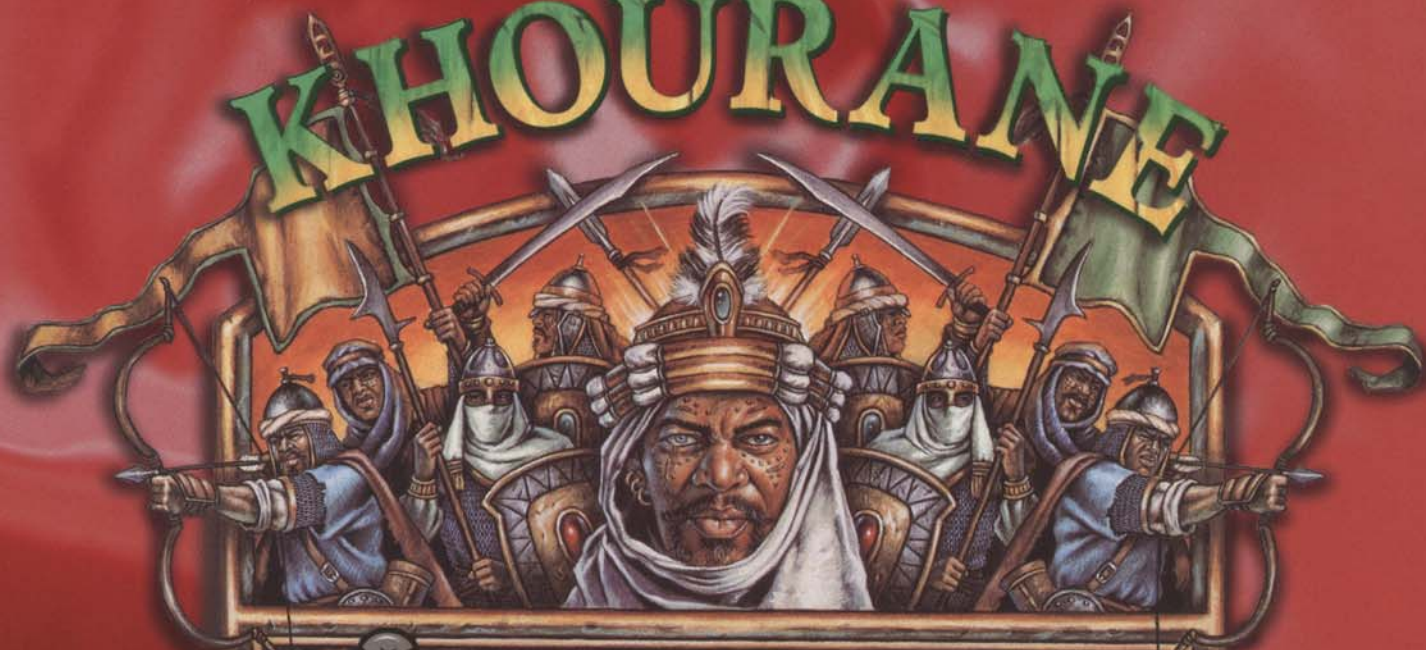


Advanced  
**Dungeons & Dragons**

Player's Secrets of

# KHOURANE



## BIRTHRIGHT

DOMAIN SOURCEBOOK



by Anne Brown



# khourane

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 UNITED KINGDOM

The lands of the Khinasi seem to stretch on forever. From the fringes of the Harrowmarsh all the way across the continent to the coast of the Sea of Dragons, a traveler could spend a lifetime visiting every settlement and every point of interest. It is a land of both riches and desolation—and certain domains include more than their share of one or the other. But Khourane is a realm that benefits from a long, beautiful coast, deep forests, and shining deserts spotted with oases. It has been the subject of envy more than once in its long history. Today, this domain recognizes a new leader—your player character.

## what you need to play

This domain sourcebook is designed for use with the BIRTHRIGHT® campaign setting. In addition to the *Player's Handbook* and the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* for the *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®* game, you or your Dungeon Master (DM) should have a copy of the BIRTHRIGHT boxed set. The *Cities of the Sun* accessory will also prove helpful. Before attempting to incorporate this material into an existing campaign, be sure that you and your DM have thoroughly read this product.

## using this domain sourcebook

This product is designed as an aid for players who wish to install a character as the regent of Khourane. This sourcebook expands upon the information in the BIRTHRIGHT boxed set and *Cities of the Sun* to provide details of the Khinasi settlements and strongholds, progress in disputes with enemies, the current political situation, resources and shortfalls, and the disappearance of Emira Kalilah bint Farid el-Mashil. It also provides an examination of the distinctive cultures in these lands and their interactions with outsiders.

Like all game products, this sourcebook may be modified by the player and DM to suit an individual campaign. Because a player character will be assuming the role of regent, that player is free to drive Khourane's future in any direction. This material is also appropriate for a non-regent PC or a DM wishing to play Khourane as a nonplayer character domain.

# last words from the emira

The formal garden of the emira's palace is especially beautiful in the early morning. Your character lingers over breakfast in this small paradise, enjoying the shade of cypress trees and the brilliant blooms of hibiscus and lilies. Their scents waft over you as you gaze at the deep blue sky and feel the warm morning breeze. The air is remarkably clear following last night's storm—the wind and rain were so fierce that you wondered if it weren't a typhoon. But morning has dawned with no sign of damage in the immediate area. Just a storm, you think to yourself—and how wonderfully it cleansed the air and washed the dust from rooftops and paving stones.

A servant boy steps forward to pour coffee. He raises the silvered pot, then an object sails over the high wall surrounding the garden and lands on your table with a thump. The boy barely manages to keep his grip on the coffee urn, but skillfully prevents the hot liquid from spilling.

The object that landed on the table suddenly gives a little hop. You see that it is a golden scrollcase—and you recognize it as belonging to the emira. It flutters slightly on richly colored feathery wings; their blue and emerald tones glint in the sunlight. The case half hops, half flutters over to you and stops.

The latch is easily opened and you lift the lid. Inside the case are a quill pen and a sodden sheet of papyrus. You unroll it carefully and discover a letter addressed to you. The handwriting looks like that of the emira, but is crooked and shaky.

"My trusted ambassador,

"I hope this missive finds you! We are nearly home from our journey to the cold country—we have passed the Magian's peninsula. But a storm of such wrath has whipped up that I fear we may never make landfall. The ship rocks terribly, and as you know, I am no weakling when it comes to sea travel. Even the captain has a gleam of fear in his eye. The ship is secured and the sailors have lashed themselves to the deck, but the beams and mast creak horribly. We are praying to Nesirie, but perhaps

even she cannot hear us above this howling wind. If I do not appear home within three days, you must assume that I am lost.

"In the event of my demise, you must carry on in my absence. I know that you will encounter opposition from others who would sit on my throne, but this letter must serve as my official notice that I wish to pass the scepter to you. I pray that this scrollcase reaches you and does not fall into enemy hands!

"I have every faith in you as a leader, but I will not rest unless I can give you these warnings.

"Be wary in dealing with the elves! They will take any opportunity to recover their beloved lands. Never take anything they say at face value.

"Beware the awnsheghlien, especially the Serpent! I know you recognize their dangers, but they will try to fool you or make a fool of you. Keep our trusted wizards near in any dealings with them—and depend on magical reports of activities in enemy lands. The Serpent is especially tricky—he will try to take the land out from under you when you are not looking, rather than marching in with an army.

"Do something about that scoundrel el-Sirad! He is a traitor without rival—and if he can strike once and seal off our lands to steal them, he can surely do so a second or third time. You must eliminate him or somehow strike a treaty with him. Make an example of him to anyone who might think to do the same.

"Turn to Beshir for everything. She knows who can be trusted and who should be buried in the garden with yesterday's fish bones. She will reveal to you many of the palace's secret magical devices for safety and for spying.

"Tihara min Buseri is also trustworthy. She will embrace you as if I were your sister.

"The treasury is healthy and our lands are prosperous. Our people are loyal. Do your best for them and they will repay you tenfold.

"Foreign matters will occupy all of your time. Do not forget to keep a watchful eye on your own realm! The minute you avert your eyes for more than a blink, someone will try to force their way in and steal the domain from the inside out.

"Squash Mairada like an overripe melon if you must. That land causes us more and more trouble as the Serpent extends his influence.

"Finally, never give up the fight. Our lands are worth preserving and our freedom is without price. Always remember the lessons of—"

The letter ends in a smear of ink. It bears the date of eleven days ago.

## the transfer of power

**T**he moment the letter from the emira arrived, you mobilized every ship in the fleet and every wizard in the realm. But no combination of searches and scrying turned up any clue as to the emira's whereabouts. Even those magical items specifically attuned to locating the emira provided no hope.

The last several days have been some of the worst you can remember. The palace has been in uproar; mourners have been arriving daily, the staff has been thrown into confusion, and the palace guards have had all they can do to keep the building in one piece. Further, you have received personal messages ranging from sincere congratulations to thinly veiled pleas for favors—and from ludicrous attempts at blackmail to outright accusations of the emira's murder. Fortunately, an assembly of mages from all across Khourane has authenticated the emira's letter. At least the accusation that you engineered her disappearance has been quelled.

The next several weeks will be difficult. Certain staff members are already jockeying for position; some of your rivals still do not seem convinced that you were legitimately given rule of the domain. You know that you can expect any number of scandals to surface in the next few months, and that anyone with an ax to grind will make an appearance to try to take advantage of the new (and presumably inexperienced) ruler.

The oasis of calm in the midst of this stormy tumult has been Beshir min Barein, the emira's most trusted adviser. She has managed to keep the undesirable elements at bay—individuals ranging from beggars and looters to scandal seekers and spies have all been turned away by her sharp tongue. You've watched Beshir for years, and have always known her to be a quiet woman. But amid this chaos, she has taken control of palace operations and has reserved her mourning for her private time. Without her experience and guidance, the palace would be in considerably worse shape and would likely be relieved of some of its treasures.

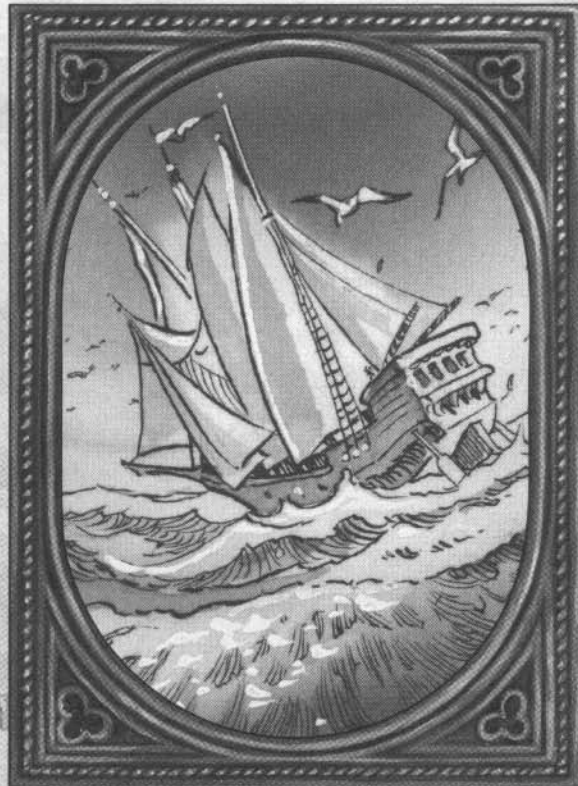
Just at the times when you think you cannot take any more of the stresses of office, Beshir appears with a pot of hot tea laced with honey

and orange. Over a cup of her brew, she has soothed your aching head and worried brow. She assures you that Kalilah made the right choice in naming you ruler, and that the document you received was authentic.

"I shall make it my business to ensure that no one questions your right to rule," she tells you. "Some rulers might pass an edict demanding respect and outlawing talk to the contrary. But that is not how Kalilah would have wanted it, and that is not the way to gain loyalty among your people. Controlling the way that people think is never good for their souls. Instead, we shall plan a goodwill campaign that will garner loyalty and instill trust. Your people will soon follow you the way they followed Kalilah.

"In the meantime, I am afraid I must report that the search for the emira has still yielded no success. We must call some ships back to the harbor; we are defenseless without them. We must also plan the emira's funeral and then see to your coronation. The sooner the affairs of state are finished, the sooner our land can return to a life ruled by the rising and setting of the sun."

That conversation was a little more than two weeks ago. The emira has since been laid to rest, and you have ascended the throne of Khourane. You stand ready to serve as the new ruler of the domain.



# history of the realm

The history of Cerilia since the human arrival has been filled with chaos, unrest, and bloodshed. The Khinasi states have suffered more than their share of battle; these nations first defended themselves against the Roeles, eventually falling under their influence, then fought again to regain their freedom. The later battle was well worth the price; the result was the independence of all the Khinasi states with the exception of Suiriene (which Anuire eventually abandoned).

Approximately half of the lands that would eventually be known as Khourane fell to Anuirean expansionism in 555 MA. The eastern half of the nation spent the next 250 years resisting the advances of the Anuirean armies. Despite the enormous enemy that waited to gobble it up, Khourane was founded in 815 MA by Rashad ibn Khourane. Rashad was the son of a freedom fighter who hoped to unite the free lands of the nation.

Khourane died on the battlefield only six months before his son accomplished the task of

declaring the realm a nation.

Khourane's dearest hope was that by uniting the lands under a single banner, the people would exhibit greater loyalty to their homelands and thus see increased success in the war against Anuire. This dream was eventually realized; Khourane became a nation, and under el-Arrasi's guidance, the Anuirean-held lands regained their freedom in 1299.

The desert lands west and north of Ber Falaia had at one time been considered part of what was now called Khourane, and the young nation immediately seized control of these regions.

The removal of Anuirean influence in the Khinasi realm meant that many tracts of land were suddenly without lawful rule. The elves of the Rhuannach prepared to lay rightful claim to the forested areas, but they had no way of knowing the human reaction to this sudden lack of title. The humans began carving up large areas of the Docandragh before the elves realized what was happening. Never before in their history had they experienced such outright thievery, but stopped short of retaliation.

Stories from the region tell that elf philosophers still argue the issue of exactly how the humans rationalize that once one group gives up a claim, the others may rush in and seize that which does not belong to them.



## recent rule

The most recent royal lineage in Khourane is that of the el-Mashil family. Seventy-seven years ago, Aziza el-Mashil gained control of the throne following the overthrow of a corrupt regime. The overthrow itself was extremely dangerous; the previous emir had spies in every alley who were willing to implicate their own forebears in order to gain the most paltry favor or trinket from the palace.

After a full year of careful planing, the effort was accomplished and Aziza was placed on the throne by unanimous decision of her cohorts. Every servant in the palace was dismissed, many advisers were executed (those who did not immediately flee the province), and the palace was burned to the ground. The new emira and her court had considerable reservations about living and working in a palace the previous offenders knew in intimate detail and that might be riddled with dangerous magical weapons or scrying devices. The burning of the old palace and the construction of the new also gave symbolism to the rise of the new government.

El-Mashil was a strong but fair leader. In a few short years, her policies became known in even the remotest corners of Khourane: attempts to bribe her government were met with strict punishment, dirty dealings of any kind were not tolerated, and the emira never placed her needs above those of her realm. She ruled for only 11 years, but her son Farid carried on her work of restoring Khourane to an honorable nation. Aziza's granddaughter Kalilah is said to bear a remarkable likeness to her ancestor in appearance, mannerism, and style of rule. The new emir will find the task of filling Kalilah's slippers to be formidable indeed.

## timeline

The Khinasi use Masetian Arrival reckoning in their histories, and the dates below are all listed in MA. To convert to the Anuirean standard, Haelyn's Count (HC), subtract 515 years from the dates listed below.

Date (Masetian Arrival)	Event
0	Arrival of humans in Cerilia
12	Maltos Sariya founds Masetian city of Sariya

495	Widespread colonization effort by Basarji
515	Battle of Mount Deismaar; Masetians practically exterminated
523	Founding of Ariya
525-555	Roele unifies Anuire; surviving Masetians flee to the Ajari Deeps
555	Djapar breaks contact with the Basarji; Roele conquers the Saere Siendere
575	Death of Roele
815	Founding of Khourane
890	Dwarf city of Kheleb-Izhil sealed
1065	Serpent curses surviving Masetians
1249	Birth of el-Arrasi
1271	El-Arrasi ascends the throne of Ariya
1279	El-Arrasi organizes Basarji Federation; Basarji Revolution begins
1299	Basarji Revolution ends with Anuire holding only Suiriene
1300	Khourane struggles to reestablish itself as a nation
1302	Diyab el-Falaia emerges as victor in the bloody maneuvering for the throne
1303	City of Ber Falaia founded
1311	El-Arrasi assassinated by an agent of the Serpent
1313	Diyab el-Falaia is assassinated; son Zezeed ibn Diyab el-Falaia succeeds him
1488	Death of Michael Roele; Anuire abandons Suiriene
1743	Appearance of the Minotaur in the Maze
1903	The Serpent seizes control of Mairada
1912	Ber Falaia fends off an attack by the Black Spear Tribes
1962	Coronation of Aziza el-Mashil
1973	Death of Emira Aziza el-Mashil; Coronation of Farid bin Aziza el-Mashil
1996	Refugees from Djafra spill into Khourane
2023	Death of Emir Farid bin Aziza el-Mashil of extreme old age; Coronation of Kalilah bint Farid el-Mashil
2029	El-Sirad forms Mour el-Sirad
2033	The Magian conquers Pipryet
2039	Emira Kalilah bint Farid el-Mashil is lost at sea; Coronation of the new emir

# geography

Few nations in Cerilia encompass the wide range of terrains found in Khourane. This is a realm of sparkling white beaches, treacherous cliffs, rocky wastelands, forbidding mountains, and lush forests. A bit of Khouranean wisdom advises, "Should the climate be disagreeable, simply pack your family and move a day's ride in any direction."

## natural features fingers of ayan

Along the southern edge of Khourane, the land rises abruptly in sharp, knife-edged ranges. The mountains are so rugged as to be nearly impassable: The few passes are extremely steep and choked with dense jungle and boulder-falls.

In a high pass of the Fingers of Ayan stands the mysterious Temple of Rilni, where all Khinasi mages must swear their oaths of service or be slain. Finding this temple is all but impossible for the inexperienced traveler, but the temple keeps scattered local mountainmen in its employ to guide those who would undertake the journey to swear to the oaths.

This range of mountains is home to some of the most exotic wildlife in Khinasi. Brightly colored parrots chatter in the jungle's drooping trees, giant lizards and salamanders scuttle in the undergrowth, and monkeys and apes make their homes in inaccessible caves. The *ayara*, or yellow monkeys, dwell here as well. This breed of monkey boasts exquisitely soft fur the color of saffron (its fur rivals that of a chinchilla); fortunately for the species, the Khinasi consider it bad luck to kill the *ayara*.

Perhaps two dozen families reside in the rugged mountains. For the most part, they live an isolated life and are entirely self-sufficient, but two or three times a year they make their way down the slopes to trade in nearby villages. These individuals tend to escape the notice of royal tax collectors, so usually do not fall victim to the emir's penny

pinchers. Even if the tax collectors could find these mountain dwellers, it is unlikely that the rustics would have anything of value to contribute.

## the rain serpent mountains

The Rain Serpent Mountains, named for a magical and mysterious creature that is said to watch over this land, run from the peninsula of Djafra to Lake Ibnoume. Over half the mountain range lies within Khourane (less than that when Mour el-Sirad is taken into account—see below). The peaks contribute significantly to Khourane's climate, primarily by adding moisture to the arid region.

The Rain Serpent Mountains are a relatively low range; none of the peaks rise above the timberline. They are treacherous nonetheless due to dense jungle growth. Despite the gentle slopes of the mountains, many areas are impassable due to twisting vines, gigantic ferns, and tangled thickets. The resident elves, of course, have little trouble traversing their realm. Humans who venture beyond the borders of Khourane will find themselves undecided about which is the greater danger—the terrain or the hateful elves.

All varieties of jungle wildlife dwell in the Rain Serpents. Brightly colored birds screech in the treetops; lizards and snakes keep watch from the underbrush; insects in every shape and color chomp on leaves and jungle debris; and monkeys, chimpanzees, and orangutans swing in select areas of the mountains. A noteworthy creature peculiar to the region is the ruby snake. This water-dweller makes its home in rivers and flowing pools (such as those below waterfalls). It boasts bright red scales that glisten like rubies even when dry. The creature can grow up to twenty feet in length, and the males bear hoods like those of a cobra. The bite of both the male and female snake is poisonous (Type D poison). The creatures are prized for their skins, which usually fetch a price higher than that for rubies because of the extreme danger involved in obtaining them.

Legends of the great rain serpent abound among natives of the mountain range. Tales of the creature are attributed to Masetian times. Descriptions of the serpent vary, but the common elements in every story are the creature's silver and gold scales, a pair of delicate but powerful wings, and an uncanny power to mentally affect

those it encounters.

The mountains are also inhabited by a rare and reclusive race called the dhoumaire, or "ones who wait." The dhoumaire are not human, but little is known of them because of their aversion to outsiders. The previous emira of Khourane developed an unusual curiosity for the race, and assembled groups of adventurers and researchers to investigate the mysterious group. The expeditions are still in the field, and are expected to return with news about the bizarre mountain dwellers.

## the docandragh

Khourane encompasses a large portion of the warm forest and low mountains known as the Docandragh, named from an elvish phrase meaning "heart's wonder." It is a beautiful, wild land of frequent rainfalls, hidden lakes, and magnificent cascades.

No one but an elf can say where the region known as the Rhuannadaraight ends and the Docandragh begins, but everyone knows that the elves guard their forest jealously and would leap at the chance to reclaim their ancestral lands. The Khinasi nations are so firmly entrenched, however, that only a massive (and likely bloody) effort by the elves might reclaim those lands. If an awnshegh were to suddenly take an interest in the region and launch an assault or team up with the elves, however, the Khinasi states would no doubt find their futures turning in a slightly different direction.

The climate and features of the Docandragh closely match the description of the Rain Forest Mountains. This is a place of misty glades, deep ravines disguised by dense undergrowth, and exotic wildlife. Any visitors to the region would be foolish to venture into the Docandragh without an experienced guide.

## lake ibnoume

Hidden in the deepest inner reaches of the Docandragh, Lake Ibnoume is at once both wild and civilized. The northern end of the lake abuts the city of Toure el-Fasil in Min Dhousai. To call this settlement a city is an act of generosity; the place more closely resembles an armed fortress. Crude walls encircle the entire compound, and traffic in and out is strictly monitored. Occupants include families displaced by wars in Min Dhousai, mercenary sol-

diers, fortune hunters, adventurers, and occasional units of soldiers from the king's army.

The shores of Lake Ibnoume are relatively untouched within 300 paces of the city walls. Wild creatures avoid the lights and noises of the city, but beyond this perimeter the wilderness grows unchecked. The rest of this 30-mile-long lake is as wild and dangerous as anywhere else in the Docandragh.

## the pipryet river

This slow-moving stream is perhaps one of the most dangerous features in the Docandragh. Its often glassy appearance tends to lull naive travelers into a false sense of serenity. Meanwhile, dangers under the water await their chance to strike. Vines and weeds choke portions of the river, ready to snag a rudder or oars; anacondas and piranha lurk in the depths to snack on fools or unfortunates who brave the water. Elven scouts keep a watchful eye on any who traverse the river; those who appear to be potential troublemakers are most often dead from elven arrow fire before they are even aware of their enemy.

Outside the Docandragh and west of the Magian's borders, the Pipryet River sees a fair amount of trade between Min Dhousai and Khourane. This section of the river is unhindered by natural dangers, elf archers, or the Magian's patrols. The river does not see nearly the amount of traffic it might if neighbors to the east and west were more hospitable.

The eastern leg of the Pipryet is navigable for its entire length. It might serve as an excellent vehicle for trade if not for the Magian's patrols that enforce martial law. Traders who do risk the river usually find themselves subject to searches, tariffs, and confiscation of "questionable" goods.

## lake ketihc

Bordered by several of the peaks in the Fingers of Ayan and by open plain, this is an especially important body of water. In the past hundred years, the lake has never been known to show signs of running dry, even in the most extreme drought. Herds of animals come from



miles around to drink and bathe in the lake; dozens of small communities are scattered within a day's walk.

The lake has other assets in addition to its waters: Reedy plants important to basket weaving and clothing manufacture grow along the shoreline, edible leaves and roots can be gathered in the shallows, fish swim in the deeps, and water birds nest among the cattails and grasses. Local wisdom regards the lake as prophetic: As long as the lake is healthy, the gods are with Khourane. But when the last drop of water has left its sands, the gods will have abandoned the world to save themselves.

Although some maps show the boundaries of Khourane excluding Lake Ketih, the folk of Khourane have visited its waters for hundreds of years without opposition. Maalvar the Minotaur apparently takes little interest in controlling the lake—a surprising thing since the waters are such a valuable commodity. It is well known in this region, however, that the Magian has sent scouts to map the area; anyone can guess that the wizard would love to expand his domain to include Lake Ketih. Controlling its shores would considerably shift the balance of power in this corner of Khinasi.

## details of the provinces

The features of Khourane's 13 provinces are described below. Details are given for terrain type, flora and fauna, resources, settlements, and bits of local interest.

### bicheda

**Dominant terrain:** Rolling plains, jungled mountains. The Rain Serpent mountains fill a little more than half the province, limiting the land available for settlement. Scattered villages lie in the fringes of the jungle.

Most civilization is found in the hilly areas in the center of the province, where water is most plentiful.

**Flora and fauna:** Jungle—deciduous trees, vines, undergrowth, flowering plants including orchids, snakes, lizards, birds, parrots, monkeys, apes.

**Plains—**grasses, hardy shrubs, flax, scrub trees; prairie dogs, weasels, ferrets, birds of prey.

**Resources:** Timber, spices, incense.

**Settlements:** The trading village of Bebrid lies wedged amid hills in the center of the province. Approximately 1,500 people reside here permanently; the population fluctuates seasonally by as much as 300 persons. Jallam is a fishing village of about 600 people.

**Local peculiarities:** At one time, Bicheda received the bulk of refugee traffic from Djafra. When el-Sirad sealed these borders ten years ago, however, this egress was abruptly cut off. Residents of Djafra are fully aware that the land is controlled by the mage; all who emigrate here realize that they could be facing greater dangers than those they escaped.

### ghourin

**Dominant terrain:** Rolling plains, jungled mountains. Like Bicheda, half this province is covered by the Rain Serpent Mountains and is barely habitable.

**Flora and fauna:** Jungle—deciduous trees, vines, ferns, flowering plants and orchids; birds, snakes, lizards, parrots, monkeys, jungle cats. Plains—grasses, shrubs, flax, scrub trees; prairie dogs, weasels, birds of prey, snakes.

**Resources:** Timber, incense, flowering plants (usually exported to royal gardens)

**Settlements:** Mariele is a trading town in the central hills. It is home to 1,200 permanent residents and roughly 200 occasional residents such as traders.

**Local peculiarities:** Like Bicheda, Ghourin was sealed off by el-Sirad ten years ago. The residents were at first unaware of their plight; only when no newcomers arrived in Mariele for several months was the magical barrier discovered. Citizens who have been questioned about their decade of isolation have no memory of anything unusual in that time.

### ber djin

**Dominant terrain:** Jungled mountains.

**Flora and fauna:** Deciduous trees, ferns, vines, orchids, bromeliads; snakes, lizards, birds, jungle cats, thousands of species of insects.

**Resources:** Timber, spices, insects used in making dyes.

**Settlements:** None.

**Local peculiarities:** The dhoumaire are rumored to live in this province every few years.

## el-sirte

**Dominant terrain:** Rolling plains, desert.

**Flora and fauna:** Plains—scrub trees, shrubs, hemp, grasses; snakes, lizards, gazelles, small mammals, birds of prey. Desert—cacti, grasses, weeds; small mammals, vultures, other birds.

**Resources:** None.

**Settlements:** Yariz is a village of 900 people on the eastern border of the province. The villagers raise pigeons, pheasants, and quail; these birds are not only exceptionally healthy, but are bred in a variety of bright jewel-tone colors that are found nowhere else on the continent.

**Local peculiarities:** El-Sirte is one of the less hospitable provinces in Khourane.

## south ibnoume

**Dominant terrain:** Jungle.

**Flora and fauna:** Palm trees, ferns, creeping

vines, bromeliads, orchids; snakes, lizards, birds, foxes, rodents.

**Resources:** Plants and colorful birds sometimes trapped for export; exotic fish usually exported for reflecting pools in the homes of wealthy merchants and nobles.

**Settlements:** A pair of villages known as Ibnim and Ibmam lie along the Pipryet river. Roughly 3,000 people are settled here in the villages themselves and on the riverbanks between the cities. Life on the river is hard, but the people here live in isolation and relative peace from the outside world.

**Local peculiarities:** The populations of Ibnim and Ibmam remain steady despite the harsh conditions in the tropical forest. The folk here are extremely superstitious, and are suspicious of strangers. Wizards seeking exotic spell ingredients sometimes journey here to learn of local herbs and plants.

## ras mhin

**Dominant terrain:** Jungle.

**Flora and fauna:** Palm trees, ferns, vines, bromeliads, orchids; snakes, lizards, birds, foxes, rodents, tarsiers, beetles and insects.

**Resources:** Timber, exotic birds and plants, insects used in making dyes.

**Settlements:** None.



**Local peculiarities:** The interior of the province is especially dense and impassable. The fringes are slightly more accessible. The area is so wild, however, that no humans are known to live here. A rumor tells that the elves who once lived here *charmed* the animals and plants to grow so wildly that humans would never successfully settle the province.

## zulaf

**Dominant terrain:** Mountains, plains.

**Flora and fauna:** Mountains—evergreens such as cedars, deciduous trees, scrub trees, shrubs, bay trees, laurels, grasses; mountain lions, small mammals, birds of prey, rodents, goats, mountain sheep, llamas. Plains—grasses, scrub trees, flowering plants; rodents, small mammals, fowl, birds of prey, wild dogs.

**Resources:** Limited timber, limited furs.

**Settlements:** The city of Moura is the second largest city in Khourane and is home to roughly 5,000 people. It is unlikely to grow further: It has the potential to become a bustling trade town, but the Magian's control of the Pipryet River sometimes causes trade to all but dry up.

Moura's government works hard to keep the city civilized; it regularly teeters on the brink of becoming an unruly frontier town. It offers no end of adventuring possibilities, however.

**Local peculiarities:** Zulaf borders the lands of two awnsheghlien: the Magian and Maalvar the Minotaur. These borders are heavily patrolled by guards based in Moura and financed by the emir's coffers. Several wizards are always posted with these border troops to serve as an early warning system for the rest of the nation.

## adeid

**Dominant terrain:** Desert, light forest.

**Flora and fauna:** Desert—cacti, scrub trees; desert foxes, small mammals, birds of prey, scavengers, reptiles. Forest—deciduous trees, scrub trees, shrubs, birds, small mammals.

**Resources:** Semi-precious gems such as topaz.

**Settlements:** Tamir, located in the interior of the province, is a mining town of about 600 people. Life here is difficult; residents must travel many miles for

supplies and the climate is usually hostile. Work in the mines is difficult and dangerous and hardly a first choice for employment. The town is filled with desperate individuals who have come here to escape the law, creditors, or other problems. The mines pay well; a man can earn enough in five years to support himself for the rest of his life—if the mines don't kill or maim him first.

Hallam and Yazira are coastal trading towns that each support about 900 persons. Life here is much easier than in Tamir. Even the most exotic goods will be found for sale in these busy villages. Most of the gemstones harvested in Tamir are exported through these two ports.

**Local peculiarities:** While the coastline of Adeid is strikingly beautiful, this province would probably not worth settling if not for the gem resources in the interior of the province. Most of the landscape is barren, varying between ever-shifting sand dunes or rocky outcroppings. In some areas, sandstone pillars rise from the earth in bizarre formations, worn by centuries of wind and blowing sand.

## tuarime

**Dominant terrain:** Desert, mountains.

**Flora and fauna:** Desert—cacti, scrub trees; desert foxes, small mammals, birds of prey, scavengers, reptiles. Mountains—scrub trees, evergreens, grasses, birds of prey, rodents.

**Resources:** Semi-precious gems.

**Settlements:** The village of Dhotir is practically a mirror image of Tamir (see Adeid). Ramek is an unruly frontier town that functions as a stopover for caravans and a haven for criminals. Ramellan is an elegant, civilized city of about 1,600 people; it is often considered a little sister to Ber Falaia. In addition to serving as a busy port, Ramellan is also a resort; wealthy tradesman and minor royalty often visit here on holiday.

**Local peculiarities:** The terrain in Tuarime is so rugged that only about 20% of it is habitable.

## ber falaia

**Dominant terrain:** Desert.

**Flora and fauna:** Desert—cacti, scrub trees; desert foxes, small mammals, birds of prey, scavengers, reptiles. Forest—deciduous trees (including citrus), scrub trees, shrubs, birds, small mammals.

**Resources:** Semi-precious gems, incense.

**Settlements:** Ber Falaia is the capital of Khourane and the site of the emir's palace.

Approximately 5,000 people reside here, making their living as craftsmen, sailors, dockworkers, traders, royal servants and guards, and adventurers.

Falaset is a mining town similar to Tamir and Dhotir. It is home to about 400 people, the majority of whom are desperate for work or hiding from their pasts.

**Local peculiarities:** This province is somewhat barren and has limited natural resources. The founder of Ber Falaia was so taken with the beauty of the Inlet of Samih that he gave no second thought to the surrounding lands and ordered the palace built on this site. The rear of the palace overlooks the sea; roughly one-third of the city rests atop a 200-foot wooded cliff. The rest of the city spills down the hillside parallel to the coastline, and about one-quarter of the city is at sea level.

## sahadein

**Dominant terrain:** Desert, mountains, jungled mountains.

**Flora and fauna:** Desert—grasses, cacti, scrub trees; gazelles, wild dogs, wolves, rodents, birds of prey, scavengers. Mountains—scrub trees, shrubs, mosses, grasses; wild goats and sheep, mountain lions, small mammals, birds of prey, giant eagles. Jungled mountains—deciduous trees, vines, ferns; exotic birds, yellow monkeys, apes, reptiles.

**Resources:** Timber, spices, fish.

**Settlements:** Maja is a remote but prosperous town populated by about 1,100 people. Its success is due to its strategic location on the shores of Lake Ketihir and proximity to trade routes. The lake provides a nearly endless source of fresh water and food (fish, seaweed, and other greens).

Bahara is a wild scattering of camps and tiny villages. Roughly one-third of the population consists of native sheep and goat herders. The remainder are mostly trappers who make their living selling furs and live exotic birds.

**Local peculiarities:** The people of Bahara are extremely superstitious. The folk of Maja, on the other hand, are more open-minded. They prize learning and are always looking to improve and expand their town.

## barein

**Dominant terrain:** Desert, mountains.

**Flora and fauna:** Desert—grasses, shrubs, cacti; small mammals, foxes, scavengers. Mountains—evergreens, shrubs, succulent plants; llamas, alpacas, birds of prey, rodents, wolves.

**Resources:** Fish, stone, some furs.

**Settlements:** Kaytar is a quarry town. Little occurs here other than the labor of cutting stone. Loads of gravel, huge blocks, and slabs are hauled cross-country to Marala where they are loaded onto barges and exported via sea.

Marala is a busy seaport, home to about 1,800 people. Hundreds of years ago, scholars flocked here for the solitude and cool ocean breezes; an enormous, ancient library is located on a cliff overlooking the sea.

**Local peculiarities:** Kaytar hardly qualifies as a village; it has virtually no permanent residents. Marala is a beautiful and well-kept town.

## ayandir

**Dominant terrain:** Mountains.

**Flora and fauna:** Scrub trees, spice trees such as cinnamon and nutmeg, grasses; mountain goats and sheep, small mammals, wolves.

**Resources:** Timber, fish, spices.

**Settlements:** Eyas is a village populated by trappers, traders, and sailors. It is hardly a family environment; law enforcement agents here have all they can do to keep order.

**Local peculiarities:** Ayandir is a province rich in resources but difficult to traverse. Almost all forms of trade are conducted by sea. If not for the terrain, Ayandir might be a much more civilized land.

# culture

The territory currently recognized as Khourane falls among the oldest settled human lands. The Masetians, being among the first humans to arrive in Cerilia, settled here in year 0 on the Masetian calendar. Only 12 years later, the city of Sariya was founded on the site of modern-day Ariya, qualifying it as the oldest human city in Cerilia. To this day, Anuireans take exception to this claim. But in the Khinasi lands, Ariya is considered the oldest city on the continent.

The culture of Khourane still shows evidence of the Masetians that first settled here. While all citizens consider themselves Khinasi who descended from the Basarji, remnants of Masetian culture still exist. In many cases, lingering Masetian customs are so old that few people recognize them as Masetian, instead mistaking them for Basarji habits.

All Khinasi people prize knowledge, beauty, and honor. In the lands of Khourane, a person is judged more by his education and mastery of social graces than by his wealth or position. If wealth or position allow him to improve his education (or that of his children) or to better master the social graces (by better serving guests or aiding the poor), then he is using his blessings wisely. A person of means who flaunts his money, spends it foolishly, or uses it to embarrass those around him is looked upon shamefully. In the Khinasi culture, a simple street beggar may hold more honor than the wealthiest merchant in a district.

The code of sayim is alive and well here. Khouraneans pride themselves in living their lives with honor and teaching their children the finer points of face. One of the highest compliments that can be paid to a Khouranean is, "Your child honors your face." A polite and subtle comment to a parent about a rude child is, "Your child shares your face."

To say that the Khouraneans prize beauty is not to imply that they are a shallow people. Rather, it refers to their sense of aesthetics in their surroundings. An exceptionally beautiful woman is not considered more valuable than a plain sister; the Khinasi know that a person's comes from within. A woman who is a skilled artisan

capable of producing objects of beauty will gain the respect of her peers for her talents; such a woman who is honorable in her business and a gracious hostess is prized indeed.

The Khinasi sense of aesthetics revolves around harmony in the surroundings and an integration with nature. When building a city, a palace, a temple, a simple house, or even a wall, the builder will evaluate the surroundings to determine how the new structure will blend with its environment. Every effort will be made to ensure that the shape, color, and position of the new construction harmonizes with the elements around it. A new temple, for example, would not be built in such a way as to cast a shadow on neighboring houses; likewise, the roofs of its minarets might be painted blue to reflect the sky or green to emulate a palm tree, but would never be painted black, red, or purple, for example, unless an architect saw a particular purpose for that color.

The interiors of buildings are designed to provide a sense of comfort and welcome. Nearly every structure has a greeting room just inside the front door. These rooms are equipped with fresh water, towels, comfortable benches or pillows, and sometimes fresh fruit or bread. Visitors can then refresh themselves after a long, tiring journey and make themselves presentable to their hosts.

Most homes and places of business are designed to be respites from the heat and dust. Rooms tend to be painted in soothing shades of blue, green, and lavender. Green plants (especially palm trees and succulents) are typically grown for their cool, relaxing qualities. Indoor fountains and reflecting pools are common for the sense of serenity they convey.

Khouraneans also seek balance in their architecture and decorating. A single stone lion guarding the entrance to a palace or temple will seem out of place to a Khouranean; a pair of lions, on the other hand, lends a sense of balance and harmony. But more is not necessarily better to the Khouranean eye; installing a dozen stone lions across the front of a building will likely look overdone and ridiculous. The fine line between artistry and tackiness is especially well-defined in Khourane.

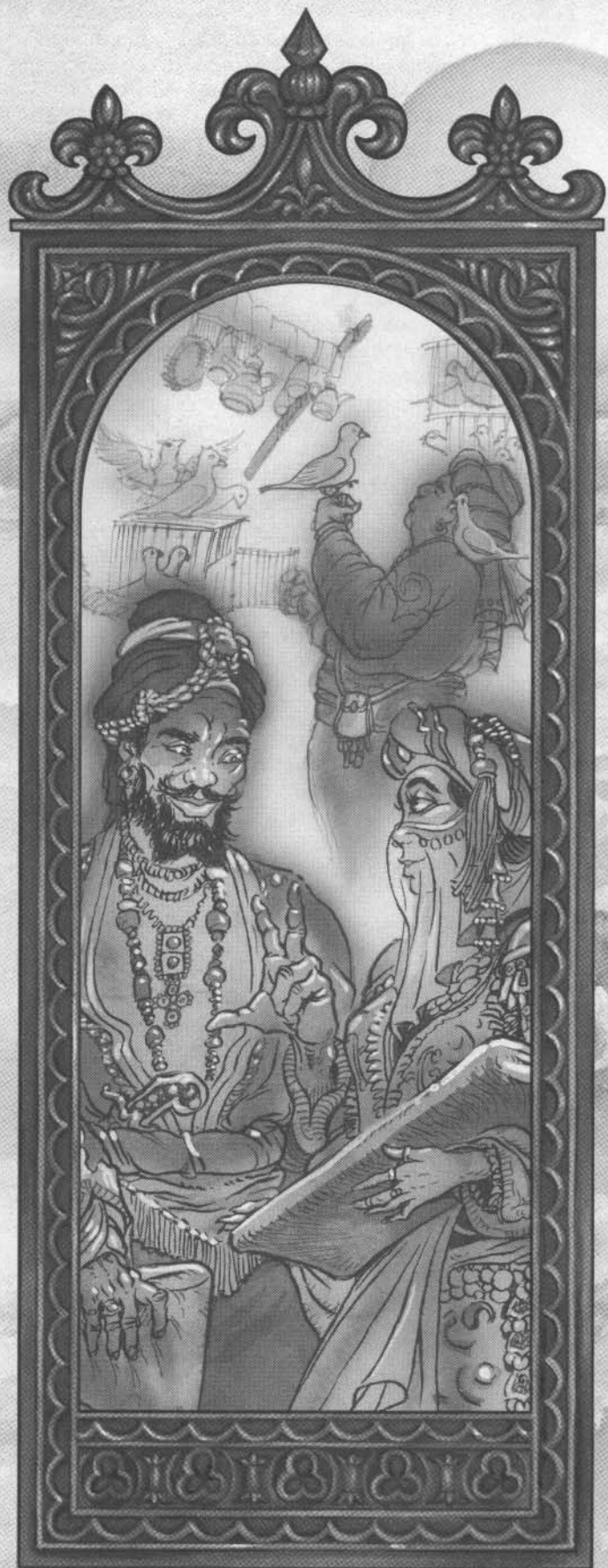
## code of colors

**W**hether this is a throwback to the Masetians or an ancient Basarji custom, no scholar can say. References to the Code of Colors can be found in the literature of both cultures as far back as documents exist.

The Code of Colors is an unwritten system for the expression of various sentiments. The interpretations of the colors are reserved primarily for gift-giving and the observances of certain holidays and rituals. When a person arises in the morning and prepares to dress, he does not choose his wardrobe based on what he hopes the day will bring. When he chooses a gift of silk pillows for his neighbor's wedding, however, he might choose green to express his wish for prosperity or yellow to wish them joy. Black or red, for example, would be inappropriate—black is considered an insult for a joyous occasion. A man may give red as a wish for passion for only his wife, brother, or an extremely close friend; likewise, a woman would give a red gift only to her husband, sister, or a friend she has known since childhood.

Color	Sentiment
Red	Passion
Maroon	Comfort
Pink	Health
Yellow	Joy
Orange	Fertility
Deep green	Prosperity
Pale green	Knowledge
Deep blue	Serenity
Pale blue	Humility
Turquoise	Honor
Violet	Wisdom
Lavender	Patience
White	Purity; sincerity
Black	Perseverance
Gray	Strength
Brown	Fortitude
Silver	Peace
Gold	Good fortune
Brass	Courage

The Code of Colors is quite flexible in interpretation. A turquoise-colored gift sent to the parents of a new baby might be interpreted as, "May your child bring you honor." A light blue



gift sent to an individual as a celebration of a promotion might signal, "May the size of your head not impede your passage through doorways."

The Code is also used for holidays and religious observances. On such occasions, colors may be worn to express the wearer's wishes. They might also be worn to express wishes for the guests of honor; for example, wearing turquoise or pink to a wedding is considered appropriate, while wearing black, lavender, or brass is considered rude. Similarly, a woman might wear orange on a religious holiday in the hope that the gods will bless her with a child; a sailor preparing for a long voyage might wear brass so that the gods will lend him courage.

## education

The Khinasi people place a high value on education, learning, and knowledge. The folk of Khourane are no different; every effort is made to enroll children in state schools and provide educational opportunities for adults.

About the time a child learns to walk, he gains his first experience in school. Toddlers are enrolled in socialization classes in which they learn manners, polite interaction with other children, respect for elders, and other basic skills. The children are also given opportunities for spontaneous play and to dabble in various artistic forms. Teachers are skilled in recognizing aptitudes; children who show promise in the arts, sciences, or magic are watched closely to evaluate their potential in these areas.

Small children attend school in this manner until the age of four. At that time, they graduate to an elementary school where they learn reading and writing, basic mathematics, history, and the sciences. Students are also tested for magical talents; those who show aptitude attend additional classes to prepare them for magical study. Here, they learn meditation and research techniques, practice exercises of dexterity, learn arcane script, and study herb lore to learn the properties of spell components and potion ingredients.

Until the age of ten, all children are required to attend a state school. (This education is considered so important that parents of repeatedly truant children are sometimes fined.) Around a child's tenth birthday, the

parents and child determine his future course of study. At this age, a child may be apprenticed to an artisan or craftsman, may be enrolled in a school of magic if he has shown aptitude and passed an entrance exam, or may attend a state-funded secondary school. Children who continue in a secondary school ultimately pursue careers as teachers, engineers, healers, merchants, scholars, chemists, and so on. Attendance in a secondary school may continue for four to sixteen years before an individual is satisfied that he is prepared to take on his chosen career.

Because of the high value placed on education, teachers of all levels are held in high regard. From the most learned instructors in the secondary schools right down to the caregivers in the socialization schools, teachers are well respected for their work. Teachers of all levels are allowed to wear a pale green sash to reflect their status; these may be embroidered with a tiny turquoise flame for every year of teaching service.

## wizard schools


A mastery of magic is considered the highest intellectual accomplishment in Khinasi society. Wizards are always respected for their intelligence and discipline. Khourane has a number of secondary schools that specialize in the instruction of magic, and even a sanctuary of magic just outside Ber Falaña.

Students who are accepted into a school of magic and pass some basic courses are required to travel to the Temple of Rilni in Mairada to swear the Five Oaths of Service. Once this is accomplished, the student may return to his school to continue his education.

Not all wizards gain their knowledge through formal schooling. Some apprentice themselves to accomplished wizards to learn the craft "in the field." However, no wizard in Khinasi lands will accept an apprentice who has not sworn to the Five Oaths.

For most students of magic, graduation from a secondary school practically guarantees a successful career. For some, however, no amount of study is enough; they may turn to the sanctuary of magic or strike out on their own to continue their studies.

The magic sanctuary, known as al-Azuk mir Ta'laya (translated as "House of the Shining Dawn"), provides a refuge where mages can



pursue even the most esoteric goals. Wizards are thoroughly tested and investigated before they are admitted to the sanctuary. Some applicants petition for admittance as soon as they are ready to graduate from a secondary school; others turn to al-Azuk after years of practice or adventuring when they find that they are weary from the demands of the world.

## adult education

Once an individual has graduated from a secondary school to pursue the career for which he studied, his education is not finished. At least four weeks of every year are spent returning to school for courses addressing new advances in the technology of a given field (such as engineering or mathematics) or new opinions on philosophical subjects (such as new teaching or healing methods). These courses are considered a normal part of one's occupation; attendance is expected by employers and is funded by the state.

In addition, many adults attend classes in their free time to study subjects that qualify as hobbies—foreign languages, philosophy, the arts, horticulture, or other diversions. A bit of Khinasi wisdom advises, "The wisest men stop learning only after they are dead." Most Khouraneans seem eager to follow this advice.

## government

The bureaucracy in Khourane is surprisingly small considering the large size of the nation. Because the code of sayim is so important in this society, citizens are primarily self-policing. If an individual slights or injurs another, the guilty party usually makes reparations of his own volition; lawsuits are virtually unknown in this land.

The former emira controlled one law holding per province, with two in Zulaf and Tuarime and three in Ber Falaia. The new emir inherits control of these. Kalilah always found these units of royal police to be sufficient to maintain order in their respective provinces. One exception has arisen to this status: The new emir would be wise to quickly and cleanly eliminate the Serpent's law holding in Ber Falaia.

## holidays and religious celebrations

The people of Khourane recognize a number of holidays and religious occasions that require the observance of ancient traditions. On such days, businesses are closed and work grinds to a halt. The only acceptable forms of work are those that contribute to the celebration of the occasion.

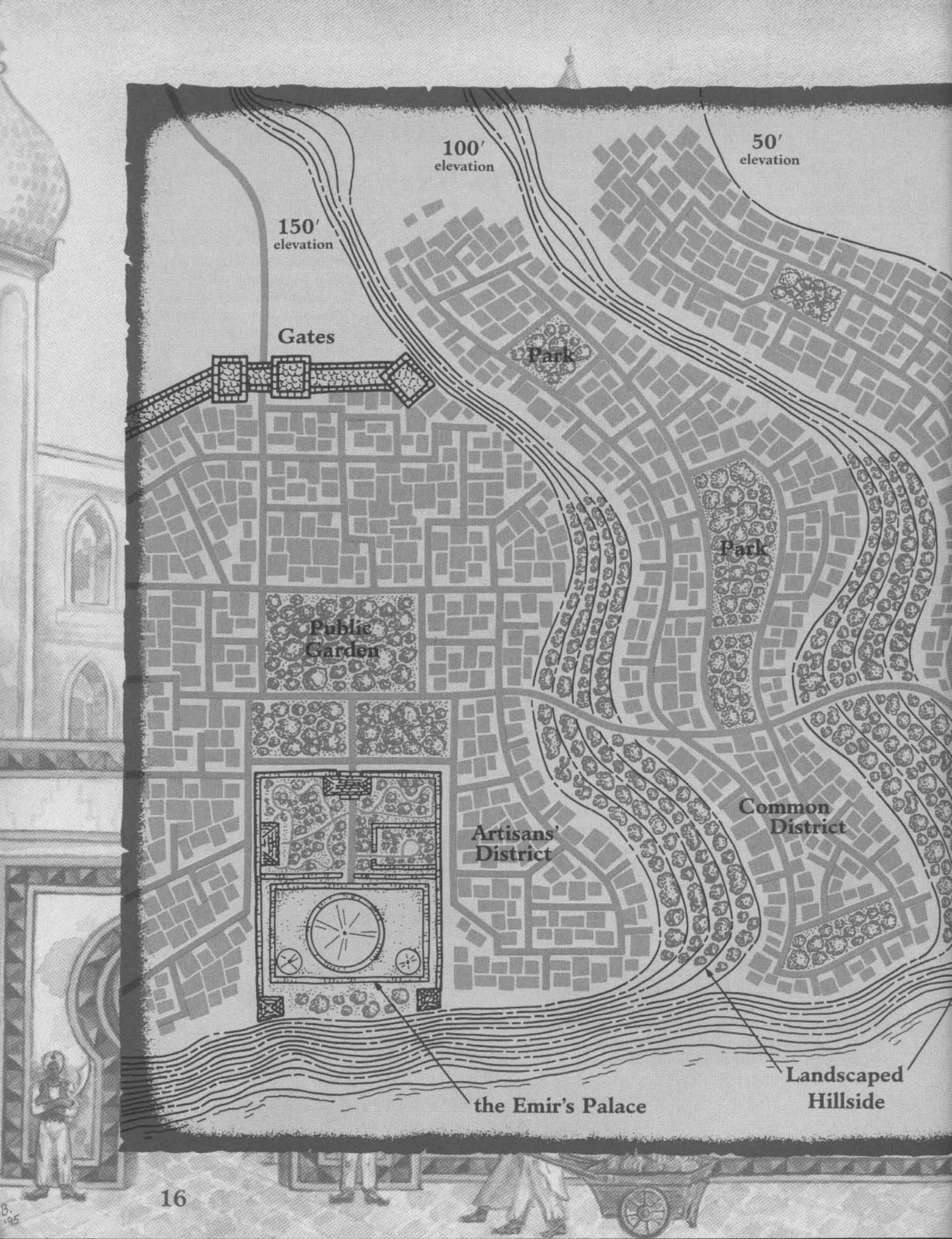
Khouraneans recognize four holidays similar to those observed by Anuireans: the Day of Rebirth which recognizes the end of the old year and the beginning of the new; el-Arrasi's Festival, celebrating el-Arrasi's victory and the eventual liberation of the Khinasi lands; Mehar al-Biziz, a day of thanks for land's resources; and the Eve of the Dead, a solemn festival that honors all who have passed to the next life.

In general, the Khinasi people take their religion very seriously; many symbols and daily activities hold religious significance. On festival days, colors are worn according to the Code to ask for blessings, great feasts are prepared according to ancient traditions, and the streets are strewn with herbs and flowers which perfume the air as they are trampled underfoot.

The Eve of the Dead differs significantly from the other three festivals. All persons of means travel to the burial sites of their ancestors to lay flowers, flatbread, and other small gifts. Families unable to travel set up small shrines in their homes to honor their loved ones. This observation lasts for three days, during which only the colors of comfort, serenity, humility, honor, and peace may be worn. The first two days are spent in meditation and prayer to reflect on the lives of deceased loved ones. The third day of the festival is a celebration of life and the future of the family.







100'  
elevation

50'  
elevation

150'  
elevation

Gates

Park

Public  
Garden

Park

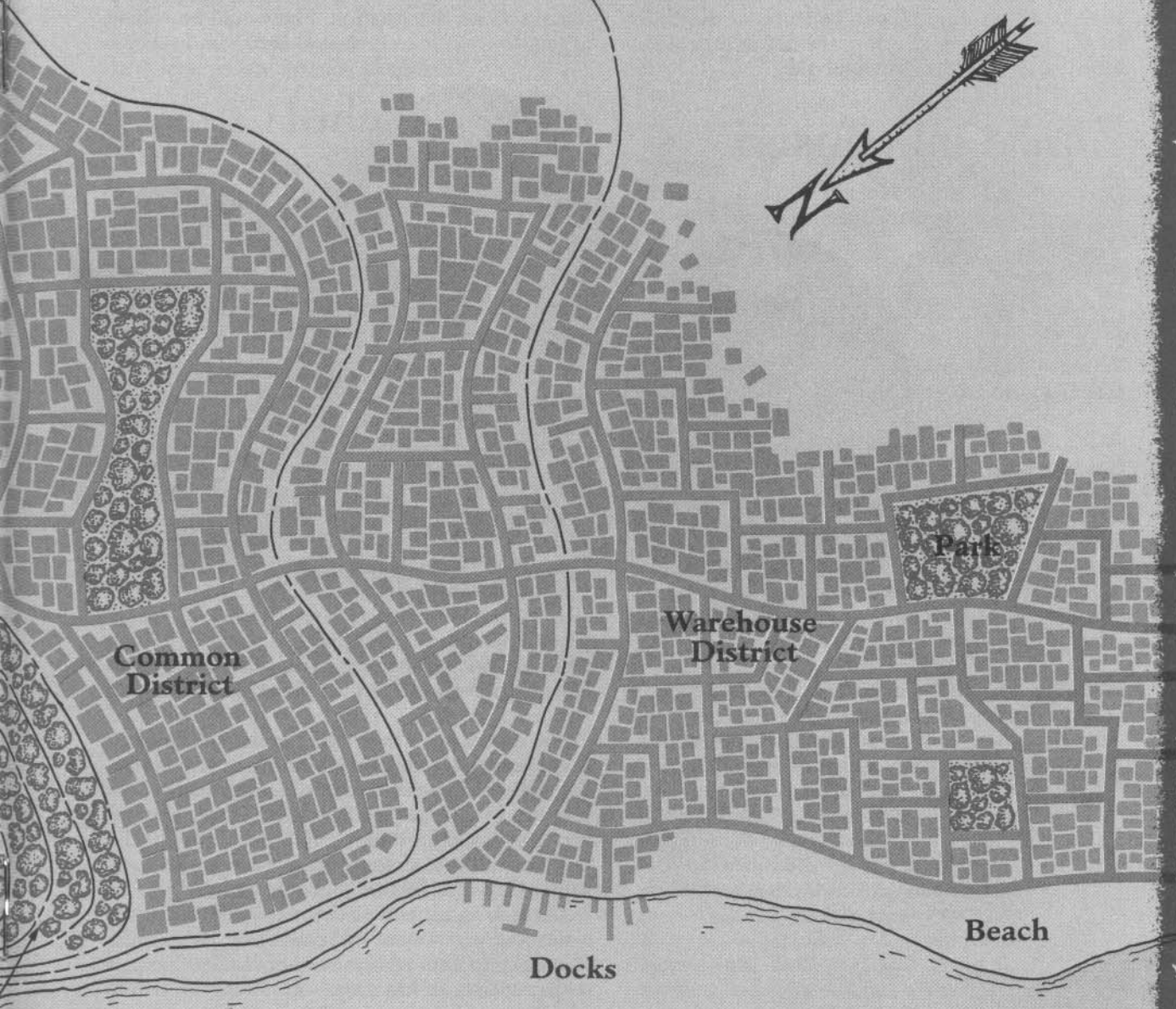
Artisans'  
District

Common  
District

the Emir's Palace

Landscaped  
Hillside

# The City of Ber Falaia



Common District

Warehouse District

Park

Docks

Beach

80 yards



# supporters and scoundrels

**Note:** Beshir min Barein has statistics appropriate for serving Kalilah bint Farid el-Mashil. If the new emir is a lower-level PC, the DM may wish to either adjust Beshir's level, or disallow Beshir's lieutenant action per domain turn as listed in the BIRTHRIGHT rulebook.

## tihara min buseri

*Leader of the Shield of Halaia  
8th-level female Khinasi fighter*

S: 16  
D: 15  
C: 10  
I: 11  
W: 16  
Ch: 13

AC: 4  
hp: 67  
MV: 12  
THAC0: 13  
#AT: 3/2

**Dmg:** by weapon;  
scimitar 1d8/1d8),  
spear (1d6/1d8),  
mace (1d6+1/1d6)

**Bloodline:** Basaia, tainted, 9

**Blood Ability:** Enhanced sense

**Equipment:** Improved mail, holy symbol,  
scimitar, spear, mace, *scarab of protection*

Tihara has held the reins of the Shield of Halaia for about 12 years. The temples have flourished and attracted new followers under her leadership.

Unfortunately, Tihara and the former emira had a personality clash and never quite trusted each other. They treated each other civilly, but neither went out of her way to accommodate the other. The two had no reason to distrust each other, but the relationship was strained.

Tihara, in her middle forties, is in excellent



physical condition, although her many battles have taken their toll on her appearance.

Tihara is looking forward to working with the new emir, and hopes to cultivate a better relationship with the new ruler.

Her biggest concern is the territory of Mour el-Sirad; although her temples there have suffered no ill effects from the sorcerer's rule, she is uneasy about the situation. She would be willing to join any battle to unseat el-Sirad.

## omar el-rehal

*Regent of the Docandragh Coster  
9th-level male Khinasi thief*

S: 11  
D: 18  
C: 11  
I: 12  
W: 13  
Ch: 13

AC: 4 (leather  
armor + Dex)

hp: 39  
MV: 12  
THAC0: 16  
#AT: 1

**Dmg:** by weapon; short sword  
(1d6/1d8), whip (1d2/1)

**Bloodline:** Basaia, major, 28

**Blood Ability:** Bloodmark, resistance (major)

**Equipment:** leather armor, short sword, whip

Omar el-Rehal is a fast talker and quick thinker; those who have dealt with him will swear that they have never seen him at a loss for words. This regent is able to bargain for the best deals and still leave his trade partners feeling that they got the best end of the exchange. Omar never walks away from a deal until he is completely satisfied.

Omar is in his late sixties. He inherited properties and investments when he was 19. Traders often expect him to be senile or ineffective, not realizing that he has spent two-thirds of his life wheeling and dealing, and his mind is as sharp as ever. Omar is rather attractive and considered an eligible mate; he has two wives, but might consider a third.

The guilder stood to control most of the holdings in Kourane until the Serpent began exerting his influence. If Omar hopes to bring those holdings under his charge, he must step carefully so as not to anger the awnshegh. His other choice of action



would be to prove to the new emir just how far-reaching the Serpent's influence has become. This would no doubt lead to war, not for the sake of the guilds, but for the imminent danger created by the Serpent's infiltration.

## beshir min barein

*Adviser to the Emir*

*10th-level female Khinasi Magician*

S: 13  
D: 13  
C: 9  
I: 15  
W: 16  
Ch: 17

AC: 7  
hp: 26  
MV: 12  
THACO: 17  
#AT: 1

Dmg: by weapon;  
dagger (1d4/1d3),  
quarterstaff  
(1d6/1d6)

**Bloodline:** Basaia, minor, 18

**Blood Ability:** Detect lie

**Equipment:** ring of protection +3

Beshir is a seemingly ageless woman (she is actually in her late sixties but appears to be in her forties) who emanates a sense of calmness. Servants follow her orders without question, bartering street merchants find themselves giving in to her offers, and even enraged diplomats are mysteriously soothed by her presence. It is no wonder that she was the most trusted and valued adviser to the emira.

Although she carries a minor bloodline and could have pursued a career as a true mage, Beshir instead chose to follow the path of the magician. She never held a desire to wield flashy spells such as fireballs; rather, she was more fascinated with divination magic and crafting intricate illusions. She is highly skilled in both these schools of magic, and her illusions are the envy of her peers. Her talents in these areas have served her well in her duties within the palace.

The new emir will find Beshir to be unfailingly wise and completely trustworthy. Enemies of Khourane have begun to realize Beshir's importance; a wise ruler will take precautions to safeguard her, as she is perhaps the most valuable member of the palace staff.



## taeric uluine, the gray shadow

*11th-level male Anuirean wizard*

S: 11  
D: 15  
C: 12  
I: 18  
W: 14  
Ch: 14

AC: 5  
hp: 31  
MV: 12  
THACO: 17  
#AT: 1

Dmg: By spell or weapon;  
quarterstaff  
(1d6/1d6)

**Bloodline:** Vorynn, minor, 19

**Blood Ability:** Resistance

**Equipment:** Bracers of defense AC 5, wand of flame extinguishing, staff of thunder and lightning, ring of mind shielding



Taeric is an Anuirean wizard who became somewhat disgruntled with the power-hungry rulers in Anuire. He served as a court wizard for many years, but grew tired of territorial rulers with no respect for the magic potential of the land. Now 60 years old, Taeric has wandered the southeastern quadrant of Cerilia for the past two decades. He recently settled in Khourane, discovering magic-rich lands and little opposition to his presence.

In an effort to safeguard his holdings, Taeric approached Emira Kalilah, expecting to pay dearly for his right to control some of the magic in Khourane. He was pleasantly surprised, however, to learn that the emira had no intention of ordering him to serve her needs; in fact, she was perfectly willing to grant him the right to control the magic in his chosen provinces and to subsidize his income in return for his future aid, if needed. Furthermore, she had no intention of civilizing those lands.

Taeric hopes to strike such a deal with the new emir. He has been trustworthy and honest in his dealings with the emira, and has earned Beshir's respect.

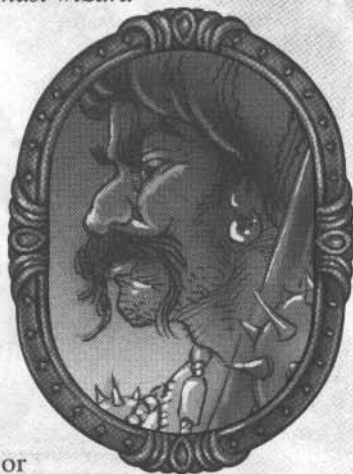
# el-sirad

*Regent of Mour el-Sirad*

*17th-level male Khinasi wizard*

S: 12  
D: 13  
C: 9  
I: 17  
W: 15  
Ch: 16  
(blood ability)

AC: 7  
hp: 35  
MV: 12  
THAC0: 15  
#AT: 1  
Dmg: By spell or  
weapon; dagger  
(1d4/1d3)



**Bloodline:** Azrai, major, 27

**Blood Ability:** Alter appearance (minor), heightened ability (Charisma), resistance (major)

**Equipment:** *Wand of paralyzation, ring of human influence, wand of fear, ring of protection +3*

El-Sirad will no doubt prove to be the new emir's greatest worry. Little is known about this stranger; in fact, no one had heard of him until he magically sealed the borders of Bicheda and Ghourin ten years ago. When the enchantment was removed less than a year ago, the inhabitants seemed none the worse for the experience; apparently, life continued in a more or less normal fashion. Residents have little memory of anything unusual taking place in the past decade. Currently, they

have little concern over the fact that el-Sirad claims control of the lands. Some folk are actually thankful for the seclusion of the past ten years; refugee traffic from Djafra was naturally brought to a halt by the magical barrier.

El-Sirad is unquestionably dangerous. He inherited a tainted bloodline from his parents, and this was enough to allow him to study true magic. As he learned his craft, however, he hungered for greater abilities and powers. Eventually, he

became fascinated with tales of the awnsheghlien

and sought to study them. He traveled to a number of sages and scholars to learn of the awnsheghlien and of the process to become one of their kind. The deaths of at least two scholars are attributed to him; local rumors report that el-Sirad murdered the men when they were unable to provide the formula to become an awnshegh. The wizard's current bloodline reflects his past deeds of murder and bloodthrift.

Rumors also tell that el-Sirad visited the Chimaera in order to learn more about awnsheghlien. Whether he gained the information he desired is open to speculation. Both he and the Chimaera emerged from the meeting unscathed; this might indicate that the pair reached an understanding. The Chimaera is not known to be particularly bloodthirsty, but she is known to have little patience for those weaker than her.

The limited information that has come back from scouts in Bicheda and Ghourin indicates that el-Sirad has constructed a fortress at the base of a mountain on the southern edge of the Rain Serpents in Ghourin. Reports of his appearance are conflicting; it is difficult to get close to the mage for an accurate description, and he is known to have a talent for disguise (including his blood ability that allows him to alter appearance). The points on which these reports agree are that the wizard has black hair, stands over six feet tall, and appears to be in his mid-thirties.

El-Sirad's fortress is described as a small, black granite castle. The main portion is known to have two levels with two three-story towers. Another tower approximately five stories high stands about 100 yards forward of the main structure. Two walls extend from the castle to meet the tower, joining to form a massive, pointed courtyard. Hell hounds are known to roam this courtyard, attacking anyone not wearing el-Sirad's magical warding devices.

From all indications, el-Sirad is making plans to become an awnshegh. He is believed to have killed two minor awnshegh and has presumably absorbed their bloodlines. If he is successful in this endeavor, Khourane will face an entirely new set of problems. Through his mechanical police, the meharmaine, the wizard stands to enforce any commands he wishes over his provinces.

Khourane's greatest hope for vanquishing el-Sirad lies in the other awnsheghlien in the area. These individuals, especially the Serpent, will not take kindly to a new awnshegh carving out

his own slice of territory and thus leaving less for the rest of them. If el-Sirad appears to pose too great a threat, the other awnsheghlien may decide to eliminate him while they have the chance.

A final point of speculation regarding el-Sirad regards his practice of magic. No one is certain whether the wizard traveled to the Temple of Rilni to swear the Five Oaths. If it can be proven that he has neglected this duty, little effort will be needed to rally dozens (perhaps hundreds) of wizards from around Khourane to face off against the sorcerer. If this can be accomplished, the battle that ensues will no doubt qualify as the greatest magical conflict ever seen in Khinasi.

## the meharmaine

Servants of el-Sirad

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Bicheda and Ghourín
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Non
TREASURE:	Weapons
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	18 (80 hp)
THAC0:	6
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d6 (claw) or 2d4/1d6 (khopesh)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (9' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (19)
XP VALUE:	7,000

The meharmaine are el-Sirad's not-so-secret police. They have never been known to exist in Khinasi; by the time el-Sirad dispelled the magical barrier around Bicheda and Ghourín, the meharmaine were patrolling the provinces in full force. The creatures stand 9 feet tall and are built entirely of brass. They are all identical, exhibiting the same facial features, markings, and mannerisms. Some sages have likened them to iron golems in form and function.

Twelve meharmaine are known to patrol each of the cities of Bebrid, Jallam, and Mariele. No one is certain whether el-Sirad has extras to replace any that might become damaged.

The brass constructs keep order by intimidation. Their height, hard brass armor, four clawed arms, and clawed feet are more than enough to instill fear in the average citizen. In combat, the creatures are fearsome, swinging their claws and khopesh swords to attack two enemies at once.

The creatures have no intelligence but can obey simple commands. Because they cannot reason, it is unclear how they decide whom to attack and whom to ignore. Some speculate that agents of el-Sirad are posted in his cities to secretly command the meharmaine.

The meharmaine have Strength 24 for purposes of lifting and throwing objects. Because of their limited Dexterity, they gain only a +4 Strength bonus to attacks.

The creatures may use a blinding gaze attack three times per day. This is the equivalent of reflecting a highly polished shield under the midday sun directly into an opponent's eyes. The victim is stunned for one round and can make no attacks. A successful saving throw versus petrification allows the victim to act in the subsequent round; failure means the victim is blinded for three rounds.

The meharmaine suffer only half damage from slashing weapons and electrical attacks. They are immune to heat, cold, sleep, and mind-affecting spells.

Some observers believe that the meharmaine suffer from the effects of tarnish and from sand clogging their joints. No one has ever observed the meharmaine retiring for routine maintenance; some speculate that the creatures are rotated for servicing on a regular basis.

# assets and holdings

## fortifications

Because so much of Khourane is inhospitable, civilization is scattered far and wide. Some areas of land are settled, but are hardly the object of envy; it is unlikely that anyone will wage war for control of the lands themselves. Holdings are far more valuable; wars are likely to be fought in political or economic arenas.

As a result, the only fortification in Khourane is the palace in Ber Falaia, which is rated as a level 4 castle.

## armies

The new emir gains command of the standing armies of Khourane, consisting of five units of Khinasi spearmen, five units of Khinasi archers, and two units of scouts. Each unit costs one Gold Bar per domain turn to maintain. All of the units report to the royal guard headquarters in Ber Falaia, but may be posted anywhere in the realm except the provinces of Mour el-Sirad (moving troops into these areas would be considered an act of war). One unit of spearmen is always posted in Zulaf.

Khourane also supports a top-rate navy consisting of four zebecs, nine dhouras, and two dhows. The maintenance cost for these ships is one Gold Bar for each zebec, dhoura, and dhow. These ships are constantly patrolling Khourane's coastline. Mairada's position, which breaks up the coast into two distinct areas, is often cause for tensions between passing ships of the opposing nations.

Neither side wishes to start a war, however, and these encounters are normally peaceful.

## roads

Khourane's rugged terrain makes overland travel difficult. Fortunately, the realm's lengthy coastline allows for easier transportation via sea. Trade goods are usually hauled from inland areas to the nearest seaport, then traded to other provinces by seafaring merchants.

The road connecting Bebrid, Jallam, and Mariele is an easily traveled route that has changed little in its past ten years of isolation. Before el-Sirad's magical barrier appeared, this road wrapped along the Inlet of Yazir to connect with Yazira. That path has been abandoned for the past ten years, and it is unlikely that it will become a major route again.

The road leading from Hallam to Ber Falaia is the busiest route in Khourane. This path is wide enough to accommodate four caravans (two traveling in each direction). The road runs roughly 50 yards from the edge of the coast. It is so well used that it is easily identifiable (no guide is needed to trace its path) and is always in good condition. The road is sometimes abandoned in foul weather: When storms and hurricanes blow in from the sea, caravans caught unawares along the route must sometimes head further inland to ride out the winds and driving rains.

Moura is connected to Ber Falaia via a long and rugged trail. If not for the unit of royal troops constantly stationed in Zulaf (and rotated monthly with a fresh unit), this road would be much more dangerous as a result of marauding bandits. Most of the road is an easy journey, with the exception of the mountain passes near Ramek.

Other roads in Khourane are little more than partly cleared trails. In many areas, an experienced guide can navigate these trails successfully.

## trade routes

Trade is the most lucrative and political business in Khourane. The control of any resource offers significant power; any ruler of Khourane must keep an eye turned toward trade to supplement the royal coffers. The new emir gains control of two important trade routes: one connecting Ber Falaia with Izédas in Ghamoura (yielding 4 GB per domain turn), and another connecting Ber Falaia with Ber Mera in Merasaf (yielding 6 GB per domain turn).

## the court

The palace at Ber Falaia is one of the most beautiful structures in all of Khinasi. It was constructed less than 80 years ago, and thus does not suffer from damage due to age or disrepair.

The palace staff are eager and willing workers. Because Khourane has no caste system and all individuals are treated equally, and because all Khouraneans follow the code of sayim, the palace runs more efficiently than many royal castles (especially those in Anuire). As a result, the emir may spend fewer Gold Bars on his court with no ill effect. The court is treated as one level higher than the amount spent; thus, if the emir spends 7 GB to maintain his court, the court is treated as a 9 GB court.

## ley lines

Khourane benefits from many unspoiled regions of high magic potential. Provinces within the Docandragh provide a unique magical advantage:

Because the lands are so wild, they are unlikely to be settled and civilized at any time. Thus, wizards who gain control of these magic-rich provinces are virtually guaranteed that their sources will not diminish with future settlements.

The new emir gains control of two ley lines originating in South Ibmoume. The first runs through Zulaf and terminates in Ber Falaia; the second runs through Ber Djin and el-Sirte and terminates in Tuarime. The latter is particularly important because it crosses a province in which el-Sirad controls a high-level source.

El-Sirad commands a source (8) in Ber Djin; a ley line emanates from it and reaches into Ghourin and Bicheda. If el-Sirad has plans to annex further lands in Khourane, Ber Djin would seem a likely target. The emir would be wise to gain greater magical control in northern Khourane, either personally or by assisting the Gray Shadow in gathering power. Any additional power gained by el-Sirad can only mean future difficulties for Khourane.

## the emir's assets

Upon assuming the throne of Khourane, the new emir gains access to the assets and trappings of the position. Most of these items; such as palace furnishings, the crown jewels, and gifts to the realm remain the property of the





state and are not converted to personal wealth. Items such as wardrobe, personal gifts, and the emir's favored mount are considered the ruler's property.

**The palace:** The emir, his family, and guests gain free rein of the royal palace. The emir may spend one Gold Bar customizing the royal apartment and redecorating the public areas of the palace, in addition to routine maintenance.

**Wardrobe:** The emir and his family will be provided with all necessary items of clothing and armor throughout the course of his reign. The emir may commission a new suit of armor to virtually any specifications (including magical bonuses); if damaged, the armor will be replaced from the state coffers.

**Mounts:** The emir may choose a personal mount from any of the fine animals in the royal stables. In addition, he may borrow horses for personal use at any time.

**Wizard's laboratory:** The palace is equipped with one of the finest laboratories in the realm. The emir, advised by a council of wizards, grants permission for use of the lab; but the emir has free access to the work room at any time. A small staff of apprentices are employed to clean and stock the laboratory.

**Weapons:** The emir may commission any type of weapons for personal use upon his ascension to the throne. He may also commission weapons as gifts, as aids for adventurers serving state business, or to better outfit the army.

**Personal allowance:** The emir may draw 250 gp each domain turn for personal expenses. Most previous emirs avoided drawing this money, and preferred to fill their purses through their own means (such as adventuring).

## the gray shadow

The new ruler stands to benefit from an individual who might be considered an asset: the wizard Taeric Uluine, known as the Gray Shadow. Taeric has proven himself to be a trustworthy and unselfish ally; he enjoyed serving the emira of Khourane in exchange for unsupervised control of sources, and has always come to her aid in times of need. Taeric hopes to continue this relationship.

Because el-Sirad poses such a serious threat to the control of some of Khourane's provinces, the emir should seriously consider calling upon Uluine to help fend off the evil sorcerer. Control of northern Khourane could be compromised in a very short time if el-Sirad is allowed to continue his activities without opposition.

## holdings

The table of holdings from the *Cities of the Sun* accessory is reprinted here for convenience.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Adeid (2/3)	XX (1)	NTS (2)	SOS (2)	Sir (2)
Ayandir (1/8)	XX (1)	SOH (1)	—	GS (8)
Barein (2/5)	XX (1)	SOH (2)	SOS (1)	XX (4)
Ber Djin (0/9)	—	—	—	Sir (8)
Ber Falaia (6/1)	XX (3)*	SOH (4)	DC (4)	XX (1)
	SOS (1)	NTS (2)	SOS (2)	
S. Ibnoume (2/7)	XX (1)	SOH (2)	DC (2)	XX (6)
Zulaf (4/5)	XX (1)	SOH (3)	DC (3)	XX (3)
Sahadein (2/7)	—	SOH (2)	DC (1)	GS (7)
el-Sirte (1/8)	XX (1)	NTS (1)	SOS (1)	Sir (5)
Ras Mhin (0/9)	—	—	—	XX (3)
				GS (3)
Tuarime (3/2)	XX (2)	NTS (3)	DC (2)	XX (2)
Bicheda (2/5)	Sir (2)	SOH (1)	DML (1)	Sir (4)
Ghourin (2/5)	Sir (2)	SOH (2)	DML (1)	Sir (5)

\* Indicates a holding fortified by a castle.

Abbreviations: XX=formerly Kalilah bint Farid el-Mashil (Khourane), currently the new emir; NTS=Nuridan Temple of Sarma (Rigel min Namal); SOS=Society of the Serpent (Darius Asparta); Sir=el Sirad (Mour el-Sirad); SOH=Shield of Halaia (Tihara min Buseri); GS=the Gray Shadow (Taeric Uluine); DC=Docandragh Coster (Omar el-Rehal); DML=Djafra Merchant League (Ousira bint Falih).

## law

The citizens of Khourane tend to be an orderly lot, thanks to the code of sayim. In addition, the realm boasts so much unsettled land that property disputes are rarely an issue. The former emira never had much need to control large numbers of law holdings, but this may become a greater concern in the near future. The Serpent controls a law (1) holding in Ber Falaia, and el-Sirad controls two levels of law holdings in both Bicheda and Ghourin. If the new emir ever hopes to eliminate el-Sirad, the ruler would be wise to gain law holdings in the sorcerer's realm.

Furthermore, if the Serpent's influence is to be eradicated, the emir should do everything in his power to disband the awnshegh's law holding in Ber Falaia. This will no doubt require long-term scheming, since the Serpent's factions are secretive and widely dispersed.

The new emir would be wise to seize control of all available slots of law holdings in Ber Falaia before the Serpent or el-Sirad make a bid for them.

## temples

The rulership of temples in Khourane is largely a peaceful and nonpolitical situation. Khouraneans worship only two deities: Sarma and Halaia. Citizens are divided in their worship along both geographical and occupational lines. Sarma is popular in the large cities and among rogues, merchants, and gamblers. Halaia is revered in the outlying countryside and by warriors and certain nobles.

The temple leaders have come to realize that stealing followers from their opponents is a losing proposition. Tihara min Buseri, leader of the Shield of Halaia, wishes primarily to strengthen her existing temples and to support and serve Khourane. Rigel min Namal, leader of the Nuridan Temple of Sarma, is interested in expanding his temple's coffers—and his own pockets at the same time. Though neither desires a holy war to convert followers, if Rigel is successful in making his temple a political power over the next few years he may look to usurp followers from his rival temples. Because of Rigel's lack of regard for the code of sayim, however, he may find himself losing more ground than he is gaining.

## guilds

Because of Khourane's limited resources, control of trade is a hotly contested and highly political battle. The three major guilds in Khourane—the Docandragh Coster, the Djafran Merchant League, and the Society of the Serpent—each exert their own form of control over specific areas. Maintaining control of holdings is likely to be as challenging as acquiring new ones.

The Docandragh Coster (detailed in *Cities of the Sun*) controls 31 levels of holdings in southeastern Khinasi and thus wields exceptional power. The coster, led by Omar el-Rehal, makes a serious effort to prevent exploitation of natural resources and thus ensure prosperity for generations to come.

The Society of the Serpent is banned from Khourane but operates clandestinely in its cities. The Society's only goal is to seize as much control of Khourane as possible to allow the Serpent to eventually annex Khourane. The emira and her contacts recently became aware of the length of the Serpent's reach, and had begun to make plans to oust the awnshegh's agents.

The Djafran Merchant League's only holdings in Khourane are in Bicheda and Ghourin. No other guild has designs on gaining control of trade in these provinces; no one has confidence in keeping control of anything in el-Sirad's realm. Rumors have circulated that the Djafran Merchants are in league with el-Sirad, but no information has ever surfaced to confirm this rumor.

## SOURCES

Sources are particularly important in Khinasi lands because of the high regard held for spellcasters. To control a source is to control the most potent magic in the land; control of a source is as much a symbol of honor as a conduit to power.

Unfortunately for Khourane, el-Sirad controls more sources than either the new emir or the Gray Shadow. Together, however, Taeric and the emir easily outnumber el-Sirad's sources. If the rich reserves of mebhaighl available in Khourane are to be kept out of the hands of the evil sorcerer, the new emir must be extremely careful about maintaining existing sources and tapping those that are unclaimed.

# the imperial palace at ber falaia

If the new emir is not already in residence at the palace, he should make arrangements to move into the royal suite as soon as possible. The sooner he is seen settling into his new position, the better—once the citizens of Khourane see the palace falling into its new routines, they will gain confidence in the transfer of power and resume their normal daily activities.

A map of the palace and its grounds appears on the gatefold accompanying this sourcebook. The explanation and key to the map follow.

## the palace grounds

The emir's home is situated on a cliff overlooking the inlets of the Baïr el-Mehare. The palace is barely 80 years old—it was completely razed and rebuilt following the fall of a previous corrupt emir.

The rear of the palace faces the sea, allowing the emir and his family and guests to stroll the gardens and enjoy the view in privacy. In foul weather, the cliff is pounded by surf, but the palace is high enough on its rocky cliff to escape dangerous waves.

The private gardens at the rear of the palace are maintained by a small squadron of full-time gardeners. This area features several gazebos, an outdoor bath, bath houses, reflecting pools stocked with brightly colored carp, citrus trees, and elaborate, fanciful borders planted with every variety of colorful and exotic plants. The gardens are strategically planned so that plants are in bloom year-round.

The front of the palace is designed for security and beauty. Visitors are welcomed by a meandering path, bubbling fountains, and lush gardens, while riffraff are turned away by the efficient and discreet royal guards.

**A. Outer wall and main gate:** The three-foot-thick stone wall surrounding the palace grounds is an effective deterrent against would-be troublemakers. The brilliant white wall probably would not withstand a siege, but keeps thieves and street urchins away. An

ornate wrought iron gate provides access to the courtyard.

**B. Guard houses:** These plain white structures are covered in flowering vines so that they are almost hidden. Ten guards are on duty here at all times; the houses include a small dining area and weapon storage.

**C. Citrus groves:** Grapefruit, oranges, lemons, limes, and kumquats grow here year round. The groves include winding stone paths and teak benches for visitors to enjoy the shade. The refreshing scent of citrus fruits constantly perfumes the air.

**D. Guard barracks:** This two-story structure built of white stone is also covered in flowering vines and camouflaged by trees and lilies. The palace's 75 guards reside and train here.

**E. Formal garden:** This garden, surrounded by a low stone wall, is especially pampered. Tended to by the head gardener herself, this area is reserved for the most exotic, rare, and tender plants. It includes a comfortable sitting area to conduct business or entertain guests. Peacocks stroll the grounds, adding to the garden's beauty.

**F. Inner wall:** This white stone wall provides a second line of defense against intruders. It is watched by eight royal guards at all times who are conspicuous in their inconspicuousness.

## the palace structure

The entire palace is built of glistening white marble. The exterior is decorated with brightly colored tiles and mosaics, carefully designed not to compete with the beauty of the gardens.

**1. Main entrance:** These arching, double doors are the primary entrance to the palace and are tended at all times by four guards. These posts are filled by senior members of the guard staff.

**2. Welcoming hall:** This wide lobby, decorated with fountains and sculptures, is a place to welcome guests and allow travelers to refresh themselves. It is furnished with comfortable divans and wash facilities. Servants are posted here at all hours to provide water, fresh fruit, and bread for guests. A curtain wall divides the guest areas from the servants' facilities.

**3. Servants' stations:** This area is stocked with towels, linens, and cleaning supplies. Servants are always posted here to assist guests.

**4. East and west kitchens:** Equipped with all types of utensils and cooking implements,

the kitchens service all areas on the first floor.

**5. Servants' dining rooms:** These rooms are plain but functional. Servants dine here and relax between duties.

**6. Empty chambers:** These rooms are intentionally unused so that space is available if an unusual need should arise.

**7. Servants' quarters:** These sections are divided into chambers housing two to three individuals. They are plain but comfortable, and would be considered luxurious compared to servants' quarters in other royal dwellings.

**8. Guest rooms:** These chambers are reserved for visitors such as merchants and the entourages of dignitaries. They are clean and simple, but outfitted with the finest trappings (feather pillows, silk bedding, etc.).

**9. Guest baths:** The baths are miniature sanctuaries decorated with flowering plants and detailed mosaics. Servants attend these areas to provide fresh towels and perfumed oils.

**10. Formal dining room:** State dinners are served here. The room is outfitted with the finest furniture, silk pillows, and intricate tapestries.

**11. Library:** The royal library is an impressive collection of books and scrolls gathered throughout the centuries. Fiction, genealogies, and magical tomes may be found here.

**12. Conservatory:** This area is reserved for quiet study and research. The room is rimmed with potted trees and plants to provide a relaxing environment. The ceiling is open all the way to the top of the minaret.

**13. Throne room:** The most lavish chamber in the palace, the emir holds court here and conducts the business of state. Two spiral staircases at the back of the room lead to the royal apartment.

**14. Guard chambers:** Guards are posted here at all times to provide invisible security.

**15. Ball room:** Entertainment for state functions is provided here. The ceiling is open to the top of the minaret; at night, the stars can be viewed through the glass roof.

**16. Empty chambers.**

## Second Floor

**1. Entry passage:** Spiral stairs from the throne room lead into this passage. Two guards are posted at all times.

**2. Private audience chamber/meditation room:** This room is intended for the emir's private meetings and his own relaxation.

**3. Council room:** The emir's advisers meet here for all matters of state.

**4. Storeroom:** Because the rulers of Khourene tend to be wizards, this room is stocked with herbs, spell components, and magic tomes.

**5. Laboratory:** This space is reserved for magical research and experiments.

**6. Adviser's apartment:** This area serves as Beshir's personal quarters and includes a private bath.

**7. Dignitaries' rooms:** Important and trusted guests of state are housed here.

**8. Guest baths:** These private baths are reserved for dignitaries.

**9. Quarters of the emir's personal servants:** These comfortable chambers are occupied by the ten most trusted servants of the palace who see to the emir's personal needs.

**10. Servants' baths.**

**11. Servants' dining room.**

**12. Private kitchen:** Meals for the emir and his family and guests are prepared here. A royal food taster is sometimes employed.

**13 and 14. Empty chambers.**

**15. Royal apartment:** To be designed and decorated by the new emir.

# This section is designed to provide a DM with ideas for adventures in Khourane, and also to provide players with story threads they would like to follow. Some may be short adventures; others may turn into long campaigns or open new opportunities or difficulties for the emir of Khourane.

# rumors, secrets and plots

It is recommended that the player not read this section for maximum game enjoyment.

## rumors

Following is a list of rumors that might be heard anywhere in Cerilia. These may be used as adventure starters, political leverage, or the beginnings of wild goose chases.

- ◆ The emira has been captured by the Magian; he is demanding a large portion of Khourane as ransom. (False)
- ◆ Mour el-Sirad is demanding to be recognized as ruler of Khourane. (False)
- ◆ Ber Falaia has been in chaos ever since the emira's disappearance. (True)
- ◆ The emira's most trusted adviser has turned traitor since the disappearance of the royal entourage. (False)
- ◆ Spies from every corner of Khourane have descended on the city of Ber Falaia since the emira's disappearance. (True)
- ◆ The palace has been hiring adventurers to clear out spies and provide extra security around the city since the emira's disappearance. (True)
- ◆ The emira secreted an unknown treasure somewhere north of Ber Falaia outside the city limits. (True)
- ◆ Haninah Island has a hidden underwater cove. Legend tells that it was a pirate hideout in centuries past and that it is now guarded by bizarre sea creatures. (True)

## secrets the dhoumaire

The mysterious race known as the dhoumaire rumored to live in the Docandragh are not merely creatures of legend. They actually exist, inhabiting remote reaches of the deep forest. The clan moves seasonally to follow the best hunting and gathering, and these moves also help to ensure their safety. Over the centuries, adventurers, hunters, and explorers who have sighted the dhoumaire and returned have never had success locating the reclusive clan. Thus, their culture has remained unchanged for over 1,000 years.

The dhoumaire are a remnant from the Battle of Mount Deismaar. Before the war, they were an ordinary clan of Cerilian brownies minding their own business and living peacefully in the forests. When the gods exploded at Mount Deismaar, some of their essence rained down upon this clan of brownies, changing them forever.

Fortunately for the brownies, the only essence that affected them was that of Reynir and the entire clan was affected with minor bloodlines. Because of their solitary lifestyle, the bloodline has been maintained to this day at its original strength.

The dhoumaire do not consider themselves scions in the same way that humans do. Rather, they gained powers that specifically attuned them to their lands and that allow them to live in solitude. Members of the clan are immediately aware of any strangers who venture within one mile of their traditional territory. They can also speak with animals at will within their ancestral lands.

The brownies live their lives to this day in the same manner as their ancestors of thousands of years ago (the brownies are believed by some scholars to predate even the elves). They make a conscious effort to avoid strangers and escape discovery. They are aided in this endeavor by a unique blood ability of camouflage. To members of the clan, the brownies are no different in appearance than their original ancestors. To strangers, however, the brownies' skin, hair,

clothing, and tools naturally take on the colors of their surroundings, much like the ability of a chameleon. The colors naturally shift and adjust so that someone observing a dhoumaire running full-speed through a forest would have only a 20% chance of detecting the brownie. A dhoumaire standing still in her native lands would be undetectable by any means.

The dhoumaire are a peaceful folk whose only goal is to live in solitude. They are nonaggressive and will fight only if cornered; in the past century, however, no story of a conflict with the brownies has ever been reported.

Explorers who claim to have sighted the dhoumaire describe them as tall (for faerie folk—they are believed to average about five feet in height), slender, and graceful, with the ability to run and cavort in the forest with the utmost ease. They are said to have wide, watchful, intelligent eyes and a language that sounds like wind rustling the leaves. They are believed to have mind-controlling or *charming* powers, since anyone who claims to have seen a dhoumaire never has a recollection of interaction. From time to time, wanderers in the Docandragh have emerged from the forest after several weeks with no recollection of their ordeal. Whether the dhoumaire saved them from injury or simply turned them back on their proper course is open to speculation.

Remote human villages that have existed on the fringes of the Docandragh for centuries usually refer to the dhoumaire as “the ones who wait,” but no scholar or adventurer has ever determined what meaning this reference might hold.

## the lost city of kheleb-izhil

According to human and dwarven records, a city named Kheleb-Izhil once existed in Cerilia. It was a vast and powerful dwarf realm of indescribable beauty at the heart of a great mountain. The city was rumored to be one of the oldest civilizations in Cerilia.

From all estimates, around the year 890 MA, the dwarves sealed the doors to their city and disappeared completely. Over time, the location of the city was forgotten; most speculate that it lay in eastern Rhuannach.



A handful of Khourean scholars have taken a particular interest in the city of Kheleb-Izhil. Their hope is that if the city still exists, the dwarves may have records dating further back in history than human accounts and that gaps in Cerilia's history might be filled. Their greater hope is that the dwarves may harbor lost knowledge about the awnsheghlien that might be used to battle the abominations. Khourean is beginning to feel the squeeze of its awnshegh neighbors—any secret weapon that might prove effective against Azrai's children would be invaluable indeed.

Scholars are divided on the issue of the most likely location for Kheleb-Izhil. Some are convinced that the southern pair of peaks in Rhuannach mark the lost city; others insist that the northernmost peak in Khourean is the only logical site.

In any case, the search for Kheleb-Izhil offers no end of adventuring possibilities. Does the hidden dwarf nation with its roofs of beaten gold still thrive under the mountains? If so, what technology has evolved throughout the past centuries? What wonders have the dwarves invented in their seclusion? And if discovered, will they be willing to bargain and interact with the humans on the surface, or will they regard their discovery with hostility? A thousand questions about this nation of dwarves remain unanswered.

## the rain serpent

Little is known about the Rain Serpent, but everyone in Khinasi and most folk in the rest of Cerilia are aware of the legends. According to the tales, the Rain Serpent was a powerful but benevolent guardian of the mountains that bear its name.

No one in a civilized region has heard of a sighting of the Rain Serpent in the past 500 years. However, whether sightings have occurred among natives of remote regions is unknown.

Legends of the Rain Serpent originated in the south of the mountains in the province currently known as Ghourin. The stories date back to the era of the first Masetian settlers. The original legend, as it is best traced, tells of an ancient ruin on a high mountain plateau. The ruin was

decorated with hieroglyphs that have never been identified, and were accompanied by drawings of an enormous feathered serpent with rays of light radiating from its head. The builders of the city that eventually became this ruin, as well as their demise, has never been explained.

Tales also tell that the early Masetian settlers actually sighted the Rain Serpent. It is always described as a feathered serpent with eyes like liquid gold. The legends do not describe any frightening or horrific behavior, but instead describe it as a guardian and protector.

Some legends connect the Rain Serpent with the dhoumaire, stating that the dhoumaire are the Rain Serpent's ears and eyes. Whether this explains the reference "the ones who wait" is a mystery. It has even been suggested that the dhoumaire, through a fantastic form of ancient magic, actually transform themselves to meld into the single creature known as the Rain Serpent.

If the Rain Serpent actually exists and was present during the time of Mount Deismaar, no one can even speculate what effect a bloodline might have on this mythical creature.

## haninah island

Rumors tell that Haninah Island hides underwater caves filled with treasure and inhabited by strange sea creatures. The rumors are true—beneath the surface of this rocky isle is a labyrinth of coves that stretches for at least three miles.

The island itself measures five miles from tip to tip. The seaward side is a sheer cliff about 150 feet high. The island slopes toward the continent, and its edge nearest to Ber Falaia dips below the water. A narrow beach fringes this point, and a coral reef stretches toward Khourean for about half a mile. The island's surface is rocky and barren, but scrub trees and mosses cling to the stone. Pelicans and gulls nest in the nooks and crannies of the rocks.

The island is a remnant of an ancient volcano and was thrust up from the ocean floor millennia ago. As lava spewed forth beneath the sea and was quickly cooled by the water, bizarre twisting columns and tunnels resulted. Water in the tunnels either turned to steam and escaped or was forced out by pressure, leaving the roopy tunnels that exist today.

The Masetians knew of this island and used the coves as storage vaults and refuges against bad weather. The tunnels have never been fully explored in the past few centuries, so no one knows what dangers or treasures may hide in those dark crevices.

The outer caves are inhabited by a colony of lawful neutral kuo-toa who are secretly paid from Khourane's coffers to keep would-be explorers at bay. The emira and her predecessors maintained this relationship in order to safeguard a magical research station on the island.

## plots the serpent

One of Khourane's worst enemies is its southern neighbor—the awnshegh known as the Serpent. Instead of sweeping down on the nation and seizing it by force, this creature of evil has decided to infiltrate Khourane little by little, enjoying his ever-tightening grip on the unsuspecting citizens.

The Serpent already controls a significant number of guild holdings and has spies in every city and settlement in Khourane. His plans include a quiet campaign of subversion to bring persons of political and economic influence under his sway; he will promise anything to a potential follower (regardless of whether he can deliver).

All persons appointed to the new emir's staff from the scullery maids to the captain of the royal guard can expect to be approached by agents of the Serpent at some time during their first few months of employment. The Serpent's minions are careful not to arouse suspicion in those they approach; they use caution not to reveal the true nature of their offers until they are certain that their new recruits are completely devoted to the Serpent's cause. Those unlucky few who refuse the Serpent's veiled offers but correctly suspect the awnshegh as the perpetrator usually meet with an untimely, accidental demise.

If necessary, the Serpent may ally with el-Sirad to deliver the final blow upon Khourane. Both parties, however, are likely to think that they will be able to eliminate the other after the work has been done. The result of this could range from a clean and swift assassination to a long and ugly battle of magical talents. The result of the battle, regardless of the winner, can only spell bad tidings for the Khinasi lands.

## the magian

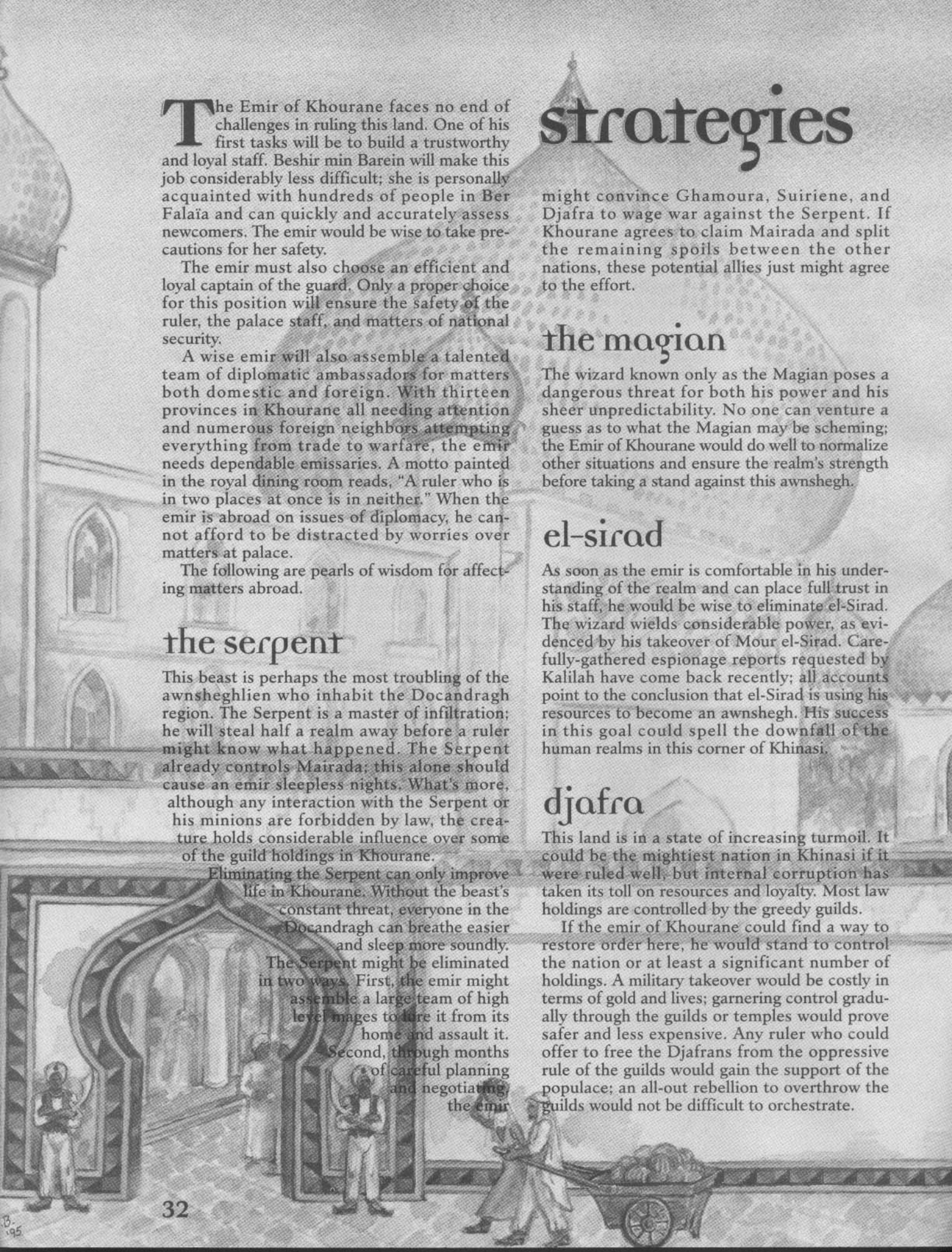
Because the Magian arrived in Cerilia only six years ago and has gained control of a large domain in that time, his plots and schemes are of particular worry to Khourane. The new emir would be wise not to make any sort of decisions that might attract the attention of the Magian (including such innocuous actions as trade sanctions or travel restrictions) until the ruler is completely confident in his leadership abilities and in his advisers.

Although the Magian denies accusations that he plans to annex Khourane and Min Dhousai, no one doubts that these nations will face off against the Magian's troops sometime soon—probably within the next decade. The sorcerer would like nothing better than to control the powerful mebhaighl originating within the Docandragh.

Khourane's emir would be wise to appoint a council of advisers to study and spy upon the Magian. Residents of the Magian's peninsula are sneaking out of the domain with increasing regularity, and interviews with these individuals (especially in exchange for safe refuge) might be telling. Any information that can be assembled about this evil wizard will be useful—and if Khourane and her neighbors are lucky, a weakness might be revealed.







The Emir of Khourane faces no end of challenges in ruling this land. One of his first tasks will be to build a trustworthy and loyal staff. Beshir min Barein will make this job considerably less difficult; she is personally acquainted with hundreds of people in Ber Falaia and can quickly and accurately assess newcomers. The emir would be wise to take precautions for her safety.

The emir must also choose an efficient and loyal captain of the guard. Only a proper choice for this position will ensure the safety of the ruler, the palace staff, and matters of national security.

A wise emir will also assemble a talented team of diplomatic ambassadors for matters both domestic and foreign. With thirteen provinces in Khourane all needing attention and numerous foreign neighbors attempting everything from trade to warfare, the emir needs dependable emissaries. A motto painted in the royal dining room reads, "A ruler who is in two places at once is in neither." When the emir is abroad on issues of diplomacy, he cannot afford to be distracted by worries over matters at palace.

The following are pearls of wisdom for affecting matters abroad.

## the serpent

This beast is perhaps the most troubling of the awnsheghlien who inhabit the Docandragh region. The Serpent is a master of infiltration; he will steal half a realm away before a ruler might know what happened. The Serpent already controls Mairada; this alone should cause an emir sleepless nights. What's more, although any interaction with the Serpent or his minions are forbidden by law, the creature holds considerable influence over some of the guild holdings in Khourane.

Eliminating the Serpent can only improve life in Khourane. Without the beast's constant threat, everyone in the Docandragh can breathe easier and sleep more soundly.

The Serpent might be eliminated in two ways. First, the emir might assemble a large team of high level mages to lure it from its home and assault it.

Second, through months of careful planning and negotiating, the emir

# strategies

might convince Ghamoura, Sui riene, and Djafra to wage war against the Serpent. If Khourane agrees to claim Mairada and split the remaining spoils between the other nations, these potential allies just might agree to the effort.

## the magian

The wizard known only as the Magian poses a dangerous threat for both his power and his sheer unpredictability. No one can venture a guess as to what the Magian may be scheming; the Emir of Khourane would do well to normalize other situations and ensure the realm's strength before taking a stand against this awnshegh.

## el-sirad

As soon as the emir is comfortable in his understanding of the realm and can place full trust in his staff, he would be wise to eliminate el-Sirad. The wizard wields considerable power, as evidenced by his takeover of Mour el-Sirad. Carefully-gathered espionage reports requested by Kalilah have come back recently; all accounts point to the conclusion that el-Sirad is using his resources to become an awnshegh. His success in this goal could spell the downfall of the human realms in this corner of Khinasi.

## djafra

This land is in a state of increasing turmoil. It could be the mightiest nation in Khinasi if it were ruled well, but internal corruption has taken its toll on resources and loyalty. Most law holdings are controlled by the greedy guilds.

If the emir of Khourane could find a way to restore order here, he would stand to control the nation or at least a significant number of holdings. A military takeover would be costly in terms of gold and lives; garnering control gradually through the guilds or temples would prove safer and less expensive. Any ruler who could offer to free the Djafrans from the oppressive rule of the guilds would gain the support of the populace; an all-out rebellion to overthrow the guilds would not be difficult to orchestrate.



MIN DHOUSAI

Toure el-Fasil

Lake Ibnoum

the Docandragh

Pipret R.

the MAGIAN

DJAFA

Moura

KHOURANE

MAZE OF MAALVAR

Rain Serpent Mtns.

Ber Falaia

Fingers of Ayan

Nurida

STRAITS OF BAGIRA

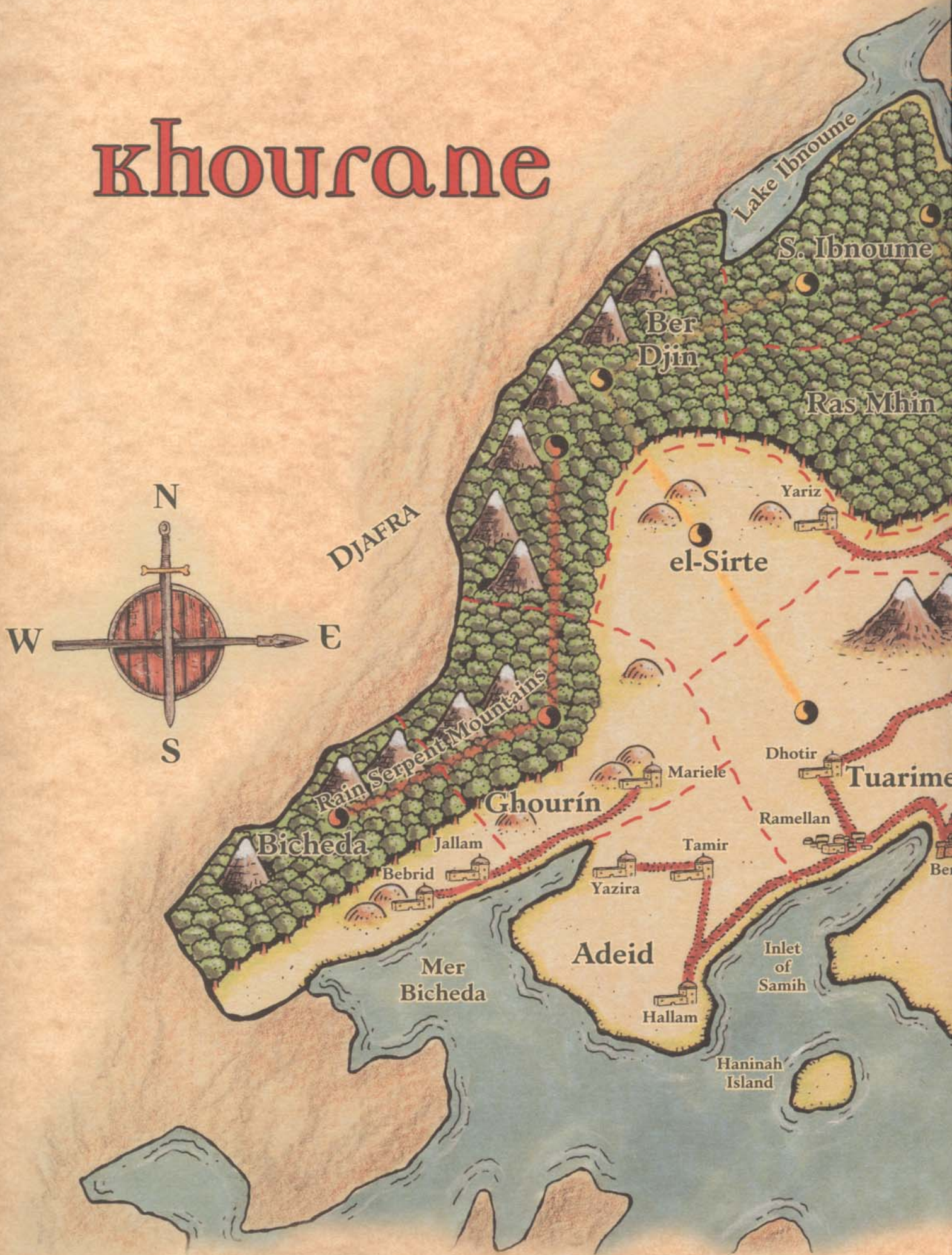
MAIRADA

GHAMOURA

AJARI DEEPS

Isle of the Serpent

# khourane





MIN  
DHOUSAI

	Forest		Town
	Mountains		City
	Hills		Capital
	River		Temple
	Lake		Ley Lines
	Road		
	Border		

10 miles

MAZE  
OF  
MAALVAR

Zulaf

Sahadein

Ayandir

Barein

Fingers of Ayan

Temple  
of  
Rilni

Pipryet River

Lake Ketihir

Ibnim

Ibnam

Moura

Ramek

Maja

Bahara

Falaset

Eyas

Falaia

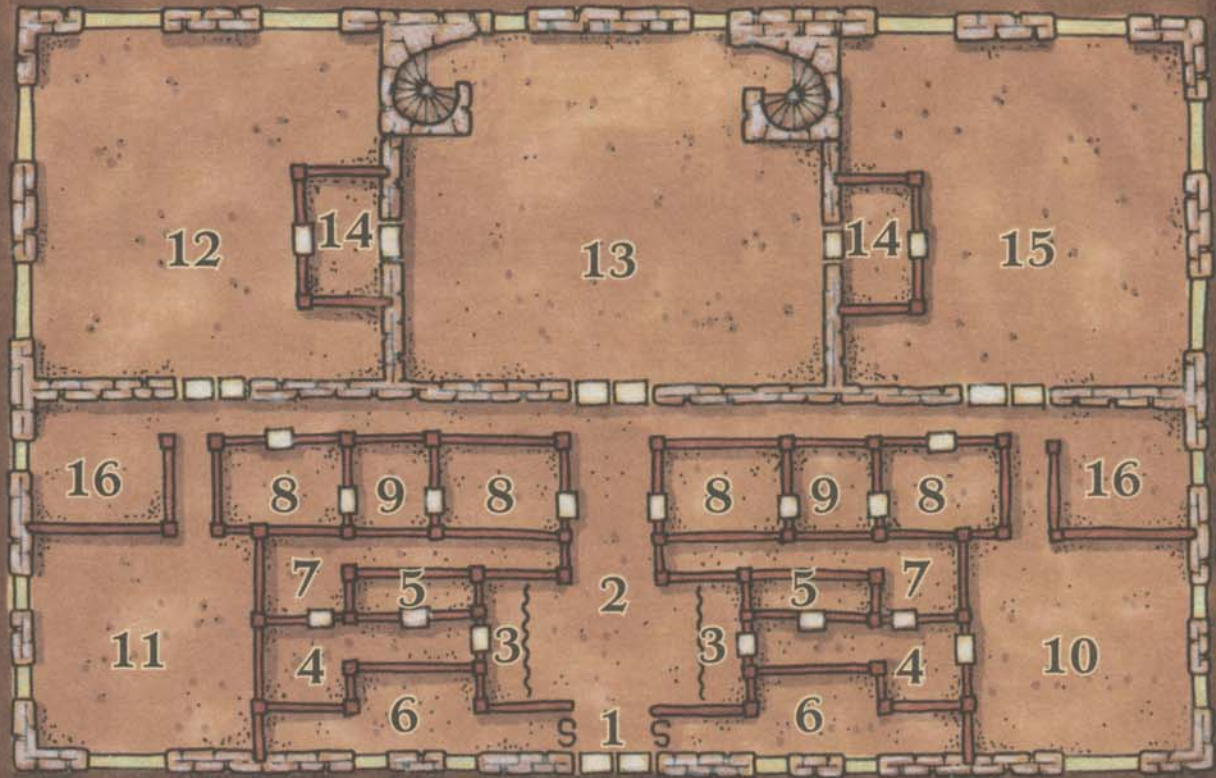
Ber Falaia

Marala

Kaytar

# Emira's palace

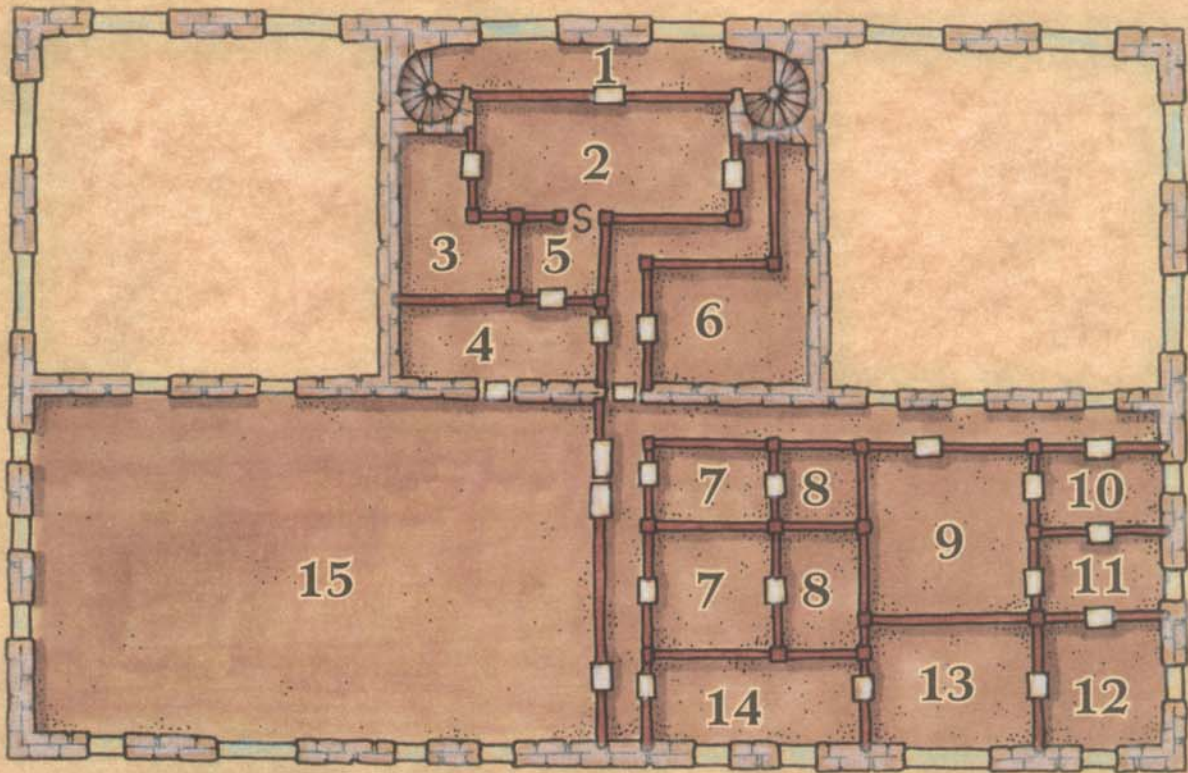
ground level



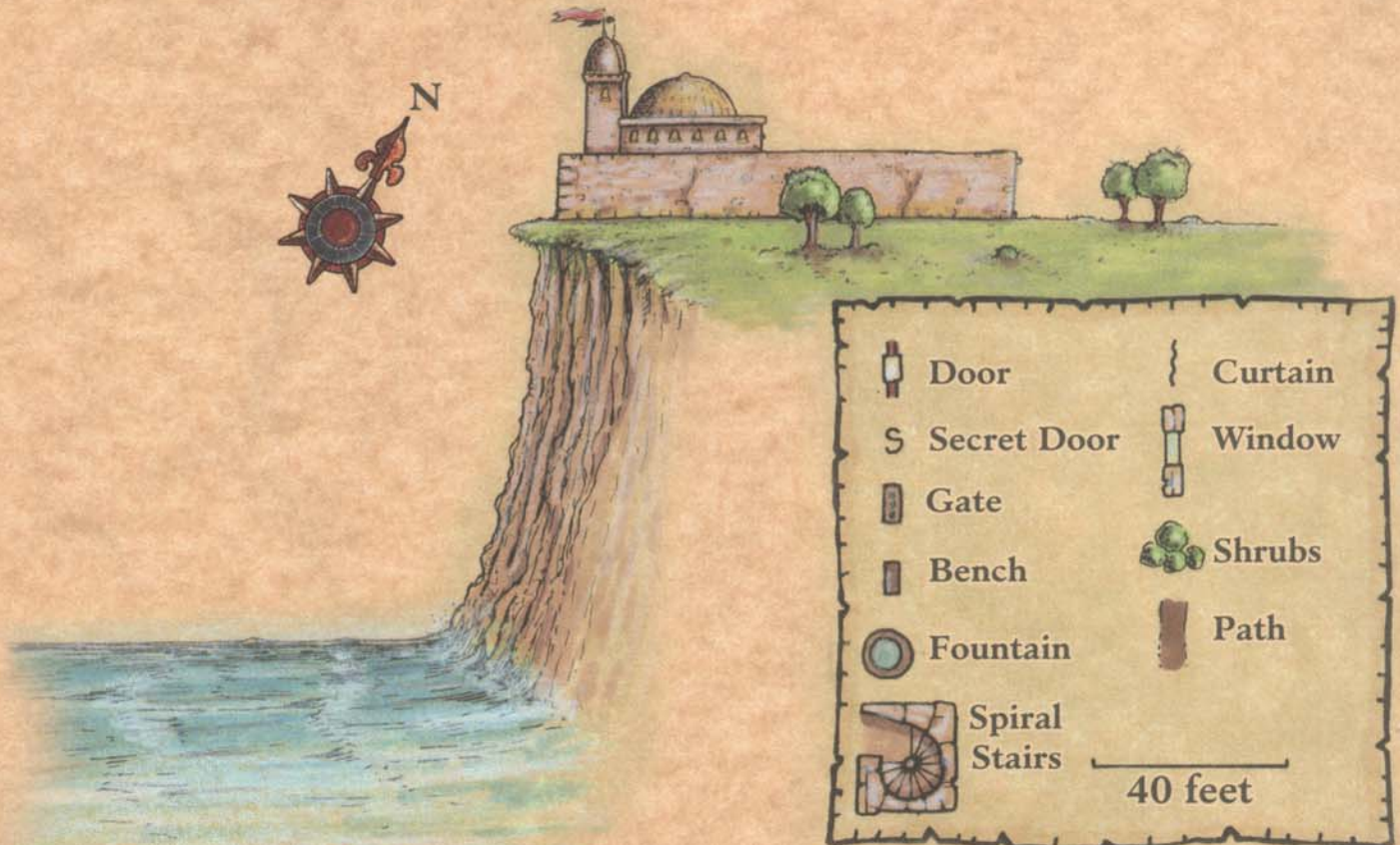
40 feet

# Emira's palace

second level



northeastern elevation



## Genealogy of the el-Mashil line

Kerim el-Mashil = wife unknown  
 Gem trader  
 (1845 MA - 1890 MA)

Aasim el-Mashil = Zobeida (f.)  
 Gem trader  
 (1870 MA - 1944 MA)      (1875 MA - 1940 MA)

**Aziza (f.) el-Mashil** = Umar Ishil  
 (1912 MA - 1973 MA)      (1907 MA - 1940 MA)

Tufala (f.) = Nabil el-Baran  
 (Aziza's sister)  
 (1916 MA - 1987 MA)      (1901 MA - 1979 MA)

Alejan el-Baran  
 whereabouts unknown

Ketifa (f.)  
 whereabouts unknown

Mamoon el-Mashil  
 (Aziza's brother; fathered one illegitimate child)  
 (1921 MA - 1982 MA)

**Farid bin Aziza el-Mashil** = (1) Safana (f.)      (2) Amsha (f.)  
 (1936 MA - 2023 MA)      (1938 MA - 1962 MA)      (1960 MA - 2018 MA)

(2)

**Kalilah bint Farid el-Mashil (f.)**  
 (1986 MA - 2039 MA)  
 Lost at sea; unmarried, no children

Key	
=	Married
(f.)	Female
(1)	First Marriage
Red	Regent



Advanced  
Dungeons & Dragons

Player's Secrets of

# KHOURANE



by Anne Brown

**K**hourane stands out among the arid Khinasi lands like a blooming lily in a barren field. It boasts some of the most enviable territory in this corner of the world: mountains, deep jungles, and a stunning coastline.

These enviable features inevitably lead to conflict, however: The lands are coveted by the Serpent, the Magian, and the Minotaur. What's more, the elves still resent the humans who claim control of their hereditary forests.

Combine these problems with fierce trade wars, a harsh climate, and a missing ruler, and the result is trouble. Khourane needs a new regent in a hurry—is your character ready to face its challenges? The new ruler of this domain will be challenged by some of the greatest problems—and could realize some of the finest rewards—in all of Cerilia!

This BIRTHRIGHT® domain sourcebook is designed for players who wish to take the role of the Emir of Khourane. It may also be used by players seeking to play nobles, servants of the regent, or adventurers from Khourane.

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