

# CONAN<sup>®</sup>

## ARGOS AND ZINGARA





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# Introduction

## LORDS OF THE WESTERN WAVES

**WELCOME TO THE** sourcebook for Argos and Zingara, the maritime nations of the Hyborian age. Argos and Zingara are two of the most politically volatile nations of the world, where men's destinies are decided through wealth and sword. These are vibrant realms of bloody strife and darksome horror. The cities of these two nations have begun to throw off the shackles of feudalism and the nations shudder beneath the tread of wealthy merchants, who are neither noble nor peasant. One's skills are as important as the circumstances of one's birth. This volume is divided into three basic parts. The beginning is devoted to Argos. The second part to Zingara. The third part is given to material that can be safely used in both nations.

Topics in the Argossean and Zingaran sections include the importance of honour and reputation, education, property (including slaves) and details on trade. Social hierarchy is also addressed.

Variant rules for non-coastal Argosseans and Zingarans are given, as well as culturally-specific roles for each of the character classes for each nation. Gladiators are also discussed in detail.

The governments of both nations are analysed and discussed, and the statistics of recent kings are offered. Detailed histories on both nations are offered to help Games Masters get a sense of where the countries came from and where they might be headed.

There is also an in-depth gazeteer for both nations detailing major cities and landmarks.

Next, new uses for skills to maintain a distinctness about Argossean and Zingaran characters are discussed, especially the Knowledge (fencing; Zingaran school) for rounding out the combat capabilities of Zingaran sword masters and Zingara's fencing schools.

The Pirates & Cutthroats chapter is a collection of Non-Player Characters for use as-is or as starts for customised villains. It includes Argossean and Zingaran pirates, knights and knaves, as well as statistics for Conan the Barachan. There is also a Games Mastering section with details on reputation, codes of honour and new weapons.





# Life in Argos

## THE MARITIME KINGDOM

**ARGOS IS ONE** of the Hyborian kingdoms that rose out of the ashes of Acheron when it fell 3,000 years ago. Situated on a coastline with natural sea-ports, unlike Shemites, the people of Argos have become master sailors, crafty pirates and powerful merchants. Argos is a small nation with a population of just over seven million people.

Argos is an interesting land for a Hyborian kingdom. It is wonderfully varied. The sea-ports are cosmopolitan and liberal. In contrast, the inland provinces of Argos are peopled with more traditional, conservative farmers, craftsmen and labourers. The roads of Argos, lined with trees, fields and villages, are generally peaceful and the inland folk are friendly toward strangers. Nearly every village has an inn for travellers, most of whom are making their way to Messantia or one of the other port cities, or are making their way toward Zingara, Ophir or Aquilonia laden with trade-goods.

With a command of the sea and the trade-routes, Argos has become a wealthy kingdom. It is wealthy enough to be able to raise armies for war or to hire assassins, spies and diplomats for its own brand of intrigue and subterfuge involving the other kingdoms.

## HONOUR & REPUTATION IN ARGOS

An Argossean looks to others for confirmation of ability, identity and honour. No Argossean can be his own judge. Argosseans do not look inwards to understand themselves but toward others to determine the opinion they should hold about themselves. Most Argosseans have a civilised code of honour as outlined in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. It is not enough, though, that an Argossean holds this code of honour – he must be *seen* as upholding that code by others. Thus, Argossean characters may act in private as if they have no code of honour so long as there are no witnesses, but one holding a code of honour must publicly behave in the appropriate manner. However, if private deeds become known, a reputation can be publicly ruined (earning the offender a Fallen Reputation type as seen on page 92). Thus,

Reputation as defined in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* is vital to an Argossean. Glory is measured by one's Reputation. Reputation can be used to climb the social ladder. Any honour or glory given by another to a character is used to further his political and social fortunes. Thus, many Argosseans become braggarts, for any achievement is blatantly spoken about to make sure everyone knows about it. However, some Argosseans feel too arrogant for such acts so they find others who will brag for them.

Honour for the Argosseans is a very real concept, built of a character's reputation, moral identity and self-perception. This sense of honour is the guiding principle of Argossean society and is never a matter of mere lip-service. Indeed, honour is an all-important issue. Argosseans of honour are always alert for insults. Actual or suspected, insults will impugn an Argossean's honour. An Argossean's honour also extends to his wife, his family and his beloved. Impugned honour will usually result in a duel or other form of violent redress. Among the aristocracy and the knighthood, honour is one's measure of standing among his peers, setting him apart from the common man. To those who hold a code of honour, it is as real as a castle, yet vastly more important, for a castle can be rebuilt if destroyed and honour is wounded forever if stained. For example, a man is allowed to kill his betrothed or wife without facing criminal charges if he suspects her of adultery because the man's honour and integrity has been tarnished.

In Argos, news and gossip spreads quickly, for many of the wealthier citizens spend much of the day talking in public baths or in the Argossean courts. Playwrights write plays that may praise or deride a public figure and the inns resound with songs praising or ridiculing the important figures of the day.

The importance of Reputation in Argos is such that the normal rule of losing one Reputation point for three consecutive months spent without any change in Reputation is suspended. If a character goes two consecutive months in Argos without a change in Reputation, then the character loses two Reputation points. Not to be talked about is political and social death for Argosseans and it does not take long before the people forget.



## ALLEGIANCE

A character may have up to three allegiances, listed in order from most important to least important. These allegiances are indications of what the character values in life and may encompass people, organisations or ideals. A character may have no allegiances, being either a free spirit or a lone wolf, or may change allegiances as he goes through life. Also, just because the character fits into a certain category of people does not mean he has to have that category as an allegiance. An allegiance in Argos creates an empathic bond with others of the same allegiance. Characters with allegiance gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with someone of the same allegiance, so long as the character concerned has had some interaction with the other character, allowing the connections to be discovered and thus bring the bonus into play.

Argosseans share most of the basic values that make civilisation possible, such as loyalty to lord and nation. Argosseans have a strong sense of community and a large share of civic pride. They take tremendous pride in their nation, in its infrastructure, wealth, art and architecture and most will gladly answer questions or provide directions to foreign visitors. Their civic pride ends at their coin purses, however. There are no charities in Argos, no orphanages, and beggars receive most of their alms from people from other lands. Even when it comes to their tithes to the cult of Mitra, Argosseans are tight-fisted. Argos is less feudal than Aquilonia and has more of a reliance upon written laws than Aquilonia or Nemedra, so allegiances are less important to an Argossean than to an Aquilonian or Nemedian. Still, many Argosseans have an allegiance to their nation and/or city simply out of civic pride. Unlike in Aquilonia, there is no penalty for lacking allegiance in Argos.

The economics of rural Argos depend on the concept of allegiance. The social orders rely upon their members swearing allegiances. Allegiance is a pledge, a promise and oath, taken faithfully and with full realisation that it may mean giving up everything, including but not limited to time, property, even lives in support of one thing. Feudal lords pledge allegiance to the lord of their manor and their allegiance changes according to who wears the crown. Characters also pledge allegiances to loves, wives, families, comrades, cities and gods.

Allegiance is usually a reciprocal tie between individuals and between families. Allegiances involve obligations on both sides and are regarded as being as binding as formal law. In some cases allegiances are considered *more* binding than formal law. Written contracts count for little in rural Argos, although they take precedence in coastal Argos. Most of the rural nation is illiterate, so

only an oath taken before peers is worth anything. These oaths are taken more seriously than any public law. This sometimes creates problems in society in the form of escalating violent vendettas as people avenge each other and counter-avenge in never-ending cycles of blood and war.

Allegiance ties in with honour as well. Honourable Aquilonians almost always have one or more allegiances; indeed, Aquilonians define themselves by lines of allegiance. Usually their immediate feudal lord is their primary allegiance; however, many nobles are pledged to more than one lord. Common allegiances include family, merchant houses, guilds, household, neighbourhood, feudal lords, province and/or nation.

## EDUCATION

There are, at present, no formal schools or academies in Argos. Children are educated according to their parents' means.

For the scion of nobility or wealthy merchants, this means hired tutors or educated slaves to teach lessons in history, etiquette, mathematics, literature and philosophy. For families of lesser means, tutors and knowledgeable slaves may not be an option. A merchant who owns his own shop will generally rear his children to run the business, assuming he does not have too many.

Shop-owners with too many children, or those who have no business of their own, have fewer options for their offspring. If the parents are very lucky and very pious, they might arrange to have their child educated by the priests of Mitra. Otherwise, their best option is to petition a guild to accept the child as an apprentice. In time, if accepted, the child may advance to a position of power within the guild, which is one of the only means of social climbing available to those not born to nobility. Being accepted as an apprentice is not common, but it happens frequently enough that many parents hope for it, dreaming that when the time comes, their child will be able to provide his children with the education his own parents could not.

Aside from a career in the military, another option available to the sons of Argos is the sea. It is a difficult life, but one which can lead eventually to riches or to a painful death on an unnamed beach. The final option is a life as a farmer in the interior.

## WOMEN IN ARGOS

Women and men mix more freely in Argos than they do in many other Hyborian nations, although not by much. In Argos, women, whether noble or peasant, hold a difficult position in society. Often assigned such tasks as cooking,





baking bread, sewing, weaving and spinning, Argossean women are also expected to use weapons to defend their homes and families. Argossean women, although few ever become masters, do learn to use weapons to defend their homes and castles. Regardless of the normal positions society attempts to pigeonhole women into, some Argossean women hold occupations typically reserved for men. Women outnumber the men in Argos, so it is not unheard of to encounter well-respected female blacksmiths, merchants, apothecaries, midwives, field hands, writers, musicians, dancers and painters. Many learn a trade from a father or husband and simply carry on the male's work when he dies. Women tend to have an easier time in rural settings. Urban Argossean women tend to be more pigeonholed, as many guilds will not admit women save via their husbands. As a result, establishing oneself as a single woman in a field is difficult and many young women who move to the cities and fail to find domestic situations turn to prostitution.

When peasant girls reach the age of eight years, they work with their mothers doing such tasks as sewing, cleaning and tending livestock. During harvest time the peasant girls join their brothers or husbands in the fields. Girls of the merchant or craftsmen classes are often apprenticed out when they are eight. Usually these girls are apprenticed to another woman but it is not uncommon to apprentice a girl to a man. These girls learn their master's or mistress's trade until they earn the right to perform on their own or find a husband. Girls of the

noble classes are often fostered out to other wealthy homes and estates to learn sewing, embroidery, manners, music and other leisure skills. Regardless of class, all of these activities revolve around one single goal – marriage.

Women are under the control of their fathers until they marry. Although peasants have more free choice in marriages because their dowries are either small or non-existent, aristocratic women are subject to arranged marriages. Their lands and potential children are too important to noble families to be given away indiscriminately.

## PROPERTY

Land and property are sources of wealth and social prestige, thus Argosseans have a high regard for property laws. Doubtless a result of their mercantile mindset and their dogmatic adherence to fair pay for fair work, they consider theft of another man's property a terrible sin. This does not extend to canny trading which amounts to theft, nor does it extend to smuggling, which has a long and storied history in Messantia, but rather is limited to the traditional definitions of theft: burglary, robbery, mugging, banditry, shoplifting, pocket-picking, purse-snatching and the like. Most Argossean thieves tend to be assassins, confidence artists, embezzlers, forgers, smugglers and kidnappers. Argosseans tend to turn a blind eye to piracy but not to banditry.

## HOUSES

Houses in Argossean cities and towns are laid out in streets with sewage lines located under the roads to avoid disease. The Argosseans also reticulate water by means of underground water pipes and pressure boxes, although some areas continue to use aqueducts. They also possess a form of under-floor heating for the winter months. Pillars and arches are a common sight in Argossean houses and public buildings.

Upper class Argossean houses have a wide central courtyard entered from a type of 'harbour,' as they call it, or an atrium. Rooms lead off from the central courtyard. The houses are typically single story and use stone for the foundation, with frames of wood and clay plastering to build up the walls.

## SHIPS

The merchants employ merchant ships, usually coasters, cogs and other small and intermediate craft to transport goods far cheaper and far safer than those same goods could be sent overland, piracy notwithstanding. The trading vessels are not equipped for extended sea voyages, and usually move within sight of shore. Argos' economy is extremely dependent upon a trading season that



starts in late spring and ends in the early fall. It is during this season that fair weather can be expected. Also, Stygian ports are temporarily open to Argossean trading ships during this season.

However, merchant galleys are not uncommon. These larger and more seaworthy craft, including galleons, carracks and caravels, can embark on longer voyages and operate in nearly any sort of weather. Most of these craft, however, have limited cargo space, so their use is usually limited to compact or especially valuable goods. These larger craft are primarily used as warships or, of course, by pirates.

## SLAVERY

Slavery is still quite alive in Argos, though it is not so prevalent as it once was. The majority of slaves attached to Argos rarely see the city; they spend their days chained to the oaring benches of a ship, either in Argos' mighty navy or aboard one of her larger trading vessels. Other slaves are used as labourers; most of Argos' coastal cities were built via slave labour.

Most Argossean slaves are taken from the lands of Kush and the Black Kingdoms, and are used for menial, dangerous labour. Those not chained to an oar are likely working the croplands, vineyards and orchards that surround the city or are assigned as labour to the Order of Engineers to spend their days hauling stone and timber for the Order's current project. Their labour is ensured with the chain and lash and the occasional threat to sell them upriver to Athos.

The average Argossean owns no slaves, primarily because he has little need of them. In Argos, the philosophy of 'a day's wage for a day's work' is a nearly religious dogma, and slavery stands in stark contrast to that. The free farmers of the interior usually cannot afford to feed slaves, so they merely have large families to help work the farms.

The average Argossean of a Merchant House or noble family, on the other hand, has never done a day's work and feels no compunctions regarding ownership of other human beings. More than that, however, they consider slavery a necessity. No free man works the oars of their trading ships like a slave can be made to, and no free man works their farms and orchards from before dawn until after dusk for a wage low enough to maintain profits. As much as for the practical reasons, though, many nobles own slaves simply because they enjoy doing so. Maintaining a small seraglio or a staff of footmen gives them yet another of the trappings of power so many of them crave. Slaves generally live squalid lives beneath the houses of the wealthy in cave-like warrens of rooms with no natural

light or amenities of any sort beyond a straw pallet. Other than gladiatorial slaves, Argosseans tend to prefer females and children for slaves because they are easier to control. Most male slaves are children who have been brought up as slaves and have little concept of a different way of life and little martial skill.

The life of a slave in Argos is horrific. Slaves are at the beck and call of their masters in all ways, including sexual. However, an Argossean master cannot kill a slave unless the slave has previously tried to escape. A recaptured, escaped slave is branded and his life belongs then to the master in all ways – including the slave's death.

Slaves are usually of the commoner class, although gladiator slaves are taught weapons and take the barbarian class. Slaves taught to be tutors are able to take the scholar class; it is traditional in Argos to use learned slaves to educate children. Slaves are not taught the skills of thieves, as that would be dangerous physically (sneak attacks) and financially (thieves steal things). Slaves do not need the skills of a borderer, so they are not encouraged to move along that path. Slaves are not allowed to escape so the entire concept of a nomad is not encouraged.

## OCCUPATIONS

The people of Argos generally assume everyone should be employed by the age of fourteen or fifteen. Some occupations require skill at some craft. For example, people may craft their own goods and sell them themselves from storefronts built in front of their own homes or in moveable carts or by hawking their goods in the streets. Some occupations merely require a reputation. For example, anyone who can attract students can set himself up as a teacher. Regardless of what it is a person does to earn a living, people are expected to earn one.

Women in Argos also practise trades and many work more than one trade at a time. Many midwives also are weavers, for example. Knowing a profession or craft practicable at home adds to a woman's value in the marriage market because any extra money brought into the home by the wife only helps the household. Many of the cottage industries are run by the women of Argos, which angers the local guilds and occasionally can lead to exclusion.

Diplomacy, Bluff and Sense Motive are also important skills for people making a living in Argossean cities. Characters who have a developed Profession or Craft skill gain a +1 bonus to Reputation while in Argos. Characters who are known to have no ability to make a regular living at all suffer a -1 penalty to Reputation while in Argos.



## CRAFT GUILDS

As Argos' specialisation of industry became more and more prominent, the city's bakers, cobblers, stone masons and carpenters associated with one another and banded together for mutual trade protection. As these associations, or guilds, grew larger and more important in Argos, the guild leaders petitioned the king of that era for more rights, which were granted to them in order to protect Argos against outsiders so long as the craftsmen upheld some measure of civic service and duty.

The guilds protect themselves against outsiders by barring or restricting trade, forcing merchants and traders in foreign goods of a type made by a local guild to pay a stipend or tariff for the right to sell the goods in that particular Argossean city. The tariff is then split between all the relevant craftsmen in the guild with a portion given to the feudal lord for the right to charge the tariff. The only exception to this is during annual fairs or on established market days, when anyone can buy and sell to the public. Women generally join guilds when their fathers or husbands join. They become independent guild members with the death of the male that sponsored them.

Guilds often use secret signs to communicate basic information to other members, as well as mysterious gestures to identify fellow guild members and their ranks. Many guilds incorporate religious and philosophical concepts and traditions into their meetings, making them mystery cults of a sort. During festivals the guilds often put on trademark plays to emphasise their preferred themes and religious stories. For example, every year the Goldsmiths may put on a complex play illustrating the creation of gold myths present in the religious traditions of Mitra.

**Guild Craftsmen:** The craftsmen usually live in neighbourhoods of similarly skilled craftsmen, although this may vary somewhat depending on the size of the city. Often the master craftsmen of a particular craft all belong to the same family. They share apprentices between them, working together to regulate competition and promote prosperity for the entire family and, by extension, the prosperity of Argos as a whole.

**Apprentices:** Most apprentices live in the attic of the master's house, furthest away from the valuable tools and raw materials of the shop located on the ground floor. Apprenticeship is not without its dangers, especially for girls. Female apprentices are easy prey for the sexual advances of their masters and they might even be sold into prostitution by their mistresses.

**Journeyman:** Once the master has given his approval of the apprentice's overall work and skill level, the apprentice leaves

the home of his master and goes out into the world as a hired hand, carrying a letter of recommendation from his master. He is called a journeyman because he journeys from town to town, working for master after master to learn different techniques.

**Masters:** A master is a full citizen of a town. Masters are allowed to establish their own workshops, hire journeymen and train apprentices. Most guilds have a restriction on how many masters can operate in the city, so some journeymen are denied the position for economic reasons until an opening is available.

### Additional Information

Joining a guild is an honour and earns an apprentice an immediate +2 bonus to Reputation. Simply being in a guild results in a perceived increase in social status and class. Most craft guildsmen attempt to gain a talented Reputation. Becoming a journeyman for a guild earns the craftsman another +2 bonus to Reputation. Becoming a master requires at least a 20 Reputation and, if attained, earns the craftsman a +4 bonus to Reputation, making him one of the movers and shakers of Argos' economy.

Most craftsmen in Argos are of the commoner or scholar class (non-sorcerous, generally speaking). Skill Focus and other feats designed to enhance skills are typical feats for the craftsmen to take. Craftsmen do not make a living from combat, so combat-oriented feats are rare. Craft masters take the Leadership feat to attract apprentices and journeymen, although few can afford to house and maintain their full allotment of 1<sup>st</sup> level apprentices. Craftsmen tend to have an allegiance toward their guild, giving them a +2 Cha bonus when dealing with other guild members who share their allegiance.

Player Characters who successfully apprentice and become journeymen in any Craft skill (usually with the accumulation of at least six skill points in a craft) may find themselves barred from leaving the city where they apprenticed, depending on guild laws in that city. Their ability to adventure may also become hampered, although this may be alleviated by allowing some amount of time to lapse between adventures. Also, if a Player Character becomes a master craftsman he will find he has additional duties to perform and, if found lax, may be fined. This fine may well be part of the 'high living' spending of treasure or it may be on top of that.

## MERCHANT HOUSES

Merchants early in Argos' history had difficulties because of feudal obligations. Difficulties in procuring the right to leave a manor or fief was but one of the hurdles faced



by early merchants. This resulted in foreign merchants dominating the marketplace. Obviously, a career in trade was hampered by feudal obligations, so many merchants sought to become free. This, however, had its own problems. The price of freedom from a feudal lord was that the merchants and their property were no longer protected by the feudal lords. Without that protection, merchants risked more than they could reasonably recover in profit. Thus the merchants found they needed to band together to achieve the protection they had lost in gaining their freedom. Seeing the accomplishments of the craft guilds, the merchants used the same model, creating their own Houses for the same privileges of protection and support. However, these Houses have their own opportunity costs, for they can set prices, arrange trade and regulate working hours. In much of Argos, a work day is up to 16 hours in the summer and 12 hours in the winter; essentially House members work during all available daylight hours. High-ranking members of Houses usually wear medallions on silver chains.

Members of Merchant Houses are considered to be of noble blood, as all of them claim barons, counts and sometimes dukes throughout the nation of Argos among their number. In Argos's feudal society, the lands these men control give them as much influence on the throne as the family's great wealth.

The forebears of the various Merchant Houses laid claim to the trading routes, the seaports and the caravan trails Messantia still uses today. It was a claim that could not be defended except through power and secrecy. The early trading vessels of the Houses were more like warships than trading galleys, armed to the teeth and ready to turn on and destroy any who followed them to find the trading lanes. Their caravans moved across the countryside like small armies. This secrecy and jealous protection of the trading ways could not last long; too many others were charting their own routes and carving their own caravan paths.

Those years of sole ownership of the trade routes brought the fledgling Merchant Houses tremendous wealth. They did not sit idly on this, but rather used it to expand their influence ever farther. They bought land and businesses and ships, they signed trading agreements with distant kingdoms and insinuated themselves into Argossean nobility. They grew civilised and patient, protecting and acquiring wealth no longer with just the sword, but with intrigue and scheming as their favoured weapons.

The lives of the members of Merchant Houses are taken up conniving and plotting to increase the House's wealth and power. Some are purely evil and corrupt, others merely avaricious, but all

are deceitful and insidious people who rarely give more care to those not of their House.

**Benefits to House Members:** The merchant House establishes rights and norms to ensure House members enjoy an income, which the feudal lords had taxed heavily prior to the establishment of the Houses. Rules and regulations for merchants are determined by the Houses and the merchant Houses have the power to impose sanctions on members who violate those rules. The advantages of the merchant Houses are similar to those of the craft Houses. Merchant Houses are noted for their charity toward disadvantaged members, providing aid to members who fall into poverty, taking care of funeral expenses of dead members and looking after a dead member's family.

**Benefits to Feudal Lords:** Feudal lords find many advantages to granting rights to cities to form Houses. Houses prove structure and self-regulation for the cities, allowing the cities to almost run themselves without siphoning too much direct power from the control of the feudal lord. The Houses levy dues from their members and use them to pay the feudal lords in lump sum payments. Fief-holders have found that it is easier to collect tax from central Houses as opposed to sending collectors and agents out to each and every merchant in the city. Houses also sponsor community events and often form private theatre troops to demonstrate their wealth and influence. Many Houses are also charged with public defence, members taking turns to man the walls of the smaller cities and towns.

**Rights of the Houses:** The merchant House has the power to exclude and discriminate against foreign merchants. Foreign merchants are forced to unload their wares in Argos' warehouses, where members of the merchant House have the right to purchase the goods at privileged prices. Foreign merchants are also required to pay special tolls, fees and taxes that the merchant House members are exempt from paying. The merchant House also sets up a system of brokering, wherein foreign merchants are forbidden to deal directly to the customers but have to employ local brokers chosen by the merchant House. The House also has the right to limit its membership based on any number of qualifications. Women are often excluded from Houses that require long-distance travel. This is largely to protect the women. Women on long trade journeys face abduction, rape or murder by bandits who are likely to leave a male merchant alone. Argos' feudal lords have given the merchant Houses the power to punish those who break the laws of the Houses. The Houses have the power to assess a fine or fee against all traders who are not members of the appropriate House. Those who cheat the public unduly are also punished by the House. Fines and confiscations are common sanctions. Other punishments include imprisonment, flogging, shaving or any number



of tortures. The merchant Houses usually have their own appointed magistrates who arbitrate disputes among the merchants of a given House. The House checks weights and measures and often fixes prices on certain goods and services. The Houses have a familial aspect as well, although not as strongly pronounced as the craft Houses. The eldest sons of a House member are admitted into the House as a matter of law. Younger sons of House members are required to pay a small fee to join.

## OTHER GUILDS

Craft guilds and merchant Houses in Argossean coastal cities are so successful in promoting their members' well-being that many guilds are being established for nearly every conceivable trade. Tutors, philosophers, rat catchers, road menders, domestic servants, bell ringers, thieves, beggars and even prostitutes are beginning to form guilds in the largest Argossean cities, jealously defending their members against freelance competition.

## TRADE

Argos has a prime location. Not only does the wide Tybor river channel a lot of trade from the interior Hyborian nations into Messantia, but Argos has a central location on the coasts of the charted continent, allowing it to dominate trade – the Barachan pirates, who tended not to prey upon Argossean vessels, easily intercept trade moving toward Argos' ancient rival, Zingara. From its central location, Argos trades not only with Shem and Zingara, but also with Stygia, and, to a lesser degree, with the Black Coast.

Clearly, Argos' economy thrives on trade. But what, exactly, is traded in the cities? The short answer is everything. Everything is needed, and everything is available. Argos' citizens say they live in the trading capital of the world, and they are not boasting idly. Although Argos has good soil in some parts, the nation has never been a rich agricultural region. Wheat, olives and grapes are its primary agricultural products although it does little trading of its produce. Argos' wealth comes from its unique location at the hub of at least three major trade routes. It is an anchor at one end of the Road of Kings. It lies at the mouth of the Khorotas River. Throughout trading season, its quays host a constant stream of ships, both of Argos and other nations, importing and exporting goods at a dizzying pace.

Most of Argos' sea trade is with Shem and Kush, as well as Argos' old rivals Zingara and Stygia. Messantia itself is rightly famed for its clockmakers and finemiths, who craft some of the most intricate and delicate jewellery available in the Hyborian Age from the gold mined in Argos' hills. The Argosseans have perfected the technique of fixing hundreds of gold granules on jewellery. With Shem, Messantia trades mirrors, silk clothing, armour, weapons and shields. With



Kush, the trade consists of beads, silk, sugar and weapons in exchange for ivory, copra, copper ore, slaves and pearls.

In addition to the items listed above, Argos offers ships in trade. Acknowledged throughout the sailing world (except by the Zingarans) as the best ships to ride the waves, Argossean vessels are always in demand. Though many nations might wish otherwise, the only Argossean vessels for sale are simple merchant craft of varying descriptions. The making of Argos' warships is a more carefully-guarded secret than most any in the world.

Up and down the Khorotas River and along the Road of Kings flows Argos' trade with Aquilonia and the lands beyond. Goods of most every description, from vats of pickled fish to velvet-wrapped jewels, travel north to hungry mouths and eager hands.

Cities with the size and wealth of Messantia and the other coastal cities have tremendous demands, however, and importing goods is the only way to satisfy them. Indeed, the only staple the coastal cities have in abundance is fish. The farms and ranches in outlying areas produce, at most, the minimum required to feed the cities' hunger, so the arrival of herds of cattle or long wagon trains laden with grain is not an uncommon sight along the coast. From the northern forests of Argos comes a steady stream of timber, bound for the coastal cities to repair damaged ships and build new ones.



## ARGOS' MERCANTILE ECONOMY

The merchant Houses view economics as a zero sum game in which a gain by one party is a loss by another. They see no possibility of economics being used to maximise the common good because any policy that benefits one group must by definition harm another. Argos' economy is also based around bullionism; the Houses feel that the wealth and power of a House or even a nation is measured by how much gold and silver the nation possesses. They believe each nation must export more than it imports and the Houses impose a strict ban on the export of gold or silver, favouring instead the export of mass raw materials. Argos and its merchant Houses have a goal of maximising production with no concern for consumption or the economic oppression of labourers and farmers, who are to live at subsistence levels. After all, argue the Houses, extra money, free time and education for the lower classes leads to laziness and the moral decline of the nation.

Argos' position as a trading hub means that nearly anything is available for purchase somewhere within the coastal cities. Most of the items listed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* are easily purchased in shops throughout Messantia and the other cities, though some of the more esoteric weapons and armour may require some tenacious searching. The interior towns usually only sell items of need to the surrounding communities, so weapons are hard to find and expensive once one leaves the coasts of Argos.

The prices given in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* also form a useful baseline price, though a Games Master may consider varying the prices by as much as 20% depending on the time of year. During the trading season prices fall as supplies flood the market, only to rise again during the winter, as stocks become scarcer. Another detail to consider is that the prices given in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* are generally for the cheapest or most basic incarnation of any given item. In the coastal cities, like Messantia, the wealthy will not be satisfied with such lowly accoutrements, and a number of shops and merchants cater specifically to such tastes with customised items of great worth. For example, an arming sword inlaid with gold filigree and capped on the pommel with a huge pearl will certainly cost more than 100 silver pieces, just as a specially-tailored silken dress will cost dramatically more than two silver pieces.

## SOCIAL STANDING

Argos stratifies its society along wealth lines. At the top of society is the king and his royal family, extending out to cousins, uncles and other extended family members. Beneath the king are the nobles of the merchant Houses and the interior fiefs. Beneath the nobles are the wealthy merchants and ship captains. Freedmen living in the cities or working on the ships lie below the merchants and captains. Labourers, including peasants, serfs and cottagers, are among the lowest of the classes; the slaves are the lowest of the stratum. Despite the stratification of its society along lines of wealth, Argos remains fairly stable. Gladiators are among the lowest ranks but they have the opportunity to mingle with the upper classes.

## SOCIAL MOBILITY

There is little social mobility in Argos save via marriage or the accumulation of wealth. No matter how well one behaves, no matter how much one accomplishes, one cannot be elevated in status because of mere accomplishments or behaviour. Misbehaviour short of criminal also does not decrease one's social standing, although criminal activity could cause one to be outcast from society, leaving a character without legal protection. Downward movement is certainly easier than upward movement.

Nobility is never just bestowed upon characters. Nobility is always a gradual climb or fall by a family. To be established as a noble, a character must prove three generations of wealth and/or social service, called the 'three fathers' rule'. It does not matter if a man's family had been noble in the past – any interruption of the three generations is all that it takes to deprive a person of noble status.

For persons who lose their social status (characters who lose their fortunes in lawsuits or to hurricanes, pirates or other disasters), or even fringe nobles who do not have a lot of wealth and no trade, their remaining career options are few. They could join the ranks of the Guardians or another army, teach or become a gladiator. Each has its downside. Those who take up the military must submit to a strict disciplinary system and would likely never see home again. Those who teach must be literate and be willing to win students and fight for their fees. Those who become gladiators forever lose their citizenship and must face death on a routine basis but they are fed well, treated well and have the opportunity to win money or die trying. Since few gladiator contests are fought to the death under King Milo, this is usually the most financially secure way to go for many bankrupt citizens.



# The Argossean Breed

## CHARACTERS IN ARGOS

**ARGOS, LIKE AQUILONIA,** is comprised of Hyborians, one of the most adaptable of all the races; however, the Argosseans and Barachans have grown more specialised, focusing on the sea for the most part. Pirates are the favoured heroes of these people and nomad is the most rejected lifestyle. Of the three fierce classes, adventuring Argosseans are more apt to begin in the borderer class than barbarian or nomad. Any of the three finest classes are equally likely to be adventuring Argosseans. Out of the three fallen classes, most adventuring Argosseans naturally gravitate toward the pirate class.

### RACIAL VARIANT

The Argossean template provided in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* describes coastal Argosseans accurately. However, Argosseans of the interior would hardly have the background skills appropriate to a coastal people. Argosseans from the interior instead have the following background skills in place of the standard ones offered:

**Non-noble Background Skills (variant):** Replace Profession (sailor) with any other Profession or Craft skill.

**Noble Background Skills (variant):** Replace Profession (sailor) with Knowledge (nobility); Replace Use Rope with Knowledge (fencing; Zingaran school).

### CHARACTER CLASS IN ARGOS

#### ARGOSSEAN BARBARIANS

The Argosseans are a people who have bred Zingaran and Shemite strains, as well as other aboriginal peoples, into their Hyborian blood. These aboriginal peoples still exist in pocket communities in the fertile valleys of Argos, and many are considered quite barbaric by the urban dwellers of Argos.

Argos and the Barachans, however, do support a strong pirate community, and many of these pirates are blood-thirsty enough to qualify as barbarians. These sea wolves

are barbarian/pirates of sinister repute, savage and ruthless. See *Conan: Hyboria's Finest* and *Conan: Hyboria's Fallen* for variant rules concerning these types of barbarian/pirate multiclass.

#### Rules Variant

Argossean barbarians usually farm their lands, so they often take Profession (farmer) as one of their background skills instead of Profession (sailor). Likewise, Argossean barbarians do more hunting than they do sea-faring, so they replace Balance with Survival as one of their background skills. The Argossean racial bonuses apply to the new background skills.

#### Rules Variant II

Barbarians raised in gladiator pens never really learn to track. Instead, substitute Power Attack for Track at 1<sup>st</sup> level to indicate this nature of barbarism. Likewise, Survival, Craft, Hide and Move Silently are never really learned by these barbarians and should be removed from their class skills. Substitute instead Bluff, Sense Motive and Tumble.

#### ARGOSSEAN BORDERERS

Argos uses borderers, especially borderer soldiers (such as the skirmisher from *Conan: Hyboria's Fiercest* or the scout from *Conan: The Free Companies*), along their borders, especially the Zingaran and Shemite borders.

Argos and the Barachan Islands have extremely strong ties to pirate cultures, and their borderers are no less sea-faring than most of these people. Known as explorers, these borderer/pirates seek out the horizon for new lands and new sea-routes. See *Conan: Hyboria's Finest* and *Conan: Hyboria's Fallen* for variant rules concerning these types of borderer/pirate multiclass.

#### Rules Variant

Argossean borderers are woodsmen, so they often take Survival as one of their background skills instead of Profession



(sailor). Likewise, Argossean borderers do more hunting than they do sea-faring, so they replace Balance with Move Silently as one of their background skills. The Argossean racial bonuses apply to the new background skills.

## ARGOSSEAN NOBLES

Argossean nobles tend to be fairly stable in terms of military politics. Military action between noble families and even between the Merchant Houses is almost unheard of. Their battles are largely economic and are usually related to trade. Nobles do not attack other fiefs in Argos – if an Argossean noble wants another noble family destroyed, he finds a way to beggar them financially.

The noble families own the land under fief from the king. They administer their own estates and exercise their own justice. They mint their own money and levy whatever taxes or tolls they wish. Nobles without land often own a ship where they exercise the same rights.

The lords of the Merchant Houses do not own land or buildings unless they have somehow earned a true noble title from the king himself. They do, however, own ships (purchased from the barons) and control the commerce of the land, so the nobles and the lords live in an uneasy alliance of mutual reliance. The nobles control the land and the resources and the Houses control the economy.

Argossean nobles and the lords of the Merchant Houses do not labour and are almost always accompanied by slaves who do work for them, including military work. Rarely will an Argossean noble take ranks in a Profession or Craft skill beyond the background skills afforded to them unless they are routinely on board a ship as captain. Such things are beneath them. Appraise, Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility) and Sense Motive are more typical of the skills the Argossean nobles and House lords concentrate on. Any two of those skills are suitable and appropriate for the Argossean's Adaptability racial feature.

## ARGOSSEAN NOMADS

Argos and the Barachans are not harsh enough environmentally to bring about a true nomadic culture. Although river rats (pirate/nomad multiclass characters) can be found pushing cargo through the rivers and waterways of Argos, they are generally of a foreign caste (they are often Shemites).

Argosseans and Barachans are prohibited from taking nomad as a 1<sup>st</sup> level class. They tend to despise nomads of any sort and, if any are around when a crime is committed, the nomads are usually the first to take the brunt of the blame.

## ARGOSSEAN SCHOLARS

Argosseans, like most Hyborians, revile sorcery. Their legends are replete with stories about degenerate rituals of demonic debauchery, horrifying plagues and worse. Sorcerers in Argos hide their talents from the people for fear of mobs with pitchforks, torches and nooses. Many scholars, however, do reside in Argos as tutors, choosing to take bonus feats and skill points instead of new sorcery styles and advanced spells.

Scholars with noble blood or from the Merchant Houses tend to concentrate on the same skills as listed above for the noble class. Those who work as tutors take the appropriate Knowledge skills and the Profession (tutor) skill. The skills assigned to the Adaptability racial feature should be chosen from among these. Sorcerous scholars tend to be unique in their skill selections, although many focus on Sea Witchery or Weather Witching sorcery styles (both from *Conan: Pirate Isles*). Nature Magic is another common sorcery style for the Argossean scholar. Other spells particular to the Argossean sorcerers can be found in *Conan: Messantia – City of Riches*.

Although the Mitran religion is the primary religion of Argos, several cults can be found there, although most are heavily persecuted by the Mitrans. One regional cult found around the area of Athos is the cult of Gita, a spider goddess. Bel is worshipped along the coast, especially in Messantia.

Books in Argos are written on folded linen pages sewn into a binding or simply rolled into a bundle.

For Argossean sorcerers, music and dancing plays a huge role. Both are considered magical in Argos, so most Argossean sorcerers use music and dancers in their magic. Musician troupes and silky dancers may provide background ambiance during alchemy or the sorcerer himself may play an instrument to the accompaniment of a dancer to cast his spells. Dancers are thought to bring out magic from the music and are thought to enhance magical effects. Any Argossean sorcerer casting spells with music may add a +1 competence bonus to his Magical Attack roll. A dancer in addition to the music increases the competence bonus to a +2.

## ARGOSSEAN SOLDIERS

Although the merchant Houses fight among themselves often enough, they do recognise the need for mutual defence. Each House spends a small portion of its wealth to fund the Guardians, mercenary protectors of Argos' borders in times of peace. These mercenaries, chosen from the population by lot to serve for a term of several years, owe no loyalty, in theory, to any one House, but to Argos itself. Argos also



has marines, soldiers who multiclass with pirate (presented in *Conan: The Free Companies*), as a career for those who serve in the military. Other soldiers, the Argossean chivalry, are usually drawn from the nobility as part of their feudal obligation to the barons and/or to the king himself.

Soldiers along the coast tend to emphasise Profession (sailor), Intimidate and Search skills, even if they do not multiclass into pirate. If possible they add ranks in Balance, Gather Information and Use Rope. Argossean soldiers stationed away from the coastal cities emphasise their Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Ride and Search skills. The skills assigned to the Adaptability racial feature should be chosen from among these.

## ARGOSSEAN PIRATE

Messantia and the other ports in Argos are rather lax about laws. They make their money from trade, and illegitimate trade is profitable. Argos turns a blind eye to most acts of piracy. The Barachan pirates, mostly Argosseans anyway, have a safe harbour in Messantia, so the Barachans leave most Argossean shipping alone for that reason.



Thirteen volcanic islands off the coast of Zingara comprise Baracha. Although nearer to Zingara, the Barachan Isles are settled by renegade Argossean buccaneers. The buccaneers are not fond of Zingaran privateers. Their home port is the wild city of Tortage. Tortage is the only major city among the Barachan Islands mentioned in the Saga. It is a roaring city filled with pirates, loot and bloodshed. It is a safe haven for most pirates, save the Black Corsairs and the Zingaran privateers. More details about Barachan pirates can be found in *Conan: Pirate Isles*.

Argosseans and Barachans make some of the world's best pirates. Pirate is a favoured class and their background skills emphasise this preference. Argossean and Barachans usually fight with the cutlass and are armoured with breastplates and steel caps. They usually take the Weapon Focus (cutlass), Fleet-Footed, Leadership and Pirate Code Expert feats, as well as many of the feats from *Conan: Pirate Isles*. Some choice feats from that comprehensive work include Argossean Dreamer, Jolly Chants, Master of the Waves, Pirate Chants, Pirate Horde, Take the Tap, True Brother and Unfurled Sails. Characters who multiclass with soldier should consider taking the Marine combat formation from *Conan: Pirate Isles*.

## ARGOSSEAN THIEF

Most Argossean thieves live in the urban cities. Used to opulence and wealth, most maintain fairly high scores in Appraise. Argossean thieves are usually aristocratic or free townsmen. Thief-soldiers tend to be bandits, warriors or knights who have fallen on hard times. The Argossean thief will find his background skill and racial bonus of Gather Information will often serve him well. Retired thieves often work as fences or merchants. Many Argossean thieves also serve on pirate ships. Most Argossean thieves within cities are suited to fit any of the roles outlined in *Conan: Hyboria's Fallen*. They will take skills and feats appropriate to their role in society.

Smugglers in Messantia and other Argossean coastal cities are much in demand. Argossean smugglers fill a needed niche by providing certain goods and merchants the means to escape a tax, shirk a prohibitive law or evade a Merchant Guild's restrictive clause. Skills such as Bluff, Disguise, Escape Artist, Hide, Knowledge (local), Move Silently and Sleight-of-Hand are typical skills the smuggler emphasises. Feats enhancing these skills are common among successful smugglers.



## ARGOSSEAN TEMPTRESS

Argossean temptresses are usually found in the port cities, often entertaining sailors and pirates, hoping to cash in on some of the loot. Some temptresses keep an ear out for rich hauls so they can report it to their pet pirates, hoping to reap some financial reward for their treachery. Many temptresses in Argos seem to be half-breeds, the beautiful sons and daughters of Argosseans and foreign slaves, mistresses or wives. Many try to keep up with local fashions, which can be difficult, especially in the cosmopolitan ports like Messantia, where fashions can change dramatically almost overnight, particularly among the ladies of the Merchant Houses.

All the standard roles many temptresses play can be found in Argos. Black widows sometimes rise to prey upon the Houses, but are rarely found among the true aristocracy. Femme fatales reject society's standard notions about women and their proper 'place' in the community. Prostitution is a venerable tradition in the ports of Argos, including grand Messantia. The comely (and not so comely) maidens of Argos can be found throughout the cities trying to influence the weak minded (but politically powerful) House leaders and heirs. Other temptresses rise and become ship captains. Many House ladies are also temptresses, usually fulfilling the infiltrator role described in *Conan: Hyboria's Fallen*.

## GLADIATORS

Argos is well known for its gladiator arenas. Vast streams of slaves enter into Argos destined to become gladiators, trained in killing and dying. Gladiators are usually prisoners of war, violent criminals and warrior slaves. Argos long ago found out that warriors and soldiers do not make good household slaves or labourers. There is just too much fight in them. Anyone enslaving Conan the Cimmerian, for example, and expecting him to plough a field is probably going to end up with a plough embedded in his head. However, enslaved soldiers and warriors make excellent gladiators.

## TREATMENT OF THE GLADIATORS

The conditions Argossean gladiators live in are not all that bad compared to those of other slaves and even of poor serfs, peasants and urban free men. Gladiators are an investment by their handlers and owners and are treated as valuable property. In addition to the investment aspect, there is the fear that unhappy gladiators, men who know how to fight and are not afraid to die, might revolt.

Gladiators receive three high-protein and high-fat meals per day, medical care on par with the wealthy and the opportunity to win purses in competitions. They are allowed to form relationships with women and have children. In addition, any children they have can become citizens even if they can not. If the gladiator survives to freedom, they can have legally recognised marriages. They usually only have to fight in a handful of matches per year. After a certain number of matches (depending on the time and place), the gladiator can win a wooden sword along with the purse, which grants his freedom.

Gladiators also have excellent social prestige considering their status as slaves. Young Argosseans enjoy hanging out at the gladiator schools and many take lessons there, although their parents usually *hate* this. They are the sports stars of the day and are treated as such. Argossean women pay to share their beds or take them home for a night or two. A character having a known affair with a gladiator gains a +1 bonus to Reputation.

## FREE CITIZENS AS GLADIATORS

Many free citizens are attracted to the life of the gladiator. The guarantee of square meals, adequate medical care and the opportunity to win money attracts those who are down on their financial luck, often seen as a fair trade off of their citizenship. Others see the adoration other Argosseans bestow upon the gladiators (especially young women) and want that for themselves. Gladiators often become the lovers of noblewomen. More than one man has thrown away his freedom for women and sex. Free citizens may enter the gladiatorial arena by taking a gladiator oath renouncing their freedoms and their citizenship.

**Gladiator Oath:** Any free person wishing to be a gladiator must swear they will submit to being branded, chained, killed by a weapon and suffer anything even against their will. They must also promise to pay for the food, drink and shelter received with their blood. In essence, the free citizen who takes the gladiator oath renounces all the social benefits of being a citizen of Argos.

Characters who take this oath immediately lose 10 points of Reputation and their Reputation type changes to Fallen for a time. Characters with the noble class have the most to lose by taking this oath and becoming gladiators. Nobles forever lose several of their defining class abilities, including Title, Rank Hath its Privileges, Wealth, Enhanced Leadership, Do You Know Who I Am? and Absolute Power.



## GLADIATOR TRAINING

Gladiators are taught how to fight in schools. Not only are they taught to fight, but they are also taught to be efficient killers and efficient at dying. Gladiators know how to make quick and easy killing blows. The Fortitude save can be used to avoid death by *coup de grace* delivered by a gladiator (anyone with five or more ranks in Profession (gladiator)) is DC 20 + damage dealt (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for the regular rules concerning *coup de grace*).

Gladiators also know how to die well. They are trained to offer their bodies for the most effective *coup de grace* if they are defeated or mortally wounded. A gladiator offering himself up for a *coup de grace* voluntarily forfeits his right to a saving throw against the attack.

Gladiators are trained to take Power Attack, Improved Sunder, Dodge, Parry and Weapon Focus feats. They are never taught Survival, Craft, Hide and Move Silently skills. They are taught Bluff, Sense Motive and Tumble.

Different schools teach different types of combat. For ease of use, presume one school teaches a 'barbarian' style of combat (substitute Power Attack for Track if the class is new to the character), another teaches a 'soldier' style, and another teaches a 'thief' style of combat (substitute Endurance for Trap Disarming, Power Attack for Eyes of the Cat and Versatility (-2) for Trap Sense if the class is new to the character). Characters in these schools start to go up in levels of the appropriate class for their school. They are often trained in certain types of weapons (see Gladiator Types on page 16).

## WOMEN AS GLADIATORS

Women can and do fight as gladiators in Argos. Skill in killing and dying transcends gender – and since barbarian women often fight as warriors, they also make less than desirable household slaves, so they are trained as gladiators. Female gladiators are often pitted against dwarves or midgets when comical games are desired. They are also pitted against other female gladiators in more brutal games. Occasionally two females might be pitted against a single male or a female is permitted to fight from the back of a chariot against a male.

## ARMS AND ARMOUR OF THE GLADIATORS

Gladiators do wear armour and they do wield weapons. However, little of what they use is considered military calibre. Gladiators are ready to die at any moment and full



suits of armour would prevent effective demonstrations of that readiness and fearlessness. Further, if gladiators fought completely unarmoured, the fights would either be too swift or too cautious; in other words, boring. So gladiator armour is a hodgepodge of pieces. Parts of the body are armoured and other parts are unarmoured. The torso, though, is almost always bared to show their readiness to die – as well to offer the visual sight of muscular bodies in vigorous action. The use of partial armour promotes dynamic and skilful weapon use.

Armoured sleeves are used to parry blows and offer a +1 armour bonus to Parry Defence, as well as a +1 to Damage Reduction. Gladiator helmets are three times as thick as military helmets, and three times heavier. They provide Damage Reduction +2/+3 to the gladiator, depending on whether the visor is down. These thick, heavy helmets can stop a short sword cold if it strikes the head directly; however, blows to the head can still cause heavy bruising, concussions and neck injuries. Shields are also used and follow the rules in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Most other armour bits and pieces (such as greaves) do little to affect the combat game mechanics.

Gladiator weapons are below average in quality but are still better than primitive weapons most of the time. Gladiator weapons have three-quarters the Hardness of standard weapons (rounded appropriately to the nearest whole number). Armour Piercing is reduced by 1 to a minimum of 0. Gladiator weapons break 50% of the time when they strike a fully metal-armoured character, that is, if the armour's DR reduces the gladiator weapon's damage to 0.

Gladiator weapons cost three-quarters what normal weapons cost.



## GLADIATOR TYPES

There are different types of gladiators. Many are matched against traditional opponent types and others are used as desired by the sponsors of the gladiator games.

**Net-Man:** The net-man is the traditional opponent of the fish-man gladiator, although he can be set against other types of gladiators (although never a heavily-armed gladiator – his spear negates the net-man's trident to an unfair degree). He is the lowest of the gladiator hierarchy, held in the least esteem. The net-man wields a net, trident and dagger. He represents early fishermen who had to struggle with nature (Dagon) to survive. The net-man is not permitted a shield or a helmet. The net is used to trip and hold his opponent. The trident is used to worry the opponent or wound him. The dagger is then used to finish off a gladiator captured in the net. Mobility, speed and distance are actually the strongest assets of this gladiator. Against a fresh and strongly armed opponent, he can hardly stand toe to toe, but against one that is growing tired of dragging around his equipment, the net-man, by comparison, grows more powerful. The trident and net hold off the opponent, holding him at bay until he makes a mistake. Net-Men often take the Trident Disarm and Net Man feats (see pages 84-85) and other trident feats.

**Fish-Man:** A fish-man type gladiator carries a curved, oblong shield, a metal shoulder-guard on his right arm, a sleeve of heavy linen quilting held on by straps protects his left arm, a plumed helmet with a visor and wields a short sword. The helmet of the fish-man has a smooth surface with no brim. It has small eye-holes (to prevent the prongs of the trident wielded by the net-man from penetrating) and a crest. All in all, the helmet suggests a fish and is derived from ancient images of Dagon. The fish-man is almost always pitted against the net-man, his traditional enemy, although he is occasionally pitted against a heavily-armed gladiator if the fish-man proves to be especially capable. He usually takes Weapon Focus (short sword) and similar feats. A similar style of gladiator, called the Corinthian gladiator, carries a small, square shield instead of the large oblong one.

**Heavily-Armed:** The heavily armed gladiator uses a round buckler shield, and a sleeve of heavy linen quilting held on by straps protects his right arm. Greaves protect his leg and he is permitted to wear a loincloth with a girdle. He wears a fish-like helmet similar to that worn by the fish-man gladiator. He is the best armed of the gladiators. He wields a spear, a short sword and a dagger. He enters the arena with the spear in one hand and the shield (a buckler) and short sword held together in the other hand.

**Two-Weapon:** Some gladiators fight with two weapons and do not have the luxury of a shield. They are given the arm sleeves of other gladiators and wrap their torsos in leather belts (in total, they have the equivalent of a leather jerkin). They have large greaves on their legs. Depending on the arena and the area, some of these gladiators are permitted helmets, others are not. They are usually given a pair of short swords to fight with and learn feats appropriate to two-weapon fighting styles.

**Challenger:** The challenger wears a helmet without a crest, a large, curved rectangular shield and a broadsword. He is not permitted the honour of the other types of gladiator – a bare torso; the challenger wears a rectangular breastplate. Challengers only fight other challengers as their torso protection makes their fights with other types of gladiators unfair and not a lot of fun to watch. However, against another challenger, their skill comes to the fore. The challenger's combative style is one of hiding behind the shield, striking out at his opponent's side when he overextends himself. Challengers almost always lead with a shield bash when they attack.

**Equite:** Equites are horsemen. They wear wide-brimmed wide helmets with visors and two feathers. They wear tunics that reach to mid-thigh instead of going bare-chested like most gladiators. They have shields and only fight other equites. They usually maximise their ranks in Ride.

## GLADIATOR OWNERS

Gladiators are owned by certain lords who have a gladiator 'fief' granted to them by the king. Private citizens are not allowed to own and train gladiators, as that would give a citizen the power to have his own private army of fearless warriors. Thus, only those approved by the king have the sanction to run gladiator 'schools'. This right comes at a cost. The owner is not allowed to own other property and he is seen by others as a butcher and a pimp, among the lowest of the low on the social scale because his income is derived wholly from treating human beings as little more than animals, reducing men to the status of property.

Money is made by renting or selling gladiators or troupes of gladiators. The owners often become quite wealthy although they never become respected. They are never allowed to join a guild or House or own a ship or any other fief.



# By Land & Sea

## THE ARGOSSEAN MILITARY

**ALTHOUGH THE MERCHANT** Houses fight among themselves often enough, they do recognise the need for mutual defence. Each House spends a small portion of its wealth to fund the Guardians, mercenary protectors of Argos' borders in times of peace. These mercenaries, chosen from the population by lot to serve for a term of several years, owe no loyalty, in theory, to any one House, but rather to Argos itself.

Argos has much to defend. In addition to its trade routes and wealthy merchants, the land itself is valuable. Much of the forests of Argos are used for timber to build ships, as well as to grow fruits and nuts in well-tended orchards. Its large forests are an economic advantage Argos puts to good use.

### WAR FORMATIONS

The Argossean army favours a standard formation for Hyborian hosts. In marching, the archers are first, then the spearmen, then the knights. When they arrange their battle lines, the centre, featuring the heavily armoured knights, is the strongest section. The wings are composed of lesser cavalry units that are supported by spearmen and archers. The wings move in advance of the centre. The archers unleash their arrows and the spearmen and swordsmen move in afterward. The archers lift their aim to fire at the back ranks of the foe so as to avoid killing their own soldiers. The cavalry units move in next, followed by the knights on their immense horses.

The knights are arrayed in the centre and all the knights should have the Heavy Cavalry combat formation ability described in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* in order to fight most effectively. Although stories and tales seem to indicate the individual nature of knightly combat, in truth knights fight as a team. The lesser cavalry units, mounted men-at-arms and landless knights, also have the *Heavy Cavalry* combat formation. The tactics used by these mounted warriors require great personal discipline and the ability to work as a unit.

Argossean lords use conscripts, peasants or serfs forced to serve as military units instead of performing their customary work obligation. These conscripts are usually untrained (or

minimally trained) and easily demoralised. Argos as a nation, when it needs to raise an army, simply recruits mercenaries instead of training its own infantry. Argos mostly uses Shemites for its mercenaries, although some units are mercenary Gundermen. Its bulging coffers enable Argos to hire large numbers of mercenaries to supplement its armed forces or simply to fight a battle without the involvement of any Argossean military. Many of the skirmishes and limited border struggles with Zingara are fought in this manner.

The infantry and spearmen of Argos have the *Heavy Infantry* combat formation described in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Much of the infantry is made up of mercenaries and professional soldiers that follow the noble knights.

### CITY POLICING

The Patrol is Messantia's police force. From a score of stations throughout the city, the Patrol walks the streets of Messantia, keeping the peace and enforcing the law. While on duty, they move in groups of two to four, depending on the area of the city and the time of day.

The uniform of the Patrol is brown boots and breeches and a pale blue sleeved coat under a leather jerkin on which is emblazoned the wave and coin emblem of Messantia, above a number of stripes, which indicate the Patrolman's rank. A leather cap completes the uniform. On duty, the officers of the Patrol are armed with broadsword, poniard and manacles. They all carry copper whistles as well, which make a distinctive trilling noise when blown and are used to summon reinforcements.

### ROYAL GUARDS

The Patrol loses some of its best men to the higher pay and greater privilege of the Royal Guards. These men are no longer charged with enforcing the law, but rather with protecting the life of the king. They wear breastplates and scale hauberks and steel caps and most of them are 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> level soldiers. An important part of this regiment are the elite King's Hand, which are made up of loyal followers of the king.





## MILITARY

While the Argossean military is most famed for its indomitable navy, King Milo can also field an army that all but the mightiest of nations would fear. Argos is a feudal land, and Milo must call upon his nobles to provide troops in time of war, swelling the standing army's ranks to tens of thousands.

An Argossean coastal freeman is required to receive some level of military training and, provided he has no dependants and is not a business owner, to spend two years as a soldier or sailor. The man's rank and where he serves depends upon his social standing. The sons of the wealthy serve as knights and cavalry or aboard the great Argossean warships. The sons of the middle classes become infantrymen or serve aboard transport vessels. The sons of the poor become archers and auxiliaries or serve on a support ship or riverboat. Argossean men are liable to be summoned for military service from the age of 17 to the age of 60. With as little as one day warning, King Milo could field an army of 5,000 to 10,000 men, though most of the troops would be militia.

## THE GUARDIANS

Argos maintains a relatively small standing army known as the Argossean Guardians through levees from the feudal barons to help patrol its borders, while guardianship of each city usually falls to regular soldiers. All told, there are some 700 to 800 active soldiers in and around Messantia at any given time and the other coastal cities boast similar numbers. The merchant Houses are required to give some portion of their wealth to the support of the Guardians, for defence of Argos is a concern to all. These mercenaries, chosen from the

population by lot to serve for a term of several years, owe no loyalty, in theory, to any one House, but rather to Argos itself.

## NAVY

While the standing army of Argos is small, the country maintains a huge navy, which is constantly in operation. Ships ply the Argossean seas up and down the coast, endlessly patrolling the water to guard against hostile pirates and nations, and to provide assistance to any trading ship that needs it.

The Argossean navy is made up of more than 500 ships. Many of these are support and transport craft, but the nation still boasts more than 200 deadly warships, based out of every city along the coast. Most of these are out on patrol at any given time, but a few remain in port to defend the cities should any enemy force slip past the navy's screen. In Messantia, there are often as many as a score of warships ready to defend the capital and its vital shipyards.

Though the Argossean army can be a formidable foe, it is the nation's sailors that truly terrify an enemy. Unlike the army, which is mostly composed of conscripts and militia, many of these men have made the navy their career. Adept at fighting on the deck of a ship or the sand of a beach, they are rigorously, even mercilessly, trained in ship-boarding and small-unit combat. Any enemy ship that comes to grips with an Argossean warship, its decks swarming with stocky, sure-footed Argossean sailors cutting through the enemy's crew with a terrible, bloodthirsty efficiency born of long practice, is all but certain to lose the encounter.

*Conan: Pirate Isles* presents additional rules and materials for running exciting marine and naval adventures and combats.



# Gladiators & Feasts

## ENTERTAINMENT IN ARGOS

**SOCIAL ACTIVITIES ARE** important in Aquilonia. Every citizen of a town attends most public functions. Unfortunately for most of Argos, a lot of the entertainment and diversions, save for going to the local tavern or pub, are reserved for the aristocracy, the wealthy or the clergy. However, gladiator matches and races, as well as a few sports, are enjoyed by all orders of Argossean society. Young and old, rich and poor, commoner and noble, all enjoy the troubadours and acrobats performing on the corners, the merchants selling goods from far and near, gladiators fighting in tournaments and games of chance held in local taverns.

## GLADIATOR GAMES

Argos is famed for its gladiator games. Slaves and prisoners are forced to serve as gladiators, fighting other slaves or animals. Condemned men do not even get the opportunity to fight – they are simply slaughtered by butchers or fed to savage animals. Site of countless atrocities, the arena serves as a ritual to express man's otherwise repressed savagery.



## TYPICAL FORMATS

Most gladiator games in Argos are staged in similar manners with certain events coming before other events in an almost ritualised manner. Also, music is often played during the slaughtering and fighting, usually in time with the flow and ebb of battle.

### Slaughter of the Beasts

The day of a game usually begins with the slaughter of the beasts. First, starving carnivores are pitted against herbivores. Later, the beastmasters are brought out, warriors trained to fight animals doing just that – fighting and killing wild animals, symbolic of the fear Argosseans feel about the wild and the unknown. To the Argosseans, wild animals are just as much a threat and an enemy as marauding Black Corsairs, so the wholesale slaughter of animals is usually immense, especially in the state-sponsored games. In some of Messantia's games, anything between 700 and 1000 animals might be killed in the opening ceremonies. The killing of the animals symbolises Argos's ability to win against nature and the elements. In smaller towns and cities, the death toll of the animals is usually kept down to the hundreds. Private games usually forgo this tradition due to the expense, although some of the wealthier families insist on displaying this to prove their wealth and their own ability to tame and/or destroy nature.

### Slaughter of the Criminals

After the morning ceremonies, all non-elite criminals are brought out, usually at lunch-time, and executed, usually by burning at the stake, crucifixion or leaving them defenceless against wild animals (considered the most shameful way to die by Argosseans). Note that none of these criminals are killed with swords – a death by sword is a fate left for noble or wealthy criminals. This is held at lunch-time so that those with weaker stomachs can politely excuse themselves for a meal. Those caught practicing sorcery or illegal religions are often slaughtered during these lunch-time executions. More elite criminals are then given weapons (no armour, though) and forced to fight each other until everyone is dead. If one



criminal remains alive, he may be held to fight another day or perhaps given a pardon. Each local government has its own rules concerning such matters.

There is generally no way to escape this death penalty. Staff dressed as demons come out at the end to poke each downed criminal with hot metal rods to make sure they are dead, then the corpses are dragged away to the underworld of the arena. If anyone is found to be feigning death, his head is crushed with a heavy war mallet wielded by another demon-dressed staff member of the arena.

### The Gladiator Matches

After lunch the gladiators are brought out. They are identified by their fighting styles (which are given ethnic names), not their true ethnicity. A Corinthian slave might be trained in the Stygian style, for example, and would be introduced as a Stygian gladiator, using Stygian weapons and armour. These fights may be matches between single warriors, team matches, chariot race matches and even full-fledged tiered elimination tournaments. The larger, more expensive games feature some of each.

Captured soldiers are favoured as gladiators because they already know how to fight and are more likely to win than some trembling slave given arms and armour and thrust into the arena. Most fights are not to the death unless they are state-sponsored because the sponsor of the fight has to reimburse the gladiator trainers for any deaths. Usually, when one gladiator decides he is defeated, he throws his shield and/or weapons to the ground and kneels. The victorious gladiator stands triumphant next to him and, unless the sponsor had decreed otherwise prior to the games, the defeated gladiator is allowed to leave the arena. If he is not allowed to leave the arena, he may die with honour by grasping the thigh of the victor while kneeling, lowering his head and submitting to the death-blow.

The victors of the gladiator fights are awarded cash prizes. If a gladiator has served a long and distinguished career, he might be awarded a wooden sword by the sponsor of the fight. The wooden sword means the gladiator no longer has to fight with real weapons and is granted freedom from his oath (see page 14 for the gladiator oath).

## RACING

Argosseans love races, especially boat-races, although among the interior peoples, horse-races, chariot-races and foot-races are favoured. If the rivers are wide and deep enough to be navigable, boat-races are also enjoyed.

**Racing Check:** Since movement rates are all constant, determine the winner by taking every contestant with the fastest land speed and rolling Dexterity checks (or Profession (sailor) for a boat race or Ride for a horse race) for each against a DC of 10. The largest margin of success wins the race. Lower scores finish in descending order.

For a more complex race, give the race course a series of check points. At the first check point, make the racing check to determine the order the racers are in. At subsequent check points, make additional racing checks in comparison to racers in front of and behind each racer to determine if the racer moves forward or backward in the race, working backwards. For example, compare the racing check of the two people in first and second place. The highest margin roller is now in first place. Compare then the second and third place spots. Again, the highest margin roller is in second place. Compare third to fourth, fourth to fifth and so on. It is easy to fall back with this method but hard to move forward. If the first place runner has a lower margin than the second place runner, he moves to second place. If his margin is lower than the third place runner, he drops back to third place until his margin is better than someone else's. Essentially, he has stumbled and is passed by several runners until he comes out of the stumble and continues with the race.

## SEABREAKER

There is one annual two-day boat-racing event called Seabreaker the people of the coastal cities, especially Messantia, are absolutely obsessive about. It is the primary topic of conversation in the city the month before and for at least a month after it happens. Usually held in late spring, when a stiff wind is virtually assured, this event encompasses all classes of ships from almost all of the seagoing western nations. There is competition in sailing, oaring and combination. The number of masts and number of oars determine a ship's class.

Trading season or not, work on the docks, and in much of the city itself, is at a bare minimum during the two days of Seabreaker. To accommodate the fans who want the best possible view, the Merchant Houses convert all their surplus cargo barges into floating spectator stands, allowing excellent views for a cost of three silver pieces per person per day. The barges are outfitted with two curtained privies, the use of which is free, and food and drink vendors, who charge their captive audience about four times more than their shore-bound counterparts. The barges are chained together and towed out of the harbour to a spot near the race lanes just east of Cranetown, where they are anchored in place against the tides.



Huge amounts of money are won and lost in gambling on Seabreaker. Many Merchant Houses build and maintain private ships for the sole purpose of winning one of the events and gamble large sums in hopes of recouping the cost of the ship in a single day. The fortunes of Seabreaker can break alliances or create rivalries among the Houses as well as any trading contract.

The only people of Messantia who despise Seabreaker are not citizens at all, but slaves. The slaves manning the oars know they will feel the lash during the races, and it is a rare year that goes by without a slave being whipped to death during Seabreaker.

## MUSIC

Argosseans love music as well. It plays a role in all the most significant parts of an Argossean's life, including feasts (before, after and during), religious rites, funeral rites, sporting events, military drills and gladiatorial combats. Music has magical and spiritual aspects ascribed to it by Argosseans, who use music to accompany both work and play. They also use music to lighten the atmosphere whenever possible.

Typical instruments of the Argosseans include the auleta (a type of flute), tibias (another type of flute), aulos (a double flute), lyre, tuba, salpinx, lituuses (an L-shaped bronze wind instrument), cornus (coiled brass horn of huge diameter) and others.

Dancers often carry and play bells, campanella and castanets. They almost always accompany troupes of musicians. Dancers in Argos prefer subtle expressive movements. They wear diaphanous veils and/or colourful cloaks knotted on one shoulder or folded in the hands. Dancers are thought to bring out the magic inherent in the instruments played by the musicians. Although Argossean sorcerers are few and far between, most use instruments and dancers in their magic.

The military uses the tuba and the salpinx. The tuba is a straight trumpet with a long tube finishing in a bell-shape. The salpinx is similar except it ends in a tulip shape. These instruments are used by the military because of their volume and their ability to invoke fear and panic in the minds of enemies. They are also used to give signals for tactical movements during battle.

Bells are believed to repel evil presences and are often mounted on tombs so they produce sounds when the wind moves over them. Many houses and temples also have bells mounted over the doors and entrances so that either the wind or the opening of a door sounds them.

The Argossean national instrument is the aulos, a double flute attached to a double mouthpiece. The aulos is often fixed to the player by means of a strap around the head. An aulos virtuoso tends to become legendary – such is the Argosseans' love for music. Stories are told about how Argossean flautists can use the aulos to lure wild animals out of the wilderness so they can be captured or killed.

Some instruments are believed to have magical potency. The tibia is a type of flute that is believed to counter the effects of plagues. During the Blackblood Plague in Messantia great troupes of tibia players were organised in attempts to counter the effects of the plague. Great stories are told and re-enacted about how these musicians and their dancers saved the elite of society and eventually brought an end to the plague.

## THEATRE

Argosseans enjoy the theatre as well, considering it to be one of the greatest joys of civilisation. Playwrights enjoy great fame in Argos, as do the performers who play the various parts. Dancers, singers and actors from all over the Hyborian world all seek the stages of Argos to perfect their craft.

Each month in Messantia, a new play opens on the stage, playing every other day until the next one opens. On nights when no play is being performed, there are usually musical or oratorical performances. Entertainers from other Argossean cities, and even from other lands, come to Messantia harbouring hopes of performing at the famous amphitheatre of Messantia.

Although the amphitheatre is the most famous and prestigious of Messantia's venues, there are other stages. Miklus's Garden and Mariners' Plaza both have small stages available to performers trying to make a name for themselves. Here citizens who do not wish to pay the admission price at the amphitheatre may watch for free. In addition to plays, these stages often host tumblers, jugglers, fools and musicians. In the Bazaar prefect and some of the wider plazas of King's Prefect it is not uncommon to spot jugglers and tumblers performing for the passing crowd, and the bazaar itself has a small stage. On days when the arena hosts games, the gardens are filled with performers entertaining the waiting audience.

## FEASTS

Argos relishes its feasts. Banquets and meals are important aspects of Argossean social life. Feasts are part of most religious ceremonies, including funerals, and are status symbols. Feasts are given in honour of the dead (and the spirits of the deceased are believed to attend) and they are given to show that an Argossean socialite has come of age.





One cannot be wealthy in Argos and be part of the social scheme of the nation's elite without giving sumptuous banquets to prove wealth and prosperity to all. Servants wait upon indolent nobles reclining on couches as musicians and dancers provide hypnotic music for everyone's enjoyment. Music is played during food preparation, during the meal and during the drinking that follows the meals.

If an event is noteworthy in Argos, it almost always involves a banquet or is commemorated with a feast. Exotic foods are imported from around the world to supply the constant need of Argos' seemingly endless banquets and the nobles' need to outdo each other in both opulence and exoticness of their feasts. Often gladiator fights are staged in the privacy of a noble's home, and occasionally famed gladiators are brought in for the guests to gawk over. Famous playwrights, poets and actors are often invited, as are famous travellers, captains and other honoured members of society. Some feasts are little more than orgies with food and drink provided at will.

Holding a sumptuous feast for Argos' elite gives a character a +1 boost to Reputation if it is well-received. To continue getting the bonus, which can be gained no more than once per week, characters must ensure the current banquet is greater and more sumptuous than the last feast he sponsored.

## THE KING'S EAR

In a departure from tradition, King Milo instituted a new practice upon assuming the throne. Concerned his advisers might not tell him everything he needed to

hear, and concerned as well for the welfare of his subjects, Milo offered the citizens of Argos the opportunity to speak to him directly. On the second day of every new year, commoners from throughout Argos have the chance to speak directly to the king, in an event known as the King's Ear.

Those who would speak their praise or grievances gather early outside the Dome of the Sea, and are chosen by lot. Inside, Milo waits for them, alone except for his guards, who have their ears plugged with wax so that only the commoner and the king know what is said. After one

assassination attempt, his advisers pleaded with him to quit the practice, but Milo refused and the tradition continues. It is a simple thing, but it has endeared the king greatly to his subjects.

## THE BIRTH OF MITRA

A popular feast in Argos is held on the eve of the winter solstice to celebrate the birth of Mitra. Mitra came to the earth, born of a virgin mother named Anahita the Immaculate, to teach his prophet, Epimitreus, how to fight the serpents of the world (note that in Aquilonia, Mitra is believed to have been born of the light, not of a woman; however, they do worship his birth on the same day). It is the day when the sun overtakes the night and the days begin to be longer than the nights, a symbol of light's eternal victory over darkness, goodness over evil. Fires are burnt all night to ensure the defeat of the forces of evil, be they the black hordes of Asura or the grim voteries of Set, both serpents.

The festival involves a temporary subversion of order, when masters and servants often reverse roles. The king of Argos dresses as a commoner and changes places with a commoner, crowning him a mock king. Masquerade parties are commonplace on this night and ordinary rules of society are relaxed. Merriment is the ultimate theme of this chaotic celebration.



# Law of the Ocean

## GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN ARGOS

**ARGOS IS ONE** of the primary maritime nations of the Hyborian world. Under the mercantilism of the merchant Houses, Argos prospers. However, Argos does not run itself. The king of Argos can only do so much in such a large kingdom. He may be king but the management and defence of the kingdom depends on the nobility, the prosperous work depends upon the labourers, the economic expansion depends upon the burghers and the spiritual well-being of the nation depends upon the Mitran clergy. The king of Argos is primarily little more than the cord binding together all of these disparate elements into a cohesive unit that functions for the overall betterment of the whole nation, but without that cord, Argos would fall apart into civil wars between its barons. To control Argos, the king relies on a feudal form of government and a manorial form of economics in the interior and mercantilism along the coast. Argos is on the verge of becoming a true national state, as feudalism there is waning fast.

### FEUDAL GOVERNMENT

Argos is more stable politically than most of the Hyborian realms. Aquilonia seems to be constantly rebelling and fighting, with provinces ceding and being reacquired. Robert E. Howard describes Messantia as being without wall, utilising the sea for defence. This indicates Messantia did not fear military action from neighbouring provinces and fiefs – its only fear was from a naval assault. Presumably if a foreign army had reached Messantia via an overland route, then Argos would already have been effectively conquered. The fighting between the various Houses, nobles and lords is largely economic and political battles and rarely involved military actions.

Argos is ruled by a king. It is a feudal kingdom and the land of Argos is split into different fiefs, counties and baronies. One of these provinces is Hypsonia, mentioned in *Conan the Liberator* by L. Sprague de Camp. These provinces are ruled by counts or barons. Most of the wealth is held in the hands of the merchant Houses, which hold much of the power as well. Most of Argos' barons and counts come from these Houses. Beneath the king, the counts and barons and the Houses are the military officers; as ship captains and generals of armies, these individuals also hold status in Argos. Slaves are at the bottom of the social ladder in Argos.

The various fief-holders beneath the king administer their own estates and exercise their own justice. Most of them mint their own money, levy whatever taxes and tolls they want and field armies. Although each pledges fealty to the king, these individual lords are supreme within their territory. Not even an emissary from the king would dare to interfere with a ship captain on his own ship. Many merchant Houses are actively engaged in acquiring fiefs, especially surrounding the cities and putting those fiefs under city law instead of traditional manorial law.

The counts and barons of Argos hold noble titles and fiefs from the king granting them official power. The granting of these fiefs is done by a patent, or contract, wherein the noble swears fealty to the king and the king grants the noble all rights pertaining to the land proffered as fief. The fief includes both private property and a noble title. These noble titles are inherited through the male line, although the king may remove a title at his pleasure. The eldest son or husband of an eldest daughter almost always inherits the noble title. The actual property of the fief, however, can be divided among the lord's heirs however he may see fit. If a dispute over inheritance occurs, especially in a case where a nobleman produced no heir, the king may intercede and name an heir.

The whole point of this system of government is the obligation of military service to a lord. The whole reason a lord parcels out his land is to obtain warriors he does not have to support. The vassal supports those troops. Vassals who have vassals suddenly find themselves with knights they can send to their lord. Most vassals in Argos pay their military obligation in coin, allowing the lord to purchase more professional soldiers – mercenaries. A lord may accept or refuse this payment in coin, called scutage, but most accept it unless a specific military action requires a vassal's specific talents. A vassal is also expected to provide counsel to the lord. He is also obliged to appear when summoned; a vassal who ignores a summons risks losing his fief. The obligation of counsel cannot be bought with scutage. Argossean barons require their vassals to serve time in their courts as advisors. Further, most barons require their vassals to gather their own vassals and listen to their opinions.



In return for military obligations and counsel, a lord is obligated to perform certain duties for his vassals. One, a lord must keep good faith with his vassals and not act in a manner which would injure the honour, life or property of his vassals. Second, a lord must offer protection to his vassals. The lord must come to the aid of his vassals if they are unjustly attacked. Third, a lord must offer his vassals legal protection, vouching for them and offering counsel and wealth to them if needed. Fourth, a lord must provide his vassals with a means to support themselves – a manor, a ship or bullion. This entitles a vassal to become a lord himself if his means of support is land, a captain if it is a ship or a merchant House if it is bullion. A vassal who is supported at court is called a bachelor knight. Keep in mind that the vassal of a vassal is not technically a vassal to the original lord.

For every vassal a lord creates, he gains a +2 to his Reputation and a +1 modifier to his Leadership score. If the vassals have a higher Reputation than the bequeathing lord, the Reputation bonus doubles. Gaining a benefice, royal charter or land grant gives the receiving character a +1 bonus to Reputation. Almost all receipts of manors or other forms of benefice require the character to give an oath of allegiance.

The easiest way to acquire land and property in Argos is to swear fealty to a lord in exchange for the land or a ship. Argos, after centuries of this practice, has created an environment where many vassals have multiple lords. If a vassal needs more land, he simply swears fealty to another lord in addition to all previous lords. Simple enough, but what happens when two lords go to war and both call upon the vassal for aid? To avoid situations where a vassal must be forced to choose between his lords or simply ignore both lords, Argos has created a hierarchy of lordship called liegeancy, wherein one lord is the acknowledged liege lord and beneath him are simply lords. In essence, allegiances are given orders of precedence (discussed under Allegiance in the core rules for *Conan the Roleplaying Game*).

If a vassal or lord fails his obligation, there are three remedies available. One is a public declaration of loss of faith. This declaration tells society that there has been a failure in performance, resulting in a -10 penalty to Reputation to the accused. The accused may publicly explain his actions (resolved through a Diplomacy check). If successful, his Reputation is restored and the accuser accrues a -5 penalty to his Reputation. If unsuccessful, the accused must make immediate reparations to restore his Reputation. If this method fails to resolve the situation, the other remedy is available. Combat is the next step in resolving such a failure. If military action is not favoured, there is a third solution for those whose vassals are the problem (this third one does not

exist if the lord is the one failing to oblige his vassal). All lords have the social right of entertainment, by which a lord may visit his vassal's manor. When a lord travels, his entire entourage travels with him, including family, advisors, staff, servants, guards, huntsmen, courtiers and sycophants. The vassal must provide room and board for everyone. By forcing the vassal to host the lord indefinitely, a lord can financially make his point.

Vassalage is a contract between two people and it ends when one of the persons dies. Inheritance is a guaranteed right in Argos. Although the inheritor often pledges fealty to the original lord, he does not have to do so, although that puts him at the risk of war.

## ARGOSSEAN HISTORY

History tells us that a race of pre-human Giant-Kings founded a kingdom that eventually came to be called Stygia after the Khari conquered it. That kingdom built Khemi as a trading centre. The Giant-Kings fled Stygia, excepting those traitors who aided the Khari. Expanding outward, those early tall, white-skinned merchants built a trading outpost named Tartarus on the mouth of the Khorotas river. These early frontiersmen spread out along the Khorotas river valley building new cities. They enslaved the barbarous indigenous populations. Thus Acheron was founded.

Thus it was that 3,000 years ago Argos was part of Acheron, as told in *The Hour of the Dragon* by Robert E. Howard. Then the balance of power changed. When Xaltotun lost the Heart of Ahriman to a Hyborian shaman, the great Hyborian tribes of Nemed and Aquilon attacked. The army of Aquilon joined with the army of Koth and destroyed Tartarus on the mouth of the Khorotas. The purple-towered city was razed to the ground, forming the foundation for the Hyborian city of Messantia, although for many decades it remained little more than a Hyborian fishing village.

Great migrations of various tribes of Hyborians, indigenous peoples and Shemites flooded the Argossean lands. The inherent instability of early Argos caused its fortunes to rise and fall on a constant basis, even as Aquilonia and Nemedias began to take shape. Wars with Poitain, Shem and Zingara took their toll as land was conquered and re-conquered.

The Sons of Shem and the Hyborians fought for the lands, but ultimately the Hyborians sweeping down from Poitain won. Danaus, a Poitainian war chief, was crowned king of Argos. He made the large town of Messantia his capital, dedicating it to his god, Anu. He built a small defensive wall to protect his new capital from raiding and decided to focus





his sights on the wealth of the sea. His armies could not expand further into Zingara because of the darksome forest of ghouls. Shem was already strong with powerful city-states. King Danaus decided to look to the sea as a conquerable territory. He knew there were other lands, because Zingara, Stygia and the Black Kingdoms had raided Messantia in the past. The Messantian shipwrights began to turn their attention to the art of maritime warfare, the advent of which lead to the founding of the strongest navy of the Hyborian Age. The shipwrights turned their skills to developing faster ships that sat low in the water and were powered by the oars of slaves. This period also saw the experimental use of bronze plated hulls, specifically designed for ramming, and deck-mounted light catapults. With such defences in place, the city was kept safe and continued to grow.

Trading began with neighbouring cities, other Hyborian tribes who had settled along the coast. With the rise of Venzia, Napolitos, Birrantia and Messantia, commerce and security allowed Argos to take control of the adjacent seas and begin trading with other nations along the coast,

giving rise to a period of commerce that lay the foundation for a powerful maritime nation. Argos quickly became the maritime capital of the Hyborian Age, renowned for its ships and sailors.

About 1,400 years after the fall of Acheron, Argos was invaded by Stygia. The black sorceries of the Stygians wreaked a horrible storm across all the harbours. Up the rivers the Stygians came, bringing with them death, destruction and pestilence. Temples of Set were founded along the rivers as the Stygians conquered. The people began to abandon Anu, Bori and the other Hyborian gods as worthless once the power of Set was seen as unstoppable. Fortunately for Argos and the whole of the Hyborian world a prophet arose in Aquilonia – Epemitreus the Sage. This prophet came with a message from Mitra and he came with counterspells and he came with power. The Stygians were driven from the lands, forced back to the sea and slaughtered. The power of Epemitreus and his god, Mitra, was embraced by the Argosians.



As the years went by, the influence of the Mitran religion made itself felt more and more consistently, in stark contrast to the progressive cosmopolitan growth of coastal Argos and its capital of Messantia. The Mitran religion sought to create its own authority over the Hyborian nations. Due to repeated territorial acquisitions, the Mitran temples began to assume political and administrative functions in the growing feudal world of the Hyborians. The Mitrans began to found monasteries of sorts to serve as centres for the preservation and spread of the Hyborian culture in addition to serving religious needs. Feudal lords often donated huge estates to the temples in return for promises of eternal rewards, strengthening the political authority and secular power wielded by the religion. King Arcturus was the first Mitran king; following Aquilonia's lead, he made the Mitran faith the state religion.

It is around this era that the Merchant Houses started to grow politically strong. Beginning as mere feudal lords, these Houses began accepting ships in trade for land, becoming less land-owners and more ship owners – and therefore controlling most of the trading interest. The merchant Houses, however, retained strict control over the trade routes through the interior, especially along the Road of Kings, supporting its construction whole-heartedly. Argos, although fertile, was not becoming wealthy because of manors and crops, but through trade. Early feudal lords realised this and jockeyed for increased interest in overseas trade. The early kings, coming from a land-owner background, did not do enough to retain a controlling interest in the sea-trade and happily gave over shipping rights in exchange for allegiances and land-rights. Now, although technically a feudal government ruled by a king, it is the merchant Houses that hold the wealth of the kingdom, thus it is the merchant Houses that hold the power in Argos.

For nearly 1,000 years Argos struggled through political adversity and constant change. The merchant Houses were fighting for feudal lands even as the kings of Argos weakened politically against the growing power of the Mitran church. The Mitran church managed to acquire more and more land and feudal allegiances than the kings of Argos. Argos became incapable of taking independent political action because of the power of the Mitran temples, run from the Mitraeum in Aquilonia. Argos again found itself invaded by an influx of foreigners, especially Zingarans and Hyborians from Poitain. A two-century long Shemite expansion throughout Argos also caused controversy and internal warfare, especially as the Shemites would not submit to the dominant Mitran religion.

The great coastal cities of Argos fought for independence from the ineffective kings. Venzia, Napolitos, Birrantia and Messantia had become virtual

city-states of mercantilism. Toward the end of this dynamic period of political and racial flux the coastal cities were granted limited charters of freedom from their feudal obligations. The Houses become less feudal lords and more like guilds under these charters. This period was brought to an end with a final influx of Poitainians and the rise of King Menetus. He restored power to the crown of Argos, taking land by any means possible from the Mitran temples, often by declaring the Temples heretics and causing the Mitrans to essentially destroy themselves in their efforts to root out heresies. King Menetus forced all the interior lords to renew their pledges of allegiance to him in great ceremonies. Those who would not were forcibly stripped of their titles and their lands. Those lands were then divided and distributed amongst favoured knights and warchiefs of the king upon their pledges. The feudal system was effectively restored to Argos, save among the coastal cities, which maintained mercantile economies and semi-free statuses based on their charters.

During the reign of King Gellius, the coastal cities of Venzia, Napolitos, Birrantia and Messantia boomed, and with them, the Houses grew to the point of near-absolute power throughout Argos. Even the interior land-barons found themselves at the mercy of the coastal lords. Also during the reign of King Gellius, Argos began a relationship with the Barachan pirates; although the king did this to protect Messantia, he did not initially bother to protect Venzia, Napolitos or Birrantia. The Barachans preyed upon those three coastal cities and they begged for Argossean aid but King Gellius refused unless the charters could be reworked, giving the crown more influence and more wealth in return for military protection.

During the reign of King Prius the hinterlands of Argos rose up in rebellion, using Gunderland mercenaries to sever ties with the glittering coastal cities, especially Messantia, which was by then run by prefects. The coastal cities again fought for independence themselves, and Argos fell into a brief period of turmoil. Queen Penellia later restored much of the order, although Argos lost a lot of territory to Aquilonia. Zingara captured Napolitos during the Queen's reign, causing much consternation among the neighbouring coastal towns, who begged for Argossean protection – protection that was not coming due to efforts to restore order in the interior.

Zingaran raids continued until the reign of King Calemus, who, with a unified Argossean interior state, managed to fight off the freebooters and the Zingaran soldiers. King Calemus also retook Napolitos and fortified it against continued Zingaran aggression. At the end of King Calemus's reign chaos again shook the Argossean foundations as the Blackblood Plague ravaged Messantia.

Argos' falling confidence in their kings caused trouble throughout King Miklus's reign, especially in the interior.



Although he restored Messantia and rebuilt much of it, his focus on the centrepiece of Argos' mercantile capital lost him a lot of support among the outlying feudal lords. Wars among the feudal lords just made the Messantian kings less than sympathetic as they could not produce enough surplus to make an economic dent in the wealth flowing through Messantia and the other coastal cities. King Miklus drained Argos' coffers in his efforts to redesign and reshape the capital, a fact that made him popular among the Messantians but did not endear him to the feudal lords. The situation in the interior grew worse and worse over the next century until it grew to a head during King Arrigo's reign, when he annexed surrounding alluvial lands and nearly caused a full-fledged civil war. The lords of the interior hills actually managed to put aside their territorial squabbles to rise up against Messantia. King Arrigo neatly ended the near-war.

More recently, King Vilerus III of Aquilonia, who ruled before Numedides, invaded Argos and took a section of land around the juncture of the Alimane with the Khorotas River from King Milo not long after Milo took the throne.

Currently, Argos is at peace with Aquilonia, having helped Conan gain the throne from Numedides. At some time during the reign of Conan in Aquilonia, King Ariostro replaced King Milo as king of Argos. The Games Master should feel free to present this transition of power however and whenever he wishes.

## ARGOSSEAN LAW

Law in Argos is complex because of the multiple sources of law. The coastal cities all have their own legal systems, laws and customs, all largely set out in the original charters, freeing them from the feudal system. People living in the manors of the interior must contend with the feudal system, which has law dispensed from three different sources, all independent of each other: manorial law, temple law and royal law.

### INTERIOR LAW

Argossean law differs from modern law in several ways. First of all, some men are better than others in the eyes of justice. The inherent idea of worthiness is not only socially supported but legally practised. The point of law is not to determine truth so much as it is to arbitrate disputes in a peaceful manner and generate further revenue for landowners. The laws vary depending on one's social order. Secondly, local law derives from local custom and local mores. The specifics of law vary from locality to locality. Even powerful kings and barons are wise to follow custom more often than not, although they can decree laws at variance with local or national customs. Third, justice can be slow in Argos. Crimes intended to be tried in manorial courts must wait until the lord or his

steward visit the manor, which may be once a year for some manors. The more powerful the wronged person is, the faster the wheels of justice tend to roll. Fourth, authority derives from strength in Argos. A court is only as powerful as the lord dispensing justice. The lord must enforce his will, gather fines and see to it that court mandates are followed. This becomes problematic as wealthy people are tried, as such people often have the power to ignore judgements.

**Courts:** Serfs and any others classified as not being free do not go to court. They must accept justice as dispensed by the lord of the manor, which is usually both swift and brutal. If the lord or court cannot settle the case, it is settled via an ordeal by combat, wherein the accused battles the accuser. Whoever wins is deemed the correct party. The other party usually dies in battle. Trials by jury are not popular in Argos, as people feel their neighbours may have a grudge against them and use the trial as a means to gain revenge.

There are three types of courts in Argos for freemen. The first type of court is the omnicompetent manorial court. A feudal lord or his steward presides, giving the court authority, but it is run primarily by villagers. This court meets once every three weeks to handle all litigation not handled by the other two courts, such as chicanery, petty theft, impositions on a lord's rights, marriage issues, estate issues, feudal obligation issues and farming complaints. These courts hear cases ranging from being wasteful with seed to arson and murder. It is the natural venue for trials, and for a case to be heard in either the temple court or the royal court explanation and a royal order are required. Most murder, rape, kidnapping and mutilation cases are heard in the royal courts, for example, and any crime involving a Mitran priest or sorcery is tried in the temple courts. A suspect's neighbours usually detain him until a judge arrives to hold the court, although gaols are becoming more and more commonplace in rural Argos. A manorial court usually has trial by juries composed of three to six persons with honest Reputations. The jury merely act as advisors for the most part as the final decision lies in the hands of the lord or his steward.

The second type of court is a temple court, which has jurisdiction over canon law, such as blasphemy or witchcraft. In addition, the temple courts usually claim exclusive right over mutilation, kidnapping or murder cases involving clergy. The temple courts often hold trials by ordeal. Some sample ordeals include carrying red-hot metal bars for three paces or pulling heavy stones out of boiling water. The accused's hands are then checked after three days for clear signs of healing. If his wounds are getting worse, the accused is pronounced guilty of the crime and punished. Another ordeal is to tie the accused up, then throw him into water. If the water rejects the accused (in other words, if he floats),



he is guilty. Ordeals are limited only by the imagination of the priests of Mitra.

The third type of court is the royal court, which sees cases involving murder and treason. It is a court of special jurisdiction and requires a royal command to hear a case. This court is held by the king or his steward. This court also sees any cases concerning the division of lands or seizure if the case is between the king's barons or counts. Similar conflicts between a baron or count's vassals are dealt with in the baron or count's manorial court.

Overall, this system is slowly giving way to the written law systems of the coastal cities. The cities are controlling more and more land and many diehards complain that the entire feudal system will fall away within two generations if the king does not do anything to stop it.

Courts are an excellent opportunity for characters to pit their Diplomacy skills against a lord or judge's Sense Motive skill.

**Punishments:** Punishments for breaking the king's peace are harsh to the point of savagery. People found guilty of minor crimes are fined, dragged along the ground by a horse, blinded or put into stocks, but woe to those found guilty of something serious. Serious crimes can offer punishments such as being blinded, hanged, having limbs or extremities cut off or execution, often via beheading. Thieves can expect to have their hands cut off. People who hunt in the lord's forests illegally have their ears cut off. Public executions for robbery, rustling, treason and murder are common in Aquilonia. These executions attract large crowds and most are carried out by a headsman. Executions often begin with a public display of torture (meant as a deterrent), such as being partially hung, then disembowelled, then castrated. Once the display of torture is finished, the doomed is beheaded and his head is placed on a pole while his limbs are dispatched to the places affected by his actions. Most towns have a gibbet outside of them. People are hung on these gibbets and their bodies are left hanging for weeks as a warning. Few places imprison criminals as a punishment because upkeep is simply too expensive; it is cheaper to execute or mutilate someone. Many courts punish those who accuse others but are unable to prove their cases.

## COASTAL CITY LAW

The coastal cities have their own law systems, but most are based on Messantia's laws. It is beyond the scope of this sourcebook to discuss each and every coastal city, so a general look at Messantian law will be presented instead. Games Masters placing games in other

coastal cities may make the city law the same or may vary it if desired.

It has been said before that money is power in Messantia and the city's justice system is no exception. Over the years, the Merchant Houses have had laws written and rewritten to serve their interests, and have inculcated a culture of deference to privilege in the justice system. As envisioned, Messantia's justice system is based on a set of laws, enforced by the Patrol and administered by magistrates; at least in theory, that is how it works. The reality is much more complex. While it is possible to receive a fair trial in Messantia, this is only true so long as the Merchant Houses are not involved.

Generally speaking, Patrolmen on the street will arrest anyone they see in commission of a crime or whom they suspect has committed a specific crime. The suspect is taken under guard to the Magistrate Hall in the King's Prefect. Once there, a warden questions him. The warden is responsible for bringing all available evidence to the upcoming trial, including any evidence the suspect feels will help prove his innocence, including witnesses, who cannot refuse to testify before the court if charged to do so. A judge convenes the trial as soon as the warden is satisfied that all evidence which can be found is present, a process which can take hours or days.

There are no lawyers in Messantian justice, nor are there juries. The judge weighs the evidence, the words of the Patrol, the suspect and any witnesses and renders his verdict. There are no appeals, save by direct order of the king. After one unfortunate incident with a barbarian, it is now forbidden for any person other than a Patrolmen to enter the courtroom armed.

Civil cases, such as disputes over trade agreements or the rights to property or a cargo of goods, are handled similarly to criminal cases. A warden takes statements and solicits evidence from each aggrieved party and a judge decides the case. In disputes between two ordinary Messantians, the decision is likely to be fair, but ordinary Messantians have long since learned the folly of challenging the wishes of a Merchant House in court, where, barring truly overwhelming evidence, the decision always favours the House. Disputes between two Merchant Houses, on the other hand, never come to court. They are either decided between the Houses or added to the long list of grudges and vendettas nursed by all the Houses.

Messantian judges have tremendous latitude in assigning blame and ascribing punishment in the cases brought before them. The city's law code lists a large number of crimes, categorised from First Order to Fifth Order, as well as



recommended sentencing of offenders, but the judges are free to increase or decrease the punishment as they see fit. As a general rule, the wealthier and more influential the criminal, the lighter the punishment.

Though the Magistrate Hall has a number of underground cells, they are not used to house criminals who are sentenced to a period of imprisonment. Instead, a prisoner is taken under heavy guard to Three Corners Keep, the headquarters of the Patrol, and locked away in a dank cell beneath that ancient fortress. Actual imprisonment is an uncommon sentence, however, as housing, feeding and guarding a prisoner is expensive. Execution, arena combat, mutilation, hard labour, flogging, exile and fines are much more common and are indicative of Messantia's 'eye for an eye' system of justice. Rarer even than imprisonment are sentences of enslavement and destitution.

Argossean law is regarded in some other nations as venal and corrupt, and that is true of Messantia as well. However, despite the corruption endemic in the system, Messantia does have a code of laws and process of judgement that elevates it somewhat above other areas of the nation. The common man on trial in Messantia is, barring the involvement of any of the Merchant Houses, almost certainly better off than the common man in rural Argos. Deeper into Argos, such individuals are hauled trembling before a baron with more interest in how his eggs were cooked that morning than in the life of the trembling peasant before him.

### Smuggling and the Law

Messantia and the other ports in Argos are rather lax about certain laws. They make their money off sea trade and illegitimate trade is also profitable. Argos turns a blind eye to most acts of piracy. The Barachan pirates, mostly Argosseans anyway, have a safe harbour in Messantia, so the Barachans leave most Argossean shipping alone for that reason. However, Black Corsairs and any that associated with them are summarily hung if caught by the Hyborians. The Corsairs burn and destroy anything they do not want, taking anything they do want without remorse or care and they do




not, in general, trade. The Corsairs and their activities are not appreciated by the Argosseans; they rather fear the Black Corsairs, including the legends of Amra, the bloodiest and most horrible of the Corsairs ever to sail the ocean. Conan (Amra himself) did manage to find a fence in Messantia, but that was an exceedingly rare exception. Few merchants will risk their necks to fence goods from the Black Corsairs, for the laws are not lax in that regard.

Laws in Argos do exist, however. Black Corsairs and those who traffic with them are hung. Killing town guards is also illegal, as is refusing to testify in court. The courts favour the rich in suits against merchants. In Howard's *The Queen of the Black Coast*, Conan was nearly thrown into a dungeon for contempt of court when he refused to betray a friend. It was in escaping the wrath of the courts that Conan met with Tito, an Argossean merchant en route to the Black Kingdoms on the other side of Stygia.

Under Messantian law, smuggling is a crime that carries stiff penalties, usually including heavy fines, hard labour and/or flogging. In practice, however, these laws are not commonly applied. Coin is the engine that drives Messantia, and in turn Argos, and smuggling brings in that coin. Merchant ships bearing smuggled goods to Messantia have little choice but to dock openly in the city's harbour. As it would be a foolish man indeed who sailed into the heart of King Milo's realm in a laden merchant ship and declared no cargo, smugglers





tend to mask their illicit goods by bringing them to port as a small percentage of an otherwise legal cargo. This practice has the twin benefits of keeping smuggling at an acceptable level and generating still more trade in the city.

Though the city turns a blind eye to most smuggling, from time to time an exception is made. Generally, this happens against a foreign merchant who has become too greedy and brazen in his illegal trafficking. Seeing a fellow smuggler stripped of his ship, goods and even the clothes on his back is usually enough of a deterrent for most novice smugglers. However, being flogged in full view of his fellows and either exiled from the city or sent to the arena serves as a poignant reminder to even the hardest smuggler not to grow too confident.

### Sorcery and the Law

Sorcery is illegal in Messantia and practising it carries penalties ranging from fines to instant death. Likewise, creating, dealing in or possessing magical items is forbidden. It is noteworthy that Messantian law does not make it illegal to *be* a sorcerer, only to practice the craft within the city. There are several sorcerers who discreetly make their homes in Messantia and a number of others frequently pass through on business of their own.

Messantian law provides few clear rules for adjudicating the severity of a sorcerous crime. In some cases, such as very minor prestidigitation, the crime might go unnoticed even in a crowd. In a case where no evidence exists of any harm done or other crime committed, the punishment may be limited to a fine or possibly exile. If magic is used in the commission of a crime, the punishment for that crime is raised to the next Order. For example, a sorcerer who used his magic to change the odds in an arena match to make the combatant he bet on more likely to win would have used magic to commit theft. In this case, the sorcerer would be charged with a Second Order crime. In the most severe cases, such as sorcery that openly endangers the city, the punishment is instant death. The Patrol would kill without question any sorcerer foolish enough to openly attempt to summon a demon or raise the dead.

Trials for sorcery are handled differently than for other crimes. Messantian law considers sorcerers to be armed at all times, as a sorcerer's weapon is his mind. A sorcerer is not allowed into court for the trial, and both the verdict and sentence are decided by a tribunal of three judges, for fear that the sorcerer may attempt to control one judge's mind.

As stated, magical items and components such as lotus extracts are illegal in Messantia, but there are some fences brave and avaricious enough to buy and sell such items. There is always a market in a city of this size for potions, poultices and lotus extracts. Dealing in such things is a dangerous path to walk, but it can be extremely profitable as well for a character with enough wealth, and who knows the right people. This is Messantia after all and almost anything can be found for a price.

## GOVERNMENT

The government of Messantia is nominally in the hands of King Milo, but in actuality he has little to do with the day-to-day governance of the city. The Consul, a noble appointed to the post by the king for a period of two years, oversees the general affairs of the city. The full roster of the Consul's duties is too complex to be detailed here, but in summary he oversees collection of taxes and tariffs, maintenance of the city's streets, sewers, buildings and wharves and the supervision of the Patrol. He meets with the king every 10 days to brief him on what has happened in the city and submit to him any problems which fall outside his authority. This leaves the king free to focus his attention on Argos and the world outside its borders.

In reality, of course, the system rarely works so smoothly. Consul is a position of some power, and from its inception some nobles who have held the rank have sought to use it to further their own ends or settle scores with old rivals. Queen Penellia, when she created the position, foresaw that and instituted a simple remedy. Any Consul who behaves in such a fashion is replaced with a noble of a rival House. Thus far, this provision has worked fairly well at stopping the more blatant transgressions.

Below the Consul position, city government is divided into Law (Patrol and judges), Treasury (fees, taxes and tariffs, as well as disbursement of monies) and Engineering (maintenance of all property owned by the state).

King Milo is a strong monarch who enjoys the approval of the people, something which has been of tremendous help to him in his daily struggles with the Merchant Houses. Rulership of Argos and Messantia is decided in large part by whoever controls its purse strings; thus, the Merchant Houses have a tremendous amount of power within Argosesean politics. Weaker monarchs have had to content themselves with merely acting as puppets for the Houses, but the last few kings have had the strength to resist them. Milo has charted his own course as much as possible and is determined to continue doing so, much to the Merchant Houses' chagrin. The Houses still possess enormous power and it remains to be seen how well Milo's sons will resist them.



## KING MILO

Male Argossean noble 13

**Hit Dice:** 10d8+20+6 (81 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (+4 Reflex save)

**Speed:** 30 ft. (six squares)

**Dodge Defence:** +14 (+4 Level)

**Parry Defence:** +18 (+3 Str, +6 Level)

**Damage Reduction:** –

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +9/+12

**Attack:** Broadsword +15 melee; heavy lance +15 melee

**Full Attack:** Broadsword +15/+10 melee; heavy lance

**Damage:** Broadsword 1d10+2; heavy lance 1d10+2

**Special Attacks:** +3 bonus to attack rolls with broadsword, hunting bow, heavy lance and war spear

**Special Qualities:** Do You Know Who I Am?, Enhanced Leadership, Lead By Example +4, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Social Ability (*ally*), Social Ability (*etiquette*), Special Regional Feature +3, Title, Wealth

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (one square)/5 ft. (one square)

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +14 (+17 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 17

**Skills:** Balance +2, Bluff +20, Diplomacy +20, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) 12, Profession (sailor) +5, Ride +11, Sense Motive +14, Use Rope +2

**Feats:** Leadership, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Steely Gaze

**Reputation:** 52 (Honest) (+6 modifier to Bluff, Gather Information and Sense Motive checks, –3 penalty to Disguise)

**Leadership:** 22/28 (11<sup>th</sup> level cohort; 800 1<sup>st</sup> level, 32 2<sup>nd</sup> level, eight 3<sup>rd</sup> level, four 4<sup>th</sup> level, two 5<sup>th</sup> level, one 6<sup>th</sup> level followers)

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

**Allegiances:** Royal Family, Argos, vassals

**Possessions:** As king of Argos, Milo can have any possession he pleases. The statistics given here assume he is unarmoured. King Milo and his sons prefer to use weapons and armour of Argossean craftsmanship, despite the availability of Akbitanan equipment.

King Milo seems destined to be regarded as one of the great Kings of Argos. His reign began rockily, taking the throne at a relatively young age after his father Constans died, and facing an invasion by the far more powerful nation of Aquilonia. Even after peace was declared, relations between Argos and its mighty neighbour to the north were chilled.

King Milo eventually got his revenge on Aquilonia, when he allowed Conan the Cimmerian to use Argos as a staging point for an invasion of Aquilonia, even using his own army to protect Conan's when the barbarian's first foray into



Aquilonia met with failure. Once Conan assumed the throne in Tarantia, relations between Argos and Aquilonia became much friendlier, but Milo remained concerned about Argos' traditional enemy to the west, Zingara, as well as the doings of some of his feudal lords and the entire ill-favoured city of Athos.

Milo himself is heavy-set and barrel-chested, with a long grey beard and sharp blue eyes. He is opportunistic in his country's affairs, usually ready to take any advantage he sees, but he is also very patient, willing to wait as long as is needed until the right opportunity presents itself. He is even-tempered, rarely displaying much emotion and is a shrewd and stubborn negotiator.

King Milo has gathered a group of followers together who are fiercely loyal to him and more than capable of dealing with any who prove to be too much for the Patrol of Messantia. This group, which calls itself the King's Hand, is comprised of barbarians, borderers, pirates and soldiers.



# Geography of Argos

## THE LUSH WILDERNESS

**THE COAST OF** Argos is dotted with sheltered lagoons and has many harbours. Although most of them are not used for commercial reasons, they do serve as convenient hiding places for pirates and merchants hiding from pirates. The countryside of Argos is largely wooded, although large farms and orchards line the fertile Khorotas valley. Central Argos is a rich agricultural land of fields and orchards, friendly to travellers, with a great many inns.

Outside the valley and away from the coasts, the countryside slowly starts to resemble Shem, shifting from woodlands to rolling, bare hills. Towns and villages become rarer and further apart toward Shem and are more dependant on wells for water than on rains or rivers. On the other side of the Khorotas river, the landscape grows more and more wooded, eventually merging into the ghoulish forests of Zingara.

The main Zingaran border roads are guarded at all times but particularly so when Zingara is amidst another civil war. The border country is predominantly oak-forested hills, haunted by dreadful flesh-eating ghouls (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). The ghouls are probably one reason why most of the conflict between the two nations has been expressed at sea, rather than in land battles.

Southern Argos is less flat, with low blue hills as far as the coast and then cliffs plunging down to the sea. The roads that interconnect all the various sea-ports run through knife-edged ravines and other convenient places of ambush for inland raiders.

**Alimane River** – This important trade river merges with the Khorotas shortly after it enters Argos. The Alimane has many fords so it is not navigable for most of its reaches, although trade routes lie alongside the river. One such ford is the Nogara which lies near the Saxula Pass of the Rabirian Mountains. It is one of three fords that leads from Argos to Aquilonia.

**Arond** – Arond is an eastern province of rolling, bare hills. It is lightly populated and is most noted for its artesian wells, which are of the necessary depth to produce water without the need for pumping. Arond is not a particularly fertile land.

**Astar River** – The Astar is an Argossian tributary of the Khorotas River. There is a ford in Hypsonia that crosses the river into the Plain of Pallos. The river forms a border between Hypsonia and the Plain of Pallos and flows to the south of the Rabirian Mountains.

**City of the Ghouls** – This city is somewhere deep within the primeval forests near the Zingaran border. The ghouls of the border country make their homes here, ranging out by night to capture and devour unwary travellers.

**Didymian Hills** – The Didymian Hills is a hilly land between Messantia and the Plain of Pallos. The area is famous for its olive production and its dairy products. Shepherds keep large herds of sheep and goats in these low-lying hills. Fiefs and manors in this area are sought after by lords.

**Hypsonia** – Hypsonia is a province in central Argos. The Astar River passes along the border of this province, separating it from the Plain of Pallos.

**Khorotas River** – This is Argos' major river, running from Poitain through Ophir and emptying into the sea at Messantia. Although it cannot be navigated by large vessels because of the cataracts it passes through in Poitain, some goods can be moved along it once it is joined by the Tybor. Goods being transported to Messantia from the caravan route through Ophir are placed onto barges at the Tybor-Khorotas junction. The region around the Khorotas river is Argos' most fertile area; its annual flooding brings soil from beautiful Poitain and its mountains.

**Orabono** – East of Messantia, several miles offshore of the Argossean/Shemite border, lie a pair of islands known to Argosseans as Orabono and Orinolo. The western island of Orabono is its Brother's opposite in nearly every way. Certainly the prize of the two, Orabono boasts a wide harbour on its northern shore and plentiful fruit trees and grasslands. Certainly the most important feature of Orabono is the Argossean naval base and settlement at Trabatis. Logging camps and farmlands are growing more prevalent outside the city, as the Merchant Houses begin to exploit this virgin territory. What crops and timber are not needed in Trabatis itself are exported elsewhere, generally back to Messantia. On the shallow waters off the beach lies an enormous oyster bed, which is mined for pearls. The waters are as shark-



infested as all others around the island, however, making the work extremely dangerous. Any slave who works the pearl beds for four months is freed. There are still occasional problems with crocodiles and poisonous snakes. The forests on the southern coast of Orabono are home to enormous bears, boars, leopards and sabre-toothed cats as well as several colonies of giant spiders. More information about this island can be found in *Conan: Messantia – City of Riches*.

**Orinolo** – East of Messantia, several miles offshore of the Argosian/Shemite border, lie a pair of islands known to Argosians as Orabono and Orinolo. Orinolo is very nearly inaccessible. It is ringed on the south, west and north by great crumbling cliffs, which offer no sanctuary or harbour to a ship. A ship attempting to drop anchor near one of these shores would likely be pulled toward the island and dashed against the rocks by the treacherous tides that swirl among the cliffs. Should someone manage to reach the cliffs, without falling prey to any of the perils at their base, he would find the climb all but impossible. The very stone seems rotten with the sea's erosion and firm handholds are difficult to find. For the purposes of a Climb check, these cliffs count as a slippery surface (due to their propensity for crumbling) and impose a –5 penalty on all checks. The cliffs ascend from the water to a height of anywhere between 50 and 80 feet.

On the eastern side of the island the sea slowly gives way to land in a thick, fetid swamp haunted by saltwater crocodiles, poisonous snakes, spiders the size of a man's head and worse. Ships certainly cannot reach the island by traversing the swamp. Even a small boat will run aground or become lodged on the submerged trunk of a rotten tree. Anyone attempting to reach the interior of the island by passing through the swamp will need to use both a boat and their feet to make it, as some areas are impassable to a man on foot, while others cannot accommodate a boat of any kind. Once the land finally becomes solid, it marches uphill through treacherous terrain, in a series of broken, rocky steps and cliffs to a wide plateau. More information about this island can be found in *Conan: Messantia – City of Riches*.

**Plain of Maru** – This is a flat plain of grasses around the city of Athos. The plain is located in north-eastern Argos.

**Plain of Pallos** – This fertile plain lies at the foot of the Rabirian Mountains about nine leagues north of Messantia. It lies across the Astar River from Hypsonia. It can be reached from Hypsonia through a ford in the river.

**Rabirian Mountains** – This mountain range in northern Argos forms a border between Argos and Zingara. These serrated peaks have forested crests and are broken by the Saxula pass, 'a deep cleft in the central ridge, as if made by a blow from an axe in the hands of an angry god' (L. Sprague de Camp, *Conan the Liberator*). The pass is near the Alimane

river. The rocky foothills of the Rabirian mountains are home to several villages, such as Stag's Leap. These mountains are full of precious ores and are extensively mined.

**Thunder River** – This is another important river for Argos and is a point of contention with Zingara, which covets it so it can have a port at its mouth. It was named the Thunder River for the long stretches of white-water rapids in northern Zingara and southern Bossonia. The hills and mountains in the southern stretches of the river that create the rapids also create an almost perpetual fog throughout the immense forests between the Thunder and the western coast. The port city of Napolitos sits at the river's mouth.

## IMPORTANT ARGOSSEAN URBAN CENTRES

Argos is an interesting land for a Hyborian kingdom. It is wonderfully varied. The sea-ports, especially Messantia, are cosmopolitan and liberal. In contrast, the inland provinces of Argos are peopled with more traditional, conservative farmers, craftsmen and labourers. The roads of Argos, lined with trees, fields and villages, are generally peaceful and the inland folk are friendly toward strangers. Nearly every village has an inn for travellers, most of whom are making their way to Messantia or one of the other port cities, or toward Zingara, Ophir or Aquilonia laden with trade-goods.

The cities and towns themselves often buy the freedom of their citizens. Cities that deign to be free of feudal obligation pay their lords for a charter of liberties. This payment is usually in the form of a yearly gift, often on the order of tens of thousands of silver coins or equivalent. This charter usually stipulates that everyone living in the town would be free if they lived there for more than a year. Other elements of a charter of liberties might include landholding by lease and rent as opposed to feudal tenure; freedom to wage war against neighbouring cities; owning land surrounding the city; limitations on what a feudal lord may levy in regards to taxation, resulting in limited freedom from taxation; freedom from the lord's courts, giving town courts jurisdiction; and the right to self-government.

A lord can revoke charters or refuse to create a charter. If a charter is revoked, the city reverts to the feudal lord and he then controls the city and all of its holdings and inhabitants. All feudal obligations, restrictions and justice also revert to the lord. Strong and large cities may fight to remain free, but smaller towns have difficulty sustaining a revolt against a strong feudal lord, especially one with many vassals who may collectively send waves of soldiers to secure the town.



Occasionally strong liege lords declare cities or towns within the demesne of other lords as free cities, providing them with charters. This hampers a lesser lord's ambitions by lowering his income, reducing his vassalage and forcing him to deal with a potentially rebellious city or town determined to keep its new freedom.

## MESSANTIA, CAPITAL OF ARGOS

Messantia is the capital city of Argos and is Argos' richest sea-port. It lies at the mouth of the Khorotas River. The city serves as a trading centre as well as a shipyard for much of the Hyborian world. The city's laws are designed to protect the rich and those employed by the city (such as city guards), and are often overlooked in regards to sea-rovers, especially the Barachan pirates. Here also resides King Milo of Argos and his court. Messantia is also an anchoring end of the Road of Kings and the beginning of many caravan routes into the interior nations. The main road to Tarantia first winds through the Argossean kingdom, then moves along the eastern border of Poitain. Another route to Tarantia goes northwest into the ghoulish forests of Zingara, then along the Zingaran shore of the Alimane. More information on Messantia can be found in *Conan: Messantia – City of Riches*.

**Population:** 35,400 (79% Argossean, 9% Aquilonian, 5% Meadow Shemite, 3% Black Kingdom (mostly as slaves), 2% Zingaran (free merchants mostly), 1% Zingaran (as slaves), 1% other)

**Size:** Metropolis (168 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 211 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 85 structures per acre (approx. 14,216 buildings total)

**Wealth Limit:** 1,000,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 1,770,000,000 silver coins

**Government:** Monarchy

**Income for King Milo:** 885,000 silver coins

**Religion:** Mitra

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods, especially olive oil and wine, as well as currants, grapes, figs, citrus fruit and wheat. Sheep and goat raising, textile manufacturing and fishing are secondary imports.

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Messantia has no protective wall. It relies on the sea and its navy to protect it. However, there are some 700 to 800 active soldiers in and around Messantia at any given time; they are known as Guardians.

The Patrol is Messantia's police force. From a score of stations throughout the city, the Patrol walks the streets of Messantia, keeping the peace and enforcing the law. While on duty, they move in groups of two to four, depending on the area of the city and the time of day. The Patrol numbers about 250 soldiers of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level, as well as a score or so of officers, soldiers of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> level. The commander of the Patrol, appointed by the king and who reports directly to the Consul, is known as the High Constable.

### Culture

**Cosmopolitan:** Messantia's business is international, as it sits at the junction of several major trading routes. Messantia is a hub of trade, sitting on the Road of Kings as it does. While the citizens of Messantia are mostly Hyborian commoners, they are all touched by the international scope of the city. The cosmopolitan nature of Messantia intrudes daily on the lives of the native citizens. Traders visit with tales of far-off places and tourists visit with wide-open eyes, astonished at the lurid quality of life to be found in mighty Messantia. Signs are often written in multiple languages or in basic, easy to understand designs. Most merchants and businessmen speak multiple languages to better take advantage of their customers and suppliers.

**Mercantile Mindset:** Messantians have a very mercantile mindset, a tendency to see everything in profit, loss and percentage. Messantians, even the wealthiest of them, have a reputation as misers, which is generally deserved as to them avarice is not a failing. The long tradition of trade and commerce has produced a city of shrewd businessmen who are always alert for an opportunity.

**Hard-working and Honest:** Messantians value hard work, a keen business sense and an ability to work the angles of a situation more than anything else, except possibly wealth. They value honesty in business dealings, but they value it more in their business partners than in themselves. Still, it is a fine line. Embellishment, innuendo and omission in business deals are well and good, to a point, but outright lying and cheating can poison any chance for future deals and are therefore considered taboo.

**Work the Angles:** The value placed on being able to work the angles of a situation is what has made gambling so prominent in Messantian culture. All Messantians like to think they can work those angles, whether they can or not, leading many to believe they have an edge in gambling. It is a rare Messantian who only occasionally gambles; most either gamble enthusiastically, or never gamble at all.

**Property Laws:** Messantians all have very high regard for property laws, however. Doubtless a result of their mercantile mindset and their dogmatic adherence to fair pay for fair



work, they consider theft of another man's property a terrible sin. This does not extend to canny trading which amounts to theft, nor does it extend to smuggling.

**Civic Pride:** Messantians have a strong sense of community and a large share of civic pride. They believe Messantia is, by virtue of its trade and cosmopolitan nature, among the finest cities in the world and destined to grow ever mightier with power and wealth. They take tremendous pride in their city, in its infrastructure, wealth, art and architecture, and most will gladly answer questions or provide directions to foreign visitors. Their civic pride ends at their coin purses, however. There are no charities in Messantia, no orphanages and beggars receive most of their alms from people from other lands. Even when it comes to their tithes to the cult of Mitra, Messantians are tight-fisted.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Official Government:** The King of Argos (King Milo at the default time period of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*), who rules all Argos, nominally rules the city as well, although most of the day-to-day duties fall to the Consul, whom the king appoints. The Consul is a noble appointed to run the city for a period of two years. He is in charge of the Law (Patrol and judges), Treasury (fees, taxes and tariffs) and Engineering (maintenance of all property owned by the state).

**Merchant Houses:** Most of Messantia's industry is owned and controlled by the Merchant Houses, as are many of her businesses. There are independent merchants and craftsmen in the city, but they are not free of the Houses. Guild membership is compulsory for all Messantian businesses, and as the Houses control the guilds, the dues, which are burdensome but not unbearable, go straight into the coffers of the Houses. There is some dispute over how many Merchant Houses have existed throughout Messantia's history, but fewer than 21 still stand today. Members of Merchant Houses are considered to be of noble blood, as all of them claim barons, counts and sometimes dukes throughout the nation of Argos among their number. Though the wealth of the Merchant Houses is such that they could easily forego engaging in trade and commerce, and live degenerate, indolent lives of luxury, they do not. They are the very embodiment of, and perhaps the very cause of, Argos' culture of avarice. They do not believe there is such a thing as 'enough gold'.

**The Guilds:** The guilds of Messantia were formed in response to the growing power of the Merchant Houses. They protect both merchants and consumers by regulating occupations, ensuring quality of goods and services and maintaining prices. There are now 14 guilds operating in Messantia. Though most guilds have ostentatious official names, they are rarely referred to by their full names. The guilds are:

The Brotherhood of Blacksmiths & Weaponsmiths; The Noble Association of Butchers & Slaughtermen; The Order of Caravaneers; The Exacting Brotherhood of Clockmakers; The Esteemed Association of Clothiers & Cobblers; The Hall of Finesmiths and Jewellers; The Guild of Fishermen; The Hospitable Order of Hostellers; The Perfect Order of Musicians and Instrument Makers; The Sturdy League of Porters & Wagoneers; The Sewer Workers Guild; The Worthy Order of Shipmasters; The Guild of Shipwrights; and The Honoured Brotherhood of Street Lighters & Street Sweepers.

**Order of Engineers:** Officially, the Order of Engineers is a branch of the government, but possesses a unique charter that allows it to operate independently. The Order believes itself to be the oldest organisation in Messantia, and, considering the exactitude of its records, is likely correct. The Order is responsible for maintenance of all government buildings and is hired to maintain and repair most other buildings in the city. In co-operation with the Sewer Workers Guild, it maintains the major branches of the sewer system. Lastly, it is charged with the upkeep of Messantia's wells, fountains and water pipes. The Order's prominence and secrecy have led to many theories and suspicions regarding it, and some Messantians believe it is the true power in the city, greater than the Merchant Houses or even the crown.

## ATHOS

Athos is an upland Argossean city, located on the plains of Meru, whose citizens are 'fat, richly-garbed, and cruel as fiends'. It is a decadent city where pleasure is foremost on the minds of its citizens. Athos was once ruled by a queen and is still resplendent in its fabulous wealth. It has enslaved its sister city across the river, Zotoz. The people worship the goddess Gita, an insect goddess. Red Sonja slew Queen Sortilej, a priestess of Gita. Likely another ruler was appointed by King Milo from the same House. Every year Athos sponsors a sporting event called the Games of Gita. During the time of Queen Sortilej these games were fixed, however the games are fair now. There is a large lake near Athos on the plain of Meru.

**Population:** 10,458 (79% Argossean, 9% Black Kingdom (as slaves), 5% Meadow Shemite, 3% Aquilonian, 2% Zingaran, 1% Ophirean, 1% other)

**Size:** Small City (82 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 128 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 49 structures per acre (approx. 3,986 buildings total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 78,435,000 silver coins

**Government:** Monarchy

**Income for King Milo:** 392,175 silver coins

**Religion:** Gita



**Imports:** Trade Goods, especially luxury items

**Exports:** Trade Goods, especially silver, crafts and gladiators

**Code of Honour:** None

### Fortifications and Military Strength

An average of 314 Shemite mercenaries make up much of the military strength of Athos. They do not trust the poor to guard their cities nor do they much care to do it themselves. The wealthy portion of the city has a wall surrounding it.

### Culture

**Decadent Wealth:** One of the defining aspects of Athos is the decadence of the wealthy and the strength of the impoverished (who live in the slum of Zotoz). Thus, Argosseans who are from well-off families in Athos have a Strength and Constitution maximum of 12 at 1<sup>st</sup> level. Later movements in level can go beyond the 1<sup>st</sup> level cap, however. Also, they are desensitised to the plights and needs of others, so they suffer a -2 cultural penalty to Sense Motive checks. However, anyone who is not impoverished, regardless of class, gains the noble's Wealth ability. Instead of the Argosesean racial norm, only noble is a favoured class for an Athosian Argosesean. The society is so decadent that few even bother with codes of honour.

**Strong Poor:** Athosian characters from the impoverished neighbourhoods of Zotoz have a Strength and Constitution minimum of 14, gain a +2 bonus to any one Craft or Profession skill, have a maximum Wisdom score of 10 at 1<sup>st</sup> level, may not take the noble class at 1<sup>st</sup> level and have favoured classes of only commoner and barbarian instead of the Argosesean norms. Most of the poor work in the silver mines in the hills around the plain or are renowned craftsmen. Sports and games are important pastimes for the poor of Athos. The neighbourhoods of Zotoz are treated as breeding grounds for gladiators, yet another commodity to be exploited by the wealthy.

**The Games of Gita:** The games of Gita are gladiator games in honour of Athos's demon-goddess. They fell into disfavour for long years but were brought back by Queen Sortilej several decades ago. She decreed that Athosians must win, and any Zotozian who won was to be slain. A red-haired champion came and killed the sorcerous Queen and decreed the games be fair from that day forward.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Official Government:** Athos has a charter giving the city freedom from the Argosesean king's direct rule. Athosian rulers often call themselves kings or queens, reflecting that freedom from the usual feudal obligation. They pay a yearly

gift to the king of Argos, as stipulated in the charter, but otherwise are not answerable to him. The ruler is usually a high priest or priestess of Gita, however, Athos is currently ruled by Lord Mikal, a former Zotozian who found wealth while adventuring with a red-haired Hyrkanian woman and returned to become ruler.

**Merchant Houses:** The families who control the silver mines have a lot of influence here, as their wealth is the wealth of the city. Although the king of Argos technically owns the mines, he allows various lords and Houses to control them for a payment.

### Layout of Athos

The turrets and towers of the city are made of ivory and many of its domes are gilded in gold. Its population wears jewels from Khitai and its streets are perfumed with oils from Vendhya to provide visual and olfactory pleasures to those who wander the city. Across the river, the slums and shanties of Zotoz can be found.

### Districts of Athos

Athos is divided into two distinct districts to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods. An ornate bridge connects the two districts.

❖ **Zotoz, City of Struggle:** Zotoz is a slum of Athos, lying on a small river across from the city of Athos. The impoverished populace of Zotoz are physically stronger than their masters but, due to their long struggles in abject poverty, are weak in spirit. Zotoz is a maze of craftsman districts, slums, shanties and bazaars all mixed together. The dwellings of Zotoz are mud huts for the most part, and a grim grey pall hovers over the entire district. The people here have a better life now that Lord Mikal is ruling Athos and they have grown as a people and as a town. Along the river is the river district, which has mills and other river-powered industries. 9,592 people live and suffer amid 3,534 structures. Zotoz occupies 67 acres of Athos' area.

❖ **Athos, City of Wealth:** Athos proper is the wealthy portion of the city. It is protected by a wall and is beautiful to behold. An average of 866 wealthy adults live among 452 structures in 15 acres of land. The Theatre of Monsters is one of the more opulent theatres in the city. One of the most massive structures is a golden arena that nearly puts to shame the one in Messantia. It is surrounded by animal-headed gods, including an elephant-headed man with a pot-belly holding out his arms in an invocation, holding a holy-water sprinkler. The arena is outside the city walls on the plain of Meru, but is not far beyond the walls.



## BEZFARDA

Bezfarða is a manor near a tangled forest where rumours claim a unicorn lives. Decades old tales tell of a red-haired devil-woman who lives with the unicorn. The manor has 227 acres to it (173 acres are arable) and a single hamlet. For industry, the Bezfarða manor has three beehives, herds of livestock (including oxen, horses, cows, pigs, capons, sheep and geese), a gristmill, a millpond, a small slate quarry (yielding about 1,000 tons of slate annually), cash crop farms (flax, hemp and lumber) and staple crop farms.

**Population:** 345 (96% Argossean, 2% Aquilonian, 1% Zingaran, 1% other)

**Average Population Density:** Two adults per arable acre

**Average Number of Structures:** Approx. 160 structures total

**Wealth Limit:** 1,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 17,250 silver coins

**Government:** Monarchy

**Income for the Lord of the Manor:** 173 silver coins

**Religion:** Gita

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Honey, lumber, flax, hemp, slate

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

The lord of this manor can usually afford ten men-at-arms of some sort.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Official Government:** An Argossean nobleman controls this manor. He maintains a small personal staff and a manorial administrative staff, including a chamberlain, steward, barber and huntsmen. The lord of the manor controls other manors as well and is not always on hand.

## EIDORAN (RUIN)

Eidoran is a ruin on a plateau in the mountains of eastern Argos. During Stygia's reign over the lands of Argos, the city was built as a city where sorcerers could learn and summon demons from Hell. The first followers of Mitra bound the demons in stone and laid waste to the city. The followers of Mitra guard the ruins so that sorcerers cannot arrive and unbind the demons. The demons litter the city like statues of pink stone. Columns and stark temples cover the plateau.

## NAPOLITOS

Napolitos is a powerful, chaotic city situated at the mouth of the Thunder River. It is a growing trade city, a fact that infuriates Argos' rival, Zingara. At one time Koth attempted an invasion of Argos using this bustling harbour as its main

thrust. Napolitos is an overcrowded city and a major seaport. It has noisy shipyards and flourishing industries. The streets are where life happens in Napolitos. Poverty is shockingly on display, and the streets are loud and dirty. Wagons and mounts weave around each other as pedestrians bellow out their harsh Argossean dialect at the drivers and each other. It is an exhilarating city, restless and ever moving.

**Population:** 17,112 (42% Argossean, 20% Zingaran (some as slaves, some as free), 18% Black Kingdom (slaves mostly), 10% Aquilonian, 7% Meadow Shemite, 3% other)

**Size:** Large City (106 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 161 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 67 structures per acre (approx. 7,450 structures total)

**Wealth Limit:** 400,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 342,240,000 silver coins

**Income for the Ruler:** 855,600 silver coins

**Government:** Free City

**Religion:** Mitra

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods, especially porcelain

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Due to invasions from the sea and from Zingara, Napolitos is a walled city. 171 Shemite mercenaries are usually housed in the city, and the Guardians number around 342 soldiers.

### Culture

**Mitran:** The city is resolutely Mitran, not nearly as forgiving of foreign religions as its rival, Messantia. Virtually all of its male population is indoctrinated in the mysteries of Mitra, up to the fourth mystery.

**Life Lived on the Streets:** Foods are eaten out on the street, not inside shadowed taverns. Virtually everything happens in the meandering, chaotic streets, from business deals, industry, prostitution and any other aspect of life. Abject poverty rubs elbows with intense wealth and few display their wealth openly due to the carefree and rampant thievery.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Official Government:** An Argossean nobleman controls Napolitos as a town lord. He staffs the city council and provides power to the patriciate. The town lord controls other manors as well and is not always on hand. The municipal head of the city is the city council, the rights of which are spelled out in the city charter. The council has the right to tax, including poll taxes, gate taxes, luxury taxes, war taxes and so on. The council is also in charge of forced loans (a practice





of making merchants give loans to the city when needed) and paying the town lord for his continued support of the city charter.

**Merchant and Craftsman Guilds:** The guilds of Napolitos were formed in response to the growing power of the Merchant Houses. They protect both merchants and consumers by regulating occupations, ensuring quality of goods and services and maintaining prices. There are now over 40 guilds operating in Napolitos. They are: Architects & Engineers, Armourers & Locksmiths, Artists, Bakers, Bookbinders & Papermakers, Bowyer/Fletchers, Brewers, Distillers & Vintners, Brothel Keepers, Builders, Butchers, Casters, Chandlers, Clay & Stone Workers, Clerks & Scribes, Clothing & Cobblers, Coopers, Cordwainers, Dyers & Weavers, Financial Transactors, Fishmongers, Forgers & Smiths, Furriers, Glass Workers, Harness Makers & Saddlers, Hostellers, Jewellers, Launderers, Map Makers & Surveyors, Mariners, Medical, Merchants, Music & Performers, Professional Guilds, Scholastic, Shipwrights, Skinners & Tanners, Stable

Keepers, Tinkers, Watermen, Wheelwrights, Wicker Workers & Wood Workers.

**Camorra House:** There is a large criminal family in Napolitos, the Camorra family. This family makes criminal behaviour stable and profitable. This family also cracks down on unauthorised or even overly brutal criminal behaviour.

### Districts of Napolitos

Napolitos is divided, unofficially, into a number of different regions to make it more manageable:

- ✦ **Shanty Towns:** Several acres of run-down homes and shacks thrown up outside Napolitos's walls comprise small shanty towns, including the districts of Stregare and Mostrogon. There are no roads or streets, merely muddy paths. Water is drawn from the moat. Nearly 800 ramshackle homes and buildings can be found here, providing shelter to over 1,120 adults.
- ✦ **Slum Wards:** Inside the walls are three slum wards, each around six acres in size, boasting a total of 1,276 wattle



and daub or wooden tenements to house the city's 2,396 poorest labourers and immigrants, not counting the teeming hordes of children and orphans. The three wards are named Senza, Profumi and Piratapatria. The city cemeteries are in these wards. Most of the poor live in one-room, windowless houses.

❖ **Gate Wards:** Five of the six massive city gates are the main entries into the bustling gate wards of Napolitos, where traders line up to enter the city as sellers hawk their wares and vendors sell food on sticks. Only the market ward has more activity than this vibrant section of Napolitos. Inspectors and tax collectors swarm through the crowds as they enter the city. Guilds purchase goods from foreign merchants in the market wards here.

- **Ponente Canshello** is the western gate for the trade route to Zingara and the villas of the wealthy. Higher quality wares are sold here.
- **Tuono Canshello** is the eastern gate near the Thunder River.
- **Sovrano Canshello** is the liege lord's gate.
- **Fumo Canshello** is the southernmost gate.
- **Maga Canshello** is the newest gate just north of Fumo Canshello. It is used by merchants wanting to store goods in Immagaz prior to shipping overseas.

❖ **Market Ward:** Not many people live in the five market wards of Napolitos. Instead, wealthier shops, guild houses, the Exalted Napolitosian Mitraeum, pavilions, merchant offices and trading stalls are located there. The market ward is the main market and teems with warehouses, shops, offices and fountains. These markets have 576 structures and 1,242 residents working them. Public trials, executions and festivals take place in the main market. The various markets are specialised and include a vegetable market, a horse market, a wood market, a wool market, a grain market, a spice market, a prostitute market, a slave market (rare in Argos, but Napolitos has one) and a cloth market.

❖ **Thunder River Wards:** This river ward resembles docks, with many warehouses, offices and shops to accommodate trade. Several watermills operate here. The guilds buy and sell goods to foreign merchants here. This ward covers 12 acres along the length of the Thunder River on either side of the river. People dump their waste, personal or industrial, into the river here and the wards are extremely crowded, smelly and noisy. 744 buildings line the narrow, twisting lanes. The Thunder River wards are home to 1,632 people. The wards are named Tuonomulino, Versatmulino, Controisla, Schinog and Controtuono.

❖ **Craftsman Wards:** There are several craftsman wards in the city. There is a total of 1,722 workshops, homes and warehouses devoted to the craftsmen of Napolitos and 4,667 craftsmen, journeymen and apprentices. There is a cobbler ward, a furniture maker ward, a furrier ward and several olive-press wards. Other craftsman wards in Napolitos include basket makers, carpenters, parchment makers, potters, wheelwrights and jewellers.

- **Ponentat:** This ward has mostly cobblers, furniture makers, furriers and olive-workers.
- **Cenerat:** This ward has basket makers, carpenters, parchment makers, potters, wheelwrights and toymakers.
- **Mezzat:** This ward has craftsmen devoted to ship building.
- **Versat:** This ward has jewellers, masons, chandlers, coopers, silversmiths, saddlers and spurriers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, artists, leatherworkers, buckmakers, cutlers, fullers, armourers, sculptors, tapestry makers, bookbinders, weaponsmiths and vestment makers.
- **Frehgat:** This ward has bakers, soapmakers, tanners, distillers and dye makers.
- **Stregospizio:** This ward has a wide variety of poorer quality or foreign craftsmen.

❖ **Mezzogiorna:** This ward houses the administration buildings of Napolitos, some of the largest buildings in the city, including the council building, the duke's courts, two castles and record-keeping buildings as well as homes for the city's civic administrators. This ward has 328 structures and keeps 703 aldermen, bankers, historians, judges, librarians, moneychangers, pawnbrokers and tax collectors. This district also has the best shipyard.

❖ **Military Ward:** Unusual in most cities, Napolitos does host a military district to house its mercenary armies, giving them room to practise and live. This ward is essentially two fortified castles and each has its own mess hall, market, laundresses, gardens and blacksmiths, all for the use of the soldiers and mercenaries. The ward also employs healers, carpenters, armourers and a pair of bookkeepers. This area has a parade ground and stables as well. The soldiers also have their own shrine to Mitra. While Aquilonian officers, usually minor nobles, are given three or four rooms to live in, the regular infantry have much more drab and uncomfortable accommodation, crammed into barracks that are small, poorly built, badly ventilated and generally over-crowded. This ward covers five acres of land and has 270 buildings. Including merchants



and support personnel, this ward houses 725 people. This district is comprised of Cenere Castle and Fumo Castle, both built by Zingarans in ages long past.

❖ **Merchant Wards:** These wards house the merchants and the merchant guilds with shops, warehouses and offices. 1,016 merchants live and work in these wards, which include Immagaz, Ponengaz and Sovragaz.

❖ **Wealthy Villas:** This ward covers 28 acres of land and boasts the largest buildings, the widest and cleanest streets and the Napolitos Castle, built on the highest point in the city. Here is concentrated the aristocracy and their palaces and mansions. 400 structures fill this expanse of land, which is home to 595 noblemen and their servants and labourers.

## SKRANOS

Skranos is a fortress and town built high in the green Rabirian mountains. It is built of three concentric walls around a central square with 24-foot thick walls. A herd of mammoths is maintained in the centre. The fortress-city is home to some 300 warriors. The ground is fertile, with clear streams and green valleys. Women often try to escape the depredations of its lords and warriors, so they are often kept chained.

**Population:** 3,450 (96% Argossean, 4% other)

**Size:** Large Town (26 acres)

**Average Population Density:** 132 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** Approx. 2,645 structures total

**Wealth Limit:** 30,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 5,175,000 silver coins

**Government:** Monarchy

**Income for the Lord of the Manor:** 51,750 silver coins

**Religion:** Mitra

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** None

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Bowmen are stationed along the lengths of all three squares of the fortress. Also, about six woolly mammoths, found in a lost valley of Corinthia, are trained for use in battle. The mammoths go mad with blood lust and rage if brought in the presence of horses. There are about 300 warriors here, mostly borderers. The town is hard to reach because of all the fertile ravines, cliffs and canyons in the mountains where it is built.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Official Government:** An Argossean nobleman named Suumaro controls this manor. He maintains a small personal staff and a manorial administrative staff, including a chamberlain, steward, barber and huntsmen. An albino Hyborian (perhaps a Hyperborean) is the master of the mammoths. Suumaro's mother was a sorcerous and he dabbles in sorcery as a result.

## THESSALIA

Thessalia lies in northern Argos near the Zingaran border, and is part of Argos' olive-growing region. It is a manor that contains a small town of the same name.

**Population:** 1,345 (96% Argossean, 2% Zingaran, 1% Aquilonian, 1% other)

**Average Population Density:** Two adults per arable acre

**Average Number of Structures:** Approx. 160 structures total

**Wealth Limit:** 8,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 538,000 silver coins

**Government:** Monarchy

**Income for the Lord of the Manor:** 5,380 silver coins

**Religion:** Mitra

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Olives and olive products

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

The lord of this manor can usually afford 40 men-at-arms of some sort.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Official Government:** An Argossean nobleman controls this manor. He maintains a small personal staff and a manorial administrative staff, including a chamberlain, steward, barber and huntsmen. The lord of the manor controls other manors as well and is not always on hand.

## TORTAGE, THE CAPITAL OF THE BARACHANS

Tortage is the only major town among the Barachan Islands mentioned in the Saga. It is a roaring port-of-call filled with pirates, loot and blood-shed. It is a safe haven for most pirates. Tortage was founded over 200 years ago. The town receives fresh water not only from rainfall but also from a lake high in the mountainous island called High Lake.



**Population:** 1,516 (80% Argossean, 20% other)  
**Size:** Small Town (37.5 acres of land)  
**Average Population Density:** 40 adults per acre  
**Average Number of Structures:** 20 structures per acre (approx. 749 buildings total)  
**Wealth Limit:** 8,000 silver coins  
**Ready Cash:** 600,000 silver coins  
**Government:** Anarchy  
**Religion:** No official religion.  
**Imports:** Trade Goods (usually stolen) (Tortage can store up to nine cargos)  
**Exports:** Trade Goods (usually stolen)  
**Code of Honour:** None

**Geography:** Part of the Barachan Island archipelago. There are dangerous reefs making navigation difficult.

**Legend:** Tortage is its own legend. Other legends tend to centre around the specific pirates who used to visit, including Tranicos, Bêlit, Amra and others.

**Ancients:** Not far from Tortage, at a spot where the sea shelf drops into the ocean's depths, there is an underwater Atlantean ruin guarded by a demon. Those able to swim that deep must make a Terror check (DC 15) when approaching.

**Current:** Several pirate bands are always in harbour at any given time.

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Tortage is a harbour among rocky cliffs. Its main military units are the pirate ships floating in its bay. Another fortification is the island structure itself. Reefs and other dangers lurk just below the surface; navigators who do not know the way are likely to get snagged and never make it into the harbour. The rocky cliffs prevent ships from mooring anywhere around the main island and attacking overland. Also, there is an old fort in the town, the location of the original pirate settlement built over 200 years ago. The permanent residents have formed their own militia who garrison the fort. Pirates may hole up here if necessary. Also, the town itself is not without some protection. The roofs of the houses are mostly slate, preventing ships from firing flaming arrows into town and burning it down. Most buildings in Tortage have shutters and iron-grills over the windows as well. One warship, manned by militia, patrols the water. A Barachan pirate must make a Diplomacy check (DC 5) to gain access to the port peacefully.

### Culture

Tortage is the main port of call for the Barachan pirates and its culture is much like that found on a Barachan pirate ship, including a charter. Newcomers to Tortage are allowed to wander as they will but are not allowed a voice in city affairs until they have served a term in the militia or owned and

operated a business in Tortage for at least a year. Disputes in the city are handled through duels. Most duels are over with first blood. Business owners and/or ship captains may also arbitrarily judge disputes occurring in their presence if they choose to do so. Tavern owners often do this to avoid capital damage to their property and/or personnel. Anyone challenging the judgement of a business owner or ship captain will likely be attacked by any and all around them.

**Thievery:** Drunks sleep openly in the streets during good weather. Few Barachans will rob a fellow pirate while in Tortage. Those caught doing so are usually dealt with harshly. Of course, this is merely a guideline, not a hard and fast rule covered in the town's charter, which all Barachans tend to follow in order to be welcome here. The seven slums of Tortage do not even attempt to follow this guideline, so most pirates avoid the slums.

### Administration and Power Centres

This is a lawless and chaotic city with no real centre of power save the Tortage Charter.

**The Barachan Pirates and the Tortage Charter:** The Barachan pirates adhere to a strict charter signed centuries ago by the original founders of the city. In order to maintain good relations with Tortage, as neutral a port as any in the Hyborian Age, pirates must agree to follow the terms of the Tortage Charter, which prohibits pirates from stealing from debauched and/or carousing pirates while on shore. Also, every ship's quarrels are ended while on shore. Thus, rival captains and crews can safely come to shore without fear of an ambush. Pirates who would attack each other on the open sea may revel and carouse together here. Those who break the charter are usually handled harshly by other crews and/or the permanent inhabitants of the town.

### Layout of Tortage

Tortage is a pirate port whose crooked, cobbled alleys are lined with alehouses, brothels and inns. The streets follow the lay of the land, which is rocky and broken. Tortage is not a totally flat town. It rises from the docks up into the rocky heights of the island. Palm trees grow all over the island, including the tops of the cliffs surrounding most of Tortage. The city has a natural radial structure emanating from the central docks. The cliffs form a horseshoe around Tortage and parts of the town are built upon the ledges and ramparts of these cliffs.

### Districts of Tortage

Tortage is segregated into sprawling wards and districts to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods.





❖ **Waterfront Districts:** The harbour of Tortage lies along Cachelot Cove, the only natural harbour on the island. The waterfront district is nine acres in size. 369 people live and work here amid 160 structures, including tavern workers, prostitutes and pirates waiting for a berth. Tortage is a Class 3 dock (see *Conan: Pirate Isle*). Whaling ships as well as pirate ships are constantly putting in and setting out with the tides. The nine sections of this district are named after the main streets, such as the Water Street district, the Alios Street district and the Bombasine Street district. A few massive mansions can be found here, the homes of rare pirates who actually retire wealthy. The town's main square and port market can be found in the waterfront district known as Stubb. The other five districts are Helek, Pegleg's 'ome, S'th-end, Grelb Street and Tortage Main. Tortage Main, the smallest district, is where the upper class citizenry usually choose to dwell. Many of these districts are devoted to entertainment and the support of the pirate 'industry.'

The waterfront districts are the staging points of the pirate trade. Goods and people flow through here constantly. The waterfront districts are home to travellers and local workers. These are the most culturally diverse sections of Tortage. Many merchants will only walk these streets with a small force of armed guards to protect them from ruffians and press gangs. Life here revolves around the rhythm of the tides. When the tide comes in, labourers and crewmen are busily unload and move cargo from the incoming ships. When the tide goes out, the same people bustle about to reload and re-supply ships that are leaving. Warehouses for the storage of incoming cargoes, inns, taverns and businesses devoted to the interests of wharf labourers and sailors abound here.

- **The Sign of the Skull:** This tavern is considered the best remedy for loneliness in Tortage, for this location is said to sport the most numerous and most lovely girls in the entire town. Located in Pegleg's 'ome, it is run by a portly man named Pythios. A former pirate, he is bald, but sports a long moustache. The tavern is a gable-ended



building decorated with old whaling lances and deformed harpoons, most of which have a story attached. Swords and implements of death can also be found hanging on the walls, also with stories known by the sea-salts who regularly imbibe here. The tavern has rooms available but rare are the times when a room is actually available. Unless extra silver is given to Pythios, odds are that most pirates will have to share beds with strangers or sleep in the common room.

❖ **Market Districts:** The waterfront streets give way to the crowded streets of the market district, six acres of wide rocky cliffs rising above the waterfront districts that is primarily accessed by a street leading from the main square in Stubb. Another road, winding through the shallow cliffs here, leads to Blackburnh (another craft district). Here are many of the storage facilities of Tortage. The market districts are divided into four sections: Wharfton, Sophbury, Bass'm and Ghorgal. The districts are built on layers of the cliffs with ramps and ladders connecting the districts. Some of the structures are carved directly into the cliffs with terraces serving as streets. The buildings here tend to have a lot of windows. Pirates may buy and sell their stolen cargoes here or outfit their ship and crews. Wharfton, the lowest level, is mostly a collection of general stores. Sophbury is where brokers deal with illicit cargoes and charter ships. Bass'm is a fish and food market. Ghorgal is the highest market district on the cliff and is primarily devoted to the slave trade. 252 permanent residents work among 126 structures. There are tunnels and caverns where additional buildings and darker markets can be found.

❖ **Slum Clusters:** A total of four acres of the town is devoted to housing the poor and destitute, often escaped slaves and disabled pirates. These four acres are divided into seven non-contiguous clusters dotting the town. 156 persons nestled amid 88 structures reside here, usually working their own crafts and trades or doing nothing. These are often the homes of severely wounded ex-pirates. Disabled Argossean pirates are usually dropped off in Tortage with three shares. Once the shares are spent (usually in colossal debauches), the disabled pirates find themselves living lives of desperation in one of these slums. Legless, armless and eyeless men litter the filthy streets and hovels here. Most of the houses and buildings are white-washed stucco with slate roofs. Most pirates avoid these destitute sections of Tortage, for the thieves here would love nothing better than to take the wealth they perceive the successful pirates as having. These clusters are referred to as the 'bad end' of whatever district they are attached to. For example, the slum cluster of Sophbury is simply called 'Sophbury

Badend'. Ghorgal Badend is probably the worst and most destitute of the slum clusters.

❖ **Craftsman Wards:** There are three craftsman wards in Tortage. The first, called Cafbury, is devoted to ship-craft. The port has the means for dry-docking and repairs. Tortage is a Class 3 dock (see *Conan: Pirate Isles*). Skilled shipwrights make their homes in these eight acres called Cafbury. There are a total of 160 workshops, homes and warehouses devoted to the shipwrights of Tortage and 320 craftsmen, journeymen and apprentices. Another six acres of the city are devoted to the other craftsmen of the city, including blacksmiths, coopers, seamstresses, rope-makers and sail-makers. This craft ward, called Blackburnh, is home to 246 craftsmen, journeymen and apprentices working among 108 structures. The third craftsman ward, Tinks'ere, is but an acre in size and is located a short distance from the docks but away from the bulk of the town. 30 workers nestled among 17 structures perform laundry, tanning and other odorous occupations.

❖ **The Old Fort:** The old fort is built on a cliff overlooking the wharves on the opposite end of Tinks'ere. Built on a three acre area of ledge, the old fort garrisons a revolving group of 123 militia men chosen from the citizenry. 48 structures provide protection and quarters for this militia. A great bell-tower and light-house are built in the centre of the fort. The bell is sounded to give warning of enemy ships or fleets.

## TRABATIS

Founded 20 years ago, the settlement of Trabatis on Orabono is the clearest sign of Argossean supremacy on these two islands. King Milo ordered the construction of the settlement and its shipyards as a base for his mighty navy, from which his ships could easily patrol Argos' eastern waters and protect the Argossean claim on the Brothers.

**Population:** 3,000 (96% Argossean, 4% other)

**Size:** Large Town (26 acres)

**Average Population Density:** 132 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** Approx. 2,645 structures total

**Wealth Limit:** 30,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 4,500,000 silver coins

**Government:** Monarchy

**Income for the Lord of the Manor:** 45,000 silver coins

**Religion:** Mitra

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** None



## Fortifications and Military Strength

Trabatis has grown quickly in the 20 years since its founding, and is now home to some 3,000 sailors, slaves and civilians. Fifteen of Argos' great warships call this their home, as do almost two score of smaller support ships. It is now the primary training site for sailors in the Argossean navy, who drill endlessly in the harbour, on the beach and in the island's interior learning the skills that make them some of the most feared sailors in the world.

## Administration and Power Centres

**Governor:** The entire settlement of Trabatis, and by extension the entire island of Orabono, is governed locally by Captain Meus Fenthenes, appointed to the task three years ago by King Milo. However, there are limits on his power, as Trabatis is officially the property of the crown and is considered part of Messantia. Though Captain Fenthenes has full authority over all the military men in Trabatis, he must abide to some degree by Messantian law in regards to the civilian population. Aiding him in this are a single judge and two wardens, dispatched from Messantia for a six-month term of service on the island. Unlike Messantia itself, Trabatis has no Patrolmen and sailors are detailed to police duty while their ship is in port to enforce all laws. Most sailors are tremendously displeased with this task and are apt to vent their frustration on anyone they catch in commission of a crime. The legal code in Trabatis is identical to that of Messantia.

**Merchant Houses:** The Merchant Houses themselves are strongly represented in Trabatis. When King Milo first decided to found Trabatis, he rightly expected resistance from the Merchant Houses, who saw it as another example of Milo gathering more power to himself. By declaring the settlement to be legally part of Messantia, however, he gained the eager co-operation of the Houses. Just as in Messantia, the Merchant Houses enforce guild membership on all businesses in Landward, and they have quickly snatched up every opportunity for import or export on the island.

## Layout of Trabatis

The settlement is officially divided into two sections, one for the military and one for the civilians. The two halves have no official names, but are commonly known among the residents of Trabatis as 'The Deck' for the military and 'Landward' for the civilians. The division is physical as well as official; a long wooden fence runs between the two halves, pierced by two lightly guarded gates.

Unlike the various prefects of Messantia, this division has a real legal and useful purpose. Civilians, even the families of the rare married sailor, are

not allowed 'on Deck' as it is called, and the sailors are not allowed to remain in Landward after midnight (though an exception to this rule is made for a married sailor).

The settlement of Trabatis begins even before the water's edge in a series of wharves and quays berthing the island's warships and fishing craft. Like the rest of the settlement, these wharves are kept strictly separate. The military side boasts docking space for four score naval vessels. The civilian side is less impressive, but still has sufficient space for the island's fishermen and the ships of the Merchant Houses that dock here regularly. The harbour itself is deep and relatively still. There is no beach as such; the land drops away underwater in a submerged cliff, leaving just a few feet of rock above the tides.

## Districts of Trabatis

Trabatis is segregated into sprawling wards and districts to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods.

- ✦ **The Deck:** The eastern side of the harbour is the Deck, devoted to maintaining, training and housing the officers, sailors and slaves of the Argossean warships docked here. It is a place of utilitarian billets, slave kennels and storehouses. The shipwright facilities here are rudimentary, sufficient only to ensure a damaged ship is seaworthy enough to make the voyage to Messantia's Freecove for full repairs.
- ✦ **Landward:** Landward occupies the western side of the harbour and consists mostly of a chaotic jumble of poorly constructed buildings. The majority of Landward's businesses are taverns, brothels and gambling halls, packed with a constantly-rotating clientele of off-duty sailors, traders and even Barachan Pirates, who are tolerated here as well as in Messantia.
- ✦ **The Crag:** The most dominant feature of Trabatis, without a doubt, is the massive, hulking fortress perched on a granite cliff some 100 feet above the settlement itself. Assembled in 13 years of feverish effort by the Order of Engineers and an untold number of slaves, this towering fastness is known simply as the Crag. From here, Captain Fenthenes rules Trabatis, and it is in the Crag that all trials are held and all prisoners incarcerated. The storerooms underneath the granite fortress hold literally tonnes of food and fresh water is drawn up from a well in the Crag's centre. The size and provisions in the fortress would allow it to shelter the entire population of Trabatis for as long as three months.



## VENZIA

Venzia is a seaport near Napolitos that has canals. The avarice of its merchants puts gods of greed to shame.

**Population:** 13,245 (42% Argossean, 20% Zingaran (some as slaves, some as free), 18% Black Kingdom (slaves mostly), 10% Aquilonian, 7% Meadow Shemite, 3% other)

**Size:** Large City (26 acres)

**Average Population Density:** 132 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** Approx. 2,645 structures total

**Wealth Limit:** 30,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 4,500,000 silver coins

**Government:** Monarchy

**Income for the Lord of the Manor:** 45,000 silver coins

**Religion:** Mitra

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** None

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Venzia has a fleet of over 3,000 merchant ships and almost all of them can quickly be converted into warships or military transports. Venzia's rulers requires Venzian merchant ships to carry crossbows and javelins, as well as armour, and any merchant passengers are expected to fight if necessary. A reserve fleet of 25 warships is always on duty around Venzia. Citizens of the city are chosen by lot to be rowers for the ships and debtors can work off their debts by serving as rowers on these ships. The families of rowers are supported by the others in the district the rowers come from for the duration of the rower's absence. Constant boat races keep most of the citizens skilled in rowing.

Crossbow practice is enforced among all citizens of Venzia (Venzian Argosseans lose their proficiency with the greatsword, replacing it with a crossbow proficiency). Young noblemen form companies together and serve on war-galleys and armed merchant ships.

Venzia does not use mercenaries as most of Argos does. Instead, they recruit from among their own. All males between seventeen and sixty are registered, along with their weapons. In emergencies, companies of twelve are formed from these registries. The latest register claims that 8,000 Venzian men are available to bear arms in the service of the city. Noblemen and wealthy merchants are made into cavalymen and commoners are formed into infantry. Some of these companies are somewhat permanent and are hired out to allied cities and manors as mercenary units. Venzian soldiers are among the best in the world because of the compulsory training. All Venzian Argosseans have a +1

racial bonus to attack bonus to any one weapon (chosen at character generation) because of the compulsory and general military training. Venzia expects all citizens, noble and common alike, to bear arms and serve the city. No citizen can join a foreign mercenary group without the government's consent.

Noblemen command the companies, but no noble can command more than two dozen men. Twenty civilian men chosen for their age and wisdom command the nobles. A civilian adjutant (a scholar or scholar-soldier) accompanies each and every army to make sure the soldiers behave and do not attempt to conquer Venzia for themselves in some sort of revolt.

### Culture

**Money Matters:** Money is the most important thing to the citizens of Venzia, being a city of merchants. They accept all foreign currencies, so long as the coins are of quality. They also produce their own coinage. They have become so skilled at minting coins that they serve as minters for most of Argos and for several other minor nations as well. Money and profit tends to be overriding concerns in Venzia; even in military matters, money is an important consideration. If a military operation is deemed too expensive or risky, either in money or lives, then the military action is not performed.

**Religion Does Not Matter:** Venzia, although predominantly Mitran, is not fanatical about religion. Never in the history of the city has anyone ever been executed for religious heresy. So long as money is to be made, of what importance is religion? Apparently, it is of no importance to the Venzians.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Official Government:** An Argossean duke controls Venzia as a town lord. The duke is an elective office and he holds the position, in theory, for life. However, discredited dukes or those who are political failures often resign the office when political pressure from their aristocratic peers is presented. Retired dukes usually go into seclusion with the clergy. They staff the city council and provide power to the patriciate. The duke is elected by the aristocracy. The elected duke then leaves his palace home to take residence in the Duke's Palace. He is forbidden to leave the city and may not own land in foreign kingdoms. For the rest of his life he is basically confined to the Duke's Palace. One of the duke's ceremonial duties is the annual marriage of Venzia to the sea. A duke cannot name his own successor.

**Great Council:** The municipal head of the city is the city council, the rights of which are spelled out in the city charter. The council has



the right to tax, including poll taxes, gate taxes, luxury taxes, war taxes and so on. They are also in charge of forced loans (a practice of making merchants give loans to the city when needed) and paying the town lord for his continued support of the city charter.

**Merchant and Craftsman Guilds:** The guilds of Venzia were formed in response to the growing power of the Merchant Houses. They protect both merchants and consumers by regulating occupations, ensuring quality of goods and services and maintaining prices. There are now over 40 guilds operating in Venzia. They are: Architects & Engineers, Armourers & Locksmiths, Artists, Bakers, Bookbinders & Papermakers, Bowyer/Fletchers, Brewers, Distillers & Vintners, Brothel Keepers, Builders, Butchers, Casters, Chandlers, Clay & Stone Workers, Clerks & Scribes, Clothing & Cobblers, Coopers, Cordwainers, Dyers & Weavers, Financial Transactors, Fishmongers, Forgers & Smiths, Furriers, Glass Workers, Harness Makers & Saddlers, Hostellers, Jewellers, Launderers, Map Makers & Surveyors, Mariners, Medical, Merchants, Music & Performers, Professional Guilds, Scholastic, Shipwrights, Skinners & Tanners, Stable Keepers, Tinkerers, Watermen, Wheelwrights, Wicker Workers and Wood Workers.

### Layout of Venzia

Venzia is a city of canals. The city is built on an archipelago of more than 100 islands. The canals serve the function of roads, and small craft are always available to carry people from one place to another.

### Districts of Venzia

Venzia is segregated into sprawling wards and districts to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods. Each district is managed by its own procurator, who reports to the duke.

✦ **Canarijeo:** Canarijeo is the northernmost district of Venzia. It is the second largest district in the canal city and is where most of the labouring classes live, although it has its palaces along the canals as well. It functions primarily as a craftsman ward, with mills and other industries dominating it. There are two Mitraeums in this district.

- **The Island of the Dead:** Slightly to the northeast of Venzia is the cemetery island of the city. It is a popular place for fishermen and visitors to the city. A Mitraeum is built on the island. The dead are brought to the island on special boats. After a few years of burial, the bones are dug up and placed in ossary boxes in another part of the cemetery because of shortage of space.

- **The Golden House:** The Golden House is a gilt home and one of the most ornate palaces in Venzia. It is built around an inner courtyard but the opulence of the exterior provides no hint of this. It is the home of a prominent Merchant House known as the Condarini family.

- **Zingaran Slum:** There is an extensive slum for displaced Zingarans running from the civil wars.

✦ **Vanpuhl:** This is the smallest district and is the city's main market. The western half is renowned for its temples (mostly to Mitra or to various saints) while the eastern half has several palaces and smaller houses belonging to the merchants and the powerful Merchant Houses.

- **Rialto Mitraeum:** This is the oldest Mitraeum in the city.

✦ **Dursadora:** The district of Dursadora is the highest district in the city and includes two small islands. It is an expensive area with many palaces and beautiful landmarks.

✦ **Vanmur:** Located in the heart of the city, Vanmur is the location of the government, including the Duke's Palace. It is also the location of theatres and other forms of entertainment. It also includes a Mitraeum that angers most of the Hyborian world – it is one of the most ornate temples in the world; indeed, many Venzian ships when they return from far off trips bring back pieces of temples and palaces stolen from other lands to add to this temple of Mitra, giving it a foreign look.

✦ **Crocamur:** Located in the northwest, this area is swampy and is basically a small shanty-town at this point. Still, there is one palace, built by a Merchant House who hopes to drain the area and make it more marketable, and a Mitraeum.

✦ **Castle District:** This district is the largest of the districts and houses the immense shipyards of Venzia. It has the largest naval complex in the entire seacoast west of the Black Kingdoms. It has Class 4 docks (see *Conan: Pirate Isles* for definitions of the dock classes), so it can dry-dock virtually any craft.



# Life in Zingara

## CONSPIRACY AND TREASON

**ZINGARA IS A** land torn apart and ruined by civil war. Historically a king ruled the land out of Kordava, but when the elegant, bejewelled and hosed princelings and nobles, who usually fought petty battles among themselves and the Poitians, rose up and destroyed themselves and their noble kingdom in flame and blood, the refined swordsmanship of the Zingarans unfortunately turned against itself. At its peak, Zingara had a population of approximately 20 million people. Today, that number is considerably less, about 8 million. The kingdom is faltering, unable to support itself due to burnt and salted fields, destroyed armies and crushed castles. The ghouls of the central region have begun to prowl all over the region, even in the north, toward the Poitanian border.

Once the proud possessor of a major shipping industry, Zingara is an exotic land that exists between the Pictish Wilderness, the Bossonian Marches, Aquilonia and Argos. Although often times thought of merely as Argos' maritime rival, Zingara has in the past been a land of agriculture and elegance.

### HONOUR

In its prime, Zingaran swordsmanship was taught in formal fencing-schools as well as in the deadly backstreets of every city, though many Zingarans learned only the civilian arming sword, rather than the more military-oriented broadsword. The Zingarans developed one of the most sophisticated forms of elite fencing ever developed, a sheer art form to behold. Many of these fencing schools may still survive and those that have burned are slowly being rebuilt. Many feel these schools, which also teach principles of chivalry, are essential to the rebuilding of Zingara to keep it from sliding backwards into barbarism. All they need is a strong king...

Honour for the Zingarans is a very real concept, built of a character's reputation, moral identity and self-perception. This sense of honour is the guiding principle of Zingaran society and is never a matter of mere lip-service. Indeed, honour is an all-important issue. Zingarans of honour are always alert for insults. Actual or suspected, insults will impugn an Zingaran's honour. An Zingaran's honour also extends to his wife, his family and his beloved. Impugned honour will usually result in a duel or other form of violent

redress. Among the aristocracy and the knighthood, honour is the measure of standing, setting them apart from the common man. To those who hold a code of honour, it is as real as a castle, yet vastly more important, for a castle can be rebuilt if destroyed and honour is wounded forever if stained.

### ALLEGIANCE

A character may have up to three allegiances, listed in order from most important to least important. These allegiances are indications of what the character values in life and may encompass people, organisations or ideals. A character may have no allegiances, being either a free spirit or a lone wolf, or may change allegiances as he goes through life. Also, just because the character fits into a certain category of people does not mean the character has to have that category as an allegiance. An allegiance in Zingara creates an empathic bond with others of the same allegiance. Characters with allegiance gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with someone of the same allegiance, so long as the character concerned has had some interaction with the other character, allowing the connections to be discovered and thus bring the bonus into play.

Historically, the economics of Zingara depended on the concept of allegiance. The social orders relied upon their members swearing allegiances. Allegiance is a pledge, a promise and oath, taken faithfully and with full realisation that it may mean giving up everything, including but not limited to time, property and even life in support of one thing. Feudal lords pledge allegiance to the lord of their manor and their allegiance changes according to who wears the crown. Characters also pledge allegiances to loves, wives, families, comrades, cities and gods.

Allegiance is usually a reciprocal tie between individuals and between families. Allegiances involve obligations on both sides and are considered as binding as formal law. In some cases an allegiance is considered *more* binding than formal law. Written contracts count for little in rural Zingara, although they take precedence in coastal Zingara. Most of the rural nation is illiterate, so only an oath taken before peers is worth anything. These oaths are



taken more seriously than any public law. This sometimes creates problems in society in the form of escalating violent vendettas as people avenge each other and counter-avenge in never-ending cycles of blood and war. Allegiances are often symbolised by making a man's wife live on the property of someone he has pledged allegiance toward. This is extremely common if a man pledges an allegiance to a town or city – he is expected to move his wife into that town as proof of the sincerity of his pledge.

Allegiances have become a touchy issue in Zingara in light of the recent wars. Zingarans are increasingly unhappy fighting for causes they do not believe in, for lords who are greedy for land or to avenge a mere slight in protocol. It seems to the common Zingaran that the lords simply want to fight and make up fraudulent excuses to fire the people up, calling upon Mitra or other divinities to show righteous indignation before sending the people off to die for their illusory causes. Now Zingaran lords are relying on mercenary units, increasing the foreign population greatly, which is not easing the minds of the people, despite their polyglot and multicultural history as a cultural melting pot. Conspiracy and treason abound in Zingara due to all these mixed concerns and internal problems.

Zingarans have become wary, always suspicious of others' motives. They naturally assume the worst of everyone, foreign or local. Paranoid of others, the Zingarans suffer a –1 racial penalty to Diplomacy but gain a +1 racial bonus to Sense Motive (as detailed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*).

## ELEGANCE

Manners and pleasures are elements of Zingaran elegance and sophistication. Ballet troupes learn the finest dances in the schools and noblemen learn the fine art of fencing. Waving scented handkerchiefs, the nobility of Zingara plots and conspires against fellow nobles even as they talk elegantly of philosophy and civility. This elegance is one of the contributing factors behind their racial bonus to Charisma.

## SWORDSMANSHIP

Swordsmanship, known as the 'True Art,' is a mark of prestige in Zingara. The fine art of fencing is taught to all noblemen. The training begins with education in geometry to improve the noble's thinking, training him to think logically and provide an understanding of spatial relationships. They are taught a coolness and a detachment when sword fighting so their mind can function with logic and clarity. The Zingaran fighting stance is taught as a circular model so that all fighting takes place within an imaginary and mobile circle. The swordsman is trained step by step how to move his body and



how to move his sword. In actual combat, the Zingaran swordsman combines body movements with various sword movements to create a personal technique. Body position is as important as sword position. Unlike Aquilonian intricate swordplay, Zingaran swordsmen do not meet attacks with counter-attacks. Zingaran swordsmen answer attacks by moving into a defensive position while controlling their adversary's weapon with their own – they move away from an attack instead of attacking into an attack. The Zingaran will veer away at an angle, stepping around his antagonist to thrust his sword into his opponent's side or back as the opponent over-thrusts. Zingaran swordsmen fight by attacking and defending while circling each other, continually stepping out of each other's way along the circumference of their personal imaginary circles. All attacks are made at angles. The Zingaran swordsman does not attempt to predict the responses of his antagonist; rather, he tries to command his opponent's movements by subtle positioning on his part. The minds and bodies of the noblemen are trained to size up a situation instinctively and give the most logical response.

The Zingaran system of swordplay is a science, yet it is a science that is combined with art, experience, philosophy and spirituality in much the same way as Khitan hand-to-hand techniques combine these elements. Zingaran swordsmen are taught a frightening command of timing, distance, space and movement. The Zingaran system of



teaching detachment and logical evaluation creates cold and calculating swordsmen, some of the deadliest the world has ever seen. Most noblemen take Weapon Focus (arming sword), Parry, Combat Expertise, Intricate Swordplay, Dodge, Web of Death and Zingaran Surprise feats, which emulate the training Zingaran noblemen receive in swordplay.

Although formal training is available only to those enrolled in the various fencing schools throughout Zingara, swordplay is also emphasised in the back streets of Zingara, a school no less strict than the formal schools. This makes all Zingarans proficient with the arming sword. The Zingaran propensity for elegant but effective swordplay and training gives Zingarans a +1 racial bonus to all attack rolls made with the broadsword and arming sword (as seen in the Zingaran racial description in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*).

## WOMEN IN ZINGARA

The woman's position in Zingara is one of being an idol, put up on a pedestal. It is improper of men to openly speak ill of a particular woman, or even women in general. Those Zingarans who consider themselves particularly refined kneel in front of women to speak to them. Men are expected to provide a pile of merits before being admitted into the company of a woman, including gifts, actions and praises. Some women are able to command outright quests before they will consider a man more than just a fleeting acquaintance. Men do not court women in Zingara, they pay homage to women.

However, Zingarans do tend to keep their women in seclusion, believing that non-business conversation between the sexes is impure and prone to lead a couple into sexual activities. A Zingaran woman is expected to be known as chaste and, although in Zingaran literature it appears all women are cherished, in truth only women believed to be chaste are so treated.

Zingaran girls are taught how to make themselves precious. They have to appear chaste if they are to be properly married; to appear chaste means never looking up or looking someone straight in the eye. Zingaran women must appear reserved, an idolised quality in women. The eye is important to Zingarans. An unknown woman who glances at a Zingaran man excites that man, for she has dared to look at him at the risk of seeming unchaste and sinful. This, of course, is all in appearances. To the Zingarans, that which is not seen does not exist, so the appearance of chastity in public is all that is required. In private, matters can take a more amorous course. Parents are stringent in hiding their daughters. Each time a young girl leaves her home, she gives herself a place on

people's minds and, therefore, their tongues – a risky place to be. Even King Ferdrugo forbade his daughter Chabela from dressing as a sailor and swarming into the rigging of the royal yacht with the seamen once she hit puberty and began to show signs of womanhood.

Openness and public cheekiness does more damage to a woman's honour than any failings that are secret. So long as her public reserve is intact, her reputation is secure. So, from maidenhood, women are taught to curb their inclinations in public, to express those inclinations as little as possible. In order to do this, a woman must live in seclusion prior to marriage in order to ensure she has a good name, which is essential for marriage. Thus, young Zingaran women repress themselves during girlhood, believing marriage will bring emancipation as the undisputed mistress of a Zingaran home.

Unfortunately, marriage is not all it is believed to be, especially if one marries into wealth. Most wealthy Zingaran husbands are jealous and harsh, rarely letting their wives go out in public. Chastity implies a loyalty to the husband and wives soon find out that such appearances are to be maintained even after marriage. The young girls, enraptured by the flames of arduous courtship filled with expressive poetry, hot passion and violent duels, suddenly find themselves reclusive, expected to become unassuming and virtuous wives who spend the rest of their lives tending to hearth and home, seen by few, heard by even fewer. They live the rest of their lives with the memories of their brief, fiery courtships and little else. The good name of a wife lies in her seclusion, just as it did during her maidenhood. Most Zingaran women take ranks in Perform (chastity) and have a chaste Reputation. The Perform (chastity) skill shows a girl's skill at keeping her Reputation type as chaste and in avoiding negative gossip or *smear other* attacks. Noble women suffer the worst of the loneliness because they have servants to go to the market for them or to run errands; lesser classed women often perform such chores for themselves.

Lower- and middle-class women tend to be more practical in these matters. They spend most of their time running the household, bearing babies, caring for children and performing domestic duties. Some Zingaran women, even while trying to maintain a chaste demeanour, must also work in a family trade or even in outside occupations, thus mingling with all manner of people, both citizen and foreigner. This is becoming more common as the civil wars leave more and more women as widows who must fend for themselves. Zingaran women are easily found along local water courses, where they wash their laundry or their hair. They also gather in courtyards and houses for sewing and spinning. Zingaran women are always familiar with each other's



handiwork. Women also like to sell surplus bread in the market in order to get out of the house.

Housewives are charged with provisioning a household, so this gives them reason to go to market, unless they are so wealthy that they have servants to do it for them. The woman of the house decides how much grain, wine and garden produce are stored and what animals are to be slaughtered from the herds. If the household manor does not produce something, a housewife is sometimes allowed to go to town to purchase it, or send a servant to purchase the item(s).

Noble women, however, are allowed to make a game out of flirtation. A man, even if he is married, may declare himself the lover of a noblewoman (even if she is married) and give her presents, poems and declarations. This scandalises no one if a great show is made about how chaste the affair really is; such games actually give the lady accepting such flirtation from a single male a boost in Reputation (+1). This is a privilege of the noble classes, however.

## RACISM IN ZINGARA

Despite their own mixed heritage, Zingarans tend to be, as a society, racist. Zingarans are not wholly Hyborian yet they act as though their race is the most pure, the most elegant on the world. Zingaran women find themselves needing to be careful when dealing with Shemites or other foreign races, especially non-Hyborian foreigners. A Zingaran woman, married or unmarried, caught having sex with a Shemite or other foreigner is usually burned at the stake along with the offending male. Zingaran women who give birth to mixed-blood children are branded as 'bad'; they certainly find themselves socially exiled from polite society and probably physically exiled from the town as well. The law is clear on this point – Zingaran women are unavailable to Shemites and other non-Zingarans. There is no punishment if a Zingaran man wants to have relations with a non-Zingaran woman, though. A Zingaran man with a mixed-blood son suffers no penalties and, if that son is part of the Mitran faith, may even pass on his lands and goods to that son. Thus many Zingaran men marry their foreign-born slaves. Male slaves are forbidden to marry their female Zingaran mistresses. A Zingaran widow who tries to marry one of her former spouse's slaves will find herself burned at the stake right alongside that same slave.

Zingaran women cannot even nurse or heal Shemites and foreign women may not nurse Zingaran women.

Many cities even have segregated sections to protect their Zingaran women. Zingaran

society, geared to allow conquering men access to whomever they desire as plunder, stringently prohibits women from intimately associating with foreign elements, especially Shemites or Picts.

## SLAVERY

Since the beginning, the people of Zingara have been capturing and enslaving each other – Picts, Shemites, Hyborians and all have felt the lash of Zingara's whips as cultures clashed on Zingaran soil. When the Mitrans clashed with the aboriginal non-Mitran, slaves were taken. The slave in Zingara is not so much an issue of chattel or property to be bought and sold individually but is an issue of honour. The slave is a symbol of domination and superiority by the slave-taker. There is no strict line between slave and master, and slaves can even become family, either through adoption or marriage. Slaves are a prestige symbol; to own a slave means you have conquered someone.

Slaves are usually attached to the land they work and are sold with the land, not as separate property. Mutilation of slaves is unlawful but virtually any other cruelty is permitted. Pictish and Black Kingdom slaves (as well as crossbreeds between the two) are usually used in the south to work the plantations and manors. They are driven to work with whips. Slaves in the manor houses and urban cities fare better and are treated as servants, although they are still attached to the overall property and not to a particular owner.





Beautiful foreign women are often tricked into slavery by wily Zingarans who promptly put them to work as prostitutes. The slaver makes seemingly legitimate offers for situations with the Zingaran elite, but once they arrive in Zingara the women find themselves alone and without friends, at the mercy of the man who brought them there.

Zingarans prefer female or child slaves. Most males are too resistant to slavery unless brought up in slavery to make usable slaves. Enslaved males are consigned to places where they can labour in chains, such as pulling the oars of Zingaran ships.

It is illegal for a Zingaran to sell another Zingaran into slavery to a Shemite or other foreigner. In some places it is illegal to sell any Hyborian into slavery to a Shemite or Pict. In either case it is also illegal for a Zingaran to sell him- or herself into slavery to such persons. Those condemned for this crime are usually burned at the stake, although along the coast those who sell themselves into slavery are burned; others are hanged. These laws are in place mostly to prevent Zingaran families from selling unwanted children into slavery.

Slave dealers are often considered to be just slightly better than prostitutes and are accorded little protection through the law. Most slave dealers, men and women alike, move into cities secretly and establish clients with the utmost discretion, since all parties could easily find themselves burned alive if caught.

## OCCUPATIONS

Most occupations in Zingara belong to merchants, craftsmen and servants. The primary responsibility of any servant is loyalty to the master or mistress and they are expected to take an oath of allegiance.

## OCCUPATIONS FOR WOMEN

Zingaran housewives do the cooking, cleaning, preserving, mending and provisioning of a house, either alone or with the help of their daughters. Wealthy housewives also direct female staff members, such as maids, wet nurses, laundresses and housekeepers. Almost all domestic servants are female. Domestic employment is the easiest way for a woman in Zingara to find work. They are usually contracted for a year at a time and paid an annual wage, although they receive pay for the days they have worked should they leave their contract early. Many households employ the children of poor relations. The deputy housekeeper, who is the most important female servant directly below the housewife, usually lives in the house where she works, but other domestic servants

usually live in their own homes and come to the house of employment on a daily or weekly basis. Wet nurses are also expected to live in houses that employ them; they are charged with a child's survival and, thus, are important people in any wealthy home. Wet nurses are hired on three-year contracts, earning room, board and an annual wage. Some families are trying to extend the legal contract of wet-nurses to four years but so far they have met with limited success. Wet-nurses are expected to be in good health and to be pretty, in the belief that the child will hunger more for nourishment from a pretty woman than an homely one. Female domestic workers tend to earn more than male agricultural labourers and are eligible for back-pay if they leave their employment prematurely.

## OCCUPATIONS FOR MEN

Men are usually hired to do agricultural work, and work as shepherds, beekeepers, vintners and farm hands. They are contracted for a year at a time and paid an annual wage at the end of that year. Unlike female domestics, if the men quit before payday, they lose their wages. This inequity between the sexes is justified to the Zingaran mind because the men do not work equally on each day – during the winter and inclement weather, they do little to no work on the manors – while women's work is never done.

## TRADE

Historically, Zingara has tried hard to outdo Argos in the seas. The Zingarans managed to trade along the Pictish Wilderness, despite the intense ferocity of the Sea-Tribes that exceeds even the savagery of those Picts that ravaged Velitrium. They traded tin, ostrich plumes from Kush via Stygia, wine, weapons and other goods for copper ore, hides, gold dust, whale teeth, walrus tusks and other goods made by the Picts. The Picts tend to fiercely resist contact with the Hyborian nations, but reluctantly traded with the Zingarans, probably because they are not entirely Hyborian and have a distant kinship with the Picts. This trade is something the traders of Argos never try. The coast is too savage, largely uncharted (at least by Argossean chart-makers) and frightening. Today, there is little trading going on by Zingaran merchants along the Pictish Wilderness. The Picts have, as a result, increased the frequency of their raids, sensing the instability of Zingara.

Zingara's primary export is tin, which is essential for the making of bronze. The mountains of this proud land are mined for tin, a rare commodity in most lands, but readily found here. In the past, Zingara's once great plantations yielded crops of grapes, sugar, tobacco and grain and black serfs were brought in to work these vast plantations of southern



Zingara, labouring under the whips of cruel slave-masters hungry for wealth and prestige. No more. Most of those fields are gone, burnt by the civil wars that have raged from one end of Zingara to the other. From the grapes, highly regarded Zingaran wines were once distilled. Even this industry has come to a crashing halt in recent years. In addition to the agricultural products produced in the fertile southlands, leather was another staple product from the Zingarans. This industry proceeds even today.

Zingara also competes with Argos by exporting olives and olive-products.

## SOCIAL STANDING

Zingara has evolved into a stratified society that is complex and, to some degree, racially motivated. The upper rung of the hierarchy are the nobles. Beneath the nobles are the middle classes, the lower classes and the slaves, in that order.

### NOBLES

All nobles have the right of denaturalisation, which allows them to renounce their allegiance to a lord (even the Crown) if they give due notice, which is ten days. The formal defiance must be made in the presence of witnesses. If the ten-day notice is not given, they are expected to perform their duty when called upon. The nobles are of four types: the upper, the middle, the knights and the esquires.

The upper nobility consist of barons and counts, viscounts and their aides and vassals who can command at least five knights. They receive land from the king in return for military service. Their tenure is hereditary but the king can alienate their land at will. The barons hold the largest land grants, followed by the counts. The rents of various free towns are given to the princes and counts by the to ensure they can support an adequate number of knights. They are descended from the bravest and proudest of Zingaran knights back in antiquity, usually dating to the Hyborian invasion. They are exempt from corporal punishment and they have the right of trial by their peers. They must, however, serve the king's army for two months of the year. They must serve longer if the king pays their expenses. This rank of nobility is hereditary only. The king is forbidden from granting anyone these ranks.

The middle nobility include the viscounts, comitores and vassores. The viscounts serve the counts. Comitores are the noble aids of viscounts. The lowest of the middle nobility include the vassores, who are vassals to the counts and comitores. This is the highest order

of nobility the king can legally grant a person. The titles are hereditary to a point – they are hereditary for the life of the king. Each king has the right to appoint his own viscounts, comitores and vassores, although he often just reappoints the existing ones for the most part just to avoid unnecessary conflict. The current state of Zingara, however, is a nation with no king, so this rung of nobility is the most unstable for the moment.

The next rank of nobles are the knights, who command at best a single castle or manor. A knight is expected to own a wife, have children and possess a horse. They are also expected to have arms. Originally a knight was the vassal of the king but now they are allowed to be the vassals of the upper and middle nobility. They and their household are excused from municipal taxation should they enter a city or live within its jurisdiction.

The final rank of nobility are the esquires, who have grants enough to enable them to support a horse and arms. They are frequently vassals of the knights. Merchants who become wealthy enough or have aided the king or a baron may be granted this title. They are exempt from taxation but are bound to serve for three days a year in the case of war. Esquires who fail to take the field when summoned by their knightly lords may be fined heavily. Some knights allow the esquires to make a payment to the knight of some sort in exchange for not enforcing military duty.

### THE URBAN CLASSES

The urban classes are composed of the burgueses and the condishions. The burgueses are citizens who have Profession skill ranks and follow that profession. They are subdivided into the Greater Hand and the Lesser Hand. The Greater Hand are the bankers, doctors, advocates and their ilk. The Lesser Hand are the merchants, brokers, agricultural procurers, shopkeepers and the like. The condishions have ranks in Craft and make a living by producing things. The leaders of these classes are not merchants or artisans, though. The leading citizens are soldiers, stock ranchers and plantation owners who live within the walls of a city but own vast amounts of property in the country beyond the walls.

They are the economic lifeblood of an urban centre. This group is becoming increasingly significant in Zingara and many fear they may come to dominate the other orders. Townsfolk are the people who dwell in the large towns and cities as the social elite. They do not labour on the land as peasants and serfs do, but they are also not noblemen. They lurk in an awkward position in Zingaran society.



## THE LOWER CLASSES

The lower classes also have two categories: propertied and non-propertied. They are generally attached to an overlord and the soil when on the manors, or they are servants in the cities. They are permitted to buy, sell and inherit land and livestock. The propertied lower class citizens own land and the non-propertied do not. A non-propertied man is tied to a plot of land owned by someone else. Non-propertied men cannot leave the land they are tied to without their feudal lord's permission. In addition to working their own lands, they are required to labour on the lord's estates as well and give up a portion of their own personal harvest to the feudal lord. They may be asked to perform other labour services as well, such as repairing a road or building a bridge. Non-propertied men are otherwise free. They may accumulate personal wealth, for the social constraint is not an economic constraint. Non-propertied men may raise whatever they see fit on their land and can sell any surplus at the local market. A non-propertied man may also bequeath an inheritance to his heirs. Also, the tie to the feudal lord goes both ways. The feudal lord is not only obligated to protect the non-propertied man, the feudal lord cannot dispossess the non-propertied man without due cause.

A propertied man is a free man who lives in a village or more rural setting and owns his own land or, at most, owes rent on his land. Most propertied men are farmers, although some are more specialised, such as village blacksmiths, coopers or millers. Propertied men only owe a lord labour obligations during harvest time. Propertied men do not need to pay the various fees and fines imposed by the feudal lord, although they do pay taxes. Most propertied men swear fealty to the lord of the land in order to obtain the lord's protection, but they also obligate themselves to pay all the various fees and fines like a non-propertied man. Propertied men often manage to attain a modest amount of wealth. In any one given village there will be some propertied men who are better off and more powerful than others. The wealthier and more powerful propertied men usually have better homes and better harvests. The more powerful families often have members who serve as aldermen, or elders. Often these elders have no formal identity bestowed upon them, so membership is cliquish. Certain families, it seems, are considered to have 'always' been among the elders. Many of the well-to-do can lend money, seed or livestock to the poorer members of the village. Well-off families collect on defaulted loans by repossessing property and extending their own holdings.

Propertied men who own land in the fields but live within a lord's demesne are often employed permanently as manorial labourers. They serve the lord's lands and protect his interests, thereby increasing the lord's industries and profits.

These permanent labourers are paid with any combination of grain, money, labour obligation relief or propertied men to help them with their own lands. These propertied men take Profession skills to reflect the amount of income they earn and to reflect the jobs they do on the manor grounds. These are Profession (ploughman), Profession (carter), Profession (shepherd), Profession (dairymaid), Profession (cowman), Profession (overseer) or Profession (household servant). Ploughmen plough up most of a lord's fields as non-propertied men with labour obligations harrow and weed. Carters carry grain and goods to and from market and do any other deliveries as needed. Carters are usually paid very well to keep them honest and are especially important to lords with multiple manors. Shepherds tend to the lord's sheep. Dairymaids milk the lord's cows, goats and sheep, make butter and cheese, tend to poultry, collect eggs and make mid-day meals for the other manorial labourers. Cowmen receive the least amount of pay among the permanent labourers for odd jobs they do around the manor. Overseers manage propertied man labour and prevent theft, especially among a lord's groves, orchards, vineyards or cash crops. Household servants are propertied men without farmland. They usually receive room and board as partial pay, although some manors pay in grain or money exclusively. Household servants include chambermaids, cleaners, marshals, grooms, messengers, pages, washwomen, slaughterers, poulterers, cooks, butlers, pantlers, brewers, bakers, cupbearers, fruiterers and their helpers. Only the largest of manors employ all of the above types of household servants.

About half the propertied men in Zingara own ten or fewer acres of land, which is at the subsistence level for a typical family. A third of the propertied men own 12 to 16 acres (a half-virgate). About 12% of the propertied men are so poor they own no land save for their home and the soil immediately surrounding the one roomed daub-and-wattle home. These are the poorest propertied men. The remainder are the wealthiest propertied men who own more land than they can work and hire the poorest propertied men to work their land. Rarely is the land owned by propertied men neatly divided up into contiguous plots. A single propertied man may own a strip in one field and a strip of land in another field and so forth, and all the strips and plots of land are mingled with those of other propertied men as well as with those still owned by the feudal lord and worked by the non-propertied men.

## SLAVERY AND PATRONAGE

The lowest classes are those who belong to patronage and the slaves. The patronage state involves a patron giving a slave possession of the



land the slave is attached to in return for half the produce from it. The patron usually also assumes the responsibility of protecting a former slave's family if the former slave dies. The freed slave may not change his patron. The freed slave still is not all that free – he must seek his patron's permission for just about anything, including marriage. He also cannot give evidence against anyone ranking higher than him.

Beneath those involved in patronage are the slaves. Slaves are either captured or born into slavery for the most part, although people can be enslaved as a legal punishment. Slaves may not own property; all they previously owned belongs to their master and the land. Even their children belong to the master. Southern Zingarans use slave labour from the Black Kingdoms to work their fertile plantations.

## OUTCASTS AND BANDITS

There exist on the outskirts of Zingaran society those elements who have either been cast out or those who have withdrawn voluntarily beyond societal borders. Among the outcasts are the itinerant poor, such as the wandering beggars or those who suffer from physical or mental handicaps. Unable (or unwilling) to labour, fight or pray, these persons are fair game for any sort of indignity or outrage because no one protects them. During times of famine or plague, their numbers swell, though at most times they are encountered as individuals or small groups or families. Occasionally a villager may give them a bit of food and a place to sleep, depending on the villager's moral sensibilities and sense of security. Foreigners and outlaws also fall into this unprotected category. Outlaws may be captured or killed by anyone. They are without lords and have no protectors. Thus

outlaws tend to avoid villages, towns and cities, save to loot them. Even foreigners must be careful. They too have no protectors save their own sword arms.

## SOCIAL MOBILITY

No matter how well one behaves, no matter how much one accomplishes, one cannot be elevated in status because of mere accomplishments or behaviour. Marriage is generally the only way to socially move up or down the ladder of society. Misbehaviour short of criminal also does not decrease one's social standing, although criminal action could cause one to be outcast from society, leaving a character without legal protection. Downward movement is certainly easier than upward movement.





# The Zingaran Breed

## CHARACTERS IN ZINGARA

**MOST ZINGARANS ARE** black-haired and dark of complexion. They are descended from a mixture of the Pictish and Hyborian people, along with the pre-Pictish inhabitants of Zingara, who are thought to be closely related to the Shemites. They are lean and dangerous-looking and have fiery tempers. The warriors of eastern Zingara sport black moustaches. Zingarans tend to be accomplished swordsmen and most are quite accomplished at deceit and conspiracy.

### RACIAL VARIANT

The Zingaran template provided in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* describe coastal Zingarans accurately. However, Zingarans of the interior would hardly have the background skills appropriate to a coastal people. Zingarans from the interior instead have the following background skills in place of the standard ones offered:

**Non-noble Background Skills (variant):** Balance, Handle Animal, Profession (any) or Craft (any)

**Noble Background Skills (variant):** Balance, Knowledge (nobility), Knowledge (local)

### CLASS VARIANTS

#### ZINGARAN BARBARIANS

Zingarans are prohibited from taking barbarian at 1<sup>st</sup> level. The idea of living a barbaric lifestyle is abhorrent to the civilised Zingarans. Zingarans who later multiclass into barbarian are usually enslaved gladiators forced to hone their instincts and learn to fight with grim and stolid strength through harsh lessons of live combat. The Constitution penalty hurts this class; the Charisma bonus this race offers does little in the way of compensation for most barbarians.

#### Rules Variant

Barbarians raised in pit fighting or gladiator pens never really learn to track. Instead, substitute Power Attack for Track at 1<sup>st</sup> level to indicate this nature of barbarism. Likewise, Survival, Craft, Hide and Move Silently are never really learned by these barbarians and should be removed from their class skills. Substitute instead Bluff, Sense Motive and Tumble.

### ZINGARAN BORDERERS

Zingaran borderers are often rebels, fighting with anger in the Zingaran civil war. Other borderers defend the borders against invaders as skirmishers (borderer/soldiers, see *Conan: The Free Companies*, *Conan: Hyboria's Finest* or *Conan: Hyboria's Fiercest* for mixing the borderer and soldier classes). They often clash with the Picts or the ghouls. Zingaran borderers also serve as slavers, enslaving captive Picts, especially Pictish women and children. Borderer-pirate combinations are also popular roles for Zingarans (see *Conan: Hyboria's Finest* or *Conan: Hyboria's Fiercest* for options concerning the mixture of the borderer and pirate classes). Occasionally one finds a Zingaran borderer-pirate serving as an enslaver of the people of the Black Kingdoms. Zingaran borderers often use the two-weapon combat style presented in the borderer rules in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, the Zingaran whip combat style or the Zingaran sneak attack combat style (page 86). The Constitution penalty makes Zingaran borderers a bit less enduring than borderers of Zingara's neighbours on average but Zingaran borderers tend to be more apt to lead because of the Charisma bonus.

Zingaran rebels often lead revolts, focused on a burning goal that involves dismantling the government by whatever means possible. They take ranks in Gather Information, Diplomacy, Hide, Move Silently and Spot and feats such as Leadership, Persuasive and Negotiator.

### ZINGARAN NOBLES

Zingara is a feudal land, a monarchy in Hyborian fashion, though Zingara is not a true Hyborian kingdom (see sidebar on the king of Zingara). Under a dazzlingly complex political system, dukes and counts rule fiefs in the name of the king in Kordava, although in most cases that fealty is, at best, nominal and somewhat confusing. The nobles of Zingara are a proud, individualistic race, not given to subservience. They rebel both openly and secretly. This continual backstabbing, political manoeuvring and social ladder-climbing under weak kings who are more concerned about the state of Argos' shipping than rebel activities brought about the final dissolution of Zingara as a bastion of civilisation and good breeding. Today, Zingara is a faltering anarchy.



Manners and pleasures in Zingara are elements of their elegance and sophistication. Knowledge (nobility) is usual for Zingaran nobles to have ranks in. The fine art of fencing is taught to all noblemen. Most noblemen take Weapon Focus (arming sword), Parry, Combat Expertise and Intricate Swordplay feats. Waving scented handkerchiefs, the nobility of Zingara plot and conspire against fellow nobles even as they talk elegantly of philosophy and civility. There is a movement in Zingara away from the old feudal system, which clearly has failed, to a republic. Zingarans try to dress well. Trunk-hose and doublets of silk with puffed and slit sleeves are common for the men. Cloaks hang from their shoulders. Boots of the finest Kordavan leather adorn their feet.

Zingara's elite knights are just as skilled as their Poitanian enemies, and perhaps somewhat more numerous. However, given the difficulties in fielding even a single unit of knights it is unlikely that this numeric superiority will ever translate into a distinct military advantage. Their absolute numbers may be higher, but their lack of central authority means their full numbers will never take the field. Those nearest Poitain wear heavy armour, such as plate, but elsewhere the knights are usually less armoured. Centuries of fighting quick Picts and mounted Shemites have left many Zingarans leery of heavy and ineffective armour. They carry heavy lances, broadswords and large shields into battle. Most have the following feats: Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Trample, Weapon Focus (broadsword) and Weapon Focus (heavy lance).

The Zingaran bonus to Charisma makes its nobles especially powerful leaders, although Zingaran nobles suffer a bit in regards to feats because noble is not a favoured class for them.

## ZINGARAN NOMADS

Zingarans are prohibited from taking nomad at 1<sup>st</sup> level, although Zingarans who leave the country certainly may adapt to the lifestyle elsewhere. Zingarans generally do not trust the highway nomads who travel from foreign lands through their country. Most nomads in Zingara are Shemites or gypsy-like foreigners. Shemites are generally looked down upon by the lofty-minded Zingarans, so the class most associated with them is also shunned. Any Zingaran living among Shemites is considered no better than a Shemite by most other Zingarans.

## ZINGARAN SCHOLARS

Mitra is the head of the Zingaran pantheon. This is interesting because in all other Hyborian nations, Mitra is the One True God. The melting pot of Zingara has also produced a melting pot of

religions. Mitra, as the god of the last conquerors, now rules supreme over the other gods in a king-like role. The saints have vanished, but the legions of heaven and hell remain. A variant of Ishtar serves as Mitra's consort in a court that contains Shemitish and Pictish deities, all with complex portfolios of power duplicating the complicated Zingaran court. It is in this arena the Zingaran priests move.

In general, the Zingarans fear magic and they fear sorcerers. Their legends are replete with stories about degenerate rituals of demonic debauchery, horrifying plagues and worse. Sorcerers in Zingara hide their talents from the people for fear of mobs with pitchforks, torches and nooses. Many scholars, however, do reside in Zingara as tutors, choosing to take bonus feats and skill points instead of new sorcery styles and advanced spells.

Scholars with noble blood tend to concentrate on the same skills as listed above for the noble class. Those who work as tutors take the appropriate Knowledge skills and the Profession (tutor) skill. Sorcerous scholars tend to be unique in their skill selections, although many focus on Sea Witchery or Weather Witching sorcery styles (both from *Conan: Pirate Isles*). Nature Magic is another common sorcery style for the Zingaran scholar. The Zingaran bonus to Charisma makes a Zingaran sorcerer especially dangerous because his magic attack bonus is naturally a point higher than the average foreign sorcerer.

The Zingaran sorceress is known as the *Hechicera*, she focuses her magic on incantations and magical links, as well as alchemical and herbal magic. She is a fortune-teller and a soothsayer, so she usually takes the Divination sorcery style early on to earn a living, as well as maximising her ranks in Craft (alchemy) and Craft (herbalism). Anyone practising divination, whether truly sorcerous or not, is denounced by the Mitran temple and is deprived of all rights as a citizen, treated little better than a whore. Even herbalists have much to fear from Zingarans; it is considered slanderous for someone to even call a woman an herbalist. All known herbalists in town are carefully watched because they possess extremely practical knowledge and skills, and are believed to possess supernatural powers whether they do or not. Anyone accused of practicing sorcery has to face the ordeal of the hot iron (page 67). If convicted, they are burned at the stake.

## ZINGARAN SOLDIERS

Zingaran soldiers dress in steel and satin. Armour and garments are always ornate and made of the best material that can be afforded, stolen or made. Thin black moustaches are also common. Royal soldiers dress in burgundy and gold.

Zingara is a war-torn nation, ripped apart by civil wars. There is much work here for a soldier. The basic infantrymen are given hasty training with pikes to blunt the first charge



of heavy cavalry before dropping their pikes and running. The basic infantryman wields a pike and a broadsword. He wears a leather jerkin topped with a steel cap. A few carry large shields strapped to their backs, but most do not bother; there is never enough time to sling it down before the pikes break and the nobles in plate armour rage though the lines. Infantrymen take ranks in Perform (guard mount) and Search. They are usually trained to have the following feats: Improved Initiative, Power Attack and Weapon Focus (pike).

In addition to the infantrymen, Zingara also trains arbalesters in Nemedian fashion. Zingaran arbalesters, however, are more focused on swordsmanship than archery. They are often trained by the Zingaran lords to have the Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (arbalest) and Weapon Focus (arming sword) feats. Each arbalester carries an arbalest, 30 bolts and an arming sword. He wears a mail shirt covered with a surcoat showing his lord's crest. Arbalesters take ranks in Perform (guard mount), Spot and Search.

Those soldiers who excel are often elevated to the status of men-at-arms. They are trained in Mounted Combat and Ride-By Attack, in addition to whatever feats they learned as infantrymen or arbalesters. Weapon Focus (arming sword) is also common. Most have decent warhorses to ride as well as good mail hauberks and steel caps to ward off the arrows. They do not use large shields. Zingaran men-at-arms ride into battle beside their noble leaders. Usually each knight will have around two men-at-arms supporting him. They take ranks in Ride and Handle Animal.

The Constitution penalty given to Zingarans hurt the soldier class in hit points and Fortitude saves and the Charisma bonus offers little in return for most soldiers. However, soldier is a favoured class for the Zingarans, mitigating the penalty somewhat. Zingaran soldiers tend to be more capable of action than the soldiers of other races because of this.

## ZINGARAN PIRATE

Pirate is one of the favoured classes of the Zingarans. Their bonus with sneak attacks, arming swords, broadswords and to their background skills all work toward making Zingarans exceptional pirates. They make especially good marines (see *Conan: The Free Companies*) because both soldier and pirate are favoured classes. Zingaran pirates raid Pictish and Vanir settlements for goods. Zingaran pirates, known as Freebooters, often battle Barachans as part of the ancient feud between Zingara and Argos. Many Zingaran Freebooters are genuine privateers, sailing under letters of authority from the kings of Zingara to disrupt Argosian shipping and to hunt Barachan pirates. However, with the dissolution of Zingaran government into anarchy, most Zingaran freebooters have gone rogue, preying on even Zingaran ships for their livelihood.



A Zingaran's background skills immediately set the stage for his piratical career. He automatically gets two ranks in Profession (sailor), Balance and Use Rope. Zingaran ships have complex rigging, so most Zingarans put plenty of ranks into Climb, Balance and Use Rope, as well as maximising Profession (sailor). Bluff is also a key skill for a Zingaran pirate. Zingaran Freebooters are notorious back-stabbers and are expert at the sneak attack. Maintaining high ranks in Bluff is common for these pirates in order to maximise the effectiveness of their own combat skills. A Freebooter captain's position tends to rest on his seamanship abilities, navigational prowess, success rate and combat skill.

Remarkable swordsmen, Zingaran pirates usually take the Combat Expertise, Intricate Swordplay, Parry, Weapon Focus, Web of Death and Zingaran Surprise feats, as well as many of the feats from *Conan: Pirate Isles*. Some choice feats from that comprehensive work include Freebooter's Fortune, Sharp Blade, Up the Rigging, Viper's Speed and Wave Dance. Characters who multiclass with soldier should consider taking the Marine combat formation from *Conan: Pirate Isles*.



Zingarans also have a racial bonus to sneak attacks, setting them above most pirates even at 1<sup>st</sup> level, so any feats that improve sneak attacks will find favour among the treacherous and fiery-tempered Zingarans. Black Zarono from Howard's *The Black Stranger* is an example of a Zingaran pirate (see *Conan: Pirate Isles* for Black Zarono's statistics).

The Zingaran bonus to Charisma and penalty to Constitution make Charisma-based pirates much more likely than any other, especially Constitution-based pirates. The charismatic pirate uses his charisma to steal ships, fleets, soldiers and cities. He does not board a ship with blood in his eye. Instead he is likely to carry a forged charter from a king or other owner and claim ownership has changed hands and that he is now the legal owner of the ship. He convinces the legitimate crew to undertake his missions and he is long gone before anyone figures out it was all a scam. Pirates who focus on Charisma are consummate seducers.

### Zingaran Freebooters

The Zingaran Freebooters were once loyal Zingaran subjects who were given legal charters as privateers to prey upon Argossean shipping and as a means to stop the Barachans. Fierce Zingaran independence soon reared its savage head and the Freebooters went renegade, preying even on their own country's ships. This backstab did not endear them to the Zingarans.

The Freebooters are not welcome in Zingaran ports. Like as not, the renegade pirates will find themselves hanged. Likewise they are not welcome at Tortage in the Barachans. Their bases are outside of Zingara, although the Saga does not tell us where. Howard does hint that there are minor maritime nations, but none of them show up on modern maps of the Hyborian Age. Some scholars have postulated small principalities, free city-states or tiny nations nestled snugly between the well known empires, not shown on any map surviving to this day. Perhaps there are tiny nations between Zingara and the Pictish Wilderness, or between Argos and Zingara where the Freebooters have a city where they can safely fence their goods. Any number of islands that are either not large enough to be depicted on the standard maps or have simply been forgotten could lie off the shores of Zingara, Argos, Shem or the Pictish wilderness. The Saga mentions several small islands that continually fail to show up on the maps published along with the Saga.

The captain of a Freebooter ship is the absolute authority... at least so long as his seamanship, swordsmanship and success in plunder acquisition hold up. To obtain the rank of captain, a qualified Freebooter must kill the former captain in a fair fight. Anything less is considered a mutiny, the last choice for an oppressed crew.

There is a time-honoured tradition of baiting strangers among the Freebooters, where they test the stranger with violence. This establishes the stranger's status among the crew. The testing is both brutal and bloody. The pirates press around the stranger menacingly. One man pushes the brawl. It begins with taunts and insults, then the fight starts. It is a one-on-one fight, and how the stranger comports himself establishes his 'rank' among the crewmembers. The stranger does not need to win, but he must not prove himself a coward or a weakling.

The Freebooters dress in a typical pirate fashion. They often sport sashes, bare chests, silken pantaloons, great loops of gold in their ears, sabres, cutlasses and so on. These pirates often sail in carracks, large, seaworthy ships.

The Freebooters are rapacious and cruel, feared as much as the Barachans, especially by the Argosseans. They maraud ships and raid coastal towns. There probably are not too many of these pirates or one of the larger nations would have sent more forces out to tame them. Also, plenty of sea-faring traffic carries trade good across the oceans. If there were so many pirates out there that no ship could pass unscathed, then trade would be shifted overland and Argos and Zingara would be out of business – and would, without hesitation, wage such a war on the pirates that the seas might never wash out the taint of blood from the shores of their island abodes. The Freebooters are not numerous, which makes the handful still out there all the more famous and well-known.

### ZINGARAN THIEF

Most Zingaran thieves live in the urban cities. Retired Zingaran thieves often work as fences or merchants. Most urban Zingaran thieves are suited to fit any of the roles outlined in *Conan: Hyboria's Fallen*. They will take skills and feats appropriate to their role in society. Zingaran thieves are also remarkable swordsmen, and often take the Combat Expertise, Intricate Swordplay, Parry, Weapon Focus, Web of Death and Zingaran Surprise feats. Their bonus to Charisma and penalty to Constitution make Charisma-based thieves much more likely than any other, especially Constitution-based thieves. Their bonus to sneak attack is also a boon for the Zingaran thief. Their first sneak attack style is usually either the broadsword or arming sword to take advantage of their racial bonus to attack with those weapons as early as possible.

The thief who cultivates his Charisma usually focuses on the skills associated with Charisma. These characters have an element of style and panache that most practitioners lack. These are the fallen who become the most renowned. They usually focus on practices requiring people-skills, such as confidence tricks, fencing stolen goods, shakedown and blackmail. These thieves and pirates do not undertake



housebreaking jobs or typical robberies as a general rule. The charismatic thief is the con man and blackmailer. They are liars, but somehow they are loveable – or at least charming. They tend to be proud and pretend to be easily offended. They pretend offence because they are masters of emotional manipulation, and an angry display of offence is usually easier than to actually prove they are something or can do something they say they are or can do. If confronted with evidence of their lies, they still will not admit to lying. Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidation and Perform are perfect skills for these characters. Any feat with a Charisma prerequisite is usually appropriate for these thieves.

Zingaran assassins usually are quite skilled but are not as easy to locate as some might think. Most assassins for hire do not deal directly with those looking to have a murder committed; instead these experts are contacted through a web of middlemen. The assassin rarely knows who hired him and the employer rarely knows who the assassin is. Different assassins have different modes of murder. Some use poison, some strangle their victims, some use a weapon. Regardless of the means, the hired killer intends to slay the victim and live to collect his pay. Beginning assassins usually slay from a distance with crossbows and expert assassins move in close for the kill to show their expertise. Standard pricing for assassination is one silver coin per point of Reputation. This price varies according to circumstance. Murdering a princess during her wedding will cost more than murdering the same princess as she sneaks out of the palace for some late-night rendezvous. The Zingaran experts in murder tend to optimise their sneak attack abilities. Bluff, Disguise, Gather Information, Hide, Move Silently, Spot, Search and Sense Motive are important skills for the assassin.

Zingara's civil wars have made the nation into a nation of bandits. Some Zingaran thieves, often with a few levels of soldier, nomad or borderer, work the trails, roads and highways as bandits, sort of as 'pirates of the road,' so to speak. Bandits are often fast and agile, preferring to attack from ambush, intimidating others into giving up their valuables. Bandits often emphasise their Dexterity and Charisma scores. Their fighting style usually depends on Dexterity to bypass armour and they prefer to use Charisma based skills to avoid unnecessary fighting. Appropriate skills include Appraise, Bluff, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Listen, Ride, Search, Spot, Survival and Tumble. Dodge, Parry, Persuasive, Mobility and similar feats will come in handy.

## ZINGARAN TEMPTRESS

Zingara sexually represses its women, relegating them to a life of seclusion as soon as they begin showing signs of womanhood. They are taught to be submissive and chaste. The temptress rebels against this upbringing; she dares to

look men in the eyes and she dares society to talk about her. Even those who outwardly maintain a chaste appearance use their personal skills and charisma to dominate men and society, moving behind the scenes, chaffing at the need for secrecy.

The time is ripe for temptresses in Zingara. With so many rebellions and revolutions sweeping the countryside, the temptresses can find opportunities galore for power. They run plantations, manors and castles. They manage slaves, servants and households. Many Zingaran temptresses excel with the whip (there are some new combat manoeuvres utilising the whip presented elsewhere in this volume that would be perfect for a whip-wielding Zingaran temptress). They also learn to fence just as the men do. The Charisma bonus accorded Zingarans works well with the temptress concept.





# Zingaran Military

## KNIGHTS OF THE REALM

**ZINGARA IS NOW** constantly in a state of war, so most of its armies are small and lightly equipped. They have to be able to move long distances quickly and return home. Each lord maintains his own troops so that he might lend to the common cause or not depending on his own agenda. More often, he uses his troops to engage in open rebellion against the throne.

### WAR FORMATIONS

War tactics in Zingara are different than standard Hyborian tactics. Its isolation brought about by mountains and ghoulish forests puts Zingara into a unique cultural milieu. Historically, the Zingarans fought with lightly armoured cavalry and infantry. The cavalry was comprised of nobles and the infantry of peasants who went to war because of their feudal relationship. The infantry only went to war if needed and were not commonly used.

The knights fought in a typically Zingaran way. They rushed toward the enemy, threw javelins, then turned around and ran back, repeating the process as necessary. When the enemy's formation weakened, the knights used thrusting spears and charged. Later, when lances were developed, they were used by the Zingarans in place of the spears.

Infantrymen were used as auxiliary troops to contain enemy troops until the cavalry arrived. They were also used to block the enemy infantry from charging the knights.

Eventually, the arms and armour of neighbouring Hyborians outstripped the tactics of the early Zingarans and they began adapting Argossean and Poitanian tactics, getting rid of the javelins, for example, because their knights were slaughtered by archers waiting for the knights to come in close enough to throw. Poitanian greatswords rendered their light armours useless, so the Zingarans began adapting full plate armour and horse barding for their use.

When Zingara does gather for battle the Zingaran army wields as much power as any Hyborian army. They now duplicate the heavy cavalry charge that enabled the Hyborians to conquer their empires in the first place. Infantrymen are still used to contain and block but now contain arbalesters to counter Hyborian archer units.

### REGULAR ARMY

The regular army are those knights and soldiers raised by the various feudal lords as part of their obligations to the barons, counts and the king himself. The regular army is comprised of knights, lesser cavalry, archers and infantry. These armies also have officers, adjutants, scouts and supporting trains.

#### The Knights

Zingara's elite knights are just as skilled as their Poitanian enemies, and perhaps somewhat more numerous. However, given the difficulties in fielding even a single unit of knights it is unlikely that this numeric superiority will ever translate into a distinct military advantage. Their absolute numbers may be higher, but their lack of central authority means their full numbers will never take the field. Each unit of Zingaran knights centres around a single, charismatic noble. This noble will often be a named character, acting with the support of his troops.

Knights must take care of their arms and armour on an almost continual basis. Straps need replacing and armour needs to be scoured and/or oiled with olive oil to prevent rust. Any character proficient with armour also knows how to take care of his armour. A monthly Int check (DC 10) or Craft (armourer) check (DC 5) will take care of this maintenance. Failure to maintain armour reduces its Damage Reduction by one each month until maintenance is done. Each month with failed maintenance raises the DC of the check by five. Once Damage Reduction is half of its original value, it must be repaired by a craftsman.

Horses and equipment are central to a knight's success. His life or death depends on the quality of his horses and equipment. The greater knights, who apprenticed as pages or squires, usually have high ranks in Appraise and Animal Handling, and even the lesser cavalry care continually for their mounts and arms.

There are three types of Zingaran knight: royal knights of the crown, noble knights and commoner knights.

**Royal Knights:** Royal knights serve the king. They typically have allegiances to the king of Zingara, their family and their unit commanders. The shield of the royal knights has a yellow field divided into thirds by two wavy bands of



blue (representing the Black and Thunder rivers). A black tower is the central device in the royal shield. Royal knights fight with plate armour, a kite shield, a long, double-bladed broadsword when fighting mounted and a single-bladed arming sword if on foot. They also carry a double-axe that is designed to be thrown or used in close melee. Zingaran royal knights do not commonly use maces or hammers. They also carry lances.

**Noble Knights:** Noble knights are lower nobles who agree to fight as part of their feudal obligations. They typically hold allegiances to a Zingaran noble, their family and their unit commanders. The shield of the nobles knights has a yellow field divided into thirds by two wavy bands of blue (representing the Black and Thunder rivers). Each individual noble has its own symbol as the central device in the noble shield in place of the

royal black tower between the two 'rivers'. Noble knights also wear heavy armour, although it is not always full plate. Scale armour is also well known among this class of knights. Their shields are kidney-shaped. They fight with long, double-bladed broadswords when mounted and a single-bladed arming sword if used as infantrymen. They rarely use maces and hammers, but do so with more frequency than a royal knight. If used, they use them when mounted. They also use lances. About fifty percent of them will have a double-axe for throwing or melee use. They wear burgonets, lightweight and open-faced helmets common among Zingaran horsemen. Noble burgonets are usually of fairly high quality, with the comb and helm forged of one piece. Many have a falling chin and neck protection to enclose the face, along with a gorget. Some knights incorporate a plume holder at the base of the helmet.

**Commoner Knights:** The commoner knight is a class of knight unique in the Hyborian world. Commoner knights are non-noble men who are wealthy enough to purchase a horse and arms and agree to fight for a free city as part of its militia. Occasionally the commoner knight is employed to fight for the king or one of the counts. They typically have allegiances to their city, their family and their unit commanders. The shield of the commoner knights has a yellow field with the arms of the city they represent as the central device. Commoner knights wear whatever kind of armour they





can afford, which is often leather or scale. Instead of a great helm, most can only afford a metal cap with a nose guard over a chain coif. Some can afford burgonets, a light-weight helmet used by cavalry in Zingara who do not need heavier infantry closed-helms. A burgonet has a peaked brow, an uprightly combed skull and hinged ear-pieces. Often a gorget is worn with the burgonet. Commoner knights wield spears more often than lances and use wooden round shields with leather covers. They fight with whatever sword they can afford and are likely to fight from horseback with maces or hammers.

### Arbalesters

Zingaran arbalesters train to contain and block enemy infantry units, with emphasis more on swordsmanship than actual archery. Most lords field their own arbalesters and the king uses his own funds to maintain a unit as well. Arbalesters are not as effective as Bossonian longbow men on the field of battle but they can have a significant impact on cavalry or other massed troops. The various units of arbalesters work reasonably well together though those loyal to opposed lords have been known to 'miss' an occasional order if it will get their rivals killed. They usually have three allegiances from the following list: Zingara, king of Zingara, individual Zingaran lords and unit commanders.

Each arbalester carries an arbalest, 30 bolts and a single-edged arming sword. He wears a scale or leather shirt covered with a surcoat showing his lord's crest.

### Zingaran Men-at-Arms

The Zingaran men-at-arms are esquires who have risen from the ranks of noble-born soldiers to begin their long march to glory, or at least who have survived long enough not to be considered completely expendable by their lords. Some are commoners who, through virtue of service as soldiers, have been granted noble status as esquires. Zingaran men-at-arms ride into battle beside their noble leaders. Each knight unit will have two units of men-at-arms to act as support. They usually have to swear allegiance to their knights.

Men-at-arms use the heraldry of their individual lord knights. The shield of the royal troops has a yellow field divided into thirds by two wavy bands of blue (representing the Black and Thunder rivers). A black tower is the central device in the royal shield. Other nobles use a differing central symbol between the two 'rivers'.

Most men-at-arms have decent warhorses to ride as well as good mail hauberks and steel caps with

nose guards to ward off arrows. They do not use large shields. They rarely fight mounted, instead using their horses to make them a mobile infantry force. They use single-bladed arming swords.

### Zingaran Soldiers (Conscript)

Largely untrained peasants, the infantrymen of Zingara simply try to stay alive. They go to battle because of their feudal relationship with their lord. They do receive some training with their spears or hunting bows before being sent out to face down heavy cavalry, but nowhere near enough to hold their ground after repeated charges. Fortunately, the nobles do not really expect them to hold their ground long. So long as they blunt the first charge most nobles will forgive them if they throw down their spears and run for their lives. Many are armed with double-edged short swords in addition to spears. Some units have hunting bows and arrows. The unfortunate peasants are given leather jerkins topped with a steel cap along with their weapons. A few carry large shields strapped to their backs, but most do not bother; there is never enough time to sling it down before the spears break and the nobles in plate armour rage through the lines.

### Freebooters (Conscript)

Many lords will hire a crew of Zingaran Freebooters to serve as naval guards, assault forces or raiders. These pirates are not the most loyal of retainers, but will serve if the gold seems good enough. Many swear allegiance to the king of Zingara or a Zingaran noble when they receive their papers of marquee. Most also have allegiance toward their officers.

Zingaran freebooters generally wear leather jerkins and steel caps. They wield double-edged broad swords or single-edged arming swords in personal combat, and primarily use bows for ranged attacks. A handful use crossbows, but most such weapons cannot survive the harsh, wet conditions found on the open seas.

## MERCENARIES

Zingara relies heavily upon mercenary armies, especially Shemite troops. Kings and nobles simply do not have enough soldiers anymore because of the civil wars and many cannot even afford to field the ones they have for long. Using mercenaries is often cheaper than paying nobles to remain in the field longer than their two month terms. Æsir infantrymen, Bossonian archers, Gunderland pikemen, Aquilonian knights and Shemitish mounted archers are the main mercenaries used by the Zingarans. They are usually expected to arm themselves.



# Zingaran Treachery

## GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

**ZINGARA EVOLVED OUT** of a group of primitives in the valley of Zingg. These early Zingarans were similar to the Shemite in form and lived south of the Picts. They built megalithic monuments to gruesome gods as they came out of their primitive state. They were a peaceful people for the most part, concentrating on agriculture and herding. The Zingg valley was a fertile and wondrous habitat for these people. They developed mead and used a unique pottery style that emulated cords. They discovered copper, tin and zinc in the mountains near the valley and learned to mine these metals. Other primitive groups evolving around the area often fought with the burgeoning Zingg culture and they created weapons. They learned to work and mix minerals, discovering bronze, giving them a distinct advantage over many of their neighbours.

The early Zingg inhabitants organised themselves into tribes and soon had a trading network established; after several thousands of years, they began to organise into a more urban culture, complete with social stratifications and craft specialisation when the Picts arrived from the north.

A southern tribe of Picts attacked them, invading their peaceful agricultural society. The Picts settled in the Zingg Valley and neighbouring areas. They intermarried and adopted much of the Zingg culture, mixing and matching ideas and bloodlines as time went on, creating an exotic culture. This culture was based on herder and farmer commoners protected by a warrior elite. Kings were generally Pictish, although this distinction fell to the wayside as the bloodlines became hopelessly tangled. Stone walls were developed as were protective ditches. Unlike the Picts to the north of the mountains, which soon became a cultural divider, this culture evolved relatively quickly, becoming more and more civilised. Again, urban areas began to develop when a second wave of Picts moved into the area, turning the area into a war-zone for a few decades. The Zingg people began to develop better strongholds and ruled from those strongholds.

Acheron grew into prominence and a wave of Shemite invaders poked into the Zingg area, driven west by the Stygians. Trade with Acheron began among the growing Zingg peoples and the Shemites were assimilated into their culture. Iron weapons became the norm. The wave of Shemite culture changed the burial habits of the people – no longer was a person's weapons buried with him; instead, the weapons were redistributed among the living. The Shemites

also brought a concept of law with them. Although Shemite law was oral, the Zingg people soon took to writing the laws down. Also during this period, the clan ceased to be the basic Zingg political/social unit. The clan was replaced by fortified cities with a defined territory. If a person lived in that territory, he belonged to that city. Each of these city-territories was independent of the others and did not qualify as a nation, although overall cultural similarities can be seen.

Then, as happened to many of these burgeoning cultures, the Hyborians arrived, burning, looting, slaying everything in their paths, conquerors of unequalled passion. The Hyborian tribe that discovered the valley of Zingg conquered and, in turn, mixed in their heritage with the cauldron brew of culture already there. The Hyborians, one by one, crushed the city-states of the evolving Zingg culture. The elite warrior-class was decimated by the superior tactics of the fierce Hyborians. For 500 more years this multi-cultural concoction boiled and bubbled, even as Acheron fell in flames beneath the scintillating torches and singing swords of the Hyborians and the Hyrkansians finally rode out of the east to establish Turan. Zingg society was reordered with the Hyborians as the aristocrats. Wars raged across the land as the Hyborian lords fought each other to be king of the entire area. The old elite warriors joined in the fighting, learning the ways of the Hyborians. Eventually a king rose, a charismatic war-leader named Rodrigo, who came from a mixture of Hyborian and Zingg blood. He managed to unite an army comprised of all the peoples in this brewing culture. Zingara, a unified nation under this powerful feudal king, had risen from its fertile valley.

Neighbouring Argos was founded on the heels of Acheron's demise, a vulture that dove for the sea trade established by that now-dead kingdom. Commerce sprung up between Zingara and Argos, as well as between Zingara and Poitain. Blood and kinship developed between the trio of nations. From the people of Argos, they learned about the wealth to be gained from the sea trade, and so Zingara built ships and sailed the mighty blue oceans, seeking wealth and treasure abroad.

At some point in history, Zingara decided to just sink Argos' merchant fleet, chartering patriotic privateers with letters of marque to plunder their enemy's



shipping and, perhaps, to neutralise piratical Argosseans out of the Barachan Isles. Known as the Zingaran Freebooters, they preyed upon the Argossean coastal towns and shipping with a rapacity not even the Zingaran nobility could have anticipated. The ancient feud between Argos and Zingara took an extremely bloody turn with the chartering of pirates. The Argosseans had their own band of pirates, the Barachans, whose favoured targets were Zingarans, especially Zingaran Freebooters. Although the Barachan pirates refrained from attacking Argossean ships in return for safe harbour in Messantia and other Argossean ports, the Freebooters turned renegade and began to attack Zingaran ships and coastal towns just as often as they did Argossean ships and towns.

Even though they were unified under a single king, the Zingarans continued to display independent streaks. The various localities that emerged throughout Zingara's history continued to be almost self-governing. Fighting continually broke out amongst the various dukes over fiefs, manors and breaches of honour. Even though Zingara is geographically on the fringes of civilisation, they grew to take their civilisation seriously, taking it to an elegant point. The arts were encouraged, especially folk dances and swordsmanship displays. When the Mitran revolution came, the Zingarans were more resistant than most of the Hyborian nations. Most saw Mitra as nothing more than another version of their own gods – same stories, different name. A few baronies, however, adopted the new religion whole-heartedly, while others did not. Most simply incorporated Mitra into their own existing mythologies, just swapping out their already-similar chief deities with Mitra. Regardless of how the Mitran revolution was handled in each province, it ultimately just gave the barons and the increasingly powerful temples another reason to fight each other.

Cities and towns became increasingly important to Zingara's economy and power. Commerce kept Zingara alive through all the internal strife. The continual wars, however, disrupted the flow of commerce in and out of the cities and did little good to the overall population as the feudal lords conscripted soldiers from the populations. The cities and towns insisted on an escape from the feudal system and eventually talked the Zingaran king into granting them Freedom Charters. The charters gave the city freedom from feudal obligations overall but the town councils, however, still had to answer to the king and had to maintain a trained military force for the king's use. These Freedom Charters aided in repopulating the cities, as people could migrate to the cities and know they would not be conscripted into some army fighting for ridiculous private causes. The charter system lasted for nearly 300 years and was given to major Zingaran cities by the king. Eventually the cities no longer needed the repopulation so kings since that time have not granted further charters

to newer cities, although those with an extant charter were permitted to keep them – until recently.

A major motivation behind the recent civil wars in Zingara revolves around these charters. King Ferdrugo abolished the Freedom Charters because of several internal and private needs revolving around the growing strength of the Mitran cults and the barons, who had begun to consolidate against the king. The abolition led to King Ferdrugo's death and the fall of Zingara's infrastructure.

The independent nature of the Zingarans, which would later show itself in countless rebellions against Aquilonia after it conquered the nation, likely explains why the Freebooters broke free of their noble charters. Ships are like a country or kingdom unto themselves and the proud Zingarans would treat them like independent states of Zingara. Just as the chivalric dukes of Zingara engage in petty conflicts among themselves, conflicts that rage on up to full out civil wars, so too do these little states wage war against their own kind.

## CIVIL WAR

With the fall of the feudal system, Zingaran peasants revolt constantly in Zingara. The nobles are no longer constrained by the feudal system and limit Zingara's ability to unite under a centralised political system. The wealthy townspeople share legal privileges with the feudal nobles, making them impossible to control. The politically aggressive clergy and the economically aggressive cities are their own political entities who insist on their own autonomy, further making unity difficult.

Fiefs that once had towns and villages full of manorial peasants producing food now find they have scattered peasants in actual control of more land than ever before – and the peasants now have more power. The peasants tend to minimise the amount of labour they have to do to produce food and rarely bother to produce more than a subsistence level. This, in turn, gives the nobles less to work with. If each peasant gives up a hundredth of his yield to his lord, the lord has more if he has more peasants. Thus the lords try not to use infantry unless it is a mercenary infantry unit. Using the knights for most of the skirmishes causes more and more nobles to die every year.

With the deaths of many lords, the peasants have begun to lose their obligations and are primarily producing on a subsistence level, with new lords coming in and taking even that from them. Peasants have taken to hiding food from the knights and the lords, who have taken to raping and robbing the peasants in order to get at the food. The peasants are starting to realise they have power because they control the labour; they are also realising that if they produce at levels higher than subsistence and hide the surplus from





the marauding lords, they can sell the surplus in the cities for a profit – giving them wealth and the means to purchase additional labour for additional surplus, but if they produce more than a subsistence amount, they risk losing it all to the lords. The lords have power because they control the arms and means of warfare; they have the means to take the surplus and the leisure to hunt for the hidden caches. The cities have power because they control mercantile wealth; they can feed their people if they can get the peasants to sell their produce to them. Other lords are increasing taxes on the peasants to pull in the wealth the peasants are trying to get their hands on. All of these power sources are colliding. Fields are being razed and burned in order to keep food out of the hands of whomever is seen to be illegally profiting from the surplus.

Zingara is marred now by extreme levels of disease, mass death, infanticide, cannibalism and criminal activity. Famine is sweeping across the nation as these ‘food wars’ continue, especially in the central reaches. The famines are a destabilising force, causing everyone in central Zingara to sacrifice long-term prosperity for short-term survival. They are forced to eat their seeds, making the next year’s planting sparse, and they are killing their draught animals, leading to smaller farms and fields. The cities are becoming overcrowded with the poor. Many, including some knights, resort to becoming bandits in order to secure food or the means to acquire food.

With less food being grown because of decreasing numbers of labourers, the price of food is nearly triple the amounts listed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, meaning only the wealthy or the nobles can actually afford to purchase food in quantity.

## ZINGARAN LAW

Zingaran law is quickly falling apart. Originally, Zingara’s legal system was created for little reason other than to preserve the privileges of the privileged – to maintain the power of those who had power for little reason other than the circumstances of their birth. Listed below are the old laws before the civil war. Most of the Zingaran cities still uphold these laws and some of the more traditionally minded courts – but the civil war is causing this ancient code of law to become defunct in many areas, especially in central Zingara.

### Laws of Murder

- ❖ If a man unintentionally kills another, he is not guilty of murder.
- ❖ Those guilty of intentionally killing a freeborn man are guilty of murder and will be put to death. If the murderer has accomplices who do not deliver the killing blow, they shall receive 200 lashes in public, shall be scalped and shall pay 50 silver coins to the dead man’s heirs; if unable to pay the sum, accomplices will be given over to the heirs or relatives as slaves.
- ❖ Any man put to death for murder shall be put to death in the same manner in which the murder happened whenever possible. If a man murders through sorcery, then he shall be burned alive at the stake or upon a pyre.
- ❖ If a first man pushes a second man into a third, and the third man dies, the second man is not guilty of murder, and if the first did not intend to kill the third with the second, then he shall pay 1,000 silver coins to the dead man’s heirs for negligence. If the first did intend to kill the third with the second, then he is guilty of murder.
- ❖ If two men fight and an innocent third man is killed without intent, then both men must pay 1,000 silver coins for fighting negligently, regardless of who struck the killing blow.
- ❖ If a man intends to wound another but accidentally kills the other, that man shall be guilty of murder.
- ❖ If a man accidentally kills another while engaging in sport he is not guilty of murder and shall pay a 1,000 silver coins to the man’s heirs and shall receive fifty lashes for sporting without due caution.
- ❖ Masters may not kill their slaves without an order from the court. Should a slave admit to a crime punishable by death, then the master must report that immediately to an authority. If an investigation shows this to be true, the master will be given permission to carry out the penalty of death. If a slave attacks his master, then the master may also kill the slave.
- ❖ If man slays his slave unlawfully, he must be exiled and made infamous (his Reputation type changes to Shamed) for life and his property given to his heirs.
- ❖ If a man kills or murders a woman, the penalties are



double what he would pay if he had done the same to another man.

- ❖ If a man kills or murders the slave of another, he shall pay one half the normal fines and penalties to the dead slave's master.
- ❖ If a slave kills or murders a freeborn man, he shall pay the penalties indicated but if he cannot and his master will not, then the slave must be given over to the victim's heirs as their slave.
- ❖ If a man murders his wife, he suffers the penalties of murder and his wife's family receives the man's property. If a man kills his wife but does not murder her, he is not a murderer but still must forfeit his property to the wife's family for failing to care for her.

### Laws of Theft

- ❖ A man claiming something has been stolen from him must be able to describe the item and show that he once owned the item.
- ❖ It is unlawful to associate with thieves. Anyone in the company of a thief and who is aware of a theft or receives stolen goods is equally as guilty of the theft as the actual thief and must pay equal penalties as the thief. If a man receives stolen property and cannot find the thief to give to the law, he shall pay double the thief's fines.
- ❖ If a man steals an item, he shall pay to the former owner of the item a sum eleven-fold the value of that which was stolen. If he does not have that sum, he will be made the slave of the former owner of the item.
- ❖ A freeman may not purchase anything from a man he does not know, unless the stranger is able to produce someone known to both parties to vouch for the stranger's character. Only then may a man profess ignorance in purchasing stolen property. If he purchases property from a stranger without a testimony and that property is shown to be stolen, then the purchaser has knowingly received stolen goods. The man who purchases stolen goods is on the same footing as the thief.
- ❖ If a man unknowingly purchases stolen property and the property is exposed as having been stolen, the purchaser must restore the property to the former owner and must make an oath to diligently find the thief. If the thief is found, half of his fine shall go to the man who unknowingly bought the property and the other half to the owner who had the property stolen from him in the first place.
- ❖ If a thief is killed during the day and the thief is defending himself with a sword, then this is not murder.
  - ❖ If a thief is killed at night while attempting to steal, then this is not murder, even if the thief did not have an opportunity to defend himself.

- ❖ All crimes die with the perpetrator; so if a thief dies, his heirs may inherit his property, even if that property is subsequently identified as being stolen.

### Law of War Deserting

- ❖ If a military officer accepts a bribe to allow a soldier to leave the army or not join the army, the officer must pay nine-fold the bribe received to his own commander.
- ❖ If the military officer allows a soldier to leave or not join the army without receiving a bribe, he shall pay ten silver coins to each soldier under his command as an apology and will no longer be allowed to command any number of soldiers.
- ❖ Anyone who does not show up at the appointed time and place when called to defend his kingdom or home is considered a deserter, unless incapacitated by sickness or old age, or because they are under fourteen years of age.
- ❖ If an officer of the military deserts during a time of war, that officer shall be beheaded.
- ❖ A non-officer who deserts an army at war will be exiled and all of his property confiscated by the Crown.
- ❖ Anyone called to war must bring a twelfth of his slaves with him as soldiers and must appropriately arm them. If he hides the number of his slaves in order that the work on his manor or estate not be disrupted, that man shall be considered a deserter even if he himself joins the war.

### Laws of Marriage

- ❖ Marriage shall not be entered into without a dowry.
- ❖ Any freeman may marry any freewoman, regardless of national origin.
- ❖ It is unlawful for a girl to marry against the will of her father while she is betrothed to another. Both shall be delivered, with all of their property, into the power of the betrothed man who was spurned. Anyone who aided the girl's rebellion against her father must pay 100 silver coins to the betrothed man or be enslaved to him.
- ❖ If a gift is made as a pledge of betrothal, the betrothal may not be rescinded without returning the pledge.
- ❖ Elderly women may not marry young men.
- ❖ If the father dies, the disposition of all children in regards to marriage shall fall to the mother.
- ❖ If a girl dishonours her modesty and marries beneath her station, she loses any rights she previously had in regards to inheriting from her parents. If the girl is of the noble character class, and marries beneath her station, she loses the Wealth benefit of the class.
- ❖ If a woman marries or fornicates within a year of the death of her husband, she shall pay half of her property to her first husband's children or, if there are no children, to his family.



- ❖ A freeborn woman who marries her slave or sexually consorts with him shall be burned alive after scourging, along with her enslaved lover.
- ❖ If a freeborn woman marries the slave of another or consorts sexually with the slave of another, both shall suffer 100 lashes and the pair shall be separated. If she is caught a second time, she shall receive another 100 public lashes and be considered infamous (her Reputation type becomes Shamed). If she does this again a third time, she will be given to her nearest relatives as a slave, for she has forfeited her position and dignity.
- ❖ If a freedman or woman, after gaining their freedom, marries a slave, the slave's owner must give three warnings; if these warnings are not heeded, the freedman or freedwoman will become the slave of the master of the slave they are living with as a couple.
- ❖ If a master allows his slave to marry the slave of another without the knowledge or consent of the other master, the other master may treat the former master's slave as his own.
- ❖ If a man deceives a freewoman into accepting a slave as a husband, a horrible act usually done with the intent of claiming the children of the union as slaves, he must give up that slave as a freedman, forever free along with any children. He must further forfeit a quarter of his property to the newly freed slave so that he will not be a burden to society.
- ❖ If a free man and woman marry without the consent of her parents, the husband must pay a dowry to the father. Failing this, the father may castrate the man and take his daughter back into his power. If the parents are unwilling to negotiate the dowry or refuse to receive the daughter, the daughter is free to be married but may not inherit from her parents.

## ORDEAL OF THE HOT IRON

A common method of proving one's innocence is the ordeal of the hot iron. Usually only women are required to use this method of proving innocence, as the men can resort to duels. The ordeal of the hot iron is used when the accused woman is without the means to hire a champion to defend her innocence or when the evidence is uncertain or the evidence fails the woman entirely. It is usually used if the woman is accused of prostitution, procuring, witchcraft or if the woman is deemed unworthy of legal protection (such as a gypsy woman or other 'undesirable').

The ordeal begins by an examination of the woman to ensure she has no charm on her to protect her. Her hands are washed to make sure dirt or filth do not protect her. A four-foot iron rod is heated in a fire and blessed by a priest of Mitra. The rod is placed in the woman's hands and she



must walk with it for nine paces. The judge then waxes her hands and bandages them. The judge keeps the woman in his house for three days. At the end of the three days her hands are unwound and examined. If her hands are charred, she is guilty. Unfortunately, her hands are usually little more than twisted claws after the ordeal. Thus, the ordeal is seen as a deterrent against certain crimes – as a woman will not want to be accused of these crimes and forced to undergo the ordeal which will either cause her to be killed or leave her a cripple for the rest of her life. Some towns allow the woman to carry the rod in one hand in order to allow her some respite should she be innocent of the charges.

## GOVERNMENT

Zingara was an atypical feudal land, a monarchy in Hyborian fashion, though Zingara was not a true Hyborian kingdom. Under a dazzlingly complex political system, dukes and counts ruled fiefs in the name of the king in Kordava, although in most cases that fealty was, at best, nominal and somewhat confusing. The nobles of Zingara are a proud, individualistic race, not given to subservience. They rebelled both openly and secretly. This continual backstabbing, political manoeuvring and social ladder-climbing under weak kings who were more concerned about the state of Argos' shipping brought about the final dissolution of Zingara as a bastion of civilisation and good breeding. Today, Zingara is a faltering anarchy.

In the past, most court officials did not hold hereditary positions, so in many ways Zingara was never as traditionally feudal as Aquilonia or Nemedia. Court positions instead were paid positions. Zingara was atypical in its feudal system in other ways



as well. Land grants were not always linked to vassalage or allegiance. Sometimes land was granted simply as a reward or, when granted to the temples or clergy, to earn a place with Mitra in the heavens. Also, vassalage and allegiance did not automatically come with land rights, like they did (and still do) in Aquilonia or Nemediā. Land that was given could also be retaken by the giving lord or his heirs. Immunities to royal justice were also never handed out as a noble privilege, and even so-called 'free' cities occasionally felt the heavy-hand of royal intervention.

## TOWN GOVERNMENT

Zingaran towns are governed primarily through an open council, an assembly of all the male householders. These councils generally meet once per week after the religious services of the week. A magistrate is appointed by the king to be his representative at these councils. This arrangement works well for villages and small towns, but city-sized urban areas find this to be unworkable – there are few buildings able to hold all the male household owners of a city and still enable them to be heard.

Larger cities divide their areas up into townships led by Mitran temples. Each township in a city elects a jurymen to represent his township and their needs. The jurymen of each township then meet and make decisions, along with the king's magistrate. The jurymen are also charged with maintaining order in their township, so they operate as constables and soldiers. In addition to the jurymen, 24 noblemen are appointed to sit on the council, and are given the title of regulator.

The magistrates of the city are assisted by officers to enforce the laws and have the power to raise small armed forces to police and defend a city. One of the officers who answers to the magistrate is the Mayor of Justice, who hears criminal cases on a daily basis at the prison. Civil cases are heard by the Mayor of the Ordinaries. A chief constable usually oversees the township jurymen constables. Public scribes ensure the orderly conduct of life by recording all transactions, such as legal proceedings, council proceedings and actions and similar duties. Many Zingaran cities have a town standard-bearer, whose duty is to lead a city's army into battle. Other officials include council messengers and a council proctor – who would speak for the council at the court of the king. The Constable of Payments is a Zingaran official delegated to ensure the collection of payments ordered by the courts and the mayors. The prison is run by a council-appointed man given the title of Fiel. A mayordomo supervises any land owned jointly by the council and he is responsible for all public accounts. The mayordomo is served by a public accountant and a fund collector.

The council also appoints two Mayordomos of the Streets, who are responsible for ensuring clean streets. They appoint examiners to check the weights and measures used by merchants, as well as the overall quality of most of the merchandise sold in the city. Two clerks are appointed to oversee public works and agriculture. Another official is designated to measure lands and watch over the boundaries of the plantations and manors.

## CORRECTOR OF ABUSES

In order to maintain his various cities, the king of Zingara appoints a Corrector of Abuses for the major cities. The Corrector of Abuses is an arbitrator who arrives when the king feels the existing officials of a city have proven themselves insufficient or rebellious. He stays until the situation is corrected and he has the full authority of the king. He is paid by the city whose offences caused his arrival. In theory, a town unhappy with their government must ask for the Corrector to be sent, but in reality the king often sends him to cities and towns that have somehow displeased him.

## THE KING OF ZINGARA

King Ferdrugo de Ramiro is dead in the default time period of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. The throne of Zingara sits empty and Princess Chabela lives in exile. If the Games Master sets the campaign prior to the events of *The Black Sphinx of Nebthu* (or decides those events never happen in case players want to try for the throne), then the throne of Zingara sits empty. After the events of that story, King Conan set up a puppet throne in Zingara. King Olivero and Queen Chabela de Ramiro rule under the overlordship of Aquilonia. Even so, the kingdom is still in anarchy. The civil wars have ruined the kingdom. Much work needs to be done to restore order. This will require money and troops, something the new king and queen do not have a lot of. Will they indebt themselves further to King Conan and ask for aid? Will they strive to squash Argos' shipping to capture the sea trade market? What about the future? Will a republic be established? The king and queen have eleven children, princes and princesses all and the bloody civil wars seem ripe to begin again...

## KING FERDRUGO DE RAMIRO III

**Medium Humanoid (Zingaran noble 15)**

**Hit Dice:** 10d8+10-15 (75 hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (+1 Dex, +5 Reflex save)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 16 (+5 level, +1 Dex)

**Parry Defence:** 26 (+7 level, -1 Str, +1 parry, +3 special regional feature, +6 intricate swordplay)

**DR:** –



**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +11/+10

**Attack:** Arming Sword +15 melee

**Full Attack:** Arming Sword +15/+10/+5 melee

**Damage:** Arming Sword 1d10-1/ 19-20 x2/ AP 1

**Special Attacks:** +3 special regional bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword, sneak attack +1d6, +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword

**Special Qualities:** Zingaran traits, title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, wealth, special regional feature +3, social ability (*family ties, smear others, etiquette*), Lead By Example +6, enhanced leadership, Do You Know Who I Am?

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +15 (+18 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 13, Con 9, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 23

**Skills:** Appraise +12, Balance +4, Bluff +24\*, Diplomacy +21, Gather Information +16\*, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +12, Profession (sailor) +6, Ride +9, Sense Motive +20\*, Spot +9, Use Rope +4

**Feats:** Combat Expertise, Intricate Swordplay, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Parry, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (arming sword)

**Reputation:** 72 (Honest) (\*He may add an additional +8 bonus to his Bluff, Sense Motive and Gather Information checks)

**Leadership:** 26/32 (13<sup>th</sup> level cohort; 800 1<sup>st</sup> level, 80 2<sup>nd</sup> level, 20 3<sup>rd</sup> level, six 4<sup>th</sup> level, three 5<sup>th</sup> level, one 6<sup>th</sup> level)

**Code of Honour:** Chivalric

**Allegiances:** Zingara, family

**Possessions:** Ornate Zingaran arming sword, noble clothing, the crown of Ramiro.

King Ferdrugo de Ramiro III was the last of the Zingaran kings before years of civil war ravaged the nation. He ruled Ramiro, a large district of Zingara, for years before becoming king of the entire united nation. He took the throne after the death of King Mordermi, a tyrannical usurper who caused the death of King Rimanendo, another hated tyrant. He had a troubled rule. Tired of kings and tyrants, the nobles were always restless under stern Ferdrugo's rule, despite his heritage as the descendant of an ancient hero-king. Ferdrugo had a brother named Tovarro who served as an ambassador to Asgalun in Pelishtia. Ferdrugo died of old age not long before Conan took the throne of Aquilonia. His only daughter, Chabela, found herself exiled, so Ferdrugo's death brought about the civil wars.

During his life, Ferdrugo was known to be somewhat melancholy. Life for Ferdrugo was one of responsibility, discipline and restriction. A determined man, Ferdrugo accomplished his goals with practical steps, thinking of obstacles and solutions as steps on a ladder. He always considered the present to be the bottom of the ladder and his goals to be at the top of the ladder – which was usually at the bottom of another ladder. He was never without ambition or goals. He never bothered much with pleasures, considering such things to be idle-time wasters and, by extension, success-delayers. Ferdrugo's cold passions gave him only a single daughter as heir to the throne.

Possessed of a dry sense of humour, Ferdrugo was sober and his cutting wit had a way of bursting forth when people least expected him to see anything funny about a matter. Ferdrugo was cautious with money, spending it wisely but conservatively. He painstakingly prepared for everything. He did not ascend his ladders without the appropriate gear. His cohort was a philosopher named Godrigo.





# Geography of Zingara

## WHERE RIVERS FLOW

**ZINGARA IS A** fertile land. Two great rivers, the Thunder and the Black, flow through it, although the mouth of the Thunder River is claimed by Argos. Zingara borders the ocean and has at least one major port, Kordava. Mountains and great forests separate Zingara from the Pictish Wilderness. These mountains are rich in tin. The Alimane River provides a border with Poitain. The border with Argos is a ghoulish forest. The Zingg valley is the dominant interior feature and lies between the Black and Thunder Rivers.

The northwest is humid, used for pasture and forest product. Beef, dairy, apples and pears grow well in regions around the Black River. The southeast has hot, dry summers and cool, rainy winters. Olives, grapes and citrus fruits are the dominant products of the southeast, although cotton, hemp and tobacco serve as secondary crops. The interior of Zingara is semi-arid steppe land where grain crops are grown; wheat grows near the rivers and barley grows farther away. Sheep and goats graze in uncultivated areas.

The southern border with Argos is a range of low hills. Just within the Zingaran side of the border is a vast, gloomy and ancient forest, uninhabited by humans but home to a great many shambling ghouls. It is said that somewhere within the forest is an ancient, accursed city, filled with ghouls. It seems likely that Zingara's infamous fiend-haunted swamps are also near this southern border region. They are infested with the dreaded snakes known as Great Serpents (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). The borders, particular the south bank of the Alimane river that borders with Aquilonia, are patrolled constantly by companies of cavalry.

The northern border with the Pictish Wilderness is mountainous. A number of Zingaran miners work here, digging out tin and other metals from the rock for trading and manufacture. Iron ore is probably found here too, as it seems likely that the Zingarans are more or less self-sufficient when it comes to the production of arms and armour.

Off the coast of Zingara are the Barachan Islands, the Trallibes and several other islands. The infamous pirate Tranicos looted the castle island of the exiled Stygian, Prince Tothmekri, before heading to the Pictish Wilderness to hide the treasure. On most maps

of the Hyborian Age, only the Barachans are shown. That island may be off of the Zingaran Coast, the Argosian Coast or possibly the Shemite coast.

**Alimane River:** a river marking the border between Aquilonia and Zingara. It is too shallow in places to allow much, if any, navigable river trade. In *The Hour of the Dragon*, Chapter 12, Conan can walk his horse across the river. A caravan trail follows along the banks of the Alimane. The road crosses the road to the Khorotas at the village of Pedassa.

❖ **The Place of Skulls** – This is the north-eastern corner of Zingara where many raids and battles with Poitain have taken place. It is a grim region of blood and death. Most assuredly it is haunted. King Conan, angry at continued Zingaran invasions even after their civil war and by the Zingaran assassination of King Milo of Argos, utterly destroyed a host of Zingarans led by Duke Pantho de Guarralid here.

**Baracha Strait:** The Baracha Strait is the stretch of water between Zingara and the Barachan Isles. It is considered dangerous.

**Black River:** The Black River has a swift current, yet is quite deep and rather wide, carrying a large volume of water. The river's source is somewhere in the mountains of northern Pictland. It then flows southward along the border of the Bossonian Marches, then along the frontier border of Westermarck. Eventually it curves to the west as it flows into Zingara on its course to the open sea. The Zingaran capital of Kordava sits at its mouth.

**Ebrough River:** This is an important waterway in Zingara. It flows near the Kosso River.

**Forest of Ghouls:** This dark forest in southern Zingara is on the border of Argos in the foothills of the Rabirian Mountains. These woods are uninhabited because of the ghouls, eaters of human flesh, the children of unholy matings with demons of the underworld by a lost and forgotten race. Somewhere in these primitive woods is an ancient, accursed city where the ghouls live. Panthers also stalk the woods.

**Island of the Twelve-Eyed God:** This island lays six weeks west and southwest of the Zingaran coast. Disloyal, sorcerous



Mitran priests brought treasure plundered from several Mitraea in Kordava to this island and fashioned from the gold an ancient monster-god idol that looks insectoid, based on a real monster said to dwell on the island. The temple of the twelve-eyed god is in a castle built atop an immense crag jutting out of the centre of the isle.

**Kosso River:** This is an important waterway in Zingara. It flows near the Ebrough River.

**Menorka:** This is a large island a day's sail from the Island of the Twelve-Eyed God. It has a small population in a port town named Mahyon. The rest of the population is spread over the island in small farms and villages.

**Rabirian Mountains:** This mountain range in northern Argos forms a border between Argos and Zingara. It is also the location of the Cave of Zingas, where, according to *Conan the Guardian* by Roland Green, a being known as a 'watcher' lives. The serrated peaks have forested crests and are broken by the Saxula pass, 'a deep cleft in the central ridge, as if made by a blow from an axe in the hands of an angry god' (L. Sprague de Camp, *Conan the Liberator*). The pass is near the Alimane river. The foothills of the Rabirian mountains are rocky and are the home of several villages. These mountains are full of precious ores and are extensively mined.

**Sagro River:** The Sagro River drains into the ocean and is a fairly major waterway in Zingara. The city of Jerida is built on its eastern bank near the mouth of the river.

**Thunder River:** This is another important river for Argos and is a point of contention with Zingara, who covets it so it can have a port at its mouth. It was named the Thunder River for the long stretches of white-water rapids in northern Zingara and southern Bossonia. The Argossean port city of Napolitos sits at its mouth.

**Torture Rock:** Officially called Coastal Prison #4, Torture Rock is a cyclopean crag located six days' sailing from the Zingaran shore. A cyclopean Zingaran prison of stone and iron is built on this rocky pinnacle that thrusts up from the ocean. It is manned by Shemite mercenaries under the watchful eye of a Zingaran official. Hammerhead sharks lurk in the ocean around it.

**Trallibes:** The Trallibes are islands off of Zingara, perhaps off the coast of the Pictish Wilderness. They may be the secret stomping grounds of the Freebooters, who are hanged if they return to Kordava or any Zingaran port. They may also have been an area of reefs and shoals.

**Zingg Valley:** A fertile valley between the Black and Thunder Rivers, with mountains on either side, this is the birthplace

of Zingara, the original settling area of the indigenous people regarded as similar to the Shemites.

## IMPORTANT ZINGARAN CITIES

Zingara is about the size of Spain. It has 44 cities, nearly 200 towns and over 40,000 villages. About 19 of these cities, 90 towns and 10,000 villages have been razed in the civil war, mostly in the north.

Many spots in towns, cities and villages are frequently (or even exclusively) set aside for exclusive use by women. There are areas of cities, usually where women's work is predominantly performed, that are considered off-limits to men. Most cities have public baths, with set hours for men to use them and other hours for women. Prostitutes tend to hover around the baths during the hours men are intended to use the baths.

## CASCAN

Several days north of Argos, Cascan is a fishing village built on the side of a mountainous hill overlooking the Thunder River. Its defining attribute is that it is broken up into layers with ramps and ladders leading up the vertical face of the hill. The streets are ledges along this hill. A small dock allows for boats to be moored for fishing on the Thunder River.

**Population:** 730 (96% Zingaran, 2% Argosseans, 1% Meadow Shemites, 1% other)

**Size:** Village (20 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 37 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 18 structures per acre (approx. 361 structures total)

**Wealth Limit:** 2,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 73,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Duke and King:** 730 silver coins

**Religion:** Zingaran Mitraism

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Fish

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

## Fortifications and Military Strength

Cascan employs seven mercenaries and 15 guards to keep the peace. There is no wall around the village. Its position, crawling up an escarpment, is deemed defence enough, giving the village the high ground in any combat.

## Administration and Power Centres

Cascan itself is ruled by a council of landowners.



## CASTLE OF VALBROSO (RUIN)

Valbroso was a Zingaran count who controlled a castle and manors on the short route from Poitain to Messantia. Valbroso died during the events of *The Hour of the Dragon*. His manors and lands are slowly starving. His castle is falling into ruin and, since his death, has been deserted. The moat is dry, half filled with debris. It is now a bandit's keep. Before his death, Count Valbroso intended to take his men-at-arms and head south to serve as mercenaries.

## GUARRALID

Guarralid is the capital of a duchy of the same name in Zingara. It is the centre of winemaking in Zingara. The town is also famous for its hot baths. Zingaran nobles often make journeys to Guarralid for medicinal reasons, often wintering there. The statistics below are for the capital city of the duchy, both of which are named Guarralid.

**Population:** 6,700 (93% Zingaran, 3% Aquilonian, 2% Black Kingdom (as slaves), 1% Meadow Shemites, 1% other)

**Size:** Small City (42.5 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 158 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 50 structures per acre (approx. 2,135 structures total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 2,250,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Duke and King:** 11,250 silver coins

**Religion:** Zingaran Mitraism

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Guarralid is surrounded by a large wall, although a recent siege caused the collapse of a large sections of the wall less than a year ago. The city has since rebuilt the wall in a more modern style, giving the city a strange appearance. Sixty-seven Gunderman mercenaries do most of the defence work for the city. The town guard consists of 134 stalwarts commissioned by the council.

### Culture

Guarralid has a more stringent dress code than most Zingaran cities and duchies. Men are expected to wear long trousers, not loincloths or kilts or robes. Women are expected to keep their shoulders covered and

wear long, floor length skirts, preferably long enough to actually drag on the ground.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Municipal Council:** Guarralid itself is ruled by a council. There is no magistrate because there is no king.

**Temple of Mitra:** 133 clergymen are active in the pursuit of landownership and traditional oaths of fealty, working hard to make the temple the major landholder in Guarralid. This strong activity irritates the nobles and the merchants on the municipal council. The temple controls almost all of the hot springs. Most of the remainder are owned by a Zamorian councilman who runs them fairly openly as brothels, and the temple is active in campaigning against this Zamorian.

## ICARIA

Icaria is a mountain village nestled in the Rabirian Mountains among hundreds of miles of pine forests, cliff faces, valleys and gorges. The narrow streets are filled with flowers overflowing from white-washed balconies. A colony of Brythunian expatriates lives here. Icaria is the commercial centre of a fairly large network of manors and villages located in this area of the Rabirians.

**Population:** 880 (96% Zingaran, 2% Brythunian, 1% Argossean, 1% other)

**Size:** Village (20 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 44 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 18 structures per acre (approx. 352 structures total)

**Wealth Limit:** 2,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 88,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Duke and King:** 880 silver coins

**Religion:** Brythunian and Zingaran Mitraism

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Furs, goat products

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

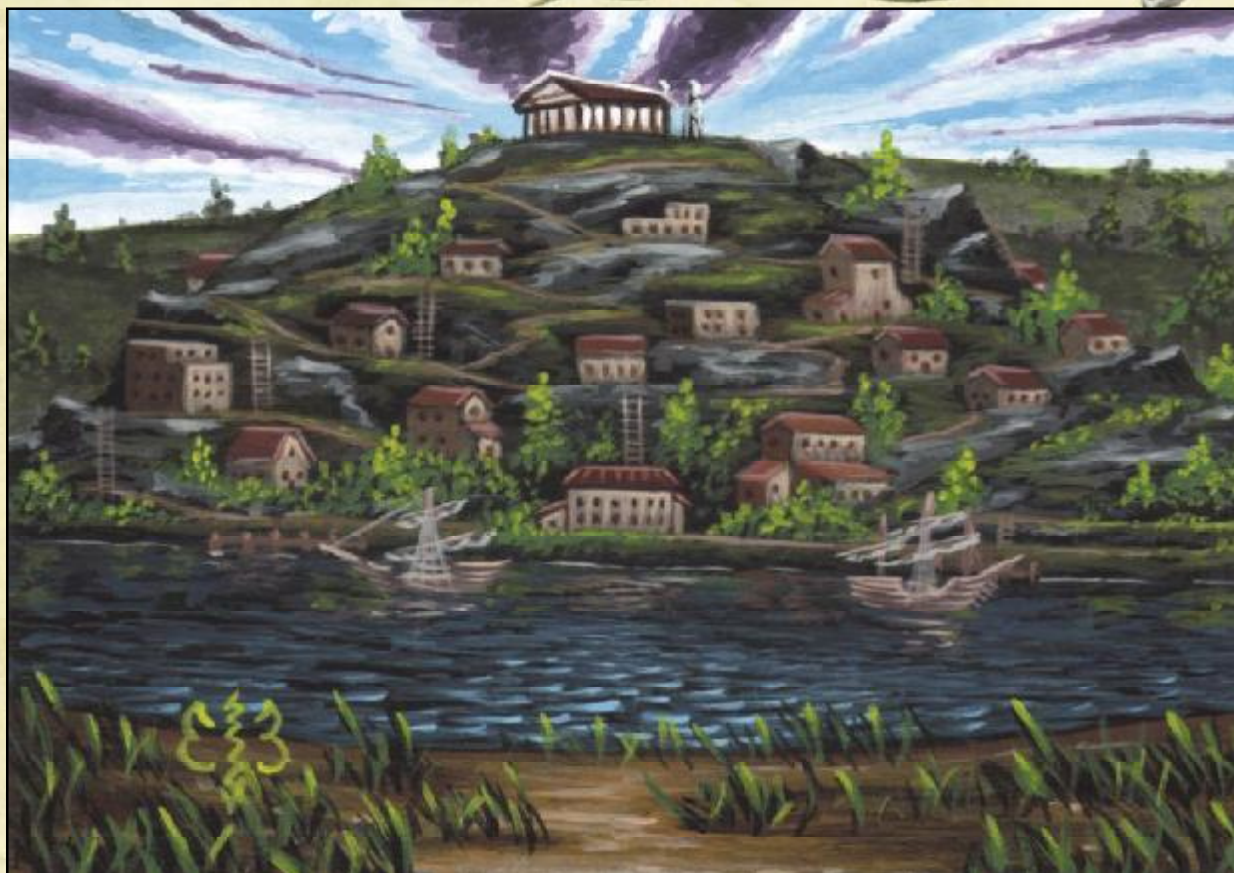
### Fortifications and Military Strength

Icaria has no wall. The town guard consists of 27 Brythunian soldiers commissioned by the village council.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Aldermen:** Aldermen are the village elders who are responsible for rousing the community when necessary, such as in times of crime or danger. They function as a council and they arbitrate petty disputes deemed too small for the manorial court, select jury members for the manorial courts if necessary, help with taxes, ensure families send appropriate





members to war when the lords call for soldiers and answer for the village to the lord or any other outside authority. The aldermen are usually the ones at the head of any mob, leading the villagers to those responsible for chaos in the village. Most of the community's work is done by committees formed out of the aldermen of the village. Those interested in serving on a committee put their name in a box and then a few names are drawn and the committee is formed. The committees serve as executive councils and usually have six to ten members who take care of most of the day-to-day administrative duties. The control of these committees is at the heart of all the politics in Icaria. The one in control of most of these committees becomes a de facto mayor.

**Temples of Mitra:** 18 clergymen are active in Icaria. Eleven of them belong to a Zingaran Mitraeum and seven belong to a Brythunian Mitraeum. Both clash constantly, each convinced the other is heretical.

## JERIDA

Jerida is a coastal city in Zingara surrounded by rich, irrigated farmlands. It is the capital city of the demesne of Jerida, a large barony of Zingara. It originated with a powerful fort that later was extended into a full-fledged castle on a great hill. Sieges are common against this city because the city commonly sides with anyone warring against the king of

Zingara. A large Mitraeum was built here (in the second castle) about two and half centuries ago but it was converted into soldier barracks about 70 years later. Smaller Mitraea now serve the people for their religious needs in Jerida.

**Population:** 9,300 (96% Zingaran, 2% Argosseans, 1% Meadow Shemites, 1% other)

**Size:** Small City (65.5 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 142 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 46 structures per acre (approx. 3,018 structures total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 69,750,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Duke and King:** 348,750 silver coins

**Religion:** Dagon (disguised as Mitra)

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Agricultural goods, horses

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Jerida has extremely thick walls built to withstand the worst sieges. Inside the city walls are two castles, one for the baron of Jerida and the other for the soldiers to use. Ninety-three Shemite mercenaries





do military work outside the town walls. The town guard consists of 186 stalwarts commissioned by the council. The city also has one ship used for naval defence.

**Culture:** Jerida is known for its horse celebration each spring. Zingara's equestrian skills are shown off, with elaborate parades demonstrating the riding skills of the knights, all decked out in their richest finery. The entire city becomes a huge riding ring, with events throughout, such as jumping contests, horse races and pageant shows. The secondary castle becomes a massive horse market for the duration of this seven-day festival.

#### Administration and Power Centres

**Council:** Jerida itself is ruled by a council as described on page 68; however, there is no magistrate because there is no king. The council jointly owns

most of the manors around the city, having bought them from the now-nominal duke.

**Cult of Dagon:** A secret cult runs much of the city behind the scenes. Those who belong to this cult make extreme efforts to hide their allegiance. The council knows of this cult and fears it, not knowing who among them could be cultists. The average person in Jerida knows nothing of this cult. The cult masquerades as a temple of Mitra. Only when select few rise beyond the fourth inner mystery does one become truly indoctrinated into the cult and its sorcerous teachings.

## KARNEMET

Karnemet is an untamed port town on the Zingaran sea-coast, according to Michael Fleisher in *The Jewelled Bird*. Guilds play a powerful force in Karnemet.

**Population:** 8,200 (96% Zingaran, 2% Argosseans, 1% Meadow Shemites, 1% other)

**Size:** Small City (60 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 137 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 46 structures per acre (approx. 2,752 structures total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 61,500,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Duke and King:** 307,500 silver coins

**Religion:** Zingaran Mitraism

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

#### Fortifications and Military Strength

Karnemet has a city wall and a spired castle. Eighty-two Shemite mercenaries do military work outside the town walls. The town guard consists of 164 Zingaran homeowners commissioned by the council.



## Administration and Power Centres

**Council of Elder Landowners:** Karnemet itself is ruled by a council as described on page 68; however, there is no magistrate because there is no king. Also, to serve on the council, one must have lived in the area for at least 20 years past their majority.

**Guilds:** In addition, the beginnings of merchant and craft guilds are rising – and they are competing for control of city resources. For example, the blacksmiths want more patrols among their streets and the weavers want the blacksmiths moved outside the city walls because of the stench of their furnaces. A representative from each guild sits on the council. The guilds are pushing the idea that guild membership should be a requirement for citizenship and legal protection in the city and on its manors.

## KORDAVA, CAPITAL OF ZINGARA

Kordava is the walled capital of Zingara and lies on the south side of the mouth of the Black River. It boasts the greatest harbour in Zingara and the greatest swordsmen; an unsurpassed school of swordsmanship is located here, run by the great Master Valerio, turning out some of the most renowned swordsmen of Zingara's courts. The nominal king of Zingara lives here in his palace. Before the ravishing civil wars described in *The Hour of the Dragon*, Kordava had one of the finest harbours on the Western Ocean. Thus far, Kordava has avoided most of the damage the civil wars have wrought in the north.

**Population:** 49,954 (79% Zingaran, 9% Aquilonian, 5% Meadow Shemite, 3% Black Kingdom (mostly as slaves), 2% Argossean (free merchants mostly), 1% Argossean (as slaves), 1% other)

**Size:** Metropolis (300 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 167 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 72 structures per acre (approx. 21,454 structures total)

**Wealth Limit:** 1,000,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 2,497,700,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Duke and King:** 1,248,850 silver coins

**Religion:** Zingaran Mitraism

**Imports:** Trade Goods (especially iron and tin ore from the mountains)

**Exports:** Trade Goods (especially finished iron and tin goods)

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

## Fortifications and Military Strength

Kordava employs 500 mercenaries, mostly Shemites and Gundermen, as an army. The city also maintains 1,000 men,

rotating from among its citizens, in its militia for guard and watch duty. The militia is paid from council funds. Anyone with the means to purchase a horse and arms is expected to render knightly service to the city. Note that a person does not necessarily have to own a horse and arms for this determination to be made; the council may examine a person's assets and simply order him to purchase the accoutrements of a knight. A typical night watch detachment consists of six guardsmen. Almost all the men of Kordava are trained with the arming sword and carry one, so the entire city can easily rise up and defend itself if necessary. In a time of need, Kordava can easily raise up to 750 mounted knights and 5,000 infantrymen (split between crossbowmen and swordsmen). The city is walled, even along the Black River, with a massive set of fortifications. The walls are built up on man-made ridges, so it looks as though the city is built on a small plateau.

## Administration and Power Centres

Kordava itself is ruled by a duke in his own castle who serves as magistrate. That a king also resides here shows the complex feudal system that exists in Zingara.

**The King:** Currently there is no king of Zingara, but when there is one, he lives in Kordava but really does not govern the city itself. His wishes are known, however, and usually followed.

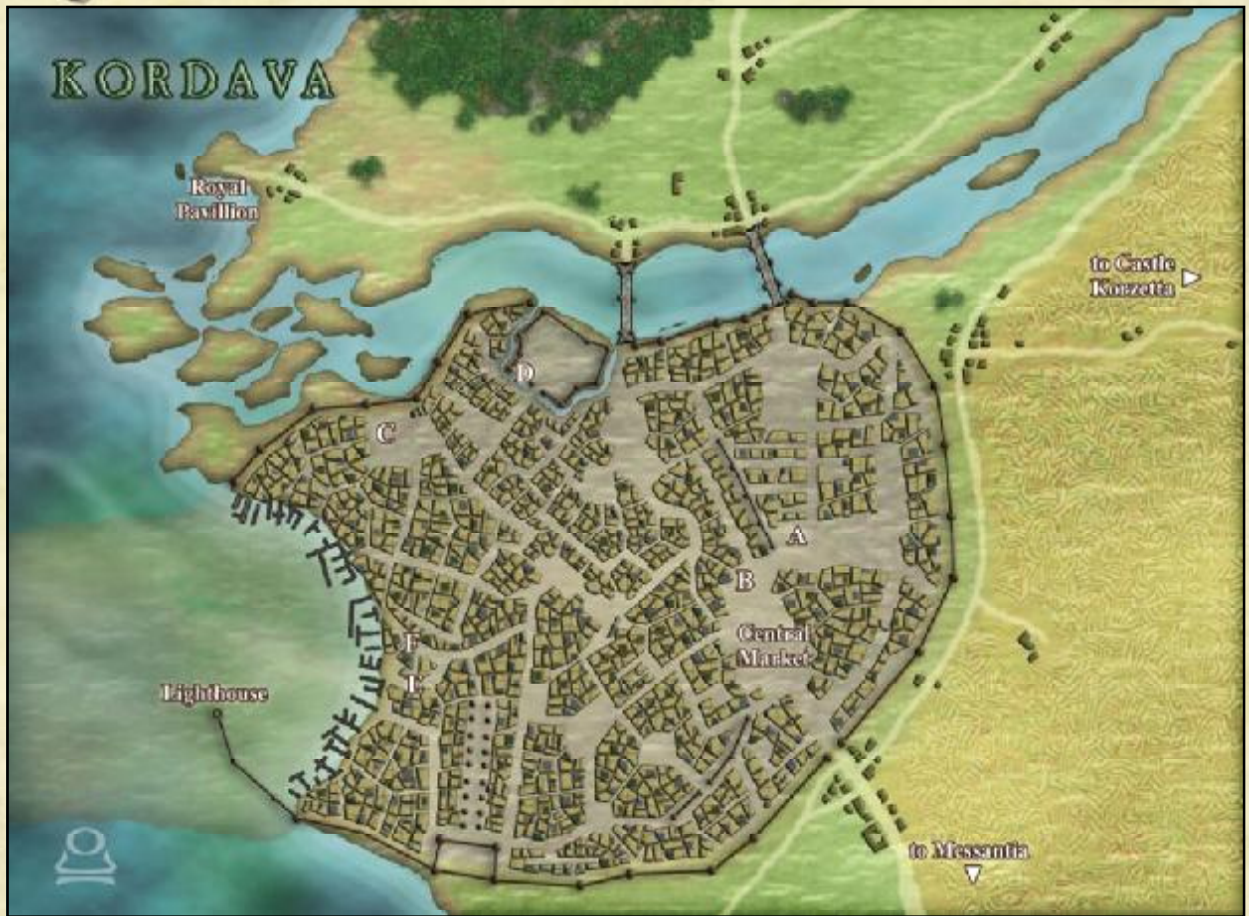
**The Nobles:** In the past, the king of Zingara made payments to the nobles to ensure their economic power over those who did not have the appropriate 'breeding' to lead. Without a king, these payments from taxes have halted, so the nobles are struggling to maintain their wealth and status, often warring with wealthy merchants in order to redistribute the wealth in the old manner.

**Magistrate:** The city council is headed by a Duke who lives in his own fortress in the city. Appointed by the king, the Duke struggles to retain hold of the city and maintain order against the coming chaos. Duke Villagro, until he met his end dealing with unholy sorcerous items, was the feudal lord of the city during much of King Ferdrugo's reign.

**The Council:** The council of Kordava functions exactly as described on page 68. They appoint city officials and make decisions for the city. They are technically headed by the magistrate, but without a king, the magistrate is seen as not having any official authority or even an authoritative voice. Advocates for the poor clash with the concerns of the nobles, whose wealth is declining in comparison to the merchants.

**Urban Poor:** An amazing number of urban poor live on the streets of Kordava, and with them, a





considerable amount of criminal activity takes place – turning them into an economic force that needs to be reckoned with. These are people driven to the brink of starvation and death by the civil wars and famines sweeping across Zingara in the absence of central authority.

**Urban Wealthy:** The merchants are forming illegal guilds and gathering wealth in amounts that alarm the nobles. The merchants are insisting upon being treated as noble. If their wealth reaches a certain point, they are forced to buy arms befitting a knight, and they are insisting on social equality to go with the military equality.

### Layout of Kordava

Kordava is a labyrinth of winding streets, mostly narrow and filthy. The courtyards of the houses are shady and festooned with flowers. Occasionally the narrow maze is broken by a picturesque square.

### Districts of Kordava

Kordava is segregated into sprawling 'townships' used to separate the city into manageable social

units and neighbourhoods. However, few of these areas are segregated into 'merchant wards,' 'wealthy wards' or 'temple wards'. The wealthy live alongside the poor and the districts are created along areas served by particular temples. Each township has its own Mitraeum and most have craftsmen, merchants, wealthy and poor all living and working alongside each other. However, there are a few features of the city that stand out:

- ❖ **The Central Market:** Entering the city from the road to Messantia, travellers come to the central market, located on the south side of the city. The market is filled with jostling humanity pouring in from beleaguered, outlying towns and villages, bringing produce from the limited, remaining fields, fish from the sea and goods produced by the various guilds of the towns.
- ❖ **Magistrate's Hall (area A):** The magistrate's hall, a large, fortified structure, is built on one end of the central market, near the prison.
- ❖ **Prison and Dancing Yard (area B):** The eastern side of the city, behind great magistrate halls and administrative buildings, is the prison and the Dancing Yard, where executions open to the public take place.



By royal concession, mountebanks peddle souvenirs from the more famous condemned men as the crowds gather to watch the villains hang.

- ❖ **The Royal Palace (area C):** The royal palace, located to the east of the barracks, is a beautiful castle, noted for its floor of polished crystal.
- ❖ **City Barracks (area D):** The city barracks lie on the north-west side, next to the royal palace.
- ❖ **Inn of the Nine Drawn Swords (area E):** This inn, located near the docks, is in one of the worst neighbourhoods of Kordava. The inn has a common room that functions as a tavern as well as private rooms for those who can afford them.
- ❖ **The Pit (area F):** Although many cities have their thieves' districts, Kordava's is unique. Centuries ago an earthquake crumbled much of Kordava, sinking it into the sea. The city was rebuilt over the ruins. Displaced, homeless poor people discovered that they could find shelter by digging out the old streets beneath the new foundation. Called the Pit, this district is a subterranean warren where any lurid vice or sordid entertainment can be enjoyed. Numerous tunnels lead to the undercity. During the day, the Pit is largely deserted but it comes to lurid life at night. It is a living museum of old styles and techniques. Buildings are oddly truncated as higher levels support the actual city above. In atmosphere, it is essentially a living catacomb for the abandoned.
- ❖ **Korzetta Castle:** This castle lies outside the city, but within the province of Kordava. It has been abandoned and sold by the Korzetta family, who have since fled Zingara. Some whisper that the Korzettas left due to debts but others claim the reason is more sinister still and rumours are whispered of black sorcery.
- ❖ **Royal Pavilion:** This castle is actually the royal pleasure palace.

## KOVA

Kova is the capital of the principality of Kova. The city has been largely devastated by famine and war. It is the size of a large city but has a population of a small city and is comprised of mostly women, children and the elderly and infirm. Food costs seven times as much as listed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* because of the vast depopulation and famine conditions (milk and beef costs eleven times as much). Most of the inhabitants suffer from malnutrition and other ailments.

**Population:** 5,630 (96% Zingaran, 2% Argosseans, 1% Meadow Shemites, 1% other)

**Size:** Large City (92 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 61 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 70 structures per acre (approx. 6,452 structures total)

**Wealth Limit:** 2,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 563,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Prince and King:** 211,128 silver coins in theory; they actually only are able to collect 1,408 sp per annum currently

**Religion:** Zingaran Mitraism

**Imports:** Trade Goods, especially food

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Kova has a city wall and a spired castle. Fifty-six Shemite mercenaries do military work outside the town walls. The town guard consists of 113 Zingaran homeowners commissioned by the council.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Prince:** Kova is a principality and is ruled by a Zingaran prince. Prince Zapayo da Kova is mentioned in Howard's *Drums of Tombalku*; he led a mercenary unit for Argos into Stygia. He never returned from that mission. One of his heirs is now prince of Kova.

**Guilds:** The beginnings of merchant and craft guilds are rising – and they are competing for control of city resources. For example, the blacksmiths want more patrols among their streets and the weavers want the blacksmiths moved outside the city walls because of the stench of their furnaces. A representative from each guild sits on the council. The guilds are pushing the idea that guild membership should be a requirement for citizenship and legal protection in the city and on its manors.

**Urban Poor:** The manors and the city itself are starving. Drove of diseased, malnourished and impoverished peasants, knights and nobles are making their way to the city, hoping for shelter, food and jobs. The starving people of Kova are nearing the point of outright rebellion against the prince.

## OZO

Oto is a city that concentrates on barley and sheep. A warren of narrow streets twists and turns within the city walls in a haphazard



manner, with courtyards, palaces and temples appearing without reason or warning. Doors tend to be 15-feet high with elegant iron knockers and hinges.

**Population:** 6,980 (96% Zingaran, 2% black kingdom (as slaves), 1% Meadow Shemites, 1% other)

**Size:** Small City (37 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 183 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 49 structures per acre (approx. 1,812 structures total)

**Wealth Limit:** 100,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 34,900,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Duke and King:** 174,500 silver coins

**Religion:** Zingaran Mitraism

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods, barley, sheep products

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Oto has a winding stone wall surrounding the town and a picturesque castle. Seventy Shemite mercenaries do military work outside the town walls. The town guard consists of 140 Zingaran homeowners commissioned by the council.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Duke:** Oto is a duchy and is ruled by a Zingaran duke. The de Oto family has had to contend with an amazing number of assassinations of late. Cordara de Oto, a frightening man who is said to be on terms with the Picts, is the current duke. Some believe Duke Cordara de Oto was behind the assassinations on his way to the top. He is a noble/pirate/scholar. Although no one in Oto knows it, he has spent time with the Picts and managed to learn Pictish shamanism. He also has powerful connections in Shadizar; he often visits the city of wickedness and leaves much of the management of his manors to his capable and loyal steward.

**Council:** Oto is managed by a council as described on page 68. There is no magistrate because there is no king, but the steward of the de Oto family sits in for the duke.

## SADORIA (RUIN)

Once known as the garden spot of western Zingara, Sadoria was destroyed by the war, and every able bodied male over the age of five was put to the sword.

## SALDUVA, THE WHITE CITY

Salduva is the capital of the province of Salduva. The city of Salduva was founded 2,000 years ago between the banks of the Ebrough and Kosso Rivers in the Salduva district of Zingara. Great walls, an advanced sewage system, a great theatre and cobbled streets are emblematic of this Zingaran city. The city lies on a trading crossroads between the Zingaran cities Mavrit, Oto, Bulentia and Basur. The ruined town of Velkite lies not too far away, destroyed by the civil wars. Salduva is connected with the rise of Mitraism in Zingara, for it is here that Epemitreus appeared to the Zingarans. He appeared to Saint Seo while standing on a large pillar. A Mitraeum was built around that pillar and each year, 20 days after the autumnal equinox, a festival is held in Salduva to honour this miraculous event. This city is held to be the 'granary' of Zingara because their primary export is cereal crops. This city, however, is currently being hit hard by the civil wars and famine. Poor weather in recent years is increasing the famine and the problems caused by famine. At its height, Salduva had nearly 15,000 inhabitants. It now has less than half that number. Many buildings, manors and fields lie abandoned. Salduva at the default period of time for *Conan the Roleplaying Game* has the physical size of a large city, the population of a small city and the income of a large town.

**Population:** 7,346 (96% Zingaran, 2% Black Kingdom (mostly as slaves), 1% Meadow Shemites, 1% other)

**Size:** Large City (86 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 85 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 67 structures per acre (approx. 5,736 structures total)

**Wealth Limit:** 30,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 11,019,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Duke and King:** 27,548 silver coins

**Religion:** Zingaran Mitraism

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods, especially cereal crops, borage and cardoom

**Code of Honour:** Civilised (quickly vanishing, however)

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Salduva is dangerously undefended in many regards. The city walls are too large for the population to adequately defend. Seventy-three Shemite mercenaries do most of the defence work for the city, although they are demanding three times the usual salary. The town guard consists of 147 stalwarts commissioned by the council.



## Culture

The most important cultural feature of Salduva is its regional cooking. Its cooks are renowned throughout Zingara for their skill. Instead of receiving Profession (sailor) as a background skill, Salduvans receive Craft (cooking) as a background skill. The area around Salduva is also the only place known in the world to grow borage and cardoom. These two vegetables require laborious cleaning but have their own special and distinctive tastes that make the result worth the extra effort. Stews based on fowl, pork or lamb, made with tomatoes, peppers, onion, garlic oil and a touch of hot spices are especially beloved in this area. Snails in hot sauce is another popular Salduvan dish.

## Administration and Power Centres

Salduva itself is ruled by a council. There is no magistrate because there is no king. Other power centres rise and fall in the city with alarming speed – it is believed the council has any rivals for power assassinated, as any dissent is thought to weaken the city and may allow it to fall to the feudal lords already consuming Salduva's lands outside the city itself.

**The Council:** The council of Salduva functions exactly as described on page 68. They appoint city officials and make decisions for the city. They harbour a long-standing grudge against the feudal lords, despite decades of freedom from feudal obligations.

**Manorial Lords:** The lords of the various manors outside of the city hold considerable influence in the city since they hold the means to feed the city. They have a tense relationship with the council and try to argue they should have representation on that council.

**The Mitraea:** The temples of Mitra hold a lot of power in Salduva and control the townships of the city. They often come into conflict with the merchants of the city over the distribution of wealth and commerce. They expressly forbid the formation of guilds, believing them to be the beginnings of secretive heresies (publicly) as well as not wanting to see the people gather in secular strength without the presence of the clergy (privately). They argue that the greed of the nobles, council, merchants and craftsmen is the cause of the famine and uncooperative weather.

## Layout of Salduva

Salduva is a typical Zingaran city in its layout; it is a labyrinth of winding streets, mostly narrow and filthy.

## Districts of Salduva

Salduva is segregated into sprawling 'townships' used to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods. However, few of these areas are segregated into 'merchant wards,' 'wealthy wards' or 'temple wards'. The wealthy live alongside the poor and the districts are created along areas served by particular temples. Each township has its own Mitraeum and most have craftsmen, merchants, wealthy and poor all living and working alongside each other. There are several palaces and courtyards belonging to the nobles and wealthy merchants. Listed here a few of the features of the city that stand out:

**The Great Mitraeum of Saint Seo:** This is the largest and most monumental Mitraeum in Salduva, built around the pillar Epemitreus stood upon when he appeared to the great Zingaran saint, who converted to Mitraism immediately. It has eleven domes and exquisite frescoes on all the vaults.

**The Lonía:** This is the great trading centre of Salduva, built next to the Markanta Mitraeum. It is a massive red building with ribbed vaults, an airy interior and massive columns painted blood-red.

**Zaporta Palace:** Once the grand palace of a dynasty of early Zingaran kings, it was converted into a prison 200 years ago.

## SHAR

Shar is a wealthy sea-port city of Zingara that is only now beginning to feel the effects of the northern civil wars. It has been a free city for a long time, so the loss of the king has had a minimal effect on its population. The city was founded upon the ruins of an older civilisation whose name has not survived. Curious ghosts in bizarre garb are occasionally seen; many folktales centre around these mysterious figures from the distant past.

**Population:** 10,000 (96% Zingaran, 2% Black Kingdom (as slaves), 1% Meadow Shemites, 1% other)

**Size:** Small City (68 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 147 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 46 structures per acre (approx. 3,158 structures total)

**Wealth Limit:** 30,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 11,019,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Duke and King:** 27,548 silver coins

**Religion:** Zingaran Mitraism

**Imports:** Trade Goods (mostly raw materials)

**Exports:** Trade Goods (mostly finished goods, but not food)

**Code of Honour:** Civilised





### Fortifications and Military Strength

Shar has extensive defensive walls with tall, round towers every fifty or sixty feet. One hundred Shemite mercenaries do military work by patrolling all the manors who have sworn allegiance to the duke of Shar, protecting their fields from raiders and neighbouring regions who are starving. The town guard consists of 200 soldiers commissioned by the council. The city also has four ships used exclusively for naval offence and defence.

### Culture

On the night of the summer solstice, ritual witch burning starts off a five day festival that brings to a halt all the industry and work in the city and on the surrounding manors. Stacks of flammables, piled around ritual stakes, are created, including the discarded clothing and furniture of the witches and sinners caught during the year. Scarecrows made to resemble these horrible persons are also created. The lighting of the bonfires signals the beginning of the festival, which celebrates the triumph of Mitra over Asura and his diabolic witches. Anyone found not celebrating risks being accused of witchcraft and heresy.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Duke:** Shar is nominally ruled by a duke who controls almost all the surrounding manors, either directly or through promoted feudal lords. He rules Shar with an iron fist, hoarding as much food as possible for his city and manorial lords. He is supported by many to become the next king

of Zingara, although he has not made any overt move in that direction as yet.

**Council:** Shar itself is ruled by a council as described on page 68; however, there is no magistrate because there is no king.

**Temple of Mitra:** The 200 clergymen of Mitra dominate city politics, dividing the city up into over 100 smaller 'townships,' each with its own Mitraeum.

## YORKIN

Yorkin is a Zingaran hamlet located in a deep forest plagued occasionally by 'the Bear God'.

**Population:** 300 (96% Zingaran, 2% Argosseans, 1% Meadow Shemites, 1% other)

**Size:** Hamlet (three acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 100 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 19 structures per acre (approx. 58 structures total)

**Wealth Limit:** 1,000 silver coins

**Ready Cash:** 15,000 silver coins

**Government:** Feudalism

**Income for the Mayor and Feudal Lord:** 150 silver coins

**Religion:** Zingaran Mitraism, the Bear God

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Yorkin has no wall and is defended by six men hand-picked by the mayor.

### Culture

On the night of the autumnal equinox, a ritual battle between the founder of Yorkin and the Bear God is the focus of a three-day festival.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Mayor:** Yorkin is ruled by an elected mayor, who controls all the politics and commerce in Yorkin. Virtually all elections are done by lot. Those interested in the position put their name into a box and then a name is drawn. Terms of office are short, only nine months long. The villagers of Yorkin do not like leaving any one person in power for too long, afraid they will become feudal lords.



# Skills & Feats

## NEW USES FOR OLD SKILLS

**ONE OF THE** best aspects of *Conan the Roleplaying Game* is the usefulness of the skills. Skills are essential to survival in the Hyborian age. This section expands on that already important aspect by giving old skills some new uses especially appropriate to Zingara and Argos.

### KNOWLEDGE (FENCING: ZINGARAN SCHOOL)

Fencing is a combination of balance, training and intelligence, a mark of prestige in Zingara. The Zingaran school of fencing teaches Dodge manoeuvres, not Parry manoeuvres (the Aquilonian school teaches the opposite). The fine art of fencing is taught by masters who begin training with education in geometry to improve the fencer's thinking, training him to think logically and provide an understanding of spatial relationships. Fencers are taught a coolness and a detachment when sword fighting so their minds can function with logic and clarity. Students are taught a frightening command of timing, distance, space and movement. This system of teaching detachment and logical evaluation creates cold and calculating swordsmen, some of the deadliest the world has ever seen.

This skill is not a class skill for most classes, so usually only the most intelligent ever become masters of a fencing school, since they can spend their bonus skill points on this skill as though it were a class skill.

With the first rank, the fifth rank and every five total points thereafter (not ranks, making more intelligent characters deadlier swordfighters) a character has in Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school), he may select one of the following bonuses which can be used when he is fencing with an arming sword or broadsword. Different schools and different masters teach these in varying orders. For example, the fencing school of Master Valerio in Kordava teaches these bonuses in this order to his students: *clarity* (1<sup>st</sup> rank), *move away from the attack* (5<sup>th</sup> rank), *light on my feet* (10 total skill points), *improved feint* (15 total skill points), *knock him off balance* (20 total skill points), *masterful point control* (25 total skill points) and *impressive lunge* (30 total skill points). Feats such as Knowledgeable and Skill Focus (Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school)) can make an intelligent fencer yet again deadlier – beware Zingaran scholars who have devoted their study to fencing!

*Knock Him Off Balance:* By making a successful Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) check against a DC set by the opponent's Balance or Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school), the fencer knocks his opponent off balance. The off balance character suffers a -10 penalty to his Balance skill until his balance is restored, which is done by making a move equivalent action (see the additional use for Balance listed previously for the importance of this).

*Move Away From the Attack:* Zingaran fencers know the best way to avoid an attack is to not be there when the attack happens. Those who choose this technique can defend against critical hits. By making a successful Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) check against a DC set by the critical confirmation roll, the fencer only takes normal damage from the attack instead of critical damage.

*Light on my Feet:* The Zingaran is always moving, circling his opponent, yet maintaining his balance like a cat. This ability gives the fencer a +2 synergy bonus to Balance when in a formal duel.

*Visualise the Victory:* This Zingaran fencer has learned that duels are won and lost before swords ever cross. The will to win can be a deciding factor in any duel. Two fencers, one of whom must have this ability, face each other and make opposed Will saves before the fighting begins. The winner gains a +2 bonus on Initiative and attack; also, he will not die until he defeats his foe or loses the bonus. If the winner of that opposed roll takes damage from his opponent, he must make a Will save against a DC set by the damage amount to maintain his bonuses. This only works in one-on-one duels.

*Unwavering Focus:* The Zingaran fencer is cool and detached and gains a +2 synergy bonus to all Concentration checks and Will saves while duelling. This bonus also applies to any fear or Terror checks, including attempts to Intimidate the character.

*Impressive Lunge:* By making a successful Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) check against an opponent's Defence (or opponent's Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) check), a fencer may make a surprising lunge, allowing him to attack a foe just outside his threatened area. Essentially the





character gains a +1 square (5-foot) bonus to his reach that round. Making this check is a move equivalent action.

*Masterful Point Control:* This student knows how to control the point of his weapon with incredible precision. Each attack lands in precisely the same spot, regardless of the direction of his attack. This has the effect of hurting already hurt areas. Some warriors can even beat through armour by attacking the same spot over and over until the armour is breached. Each successful attack after the first successful attack allows the character to make a Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) check against his opponent's Defence (or opponent's Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) check). If that check is successful, the attacker hits the same spot as before and does a cumulative +1 point of damage per successful hit on that spot after the first. This damage is included in the base damage when calculating the damage for critical hits.

*Clarity:* This student is taught logic and alertness to an amazing degree. The character gains a +2 bonus to Listen and Spot checks while duelling – this stacks with the Alertness and Skill Focus feats.

*Intricate Swordplay:* The character can use the Intricate Swordplay feat even if he does not meet the prerequisites if he makes a Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran style) check DC 22 as a free action.

*Improved Feint:* The character can use the Improved Feint feat even if he does not meet the prerequisites if he makes a Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran style) check DC 22 as a free action.

*Improved Disarm:* The character can use the Improved Disarm feat even if he does not meet the prerequisites if he makes a Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran style) check DC 18 as a free action.

**Synergy:** A character with five or more ranks in the Balance skill gains a +2 bonus to all Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) checks.

**Special:** You cannot take 10 or 20 with this skill.

## PERFORM (CHASTITY)

In the case of noble women, honour often relates to sexuality and modesty. Maintenance of chastity and/or exclusive monogamy equate to honour for women. There is more to chastity than sexual inexperience. Chastity also includes married women who remain sexually loyal to their husbands. Indeed, in many Hyborian nations, chastity is a form of performed, gendered identity. Essentially, a modest demeanour is a sign and proof of chastity. Girls who dress in pretty clothes (ornate above their station) and are free with their wit are often thought unchaste. If a chaste woman has frank discussions with men, she disgraces herself in the eyes of others. True chastity is endangered by verbal intercourse. Unfortunately, since most Hyborian societies hold the bulk of their wealth in private and aristocratic hands pass that wealth from father to son, there is a cultural need for women to retain virginal honour – just to prove paternity when she marries and bears children. Any Aquilonian woman with even a single Corruption point is considered unchaste and lacking chastity, regardless of her sexual experiences or lack of them, if that Corruption is detected (there are some feats in *Conan: The Road of Kings* to help hide Corruption). Most Hyborian scholars locate chastity in the will of the mind, not in the body. Female Aquilonian characters may well be advised to take Iron Will as a feat or to take feats that hide Corruption. Most Hyborians feel that a woman can retain her chastity if her body is violated against her will and lose her chastity if she dresses in a lascivious dress or acts in a sexual manner, even if she does not engage in sexual intercourse. Hyborian noble women are taught to avoid certain occasions, letters, sweet talk and fondling in order to overcome sexual drive and to retain honour and chastity. Many women take ranks in Perform (chastity) to always appear proper and chaste.

**Synergy:** Having ranks in Perform (chastity) gives a female character a +1 synergy bonus to Diplomacy checks per five ranks.



## SWIM

Zingarans and Argosseans spend a lot of time around the water. Listed here are a couple of new uses for the skill for Zingaran and Argossean characters.

*Pierce the Waves:* With a successful skill check against a DC equal to twice the normal swim DC for the appropriate water conditions (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for the DCs of calm, rough and stormy water), the character can negate the defence bonus a creature wading or partially submerged receives when attacked by a being on land, as well as reduce the total cover bonus a completely submerged creature receives to partial cover.

*Cliff Dive:* With a successful Swim check against a DC equal to the conditions of the water below, +5 for every 10 feet of height, the character can dive from a cliff or other high object into water and take no damage. In addition, once in the water, he can move up to his full normal movement rate for one move action, without need of another skill check, as the speed of his fall propels him like a dolphin through the water. Only water which is of a depth at least equal to the character's height can be dived into in this fashion. On an unsuccessful check, the barbarian takes full damage from the fall. The cliff dive counts as a move action.

**Synergy:** A character with five or more ranks in the Jump skill gains a +2 bonus to all Swim checks made to cliff dive.

## FEATS

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

While a few of the basic feats from *Conan: Pirate Isles* have been reprinted here, there are several Argossean and Zingaran feats in that volume that should be seriously considered. Those have not been reprinted here because they utilise rules contained in that volume that are not reprinted here.

### ARGOSSEAN DREAMER (GENERAL)

You grew up on tales of the daring deeds of pirate lads and lasses. These tales gave you a vast storehouse of pirate lore, although not all of it is of practical use.

**Prerequisites:** Must be an Argossean, may only be taken at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

**Benefit:** You gain a +1 bonus to your total skill points per level when taking a level in the pirate class.

### DRIVEN TO WIN (GENERAL)

You are absolutely resolute in your will to defeat someone in mortal combat.

**Benefit:** You may add your base Will save to your attack instead of your Strength or Dexterity modifier. Feats such as Iron Will add to this.

**Special:** Sorcerers who take this feat are considered Obsessed (-1 penalty as appropriate) when faced with a single opponent until that opponent is defeated.

### EXOTIC WEAPON PROFICIENCY: TRIDENT (GENERAL)

You can use the trident to catch your opponent on your weapon's tines.

**Benefit:** When you fight with a trident, you can catch an opponent on the vicious barbed tines. As a full attack action, make an attack at your best base attack bonus. If you hit, you may attempt to catch your foe on your weapon. The barbs dig into his flesh or armour, holding him fast. On the start of your foe's next turn, he must make a Strength check opposed by your Strength check as a move action. If you and your opponent are different sizes, the larger character gains a +4 bonus to this check for each size category difference.

If your foe succeeds he may act as normal but suffers 1d4 points of damage as the trident tears loose. Should he fail, he may not move away from his current space – you hold him in place with your trident. To keep him pinned, you must remain in place and hold onto your trident without using it to attack. If you drop the trident or take any action that prevents you from holding it fast, your foe breaks free. You may twist the trident in place, inflicting another 1d4 points of damage as a standard action.

If you continue to hold him in place each round, he may attempt another opposed Strength check as a move action to break free. An opponent held immobile on your trident suffers a -2 penalty to attacks, Defence and Reflex saves.

### FENCER'S FINESSE (GENERAL)

You wield a finesse weapon like a scalpel.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (fencing; Zingaran school) 5+ ranks, Balance 2+ ranks

**Benefit:** You use elegance and speed to make exacting, deadly cuts on your opponents.



Apply your Dexterity modifier to damage, rather than your Strength modifier.

## FREE THINKER (SORCERY)

You are freed from aspects of traditional religious dogma and ritual and may study forbidden styles of magic.

**Prerequisites:** Wis 13+, Priest

**Benefit:** You may learn any style of magic as a scholar with the Independent background. You are no longer limited by the choices given to ordained priests. Also, you are not bound to maintain your religion's taboos in order to retain the bonuses for knowing the mysteries of your god.

**Special:** There may be political or social ramifications to this feat if your independence is found out and deemed heretical by temple elders or high priests of your sect. The Games Master may impose penalties for disloyal priests if discretion is not taken.

## FREEBOOTER'S FORTUNE (GENERAL)

Your absolute certainty that the bloody road leads to a better life seems to lend a charm of good luck to your path.

**Prerequisites:** Must have been a Zingaran, may only be taken at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

**Benefit:** If you fail a Swim or Profession (sailor) skill check you may immediately re-roll the check with a -4 penalty. If you fail this check then you fail the skill roll.

## MASTER FENCER (GENERAL)

Your exacting precision, accuracy and control allow you to make deadly attacks against foes who are not ready for you.

**Prerequisites:** Fencer's Finesse, Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) 8+ ranks

**Benefit:** When making a finesse melee attack, you gain +1d6 points of sneak attack damage. If you already have sneak attack damage, this damage stacks with it.

**Special:** This feat can be taken multiple times; its effects stack.

## MIGHT MAKES RIGHT (GENERAL)

Your fighting ability makes you famous and draws people to serve you.

**Prerequisites:** Leadership

**Benefit:** You may add your Strength score (if positive) to your Leadership value.

## RELIGIOUSLY DRIVEN (GENERAL)

Your thirst for knowledge about your religion knows no bounds.

**Benefit:** You have no level limits on the maximum number of ranks you can take in Knowledge (mystery: Any God). You can rise through the mysteries as fast as you want to.

## REPUTATION DRIVES THEM TO FOLLOW (GENERAL)

Your Reputation draws people to serve you.

**Prerequisites:** Leadership

**Benefit:** You may add your Reputation bonus to your Leadership value. However, if your Reputation should drop an entire category, the previous bonus becomes a penalty and former followers will start deserting you. If your Reputation should change type, you lose 75% of your followers to disillusionment. However, you can start gaining new followers who wish to follow you with your new Reputation in a month's time.

## NET MAN (GENERAL)

You are trained as a net-man type gladiator.

**Prerequisites:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Trident

**Benefit:** If you fight with a trident in one hand and a net in the other, ignore the penalties for fighting with two weapons and gain a +2 bonus on your attack when you throw the net at an opponent held immobile on your trident. When you use your net against such a target, you provoke no attack of opportunity from him.

## RESOLUTE (GENERAL)

Your steadfast demeanour makes you less susceptible to corruption.

**Prerequisites:** Iron Will

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to all of your Corruption checks.

## SEA LEGS (GENERAL)

Having spent a great length of time at sea, the pitching and rolling of ships is nothing to you, barely noticed, even comforting in a way. Whilst others are vulnerable to losing their balance or even falling sick as the ship constantly rises



and drops as it skims the waves, you remain rock steady upon the deck, continuing your tasks as if nothing were amiss.

**Prerequisites:** Must have spent at least three months at sea.

**Benefit:** Whilst on board a ship, you gain a +2 competence bonus to all Climb, Concentration, Jump and Use Rope checks.

## SHARP BLADE (GENERAL)

You have a gift for cutting deep with a blade in your hands and a deck under your feet.

**Prerequisites:** Seamanship class feature, must be a Zingaran.

**Benefit:** When you successfully execute a sneak attack and qualify for your seamanship bonus you may add your seamanship bonus to the total damage you do.

## SIGNATURE WEAPON (GENERAL)

Your skill with a particular weapon is legendary.

**Prerequisites:** Weapon Focus, Improved Critical

**Benefit:** When you choose this feat, choose a weapon for which you have the Weapon Focus feat. This weapon is now your signature weapon. You receive a +1 to all attack and damage rolls while using this weapon. Weapon Specialisation supersedes this feat. The attack bonus stacks with Weapon Focus.

**Special:** Unlike other weapon-oriented feats, you may only choose this feat once.

## TAKE THE TAP (GENERAL)

Your life among the pirates forced you to learn how to take a few blows without flinching. This makes you a superior unarmed fighter.

**Prerequisites:** Argossean Dreamer, Brawl, Endurance

**Benefit:** When you are unarmed, wearing no armour, and choose to fight defensively you gain DR equal to your Constitution modifier against unarmed attacks. This DR works as normal DR and stacks with any natural DR you might have.

## TRIDENT DISARM (GENERAL)

You have learned to disarm your opponents with a well-timed twist of the trident.

**Prerequisites:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Trident



**Benefit:** If you ready an action to disarm an opponent when he attacks you, you immediately attempt your disarm attack before he completes his own strike. You gain a +4 bonus to the opposed attack roll and provoke no attack of opportunity. You still suffer a chance that your opponent may disarm you on a failed check.

## WAVE DANCE (GENERAL)

You are extremely adept at using the pitch and weave of a sailing ship to your defensive advantage.

**Prerequisites:** Seamanship class feature, Freebooter's Fortune, must be a Zingaran

**Benefit:** You may increase your Defence bonus from the Seamanship class ability by +2.

## WEAPON PANACHE (GENERAL)

Choose one type of one-handed melee weapon, such as a short sword. You are so brash and self-confident when wielding this weapon that you gain a bonus on attack rolls.



**Prerequisites:** Proficient with weapon, base attack bonus +1 or higher

**Benefit:** With the selected weapon, you may add your Charisma modifier instead of your Strength modifier on attack rolls.

**Special:** You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a different weapon.

## MARINE FORMATION

Soldiers who wish to take to sea may gain the following new formation rather than one of the standard four. They may do this any time they gain the formation combat class ability.

*Marine:* You are highly trained in the arts of both boarding and repelling borders. While there are at least two other soldiers with this formation combat ability in the action with you, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to any attack roll or skill check required to execute or resist a boarding manoeuvre.

This is an extraordinary ability.

## BORDERER COMBAT STYLES FOR ARGOSSEANS & ZINGARANS

All borderers learn special techniques and tricks to help them defend the frontiers and hunt down and destroy their foes. However, not all borderers are from the same culture or know the same techniques. The following alternative combat styles are available to any borderer character and are taken in lieu of the standard combat styles introduced in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. The decision to take an alternative combat style must be made at 2<sup>nd</sup> level and once an alternative style has been chosen, it cannot later be changed. There are no racial prerequisites – the racial names of the styles simply indicate the culture most likely to develop that style.

### Argossean Trident Combat Style

You are a master of the trident, using it to its truest and fullest potential.

- ❖ **2<sup>nd</sup> level:** You are treated as having the Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Trident feat, even if you do not meet the normal prerequisites. If you already have this feat, you are treated as though you have the Weapon Focus (trident) feat.
- ❖ **5<sup>th</sup> level:** An opponent held immobile on your trident now suffers a –4 penalty to attacks, Defence and Reflex saves. As a standard action, you can make an opposed Strength check to deny him his Dexterity or Strength bonus to his Defence. If you and your victim differ in size, the larger character gains a +4 bonus to this Strength check for each size category difference.
- ❖ **11<sup>th</sup> level:** When you make an opposed Strength check against a foe caught on your trident, you count as one category larger than your actual size.

### Zingaran Sneak Attack Combat Style

You know how to attack quickly and with deadly aim with an arming sword or broadsword.

- ❖ **2<sup>nd</sup> level:** You are treated as having the Improved Feint feat, even if you do not meet the normal prerequisites.
- ❖ **5<sup>th</sup> level:** You are treated as having the Intricate Swordplay feat, even if you do not meet the normal prerequisites.
- ❖ **11<sup>th</sup> level:** You are treated as having the Zingaran Surprise feat, even if you do not meet the normal prerequisites.

### Zingaran Whip Style

You have chosen to master the whip, using it as a weapon, a rope and a training tool for instructing beasts and slaves.

- ❖ **2<sup>nd</sup> level:** You are treated as having the Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip) feat.
- ❖ **5<sup>th</sup> level:** You gain the ability to inflict normal damage when attacking with a whip. When attacking with a whip, you are still unable to inflict damage to any creature with a Damage Reduction of one or higher.
- ❖ **11<sup>th</sup> level:** You can now inflict normal damage with a whip to any creature, regardless of its Damage Reduction, although DR still reduces damage.



# Pirates & Cutthroats

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

**THE NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS** used in this sourcebook are not given Fate Points or languages. There are several reasons for these omissions. First, if Non-Player Characters used fate points as much as Player Characters, no one would ever get killed and the Player Characters' jobs would be that much harder. Fate Points exist primarily as an opportunity for players to influence the game in a favourable direction. Games Masters do not need that particular contrivance. Second, who knows what a Non-Player Character has been through in his life? In both cases, the Games Master's discretion is required. If the Games Master wants to give the Non-Player Characters described throughout this book Fate Points, he is at leave to do so. Languages function in a similar manner. If the Games Master wants a character to speak a given language, then the character speaks the given language. The needs of the game are paramount here. Thus, both Fate Points and languages are left off the statistic blocks of the characters throughout this text.



## CONAN THE BARACHAN

**Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian barbarian 12/thief 1/soldier 1/pirate 2)**

**Hit Dice:** 8d10+2d8+50+15+2 (120 hit points)

**Initiative:** +18 (+5 Dex, +13 Ref)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 25 (+10 level, +5 Dex)

**Parry Defence:** 22 (+5 level, +7 Str)

**DR:** 1 (+1 natural)

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +14/+21

**Attack:** Broadsword +21 melee

**Full Attack:** Broadsword +21/+16/+11 melee

**Damage:** Broadsword 1d10+7

**Special Attacks:** Ferocious attack, versatility (no penalty), crimson mist, sneak attack +1d6/+1d8, sneak attack style (broadsword), greater crimson mist, to sail a road of blood and slaughter

**Special Qualities:** Cimmerian traits, fearless, bite sword, trap sense +4, uncanny dodge, mobility, seamanship +1, trap disarming, improved uncanny dodge, improved mobility, Damage Reduction, pirate code (Barachan rockets and smoke)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +17, Ref +18, Will +11 (+14 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 25, Dex 21, Con 20, Int 19, Wis 18, Cha 19

**Skills:** Balance +10, Bluff +15, Climb +19, Craft

(blacksmith) +6, Gather Information +6, Hide +12,

Intimidate +13, Jump +17, Knowledge (arcana) +10,

Knowledge (geography) +9, Listen +16, Move Silently +19,

Perform (song) +6, Profession (sailor) +9, Ride +10, Search

+7, Spot +18, Survival +14, Tumble +9

**Feats:** Brawl, Combat Expertise, Dabbling (counterspells),

Diehard, Endurance, Fighting-Madness, Leadership,

Mounted Combat, Navigation, Power Attack, Sleep

Mastery, Striking Cobra, Track

**Reputation:** 22 (Villain)

**Leadership:** 21

**Code of Honour:** Barbaric

**Allegiances:** None

**Possessions:** Bright crimson silk breeks, broad gold-buckled girdle, broadsword



Conan the Cimmerian, in his late thirties or early forties, is now a pirate of the Barachan islands. He is described by Howard as a tall man with mighty shoulders and a deep chest, with a massive corded neck and heavily muscled limbs. His brow is low and broad, his eyes a volcanic blue that smoulders as if with some inner fire. His dark, scarred, almost sinister face is that of a fighting man, and his velvet garments cannot conceal the hard, dangerous lines of his limbs.

## ARGOSSEAN SOLDIER

**Medium Humanoid (Argossean Soldier 3); Hit Dice:** 3d10+3 (19 hit points); **Initiative:** +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 13 (+1 level, +2 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 14 (+2 level, +2 Str); **DR:** 4 (+4 leather jerkin, +0 leather cap); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +3/+5; **Attack:** Broad Sword +5 melee; **Full Attack:** Broad Sword +5 melee; **Damage:** Broad Sword 1d10+2/ 19-20 x2/ AP 5; **Special Attacks:** Formation combat (*skirmisher*); **Special Qualities:** Argossean traits, Adaptability (Balance, Gather Information); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3 (+6 vs. Corruption); **Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12; **Skills:** Balance +6, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Profession (sailor) +3, Search +3, Use Rope +6; **Feats:** Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder; **Reputation:** 6 (Brave); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Allegiances:** City, their family and their unit commanders; **Possessions:** Broadsword, poniard, manacles, copper whistle, brown boots, brown breeches, a pale blue sleeved cote under a leather jerkin, leather cap

## ARGOSSEAN MERCHANTS

**Medium Humanoid (Argossean Scholar 5/ Soldier 1); Hit Dice:** 5d6+1d10 (10 hit points); **Initiative:** +1 (+0 Dex, +1 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 11 (+1 level, +0 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 12 (+1 level, +1 Str); **DR:** –; **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +4/+5; **Attack:** Light mace +5 melee; **Damage:** Light mace 1d8+1/ x2/ AP 3; **Special Qualities:** Argossean traits, Adaptability (Profession (merchant), Gather Information), +3 bonus feats in lieu of sorcery styles, scholar, background (acolyte), base Power Points, knowledge is power, +1 Power Point, +6 skill points in lieu of advanced spells; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +12 (+15 vs. Corruption); **Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 15; **Skills:** Appraise +12, Bluff +15, Balance +4, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +15, Forgery +6, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (mystery: Mitra) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Profession

(merchant) +14, Profession (sailor) +7, Sense Motive +11, Search +8, Spot +7, Use Rope +4; **Feats:** Combat Expertise, Diligent, Investigator, Iron Will, Negotiator, Persuasive, Skill Focus (bluff), Skill Focus (diplomacy), Skill Focus (profession (merchant)); **Reputation:** 10 (Brave); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Allegiances:** City, their family; **Possessions:** Ornate sceptre mace, merchant clothing

## BARACHAN PIRATE

**Medium Humanoid (Argossean Pirate 3); Hit Dice:** 3d8+3 (16 hit points); **Initiative:** +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 15 (+2 level, +2 Dex, +1 seamanship); **Parry Defence:** 14 (+1 level, +2 Str, +1 seamanship); **DR:** 7 (+6 breastplate, +1 steel cap); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +2/+4; **Attack:** Cutlass +4 melee; **Full Attack:** Cutlass +4 melee; **Damage:** Cutlass 1d10+2/ 19-20 x2/ AP 4; **Special Attacks:** Ferocious attack, to sail a road of blood and slaughter; **Special Qualities:** Argossean traits, Adaptability (Balance, Profession (sailor)), seamanship +1, pirate code; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0; **Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12; **Skills:** Appraise +6, Balance +9, Climb +6, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +5, Knowledge (geography) +3, Profession (sailor) +6, Search +3, Spot +2, Tumble +8, Use Rope +7; **Feats:** Argossean Dreamer, Brawl, Endurance; **Reputation:** 4 (Villain); **Leadership:** – **Code of Honour:** –; **Allegiances:** Captain, officers, crew mates; **Possessions:** Cutlass, breastplate, steel cap

## ZINGARAN ARBALESTERS

**Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Soldier 5); Hit Dice:** 5d10 (17 hit points); **Initiative:** +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 15 (+2 level, +2 Dex, +1 dodge) (additional +4 vs. attacks of opportunity); **Parry Defence:** 13 (+3 level); **DR:** 6 (+5 scale shirt, +1 steel cap); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +5/+5; **Attack:** Arbalest +8 ranged (+9 at point blank range) or Arming Sword +9 melee finesse; **Full Attack:** Arbalest +8 ranged (+9 at point blank range) or Arming Sword +9 melee finesse; **Damage:** Arbalest 2d8 (+3 at point blank range)/ x2/ AP 6 or Arming Sword 1d10/ 19-20 x2/ AP 2; **Special Attacks:** Formation combat (*skirmisher*), sneak attack +1d6; **Special Qualities:** Zingaran traits; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3 (+6 vs. Corruption); **Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10; **Skills:** Balance +5, Climb +1, Diplomacy –1, Jump +2, Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) +3, Knowledge (mystery: Mitra) +1, Profession (sailor) +2, Search +5, Sense Motive +0, Use Rope +5; **Feats:** Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (arbalest),





Weapon Focus (arming sword), Weapon Specialisation (arbalest); **Reputation:** 7 (Brave); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Allegiances:** Zingaran lord or council, unit commander, family; **Possessions:** Arbalest, 30 bolts, a single-edged arming sword, scale shirt with surcoat, steel cap

## ZINGARAN NOBLE KNIGHTS

### Veteran Noble Knight

**Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Noble 6); Hit Dice:** 6d8+6 (33 hit points); **Initiative:** +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Ref); **Speed:** 25 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 15 (+2 level, +2 Dex, +1 special regional feature); **Parry Defence:** 20 (+3 level, +3 Str, +4 kidney shield); **DR:** 9/10 (+8 mail shirt and scale hauberk, +1/+2 visored burgonet with gorget); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +4/+7; **Attack:** Broadsword +10 or Arming Sword +9 melee or Axe +7 melee or Lance +7 melee; **Full Attack:** Broadsword +10 or Arming Sword +9 melee or Axe +7 melee or Lance +7 melee; **Damage:** Broadsword 1d10+3/ 19-20 x2/ AP 6 or Arming Sword 1d10+3/ 19-20 x2/ AP 5 or Axe 1d8+3/ x3/ AP 4 or Lance 1d10+3/ x3/ AP 6; **Special Attacks:** Sneak attack +1d6, +1 regional bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword, +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword; **Special Qualities:** Zingaran traits, title, rank hath its privileges, wealth, special regional feature +1, social

ability (*family ties*), lead by example +2, enhanced leadership; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +8 (+11 vs. Corruption); **Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14; **Skills:** Balance +5, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (nobility) +4, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (mystery: Mitra) +6, Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) +8, Profession (sailor) +3, Ride +8, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3, Use Rope +5; **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (broadsword); **Reputation:** 10 (Brave); **Leadership:** 10 (5<sup>th</sup> cohort; 18 1<sup>st</sup> level followers); **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Allegiances:** Zingaran noble, their family and their unit commanders; **Possessions:** Double edged broadsword (when mounted), single edged arming sword (when on foot), double-bladed axe (50% chance), mail shirt and scale hauberk, visored burgonet and gorget, lance and kidney-shaped shield

### Lord Noble Knight

**Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Noble 9); Hit Dice:** 9d8+9 (49 hit points); **Initiative:** +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Ref); **Speed:** 25 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 17 (+3 level, +2 Dex, +2 special regional feature); **Parry Defence:** 21 (+4 level, +3 Str, +4 kidney shield); **DR:** 10/11 (+9 mail hauberk and breastplate, +1/+2 visored burgonet with gorget); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +6/+9; **Attack:** Broadsword +13 or Arming Sword +12 melee or Axe +9 melee or Lance +9 melee; **Full Attack:** Broadsword +13/+8 or Arming Sword +12/+7 melee or Axe +9/+4 melee or Lance +9/+4 melee; **Damage:** Broadsword 1d10+3/ 19-20 x2/ AP 6 or Arming Sword 1d10+3/ 19-20 x2/ AP 5 or Axe 1d8+3/ x3/ AP 4 or Lance 1d10+3/ x3/ AP 6; **Special Attacks:** Sneak attack +1d6, +2 regional bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword, +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword; **Special Qualities:** Zingaran traits, title, rank hath its privileges, wealth, special regional feature +2, social ability (*family ties, ally*), lead by example +2, enhanced leadership; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +9 (+12 vs. Corruption); **Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 15; **Skills:** Balance +5, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (mystery: Mitra) +6, Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) +11, Profession (sailor) +3, Ride +11, Sense Motive +7, Spot +3, Use Rope +5; **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (broadsword), Web of Death; **Reputation:** 13 (Brave); **Leadership:** 14 (7<sup>th</sup> cohort; 50 1<sup>st</sup> level, 2 2<sup>nd</sup> level, 1 3<sup>rd</sup> level followers); **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Allegiances:** Zingaran noble, their family and their unit commanders; **Possessions:** Double edged broadsword (when mounted), single edged arming sword (when on foot), double-bladed



axe (50% chance), mail hauberk and breastplate, visored burgonet and gorget, lance and kidney-shaped shield

## ZINGARAN COMMONER KNIGHTS

### Merchant-Scholar Knight

**Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Scholar 5); Hit Dice:** 6d6–6 (15 hit points); **Initiative:** +0 (–1 Dex, +1 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 10 (+1 level, –1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 16 (+1 level, +1 Str, +4 round shield); **DR:** 6 (+5 scale corselet, +1 steel cap with nose guard over chain coif); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +3/+4; **Attack:** Arming Sword +5 melee or Mace +4 melee or War Spear +4 melee; **Full Attack:** Arming Sword +5 melee or Mace +4 melee or War Spear +4 melee; **Damage:** Arming Sword 1d10+1/ 19-20 x2/ AP 3 or Mace 1d10+1/ x2/ AP 5 or War Spear 1d10+1/ x3/ 3; **Special Attacks:** Sneak attack +1d6, +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword; **Special Qualities:** Zingaran traits, +3 bonus feats in lieu of sorcery style, scholar, background (acolyte), base Power Points, knowledge is power, +1 Power Point, +6 skill points in lieu of advanced spells; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +6; **Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 9, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 14; **Skills:** Appraise +13, Balance +2, Bluff +10, Decipher Script +11, Diplomacy +9, Forgery +7, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (geography) +11, Knowledge (fencing: Zingaran school) +11, Knowledge (local) +11, Profession (merchant) +13, Profession (sailor) +5, Ride +0, Search +4, Sense Motive +13, Spot +6, Use Rope +2; **Feats:** Combat Expertise, Dilligent, Improved Feint, Iron Will, Negotiator, Skill Focus (profession (merchant)); **Reputation:** 7 (Brave); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** None; **Alliances:** City, their family and their unit commanders; **Magic Attack:** +4 (+2 level, +2 Cha); **Power Points:** 7 (4 base, +2 Wis, +1 bonus; 14 maximum); **Possessions:** Single edged arming sword (when on foot), mace or hammer (when on horseback), scale corselet with surcoat, metal cap with nose guard over chain coif, spear, round wooden shield, spear

The commoner knight is a class of knight unique in the Hyborian world. Commoner knights are non-noble men who are wealthy enough to purchase a horse and arms and agree to fight for a free city as part of its militia. They may be of the commoner class, the soldier class, the pirate class, the scholar class or the thief class. The sample progression above is a merchant-scholar forced by his home city to buy arms by virtue of his accumulated wealth. Occasionally the commoner knight is employed to fight for the king

or one of the counts. The shields of the commoner knights have a yellow field with the arms of the city they represent as the central device. Commoner knights wield spears more often than lances and use wooden round shields with leather covers. They fight with whatever swords they can afford and are likely to fight from horseback with maces or hammers.

## ZINGARAN SOLDIERS (CONSCRIPT)

### Young Conscripted Peasant with Spear

**Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Commoner 3); Hit Dice:** 3d4 (7 hit points); **Initiative:** +1 (+0 Dex, +1 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 11 (+1 level, +0 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 12 (+1 level, +1 Str); **DR:** 5 (+4 leather jerkin, +1 steel cap); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +1/+2; **Attack:** War Spear +1 melee or Short Sword –3 melee (non-proficient); **Damage:** Spear 1d10+1/ x3/ AP 3 or Short Sword 1d8+1/ 19-20 x2/ AP 2; **Special Attacks:** Sneak attack +1d6, +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword; **Special Qualities:** Zingaran traits, illiteracy; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; **Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10; **Skills:** Balance +2, Handle Animal +3, Profession (sailor) +2, Profession (any) +9, Spot +6, Use Rope +5; **Feats:** Endurance, Skill Focus (Profession (any)); **Reputation:** 3 (Talented); **Leadership:** –; **Code of**





**Honour:** Civilised; **Allegiances:** Family; **Possessions:** War spear, short sword, leather jerkin, steel cap

### Young Conscripted Peasant with Bow

**Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Commoner 3)**

**Hit Dice:** 3d4 (7 hit points); **Initiative:** +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 12 (+1 level, +1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 11 (+1 level); **DR:** 5 (+4 leather jerkin, +1 steel cap); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +1/+1; **Attack:** Hunting Bow +1 ranged (armour non-proficiency applied); **Damage:** Hunting Bow 1d8/ x2/ AP 1; **Special Attacks:** Sneak attack +1d6, +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword; **Special Qualities:** Zingaran traits, illiteracy; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; **Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10; **Skills:** Balance +2, Handle Animal +3, Profession (sailor) +2, Profession (any) +9, Spot +6, Use Rope +5; **Feats:** Endurance, Skill Focus (Profession (any)); **Reputation:** 3 (Talented); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Allegiances:** Family; **Possessions:** Hunting bow, 10 arrows, leather jerkin, steel cap

Largely untrained peasants, the infantrymen of Zingara simply try to stay alive. They go to battle because of their feudal relationship with their lord. They do receive some training with their spears or hunting bows before being sent out to face down heavy cavalry, but nowhere near enough to hold their ground after repeated charges. Fortunately, the nobles do not really expect them to hold their ground long. So long as they blunt the first charge most nobles will forgive them if they throw down their spears and run for their lives. Many are armed with double-edged short swords in addition to spears. Some units have hunting bows and arrows. The unfortunate peasants are given leather jerkins topped with a steel cap along with their weapons (but since they are non-proficient with armour, they take an armour check penalty to their attacks, which is figured in above).

## ZINGARAN FREEBOOTERS

### Freebooter

**Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Pirate 5); Hit Dice:** 5d8–5 (17 hit points); **Initiative:** +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 17 (+3 level, +3 Dex, +1 seamanship); **Parry Defence:** 15 (+2 level, +2 Str, +1 seamanship); **DR:** 5 (+4 leather jerkin, +1 steel cap); **Base Attack Bonus/**

**Grapple:** +3/+5; **Attack:** Arming Sword +8 melee finesse or Broadsword +7 melee or Hunting bow +5 ranged; **Full Attack:** Arming Sword +8 melee finesse or Broadsword +7 melee or Hunting bow +5 ranged; **Damage:** Arming Sword 1d10+2/ 19-20 x2/ AP 4 or Broadsword 1d10+2/19-20 x2/ AP 5 or Hunting bow 1d8/ x2/ AP 1; **Special Attacks:** Sneak attack +2d6 (plus 1 if he qualifies for seamanship), +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword, ferocious attack, to sail a road of blood and slaughter, sneak subdual; **Special Qualities:** Zingaran traits, seamanship +1, pirate code (Zingaran trumpets), uncanny dodge, mobility; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +2; **Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10; **Skills:** Appraise +5, Balance +11, Bluff +4, Climb +4, Knowledge (geography) +5, Profession (sailor) +9, Search +5, Spot +5, Swim +5, Tumble +8, Use Rope +10; **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Freebooter's Fortune, Sharp Blade, Weapon Focus (arming sword or broadsword); **Reputation:** 5 (Villain); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** King or noble, officers, shipmates; **Possessions:** Single edged arming sword or double-edged broadsword (50% chance of one or the other), leather jerkin, metal cap

### Freebooter Officer

**Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Pirate 7); Hit Dice:** 7d8–7 (24 hit points); **Initiative:** +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 20 (+5 level, +3 Dex, +2 seamanship); **Parry Defence:** 17 (+3 level, +2 Str, +2 seamanship); **DR:** 5 (+4 leather jerkin, +1 steel cap); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +5/+7; **Attack:** Arming Sword +10 melee finesse or Broadsword +9 melee or Hunting bow +7 ranged; **Full Attack:** Arming Sword +10 melee finesse or Broadsword +9 melee or Hunting bow +7 ranged; **Damage:** Arming Sword 1d10+2/ 19-20 x2/ AP 4 or Broadsword 1d10+2/19-20 x2/ AP 5 or Hunting bow 1d8/ x2/ AP 1; **Special Attacks:** Sneak attack +3d6 (plus 2 if he qualifies for seamanship), +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with broadsword and arming sword, ferocious attack (additional attack), to sail a road of blood and slaughter, sneak subdual; **Special Qualities:** Zingaran traits, seamanship +2, pirate code (Zingaran trumpets), uncanny dodge, mobility, bite sword; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +3; **Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 17, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 11; **Skills:** Appraise +7, Balance +13, Bluff +5, Climb +6, Intimidate +1, Knowledge (geography) +7, Profession (sailor) +11, Search +7, Spot +6, Swim +6, Tumble +9, Use Rope +12; **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Freebooter's Fortune, Sharp Blade, Weapon Focus (arming sword or broadsword), Web of Death; **Reputation:** 7 (Villain); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** King or noble, officers, shipmates; **Possessions:** Single edged arming sword or double-edged broadsword (50% chance of one or the other), leather jerkin, metal cap



# Games Mastering

**ARGOS AND ZINGARA** are the lords of the waves, the two most powerful maritime nations of the West. How does one go about presenting such places? Unfortunately, Robert E. Howard did not set many stories in Argos or Zingara to give us guidance; however, he did provide several Argossean and Zingaran characters as examples. Games Masters should try to provide unique Argos and Zingara atmospheres. This section will give some additional advice on how to accomplish just that.

## ARGOSSEAN NATURE

Argos has several traits that set it apart from other nations. A few of the most relevant are presented here. The Games Master will then add his own elements to this mix to create his own unique Argos for his campaign world.

**Mercantile and Political:** Argos is described as a trading kingdom, with Merchant Houses dominating the political arenas much as the gladiators dominate the gladiatorial arenas.

**Civilised and Cosmopolitan:** Argos comes across as one of the friendlier nations of the world, where people in the country are likely to wave at passers-by and strange ideas are likely to be discussed for their merits instead of tossed onto a proverbial bonfire out of hand.

## ZINGARAN NATURE

Zingara has several traits that set it apart from other nations. A few of the most relevant are presented here. The Games Master will then add his own elements to this mix to create his own unique Zingara for his campaign world.

**Chivalric yet Fallen:** Zingara is described as trying hard to hold onto old feudal ideals but is failing to do so. It has a mixture of old world charm and new world liberalism.

**Civilised and Savage:** Although a civilised nation that prides itself on its culture, the Zingarans are in the midst of the most savage civil war they have ever had, leaving the country open for marauders and disease.

## ZINGARAN & ARGOSSEAN REPUTATION

Reputation in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* can be a tremendous asset among the peoples of Zingara and Argos. *Conan the Roleplaying Game* introduces several natures applicable to Reputation. Herein can be found a few more natures to dictate how Reputation is used by characters. Each nature dictates how a character may use his Reputation score. A Reputation's nature determines which skill checks it may be used as bonus to. Remember, unless stated otherwise, people must recognise a character in order for his Reputation score to apply in a situation.

The Games Master may assign one of the following Reputation types to each character, as well as any presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* or its supplements. Players are allowed to select the nature of their own characters' Reputations, though the Games Master has the option to force them to change this nature if the player does not live up to it.

**Chaste:** The character is known as an excellent catch, a good choice for marriage. She is reserved and, to all appearances, chaste; she has made herself appear precious. She never looks up or looks someone in the eye. Her faults are easily overlooked and many people are willing to talk to her and help her. The character may apply her Reputation modifier to Diplomacy, Gather Information and Perform (chastity) checks when dealing with others. She may make Perform (chastity) checks (opposed by whatever skill is appropriate) to defend her Reputation type; if she fails her type changes to Fallen.

**Fallen:** The character has fallen from grace, bringing both shame and dishonour to his family and himself. A noble who squandered his fortune on foolish vices is an example of this type of character. He is not accorded a lot of respect by others, especially by those with Codes of Honour. His Reputation earns him a penalty to Diplomacy, Gather Information and Perform (chastity) checks. This type of Reputation could be political death in Argos.





## ZINGARAN CODES OF HONOUR

This code of honour supplements those found in the *Conan the Roleplaying Game* core rulebook. As with all codes of honour, they grant a +3 morale bonus on Will saving throws, rising to +6 if the Will saving throw is against Corruption. These codes also bestow a +2 bonus to Reputation. This code of honour first appeared in *Signs and Portents 16*.

### CHIVALRIC CODE OF HONOUR

Practised by Zingarans who hold to their old ways, a belief system based on chivalry and noble behaviour, the chivalric code of honour is a tradition born in the hearts of the noblest Zingaran knights that adheres to the most elevated principles and loftiest behaviour. Questing knights holding to a chivalric code of honour were once emblems that all was right in the land and with them rode the hearts and souls of the Zingaran people, common and noble alike. The knights who practised this code of chivalry were held in the highest regard by their peers, and were the gist of countless tales of valour and greatness across the land. Times changed, however, and principled behaviour was often trumped by brutal, cunning expediency and ruthlessness, and where Zingarans were once

viewed as chivalric paragons of knightly virtue, they took on a reputation as untrustworthy opportunists. There is a core of Zingaran nobility and others who still hold true to the old ways, however, and they continue to practice the chivalric code of honour of their forefathers. Chivalric behaviour is a difficult means of life, and therefore ennobling in the eyes of those who practice this code of honour. It is also unapologetically sexist and old-fashioned, hewing closely to an older and more idealised behaviour than is commonly practised elsewhere in the Hyborian age.

A character adhering to the chivalric code of honour gains an additional advantage above and beyond the benefits to morale saves and Reputation. When dealing with civilised allies or even enemies, characters with a chivalric code of honour gain a +1 circumstance bonus while using the following skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information and Intimidate. The caveat to this is that the character must be behaving in a manner appropriate to the chivalric code of honour to gain the circumstance bonus.

Furthermore, characters (Player or Non-Player) who possess no code of honour gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Gather Information and Sense Motive skill checks against characters with a chivalric code of honour.

**Requirement:** To practise the chivalric code of honour, a character must be Zingaran or have spent a significant amount of time alongside Non-Player Characters who adhere to the old methods of chivalry. At the Games Master's allowance, a character from another suitable Hyborian nation may also follow this code of honour, though he may be considered odd or old-fashioned by his fellows. In these cases, it is assumed that the character learned chivalric behaviour from hearing stories about it or through reading ancient tales and legends. A character can adopt a chivalric code of honour given the proper circumstances in the course of play, at the Games Master's discretion.

### Restrictions of the Chivalric Code of Honour

A character with the chivalric code of honour will:

- ☒ Respect allegiances with other honourable characters, meaning those with a barbaric, civilised, chivalric or other code of honour.
- ☒ Refuse significant allegiance with characters who follow no code of honour. This does not mean he will refuse to associate with them, but means he will not consider them equals or worthy of partnership in any significant endeavour. If the chivalric character discovers that an ally is without honour, he will take whatever steps are reasonable to disassociate himself from that ally, remaining true to his code of honour all the while.





❖ Adhere to whatever alliance, promise, covenant or agreement he has made, even if it turns out to be to a dishonourable character, though he will do what he can to free himself from his oath or bond and remain chivalric and honourable. If a character is duped into an agreement to do deeds that are ignoble or not chivalrous and cannot free himself of this obligation (and does not possess the freedom to refuse), he will emphatically proclaim to anyone concerned that he is oathbound into ignoble action and apologise for the repercussions of his actions.

❖ Adhere loyally to any contract of employment, even if the employer is revealed to be without honour, in a manner similar to that described in the previous point.

❖ Offer allegiance to any leader regarded as legitimate and following a civilised or chivalric code of honour. If the allegiance is considered temporary (such as a particular task or battle), it is not considered binding. If the leader follows a chivalric code of honour, any offer of allegiance is to be considered open-ended and terminated only at the decision of the leader.

❖ If insulted in any noticeable manner, demand a formal duel at the most immediate suitable opportunity. Honour can only be satisfied through victory in combat, a profuse and honest apology or

through intercession of a shared leader who follows the chivalric code of honour.

❖ Give quarter where it is asked, even if it is from a dishonourable foe, and even when the foe is clearly going to use this quarter to their advantage. Only in situations where the foe has clearly betrayed the character before and presents an obvious and apparent threat to the innocent or those under the chivalric character's protection can the chivalric character refuse quarter. In such situations, the chivalric character should even then be amenable to further negotiations by which a means of granting quarter can be achieved.

❖ Obey the laws of his homeland, so long as those laws are held by a rightful ruler and enforced by lawful and honourable means. If this is not the case, the chivalric character will behave in a chivalric manner to demonstrate the superiority of his own code of honour to those who rule.

❖ Protect the weak in most circumstances, provided that the weaker party is not obviously criminal or deserving of their punishment or treatment. Though a chivalric character will never keep slaves, he will allow others to keep them and will not automatically attempt to set them free, though he should act against any unnecessarily cruel or dishonourable masters in defence of the slaves, if their punishment is unjust or unwarranted.



- ❖ Protect women of any social class or race, even if he would otherwise not willingly associate with them. Furthermore, in most cases, he will defer to a woman's commands if they are obviously in need of assistance, though in all cases he will bear himself with utter chivalric behaviour.
- ❖ Show deference to any character of equal or greater social rank than the character and, where applicable, all women, regardless of social rank. The degree of deference can vary appropriately, such that a full bow and kiss on the hand are required for meeting a noble lady, a mere nod and polite greeting will do for a common milk-maid or innkeeper's wife.

A character with the chivalric code of honour will not:

- ❖ Use a sneak attack to gain advantage in combat against another foe, honourable or otherwise. Use of the Zingaran sneak attack special ability against an intelligent foe is considered a dishonourable means of combat and unsuited to chivalric behaviour.
- ❖ Break the law of the land unless it has been enforced by a ruler who is notably without a code of honour or if the law of the land is enforced by those who have no rightful claim of rulership, such as in the case of an usurper or invading king. If he does ignore the laws of the land, these will be only in matters relating to restoration of rightful rule or as demonstration of chivalric principles and behaviour.
- ❖ Slay an honourable foe without extreme provocation. As noted above, he will grant quarter if it is asked from any but the most despicable of foes, and if possible will offer a truce or conditions of surrender at the moment before a killing blow. A chivalric character will even risk further harm to himself if doing so means he might avoid killing an honourable foe, though he will place the safety of others under his protection before such mercy.
- ❖ Slay a dishonourable foe whenever possible, in the belief that demonstrating the chivalric code of honour to a dishonourable foe might impress them toward a higher standard of behaviour, or serve as an example of chivalry to others, despite the practicality of the situation.
- ❖ Knowingly work for a dishonourable employer under any circumstances, unless unknowingly. As discussed earlier, should a chivalric character discover he is serving a dishonourable character, he will do all within his power to end such a period of employ, though adhering to chivalric principles all the while.

- ❖ Attack peasants or ordinary citizens unless under the direst of circumstances, such as when said common-folk threaten those under the protection of the chivalric character, or those who would otherwise receive such protection and defence.

## NEW EXOTIC WEAPONS

Argossean gladiators are known for two specific weapons: the trident and the net.

### TRIDENT

A trident is a three pronged spear used to catch fish. Many coastal regions use the trident as a weapon. It is especially popular in Argossean gladiatorial arenas. The trident can be thrown. If one uses a ready action to set a trident against a charge, he deals double damage on a successful hit against a charging character. A trident can be used with one or two hands.

### NET

A net is used to entangle enemies. When a net is thrown, a player makes a ranged touch attack against his target. A net's maximum range is 10 feet. If the net hits, the target is entangled. An entangled creature takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls and a -4 penalty on Dexterity, can move at only half speed, and cannot charge or run. If a player controls the trailing rope by succeeding on an opposed Strength check while holding it, the entangled creature can move only within the limits that the rope allows. If the entangled creature attempts to cast a spell, it must make a DC 15 Concentration check or be unable to cast the spell.

An entangled creature can escape with a DC 20 Escape Artist check (a full-round action). The net has five hit points and can be burst with a DC 25 Strength check (also a full-round action).

A net is useful only against creatures within one size category of the player using it. A net must be folded to be thrown effectively. The first time a net is thrown in a fight, the player makes a normal ranged touch attack roll. After the net is unfolded, the player takes a -4 penalty on attack rolls with it. It takes two rounds for a proficient user to fold a net and twice that long for a nonproficient one to do so.

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Armour Piercing	Range Increment	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
Trident	15 sp	1d10	x3	2	10 ft.	6	8	4 lb.	Piercing
Net	20 sp	—	—	—	10 ft.	2	4	6 lb.	N/A



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## ARGOS AND ZINGARA

**'CONAN LOOKED DOWN INTO THE OPEN WAIST, WHENCE WAFTED THAT SICKENING ABOMINABLE ODOUR. HE KNEW IT OF OLD. IT WAS THE BODY-SCENT OF THE OARSMEN, CHAINED TO THEIR BENCHES. THEY WERE ALL NEGROES, FORTY MEN TO EACH SIDE, EACH CONFINED BY A CHAIN LOCKED ABOUT HIS WAIST, WITH THE OTHER END WELDED TO A HEAVY RING SET DEEP IN THE SOLID RUNWAY BEAM THAT RAN BETWEEN THE BENCHES FROM STEM TO STERN. THE LIFE OF A SLAVE ABOARD AN ARGOSSEAN GALLEY WAS A HELL UNFATHOMABLE.'**

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