

# CONAN<sup>®</sup>

STYGIA - SERPENT OF THE SOUTH



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## STYGIA - SERPENT OF THE SOUTH

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# Introduction

**WELCOME TO STYGIA**, may your visit be a pleasant one. Stygia is one of the most forbidding and fascinating kingdoms in the Hyborian age. With great pyramids, lurking reptiles, lost tombs, endless deserts and the greatest river in the world, Stygia is an ominous setting to use as a backdrop to your *Conan the Roleplaying Game* scenarios. The political situation of Stygia is rife with intrigue, murder and horror, and could easily be the setting for an untold number of campaigns.

In *Life in Stygia*, the mysterious culture of Stygia is detailed. Topics include Stygian clothing, the role of women in society, Stygian marriages, property, the corvée, Stygian occupations, trade, economy and taxes. The complex social hierarchy of Stygia is given substantial note. The calendar of Stygia, which is based on the annual inundation of the River Styx, is provided at the end of this chapter.

Following the variant races of the Tlazitlans and hybrid Stygians, as well as the character class advice of *Stygian Subraces*, the reader will discover the *Might & Majesty* of Stygia, a thorough look at the military life of the Stygians. Some new equipment, such as bronze armour and the khopesh sword, are also detailed. Chariots are also provided for use.

The next chapter, *Festivals* discusses the primary religious festivals, including the Festival of Set described in the recent Hyborian Age trilogy of books set in Stygia. Other festivals have been detailed as well, including orgies of Derketo and the Festival of the Dead.

Next, in *Illnesses & Mummies*, disease and ailments common in Stygia are discussed, as well as Stygian medicine. The uses of crocodile dung are shown, as well as a surgical kit for Stygian physicians. Mummification is also treated in some detail because the Stygians are obsessed with funerals and death to an unhealthy degree.

The cults of Stygia are described in some detail in *Faith & Fervour*, including a new concept to make the Stygian religion important and vibrant to players of Stygian priests. The gods here are not treated as 'real' entities but as concepts that are explored through Mysteries. As one

learns the mysteries of the cults, one gain power and an understanding of the universe, able to bend and fold it in an almost sorcerous manner according to one's darkest whims. Be warned, some of these mysteries are not for the squeamish or faint of heart.

After the gods and their mysteries are explored, the sorcerers among us will delight in the *Sorcery & Alchemy* of Stygia. New spells, darksome magic items and shadowy alchemical items can be found in this chapter. Curses like *Death Comes on Swift Wings* and necromancies like *Taper of Death* are shown, along with unusual items such as sarcophagi, animal mummies and ushabtiu figures.

*Theocracy & Tyranny* gives particulars about how the government of Stygia is organised. Detailed information on how the priests are governed, who are in places of power and just who the king of Stygia really is can be found here, including game statistics for King Ctesphon IV and his two viziers. The history of Stygia is given as well as a brief history on a few of the known kings of Stygia.

In the *Gazetteer* chapter one will not find a Corinthian-controlled Luxur, but a detailed Stygian capital city of deviltry and snake-worship. Khemi has been updated from its first appearance in *Signs and Portents* to include information from the Anok trilogy.

In *Skills & Feats*, new uses for skills to make them relevant to Stygian characters, especially the new use for Perform (ritual), which depends entirely on the Stygian take on illness and disease and the Knowledge (mystery) skill for the various cults. Feats like Disciple of Chariots and Stygian Physician further round out the capabilities of Stygian characters, customising them in new ways.

*Foes & Fiends* is a Stygian bestiary filled with monsters hinted at in *Conan: The Road of Kings* but, until now, never realised for *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. This is followed by *Non-Player Characters*, a collection of characters for use as-is or as the basis of a customised villain.

The final chapter, *Games Mastering Stygia*, gives advice on running games set in Stygia and a slue of adventure ideas and gaming hooks.

# Life in Stygia

## THE SERPENT OF THE SOUTH

**STYGIA IS A DECADENT**, sinister menace, a black land of nameless horror feared by the Hyborian races. Ruled by a dark theocracy devoted to the cult of Set, its small population is notably xenophobic, and the people are obsessed with the subjects of death and immortality, building dark tombs for their mysterious mummies. The population of about four million people is notably small for a kingdom of its size, for there is little arable land for the people to live on and there is a constant demand for sacrifices by the cults.

### STYGIAN CLOTHING

Due to the hot climate, Stygians wear little or no clothing. What clothing is worn is almost always extremely thin and light, to the point of transparency. Most of their clothes are made out of linen or animal pelts. The linen is made from flax plants grown along the Styx. Mantles are commonly worn to show status and profession. Stygians usually walk barefooted, carrying sandals with them to wear when needed. These sandals are made from palm fibre or braided papyrus. Nudity is not an issue in Stygia. Clothing is usually worn either for practical reasons or to enhance the appeal of the body; rarely is clothing worn for modesty.

Stygians take pride in their appearance, keeping themselves and their clothing spotlessly clean. Both rich and poor wear jewellery, including rings, necklaces and earrings. Most of the jewellery is made of gold, colourful beads, turquoise and lapis lazuli. Most adult Stygians wear make-up, especially around the eyes.

*'Human foes he did not fear, nor any death by steel or fire. But this was a black land of sorcery and nameless horror. Set the Old Serpent, men said, banished long ago from the Hyborian races, yet lurked in the shadows of the cryptic temples, and awful and mysterious were the deeds done in the nighted shrines.'*

R. E. Howard, The Hour of the Dragon

Almost all clothing is made of silk or linen, and the best linens are almost transparent. Children of both sexes go naked, wearing long side-locks and shaved heads, until they are around ten years old. At age ten, children begin dressing as adults of their class.

### ROYALTY

Stygia's royalty wear different clothes to the other classes of people in Stygia, displaying their power and their association with the gods. Their clothing is never bought; clothing makers bring Stygia's royalty their clothing as a gift of devotion. Thus there are no prices for the following items. They cannot be bought in Stygia and these items are not included on the equipment list on page 6 because no craftsman will make them for anyone other than the king and his family.

- ❖ **Nemes:** This is the royal headdress, complete with fine accordion pleating on the lappets. The band is bound tightly over the brows and tied at the back.
- ❖ **False Beards:** Worn by men and women of royal stature, the false beards are an important symbol of divinity to the Stygians.
- ❖ **Shendyt:** The royal kilt, completely accordion pleated, is wrapped counter-clockwise around the body.

In addition to clothing, many female royals and noblewomen simply choose to paint their bodies with henna, often in clothing-like fish-net patterns. Other than the paint and perhaps some choice jewellery, they go nude or topless.

### NOBILITY AND ARISTOCRACY

The dress of nobles and high officials is different from royalty and the common folk. The wealthier people do not wear more jewellery to show wealth. They wear more transparent clothing instead. Also, they wear a different kilt, one that is half-pleated and put on counter-clockwise, with the pleated part pulled forward into a peculiarly tied knot which is then tucked out of sight. Often a long, transparent kilt is worn over the shorter one. The nobles also wear silk cloaks and a gold band with a rearing serpent-head emblem to confine their hair (real or wig).

Both men and women of the nobility wear long, see-through, pleated robes. Wealthier women wear long-sleeved gowns during the cooler hours of morning and evening. These simple garments hang in folds, otherwise they wear the general tunic described above. On festive occasions, upper-class Stygian women wear nets of red, blue or green cylindrical faience beads across the middle third of their tunics. These nets restrict movement, making even sitting difficult. They impose a -1 penalty to all Dexterity based skills while worn. Other noble women wear complete dresses of these nets of beads. Like the royal family, many female members of the nobility and aristocracy simply choose to paint their bodies instead of wearing clothes. Other than the paint and perhaps some choice jewellery, they go nude or topless.

## PRIESTHOOD

The main consideration for the priests, insofar as clothing is concerned, is purity. Priests wash several times per day, removing all body hair to ensure they are pure enough to approach their god. Priests do not wear leather sandals or wool clothing, which Set has deemed to be unclean. However, Sem priests are permitted to wear a leopard skin. Otherwise, they dress however they can afford to dress (either as workers or nobility). They wear a mantle to indicate their rank and status in the temple.

## PROSTITUTES AND COURTESANS

Temple prostitutes and courtesans wear tall plumed head-dresses indicative of their rank and nothing else.

## SOLDIERS

Off-duty soldiers dress however they can afford. They are usually given new linen kilts once per month as payment for their services, so these are usually all that is worn by the soldiers. They may also wear a mantle to indicate their status as soldiers. Soldiers not on active duty are not allowed to carry weapons (note that a knife is not considered a weapon).

## WORKERS

Many workers, including boatmen, fishermen, papyrus gatherers and reed gatherers wear nothing at all in the heat of the day, although some wear loincloths of animal hide and linen. They may optionally wear a certain type of mantle to indicate their status and profession. The women wear simple tunic dresses which either come above or just below the breasts. Villagers wear a full kilt only if they are visiting town for a

festival, taking their produce to the market, visiting relatives or worshipping at the temples. The common men of Stygia are not allowed to wear swords.

There are local variations. In Khemi, for example, commoners wear silk breeches and sandals, a band in their hair and a short knife.

### Slaves

Most slaves work naked. Slaves, who are the playthings of the nobility, wear a curious green necklace to prevent their being bought and sold to commoners.

### Dancing Girls and Other Performers

Dancing girls, singers, musicians and banquet-servers wear little more than a string of beads slung low around their hips. Some wear a scanty kerchief for modesty, but most do not. They maintain a hairless body, save for eyebrows and the hair on their heads. Some paint designs on their bodies.

### Servant girls

Servant girls go about their duties wearing only a skirt or an apron if needed. Otherwise they perform their duties in the nude. They are expected to maintain a hairless body so as to not embarrass those for whom they work.

### Servants of the Temples

Servants with ceremonial duties in the temples of Set wear red robes of a yoked sleeveless style.

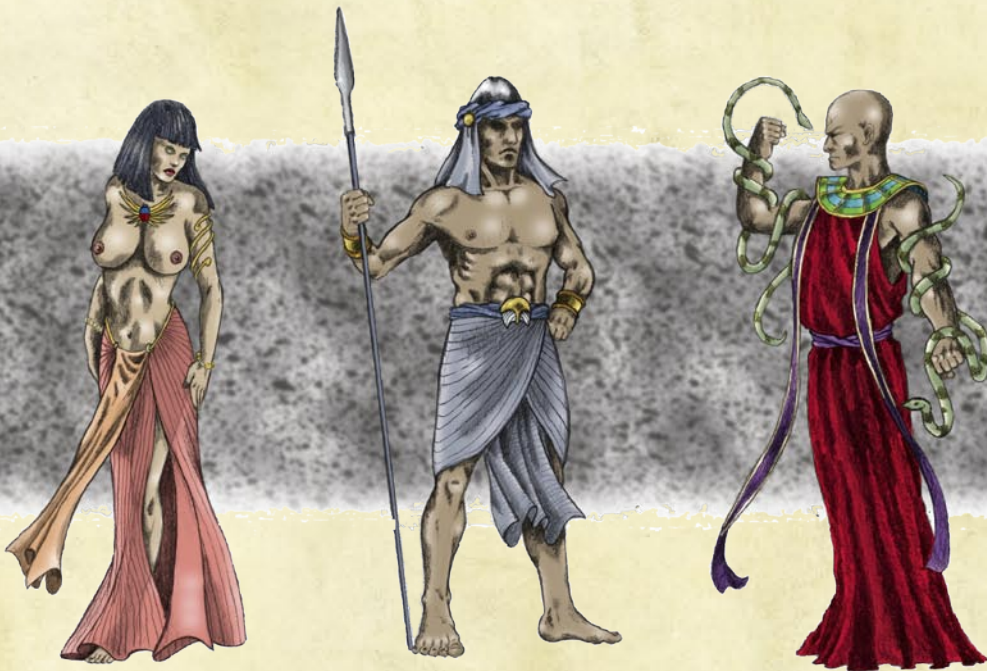
## CLOTHING

Clothing is always assumed to be of minimum quality unless more money is spent to buy higher-quality clothing; see Merchant's Clothing and Noble's Clothing. The only colour available for common clothing is white, the colour of the linen used. Note that silk is considered a common material in Stygia, available to the poor and the wealthy alike.

**Beaded Dress:** Some noblewomen wear beaded faience dresses. The pattern is akin to fish-net, a pattern of diamond-shapes. It does nothing to conceal but is extremely attractive. Most often the dress is blue.

**Body Sugar:** Another method to remove unwanted body hair (Stygians remove their body hair for hygiene) is to use a natural, sugar-based paste (often oil and honey) cooked to the consistency of soft taffy. This substance is then applied to the body and rubbed off, which pulls off the hair. The high sugar content inhibits bacterial growth, which is problematic in the hot Stygian climate for those who do not remove their body hair.

**Breeks, Silk:** Baggy, brightly coloured silk pants extending to just below the knee. Traditional pirate wear.



**Depilatory:** Stygians use depilatories of starch, arsenic and quicklime. For hygiene and cultural preferences most Stygians remove all of their body hair.

**Dress:** A long plain dress made of linen. The neckline is deep and wide, converging down to the waist. Most dresses cover only one shoulder, leaving the other shoulder and breast bare.

**Faience Bead Net:** On festive occasions, upper-class Stygian women wear nets of red, blue or green cylindrical faience beads across the middle third of their tunics. These nets restrict movement, making even sitting difficult. They impose a -1 penalty to all Dexterity-based skills while worn. However, sometimes dressing fashionably warrants the discomfort. Poorer women imitate this style by tying a string or two of beads around the waist, or even a ribbon with coloured stripes suffices.

**Feathered Headdress:** Worn by savages from the Black Coast to the Pictish Wilderness, this simple leather-headband has one or more common feathers and beads attached. More expensive versions may be made from copper and have great ostrich plumes, but these will be increased in price as for any other item of Merchant's Clothing or Noble's Clothing. Stygian prostitutes and courtesans wear tall plumed headdresses and nothing else.

**Henna:** Henna is a dye used to redden fingernails and hair.

**Kilt:** The basic unit of clothing in Stygia is a simple rectangular piece of linen wrapped clockwise around the body to cover the area between the waist and the knees. Stygians turn the end of this loincloth back to make it double thick, tucking the top under the part already wrapped. A piece of the linen is then pulled up against the body and given a twist to prevent the interior portion from slipping down.

Wealthier men wear a different kilt, one that is half-pleated and put on counter-clockwise, with the pleated part pulled forward into a peculiarly tied knot which is then tucked out of sight. Nobles then wear a long, transparent kilt over the short, half-pleated kilt. Older men wear longer kilts than younger men.

**Kohl:** Kohl is a black powder used to rim the eyes, paint eyebrows and darken eyelashes.

**Leopard Skin:** These are worn by Sem priests (see page 68). The skin is worn over normal dress and held in place by a cord adjusted by a kind of slipknot on the shoulder.

**Loincloth:** These are worn by labouring men to protect themselves during their labours.

**Mantle:** Different classes have certain mantles they wear. A mantle is essentially a shoulder-wrap or hip-length cloak. Priests sometimes wear theirs over a robe, sometimes just over their kilt. It ends in a fringe tied into little knots. For a noble, the mantle is a silk cloak.

**Merchant's Clothing:** A merchant wears an opaque linen kilt, sandals and a mantle of high quality. A merchant mantle is generally a hip-length cloak with the hieroglyph for trade painted around the trim.

**Noble's Clothing:** All the items of clothing are available as better quality versions, made from finer and more beautiful varieties of linen, so sheer as to be near-transparent and often skin-tight. They are modestly trimmed with coloured braids, ribbons, edgings and embellishments, such as painted feather designs. Some add metal decorations and embroidery. Some include silk cloaks. Clothing suitable for a noble costs at least fifty times as much as standard clothing, or 100 times as much or more for a king's garb.

## Clothing

Item	Cost	Weight
Beaded Dress	6 sp	1 lb.
Body Sugar	15 sp	—
Breeks, Silk	5 sp	—
Depilatory	3 sp	—
Dress	2 sp	1 lb.
Faience Bead Net	10 sp	½ lb.
Feathered Headdress	1 sp	—
Henna	2 sp	—
Kilt	1 sp	1 lb.
Kohl	3 sp	—
Leopard Skin	30 sp	1 lb.
Loincloth	¼ sp	—
Mantle	1 sp	1 lb.
Merchant's Clothing	See below	See below
Noble's Clothing	See below	See below
Outer Garment	2 sp	½ lb.
Robe	2 sp	1 lb.
Sandals	½ sp	½ lb.
Scented Cone	3 sp	—
String of Beads	1 sp	—
Tunic, Female	¾ sp	½ lb.
Tunic, Male	½ sp	½ lb.
Wig	3 sp	½ lb.

**Outer Garment, Woman's:** This is a smooth or pleated cloak made from the finest linen. It may have short sleeves or it may be pinned together over the bust. Some versions are tied in decorative folds. Outer garments are always sheer enough to show off feminine curves. Most women still wear the traditional (and often diaphanous) tunic underneath.

**Robe:** A plain priest's or scholar's robe in dark wool. More expensive versions, priced as per merchant's or noble's clothing, are available for particularly vain sorcerers or wealthy priests.

**Sandals:** Simple papyrus footwear.

**Scented Cone:** At parties, women wear cones of scented fat on their heads. These cones slowly melt from the heat, making their heads, and the air around them, smell pleasant.

**String of Beads:** Dancing-girls, singers, musicians and serving girls walk around with no more to cover them than a string of beads round the buttocks and across the pubis. A scanty kerchief may be added for modesty in some households.

Other women wear them around their tunics to imitate the faience bead net worn by upper-class Stygian women.

**Tunic, Female:** Women generally wear a long, white, smooth and fitted tunic held up with wide shoulder straps. The upper edge of the tunic either comes over or just below the breasts and the lower edge of the tunic reaches to the ankle. This design allows an ample

freedom of movement by leaving the arms unencumbered. This dress is easy to dance in, allowing even simple gymnastic forms. Expensive tunics may be painted with a pattern of coloured feathers. The most expensive versions are diaphanous and skin-tight.

**Tunic, Male:** Worn only by the very poor or those from primitive nations, the tunic is a simply cut linen garment for the body and sometimes includes arms.

**Wig:** Wigs (and extensions) are fashioned with human hair. The wigs are made with a variety of weaves and knots. They are attached to real hair with beeswax and resin. The most luxurious of wigs come with an internal padding of date-palm fibre to give them more fullness. Braids are the most common form of extension. The wealthy are often buried with extra sets of braids for their use in the afterlife.

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN STYGIA

Women in Stygia are highly respected and treated as equal to men in many ways. Legally, Stygian women can run businesses, own land, inherit property and appear in court. They face the same penalties under law as men do. Women can hold professions and run households. In marriage, women retain their independence and control their own assets; Stygian women are not subordinated to their husbands nor are they treated like property. Historically, a few women even managed to rule Stygia outright as pharaoh. As the bearers of children, women have a highly regarded role in Stygia. Families are extremely valuable and Stygians treasure their children. Since women bear and raise these treasures, the women are likewise treasured. While land was usually passed down to a family's sons, the jewellery and furniture usually goes to the daughters. If there are no sons to inherit the land, then it would go to any daughters. The importance of women in Stygia can be seen in the number of female deities in Set's pantheon.

Power actually resides in the hands of women in darksome Stygia, especially in terms of lineage. Future kings of Stygia are not so much the sons of kings, but the sons of queens. Men have a right to claim the throne of Stygia by right of kinship to the queen – either because she is their mother, sister, step-mother, step-sister, half-sister or niece. The children of the king are not automatically the heirs to the Serpent of the South. The inheritance of royal power depends entirely upon the queen of Stygia.

Young girls work and train at home with their mothers, learning to read and write if their mothers know how. Usually only noble women learn this from their tutors. Women who know how to read and write may become scribes. Women can become farmers, doctors, acrobats, dancers, singers, musicians, perfume makers, professional mourners, maids,

nannies and priestesses (although the latter is reserved for noblewomen) to name but a few. Although rare, women can also hold official positions and can potentially even rule the whole of Stygia as queen.

The primary role of women, however, is to bear children. Just as men boast about how many children they have fathered, Stygian women are proud of their fertility. Life is a cycle of birth and rebirth and part of that cycle is sex and pregnancy. Stygians are not modest about sex, after all, it is through sex that women gain Reputation and social acceptance. Stygian women gain +1 to their Reputation every time they get pregnant. Pregnancy earns women the admiration of society, especially from infertile and childless friends.

## LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Love and marriage can be found throughout the world, even in fell Stygia. Their concept of marriage, however, varies somewhat from the Hyborian norm. There is no religious or legal ceremony such as is found in Aquilonia or Nemedia that formalises a person's relationship with another person. Essentially, for two people to marry, they merely had to move in together into a household. Cohabitation and sexual relations constitutes the basic level marriage in Stygia. Usually there is a grand party involved when two people join together but it is a social event, not a religious one. The hateful priests of Set have darker things on their loathsome minds than to go about marrying people, especially commoners.

Commoner Stygian girls marry at around 12 years old and commoner Stygian boys marry at around 15 or 16 years old. Wealthier girls and boys marry a few years older than that. Older men who lose their wives usually seek a replacement from those newly available. It is not uncommon to see a 54 year old Stygian male married to a 12 year old girl. Girls are eligible for marriage as soon as they enter puberty. Boys marry at an older age because they are expected to have some work ability before contemplating marriage. There is no legal minimum age, however. It is not unheard of for girls to marry at 8 years old – usually to men who fell in love with them as they practise and learn their sexual skills in the temples. Royal marriages are often done at a younger age. Kings often marry as young as 9; since kings and princes do not have to learn a trade in order to support a family, there is no need for them to wait. Some royal princesses and noblewomen wait as old as 15 or 16 before they marry, spending the extra time in the temples to learn even more sexual skills to better please their noble husbands.

Marriages in Stygia are arranged by the parents, although some young people are given a chance to choose their own spouse – often when the original arrangement ended due



to an early death. Marriages are usually between people of the same social class. Indeed, social class is more important than race or nationality among Stygians. There is also no incest taboo in the debauched kingdom of Stygia. Brothers and sisters can marry, as can fathers and daughters. It is not uncommon for marriages to be arranged between relatives, especially between cousins or uncles and nieces. The scholars in Nemedia estimate a quarter of Stygian marriages are between family members.

Most people in Stygia only have one wife, although Stygian rulers always have several. Taking additional wives is expensive, so only the wealthy do so. Among Stygians, serial monogamy is much more commonplace than polygamy, since there is no social stigma attached to divorce nor does one need a reason for divorce. The king and the ruling elite usually take a principal wife, then take further wives only to ensure an heir. The king of Stygia often has several hundred wives. Interestingly, the wife of the king can also have another husband. Often the marriage between king and his sister is in name only. She is actually married to another. If she and her husband have a child, the child is considered to be the king's. Thus, the king is always the son of the previous king, even if the previous king has no male children.

Women bring into the marriage anything they own, including land. They retain ownership, although they traditionally allow the male to administer and work the property as

he sees fit, although she can regain control at any time she wishes.

Divorce is not common in shadowy Stygia although it is allowed. Divorce in Stygia is as simple as a marriage: one simply states that the marriage is annulled in front of witnesses; since marriage is simply a state of living together, divorce is simply the state of deciding not to live together. Wives automatically get custody of the children (which is why divorce is not common – marriages are usually made by men in order to produce and raise children). Women also may take back anything they brought into the marriage or at least its fair value. Women may also remarry. The most common reason for divorce is brutality by the husband. The wife will usually ask her family for help if she is beaten, and they will then attempt to reason with the errant husband. If this does not work, then the woman declares the divorce and takes the children and anything she brought into the marriage. Unlike many cultures, the priesthood is not involved and does not particularly care one way or another if individuals divorce or not.

Although most commonly seen as a male-female relationship, there are no laws prohibiting same-sex marriage in Stygia. If two people want to live together, no one really cares. For the most part, Stygia permits most sexual behaviours, including necrophilia, incest and bestiality. Although the cult of Set dominates most Stygian lives, the priests do not care how people pleasure themselves and others.

**Pre-Marriage:** The defining nature of a man and a woman in Stygia is fertility. Thus, premarital sexual activity with sacred prostitutes (or as a sacred prostitute) is a prerequisite for marriage. The sexual activity is not so much prostitution for either sex, at least not as Hyborians in the north understand prostitution, but is part of a coming-of-age ceremony. Sex is not treated with any sort of false coyness, but expressed fully in day-to-day living as simply a part of life – a necessary part of life if life is to continue. When puberty occurs, the male is circumcised, and the girl also has a form of circumcision. Both circumcisions are to prevent infections in hard to clean areas. Once a girl hits puberty, she is eligible for marriage. Prospective husbands negotiate with her father and mother for her hand – although in many cases the prospective groom negotiates directly with the girl. The accepted bride-groom then makes a payment to the bride's father. This payment is at least the cost of an adequate slave to replace the daughter.

The newly-formed Stygian couple then are afforded opportunities to get to know each other. The male suitor's parents visit the girl's house to get her family approval and to fix a date for the engagement party. The engagement party is held at a common banquet hall, which is

decorated with flowers and candles. The bride-to-be wears a blue or pink dress and the groom-to-be gives the girl a piece of jewellery (usually a ring) as a symbol of immortality. At the engagement party, the plans are laid for the building of a new house for the couple. When the house is finished, the date of the wedding party is made.

**The Wedding:** The night before the wedding day, the bride and groom's relatives, friends and neighbours celebrate at the bride's family's house, dancing and singing all night. The guests groom the bride, denuding her body of all hair except her eyebrows and the hair on her head. Afterwards, the bride may wear a pink dress made of silk or cotton. While this celebration is going on, the groom and the men have a celebration of their own, also filled with singing and dancing.

On the day of the wedding, a celebration is held and the couple wear their best clothing, along with their best jewellery. Just after sunset, the bride is taken to her new house on a camel (led by the groom) as musicians play, following her through the streets.

**Post-Marriage:** The morning after the wedding, the bride's mother and sisters present the new family with food. The bride's friends and other relatives perform a similar ceremony seven days later. Thereafter, both parties treat each other as equal partners in a relationship and hopefully fulfil their marital obligations. Sex is a large part of Stygian marriages, as children are highly sought after. Men and women both boast of their fertility and their children, so they are not modest at all about sex.

**Marital Obligations:** The bride is expected to keep her body completely hairless (except for her eyebrows and the hair on her head) throughout the marriage as a symbol of cleanliness and respect for her husband. The husband is expected to administer to the estate. Wives are expected to be fertile and provide children for the husband. The husband is expected to make sure the woman and her children are cared for. Mothers are expected to raise the children unless she can afford slaves or servants to do it for her. Women are also expected to do the cooking and the housework just as the man is responsible for doing his work outside of the house and for overseeing the housework – and the beer-brewing. Women are responsible for making sure the house has enough food and furnishings by being responsible for trading and selling what is grown in the household garden and whatever else can be made by the woman and her children. The husband is responsible for seeing the children are clothed and fed and that they will have an inheritance. He is also responsible for fidelity to the wife, to make sure the wife gets any medical attention she needs and to never, ever treat her like a master treats a servant.

**Marital Advantages:** An adventurer with a Stygian wife and household receives his Starting Budget (or one of the Starting Equipment Packages) once per year as an income to reflect the efficient management of his household by his wife. See *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for the Starting Equipment by Character Class table. Keep in mind that this budget is not money; it represents items his wife has managed to acquire over the course of the year.

## PROPERTY

Land and property are sources of wealth and social prestige, thus few own it although almost all work on it. For the most part, land is owned by the nobles and the temple, although they occasionally pay subjects who help out the state by granting those subjects land. Land owned by the temples and the king is divided equally among their subjects for them to work, subject to both rent and taxation. All ownership and assignments are recorded by scribes and used as the base for taxation. If the River Styx carries away part of a person's land, that person could appear before the king and explain the loss. The land would be re-measured and the person would only have to pay tax based on the amount of land he has remaining. Any disputes over ownership and assignment is handled by the king's vizier.

Soldiers are granted small plots of land for the upkeep of their families which is usually rent-free, although they still owe taxes. As soldiers move up the hierarchy, they might be endowed with larger amounts of land. Occasionally a wealthy person dies with no close family and the servants may find themselves inheriting his land and property, elevating their status from servants to land-owners. Inheritance of land includes all the people living on the land.

*Few lights showed anywhere except in the upper parts of the buildings. Conan knew that most of the people lay on the flat roofs, among the palms of artificial gardens under the stars.*

Robert E. Howard, *The Hour of the Dragon*

## NOBLEMAN'S ESTATE



Land can be leased to tenants and subtenants and, in extremely rare circumstances sold outright. The leases and its conditions are recorded by the scribes. Land-owners often dictate what sorts of crops are to be planted. Rent can be paid in coin, labour or produce. If paid in produce, an amount around 12% to 13% is a common rent. People wanting to sell their house nail a bird's wing to their gate.

Characters who own land in Stygia gain a +3 Reputation bonus. Any awards of land after this accumulate a further +1 bonus per award after the first allotment.

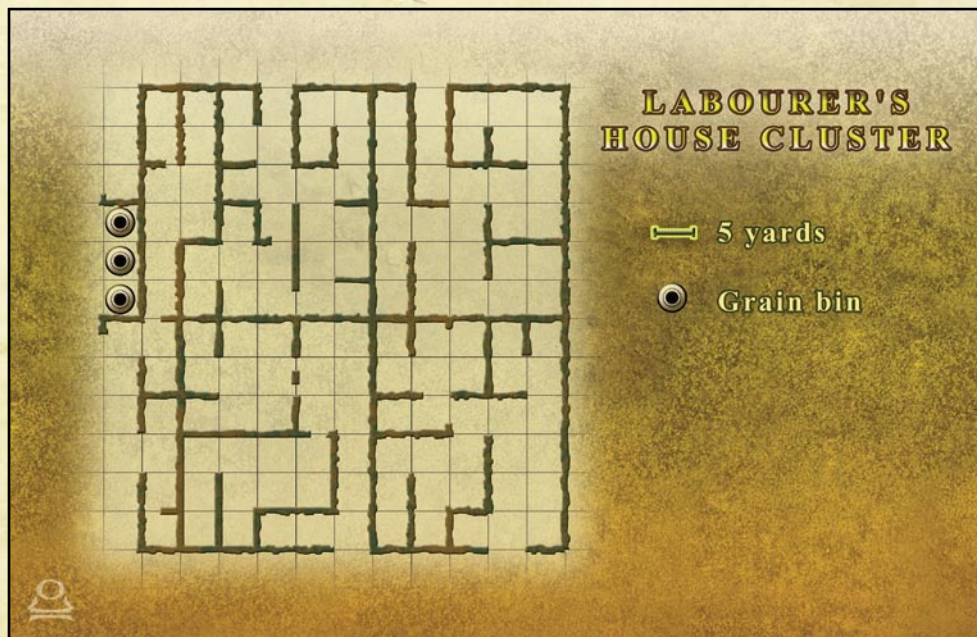
## STYGIAN HOUSES

There is not a lot of variety in Stygian homes. The homes of a wealthy man look pretty much like the other homes of wealthy people. The same goes for the homes of the various social classes. The basic style is a main central room with smaller rooms built around the central one to keep it cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The central room is also built higher than the surrounding rooms so windows can be built high on the walls to let in light. Houses are built of mud-brick, the cheapest building material available. All but the poorest houses are built with walls at least two bricks thick. Kitchens are usually just a corner of the courtyard or on the roof. Exterior walls are usually white-washed but some are painted black, especially in Khemi.

### Nobleman's Estate

Surrounded by a high exterior wall, the nobleman's estate bustles with activity. At the centre of the estate is the house, usually a two-storey house (with rooms above areas 5, 6, 25 and 26 on the map). Area 7's height equals the full two-storey height, but there is no floor above area 7 – it is just a tall room. The cattle pens and kitchens are on the south and east ends so the prevailing winds in Stygia carry the smells away from the house.

1. Main entry gate. A gate-keeper admits people.
2. The house of the gate-keeper.
3. Temple to Set and the Stygian gods. This darksome temple has a blood-stained altar and at least one image of a shambling, bestial god. Some maintain a stable of serpents for their temple.
4. The noble's personal garden. The centre piece of this garden is a beautiful pool with a walkway around it. Trees and shrubs complete the garden, each standing in a puddle of water.
5. A flight of shallow steps leads to the threshold of the house, which has the owner's name carved on its stone or wood lintel. Passing through the door leads to the vestibule where a servant greets the guest and takes them to the reception room.
6. These are reception halls. One end has chairs where a servant pours water over the feet of the visitors and dries them with linen towels. The



water runs through a channel into a vase for emptying later.

- a. This is used as a sitting room in the winter months.
7. The central hall: This is the heart of the home. Against one wall is a brick dais on which the master and his principal guests sit. This is against a brick hearth where a brazier of burning charcoal is set on cool evenings.
8. This is the sitting room for the women with their bedrooms attached.
9. This is the master's bathroom. A slab is in the centre of the room. The master lies on the slab while a slave pours water over him and rubs scented oils into his skin.
10. This is the toilet.
11. This is the master's bedroom.
12. Guest bedrooms.
13. This is where the horses are watered. It is an open air stall.
14. This is a tool-shed. The noble's chariot is also stored here. It is enclosed with a roof.
15. These are horse stables with a bucket for hay or grain in each stall. It is enclosed with a roof.
16. The sleeping quarters of the servants. It is enclosed with a roof.
17. This is the toilet of the servants. It is an open air stall.
18. A storage area for foodstuffs in great pottery urns and vases. It is enclosed with a roof.
19. The kitchen of the estate. It is enclosed with a roof.
20. This is where cattle are fed grain and watered. It is an open air stall.
21. The cattle pen with an entrance to the street. It is an open air stall.
22. This is another cattle pen. It is an open air stall.
23. This is the well of the estate. It is an open air stall.
24. This area contains at least four conical grain storage bins, each standing about ten to twelve feet high. Steps lead

to a platform so grain can be placed into and taken out of the bins.

25. Back in the house, this room is used to store linens, clothes and water.
26. This stairway leads to the roof and the second floors. The roof is used as additional guest quarters, feasting areas and simply as another floor. The second floor is basically another reception hall with pillars. Some nobles may use the area as a library or a place to dabble in alchemy or sorcery.

### Labourer's House

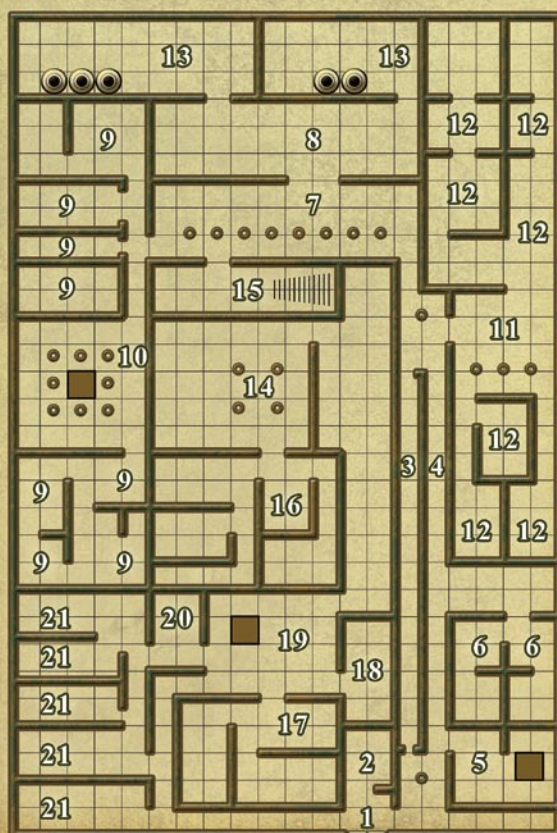
A poor man's house is almost a beehive of interconnected rooms all based around a central room for each family. The sample map here shows four clustered houses and it continues from there. Kitchens are either in a corner room or on the roof. Each family has access to the roof where additional sleeping and living quarters can be had. In the crowded conditions of Stygian city life people find room wherever room can be found and a roof is room. Trees and gardens often grow on the roofs. Storage is in cellars or in round grain bins located in intervals among the houses. The walls are often irregular, as are room shapes. If a new child or a permanent guest arrives, a person might just build a wall in an existing room, making two or more smaller rooms.

### Official's House (Great House)

Also known as a great house, officials often do not live in noble estates but they also do not live as poor men. The kitchen is usually on the roof so the smells of cooking do not linger in the home. These houses are usually built against the northern walls of cities in order that the odours, smells and smokes from the poorer quarters do not normally blow toward the officials or the wealthy. These homes are usually one storey, with the reception halls built slightly higher to allow for windows and light. Also, since the Stygians like balance in all things, if there is not a door built across from another door, the wall has a door-like niche built into it, painted like a doorway.

1. Main entrance with name of official carved on stone or wooden lintel. The door is guarded by a doorman.
2. Doorman's room.
3. Visitor's Hall: This leads toward the reception room for strangers.
4. Master's Hall: This hall is for the rest of the family to use, including intimate friends.
5. Shrine to Set or other god, often Bes or a household protector. An altar is provided for blood sacrifices.

### OFFICIAL'S HOUSE



5 yards      Grain bin  
 Feature      Column

6. Offices, used by the master and/or his scribes; includes a room for record storage.
7. Reception Hall for strangers.
8. Open air courtyard
9. Servants' quarters
10. The reception hall for friends and official guests. Multiple pillars and a pool in the centre of the room.
11. Women's reception hall with three pillars. May have a pool.
12. Women's quarters; usually includes a toilet and bathroom in at least one room.
13. Storage areas. May have conical grain storage bins.
14. The central hall: This is the heart of the home. Several small windows high up let in light. Against one wall is a brick dais on which the master and his principal guests sit. This is against a brick

- hearth where a brazier of burning charcoal is set on cool evenings.
15. Stairway to the roof.
  16. Private quarters of the master of the house.
  17. Private quarters.
  18. Shrine to the king of Stygia. Usually contains a statue of the official worshipping the king.
  19. Well for water to be drawn. Often has a stairway down to the cellar, if it has one.
  20. Storage for linens and other household goods.
  21. Guest quarters or additional family living space.

## SLAVERY

Slavery has a slightly different context in Stygia than in Zingara or Zamora. A slave in Stygia is simply a person with reduced rights and dedicated to a certain task. People become slaves when in debt, because of punishment, due to voluntary action, when taken as a prisoner of war or when sent forth as payment of tribute. The period of enslavement is normally limited. Some slaves are personal servants. Other slaves serve estates and are transferred when the estate transfers. The children of slaves are also slaves, so one can be born into slavery, but they are not separated from their mothers under normal circumstances.

Debt slaves are Stygians who are sold into slavery by creditors because they cannot pay their debts. Also, some Stygians sell themselves into slavery to escape poverty; the economic security offered by such a situation outweighs the freedoms lost. These slaves can buy themselves out of their status at any time they can come up with the economic wealth to do so.

Convicted criminals can also be enslaved by the vizier. He also sets the term of enslavement, which can be life if the crime warrants such a term.

Some Stygians merely want protection and safety in an almost feudal sense and often pay a monthly stipend to a temple or powerful person to take them on as a servant or slave. Such contracts are usually worded thus: 'I, (name), am your servant, with my children and my children's children. You will keep me and mine safe and shall guard me, keeping me sound and protecting me from all demons. In return I will pay you (a sum) of copper monthly until the completion of (number) years.'

Some Stygian slaves come from war conquests and the tribute of conquered peoples. When cities fall to the Stygians, the dusky-skinned conquerors bring back prisoners of war and make them slaves, branding them with the name of their new owner.

The families of conquered soldiers are usually brought back as slaves along

with captured soldiers. Stygian soldiers may take slaves in this manner. Defeated cities must also send tribute to Luxur and slaves are usually part of this tribute. Stygia does not engage in many wars anymore, so this source of slaves for the nation is somewhat limited.

The most unfortunate slaves are those sent to work in the gold and copper mines of Stygia. Water is rationed strictly there and many die of exhaustion and dehydration. The luckiest slaves are those who work for the royal family or the nobility, for they have an easier life (often easier than free commoners) and have the opportunity to make themselves indispensably useful to their owners and can even rise to high governmental positions. Once they are set free they can even marry into their former owners' families.

The fiendish Stygians also capture foreign travellers and sell them into slavery. Since the travellers are in a foreign land and no one knows them, they have no one they can appeal to.

There are no huge slave markets in Stygian cities such as one finds in Turan or Shem. The trade in slaves is relatively small in Stygia. Virtually all slave transactions are between private parties and are not public auctions. Much of the 'trade' in slaves takes the form of gifts.

Stygians generally prefer male slaves because they can endure hard labour but the most cherished of all slaves are those who have special or rare skills. Female slaves are problematic because wives do not want them around for their husbands to sleep with. The status of children born of master/slave sexual unions is still hotly debated among the Stygians. Slaves are generally treated well and often live more secure lives than free commoners. They fill a wide range of positions – all the way from labourers to administrators. They perform non-clerical tasks for the temples, serve as watchmen and as soldiers. In many cases, they become like family and often receive inheritances from dead masters. Sometimes the children of slaves are adopted by the master family, effectively freeing the children from slavery. Masters who mistreat their slaves can have their slaves taken away from them.

Slaves are property. Escaped slaves are pursued and recaptured if at all possible. Escaped slaves must either escape to a foreign land or seek asylum at one of the temples. Escaping to a foreign land is problematic at best. To travel south means crossing huge expanses of desert just to reach Kush, where the Kushites may enslave them, or they may reach Darfar, where they could be eaten, or they may reach nothing but trackless savannah and jungle. Heading east is no help either, as there is even more desert to the east of the River Styx. Here they risk capture by the Turanians. Eventually the escaping slaves may reach Iranistan, although this would be an exceptional accomplishment. To the north lies Shem, notorious slavers.

## Stygian Urban Occupations

Advocate	Alchemist	Armourer	Artist	Astrologer	Baker
Barber	Basket Maker	Beggar	Bell Maker	Bell-Ringer	Blacksmith
Book Seller	Bookbinder	Bowyer/Fletcher	Brewer	Brothel Keeper	Buckle Maker
Butcher	Candle-Maker	Carpenter	Carter	Cartographer	Chandler
Clothier, New	Clothier, Used	Cobbler	Cooper	Copyist	Craft Merchant
Cutler	Dairy Seller	Diplomat	Distiller	Domestic Servant	Draper
Dye Makers	Dyer	Engineer	Engraver	Farmer	Fishmonger
Fuller	Furniture Maker	Furrier	Gardener	Girdler	Glass Maker
Glove Maker	Goldsmith	Governess	Grain Merchant	Grocer	Guard
Guide/Tout	Haberdasher	Harness Maker	Hay Merchant	Historian	Illuminator
Importer	Instrument Maker	Jeweller	Judge	Lotus Merchant	Mason
Mongoose Breeder	Natron Gatherer	Official	Papyrus Maker	Pastry Maker	Perfume Maker
Potter	Prostitute	Purse Maker	Rat Catcher	Road Mender	Rope Maker
Rug Maker	Saddler	Salt Gatherer	Scabbard Maker	Scholar	Sculptor
Servants	Silversmith	Skinner	Soap Maker	Soothsayer	Spice Merchant
Student	Tailor	Tanner	Tax Collector	Taxidermist	Thief
Tiler	Tinker	Toymaker	Undertaker	Vestment Maker	Vintner
Warehouser	Weaponsmith	Weaver	Wheelwright	Wood Carver	Wool Gatherer

The most likely escape is to the sea, to live an uncertain life as a pirate. The second option involves dedicating oneself to the service of the temple, usually a temple of Set. By becoming a slave to the priests, no one else may touch or capture him.

### The Corvée

As a form of taxation, the government can draft workers if there are not enough for farm work. This system of forced labour is called the corvée and evading the corvée puts one's family at risk of punishment. Entire families have been sacrificed to Father Set for one member refusing the corvée. Men and women alike are eligible for the corvée at the government's discretion.

## OCCUPATIONS

One's occupation in Stygia begins early. Young boys learn their trade or craft from their fathers or they travel to an artisan and learn from him. Those families who can afford school send their sons, around age 7, to study religion, reading, writing and mathematics. Women who manage to learn to read and write may also be sent to school.

*She is too soft to endure what I have thrived on. I am a daughter of Luxur, and before I had known fifteen summers I had been led through the temples of Derketo, the dusky goddess, and had been initiated into the mysteries.*

Robert E. Howard, Xuthal of the Dusk

This section is intended to provide the Games Master with ideas and for the players to choose Profession skills if one is needed. The list below is by no means complete or exhaustive but serves as a fair starting point.

People in the above professions or crafts can be of any class, though most are Commoners or Scholars. Each takes ranks in the appropriate Craft or Profession skill and the best craftsmen also take Skill Focus feats in their craft or profession. Diplomacy, Bluff and Sense Motive are also important skills for people making a living in Stygian cities. Characters who have a developed Profession or Craft skill gain a +1 bonus to Reputation while in Stygia. Characters who are known to have no ability to make a regular living at all suffer a -1 penalty to Reputation while in Stygia.

## PROSTITUTION

As stated before, Stygians are not modest about sex. Indeed, the Stygians have turned the sexual socialisation of children into a religious practice. Thus, prostitution in Stygia must be looked at without modern sensibilities. Prostitutes are often pressed into service, especially in the cults of Derketo and Isis, as young girls until their first menstruation. Even noble- or high-born girls are expected to fulfil this role prior to menstruation. The prostitute in Stygian society is associated with different gods or goddesses and are not mere street-walkers. They walk around totally nude save for a feathered headdress and are not really even paid for their sexual services. They are a highly regarded member of society without any stigma, providing temples with a good source of income.



The temples install these young virgin girls in wandering performing groups (usually dancers and singers) and the girls are expected to experience their first sexual encounters during this time. If a girl becomes pregnant, she is sent home as a proven fertile young woman, someone to be proud of. These performing groups do not just dance, sing and have sex, they also perform midwifery and are dedicated to childbirth-related goddesses.

Temple prostitutes rarely permit violence to themselves as they are sacred objects of awe and fertility. The brutality often seen in the brothels and on the streets of other nations are virtually never seen in the beds of the temple prostitutes. The performing troupes always travel with guards to ensure the safety of the girls.

Temple prostitutes take ranks in Profession (temple prostitute), Heal, Knowledge (religion), Sense Motive, Spot and Diplomacy. The Profession skill allows them to actually earn money for the temple. The Games Master may allow the Profession check to indicate how many recruits the temple prostitute has brought to the temple as opposed to actual currency. Heal allows the temple prostitute to use massage and other techniques to encourage the healing of wounds. The skill also allows her to identify illness in potential customers (DC 12) in order to protect her own health. Knowledge (religion) is to help her spread the word of her faith

and encourage belief. Sense Motive helps the temple doxy to figure out the needs of various people and to find potential candidates. Spot allows the temple prostitute a chance to spy danger and Diplomacy is used to keep violence down and to encourage regular attendance with her. They can be of any class, although Scholar is most common. Appropriate feats for the temple prostitute includes Priest, Carouser, Debaucher, Skill Focus and Negotiator. Many high level priestesses become corrupt even if they never learn to cast spells from too much intimate interaction with sorcerous high level clergy in their own temples.

The city of Khemi has some more traditional houses of prostitution in its foreign quarter. These women are also required to walk about in the nude.

## TRADE AND ECONOMY

The cults utterly dominate Stygian society; the temples own most of the arable land and the government bureaucracy is filled with priests. The temples drive Stygian economy in every possible way. Ceremonies are required by law and priests always charge for these services. Examples of these required rites are numerous: crops must be blessed; all children must be consecrated to Father Set; and even the dead have requisite funerary rites that must be performed. Each of these ceremonies must be paid for by the hard work and contributions of the Stygian citizen. The Temple of Set has its own granaries, its own breweries, its own bakeries, its own craftsmen and its own farms. One third of all the grain harvested on its land is collected as rent. An army of priests oversee it all, an inescapable presence in Stygia, a theocracy of economy as well as of spirituality.

As with many religions, this Stygian theocracy is conservative and closed-minded and minimal contact with the outside world is permitted. Thus trade is kept to a bare minimum. Of course, Stygia does not need much. Grain is needed for bread and beer. They can pull fish out of the River Styx. Most people get by with some linen for a loincloth. Mud from the River Styx creates the bricks for a hut. Small gardens produce vegetables. Surplus is tiny and the needs of the people are not great. Stygian cities never learned to specialise like the cities of Shem have. The luxuries are often what Stygia trades for when they opt to trade. Stygia trades silk, ivory, skins, onions, papyrus, slaves and precious stones for grain, cattle and other agricultural products which their arid lands cannot produce or support, however, they do little international trade. Most of their trade is internal.

Despite its aridity, Stygia does support several industries. The palm date grows along the rich banks of the Styx. The Styx also supports a sizable fishing industry. Nomadic herding provides sustenance for large sectors of the non-urban population. Urban Stygians produce sorcerous jewellery, medicines and magical drugs such as the black and purple

lotus. Silk and weapon manufacturing also form major export industries (although Stygian weapons are not favoured by non-Stygians); silk is produced in massive quantities. In addition to their own native products, Stygian merchants raid the Black Kingdoms for ivory, pearls, skins and slaves to trade, transporting them along the River Styx to the open sea. Stygian merchants even venture as far as Khitai, often in search of mystical pharmaceuticals. Stygia brokers luxury goods from Iranistan and Vendhya. Stygia's wealth is also maintained by its modest fleet, which preys upon Hyborian shipping. Despite its aridity, the country is rich and the wealth trickles down throughout the entire society, for even Stygian slaves wear silk.

Most of the trade in Stygia occurs along the River Styx, which is not surprising since almost the entire population of Stygia lives along this important river. Most trade is also handled by farmers or their wives, selling or trading grain, fruit, vegetables, fowl, cattle, honey, oil, beer, wine, bread and linen. Merchants travel up and down the River Styx, taking goods from one city to another.

Overseas trade is in the hands of royal emissaries. There are no commoner overseas merchants – many of them have noble blood (if not the noble class) and many have levels in scholar. At the very least, an overseas merchant will be a scribe. Steel weapons are highly sought after but are expensive in Stygia. Steel weapons cost at least twice as much in Stygia as they do elsewhere in the world.

### Barter and Money

For the most part, trade is done via barter. Even though Stygia has its own currency, barter is still widespread. Often wages are paid in food since most people would spend their money on food anyway. Many commoners have risen in estate because they knew how to save grain and when a famine came, traded food to the starving in return for land and slaves. When the famine was over, the former commoner found himself a wealthy land-owner. Labourers often trade work or crafted goods to the temples and priests in return for ceremonies, amulets and medicine.

In addition to barter, Stygia does have a form of money. While Stygia does not generally mint coins, they do melt gold, copper and silver coins they receive or steal from other nations down into golden, copper or silver rings of a certain weight. These rings serve as a form of currency in Stygia. There are some minted coins, minted in Shem for the most part. They are stamped with the image of the king and the god Set. A silver coin is known as a *sethi*, a copper coin a *gurah*. A *sethi* is equivalent to a day's wage for a labourer. Foreign coins must be handled delicately. Aquilonian coins, for example, are illegal in much of Stygia, earning the bearer more trouble for him and his family than one might think is warranted. Also, all gold in Stygia belongs to the king in

Luxur. Anyone with gold must have it as a gift from the king or must have stolen it from a tomb. All gifts from the king are recorded in the Treasury of Luxur.

Trade is not just an economic activity in Stygia, it is also socially significant. The exchange of gifts between unequal parties plays a role in the acknowledgement of social standing, giving honour and displaying generosity. Giving a valuable gift gives a character a +1 bonus to Reputation since such activities increase the character's prestige (the most a character can gain in one year is a +3 bonus for gift giving, and each gift must be larger than the last to have an effect on Reputation).

### Wealth Other Than Coins

Merchants commonly exchange trade goods without using currency. As a means of comparison, some trade goods are detailed below.

#### Trade Goods

Cost	Item
1 cp	One pound of wheat
2 cp	One pound of flour, or one chicken
1 sp	One pound of iron
5 sp	One pound of tobacco or copper
1 gp	One pound of cinnamon or one goat
2 gp	One pound of ginger or pepper or one sheep
3 gp	One pig
4 gp	One square yard of linen
5 gp	One pound of salt or silver
10 gp	One square yard of silk, or one cow
15 gp	One pound of saffron or cloves, or one ox
50 gp	One pound of gold

### Credit and Loans

Credit is common in Stygia. The problem with the barter system is that in order to get a good, one must have a good the other party desires. Another problem is that the goods traded are often too big to carry around in one's pocket (such as oxen or bushels of wheat). In order to get around this, credit is given, often written up in contract form. If one does not have what the other party wants, the one desiring the other's good promises to come back with something else. These IOUs are written on anything flat enough to be written on, including papyrus, pot shards, stones and leaves. Also, people can deposit grain in state warehouses and gain a certain amount of income. The person leaving grain in the public stores can write withdrawal orders, which function like cheques in the modern banking system. Unfortunately for the Stygians, these storehouses do not pay interest; instead they deduct 10%

annually from the accounts to account for natural spoilage and attrition.

Stygians can also take out loans from the wealthy, though the state does not limit interest rates, which are commonly between 90% and 200%.

## TAXES

Stygia taxes its citizens fairly heavily. Tax collectors generally just seize part of the produce, merchandise or property owned by the citizens when the taxes are due. Fields are measured and their yield is assessed. Farmers cannot lie because if they claim a field is not theirs, they lose the rights to the field. Farmers cannot even really hide their stores of produce because the produce is too bulky. As a result, Stygian farmers are the most consistently taxed portion of the Stygian population, as well as the heaviest taxed. Taxes can also be paid in slaves, gold or corvées (forced labour) instead of with a share of the produce. The nice thing about corvées is that labour can be extracted from anyone. Citizens doing corvée labour on the canals are exempt from canal taxes.

Official positions are also taxed. If one is a governor of a city, that position is taxed based on the income that position affords. All local officials are likewise taxed. The vizier of Stygia supervises all of this taxation and is in charge of the tax collectors. All overseas trade is also taxed, often at a rate of 10%. Fishermen pay a tax daily to gain access to the river or the canals. Public baths are taxed at a rate of 6¼%. There is an additional 6¼% tax on houses. Canal taxes are also levied at a rate of 6¼%.

Certain peoples are exempt from the omnipresent taxation. Anyone the king feels the state needs the services of is often exempted, such as mercenary armies. Also, in the case of mercenary armies, some peoples are simply too well-armed for Stygia to enforce a tax collection anyway. Priests, temples and anyone working for the priests and temples are exempt from taxation. The king of Stygia may also exempt anyone he personally feels like exempting. One can also buy exemption or bribe a tax collector, official or even the king for an exemption.

Tax collectors are scribes. They maintain written records of deeds and field sizes and they understand quite complex geometries, using mathematics to calculate areas and yields. They also perform cattle counts twice yearly. Oil and beer is also counted and taxed. Those who do not produce have to declare their incomes twice yearly on pain of death. The tax collectors are not however just bookish accountants, they also need to be bullies. Most tax-collecting uses the coercive method of seizing property. The use of force is threatened and used quite frequently. Tax collectors must

*'In good time,' muttered Conan, his eyes burning on Thalís ivory limbs. 'What are you, a Stygian woman, doing here?'*

*'I came here when a young girl,' she answered. 'I am the daughter of a king, no common woman, as you can see by my skin, which is as white as that of your little blond there.'*

Robert E. Howard, Xuthal of the Dusk

make an accounting of all taxes collected to their superiors or face a severe beating at the hands of their own slaves.

## SOCIAL STANDING

Mysterious Stygia organises its inscrutable society in a strict class system based largely upon physical racial characteristics and the ability to read and write. Pure white skinned Stygians are in the upper echelons of society. Dusky skinned Stygians taking the Stygian racial template provided in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* fill the next tier, consisting of aristocrats, priests, scribes and warriors. The bottom rung is the largest percentage of the population, none of which take the Stygian racial template even though they are technically Stygians. They are a mongrel horde of half-breeds and mixed bloods.

At the top of the pyramid is the royalty. Beneath them are the nobility and aristocracy, as well as the scribes. Beneath them are the bulk of the Stygian people, the labouring classes, including artisans, farmers, shepherds and merchants. Throughout every level of society are the slaves, priests and soldiers of Stygia.

## ROYALTY AND NOBILITY

Stygia's royal and noble castes are descended from the ancient, original inhabitants of Stygia. Stygian royalty and nobility are relatively tall people with black hair and fair skin the colour of pale ivory, as were their ancient forebears, the black-hearted, sorcerous Giant-Kings. Many of their eyes still have a feral glitter in the dark. The royalty include the King of Stygia and his family. Beneath him are the ancient families descended of the Giant-Kings who once ruled these lands. These families betrayed their former culture and helped usher in the current culture. Many still keep man-serpents enshrined in their family tombs as protectors and avengers. These frightening families retain the records of Elder Stygia and learn the oldest and most horrible sorceries passed down through the generations since before the Great Cataclysm rocked the world.

Stygia's fearsome king is worshipped as a living god. Temples are built in his honour. The King of Stygia at the default setting of *Conan the Roleplaying Game* (two years after the events of *The Hour of the Dragon*) is King Ctesphon IV (his statistics can be found on page 91). He is an ivory-skinned giant descended from the old race of Elder Stygians.

Nobles are permitted to hold government posts, where they glean their wealth from tributes paid to the king. All Stygians give gifts to their grim gods and the ivory-skinned nobles represent these slithering gods in this dark land. The nobles all have great status in society. Being of this caste gives a character a +3 bonus to Reputation. The Stygian template in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* portrays this caste admirably. Most nobles have levels in noble, although some have levels in soldier, temptress and/or scholar as well. Priests of this caste are likely to be trained as sorcerers.

## ARISTOCRACY

Below the royal and noble families, the haughty, ruling elite of aristocrats and the powerful middle class are dusky-skinned, hawk nosed men. Interestingly, it is this caste which most non-Stygians consider to be true Stygians. They are descended from the sorcerous priests and fell priest-kings of the wandering Khari who conquered Elder Stygia. Holding the reins of power in the government, the aristocracy leaves the nobles free to hang about the court at Luxur. Aristocrats pass their position down from father to son. Fertility is important in Stygia, so most aristocrats are married.

The Stygian template in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* works well for this social caste. Aristocrats generally take levels in the noble or scholar classes, although they may multiclass in other directions if the need arises. Aristocrats are permitted to hold government posts, where they glean their wealth from taxation. Being of this class gives a character a +2 bonus to Reputation. Priests of this class are likely to be trained as sorcerers.

## SCRIBES

Scribes are valued members of society as they are the record keepers and intellectuals of Stygia. Only about one in a hundred Stygians knows how to read and write. This gives the scribes and priests prestige and influence. They take Profession skills, and the first they take is Profession (scribe). From there, many doors are opened. They may be accountants, barbers, priests, doctors and government officials. The profession of scribe has been generally handed down from father to son since the fall of the Giant-Kings. The scribes know full well their status and jealously guard their secrets. However, anyone who learns the rudiments of reading and writing the complex Stygian hieroglyphs must apprentice and train as a scribe or join a school that trains scribes.



Training is not easy. Most students enter the schools around age seven. Students in the school are not allowed to engage in sexual activity until they have mastered the basics of reading and writing to the point of being functionally literate, an effort that often takes years to accomplish. Scribes have to master over 700 hieroglyphs representing objects, ideas and sounds. Beginning scribes practice on flat stones or pottery shards, cheap materials for those who might make mistakes. As the student shows improvement and skill, the scribe begins copying light-weight texts dictated by the master scribe, such as amusing animal stories or the like. Mathematics is studied as well. If the student graduates, he is guaranteed a life without labour. If a student does not graduate, he is sacrificed to Father Set.

Although most scribes begin in the scholar class, they may multiclass freely. Scribes are valued in all walks of life. Armies, cities, towns, farmers and temples all need their services. Military leaders are trained as scribes because most commands in the field are sent by letter.

Scribes may use the Stygian racial template in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* or may use the Shemite or Kushite template if they are from the lower classes. Scribes generally take levels in the scholar class, although



they may multiclass in other directions if the need arises. Scribes are permitted to hold government posts. Just being a scribe gives a character a +1 bonus to Reputation. Scribes wear clean white linens and have soft hands, both indicative of a privileged life.

## LABOURERS

Most of the Stygian people are from the labouring class. Most of this class will not take the Stygian racial template as described in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, but instead are treated as Kushites, Shemites, Southern Islanders or even Hyborians as far as character generation rules go, although most will have dusky skin and will consider themselves Stygians. Few, if any, of these classes will be able to read unless they have had training as a scribe. Anyone of this class is strictly forbidden to carry weapons unless conscripted into the military. Failure to comply with the law usually means a trip to the sacrificial altars of the priests of Set.

## MERCHANTS

Stygian merchants are more like traders in most respects. Mostly they sail the River Styx from city to city. International commerce overseas (and to Turan and Iranistan) is conducted by the nobles, not by this class of people. They take ranks in Profession (trader) and usually have high ranks in their Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (geography) and Sense Motive skills. They take Stygian products, like papyrus, rope, gold, linen cloth and jewellery to other cities and, to some extent, to Kush, Darfar and Shem, meeting the foreign traders at border towns. They exchange these items for more exotic items such as wood, ivory, animal skins, giraffe tails (used as fly whisks) and even animals. The looming Stygian temples and colossal palaces like to have baboons and lions on the property to make an even bigger impression on visitors.

Merchants rarely have the time to take any class but commoner, although any class can trade and barter. Few merchants will take the Stygian racial template as presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Most merchants will be treated as Kushites, Shemites, Southern Islanders or even Hyborians as far as character generation rules go, although most will have dusky skin and will consider themselves Stygians. The Non-Player Character hybrid racial template offered in this supplement will work well for merchants. Merchants tend to have strong relationships with the scribes. Some inscrutable scribes become merchants, although this is unusual.

## ARTISANS

Artisans are generally employed by the government or the temples and work in large workshops.

Virtually all crafts are performed by groups of artisans. There are no masters of a craft, such as the guildmasters of Aquilonia or the master craftsmen of Shem. For the most part, everything is standardised and produced *en masse*. Artisans include carpenters, amulet-makers, metal workers, jewellers, potters, sculptors, wall-painters, glass makers and weavers. They usually receive payment in food, beer and grain. The standardisation of arts and crafts in Stygia limits the skills of its artisans somewhat. It is hard to find a Stygian craftsman with more than six ranks in his Craft skill.

Artisans rarely have the time to take any class but commoner, although any class (except noble) can work in an artisan workshop if he has at least one rank in the appropriate Craft skill. Few artisans will take the actual Stygian racial template as presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Most artisans will be treated as Kushites, Shemites, Southern Islanders or even Hyborians as far as character generation rules go, although most will have dusky skin and will consider themselves Stygians. The Non-Player Character hybrid racial template offered in this supplement will work well for artisans.

## FARMERS

Most of Stygia's population are farmers, and accomplished ones at that. Virtually everyone in Stygia is involved in at least some aspect of agriculture, either by working the land or by recording the crops or collecting taxes on the crops. Farmers usually work the land of wealthy landowners and are usually paid for their work in food, clothing and shelter. Some farmers rent the land and keep the profits from their crop, paying the landlord a portion of that crop. In addition to ploughing, planting and harvesting, farmers are also required to maintain irrigation canals and work as labourers on any construction projects.

Stygian farmers grow three kinds of wheat, known as einkorn, emmer and spelt. Einkorn is a one-grained wheat. Emmer is a wheat with spikelets, two dark red kernels that remain after threshing. Spelt is similar to emmer except its kernels are light red. Barley is also grown. Along with the wheat, barley is used to make beer, an important drink among the Stygians. Those are the main produces of Stygian farmers. In small gardens alongside the wheat and barley fields, Stygians grow vegetables of all sorts, as well as fruits like dates, figs, pomegranates and melons. Also, seeds, such as sesame and flax are grown for oils. Some farmers cultivate vineyards although this is uncommon. Papyrus is grown in the marshes along the River Styx. The papyrus is used for paper, mats and sandals.

Farmers rarely have the time to take any class but commoner, although any class (except noble) can work on a farm. No commoner farmers will take the actual Stygian racial template as presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. All farmers and commoners will be treated as Kushites, Shemites, Southern

Islanders or even Hyborians as far as character generation rules go, although most will have dusky skin and will consider themselves Stygians. The Non-Player Character hybrid racial template offered in this supplement will work well for farmers.

## SHEPHERDS

Outside of the farms are the lands used for the herds of cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, donkeys, geese, dogs and the oryx. Animal breeders and herdsmen are professional shepherds hired by the temples and other estate owners to tend to the animals. Most of the shepherds specialise in but one type of animal. They have assistants and servants who carry buckets and fodder. They are lean men and are usually unshaven. They are continuously on the move with their herds. To keep the sun off them, they carry sticks with matting on them over one shoulder. They bring the animals in at tax time for the counting of the livestock by the scribes.

During the day, the herds are driven out to various pastures or even to harvested fields. Once at the fields, the animals are tied to stones to make sure they do not trample the grasses too much. At night, the herds are brought to pens and watched over to guard against thieves and carnivores.

Shepherds usually take the nomad or commoner class. Few shepherds will take the actual Stygian racial template as presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Most shepherds will be treated as Shemites or even Hyborians as far as character generation rules go, although most will have dusky skin and will consider themselves Stygians. The Non-Player Character hybrid racial template offered in this supplement will work well for Shepherds.

## PRIESTS

Holding the reins of power in the government and in the temples, the priests are drawn from the most able throughout society. The priests grow wealthy from donations to the gods, for all Stygians give gifts to Set and the other gods. Priests and nobles pass their position down from father to son. Fertility is important in Stygia, so most priests and nobles are married. Most of Stygia's priests are priests of Set. Priests often specialise in some function or other. Some

*'A god must have his sacrifices. When I was a child in Stygia the people lived under the shadow of a priest. None ever knew when he or she would be seized and dragged to the altar.'*

Robert E. Howard, *The Slithering Shadow*



priests specialise in sacrifices, some in sorcery. Some priests function as diplomats and foreign dignitaries, other priests function as doctors. Almost the entire bureaucracy of Stygia is composed of priests. Part-time priests are appointed from the lower castes who function as porters, painters or scribes. Apart from their symbolic knives, priests travel unarmed.

Priests hold cryptic rituals in shadowed temple chambers while wearing hideous half-bestial masks. Worshipping the vile serpent god Set, these priests practice abominable rites of blood sacrifice, degenerated sex and black magic.

The Stygian racial template in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* works well for this social caste, although the priesthood does not demand pure blood, although impure Stygians are far less likely to be trained in sorcery. The Non-Player Character hybrid racial template offered in this supplement on page 22 will work well for the part-time priests, called *phyles*. Priests generally take levels in the scholar class, although they may multiclass in other directions if the need arises. Some promising priests may also learn sorcery from the temple of Set in addition to alchemy and herbalism skills. Most priests in Stygia are non-sorcerous, despite their reputation. Virtually all the priests are skilled alchemists and experts at tricks of sleight-of-hand, making the unobservant believe *all* Stygian priests.

are sorcerous. Priests who truly seek after all the power Father Set promises often find themselves attracting the attention of the Black Ring, a powerful sorcerous society in Stygia.

**Sorcerer of the Black Ring:** The sorcerers of the Black Ring are some of the most accomplished prestidigitators of the Hyborian Age. They also learn cursing, countermagic and necromancy. The Black Ring is Stygia's foremost sorcerous society, and those acolytes who apprentice themselves into its lower echelons must dedicate their lives to obeying their superiors in the society. Higher level sorcerers of the Black Ring almost always learn the Summoning sorcery style and often use their apprentices as assistants when calling up demons, which can lead to even newcomers to the society coming into contact with creatures which force a Corruption saving throw (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*).

Sorcerers of the Black Ring do not have a uniform dress code, though many wear dark-coloured robes. Note also that the Black Ring does its own recruiting. No one can just walk in and actively join. Many of the most powerful of these sorcerers become Lords of the Black Ring, the most fearsome of these eldritch wizards. Thoth-Amon is one of the most infamous of these horrifying sorcerers. A prestige class is presented on page 122 to represent these monstrous scholars.

## SOLDIERS

The warrior caste are a tall and muscular breed, usually hawk-nosed and dusky skinned. Charioteers are drawn from the nobles and aristocratic classes and infantry are conscripted from the labouring classes. Of course, soldiers fight in wars but they also serve during peace as well. They supervise farmers, fishermen, labourers and slaves that work for the temples. Some work with scribes as brutal tax collectors. Some actually learn to read and write and become scribes themselves, often with the goal of becoming a tax collector. Being a Stygian soldier gives Player Characters a +1 bonus to Reputation. Those of the warrior caste usually take levels in soldier, but some also take levels in borderer. They may multiclass freely with other classes and are not proscribed in anyway against doing so, although it takes wealth as well as ambition to multiclass into the noble class. To become a military leader, one must train as a scribe to be able to read orders. The Stygian racial template in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* works well for this caste, although many take the Meadow Shemite racial template instead, even though they call and consider themselves Stygians. Regardless of caste, Stygian soldiers are never permitted to carry arms and armour when off-duty. Officers, however, are entitled to carry a bronze short sword.

## SERVANTS & SLAVES

Servants and slaves fill a wide range of positions – all the way from labourers to administrators. They perform non-clerical tasks for the temples, work in households, labour in fields, cut hair as barbers, serve as watchmen and as soldiers. These workers are often a strong hybrid of various foreign and Stygian bloods and form the lowest class of Stygian society. Slaves and servants can be bought and sold like property. A person can even sell himself into slavery or servitude and later buy himself out of it. About 10% of the population is composed of slaves.

Servants and slaves usually take the commoner class or whatever class they were before they were enslaved. Few (if any) characters beginning on this social rung will take the actual Stygian racial template as presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* unless they are an aristocrat or noble who has fallen on hard times. Almost all servants and slaves will be treated as Kushites, Shemites, Southern Islanders or even Hyborians as far as character generation rules go, although most will have dusky skin and will consider themselves Stygians, although a Stygian of any caste can find himself a slave if the situation warrants it. The Non-Player Character hybrid racial template offered in this supplement will work well for any servant or slave.

Servants and slaves, regardless of original caste, are strictly forbidden to carry weapons unless they are carrying them for the convenience of their master.

## SOCIAL MOBILITY

There is little social mobility in oppressed Stygia; people tend to marry within their own social group and continue the trade of their dusky-skinned parents. Although social mobility is rare, it is not impossible. If a peasant or farmer saved up money, he could send his son to a village school to learn a trade. Since these schools are run by priests or by artisans, these boys could potentially learn to read and write and thus become scribes. As a scribe, the boy could be placed on a government post, work his way up the governmental ladder into the nobility. It is an uncommon route, but certainly possible. Essentially, education is the key to social mobility. Once one begins the move up the social ladder, one would do well to marry in the new class to cement the change. Thus, a slave might ascend through wealth and reputation to a position of power, but if he wishes to be assured of his new station, the slave should seek a wife in his new station. If his master allows him to marry, he is free and has moved up the social ladder. Also, joining the military is a method of ascent. The Stygians reward the valiant and successful with land and other honours.

## Stygian Calendar

Religious Month	Civil Period	Civil Month	English Month (for comparison)	Notes
Thoth	Inundation	First month of Akhet	April 26 – May 25	The River Styx overflows
Paopi	Inundation	Second month of Akhet	May 26 – June 24	
Hathor	Inundation	Third month of Akhet	June 25 – July 24	
Khoiak	Inundation	Fourth month of Akhet	July 25 – August 28	
Tobi	Going Forth	First month of Peleto	August 29 – September 27	The water recedes and the time of planting begins.
Mekhir	Going Forth	Second month of Peleto	September 28 – October 27	
Phamenoth	Going Forth	Third month of Peleto	October 28 – November 26	
Pharmuthi	Going Forth	Fourth month of Peleto	November 27 – December 26	
Pakhon	Deficiency	First month of Semut	December 27 – January 25	This is the time of low water in the Styx, time of growing and time of harvest.
Paoni	Deficiency	Second month of Semut	January 26 – February 24	
Epep	Deficiency	Third month of Semut	February 25 – March 26	
Mesore	Deficiency	Fourth month of Semut	March 27 – April 25	

## THE STYGIAN CALENDARS

Unlike the rest of the Hyborian age, Stygia does not have one calendar, it has three. Stygia's original calendar, created shortly after the fall of the Giant-Kings, was a lunar calendar. However, that calendar failed to predict the annual flooding of the River Styx, the single most crucial event in the lives of Stygia's farmers and, by extension, everyone else in Stygia. However, the Stygians noticed a particular star (known as Sothis) was visible right before each sunrise just a few days before the flooding. The Stygians developed a stellar calendar based on this, a 365-day calendar with 36 stars marking out the year. Then they marked out three seasons based on the actions of the River Styx for a civil calendar. Unlike most civilisations, the equinoxes and solstices are not all that important. The River Styx is the crux of Stygian civilisation and its calendars are designed to predict its actions.

The old Stygian scribes decided to use the old lunar calendar for religion and festivals; the religious calendar has a unique name for every single day and a name for all twelve months. The civil calendar is used for agriculture, government and administration, has names for the three seasons only and does not name its days at all. A day is simply 'Day 2 of the Second Month of Akhet (Inundation)'. Unfortunately, the civil calendar was about a quarter-day shorter than the solar year, so it and the religious calendar was a day off every four years and would not correspond again for another 1,460 years. So

the Stygians created a third calendar that was artificial and designed to keep general agreement between the other two calendars by intercalating an extra month every 25 years. The only unit of time longer than a year is the reign of a king, so the custom of dating is 'year X of King Y'. The day is divided into twelve equal parts, as is the night. However, the length of each 'hour' varied depending on the season. The Stygians do not have a constant length of time representing an hour. The day begins with sunrise and ends with night.

The period of Akhet, the 'inundation' period, is when the mighty River Styx overflows and irrigation canals bring water to areas the flooding does not reach in order to extend the fertility of the river ever further. The period of Peleto is the period of 'going forth', when the water recedes back to the river. When the ground is firm enough to walk on, the planting begins. Scribes measure out the allotment of grain for each farmer. The sowing is done by hand and the farmers are followed by small animals (goats or sheep are common) to walk over the seeds and push them into the ground. This is the coolest period of the year, temperature-wise. The period of Semut is the period of 'deficiency'. The scribes measure the fields and determine the probable yield to make sure the harvest is reported honestly for taxes. The grain is harvested, bundled, threshed, separated, sieved and stored.

# Stygian Subraces

## A BREED APART

**STYGIAN CHARACTERS GENERALLY** have Stygian traits as detailed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, except for the lower classes. The lower classes are expected to take Kushite, Shemite or Hyborian racial templates, or better, players may mix and match qualities from those templates with the Stygian one to create one of the 'lesser' castes. Another option is to play one of the Tlazitlan as seen in the brilliant Robert E. Howard story, *Red Nails*.

### TLAZITLAN

The Tlazitlan folk are partly Stygian in origin, but some of their ancestors were of one or other of the Eastern races, perhaps Hyrkanians or Kosalan. Most Tlazitlans live around Lake Zuad, but a party of them settled in the far southern city of Xuchotl some fifty years ago. The Xuchotl Tlazitlans were destroyed during Conan's visit to Xuchotl described in the story *Red Nails*.

**Culture:** Tlazitlans are a good deal more wild and dangerous than the relatively civilised Stygians. Perhaps their most feared trait is their willingness to declare a feud against an enemy, dedicating both their own lives and those of their descendants to utterly destroying their foe.

**Names:** Tlazitlan names resemble Aztec, Mayan or Incan names. Examples: (male) Chicmec, Escelan, Olmec, Tachic, Techotl, Tolkamec, Topal, Xatmec, Zlanath; (female) Tascela, Yasala. Suggestions: (male) Maxtla, Tizoc; (female) Cihuaton, Izel, Tepin, Tlaco, Xoco.

**Religion:** Several strange ritualistic practices and superstitions are revealed by the people of Xuchotl. They mark the deaths of their enemies with symbolic red nails hammered into a totem pole, or with collections of heads preserved in glass-cased daises. They fear 'The Stalker in the Dark' and keep their dead in catacombs. It is difficult to be certain if these practices exist beyond Xuchotl, among the ordinary Tlazitlans.

Tlazitlans use the following racial traits instead of the standard Stygian traits.

- ✦ +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Survival and Spot checks in any plains environment; +2 circumstance

bonus to Survival checks made to get along in the wild when a body of water is nearby and fishing equipment available. Tlazitlans herd cattle over the grasslands around Lake Zuad as well as fishing in it.

- ✦ +2 racial bonus to all Intimidate and Profession (torturer) checks. The Tlazitlans delight in inflicting pain and are quite willing to threaten and carry out the direst tortures to get what they want.

- ✦ Feud. This is a special racial ability shared by all Tlazitlans. A Tlazitlan can declare a feud against one enemy or closely connected group of enemies at a time. The target could be anything from 'the merchant who cheated me last week' to 'the entire nation of Zamora'. His feud lasts until all his declared enemies are destroyed, after which another feud can be declared at least one month later if desired. He gains a +2 circumstance bonus to attack and damage rolls when fighting his declared enemies in melee combat, but has a -2 circumstance penalty to his Defence Value against their attacks due to his frenzied combat style.

- ✦ -1 racial penalty to all saving throws against Corruption and -1 racial penalty to all saving throws against Terror. Tlazitlans are not quite so corrupt as most Stygians, but conversely they are less at home with sorcery and strange beasts.

**Background Skills:** Intimidate, Move Silently and Profession (torturer).

**Favoured Class:** Barbarian

**Prohibited Classes:** None

### NON-PLAYER CHARACTER

#### RACE: STYGIAN (HYBRID)

Ordinary Stygians are a downtrodden mix of many different races, most of them descended from slaves. These could generally be treated as Kushites, Shemites, Southern Islanders, or even Hyborians, depending on their origins. This variant race is intended to reflect these hybrid Stygians. Stygian (hybrids) are a Stygian/Shemite/Kushite variant race and gain the following benefits. They are typically dusky-skinned, but may be slightly lighter or darker in tone depending on their racial heritage. They are intended to be a Non-Player

Character race, as they are almost entirely unsuited for adventuring. The Stygian hybrid race profile, perhaps with minor modifications, can also be used for other races who have no martial training or inclination and who are almost invariably farmers, fishers or herders.

**Culture and Names:** Same as any Stygian.

**Religion:** The same as any Stygian. Exceptional commoners may be ordered to join a *phyle*, the ranks of part-time priests who serve one month out of every three in the temples.

- ❖ +2 racial bonus to any two of their background skills (see below).
- ❖ -1 racial penalty to all attack rolls. Stygian hybrid commoners are not merely untrained in the ways of war, they are completely unsuited to combat by virtue of their temperament. This penalty no longer applies if the Stygian hybrid ever gains a martial weapon proficiency.
- ❖ No Weapon Familiarity. Unlike other Stygians, the Stygian hybrid does not gain weapon familiarity with the Stygian bow. Common Stygians are not allowed to wield weapons.
- ❖ Any and all background skills become permanent class skills regardless of the class chosen for the character.

**Background Skills:** The background skills of a Stygian hybrid depends mostly on the primary racial strain and/or his function in society. The Games Master can mix and match these as appropriate. Any impure Stygian can be a Performer, not just Stygian-Darfari hybrids, for example. However, a hybrid Stygian-Kushite Performer may choose any three background ground skills from the Performer list and/or the Kushite list. The background skills chosen become permanent class skills for the character.

- ❖ **Darfari or Performer:** Concentration, Perform (any), Perform (drums).
- ❖ **Hyborian or Artisan:** Concentration, Perform (ritual) and Craft (any).
- ❖ **Kushite or Farmer:** Handle Animal, Profession (farmer) and Survival.
- ❖ **Meadow Shemite or Merchant:** Bluff, Sense Motive and Profession (trader).
- ❖ **Shemite or Herder:** Handle Animal, Spot and Survival.
- ❖ **Southern Islander or Fisher:** Perform (dance), Profession (fisherman) and Survival.

**Favoured Class:** Commoner.

**Prohibited Classes:** Barbarian, Forester, Noble, Nomad, Pirate, Scholar, Soldier, Thief.

**Automatic Languages:** Stygian.

**Bonus Languages:** 50% none; 50% their primary native language.

## STYGIAN CLASSES

The various classes, in and of themselves, are but variations on the other classes, with better statistics here and lesser statistics there. These are not the recipe for great roleplaying experiences, but mere mechanics used to solve conceptual problems such as combat and stealth. Every culture has its impact on the classes and Stygia, a decadent, sinister menace and a black land of nameless horror, is no exception.

## STYGIAN BARBARIANS

Barbarians in Stygia are savage desert dwellers. They are as sinister as most Stygians. They are the dusky skinned wanderers who took this land from the Giant-Kings, but who refused to settle in cities of stone, preferring the dunes and sands of the land to a sedentary life. They dress in silken garments, usually voluminous robes. They live in clan-based villages grouped around central markets and usually an oasis or well. Stygian barbarian clans usually have totems, or animal symbols, which they believe watch over their clan. One can readily determine the totem of a barbarian tribe just by looking at their pottery. They emblazon their animal symbol on nearly everything. Those living near the Styx know how to make papyrus boats and they have regular commerce with urban Stygians and nomadic Stygians.

All Stygian barbarians have a +1 bonus to Handle Animal when handling their totem animal. Typical totems include crocodiles, scorpions, lions, cats, dogs, spiders, scarabs, snakes and a strange dog-like animal known simply as 'Set's Animal'. Stygian barbarians will usually emphasise skills relating to their chosen totem. Crocodile-totem barbarians may emphasise Hiding and stealth attacks (and may multi-class with thief to gain the Sneak Attack ability). A scorpion-totem barbarian may emphasise endurance and using poison on their weapons.

The barbarians worship Set and his grim pantheon of gods, but the gruesome and sinister rituals used to worship Set are a guarded mystery. All that is known is that the religious ceremonies of the barbaric shamans are composed of unspeakable rites and human sacrifices in grisly quantities. The shamans wear monstrous, half-bestial masks surmounted by ostrich plumes in dark ceremonies. Silent, ritualistic processions also play an inexplicable part in this menacing religion. Sacred objects, such as curious black candles that flicker with strange green light and staves with white skull heads abound in the Stygians' grim ceremonies of creepy magic.



Tlazitlans exemplify Stygian barbarians. Their totem is a monstrous snake known as a Crawler (see Crawler of Xuchotl in *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*).

## STYGIAN BORDERERS

Stygian borderers are tomb protectors or lotus guides.

Stygian tomb protectors are charged by the priests of Set to watch over the tombs of Stygia. Most are masters of mounted combat and underground fighting techniques and dabblers in the occult, able to summon up horrible curses or worse from the tombs they guard. They combine the tactics of the sniper with the bounty hunter to track those who violate the tombs of the ancients. Stygian borderers track down those who steal from the tombs as avengers of the dead, slaying those who have touched the tomb goods and returning the treasures back to their eternal vaults. Stygian tomb guards are killers, cold and remorseless. Most Stygian tomb guardians use the Stygian Tomb Avenger combat style (page 121) instead of two-weapon or archery styles.

Tomb protectors usually take ranks in Concentration, Hide, Intimidate, Move Silently and Survival. They take feats such as Alertness, Blind Fight, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dabbler, Great Cleave, Improved Critical, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Power Attack and Weapon Focus.

The lotus guide leads people through the lotus swamps and the lengths of the Styx and knows the Styx and the Stygian swamps like no other. They see their lives as similar to a journey down the Styx, a journey with a destined but unknowable end. Finding one's destiny is as finding the source of the Styx itself. They lead groups and individuals along these black routes, protecting them from the darker things prowling the wilderness. The lotus guide usually takes ranks in Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (nature), Ride and Survival. Negotiator, Self-Sufficient and Skill Focus are common feats for the lotus guide.

## STYGIAN NOMADS

Stygian nomads ride camels. Many are slavers who range down into Kush, Darfar and Keshan, as well as travelling the Stygian wastelands. Roaming in their white-robed hordes, nomadic Stygians dwell in the deserts. They raid their urban cousins constantly, burning with a fierce hatred for their civilised kin.

In addition to the slavers are the shepherds. Animal breeders and herdsmen are the professional shepherds hired by the temples and other estate owners to tend to the animals. They are lean men and are usually unshaven. They are continuously on the move with their herds. They bring the animals in at tax time for the counting of the livestock by the scribes.

Few shepherds and other Stygian nomads will take the actual Stygian racial template as presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Most shepherds will be treated as Shemites or even Hyborians as far as character generation rules go, although most will have dusky skin and will consider themselves Stygians.

The standard dress for one of the nomad men is a white, girdled *khilat*, a robe with full open sleeves, linen, cotton or silken breeches and a flowing headdress that falls to the shoulders and is banded about the temples with a triple circlet of braided camel-hair called a *kafieh*. The amount of embroidery on the *khilat* or *kafieh* indicates the relative position and wealth of the wearer. Cloaks are of camel hair. The women wear a *chador*, or a full-body robe that includes a hood and veil.

The nomads live among lines of camel-hair tents. They are commanded by *sheiks*, or chiefs, who dwell in large, silk-walled tents hung with gilt-worked tapestries and littered with rich carpets and velvet cushions. The nomads follow only successful leaders and tend to have more faith in foreigners to lead them than in one of their own race. They want loot and they will follow the chief who will lead them to it. Stygian nomads tend to keep ranks in Spot, Ride and Survival at maximum.

## STYGIAN NOBLES

The fair skinned nobles of Stygia, descended from the Giant-Kings of the Elder Empire, have black hair and are notably tall. They have luminous eyes. The tall nobles born of the ancient families are also lithe and sinuous. Like the Acheronians, these nobles are descended from the sons of a race of wizards, veritable devils born of a lineage of black diabolism stretching back tens of thousands of years. Characters of this race should maximise their Diplomacy, Intimidation, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nobility) and Sense Motive skills. Even if they do not multiclass into scholar, they should at least have the Dabble feat.

Below these, the haughty, ruling elite of aristocrats are dusky-skinned, hawk-nosed men. Holding the reins of power in the government and in the temples, the aristocracy leaves the nobles free to hang about the court at Luxur. Even those who do not multiclass into scholar dabble in the black arts. Although not horse riders, most do ride in chariots, so Mounted Combat and/or Mounted Archery is common. Enjoying hunts, the Stygian aristocracy often take feats such as Track and Weapon Focus (Stygian bow). This stacks nicely with their racial bonus with this weapon.

In battle, the noble typically wears an archaic mail hauberk, overlaid with plates of strange pattern and design. This armour comes from patterns laid down from before the temple records, and may be of even more ancient origin. It is not particularly effective, but does present an imposing sight on the battlefield. Each noble is also expected to sling a battleaxe of curious design from his belt.

## STYGIAN SCHOLARS

Stygian scholars are part of the ruling elite of Stygia. The cults utterly dominate Stygian society; the temples own most of the arable land and the government bureaucracy is filled with priests. As with many religions, this Stygian theocracy is conservative and closed-minded. Sorcery in Stygia is synonymous with the worship of Father Set, who reigns supreme over the land. His pantheon, however, includes several 'hideous, half-bestial gods' as subordinates. At one time, according to Xaltotun, much of the world was likewise dominated by the Old Serpent. Set, today, is worshipped primarily in Stygia and in places of strong Stygian influence, such as areas of Kush and Shem, and by dark sorcerers everywhere. Set's symbol is a scaled serpent, coiled, with its tail in its mouth.

His is a bloody religion, a legacy from the strange pre-human culture that was thrown down by the Stygians in pre-Cataclysm days. At one time, Set walked the earth in the form of a man and created that mysterious pre-human race. Now the god of the Stygians, Set's cult is outlawed by the

Hyborians, who regard Set as the arch-enemy of Mitra and fear the gruesome and mysterious rituals of Set's priests.

The specific rituals used to worship Set are a guarded mystery, but those sinister rituals are known to be gruesome, comprised of unspeakable rites and human sacrifices in grisly quantities. Priests wear monstrous, half-bestial masks in certain ceremonies. Sacred beasts, both terrestrial and otherwise, abound in their religious culture. Giant pythons hunt abroad in the dark alleys of black Khemi, human sacrifices are given to amorphous monsters from the Abyss held in deep pits and giant, drugged iridescent serpents coil in their temples, ready to accept worship and sacrifice from the priests of Set.

The priests of Set are largely all sorcerers and they terrify their subjects as well as their enemies, for they can and will sacrifice their own followers to gain their corrupt ends. The most powerful of these priests are members of the Black Ring, the main sorcerous coven in Stygia. It is made up of priests of Set, formerly independent sorcerers whose infamy and power draws the attention of the senior wizards of the Black Ring, and acolytes of the Black Ring. The most powerful of these are known as Lords of the Black Ring (see *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*). Lords of the Black Ring are feared wherever they go, even in Stygia itself. Just the threat of their wrath is generally enough to bring their cowering inferiors back into line.

The mysterious scribes of Stygia are also scholars, although usually non-sorcerous. They take the Profession (scribe) skill as well as Decipher Script. Any character wanting to go into Stygian politics or wanting to govern any portion of Stygia should have scribal training.

Stygian sorcerers usually maximise Gather Information, Intimidation, Knowledge (arcana) and Perform (ritual) skills. Almost all Stygian sorcerers take the Ritual Sacrifice and Tortured Sacrifice feats. Any sorcery feat, Steely Gaze and Priest are also useful feats for a Stygian sorcerer. For those wishing to hide their corruption, the Deception of Set and Foul is Fair feats from *Conan: The Road of Kings* might be useful.

## STYGIAN SOLDIERS

The Stygian warrior caste is a tall and muscular breed, also hawk-nosed and dusky skinned. Stygian soldiers are strictly disciplined and regimented. Stygian soldiers are never mounted, however. They regard cavalries as ignoble, fit only for foreign mercenaries. Stygian soldiers are a walking anachronism, with outdated training, arms and armour. Most Stygian soldiers are archers. The numerous Stygian archers once commanded great fear from armies and nations. Their powerful bows could launch waves of steel-tipped death into the air,

*First was a long line of chariots, drawn by the great fierce horses of Stygia, with plumes on their heads - snorting and rearing as each naked driver leaned back, bracing his powerful legs, his dusky arms knotted with muscles. The fighting men in the chariots were tall figures, their hawk-like faces set off by bronze helmets crested with a crescent supporting a golden ball. Heavy bows were in their hands. No common archers, these, but nobles of the South, bred to war and the hunt, who were accustomed to bringing down lions with their arrows.*

Robert E. Howard, *Black Colossus*

blasting though flesh and bone. Then the Hyborians came, with heavy armour, massive shields, and cavalry that could cover the ground long before the archers could destroy them. Now, these unarmoured archers are considered something of a joke by the world's great powers. However, they can still inflict incredible punishment on those foolish enough to underestimate them. Each archer is clad in a light shirt and trousers. They carry daggers and a sheaf of 30 arrows into battle, along with their signature bows. The nobles station the majority of these forces around Luxur. Common feats at 1<sup>st</sup> level are Point Blank Shot and Weapon Focus (Stygian bow). Later they are trained for Endurance, Far Shot and Precise Shot.

Stygia maintains almost 3,000 chariot teams, each consisting of a chariot driver, a noble-born soldier/archer and a two-horse team. These ponderous devices require relatively level surfaces, have a wide turning radius and are notoriously vulnerable at the wheels. Nobles primarily use them for racing and demonstrations of martial skill rather than real fighting. The noble/soldier usually takes Chariot Archery, Chariot Combat and Point Blank Shot as feats. The noble soldier usually has ranks in Intimidate and Spot. The chariot's driver is unarmoured and unarmed. The driver usually takes Endurance, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mounted Combat, Skill Focus (handle animal) and Weapon Focus (Stygian bow) as feats. Handle Animal is maximised. These teams usually spend time in the Luxur garrison rather than on the various fronts.

Stygian soldiers are not permitted to carry their weapons unless they are on duty. Scribes make meticulous records of their weapon inventories and who has what weapon.

## STYGIAN PIRATES

Stygia is one of the three major maritime nations (the others being Argos and Zingara). Stygian pirates man black ships which sail under the authority of the dark priests of Set. Most are marines, pirate/soldier multiclassed (see *Conan: The Free Companies*). Stygian pirates are occasionally rebels who have escaped the iron grip of the darksome priests of that dusky land. Mostly they fight with the heavy bows of their country first and foremost. Their ships are oared by slaves and have a foul stink about them. Stygian captains are usually pale and terrified, knowing full well that at any moment a priest might appear and demand their services. Stygian pirates usually dress in silks. Many Stygian pirates sail up and down the Styx instead of out on the open sea.

Stygian pirate and navy craft enforce a stranglehold on trade with the Black Kingdoms and will usually attack any non-Stygian ship they find in those waters. Many Stygian craft will attack any foreign craft they meet on the open ocean. Stygians prey heavily upon Hyborian shipping and nearly every Stygian merchantman doubles as a Stygian privateer. Stygians have cornered the market on such items as ivory, ostrich feathers, copper, skins, pearls, hammered gold ornaments and other items from Kush, charging Hyborian merchants their weight in silver for them. The Stygians particularly hate the Black Corsairs, who manage to dip into that market, selling those same items much cheaper to those willing to bargain with the corsairs. The Stygians also export Lotus products as well as silk.



## STYGIAN THIEVES

Most Stygian thieves live in the urban cities. Retired Stygian thieves often work as fences or merchants. Most urban Stygian thieves are suited to fit any of the typical roles played by a thief. They will take skills and feats appropriate to their role in society. *Conan: Hyboria's Fallen* features additional ideas for thieves.

Many thieves in Stygia are tomb-robbers, skilled at breaking into the vast stone necropolises outside the major cities and at finding the ancient dead buried in long-forgotten tombs lost deep in the vast Stygian deserts. These thieves, should they survive long enough, often take the *sorcerous protection* special ability in hopes of surviving archaic curses whose power outlives those who laid the curses. These thieves will find Disable Device, Gather Information, Knowledge (arcane), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local) and Survival to be huge assets in their career. Survival should be kept fairly high if the thief intends to go out into the deserts for any reason. Other useful skills will include Diplomacy (to calm down patrols and officials questioning the character's business out there), Appraise (to choose the choicest items), Climb (many tombs are in hard to reach places) and others. Feats such as Lightning Reflexes may help the character avoid traps that go undetected or that they fail to disable.

Stygian tomb-robbers are usually highly skilled and highly organised. Most tomb-robbers work in gangs. A few of the thieves have stonemasonry skills to breach the tomb walls through the rear to avoid breaking the seals. Strong thieves serve as water carriers to aid in tunnelling and hauling away the loot. Thieves with metalworking skills melt down the plundered metals in a portable furnace. One thief is usually skilled at bribing corrupt officials and priests in order to get a shot at having enough time to break into a vigilantly guarded tomb. A boatman completes the team to ferry the thieves away quickly with their loot before the priests guarding the tombs can detect the theft. Tomb thieves are not usually the most stealthy. Once inside the dark tombs, the thick stone walls muffle all noise anyway, so the thieves feel free to tear up whatever they want as loudly as they want in their search for precious items. Some thieves simply set fire to densely packed tombs. When they return later, they can easily pluck pools of hardened gold from the ashen wreckage, already disguised for easy fencing.

Few Stygian thieves will have many (if any at all) ranks in Open Locks as Stygian tombs are not usually locked so much as sealed. Most Stygian thieves will learn the Stygian bow for their first sneak attack style. They are automatically proficient, plus they gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls, so it benefits them to use it for their sneak attacks early on.

*Master Tito gave that dreamy, glass  
floored bay a wide berth, even when a serpent-  
prowed gondola shot from behind a castellated  
point of land, and naked dusky women, with great  
red blossoms in their hair, stood and called to his  
sailors, and posed and postured brazenly.*

Robert E. Howard, *Queen of the Black Coast*

## STYGIAN TEMPTRESSES

The conservative and closed-minded Stygian cults utterly dominate Stygian society. This is fertile ground for temptresses. Stygian temptresses have a special advantage in the world: they are seen as exotic the world over. Even non-noble Stygians see the white-skinned upper-classes as exotic. Some temptresses become priestesses to gain power, others simply seduce the priests to manipulate them from behind the scenes. Virtually any type of temptress can be found in Stygia, from black widows to harem girls. Their bonus to Craft (alchemy) helps them to develop all sorts of chemical solutions to help in the seduction and maintenance of their men. Stygia often sends infiltrators to foreign kingdoms to exert influence on the dealings of those nations.

Aiding the soldiers of Khemi are temple harlots dedicated to Idris the asp goddess. They are also called the granddaughters of Set. These temple harlots, trained in combat, are naked women with red lotus blossoms in their dark hair and lotus resin caked beneath their long pointed nails. They essay forth on serpent-prowed gondolas to lure men to their naked bodies. With a few caresses they can stupefy a man, allowing the man to be enslaved by the Stygians. If these dusky temple harlots are attacked, the doomed attacker will draw the ire of the priests of Set. The perfume from the red lotus blossoms keeps the harlots in a drugged, sexual haze and can be smelled at a considerable distance.

# Stygian Military

## MIGHT AND MAJESTY

**BROODING STYGIA,** A land of sorcerers and dark arts, maintains a large antiquated army. Their weapons and tactics have not changed for centuries. Their methods of training remain the same as they have always been. Much to everyone's amazement they still use chariots, even though they know full well that chariots cannot face cavalry on anything remotely resembling even terms.

This army may be as much for show as it is for use. It gives the nobles something to do while the priests rule their country. It also gives foreign countries a reason not to invade. Though the Stygian army probably could not stand against Aquilonia or even a concentrated attack from Shem, its presence provides a plausible deterrent.

The fear other nations feel, though, is that the sorcerer-priests of this dangerous land protect it with spells and alchemical concoctions, not with armies. An invading army will not fall under the spears of the Kushites or the arrows of the chariots; instead it will die of plagues pulled from long-forgotten tombs and fire that burns in water. The priests will spend the army like clipped coins if they must in order to buy time for their preparations.

King Ctesphon IV can summon an army of 20,000 people reasonably quickly, divided into four divisions of five thousand, and he can hire mercenary armies above and beyond this. For Stygians, joining the military is either a way to a quick death or a way out of the drudgery of labour. Many kings came out of the military, surrounding themselves with loyal soldiers who had been with the new king when he was rising through the ranks. Other kings reward successful military service with untaxed land, daily provisions of fine food and official positions. Soldiers can also be rewarded with jewellery and Reputation.

### HONORARY ORDERS

The Order of the Lion is awarded to valorous soldiers, indicated by the gift of a gold lion amulet. The Order of the Jackal is awarded to those who bring back the most tribute to the king on various campaigns; a small gold jackal pendant indicates the recipient of this honour. Particularly successful officers and soldiers are awarded gold fly amulets, inducting them into the Order of the Fly, the highest

award available. Each awarded honour gives a +1 bonus to Reputation.

### WAR FORMATIONS

Stygia holds some of the most secure borders in the world with a ruthless army that is strictly disciplined. The ruling theocracy, obstinately conservative, forces their warrior castes to wear obsolete armour and use antique weaponry, including war chariots still made the traditional way instead of utilizing a more mobile cavalry. Chariot fighting is a noble art, and cavalry is base, fit only for foreign mercenaries, which Stygia does use as the nation's cavalry. While their armies are a walking anachronism even in the Hyborian Age, they are an effective force. Their men and horses are accustomed to Stygia's climate and geography. Their armies are also augmented by the sorcerer-priests, who call black plagues out of darkened tombs to help repel invaders. The army is well coordinated and extremely mobile, brave and formidable, considered a major military power. They could quickly be called upon to overwhelm invaders in sheer numbers, often negating tactics and superior equipment. Interestingly, despite their strengths, Stygia was very reluctant to send its forces abroad, even to reclaim captured lands.

The army of Stygia is made up of mercenary cavalry, conscripted infantry, professional archers and war chariots divided up into divisions of 5,000 soldiers each. Each division is named after a merciless Stygian god. The king or royal princes command the divisions. Each division is composed of 20 companies. One company is infantry armed with spears, one company is archers, one company is charioteers, one company is infantry armed with clubs, one company is infantry armed with khopeshes, one company is armed with slings and so on, depending on need, strategy and availability. Each company is divided into five platoons of 50 men.

### The Life of the Common Stygian Soldier

Soldiers do not have the best of lives, although they feel it is better than being a common labourer. They have hordes of officers and scribes who can command them at will, are expected to work on government projects during peace-time and can be awakened at any hour for duty. If they desert the army, their entire family can be imprisoned or exiled. They are expected to maintain a general code of conduct that precludes quarrelling among soldiers, obeying orders and



not attacking civilians during peacetime. On the plus side, they are usually well-fed and clothed. Common pay rates generally include two loaves of bread daily with two bundles of vegetables, roast meat and two linen garments provided monthly. Higher ranking officers receive additional loaves.

Most of the day is spent in training for either archery or martial combat. Stygian trainers, who have high ranks in Intimidation, use physical and psychological brutality to prepare the soldiers for the confusion and fear encountered while on the field of combat. Archers are trained for strength to develop their arm muscles because the Stygian bow is a strength bow; Stygian archers always increase their Strength score when levelling affords them the opportunity. Infantry soldiers spend countless hours drilling on parade grounds with their weapons, responding *en masse* to the shouted commands of the officers lest they feel the lash of the cruel whip for impertinence. Soldiers are not usually sent out to battle until they have mastered the appropriate formation combat at 3<sup>rd</sup> level. Those soldiers chosen to be chariot drivers train for agonising hours to mount mass charges, to learn how to manoeuvre the chariot and the two-horse team, how to drive his horse team at a full gallop over uneven terrain, how to keep up with other chariots and drive in formation and how

to position his shield to protect himself and the nobleman firing arrows even while driving the chariot at full speed.

Dusky-skinned Stygian soldiers also learn how to stand guard as well as how to run and set up a war camp. Skills such as cooking food, repairing equipment, feeding and watering the horses and removing waste are all exercised so campaigns are run flawlessly when actually needed. Camps are surrounded by a barricade of wooden shields set up in a rectangle. Inside this enclosure the pavilions are raised for the higher ranking officers by the soldiers. While on a campaign, soldiers are paid with painted tokens of wood that represent how much bread they have coming to them when they return home.

Interestingly, Stygian soldiers do not keep their own weapons unless actively on duty. When the king of Stygia calls up his army to send them to war, the scribes in charge of supply depots bring out the equipment, including helmets, bronze mail shirts, shields, bows, arrows, javelins, spears and khopeshes. Stacked in huge piles they are handed out to the soldiers, who arrive wearing naught but their kilt. The army scribes loom over each pile, marking down the names, units and the items of equipment taken by each soldier. After battle, the soldiers return all the equipment to the scribes.

### Aftermath of War

Wounds sustained in war often become infected because of unsanitary conditions on the battlefield and poor medical care. Army surgeons are not usually scholarly Nemedian healers. Even though many wounds may heal on their own, the wounded soldier may be crippled for life. The Games Master may require any character involved in a major, prolonged combat to make Fortitude saves vs. infection or disease, presuming the character probably sustained at least a few physical wounds. This save is especially appropriate if the character is healed by a person with less than 10 ranks in Heal – or if the Heal check fails, regardless of ranks. Some likely illnesses include blood poisoning (DC 10), gangrene (DC 14), malaria (DC 15), spotted fever (DC 17), sweating sickness (DC 16), tetanus (DC 14) or yellow fever (DC 14). A complete list of infections and diseases can be found on page 38.

### Women in War

Although women are accorded nearly equal rights as men in black-hearted Stygia, they do not fight in its wars as infantry or charioteers. Queens and other noblewomen may lead battles as generals if they show the aptitude but otherwise they do not fight. This does not hold true with mercenary armies, however, as the case with Valeria of the Red Brotherhood shows. She served on a mercenary unit in Stygia just before the events chronicled in Robert E. Howard's *Red Nails*.

## Regular Army

The Stygian army is rigidly disciplined and organised. In addition to the military units, each unit has its own battalion of military scribes who record everything and keep strict inventories of personnel, animals, pay allotments and equipment. See *Conan: The Free Companies* for an example of a soldier/scholar multiclass called the adjutant; a non-sorcerous version is perfect for this variety of scribe. The Stygian army also uses scribes for its engineering units.



## Infantry

The basic unit of the Stygian military are the conscripted infantry forces, drawn from farmers and labourers. Recruiting scribes travel through the villages and cities when an army is needed and record the names of all able-bodied youths. The official in charge of the village or city calls these names and has them brought before the governor of the district. The governor has been given a quota by the vizier of the king and he chooses the most qualified of the men brought before him in an exact number matching his quota. A scribe records the event and the names of those chosen. Those not chosen are sent back to their homes. Infantry are organised around the types of weapons they wield. Common weapons for infantry units include spears, axes, slings, khopeshes, swords and clubs.

## Archers

The numerous Stygian archers might have once commanded great fear from armies and nations, their powerful bows launching waves of steel-tipped death into the air, blasting through flesh and bone. Then the Hyborians came, with heavy armour, massive shields and cavalry that could cover ground long before the archers could destroy them. Now, these unarmoured archers are considered something of a joke by the world's great powers.

However, they can still inflict incredible punishment on those foolish enough to underestimate them. Each archer is clad in a light shirt

and trousers, carries a dagger and a sheaf of 30 arrows into battle, along with their signature bows. The nobles station the majority of these archers around Luxur.

## Chariots

The chariots are the elite striking arm of Stygian armies, a weapon that can be used in all phases of battle with equal effectiveness. Stygia maintains almost 3,000 chariot teams, each consisting of a chariot driver, a noble-born soldier/archer, and a two-horse team. These ponderous devices require relatively level surfaces, have a wide turning radius, and are notoriously vulnerable at the wheels. Nobles primarily use them for racing and demonstrations of martial skill rather than real fighting or for lethally pursuing routed troops.

The chariot units are led by marshals. Each chariot unit is divided into brigades of two to five squadrons. Each squadron is made up of fifty chariots divided into five companies of ten. Each chariot has a driver and a noble archer.

The chariot's driver is unarmoured and unarmed. The noble typically wears an archaic scale mail hauberk, overlaid with plates of strange pattern and design. This armour comes from patterns laid down from before the temple records, and may be of even more ancient origin. It is not particularly effective, but does present an imposing sight on the battlefield. Chariots cannot cross broken ground or scale more than a 45-degree incline. Wet ground, or worse, mud causes them

to stop completely. These units usually spend time in the Luxur garrison rather than on the various fronts.

The chariots thunder quickly in an orderly line to engage the enemy while the nobles fire their bows, making use of the chariot as a mobile firing platform for engaging the enemy at range. Hopefully, after the initial volley of Stygian arrows, the enemy line falls apart. The chariots then close with the enemy and the noble switches to use a javelin or axe, attacking as a fast-moving mobile infantry. The wheels and horses crush and trample the foe as they flee.

### Mercenary Armies

Most Stygian armies are mainly conscripted infantry troops led by nobles. When Stygia finds itself in need of troops, it finds it more practical to hire armies already trained on someone else's income than to train its own. Thus, the kings of Stygia prefer to hire mercenary armies whenever possible. Mercenary work for the Stygians is rarely profitable, as Stygians prefers paying its wages in agricultural produce, such as grain and beer. Common pay rates generally include two loaves of bread daily with two bundles of vegetables, roast meat and two linen garments provided monthly.

### Kushite Spearmen

The priests of Stygia employ Kushite spearmen. These poorly trained warriors serve the priests' needs nicely. They are tough enough to take a few charges without breaking, die quickly enough to be useful sacrifices and obey orders without question. The majority of these units can be found along Stygia's northern border.

### Free Companies Mercenaries

The temples also employ a large force of Free Companies mercenaries. These men, trained in modern warfare, tend to avoid the archaic native forces. The priests employ them to attack other countries or to keep order if the a noble decides to engage in another ineffective rebellion. They are mostly stationed on the northern border unless the temples wish to attack Kush or a southern neighbour.

### One-Handed Martial Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Armour Piercing	Range Increment	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
Khopesh	240 sp	2d4	18-20/x2	4	—	10	9	4 lb.	Slashing
Bronze Khopesh	120 sp	2d4-1	18-20/x2	2	—	9	6	4 lb.	Slashing

## EQUIPMENT OF THE STYGIAN MILITARY

Every Stygian soldier is allotted two loaves of bread daily and two bundles of vegetables, roast meat and two linen garments monthly. In addition, soldiers are provided with bronze weapons necessary for their duties. To obtain steel weapons, soldiers must acquire them themselves.

### WEAPONS

The Stygians use a wide variety of weapons. Clubs, stone-headed maces, bronze and copper daggers and spearheads are common. The impressive Stygian bow is one of their greatest innovations, developed during its wars with the Sons of Shem. The Stygian bow is heavy and powerful, shooting a long, weighty arrow that does a great deal of damage but will not travel so far as most other arrows. The springy and sturdy Stygian bow, twice as strong as a hunting bow, is made of a long, slender strip of bullhorn with wooden beams on either side of the horn. The horn and wood is covered with a strip of bark for a solid, slip-free hand-grip. A Stygian bow requires both hands to shoot and may not be used while mounted, though the Stygian nobility often use them from chariots. As described in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, Stygian bows all have strength ratings.

### Weapons of Bronze

Most Stygian weapons are still made out of keenly honed bronze. Bronze weapons have a -1 penalty to damage rolls and hardness, a -2 penalty to Armour Piercing and have only two-thirds of the hit points of an iron or steel weapon, rounded up. Steel weapons in Stygia cost two to three times as much as a bronze weapon. Bronze weapons cost as much in Stygia as a steel weapon would cost in other lands.

**Khopesh:** The khopesh is an unwieldy sickle-type sword that is heavier than a scimitar but capable of causing a lot of damage in the hands of an unsophisticated warrior, making

## Heavy Armour

Armour	Cost	Damage Reduction	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armour Check Penalty	Sorcery Failure	Speed	Weight
Bronze Scale Hauberk	170 sp	5	+2	-5	90%	25 ft.	40 lb.

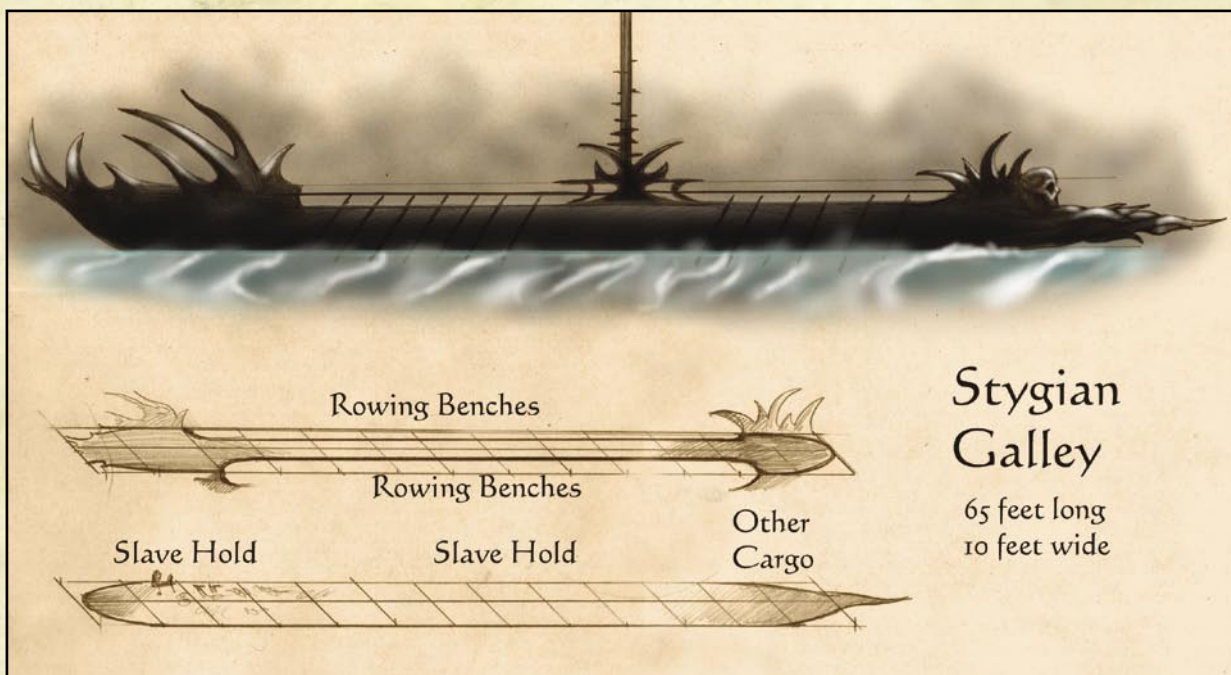
it an excellent weapon for conscripted infantry troops. The khopesh has about seven inches of hilt, another 15 inches of straight blade, then the weapon curves into a crescent for the next 11 inches.

## ARMOUR

The warrior castes have not really kept up with armour advancement made around the world. Most Stygians have never even heard of plate armour, much less seen an Aquilonian knight wearing it. Helmets are bronze crested

## CHARIOTS

The Stygian chariot is extremely lightweight, and as a result is significantly faster and more nimble than earlier chariots such as the lumbering Acheronian type. The northern nations regard chariots as essentially obsolete in any case, but the Stygian armies still use chariot regiments to powerful effect. *Conan: Tito's Trading Post* contains full details on chariots and chariot combat.



with a crescent supporting a golden ball. They conform to the steel caps described in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Their shields are made of fresh hide that is scraped, soaked and sliced into pieces, then stretched and clamped over wooden boards joined side by side. Leather straps allow the dusky Stygian soldier to sling it over his back. The shield is rounded at the top, with a flat bottom, much like an upside-down tear-drop with a flat bottom. They conform in statistics to the large shield presented in the equipment section in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

**Bronze Scale Hauberk:** A scale hauberk is made of 450 or so bronze scales individually stitched in overlapping rows to a loose-fitting leather coat. The hauberk includes a thick leather collar to protect the neck.

## BATTLESHIPS

Stygia is one of the great maritime nations of the Hyborian age and its sailors travel the seas in frightful black galleys. Sailors recognise the infamous Stygian galleys not by their sails, but by the throbbing beat of their slave drums. The galleys carry slaves from all over the world to a short, brutal life of service and sacrifice. They usually have square black sails fitted to bipod masts and stink like the foulest pits.

More than twenty oars are mounted on each side and most galleys have two or more steering oars. Elevated decks are added for archers and spearmen. Some Stygian galleys have rams added them to smash into enemy ships or for Stygian soldiers to ride (and drop down onto enemy decks) if the ram is above the deck of the enemy ship. For more information on ships and ship combat, see *Conan: Pirate Isles*.

# Festivals

## SACRED RITES IN THE LAND OF THE SERPENT

**FELL STYGIA, THE** darksome nation of Father Set, has many celebrations throughout the year. Most of these festivals include parading a statue of the god (usually Set) around the temple walls in a golden boat. The event is generally followed by live sacrifices to the deity and, if the festival is dedicated to another deity, also to Father Set.

### FESTIVAL OF SET

Annually is held the greatest of all Stygian celebrations: The Festival of Set. From every tower of every city sounds the deep and eerie notes that mark the beginning of Festival, one of the most fearsome celebrations in all of Stygia. Festival is a dark night of sacrifice to Father Set, characterised by giant snakes and sacrificial altars.

During the day, the temple is busy. A constant stream of Elders and lesser followers of Set come to the great ceremonial chamber of the Temple to lay offerings of gold, silver, jewels, fine silks and other goods before the altar. Then they bow down and chant to dark Set, asking him to favour them with power and wealth. The acolytes collect the offerings and store them in the temple's hidden vaults. Other acolytes herd worshippers in and out of the temple and yet others sharpen and polish the sacrificial knives. Chained prisoners from the jails arrive to give their lives to Set. The altars are prepared for the upcoming blood sacrifices.

At night, when the music sounds, Stygians lock and shutter themselves away, drinking and partying, all the while denying the horrors going on outside as the priests of Set hunt down sacrificial victims in strange processions, all while wearing horrific, half-bestial masks. Where do they find their victims if all are locked away? The unpopular or the diseased or the foreign may find themselves locked outside. Some say vast caravans of virgins are brought in across the desert on moonless nights to be sacrificed at Festival. Regardless, hundreds of people are sacrificed in each Stygian city across the mighty desert nation on this night.

The most spectacular event of Festival is noted the morning after, when the sewers run red with blood and the plume of scarlet turns the River Styx (and the entire bay of Khemi) red.

### FESTIVAL OF BAST

The Festival of Bast is celebrated in the early spring at the city of Amanopet. The festival is a celebration of a war Amanopet won but this original purpose has been forgotten. The people attending the festival gather in boats on the Styx, as many as will fit, of both sexes. The people on the boats play musical instruments or sing and clap their hands. At each and every town, village or city, the boats and the people disembark, making a huge disturbance while making fun of the women of each town that do not join them. Eventually the boats reach Amanopet and the festival begins in earnest when the last boat arrives (usually the one from Khemi since it has the farthest to travel). The travellers bring mummified lions and cats. Great sacrifices of man and beast are held while the wine flows freely. More wine is consumed at this one festival in this one city than during the whole of the year in all of the rest of Stygia. Fights are also held, pitting brave slave-warriors against the great cats of the Black Kingdoms. Plays are enacted demonstrating the power of Bast the Lioness over her enemies. For three days a drunken orgy progresses, then the people go home, satisfied that the goddess of evil sendings has been appropriately honoured.

### FESTIVAL OF BES

The festival of Bes is a festival put on by the people instead of the priests. The priests of Set mostly just tolerate it with a certain amount of amusement. On the day of the Festival of Bes, there is no corvée and all public work is set aside for the day. The people parade down the streets in grotesque and ugly masks of Bes (usually with a large head and protruding tongue) while nude dancers and musicians play along. The townspeople sing and clap and the children run along as well. The goal is to create such a din that all the evil spirits that threaten childbirth are driven off for the year.

### THE FESTIVAL OF MIN KOPTOS

This is a harvest festival in Luxur designed to promote fertility. The king of Stygia comes out when the harvest season is about to begin. A statue of Min Koptos is brought out and the king



Priest of Set carries an ebon staff topped with a grinning white skull. Moving with the parade is a long train of drugged sacrifices for the upcoming ceremony at the Temple of the Serpent.

The King of Stygia is there to greet Set and his procession and conduct the parade to the Temple of the Serpent. Sensuous dancers in resplendent wigs, nude save for the snakes they carry, twirl and whirl to the beat of drums pounded by soldiers. The procession is a mile and a half and once the idol and his boat reaches the dark serpent temple, the king takes part in a mysterious and horrible ritual that confirms his right to rule

ceremoniously hoes the ground. The celebration then begins in earnest with a show of people performing various sexual acts for the public. The whole festival is pretty much just a large and public orgy. By the end of the shows, which includes acts of bestiality, the watchers are invited to join in.

## FESTIVAL OF OPET

The Festival of Opet is celebrated to demonstrate and reaffirm the mystical link between Father Set and the King of Stygia. It is celebrated annually in Luxur during the time of the River Styx's inundation. The king himself participates in the ceremonies. For weeks before, the city of Luxur is filled with travellers coming from all over Stygia to see this miraculous ceremony in person. Work in the flooded fields is suspended and all the people join the king and the priests in a grand parade from the Temple of Set to the Necropolis. The day begins with the priests of Set bathing the image of Set.

After the image has been bathed, it is dressed in clean, multi-hued linens and draped in jewellery. A ceremonial boat of gold and other precious metals and stones is brought forth and the image of Set, in an enclosed shrine, is placed on the boat. Ranks upon ranks of priests hoist up the heavy boat on poles, carrying the whole thing upon their shoulders through the halls of the temple into the noisome streets where the crowds await, each hoping for a glimpse of the sacred shrine. The carrying of the boat is no job for common labourers. The highest officials of Stygia and the most powerful priests all vie for the chance to carry their god before the people and the king. The priests all wear monstrous masks, half-bestial and half-human, from the crest of which float masses of ostrich plumes. The High

in the name of Set. Only the priests and the king enter the Temple of the Serpent. The door is guarded by a lightning-quick priest who demands a pass-gesture (this priest has the following feats: Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Improved Initiative and Light-footed, as well as at least one level of thief) and kills anyone who fails to give the appropriate hand-signal.

Once inside the black inner recesses of the Temple of Set, the king communes with another image of Set in another guise, the fertile Set who inseminates the earth. The king is touched with the royal spirit, the ka, the immortal essence of kingship in an appalling ceremony that threatens all involved with Corruption or insanity. If the king goes insane he is ritually slain and a new king is chosen from among the heirs. Usually the king willingly fails the save, accepting the horrific encounter as divine providence, as ordained by Set in the Old Times. Priests who go insane are also ritually beheaded by priests wielding specially consecrated khopeshes. The blasphemous *things* that dwell in the Temple of the Serpent roar and thrash as the ceremony goes on, loud enough so the gathered crowds outside can hear.

### Ebon Staff of Set

This is a masterwork black wooden staff, topped with a white human skull. It is typical of the accoutrements wielded by priests of various religions during their ceremonies, as well as by masters of sorcerous covens and societies when leading their acolytes in ritual. The *ebon staff of Set* and similar items grant a circumstance bonus of +2 to all Perform (ritual) checks.

After the ritual and its sacrifices are concluded, the king, if he survives, emerges from the incense-laden sanctuary, clothed in fresh linen and re-invested with godliness in the eyes of the people. He is greeted by the population with praises and worship, proclaimed to be the mortal incarnation of Set himself and the High Priest announces the successful outcome of the communion with Set, naming the king with all of his titles. He is forgiven any errors in judgement he may have made in the past year, for he has been renewed.

The journey back to the Great Temple of Set, a duplicate journey that brought the boat and the idol to the Temple of the Serpent. However, this time, the procession is treated as oracular. Any man present in the crowds may rush forth and ask a question of Set that can be answered with a yes or a no. If the boat dips toward the questioner, then the answer is yes and if it dips away as it sways on the shoulders of the priests, then the answer is no. After the procession reaches the Great Temple of Set, priests distribute over ten thousand loaves of bread and hundreds of jars of beer to the gathered crowds in a great feast and orgy, a massive party of noise, song, dance and sex.

## FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD (THE BEAUTIFUL FEAST OF THE VALLEY)

This festival is celebrated annually at the onset of Semut to honour the dead. A festival begins in the morning, much like the Festival of Opet. The day begins with the priests of Set bathing the image of Set. After the image has been bathed, it is dressed in clean, multi-hued linens and draped in jewellery. Ranks upon ranks of priests hoist up the image, carrying it upon their shoulders through the halls of the temple into the noisome streets where the crowds await, each hoping for a glimpse of the sacred shrine. The highest officials of Stygia and the most powerful priests all vie for the chance to carry their god before the people and the king. Moving with the parade is a long train of drugged sacrifices for the upcoming ceremony at the Mortuary Temple in the necropolis of the city (across the River Styx in some cities, side rivers in others, such as the Bakhr River in Luxur). If the necropolis is across a river, then the Boat of Set is brought onto a barge and the people are ferried across. The public procession ends at the necropolis.

Rituals for the dead are performed by the priests and the families. Those wealthy enough to have their own family tombs enter their tomb chapel and lay out offerings of food and drink for their dead ancestors. Then the population drink and feast themselves into unconsciousness, in a massive orgy of wine and sex. The mass unconsciousness is desired in order to bring the people to a state that is close to death, thus close to their ancestors.

In the meantime, the priests enter the Mortuary Temple. Once inside, strange and corruptive rituals are undertaken, and the Sons of Set are unleashed upon the unconscious populace. The snakes feast, then return to their foul pens beneath the Mortuary Temple before the general population awakens.

## HEB-SED

The Heb-Sed is an ancient jubilee designed to replenish the power and vigour of the king when he grows old on his throne. Usually only done when a king reaches his 30<sup>th</sup> year of rule (an extremely long reign for the short-lived Stygians) and every decade thereafter, this festival is designed to reassure the people that he is still fit to rule, still chosen by the gods and has not lost his physical or mental fitness to rule. It may also be ordained whenever it is felt the people believe the king has lost the divine right to rule or has fallen into disfavour with Set. Representatives arrive from all the major cities of Stygia, bringing with them images of their local gods so that the gods of all Stygia can bear witness to the ritual and confirm the renewal. Often dignitaries from foreign lands are also invited to Luxur, usually from Turan, Iranistan, certain Shemite states and many Black Kingdoms. Naked dancers from all over Stygia and the rest of the world put on an intoxicating sight of twirling, leaping beauty. The musicians play haunting tunes while singers urge the people to revel and carouse to their hearts' content. The core ritual itself begins when the king arrives at a central pavilion set up in Luxur for the ceremony. He runs a brisk circuit around markers symbolising the borders of Stygia, then he tours the city of Luxur, surrounded by a cavalcade of courtiers, priests and foreign dignitaries, visiting all the gods in attendance. At every moment, the king must appear regal in order to assure all that he is not failing in health or faculties. His sons and daughters follow along to prove his sexual virility. In the evening, he will conduct sacrifices to Set. The carousing lasts for three days, although the king only celebrates for the middle day, performing his requisite ceremonies.

## THE ORGY FESTIVAL OF DERKETO

The orgy festival of Derketo begins with an exhibitionist show of dancers, priests and priestesses engaged in various sexual acts. The finale involve those in the audience joining in what becomes a mass, public orgy. Similar to the worship of Pteor in Shem, even bestiality is typically part of the show. Unlike Shem's orgies, necrophilia is included. For the three days of the festivals, some cities release participants of any marital obligations in regards to fidelity. The priests of Set often bring out various snakes for sexual use.

# Illnesses & Mummies

## STYGIAN MEDICINE AND HEALTH

**MEDICINE IN STYGIA** is a relatively advanced art. Stygian healers, who have years of training at the black temples of Set, practise holistic medicine, treating the whole person, not just physically, but mentally and spiritually also. These mysterious Stygian doctors are accomplished herbalists and their knowledge of anatomy and alchemy is the most advanced in the whole of the Hyborian age. Mental healing is accomplished through dream analysis and uniquely in the Hyborian age, depression is regarded as a treatable ailment. Spiritual healing is handled through a form of faith healing.

Whether the ancient proto-Stygians (known as the Khari in certain apocryphal texts) brought this information to Stygia from their homeland when they fled the massive slave-revolts of the Lemurians or whether they stole the information from the Giant-Kings they conquered or whether they discovered this information on their own is unknown and may never be known. It is known, however, that the Stygians have an incredible mastery of the medicinal arts.

### DIET

The staple diet of Stygia is fragrant flat-bread and beer, which is usually supplemented by vegetables such as onions. Most households also add a small amount of fish to this diet. The bread is made of a coarse grain. Stygian barley beer is thick, yeasty and sweetened with mashed dates and honey. As much a food as a beverage, it is traditionally served in the morning. Fish is also eaten sun-dried or preserved in salt brine. The Stygians have dietary restrictions forbidding them from eating raw fish and certain 'unclean' animals.

When families have enough surplus to eat a little better, they add dates, olives, duck and prized delicacies such as seasoned and fried silkworms. Families also supplement their diets by hunting, fowling and gathering wild fruit and roots. Families in danger of starving can also get beef from the temples, who distribute their surplus to the needy. Beef is an expensive meat because raising a cow for the sole purpose of beef is expensive.

The wealthy naturally eat better than common-folk. Meat, including expensive beef, duck and other water fowl, silkworms, vegetables, fruit and wine are a normal part of their diet. Unlike the wealthy in Aquilonia, Stygians do not overindulge.

Obese Stygians are few and far between. Festive meals for the wealthy include fresh boiled lobster from the reefs beyond the harbour of Khemi, loins of beef, a rich stew made from oysters and chunks of swordfish and mounds of spicy cakes and bread sprinkled with pungent herbs.

Stygian food is baked, stewed or fried in clay ovens or open fires; salt, oil, onions, radishes and garlic are added for flavour. Condiments include cumin, dill, coriander, mustard, cinnamon, marjoram and rosemary. Sweeteners include honey, grape syrup and fruit. Meat is often steeped in beer. Wood and charcoal is used for cooking, all imported from the Black Kingdoms.

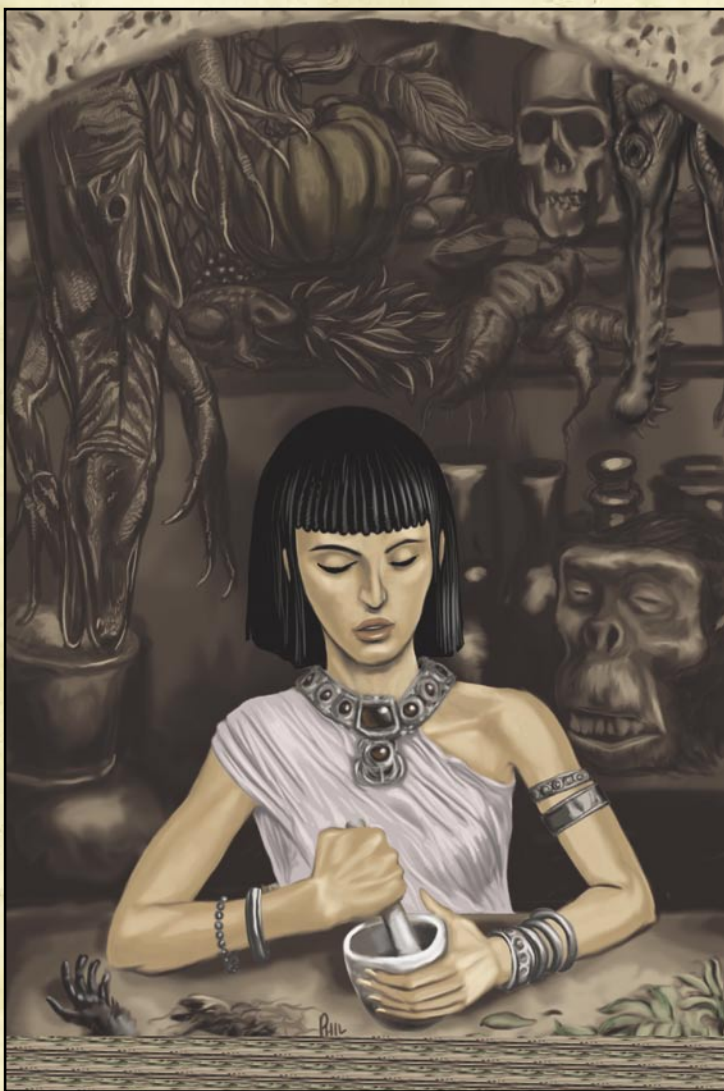
Commoner dishes are made of clay, while the wealthy dine off of dishes made of precious metals. Food is eaten with the tips of the fingers, not with spoons, forks or knives. Little water bowls are provided to each diner at the end of meals for the washing of their fingers.

### MEDICINE AND MAGIC

Stygian doctors use herbs, alchemy and ritual to heal people in Stygia. Magic charms are as much a part of medicine as herbs, poultices, potions and remedies. All medicines are prepared in bowls with magical symbols written on them. Any implements used to cut into a wound or to do surgery are heated until red-hot to cauterise the resulting wound as the implement cuts into a person.

Stygians also believe in preventative measures against illness. Children, for example, wear amulets or carry wands designed to protect them from disease and misfortune. Small amulets worn as necklaces are actually cases containing tiny papyrus scrolls with spells written on them to keep away illness. Some children carry wands of ivory or wood inscribed with designs likewise supposed to protect a child from the various maladies that plague Stygia. Adults offer food and gifts to the gods at shrines.

Stygians have remedies and solutions for many sorts of ailments. Open wounds, for example, are treated by first applying raw meat, which aids in clotting, followed by a treatment of vegetable fibre, snake-grease and honey. The honey and grease mixture prevents bacteria from growing and the fibre covers the wound. Open wounds tended by



someone trained in Stygian methods are not likely to contract infection.

Stygian doctors (almost always non-sorcerous scholars) are excellent observers and study the arts of healing for years. They usually have maximum ranks in Craft (alchemy), Craft (herbalism) and Heal. They maintain high ranks in Listen, Search and Spot. Healing is linked to magic in Stygia so all healers also have high ranks in Perform (ritual). Most take the Alertness feat as well as taking various Skill Focus feats in lieu of sorcery styles.

Medicine takes the form of potions, balms, poultices, enemas, suppositories and even eye lotions, all made up from natural ingredients, such as herbs, animal ingredients and even small amounts of toxic minerals such as lead, arsenic, sulphate and copper oxide. Crocodile droppings and honey both have known antibiotic effects and are used in many medicines.

Part of healing and medicine in Stygia is the use of 'spells'. Stygians are familiar with psychology and are fully aware of the power of faith when recovering from wounds or illnesses. While doctors do not use sorcery as defined in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, they do perform certain rituals in accompaniment to their alchemy and herbalism. The use of these rituals prepares the patient mentally to be healed, a state of mind conducive to healing in the first place. If the patient believes in the magic, he is more likely to be healed of his ailment. Most of the healing rituals involve waving a certain style of stick around while reciting 'spells' to drive away evil spirits. Characters with 5 or more ranks in Perform (ritual) earn a +1 competency bonus to all Heal checks. This bonus increases to +2 if the character also has 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (arcana).

Fertility is always an issue in Stygia, as both sexes define themselves by how fertile they are. Treating sterile patients occupies a lot of time for most doctors. Doctors are also skilled at handling difficult deliveries of babies; they are routinely taught eleven different methods to deliver a child. They can check for pregnancy through urine and determine the sex of a foetus by having the woman urinate on a mixture of barley and wheat for a few days. If barley grows, then the child will be a boy; if wheat grows, the child will be a girl; if nothing grows, then the woman is not pregnant.

## CLEANLINESS AND CIRCUMCISION

Stygians believe in cleanliness as a disease preventative. Frequent baths are prescribed by Stygian healers, often with herbs or other alchemical ingredients added. Their desire for cleanliness goes so far to shaving the entire body of hair to prevent both head lice and pubic lice. Most Stygians carry this shaving to include shaving their heads and wearing wigs instead of maintaining natural hair.

Circumcision is performed when children enter adulthood and are considered marriageable. This is around age 14 for boys and around age 12 for girls. It is often done in large groups at ordained festivals.

## DISEASES

When a character is placed at risk of disease, whether from attack, magic, being around an infectious character, or an infected area, he must make an

## Stygian Diseases

Disease	Infection DC	Incubation	Damage
Anthrax	Inhaled/Injury/Ingested DC 16	1d2 days	1d4 Con <sup>1</sup>
Bilious fever	Ingested 13	1d4+1 days	1d3 Str
Blood poisoning	Injury 10	1 day	1d3 Str
Black plague	Inhaled 16, Contact 18	1d20+2 days	1d4 Dex, 1d6 Con
Cholera	Ingested 17	1d4-1 days	1d4 Dex <sup>3</sup>
Diphtheria	Inhaled 15, Contact 16	1d4+1 days	1d4 Con
Ear Infections	Contact/Injury DC 12	1 day	1d4 Dex; 1d10 penalty to Listen Checks <sup>12</sup>
Eye Diseases	Contact 11	1 day	1d2 Dex; 1d10 penalty to Spot Checks <sup>2</sup>
Gangrene	Injury 14	1d4 days	1d6 Con
Gastroenteritis	Inhaled/Ingested DC 15	1d8 hours	1d4 Con
Leprosy	Contact 8	1d12 months	1d6 Con, 1d4 Str, 1d6 Dex, 1d8 Cha
Malaria	Injury 15	1d4 weeks	1d4 Int, 1d4 Con
Malnutrition	Ingested DC 18	1d4 weeks	1d6 Str, Con, Dex; 1d2 Int, Wis, Cha; fatigue
Measles	Inhaled 12	1 day	1d3 Str
Milk sickness	Ingested 16	1 day	1d4 Con
Poliomyelitis	Injury 13 <sup>11</sup>	1 month	1d10 Dex <sup>4, 10</sup>
Shakes	Contact 13	1 day	1d8 Dex
Smallpox	Contact 18	12 days <sup>5</sup>	1d4 Dex, 1d3 Int, 1d2 Con <sup>2, 4</sup>
Spinal Tuberculosis	Injury 18 <sup>9</sup>	1d4 months	1d6 Dex <sup>4, 10</sup>
Spotted fever	Injury 17	1d8+6 days	1d3 Con, fatigue
Sterility	Injury 16	N/A	1d12 Reputation damage
Styx fever	Injury DC 12	1d4 days	1d2 Dex and 1d2 Con <sup>1</sup>
Tetanus	Injury 14	1d20+2 days	1d8 Dex <sup>8</sup>
Tooth decay	Ingested 4	1 month	1d2 Con, fatigue
Tuberculosis	Contact 13 <sup>7</sup>	1d6 weeks	1d4 Con <sup>4</sup>
Typhoid fever	Ingested 14	1d3 weeks	1d2 Int, 1d4 Con
Urinary infection	Ingested 12	1 week	1 Con, 1d2 Dex, fatigue
Whooping cough	Contact 19	1d4 days	1d2 Con

<sup>1</sup> If damage is sustained, make a second saving throw to avoid 1 point being permanently drained (instead of damaged).

<sup>2</sup> Each time the victim takes 2 or more damage from the disease, he must make another Fortitude save or be permanently blinded.

<sup>3</sup> When damaged, character must succeed on another saving throw or 1d4 points of temporary Con is lost in addition.

<sup>4</sup> When damaged, character must succeed on another saving throw or 1 point of damage is permanent drain instead.

<sup>5</sup> There is very little variation in the incubation period. It is nearly always 12 days. Infection results in permanent scarring.

<sup>6</sup> Occurs when character suffers injury to the brain (Int damage).

<sup>7</sup> Save DC increases by 1 per day of continued contact.

<sup>8</sup> Recovery from Tetanus is prolonged. Characters heal 1 point of ability damage per week instead of 1 per day.

<sup>9</sup> Occurs when character suffers injury from regular tuberculosis.

<sup>10</sup> Saving throws are made monthly for repeat damage instead of daily.

<sup>11</sup> Occurs when character suffers injury from any viral infection.

<sup>12</sup> Each time the victim takes 2 or more damage from the disease, he must make another Fortitude save or be permanently deafened.

immediate Fortitude saving throw. If he succeeds, the disease has no effect – his immune system fought off the infection. If he fails, he takes damage after an incubation period. Once per day afterward, he must make a successful Fortitude saving throw to avoid repeated damage. Two successful saving throws in a row indicate that he has fought off the disease and recovers, taking no more damage. These Fortitude saving throws can be rolled secretly so that the player doesn't know whether the disease has taken hold.

### Disease Descriptions

Diseases have various symptoms and are spread through a number of vectors. The characteristics of several typical diseases are summarised on the *Stygian Diseases* table and defined below.

*Disease:* All the diseases on this list are extraordinary, not supernatural.

*Infection:* The disease's method of delivery – ingested, inhaled, via injury or contact. Keep in mind that some injury diseases may be transmitted by as small an injury as a flea bite and that most inhaled diseases can also be ingested (and vice versa).

*DC:* The Difficulty Class for the Fortitude saving throws to prevent infection (if the character has been infected), to prevent each instance of repeated damage and to recover from the disease.

*Incubation Period:* The time before damage begins.

*Damage:* The ability damage the character takes after incubation and each day afterward.

*Cure:* Use of this cure or cures by a healer gives the affected character a +1 bonus to his Fortitude save.

*Anthrax:* Anthrax is an acute infectious disease occurring in cattle, sheep, goats and camels. Victims suffer different symptoms depending upon how infection occurred. If the infection came from an injury, such as handling infected tissues with a cut, then the infection is a raised and itchy bump that grows into a painless ulcer with a black and dying area in the centre. If the disease was inhaled, then the symptoms resemble the common cold until it progresses to severe breathing problems and shock. If the disease was ingested, then the intestines will inflame and the victim will suffer nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, fever, abdominal pain, blood vomiting and diarrhoea. Acacia is often used in the cures for this.

*Bilious Fever:* Fever due to a liver disorder. Victims suffer fatigue, vomiting and headache. When damaged, another saving throw must be made or the character falls into a coma and, when damaged again, dies. Aloe vera is often used in cures for this.

*Blood Poisoning:* Bacterial infection from wounds. Victims suffer high fever, chills and shivering, rapid breathing and headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, low blood pressure and possible loss of consciousness. Acacia and aloe vera are often used in the cures for this.

*Black Plague:* Victims get the chills, a fever, vomiting, diarrhoea and then their skin turns black. They shrivel and die right before people's eyes.

*Cholera:* An acute, infectious epidemic that is highly contagious. Victims have severe symptoms of nausea, vomiting, spasms, chills and thirst. It is caught from drinking infected water. Onion is often used in cures.

*Diphtheria:* This is a contagious disease of the throat. Cube pepper is often used in cures for this disease.

*Ear Infections:* Ear infections can cause disorientation and dizziness. If left untreated it can cause deafness.

*Eye Diseases:* Dust, flies and poor hygiene often cause eye-diseases, including trachoma, cataracts and night blindness. Night blindness is usually cured using animal livers. Malachite, used for green eye-paint, prevents parasitic eye diseases.

*Gangrene:* Disease that kills tissues around it, resulting in either sweet-smelling or foul-smelling pus-discharges as it eats away at the flesh. Amputation stops the disease (although the amputating wound can then become infected if not done cleanly). Acacia is often used in the cures for this.

*Gastroenteritis:* Gastroenteritis is an irritation and inflammation of the digestive tract caused by viruses and bacteria and passed on by a lack of cleanliness or poorly prepared food, especially if prepared by an unclean person. Its symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal discomfort, headache, low-grade fever and muscle aches. Crocodile dung is often used to treat this. Dill and acacia is often used in cures and potions for this.

*Leprosy:* This horrible disease destroys nerve endings, blood vessels, ligaments, skin tissue, and even bone and can cause marked deformations of the extremities, face and voice because the body absorbs the calcium in the bones. These deformations often horrify others. Leprosy is only mildly contagious; transmission usually takes close contact over a prolonged period of time and children are generally much more susceptible than adults. Acacia is often used in the cures for this.

**Malaria:** Deadly disease that causes kidney failure, seizures, mental confusion, coma and death. It is transmitted by mosquito. Most of the mosquitoes carrying malaria come from the Styx or south of it.

**Malnutrition:** Inadequate food intake is the most common cause of malnutrition. Hair becomes sparse or brittle, the abdomen becomes distended and muscles lose strength and mass. Periods of near starvation or eating meagre meals causes the saving throw each week. If the character also has a disease during this period, the save to ward off malnutrition is 2 higher.

**Measles:** Victims, usually children, suffer fever, eye infections, sore throat, light sensitivity and headache. A rash appears 1d4+6 days after the victim was first exposed, but is contagious almost immediately. Acacia is often used in the cures for this.

**Milk Sickness:** Also known as Puking Fever or Sloes. This disease comes from the milk of cattle which has eaten poisonous weeds.

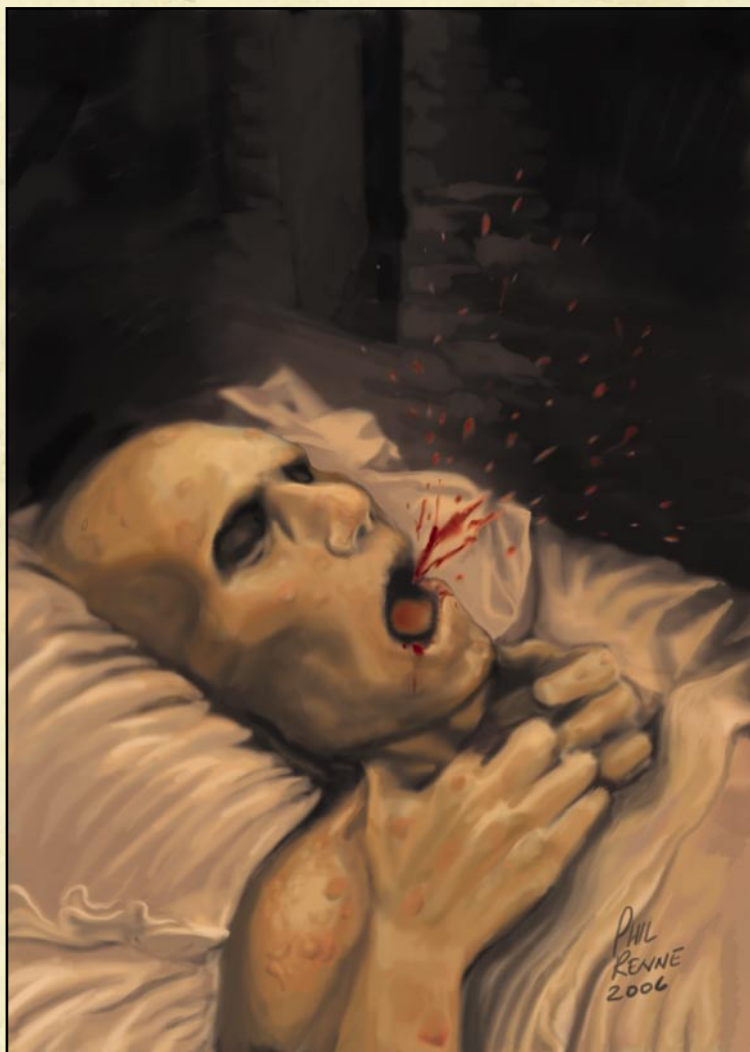
**Poliomyelitis:** This is a viral infection of the spinal chord. Its acute stage is usually fatal. Those who survive the acute stage suffer a shortening of one leg and a club foot.

**Shakes:** Causes involuntary twitches, tremors and fits.

**Smallpox:** Victim suffers fever, headache, backache, vomiting, marked prostration and even delirium from this contagious disease characterised by fever and blisters. Acacia is often used in the cures for this.

**Spinal Tuberculosis (Pott's disease):** This viral infection happens when tuberculosis, transmitted by inhalation or ingestion of the bacteria, invades the spine, collapsing the vertebrae and producing a permanent humped-back. It can lead to permanent paralysis if a 1 is rolled on the saving throw. The onset is gradual. Those who contract this complain of pain on movement. Movement rates are reduced by 5 feet early on as people tend to assume a protective, upright stiff position. After years of pain, movement eventually is reduced by 10, then 15 feet, unless paralysis occurs.

**Spotted Fever:** Also known as Typhus or War Fever, this disease is spread through fleas from rodents and from lice and ticks. This disease is especially known for following wars. Causes stupor, and mortality nears 100% during times of epidemic. Victims suffer from fever, headache, chill, and general pains that



are followed by a rash on whole body except for the face, palms and soles of the feet. Once you contract this disease you are immune to it forever more. Onions are usually used in cures.

**Sterility:** Stygian doctors spend a lot of time dealing with sterility. Sterility does no physical damage but it does hurt one's Reputation. Characters with sterility cannot take the Fertile Reputation type.

**Styx Fever:** Carried by infected mosquitoes, humans catch this when bitten. Symptoms include high fever, headache, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and/or paralysis. Failing the save by ten points results in one of the worse symptoms (coma, paralysis, blindness, etc.) as chosen by the Games Master.

**Tetanus:** Victims of any dirty wound, often caused by arrows or spears, suffer stiffness of jaw, abdominal and back muscles, the contraction of facial muscles, fast pulse, fever, sweating,

painful muscle spasms near the wound area, and will have difficulty swallowing.

***Tooth Decay:*** Sand finds its way into virtually all the food in Stygia and it grinds down the teeth over time. Infected and decaying teeth are a constant problem. Myrrh and Balsam apple are used in many cures as they soothe gums and relieve toothaches. Physicians use gold to bind loose teeth. Also, surgery can be done, perforating the jaw-bone to drain abscesses.

***Tuberculosis:*** Victims suffer prolonged coughing, night sweats, unexplained weight loss, loss of appetite, weakness, fever/chills and occasionally cough up blood. This disease is also called consumption.

***Typhoid Fever:*** Brought on by eating contaminated food handled by a carrier, this life threatening disease causes sustained fever, severe headache, nausea, severe loss of appetite, constipation and sometimes diarrhoea and mental dullness. Acacia is often used in the cures for this if diarrhoea is involved.

***Urinary Infection:*** Myrrh and various herbs such as cubeb pepper are used to help expel parasites causing these infections.

***Whooping Cough:*** Whooping cough is an extremely contagious disease marked by severe coughing. It is an upper respiratory infection spread by sneezing and coughing. It has symptoms similar to the common cold but the coughing ends with a whooping sound.

## DIAGNOSIS AND HEALING

Stygian doctors are trained to be able to diagnose over 200 types of illnesses. Treatments depend on the patient's financial status. The wealthier the patient, the better quality treatment the patient is likely to get.

**Healing a Disease:** Stygian physicians use natural materials made into potions, balms, poultices, enemas, suppositories or eye lotions to treat diseases. Use of the Heal skill can help a diseased character. Every time a diseased character makes a saving throw against disease effects, the healer makes a check. The diseased character can use the healer's result in place of his saving throw if the Heal check result is higher. The diseased character must be in the healer's care and must have spent the previous 8 hours resting. Characters recover points lost to ability score damage at a rate of 1 per day per ability damaged, and this rule applies even while a disease is in progress. That means that a character with a minor disease might be able to withstand it without accumulating any damage.

**Surgery:** Stygian doctors can perform rather complex surgeries due to their excellent understanding of the human body and its tissues. Their techniques in mummification have taught them not only how to perform basic autopsies but how to operate on living humans. With a surgery kit, a character can conduct field surgery. This application of the Heal skill carries a -4 penalty, which can be negated with the Surgery feat. Surgery requires 1d4 hours; if the patient is at negative hit points, add an additional hour for every point below 0 the patient has fallen.

Surgery restores 1d6 hit points for every character level of the patient (up to the patient's full normal total of hit points) with a successful skill check. Surgery can only be used successfully on a character once in a 24-hour period. A character who undergoes surgery is fatigued for 24 hours, minus 2 hours for every point above the DC the surgeon achieves. The period of fatigue can never be reduced below 6 hours in this fashion.

**Surgery Kit:** A healing kit in Stygia includes knives, a drill, a saw, a couple of pairs of forceps, a censer, a couple of hooks, small bags tied with string, some sort of beaked vessel, incense, amulets containing either small scrolls with a spell inscribed upon them or with a spell inscribed directly on the amulet, a set of scales, two small pots, at least one papyrus scroll with medical information, a rudimentary pair of shears and a couple of spoons. Small amounts of crocodile and hippopotamus droppings are also carried about because of their antibiotic and contraceptive properties. The kits also have collections of herbs, having samples of several different kinds.

## DEFORMITIES

Stygia also has members of its society who suffer from various deformities. Unlike diseases, these cannot be healed.

### DWARFISM

Dwarfism, especially the type with normal head and trunk but shortened limbs, is found in at least a few residents of each city in Stygia. They are not really treated with any prejudice, but are often seen as manifestations of the dwarfish god Bes. They do have a -2 penalty to Dexterity scores if a player wants to play a Stygian dwarf Player Character.

### HUNCHBACKS

Hard working conditions and illness has caused deformities in the backs of many Stygians, creating 'hunchbacks'. This condition is associated with a -4 penalty to Dexterity. This is a fairly common illness among the mongrel lower castes who must carry great weights all day.

## HOME REMEDIES

Stygians do not always have the time or even feel the need to run to a physician at every cough or minor ailment. Most Stygians keep a basic remedy kit at home to treat minor problems, including burns, insect bites, bad breath, flatulence or upset stomachs. Tiny statuettes of horrific half-animal half-human gods are kept to ward off evil spirits. If these remedies fail, then the Stygians send the patient to physicians at the temples. Having access to a home remedy kit gives characters a +1 competency bonus to Heal checks.

## PHYSICIAN'S TEXTS

Physicians keep extensive documents on medical conditions and treatments. Scribes write down all that they say and do and most Stygian doctors keep their own files. Still, there are a few 'standard and authoritative' texts used in training that most doctors still have and refer to, many of which date back to just after the Stygian society was founded.

**The Nuh-Nun Medical Papyrus:** This is the oldest known treatise about anatomy and remedies for ailments of the body, with over 700 formulae for medicines. It describes the circulatory system in more detail than even the Nemedian scholars have in their libraries. It even has a section on psychiatry, dealing mostly with depression. Using this text to help construct medicine offers a +4 competency bonus to Craft (herbalism) or Craft (alchemy) checks.

**The Nespu Henay Qesu Papyrus:** This 17 page document is a treatise on wounds, internal pathology and surgery, with a long treatment on bones. It lists 48 different kinds of injuries along with the treatments for these wounds. Using this text to help deal with damage offers a +3 competency bonus to Heal checks.

**The Beka-Auurt Papyrus:** This papyrus, 22 pages long, discusses gynaecology, contraception and pregnancy.

**The Hefau-Peseh Papyrus:** This papyrus has remedies for snake-bites and their treatment. Using this text to help construct anti-venom offers a +2 competency bonus to Craft (herbalism) or Craft (alchemy) checks, or can offer a +1 bonus to any Fortitude saving throws.

**The Rert-Beqsu Papyrus:** This 32 page papyrus deals with eye diseases and dysfunctions. Using this text to help construct eye lotions offers a +2 competency bonus to Craft (herbalism) or Craft (alchemy) checks. Using this text to help otherwise heal eye problems offers a +1 competency bonus to Heal checks.

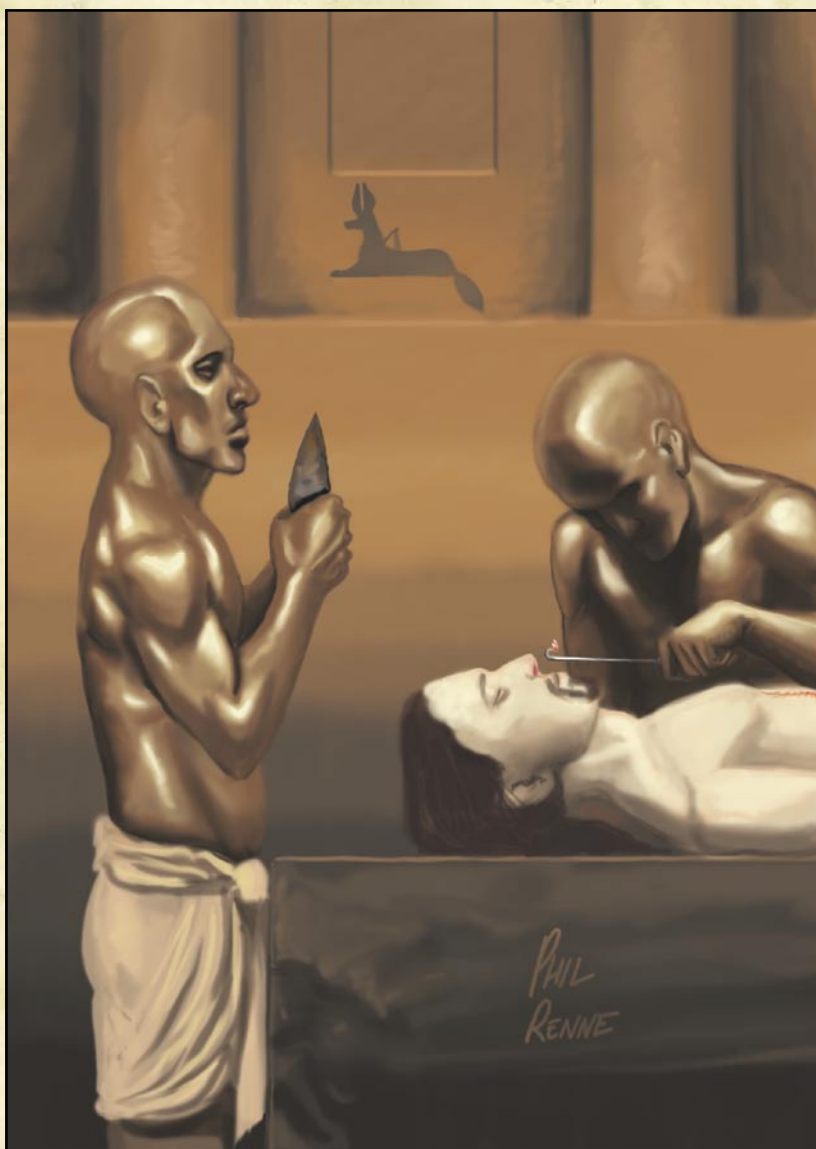
## MUMMIFICATION

Despite the collective skills of the physicians of Stygia, Stygians still die. This is where the embalmers come in. The embalmers are priests who live and work in a workshop known as the Clean Place or the *Wahbet*. They are trained surgeons and always have the Stygian Physician and Surgery feats. The process is rarely rushed, so characters making the indicated checks almost always take 20. The corpse is dead, so there is no penalty for failure. An error at any point, however, means the body will be less preserved than it otherwise might have been. If the body is intended to be a monster, then increase all the DCs by 10 or more.

The process of mummification begins when the priest in charge brings the body to the Clean Place. The assistants to the head embalming priest begin reciting formulae over the corpse. The head priest dons a horrific mask of the bestial image of Yinepu. When the masked priest orders the embalming to actually begin, the body is washed and laid on the floor. Throughout this process, the litany of formulae does not stop or waver. One of the assistants draws a line over the groin with ink, making a Perform (ritual) check (DC 20). Another assistant takes a flint knife and cuts into the body over the inked line, making a Heal check (DC 20). With ritual precision, the embalmers remove the inner organs of the dead. The heart, intestines, stomach and liver are washed in palm wine and stuffed with sweet-smelling herbs. The organs are covered in an unguent and bandaged in linen, requiring a Profession (mummifier) check (DC 20). The names of four gods are written on the internal viscera and the now embalmed innards are placed in canopic jars. Another priest, a scribe, inscribes the name of the deceased on the blank spaces of the jars. Without the preservation of these organs, the deceased has no hope of living again.

Next, the embalming priests remove the brain of the deceased via a hook inserted in the nose; it is brought out in small bits and pieces, which requires a Heal check (DC 20). The pieces are laid aside for drying; they will be buried with the body. The embalming priests then stuff the body with resin and a type of salt called natron, and lay the body in a tank of liquid natron to dry it out for seventy days. In the meantime, all the amulets to be buried with the deceased are inscribed with his name. Over a hundred amulets are used in wealthy mummies, fewer in the mummies of lower castes. Coffin-makers spend these seventy days creating the uniquely ornate coffins for the deceased, which are made to be nested inside of each other.

At the end of the seventy days, the body is taken out of the tank and checked to see if it has the appropriate greenish-grey colour. Once dried out, the fingers and arms are slit and stuffed with herbs and natron to restore their shape, which requires a Profession (mummifier) check (DC 20). The



skull is filled with herbs and powdered plaster. Obsidian eyes are placed in the eye-sockets. The internal body cavity is packed with spices, gums, natron and bitumen (Profession (mummifier) DC 20). A gold plaque inscribed with the Eye of Set covers the initial incision in the body to remove the organs. The fingernails are stained with henna and any rings he is to be buried with are placed upon his dried fingers. The dried skin is rubbed with resin or tar.

Nearly four hundred yards of linen are then used to wrap the mummy. This is done according to precise methods and rituals, beginning with the head, then each finger and toe. The legs are bandaged next, then the arms. Each layer of linen is covered with resin to hold it in place (Profession (mummifier) DC 20). Amulets and sacred relics are included in the wrappings. A scarab amulet with the deceased's name inscribed on it is placed over the heart. Male mummies receive a false penis and female mummies receive false nipples, in order that the deceased may enjoy sex in the afterlife.

Now that the limbs have been individually wrapped, the embalmers begin to wrap the whole of the mummy. The deceased's name is on each three-inch strip of linen that has been prepared for him during the seventy days he lay in the natron fluid. The body is again rubbed down with unguents. The linen strips are dipped in water and one edge of each strip is gummed. The linen is wrapped around the body from the feet upward. The priest in charge recites powerful formulae while this state of wrapping is done by the assisting priests, who must make a Profession (mummifier) check (DC 20). Thinner strips are tied around the mummy to make sure the regular wraps stay put and folds of linen are laid perpendicularly to the rest for the same purpose. A funerary mask goes over the head and shoulders, then the final layer of wrapping is done.

A single sheet of linen is laid across the body and sewn up the back. A sheet of saffron-coloured linen is laid on top of that and also sewn up the back, over the head and under the feet. These two sheets are further held in place by laying strips of brown linen from the head to the feet, under the feet and back up the head, then crossing that with four horizontal strips of the same brown linen: one around the shoulders; one around the middle of the body; one around the knees; and one around the ankles. This requires a Profession (mummifier) check (DC 15).

The completed mummy is now ready to be placed in its nested sets of coffins. The mummy is laid atop a pillow of wood, stone or precious stone. The pillow is made in three pieces and, overall, is about six to ten inches in height. There is a curved neck-piece, a column and an oblong base. These pillows can be quite ornate, often taking the form of animals or gods. Most pillows have the name of the deceased inscribed upon them, usually on the column or the base. Certain personal belongings are laid to rest within the coffin as well as a few ushabti figures. Sorcerers are often buried with copies of their spell-books (usually scrolls of inked papyrus) rolled up and lain beside their mummies. Composers may have copies of their favourite poems or songs written on papyrus for burial so they can continue to enjoy their creations. Craftsmen usually have their tools buried with them. Scribes may be given ink, quills and blank sheets of papyrus. Children are often buried with their favourite toys. Flowers may also be laid inside the casket.

# Faith & Fervour

## THE GRIM GODS OF STYGIA

**RELIGION IN STYGIA** is synonymous with the worship of Father Set, who reigns supreme. His pantheon, however, includes several 'hideous, half-bestial gods' as subordinates. The gods and the myths often revolve around the need to reconcile opposites and opposed viewpoints, including feminine and masculine power and viewpoints. A monotheistic culture based on a single male god does not make much sense to the Stygians, despite Set's apparent ability to reproduce via masturbation or through copulation with his shadow.

Worship is usually done by raising ones arms. This outstretching of the arms is done before all images of the gods and before approaching the king, who is considered a living representative of Set and likewise worthy of worship.

### PHILOSOPHY OF SET'S CULT

Many people equate religion to a philosophy of life. This is not so with Stygia and its religion. Religion in Stygia is about maintaining and justifying the culture. The religion exists to offer creation stories to teach about living life and descriptions of the afterlife to overcome fears of death. Ultimately, Stygian religion is about defining the culture and giving the people within the culture motivation to continue that culture. Stygian religion exists because it offers an explanation for how things in the world work and how people should behave. Stygian priests are not evangelists nor missionaries. They do not try to win converts or spread their religion. Their gods supervise aspects of their lives, that is all. The Stygian gods do not offer faith and forgiveness. Stygians do not believe in the literal truths of the Creation myths. Their religion is mostly one of symbolism, symbols used to help arrive at esoteric truths hidden behind the symbols. Many Stygians do not even believe in the literal existence of their gods – for many, they too are symbols of hidden truths.

#### Set is Not 'Right', Just Strong

Unlike Mitra's cult, which had to contend with rival religions when it swept through the Hyborean world, Set's cult has been around for thousands of years without any real competition in its sandy homeland. Set's cult, unlike Mitra's, does not bother

teaching it is the only true church and that all the others are fundamentally flawed. Set's cult simply does not care. Few Stygians are well-travelled enough to even know about other religions, so Set's cult does not have the need to compare itself to other religions. The cult does teach that their gods are stronger and that proof can be found in victory over foreign regiments but that is about as far as it goes. They do not claim other religions are 'flawed' or have false teachings. Just that their gods are weaker, much like the minor Stygian gods in comparison to Set.

#### Cultural Justification

Like other religions, one of the main purposes of Set's cult is to ensure the continuation of their culture and to teach a certain kind of behaviour. Do this, and all is well; do that and you anger the gods and bring ill to yourself. It is a simple equation that serves virtually all the world's religions and Set's is no different. The people of Stygia are expected to behave in certain cultural ways. Failure to so act may well cause one to end up on the sacrificial block. Ceremonies intended to strengthen the people's trust in the culture are required by law and priests always charge for these services. Survival of the Stygian culture is paramount and those who buck the system too much will be removed from that system one way or the other. Stygians generally are not fanatical about their gods; they are afraid of their god's priests.

#### An 'Evil' Religion?

Another aspect of the Stygian religion is that, while it is regarded as an 'evil' religion by outsiders, it does not actively attempt to smite 'good'. The Stygian people, including the busy priests, are too concerned about their day-to-day needs to worry about the smiting of other religions. They will defend their homeland to be sure but they are not out to rid the world of all that is 'good'. Quite the contrary, actually. They see Set and his grim menagerie of gods as 'good' for them and their cultural needs. They see many of the actions the Mitrans portray as evil, such as human sacrifice, as an offering to their gods for the good of the people, to make life easier and better here and now as well as in the afterlife. Virtually all religions have an element of sacrifice to them, be it a symbolic cannibalism of body and blood or a very real sacrifice of someone's body and blood for the 'good' of all. The Stygian religion is no different in that respect.

*'He saw great towering black walls, pedestals half hidden in the shadows upholding images of hideous, half-bestial gods. Men moved in the shadows, dark, wiry men, clad in red, silken loincloths. They were bearing a green jade sarcophagus along a gigantic black corridor... thieves sneaking through a subterranean temple of Set, in Stygia.'*

*'A teak door stood partly open, and gliding through this, knife in hand, he came out into a great, dim shadowy place whose lofty ceiling was only a hint of darkness high above him, toward which the black walls swept upward. On all sides black-arched doorways opened into the great still hall. It was lit by curious bronze lamps that gave a dim weird light. On the other side of the great hall a broad black marble stairway, without a railing, marched upward to lose itself in gloom, and above him on all sides dim galleries hung like black stone ledges.'*

*'Conan shivered: he was in a temple of some Stygian god, if not Set himself, then someone only less grim.'*

Robert E. Howard, *The Hour of the Dragon*

While the Set cult is one of the world's darker religions, that does not mean it or its priests will do stupid things to rid the world of a supposed 'good' god. The banishment of the cult of Ibis, for example, was done for political reasons, not because Ibis is 'good' or morally opposed to Set. When the Set cult as a whole acts against any one thing, be it a person, a religion or a nation, it is not a religious crusade. It will act because it will bring power, wealth and prestige to the king, the cult or Stygia as a whole. The Stygian religion is harsh, pervasive and oppressive, but it certainly is not given to acting stupidly or out of religious fanaticism. Likewise, the cult of Set is not out to smash the religion of Mitra. Mitra does not exist in Set's pantheon of gods and so has no interest for Set or the cult. On the other hand, the Mitran religion does treat Set as a sort of adversary for Mitra, but the Stygians do not reciprocate the symbolism. The mysterious Stygian religion is more about preserving a certain culture than it is about smiting other religions, even if foreign religions are supposedly 'good' and Set is supposedly 'evil.'

### Religious Intolerance to Achieve Secular Power

The Set cult does suppress powerful cults because it does not want to lose hold of its power over the people. If the king of Stygia suddenly had two or three religions pressuring him to make various decisions, the power of each individual religion would be lessened. By maintaining a religious monopoly on the culture and upon the king, the cult of Set makes sure its desires are equated with the desires of the king. The cult of Set does not practice religious intolerance because its god is more 'right' than other gods but because the practice of religious intolerance promotes the cult's secular power. It bears repeating that the cult of Set is not out to destroy so-called 'good' religions – unless that religion is actively present in Stygia and attempting to undermine the direct political,

religious, social and economic stranglehold of power it holds. The cult of Stygia is not out to work all kinds of mischief in the world. If it did that, the world might unite and destroy Stygia, which would undermine one of the fundamental purposes of the religion – the continuation of the Stygian culture.

## SACRAMENTAL AND MYSTICAL

A sacramental religion emphasises the divine is present in some fashion in physical objects and in the mystery-laden rituals of the temple. Contact and communication with the divine is sought through these objects and rites. These rites and objects serve to impress upon the believers their obligations. The objects are a source of inspiration and comfort, not some sort of golem to come to life if one prays hard enough, although a sorcerer might delude his followers into thinking such by animating a statue once in a while. A sacramental religion may regard a statue of a god as a dwelling place of divine power but it will not be worshipped as a god itself. Sacred objects, especially if they carry sacred substances, are treated with reverence at all times and mysterious rituals transmit their divine power to the participants.

## VENERATION OF STATUES

The Stygians believe their gods may, at any time, possess the statues which depict them as they are receptacles for the god's Ka (Charisma). The statues are often made in the nude and the priests clean them and clothe

them in clean linen outfits and headdresses daily. Petitioners bring the statues offerings of food, wine, blood, mummified animals and even live sacrifices at times. Not venerating the gods' statues is dishonourable and will surely bring doom upon the heads of all involved. By doing these ceremonies, the priests show the people the gods must be cared for in order for them to care for the people. They tell people about the care the priests take of the statues. This, in turn, creates a goodwill among the people to keep the priests in power.

## VENERATION OF THE DEAD

The dead are important in Stygia. They are believed to have influence with the gods. If a couple is childless, they may place letters at the tombs of their relatives asking them to speak to the gods in their favour for a child. In addition to the veneration of statues, the Stygian priests appoint part-time priests to take care of the statues of the departed in Stygia's vast necropolises. Such rituals also help to overcome the Stygian people's fear of death. If they see old mummies cared for, then they have some assurance they will also be cared for when they die. Stygians also celebrate the death-day of the deceased with feasts for the family, much like their celebration of birth-days.

The pyramids of Stygia, possibly built by the pre-human race superseded by the Stygians, now serve as temples as well as tombs for the mummies of Stygia's elite. Early Stygian tombs were of the mastaba type to protect the dead from jackals. Later the Stygians began to copy the mighty pyramids they found in their lands. Mummification had been practiced by the Stygians long before the Great Cataclysm, even before they migrated into modern-day Stygia. It is still practiced today, representing a belief in an after-life for the faithful follower of Set.

## VENERATION OF SACRED ANIMALS

Snakes and hippopotami are sacred and allowed to exist unmolested in Stygia. It is against Stygian law to injure either animal, and doing so also provokes a charge of heresy. Although the priesthood does not insist on any particular behaviour before a hippopotamus, all Stygians must lie down when a snake is sighted and await the snake to either attack or move on. If a snake attacks, the Stygian chosen for the honour is considered blessed by Father Set and none will try to save him. It is a strange custom, but one accepted by the people of Stygia with quiet dignity.

The veneration of sacred animals extends to mummifying these animals and bringing them to the temples for blessings. The necropolises of the gods often have thousands upon thousands of mummified animals dedicated to that god; for example, the temple of Sobek maintains a graveyard of mummified crocodiles and the temple of Bast has a vast area for mummified cats.

## STYGIAN RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

Stygia is a land steeped in mysticism. Animals, weather, terrain and emblems all have powerful magic contained within them.

### The Ankh

The ankh is a symbol of an elaborate bow. The top is a loop that comes down to a knot and a transverse bar. Beneath this bar is a longer lower section that looks like a single piece in common representations, but detailed representations show the bottom staff is comprised of two parts which are the ends of the bow. At the very bottom of the ankh, the ends are slightly separated. The symbol means 'life.' The ankh is carried by most Stygian deities. When it is shown being offered or touched to the lips, it symbolises the breath of life. Fiendish Stygian sorcerers often use the ankh to give life to the dead or to take life away from a foe. Many common items found in Stygia either have the ankh symbol on them or are shaped as an ankh, such as mirrors, with the mirror held within the loop. This symbol was brought by the proto-Stygians from their prehistoric homeland.

### The Knife

The simple flint blade has a lot of mystery for the Stygians, who brought this symbol of protection and retribution from their ancient homeland in the east. Flint was the first stone worked by the proto-Stygians into tools at the onset of their old civilisation long before they fled the fury of their rebellious slaves. Even though the Stygians have long had metal blades, the flint knife is still used in religious and sorcerous ceremonies. Many deities, especially those with vengeful aspects, wield the knife. The magic within the symbol renders the symbols of enemies harmless; malevolent creatures and peoples are often depicted as having been cut with the knife to show their ultimate harmlessness to the people of Set.

### The Obelisk

An obelisk is a monolithic stone with a pyramidal top and a quadrangular base, usually covered in hieroglyphics. They represent defence against evil, standing tall and perforating the sky to disperse storms. Although some are plated in gold,



most are made of black or green stone. They symbolise also the stability and protective nature of Set and were said to be the petrified 'rays' of Set, a symbol of the Fire of Creation at the Beginning of Happenings. They are placed in pairs at the entrances to temples. It is also said that Set can inhabit any obelisk and see from the top all that happens around it.

### The Scarab

Millions upon millions of Stygian amulets and works of art depict the scarab, a large beetle known to roll balls of dung along the ground to its burrow so the females can lay its eggs within. The larvae then use the dung for food, emerging from the burrows finally as beetles. The beetle is a solar symbol for the Stygians and a symbol of rebirth. Scarab amulets are placed over the hearts of mummies to bring rebirth to the heart so it will be pure and untainted when the spirit reaches the afterlife.

### The Sesheset

The sesheset is a tambourine-like instrument shaped like an ankh with small metal disks in the enlarged loop. The instrument is shaken and often has the horns of Hathor incorporated into the artwork. It produces a soft jangling sound as if one were shaking bundles of papyrus flowers. The instrument has erotic overtones and is used in fertility rites and in sexual orgies. Many priestesses take ranks in Perform (sesheset).

## The Regalia of the King

The king of Stygia carries several emblems of office with special symbolic significance. One of these emblems is a shepherd's staff, which symbolises his power to reward the innocent. Another emblem of offices is the farmer's flail, which symbolises his power to punish the guilty. On his crown is the Cobra of Set, which is Set's Eye, seeing all that the king sees. Also on his crown is the vulture of Nekhebet, the other Eye of Set. The crown of the king is a double crown with tall crests. At one time, Stygia was divided into a northern and southern portion, with the Styx as the dividing line. However, during the reign of Tuthothomes XX, the Stygians were driven by the Hyborians south of the River Styx. The kings following Tuthothomes XX refused to surrender the second crown, wearing it as an emblem of past and future glory. The king is the ultimate high priest, so he keeps his body shaven for purity, another symbol of power used by the king.

## THE HIDEOUS, HALF-BESTIAL PANTHEON OF SET

The pantheon of Set is large and varied. They have hundreds of local and individual gods and spirits. The most well-known are listed here but this listing is hardly exhaustive. Those gods with devoted priests and temples have an entry detailing the requirements for worship, the requirements for ordination and benefits of worship and ordination. Also several entries mention that a certain god is often invoked in certain types of spells; this is just for atmosphere and flavour and has no mechanical game effect. Also, some types of spells may be referenced by several gods, for example, both Bat and the handmaidens of Hathor may be called upon for divinations; in these cases a sorcerer may pick and choose whom he invokes or he may invoke any and all gods involved in that sort of magic.

Initiated Stygian priests do not even believe in the literal existence of their gods – they are but symbols of hidden truths. The descriptions below are for these Stygian gods, which may or may not be real entities. Thus, the gods have no 'statistics', such as might be found in many sourcebooks. Even if the bestial Stygian gods are considered to be real by a Games Master, they would have powers on a scale that no mortal could hope to defeat, even the mighty Conan, thus the need for monster-like statistics for these gods is still unnecessary. Demons, many of whom claim to serve these gods, are real and have statistics given in the Foes & Fiends chapter of this volume. Keep in mind that just because a certain demon claims to serve a deity, that demon could be lying or may have the same misconceptions about the gods as some mortals have.

*Grim and horrific it brooded there, like the shadow cast by one of the apish gods that squat on the shadowy altars in the dark land of Stygia.*

Robert E. Howard, *The Phoenix on the Sword*

A few demons have religious followings. Ishiti, for example, is covered here as a religion and her statistics are given in the Foes & Fiends chapter.

## SET, THE FIRST SERPENT, THE SCALED GOD OF STYGIA

Set is the old serpent-god of Stygia but is also worshipped by the Chagas of Kush, certain degenerate cults of Shem and fell sorcerers throughout the Earth. Set's symbol is a scaled serpent, coiled, with its tail in its mouth. He is the mortal enemy of Mitra and of the Hyborian Kingdoms but he also hates his old scribe, Ibis. At one time, according to Xaltotun, much of the world was likewise dominated by the Old Serpent. Set, today, is worshipped primarily in Stygia and in places of strong Stygian influence such as areas of Kush and Shem, and by dark sorcerers everywhere. He is believed to have created much of the universe by copulating with his own shadow, a probable survivor of the Elder God known as the Black Shadow. The Black Shadow of the Elder race and the Great Serpent (possibly an early version of Yig) of the Thurian age were combined by the Stygians into the being known as Set.

His is a bloody religion, a survival from the strange pre-human culture that was thrown down by the Stygians in pre-Cataclysm days. At one time, Set walked the earth in the form of a man and created that mysterious pre-human race. Now the god of the Stygians, Set's cult is outlawed by the Hyborians, who regard Set as the arch-enemy of Mitra and fear the gruesome and mysterious rituals of Set's priests.

Set is worshipped in great festivals of sacrifice and also by more subtle means, such as by allowing a great serpent to wander the streets and declaring any who are eaten by it to be suitable offerings to the god. He may be willing to grant victory to one force on a battlefield if 500 or more virgin sacrifices are made to him the night before the battle. The specific rituals used to worship Set are a guarded mystery, but these are known to be gruesome, comprised of unspeakable rites and human sacrifices in grisly quantities. Priests wear monstrous, half-bestial masks surmounted

by ostrich plumes in certain ceremonies. Sacred beasts, both terrestrial and otherwise, abound in their religious culture. Giant pythons hunt abroad in the dark alleys of black Khemi, human sacrifices innumerable are given to amorphous monsters from the Abyss held in deep pits and giant, drugged iridescent serpents coil in their temples, ready to accept worship and sacrifice from the priests of Set.

The priests of Set are largely all sorcerers, and they terrify their subjects as well as their enemies, for they can and will sacrifice their own followers to gain their corrupt ends. The most powerful of these priests are members of the Black Ring. These priests gather in sacred spots to perform their rituals, such as the colossal pyramids that dot the Stygian landscape, ancient ruins that bring magic and mystery to the priests and horror to all others.

Priests of Set terrify their subjects almost as much as they do their enemies. Many are corrupt, mad, or both – and even the relatively sane ones are usually quite willing to sacrifice their own followers. The priests of Set form the entire government of Stygia, creating in them a vested interest in the continuation of the religion.

There are seven known mysteries in the Cult of Set. Ancient records of the Giant-Kings and the Acheronians give tantalising hints of more mysteries long lost to history. The Acheronians seem to have had nine mysteries and the Giant-Kings had twelve. During various periods of war and conquest these later mysteries have been lost because the mysteries are never recorded, only passed down orally. Some texts hint that perhaps the eleventh or twelfth mystery of Set involved some relationship between the keeper of the mystery and the man-serpents buried deep in the dark tombs of Elder Stygia.

**Requirements of Worship:** Obey priests of Set, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe 2sp/level/month to the local temple.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must know the First Mystery of Set; must have an Allegiance to Set; obey the high priest of Set, obey the laws of the land in Stygia (which are largely made by the priests of Set in any case).

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood in the House of the Black Ring:** Must know at least two sorcery styles and the Tormented Sacrifice feat; obey the high priest of Set, obey the laws of the land in Stygia (which are largely made by the priests of Set in any case).

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic); +4 circumstance bonus to all Gather Information and Intimidate checks while in Stygia; corruption.

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Slay him by sorcery at a distance if at all possible.



**Inner Mysteries:** Learning the mysteries of Set is cause for Corruption saves at DC 21+ the rank of the mystery. They are learned by taking ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Set). Every three ranks makes one eligible for the next mystery.

- ❏ The first mystery of Set reveals most of the basic symbolisms of the religion, allowing a character with three ranks of Knowledge (Mystery: Set) a +1 bonus to Knowledge (arcana) and Craft (alchemy).
- ❏ The second and third mysteries of Set allow a variety of bonuses because the initiate learns the purposes and symbolic truths of many of the minor gods; these benefits can be found throughout this chapter. Also the scholar gains a cumulative +1 bonus to his Knowledge is Power ability (i.e. a +1 bonus for the second mystery and an additional +1 bonus for the third).
- ❏ The fourth mystery of Set reveals the truth about Yig, Yezm and the Great Old Ones; characters with a code of honour lose it at this time. They also learn that life is a minor thing and the only way to live is to attain great power. Characters at this level gain a +1 bonus to Intimidate because they will now do whatever they must to attain power and everyone knows it. Also, keepers of this mystery earn a +2 bonus to Handle Animal checks in regards to snakes. Keepers of this mystery are often called Hidden Ones.
- ❏ The fifth mystery of Set teaches how the symbols of the cult reveal the true nature of life and its origins; keepers of this mystery earn another +1 bonus to their Knowledge is Power ability. They also learn the power of manipulation of the masses. The character gets a +1 bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks used to manipulate Non-Player Characters to do his bidding.

This can stack with similar Corruption bonuses if the scholar has five or more points of Corruption.

- ❏ The sixth mystery of Set teaches the initiate the true power of dreams. Any skill, power or spell dealing with dreams or visions can be performed with a +1 bonus to any one roll related to the spell, skill or power. If someone tells the initiate a dream, the initiate may learn something unexpected about the dreamer. The initiate, if told a dream, may make a Sense Motive check (DC 15). A successful check allows the initiate to learn something about the subject that the subject has strong emotional feelings about. The initiate detects emotional issues about others, so if the subject was feeling guilty about neglecting his mother, suspicious of a lover's fidelity or anxious about an imminent caravan raid, these would be likely subjects to pick up on.
- ❏ The seventh mystery of Set is reserved only for sorcerous priests who make a pilgrimage to Erkulum and undergo their horrible initiation rites to test the will-power of those desiring to understand everything behind the cult. Those who survive the deadly initiation understand the true nature of power and can manipulate the universe around them to their own ends. Their spells are nearly inviolate – the Keepers of All Set's Mysteries gain a +2 competence bonus to their magic attack rolls. By making a Wisdom check (DC equal to the DC of the task at hand), he gains a +10 bonus to the relevant skill(s) until that task is done. This black mystery may only be learned in Erkulum, the City of Set, regardless of how many ranks the priest has in Knowledge (Mystery: Set).

## AHEPHI, PROTECTOR OF THE LUNGS

The baboon son of Harakht and Hathor, Ahephi died upon birth, cursed by Usir, who was jealous of his sister-wife's infidelity. Born as a baboon, his dead body (along with his three brothers) was thrown into the River Styx but it fell amongst the Ta Neheh Lotus, which sustained him in his death. The old serpent, Set, was pleased with the infidelity and anger of Usir. Set ordered Sobek to fetch the children and give them to Yinepu, who resurrected the children as mummies swathed in linen. Ahephi, like his brothers, became an assistant to Yinepu, taking on funerary duties. Yinepu, to protect Ahephi, assigned Nephthys to guard the baboon-child. He has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to an alchemical device utilising dust or pollen thrown by them if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action. Ahephi is represented as a mummified baboon sitting on a Lotus flower.

## BAST, DAUGHTER OF SET

Bast is the goddess of evil sendings, the patron of curses. She is the offspring of a lustful union between Set and his shadow, a gorgeous woman with the head of a lioness. Her son, Khonsu, is the god of the moon. As protector of pregnant women, she is seen as docile and gentle but she defends her charges with fire and fury, taking on an aggressive side not even Set can match. Thus she becomes a goddess of fire and curses, slaughtering her enemies with a violent bitterness none can withstand. Most Stygian curses invoke the name of Bast to give them power. Her cult is so powerful that the killing of cats is illegal in Stygia. She has an annual festival dedicated to her worship, described on page 33.

**Requirements of Worship:** Obey priests of Stygia, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe 2sp/level/month to the local temple; perform a twice-daily ritual of blood and wine; must never kill a cat; must mummify all dead cats.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must know at least one mystery of Bast; obey the high priests of Stygia, obey the laws of the land in Stygia.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood in the House of the Black Ring:** Must know at least two sorcery styles (one must be Curses) and the Carouser feat; obey the high priest of Stygia, obey the laws of the land in Stygia.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic); +3 circumstance bonus to all Gather Information and Intimidate checks while in Stygia.

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Force him to undergo the *Awful Curse of the Werebeast*, turning the disloyal priest into a werepanther or other werecat.

**Inner Mysteries:** The mysteries of Bast are learned by taking ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Bast). Every three ranks makes one eligible for the next mystery.

✧ The first mystery of Bast opens the spirit to protection, giving the character a +1 bonus to attack and damage when defending pregnant women or small children. Also the sexual imagery is understood, giving characters a +1 insight bonus to any one die roll per day relating to something sexual.

✧ The second mystery of Bast gives the character an understanding of the curses, giving the character a +1 bonus to all saves against any Curse.

✧ The third mystery of Bast teaches vengeance and gives a sorcerous priest



a +1 bonus to all magic attack rolls when casting a curse in revenge for a personal wrong; this mystery is only taught to sorcerous priests.

## BAT, SET'S PROPHET

Bat is a cow-goddess with the ability to see past, present and future as the same. She is often depicted as two-faced to reflect her ability to see the past and the future. She is a woman with a human face but with cow-ears and a pair of horns curling upward from her temples. Set often consults with her about the future or if he needs to know about the past. She is a historian as well as a prophet. She often works alongside Set's scribe, Djehuty, who is also her father. Bat has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the people of Stygia. Sorcerers using divinations often call upon Bat in their spells. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a divination spell cast by them if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action, or a +2 bonus to a Sense Motive skill check made for a cold reading (see page 118) for a non-sorcerous practitioner of clairvoyance and divination.

## BES, THE MUSICIAN DWARF, PROTECTOR OF CHILDREN

Bes is a dwarf with a large head, a beard and his tongue is often is shown sticking out. He has a flat nose, bushy eyebrows and hair, huge protruding ears, short bowed legs and he wears a crown of feathers. He is the son of Set and his black shadow, the god of music and dance, preferring to play the harp. He is also a warrior-god and wields a thick short sword. Women often expose their genitals to his statues when they requests favours from him or during festivals dedicated to him. He protects newborn children and brings happiness to a home. A protector against evil and curses, he is a master of counterspells. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a spell from the counterspells sorcery style cast by them if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action; non-sorcerous priests who know this mystery can do a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) to give someone a +1 bonus to their saving throw. He also has an annual festival detailed on page 33.

## DERKETO, SET'S WHORE, THE SABLE QUEEN (ANUKET, DERKETA)

Derketo, or Anuket as she was known to the Acheronians and the Giant-Kings, is a goddess of passionate lust, sacred ecstasy and sexual pleasure. Her attributes and her cult are considered obscene by most Hyborian standards. She is shown as a nude queen with a crown of ostrich feathers, often pictured standing on a lion. In her hands she holds symbols of eroticism and fertility: in one hand lotus flowers and in the other a pair of snakes. Her sacred symbols are the gazelle, the lion and the star. Unlike most Stygian art, she is usually shown full-face forward, instead of in profile. As Anuket, she was the daughter of Satet and the first wife of Khnemu. Derketo is a Shemite deity granted to Set as a war concession. Originally Set had two whores but over time they coalesced into just one deity. Her lustful embrace is said to fertilise the mighty Styx. She is a deity of life, sexual power, birth and war. Her aspect of war is the feasting and sex that comes after a victory in war. She is also a goddess of the dead, leading the spirits of the dead through the sky on midnight winds.

Derketo is also a seductress deity, a temptress who epitomises the essences of independent womanhood and a willing descent into uninhibited sexuality. Her rites are among the most orgiastic of Stygia's religions. The dancers and priestesses of Derketo are also temple prostitutes, finding sex is the best

way to capture and hold onto male worshippers. The exotic techniques taught in the temples of Derketo are extremely intense and can cause Corruption (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules on Corruption). Her sacred prostitutes are considered the embodiment of Derketo herself.

Men and women pray to Derketo for fertility and sexual virility. Derketo does not listen to men unless the man making the plea visits her cult and partakes of her prostitutes. All young women in most Stygian cities, especially Luxur, are required to go to the Temple of Derketo to learn about sexuality and freedom.

The Stygians have great temples to Derketo in Luxur. Derketo is also a part of the Shemite pantheon and is worshipped in Zembabwei where she is the consort of Dagon, the underworld god.

**Requirements of Worship:** Pay a tithe worth 2 sp/level/month to the priests of Derketo; participate in at least three orgies a year.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells (Counterspells, Divination and Nature Magic only); Orgies (at least once a month).

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must know at least the first mystery of Derketo and must be initiated in a sexual orgy.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood in the House of the Black Circle:** Must know at least one sorcery style and must be initiated.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (Counterspells, Divination, Hypnotism and Nature Magic only); perks include training noble girls in the ways of pleasure.

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** None.

**Inner Mysteries:** Learning the mysteries of Derketo is cause for Corruption saves at DC 19+ the rank of the mystery. They are learned by taking ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Derketo). Every three ranks makes one eligible for the next mystery.

☒ The first mystery of Derketo teaches the initiate to project an aura of sexual ease, making others feel more comfortable, especially in matters regarding sex. The keeper of Derketo's first mystery adds her mystery level to all Bluff and Diplomacy checks that have a sexual component to them, including seductions, flirtation and using sexuality to get her way. Thus a keeper of Derketo's first mystery adds a +1 to these checks and a keeper of Derketo's third mystery adds a +3 to these checks. The mystery also teaches how she can transform sexual energy into force of personality. She can also gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma after 20 continuous minutes of sex and a Perform (ritual) check (DC 12) for an hour afterwards. Only one ability can be enhanced per sexual encounter.

❖ The second mystery of Derketo teaches an inherent understanding of sexuality as it pertains to social situations. She gains a +1 competence bonus on Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Perform (any) and Sense Motive checks. This increases to +2 when she learns the third mystery and +3 when she learns Derketo's fourth mystery and so on. This stacks with the Seductive Art of the temptress class introduced in *Conan: Hyboria's Fallen*. The second mystery also teaches how a priest or priestess can transform sexual energy into enlightenment. She can also gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Wisdom after 20 continuous minutes of sex and a Perform (ritual) check (DC 15) for an hour afterwards (only one ability can be enhanced per sexual encounter). She may take the Carouser feat if she has a slot available regardless of prerequisites.

❖ The third mystery of Derketo teaches the power of touch on the body. The initiate is taught how to touch people to bring about certain effects. She can give a soothing touch that removes the effects of *fatigue*. She can touch someone to sensitise them, bringing on the hedonist's delight, which makes food taste better, cloth feel softer, sex stimulate more strongly and orgasms approach awe-inspiring and soul-shattering levels. Her orgasmic touch can create grand, shuddering orgasms (Fort save DC equal to her Perform (ritual) check) that makes the target *dazed* for 1 round per character level of the initiate. She can touch someone to remove the effects of *Terror*. Her touch can create impotence (which, besides the obvious effect, creates a -2 penalty on Bluff, Diplomacy and Intimidate checks because of the frustration and the negative impact to ego). Her touch can also cure impotency. Each of these touches takes a full-round action to perform, as well as a Perform ritual check (DC 15) and full concentration. The third mystery also teaches how sexual energy can make a person virile and physically strong. She can gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength after 20 continuous minutes of sex and a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) for an hour afterwards. Only one ability can be enhanced per sexual encounter. She may take the Debaucher feat (from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*) if she has a slot available regardless of prerequisites.

❖ The fourth mystery of Derketo teaches the initiate to relish in the conquest of new types of people. Whenever the temptress successfully seduces a person who is of a race and class combination not previously seduced by her, she receives a +2 bonus to all skill checks and, if she is sorcerous, to her magic attack roll for the whole of the next day. The mystery also teaches how perspirational sexual energy can bring about inspirational thought.

She can also gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Intelligence after 20 continuous minutes of sex and a Perform (ritual) check (DC



20) for an hour afterwards. Only one ability can be enhanced per sexual encounter.

❖ The fifth mystery is one of the magical nature of seduction and the uses of dance to reach into the inner core of people. The initiate is considered to meet all the non-spell prerequisites for the *Dance of Atali* spell presented in *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*, although the spell is now called the *Dance of Derketo*. She may learn the spell if she has an available slot for it. The mystery also teaches how sex can create health and vigour. She can gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Constitution after 20 continuous minutes of sex and a Perform (ritual) check (DC 22) for an hour afterwards. Only one ability can be enhanced per sexual encounter.

❖ The sixth mystery teaches the initiate how to enhance all of her ability scores (including Dexterity) with only one 20 minute sexual encounter and a Perform (ritual) check (DC 24) and a Fortitude save (DC 18). Failing the Fortitude save means the ecstasy of the attempt left her body crashing with shuddering orgasms for the next hour, leaving her *dazed* and *helpless* for that hour and *fatigued* for twenty-four hours afterwards.

## DJEHUTY, SET'S SCRIBE AND GOD OF KNOWLEDGE (THOTH)

Djehuty, a self-generated god in the shape of a baboon, replaced Ibis as Set's scribe and vizier when the Giant-Kings were defeated by the Khari. Whereas Ibis invented the written script of the Giant-Kings and of Acheron, Djehuty taught the Stygian script devised by his wife Seshet to the early Stygians. He is also a moon-god who attempts to dispel darkness with light when the sun is swallowed by Nuit. Djehuty refined the alchemical arts of the Stygians. He is a baboon because baboons always seem to have a thoughtful expression, as if they are always considering the truth and weight of a matter. Djehuty sits upon the balance that weighs the hearts of the deceased to see if they are worthy of entering the pleasant afterlife. He is the patron of scholars, scribes, physicians, alchemists and all who seek knowledge. He has no temples but he does have priests and scribes dedicated to him known as the Apes of Set.

**Requirements of Worship:** Must be trained as a scribe, physician, alchemist or other profession involving numbers or writing; obey priests of Set and Djehuty, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe 2sp/level/month to the local temple.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must know the Skill Focus (Craft (alchemy)) feat and must have at least four ranks in Profession (scribe) and must have learned the first mystery; obey the high priest of Djehuty and the high priest of Set, obey the laws of the land in Stygia. Must be trained as a scribe.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic).

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Banishment from Stygia.

**Inner Mysteries:** The mysteries of Djehuty are learned by taking ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Djehuty). Every three ranks makes one eligible for the next mystery.

- ❏ The first mystery of Djehuty teaches vigilance, giving the character a +2 bonus to Craft (alchemy) and Heal.
- ❏ The second mystery of Djehuty gives the character an understanding of truth and lies, giving the character a +2 bonus to all opposed Sense Motive skill checks to see if someone is lying.
- ❏ The third mystery of Djehuty teaches the importance of knowledge and how knowledge can be achieved through organisation and goal-setting. Keepers of the Third Mystery of Djehuty have a +1 bonus to all Knowledge skills (this stacks with Skill Focus and Knowledgeable feats).

## EHTUM, LORD OF THE SUNSET

Ehtum is the carrier of setting sun, which is consumed by Nuit. His symbol is the obelisk and the pyramids. He is depicted as a falcon-headed man and he wields a falcon-headed staff. He is generally considered an elder-form of Khephra and he dies when consumed by Nuit and is reborn in the morning as Khephra. As the day progresses, he ages and becomes Ehtum again, is consumed and reborn. Other traditions have Ehtum as his own separate deity who simply hands the sun to Nuit for consumption and just waits for Harakht to hand him the sun again later the next evening. He has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the people of Stygia. Ehtum is a patron god of painters and those who use colour. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a spell cast by them or at them at sunset if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## HAP-I, LORD OF PAPYRUS AND LOTUS

Hap-I is a man with a woman's breasts and protruding belly, symbolising the fertile bounty of the River Styx. In the East-West course of the Styx, he is the Lord of Papyrus and wears a crown of papyrus. In the North-South course of the river, he is the Lord of Lotus and wears a crown of Lotus leaves. In either depiction he always holds both Lotus and papyrus plants in his hands. He is the spouse of Nekhebet and Idris, the twin protectors of Set, guardian of water-gates, the mysterious place where the Styx leaves Khnemu's domain and rises to the earth where it can be seen. The people of Stygia throw amulets into the Styx at special shrines to appease Hap-I so that Khnemu, Derketo and Satet are allowed to inundate the Styx. Hap-I is in charge of making sure the right amount of fertile silt is in the waters so the land may also be fertile. Priests of Hap-I often maintain sorcerous gardens for the priests of Set. They are experts in irrigation and usually oversee the maintenance of canals. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a spell cast by them from the *Sea Witchery* sorcery style if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action. Priests initiated in the third mystery of Set may grow +2 HD of black lotus if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 24) is made along with a casting of *Sorcerous Garden*.

## HARAKHT, LORD OF ECLIPSES, THE HAWK-GOD

Harakht is a falcon-headed sun god of Stygia and his cult centre is the city of Harakht. He is a solar deity and is also the patron god of weaponsmiths. Harakht is symbolised by the hawk and the falcon, as well as a winged disk. He is the winged son of Kebb and Nuit and he fathered four vile children via his mother. All four darksome children of Harakht were cursed by Usir to be still-born but Set, in a darkly humorous mood, caused them to be resurrected as mummies. He is often shown as a hawk hovering over the king of Stygia during battles. Harakht is considered a lord of eclipses because a full solar eclipse looks like a hawk's eye to the Stygians. He is a symbol of swift leadership, lightning speed, rapid intelligence and brisk alertness. Most of his priests maximise their Spot and Listen skills as much as possible in emulation of their fiery, winged animal-god. He is also a symbol of victory and omnipresence. He is the personification among sorcerers of the Rule of Success presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

**Requirements of Worship:** Obey priests of Set and Harakht, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe 2sp/level/month to the local temple.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must have the Alertness and Lightning Reflexes feat; obey the high priest of Set and Harakht, obey the laws of the land in Stygia (which are largely made by the priests of Set in any case).

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic); +4 circumstance bonus to all Gather Information and Intimidate checks while in Stygia.

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Slay him by sorcery at a distance if at all possible.

**Inner Mysteries:** The mysteries are learned by taking ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Harakht). Every three ranks makes one eligible for the next mystery.

☒ The first mystery of Harakht teaches vigilance, allowing the character to add a bonus equal to his mystery rank to all Spot and Listen checks (i.e. a keeper of the first mystery of Harakht gains a +1 bonus, a keeper of the second mystery of Harakht gains a +2 bonus, and so on).

☒ The second mystery of Harakht gives the character an understanding of leadership, granting a +1 bonus to his leadership score.

☒ The third mystery of Harakht allows a sorcerer to double his count of 'enemies killed' for the Rule of Success (i.e. if he killed four

enemies, it counts as eight for the keeper of the third mystery of Harakht); this mystery is only taught to sorcerous priests.

## HATHOR, THE FIRE OF SET'S EYE (SUKHMET; ASET)

Hathor is a goddess of femininity, transformations and poisons, the sister and wife of Usir, the daughter of Kebb and Nuit. She is two goddesses rolled into one: Hathor and Sukhmet. As Hathor, she is a cow-headed woman with a vulture-crown (wings outspread), usually nude or in a transparent linen dress, with a pair of bulls horns supporting a solar disk above her head. She is a powerful sorceress and her breasts flow with the milk of kingship. Many pieces of Stygian artwork show the King of Stygia suckling at her breasts as her vulture crown looks down at the child. She was the greatest goddess of the Giant-Kings and remains so with the Stygians. She is the symbol of the adoring wife and mother, so important to Stygian culture. She is the patron goddess of counterspells and nature magic. Her instruments are the sesheset (a type of Stygian tambourine) and the drums. She is the goddess of love and cosmetics.

Hathor has seven handmaidens who are said to come to the bedside of every child when it is born to announce his fate, for these handmaidens know the future and the moment of death for every Stygian. Stygian divination spells often call upon the seven handmaidens of Hathor for this reason. They are shown as beautiful nude women with long-haired wigs playing seshesets and wearing the horns of Hathor.

Horned Hathor has a dual personality; when angered, she becomes the goddess of war and destruction, the horrible Sukhmet, the Fire of Set's Eye. In this aspect she is a patron of vampires, witches and werewolves. She is Set's horrifying avenger, the holy warrior of the ancient Serpent, a nefarious weapon used to destroy those Set deems unworthy of living. She takes on the head of a red lioness with bull horns and she fights with cobras in her hands. As the blood-drinking Sukhmet she dresses in a red kilt. Once she becomes Sukhmet, she is virtually unstoppable, a vampire killer who drinks the blood of those she vanquishes. Once unleashed, the only way Set can keep her from slaying every last man, woman and child on the planet is to provide her with buckets of blood laced with wine. She drinks the wine-blood and calms down, becoming Hathor once again.

Any person may come to a temple of Hathor and sleep on the roof in the hopes of a prophetic dream. The priestesses of Hathor await the roof-sleepers in the morning to interpret any dreams.

**Requirements of Worship:** Obey priests of Stygia, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe 2sp/level/month to the local temple; perform a twice-daily ritual of blood and wine.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must know the Loathsome Weapon feat (from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*); obey the high priest of Stygia, obey the laws of the land in Stygia.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic); only needs a +3 base attack bonus to learn the Poison Use feat (the other two prerequisites must be met as normal), +3 circumstance bonus to all Gather Information and Intimidate checks while in Stygia.

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Slay him by poison or blood draining.

**Inner Mysteries:** The cult of Hathor/Sukhmet teaches six mysteries to its adherents. The lion is shown to guard the spirit realm and the truth of the spirit world. They are learned by taking ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Hathor/Sukhmet). Every three ranks makes one eligible for the next mystery.

- ❖ The first mystery of Hathor/Sukhmet teaches the personal power of performance, allowing the character to add a bonus equal to his mystery rank to all Perform skill checks (i.e. a keeper of the first mystery of Hathor/Sukhmet gains a +1 bonus, a keeper of the second mystery of Hathor/Sukhmet gains a +2 bonus, and so on). Further, a minimum of a twenty minute performance gives the character a temporary +2 Charisma boost (lasting an hour).
- ❖ The second mystery of Hathor/Sukhmet gives the character an understanding of anger and war, doubling the character's weapon threat range for the attack following a move-equivalent Perform (ritual) check (DC 18).
- ❖ The third mystery of Hathor/Sukhmet is about sexual power of womanhood and sisterhood. The cult teaches how a priestess can transform lesbian sexual energy into enlightenment. She can also gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Wisdom after 20 continuous minutes of sex and a Perform (ritual) check (DC 15) with another woman for 1d6 hours afterwards.
- ❖ The fourth mystery of Hathor/Sukhmet allows a keeper of the mystery to sustain the benefit of the second mystery for as long as she can concentrate. Also, she learns how to use lesbian sex to become more fertile for heterosexual sex later, increasing her chances of conception to 50% if she has sex with a male within 24 hours of having sex with a woman.
- ❖ The fifth mystery of Hathor teaches the priestess how to increase the fertility of another woman by having sex with her, transferring her own power of increased conception to another woman.
- ❖ The sixth mystery of Hathor/Sukhmet is about the 'secret name' of all beings. By making a Knowledge is Power

check (DC 35) a keeper of this mystery can *remember* the secret name of some object or person at hand, and can use that name as a form of Fate Point. She can use the name to save a person from poison, or to cause someone's weapon to do maximum damage against the target, or force the person to re-roll a saving throw or whatever else the Games Master feels is appropriate. If the character also knows the seventh mystery of Seshet, the DC is only a 25.

## HEQAT, FROG-GODDESS OF MIDWIVES

Heqat is depicted either as a woman with the head of a frog or simply as a frog. She is the daughter of Set and Derketo. On amulets or ivory knives she is shown as a frog, but on objects allowing for larger art, such as on scrolls or temple walls, she is depicted as a frog-headed woman. She is a miracle worker in regards to childbirth. She can hasten labour and deliver even the most difficult of babies safely. Midwives are known as the 'servants of Heqat'. Pregnant women are often given amulets depicting her as a frog by physicians. She has no actual priesthood but is worshipped by the people as a protector of pregnant women and a patron of midwives. Those Stygian sorcerers casting a counterspell on a pregnant woman will often call upon the power of Heqat. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +5 bonus to any one roll related to a spell from the counterspells sorcery style cast by them for the benefit of a pregnant woman if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action. Also, priests initiated in the second mystery of Set may add a +2 competence bonus to any Heal check made regarding a pregnant woman.

## IBIS, THE BANISHED GOD OF ALCHEMY

Ibis is a god forbidden in Stygia. A god of moonlight and knowledge, he is self-created, depicted either as an ibis-headed human or simply as an ibis. He always carries a pen and scrolls and is the recorder of all things. He invented alchemy and, until his banishment, was the scribe of Set. He created the law of the monster-kings and is said to have married truth, proclaiming the Giant-Kings and the things of old to be more powerful than the dusky-skinned usurpers of the Styx. When the Khari came to the lands of the Styx, they vanquished the Giant-Kings of old, horrible monsters with antiquated laws. These kings fled the lands of the Styx and founded Acheron. When they fled, they took Ibis with them, as well as Set. The Khari, however, to indicate a new order was coming, banished the old scribe and gave Set a new scribe, Djehuty. The old scribe continued to serve Set



in the pantheon of Acheron. When Acheron fell, the cult of Ibis survived by renouncing any allegiance to the cult of Set, proclaiming Set as an oppressor. It erected a façade of goodness and morality to protect itself. When the cult of Mitra swept through the Hyborian nations, this façade continued to protect Ibis' sorcerous cult. This cult survives to this day in Nemediā, the old heart of Acheron, in the city of Hanumar. Hanumar is the home of Kalanthes, the last Acheronian-style high priest alive today. Another cult of Ibis exists at the Oasis of Nafri. The high priestess of Ibis there is named Paniwi and was trained in Acheronian alchemy and magic by Kalanthes himself.

Ibis is a relatively small but respected cult and has cordial relations with the cult of Mitra in Nemediā. Their shared opposition to Set in Stygia gives them a common cause but some of the priests of Mitra are reasonably suspicious of the Ibis worshippers, distrusting anything with such a close connection to the land of their enemies. After all, Ibis was once a respected part of the grim, bestial pantheon of gods worshipped by the Giant-Kings of old, then became a respected god among the black-hearted pantheon of Acheron and only when Acheron was in flames did the cult suddenly become respected as 'goodly'. Many suspect this façade is but a false-face on a darker truth.

Ibis himself is now portrayed to outsiders as a simple moon-god, a patron of scholars and those who seek to gain sorcerous knowledge but use it for moral ends. He is also portrayed as having an abiding hatred of Set, a serpent who oppresses knowledge and true alchemy. It is whispered that worshippers of Ibis survive in Stygia itself, keeping their religion secret but ever eager to foil the schemes of Set and his followers at any opportunity. It is also whispered that the cult of Ibis may be just as evil as the cult of Set, just opposed to the serpent-god's cult. It is also whispered that its supposed 'morality' is the morality of Acheron – but those who whisper such things do not whisper them for long. Ibis is an ancient god of knowledge and its priests *know* things that should not be known.

**Requirements of Worship:** Pay a tithe worth 2 sp/level/month to the priests of Ibis; report any Set-worship, sorcery or related activity to your nearest priest of Ibis as soon as possible; publicly oppose those who carry out human sacrifice or trafficking with demons.

**Benefits of Worship:** Faith, Atonement, Spells (Counterspells and Divination only), may call on priests for protection against Set and his minions generally.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows. Must know Counterspells sorcery style. Must be willing to fight Set and his minions wherever they are found, even at great personal risk. May not associate with demonic entities or minions of Set. May not learn the Curses, Necromancy or Summonings sorcery styles until invited to the Inner Circle of Ibis.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (Counterspells, Divination, Prestidigitations). Those of the Inner Circle may learn any sorcery, for Ibis records all things. Although Ibis hides things, he does not like for things to be forgotten.

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Excommunication, unless the priest has been associating with minions of Set, in which case capture and summary execution.

## IDRIS, THE DEFENDER OF SET, THE EYE OF DIVINE VENGEANCE (EDJO; BUTO)

Idris is the protector of Set and Stygia, as well as its king. She is the cobra-goddess and appears on the Crown of Stygia as the cobra with the hood flared wide open in aggression. She is also a mongoose-goddess. She is not a passive defender, awakened when attacked – no, she is an aggressive defender, a believer in pre-emptive strikes against those she believes harbour ill-will against her. She is the cobra in the bush, who strikes unexpectedly and often with the flimsiest of excuses while calling upon the name of Set, always claiming to be

doing his work even while working toward her own hidden goals; by invoking the name of Set she believes she protects herself against the animosity of the people for her mistakes in judgement and for her war-mongering lies.

She is portrayed as a nude woman with a cobra's hood spread in a threatening position. She spits poison on her enemies and burns them with the self-righteous glare of the sun, for her eye is the burning sun of the noon-desert, a personification of the withering heat of the desert. She carries with her a papyrus stem which coils about her like a cobra. She is also depicted as a cobra coiled in a basket with a red crown upon her head. Idris is also seen as a mongoose. The mongoose is one of her sacred animals, especially when she is being deceptive. Many worshippers bring her temples mongoose-mummies to please her. The giant-kings and the Acheronians called her Edjo. Her name among the Khari was Buto. Both names are still found in use in old documents and spells but her currently accepted name is Idris. She has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. Priests of Set who favour this goddess often take the Loathsome Weapon feat (from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*).

Many of the eldritch spells recorded in *Conan: The Free Companies* call upon Idris when an aggressive Stygian casts them outside the boundaries of Stygia. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +2 bonus to any one roll related to a spell from *Conan: The Free Companies* cast by them while in a foreign land if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action. Worshippers who have Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw and/or Improved Initiative often claim to have been blessed by Idris.

## IMSETY, PROTECTOR OF THE HEART

The man-child of Harakht and Hathor, Imsety died upon birth, cursed by Usir, who was jealous of his sister-wife's infidelity. Born as a man, his dead body (along with his three brothers) was thrown into the River Styx but it fell amongst the Ta Neheh Lotus, which sustained him in his death. The old serpent, Set, was pleased with the infidelity and anger of Usir. Set ordered Sobek to fetch the children and give them to Yinepu, who resurrected the children as mummies swathed in linen. Imsety, like his brothers, became assistant to Yinepu, taking on funerary duties. Yinepu, to protect Imsety, assigned Hathor to guard the man-child. He has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. Imsety is represented as a mummified man sitting on a Lotus flower. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +2 bonus to save against a *Draw Forth the Heart* spell cast at them if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-

equivalent action. Priests initiated in the third mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +2 bonus to any one roll related to a save against a disease affecting the heart if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## ISHITI, THE DEMON-GODDESS OF TIME

Ishiti is an eldritch snake demoness linked to Set and his black pantheon of grim gods. She is a demon who variously appears as a woman who is snake-like from the waist down with snakes for hair. She governs time, serpents and snake-men. Even though she is a demon goddess of Set, she is not without compassion. She was originally worshipped by the snake-men of prehistory before they were slain by King Kull.

She is the demon that was summoned to guard the Haunted Pyramids in Stygia. For the tomb-builders in the necropolis outside of Luxur, she is a dangerous but merciful goddess who loves silence. She abhors liars and sinners. She is so fierce in her pursuit of liars she is called the Lion of the Summit. For the pious, she is a defender against snakebites, especially for tomb-workers.

**Requirements of Worship:** Obey priests of Set, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe 2 sp/level/month to the local temple

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must sacrifice at least one victim per year to Ishiti; must know at least two sorcery styles and the Tortured Sacrifice feat; obey the high priest of Set; obey the high priest of Ishiti

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available in any style save Oriental Magic.

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Betrayers of Ishiti or Set are sent to an island on a different plane and imprisoned and tortured for all eternity.

## KEBB, THE GREAT CACKLER

Kebb is the son of Shu and Tef Maûti Nu. He is also the brother and husband of Nuit. He is the god of the earth and its infinite bounty. His skin is dark brown or green (the colour of fertile earth) and he has leaves growing on him. He is pictured laying underneath his sister in a reclined position, leaning on one elbow with one knee up to represent the hills and valleys of the earth. He lusts heavily for his sister and is forcibly separated from her by

his father. He also pines for his mother. The goose is a sacred animal to Kebb and he often wears one upon his head. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a spell designed to create or benefit from sex or sexual lust (such as the *Dance of Atali* or *Enslave* spells in *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*) if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## KHEPRA, THE RISING SUN

Khepra is the god of the rising sun and is depicted as a human with a dung beetle's head. He has an attribute of self-generation and self-renewal, thus he is fatherless and motherless. He is the god of dung beetles as well. He rolls the sun along the sky just as the dung beetle rolls balls of dung across the ground. He has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. He is daily born from Nuit, dropping from her to raise up the sun in the morning. He crawls into the sun as it nears noon (when Idris opens her eyes to glare down on the world ever watchful for threats against Lord Set) and Harakht carries the sun until the god of sunset claims it and changes its colours. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +2 bonus to any one roll related to a spell from the immortality sorcery style (from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*) if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## KHNEMU, THE SOURCE OF THE STYX

Khnemu is one of the oldest gods known, born of Set and Tef Maäuti Nu. His sister is Satet. He is a ram-headed man with flat horns and a white crown. A jug of water floats above his head and water pours from his outstretched hands. He is the source of the River Styx. He is also the patron god of potters, for he is said to have lovingly built man's physical forms in all their varieties (and sexes) on a potter's wheel. He was once the spouse of his daughter, Anuket, by whose power the Styx was made fertile, and he still hides from even the shadow of Set, for Set decreed Anuket to become Derketo, the whore of the gods, and especially his own whore, to promote her fertility. Khnemu is now regarded as the spouse of Neith.

He has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +2 bonus to any one roll related to a spell involving water (other than mere rain) if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## MAAHES THE LION, SON OF BAST, GOD OF STORMS

Maahes is the black-hearted son of Bast and Set and is depicted in flat art as a lion-headed man in a short kilt holding a knife and a bouquet of lotuses. Statues depict him as a full lion with a knife under one paw and a lotus plant under the other. He is a war god as well as a god of thunder and darkness. He is sent by Set to protect sacred places and he is the patron god of tomb- and temple-guardians. He has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. The priests of Bast also invoke him and serve as his priests should one be needed. Those sorcerers using magic to create a storm often call upon Maahes in their spells. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +2 bonus to any one roll related to a spell involving rain or severe weather if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## MIN KOPTOS, THE NOBLE PHALLUS OF MAN

Min Koptos is the Stygian god of male fertility, bestowing sexual prowess to all men. He is a rain god, the son of Khnemu and Neith. He is a bearded man in a heavily aroused state with his legs close together. He wears the same headdress as Set and holds a stroke of lightning in an upraised hand. Orgiastic festivals are held in his honour, the male versions of Derketo's festivals celebrating female sexuality. The white bull is sacred to Min Koptos as is the long lettuce. The priests of Min tend to spend a lot of time with priestesses of Derketo and the priestesses of Min tend to spend a lot of time with the priests of Derketo. Of course, both deities have no problem with same-sex couplings either. When the king or other regional ruler makes a wife or concubine pregnant, an orgiastic celebration in honour of Min Koptos is held by the city or town.

**Requirements of Worship:** Pay a tithe worth 2 sp/level/month to the priests of Min; participate in at least three orgies a year.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells (Counterspells, Divination and Nature Magic only); Orgies (at least once a month).

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must know at least the first mystery of Min Koptos; knowing the first mystery of Derketo helps.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (Counterspells, Divination and Nature Magic only); perks include training noble boys in the ways of pleasure.

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** None.

**Inner Mysteries:** Learning the mystery of Min Koptos is cause for Corruption (saves at DC 9+ the rank of the

mystery). It is learned by taking 3 ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Min Koptos).

☞ The mystery of Min Koptos teaches conception and how the myths of the Set cult relate to conception and birth. Humans generally have a 20% chance for conception (barring the use of pessaries or other contraceptives), but a keeper of this mystery enhances his fertility to the point of a 50% chance of conception.

## MONTU, RAGING SLAYER OF THE SUN'S ENEMIES

Montu, Son of Harakht and Derketo, is a falcon-headed god of war with the disk of the sun above his head, surrounded by bull's horns. He holds multiple weapons in his hands, including scimitars, khopeshes, knives and bows and arrows. He protects the sun on its journey across the sky. He is the patron of those who succumb to fighting-madness and those who strike out of anger. Many of the spells recorded in *Conan: The Free Companies* call upon Montu when a Stygian casts them. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Harakht can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a spell cast in anger if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## NEFERTEM, GOD OF PERFUME AND THE BLACK LOTUS

He is a lion-headed man, the son of Bast and Min Koptos, who wears a lotus plant and two feathers on his head. He taught the Stygians the importance of smelling nice and created the first black lotus plant, teaching sorcerers its value. Many Stygian sorcerers call upon him when creating sorcerous gardens. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +5 bonus to the Craft (herbalism) check made for a *Fruit of Air* spell (from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*) or +2 HD worth of size when growing magical plants with the *Sorcerous Garden* spell if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## NEITH, THE SHE-MALE ARBITRATOR

Neith is shown as a seated lioness-headed woman with a bow and two arrows in her hands and a shuttle on her head as a crown (a shuttle is used in weaving). She is a god of war and a goddess of the home, with both a masculine and feminine nature. She is also self-produced. Her son is Sobek, so she is often shown nursing a crocodile. She stole the bow and arrow from the Shemites in battle and refashioned it for the

Stygians, securing her place as a war-goddess. Neith is a patron of judges (due to her dual nature and ability to see both sides of any argument) and during a dispute with the gods of the Sons of Shem she ordered the Shemite gods to present to Set the goddess Derketo as his whore. Khnemu, who had sided with the Sons of Shem by lowering the waters of the Styx, was ordered to surrender his beloved wife, Anuket, to Set to use as his woman also. Also by her order, Derketo and Anuket became as one woman. Neith, who sympathised with Khnemu, became Khnemu's spouse, serving both as wife and male lover as desired. She also serves as the protector of Th'mumathph. She is the patron of wisdom. She has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a shot from a bow or a Craft (weaving) check if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## NEKHEBET, THE RIGHT EYE OF SET

Nekhebet the vulture-goddess is the sister of Idris the cobra-goddess. Both are daughters of Set and Tawerat. Along with her sister, Nekhebet is one of the defenders of Set, although she is hardly as proactive as her aggressive sister. She is shown with her wings spread above Set (or images of the king) in a protective manner. She and Idris share Hap-I as a husband. She is portrayed as a vulture with a white crown, her wings spread out as a shield and an ankh in her hands. She appears next to her sister on the crown of Stygia. She is a home-land defender and, unlike her sister, does not bring the defence of Set or Stygia to foreign lands. However, if an enemy crosses into Stygia she is all business, hovering over the enemy as a black, winged doom, ready to attack at the first sign of weakness or uncertainty. She has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the people of Stygia. Many of the spells recorded in *Conan: The Free Companies* call upon Nekhebet when a defensive Stygian casts them within the boundaries of Stygia. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +2 bonus to any one roll related to a spell from *Conan: The Free Companies* cast by them against foreigners in Stygia if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## NEPHTHYS, THE LADY OF THE HOUSE, BARREN WIFE OF SET

Nephthys, also called Nebhet in Acheronian times, is the great-

granddaughter of Set as well as his wife. She is a goddess of the sandy desert and thus she is barren and fruitless like the desert. She is the sister of Hathor and Usir. She is shown as a nude, winged woman with her name floating above her head. She is a loyal friend to her sister, Hathor. Grieved because of her childlessness, she conceived a plan to have a baby, disguising herself as her sister and seducing her brother Usir, the most fertile of the male gods. The power of his fertility overcame her barrenness and she was with child, a fact that angered Set greatly. However, the desert goddess was not powerful enough to give birth to a live child and the jackal-headed child she birthed was stillborn. As she grieved Set looked over the child and either out of pity or out of vengeance gave the child a semblance of life, resurrecting it as one of the living dead. Set named the child Yinepu and made him a lord of embalming. Since she proved to herself she was not as barren as she thought, she went to Khnemu, who blessed her with the waters of life. She went unto Set and conceived Sobek, the crocodile. Nephthys' wail upon seeing the horror of the monster she birthed could be heard around the world. Set, the old serpent, merely laughed and told his son to play in Khnemu's waters. Nephthys' symbols include the kite, the crow, the sandstorm, bleached bones and skulls. She is a goddess of mourning and grief. She has no dedicated priests because of her infidelity to Set but is called upon as needed by all the people of Stygia. Her followers are often professional mourners. Her temples are found in necropolises, often attached to larger temples. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a spell from the necromancy sorcery style cast by them if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## NUIT, THE INSATIABLE Sky

Nuit is the daughter of Shu and Tef Ma'uti Nu. She is the loving sister and wife of Kebb. She is also the everlasting sky. She is usually portrayed as a woman whose hands and feet touch the ground with her body arching overhead in a semi-circle, representing the heavens. Her husband, Kebb, usually is shown lying beneath her, reclining on one elbow with his knees in the air to represent the hills and valleys of the earth. She is sexually compulsive and would not stop copulating with her brother, Kebb. The continual sexual antics of Kebb and Nuit eventually angered Set, because if the sky and the earth continually slammed against each other, he could not do anything upon that earth. He ordered Nuit and Kebb's father to hold her aloft, higher than Kebb could reach. Thus Shu brought an end to chaos. Still, her copulation had left her pregnant. Set was furious.

He cursed Nuit so she could not give birth on any month of the 360 day year. Ibis, the scribe of Set at the time, was god of the moon and used its light to

create five extra days, making the year 365 days and giving Nuit a chance to give birth to her five children. She is the mother of Hathor, Nephthys, Usir, Khephra and Harakht. Daily Ehtum passes the sun into the mouth of Nuit. As the sun passes through her body, the world is enveloped in darkness until she gives birth to Khephra, who again lifts up the sun for its daily passage.

Nuit the Insatiable does not have dedicated priests or priestesses but is called upon as needed by all the people of Stygia. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a spell aimed to cause chaos among an enemy host if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action. Priests initiated in the third mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +2 bonus to any one roll related to a spell designed to create or benefit from sex or sexual lust (such as the *Dance of Atali* or *Enslave* spells in *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*) if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## QEB SNEUF, PROTECTOR OF THE INTESTINES

The falcon son of Harakht and Hathor, Qebsneuf died upon birth, cursed by Usir, who was jealous of his sister-wife's infidelity. Born as a falcon, his dead body (along with his three brothers) was thrown into the River Styx but it fell amongst the Ta Neheh Lotus, which sustained him in his death. The old serpent, Set, was pleased with the infidelity and anger of Usir. He ordered Sobek to fetch the children and give them to Yinepu, who resurrected the children as mummies swathed in linen. Qebsneuf, like his brothers, became assistant to Yinepu, taking on funerary duties. Yinepu, to protect Qebsneuf, assigned Selkhet to guard the falcon-child. He has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. Qebsneuf is represented as a mummified falcon sitting on a Lotus flower. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a spell affecting the intestines if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action. Priests initiated in the third mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a save against a disease affecting the intestines if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## SATET, SHE WHO BATHES SET

Satet is the sister of Khnemu and the mother of Anuket (who became Derketo). She is the daughter of Set and Tef Ma'uti Nu. She cleanses Set with waters from the River Styx,

poured from four sacred vessels. She is the goddess of the star whose annual return to the night sky above Stygia signals the inundation of the River Styx. She does not have dedicated priests or priestesses but is called upon as needed by all the people of Stygia. She protects public baths and is a patroness of barbers, for she also shaves the gods and goddesses, as well as cleansing them. She is charged with the purification of all the gods, in addition to being Set's personal bather.

## SELKHET, THE GRUESOME LADY OF THE BEAUTIFUL TENT

Selkhet was worshipped primarily by the Giant-Kings and the Acheronians as a goddess of magic; her centre of worship was the ancient city of Khet, now in ruins. Her symbol is the scorpion and she appears as a beautiful nude woman with the head and tail of a scorpion. Now relegated to a goddess of the dead, she protects Qebsneuf and is a protector of the embalmer's tent, thus she is known as the Lady of the Beautiful Tent. In the days of Acheron she was also associated with childbirth and nursing. Now she still has that duty, although it has been altered; she is now in charge of childbirth and nursing in the afterlife, allowing the dead to be fertile. She is also invoked as a protector against poisonous bites. She no longer has dedicated priests or priestesses but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a Craft (mummy) check if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made an hour beforehand. Priests initiated in the third mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +2 bonus to any one roll related to a Heal check or save against poisonous bites if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## SESHET, SET'S LIBRARIAN AND ARCHITECT, THE PAINTED LADY

Seshet is a scribe goddess who stores the writings of Djehuty, Set's scribe. She is a master of sacred geometry and a skilled architect. She is depicted as a beautiful woman wearing a leopard-skin kilt. A seven-pointed star hovers over her head, representing her seven mysteries. Above the star floats a pair of inverted cow horns in a down-turned crescent shape. She holds a wand with a seven-pointed star on one end which is said to be the source of all inspiration. She is the patron of all wands and is also a goddess of cosmetics. She invented writing and Djehuty taught it to mankind. Seshet is the essence of cosmic sorcery and her sorcerous priests and priestesses learn the Cosmic Sorcery style from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*.



She has no temples in her honour but she does have priests and priestesses.

**Requirements of Worship:** Must be trained as a scribe, physician, alchemist or other profession involving numbers or writing; obey priests of Set, Djehuty and Seshet, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe 2sp/level/month to the local temple.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must know the Skill

Focus (Knowledge (engineering)) and the Skill Focus (Craft (alchemy)) feats; obey the high priest of Djehuty and the high priest of Set, obey the laws of the land in Stygia. Must be trained as a scribe.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic, unless the fourth mystery is learned and this option chosen).

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Banishment from Stygia.

**Inner Mystery:** Learning the mysteries of Seshet is done by taking ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Seshet). Every three ranks makes one eligible for the next mystery.

- ✧ The first mystery of Seshet is that of *Iku*, or the impulse that causes a person to want to change and grow. The character gains a bonus of 10% to all experience awarded from now on.
- ✧ The second mystery of Seshet is *Mer*, the awareness of the duality of being, of being one yet wanting to be the other. This mystery brings unity to duality. Synergy bonuses for skills are granted at every five ranks, not just at having five ranks in a synergistic skill set. For example, if Hathor-Ka has ten ranks in Sense Motive, she gets a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks; however, if Hathor-Ka knows this mystery (by having at least 6 ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Seshet)), she would get a +4 synergy bonus to Diplomacy for her ten ranks in Sense Motive (+2 for five ranks, another +2 for ten ranks).
- ✧ The third mystery of Seshet is *Sekhem*, or Fire. This is the generation of new life from the union of being. The character gains +1 skill point per character level. This is retroactive with past levels. The skill points must all go into any one skill the character did not have previously – purchased as if it were a class skill.
- ✧ The fourth mystery of Seshet is *Kheper*, the essence of becoming. The world of actualisation is opened to the character. The character gains a +2 inherent bonus to Wisdom or the character can learn Oriental magic (Player's choice).
- ✧ The fifth mystery of Seshet is *Ab-ib*, the desire and thirsting of the soul. The power of *mer* becomes more pronounced. Synergy bonuses for skills become a +3 instead of a +2. However, if the character does not have an Obsession (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*), then the character must choose one. This obsession must be obtained before the next mystery can be learned.
- ✧ The sixth mystery of Seshet is *Tekh*, which is the drunkenness of the soul when it has absorbed all its desires and relishes in it. The bonus for absorbing the Obsession object is doubled. See *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules about ending Obsession. If the character defines a very specific goal to the Games Master, the character earns an additional +10% to his experience points

earned for the adventure if he accomplishes that goal by the end of the adventure. This is in addition to the bonus earned for the mystery of *Iku*.

- ✧ The seventh mystery of Seshet is *Sefekbt*. This is the manifestation of the seven-fold unity. The inscription of everything on earth, everything's signature, everything's secret name becomes manifest to this keeper. By making a Knowledge is Power check (DC 35) a keeper of this mystery can *remember* the secret name of some object or person at hand, and can use that name as a form of Fate Point. He can use the name to save a person from poison, or to cause someone's weapon to do maximum damage against the target, or force the person to re-roll a saving throw, grant a +1 inherent bonus to any one roll relating to an encounter with that thing or whatever else the Games Master feels is appropriate. For example, if a keeper of this mystery wants to burst through a door, he can scribe the secret name of the door on the door (or just say the secret name) and get a +1 on his check to break the door down. If the character also knows the seventh mystery of Hathor, the DC check is only a 25.

## SHU, THE WITHERED ONE WHO HOLDS UP THE sky

Shu is the heat of the sun and the dry desert air, the god of the light between heaven and earth. The father of both Nuit and Kebb, it fell to Shu to separate the two lovers, for Set called their constant coupling chaotic and disruptive. He is shown holding up his daughter while his son reclines beneath him. Shu is the son of Set and the husband of Tef Maauti Nu, his sister. He does not have dedicated priests or priestesses but is called upon as needed by all the people of Stygia. He is a force of preservation and enforcing the status-quo. Priests initiated in the third mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +3 bonus to any one roll related to a spell from the Immortality sorcery style (from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*) if a series of three Perform (ritual) checks (DC 18) are made before the casting of the actual spell.

## SOBEK, THE CROCODILE GOD

Sobek is a crocodile-headed god, the lord of crocodiles, the discarded son of Set and Nephthys, set loose to play in the waters that allowed his birth. He is worshiped to placate the large reptiles that prowl the Styx, preying upon the unwary. He is worshipped in all Stygian cities that depend upon water and his largest temple is in the oasis city of Arsinoe. Here are brought hundreds of mummified crocodiles annually by those wishing the help of the crocodile god, where they are buried in the necropolis. Living crocodiles at this cult centre are adorned with jewels and kept in large pools as pets.

Sobek is portrayed both as a large crocodile with a crown of power and as a man with a crocodile head. Sobek retrieved the four sons of Harakht and Hathor at the order of Set. He is a personification of evil in the Stygian world, and also symbolises vanity, luxury and deceit.

**Requirements of Worship:** Obey priests of Set and Sobek, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe 2sp/level/month to the local temple.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must know at least the Nature Magic sorcery style, one other sorcery style and the Tormented Sacrifice feat; obey the high priest of Sobek and the high priest of Set, obey the laws of the land in Stygia.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic); +4 circumstance bonus to all Gather Information and Intimidate checks while in Stygia.

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Feed them to crocodiles.

**Inner Mysteries:** Initiates into the inner mysteries of the cult of Sobek learn that the crocodile, which routinely pulls down large prey, is a symbol of going after what one desires, regardless of how big it is. They are learned by taking ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Sobek). Every three ranks makes one eligible for the next mystery.

- ☒ The first mystery of Sobek's cult teaches how to handle crocodiles, giving its keepers a +3 bonus to Handle Animal checks regarding crocodiles.
- ☒ The second mystery teaches how to use certain symbols to guide the initiate to increase his 'bite'. When using a weapon the sorcerer may make a Perform (ritual) DC 18 check as a move-equivalent action just before attacking. If successful in both ritual and attack, the keeper of the mystery may add one hit point of damage per die caused by the weapon.
- ☒ The third mystery aids sorcerers, teaching them how to use symbols and astrology to increase the potency of certain spells. If a spell cast by a sorcerer does physical damage, then, by making a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) as a move-equivalent action just before casting a spell, the sorcerer can add one hit point of damage per die caused by the spell.

## TEF MAAUTI NU, THE WATER OF THE SKY

Tef Maaui Nu is the rain goddess of the Stygians. She is pictured as a lioness-headed woman in a tight dress holding a sceptre and an ankh. A solar disk floats above her head circled by two cobras. She does not have dedicated priests or priestesses but is called upon as needed by all the people of Stygia. Those casting spells from the Weather Witching sorcery style from *Conan: Pirate Isles* often call upon her.

Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a spell affecting the rain if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action. Priests initiated in the third mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +3 bonus to any two rolls related to a weather-affecting spell if a series of three Perform (ritual) checks (DC 18, DC 22, DC 15) are made in an hour-long ritual performed immediately before the casting of the weather-related spell.

## TH'MUMATHPH, PROTECTOR OF THE STOMACH

The jackal son of Harakht and Hathor, Th'mumathph died upon birth, cursed by Usir, who was jealous of his sister-wife's infidelity with her son. His dead body (along with his three brothers) was thrown into the River Styx, but it fell amongst the Ta Neheh Lotus, which sustained him in his death. The old serpent, Set, was pleased with the infidelity and anger of Usir. Set ordered Sobek to fetch the children and give them to Yinepu, who resurrected them as mummies swathed in linen. Th'mumathph, like his brothers, became assistant to Yinepu, taking on funerary duties. Yinepu, to protect Th'mumathph, assigned Neith to guard the jackal. He has no dedicated priests but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. Th'mumathph is represented as a mummified jackal sitting on a Lotus flower. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to a spell affecting the stomach if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action. Priests initiated in the third mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain a +2 bonus to any one roll related to a save against a disease affecting the stomach if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action.

## TAWERAT, THE HIPPOPOTAMUS CONCUBINE OF SET

Tawerat is a hippopotamus goddess dedicated to the rebirth of the sun, serving as a midwife to Nuit each morning. She is a pregnant female hippopotamus with large, sagging human breasts, the hind legs of a lion and the tail of a crocodile. She stands erect and holds an ankh. She is one of the daughters of Set. Greatly revered in Stygia, she is one of Set's concubines. She is a protector of pregnant concubines and, like Heqat, a patron of midwives. Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to gain a +1 bonus to any one roll related to the birth of a child if a Perform

(ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action. Priests initiated in the third mystery of Set can call upon her in a symbolic fashion to increase the likelihood of conception by 50% if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a one-minute ritual performed prior to sexual activity.

## USIR, THE REBORN PHOENIX GOD, ACTIVATOR OF SET'S EYES

The god of fertile ground and vegetation, Usir is symbolised by the bull and the phoenix. Usir is portrayed as a pale Giant-King with a long beard and crown. He holds a flail and crook as symbols of his office as god of agriculture. He married his sister, Hathor. He was seduced by his other sister, Nephthys, and fathered Yinepu, the god of the dead, because Nephthys was barren and he was the personification of fertility. As the phoenix god, he symbolised the miraculous annual inundation of the River Styx and the growth of grain, followed by the recession of the river and the drought. He taught the early Stygians how to grow grain and eat proper food, instead of resorting to cannibalism, which some Nemedian scholars believe was the state of the Khari (the proto-Stygians) when they finally arrived at the lands of the Giant-Kings. It is said he helped the Khari conquer the Giant-Kings and, because of this, Set murdered Usir. Other stories claim he murdered Usir for sleeping with Nephthys, Set's favourite. Like a phoenix, Usir rose again from the bosom of the Styx. Set killed him again and scattered his body across the whole of the planet. His wife, Hathor, sought out the pieces of her husband but could not find them all. By exacting a promise that he would not attempt to assail his throne, Set allowed Usir to rise. Still he struggles to take the throne of Stygia away from Set, a struggle that is symbolic of the war between the dominant desert and the slim fertile regions of Stygia.

He has no official order of dedicated priests (by the order of the priests of Set, who see him as a rival) but is called upon as needed by all the priests of Stygia. His religion taught a system of seven power centres of the human body called 'stars' in Stygian hieroglyphs, an eastern belief still followed in Khitai. These 'stars' are now referred to as 'Set's Eyes.' Priests initiated in the second mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain +1 Power Points if a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) is made as a move-equivalent action. Priests initiated in the third mystery of Set can call upon him in a symbolic fashion to gain double their Wisdom bonus to their total Power Points if a series of three Perform (ritual) checks (DC 18, 20 and 22 respectively) are made as three standard actions.

## YINEPU, THE STILL-BORN JACKAL-HEADED GOD

Yinepu is the jackal-headed god of the dead. His holy symbol is a bloody ox-hide hanging from a pole. He carries a Stygian sceptre. At Set's command, he supervises the embalming of bodies and monitors the Scales of Truth. He is the son of Nephthys and Usir. The product of a barren goddess and the epitome of fertility he was still-born, but Set, angry as he was, gave Yinepu 'life' as an undead thing, giving Yinepu power over mummies and those who live again after death.

**Requirements of Worship:** Obey priests of Set and Yinepu, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe 2sp/level/month to the local temple.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must know at least the Nature Magic sorcery style, and the necromancy sorcery style and the Tormented Sacrifice feat; obey the high priest of Yinepu and the high priest of Set, obey the laws of the land in Stygia.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic); +4 circumstance bonus to all Gather Information and Intimidate checks while in Stygia, may wear animal skins.

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Wrap them in linen and bury them alive.

**Inner Mysteries:** The mysteries of Yinepu cause Corruption checks (DC 18) at each level. They are learned by taking ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Yinepu). Every three ranks makes one eligible for the next mystery.

- ✦ The first mystery of Yinepu teaches the crafting of mummies, giving the keeper of this mystery a +2 bonus to all Craft (mummy) checks.
- ✦ The second mystery of Yinepu teaches the sacred Litany of the Dead, wherein the initiate is shown the Book of Dead Names. The keeper of this mystery gains a +2 bonus to all Perform (ritual) checks made in regards to death rituals and Necromancy spells.
- ✦ The third mystery of Yinepu teaches the true power of necromancy, giving the character a +1 bonus to any one roll associated with a Necromancy spell if he can do a Perform (ritual) check (DC 18) as a move-equivalent action just before casting the spell.
- ✦ The fourth mystery is lost to modern Stygians.

## THE ROYAL CULTS

The kings of Stygia have a religious cult during their life and after their death, with rituals similar to those of the various gods, complete with statues and offerings. These cults are

mostly supported by part-time priests drawn from the local population. The statues of the kings must be cared for and the people of Stygia must be taught to continue to revere the kings of old as gods. An example of a royal cult is the Cult of Akivasha.

### Cult of Akivasha

The name of this ancient, evil, beautiful princess, the daughter of Tuthamon, who revelled in purple feasts amid the black halls of ancient Luxur is still heard throughout the Hyborian lands in song and legend as a beautiful symbol of eternal life. Ten thousand years ago, she loved life and all the meanings of life, and to win life she courted death. She could not bear to think of growing old and shrivelled and worn, and dying at last as hags die. Using dark rites, she 'wooded Darkness like a lover' and his gift was eternal life. According to the cult she ascended into the heavens to live as a goddess of youth.

**Requirements of Worship:** Obey priests of Set, even if called upon as a sacrifice; tithe 2sp/level/month to the local temple.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells.

**Requirements for Ordained Priesthood:** Must know at least the second Mystery, and have the desire for immortality; obey the high priest of Akivasha and the high priest of Set, obey the laws of the land in Stygia.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: sorcery teaching is available (any sorcery styles except Oriental Magic).

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Sacrifice them to the vampire Akivasha.

**Inner Mysteries:** The mysteries of Akivasha cause Corruption checks (DC 18) at each level. They are learned by taking ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Akivasha). Every three ranks makes one eligible for the next mystery.

- ❖ The first mystery of Akivasha teaches the meaning of eternal life and offers rituals to achieve it. Living sacrifices are left in front of her statue.
- ❖ The second mystery of Akivasha teaches that in truth she descended into the tombs of her ancient land as a vampire. The character is permitted to meet Akivasha and bring her living sacrifices in person.

## HERETICAL CULTS

Occasionally a disenchanting priest leaves the cult and attempts to found his own religion. This religious leader can only teach mysteries that he knows – unless another priest indoctrinates the heretic further, he simply is ignorant of the higher mysteries of his own cult. Often this split is because of misinterpreted visions encountered through the Lotus dreams.

### The Heresy of the Parath

One such heresy revolves around a quasi-deity known as the Parath. The members of this heresy believe the Parath is a lost God of Stygia and, in the time before men when Stygia was wholly fertile, was friend to Set and Ibis. Since Set and Ibis were jealous of each other, the Parath tried to make peace between them. Both Ibis and Set turned on the Parath. Set trapped him in the body of a great serpent. Ibis then led the Parath into the desert and killed him.

This heresy teaches that Set is a living force of evil and Ibis is a living force of good. The Parath is the living force of neutrality. This heresy teaches that Set, Ibis and the Parath are the three Creator Gods. This cosmology runs contrary to the accepted Stygian cosmology in virtually every way. However, its adherents believe fully in its truth. This heresy was founded by priests who only knew the first mystery of the cult and thought this mystery answered all the questions. If asked, virtually no orthodox Stygian priest will even know what the Parath is (Knowledge is Power check DC 30) and if one *has* heard of the Parath, he is most likely to laugh at the ignorance of those who listen to such heretics.

**Historical Note:** The Parath is an apocryphal god created by Steven York for his trilogy of stories set in Stygia about a young priest of Set named Anok. The story hinges on priests who believe in the reality of Set and have decided to betray Set for the supposed greater power of the Parath. The cosmology presented in that trilogy requires the presence of Good, Evil and Neutrality as true forces, such as might be found in most fantasy roleplaying games. It presupposes that those who worship Set know they are evil and accept this about themselves. The cosmology of York's trilogy is largely incompatible with the religion of Stygia presented here for *Conan the Roleplaying Game* but is offered in this manner in order to accommodate those who might wish to incorporate the material in their campaigns and justify its presence without negating the rest of this chapter.

### Other Heresies

In a like manner, a Games Master may incorporate religious factions that oppose the traditional cults, which could make for an entire campaign. Campaigns can revolve around a nefarious or rebellious movement to have a god or goddess added to the pantheon or to have one removed. Some heresies treat Mitra as an element of the Stygian pantheon and that Set strives against Mitra. Often these heresies again portray Set as the 'evil' god and Mitra as the 'good' god. In the orthodox Stygian view, there is no Mitra. Hence, Set has no interest in Mitra. He is not part of the pantheon of gods and does not teach a symbolic truth to the Stygians. However, there are heretical cults (especially in Taia) who

teach otherwise. Most common Stygians, however, will never have heard of Mitra. He is simply not seen as a rival to Set in any way.

## THE PRIESTHOOD

The priests of Stygia, largely composed of priests of Set, hold the reins of power, both in government and in temple hierarchies. Despite the modern meaning of the word priest, the word to a Stygian does not necessarily mean a religious leader. Anyone serving a function for a temple or the government is called a priest. The most able in society are found and invited to join the priesthood, allowed to move up in society and allowed to supervise others once the training is complete. Most priests in Stygia are actually 'part-time,' serving one month out of every three. Priests also hand their positions down from father to son. The High Priest of the Temple decides who will be called to priesthood.

## INITIATION

Priests are initiated into the priesthood by a ritual shaving of all bodily hair followed by a baptism in a sacred pool to symbolise the coming out of the Cosmic Ocean. If the candidate has not been circumcised, he undergoes the appropriate ceremony. The candidate is anointed with oil and sprinkled further with water. The candidate is then led to the statue of the god or goddess of the temple and taught the secret ways to touch and work with the statue. The candidate is then lead away for a ten day fast. At the end of the ten days, the initiate is exposed to black lotus blossom (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*) in order to reveal the inner mysteries of the god or goddess necessary for their job. These characters are permitted to take Profession (priest) ranks. They do not take the Priest feat.

The next level in the Cult of Set is even more arduous. Hereafter the next mysteries of the cult are laid bare in a mystifying display of snake worship. Two Stygian cobras are brought forth and made to crawl toward the initiate, their hoods spread wide. The initiate must stare into the unblinking eyes of the cobras and extend his right hand. The initiate must swing his hand and arm in a commanding manner, back and forth in an arc, charming the cobras to sway against each other and move their bodies vertically upward as they sway. The initiate must charm the snakes so they begin swaying in unison in opposite direction in a hypnotic pattern. The initiated priests light the lotus incense as the high priest uses mirrors and legerdemain to make a ray of light shine between the deadly serpents. The snakes spiral around the spike of light, taking an opposite rotation. The high priest tells the initiate to behold the Tempter and the Redeemer with their conflicting natures making all manifestations. The

high priest tells the initiate the change of consciousness the cobras represent will lead the new priest to wisdom.

The third level in the Cult of Set is even darker. The initiate is made to stand in front of a sarcophagus. A nude acolyte brings forth a lapis lazuli platter with an alabaster vessel on it. The vessel is decorated with an image of the winged sun wrapping its wings around the vessel. Bread dissolved in water is within the vessel. The high priest gives the initiate the vessel and commands the initiate to drink, telling him that this is the bread and water of life. The initiate is instructed to lie down in the sarcophagus, which is then sealed by the acolytes in the ritual manner. The initiate must remain in the sarcophagus for three days to feel the death of flesh and suffer a symbolic death. At the end of the third day, seven mysterious figures in white approach the sarcophagus as musicians play weird music. The seven high priests form a chain around the sarcophagus and chant an ancient spell 'resurrecting' the initiate. The tomb is opened and the initiate is released as an acolyte of the next mystery. If there are more initiates waiting, then they too are, one by one, placed in the sacred sarcophagus.

The fourth level requires the initiate to be bitten by a cobra in a public ritual. If the initiate survives, he is permitted to pass on and learn the next mysteries; otherwise he is buried in an unmarked tomb and forgotten, cursed to be unremembered and uncared for in the next world.

Other initiation ceremonies may exist, or the cult may use multiples of the above if further initiations into the upper echelons of the temple prove necessary. Different cults may use different variations. For example, the cult of Bast may use lions instead of cobras for the second level of initiation into their cult.

## ORDINATION

If a priest is to become a full time priest, either as a result of exemplary work as a part-time priest or as a result of birthstation or the honour of the High Priest, then the character may be ordained as a priest. To start on this path, another priest will initiate the character into the first mystery of that temple. He will serve for a term as a full-time priest and earn enough knowledge in the mysteries to have earned initiation into the second mystery of that temple. If the character meets all prerequisites then the character goes through another Initiation and must also make an appropriate sacrifice to the gods and to the king, often a blood sacrifice. Thereafter, the character is permitted to take the Priest feat and, if he has enough ranks in the Knowledge (mystery) skill, he may learn the second mystery of his cult. The ordained priest of Set is given a set of robes (or a mantle) befitting his status and is given a new ranking.



## RANK & PHYLE

Priests often specialise in some function or other, such as sacrifices or sorcery. Some priests function as diplomats and foreign dignitaries, other priests function as doctors. Almost the entire bureaucracy of Stygia is composed of priests. The largest temple complexes are almost cities in and of themselves, employing almost every sort of worker. Temple bakeries, breweries, fisheries, stables and farms can be found in these complexes. Produce and animals from the farms arrive constantly, and everything is recorded by temple scribes. Craftsmen and administrators also work here as well as the more permanent priests. The city of Luxur's Temple of Set employs more than 81,000 people, for example.

Part-time priests are appointed from the lower castes who function as porters, painters or scribes. These part-time priests are drawn from the best of all the classes and they serve for one month out of every three, a position of some prestige. The other two months they return to their daily lives. Serving as a part-time priest gives a character a +2 Reputation bonus when first chosen and characters receive a further +1 Reputation bonus each additional time they serve. Serving as a part-time priest (or priestess) is indicated by taking ranks in Profession (priest). It is a means of wealth and possible advancement, as one may interact more often with the higher echelons of society. Part-time priests are never taught sorcery.

Part-time priests are divided into four groupings called phyles. Each phyle works one month out of every three and is rotated, so the temple is always fully staffed. Those of the phyles retain their normal profession and lives (including wives and families) for the remaining eight months of the year. When a phyle is summoned, each member has to undergo a ritual shaving of all body hair, even the eyebrows. During the three months of the year the phyle serves, they are considered 'outside' of marriage and are not bound by the strictures and rules of marriage until they return to their regular life.

During the months of service, the phyles receive a higher share of the wealth than they would normally have, depending also on status and the type of work being done. The phyles are often allowed to keep their families on temple land. Any Profession or Craft check made while working at the temple earns twice as much income for the character for that month.

The hierarchy of Stygian priests is complex. There are several rankings of High Priest, ranging from First Prophets, to Priests of Deeds, down to the Sem Priests and High Priests of the Temples. Below the high priests are the specialist priests.

Listed below are some typical ranks within the temples. Priests can have more than one rank. For example, a priest can be the Second Prophet of Set at Luxur, Sem Priest of the Royal Necropolis and High Priest of Bast at Khemi. Priests can also hold rankings outside of the temple. A priest could be High Priest of Harackht, Master of the King's Horses and Overseer of the Cattle of the temple of Set. Each title confers a +2 bonus to Reputation, so many priests actively seek multiple titles and rankings. The list below is by no means exhaustive but are given as samples. Some rankings are administrative and are usually held by non-sorcerers (who usually have better and darker things to do than to be a low- or mid-level manager).

There are five main divisions to the various temples of Stygia: the House of the Black Circle, the Harem of the God, The Labourers, The Craftsmen, The Administrators. Other than the priests of the House of the Black Circle, the various divisions do not really outrank each other. An acolyte priest of potters has the same standing as an acolyte priest of astrology.

### The Administrators of the Temple

These are the decision-makers of the temple complex. The administrators maintain the store houses and all records. There are all sorts of ranks and offices, such as the acolyte priest of the granary to the priest of armour inventory. Two well known ranks are listed here:

- **Hem Netjer (High Priest of the Temple):** The high priest is in



charge of the temple. He is almost always sorcerous or so skilled in alchemy he may as well be sorcerous. The high priest is not concerned with the spread of his god's teachings or even his god's superiority. It is not his job to see to the spiritual or moral welfare of the people. Publicly, his job is to take care of the god and the god's needs; he is a servant of the god. In reality, he spends most of his time working on his personal power and prestige.

- ✧ **Āst Priest (Priest of the Shrine):** These are the highest ranking priests of each division within a temple complex: the House of the Black Circle, the Harem of the God, The Labourers, The Craftsmen, The Administrators. They advise the High Priest of the Temple.

### The House of the Black Circle

These priests, known as the priests of the Black Circle, administer to the Stygian masses, interpreting the dreams of the commoners, counselling and making 'magical' amulets and charms. This cult is shrouded in ancient mystery, and its libraries hold the most precious of magical texts. It is here that priests who are to be trained in sorcery come. They are trained in alchemy, herbalism and sorcery. Priests who enter this branch of the cult do not need to bother with the ceremonial trappings of their religion any more, such as dressing and feeding statues. They always add their title in the House of the Black Circle to whatever titles they may earn later. Most sorcerous priests, however, do not actually re-enter the day-to-day duties of temple life. The higher ranking members are no longer concerned with the basic functions of the religion but are on the path to personal power in sorcerous, political, economic and social circles. The Sem and Khor-Heb priests make sure the cult still manages to retain power over the masses, but those ranking above them really do not bother, trusting the other branches of the cult to take care of such mundane matters. These cult members start to learn the true measure of power and are considered members of the inner circles of their cults. Outsiders are occasionally invited to join the House of the Black Circle, and although they are not made into priests, they are expected to at least pay lip-service to Set. Those fully initiated into the dark heart of the House of the Black Circle with access to their inner-most teachings become Lords of the Black Circle. The Black Circle does its own recruiting. Some sample titles in the House of the Black Circle include:

- ✧ **Speaker of Set (First Prophet):** Appointed by the king only, the Speaker of Set, also known as the First Prophet, is the High Priest to the King. He is always sorcerous. He serves as a political advisor to the king and a political leader for all the temples he belongs to. He is in charge of all national magical rites and ceremonies. He may, in turn, appoint his own deputies as Second, Third and Fourth Prophets. He is often called the High Priest of the Cult. The current Speaker

of Set, High Priest to the King and First Prophet in the court of Ctesphon IV is Thoth-Amon, High Priest of the Cult.

- ✧ **Ārit Priest (Priest of Deeds):** There are only a few dozen Priests of Deeds in the cult of Set and they are attached to no individual temple, answering only to the Speaker of Set and his Prophets. The temple High Priests, the temples themselves, and all the resources of the cult are at their disposal.
- ✧ **Sem Priest:** The Sem priest is the only type of priest allowed to wear a leopard skin. The Sem priest's functions are with the mortuary cult. They are high ranking members of the House of Set.
- ✧ **Kher-Heb (Priest of Rituals):** A head officiating priest who holds the ritual papyrus. He is also called the Lector Priest. He is obligated to recite from papyrus scrolls exactly as written, no matter how many times he has read from the scroll, because a single mistake can anger the gods and send curses upon all the priests gathered. He is also at the head of any processions when the god is carried out before the people, reading a precise litany. This is often a pre-sorcerous stage in the temple, to prepare a priest for the rigours of actual sorcery.

### The Craftsmen of the Temple

These priests are almost never sorcerous unless they also hold ranks in the House of the Black Circle. There are many priests of these ranks, with ranks within, such as 'novice priest of horology', 'adept priest of horology', 'overseer of the priests of horology', and even a 'high priest of horology'. Many of the lower ranking priests are part-time. Once a priest becomes a 'high priest', he joins the temple full-time and becomes an administrator.

- ✧ **Priest of Healing:** These priests are the physicians and surgeons of the temple.
- ✧ **Priest of Horology:** These priests keep an accurate count of hours and days. They keep the calendar accurate. They advise of intercalary needs and upcoming festivals.
- ✧ **Priest of Astrology:** This priest is in charge of watching the cosmos. If from the House of the Black Circle, he can usually cast spells from the Cosmic Sorcery style presented in *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*. There are many of these priests and there are several rankings, similar to the priests of horology. They often interpret cosmological omens. Low ranking or part-time astrologers are usually not sorcerous.

### Harem of the Gods

This division of the priesthood is mostly for the women of the temples. It may be called Set's Harem in a temple of Set, or Harakht's Harem in a temple of Harakht. It may be its own temple under the umbrella of a larger temple. The Temple of Derketo in Luxur is part of this division of Set's Temple in Luxur. Many of the lower ranking priests are part-time.

- ❖ **Theseru Priest:** This is the priest or priestess in charge of the temple prostitutes. There are many of these priests and there are several rankings, similar to the priests of horology.
- ❖ **Musicians, Dancers, Prostitutes:** These are usually the roles played by female priestesses.
- ❖ **Umet Priestess:** These priestesses are charged with the clothing of the goddesses and making sure the statues are cleaned and maintained.

### Labourers of the Temple

Many of the lower ranking priests are part-time.

- ❖ **Menhu Priest:** These are slaughterer priests, in charge of slaughtering animals for meals.
- ❖ **Am-asi Priest:** These are priests in charge of labour. They are overseers of temple slaves.
- ❖ **Am-khent Priest:** These are priests in charge of preparing and cooking food.
- ❖ **Priest of Agriculture:** These priests supervise the lands owned by the temples
- ❖ **Umet Priest:** These priests and priestesses are charged with the clothing of the statuary and making sure the statues are cleaned and maintained.

Some priests exist in all five divisions. Only those within the House of the Black Circle are sorcerous. The name of the branch they serve is appended to their other title; for example, a priest of texts is usually called the Priest of Texts in the House of the Black Circle, or the Priest of Texts in the Labourers of the Temple.

- ❖ **Priest of Texts:** It is an extreme honour to be chosen as a scribe for a temple. Higher ranking scribes get to write magical texts and are often sorcerous. Lower ranking scribes write out decrees and generic books of the dead as well as other texts. The scribes are often assigned to other priests to record their doings and needs.
- ❖ **Priest of Acolytes:** These priests supervise the initiation and training of acolytes. There are many of these priests and there are several rankings, similar to the priests of horology.
- ❖ **Unnu Priest:** This priest or priestess is charged with shaving the bodies and heads of other priests completely of hair.
- ❖ **Acolyte:** This is the lowest initiated rank. There are Am-khent acolytes, acolytes of astrology and so on.

## RELIGIOUS DUTIES OF THE PRIESTS

The priests of Stygia have certain duties they are expected to perform upon pain of death. Many of the more mundane duties are performed for the purpose of satisfying the general population and maintaining the power of Set's cult.

### Purity

An important consideration for the priests is purity. Priests are held to a higher standard than the general population. Priests wash several times per day in ritual pools and remove all body hair to ensure purity to approach their god. Priests must be circumcised. Priests may not eat fish, which is believed to be an impure, peasant food.

Another duty in regards to purity lies in their clothing choices. Priests do not wear leather sandals or wool clothing, which Set has deemed to be unclean. However, Sem priests are permitted to wear a leopard skin. Priests wear a mantle to indicate their rank and status in the temple. Priests may wear papyrus sandals. Temple prostitutes of any rank go nude except for a wig and headdress indicative of their rank. Otherwise, they dress however they can afford to dress (either as workers or nobility). Sorcerous priests often wear scarlet robes, trimmed with gold, of a Priest of Set in the House of the Black Circle.

### Rituals

Certain rituals are expected to be followed in each temple. Ceremonies are required by law and priests must perform these services. Examples of these required rites are numerous: crops must be blessed; all children must be consecrated to Father Set; and even the dead have requisite funerary rites that must be performed. The god of the temple resides in a shrine and there are three rituals a day. At dawn the temple singers awaken the god with a morning song intended to stimulate the god's sense of hearing. The Priest of the Morning conducts a morning ritual to open the doors to the shrine of the god. The statue of the god is disrobed and purified. Incense is burned to stimulate the god's sense of smell, the god is dressed, perfumed and made-up with cosmetics. Later, the priests bring offerings to the god in the form of food and drink in large quantities to stimulate the god's sense of taste. The offerings are made with bountiful quantities of flowers from the temple florists to stimulate the god's sense of sight. As the god absorbs the offerings dancers entertain the god. This offering ceremony is repeated later in the day.

Other daily rituals include the appeasing of Sukhmet, Set's arm of vengeance. In another shrine are 70 statues of Sukhmet. The priests of the morning must perform a certain ritual before one or more of these statues (as determined by the horologists and astrologers) to stave off the mass death of the Stygian people. In the afternoon, the priests of risen son must perform similar ceremonies before the same chosen statues. Most of these daily rituals are performed by part-time phyles of priests under the supervision of a full-time priest. The reason for this relates to the reason the ceremonies are done, which is the perpetuation of the Stygian culture with the priestly class on top. If the part-time phyles see the veneration done

and the importance given the statues and the dead, they will talk about this when they return to their daily lives. Then the people will see that the priests are a necessary part of life and need to stay in control lest chaos take Stygia.

These rites and objects serve to impress upon the believers their obligations. Statues are a temporary dwelling for the divine. Note that the object itself is not divine, merely a manifestation or dwelling. The objects are a source of inspiration and comfort, not some sort of golem to come to life if one prays hard enough, although a sorcerer might delude his followers into thinking such by animating the statue once in a while. A sacramental religion such as Set's regards a statue of a god or ancient king as a dwelling place of the divine *ka*. Sacred objects, especially if they carry sacred substances, are treated with reverence at all times and mysterious rituals transmit the divine power to the participants.

## DAILY LIFE

The actual daily life of a priest or priestess depends a lot on their rank within the priesthood. Priests are often rotated from position to position, even from branch to branch, as needed. Priests are expected to bathe at least once a day but often three times a day if possible, and must constantly be shaven of all body and head hair. Generally the priests perform governmental offices or hold management positions as overseers and accountants. Some of their day, especially for the full-time priests or the wealthy, is spent training in the mysteries of their temple.

## SORCERY

Some gifted and darkly promising priests may also learn eldritch sorcery from the temple of Set in addition to mysterious alchemy and secret herbalism tricks and skills. Most priests in Stygia are non-sorcerous, despite their reputation. Virtually all the priests are skilled alchemists and experts at tricks of Sleight-of-Hand and Bluff, making the unobservant believe *all* Stygian priests are inherently sorcerous. The priests of Stygia hold cryptic rituals in shadowed temple chambers while wearing hideous half-bestial masks, further enhancing their sorcerous reputation whether or not the priests involved can actually perform sorcery.

## TEMPLES

The shadowed temples of dark Stygia are made according to prescribed rituals and architectural designs. They are usually huge structures, imposing and powerful, often made of black stone and have a menacing aura.

To enter one without permission is cause for a Terror check (DC 18). The black temples are contained within a walled temple complex.

The temple complex is a huge walled enclosure painted with hieroglyphs and uncanny, vaguely disturbing designs. A ramp or stair leads into the enclosure through a colossal gate flanked by two immense towers. Once through the gate, one can see the massive front of the House of the Two Eyes. Its vast towers are behind ten incredibly high flag-poles with fluttering pennants. Great carvings of the king and queen of Stygia flank the entryway into a hall of tall columns and eerie wall paintings. Only a privileged few may enter the dark *House of Two Eyes*, a shaded edifice with a marbled floor. All others must turn aside and go unto the courtyard where squat, low pillars made of mud brick stand in long rows. These are offering tables for the ordinary people. People bring fruit, flowers, vegetables, meat and animal mummies to place on these low tables of brick.

Beyond the haunting *House of the Two Eyes* is a long, narrow court with an shadowy altar with an apish god squatting atop it atop a flight of stairs. After the shadowy altar is another causeway leading to another set of lofty and impressive towers. This leads to another court with more low column-tables for sacrifices and another shadowy altar, this one with an even more bestial god squatting horribly upon it, lusting for sacrifices. The path then leads through another painted gate and a set of glowering towers to a third courtyard of columns. At the end of this courtyard is a multi-pillared building that leads to three small sanctuary courts. The furthest court features the High Altar where human sacrifices may be offered to Set on a black altar with a cobra motif. Pits of serpents surround the altar and dark gulfs lead to underground chambers where the Sons of Set repose in cold slumber, awaiting victims to be thrown down to them or for their nightly release into the streets.

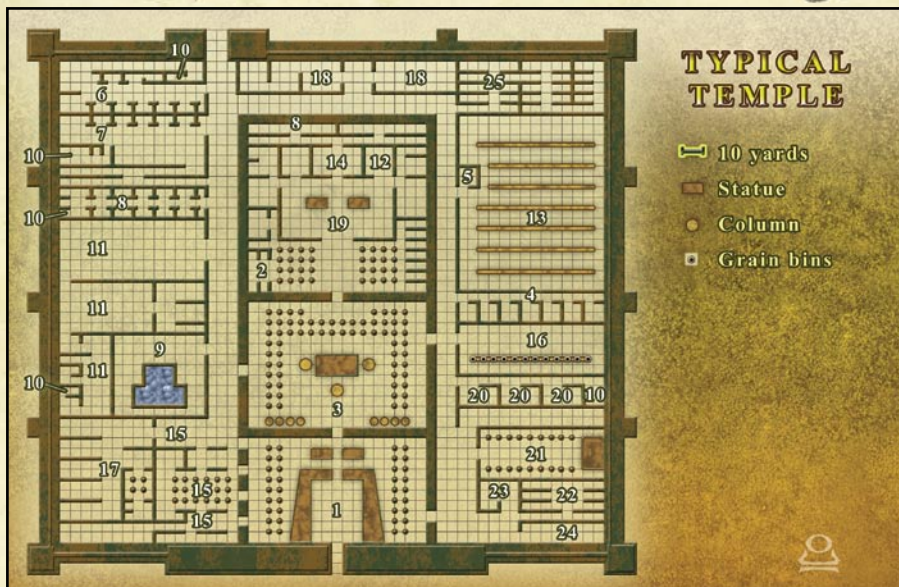
Along one of the looming walls is the *Hall of Foreign Tribute* where gifts and taxes from visiting dignitaries may be received by the temple. Foreigners are generally not allowed into the temple enclosure so this hall was built so they too may honour Set.

The temple complex also includes a slaughter yard where cattle and other animals are brought and slain for the temple. Each temple complex has its own garden lake where priests and priestesses are purified and where ritual water used in ceremonies is taken.

At the far end of the temple enclosure is the menacing and awesome Sanctuary Temple.

Each marble-floored temple also has an inner shrine where the horrible statue of a Stygian god is kept. This statue is not an idol but the receptacle of the god's *Ka*, or genius. Each temple has a shadowed entry sanctuary with statues of the grim gods of Set's pantheon and several rows of serpentine columns. Snakes lurk coiled in the black recesses or glide unhampered across the marbled floors. Inside some of the

shadowed recesses are store rooms, blasphemous libraries of magical scrolls, more mundane libraries of records and darksome relics of bygone ages. In the darksome cellars dwell the Sons of Set and other unwholesome products of dark sorcery. Only the priests and their servants may enter into these massive structures. For most cities, the temples are a single story, although the Temple of Set in Khemi has several floors and basements. Rooms not numbered are usually just halls where the stories and myths of the gods are told in artistic forms. Some smaller temples may not have the surrounding rooms. They may only have the pylons and the areas containing rooms 1, 3, 2, 25, 19, 14, 12 and 18.



1. This is the first sacred shrine. It is entered from the outside by passing between two mammoth pylons. It has a rectangular area at the main entrance with three sides of steps up to a slightly higher platform with papyrus-shaped columns and hideous statues of grotesque Stygian gods. Two giant emblems of the god the temple is dedicated to stand on either side of the door into the main sanctuary (area 3). For example, in a temple of Set, these will be giant statues of a cobra or Son of Set, but in a temple of Bast, these might be sphinxes or lions. A young acolyte girl waits here with water from the River Styx or the purifying pool to wash the feet of entering priests.
2. Storerooms for clean linens, not only for the priests and priestesses but also for the statues of the gods.
3. This is the main sanctuary. Impressive columns and shadowed statues line the room. Just off centre is the altar to the god where sacrifices are made. This sanctuary is usually built higher than the rest of the temple so small slits along the roof-line can allow some light in.
4. The Hall of Scribes is where the offices and quarters of the scribes are located.
5. The Librarian has an office and bed here.
6. Priest quarters.
7. These are acolyte quarters and includes a large common area for game playing and relaxing.
8. Priestess quarters.
9. This is a pool for purifying and initiation rituals. The floor is usually black marble.
10. Toilet.
11. These are the suites of the High Priest or High Priestess.
12. This is where the holy bark (boat) of the temple's god is stored in between parades.
13. The Library of Sacred Knowledge.

14. There is a flagstone on the marble floor here that leads to a rock-cut tomb where initiations may be held and, sometimes, bowl sarcophagi holding man-serpents or other demons are kept.
15. Rooms and reception areas where the mysteries of the god are taught to initiates. Sacred writings adorn these walls and those who are not initiated into the appropriate levels of mystery may not explore them.
16. Granary – this is where grain is stored in large conical storage bins. Although the kitchens and breweries in the temple complex (not in the temple itself) have their own grain storage, the priests keep storage here in case of a siege or other pressing need.
17. These are common rooms for all the priests and priestesses to use.
18. These shadowed rear sanctuaries are where sorcerous ceremonies are held in private for select initiates and keepers. Few are ever allowed to see these darksome chambers of unholy terrors.
19. This is an inner sanctuary celebrating the dual nature of every god or goddess, or a god and his spouse.
20. These are living quarters for full-time priests who are not ranked high enough to have their own great house on the property.
21. This is the hall of music where the priestesses gather to sing and play instruments, often filling the temple with weird tempos and sounds.
22. The armoury is where weapons for the priests are held.
23. This is the home of the scribe of the armoury. None may collect weapons or armour without first seeing the scribe.
24. More living quarters for priests, priestesses, full-time or part-time. Some rooms may be used as storage.
25. The keepers of the statues live in these rooms, as well as some of the temple prostitutes.

# Sorcery & Alchemy

## THE HORRIFIC MAGIC OF STYGIA

**MAGIC WORKS IN** the world of *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Magic is not, however, a replacement for technology or a way to circumvent the existing technology to give the world a more modern edge. Magic does not even work in favour of the characters all the time. Magic is best used as a villainous obstacle. There are no practical day-to-day applications of sorcery in the Hyborian age, thus, the priests of Set do not use crystal balls to communicate with each other as if they were modern-day cell-phones. The soldiers and guards of Stygia do not have access to *psychometry* or *mind-reading* spells to solve crimes. The priests of Set do not work with guards as a pseudo-forensic unit. The priests of Stygia cannot place huge spells of deflection around army units or caravans to protect them from enemy arrow fire. To have priests and sorcerers perform this sort of practical magic in Stygia (or any other Hyborian-age nation) is to break away from the foundation of Robert E. Howard's sword & sorcery genre.

Note also that there are no 'simple' spells in the Hyborian age setting. Generic fantasy novels often have wizards referring to their magical effects as 'nothing more than a simple spell'. Magic usually costs Power Points and few mages have

enough points to make the casting of any spell a commonplace, 'simple' event. The encountering of sorcery in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* should be an encounter with a force superseding nature – an event that should be portrayed as strange and terrifying, not 'simple'.

## SORCERY

Stygians, who love true sorcery, which is spectacularly effective but usually quite exhausting to carry out, still supplement their magic with trickery of one kind or another. Even the powerful lords of the Black Ring use herbal potions and alchemical tricks to preserve their true sorcerous powers.

## NEW ADVANCED SPELLS

Stygia is a land of its own magical traditions and sorceries. This section includes new spells especially appropriate for Stygian sorcerers for the existing sorcery styles presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

### New Sorcery Spells

Sorcery Style	Spells	Prerequisites
Counterspells	Ward by Will	Knowledge (arcana) 7 ranks, <i>warding</i>
	Ward of Anigmus	Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, <i>warding</i>
Curses	Death Comes on Swift Wings	<i>Lesser ill-fortune</i> , <i>death touch</i> , the third mystery of Yinepu
	Life Leech	Magic attack bonus +4 or higher, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i> , <i>death touch</i> , the second mystery of Hathor/Sukhmet
Hypnotism	Walk of Shadows	Magic attack bonus +3, <i>entrance</i>
Nature Magic	Creeping Doom	Knowledge (nature) 12 ranks, <i>summon beast</i>
Necromancy	Crawlers from the Mouth	Magic attack bonus +4, <i>raise corpse</i> , <i>summon beast</i>
	Opening of the Mouth and Eyes*	<i>Raise corpse</i> ; the fourth mystery of Yinepu; at least ten participants
	Taper of Death	Magic attack bonus +6, <i>raise corpse</i> , <i>death touch</i>
	Transference	Magic attack bonus +6

### Notes to New Sorcery Spells

\* Spells marked with an asterisk are potentially world-changing ones that are especially likely to have runaway magic effects (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules concerning world-changing magic).

## COUNTERSPELLS

Counterspells are very much sought-after by almost all sorcerers, since a rival wizard can be even deadlier than a sword-wielding Cimmerian to the typical sorcerer. Many scholars who do not otherwise practice sorcery learn counterspells, just to have a weapon of sufficient power to defend themselves from sorcerous attack.

## WARD BY WILL

**PP Cost:** 1 point/2 DR desired/round

**Components:** S

**Casting Time:** Free Action

**Range:** Personal

**Duration:** 1 round

**Saving Throw:** None

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) 7 ranks, *warding*

This spell is a ward against physical blows. The form the spell takes varies by sorcerer, depending on his visualisation. His body may become slightly non-physical, allowing blows to pass through; his body may become granite-like; he may become lightning-quick; perhaps small demons appear around the sorcerer and slow down the weapons or push them aside. Regardless of the magical effect, the game-mechanic effect is that the spell grants the sorcerer Damage Reduction. He gains twice as much Damage Reduction as he spends Power Points. If a sorcerer spends 10 Power Points, he



*Sorcery always extracted a price of those who wielded it. Sorcerers inevitably became corrupted by their power, and great magic often eroded even a man's sanity. Many of the most powerful sorcerers were said to be mad, or at least subject to episodes of madness after casting their spells.*

*One reason powerful sorcerers, such as the Priests of Set, sought followers and acolytes was to have them do most of the spell casting, thus saving the master from his own power. Only when there was no other choice, and his greater power was required, would the master act directly.*

Steven York, *Heretics of Set*

gets 20 Damage Reduction for one round. Armour Piercing rules work normally.

## WARD OF ANIGMUS

**PP Cost:** 4 points

**Components:** S

**Casting Time:** Free Action

**Range:** Personal

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** None

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, *warding*

The Ward of Anigmus is a ward against demon fire that takes a bit of power to pull off. It offers brief but complete immunity against Outsider-originated flame attacks, such as Fiery Breath, including passive Outsider attacks like Body of Flame and Flame Incarnate.

## CURSES

Sorcerers are feared most of all not for the dark powers with whom they traffic or the strange artefacts they create, but for what they can do to ordinary folk, cursing them in a variety of cruel and horrid ways. Stygian sorcerers are often considered to be experts at cursing, for this is how they protect their ancient dead.

Any character who is under the effects of a curse that does not have immediately obvious physical effects may attempt a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 10 + scholar level of the sorcerer who cast the spell) to determine that he is affected by a curse. If he succeeds by

at least 20, he can also determine the precise nature of the curse and the name of the sorcerer who cast it.

## DEATH COMES ON SWIFT WINGS

**PP Cost:** 12 points

**Components:** V, S, F, XP

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)/ 100 ft.

**Area:** One tomb

**Duration:** Mortal (D)

**Saving Throw:** See text

**Prerequisites:** *Lesser ill-fortune, death touch*, the third mystery of Yinepu

**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets DC for target's saving throw

This is a curse placed on Stygian tombs. Those who fall prey to it find themselves surrounded by death. The victim of this spell finds himself subject to tomb toxins, horrible diseases present in the moulds and decay of any given tomb. This is an infectious disease that can even affect the victim's pets and mounts. The sorcerer chooses three inhaled diseases and one injury disease. When the tomb is invaded, those who fall victim to this curse also fall victim to these diseases and, within 1d20 days, are subjected to the injury disease (for example, ten months after looting the tomb of the sorcerer Anomephis, the thief was bitten by a mosquito and contracted malaria). Regular Fortitude saves are made against these diseases.

Some powerful sorcerers who know how to make their spells permanent often protect their tombs with permanent versions of this spell. The experience point cost makes only the most important of tombs worthy of this spell, although almost all tombs proclaim a curse.

**Focus:** The focus of this spell is a tomb; the hieroglyphs proclaiming the death of any despoilers must be carved into the doors, walls or seals of the tomb.

**Experience point cost:** 1,000 xp

## LIFE LEECH

**PP Cost:** 10 points

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Evil Eye, Touch or Magical Link

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** Mortal (D)

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Prerequisites:** Magic attack bonus +4 or higher, *lesser ill-fortune, death touch*, the second mystery of Hathor/Sukhmet  
**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets DC for target's saving throw

This spell curses the recipient to be a bane to those around him who are dying. It does not kill the recipient but it could kill his friends. This is especially malignant when used on a healer. Each dying or stable creature within 30 feet of the cursed victim (any creature with -1 to -9 hit points) loses an additional 1 hit point at the beginning of the cursed victim's turn. The victim gains the same amount as temporary hit points that last for 10 minutes. He cannot control or suppress this effect, which functions on both friend and foe.

## HYPNOTISM

Hypnotism, while not inherently sorcerous, is useful both as a direct means of attack and for far more subtle purposes. Though it may not be so quick as a hurled globe of demon-fire, hypnotism can still provide fairly rapid effects that are significantly more versatile than mere flaming destruction. Stygians are not well-known for their hypnotism although several are surprisingly well-versed.

## WALK OF SHADOWS

**PP Cost:** 6 points

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Personal

**Duration:** Concentration

**Saving Throw:** None

**Prerequisites:** Magic attack bonus +3, *entrance*

The casting of this spell requires the tracing in the air of a key symbol akin to the Stygian hieroglyph for 'seeing', a stylized eye with a long, curling, lash. A warm tingling runs out from the air-traced sigil and up the fingertips of the sorcerer; the air will ripple and bend where the fingertips trace. The Walk of Shadows is not an invisibility spell, but it does grant the user the ability to travel unnoticed. The spell will not protect a sorcerer from his own clumsiness. One trip, one dropped object and he could be revealed to anyone nearby. The spell gives a character a +20 competence bonus to Hide checks for the duration of the spell. It is generally disregarded in Stygia as costing too much for a limited effect.

## NATURE MAGIC

Nature magic affects or summons plants and animals. It is commonly found among witches, wise women and shamans, since it is relatively simple to learn and highly effective in the wilderness or rural environments favoured by such scholars.

## CREEPING DOOM

**PP Cost:** 2 points/swarm

**Components:** V, S, F

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)/ 100 ft.; see text

**Effect:** One swarm of centipedes per two levels

**Duration:** 1 min./level

**Saving Throw:** None

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (nature) 12 ranks, *summon beast*

**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets DC for target's saving throw

When you utter the spell of *creeping doom*, you call forth a mass of scarab or locust swarms (one per two caster levels, to a maximum of ten swarms at 20<sup>th</sup> level), which appear from your mouth or from the ground around you if the ground is soft enough (such as sand).

You may summon the scarab or locust swarms so that they share the area of other creatures. The swarms remain stationary, attacking any creatures in their area, unless you command the creeping doom to move (a standard action). As a standard action, you can command any number of the swarms to move toward any prey within 100 feet of you. You cannot command any swarm to move more than 100 feet away from you, and if you move more than 100 feet from any swarm, that swarm remains stationary, attacking any creatures in its area (but it can be commanded again if you move within 100 feet).

*Focus:* The character should have an effigy of a scarab or locust.

## NECROMANCY

The scholar who learns necromancy achieves limited mastery over the very mysteries of life and death. The priests of Set are especially fond of necromancy. Theirs is a deathly land of shadowed tombs, embalmed mummies and sacrificed lives.

## CRAWLERS FROM THE MOUTH

**PP Cost:** 2 points/target

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per scholar level)

**Target:** One or more creatures, up to a maximum of one creature/two scholar levels

**Duration:** Concentration +1d4 rounds

**Saving Throw:** Fort (see below)

**Prerequisites:** Magic attack bonus +4, *raise corpse*, *summon beast*

**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets DC for target's saving throw



The spell summons serpents, bees, flies, mice, scorpions, spiders or other vermin from the interior of enemies, as a *Summon Beast* spell. The vermin of choice comes from the victim's mouth. A target is entitled to attempt a Fortitude saving throw to resist the effect based on the sorcerer's Magic Attack Roll. A failed saving throw indicates the character begins choking to death on the vermin slithering out of his mouth. A character who begins choking can hold his breath for 1 round per point of Constitution, coughing up vermin the entire while. After this period of time, the character must make a DC 10 Constitution check in order to continue holding his breath. The save must be repeated each round, with the DC increasing by +1 for each previous success. When the character fails one of these Constitution checks, he begins to suffocate. In the first round, he falls unconscious (0 hit points). In the following round, he drops to -1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, he suffocates and dies. The process of being choked by a stream of vermin is painful. The pain imposes a -4 penalty on attack rolls, defence, movement, skill checks and ability checks the first round of contact (a second Fortitude save DC 18 may be made to halve the penalties). If the first save is successful, he is instead stunned for 1 round. A stunned character may not act, nor may he

use Dodge Defence or Parry Defence. Attackers get a +2 bonus on attack rolls against a stunned opponent.

## OPENING OF THE MOUTH AND EYES

**PP Cost:** 6 points + 2 points from each participant

**Components:** V, S, F

**Casting Time:** 1 hour

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** One mummy or statue

**Duration:** Mortal

**Saving Throw:** See below

**Prerequisites:** *Raise corpse*; the fourth mystery of Yinepu; at least ten participants

**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets DC for target's saving throw

The Opening of the Mouth and Eyes ceremony is cast so the dead can partake of nourishment in the afterlife and be able to see. It restores all the senses of a mummy or ghost, including movement. The *ka* gains control of speech, thought and motion. The *ka* can then move back and forth from the tomb as it wills. The spell is cast while touching an adze to the mouth of a mummy or statue of the deceased. Most forms of this ritual is simply ritual, with no sorcerous element. By expending true sorcerous power on the ritual, the spell takes on a much more real and terrible aspect. It creates a true ghostly *ka*.

The spell begins with at least ten people involved. The Kher-heb priest, who actually casts the spell, the Sem priest, a friend of the deceased (a stand-in is acceptable), the son of the deceased (or a representative), a priestess who represents Isis, a priestess who represents Nephthys, a Menhu priest, an Am-asi priest, an Am-khent priest and someone to represent the armed guard of Harakht. The spell begins by sprinkling water around the mummy or statue from four vessels, one for each direction, accompanied with prayers to Set, Harakht, Thoth and Sept. This symbolically gives the dead the use of his head. Four vases of incense are brought forth to purify the body and strengthen the heart. The Sem priest, at this point, dresses in the skin of a cow and pretends to be asleep at the foot of the statue or mummy. The Am-asi ritually awakens the Sem priest and takes him to his seat. The four priests take the heads of a hawk, an ape, a jackal and a man to transform themselves into the children of Harakht. They give a ritual prayer to return the deceased's shadow. The priest representing the honour guard of Harakht touches the lips of the mummy or statue.

Once this is done, the Menhu priest sacrifices a bull, two gazelles and several ducks. The heart is taken out of the bull and offered to the mummy or statue. The foreleg of the bull is cut off and touched

to the lips and eyes of the mummy or statue four times as the Sem priest recites a formula. The other sacrifices are offered to the mummy or statue. The Sem priest takes two instruments and touches the mouth of the statue or mummy with them as the Kher-heb priest says another ritual formula. The Sem priest then takes a curious, sinuous wand with a ram's head on one end and touches the wand to the statue or mummy four times while the Kher-heb priest tells the mummy or statue the 'words of power'. The representatives of the deceased's friends and children then perform similar touching rituals with their own instruments, a chisel and a bag of red carnelians. The Sem priest then touches the mouth and eyes four times with a Y-shaped instrument. Food is offered to the mummy and an ostrich feather is waved four times in front of the mummy or statue. The mummy is then presented with scents, perfumes and clothing.

The *ka* is now free to wander and do the bidding of the lead sorcerer (see page 136 for the statistics of the *ka*).

**Note:** Keep in mind the rules of mortality in regards to spell casting. Unless steps are taken to make this spell permanent as detailed in *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*, then as soon as the sorcerer dies, the spell ends.

**Focus:** The spell requires a mummy or statue of the deceased.

## TAPER OF DEATH

**PP Cost:** 5 points

**Components:** V, S, M, XP

**Casting Time:** 3 days plus 1 action

**Range:** Close

**Target:** 1 creature

**Duration:** See below (D)

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Prerequisites:** Magic attack bonus +6, *raise corpse*, *death touch*

**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets DC for target's saving throw

Created by the Seers of Yimsha, this death spell takes three days to prepare. Once prepared, it takes but one further action, taken anytime thereafter, to cast the spell. It creates a phantom image of a white candle with a black flame on the wick. This image represents the melting of the subject's soul. The sorcerer sets the duration, which cannot be less than 1 day or more than a fortnight. When the mystic candle burns down and extinguishes itself, the subject dies and his soul is forced to flee the mortal realms forever. It is used by the Seers of Yimsha and by Thoth-Amon to force subjects to do their bidding within a certain time frame.

**Material Component:** The sorcerer must first fashion a soul candle *in his mind*. The ghostly, mental conception melts to nothingness during the course of the spell.

*Experience Point Cost:* This mental construct costs 50 xp/HD of the subject

## TRANSCERENCE

**PP Cost:** 8 points

**Components:** V, F, XP

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Personal

**Targets:** 1 creature and 1 magic item

**Duration:** 2d6 hours (D)

**Saving Throw:** None

**Prerequisites:** Magic attack bonus +6

This spell's purpose is to drain all the power from a mystical object and temporarily transfer it to a sorcerer's body. Once this spell is cast, all the properties of a magic item are now personal properties of the caster; the caster functions exactly as the magic item in question. Any divinations regarding the magic item now target the caster. At the end of the duration, the magic bleeds from the sorcerer back to the original vessel.

*Focus:* The magic item is the focus.

*Experience Point Cost:* Half of what it would take to create the magic item (100 xp minimum)

## MAGIC ITEMS

A large number of brand-new magic items are provided here for sorcerers to create. The costs and requirements for each are listed, so that a sorcerer with Craft Magic Item and related feats can create them.

### APPARATUS OF SET'S DEMONS

This odd-looking framework of black wood resembles a small altar, topped with a cone of smoky grey crystal. It is used to empower *summon demon* spells, when one or more smoke-serpents are summoned. When the spell is cast, each smoke-serpent gains a new attack as follows:

*Paralysis (Ex):* Those hit by a smoke-serpent's grapple attack must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 20,000 sp; 2,000 xp.

### ARMOUR OF MOCIOUN

The armour of Mocioun is ambulant armour. Golden coloured yet not made out of gold, this armour was created by a long-dead sorcerer gifted in the crafting of permanent magic named Mocioun for a king whose name has been forgotten. Mocioun had discovered the magic to give metal objects the power of motion, when directed by an external will (unfortunately, the prestidigitation spell he used is lost – to make the armour with spells available now would be far more expensive than the armour is worth).

Unfortunately, it may be most sensitive to those thoughts of self-destruction and self-hatred that eat at the edges of all men's minds. Once the armour has been set into motion, it obeys that person's will. It moves as directed if a Concentration check (DC 18) is made. If concentration falters, the armour lashes out and attacks the closest person, including the one formerly directing the armour. Most of this will-ambulant armour is found in the form of scale-mail hauberks and corselets, although it can be found in any form of armour made by Stygians; most sets also include greaves, gauntlets, weapons and helms – about twenty pieces per suit in total.

*Manufacturing Cost:* 4,000,000 silver pieces per suit, 400,000 xp; *spells required:* Greater Telekinesis.

### BLACK CANDLE OF SET

Thin, greasy plumes of smoke rise from the burning of these black candles. The tallow of these candles is rendered from the body of a virgin strangled with her mother's hair and made woman after death by her father. Each candle burning while casting a spell within



10 feet of it gives the caster a +1 circumstance bonus to his Magic Attack roll. The use of these candles puts a sorcerer in danger of Corruption (the item has a Magic Attack bonus of +2 per candle for determining the save DC). Burning more than two candles at once has a tendency to upset the magical balance of a given area and causes any spell cast to be considered a mighty spell if it is not already for determining runaway magic results. If a spell is already a mighty spell and is cast with more than two of these candles lit, then it automatically causes the requisite Will save as if it were the second casting of the spell.

*Manufacturing Cost:* 10,000 silver pieces per candle, which should cover the cost to secure a virgin from a kidnapper, as well as the father and mother, plus the cost to compel the father to defile his daughter's body, plus the cost of rendering down the body.

## GOLDEN SCALES (LATER KNOWN AS THE SCALES OF SET)

The golden scales are flat and inscribed with ornate designs. They are about the size of a hand, oblong, cut straight across the top, and slightly thickened, forming a tube through which a cord or thin chain can be threaded. The sides are curved, tapering to a rounded point. The shape is like some kind of seashell, shield or even leaf. Running down the middle is the design of a stout looking straight-bladed sword, hilt up. Running down either side of the sword are twin serpents, their bodies undulating upwards, until the heads curve back toward the blade and down, almost as though bowing to the sword. The back is engraved with the writing of the Giant-Kings of old. These three golden scales are the tools of gods, demigods, demons and monsters. These are supposedly the scales of a great golden serpent that once encircled the globe. These three scales bind man with gods and animals.

Ancient man took the three scales and hid them so they could never be brought together. One is said to be guarded by the priests of Ibis at the Oasis of Nefri. The other can be wherever the Games Master desires, such as being guarded by an Argossean merchant living in Khemi. Alone, each scale allows a character to command serpents, forcing them to do his bidding. This is accomplished by means of a contested Will save. A character using a scale may add his Corruption to the save. If the character's rolled Will save is higher than the animal's, the animal must obey to the best of its ability. If two scales are used, the character gets a +5 competence bonus to the save. If all three are used, unlinked, then the character gains a +15 competence bonus to the contested save. If

*'There are many tales written, of how the scales were made, and what they can do, but who can say if any are true? For their true power to manifest, all three scales would need to be brought together, linked by metal forged in a sacred fire, and that has not happened since before they were first separated. All the legends agree on that. At times, two have been brought together, but never three. Only with all three together, will their true power and purpose be apparent. Some say it would be a portent of the end of the world.'*

Steven York, *Venom of Luxur*

all three are brought together and linked by metal forged in a sacred fire, then the character may command any and all beings, man, beast or devil, to do his bidding in the same manner with the +15 bonus to the contested save. The three golden scales were technically destroyed at the end of Steven York's *Venom of Luxur*, but the Games Master may deem that tale apocryphal and so make use of the items as he sees fit – or new ones can be constructed.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 925,000 sp; 92,500 xp; caster level 20<sup>th</sup>; spells required *demonic pact*, *summon beast*, *animal ally*, *greater demonic pact*.

## JEWEL OF THE MOON

A *jewel of the moon* is an oval, flattened, translucent and polished river rock. When touched to blood, the jewel will glow with a cool blue light until an area is lit as though by a full moon. Anything within 20 feet is considered brightly lit and anything within 40 feet is considered to be in shadowy illumination. See *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for definition of brightly lit and shadowy and its effects on play.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 10,000 sp; 1,000 xp, spells required: *projection* (see *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*).

## SERPENT MARK OF SET

The Mark of Set is a snake-shaped tattoo burned onto the skin of the person bonding with the Mark. The Mark triples the character's Wisdom bonus to Power Points, doubles the character's Charisma bonus to his base Magic Attack bonus and functions as the sorcery feat

*Manufacturing Costs:* 625,000 sp; 62,500 xp; caster level 20<sup>th</sup>; spells required *demonic pact*, *summon demon*, *greater demonic pact*; must be a worshipper of Set and a member of the Black Ring (see page 122).

## SERPENT RING OF SET

For anyone other than a Set-worshipper and powerful sorcerer, this ring appears to grant one power and one power only. This is the power of good luck. Once per day, the ring allows its wearer to re-roll any one die roll he has just made.

The full powers of the *serpent ring of Set* may be accessed only by a worshipper of Set who has a magic attack bonus of +5 or higher and knows at least three sorcery styles, including Summonings and the *summon demon* spell. These powers are as follows, and are gained in addition to the power of good luck detailed above.

The ring increases the wearer's Power Points by +10 for all purposes while worn. This is an enhancement bonus. Whenever the ring is removed, reduce the wearer's Power Points by -10 immediately, even if this would cause him to be reduced below 0 Power Points (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*).

Rubbing fresh human blood on the serpent's eyes enhances all spells, granting the wearer a +5 enhancement bonus to his magic attack roll for 10 minutes for every 1 hit point's worth of blood used. This blood can come from either the wearer or another creature.

The wearer of the *serpent ring of Set* may also summon a specific creature, the slave of the ring (see *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*). He casts *summon demon* as usual, but may now summon the slave of the ring as an option along with whatever other demons are available to him.

These advanced powers come at a dreadful price as the ring binds more and more of the magician's soul up within it. In game terms, any experience the magician gains while wearing the ring is directly tied to the ring, and will be lost whenever it is not worn. The player should begin keeping separate track of experience points gained while wearing the ring, and any gained when not wearing the ring (including any experience points he had when he first came into possession of the artefact). Note that this only applies to a wearer of the ring who fulfils the requirements to access the advanced powers; a character who uses the ring only to grant him good luck pays no particular penalty.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 725,000 sp; 72,500 xp; caster level 20<sup>th</sup>; spells required *demonic pact*, *summon demon*, *greater demonic pact*; must be a worshipper of Set and a member of the Black Ring (see page 122).

Conan stared down at the girdle. The hair of which it was woven was not horsehair. He was convinced that it was woven of the thick black tresses of a woman. Set in the thick mesh were tiny jewels such as he had never seen before. The buckle was strangely made, in the form of a golden serpent-head, flat, wedge-shaped and scaled with curious art. A strong shudder shook Conan as he handled it, and he turned as though to cast it over the precipice: then he hesitated, and finally buckled it around his waist, under the 'Bakhariot girdle.

Robert E. Howard, *The People of the Black Circle*

## STYGIAN GIRDLE OF PROTECTION

This powerful magical belt renders the wearer invulnerable to many sorcerous attacks. Its first property is that any spell-like or supernatural effect that has a random variation which is used to select the victim it strikes will never strike him, but will always affect someone else instead. This is always at the Games Master's discretion, but could include such things as *globes of Yezud* (from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*) being bounced down a hill at the *girdle's* wearer and always striking someone else, or a creature affected by the savage beast spell running right past the *girdle's* wearer to attack one of his allies. An effect or spell which is targeted specifically at the owner will not be blocked by this benefit of the *girdle*.

Furthermore, up to once per round, if touched as a free action, the *Stygian girdle of protection* grants a new saving throw against any spell, spell-like ability or supernatural ability that is affecting the wearer. This new saving throw is made at a +4 resistance bonus. Even a character who is affected by a mind-affecting spell such as one of the Hypnosis spells may touch the *girdle* to attempt a new saving throw – he always has just sufficient instinct to know he is hypnotised, even if, without the *girdle*, he might be unable to do anything about it.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 160,000 sp; 16,000 xp; caster level 17<sup>th</sup>; spells required *warding*, *greater warding*.

## WATERS OF KHARN

The waters of Kharn are potent indeed. The enchanted waters in this pool within the Temple of Set in Luxur work similar to a crystal ball. These waters can serve as a focus for a *visions* spell (see *Conan the*

*Roleplaying Game*). It provides a +6 enhancement bonus to the magic attack roll when using the *visions* spell and allows the sorcerer to view the past of anyone present, including past lives. The waters also allow the casting of any spell utilising a range of Evil Eye through it.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 101,000 sp; 10,100 xp; spells required *visions*.

## ALCHEMY

In addition to using various devastating necromantic spells, the Stygians also unleash a number of particularly vicious alchemical preparations on their enemies. The following additional alchemical items are available to scholars, as well as those given in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. As usual, an asterisk (\*) indicates that the item can be used in conjunction with the *telekinesis* and *greater telekinesis* spells.

### TA NEHEH LEAF ELIXIR

These prehistoric leaves are found only in sorcerous gardens or deep in Stygian swamps. These strange leaves are said to make a person immortal. The juices from the leaves are extremely addictive. To the living, the first dose of the elixir restores the drinker's age back to 16. It must be taken every month during the full moon thereafter or the character begins to age 2 years per day until the character's true age is achieved. It has an addiction rating of Extreme. Any time a character imbibes this elixir, the character must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 25) or become addicted. The elixir has a satiation period, the length of time a single dose remains effective in the character's system, of 1 month. Each time a user takes a the elixir, if he is addicted, he is satiated and staves off withdrawal symptoms (including the penalties for obsession if applicable) until the next full moon. Whenever the satiation period expires before the user takes another dose, the DC of the Fortitude save to resist damage (see below) increases by 5. Addiction will proceed like a disease if not satisfied by further doses of the drug. Each day the character takes ability damage of 1d8 Dex, 1d8 Wis, 1d6 Con and 1d6 Str unless he succeeds on another Fortitude save (DC 25). A sorcerer who becomes addicted to a drug becomes obsessed (see *Conan the Role Playing Game* for the Rule of Obsession and its effect on sorcerers). If a character makes two successful saving throws in a row, he has fought off his addiction and recovered and takes no more damage from withdrawal symptoms.

The elixir can also be administered to the dead. Three leaves can keep the heart of a dead man beating. If given to a corpse, it moves its hit points to -9 until the next full moon. To maintain a dead man indefinitely at -9 hit points, the three leaves must be boiled each night of

the full moon and administered to the corpse. The corpse can neither move nor speak. If the corpse is intact, it can be healed regularly. Otherwise, the corpse is simply maintained as an undead monster. If a person brews nine leaves each night of the full moon, the undead corpse is given full unlife with full hit points and a full movement rate, but the risen dead or mummy will be under the command of the sorcerer. More than nine ta neheh leaves will make the risen dead or mummy into an uncontrollable monster.

*Cost:* 2,000 sp. *Requirements:* Craft (alchemy) 4 ranks (DC 15 to create), plus a supply of the rare ta neheh leaves.

### ELIXIR OF ORKIDEH

Made from water that leeches magic, the elixir of Orkideh suppresses magic. If anointed on a magic item, the item will not function until the elixir evaporates or is rubbed off. If a sorcerer is anointed with this elixir, the sorcerer may not use power points (including his defensive blast) for 1d4 minutes. It can only be made with a certain water from beneath a citadel not far from Kheshatta. Obtaining this water from the bandits who control the citadel is not an easy task. This substance cannot be lifted with magic, nor can anyone carrying a flask of this elixir use magic.

*Cost:* 3000 sp. *Requirements:* Craft (alchemy) 10 ranks (DC 25 to create).

### FOUNTAIN OF BLOOD

The fountain of blood potion makes a person bleed like a fountain and prolongs his death. Using this potion in conjunction with Ritual Sacrifice or related feat allows the sorcerer to treat a sacrificial victim as having +10 hit points more than they had. This is cumulative with related feats such as Bleed Dry from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*. A stronger version that turns the entire body, flesh and bone, into blood is rumoured to exist, although no one in Stygia today knows how to create that version.

*Cost:* 600 sp. *Requirements:* Craft (alchemy) 6 ranks (DC 20 to create).

### STYGIAN WIND VENOM

Wind Venom is a particularly vicious preparation. In its unused form it looks like a fine, yellow powder. It weighs next to nothing. However, when exposed to flame it causes the flames to turn sooty and sickly green. The flames give off an incredible amount of smoke, so much so that everyone within a 20 ft. radius of the fire is blinded for 1d4 rounds.

This blindness is entirely incidental to the wind venom's true purpose. Everyone within 100 ft. of the fire must

make a Fortitude save (DC 15). If they fail they suffer a -2 penalty to any saving throw required to resist a Hypnotism or Necromancy spell cast on them in the next 24 hours. Furthermore, they suffer a -1 penalty to any saving throws required to resist Terror or Corruption.

Targets suffering the effects of wind venom can hear quiet voices muttering just on the edge of their hearing. These delusions last until the venom finally flushes from the victims' system.

## UNUSUAL ITEMS

The following items are not strictly magical, but may be regarded as magical by the ignorant. Some of them are useful either for sorcerers or for those battling sorcerous creatures. All will be difficult to buy and are likely to be available only in a few communities that specialise in their manufacture. Unusual items are only ever offered for sale at the Games Master's discretion.

## ANIMAL MUMMIES

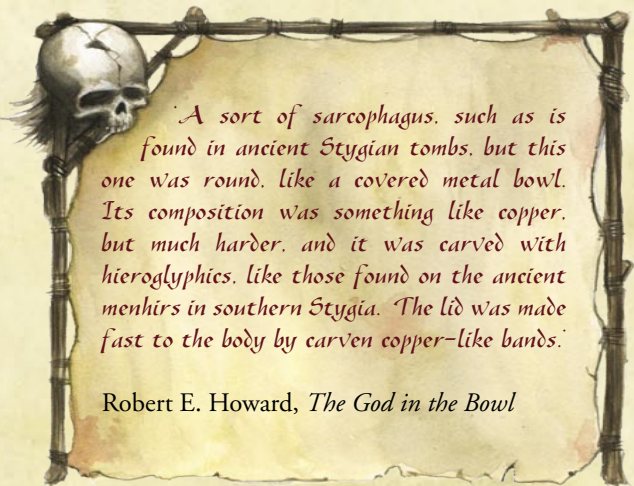
Animals are associated with the gods, so to honour the gods the Stygians mummify animals and give them as offerings. Mummified cats are left for Bast; mummified hawks are left for Harakht. So many animals are annually embalmed in Stygia that farms often raise the animals for the express purpose of selling them, killing them and mummifying them. Animal mummies can be used as the material component of the *Summon Beast*, *Animal Ally* and *Children of the Night* spells from *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

*Cost:* 10 sp. *Requirements:* Profession (mummifier) 6 ranks.

## CANOPIC JARS

Carved from alabaster and inscribed with spells, these jars hold the eviscerated organs of a mummy. There are four kinds of jars. The jar of Mesthâ has the head of a man and it holds an embalmed stomach. The hieroglyphs place this jar under the protection of the goddess of magic. The jar of Hapi has the head of an ape and it holds the embalmed small intestines of the deceased; its inscriptions dedicate this organ to Set's mate, Nephtys. The jar of Tuamautef has the head of a jackal and the embalmed heart of the dead man or woman is placed in this jar. It is protected by the goddess Neith. The jar of Qebshennuf has the head of a hawk and the liver is placed within to be protected by Serqet. The canopic jars are usually placed in sepulchral boxes.

*Cost:* 30 sp. *Requirements:* Craft (stonemason) 6 ranks.



*'A sort of sarcophagus, such as is found in ancient Stygian tombs, but this one was round, like a covered metal bowl. Its composition was something like copper, but much harder, and it was carved with hieroglyphics, like those found on the ancient menhirs in southern Stygia. The lid was made fast to the body by carven copper-like bands.'*

Robert E. Howard, *The God in the Bowl*

## BOWL SARCOPHAGI

A bowl sarcophagus is a strange black cylinder, nearly four feet in height and perhaps three feet in diameter at its widest circumference, which is half-way between the top and bottom. These ancient bowls are generally not built anymore by anyone. The sign of Set is carved upon the lid, the scaled serpent with its tail in its mouth. Too ancient to be holy, the bowl sarcophagus is made of unearthly metal similar to copper yet harder and are said to be relics of the time when Set walked the earth in the form of a man. Bits of black mould cling in the grooves of the hieroglyphics; the bowl sarcophagus smells as earth smells from far below the surface. The metal is usually corroded and eaten away in spots. They were used to contain the slumbering gods of the giant-kings and buried beneath Stygia's mighty pyramids. A bowl sarcophagus found intact usually has a slumbering man-serpent within it (see page 130).

*Cost:* 300,000 sp. *Requirements:* Craft (metalworking) 16 ranks; enough strange copper-like metal to form into a large bowl.

## COFFIN SARCOPHAGI

Stygian coffins are beautiful caskets for the burial of the dead. They are made for specific individuals, not in generic forms.

*The Mummy-Cover:* The mummy-cover, which lays directly on the mummy, is shaped like a mummy and is slightly vaulted. The cover is made of wood, which is expensive in Stygia. It has a painted human face with a beard carved on it. It has a painted collar with grotesque figures of Stygian gods around it. The full names and titles of the deceased are carved in vertical lines. The cartouches (encircled names) of the king in whose time the deceased lived are also inscribed. The

bottom portions, covering the legs, are painted with scenes of the deceased worshipping Set and the other bestial gods of Stygia. The inside of the cover is painted purple overall and yellow pictures of apes adoring Set are painted on.

*The Inner Coffin:* This is often considered the most beautiful of the coffins and craftsmen are instructed to expend their best efforts on this casket. The mummy and the mummy-cover are enclosed within this coffin and its sumptuous lid. It is built to fit the mummy exactly from measurements of the corpse. Craftsmen know how much allowance to give for the wrappings for an exact fit. This coffin, like the mummy-cover, is made of wood. The bottom is of one piece, as are each of the sides and the rounded top, pegged together with two-inch long wooden pegs. A solid and carved face in the form of the deceased is pegged to the lid. The face is given bronze eyelids and obsidian eyes and includes a wooden false beard. Solid and engraved hands are fixed to the painted breast upon the lid. Gold foil, lapis-lazuli and other semi-precious stones are often used, if the deceased can afford it, as part of the decorations. The whole of the inner coffin, in and out, is covered in a thin layer of plaster and then painted gold. Scenes and inscriptions are painted in red, green and white. Nephthys is painted at the coffin head on the inside and another bestial goddess is painted at the deceased's feet, promising to protect the mummy. Inside the coffin are painted the monstrous figures of Stygian gods in shrines, as well as scenes of the afterlife, such as the weighing of the heart. Around the edge of the coffin, near the lid, the names and titles of the deceased are inscribed repeatedly in two lines. The lid is hermetically fitted to the coffin and sealed with pegs and dowels. After the mummy is laid within, any spaces are filled with plaster to seal the coffin. The whole coffin is covered in varnish to complete the seal and protect the outer paintings and decorations. This coffin is placed inside an outer coffin.

*The Outer Coffin:* This coffin is virtually identical to the inner coffin, and fits perfectly around the inner coffin. The artwork is a little less precise than that of the inner coffin and rarely incorporates precious metals or semi-precious stones. Once the inner coffin is laid inside, the outer coffin is likewise sealed and varnished. Extremely wealthy patrons may have additional outer coffins, although this is rare.

*Cost:* 300-30,000 sp. *Requirements:* Craft (carpentry) 6 ranks, Craft (painting) 4 ranks, Craft (jewellery) 4 ranks.

## SEPULCHRAL BOXES

Sepulchral boxes are small chests placed in tombs to hold ushabtiu figures, clothing, papyri and personal effects of a deceased person. They may be as small as six inches a side up to

two feet a side. Some are perfectly square; others are oblong. Many have slightly wider bases than tops. Some have one compartment inside; others have two and yet others have four. The outsides of these boxes are usually painted with figures of the deceased worshipping Father Set, entreating him to give gifts of cakes, bread, beer, fowl, oxen, oil or whatever else the deceased might need in the afterlife.

*Cost:* 18 sp. *Requirements:* Craft (carpentry) 2 ranks.

## SEPULCHRAL TABLETS (STELÆ)

Buried with the Stygian dead are ornate stone tablets inscribed with the names and titles of the person buried with the stelæ. The deceased's genealogies and the important events in the person's life are also inscribed on these stones. They are placed inside the tombs in the corridor leading to the mummy's chamber. They are either square or rounded at the top. Often they are made to resemble the façade of the Temple of Set. In addition to stone, wooden stelæ inlaid with glass are also found in some regions.

*Cost:* 16 sp. *Requirements:* Craft (stonemason) 4 ranks or Craft (woodworking) and Craft (glassworking) 4 ranks each.

## USHABTIU FIGURES

The Ushabtiu figures are small humanoid figures made of stone, alabaster, wood or clay. They are placed in tombs, either on the floor, in the coffin or in sepulchral boxes and are designed to do labour for the deceased. Many are inscribed with the name of the deceased and the emblem of a scarab with its wings extended upon its breast. Many carry agricultural tools, although some do not, depending on the style desired, the artist who made them and the dictates of style at any given time. They are servants devoted to doing any work the deceased might be ordered to do in the afterlife so that the deceased may have leisure in death. Ushabtiu figures can be animated with an *Animate Statue* spell (from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*) and are typically used as the material component for a *Magic Builder* spell (also from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*).

*Cost:* 3-16 sp each. *Requirements:* Craft (stonemason) 4 ranks or Craft (woodworking) 4 ranks.

## MAGICAL TOMES

Most Hyborian Age texts are written on scrolls or stone/clay tablets. However, the sorcerous works of the era are usually described as 'iron-bound', indicating they are actually books in the modern, bound sense. Of course, even this is disputed



by scholars, some of whom believe these iron-bound 'books' are merely collections of scrolls kept within iron chests for protection. The Games Master is free to choose whichever interpretation pleases him – it is actually unimportant. That there exist collections of sorcerous knowledge is the important piece of information. Most readers of the Conan saga are familiar with the Books or Scrolls of Skelos, for example. Herein are listed some of the other known spellbooks from Stygia. Most magical tomes are powerful enough to generate a Corruption check when perused.

Do not be afraid to tie these ancient tomes (or the other magic items listed in this volume and the other sourcebooks for the *Conan the Roleplaying Game* line) into an adventure or campaign. However, do not make these random treasures. If these items have no story-specific purpose, then they are wasted items. Once they have served their purpose, destroy or remove the item. Also remember that there are false tomes floating around the Hyborian Age – a search for one of these tomes may involve finding several leads and testing the finds for authenticity.

**A Note on Spellbooks:** It is always important to remember that spell books do not instantly grant the reader the knowledge of a new spell. Rather, a spellbook that has been successfully deciphered allows the reader to learn the spell (or one of the spells) discovered next time he is eligible to choose a new spell anyway, instead of having to make a Knowledge (arcana) check (if an independent) or simply being forced to learn the next spell his coven or magical order wishes to teach him.

For the spell-books that have a large number of spells that can be discovered randomly with study, the player should keep a record of which spells he has discovered. Again he does not automatically know them, but they will all be available to him to choose from next time he is eligible to learn a new spell by virtue of class feature or feat.

## ACHERONIAN ARCANA

This ancient book, which now half-charred, was written by Xaltotun. The writings are unique and potent, if at times indecipherable. Thoth-Amon owns the text. It is steeped in curses of death if the reader worships Mitra or Ibis. Any worshipper of Mitra or Ibis must make two saving throws. The first, a Will save DC 30, is against a Greater Ill-Fortune curse, followed by a Will save (DC 30) against a Draw Forth the Soul curse with a 20 hour duration. If the Mitra- or Ibis-worshipping reader is also a sorcerer, he is subject to a Curse of Yizil as if 20 power points had been expended.

### Decipher Script

Check Result	Benefit
21 or less	No benefit but character is fatigued from the attempt to unravel the half-burnt text.
22-27	+4 competence bonus to all Knowledge (arcana) checks for the next month; Character must make a Corruption save (DC 20) at the end of this time or gain 1 point of Corruption.
28-33	The character can increase the potency of his curses in the next month, increasing his magical attack rolls by +4, however, all curses cast by the character become subject to the runaway magic rules.
34-39	The character learns that-which-should-not-be learned, permanently eroding the character's ability to maintain a human outlook. Character gains 1 Corruption or goes insane – no save, merely a choice. The character can learn a new necromancy, curse or summoning spell of the Games Master's choice.
40+	Character learns one of the names of the Grim Grey God (limit three); Character must make a Corruption save (DC 20) at the end of this time or gain 1 point of Corruption.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 77,400 sp; 7,740 xp; must own another *Acheronian Arcana* to copy from.

## BOOK OF THE DEAD

The *Book of the Dead* is a fairly common papyri scroll found amongst the Stygian undertakers and buried with the dead. There are many varieties to find – expensive and lavish versions with colour and illustrations to cheap, text-only versions. Errors abound throughout most versions, the results of scribal carelessness or ignorance. Difficult to understand, even the scribes had trouble inscribing the books. The better undertakers had versions of the scroll written out in advance with blank spots for the name of the deceased to be entered later; other versions are more generic. Passages from the book adorn Stygian tombs and sepulchral items. Taken as a whole, though, a sorcerer can find much sorcerous knowledge and benefit.

### Decipher Script

Check Result	Benefit
10 or less	No benefit.
11-15	+2 competence bonus to all Knowledge (religion) checks for the next month.
16-20	+2 competence bonus to all Perform (ritual) checks for the next month.
21+	+2 Magical Attack bonus to all Necromancy spells for the next month.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 17,200 sp; 1,720 xp; must own another *Book of the Dead* to copy from.

## SCROLL OF THOTH

The *Scroll of Thoth* is a part of an ancient text regarding the afterlife and eternal life. It was once part of the *Book of the Dead* until banned by the priests of Set centuries past. This scroll contains one of the most powerful incantations for raising the dead known to man. Only one extant copy is rumoured to exist and it is kept within the sacred shrines of the black Temple of Set in dark Luxur.

To read the *Scroll of Thoth*, one must make a Decipher Script check (DC 18) or have 12 or more ranks in Profession (scribe), in which case no check is necessary. The *Scroll of Thoth* is capable of restoring the dead to weird un-life. Restoring the dead to 'life' requires an hour-long ritual who makes a Perform (ritual) check (DC 20) at the end of the hour. At the end of the hour, the corpse returns to life as a mummy of Ahriman (see *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*

for the mummy of Ahriman template). The *Scroll of Thoth* functions as a substitute for the *Heart of Ahriman* in this case. The *Scroll of Thoth* can raise an unlimited number of mummies in this way, so long as the ritual is performed for each. The ritual also requires the use of candles and incenses to a total value of 200 sp. These resources are consumed each time the ritual is performed. No Power Points need be expended when the ritual is performed, allowing it to potentially be done by non-sorcerers.

Any mummies created by the *Scroll of Thoth* are not under any sort of command by the ritualist, though they will probably be well-disposed towards him, at least to begin with.

If any of the Perform (ritual) checks fail, or if the *Scroll of Thoth* is incompletely read, even translated and without a ritual, the *Scroll of Thoth* instead animates the corpse as though with a simple *raise corpse* spell. In this case the corpse will try to steal the scroll and complete the ritual itself if possible.

*Manufacturing Costs:* 50,800 sp; 5,080 xp; must own another *Scroll of Thoth* to copy from.



# Theocracy & Tyranny

## GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

**STYGIA IS A** theocracy. The government claims its right to rule on behalf of Set, an unwholesome and ancient deity. The king claims to have the support of Set and his pantheon – and decrees that any attempts to remove the king would risk the displeasure of all the gods. The entire religion revolves around the king's divinity; the annual festival of Opet renews the king's relationship with Set and, if the king should rule more than thirty years, the religion has created the Heb-Sed festival (these festivals are detailed on pages 34 and 35 respectively).

Almost the entire bureaucracy of Stygia is composed of priests. The largest temple complexes are almost cities in and of themselves, employing almost every sort of worker. Temple bakeries, breweries, fisheries, stables and farms can be found in these complexes. Produce and animals from the farms arrive constantly and everything is recorded by temple scribes. Craftsmen and administrators also work here as well as the more permanent priests. The city of Luxur's Temple of Set employs more than 1,000 people, for example.

### PATRON GOD OF STYGIA

Stygia is known as the 'Serpent of the South' for good reason: Set, the snake-god, is its patron deity. The temples of Set have created a network of social ties and obligations throughout the land, securing the relationship between Set's religious identity to Stygia's regional identity. The religion of Set is so ingrained in the social machinery of Stygia that it has an almost omnipotent base of influence and control in social, economic and political arenas. The integration of religion into these secular arenas is so complete that there is no secular leadership without ties to the temple.

### TOLERANCE & INTOLERANCE

Stygia is not exceptionally tolerant of alternative religions. Approved religions are those that tie themselves to Set with Set actively acknowledged as the superior god – thus grew the pantheon. Those who are members of these approved cults pay extra taxes and often must include a symbol of their

deity on their mantle. Some gods wax and wane in both popularity and approval, often depending on social, economic and political movements among the powerful. The ancient cult of Ibis is an example of an approved cult that became intolerant to the patron religion. Did this happen because Set and Ibis are real and had a falling out, or did the cult of Ibis support a course of action that the cult of Set opposed? The latter is the case as the cult of Ibis supported something that would cause the cult leaders of Set to either lose face or would diminish their power somewhat, so the cult of Ibis was declared an enemy of Set and abolished within the realm of Stygia. Since the cult of Ibis flourished in Acheron, another society with Set as a patron god, the abolishment of Ibis' cult in Stygia must be seen as a political manoeuvre and not one of a 'good' god vs. an 'evil' god.

The overriding reason for this intolerance toward foreign religions and rival cults is power. Rival religions in the political arena tend to reduce the overall influence of religion in secular matters. With every organisation in Stygia supporting the Cult of Set, the cult is able to present a unified and empowered force in all secular affairs. Allowing other religions would undermine that single-minded effort in controlling all things Stygian. If the Cult of Set decided to take a more tolerant view, then the king could conceivably play one religion off against the other and effectively ignore both and push forth his own ideas with relative ease. By taking an intolerant stance, the Cult of Set assures it is the strongest force behind the king. The intolerance extends not only to rival religions, the Cult of Set prevents the formation of craftsman guilds and any other civil union for the same reason.

However, that single-minded intolerance does not extend to attempts to 'convert' other nations to Set-worship. Unlike the Mitran religion, whose fanatical followers actually feel conversion is a mandate from their god, the Stygians do not really care what gods other nations worship. Stygia does not send out missionaries or send its warriors out on religious crusades. If Stygia conquers a land, though, it does symbolically demolish the local religion, either by usurping it and giving the god a role beneath Set or by abolishing it outright, as it did Ibis.

*'Far to the east, the Lemurians, levelled almost to a bestial plane themselves by the brutishness of their slavery, have risen and destroyed their masters. They are savages stalking among the ruins of a strange civilization. The survivors of that civilization, who have escaped the fury of their slaves, have come westward. They fall upon that mysterious pre-human kingdom of the south and overthrow it, substituting their own culture, modified by contact with the older one. The newer kingdom is called Stygia, and remnants of the older nation seemed to have survived, and even worshipped, after the race as a whole had been destroyed.'*

Robert E. Howard, *The Hyborian Age*

*'Kallian Publico believed that it contained the diadem of the Giant-Kings, of the people who dwelt in that dark land before the ancestors of the Stygians came there. He showed me a design carved on the lid, which he swore was the shape of the diadem that legends tell us the monster-kings wore.'*

Robert E. Howard, *The God in the Bowl*

## FOR MAINTENANCE OF POWER

When designing motivations for priests and other characters with a vested interest in maintaining the power of the priesthood, remember that the status quo of Set as the dominant deity is important. It does not matter if people believe in Set as a 'real' being, but it does matter that they believe the priesthood is qualified to rule Stygia and that the priesthood keeps forces of evil and chaos at bay. Priests, unless driven completely insane, will not try to proclaim a new god as superior to Set because such a proclamation will undoubtedly disrupt the continuity of society and the tranquillity of the people. If Set is seen as a force that can be defeated, then the priesthood is likewise seen as such. Thus, the conquering Khari kept the main religion they found among the conquered pre-human race, and added their own gods as supplementary, removing a few gods as a political tool to dissuade malcontents.

On the other hand, there have been kings who *have* so declared new religions and declared the fall of Set, especially those who are sick and tired of being advised by corrupt officials and priests who are not interested in Stygia as a whole. This usually causes the people to erupt into civil war or chaos until the priests of Set can do some damage control and restore themselves and Set to power. The priests of Set, even if they believe they have discovered a more powerful god or demon, are *extremely* unlikely to disturb this delicate balance of power. Such a move would not have the support of the people, the military or the cults, all of whom have a vested interest in the religion as it currently stands.

## STYGIAN HISTORY

During the post-Cataclysmic age, a pre-human culture existed in Elder Stygia, a surviving remnant of the Thurian age, worshipping a god named Set as well as monstrous man-serpents. Kuthchemes and Pteion were founded within 500 years of the three-year winter that resulted from the Great Cataclysm. Important centres of worship were built along the Styx in the portion flowing northward. The Lesser Cataclysm then created the portion of the Styx, called the Nilus by the pre-human Elder Stygia, that flows to the west. The eastern desert was created at this time as well.

The people who would eventually bring about modern Stygia lived on the eastern coast of the Thurian continent in pre-Cataclysmic times. After Atlantis and Lemuria sank beneath the waves during the Great Cataclysm, this shadowy land of the Proto-Stygians, called the Khari in apocryphal sources, were invaded by fleeing Lemurians. The strange Khari enslaved the refugees of the disaster and brutalised them. Crushed and destroyed, the Lemurians became little more than beast-men during the thousand or so years of captivity, but they eventually threw off their yoke of slavery and destroyed their enslavers, burning their strange cities and smashing their curious culture. The few remaining Khari, numbering perhaps in the low thousands, fled the slave wars, leaving their decimated lands to the risen slaves.

During this time the priests of the Khari assumed the leadership of the survivors. Only by faith could the Khari embark on the massive trek across the brutal steppes (that would later become Hyrkania) toward lands unknown. The goal of finding a new homeland became a religious focal point and those making the trek became fanatical. As they travelled along the mountain ranges of the south, they conquered and



absorbed the burgeoning cultures there, swelling their own numbers with trains of slaves. Even in flight, the Khari could not dampen their enslaving temperament, despite the fact that the abuse of their slaves had led to their current exodus.

The Khari eventually came to the Vilayet, a great inland sea created by a lesser cataclysm some thousand years after the Great Cataclysm, and heard of the great culture of the Giant-Kings to the south, built along a massive river of fertility, a virtual land of milk-and-honey to the wandering Khari. They heard of the cyclopean monuments, the black pyramids with their haunted tombs, and the power of this ancient culture. They also learned that the Giant-Kings, who had lived unopposed for so long, had grown soft and decadent. The Khari set their sights on that land as they had travelled far and for decades had no home. The priest-king declared the Nilus culture belonged to them by god-given divine right.

The Khari prepared for war. They came to the walled city of Kuthchemes first. Lacking any sort of adequate defence against a large, organised army, the city fell quickly, giving the Khari a stable base of operations, a capital city. Alarmed by the fall of Kuthchemes, the Giant Kings rallied and summoned up their armies and magic. The Giant-Kings had never in centuries had to face a sorcerous opponent. The Khari, with its priests, were a sorcerous people and their magic overpowered the Giant-Kings.

At the same time the Khari began making alliances within the noble houses of the Giant-Kings. These Houses believed the Khari were the stronger race and wanted a place amongst the new order, so they deceived and betrayed their own kind. The treachery of many of the noble houses permitted the Giant-Kings to be overthrown by the Khari, and their worship of dark Set assimilated into their burgeoning culture. The treacherous Houses of the Giant-Kings remained behind and the Khari came to admire these alien beings and their culture, treating the few who remained as gods and adopting many aspects of their alien culture, such as worship of Set. The Giant-Kings proclaimed to their existing human infrastructure that Set had claimed the Khari to be his chosen ones. The Khari and the treacherous noble Houses abolished cults that did not make or agree with this proclamation. The Khari began raiding the tombs for magical relics and spells and substituted their own strange culture for that of the Giant-Kings, retaining only the dominant religion to mollify the people. The remaining noble Houses of the old Giant-Kings helped smooth this transition, which is why the Khari allowed them to live. This mingled culture became Stygia.

Stygia expanded north and for a thousand years ruled the lands that would later become Shem, Argos, Koth, Ophir and southern Corinthia. The

*'Long ago their rule stretched far north of the Styx, beyond the meadowlands of Shem, and into the fertile uplands now inhabited by the peoples of Koth and Ophir and Argos. Their borders had marched with those of ancient Acheron.'*

R. E. Howard, *The Hour of the Dragon*

Nightmare Empire of Acheron, the nation of the Giant-Kings, was Stygia's most powerful rival, both militarily and magically. For reasons lost to the shadows of time, Stygia abolished the worship of Ibis, possibly to further separate itself from Acheron, or perhaps because the Cult of Ibis wanted a unification between Stygia and Acheron. Perhaps the cult of Ibis was outlawed because it refused to proclaim the Khari as the new chosen ones of Set. Regardless, Ibis continued to be worshipped in black-hearted Acheron and the cult failed in Stygia. The Stygians eventually began to have commerce with Acheron, but even as they traded with the remnants of the Giant-Kings, they were plumbing the knowledge of their noble houses about the magical abilities of the Heart of Ahriman.

The Hyborians soon arrived and complicated matters. The Stygians stopped the advance of the early waves of Hyborian drifters at a series of forts in Corinthia. Eventually the Stygians allowed the Hyborians to settle in the Corinthian uplands under Stygian rule. Koth, Ophir and Corinthia were developed as Stygian provinces. During the reign of Tuthothomes XX, with covert aid from Acheron, the Hyborians in those three provinces revolted and drove out their masters, chasing them back to Kuthchemes. Once again the ancient city of Kuthchemes saw the bloody swords and raging fires of conquering invaders. The Hyborians arrived and, like the Khari before, sacked the city. The Stygians were driven behind the natural barrier of the Styx, abandoning such cities as Sabatea to the Shemites. The Hyborians then turned their barbarous attentions upon the Nightmare Empire of Acheron and, when the Heart of Ahriman was stolen by a shaman, the last empire of the Giant-Kings fell to the sword.

Never again did Stygia try to expand so far north of the River Styx. Instead, the brooding kingdom concentrated more on internal affairs and defence, perhaps concerned they, like their sinister sister Acheron, would also fall. They continued their advance to the south.

Splinter groups fled the reorganisation of Stygia and founded Shumballa in Kush, establishing the Chaga people. Less than a hundred years ago, the Tlazitlans of Lake Zuad left their homeland and settled in Xuchotl.

Today, Stygia is the dark, dreaming empire of the South, reviled by the Hyborian nations, yet ever a scheming stronghold for the black powers of Set.

## STYGIAN LAW

Not only is the Stygian army strictly disciplined and regimented, so too are the common people of Stygia. Stygian laws are restrictive and brutal, designed to ensure the continued existence of the Stygian culture by enforcing the Stygian people to comply with the rules of its priests. Permits are required for many elements of life, including but not limited to changing one's place of residence, travelling more than 20 miles from one's home or owning weapons or armour. These permits provide a pair of powerful tools for the Stygian government: income and internal security. The selling of permits sends a steady stream of income to the ruling classes. Internal security is provided because permits are often denied, and this prevents known dissidents from gathering. There is no legal recourse to those who are denied permits, and doing something without the requisite permit invites severe punishments, such as fines, confiscation of goods and even physical mutilation, such as public whipping, hamstringing or execution. The bodies of criminals are not mummified, they are left to rot, denying them an eternal after-life with Father Set.

Religious crimes are punished even more severely than secular crimes. Not attending a religious ceremony is cause for a hefty fine. Failure to tithe to the temple gives rise to fines even worse than the tithe would have been, plus the offender still must make the requisite tithe. Ceremonies are required by law and priests always charge for these services. Examples of these required rites are numerous: crops must be blessed; all children must be consecrated to Father Set;

*'At last, the next summer, I came to trial before King Ctesphon and the High Priest. Nefri and but one of my children had survived the rigors of the dungeon, and her hair was all fallen out. The law's of King Tuthamon X'VIII concerning aid to foreign foes of Set and Stygia were read to us, and under these law's the High Priest pronounced our doom.'*

John Boardman, *The Testament of Snefru*

and even the dead have requisite funerary rites that must be performed and paid for. Failure to meet these requirements may be considered heresy; the punishment for heresy is death, confiscation of all property and enslavement of the transgressor's entire family. Repeated failures will most definitely be deemed heresy. In addition to the required rites, several animals enjoy a protected religious status. Snakes and hippopotami are sacred, and allowed to exist unmolested in Stygia. It is against Stygian law to injure either animal, and doing so also provokes a charge of heresy. Although the priesthood does not insist on any particular behaviour before a hippopotamus, all Stygians must lie down when a snake is sighted and await the snake to either attack or move on.

Other than those traditional punishments, the Stygians have not really codified much of their law, beyond some efforts by King Tuthamon XVIII, equating certain punishments with certain crimes. Thieves might be forced to pay back twice the value of what they stole, or they could find their hands (and the hands of their family) cut off. Penalties can include sacrifice, impalement, burning alive, drowning, decapitation, imprisonment, hard labour in the mines, exile, a hundred strokes with a cane or whip, bleeding cuts or even permanent branding. The worst of offenders suffer sorcerous punishment, such as the loss of a soul, tortured sacrifice or embalming alive to be turned into an undead thing that cannot rest or enter into the after-life. In some cases, this fate has been given to entire families. As *the Testament of Snefru* states, 'the priests know all manner of torments which break the evil-doer's body slowly and damn his soul to the dark gulfs beyond the stars'. Snefru and his family were condemned to be sacrificed to Set.

**Courts:** There are no courts of law in Stygia and there are no separate buildings of law or specialists who practise law. Law is simply a part of administration; any official of the government is, by default, a de facto judge, although they cannot judge people they have working for them. To avoid gross miscarriages of justice, a third party official serves as judge and administers whatever punishment he sees fit. There is always a punishment delivered, because those who file a complaint, if they fail to prove their case, are punished for wasting the official's time and for lying. Further, when punishment is carried out, the entire family of the guilty suffer the same fate. If a man is exiled, so to is his entire family. If the case is particularly large or important, councils of officials are formed to judge the case. Once the case is tried and judged, that particular council is disbanded. The viziers of Stygia or the king may also try cases, although they usually only hear important cases, or hotly contested cases that have slowly made their way up the governmental hierarchy.

**Stygian Dungeons:** Stygians have a rigorous dungeon filled with horrors so blasphemous and alien that those who survive

*Stygia's government was simply a puppet operated by the cult of Set, and supposedly any acolyte was putting themselves on a path that could lead to the office of the Speaker of Set, the true power behind King Ctesphon's court.*

Steven York, *Scions of the Serpent*

the experience either have white hair or no hair at all. *The Testament of Snefru* talks about how Snefru's wife and one child survived the dungeon experience and all of his wife's hair fell out. These prisons are often used when citizens try to avoid the corvée or when they are awaiting trial in front of the viziers or the king himself.

## STYGIAN GOVERNMENT KNOWN KINGS OF STYGiA

Records of Stygia's kings are scanty. Although the Nemedian scribes have often tried to get access to Stygia's records, the Serpent Kingdom holds its secrets in a death-grip. Still, some information has been revealed:

### Early Kings

The earliest king known is **Tuthamon**, who is the father of Akivasha (see page 142). His rule is stated by Akivasha as being 10,000 years ago. This may be exaggeration on the part of Akivasha because this places his rule prior to the arrival of the Khari and the formation of Stygian society. Alternatively, Tuthamon may be a king of Elder Stygia, one of the Giant-Kings. Modern Stygians are tight-lipped on the subject. Another early king is **Tuthamon XVIII**, who established some early codified laws. He may or may not be the same king who fathered Akivasha; most likely he is a later king who simply borrowed his name for continuity during the shift from Giant-King to Khari rulership.

### Ctesphon I

Ctesphon I's existence is implied by the existence of Ctesphon II, III and IV. He likely ruled and died before Conan was born. He was probably Mentupherra's father and Ctesphon II and III's grandfather. He most certainly was descended from the original inhabitants of Elder Stygia and had ivory

## List of Known Kings

Name of King	Period of Rule	Notes	Source
Tuthamon	10,000 years ago.	Father of Akivasha; probably a Giant-King.	Robert E. Howard, <i>The Hour of the Dragon</i> .
Tuthamon XVIII	Unknown; probably after the Khari conquered Elder Stygia.	Established codified laws concerning aid to foreign foes of Set and Stygia.	John Boardman, <i>The Testament of Snefru</i> .
Rahotep	Unknown.	Wizard-king; remembered for his sphinx out in the desert and for his abominable practices during his rule.	John Maddox Roberts, <i>Conan the Valorous</i> .
Tuthothomes XX	Around the period where Kuthchemes was sacked by the Hyborians.	Withdrew Stygia's northern border to the Styx.	Fritz Leiber, <i>When Set Fled</i> .
Ctesphon I	Unknown.	Existence implied by the numbering of later kings called Ctesphon.	Implied by Roy Thomas, L. Sprague de Camp, Robert E. Howard and John Boardman.
Mentupherra	Unknown period; ruled Stygia when Bêlit was a child until about a year before Bêlit's death.	Father of Ctesphon II. Raided Asgalun, defeated Atrahasis and put Nim-Karrak on the throne of Asgalun. Exiled Thoth-Amon, who fled to Zingara.	Roy Thomas, <i>Conan the Barbarian</i> , Vol. 1, No. 88, July 1978; L. Sprague de Camp and Robert E. Howard, <i>The Treasure of Trancos</i> ; Poul Anderson, <i>Conan the Rebel</i> .
Ctesphon II	Unknown until <i>Queen of the Black Coast</i> . About 1 year of rule, ending a few months before Bêlit's death.	Died around 20 years old. Wizardly advisors dominated him and his rule. Killed by Bêlit; kicked out of a window.	Roy Thomas, <i>Conan the Barbarian</i> , Vol. 1, Nos. 86-88, 1978; Poul Anderson, <i>Conan the Rebel</i> .
Ctesphon III	Took control of Stygia during the Conan's years as Amra ( <i>Queen of the Black Coast</i> ).	Female, the sister of King Ctesphon II. She had an alias of Neftha when she posed as a slave girl during the reign of her brother. She dabbles in the occult. Gave Thoth-Amon a place in her court as advisor.	Roy Thomas, <i>Conan the Barbarian</i> , Vol. 1, Nos. 88-90, July-September 1978.
Ctesphon IV	Was ruling Stygia by the time of <i>Phoenix on the Sword</i> .	Thoth-Amon served as an advisor in his court and as virtual ruler of Stygia until the wizard lost his Ring.	John Boardman, <i>The Testament of Snefru</i> ; Robert E. Howard, <i>The Phoenix on the Sword</i> .

skin. During his reign the magicians of Stygia all enjoyed high rank and the Cult of Set was at a peak of political and economic power, a level of power that would later be broken with the ascension of Thoth-Amon, who caused later kings to throw down all the magicians from their places of power in favour of the powerful Lord of the Black Ring.

### Mentupherra

Much later, during Conan's youth and early manhood, Mentupherra was the ruler of Stygia. Mentupherra defeated Asgalun and captured Bêlit's father. Mentupherra's rule caused Thoth-Amon to flee to Zingara under unknown circumstances. He was a strong king and retained the title of High Priest of the Cult of Set for himself as one of his many titles, even though he had no sorcerous training or knowledge. Magicians and sorcerers served in high places during his reign.

He had no particular fear of them and would put them to death if they stepped out of line. He was the most powerful secular king Stygia had in many generations. He was killed in a Taian revolt at Rasht just over a year before Bêlit died. The Speaker of Set in Mentupherra's court was Tothapis.

### Ctesphon II

Mentupherra's slender son took the throne as Ctesphon II. Thoth-Amon returned to Stygia, taking residence in Kheshatta and gathering power and influence. Ctesphon II was a young, cowardly ruler, terrified of everything. Scrawny and without power, he was completely dominated by his viziers, the Speaker of Set (Hath-Horeb) and just about every courtier around him. The Speaker of Set took the traditional High Priest of the Cult of Set for himself. The sorcerers of Stygia had so much power they began to get lazy and comfortable, taking advantage of every cultural system in Stygia. Ctesphon II had every prisoner in Stygia sacrificed to

Set when he ascended the throne, as have virtually all kings of Stygia, which spelled the end of Bêlit's father. Bêlit killed Ctesphon II, who was immediately succeeded by his older sister, Neftha, who ruled as King Ctesphon III. He ruled for less than one year and was much less ambitious than his father. He knew more arcane knowledge than his father and corresponded with Thoth-Amon.

### Ctesphon III

Ivory-skinned Ctesphon III gave Thoth-Amon the post of Speaker of Set and cast down all the magicians from their high places, giving Thoth-Amon the title of High Priest of the Cult of Set. She is one of the few women to rule Stygia as king. Under her rule, Thoth-Amon used the *Serpent Ring of Set* to become the *de facto* ruler of Stygia. Later, her children from her uncle became the next rulers. During her rule Thoth-Amon culled the weak, lazy and complacent from the Cult of Set.

### Ctesphon IV

The ruler of Stygia during Conan's reign in Aquilonia was King Ctesphon IV. During his reign, Thoth-Amon lost his Serpent Ring and was broken, enslaved and sent to Aquilonia as a slave. Thoth-Amon regained his ring and has since returned to Stygia. King Ctesphon IV, knowing full well the terrors Thoth-Amon wields, restored him to his former ranks and titles, except for High Priest of the Cult, which Ctesphon IV retained for his own use. He reconquered the Taia province.



## KING CTESPHON IV

**Ruler of Stygia, Lord of the Serpent Throne, High Priest of the Cult of Set and the House of the Black Ring**  
**Medium Humanoid (Acheronian (Stygian) scholar 8/ noble 12)**  
**Hit Dice:** 5d6+5d8+14+3+10 (67 hit points)

**Initiative:** +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 19 (+7 level, +2 Dex)

**Parry Defence:** 21 (+9 level, +2 Str)

**DR:** —

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +15/+17

**Attack:** Stygian Bow +20 ranged; Javelin +17 ranged; Lance +17 melee

**Full Attack:** Stygian Bow +20/+15/+10 ranged; Javelin +17 ranged; Lance +17/+12/+7melee

**Damage:** Stygian Bow 1d12+2/ 19-20 x2/ AP 4; Javelin 1d8+2/ x2/ AP 3; Lance 1d10+2/ x3/ AP 4

**Special Attacks:** Special regional feature +3 attack bonus with Stygian bow

**Special Qualities:** Stygian/Acheronian traits, title, rank hath its privileges, wealth, special regional feature +3, social ability (*comeliness, family ties*), lead by example +4, enhanced leadership, do you know who I am?, new sorcery style x4, scholar, lay priest background, base power points, knowledge is power, +2 power point, advanced spells x6, bonus spells x2, increased maximum power points (triple)  
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +20 (+10 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 26

**Skills:** Bluff +15, Craft (alchemy) +23, Craft (herbalism) +16, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +20, Handle Animal +13, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (nobility) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perform (ritual) +31, Profession (scribe) +13, Sense Motive +27, Sleight-of-Hand +8

**Feats:** Chariot Combat, Eyes to the Sky, Hexer, Iron Will, Leadership, Menacing Aura, Mounted Archery (chariot use only), Priest, Ritual Sacrifice, Steely Gaze, Tormented Sacrifice

**Reputation:** 102 (Villain) (+10 bonus to Bluff, Gather Information and Intimidate Checks)

**Leadership:** 42/44 (17<sup>th</sup> level cohort; 800 1<sup>st</sup> level, 160 2<sup>nd</sup> level, 40 3<sup>rd</sup> level, 10 4<sup>th</sup> level, 4 5<sup>th</sup> level, 2 6<sup>th</sup> level)

**Code of Honour:** None

**Allegiances:** Cult of Set, The Black Ring, Stygia

**Base Power Points:** 10 (4 base, +4 Wis, +2 bonus); 30 maximum

**Magical Attack:** +18/+21 (+7 level, +8 Cha, +3 Regional Bonus/Curses: +1 racial, +2 hexer feat)

**Sorcery Styles:** Curses, Hypnotism, Immortality, Prestidigitation

**Spells Known:** *Conjuring, domination, draw forth the soul, entrance, eternal youth\*, greater ill-fortune, hypnotic suggestion, lesser ill-fortune, mass hypnotic suggestion, telekinesis, torment\*, witch's vigour\**

**Corruption:** 6

**Insanity:** Sleeplessness

**Possessions:** Shepherd's crook, farmer's flail, linen kilt, double crown, sandals, wig.

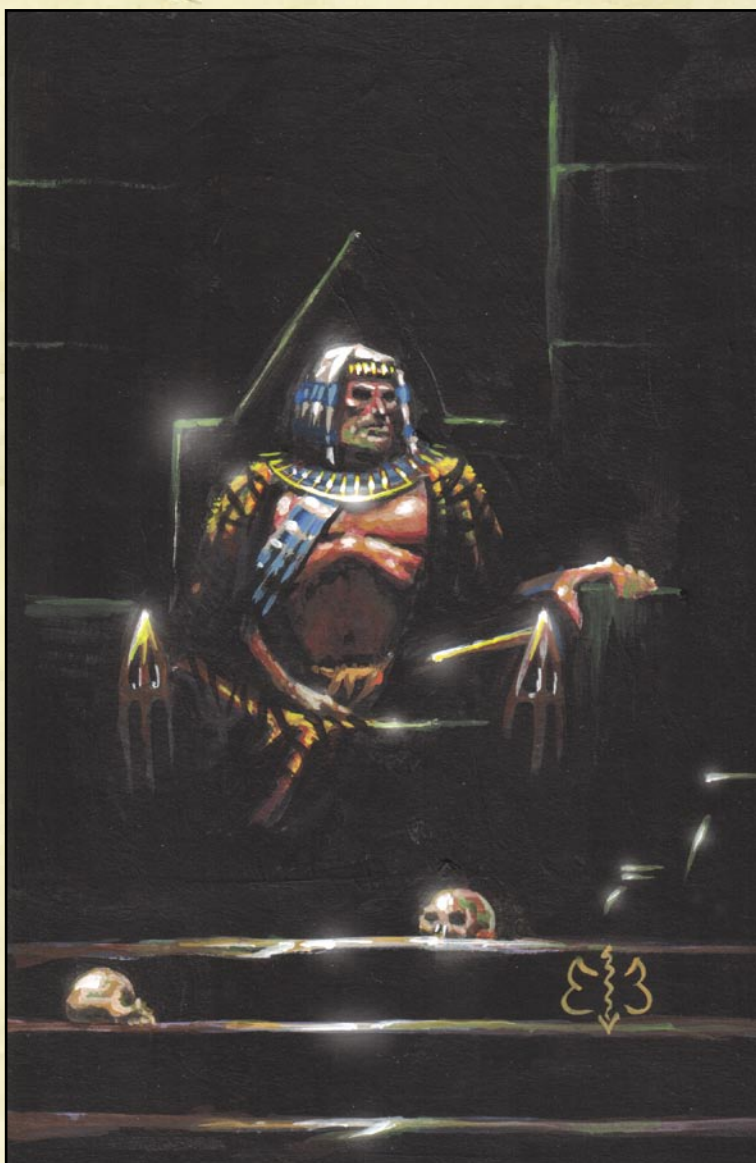
\*Spell from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*

King Ctesphon IV is a sinister Stygian descended from the original inhabitants of Elder Stygia, the vile by-product of generations of inbreeding. He is taller than most men by a head, has pale, white skin, has large, luminous eyes and has a sensuous mouth. He has a sinuous, snake-like stride worthy of a ruler of a nation of snake worshippers. His feet are regarded as well-shaped. Ctesphon's sandals always have the hieroglyph representing the Sons of Shem on them, so that he can symbolically trample upon the Shemites with each and every step he takes. He is the glittering-eyed third son of Queen Neftha, who ruled as King Ctesphon III. As a child he was trained as a scribe and initiated both in the temple of Derketo and the temple of Set. Quickly he earned the right to be initiated into the House of the Black Circle and was trained as a sorcerer-priest. When his mother died, he was quick to act to secure his place as king, killing his two older brothers with horrible curses. Upon his ascension to the throne he ordered all prisoners throughout Stygia sacrificed to Set in his honour, regardless of crime and regardless of upcoming trials to determine innocence. He married his sister within days of taking the crown. Currently he has twenty three wives. King Ctesphon IV is worshipped as a god in his own right, a living incarnation of Set, the upholder and protector of all things Stygian.

Unlike his uncle Ctesphon II, he is a natural leader who exudes self-confidence. His most well-known trait is that of courage. He has no problem trying out new ideas and he believes he is headed for success no matter what he tries. Opposition is but an annoyance to be swatted away. He has no problem taking a gamble, following a dream, setting his mind on a goal and pursuing it with the utmost confidence, courage and enthusiasm. He also has a hot temper and can throw almost childish tantrums when faced with a slight, imagined or real. He has often ordered the death of entire villages because of a perceived insult.

Ctesphon inspires fear and dread in others. He is powerfully charismatic, but the sinister edge to his personality frightens even hardened Stygians. He knows the old ways, methods of alchemy and sorcery passed down through his family since the days of Elder Stygia. Vanity is one of his chief weaknesses and he is a sucker for artful compliments (-10 on any Sense Motive skill check against such art). He has a scribal cohort named Bessu Besek who serves as one of his two viziers; Bessu was actually a childhood adversary who later became his closest friend.

He is fond of children and his own children are sources of pride and happiness.

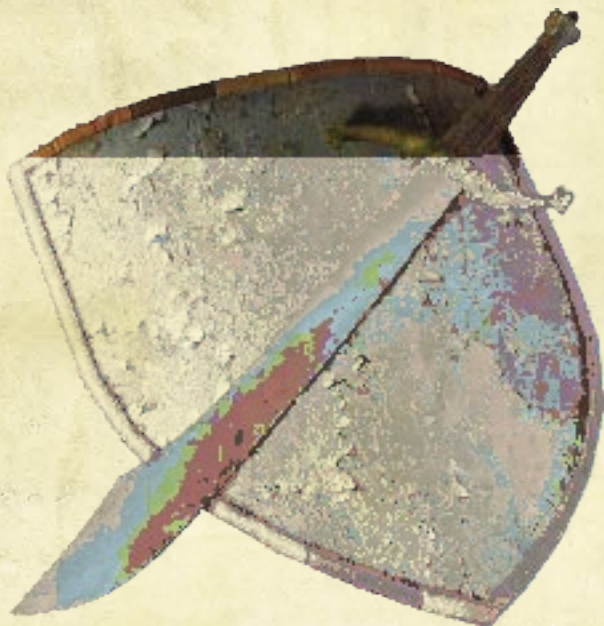


He tends to fall in love at first sight and never thinks twice about following the dictates of his heart but he is turned off by sloppy appearances and loud, vulgar behaviour. Ctesphon also has a tendency to credit a lover with virtues not found in reality; when the lover fails to live up to his expectations he is horribly wounded. He tends to have secret love affairs that bring him trouble more often than not. Given the chance, he prefers to run everyone's lives, making his position as king wonderful for him. He is often blunt and brusque, with little patience for the 'tried and true' if he thinks he has a better idea.

Ctesphon is ruled by his emotions. It is faster to reach his heart than his head. He is a quick and accurate learner if his emotions are engaged. If a subject does not arouse his affections then he dismisses the subject completely. In order to change the mind of King Ctesphon IV, one must change how he *feels* about the subject first. Logic will not win the

day with Ctesphon. Thoth-Amon knew this and used it to get Ctesphon to throw down all other magicians from their places of power, making Thoth-Amon the most powerful sorcerer in Stygia politically and economically.

Ctesphon IV suffers from insomnia. He lies awake for hours every night, tossing and turning, seeking sleep. He must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) every morning or wake up fatigued (-2 to Strength and Dexterity, cannot run).



## PRINCE MENOPHIS

Vizier of Western Stygia, Left Eye of King Ctesphon IV, Lord Procurer for Greater Stygia, Hand of Set, Judge of Magicians in the House of the Black Circle, Overseer of all Divine Offices, Overseer of all Works of the King in Every Place, King's Envoy, Overseer of Recruits of the Lord of the Land of Set, Master of the Secrets of the Palace, Fan-Bearer on the Right of the King, Seal Bearer of King Ctesphon IV

Medium Humanoid (Stygian noble 18)

Hit Dice: 10d8+16+20 (81 hit points)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 18 (+6 level, +2 Dex)

Parry Defence: 23 (+9 level, +4 Str)

DR: —

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +13/+17

Attack: Stygian Bow +20 ranged; Lance +17 melee

Full Attack: Stygian Bow +20/+15/+10 ranged; Lance +17/+12/+7melee

Damage: Stygian Bow 1d12+4/ 19-20 x2/ AP 6; Lance 1d10+4/ x3/ AP 6

Special Attacks: Special regional feature +4 attack bonus with Stygian bow

**Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, title, rank hath its privileges, wealth, special regional feature +4, social ability (*etiquette, family ties, smear others*), lead by example +6, enhanced leadership, do you know who I am?, rally  
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +17 (+10 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 20

**Skills:** Appraise +13, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +32, Gather Information +20, Handle Animal +16, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcane) +11, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Perform (ritual) +7, Perform (sing) +7, Profession (government official) +15, Profession (scribe) +14, Search +9, Sense Motive +28

**Feats:** Chariot Combat, Dabbler (divination), Investigator, Iron Will, Knowledgeable, Leadership, Mounted Archery (chariot use only), Negotiator, Persuasive, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Skill Focus (search), Skill Focus (gather information)

**Reputation:** 92 (Villain) (+9 bonus to Bluff, Gather Information and Intimidate Checks)

**Leadership:** 27 (13<sup>th</sup> level cohort; 600 1<sup>st</sup> level, 24 2<sup>nd</sup> level, 6 3<sup>rd</sup> level, 3 4<sup>th</sup> level, 1 5<sup>th</sup> level)

**Code of Honour:** None

**Allegiances:** King Ctesphon IV, Stygia, Thoth-Amon

**Base Power Points:** 6 (2 base, +4 Wisdom) (12 maximum)

**Magical Attack:** +9 (+4 level, +5 Cha)

**Corruption:** 5

**Possessions:** Linen kilt, double crown, sandals, wig

Menophis is one of the two viziers serving the court of King Ctesphon IV. He is about 47 years old and has such a weathered appearance he almost looks mummified. He has a large brow that shadows his eyes and a wide forehead. Although not a sorcerer, he has been in contact with so much sorcery and vileness he has acquired Corruption. He has a practical and constructive mind and never embarks on a project without being completely prepared. There is a rigidity to his intellect and is quite sure that his opinions are the wisest. Thus, he has no use for what others might think. He is horrible at listening to others, inattentive at best, outright dismissive at worst, because he is not about to change his mind anyway. He does take responsibility seriously and is determined and capable at his job. He has the power to bring about just about anything he can envision, often through sheer tenacity.

He does his best to amass wealth and possessions because he has a secret fear that he will be left alone and penniless. He came from a poor family and his climb to the top has been long and arduous. He has now achieved material comfort, so he is generous to those in need because he knows what it means to not have enough. A great deal of his energy is spent in sexual pursuits; he has fourteen children and has been married six times. He is dominant and possessive in his love affairs, although he does

have a light-hearted attitude toward love; a deep and intense emotional involvement is something he avoids.

Menophis has a reputation for frankness. People always know where they stand with him. He is interested in new things, the latest imaginative stories always grab his attention. He has travelled extensively, and has visited Turan, Nemedra and several city-states in Shem. It was in the capacity of a foreign trader for the king that Menophis served before his appointment as vizier.

## PRINCE BESSU BESEK

**Vizier of Southern Stygia, Right Eye of King Ctesphon IV, Cohort to the King, Priest of Monuments, Lord of the King's Largess, Overseer of the Royal Harem, Chooser of the Slain, Foremost of the King's Courtiers, Overseer of all Overseers of Scribes of the King, True Royal Scribe, Mouth Who Appears in the Entire Land, Overseer of the Generals of the Lord of the Land of Set, Master of the Secrets of the Palace, Fan-Bearer on the Left of the King Medium Humanoid (Stygian scholar 17)**

**Hit Dice:** 10d6+7 (42 hit points)

**Initiative:** +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Ref)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**DV Dodge:** 18 (+6 level, +2 Dex)

**DV Parry:** 17 (+6 level, +1 Str)

**BAB/Grapple:** +12/+13

**Attack:** Dagger +14 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +15 ranged

**Full Attack:** Dagger +14/+9/+4 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +15/+10/+5 ranged

**Damage:** Dagger 1d4+1/19-20 x2/ AP 2 or Stygian Bow (+1) 1d12+1/ 19-20 x2/ AP 3

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

**Special Attacks:** Spells

**Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, base power points, bonus feats (taken in lieu of sorcery styles) x6, bonus skill points (taken in lieu of advanced spells) +38, scholar, background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power, +4 power points, increased maximum power points (quadruple)

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +13 (+5 vs. corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 20

**Skills:** Bluff +13, Concentration +6, Craft (alchemy) +18, Decipher Script +17, Diplomacy +17, Gather Information +12, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (engineering) +29, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (religion) +26, Knowledge (local) +14, Knowledge (nature) +16, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Knowledge (geography) +13, Perform (ritual) +20, Profession (high priest of monuments) +7, Profession (government official) +12, Profession (slave overseer) +7, Profession (scribe) +12, Profession (tax-collector) +10, Sense Motive +14, Sleight-of-Hand +12

**Feats:** Chariot Combat, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Iron Will, Knowledgeable, Leadership, Menacing Aura, Mounted Archery (chariot only), Negotiator, Persuasive, Priest, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Skill Focus (Knowledge (engineering)), Skill Focus (Profession (government official)), Skill Focus (Profession (scribe)), Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Steely Gaze

**Code of Honour:** None

**Reputation:** 96 (Talented) (may add a +10 bonus to Bluff and Profession checks when dealing with others)

**Leadership:** 22/26 (11<sup>th</sup> cohort; 400 1<sup>st</sup>, 16 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2 4<sup>th</sup> level, 1 5<sup>th</sup> level)

**Allegiances:** King Ctesphon IV, Father Set, Stygia

**Base Power Points:** 11 (4 base, +3 Wisdom, +4 bonus) (44 maximum)

**Magical Attack:** +13 (+8 level, +5 Cha)

**Corruption:** 6

**Insanity:** Phobia (crocodiles)

**Possessions:** Linen kilt, double crown, sandals, wig, dagger

\*Spell from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*

Bessu Besek is the intimidating cohort of King Ctesphon IV, a childhood friend who was appointed by the king to be one of his trusted viziers. He is a mercurial person, strong and powerful one moment and undecided and wavering the next. He feels he must always fight against obstacles placed in his way. He has finally achieved success with his appointment as vizier, but the path has not been without disappointment and set-backs through the years. He is ambitious and determined, fairly skilled at controlling people, but he is also stubborn and grumpy. Bessu likes to look at both sides of any given issue and weigh the pros and cons so he can make a rational choice; his goal is to make the *perfect* choice at all times. He likes to adopt a wait-and-see attitude about most things.

Bessu Besek enjoys socialising and tries not to stir up controversy in public. Left alone, he tends to be lazy and less than diligent, but he performs admirably when teamed with a strong person who can direct him, such as King Ctesphon IV. Although not a sorcerer, he has been in contact with so much sorcery and vileness he has acquired Corruption.

# Beyond the Styx

## AN EXPANDED GAZETTEER

**THE MAP PRESENTED** in this volume is a truer representation of Stygia and the Black Kingdoms than has been presented thus far in the *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. The maps in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* and *Conan: The Road of Kings* are a representation of how the Hyborians view the world. Their knowledge of Stygia and the Black Kingdoms is sparse and incorrect. This new map, based on the research of Howardian scholar Dale Rippke, supplements the Hyborian knowledge of the world.

This disparity in the maps presents adventure hooks in and of themselves. Hyborian characters, who 'know' what the maps look like will travel to Stygia or the Black Kingdoms and soon find themselves utterly lost and probably captured. For example, the ruins of Pteion are shown in their correct position on the Stygia map. Hyborians with the standard Hyborian map of Stygia as presented in *Conan: The Road of Kings* will find themselves so deep in the Stygian desert they will likely never extricate themselves.

The geography of Stygia, while not as varied perhaps as Aquilonia, still is not just a large expanse of desert. The floodplain of the Styx provides dark alluvial lands. This dark soil on the low lands on both sides of the River Styx does not need fertilisation and almost no artificial irrigation. This soil produces most of the wheat, barley and vegetables for Stygian farmers. Irrigation canals and dams take water from the Styx through this rich soil to the higher lands to irrigate the upper fields. Stygia has oases which produce dates and grapes. There is marshland along the Styx and steppes in the south.

**Akhbet Isle** – Akhbet Isle is an uninhabited island in the sea. The small, white-cliffed island lies to the west of Khemi.

**Bakhr River** – The Bakhr River is a small tributary of the Styx. It is a stagnant, muddy watercourse filled with deadly crocodiles. It joins the Styx north of Nebthu and east of the oasis of Khajar. There are a series of small inns built along the banks for river travellers.

**Black Lotus Swamp** – This is a vast swamp reeking of decay and ancient menace. It lies about four to six days upriver from Khemi. Lizards, pythons and crocodiles lurk in its murky depths and among the eldritch ruins.

**Dragon's Spine** – To the southwest of Pteion is a ridge of small peaks off the main caravan route. The sandy dunes of the desert gradually give way to low hillocks of crumbling soil, then to a land of stone outcrops and towers. It is as though the surface of the earth had buckled up here from unthinkable pressures within to bare the earth's raw and naked bones. It is a torturous landscape of canyons and cliffs. The palace of the ancient wizard Cetriss, who developed the Emerald Lotus millennia ago, can be found in this line of small mountains.

**Dune Sea** – The dune sea is an ocean of sand dunes to the west of Pteion and north of the Dragon's Spine. It is a demon-haunted wasteland. There is said to be an oasis in the midst of the dune sea. Only those who must travel in secrecy cross these foreboding wastes of trackless sand.

**Eastern Escarpment** – The eastern escarpment separates the fertile valley of the River Styx from the high desert.

**Ellobolu** – Ellobolu is a long, narrow lake along the Styx in the east. It is lined with marble and is rumoured to be bottomless.

**Ford of Bubastes** – The Ford of Bubastes is a crossing on the River Styx on a major caravan route between Shem, Turan and Luxur.

**Helu River** – The Helu River lies in the Taian province, creating a fertile region of hills and highlands.

**High Desert** – The High Desert begins with the Eastern Escarpment, stretching toward the west. The sphinx of King Rahotep, an ancient monument with a lion's body, dragon's wings and the face of the wizard-king of old, all carved out of sandstone, is located here.

**Khnemu (The Hot-Springs Lake)** – In eastern Stygia there is a lake in the hill country of the Styx that is said to be the ultimate and holy source of the River Styx's life-giving waters. Shrines to Set, Hap-I and Khnemu can be found around this body of water. The lake feeds a sizable and navigable river tributary to the Styx and is not the actual source of the river. If one can get a boat up the mountain into the lake, this tributary is actually easier to



navigate than the Styx for a distance, going around a major cataract.

**Khopshef Province** – The Khopshef province lies immediately to the west of Pashtun. Strings of small villages and estates line the river in this province. Several pleasure islands can be found in this district as well.

**Oasis of Khajar** – This oasis is where Thoth-Amon is said to have a home, in addition to his Kheshatta castle and his palace at Luxur. It is located three days' travel by camel from the shoreline, far to the west of Nebthu.

**Oasis of Nafri** – A cluster of huts, barns and small simple buildings of mud brick and stone can be found at this oasis. Goats, ducks and other animals mill around the oasis. The few men and fewer women who live here are clothed like nomads. There is supposedly an underground temple to Ibis, the forbidden Giant-King god of black sorcerous knowledge, here.

**Purple Lotus Swamp** – The Purple Lotus Swamp is a ghost-haunted swamp in southern Stygia, where the purple lotus grows. Purple lotus is

a plant whose juices cause immediate temporary paralysis in even small quantities. Made properly, purple lotus can also make people sleep. The pollen of the purple lotus is sometimes used in spells to summon demons.

**River Styx** – The River Styx is probably one of the most famous rivers in the Hyborian Age landscape and the defining geographic site of Stygia. Also known as the Nilus, the Styx is by far the largest river of the South, a veritable lifeline of agriculture and fertility along its entire length, from the darkest realms of the Black Kingdoms to the gaping mouth at Khemi. The Styx binds Stygia in the north and is a wide, deep river, navigable for most of its length. Its source is somewhere in the jungles south of Zembabwe. The great

*The Styx lay in a broad, muddy band nearly a mile wide. Villages lined its shores so thickly that there was scarcely any division between them. Broad, fertile fields stretched back from the banks, and over everything lay a glittering network of irrigation canals.*

John Maddox Roberts, *Conan the Bold*

black-walled city of Khemi sits at its mouth, guarding the river. Hills and cliff sides mark the northern shore of the vast river and various reedy channels, black lagoons, snake-infested swamps and tributary streams and rivers flow into it from the south. Great crocodiles and massive hippopotami swarm the shallow regions of the Styx. Stygians use the river to irrigate crops along the fertile land found on the shores of the Styx, which floods annually to deposit mineral rich soil along its length. Several small islands can be found in the wide expanse of the Styx and great cities dot its black shores. Impressive megalithic temples and statues are built on its shores, as are several noble estates. In a few places, such as the Ford of Bubastes near the Bakhr River, the Styx is fordable. The great bend of the Styx, two thousand miles or more inland, is at a section called Taia. The river is broken by falls and white-water cascades once it moves past the Purple Lotus Swamp and by the time it has reached the end of Zembabwei it has become marshy and thin, riddled with diseases and horrible insects. The famous right-angled corner the Styx makes is actually so gradual when sailing, covering so many miles, that it is hardly noticeable. The Styx has many small islands, many of which are used as pleasure resorts by the princes and nobles of Stygia. These 'pleasure islands' often have temples to Derketo on them.

**Siptah's Isle** – This technically nameless isle belongs to a powerful sorcerer named Siptah. It is a small, jungle-covered island off the coast of Stygia, south of Khemi. Only Siptah and the things he summons live on this dark island. On the eastern coast of the island is a slender spire, a black shape like a pointing finger, where a fabulous and mysterious gem taken from deep within a desert tomb is said to be hidden. The black tower of Siptah is a simple cylinder surrounded at its tapered height by a narrow parapet; above the parapet rises the spire, supported by four columns. The black basalt tower has neither doors nor windows. Seacoast cities used to get demands from Siptah for tribute lest he use the gem to conjure storms and other mishaps for their ships; Conan

**The River of Death:** Many of the pastiches written about the River Styx name it the River of Death and claim that men who bathe in its waters will be stricken with a horrible wasting disease (just as many pastiches claim otherwise). While one can potentially get a disease from the waters just as from any other, the River Styx cannot be the river of death it is claimed and still support a civilisation. Likely it is a 'river of death' more from the profusion of hippopotami and crocodiles than from any supernatural or bacterial curse. However, a Games Master may want to assign a saving throw penalty (say, -2) for foreigners (non-Stygian, non-Shemite, non-Darfari characters) drinking the water against contracting gastroenteritis (see page 39) or a similar illness simply because the characters do not have immunity to the bacteria of the region.

once investigated the island and found the sorcerer dead and destroyed the gem. However, another sorcerer could easily take over the eldritch tower.

**Taian Mountains** – The Taian mountains lie in Stygia's north-east corner where the River Styx makes its ninety-degree turn toward the ocean from the jungles of the Black Kingdoms. Some of the mountains are still active volcanoes.

**Taia Province** – This area is often rebelling against the Stygians. The Taian hillmen are taller, more slender, darker of skin than Stygians. Their features are broad-nosed, full-lipped but regular. Their hair is blue-black and straight and they shave their beards. They wear little more than a linen kilt dyed to show their clan, with a part of it draped over the left shoulder. Their chief weapons are dirks, spears, slings, bows and axes. Their rectangular hide shields are brightly painted with a solar disc. Taia's capital used to be Thuran-on-the-Heights, but that city was destroyed by the Stygians over five hundred years ago. Its ruins are still holy to them.

**Viper's Head** – A swampy headland near Harakht. It almost resembles tropical jungle. A reek of decay hangs in the air here and grey moss beards the trees. Poisonous vines twist in rank tangles. Crocodiles, serpents and hideous hermit-shamans thick with Corruption dwell in this vile land of black trees and even blacker waters.

## IMPORTANT STYGIAN CITIES

Stygia is home to 12 powerful cities, 61 towns, and over 6,400 villages. The villages are jumbles of low, dun-coloured mud huts. Stygian cities usually only have areas for labourers, great houses for the nobles, an acropolis for the king or his representative, a temple area and a storage area. Streets are usually covered with branches to give some shade but still allow smoke and odours to leave.

## DESCRIPTION OF TERMS

All the urban centres listed here are presented in the following format:

### Population

Population is at the heart of most factors about the urban centre, determining much about the town in terms of vital statistics. The population statistic reflects the permanent populace, not transients. Walled cities tend to be crowded and most Stygian cities only hold four to five thousand residents. Only Khemi, Kheshatta and Luxur exceed 12,000 people.

### Size

Urban centres in Aquilonia are fairly small, less than a single square mile in area (about 640 acres). The size of a town or city does not include fields for growing food, although less dense urban centres, such as villages and towns, may have garden plots next to many of the homes. The number of acres and corresponding square mileage are given parenthetically.

### Average Population Density

This statistic gives the average number of adults per acre. This does not reflect children or animals. The larger the city grows, the more dense it becomes.

### Average Number of Structures

This statistic gives the average number of structures per acre of space. Structures can be pavilions, stalls, barns, sheds, houses, wells, fountains, temples, civic buildings, barracks, cemeteries, cisterns, coliseums, corrals, granaries, inns, libraries, mills, offices, plazas, shops, stables, taverns, tenements, theatres, warehouses and workshops. The larger the city grows, the more dense it becomes. The approximate total number of buildings is given parenthetically.

### Wealth Limit

This is determined by the community size. This determines the maximum price of items that may be found in the community.

### Ready Cash

This is the amount of coin and kind available in the community. Most of this wealth is in the hands of the aristocracy and the guilds.

### Government

This lists the type of lord the town is controlled by.

### Income for the Feudal Lord

A lord's income from urban centres are percentages of the wealth of the city. The aristocrat in charge may not be the sole recipient of this money – he may have a liege lord he must pass on some of the wealth to. This is money from taxation or it may be from an annual gift if it is a free city.

### Religion

This lists the primary god or gods worshipped in the community.

### Imports and Exports

Towns and cities are rarely self-supporting and must import food and supplies from elsewhere. Some urban centres have traders who take excess items from the city and return with needed items.

### Code of Honour

This lists the typical code of honour its citizens adhere to.

### Fortifications and Military Strength

This describes the fortifications and military strength of the city.

### Administration and Power Centres

This lists the administrator and any other persons or entities holding the reins of power in the city.

### Districts

People in these wards and districts know each other, vouch for each other, celebrate with each other and work with each other. People native to a particular ward with Knowledge (local) of at least one rank know everyone else in the ward, so Reputation bonuses always apply when a character is in his home ward and dealing with other natives of that same ward. Most ward or district information is based on the acre, which is 43,560 square feet or a roughly 210 feet by 210 feet square.

## AMANOPET

### The City of Cats

This is Bast's cult centre. The city maintains a lively trade with Shem and other Stygian cities along the Styx.

**Population:** 5,549 (96% Stygian (hybrid), 2% Stygian, 1% Kushite, 1% Other)

**Size:** Small City (32 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 173 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 50 buildings per acre (approx. 1,602 buildings total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 41,617,500 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the King:** 208,088 silver coins per year

**Religion:** Stygian Pantheon (Set, Bast)

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** None



### Fortifications and Military Strength

The city is surrounded by crocodile-ridden swamps fed by the River Styx, making the approach of armies difficult. It also has a wall. Amanopet has 111 soldiers on active duty and routinely hires 55 mercenaries.

### Culture

Lions and cats are sacred here. A favourite way of spending a day is to take one's family fishing and hunting in the marshes of the Styx delta. Hunters hurl throwing sticks at waterfowl to stun the birds, which are then collected by trained cats.

### Administration and Power Centres

There are an innumerable number of political factions vying for dominance in this black-hearted city.

**Ruler:** Luxur has its presence here via a regional governor. The governor is usually a high priest of Set or a noble high in the favour of the king.

**The Cult of Bast:** The Cult of Bast has a prominent place here. This is also the centre of a festival celebrated throughout Stygia, especially along the Styx. The cult is under the control of the priests of Set.

### Layout of Amanopet

The city of Amanopet is a wide-avenued city not far from the banks of the Styx. The river front has quays and wharves for the unending arrival and departure of boats bringing foods, materials and merchandise along the Styx. Grand stairs pass through the farmlands of the floodplain to the city itself. The palace of the governor overlooks the Styx at the front of the city.

### Districts of Amanopet

Amanopet is segregated into sprawling wards and districts to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods. Great houses lie to the north of the interior of the city, which is then filled with the clustered homes of the poor and the labourers and



artisans. Around the palace and the temple of Bast lie the noble estates.

- ❏ **House of Life:** A temple devoted to doctors and open to the public, is located between the noble estates. Doctors in the House of Life are paid in goods. A great medical library is attached to the House of Life.
- ❏ **Noble Estates:** At least six noble estates can be found around Amanopet. These estates conform to the standard construction of such estates.
- ❏ **Temple of Bast:** The temple of Bast, built in the standard style, dominates the eastern part of the city. Houses of the priests can be found to the south of the temple, built as a cluster of great houses with a wall around them.
- ❏ **Temple of Set:** This small temple is a hypostyle temple with an altar dedicated to the worship of Father Set. The columns are made to appear as rearing cobras.
- ❏ **Treasury:** There is a treasury where legal records are kept, especially in regards to ownership of property. Documents going back hundreds of years are stored here.
- ❏ **The Inner City:** The walled inner city is where most of the commoners dwell.
  - **The Great Houses:** In the northern part of the inner city are two streets of Great Houses, where officials and nobles not wealthy enough to have an estate dwell.
  - **The Clusters:** Extending to the south are the clusters of poor houses.
- ❏ **The Pyramids:** To the south of the city are three pyramid tombs.
- ❏ **The Necropolis:** Between the inner city and the pyramid complexes is a large necropolis of mastabas and shaft tombs. Also there is a huge burial ground for cat mummies.
- ❏ **Palace of the Governor:** The palace of the governor is a large building where offices and courts are built.
  - **Garden Courtyard:** Surrounded by colossal statues of kings, priests and gods, this walled courtyard is a huge garden for the pleasure of the governor and his visitors.
  - **Grand Hypostyle Hall:** A hypostyle hall is a great hall with a massive roof supported by numerous pylons. These pylons are shaped like Bast and stand 50 feet tall on the ends, 68 feet tall in the centre.
  - **Lesser Hypostyle Halls:** There are three lesser hypostyle halls separating the garden courtyard from the two inner courtyards. A causeway leads from the central lesser hall to the palace of the governor.
- ❏ **Docks:** Amanopet has a class 1 set of docks for the unloading of cargo, as defined in *Conan: Pirate Isles*.

## BEL-PHAR

Bel-Phar is the sister city to the Shemite city of Aswana across the Styx but is smaller in terms of area and population, yet is more colossal in terms of monument and building size. The village has a much more subdued tone than Aswana.

**Population:** 1,100 (37% Stygian (hybrid), 20% Stygian, 18% Meadow Shemite, 10% Kushite, 7% Pelishtim, 5% Hyborian, 3% Other)

**Size:** Small Town (20 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 55 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 22 structures per acre (approx. 440 structures total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 440,000 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the Temple:** 4,400 silver coins per year

**Religion:** Set, Stygian pantheon

**Imports:** Trade Goods, especially Shemite artefacts and products

**Exports:** Surplus emmer wheat and barley, papyrus

**Code of Honour:** None

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Bel-Phar has no wall. 22 guards and 11 mercenary soldiers make up the military strength of Bel-Phar. If the town fears a Shemite invasion, the high priest of Bel-Phar uses all the sorcery and alchemy at his command to deter the attack.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Ruler:** Bel-Phar is ruled by a high priest of Set, also a noted member of the Black Ring.

### Layout of Bel-Phar

Bel-Phar's waterfront lays somnolently along a raised foundation of mammoth stone blocks; the eroded stone docks thrust out into the Styx for the use of a myriad of papyrus boats of all sizes. A single ferry takes people across to Shem. The ferryman has a royal seal allowing him to transport people across the Styx to Bel-Phar. Anyone else caught transporting people across the Styx is arrested on the other side. The entire waterfront is paved with wide plates of stone. The centre of the waterfront is an open bazaar.

## ERKULUM

### The City of Set

This city is located in eastern Stygia along the River Styx. The city was built by the Giant-Kings and conquered by the Khari to form the seat of their new religion. Here the largest temple to Set, also the most ancient, rears its black bricks to the sky. Great pyramids and necropolises can be found to the

south. The city is under populated now and does not do a lot of trade. The centre of worship is now at Khemi and Luxur and few bother to even note the old City of Set, a huddled place that broods over lost power.

**Population:** 2,538 (96% Stygian (hybrid), 2% Stygian, 1% Shemite, 1% Other)

**Size:** Large Town (24 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 107 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 25 buildings per acre (approx. 596 buildings total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 3,807,000 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the King:** 38,070 silver coins per year

**Religion:** Stygian Pantheon (Set)

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** None

## Fortifications and Military Strength

The city is surrounded by a huge wall. Erkulum has 75 soldiers on active duty and can quickly call up 127 more.

## Culture

The cult of Set is strong here. Everything is oppressive and the masonry is Cyclopean in nature, massive beyond anything else found in Stygia save the great pyramids themselves. The quadruple statues of Set stand on either side of the entrance to the palace, towering hundreds of feet in height.

## Administration and Power Centres

There are an innumerable number of political factions vying for dominance in this black-hearted city.

**Ruler:** Luxur has its presence in Erkulum via a regional governor. The governor is usually a high priest of Set or a noble high in the favour of the king.

**The Cult of Set:** The Cult of Bast has a prominent place here. The most ancient of all temples of Set is located here. Some believe the temple is a rebuilt temple to the Old Ones and more than one scholar has intimated that this is really a temple to Yig, an ancient and terrible snake god predating Set. It is only here that a high priest of Set can learn the final mystery of Set. He must bring with him at least seven young virgin girls when he voyages to this black city to learn this horrible mystery of power and religion.

## Layout of Erkulum

The city of Erkulum is a wide-avenued city not far from the banks of the Styx. The river front has quays and wharves for

the occasional arrival and departure of boats bringing foods, materials and merchandise along the Styx. Grand stairs pass through the farmlands of the floodplain to the city itself. The palace of the governor overlooks the Styx at the front of the city. The buildings here are so massive and ominous that to even approach them, unless one is already indoctrinated in the second mystery of Set's Cult is to invite a Terror check (DC 18).

## Districts of Erkulum

Erkulum is segregated into sprawling wards and districts to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods. Great houses and towering spires lie to the north of the interior of the city, which is then filled with the clustered homes of the poor and the labourers and artisans. The architecture is massive in this city, tall and oppressive for the most part. It is said that if a person goes outside the living districts at night and screams loudly, that person will never be seen again; a seven-foot tall shadow will hunt down and take the screamer, pulling the person into his dark realms and eating the person, bones and all. It will take its time hunting down groups that go out and scream – all of them eventually disappear into the night.

- ❖ **Noble Estates:** At least twelve noble estates can be found around Erkulum. These estates conform to the standard construction of such estates except each has at least one towering spire on its roof.
- ❖ **Great Temple of Set:** The Great temple of Set, built in the standard style, dominates the eastern part of the city. Houses of the priests can be found to the south of the temple, built as a cluster of great houses with a wall around them. Only priests are permitted to enter the Great Temple.
  - **The Lesser Temple:** This is a temple to the other gods of the pantheon.
  - **The Sacred Lake:** In a garden for the temple is found the sacred lake where the priests wash for purity.
  - **Colossi:** Two colossal figures of an animal headed Set sit on great serpent thrones on either side of the temple complex.
  - **Mortuary Temple:** This temple begins the causeway route to the necropolis and the pyramids to the south of the city. The causeway is lined by cobra-headed sphinxes.
- ❖ **Treasury:** There is a treasury where legal records, especially in regards to ownership of property are kept. Documents going back hundreds of years are stored here.
- ❖ **The Inner City:** The walled inner city is where most of the commoners dwell.
  - **The Great Houses:** In the northern part of the inner city are two streets of great houses, where officials and nobles not

wealthy enough to have an estate dwell. Many of the great houses have spires on their roofs.

- **The Clusters:** Extending to the south are the clusters of poor houses.
- **The Pyramids:** To the south of the city are seven pyramid tomb-temples, one for each of the mysteries of Set. Although hard to see on the ground, the pyramid complexes are arranged to form a seven-pointed star. The largest pyramid is the farthest to the south and is most easily reached via canal.
- **The Obelisks:** The Great Obelisks of Erkulum stand on either side of the canal, great black spires erected in honour of Set. They are among the largest known Obelisks in Stygia. There used to be seven of them, but the other five were taken to other cities (Khemi (2), Luxur (2) and Sabatea (1)).
- **The Necropolis:** Between the inner city and the pyramid complexes is a large necropolis of mastabas and shaft tombs.
- **Palace of the Governor:** The palace of the governor is a large building where offices and courts are built.
  - **Garden Courtyard:** Surrounded by colossal statues of kings, priests and gods, this walled courtyard is a huge garden for the pleasure of the governor and his visitors.
  - **Grand Hypostyle Hall:** A hypostyle hall is a great hall with a massive roof supported by numerous pylons. These pylons are shaped like Bast and stand 50 feet tall on the ends, 68 feet tall in the centre.
  - **Lesser Hypostyle Halls:** There are three lesser hypostyle halls separating the garden courtyard from the two inner courtyards. A causeway leads from the central lesser hall to the palace of the governor.
- **Docks:** Erkulum has a class 2 set of docks for the unloading of cargo, as defined in *Conan: Pirate Isles*.

## HARAKHT

### City of the Hawk God

Harakht is the accursed and ancient city of the Hawk-God where dusky Stygians in amber-hued robes sing strange dirges before his immense idols. Strangers are not allowed into the city. It lies along the River Styx and is less than a day's ride from the Oasis of Khajar where lived the great Thoth-Amon. Years ago, King Ka-Mos, the father of Hor-Neb and Mer-Ath, managed to make Harakht largely independent of the crown of Luxur.

**Population:** 6,549 (96% Stygian (hybrid), 2% Stygian, 1% Shemite, 1% Other)

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

**Average Population Density:** 100 adults per acre

*'I suppose that few outside Stygia have heard much about Harakht, city of the Hawk-God. Nominally, it is subject to the crown, but in reality, it goes its own way.'*

*'Why does King Ctesphon allow it to?' asked Conan.*

*'Because it lies halfway between Harakht and Luxur. If it fell, the way would be open for a Shemite army to split this land in half, in time of war! Better a strong Stygian vassal than foreign hordes.'*

Roy Thomas, *The Hawk-Riders of Harakht*

**Average Number of Structures:** 50 buildings per acre (approx. 3,275 buildings total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 2,619,600 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the King:** 632,500 silver coins per year

**Religion:** Stygian Pantheon (Harakht, Set, Idris, Derketa)

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods, especially wood.

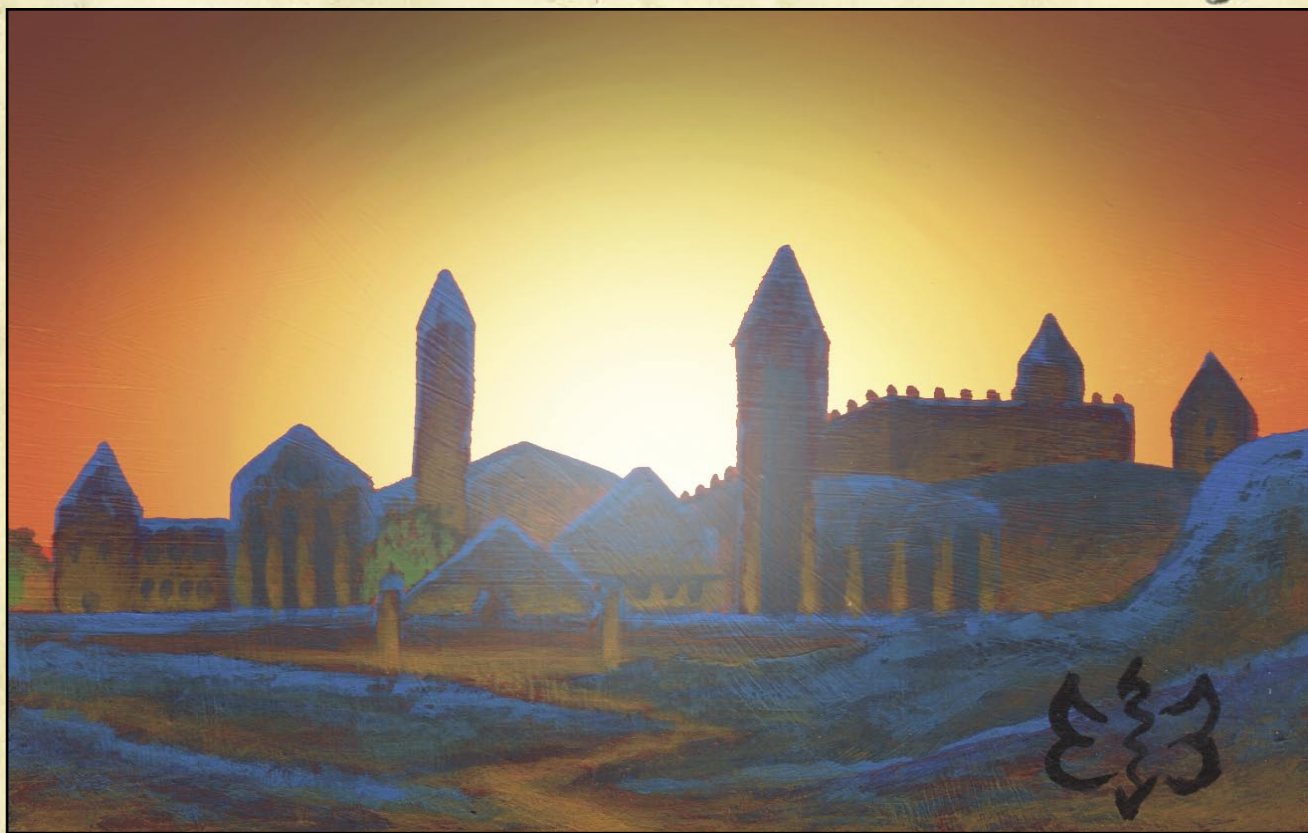
**Code of Honour:** None

### Fortifications and Military Strength

At one time, Harakht was defended by its trio of hawk-riders, Stygian soldiers trained to ride giant hawks raised by the priests of Harakht. The hawk-riders wielded swords and wore hawk-headed helmets. The giant hawks used as mounts came from three eggs found near a fallen star in the hills. However, the city is surrounded by crocodile-ridden swamps fed by the River Styx, making the approach of armies difficult. The city has 327 soldiers it can readily call up for duty and 65 full time soldiers. The city is also surrounded by a huge wall nearly as thick as that of Luxur.

### Culture

Harakht's sentries admit no foreigners and even Stygians who request entry or exit are subjected to knife-sharp inquiries lest they be acting as spies. Many are searched and any who are not devout worshippers of Harakht or Set are turned away by the gatekeepers. This policy condemns many, for the only water around is the befouled water of the swamps and a single oasis a day's travel to the south – and few will travel to the dread Oasis of Khajar to drink of its water.



**Falcons and Hawks:** Falcons and hawks are sacred here, especially the giant falcons. Conan killed them during his travel here. The bodies have been recovered and properly mummified, though.

**Eyes of Set:** Harakht has kept the peace with a certain village in the southern hills called Attalus by exchanging one of a pair of jewels whenever a new monarch takes the throne of one or the other city. A lone warrior, the strongest and bravest, is charged to make the journey and the exchange.

### Administration and Power Centres

There are an innumerable number of political factions vying for dominance in this black-hearted city.

**Ruler:** King Mer-Ath, a priest of the Hawk-God rules Harakht. Mer-Ath wears a blue and gold crown. It is a tall crown with a cobra design along the front of it. He also wears a scarlet cloak. Mer-Ath is an interpreter of dreams and often has portentous visions. He is a man who loathes violence and does not like using the giant hawks for war. King Mer-Ath once co-ruled the city with his brother, Hor-Neb, who was killed by Conan.

**The Priesthood of Harakht:** The amber-clad priests of Harakht (once led by Mer-Ath until he became the sole king of Harakht) are the true power within the city. The cult of Harakht, who bow and croon strange dirges before immense

idols of their Hawk-God, utterly dominate society here; the temples own most of the arable land and the government bureaucracy is filled with priests. As with many religions, this Stygian theocracy is conservative and closed-minded, and minimal contact with the outside world is permitted. Thus trade is kept to a bare minimum. The priests are the haughty, ruling elite of aristocrats. Interestingly, it is this caste which most non-Stygians consider to be true Stygians.

**The Nobles:** Stygian royalty and nobility are relatively tall people with black hair and fair skin, as were their ancient forebears, the original inhabitants of Stygia. The nobles are revered as minor gods and even the priests walk carefully around them.

### Layout of Harakht

The city of Harakht is a wide-avenued city not far from the banks of the Styx and the serpent-riddled swamps of Viper's Head.

### Districts of Harakht

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

▣ **Noble Estates:** These estates conform to the standard construction of



such estates except each has at least one towering spire on its roof.

- ❖ **The Temple of Harakht:** The temple of Harakht, built in the standard style, dominates the eastern part of the city. Houses of the priests can be found to the south of the temple, built as a cluster of great houses with a wall around them. Only priests are permitted to enter the Temple.
- ❖ **Treasury:** There is a treasury where legal records, especially in regards to ownership of property. Documents going back hundreds of years are stored here.
- ❖ **The Inner City:** The walled inner city is where most of the commoners dwell.
  - **The Great Houses:** In the northern part of the inner city are two streets of great houses, where officials and nobles not wealthy enough to have an estate dwell. Many of the great houses have spires on their roofs.
  - **The Clusters:** Extending to the south are the clusters of poor houses.
- ❖ **Palace Royal**
  - **The Pit of Shadows:** This darksome pit is where the sacred stone from the stars is kept. Gol-Thir, a man made into a giant by the star, lives here as its keeper.

## KARNATH

Karnath is a Stygian city on the coast west of Kheshatta and is on the western end of Stygia's great east-west caravan route. Most goods that need shipping travel along the coast to Khemi.

**Population:** 7,112 (96% Stygian (hybrid), 2% Stygian, 1% Shemite, 1% Other)

**Size:** Small City (65 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 109 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 38 buildings per acre (approx. 2,476 buildings total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 53,340,000 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the King:** 266,700 silver coins per year

**Religion:** Stygian Pantheon

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** None

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Karnath is defended by 71 full-time soldiers. The city and the estates and the temples are all surrounded by walls.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Ruler:** Luxur has its presence in Karnath via a regional governor. The governor is usually a high priest of Set or a noble high in the favour of the king.

**The Cult of Set:** The priests of Karnath are the true power of Karnath. The cults utterly dominate Stygian society; the temples own most of the arable land and the government bureaucracy is filled with priests. As with many religions, this Stygian theocracy is conservative and closed-minded, and minimal contact with the outside world is permitted. Thus trade is kept to a bare minimum. The priests are the haughty, ruling elite of aristocrats.

**The Nobles:** Stygian royalty and nobility are relatively tall people with black hair and fair skin, as were their ancient forebears, the original inhabitants of Stygia.

### Layout of Karnath

The city of Karnath is a wide-avenued city not far from the banks of the Styx. It is laid out in a pattern similar to Amanopet and Erkulum.

### Districts of Karnath

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

- ❖ **House of Life:** A temple devoted to doctors, open to the public, is located between the noble estates. Doctors in the House of Life are paid in goods. A great medical library is attached to the House of Life.
- ❖ **Noble Estates:** At least twelve noble estates can be found around Karnath. These estates conform to the standard construction of such estates except each has at least one towering spire on its roof.
- ❖ **The Temple of Set:** The temple of Set, built in the standard style, dominates the eastern part of the city. Houses of the priests can be found to the south of the temple, built as a cluster of great houses with a wall around them. Only priests are permitted to enter the Temple.
- ❖ **Treasury:** There is a treasury where legal records, especially in regards to ownership of property. Documents going back hundreds of years are stored here.
- ❖ **The Inner City:** The walled inner city is where most of the commoners dwell.
  - **The Great Houses:** In the northern part of the inner city are two streets of great houses, where officials and nobles not wealthy enough to have an estate dwell. Many of the great houses have spires on their roofs.
  - **The Clusters:** Extending to the south are the clusters of poor houses.

- ❖ **The Pyramids:** To the south of the city are two pyramid tomb-temples.
- ❖ **The Necropolis:** Between the inner city and the pyramid complexes is a large necropolis of mastabas and shaft tombs. Also there is a huge burial ground for cat mummies.
- ❖ **Palace of the Governor:** The palace of the governor is a large building where offices and courts are built.
  - **Garden Courtyard:** Surrounded by colossal statues of kings, priests and gods, this walled courtyard is a huge garden designed for the pleasure of the governor and his visitors.
  - **Grand Hypostyle Hall:** A hypostyle hall is a great hall with a massive roof supported by numerous pylons. These pylons are shaped like Bast and stand 50 feet tall on the ends and 70 feet tall in the centre.
  - **Lesser Hypostyle Halls:** There are three lesser hypostyle halls separating the garden courtyard from the two inner courtyards. A causeway leads from the central lesser hall to the palace of the governor.
- ❖ **Docks:** Karnath has a class 2 set of docks for the unloading of cargo as defined in *Conan: Pirate Isles*.

## KHEMI

### Spiritual Home to the Priesthood of Set

Khemi, with its mighty black castles, is the priestly capital of Stygia. It is the greatest city of Stygia, located at the port on the Western Ocean on the rank, swampy delta of the River Styx. If the mighty River Styx is the embodiment of Set, the loathsome serpent god of the Stygians, then black-walled Khemi is its never closing eye and the fortified southern peninsula is its fang. Despite the sea trade commanded by this city, Khemi is a sealed metropolis, and does not permit non-Stygians entrance, except as slaves. Thus, all trade with Stygia must be done with Stygia's ships, captains and crews. The only other exceptions are ambassadors and licensed traders, and even those traders must leave the city after sunset. Not

for hundreds of years has a hostile force even attempted to attack this high-walled city of black-hearted magicians.

**Population:** 25,300 (96% Stygian (hybrid), 2% Stygian, 1% Shemite, 1% Other)

**Size:** Metropolis (145 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 174 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 68 buildings per acre (approx. 9,872 buildings total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 1,265,000 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the Count:** 632,500 silver coins per year

**Religion:** Stygian Pantheon (Set, Idris, Derketa)

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods, especially wood.

**Code of Honour:** None

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Khemi is a walled city built around several massive black castles and colossal black temples. 759 Stygian soldiers are routinely stationed in these castles and throughout the city. Dusky marines (soldier/pirates) on large dromons often stop ships to levy taxes on cargoes or, if desired, to confiscate cargoes, ships or crews.

### Culture

**Foreigners:** Aliens are not allowed into the city except when they possess a pass, and passes are given out grudgingly at best. Once inside the city, a foreigner finds the dwellers refuse to speak to him except for those directly required to deal with foreigner's business.

**Sons of Set:** In addition to many required rites, several animals enjoy a protected religious status. Snakes and hippopotami are sacred, and allowed to exist unmolested in Khemi. It is against Khemian law to injure either animal, and doing so also provokes a charge of heresy. Although the priesthood does not insist on any particular behaviour before a hippopotamus, all Khemians must lie down when a snake is sighted and await the snake to either attack or move on. If a snake attacks, the Khemian chosen for the honour is considered blessed by Father Set and none will try to save him.

**Women:** As for women, only noblewomen and harlots are permitted to walk the streets of Khemi freely, night or day.

### Administration and Power Centres

There are an innumerable number of political factions vying for dominance in this black-hearted city.

*'Khemi was not like the seaports of the Hyborians, where types of every race swarmed. The only aliens here were Negro and Shemite slaves... Strangers were not welcome in the cities of Stygia: tolerated only when they came as ambassadors or licensed traders. But even then the latter were not allowed ashore after dark.'*

Robert E. Howard, *The Hour of the Dragon*

**Ruler:** Prince Tamuneb is the governor of this Stygian metropolis although he rules by the indulgence of the priesthood only. He is married to his sister to keep the bloodline pure.

**The Priesthood of Set:** The priests of Set, among them several members of the Black Ring, are the true power of Khemi. The cults utterly dominate Stygian society; the temples own most of the arable land and the government bureaucracy is filled with priests. As with many religions, this Stygian theocracy is conservative and closed-minded, and minimal contact with the outside world is permitted. Thus trade is kept to a bare minimum.

**The Nobles:** The nobles are revered as minor gods and even the priests walk carefully around them. Only the nobles are permitted to bear arms in the city.

**Magistrates:** The magistrates are the guardians of law and justice in Khemi and they try criminal cases. They answer to the vizier of Luxur, who is in charge of justice and public works. The decisions of the magistrates are recorded and stored in the Treasury.

### Layout of Khemi

The city of Khemi is a sinister dark collection of towers and castles forever under a smear of grey smoke from the sacrificial altars of the dark-robed acolytes of fearsome Set and the hissing sorcerers of the Black Ring. The massive architecture of the city is overwhelming and oppressive. Bronze chariots, antique in their design, often carry the nobles and priests around. The flag-stoned streets are narrow, but broaden somewhat as one enters the temple district. The city is dark after sunset and the only lights to be seen are in the highest portions of the oppressive buildings. Artificial gardens of palm trees grow on the roofs of many of the buildings and most of the townsfolk sleep in those gardens. In Khemi, none lack a roof because the hierophants of Set want to know where everyone is and that everyone has a place.

The Temple of Set in Khemi houses the mummies of many of the elder members of the Black Ring. Other temples in the district house other ghastly things. Most of the major pyramids and secret subterranean temples in Stygia can be found near this black city. The Grand Pyramid lurks near the northeast corner of the city, looming over the black walls of Khemi. Other black pyramids, smaller but no less grim, can be seen dotting the landscape outside and within Khemi. Around Khemi, the terrain is rough with abandoned quarries and chaotic funerary structures. Around the Styx crocodiles lie on sandbars, protected by ancient laws.

*Nor did Master Tito pull into the broad bay where the Styx river emptied its gigantic flood into the ocean, and the massive black castles of Khemi loomed over the blue waters. Ships did not put unmasked into this port, where dusky sorcerers wove awful spells in the murk of sacrificial smoke mounting eternally from bloodstained altars where naked women screamed, and where Set, the Old Serpent, arch-demon of the Hyborians but god of the Stygians, was said to writhe his shining coils among his worshippers.*

Robert E. Howard, *Queen of the Black Coast*

The flag-stoned streets are clean, kept so by teams of slaves who move at night to do the work. These teams are composed of the emaciated, the insane and the diseased, all deemed unsuitable for other work any longer by their Stygian masters. They shamle along the streets at night as foremen crack black whips to motivate them in their silent work, for they say little for fear of drawing toward them the monsters of Khemi, the great serpents slithering through the dank streets when they hunger.

### Districts of Khemi

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

**Waterfront District (Odji):** The harbour of Khemi lies between two great jutting points of land running into the ocean. Great black castles rise on the southern point. Great black war galleys lie silent and unlighted at anchor and a flight of wide stone stairs mount up from the water's edge. Iron rings set fast in the steps allow for the tying fast of water craft. Here the fishermen and dock workers live and work. 2,800 people live here among 1,150 structures of various types on 16 acres of waterfront land. This district is flanked by a pair of mountainous walls and two dark towers keep watch over the misty harbour. Most of the royal fleet stays anchored here, forming another black wall at night when they anchor themselves across the bay. A few canals are cut from here into the depths of the city. On certain dark holy days, when all the people are gathered at the smoking temples to watch the gruesome sacrifices, the wharves are protected by great aquatic dragons summoned by the priests (see *Conan: Pirate Isles* for statistics). Odji has a class 4 dock (as defined in *Conan: Pirate Isles*).



- ❖ **Tortoise Island** – Tortoise Island lies in the harbour of Khemi. Foreign ships may only moor here over night. A causeway connects the island to Akhet (see below). Foreign visitors are permitted to stay on the island if they are not accorded a semi-permanent status within Akhet.
- ❖ **Green Lotus Tavern** – The Green Lotus is a popular tavern in Odji. It lies uphill from a brothel and is notated by an elaborate green flower, carved from wood, hanging over the door. The barkeep is a short man, brown skinned, with a round, hairless head that is somehow reminiscent of a coconut.

**The Fangs of Set:** Great black fortified castles rise on the southern point of the bay. In the castles, soldiers and marines are based, securing the city from aliens. Covering 21 acres of land, these castles house 3,360 soldiers and support (craftsmen, servants, etc.) amid 1,344 immense structures, including crenellated towers, great walls of black stone, imposing barracks and storehouses and other military buildings.

- ❖ **Palace of Prince Tamuneb:** This coastal palace of black stone is the tallest of all the dark keeps on the southern peninsula.

**Bazaar Districts:** The waterfront streets give way to the long shadowy streets of the main part of the city. All stalls are closed at dusk. The only lights at night are torches set at wide intervals. Few people walk the streets at night, and they

move silently and in haste. Great black stone walls rise on each side of the streets. The architecture is grim and massive, giving an overpowering and oppressive atmosphere to the ward as a whole. The 18 acres of the market district is where wealthier shops, pavilions, merchant offices and trading stalls are located. The impressive architecture displays the wealth and power of the dark sorcerers who wield the power of Set with impunity. There are 3,300 people living here among 1,300 structures. Most of the market stalls of similar natures are kept together on common squares, forming little markets within the larger bazaar district. Thus there is a slave bazaar, a livestock bazaar and so on.

- ❖ **Bazaar of the Money Changers:** Here foreign money can be exchanged for silver sethis and copper gurahs. Ona the money-changer has a stall here. There is always a detachment of the Royal Guard in this bazaar. Gold lunas from Aquilonia are forbidden here and will not be changed. Also of note: all gold in Stygia belongs to the king in Luxur. Anyone with gold must have it as a gift from the king or must have stolen it from a tomb. All gifts from the king are recorded in the Treasury of Luxur.

**Temple Ward:** The streets broaden as one moves from the market district into the 20 acres of the city dedicated to the temples. Here, great structures rear their black bulks against the sky, grim and menacing.



There are 3,700 priests, black sorcerers and their abominable servants living among 1,200 forbidding structures. The wealthy and well-to-do also live in a subsection of this ward known as the Zamlek quarter. Merchants, diplomats, short-term noble visitors and honoured foreigners live in a subsection called Akhet, the enclave of foreigners. Many of the temples also have schools for the sons of officials and priests, although poor children could also attend if sponsored by local landowners. Schooling lasts for ten years, the youths specialising in some profession instead of a craft.

❖ **Zamlek Quarter:** Here one can find houses owned by the wealthy, ranging from large houses to towering mansions. Its avenues are named after snakes.

○ **Avenue of the Asps:** This avenue is renowned for its huge mansions.

▪ **Mansion of Tothapis:** Sheathed in bone, the sheer walls of this mansion are undecorated save for doors and air-slits. There are no windows. Its interior is lit entirely by candles and lamps. It is mounted by a dome and around the dome is a roof-top garden of black and purple lotus.

❖ **House of Life:** The House of Life is a temple devoted to doctors and is open to the public. Doctors in the House of Life are paid in goods. A great medical library is attached to the House of Life.

❖ **The Treasury:** Here are stored legal records, especially in regards to ownership of property. Documents going back hundreds of years are stored here.

❖ **Akhet:** This is the enclave of foreigners, where those few foreigners permitted to stay in Khemi for short-term visits are kept.

❖ **Temple of Set:** The black temple of Set in Khemi is tall, deep and relatively narrow. The courtyard of the temple is dominated by a statue of a great serpent.

**Slum Clusters:** Outside the walls lie 18 acres of clustered, low, flat-topped mud houses and palm groves arranged in belts around the city. Each cluster is around 2 acres in size, boasting a total of 700 mud tenements to house the city's 1,740 poorest adult labourers.

**Gate Wards:** The two massive bronze city gates are the main entries into the bustling gate wards of Khemi, where traders line up to enter the city as sellers hawk their wares. Only the market ward has more activity than this vibrant section of Khemi. Inspectors and tax collectors swarm through the crowds as they enter the city. The great bronze valves of these gates are closed at dusk.

❖ **Serpent Gate,** on the east side, covers four acres of land, with 304 buildings and 752 people;

❖ **Crocodile Gate,** the southern gate, is low-arched. Beyond the gate lie clusters of low, flat-topped mud houses and palm groves. A broad avenue connects this gate with the Temple Ward.

Beyond those palms is a sombre, black-stoned pyramid rising colossally out of the murk of the desert. There are 370 people working among 150 grim structures.

○ **Keop of the Manticore:** This keep, near the Crocodile Gate, is a nearly cubical pile of dark stone around a central courtyard. Its name comes from the grim figure chiselled above the iron doors of its entryway. The lower levels are used for torture, executions and imprisonment. The common Khemians avoid this entire neighbourhood because of this place. Unknown to them, there are luxury suites on the two highest floors, including luxurious apartments, large bathrooms, a swimming pool, an elegant kitchen and secret walkways for entertainers, who are brought in blindfolded. These are for prisoners for whom comfort is designated for whatever reason. It is heavily guarded.

**Craftsman Wards:** These wards are almost slums and are considered the meaner portions of the city. There are 6 non-contiguous craftsman wards in the city, each about nine acres in size and most devoted to a different craft. In total, there are 31 acres devoted to craftsmen among the four craft districts. There are a total of 2,158 workshops, homes and warehouses devoted to the craftsmen of Khemi and 5,395 craftsmen, journeymen and apprentices.

❖ **Uminankh's Hostel:** A withered palm frond proclaims this building as an inn. Even though Khemi does not allow unregistered visitors, Uminankh asks no questions of visitors if they have money.

## KHESHATTA

### City of Magicians

Kheshatta is a loathsome city of dark magicians in southern Stygia. It lays on a caravan route from Kush and today it is the headquarters of the Black Ring. Ruled by magicians, the priesthood of Set has no real power here, nor does King Ctesphon IV, king of Stygia. The city is a reputed treasure trove of eldritch forbidden lore and grim ceremonial items.

*'My brother was Theteles, and we were of the house of Chelkus, scientists and noblemen of Ophir. By special permission of the king of Stygia, my brother was allowed to go to 'Kheshatta, the city of magicians, to study their arts, and I accompanied him. He was only a boy - younger than myself...' her voice faltered and broke.*

Robert E. Howard, *The Vale of Lost Women*

With a population of 12,500, it is a large city, and well over a hundred of these inhabitants are dark wizards, members of the Black Ring.

**Population:** 12,563 (37% Stygian (hybrid), 20% Stygian, 18% Chaga, 10% Hyborian, 7% Vendhyan, 5% Khitan, 3% Other)

**Size:** Large City (68 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 185 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 58 buildings per acre (approx. 3,946 buildings total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 251,260,000 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the King:** 628,150 silver coins per year

**Religion:** Stygian Pantheon (Harakht, Set, Idris, Derketa); Others

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods, especially poisons.

**Code of Honour:** None

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Kheshatta is approached through a narrow passage in a canyon. A constant flow of caravan traffic moves through this narrow road. At regular intervals along the high walls of the canyon, small, defensive towers stand, ready to rain down arrows upon raiders or bandits and to light signal fires to put the city's defences on alert. An undulating wall that follows the contours of the land defends the city's southern edge. The wall is broken by wide, squat towers that are fortresses in and of themselves. The walls are wide enough that war chariots can be driven along them without running over soldiers standing next to the battlements. The wall begins in the mountains on the west and extends well into the waters of the lake, also on the west.

The poisoners and magicians of Kheshatta can afford their own armies, so mercenaries can often find employment here. These hired troops man the formidable southern wall that protects the city against raiders from Kush, and the various approaches by trail and caravan road. There is even a small fresh-water navy of fast, shallow-draft fighting ships, equipped with both sails and oars, that ply the lake, patrolling its extensive shoreline. The private armies are a proud and disciplined lot for mercenaries. Resignations are rare and there are never many openings in the ranks unless a raid results in casualties. Most of the officers have served steadfastly for years and some families had been in service of the city's forces for generations. Any mercenary from one of these families has a +2 bonus to Reputation within the walls of Kheshatta. There are usually 380 mercenaries operating in Kheshatta.

### Culture

**Knowledge:** Kheshatta is a place of great mystical learning. It is also a lawless place and the Cult of Set only holds nominal power. Many gods and demons are openly worshipped here and knowledge is considered more precious than gold.

**Entertainment:** The whores of Kheshatta engage in depravity that those in Khemi can scarcely dream. There are exotic blood-sports from the east and drugs and intoxicants of all kinds can be found here.

**Poisoners:** Kheshatta is home to some of the greatest alchemists and poisoners in the entire world. Any kind of poison can be found here.

**Wealth Distribution:** Apartments of the wealthy stand only blocks from the homes of the poor. Wealth is somewhat better distributed among the lower classes in Kheshatta than in the rest of Stygia. Money flows more freely here because it is not a path to power in Kheshatta – only knowledge and sorcerous lore can achieve that. The only truly distinct class line is between sorcerers and poisoners, those who have mystical knowledge and those who do not.

### Administration and Power Centres

There are an innumerable number of political factions vying for dominance in this black-hearted city.

**Ruler:** Nominally, a governor from Luxur rules here in the name of the king. He answers to the vizier of Luxur, who is in charge of justice and public works. The decisions of the ruler are recorded and stored in the Treasury. He is pretty much a figure-head in Kheshatta.

**Sorcerers:** The greatest wielder of power in Kheshatta is the scholar with the most knowledge. When Thoth-Amon is at his estate in Kheshatta, he fills this role; otherwise many powerful sorcerers struggle for dominance during his absence.

**Poisoners:** The poisoners of Kheshatta have a rivalry with the sorcerers. Non-sorcerous, they must find ways to acquire power through more conventional means and they have the best assassins and thieves working for them to ensure this.

### Layout of Kheshatta

The city of Kheshatta is built in a basin, surrounded on the north and west by low mountains, which catch winds from the distant ocean, and wring from them every last drop of their remaining rain. The rain gives life to the surrounding mountainsides, allowing the poisoners and sorcerers to grow sorcerous gardens. The

mountains around the city are where the great sorcerers build their looming castles. Lake Nafrini is also formed by these waters, and is the source of the river. The basin is open to the south and is known as 'The Mouth of the Winds'. It is the junction of many caravan roads.

Once past the canyon, the valley widens out into an expanse of trees and grassland. Fences hold in camels, mules and a few horses. A cluster of houses, barns and storage sheds are at the centre of the grazing fields. It is a short distance from here to the city's edge.

The city is packed with tall buildings, most of which are taller than two floors. Toward the centre of the city most of the buildings have four or five floors. Many grand buildings, temples and towers are interspersed throughout the city among smaller and lower buildings. The scale of the buildings are less oppressive than most Stygian cities and the styles are more diverse.

**Lake Nafrini:** Lake Nafrini is dotted with small fishing boats and cargo vessels. It is a huge lake filled with fresh-water crocodiles and catfish big enough to swallow a man whole. A tall, rocky spire of an island is connected to the land by a narrow causeway. At the island's highest point is a tall, shimmering castle seemingly made out of black glass. This is the palace of Thoth-Amon, the Lord of the Black Ring.

### Districts of Kheshatta

Kheshatta is segregated into sprawling wards and districts to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods. There is a treasury where legal records, especially in regards to ownership of property. Documents going back hundreds of years are stored here. The libraries and halls of antiquity are everywhere in Kheshatta, but there is a district near Set's temple where some of the finest are to be found.

✱ **Foreign Districts:** There are many foreign districts in Kheshatta, each built in their own unique style.

- **Khitan District:** The Khitan district has many red-painted columns holding up tiered, gracefully curved tile roofs. The doorways and windows are all marked with strange symbols and ornate wooden screens carved of dark wood are everywhere.
- **Vendhyan district:** The Vendhyan district is a colourful place; every building, wall and pillar is elaborately decorated with brightly hued paint, turned wood and carved stone. Arches and rounded forms predominate, and many buildings are topped with ornate columns and thin, needle-like towers. Everywhere can be seen the carvings and paintings of multi-armed, multi-headed Vendhyan gods, many with animal heads and parts. Strange and

pungent cooking odours come from the shops and buildings.

- **Darfari District:** The Darfari district (often mislabelled a Zamboulan district) is a miniaturised Darfar. The alleys here stink of death. Heads hang from window ledges, twisting in the cold wind. From each head hangs an artfully extracted spine, each glistening with bits of gore; grotesque tadpoles hung by the neck. On each face is an expression of horror, mouths wide as though in a scream, gagged by a swollen, black tongue. They are the heads of the men, women and children who make the mistake of passing through this district without a Darfari guide or enough strength to ensure their safety.

✱ **Temple of Set:** The temple of Set is in the eastern part of the city, near the end of the causeway to Thoth-Amon's palace on the island. The temple is surrounded by a stout masonry wall and guarded by tall, slender towers with small golden domes on top. A great sun-dial can be found in the courtyard of the temple, its brass upright in the shape of a rearing snake about to strike. The temple itself has a great bulb-shaped dome covered with gold. A statue of Set looks down upon the surrounding city. The temple is wide and has several smaller towers (three to four stories tall) and domes connected to the central chamber. The wings have open galleries on every level and they are divided into many smaller rooms. Once past the main doors, one enters the entry hall, then the ceremonial chamber. The inside of the dome is open, gilded with gold and painted with great murals of Set battling and humbling other gods. A circle of small, arched windows under the rim of the dome admits light into the room and in the centre is the altar. A tall golden statue of Set, five times the height of a man, stands in the middle, flanked with rearward facing snakes that lean against his shoulders. The altar is surrounded by benches in concentric circles. On each side of the altar is an aisle and an arched doorway. The left hand wing has a central chamber with a large, circular table ringed by two dozen straight-backed chairs. Four red and gold tapestries hang in the room, indicating the disciplines of study in this temple. The wing on the left, marked with the tapestry with a sun and moon, is where astrology and meteorology are studied. Across the courtyard is where surgeons study, marked with the tapestry with the hieroglyph for surgeons. Sorcery and poisons are studied in the final wing of the temple.

## KHET (RUIN)

### The City of Scorpions

The ruins of this city lie along the River Styx and it was once the centre of worship for Selkhet. The city was abandoned and fell to ruin several centuries ago. This was once the centre of Selkhet's worship as a goddess of magic and childbirth before

the Stygians altered her nature. Great black structures loom oppressively over the sands that are slowly swallowing the ruins. Nomads occasionally pass near or through the ruins, often to allow their herds to drink out of the neglected and broken canals. Nomads report seeing strange lights at night around the ruins and claim a Lamia lives there. Occasionally one hears reports of encounters with strange, gnarled, blue-robed little people roaming around the ruins at night.

## LUXUR

### The Capital of Stygia

Luxur is the royal capital of Stygia, the site of the Ivory Throne where King Ctesphon IV sits. The king appears to be less xenophobic than much of the rest of the population, occasionally granting permission for foreigners, especially scholars, to study at Kheshatta. Luxur controls much of Stygia's river traffic and the caravan routes out of Shem, making it a strategic commercial centre of considerable importance, rivalling Khemi in economic wealth. Situated on the upper Bakhr River, Luxur's surrounding lands were reasonably fertile and well-watered at one time, but the slow dropping of the Bakhr's waterline has caused some concern. Thoth-Amon maintains a residence here. The dusky goddess Derketo has a strong presence in Luxur.

**Population:** 81,000 (79% Stygian (hybrid), 9% Stygian, 5% Acheronian, 3% Shemite, 2% Kushite, 1% Hyborian, 1% Other)

**Size:** Large City (149 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 127 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 58 buildings per acre (approx. 8,642 buildings total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 377,880,000 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the King:** 944,700 silver coins per year

*'I am a daughter of Luxur, and before I had known fifteen summers I had been led through the temples of Derketo, the dusky goddess, and had been initiated into her mysteries. Not that my first years in Xuthal were years of unmodified pleasure! The people of Xuthal have forgotten more than the priestesses of Derketo have ever dreamed. They live for sensual joys. Dreaming or waking, their lives are filled with exotic ecstasies, beyond the ken of ordinary men.'*

Robert E. Howard, *Xuthal of the Dusk* (AKA *The Slithering Shadow*)

**Religion:** Set, Derketo and the Stygian Pantheon

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** None

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Luxur has fantastically thick black walls over a hundred feet high and over a thousand soldiers and nobles ready to defend the city and the country.

### Culture

Luxur is the most visible symbol of religious and political power in Stygia. Non-Stygians are not welcome in Luxur unless they are wearing a numbered clay tag on a leather cord. Without that tag, any non-Stygian can be arrested and executed on sight by any Stygian.

### Administration and Power Centres

There are an innumerable number of political factions vying for dominance in this black-hearted city. Two of the most powerful are the ruler and the Speaker of Set.

**Ruler:** King Ctesphon IV is the ruler of Stygia and of Luxur in name, although Thoth-Amon holds considerable influence over him. Ctesphon is strong enough politically to stand against Thoth-Amon but he usually agrees with the sorcerer, not out of fear but because they both tend to have similar opinions about various topics. The king has seventeen children, five sons and twelve daughters. His primary queen is the High Priestess of Derketo; she has considerable influence over him. He has four other wives.

**Speaker of Set:** Thoth-Amon is the Speaker of Set for Ctesphon, and other magicians are not permitted high office due to the honours bestowed upon the high priest. His enemies fear him and he has no friends. His power is almost absolute and only King Ctesphon IV attempts to stand against Thoth-Amon's desires.

### Layout of Luxur

The first sight that greets most people visiting the city of Luxur is the Great Pyramid of Set which looms out of the sky's haze like a mountain seen from afar. Great pyramids can be found on the edges of the city, including King Ctesphon IV's nearly complete monument. Many wide canals, built to bring stones for the pyramids through the city, cross into Luxur.

The architecture is as oppressive as any Stygian city. Still, there are influences from the Hyborian kingdoms and the other northern lands as well. Though there



are great houses and lesser ones, there are no slums in Luxur. All the buildings are neat and in good repair. There is an aura of precision and order in Luxur many find disturbing.

### Districts of Luxur

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

- ❖ **The Black Palace of Thoth-Amon:** The west end of town is dominated by the palace of Thoth-Amon. It is smaller than the royal palace but more ornate and of far more recent construction. Thoth-Amon lives here most of the time, although he occasionally goes back to his castle in Kheshatta.
- ❖ **The Grand Palace of King Ctesphon IV:** At the east end of the city is the palace of Ctesphon IV, a grand building marked by high walls and narrow towers. The building is constructed of weathered yellow stones of cyclopean size. It is four stories in height, each story smaller than the one under it, much like a Shemite zikkurat.
- ❖ **The Temple of Derketo:** There is a large temple dedicated to Derketo in Luxur. The daughters of Luxur must

spend time here learning sexual mysteries and techniques.

- ❖ **The Temple of Set at Luxur:** The temple of Set at Luxur is a small temple compared to the magnificent Pyramid of Set built by the Giant-Kings. Like most Stygian temples, the Temple of Set is a large compound to provide safe-keeping for sacred artefacts and treasures.
- ❖ **Mammoth Icons:** Two towering statues of cobras, hoods flared, stand on either side of the cyclopean gate.
- ❖ **Noble Estates:** These estates conform to the standard construction of such estates.
- ❖ **Treasury:** There is a treasury where legal records, especially in regards to ownership of property. Documents going back hundreds of years are stored here.
- ❖ **The Inner City:** The walled inner city is where most of the commoners dwell.
  - **The Great Houses:** The eastern part of the inner city are two streets of great houses, where officials and nobles not wealthy enough to have an estate dwell.
  - **The Clusters:** Extending to the west are the clusters of poor houses.
- ❖ **The Pyramids:** To the south and west of the city are many pyramid tomb-temples, one for each of the mysteries of Set.
  - **The Great Pyramid of Set:** The Great Pyramid of Set is not just a tomb like most pyramids. It

stands at a distance from the city but is so large it appears within the city's limits. It is a monument and a temple dedicated to Father Set, much like the Great Pyramid in Khemi. A grand entrance at its base leads to holy chambers in the interior. Flanking the entrance are two staircases leading to a landing above the entrance. A single, wide staircase leads to a truncated top with a small temple, much like a Shemite zikkurat. The temple at the top is a flat roof supported by stone columns. Beneath the shelter of that flat roof is an altar to Set.

- ❖ **The Obelisks:** Two of the Great Obelisks of Erkulum stand on either side of the canal, great black spires erected in honour of Set. They are among the largest known Obelisks in Stygia. A lesser obelisk stands with the pair stolen from Erkulum.
- ❖ **The Necropolis:** Between the inner city and the pyramid complexes is a large necropolis of mastabas and shaft tombs.
- ❖ **Docks:** Luxur has a class 3 set of docks for the unloading of cargo as defined in *Conan: Pirate Isles*.

## NEBTHU (RUIN)

### The City of Tombs

Nebthu, the City of Tombs, is a ruined necropolis that looms over the Bakhr River. Nebthu is well known for the large stone hyena-sphinx that crouches outside the crumbled foundations that are all that remains of the ancient town walls. This sphinx is made of some smooth, lustrous black stone, like jet or basalt. Its head is of some beast of prey with a long skull, round ears and massive jaws. The sphinx represents the ghoul-hyena of Chaos. There is a door between the great paws of the sphinx leading to an underground labyrinth. The great pylons of the gates, carved with the leering gargoyle masks of grinning monsters, are all that remain of the blasted walls. Thoth-Amon keeps another residence here (as well as at Kheshatta, Luxur and the Oasis of Khajar). Nebthu is also said to be a secret headquarters of the Black Ring.

## PASHTUN

Pashtun is an island community built on the River Styx. It serves as a river port and clearing-house for goods crossing the river. Prices are generally high on the island.

**Population:** 1,900 (37% Meadow Shemite, 20% Stygian, 18% Kushite, 10% Turanian, 7% Pelishtim, 5% Hyborian, 3% Other)

**Size:** Small Town (17 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 110 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 50 structures per acre (approx. 5,500 structures total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 760,000 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the Temple:** 7,600 silver coins per year

**Religion:** Nina is the patron goddess; Shemite pantheon

**Imports:** Trade Goods, especially Stygian/Shemite artefacts and products

**Exports:** Trade Goods, especially Stygian/Shemite artefacts and products

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Pashtun has no wall and no military strength beyond 19 or 20 mercenaries hired to keep the peace.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Ruler:** Pashtun is ruled by the high priest of Nina, also a noted warrior among the people. He is advised by a High Priest of Set.

### Layout of Pashtun

Pashtun is a town built on a large island just north of the centre line of the River Styx. It is not claimed by Shem or Stygia for the convenience of both. It is located near a confluence of tributaries flowing into the Styx. In the centre of the island is a high rock outcropping where several inns have been built. The Khopshef province is to the west of Pashtun.

## PTEION THE DAMNED (RUIN)

Pteion is a ruin from ancient times in eastern Stygia just across from the Taian border. Chronicles declare it was founded by the Giant-Kings thousands of years ago but legends say it was founded by the serpent men of prehistoric Valusia. It was the seat of black magicians and terror for untold centuries but, during the Seventh Dynasty of Stygia the desert swallowed the city up and the magicians moved their centre of power to Khemi. For generations afterward, the city was used as a necropolis. The foul beings raised up by the ancient wizards still haunt the area. In truth, it is just as likely the course of the Styx shifted, leaving the city alone in the desert without fertile soil to sustain it. It is said to be the resting place of the Ax of Varanghi, a powerful artefact of antiquity. Drifts of sand pile nearly to the top of the remains of the outer walls. Black stone masses have a hint of the inhuman in their structure. They are low and narrow with sides slanting at curious angles to roofs grotesquely decorated. Monoliths and twisted columns rise above the sands. Legend claims most of the city consists of underground, serpentine labyrinths fit for the snake-men who built the city, which was

later inherited by the Giant-Kings and the forebears of the Acheronians. The city is defended by two hundred or so dried corpses, the blackened natural mummies of the dead. Once inside its walls, ghouls lurk within. Giant hyenas the size of bulls and clawed, bipedal dinosaurs twice the height of a man are also said to haunt the interior.

## QARNAK (RUIN)

On the banks of the Styx in eastern Stygia are the ruins of Qarnak. This ancient place consists of vast, abandoned temple-tombs carved by forgotten races into the crimson face of the river cliffs. Many tombs of man-serpents are said to be here, as well as tombs of the ancient Giant-Kings of old. Massive colossi look over the ruins and the river.

## RASHT

Rasht is a small farming village on the banks of the Helu river in Stygia. Its biggest claim to fame is that the town is the site of the death of King Mentupherra, which happened during the last major battle of Taian independence. It is said by the locals that there is a certain green stone near one of the old monuments that is haunted; if a person sits on the stone, he will die within seven years. This village answers to Seyan.

## SEYAN

Seyan is a white-washed town of mud buildings in Taia on the confluence of the River Styx and the Helu River. It lies on the left bank of the Helu. It has class 1 docks on the river (see *Conan: Pirate Isles* for definitions of dock classifications). The palace of the Stygian governor (named Wenamon during the age of Bêlit) on the outskirts dwarfs the remaining houses. The palace boasts beautiful and fertile gardens.

**Population:** 6,049 (96% Stygian (hybrid), 2% Stygian, 1% Taian, 1% Other)

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

**Average Population Density:** 100 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 50 buildings per acre (approx. 3,275 buildings total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 2,049,600 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the King:** 602,500 silver coins per year

**Religion:** Stygian Pantheon

**Imports:** Trade Goods

**Exports:** Trade Goods

**Code of Honour:** None

## Fortifications and Military Strength

A Stygian military base is also located here with 300 Stygian troops.

## Administration and Power Centres

**Ruler:** Luxur has its presence in Seyan via a regional governor. The governor is usually a high priest of Set or a noble high in the favour of the king. During the time of Bêlit, the governor was named Wenamon.

## Layout of Seyan

The architecture is as oppressive as any Stygian city. Still, there are influences from Shem as well.

## Districts of Seyan

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

- ❖ **House of Life:** A temple devoted to doctors, open to the public, is located in one of the noble estates. Doctors in the House of Life are paid in goods. A great medical library is attached to the House of Life.
- ❖ **The Palace of the Governor:** Built on the outskirts of the town, this is one of the most magnificent buildings in the area.
- ❖ **Noble Estates:** At least four noble estates can be found around Seyan. These estates conform to the standard construction of such estates except each has at least one towering spire on its roof.
- ❖ **The Temple of Set:** The temple of Set, built in the standard style, dominates the eastern part of the city. Houses of the priests can be found to the south of the temple, built as a cluster of great houses with a wall around them. Only priests are permitted to enter the temple.
- ❖ **Treasury:** There is a treasury where legal records are kept, especially in regards to ownership of property. Documents going back hundreds of years are stored here.
- ❖ **Necropolis:** The city of Seyan has a necropolis in a valley to the south of the city made of rock-cut tombs.
- ❖ **The Inner City:** The walled inner city is where most of the commoners dwell.
  - **The Great Houses:** The northern part of the inner city are two streets of great houses, where officials and nobles not wealthy enough to have an estate dwell. Many of the great houses have spires on their roofs.
  - **The Clusters:** Extending to the south are the clusters of poor houses.

## SUKHMET

Sukhmet is a southern Stygian town built among the grasslands of the border. Mercenaries bolster the defences of the city, protecting Stygia from Darfari raiders. The city is a centre of worship for Sukhmet, the violent aspect of Hathor.

**Population:** 4,920 (37% Stygian (hybrid), 20% Stygian, 28% Darfari, 7% Kushite, 5% Amazon, 3% Other)

**Size:** Large Town (65 acres of land)

**Average Population Density:** 76 adults per acre

**Average Number of Structures:** 23 structures per acre (approx. 1,524 structures total)

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

**Ready Cash:** 7,380,000 silver coins

**Government:** Theocracy

**Income for the Temple:** 73,800 silver coins per year

**Religion:** Sukhmet

**Imports:** Trade Goods, especially Darfari artefacts and products

**Exports:** Trade Goods, especially Stygian artefacts and products

**Code of Honour:** Civilised

### Fortifications and Military Strength

Sukhmet has 20 Stygian noble officers, 78 Stygian soldiers and scores of mercenary companies to keep the peace. The king in Luxur prefers to send mercenaries against the savage Darfari instead of Stygians if possible.

### Administration and Power Centres

**Ruler:** Luxur has its presence in Sukhmet via a regional governor. The governor is usually a high priest of Set, Sukhmet or a noble high in the favour of the king.

### Layout of Sukhmet

The architecture is as oppressive as any Stygian city. Still, there are influences from the Black Kingdoms and Iranistan as well.

### Districts of Sukhmet

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

■ **Noble Estates:** At least four noble estates can be found around Sukhmet. These estates conform to the standard construction of such estates.

■ **The Temple of Sukhmet:** The temple of Sukhmet, built in the standard style, dominates the eastern part of the city. Houses of the priests can be found to the south of the temple, built as a cluster of great houses with a wall



around them. Only priests are permitted to enter the temple.

■ **Treasury:** There is a treasury where legal records, especially in regards to ownership of property. Documents going back hundreds of years are stored here.

■ **Necropolis:** The city of Sukhmet has a necropolis in a valley to the north of the city made of rock-cut tombs.

■ **The Inner City:** The walled inner city is where most of the commoners dwell.

- **The Great Houses:** The northern part of the inner city are two streets of great houses, where officials and nobles not wealthy enough to have an estate dwell.

- **The Clusters:** Extending to the south are the clusters of poor houses.

## THURAN-ON-THE-HEIGHTS (RUIN)

This is the holy city founded by King Varanghi in Taia. It was destroyed five hundred years ago when Stygia conquered Taia again. The city was consecrated to Mitra. The Taians believe the city was destroyed for this reason. In truth, the Stygians had no clue which god the city was consecrated to – the Taians were considered ‘squatters’. The Stygians did not investigate their religion; they were, however, bothered that someone had decided to live there without paying tribute to the Stygian king. This fertile region had been a Stygian-controlled land since the fall of Elder Stygia. However, due to mismanagement and concentration elsewhere, the region was largely abandoned when King Varanghi arrived and built his city. The Stygians eventually took note of the activity and reasserted their rights in the region.

# Means & Ways

## STYGIAN SKILLS AND FEATS

**BROODING STYGIA** IS an ancient land with its own curious traditions and ways of doing things. Some skills are used differently, certain feats are performed more readily and the Stygians have at least one special combat style for its borderers to give them the edge over an opponent. This chapter reveals unique Stygian traditions.

### NEW USES FOR OLD SKILLS

Although the skill uses discussed herein can technically be used by anyone, it is recommended they be used in these manners by Stygians to maintain a distinctness about their characters, especially the new use for Perform (ritual), which depends entirely on the Stygian take on illness and disease (discussed in detail on page 36), and the Knowledge (mystery) for the various cults.

### CRAFT (HERBALISM)

This skill allows a character to compound medicinal drugs to aid in recovery from treatable illnesses. A medicinal drug gives a +2 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves made to resist the effects of a disease. All medicines are prepared in bowls with magical symbols written on them. Medicine takes the form of potions, balms, poultices, enemas, suppositories and even eye lotions, all made up from natural ingredients, such as herbs, animal ingredients and even small amounts of toxic minerals such as lead, arsenic, sulphate and copper oxide. Crocodile droppings and honey both have known antibiotic effects and are used in many medicines.

The Craft (herbalism) check is based on the severity of the disease to be countered as measured by the DC of the Fortitude save needed to resist it.

Disease Fortitude Save DC	Purchase DC	Craft DC	Time
14 or lower	5	15	1 hr.
15–18	10	20	3 hrs.
19–22	15	25	6 hrs.
23 or higher	20	30	12 hrs.

### HEAL

**Surgery (DC 20):** With a surgery kit (see page 41), a Stygian physician can conduct field surgery. This application of the Heal skill carries a –4 penalty, which can be negated with the Surgery feat. Surgery requires 1d4 hours; if the patient is at negative hit points, add an additional hour for every point below 0 the patient has fallen. Any surgery exposes the patient to at least one injury-type disease.

Surgery restores 1d6 hit points for every character level of the patient (up to the patient's full normal total of hit points) with a successful skill check. A failed surgery check exposes the patient to an injury-type disease but suffers a –4 penalty to the save against it. Surgery can only be used successfully on a character once in a 24-hour period.

A character who undergoes surgery is fatigued for 24 hours, minus 2 hours for every point above the DC the Stygian surgeon achieves. The period of fatigue can never be reduced below 6 hours in this fashion.

**Remove Organs (DC 20):** Stygian surgeons are called upon to remove the visceral organs and the brains of deceased persons for embalming.

**Try Again?:** Yes, for surgery and organ removal.

**Special:** The Surgery feat gives a character the extra training he needs to use Heal to help a wounded character by means of an operation.

Surgery requires a surgery kit. Any implements used to cut into a wound or to do surgery are heated until red-hot to cauterise the resulting wound as the implement cuts into a person. If the character does not have the appropriate kit, he takes a –4 penalty on the check.

A character with the Stygian Physician feat gets a +2 bonus on all Heal checks.

### KNOWLEDGE (MYSTERY: GOD)

This is a more defined version of Knowledge (religion) for the highly symbolic Stygian religion. While most commoners

believe in the outward myths and rituals, those initiates who delve into the mysteries learn that things are not as literal as they once believed. Stories of virgin births and shadowy conceptions, murders and resurrections are symbolic of deeper spiritual truths. Knowledge of these spiritual truths benefits the character in many ways. Characters who study a particular god's mysteries earn ranks in this skill. A character who delves into the deepest mysteries of Bast would take ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Bast); a character delving into the mysteries of Set would take ranks in Knowledge (Mystery: Set).

Knowing mysteries earns a character certain benefits depending on the god or goddess studied and the number of ranks in the skill. Some gods have more levels of mysteries than others. Every three ranks in this skill allows the character an opportunity to learn a new mystery for that god. Having high ranks in the mysteries earns the character the title of Keeper of Mysteries for that god, such as the Keeper of Bast's Second Mystery.

Characters may know mysteries from multiple gods since the Stygian pantheon is polytheistic. A character could have the titles of Keeper of Bast's First Mystery and Set's Fourth Mystery. Once a character knows all the mysteries of a particular god he may take the title of Keeper of All Mysteries of that god, such as the Keeper of All Set's Mysteries. The benefits of this skill are covered in each individual god or goddess entry covered in the Faith & Fervour chapter of this volume. Each level of Mystery earns a character a +1 Reputation boost.

The character must retain purity (keep his body shaved of all hair and wear only white linen or silks) in order to retain the benefits of the mystery. Some uses of this skill require an additional Perform (ritual) check. Characters are forbidden to teach or record this knowledge to anyone who has not been initiated in the order. Anyone known to be breaking this restriction is hunted down by the Cult of Set.

## PERFORM (DANCE)

**Arousing Dance:** A dancer may dance in a highly provocative manner that makes her extremely desirable. The character makes a Perform (dance) check and, for the duration of an encounter, earns a +1 bonus to all Charisma-based skills per 5 points of the check toward all who watched her performance. i.e. if a character rolls 1-5, the character gains no bonus. If a character rolls a modified 6-10, the character gains a +1 bonus, on an 11-15, the character gains a +2 bonus, on a 16-20 the character gains a +3 bonus and so on.

**Fearsome Dance:** When a character has at least 14 ranks in Perform (dance) the character knows how to dance in such a way as to inspire fear and dread in those who watch. The character may use her Perform (dance) check as an Intimidate

check. If she has 5 or more ranks in Intimidate, she may add a +2 synergy bonus to the Perform (dance) check for this purpose.

## PERFORM (RITUAL)

Part of healing and medicine in Stygia is the use of 'spells'. While doctors do not use sorcery, they do perform certain rituals in accompaniment to their alchemy and herbalism. The use of these rituals prepares the patient mentally to be healed, a state of mind conducive to healing in the first place. If the patient believes in the magic, he is more likely to be healed of his ailment. Thus, having 5 or more ranks in Perform (ritual) gives healers a +1 competency bonus to any Heal check. Every five ranks in Perform (ritual) after the 5<sup>th</sup> rank earns a cumulative +1 bonus to Heal skill checks.

Also, Perform (ritual) plays a part in many of the mysteries of Stygia's cults.

## PROFESSION (MUMMIFIER)

Many of the kings and sorcerers of Stygia and Acheron are mummified after death. This process is essentially a non-magical one, though extensive herbal and alchemical extracts are used along with certain post-mortem surgical techniques to remove those organs which decay rapidly and preserve those which do not. A properly mummified body can remain recognisable for many thousands of years.

Creating Stygian mummies is a complicated task and can only be done in a ritually correct manner by those who have been trained. Creating a mummy allows it to be preserved for 1,000 years. Creating animal mummies can be accomplished by a simple DC 18 check. The process is rarely rushed, so characters making the indicated checks almost always take 20. For every 2 points above 20 on the skill checks, the mummy remains preserved for a further 1,000 years. Depending on the checks, some parts of the mummy may deteriorate before other parts. The corpse is dead, so there is no penalty for failure. An error at any point, however, means the body will be less preserved than it otherwise might have been. If the body is intended to be an animated undead (such as a living ka, a ta-neheh mummy or a mummy of Ahriman), then increase all the DCs by 10 or more. The cost is 500 silver pieces in incense, potions and other consumables, as well as a mummy case of at least 1,500 silver piece value. Creating a human mummy requires multiple steps (detailed on page 42). Some of the steps are outlined below.

*Embalm visceral organs:* DC 20

*Reshape and embalm fingers and arms:* DC 20

*Embalm skull and internal cavity:* DC 20

*Correctly bandage fingers, arms, toes and legs:* DC 20

*Correctly wrap entire body after amulets are laid in:* DC 20

*Correctly handle final wrapping after death mask is placed on corpse:* DC 15

**Special:** A character with the Stygian Physician feat gets a +2 synergy bonus on all Profession (mummifier) checks. All Profession (mummifier) checks benefit from synergy bonuses of +2 if the character has 5 ranks of Craft (herbalism) and +2 if the character has 5 ranks of Craft (alchemy).

## PROFESSION (SCRIBE)

All characters who truly want to be literate in Stygian hieroglyphics must take at least two ranks in Profession (scribe) to show they have been trained in reading this complex and artful writing system. Although all non-commoner, non-barbaric Stygian characters are considered literate, this is in a more common form of writing, a form not used for official or religious purposes. All Stygian priests and generals are trained as scribes, as are all government officials.

**Note:** Being a scribe is important for many governmental posts. Since the nobility often seek such posts to increase their own political power, Profession (scribe) can be considered a class skill for all Stygian nobles.

## SENSE MOTIVE

**Cold Reading:** Stygian priests are practitioners of an art of clairvoyance based more on reading the person than on reading the cards or the signs. There have always been and always will be unsophisticated and trusting people who want to know more about their future, usually so they can be reassured that they will find a good partner, marry, settle down and be prosperous. While this class exists, there will also be the other class of person who makes a tidy living by exploiting them.

A cold reader is someone who sets himself up as a fortune-teller but has no genuine abilities. Instead he relies on bodily and verbal cues to gain information about the subject. Most cold readers are palmists, as it is much easier to 'read' a person if you can hold their hand while asking the person questions. These questions usually begin as vague statements; as the cold reader gets a feel for the candidate, the statements become more specific. Tiny reactions, such as pulling away or pushing forward are giveaways from which the cold reader can make deductions. For example, a cold reader might say something along the lines of 'I sense a great deal of love in your life' and on feeling the client jerk away or tense up, modify this to 'love which Ishtar has denied to you, for yours is a lonely soul'.

The cold reader's technique is to establish trust by telling the subject facts about himself which the reader 'could not possibly know', all derived from cold reading, before making a set of cosy predictions designed to make the subject feel good about himself and his future. The cold reading is not intended to tell the subject anything he did not already know. It is only performed in order to give the semblance of clairvoyant ability on the cold reader's part.

**Check:** You may use this skill in two ways. If you have the necessary paraphernalia to pass yourself off as a fortune-teller and you have a place from which you can work, such as a market stall or a tent, you may use your Sense Motive skill as if it were a Profession skill, practising your trade and making a decent living. You may make a skill check for any given week of dedicated work and earn half your check result in silver pieces.

Alternatively, you may use cold-reading to eke information from someone. This can only be done if the other person is willingly talking to you in the context of fortune-telling; you cannot use the ability to pry information from an unwilling target. For every minute of cold-reading, you may make a Sense Motive check (DC 15); this is raised to DC 20 if you cannot, for whatever reason, take the hand of the subject. A successful check allows you to learn something about the subject that he has strong emotional feelings about. Cold reading detects emotional issues about others, so if the subject was feeling guilty about neglecting his mother, suspicious of a lover's fidelity or anxious about an imminent caravan raid, these would be likely subjects to pick up on.

**Retry:** Yes, but failure to produce information about the subject (and thus confirm your supposed divinatory ability) is likely to cause them to give up and try someone else.

**Special:** Any character with 5 or more ranks in Bluff receives a +2 synergy bonus to cold reading checks, as they are more able to make their probing questions seem like incisive statements.

## FEATS

All characters within the *Conan Roleplaying Game* will select at least one feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level and more as they rise in levels. Feat selection is a crucial part of customising each character, and care should be taken to choose feats that complement the character's class features, racial traits and other capabilities.

## CHARIOT COMBAT (GENERAL)

You are skilled in chariot combat, maximising the benefits from the limited cover afforded you by its defences.



**Prerequisite:** Handle Animal 1 rank, base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** When you are in a chariot, you gain double the usual cover bonus from its low walls.

**Special:** If you have the Chariot Combat feat, you may select any feats for which the Mounted Combat feat is a prerequisite just as though you also had Mounted Combat. These feats may then be used when you are in a chariot, just as though you were mounted. However, you may not use them when mounted unless you also have Mounted Combat.

## CHARIOT TEAM FLANKING (GENERAL)

Skilled in fighting as part of a group, you are adept at making devastating flanking attacks.

**Prerequisites:** Chariot Combat, Handle Animal 9 ranks.

**Benefit:** You (or your passenger) gain a +4 bonus to your attack roll whenever flanking an opponent. The ally helping

you flank the opponent retains his normal +2 attack bonus unless he also has this feat.

## DISCIPLE OF CHARIOTS (GENERAL)

Your training in the discipline of the chariot use makes you more effective when driving a chariot. You have trained for agonising hours to mount mass charges, to learn how to manoeuvre the chariot and the two-horse team, how to drive your horse team at a full gallop over uneven terrain, how to keep up with other chariots and drive in formation and how to position a shield to protect yourself and the passenger firing arrows even while driving the chariot at full speed.

**Prerequisites:** Chariot Combat, Handle Animal 4 ranks or more.

**Benefit:** When you are driving a chariot, you may position your shield so that both you and the noble archer with you benefit, although at a -1 penalty. Also, unless the terrain is completely broken, you can drive the chariot at full speed. You can also use the Heavy Cavalry combat formation while on chariots.

## KEEPER OF THE FOURTH MYSTERY OF YINEPU

You are not only trained in the arts of embalming the dead, you are an expert in all aspects, including the rituals. You have uncovered the secret of the lost fourth mystery of Yinepu.

**Prerequisites:** Profession (mummifier) 12 ranks, Craft (herbalism) 4 ranks, Craft (alchemy) 4 ranks, Knowledge (Mystery: Yinepu) 12 ranks, Corruption 1+

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to all Profession (mummifier), Craft (herbalism), Craft (alchemy) and Perform (ritual). You can raise a Mummy of Ahriman *without* the Heart of Ahriman (although you must still complete all the other steps described in *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*, substituting your hand for the Heart).

**Special:** Learning this profane feat automatically corrupts the soul, giving you 1 point of Corruption.

## EYES TO THE SKY (SORCERY)

You do not like to be watched and you do not like having your life pried into. You have an instinctive sense when someone is magically watching you, studying you or learning about you.

**Prerequisites:** Previous exposure to a *visions* spell.

**Benefit:** You automatically know when you are the subject of *visions*, *dream of wisdom*, *mind-reading* and *psychometry* spells. You know who is learning about you and where they are located. If the spell allows a saving throw, you make it at a +4 competence bonus. If the spell does not allow a saving throw, it now allows a Will save (DC set by caster's magical attack roll) to negate the observation, but without the previous bonus.

## GREATER CHARIOT OVERRUN (GENERAL)

You knock them down, then hit them while they are down.

**Prerequisites:** Chariot Combat, Disciple of Chariots, Improved Chariot Overrun.

**Benefit:** Your horses gain an additional +2 to opposed Str/

Dexterity checks against an overrun attack. In addition your passenger can make an additional follow-up attack (ranged or melee) on your turn on a successful overrun before resuming movement.

## IMPROVED CHARIOT OVERRUN (GENERAL)

You barrel over your opponents with gleeful ease with your horses and chariot.

**Prerequisites:** Disciple of Chariots.

**Benefit:** When you attempt to overrun an opponent while driving a chariot, the target may not choose to avoid you. You also gain a +4 bonus on your Strength check to knock down your opponent. Each horse in the horse-team may make one hoof attack against any target you knock down, gaining the standard +4 bonus on attack rolls against prone targets.

**Normal:** Without this feat, the target of an overrun can choose to avoid you or to block you.

## MANIFEST ATTACK (GENERAL)

Many outsiders have the ability to manifest at will, allowing them to journey across the planes with ease. Such creatures that regularly engage in battle learn to use this talent to outflank opponents and catch them by surprise.

**Prerequisites:** Ability to manifest.

**Benefit:** A creature may use its manifest ability to appear next to an opponent and deal a surprise attack against its foe. When using a standard action to manifest, the creature is allowed to take a partial action to make a melee attack, and only a melee attack, after arriving at a destination that is within its line of sight. The target of this attack loses his Dexterity bonus to Dodge Defence. This partial action is in place of the creature's normal move-equivalent one.

**Special:** This feat requires the creature to use a standard action to manifest. Thus, the creature cannot take a five-foot step, manifest, then use this feat. You may only make a five-foot step as part of a full-round action.

## STYGIAN PHYSICIAN (GENERAL)

Stygian healers, who have years of training at the black temples of Set, practice holistic medicine, treating the whole person, not just physically, but mentally and spiritually also. These mysterious Stygian doctors are accomplished herbalists and their knowledge of anatomy and alchemy is the most advanced in the whole of the Hyborian age. The Stygians

have an incredible mastery of the medicinal arts. Stygian doctors are trained to be able to diagnose over 200 types of illnesses.

**Prerequisites:** Stygian

**Benefit:** The character gets a +2 bonus on all Craft (herbalism) checks and Heal checks.

## SORCEROUS INSTRUCTOR (SORCERY)

You are a superb guide and instructor in the furtive ways of sinister Stygian sorcery.

**Benefit:** During your action, you designate any sorcerous ally within 30 feet of you to receive a +1 morale bonus on their magic attack roll.

## SUMMONED ATTACK (SORCERY)

Outsiders that rely on summoning allies and reinforcements can deliver their summoned minions onto the battlefield in a tactically advantageous manner.

**Prerequisites:** *Summon demon* or similar spell or power

**Benefit:** When summoning allies via sorcery or an innate ability, those allies gain the ability to pounce on foes on their first action in the encounter. Pounce allows a creature to use a full-attack action even if it used a movement action, such as charging, during its round. The summoning creature opens a portal to another world/dimension in such a manner that its allies may leap upon its enemies and attack in one motion. For example, the summoned demons may appear above their foes or attack from an unexpected direction.

## SURGERY (GENERAL)

Stygian doctors can perform rather complex surgeries due to their inordinate understanding of the human body and its tissues. Their techniques in mummification has taught them not only how to perform basic autopsies but how to operate on living humans and modify them.

**Prerequisite:** Heal 4 ranks, Stygian Physician.

**Benefit:** The character can use the Heal skill to perform surgery without penalty. See the new use of Heal skill description.

**Normal:** Characters without this feat take a -4 penalty on Heal checks made to perform surgery.

## ALTERNATIVE BORDERER COMBAT STYLES

All borderers learn special techniques and tricks to help them defend the frontiers and hunt down and destroy their foes. However, not all borderers are from the same culture or know the same techniques. The following alternative combat style is available to any borderer character and is taken in lieu of the standard combat styles introduced in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. The decision to take an alternative combat style must be made at 2<sup>nd</sup> level and once an alternative style has been chosen, it cannot later be changed. There are no racial prerequisites – the racial names of the styles simply indicate the culture most likely to develop that style.

### STYGIAN TOMB AVENGER COMBAT STYLE

You hate tomb robbers with a passion unequalled. You know how to fight them and how to kill them.

☒ **2<sup>nd</sup> level:** *Killing Rage:* Your fury is deep and merciless. When attacking the tomb robbers you seek, the critical threat multiplier of your weapon is increased by one, from x3 to x4, for example.

☒ **5<sup>th</sup> level:** *Guided by the Ancients:* You truly believe that you are destined to protect the ancient dead of Stygia. Once per day you can re-roll any failed attack roll, saving throw or skill check; in order to use this ability, you must declare that you are using it immediately after the results of the first roll are known. The new check is made with the same bonuses as the failed check and the new result must be accepted, whether the re-roll is successful or not.

☒ **11<sup>th</sup> level:** *Death Comes on Swift Wings:* You are at your deadliest when using ranged attacks to strike down those who have stolen tomb goods or mummies under your charge. You can kill almost any foe with a single, well-placed arrow, so long as their defences are down. When using a ranged attack to strike a flat-footed opponent, the tomb avenger increases the critical threat range of the weapon by +1, from 19-20 to 18-20, for example. This bonus stacks with the benefits of feats like Improved Critical but is applied after all other changes are made to a weapon's critical range. The avenger must be within point blank range for this power to work.

# Lords of Sorcery

## PRESTIGE CLASSES IN STYGIA

**PRESTIGE CLASSES OFFER** a new form of multiclassing. Unlike the basic classes, characters must meet certain requirements before they can take their first level of a prestige class. The rules for level advancement apply to this system, meaning the first step of advancement is always choosing a class. If a character does not meet the requirements for a prestige class before that first step, that character cannot take the first level of that prestige class. This section presents a prestige class embodying the spirit of Stygia.

### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Here are definitions of some terms used in this section.

**Base Class:** One of the standard eleven classes.

**Caster Level:** Generally equal to the number of class levels (see below) in a spellcasting class. Some prestige classes add caster levels to an existing class.

**Character Level:** The total level of the character, which is the sum of all class levels held by that character.

**Class Level:** The level of a character in a particular class. For a character with levels in only one class, class level and character level are the same.

### LORD OF THE BLACK RING

The Black Ring is the main sorcerous coven in Stygia. It is made up of former or current priests of Set, formerly independent sorcerers whose infamy and power draws the attention of the senior wizards of the Black Ring, and acolytes of the Black Ring.

Lords of the Black Ring are among the highest ranking sorcerers of their cult, capable of commanding the loyalty of both their lower grade acolytes and great numbers of Stygian warriors and nobles. Most also have an official position within the cult of Set, though almost as many pay no more than lip service to the Old Serpent. There is a certain rivalry between those who are priests of Set and those who are not. This rivalry often degenerates into power struggles and even open magical warfare. There is no honour among lords of the Black Ring, just a naked desire for control over others and sorcerous knowledge.

Sorcerers join the Black Ring because they seek raw magical power, and indeed lords of the Black Ring tend to have more base Power Points and more advanced spells than independent sorcerers or those who belong to other magical societies (the only real contender in terms of raw magical power is the master of the Black Circle, but he is very much unique). They are also among the most powerful wizards in the world in terms of their ability to sway others with magical attacks, too. However, they miss out on some of the physical formidability of the Eastern sorcerers, as well as the versatility that other sorcerers may gain by bonus feats. For the lords of the Black Ring, such tradeoffs are irrelevant. They are among the top wizards of the western world, and that is enough for them.

Lords of the Black Ring are feared wherever they go, even in Stygia itself. Even the threat of their wrath is generally enough to bring their cowering inferiors back into line.

**Hit Die:** d6.

### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a lord of the Black Ring, a character must fulfil all of the following criteria:

**Sorcery Styles:** Must know at least four sorcery styles, including Summonings.

**Codes of Honour:** Must not have a code of honour

**Skills:** Knowledge (arcane) 12 ranks, Perform (ritual) 12 ranks.

**Race:** Must be Stygian.

**Religion:** Must be a worshipper of Set in good standing.

**Corruption:** 3 or higher.

**Special:** Must have been a member of the Black Ring coven for at least a year.

*There are secrets not meant for such ears even as yours, and Thoth-Amon is not the only lord of the 'Black Ring.*

Robert E. Howard, *The Hour of the Dragon*

## The Lord of the Black Ring

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	+1 Power Point, Advanced Spell, Scholar Levels, Demonologist
2	+1	+0	+0	+1	+0	+0	+3	Advanced Spell
3	+1	+1	+1	+2	+1	+1	+3	Advanced Spell x2 <i>or</i> New Sorcery Style
4	+2	+1	+1	+3	+1	+1	+4	+1 Power Point, Advanced Spell
5	+2	+1	+1	+3	+1	+1	+4	Advanced Spell
6	+3	+2	+2	+4	+2	+2	+5	Advanced Spell x2 <i>or</i> New Sorcery Style
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	+2	+2	+5	+1 Power Point, Advanced Spell
8	+4	+3	+3	+6	+2	+2	+6	Advanced Spell
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	+3	+3	+6	Advanced Spell x2 <i>or</i> New Sorcery Style
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	+3	+3	+7	+1 Power Point, Advanced Spell

## CLASS SKILLS

The lord of the Black Ring's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Craft (herbalism) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any) (Int), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis) and Sleight of Hand (Dex). See the *Conan Roleplaying Game* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + Int modifier.

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the lord of the Black Ring prestige class:

**Weapon and Armour Proficiency:** The lord of the Black Ring gains no new weapon or armour proficiencies. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble.

**+1 Power Point:** At 1<sup>st</sup> level and every three levels thereafter, the lord of the Black Ring's Base Power Points increase by +1. This is a supernatural ability.

**Advanced Spell:** At 1<sup>st</sup> level and every level thereafter, the lord of the Black Ring improves his knowledge of any one of the sorcery styles he already knows by gaining any one of the advanced spells listed under the style. The lord of the Black Ring may choose his advanced spell himself. This is a supernatural ability.

Note that when a lord of the Black Ring gains Advanced Spell and New Sorcery Style at the same time on gaining a new level, he may choose to gain the Advanced Spell in the New Sorcery Style.

At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, 6<sup>th</sup> level and 9<sup>th</sup> level, the lord of the Black Ring gains two advanced spells rather than one. If he prefers, he may choose to gain a New Sorcery Style instead of the two advanced spells. The lord of the Black Ring also gains the basic spell associated with it.

**Scholar Levels:** The lord of the Black Ring may add his lord of the Black Ring class level to his scholar class level for the following purposes: gaining bonus spells for high Intelligence, determining effective scholar level when casting spells. This is a supernatural ability.

**Demonologist:** The lord of the Black Ring is unusually adept at dealing with demons of various kinds. Whenever he casts the *summon demon* or *form demon* spell, he adds double his lord of the Black Ring class level to his scholar class level to determine the maximum HD of the demon he can *summon* or *bind*, rather than merely adding his lord of the Black Ring class level to his scholar class level (see Scholar Levels, above). This is a supernatural ability.

# Foes & Fiends

## A STYGIAN BESTIARY

**ALL THE CREATURES** listed here are presented in the format described for monsters in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Complete definitions of the terminologies used here can be found in that resource and in the interest of space will not be repeated here. This tome also reprints corrected versions of monsters that originally appeared in some of the supplements. Those reprints have been streamlined and made consistent with the Atlantean Edition of the rules.

### ANIMALS

Snakes of all sizes populate Stygia, as do jackals, lions and other carnivores. Huge crocodiles and river horses (hippopotami) thrive in the Styx and Bakhr rivers. Bizarre half-human creatures such as the manticore and lamia haunt the ancient, pre-human ruins.

### CROCODILE, GIANT STYGIAN

Stygian crocodiles are the second biggest danger on the River Styx and other Stygian waterways (the number one danger are the hippopotami). These huge, scaly creatures usually live in the Styx River and can be more than 20 feet long. They weigh between 600 and 2,000 pounds. In colouration there is a lot of variance, ranging from a brownish-black to drab green, with a lighter tone on the underside. Like other crocodiles, the Stygian crocodile has its eyes and nostrils placed on the top of the head so they can see and breathe while the rest of their body lies submerged, hidden in the murk of the river.

Stygian crocodiles swim with large, oar-like tails. Their rear feet are webbed and can help with small manoeuvres but are only rarely used in swimming. Their feet however are used when travelling overland and they can even run in a manner similar to rabbits, planting their front feet, bringing their hind legs around the outsides of the front legs and then pushing off the hind legs to replant the front ones again.

They can move up to 29 miles per hour in short bursts.

Crocodiles can learn by watching the behaviour of animals and men. They know when prey starts using the same stretch of water for drinking or cleaning.

Stygians never do their washing, bathing, fishing or playing in the same places over and over again on the Styx;

those who do become meals for the ever-watchful crocodiles. Many foreigners who set up a camp along the Styx often meet that fate because they do not know any better.

Stygian crocodiles also work in teams. Many will form small dams in the Styx to catch fish, each one taking a turn at eating the fish. For larger prey, one will catch the food and hold onto it while another (or several others) tear the prey apart. They also exhibit their intelligence by trapping prey against underwater logs or rocks to help them tear the prey apart – an almost tool-like usage of natural objects.

### Combat

Giant Stygian crocodiles lie mostly submerged in rivers or marshes, with only their eyes and nostrils showing, waiting for prey to come within reach. Once prey is within reach, the crocodile launches out of the water with lightning speed, latches onto the prey, then drags it underneath the water, usually drowning the victim.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a crocodile must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, the crocodile establishes a hold on the opponent with its mouth and drags it into deep water, attempting to pin it to the bottom, often while other crocodiles attack the food. Once prey is held in its mouth it can do a savage roll.

**Savage Roll (Ex):** Crocodiles cannot chew their food so they roll in the water in an action that tears the prey up in a bloody and brutal manner. Crocodiles doing a savage roll inflict their bite damage and automatically threaten a critical hit; they do not need to roll an attack but only need to roll for a confirmation of critical damage.

*The thought of Set was like a nightmare,  
and the children of Set who once ruled the  
earth and who now sleep in their nighted caverns  
far below the black pyramids.*

Robert E. Howard, *The God in the Bowl*

	Huge Animal	Huge Animal	Huge Animal
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	7d8+28 (59 hp)	10d8+50 (95 hp)	14d8+70 (133 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+6 (+1 Dex, +5 Ref)	+10 (+1 Dex, +7 Ref, +2 Lightning Reflexes)	+17 (+2 Dex, +9 Ref, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.	20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.	20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.
<b>Dodge Defence:</b>	14 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural)	16 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural)	20 (–2 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural)
<b>Damage Reduction:</b>	7 (leathery hide)	7 (leathery hide)	7 (leathery hide)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+5/+21	+7/+24	+10/+28
<b>Attack:</b>	Bite +11 melee (2d8+12/ AP 8) or tail slap +11 melee (1d12+12)	Bite +14 melee (2d8+13/ AP 9) or tail slap +14 melee (1d12+13)	Bite +18 melee (2d8+15/ AP 11) or tail slap +18 melee (1d12+15)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Bite +11 melee (2d8+12/ AP 8) or tail slap +11 melee (1d12+12)	Bite +14 melee (2d8+13/ AP 9) or tail slap +14 melee (1d12+13)	Bite +18 melee (2d8+15/ AP 11) or tail slap +18 melee (1d12+15)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	15 ft./10 ft.	15 ft./10 ft.	15 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Improved grab, savage roll	Improved grab, savage roll	Improved grab, savage roll
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Hold breath, low-light vision	Hold breath, low-light vision	Hold breath, low-light vision
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3	Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +4	Fort +14, Ref +13, Will +6
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 27, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2	Str 29, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 1, Wis 13, Cha 3	Str 31, Dex 14, Con 21, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 4
<b>Skills:</b>	Hide +1*, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +16	Hide +2*, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +17	Hide +4*, Listen +8, Spot +8, Swim +19
<b>Feats:</b>	Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide)	Alertness, Endurance, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Hide)	Alertness, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Hide)
<b>Environment:</b>	Warm marshes	Warm marshes	Warm marshes
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary or colony (6–11)	Solitary or colony (6–11)	Solitary or colony (6–11)
<b>Advancement:</b>	8–9 HD (Huge)	11–13 HD (Huge)	15+ (Huge)

\*A crocodile gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks when in the water. Further, a crocodile can lie in the water with only its eyes and nostrils showing, gaining a +10 cover bonus on Hide checks.

**Hold Breath (Ex):** A crocodile can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 4 x its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

**Skills:** A crocodile has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

## JACKAL

### Medium Animal

**Hit Dice:** 2d8+4 (13 hp)

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 50 ft. (10 squares)

**Dodge Defence:** 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 1 (fur)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+3

**Attack:** Bite +3 melee (1d6+3)

**Full Attack:** Bite +3 melee (1d6+3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Trip

**Special Qualities:** Low-light vision, scent

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6

**Skills:** Hide +3\*, Listen +6, Spot +4

**Feats:** Alertness

**Environment:** Warm deserts

**Organization:** Solitary or pair or family (6-10)

**Advancement:** 3 HD (Medium); 4–5 HD (Large)

\*Jackals have a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth.

Jackals are pack hunters infamous for their cunning and their unnerving vocalizations. They are about 3 feet long and weigh about 120 pounds. Jackals have dog-like features, huge ears and bushy, foot-long tails. Three breeds of jackal are found in Stygia. The common jackal, the stockiest of the jackals, is found out in the deserts of Stygia; it is a sandy colour and has a black-tipped tail. The striped jackal, which has two yellow-brown stripes running lengthwise down its sides, lives near the River Styx in dense undergrowth; this jackal has a white tip on the tail and is a drab light-brown colour. The black-backed jackal, by far the more aggressive of the species, lives near settled areas; this jackal is the most slender of the three, has a mantle of black hair on its back (although the rest of the fur is rust-coloured), has a black-tipped tail and the largest ears.

Jackals hunt young birds, small mammals, fruit and insects as well as carrion. Jackals often follow vultures or hyenas to find carrion. The black-backed jackals of the Hyborian Age can even drive off a lion. Unlike hyenas, jackals hunt alone or in pairs. The black-backed jackal forms a permanent partnership with another jackal to hunt with and they mate for life. Even solitary jackals maintain contact with other jackals by howling to each other, especially when food is found. Jackals only respond to the yipping of family member's, ignoring the calls of other jackals.

Jackals make their dens in the abandoned homes of other animals, hollow trees or other places where they feel they will not be surprised by others, especially people. They change den sites about every two weeks so predators cannot find them. They have learned that crocodiles observe repetitive behaviour. Jackals are not all bad because they keep the environment clear of carrion and they help to control the rodent population. However, their presence created the need for the Giant-Kings and the Stygians to build elaborate stone tombs – the jackals will also eat dead humans and are quite creative when getting into graves and less sound tombs.

### Combat

A favourite tactic is to send a few individuals against the foe's front while the rest of the pack circles and attacks from the flanks or rear.

**Trip (Ex):** A jackal that hits with its bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+2 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the hyena.

## LION

### Large Animal

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+10 (32 hp)

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Dodge Defence:** 15 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 1 (thick hide)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+12

**Attack:** Claw +7 melee (1d4+5)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +7 melee (1d4+5) and bite +2 melee (1d8+2)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Pounce, improved grab, rake 1d4+2

**Special Qualities:** Low-light vision, scent

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 21, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

**Skills:** Balance +7, Hide +3\*, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Spot +5

**Feats:** Alertness, Run

**Environment:** Warm plains

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, coalition (2 male nomad lions), hunt (3-8 lionesses) or pride (6–30 females with 1 or 2 males)

**Advancement:** 6–8 HD (Large)

\*In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus improves to +12.

Lions are low-built, powerful felines with a short coat and tufted tail. The backs of a lion's ears, the tuft of its tail and its lips are black, but the rest of the fur is mostly tawny. The male's underside is buff-coloured and the female has a white underside. The male has a magnificent mane, which can be any colour, from blonde to black. Their claws are sharp and retractable, and their powerful jaws hide great two-inch canines capable of sinister damage. Lions have a regal bearing and are associated with the sun by the Stygians.

The statistics presented here describe a male lion, which is 5 to 8 feet long and weighs 330 to 550 pounds. Females are slightly smaller, usually weighing just under 300 pounds, but use the same statistics. The females, often called lionesses, are the hunters. Lions will hunt and kill not only herbivores but other carnivores – except the jackal. Jackals and hyenas are the only known predators that will routinely hunt and kill lions.

Male lions often go rogue when they leave their pride, driven out by competing males (often their father). These lions often partner up with another male to form a coalition. These coalitions then work together to take the pride from another male lion. Male lions often practice infanticide by killing male cubs to decrease sexual competition.

## Combat

The lionesses hunt with three to eight of them working together to drive prey into an ambush.

**Pounce (Ex):** If a lion charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a lion must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +7 melee, damage 1d4+2.

**Skills:** Lions have a +4 racial bonus on Balance, Hide and Move Silently checks.

## SERPOPARD

### Medium Animal

**Hit Dice:** 3d8+6 (19 hp)

**Initiative:** +7 (+4 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Dodge Defence:** 16 (+4 Dex, +2 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 2

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+5

**Attack:** Bite +6 melee finesse (1d8+3)

**Full Attack:** Bite +6 melee finesse (1d8+3) and 2 claws +1 melee finesse (1d4+1)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft. (its bite has a 10 ft. reach)

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, pounce, rake 1d4+1

**Special Qualities:** Low-light vision, scent

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

**Skills:** Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +8\*, Jump +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6

**Feats:** Alertness, Track

**Environment:** Warm and temperate forest

**Organization:** Solitary or pair

**Advancement:** 4–5 HD (Medium)

A serpopard is a creature found in the deserts of Stygia and Shem. It has a feline body and head but its neck is long and serpentine (giving it reach). Its image adorns many Stygian and Shemite artefacts.

## Combat

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a serpopard must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

**Pounce (Ex):** If a serpopard charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +6 melee, damage 1d4+1.

**Skills:** Serpopards have a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks and a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks. Serpopards have a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. A serpopard can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.



## STYGIAN RIVER HORSE (HIPPOPOTAMUS)

Large animal

**Hit Dice:** 6d8+21 (48 hp)

**Initiative:** -1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 20 ft.

**Defence Value:** 12 (-1 Dex, -1 Size, +4 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 6 (thick skin)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +4/+13

**Attack:** Gore +8 melee (1d8+5)

**Full Attack:** Gore +8 melee (1d8+5)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./ 5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Hold breath, low-light vision

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 21, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5

**Skills:** Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +18\*

**Feats:** Alertness, Endurance, Toughness

**Organization:** Solitary or herd (4-24)

**Advancement:** 7-12 HD (Large), 13-18 HD (Huge)

\* A river horse receives a +8 racial bonus on all Swim checks to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can take 10 on any Swim check, regardless of circumstances.

The Stygian river horse is one of the largest land mammals in the Hyborian Age, and certainly the largest amphibious mammal in Stygia. River horses are mean and aggressive animals, killing more Stygians every year than any other animal, including the Sons of Set. They are found mainly in the river Styx, where they lazily live, bathe and sleep, eating aquatic plants. They can be found all the way down into the southern Black Kingdoms. An adult male river horse averages a length of 12 feet and height of 5 feet. They weigh around 3 to 4.5 tons. Their tusks can reach 28 inches long and their mouths can open four feet wide. River horses sweat a sticky pink oil that can prove a very effective sunscreen for those brave enough to try and collect some. Stygians liken river horses to some of their fertility and guardian demons.

These animals are also known as *mutapa* (moo-TAH-pah) or 'water elephants' along the banks of the rivers and waterways of the Black Kingdoms.

### Combat

River horses fight by goring opponents with their powerful lower canines. River horses are highly territorial and are irritated by intrusions. They are not naturally aggressive but, when roused to action, can be quite dangerous indeed. River horses are known to capsize an offending boat and bite off the heads of those in it. The worst mistake a person can make is to get between a river horse

and her young. The river horse can run up to 20 miles per hour in short bursts.

**Hold breath (ex):** A river horse can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 6 x its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

## DEMONS

Demons are variously said to come from Hell, Earth, or the Outer Dark. Most adventurers leave such speculations to the scholars who attempt to study demons and the sorcerers who summon them up. Who cares where these horrors come from, after all, so long as you know whether a powerfully swung sword is sufficient to kill them, or whether you need fire and silver? Demons are popular villains in the *Conan* stories but be careful not to over use them in campaigns.

## CHILDREN OF ISHITI

The children of Ishiti are the reptilian slaves of the demoness known as Ishiti. They look humanoid, but with mottled, scaled skin and a monstrous dragon-head. Their eye-sight is particularly sharp and especially attuned to detect motion. Pits along the snout allow the creature to detect heat, giving it the ability to 'see' in complete darkness. They identify each other through scent and, when not disguised, give off an ophidian odour. They smell through their forked tongues. They are generally created through the breath of Ishiti or through Corruption (10+) if the corrupted individual served Ishiti. Although they can be subjects of a *demonic pact* spell, they cannot teach spells unless they are sorcerous scholars.

### Creating a Child of Ishiti

A child of Ishiti is a template that can be applied to any humanoid character, hereafter called the base creature. A child of Ishiti uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to Outsider (demon). Do not recalculate base attack bonuses, saves or skill points. Size is unchanged.

**Hit Dice:** Change all current and future Hit Dice to d8s.

**Speed:** Same as the base creature.

**Dodge and Parry Defence:** Same as the base creature.

**Damage Reduction:** Change to 2 (scales).

**Attack:** A child of Ishiti retains all the attacks of the base creature.

**Full Attack:** A child of Ishiti retains all the attacks of the base creature. He also gains a bite attack that does 1d4 plus poison damage as a secondary attack.

**Special Attacks:** A child of Ishiti retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains those described below.

*Poison (Ex):* Child of Ishiti venom blocks nerve impulses, causing respiratory failure. Symptoms

include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In addition, the effects of the bite include darkening and blistering of the flesh around the fang punctures and rotting flesh within 48 hours of the bite. The wound typically smells quite putrid within minutes of the bite or injection of the venom by a poisoned weapon. This poison must be delivered through a wound. If a creature has sufficient damage reduction to avoid taking any damage from the attack, the poison does not affect it. Characters who take damage from a child of Ishiti's bite must make a Fortitude save (DC 14 + child of Ishiti's Constitution bonus) or take 2d4 Strength damage in 10 minutes, with secondary damage of 1d4 Strength a minute later. After 48 hours the character must make a save or contract gangrene around the wound.

**Special Qualities:** A child of Ishiti retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains Darkvision 60', aberration traits (except immunity to physical attack forms), scent and the qualities listed below.

**Shape-Shifting (Su):** These fiends can take any human form they wish by flinging a web of sorcery about their faces, as an actor dons a mask. They gain a +10 competence bonus to Disguise checks. If a child of Ishiti is killed, he automatically reverts to normal form. If a child of Ishiti hears the *Words that Unweave*, he also reverts to normal form. Reflective surfaces also reveal their true form, for the sorcery that clouds the minds of men does not fool a mirror, which has no mind to cloud.

**Sorcerous Phrase Vulnerability (Su):** Children of Ishiti cannot say the words 'Ka nama kaa lajerama'. These words cause a child of Ishiti pain and forces him to reveal his true nature. All men retain a racial memory of these haunting words, and will feel a sense of déjà vu when hearing them, feeling they know the words but have simply forgotten them. It takes a Knowledge (arcana) check DC 20 to remember the words for the first time if someone has not already told them to the character. The pain lasts for 1 round and imposes a -4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks and ability checks. This phrase is sometimes known as the *Words that Unweave*.

**Saves:** A child of Ishiti's base saves are unchanged from the base creature.

**Abilities:** A child of Ishiti gains a +2 bonus to Dexterity and Wisdom and a -6 bonus to Charisma.

**Skills:** Between their keen eyes, heat-sensing pits and odour-detecting tongues, the children of Ishiti have a natural +6 to their Spot skills. Their hearing is also extremely acute. They lack external ears but they sense vibrations through a combination of inner ears and through their jaws and other bones. Vibrations along the ground transfer up through the body to the inner ear. A snake-that-speaks always hears a person coming before seeing that person. Children of Ishiti have a natural +8 bonus to Listen because of this. These

incredible senses also help them to determine a person's mood and intent, giving them a +6 racial bonus to Sense Motive.

**Feats:** A child of Ishiti gains Alertness and Dodge, assuming the base creature meets the prerequisites and does not already have these feats.

**Environment:** Any, usually the same as the base creature.

**Organisation:** Solitary, pair, gang (3-5) or squad (6-30)

**Advancement:** By character class (soldier is now the favoured class)

**Corruption:** The creature is a demon now.

**Allegiances:** A child of Ishiti loses all Allegiances, save one to Ishiti.

**Code of Honour:** A child of Ishiti may never have codes of honour. A child of Ishiti who had a code of honour in his previous life immediately loses it on becoming an undead creature.

## LAMIA

**Large Outsider (demon)**

**Hit Dice:** 9d12+9 (67 hp)

**Initiative:** +14 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Imp. Initiative)

**Speed:** 60 ft. (12 squares)

**Dodge Defence:** 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural, +1 dodge)

**Damage Reduction:** 2 (scales)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +9/+17

**Attack:** Bite +12 melee (1d2 +4)

**Full Attack:** Bite +12 melee (1d2 +4)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Lure, constrict, blood-drain, improved grab, dominate

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, manifest, mobility

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +7 (+4 base, +3 Cha)

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +7

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 16

**Skills:** Bluff +15, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +15, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Move Silently +14, Hide +14, Intimidate +15, Sense Motive +14, Spot +14

**Feats:** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Manifest Attack

**Environment:** Temperate deserts

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or gang (3-4)

**Advancement:** 10-13 HD (Large); 14-27 HD (Huge)

The lamia is a snake-like vampire-demon with a woman's head and breasts. She cannot close her eyes. A typical lamia is about 8 feet long and weighs about 700 pounds. They cannot speak but have a hiss that is pleasing to children but repellent to anyone who has entered or gone beyond puberty. Lamias rarely attack adults unless cornered. They draw children to them and drink their blood, gently caressing them with their serpent tail. Stygian mythology holds the lamia

as a horrific curse laid upon mothers, for the lamia is also sterile, the personification of still-births and sudden infant mortality. According to Stygian myths, the lamia was a mother whose children died and unable to get the images of her dead children out of her head, she was driven insane with jealousy, so she sought out and consumed the children of other mothers.

Although she drinks blood and is characterised as a vampire, she is not undead. She is a demon from the Outer Dark and can be summoned much like other demons, although the ceremonies to summon one of these creatures always involves the death and blood of pre-pubescent children, an act heinous to most Stygians, even sorcerers. To a culture who has numerous gods and goddesses devoted to the protection of children and motherhood, this demon is particularly despised. Sorcerers who traffic with lamias are given the worst possible punishment – buried alive, wrapped in sheepskin (an unclean garment). Even Thoth-Amon, who would willingly sacrifice virgins for power, leaves children alone and has no patience for those who deal peacefully with lamias.

A lamia can be summoned with a *summon demon* spell that includes a small child. Alternatively, a lamia makes a good subject for a *demonic pact* spell if the scholar promises to provide the lamia with a constant supply of children. Even lamias who are not themselves scholars will have knowledge of (though not the ability to cast) 1d2+1 sorcery styles and the usual Summoning spells. Lamia scholars can add the spells they personally know to that.

### Combat

A lamia usually only attacks children, but it can attack adults if necessary. It drops from a dark place and constricts its foes, draining their blood as its serpent body tightens like a shrinking iron band.

**Lure (Su):** When it hisses, all children within a 60-foot radius must succeed on a Will save or be affected by *entrance* and *suggestion* effect or all adults (anyone past puberty) must save on a Will save or be affected by Terror (based on its magical attack roll).

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a lamia must hit with its bite attack (it does not need to deal damage or pierce damage reduction). It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict and/or blood drain.

**Constrict (Ex):** On a successful grapple check, a lamia deals 1d8+9 damage.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** A lamia can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains

blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, the lamia gains 5 temporary hit points.

**Dominate (Su):** A lamia can crush an opponent's will just by looking onto his eyes. This is similar to an *evil eye* spell, except that the lamia must use a standard action and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the lamia targets must succeed on a Will saving throw (DC set by the lamia's magic attack roll) or fall instantly under the lamia's influence as though by a *domination* spell. The ability has a range of 30 feet.

**Mobility (Ex):** The lamia gets a +4 dodge bonus to Dodge Defence against attacks of opportunity caused when she moves out of or within a threatened area.

**Manifest (Su):** As a standard action, the lamia can either leave Earth and return to its home plane, or appear somewhere else on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

**Skills:** Lamias have a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Hide checks.

## MAN-SERPENT (THE GOD IN THE BOWL)

**Huge Outsider (demon)**

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+30 (52 hit points)

**Initiative:** +6 (+4 Ref., +2 Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares); Climb 30 ft.; Swim 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 13 (+3 natural, +2 Dex, -2 size)

**Damage Resistance:** 5 (scales)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +5/+23

**Attack:** Slam +13 melee (1d8+10)

**Full Attack:** Slam +13 melee (1d8+10)

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Constricting grapple

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60', improved terror of the unknown, sorcerous phrase vulnerability

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +5 (+2 natural, +3 Cha)

**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 30, Dex 15, Con 22, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 17

**Skills:** Bluff +11, Craft (alchemy) +11, Decipher Script +11, Hide +12, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10

**Feats:** Stealthy, Steely Gaze

**Climate/Terrain:** Stygia

**Organisation:** Solitary or Pair

**Advancement:** 6-11 HD (huge), 12-23 HD (gargantuan), 24+ HD (colossal); or by character class (favoured class: scholar)

The gods of old times did not die, but fell into long sleeps. Their worshippers locked them into sarcophagi so that the hand of man did not disturb their slumbers. Man-serpents, ancient gods who sleep beneath the pyramids of Stygia,



are ancient abominations known as the Children of Set. Whether that nomenclature is figurative or literal depends on one's religious beliefs. They have unemotional but beautiful faces with full lips that appear to be carved from marble. Beneath that fine head, however, is a twenty to thirty foot long shimmering body of a horrible serpent, thicker than a man's arm. The serpent body is generally black with curious splotches or designs.

They make reasonably useful teachers of the occult for sorcerers to enter into *demonic pacts* with, although they generally only know 1d3+1 sorcery styles (unless they have taken levels in scholar).

### Combat

It can kill by driving men mad or by crushing them with its black body.

**Constricting Grapple (Ex):** The man-serpent may perform this attack against any target that is immediately adjacent to it or in the same square (if it drops down from above). The man-serpent can attempt a grapple against an opponent. If successful, the target becomes coiled in the grip of the beast's sinuous body and becomes constricted. The beast will automatically deal 1d8+10 (AP 12) points of constriction damage per round until the target manages to break the grapple. During this time, it cannot dodge attacks. Unarmoured foes will possibly suffocate. Normal suffocation rules apply with

one exception: since this is a violent suffocation, the grappled character can only hold his breath for 1 round per point of Constitution. After this period of time, the character must make a DC 10 Constitution check in order to continue holding his breath. The save must be repeated each round, with the DC increasing by +1 for each previous success. When the character fails one of these Constitution checks, he begins to suffocate. In the first round, he falls unconscious (0 hit points). In the following round, he drops to -1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, he suffocates.

**Improved Terror of the Unknown (Su):** The man-serpent has such unnatural beauty it adds its Charisma modifier to the save DC for Terror. Also, any character rolling a natural 1 on their Will save dies after a number of rounds equal to his Constitution modifier.

**Sorcerous Phrase Vulnerability (Su):** Man-serpents cannot say the words 'Ka nama kaa lajerama'. These words cause a man-serpent pain and forces him to reveal his true nature. All men retain a racial memory of these haunting words, and will feel a sense of déjà vu when hearing them, feeling they know the words from their dreams but had simply forgotten them. It takes a Knowledge (arcana) check DC 20 to 'remember' the words for the first time if someone has not already told the words to the character. The pain lasts for 1 round and imposes a -4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks and ability checks. This phrase is sometimes known as the *Words that Unweave*.

**Man-Serpent Apocrypha:** According to apocryphal sources, the man-serpent appearing in the Howard story, *The God in the Bowl*, was named Sschaaronn. The same sources list its siblings as Hotphaaph, Mehennassar, Nuubissat, Ssarbaarix and Thefertaash.

Also, these sources give the man-serpents medusa-like serpent hair with poisonous bites. GMs who are fans of Marvel Comics may want to add an additional attack mode to their man-serpents with a +9 base attack, doing 1d4 points of damage plus poison, AP 1; Characters who take damage from a man-serpent's bite must make a Fort save (DC 14 + man-serpent's Con bonus) or take 2d4 Strength damage in 10 minutes, with secondary damage of 1d4 Strength a minute later.

These man-serpents can also cast *Entrance* and *Ranged Hypnotism* with a glance. Blinking one's eyes repeatedly can give a character a +5 circumstance bonus to the save vs. the hypnotic effect. These man-serpents are possibly abominations instead of demons.

There is also a theory that the Giant-Kings and Monster-Kings referenced in *The God in the Bowl* are not humanoids but are actually the man-serpents.

## DEMON LORDS

In *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, the spell *greater demonic pact* mentions the prospect of making a pact with demon lords, rather than mere demons. This section gives game statistics and descriptions for a number of the demon lords mentioned in the Conan stories. These can either be used as patrons as they are, or be taken as typical examples of lords to use as starting points for the Games Master to create his own new demon lords.

As well as functioning as effective patrons for sorcerers, demon lords are often worshipped as gods by those who know no better. They do not offer quite the same benefits as the more established religions, but can prove useful for those well-versed in evil. Unlike true gods, demon lords can have an incarnate form on Earth, and can potentially be slain in that form, particularly with the assistance of spells such as the incantation of Amalric's witchman (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game*).

**Damage Reduction for Demon Lords:** Many demon lords have damage reduction derived directly from their unearthly nature as demon lords, rather than from the hardness or natural armour of their bodies. This is indicated in the entry for Damage Reduction by the parenthetical note (demon

lord) after the number. Any damage reduction gained in this way can be removed by use of the *incantation of Amalric's witchman* spell.

**Demon Lords and Spells:** All demon lords are capable of teaching all spells, both those found in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* as well as any other Conan supplements. Note that demon lords need not meet the same prerequisites as human scholars. For example, many can cast *summon elemental* or *summon demon* without needing to have a *demonic pact* or similar spell, simply by virtue of their demonic nature.

## AMMUT

**Huge Outsider (demon lord)**

**Hit Dice:** 20d8+300 (390 hp)

**Initiative:** +13 (+1 Dex, +12 Reflex)

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Dodge Defence:** 24 (–2 Size, +1 Dex, +15 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 4 (demon lord)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +20/+40

**Attack:** Bite +33 melee (2d8+18/ AP 20)

**Full Attack:** Bite +33 melee (2d8+18/ 19-20 x2/AP 20), plus 2 claws +28 melee (2d6+18/ 19-20 x2/AP 20)

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft. (3)/15 ft. (3)

**Special Attacks:** Pounce, improved grab, rake

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60', manifest

**Power Points:** 55 (base 50, +5 Wis)

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +18 (+10 natural, +8 Charisma)

**Saves:** Fort +27, Ref +13, Will +17

**Abilities:** Str 34, Dex 12, Con 40, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 27

**Skills:** Balance +24, Climb +35, Craft (alchemy) +27, Craft (herbalism) +27, Intimidate +31, Jump +35, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (religion) +27, Listen +28, Perform (ritual) +31, Spot +28

**Feats:** Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Critical (bite), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Power Attack

**Environment:** Any land and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Advancement:** –

Ammut is a demon lord believed to dwell in the Hall of the Law, waiting to eat the hearts of those deemed not worthy of an afterlife. She has the head of a crocodile, the forequarters of a lion and the hindquarters of a hippopotamus.

She can be summoned with a *summon demon* spell. Alternatively, she makes a good subject for a *greater demonic pact* spell.

### Combat

**Pounce (Ex):** If she charges a foe, she can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, she must hit with her bite attack. She can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If she wins the grapple check, she establishes a hold and can rake.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +7 melee, damage 2d8+12/AP 14.

**Manifest (Su):** As a standard action, she can either leave Earth and return to her home place, or appear somewhere else on Earth. In either case, she manifests at the new location at the end of her action.

## BLACK BEAST, THE GHOUL-HYENA OF CHAOS

**Colossal Outsider (demon lord)**

**Hit Dice:** 20d8+200 (290 hp)

**Initiative:** +14 (+2 Dex, +12 Ref.)

**Speed:** 70 ft. (14 squares)

**Dodge Defence:** 19 (+2 Dex, +15 natural, -8 size)

**Damage Reduction:** 10 (+6 fur, +4 demon lord)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +20/+56

**Attack:** Bite +32 melee (3d8+20/ 19-20 x2/ AP 18)

**Full Attack:** Bite +32 melee (3d8+20/ 19-20 x2/ AP 18), 2 Claws +27 melee (3d6+20 / AP 12)

**Space/Reach:** 60 ft./50 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Awesome blows, pounce, trip, uncanny howl

**Special Qualities:** Low-light vision, scent

**Saves:** Fort +22, Ref +14, Will +15

**Abilities:** Str 50, Dex 15, Con 31, Int 6, Wis 17, Cha 40

**Skills:** Climb +43, Hide +9, Intimidate +38, Jump +43, Listen +28, Spot +28

**Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Sunder, Power Attack

**Magic Attack:** +25 (+10 base, +15 Cha)

**Environment:** Any land and underground

**Organisation:** Solitary

**Advancement:** -

The Black Beast is a hulking, monstrous and unthinkable *thing* and the earth trembles beneath its ponderous tread. Earth was never meant to bear the weight of such a hell-spawned abomination and even the Heart of Ahriman gives no power over the Black Beast, the very child of Chaos itself. His cult centre was once at Nebthu, now in ruins. It resides in the labyrinth beneath its sphinx in Nebthu.

The Black Beast is larger than 50 lions, weighing over 125 tons. It can be summoned with a *Summon Demon* spell, although it may take a while to get to the summoner, as the Black Beast can no longer *manifest* itself. It was a willing subject of the *form demon* spell eons ago, so it cannot *manifest*, however it is also immune to dismissal via *master-words and signs* and to *banish outsider* (see *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos* for details on the *Form Demon* spell).

### Combat

This is an incredibly dangerous demon-monster. Virtually every hit he makes calls for a massive damage save as he ploughs into enemies, biting with his slaver jaws and swiping with his fierce claws. The Black Beast is often reluctantly called upon to defend Stygia against armies, although the demon beast cares not which army it slaughters and is likely to slay any and all armies present.

**Awesome Blows (Ex):** As a standard action, the Black Beast may choose to subtract 4 from its claw melee attack roll and deliver an awesome blow. If the Black Beast hits a



*At the mouth of the great shaft that led down to immemorial crypts appeared a shape of living horror, leering and slavering. Huge as half a hundred lions, it peered into the darkness and sniffed the pre-dawn air.... It wheeled ponderously toward the host and for an instant towered over them, like the living cub of the stone monster it resembled. Then it was among them! Its great paws swept right and left, dashing men and mounts head over heels in a welter of gore. The 'Black Beast' waded through the slaughter, dipping its huge head with every stride to snatch up a Stygian and crunch him to jelly with one bite.... And after them came the 'Black Beast, trampling and crunching. Ever it slew... and slew... and slew...*

L. Sprague de Camp and Lin Carter, *The Black Sphinx of Nebthu*

corporeal opponent smaller than itself with an awesome blow, its opponent must succeed on a Reflex save (DC = damage dealt) or be knocked flying 10 feet in a direction of the attacking Black Beast's choice and fall prone. The attacking Black Beast can only push the opponent in a straight line, and the opponent can't move closer to the attacking Black Beast than the square it started in. If an obstacle prevents the completion of the opponent's move, the opponent and the obstacle each take 1d6 points of damage and the opponent stops in the space adjacent to the obstacle.

**Pounce (Ex):** If the Black Beast charges a foe, it can make a full attack at the end of the charge.

**Trip (Ex):** If the Black Beast hits with its bite attack it can attempt to trip the opponent (+2 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the Black Beast.

**Uncanny Howl (Su):** The Black Beast can make an uncanny howl, a horrible sound a thousand times more frightening than that of a mere jackal or hyena. Upon hearing this weird cry, all must make a Terror save. Those who fail the save must, in addition to suffering the effects of Terror of the Unknown, make a Will save against madness. Those who fail that save become carrion eaters for the duration of the temporary madness (see *Conan the Roleplaying Game* for rules on temporary madness). All DCs are set by the Black Beast's magical attack roll.

## ISHITI, DEMON GODDESS OF SNAKES

**Gargantuan Outsider (demon)**

**Hit Dice:** 20d8+160 (250 hit points)

**Initiative:** +16 (+12 Ref., +4 Dex)

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares); Climb 20 ft.; Swim 20 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 25 (+15 natural, +4 Dex, -4 size)

**Damage Resistance:** 12 (+5 scales, +7 demon lord)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +20/+44

**Attack:** Slam +29 melee (2d6+12)

**Full Attack:** Slam +29 melee (2d6+12)

**Space/Reach (Snake with medusa head form):** 20 ft. (4 x 4) / 15 ft. (3 squares)

**Space/Reach (Woman torso with snake body from waist down):** 20 ft. (4 x 4) / 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Special Attacks:** Ishiti's Fire, spells, swallow whole

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60', manifest, immunities, time stop

**Power Points:** 57 (base 50, +7 Cha)

**Magic Attack Bonus:** +17 (+10 natural, +7 Cha)

**Saves:** Fort +20, Ref +16, Will +19

**Abilities:** Str 34, Dex 19, Con 26, Int 20, Wis 19, Cha 25

**Skills:** Bluff +30, Craft (alchemy) +28, Diplomacy +30, Gather Information +20, Hide +6, Intimidate +33, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (religion) +28, Listen +27, Move Silently +27, Perform (ritual) +35, Search +28, Sense Motive +30, Spot +27

**Feats:** Iron Will, Menacing Aura, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Steely Gaze, Summoned Attack\*, Summoner

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land or underground

**Organisation:** Solitary or Pair

**Advancement:** -

\* New feat introduced in this volume.

Ishiti is a snake goddess linked to Set and his black pantheon of grim gods. She is a demon who variously appears as a beautiful woman who is snake-like from the waist down with snakes for hair or as a medusa who is snake-like from the neck down. She governs time, serpents and her children. She does not like to be lied to and, oddly enough, she does not like to see selfishness in regards to her gifts. Even though she is a demon goddess of Set, she is not without compassion.

She perceives things from an emotional viewpoint, not a rational one. To change her mind, one has to change how she feels. She is extremely intelligent and responsive to new ideas; she has little time or sympathy for narrow or petty thinking. If nothing is happening, she will try to create an interesting or amusing situation. Vanity is one of her chief weaknesses

— she loves attention. She has the ability to see deeply into the human psyche and teaches her followers to listen to their hunches. She is also susceptible to other people's hard luck stories or pleas for help — she often takes the problems of others as her own to solve. Unfortunately, she is often prone to giving impractical aid or solutions.

Her anger takes a few minutes to come to a head but lasts for weeks, running in bizarre directions instead of in a logical manner. She has a contradictory nature and she often manages to get people back on their feet yet gets jealous and nit-picky if they actually should succeed and build up some level of self-esteem.

Those who die in her service are reincarnated as Children of Ishiti.

**Hands Through the Void (Su):** If Ishiti wants, she can extend her arms out as snakes with hands instead of heads. She can reach these hands through the Outer Void to grasp people and bring them to her realm. This is a grapple attack.

**Immunities (Su):** Ishiti is immune to all physical damage, except that dealt by either fire or objects made from silver. Silver weapons are not generally manufactured during the Hyborian Age, though improvised weapons made from silver benches, candlesticks, mugs etc. could be used.

**Ishiti's Fire (Su):** Ishiti spews out sorcerous fire from her mouth that transforms those it hits into Ishiti's Children (see page 128). Each blast covers the target's skin with scales where it strikes and forces a Corruption save, a Fortitude save (DC 18) and a Will Save (DC 17). A failed Corruption save gives the target a point of Corruption, as usual. A failed Fortitude save mutates the character, taking him along the path of humanoid to humanoid (augmented) to Aberration to Outsider (demon). A failed Will save places the Children of Ishiti template on the character.

**Manifest (Su):** As a standard action, Ishiti can either leave Earth and return to her home place, or appear somewhere else on Earth. In either case, she manifests at the new location at the end of her action.

**Multiple Forms (Su):** Ishiti variously appears as a beautiful woman who is snakelike from the waist down with snakes for hair or as a medusa who is snake-like from the neck down. She can turn any part of her body snake-like if she so desires.

**Spells (Sp):** Ishiti may cast the following spells as though she were a 20<sup>th</sup> level scholar. The usual Power Point and other costs apply.

Hypnotism: *Domination, dread serpent, entrance, hypnotic suggestion, mass hypnotic suggestion, ranged hypnotism, savage beast*

Nature: *Animal ally, children of the night, greater summon beast, sorcerous garden, summon beast*

Summonings: *Summon demon, summon elemental*

## MONSTERS

Many of the creatures Conan encounters seem to be more-or-less one-offs, either unique demonic entities, sorcerous experiments or weird creatures that are the last of their kind. For this reason the Games Master should avoid overusing monsters from this section. It is rare that Conan must fight more than one or two different types of monster during one story. Your scenario should probably be similar, with the supernatural element occurring only late in the adventure after a suitable build-up of tension. The Games Master is also encouraged to create new monsters or adapt monsters from other d20 sources to retain a certain freshness to their games.

Although in the Conan stories monsters usually appear singly, Conan does sometimes face packs of were-beasts or even gangs of far larger and more dangerous foes, particularly if he has allies himself. It is recommended that if you use a single powerful opponent against a party of adventurers, you either have it be very powerful indeed or accompanied by a number of lesser creatures, since the combat rules tend to favour multiple attackers.

**Terror of the Unknown:** Monsters in this section all force Terror saving throws.

## EMERALD LOTUS

**Large Plant**

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+20 (38 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (+3 Dex, +1 Reflex save)

**Speed:** 2 ½ ft. (cannot run)

**DV:** 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural)

**DR:** 2 (natural)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+3

**Attack:** Whip-like branches +6 melee finesse (1d4+4)

**Full Attack:** 2 Whip-like branches +4/+4 melee finesse (1d4+4)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft. (2)/15 ft. (2)

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, constrict, blood-drain, blood frenzy.

**Special Qualities:** Low-light vision, plant traits, blindsense

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +4, Will -3

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 16, Con 20, Int -, Wis 2, Cha 26

**Skills:** -

**Feats:** -

**Environment:** Sorcerous gardens

**Organisation:** Solitary, Patch (5-10) or colony (11-30)

**Advancement:** 5-9 HD (Large); 10-19 HD (Huge); 20+ HD (Gargantuan)

The emerald lotus is a vampiric fungus, feeding off the blood of creatures. Its thorns feed off the blood of corpses, animal or human, and without blood, the plant will die. For every week it goes without blood, it loses 1 HD until it reaches 0 and dies. For every full grown Medium-sized mammal it consumes, it gains 1 HD (maximum 1 HD gain per week). It can slowly ambulate, scuttling like a crab.

Emerald lotus, unlike other forms of lotus, is not natural to the world. The emerald lotus was created by a sorcerer of Elder Stygia named Cetriss, who bargained with dark gods for its secret. The sorcerous power of the lotus helped the seers of Elder Stygia keep Acheron at bay. Cetriss is said to have decided there was little use in his lotus plant, so he abandoned it to seek out the secrets of immortality.

Emerald lotus is an iridescent, green plant with a sharp, musky odour. Emerald lotus is one of the most addictive substances in the world and it effectively ages those addicted to it, making them appear at least twice their real age. Their skin hangs loose, their hair turns white, their hands turn into twisted claws. Despite this, the lotus is a wondrous gift to sorcerers. Its addicts claim that with enough emerald lotus their power will be limitless. The black seeds of the emerald lotus were lost before the fall of Acheron but have been found again recently by a twisted Stygian, a reject of the Black Ring.

### Combat

Its whip-like, thorny branches are animate and can attack like the twisting limbs of an octopus. It is said to undergo blood-madness, which is not unlike the feeding frenzy Vilayet sharks fly into when they smell blood.

**Blindsense (Ex):** Emerald lotus can locate creatures within a 90 ft. radius regardless of lighting conditions.

**Blood Frenzy (Ex):** When a creature is injured within 90 feet of the lotus the plant enters the blood frenzy. It gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls. It also gains a -2 penalty to its Dodge Defence. The frenzy lasts for 1 minute.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** An emerald lotus can suck blood from a living victim with its thorns by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, the emerald lotus gains 5 temporary hit points.

**Constrict (Ex):** The creature deals 1d6+6 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability the creature must hit an opponent of any size with a tentacle attack.

It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

If it wins the grapple check it establishes a hold and can constrict.

## LIVING KA

The *Ka* is a person's Charisma, often talked about as an invisible double of a person. Certain dark spells have resurrected the *Ka* as an undead spirit bound to obey the sorcerer. The living *Ka* can function as a disembodied spirit or it can possess its mummy. A *Ka* functioning as a spirit is like a ghost as described in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. A living *Ka* that has possessed a mummy functions as a *Ka*-possessed mummy as described here.

### Creating a *Ka*-Possessed Mummy

'*Ka*-Possessed Mummy' is a template added to any dead humanoid or animal creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A *Ka*-possessed mummy uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to undead (augmented humanoid or animal). Do not recalculate base attack bonuses, saves or skill points. Size is unchanged.

**Hit Dice:** Increase all current and future Hit Dice to d12s.

**Speed:** Same as the base creature.

**Defence:** Base Dodge and Parry Defences are the same as the base creature

**Damage Reduction:** Change to 8, replacing the original creature's DR, if any. The mummification process completely transforms the flesh.

**Attack:** A *Ka*-possessed mummy retains all the attacks of the base creature. If the base creature can use weapons, the *Ka*-possessed mummy retains this ability. A creature with natural weapons retains those natural weapons at the same damage levels. A *Ka*-possessed mummy fighting without weapons (natural or otherwise) gains a slam attack doing 1d8 + Strength bonus damage.

**Special Attacks:** A *Ka*-possessed mummy retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains those described below. Saves have a DC set by the *Ka*-possessed mummy's magic attack roll unless noted otherwise.

*Animate Ushabtiu Figurines (Su):* The *Ka*-possessed mummy can animate the funerary figures and statues buried with him as if he had cast an *animate statue* spell from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*. He does not need to meet the prerequisites for the spell, nor does he use Power Points to activate the power, although it takes 3 Power Points per minute after the first ten per day (thus a *Ka*-possessed mummy without Power Points cannot do this for more than ten minutes per day). He can activate twice as many Small statues as his Hit Dice.

**Special Qualities:** A *Ka*-possessed mummy retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains those described below.

*Fast Healing (Su):* A *Ka*-possessed mummy heals 2 points of damage each round so long as he has

## Funerary Trappings

Funerary Item	Power Controlled by Funerary Item
A collar of gold in the shape of a hawk spreading its wings.	Ability to appear human, in human clothing
Carnelian amulet of the heart.	Ability to think. Intelligence drops to zero if this is destroyed. Becomes a mindless, killing automaton.
Green marble amulet of the scarab, set in gold.	Animate ushabtiu figurines.
Red jasper amulet of the buckle.	If a scholar, this gives him the ability to cast spells as an undead. If lost, he cannot cast sorcery spells.
Gold amulet of the Tet.	Fast Healing (half of it).
Hematite amulet of the pillow.	Fast Healing (half of it).
Gold amulet of the vulture clutching a pair of ankhs.	Hit Dice. His hit dice are halved if this is destroyed.
Blue porcelain amulet of the papyrus sceptre.	Renewed youth. His strength will drop to 4 if destroyed.
Gold amulet of the soul.	Enables the soul to unite with the mummified body and the spirit and the spiritual body at will. Destruction of this will erase his memory.
Jasper amulet of the Eye of Harakht.	The ability to see in the dark.
The amulet of life (Ankh).	If destroyed, the mummy's Hit Dice becomes a d6 (damage already taken does not change).
Red porcelain amulet of Nefer.	This amulet empowers the mummy's saving throws. If it is destroyed, the mummy saves on natural 20s only.
Red jasper amulet of the Serpent's Head.	The destruction of this amulet will end the mummy's ability to use skills.
The false penis or nipples.	Allows the mummy to have sex and children.
Lapis lazuli amulet of the Shen.	The mummy will begin to decay if this is destroyed. It will lose 1HD per month.
Gold amulet of the Frog.	Allows the mummy to use special class abilities it had in life.
Mestha (canopic jar with human head).	If this is destroyed, the mummy loses all bonuses to Dodge Defence and is continually flat-footed.
Hapi (dog headed jar).	Allows the mummy his slam attack.
Tuamautef (jackal headed jar).	This grants the power of its ability increases and bonus feats.
Qebsneuf (canopic jar, hawk headed).	This grants the mummy the ability to track its belongings.

his amulets of the tet and the pillow (see Funerary Trappings above).

*Cold Immunity (Ex):* A *Ka*-possessed mummy is completely immune to cold.

*Open the Invisible Door (Su):* The *Ka* can create an invisible passage through wooden, plaster, or stone walls, but not other materials. The *open door* is invisible and inaccessible to all creatures except the living *Ka*, and only the living *Ka* can use the passage. If it desires, the living *Ka* can take one other creature (Medium-sized or smaller) through the door. The door does not allow light, sound, or spell effects through it. Thus, the spell can provide an escape route, usually used to enter and leave tombs and sarcophagi. The living *Ka* can do this once per day per two Hit Dice. Taking someone through the *open door* counts as two uses of the power. The *open door* cannot be longer than 50 feet.

*Darkvision (Su):* A *Ka*-possessed mummy can see in the dark as well as it can see during the day. It does not use physical light to see.

*Resistant to Blows (Ex):* *Ka*-possessed mummies are incredibly resistant to physical attacks. Physical attacks only do half damage, applied before damage reduction.

*Qebsneuf's Sight (Su):* A *Ka*-possessed mummy always knows where its belongings are; they can track down tomb robbers with meticulous precision.

*Vulnerability to Fire (Ex):* *Ka*-possessed mummies are flammable and take double damage from fire.

*Funerary Trappings (Su):* The *Ka*-Mummy requires its funerary trappings to function. If these trappings are destroyed, the living *Ka* loses its powers. The amulets are usually concealed in its wrappings. Its powers are tied into the following:

**Abilities:** Increase from the base creature as follows for a *Ka*-possessed mummy: Str +6, Dex -2, Int +2, Wis +4, Cha +6. As an undead creature, a *Ka*-possessed mummy has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** A *Ka*-possessed mummy has a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search and Spot checks. Otherwise it has the same skills as the base creature.

**Feats:** A *Ka*-possessed mummy gains Alertness, Dodge, Toughness and Great Fortitude, assuming the base creature meets the prerequisites and does not already have these feats.

**Environment:** Any, usually the same as the base creature.

**Organisation:** Solitary, pair, gang (3-5) or tomb guardians (6-30)

**Advancement:** By character class

**Corruption:** As base creature +2

**Code of Honour:** A *Ka*-possessed mummy may never have codes of honour. A *Ka*-possessed mummy who had a code of honour in his previous life immediately loses it on becoming an undead creature.

## MANTICORE

**Large Magical Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 6d10+24 (57 hp)

**Initiative:** +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Ref)

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Dodge Defence:** 15 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 6 (tough hide)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+15

**Attack:** Claw +10 melee (2d6+5) or urticating hairs

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +10 melee (2d6+5) and bite +8 melee (1d8+2) and tail stinger +9 melee (1d6+2 plus poison); or urticating hairs

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Urticating hairs, pounce, improved grab, rake

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent

**Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9

**Skills:** Listen +5, Spot +9, Survival +1

**Feats:** Multiattack, Track, Weapon Focus (tail stinger)

**Environment:** Warm marshes

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or pride (3–6)

**Advancement:** 7–16 HD (Large); 17–18 HD (Huge)

\*Manticores have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

A manticore is a sphinx-like monster. It has the red-furred body of lion, the tail of a scorpion and the head of a horned man. The manticore has multiple rows of teeth, much like a shark, although its teeth are reputed to be iron. A typical manticore is about 10 feet long and weighs about 1,000 pounds. Manticores also have beautiful voices that sound harmonic, as if multiple people are speaking at once, saying the same words. Its scorpion tail has stiff urticating hairs on the bulbous end, just beneath the poison spike. These venomous, barbed hairs can be shaken out by vigorous action, much like the hairs on the abdomen of a tarantula, creating a cloud

of these small hairs that react with the mucous membranes of mammals, causing itching and open sores, incapacitating those caught in the cloud of spines. The manticore will eat its victim entirely, including the bones, weapons and clothing. If a manticore has cubs, it will sometimes drag its prey, alive and kicking, to its cubs so they can learn to kill; otherwise, they eat what they kill where it died.

## Combat

A manticore begins most attacks with a volley of hairs, then closes.

**Urticating Hairs (Ex):** With a snap of its tail, a manticore can loose a cloud of barbed urticating hairs as a standard action. Anyone caught in this cloud other than the manticore must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 19) or be paralysed for 1d6 x 10 minutes. He may still speak but he is helpless to move his arms, torso or legs. After the paralysis wears off, he is fatigued (–2 to Strength and Dexterity, cannot run) for 1d6 further hours. A successful saving throw means he is unaffected by the paralysis.

**Pounce (Ex):** If a manticore charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a manticore must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +10 melee, damage 2d8+2.

**Poison (Ex):** A manticore has a poisonous sting. The manticore's neurotoxin produces great pain and swelling in its victims. Numbness covers the body, followed by frothing at the mouth and difficulties in breathing. Eventually the victim's muscles start twitching and the victim starts convulsing. If the victim dies, it is from respiratory failure or heart failure some hours later. Those struck by the stinger must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or take 1d4 Constitution damage (initial and secondary). The save is Constitution-based.

## TA-NEHEH MUMMY

**Medium Undead**

**Hit Dice:** 8d12+8 (60 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (+2 Reflex)

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Dodge Defence:** 13 (+3 natural)

**Damage Reduction:** 5 (leathery, preserved skin and linen wrappings)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+16

**Attack:** Slam +16 melee (1d6+10)

**Full Attack:** Slam +16 melee (1d6+10)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Despair, improved grab, choke

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., resistant to blows, undead traits, vulnerability to fire

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 30, Dex 10, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15

**Skills:** Hide +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Spot +8

**Feats:** Alertness, Great Fortitude, Toughness

**Environment:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary, warden squad (2–4), or guardian detail (6–10)

**Advancement:** 9–18 HD (Medium); 19–24 HD (Large)

Mummies are preserved corpses animated through the auspices of dark desert gods best forgotten and the forbidden leaves of the ta-neheh plant. Most mummies are 5 to 6 feet tall and weigh about 120 pounds. Ta-neheh mummies are created by administering a certain number of boiled ta-neheh leaves each night of the full moon to a newly created mummy, usually by the mummy's cult. The mummy at this point can neither move nor speak. This elixir must be given to the mummy each night or it becomes just a regular, non-magical mummy and might lose the power to be resurrected with the leaves (30% the leaves will animate it), so it is important that cults keep up the ceremony, month after month, year after

year. If three times as many leaves are brewed each night of the full moon and given to the mummy with a certain dark ritual (Perform (ritual) check (DC 20)), it animates as a ta-neheh mummy, under the control of the one who gave the mummy the leaves with the ritual. If given that number of leaves without the ritual or with a failed ritual, it simply seeks more ta-neheh leaves and does not obey commands. It will kill anyone who has ta-neheh leaves if that person stands in the mummy's way. If more ta-neheh leaves are given to the mummy, then the mummy becomes violently uncontrollable and its Hit Dice doubles. If the ta-neheh mummy does not get his monthly supply he becomes inanimate.

### Combat

**Despair (Su):** At the mere sight of a ta-neheh mummy, the viewer must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same mummy's despair ability for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a ta-neheh mummy must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can choke.

**Resistant to Blows (Ex):** Ta-neheh mummies are incredibly resistant to physical attacks. Physical attacks only do half damage, applied before damage reduction.

**Choke (Ex):** During a grapple, the mummy may use the special choke action. It can choke its opponent for 1 round by winning an opposed grapple check (made in place of an attack). Normal suffocation rules apply with one exception: since this is a violent suffocation, the character can only hold his breath for 1 round per point of Constitution. If a character successfully breaks out of a choke, he is considered stunned for 1 additional round after.

**Vulnerability to Fire (Ex):** Ta-neheh mummies are flammable and take double damage from fire.



# Heretics & Priests

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS OF STYGIA

**WITH SO MANY** people living and working in Stygia, it is impossible to create every person in a city a Player Character may decide to interact with, so this section provides additional Non-Player Characters for the Games Master to use in his games, either directly or as inspiration. This section also provides statistics for such notables as Conan at the time of *Red Nails*, Akivasha the Vampire Princess and Thoth-Amon.

The Non-Player Characters used in this sourcebook are not given Fate Points or languages. There are several reasons for this omission. First, if Non-Player Characters use fate points as much as Player Characters, no one would ever get killed and the Player Characters' jobs would be that much harder. Fate Points exist primarily as an opportunity for players to influence the game in a favourable direction. Games Masters do not need that particular contrivance. Second, who knows what a Non-Player character has been through in his life? In both cases, the Games Master's discretion is required. If the Games Master wants to give the Non-Player Characters described throughout this book Fate Points, he is at leave to do so. Languages function in a similar manner. If the Games Master wants a character to speak a given language or not, then the character speaks or does not speak the given language. Thus, both Fate Points and Languages are left off the stat blocks of the characters throughout this text.

### CONAN, MERCENARY OF SUKHMET

**Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian barbarian 14/thief 1/soldier 1/pirate 2)**

**Hit Dice:** 8d10+2d8+50+21+2 (126 hit points)

**Initiative:** +20 (+6 Dex, +14 Ref)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 27 (+11 level, +6 Dex)

**Parry Defence:** 24 (+6 level, +8 Str)

**DR:** 2 (+2 natural)

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +16/+24

**Attack:** Broadsword +24 melee

**Full Attack:** Broadsword +24/+19/+14/+9  
melee

**Damage:** Broadsword 1d10+8

**Special Attacks:** Ferocious attack, versatility (no penalty, double threat range), crimson mist, sneak attack +1d6/+1d8, sneak attack style (broadsword), greater crimson mist, to sail a road of blood and slaughter

**Special Qualities:** Cimmerian traits, fearless, bite sword, trap sense +4, uncanny dodge, mobility, seamanship +1, trap disarming, improved uncanny dodge, improved mobility, damage reduction, pirate code (Barachan rockets and smoke)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +18, Ref +20, Will +11 (+14 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 26, Dex 22, Con 21, Int 20, Wis 19, Cha 20

**Skills:** Balance +12, Bluff +16, Climb +20, Craft (blacksmith) +7, Decipher Script +8, Gather Information +7, Hide +13, Intimidate +14, Jump +18, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (geography) +15, Listen +16, Move Silently +20, Perform (song) +7, Profession (sailor) +12, Ride +11, Search +8, Spot +18, Survival +14, Swim +13, Tumble +10

**Feats:** Brawl, Combat Expertise, Dabbler (counterspells), Diehard, Endurance, Fighting-Madness, Improved Sunder, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Navigation, Power Attack, Sleep Mastery, Striking Cobra, Track

**Reputation:** 24 (Brave)

**Leadership:** 23

**Code of Honour:** Barbaric

**Allegiances:** None

**Possessions:** Aquilonian broadsword, poniard, broad leather belt, short wide-legged silk breeches, flaring-topped boots, low-necked, wide-collared, wide-sleeved silk shirt.

*He was almost a giant in stature, muscles rippling smoothly under his skin which the sun had burned brown. His garb was similar to hers, except that he wore a broad leather belt instead of a girdle. Broadsword and poniard hung from this belt.*

Conan the Cimmerian, in his late thirties, a member of Zarallo's Free Companions and is stationed in the Stygian city of Sukhmet. He is described by Howard as a tall man with mighty shoulders and a deep chest, with a massive corded neck and heavily muscled limbs. His brow is low and broad, his eyes a volcanic blue that smoulders as if with some inner fire.

Conan is loud and vibrant, despising the ordinary and the dull. The key to his personality is *intensity*. Even when he appears impassive, turbulent passions are roiling invisibly



behind the scenes. He never forgets a kindness and repays it handsomely. He never forgives injuries, either, and can wait years for vengeance. Conan of Cimmeria does not try to get 'even' – he conquers and destroys utterly those who betray or hurt him – he gets cold revenge. When he sees a weakness in an opponent he moves in quickly for the kill. Even in his most mirthful moods there is always a hint of an imminent change of heart, a sense that there is, beneath the surface, a lurking and unpredictable violence that can erupt at any time. However, this intense and explosive nature serves Conan well. He is incredibly adaptable, able to channel his unconquerable, intense energies into new paths as needed, without looking back. He embarks regularly on entirely different roads in life almost instantly, thus is explained his wide range of character classes, moving from barbarian to thief to pirate to soldier and, ultimately, to noble. As Conan himself once said, in Robert Howard's *The People of the Black Circle*, 'I was born in the Cimmerian hills where the people are all barbarians. I have been a mercenary soldier, a corsair, a *kozak*, and a hundred other things. What king has roamed the countries, fought the battles, loved the women, and won the plunder that I have?'

Conan is very different from most Cimmerians, despite his doomed moodiness. Most Cimmerians are depressive and

dismal all the time and not usually given to wanderlust. Conan's mirth is as gigantic as his depressions are deep and, as stated earlier, Conan is a wanderer. As one of Conan's councillors says in *The Phoenix on the Sword*, 'I never saw another Cimmerian who drank aught but water, or who ever laughed, or ever sang save to chant dismal dirges.' Conan, in many ways, is more like the Æsir than he is like the typical Cimmerian.

**Conan's History to This Point:** Conan was born on a battlefield, according to Robert E. Howard in a letter to P.S. Miller, during a fight between his Cimmerian tribe and a horde of raiding Vanir. The country claimed by and roved over by his clan lay in the northwest of Cimmeria, but Conan was of mixed blood, although a pure-bred Cimmerian. His grandfather was of a southern tribe who had fled from his own people due to a blood feud. The tales of his grandfather, who had taken part in many raids of the southern Hyborian kingdoms, roused Conan's interest in travelling. His father was a blacksmith (hence Conan's ranks in Craft (blacksmith)). Presumably he learned some of the craft from his father. At Venarium, Conan was about 15 years old and was already a formidable barbarian warrior, growing in Reputation. He soon encountered *The Frost Giant's Daughter* when he fought with the Æsir against the Vanir. Captured by Hyperboreans, he escaped and made his way into Zamora.

In Arenjun, a 2<sup>nd</sup> level barbarian/1<sup>st</sup> level thief, he learned something of thievery and encountered *The Tower of the Elephant*. Still in Zamora, he investigated *The Hall of the Dead* and then travelled to the west of Zamora where he had the adventure related by Howard as *Rogues in the House*. Later still, he tried thievery again in Nemedia and encountered *The God in the Bowl*.

As a 5<sup>th</sup> level barbarian/1<sup>st</sup> level thief, Conan travelled to Argos and joined with Bêlit, *The Queen of the Black Coast*. He sailed with her for nearly three years and ended up on foot in the Black Kingdoms. He raised a small kingdom of black tribesmen just before *The Vale of Lost Women*, lost his kingdom and made his way to Kush in *The Snout in the Dark*. He becomes a mercenary, earning the name Conan the Throat-Slitter, and ends up in Khoraja in time to battle Nattohk's horde in *Black Colossus*. His stint as a mercenary adds soldier levels to his total. He is now a barbarian 9/thief 1/soldier 1/pirate 1. He continues as mercenary, making his way to Khauran for the events told in *A Witch Shall Be Born*. Conan then becomes a Zuagir chieftain, then a *kozak*. His horde is slaughtered at the Ilbars River. After *Shadows in the Moonlight*, Conan joins the Red Brotherhood of the Vilayet. He is now a barbarian 10/thief 1/soldier 1/pirate 1.

After Yezdigerd is crowned king of Turan, replacing his father Yildiz,

Conan finds himself in Zamboula. After *Shadows in Zamboula*, Conan heads toward Ophir. He is next seen as part of a rebel uprising in Koth, travelling through Shem and Stygia to Kush and beyond. After he encounters *Xuthal of the Dusk*, Conan returns as a *kozak* for *The Devil in Iron*. He is next seen as a *hetman* among the Himelian tribesmen in *The People of the Black Circle*. He rescues the Devi of Vendhya from the Black Circle. Later, Argos and Koth attacked Stygia, then Koth switched sides. He became a barbarian 11/thief 1/soldier 1/pirate 1. Conan fought in a mercenary army for Argos and ended up, again, in the Black Kingdoms for *Drums of Tombalku*. In the Black Kingdoms he learned to dabble in the occult and learned the sign of Jhebbal Sag.

After King Numedides replaced King Vilerus as King of Aquilonia, Conan was in Pictland for the events of *Beyond the Black River* and *The Black Stranger*. Conan then embarked on a career as a Barachan Pirate, taking a second level in the pirate class. He became a Cimmerian barbarian 12/thief 1/soldier 1/pirate 2. In *The Pool of the Black One*, Conan is forced to leave Tortage on a sinking boat. Conan continued his pirate activities. When his ships were sunk by the Zingarans, he became a mercenary. He travelled to Sukhmet on the Darfar border, where raids came up like a red wave, as a Free Companion, leaving them for the adventure narrated in *Red Nails*, wherein Conan travels from Stygia back into the Black Kingdoms.

## PRINCESS AKIVASHA - THE QUEEN OF ETERNAL LIFE

**Medium Undead (Augmented Humanoid) (Stygian (noble caste) Noble 8 / Scholar 12)**

**Hit Dice:** 10d12+10 (75 hp)

**Initiative:** +16 (+4 Dex, +6 Reflex save, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 22 (+7 level, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)

**Parry Defence:** 21 (+8 level, +3 Str)

**DR:** 6 (+6 vampire)

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +15/+18

**Attack:** Slam +18 melee or Stygian bow +22 ranged

**Full Attack:** Slam +18/+13/+8 melee or Stygian bow +22/+17/+12 ranged

**Damage:** Slam 1d8+3 or Stygian bow 1d12+3/19-20 x2/ AP 5

**Special Attacks:** Blood drain, children of the night, dominate, +2 regional bonus to all attacks with Stygian longbow, +1 racial bonus to all attacks with Stygian longbow



**Special Qualities:** Stygian qualities, title, rank hath its privileges, wealth, special regional feature +2, social ability (*family ties*), lead by example +2, enhanced leadership, sorcery style x5, advanced spells x10, bonus spells x3 (used for +6 skill points instead), increased maximum Power Points (triple), +3 Power Points, fast healing, immunities

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

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +12, Will +21 (+7 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 17, Dex 19, Con -, Int 19, Wis 21, Cha 29

**Skills:** Appraise +15, Bluff +23, Craft (alchemy) +21, Craft (herbalism) +19, Decipher Script +15, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +18, Handle Animal +13, Hide +12, Intimidate +32, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Knowledge (Mystery: Set) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Listen +26, Move Silently +12, Perform (ritual) +34, Profession (scribe) +16, Search +23, Sense Motive +18, Spot +26

**Feats:** Alertness, Bleed Dry, Carouser, Combat Reflexes, Debauched, Dodge, Iron Will, Improved Initiative, Knowledgeable, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Menacing Aura, Permanent Sorcery, Priest, Ritual Sacrifice, Steely Gaze, Tortured Sacrifice

**Reputation:** 105 (Villain) (She may add a +10 bonus to her Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information checks)

**Leadership:** 27 (13<sup>th</sup> level cohort; 600 1<sup>st</sup>, 24 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3 4<sup>th</sup>, 1 5<sup>th</sup>)

**Code of Honour:** None

**Allegiances:** 'Darkness'

**Power Points:** 12 (+4 base, +5 Wis, +3 bonus; 36 maximum)

**Magic Attack:** +19 (+8 level, +9 Cha, +2 regional bonus)

**Sorcery Styles Known:** Curses, Divination, Immortality, Necromancy, Summonings

**Spells Known:** *Astrological prediction, demonic pact, dream of wisdom, eternal youth, greater demonic-pact, greater ill-fortune, ill-fortune, lesser ill-fortune, mind-reading, raise corpse, sorcerous news, summon demon, vampire transformation, visions, witches vigour*

**Corruption:** 18

**Possessions:** Velvet sandals, broad jewel-encrusted girdle.

The name of this ancient, beautiful princess, the daughter of Tuthamon who revelled in purple feasts amid the black halls of ancient Luxur, is still heard throughout the Hyborean lands in song and legend as a symbol of eternal life. Ten thousand years ago, she loved life and all the meanings of life, and to win life she courted death. She could not bear to think of growing old and shrivelled and worn, and dying at last as hags die. Using dark rites, she 'wooed Darkness like a lover' and his gift was eternal life. Although the world believes she ascended into the heavens to live as a goddess of youth, in truth she descended into the tombs of her ancient land as a vampire. She is not truly Stygian, as she lived before the founding of Stygia. She is of the ancient race of Giant-Kings that founded Stygia, the remnants of whom still live as the nobility of Stygia.

She has ivory skin, and is tall, lithe, voluptuously figured, with thick tresses of black hair. She wears nothing but velvet sandals and a broad jewel-crusted girdle about her waist. Her flesh is cold, and her eyes glow in the darkness like golden fire. She survived her encounter with Conan, so she still makes for a formidable foe in a Hyborean campaign, or she could serve as a teacher of the black arts. She is a keeper of Set's Third Mystery and an ordained priestess of Set. If someone recognises her name, her ability to use Menacing Aura or Steely Gaze is almost unmatched because of her Reputation bonus.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** Akevasha can suck blood from a living victim with her fangs by making a successful grapple check. If she pins the foe and drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points.

**Children of the Night (Su):** Akevasha can command the lesser creatures of the world and once per day can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms or a pack of 3d6 wolves

*'I am Akevasha! I am the woman who never died. who never grew old! Who fools say was lifted from the earth by the gods. in the full bloom of her youth and beauty. to queen it forever in some celestial clime! Nay. it is in the shadows that mortals find immortality! Ten thousand years ago I died to live for ever! Give me your lips. strong man!'*

Robert E. Howard, *The Hour of the Dragon*

as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve her for up to 1 hour.

**Dominare (Su):** Akevasha can crush an opponent's will just by looking onto his eyes. This is similar to an evil eye spell, except that she must use a standard action, and those merely looking at her are not affected. Anyone Akevasha targets must succeed on a Will save or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a *domination* spell. The ability has a range of 30 feet.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** Akevasha heals 5 points of damage each round so long as she has at least 1 hit point.

**Immunities (Ex):** Akevasha is completely immune to cold.

**Note:** Akevasha was first presented in *Conan: The Road of Kings* and in *Khemi: Ancient Spiritual Home to the Priesthood of Set* (Signs and Portents #21). She is presented here as an alternate version, making use of spells from *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*, which were not available when her statistics were first created. This one does not necessarily supersede the previous version; Games Masters should feel free to use whichever version is preferred.

## THOTH-AMON, LORD OF THE BLACK RING

High Priest of Set, Speaker of Set, Keeper of All Set's Mysteries, Keeper of All Djehuty's Mysteries, First Prophet

Medium Humanoid (Stygian Scholar 20)

**Hit Dice:** 10d6+20+10 (65 hp)

**Initiative:** +9 (+3 Dex, +6 Reflex save)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Dodge Defence:** 20 (+7 level, +3 Dex)

**Parry Defence:** 19 (+7 level, +2 Str)

**DR:** –

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +15/+17

**Attack:** +19 Akbitanan dagger finesse; or +18 thrown alchemical weapon

*'Listen, my lord. I was a great sorcerer in the south. Men spoke of Thoth-Amon as they spoke of Rammon. King Ctesphion of Stygia gave me great honor, casting down the magicians from the high places to exalt me above them. They hated me, but they feared me, for I controlled beings from outside which came at my call and did my bidding. 'By Set, mine enemy knew not the hour when he might awake at midnight to feel the taloned fingers of a nameless horror at his throat! I did dark and terrible magic with the Serpent Ring of Set, which I found in a nighted tomb a league beneath the earth, forgotten before the first man crawled out of the slimy sea.'*

Robert E. Howard, *The Phoenix on the Sword*

**Full Attack:** +19/+14/+9 Akbitanan dagger finesse; or +18 thrown alchemical weapon

**Damage:** Akbitanan dagger 1d4+2/ 19-20 x2/ AP 5; or Acheronian demon fire 1d6 fire plus incapacitation; or Kothic demon-fire 5d6 plus stun; or Stygian tomb-dust (blind); or black lotus smoke (sleep); or grey lotus smoke (madness); or green lotus smoke (poison)

**Special Attacks:** Sorcery

**Special Qualities:** Stygian qualities, scholar, lay priest background, base Power Points, knowledge is power, sorcery style x7, advanced spells x18, bonus spells x4, +5 Power Points, increased maximum Power Points (quintuple)

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

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +17 (+3 vs. Corruption)

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 19, Wis 17, Cha 21

**Skills:** Bluff +20, Concentration +19, Craft (alchemy) +29, Craft (herbalism) +27, Decipher Script +25, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (Mystery: Set) +27, Knowledge (Mystery: Djehuty) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +17, Perform (ritual) +30, Perform (drums) +18, Sense Motive +18 (+20 to see if someone is lying), Sleight-of-Hand +9

**Feats:** Adept (necromancy), Adept (curses), Adept (summoning), Augment Summoning, Hexer, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Priest, Ritual Sacrifice, Summoner, Tortured Sacrifice

**Reputation:** 125 (Villain) (He may add a +10 bonus to his Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information checks)

**Leadership:** –

**Code of Honour:** None

**Allegiances:** Set, Serpent Ring of Set

**Magic Attack:** +15 (+10 level, +5 Cha); +17 with curses (+2 Hexer)

**Power Points:** 25 (4 base, +3 Wis, +5 bonus, +3 obsession bonus for regaining Serpent Ring of Set, +10 enhancement; 125 maximum)

**Sorcery Styles Known:** Counterspells, Curses, Divinations, Hypnotism, Necromancy, Prestidigitation, Summonings

**Spells Known:** *Astrological prediction, agonising doom, awful rite of the were-beast, black plague, burst barrier, conjuring, curse of Yizil, death touch, demonic pact, draw forth the heart, draw forth the soul, dread serpent, domination, entrance, greater black plague, greater demonic pact, greater ill-fortune, greater telekinesis, greater warding, hypnotic suggestion, lesser ill-fortune, mind-reading, raise corpse, ranged hypnotism, sorcerous news, summon demon, summon elemental, telekinesis, visions, warding*

**Corruption:** 12

**Obsession:** The Ring of Set (currently possessed, so no negative effects)

**Possessions:** Silk robes, Akbitanan dagger, serpent ring of Set, 1 dose of Acheronian demon fire, 1 dose of Kothic demon-fire, 2 doses of Stygian tomb-dust, 1 dose of black lotus smoke, 1 dose of grey lotus smoke, 2 doses of green lotus smoke.

Thoth-Amon is widely regarded as the greatest living sorcerer in Stygia, if not the world. For this reason, he is alternately revered and hated in Stygia. One mistake, one revealed weakness, and his rivals among the sorcerous society of the Black Ring and the priesthood of Set will be quick to pounce.

He is a sombre giant with dusky skin and malevolent eyes that burn red as a vampire's in the gloom. Bigger than most men, he is a character of iron-will, who keeps his emotions under lock and key. In all ways and at all times, Thoth-Amon *knows* he is the superior person.

Thoth-Amon does not care about the consequences of his words or actions. He is, at best, a heartless observer of the human condition, a condition he wants no part of but constantly catalogues and notates. His journals are filled with such observations and he finds his own reactions to stimuli coldly fascinating. It is not that Thoth-Amon finds humanity dull; far from it. He is endlessly fascinated by humanity and is always watching from afar, aloof and observant.

At various times in his life, Thoth-Amon has had access to an artefact known as the Serpent Ring of Set in addition to the equipment listed here. Full statistics for the *serpent ring of Set* can be found on page 79. While he possesses this ring, his power is nearly omnipotent. He commands a large portion of the magical power in Stygia from his home in Kheshatta, the city of magicians. When he does not have this ring, his obsession for it is so great that he suffers a –3 penalty to his base Power Point total. The ring also increases his Power Points by +10 while wearing it and allows him to re-roll one die roll per day. He can also rub the blood of victims on



the serpent's eyes to increase his magical attack bonus (+5 enhancement for 10 minutes for every 1 hit point's worth of blood used).

Thoth-Amon acquired the ring when he was 10<sup>th</sup> level, so if the ring is lost or not worn, he drops down to 10<sup>th</sup> level, losing 2 of his bonus Power Points and the sorcery styles of Divinations, Hypnotism and Necromancy, along with any related advanced spells. He will also lose several of his ability increases and feats. He will actually forget most of the Mysteries of Set and Djehuty. Listed below is Thoth-Amon without his Serpent Ring of Set:

**Thoth-Amon (without the Serpent Ring of Set): Medium Humanoid (Stygian Scholar 10); Hit Dice:** 10d6 (35 hp); **Initiative:** +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex save); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 15 (+3 level, +2 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 14 (+3 level, +1 Str); **DR:** –; **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +7/+8; **Attack:** +9 dagger finesse; or +9 thrown alchemical weapon; **Full Attack:** +9/+4 dagger finesse; or +9 thrown alchemical weapon; **Damage:** Dagger 1d4+1/19-20 x2/AP 2; or Acheronian demon fire 1d6 fire plus incapacitation; or Kothic demon-fire 5d6 plus stun; or Stygian tomb-dust (blind); or black lotus smoke (sleep); or grey lotus smoke

(madness); or green lotus smoke (poison); **Special Attacks:** Sorcery; **Special Qualities:** Stygian qualities, scholar, lay priest background, base Power Points, knowledge is power, sorcery style x4, advanced spells x8, bonus spells x2, +3 Power Points, increased maximum Power Points (triple); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +9 (-5 vs. Corruption); **Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 18; **Skills:** Bluff +9, Concentration +7, Craft (alchemy) +18, Craft (herbalism) +16, Decipher Script +14, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (Mystery: Set) +16, Knowledge (Mystery: Djehuty) +6, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Perform (ritual) +19, Perform (drums) +17, Sense Motive +7, Sleight-of-Hand +8; **Feats:** Augment Summoning, Hexer, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Priest, Ritual Sacrifice, Summoner, Tortured Sacrifice; **Reputation:** 114 (Villain) (He may add a +10 bonus to his Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information checks); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** Set, Serpent Ring of Set; **Magic Attack:** +9 (+5 level, +4 Cha); +11 with curses (+2 Hexer); **Power Points:** 6 (4 base, +2 Wis, +3 bonus, -3 obsession; 18 maximum); **Sorcery Styles Known:** Counterspells, Curses, Prestidigitation, Summonings; **Spells Known:** *Burst barrier, conjuring, curse of Yizil, demonic pact, dread serpent, greater ill-fortune, greater telekinesis, greater warding, lesser ill-fortune, mind-reading, sorcerous news, summon demon, telekinesis, visions, warding*; **Corruption:** 12; **Obsession:** The Ring of Set; **Possessions:** Silk robes, dagger, 1d4-1 doses of an alchemical weapon (0 minimum).

**Note:** Thoth-Amon was first presented in *Conan: The Scrolls of Skelos*. He is presented here as an alternate version, making use of new rules which were not available when his statistics were first created. This one does not necessarily supersede the previous version; Games Masters should feel free to use whichever version is preferred.

## ACOLYTES OF THE BLACK RING

The Black Ring is the main sorcerous coven in Stygia. It is made up of former or current priests of Set, formerly independent sorcerers whose infamy and power draws the attention of the senior wizards of the Black Ring, and acolytes of the Black Ring. Sorcerers join the Black Ring because they seek raw magical power. An excellent way to customise these acolytes is to take their Knowledge (any other) skill and give it the Mysteries of various cults and gods.

**Medium Humanoid Stygian Scholar 6<sup>th</sup> level; Acolyte Adept; Hit Dice:** 6d6–6 (15 hit points); **Initiative:** +7 (+1 Dex, +2 Ref, +4 imp. initiative); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 13 (+2 level, +1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 12 (+2 level, +0 Str); **BAB/Grapple:**

+4/+4; **Attack:** Dagger +5 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +6 ranged ; **Full Attack:** Dagger +5 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +6 ranged; **Damage:** Dagger 1d4/ 19-20 x2 / AP 1 or Stygian Bow 1d12 / 19-20 x2/ AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Special Attacks:** Spells; **Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, base Power Points, sorcery styles x3, advanced spells x4, bonus spells x1, scholar, background (*acolyte*), knowledge is power, +2 Power Point, increased maximum Power Points (triple); **Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +9 (+5 vs. corruption); **Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 13, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 17; **Skills:** Bluff +9, Concentration +3, Craft (alchemy) +12, Craft (herbalism) +5, Decipher Script +11, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (any other) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perform (ritual) +14, Profession (scribe) +4, Sleight-of-Hand +7; **Feats:** Hexer, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Persuasive, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice; **Code of Honour:** None; **Reputation:** 9 (Villain); **Leadership:** –; **Allegiances:** Lords of the Black Ring, Father Set, Master; **Base Power Points:** 8 (4 base, +2 Wisdom, +2 bonus) (24 maximum); **Magical Attack:** +6 (+3 level, +3 Cha) or +8 (+3 level, +3 Cha, +2 hexer) with curses; **Sorcery Styles:** Counterspells, Curses, Prestidigitation; **Spells Known:** *Animate swords, conjuring, greater ill-fortune, greater telekinesis, ill-fortune, lesser ill-fortune, telekinesis, warding*; **Corruption:** 2; **Insanity:** –



## LORDS OF THE BLACK RING

Lords of the Black Ring are among the highest ranking sorcerers of their cult, capable of commanding the loyalty of both their lower grade acolytes and great numbers of Stygian warriors and nobles. Most also have an official position within the cult of Set, though almost as many pay no more than lip service to the Old Serpent. There is a certain rivalry between those who are priests of Set and those who are not. This rivalry often degenerates into power struggles and even open magical warfare. There is no honour among lords of the Black Ring, just a naked desire for control over others and sorcerous knowledge.

Sorcerers join the Black Ring because they seek raw magical power, and indeed lords of the Black Ring tend to have more base Power Points and more advanced spells than independent sorcerers or those who belong to other magical societies. Lords of the Black Ring are feared wherever they go, even in Stygia itself. Even the threat of their wrath is generally enough to bring their cowering inferiors back into line.

**Medium Humanoid Stygian Scholar 10/Lord of the Black Ring 5; Hit Dice:** 10d6+5 (40 hit points); **Initiative:** +10 (+2 Dex, +4 Ref, +4 imp. initiative); **Speed:** 30

ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 16 (+4 level, +2 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 15 (+4 level, +1 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +9/+10; **Attack:** Dagger +11 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +12 ranged ; **Full Attack:** Dagger +11/+6 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +12/+7 ranged; **Damage:** Dagger 1d4+1/19-20 x2/ AP 2 or Stygian Bow (+1) 1d12+1/ 19-20 x2/ AP 3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Special Attacks:** Spells; **Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, base Power Points, sorcery styles x4, advanced spells x12, bonus spells x3, scholar, background (*acolyte*), knowledge is power, +5 Power Point, increased maximum Power Points (triple), scholar levels, demonologist; **Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +17 (+10 vs. corruption); **Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 20; **Skills:** Bluff +14, Concentration +4, Craft (alchemy) +21, Craft (herbalism) +16, Decipher Script +16, Gather Information +12, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (any other) +18, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perform (ritual) +24, Perform (musical instrument) +20, Profession (scribe) +6, Sleight-of-Hand +12; **Feats:** Adept (curses), Adept (necromancy), Bleed Dry, Hexer, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Persuasive, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice; **Code of Honour:** None; **Reputation:** 27 (Villain); **Leadership:** –; **Allegiances:** Father Set, Lords of the Black Ring, Demonic Patron; **Base Power Points:** 13 (4 base, +4 Wisdom, +5 bonus) (39 maximum); **Magical Attack:** +13 (+8 level, +5 Cha) or +15 (+8 level, +5 Cha, +2 hexer) with curses; **Sorcery Styles:** Counterspells, Curses,

Necromancy, Prestidigitation, Summonings; **Spells Known:** *Agonising doom, animate statue, animate words, burst barrier, conjuring, curse of Yizil, death touch, demonic pact, draw forth the heart, greater demonic pact, greater ill-fortune, greater telekinesis, greater warding, ill-fortune, incantation of Amalric's witchman, lesser ill-fortune, raise dead, summon demon, summon elemental, telekinesis, warding*; **Corruption:** 5; **Insanity:** One minor insanity (*delusion, phobia or sleeplessness*), one or two major insanities (*paranoia, voices or hallucinations*)

## SCRIBES & PRIESTS

### PHYLE PRIESTS

**Medium Humanoid (Stygian (Hybrid) Commoner 3/ Scholar 1); Hit Dice:** 3d4+1d6+4 (16 hp); **Initiative:** +1 (+0 Dex, +1 Reflex save); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 11 (+1 level, +0 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 12 (+1 level, +1 Str); **DR:** –; **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +1/+2; **Attack:** Primitive flint dagger +2 melee; **Damage:** Primitive flint dagger 1d4+1/20 x2/AP 0; **Special Qualities:** Stygian (hybrid) qualities, farmer background skills, illiteracy, scholar, background (lay priest), base Power Points, knowledge is power; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; **Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8; **Skills:** Bluff +0, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +0, Knowledge (arcane) +1, Knowledge (Mystery: Set) +1, Knowledge (any other) +1, Listen +4, Perform (ritual) +0, Profession (farmer) +11, Profession (priest) +1, Spot +3, Survival +2, Swim +2, Use Rope +6; **Feats:** Alertness, Endurance, Priest, Skill Focus (profession (farmer)); **Reputation:** 5 (Talented); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Allegiances:** Family, Temple, Stygia; **Power Points:** 4 (+4 base, +0 Wis); 8 maximum; **Possessions:** Priest's mantle, loincloth (or nude), wig, alchemical weapon (Games Master's choice).

Phyle priests are part-time priests drawn from the local people. They serve one month out of every three in a rotating fashion. This particular sample phyle priest has been culled from a list of farmers and does not yet have any real rank or standing in the temple and has only received minimal training in the care of the statues of the gods. He will move up in Commoner levels if he earns experience during the two months he is at home working his craft or land or he will move up in Scholar levels if he earns experience during the month he is at the temple. This particular phyle may be put in a position of overseeing labour on temple farms or he may be required to tend to the statues. The priests of Set will put him in whatever temple and whatever position they need filled. It is unlikely this farmer will ever be taught sorcery; he will take the priest feat in lieu of a new sorcery style at 1<sup>st</sup> level of scholar if he otherwise qualifies. He will take ranks in Profession (priest) to show his new level of income. Later, if

he performs well, he might be permitted training as a scribe. He is even given rudimentary instructions in Bluff to help him pull off the deceit.

## SCRIBES

**Medium Humanoid Stygian Scholar 1<sup>st</sup> level; Hit Dice:** 1d6–1 (2 hit points); **Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex, +0 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 11 (+0 level, +1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 10 (+0 level, +0 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +0/+0; **Attack:** Dagger +1 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +2 ranged; **Full Attack:** Dagger +1 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +2 ranged; **Damage:** Dagger 1d4/ 19–20 x2/AP 1 or Stygian Bow 1d12/19–20 x2/AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, sorcery style, base Power Points, scholar, background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power; **Saves:** Fort –1, Ref +1, Will +5 (+2 vs. corruption); **Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13; **Skills:** Appraise +4, Concentration +3, Craft (alchemy) +8, Decipher Script +8, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (engineering and architecture) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perform (ritual) +7, Profession (scribe) +9, Sleight-of-Hand +7; **Feats:** Diligent, Knowledgeable, Skill Focus (profession (scribe)); **Code of Honour:** None; **Reputation:** 7 (Talented); **Leadership:** –; **Allegiances:** Father Set, High Priest; **Base Power Points:** 6 (4 base, +2 Wisdom) (12 maximum); **Magical Attack:** +2 (+0 level, +2 Cha); **Possessions:** Kilt, stylus, quill, wig.

Scribes are an ever-present force in the lives of Stygians, collecting their taxes, recording their deeds and running much of the government. They are the labouring arm of the priesthood. Many become ordained priests and may even go on to join the House of the Black Ring, becoming sorcerers. However, they are not sorcerous to begin with, so they take a bonus feat in lieu of a new sorcery style.

## NON-SORCEROUS PRIESTS OF SET

**Medium Humanoid Stygian Scholar 1<sup>st</sup> level Acolyte; Hit Dice:** 1d6–1 (2 hit points); **Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex, +0 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 11 (+0 level, +1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 10 (+0 level, +0 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +0/+0; **Attack:** Alchemical weapon +1 ranged; **Full Attack:** Alchemical weapon +1 ranged; **Damage:** Alchemical weapon (varies); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, sorcery style, base Power Points, scholar, background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power; **Saves:** Fort –1, Ref +1, Will +4 (+2 vs. corruption); **Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13; **Skills:** Appraise +4, Bluff +3, Concentration +3, Craft (alchemy) +8, Craft (herbalism) +4, Decipher Script +6, Handle

NPCs

Animal +3, Heal +4, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (Mystery: Set) +8, Knowledge (any) +8, Perform (ritual) +7, Profession (priest) +4, Profession (scribe) +4, Sense Motive +4, Sleight-of-Hand +7; **Feats:** Diligent, Knowledgeable, Skill Focus (craft (alchemy)); **Code of Honour:** None; **Reputation:** 7 (Talented); **Leadership:** —; **Allegiances:** Father Set, High Priest; **Base Power Points:** 6 (4 base, +2 Wisdom) (12 maximum); **Magical Attack:** +1 (+0 level, +1 Cha); **Possessions:** Kilt, priest's mantle, alchemical weapon (Games Master's choice).

Most of the priests of Stygia are non-sorcerous, just using alchemy, Bluff and Sleight-of-Hand to appear sorcerous. Since Thoth-Amon's ascension to power, King Ctesphon has thrown down the magicians from their places of power and many of the actual sorcerers have gone into hiding. Any new acolytes into the House of the Black Ring require Thoth-Amon's personal approval. Those who do not earn that approval must remain non-sorcerous or find a way to learn sorcery on their own – and hope Thoth-Amon is impressed enough to seek them out.

## PHYSICIAN/SURGEON, KEEPER OF DJEHUTY'S FIRST MYSTERY

**Medium Humanoid Stygian Scholar 3<sup>rd</sup> level; Hit Dice:** 3d6–3 (6 hit points); **Initiative:** +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 12 (+1 level, +1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 11 (+1 level, +0 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +2/+2; **Attack:** Alchemical weapon +3 ranged; **Full Attack:** Alchemical weapon +3 ranged; **Damage:** Alchemical weapon (varies); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1); **Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, sorcery style, base Power Points, scholar, background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power, 2 bonus feats (instead of sorcery styles), +4 skill points (instead of advanced spells and bonus spells); **Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +4 (+2 vs. corruption); **Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13; **Skills:** Bluff +6, Craft (alchemy) +15, Craft (herbalism) +13, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +3, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (Mystery: Djehuty) +7, Knowledge (Mystery: Set) +4, Heal +15, Perform (ritual) +9, Profession (physician/surgeon) +6, Profession (priest) +4, Profession (scribe) +4, Sense Motive +7, Sleight-of-Hand +5; **Feats:** Stygian Physician, Surgery, Skill Focus (Heal), Skill Focus (craft (alchemy)), Skill Focus (craft (herbalism)); **Code of Honour:** None; **Reputation:** 8 (Talented); **Leadership:** —; **Allegiances:** Father Set, High Priest; **Base Power Points:** 7 (4 base, +2 Wisdom, +1 bonus) (14 maximum); **Magical Attack:** +1 (+0 level, +1 Cha); **Possessions:** Kilt, priest's mantle, surgeon's kit, alchemical weapon (Games Master's choice).

The physicians of Stygia are typically scholarly priests without sorcerous training. They take bonus feats in lieu of new sorcery styles and extra skill points instead of advanced spells. They can perform rituals and most learn the mysteries of Djehuty (or at least the first mystery) in order to gain the insight to healing and alchemy. Those dealing with childbirth or funerary duties may then enter those temples to learn the mysteries of the gods most related to their field, possibly including the mysteries of Set. After reaching 4<sup>th</sup> level, many opt to become ordained but non-sorcerous priests. Some of the best are invited to join the House of the Black Ring for sorcerous training.

## SORCEROUS PRIESTS OF SET

Priests of Set terrify their subjects almost as much as they do their enemies. Many are corrupt, mad, or both – and even the relatively sane ones are usually quite willing to sacrifice their own followers. The priests of Set form the entire government of Stygia. An excellent way to customise these acolytes is to take their Knowledge (any other) skill and give it the Mysteries of various cults and gods. Technically speaking, these priests are part of the Black Ring, although they have more to do with temple affairs than the recluses discussed elsewhere in this chapter. These are priests whose family and background warrant almost immediate entry into the House of the Black Ring.

**Medium Humanoid Stygian Scholar 1<sup>st</sup> level; Acolyte; Hit Dice:** 1d6–1 (2 hit points); **Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex, +0 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 11 (+0 level, +1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 10 (+0 level, +0 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +0/+0; **Attack:** Dagger +1 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +2 ranged; **Full Attack:** Dagger +1 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +2 ranged; **Damage:** Dagger 1d4/ 19–20 x2/AP 1 or Stygian Bow 1d12/19–20 x2/AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Special Attacks:** Spells; **Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, sorcery style, base Power Points, scholar, background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power; **Saves:** Fort –1, Ref +1, Will +4 (+2 vs. corruption); **Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 15; **Skills:** Bluff +6, Concentration +3, Craft (alchemy) +5, Decipher Script +5, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (any) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Perform (ritual) +8, Profession (scribe) +4, Sleight-of-Hand +5; **Feats:** Persuasive, Ritual Sacrifice; **Code of Honour:** None; **Reputation:** 5 (Villain); **Leadership:** —; **Allegiances:** Father Set, High Priest; **Base Power Points:** 6 (4 base, +2 Wisdom) (12 maximum); **Magical Attack:** +2 (+0 level, +2 Cha); **Sorcery Styles:** Prestidigitation; **Spells Known:** *Conjuring*; **Corruption:** 0; **Insanity:** —

**Medium Humanoid Stygian Scholar 6<sup>th</sup> level; Priest;** **Hit Dice:** 6d6–6 (15 hit points); **Initiative:** +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 13 (+2 level, +1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 12 (+2 level, +0 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +4/+4; **Attack:** Dagger +5 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +6 ranged; **Full Attack:** Dagger +5 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +6 ranged; **Damage:** Dagger 1d4/19–20 x2/AP 1 or Stygian Bow 1d12/19–20 x2/AP 2; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Special Attacks:** Spells; **Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, base Power Points, sorcery styles x3, advanced spells x4, bonus spells x1, scholar, background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power, +2 Power Point, increased maximum Power Points (triple); **Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +9 (+5 vs. corruption); **Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 13, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 17; **Skills:** Bluff +9, Concentration +5, Craft (alchemy) +12, Decipher Script +11, Gather Information +7, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (any) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perform (ritual) +14, Profession (scribe) +5, Sleight-of-Hand +7; **Feats:** Iron Will, Leadership, Persuasive, Priest, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice; **Code of Honour:** None; **Reputation:** 9 (Villain); **Leadership:** 9/13 (4<sup>th</sup> cohort; 40 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 2<sup>nd</sup> level); **Allegiances:** Father Set, High Priest or Lords of the Black Ring; **Base Power Points:** 8 (4 base, +2 Wisdom, +2 bonus) (24 maximum); **Magical Attack:** +6 (+3 level, +3 Cha); **Sorcery Styles:** Counterspells, Curses, Prestidigitation; **Spells Known:** *Animate swords, conjuring, greater ill-fortune, greater telekinesis, ill-fortune, lesser ill-fortune, telekinesis, warding*; **Corruption:** 2; **Insanity:** One minor insanity (*delusion, phobia or sleeplessness*)

**Medium Humanoid Stygian Scholar 10<sup>th</sup> level; High Priest;** **Hit Dice:** 10d6 (35 hit points); **Initiative:** +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge defence:** 15 (+3 level, +2 Dex); **Parry defence:** 14 (+3 level, +1 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +7/+8; **Attack:** Dagger +9 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +10 ranged; **Full Attack:** Dagger +9/+4 melee finesse or Stygian Bow +10/+5 ranged; **Damage:** Dagger 1d4+1/19–20 x2/AP 2 or Stygian Bow (+1) 1d12+1/19–20 x2/AP 3; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Special Attacks:** Spells; **Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, base Power Points, sorcery styles x4, advanced spells x8, bonus spells x2, scholar, background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power, +3 Power Point, increased maximum Power Points (triple); **Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +12 (+7 vs. corruption); **Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 19; **Skills:** Bluff +12, Concentration +6, Craft (alchemy) +16, Decipher Script +15, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (any) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perform (ritual) +19, Profession (scribe) +9, Sleight-of-Hand +12; **Feats:** Bleed Dry, Iron Will, Leadership, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Persuasive, Priest, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice; **Code of Honour:** None; **Reputation:** 20 (Villain); **Leadership:** 14/18 (7<sup>th</sup> cohort; 100 1<sup>st</sup>, 4 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1 4<sup>th</sup> level); **Allegiances:** Father Set, Lords of the Black Ring

; **Base Power Points:** 10 (4 base, +3 Wisdom, +3 bonus) (30 maximum); **Magical Attack:** +9 (+5 level, +4 Cha); **Sorcery Styles:** Counterspells, Curses, Necromancy, Prestidigitation; **Spells Known:** *Animate statue, animate swords, burst barrier, conjuring, curse of Yizil, death touch, greater ill-fortune, greater telekinesis, greater warding, ill-fortune, incantation of Amalric's witchman, lesser ill-fortune, raise corpse, telekinesis, warding*; **Corruption:** 3; **Insanity:** One minor insanity (*delusion, phobia or sleeplessness*)

## TEMPLE HARLOTS OF IDRIS

**Medium Humanoid (Stygian scholar 5); Hit Dice:** 5d6+10 (27 hit points); **Initiative:** +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Ref); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 13 (+1 level, +2 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 11 (+1 level, +0 Str); **DR:** –; **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +3/+3; **Attack:** Unarmed Strike +5 melee finesse; **Full Attack:** Unarmed Strike +5 melee finesse; **Damage:** Unarmed Strike 1d4 plus lotus resin; **Special Attacks:** Spells, lotus resin; **Special Qualities:** Stygian traits, new sorcery style x3, scholar, background (acolyte), base Power Points, knowledge is power, +1 Power Point, advanced spell x3, bonus spell; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +7 (+2 vs. corruption); **Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 18; **Skills:** Bluff +12, Concentration +6, Craft (alchemy) +7, Escape Artist +10, Gather Information +12, Handle Animal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perform (ritual) +8, Profession (temple harlot) +9; **Feats:** Carouser, Debaucher, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will; **Reputation:** 9 (Any); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** Temple of Idris, Khemi, Stygia; **Base Power Points:** 6 (4 base, +1 Wis, +1 bonus); 12 maximum; **Magical Attack:** +6 (+2 level, +4 Cha); **Sorcery Styles:** Counterspells, Divination, Hypnotism; **Spells Known:** *Astrological prediction, domination, entrance, hypnotic suggestion, torment, visions, warding*; **Corruption:** 3; **Insanity:** None; **Possessions:** Red lotus blossoms

Aiding the soldiers are temple harlots dedicated to Idris the asp goddess who are also called the granddaughters of Set. These temple harlots, trained in combat, are naked women with red lotus blossoms in their dark hair and lotus resin caked beneath their long pointed nails. With a few caresses they can stupefy a man, allowing the man to be enslaved by the Stygians. If these dusky temple harlots are attacked, the doomed attacker will draw the ire of the priests of Set. The perfume from the red lotus blossoms keeps the harlots in a drugged, sexual haze and can be smelled at a considerable distance.

**Red Lotus Blossoms:** The temple harlots of Idris wear only red lotus blossoms in

their hair. This has the effect of rendering men and women stupefied. Any one other than a temple harlot, who have a limited immunity, who smells the blossom's perfume at close range (within 10 feet) must make a Will saving throw (DC 25) or be unable to take any non-sexual actions. Anyone under the influence of red lotus is considered entranced for the purposes of other spells.

**Red Lotus Residue:** The temple harlots keep red lotus residue under their long, sharp fingernails to dig into the men and women who kiss them. If a harlot inflicts at least 4 hit points of damage with her unarmed strike, a character must make a Fort saving throw (DC 20) or be unable to take any non-sexual actions. Anyone under the influence of red lotus is considered entranced for the purposes of other spells.

## ARMIES OF STYGIA KUSHITE SPEARMEN

**Medium Humanoid (Kushite barbarian 3); Hit Dice:** 3d10+3 (19 hp); **Initiative:** +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflex save); **Speed:** 30 ft. (x5 run feat); **Dodge Defence:** 13 (+2 level, +1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 17 (+1 level, +2 Str, +4 shield bonus); **DR:** 0; **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +3/+5; **Attack:** Hunting Spear +5 melee; **Full Attack:** Hunting Spear +5 melee; **Damage:** Hunting Spear 1d8+3/x2/AP 3; **Special Attacks:** Crimson Mist, Versatility (–2 penalty); **Special Qualities:** Kushite qualities, Illiterate, Fearless, Bite Sword, Trap Sense +1; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0; **Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9; **Skills:** Hide +10, Intimidate +1, Listen +7, Move Silently +10, Spot +7, Survival +7 (*Note: skills presume a hot climate, taking advantage of all racial benefits*); **Feats:** Endurance, Fighting-Madness, Run, Stealthy, Track; **Reputation:** 2 (Brave); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** Tribal Chief, Stygian commander; **Possessions:** headdresses with ear guards made of monkey-skin, hunting spear, large black shield

The priests of Stygia employ units of Kushite spearmen. These poorly trained warriors serve the priest's needs nicely. They are tough enough to take a few charges without breaking, and obey without question.

## STYGIAN ARCHERS

**Medium Humanoid (Stygian soldier 3); Hit Dice:** 3d10 (16 hp); **Initiative:** +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Ref.); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 12 (+1 level, +1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 13 (+2 level, +1 Str); **DR:** 0; **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +3/+5; **Attack:** Stygian bow +6 ranged or bronze dagger +5 melee; **Full Attack:**

Stygian bow +4/+4 ranged or bronze dagger +5 melee; **Damage:** Stygian bow 1d12+2/19-20 x2/AP 4; or bronze dagger 1d4+1/19-20 x2/AP 1; **Special Attacks:** Formation Combat (skirmisher); **Special Qualities:** Stygian qualities; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0 (–2 vs. Corruption); **Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 7; **Skills:** Climb +5, Handle Animal +0, Jump +5, Knowledge (arcane) +4, Knowledge (local) +3, Perform (ritual) +2, Search +3; **Feats:** Disciple of Archery\*, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (Stygian bow); **Reputation:** 1 (Brave); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** Unit Commander, Set, King of Stygia; **Possessions:** Linen kilt, daggers, sheaf of 30 arrows, Stygian bow

\*Feat from *Conan: The Free Companies*. If this volume is not available, substitute with Improved Initiative

The numerous Stygian archers might have once commanded great fear from other armies and nations. Now they are considered something of a joke by the world's great powers. However, they can still inflict incredible punishment on those foolish enough to underestimate them.

## STYGIAN CHARIOT DRIVER

**Medium Humanoid (Stygian soldier 3); Hit Dice:** 3d10–3 (13 hp); **Initiative:** +1 (+0 Dex, +1 Ref.); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 11 (+1 level, +0 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 16 (+2 level, +1 Str, +3 shield when using it to defend noble archer); **DR:** 0; **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +3/+5; **Attack:** Unarmed Strike +5 melee; **Full Attack:** Unarmed Strike +5 melee; **Damage:** Unarmed Strike 1d4+2/x2/AP 0; **Special Attacks:** Formation Combat (heavy cavalry); **Special Qualities:** Stygian qualities; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0 (–2 vs. Corruption); **Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13; **Skills:** Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (arcane) +4, Knowledge (local) +2, Perform (ritual) +5, Profession (chariot driver) +5; **Feats:** Chariot Combat, Disciple of Chariots, Improved Chariot Overrun, Skill Focus (Handle Animal); **Reputation:** 4 (Brave); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** Unit Commander, Set, Chariot Archer; **Possessions:** Linen kilt, shield

Those soldiers chosen to be chariot drivers train for hours to learn how to manoeuvre the chariot and the two-horse team, how to drive their horse team at a full gallop over uneven terrain, how to keep up with other chariots and drive in formation and how to position their shields to protect themselves. Other than the shield, the chariot's driver is unarmoured and unarmed.

## STYGIAN CHARIOT ARCHER

**Medium Humanoid** (Stygian noble 3); **Hit Dice:** 3d8+3 (16 hp); **Initiative:** +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Ref.); **Speed:** 25 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 13 (+1 level, +2 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 16 (+1 level, +2 Str, +3 driver's shield); **DR:** 6 (Bronze scale hauberk and helmet); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +2/+4; **Attack:** Stygian bow +7 ranged or bronze axe +4 melee or bronze khopesh +4 melee; **Full Attack:** Stygian bow +7 ranged or bronze axe +4 melee or bronze khopesh +4 melee; **Damage:** Stygian bow 1d12+2/19-20 x2/AP 4 or bronze axe 1d10+1/19-20 x2/AP 4 or bronze khopesh 2d4+1/18-20 x2/AP 4; **Special Attacks:** +1 regional bonus to all attack rolls with a Stygian bow; **Special Qualities:** Stygian qualities, +1 regional feature, title, rank hath its privileges, wealth; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +2 (+0 vs. Corruption); **Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13; **Skills:** Appraise +2, Bluff +3, Diplomacy +4, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (arcane) +5, Knowledge (nobility) +1, Perform (ritual) +6, Profession (government) +2, Spot +0; **Feats:** Chariot Combat, Mounted Archery (chariot use only), Weapon Focus (Stygian bow); **Reputation:** 4 (Brave); **Leadership:** —; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** Unit Commander, Set, King of Stygia; **Possessions:** Linen kilt, bronze scale hauberk, helmet, bronze battle axe or bronze khopesh, sheaf of 30 arrows, Stygian bow

Stygia maintains almost 3,000 chariot teams, each consisting of a chariot driver, a noble-born soldier/archer, and a two-horse team. These ponderous devices require relatively level surfaces, have a wide turning radius, and are notoriously vulnerable at the wheels. Nobles primarily use them for racing and demonstrations of martial skill rather than real fighting.

The noble typically wears an archaic mail hauberk, overlaid with plates of strange pattern and design. This armour comes from patterns laid down from before the temple records, and may be of even more ancient origin. It is not particularly effective, but does present an imposing sight on the battlefield. Each noble is also expected to sling a battleaxe of curious design from his belt. Most ignore it in battle, but a few have been known to pull it out when in dire straights.

## STYGIAN INFANTRY

**Medium Humanoid** (Stygian (hybrid) commoner 3/soldier 3); **Hit Dice:** 3d4+3d10+12 (36 hp); **Initiative:** +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflex save); **Speed:** 25 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 13 (+2 level, +1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 19 (+3 level, +1 Str, +4 shield bonus, +1 parry); **DR:** —; **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +4/+6; **Attack:** Bronze Khopesh +7 melee; **Damage:** Bronze Khopesh 2d4+1/18-20 x2/AP 4; **Special Attacks:** Formation Combat (skirmisher); **Special Qualities:** Stygian (hybrid) qualities, farmer background skills, illiteracy; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; **Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9; **Skills:** Climb +4, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +2, Listen +4, Profession (farmer) +11, Search +3, Spot +3, Survival +2, Swim +5, Use Rope +7; **Feats:** Alertness, Athletic, Endurance, Parry, Skill Focus (Profession (farmer)), Weapon Focus (khopesh); **Reputation:** 2 (Talented); **Leadership:** —; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** Stygian priesthood, Stygian nobility, unit commander; **Possessions:** Bronze dagger, bronze khopesh, steel cap, antique large shield

The basic unit of the Stygian military are the conscripted infantry forces, drawn from farmers and labourers. Infantry are organised around the types of weapons they wield. Common weapons for infantry units include spears, axes, slings, khopeshes, swords and clubs. The above sample wields a khopesh and represents a conscripted farmer who is given some training. To simulate another type of unit, simply replace the weapon with another primitive (bronze) weapon and change the Weapon Focus feat. Soldiers can be made from any of the sample commoners listed in this chapter by adding one to three levels of soldier to them and removing penalties to attack. Given enough time, Stygians prefer to train their soldiers until they have their first Formation Combat ability (i.e. 3<sup>rd</sup> level soldier) but they will not hesitate to send barely-trained units into battle when needed. Their training usually adds the Parry and Weapon Focus feats, and if the character's level grants the new soldier another feat, then his endurance training either gives him the Endurance or Athletic feat.

# Games Mastering Stygia

**STYGIA IS KNOWN** as a sinister and xenophobic kingdom. But how does one go about presenting such a place? Fortunately, Robert E. Howard set many tales in Stygia to give us guidance. Games Masters should read stories such as *The God in the Bowl*, *The Queen of the Black Coast* and *The Hour of the Dragon* to give Stygia a unique atmosphere. This section will give some additional advice on how to accomplish that.

## STYGIAN NATURE

Stygia has several traits that set it apart from other nations. Here are a few of the most relevant. The Games Master may then add his own elements to this mix to create his own unique version of Stygia for his campaign world.

**Brooding and Atmospheric:** Stygia is described as brooding and menacing. Keep the atmosphere as ominous as possible. The priests should be portrayed as creepy, baleful and more than a little disturbing. They are an omnipresent threat to all in Stygia. Characters should find the idea of going into the cities of Stygia alarming and a bit intimidating. Great looming walls, ominous monuments, eerie art, frightful ceremonies and menacing priests should always be part and parcel of Stygia.

**Civilised and Xenophobic:** Stygia is a civilised land but extremely xenophobic. The priests of Stygia will automatically suspect anyone who does not resemble a Stygian, both culturally and physically. The priests have a strangle-hold on economic and political power in Stygia; they are not so stupid as to trust a foreigner lest they travel to Luxur under Corinthian control.

**Decadent and Sinister:** Like many civilisations that have lasted for a long time, Stygia is in decline. Its golden age is in the past, before the fall of Kuthchemes to the Hyborian barbarians. The society is decadent and permissive, allowing all kinds of depravity that would be outlawed in any other nation. Sorcery is also considered a natural part of life, in contrast with the view of virtually all other societies in the Hyborian Age, lending the Stygian culture an air of the sinister. The priesthood is having a harder time controlling society when the nobles and priests are perceived as spending more and more time conjuring demons

and casting curses instead of conducting business. The land simply has an oppressive blanket of fear covering it at all times.

## STYGIAN REPUTATION

Reputation in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* can be a tremendous asset among the people of Stygia. *Conan the Roleplaying Game* introduces several natures applicable to Reputation. Herein can be found a few more natures to dictate how Reputation is used by characters. Each nature dictates how a character may use his Reputation score. A Reputation's nature determines which skill checks it may be used as a bonus to. Remember, unless stated otherwise, people must recognise a character in order for his Reputation score to apply in a situation.

The Games Master may assign one of the following Reputation types to each character, as well as any presented in *Conan the Roleplaying Game* or its supplements. Players are allowed to select the nature of their own characters' Reputation, though the Games Master has the option to force them to change this nature if the player does not live up to it.

**Xenophobic:** The character is known to be intolerant of foreigners. The character may apply his Reputation modifier to Bluff, Gather Information and Diplomacy checks when dealing with priests of Stygia and other xenophobes. He suffers a penalty to Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather Information when talking to foreigners who know him as racially bigoted. This is most appropriate for anyone involved in government functions.

**Decadent:** The character is known to be sinister and depraved. The character may apply his Reputation modifier to Diplomacy, Gather Information and Intimidate checks when dealing with others. This is most appropriate for priest or noble characters.

**Fertile:** The character is exceptionally fertile and has many children, which is important in Stygia. A character who is known to have fathered or mothered many children may apply their bonus to Knowledge (local), since everyone wants to know them.

**Haunted:** The character is someone known to have a past that still disturbs him. People tend to feel sorry for the character or believe he acts out of guilt for his past. Some people may be terrified by the potential deed the person did. The character may apply his Reputation modifier to Intimidate and Gather Information checks when dealing with others.

**Mysterious:** This character is seen as unapproachable and menacing, a secret best left shrouded in darkness. People find talking to this renowned enigma as daunting; people see him as unreadable. He may use his bonus on Bluff and Intimidate checks.

**Proxy:** This character is well-known to be the mouth-piece of a more powerful background character. While not necessarily a power in his own right, he has the ears of power and speaks with the voice of power. People know this character is someone to be listened to for his words are someone else's. Others also know to be guarded in what they say, for this character is also someone else's ears. This character may add his Reputation bonus to Diplomacy, Intimidate and Sense Motive checks but the bonus is a penalty to Gather Information checks.

**Seductive:** Stygians are relatively open about sexuality. This Stygian character is known as a sexual predator, using his power and reputation to bed others. His speech is suggestive and his body language filled with innuendo. This character may add his Reputation bonus to Diplomacy and Gather Information checks.

## DESERT TERRAIN

Desert terrain exists in warm, temperate and cold climates, but all deserts share one common trait: little precipitation. Stygia is known for its fertile land around the Styx and for the deserts to the south, although there is marshland around the rivers and even grassland as one approaches Kush and Darfar. The two categories of terrain in Stygia are rocky desert and sandy desert. Choose your preference for the setting of your Stygian adventure.

The table describes terrain elements found in each of the two desert categories. The terrain elements on this table are mutually exclusive; for instance, a square of sandy desert may contain either light undergrowth or sand dunes, but not both.

### Desert Terrain Features

	Desert Category	
	Rocky	Sandy
Light undergrowth	5%	5%
Light rubble	30%	10%
Dense rubble	30%	5%
Sand dunes	—	50%

**Light Undergrowth:** Consisting of scrubby, hardy bushes and cacti, light undergrowth functions as described for other terrain types.

**Light Rubble:** Small rocks are strewn across the ground, making nimble movement more difficult. The DC of Balance and Tumble checks increases by 2.

**Dense Rubble:** This terrain feature consists of more frequent and larger stones. It costs 2 squares of movement to enter a square with dense rubble. The DC of Balance and Tumble checks increases by 5, and the DC of Move Silently checks increases by 2.

**Sand Dunes:** If the wind is strong and consistent, a sand dune can move several hundred feet in a week's time. Sand dunes can cover hundreds of squares. They always have a gentle slope pointing in the direction of the prevailing wind and a steep slope on the leeward side.

**Other Desert Terrain Features:** Rocky deserts have towers and mesas consisting of flat ground surrounded on all sides by cliffs and steep slopes. Sandy deserts sometimes have quicksand (see below), although desert quicksand is a waterless mixture of fine sand and dust. All desert terrain is crisscrossed with dry streambeds (treat as trenches 5 to 15 feet wide) that fill with water on the rare occasions when rain falls.

**Quicksand:** Patches of quicksand present a deceptively solid appearance (appearing as undergrowth or open land) that may trap careless characters. A character approaching a patch of quicksand at a normal pace is entitled to a DC 8 Survival check to spot the danger before stepping in, but charging or running characters do not have a chance to detect a hidden sandpit before blundering in. A typical patch of quicksand is 20 feet in diameter; the momentum of a charging or running character carries him or her 1d2×5 feet into the quicksand.

**Effects of Quicksand:** Characters in quicksand must make a DC 10 Swim check every round to simply tread sand and dust in place, or a DC 15 Swim check to move 5 feet in whatever direction is desired. If a trapped character fails this check by 5 or more, he sinks below the surface and begins to drown whenever he can no longer hold his breath (see the Swim skill description in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*). Characters below the surface of a quicksand may swim back to the surface with a successful Swim check (DC 15, +1 per consecutive round of being under the surface).

**Rescue:** Pulling out a character trapped in quicksand can be difficult. A rescuer needs a branch, spear haft, rope, or similar tool that enables him to reach the victim with one end of it. Then he must make a DC 15 Strength check to successfully pull the victim, and the victim must make a DC 10 Strength check to hold onto the branch, pole, or rope. If the victim fails to hold on, he must make a DC 15 Swim check immediately to stay above the surface. If both checks succeed, the victim is pulled 5 feet closer to safety.

**Stealth and Detection in the Desert:**

In general, the maximum distance in

## Stygian Names

Aakheperkare	Addaya	Ahhotpe	Ahmosse-saneit	Ahmosse-sipari	Akencheres
Akhenre	Amenakht	Amenemhat	Amenemheb	Amenemnisu	Amenhiremef
Amosis-ankh	Amunemhat	Amunhotpe	Amunpanesha	Anen	Ankhefenamun
Ankhefenmut	Ankh-hori	Ankh-Psamtek	Ankhsheshonq	Ankhu	Ankhwa
Any	Apophis	Baba	Bak	Bakenkhons	Bakenkhonsu
Bakennefi	Bakenptah	Bakt	Baky	Bay	Bek
Benermerut	Besemut	Denger	Deniuenkhons	Djadjaemankh	Djau
Djedhoriufankh	Djedi	Djedptahefankh	Djedptahiufankh	Djedsiuufankh	Djehutymose
Djenutymes	Djeserka	Djeserkare	Djesersukhons	Djhutmose	Genubath
Gua	Hapimen	Hapu	Hapymen	Haremakheth	Harkhebi
Harkhuf	Harmhabi	Harsiese	Hemaka	Henenu	Henuka
Heqaemeheh	Herenamenpenef	Herihor	Hesire	Hetepnebi	Hor
Horemheb	Horhotep	Hori	Hornedjitef	Horwebbefefer	Hunefer
Huy	Huya	Ibana	Ibe	Idy	Ikeni
Imhotep	Inarus	Inebni	Iniuia	Ipi	Ipuwer
Ipuy	Ipy	Ishpi	Iu-Amun	Iufankh	Iufenamun
Iunmin	Iuwlot	Iyerniutef	Iyimennuef	Iymeru	Kadjadja
Kaka	Kamoses	Kanakht	Karnefhere	Katenen	Kawab
Kay	Kenamun	Kenefer	Kerasher	Khabausokar	Khaemnetjeru
Khaemwaset	Khafra	Khahor	Kha'y	Khensthoth	Kheruef
Khety	Khnemibre	Khons	Khonsirdais	Khonskhu	Khonsuemwaset
Men	Menkaura	Menkheperre	Menmet-Ra	Mentuemhat	Mentuherkhepshef
Meremptor	Merenamun	Merenkhons	Merirahasetef	Merka	Mernebptah
Mes	Minkhat	Minmose	Mokhtar	Montjuemhat	Montuemhat
Mose	Nakhtorheb	Nakhtimenwast	Nakhtmin	Nakhtnebef	Nebamun
Nebankh	Nebemakst	Nebhotep	Nebimes	Nebnefer	Nebnetjeru
Nebsemi	Nebsemi	Necho	Neferaba	Neferhotep	Neferhotpe
Nefermenu	Neferrenpet	Nehasy	Nehi	Nekhwemmut	Nendjbaendjed
Netjerikhet	Neuserra	Niankkhnum	Nimlot	Niumateped	Osorkon
Paankhenamun	Pabernefy	Padiamenet	Padiamun	Padineith	Paury
Pait	Pakharu	Pami	Pamose	Pamu	Panas
Pashedbast	Pashedu	Pashedjehuty	Pa-Siamun	Pawiaeadja	Payneferher
Psamtek	Psusennes	Ptahetep	Ptahhemakheth	Ptahhemhat-Ty	Ptahmose
Puyemra	Qenymin	Rahotep	Raia	Rameses	Rekhmire
Sethnakhte	Sethnakhte	Seti	Setnakht	Setne	Shabaka
Shemay	Shepenwepet	Sheri	Shoshenq	Si-Mut	Sinuhe
Sipair	Siptah	Sneferu	Surero	Suty	Sutymose
Tefnakht	Teti-en	Tjaenhebyu	Tjanefer	Tjaroy	Tjaudemdi
Tjenna	To	Tui	Userhet	Usermaatere	Wahibra
Wahibre-Teni	Wahka	Webaoer	Webensenu	Wendjebaendjed	Weni

desert terrain at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 6d6×20 feet; beyond this distance, elevation changes and heat distortion in warm deserts makes spotting impossible. The presence of dunes in sandy deserts limits spotting distance to 6d6×10 feet.

## SANDSTORMS

A sandstorm reduces visibility to 1d10×5 feet and provides a -4 penalty on Listen, Search and Spot checks. A sandstorm deals 1d3 points of nonlethal damage per hour to any creatures caught in the open, and leaves a thin coating of sand in its wake. Driving sand creeps in through all but the most secure seals and seams, to chafe skin and contaminate carried gear.



## STYGIAN GAMING HOOKS

- ❖ The centre of Set's cult is being restored to Erkulum, the walled City of Set. The people of Khemi are upset and worried. Other cultures, wonder at the move and what it means for them. Perhaps a priest has uncovered an ancient relic of the Giant-Kings that can be used in a war effort.
- ❖ Taia province once again revolts. The Player Characters are part of the force sent to crush the rebellion once and for all or they are leading the rebellion against the evil serpent empire.
- ❖ A Mitran missionary decides it is his duty to convert the devil-worshipping Stygians, so he heads to the River Styx, thinking to start off with some small farming community. No one really has time to listen to him but he does not give up. Finally a Stygian priest gets annoyed and has the man arrested and scheduled to be sacrificed. The Player Characters are called upon to rescue the missionary.
- ❖ Someone has brought a secret out of Stygia and has given it to the Player Characters. The Stygians want that secret back (a religious text, a mystery, a relic, etc).
- ❖ The Player Characters meet a political fugitive from Stygia and are asked to protect him from the wrath of King Ctesphon IV and Thoth-Amon.
- ❖ Thoth-Amon's *Serpent Ring of Set* is stolen and the Player Characters have unwittingly received it.

- ❖ Stygia is rising from the south and has struck several Shemite cities, conquering them. Shem and Stygia go to war. The Player Characters are hired as part of a mercenary unit to fight in this war.
- ❖ Conan has vanished from Aquilonia. The Player Characters find out he is being held in Stygia by a fell sorcerer near the Darfar/Stygia border and set out to rescue him.
- ❖ The Player Characters get involved in a plot to overthrow King Ctesphon IV.
- ❖ The Player Characters are hired to steal an artefact from a Stygian tomb.
- ❖ The Player Characters break into a Stygian tomb and unleash a mummy upon the world.
- ❖ The Player Characters infiltrate the Great Temple of Set in order to destroy it from within – but slowly become corrupted while working undercover and ultimately must betray their old ideals or their new power.
- ❖ All the first born children in Stygia die. For a kingdom so devoted to its children, this is a catastrophe. King Ctesphon IV hires mercenaries to investigate the cause of the curse.
- ❖ The Player Characters do something for King Ctesphon IV and he starts treating them with extreme favour, even placing their opinions above that of his viziers and Thoth-Amon. Thoth-Amon begins to plot their deaths...
- ❖ A Stygian magician seeking power and high honour wants to bring down mighty Thoth-Amon from his high place and believes the Player Characters are just the people he needs to help him do it.
- ❖ One of the viziers of Stygia is attacked or murdered and the evidence points to the Player Characters, who are wholly innocent. They may have to flee or find the true culprit.
- ❖ A Hyborian visionary wanting to build a menagerie has hired the Player Characters to bring back a Son of Set and other, uniquely Stygian, animals.
- ❖ A woman has been cursed by a vengeful priest of Set to be infertile until she recovers a rare herb found in the remotest parts of the Styx. The Player Characters are asked to escort her to that region and bring her and the herb back in one piece.
- ❖ Player Characters are part of a tired mercenary force repelling a savage Darfari invasion.

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