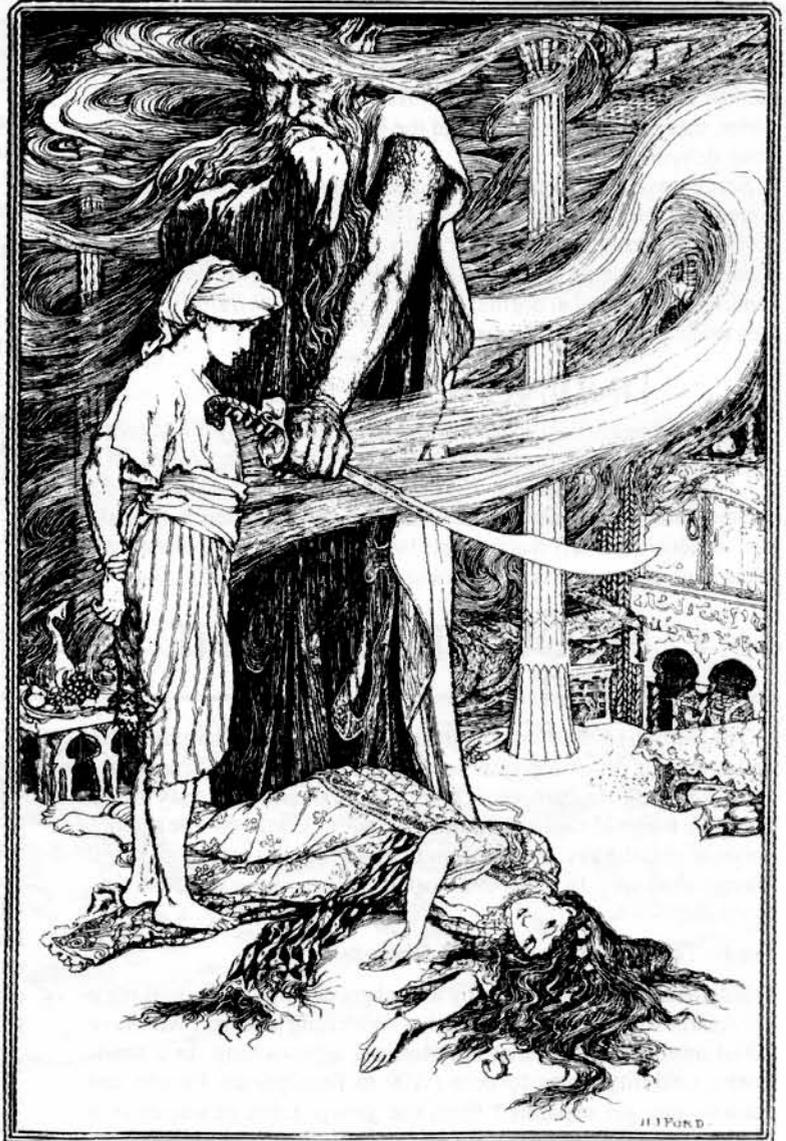
Clothing becomes very important. An unclothed man uses a third again as much water as a clothed one. Travelers in the desert learn quickly to keep covered as much as possible. A cloak or burnous protects against sunburn and wind-blown sand, and by shading the body it helps keep a person cool. Color of the clothing turns out to be relatively unimportant. White outer garments do reflect a little more sunlight, but Arabs wearing Abbassid black are under no great handicap.

DEHYDRATION AND HEAT EXHAUSTION (16.2.2)

But what happens if someone doesn't get enough water? The body will use up all its reserves for cooling, to keep the body from cooking itself. This leads to dehydration. Dehydration produces a decrease in blood circulation, so that the body does not receive enough oxygen and nutrients—hence the term "heat exhaustion." Eventually, the blood cannot circulate fast enough to keep the body alive.

For each 24-hour period spent in the desert without adequate water, a character must make a Constitution roll (roll adding Co bonus, 101+) to avoid dehydration. Each day after the first, his Constitution is reduced by one tenth of the starting temporary (rounding down)—so a character with a Constitution of 85 would have 85 the first day, 77 on the second day, 69 on the third, and so on. A failed roll means that the character takes 1d10 hits of damage from dehydration, and all his stats and skills are reduced by the same fraction as his Constitution (optionally, the GM could use the Starvation/Dehydration Critical table in *RMC V*). When Constitution reaches 0, the character has died of thirst.

If the character gets an adequate supply of water for one day, the decline is halted. If he gets at least four gallons for a day, his Constitution return to normal. The concussion hits heal at the usual rate.



16.3 TRAVEL IN THE DESERT

Since much of the Muslim world was covered by deserts, even urban characters will occasionally find themselves in the desert while traveling from one city to another.

TRAVEL ON FOOT (16.3.1)

Because humans cannot carry a heavy load of water, a person on foot cannot get very far in the desert unless he knows how to find water. Travelers in the desert prefer to avoid the hot sun by sleeping in the shade during the day and marching at night. Men on foot can travel at normal speeds in most desert terrain; only in a sandy desert is their movement rate halved.

TRAVEL BY CAMEL (16.3.2)

Since camels are native to desert environments, they are the perfect mount for travel through a desert. A camel can go about two miles per hour on level ground, and can generally cover twenty miles in a day's travel. They require water every hundred miles or so. For each day beyond the first five that a camel goes without water, there is a 10% chance that the beast will suddenly collapse from dehydration.

Some travelers on camel-back use a litter, or Shugdud (a sort of tented platform slung on the camel's back). The Shugdud is used mostly by women and invalids. The advantage of a Shugdud is that it provides shade for the traveler, and protection from windblown sand. Camels travel at normal speeds in all desert terrain. Their big feet make even sandy deserts passable.

FINDING WATER (16.3.3)

It is very hard to find water in the desert—that's why it's a desert. A Region Lore or Foraging skill roll is needed to find water. In a Stony Desert (Za) there is a -10% penalty to the roll, and in a Sandy Desert (Wa) the penalty is -30%. Camels and other desert animals can sometimes smell water; their base chance is 10%. However, there is no guarantee that the water will be potable.

16.4 ENCOUNTERS IN THE DESERT

The following encounter chart shows the chance of an encounter in the various desert environments. This is a "realistic" encounter table, with real creatures and conditions. Gamemasters may prefer to use the tables in *Creatures and Treasures*, which provide a wider range of encounters. Encounters marked with an asterisk (*) are fantasy creatures. In a non-magical campaign, these are treated as "Nothing."

Wadi: The party finds a typical Wadi.

Sandstorm: The party is hit by a sandstorm. Characters making a successful Region Lore or Weather-Watching skill roll will have 1D10 minutes' notice that the storm is approaching. In a sandstorm, visibility drops to zero (-100 to Perception). People and animals can get separated from the group. Each character in a group can make one Driving or Animal Handling skill roll to secure one animal. Secured animals remain with the party; unsecured ones will wander off 50% of the time.

The windblown sand can damage unprotected individuals. Characters who fail to make a Region Lore roll will suffer 1d10 hits of damage from the abrasive sand particles. The sand also completely covers any tracks, making Tracking rolls impossible (-100 to Perception).

Rainstorm: If this is the rainy season, the party experiences a sudden shower. If it is not the rainy season, treat this as a sandstorm. The Gamemaster should roll to determine the strength of the downpour. On a 1-5 it is a light shower, which cools the air but soaks into the ground instantly. On a 6-8 it is a moderate rain, which can fill open water-jugs, and creates temporary streams in the wadis. Travel in a moderate rain is slowed by one quarter. On a 9 or 10 it is a real storm, with heavy rain and strong winds. Wadis will quickly fill with raging floodwaters, and normal travel speed is cut in half.

Mirage: The party members see strange visions created by wind, sand, and sun. Normally, such a mirage can be recognized as such by a simple Perception roll. But if the characters are suffering from thirst (or are lost) their rolls will be made at a penalty of up to -50% (as determined by the Gamemaster).

Ruin: The party comes across a ruin or abandoned building in the desert. Along a well-traveled trail the ruin will have been picked clean by looters long ago, but in a remote area it still might hold items of value—or dangerous creatures.

Oasis: The party discovers a small oasis—a spring-fed pond surrounded by date palms, grass, and shrubbery. Roll twice on the Wadi column of the encounter table to see what is at the oasis, ignoring the weather and terrain encounters.

Animals: The travelers encounter the animal listed. Herbivores will almost always flee, but carnivores may attack lone characters.

Nomad: The characters come across a lone member of a desert tribe. He will be wary at first, but will respond to friendly overtures. A Nomad may be a Ranger or Barbarian character (1st to 5th level).

Hunters: The party encounters band of 1d10 desert tribesmen out hunting for game. The hunters are 1st to 5th level Fighters, Rangers and/or Barbarians. They may attack small groups, or try to intimidate larger ones with a show of strength. The hunters will usually have the advantage of surprise.

Tribe: The encampment of a desert nomad tribe. This will usually be at an oasis or wadi. The tribe has 1D10 x 10 able-bodied warriors (1st to 3rd level Fighters and/or Barbarians), led by 1D10 higher-level characters. There are roughly equal numbers of women and children. A tribe will have dozens of pack animals, herds of livestock, and many tents.

Caravan: The party comes across a caravan making its way across the desert. The caravan will have 1D10 x 10 camels bearing loads of trade goods. There will be one driver for every 10 camels, one merchant for every two drivers, and a number of guards equal to the number of drivers. All the members have their own riding animals, either camels or horses. Drivers are 1st to 3rd level Farmers, Rangers, and/or Gypsies. Merchants are 1st to 5th level Traders, and guards are 1st to 5th level Fighters, Rangers, or Rogues. A caravan will never start hostilities, and caravaneers will usually be friendly to anyone they find lost in the desert.

Soldiers: The party encounters a troop of soldiers on patrol. There are 3D10 soldiers, mounted on horses or camels. They have chainmail and carry swords, bows, and spears. Soldiers will help those in need, but will fight bravely if attacked. Most of the men are 1st level Fighters, but one of each 10 will be 3rd level, and the group may be led by a 5th level or higher character.

Magical Beings: These creatures are all described in the Bestiary section.

DESERT ENCOUNTERS

	Stony	Sandy	Steppe	Upland	Wadi
Nothing	01-10	01-25	01-20	01-35	01-25
Wadi	11-14	26	21-24	36-44	—
Sandstorm	15-34	27-57	25-29	45-48	26-30
Rainstorm	35-38	58	30-33	49-53	31-35
Mirage	39-53	59-79	34-35	54-55	36
Ruin	54-58	80	36-39	56-59	—
Oasis	59-60	81	40-42	60-63	—
Camel	62-66	82-84	43-48	64-65	37-41
Gazelle	67-68	85-86	49-52	66-68	42-45
Ibex	69-70	—	53-56	69-70	46-49
Jackal	71-72	87	57-59	71-72	50-53
Leopard	73-74	88	60-61	73-74	54-56
Lion	75	—	62-63	75	57-58
Ostrich	76-77	—	64-66	76-77	59-61
Snake	78-80	89-90	67-71	78-80	62-66
Wild Ass	81-82	91	72-77	81-84	67-71
Zebra	83	—	78-79	—	72-75
Nomad	84-87	92	80-82	85-87	76-80
Hunters	88-90	93	83-86	88-89	81-84
Tribe	91-93	94	87-89	90-92	85-89
Caravan	93-94	95	90-93	93	90-92
Soldiers	95	—	94-95	94	93-95
Ghul*	96	96	96	95-96	96
Jinn*	97	97	97	97	97
Peri*	98	98	98	98	98
Roc*	99	99	99	99	99
Shikk*	00	00	00	00	00



17.0 OTHER CAMPAIGN IDEAS



Not all Gamemasters may wish to run a pure *Arabian Nights* campaign. The background material presented in this book can be used for any campaign involving Islamic characters and culture. Gamemasters can use this information to add a Muslim flavor to any game genre.

17.1 ISLAM IN A FANTASY WORLD

Though the sourcebook information presented in this book is focused on Islamic fantasy and historical adventures, much of it can be useful for other fantasy campaign worlds.

ISLAM AND MIDDLE-EARTH (17.1.1)

Tolkein's Middle-earth obviously does not contain any regions inhabited by actual Muslims. But many of the details of Islamic civilization would be appropriate for races living in deserts and arid steppes, such as the inhabitants of Harad. It might be possible for a group of Islamic adventurers to be transported to Tolkein's world by some great enchantment, or for some characters from Middle-earth to be dragged into the *Arabian Nights*.

Perhaps Iblis the Deceiver and Sauron are really one and the same, and a group of adventurers must prevent the stain of the Dark One's evil is spreading to other worlds and times.

OTHER FANTASY WORLDS (17.1.2)

In other heroic fantasy backgrounds, the information on Islam could be used for similar cultures. The Gamemaster can replace the Muslim religion with one that fits his world better, change the names, and still use all the NPCs and adventures in this book. The Caliph Harun Al-Rashid could become the Priest-Emperor Huran, ruler of the Harvashid Empire, with his palace in the capital city of Galnan. The flavor is generally more important than the details.

EXISTING CAMPAIGN WORLDS (17.1.3)

Many *RM* Gamemasters prefer to create their own campaign worlds. If the GM has a fully-developed world of his own but wishes to run some *Arabian Nights* adventures, it can be difficult to work the right sort of setting into an existing world.

There are several ways in which an Islamic-style setting can still be added to an existing campaign. If the campaign is set in a fantasy version of medieval Europe, the task is simplest.

Islamic cultures can be placed in their proper historical locations, with as much or as little magic as the Gamemaster wishes. The characters can voyage to Muslim lands, have adventures, and return home by normal means (ship, camel, etc.).

Campaigns set in completely imaginary worlds make the task more difficult. Instead of using the historical Abbassid Caliphate, the Gamemaster must invent an empire with similar politics, culture, and flavor. Locating it may pose real problems—an mighty state like the Caliphate cannot be hidden away in a remote and obscure region. It must be one of the centers of civilization, with access to major trade routes. After all, an appealing part of the *Arabian Nights* setting is the enormous amounts of wealth in circulation.



This is easiest if the game world is not too completely defined. If the campaign has all taken place in the "Western Lands," the Gamemaster can simply add an Islamic civilization in the "Eastern Lands" and the players can voyage there. Even if the characters have seen maps of the game world, the Gamemaster can change things. When they complain that "that wasn't on the map!" the Gamemaster can answer that the map was wrong.

If the game world is too well-defined to allow the insertion of a state like the Caliphate, all is not lost. It may still be possible for the Gamemaster to introduce an Islamic setting to a pre-existing world.

One very interesting approach might be to copy the early history of the expansion of Islam. A previously minor group of desert tribes could be united by a charismatic leader inspired by the gods, and conquer the neighboring kingdoms. The player-characters in the campaign could become involved in these events, fighting battles, escorting diplomats, and trying to cope with the sudden political upheavals.

Depending on their temperament, the PCs can either fight against the Prophet and his followers, or else can take advantage of the chaotic conditions to seek wealth in the collapse of great empires. They might even join with the desert tribes—a group of skilled characters might rise high in the ranks of the Prophet's army. The player-characters might even consider converting to the faith of the Prophet. Who knows? One of them might end up as Caliph!

If the Gamemaster decides that there's just no way to fit an *Arabian Nights* setting into his own world, the obvious answer is to put the *Arabian Nights* into another world, and send the player characters there. Alternate dimensions, other planets, or other time periods can all serve as a variant campaign setting.

The adventurers can be transported to an *Arabian Nights* world through whatever magical means the Gamemaster chooses. They might pass through a mystic portal, be banished by a curse, abducted by an interdimensional being, or wished away by a foe. One particularly interesting way is to have the PCs summoned to an *Arabian Nights* world by powerful magics. Some great evil is afoot, and only the player-characters can stop it. This provides a ready-made adventure, which can be either a simple task or an epic quest at the Gamemaster's option.

17.2 ISLAM IN HISTORY

An effort has been made to make the historical information in this game as accurate as possible. Gamemasters running historical campaigns can use the *Arabian Nights* sourcebook material if their player-characters ever enter the realms of Islam.

VIKINGS

At first thought, it seems impossible for there to be any interaction between the Scandinavian Vikings and the Muslims of the Middle East. But in fact, their contact was surprisingly extensive. The Vikings established trade routes and colonies through Russia, along the Dvina and Dneiper rivers, leading to the Black Sea. Viking trade ships also voyaged to Spain, and occasionally entered the Mediterranean to call at North African ports.

Most of the Muslim domains were too well-defended for raiding, but Viking warriors did serve in the armies of the Byzantine Empire, and so might fight against the Caliph's men. And parts of Muslim Spain might be vulnerable to attacks by the dragon-headed ships.

Nor was the contact all one-directional. Muslim merchants could and did make the trip north to the Baltic in search of amber and furs, and ships from Spain or Morocco could brave the North Sea to trade at Denmark. A caravan might head north through Russia to make contact with the Norse settlements along the rivers there.

THE CRUSADES

In 1095, the Christians of Europe attempted to regain control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. They were motivated both by sincere religious fervor and the desire to control the trade routes to the East. The disorder following the breakdown of the Abbassid Caliphate made it possible for the Crusaders to carve out some small kingdoms along the coast. But the Christians never could push into any of the really rich areas of Egypt or Iraq; thus, the Crusader kingdoms were always vulnerable to attack by their more powerful Muslim neighbors.

The Crusades were a time of great opportunity for adventurers. Landless knights from all over Europe flocked to the Levant, hoping to win themselves baronies. Most won only six feet of the Holy Land, but a few rose to become Barons and Dukes of the tiny states formed by the Crusaders.

The Crusades saw the involvement of several monastic military-religious orders on both sides. The Christians had the Knights Templars and Hospitallers, while the Muslims had the Assassins and the Dervishes.

A campaign set at the time of the Crusades could involve either Crusading player-characters fighting the Saracens for control of the holy places, or Muslims battling the invaders. Such a campaign need not be just endless combat; there were constantly shifting alliances, and factions on either side intrigued against each other. A Crusade would be a good opportunity for European-type characters to spend some time in the Near East.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The Turkish dynasty called the Osmanlis (called the Ottomans in Europe) carved out an empire in Asia Minor and the Balkans, eventually taking Constantinople. With the new wealth to back up their military might, the Ottomans soon absorbed much of the Islamic heartland, extending their rule over Egypt, North Africa, much of Arabia, and Iraq. Ottoman military power began a slow decline after the Sixteenth Century, but as late as 1683 they were able to besiege Vienna, the capital of the Austrian Empire.

The Ottomans had the most contact with Europe of any Muslim empire. From the fall of Constantinople to the Victorian Era, the Turks *were* Islam to the Europeans. The standard term for a Christian who had adopted Islam was that he had "turned Turk."

The possibilities for adventure in the Ottoman Empire are best in the days before the power of the industrial nations made it the "sick man of Europe"—the period from about 1500 to 1800. Swashbuckling player-characters can fight Turkish pirates in the Mediterranean, or try to trade in the markets of Constantinople. The Ottoman capital was a hive of intrigue, and characters might be sent by one of the European monarchs on a secret mission. The *Pirates!* campaign book is rich in background information on this period of history.

Much of the sourcebook material about the Abbassid Caliphate can be easily adapted to the Ottoman Empire. The biggest changes would be the use of guns, tobacco, and coffee. The Ottoman Sultans were just as decadent as the later Caliphs, and their bureaucracy was even more corrupt.

THE VICTORIAN ERA

During the Nineteenth Century, the rapid industrialization of the European countries made them vastly more powerful than the rest of the world. Even tiny countries like the Netherlands or Belgium could conquer huge empires in Asia or Africa. But in the Islamic lands, little had changed from the days of the Caliphs. The collision of the two worlds was explosive.

In the early part of the century, European explorers visited many Muslim lands for the first time since the Crusades. Sir Richard Burton traveled to Mecca disguised as an Afghan pilgrim. Player-characters might have equally amazing adventures.

The best prospects for adventure using the material in this book are in the lands that avoided European conquest during the colonial era. Morocco was independent until 1904, and had a great deal of contact with the West. The Sahara desert was theoretically controlled by the French, but the nomads there had other ideas. The Ottoman Empire held Anatolia and the Middle East until World War I (but the Ottomans tried as much as possible to modernize their empire, and lagged only slightly behind Europe). The deserts of Arabia were under nobody's control but the Bedouins, and Persia, like the Ottoman Empire, tried to be a medieval monarchy with modern guns.

During the Victorian Period, all the Muslims used guns. Desert tribes had old smoothbore muskets, but the armies of Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Persia had modern bolt-action rifles and cannon. A fantastic mix of technologies coexisted, with modern regiments of the Turkish army carrying European rifles serving alongside musket-armed troops and bowmen.

Gamemasters can use much of the information on weapons and character creation from the *Outlaws* genre book for adventures during the Victorian Era. In fact, a wild change-of-pace adventure for an *Outlaws* campaign might drop a bunch of 19th-century Americans into Morocco or Arabia. The film *The Wind and the Lion* is an entertaining depiction of just such a culture clash; as President Theodore Roosevelt locks horns with a Moroccan chieftain.

17.3 MODERN-DAY ISLAMIC ADVENTURES

Ideas for modern-day adventures in the Islamic countries are no further away than the morning newspaper. However, Gamemasters should strive to avoid the current stereotype of Muslims as fanatics and terrorists. There are some extremists out there, but there are also nearly a billion Muslims living peaceful, law-abiding lives.

With the end of the Cold War, most of the interesting espionage is now going on between middle-sized countries, particularly in the Persian Gulf and Middle East. Arab countries spy on each other, Europeans spy on the Arabs, and everyone spies on Israel. The potential for role-playing adventures are enormous.

17.4 ISLAMIC SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES

Given that nearly a fifth of the Earth's population in the Twentieth Century are Muslims, it is likely that the faith of Muhammad will continue to be of great importance in the future. Characters in science-fiction settings may well have to deal with the intricacies of Muslim culture.

CYBERPUNK

In a near-future "cyberpunk" environment, like that of the *Cyberspace* game, the Islamic countries will be very much as they are today. The clash of cutting-edge technology and Islamic tradition can serve as a powerful generator of adventure scenarios. The oil wealth of the Arab states will make them powerful players in a corporate-dominated future. And as new sources of energy are developed, the Persian Gulf sheikdoms may take steps to preserve their sources of money and influence.

The book *When Gravity Fails*, by George Alec Effinger, is a very good story of cyberpunk goings-on set in Muslim North Africa.

SPACE OPERAS

There is also a place for Islam in a star-spanning campaign of the far future, as in *Space Master*. It is certain that the Muslim religion travel to the stars as Mankind explores the Galaxy. Probably entire planets and sectors will be colonized by Muslims, and fascinating new societies will develop from the combination of Islamic tradition and new environments.

Perhaps a planet might be colonized by devout Muslims seeking to live a simple, low-technology life, recreating the glory days of the Abbassid Caliphate. Alternatively, a star-spanning empire based on the Islamic faith might have many features in common with Harun's dominions. The *Dune* series by Frank Herbert is a superb depiction of an Islamic-flavored starfaring society.

In any science-fiction background, the players might have the opportunity to participate in a live-action role-playing game or sophisticated holographic simulation of the *Arabian Nights* tales.

TIME TRAVEL

If one eliminates the wishing-rings, jinn lamps, and one-eyed giants, this sourcebook can be used for historical adventures in the Caliphate of Harun Al-Rashid. Historians might be very interested in visiting the period via time machine, and time criminals might decide to help themselves to a little of the Caliph's wealth. Characters working for the League of Ages or the Timekeepers (see *Time Riders*) might find themselves in Baghdad from time to time.

Questions of particular interest to historians about this period include:

- The real reason for Harun's destruction of the Barmecide family
- How Harun's predecessor Al-Hadi really met his death
- The secret of Greek Fire
- what manuscripts might have survived the destruction of the Library of Alexandria
- the true origin of the Order of Assassins

An even stranger possibility would be to have medieval Muslim player-characters becoming involved with a group of time-travelers in old Baghdad. If the players themselves aren't told if the campaign is really science fiction, they might start to think the strangers with unusual powers are magicians.

17.5 ISLAMIC HORROR

Some of the *Arabian Nights* tales are ghost stories, and it would be very possible to create an entire campaign of Islamic horror. There are ample opportunities to stumble across old tombs and abandoned cities, any of which could contain awful secrets that "Man Was Not Meant To Know."



18.0 BESTIARY

Most of the creatures mentioned in the *Arabian Nights* are already described in the *C&T* books. This section includes some new monsters, and revised statistics for other beasts.

18.1 CAMELS

Camels are described in *C&T*. They come in two types, Dromedary and Bactrian. In the Muslim world, most camels will be Dromedaries. Only in Khorasan and the steppes of Asia will Bactrian camels be common. For purposes of Riding and Animal Handling, skills pertaining to one kind of camel can be used on the other sort at one-half the total skill ranks.

18.2 IFRITS, JINN, AND MARIDS

"...the thick vapour condensed and became an Ifrit, huge of bulk, whose crest touched the clouds while his feet were on the ground. His head was as a dome, his hands like pitchforks, his legs long as masts and his mouth big as a cave; his teeth were like large stones, his nostrils ewers, his eyes two lamps and his look was fierce and lowering."

Ifrits, Jinn, and Marids are all used interchangeably to describe powerful supernatural beings. Their abilities were never clearly defined, but they are incredible.

Some of the Jinn are Muslims and believers; others are wicked infidels. In the Koran the Jinn are quoted as saying "And among us there are righteous folk and among us there are far from that. We are sects having different rules."

The *C&T* book lists several different types of Jinn (or Genies), classified by their power level—Jann, Jinn, Shaitans, Marids, and Ifrits. Medieval Muslims would have called all of them "Jinn" and left it at that. Traditionally, the Jinn and Jann were good, or at least neutral towards humans. They were Muslims. The Marids were infidels, who could be good or evil as they chose (usually evil). And the Ifrits were the truly evil ones, followers of Iblis the Deceiver—the Devil.

All Jinn have mutable forms, but their souls can be bound into a physical object. This is how King Solomon bound the evil Jinn into brass bottles, and how many Jinn were magiced into rings and lamps. But other Jinn have their souls hidden in sesame seeds, eggs, jewels, or a bird's heart. These Jinn carefully protect their souls, locking them away in strong vaults or hiding them far away. If a mortal gets control of a Jinn's soul (through possession of a magic ring or lamp), then he can command that Jinn indefinitely. See the discussion of Jinn lamps, bottles, and rings in Section 4.

Gamemasters can use the statistics given in *C&T* for the Jinn. The names should not correspond to the power level of the creature, but rather to its alignment. So the "Jinn" described in the book would simply be a fairly low-powered being, and would be called a Jinn, Marid, or Ifrit depending on which tribe it belonged to. Gamemasters should also vary the powers and abilities of Jinn frequently, because in the tales no two were alike.

18.3 PERIS

Peris were Persian fairies. In the stories, they were described as similar to the Jinn. The Sylphs in the *C&T* book correspond almost exactly to the Peris. In the *Arabian Nights*, they were capricious beings who could help or harm mortals at a whim.





18.4 ROCS

The Roc (Rukh) was an absolutely colossal bird. It was similar to an eagle, but fed on elephants the way an eagle catches rabbits. A Roc could sink ships by dropping huge boulders to smash the hull into splinters. Fortunately, Rocs are very rare, nesting only on remote islands. A Roc's egg is the size of a house, and they generally lay only one at a time. The statistics given in *C&T* can be used without alteration.

18.5 GIANTS

Giants encountered in the *Arabian Nights* are huge, brutish, and hideously ugly. Sindbad the Sailor was shipwrecked on an island inhabited by cannibal giants with elephant ears and a single eye. The Giants and Cyclops listed in *C&T* can be used, but *Arabian Nights* giants did not use magic.

18.6 GHOULS

Level: 1H **Base:** 50 **Pace/MN:** Spt/10
MS/AQ: MF/FA **Size/Crit:** M/-
Hits: 30HAT **(DB):** 1(30)
Attacks: 40We
Enc: 1-10 **Treasure:** c
EP: — **Outlook(IQ):** Aggressive(AV)
Climate: (c,f)-NY+@§#, IMQSZ, (T)-4

Ghouls in Islamic folklore were not undead, but humans who ate the flesh of the dead, and occasionally devoured the living as well. Most ghouls were hideous, filthy creatures who lived in tombs and wild places.

But some passed for normal humans, living among other men and keeping their horrible habits secret. Stories tell of men who fell in love with a beautiful woman, only to discover—too late—that she was in fact a ghoul. The only clue that a person might be a ghoul is that they eat little or nothing at mealtimes, preferring to feast on carrion in the night.

18.7 NAGAS

YOUNG

Level: 10G **Base:** 70 **Pace/MN:** Spt/30
MS/AQ: FA/VF **Size/Crit:** M/-
Hits: 100G **AT(DB):** 3(30)
Attacks: 90MGr/100MCr/Spells
Enc: 1-2 **Treasure:** i
EP: I **Outlook(IQ):** Playful(HI)

MATURE

Level: 20G **Base:** 90 **Pace/MN:** Dash/30
MS/AQ: VF/BF **Size/Crit:** M/II
Hits: 200G **AT(DB):** 11(30)
Attacks: 100MGr/110MCr/Spells
Enc: 1-4 **Treasure:** s
EP: K **Outlook(IQ):** Protect(VH)

OLD

Level: 30G **Base:** 80 **Pace/MN:** FSpt/20
MS/AQ: MF/BF **Size/Crit:** L/LA
Hits: 350G **AT(DB):** 12(20)
Attacks: 120LGr/130LCr/Spells
Enc: 1 **Treasure:** yz
EP: L **Outlook(IQ):** Aloof(EX)
Climate: hna-EX#, QZ, UW, J-8

Nagas come in three categories: young, mature, and old. The young are the rarest, since Nagas breed very seldom. Mature ones are the most common. Old Nagas are very powerful, and are the rulers of their race. An old Naga will always be attended by 1-10 mature adults.

Nagas range in 10-30 feet in length.

The Nagas of the *Arabian Nights* are different from those described in *C&T*. The snaky shape-changers listed there should be called "were-nagas" or "were-serpents."

In the *Arabian Nights*, Nagas are great human-headed serpents. They are immortal and wise, with vast knowledge of magic and ancient lore. Nagas prefer to remain hidden in their lairs, deep among the ruins of forgotten civilizations. They are aloof and proud, but occasionally will give advice or information to mortals who win their favor through flattery and gifts. Nagas prefer to avoid combat, using spells to confuse and disable their enemies. They know the following spell lists to their level: all Open Essence, all Closed Essence, all Magician or Illusionist. But if pressed, they will fight, crushing foes in their powerful coils.

18.8 SIMURGH

Level: 30G **Base:** 180 **Pace/MN:** Dash/30

MS/AQ: BF/VF **Size/Crit:** M/I

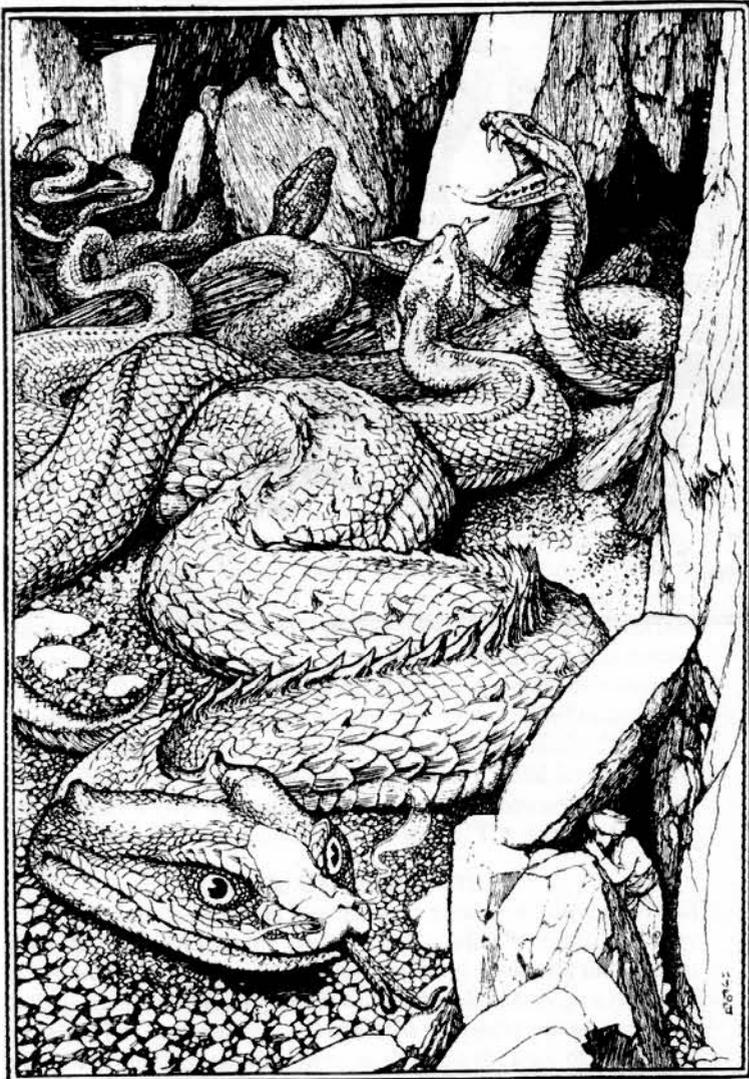
Hits: 100G **AT(DB):** 7(60)

Attacks: 100MCI/100MPi/Spells

Enc: 1 **Treasure:** xx

EP: L **Outlook(IQ):** Good(EX)

Climate: w-E,A-9



This fantastic bird is similar to the Phoenix. It is fantastically beautiful, with rainbow-colored feathers and eyes of fire. Its wingspan reaches 20 feet. The Simurgh is immortal, and commands all the other birds of the sky. It is fully intelligent, and speaks all the languages of the world. It dwells in distant lands beyond the sea, but the birds bring it news of everything that happens in the kingdoms of men. The Simurgh will never be encountered alone; it is always accompanied by thirty great eagles. The ruler of all birds is powerfully magical, and can use spells and legions of feathered servants to protect itself. It knows all the Open Channeling, Closed Channeling, and Animist spell lists.

18.9 SHIKK

Level: 5A **Base:** 30 **Pace/MN:** FSpt/10

MS/AQ: MF/VF **Size/Crit:** M/-

Hits: 50A **AT(DB):** 1(30)

Attacks: 60We

Enc: 1-4 **Treasure:** h

EP: — **Outlook(IQ):** Cruel(AV)

Climate: hnawms-EXY\$#, QZ, RUW, HJ-5

The Shikk is a bizarre and dangerous creature. It looks like a man cut in half vertically, with one arm, one leg, one eye, one ear, one nostril, and half a mouth. Despite this seeming handicap, the Shikk can move startlingly fast, and it attacks without mercy. A Shikk often wields a scimitar in its single hand. The creature prefers to lurk in wild places, and waylays lone travelers. It is cruel and evil, killing for amusement, then devouring its victims.

18.10 ARROW-SNAKE

Level: 5C **Base:** 60 **Pace/MN:** Spt/20

MS/AQ: MD/BF **Size/Crit:** S/-

Hits: 75C **AT(DB):** 3(50)

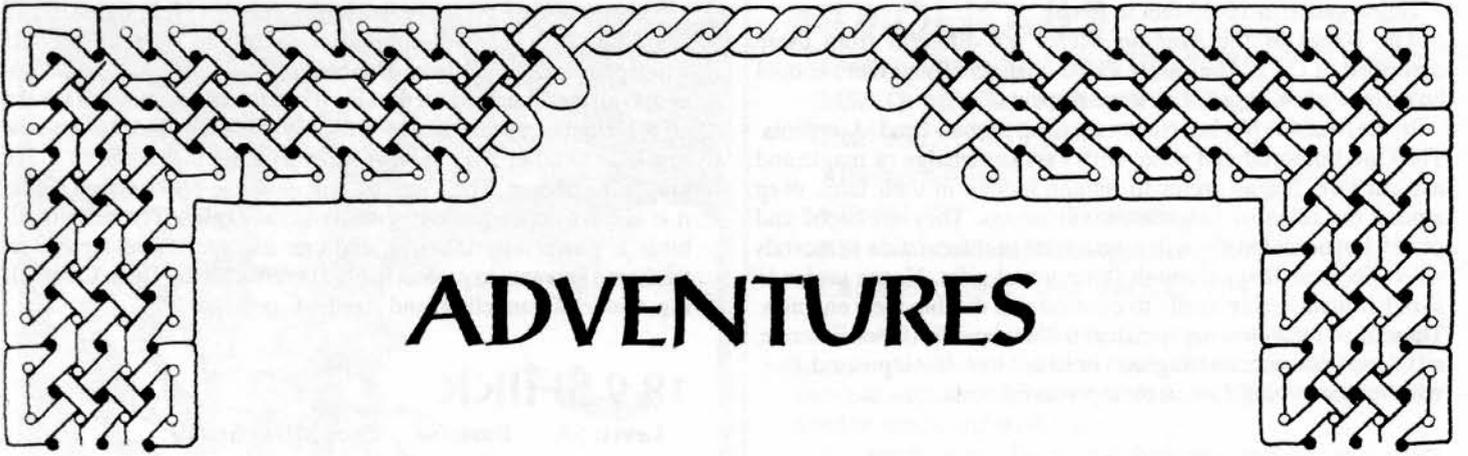
Attacks: 50ja/40Bi√Poison

Enc: 1-10 **Treasure:** g

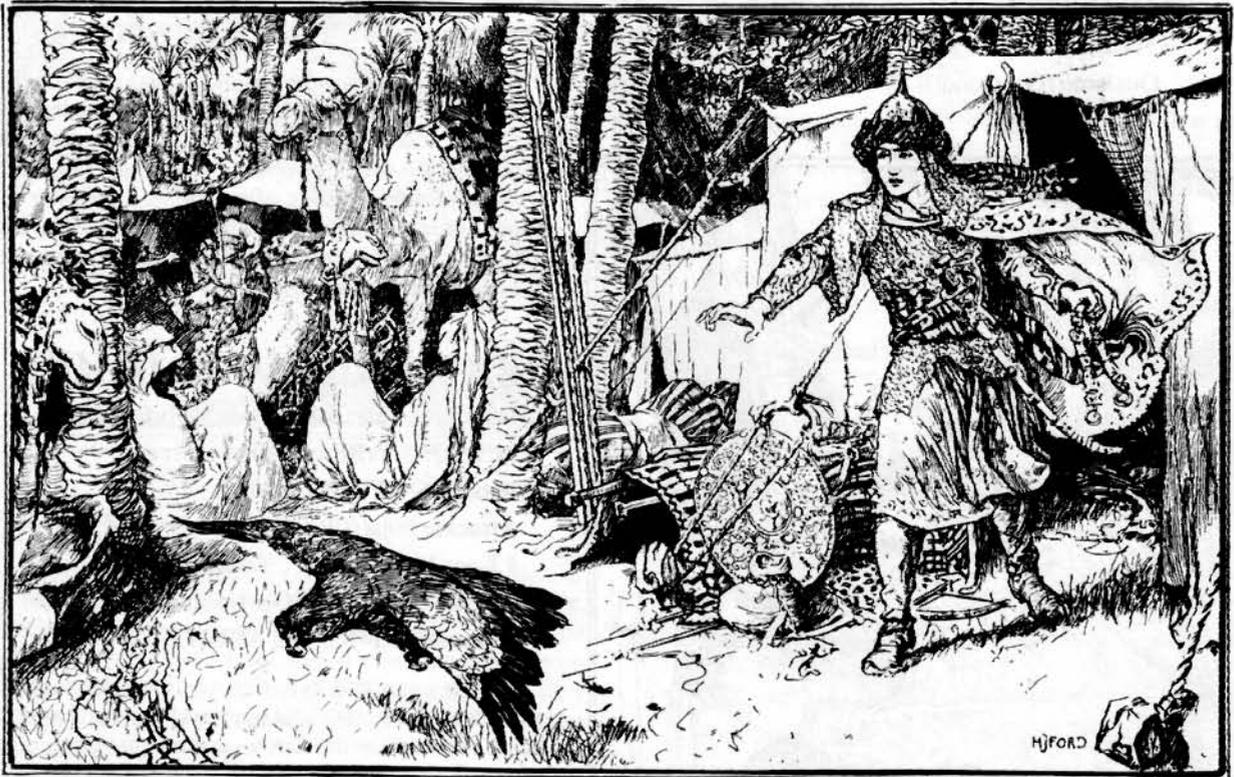
EP: D **Outlook(IQ):** Normal(NO)

Climate: hna-(K), QZ, ARUW, H-4

To the untutored eye, the Arrow-snake seems to be just another serpent. It is about four feet long, and has a flat, pointed head. What makes the Arrow-snake so dangerous is its method of attack. It coils its body up, then suddenly launches itself through the air at its victim, piercing the target like an arrow. The snake then bites its foe with venomous fangs. A single Arrow-snake can be dangerous enough, but woe to the party of adventurers who blunder into a nest of the creatures. They tend to live in rocky areas, or in ruins.



ADVENTURES





19.0 THE CAMEL'S TALE

This is a fantasy adventure, involving a great deal of magic. It is completely unsuitable for a realistic campaign. It opens in Baghdad at the time of Harun Al-Rashid, but could easily be transposed to any other major Muslim city in the Middle East or North Africa. The time period can be changed as well, to any point before the European domination of the Muslim world. The characters are assumed to be 3rd to 5th level.

19.1 THE REMARKABLE CAMEL

One of the player-characters has recently acquired a new camel. The creature cost the normal amount, and Hamid the camel dealer didn't say there was anything special about it (well, he did claim that it used to belong to a little old lady from Damascus who only rode it to the mosque on Fridays, but he says that about all his animals). It looks like any other camel—shaggy, long-legged, with a perpetual expression of disdain. But over the next few days it gradually becomes apparent that this is no ordinary camel.

STRANGE BEHAVIOR

If the camel's owner makes a successful Animal Handling roll, he will notice that the beast isn't as stubborn as other camels, and learns very rapidly. In addition, the Gamemaster should try to work the following incidents into the normal course of play:

One afternoon, the beast's owner is on the road at prayer-time, and stops to perform his devotions (if none of the PCs are that pious, the Gamemaster can have an NPC stop to pray). As the character prostrates himself toward Mecca, the camel will do likewise, kneeling on its front legs and touching its nose to the ground in the right direction!

On another occasion, the character has accidentally lost something important while on the road—a purse of gold, or a jeweled ring. All efforts to find it are unsuccessful (even with a successful Perception skill roll), until the camel suddenly heads for a particular spot and paws at the dirt. There, half-buried, is the missing item.

Finally, one evening the PC is riding his camel home from a drinking-party. The character is a bit tipsy, and so does not see that a gang of thieves are waiting in ambush at the door to his house. There are three robbers, all 3rd-level Rogues, armed with swords. When the robbers attack, the player-character is so befuddled with drink that he can scarcely draw his own weapon to defend himself. All of the character's skills are at half their normal level. But the camel goes on the offensive, lashing out with powerful kicks and vicious bites, and braying as loud as it can. The robbers flee.

CAMEL COMMUNICATION

After enough incidents like these, the owner of the camel will probably suspect that the creature is not what it seems, and may wish to communicate with it. The camel can obviously understand human speech perfectly, but it cannot speak, uttering only camel noises. The Gamemaster should let the PCs work out some sort of code to communicate with the animal, along the lines of "one snort for yes, two snorts for no" or whatever.

After much tedious questioning, the adventurers will be able to establish that the camel is not really a camel but a man under a spell. If asked, he claims to be a prince from a far-off country to the east. A wicked sorcerer placed the spell on him, and he does not know how to break the enchantment.

MIGHTY MAGIC

If any of the player-characters are magically-inclined, they may attempt to break the enchantment and return the poor fellow to his proper form. But no matter what spells the characters try, nothing works. The camel remains a camel. (The Gamemaster should let the characters try as many spells as they wish, and perhaps he should even roll dice in a meaningful manner, but the result will always be failure.) Even attempts to learn what kind of spell is on the camel will fail. It is magic of a completely unknown type.

If the party seeks outside help, the other magicians will have no better luck with the camel. Even the mightiest magicians in Baghdad are completely stymied by whatever spell lies upon the camel. At last, one of the magicians will sigh and turn to the player-characters.



"Bismillah! It is hopeless! That which wrought this enchantment was a far greater magician than I, and I am the wisest of the wise. Only Iblis the Deceiver himself could have wrought such a spell, and it is not for mortal men to undo. And yet, there may be a way...."

At this point the NPC magician will look at the player-characters expectantly. If they give him some gold, he will continue.

"Though I am the wisest of wise men, yet there is one who is wiser still. He is a good and holy man, learned in all things and favored of Allah. His name is forgotten, for he dwells far off in the wasteland, and speaks only to God. Ride south-westward from Baghdad, across the Euphrates, and along the Wadi Al-Ubayyid till you are fifty miles past the town of Nukhayb. In a ruined tower on a high hill the wise man dwells. If he cannot help you, no human can."

19.2 THE DESERT SANDS

If the player-characters follow the magician's advice, they will have to travel more than two hundred miles through the barren deserts of northern Arabia. Gamemasters should consult the section on desert travel and survival, and generate encounters normally. If the party follows the watercourse of the Wadi al-Ubayyid, they should have little trouble finding waterholes. The journey will take at least ten days.

THE TOMB

One evening after the travelers have passed through the little town of Nukhayb, they will find themselves at an old tomb out in the desert. The wind is rising and it seems like a good idea to find shelter inside.

The tomb is a simple brick building about thirty feet square, with a single entrance. There is no door, and the floor is covered with sand a foot deep. A dozen stone coffins are scattered around the floor; all are long empty. Not even bones remain. All of the party's animals except the enchanted camel will be skittish inside the tomb building.

If the characters are paranoid or very greedy, they may wish to carefully search the tomb, either for traps or treasure. The Gamemaster should humor them and roll many dice, but in fact there is nothing to find. The coffins were all looted centuries ago, and the wind and desert scavengers have removed everything else. Characters who dig down through the sand will find a stone floor made of roughly-hewn blocks.

THE DWELLERS BENEATH

As the wind outside gets stronger, the characters bed down for the night. Probably one or more will be left on guard. In the darkest time of the night, when the moon has set and the clouds obscure the stars, the riding-animals will all start a terrible commotion. As the adventurers wake up and fumble about trying to calm the animals, the sand in one corner of the room suddenly shifts, and horrible man-like things start to emerge.

The creatures are ghouls—horrid monsters that may once have been human. They eat the flesh of the dead, but are not above supplementing their diet with fresher food from time to time. Pale and stooped, with dirt-encrusted teeth and sharp nails, they reek of corruption and decay.

The ghouls will emerge from their underground lair and begin attacking the player-characters. Two ghouls can pass through the tunnel entrance each round.

There are twice as many ghouls as humans, and they will fight until they are outnumbered by a margin of two to one. The ghouls are initially armed only with teeth and nails, but can pick up discarded weapons. They are crafty creatures, and will try to wound the party's animals, in hopes of trapping the humans at the tomb. Strangely, none of the ghouls will molest the enchanted camel, even if all the other animals are attacked. (In the middle of a desperate fight, it would take an extremely perceptive character to notice this, however.)

If the player-characters triumph over the ghouls, they may wish to examine the underground lair of the creatures. The tunnel in the tomb leads down to an underground crypt beneath the building. The room smells of death, and the floor is covered with a layer of human and animal bones.

There are six more coffins in the crypt, all bigger and more elaborately decorated than the ones above. The ghouls have opened them to get at the corpses. Gold and jewels from within the coffins lie strewn about the floor, along with a few belongings from the unfortunate victims of the ghouls. The Gamemaster should adjust the value of the treasure depending on the size of the party, but it should come out to at least 500 dirhams per character.



If the characters try to move any of the coffins in the crypt, they will discover more tunnels leading down into the earth. These passages are very narrow; a man can barely squeeze into them. A horrible stench comes from the tunnels, and faint sounds of childish laughter can be heard. Anyone entering the tunnels will never be seen again.

19.3 THE HERMIT

From the tomb to the hermit's tower is a day's travel. If the characters have lost their animals, the journey takes two days. The tower stands alone on a bleak hilltop, surrounded by crumbling ruins. There is no sign of anyone about. When the travelers enter the tower, they will find it completely deserted. (Actually, the room is covered by a *Waiting Illusion V* spell, which creates the image of an abandoned chamber when anyone but the hermit enters. The illusion affects all the senses but taste.)

If the characters call out to the hermit, a little old man will emerge from behind some ruins. He is bent and ragged, his hair bleached by the sun and his skin as dry and brown as leather; yet there is a strange light in his eyes. "You come in search of Anwar, the hermit? He is dead, and no doubt enjoying the solitude of his tomb."

As the characters try to explain why they have come, the little old man will stand watching them curiously. Finally he will sigh, and hobble into the tower. Inside, he claps his hands thrice, and the illusion spell cast on the chamber is dispelled. The tower is furnished simply but comfortably, with a soft carpet on the floor and many chests full of books. A fountain of cool water bubbles in the center of the room. "Rest here; we will dine together later," says the hermit. "Then you can tell me your tale."

A few hours later, the old man returns, and seats himself in the room with the characters. With a wave of his hand, he conjures up huge platters of the finest delicacies imaginable (this is done by *Transmutation* and *Telekinesis*). As the adventurers dig in, they may notice that the old man eats nothing but five grains of rice, two beans, and a thimbleful of water.

Once the meal is done, the hermit bids the characters to tell their story. He listens attentively to what they have to say, then asks if he may see the enchanted camel. After looking the beast over carefully, the hermit goes back inside to consult some ancient scrolls.

At last he is done. "This is mighty magic, in truth like nothing I have seen these past hundred years. Yet I know how the spell may be broken." As the characters wait eagerly, the old man warns them, "All things come to be by the will of Allah. If He has truly willed that this man wear the shape of a beast, is it wise to attempt to change him back?"

But if they persist, he will beckon the characters to lean close, so that the camel cannot overhear, and whispers to them, "If you are determined to break this spell, turn your faces to the South. Go far into the wastes of the Empty Quarter, where dead Irem of the Thousand Pillars lies hidden by the blowing sand. If Allah indeed smiles upon your quest, that city will be revealed to you, for no man alive has seen it."

The hermit peers around the room, as if afraid of being overheard. "It is written in my book of ancient lore that within the walls of Irem there is a pool, whose waters are magic; for the water of the pool will wash away all enchantments, and leave all who bathe there restored to their true form."

Old Anwar will treat any injuries the player-characters may have, and will give them a full load of supplies for the trek to the nearest town. If they have no animals left, he will send his two camels along. When the party reaches the next town, Anwar's camels will vanish into thin air.

19.4 THE EMPTY QUARTER

If the player-characters decide to follow the hermit's advice, they have a hard journey ahead of them. From the hermit's tower to the Empty Quarter is nearly eight hundred miles. The trip will take nearly six weeks, depending on the exact route chosen.

The travelers must go south through the rocky Nejd region of Arabia. Though barren, the area has a number of small towns, and is crisscrossed by caravan routes. Travel will be fairly easy, especially for characters who have had some experience with desert life.

South of Riyadh the country changes. The stony desert and steppe of the Nejd, with its scrub vegetation and occasional waterholes is replaced by a vast sea of sand. This is the Empty Quarter, an endless expanse of shifting dunes. The heat is incredible, and the hot wind carries sand to flay the exposed skin of those foolish enough to travel here. Travel speed is halved in the dunes of the Empty Quarter.

THE SANDSTORM

After the party has been in the Empty Quarter for several days, the wind will start to rise alarmingly. Any Bedouin or Berber characters will recognize the signs: a sandstorm is brewing!

There is no shelter to be found—nothing but endless dunes in all directions. As the characters struggle to secure their animals and supplies, the wind hits. It is like the hot blast from the mouth of a furnace, and is strong enough to knock a man over. The tiny particles of windblown sand can draw blood from unprotected skin. Though it is still day, the sun is utterly hidden, and the roar of the wind makes it impossible to hear anything.

If the characters have any training in desert lore, they may be able to prevent total disaster. Make a separate *Animal Handling* or *Region Lore (Desert)* roll for each pack animal to see if it is lost in the sandstorm. Each character can try to secure up to three animals; all others are automatically gone. The enchanted camel will of course remain.

MIRAGES

After the sandstorm it becomes harder to navigate in the desert. The sky is a hazy hell of glare during the day, and at night wisps of cloud obscure the stars. The storm has shifted all the dunes around, so there is no way for the characters to tell if they are traveling in the right direction. All *Navigation* or *Direction Sense* die rolls are made with a penalty of -75.

The constant heat and glare begin to take their toll on the minds of the travelers. Each day, the Gamemaster should have the players roll against their characters' *Constitutions* to see if they begin to suffer from mirages and delirium. Those who fail the roll will see lakes of water, or the towers of far-off cities. Others might see groves of trees, or even the figures of loved ones.

At last, all the travelers will see a city in the distance. Unlike all the other mirages, this one does not fade away into nothing as they approach. As night approaches, the party reaches the walls. The adventurers have found lost Irem, the city of the Thousand Pillars.

19.5 IREM OF THE THOUSAND PILLARS

The ancient city of Irem stands among the dunes of the Empty Quarter. The sand all around is hot and lifeless, but palm trees and gardens can be seen beyond the city walls. The great towers of Irem stand perfectly intact, glittering with golden ornaments.



GETTING IN

The city is surrounded by a circular wall of black stone, two miles in diameter and sixty feet high. There are no gates in the wall, and the black stone surface is mirror-smooth, making it practically impossible to climb. Any attempt to scale the wall will be at a penalty of -100 to the die roll.

There are a number of possible ways for the adventurers to get into the city. The Gamemaster should try to let the players come up with a way in. The most likely routes are: climbing the wall with a grapple, scaling the wall with ladders, or using magic to fly or teleport inside.

Climbing up the wall using a grapple requires a successful Grappling Hook roll, and a Climbing skill roll. The smooth stone surface of the wall means that even with a rope all attempts to climb up are at a penalty of -30.

Ladders would make getting over the wall very simple—if the party happens to have a sixty-foot ladder on hand. Unfortunately, there is no wood to make a ladder for a hundred miles in any direction. It is possible that the characters can improvise something using tent-poles, spears, or other bits of equipment. Building a ladder would be greatly aided by a Siege Engineering or Crafting skill roll.

If the adventurers use either grapples or ladders, they face an extra peril at the top of the wall. When the first person reaches the top of the wall, he will find that it is surprisingly narrow—only a yard thick. There is no parapet or railing, and the stone is smooth and covered with slippery grains of sand. When anyone stands atop the walls of Irem, they will be subject to an illusion, depicting a ferocious warrior charging with drawn sword. The spell is a Waiting Phantasm III (sight and sound only).

Anyone atop the wall must make an Agility or Tightrope Walking skill roll to avoid falling off the top of the wall. When the warrior phantasm “strikes” the character, it is revealed as an illusion and will vanish.

Magic is the simplest way to enter the city, if one of the PCs knows the right spells. There will be nothing to interfere with the spell. Magicians can fly over the wall, tunnel through it, or teleport into the city, subject to all the normal restrictions.

ENCOUNTERS IN IREM

As the players roam about through the city, they will quickly discover that they are not alone in Irem. Every ten minutes the Gamemaster should roll for an encounter.

Die Roll (D10)	Encounter Type
1-2	Nothing
3-4	Harmless Ghost
5-6	Hostile Ghost
7-8	Phantasm
9-10	Animated Statue

Harmless Ghost: The character encounters the ghost of an inhabitant of Irem, wandering the streets. These ghosts can do little but bemoan the pride that led to their city’s curse. They are Minor Ghosts as described in *C&T*; they will not fight but they will inadvertently drain 3 Constitution points per round from anyone within 10 feet (RR vs. 10th level).

Hostile Ghost: The character encounters a ghost of an envious of the living and will try to slay intruders to Irem. These are Minor Ghosts, as described in *C&T*. The foci for these ghosts and the harmless ones are always a moldering heap of bones—the body of the ghost when it was alive. It requires a successful Perception roll to find a ghost’s focus. None of the ghosts will venture more than thirty feet from its bones.

Phantasm: Scattered about the city are a number of illusionary defense spells waiting to be triggered. These are Waiting Phantasm III spells, and take the form of a beautiful maiden dressed in wisps of silk, beckoning seductively. The maiden phantasm will lead the character to a concealed pit trap ten feet deep, covered by a hinged stone slab. To spot the pit requires a successful Detecting Traps skill roll, with a -30 penalty to the roll (because of the illusion and the clever workmanship of the trap).

Animated Statue: Some of the statues in the city are really automatons set up to protect it from invaders. The statues are activated when a stranger passes within ten feet. These are all Minor Constructs, as described in *C&T*. They do not have functioning dart throwers.

LOCATIONS WITHIN THE CITY

There are a number of strange and wonderful sites within the city. Some are enchanted, others are merely interesting. They are indicated on the map.

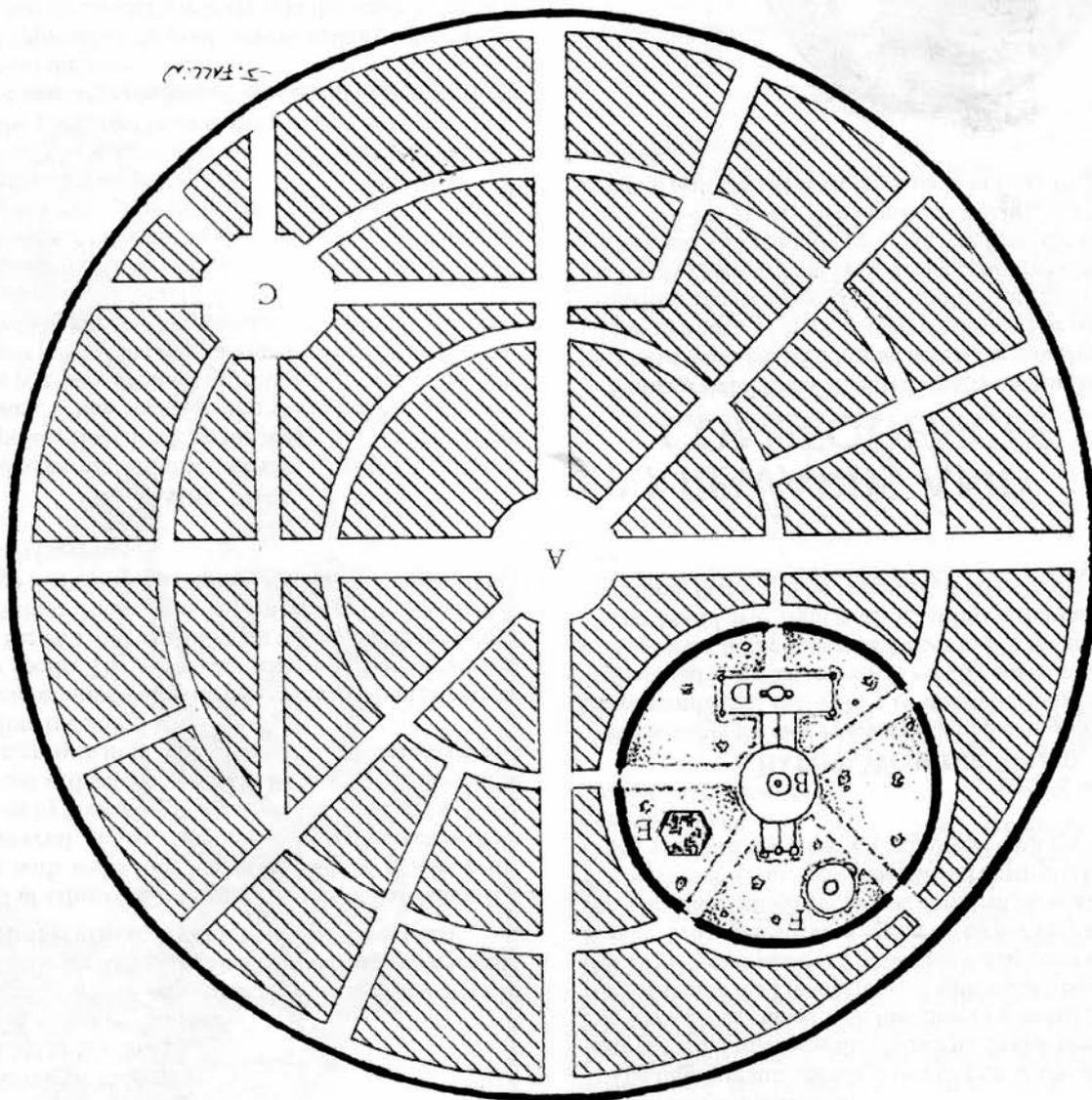
The Brass Statue (A): In the center of the city is a life-size brass statue of a king, standing with one arm raised. The base of the statue bears an inscription: “Here stands him who holds the keys to Irem.” If the characters push his arm down, then four gates will magically appear in the city walls, opening to the four compass points.

In the lovely chamber are the ghosts of a dozen lovely maidens; they are Minor Ghosts. They are harmless, but their Constitution-draining power cannot be stopped. The fact that there are multiple ghosts means that anyone entering the room will be affected by ID10 ghosts simultaneously.

The Market (C): The market district of Irem is a wonderful place; far greater than even the bazaar of Baghdad itself. There are shops full of goods from all parts of the world, and precious things are in abundance. The district is completely abandoned, yet all the shops are full of merchandise, and all the goods are still intact after the passage of centuries. Even the fruits and vegetables on display are still fresh and unspoiled. Goods carried away from the market will keep normally.

The King's Chamber (B): Within the royal palace is a huge chamber of marble and gold. In the center, a golden throne hangs suspended over a vast deep pit, hanging by a single thin strand. Carvings on the throne read, "All the gold and might of Kings cannot save them from perdition. Only the mercy of Allah can take a soul to Paradise."
 The pit is twenty feet in diameter; thus, the throne is ten feet from the edge on all sides. To get to the throne requires either magical flight, a successful Grappling Hook and Tightspeaking skill roll, or an Extremely Hard leaping maneuver.
 If anyone is able to reach the throne, the added weight triggers a mechanism which raises the throne, up through an opening in the ceiling. The chair rises into a room decorated with scenes of lush gardens. The floor is strewn with pillows, and fountains of scented water cool the air. A staircase leads back down to the throne room via a secret door.

Only major avenues are shown



City of Irem

The Treasury (D): In the cellars beneath the royal palace is a vault of treasure, filled with gold and jewels. Over the door of the treasury the following verses are carved:

*"Herein lies the gold of kings,
But faith is fairer far than rings.
Irem's pride led to her doom.
Cursed are the riches in this room."*

The gold is in fact cursed—any character who takes any of it will suffer the Evil Cleric spell Curse of Shar Bu (causes impotence and sterility). The spell is effectively cast by a 10th-level Cleric.

The Labyrinth of Ghosts (E): On the grounds of the Palace is a stone labyrinth with walls four feet high. Faintly visible in the labyrinth are several ghosts, wandering lost. Characters who release the ghosts by breaching the walls of the labyrinth will win their gratitude and will get a bonus Skill Rank with all their skills for the rest of their stay in Irem. The stone walls of the labyrinth will take 50 hits before breaking.

Characters can communicate with the ghosts by Mind Speech or other telepathy spells. The ghosts are mostly self-absorbed and uninterested in the PCs, but can tell them where to find the magic pool. They are Minor Ghosts, and will not attack. The labyrinth is sufficiently large that their Constitution-draining powers will not affect the player-characters.

THE MAGIC POOL

At last the adventurers will discover a pavilion set among the gardens of the palace (location F on the map). Inside the pavilion is a pool of water, which seems to shimmer strangely. Anyone looking into the pool will see their reflection oddly distorted. The image in the water reflects the true nature of the person's soul—so evil characters will be horribly deformed and corroded, while good characters appear pure and beautiful.

Anyone drinking the water will be wonderfully refreshed. It restores one hit point of damage, and instantly removes all fatigue. A flask filled with water from the pool will lose this magic power, but will still taste refreshing.

If the adventurers have been able to get the camel into the city, they can bring the enchanted beast to the pool and break the spell. The beast will be very eager to get cured, and will wait for nothing once it hears about the pool.

As the camel approaches the pool, anyone making a Perception roll will notice that the animal's reflection in the water is that of a huge and horrible monster (characters who have had previous experience with the Jinn, or have the appropriate lore skills, can recognize the beast in the reflection as a Marid).

19.6 THE CAMEL RESTORED

When the beast plunges into the shimmering pool, the water begins to churn and bubble. The camel thrashes in agony, then starts to change shape.

But the transformation is not what the characters expect. The camel does not become a man. Instead, its skin becomes scaly, its teeth grow long and sharp, and huge claws replace its hooves. It grows and grows and GROWS!

GRATITUDE

As the player-characters watch stupefied, the camel turns into a gigantic Marid, whose head touches the roof of the pavilion. The monster's horrible laugh echoes through the deserted city.

"At last! For six times sixty years have I worn the skin of a beast, and it is good to be free again! A holy man cast me into the shape of a camel when I tried to attack him—if he still lives, I will seek him out and kill him slowly."

The huge creature bends down to grin at the adventurers. "As your reward, I offer you the chance to choose how I will kill you. For when I was cursed with the form of a camel, I vowed that he who delivered me I would reward with wealth beyond imagining. But as the years passed, I grew angry that none came to my aid. Finally, I changed my vow, swearing by my very soul that I would slay him that released me, as a punishment for waiting so long. The time has come, O my deliverers! Shall I crush you beneath my feet? Grind you with my jaws? Or shred you with my talons? Choose, puny mortals!"

BATTLE WITH THE MARID

Presumably the characters will fight the monster. At first it will be overconfident, and will try to smash the humans bodily. But if they wound it, the creature will rapidly sober up, and will use all of its powers to the fullest as it tries to kill them.

The Marid will fight until it suffers a serious wound. Then, screaming that it will be revenged, it takes to the air and flees the city.

19.7 REWARDS AND CONSEQUENCES

The ungrateful Jinn will give the party nothing but trouble for all they have done. But, if they can defeat the monster, they will have all the treasures of Irem at their disposal. The only limit is how much they can transport back to civilization through the wastes of the Empty Quarter. The Gamemaster can either assign an appropriate treasure, or randomly generate one from the random tables in C&T. The city is very rich in normal wealth, and normal in magic items. It will take at least three days in Irem to gather up all the goodies.



19.8 NPCS

THE HERMIT

Aged Anwar (if that really is his name) has dwelt in the wilderness for decades, perhaps centuries. Through meditation he has purified his soul, and now contemplates Eternity in peace. He does not enjoy being disturbed, but will help those in need. If threatened or attacked, he will not use his mystic powers to harm others, but instead will simply leave.

In appearance, he is a short, extremely thin man with a bald head. His long beard is the color of the desert sands. Only his eyes betray the power within him. Anwar dresses in simple clothing of rough wool, carefully mended by hand.

ANWAR THE HERMIT

LEVEL 20 MYSTIC

Co: 17 Ag: 19 SD: 86 Re: 79 Me: 85
St: 32 Qu: 63 Pr: 95 Em: 99 In: 91

Hits: 50
PP: 142/40

AT: 2 (robes)
DB: +2/+0

Skills:

Spell Mastery:	68	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine	
Divination:	95	(Islamic):	86
First Aid:	68	Symbol Lore:	89
Foraging:		Meditation (Sleep):	105
(Arid Sandy Desert): ..	66	Region Lore:	
General Perception:	89	(Arid Sandy Desert):	68
Jinn Lore:	84	Spell Casting:	86
Magical Languages:	95	Star-Gazing:	84

Spell Lists: The Hermit has the following Spell Lists: Solid Alteration to the 25th level of mastery, Delving Ways to 25th level, Illusions to 25th level, Hiding to 20th level, Self Healing to 20th, Anticipations to 10th level, Spirit Mastery to 10th level, and Telekinesis to 10th level.

In a highly magical campaign, Anwar will have a x3 Mentalism/Essence PP multiplier ring (120 PP total), and a Necklace of Protection (+30 to his DB).

THE MARID

The Marid is a wicked Jinn, though not one of the followers of Iblis the Devil. He is evil but foolish and overconfident, and so years ago he was punished by a wise holy man, who cast the bad spirit into the form of a camel. At first the Marid promised to richly reward whoever freed him from the spell. But as time passed he grew impatient, finally vowing to kill whoever released him, for not coming sooner.

This Marid is a 10th level monster. It flies at a rate of 120, with a maximum pace of Dash and a MM bonus of 30. Its Speed is Fast (FA) both for Movement Speed and Attack Quickness.

It can vary its size freely from Small to Huge; in combat it will be Huge and uses the Large Creature critical table. The Marid can take 110 hits. The Marid can change its skin to different kinds of armor, but in combat it will be Armor Type 12. Defensive Bonus is 50. It can make a Huge Trample/Stomp attack with an Offensive Bonus of 80; also a Huge Bash attack with an Offensive Bonus of 90. (These attacks are scaled to whatever size the creature takes— if it is Small, they become Small attacks.)

The Marid's IQ is only Average (60). Bonus EP code is H. It knows the following Essence Spell Lists: Spell Wall, Lesser Illusions, Detecting Ways, Fire Law, Wind Law, and Water Law, all to the 10th level of mastery (the Marid can use these spells automatically, without gesturing or uttering incantations).



20.0 THE FRANKISH KING'S CROWN



This is a more realistic adventure of crime-detection and intrigue in and around Baghdad. No magic is involved (and in fact would probably make solving the mystery too easy). The story takes place in Baghdad during the reign of Harun Al-Rashid, before the fall of the Barmecides from power. With a little work it can be adapted to any setting. The player-characters are assumed to be 3rd to 5th level.

20.1 THE GOLDSMITH'S DILEMMA

One afternoon at the mosque, just after the midday prayers, the player-characters encounter Ali ibn-Hasan, a distant cousin of one character. Ali is a prosperous goldsmith of Baghdad, a well-off and highly-respected craftsman. But today he seems dreadfully upset. When he spies the adventurers he urgently beckons them to him. "Bismillah, O son of my uncle! Woe is me—I am a ruined man! It is very important that you come with me to my home. Something terrible has happened!"

THE BARMECIDE'S CROWN

Ali ibn-Hasan dwells in a comfortable house in the Al-Kharkh quarter of Baghdad (a detailed description is given below). When the player-characters arrive, Ali welcomes them in, seats them on soft pillows, and gives them chilled lemonade to drink. As soon as everyone is settled, he begins his story.

"Allah have mercy upon me, for I am the most unfortunate of men! Two months ago I was working in my workshop when a huge slave gorgeously dressed in black and gold came to me, and told me I was summoned to the presence of the Vizier Jafar the Barmecide.

"My heart was in my mouth from fear. I dressed in my best, and followed the slave across the river to the Vizier's palace at Al-Rusafa. Truly, it is a place of wonders! Twin golden-haired boys came to wash my feet at the gate, and a pair of giant warriors stood by each door. The first slave led me to Jafar's office, where he and twenty scribes manage the administration of the whole world.

"Jafar greeted me kindly. 'You are Ali the goldsmith, are you not?' I told him I was, and he praised my work. 'I have seen ornaments of your making, O Ali, and they are wrought with a marvelous skill.' My breast broadened with pride to hear such words from the first man in the land (excepting of course the Commander of the Faithful, Allah bless and keep him).

"Jafar then told me that the Caliph (whose name be ever praised) had received a party of ambassadors from the infidel Charlemagne, King of the Franks. They brought gifts from barbarous Frangistan, and the Well-Guided One was minded to send gifts back to Charlemagne when the ambassadors departed. The Caliph (peace be upon him) had asked Jafar to procure a golden crown, of wondrous beauty, to send back with the ambassadors. Jafar thought of my work, and asked me if I would undertake the commission.

"At once, your Excellency! I told him. 'Good,' he said. 'The crown must be ready when the ambassadors depart Baghdad in two months' time.' I left the palace and returned home, and straight away began working on a crown for the infidel King—a crown of beauty such as no man has seen!

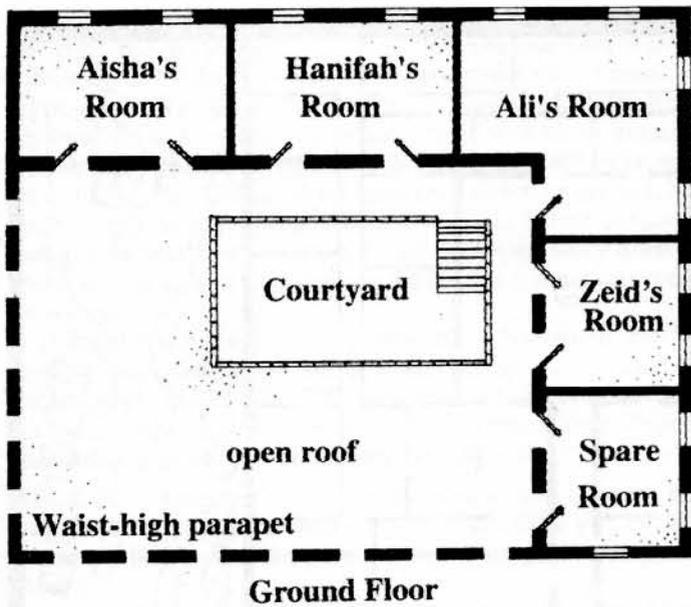
"For eight weeks I labored making the crown, stopping only to eat, sleep, and pray. Yesterday I finished it, and went out to celebrate. Woe is me! I encountered some merry men and joined them at their revels. They made me drink wine so that I became drunk, and staggered home to sleep. Alas! I am a miserable sinner!

"This morning when I awoke I went to my shop to get the crown and deliver it. But the crown was gone! Allah have mercy upon me! I turned the house inside out but the crown was nowhere to be found!

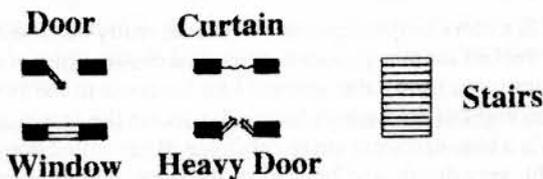
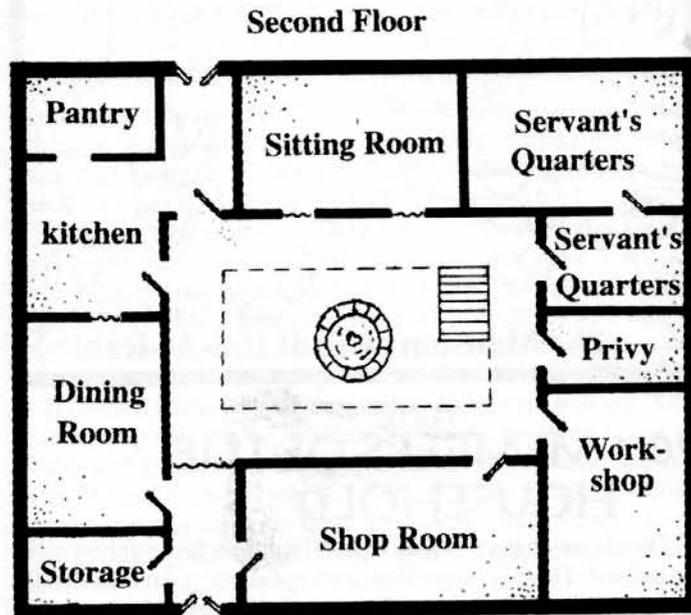
"I am ruined! When Jafar the Barmecide asks for the crown I will have nothing to give him! He will surely have my head, or throw me into prison! O son of my uncle, you must help me find the crown before Jafar learns of this matter. You must!"

In addition to begging and moaning, Ali will also offer to give half of his payment to the player-characters. Naturally, he can only collect his pay if the crown can be found. It must be delivered to Jafar in two days' time.





The House of Ali



20.2 ALI'S HOUSE

Ali's house is a comfortable but small dwelling in the Kharkh section of Baghdad. The floor plan shows the layout. It stands in a street inhabited almost entirely by jewelers and goldsmiths. From the outside, the house is unimpressive—a squat structure of mud brick covered with stucco, with no windows on the ground floor.

The Entryway: This is one of three ways into the house. A very thick door opens into the hall from the outside. At night the door is barred with a stout beam. The hallway itself is cool and dim, with a tiled floor. A basin stands ready for guests to wash their feet upon entering. Doors open into Ali's shop and the storage room, and the passage opens into the courtyard.

The Smithy: This room is where Ali does his goldsmithing. There is a small forge, bars of gold, crucibles, and a complete set of metalworking tools. The doors are not locked (locks haven't been invented yet). A small window is barred and shuttered. The floor of the workshop is packed dirt.

The Shop: This is where Ali does his selling. It is a cool and airy room, with rugs and cushions for customers to sit on. A large chest holds samples of Ali's work—mostly brass, but there are a few silver pieces worth perhaps ten dirhams. The floor is tile, and the walls are decorated with patterned tiles. The door to the street is very strong, and is barred when Ali is not in the shop or the smithy.

Storage Room: This room holds coats, shoes, brooms, old rugs, and a sack of scrap metal. A heap of new rugs belonging to Ali's nephew Zeid fills one corner. A successful Perception roll will allow the player characters to notice that the packed dirt floor is disturbed next to the sack of metal scraps—as if another sack had been resting there. (See the section "Clues" below.)

Courtyard: The courtyard is a pleasant spot, with pots of flowers blooming around a fountain in the center. In hot weather much of the family life goes on here.

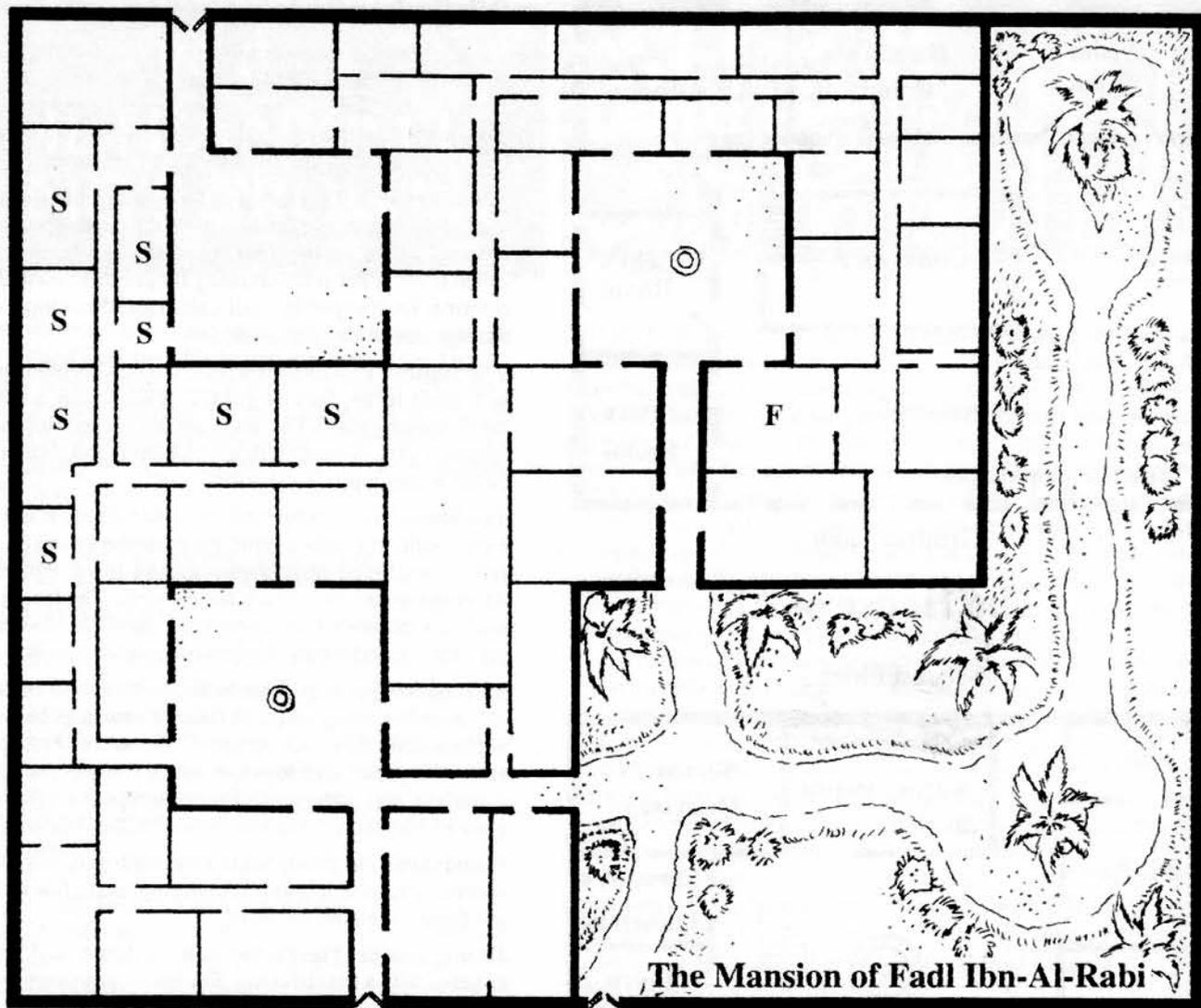
Dining Room: The dining room is large, and has a tile floor covered with a beautiful rug. The walls are covered with patterned tiles. This is where Ali and his nephew Zeid take their meals, usually with one or two of Ali's customers or business associates. The women eat in the kitchen or upstairs.

Kitchen: The kitchen has a large fireplace where the food is cooked, and has pots and pans hanging on the walls. The floor is packed dirt. A heavy door opens into the alley behind the house; it is kept barred when nobody is in the kitchen.

Pantry: The pantry holds large stone jars of wheat, oil, clarified butter, olives, honey, dates, sesame, and beans. A small handmill is used to grind flour. A chicken-coop holds two hens. Hidden behind the jar of olives is a bottle of wine, which Ali occasionally brings out for his guests. The floor is packed dirt.

Sitting Room: This is the room where the family members relax during the day. It is a large comfortable room with thick carpets and cushions on the floor.

Slave Quarters: This is where Ali's three slaves live. Gibreel works with Ali in the workshop. His wife Miryam cleans and helps in the kitchen, and their daughter Hagar does the laundry. There is one room where the three of them eat, and another where they sleep. The floors are packed dirt, but the living-room has a cast-off rug. If the characters search under the rug, a Perception roll will note that the dirt floor has been disturbed. Digging into the floor will uncover a small pottery jar, which Gibreel has been filling over the years with tiny scraps of gold from Ali's workshop. (See the section on "Clues," below.)



Ali's Room: This is where Ali sleeps, usually with one of his wives. It is the coolest room in the house, and is furnished with a mattress and rugs. The floor is wood. Ali's windows look out over the alley behind the house; they are kept shuttered most of the time.

Hanifa's Room: This is where Ali's senior wife Hanifa sleeps. It has windows on both the courtyard and the alley. The alley-side windows are shuttered. The floor is wood.

Aisha's Room: This is where Ali's second wife Aisha sleeps. It is similar to Hanifa's room.

Rooftop: The roof is flat, and this section is used to hang up washing and beat rugs. In the hot part of the year, the family members sleep on the roof.

Zeid's Room: This is where Ali's nephew Zeid sleeps. It has windows on the courtyard, but the other wall directly abuts the house next door. Zeid's room is neatly kept, and there is a pile of rugs he is hoping to sell.

Spare Room: Currently this extra room holds all the sewing and spare clothes for the household. Ali is keeping it vacant in the hope of getting another wife.

20.3 MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD

The player-characters may wish to interview the members of the household. There is no problem with speaking to the men, but the women will of course be veiled. Attempts to use Lie Perception skill on a veiled woman will be at a -10% penalty to the roll because her face cannot be read.

Ali: Ali is a short, overweight man with a carefully trimmed beard. He has worked for many years to become a master goldsmith, and the commission from Jafar seemed like his route to the big time.

On the night of the theft he finished work on the crown, stowed it away in a box, and went out to celebrate. He returned home after midnight, very drunk, and banged on the door until Gibreel came to let him in. He didn't notice anything as he staggered upstairs to bed. Ali awoke the next day just before the noon prayer. He went downstairs to his workshop and found the crown missing.

Hanifa: Ali's senior wife is a tall, well-built woman. She has born Ali three children, but sadly none survived infancy. Hanifa has a sharp temper and keeps a close watch on how the household is run. She does most of the cooking herself, aided by Aisha and Miryam.

Her account of the night of the theft is: "Let me see—I went to bed after the nighttime prayer. I think everyone else went to sleep then, too. That's usually when we all go to bed. I don't believe in staying up until all hours. I slept soundly, thanks be to Allah, until my husband woke the whole neighborhood with his disgraceful pounding on the door and shouting like a drunken fool. What will the neighbors think? After that I tossed and turned on my bed, but couldn't get back to sleep. About two hours before sunrise I thought to myself that my husband would be feeling badly when he woke, so I got up and went down to the kitchen to make him some nice soup."

If asked about the other members of the household, Hanifa recalls "Everyone else was asleep when I got up. I did see Zeid go out very early, before the morning prayer, even. He usually lies in his bed until noon, like a worthless good-for-nothing. Then Miryam came in to help me, and soon everyone was awake."

Aisha: Ali's younger wife is nearly twenty, and is pretty but slightly plump. She is a warm-hearted, affectionate girl, but not extremely bright. She dotes on Ali and is on good terms with Hanifa.

Aisha story is: "Oh, that night I remember I stayed up late. I was trying to teach my pet kitten to fetch. It wouldn't, though. I finally gave up and went to sleep. I remember I was just getting sleepy when all of a sudden there came a tremendous pounding on the door. At first I was afraid, until I recognized Ali's voice. He doesn't usually drink so much. Once everything was quiet again I fell asleep and didn't wake up until I heard the muezzins at sunrise."

Zeid: Zeid is the son of Ali's brother Bayram, who lives in Isfahan. He came to live with his uncle while trying to make his fortune importing rugs from Isfahan to Baghdad. Zeid is a stocky, red-faced young man with a normally merry expression.

Zeid's account of the night is as follows: "I was out that evening with some business associates over in Rusafa. I got home just before Gibreel barred the door for the night. That must have been right after the evening prayer. I went to bed and didn't get up until morning. When Uncle Ali came home I woke up for a little while, but went back to sleep. In the morning I got up early and went out."

If pressed about why he went out so early, Zeid will say "Oh, I wanted to get to the baths before the morning prayer, to see if I could catch Uthman ibn-Yusuf, the big rug-seller. I have some new pieces from Khorasan I want to sell him." (If the characters follow up this lead, they can learn from Uthman that Zeid met with him as he was coming out of the mosque after prayer, not in the bath.) Should anyone ask him, Zeid will recall that the front door was not barred when he left.

Zeid is lying, for he really did steal the crown, but he is very good at concealing his emotions. If any of the player-characters tries a Lie Perception skill roll, the Gamemaster should first check to see if Zeid makes his Acting skill roll. If he does, then the lie goes undetected.

Gibreel: Gibreel is a muscular man with a completely bald head. His fair skin betrays some Slavic ancestry. He has been Ali's slave for fifteen years.

Gibreel's version: "If it please the Nobly-Born sirs, after my master finished work in the smithy, I went in to tidy up. He had put that crown into a box under the worktable, and I remember seeing it when I cleaned up. I didn't touch it, though. After that, I think I had dinner, then after the evening prayer I shut the front door. I was going to leave it open for my master, but my master's wife Hanifa is very strict about not leaving the door open at night. Then I went to bed."

"When my master returned I let him in, then barred the door again and went to the kitchen to get some dates. After that I went back to bed. This morning I slept late—I figured my Nobly-Born master wouldn't be needing me early."

Miryam: Miryam is a buxom, broad-shouldered woman. Though a slave, she wears a veil. She has been married to Gibreel for eighteen years. Miryam is a no-nonsense sort of woman, and will be insulted if a bunch of strangers come in and start asking her questions.

According to Miryam: "That night I went to bed at the same time as my husband. I always try to keep regular hours; it's all this staying up late that makes people sick. I slept pretty well, but then I usually do. Hard work makes for sound sleep. When the master came home it barely woke me, and I went right back to sleep again. It's always best to get a good night's sleep. I didn't wake up again until the morning prayer. And then I had to hurry up and go help the mistress in the kitchen."

If asked, she will say that Hagar was already up when she woke, while Gibreel was still fast asleep.

Hagar: Hagar is a small, scrawny girl, dressed in cast-offs from Aisha and Miryam that do not fit her very well. She does not wear a veil. Anyone can tell that she is frightened to have strangers asking her questions.

Hagar's account of that night is simple: she says that she was asleep all night, but woke up a little while before her parents to get some sewing done.

Anyone making a successful Lie Perception roll will quickly notice that Hagar is not telling the truth. If confronted with this (or if anyone asks if she went out), Hagar will burst into tears. Through the flood of tears the player-characters can make out the following: "Please don't tell anyone, O worthy excellencies! I didn't mean any harm. I just wanted to go and see Maruf. He's the boy who works for the tinsmith down the street and he's very nice and handsome and he's the only person in the world who cares about me and my parents are just *awful* for telling me not to see him! So I got up early and snuck out and we just talked, that's all we did, because he's a nice boy and knows half the Koran. And then I came straight back and that's all that happened and if Zeid says anything different he's lying. But please don't tell anyone about this, Noble-Born Sirs! My parents just don't understand me!"

If the characters ask why she mentioned Zeid, Hagar will explain that she was coming in just as he was going out, and she's been terrified that he was going to tell someone. If questioned further, Hagar can recall that Zeid was carrying the bag of scrap metal.

20.4 CLUES

There are several clues which the player-characters may come across in the course of their investigation.

The missing bag of scrap metal is the most important clue. Zeid put the crown into the bag when he came home and then removed the bag early the next morning. So the crown was "stolen" several hours before Ali returned home.

Hagar's unusual behavior is the next big clue. She slipped out to meet her boyfriend Maruf before anyone else got up, and came home just as Zeid was leaving. He thinks she noticed the bag, and so didn't mention seeing her at all. But she's too scared that he will tell someone about her sneaking out to mention it either.

The gold which Gibreel has been stealing is actually a red herring, which a little deduction should make clear—if he's been accumulating gold shavings all these years, why now suddenly steal the crown?

20.5 THE THIEF'S CONFESSION

If the PCs gather all the facts and put them together properly, they can confront Zeid and ask him why he stole the crown. When confronted, he will confess that he did it.

"O my brothers, I am a miserable vermin. For some weeks now I have been playing at dice in the shop of Husein the butcher. At first I was lucky, and won gold. But then fortune turned against me, and I began to lose badly. A one-eyed Egyptian lent me the money to pay my debts, but he charged interest on the loan so that I sank ever deeper into debt. Then, five days ago, he called me in and asked if I would like to have all my debts canceled. My heart was gladdened, and I said I would do anything to free myself. The Egyptian told me to bring him the crown. I hated myself for doing it, but it sounded like such a little task to ease my burden."

20.6 THE ONE-EYED EGYPTIAN

The Egyptian is a henchman of Fadl's, and got him the crown in order to further a plot to embarrass Jafar. When it comes time for the ambassadors to leave, Jafar will have no crown to send, but Fadl will be able to produce one and thereby win favor with the Caliph.

The Egyptian keeps a shabby little shop near the edge of Baghdad, selling secondhand merchandise. Most of his stuff is either junk or stolen goods. He lives upstairs, and has an underfed teenage slave boy to do the cleaning and cooking. At any given time there will be 1D6 first-level Thieves and Rogues lounging around the shop, drinking cheap wine and trading tall stories.

If the player-characters go to confront the Egyptian about the crown, he will first claim to know nothing about the affair. But if they persist, he and his buddies will try to fight them off and escape to Fadl's house for protection.

Only if he is defeated by the adventurers and in danger of death will the Egyptian confess who he gave the crown to. He knows what Fadl does to his hirelings with loose tongues—many of them end up without any tongues at all. He can tell them only that he took the crown to Fadl ibn-Al-Rabi, the Caliph's Chamberlain. He wanted it to discredit the Vizier Jafar.

20.7 RECOVERING THE CROWN

The only way to get the crown back is for the player-characters to get into Fadl's house and recover it. This can be done either by fraud, stealth, or brute force.

Fadl lives in a relatively modest mansion inside the Round City. The house has a walled garden attached to it, and is a rambling one-story structure. There are no windows on the outside of the house. The house has a staff of 12 guards—6 level 1 Fighters, 3 level 3 Fighters, 2 level 5 Fighters, and 1 level 7 Fighter. Fadl is also protected by his personal bodyguard Ahmed.

Rather than describe each chamber individually, the rooms in Fadl's mansion are grouped into three categories: Public, Harem, and Service. Public rooms are left white on the floor plan, Service areas are lightly shaded, and Harem areas are darkly shaded.

Public Rooms: These are the chambers where Fadl entertains guests and conducts business. They are all in the front section of the house. The public rooms are all elaborately decorated with tiled walls, painted ceilings, hanging tapestries, and thick rugs.

During the day all the public areas will be crowded with scribes, toadies, and people begging for favors. Fadl himself will be in his office (the room marked O), attended by a dozen scribes and his bodyguard. Characters will have to wait several hours before being allowed to see Fadl; a successful Bribery roll can cut this delay to only twenty minutes.

At night the public rooms are all empty. A single guard patrols the front courtyard, and will respond to any sound in the public rooms. There is a 5% chance of encountering someone in the public areas at night.

Harem: The rooms of the Harem are also lavishly furnished, but the emphasis is on comfort rather than display. These are the rooms where Fadl and his family live. During the day this section will be full of servants, wives, and children. Intruders will be immediately noticed and the guards will be summoned.

At night almost everyone will be asleep. Fadl sleeps in the bedroom marked "F" on the floor plan. His bodyguard Ahmed sleeps across the threshold of his room, with his sword by his side. All of the other rooms will have sleeping family members in them as well. There is a 10% chance of encountering a family member who is awake during the night.

The crown is in a wooden box in Fadl's bedroom. The box about a foot square, and is secured by a Chinese wood puzzle lock, which requires a successful Pick Locks skill roll to open.

Service: The service areas of the house include the kitchens, laundry, storage, stables, and the slave quarters. In daytime they are full of servants and tradesmen. At night, most of the service areas are empty except for the slave quarters, marked "S" on the floor plan. The slaves all sleep there, and will raise the alarm if intruders are found. The guards are slaves also, and stay with the others. There is a 10% chance of encountering someone in the service areas at night.

20.8 RESULTS

If the characters succeed in recovering the crown in time, they will gain a powerful ally in Jafar. But if Fadl learns they were involved, they will also have gained a powerful enemy. Even if they fail to accomplish the mission, Jafar may still remember them as loyal and brave adventurers; he may call upon them in the future.

20.9 NPCs

ALI IBN-HASAN

Ali is a talented goldsmith whose skill recently brought him to the attention of the Vizier Jafar. Ali wants desperately to recover the missing crown, not so much because of the money it represents, but because he is afraid his reputation will be destroyed—if Jafar doesn't have him beheaded.

Ali's skill at metal-working is much better than his ability to deal with people. He is kind and friendly, and not a little naive. Ali is very easy to impress, and equally easy to fool.

The goldsmith is a middle-aged man, slightly stooped from long hours bent over his worktable. His beard is bushy and untrimmed, and his clothes are marked with soot and metal dust. Ali doesn't carry a weapon, as he would never dream he might get into trouble.

ALI**LEVEL 5 CRAFTSMAN**

Co: 45 Ag: 79 SD: 52 Re: 58 Me: 95
 St: 59 Qu: 62 Pr: 47 Em: 67 In: 94

Hits: 25 AT: 1 (none)
 DB: +1/+0

Skills:

Appraisal:	35	Pick Locks:	45
Brawling:	35	Sculpting:	45
Disarm Trap:	40	Smithing (Goldsmith):	60
Metal Evaluation:	65	Trading:	35
Metal Lore:	65	Trap-Building:	35

HAGAR

Hagar is a skinny teen-age girl who escapes her rather humdrum life with dreams of romance. She has recently fallen in love with Maruf, the tinsmith's apprentice, and has hopes that he might want to marry her. If any of the player-characters are suitably handsome and dashing, Hagar will waste no time falling in love with the PC.

Hagar is rather plain-looking, with a prominent nose and crooked teeth. Her appearance isn't helped by the ragged cast-offs she wears, which have gone through two or three previous owners before she gets them. Hagar doesn't carry weapons, but might try to fight if threatened.

HAGAR**LEVEL 1 NO PROFESSION**

Co: 49 Ag: 80 SD: 16 Re: 49 Me: 50
 St: 38 Qu: 72 Pr: 48 Em: 93 In: 59

Hits: 21 AT: 1 (none)
 DB: +6/+0

Skills:

Brawling:	5	Crafting (Sewing):	15
Dance:	10	Scrounge:	5
Cookery:	10		

ZEID

Zeid ibn-Bayram is Ali's nephew. He is living with his uncle while he tries to make a living as a rug merchant. Unfortunately, Zeid tries too much to make a single "big score" rather than developing his business day-by-day. He also has a taste for gambling, and that has led him into debt.

Zeid is a stocky young man, with a red face and fair skin. His hair and beard are curly. Zeid dresses carelessly, and seldom visits the mosque. He likes to think of himself as a tough guy, and carries a big dagger at his belt.

ZEID**LEVEL 3 TRADER**

Co: 86 Ag: 71 SD: 39 Re: 75 Me: 65
 St: 86 Qu: 49 Pr: 56 Em: 35 In: 67

Hits: 35 AT: 1 (none)
 DB: +0

Skills:

Advertising:	20	Riding (Camel):	25
Appraisal:	50	Streetwise:	40
Basic Mathematics:	48	Trading:	50
Gambling:	20	Trading Lore:	44
Loading:	43	Weapon (Knife):	30

THE EGYPTIAN

Akbar, known to everyone as "the Egyptian" is a fence, smuggler, and underworld go-between. He isn't a big operator himself, but he works for them. He has recently started working for Fadl ibn-Al-Rabi, the Caliph's Chamberlain. Who knows how high the Egyptian could rise with a patron at court?

Akbar is a tall, leathery man with one eye. He wears shabby clothes and carries a sword at all times.

AKBAR THE EGYPTIAN**LEVEL 7 ROGUE**

Co: 56 Ag: 95 SD: 58 Re: 55 Me: 42
 St: 100 Qu: 97 Pr: 74 Em: 39 In: 49

Hits: 89 AT: 5 (leather shirt)
 DB: +21/+15

Skills:

Brawling:	98	Riding (Camel):	50
Climbing:	60	Streetwise:	40
Grappling Hook:	80	Weapons:	
Maneuvering in Armor		Knife:	75
Soft Leather:	90	Scimitar:	75

AHMED

Ahmed (he gives no other name) is the Fadl ibn-Al-Rabi's bodyguard and killer. He is quite good at protecting his master and eliminating his enemies, and best of all he keeps his mouth shut. Ahmed is very loyal to Fadl, who rewards him with great generosity. Ahmed is smart enough to know that without Fadl, he'd be just another street punk—and that there are plenty of street punks who'd love to take his place.

Ahmed is a small, slender man with wiry muscles and clear eyes. His face is almost always expressionless, even when he is wounded. Ahmed wears loose, comfortable clothing which doesn't hinder his movements, and which conceals his armor and weapons.

AHMED**LEVEL 10 ASSASSIN**

Co: 71 Ag: 95 SD: 85 Re: 48 Me: 66
 St: 87 Qu: 97 Pr: 80 Em: 24 In: 40

Hits: 76 AT: 10 (rigid leather breastplate & greaves)
 DB: +21/+15

Skills:

Adrenal Defense:	25	Maneuvering in Armor:	
Adrenal Moves:		Rigid Leather:	90
Quick Draw:	40	Soft Leather:	90
Speed:	40	Martial Arts (Strikes):	70
Ambush:	95	Riding (Horse):	50
Brawling:	85	Silent Kill:	80
Climbing:	85	Tightrope Walking:	40
Disguise:	80	Weapons:	
Grappling Hook:	70	Knife:	80
Languages		Scimitar:	80
Persian, sp.:	7/32	Short Bow:	90
Persian, wr.:	3/37		

21.0 FOR LOVE OF FATIMA



This is a change-of-pace adventure for characters of any level. It involves very little combat, and will test the players' ability to use their imaginations to solve a problem. It takes place in Baghdad, but could be moved to any location and nearly any time period.

21.1 BATTLE IN THE BAZAAR

One afternoon as the player-characters are strolling through the bazaar in the Al-Kharkh section of Baghdad, they will suddenly hear shouts coming from up ahead. In a circle of onlookers, three big men are beating up a scrawny teenage boy. The kid is definitely outmatched, for he can do little but hold his arms over his face and cry for help.

If the adventurers do nothing to help, the men will kick the boy senseless, then leave him bleeding in the gutter. The attackers are all 3rd-level Rogues, who will flee if faced by determined opponents. They are armed with knives.

The boy they were beating on will thank the player-characters for rescuing him, if they did. "May Allah grant you his favor for saving my miserable hide. I am Omar ibn-Ismael, O my rescuers. But alas, your effort was wasted, for it seems I cannot go on living."

21.2 OMAR'S PROBLEM

Without any prompting, the boy will explain his problem to the player-characters. "Know, O worthy ones, that those three villains you drove off were sent by a man named Uthman ibn-Yusuf, who hates the very teeth in my mouth. He is a merchant of the merchants, with mountains of gold and ships upon the ocean. And he has a daughter, Fatima—truly she shines in beauty like the moon!"

Wiping a tear from his eye, Omar continues. "I met her one day while delivering a bushel of rice to the house of Uthman. Just a glimpse through a half-shuttered window, and my heart was hers! Her beauty was like sunlight through a curtain. Since that day I have thought only of Fatima. I have tossed letters up to her window, sung songs outside her house, and striven to see her again. But her father will have none of it, for I am but a poor shopkeeper's son. He has said I am not worthy of his daughter's hand, and sent those men to teach me not to come near his house. O my excellent comrades, truly I am like a soul cast into Hell. There is no man on Earth as miserable as I!"

21.3 HELPING OMAR

If the player-characters decide to help young Omar, they must use their heads to come up with a way to arrange for him to marry his beloved Fatima. This adventure is more free-form than the others, as much of what happens depends on what the PCs decide to do. It could be used as the starting-point for a

continuing campaign, as the player-characters try various means to overcome Fatima's father's opposition. If the players cannot come up with any ideas, here are some suggestions:

GETTING WEALTH

Omar's chief problem is that he is poor. If he was wealthy, then Fatima's father might accept him more readily. If the players have any money to spare, they might try to bankroll Omar in starting a business. Unfortunately, though he is clever and resourceful, Omar has almost no marketable skills.



Alternatively, they might offer to finance him on a merchant venture. Omar will gladly go on a trading expedition, though he knows little of trading or desert travel. He will ask the player-characters to help him make the journey. It will be up to the players to select a commodity and arrange the trading mission.

Fatima's father and brother are well-connected in the Baghdad business community, and will quickly learn of any commercial venture involving young Omar. Fatima's father, Uthman, will merely use his connections to make things difficult for the young man. All business-related skill rolls will be at a -10% penalty whenever Omar or his friends deals with another local businessman.

But her brother Hasan will choose a more direct method. He will hire the three Rogues he sent to beat up Omar, and have them try to physically sabotage anything the boy tries to make money. The thugs will try to hijack any trade expedition the boy makes, or burn down his shop, or interfere however they can with Omar and the player-characters.

WINNING FAVOR

Though Omar is poor, he might win favor with Fatima's father by doing something to help or impress the old man. The problem, of course, is that Uthman doesn't want to see Omar's face, much less accept his help.

If the characters can get in touch with Fatima, she may be able to provide some useful information. It seems her father recently lost a great sum of money when a ship he owned sank near Basra. Apparently Uthman had sent one of his merchant captains to Serendip, to purchase a giant emerald which Uthman hoped to sell to the Caliph's wife Zubaida. Unfortunately the ship sank with the emerald on board. If Omar could recover the emerald, Uthman would be eternally grateful (alternately, Omar could sell the emerald himself and thereby become rich).

Finally, the player-characters may think of running a scam. If old Uthman were to be captured by a gang of desperadoes, and then rescued by heroic young Omar, surely he would marry his daughter to the young man who saved his life. The adventurers could take the part of bandits and arrange a kidnapping. Naturally, the Gamemaster can add all sorts of complications, in the form of real bandits, the police, and Uthman escaping.

KIDNAPPING FATIMA

Instead of going to all the trouble of persuading Uthman to let Omar marry his daughter, the player-characters may decide to take the direct approach. Why not just grab Fatima, and send her and Omar off to another city to start a new life? Of course, Uthman's house is not easy to get into. (Use the map of Ali the Goldsmith's house; Fatima sleeps in Aisha's bedroom, her father in Ali's, and her brother in Hanifah's. Uthman's two wives sleep in the other two bedrooms.) There will be a couple of third-level Fighters hired as guards to protect the house; they normally sleep in the courtyard.

And once Fatima has been snatched, the group must evade the authorities and get safely out of Baghdad. Uthman may send out agents looking for Omar and the player-characters. These will be very tough Fighters, Rogues, or Rangers (at least two levels higher than the highest-level PC).

21.4 OBSTACLES

Fatima's brother Hasan has promised to arrange for her to marry a friend of his, Abdallah ibn-Katib. So even if the PCs can convince Fatima's father that Omar is worthy, Hasan will still strive to sabotage their efforts. Once the player-characters discover Hasan's interference, he will desist. Hasan has no stomach for fighting.

The lovely Fatima might have other suitors, as well—perhaps including a powerful noble or official. Such a rival might take steps to prevent Omar from interfering in his courtship of Fatima.



21.5 NPCs

OMAR

Young Omar ibn-Ismael is the son of a poor shopkeeper. He is desperately in love with Uthman's daughter Fatima. Omar is a very pleasant young man, and is quite brave and determined. Unfortunately, he has almost no useful skills.

Physically, Omar is short and skinny, with large, appealing eyes set in a handsome face. He wears ragged cast-off clothes, all much too big for him.

OMAR

Co: 57 Ag: 70 SD: 37 Re: 63 Me: 72
St: 35 Qu: 69 Pr: 45 Em: 76 In: 65

Hits: 15

LEVEL 1 NO PROFESSION

AT: 1 (none)
DB: +5/+0

Skills:

Cookery: 20 Scrounging: 30
Play Instrument (Lute):.. 10 Streetwise: 30
Riding (Camel): 35

UTHMAN IBN-YUSUF AL-YEMENI

Uthman is a very successful and respected merchant in Baghdad. He owns several trading vessels, and each year sends out a caravan laden with goods. He lives fairly modestly, and dotes on his children, Hasan and Fatima. (Their mother was Uthman's first wife, now dead).

Uthman is very intelligent, but can be quite stubborn. He wants to marry Fatima to a man of wealth, who can take care of her. He does not want to see his daughter married to some ragamuffin like Omar. Uthman is reasonably pious, but is not a fanatic.

Physically, Uthman is a tall, heavyset man. His sedentary life and taste for good food have made him fat, but he is not grossly overweight. He carries a sword but never fights.

UTHMAN**LEVEL 5 TRADER**

Co: 50 Ag: 95 SD: 55 Re: 83 Me: 87

St: 57 Qu: 52 Pr: 95 Em: 45 In: 81

Hits: 30

AT: 1 (none)

DB: +0

Skills:

Administration:	60	Riding (Camel):	35
Appraisal:	60	Stone Evaluation:	60
Basic Mathematics:	60	Trading:	65
Bribery:	40	Trading Lore:	60
Hide Item:	40	Weapon:	
Language:		Scimitar:	35
Persian, sp.:	85/5		
Persian, wr.:	43/4		

FATIMA

Uthman's daughter Fatima is a stunningly beautiful girl. She is graceful, modest, and good-natured. She has fallen in love with Omar, and would like very much to marry him. But Fatima cannot defy her father. She is somewhat naive, having led a sheltered life in her family home.

In appearance, Fatima is lovely. She has wide dark eyes and lustrous black hair. Her neck is slender and her skin is the color of butter. She knows nothing about fighting.

FATIMA**LEVEL 1 NO PROFESSION**

Co: 54 Ag: 74 SD: 45 Re: 51 Me: 48

St: 25 Qu: 79 Em: 80 In: 60 Pr: 75

Hits: 15

AT: 1 (none)

DB: +10/+5

Skills:

Cookery:	25	First Aid:	15
Dance:	25	Singing:	25

HASAN IBN-UTHMAN

Hasan is Uthman's only son, and so stands to inherit a vast fortune from his father. He is not interested in business, but instead devotes his time to scholarly pursuits and social-climbing. He wants to marry Fatima off to a well-born friend of his. Hasan is not very physically brave, but he is quite clever and can be very devious. He will not take any direct action against Omar, but can hire thugs to do his dirty work.

Hasan resembles his father—he is tall, dark, and already is starting to put on weight. He dresses in all the latest styles, and tries to emulate the nobles of the Caliph's court in clothing, speech, and manners. He usually carries only a knife.

HASAN**LEVEL 3 SCHOLAR**

Co: 54 Ag: 41 SD: 45 Re: 91 Me: 88

St: 50 Qu: 35 Pr: 55 Em: 47 In: 90

Hits: 20

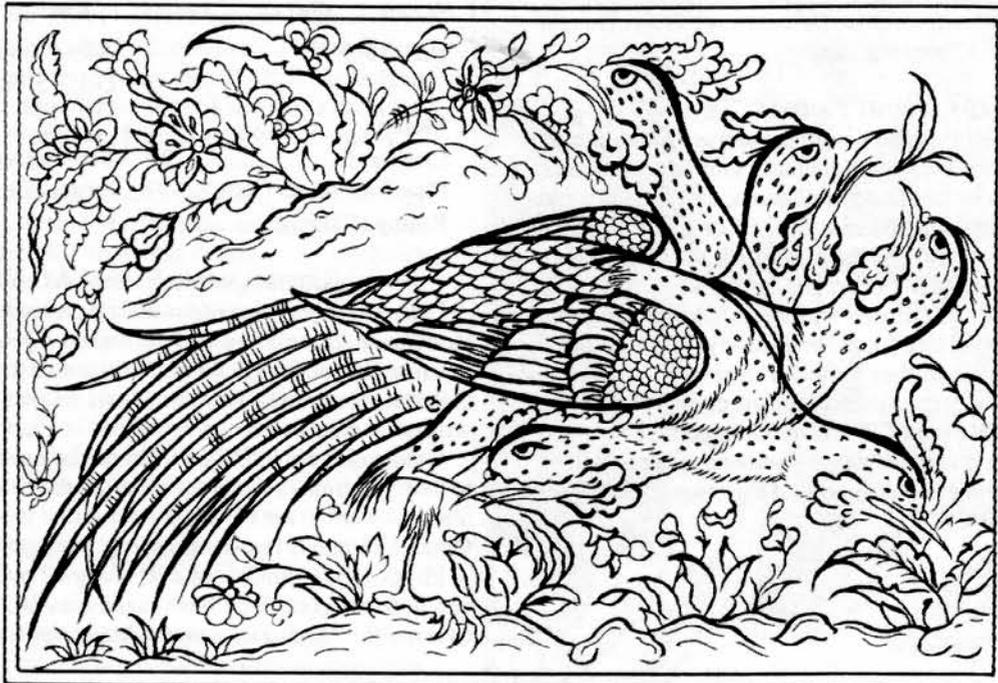
AT: 1 (none)

DB: +0

Skills:

Bribery:	10	Law (Islamic):	60
Cookery:	30	Philosophy/Religious Doctrine (Islamic):	55
Etiquette:	40	Racial History (Muslim): ...	55
Language:		Weapon:	
Persian, sp.:	89/9	Knife:	20
Persian, wr.:	59/5		

The following are short seeds for Gamemasters to develop into their own adventures. Some are fantasies, full of magic and strange creatures, while others are realistic scenarios.





22.0 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER ADVENTURES

22.1 THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND

The PCs are hired to take a consignment of goods by ship to Serendip (Ceylon). But a freak storm comes up while they are at sea, driving their ship far to the south, where the characters discover an unknown island. The island is inhabited by beautiful maidens in scented gardens, with all manner of treasures for the taking. But the women are in fact cannibal ghouls, and the island's delights are nothing more than illusions.

22.2 THE NOBLE INFIDEL

While walking through the market district, the PCs encounter a gang of brigands fighting a lone man, who is very strangely dressed. If the characters drive off the bandits, the man will thank them, and introduce himself as Ethelstan of Mercia, a nobleman from the distant land of Britain (wherever that may be). He was accompanying the fair lady Winafred on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem when their ship was attacked by pirates off Tripoli. Winafred was taken by the pirates, and Ethelstan has followed her to Baghdad, where she is to be sold as a slave. Ethelstan is very brave, but not very bright. He knows absolutely nothing about Muslim society.

22.3 CARAVAN TO SAMARKAND

The player-characters are accompanying a caravan along the Silk Road to Samarkand, carrying an important message for a noble patron. But along the way are bandits in the pay of their patron's enemies, determined to stop the caravan at all costs. In a lonely ruin the players and the caravaneers must hold off a siege by the bandits.

22.4 THE MARID'S CAPTIVE

The PCs meet a young noble named Abdallah who is dreadfully upset. On his wedding-day a horrible Marid appeared and carried off his bride, the lovely princess Aisha. The characters must help Abdallah find the Marid's palace and rescue Aisha, then find out why the creature abducted her. Perhaps Aisha has a secret?

22.5 THE MISSING BEAUTY

A nobleman's new Persian slave girl has vanished without a trace, and he engages the player-characters to find her and bring her back to him. Their search leads them to a magical fortress in the desert, where the girl is guarded by hideous monsters. Upon rescuing her, they discover she was sent to the prison by the noble's senior wife, who feared she would supplant her and so used powerful magics to get rid of her.

22.6 NABIL THE TRICKY

The player-characters fall in with a shady fellow named Nabil. He has learned that one of the richest merchants in Baghdad, a man named Murad, is worried because none of his four wives and ten concubines has been able to give him a son. Murad will generously reward anyone who can solve his problem. Nabil offers to share the take with the PCs if they will help him fleece Murad. The characters must come up with a scheme and see it through, and keep Nabil from double-crossing them and taking all the money.



APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE



Unfortunately, there is no universally accepted method of transliterating words from the Arabic alphabet to the Latin (just think of all the different ways to spell "Khaddafi"). Because this is a role-playing game, not a linguistics text, I have tried to use the most pronounceable and easily spelled versions of foreign words. Where a word has a familiar English spelling, I have used that, with the more technical form in parenthesis. Otherwise, the spelling is that used in my sources, with the pronunciation marks omitted. My choice of which version of a word to use has been frankly arbitrary, and I make no apologies.

Words with the prefix "Al-" are listed under the second word, not under "Al."

Abbasids (ah-BAH-sids): The dynasty descended from Muhammad's uncle Abbas, who gained control of the Caliphate in AD 749 and remained Caliphs until 1258.

Aghlabids (OG-la-bids): A family of governors in North Africa who became effectively independent of the Abbasid Caliphs during the Eighth Century. They ruled until AD 909, when the Fatimids conquered the region.

Ahl Al-Kitab (awl oll-ki-TOB): "Peoples of the Book"—the faiths which Muslims recognized as having their own authentic revelations from God. Christians and Jews were always among them, as were the Sabians of Yemen. Zoroastrians were sometimes included. Members of these religions could not be forcibly converted, and usually were given some degree of legal protection.

Ali (AH-lee): Cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, he served briefly as Caliph before resigning in favor of the Umayyads. He was assassinated in AD 661, and left two sons, Hasan and Husein.

Alid (AH-lids) The descendants of Ali, whose supporters were the Shi'ites.

Allah (all-LAH): The Arabic word for God.

Allah Akbar! (all-LAH OK-bar): Arabic phrase meaning "God is Great!" It is used as an all-purpose exclamation, and as a battle cry.

Aminah (a-MEEN-ah): Muhammad's mother.

Anatolia: The region between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, occupied now by the Republic of Turkey.

Assassin (*hashishim*): A member of the Nizari branch of the Ismaili Shi'ites, which during the Twelfth Century gained great political power through the use of terrorism.

Avestas: The holy books of the Zoroastrian religion.

Baghdad (bog-DOD): The capital city of the Abbasid Caliphate, located on the Tigris River. Today it is the capital of Iraq.

Baghlah (BUG-lah): Literally, "she-mule." A small ship.

Barmecide (*Barmakid*): A family of high officials in the service of the Abbasid Caliphs.

Bazaar: The market section of an Arab city.

Bedouin (*Badawi*): A nomadic inhabitant of the Arabian desert.

Berber: An inhabitant of North Africa; the name is European and is an imitation of how a foreigner speaking an unknown language sounds.

Al-Biruni (oll beer-OON-ee): A great Muslim astronomer and astrologer (AD 973-1048).

Bismillah (bis-mil-AH): an all-purpose expression of astonishment or consternation. "Good Lord" is an approximate English equivalent. Also used to say Grace before eating. It is the abbreviated form of the formula "Bismi-llah-r-rahmani-r-rahman," usually translated as "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate."



Black Stone: A stone set in one corner of the holy Kaaba at Mecca, said to have been put there by Adam. Muslims on pilgrimage touch or kiss the Stone.

Burak (boo-ROCK): The miraculous steed which carried Muhammad to Heaven on the Night of Journeying. In Persian and Indian art, it is represented as having a human face.

Byzantium: An alternate name for the city of Constantinople (modern Istanbul), and by extension the name of the Eastern Roman Empire, which was ruled from that city.

Caliph (call-EEF): The successor to the Prophet as leader of Islam. The term literally means "lieutenant" or "deputy."

Caravansera: A depot and way-station for caravans, serving as a combination inn, warehouse, and market.

Concubine: A woman living with a man who was not officially married to him; not quite a wife but more than a mistress.

Constantinople: Capital of the Byzantine Empire, located on the Bosphorus strait which separates Europe and Asia. Today it is called Istanbul.

Damascus: An important city in Syria, which served as the capital of the Ummayyad Caliphate from 661 to 749. Today it is the capital of the Republic of Syria.

Dervish (darwish): A member of one of the ecstatic Sufi sects, known for their whirling dances and their berserker ferocity in battle.

Dhimmi (DHIM-ee): The "Protected Peoples" or "Peoples of the Book." In Islam the term referred to Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians who were allowed to live under Muslim rule.

Dhow (DAU): A small sailing ship commonly used by Muslim seafarers.

Dinar (DIN-ar): A gold coin common in the medieval Islamic world, worth about \$25 in modern money. The name comes from the old Roman coin called the Denarius.

Dirham (DEER-hom): A silver coin of the Abbassid Caliphate, worth about a tenth of a dinar, or \$2 to \$3 in modern money.

Emir (ay-MEER): After the fall of the Abbassid Caliphate, this title was adopted by local rulers. It roughly means "commander."

Eunuch: A castrated man.

Fiqh (FEEK): Muslim jurisprudence or legal reasoning based on the Koran, the practices of the Prophet, and legal precedent.

Frangistan: The Muslim term for Europe, meaning "land of the Franks."

Ghazi (GAH-zee): One who fights for the Muslim faith; a holy warrior.

Ghoul (ghul): A person or humanoid creature that eats the dead. Sometimes called one of the Jinn.

Hadith (ha-DEETH): A saying or practice of the Prophet not included in the Koran. Hadiths are used as precedents to decide what is proper Muslim behavior in a situation not covered by the Koran.

Hajj (HODGE): The pilgrimage to Mecca.

Hamdallah (HOM-doll-ah): "Praise to God." A blessing or prayer. The literal form is "Al-hamdu li-llah."



Hammam (ham-MOM): A bath-house.

Harem (harim): The part of a house reserved for the women and family; the term literally means "sanctuary." The word is also applied to the zone around Mecca which is considered sacred, and is off-limits to infidels.

Harun Al-Rashid (ha-ROON all-rah-SHEED): One of the most popular Caliphs; his reign is looked back upon as a Golden Age.

Hashemite: One of the aristocratic clans of Arabia; Muhammad was a Hashemite, of the Quraysh tribe.

Hegira (hijra): The term for the Prophet Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina in the year AD 621. The Muslim calendar is figured from that date.

Husein (who-SAYN): The son of Ali, whose death marked the schism between orthodox Sunni Muslims and the Shi'ite branch.

Iblis (ib-LEASE): Lucifer or the Devil. Also known as Shaytan. He leads the evil Jinn and tempts mankind.

Ibn-: The Arabic prefix meaning "son of."

Id Al-Adha (id oll-OD-ha): The most important Muslim feast day, and the culmination of the pilgrimage to Mecca. Muslims who cannot make the pilgrimage observe the feast at home.

Id Al-Fitr (id oll-FIT-ter): The feast day marking the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting.

Ifriqya (IF-reek-ya): The old term for the region around Tunisia; an Arabization of the word "Africa."

- Ifrit (if-REET):** The name given to evil supernatural beings related to the Jinn or the Marids.
- Iran (eer-ON):** The term Iran refers to both the country (also known as Persia), and the plateau between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea. Iran is the Iranian name; Persia is the foreign name.
- Iraq (eer-OCK):** The Arabic word for the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.
- Islam:** The name of the religion founded by Muhammad. The term literally means "surrender" or "reconciliation" (to God).
- Ismaili (iss-MY-lee):** A Shi'ite sect which split off from the main Shi'ite group in AD 762. The Assassins were a branch of the Ismaili, and the sect produced many important theologians.
- Izar (iz-AAR):** A kilt-like garment worn wrapped around the waist, sometimes as a loincloth.
- Jafar (ja-FAR):** The name of the Barmecide Vizier of the Caliph Harun Al-Rashid.
- Jihad (jee-HOD):** A holy war, fought by Muslims when the Faith is in danger.
- Jinn (JIN):** A powerful supernatural creature.
- Jizya (JIZ-ee-ah):** a head tax paid by non-Muslims in Islamic countries.
- Jubba (JOOB-bah):** a long shirt or tunic, reaching to below the knees.
- Kaaba (KA-bah):** the most sacred shrine of Islam, located in Mecca.
- Katib (ka-TEEB):** A scribe or clerk; also a bureaucrat or official.
- Khadija (ka-DEE-ja):** Muhammad's first wife, and the first convert to Islam.
- Khan (CON):** This word has two meanings. First, a Mongol ruler, and the title adopted by rulers in the lands conquered by the Mongols. Second, a caravanserai.
- Kharkh (CARK):** The commercial section of medieval Baghdad.
- Khorasan (core-a-SAN):** The old term for the region lying northeast of Iran, bounded by the Jaxartes river and the Aral Sea.
- Koran (Quran) (coor-ON):** The sacred book of the Muslims, made up of Suras spoken by Muhammad under divine inspiration.
- Kurr (CUR):** A unit of measurement for grain.
- Levant:** A general term for the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean, comprising modern Israel, Lebanon, and Syria.
- Madrasah (MED-ra-sa):** a college or place of higher learning, usually attached to an important mosque.
- Maghrib (meg-REEB):** The Arabic term for the western part of North Africa, generally consisting of Algeria and Morocco.
- Mahr (MAR):** A bride-gift from a new husband to his wife, which remains her property if they divorce.
- Al-Mamun (oll-ma-MOON):** The son of Harun Al-Rashid. He founded many scholarly institutions.
- Al-Mansur (oll-mon-SOOR):** Third Caliph of the Abbassid dynasty, and founder of Baghdad.
- Marid:** A type of evil Jinn.
- Maulawiya (mole-AW-ee-ah):** The proper name of the Sufi group known to the west as the "whirling dervishes." Founded in the 13th century by Jalal Al-Din Al-Rumi.
- Mawali (ma-WHALE-ee):** An early non-Arab convert, adopted into an Arab tribe as a client. The system was abolished under the Umayyads, but the distinction remained.
- Mecca:** The most sacred city of Islam, the place of pilgrimage where the Kaaba is located. Birthplace of Muhammad.
- Medina:** Originally called Yathrib, this city became Muhammad's home after he fled Mecca. He is buried in Medina.
- Minaret:** The tower on a mosque from which the Muezzin gives the call to prayer.
- Mongol:** A tribe of Turkic horse nomads from the steppes of Asia who forged an empire stretching from Korea to Poland.
- Mosque:** A Muslim place of congregation for prayer.
- Muezzin:** The person who gives the call to prayer five times a day.
- Mufti (MOOF-tea):** Another term for a religious judge; a Qadi or Qadi's assistant.
- Nadim (na-DEEM):** The Caliph's inner circle of learned men, who entertained and advised him.
- Nafud (na-FOOD):** A region of sandy desert in north-central Arabia, near where the borders of modern Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia come together.
- Naga (NA-ga):** A magical snake-like creature with a human head.
- Nejd (NED-jd):** A semi-arid region in central Arabia.
- Night of Journeying:** The night when Muhammad was miraculously taken on a journey to Heaven and back, on the steed Burak.
- Night of Power:** The night when Muhammad was inspired with the Koran.
- Osmanlis (oz-MAN-lees):** A clan of Turkish ghazis who conquered the Byzantine Empire and established the Ottoman Empire on its ruins.
- Peri (PERRY):** The old Persian term for a fairy or spirit.
- Qadi (CAH-dee):** An Islamic judge or arbiter, who reaches decisions through study of the Koran and Hadiths.
- Qibla (KIB-la):** The niche in the wall of a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca. Only the mosque containing the Kaaba has no qibla.
- Quraysh (coor-EYE-sh):** The leading tribe of Mecca, of which Muhammad was a member. They were initially among the bitterest opponents of Islam.
- Ramadan (RAH-ma-don):** The month of fasting, during which Muslims cannot eat or drink during daylight. The ninth month of the Muslim calendar.
- Raqqa (ROCK-a):** A town on the Tigris river upstream from Baghdad, where Harun Al-Rashid established a summer palace.
- Ratl (ROT-tl):** A unit of measurement for grain.
- Al-Razi (oll-ROZ-ee):** Known in Europe as Rhazes, he was an important physician and alchemist of the Ninth Century.
- Roc (Rukh):** A giant bird, said to prey on elephants as a hawk preys on mice. The name is also used to refer to the Phoenix.
- Rub-al-Khali (roob-oll-CALL-ee):** The "Empty Quarter," a large tract of sandy desert in southeastern Arabia.
- Rum (ROOM):** Rome. The term refers both to the Byzantine Empire, and to Christendom or Europe in general.
- Salaam (sal-OM):** The traditional Muslim greeting and salutation. It means "peace upon you."



Salat al-Asr (suh-**LOT** awl-**AH**sur): a daily prayer (one of five), performed midway between noon and sunset. Frequently combined with the noon prayer.

Salat al-Isha (suh-**LOT** awl-**EE**sha): a daily prayer (one of five), performed an hour or two after sunset. Frequently combined with the sunset prayer.

Salat al-Maghrib (suh-**LOT** awl-mog**REEB**): a daily prayer (one of five), performed midway at sunset.

Salat as-Subh (suh-**LOT** ahs-**SOO**bh): a daily prayer (one of five), performed at dawn.

Salat az-Zuhr (suh-**LOT** ahz-**ZOOR**): a daily prayer (one of five), performed noon.

Samarra: A city in Iraq which became the capital of the Abbassid Caliphate after Baghdad became too dangerous.

Sambuk (som-**BUKE**): A small ship commonly used in Muslim waters.

Sassanid: The dynasty which ruled Persia before its conquest by the Muslims.

Seljuk (**SAL**-jook): A clan of Turks who established an empire in Iran and Iraq after the collapse of the Abbassid Caliphate.

Serendip: The island of Sri Lanka or Ceylon. Also called Taprobane.

Shah: The old Persian name for a king, revived by later Muslim dynasties in Iran. Also used in India.

Shariah (**SHA**-ree-ah): Islamic canonical law, combining the teachings of Muhammad with the work of later theologians and jurists.

Sheikh (*Shaykh*) (**SHAKE**): The term literally means "old man." A Sheikh is usually a respected leader of a community. Among the desert Bedouins, the Sheikh is the tribal chief. In towns, the Sheikhs are the town leaders.

Sherif (sha-**REEF**): Not a lawman, but the title given to one of the descendants of Muhammad. The plural is Shurafah.

Shi'i (**SHE**-ee): Or in western usage, Shi'ite. A follower of a minority sect of Islam, derived from the schism caused by the succession of Ali as Caliph.

Shikk (**SHICK**): A monster of Middle Eastern folklore, resembling a man split in half vertically.

Shugduf (shoog-**DOOF**): A litter carried on camel-back, used for protection from the sun while traveling in the desert.

Sind: The province comprising the southern portion of modern Pakistan. In the day of Harun it was the easternmost part of the Islamic Empire.

Sufi (**SOO**-fee): A form of Islam which emphasizes a personal, mystical knowledge of God. The Sufi tradition began in the early Eighth Century with the saint Hasan Al-Basri.

Suleiman (**SOOL**-ay-mon): The Arabic form of Solomon. A common personal name.

Sultan: A word originally meaning "chief" or "boss," it subsequently was used by Muslim rulers independent of the Caliphs.

Sunni (**SOON**-ee): The orthodox and most numerous Muslim sect. The term means "followers of the tradition."

Sura (**SOO**-ra): A verse of the Koran, spoken by the Prophet.

Tigris: One of the two rivers of Iraq; it flows through Baghdad.

Turban: The traditional headgear in the Middle East and India.

Turks: An ethnic group which originated in central Asia and migrated into the Islamic lands during the Middle Ages, eventually settling in Anatolia.

Umayyads (oo-**MY**-ads): The dynasty which held the Caliphate from the death of Ali in 661 to the rise of the Abbassids in 749.

Vizier (*Wazir*): Originally a Persian word meaning "one who carries a burden." It came to be the name for a secretary or assistant, and then for a Muslim ruler's Prime Minister.

Wadi (**WA**-dee): A desert watercourse which is usually dry, but can fill suddenly during the infrequent rains.

Wali (**WA**-lee): This word has two meanings: either a holy man, or a provincial governor. (The root meaning is "a friend"—either of God or of the ruler.)

Waqf (**WOK**-f): A bequest or endowment made to a mosque, usually of land. Such lands were tax-free.

Yemen: The southern coastal region of the Arabian Peninsula.

Zakat (za-**CAT**): The standard land tax levied by Muslim rulers, originally as charity for the poor but later merely as government revenue. The usual rate was 1/5 of the land's produce, or 2.5 if the land was irrigated by a public canal.

Zanzibar: An island sultanate off the coast of Africa, now part of the republic of Tanzania.

Zeid (zay-**EED**): One of Muhammad's earliest converts, who gave his wife to the Prophet.

Zoroastrian: The official religion of Sassanid Persia, which centered on the conflict between the God of Light, Ahura Mazda, and the God of Darkness, Ahriman.

Zubaida (zoo-**BUY**-da): The chief wife of Harun Al-Rashid.

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FILMS

There are surprisingly few good movies set in Islamic lands. Most of those listed below take place in the 19th and 20th centuries, and focus on the adventures of Europeans.

Aladdin: The 1992 Disney hit has stunning animation and great music by the late Alan Mencken.



Beau Geste: There are several versions of this French Foreign Legion epic, of varying quality. The Arabs in the movie are chiefly there to get shot at.

Casablanca: Besides being the best movie ever made, this film has some good scenes of life in Islam under European rule.

Lawrence of Arabia: David Lean's epic about the Arabs battling the Turks during World War I.

Mountains of the Moon: A film about Richard Burton and John Speke searching for the source of the Nile in Africa. But it does have some good scenes in Zanzibar.

Pepe Le Moko: Another colonial-era film, with Charles Boyer as a thief in Algiers, who invites Hedy Lamar to "come with me to ze Casaba."

The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad: A ridiculous plot, wooden acting, cheesy sets and costumes are all more than justified by Ray Harryhausen's amazing special effects.

The Sheltering Sky: A recent film about encounters between Europeans and Muslim tribes in the Sahara.

The Thief of Baghdad: There are a couple of versions, but Alexander Korda's original is probably the best. Full-bore Arabian Nights fantasy.

The Wind and the Lion: Teddy Roosevelt and a Berber chieftain played by Sean Connery almost start World War I over Candice Bergen.

APPENDIX 3: MISCELLANEOUS MILITARY NOTES



WEAPONS AND ARMOR

There was no standard military uniform. A common Arab soldier might have an arm band or even be issued an all white or all black uniform. Black was the only regular color worn by soliders in the *Arabian Nights* era.

The most common weapons of an Arab soldier were the spear and the saif. The spear was a typical wooden-hafted weapon. The saif was a long straight sword worn by infantry on a baldric (hanging over one shoulder) leaving the pommel just above the belt on the side opposite. Another weapon of significance was the mace. Most often, horsemen (and sometimes infantry) carried this weapon.

Most people envision scimitars as a dominate weapon of this period. Historically, they were introduced much later. Small crescent knives, though historically less than common, have also colored imaginations of this period.

Short bows were a common weapon in the Arabic armies. Composite bows were also common. The crossbow was not common until the Crusades. Quiver for bows held up to thirty arrows. Troops without bows often used javelins as a short-ranged missile weapon.

The typical infantry soldier did not wear armor, but often carried a shield. Shields can in two typical types. A turs was a medium-sized wooden shield, reinforced by leather (use the **RM** stats of a normal shield). A daraqa was a small shield made mostly of harden leather (use the **RM** stats of a target shield).

However, elite soldiers and cavalry troops were often well-armored. Chain mail (of a Byzantine design) was used by such troops. Shirts made of rectangular metal plates, woven together with leather thongs (called lamellar) was another armor type borrowed from the Byzantines (**AT** 13). An older type of armor was scale mail. This armor was made of simple oval (or round) metal plates (the size of coins) attached to a leather linen garment. It was heavier than other armors. It was usually made in a full length corselet extending to the ankles (treat as **AT** 15).

Helmets were only worn by a few types of troops (most troops wore a simple turban). Heavy cavalry and elite bodyguard would wear conical helmets (of a Persian style) that had an aventail hanging from the back of the helmet covering the neck. Aventails were made from either padded linen, leather, or even chain mail.

In addition, heavy cavalry often wore greaves of metal or wood. These greaves were made by binding staves of wood or metal together to form a half-open tube (which were then placed over the forearms and shins).

Excellent padding was necessary when wearing any heavy armor. The climate of the Middle East made wearing heavy armor very uncomfortable (double all exhaustion point expenditure if wearing armor above **AT** 9).



ORGANIZATION

In the battlefield, the Abbassid army was organized in formations called Khamis. The term Khamis was sometimes used to refer to a small army. A Khamis was commanded by a general who created his own tactical plans to fit the strategy devised by the Emir (commander-in-chief). The Caliph would assume the role of Emir when he was in the battlefield; however, he would often appoint a noble to the position of Emir.

The soldiers of a Khamis came from various provinces. As the Abbassid empire grew, they began to employ a more multi-racial army. In the time of *Arabian Nights*, the regular army is made up of many slave troops ghulam. Most ghulam were Turks. In addition, every nationality that could be purchased served the Abbassid. This often included Serbs, Kurds, Nubians, Khazars, Byzantines, Slavs, Georgians, and Armenians (just to name a few). Ghulam formations would often take the name of their employer or general nationality. If their employer died, the ghulam unit would often disband in the middle of combat!

TACTICS

The Arabs of this period relied heavily on cavalry to provide victory on the battlefield. Infantry are most often referred to as unreliable rabble.

Arab armies could move at an incredible speed (until they had so much loot that they were slowed). This mobility was attained by using camels. Camels were used to carry the soldiers and equipment. They could also provide water and meat on long campaigns. When an army did not have enough camels for all the soldiers (as tended to happen with large armies), it was slowed drastically.

Arabs seldom travelled on their war horses. They would ride a camel or lesser-quality horse to the battle and then mount their war horses for the battle. Some warriors would bring additional horses so they could take a fresh mount during the battle!

The typical Arab army of this period would form a line of battle from 8 to 11 ranks deep. Archers often formed a thin line in front of the main body and shot at the enemy. Sometimes, archers were deployed on the flanks (with the cavalry).

The front ranks were filled by men with some armor (when possible). The rest of the army, except for heavy cavalry) would go without armor. The main body of the army was equipped with whatever they could afford or salvage from the battlefield (spears, swords, javelins, and bows were the most common). Only cavalry and ghulam units were given standard equipment.

Khamis means five. The five elements of the formation of the Khamis was two wings, the center, the advance guard, and the rear guard. Where possible, each element made up of men from a single tribal affiliation.

The main body of the army was made up of infantry, flanked on both sides by cavalry. A favorite tactic was to feign a retreat, pretending to be beaten, then suddenly turning upon their pursuers.



In addition, the Arabs were fond of ambushes during the most difficult times of the year (attacking just before sunrise on the coldest day of the year was an ideal tactic).

Whatever the situation, breaking through the enemy ranks and threatening his rear was the objective most pursued. The cavalry were drawn up about five ranks deep and charged into battle in a pact unyielding formations, using lances until the hand-to-hand fighting demanded a sword or mace. This tactic would often panic the enemy troops (as the Muslim soldiers charged into battle yelling 'Allahu Akbar'—which means God is great!). However, if this assault failed, the Arabs often became confused and routed.

ROLEMASTER™

ICE's advanced Fantasy Role Playing (FRP) Game system, *Rolemaster* is the most advanced, complete, realistic and sophisticated FRP rules set available. The flexibility of the system allows it to be used wholly or in part. Each of the three components books can be used separately to improve the realism of most major FRP systems! *Rolemaster* is supported by its own fantasy setting: *Shadow World*™.

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