

# Sons of Cimmeria #2

## SONS OF ANSHAN

### IRANISTANI PLAYER CHARACTER GUIDELINES FOR CONAN THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

**T**HE core rulebook for *Conan the Roleplaying Game* hewed very close to the original works of Robert E. Howard, almost too much so in one instance. No character creation options were provided for the Iranistani, the natives of Iranistan, an area analogous to ancient Persia (modern Iraq and Iran). Since this is a rich and evocative region, ripe for adventuring and adjacent to many other well-travelled areas from the Conan stories, this article presents guidelines for creating Iranistani player characters.

Howard never detailed this area in his writings, nor did he place it on any of the few maps he made of the Hyborian world. Its presence in his original stories is limited

to a single mention in *The People of the Black Circle*. L. Sprague de Camp adapted *Three-Bladed Doom* (a Howard story featuring the pulp-era adventuring hero El Borak) into the Conan story *The Flame Knife*, set in Iranistan, a region Sprague de Camp placed south of the Ilbars Mountains, east of Zembabwei and Punt, and west of Kosala and Vendhya. More details about Iranistan can be found in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* and Mongoose's Hyborian Age gazetteer *The Road of Kings*, and following are guidelines for creating Iranistani player characters.



### IRANISTANI

The folk of Iranistan are black-haired and often broad across the shoulders, with a full range of heights. Their eyes are brown and their complexion dark, with a small range of tribal variation in appearance and culture. They can range from fine-featured and near fair skinned, to swarthy and heavy-featured. Men favour facial hair, often oiling their beards, and women traditionally wear their hair long and straight. Women (and sometimes

men) ornament their eyes with kohl, and most Iranistani wear richly ornamented clothing and anoint themselves perfumes or scented oils when possible.

**Culture:** The Iranistani are essentially a tribal people, with the tribal unit based on an extended family and hereditary allies, led by powerful chiefs loosely united under a powerful Shah. They are a proud people, and somewhat xenophobic, with a strong distrust of those outside their culture. Iranistani have a great appreciation of life and its pleasures, seeing it as a temporary gift that might be taken away at any moment. This fatalism fuels their art, with rich ornamentation adorning virtually all crafted items, and at the same time, they will readily give their lives in combat for honour or in defence of their faith.

**Names:** Iranistani names tend to be Arabic in origin, particularly Iraqi or Iranian. Examples: (male) Arshak, Balash, Bardiya, Gotarza, Hakhamani, Kerim, Kobad, Kujala; (female) Nanaia. Suggestions: (male) Abbal, Amar, Assad, Bijan, Davoud, Farouq, Firouz, Haroun, Hassan, Jaafar, Khalid, Parviz, Rahim, Rassoul; (female) Alireza, Badri, Farah, Farida, Fatima, Nissa, Sabah, Samina, Soraya, Tahereh, Zora.

**Religion:** Many northern Iranistani have adopted the Asuran religion and follow its strictures. However, their culture has flavoured their worship of this faith, and their innate fatalism steers them from attempting to divine the future. As a result, Iranistani scholars and mystics rarely use divinatory magic styles, and those schools are not taught to Iranistani worshippers or priests in Iranistan. The southern Iranistani follow a variety of more shamanistic, primitive faiths, and are not bound by this restriction.

- -2 to Wisdom, +2 to Charisma. Iranistani are quick to anger and often let their passions overcome their better judgement, but are charismatic and socially adept when dealing with their family, friends and potential allies.
- +2 circumstance bonus to all uses of the Appraise, Diplomacy, Forgery, Intimidate, Sense Motive and Spot skills when relating to haggling or negotiating the price of goods in an appropriate situation or venue. This bonus can apply whether the character is the buyer, seller, or an impartial negotiator, and only relate to the motives, goods, and or currency relating to any and all the parties in the transaction. This +2 circumstance bonus can also apply to any appropriate Craft or Profession skills if the character possesses them and they relate to the negotiation at hand.

- **Fatalistic:** Iranistani believe strongly in the machinations of fate, and that their destinies are to be adhered to rather than fought against. As a result, Iranistani characters do not collect or spend Fate Points as easily as other characters do. Iranistani characters begin with only 1 Fate Point (opposed to the standard 3 Fate Points for starting characters), and can never have more Fate Points than they have combined levels in all classes. Furthermore, the Games Master may impose an unmodified check (DC 10) for the use of a Fate Point – if the roll is less than 10, the Fate Point is lost and the character must adhere to the path the gods have set before them. The player can spend another Fate Point on the same action, but the same check must be repeated until the roll is successful or the player chooses not to spend further Fate Points. *(Note: Restricting player use of Fate Points is a seriously limiting factor, though in character with the Iranistani culture. The Games Master should feel at liberty to ignore this restriction, favouring only the initial limitation of Fate Points, or ignoring all aspects of this racial characteristic altogether. If so, it is suggested that this ability be replaced with a -1 racial penalty to all saving throw checks as per the Shemite race, described in Conan the Roleplaying Game.)*
- +2 racial bonus to Animal Handling and Ride checks for horses and camels. Most Iranistani are familiar with horses and camels from an early age, using them for travel (and food when necessity requires).
- **Weapon Familiarity:** Iranistani characters can use sabres and tulwars as though they are martial weapons, rather than exotic weapons. Additionally, they gain a +1 racial bonus to attack and damage rolls when using either of these weapons.

**Background Skills:** Appraise, Intimidate, Sense Motive.

**Favoured Class:** Nomad.

**Prohibited Classes:** Borderer.

**Automatic Languages:** Iranistani.

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