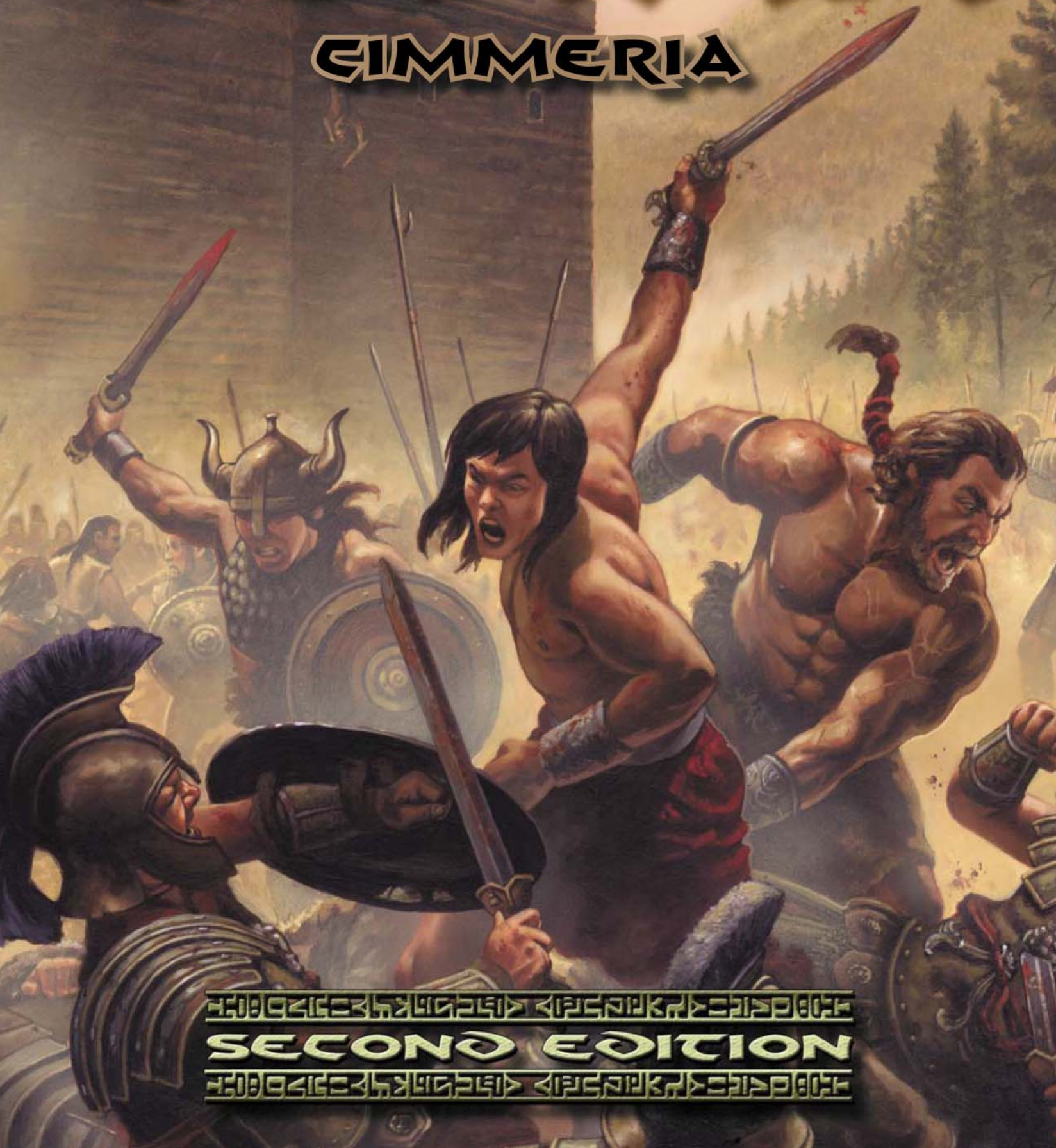


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SECOND EDITION



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CIMMERIA

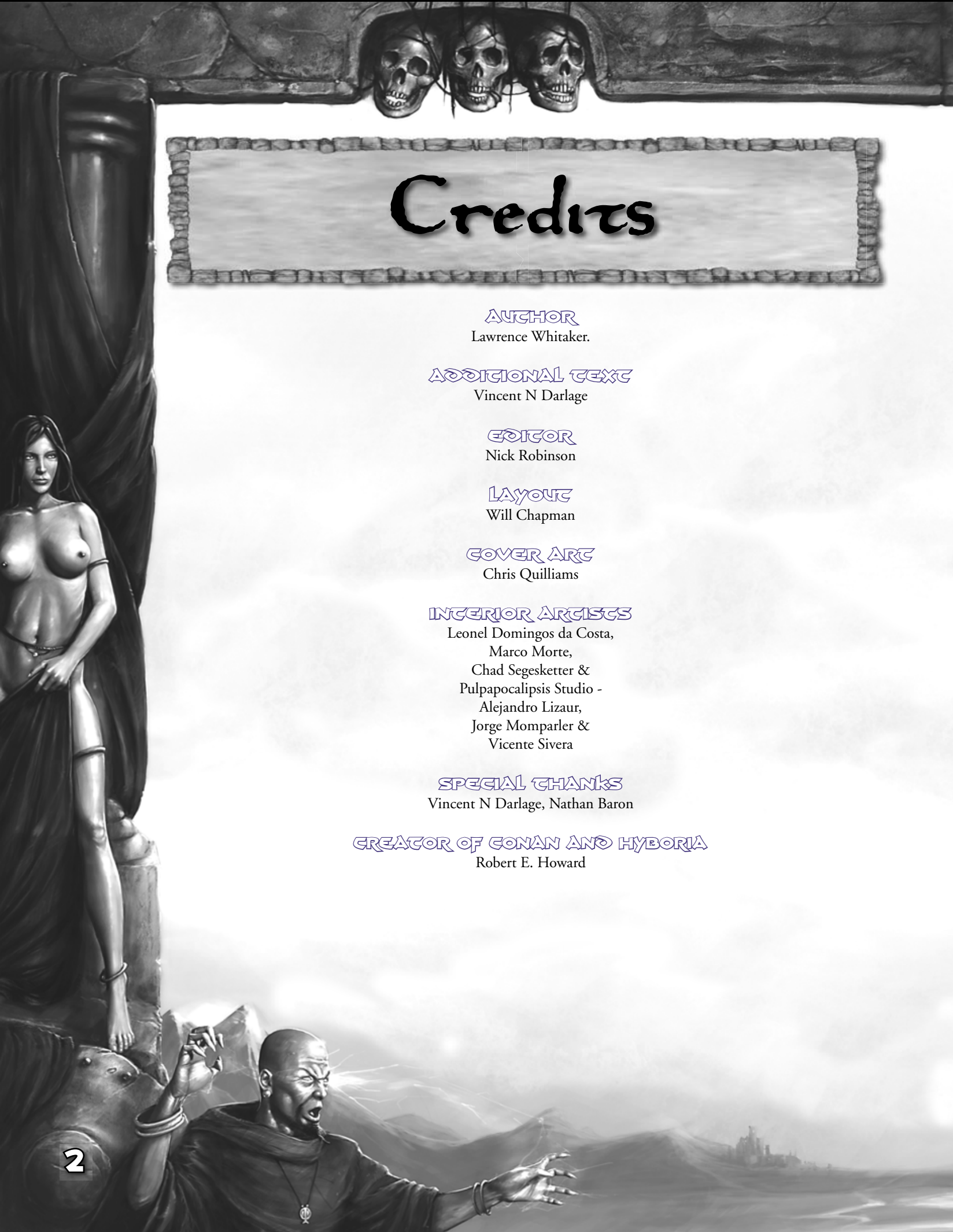
SECOND EDITION

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The Cimmerian Way

Cimmeria is, without doubt, a barbarian society. That is, Cimmeria has no cities, few settlements that could pass for towns, and an overwhelming reluctance to embrace or develop such structures or ideals. The landscape shapes the people and, because the landscape is harsh, grim, dark and forbidding, so are Cimmerians.

No true Cimmerian has any time for deliberate complexities or subtleties. A man's word is his bond, and any man who breaks that bond pays with his life. Justice is fast, harsh and retribitional. Everyone works or everyone starves: raiding a neighbouring tribe who has more than you is considered both work and survival. The strongest survive and the weakest die: it is evident all around. Cimmeria has no room for sentiment and little for sympathy. Yet Cimmerians are passionate and aware of the importance of certain conventions and constraints. For all their brutal hardiness every Cimmerian understands honour, integrity and dignity, even if these concepts differ markedly from what the civilised realms of the Hyborian age would understand by the terms.

The Cimmerian outlook revolves around five key facets: Devotion to Clan, Conformity to Tradition, Honour and Prowess, Blood Vengeance, and a Clean and Honest Death.

DEVOTION TO CLAN

The clan is everything to Cimmerians. The extended family nurtures and supports, creates a fabric of social values, educates, and perpetuates the Cimmerian warrior spirit. It is for the clan's honour that a Cimmerian makes war on his enemies; for the clan's prosperity that he raids his neighbours; and for its continued existence that he ultimately lays-down his life.

Most Cimmerians are indivisible from their clans. Children are raised communally, by both the women and men, and schooled from the earliest possible age in the clan's ways, duties, allies and enemies. Irrespective of its true position in Cimmerian society, the clan is the most noble, most hard-working, most potent in battle and most blessed of all the clans scattered across Cimmeria's gloomy hills, valleys and forests. As he grows, the young Cimmerian usually learns that his clan's position is not necessarily as

illustrious as his peers have described it, but by that point the clan's spirit flows through his blood and the young Cimmerian perpetuates the clan's strength to others despite knowing and understanding its flaws.

For every Cimmerian the crowning moment is the clan adulthood ritual; the point where he ceases to be a child and becomes a man. Even though every Cimmerian upholds his clan's values and traditions from the moment he begins to understand them, it is the adulthood ritual that *demand*s he do so. Passing from youth to man confers on every Cimmerian the duty of protecting the clan and upholding its ways in the face of any adversity. Every adult in a clan is expected to be prepared to lay-down their life for the clan, and to take the life of its enemies without question.

The rite of passage varies from clan to clan, but there are many common elements and similarities. The rite of passage usually involves several tests involving bravery, cunning, martial prowess, mental fortitude, physical fortitude and a measure of the individual's devotion to the clan and understanding of its nature and purpose. The Clans chapter develops these themes in greater detail, explaining some of the various rituals practiced by the clans of Cimmeria.

CONFORMITY TO TRADITION

Cimmerians dislike change; some hate it and others positively fear it. The Cimmerian outlook is founded on things that work and ensuring they continue to work with as little interruption as possible. This means that Cimmerians act and think the way they do *because it has always been done that way*. Change is destructive; Tradition preserves and endures. Change alters everything; Tradition ensures predictability – and, in a landscape as harsh as Cimmeria, predictability is fundamental to survival.

Cimmerians have countless traditions: efficient routines; clan-focused beliefs and rites; and modes of thought and action that have developed over hundreds and



hundreds of years which have proved to be effective. Few traditions are maintained for sentimental reasons; almost all of them are developments from practical necessity. Some traditions are based on superstition and folklore, but few are designed to appease the gods outright.

Cimmerians who deny the traditions or actively balk at them are viewed with deep suspicion and hostility because, inevitably, such people are troublemakers. Traditions underlie the few laws Cimmerians have and, if these traditions are challenged, then so is the fragile rule of law. Respect for the tradition and the 'old ways, the right ways' is inculcated from birth and therefore any adult who wilfully takes a stand against a tradition is rejecting the years of teaching and wisdom the clan has tried to instil. The honourable option is to leave the clan; any who attempt to stay and create or impose change are likely to pay with their lives.

HONOUR AND PROWESS

Cimmerians live by a 'rough code of honour', as Robert E Howard describes it. Irrespective of the clan one comes from, Cimmerian Honour can be defined in the following terms:

- Accept hospitality gracefully when it is offered, but always be wary
- Accept no imprisonment
- Accept no insult
- Defend the honour of kith and kin
- Defend those who need defending; attack those who need attacking
- Listen to those who seek your aid, but always be wary
- Never trust a sorcerer
- Offer foes a clean and swift death, if they are deserving of it
- Remain true to one's clan (and by extension the clan's traditions and customs)
- Remain true to one's word
- Show no fear
- Sometimes, even theft is necessary
- Speak only the truth; punish liars and expose falsehoods
- Take no woman by force
- Take only what is necessary; taking more than is necessary is theft

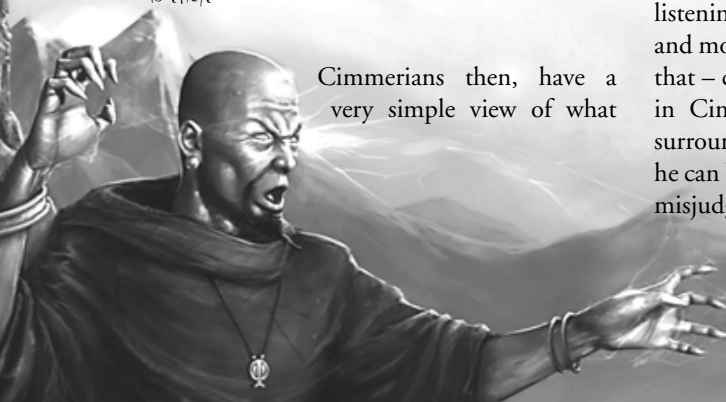
Cimmerians then, have a very simple view of what

constitutes 'honour': speaking and acting truthfully, and decisively, whilst maintaining respect for those who do likewise. To Cimmerians, honour does not need to be any more complicated and should always be a straightforward business. Cimmerians do not make the mistake of confusing honour, honesty and tact – something many civilised nations do. Neither do they believe that politeness and gratitude need to be dressed in false sincerity or fawning courtesy. When a Cimmerian offers his thanks, he means it. When he wants something, he asks for or demands it, depending on urgency. Most Cimmerians speak and act plainly, clearly and bluntly – but always honourably.

Prowess – personal excellence in a given area – is a matter of deep personal honour for all Cimmerians. Generally most Cimmerians place import on their prowess as hunters and warriors although, for some, prowess in other fields is held in higher regard. It is the desire of most Cimmerian youths to be considered fine fighters first and foremost, but not all: some are destined to be better craftsmen or herders and, whilst the hunter-warrior creed is expected of all Cimmerians, it is understood at a cultural level that a range of skills and talents are essential for the clan's survival. What is most important is the honesty and honour of understanding where one's talents lie and achieving excellence in that field, whilst still cultivating the ability to both hunt and fight well.

Thus all Cimmerians are geared towards being the best at what they do, because prowess yields success for both the individual and the clan. Every clan sincerely believes it produces the best fighters, hunters, crafters, herders and so forth in Cimmeria. Each clan's traditions are bent towards this goal even though every clan exhibits different areas of excellence.

Yet Cimmerians are not innately boastful. Great pride is taken in every endeavour that proves personal excellence, but few Cimmerians use their expertise as the basis for boastful declamations. Such actions always invite challenge and, although Cimmerians never balk at a challenge, it is always better to err on the side of caution and reserve because each and every Cimmerian knows that life is harsh and unforgiving. No Cimmerian believes himself singled out by fate above his kith, kin or comrades; whatever success one realises is the result of hard work, training, listening, watching and learning. Boastfulness is foolhardy and most likely displays a lack of personal confidence. And that – confidence – is the key to both honour and prowess in Cimmeria. Every Cimmerian, despite their gloomy surroundings, is confident in his abilities and confident that he can be the best of the best; but displays of arrogance and misjudged pride always attract a fall. Cimmerians know



this and simply work towards developing their prowess through deeds, not words. The truly excellent swordsman or crafter knows that his work will speak for him; if he is as good as he believes himself to be, it will be evident to others without the need for rash and arrogant boasts.

BLOOD VENGEANCE

Cimmerians are passionate and filled with pride for their clan. Sights can be weathered from time to time, but insults and assaults against the family or clan are taken seriously and never allowed to rest. The desire for vengeance runs through every Cimmerian as freely as their blood. Insults and assaults must always be paid for, usually in blood.

Because clan ties and personal honour are closely bound together, injury to an individual becomes the responsibility of the entire family or clan to avenge. Refusal or unwillingness to seek revenge is seen as a sign of weakness and is likely to attract further attacks. Thus, any Cimmerian who feels his honour, or that of his clan, has been challenged, always seeks vengeance against the perpetrator; the matter cannot be allowed to rest until vengeance has been satisfied.

Clans therefore can, and do, engage in feuds and war between themselves. Individuals may even accept the burden of extracting blood vengeance as a perfectly acceptable means of proving both their honour and prowess. It is commonplace for Cimmerians to brood upon an insult or attack for days, weeks, months or years before taking action, but action is *always* taken. Anything that challenges, insults or harms the honour of a person or the honour of the clan attracts a furious response. And, naturally enough, vengeance begets further revenge, resulting in long-running and bloody feuds that persist long after the initial provocation has been forgotten. Grandsons seek vengeance for long-dead grandfathers; clans battle clans for decades, becoming ignorant as to *why*, but retaining the certainty that they *must*. A Cimmerian who has been wronged becomes a life-long enemy and, given the insular and sullen nature of each and every clan, it is impossible to gauge what is likely to provoke vengeance.

This uncertainty leads clans and individuals to act cautiously whenever they encounter an unfamiliar clan or individual. Cimmerians do not like to give offence; not because they believe in being deferential (far from it: deference is for slaves – no Cimmerians will ever allow himself to be a slave), but because one can never be certain what will provoke a violent response. Once a certain level of trust and understanding has been developed, Cimmerians relax, but always take care not to overstep perceived boundaries. Known enemies, of course, never receive such

caution; but no clan wants to make more enemies if it can help it. Many clans have been wiped out through a constant willingness to attack and insult their neighbours; and, making an enemy of one clan usually results in making enemies of all the clans the injured party is allied with. A single insult can, and will, result in attracting a fierce and disproportionate response.

A CLEAN AND HONEST DEATH.

Cimmerians do not place any faith in their gods to provide them with a happy afterlife. Death is part of the natural cycle of things, and every Cimmerian knows that death is never far away. Death is not spoken of in hushed tones; it is discussed matter of factly and without sentiment. Every Cimmerian wants a death that is both clean and honest. That is, a death that would not bring shame on the clan or the individual. Dying in battle, sword in hand, surrounded by the bodies of the enemy, is a good and honest death. Being executed after capture, pleading for one's life, is exactly the opposite. Dying whilst behaving with honour is the way every Cimmerian wants to die and they have no fear of it; but dying pitifully, weakly, and either denying honour or having it denied to them, shames the soul and clan.

Similarly, when dealing death, Cimmerians tend towards offering it cleanly and honestly. If a foe fights well and honourably, a fast, cleanly delivered death is an honourable thing to offer. A clean death is delivered without cruelty and without resort to unclean methods such as poisons or venoms, which are the weapons of cowards who lack the prowess to slay their foes cleanly. When facing death from other Cimmerians, every Cimmerian expects a fast and clean death (assuming he has, himself, behaved honourably); but when dealing with outsiders, Cimmerians know that they cannot be guaranteed such a death. Plenty of outsiders do not understand the concepts of honour and an honourable death, and resort to tactics and weapons that deny such honesty. Foes who do not offer clean and honest deaths will always incur the enmity of a clan; foes who take lives as Cimmerians expect are simply acting with honour and will be recognised for it.

Those who die with honour are always highly regarded in the clan, but, again, never with undue sentimentality. Death comes to everyone and one cannot choose when they will die or by what method; but how one dies is important. Those who die bravely are honoured in song and reputation. Those who





die weakly or with cowardice, are erased from the memory of the clan.

CIMMERIAN SOCIETY

Without exception Cimmerian society is based on the clan as the social unit. Clans are groups of extended families bonded together through common lineage, either patriarchal or matriarchal and for a common purpose, mostly survival. Most marriages and births take place solely within the clan but unions with other, allied or semi-allied clans are common so that the clan's bloodline can be extended and enriched. Marriage between clans that have settled a feud is a good way of demonstrating the reconciliation although by no means is this a way of guaranteeing it.

Clans range in size from anything between two to a hundred families, depending on the clan's success and perceived prestige. Family units vary between three and twelve members; typically Cimmerians do not have large families because infant mortality is high, but, on occasion, families within a clan prosper leading to large family sizes. As families within the clan marry and produce further offspring, cousins, half-cousins and so on proliferate but, generally, Cimmerians do not recognise such relationships with any great regard. Siblings – brothers and sisters – demonstrate the strongest filial bonds, but more distant relatives are regarded as simply being clan members. A typical clan may therefore consist of perhaps ten to fifteen families and range in size from around 40 to 500 individuals.

Few clans can accurately trace their roots. Cimmerians are evolved from the Atlanteans but it is rare for this lineage to be offered any kind of regard. Those clans that can trace their lineage may honour one or several ancestors but of more fundamental importance is simply the clan's existence, purpose, current territory and the natural support offered to its members. Cimmerians are pragmatic, practical people with little time for remote sympathies or pressing needs for distant ancestor worship. Clan history is important in terms of its collective deeds rather than any illustrious ancestors, although certain key individuals are, from time to time, used to invoke the clan's position when dealing with others (*'We are the Clan Karnak and Gulan the Head Stripper won us these lands...'*).



CHILDREN

Child rearing differs from clan to clan but is most commonly a communal affair. Parents are ultimately responsible for a child, especially newborns, but once a child is old enough to run and, more crucially, hold a spear, the clan at large takes over with children spending time with whoever in the clan is equipped to teach them particular skills. Cimmerian children therefore grow to respect the clan much more than their birth parents – although bonds between parents and children may remain strong for life. There is little device or artifice in how children are raised; clan practice, tradition and common sense dictates what skills children learn, when and how. The vast bulk follow in the footsteps of their parents, older siblings and other clan members, learning the primary skills of the clan. A few might exhibit other talents useful to the clan that might need to be nurtured elsewhere. If this is the case – with a child that is clearly a better weaver than hunter, say, but born into a hunting clan – then it is not uncommon for the child to be sent to live with another, allied clan, in exchange for one that has the requisite skills.

This practice, whilst barbaric to 'civilised' eyes, serves a number of purposes. First, it ensures that a child's talents are properly nurtured; Cimmerians do not believe in stymieing natural aptitudes unnecessarily. Secondly, the exchange



CHILD MORTALITY

Many children do not survive beyond their first year. Cimmeria's damp climate is hard on young lungs and many succumb to illness and disease before they have been weaned.

It is customary for many clans to present a newborn child to the chieftain who inspects it for physical deformities. Whilst this is quite often a formality, some chieftains decide that any child who carries some form of defect should be taken out into the wilds and disposed of. Anyone who may come to be a burden on the clan cannot contribute to its long-term welfare and it is considered better to get rid of such burdens before they become troublesome.

Where a newborn is condemned to such a fate, it is customary for the child to be either taken deep into the forests and abandoned to the elements and predators. In some clans the child is either drowned, or swiftly strangled. The parents are usually compensated by the chieftain in some way; perhaps with a precious token or with better than average food for a short period. This is not some form of sentimentality, however; Cimmerians believe that parents who have brought a less than healthy child into the world stand a better chance of producing a healthy child swiftly if their loss is rapidly compensated for. The act has no deeper emotional connotations.

ensures that the clan's resources are not depleted and that it continues to benefit. As the parent/child relationship in Cimmerian clans is nowhere near as sentimental and strong as elsewhere, most children are unaffected by such a transition. With their typically brutal honesty exchanged children are told why they were placed with a new clan and the benefits to both clan and child explained.

But, for the most part, Cimmerian children are born, raised and die within the clan. As children they

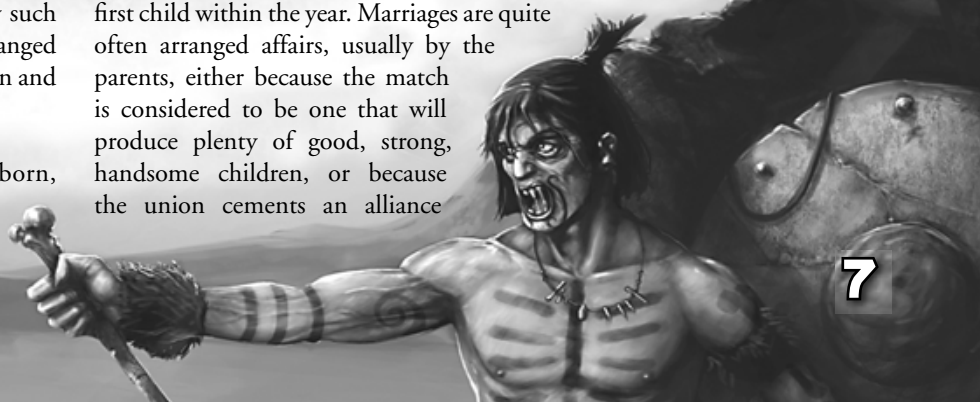
live relatively carefree lives but, once they reach the age of 13 or 14, they undergo the rites signalling the transition from child to adult. For males, this symbolises the youth's readiness to fight for the clan and perhaps die for it. For females, it signals their readiness for marriage and child rearing.

WOMEN

Women are naturally expected to be hearth-makers and mothers, but they are not denied the occupations traditionally occupied by men. Cimmerians are practical people and, if a woman shows an aptitude with spear, sword or bow, then it is quite acceptable for them to fight alongside the menfolk and, in some clans, even expected as a duty. Women are not perceived as being weak or inferior and, typically, they are anything but. Because strength survives, and because Cimmerian life is about survival, Cimmerian women are strong in body, spirit and purpose. Strong Cimmerian men can only be born of strong, Cimmerian women, as the old claim goes.

Women and men usually share equal status in terms of clan rights. Clan tasks and chores are shared; women chop wood and hunt, and men fix the hearth and cook. A wife is not a husband's property or chattel, but she is expected to be faithful to her man (and vice versa). This independence of female spirit may account for the way that many Cimmerian men who travel outside their borders view the women of other cultures. In cultures where women take a more subordinate role, Cimmerian men naturally assume this is an inherent weakness and therefore have a propensity to treat women as chattels rather than equals, to be taken as and when the man decides. Strong women of other cultures are admired, and Cimmerians tend to appreciate foreign females who display similar characteristics and personalities to Cimmerian women far more than do the menfolk of the culture concerned.

One role that women cannot escape, though, is child birth. Some Cimmerian women are quite content to do little but raise large families; others are content with raising only a few. Every woman is expected to bear at least one child, and usually within a few years of the adulthood rite. It is therefore very common for Cimmerian women to be married as soon as puberty begins and to have born their first child within the year. Marriages are quite often arranged affairs, usually by the parents, either because the match is considered to be one that will produce plenty of good, strong, handsome children, or because the union cements an alliance



CIMMERIAN WAY



between two clans. Marriage is very rarely for love, and it is considered against tradition for a woman to disagree with an arranged union because she does not love (or even like) the intended husband.

Whilst most women marry, some do not, and will lie with whoever they wish. If a woman tempts a married man (even if she did not actually do the tempting), it is generally considered grounds for expulsion from the clan although the child, if one results from the union, is usually kept within the clan and raised as part of the father's household. Unmarried women and men may sleep together and have as many children as they want; there are very few taboos surrounding illegitimacy because, once again, the overall welfare of the clan is strengthened by the presence of children.

MEN

The expectation is that every Cimmerian man will be a warrior or hunter. Indeed, every Cimmerian man is considered to be a warrior and/or hunter unless, quite clearly, they are incapable of fighting or stalking. Very few male Cimmerian children ever express the desire to grow up to be a farmer or weaver; those that do are usually frowned upon and considered for exchange. From the earliest years Cimmerian boys are taught to fight – to fight hard, skilfully and cleanly.

Whilst Cimmerian clans display a great deal of sexual equality, the tasks of hunting and protection fall naturally to the menfolk. Adopted into hunting and war bands from an early age, Cimmerian men form strong masculine alliances, learning to rely upon and trust their comrades. This is less concerned with machismo and far more concerned with survival. The tough terrain of Cimmeria means that even the task of hunting is a risky business, and teamwork and trust are essential to avoid injury and death. And, with so many warlike clans vying for territory, Cimmerian men know there is strength in numbers and greater strength in trust. An enemy is more easily bested or outwitted if you can trust another to watch your back.

Cimmerian men therefore enjoy male company and are capable of making male friends easily. They enjoy the competitiveness that inevitably arises in male groupings: drinking contests, friendly boasting and tall stories, games of chance, do or dare, and so forth. Raucous behaviour offsets the hardships of life in Cimmeria and helps form strong bonds that can be relied upon

in adversity. To outsiders, groups of Cimmerian men are intimidating; dark haired, invariably toned and muscled, and usually exuding aggression. However, if trust is gained, such groups prove to be boisterous, loyal company. If a Cimmerian gives his word, then it is binding; if a group offers its trust and friendship, then it is far-reaching – as long as the same courtesies are returned.

When there is no hunting or fighting to be done, Cimmerian men get on with the mundanities of clan life, completing the common tasks, whatever they might be, without any real complaint. Thus, despite their rugged natures and appearances Cimmerian men are remarkably capable where home-making tasks are concerned. All good Cimmerian men can look after themselves and any dependents, cooking, cleaning, stitching, and so forth. Of course, no great honour is accorded to such mundane tasks; true honour and prowess is found in hunting and battle, but Cimmerian men rarely scorn mundane activities as being 'women's' work. Instead, they just get on with the job.

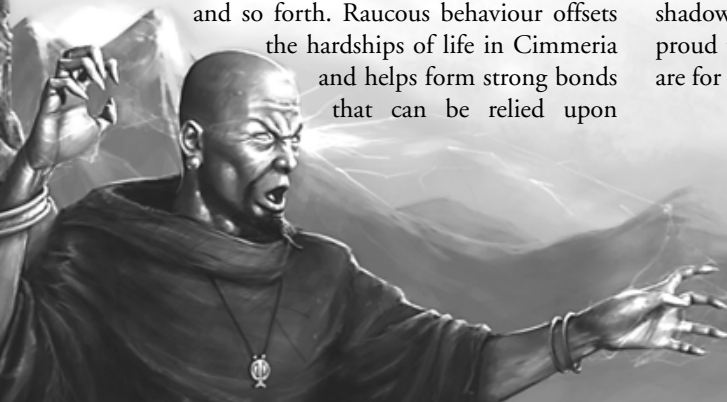
CLOTHING

Cimmerians shun finery and ostentation. Typically clothing for men and women are simple tunics or shirts of coarse wool and linen worn either with kilts or woollen trousers, dyed with simple, natural dyes derived from minerals or vegetables. This is everyday garb worn to protect against the seemingly incessant rain and cold, chilly nights.

Footwear, when worn (often it is not – many Cimmerians go barefoot), is a pair of simple leather sandals laced around the ankle and calf.

Every clan adopts specific colours that are displayed in the patterns woven into kilts, tunics or trousers. These colours are often plaids or crude tartans; regular, geometric patterns that are simple to weave but intricate enough to promote clan identity.

In cold weather cloaks are very common, being of either wool, sheep or goatskin, or, occasionally, leather. Hats and other forms of headwear, with the exception of helmets for battle, are extremely rare amongst Cimmerians, although a cloak might have a hood stitched to it if lengthy travel in inclement weather needs to be undertaken. Cimmerians generally consider headwear to be a form of disguise as it shadows the eyes or masks the hair. Every Cimmerian is proud to be a Cimmerian; disguises or attempts at them, are for cowards and thieves.



TYPICAL ITEMS OF CIMMERIAN CLOTHING

Léine – a shirt of soft linen, usually worn under a woollen tunic or robe. The léine has no collar and is often slit in a V from the throat to the top of the chest. For men, the léine is calf-length and for women, ankle length. It is usually dyed a deep saffron colour although bleached linen (a creamy-white) is also common.

Braecci – linen or woollen trousers worn over the léine, and belted at the waist and, sometimes, gathered at the ankle.

Inar – a woollen, collarless jacket worn over a léine and cut in the style of a robe. Designed to be worn open, but sometimes secured with a belt.

Trius – woollen or coarse linen underwear formed from two rectangular leg tubes and a centre flap of rectangular cloth that folds from the belly to down between the legs, and then back up to cover the rear.

Mantle – woollen rectangular cloak with length indicating status within the clan. Fringing is common and many are decorated with clan symbols. The mantle is held in place by a clasp of horn, antler or bone, although chieftains and other high-status individuals may have clasps of bronze, iron, silver or gold.

However, when it comes to hunting and warfare, dress changes radically. Loincloths of soft leather, sometimes accompanied by leather jerkins, replaces the woollen shirt and kilt. Such garb would easily snag when out in the wilds and, although it protects against the cold, Cimmerians would far rather shiver than be impeded when it comes to a high-speed chase through forest and briar, or across bleak moorland. When going into battle, those Cimmerians

who have armour, either taken from slain enemies, gifted by fathers or clan elders, or bought (although this is rare), wear it – especially helmets. Cimmerians, whilst proud of their prowess in battle and eager to display their strength and tenacity, are not fools and value good, solid protection. Many outsiders view all Cimmerians as near-naked savages, running into battle nude, save for a loincloth and battle scars, but this is a rare sight; Cimmerian war bands wear whatever armour they can and those that do choose to go semi-naked (as Conan himself did on many occasions), usually have a specific reason for doing so (the most common being that they cannot afford armour, or want to maximise their speed).

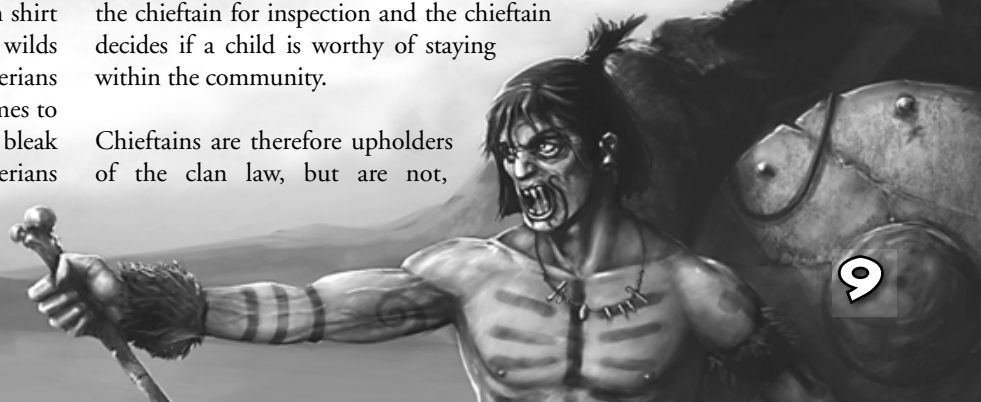
NOBILITY

Cimmeria is a land of tribes and clans; it has no kings or landed nobility although plenty have, in the past, attempted to make themselves into such – and failed. Clans have land, or more, correctly, territory, that they control, but no single individual lays any right to exclusive ownership of territory.

However every clan has a headman or woman, who is considered to be the clan's chieftain. Where several clans have come together to form a tribe, then a tribal chieftain, often called a Thane, is elected from amongst the clan rulers. Rulership is very often decided by right of strength; the strongest warrior can challenge for the leadership of the clan. It is therefore common for clan heads to be young men or women who have proved themselves in battle. Lines of succession are rare; there is no outright claim to lead a clan through family ties or position.

Every clan chieftain is expected to form a council. The council offers advice on all matters relating to the clan's welfare and the chieftain is expected to listen to this advice and heed it. Chieftains who are arrogant enough to ignore the advice of the council are likely to face a challenge from someone as strong that shows he *will* listen to advice (not that that is ever a guarantee in reality). The chieftain's word and decision are considered final. Chieftains decide when to go to war, whether or not to go to war, and whom to go to war against. They decide when raids will take place and when peaceful pursuits will prevail. Chieftains have the final say in who marries whom and, quite often, make the marriage in the first place. New born children are traditionally given to the chieftain for inspection and the chieftain decides if a child is worthy of staying within the community.

Chieftains are therefore upholders of the clan law, but are not,





normally, law-makers. Where some form of law or social regulation is considered necessary, it is customary for the council to decide upon it and the chieftain to proclaim it. More often than not, a clan's laws are enshrined by its existing traditions and practices, with little need for any other mechanisms to enforce social harmony. Sometimes a chieftain has a certain way of doing things, born from necessity or circumstance that is later adopted as part of the traditions, and, in this way, Cimmerian clan society evolves slowly and in response to events.

Even chieftains, though, are expected to uphold and abide by a clan's traditions and customs. Where a chieftain contravenes or overturns a tradition, he needs an exceedingly good reason (and usually the consent of his council) for doing so and must explain his actions clearly to the rest of the clan. Chieftains who are intent on enforcing their own will are likely, at some point, to be challenged openly and, if defeated (and still alive), forced to leave the clan immediately. It is not the Cimmerian way to conspire against, or assassinate, its chieftains. If a chieftain's decision is opposed, the opponent must clearly state his reasons and make a challenge against the chieftain. If a chieftain is clearly so bad that he needs to be removed, then a challenger is openly sought and the subsequent attempt to remove the chieftain is resolved swiftly and, usually, brutally. If a chieftain survives a challenge of strength, he has shown that his will must prevail, unless someone else can succeed in making the challenge.

PRIESTS

The Cimmerian approach to religion is ambiguous, at best. Crom, foremost of the gods, is a distant, unforgiving, merciless deity that Cimmerians recognise but do not overtly worship. The other deities receive equal disinterest. There are no churches or temples to the gods to be found anywhere in Cimmeria although certain places are considered shrines or places sacred to the gods. If any worship takes place – and usually it is a swiftly muttered prayer and short sacrifice – then this is where it will take place.

Cimmeria therefore has no priests as such. Some individuals study the ways and myths of the gods but they do so more to be able to help guide the clan than to make converts, enforce ritual worship or lead congregations.

Those who do study the ways of the gods do

so as a side interest whilst still playing a traditional role within the clan. Some of these sages might shave their hair into a tonsure (shorn from brow to crown, left long at the sides and back) indicating their interest in the gods and Otherworld, but they do not make any attempts to inculcate others into their interest. If a clan has a sage, then usually he or she is given a place on the chieftain's council so that any snippets of wisdom or insight from the gods might be channelled into clan business, but this is by no means a right. Plenty of sages go through life without exerting the slightest influence on the clan because, by and large, the gods, even Crom, are considered to be distant from mortal affairs – and Cimmerians prefer it that way.

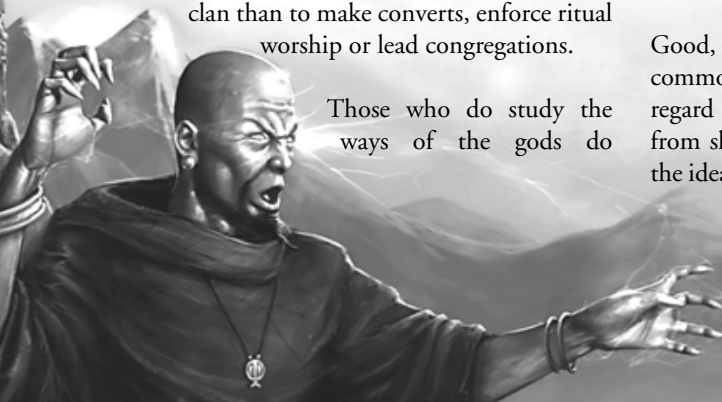
Despite this attitude towards the gods, sages very often concern themselves with the study of a clan's traditions and the influence that the ancestors might exert on affairs. For all their lack of religious devotion, Cimmerians are superstitious people, and it is widely believed that the spirits of the ancestors remain in and around clan territory, watching and, sometimes, gently guiding clan affairs and fortunes. Ancestors are the honoured dead of the clan; those who served it well and died for its cause. The sages of Cimmeria ensure that the ancestors are remembered on the anniversary of their death (or some other commemorative day) through a simple ceremony such as laying a place for them at the chieftain's dinner table, or drinking to their health in the Otherworld.

Otherwise, there is little room for priests in Cimmeria. Those Cimmerians who have travelled to places such as Stygia and Hyrkania, have frequently reported on the way many priests prey on communities rather than serve them. Cimmerians, with their natural distrust of cowardly predators, have their suspicions confirmed and become ever more resolved to keep their gods – and those who are so keen to serve them – at a lengthy distance.

WARRIORS

The warrior is the lynchpin of the Cimmerian clan. Every man is expected to become a warrior, and many women join them. Warriors are expected to defend the clan from its enemies, make war on the same enemies, raid when raiding is necessary, and promote the clan's strength and pride at every opportunity.

Good, strong, fast and brave warriors are the most prized commodity of Cimmeria. The ideal warrior fights without regard for his own safety, offers no mercy, does not shirk from slaughter, and is unafraid to die. At the same time, the ideal Cimmerian warrior is expected to obey orders and





to fight with honour and dignity. Cimmeria's history is one of countless tribal wars stretching back into the mists of time, and Cimmerians have learned their lessons in warfare the hard way. Some Cimmerians – the foolish ones – do charge headlong into battle at the first opportunity with absolutely no regard for themselves or others, but these are the ones who quickly die and are, ultimately, a waste. A good Cimmerian warrior listens to his chieftain or commander, thinks a little before he strikes, uses cunning (but not deceit) to gain an edge over his opponent, but still becomes a merchant of death feared by all before him.

War seems to be a natural aptitude for most Cimmerians. They have an uncanny ability to appear fearless in battle and openly relish the opportunity to engage in bloodletting, even if the odds almost guarantee their own death. Cimmerians rarely offer surrender to a foe and never expect it to be offered in return. But they are not, by and large, reckless berserks. Certainly some, the most feared (like Conan), enter a berserk killing rage in the middle of battle, gripped by an insatiable bloodlust that has them howling with glee at the carnage, but this tends to be a result of hard experience rather than reckless abandon.

Cimmerian warriors train with a variety of weapons and across a variety of different techniques: close combat against single and multiple foes; battlefield combat; ambush, and

so forth. Favoured weapons are the long spear, broadsword, battle axe and heavy mace. Shields are used, but primarily as battlefield protection. Every Cimmerian is schooled in the use of the dagger and knife and this is usually the first weapon a Cimmerian learns to handle.

For many warriors amongst the barbarian cultures of Hyboria a combat or battle begins with drinking and taunting of the enemy. Although this occurs within their society it is more common for Cimmerians to spend the moments before a battle in steely concentration, focusing on their enemies, their weapons, and likely weaknesses or points of vulnerability. Ranks of Cimmerian warriors preparing to clash are a line of sullen concentration, dark eyes narrowed, brows furrowed, fingers tensing and relaxing around the hilts and hafts of their weapons. When concentrating thus Cimmerian warriors are oblivious to everything save their enemy, their nearby comrades, and are ready for the first orders commanding them into engagement.

Every Cimmerian warrior takes stock of his environment as naturally as a predator in pursuit of its prey. Cimmeria's grim landscape dictates that awareness and observation are vital traits for survival and so all Cimmerian warriors are trained to watch, listen, smell and observe. It is this acuity for the environment that makes Cimmerians, even the most poorly trained, more than a match for the warriors of other countries. The common perception of the barbarian is that he is a blunt instrument, unsubtle, uncultured and therefore ignorant. It is a fatal mistake. Cimmerian warriors, honed from childhood in the ways of the wild, have a natural aptitude for the subtle strategies that need to be employed when entering a conflict. The number of an enemy is quickly established; vantage points and weak spots taken in and registered at a glance; the enemy's state of mind understood through their body language and other signals, verbal and non-verbal. In preparing for a fight all these traits spring immediately to life in the Cimmerian warrior, making him a difficult foe to take unawares and a dangerous one to underestimate.

SLAVES

Cimmerians have a nonchalant attitude towards slavery. Slaves are taken whenever an enemy clan is vanquished in order to prove mastery, and the treatment slaves receive depends purely on the outlook of the owner. By and large slaves are considered to be chattels and receive the most basic level of care but are often abused,





depending on the will of the owner. Slaves are expected to do the drudge-work of the clan, to wait on the chieftain or owner and have no rights within the clan other than to receive food, somewhere to sleep, and a few, exceedingly modest possessions. Slaves might be traded between allied clans, much as any other goods might be traded and, if a slave is especially fit, diligent and obeisant, valued as highly as gold or silver. However the Cimmerian clans do not, as a rule, deliberately go in search of slaves and make a practice of trading them to further the clan's position. Slaves are an occasional necessity and a right of victory, but not a commodity to be farmed and bartered.

But Cimmerian pride makes them poor slaves. To be taken into slavery is considered shameful and no Cimmerian warrior worth his salt accepts slavery as an option in defeat. Acceptance of slavery automatically confers a position of weakness and almost all Cimmerians prefer death to a life of enforced servitude. It is therefore rare to find strong warriors amongst Cimmerian slaves. It is more common to find the old and those less capable of fighting amongst the slave ranks, and invariably Cimmerian slaves have a subdued, morose attitude because they are abundantly aware that, in being captured and enslaved, they have effectively failed to be good, proud, Cimmerians.

If a slave proves to be hard-working, accepting of their lot (a rarity, but a possibility), then, occasionally, a chieftain might grant the opportunity for the slave to become part of the clan. Whilst this confers freedom it does not necessarily confer respect and honour. Those who have risen from slavery to become clan members proper are always remembered as slaves and cannot count on being treated with the respect 'true' clan members receive. To have been a slave is to have demonstrated a weakness of spirit and, no matter how well an ex-slave has behaved, the stigma of weakness is always there in the clan memory.

SERFS

Because individuals do not own property or land (save for the chieftain of a clan, who holds territory in the name of the clan), there are no serfs in Cimmerian society. Working the land is a communal activity and the drudge work associated with serfdom is carried out by any slaves a clan owns. Other than this, the Cimmerian philosophy is to cooperate to survive; the concept of serfdom is alien to their way of thinking.

FARMERS

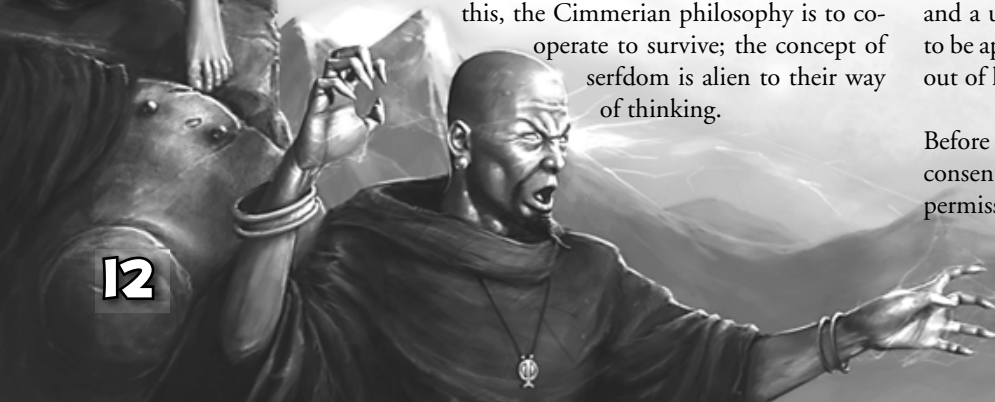
Farming is not an extensive occupation amongst Cimmerians. Many clans are semi-nomadic and do not have the time to raise and husband extensive farmlands. Hunting, not farming, is the basis for food production, but most clans maintain some livestock (sheep, goat, poultry and, occasionally, cattle) that can be easily herded and maintained. Crop production is limited to things that can be easily grown, harvested and processed to feed the clan, such as root vegetables, but cereal crops, which require intensive effort to cultivate, are a rarity in Cimmeria. Farming is thus a very limited pursuit amongst Cimmerians and takes place along subsistence lines. Few clans produce enough food to trade and the constant threat of raids by rival clans makes farming a burden and a liability rather than a viable way of sustaining the clan.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Cimmerians are an unsentimental people, but most certainly passionate. The romantic ideals surrounding love that might be found in other countries do not exist in Cimmeria; there are few, if any, romantic sagas told by bards or around campfires; no one composes great swathes of poetry in celebration of love and romance. But Cimmerians *do* love, and love deeply. They love their clans, their families, their hunting bands, their war comrades and, of course, members of the opposite sex in the romantic sense. Where they differ from other countries is in the way love is expressed. There is little time, motivation or appetite for idealised expressions of love; instead Cimmerians simply get on with their lives personally confident that those who are loved know it because they are not considered to be enemies and are treated with respect and kindness. Occasionally a couple might be so stricken with each other that they hold hands and adorn each other's hair with flowers, but such practices are quickly subjected to scorn and ridicule because they serve little practical purpose beyond mawkish sentimentality. When a Cimmerian loves someone, he tells them, bluntly and matter-of-factly, but usually he does not feel the need to do so.

Marriage is almost always a political union, designed to forge new alliances, bring to an end old enmities or advance the standing of the families involved. Couples do marry for love, but it is the exception rather than the rule, and a union that would benefit the clan is far more likely to be approved by the chief than a union that is being made out of love.

Before marriage takes place the couple must gain the consent of the heads of each family; if one family refuses permission, then the couple can ask the relevant chieftain





FIRST STEP: CASTING AND CONSECRATION OF THE CIRCLE

The women of the clan prepare a circle for the bride and groom to be married within. This might be a circular area in the centre of the clan's seat or it might be a sacred or special place in a nearby forest or on a moorland. The circle is clearly marked with either stones, flowers, petals, or some other marker and is always with a nine-yard radius. Only the bride, groom and the clan elder, who performs the ceremony, may enter the circle; anyone else who does so is considered to be cursed with bad luck for nine years.

The circle is consecrated with the urine from nine virgins, which is sprinkled around the perimeter. This wards against evil spirits and is considered to be a powerful charm aiding fertility.

SECOND STEP: PRESENTATION OF THE BRIDE AND GROOM

The bride and groom are brought from respective ends of the clan settlement where they have remained in seclusion from the previous night. The chieftains and elders of the respective clans and families receive the couple and offer a formal blessing, usually requesting the clans' ancestors to look favourably on the union. It is at this stage that the bride's family presents her dowry to the groom's family. The dowry is usually an agreed amount of some commodity that has been negotiated before the ceremony. It might be gold or coin, slaves, food or even armour or weaponry. If the bride and groom separate for any reason within nine years of the marriage, then the groom's family forfeits the dowry.

Following the exchange of the dowry, the bride and groom are presented to the gathered clans in preparation for the third step of the ceremony.

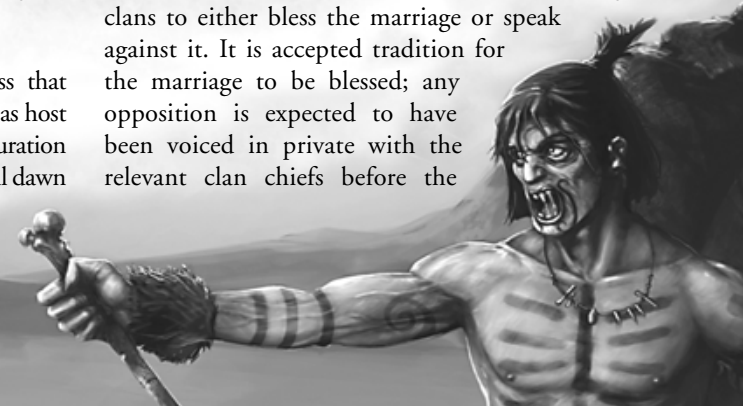
THIRD STEP: STATEMENT OF THE BARD

The bard is either a clan member who regularly regales his fellows with stories, songs and poetry or someone, such as a sage, who has been nominated for the purpose. It is the Bard's duty to explain, simply and concisely, why the couple are to be married, and to call upon the gathered clans to either bless the marriage or speak against it. It is accepted tradition for the marriage to be blessed; any opposition is expected to have been voiced in private with the relevant clan chiefs before the

to overturn the decision if he approves the union. Once the families have consented, then the couple are presented to the chieftain of the bride who must also consent. If the chieftain refuses his consent, then the marriage is not permitted to take place – even if the chieftain of the groom approves the marriage.

Once consent has been given, the couple must marry within ninety days. This period varies from clan to clan sometimes, but is a widespread and accepted Cimmerian tradition. In this time the couple must have minimal contact with other – something that is not difficult if the bride and groom are from separate clans – and when they do come into contact they must be chaperoned by a relative or close clan member. This particular tradition is designed to prevent the bride and groom from either eloping or having enough time to decide that they dislike each other before the marriage ceremony. It is *not* designed to ensure that sexual relations do not take place.

The marriage ceremony itself is a nine-step process that involves the entire clan or clans. The groom's clan acts as host and both clans are forbidden to carry weapons for the duration of the ceremony – which generally lasts from dawn until dawn of the next day (or whenever the drinking stops).





ceremony takes place. However, it is still an opportunity for people to protest.

Anyone who challenges the marriage must step forward and justify his opposition. It is then the duty of the groom's chief to either accept or deny the challenge. If he accepts it, the marriage is denied and tradition dictates that each party must go their separate ways without bloodshed or rancour. In practice, when this unfortunate state of affairs has arisen, it has invariably led to the creation of a feud or the intensification of one.

If the chieftain denies the opposition, he may call the challenger out. This always signals a duel of honour between the challenger and whoever the chieftain nominates as his champion. Usually this is the clan's foremost warrior, but may be anyone the chief decides to nominate, including the groom. The stakes for the duel depend purely on the severity of the opposition. Where considerable clan or personal honour is at stake a duel to the death is not uncommon. If the charge levelled is less serious, then the duel might be to first blood or even disarmament; if they duel is simply being fought to prove a point or make one, then a physical contest, such as wrestling, might be used instead of a duel with weapons.

If the challenger wins the duel, then the charge he has made stands and the marriage ceremony is either suspended or called-off completely, until a resolution (if there is a resolution) can be found. If the chief's champion wins, then the marriage continues – although Cimmerian superstition holds that any marriage challenged in this way is always doomed to failure in some form.

STEP FOUR: DECLARATIONS OF THE BRIDE AND GROOM

Once the Bard's statement has been made, the bride and groom, followed by the congregation, proceed to the circle. Here, the person conducting the marriage calls upon the bride and groom to declare their vows. There is no specific form of words, but essentially the groom must declare that he will:

Protect and honour his wife
Provide for her and his family
Place her needs above those of any other woman
Remain faithful to her

And the bride must declare to:

Honour and obey her husband
Ensure his needs are well-met
Raise his children in the traditions and ways of the clan
Remain faithful to him

STEP FIVE: EXCHANGE OF RINGS

The rings exchanged between husband and wife need not be finger rings of metal; they can be of any circular object – torques of bone or antler; warrior rings forged from the weapons of defeated enemies; necklaces of flowers or beads – anything, as long as it is symbolic of the circle.

The bride presents the groom with her ring and then the groom returns the action.

STEP SIX: FASTING OF HANDS

The couple clasp hands and present them to the elder conducting the ceremony. Their hands or wrists are then bound together in a loosely tied length of soft linen or silk. This signifies the completion of the union.

STEP SEVEN: PASSING OF LIGHT

The elder performing the ceremony takes either a lit candle or burning brand and encircles the couple nine times, chanting their names. The light source is then passed to the couple who, holding it together in their fasted hands, must proceed nine times, anticlockwise, around the inner perimeter of the circle. This act represents the spirit of the union and everyone watches the light source carefully to see if it will be extinguished. If it goes out at any point, then it is relit by the elder of the ceremony, but the rotation in which the light goes out signals the year or years in which troubles might be encountered by the couple. The more times the light source is extinguished, the more troubled the union will be and if the light source goes out more than once in any rotation, or is extinguished in every rotation, then the marriage is considered to be cursed from the start.

STEP EIGHT: THANKSGIVING AND OATH

Once the Passing of the Light is completed the couple kneel in the centre of the circle and jointly utter a simple prayer



of thanks to the ancestors and any gods observed by the clan – usually Crom, Macha or Nemain – and pledge to serve the clan that will be their home as a married couple.

STEP NINE: BLESSING AND OPENING OF THE CIRCLE

The elder of the ceremony blesses the married couple by offering them a sip of either wine or mead. This done, the circle is opened by the married couple each taking one of the markers of the circle and stepping out of the perimeter. They emerge from the ceremony as husband and wife, and the opening of the circle is the signal for the feasting to begin. The couple can remove the item used in the Fasting of Hands and tradition demands that it is tossed by the bride into the throng of the congregation; whoever catches it will be the next to marry.

Officially the marriage ceremony lasts for one full day, but celebrations might continue for several days depending on the mood of the clans involved, the status of the married couple, and how much food and drink is available. It is the mark of a good chieftain to sustain the feasting for as long as he can, and, although no chieftain has any obligation to continue the feast any longer than dawn the next day, it

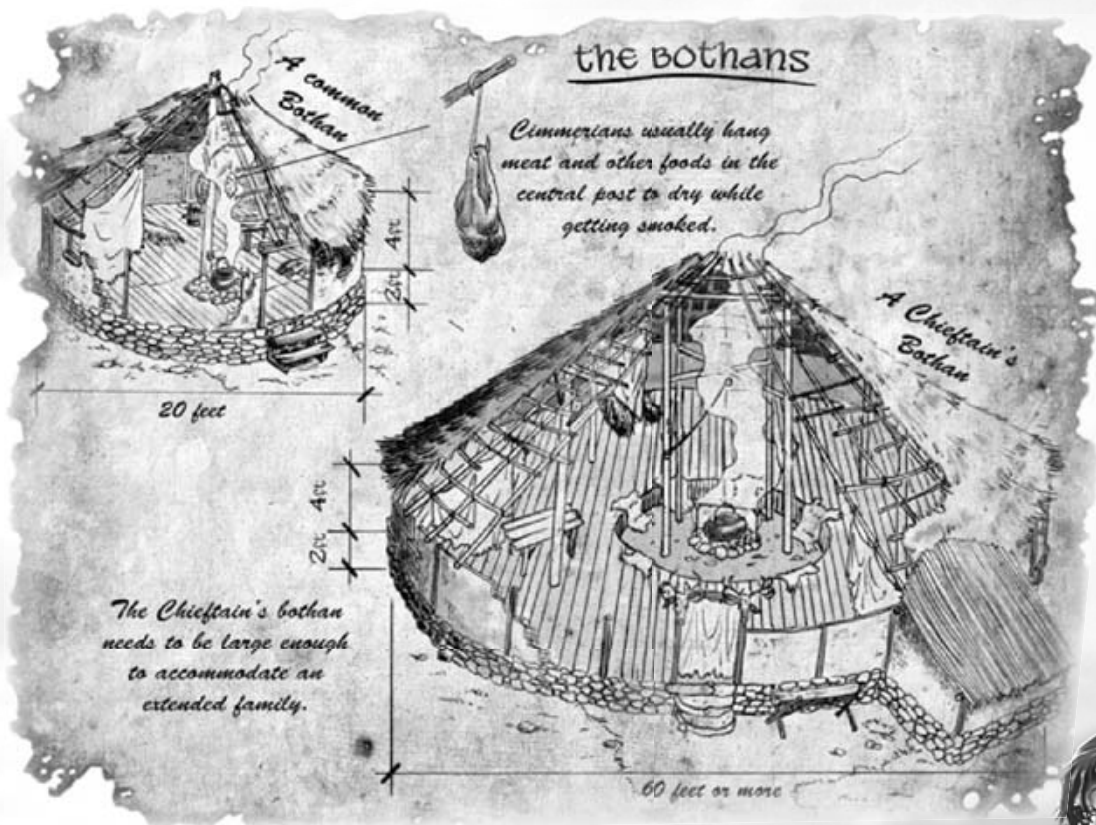
is considered poor form for the celebrations to end at the appointed time.

PROPERTY

Most Cimmerians have an ambivalent attitude to property, needing only the tools of their trade (weapons, mostly), somewhere to live and clothing to keep warm. Many Cimmerians own only what they wear and can carry, considering all other non-essential property as just so much excess baggage. But Cimmerians do appreciate and admire quality and craftsmanship; they also understand the value of precious metals, both for use in trade and in creating items of outstanding value.

A typical Cimmerian clan member can be expected to own the following range of possessions:

- ✿ Hunting spear
- ✿ Bow and arrows
- ✿ Broadsword (usually handed-down from his father, or taken from a fallen foe)
- ✿ A dagger or broad-bladed knife
- ✿ Ordinary day-wear (see Clothing, above)
- ✿ War gear (a few pieces of armour, a helmet or cap)





- ❁ Loincloth
- ❁ Leather sandals
- ❁ Cloak and bone brooch or clasp
- ❁ Hunting tools (snares, bone or antler fishing hooks, fishing line)
- ❁ Flint, steel and tinder
- ❁ Wine/water skin
- ❁ A few items of jewellery – a torque, some warrior rings made from the spear tips of defeated enemies, and perhaps a necklace

Additional items depend on status, experience and so forth, but most Cimmerian warriors consider the above to be the essentials.

Property within a Cimmerian clan is divided into three types. *Personal property* – that which is a hunted, made, bought or traded by an individual (and summarised in the list above). That property is an individual's by right and taking it away from him is an act of theft and punishable under whatever laws a clan enforces for theft. *Communal property* – that which belongs to the clan and is administered in behalf of the clan by the chieftain and his council. This is essentially land and territory, but also extends to treasures and items that are known to symbolise the clan and its heritage; it also includes specific gifts made to the clan by other clans, whatever form these take. Communal property therefore expresses the clan's wealth, heritage and standing. *Chief wealth* is the third kind of property; this is property owned by the chief's position and which can be freely gifted by the chief either as rewards to other clan members or to other clans as an expression of gratitude or alliance. When emissaries come to a clan it is typical for them to bring two gifts; one for the clan and one for the chief. The clan gift becomes communal property whereas the chief gift enters the chief's wealth and can be used by him in whatever way he decides.

LAWS REGARDING PERSONAL PROPERTY

Theft is regarded as a grave offence within a clan. Mutual trust and respect plays such a strong part in clan life that stealing from another clan member is considered a critical breach of trust. If caught stealing from another clan member, the thief can expect to, at the very least, lose his left hand. If the item stolen is particularly valuable, or is either clan or chief wealth, he might pay with his life, and the chief is

always called upon to make the final decision in these circumstances. Even if the thief loses just a hand, he will be expelled from the clan and, bearing the mark of his crime, will find it difficult to gain sanctuary in another community.

The only circumstances where theft is deemed acceptable are:

- ❁ Looting the body of a defeated enemy. Cimmerian tradition always gives the victor the right to the spoils
- ❁ Seizing livestock in a sanctioned raid when a clan has no other option
- ❁ Sacking a village that has been defeated in battle, if the residents have offered resistance. In these circumstances only clan property and chief wealth should be looted; personal property, with the exception of weapons and armour, should be left untouched.

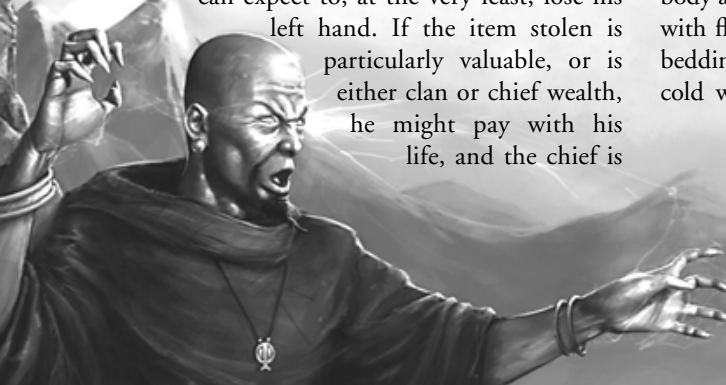
In resolving a dispute between two clan members, a chief might levy a confiscation of personal property as a punishment for the guilty party, but this tends to be a rare occurrence. Most disputes tend to be settled through tests of honour in some form of challenge.

HOMES AND DWELLINGS

Whilst some of Cimmeria's clans are semi-nomadic, most have fixed territories with established settlements. The standard kind of building in a clan settlement is the *bothan* or roundhouse. A circular base of stone, about two feet high and (in a typical family dwelling) twenty feet in diameter, is topped with a wall of wattle and daub, which acts as a windbreak and insulator. A central post and several radiating beams provide the framework for the conical roof which is made from thatch, reeds and willow canes.

Its interior is generally dark but warm. A central fire pit surrounded by stones serves as the hearth, and animal skins and pelts are hung on the walls and from the rafters to create basic divisions and increase insulation.

Bedding is made from clean bracken, rushes, straw or reeds, topped with a length of cloth to be wrapped around the body at night. Even the cleanest bed soon becomes riddled with fleas, lice and other fauna and so regular changes of bedding and sweeping out of the bothan is essential. In cold weather it is common for livestock to be brought





into the dwelling at night to offer yet more warmth and to protect them from predators.

The bothan of a chief is built to a similar design but on a larger scale (double, or even triple a standard bothan's diameter), and sometimes with a rectangular annex added to the circular structure where livestock and other chattels are housed. The chieftain's dwelling acts as residence, meeting hall, feast hall and, occasionally, armoury for the settlement, and is usually the focus point for the clan. The chieftain's chosen warriors may be required to sleep in the chieftain's bothan on a permanent basis, in order to act as both guard and symbol of strength for the clan, so the chief's bothan needs to be large enough to accommodate an extended family as a matter of course.

Cimmerians rarely use tables, chairs or other furniture. When sitting, it is cross-legged on the floor, with perhaps an animal skin for comfort. Meals are eaten from carved wooden bowls and trenchers of thick, unleavened bread, which are held in the hand. Cutlery is either a personal knife/dagger, and a spoon carved from wood or antler.

The only concession to furniture is likely to be a possessions chest, made from stout wood and secured by iron or steel fittings. The chest contains items of value or things that need to be kept dry, such as spare clothing and flint and tinder. The chest may or may not be lockable, depending on what the owner has been able to afford.



NOMADIC CLANS

Cimmeria's nomad clans do not build roundhouses but carry with them their portable equivalent: the yurt. Each yurt is built of a circular wooden frame over which a fabric cover, usually of coarse linen or wool, is draped. The timber frame consists of several lattice sections for the walls, a simple door-frame, roof poles and a crown. The wood frame is self-supporting and covered with pieces of cloth; guide ropes add strength and stability. The yurt's structure is kept under compression by the weight of the fabric, but, sometimes, a weight is hung from the centre of the roof to create even greater strength.

A yurt can be erected and disassembled by a couple of people in less than an hour. Its design allows it to be collapsed completely and be easily carried on horseback.

MONEY

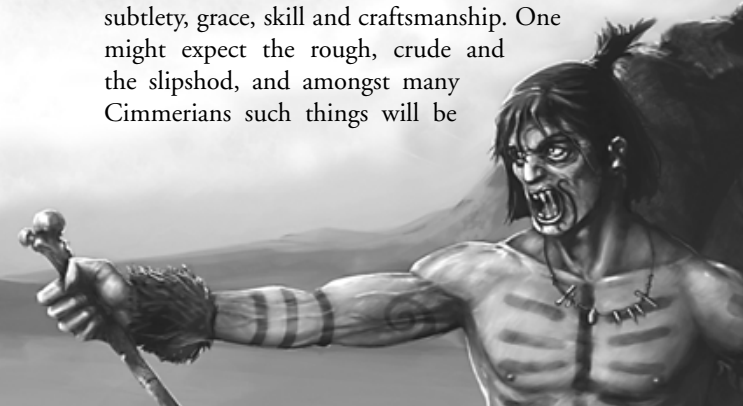
Despite not minting their own, Cimmerians have a love of coin, especially gold and silver. Day to day transactions are conducted using the barter of goods and services rather than payment in coinage, but whenever Cimmerians receive coins somehow, they hoard them for use later and if a chieftain or clan needs to make a particularly impressive gift, either within a clan or outside of it, coins are often the means for doing so.

However for most Cimmerians there is little use for coins in their daily lives. The Cimmerian economy has no centralised mechanisms, no exchequer, and moves fluidly on the straightforward transfer of goods and favours.

CULTURE AND ART

Foreigners make the mistake of assuming that, because Cimmerians are barbarians, they have no culture to speak of, with no way of expressing their character beyond fighting and raiding. This is a hideous underestimation of the Cimmerian way of life, which has an extremely rich culture, steeped in tradition, and expressed through art and artifice as articulately as any other nation of Hyboria.

The Cimmerian need to hone prowess extends as far into the creative arts as it does into the arts of war and battle. Metalwork, bone work and textiles exhibit incredible subtlety, grace, skill and craftsmanship. One might expect the rough, crude and the slipshod, and amongst many Cimmerians such things will be





found, with the functional being placed over the aesthetic – but no more than in any other culture. Cimmerians are highly capable of producing stunning works of art fitting enough for the finest halls of Aquilonia. Textiles are filled with vibrant colours and rich patterns, the quality of the fabric second to none in quality and durability. Cimmerians do not paint, but the designs they tease in their metalwork and knot work (used in belts, sashes and as fringes for robes and cloaks) are abstract and beautiful.

Such artworks are prized by the clans and chiefs, forming the treasures of Cimmerian society. Few emerge from Cimmeria, being prized possessions and therefore closely guarded, and doubtless their invisibility contributes to the notions that Cimmeria is uncultured.

METALWORK

Cimmerians are skilled metalworkers, particularly in copper, bronze and iron. Gold and silver, whilst scarce, are merged sparingly and skilfully into the mix to create precious items such as bowls, plates, goblets, jewellery and weaponry that are highly prized in the Cimmerian community. A good metalworker is an asset to any clan, and so the profession is considered honourable and necessary to clan fortunes.

Cimmerian metalwork shuns straight lines and rigid patterns. It favours flowing, intricate, interconnected patterns of curves, waves, concentric circles and complex knot formations. Such intricacy is always sparingly applied, but highly detailed and finely wrought. Cimmerian metalwork is, at first glance, quite simple to look at but, as the detail is studied, the intricacy and beauty of the design becomes apparent. Ostentation is deliberately avoided; quite simply, for Cimmerians, less is more.

The patterns and motifs used in Cimmerian design, especially their metalwork, avoid direct representations of nature and focus instead on symbolism. The main symbolic areas are: the clan, the ancestors, and the sacred numbers. Each clan has its own designs, expressed in the patterns and colours used in fabrics, but also in the knots and circular patterns used to decorate metalwork. The patterns followed allow Cimmerians to identify the clan producing the item.

Each important ancestor has their own combination of non-linear patterns, typically swirls and whorls reflecting the turbulent nature of life.

These tend to be etched into the

surface of an item, expressing how deeply ingrained the memory and influence of the ancestor is to a clan.

The sacred numbers: three, nine and twenty seven, represent several things. Three represents the three-layered nature of the human soul; the earth, water and sky are considered three parts of the same relationship. The *triskel*, a figure composed of three spirals, is thus a common motif throughout Cimmerian artwork. Nine represents the family unit, and the nine months of gestation for new, human life. Twenty seven, the result of multiplying three and nine, is the number of warriors comprising a typical Cimmerian war band and thus embodies Cimmerian strength.

SONGS, STORIES AND BARDS

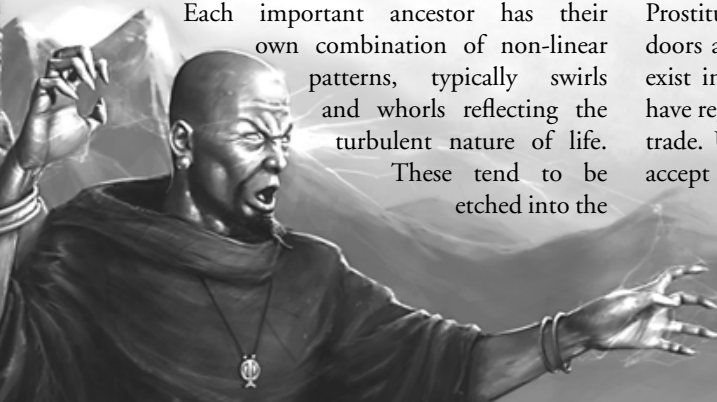
Unlike some barbarian cultures, Cimmerians do not have a strong bardic tradition although bards are present in Cimmerian society, and Cimmerians enjoy hearing tales and singing songs. Most stories and songs are retelling of great battles and victories. A few concern myths and legends but most are based around tangible events that recount Cimmeria's strength and glory and celebrate the heat, thrill and bloodiness of battle.

PROSTITUTION

Considered the oldest profession in many cultures, and Cimmeria is little different. Men are always willing to pay for sex and there are always women willing to oblige. However, few Cimmerians would ever admit to taking pride in using prostitutes. Every Cimmerian man is expected to have a woman, just as he is expected to have a sword and spear. Those that habitually pay for sex are considered to be, at best, unlucky or, at worst, weak and unable.

For women, prostitution is not considered to be a profession, but simply an activity that is indulged in when necessity dictates. Accepting payment in exchange for sex is sometimes the best way of preventing rape or rough, undesired union and, sometimes, as a form of reward for Cimmerian men who might have made an impression, but to whom the woman does not want to grant unrewarded favour.

Prostitution therefore happens but is always behind closed doors and is never discussed. Professional whores do not exist in Cimmerian society and clan settlements do not have regular streetwalkers or courtesans readily plying their trade. Usually, though, a few women who are known to accept payment for sex can be readily identified in any



clan, although a great deal of euphemism and discomfort surrounds such identification.

FOOD AND DRINK

Cimmerians are, first and foremost, hunter-gatherers. What small amount of farming takes place does so on a subsistence basis. The vast majority of a clan's food is hunted in the wild, not reared, and gathered from the moors, valleys and forests, not grown.

Meat is highly prized. Deer, boar, goat, rabbit, wildfowl, pigeon, and so forth. Cimmerians will eat anything they can trap or stalk and have a use for just about every part of an animal. The highest prized meats are deer and boar. Both require stealth, skill and cunning to be successfully hunted and their skins, antlers and tusks are prized for all manner of crafts. Hunts takes place every week with a full hunting band, both men and women, spending one or two days ranging through the territory checking snares, stalking the hunting trails and bringing-down prey. This extended hunt brings-back meat for the whole clan: several deer, boar and rabbits being the most common catches. This weekly food supply is supplemented by individual hunting expeditions where smaller game is targeted and the yield is not expected to be shared with the rest of the clan.

Cooking is simple: spit-roasted meat served on the bone, with left-overs being used to make broths. A portion of any large catch is reserved to be air-cured for the lean, winter months when hunting might be scarce, and Cimmerians are experts in such techniques of meat preservation.

Vegetables and herbs figure in the Cimmerian diet, but are not high on the agenda. Whatever is seasonal is gathered in the wild: nettles, wild garlic, berries, nuts, edible weeds and edible fungi. Cereal crops such as wheat and barley are cultivated in those territories where the land is available, and fertile enough, to support successful harvest, but cereals are by no means widespread and bread is not a staple of the Cimmerian diet. Agricultural methods are simplistic; Cimmerians have not developed crop rotation to optimise soil fertility and many crops are prone to disease and blight due to Cimmeria's wet, miserable climate and limited sunshine. The failure of a complete crop is viewed as likely rather than an avoidable disaster, and so clans are careful to ensure that their hunts are extensive enough to support the entire community, knowing that nature in Cimmeria is invariably harsh.

When the hunting is lean and food scarce, clans turn to raiding other clans; usually those that are foolish enough

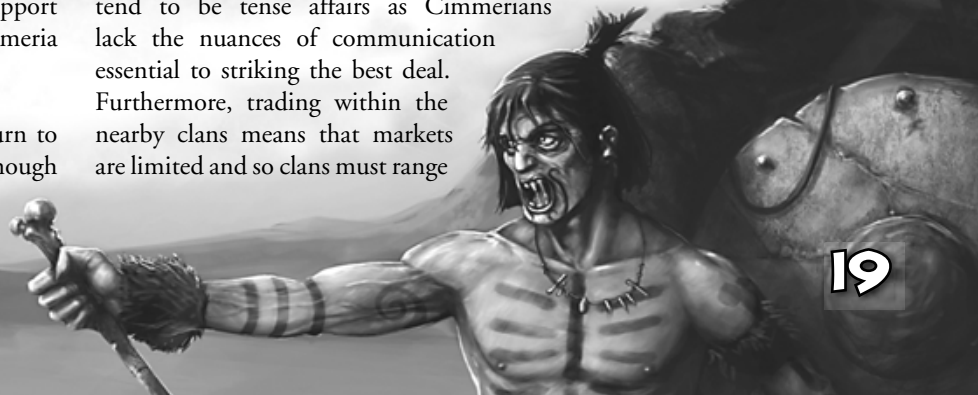
to maintain sizable herds of livestock that are worth the risk. The hunting bands turn their skills to reconnoitring a rival clan's territory, sizing the livestock, understanding the defences, and then using the cover of night and inclement weather to steal into the compounds and take as much meat as they can escape with. Naturally enough any clan with livestock understands it is prone to these attacks and uses its own war bands to form defences against raiders. Clashes over livestock are fiercely-fought affairs – as much a way of settling territorial and other disputes as for obtaining and protecting food. A raiding clan may disguise its identity by dressing and acting like another clan in a bid to minimise the likely retribution that will follow a raid, and feuds can develop, fester and spill-over into long-term bloodshed.

A raid is usually the first taste of combat a young Cimmerian warrior will experience. Raids are considered part of the training and initiation of all new warriors – a chance for a young man to prove himself in conditions that are dangerous, but less-so than a full-scale battle. Hot-headed warriors, keen to prove their mettle, are therefore at the heart of many raids and receive their first battle scars from the defenders. Particularly ambitious, fierce and successful raids are lauded as reverentially as any major battle, with those who distinguish themselves (especially young, newly blooded warriors) being feted for their deeds. Raiding season is thus an eagerly anticipated time as it relieves some of the grim monotony of the cold, dark, long Cimmerian winter.

TRADE

Most clans produce everything they need internally but, sometimes, trade is necessary – either with neighbours or further afield. Cimmerians lack a merchant class, so most trade expeditions are conducted by warriors who explain what they want bluntly, are unprepared to negotiate, and consider refusal to trade to be an insult. Of particular interest as tradable commodities are meat (fresh and cured), metals, weapons and armour.

Lacking a currency of their own, Cimmerians are prepared to deal in whatever treasure the clan owns as its Clan Property. Coins, when a clan has them, are always valuable, especially when silver and gold, but usually the clans must deal in whatever items are to hand. Trading expeditions tend to be tense affairs as Cimmerians lack the nuances of communication essential to striking the best deal. Furthermore, trading within the nearby clans means that markets are limited and so clans must range





further afield, taking them into unfamiliar territories where the chances of hostility are far higher owing to the fact that clan relations are less assured or completely non-existent. Trade is therefore not an activity Cimmerian's relish since it goes against the gut instinct to take what is needed via a show of strength.

Merchants from outside Cimmeria are, at once, both admired and distrusted. Cimmerians admire those who, through the gift of the gab and slick negotiation, can obtain a superb deal for minimum outlay; however they are deeply suspicious and even contemptuous of the mercantile skills. Slick negotiation is one step up from lying, and lying is not in the Cimmerian character. Few merchants speak plainly and say precisely what they mean; many bend to the truth to unacceptable lengths to get what they want and at the lowest price. But their methods, whilst often despised, are sometimes valuable for Cimmerians and so, on the odd occasion where foreign merchants might venture into Cimmeria's dark vales and bleak territories, clans are prepared to hire them as negotiators (or kidnap them for the same purpose, promising freedom if a trade deal works out; death if it does not).

CALENDAR

Cimmerians treat days as starting at sun down, and months are moons, based on the lunar cycle. A two week period is a fortnight, a contraction of 'fourteen nights' with one week known as a *sennight* (seven nights).

Festivals are held on the nearest moon, new or full depending on the festival. The length of the moon cycle is just over 28 days, giving 12 moons in a normal Solar year. Every 21 years there are 13 moons in the year and this is

Cimmerian Festivals

| | English Date | Festival |
|----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Samhain | 31 st October | New Year |
| Imbolc | 31 st January | Awakening of the world |
| Beltain | 1 st May | 1 st day of summer |
| Lughnasa | 31 st July | Harvest |

Minor clan festivals and feasts are held traditionally on the ninth day of the third, sixth or ninth month.

called a Great Lunar Year; Cimmerians mark the passage of the solar and lunar years and hold a Great Lunar Year as a period of unusually powerful foreboding.

The Cimmerian year is divided into four main parts based on the farming and hunting cycle, and marked by festivals symbolising the transition of the world.

Samhain begins the New Year, when the world starts to darken into winter. The veil between the human world and the world of the dead becomes very thin. Feasts are held and the ancestors of the clan honoured. The following day in the calendar has no name, to prevent the ancestors from being trapped in the mortal world and to make the journey back over the veil of death much easier.

The end of winter and the start of the awakening of the world is marked by *Imbolc*, which translates to 'the lactation of the ewes'. The birth of the first lamb means that there is once again fresh milk available, and isn the proof of new life returning.

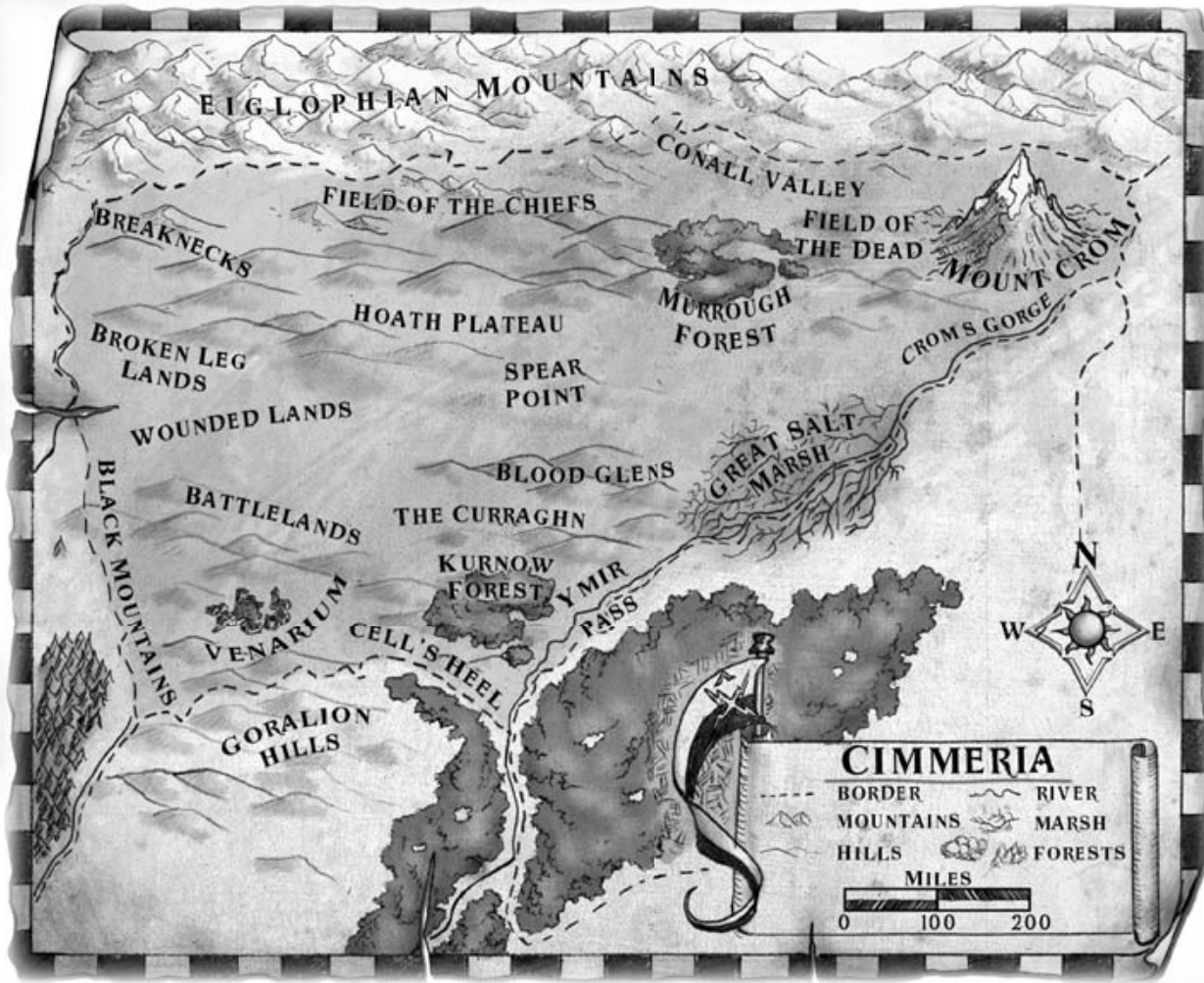
Beltain is the most lively festival of this gloomy realm, and it marks the first day of summer. It is marked by the appearance of the first May blossoms amongst the twisted branches and shoots of Cimmerian tress. A time of partnerships and fertility, this is the time for declaring alliances of politics and marriage. New couples proclaim their love for each other on this day, and clan chieftains take stock of what prosper or problem alliances and enmities will bring for the year ahead. Animals are transferred from winter to summer pastures, and are driven between the Beltain fires to cleanse them of evil spirits.

The last major festival of the year is the bringing in of the harvest, starting on the feast of *Lughnasa*. The festival is a

celebration of the clan coming through another year and entering the darkening days with plenty in store for the winter. In those clans where agriculture is practiced, the culmination of the festival is Harvest Home, marking the last load coming in from the fields.



That Sombre Land





Peering through the dust as best he could, Granth looked north toward the hills of Cimmeria. Dark forests of pine and fir and spruce robed those hillsides, making them even more sombre than if they were of bare rock. Mist clung to the hills, grey clouds scudded low above them.

"Mitra!" muttered Granth. "Why do we want that miserable country, anyway? Why would anybody in his right mind want it?"

Conan of Venarium

To outsiders, Cimmeria is an unremitting, unforgiving landscape best left to the barbarians who seem to cherish it. To its indigenous people, Cimmeria is a wild, untameable land that challenges constantly the very notion of life and progress taking place within it. Life endures in Cimmeria in spite of it, not because of it. Cimmerians have few romantic ideals about their land; they know it is a bleak and miserable place. What few snatches of natural beauty exist are not romanticised or venerated; instead Cimmerians know it is only a matter of time before the gloom encroaches, reducing all beauty to the same gloom.

HISTORY OF CIMMERIA

The land colonies of the Atlanteans survived the death of the world and the doom of Atlantis only to find themselves stranded on the mainland, alone and isolated from all they had possessed and known. Surrounded by bestial savages and ape-men, this new existence was a struggle for survival. Old techniques such as metallurgy were lost to them – the advances of the old Atlantean culture stripped away so that the isolated colonies were reduced to a simpler, more savage existence, mirroring the savagery of the world they had inherited. To their south the Picts, brutish, unforgiving brutes, launched attacks on the Atlanteans, plunging the two races into a series of long, vicious wars that were focused on nothing less than the survival of one race over the other. The Picts had the advantage; their clans were unified and led by powerful, warlike kings who had the strength of will to wage protracted war on the Atlantean interlopers. By contrast the Atlanteans were divided and disparate. Slowly, steadily, inexorably, the two battled and destroyed each other, piece by piece.

Then, three thousand years ago, the remnants of the Atlanteans and the Picts, who had warred for five hundred years already, were reduced to complete barbarity by some unknown cataclysm. Degenerating to an almost bestial existence, the Atlanteans came to forget their heritage and were forced to climb their way slowly out of savagery. The land around them was as savage as they; grey, rain-lashed and unforgiving. Slowly and steadily the Atlantean savages began to rediscover old crafts and ways, but had completely forgotten their ancestry. They named the land enclosing them *Cimmeria* and themselves Cimmerians. Families joined together to form the basis of the clans that now permeate the land and, in time, the clans joined to form tribes.

These early Cimmerians dwelt primarily in the north west, protected by the forested hills. To the south west their ancient enemies, the Picts, continued to dwell. They had fared better in these dark days, retaining their language and cultural memory, but still they remained enemies with the remnants of the Atlanteans, although their propensity for war was limited.

THE THURIAN AGE

Over time the Cimmerians fought their way from bestial savagery and became men once again. Nomadic clans struck out from the north west and encountered first the Acherons and then the Hyborians. From both they learned many of the arts that, when Atlanteans, they had been masters of. The Cimmerians regained the knowledge of iron and steel, husbandry and fine crafts. Savagery turned to a crude form of civility and the Cimmerians carefully nurtured these crafts so that they could be used against their enemies. War with the Picts came again, and the Cimmerian clans were driven away from the coastal plains of the north west and further into the interior of their land. Invasions by the Vanir and Æsir from the north cemented in the Cimmerian mind that they were beset by enemies on all sides and could look to no one for aid.

As the Cimmerians developed in size, culture and capability, further raids took place – this time by the Hyperboreans, the Nordheim and the Acherons. The reasons were always the same: to seize territory, make slaves, and create empires. Scoured by the Picts to the south and the fierce northlanders, the Cimmerians knew that their only chance of survival as a distinct populace was to maintain pure bloodlines and to fight harder, faster and with less mercy than their foes. With each battle the Cimmerians forged a new reputation for themselves; vicious, cunning fighters who would face incredible odds, fight tirelessly and with little regard for anything but the absolute defeat of their enemy. This grim reputation, reinforced by the grim nature of Cimmeria,



created the impression that perpetuates throughout the Hyborian Age: Cimmeria is a cold, dark land inhabited by cold, dark people prepared to live and die by the sword.

HYBORIAN AGE CIMMERIA

Attacks by the Picts continue, although with far less frequency than in earlier times, and, now wise to the way of their age-old enemy, the Cimmerians are able to contain the Pictish raids with a minimum amount of force. The Hyperboreans, a race famed for its cruelty and tenacity, still sends slaving raids into Cimmerian lands, particularly the north east regions, but its pickings are few as, again, the clans of the lands around Mount Crom are wise to the ways of Hyperborean slaving parties and are able to use guerrilla tactics to demoralise and destroy those who are foolish enough to plough too deep into the Cimmerian interior.

Cimmeria considers itself alone in the world. Forsaken by gods, forsaken by nature, surrounded by enemies, beset by hatred, Cimmerians have nothing but contempt for the nations around them. Having seen the greed and weakness the desire for empire brings, Cimmerians are content to remain within their own realm, with absolutely no interest in expansion. Bloodlines are kept within Cimmerian stock and the purity of the race is considered paramount for survival. Trust is limited to the immediate community and allied clans. Outsiders are treated with suspicion and a healthy degree of contempt. Those from the lands north of the Eiglophian Mountains and south west of the Black Mountains are considered enemies until they prove themselves otherwise. Few nations of the world, in Cimmerian eyes, deserve any kind of respect or honour. Against the whole of the world, Cimmerian stands alone, grim, brooding, untrusting and scornful of the so-called 'civilised' lands.

The tribes and clans of Cimmeria in Conan's time are far removed from the savage days of the Thurian Age. Tribal and clan history stretches long and far and, because Cimmerians have an oral, rather than a written tradition, the truth of their distant history has become myth. Similar myths are shared across all the clans, although details vary considerably according to clan victories, defeats and the merging with others. No single, reliable guide to Cimmerian history exists although the core myths are about as reliable as any history needs to be.

HOW CIMMERIA CAME TO BE A CLAN MYTH

Once, all people lived as kings and the world was a fine place of light, wealth and prosperity. But the kings became greedy and

this angered the gods who caused the world to shake and the great kingdoms to be destroyed.

So now the people lived like animals and had to fight for what they needed, because the gods had taken away everything that made life easy. *Life is Never Easy*: that is the first lesson.

In that time the people fought against each other because they did not know any better. They had forgotten how to act and live like men. They grunted like apes, or the swartheim of the Black Mountains, and dressed themselves in the smeared blood of those they killed. They used rocks as their only weapons and had even forgotten how to knap flint for blades and arrow heads.

Life was this way for a very long time. This is the second lesson: *Nothing Can be Hurried*. Around the savages, the world grew darker still. Out of that darkness came the Pict-Men from the south. They had not forgotten themselves as had the People Who Had Been Kings, and they looked around them with scorn and set-to cleansing the world of the beast people.

But the People Who Had Been Kings knew how to fight, and fight they did. This is the third lesson, and it was learned hard by the Pict-Men: *An Enemy With Nothing To Lose Fights Harder*.

Through fighting and war, the people relearned some of their old ways. They learned to talk again, so they could taunt the Pict-Men, and they learned to make weapons, so they could kill them. This was the fourth lesson: *Necessity Breeds Invention*. With tongues and weapons, the Pict-Men were fought on many battlefields. The Battle Lands were formed and countless good warriors died there, spilling their blood so the Picts would be driven away.

The Battle Lands taught the people to form families again and make ways for themselves. It took a long time, and the families fought each other, because that is the way of families, but the families grew, fought against the Pict-Men and others who tried to invade, and became larger. This is how the clans began, and the clans grew because more families joined together to make bigger houses and protect what was theirs.

So with more time, more clans; with more clans, greater strength and greater learning. Here is the sixth lesson: *More is Good; Too Much is Bad*. From the clans comes Cimmeria, but we are mindful of what happened when the Old People became like kings, and so the clans keep to themselves, make and take what they need, and leave the rest to Cimmeria.



THE FAILED KING MYCH

Out of the Three Great Tribes there came a champion who slew the Ice Giants, the Fire Giants, the Earth Giants and the Water Demons. He did so without weapons, using only his hands and wits, and all agreed he was a true champion of the land and not to be challenged lightly. But the champion, having slain all these foes, had lost humility and wondered why there should not be one single tribe with himself as leader. His wife, who was the widow of the Earth Giant, agreed, because she sought power too, having lost it with her old husband's death, and so together they decided to become kingmakers.

The champion called together all the tribes at the Field of Chiefs and there, side by side with his giantess wife, declared that, from henceforth, the three tribes would be one, and he would be king. His wife had fashioned a crown from giantish silver and she placed this on the champion's head. The champion called for any who disagreed with his plan to step forth in challenge.

Knowing the champion's strength, no one was prepared to risk facing him in single combat, but there was considerable anger amongst the three tribes that they should be dictated to this way. The various chiefs made conference and reached an agreement; rather than be a single clan, they would return to being many clans, and, in that way, the champion could not defeat them all.

When the champion heard of their plan, he became enraged and he stormed into the chieftain's tents and threatened them with death. The chiefs were, however, resolved; many was better than one. The champion killed several out of spite, thus proving his worthlessness as a king of anything, and, one by one, the Three Tribes split into many separate clans that left the Field of Chiefs and spread to the four corners of Cimmeria, leaving the champion and his wife alone.

What became of the champion, no one knows. Some say he returned to the Earth Giant's layer, beneath the Eiglophian Mountains; others that his wife ate him. What is certain is that he was never seen again and, from that time, the Cimmerian clans have always distrusted any attempts to form a single land with a single king, knowing that, somewhere, no matter how vague or distant, the hand of a giantess is behind it.

GENERAL GEOGRAPHY

Cimmeria is a lozenge some 1500 miles by 700. It is bordered to north by the cold, unforgiving peaks of the Eiglophian Mountains, to the east by the Border

Kingdom, to the south by Aquilonia, and to the west by the lands of the Picts.

The landscape is raw and undulating, occupied by great, unsheltered stretches of moorland in the interior, and densely wooded vales surrounding, rising steadily to the hills and mountains forming the boundaries at its edges. Cold winds drive down from the north bringing chilling autumns and freezing winters, when the countryside is blanketed in deep snow. Spring brings a thaw but also rain, which inflicts itself across the land for almost the whole season, tumbling down from skies like sheets of lead. In summer, the sun breaks through to warm the land but it never seems to be enough; great patches of ground remain waterlogged and the forests and vales are so dense that all sunlight is absorbed into the thick canopy. In the spring and summer, days are long but grey and lacking in vibrancy, even during the relative beauty of the summer. In the winter, Cimmeria experiences daylight for only six or seven hours out of the day, and even then the light is frail and sombre, the darkness ever threatening.

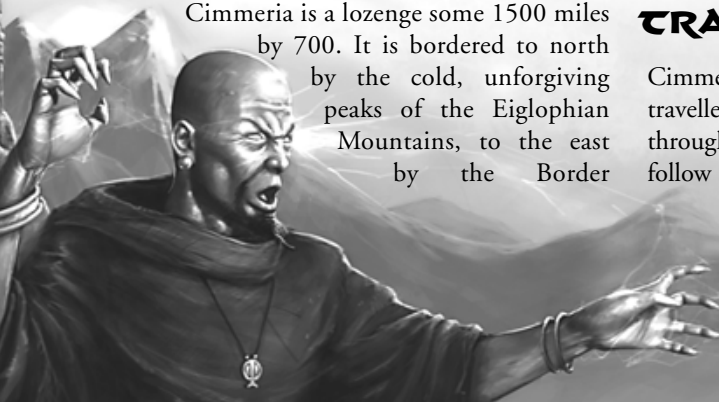
Cimmeria possesses only one, great river. The Shikal rises in the high hills of the north east and winds steadily south west, creating the natural border between Cimmeria and the Border Kingdom. Many smaller rivers are found throughout the land, but none has any kind of majesty and many are underground.

The land is rich in natural resources, particularly timber, coal, iron ore and copper in the Black Mountains of the south west and the hills of the north west and west, and salt from the Great Salt Marsh. The interior vales have a plethora of herbs and plants that form the basis of many medicines, salves, unguents, potions and poisons and the dense, dark forests provide a home to species of malevolent and benign fungi.

Cimmeria is therefore a land of stark contrasts. Natural features of the landscape denote particular territories, and the land is pock-marked with clan symbols such as cairns, henges, ghost fences, totems, gibbets and burial mounds. It is chilly throughout the year, and Cimmeria always seems to be cloaked in wind and water, which the dark ground absorbs and then releases.

TRAVEL IN CIMMERIA

Cimmerians have little use for roads and the best any traveller can expect are ancient footpaths threading through the moorland, marshes and forests. Most paths follow hunting trails which means they conform to the



movements of game rather than following the easiest pathway through the landscape. Road signs and mileage markers are non-existent; the only markers are for clan boundaries and these are often only obvious to a trained eye or other Cimmerians. Getting lost in Cimmeria is not difficult; the countryside is intense and oppressive – it is easy for the mind to either wander or become distracted by the overbearing nature of the surroundings and, in these instances, it is all too simple to lose one's bearings.

Navigating through Cimmeria requires a Concentration check. The DC for the Concentration check depends on whether or not the traveller is a native and whether or not he travels in familiar lands.

Cimmerians have a base DC of 20 and outsiders have a base DC of 25. The following modifiers are applied to the base DC to determine the overall DC for the Concentration check. ---->

A Concentration check is required every 3 hours of travel, assuming conditions are stable and the traveller is under no undue strain. If the traveller is under some form of pressure, then the check may need to be made at more

| Conditions | DC Modifier |
|---|-------------|
| Travelling in one's clan/tribal lands | -5 |
| Travelling in lands bordering clan/tribal lands | -3 |
| Travelled the area before in past 3 years | -2 |
| Following a Hunting Trail or Game Trail | -3 |
| Travelling with a local or knowledgeable guide | -4 |
| Light rainfall | +1 |
| Moderate rainfall | +2 |
| Heavy rainfall | +3 |
| Mist/light fog | +2 |
| Moderate fog | +3 |
| Heavy fog | +5 |
| Night time | +5 |
| Light snowfall | +1 |
| Moderate snowfall | +2 |
| Heavy snowfall | +3 |
| Pursued by predator or assailant | +5 |
| Injured or fatigued | +3 |
| Hungry or thirsty | +2 |
| Starving or dying of thirst | +5 |

Lost in Cimmeria

| 1D10 | Result |
|------|--|
| 1 | Wander north of the direction of travel for 2D6 miles |
| 2 | Wander south of the direction of travel for 2D6 miles |
| 3 | Wander east of the direction of travel for 2D6 miles |
| 4 | Wander west of the direction of travel for 2D6 miles |
| 5 | Wander in a circle for 2D6 miles |
| 6 | Wander north east of the direction of travel for 2D6 miles |
| 7 | Wander south east of the direction of travel for 2D6 miles |
| 8 | Wander in the reverse direction for 2D6 miles |
| 9 | Wander north west of the direction of travel for 2D6 miles |
| 10 | Wander south west of the direction of travel for 2D6 miles |

frequent intervals; every hour, say, for poor weather, or every 3 combat rounds if fleeing an enemy or predator.

If the Concentration check succeeds, then the traveller maintains his bearings and makes progress. If the Concentration check fails, then the character should consult the *Lost in Cimmeria* table above.

HAZARDS

The inhospitable landscape has many hazards: treacherous ground, steep, unstable inclines, predators, and so on. The most common hazards encountered whilst travelling abroad are described below.





EARTHQUAKE

The south of Cimmeria is the most prone to earthquakes. Where Cimmeria meets Aquilonia and the southern part of the Border Kingdom is where separate tectonic plates meet and force against each other. Fortunately tremors are a rarity and, when they do strike, are relatively localised and not strong enough to cause a cataclysm. Major earthquakes do occur, however, and a tremor of sufficient strength can cause a cliff-face to crumble, dislodge banks of scree, open fissures in the ground, bring trees crashing down or level settlements. This does not prevent Cimmerians from settling such areas; to them, an earth tremor is simply one of the gods displaying its displeasure and, once it has vented its wrath, it will forget about the world until the next time it becomes enraged.

Earthquakes occur when the rock cannot absorb or contain the strain it is placed under. The rock shifts along the fault line, releasing energy as it does so. This release of energy manifests in the form of shock waves, and it is the shock waves that are often the cause of damage, more so than the actual splitting of the rock or opening of the ground.

An earthquake is either Light, Moderate or Severe. Every earthquake carries a modifier to the DC of any skills being used at the time of the tremor. Light earthquakes are usually just strong enough to distract the attention and cause consternation, but Moderate and Severe tremors carry additional effects.

LIGHT EARTHQUAKE

Lasting for 1D10 seconds, the Light Earthquake causes the ground to rumble and shake, tree branches to shudder, and rivers of dust and small particles to skitter down cliff faces. Small, unsecured items might topple over, but the tremor is insufficient to cause anyone to fall over. If a Light Earthquake hits, anyone performing any skill receives a penalty of +5 to its DC until the tremor subsides.

Light Earthquakes affect a radius of 50+1D100 yards.

MODERATE EARTHQUAKE

Lasting for 10+1D10 seconds, the ground shakes with greater violence. Moderate Earthquakes impose a +7 penalty to the DC of all skill checks and have the following effects:

Anyone in a precarious position, such as climbing, walking on a ledge, balancing on a tree-branch or crossing a narrow bridge, must make a Reflex Saving Throw against a DC of 20 to keep his balance. If the Saving Throw is failed then the character falls (results of the fall being resolved according to how far the character falls and any additional hazards incurred as a result of the fall).

If the tremor strikes an area of unstable rock, such as a scree slope or a cliff that has suffered erosion, a rock fall may result: roll 1D20. On a result of 1-4, then a rock fall occurs. The character makes a Fortitude Saving Throw, against DC 18, to avoid being struck by 2D6 lumps of rock, or an equivalent slide of choking mud carrying debris, with each lump that strikes inflicting 1D3 points of damage.

Moderate Earthquakes affect a radius of 150+3D100 yards.

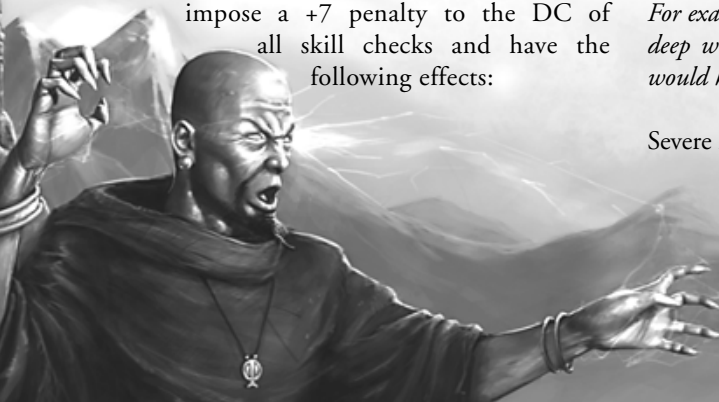
SEVERE EARTHQUAKE

A Severe tremor lasts for 40+1D20 seconds. At this level, the ground swells alarmingly, trees are uprooted, structures shake and crumble (and unstable ones fall), and maintaining balance is almost impossible. All skills suffer a +12 penalty to the DC. Every character must make a Reflex ST against a DC of 25 if on level ground, and against a DC of 30 if on precarious ground, to prevent from falling or remain upright. The chance of a rockslide, mudslide or being hit by a falling tree or branches is increased to a roll of 1-8 on 1D20, and the amount of rock/or mud being caused to slide is increased to 4D6, with damage increased to 1D6 for each hit. A Fortitude Saving Throw is still permitted to mitigate against the damage, but the DC is increased to 25.

A Severe Earthquake may also result in a fissure opening in the earth. The chance of this is a roll of 1-3 on 1D20. The resulting fissure is 3+1D20 feet in length, 1D6 feet wide and 1D20 feet in depth. Avoiding the fissure, if it travels through where the characters are standing, requires a Reflex Saving Throw against a DC determined by the fissure's size and depth. The DC equals 10 plus the width and depth in feet. Everyone caught along the length of the fissure must make the Reflex Saving Throw.

For example, at the very least, a fissure 1 foot wide and 1 foot deep would have a DC of 12, whilst a catastrophic fissure would have a DC of 36.

Severe Earthquakes affect a radius of 500+5D100 yards.





GALES AND STORMS

Cold winds from the Eiglophian Mountains batter Cimmeria's northern edges whilst warmer, wetter winds tear in from the Western Ocean, funnelled between the northern reaches of the Pictish forests and the western edges of the Eiglophian peaks. In the autumn and winter months, Cimmeria is frequently battered by strong gales that launch an assault on the countryside and people alike.

Cimmerians refer to such gales and storms as *The Breath of Crom*. Settlements built in the shelter of valleys and forests are more likely to survive a howling attack of Crom's breath than the yurt-towns of the nomadic clans, but even so the destructive powers of a fierce gale are yet another reason for Cimmeria's dark and dismal aspect.

Gales range in speed from 39 miles per hour up to 54; above this (55 to 72 mph), a storm occurs. When such a violent Breath of Crom strikes, everything suffers. Trees can be uprooted by storms, debris is blown helter-skelter around the land. The table below determines the effects applied to characters and the use of skills.



Gales and Storms Table

| | Wind Speed (mph) | Increase DC of all Physical Skills (inc. Attacks and Feats) by | Increase DC of all Mental Skills (inc. Magic) by | Reduce Movement Rate by | Damage Bonus to Flying Debris | Reflex Save to Remain Upright? |
|---------------|------------------|--|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Near Gale | 32-38 | +2 | – | 1/4 | +1 | No |
| Gale | 39-46 | +4 | +1 | 1/3 | +2 | No |
| Severe Gale | 47-54 | +6 | +2 | 1/2 | +4 | No |
| Storm | 55-63 | +8 | +3 | 2/3 | +6 | Yes: DC15 |
| Violent Storm | 64-72 | +10 | +4 | 3/4 | +8 | Yes: DC18 |

Winds of gale level and higher increase all DC modifiers by +1 if rain is present.

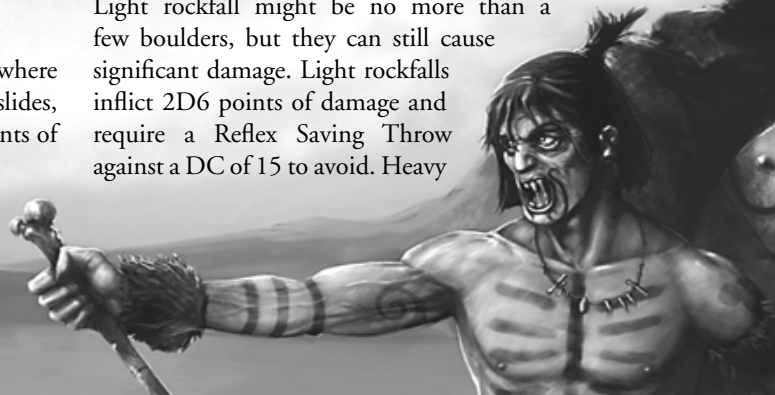
A Reflex Saving Throw is necessary to remain upright in Storm and Violent Storms if any physical activity is being undertaken.

It takes very little to trigger a rockfall; a misplaced foot or an ill-timed leap to what seems like a stable standing place is all that is needed to send a pile of rocks tumbling downward. As the rocks strike other outcrops, more rocks join the fall and soon the fall is a teeming cascade of sharp-edge debris, moving at an inexorable rate.

ROCKFALLS, AVALANCHES AND MUDSLIDES

In the mountains and hilly areas of Cimmeria, where scree slopes and loose boulders are common, rockslides, avalanches and other hazards concerning large amounts of fast-moving debris are a constant danger.

Rockfalls are rated according to their relative size. A Light rockfall might be no more than a few boulders, but they can still cause significant damage. Light rockfalls inflict 2D6 points of damage and require a Reflex Saving Throw against a DC of 15 to avoid. Heavy





rockfalls inflict 6+3D6 points of damage and have a DC of 25. A Severe rockfall inflicts 12+4D6 points of damage and has a DC of 35.

If struck by a rockfall, and in a position of elevation, then the character needs to make a Fortitude Saving Throw against a DC equal to the damage inflicted by the rockfall. If the Saving Throw fails, then the character is swept up in the fall. Roll the rockfall's damage dice again to determine how many feet is travelled. The character sustains Falling damage as though he had fallen from a similar height.

A Severe rockfall can also bury a character beneath the debris. If the character falls over (indicated by the failing of the Fortitude Saving Throw), there is a percentage chance equal to the amount of damage he sustained from the rockfall (not the damage from being transported) that he will be buried beneath a mound of rubble and debris once the rockfall has run its course. Digging a character out of such a mound takes a number of hours equal to one tenth (rounded up) of the rockfall's inflicted damage. The character is considered helpless whilst buried.

For example, Lurach of the Red Mane clan is caught in a Severe rockfall. Failing his Saving Throws he sustains 26 points of damage from the debris and is swept 30 feet down the rocky hillside, sustaining a further X points of damage in the process. There is a 26% chance of him being buried beneath the debris, and, if he is, it will take a total of 3 hours (26/10 and rounded up) to dig him out.

Avalanches and mudslides work to similar principles as rockfalls but involve different mediums. An avalanche is a wall of unstoppable snow that, in addition to the damage the snow causes, picks-up debris to increase the effect. Mudslides work to similar principles but involve loose earth and mud that is loosened and then lubricated by surface water. Both work identically for the purposes of the Conan game. A Light avalanche inflicts 4D6 damage; a Heavy avalanche 6+5D6, and a Severe avalanche 12+6D6 damage. In both cases the percentage chance of being buried is double the damage inflicted.

Rockfall Table

| | Damage Inflicted | DC for Ref ST | DC for Fort ST | Distance Transported (feet) | % Chance of being buried |
|--------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Light | 2D6 | 15 | Rockfall's damage | 2D6 | - |
| Heavy | 6+3D6 | 25 | Rockfall's damage | 6+3D6 | Rockfall's damage / 2 |
| Severe | 12+4D6 | 35 | Rockfall's damage | 12+4D6 | Rockfall's damage |

Avalanche and Mudslide Table

| | Damage Inflicted | DC for Ref ST | DC for Fort ST | Distance Transported (feet) | % Chance of being buried |
|--------|------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Light | 4D6 | 15 | Avalanche/Mudslide damage | 4D6 | - |
| Heavy | 6+5D6 | 25 | Avalanche/Mudslide damage | 6+5D6 | Avalanche/Mudslide damage |
| Severe | 12+6D6 | 35 | Avalanche/Mudslide damage | 12+6D6 | Avalanche/Mudslide damage X 2 |



QUICKSAND

Quicksands are found in marshy and boggy area where the ground has become so waterlogged it creates a pool of viscous, semi-liquid ground that pulls down anyone unlucky enough to be caught in its grip. If the quicksand is deep enough, drowning is the inevitable result if the victim cannot free himself.

Patches of quicksand are relatively rare in Cimmeria, but are found in wetter areas such as the upland moors, low-lying marshes around rivers and, sometimes, hidden within woods or forests. The ground appears to be solid but is anything but.

Patches of quicksand can be between 3 and 60 feet deep; roll 3D20 to determine depth. If caught in quicksand, it requires a successful Reflex Saving Throw vs DC 20 to avoid struggling and being sucked 2 feet deeper into the quicksand pool. If the Saving Throw is successful, then the character can make a further Reflex Saving Throw against DC 15 to relax and allow their body to float in the quicksand and resist being sucked down further. If three such Saving Throws are passed in a row, then the character breaks free and climbs out.

If a Saving Throw fails, the next test is at +3 to the DC as the power of the quicksand takes hold and sucks the character down. Damage is sustained as per the Drowning rules in the Conan Second Edition rulebook.

NOTABLE AREAS, REGIONS AND LANDMARKS

BATTLE LANDS

A wide, bleak, rain-lashed plain of south eastern Cimmeria, the Battle Lands are the site of ancient clashes between the Picts and Cimmerian clans. Countless cairns of stone mark the glorious fallen, built by the survivors of the battles that took place in the land's grim past. No battle has been fought here for centuries, but it remains sacred territory for all Cimmerians who know it as a place of both ghosts and glory, haunted by the restless spirits of those who died resisting the Pictish incursions.

On certain nights, when the wind howls through the Black Mountains to the west, it is as though the cries and moans of the fallen prevail still, and Cimmerians believe that, beneath

the cairns, trapped in some limbo, the warriors maintain a peculiar half-life, waiting for the final battle where all Cimmeria's enemies will be gathered in the Battle Lands above. At that time the dead shall erupt from beneath the cairns and come to the aid of the clans in the Final Defeat where Cimmeria's enemies will be slain once and for all, releasing the souls of the fallen to cross the Bridge of Swords and find eternal peace. With that defeat the enemies will take the place of the glorious Cimmerian fallen.

Cimmerians are fearful of entering the Battle Lands; not because the spirits will seek retribution, but because the land itself is a sacred place of death. To enter the Battle Lands is to issue a challenge that will call forth Cimmeria's enemies, and only Crom, or the fallen warriors themselves, can issue such a challenge, and no true Cimmerian wishes to bring about the dark gathering of enemies that will see the Final Defeat wash the rain-soaked plain in more blood.

Wandering into the Battle Lands requires a successful Will Saving Throw against a DC of 20, in order for the distinct sense of unease to be overcome. The Battle Lands are always damp; the ground squelches underfoot and dark clouds create a perpetual drizzle that soaks the skin and chills the soul year-round. In the winter, snow blankets the miserable plain, and the grey stone of the countless cairns are thrown into sharp relief – a field of death monuments stretching for miles in all directions. Every hour spent in the region requires a Will ST against a DC of 20; failure causes the hapless wanderer to hear the cries and wails of the trapped souls, calling for all Cimmeria's enemies to gather and be slain.

If four Will STs are failed whilst in the Battle Lands, the will of the individual is sapped to the point where leaving the plain is impossible. The compulsion is then to build a personal cairn from the thousands of loose stones scattered around, and to then sit within its shadow and wait for the hour of the Final Defeat, the soul being steadily absorbed by the earth, the body dying of starvation, and the spirit joining with the limbo-trapped warriors who await their inevitable calling. Across the Battle Lands are the skeletal remains of Cimmerians who have been trapped by this dreadful, mournful place, their essences called to the massed ranks of the fallen.

BLACK MOUNTAINS

Forming a natural barrier with the Pictish lands, the Black Mountains rear in the south west of Cimmeria, a range of jagged, dark, mist-



shrouded peaks threaded by deep valleys, dense forests, surging rivers, and perilous gorges.

Crossing the Black Mountains is hazardous at the best of times, but almost impossible in the winter when snow chokes the valleys and turns the black peaks into the jagged white teeth of a slumbering dragon. Avalanches are a constant threat in the winter months, and the crack and thunderous rumbled of cascading snow and debris is frequently heard across the lands north of the Black Mountain foothills. Even the tenacious Picts refuse to attempt a crossing in the winter, but in the spring and summer, war bands from Pictland press through the narrow passes of the Black Mountains intent on penetrating Cimmeria and waging war on anyone they encounter.

The eastern slopes of the Black Mountains shelve to form a forested plateau which is home to the Nachta clan. The Nachta are fierce, tenacious fighters who loathe the Picts with a greater passion than any other Cimmerian clan. They know the Black Mountains intimately, consider the landscape sacred, and scar their cheeks, chests and upper arms to demonstrate their identity with the landscape. In the spring and summer the Nachta warriors take up swords, spears and supplies and spread themselves into the craggy interior of the Black Mountain lands, waiting for the incursions of the Picts and bringing death to their raiding parties before the Picts can bring death to Cimmeria.

The Nachta warriors divide themselves into war bands of twenty-seven, spending months watching, waiting and killing Pictish invaders. They live off the land, sleep under open skies, and become part of the mountain landscape. The Nachta knowledge of the Black Mountains is formidable and, whilst they are still prone to the natural hazards of the region, the Nachta know all the danger signs and tread carefully and with respect.

The deepest, darkest recesses of the Black Mountains are also home to the reclusive, repellent svartheim; a race of charcoal-skinned, flesh-eating dwarves who might be a Cimmerian clan that utterly regressed instead of climbing out of their bestial existence; a degenerate Pictish offshoot; or a distinct race altogether. The svartheim dwell deep underground, colonising the tunnels and caves threading through the Black Mountains, feeding on whatever small creatures they can find in their subterranean realm and, occasionally, each other.

When hunger so drives them, they climb to the surface

world, waiting for nightfall, and then venture into the crags, valleys and woodlands in search of other meat. In the spring and summer, Pictish and Cimmerian raiders might provide the fodder they seek. Being small in stature and cowardly by nature, svartheim rarely launch overt attacks. Instead they prefer to hunt the dead or the dying, carrying the bodies back to their underground realm. Occasionally, if numbers and conditions permit, then the svartheim may launch an ambush, using the cover of darkness, their natural camouflage, and vicious natures to pick-off stragglers in a hunting party or to overwhelm a force much smaller, numerically, than they are. Svartheim scare easily and cannot stand bright lights of any kind, so driving them away is not especially difficult although, if present in large enough numbers, they will display remarkable tenacity if a tasty morsel of prey is within their grasp.

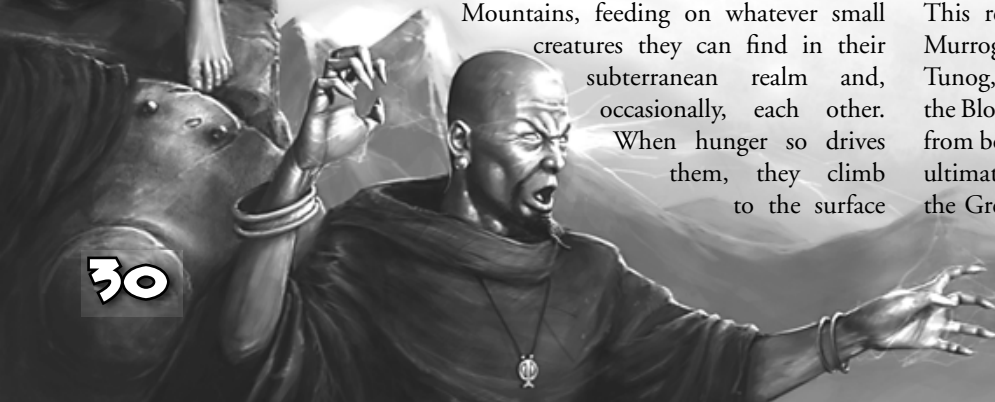
The svartheim are detailed on page 111 of the Gazetteer chapter.

BLOOD GLENS

Located to the west of the edge of the Great Salt Marsh, and on the borders of the Murrough Forest, the Blood Glens are a collection of narrow, U-shaped valleys flanked by steep, wooded hills and through which the narrow, deep, Blood River presses its course. The land is too steep and too rugged to support settlements, but the woodlands and valley floor, choked with boulders and the debris of landslides, teems with wildlife and game. The Blood Glens are thus a popular hunting haunt for the Tunog and Murrough clans and marks the territorial border between them.

Neither clan lays claim to the Blood Glens, but a code of conduct dictates that tacit control of the hunting trails in the Blood Glens alternates between the Tunog and Murrough with each holding dominion for one year. Dominion over the Blood Glens means that the controlling clan has prior claim to all game within the valleys, and any members of the opposing clan must yield to the controlling clan's decisions. This does not preclude either clan from entering and hunting in the Blood Glens when not in control of them, but it does mean that all snares, traps and hunting parties of the controlling clan must be respected and left alone.

This relationship has served both the Tunog and the Murrough well for six decades. Before Guthalch, chief of the Tunog, reached agreement with Mochal of the Murrough, the Blood Glens were contested ground with many warriors from both sides losing their lives in a series of dreadful, but ultimately pointless, clashes. Guthalch and Mochal met at the Great Step Boulder, a huge, pitted lump of rock said



to mark the rough centre of the Glens, and there wrestled for three days and nights in a bid to determine which clan should control the Blood Glens. Finally, exhausted and with no clear victor determined, the two chiefs slumped against the Great Step Boulder causing it to sunder in two. The chiefs, weary as they were, pondered this turn of events and discussed it rationally. As dawn of the fourth day seeped into the Blood Glens they reached the conclusion that it was the will of the earth that the Glens be shared, with each clan controlling them for alternate years.

So was the tradition established, and so it has endured, even though Tunog and Murrogh have battled each other on other matters over the years since Guthalch and Mochal reached their agreement over the pieces of the Great Step Boulder.

Within the confines of the Blood Glens live deer, beaver, otter, rabbit, sable and many other species essential to the Cimmerian way of life. Wild berries, herbs and roots are found in the steep forests, and the Blood River produces plump, tasty fish in the many deep pools and reed beds found at the base of the incised valleys. Both clans husband the game in the Glens well, to ensure a plentiful and constant supply for all, but even at the leanest times and the most bitter winters, it is noted with some curiosity that the Blood Glens always seem to be full of game and untouched by any of the harsh conditions wider Cimmeria endures.

Clans other than the Tunog and Murrogh who seek to take from the Blood Glens must seek permission from the controlling clan. This generally involves paying some kind of toll in the form of a gift, although certain allies might be awarded hunting privileges for services rendered.

BREAKNECKS

Between the Broken Leg Lands and the Eiglophians is the rough, dangerous country of the Breaknecks – so known because a broken neck is a common enough result of attempting to traverse land of craggy canyons, broken, uneven ground, thin ribbons of pine forest and imposing escarpments that loom across the area.

BROKEN LEG LANDS

A continuation of the Breaknecks, the Broken Leg Lands is essentially a long, wide plateau punctuated by deep, sheer-sided canyons, imposing escarpments and stretches of thin forest. The terrain is fractured and unforgiving; there is barely a stretch of land that is not pock-marked or scarred by some gorge, crevasse or ravine. Wind and rain scours the region leaving little in the way of vegetation, save for the sparse ribbons of woodland found in the shelter of

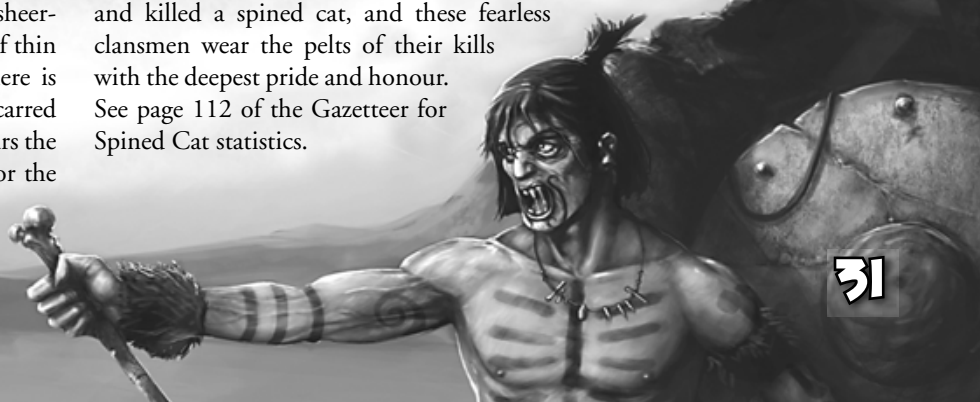
the escarpments or in the deeper crevasses where roots can penetrate down to the low water table.

The southern reaches of the Broken Leg Lands are the territory of the Callaugh clan. The Callaugh base themselves around the permanent village of Callaugh, which is located in the Callaugh Glen, a deep, wide canyon that is well-forested on all slopes and fed by the winding Llau River. The Callaugh clan treats the whole of the Broken Leg Lands as its own territory and its warriors know the fractured countryside intimately, being unfazed by its hazards and crumbling nature.

Like many Cimmerian clans, the Callaugh are veterans in the wars against the Picts. The village is a vital defence against Pictish incursion, and Callaugh warriors mount a vigilant guard along the southern edge of the Broken Leg Lands, watching for signs of war bands. As the Broken Leg Lands form a maze of gulleys, valleys and gorges, there are many dead-ends and blind passes where ambush is easy and the Picts have learned from experience to give the Broken Leg Lands as wide a berth as possible.

In addition to watching for the Picts, Callaugh clan members scour the passes, gorges and riverbeds for gold. Nuggets of the precious metal have been found in the rivers and streams, washed-down from the small, exposed seams deep in the heart of the Broken Leg Lands. Though a gold find is rare, the Callaugh knows the worth of the stuff and is practiced in both working gold and protecting it, conducting the former pursuit with subtle intricacy and the latter with brutal efficiency.

Native to the Broken Leg Lands are the ferocious spined cats that prowl the canyons and gorges. Although these fearsome predators are reclusive and solitary, they are deeply territorial and attack anyone straying into their hunting areas (marked, by the males, by sprays of intense, sickly-sweet smelling urine across prominent rocks and tree trunks). The spined cats are, like the Callaugh, vigilant and experts in ambush, stalking prey for many miles before leaping upon it from a great height and rending it with tooth, talon and spined tail. Spined cats are fearless, remorseless predators and the Callaugh clan consider them to be the true guardians of the Broken Leg Lands. The strongest Callaugh warriors are those who have stalked and killed a spined cat, and these fearless clansmen wear the pelts of their kills with the deepest pride and honour. See page 112 of the Gazetteer for Spined Cat statistics.





CELLS HEEL

This escarpment overlooks the central, forested steppes of Cimmeria, rising amongst the Goralion hills like a giant's throw board. The steep cliff rise 160 feet above the plain and the escarpment's line runs for over thirty miles in a north-south direction, its sheltered side sloping gently until it merges with the Goralion hills in the east.

The summit of the escarpment, despite being heavily forested, is buffeted by high winds and strong rains that break across the hills behind it. The cliffs are treacherous, being prone to rock falls and landslides, especially in the winter months when ice penetrates the many fissures loosening the brittle rock. Cimmerian legend has it that the earth giant Cell created the escarpment when he dug his heel into the land when battling the ice giants of Asgard.

Cell's Heel is the territory of clan Bardh. This extensive, warlike clan has battled the Tunog and Diarmid constantly over the years and is known as the Black Wolf clan because its warriors wear wolf pelts, dyed black, over their robes and kilts. Bardh sees Cell's Heel as central to the whole of Cimmeria, and its position at the top of the escarpment elevates it above all the other clans. Bardh makes war for the slightest of the reasons, revels in its capacity for wanton destruction, and has little interest in peaceful co-existence. The only times when it is prepared to form alliances is when invaders from Hyperborea come seeking slaves, or when the Pictish war bands manage to circumvent the Broken Leg Lands and the Black Mountains to plunge deep into the Cimmerian heartland.

Cell's Heel is bleak, dark country. The incessant winds moan across the high lands and through the patchwork of forests on the escarpment's lee-side, echoing the howls of the Bardh warriors as they channel the spirit of the Black Wolf. For a none-Bardh to be caught on Cell's Heel is to risk death, for the Bardh tolerate none but their own kind here. Ghost fences of wolf skulls, bear skulls and the skulls of human foes line the summit of the cliff face and lace through the rest of the rise as a testament to Bardh's barbaric power.

The landscape of the Heel is a mixture of rocky, uneven terrain and dense stretches of forest spreading out towards the east. The main Bardh settlement is in a depression about ten miles from the escarpment edge and half way along the

Heel's length. This wide, grey basin is surrounded by woodland and protected by ghost fences, imposing cairns of huge size and great slabs of rock hauled from the cliff edge. These edifices signify the settlement's boundaries and each represents a particular ancestor. Crude carvings on the stones of the cairns and standing rocks are graphic representations of the Bardh's ancestor's deeds and victories and, greatly superstitious of the power of the ancestors, the Bardh people leave regular offerings at the foot of each.

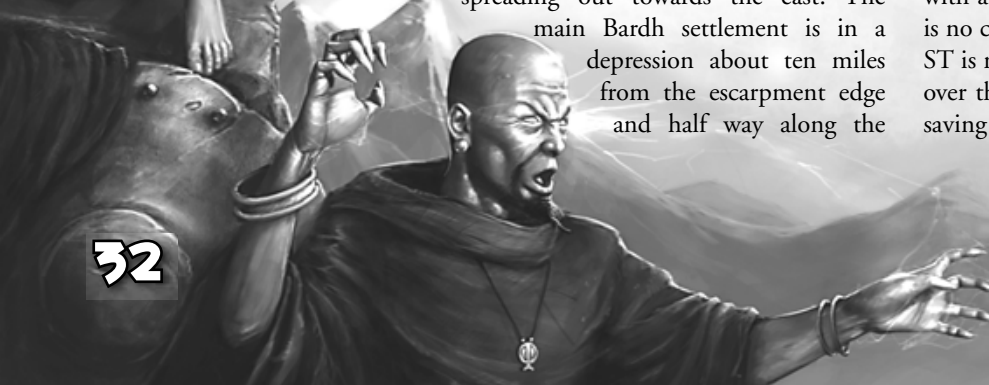
Twenty miles due east of the settlement is a sinkhole for the cave system that threads deep into the rock of the escarpment. Known as Cell's Mouth it is a sheer drop down into the inky blackness with broken rocks lining the opening. Prisoners from Bardh's battles are thrown into the Mouth not for any religious reasons, but simply because the sinkhole is so terrifying to behold. At its bottom, some two hundred feet below, perhaps a thousand skeletons are piled, bone upon bone, skull upon skull, testament to clan Bardh's cruelty and ruthlessness.

CROMS GORGE

Ben Morgh, or Mount Crom, rises in the north east amongst the eastern stretches of the Eiglophians but, before it is reached, one must pass through Crom's Gorge, a vast, narrow canyon of looming black stone that is eerily silent, framing Ben Morgh at its northern end.

The floor of the gorge is choked with rubble and debris, the remnants of an ancient river bed. The peculiar acoustics of the gorge cause echoes to last for anything up to a minute, fading slowly as the noise ricochets around the walls of stone. All who approach Mount Crom must pass through Crom's Gorge, and it is believed that the dead pass through this way en-route to the Bridge of Swords which must be crossed if the afterlife is to be reached.

There is certainly a mortal bridge at the end of the gorge. As one nears the northern opening the ground falls away sharply in a two hundred foot sheer cliff. Continuing to the mountain means crossing this lateral canyon by means of the narrow bridge of stone spanning the fifty-foot wide ravine. The bridge curves gracefully over the plunge, its ancient stones held in place without mortar, and it has no hand rails to offer comfort. A single man can walk across it with a little room to spare on either side, but even so this is no crossing for anyone with no head for heights. A Will ST is required against a DC of 20 to avoid glancing down over the rim of the bridge and into the abyss below. The saving throw only needs to be made once but, if it is failed,





then paralysis grips whoever is making the crossing, and they must be helped to safety by someone better equipped to make the journey.

On the far side of the Gorge, carved into the rock overlooking the pathway that continues up towards the mountain, is the cave hermitage of Ceiladh the Permanent. This ancient seer claims to be sacred to Crom and he passes judgement on all who cross the bridge. The hairy, wizened form of Ceiladh sits cross-legged outside his cave, naked save for the long beard that wraps around his lower half, watching all travellers with beady green eyes. His head is shaved into a tonsure and he wears a string of knuckle bones around his neck. To pass judgement Ceiladh removes the knuckle bone necklace, points it at the traveller, shakes it vigorously and chants in a language of his own devising. He then listens to the knuckle bones intently, as though hearing them whisper secrets, and then either proclaims the traveller blessed or damned. Whether he speaks the truth is unknowable – and whether Cimmerians care to hear it is a moot point; whatever the proclamation it is the custom to leave the hermit with a small offering of food, preferably meat, for his trouble.

Some clan chiefs are buried at the base of Ben Morgh as per the ancient rite of their clans. Funeral parties bringing

the dead to rest must come through Crom's Gorge and pass across the stone bridge on their way to the Field of the Dead. On these occasions Ceiladh passes no judgement but stands on his rocky ledge overlooking the funeral party and croons a high-pitched dirge to mark the chieftain's passing from this world and across the Bridge of Swords. On these occasions it is customary to reward the hermit with gold or silver; failure to do so is considered to be an insult to the gods that will make the passage across the Bridge of Swords more arduous for the departed chieftain.

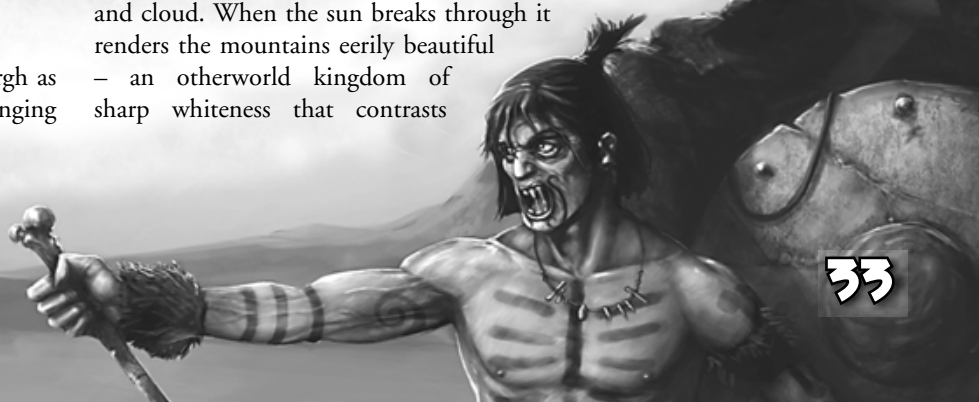
EIGLOPHIAN MOUNTAINS

The northern horizon is dominated by the immensity of the Eiglophian Mountains; icy daggers digging into the sky, separating Vanaheim and Asgard from Cimmeria's warmer lands. The Eiglophians are difficult to negotiate but are not impenetrable; snowy passes and ice-seamed gaps connect the northern edge of Cimmeria with the lands beyond although Cimmerians have little interest in risking life and limb against the wrath of the peaks, the treacherous glaciers, the Ice Demons and the murderously cold conditions of the range.

The mountains are symbolic for Cimmerians in several ways. They mark the edge of the earth; represent a barrier between the knowable and the unknowable; and, most potently, reinforce the isolation Cimmerians take comfort from. The mountains would not exist if the gods had wanted Cimmerians to wander.

Although the Eiglophians appear lifeless and stark, Cimmerians know that terrors lurk within those peaks: demons and giants of ice; white-pelted ape-men who feast on brains and drink blood like wine; winged serpents that make the glaciers their home, emerging now and again to feast on the souls of hapless travellers who, driven by curiosity, have wandered too far north. The Cimmerian clans living in the shadow of the Eiglophians have many tales concerning the mountains' dangers and the children of these clans are told them at the earliest opportunity, so that they will develop the necessary fear that will keep them alive.

In the autumn and winter, when the earth grows colder, the highest peaks of the Eiglophians are wreathed in mist and cloud. When the sun breaks through it renders the mountains eerily beautiful – an otherworld kingdom of sharp whiteness that contrasts





with Cimmeria's own, gloomy aspect. In the summer, the brilliance and warmth of the sun, frail though it is, angled through the dagger summits, softens the Eiglophians' appearance, making them almost enticing. This is why the Cimmerians fear the mountains so much. Their beauty is duplicitous, hiding the true dangers of what lies within and beyond. As a people who gain much from surface appearances, Cimmerians are naturally repelled by the dual nature of the mountains and this is why they fear them. The mountains are complicated, untrustworthy, and offer nothing save death and a barrier from those in the ice wastes beyond who would deliver more of it.

CONALL VALLEY

In complete defiance of the general Cimmerian distrust of the Eiglophians, three clans make them their home territory. The long, wide Conall Valley is home to the warring Gaud, Taur and Cruiadh clans. Cruiadh owns the northern stretch of the Conall Valley, controlling the Pass of Blood which drives deep into the mountains and leads eventually to Asgard. In the central plain the Taur control the land and, in the south, where the land softens and slopes down into Cimmeria proper, the Gaud rule.

Once, the three clans were a single clan and they guarded against invasion from Asgard. What sundered them is lost to memory but the enmity runs deep and each wages a blood-feud against the others. In the winter, when snow carpets the Conall Valley, the three clans are bound into their territories for many months. In this time the clans brood and make plans, storing-up hatred that is vented in the spring and summer when the thaw makes war a possibility again. Numerous attempts have been made to heal the rifts between these three clans, but to no avail; marriages between them have failed; peace talks have stalled and collapsed. It is as though these three clans, separated from the rest of Cimmeria by the mountains, have become infected with the Eiglophians' madness. Because they cannot make war against the enemies of Nordheim, they must make war against each other – simply because there is little else to do, and the need for warfare is so ingrained in the Cimmerian soul.

The Pass of Blood is occasionally used by the Æsir who raid from time to time. Clan Cruiadh defends the pass from

the Asgardian raiders and when the threat to the valley is overwhelming the three clans have been known to band together to drive the Norsemen from their lands. However in recent years the Æsir raids have been less intensive and have not focused on Cruiadh holdings, leading the suspicious Taur and Gaud clans to speculate on what deal the Cruiadh have struck with the age-old Nordheim enemy.

FIELD OF THE DEAD

In the direct shadow of Mount Crom is a gently sloping plain. To the east and west, grey bluffs of granite rear from the lush, green grass, framing the plain against Ben Morgh's rough, wild majesty.

Scattered across the plain, seemingly haphazardly, are many, many cairns of stone, varying in height and width. Some have toppled over with age or the attack of the elements; most stand proud and tall. Each cairn marks the final resting place of a clan chief. It is the right of every clan chieftain, no matter what his actions in life, to be laid to rest in the Field of the Dead if he so chooses. Not every chief chooses the Field of the Dead as his final resting place; many prefer to be buried in grounds sacred to the clan.

Cimmerians believe that, at the moment a chief dies, Crom appears bearing a bloody spear, summoning the chief to the final council. To reach it, the chief must accept the spear and then cross the Bridge of Swords which spans the river of hell. Here he is judged and, if found to have fulfilled his obligations as a chieftain, may pass across the bridge safely, to spend his days carousing with the ancestor chiefs in the Field of the Dead. If he has failed to lead as a Cimmerian should, his progress across the Bridge of Swords will either be slow, whilst he atones, or it will fail and he will fall into the boiling river of hell.

GHOSTS OF THE CHIEFS

If the Field of the Dead is defiled by grave robbery or any other transgression that dishonours the chieftains, the spirits of the chiefs rise-up as ghosts (see page 385 of the *Conan* rules) to challenge the perpetrator. The ghosts of the chiefs are not bound by the one-time-only limitation applicable to ghosts and may manifest time and again to protect the Field of the Dead.





No one has bothered to count the cairns in the Field of the Dead, but they stretch back centuries. Many are unmarked, but usually the chieftain's device, symbol or seal is carved into a marker rock forming part of the cairn. A chief is buried with only the things he needs for the journey across the Bridge of Swords; his armour, weapons, some food and drink, and some gold and silver which are given as gifts to the assembled chieftains he hopes to join in death.

The promise of treasure buried beneath the cairns has been a lure to grave robbers. No true Cimmerians would ever plunder a chieftain's grave, but there are plenty of unscrupulous interlopers who are only too willing to break into the graves and steal the gold, silver and artefacts buried with a chieftain. Such thieves are willing to try, but they will find, to their cost, that the Field of the Dead is protected by more than just a remote location and the elements. Plundering a grave may anger the spirit of the chieftain attached to it, and, in turn, that chieftain's spirit may call on his fellow chieftains to assail the villains and preserve the peace and sanctity of their resting place.

MOUNT CROM - BEN MORGH

Mount Crom – Ben Morgh – in the far east of the Eiglophian range is the most potent representation of the gods' will for isolation. Its precipices, sheer cliffs, and snow-

bound lower slopes are amongst the most aggressive and fascinating in appearance of the whole mountainous wall. Mount Crom challenges the eye and the will, and only those who are truly fearless would dare accept the challenge and stray through Crom's territory. Almost all Cimmerians are content to approach the Eiglophians as far as Mount Crom and, even then, to go no further than the Field of the Dead.

The mountain is considered Crom's fortress; a jutting, threatening crown of precipices, sheer cliffs and sharp ridges that is as implacable as the god himself. From here Crom curses Cimmeria with the gloom and desperation it feels daily, unsympathetic and uncaring of the fate inflicted on the mortals below. Cimmerians do not worship Crom in any meaningful religious context – but they do acknowledge and fear him. As a war god he is respected; but as a god of the Cimmerian people he is considered a remote, cold power that seeks to give nothing to those who worship him and wants nothing in return.

FIELD OF THE CHIEFS

The immense Hoath plateau hosts the Field of the Chiefs; ancient, uncontested ground where, when needs involving every Cimmerian clan dictate, the clans gather and make decisions.

The field is a huge, open, grass-filled plain. It is relatively dry, flat, and from it one can see to the Eiglophians in the north, the Black Mountains in the south and the Goralian Hills in the east. At its centre is a large, angular slab of dark stone, placed there deliberately by the Atlantean ancestors of the Cimmerians. Moss covered and carved in strange, indecipherable runes, it is incredibly sacred; the symbol of All Ancestors. Some crudely refer to the stone as Crom's Arrowhead, but all know that the stone was placed there by the long forgotten people who became the Cimmerians. Perhaps a symbol of their superiority; perhaps as a prayer to some long-dead god; perhaps as a warning. No one knows. But the stone has prevailed even though its architects have ceased to be. Cimmerians take heart in that permanency and so have named the plain Field of the Chiefs and this is where they gather.

The call to the Field of Chiefs is made by the circulation of the Bloody Spear. Any chieftain of a clan who feels that a council of all the chiefs is needed takes a hunting spear, makes a blood sacrifice, and drenches the spear in the blood. A messenger is then sent out to the take the spear to nearest clan,





which, in turn, relays the spear to the next – and so on until all the clans have been contacted. Anyone bearing the Bloody Spear is immune to attack or retribution for they represent Cimmeria; if any harm comes to one bearing the Bloody Spear, then the enmity of all clans is earned.

As soon as the Bloody Spear reaches a chieftain, he must make immediate preparations to venture to the Field of the Chiefs. He may bring as many warriors with him as he wishes; some bring just a small circle of advisers and a bodyguard; some bring several war bands whilst others bring the entire clan. The size and composition of the retinue says much about the competence, confidence and intentions of the clan chieftain.

The chiefs arrive at the Field of the Chiefs prepared for an extended stay. Shelter and supplies are brought; a long discussion is always anticipated. By the time all the clans have assembled, the Field of the Chiefs has become a tent city, countless standards fluttering in the breeze above the yurts, ghost fences with a hundred separate totems erected around the encampment to ward against evil spirit spies.

The host of the meeting is always the chief who prepared and first sent the Bloody Spear. It is his duty to set out, clearly, why he has summoned the chiefs together. Once this is done, it is the right of each chief to question the host. The Bloody Spear is passed to whoever is speaking and, whilst they hold the spear, they cannot be interrupted. When all questions have been asked, an open debate begins and lasts for as long as all present can stand it. Finally – and this might take many days – the host brings the debate to a halt and, taking the Bloody Spear once more, outlines the options and demands a decision.

In this way is Cimmeria's fate decided.

GREAT SALT MARSH

The bulk of the Great Salt Marsh bowl lies in the Border Kingdom's northern reaches, but it spills across into eastern Cimmeria like a brooding scab upon the earth. Surrounded by stinking bogs, stagnant pools and sluggish streams. As a land, it is impassable and even the mighty Conan skirts the region rather than attempting to cross it. The Cimmerians believe that the Great Salt Marsh contains many monsters and serpents that skitter through the dingy, black waters and hide in the thick, tangled reed beds, waiting for prey to pass. Howls,

cries and bitter screams sometimes echo from the marsh's interior making this a fearful, dismal place.

The Great Salt Marsh certainly contains vicious creatures; serpents, lizards and other monstrosities cruise the foetid channels in search of meals. But, deep within the marsh, living at its very heart, are the degenerate remnants of outlaws who, fleeing the Border Kingdom, strayed too far into the marsh and became trapped here.

These are now the Marsh Ghouls. They have degenerated so far that they have ceased to be men and are instead insane, raving monsters. Treat these fiends as typical ghouls as described on page 386 of the *Conan* rules.

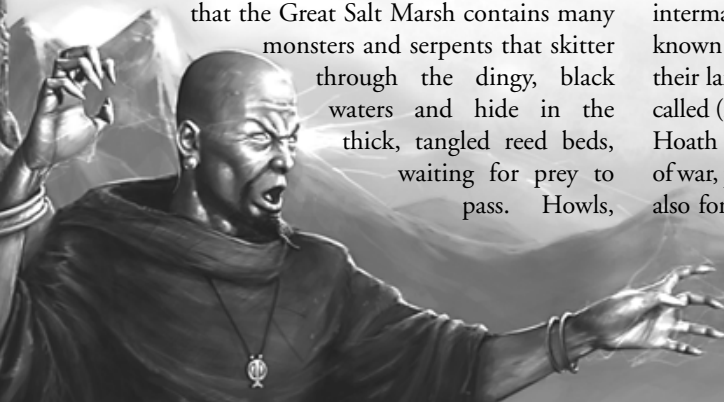
The Marsh Ghouls have created a crude settlement of willow, wattle, dung and weed in the misty, murky centre of the Salt Marsh. Numbering fifty, they worship the Lord of Bogs, Negrusast, the Black Fiend (see *Conan* rules, page 378) that was summoned to capture and imprison the fugitives from the Border Kingdom over two centuries ago. The descendants of the fugitives now treat Negrusast as their lord and protector even though the demon is, in reality, their captor and tormentor. Their worship rites include blood sacrifice and dreadful, violent orgies watched over by the sneering Negrusast who jeers them onto commit greater atrocities against each other.

HOATH PLATEAU

The Hoath Plateau is a lozenge of raised land in north west and north central Cimmeria, in the shadow of the Eiglophians. From the plateau one can look north the Eiglophian range, south west to the Black Mountains and east towards Mount Crom. The vast patchwork of Cimmeria ranges out before the plateau, a quilt of green, grey and black.

The plateau is divided into territories controlled by three clans that claim descent from the original Hoath founders. The Hoath, the Nangh, and the White Bulls are all semi-nomadic, maintaining certain fixed settlements within their territories, but otherwise following the game trails across the reaches of the plateau.

The three clans maintain a strong alliance through intermarriage and a shared heritage; together they are known as the Plateau Tribe and they tolerate no outsiders in their lands unless a moot at the Field of the Chiefs has been called (for the Field of the Chiefs lies upon the plateau). The Hoath clan dominates tribal affairs and is powerful in ways of war, politics and crafts, but the Nangh and White Bulls are also formidable clans in their own right and, whilst Hoath



dominates relations, its control is tempered by the fact that, if the Nangh and White Bulls decided to ally and challenge Hoath together, Hoath would find itself outnumbered.

As with most of Cimmeria, the Hoath plateau is lashed by wind and rain, going about its life under leaden skies. Its exposed nature means that the winds are powerful here, and the plateau's proximity to the Eiglophians means that, in winter, temperatures rapidly drop below freezing and the snow falls thick and persistently, causing clan life to drag itself to a standstill.

KURNOW FOREST

Located in the south of Cimmeria and following the rise in the land as the Goralian Hills of Aquilonia form, Kurnow is dense, ancient woodland that becomes thicker and more difficult to penetrate the deeper one presses into it.

The outer stretches of the forest are home to Clan Grath, experts in woodland survival and crafts. The clan occupies permanent settlements, called crofts, which are collections of wood and stone roundhouses built in clearings around a central meeting hall. Grath is hostile to outsiders and its ghost fences and Warning Trees are clear enough for all to see on the approach to Kurnow. Its warriors are especially adept at blending with the woodland and using its trees to gain maximum advantage over enemies.

Yet even Clan Grath fears what lies deeper in the forest. Beyond the Kurn river, which cuts laterally across the forest about three miles from the last of the Grath crofts, the woodland becomes almost impenetrably dense; a disturbing tangle of twisted oak, sycamore, horse chestnut, layers of thick, sharp-branched bracken and black-tinged ferns. This deep in, and the forest is quiet; no birds call and no animals shuffle. The forest encloses and absorbs.

The Grath know that in the deepest reaches of Kurnow, spirits and apparitions dwell. Shadowy, half-formed figures flit through the greeny-grey darkness and, sometimes, make themselves tangible to the unwary, presenting themselves as creatures of flesh and blood that entice humans to come deeper into the forest realm, either as part of a quest in search of some non-existent prey, or a forgotten treasure hoard. The apparitions are convincing and plausible, ready to spend time setting their victims at ease. Then, when the forest has closed around them, and it is impossible to retrace one's steps to safety, the Kurnow apparitions drop their deceit and feast on the sanity of their prey, drawing it out of them like blood is drawn from a slaughtered ox.

What the apparitions leave behind is a broken shell, doomed to wander in idiocy the innermost depths of Kurnow. Clan Grath considers this fate unclean and so would not even tempt their direst enemies into the grasp of the Kurnow apparitions. When the clan comes across one of these poor, mind-robbled victims, they are quick to put the unfortunate out of his misery before the thing dies of starvation.

Statistics for the Kurnow Apparitions are presented in the Gazetteer chapter.

MURROGH FOREST

To the south of the Conall Valley Murrogh Forest spreads out in a tangled web of stunted trees and dense undergrowth, cut here and there by wide, slow moving streams fed by melt water from the Eiglophians. Quicksands and foetid marshes pockmark the forest, making any journey through it a hazardous, slow-going experience.

The forest is home to an array of wildlife and game. It is too tangled and dense for human habitation and little attempt has been made to clear it for settlements. Whilst it shares its name with the Murrogh clan, this is not their home although the Murrogh people claim to have been founded here when the hero, Murrogh, killed the demon that was spewed from the Eiglophians, its body becoming the forest.

SPEARPOINT

This solitary plug of rock, located dead-centre in Cimmeria, is surrounded by ugly, treacherous moorland and bog, crawling with flies and mosquitoes in the summer. It is three hundred feet high and sixty feet in width, a point-down spearhead shape of sharp crags and wicked overhangs.

Some of the clans consider climbing Spearpoint to be a worthy challenge for all warriors to face as part of their rite of manhood. The climb is difficult and dangerous, requiring the climber to negotiate numerous steep overhangs of sharp, flesh-tearing rock, narrow precipices and unstable ledges where the rock crumbles at the even the lightest footfall. Consider Spearpoint to offer a base climbing DC of 25. Six separate climbing checks are required to negotiate the ascent, each made against the base DC plus an additional 2D6 to represent the various hazards encountered along the way.

At the summit Spearpoint is wide and flat, a deep fissure in the



rock threatening to split it asunder. Up here many brave warriors who have made the climb have etched their marks into rock so that it is now thickly patterned with many centuries' worth of carvings. The unlucky ones who fell and died are not commemorated.

The legend of Spearpoint has it that the Morrigan thrust her spear through the body of an earth giant here, using so much force that the head broke from the shaft and remained in the ground. She cast the useless shaft to the south where it formed Kurnow Forest, but left the point in the ground as a message to other giants who would challenge the gods. As part of the climbing rite it is customary for the young Cimmerian warrior to spend a night on Spearpoint's summit where he receives dreams of the Morrigan's battles, assisting her in her struggle against the giant she defeated here. On their descent, the warriors like to compare their dream experiences, the intensity of the dream indicating how great a warrior he will become later in life.

THE CURRAGHN

South of the Blood Glens the field of the Curragh spreads out towards the Shikal river like a sea of green. Its eastern edge encroaches onto the Great Salt Marsh, but its rolling, verdant country spills out for hundreds of miles in a teardrop shape of unbroken pasture.

This is the land of the Murrogh clan. The word Curragh means grazing, and the Murrogh clan makes extensive use of it to graze their horses and cattle year-round, moving across the wide expanse of green in a complex pattern that takes two years to complete a rotation. Small, pleasant streams and rivers break the Curragh now and again and only occasionally does the land give way to the odd rocky gorge or sinkhole. Cairns and markers of standing stones, erected by the Murrogh, indicate the grazing trails, and they spread across the Curragh creating a complex pattern dictating the path of the clan's travel around the grazing lands.

VENARIUM

Eager to try their hand at conquering barbaric Cimmeria, Aquilonia sent forth an invasion force to capture the south of the country. Swordsmen, spearmen, archers and mounted knights pushed into Cimmeria's south west corner and quickly found that the land was more rugged than previously thought. A camp was made and named Venarium. The small clan inhabiting

the area was butchered rapidly, although some survivors escaped north and brought warning to the other clans of the region.

Knowing that Aquilonia would only advance if not checked, the Bloody Spear was sent around the clans, summoning a council of war at the Field of the Chiefs. There, the clans acknowledged the threat and an army was hastily prepared. Many, but not all, the clans joined it, and at the earliest opportunity the Cimmerian war bands marched south to counter the Aquilonians at the fort of Venarium.

Many heroes were forged in this battle; many deeds of valour performed. The Cimmerians brought their formidable shield walls to bear against the archers and knights of mighty Aquilonia and, over the course of three days, scythed into their warriors with little more than outright ferocity and strength in the shield line. Both sides suffered horrific casualties, but the Cimmerians broke through, and, with all the savagery Aquilonia had anticipated, sacked Venarium, showing no mercy. Aquilonia broke and ran. The clans hunted the survivors down on foot, driving some towards the Black Mountains, others into the Pictish wilderness, and killing many where they tried to hide in the glens and secluded valleys.

A young barbarian named Conan, born on a battlefield, brought his first blood at Venarium, fighting alongside his father. Countless other Cimmerian warriors did the same.

Venarium was a great victory and sent a clear message back to the Aquilonians: leave Cimmeria alone. The Cimmerian army was not larger or better organised than the Aquilonian force, but Aquilonia had wrongly anticipated that the Cimmerians were incapable of any form of organisation and would soon crumbled beneath the displayed might of its armoured troops. Cimmeria countered with ferocity and tenacity – something that the Aquilonians had failed to anticipate.

Nothing remains of the fort of Venarium – save the low hill where it was built, and dozens of stones placed by the clans to mark the heroic fallen. It is still remembered as a place of great victory for the barbarians and, across the border, remains a bitter memory of defeat for Aquilonia.

WOUNDED LANDS

Cimmeria is littered with battle sites; Venarium is the most famous, and many are the scenes of clan skirmishes that have been forgotten with the passage of time. One, however, continues to resonate with Cimmerians – the Wounded Lands.



This peaceful, if rain-soaked valley, saw a ferocious clash between the massed tribes of Cimmeria and a Pictish war force a hundred years before Conan's birth. The fighting was so bitter, the sages say, the blood so thickly spilled, that it looked like the very land was wounded. Fifty thousand met on these fields of slaughter, arranged on either side of the valley, and then collided in the middle in a pair of vast shield-walls that pushed and sparred, making no headway, for an entire morning. The Cimmerians feigned fatigue and allowed themselves to be pressed back; this lured the Picts into a false confidence and they pushed further, driving the Cimmerians back up their own side of the valley. But the Cimmerians fell back in good order, taking care not to trip or stumble and to keep their shield wall held. Then, when the rear ranks had the advantage of height, a thousand spears were hurled to slice into the rear ranks of the Pictish fighters, weakening both their strength and confidence. Using the advantage the slope gave them, the Cimmerian shield-wall made a single enormous push and broke the Pictish line.

From that point forward the battle became an intense melee of clashing wood, steel and bone. The Picts suffered a dreadful defeat and the Cimmerians pursued the fleeing numbers all the way to the Black Mountains, slaughtering all but a handful of the Picts in the process. Many Cimmerians died, but the Pictish propensity for bringing war deep into the heart of Cimmeria was checked for a long, long time, and it all happened in the Wounded Lands.

Nothing remains to mark the Cimmerian victory, save for the songs and lays that sing of the heroes of that day.

The Wounded Lands look anything but wounded now, but that gentle valley, blanketed in its soft, incessant rain, once resembled a deep and livid scar on the Cimmerian landscape. That it healed quickly is as much a reflection of the Cimmerian tenacity as it is of the earth's ability to quickly absorb – and forget – the atrocities committed on its surface.

YMIRS PASS

This high, cold, narrow pass between the rocks leads into the Border Kingdom. It is named Ymir's Pass in veneration of the war god because, it is said, Ymir held this ridge of mountainous land against the Ice Demons.

The pass is reached via a narrow, winding path that snakes up from the south eastern Cimmerian plain below. It marks the border between the Border Kingdoms and Cimmeria and, although Ymir's Pass is not within Border Kingdom territory, the fortress of Atzel, a Border Kingdom outpost, watches the road and pass for Cimmerian invasion – something that still happens from time to time when the clans decided to risk a raid into the Border Kingdoms.

The presence of Atzel's fortress means that people passing out of Cimmeria have a more difficult time than those passing into it. The fortress sentries are alert for Cimmerian insurgency and closely question everyone who uses the pass approaching from a westerly direction. Those who approach from the east, from Border Kingdom lands, are usually granted free passage through Ymir's Pass without any further trouble.





Shadows Out of Men

Cimmeria is defined by its clans. Each has its own traditions and ways of life, but each maintains characteristics that make the clan uniquely Cimmerian. When unthreatened by outsiders, the clans are happy to war with each other and blood feuds are commonplace – some lasting many generations and claiming many lives. But, when the Bloody Spear is raised, all the clans are brought together at the Field of the Chiefs and, for a short while at least, the clans act as a single nation, especially when it comes to defending against invaders from the surrounding lands.

Seventeen of Cimmeria's clans are described in this chapter, offering history and detail about their lives, habits, allies, enemies and exploits. This is by no means an exhaustive list; many others clans exist and both players and Games Masters are encouraged to create their own, unique clans using the Clan Generator provided here and the template used to describe the established clans.

Each clan is described in the following terms:

- ✿ Location: where Cimmeria the clan holds its territories. See the previous chapter for a geographical overview.
- ✿ Type: Either Settled, meaning the clan occupies fixed territory; Semi-Nomadic, meaning the clan roams on a semi-seasonal basis; or Nomadic meaning that the clan is completely nomadic with no fixed settlement of any form.
- ✿ Allies: Clans it is allied with.
- ✿ Enemies: Clans it is considered enemies with – and why.

- ✿ Traditions: Key traditions upheld by the clan.
- ✿ Treasures: Clan treasures and items of considerable value.
- ✿ Chieftain: The current chief of the clan
- ✿ Personalities: Notable members of the clan.
- ✿ History and Outlook. Detail on the clan's history and the ways in which it conducts itself.

For example, Clan Karnak is generated thus:

Average Number of Families: die roll of 1D10 is 3, yielding 1D8+3 families. The 1D8+3 die roll is 5+3, so 8 families in total.

Average Family Size: 1D6 die roll yields 5, so there are 1D10+5 members of each family, on average. The 1D10+5 die roll yields 4+5, so 9 members of a family, on average.

The total size of Clan Karnak is therefore 72 people. 32 are below fourteen years; 25 are between fifteen and thirty years (of which 12 are men and 13 women), 13 people (5 men and 8 women) are between thirty one and sixty; and just 2 people are sixty years or older (one man and one woman).

Clan Karnak is therefore not an especially large clan but not especially small, either.

The precise nature of a clan is explored in more detail in the clans c



RAPID CLAN GENERATOR

This set of tables allows for a Cimmerian clan to be generated in a simple set of die rolls. The process is:

- ☛ Roll for number of families
- ☛ Roll for Average Family Size – this determines only the number of living parents and children; it does not account for half-siblings, cousins, and other, extended relations.
- ☛ Multiply the two together to determine clan size
- ☛ Apply the Demographic Percentage to determine sex and age.

Average Number of Families

| 1D10 | Number of Families | Average Number of Families |
|------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 1D4+1 | 4 |
| 2 | 1D6+2 | 6 |
| 3 | 1D8+3 | 8 |
| 4 | 1D10+4 | 10 |
| 5 | 1D12+5 | 12 |
| 6 | 2D6+6 | 13 |
| 7 | 3D6+6 | 17 |
| 8 | 4D6+8 | 22 |
| 9 | 5D6+9 | 27 |
| 10 | 6D6+10 | 31 |

Average Family Size

| 1D6 | Number of Family Members | Average Family Size |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 1D3+1 | 3 |
| 2 | 1D4+2 | 5 |
| 3 | 1D6+3 | 7 |
| 4 | 1D8+4 | 9 |
| 5 | 1D10+5 | 11 |
| 6 | 1D12+6 | 13 |

Typical Demographics

| Age Ranges | Age Percentages | Male Percentages | Female Percentages |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 0 – 14 years old | 45% | 49% | 51% |
| 15 – 30 years old | 35% | 45% | 55% |
| 31-60 years old | 18% | 40% | 60% |
| 61 years and older | 2% | 50% | 50% |



BAIN LOCATION

Central Cimmerian plains

TYPE

Settled. Bain occupies four villages in a shallow, tree-lined valley. Bain has 120 members. 54 children, 70 adults of fighting age and 2 clan elders.

ALLIES

No notable alliances

ENEMIES

Darkwolf. Bain is engaged in a blood-feud with Darkwolf following a dispute over a find of gold made by Darkwolf clan members in territory Bain claims as its own. The feud has lasted ten years and shows no signs of abating. Bain demands the return of all the gold; Darkwolf refuses and accuses Bain of shifting its own boundaries to deny Darkwolf its good fortune. Three years ago the warriors of both clans clashed in the Battle of the Black Axe when Bain raiders, their axe-heads smeared with pitch to prevent them from glinting, attacked a Darkwolf war band that was seeking more gold in the region where the first, disputed amount was found. Clan Bain prevailed, and the feud has intensified since then.

TRADITIONS

Bain is a farming clan. It raises cattle and fowl in the pasture of its valley and has a reputation for creating fine leather and leather crafts.

At the age of 15 a clan member, male or female, is expected to undergo the Bull Running. Carrying a flag of blood-red, the runner must first antagonise one of the mighty horned Bain bulls and then attempt to out-run the incensed creature as it thunders after the youth. If the runner can reach the sacred oak, a solitary tree overlooking the valley, then the test has been passed successfully and the runner is considered to be an adult.

Every adult is expected to learn the arts of cattle husbandry and leather-working. Only women are expected to learn how to craft leather, and only men

are expected to learn how to prepare it, but there is no shame in either sex learning the entire process.

Both men and women are expected to fight for the clan's honour, and, since the blood feud with Darkwolf began, every clan member is expected to attack any member of the Darkwolf clan they come across. Darkwolf is portrayed as a clan filled with thieves and tricksters and all manner of thefts and transgressions have been heaped on Darkwolf's reputation.

Men and women wear leather kilts decorated with the horns of the Sacred Bull. Men traditionally wear thongs of leather around their forehead and have a tattoo of a bull's horns on either their arm or chest. Those who carry the horns on their chest fight bare-chested so that all can see that they have the courage of the Sacred Bull.

TREASURES

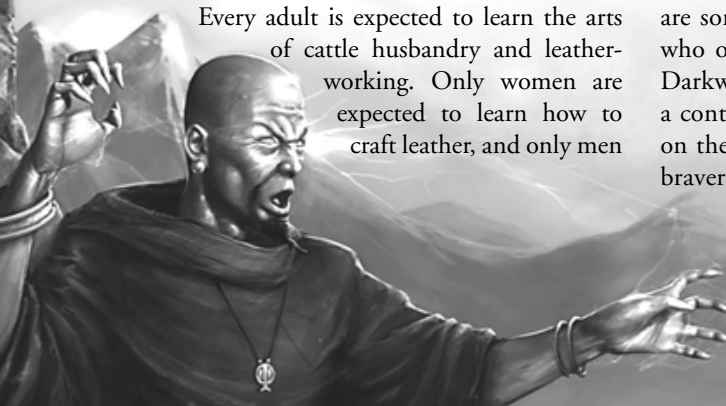
Bain's most valued treasure is the Silver Skull. This is a bull's skull and horns that have been worked with silver to create a dazzling totem that is brought out to watch over ceremonies such as the Bull Running, marriages, funerals and so forth. The Silver Skull is kept in a treasure chest buried beneath the floor of the chieftain's hut and it can only be disinterred when both the chieftain and the clan elders are present.

CHIEFTAIN

ROTH NAB BAIN

Roth has been chief for ten years, having rested the position from the ailing, one-eyed warrior Culoch. His rule is fierce with no dissent being tolerated, although he treats the wellbeing of the clan with more dignity than his predecessor (whom Roth believes was weak-willed). Under Roth's chieftainship clan Bain has extended its grazing territories, driving out a smaller, nomadic clan from the Broken Leg Lands, and has increased its livestock considerably. Under Culoch, the clan was stagnant; under Roth, Bain thrives.

Of particular note is the blood-feud with Darkwolf. Roth initiated it as part of his drive to raise the clan's profile in his first months of becoming chieftain, and he is the driving force behind maintaining it – even though there are some in the clan who weary of the situation. Those who openly question Roth's desire to continue battling Darkwolf are either publicly belittled or challenged to a contest of arms: two dissenters now have burial cairns on the outskirts of Bain territory as a testament to their bravery (if not their success).





Roth is thirty seven and a typical Cimmerian: broad-shouldered, brooding, dark looks, and a mane of shaggy black hair. His thin lips are perpetually dry and cracked and his brown eyes are deep and intense, scowling beneath a heavy brow. He wears a leather jerkin and kilt when around the settlements, and wears a bronze torc around his upper left arm and his bull horn tattoo on both his upper right arm and across his shoulder blades. He is quick to anger and, when pushed too far, explodes into unthinking violence. When untroubled he is blunt and forthright, but can be engaging company. He is most certainly a serious leader of his clan, with no time for anything that does not, in some way, advance Bain's interests.

5th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +5
Senses: Listen +7, Spot +7

Dodge Defence: 14; 17 vs. ranged
Parry Defence: 17
Hit Points: 45 hp (5 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2

Speed: 30 ft.
Melee: Broad sword +8 (1d10+4)
Base Atk: +5; Grp: +8

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility (-2 Penalty),

Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +1, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility
Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Abilities:

Feats:

Skills:

Possessions:

Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush
Hide -6, Intimidate +9, Listen +7, Move Silently -6, Survival +1, Spot +7
Leather kilt and jerkin, bronze torc and iron warrior rings, war sword and battleaxe.

PERSONALITIES

MATHMA NAB BAIN

Roth's mother and an elder of the clan, she is the source of her son's aggressive ambition and reticence to draw an end to the feud with Darkwolf. A malignant, twisted, hateful woman, she wields power through her son but senses that she has nowhere near the control she would like. Her body is crippled following a fall in her own Bull Run, but her mind is sword-edge sharp. Her husband and Roth's father, Wicoch, died the year before Roth became chieftain, having succumbed to a sickness contracted during the dreadful winter of the previous year. Mathma wasted no time in grieving and concentrated on building Roth into a credible challenger for the leadership of the clan.

6th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +6
Senses: Listen +7, Spot +7

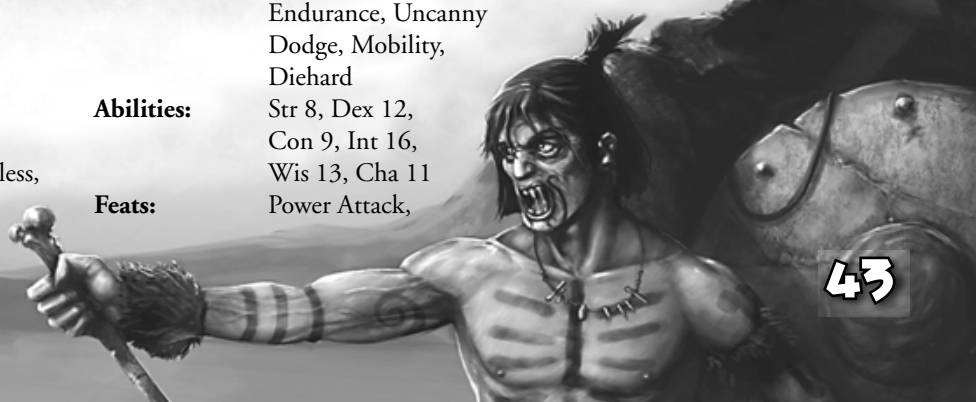
Dodge Defence: 15; 18 vs. ranged
Parry Defence: 11
Hit Points: 27 hp (6 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +4

Speed: 20 ft (twisted legs)
Melee: Spear +5 (1d8)
Base Atk: +6/+1; Grp: +5

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility (-2 Penalty), Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Diehard

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 11

Feats: Power Attack,





Skills: Cleave, Improved Bull Rush
 Craft (Weaving) +6, Handle Animal +6,
 Hide +6, Listen +9, Survival +4, **Spot +9**

Possessions: Clothes, necklace of flint and fox teeth,
 flint-headed spear, iron dagger.

CARAC NAB BAIN

If anyone is likely to challenge Roth for the leadership of the clan, it is Carac. A good looking man of 30, Carac is considered something of a hero amongst Bain since he is the fastest runner in the Bull Running and, a year ago, slew three Darkwolf warriors single-handedly in an ambush out at Fell's Creek, close to the disputed territory of the gold find.

Carac dislikes Roth and his mother. He believes the blood-feud, whilst necessary, has gone on for too long and should be brought to a conclusion. He is a brave warrior with a great deal of sense and a real desire to lead Bain, but without Roth's ruthless ambition and knife-edge temperament.

4th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +5
Senses: Listen +7, Spot +5

Dodge Defence: 14; 17 vs. ranged
Parry Defence: 14
Hit Points: 31 hp (4 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2

Speed: 30 ft.
Melee: Broad sword +7 (1d10+4)
Base Atk: +4; Grp: +7

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility (-2 Penalty), Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +1, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 13

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack

Skills: Handle Animal, Hide +3, Listen +7, Move Silently +2, Survival +2, Spot +5

Possessions: Leather kilt and jerkin, broadsword and hunting spear

other clans, and kept itself to itself. When the Bloody Spear brought the clans together to fight the Picts or the Aquilonians, Bain was there, but acted in the background, supporting, never leading. The clan embodied a simple spirit, maintained its size and prospered slowly and steadily as a result. Its ambitions did not extend beyond its valley and most seemed happy that way.

When the Darkwolf clan came into the hills Bain had always considered its territory (but had never officially claimed and marked), and grubbed for gold and secrets, it found gold – something Bain had known about but never expended much effort in exploiting. The chief at the time, Culoch, demanded a share of the find but Darkwolf sneered and denied any tribute. Culoch, ailing and sickly, demurred.

This was the signal for Mathma and Roth to act. Roth was certainly strong enough to challenge for leadership, given his strength and success in the Bull Run, but Mathma was the one who pushed for the challenge. Roth challenged the old chief to assert clan pride over Darkwolf, but Culoch declared he had no wish to create a feud. With Mathma denouncing such weak leadership, Roth demanded that Culoch stand aside but the old chieftain refused, telling Roth that the leadership of Bain must be decided by arms. Culoch had led for twenty years, proving himself at Venarium and against the Picts. Roth was young, strong and backed by an ambitious mother, but was able to articulate a vision of greater prosperity for Bain if they made war on the Darkwolf. The two men faced each other with spears and, after a long melee, Culoch was felled by a quick, sharp thrust from his challenger and died, cursing Mathma and Roth as he died.

Roth was declared chief and none dared to oppose him. Soon, a feud with the Darkwolf was declared followed by two well orchestrated raids on outlying Darkwolf settlements where cattle were taken, some warriors killed, and Bain honour established. That was ten years ago, and the feud persists, continually driven by Roth and Mathma's ambition.

BHARDH LOCATION

North eastern Cimmeria, between the territories of the Ice Leopards and Raeda.

TYPE

Settled. Bhardh has 338 members. 140 are children, 189 are of fighting age, and 9 are clan elders.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK.

For centuries Bain tended its herds, fought-off raids from



ALLIES

Ice Leopards. The two clans have several inter-marriages and have been allies against the Raeda for well over a century.

ENEMIES

Raeda. This is a traditional enmity shared with the Ice Leopards; no one remembers the cause of the feud between the clans, but it endures against all hopes of reconciliation.

TRADITIONS

Males of the clan wear their hair long and tied into an elaborate top-knot. Women wear the left-side of their hair braided if unmarried, and both sides braided if married.

All males of age 15 must take part in a full hunt and must bring-down, single-handedly, a deer, boar or other form of large game. They must then allow themselves to smeared with its blood across the face, chest and legs, thereby confirming their status as a warrior (and thus as a man). Women have no particular adulthood rite; the onset of menstruation is sufficient. However, all menstruating women are required to retire to the Woman's House on the far side of the settlement until the period has run its course.

Every winter the male warriors take part in The Great Hunt. Every single man capable of wielding a weapon heads deep into the forests for three days and three nights with aim being to kill as much game as possible to last the clan through the winter. The Great Hunt is treated as much as a festival and contest as it is a necessity. The night before the hunt starts, the men spend the evening in revelry. When they return, the whole clan joins in the Great Feast where the largest or first-killed animal is roasted and distributed, accompanied by much drinking, dancing and merry-making. The warriors are honoured as their kills are tallied, and it is customary for each warrior to tell of his exploits, deliberately exaggerating the details for the amusement of the clan.

The Bhardh clan acknowledges The Morrigan above the other Cimmerian gods, although religion does not figure highly in their daily life.

TREASURES

The clan's most prized treasure is the Silver Cup of Bhardh. Bhardh himself was a Cimmerian hero who lived five centuries ago. He wandered far across the country until he came to these lands and saw, levitating in the air, a silver chalice. Hungry and thirsty he reached for the chalice but a

warning voice, which could only be the Morrigan, told him he would only be refreshed when he had hunted for three days and three nights, and had agreed to settle and form a clan in this region. Bhardh agreed and did as commanded, and was then allowed to drink from the cup and keep it as a symbol.

The cup is therefore considered to be a gift from the gods. It is a simple, shallow-bowled chalice that could be of Hyrkanian origin. It is battered and scratched, but clearly of good quality and fine craftsmanship. The chalice is brought out on the evening before the Great Hunt and filled with wine. Although it can hold no more than a few decent mouthfuls, it somehow seems to provide enough for every warrior in the clan to take a decent draft – proof that the cup is, indeed, the one gifted to Bhardh by the Morrigan.

The cup is kept in an oak box, lined with bracken, and buried in a sacred place known only to the chief and the elders.

CHIEFTAIN

PADRIG

Padrig has been chief for fifteen years. He is a powerfully built Cimmerian originally of the Ice Leopards but who married into Bhardh when he was just 16, as part of a sealing of alliance between the two clans. He became chieftain at the age of 30 when the previous chieftain, Gunthas, was gored by a gigantic boar during that year's Great Hunt. Padrig killed the boar and dragged Gunthas to safety, but the old chief died soon after – although he insisted that Padrig be considered his successor. As none could match Padrig's success in the hunt that year, he was taken as the chieftain and he has served clan Bhardh well in the fifteen years since.

Padrig is quick with his emotions: quick to laugh, quick to anger and quick to calm. He is a popular chief, leading from the front, and taking the time to get to know his warriors strengths and weaknesses. He has led Bhardh in five battles against the Raeda clan to the east of Bhardh territories. Raeda is a savage clan noted for its long-nosed, braided hair warriors. Raeda keeps trying to push its territory closer to Bhardh, and Bhardh continues to resist. In each battle Padrig has led against the Raeda, Bhardh has won. The clan warriors put this down to Padrig's tactical skills, and the protection of the Morrigan who lends every warriors strength when they drink from the chalice.



8th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +8
Senses: Listen +14, Spot +3

Dodge Defence: 18; 19 vs. ranged
Parry Defence: 15
Hit Points: 50 hp (8 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +4

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Broadsword +10/+5 (1D10+2)
Base Atk: +8/+3; Grp: +10

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Diehard

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Persuasive.
Skills: Climb +8, Hide +2, Intimidate +10, Listen +14, Move Silently +2, Ride +11, Spot +3, Survival +11, Swim +13;

Possessions: Good quality broadsword, hunting spear, a pair of silver torc (worth 9,600 SP), leather hauberk.



speak with Orilia, despite the obvious attraction, and so Padrig is hatching a plan to bring the two together and get them married.

6th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +8
Senses: Listen -3, Spot -3

Dodge Defence: 17; 18 vs. ranged
Parry Defence: 15
Hit Points: 44 hp (6 HD); DR 0
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +0

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Broadsword +9/+4 (1D10+2)
Base Atk: +6/+1; Grp: +9

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility (-2 penalty), Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Diehard, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Diehard

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 5, Cha 9

Feats: Dodge, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Climb).

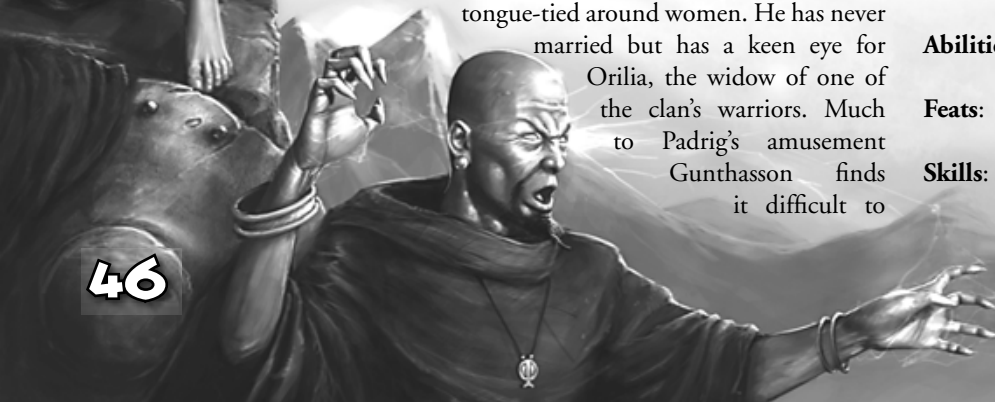
Skills: Balance +7, Climb +14, Hide +3, Listen -3, Move Silently +3, Ride +8, Search+2, Spot -3, Survival +0

PERSONALITIES

GUNTHASSON

The son of the previous chieftain, Gunthasson is one of Padrig's closest friends and advisers. It was not always this way; he was embittered when Padrig won the position of chieftain because he believed it ought to be his. But Padrig took care to cultivate Gunthasson's friendship which was sealed when the pair fought shoulder to shoulder against Raeda at the Battle of the Shattered Stump twelve years ago. Since then, the men have been firm friends and comrades, with Gunthasson offering his sound advice on clan matters and helping Padrig to maintain a firm but fair leadership style.

Gunthasson is an archetypal Cimmerian who is very proud of his bushy, shaggy beard. He is, however, tongue-tied around women. He has never married but has a keen eye for Orilia, the widow of one of the clan's warriors. Much to Padrig's amusement Gunthasson finds it difficult to



Possessions: Broadsword and hunting spear, braid of Orillia's hair (taken without Orillia's knowledge when she had her hair combed and trimmed).

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK.

The clan's ancestor is clearly Bhardh himself, and this great hero was indeed the founder of the clan. Whether or not the cup was a gift from the Morrigan is unknown, but it clearly has strange, magical properties, although its design is Hyrkanian and not Cimmerian.

Bhardh's prowess as a warrior and hunter is invoked and celebrated in everything the clan does. Over many years it has made peace with the Ice Leopards, to the west of Bhardh territories, and, through a succession of skilful inter-marriages and astute (for Cimmerians) diplomacy, has strengthened the bond between the two. Bhardh warriors often accompany Ice Leopard war bands when they wander afar in search of enemies and, as a result, have brought back much for Bhardh's benefit.

The clan is not especially warlike, but certainly does not flinch from confrontation. For the most part its warriors are content to hunt and tend their homes peacefully, making war on the Raeda only when those long-snouted savages come looking for trouble.

CALLAUGH LOCATION

Southern Broken Leg Lands

TYPE

Settled. The clan numbers 480, with 80 children, 20 elders and 380 warriors. Its core settlement is Callaugh village, but additional homesteads are scattered through the Callaugh Glen.

ALLIES

Canach. The Canach are considered a valuable ally of the Callaugh with the two enjoying a great deal of interdependence and inter-marriage

ENEMIES

Morgach, but more of an uneasy truce than outright enmity.

TRADITIONS

The southern reaches of the Broken Leg Lands are the territory of the Callaugh clan. The Callaugh base themselves around the permanent village of Callaugh, which is located in the Callaugh Glen, a deep, wide canyon that is well-forested on all slopes and fed by the winding Llau River. The Callaugh clan treats the whole of the Broken Leg Lands as its own territory and its warriors know the fractured countryside intimately, being unfazed by its hazards and crumbling nature.

Like many Cimmerian clans, the Callaugh are veterans in the wars against the Picts. The village is a vital defence against Pictish incursion, and Callaugh warriors mount a vigilant guard along the southern edge of the Broken Leg Lands, watching for signs of war bands. As the Broken Leg Lands form a maze of gulleys, valleys and gorges, there are many dead-ends and blind passes where ambush is easy and the Picts have learned from experience to give the Broken Leg Lands as wider berth as possible.

In addition to watching for the Picts, Callaugh clan members scour the passes, gorges and riverbeds for gold. Nuggets of the precious metal have been found in the rivers and streams, washed-down from the small, exposed seams deep in the heart of the Broken Leg Lands. Though a gold find is rare, the Callaugh knows the worth of the stuff and is practiced in both working gold and protecting it, conducting the former pursuit with subtle intricacy and the latter with brutal efficiency.

A traditional rite of passage is the hunting and killing of a spined cat (see *That Sombre Land*, page 21). Taking a spined cat's pelt is considered the mark of a blooded warrior and the skins of these animals are worn with great pride.

TREASURES

Callaugh has managed to hoard 100,000 GP in gold nuggets and gold dust. This treasure trove is buried in a secret cave deep within Callaugh Glen, which is known only to the chief and selected, trusted clan elders.

CHIEFTAIN

HENGHAR

Challenges to the chieftain of Callaugh are numerous. Anyone with a decent sword arm and an impressive spine cat pelt believes he is fine chieftain material. The current incumbent is Henghar, a youthful champion



who is renowned for having slaughtered six Picts single handedly whilst badly wounded in one leg: he still walks with a limp. Henghar is pugnacious, quick to anger, but has a certain maturity for all his lack of years. People respect his ability, but his youth means others will be willing to offer a challenge sooner rather than later. Henghar has promised the clan that he will extend its territories, meaning he intends to recommence the raids against clan Morgach in the north. This is popular with some, who think there has been too much peace of late, but is unpopular with the older warriors who have grown to respect Morgach's presence and maturity.

7th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +6
Senses: Listen +2, Spot +2

Dodge Defence: +16
Parry Defence: +14
Hit Points: 69 hp (7 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +5

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Battleaxe +9/+4 (1d10+2)
Attack: +7/+2

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Diehard, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Feats: Power Attack, Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Weapon Focus (Battleaxe)

Skills: Gather Information +5, Heal +5, Hide +6, Jump +11, Knowledge (Broken Leg Lands) +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Sense Motive +7, Spot +2, Swim +11

Possessions: A hand filled with golden rings. Leather armour, battleaxe. 5,000 GP.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Callaugh typifies the Cimmerian spirit: warlike, defiant, but pragmatic. The clan's history was always this way and despite the fact that it has had numerous chieftains its character has changed little. And that character is

shaped very much by the rough, unforgiving landscape of the Broken Leg Lands: the jagged peaks and deep-rutted valleys have created people with similarly sharp temperaments. Changed by the erosion of the wind and rain, the Broken Leg Lands never stand still; neither does clan Callaugh.

Under Henghar's regime, a challenge to Morgach clan is inevitable, despite the rift being caused amongst its people. Callaugh revels in war and conflict, and, with no recent Pictish incursions, many in the clan are bored and ripe for new conflict. Spears are being readied, tempers and sword-blades whetted.

CANACH, CONARCH OR SNOWHAWK

LOCATION

North west Cimmeria in the northern edge of the Broken Leg Lands.

TYPE

Settled. Canach is one of Cimmeria's largest clans with around 535 clansmen scattered over several hamlets on the northern edge of the Broken Leg Lands. It has 225 under the age of 14, some 300 of fighting age and 10 clan elders.

ALLIES

Callaugh. The clan occupying the southern reaches of the Broken Leg Lands is considered a valuable ally of the Canach with the two enjoying a great deal of interdependence and inter-marriage.

ENEMIES

Murrogh. Canach's blood enemies are the Murrogh. The reason for the feud is lost to time, but the clans' hatred of each other shows no signs of abating, and raids between them are frequent. Another enemy clan, although uneasy truces have been established, is the Nachta of the Black Mountains.

TRADITIONS

Canach's traditions are typically Cimmerian. The chieftain of the clan is known as the Canach. His word is law, but the Canach's position is supported by an extensive ring of advisers drawn from the elders and the senior warriors. It is the Canach's task to guide the clan, protect it, and advance its fortunes.



All youths undergo a rite of passage before being considered adults. The rite is generally a proving of one's ability to support the clan through either hunting, war, or bravery in some physical endeavour. The accomplishment needs to be witnessed by an adult who presents the candidate for adulthood to the Canach, describes what has been accomplished, and requests that the clan recognise the youth as a man. If acceptable, the Canach proclaims the youth as a Man of the Canach and, at a formal ceremony before the gathered clan, introduces the new addition and proclaims a toast to his health. The new adult must drink from the Horn of the Canach, swear to protect and uphold the clan's traditions, and, in so doing, receives the clan's approval.

The tradition of war is a serious business within the clan. Enemies are never forgiven or forgotten, although truces might be agreed if the conditions are favourable. The Canach people accept no slight against them and are prepared to raid or make war on anyone who insults or injures the clan's traditions and interests. It is forbidden for any clan member to fraternise with members of the Murrogh, and every warrior is expected to challenge (and kill) any Murrogh encountered.

The sacred numbers of Cimmerian – 9 and 27 – are represented throughout the Canach clan. Every war band comprises of 27 warriors, and every ninth day is considered a Resting Day when it is permitted for people to lay down their tools and relax. During the spring and summer, the Canach might call for a feast or banquet to be prepared on the ninth day, if a hunt has been especially successful. The ninth day is also the day used for weddings and the honouring of the clan's ancestors.

TREASURES

Canach has many treasures as a result of its long and illustrious history. The chieftain's hoard contains the equivalent of 20,000 in gold and silver coins, plus a variety of gold jewellery items such as torcs, bracelets and rings. The Canach wields the sword and spear Snowblade and Snowpoint, revered artefacts said to be touched by the gods.

CHIEFTAIN

The chieftain of the clan is called the Canach of Canach. This symbolises the unity and strength of the clan in a single name adopted by the chieftain. Once the chieftain is acclaimed to the position, his previous name is rarely used, save by those close friends and family.

Anyone aspiring to be Canach must be an exemplary warrior with a robust record of war against the

clan's enemies. Challengers to the position must be able to match their exploits against those of the incumbent and be sure of meeting or exceeding them, as well as being able to physically challenge the Canach for the position.

GAIRDH, CANACH OF CANACH

The current Canach is Gairdh ('the rough one'). One of the warriors at Venarium, and a veteran of every contemporary Canach battle of the past eighteen years, he is noted for his rough, forthright style, simple requirements and fierce hatred of the Murrogh clan, whose champion, Ewain, he defeated in single combat two years ago.

As Canach, Gairdh wields the spear Snowpoint and the broadsword Snowblade. These relatively simple-looking weapons are said to have been touched by Crom and wielded by Ymir and are the hereditary weapons of every Canach for as far as one can remember. Gairdh is married





to Aeywen, once of the Callaugh and has three sons, each a noted warrior of the clan in their own right. The eldest, Gethyn, is a mean, moody, one-eyed warrior who leads his own war band and controls the village of Nairn whilst his younger brothers, Heord and Henmast, serve in Gairdh's war band.

Gairdh is a huge, imposing man with greying hair and narrow eyes set into a square-jawed, craggy face. Of Canach's most famous son, Conan, he thinks little; a true Cimmerian does not wish to wander the world and, even though Conan has returned to Cimmeria from time to time, his willingness to dally with the ancient enemies of Cimmeria marks him, in Gairdh's eyes, as an outlaw not to be trusted.

12th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +9
Senses: Listen +17, Spot +3

Dodge Defence: 20; 22 vs. ranged
Parry Defence: 19
Hit Points: 140hp (12 HD); DR 5
Saves: Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +8

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Broadsword (Snowblade)+17/+12/+7 (1D10+7, Hunting Spear (Snowpoint) +13 (1D8+6)
Base Atk: +12/+7/+2; Grp: +17

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +4, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Diehard, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Power Attack

Skills: Craft (Leatherworking) +10, Craft (Stonemasonry) +15, Hide +1, Intimidate +17, Listen +17, Move Silently +1, Ride +16, Spot +3, Swim +21, Use Rope +8

Possessions: Tooled leather armour bearing the Snowhawk crest, Snowblade and Snowpoint, gold torc, bronze armbands and iron warrior rings worn in the beard.

PERSONALITIES

GETHYN, SON OF GAIRDH

Gethyn resembles his mighty father. He lost an eye in a raid against the Murrough in the action that earned him his warrior rite, and he wears the socket open for all to see. Gethyn claims his empty eye can see Murrough souls directly and no one disputes the assertion. Currently he is the Champion of Nairn and a likely candidate for the Canach's position if and when Gairdh ceases to be chieftain. He hates the Murrough with an intensity far outstripping that of his illustrious father and would move to wipe out the Murrough clan if he became the Canach.

8th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +7
Senses: Listen +2, Spot +2

Dodge Defence: 17; 19 vs. ranged
Parry Defence: 18
Hit Points: 90hp (8 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +3

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Battleaxe +13/+8 (1D10+5)
Base Atk: +8/+3, Grp: +9

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Diehard, Str 20, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Abilities: Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Self Sufficient

Feats: Craft (Blacksmith) +7, Gather Information +6, Handle Animal +12, Hide +1, Intimidate +12, Listen +2, Move Silently +1, Ride +11, Spot +2, Swim +16

Skills: Craft (Blacksmith) +7, Gather Information +6, Handle Animal +12, Hide +1, Intimidate +12, Listen +2, Move Silently +1, Ride +11, Spot +2, Swim +16

Possessions: Tooled leather armour bearing the Snowhawk crest, twin battleaxes.



Aeywen, Wife of Gairdh

Born of the Callaugh clan, Aeywen is a beautiful, flame-haired woman who, despite being in her late 40s, is still slim and striking. She is the love of Gairdh's life and has kept him grounded in his responsibilities as Canach over the years. She is proud of her three sons, and is fully immersed in Canach life even though she still retains strong connections with her birth clan on the south side of the Broken Leg Lands.

An accomplished musician, singer and poetess, she entertains the whole clan on the ninth day festivals with songs, poems, stories and lays from the Old Years of Cimmeria.

4th Level Barbarian/ 4th Level Scholar

Initiative: +7
Senses: Listen +10, Spot +7

Dodge Defence: 14; 16 vs. ranged
Parry Defence: 12
Hit Points: 67hp (8 HD); DR 0
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +8

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Spear +8 (1D8+3)
Base Atk: +7/+2

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility (-2), Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +1, Diehard, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 16
Feats: Agile, Alertness, Diligent, Performer
Skills: Animal Handling +4, Balance +7, Craft (Weaving) +9, Diplomacy +8, Handle Animal +10, Hide +1, Jump +10, Knowledge (Clan Traditions) +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +1, Perform (Sing) +9, Ride +7, Spot +7, Survival +8
Possessions: Fine wool robes, harp, books of Cimmerian Lays.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Canach, the Snowhawk clan, is the clan of Conan's birth. His family is not originally of the clan, but came from the south, fleeing a blood feud. From this it is possible to determine that, as traditionally Cimmerian as the clan is, Canach is prepared to welcome new members if those people (Murrogh aside) are prepared to accept the clan's ethics and traditions; a rarity amongst the Cimmerian clans.

Canach is fiercely defensive of both its own way of life and Cimmeria's. It is prepared to call forth the Bloody Spear to protect Cimmeria against the likes of the Picts and Aquilonians, bringing together the clans for the singular defence of the heartlands. It is prepared to promote a wider interest, although, ultimately, it seeks its own preservation as all clans do.

Members of Canach are expected to follow both the warrior creed and develop pastoral pursuits benefiting the community. Conan's father, for instance, is a talented and respected blacksmith as well as a renowned warrior. Conan himself is born in the midst of battle and his mother is as capable a warrior as any man of the Snowhawk clan.

Canach has controlled the northern Broken Leg Lands for as long as any Cimmerian can remember. The clan itself is divided between several villages and settlements that are essentially self-contained, based around two or three extended families that look after their own lives until called together by the Canach on a ninth day celebration or for a clan council. Six main villages exist; Uist, Nairn, Duthil (Conan's home village), Berwik, Broath and Conarch. Conarch is the Canach's seat and the largest of the settlements. None of the settlements are more than two or three days travel apart and each conforms to the typical Cimmerian structure of a main roundhouse around which are gathered the homes and workshops of the populace.

The clan has supported every Cimmerian action against invasion through the country's recent history, including decisive conflicts such as the Siege of Venarium, where the young Conan made a name for himself against the invading Aquilonians. But other engagements have proved Canach's ferocity and been the making of its heroes: the Battle of Gorach's Pass in the Black Mountains against the Picts; the Battle of Conall Valley against the Nordheim and the Salt Marsh Battle against the Borderlanders (and a rare instance of Murrogh and Canach clans working together, although, once the battle was finished, the old enmity returned).

**CRUIADH
LOCATION**

Conall Valley

TYPE

Settled. Clan Cruiadh occupies the northern reaches of the Conall Valley linking Cimmeria



with Nordheim. It numbers 460, with around 300 of fighting age.

ALLIES

None

ENEMIES

Gaud and Taur. Cruiadh does not have blood feuds with either clan, but is on friendly terms with neither. It resents the presence of both in the Conall Valley and seeks to absorb both into a larger tribe.

TRADITIONS

Cruiadh views the whole of the Conall valley as its rightful territory and all its traditions are geared towards achieving this end – which means driving out the Gaud and Taur clans. Its greatest tradition is therefore one of constant warfare against these two clans although it has, over the years, formed alliances with each against the other.

The clan also believes it is the gatekeeper of the Pass of Blood and is in sole charge of defending Cimmeria from the northmen, which it has done with varying degrees of success throughout its long history. The central belief is that Cruiadh is destined to absorb both Gaud and Taur clans through strength of arms and thus become the largest of all the Cimmerian clans. Its traditions speak of a prophecy, given to one of the clan's oracles, which describes Cruiadh becoming known as the Blood Clan. Chieftains interpret this to mean that the Conall Valley is the critical artery of Cimmeria and the clan is the blood of Cimmeria.

All Cruiadh's members are schooled in the belief of their supremacy over the other clans, culturally and militarily, and especially Gaud and Taur. Each warrior believes he is a hero in the making and will be known by history as one of the saviours of Cimmeria. The clan therefore places great emphasis on creating an entirely warlike culture.

Upon reaching the age of 12, every Cruiadh male must make his way into the Pass of Blood, alone, and armed only with a spear, a shield and a dagger. He is given a one-day start and is then pursued by a full war band of Cruiadh warriors. The youth's task is to remain hidden from the war band for three full days and three full nights. He is expected to survive by his wits and to live off the land

for the duration of his ordeal. If caught he is expected to submit himself to a personal combat with the appointed champion of the war band. The winner is the one who draws first blood during the fight, and both combatants are expected to fight as they would any enemy.

Between the ages of 7 and 12 every child is taught the way of the spear, sword and shield. They are taught how to fight singly and as part of a shield wall. They are taught survival and stealth and are encouraged to see themselves as heroes not just of the clan but of Cimmeria.

All the ancestors of Cruiadh are warriors killed in battle against the Nordheim and against Gaud and Taur. Every ninth day is the Day of the Warrior where the entire clan stages mock battles in preparation for two wars: one against the Nordheim and one against the Gaud and Taur. These wars will create the Blood Clan and seal Cruiadh's supremacy of Cimmeria.

TREASURES

Nothing of notable value.

CHIEFTAIN

ODHRÁN MAC CAILEAN

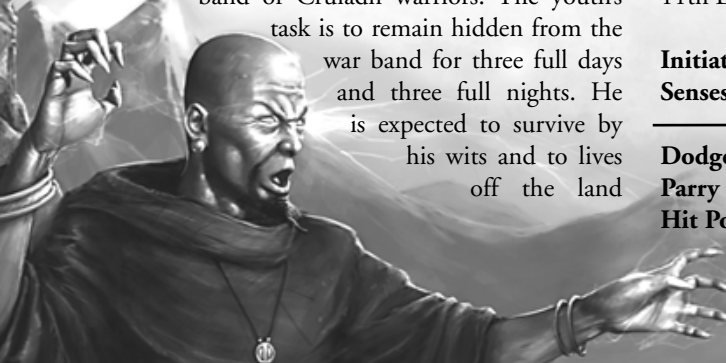
The black-haired, white-bearded Odhrán has led the Cruiadh for eighteen years. His father, Cailean, led the clan for twenty years before him. Odhrán has killed over five hundred men in his lifetime and has lost count of the battles and skirmishes he has endured. He is an angry, violent man, frustrated that the Blood Clan has still not come into being and desperate to see its creation during his lifetime. This makes him angry and frustrated with the clan's oracles, but as a superstitious man, he must abide by their guidance – and the oracles say that the Blood Clan is not ready yet.

Such is Odhrán's ferocity and skill as a fighter, he has never been challenged for the leadership of Cruiadh. He would welcome any challenger, confident of killing him, and thereby continuing to prove his strength as the leader of his people.

11th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +10
Senses: Listen +15, Spot +6

Dodge Defence: +21
Parry Defence: +17
Hit Points: 108hp (11 HD); DR 5





PERSONALITIES

OWAIN MAC FINEAN

The clan's champion and the only warrior who counts more kills than the chieftain. Owain is a leering, balding warrior, powerfully built and with numerous scars across his body. Owain disdains anyone from outside the clan, but reserves special hatred for the Nordheim, whom he enjoys taunting before entering a combat.

Owain is one of his Odhrán's closest friends and advisers. If anything he is more superstitious than his chief, acting fearfully when the omens are poor and recklessly when they are good. Although he would never admit it, Owain is in love with the Oracle Dedhre, hanging on her every word. Odhrán enjoys taunting the champion about his feelings; if anyone else had the temerity to do so, they would soon feel Owain's wrath.

10th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +9
Senses: Listen +1, Spot +1

Dodge Defence: +19
Parry Defence: +15
Hit Points: 117hp (10 HD); DR 5
Saves: Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +5

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Broadsword +12/+7 (1D10+2)
Attack: +10/+5

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +3, Diehard, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 15 (+2), Dex 15 (+2), Con 16 (+3), Int 6 (-2), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 12 (+1).

Feats: Power Attack, Run, Self Sufficient, Skill Focus (Climb).

Skills: Climb +14, Handle Animal +10, Hide +2, Intimidate +8, Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Perform (Sing) +2, Ride Spot +1, Swim +9

Possessions: Chieftain's clothes, leather armour, necklace made from pieces of rugged flint, leather greaves, fur cape made from wolf skin.

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +4

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Broadsword +14/+9/+4 (1D10+3)
Attack: +11/+6/+1

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +3, Diehard, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Run

Skills: Handle Animal +7, Hide +3, Intimidate +15, Listen +15, Move Silently +3, Ride +16, Search +1, Spot +6, Swim +15, Use Rope +4

Possessions: Chieftain's clothes, leather armour, necklace made from pieces of rugged flint, leather greaves, fur cape made from wolf skin.





DEDHRE, CRUIADH ORACLE

A dark-eyed, slender-hipped beauty, Dedhre claims to have been blessed in the womb by the Morrigan, thus giving her the power of second sight and the reading of omens. Her sullen, proud face is framed by raven-black hair with almond-shaped eyes and a pouting, full-lipped mouth. Dedhre is scornful of the attentions of men and is filled with invective for all males. However she holds of the men of Cruiadh in the palm of her hand through her detailed and chilling ability to read the omens of the natural role and she relishes the power this gives her.

She is, of course, fully aware of Owain's ill-concealed love for her and exploits this weakness to the full. In reality she is incapable of love, but uses her overt sexuality to extract the maximum advantage from the frail and posturing warriors who surround her.

Cruiadh Oracle (10th Level Barbarian/10th Level Scholar)

Initiative: +11
Senses: Listen +14, Spot +10

Dodge Defence: +21
Parry Defence: +17
Magical Attack Bonus: +7
Hit Points: 126 hp (10 HD); DR 0
Saves: Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +14

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Dagger +18/+13/+8 (1D4+1)
Attack: +17/+12/+7

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +3, Diehard, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 13 (+1), Dex 12 (+1), Con 16 (+3), Int 16 (+3), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 21 (+5)

Feats: Hexer, Ritual Sacrifice, Self Sufficient, Skill Focus (Handle Animal)

Divination Powers: Astrological Prediction, Blessing of Fate, Dream of Wisdom, Visions, Visions of Torment and Enlightenment

Skills: Climb +15, Handle Animal +14, Heal +5, Hide +1, Jump +8, Knowledge (Omens and Dooms) +10, Knowledge (Arcana) +10, Knowledge (Nature) +13, Knowledge (Clan Customs) +9, Listen

+14, Move Silently +1, Ride +16, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3, Swim +11

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

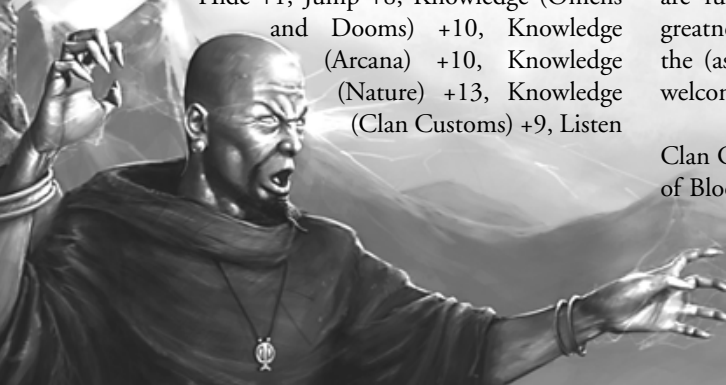
With a long history of war behind it, against Picts, northmen and other Cimmerians, Cruiadh is an aggressive but sophisticated clan. Its belief is that it is destined for greatness, and possibly to unite all the Cimmerian clans into a single tribe with a single king.

Its stance is based not on an innate hatred of the Gaud and Taur clans; it is based on its location at the northernmost edge of Cimmerian territory. Cruiadh has had to fight to maintain its lands and, where fighting the Nordheim is concerned, fighting against the odds. It has prevailed because Cruiadh knows the Conall Valley and Pass of Blood intimately and can use this knowledge to defend Cimmeria's border with a minimum of men and at maximum cost to its enemies. It knows that, fighting with cunning and an utter ruthlessness, it can take-on an enemy of any size and defeat it. Cruiadh is proud of its discipline, its cold-heartedness, and its apparent destiny to bring Cimmeria under a single, blood-spattered banner.

Cruiadh views the clans of Gaud and Taur as interlopers. They should submit to Cruiadh control and thereby create an even greater force to defend Cimmeria from the frozen north. It is furious that both clans seek to maintain their own identities and traditions but sees similar traits within itself. Thus, the war between the three clans is as much a war of attrition as one of swords and spears. Cruiadh knows that if Gaud and Taur were to formally ally, and attack from the south, it would be seriously threatened. Therefore Cruiadh has been careful to avoid blood feuds with either of its neighbours, despite a constant stream of skirmishes and raids over the years. Cruiadh intends to keep Gaud and Taur divided and, in time, to conquer each, absorbing them into the Blood Clan.

Cruiadh is, perhaps, the most superstitious of all the Cimmerian clans. It values its oracles (it has two) and forges its destiny around the two hundred year-old prophecy that it will arise as the leaders of the Blood Clan. Every omen is read, noted, interpreted and re-interpreted. Its warriors prepare for an epic battle they may never live to see, and are fuelled by the oracles' proclamations of imminent greatness. It keeps its bloodlines absolutely pure and rejects the (as it views it) weak-heartedness of those clans who welcome foreigners into their hearths.

Clan Cruiadh is as hard and brutal as the crags of the Pass of Blood. Its outlook is as pure as newly-fallen snow, and



its ensures a constant state of preparedness amongst its warriors, patiently awaiting its greatest hour.

DARKWOLF LOCATION

Central Cimmerian plains and forests

TYPE

Semi Nomadic. The clan follows the hunting trails of central Cimmeria during the spring and summer, making camp at regular points. In the winter it heads to the southern edge of the plains where the winters are not as harsh and makes a permanent camp called the *wintervast*.

ALLIES

No strong alliances

ENEMIES

No particular enemies

TRADITIONS

Darkwolf has a strong nomadic tradition. It knows, and follows, the hunting trails expertly, marking its territory with wolf skulls either set into trees or atop cairns of stone and wolf bone.

Every warrior of the clan wears a wolf skin cloak and plait a wolf tail into their hair. Wolf teeth are strung on necklaces which are worn around the neck, and bangles of wolf claws are worn on the wrists and ankles. The clan believes it has a deep kinship with the wolves of the central plains and conducts itself as a wolf pack might, with a central pack leader and all else subservient to him.

The moon, howled at by the wolves Darkwolf holds so dear, is referred to as Crom's Eye; it is believed that Crom gazes down balefully at the earth from the sky and the howling of the wolves is their response to the dooms Crom sends to torment the world.

As nomads, the clan has many rituals and superstitions relating to travel and the following of the hunting trails. When pitching a camp, for instance, the yurts are always oriented in the same way, with the openings facing towards the east. However, the same postholes are never used twice as this is considered bad luck. Whenever three crows, rooks or ravens are seen to be nesting or

roosting in an area, the clan will not camp there (as the three symbolise the Morrigan, Nemain and Bodb). Nor will the clan camp within a mile of a known wolf-den, out of respect for the animals.

Darkwolf's reputation as a warlike clan is well deserved. Its warriors fought at Venarium against Aquilonia, and there are many tales of the ferocity of the Darkwolf clansmen howling with the blood-lust and tearing into the invaders like a packed of starved wolves. Foremost of the Darkwolf warriors was Shawan; a lean, ferocious fighter who terrified the Aquilonians and took many heads before falling to their spears. Until that point, Darkwolf had thought itself invincible; Shawan was viewed as the spirit of the clan, and his death brought a great sorrow that saw every clan member howl for a whole night.

Since then, Shawan has been honoured as an ancestor. The clan's oracle claims that Shawan's spirit was saved from wandering Crom's bleak Otherland and, instead, has become a great, black-furred wolf who skulks the Cimmerian plains hunting the enemies of Cimmeria and the Darkwolf clan in particular. Many clansmen claim to have caught a glimpse of this huge, red-eyed, lean bodied, black-pelted animal stalking through the night, and so it has become a ritual to leave a portion of any hunt for Shawan's wolf-shadow so that the beast will neither starve nor consider that the clan has forgotten him.

The clan travels on horseback. All its possessions are packed into huge panniers that are carried by pack horses whilst the clan members ride around the outside of the cargo. Women and children share horses, but men ride singly and always with weapons at the ready, either to hunt or to defend against raiders.

TREASURES

Shawan's sword and spear are considered the clan's greatest treasures. As nomads, a treasury would be a nuisance to transport, but Shawan's weapons represent the finest warrior spirit of Darkwolf and they are held in reverence, always travelling with the chieftain.

The wolf skins and other lupine accoutrements the clan wears are considered clan treasures rather than personal possessions. Any Darkwolf clansman who dishonours the clan is stripped of all wolf accoutrements and expelled from the clan in disgrace. The wolf skin and tail is considered to be a potent symbolic tie to the lifestyle of the wolf and losing it akin to losing one's soul.



CHIEFTAIN

EUGHAN - SCARCLAW

Once a fine, strong warrior in the same mould as Shawan, Eoghan was wounded at Venarium and has never fully recovered. Each year has seen his health slide and now he is a shadow of his former self. For many years he has hidden his pain behind a gruff persona but age and illness are taking their toll and Eoghan is now in a position of weakness.

The clan senses this. Others are preparing the challenge the leadership of the clan, including Eoghan's three sons, all of them fine, strong, wolf warriors. Yet Eoghan has no intention of surrendering his position until it is absolutely inevitable. Despite his failing health he knows his time has not yet come. Eoghan believes that when – and only when – the Black Wolf comes to the edge of the *wintervane* and howls thrice will it be his time to depart for the Otherworld and whatever fate Crom has outlined there. Perhaps, sensing the immanency of this fate, the clan is prepared to honour Eoghan's beliefs, but that does not stop the brooding tension building with Darkwolf's ranks as the various pretenders to the chieftain's saddle position themselves for leadership.

8th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +8
Senses: Listen +12, Spot +1

Dodge Defence: +18
Parry Defence: +13
Hit Points: 90 hp (8 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +4

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Hunting spear +11/+6 (1D8+3)
Attack: +8/+3

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge,

Mobility

Abilities: Str 16 (+3), Dex 14 (+2), Con 17 (+3), Int 6 (-2), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 9 (-1).

Feats: Blind-Fight, Run, Toughness

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +2, Intimidate +9, Jump +12, Listen +12, Move Silently +2, Spot +1

PERSONALITIES

Shawan – great hero killed at Venarium. Shawan is the revered hero ancestor of the clan and his name outshines the names of all those who came before him. All young warriors aspire to be like him, and a slew of myths are now arising which promote his presence or influence – real or imagined – in a variety of situations the clan has faced.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Darkwolf is an old nomadic clan, and always highly singular. Its territories and trails are centuries old, its secrets well kept and its clan members tightly knit. Darkwolf has existed for as long as the Cimmerian legends recount and the bards believe that Darkwolf was Crom's own wolfhound who, upon the god's retreat to his mountain, was given human form and told to form a clan from his pack. Thus was the clan born, and the wolf's spirit manifests in all its warriors, finding its ultimate expression in Shawan.

When the Bloody Spear called the clans to Venarium, Darkwolf was first to answer – eager to make war on the invaders and test its warriors. Despite the losses to its men that day, Darkwolf made its name. No clan fought with more ferocity or took more heads of the enemy; it defended other clans who had previously feared it whilst taking the fight to an enemy that was better equipped and better organised. The howls of the Darkwolf warriors echoed above the war chants of the massed Cimmerians and drowned out the Aquilonian battle-cries. Shawan led the attacks and, when he fell, Darkwolf fought with deeper conviction, intent on avenging its loss.

Since then Darkwolf has gained new respect across the Cimmerian clans even though it remains true to its singular ideals and nomadic nature.

GALLA

LOCATION

South East Cimmeria, occupying a series of a narrow vales some 60 miles north west of the Ymir Pass.

TYPE

Settled. Galla numbers 250, with some 180 of warrior age, plus another hundred in slaves.

ALLIES

None



ENEMIES

Everyone

TRADITIONS

Galla is considered barbaric even amongst the other Cimmerian clans. Its people are blood-thirsty and ferocious warriors with little developed agriculture and a way of life devoted almost entirely to raiding other clans and the Border Kingdoms. Galla takes slaves and, whilst slaves are not objected to in principle by Cimmerians, an overt slave trade is not considered an essential of Cimmerian life.

The Gallans' appearance projects savagery. Their faces and bodies are coated in swirling tattoos and deep blue woad. Their long, tangled hair is worn in complex topknots, and they wear little more than trimmed animal skins, shunning even the simplest sandals. Festivals and rites are violent and orgiastic; they revel in the cruel barbarity of Crom.

The weapon of choice for Gallans is neither the sword nor the spear, but the immense single and double-handed clubs of knotted wood, sometimes spiked with shards of flint, that they call *chillelagh*. Every Gallan prepares his own chillelagh, cutting a stout branch from either an oak or blackthorn tree, and then curing the wood in smoke stacks so that the wood takes on a burnished black colouring. The Gallans believe that curing the club in this way imbues it with some of Crom's wrath, and the heavier and more gnarled the branch, the more of his wrath the chillelagh is said to hold.

Gallans carve a deep notch onto their chillelagh for every skull they crack with it. It is not uncommon for their clubs to be given names and treated as gently as lovers – perhaps the only gentleness Gallans ever display.

Slaves are survivors of Galla raids on other clans and the Border Kingdoms. The weak and helpless are preferred and a life of miserable drudgery is guaranteed. The Galla treat their slaves as cattle and all domestic chores are handed to them whilst the Galla laze, planning more raids or engaging in their own squabbles settled, inevitably, by the chillelagh.

With its primitive nature, Galla is exceptionally superstitious. Its ancient old oracle, Tanuba, controls the power of the clan although its chieftain, Gundhel, purports to be the leader. Nothing is done without Tanuba reading the entrails first, and the oracle enjoys a position of special privilege and protection from Gundhel's guard. Gundhel

spends most of his time drunk on the rough mead which is one of the few things Galla produces for itself and does not steal; this leaves Tanuba to effectively rule the clan through a mixture of fear and clever rhetoric. Tanuba leads the regular ninth day orgies which, he rants, are necessary to appease the ancestors, if not the gods. Terrified of Tanuba's powers, the clan joins in enthusiastically.

TREASURES

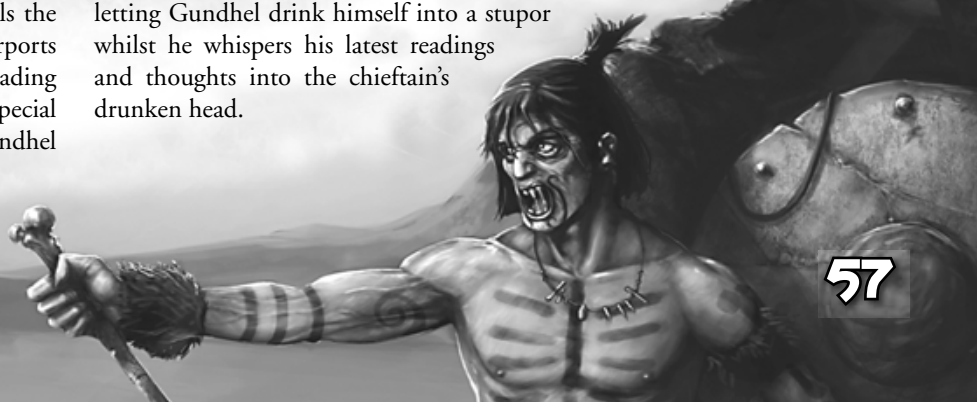
Galla has no clan treasures, but Gundhel and Tanuba have a significant stash of gold, silver and bronze between them. Gundhel's hoard, which he keeps in a specially built chest of oak, is worth over 100,000 gold. As he cannot count, he does not know for sure how much is there, but he guards it jealously and, in moments of drunken adoration for his wealth, sits and contemplates the coin with barely disguised awe.

CHIEFTAIN

GUNDHEL MAC GUNDHEL

In Galla the one who hits hardest and kills the most is declared chieftain. Galla has got through a lot of chieftains as a result, and Gundhel is merely another in a long-line of violent thugs who have battered their way to the top. He has occupied his position for five years and owes his longevity to the clever manipulations of Tanuba who, through his readings of entrails, has guided the clan to ever more audacious and successful raids. Under Gundhel the clan has never had more slaves. Gundhel thinks his position safe, but always there are others who are ready to challenge, and Tanuba seems to revel in the precarious nature of the Gallan chief.

Gundhel has two weaknesses. Drink, the stronger the better, and pretty girls, the younger the better. He maintains a harem of some fifteen slave girls, many pregnant, that he visits daily to terrorise with his violent ways. A few girls are selected for Tanuba to enjoy too, and his practices, whilst less physically aggressive, are far more distasteful than Gundhel's. Where drink is concerned, Gundhel always has a skin of mead within easy reach and he sups the stuff like water. Tanuba encourages him as it makes him easier to control. Curiously, Tanuba never drinks mead himself, letting Gundhel drink himself into a stupor whilst he whispers his latest readings and thoughts into the chieftain's drunken head.





12th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +13
Senses: Listen +16, Spot +3

Dodge Defence: +19
Parry Defence: +17
Hit Points: 90 hp (8 HD); DR 5
Saves: Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +3

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Club (chillelagh) +15/+10/+5 (1D8+3)
Attack: +12/+7/+2

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +4, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 17 (+3), Dex 11 (+0), Con 15 (+2), Int 9 (-1), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 9 (-1).

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Shield Proficiency

Skills: Balance +1, Hide +6, Jump +11, Knowledge (Mead) +6, Listen +16, Move Silently +0, Speak Language +4, Spot +3, Swim +13

Possessions: treasure hoard of 100,000 gold; chillelagh (named Brain Acher); countless flasks of mead; harem of 15 slave girls.

PERSONALITIES

TANUBA

Weasel-faced, with mane of tangled and dung-matted hair, Tanuba's clever eyes twinkle beneath a knotted brow. He is thin and reedy – most certainly not a warrior – but he is clever and skilled in the arts of the oracle, and this is what has given him control of the clan.

Tanuba uses chieftains to solidify his own position.

He watches out for a candidate he knows he can manipulate and then takes time to groom them. He groomed Gundhel in this way and, when Gundhel outlives his usefulness, Tanuba will



look for someone to challenge him, all the while reassuring Gundhel that his position is still tenable.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Galla is an old and isolated clan. It has struggled to increase its size and its propensity for audacious, savage raids on neighbours and the Border Kingdoms has led it to facing extinction on several occasions. It lacks the discipline and honour found in the more civilised of the Cimmerian clans and the succession of short-lived chieftains in recent years has led to a lack of purpose and direction – other than taking slaves – that can only accelerate the clan's downward spiral into complete anarchy.

Tanuba relishes this kind of self destruction. His belief is that death is more than a human inevitability, and one that should encompass societies and entire nations. He believes in the purity of suffering, especially where the human spirit is concerned, and he relishes the misery and gloom Galla encapsulates, reflecting Cimmeria as a whole.

Galla's outlook is therefore driven very much by death. The clan seems to know it will die relatively soon and has therefore abandoned any notions of advancement. It enjoys causing suffering as much as it enjoys its own hedonism under Tanuba's gleeful guidance.

Disdained and feared in equal measure by the other Cimmerian clans, Galla is the epitome of the clan that has given Cimmeria its reputation for barbarity.



GORRAM**LOCATION**

Northern edge of the Murrogh Forest.

TYPE

Settled. Gorram village is the clan's home, and numbers some 600 souls (200 children, 360 adults and 40 elders)

ALLIES

Canach

ENEMIES

Murrogh. Gorram supports the Canach blood feud with Murrogh although it holds no feud with Murrogh itself.

TRADITIONS

A farming community first and foremost, Gorram occupies a quiet valley in the shadow of the Murrogh forest's northern edge. The clan tends cattle, sheep and goats, using the grazing lands nearby for pasture. Some small areas around the village are used for vegetables, and the clan supplements its livestock with hunting in the forest. Given its reliance on livestock, Gorram has developed an effective defensive system of territorial patrols with its lands being constantly under watch by the clan's warriors.

Nine warriors form a guardian band, and nine patrols circulated throughout the Gorram lands, watching for animal and human predators alike. The guardian bands react ferociously to any perceived attempts to interfere with livestock, using the terrain to their advantage, and employing maximum force to protect their flocks and herds. The bodies of would-be rustlers are strung from trees, the carcasses deeply scarred and pummelled, as a warning to others. The guardian band is compulsory duty for all warriors, men and women, and is considered an excellent education for the fledgling fighters of the clan. Every boy and girl from the age of 12 is expected to undertake guardian duty and, when they have participated in their first protective action, are considered to be adults.

The Gorram people favour the colour red and its representation is everywhere, from the red dyes used in the rough textiles of the clan, to the red daub used to cover the huts of the village. The dye is plant-based, and found in ferns taken from the Murrogh forest. The ferns are dried, ground, pounded, and then mixed with water, urine and tree-sap to arrive at the rich, scarlet dye that the Gorram then use extensively in their daily

**AMU-KHAG,
SORCERER-COLLECTOR
OF KHITAI**

The treasures are undeniably old and not of Cimmerian origin. They may be Atlantean, but it is impossible to prove their heritage. However, the three skulls, the dagger and the amulet are known outside Cimmeria. Deep in Khitai, the Sorcerer-Collector Amu-Khag has a collection of similar skulls and other weapons, wrought from gold and ebony, and knows that others exist. He pays highly for information leading to the whereabouts of additional examples and is prepared to use his considerable magical talents, bolstered by absolute cruelty and ruthlessness, to obtain them.

lives. The dye is known outside the clan and is called, in Cimmerian, *gor* – hence the clan name of Gorram.

Gorram warriors paint their bodies with broad strokes of *gor*, and, when going to war, cake their hair with it. Women adorn their lips and cheeks with diluted dye to highlight their fair appearance but, when accompanying their men folk to battle, streak their bodies with it so that they resemble red demons, their hair spiked into menacing scarlet coxcombs.

The clan has a long association with clan Canach and many bonds of marriage exist between the two. Gorram and Canach are therefore allies, and Gorram sends its warriors dutifully to support Canach whenever it goes to battle: Canach reciprocates the duty, although Gorram has little need to call upon its aid. Although Gorram has no specific feud with the Murrogh clan, it considers it an enemy and many raids on the Gorram herds have been made by Murrogh rustlers. Gorram therefore has no qualms in sending its war bands against Murrogh when clan Canach calls for help, and the red-daubed Gorram warriors take great glee in delivering death to the Murrogh clan's lands.

TREASURES

The clan possesses a small cache of treasures unearthed by one of the



herdsmen around one hundred years ago. The treasures are a closely guarded secret, known only to the chief and the closest, most experienced members of the counsel.

The herdsman, grubbing through a cave in the low hills overlooking the Murrough forest, found a shallow pit. Within was a heavy chest wrapped in oiled goatskin. Curious, he broke open the casket and found it contained a set of three, life-size crystal skulls, identical in design, and quite beautiful to behold. Along with the skulls he found a dagger wrought in gold and ebony, and an amulet fashioned in the shape of a triple-headed dragon.

The treasures were brought back to Gorram and given to the Oracle. Following a trance lasting three days, the Oracle declared that these items were made by the Ancients who once bestrode the land like giants. The skulls are the real skulls of the chiefs of the Ancients, and the dagger and amulet represent their authority and dominion over the gods who ruled long before Crom and his kin came to the Earth.

The skulls have no intrinsic magical properties but it is believed that Gorram's fortunes changed for the better on the day the skulls were unearthed. Before that time the herds were sickly and prone to predators; since then Gorram has defended itself against all foes and has prospered.

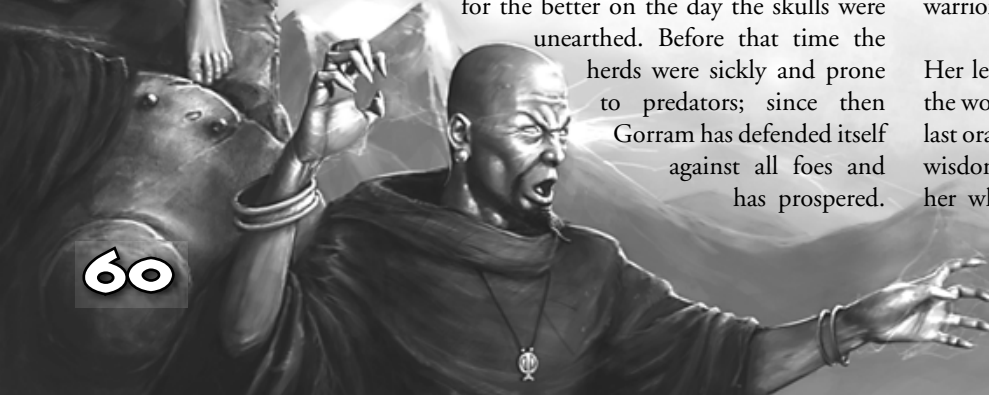
The skulls, it is believed, watch over the clan and are thankful for being brought out of the darkness.

Every chief of Gorram is shown the skulls, which are now kept buried beneath a cairn outside the village, and must lay hands upon each one in turn. His palm is cut with the gold and ebony dagger, and the amulet is placed on his head as he recites the vows of protection for the clan. The wisdom of the Ancients' skulls is believed to pass to the new chieftain, and Gorram has, indeed, been fortunate enough to enjoy good rulership.

CHIEFTAIN CEINWYN

Gorram's chieftain is Ceinwyn, the first female chief of the clan for more than sixty years. She is beautiful but battle-hardened, her dark hair streaked with the scarlet gor dye, her fine, angular cheekbones delicately tattooed with interlocking knots of the same pigment. She has ruled over the clan for twelve years, assisted by her brother Kenhuir, and in that time has proved herself the equal of any male warrior Gorram has produced.

Her leadership is wise, but hard. She places little stock in the words of oracles and did not feel the need to replace the last oracle when she died. She believes firmly in the inherent wisdom of the three skulls, which was communicated to her when she challenged for the leadership of the clan



and won it in single combat. Her favoured weapon is Truthrust, her knotted battlespear, which is tipped with a single, perfectly knapped blade of razor-like black flint. Like everyone else in the clan, she takes her place in the guardian bands, protecting Gorram's borders, and in the war-bands when Gorram marches with Canach to engage the Murrough clan.

Many suitors have come seeking marriage with Ceinwyn, but she has refused every entreaty. Marriage is not her way, because she *is* the spirit of Gorram, and the spirit must forever be true to itself. She tolerates neither weakness nor sentimentality but loves Gorram and its traditions as any mother loves a child (and as far as any Cimmerian entertains notions of love). In her heart she believes she is descended from the Morrigan and, in battle, the outstretched wings of the raven, painted in red, are her standard.

10th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +8
Senses: Listen +2, Spot +2

Dodge Defence: +18
Parry Defence: +15
Hit Points: 94 hp (10 HD); DR 5
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +4

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Spear +12/+7 (1D10+2)
Attack: +10/+5

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +3, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack

Skills: Appraise +3, Balance +4, Climb +16, Craft (Knots) +8, Hide +1, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (Myths of the Morrigan) +4, Listen +2, Move Silently +1, Spot +2, Survival +12, Swim +12

Possessions: Truespear (war spear), 10,000 GP in assorted items of jewellery and gems, leather armour.

THE TRUTH OF NUADHA

Nuadha was not carried-off by the Nachta. It is true that the chief of the Nachta, hearing of Nuadha's beauty, came to seek a possible marriage, but Nuadha's father, consumed by incestuous feelings for his only daughter, rejected the proposition out of hand. Drunk, and fuelled with anger, he took Nuadha by force, killing the poor girl when she resisted his advances. With the help of his brothers, both of whom are now dead, he concocted the lie of a Nachta raid. He then took his own life with his own spear, unable to face the shame of his actions.

The families of clan Grath have been cursed ever since, because they were prepared to believe the lies Nuadha's father created. The decline and self-pity of the Grath clan is a direct result of Nuadha's restless spirit-will. Her remains are buried deep in the northern forest overlooking Grath Vale, nothing but a pile of stones, hastily arranged into the shape of a five-leafed clover (now overgrown and moss-covered), marks where she lies. If her remains could be removed from the shallow grave, and placed to rest within her home village, then Grath's curse will be lifted and its people will return to the sensible, true Cimmerians they once were.

PERSONALITIES

KENHUIR

Ceinwyn's brother, Kenhuir, is considered Gorram's champion. He leads a guardian band of eight other warriors which is known as The Red Death and he is a ferocious and highly skilled fighter. Despite his prowess he is essentially a man who prefers a peaceful existence and, whilst he does not seek power for himself, enjoys advising his younger, more capable sister, on the affairs of the clan.



He knows of the clan's treasures and believes fully in their power. He has also been troubled by strange dreams, which he has told no one about (not even Ceinwyn). In these dreams the pure, clear crystal of the skulls changes to a midnight black as a shadow from the east descends around them. Eyes form in the blank sockets and wherever they gaze all turns to death. He believes Gorram's purpose is to prevent the skulls from becoming these weapons of sorcerous evil.

12th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +10
Senses: Listen +1, Spot +1

Dodge Defence: +21
Parry Defence: +17
Hit Points: 101 hp (12 HD); DR 6
Saves: Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +5

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Spear +15/+10/+5 (1D10+2)
Attack: +12/+7/+2

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +4, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 14

Feats: Endurance, Power Attack, Run, Track, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Skills: Climb +15, Concentration +5, Gather Information +6, Handle Animal +8, Hide +2, Jump +17, Listen +1, Move Silently +10, Ride +3, Search +1, Spot +1

Possessions: Longsword, leather armour, 6,000 GP in various coins and pieces of jewellery.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK.

The people of Gorram have always been pragmatic, using the fertile lands to raise livestock and grow crops, so that they need not rely on the constant cycle of raiding, hunting and near-famine so many other Cimmerians risk yearly. They remain fiercely independent, despite being tied

to the land, and their propensity for husbandry has made them hardier warriors, as well as hardier farmers.

Despite Gorram's complete intolerance for raiders, bandits and rustlers, it is a welcoming clan quite happy to offer hospitality to those who deserve it and do not breach the clan's trust. Its longstanding alliance with Canach is a testament to Gorram's loyalty and stability whilst the grisly remains of those who would raid Gorram are a testament to its determination to resist those who would steal.

Under Ceinwyn's rulership Gorram has continued to be strong and resourceful, despite the misgivings some other clans have for female rulers. Her personal strength, and her brother's prowess in war, means that clan Gorram is rarely underestimated, even by the likes of clan Murrogh.

GRATH LOCATION

The Grath vales, a series of steep, wooded valleys in the central foothills of the Eiglophian mountains.

TYPE

Settled. The clan occupies a series of small, insular settlements spread throughout the Grath Vales. Each village comprises of no more than two families, and there are some twenty villages in all. In its entirety, the clan numbers 260 members, with 30 children, 12 elders and the remainder adults of warrior age.

ALLIES

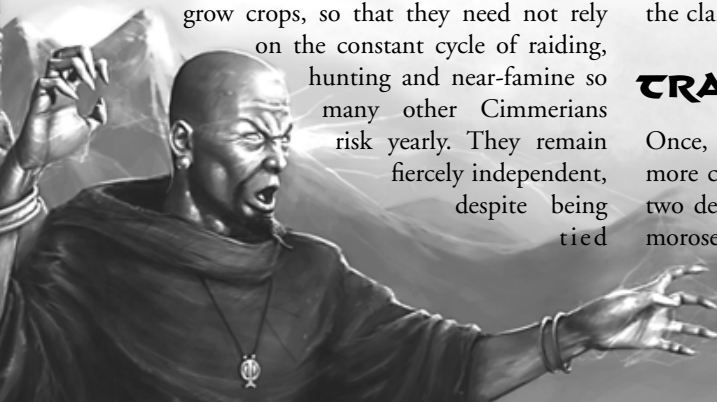
None

ENEMIES

Nangh. Twenty years ago the chief of the Nangh carried-off Nuadha, the much adored daughter of the Grath's chieftain, and killed her father. This act was claimed to be in revenge for some slight caused at the Field of Chiefs although none in Grath recall any insult being levelled. The Grath are sworn to never rest until every member of the Nangh is dead and their hatred has cause the clan to degenerate.

TRADITIONS

Once, clan Grath could have considered itself one of the more cultured of the Cimmerian clans. Yet over the past two decades the clan has declined steadily into a savage, morose and hate-fuelled ennui. Gone are the herds and tended fields; gone is the



wisdom of the ancestors; gone are the colourful linens and woollen kilts. In their place are rough skins, rough people, a propensity for casual violence and a depressing self-pity that is completely driven by the kidnapping of Nuadha, the chieftain's daughter.

The people of Grath the to centralised nature of most Cimmerian clans and are strung-out across the twenty villages of the Grath vales. The families of the villages are fractious, self-pitying and self-aggrandising, locked in a bitter blame-culture over Nuadha's loss. Any pride they had as a clan has been replaced with semi-barbaric practices such as deep, ritual scarring, all in Nuadha's name. She, the beautiful chieftain's daughter, was considered the clan Grath's soul, and her loss is seen as the loss of all clan dignity.

Each village of the Grath Vale represents its grief in different ways. Some scar their bodies along the arms and legs; others tattoo Nuadha's symbol, a five-leafed clover, onto their temples. In one, all the females are called Nuadha and in another, the men-folk engage, every night, in a violent war-dance that whips them into a vicious frenzy as they act-out the revenge they will inevitably visit on clan Nachta.

Despite these perplexing actions and traditions, the Grath have not yet sent war bands to attack Nachta. Every time a counsel is gathered to decide on the course of action, family tensions and recriminations flare-up and the counsel dissolves into disagreement and sullenness. The chief, Euwolf, screams a good war-scream, and tub-thumps as loudly as any other Cimmerian warlord, but is powerless to command the families into a single, cohesive war band.

TREASURES

The gold and silver Grath once owned communally has been squandered in the twenty years since Nuadha's disappearance. Now, the only treasures the clan considers to be of value are Nuadha's distaff, her spinning wheel, and the dress that everyone presumes was ripped from her body when the Nachta took her. These items are kept in a shrine to Nuadha in her home village, Grathmuir, deep within Grath Vale by the Diamondrun River.

CHIEFTAIN

EUWOLF

Euwolf is Grath's incumbent chief although he does little more than provide the odd arbitration between the families of the clan and host the occasional Councils of War that descend into a disagreeable squabble. Like all Grath members, Euwolf is morose and taciturn, unconcerned with the old civilities of Cimmerian life and wrapped in a

mixture of near barbaric self-loathing and misplaced hatred for the Nachta.

Euwolf is prone to furious rages for no reason and reminiscences of Nuadha's beauty reduce him to enraged tears. He knew her when he was a young man and was, perhaps, in love with her. He hates his wife, Gherda, because she is, simply, not Nuadha. He wanted daughters, in the hope that Nuadha's spirit might be returned somehow, but Gherda bore him only sons, each of which he considers a disappointment.

If the spell that curses Euwolf's clan can be broken, he would be a changed man – perfectly capable of uniting the families of the Grath Vale and creating a strong, proud, truly Cimmerian clan in the process.

8th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +8
Senses: Listen +12, Spot +1

Dodge Defence: +18
Parry Defence: +15
Hit Points: 60 hp (8 HD); DR 1
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +4

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Battle Axe +10/+5(1d8+2)
Attack: +8/+3

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +3, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats: Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

Skills: Handle Animal +9, Hide +2, Intimidate +10, Jump +11, Listen +12, Move Silently +2, Perform (Oratory) +4, Ride +12, Spot +1, Survival +11

Possessions: Furs, battle axe, assorted copper and silver coins to a value of 300 GP.

PERSONALITIES

VENDRA

Vendra is the matriarch of Grathwold village, a gathering of eight huts on a rise overlooking the Diamondrun River and



roughly in the middle of the Grath line of settlements. Of all the Graths, she is the least affected by Nuadha's curse. She attempts to maintain the standards her people once had, and believes – though she dare not articulate it – that Nuadha was not taken by the Nachta but certainly met with foul play.

Vendra was not present in the clan at the time of Nuadha's disappearance and this is why she has been spared the full toll of the curse. She was once married to a member of the Murrogh clan but, when her husband died, she returned to Grath seeking solace. This was three years after Nuadha vanished and she was shocked at the change in her people.

The folk of Grathwold are two interconnected families and both look to Vendra for guidance. She long ago gave up attempting to get the clan to see reason but she still believes that something mysterious holds Grath in a debilitating grip. Naively she blames Crom, as all good Cimmerians do, but is aware that something else might be involved.

4th level Cimmerian Barbarian

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Initiative: | +6 |
| Senses: | Listen +7, Spot +1 |
| <hr/> | |
| Dodge Defence: | +15 |
| Parry Defence: | +13 |
| Hit Points: | hp 36 (4HD); DR 1 |
| Saves: | Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3 |
| <hr/> | |
| Speed: | 30ft |
| Melee: | Broadsword +6 (1d10+2) |
| Attack: | +4 |

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility (–2), Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +1, Diehard, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats: Run, Track

Skills: (Weaving) +6, Handle Animal +6, Hide +0, Jump +9, Knowledge (Local Lore)+4, Listen +7, Move Silently +0, Profession (Weaver) +2, Spot +1, Swim +10

Possessions: Weaving equipment, including distaff, spinning wheel, loom and assorted combs. Husband's chipped broadsword.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Grath's recent history is clearly at odds with the typical state of the Cimmerian clans and it is more or less shunned for its communal affliction. Those few who leave the clan find themselves curiously relieved of Nuadha's emotional burden and able to become fully-fledged Cimmerians once more, unable to explain the fixation on this near-mythical woman.

Within the clan, all is introspection. With every passing year the clan's culture deteriorates a little more and, within 20 years, Grath will have become a community of savages, unable to fend for themselves save in the most bestial and selfish of ways. Even Nuadha's name will be forgotten, eventually, although her curse will remain.

HOATH LOCATION

The Hoath Plateau of south western Cimmeria. The Hoath clan occupies and controls the central band of the plateau, bordered to east and west by the Nangh and White Leopards respectively.

TYPE

Nomadic. The clan circulates constantly around the plateau, pitching its huge yurt town where the hunting is best and the grazing land for its plateau bison is plentiful. The Hoath follows a familiar pattern with identified settling grounds although the precise position of each camp varies slightly from year to year.

The clan numbers some 600 members, with some 100 children, 450 adults and 50 elders.

ALLIES

Nangh and the White Leopards. Together the three form the Plateau Tribe.

ENEMIES

Any who enter the plateau unbidden.

TRADITIONS

The Hoath consider their plateau to be the very heart of Cimmeria; a region declared by Crom to be the most important land in the world. Other clans might have found lands that seem to offer greater bounty, but they are misguided. Crom abhors weakness, and to live on the plateau one must be strong. Hoath considers itself the



strongest since it lives within the sacred heart of Crom's own domain.

Every aspect of Hoath's existence is based on the strength of the land. It gives the clan everything it needs and, in return, they defend it with their very souls. All the Plateau clans believe in this relationship but it is the strongest in Hoath. The clan therefore pays great attention to all physical manifestations within its territory; the condition of the earth and plants, the behaviour of animals, the weather, and so forth. Oracles continually watch and interpret the signs and portents, advising the chieftain on anything of import. Oracles are important in the Hoath clan, and these Cimmerians believe that they, the oracles, are the essential conduit between the people and the land itself.

Hoath marks its territory constantly. Its favoured markers are cairns topped with an angular boulder painted with the swirling, spiral like design of the Hoath clan. A similar design is scarred into the cheeks of every clan member when they come of age (taken as 14 summers) and into the flanks of their livestock. Wherever the spiral marker appears it signals Hoath dominion.

Clan members are fiercely loyal to the Hoath tradition. To them, Hoath is the greatest of the clans and the custodians of what makes Cimmeria great. As well as the scarring of their cheeks, clan members dress in earthy colours: browns, greens, greys and umbers. Hair is worn long and secured at the nape of the neck with a loose leather thong. Thanks are given to the land and clansmen have all manner of ways of expressing their appreciation for the security and greatness the plateau brings. Dust and soil is rubbed into the hair and skin; stones from the plateau are carried by every individual, especially if they need to leave the plateau for any time and any reason. The stone each member carries is carved with the Hoath design and is considered a sacred item that keeps them in touch with the home territories.

As a nomadic clan Hoath has many traditions and superstitions concerning travel. Hoath members never ride or walk more than two abreast, so that their numbers can be hidden. A Hoathman will never step into another's shadow nor allow his shadow to be trodden upon. When camp is made tents and yurts are erected in a strict and specific order and always to the same pattern. Hospitality, when it is granted to outsiders, is highly ritualised:

- ✿ *Name Yourself*
- ✿ *Name Your Clan*
- ✿ *Name Your Friends*
- ✿ *Name Your Enemies*
- ✿ *State Your Business*
- ✿ *State Your Destination*

✿ *If You Carry Food, Share Some With Us and We Shall Share With You*

✿ *If You Have No Food, We Will Share With You, But You Must Do Some Work For Us*

The ritual always follows this pattern and, if any question or request is ignored or answered untruthfully, then hospitality is not only denied, but the stranger is forcibly ejected from the camp.

TREASURES

The plateau itself is the Hoath clan's treasure. It possesses well over 100,000 in gold and silver, but coin is unimportant to the Hoath. The clan's treasures are simple things related to the earth: good weather, good grazing, and good hunting.

CHIEFTAIN

The chief of the Hoath is known as the High Hoath. As with all Cimmerian clans the High Hoath is the one who proves strongest and most capable in leading the clan. However, the High Oracle of the clan is always called upon to ratify a challenger *after* he has successfully challenged for position. The challenger must allow his palm to be slit in a spiral cut, and his blood mixed with a handful of earth the High Oracle collects. The oracle then smears the paste across a smooth stone he carries for the purpose and lets it dry over night. The patterns formed when the paste is dry allow the High Oracle to determine if the challenger would make a good or a bad chief. If the omen is bad, then the challenger must relent his claim; in such a rare case, then a new chief is sought from the clan with every contender undergoing the same High Oracle test.

HIGH HOATH AELL

The current High Hoath is Aell. This massive, muscular, grey-haired warrior has led the clan for twenty one years, has sired thirty sons in that time, slain eight of them, and has been challenged for the leadership six times: every challenger is now buried under a cairn, giving eternal thanks to the plateau. Aell is gruff to the point of rudeness, but his keen, grey eyes hint at a formidable intelligence and his body, covered in both ritual scars and battle scars, shows his dedication to clan and country. In his time Aell has made war on both neighbouring clans of the plateau and then restored alliances. He fought at Venarium and he has been the destroyer of many Picts and Aquilonians who have dared to invade the country of Cimmeria. Only the bravest challenge Aell, and



his ferocious temper is well-known. Even though, at 44 years, he is considered old, he is still strong and fast, and his knowledge, wisdom and skill at battle has seen Hoath through its most troubled times.

14th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +13
Senses: Listen +3, Spot +3

Dodge Defence: +24
Parry Defence: +20
Hit Points: 100 hp (14 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +10, Ref +13, Will +6

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Battleaxe +20/+15/+10 (1d10+5)
Attack: +14/+9/+4

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility (double threat range), Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +4, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 2/- Str 20, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 9

Abilities: Alertness, Persuasive, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)
Skills: Bluff +15, Climb +20, Handle Animal +16, Hide +6, Intimidate +16, Jump +22, Knowledge (Hoath Plateau) +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +12, Spot +3, Survival +16

Possessions: Two wives and a dozen mistresses, 15,000 in gold and silver coin, black-bladed battleaxe, various gold and silver bangles, an oval of granite marked with the spiral symbols of both Hoath and the High Hoath.

PERSONALITIES

SEOIRSE, HIGH ORACLE

Like almost all Cimmerian oracles, Seoirse cuts his hair into a tonsure, shaving away the fringe and crown, but wearing the hair long and loose at the sides and back. Seoirse is a tubby, round-faced man with a straggly, lice-riddled beard and a pair of thin, dry lips that he continually licks with a



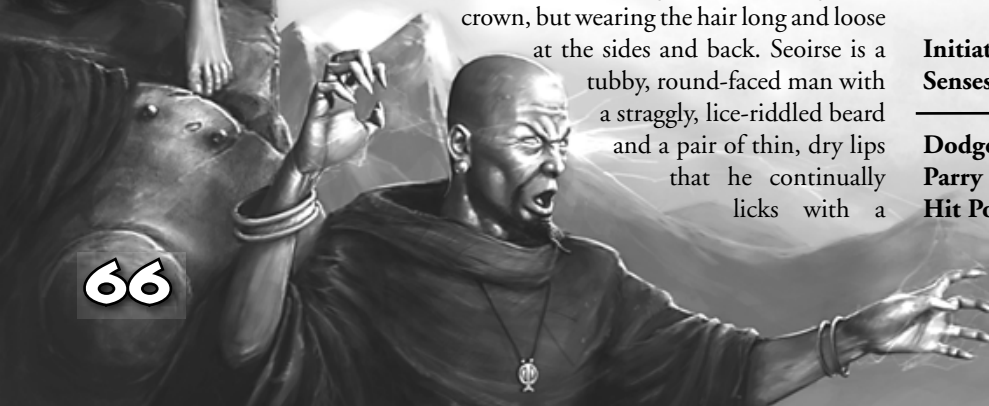
fat, grey tongue. Seoirse is an expert at reading the omens present in natural phenomenon; he is also remarkably consistent in his readings and divinations, proving to be unerringly accurate.

However, even the most astute oracle is not without his challengers, and Seoirse is plagued by a female oracle called Sorcha. This wild-haired, wild-eyed young thing is barely nineteen but, under Seoirse's tutelage, has shown herself to be an oracle of prodigious talent – good enough, perhaps, to challenge for the position of High Oracle, and thus serve Aell directly. Sorcha plagues Seoirse daily, challenging his readings and coming up with her own, equally astute, interpretations. Soon, Sorcha will challenge Seoirse's position, petitioning Aell himself directly. Seoirse is therefore looking for a way – any way – that will remove Sorcha forever.

8th Level Cimmerian Scholar (Oracle)

Initiative: +4
Senses: Listen +13, Spot +2

Dodge Defence: +15
Parry Defence: +16
Hit Points: 52 hp (HD); DR 2



Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +9

Speed: 30ft

Melee: Dagger +9/+4 (1d4+3)

Attack: +6/+1

Magical Attack: +4

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge,

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13

Feats: Hexer, Ritual Sacrifice, Skill Focus (Signs and Omens)

Divination Powers: Astrological Prediction, Blessing of Fate, Dream of Wisdom, Visions, Visions Torment and Enlightenment

Skills: Climb +13, Diplomacy +2, Handle Animal +9, Heal +4, Hide +2, Intimidate +8, Jump +14, Listen +13, Move Silently +2, Knowledge (Signs and Omens) +18, Ride +12, Spot +2

Possessions: Piece of arrowhead flint inscribed with the symbols of Hoath and the High Oracle; a bag of assorted bones and stones used for divination readings; 1,500 in silver.



HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Hoath is the oldest of the Plateau Tribes and secure in its position. In the distant history of Cimmeria, many generations ago, Hoath was the only tribe on the Hoath plateau. It was divided into three when the three sons of the chieftain fought for their father's position when he was slaughtered by a green-skinned demon summoned from the frozen north. The Hoath became the Hoath, the Nangh and the White Leopards, but each occupied the plateau.

In the intervening years the three clans have warred over territory and other, pettier things, but are currently allied. An alliance is guaranteed whenever the plateau comes under threat, and the three hot-headed chiefs of the clans are sensible enough to resolve past differences in defence of the homeland.

Hoath has no desire to dominate the plateau to the exclusion of the other clans, and it recognises both Nangh's and the White Leopard's rights to co-exist. However it sees itself as the true guardians of the entire region and is accorded such status by its neighbours.

ICE LEOPARDS

LOCATION

Northern Cimmeria, in the icy lower slope of the Eiglophians, mid-way between the Field of the Chiefs and Mount Crom.

TYPE

Settled. The Ice Leopards occupy a sprawling settlement in a deep glacial valley that is protected from the deep snows of the winter by the thick tree line and natural depth of the valley itself.

ALLIES

Snowhawk, Bhardh

ENEMIES

Raeda, Tunog, Murrogh. Both of the latter clans have been the target of raids by the Ice Leopards into the Blood Glens.

TRADITIONS

The Ice Leopards venerate the big, pure-white cats of the same name, wearing their pelts, teeth





and claws and marks of clan membership. As occupiers of the mountainous region of northern Cimmeria, the Ice Leopards are experts at survival in the cold weather, understanding how to harvest and store food to see them through the freezing winter months, as well as protecting themselves from the attacks of mountainous predators such as the Frost Giants that wander through the mountain passes onto Cimmeria's slopes.

As one might expect from a clan taking its name from a mountainous predator, the Ice Leopards are warlike and fierce. They enjoy descending into the lowlands to raid and make war on clans such as the Tunog and Murrogh, but they especially enjoy battle against the Picts. The Ice Leopards made a name for themselves at the battle of Venarium where Fenrik, one of their champions, and a delegate to the Cimmerian war council, excelled in the slaughter of Aquilonians even though it cost him his own life.

Life in the Ice Leopard's territory is simple and harsh. The clan has few specific rituals, concentrating instead on the day to day practicalities of survival. Despite their undoubted skills in survival, infant mortality during the winter is high, and the clan accepts this without any sentimentality. The fact that only the strongest survive means that the clan takes advantage of its natural hardiness, being prepared to travel far in order to raid from others in order to ensure its own survival.

Within their own territory, which is steep, heavily wooded, frequently snow-choked, treacherous and cold, the Ice Leopards rule supreme. Even the Tunog and Murrogh, who hold blood feuds with the Ice Leopards, are wary of travelling so far north in search of revenge, and they know that, even if the natural hazards of the Ice Leopard's territory do not kill them, the Ice Leopards know the terrain so well, that even a large force is at a disadvantage.

One tradition adopted from the Nordheim is that of the community council, known as the *Thing*. The Thing meets three times each year to discuss clan business, petty injustices and so forth. The chieftain chairs the Thing, but the entire community makes the decisions. The Thing works on precedent, so oral accuracy is of paramount importance, and several individuals within the clan are tasked with listening to, and memorising, every case and judgement the Thing attends to, so that justice is served consistently. Where the interest of the entire clan are concerned, the judgement is known as Wapentake;

the clansmen show their support for a decision or course of action by clashing their weapons against their shields, with the loudest display sealing the judgement.

TREASURES

The most prized treasure of the Ice Leopards is the skin and pelt of the Frost Giant Jhurl. This immense monster from Nordheim tore through the Cimmerian side of the Eiglophians in a terrible rage, hurling trees and boulders before him. The Ice Leopards had no idea what had angered the giant so much, but were quite prepared to meet the monster in battle. So it was that the six champions of the Ice Leopards, Colm, Dara, Mhorn, Jurgen, Micha and Ionhar, set out to meet the 18 foot-tall monster and engage it in combat.

When the battle was finished, Colm, Dara and Micha were dead, snapped like twigs or pulled apart. The forest where the battle occurred was slicked with blood and, even now, snow does not fall there or turns red when it occasionally settles. Jhurl was dead too, stabbed through the heart by Ionhar's mightiest spear thrust. It took thirty strong Cimmerians to drag the corpse of the giant back to the settlement where it was skinned and put on permanent show outside the camp as a warning to other frost giants of the welcome they faced if they dared attack the Ice Leopards. Colm, Dara and Micha's bravery has been immortalised in the Jhurk Saga, a lay taught to every Ice Leopard youth, and their weapons and armour are considered sacred items to be used only by the chiefs of the clan.

CHIEFTAIN RAGNAL

Ragnal, son of Rhegad, is the current chieftain and has been for six years. He wears the pelt of the great white leopard slain by his father, and wears its teeth as a belt. Ragnal is young, sombre and taciturn. He has a reputation for even-handedness even though his temper, typically Cimmerian, is short. Ragnal's position as chief was ratified by the Thing and only the Thing can challenge it. In the six years of his tenure, no one has seen fit to bring a complaint against him.

His wife is Vanya, a Nordlander from Vanaheim. Vanya was part of a raiding party that came through Ice Leopard territory a decade ago. In the ensuing battle, Ragnal and Vanya met in combat and, even though the rest of the Vanaheim part was slain, Vanya and Ragnal fought on, evenly matched. The fight only stopped when Ragnal cast down his axe and told Vanya, bluntly, that, since they could not kill each other, they had better marry instead. Vanya



replied: 'Think of the children,' and so they were. Vanya is now a firm part of the Ice Leopards and has renounced her Vanaheim heritage.

8th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +8
Senses: Listen + 12, Spot +1

Dodge Defence: +18
Parry Defence: +15
Hit Points: 72 hp (8 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +4

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Battleaxe +10/+5 (1d10+2)
Attack: +8/+3

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Run
Skills: Handle Animal +9, Hide +6, Intimidate +10, Jump +11, Listen +12, Move Silently +2, Perform (Oratory) +4, Spot +1, Survival +18

Possessions: Leather armour, leopard pelt and leopard tooth belt, battleaxe, silver anklet, 9,000 in silver coins.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK.

The Ice Leopards originate from central Cimmeria although the clan did not go by that name originally. It is remembered that the clan was driven from its lands by what became the Raeda clan, and so a feud exists between the two. Travelling north, the survivors of the nascent Ice Leopard clan found the snowy valley that is now their home and established a settlement with only a handful of huts. It took many generations for the clan to grow to its current strength, and it weathered many hardships, but over the years it forged its own identity and, recalling how its originators had been driven from the lowlands, it decided never to place its trust in cast-iron alliances and to remain aloof, as much as it could, from general lowlander affairs.

The clan fought hard against incursions from Vanaheim and Asgard, always holding its own and creating heroes in the process – although many brave warriors

were lost as a result. The clan has survived avalanches, frost giant assaults, Nordheim raiding parties and the occasional attack from the south, such as the ill-fated war band the Raeda sent against the clan eighty years ago (resulting in the massacre of Snow Peak, where not a single Raeda warrior survived the fury of the outnumbered Ice Leopard warriors).

The Ice Leopards rely on no-one. They respect good foes, but do not concern themselves with seeking alliances or soothing existing feuds. That they have achieved alliance with the Snowhawk and Bardh clans is perhaps Crom's will, so the Leopards believe, rather than through any overt desire to make friends.

The people of the clan are pragmatic survivors, taciturn, aloof and disdainful of the soft southerners who once drove them from the Cimmerian plains. Despite their battles with the Nordlanders over the years, they hold a grudging respect for the tenacity of the people of the north, who share similar values and instincts to the Ice Leopards. The marriage of Ragnal and Vanya raised no eyebrows because she is a stout warrior equal of one of the clan's champions and was prepared to accept Cimmerian ways over those of her blood-kin. Those who flee clan feuds in the south, and who brave the snows and cold, and are willing to join fully with the Ice Leopards are given a similar welcome – although any new additions must always prove their worth and be prepared to stoically accept the hardships of life in the frozen mountains and valleys of the Eiglophians.

MORGACH LOCATION

Broken Leg Lands

TYPE

Settled. Clan Morgach occupies the settlement of Irongate, which nestles in a long, flat ravine between three iron-bearing hills in the centre of the Broken Leg Lands. The clan numbers 450, with 70 children under the age of 14, 25 elders, and 355 adults of warrior age.

ALLIES

None specifically, although Morgach's willingness to trade iron and weapons means it is on friendly terms with many Cimmerian clans across the country.



ENEMIES

Callaugh. The Callaugh clan has raided Morgach many times seeking iron to make weapons, or weapons themselves. An uneasy peace exists between them owing to several marriages between the clans, but they would never call themselves allies.

TRADITIONS

The Morgach clan is skilled in the finding, mining and crafting of iron. The hills surrounding Irongate are rich in seams of iron ore and, for as long as anyone can recall, Morgach has been adept in exploiting this valuable resource.

The clan's people are therefore a mixture of artisans, craftsmen, traders and warriors. The settlement of Irongate is an impressive mixture of houses and workshops, built from the red stone of this region of the Broken Leg Lands, and it rings to the sound of furnaces, smithies and the clank of iron crafters turning out ingots, blades, arrowheads and spearheads. The pursuit of iron, and turning it into steel for use in weaponry, is central to the Morgach tradition. Every child grows-up schooled in the ways of the metal: where to find it, how to work the ore and then how to work the metal.

The steel Morgach produces is considered the best in Cimmeria. The clan has perfected the art of steel-making and it keeps its methods a closely guarded secret. Part of the secret lies in the quality of the iron ore extracted from the surrounding hills; other clans working iron use bog iron, which is derived from the rivers, streams and bogs punctuating Cimmeria. In the Broken Leg Lands, the iron comes straight from the rock and is of a high quality. Mixing it with the right proportion of carbon, derived from charcoal, and then patiently working the spongy iron bloom that results, Morgach produces steel of excellent quality and durability.

Every member of the clan wears or carries iron or steel jewellery and weaponry. The finest craftsmen forge swords that are prized by generations of Morgach clansmen, and treasured blades are usually heirlooms that have seen service in many hands and in many battles. The Morgach name their weapons – from the humblest axe through to the finest sword – and a simple ceremony has evolved for the purposes of naming. The weapon is offered to the chieftain for a blessing, and then the weapon is anointed with either water or wine, and then engraved

with the personal marks of the maker, the owner, and the Morgach clan. Then it is named, and from that point on the weapon is believed to carry with it the spirit of Morgach's courage.

Naturally enough Morgach's skill with metal attracts much attention. Clan Callaugh, in the south of the Broken Leg Lands, covets the weapons Morgach produces and, up until thirty years ago, raided Morgach periodically. The resulting battles were intense, but Morgach never relented, using its weapons to impressive effect against the Callaugh warriors in their spine-cat hides. Finally, under the aegis of the chieftain Brak, several craftsmen of the clan were married to Callaugh women and an uneasy peace arose. Morgach now allows Callaugh to mine iron and has taught some (but not all) of its secrets to its southern neighbour. There are no raids any longer, but a certain distrust lingers between the two clans.

Morgach is also a trading clan. Its warrior-merchants take iron wares across Cimmeria for sale, bartering for food, fabrics and other commodities. As a result of its willingness to trade, Morgach is a well-informed and well-connected clan, although it holds no formal alliances. Its warrior-merchants are skilled in dealing with people according to the etiquette of particular clans, and know how to drive the right kind of bargain that will secure future trade.

TREASURES

Morgach has gold, silver and, naturally, plenty of steel. Its finest treasure is known as Urech's Sword, a huge, black greatsword with a complex blade and elaborate hilt that was made for the greatest chieftain of the clan, Urech. Urech slew the Deep Demon which once plagued the Broken Leg Lands with the sword, and the blade is said to have absorbed the demon's blood, becoming indestructible in the process. Only the chieftain or champion of Morgach is allowed to wield the blade, and it is a fearsome thing, some six feet in length and six inches wide, narrowing to a barbed point. The craftsman who made the blade was Airach and it is said that, when he had completed the sword, he died, having put his entire soul into the weapon. Airach and Urech and now the revered ancestors of clan Morgach.

CHIEFTAIN BHERN

In these times, the chieftain is Bhern. Bhern is a mighty bull of a man with a wide, shaggy-haired head, thick, ironworker's hands, and a wide mouth that is always ready with a friendly smile. Bhern is open and good-natured,



although a fearsome warrior when provoked and strong enough to wield Urech's Sword with abandon. Like all in Morgach he is a skilled ironsmith and, when clan business does not distract him, he works in his forge with his son and two daughters, producing all manner of iron and steel goods. Bhern enjoys making jewellery, mixing steel, gold and silver and then working the alloy into delicate, intricate torcs, chains and bracelets that are then used for trade and gifts to other clans. On occasion, Bhern accompanies trading ventures and, in this way, promotes Morgach's respected name across Cimmeria.

12th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +11
Senses: Listen +1, Spot +1

Dodge Defence: +22
Parry Defence: +18
Hit Points: 107 hp (12 HD); DR 4/9
(when wearing chainmail armour)
Saves: Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +6

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Ulech's Sword +16/+11/+6 (2d6+4)
Attack: +12/+7/+2

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +4, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 10

Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Skill Focus (Oratory), Power Attack, Toughness

Skills: Climb +18, Craft (Blacksmithing) +3, Craft (Jewelrysmithing) +3, Hide +3, Intimidate +11, Jump +18, Listen +1, Move Silently +3, Perform (Oratory) +12, Ride +8, Spot +1, Survival +12, Swim +18, Tumble +5

Possessions: Ulech's Sword, hand-crafted chainmail armour, broadsword (called Firehilt).

PERSONALITIES

ORIMBAR, WARRIOR AND TRADER

Orimbar is one of Morgach clan's finest emissaries. A clan champion he is also a skilled negotiator

with an excellent reputation as both a fighter and a trader across many Cimmerian clans. For a Cimmerian, he is short and lean, but he has quick wits, a strong sword-arm and a bawdy, but astute, sense of humour. He spends little time at Irongate as he is usually out leading a warrior-merchant expedition, and so he can be encountered anywhere within Cimmeria, either on a trade errand or preparing to return to Morgach with the results of his mercantile ventures.

11th Level Cimmerian Barbarian Trader

Initiative: +9
Senses: Listen +10, Spot +1

Dodge Defence: +20
Parry Defence: +16
Hit Points: 92 hp (11 HD); DR 6
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +7

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Broadsword +13/+8/+3
(1d10+2)
Attack : +11/+6/+1

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +4, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 17

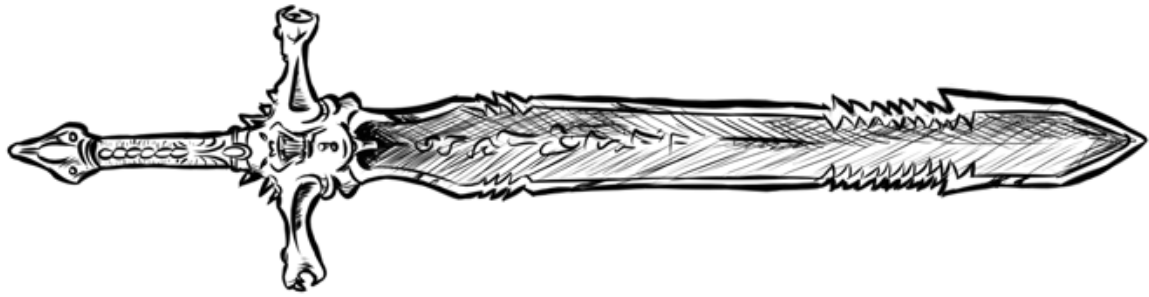
Feats: Alertness, Skill Focus (Trade), Investigator, Toughness

Skills: Craft (Weaponsmithing) +4, Handle Animal +15, Hide +2, Jump +16, Knowledge (Trading) +12, Listen +10, Move Silently +2, Ride +15, Search +3, Sense Motive +1, Spot +1, Survival +7

Possessions: Orimbar usually is in charge of a considerable number of steel blades, arrowheads, spearheads and other weapons of Morgach manufacture. Roll 3D20 to determine current amounts. Personal possessions include chainmail hauberk and his broadsword, Bargainer.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Morgach has occupied its territories for generations. It



is a confident, open clan that, despite its interest in iron working, remains a solid Cimmerian clan. It has fought the Picts and neighbouring clans and sent warriors to Venarium. Never has it ignored the Bloody Spear and Bhern is considered an honourable chief.

Morgach is not especially warlike, but neither is it pacifistic. When called upon to defend itself it does so with all the ferocity of the Canach or the Murrogh. However it has always seen that progress can be achieved through craftsmanship and trade, as much as by the sword and spear. Every chief of the clan has embodied this approach and the clan would not tolerate any chieftain who advocated a more warlike direction.

MURROGH

LOCATION

The Curraghn, moving through its extensive grasslands and then into the Blood Glens every second year.

TYPE

Nomadic. The Murrogh clan numbers 650 souls, with 200 children, 50 elders and 400 warriors.

ALLIES

Tunog, with whom it shares control of the Blood Glens.

ENEMIES

Canach, Callaugh, Gorram and Ice Leopards. Murrogh has raided them all with such ferocity that blood feuds have resulted.

TRADITIONS

Murrogh is utterly warlike. It takes great joy in raiding the Border Kingdoms and preying on

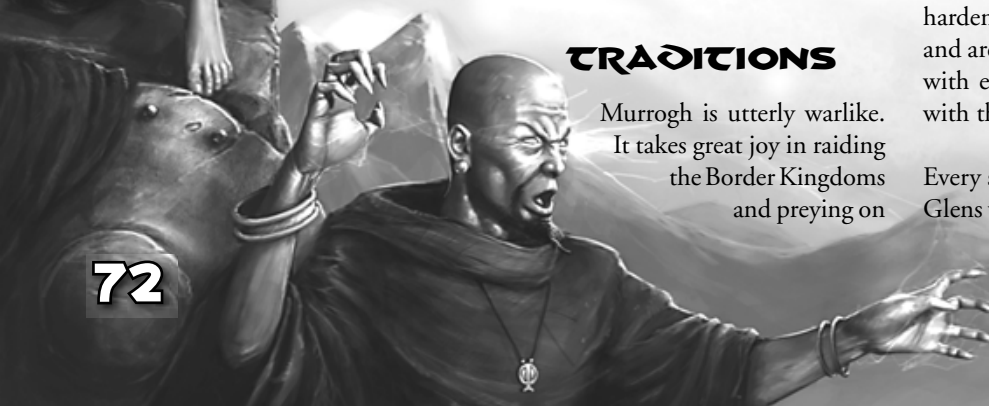
anyone who enters the Curraghn region of southern Cimmeria, which it deems to be Murrogh territory. The clan considers everyone to be an enemy (save clan Tunog, although their alliance is far from being strong), and, as a result, is shunned by those clans who engage in trade. Murrogh stands alone in Southern Cimmeria, its square-jawed people every bit as vicious and hateful as the Picts or the more squalid of the Border Kingdom low-lives.

Murrogh seems to revel in blood feuds, collecting them in the same way it collects scalps from those who fall to its swords, axes and spears. Murrogh is boastful, regarding those clans it considers enemies and gleefully embellishes the true history of the enmity in order to cast its shadow even further. Its reputation for war mongering, murder and pillage marks it out as one of the most savage of the clans, and the name of Murrogh is spoken with shivers in Aquilonia and the Border Kingdoms.

Clan customs are typically savage. The strongest survive; Murrogh children that are sickly or deformed are put to death in the Murrogh Death Pits (deep trenches filled with spiked wooden stakes). Duels to the death are frequent and encouraged within the clan: the slightest provocation causes swords to be drawn and blood to be spilled. Warriors scalp their victims and wear these gruesome trophies about their person and wrapped as collars around their long, barbed spears.

The clan, though, is nomadic. Its path around the Curraghn takes two years, following a complex pattern that allows the Murrogh herds to graze well without diminishing the land. As the Murrogh travel, its war bands ride ahead, sometimes for many days, to raid and terrorise. The Murrogh are expert horsemen, valuing good steeds above coin, and their stout, shaggy-maned horses are both fast and battle-hardened. Murrogh ride them bare-back, without stirrups, and are able to swing two-handed weapons or throw spears with ease and accuracy even whilst controlling the horse with their legs.

Every second year the Murrogh clan travels into the Blood Glens where it spends the autumn and winter. The hunting



is good, and the deep crevasses offer shelter from the biting winds and drifting snows that wash over the Curraghn. This is the only time when the Murrogh form anything like a permanent camp, and, in this biannual hiatus, even raiding must stop. Thus, as the clan prepares to head for the Blood Glens, its summer raids and attacks intensify in frequency and ferocity, usually into the Border Kingdoms, but often into the territory of others clans. Once in the Blood Glens, however, the Murrogh are vulnerable, even though their position is well defended by the steep and brutal nature of the terrain.

TREASURES

The clan maintains no treasures of its own, save those plundered from elsewhere. It communally owns little gold, but it considers its stock of horses to be its greatest prize. Every Murrogh warrior has a horse, and the clan has some 1,000 horses and 1,000 cattle which move with the clan about the Curraghn region.

CHIEFTAIN

EITHRIALL

Eithriall mac Agh is the current chieftain. Huge, thick-set, balding and brutal, he views the entire world through brooding, hateful eyes and despises it. He dresses in leather trews made from cattle skin, and in the winter dons a bearskin that he killed with his own hands when just 13 summers old. His massive two-handed spear, barbed and knotted, decorated with countless, rotting scalps, is called Bloodneedle, and he wields it as his staff of office. Eithriall rules over the clan with an iron will and a cadre of die-hard cohorts who enforce it. There is no clan council; there is only what Eithriall wants and he rewards richly those who help it happen. Murrogh clan is thus ruled on a principle of fear. No one dares to challenge Eithriall's rule because in so doing one condemns not just oneself, but one's direct family and relatives to Eithriall's brutal retribution.

19th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +11
Senses: Listen +19, Spot +10

Dodge Defence: +24
Parry Defence: +21
Hit Points: 124 hp (19HD); DR 6
Saves: Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +7

Speed: 30ft



Melee: Longspear +23/+18/+13/+8 (1d10+4)
Attack: +23/+18/+13/+8 melee, or
+19/+14/+9/+4 ranged

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility (Double Threat Range), Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +6, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 4/-, Unconquerable, Wheel of Death Str 18, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Abilities:

Feats: Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, *Combat Riding**, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Self Sufficient

Skills: Climb +18, Hide +1, Intimidate +17, Jump +12, Listen +19, Move Silently +2, Spot +10, Survival +24

Possessions: 18,000 GP in various coins. War Horse (Cromhoof), Longspear (Bloodneedle), bear-skin (+2 DR)





PERSONALITIES

Eithriall surrounds himself with a cadre of loyal bodyguards and captains who lead both his war bands and carry-out his will. There are six of these captains, known as Murr, and each has sworn a blood-oath to Eithriall. They are every bit as vicious and conniving as their chief, and reap the rewards in terms of the best weapons, horses and spoils of victory in raids.

Each Murr is at least Level 8. Use the sample Cimmerian Barbarian statistics found on page 100. Their names and personalities are:

Severach – a swarthy and cruel warrior who is the longest serving of Eithriall's Murr. His long hair is worn spiked with mud and dung and his face is heavily scarred from long years of combat.

Vanak – a small and wiry Cimmerian who shaves his head and has his scalp tattooed in the image of a galloping horse. He lives to kill and is crueller, even, than Eithriall. He is also a drunkard who flies into vicious rages when drinking.

Sine – a female Murr and Eithriall's lover. She is red-haired, lean, and whilst no beauty has a personal eroticism that helps her exercise the chieftain's will without necessarily resorting to the violence. She ostensibly commands all the women in the Murrogh clan.

Onak – a one-handed, fox-faced man who claims to have visions of Crom's grim testament for Cimmeria, although he is no oracle. He enjoys torture and invoking Crom's name.

Duggan – known also as The Dog, this massive Cimmerian is hirsute and dead-eyed. He says little but uses his fists, feet and club to communicate fluently. He fights with a huge, knotted club.

Uoin – youngest of the Murr and one of Eithriall's sons. Uoin resembles his father physically but lacks the distinctive cruelty (although he is neither sentimental nor merciful).

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Murrogh has always been known for its barbarity and propensity for hatred. Its chieftains have always been callous bastards, but Eithriall is by far the worst. Curiously it has no

desire to extend its territory; merely to maintain its control of the Curraghn and the Blood Glens, and to make life an absolute misery for those who surround it – especially the Picts and the Borderlanders.

Its blood-feud with Canach, Conan's clan, is deep-rooted and intractable. No one knows how it began, but it remains solid after many generations. The likelihood is that an innocuous insult or discourtesy was typically interpreted as an overt challenge by one of the Murrogh chieftains, and so blood-feud was declared. No member of Murrogh or Canach can hope to encounter each other without blood being spilled.

Murrogh's fearsome reputation keeps the Border Kingdoms bandits in check. Few are brave enough to venture through southern Cimmeria for fear of encountering one of the Murrogh war bands. The only time when such incursions are considered is during the period when the Murrogh retire to the Blood Glens for their winter sojourn, because that is when the Curraghn is comparatively safe to travel through (even though the hard winters and driving winds make it hazardous).

NACHTA LOCATION

Black Mountains, south west Cimmeria. The Nachta clan has settled a plateau in the eastern slopes of the mountains.

TYPE

Settled. The clan spans three small villages and a large, central settlement surrounded by forest which is called Aoal-Nachta. The clan totals some 600 members, with 250 children, 40 elders and 310 warriors.

ALLIES

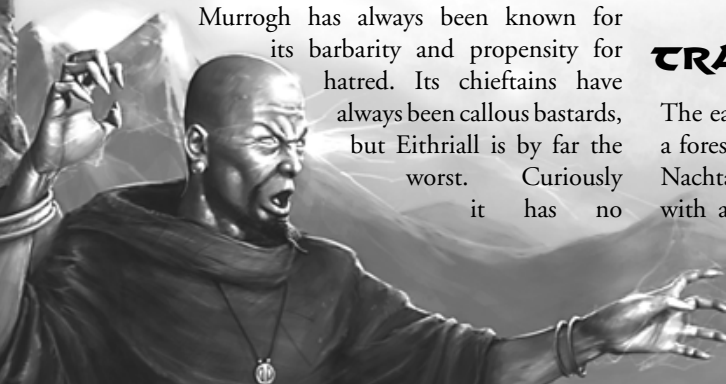
No specific allies

ENEMIES

The svartheim; Picts

TRADITIONS

The eastern slopes of the Black Mountains shelve to form a forested plateau which is home to the Nachta clan. The Nachta are fierce, tenacious fighters who loathe the Picts with a greater passion than any other Cimmerian clan.



They know the Black Mountains intimately, consider the landscape sacred, and scar their cheeks, chests and upper arms to demonstrate their identity with the landscape. In the spring and summer the Nachta warriors take up swords, spears and supplies and spread themselves into the craggy interior of the Black Mountain lands, waiting for the incursions of the Picts and bringing death to their raiding parties before the Picts can bring death to Cimmeria.

Hunting and killing Picts is an obsession with the Nachta. The deliberate intention is to drive fear into the Pictish heart through meeting their raids with a ferocity that exceeds even the savage, Pictish resolve. When the Nachta attack, they use stealth, the landscape and fear to cause the simple-minded Picts to worry, panic and then rout. Pictish bodies are hung from trees, their heads severed and taken back to the settlements where their skulls are boiled and used to make Ghost Fences and Skull Gates that, the Nachta believed, seal the presence of the Pictish soul into the fabric of the Black Mountains and protect it against incursions from the living.

The Nachta warriors divide themselves into war bands of twenty-seven, spending months watching, waiting and killing Pictish invaders. They live off the land, sleep under open skies, and become part of the mountain landscape. The Nachta knowledge of the Black Mountains is formidable and, whilst they are still prone to the natural hazards of the region, the Nachta know all the danger signs and tread carefully and with respect.

When not raiding, the Nachta are reserved and introspective, but are not unwelcoming to other clans (although they steer clear of making formal alliances). They have little trust of the world beyond the Black Mountains, and want nothing to do with it. A central belief is that the Black Mountains are sacred to the goddesses of the Cimmerian pantheon, especially Badb and Macha, in the same way that the eastern Eglolphians around Ben Morgh are sacred to Crom. The oracles of Nachta are all female and focus their divination on interpreting omens from the stand-point of the goddesses. Naturally enough, the ravens, which are large and numerous in the forests of the Black Mountain foothills, are sacred birds, and the Nachta have many superstitions surrounding ravens. Whenever ravens are seen in pairs, for instance, it is taken as a sign that Badb and Macha are watching. The scars the clan cuts into its cheeks and upper body are made with sharpened raven quills, and raven feathers are employed extensively in Nachta's everyday dress (feathers being woven into the hair and beards, and worn on clothing, which helps create camouflage).

Nachta is both wary and fearful of the svartheim. That the svartheim kill Picts is a good thing, but that they also kill Cimmerians is bad, and considered a curse of the Morrigan. Nachta believes that the svartheim control the routes into Badb's underworld realm as a punishment for some ancient betrayal, and that this degenerate race is cursed by the goddesses.

TREASURES

Nachta's key treasures are the skulls and bones of slain Picts, which they are convinced that, once cleaned and purged of their rotten ways become enemies against the living foe.

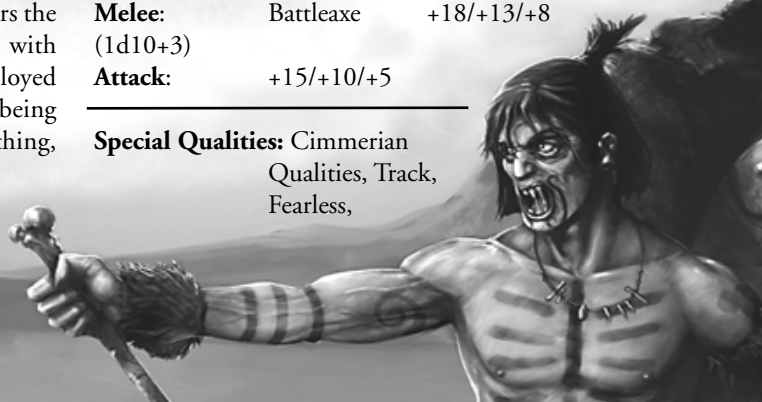
The main treasure of Aoll-Nachta is the knowledge of the main svartheim caves that thread through the deep reaches of the Black Mountains. No physical maps exist, but as one progresses through the ranks of the clan, individuals are taught more of the svartheim realm so that the elders and chief are firmly schooled in the location and layout of the known svartheim enclaves.

CHIEFTAIN NAGD-ADAN

Nagd-adan is the incumbent Nachta chief and has been for fifteen years. A fearsome warrior who wears the knuckle bones of felled Picts in his hair and beard, he has delved deeper into the caverns of the svartheim than any other Nachta member and, as a result, has had his sanity shaken at what he has seen there. Nagd-adan is untrusting and blood-thirsty, ever fearful of a full-scale Pictish invasion and terrified of the possibility of the Picts and svartheim forging an alliance.

15th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Initiative: | +11 |
| Senses: | Listen +6, Spot +1 |
| <hr/> | |
| Dodge Defence: | +21 |
| Parry Defence: | +18 |
| Hit Points: | 108 hp (15 HD); DR 6 |
| Saves: | Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +7 |
| <hr/> | |
| Speed: | 30ft |
| Melee: | Battleaxe +18/+13/+8 (1d10+3) |
| Attack: | +15/+10/+5 |
| <hr/> | |
| Special Qualities: | Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, |





Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +5, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 2/-

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 13

Feats: Blind-Fight, Cleave, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Power Attack, Run

Skills: Climb +15, Handle Animal +17, Hide +9, Intimidate +15, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Perform (Oratory) +2, Spot +1, Survival +15

Possessions: A vast array of Pictish and svartheim bones, kept in several large sacks within his hut. A further three sacks contain raven feathers, feet and claws. Battleaxe and leather armour

PERSONALITIES

MURGHA-ADAC

Foremost of the war band leaders of clan Nachta, Murgha-adac leads his warriors deep into the Black Mountains every spring, not returning until the onset of winter, when he brings back Pict and svartheim skulls along with information valuable to the clan concerning Pict movements in the Pictish borderlands, the mountains, and better knowledge of the svartheim cavern systems. Murgha's war band is considered the strongest of the Nachta and, every year, he takes a number of young, newly-appointed warriors to join his team and so increase their skills and standing. Competition to join Murgha's crew is intense, with the young warriors of the clan seeking to impress him throughout the winter months.

Murgha is a good-humoured, bawdy, but somewhat intense individual who is far more at home in the wilds of the Black Mountains than in the settled confines of Aoll-Nachta. He dresses simply in leathers adorned with raven feathers, but wears a belt of Pict wrist bones around his waist which he is convinced assists in his prowess at killing Cimmeria's age-old foe.

16th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +11

Senses: Listen +10, Spot +6

Dodge Defence: +23

Parry Defence: +19

Hit Points: 119 hp (16HD); DR 7

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +8

Speed: 30ft

Melee: Broadsword +19/+14/+9/+4 (1d10+3)

Attack: +16/+11/+6/+1

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +5, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 3/-

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, Persuasive, Run, Power Attack, Cleave

Skills: Balance +2, Climb +15, Hide +11, Intimidate +11, Listen +10, Move Silently +9, Knowledge (Black Mountains) +25, Ride +19, Spot +6, Survival +18

Possessions: Leather armour, broadsword, Pictish bone belt.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Nachta's history and outlook is rooted in the Black Mountains so deeply that no other clan would consider impinging on its territory. Its actions against the Picts are legendary and at the Field of Chiefs, when the clans gather, it is customary for Nachta's campaign against the Picts to be acknowledged publicly.

It is an uncompromising clan that dedicates itself to its singular cause. This makes Nachta an outsider in many ways, but cements its reputation firmly amongst the Cimmerian clans. The Black Mountains mark the division between the Pictish barbarians and the grim lands of the north, and clan Nachta symbolises the brooding stoicism for which Cimmeria is infamous.

For its own part, Nachta simply wants the Black Mountains free of Picts. The svartheim it can tolerate, because they seem to know their place underground although svartheim



occasionally attack Nachta war bands and so are not to be trusted. However, as the svartheim do not seek all-out war with Nachta, there is little cause to wipe them out.

From time to time Nachta makes forays into the svartheim caverns in search of secrets and treasure. Some of the strangeness encountered there shakes the minds of the warriors who brave the depths. Tales of underground cities with foul practices, demon-worship and gates leading into hell figure highly in the recollections of those who return. For most Nachta, fighting and killing Picts is a cleaner business although the lure of the svartheim caves is strong as those who return are accorded a certain honour amongst the warriors of the clan.

NANGH - BRONZE BULLS

LOCATION

Hoath Plateau.

TYPE

Settled. The Nangh is one of the three members of the Plateau Tribe, along with the Hoath and White Bulls. Its main settlement is the sprawling tent city of Ungha-Nangh in the western third of Hoath Plateau. It numbers 560 people, with 150 children under the age of 14, around 380 warriors and 30 elders.

ALLIES

Hoath, White Bulls

ENEMIES

No specific enemies

TRADITIONS

The Nangh was once a nomadic clan, circulating around the plateau in a way similar to the Hoath clan. About a century ago it made camp at the place known as Ungha and has never moved since, although it still maintains a settlement composed of sturdy tents and yurts rather than the traditional stone and wood dwellings of other settled Cimmerians.

Clan Nangh strives to keep itself to itself, acknowledging the Hoath clan's dominance, but quite prepared to defend its lands against enemies. The Nangh territory is home to many small, single-family homesteads that are,



again, tent-based, and the traditional way of life for the clan is to tend and raise cattle, allowing their livestock to graze freely across the western plain of the Hoath plateau. Cattle are branded with the blocky Nangh device and have distinctive, shaggy coats and long, curving horns. The emphasis of the clan is therefore on preserving and tending its herds, rather than on raiding or warring against other clans. Its warriors, however, are as tenacious and sullen as any other Cimmerian clan, and Nangh does not welcome outsiders (even from its neighbours, Hoath and the White Bulls).

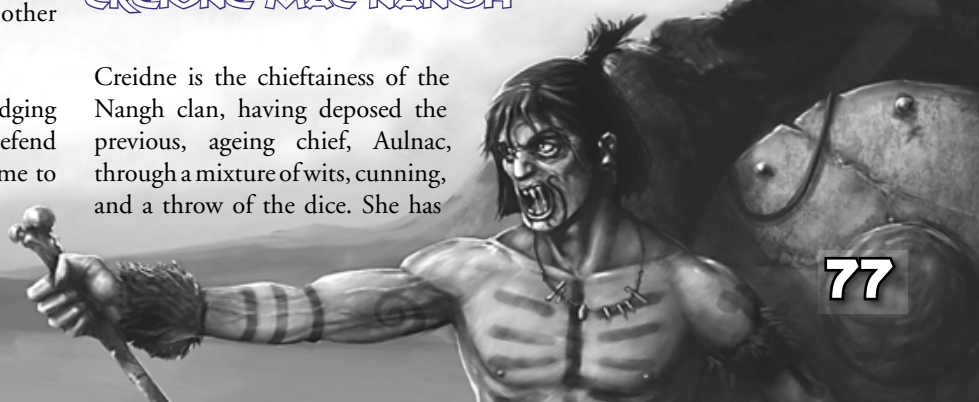
TREASURES

The clan's totem is a life-sized bronze bull, sculpted by an unknown hand, that resides squarely in the centre of Ungha-Nangh. All festivals and clan meetings are conducted in the Bronze Bull's shadow and it is customary for every warrior to kiss the horns of the bull before going off to battle.

CHIEFTAIN

CREIDNE MAC NANGH

Creidne is the chieftainess of the Nangh clan, having deposed the previous, ageing chief, Aulnac, through a mixture of wits, cunning, and a throw of the dice. She has





been chief for four years and, since there has been no test of the clan's strength during her tenure, the clan is happy to accept her in the role. Aulnac remains as an adviser, but his sickly nature means he spends more time in his yurt than attending to clan affairs.

Strikingly blond, Creidne possesses the stoic traits of a typically Cimmerian woman. Ruthlessly practical, she is smart and strong, with the clan admires, but is untested in combat, despite her undoubted experience with a blade. Her best quality is an analytical mind, which is uncommon enough amongst the accepting Cimmerians who are happy to spend their lives without questioning all but the knottiest of immediate problems.

8th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +9
Senses: Listen +10, Spot +1

Dodge Defence: +19
Parry Defence: +14
Hit Points: 56 hp (8 HD); DR 2
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +6

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Broadsword +9/+4 (1d10+1)
Attack: +8/+3

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 10

Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot

Skills: Appraise +19, Balance +11, Craft (Leatherworking) +6, Handle Animal +19, Hide +3, Jump +11, Listen +10, Move Silently +3, Perform (Oratory) +11, Knowledge (Analyse Problem) +11, Spot +1, Survival +5

Possessions: 9,000 in gold. Broadsword, chieftain's yurt, a set of bronze dice.

PERSONALITIES

FINN MAC INNIS

Finn is Creidne's champion. Despite his bruising looks and gruff demeanour he is lovelorn for Creidne and pledged to defend her life with his own. The son of Innis, who was Aulnac's champion, he has a wife already, the plain and shrewish Cathca, and the marriage is far from happy. Cathca is barren and scolds her husband constantly believing this is all his fault. Finn seeks solace in his protection and adoration of Creidne, living in hope that some accident will free him from his unhappy marriage and pave the way for he and Creidne to be together.

9th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +1
Senses: Listen +7, Spot -2

Dodge Defence: +17
Parry Defence: +14
Hit Points: 68 hp (9 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +1

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Broadsword (1d10+1)
Attack: Attack +10/+5

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 7, Cha 13

Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Run

Skills: Concentration +4, Handle Animal +13, Hide +1, Intimidate +13, Jump +13, Knowledge (Hoath Plateau) +3, Listen +7, Move Silently +1, Search +2, Spot -2, Survival +10, Tumble +3;

Possessions: Broadsword, hunting spear, leather armour, lock of Creidne's hair worn around his wrist (but dyed black, so as to appear as Cathca's hair).

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Once part of the greater Hoath clan, the Nangh have forged a less strident, personal identity whilst still maintaining presence and influence on the Hoath plateau. Its history is largely uneventful, and mostly concerns a series of minor



raids and subsequent alliances with the White Bulls and Hoath clans, leading the current state of general peace.

Nangh is happy to be left to its own devices. It exhibits no territorial ambitions and follows the Hoath clan lead diligently and without dissent. The White Bulls, on the far side of the plateau, are largely ignored, and the Nangh forge their own, relatively peaceful way.

RAEDA LOCATION

North east Cimmeria, in the foothills of the Eiglophians and in the shadow of Mount Crom.

TYPE

Settled. Raeda's territory is a mixture of the sparse, cold, mountain foothills, the jagged, sombre, grey plains that front them, and the thick, dark, fringe-like forest that stretches down towards the Great Salt Marsh. The clan is dispersed across this territory, occupying small villages, each of which supports two or three extended families. The true size of the clan is unknown, but it could number up to 1,000 members.

ALLIES

None

ENEMIES

Bhardh, Ice Leopards. Raeda is warlike and fractious, raiding its neighbouring clans for no reason other than the sheer thrill of battle.

TRADITIONS

Considered one of the most savage of all the Cimmerian clans, Raeda is fiercely territorial, cares nothing for the wider, traditional Cimmerian values, and considers itself blessed (if such a thing exists) by Crom, whose mountain home towers over Raeda lands.

Although the clan is dispersed through its dark, sombre, territories, its familial ties are exceedingly strong and the entire clan can come together as a single, howling, shrieking, blood-curdling force, at very short notice.

Members of the clan are distinctive for their long noses and braided hair, which is sometimes deliberately caked in blood and dung, and strung with teeth or knuckle bones. Raeda warriors daub themselves

in blue and white dyes ground from certain rocks found in the foothills and prefer to wear crudely stitched furs rather than the more cultured garb of other Cimmerian clans. Body piercings and tattoos are commonplace, with bones or crude rings being worn through the earlobes, septum, lips, eyebrows and nipples. One family within the clan wears thin slivers of wood pierced through their chests and abdomen, each sliver marking a human kill the warrior has made.

Raeda makes few concessions towards appearing civilised. Its settlements are little more than glorified mud and thatch huts, and it has little in the way of crafting skills in metal. Its weapons are made from flint, antler and stone although clan members readily seize metal weapons from fallen foes and regard them as trophies of war as much as functional items of battle. Outsiders are distinctly unwelcome: those who venture into Raeda territory without invitation risk being crucified and then flayed alive, with all manner of dreadful tortures being visited on the dying body. Raeda clansmen are experts in inflicting slow, lingering deaths, revelling in the suffering, and rejecting the traditional Cimmerian courtesy of a clean, swift death.

The spring and summer sees the warriors of clan Raeda coming together at the Sacred Rock, a jagged finger of granite, fifty feet high, found in a stretch marshy lowland roughly in the centre of the clan's territory. Here the chieftain exhorts the warriors to spill forth and harry the Ice Leopards and Bardh clans, visiting on them all manner of torments in repayment for past, forgotten slights. The aim is to indulge in killing and to gain slaves/torture victims; Raeda's raids are rarely concerned with taking food or livestock. The exhortation concludes with a frenzied feast and then the war bands swarm east and west, heading into the lands of their enemies to kill or be killed.

TREASURES

No worthwhile treasures known.

CHIEFTAIN GUNACH MAC GUNACH

Head of the sprawling, inbred Sulva family, Gunach is a mad-eyed, many-pierced, tattooed horror of a man. He treats his only family, with the exception of its warriors, as slaves, and has no respect for women or children if they cannot fight. He rules through fear and the willingness to visit on his own clan the kinds of terrors they



visit on others. His name and history is blood-soaked, and Gunach revels in his own infamy.

13th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +13
Senses: Listen +17, Spot +2

Dodge Defence: +20
Parry Defence: +18
Hit Points: 107 hp (13 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +7

Speed: 30ft
Melee: War club +17/+12/+7 (2d6+4)
Attack: +13/+8/+3

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +4, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 11

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Power attack, Fighting Madness, Improved Initiative, Leadership

Skills: Handle Animal +1, Hide +1, Jump +9, Listen +17, Move Silently +13, Ride +9, Spot +2, Survival +18

Possessions: Stone and wood war club, 3,000 gold in various coins and scraps of jewellery.

PERSONALITIES

Clan Raeda does not remember its heroes, save for one: Chamta, a champion of the clan who died fighting a scaled monstrosity that slithered down from Mount Crom, devouring all within its path. Chamta marched north with his war band and met the great, serpent-like monster as it consumed a small Raeda village. His war band perished in the epic battle that followed, but Chamta stood alone and defiant against it, cursing Crom and his kin for sending this foul beast against his people.

The battle between serpent and champion lasted an hour,



and Chamta killed it by driving his spear into what passed for its brain, but not before sustaining mortal wounds of his own. Still, its progress was halted and Raeda continued to wreck havoc throughout the northern lands. Chamta is remembered in several lays and his memory is invoked at the spring exhortation at the Sacred Rock.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Raeda is typical of those clans that favour isolation over involvement; it is a degenerate collection of families with no prospect of any form of civilisation, nor any desire to attain it. Its principles and traditions are steeped in inflicting pain, and it knows no other way of expressing itself. Its people remain hateful and afraid of the world beyond Raeda's borders – partly through grim warnings issued by successive chieftains and oracles, but also through an endemic fear of the unknown and genuine belief that Crom made the rest of Cimmeria for Raeda to hate and seek vengeance upon.



TUNOG

LOCATION

Blood Glens and the surrounding forests and hills.

TYPE

Settled. Tunog has 340 members. 139 are children, 190 are of fighting age, and 11 are clan elders.

ALLIES

Murrogh, through shared control of the Blood Glens

ENEMIES

Ice Leopards, in support of the Murrogh clan.

TRADITIONS

Tunog is settled around the two villages of All-Tun and Bre-Tun (the Great Village and the Hill Village, respectively). All-Tun is located in the forested lands that deep down towards the Blood Glens in the east, whilst Bre-Tun is located in the hills overlooking the forests. The chieftain maintains halls in both villages and circulates between the two regularly, accompanied by his entourage which includes a full war band, several oracles and his favoured wives and slaves.

Tunog considers itself on a par with clan Canach but has, in reality, more in common with Raeda or Murrogh. It is a warlike clan, quick to anger and slow to see reason, but it has lost several major battles with other Cimmerian clans in the last century and now cannot afford to make serious enemies for fear of losing more warriors or being destroyed outright. For this reason Tunog pursues an alliance with Murrogh and avoids direct antagonisation of Murrogh's enemies, such as the Ice Leopards.

The people of Tunog are skilled hunters, honing their talents on the rich game of the Blood Glens and their own forests. Boar is a favoured target for Tunog hunts, but anything that provides copious quantities of rich meat is fair game for the hunting bands. Skins are prepared for leather which is then traded by the small merchant warriors Tunog sends forth in the spring and summer months, hoping to buy metal for weapons, or weapons themselves.

TREASURES

Clan Tunog has a cache of gold, worth 150,000 GP, hidden deep within the Blood Glens, well away from

known hunting trials used by either Tunog or Murrogh hunting parties.

CHIEFTAIN

MANNAN

A surly, if handsome man, Mannan is a hero amongst his people for felling the great boar Morghus that had haunted the Blood Glens for years, goring many a hapless hunter with its vast tusks. Mannan wears the boar skin as his robes of office and has had the tusks made into a pair a fine, gold-hilted daggers that he wears at his side.

Mannan's wife is the beautiful Murrogh woman Rohannyn, the daughter of one of the Murrogh war band champions. The marriage is political, but Mannan is besotted with his vain and clever wife, who claims to have visions of the future and foresees a life of victory and prosperity for her brave, if foolish, husband. Mannan swallows Rohannyn's words without any evidence or omens to point to their veracity and believes that Tunog's current, wary state must change in order for these visions of personal glory to be realised.

Unbeknown to Mannan, Rohannyn is a plant. Eithriall mac Agh of the Murrogh knows that the Tunog clan's treasure is buried somewhere in the Blood Glens and wants it for himself. Rohannyn's purpose is to discover the hiding place and send word back to her own people. Poor, love-struck Mannan has, so far, resisted divulging the clan's secret, but Rohannyn knows it is but a matter of time.

9th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Initiative: | +8 |
| Senses: | Listen +6, Spot +3 |
| <hr/> | |
| Dodge Defence: | +16 |
| Parry Defence: | +14 |
| Hit Points: | 84 hp (9 HD); DR 3 |
| Saves: | Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +5 |
| <hr/> | |
| Speed: | 30ft |
| Melee: | Hunting spear +10/+5 (1d8+1); Boar tusk daggers +10/+5 (1d4+2) |
| Attack: | +9/+4 |

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Q ualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +3, Dichard, Endurance,



Abilities: Improved Uncanny Dodge
Str 13, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 15

Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Run, Self Sufficient.

Skills: Appraise +1, Craft (Leatherworking) -1, Handle Animal +11, Hide +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +0, Search +2, Sense Motive -2, Spot +3, Tumble +1, Use Rope +3;

Possessions: Boar skin cape, boar tusk daggers, leather armour, hunting spears.

PERSONALITIES

ROHANNYN, MANNANS WIFE



Black-haired, curvaceous, ambitious and clever, Rohannyn is the archetype of Cimmerian womanhood. Her determination is reflected in her skill with weapons and she is the match for almost any male warrior. She is loyal to her clan, the Murrogh, and despises her husband, but is prepared to maintain the marriage in order to find out where Tunog's wealth is hidden so that the Murrogh might gain dominance over the Tunog clan.

7th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +6
Senses: Listen +6, Spot +6

Dodge Defence: +16
Parry Defence: +13
Hit Points: 58 hp (7 HD); DR 2
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +5

Speed: 30ft
Melee: Broadsword +8/+3 (1d10+1)
Attack: Attack +7/+2

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +2, Diehard, Endurance, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 18

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, Improved Unarmed Strike, Persuasive

Skills: Heal +4, Hide +2, Jump +1, Listen +6, Move Silently +2, Knowledge (Seduction) +11, Spot +6, Survival +9

Possessions: Boar skin cape, broadsword.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Tunog has existed in Murrogh's shadow for many generations and has always struggled to free itself from Murrogh's general influence. Murrogh is clearly the stronger tribe, and whilst it allows Tunog certain concessions (in regard to the Blood Glens, for instance), it is not about to let its neighbour gain in strength.

Tunog is therefore trapped in difficult place. Whilst it remains allied with Murrogh, it will always lack the trust of the clans it wishes to emulate; but Murrogh has no interest in Tunog gaining any kind of strength where it might become a threat – and so the Tunog must be kept in its place.



This captivity is certainly felt with the Tunog settlements, and resentment s never far from the surface. Mannan's taking of a Murrogh wife is viewed with an equal mixture of disdain and inevitability – although not even the most astute observers have deduced Rohannyn's *true* purpose.

WHITE BULLS

LOCATION

Hoath Plateau

TYPE

Settled. The White Bulls occupy three core settlements of similar size, with three large, extended families. The clan numbers some 600 members, divided between the three settlements.

ALLIES

Hoath, Nangh

ENEMIES

No particular enemies.

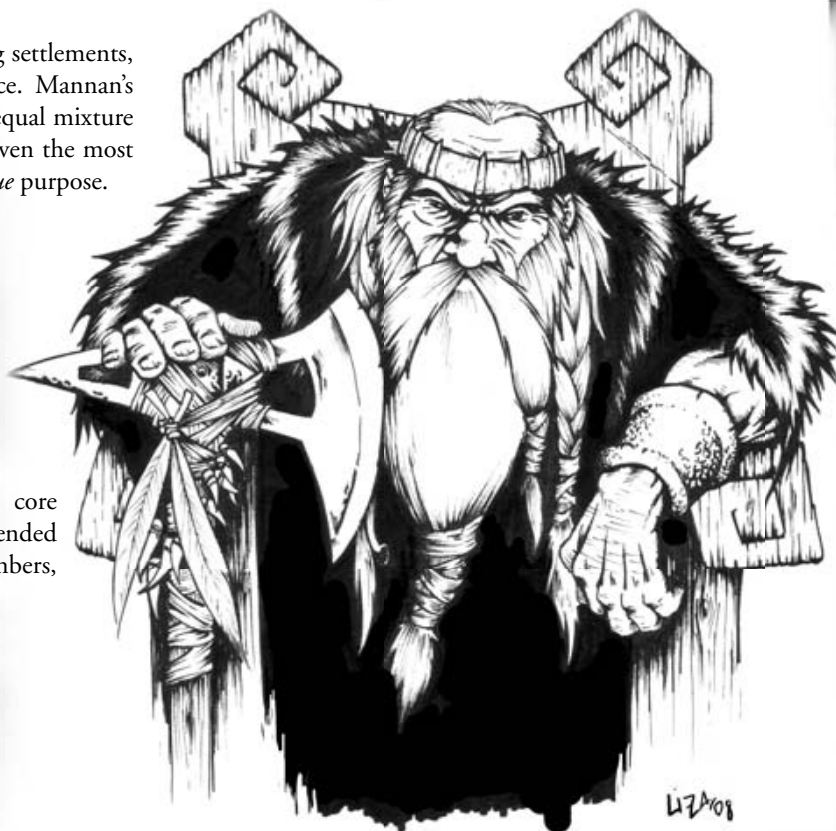
TRADITIONS

Like Nangh, the White Bulls are predominantly herders, tending their herds of characteristically white cattle across the eastern plains of the Hoath plateau. The clan is exceptionally proud of its beautiful livestock, which provides some of the finest beef and sweetest milk anywhere in Cimmeria.

This pride is carried through it the clan's ritual dress, which is pure-white leather jerkins matched with kilts of bleached linen, and helmets that have the white horns of the cattle worked into the bowl. Some warriors go further, bleaching their hair and beards white in both reverence for the cattle they so adore, and to distinguish themselves from the 'rougher' looking Hoath and Nangh clans.

The eastern reaches of the Hoath plateau are exposed, wind-swept and rain-soaked. Both the cattle and the people are hardy, and the White Bull clansmen are especially pragmatic, accepting that the harsh conditions of their edge of the plateau is simply one more of life's trials.

The three settlements – Wolfstead, Eaglestead and Bullstead – are robust dwellings of grey stone and thick thatch, each surrounded by a thick, timber stockade of



felled pine, the gates topped with the skulls of bulls, and bullhorns marking the longhouse for each stead. Daily practices and traditions are centred on the needs of the cattle, and the White Bulls, like the Nangh clan, are given more to husbandry than warfare although, like the Nangh, they can be relied upon in a fight. Indeed, throughout their long history they have endured raids from the Hoath clan although, these days, peace exists between them – or will do, as long as the White Bulls continue to offer a tribute of 10 calves a year to the Hoath, along with supplies of milk, beef, horn and hide.

TREASURES

No particular clan treasures, save for the herds.

CHIEFTAIN

UAINÉ MAC PARLAN

Uaine is old now, and has no need to stain his hair or beard for both are naturally white. His wizened face is weather beaten and as craggy as the rocks of the outlying extent of the plateau,



but he was once very handsome and a warrior to be reckoned with, having fought at Venarium and against the Picts in several campaigns.

It is Uaine's hope that one of his seven sons will become the next chieftain, but he knows that the line of succession is by no means guaranteed. Several prospective candidates, in addition to his strong, sensible sons, exist and he knows that it is only a matter of time before death either claims him or a challenger will exercise his right. Uaine therefore continues to lead the clan as wisely as possible, but filled with a fatalism that his days are coming to a close.

His sons are loyal to both father and clan, and would not consider asserting their own claims to the position of chieftain without undertaking the necessary challenges – and the drive to challenge their own father is not strong enough in any of them.

11th Level Cimmerian Barbarian

Initiative: +8
Senses: Listen +14, Spot +1

Dodge Defence: +19
Parry Defence: +17
Hit Points: 76 hp (11HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +5

Speed: 20ft
Melee: Broadsword +14/+9/+4 (1d10+3)
Attack: Attack +11/+6/+1

Special Qualities: Cimmerian Qualities, Track, Fearless, Versatility, Bite Sword, Greater Crimson Mist, Trap Sense +3, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Uncanny Dodge,

Improved Mobility, Damage Reduction 1/-

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 12

Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Self Sufficient

Skills: Handle Animal +9, Hide +1, Intimidate +10, Jump +14, Knowledge (Hoath Plateau) +4, Knowledge (History) +2, Listen +14, Move Silently +1, Spot +1

Possessions: 18,000 in a mixture of gold and silver. Fine white leather cloak and finely crafted bronze helmet with curving white horns.

HISTORY AND OUTLOOK

Like Nangh, the White Bulls claim lineage with the original Hoath clan but have diverged to become farmers and herders instead of war-mongers and raiders. Unlike Nangh, the White Bulls have always been prepared to take the fight to the enemy, especially where the Picts and Aquilonians are concerned, and the clan's leaders have regularly sent excellent warriors to take part in the defence of Cimmeria or the Hoath plateau.

The White Bulls are also willing and ready to trade their meat and hides with others, which has cultivated a certain degree of respect in other clans, particularly Canach, the Ice Leopards and even the reclusive Nachta. Despite the isolation and conditions to be found on Hoath plateau, the pragmatic nature of the clan has ensured both its survival and its prosperity. Hoath clan's demanded tribute is seen as a necessary accommodation, and the White Bulls, proud though they are of their herds, see the reasoning behind keeping the Hoath clan placated so that they can remain at relative peace.





Hunts and Wars Like Shadows

Cimmerians are warlike and brutal, generally revelling in the sheer joy of slaughter and mayhem as the corpses pile around their feet, but in terms of military organisation, Cimmerians are not at the forefront of the great military powers of the Hyborian Age.

The main reason for this lies in the essential conflict between discipline and personal prowess. Cimmerians like to be the best at what they do, but do not enjoy taking orders or being marshalled when it comes to doing it. Personal glory always ranks above the good of the troupe, in a Cimmerian's eyes, and it requires a great force of will for any Cimmerian to accept the necessary regulations an effective military force needs when facing a foe.

Battles between clans and against other barbarians, such as the Picts, are largely disorganised affairs preceded by a brief period of relative organisation. A Cimmerian battle-plan is often little more than 'kill the enemy'; long and short-term strategic objectives are generally ignored in favour of achieving supremacy through the sheer weight of carnage. It took Conan many years and many travails to become an effective leader of men, and his youthful experiences beyond Cimmeria are characterised by an impulsive nature clearly shaped by his upbringing amongst the gloomy hills of his homeland.

However, when Cimmerians set their mind to, they can operate as effective troops. They excel in guerrilla-style situations, where local knowledge of the terrain, and a certain degree of stealth, is followed by a short, intense, explosion of violence against the enemy, designed to surprise and unnerve them, and to leave them easier to be overwhelmed. Such tactics are highly effective in Cimmeria, where the wild landscape offer plenty of opportunities for ambush and close-quarters skirmishing, but few opportunities for large, organised, pitched-battles that require a strategic approach and clear objectives.

CIMMERIAN COMBAT STRATEGY AND TACTICS

When clans come face to face with each other, or against a force of incursive Picts, the pattern of battle, from the Cimmerian standpoint, is straightforward and plays out thus:

- ✿ The battleground is identified and the forces arraign on either side
- ✿ Shield walls form in ranks
- ✿ One or more champions stride forth to taunt and mock the foe, describing in graphic detail the slaughter about to be visited upon them
- ✿ A period of silent intensity follows, as the Cimmerians concentrate on their enemy, preparing mentally for the explosion of violence to follow
- ✿ When the order for movement (advance or defence) is given, the shield walls brace and carry themselves in a roughly disciplined way to engage the enemy. Blows are exchanged and men may falter or fall
- ✿ As soon as a weakness in the shield wall is identified, the organisation breaks down as champions and individual warriors surge forward to begin the killing
- ✿ So the carnage continues, with Cimmerians deliberately seeking the thick of the battle in order to cleave more heads and earn more personal glory, relying on personal strength and prowess rather than the security of a well-disciplined and organised unit to lend support and protection
- ✿ Individuals will draw attention to themselves to encourage more foes to come towards a certain death – be it theirs' or the Cimmerian's.



THE SHIELD WALL

A line of warriors, each carrying a shield which overlaps with their neighbour's, presenting a formidable barrier to advancing troops, is the premise of the shield wall. Cimmerians dislike the tactic because using their favoured swords and axes, especially two-handed varieties, is nigh-on impossible in a shield wall. Instead, warriors need to rely on a mixture of brute strength to push at the foe (aided by more shoving from the rear ranks) and the use of shorter thrusting weapons such as spears or shortswords to disable (by stabbing under the opponent's shield, into the groin or leg), rather than kill outright, the enemy. And, in forested terrain, of which there is much in Cimmeria, shield walls are difficult to arrange effectively as warriors are so crammed together they cannot move effectively.

Yet Cimmerians will form a shield wall when necessary because the arrangement suits troops that have no clearly defined formation, and it provides protection in a reasonably instinctive way – which is a decent compromise between typical Cimmerian recklessness and the need for a certain degree of discipline. However, as soon as the opportunity to break the shield wall arises (because the opponent's wall has broken and the Cimmerians have the advantage; or because their own has broken and they have no choice), the urge to fight freely and with head-splitting abandon, takes over and the battle becomes a free-for-all – which is the kind of fighting most Cimmerians excel at.

ABSTRACTING THE SHIELD WALL

Three factors determine the effectiveness of a shield wall: its length, the strength of those who make it and support it, and the courage or willingness of the front rank to maintain it. These things contribute to a value known as Shield Wall Strength.

Longer shield walls are more effective than short ones, because it is harder to outflank them, and the number of men in a shield wall lends natural strength to both staying power and confidence. Compare the number of warriors in a shield wall with those in the opposing shield wall and calculate the ratio. If the ratio is equal, then neither side has any particular advantage. If the shield walls are unequal, then the side with the larger ratio gains +1 to its Shield Wall Strength for each 0.5 (rounded up) ratio advantage it has over the enemy.

For example, Murrogh clan is facing a war band of marauding Picts. The Murrogh warriors form a reluctant shield wall with 60 men. The Picts do likewise, fielding 40. Murrogh has the numerical advantage (1.5:1) and gains +1 to its Shield Wall Strength. If it had had 80 warriors, then the Shield Wall Strength would be +2.

Next, work out the average Strength ability for the warriors in the shield wall. Add the standard Ability Modifier derived from the average Strength to the Shield Wall Strength.

For example, Murrogh's warriors have an average Strength ability of 16. The Picts have an average strength of 13. Murrogh gains +3 to its Shield Wall Strength, whilst the Picts gain +1. The Murrogh Shield Wall Strength therefore currently stands at +4 (+1 for numerical advantage, and +3 for brute strength) to the Picts +1.

When the respective shield walls clash, it is question of which breaks first that determines the way the skirmish continues. To determine when and if a shield wall breaks, use the following mechanics.

Each side rolls 1d20, modifying the result as follows:

- ✿ Add the Shield Wall Strength
- ✿ Add the Average Ref Saving Throw modifier (i.e., Dex and Class Bonus) for the warriors forming the front rank
- ✿ +1 for each *additional* rank of warriors behind the shield wall rank

For example, the Murrogh already have +4, whilst the Picts have +1. The average RefST for the Murrogh front rank is +7, whilst the Picts have +8. The Murrogh has 3 ranks of warriors heaving against the front rank, whilst the Picts have 4.

*The Murrogh d20 roll is 13, modified by $4+7+3 = 27$
The Pict d20 roll is 19, modified by $1+8+4 = 32$*

If the difference between the two rolls is then considered. If the two sides are within 5 of each other, then for this round of combat the shield walls are engaged in a frenzy of shoving and stabbing, but both walls hold. The side with the lower modified d20 result suffers a -1 penalty to its Shield Wall Strength for the next round.

If the result is between 6 and 10, then the side with the lower result must make a Will ST, using the average Will ST modifier for the front rank, against a DC of 15.

If the result is between 11 and 15, then the Will ST is made against a DC of 20. The DC then increases by 5



for every 5 points of difference between the results of the two sides.

If the Will ST check succeeds, then the shield wall for the lower scoring side has held, but in the next round it suffers -1 to its Shield Wall Strength. If the Will ST fails, it accumulates 1 Break Point. If a natural 1 is rolled for the Will ST, it accumulates 2 Break Points. When Break Points *exceed* the Shield Wall Strength, then the shield wall is broken.

Example: The Murrogh shield wall, despite having the numerical advantage, is being severely challenged by the tenacity of the Picts. It has lost the first round of pushing by 5 points, so its shield wall holds, but next round it suffers -1 to its Shield Wall Strength. Murrogh does not need to make a Will ST this round.

In the second round, the Murrogh rolls 15, modified by $3+7+3 = 28$. The Picts roll 10, modified by $1+8+4 = 23$. This time, Murrogh has the advantage and the Pictish Shield Wall Strength suffers a -1 penalty, taking it to 0. The Pict shield wall shows signs of weakness but remains stable due to the weight of warriors behind it and the tenacity of the Pictish character.

In the third round of shield wall combat, Murrogh rolls 14, modified by $3+7+3 = 27$. The Picts roll 8, modified by $0+8+4 = 20$. As the Picts are facing a difference of 7, they must make a Will ST against a DC of 15. The ST result is $7+4$ for the Will ST Dex and Class modifier = 11. The Will ST has failed, and so the Picts incur 1 Break Point. As this automatically exceeds their Shield Wall Strength, which has already fallen to zero, their shield wall breaks and the Murrogh horde surges through their front rank.

Once a shield wall is broken, free melee takes place. The warriors who successfully broke the opposing shield wall gain a +5 bonus to all attacks for the next 1d4 rounds of combat as they take advantage of the confused and broken ranks before them.

Note that, whilst fighting in a shield wall, the front rank can only effectively fight with short weapons: shortswords and short spears, and the rear ranks need weapons with a long reach to prove effective against the front rank of the opposing shield wall. Once free melee commences, characters will need to use the standard *Conan* rules for changing weapons if they want to revert to weapons of choice such as two handed swords or axes, instead of fighting with the weapons used during the shield wall skirmish.

TAUNTING

As much a ritual exchange as a way of goading the enemy into rash action, taunting is a common, but always necessary, part of the build-up to battle. Usually, it is the job of a clan champion to conduct the taunting, but any man bold enough to step forward and parade up and down before the enemy, insulting the opponent (and all those related to him), may conduct or lead the taunting.

Usually, taunting is purely ritual and neither side takes it seriously – unless some deeply, deeply personal insult is hurled at a specific individual, rather than being generally levelled at the prowess and courage of the enemy. Both sides might engage in it, and it helps to both keep nerves under control and lighten the mood a little before the slaughter begins in earnest.

However, taunting can be used to try to fray the enemy's nerves or goad them into making a premature, blundering attack that lends advantage to the taunter's side. To achieve these ends, a character needs the Perform (Taunting) skill (see page 124), and must make a successful test against a base DC depending on what the taunter wants to achieve. There are three Taunt Effects:

- ❖ **Demoralise the Enemy:** the taunts questions the courage of the enemy and bolster the courage of the taunter's force. If the taunt is successful, then the enemy suffers a -2 penalty to Defence checks for a number of rounds of combat equal to the taunter's Perform (Taunting) score. If successfully demoralised, reduce the Shield Wall Strength score by 1.
- ❖ **Provoke a premature group attack:** the taunts enrage 1D8 opponents who break rank and rush forward to attack the taunter. The distance between the taunter and the attackers determines how quickly help can be summoned (if, indeed, it IS summoned; tackling 8 opponents single-handedly might be part of the intention). The attackers, enraged to the point of recklessness, suffer penalties of -2 to Attack and Defence for the duration of the revenge combat. If these attackers are defeated by the taunter or the taunter's side, then the rest of the enemy suffers the same penalty as though the taunting had demoralised them, increased by one for each enraged attacker slain.
- ❖ **Provoke an individual retaliation:** This is designed to call forth a champion or leader and provoke him to single combat. The retaliating character sustains no penalties to his



Taunting Summary Table

| Taunting Effect | Base DC | Saving Throw to Mitigate? |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Demoralise the Enemy | 15+Average Level of Enemy | No |
| Provoke a premature group attack | 20+ Average Level of Enemy | Yes. Will ST based on Average Level of the enemy. DC = 10+Taunter's Skill Modifier |
| Provoke an individual retaliation | 15+ Provoked Individual's Level | Yes. Will ST. DC = 10+Taunter's Skill Modifier |

Attack or Defence scores if he rises to the challenge. If the taunter wins the single combat, the following effects are applied:

- ❖ The enemy force suffers a penalty to both Attack and Defence equal to the half the slain character/NPC's Level (round up).
- ❖ The taunter gains 1 Reputation point for every 5 full Levels of the defeated character or NPC, as long as the foe is 5th Level or higher. If the foe is below 5th Level, then no Reputation is gained. *Thus, if a 15th Level Champion is slain, then the taunter gains +2 Reputation.*

Provoking either a group or an individual attack can be mitigated by a successful Will ST against a DC of 10, plus the taunter's Perform (Taunting) score.

SILENT INTENSITY

Once the taunting has ceased – or perhaps in its place – Cimmerians usually fall into a period of absolute, sullen silence, during which they stand, calm and motionless, staring intently at the enemy. During this period of silent intensity the Cimmerian does two things. First, he clears his mind and focuses purely on the battle to come. Second, he prepares for death: that of his foes and his own. Through the sheer power of concentration, the Cimmerian turns himself, temporarily, into a killing machine – although he does not become a *berserk*. He simply prepares his mind and body for the singular task of killing the enemy and being killed, perhaps, if his luck runs out.

At the Games Master's discretion, Cimmerian characters can be allowed a Will ST during the period of Silent Intensity. The ST is against a DC of 20 and receives no additional modifiers from Feats or other sources (the one exception to this is the Silent Intensity Feat itself, described on page 125). If the Will ST succeeds, the Cimmerian

SAMPLE TAUNTS

'By Crom, when you are but a corpse, I shall have your wife and sisters as my personal whores!'

'Come; meet your death, yellow-souled scum. Or are you shivering too much behind that shield?'

'Die like men! For you surely live like women...'

'Is this the best you can offer? Why, I can slay ten of you without breaking a single droplet of sweat.'

'I stepped in dog-shit yesterday, and today I have come across you. It's taken me some time to realise there's a difference...'

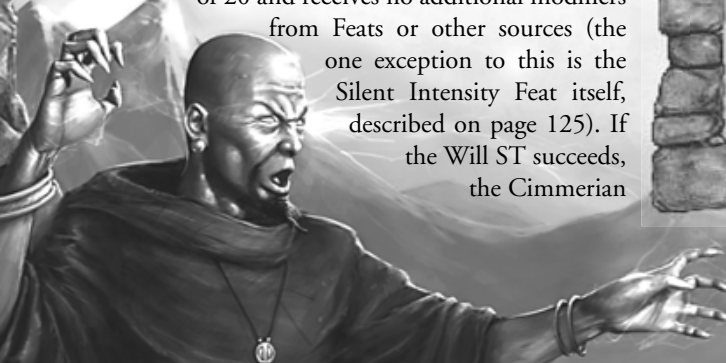
'I see the Morrigan is suffering from the runs again today. She moulded what she expelled into your shield wall.'

'By Crom, I thought we'd killed all you Pictish bastards last year. Ah – my mistake! You're Cimmerians/Aquilonians/Clan Murrogh, etc. It's so hard to tell the difference!'

'Well? Has anyone the courage to fight me? Or are you all as terrified as that cowardly chieftain of yours and his whore wife?'

'[Insert Name], chief of the [insert clan]. We're here to murder your men, ravage your women and to use your scalp and beard to wipe our backsides. Surrender now and we'll make the murder quick, the ravaging pleasurable and I'll only use your scalp and beard once.'

'By Crom's Eye... I asked for your best. You send me your children...'





can, for a number of combat rounds equal to his *highest* Ability modifier (and always a minimum of 1 round), choose ONE of the following combat benefits.

- ✿ Improve DR equal to his Level, divided by 2 (round down)
- ✿ Double his Damage Modifier
- ✿ Increase Attack Modifier equal to his Level, divided by 2 (round down)
- ✿ Increase one Saving Throw modifier by an amount equal to his Level, divided by 2 (round down)
- ✿ Increase either Dodge *or* Parry by an amount equal to his Level, divided by 2 (round down)

Once these additional abilities cease, they cannot be reactivated until the next fresh battle or combat. In addition, at the end of the combat or battle, the character automatically gains the Shaken condition (see page 225 of the *Conan* rules).

Shield Wall Effect

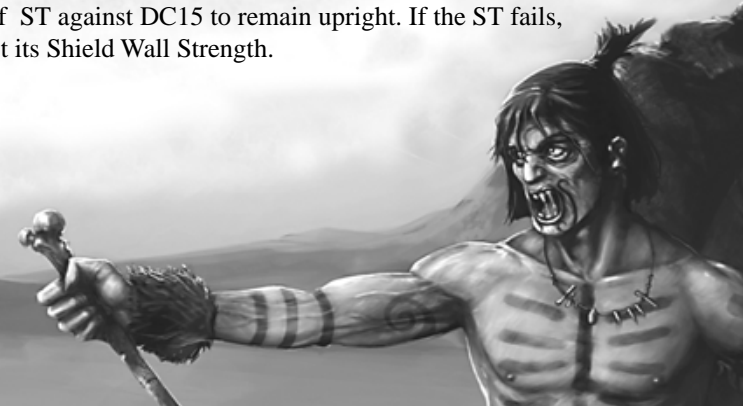
| 1d20 | Effect |
|-------|--|
| 1-3 | Drop weapon in the pushing and shoving. Must retrieve weapon or draw another weapon before free melee starts, or must fight bare-handed. |
| 4-11 | No significant event this round. |
| 12 | Shield strap breaks, risking the strength of the shield wall. Subtract 1 from the 1d20 roll used to resolve the outcome of clashing shield walls for the character's side. |
| 13 | Stumble and fall. No ST allowed. Unit sustains 1 Break Point against its Shield Wall Strength. |
| 14-15 | Sustain wound to the groin from a well-placed sword or spear point that find its way beneath the character's shield. Sustain 1d10 points of damage. |
| 16 | Sustain wound to the head from a well-placed spear thrust from the opposing side's rear ranks. Sustain 2d6 points of damage. |
| 17-18 | Sustain wound to the leg from a well-placed sword or spear point that finds its way beneath the character's shield. Sustain 1d8 points of damage. |
| 19-20 | Trip due to false footing. Make a Ref ST against DC15 to remain upright. If the ST fails, the unit sustain 1 Break Point against its Shield Wall Strength. |

CHARACTERS FIGHTING IN A SHIELD WALL

Use the shield wall abstraction, above, to resolve most shield wall conflicts.

A character fighting in a shield wall occupies one square; thus the total length of a shield wall is determined by the number of unobstructed squares available. The same applies to the depth of the supporting ranks, and the number of ranks is going to be determined by the number of supporting troops available. Usually a single, long shield wall is employed, but, depending on the arrangement of an opposing force's troops, several shorter shield walls might be used.

When Cimmerian characters are fighting in the front rank of a shield wall, there is the chance that, each combat round, they might incur a particular Shield Wall Effect, as determined by the below table. The character should make a Ref Saving Throw against a DC of 20. He may add the Shield Wall Strength of his own shield wall as a positive modifier to the Ref ST. If the Ref ST fails, then roll 1d20 and consult the Effects column.





FREE MELEE

When a shield wall breaks, free melee is possible, and, where Cimmerians are concerned, it is bloody affair. Those who successfully break a shield wall surge forward, tearing into the ranks of the enemy and gain a +5 bonus to all attacks for the next 1d4 rounds of combat as they take advantage of the confused and broken enemy before them.

Any character that is caught in the front rank of a shield wall that is broken around them acts as though Shaken (see Conan, page 225) for 1d4 combat rounds. At the end of this period the character is able to make sense of the confusion and fight and act normally.

SEEKING THE THICK OF THE BATTLE

Every Cimmerian wants to be in the middle of the action, and attacking as many foes as possible, using every ounce of prowess and combat advantage afforded to them. To die in battle, and die surrounded by slain foes and worthy ones, having fought well, is what every Cimmerian considers a Good Death. Therefore, once into free melee, Cimmerians typically seek out a group of opponents to plough into, killing or maiming as many as possible. This recklessness ends many young, enthusiastic clansmen's lives, but Cimmerians are not all reckless and foolhardy. The best Cimmerian warriors seek the thick of a battle, but weigh-up their options as best they can to ensure the advantage is on their side. Fighting in twos or threes, with a valued companion to either side, is a common tactic, whilst the strongest, fastest, most experienced warriors will happily charge into a group of less-able opponents, hoping that his own prowess and experience will carry the melee his way.

Cimmerians abhor the idea of retreat and surrender, and chieftains or war band captains who find themselves, reluctantly, having to issue such an order have a hard time regrouping and ordering warriors who are caught in the battle-lust, especially if, in their own small melee, they have an advantage and the bodies are stacking high around them.

Any character with the Leadership Feat is able to gain the attention and compliance of his rampant war band or army by making a successful Will ST against a DC of 20. The leader may add any modifiers due to Reputation, and due to his Charisma ability, to the result of the ST. If the war band or army is clearly losing



a combat, and has sustained any losses, then the DC is reduced to 15.

CIMMERIAN FORCES AND STRATEGIES

Cimmerians have three typical battle units: the *war band*, the *clan* and the *army*.

A *war band* typically comprises of 27 warriors, including a captain (usually a warrior of 8th Level or higher) and clansmen of varying ages and degrees of experience. Elite war bands usually comprise of warriors of 6th level or higher, and are responsible for protecting the chief of a clan, although they are often used as the vanguard for a clan unit.

The *clan* unit consists of as many war bands a particular clan can field. The clan champion or champions act as field captains, marshalling the war band captains, but also getting into the thick of the battle alongside the rank and file. Most champions are of 9th or 10th Level, but may be less experienced and chosen for other qualities. The clan is always commanded by the chieftain. The chieftain is not expected to fight unless there is no option, and usually





takes position at the rear of his forces to issue orders to his champion or champions. Generally, though, Cimmerians fight in a predictable formation of shield wall followed by free melee, making complex tactical deployments a rarity amongst clan leaders.

When a clan goes to war, every warrior of the clan is expected to fight, even those who are wounded or ill. Women fight too, although the clan chieftain has the say over whether or not women will fight, and, if so, which will join the war bands. When a clan goes to war there is a real risk that many of its warriors will die gloriously, and the very existence of a clan is threatened if there are no, or few, women left alive to bear more children and raise the existing ones, but it is quite normal for war bands and clans to include Cimmerian women, standing in the shield wall or carving their way through enemies with the same ferocity and appetite for carnage as the men folk.

'Amalric, delving into the scenes of a turbulent life, recalled a desperate battle on the northern frontier, and wild figures rushing into the melee - tall, supple women, stark naked, their black hair streaming, their eyes blazing, swords dripping redly in their hands. He shook his head.'

'Black Colossus' Robert E Howard

Armies consist of multiple clans. The clans arrange themselves into several war bands or combine all their warriors into a single, clan unit, depending on the nature and size of the enemy being faced. Overall command is given to a single chieftain who is declared supreme commander during any war council convened at the Field of Chiefs. The commander can decide if any clans will be held in reserve, used as cavalry (Hoath horsemen, for instance) or missile troops, and which clans will engage which parts of the enemy (and when). Usually the commander will continue to convene with the other clan chiefs right up to the battle itself, in order to determine the overall strategy and tactics to be used. The expectation is that each chief will work to the plan outlined by the commander and agreed to by the war council, but, chieftains being chieftains, and strong-willed Cimmerian chieftains at that, it is not uncommon for the strategic concerns of the commander to be either ignored or supplanted by a chieftain's own strategies, if he finds the overall plan wanting.

Commanders are always wary of clan alliances and enmities, and arrange clans on the battlefield accordingly. Clans rarely combine their strengths, although they will fight side by side, but no commander worth his salt would every place feuding clans, such as Canach and Murrough, close to each other. Even though a common enemy

faces them, Cimmerians engaged in a blood feud will take the opportunity of the confusion and mayhem to settle clan differences, if they are given the chance.

At the end of it all, Cimmerians rarely analyse the outcomes of large battles and spend time apportioning blame. If the Cimmerians win, and win decisively, then the job has been done and Crom has smiled. If, however, losses are heavy and the actions of a single, recalcitrant chieftain are to blame, then enmity and even blood feuds might result, depending on the scale of the loss.

CAVALRY

The general geography of Cimmeria does not lend itself to the development of significant cavalry forces, and Cimmerian clans rarely employ mounted troops. Some exceptions exist: Hoath clan, noted horsemen, do field cavalry war bands that are used to plough into opposing units that are already in some state of disarray, but generally cavalry units are deployed to circle and outflank enemy units and attempt to attack from the rear. This is not always a popular tactic. Cimmerians prefer to face an enemy head-on, and outflanking for a rear attack is often considered as a sign of weakness. Yet sometimes the logistics of a battle demand it – usually against a large, but typically inexperienced or easily intimidated enemy, that can be driven towards the waiting swords of the foot warriors. Where a Cimmerian cavalry has no clear advantage though, mounted units prefer to storm into the conflict in order to use hooves and spears to trample and impale as many of the enemy as possible.

ARCHERS AND MISSILE TROOPS

Again, missile units are not a common sight on a Cimmerian battlefield. Standing back and lobbing spears or loosing arrows denies Cimmerians the Crom-given right to see the whites of an enemy's eyes and feel his lifeblood ooze down the length of a sword blade. If the conditions demand it, some war bands will provide missile cover for advancing shield walls, but the general preference is for hand to hand combat rather than distant skirmishing.

PERSONAL WEAPONS AND ARMOUR

Visceral creatures, Cimmerians enjoy the feel of good, heavy steel in their hands; the heavier and longer the better. The broadsword is the preferred weapon for most





Cimmerian warriors, but a decent long spear or battleaxe does just as well. Two handed weapons are a favourite, but even the strongest warriors knows that swinging a huge, double-handed sword or axe soon saps the strength and consume half the energy. So, most Cimmerians go into battle armed with a double-handed weapon and a single-handed one, plus a shield, for the times when a shield will may prove to be essential to the conflict. Daggers or knives are worn on the belt, at the thigh or in the boot, but are used as weapons of last resort rather than battlefield tools.

When it comes to armour, Cimmerians know the value of good protection, but they also know that armour is hot, heavy and restricts both speed and movement. Many fight without armour; some fight naked. Leather is often preferred because it is easy to maintain, easy to climb into, lighter and lets the body breathe. Helmets are considered a cumbersome novelty by many Cimmerians, for whilst they protect the skull, peripheral vision and hearing are compromised, and every good Cimmerians knows that the senses are as vital as the sword when it comes to waging war.





Gods of the Everlasting Mist

'They have no hope here or hereafter,' answered Conan. 'Their gods are Crom and his dark race, who rule over a sunless place of everlasting mist, which is the world of the dead.'

'Robert E. Howard. The Phoenix on the Sword'

Can there be a bleaker view of the gods than Conan's summary of his people's pantheon? As Howard writes, 'His gods were simple and understandable; Crom was their chief, and he lived on a great mountain, whence he sent forth dooms and death. It was useless to call on Crom, because he was a gloomy, savage god, and he hated weaklings. But he gave a man courage at birth, and the will and might to kill his enemies, which, in the Cimmerian's mind, is all any god should be expected to do.'

RELIGION IN CIMMERIA

The pantheon of Cimmerians is dark and merciless. Crom rules them all, and they are of his race. Crom is a dire god, as gloomy as the Cimmerians themselves and as dangerous. Cimmerians do not pray to Crom, having no use for prayer, nor do they indulge in outright worship of him or any of his kind. Crom and his kind despise weaklings who call on them for aid and would likely make the situation worse for the petitioner. The Cimmerians value individuality and self-worth; their gods expect them to take care of life themselves. Indeed, Crom only takes pride in a Cimmerian if that Cimmerian never calls upon him for aid in his life. Cimmerians are supposed to take what they want from life, not ask a god for blessings, wealth, health or anything else.

Crom is believed to live on Ben Morgh, and so Cimmerians shy away from that tall mountain to avoid his dooms and death. After death, the Cimmerians believe their spirit travels to a grey realm, misty and icy, where they would forever wander in cheerless gloom. Still, the Cimmerians did not fear death and gladly met it with steel in hand and a war cry on their lips. Cimmerians do not offer any form of worship to their dread gods; at best they venerate them. Cimmerians do not sacrifice bulls to Crom and Crom cannot materialise. They do not have feasts in Crom's honour. Many authors seem to have a need to portray Crom as a 'good' god who actually, on some level, cares. Howard's writing does not give this portrayal of Crom. Howard writes of the Cimmerians, '...for it was their belief that their gods were indifferent to the fate of men.' (Notes on the Various Peoples of the Hyborean Age).

An indifferent creator god is a characteristic of many animist religions. The primitive religious beliefs of the Cimmerians fall into this category. Spirits walk the earth and they inhabit the things of the earth. While man has no chance of communicating with Crom, they might be able to influence the spirits through minor little rituals. Ritual is a part of life, important for placating the spirits so that food may be found and survival ensured. They have death rituals, divinatory rituals, agricultural rituals, hunting rituals, rites of passage, healing rituals and war rituals. Common rites of passage include birth rites, naming rites, marriage rites, initiation rites (such as initiating a warrior or a chief) and death rites. Many of these rituals, while rooted in an animist or ancestor-worship religious context, have practical purposes. Most of their rites involve chanting or singing sombre dirges.

The other gods of the Cimmerians are just as grim and indifferent as Crom himself. The Cimmerians believe in their existence, but they do not worship them. They are just as anything else – there, but what use is worshipping them? One may as



will pray to a tree or a statue as pray to a god. Cimmerians will often use the name of a god in a curse, but never in a prayer. Cimmerians do not worship their own gods lest their attention be attracted.

Cimmerians do not build temples. The spirit world occupies two places, the soul and the universe (the invisible and the visible), so specific places cutting them off from the world would also effectively cut them off from the soul. A temple is a civilised concept the Cimmerians do not really understand.

OF FUNERARY AND MOURNING

Cimmerian funerary customs are quick and deadly. The fallen are left where they fall, or disposed of simply; it is no matter, since their shades are departed. A wake is held, with those present drinking a toast to the departed, then pouring out the remainder of their beverages onto the ground for the dead. If revenge is called for – and the

BY CROM!

To evoke the feel of Howard's milieu in your campaign, avoid the pitfall of presuming Crom is 'good.' Cimmerians do not want to attract Crom's attention: as Conan said, 'What use to call on him? Little he cares if men live or die. Better to be silent than to call his attention to you; he will send you dooms, not fortune! He is grim and loveless...' The actions of Crom, of any real supernatural entity, usually brings about the destruction of men, not the succour of man. Simply put, the Cimmerians do not pray to Crom... ever – although his name is frequently invoked as a curse or to fortify an oath or promise: 'By Crom!'

Cimmerians can feud like no-one but the Tlazitlans – the drinking-vessels are then smashed, with each warrior boasting of how he personally will take his revenge on behalf of the deceased. Such vengeance is usually in the form of a number of heads, to be collected from the enemy tribe that slew him. Many of the Cimmerian tribes practice



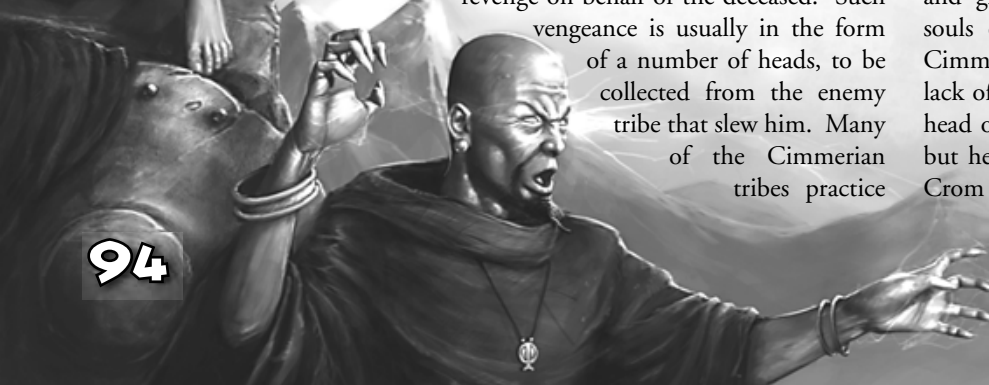
headhunting of their fallen foes in a ritualistic manner, similar to that of their later Celtic descendants.

CIMMERIAN PANTHEON

Whilst Crom is pre-eminent, the Cimmerians also have lesser gods. These include Badb, Morrigan, Macha, Nemain, Dianchecht, and Dagda. Conan also swears by the names of Lir and Mannanan Mac Lir. Just as with Crom, these gods and goddesses are considered to be bleak and dire entities and are not worshipped. They exist only to give the Cimmerians something else to be depressed about. To the Cimmerians, these gods' names are to be used when making a particularly strict oath or when cursing - but never in a more religious context.

CROM

From his mountainous seat, Ben Morgh, Crom watches the world dispassionately, sending form storms, dooms and gloominess to haunt both the landscape and the souls of men. His grim demeanour lives through the Cimmerian outlook, as does his courage, ferocity and lack of mercy. Crom cares for no one and nothing. He is head of a pantheon of similarly dismal and warlike gods, but he is neither their champion, king nor father figure. Crom simply is, and through his existence, so is his will.





Cimmerians have no explanation for his merciless nature and neither is one required. Crom is a god, after all, and that is simply how he is made.

Crom is the chief Cimmerian god, who grants no boons save the strength of the sword arm and fire in the heart, which are his *only* gifts to all Cimmerians. He and his pantheon do not truly have worshippers or priests. Nominally, every Cimmerian is a follower of Crom but they have long since learned that he takes pride in them only if they never call on his aid in their lives. Cimmerians are expected to take what they want from life using Crom's gifts, not call on him for assistance every time they are in need. That would be weak and Crom despises weaklings – he would sooner see them dead than help them out.

Whilst Crom is considered a storm god and a god of ill-omen, he is, first and foremost, a war god, and pre-eminent amongst all the Cimmerian war gods. No foe, it is believed, can withstand Crom's wrath and, when immortals ruled the earth instead of men, there was no foe that he could not vanquish. His strength, perhaps, has bred his contempt for all others; and Crom is a contemptuous god, scorning weakness and the emotions that go with it. His harsh nature is reflected in the world spreading out before his home, Ben Morgh, and those who live in his shadow are bound to reflect his demeanour.

BAÐB

Badb is a war goddess who often assumes the form of a raven or carrion-crow (her favorite disguise although only occasionally is a wolf) and is then referred to as *Badb Catha*, meaning "battle raven". Not only is she believed to take part in battles themselves, she also influences their outcome by causing confusion among the warriors with her magic. The battle-field is often called the Land of Badb, and Badb is invoked as a curse or oath by Cimmerians preparing themselves for a full-on battle.

Some warriors invoking Badb's power in the eve of a battle recite her dire lay:

*Summer without flowers,
Kine without milk,
Women without modesty,
Men without valour;
Captives without a king,
Woods without mast,
Sea without produce*

The belief is not that Badb will aid the sword arm or

strengthen the shield-wall, but rather turn the fortunes of battle against the enemy, thus making it easier for the Cimmerians to enter the Land of Badb.

DAGDA

A little regarded god who might once have been king of all gods, but was defeated, unsurprisingly, by Crom. A few clans invoke his name now and again, but any power Dagda might have is completely in the shadow of Crom and his brethren.

DIANCHECHT

A god of healing and ploughing, Cimmerians have little use for Dianchecht talents unless the healing speeds the ability to get back into a battle. Likewise in a land where Crom's will renders the land hard and stony, Dianchecht cannot be relied upon the keep ploughshares sharp and the ground yielding.

LIR

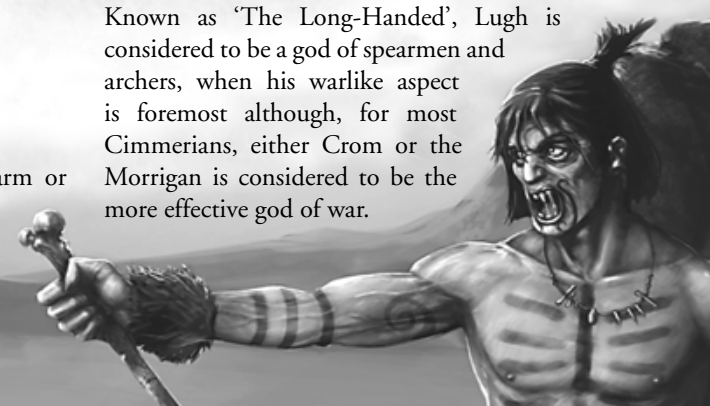
Lir, the father of Mannanan Mac Lir, is the god of the sea in its primal, elemental form, which is a little strange as Cimmeria is a land-locked nation without access to the ocean. Perhaps in their history, the Cimmerian lands included part of Pictland (which would also account for some of the Cimmerian hatred of that dusky race).

Another theory is that the Cimmerian collective memory, which holds tales of a great flood that destroyed the world, attribute this catastrophe to Lir's wrath, and so, whilst having no clear relationship with this tempestuous god, have no wish to invite further cataclysm by ignoring his undoubted power.

LUGH

Little mentioned by Cimmerians as a whole, but brought to the lips in some clans, Lugh is the god of personal prowess, especially arts and crafts. He is also the god of the harvest although, given the poor weather and low reliance on crops amongst Cimmerians, this aspect of his nature is rarely acknowledged.

Known as 'The Long-Handed', Lugh is considered to be a god of spearmen and archers, when his warlike aspect is foremost although, for most Cimmerians, either Crom or the Morigan is considered to be the more effective god of war.





MACHA

Macha is a goddess of war and often associated with horses, but she also is in charge of fertility, helping to fill the land with warring Cimmerians. Some ancient Cimmerian lays identify Macha as leading a settlement of the new lands after Lir's flood destroyed all, bringing war to those who opposed her return to the land.

MANNANAN MAC LIR

The son of Lir, Mannanan Mac Lir is also a sea god in a more humanised, heroic form, and is considered to have strong connections to the islands of the dead, as well as to weather and the mists between the worlds. The mists



**WORSHIP
REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE
CIMMERIAN
PANTHEON**

- Requirements of Worship:**
Be a Cimmerian.
- Benefits of Worship:** None.
- Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:**
None (no priests).
- Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** –
- Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** –

war goddess is the Morrigan, a goddess of battle, strife, and fertility. Her name translates as either Great Queen or Phantom Queen, and both epithets are entirely appropriate for her and her dark ways. Together with Badb and Nemain the Morrigan comprises a trio of morose goddesses. The Morrigan's symbol is the hooded crow and any Cimmerian catching sight of one of these birds is apt to utter Morrigan's name and spit thrice, to avert any doom she might lay upon him. Killing a hooded crow is considered to attract considerable ill fortune and hence all crows and ravens are exempt from Cimmerian hunts.

NEMAIN

Another war goddess, Nemain also governs sacred springs and wells. In battle she is known as 'the venomous' and 'the Fury' or 'the Frenzy' for she becomes a berserk rage when in combat, slaying without thought or fatigue.

shrouding Cimmeria are thus of Mannanan Mac Lir's creation.

Mannanan Mac Lir's is believed to have a wife, Fand, who is a queen of the Otherworld, and he is the foster-father of many gods, including Lugh. He is the guardian of the Blessed Isles, and the ruler of Mag Mell, an Otherworld island where giants are believed to dwell. Manannan Mac Lir has a sail-less ship that follows his command, and his cloak renders him invisible.

**THE BRIDGE OF
SWORDS, THE ROAD
OF BONES AND THE
OTHERWORLD**

Ever fatalistic, Cimmerians do not believe in some paradise or benevolent realm of the gods when they die, but simply an eternity of existence at the gods' whim. This after-death world, unknowable but grim nonetheless, is called the Otherworld. Here the human soul becomes a shadowy presence that the gods may favour or torment dependent on how they are disposed to the soul they receive.

This stark belief notwithstanding, Cimmerians do believe

**T H E
MORRIGAN**

The primary
Cimmerian



in a journey to the otherworld. Upon death, the soul must cross the Bridge of Swords, which crosses a yawning chasm of non-existence. Cowards, traitors and enemies of Cimmeria are doomed to fail in crossing the Bridge of Swords, which is lined with the blades of Crom and his kind. Only true, brave Cimmerians cross the bridge unscathed and pass then into the Road of Bones. This road, which stretches into the otherworld, is made from the skeletal remains of Crom's foes, ground into a white ash that lends some comfort to the weary feet of the traveller as he completes his final journey.

The culmination of that journey is the otherworld itself, where the soul is neither judged, rewarded nor punished, but simply used in ways that Cimmerians cannot, and do not, wish to contemplate with any depth. The otherworld is truly an unknown and unknowable realm, governed by the likes of Crom and the Morrigan. It might be a world of endless battle and feasting, enduring torment, or simply an existence without further awareness. For Cimmerians, the best they can hope for is to cross the bridge and walk the road, accepting the afterlife that only the gods themselves can dictate.

Those who fail to cross the bridge, but who do not plunge over its edge, might return as restless, sometimes malevolent, spirits, eager to inflict their torment on others.

CIMMERIAN ORACLES

This was something he could understand. The barbarians had their oracles.

Robert E. Howard. Black Colossus

Cimmerians are not the scholarly sort and are prohibited from taking the scholar class at 1st level. They have no priests, sorcerers, shamans or witches. Those who traffic with the power of the gods, even through prayer, are weaklings in their eyes. The Cimmerians do not make sacrifices to Crom or any other deity and see those that do as either touched in the head or simply weak. The Cimmerians are superstitious, not wanting to try the gods.

Those Cimmerians who take the barbarian/scholar multi-classed path are known as *oracles*, as befitting their superstitious nature. These oracles can read the both the omens dooms evident in a flight of birds or in the entrails of an animal. Just about any aspect of nature is endowed with spiritual significance that can be read by those who are wise. These Cimmerian oracles learn the sorcery style of Divination only; thereafter they take bonus feats in lieu of additional sorcery styles and, when they run out

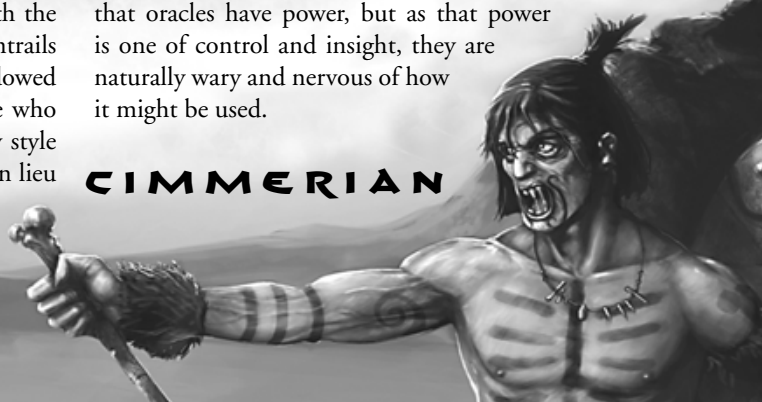


of divination spells to learn, they take +2 skill points in lieu of additional advanced spells.

A clan might have one or several oracles, or none at all. There is little consistency from one clan to another and no clan considers itself weak or wanting if there is no oracle amongst its populace. Chieftains are often scornful of an oracle's powers in public but, as superstitious as the next man, listen to, and worry over, the oracle's proclamations.

Within the clan the oracle occupies a peculiar place. Many are nervous or afraid of their abilities, and react scornfully or insultingly; however it is never right to tempt fate, Cimmerians believe, and so when an oracle starts his or her deliberations, adopting the grim face every oracle develops when reading for signs, people hush and listen. If an oracle is present in a community, he or she is consulted before every great hunt or battle, even though the advice or reading might be received dismissively. Cimmerians understand that oracles have power, but as that power is one of control and insight, they are naturally wary and nervous of how it might be used.

CIMMERIAN





BLIND BARDS

'Crom! I know this place! The blind bards have sung the story of this battle with the Vanir around every campfire in Cimmeria!'

Larry Hama, 'The Corridor of Mullah-Kajar', *Conan the Barbarian*, Vol. 1, No. 117, December 1980

In addition to the oracles, Cimmeria also has an oral tradition of story-telling by blind-men who can no longer provide for themselves, their families or their clans. Cimmerians fear the written word, believing letters and runes to be magical. Blind or blinded Cimmerians often multi-class into scholar and become the oral repositories for Cimmerian and clan histories and stories, thus earning their keep. It is also possible that Cimmerians intentionally blind their bards to prevent them from becoming literate. Again, just like the oracles, if a blind bard of Cimmeria learns a sorcery style, he will likely limit himself to Divination only. Many Cimmerians consider writing to be a form of magic, so literacy is rarely available to Cimmerian scholars who have not travelled. These scholars will focus on Knowledge skills (as many as possible) and Perform skills (to convey their knowledge).

Of course, not all bards are blind, so loss of eyesight is not an *essential* precondition of the profession.

ANCESTORS

Although death is a doom from which there is no escape, Cimmerians believe that the ancestors – those individuals important to a clan's welfare and traditions – still exert an influence long after passing into the murkiness of the Otherworld. That influence is not felt at an individual level and nor is it the power of a god or demon. Instead it is the power of respect that ought to be accorded to those who served the clan.

Ancestors are not worshipped, but they are honoured. The traditional time for such honours to be accorded is the ninth day of every ninth month. Small offerings of food and drink at a commemorative stone or shrine usually suffice, perhaps with a feast to complete the proceedings. Whilst Cimmerians can never be accused of sentimentality, the veneration

of the ancestors is, perhaps, the closest concession they have. Without the deeds and wills of the ancestors, there would be no clan and no Cimmeria. Without their feats and trials others would have nothing to emulate – especially on the battlefield or in the hunt – and skills would never grow; clans never become stronger.

No class, in game terms, is dedicated to veneration of the ancestors; neither is any magic pertinent to the practice. Everyone takes part in honouring the ancestors, just as every Cimmerian is considered to follow Crom and his brethren.

SUPERSTITION, TABOO AND GEASA

For all their fierce practicality, Cimmerians are not a strictly rational people. They do not base their actions, beliefs, or lifestyle completely on what can be deduced from observation and experience. They are shaped by their environment (and the inevitability of Crom's overarching doom of the world) and react in ways the landscape causes them to feel. Cimmerians are, however, possessed of a strong sense of wonder and superstition. Fate cannot be avoided, but neither should it be tempted or rushed towards. Simple customs and behaviours can prevent the worst aspects of fate from manifesting although, ultimately, one's lot in life is wound from the gods' distaff.

Superstitions take many forms and are usually associated with avoiding bad luck (rather than encouraging good luck). These simple acts prevent one from becoming prematurely noticed by one's fate, and a few examples of typical Cimmerian superstitions are as follows:

- ❖ *Never bid farewell on a bridge (if you want to see the other person alive again)*
- ❖ *Seeing a single crow is very unlucky; seeing a single hooded crow signals war is close by*
- ❖ *If a bride does not sew a swan's feather into her husband's bedding, she cannot guarantee his fidelity. If a husband does not sew a hawk's feather into the bride's, then likewise.*
- ❖ *Burning beef bones when making broth brings a bad harvest and poor hunting.*
- ❖ *Malice and envy are to be feared when sparks jump out of the fire.*
- ❖ *If thirteen people sit down to dine, the last to rise will meet*



with ill fortune.

Every Cimmerian is beset by doubts and superstition. Every Cimmerian has a need to go about things in a particular way and, if that little routine is disturbed, then only bad luck and poor fortune can result. Cimmerians are therefore very careful not to disturb either their own routines or those of their comrades.

TABOO

Taboos are things that are not done, both as a matter of clan tradition and as a way of avoiding bad fortune. Usually clan taboos are linked with the ancestors and breaking a taboo is considered as bringing bad fortune on the whole clan and not just oneself. Taboos therefore differ from clan to clan, but typical common taboos are:

- ✿ *Murdering innocents*
- ✿ *Murdering clan members outside of a blood feud*
- ✿ *Cowardice*
- ✿ *Defiling an artefact of the ancestors*
- ✿ *Theft within the clan*
- ✿ *Theft of clan treasure*
- ✿ *Eating human flesh*
- ✿ *Killing crows, rooks or ravens*
- ✿ *Killing animals sacred to the clan*
- ✿ *Rape*
- ✿ *Arson*
- ✿ *Making independent peace with a blood feud enemy*
- ✿ *Treachery to the clan*
- ✿ *Ignoring the call of the Bloody Spear*
- ✿ *Worshipping false/foreign gods (indeed, worshipping any gods)*
- ✿ *Homosexuality*
- ✿ *Paedophilia*
- ✿ *Necrophilia*
- ✿ *Torture*

✿ *Lying*

Breaking a taboo usually involves a clan punishment and, given Cimmeria's lack of mercy, this can mean death. But, some taboos are punishable not just by a physical punishment, but also by the accepting of Geasa.

Any character breaking a clan taboo is considered to have lost his Code of Honour as per page 81 of the Conan rules. He must also accept a geas. By accepting the geas he regains the benefits of his Code of Honour but is then bound by the terms of the geas.

GEASA

A geas is a punishment of atonement and can be a permanent, lifetime affair depending on the taboo broken and whether it was broken knowingly. A Cimmerian burdened with a geas must comply with the geas's conditions for the duration compelled by the clan chief or elders.

A geas can be a social condition, such as a vow of chastity or being forbidden to eat meat on clan festival days. It may also be more perilous, compelling the Cimmerian to act in a way contrary to clan or individual norms in order to atone for the broken taboo. Sample geasa include:

- ✿ *Never use a sword in battle*
- ✿ *Take a vow of permanent silence*
- ✿ *Accept no healing from wounds inflicted in battle*
- ✿ *Wear no armour*
- ✿ *Drink no alcohol*
- ✿ *Take a permanent vow of chastity*
- ✿ *Become a direct slave of the chief or an elder*
- ✿ *Accept exile from the clan and make no attempt to join another*
- ✿ *Quest into enemy lands and kill a given number of enemies*
- ✿ *Live outdoors permanently, never accepting shelter*
- ✿ *Eat no meat – offer all meat given to the ancestors or clan chief*
- ✿ *Eat no vegetables - offer all vegetables given to the ancestors or clan chief*
- ✿ *Never utter a single lie*

Cimmerian Gazetteer

This chapter details sample Cimmerians for use as non-player characters, plus a digest of creatures found in the Cimmerian lands.

CHARACTER DIGEST

A typical Cimmerian war band comprises 27 warriors. Of these 13 will be between levels 1 and 4; 10 will be between levels 5 and 7, and 3 will be level 8 and over, with one of those (usually the highest level) being the leader.

Sample Generic Cimmerians

| | 1st level Barbarian Warrior | 3rd level War band Member | 5th level War band Veteran |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| Hit Dice: | 1d10+1 (11 hit points) | 3d10+3 (25 hit points) | 5d10+5 (37 hit points) |
| Initiative: | +5 | +6 | +8 |
| Speed: | 30 ft. | | |
| DV Dodge: | 13 (+3 Dex) | 15 (+3 Dex, +2 base) | 17 (+4 Dex, +3 base) |
| DV Parry: | 11 (+1 Str) | 12 (+1 Str, +1 base) | 12 (+1 Str, +1 base) |
| BAB/Grapple: | +1/+2 | +3/+4 | +5/+6 |
| Attack: | Broadsword +2 (1d8+1/x2, AP 2); Hunting spear +4 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) | Broadsword +5 (1d8+1/x2, AP 2); Hunting spear +6 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) | Broadsword +6 (1d8+1/x2, AP 2); Hunting spear +9 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) |
| Full Attack: | Broadsword +2 melee (1d8+1/x2, AP 2, and 1d6/x2); or Hunting spear +5 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) | Broadsword +4 melee (1d8+1/x2, AP 2, and 1d6/x2); or Hunting spear +6 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) | Broadsword +6 melee (1d8+1/x2, AP 2, and 1d6/x2); or Hunting spear +9 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Special Attacks: | Versatility (only -2 penalty when using improvised weapons) | Versatility (only -2 penalty when using improvised weapons), Crimson Mist | Versatility (only -2 penalty when using improvised weapons), Crimson Mist |
| Special Qualities: | Cimmerian racial qualities, +1 all Will Saves. +2 bonus to all Climb checks | Cimmerian racial qualities, +1 all Will Saves. +2 bonus to all Climb checks | Cimmerian racial qualities, +1 all Will Saves. +2 bonus to all Climb checks |
| Space/Reach: | 5 ft.(1)/5 ft.(1) | 5 ft.(1)/5 ft.(1) | 5 ft.(1)/5 ft.(1) |
| Saves: | Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0 | Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +1 | Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +1 |
| Abilities: | Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 8 | Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 8 | Str 12, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 8 |
| Skills: Note: | Hide +11, Jump +7, Listen +2, | Hide +12, Jump +7, Listen +3, | Hide +14, Jump +7, Listen +4, |
| Circumstance bonuses figured into skills | Move Silently +11, Spot +2, Bluff +2, Handle Animal +4, Hide +2, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (Geography) +0, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Ride +4, Spot +2; | Move Silently +12, Spot +3, Craft (Woodworking) +2, Gather Information +2, Hide -1, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3, Swim +9; | Move Silently +14, Spot +4, Bluff +5, Climb +5, Forgery +1, Heal +2, Hide +1, Intimidate +10, Jump +5, Knowledge (Local Area) +2, Listen +7, Move Silently +1, Spot +3, Tumble +3; |
| Feats: | Shield Proficiency | Blind-Fight, Weapon Focus (Broadsword). | Power Attack, Quick Draw |
| Reputation: | 1 (Brave) | 2 (Brave) | 4 (Brave) |
| Advancement: | By character class (probably barbarian) | | |
| Possessions: | Broadsword, hunting spear, round shield | | |

Clan champions are usually found at level 10 and higher, and are generally responsible for controlling all the war bands within a particular clan. A chieftain can, technically, be of any level, as whoever prevails in a challenge and is ratified by the clan takes the title. However, most chieftains are at least 10th level and those who have been longstanding in the role can be expected to be between levels 15 and 20.





Sample Generic Cimmerians (Continued)

| | 8th level Champion/War Chief | 10th level Clan Champion/Chief | 15th level Elder Clan Champion/Chief |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Hit Dice: | 8d10+16 (65 hit points) | 10d10+20 (80 hit points) | 10d10+30+15 (132 hit points) |
| Initiative: | +11 | +12 | +15 |
| Speed: | 30 ft. | | |
| DV Dodge: | 21 (+5 Dex, +6 base) | 22 (+5 Dex, +7 base) | 26 (+5 Dex, +11 base) |
| DV Parry: | 14 (+1 Str, +3 base) | 14 (+1 Str, +3 base) | 16 (+1 Str, +5 base) |
| DR: | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| BAB/Grapple: | +8/+9 | +10/+12 | +15/+17 |
| Attack: | Broadsword +9 (1d8+1/x2, AP 2); Hunting spear +13 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) | Broadsword +12 (1d8+1/x2, AP 2); Hunting spear +15 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) | Broadsword +18 (1d8+1/x2, AP 2); Hunting spear +21 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) |
| Full Attack: | Broadsword +9/+4 (1d8+1/x2, AP 2, and 1d6/x2); Hunting spear +13/+8/+3 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) | Broadsword +12/+7 (1d8+1/x2, AP 2, and 1d6/x2); Hunting spear +15/+10/+5 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) | Broadsword +18/+13/+8 (1d8+1/x2, AP 2, and 1d6/x2); Hunting spear +21/+16/+11 (1d8/x2, AP 1*) |
| Special Attacks: | Versatility (no penalty when using improvised weapons), Crimson Mist | Versatility (no penalty when using improvised weapons), Crimson Mist | Versatility (double threat range), Crimson Mist, Greater Crimson Mist |
| Special Qualities: | Cimmerian racial qualities, +1 all Will Saves. +2 bonus to all Climb checks, Bite Sword, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge | Cimmerian racial qualities, +1 all Will Saves. +2 bonus to all Climb checks, Bite Sword, Trap Sense +3, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, DR 1/- | Cimmerian racial qualities, +1 all Will Saves. +2 bonus to all Climb checks, Bite Sword, Trap Sense +5, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, DR 2/- |
| Space/Reach: | 5 ft.(1)/5 ft.(1) | 5 ft.(1)/5 ft.(1) | 5 ft.(1)/5 ft.(1) |
| Saves: | Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +3 | Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +3 | Fort +12, Ref +15, Will +7 |



| | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| Abilities: | Str 13, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 9 | Str 14, Dex 21, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10 | Str 15, Dex 23, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11 |
| Skills: | Hide +18, Jump +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +18, Spot +5, Survival +10, Tumble +8 | Hide +20, Jump +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +20, Spot +5, Survival +12, Tumble +8 | Hide +24, Jump +12, Listen +12, Move Silently +23, Spot +6, Survival +18, Tumble +9 |
| Feats: | Diehard, Power Attack, Track | Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Diehard, Power Attack | Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Diehard, Improved Critical, Power Attack, Weapon Focus |
| Reputation: | 7 (Brave) | 10 (Brave) | 15 (Brave) |
| Advancement: | By character class (probably barbarian) | | |
| Possessions: | Broadsword, hunting spear, leather armour, appropriate ornaments | | |

TYPICAL CIMMERIAN ORACLE

Oracle: Medium Cimmerian
Barbarian 3/ Scholar 3;
Hit Dice: 3d10+3d6-6 (26 hit points)
Initiative: +4 (+0 Dex, +4 Ref)
Speed: 30 ft.
Dodge Defence: 13 (+3 level, +0 Dex)
Parry Defence: 14 (+2 level, +2 Str)
BAB/Grapple: +5/+7
Attack: Broadsword +7 melee; 1d10+2/ 19-20 x2/ AP 5
Full Attack: Broadsword +7 melee; 1d10+2/ 19-20 x2/ AP 5
Space/Reach: 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1)
Special Attacks: Versatility (-2 penalty), crimson mist
Special Qualities: Cimmerian traits, fearless, new sorcery style x2, scholar, acolyte background, base power points, knowledge is power, +1 power point, advanced spell, bonus spell, bite sword, trap sense +1
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7 (+10 vs. Corruption)
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 16
Skills: Bluff +6 (+4 if verbal-based), Climb +10, Craft (herbalism) +3,

Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +6, Heal +6, Hide +2*, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge (local) +4, Intimidate +13, Listen +5*, Move Silently +4*, Perform (ritual) +5, Sense Motive +9, Spot +8*, Survival +13*

Feats: Persuasive, Power Attack, Skill Focus (sense motive)
Code of Honour: Barbaric
Reputation: 9 (any);
Leadership: –
Allegiances: Clan chief, ancestral spirits
Base Power Points: 8 (base 4, +3 Wis, +1 bonus; 16 maximum)
Magical Attack: +4 (+1 level, +3 Cha)
Sorcery Styles: Divination (skill focus (sense motive) taken in lieu of second style)
Spells Known: *Astrological prediction, psychometry, visions*
Corruption: 0;
Insanity: –
Possessions: Broadsword, léine, inar, woollen mantle, knee high boots

* includes +2 circumstance bonus made in temperate or cold hills and mountains



TYPICAL CIMMERIAN BLIND BARD

Blind Bard: Medium Cimmerian
Barbarian 3/ Scholar 3
Hit Dice: 3d10+3d6-6 (26 hit points)
Initiative: +4 (+0 Dex, +4 Ref)
Speed: 22 ft.;
Dodge Defence: 13 (+3 level, +0 Dex)
Parry Defence: 14 (+2 level, +2 Str)
BAB/Grapple: +5/+7
Attack: Broadsword +7 melee 1d10+2/ 19-20
x2/ AP 5
Full Attack: Broadsword +7 melee 1d10+2/ 19-20
x2/ AP 5
Space/Reach: 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1)
Special Attacks: Versatility (-2 penalty), crimson mist
Special Qualities: Cimmerian traits, blind, fearless, feat
in lieu of a new sorcery style x2, scholar,
acolyte background, base power points,
knowledge is power, +1 power point, +2
skill points in lieu of an advanced spell,
+2 skill points in lieu of a bonus spell,
bite sword, trap sense +1
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7 (+14 vs.
Corruption)
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 16,
Cha 16
Skills: Bluff +5 (+3 if verbal-based), Climb
+10, Gather Information +4,
Hide +2*, Intimidate +9, Knowledge
(arcana) +4, Knowledge (history) +11,
Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge
(local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +5,
Listen +16*, Move Silently +4*,
Perform (epic) +8, Perform (story-
telling) +13, Perform (sing) +10, Spot
+7* (touch or scent only), Survival +11*
Feats: Blind-fight, Knowledgeable, Performer,
Skill Focus (knowledge (history)), Skill
Focus (perform (story-telling))
Code of Honour: Barbaric
Reputation: 10 (any)
Leadership: -
Allegiances: Tribal chief, ancestral spirits
Base Power Points: 8 (base 4, +3 Wis, +1 bonus;
16 maximum)
Magical Attack: +4 (+1 level, +3
Cha)
Sorcery Styles: None (feats
taken instead)

Spells Known: *None (skill points taken instead)*
Corruption: 0;
Insanity: -
Possessions: Broadsword, léine, mantle, knee high
boots

* includes +2 circumstance bonus made in temperate or
cold hills and mountains

BESTIARY

This section details the creatures and monsters native to
Cimmeria, including creatures found in the *Hyborian*
Bestiary that are noted as living in and around the
Cimmerian lands and borders.

FROST GIANTS

Huge Monstrous Humanoid [cold]
Climate/Terrain: Any cold (mostly mountains)
Organization: Solitary or family (2-4)
Initiative: +4
Senses: Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision
Languages: Ymirish and Hyperborean

Dodge Defence: 12
Parry Defence: 21
Hit Points: 105 (10 HD); DR 4
Saves: Fort +16, Ref +4, Will +3
Immunities: Cold damage
Weaknesses: +50% damage from fire

Speed: 40 ft.
Space: 15 ft.; Reach: 10 ft.
Melee: Oversized war club +16/+11 (2d10+12,
AP 12) or fist +16 (1d8+8, AP --)
Base Atk +10; Grp +26
Special Attacks: Primal Terror
Abilities: Str 27, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 11,
Cha 7
Feats: Brawl, Combat Reflexes, Crushing
Grip, Endurance, Improved Grapple,
Improved Sunder, Greater Sunder
Skills: Balance +3, Climb +16, Jump +10,
Knowledge (nature) +2, Survival +8
Possessions: Collected skins, furs and metallic items
from past kills (5d6 x 100 silvers worth)
Advancement: By character class (usually barbarian)

The frost giants once ruled Nordheim and the northern
reaches in the age of Atlantis, but their heavy footfalls have





been leaving trails through the snow for centuries. As the rise of mankind pushed them further and further north, the giants became embittered toward mankind. They began to equate humans with skittering little vermin, and the frost giants began to target them for raids, rape and murder.

Frost giants are between twelve and fifteen feet in height and easily weigh over 2,000 pounds. They seem made of solid muscle and iron-hard bones, towering over even some of the white bears of the north. They tend to have sloping features and thick, reddish hair and beards that they keep in braids and dreadlocks. Although not strictly carnivorous, frost giants tend to have oversized and angular teeth for smashing up bones and frozen vegetation, allowing them to make a meal out of nearly anything they can get their thick-nailed hands upon.

The current age does not see many frost giants left in the world, with only a few small families living in the Eiglophian Mountains and many lone huntsmen wandering Vanaheim, Asgard and parts of northern Cimmeria. When the wind is low at the foot of the mountains it is said that travellers can hear the booming songs of the giants, echoing down in the ancient tongue of Ymirish.



COMBAT

Frost giants are strong and tough, using their natural size and physique to overwhelm their foes. In ancient times the giants wielded huge swords and axes, but the lack of forge-

worthy bronze or metalworking tools has turned them to simply uprooting trees or carving stone into heavy clubs as long as a man. They wield these clubs with relentless force, falling to the use of their hands if a club is not available.

Primal Terror: Seeing a frost giant is an instinctually frightening moment, calling for a Terror of the Unknown check (normal DC 15). In addition, a character must make this check every time they see a frost giant, rather than just the first time

Skills: Frost giants have a +8 racial bonus to their Climb and Survival skills from living in the mountains for so many generations.

GIANT MANTIDS

Small Animal

Climate/Terrain: Warm to temperate plains, forests and hills

Organization: Solitary

Initiative: +7

Senses: Listen +1, Spot +1, low-light vision, scent

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 17

Hit Points: 32 (5 HD); DR 2

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +1

Speed: 20 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)
Melee: 2 foreclaws +6 (1d6+2, AP 3) and bite +1 (1d8+1, AP 2) Base Atk +3; Grp +1

Special Attacks: Pounce

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 6

Feats: Flyby Attack, Track

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +8, Jump +8, Move Silently +8, Survival +2

Possessions: –

Advancement: 6–10 HD (Medium), 11–15 HD (Large)

One of the greatest natural predators in the Hyborian wilds, giant mantids thrive on attacking small animals and injured travellers. From the bright green 'praying' mantis that hunts the Aquilonian plains to the deep russet tunnel hunters of Cimmeria, giant mantids are a terrifying breed of insect. Mantids are voracious eaters that swoop down from hiding places to grab small prey





and devour them – not even waiting until they are dead to get a bite!

These insects are three or four feet long from the ends of their wings to the tip of their triangular heads, and range in colour from green to brown. They all have folding foreclaws that make up their front legs, which they use to slice and capture prey to be devoured.

COMBAT

Giant mantids prefer to use momentum and surprise to catch their prey unawares, grasping them in their serrated foreclaws before beginning to devour them with their slicing mandibles.

Pounce: If a giant mantid charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

Skills: Giant mantids have a +4 racial bonus to all Climb, Hide, Jump and Move Silently skill checks. They can always choose to take 10 on their Climb checks, even when rushed or threatened.

GIANT WHITE RAM - EIGLOPHIAN WARDEN SHEEP

Large Animal [cold]

Climate/Terrain: Cold mountains

Organization: Solitary

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +8, Spot +8, low-light vision, scent

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 16

Hit Points: 68 (8 HD); DR 3

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +3

Speed: 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; Reach: 5 ft.

Melee: Head butt +8 (2d6+3, AP 5) and 2 hooves +3 (1d6+3, AP 3)
Base Atk +6; Grp +13

Special Attacks: Powerful Charge

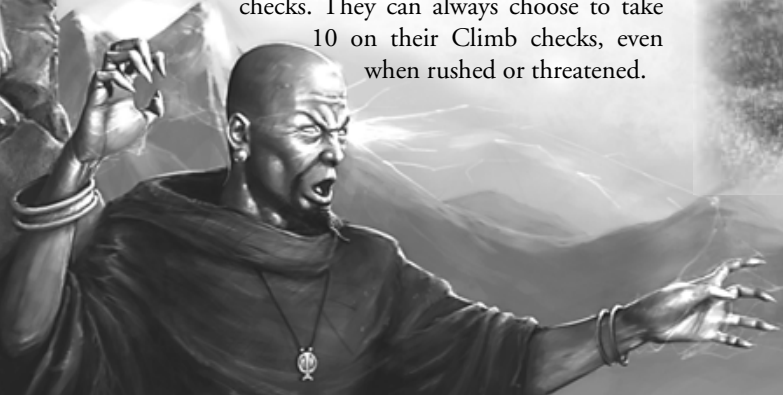
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Power Attack

Skills: Balance +9, Climb +11, Hide -2, Jump +11, Survival +9

Possessions: –

Advancement: 9–16 HD (Large)





Something of a local legend in the Eiglophian mountains and northern Cimmeria, the giant white ram is a horse-sized mountain sheep that has become a prize for hunters throughout Hyboria. To find, track and kill one of the supposed 'Eiglophian warden sheep' is a feat worth of a lifetime of bragging, luring many foolish men to their frozen deaths in the peaks. They are a very rare creature to find, and most hunters are forced to give up pursuit because of the weather, terrain or other wildlife.

A giant white ram is the size of a draft horse, covered in white wool, and sports a pair of extremely thick and curved ivory-hued horns. The animal is wary at all times and always has its twitching ears and darting blue eyes ready to alert it to the presence of a possible threat.

COMBAT

Giant white rams fight much in the way as a normal mountain ram would, using its thick horns to batter foes – perhaps even hard enough to knock them off a nearby mountain cliff. They also have angled hooves useful for mountain climbing, which they can rear back and use to slash at foes before falling into them head-first.

Powerful Charge: When a giant white ram charges, its head butt attack deals 4d6+6 points of damage (AP 6) instead of the normal amount.

Skills: Giant white rams have a +8 racial bonus on Balance, Climb, Jump and Survival checks. A giant white ram can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. Additionally, they gain an additional +8 to their Hide skill checks when in snowy terrain or weather conditions due to their colouring.

GIANT KIN

Large Monstrous Humanoid [cold]

Climate/Terrain: Any cold land

Organization: Solitary

Initiative: +3

Senses: Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision

Languages: Varies by location, occasionally Ymirish

Dodge Defence: 12

Parry Defence: 14

Hit Points: 42 (5 HD); DR 3

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +2

Immunities: Cold damage

Weaknesses: +50% damage from fire

Speed: 30 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; Reach: 10 ft.

Melee: Large two-handed axe +9

(2d10+7, x3 critical, AP 10)

Base Atk +5; Grp +14

Str 20, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 11,

Wis 12, Cha 9

Abilities:

Feats:

Skills:

Possessions:

Advancement:

Brawl, Power Attack

Balance +4, Climb +9, Jump +7, Survival +9

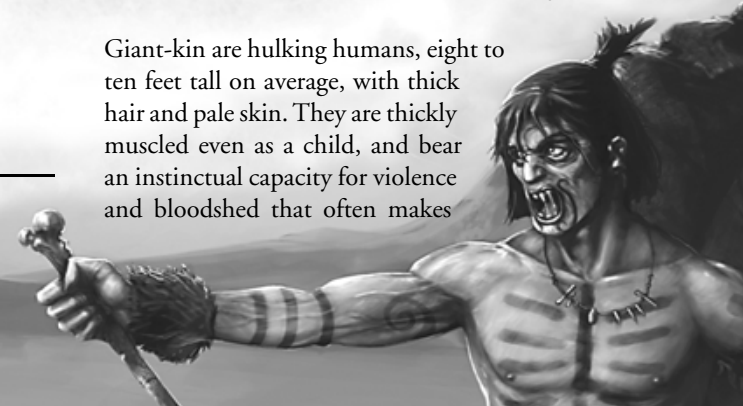
Normal traveller's gear, plus 3d6 skins, furs or leathers (1d6 x 10 silvers worth)

By character class (usually barbarian)



When the frost giants of the far north began to turn their vicious attentions on the men of Nordheim, Cimmeria and Hyperborea, many villages were raided by their kind. Frost giants are not known for their pleasantries and many violations of villagers – particularly women – took place. The resulting offspring of these unions, which kill the mother in childbirth every time, are called giant-kin.

Giant-kin are hulking humans, eight to ten feet tall on average, with thick hair and pale skin. They are thickly muscled even as a child, and bear an instinctual capacity for violence and bloodshed that often makes





them pariahs of their communities – if they are allowed to survive at all. Those giant-kin who reach adulthood are frequently mountaineers and wilderness hermits, living out their years much like their monstrous parent.

COMBAT

Giant-kin know their strength and size makes a big difference in most combats, and they frequently use two-handed weapons to make the most of their prowess.

Skills: Giant-kin have a +2 racial bonus to their Climb and Survival skills due to the physical adaptations they inherited from their frost giant parent.

GREAT BEARS

Huge Animal

Climate/Terrain: Dense forests, tundra, frozen plains

Organization: Solitary or pair

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +6, Spot +6, low-light vision, scent

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 16

Hit Points: 42 (7 HD); DR 4

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +5

Speed: 40 ft.

Space: 15 ft.; Reach: 10 ft.

Melee: 2 claws +18 (2d4+10, AP 5), bite +12 (2d8+5, AP 5) Base Atk +9; Grp +27

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Bear Hug (3d12+15, AP –)

Abilities: Str 31, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats: Endurance, Run, Toughness, Track, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills: Climb +10, Swim +10, Survival +6

Possessions: Scraps of clothing or armour

Advancement: 13–24 HD (Huge)

In the deep wilds where man dreads to dwell, there are giants of muscle and fur that make the largest of grizzlies tremble when they pass. Massive bears, twelve feet at the shoulder when on all fours, live in these wild places without fear of other predators or hunters. A single swipe of their short sword-long claws can turn a

man to pulp, and nothing can withstand more than a few moments between their gigantic forelegs.

Great bears have been heralded as the ‘protectors of the wild’, claiming huge territories in the Pictish Wilderness, Cimmeria, Nordheim and Hyperborea to keep safe from the ever expanding tribes of mankind. From the massive white polar bears of the high frozen plains to the black mountain bears of the Graaskals, great bears can be a threat to wayward travellers who choose to cross them.

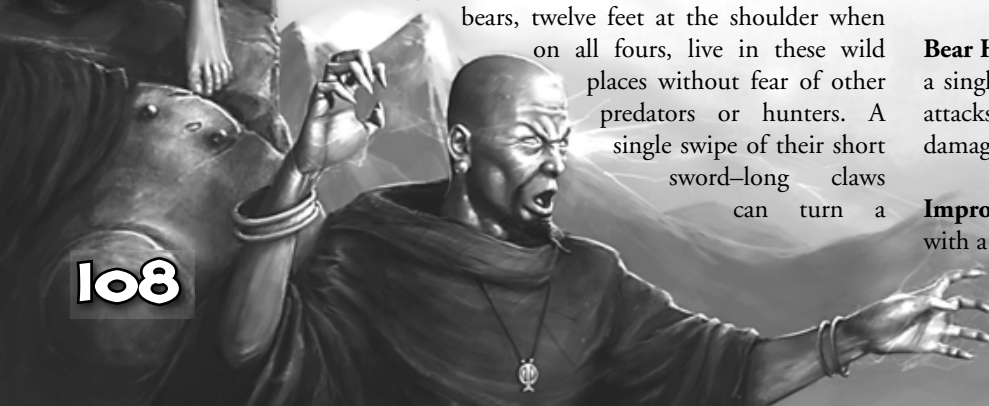


COMBAT

Luckily great bears rarely go on the offensive toward humans unless protecting their young, as they are generally omnivorous and would rather have a light snack of some melons or berries. However, occasionally the situation calls for violence and their deadly claws and jaws are put to the task of shredding whatever has raised their ire. Their great strength and terrible ferocity are more than a match for anything Hyboria can set in their way.

Bear Hug: A great bear that is grappling a target can make a single bear hug on that target in place of its two claw attacks. The bear hug attack automatically deals 3d12+15 damage to the target. This attack has no AP.

Improved Grab: To use this ability, the great bear must hit with a claw attack.



GREAT BOAR

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm forest

Organization: Solitary, or hunting herd (5–8)

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +8, Spot +8, low-light vision, scent

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 13

Hit Points: 52 (7 HD); DR 4

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +3

Speed: 40 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; Reach: 5 ft.

Melee: Gore +12 (1d8+8, AP 5) Base Atk +5; Grp +17

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Ferocity

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Iron Will

Skills: Survival +11

Possessions: –

Advancement: 8–16 HD (Large), 17–21 HD (Huge)



In the deeper forests and woods where herds of boar can be found, the occasional pack of larger and deadlier males rise to become a roaming threat to anyone

that might cross their paths. These great boars are larger than horses and have no fear of anything. When word spreads that great boars have moved into a populated area, the populace panics, livestock is pulled behind closed doors, and hunters walk out on shaking legs in order to deal with the ferocious monstrosities.

COMBAT

Great boars are single-minded ferocity given form, charging forward into their targets with thick and curving tusks, goring them to the core and trampling the entrails without pause or mercy.

Ferocity: A great boar is such a tenacious combatant that it continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.

NORÐWOLF

Large Animal

Climate/Terrain: Cold to arctic plains, woods and mountains

Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (4–8)

Initiative: +6

Senses: Listen +2, Spot +2, low-light vision, scent

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 15

Hit Points: 45 (6 HD); DR 3

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3

Speed: 40 ft.

Space: 10 ft.; Reach: 5 ft.

Melee: Bite +6 (2d6+4, AP 3) and 2 claws +1 (1d6+3, AP –) Base Atk +4; Grp +11

Special Attacks: Rend, Trip

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Endurance, Great Fortitude, Run, Track

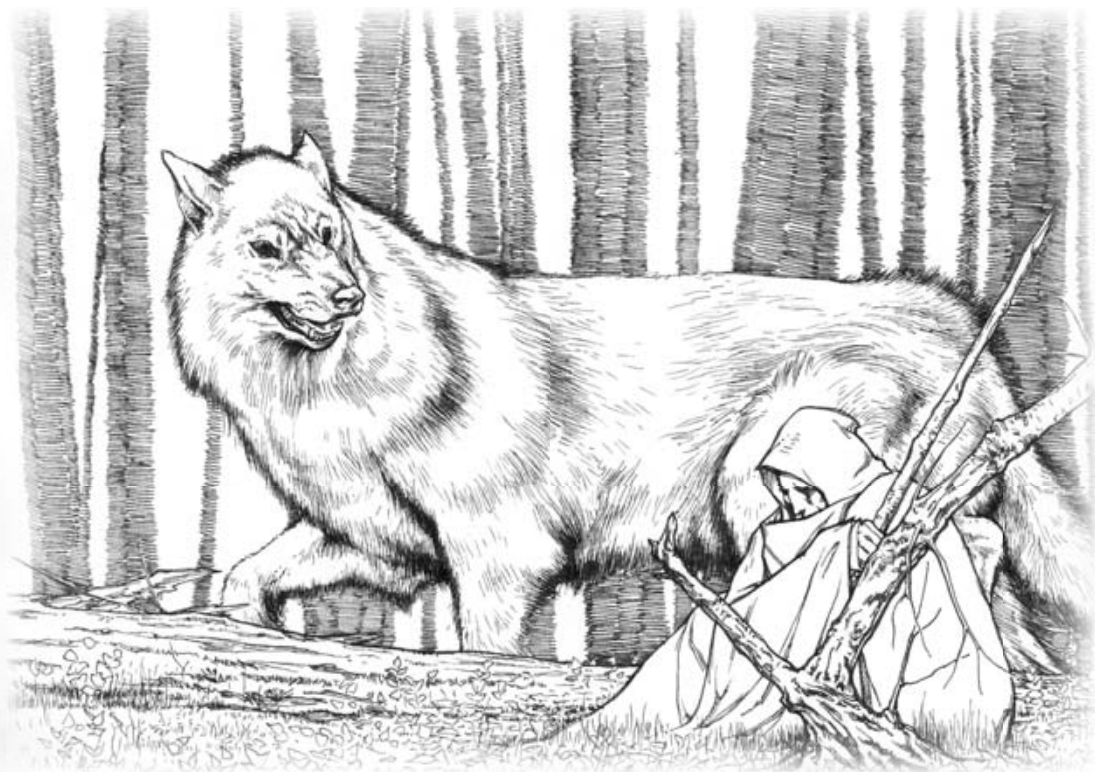
Skills: Hide +0 (+4), Jump +4, Survival +5

Possessions: Metallic objects taken as den-trophies

Advancement: 7–10 HD (Large), 11+ HD (Huge)

In the northern hills and evergreen forests of Nordheim and Hyperborea there roams a species of massive wolves as large as horses that hunts man as well as beast. In the cold and frozen north, carnivores must take





whatever they can in order to stay well fed, and the vicious nordwolf is no exception. When food is scarce, packs of these massive predators can be found as far south as Cimmeria or even Brythunia, often trailing after wintering caravans.

These massive beasts are five to six feet at the shoulder, nearly two-thirds that length wide, and sometimes eight feet from nose to tail. They are coated in thick white or grey fur, have piercing blue eyes, and a maw filled with curved teeth as long as a man's hand. When a nordwolf pack comes to hunt in the area, only the bravest of warriors or hunters dares confront them with anything short of a militia behind them.

COMBAT

Nordwolves fight very much like their smaller cousins, tripping up foes in order to set their weight upon them and pull them apart with their powerful jaws. Nordwolves are smarter than their kin, however, and reaching up to pull a man from his mount is just as

possible a tactic for these beasts as going after the mount itself – depending on what would be easier for the nordwolf at the time.

Rend: A nordwolf can make a rend attack for 4d6+6 damage with a successful grapple check.

Tenacity: Nordwolves are raised in harsh environments filled with dangerous predators, and fighting to the bitter end can be the difference between starving and surviving. Nordwolves can fight beyond reaching 0 hit points, requiring a DC 15 Fortitude save each round they are in negative hit points to stay conscious.

Trip: A nordwolf that hits with a normal bite attack (non-rending) can attempt to trip the opponent (+3 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to try to trip the nordwolf.

Skills: Nordwolves receive a +4 racial bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent and a +4 racial bonus to Hide checks when in snowy terrain.



SVARTHEIM

Small humanoid

Climate/Terrain: Peaks of the Black Mountains; secluded valleys, craggy upper-reaches, and close to any natural tunnels or caves.

Organisation: Hunting party (10 – 18 including one leader of 3rd or 4th level)
Initiative +3

Senses: Listen +0, Spot +6, low light vision, darkvision 60 ft

Dodge Defence: 12; 16 vs ranged
Parry Defence: 17
Hit Points: 20 (3 HD); DR: –
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0

Speed: 30 ft (40 ft underground)
Melee: Hunting spear +2 (1D8+2, AP3), Club +6 (1D8+1, AP2)
Ranged: Thrown Hunting spear +1 (1D8+2, AP3) **Base Atk:** +2; Grp +0
Special Attacks: Delay
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 4
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft; Intimate knowledge of caves and tunnels of the Black Mountains
Feats: Eyes of the Cat; Sneak Subdual
Skills: Move Silently +4, Knowledge (Black Mountains) +4, Survival +3
Possessions: Hunting spear, club, loincloth, necklace made from bones and teeth
Advancement: None

Svarthheim are the degenerate, cave-dwelling, cowardly dwarfs of the Black Mountains. Terrified of sunlight, they keep to their underground lairs unless hunger drives them to the surface where they go in search of carrion. If they stumble across the sick, wounded or dying, svarthheim weigh-up their chances of overwhelming the prey depending on their own numbers and, if believing they have a good chance of success, attack en-masse.

The svarthheim are attracted to small, shiny objects, particularly gold and silver and this greed can help them overcome their natural cowardice. Some Pictish and Cimmerian legends hold that the svarthheim have a vast underground castle filled with plundered treasure and guarded by a huge, black-skinned serpent that is worshipped as a god.



COMBAT

Svarthheim attack from the shadows and always from behind. They use their numbers to overwhelm a foe, aiming to subdue and then drag the unfortunate back to their caves. If confronted with superior numbers or a demonstration of bravery and skill, they scatter, being far too cowardly to risk their necks against a superior adversary.

A favoured technique is to conceal themselves amongst the many rocky outcroppings overlooking a pathway, cause a rock fall by shoving and worrying at unstable patches of scree, and then pour down on the stranded victim, howling and shrieking, their primitive, flint-tipped spears brandished. Another tactic is to wait close to a path and then trip a victim, dragging the fallen body into hiding where it is clubbed around the head until unconscious or dead.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The tunnels and cave lairs of the Black Mountains abound with svarthheim. The legend of their castle filled with treasure is true; following the immense network of tunnels deep into the heart of the Black Mountains leads, eventually, to a vast cave filled with a black lake. In the middle of the lake is a single island of rock and, built atop, is a roughly constructed fortress of ragged basalt pillars and





battlements. Svartheim swarm around it, using coracles to paddle across the lake and to the castle's entrance. They deliver gold, silver and other treasures plundered from the surface world, taking their offerings to the central area of the castle where the Grand Svart, Uffhzel (10th level svartheim), collects it into an immense hoard that is his pride and joy.

The treasure hoard is protected by the black serpent Vhazzi, a Greater Son of Set (see Conan the Roleplaying Game, Second Edition, page 374). Blind, but still a great danger, Vhazzi is worshipped as a god by the svartheim with Uffhzel as the high priest. Sacrifices, either of Cimmerians, Picts or other svartheim, are made on a regular basis to Vhazzi which devours the prey greedily whilst the massed ranks of the svartheim gather around its dark lair, cheering and shrieking their delight.

SPINED CAT - ERAULACH

Large animal

Climate/Terrain: The high plateau of the Broken Leg Lands.

Organisation: Solitary or Pair

Initiative +12

Senses: Listen +6, Spot +6, Scent

Dodge Defence: 17

Hit Points: 124 (16HD+48)

Saves: Fort +15, Ref +12, Will +6

Speed: 40ft

Melee: Claw +19 melee (2D4+8), Bite +14 melee (2D6+4), Spined Tail Slash, +14 melee (2D4+4)

Base Atk: +12; Grp +28

Special Attacks: Improve grab, pounce, rake.

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Low light vision, Scent

Feats: Endurance, Great Fortitude, Run, Track

Skills: **Climbing** +7 Hide +7, Jump +14, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Spot +7, Swim +10

Advancement: 17-32 HD Large; 33-48, Huge.

The huge, hunched, 12-foot long shape of a



Spined Cat is a formidable sight. Its fur is dappled brown allowing it to blend with its surroundings, and a spiky ridge of dark hair runs from the base of the skull and the length of the spine. The forelimbs are long and powerful, ending in black, razor-like claws. The rear limbs are short but powerfully built, designed so that the cat can propel itself forward in a single, terrifying pounce, forelimbs outstretched to deliver a killing blow to its prey. Although spine cats are fast, they are unsuited to long-distance pursuits, preferring to stalk softly before delivering a single, ferocious attack from the advantage of height.

Aside from its brutish, hunched appearance, the spine cat is distinguished by its whip-like tail that terminates in four, lateral, bony spines, each the length of a dagger. The tail provides balance when pouncing, but when a spine cat has managed to grasp its prey with both claws, it uses the tail to deliver whip-like thrusts with its tail spines, inflicting deep and grievous wounds in the flanks, sides and unprotected areas of its prey.

COMBAT

Spine cats identify prey and then stalk, sometimes for up to a day, skulking in the shadows out of sight. The aim is always to gain the advantage of height before pouncing on the back of the prey, delivering twin slashes with its claws, followed by rakes and whip slashes from its tail.

Improved Grab: the spine cat must successfully hit with its bite attack before it can attempt an Improved Grab. This ability allows the cat to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the spine cat wins the grapple, it establishes a hold and can then rake.





Pounce: When charging, a spine cat can make a full attack including two rake attacks.

Rake: Atk +19, damage 2d4+4

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The largest, meanest spine cat of the Broken Leg Lands is the fabled One-Eye. A rare presence, One-Eye is 19 feet long, scarred from countless battles with humans, other spine cats and other predators, and a stone killer of men with a taste for human flesh. It gained its name when the Callaugh hero Faraugh took one of its eyes following a fierce battle between man and cat. Faraugh lost a hand and a good deal of leg muscle, but removed the cat's eye with his own fingers and was lucky to escape with his life.

Faraugh is old now, and nearing death. He knows that One Eye still haunts the badlands of the Broken Leg and has decided that it is destiny for the two of them to die together. He therefore seeks young warriors to accompany him into the depths of the Broken Leg Lands in search of his nemesis. Clearly the mean old spine cat senses the presence of Faraugh and his retinue and, in its one, final, great stalking, engages in an epic hunt across the maze-like canyons of the Broken Leg Lands, aiming to take Faraugh's other hand and the rest of the hero's life.

Whoever kills One Eye is permitted to wear the beast's mighty pelt and be considered a true Cimmerian Hero.

KURNOW APPARITIONS

Medium Creature/Apparition

Climate/Terrain: Wildwoods of Kurnow Forest
Organisation: Solitary
Initiative +5
Senses: Listen +6, Spot +6, low light vision, darkvision 60 ft

Dodge Defence: +21; +19 vs ranged
Parry Defence: +19
Hit Points: 38 (5 HD); DR: (see below)
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +4

Speed: 40 ft
Melee: See Combat
Base Atk: +2; Grp +2
Special Attacks: Shred Sanity (see Combat)
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 18

Special Qualities: Intimate knowledge of Kurnow Forest.
 Immune to weapon attacks.

Feats: Deceitful, Fleet-Footed, Persuasive, Stealthy,
Skills: Move Silently +10, Bluff +10, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Kurnow Forest) +4,
Possessions: Typical Cimmerian war gear and trappings.

The Kurnow apparitions are magical wraiths generated by the dark will of some long-dead demon or broken god. They are unique to the Kurnow Forest, skulking in its depths, craving the sanity of mortal souls for sustenance. Their spirit forms lurk around ancient, twisted trees and, when a creature of intelligence enters their area (usually getting within 10 feet), the apparition makes itself known, appearing as a Cimmerian or other human traveller, and always with a substantive appearance and demeanour. The apparitions cannot bear to be touched and if touch occurs, they shrink away abruptly and prepare to unleash their Shred Sanity attack. Usually the apparition spends at least one hour gaining the prey's trust before attempting to steal its sanity and, in this peaceful period, reacts as a friendly, trustworthy individual, ready to talk and share information – although none of it is reliable.

COMBAT

Shred Sanity. The shadowy apparitions of the Kurnow Forest feed on the sanity of their prey. The standard tactics to gain the confidence of the individual and then, when the prey feels secure, to reveal their true, inhuman form, and feast on the emotional damage it inflicts. The prey must make a Will SV against a DC of 18. If he fails the test then he loses 1d10 points of Wis for each combat round he is in the apparition's presence. The Will SV is made each combat round, reducing with the damaged Wis of the prey. When Wis reaches zero or below, the prey is mentally broken and the apparition satiated. The apparition continually harries the prey during its shred sanity attack, always aiming to keep within line of sight. It gains in substance with each intake of stolen sanity, growing in size and horror. The horror it reveals to the prey is dependent on what he fears the most, the apparition turning into the fear and amplifying it. Each Shred Sanity attack is therefore highly individualistic.

Kurnow apparitions do not use any other kind of attack, relying on their ability to wreck the mind of those being stalked. If the prey manages to flee, it will be pursued mercilessly until it manages to reach the edge of the Kurnow forest where the apparition must relinquish the chase.



Roleplaying in Cimmeria

His mirth fell away from him like a mask, and his face was suddenly old, his eyes worn. The unreasoning melancholy of the Cimmerian fell like a shroud about his soul, paralyzing him with a crushing sense of the futility of human endeavour and the meaninglessness of life. His kingship, his pleasures, his fears, his ambitions, and all earthly things were revealed to him suddenly as dust and broken toys. The borders of life shrivelled and the lines of existence closed in about him, numbing him. Dropping his lion head in his mighty hands, he groaned aloud.

Robert E. Howard, The Phoenix on the Sword (First Draft)

This chapter concerns itself with developing Cimmerian characters. It offers several new Feats, some new skills, and alternative ways of preparing the Barbarian class to distinguish it from the general class described in the Conan rules. These changes and additions should be considered as *optional* by Games Masters.

DEVELOPING A CIMMERIAN CHARACTER

Conan the warrior, thief, reaver and king provides the template for what Cimmerians can achieve when they stalk the greater world of the Hyborian Age. Conan is driven by boredom, the need for adventure, desire, revenge and many other moods and whims, making him every bit as complex a person as one born in Hyperborea or Aquilonia.

So, the first thing to remember is that, despite being a barbarian culture, Cimmerians are neither simple nor straightforward. Their way of

life lacks certain sophistications, but Cimmerian society does not lack complexity of culture, tradition or values. It is true that Cimmerians shun surface refinements in favour of a blunt, honest approach. They speak as they find, act decisively, and have little immediate care for longer-term consequences, but they remain human and are therefore saddled with the same range of emotions as any person of the Hyborian Age.

The second thing to remember is that Cimmeria's harsh, rugged, sombre environment has shaped the Cimmerian character. These are dour, fatalistic people, fearful of their gods, but ready to use aggression as both a way of expression and as a tool to get things done. Life in Cimmeria is hard. Only the strongest babes make it into childhood, and only the strongest children become adults. Cimmerians have to be ruthless to survive, and there is little room for sentimentality and overt displays of compassion.

That said, Cimmerians are not cold, heartless brutes. They are a passionate people capable of developing deep loves and loyalties, but they are pragmatic and know that displays of emotion do not put food in the belly or defend the village. Every emotion has a place and a time; Cimmerians very carefully choose both.

One thing lacking in many Cimmerians is *regret*. Something is done, and it remains done. The past is the past, and worrying about it endlessly will not change the past. The gods express no regret, and they inflict far bigger dooms than any individual Cimmerian ever can. Do *they* regret? Do the birds and beasts of the glens regret? They do not. And neither do Cimmerians. The closest they might come to expressing regret is to grumble a brief apology, but little effort is wasted on brooding about things that cannot be changed. If an action has unforeseen or unfortunate consequences, then so be it. Cimmerians accept their lot as it comes. Regret is an emotion for the weak.

THE CIMMERIAN VOICE

'The Aquilonians sneer at us and call us barbarians because our houses are not made of brick and we choose not crush ourselves together like too many fish in a shallow pond. They call us barbarians because we choose not to write down what we see, hear and say. They call us barbarians because we fight amongst ourselves sometimes. They call us barbarians because they simply do not understand. Living in brick boxes must do something to the wits.

We choose to be close to the ground that gave rise to all of us. Crom's Ground. Our homes are made from the things we can readily find and shape and we do not believe in building high or covering the ground in dressed stone. Life is hard; we appreciate it that way. It is good to feel the rain on our cheeks and the sun on our backs as we go about our business. Why lock ourselves away? The gods created us to experience the world and you can't do that if you spend all your time in a box of bricks. We accept the world for what it is and how it is. Town and city folk seek to make it something else. We appreciate comfort and warmth just like they do, but we take life as it comes, not as how we would like it be. A bed of good, fresh straw is as comfortable as any slab stuffed with feathers – and probably cleaner and certainly better for the back.

Neither do we waste. Waste is an insult to the Earth and the Ancestors! We eat, or find a use, for everything we hunt. We honour what nature provides and do not squander it. It brings tears to the eyes and heart to see the waste in the cities. If you are not prepared to use something to its full then leave it alone.

And do not believe what you hear from them about our lack of laws. Our laws are embodied in our customs and traditions. When we transgress we expect to be punished. When we transgress badly we expect the punishment to be bad, too. We believe in saying what we mean, meaning what we say and doing what we have promised. Some view this as harsh, such as when stone to death liars, but this means we do not have liars in our midst. Those tempted to transgress know the consequences and think twice. This helps us to live in harmony.

Ah, of course. The raids. Well, do the civilised folk not make wars? Of course they do! When they make war thousands die and most are unprepared for it. For us, we raid to settle scores and to build our strength – not just the strength of the tribe but the strength of the character too. We expect to be raided and our neighbours expect us to raid them. Just as the hawk takes the dove on the wing. Life is a cycle and we are part of it. And when we raid, a few might die, but most do not. And when we die we are ready for it and unafraid. Through raiding we understand our place and keep it, just as the wolf knows its territory and keeps that.

So come and break bread with us. We do not care that you live in a brick box; as a visitor to our hearth you are a guest and will be treated as such. You will be served first, above even the headman, and we will share with you all that have keeping nothing back. In return we ask for news and stories and perhaps a small token of your appreciation for our hospitality in the form of a song or a dance. Come, the elders are waiting.'





CIMMERIAN DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to help develop a fully rounded Cimmerian character.

- ✿ Name your character. See the section on Cimmerian names, below.
- ✿ Which clan does your character belong to? Either use one of the clans described in the ‘Shadows Out of Men’ chapter, starting on page 40, or create your own using the Rapid Clan Generator found on page 41.
- ✿ Choose your character’s disposition. Is your character a Clansman or a Wanderer? Clansmen Cimmerians remain within Cimmeria and within their clans, having no desire to engage with the wider world. Wanderers are like Conan; curious souls who want to explore and develop. More is given on these two dispositions below.
- ✿ Your *disposition* determines the multi-class options available to you. The two dispositions are Clansman and Wanderer, and the multi-class combinations available to each disposition are described in more detail below.
- ✿ Create your character as normal. When choosing Skills and Feats, look carefully at the notes provided in this chapter so that your options are maximised, and you create as authentic a Cimmerian as possible.

CIMMERIAN NAMES

Many Cimmerian names are composed of two words with a separator, or two words with a prefix added to the second word. Some have suffixes added. For example, *-an* is a suffix that indicates a diminutive. “Conan” actually means “Little Wolf,” much as “Donny” means “Little Don.”

Pronunciation: MH is pronounced as a V; DB is pronounced as a TH; CH is pronounced as a K from the back of the throat; GH as a regular K; C is always pronounced as a K.

Separators/Prefixes/Suffixes

| Separator/Prefix | Meaning |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| bann, ban | Wife of |
| ingen | Daughter of |
| ~an, ~en, ~nan | Diminutive (male) |
| mak, mac | Son of |
| ui | Grandson of |
| ua | Descendant of |
| ~in, ~at, ~nat, ~nait | Diminutive (female) |

If a name with meaning is desired, then the following chart can be used to construct a suitable Cimmerian name. You might not create an authentic Celtic name, but Cimmeria is not 100% analogous to Ireland, Scotland or other Celtic regions. The goal here is to create an interesting, but authentic-sounding name. One can also use the male element table with a female suffix to create female names; for example, Brógan is a male form of ‘little shoes’ and Brógnait is the female form of the same.

- ✿ **Simple Combination of Elements:** For example, Óen (one) and Ghus (strength) can be combined to make Óenghus (Angus). A name can also just be a single element plus a prefix or suffix. ‘Ciaran’ combines the word for black and the diminutive suffix.
- ✿ **Combined, with Dropped Letters:** Sometimes letters might be dropped; for example, one can combine Cath and Vair to come up with Cathair (‘battle man’). Corb and mac can be combined into Cormac (dropping the ‘b’) to create a ‘Son of Defilement’. Dubh and Gall can be combined into Dugal (or Dougal), which means ‘Dark Stranger.’ Combining Os with Cara and dropping the final ‘a’ leads to Oscar (‘Deer Lover’). For women, combining Gorm with Flaith, and dropping the ‘f’ gives Gormlaith (‘illustrious lady’).
- ✿ **Combined, with Changed Letters:** Letters can be changed to make a name more pronounceable without altering the meaning; for example, one might combine Cú and the diminutive suffix ‘an to come up with Cúan – adding an ‘n’ in the centre and changing the ‘ú’ into an ‘o’ makes the name Conan, a nicer sounding name which still means ‘little wolf.’ Likewise, the same system can take Cú and All to create Conall (‘strong wolf’).





❖ **Stand Alone:** Words can also stand alone. Conn is a perfectly good name by itself.

❖ **Noun Plus Adjective:** Sometimes a name is a single noun followed by an adjective. For example, Conn Mór means Big Chief, and is written as two words.

MALE ELEMENTS

| | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Alill | Elf |
| Alín | Handsome |
| All | Strong |
| Aodh | Fire |
| Ard | High |
| Bearach | Sharp |
| Bran | Raven |
| Bre | Hill, noble (lives on a hill) |
| Bróg | Shoe |
| Cabhán | Hollow |
| Calbhach | Bald |
| Caol | Slender |
| Cara | Lover |
| Cath | Battle |
| Ceallach | Bright-headed, war, strife |
| Cearbh | To hack (with a weapon) |
| Char | Dear |
| Cian | Ancient |
| Ciar | Black |
| Cinnéidigh | Armoured head |
| Coem | Kind, gentle |
| Comh | Together |
| Conn | Chief, wise |
| Connla | Chaste |
| Corb | Defilement |
| Cú, Co | Wolf, hound |
| Dorcha | Dark |
| Dubh | Dark |
| Éimhín | Swift |
| Fachtna | Hostile |
| Faol | Wolf |
| Fear | Man |
| Fiach | Raven |
| Finn | White |
| Fionn | White |
| Flaith | Prince |
| Flann | Red |
| Gall | Stranger |
| Garbh | Rough |
| Gein | Birth |
| Ghal | Valour |
| Ghall | Pledge |
| Ghus | Strength, force |
| Giolla, Gil | Servant |
| Gobha | Smith |

| | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| Lachtna | Milk-coloured |
| Lagh, Laogh | Warrior |
| Lomm | Bare |
| Lon | Blackbird |
| Lorcc | Fierce |
| Mór | Big |
| Naomh | Holy |
| Niall, Nial | Champion |
| Odhra | Pale green, sallow |
| Óen | One |
| Os | Deer |
| Rí, Ríogh | King |
| Ruadh | Red |
| Ruarc | Rainstorm, Squall |
| Sean | Wise, Elder |
| Tadhg | Poet |
| Tigern | Lord |
| Vair | Man |
| Val | Rule |

FEMALE ELEMENTS

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Aifric | Pleasant |
| Áine | Radiance |
| Aisling | Dream, Vision |
| Aobhe | Beauty |
| Blaith, Blath | Flower |
| Brígh | Exalted, High |
| Caol | Slender |
| Caomh | Beautiful |
| Clíodhna | Shapely |
| Dáire | Fertile |
| Damh | Fawn |
| Eithne | Kernel |
| Et | Person, One |
| Fionn | Fair |
| Flaith | Lady, Princess |
| Flann | Red |
| Gorm I | Illustrious |
| Grán | Grain |
| Guala | Shoulder |
| Maith | Good |
| Medb | Intoxicating |
| Muadh | Noble, Good |
| Muirne | Beloved |
| Naomh | Poet |
| Níamh | Bright |
| Ór | Gold |
| Siofra | Sprite, elf |
| Sith | Peace |
| Sláine | Health |
| Tuile | Abundance |
| Uan | Lamb |





Of course, many people are named without any regard given to the meaning of the name. They just like the name, perhaps, or a family member is being honoured by giving the child the name. Do you know the meaning of your name? Some people do, other people do not. Did your parents know the meaning when they named you? So, if desired, traditional names based on old Irish or Scottish Celtic names can be used, without regard to meaning. These are listed below.

FEMALE CIMMERIAN NAMES

Aedammair, Aideen, Ailionora, Ailis, Aine, Airmid, Aisling, Alma, Ana, Andraste, Anu, Aoife, Artis, Badb, Bairrfhionn, Banba, Bean Mhi, Beare, Becuma, Berrach, Bevin, Binne, Blair, Blaithin, Boann, Brenda, Briana, Brid, Bryg, Caer, Cahan, Caillech, Caireach, Caireann, Caitriona, Caoilinn, Casidhe, Ceara, Celach, Cessair, Ciar, Cliona, Clodagh, Cochrann, Colleen, Conchobarre, Cori, Creidne, Cuimhne, Dairine, Dallas, Darby, Daron, Dealla, Dechtire, Deirdre, Delaney, Delbchaem, Derry, Dervil, Devin, Devnet, Doireann, Doirind, Doneele, Donnfhlaith, Druantia, Dubh, Dubheasa, Dubh Lacha, Eavan, Ebliu, Edana, Eibhilín, Eibhilín, Eilinora, Eilis, Eithne, Elatha, Elva, Emer, Ernine, Etan, Etaoin, Flann, Flannery, Flidais, Fodla, Fuamnach, Isibeal, Isleen, Jilleen, Labhaoise, Laoise, Lasair, Liadan, Luiseach, Moina, Mona, Moninne, Mór, Moriath, Morrigan, Muadhnaid, Muireann, Muirín, Muiriol, Muirne, Naomh, Narbflaith, Neala, Nessa, Nevina, Nia, Niamh, Nila, Nola, Nora, Sadhbh, Saoirse, Saorla, Saraid, Scathach, Sceabh, Seana, Seanait, Shanley, Shannon, Sierra, Sile, Sine, Sinead, Siobhan, Siomha, Sláine, Sorcha, Tailte, Tara, Teamhair, Tierney, Tipper, Tlachtga, Trevina, Troya, Tullia, Uathach, Una

MALE CIMMERIAN NAMES

Abbán, Achaius, Adamnan, Adhamh, Adrian, Aeneas, Agh, Aghy, Aichlinn, Aidan, Ailbe, Ailbhe, Ailfrid, Ailill, Ailín, Ainmire, Ainsley, Alaois, Alastar, Albion, Alby, Allister, Alphonsus, Ambrós, Amergin, Amhlaoihb, Aodh, Aonghas, Árón, Artúr, Auliffe, Bainbridge, Baird, Bairrfhionn, Bairtlemeád, Barra, Barry, Bartel, Batt, Beacán, Bearnárd, Beartlaidh, Benen, Bevan, Bran, Brasil, Bréanainn, Cael, Cailean, Cailt, Cairbre, Callaghan, Callough, Caoimhghin, Caolán, Carlin, Carlus, Carney, Carroll, Cathal, Cathal, Cathaoir, Cearbhall, Cedric, Cian, Cianán, Ciarrai, Cillian, Cinnéide,

Cleary, Coinneach, Coireall, Colin, Colla, Colm, Comala, Comán, Comhghan, Conall, Conán, Conary, Conchobhar, Conn, Connlaoi, Connor, Conor, Conon, Corey, Cormac, Cory, Crimthan, Críostóir, Cruaidh, Cú Uladh, Cuchullin, Cul, Cuma, Cúmheá, Curran, Daibhéid, Dáire, Dáithí, Damhlaic, Daol, Daray, Dempsey, Dermot, Devlin, Devnet, Diarmaid, Dima, Dónal, Donnan, Donnchadh, Doon, Dougal, Doyle, Drummond, Duane, Dubhán, Duer, Duff, Duncan, Dunham, Ea, Eadoin, Eamhua, Eamon, Eanbotha, Earnán, Edan, Egan, Éibhear, Éimhin, Eithriall, Énán, Ennis, Eoghan, Eóin, Eóin Baiste, Erin, Evan, Eveny, Fagan, Faolán, Farrell, Fearghus, Feoras, Ferris, Fiachra, Fingal, Finghin, Finlayv, Finn, Fionan, Fionn, Fionnbharr, Flann, Flannery, Flinn, Flynn, Garbhán, Gearóid, Giallachadh, Gilvarry, Giolla, Giolla, Giolla Dhé, Glaisne, Gofraidh, Greagoir, Hannraoi, Heremon, Hydallan, Iarfhlaith, Innis, Ionhar, Íoseph, Kane, Kearney, Keefe, Keegan, Keir, Keiran, Kern, Kerwin, Kieran, Kiernan, Labhrás, Laughlin, Laurence, Leachlainn, Léon, Liam, Lochlain, Logan, Lomán, Lúcas, Lughaidh, Lynch, Macallister, Maclean, Maeleachlainn, Mahon, Mairtin, Maitias, Maitiú, Moghcorb, Morne, Murdoch, Nessian, Nevan, Nevin, Niall, Niece, Nioclás, Niocol, Nyle, Odhrán, Oilibhéar, Oistin, Oscur, Ossian, Owain, Owney, Pádraig, Parlan, Parthalán, Peadar, Piaras, Pilib, Proinsias, Quinlan, Raghnaill, Rayne, Réamonn, Renny, Revelin, Riocárd, Rodhlann, Roibeárd, Roibhilín, Roibín, Rónán, Ronat, Rory, Rotheachta, Ruaidhri, Rylie, Séafra, Séamas, Seanán, Searbhreathach, Séarlas, Sedic, Seoirse, Seosamh, Shanahan, Shea, Sheehan, Síomón, Siseal, Sláine, Slevin, Steafán, Tadhg, Téadóir, Teagan, Teague, Thady, Tiarnach, Tiernan, Tiomóid, Tomaisin, Tomás, Torin, Tremain, Uaine, Uileog, Uilliam, Uinseann, Úistean, Ultan, Uscias, Usnach, Vailintín, Zephan

CLANSMEN AND WANDERERS

Cimmerians come in one of two dispositions; those who remain within their clans, loyally serving and toiling, and those who, like Conan, strike-out (or are forced to do so) inter the wider world. Neither disposition is a barrier to adventure: Clansmen lead dangerous lives within Cimmeria's confines, but concern themselves with clan ties and business. Wanderers see more of the world, and may experience adventure as a result, but do they become more rounded?

The disposition chosen determines the Classes available to the character. Certain other benefits also accrue, reflecting the life experiences of the disposition.



CLANSMEN

The clansman remains in the clan, fighting for it, defending it, and making a life for himself and his family. The strongest and most ambitious rise to become champions or chiefs. However clansmen develop many different skills and talents; they are not simply straightforward barbarian warriors (although many are). All clansmen are Barbarians by default, but the following multi-class options, using Barbarian as the primary class, are available to clansmen.

Available Classes: Cimmerian Barbarian (default), Savage Scout, Clan Chief, the War Chief, the Harrower, Scout, and Wild Hunter (found in Hyboria's Fiercest), Berserker (see Conan: Free Companies), Temptress

Naturally enough, every clansman belongs to a clan, and the clan your character belongs to needs to be given some careful consideration. All clans are different, and many examples are given in the previous chapter. Read through the clan overviews and use the Traditions and the History and Outlook sections, to help define the sort of life your Cimmerian has led, and can expect to lead, as part of his clan.

If your character is beginning at 1st Level, he is considered a newly confirmed adult. Answer the following questions about your character:



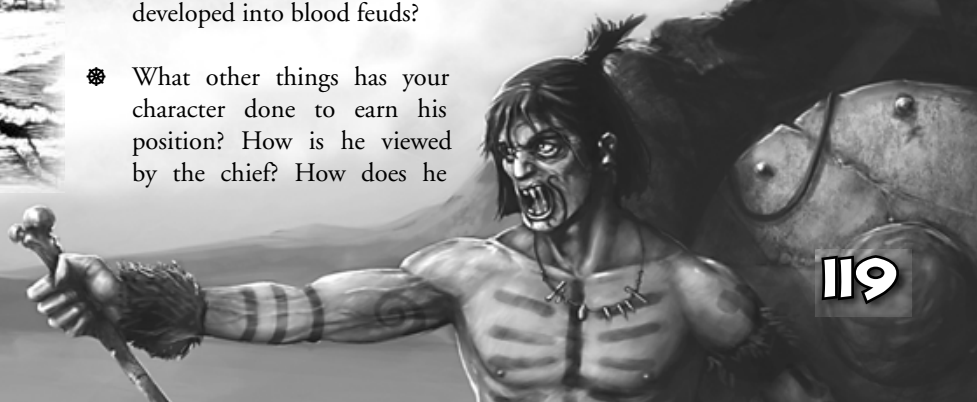
- ❖ Who are his parents? What do they do?
- ❖ Does he have any siblings? Are they alive or dead?
- ❖ What Rite of Passage did you undertake to be confirmed as an adult? What effect did this have on you?
- ❖ What aspirations does your character have for the future? Does he want to lead a war band? Is he content with fighting in the shield wall? Does he simply want to lead as peaceful a life as possible?

If your character is beginning at 4th Level, then he is already a noted and valued clan member, most likely in his early 20s. Answer the following questions about your character:

- ❖ Have you married? If so, who is your wife and was the marriage for love or politics? If for politics, what are they? Does your wife come from another clan? Was the marriage to settle a blood-feud?
- ❖ Do you have any children? If so, how many and by whom (you do not need to be married to have sired children!)? What do you feel towards your children?
- ❖ Do you actively fight in a war band? If so, who is its champion or War Chief? How did you come to be in this particular war band? Who are your comrades? What battles have you fought in?
- ❖ As a seasoned character, you have earned your experience with a certain amount of adventuring; what sort of adventures have you been engaged in? What have you gained or learned?

If your character is beginning at 8th Level, then he has already made a name for himself in the clan and is an experienced warrior. Answer the following questions about your character:

- ❖ Does your character lead a war band? If so, how did he gain his position and who serves under him?
- ❖ What adventures has he undertaken for the clan? How have these served his people?
- ❖ What enemies has he made? Have any enmities developed into blood feuds?
- ❖ What other things has your character done to earn his position? How is he viewed by the chief? How does he





view the chief? Has he any ambitions to become chief himself (perhaps he already is...)?

Temptress (female characters), Wild Hunter, Outlaw (both found in Hyboria's Fiercest)

All Clansmen have the following possessions:

Weapons, armour (if any) and war gear, earned as part of entering adulthood or through experience and exploits.

A home – be this a hut, tent or yurt. If 1st Level, then this home might still be a family home, but it need not be.

Tools – pertaining to mundane jobs and tasks: building tools, agricultural tools (a plough, rake, hoe, and so on), and/or hunting tools (snares, nets, traps, and so forth).

Money – although Cimmerians do not value coin, they do attain it. Your Clansman has managed to come by the equivalent, in either goods or lesser coins, 3d20 gold pieces for each level of experience.

If your character is beginning at 1st Level, he is young and inexperienced. Answer the following questions about your character:

- ❖ Is the reason for becoming a Wanderer temporary or permanent?
- ❖ Who has the character left behind in the way of family? How do they view his choice to wander?
- ❖ What prospects are there for returning to the clan?
- ❖ What kind of adventure are you seeking? Do you want to see as much of the world as possible, or settle in another country and adopt another culture?
- ❖ As a Cimmerian abroad, you may be feared and despised: how to you treat those who treat you with such loathing or disdain?

WANDERERS

Wanderers have left the clan behind to make a life for themselves alone. Some – many – remain within Cimmeria's borders, although they find it difficult gaining acceptance from other clans since they are considered to have forsaken clan loyalty for a more selfish existence. Others leave Cimmeria, like Conan, to sell their skills in the wider world without the shackles of clan life.

If your character is beginning at 4th Level, then he has already been wandering for several years. Answer the following questions about your character:

Every Wanderer should answer the following questions about his character:

- ❖ What caused you to leave the clan behind? Was it for some indiscretion or crime? Was the clan destroyed? Was it because of a blood feud?
- ❖ How does your character view or remember his old clan? Is it with fondness or hatred? Have you any desire to return some day? If you do return, how do you think you will be accepted?

Again, all Wanderers are Barbarians by default, but through adventuring experience are able to gain experience in other classes. The multi-classed options for Wanderers are:

*Available Classes: Cimmerian
Barbarian (default),
Cimmerian Borderer,
Cimmerian Nomad, Noble,
Soldier, Pirate, Thief,*



- ❖ What places have you visited? What did you think of them?
- ❖ What friends or comrades have you made? Do they travel with you, or will you meet them again?
- ❖ What enemies have you made? What were the circumstances?
- ❖ Have you formed any emotional ties anywhere? A wife? Children? Sundry lovers and conquests?
- ❖ What adventures have you experienced? What have you gained from them?
- ❖ Has your view of the wider world altered as you have travelled? Do you remain a professional Cimmerian, or has your Cimmerian side become tempered through exposure to different ways of life?

If your character is beginning at 8th Level, then he has already made a name for himself in wider world and may even be on the path to becoming as infamous as Conan. Answer the following questions about your character:

- ❖ What single event has forged your reputation? What benefits did it bring – and what hazards?
- ❖ How do others view you when they hear your name or come face to face with you? Are you seen as a Cimmerian barbarian first and foremost or does the world have another view?
- ❖ You will have made at least one powerful friend and one powerful enemy. Who are they? What is your friend's position and what help can he lend to you in times of need? What is your enemy's power? Is he a sorcerer, a war chief or a noble? What did you do to earn this enmity? What do you think is going to be the eventual outcome of the relationship?
- ❖ Who is the one, great love of your life? What have you risked for her? What has she done for you? Is she still a lover, or is she now an enemy perhaps?
- ❖ Does the world fear you or welcome you? How do you view the world?

Wanderers generally leave the clan with just their weapons, armour and war-gear. Anything else they have is accumulated as a result of their adventures. As part of the character development process, Games Masters and players should discuss what things the Wanderer Cimmerian has accumulated and why. This might include a mount, treasure, magical items and so forth, based on the character Level and the answers to the above questions. But remember: Cimmerians are not overly materialistic, they prefer to travel *light*.

CIMMERIAN CLASS OPTIONS AND NOTES

The various class options available to Cimmerian characters are discussed below, with tips on gaining the best from the class. *Access to Hyboria's Fiercest* and *Conan: Free Companies* will help you gain the utmost from your Cimmerian's class options..

CIMMERIAN BARBARIANS

Barbarian is the favoured class of the Cimmerians. They are accustomed to slipping quietly through the thick woods blanketing their hilly land and equally at home climbing precarious peaks.

Cimmerians have a skill disadvantage because of the –2 penalty to Intelligence. Appropriately, Cimmerians gain a racial bonus to Climb and circumstance bonus to Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot and Survival when the Cimmerian is in mountains and hills. Although mechanically there is little reason to maximise the Climb skill for most campaigns, from a role-playing perspective a player may want to keep the Climb skill as high as possible. Imagine the embarrassment of a Cimmerian character failing his Climb check! At any rate, a total bonus higher than +25 is unnecessary. Cimmerians should also keep their Listen and Spot checks maximised as these are usually opposed checks. Survival should also be kept high to make the most use of the Track class ability. Throw occasional points into Hide and Move Silently, but unless your Cimmerian is the sort who would rather avoid knife-work, do not worry about maximising those skills. If you are playing a Cimmerian barbarian, do you really want to hide from your enemies or do you want to see their blood splatter the walls? Intimidate is a good skill to put some points into. If you can demoralise your opponents, why not do so?

Seriously consider taking the Fighting Madness feat. According to *The Queen of the Black Coast* by Howard, fighting madness is a racial trait of the Cimmerians. Also, the bonuses to Strength, Constitution and Will saves offset the penalty to defence – and if you can demoralise the opponent, then the penalty to defence is effectively negated. Power Attack and Cleave are also great feats for the Cimmerian barbarian. It is much easier to drop an opponent in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* than it is in most





other fantasy RPGs because of the higher weapon damages and the lower massive damage threshold.

The Cimmerians do not practice refined sword-play as do the sword masters of Zingara or the martial artists of far-off Khitai, but fight with well-earned experience bought in blood on numerous battlefields where survival is not so much a matter of technical skill as it is intense spirit and indomitable will. Even the children do not pick up sticks to pretend at fighting. Fighting is a serious business among the Cimmerians, one does not make an enemy of a Cimmerian unless willing to fight for one's life. Impoliteness is an invitation to a quick fight to the death among the Cimmerians. Of course, few Cimmerians fear death and even fewer respect authority, they do respect honour and prowess. Honour and reputation for the Cimmerians is a mixture of courage, honesty, integrity, loyalty, and physical prowess, the traits most prized by the Cimmerians. Cimmerians do not have social rankings beyond that simple attitude, chief or herdsman, it doesn't matter. Cimmerians are not taught to fear and respect kings and chiefs because of their title as civilised men are.

Many Cimmerians fight unarmoured but some clans use round shields in battle.

Armour is occasionally considered to be cowardly,

although the more practical Cimmerians have been known to ignore that attitude.

The savage scout, the clan chief, the shaman, the war chief, the harrower (see *Hyboria's Fiercest*), and the berserker (see *Conan: Free Companies*) are all excellent class combinations for the Cimmerian barbarian.

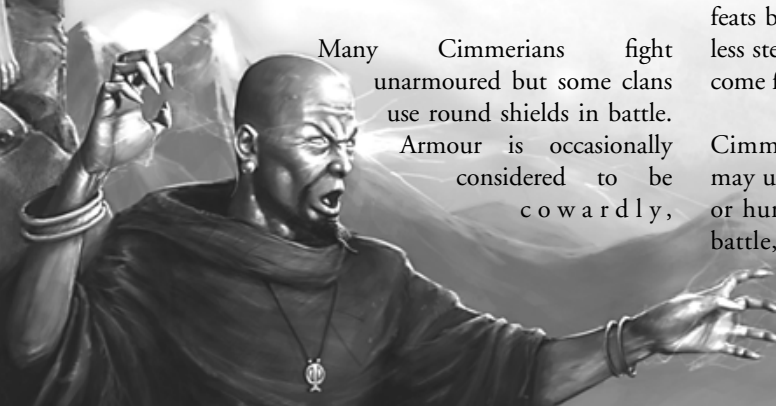
CIMMERIAN BORDERERS

'Give me a bow,' requested Conan. 'It's not my idea of a manly weapon, but I learned archery among the Hyrkanians, and it will go hard if I can't feather a man or so on yonder deck.'

Robert E. Howard. The Queen of the Black Coast

Cimmeria has its borderers as well as its barbarians. Even though all Cimmerians are barbarians culturally, not all Cimmerians need to have the barbarian class, and a Wandering Cimmerian may opt to take the Borderer class instead of Barbarian, or develop the two as a multi-class option. Cimmerians are at a disadvantage in terms of bonus feats by taking the Borderer class, but it does make for a less stereotypical character. Cimmerian Borderers tend to come from tribes near the Pictish or Gunderland borders.

Cimmerians are, at best, indifferent archers. Some tribes may use the bow to hunt with, but most either trap, fish or hunt with the spear. Virtually none use the bow in battle, believing the bow to be an unmanly, cowardly weapon. Conan even says as





much in *The Queen of the Black Coast* when he proffers that he learned archery not among his people but from the Hyrkanians. Thus, Cimmerian borderers almost always take the two-weapon fighting style.

A 1st level borderer still has a +1 base attack bonus, so a Cimmerian borderer should still take the Fighting Madness feat as his first level feat. He does not get a favoured class bonus feat, so he will be a little lacking in comparison to a first level Cimmerian barbarian. His favoured terrain should be hills or mountains, depending on the location of his tribe. Cimmeria's hills are heavily forested, so the forest terrain is also a likely choice, especially if the Cimmerian borderer does many forays into Pictland.

Cimmerian borderers have the same general preferences for skills as do Cimmerian barbarians, with having high Survival, Climb, Spot and Listen skills a priority.

The wild hunter, the guide, the skirmisher, the outlaw (see *Hyboria's Fiercest*), and the scout (see *Conan: Free Companies*) are all excellent class combinations for the Cimmerian, although the wild hunter is the most likely because barbarian is the favoured class.

CIMMERIAN NOMADS

Robert E. Howard establishes Conan and his grandfather as exceptions to the rule in regards to Cimmerians. Virtually all of them stay home, never going far from their clans for their entire lives except as necessary. There is little nomadic culture in Cimmeria. Indeed, with the climate and terrain, there are very few herds of horses or few Cimmerian horsemen to speak of. The small number of clans that have taken-up a nomadic or semi-nomadic existence remain within Cimmerian borders and range over small territories. They are not the far travellers of other nomadic cultures. Cimmerians who wish to be nomads in the truest sense of the world must travel to a nomadic society and multi-class into nomad while learning their way of life from actual nomads. Otherwise, Cimmerians belonging to a nomadic or semi-nomadic clan are still considered to be Clansmen and use the Barbarian class as the default.

NOBLES

The Cimmerian showed no sign of surprise or perturbation. He had none of the fear or reverence for authority that civilization instills in men. King or beggar, it was all one to him.

Robert E. Howard, 'Rogues in the House'

Cimmeria does not have a line of blooded nobility. Cimmerians are prohibited

from taking the noble class at 1st level. Cimmerians who later become a nobleman, such as Conan, must multi-class into it. Cimmerians do not respect nobility as it is practised elsewhere in the world, a man is judged on his character, not on his lineage.

ORACLE

Cimmerians are not the scholarly sort and are prohibited from taking the scholar class at 1st level. The Cimmerians have no priests, sorcerers, shamans or witches. Those who traffic with the power of the gods, even through prayer, are weaklings in their eyes. The Cimmerians do not make sacrifices to Crom or any other deity and see those that do as either touched in the head or simply weak. The Cimmerians are superstitious, not wanting to try the gods. Those Cimmerians who take the barbarian/scholar multi-classed path are known as oracles, as befitting their superstitious nature. These oracles can read the dooms evident in a flight of birds or in the entrails of an animal. Just about any aspect of nature is endowed with spiritual significance that can be read by those who are wise. These Cimmerian oracles learn the sorcery style of Divination only; thereafter they take bonus feats in lieu of additional sorcery styles and, when they run out of divination spells to learn, they take +2 skill points in lieu of additional advanced spells.

In addition to the oracles, Cimmeria also has an oral tradition of story-telling by blind-men who can no longer provide for themselves, their families or their clans. Cimmeria fears the written word, believing letters and runes to be magical. Blind or blinded Cimmerians often multi-class into scholar and become the oral repositories for Cimmerian and clan histories and stories, thus earning their keep. It is also possible that Cimmerians intentionally blind their bards to prevent them from becoming literate. Again, just like the oracles, if a blind bard of Cimmeria learns a sorcery style, he will likely limit himself to Divination only. Many Cimmerians consider writing to be a form of magic, so literacy is rarely available to Cimmerian scholars who have not travelled. These scholars will focus on Knowledge skills (as many as possible) and Perform skills (to convey their knowledge).

SOLDIERS

Cimmerians are naturally barbarians, though there are some who actually train to fight, becoming soldiers. They are no less barbarians for not having the Barbarian class but they are formidable warriors. Many gather in bands known as





Bands of Brothers, to perfect their fighting skills. Almost all learn the *skirmisher* formation combat style.

CIMMERIAN PIRATE

Pirate is a prohibited class for first level Cimmerians. This is because Cimmeria is a land-locked nation. Cimmerians do not have pirates living among them. Obviously, as Conan the Cimmerian has proved, Cimmerians can later multi-class into pirate successfully. They would make excellent sea-wolves (see *Conan: Hyboria's Fiercest*) because barbarian is a favoured class for the grave Cimmerians.

CIMMERIAN THIEF

Although Cimmerians will happily plunder those they kill in battle, they are not petty thieves and none make their living in Cimmeria stealing from the clans, especially their own. Such thievery is considered cowardly and dishonest. If a Cimmerian cannot win what he wants by fighting for it, then the Cimmerian solemnly goes without. That said, the thief class is not prohibited to the Cimmerians. Just because the culture abhors petty thievery does not mean individual members of that culture are unable to act differently.

A Cimmerian thief will find his background skills serve him well in his chosen vocation. Climb and Move Silently can be used for breaking, entering and escaping. Survival allows the Cimmerian to leave the roads and trails and travel to almost inaccessible hide-outs. A Cimmerian has a natural boost to his Strength, so a Strength-based thief is appropriate here. With their racial negative modifier to Intelligence, few Cimmerian thieves will become the centre of a network of thieves and he will be hampered in the number of skills they can select. Cimmerian thieves will rarely be as skilled as thieves of the other races because of the Intelligence modifier, as well as for cultural reasons.

CIMMERIAN TEMPTRESS

With high Strength scores and penalised Intelligence scores, the notably rare Cimmerian temptresses are not the most skilled of seductresses, but they often pack a powerful wallop if spurned. They tend to be of the farmer's daughter type more often than the other roles played by temptresses (see page 124 for potential temptress roles), although the femme fatale is a close second – Cimmerian women who refuse to live the sedentary life demanded by their villages. Climbing is point of

pride among Cimmerians, and this is no less so for the Cimmerian temptress. A Cimmerian temptress will be blunt, strong and physically sexual. She has a rare, barbaric quality, a savage exoticness that will help her survive in the world outside of gloomy Cimmeria. She will also tend to be depressive at times, especially when she thinks of her homeland. Her mood cheers when she has a goal to pursue.

NEW SKILL

PERFORM - TAUNT

Taunt forms part of the range of Perform skills and is used to both taunt and insult direct enemies before a battle, but also to offer insults generally in social situations. The effects of pre-battle taunting are described on page 87, but in social situations, apply the following guidelines for using the Perform (Taunt) skill.

| Perform DC | Taunt Performance |
|------------|---|
| 10 | Make a casual, but caustic witty riposte that causes embarrassment to the victim and raises a laugh from others present |
| 15 | Offer a stinging insult that causes deep embarrassment which cannot be countered by the victim |
| 20 | The insult levelled is vicious and wounding. The victim has no option to consider the insulter as an enemy from now on. |
| 25 | The insult is so well framed, and filled with such threat and menace, that the only possible option is for the victim to now initiate a blood feud, such is the hurt caused by the taunter's tone and phrasing. |

CIMMERIAN FEATS

Whilst these new Feats are developed with Cimmerians in mind, they are not exclusive to Cimmerians and may be freely absorbed into wider Feat options for Conan characters.

COMBAT RIDING

Using only your legs and knees to control a mount, you can wield missile and two-handed weapons from horseback.

Prerequisite – Dex 13, Ride



Benefits - This Feat means that you do not need to make a skill check when attempting to fight from horseback (either against Guide with Knees or Fight with Warhorse – see page 112 of the Conan rules), whether it is with a two handed weapon or a missile weapon. Your balance and confidence are so well developed that it seems as though rider and mount are as one.

CONFIDENCE OF THE CLANS

You are adept at clan politics and etiquette, sensing the correct way to act when engaged on clan business.

Prerequisite – Clansman, Cha 13

Benefits – Any clan you come into contact with – even those with whom you have a blood feud – trusts you and is prepared to deal with you. You gain +5 to all Bluff, Intimidate and Perform (Oratory), checks when engaged on clan business, and you are usually guaranteed to gain audience with the chieftain rather than having to deal with subordinates or lackeys.

SILENT INTENSITY

You silently focus every instinct on the battle ahead, staring intently at your foe..

Prerequisite – Wis 13

Benefits – You are immune to taunts or other distractions before any kind of combat as you silently concentrate on

what you have to do and what you have to become when the fighting starts. When attempting to channel the Silent Intensity abilities (see Hunts and Wars Like Shadows, page 85), you add your Level as a bonus to the Will Saving Throw. However, when using this Feat you must spend one full combat round in concentration, ignoring everything that goes on around you. If you are physically or magically attacked then your concentration is shattered and you will not be able to invoke the Feat until the opportunity for pursuing silent concentration becomes available.

Normal – You must have a foe in plain sight on which to concentrate; if the foe is hidden or invisible, Silent Intensity cannot be invoked.

STALWART

You are an expert fighter within a shield wall, providing a stalwart presence that encourages others and contributes to the shield wall's strength.

Prerequisite – Level 5 and above

Benefits – When fighting as part of a shield wall, you add +1 to the Shield Wall Strength for every 5 Levels your character has. Additionally, if making a Ref ST to determine a Shield Wall Effect, you may add your Level as a bonus to the Ref ST throw.

Normal – Stalwart is only effective when you fight in the front rank of a shield wall.





Games Mastering Cimmeria

As Robert E Howard provides very little information on Conan's place of birth, much of this book is based on the extrapolation of the few scant facts presented in the Conan stories, and newly created material inspired by the Celtic peoples and their landscapes. The aim has been to create as authentic and interesting a game environment for Cimmerian characters as possible; but from here on, the bulk of the work needs to come from Games Masters. This chapter is designed to help you, as the GM, gain the most from Cimmeria.

TIMING OF A CIMMERIAN CAMPAIGN

As with any Conan campaign, some thought needs to be given as to when a Cimmerian campaign takes place. The entire history of the Conan saga is available to Games Masters, and this book makes only a few assumptions, with no definite period attached, save that the siege of Venarium is several years in the past.

If this assumption is held for your campaign's timeframe, then the Aquilonians have been driven out of Cimmeria and many Cimmerian heroes, not least Conan, have made their names in the battle of Venarium. The message has been sent that Cimmeria is no easy conquest and the barbarians of the dark forests can form an army that is a match for Aquilonia's sophisticated military might.

If your campaign is going to take place before, or around the time of the battle of Venarium, then there are certain considerations to make:

- ✿ If the campaign takes place shortly after Venarium, Conan is still in Cimmeria but as a relatively young adventurer. Various clan enmities have either been settled or forged

during the battle and in its aftermath. Specifics are for you to decide.

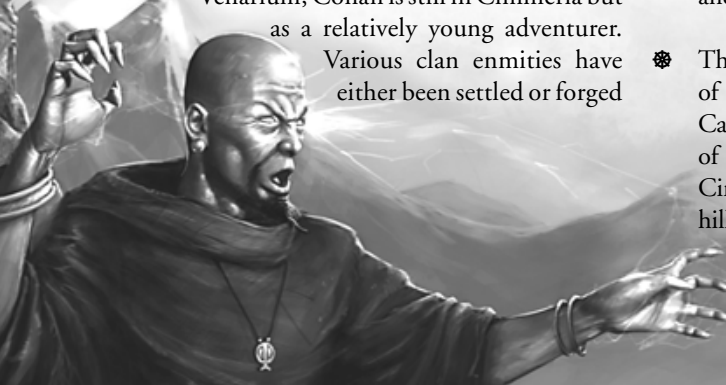
- ✿ If the campaign takes a short time place before Venarium, Cimmeria has not faced such a consolidated threat for many years, testing itself mainly against the Picts and the Nordheimers (as well as each other). Conan is a callow youth with greatness and infamy stretching before him. If the campaign concerns the Canach (Snowhawk) clan, then many of the characters will know Conan, his father, mother and grandfather.

Perhaps the best setting for any Cimmerian campaign is several years after Venarium. This gives the opportunity for the deeds of that great battle to be recounted to fledgling clansmen, with some of its heroes still alive to boast of their experiences. Conan himself has moved north, to fight with the Vanir, and Cimmeria is, once again, left to its own devices.

ATMOSPHERE

As the poem at the start of this book demonstrates, and as is evident in both Conan's personality and what he (and other characters of the saga) tell us, is that Cimmeria is gloomy, dark and brooding. Its landscape is stark and forbidding, its people insular and, in cases, outright xenophobes. Cimmeria is a dangerous country inhabited by dangerous people. This atmosphere and constant, inherent danger should be at the forefront of any story set within Cimmeria's borders.

- ✿ Emphasise the poor weather. Rain is common; from an incessant, miserable drizzle, through to brutal thunderstorms. When the sun does shine, it is with a weak, infrequent light. Cimmeria is a land of leaden skies and grey horizons. The winds are strong, howling and cold as they blast down from the Eiglophians.
- ✿ The geography is stark and unforgiving. The mountains of the north are not snow-capped beauties, such as the Canadian Rockies, but an angry grey and white crown of thorns that snarls at the world. Huge swathes of Cimmerian countryside are deep, rutted valleys, steep hills, cloaked in snarled forests, or dull, windswept





moorlands covered in heather and gorse that tears at the skin. Plains and meadows are few and far between. Travelling through Cimmeria takes twice as long as it should because there are no roads and the way is never simple. There is always another peak, another false summit or some obstacle to straight-line travel.

✿ The gloom of Cimmeria emanates not just from its stark geography and miserable weather. Shadows seem to cling to Cimmeria like lichen to rock. The light is frail and the shadows long and deep. Nights are thick and silent, the dawn sluggish, and the days feel short and beleaguered. The whole country is wearying to endure, with little natural enlightenment to raise the spirits or mood. Birdsong is sparse and mournful; the snarls of predators bringing down prey supplant the pastoral calm of herbivores grazing and lowing. The whole aura of Cimmeria is weighty and depressing – as though something terrible is on the brink of happening; some long-prophesised doom ready to strike. Sleep is fitful and plagued by unpleasant dreams. Laughter sounds hollow and forced. Smiles, when they occur, are grim and humourless.

✿ Cimmerians themselves are suspicious and taciturn. A warm welcome means not being killed on sight. Hospitality is offered without ceremony and

with little grace. Suspicious eyes from shadowy huts watch newcomers with a mixture of contempt and fascination. Children do not flock to greet strangers, as they do in other settlements of the world; instead they glower from a distance, sizing-up the new arrivals from behind the strength of their parents. Cimmerians do not speak unless spoken to or unless the occasion demands it. A shrug is often the closest one comes to an affirmation or approval. Banter and casual humour is ignored and, sometimes, disdained. Comments meant in jest but which could be taken as vaguely insulting are treated as insults. Irony and double-meaning are unappreciated. Flippancy is likely to be greeted with a withering – or even murderous – glare.

THE CLANS

The chapter dealing with the Cimmerian clans provides lots of examples of how the Cimmerian clans differ, whilst highlighting the essential similarities. This is an important chapter because clan life determines the outlook, belief and philosophies of a Cimmerian adventurer. The clans are not large, but they are large enough to have distinct traditions and views that





make them unique. In developing a Cimmerian party, you, as Games Master, should take some time to develop clan outlook in relation to the characters, using the guidance given in the chapter on roleplaying in Cimmeria, so that the players understand that the clan is more than just an extended family or backdrop: it is an essential framework for Cimmerian life. The clan drives everything, and no Cimmerian, no matter how far he wanders, will ever escape his clan's influence.

CLAN ENMITY

The clans are fractious and mercurial. Alliances come and go, and blood feuds are easily started. Clans raid other clans for revenge and out of necessity. Thus, warring clans offer a superb backdrop for Cimmerian adventuring. Ultimately every clan believes it is superior to its neighbours and the propensity is to prove this through subjugating those who are inferior, or inflicting an embarrassing defeat in order to force home the point.

The relations between clans encompass all the bold themes of epic fantasy. Consider some of these as backdrops for a campaign or instigators of adventure:

Cattle/Food Raids. Some clans find it easier to take from others rather than produce their own. Raiding season occurs between the summer and autumn, before the weather becomes too bitter. Some raids aim to take just enough to tide the raider over. Others are deliberately punitive, designed to deny the opposing clan as much as to feed the raiding one. A raid carries many risks, but is seen as good experience for a war band and to 'blood' new warriors and adults. And, of course, a raided clan often makes a counter attack, both as punishment and to mitigate its losses.

Strengthening Alliances. Clans that have decided to cease being enemies usually require some form of bond: an exchange of hostages, perhaps, to ensure that the alliance holds, or a marriage between valued clan members to demonstrate the new alliance. What circumstances have dictated the alliance? Can it be trusted? How do hostages view living in the camp of their enemies? Perhaps they discover something that shows their enemies were right all along – or have been attempting to deliberately mislead. If the basis for an alliance is marriage, how do the respective bride and groom feel about the prospect? How do those closest to them feel? Where will the marriage take place? Are there any dissenters who would deliberately

wreck the marriage for personal, spiteful reasons? Perhaps the characters, drawn from the two clans, are tasked with ensuring that a political marriage succeeds at all costs. Perhaps they are tasked with making it fail...

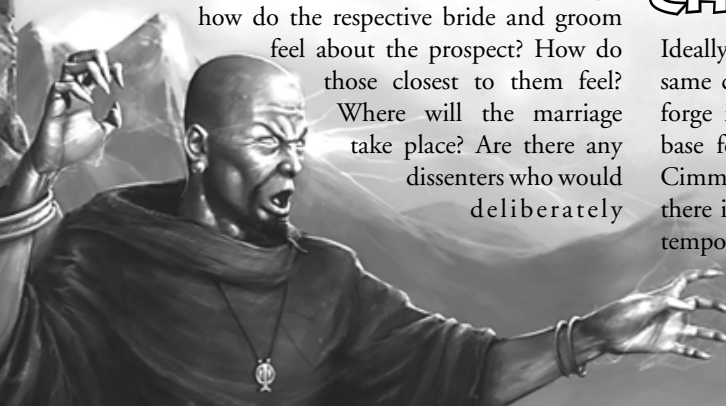
Common Enemies. A pair of warring clans are suddenly threatened by a new enemy who intends to destroy both clans. This might be a Pictish army or a Nordheim force, other clans, or a creature such as a Frost Giant, intent on making trouble. Do the threatened clans ally against the common enemy? Can they work together? What do they need to do and agree in order to face the foe? Is one side likely to join with the aggressor? Perhaps members of each clan are hand-picked to form a new war band to face the common enemy.

Blood Feud Intervention. Two clans engaged in a blood feud have reached a point where the feud threatens to spill-out and involve other, neighbouring clans. An independent clan decides that it is time to intervene – or risk being consumed and destroyed. How will it do so? What are the criteria for success? What are the true consequences of failure? Who are the players within the blood feud that need to be reasoned with or eliminated? Is one of the feuding clans receptive to third-party intervention? The opportunities for inter-clan politics, fighting and intrigue are irresistible and afford the chance for characters to advance their own positions and for the GM to bring together a party of characters from disparate backgrounds.

Blood Feud Fallout. Clans involved in a blood feud have reached a point where one must take decisive action to gain victory. There is no longer any hope of co-existence between the clans, and so the characters find themselves engaged in a desperate battle against age-old enemies. This situation is unlikely to be resolved in a single battle, and may require new alliances to be forged before a series of skirmishes and inter-clan battles takes place, determining, once and for all, who presides. The nature of the blood feud fallout may depend on the nature of the blood feud itself, or afford opportunities for discovering what really lies behind a generations-old feud – perhaps with surprising results.

CIMMERIAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

Ideally, a party of Cimmerians will belong to either the same clan or allied clans. This clearly makes it easier to forge inter-character relationships and lends a common base for adventuring and campaign play. It is rare for Cimmerians of disparate clans to band together unless there is some common enemy to be faced (in which case temporary adventuring bands of different clansmen would





be created at a gathering such as a clan moot at the Field of the Chiefs). What is more likely are for allied clans to unite against an enemy threatening their particular interests, such as a Pictish incursion, or an enemy clan making an offensive move (as part of a blood feud, for instance).

Characters from the same clan will, most likely, have spent their formative years together, growing-up and becoming warriors. They are likely to serve in the same war band or have fought together in the same shield wall. However the party is determined, it is easier to rationalise and support if all characters come from the same clan, or from a couple of allied clans, where relations between the two support common goals and co-operation.

This means that, for the most part, Cimmerian player characters will be of the Clansman disposition rather than Wanderers. A mixed group of the two dispositions is going to be difficult to rationalise owing to the different perspectives clansmen and wanderers have. However, it is perfectly feasible for a group of Cimmerians who are all Wanderers to band together into an adventuring party. A reason for the grouping needs to be established and here are a few ideas for consideration:

- ❖ Something has happened within a clan that has forced a group of characters to leave altogether. This might be a scandal, a frame-up, or a communal necessity. If the clan has been all-but wiped-out by a rival clan or an enemy such as the Picts, then the characters could be survivors who, with little choice, must wander Cimmeria together in order to survive. Given the Cimmerian desire for vengeance, perhaps the

group of wanderers is in search of their clan's destroyers intent on revenge.

- ❖ A pair of rival clans have met and done battle, but during the conflict some members from either side have seen the futility of the struggle and found a common ground that has allowed a certain amount of comradeship to develop. Knowing that this comradeship will make them pariahs in their own clans, the characters have decided to break away and forge their own destiny. How will their respective clans view this betrayal? Is the party being hunted by war bands from their parent clans? Do old rivalries still exist within the party; perhaps some of the old clan loyalties and tensions arise from time to time, even though a spirit of comradeship exists between the two.

- ❖ The wanderers are from several separate clans, each striking out for different reasons, but have found themselves thrown together when they meet at a common place (such as a watering hole or known hunting area). Initially the group of wanderers view each other with deep suspicion, but, given there is a mutual desire for survival and exploration, decide to stick together because they are, after all, Cimmerians – and the wider world does not care about clan differences, treating all Cimmerians with the same fear and disdain.

- ❖ A meeting at the Field of the Chiefs has descended into inter-clan bickering although a few, sensible-minded





individuals (the characters) have been able to see past the petty rivalries and deep-rooted hatred and decided to show the chieftains what can be done if politics and enmity are set aside. The characters become wanderers together in order to eventually prove to the Cimmerian clans that co-operation, not division, is the best way forward.

- ✿ Several clans have been forced to work together to defeat invading Picts, Borderlanders or Gunderlanders. In so doing some of the clan members have discovered the kind of comradeship that arises only in times of conflict and battle. Later, when the enemy has been defeated, these comrades decide that they can, no longer, remain within the clan structure and seek new opportunities in the lands of those they have just fought.

CELTIC MYTH, TRADITIONS AND LEGENDS

Howard clearly took his inspiration for Cimmerian from the Celts. Cimmeria mixes Irish, Welsh, Scottish, French and English Celtic traditions to arrive at the Cimmerian amalgam. Therefore, Celtic myth and legend provides a valuable source of ideas and inspiration for creating memorable Cimmerian campaigns. Remember, though, that Cimmeria is inspired by Celtic myth and tradition; it is not a direct analogue. You are therefore free to take as much or as little inspiration from existing Celtic sources as you wish, adding your own twists just as Howard did.

Some of the qualities of the Celts to consider when drawing upon Celtic sources for developing a Cimmerian campaign:

- ✿ The Celtic mythology, which is both involved, contradictory, and less stringently organised than other belief systems, responds to the need for morality. The Celts, and also the Cimmerians, seek to impose some form of order upon life, personally, and in the relation with the clan or tribe. Celts believed that the gods directed certain actions, but ultimately it was up to the individual to forge his own way. Cimmerians believe this too, and, living in such a harsh environment, Cimmerians have reached the conclusion that the gods simply do not care. The Celts believed that their mythology enabled them to determine their position in the grand scheme of life and reduce

bewilderment the grand scheme so often imposed. Cimmerians share a similar philosophy but from the point of view that, because the world does not make sense, it is up to the individual to try to make it sensible – or simply accept that the world cares nothing for the individual; a common tenet amongst Cimmerians.

- ✿ Celtic traditions begin with the mysteries of the earth; fertility, life, growth and support. In Celtic myth, mortal men – heroes and kings – paired with earth and nature goddesses to cement that relationship between man and nature. Cimmerians are nowhere near so romantic; their belief is that the gods have forsaken mortals and have nothing but bad news to share. But still Cimmerians are cognisant of the land and their relationship with it, and do not ignore the signs and omens nature has to offer. Places and things are invested with their own, innate power, quite separate from that of the gods, which, although not manifesting as magic or sorcery per se, provides a degree of comfort and helps spark the fire within the Cimmerian soul to survive and force the world, somehow, to make sense. So, just as Celts carried with them small, caressable stones, ominously shaped sticks or boughs, or other, personal totems, so do Cimmerians look for such items, in order to remind themselves that the earth, for all its fearsome, unforgiving nature, still holds the power of life and growth – no matter what the gods decide to do.
- ✿ Animals and beasts are harbingers of doom or messengers from the gods. The Celtic hero, Cuchulainn, strapped himself to a pillar in order to keep fighting his enemies, even though he was suffering from dreadful wounds. It was only when a raven, dread symbol of Badb and the Morrigan, perched on his shoulder that his enemies dared to draw near and finish the hero. This image is reflected across Howard's stories in situations Conan finds himself in, and Cimmerians are always on the look-out for the presence of certain creatures that might hint at the messages the gods are sending. The stag, the ram, the wolf, the raven – each is a harbinger of a certain kind of message (usually doom-laden in Cimmerian eyes) that needs to be heeded.
- ✿ Celtic heroes such as Cuchulainn and Nuada Silverhand, epitomise the fighting spirit and mercurial nature of the culture: argumentative, brave, foolish, impetuous, tenacious. These are traits found in Cimmerians and Conan himself exhibits all these characteristics and, from that standpoint, reflects the mythical stature of the Celtic heroes. Although Howard never uses them as mythical heroes directly in his stories, there is no reason why Cimmeria's deep, mythical history, can not be inhabited by the likes of Cuchulainn, Nuada,





Miach (son of Dianchecht), and Angus Og. The exploits of these mythical heroes are likely to be woven into the fireside tales of Cimmerian clans, becoming a mix of genuine history, mythical invention, and even a combination of several Celtic heroes into unique, Cimmerian archetypes. Their exploits, such as the cattle raid of Cooley, are mirrored in the warlike nature and relationships between clans, which are often founded on petty jealousies and misinterpreted slights than genuine reasons for blood-letting. Indeed, Celtic heroes might even be representations of Atlantean heroes from Cimmeria's prehistory.

- ❖ Celtic society mirrored that of the gods. Just as the Celts never formed a single political unit, neither was their pantheon organised into a strict hierarchy or pantheon. But the actions and mythical behaviour of the gods were echoed in Celtic society. So, the families became clans and the clans formed tribes. Similarly, the traditions of





the gods found their way into rituals of the Celts – such as the festival of Lughnasa, at the start of the summer, and Samhain, the end of the old Celtic year. Although Cimmerians do not worship their gods, there is no reason to suggest that divine traditions, such as Lughnasa and Samhain, are not observed simply because they form a convenient way for excusing celebration. Indeed Samhain is a particularly apt example of a festival that would appeal to the Cimmerian mindset. At Samhain, the earth is believed to open and spirits stalk the land (this notion forms part of the inspiration for the Kurnow Apparitions). Darkness reigns and the sexual union of the gods shakes the land. Samhain echoes the chaos from which man emerged and to which he must never return (which mirrors the dark days when the Atlanteans descended into utter barbarity and from which Cimmeria emerged). When the world is filled with such god-sent horrors, the fertility of the earth must be renewed and the future of the clan guaranteed. During Samhain the Celts possessed a heightened sense of foreboding and dread which only lifts as spring arise, marked by the festival of Beltane. At Beltane, great fires are lit to symbolise the return of the sun to drive out the darkness (and is Cimmeria not dark?), and cattle driven between these beacons of fire to purify them. Would such celebrations not be apt for Cimmerians, despite their lack of faith or trust in their errant and unforgiving gods?

- ❖ The Celts adored battle trophies, and foremost (and most distressing, to some) are scalps and severed heads, brought back to the tribe or clan, dripping and bloody, to be displayed as tokens of victory. Celtic myth is redolent with this imagery, and it is not hard to imagine the Murrogh clan following similar practices which, in turn, contribute to the revulsion many peoples of the Hyborian Age feel when contemplating the people of dark Cimmeria. Indeed the severed head was believed to contain a warding power that the Celts felt to be particularly potent. Cuchulainn, for example, took the heads of twelve enemy warriors and planted them on twelve stones both as a warning to others and to defend himself from further harm. Similar grisly barriers – ghost fences – are a potent reminder of Cimmerian power within a given region.





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