

TALISLANDTA

People & Places



R.D.B. BLACK

Vol. I **DIAPPA**

Talisanta

Peoples & Places Vol. 1

Djaffa



TALISLANTA

FANTASY ROLE PLAYING GAME

Peoples & Places Vol. 1

Djaffa

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THE DESERT AND PEOPLE OF DJAFFA

Born to the saddle and the deserts of Djaffa, the Djaffar are nomads in the truest sense of the word. Building no structures of stone or wood, they live their whole lives under the sky or the folds of their tents. Life in the sands of Djaffa is not easy, but for centuries the Djaffar have endured and prospered. Now they travel to far distant lands to trade, masters of the deserts that once almost destroyed them. The Djaffar are common in many civilized lands, carrying goods far and wide in pursuit of commerce, always recognizable by their leather masks which are never removed in public.

THE DESERT OF DJAFFA

The desert of Djaffa is a barren, desolate land where no resource is more precious than water. Bordered by the Red Desert of Carantheum and the Wilderlands, it is near territories claimed by the Hadjin, the Farad, and the hated Rajan. Djaffa has little in the way of worthwhile resources or strategic value. No one has tried to conquer the land in recorded history due to the fact its only value lies in trade routes, several of which run through Djaffa, and its location between the Eastern and Western Lands. Djaffa is ideally placed for trade both with the desert kingdoms and the Seven Kingdoms, allowing the Djaffar to easily transport goods over a wide area.

Most of Djaffa is desert or dry scrubland with a few oases spread across its territory, many of which are home to makeshift camps of Djaffir passing through. Between these oases are miles and miles of sand, dirt, and scrub with few living creatures to be found. Without an aht-ra or similar mount that can go for long periods of time without drinking, traveling Djaffa is suicide because a traveler on foot will surely die of dehydration long before they reach the next oases. Death by exposure after the loss of a mount is a widely feared demise among the Djaffar, and their tales speak of hateful spirits who roam the wastes where they expired under such conditions, looking to kill steeds to serve them in the afterlife. Because of these beliefs banishment into the deserts of Djaffa is a punishment only reserved for the most heinous of crimes, such as wasting water or poisoning oases.

A few rocky outcroppings break the monotony of southern and central Djaffa, many of which are used as navigational aids by the Djaffar, as are the oases of Djaffa. These rocky areas are rarely more than a few hundred feet across and reach only a few dozen feet in height, but compared to the sand and scrub that surrounds them they stand out like a sore thumb. Despite the lack of water, some of these rocky areas are home to temporary settlements, usually constructed by Djaffir mining the outcropping or selling supplies to those travelers who use them as navigational reference points. Those Djaffir selling to travelers are usually poor peddlers who cannot afford to travel beyond their homeland or set up shop around one

OF DJAFFA, DJAFFIR AND DJAFFAR

These terms can sometimes prove confusing to foreigners and are explained as follows:

Djaffa is the term used to refer to the lands of the Western Red Desert. It consists of all of the lands west of the Sanctuary Mountains (and area known as the Rocklands among the Djaffir).

Djaffir is the word used when speaking of an individual who hails from Djaffa or to describe an item manufactured by these people.

Djaffar is the plural form of Djaffir. One Djaffir, many Djaffar.

of the oases. These rocky areas are often rich in copper and tin, and many are mined by Djaffir as they pass by. Any non-Djaffir found mining such materials is likely to be chased off if discovered since the Djaffar make a significant portion of their income selling copper and bronze tools.

In the northern section of Djaffa the desert and scrub gives way to more rocky terrain, eventually changing over to a large network of valleys, plateaus, and rock outcroppings that are all made up of orange dirt and stone. These stone formations rarely reach more than fifty feet in height, but they stretch for miles, creating a virtual maze of valleys and crags. The Djaffar call this region the Rocklands and most avoid it due to its inhospitable nature. These rock formations form mazes that stretch for miles and have swallowed many a traveler in their confusing valleys and crevices. These valleys and crags were carved long ago by running water and the wind, but now they are almost completely dry and there are very few oases to be found within the Rocklands. While some Djaffir tribes mine copper and tin from the Rocklands, few consider it worth the danger of dehydration due to the lack of water sources. Many bandit Djaffir use this lack of population and the maze-like nature of the region to their advantage and hide in the Rocklands between raids. Rumors have begun to circulate about more valuable minerals being found in the Rocklands, but most

Djaffir chock this up to being a trap set by bandits. Outsiders have not been so discerning and several excavation groups have traveled to the Rocklands only to be ambushed as soon as they were deep in the valleys of the region.

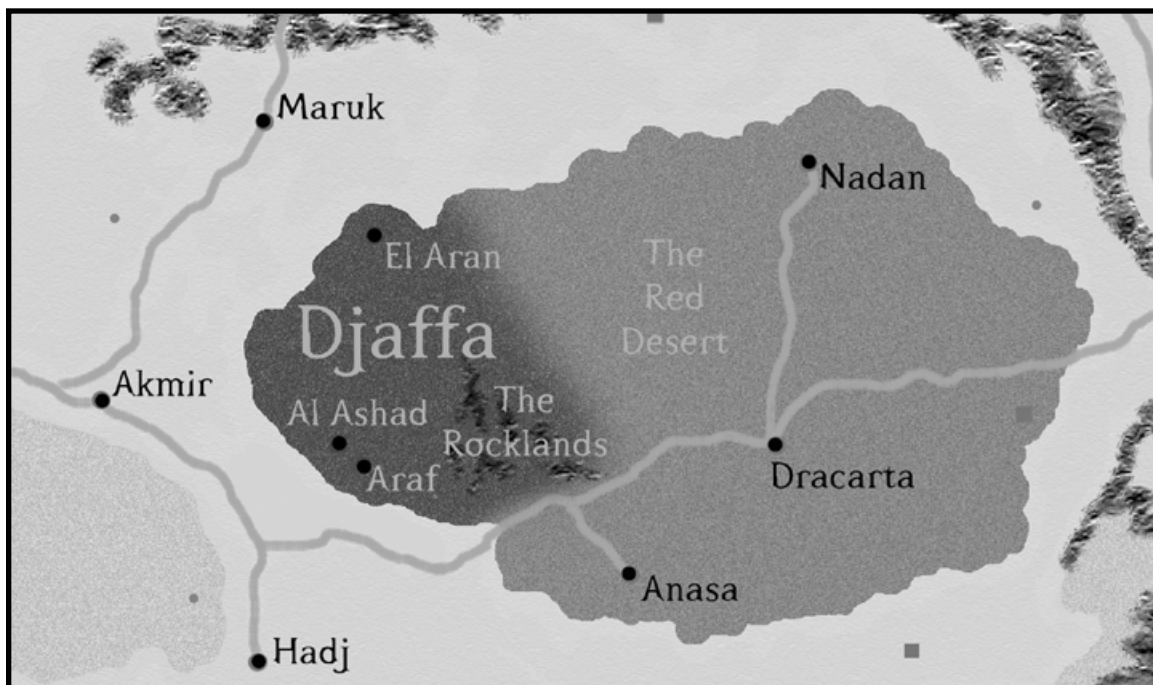
OASES OF DJAFFA

The oases of Djaffa are truly the centers of life within the desert. All life in Djaffa depends on these oases to continue and much of Djaffir culture revolves around these oases. There are several score such locations throughout Djaffa, all of which

are nearly constantly inhabited by Djaffir merchants or bandits due to the scarcity of water. These oases are usually surrounded by surprisingly verdant plant life, including date trees and other forms of food bearing plants. These oases are well known to the Djaffar and used in navigation due to the fact there are few landmarks in the desert. Djaffir are very careful not to pollute the oases they visit, and anyone doing so is harshly punished. Occasionally oases are destroyed by natural means, such as being filled up by sandstorms or dried out by drought, in addition to the acts of man. The loss of an oasis is considered a great tragedy by the Djaffar who often hold ceremonies similar to a burial for such lost oases. Similarly when new oases are found it is a cause for celebration and being one of the first to drink from a newly discovered oasis is considered a sign of good luck.

DJAFFIR KHALEEL

According to tradition, each oasis in Djaffa is guarded by a person known as a *Khaleel*, best translated as "life-warden", who is charged with protecting their specific oasis. In addition the *Khaleel* is charged with settling disputes that occur at his or her oasis, keeping visitors to the oasis safe, and helping those who visit the oasis continue their travels. Because of this, Khaleel are skilled in a number of disciplines, from combat to diplomacy to medicine, and usually



have a stockpile of supplies on hand. In addition many Khaleel charge rent to Djaffir merchants who set up shop around the oases, though this is nearly always scaled according to the merchant's ability to pay. Some Khaleel do not welcome bandits at their oasis, while others do not welcome merchants, but for the most part they welcome all Djaffir to share in the bounty of their oasis. Outsiders are usually welcome to make use of a Khaleel's oasis as long as they are respectful of the ways of the Djaffar. Despised enemies like the Rajans or Farad, are often outright refused and sometimes even confronted at sword point when they approach an oasis.

Khaleel have no official authority over chiefs or other leaders in Djaffa, but many heed their wisdom. Many Khaleel are seen as wise hermits in addition to caretakers and are sought out for advice and guidance by other Djaffir. The position of Khaleel is usually passed down from parent to child and Khaleel are some of the few Djaffir who are not nomadic. They instead spend their entire life at their oasis, and are highly respected by other Djaffir for their dedication. Attacking a Khaleel is a grave offense among the Djaffar and considered an invitation for bad luck. Khaleel are recognizable by the special blue insignias worn on their masks.

For newly discovered oases a new Khaleel appoints himself from among those who first find the oases, though contests are sometimes held to determine the Khaleel for a new oasis or for an oasis whose Khaleel has died without an heir if there is more than one applicant. These contests involve horsemanship, combat, perception, and diplomacy, all traits of an effective Khaleel. If a Khaleel's oasis is destroyed because of natural events the Khaleel usually returns to his tribe to serve as a leader or advisor. Those Khaleel who fail to protect their oasis from others who would do it harm are shamed and often commit suicide. Khaleel who fail to defend their oasis and do not end their own lives spend their entire lives as outcasts, replacing the blue insignias on their mask with black, the color of shame among the Djaffar.

While a few of these outcast Khaleel have become heroes in Djaffir legend, most live out their lives shunned and alone. In select instances in the past, Khaleel have poisoned their own oasis in order to destroy large amounts of Rajan troops, dooming themselves to being an outcast in order to serve their people. While such individuals are often honored posthumously for their sacrifice, in their lifetimes they remain pariahs. Only the Caliph can remove a Khaleel against his will, an ability that is

very rarely used. If a Khaleel were ever removed under such circumstances he would likely commit suicide or leave Djaffa forever due to the shame he would suffer.

WEATHER IN DJAFFA

Like many deserts, while the days in Djaffa are very hot, the nights are often very cold. Djaffa's status as a desert is linked more to its very low amount of rainfall, less than four inches a year and almost all of that in the spring rainy season, than its temperature. Daytime temperatures are regularly scorching, and in the summer months, an unprotected creature without water will die in less than three hours. Meanwhile, in the night the temperatures drop to near freezing or even below freezing during the winter. Thus travelers must be prepared with both light clothes for day time and insulating clothes for nighttime. The high winds that blow across Djaffa often help refresh travelers during daylight hours, but at night they are bone chilling. Most Djaffir travel during the day, cook and socialize in twilight hours, and sleep during the night to avoid the worst of the cold. Firewood is nonexistent in Djaffa so camp fires are a rarity for anything other than cooking, limiting the ability of the Djaffar to stay warm at night outside of their tents. Those fires that are lit are usually fueled with dried aht-ra dung, which produces little smoke or smell. Wood fires are usually only used for special occasions, such as marriages or other celebrations. The Djaffar often make use of spices and scents in their camp fires, a small luxury they find particularly pleasing.

While the rainy season can sometime spark flash floods and similar disturbances, the most destructive weather events in Djaffa are the sandstorms. Heat lightning is the only common form of storm activity in Djaffa, and it mainly occurs in the dry summer months. Lightning of any type is considered a sign of high magical activity, which some Djaffir wizards attempt to take advantage of by scrambling to carry out magical

rituals during lightning strikes. Sandstorms on the other hand occur regularly in all seasons other than the rainy season and are capable of amazingly destructive power. Individual sandstorms rarely last more than a few hours, but occasionally they can last for days, moving millions of tons of sand as they travel across the desert. Djaffir caught in such storms usually try to make camp and wait out the storm since traveling under such conditions is usually more dangerous than staying put. The Djaffar have engineered a complex series of breathing tubes and special doors to keep the sand out of their tents and even survive when buried by a sandstorm, but such precautions are not full proof. Djaffir avoid sandstorms whenever possible due to the fact that few tribes come away from encountering one without suffering a few casualties. Luckily for the Djaffar they are skilled at predicting and detecting sandstorms, enabling them to avoid them much of the time. Outsiders to Djaffa often hire Djaffir guides specifically for this purpose. In addition to the danger sandstorms pose to the Djaffar directly, these storms can rearrange the geography of Djaffa, moving sand dunes, burying rocks and boulders, and destroying oases. This makes it very easy to get lost in the wake of a particularly large sandstorm.

In addition to naturally occurring sandstorms one large sandstorm has continued to wreak havoc throughout Djaffa since the Great Disaster. Called the Desert's Anger by the Djaffar, this storm is suspected to be a magical byproduct of the Great Disaster by many outsiders, but the Djaffar hold to a far different theory. Made of some sort of elemental air essence, the Desert's Anger travels in a seemingly random course across Djaffa, barreling along all day and night. While for the most part the Desert's Anger acts like a normal sandstorm except for its duration, it has occasionally exhibited unusual behavior. It has been known to circumvent oases, avoid Djaffir tribes, consume Rajan raiders, and even destroy other sandstorms. According to Djaffir legend the Desert's Anger is the incarnation of Djabin el-Djaroup, a Khaleel who once protected the Creator while he stayed at Djabin's oasis. For his vigilant protection, according to legend, Djabin was given the power to protect the Djaffar for all eternity and became the Desert's

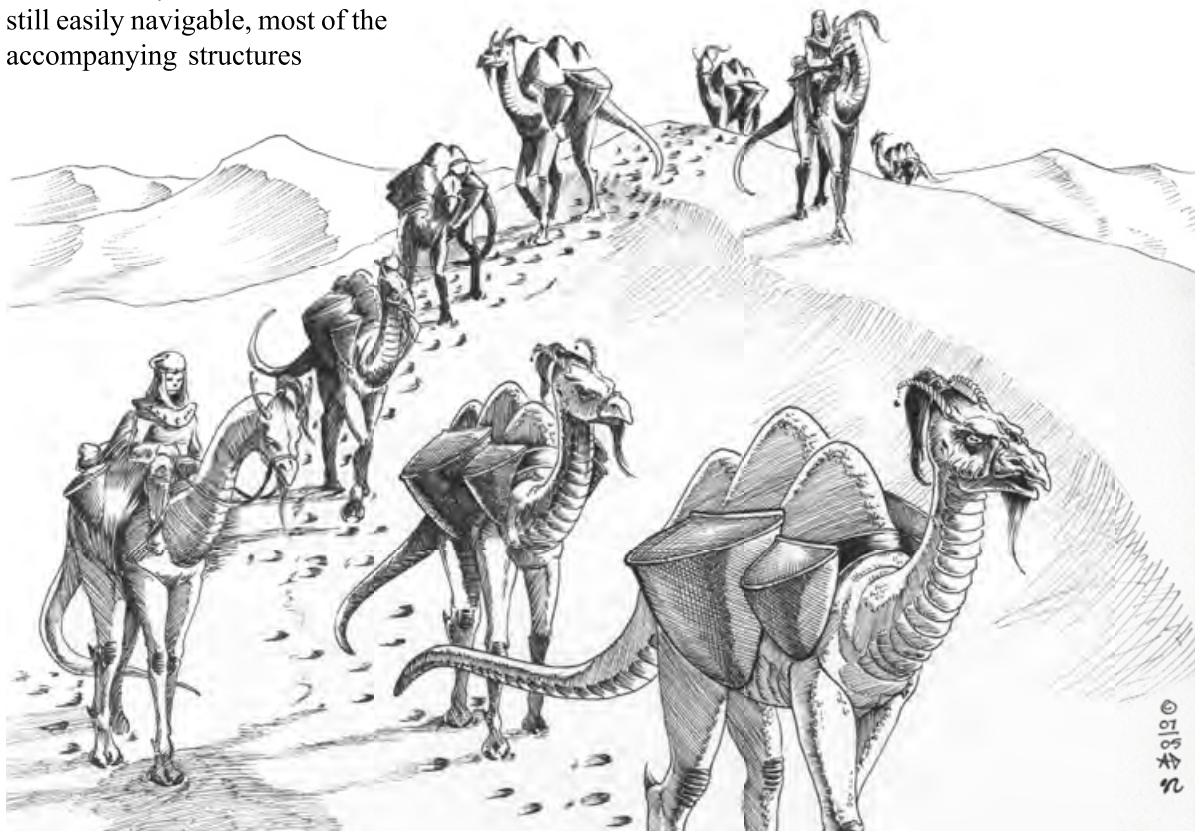
Anger. Outsiders sneer at this story and often put forth the theory that the Desert's Anger is simply a large air elemental, but the Djaffar do not take such comments kindly.

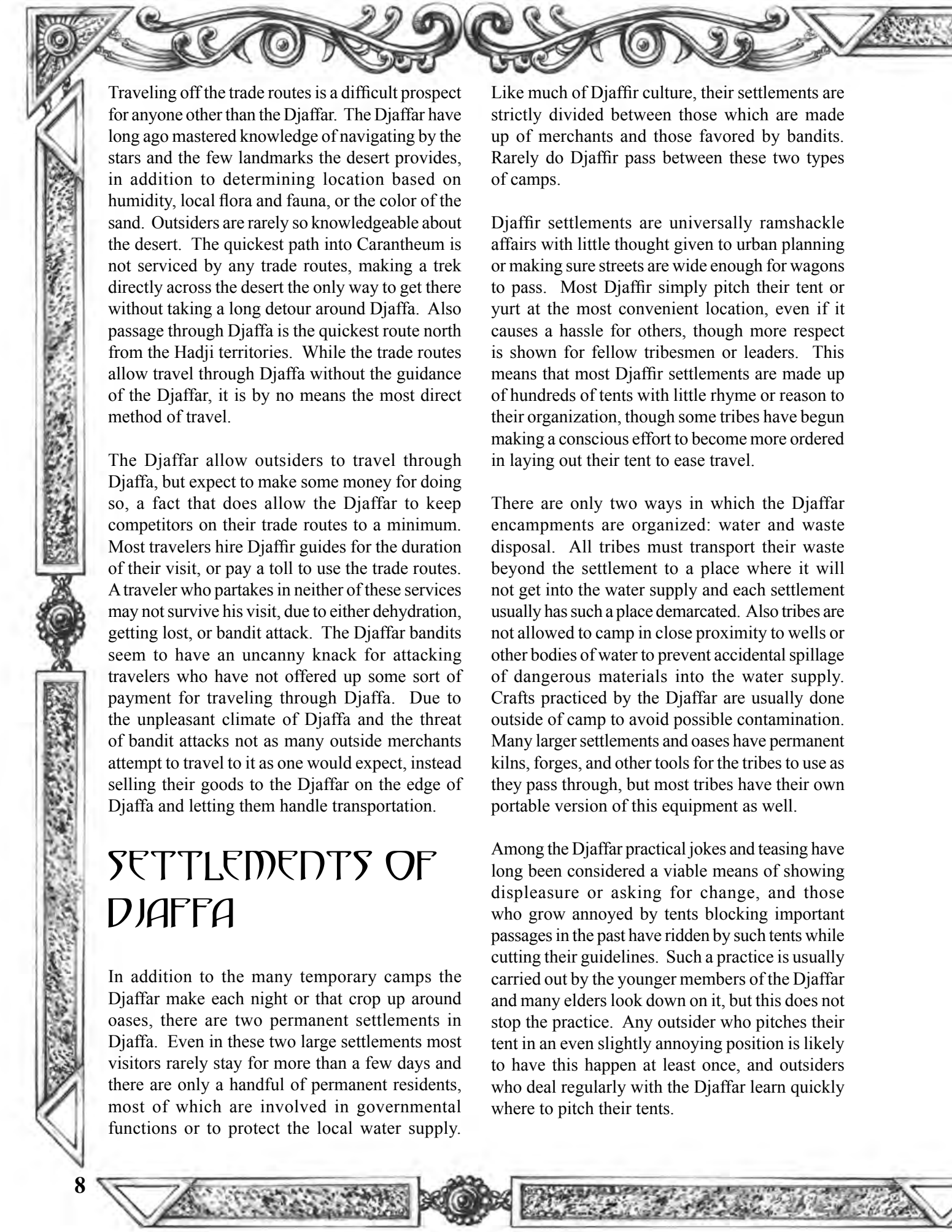
TRAVELING IN DJAFFA

Roads in Djaffa are ill-defined and often change due to rainy seasons or sandstorms. Only the major trade routes have any type of permanent structure. These major trade routes, of which there is only a handful, are paved using massive stones quarried from the Rocklands long before the Great Disaster. The trade routes connected the major Djaffir settlements of El Aran and Al-Ashad, a handful of larger oases, the Rocklands, and the Wilderlands Road outside Djaffa. These roads were once magnificent thoroughfares complete with arches and bridges but between the Great Disaster and centuries of neglect these once magnificent structures have fallen into a state of decay. While the roads are still easily navigable, most of the accompanying structures

have collapsed and some small areas of these ancient roads are now impassable. Where such obstructions occur it is a simple matter to go around them by traveling a short distance into the desert, but some of these detours have become common sites for bandit ambushes.

The Djaffar do not have the technology or equipment to repair these roads, though some clan chieftains have petitioned the Caliph to bring in engineers from the Seven Kingdoms or Carantheum to look into repairing the damaged trade routes. Even with the damage the trade routes are still by far the fastest way to traverse Djaffa without a Djaffir guide and are often packed with travelers in the summer and fall months. The trade routes pass oases regularly, allowing for travelers to easily gather water during their journey. All of these oases are guarded by veteran Khaleel who often have a staff of guards under their command to keep the most crowded oases safe. Most Djaffir use the trade routes when expedient but travel cross-country when it is faster to do, allowing them to cover more ground than those who stick to the safer trade routes.





Traveling off the trade routes is a difficult prospect for anyone other than the Djaffar. The Djaffar have long ago mastered knowledge of navigating by the stars and the few landmarks the desert provides, in addition to determining location based on humidity, local flora and fauna, or the color of the sand. Outsiders are rarely so knowledgeable about the desert. The quickest path into Carantheum is not serviced by any trade routes, making a trek directly across the desert the only way to get there without taking a long detour around Djaffa. Also passage through Djaffa is the quickest route north from the Hadji territories. While the trade routes allow travel through Djaffa without the guidance of the Djaffar, it is by no means the most direct method of travel.

The Djaffar allow outsiders to travel through Djaffa, but expect to make some money for doing so, a fact that does allow the Djaffar to keep competitors on their trade routes to a minimum. Most travelers hire Djaffir guides for the duration of their visit, or pay a toll to use the trade routes. A traveler who partakes in neither of these services may not survive his visit, due to either dehydration, getting lost, or bandit attack. The Djaffar bandits seem to have an uncanny knack for attacking travelers who have not offered up some sort of payment for traveling through Djaffa. Due to the unpleasant climate of Djaffa and the threat of bandit attacks not as many outside merchants attempt to travel to it as one would expect, instead selling their goods to the Djaffar on the edge of Djaffa and letting them handle transportation.

SETTLEMENTS OF DJAFFA

In addition to the many temporary camps the Djaffar make each night or that crop up around oases, there are two permanent settlements in Djaffa. Even in these two large settlements most visitors rarely stay for more than a few days and there are only a handful of permanent residents, most of which are involved in governmental functions or to protect the local water supply.

Like much of Djaffir culture, their settlements are strictly divided between those which are made up of merchants and those favored by bandits. Rarely do Djaffir pass between these two types of camps.

Djaffir settlements are universally ramshackle affairs with little thought given to urban planning or making sure streets are wide enough for wagons to pass. Most Djaffir simply pitch their tent or yurt at the most convenient location, even if it causes a hassle for others, though more respect is shown for fellow tribesmen or leaders. This means that most Djaffir settlements are made up of hundreds of tents with little rhyme or reason to their organization, though some tribes have begun making a conscious effort to become more ordered in laying out their tent to ease travel.

There are only two ways in which the Djaffar encampments are organized: water and waste disposal. All tribes must transport their waste beyond the settlement to a place where it will not get into the water supply and each settlement usually has such a place demarcated. Also tribes are not allowed to camp in close proximity to wells or other bodies of water to prevent accidental spillage of dangerous materials into the water supply. Crafts practiced by the Djaffar are usually done outside of camp to avoid possible contamination. Many larger settlements and oases have permanent kilns, forges, and other tools for the tribes to use as they pass through, but most tribes have their own portable version of this equipment as well.

Among the Djaffar practical jokes and teasing have long been considered a viable means of showing displeasure or asking for change, and those who grow annoyed by tents blocking important passages in the past have ridden by such tents while cutting their guidelines. Such a practice is usually carried out by the younger members of the Djaffar and many elders look down on it, but this does not stop the practice. Any outsider who pitches their tent in an even slightly annoying position is likely to have this happen at least once, and outsiders who deal regularly with the Djaffar learn quickly where to pitch their tents.

AL ASHAD

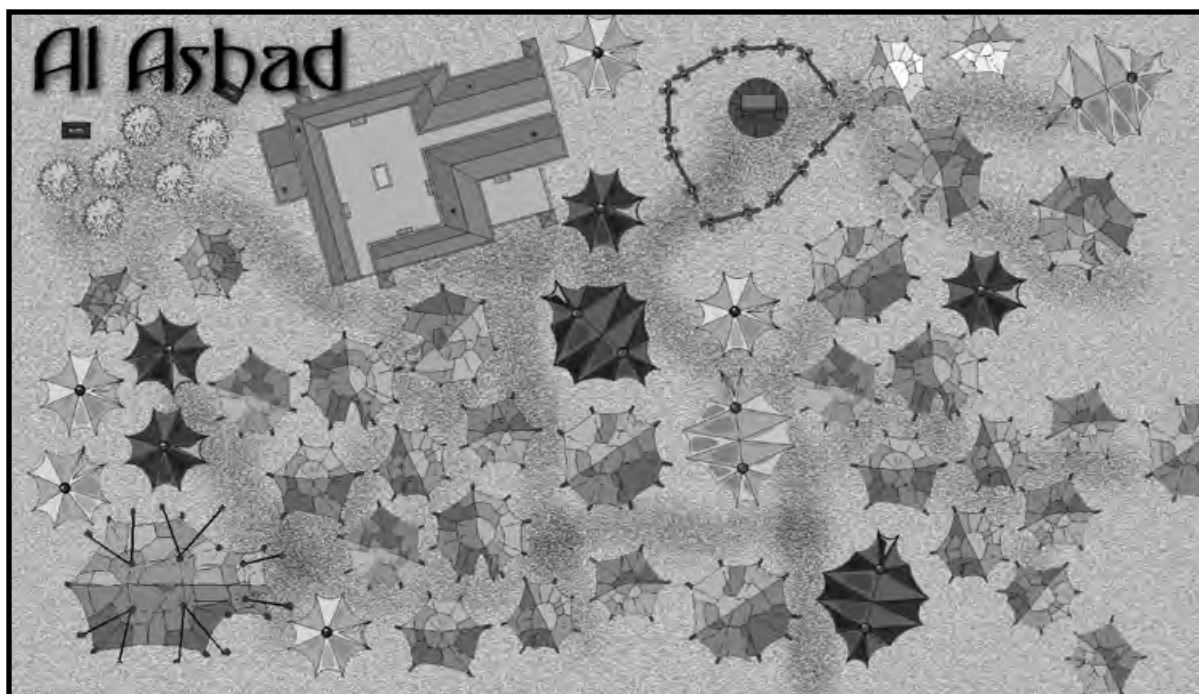
The southernmost of the Djaffar settlements is Al Ashad, which has an average population of several thousand individuals. The population of Al-Ashad varies greatly and in winter months often shrinks to only a few hundred inhabitants. The only permanent structures in the city are the wells that supply it with water and the Palace of the Caliph.


The Palace is a building that dates from before the Great Disaster and serves as the Caliph's permanent residence, though he is rarely there. The Caliph prefers the wandering life of his people and spends most of the year visiting the various tribes that roam Djaffa. Instead the Palace is more commonly used as a meeting place for chiefs to meet and is often used by Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar, leader of the merchant tribes of the Djaffar. The Palace of the Caliph is the only multi-story structure in Al Ashad and as such provides one of the most visible landmarks when navigating the city. Its onion shaped spires can be seen throughout the city, delineating the center of Al Ashad. All the other structures in the city are tents erected by visiting Djaffir and outsiders, though some of these tents

are larger than houses in other lands, containing multiple chambers and lush accoutrements like cushions and rugs. Djaffir who spend more than a few weeks in Al Ashad are often ridiculed by their fellows for growing soft, meaning only the most profit minded Djaffir can stand the social stigma of living there for long periods of time.

The Khaleel of Al Ashad is an ancient Djaffir warrior named Djala al-Ashad who arguably has more power than the Sheiks within Al Ashad. A personal friend of the Caliph and leader of a cadre of loyal water guards, she has been known to cut off entire tribes from the wells of Al Ashad for poor behavior in the city. A strong believer in tradition, the only tenet of Djaffir culture she resists is the traditional role of women. Some suspect she has ties to the Sand Viper bandit tribe. Djala al-Ashad is a strong force of law and order within Al Ashad and one of the primary reasons the city is so populous and welcoming to outsiders.

Al Ashad is the primary settlement of the merchant Djaffir, who make up the majority of the Djaffar population. The inhabitants of Al Ashad are primarily concerned with trade and have little patience for actions that damage their trade relations with other nations, meaning bandits are





not welcome in Al Ashad.

Of course not all merchants are so forthright in their beliefs and deal with bandits on the side, some of which sneak into Al Ashad under the cover of being merchants. Anyone caught stealing within Al Ashad is heavily punished, usually losing at least a hand. Despite these precautions Al Ashad can be a very dangerous town for the unwary due the constant influx people and its chaotic organization. It is easy to get lost in the tent city and it is not difficult for criminals, especially those from other lands, to sneak into the city and leave again after committing a crime. There is no official police force in Al Ashad with each clan expected to police its own members and keep an eye out for outsiders causing trouble. The water guards that report to the Khaleel serve as something of an inter-tribal peacekeeping force, but there is little conflict between the merchant tribes of Al Ashad.

In addition, members of the Caliph's personal guard, the Glorious Few, are always in town keeping the palace secure. They have the authority to render punishment on any Djaffir who is not a chieftain or a Sheikh, and are thus often called in to render punishment while the Caliph is out of town.


Despite the numerous intricacies and eccentricities of Al Ashad it is the Djaffar settlement with the highest number of people from beyond Djaffa. Most of these are merchants from Carantheum, the Seven Kingdoms, Kashmir, or Hadj. All outsiders are welcome in Al Ashad except for the Rajan, who are not welcome anywhere in Djaffa. Once outsiders learn the complexities of local customs, trading in Al Ashad can be very profitable as it serves as the nexus of the Djaffar trading network. Most legal goods can be found here for reasonable prices, though the Djaffar do not have much patience for peddlers of slaves, poisons, or other goods of questionable morality. The Djaffar know their ability to trade with others depends on their treatment of these trade partners, and so often go out of their way to make visitors to Al Ashad comfortable, often throwing parties for visiting merchants. The more cynical visitors to the city see this as some sort of attempt to assuage the guilt

of the merchant Djaffir over their bandit fellows or to lure merchants into returning to Djaffa so they may be robbed.

EL ARAN

Commonly referred to as the Bandit Capital of the Desert, El Aran serves not only as the home of many Djaffir bandits but also bandits from neighboring lands. An international underworld meeting place, it provides a relatively safe place where thieves, bandits, smugglers, and other ne'er-do-wells can meet and do business. While most of the inhabitants of El Aran are Djaffir bandits, criminals from Hadj, Carantheum, Kashmir, Farad, and even other lands can be found in El Aran. The Djaffar keep up their characteristic dislike of the Rajans and other trouble making groups, such as the Rasmirin, are not allowed into El Aran. Generally speaking particularly bloodthirsty criminals are not welcomed either; El Aran is a city of economically motivated individuals, not violence motivated individuals. While the city has a reputation for being a den of thieves, its inhabitants like that reputation and prefer it to being known as a den of murderers. Often such dastardly criminals who come to El Aran seeking asylum are instead executed as soon as they are discovered and their body sent back to their victims along with a bag of coins.

The leader of El Aran is Sheik Djombi al-Aran, an old and cunning bandit who spent most of his life raiding on the sands of Djaffa, eventually becoming chief of his tribe, before being handpicked by the previous Sheikh of El Aran to succeed him. Since then Sheikh Djombi al-Aran has led his people with zeal and a strong eye for opportunity, turning El-Aran from a rough and dangerous town of criminals to a far more peaceful city of contraband commerce. Sheikh Djombi al-Aran is liked by most who live in El Aran, but he has still managed to gain many enemies, particularly among the Rajans after having several Rajan officials assassinated for interfering with his business. Sheikh Djombi al-Aran at his heart is a businessman, preferring to make money easily and without blood shed, a philosophy he has tried to extend to others in El



Aran. He is very loyal to the Djaffar people and comes down hard on any bandit who dares attack another Djaffir, even by mistake.

The Caliph spends two or three months in El-Aran each year as part of his survey of Djaffa, during which time the city is on its best behavior. Sheikh Djombi al-Aran is completely loyal to the Caliph and follows his commands with great faithfulness, though he does not show this loyalty toward his fellow sheikh Djakas ibn-Djumar of al-Ashad. The two do not get along due to the differing goals they espouse, Djakas favoring legal and peaceful trade while Djombi favors wealth for the Djaffar through any means necessary short of murder. The Caliph has done his best to keep both sheiks content, splitting his time between the two cities and showing neither of them particular favoritism. Most visitors avoid El-Aran when the Caliph is in town due to the extra security, toned down entertainment options, and generally paranoid mindset of the locals.

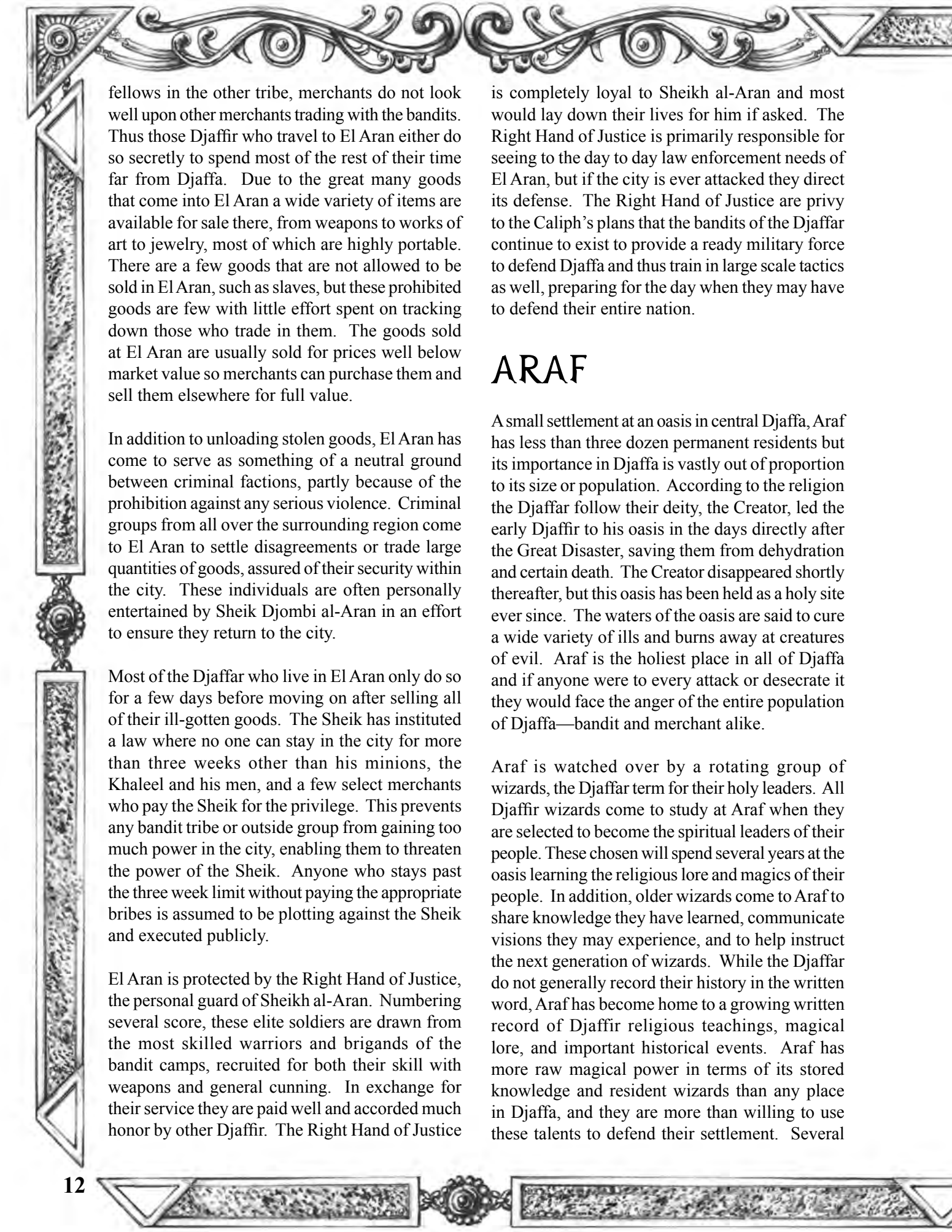
The city of El Aran itself is laid out in a far more organized fashion than al-Ashad thanks to the constant attention of Sheikh al-Aran to the city's needs. This is mainly possible due to the fact that El Aran is much smaller than Al-Ashad, having only one third of its sister city's population. Also Sheikh al-Aran is more energetic about acquiring funds than his fellow Sheikh and he uses most of the money to improve conditions in El Aran. While El Aran only has two permanent buildings, the home of the Caliph when he visits and the town auction house/bank, it has cisterns, sewage ditches, and paved streets. Some of the Djaffar sneer at these changes, but Sheikh al-Aran feels they are necessary to keep outsiders returning to the city.

The wells of El Aran have likewise been improved upon and are protected from accidental spillage by a series of stone walls. The wells in El Aran are the most heavily defended in all of Djaffa according to rumor, with a number of stone walls and several dozen guards on duty at any given time. Sheikh al-Aran realizes that much of his power comes from his control of the local water supply and he has spent much effort and coin consolidating this control. All inhabitants of El Aran are rationed a

limit of one gallon per day, though more can be purchased if desired. The Khaleel of El Aran is an ancient man named Djeril il-Tousen who is said to be over three hundred years old and his guardianship of the water of El Aran predates the founding of the city. Djeril has not commented on the truth of these rumors, but scholars, magicians, and alchemists come from far and wide to learn from him. Djeril il-Tousen has survived several attempted assassinations by outsiders and Sheikh al-Aran's predecessors, but Sheikh al-Aran treats the man with great respect. Some suspect that Djeril il-Tousen is actually the Creator in disguise or one of his minions, and thus he is considered a holy man by many.

In addition to a prohibition against violent criminals, the inhabitants of El Aran prohibit any type of criminal activity within the bounds of the city. Committing crimes is just fine as long as it is kept out of the city, something the minions of Sheik Djombi al-Aran, the Right Hand of Justice, work hard to enforce. There is only one punishment in El Aran; troublemakers are stripped of their possessions and taken six leagues from the city, where they are left to do as they will. If they make it back to the city others may help them if they wish, but few manage to return to El Aran. Because of this policy El Aran is a surprisingly peaceful place despite its rather rambunctious inhabitants. While there is little serious crime in El Aran brawls are common, but these are usually ignored by the Right Hand of Justice as long as no one is seriously wounded.

The business of El Aran is the sale of contraband, most of which has been stolen by Djaffir bandits and brought to the city to unload. Criminals from other lands come to El Aran for similar reasons, seeking to avoid law enforcement, people recognizing their stolen goods, or simply the ease of relaxing in an environment where they need not fear persecution. El Aran is also frequented by merchants, most of which are Farad or Djaffir, who purchase the stolen goods and then sell them in far distant markets. While the Farad are completely open about their trade in previously owned goods, those Djaffir who take part in this trade do so quietly. While all Djaffir have some loyalty to their



fellows in the other tribe, merchants do not look well upon other merchants trading with the bandits. Thus those Djaffir who travel to El Aran either do so secretly to spend most of the rest of their time far from Djaffa. Due to the great many goods that come into El Aran a wide variety of items are available for sale there, from weapons to works of art to jewelry, most of which are highly portable. There are a few goods that are not allowed to be sold in El Aran, such as slaves, but these prohibited goods are few with little effort spent on tracking down those who trade in them. The goods sold at El Aran are usually sold for prices well below market value so merchants can purchase them and sell them elsewhere for full value.

In addition to unloading stolen goods, El Aran has come to serve as something of a neutral ground between criminal factions, partly because of the prohibition against any serious violence. Criminal groups from all over the surrounding region come to El Aran to settle disagreements or trade large quantities of goods, assured of their security within the city. These individuals are often personally entertained by Sheik Djombi al-Aran in an effort to ensure they return to the city.

Most of the Djaffar who live in El Aran only do so for a few days before moving on after selling all of their ill-gotten goods. The Sheik has instituted a law where no one can stay in the city for more than three weeks other than his minions, the Khaleel and his men, and a few select merchants who pay the Sheik for the privilege. This prevents any bandit tribe or outside group from gaining too much power in the city, enabling them to threaten the power of the Sheik. Anyone who stays past the three week limit without paying the appropriate bribes is assumed to be plotting against the Sheik and executed publicly.

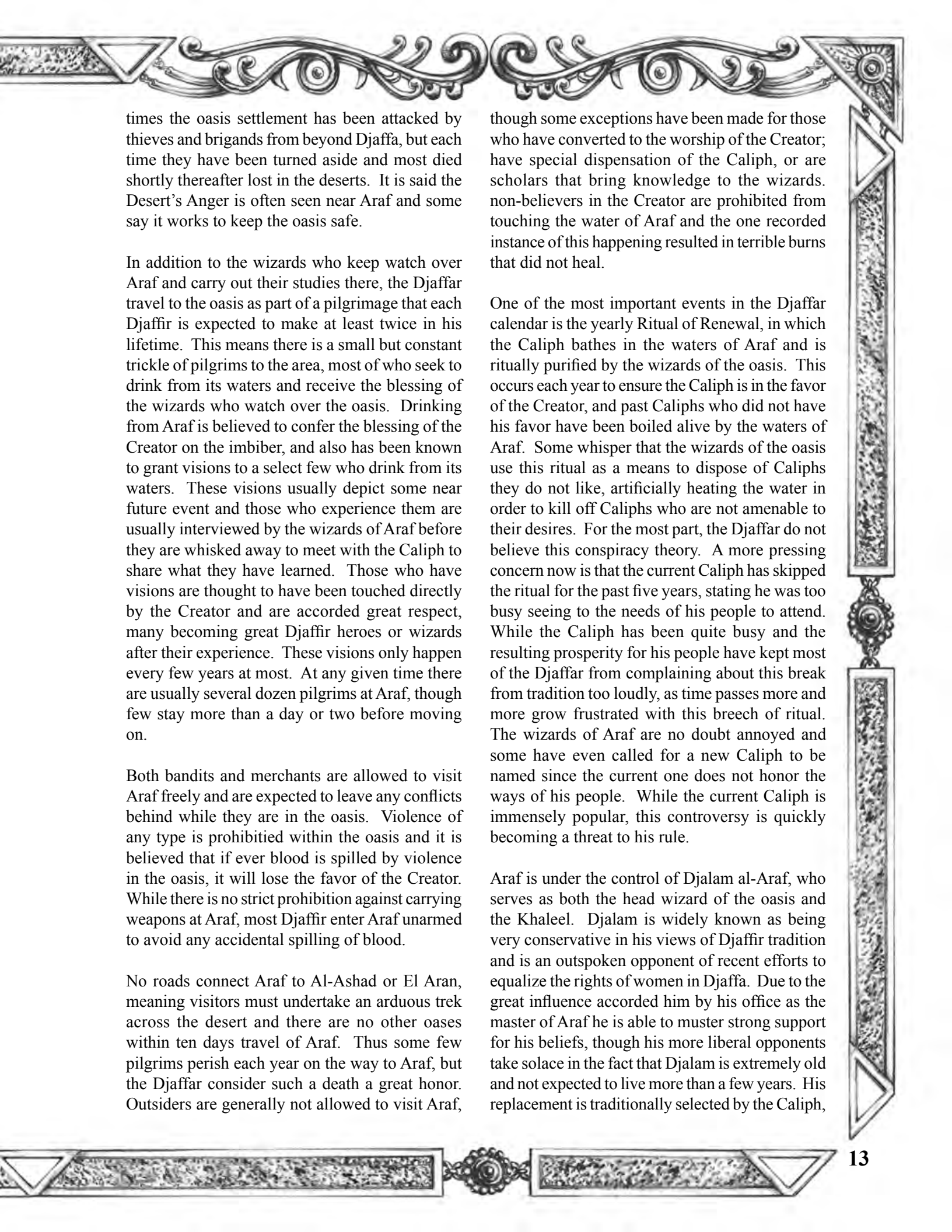
El Aran is protected by the Right Hand of Justice, the personal guard of Sheikh al-Aran. Numbering several score, these elite soldiers are drawn from the most skilled warriors and brigands of the bandit camps, recruited for both their skill with weapons and general cunning. In exchange for their service they are paid well and accorded much honor by other Djaffir. The Right Hand of Justice

is completely loyal to Sheikh al-Aran and most would lay down their lives for him if asked. The Right Hand of Justice is primarily responsible for seeing to the day to day law enforcement needs of El Aran, but if the city is ever attacked they direct its defense. The Right Hand of Justice are privy to the Caliph's plans that the bandits of the Djaffar continue to exist to provide a ready military force to defend Djaffa and thus train in large scale tactics as well, preparing for the day when they may have to defend their entire nation.

ARAF

A small settlement at an oasis in central Djaffa, Araf has less than three dozen permanent residents but its importance in Djaffa is vastly out of proportion to its size or population. According to the religion the Djaffar follow their deity, the Creator, led the early Djaffir to his oasis in the days directly after the Great Disaster, saving them from dehydration and certain death. The Creator disappeared shortly thereafter, but this oasis has been held as a holy site ever since. The waters of the oasis are said to cure a wide variety of ills and burns away at creatures of evil. Araf is the holiest place in all of Djaffa and if anyone were to every attack or desecrate it they would face the anger of the entire population of Djaffa—bandit and merchant alike.

Araf is watched over by a rotating group of wizards, the Djaffar term for their holy leaders. All Djaffir wizards come to study at Araf when they are selected to become the spiritual leaders of their people. These chosen will spend several years at the oasis learning the religious lore and magics of their people. In addition, older wizards come to Araf to share knowledge they have learned, communicate visions they may experience, and to help instruct the next generation of wizards. While the Djaffar do not generally record their history in the written word, Araf has become home to a growing written record of Djaffir religious teachings, magical lore, and important historical events. Araf has more raw magical power in terms of its stored knowledge and resident wizards than any place in Djaffa, and they are more than willing to use these talents to defend their settlement. Several



times the oasis settlement has been attacked by thieves and brigands from beyond Djaffa, but each time they have been turned aside and most died shortly thereafter lost in the deserts. It is said the Desert's Anger is often seen near Araf and some say it works to keep the oasis safe.

In addition to the wizards who keep watch over Araf and carry out their studies there, the Djaffar travel to the oasis as part of a pilgrimage that each Djaffir is expected to make at least twice in his lifetime. This means there is a small but constant trickle of pilgrims to the area, most of who seek to drink from its waters and receive the blessing of the wizards who watch over the oasis. Drinking from Araf is believed to confer the blessing of the Creator on the imbiber, and also has been known to grant visions to a select few who drink from its waters. These visions usually depict some near future event and those who experience them are usually interviewed by the wizards of Araf before they are whisked away to meet with the Caliph to share what they have learned. Those who have visions are thought to have been touched directly by the Creator and are accorded great respect, many becoming great Djaffir heroes or wizards after their experience. These visions only happen every few years at most. At any given time there are usually several dozen pilgrims at Araf, though few stay more than a day or two before moving on.

Both bandits and merchants are allowed to visit Araf freely and are expected to leave any conflicts behind while they are in the oasis. Violence of any type is prohibited within the oasis and it is believed that if ever blood is spilled by violence in the oasis, it will lose the favor of the Creator. While there is no strict prohibition against carrying weapons at Araf, most Djaffir enter Araf unarmed to avoid any accidental spilling of blood.

No roads connect Araf to Al-Ashad or El Aran, meaning visitors must undertake an arduous trek across the desert and there are no other oases within ten days travel of Araf. Thus some few pilgrims perish each year on the way to Araf, but the Djaffar consider such a death a great honor. Outsiders are generally not allowed to visit Araf,

though some exceptions have been made for those who have converted to the worship of the Creator; have special dispensation of the Caliph, or are scholars that bring knowledge to the wizards. non-believers in the Creator are prohibited from touching the water of Araf and the one recorded instance of this happening resulted in terrible burns that did not heal.

One of the most important events in the Djaffar calendar is the yearly Ritual of Renewal, in which the Caliph bathes in the waters of Araf and is ritually purified by the wizards of the oasis. This occurs each year to ensure the Caliph is in the favor of the Creator, and past Caliphs who did not have his favor have been boiled alive by the waters of Araf. Some whisper that the wizards of the oasis use this ritual as a means to dispose of Caliphs they do not like, artificially heating the water in order to kill off Caliphs who are not amenable to their desires. For the most part, the Djaffar do not believe this conspiracy theory. A more pressing concern now is that the current Caliph has skipped the ritual for the past five years, stating he was too busy seeing to the needs of his people to attend. While the Caliph has been quite busy and the resulting prosperity for his people have kept most of the Djaffar from complaining about this break from tradition too loudly, as time passes more and more grow frustrated with this breach of ritual. The wizards of Araf are no doubt annoyed and some have even called for a new Caliph to be named since the current one does not honor the ways of his people. While the current Caliph is immensely popular, this controversy is quickly becoming a threat to his rule.

Araf is under the control of Djalām al-Araf, who serves as both the head wizard of the oasis and the Khaleel. Djalām is widely known as being very conservative in his views of Djaffir tradition and is an outspoken opponent of recent efforts to equalize the rights of women in Djaffa. Due to the great influence accorded him by his office as the master of Araf he is able to muster strong support for his beliefs, though his more liberal opponents take solace in the fact that Djalām is extremely old and not expected to live more than a few years. His replacement is traditionally selected by the Caliph,

but given the Caliph's recent resistance to tradition it remains to be seen if the Caliph's decision will be backed by other wizards.

THE DJAFFAR

It is not only the masks of the Djaffar that make them inscrutable. Most outsiders find their weird mix of calm and emotional restlessness confusing, let alone their preference for living in the deserts as opposed to settling down in the oases of Djaffa. The Djaffar are a complex people who have altered their entire culture to survive in the land they have been given, and they are in no hurry to change their ways.

Most are of average height with tan or olive skin. Their hair is always dark and most wear it short, avoiding the heat build up caused by long hair. During the day Djaffar wear light linen clothes of white or beige color, though some of the wealthier Djaffar merchants wear silk imported from the Kang Empire. At night these light clothes are traded for more protective clothes in order to fight off the cold of the Djaffa night. All Djaffar carry at least one dagger on them at all times, though many carry a scimitar as well. Such weapons are usually kept *peace-bonded* while in a settlement, but on the deserts a Djaffar must always be ready for combat.

More common than weapons, no Djaffar will venture far from their aht-ra mounts. Due to the vast importance this creature plays in the lifestyle of the Djaffar, they are often considered more family than pets and are treated well. A Djaffar who does not treat his aht-ra well has only himself to blame when it fails him in the deep desert, dooming him to a slow and painful death.

ANCESTRY

The exact ancestry of the Djaffar is unknown, but there are a number of theories. The lack of a strong recorded history among the Djaffar is the main reason for this confusion; they do not have any surviving written records of their history before the

Great Disaster and their few myths describing that time are very vague. Their history is concerned more with the Creator than historical events.

The Djaffar are descendants of a large group of nomadic people who were displaced during the Great Disaster, whose descendants can also be found among the Dracartans, the Marukans and others. These ancient nomads survived the Great Disaster by constantly moving to avoid its various dangerous effects, eventually winding up in the desert that would become Djaffa and Carantheum. While these deserts were inhospitable, they were no more dangerous than the surrounding Wilderlands. Thus their new inhabitants remained in them despite the difficult future that life in the desert would lead to.

Those nomads who would become the Djaffar initially had great difficulty surviving in the desert due to a drastic lack of water during the Great Disaster. Water itself was scarce and that water which could be found was often polluted and too contaminated to drink. Thus the Djaffar were almost wiped out by dehydration when a wandering hermit led them to an oasis that would eventually become Araf. This hermit stayed with them a time, giving them lore about how to survive in the desert, the breeding of the aht-ra, and saying that he would watch over them as long as they stayed in the desert. The Djaffar believe this hermit to be a god and thus the religion of the Creator was formed. Several times since then the Creator has reappeared to the Djaffar, both physically and in visions, helping to guide them and protect them from harm.

MERCHANT CLANS

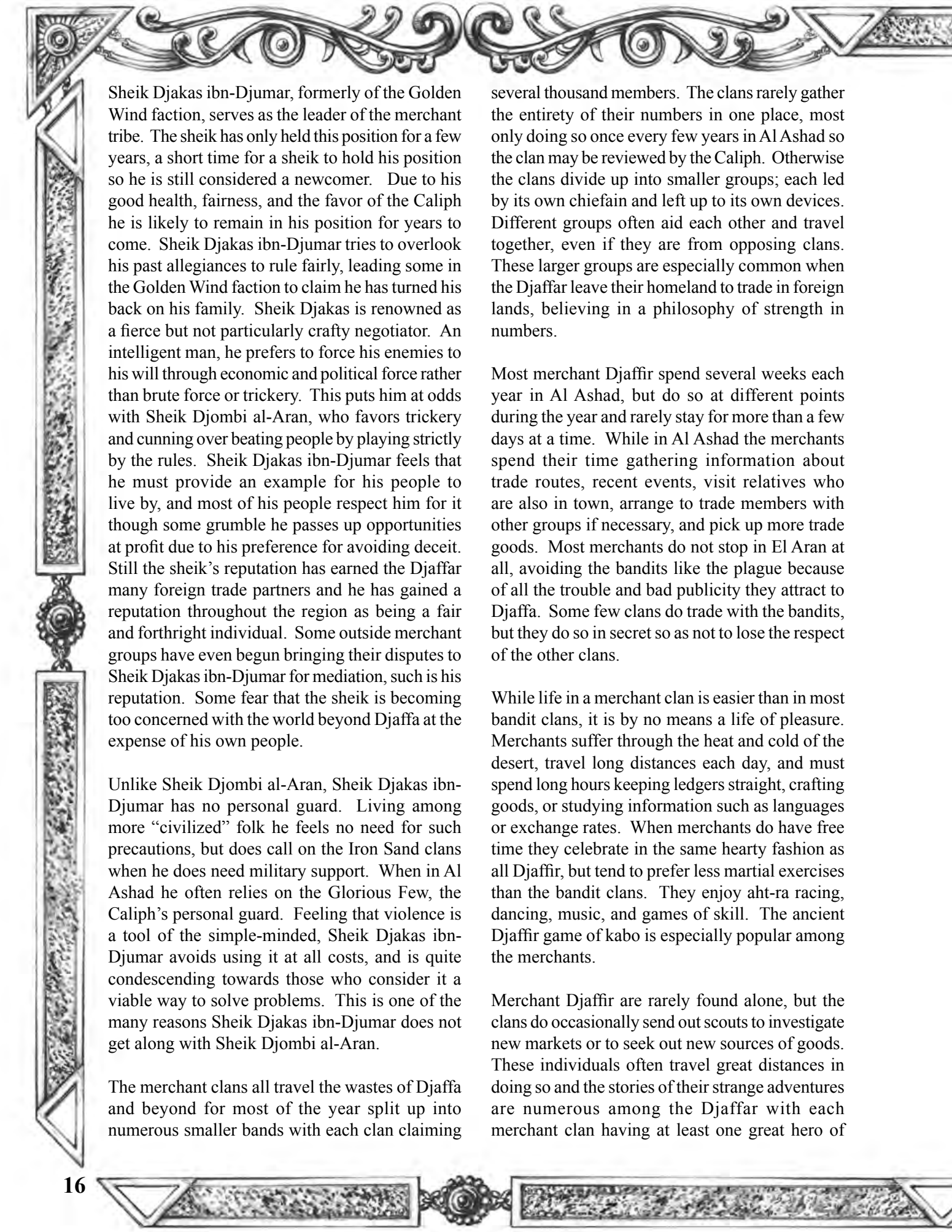
The merchants are the larger of the two tribes within the Djaffar. The merchants are those Djaffar who make their living transporting and selling goods throughout the region surrounding Djaffa, from the Seven Kingdoms to Farad and even beyond. The merchants are the larger, wealthier, and more powerful of the two tribes, but their power lies mainly in money, trade routes, goods,

aht-ra, and cunning rather than military power. The merchants have more influence over the Caliph and the Djaffar government than the bandits, but their power has been slipping in recent years. With recent concessions made to the bandits by the Caliph, some fear the Djaffar may change from being primarily a mercantile people to being primarily bandits.

Led by Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar, the merchants are made up of fifteen different clans, each with its own chiefain, territories, trade routes, and specialties. Most of the tribes specialize in a specific type of good, such as copper and bronze pots, gems, aht-ra, etc. though these specializations are not exclusionary. Any clan can trade anything, but most play to their strengths. Each clan has numerous craftsmen who are skilled in their chosen arts, merchants who are knowledgeable in market prices, and reputations for trading in such goods. Thus it is easier and more efficient for the merchant clans to stay within their specialties, though most do not completely limit themselves. It is

not uncommon for clans to trade members if a Djaffir shows a talent for a craft practiced by another clan, though this is only done with clan allies. Each clan has certain clans that it considers allies, usually due to long standing ties created by geography, trading in similar fields that support each other, or the influence of the Caliph. There are three primary factions among the clans of the merchants, each of which claims five clans. This grouping has lasted for centuries and has been kept in place by the Caliph through careful political maneuvering in order to avoid any one clan or faction from gathering too much power. The clans have been fighting amongst themselves for so long they have never even considered uniting against a common foe, except under the direction of the Caliph. Despite the fact some merchant clans are considered enemies, this means much less than it would in other land. Enemy clans may try to undercut each other's prices or may mock each other in public, but actual violence or sabotage is considered an anathema among the Djaffar. Enemy clans are seen more as friendly rivals than true enemies, something many outsiders miss considering the gusto with which the Djaffar can sling insults.





Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar, formerly of the Golden Wind faction, serves as the leader of the merchant tribe. The sheik has only held this position for a few years, a short time for a sheik to hold his position so he is still considered a newcomer. Due to his good health, fairness, and the favor of the Caliph he is likely to remain in his position for years to come. Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar tries to overlook his past allegiances to rule fairly, leading some in the Golden Wind faction to claim he has turned his back on his family. Sheik Djakas is renowned as a fierce but not particularly crafty negotiator. An intelligent man, he prefers to force his enemies to his will through economic and political force rather than brute force or trickery. This puts him at odds with Sheik Djombi al-Aran, who favors trickery and cunning over beating people by playing strictly by the rules. Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar feels that he must provide an example for his people to live by, and most of his people respect him for it though some grumble he passes up opportunities at profit due to his preference for avoiding deceit. Still the sheik's reputation has earned the Djaffar many foreign trade partners and he has gained a reputation throughout the region as being a fair and forthright individual. Some outside merchant groups have even begun bringing their disputes to Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar for mediation, such is his reputation. Some fear that the sheik is becoming too concerned with the world beyond Djaffa at the expense of his own people.

Unlike Sheik Djombi al-Aran, Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar has no personal guard. Living among more "civilized" folk he feels no need for such precautions, but does call on the Iron Sand clans when he does need military support. When in Al Ashad he often relies on the Glorious Few, the Caliph's personal guard. Feeling that violence is a tool of the simple-minded, Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar avoids using it at all costs, and is quite condescending towards those who consider it a viable way to solve problems. This is one of the many reasons Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar does not get along with Sheik Djombi al-Aran.


The merchant clans all travel the wastes of Djaffa and beyond for most of the year split up into numerous smaller bands with each clan claiming

several thousand members. The clans rarely gather the entirety of their numbers in one place, most only doing so once every few years in Al Ashad so the clan may be reviewed by the Caliph. Otherwise the clans divide up into smaller groups; each led by its own chiefain and left up to its own devices. Different groups often aid each other and travel together, even if they are from opposing clans. These larger groups are especially common when the Djaffar leave their homeland to trade in foreign lands, believing in a philosophy of strength in numbers.

Most merchant Djaffir spend several weeks each year in Al Ashad, but do so at different points during the year and rarely stay for more than a few days at a time. While in Al Ashad the merchants spend their time gathering information about trade routes, recent events, visit relatives who are also in town, arrange to trade members with other groups if necessary, and pick up more trade goods. Most merchants do not stop in El Aran at all, avoiding the bandits like the plague because of all the trouble and bad publicity they attract to Djaffa. Some few clans do trade with the bandits, but they do so in secret so as not to lose the respect of the other clans.

While life in a merchant clan is easier than in most bandit clans, it is by no means a life of pleasure. Merchants suffer through the heat and cold of the desert, travel long distances each day, and must spend long hours keeping ledgers straight, crafting goods, or studying information such as languages or exchange rates. When merchants do have free time they celebrate in the same hearty fashion as all Djaffir, but tend to prefer less martial exercises than the bandit clans. They enjoy aht-ra racing, dancing, music, and games of skill. The ancient Djaffir game of kabo is especially popular among the merchants.

Merchant Djaffir are rarely found alone, but the clans do occasionally send out scouts to investigate new markets or to seek out new sources of goods. These individuals often travel great distances in doing so and the stories of their strange adventures are numerous among the Djaffar with each merchant clan having at least one great hero of



legend who left Djaffa in search of profit. These individuals are usually heroes of a trickster nature, overcoming enemies with craft and guile instead of strength, and being sent on such a mission is the dream of many children in Djaffa who crave adventure.

Despite the fact that Djaffir merchants often acquire a sizeable fortune in their lifetime, they only own as much as they can transport. Any particularly bulky belongings are traded for something more portable and most merchants have an abundance of gems, jewels, and other small but valuable items. Djaffir consider the idea of owning land something that only the Caliph can do within Djaffa and owning land outside their homeland is of no interest to them. Often Djaffir merchants have herds of aht-ra that serve as their source of wealth, being both highly valuable and portable.

THE GOLDEN WIND MERCHANT FACTION

The best known of the merchant factions outside of Djaffa, the Golden Wind faction is the richest of the merchant factions and mostly deals in high end goods, such as gems, jewelry, precious spices, and other items that have a high profit to size ratio. The Golden Wind is the smallest of the three merchant factions and its members like to keep it that way so they can keep more of the profit for themselves. The Golden Wind is commonly seen in neighboring lands due to the ease with which they travel thanks to their light cargo and most of their trade is carried out with people from beyond Djaffa. The rivals of the Golden Wind claim they are growing soft and are becoming more like outsiders than their fellow Djaffir, with some Golden Wind even renting buildings in foreign lands to live in while they visit. While the Golden Wind claim this is simply an attempt to mesh with the cultures of others, many in Djaffir see it as a sign of weakness.

The Golden Wind was led by Djakas ibn-Djumar before he was selected by his fellows to serve as sheik after the last sheik died without an heir. Since becoming sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar has done little to help his former faction, which some see as a betrayal. The new leader Djaikar ibn-Djousaff, is much more of a faction loyalist and seeks to use his position to influence Djaffa into modernizing to be more like the outside world. Considered something of a radical by those outside his faction, he has even advocated building more permanent structures in Al Ashad, something that has received wide condemnation. Djaikar ibn-Djousaff has decided to back off on these plans of modernization for now and instead show the Djaffar the economic benefits of closer ties with the world beyond their deserts.

The foremost clan among the Golden Wind faction is the Wind Jewel clan, which specializes in spices and magical items which they purchase in the Seven Kingdoms and from Phantasian Dream Merchants. While the Wind Jewel clan has a very small customer base, each of their transactions generates an immense amount of profit. They subscribe to Sheik Djaikar ibn-Djousaff's plans of modernization in some respects, favoring more ties with the world beyond Djaffa, but do not favor the changing of traditions within Djaffa itself. The Wind Jewel clan has the highest number of wizards per capita of any clan in Djaffa and its wizards are renowned for their skill and wisdom. They are widely sought out for advice and often join other clans who are short on wizards, thus the Wind Jewel clan has a wide network of allies and generates a large amount of good will among other clans. The Wind Jewel clan is a very popular clan, and are all the more so because of their willingness to share their wealth with other Djaffir. The Wind Jewel merchants are well known for giving to the poor and the needy and are considered by many to be symbol of proper Djaffir generosity. They are the clan that is the most capable of gaining support across faction lines and is considered by many to be the most powerful clan in all of Djaffa.

THE DESERT STAR MERCHANT FACTION

The Desert Star faction specializes in merchandise that moves itself, such as aht-ra and other beasts of burden sold by the Djaffar. While all Djaffir clans breed their own aht-ra, those bred by the clans of the Desert Star are generally considered better trained, in better health, and all around superior animals compared to the other clans. In addition to aht-ra of all types the Desert Star also breed numerous other animals, from Ogriphants to land lizards to malathrax, and sell them in both Djaffa and the lands beyond. Most Desert Star clans also do business in a number of other crafts, usually leatherworking, but a great many also make a living at map making. While Djaffir usually do not trust maps within their own lands due to the changing nature of the desert, Desert Star maps of the world beyond Djaffa are very detailed based on their own travels and are used by both Djaffir and others when traveling. These maps are freely traded with most neighboring countries, but allowing a Rajan to possess one is considered a grave crime due to the information they could gain from it.

More so than other merchant factions, the Desert Star clans are always on the move making sure their animal charges have sufficient food and water. They often wander far outside of Djaffa in order to acquire supplies for their creatures and are always looking for new animals to add to their collection. When a Desert Star Djaffir spots a new animal he will immediately try to discern if it has any commercial use and if it does, will try to capture it. Despite this mercenary behavior, the Desert Star Djaffir train their animals well, especially the aht-ra due to a commonly held belief that aht-ra are the reincarnated spirits of Djaffir who earned great honor in their lives. For most Desert Star clansmen they treat their animals as family and prefer not to sell to people who show a lesser degree of care for their creatures. Of the merchant factions the

Desert Star are the most violent and vengeful. They are more than willing to physically stop their customers from harming animals purchased from the Desert Star and have been known to steal back animals from particularly abusive owners. There are rumors of Desert Star clansmen assassinating particularly cruel past customers, but these are not widely believed. Still, striking a creature owned by a Desert Star is a good way to end up on the sharp end of a scimitar.

The foremost clan of the Desert Star faction is the Sky Riders, a clan who specializes in raising winged aht-ra. The winged aht-ra are the most sought after mounts among the Djaffar and only a small number are present in each clan which are usually reserved for clan leaders to convey messages quickly across Djaffa. The Sky Riders sell winged aht-ra both within and without Djaffa and do a strong business in Carantheum and the Seven Kingdoms where aht-ra are proving increasingly popular in the face of the expense of windships. In addition to raising and training winged aht-ra, the Sky Riders serve as the messengers and mail carriers of Djaffa with a score of their best riders always at the beck and call of the Caliph to deliver important messages across the country as quickly as possible. All major Djaffir settlements or caravans have at least one Sky Rider messenger present in case an emergency message must be delivered. Because of this the Sky Riders are very knowledgeable in recent events and form the most effective information network in Djaffa. A Sky Rider arriving at a caravan is usually beset by questions about what is going on inside and outside of Djaffa, and most are more than willing to share this information. When ordered to keep their messages secret the Sky Riders always do so, and some believe they serve as a spy force for the Caliph in addition to being messengers because Sky Riders are common everywhere, learn a lot of private information, and are able to travel quickly. The Sky Riders have remained silent on this rumor, but they do seem to spend a lot of time advising the Caliph of late. The leader of the Sky Riders, Chief Djala el-Djas, is one of the few female clan chiefs, having attained her position through expert knowledge of breeding and training the winged aht-ra.

THE IRON SAND MERCHANT FACTION

While the Iron Sand merchant faction is the most numerous of the three factions, in the eyes of many they are considered the lowest in terms of stature among the Djaffar. In addition to being traders, the Iron Sand merchants are also craftsmen, creating mostly bronze, copper, and leather goods that they then sell. While the Golden Wind collects their spices and gems and the Desert Star raise their animals, they have few true craftsmen within their ranks. In fact many goods sold by the Golden Wind and Desert Star factions are made by the craftsmen of the Iron Sand clans. While there is no traditional prejudice against craftsmen or those who work with their own hands among the Djaffar, the Iron Sand clans tend to be the least profitable of the merchant Djaffir, thus the least respected in the eyes of many. Politically they have as much pull as anyone else and to have one distinct advantage over the Golden Wind and Desert Star factions: military power.

While all Djaffir are practiced with scimitar and bow and are expected to ride forth at the command of their leaders to defend the nation and its people, the Iron Sand merchant clans are more prepared than most clans. Outfitted with better weapons and armor, they also train more often than any other merchant clan.

This combination means that should war come to Djaffa, the Iron Sand clans will be the core of the merchant military forces. Due to their dedication, the Caliph selects the majority of his personal guard, the Glorious Few, from this clan, a fact few other clans have missed. This gives the Iron Sand clans a direct path to the Caliph's ear despite their relative lack of wealth or other sources of influence. There are always rumors that the Glorious Few are in fact the rulers of Djaffa and the Caliph is nothing but a figurehead, but these are generally dismissed. The rising activity level

of the Glorious Few in Djaffir politics has caused some to pause though and give thought to what previously seemed a ridiculous conspiracy.

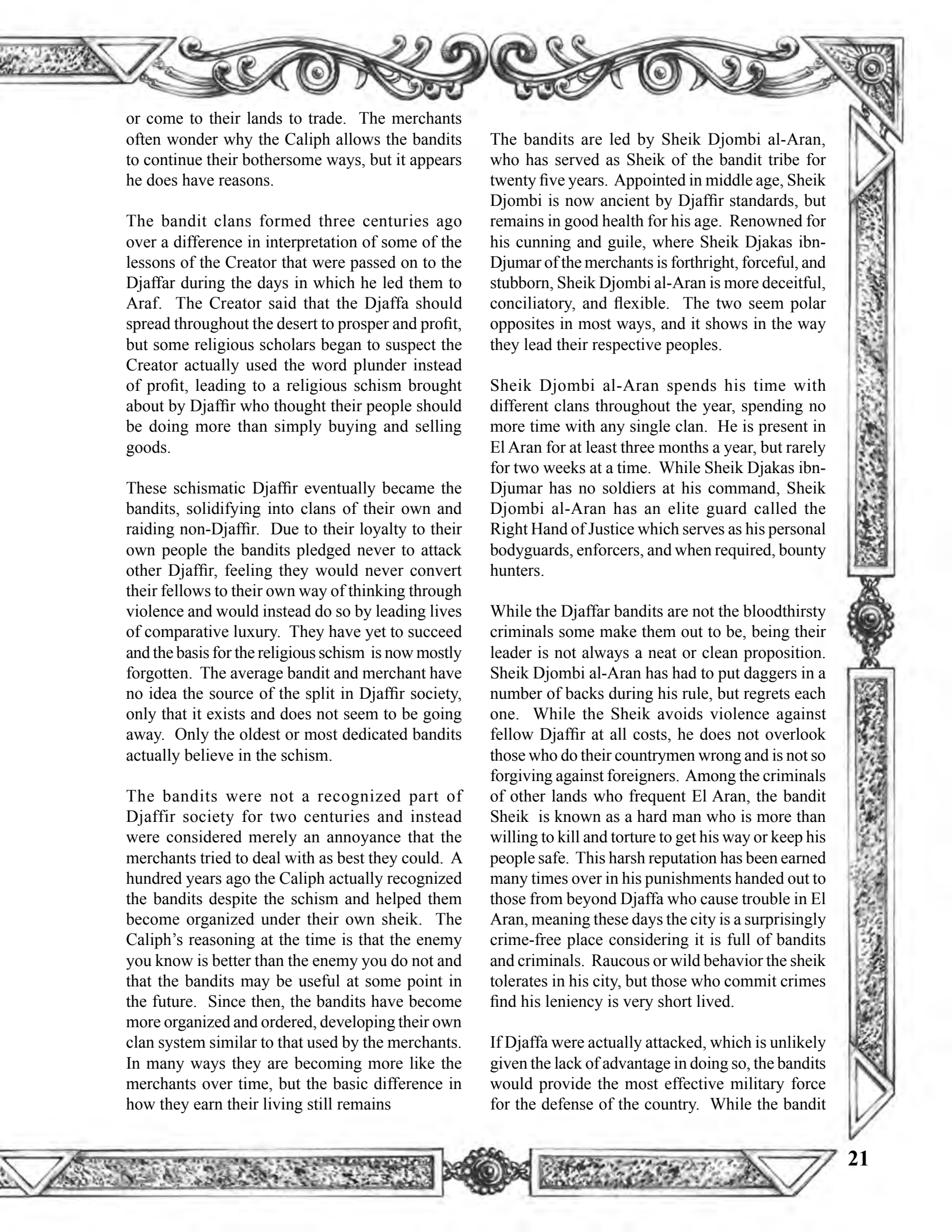
While the Iron Sand clans do not spend much time in Al Ashad, they do not move around as often as many other clans due to their mining operations and the great weight of their crafting equipment. Iron Sand clans can often be found mining the rocky outcroppings that dot Djaffa, and are the merchant clans that most often travel into the Rocklands, which is commonly thought to be bandit territory. In many of the particularly mineral rich areas the Iron Sand clans have constructed permanent forges and smelting equipment which they travel between as needed. In addition the clans have portable versions of the same equipment, but they are usually not as efficient as the more permanent equipment.

The foremost clan of the Iron Sand clans is the Stone Herders who do most of the mining for the Iron Sand clans. While each clan does mine some of its own raw materials, the Stone Herders specialize in it and produce far more than any other clan. They sell the materials gained to other clans within Djaffa and buyers outside the country as well, but most of their goods go to other Iron Sand clans. This gives the Stone Herders a good deal of influence over the other clans since they control a large part of the supply of raw materials. Luckily the Stone Herders do not abuse this advantage and sell their goods to other Iron Sand clans at lower prices than other buyers.

BANDITS' CLANS

While the merchants are concerned with making a living through the peaceful trading of goods, the bandit clans of the Djaffa earn their living by stealing from outsiders. While the bandit clans are not particularly bloodthirsty and usually go out of their way to avoid casualties, their choice of disreputable lifestyle does not win them many friends either inside or outside of Djaffa. While the bandits do not attack other Djaffir, the trouble they cause does not encourage outsiders to trust Djaffir





or come to their lands to trade. The merchants often wonder why the Caliph allows the bandits to continue their bothersome ways, but it appears he does have reasons.

The bandit clans formed three centuries ago over a difference in interpretation of some of the lessons of the Creator that were passed on to the Djaffar during the days in which he led them to Araf. The Creator said that the Djaffa should spread throughout the desert to prosper and profit, but some religious scholars began to suspect the Creator actually used the word plunder instead of profit, leading to a religious schism brought about by Djaffir who thought their people should be doing more than simply buying and selling goods.

These schismatic Djaffir eventually became the bandits, solidifying into clans of their own and raiding non-Djaffir. Due to their loyalty to their own people the bandits pledged never to attack other Djaffir, feeling they would never convert their fellows to their own way of thinking through violence and would instead do so by leading lives of comparative luxury. They have yet to succeed and the basis for the religious schism is now mostly forgotten. The average bandit and merchant have no idea the source of the split in Djaffir society, only that it exists and does not seem to be going away. Only the oldest or most dedicated bandits actually believe in the schism.

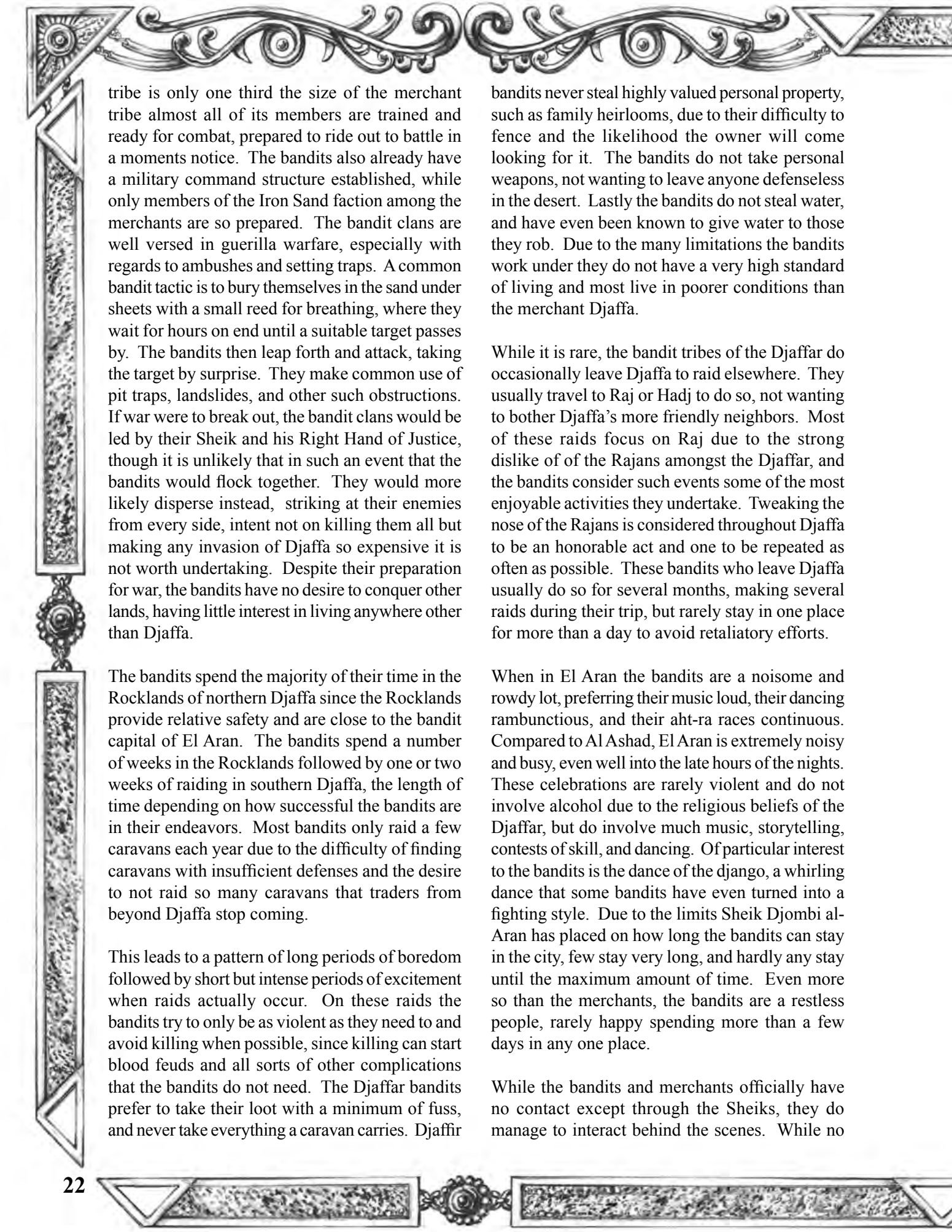
The bandits were not a recognized part of Djaffir society for two centuries and instead were considered merely an annoyance that the merchants tried to deal with as best they could. A hundred years ago the Caliph actually recognized the bandits despite the schism and helped them become organized under their own sheik. The Caliph's reasoning at the time is that the enemy you know is better than the enemy you do not and that the bandits may be useful at some point in the future. Since then, the bandits have become more organized and ordered, developing their own clan system similar to that used by the merchants. In many ways they are becoming more like the merchants over time, but the basic difference in how they earn their living still remains

The bandits are led by Sheik Djombi al-Aran, who has served as Sheik of the bandit tribe for twenty five years. Appointed in middle age, Sheik Djombi is now ancient by Djaffir standards, but remains in good health for his age. Renowned for his cunning and guile, where Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar of the merchants is forthright, forceful, and stubborn, Sheik Djombi al-Aran is more deceitful, conciliatory, and flexible. The two seem polar opposites in most ways, and it shows in the way they lead their respective peoples.

Sheik Djombi al-Aran spends his time with different clans throughout the year, spending no more time with any single clan. He is present in El Aran for at least three months a year, but rarely for two weeks at a time. While Sheik Djakas ibn-Djumar has no soldiers at his command, Sheik Djombi al-Aran has an elite guard called the Right Hand of Justice which serves as his personal bodyguards, enforcers, and when required, bounty hunters.

While the Djaffar bandits are not the bloodthirsty criminals some make them out to be, being their leader is not always a neat or clean proposition. Sheik Djombi al-Aran has had to put daggers in a number of backs during his rule, but regrets each one. While the Sheik avoids violence against fellow Djaffir at all costs, he does not overlook those who do their countrymen wrong and is not so forgiving against foreigners. Among the criminals of other lands who frequent El Aran, the bandit Sheik is known as a hard man who is more than willing to kill and torture to get his way or keep his people safe. This harsh reputation has been earned many times over in his punishments handed out to those from beyond Djaffa who cause trouble in El Aran, meaning these days the city is a surprisingly crime-free place considering it is full of bandits and criminals. Raucous or wild behavior the sheik tolerates in his city, but those who commit crimes find his leniency is very short lived.

If Djaffa were actually attacked, which is unlikely given the lack of advantage in doing so, the bandits would provide the most effective military force for the defense of the country. While the bandit



tribe is only one third the size of the merchant tribe almost all of its members are trained and ready for combat, prepared to ride out to battle in a moments notice. The bandits also already have a military command structure established, while only members of the Iron Sand faction among the merchants are so prepared. The bandit clans are well versed in guerilla warfare, especially with regards to ambushes and setting traps. A common bandit tactic is to bury themselves in the sand under sheets with a small reed for breathing, where they wait for hours on end until a suitable target passes by. The bandits then leap forth and attack, taking the target by surprise. They make common use of pit traps, landslides, and other such obstructions. If war were to break out, the bandit clans would be led by their Sheik and his Right Hand of Justice, though it is unlikely that in such an event that the bandits would flock together. They would more likely disperse instead, striking at their enemies from every side, intent not on killing them all but making any invasion of Djaffa so expensive it is not worth undertaking. Despite their preparation for war, the bandits have no desire to conquer other lands, having little interest in living anywhere other than Djaffa.

The bandits spend the majority of their time in the Rocklands of northern Djaffa since the Rocklands provide relative safety and are close to the bandit capital of El Aran. The bandits spend a number of weeks in the Rocklands followed by one or two weeks of raiding in southern Djaffa, the length of time depending on how successful the bandits are in their endeavors. Most bandits only raid a few caravans each year due to the difficulty of finding caravans with insufficient defenses and the desire to not raid so many caravans that traders from beyond Djaffa stop coming.


This leads to a pattern of long periods of boredom followed by short but intense periods of excitement when raids actually occur. On these raids the bandits try to only be as violent as they need to and avoid killing when possible, since killing can start blood feuds and all sorts of other complications that the bandits do not need. The Djaffar bandits prefer to take their loot with a minimum of fuss, and never take everything a caravan carries. Djaffar

bandits never steal highly valued personal property, such as family heirlooms, due to their difficulty to fence and the likelihood the owner will come looking for it. The bandits do not take personal weapons, not wanting to leave anyone defenseless in the desert. Lastly the bandits do not steal water, and have even been known to give water to those they rob. Due to the many limitations the bandits work under they do not have a very high standard of living and most live in poorer conditions than the merchant Djaffa.

While it is rare, the bandit tribes of the Djaffar do occasionally leave Djaffa to raid elsewhere. They usually travel to Raj or Hadj to do so, not wanting to bother Djaffa's more friendly neighbors. Most of these raids focus on Raj due to the strong dislike of of the Rajans amongst the Djaffar, and the bandits consider such events some of the most enjoyable activities they undertake. Tweaking the nose of the Rajans is considered throughout Djaffa to be an honorable act and one to be repeated as often as possible. These bandits who leave Djaffa usually do so for several months, making several raids during their trip, but rarely stay in one place for more than a day to avoid retaliatory efforts.

When in El Aran the bandits are a noisome and rowdy lot, preferring their music loud, their dancing rambunctious, and their aht-ra races continuous. Compared to Al Ashad, El Aran is extremely noisy and busy, even well into the late hours of the nights. These celebrations are rarely violent and do not involve alcohol due to the religious beliefs of the Djaffar, but do involve much music, storytelling, contests of skill, and dancing. Of particular interest to the bandits is the dance of the django, a whirling dance that some bandits have even turned into a fighting style. Due to the limits Sheik Djombi al-Aran has placed on how long the bandits can stay in the city, few stay very long, and hardly any stay until the maximum amount of time. Even more so than the merchants, the bandits are a restless people, rarely happy spending more than a few days in any one place.

While the bandits and merchants officially have no contact except through the Sheiks, they do manage to interact behind the scenes. While no



merchant will admit to trading with the bandits, a few do so discretely, buying stolen goods and then selling them somewhere they will not be noticed, such as Faradun or even the cities of Zandu. This is how the bandits make most of their money, since one cannot live on a stolen cargo of coal very effectively. The bandits also sell to various outsiders, including the Farad and Dracartans. Most of these deals take place in El Aran, and fences far and wide know that El Aran is the best place to pick up stolen goods cheap. The Farad gather a large amount of the previously owned goods here, though personally the Djaffar often find the Farad annoying and untrustworthy.

The bandit Djaffa have not broken into factions as the merchants have, instead remaining as a large number of independent clans connected by blood, mercantile ties, and convenience. These clans ally with each other as need requires and usually part company after splitting any plunder earned. While clans do sometimes develop particularly strong rivalries, these rarely progress beyond horse races or practical jokes. Any more serious attacks between clans are usually met with fierce punishments by the sheik. Each clan usually has three or four allied clans it works with regularly and one or two rivals. There are thirty bandit clans overall, ranging from ten to three hundred members. New ones appear and old ones disappear regularly, though the largest clans have been around for at least a century.

Of late two bandit clans have attracted a particularly large amount of attention due to their unusual activities. The first of these, the Sun Avir clan, is the only bandit clan that is mostly made up of women. The Sun Avir clan has gained notoriety for going against tradition and allowing men in the clan only one wife and according women all the other rights than men have. This has caused a number of other more traditional clans, both merchant and bandit, to call on both the Caliph and the Sheiks to do something about the Sun Avirs, but as yet there has been no move to stop their actions. The leader of the clan, Djalai al-Aran, is said by some to be a close friend of the Caliph and that her clan's rebellion is part of a calculated plan to change the social structure of Djaffa. What the truth is, few people know.

The other tribe of note is the Blood Sand clan, one of the largest bandit clans in Djaffa. This clan has sworn off raiding merchants in favor of causing trouble solely for the Rajans, often riding into Raj in raids. While many of the Djaffar applaud their efforts, especially among the bandit clans, the merchants and the sheiks are concerned their behavior may provoke Raj into all out war. So far their attacks have been limited to the outer settlements of Raj, but the clan has been growing bolder over time.

CUSTOMS

While a good portion of the Djaffar make their living through banditry, the Djaffar are a surprisingly non-violent people. The merchant Djaffir only fight in self defense and generally see the whole enterprise of war as being very unprofitable. The Djaffar hold the lives of most people as being worth far more than money can measure, but for certain groups of particularly odious individuals, such as the Rajans, they make exceptions. Bandit Djaffir try to go about their business with a minimum of bloodshed, and can usually be bribed relatively easily into leaving caravans alone. Many of the foreigners who travel through Djaffa now consider bribes for bandits they encounter as being a standard cost of business, especially since bribing one clan means that clan will try and steer other bandit clans from making trouble for the caravan. Some foreign merchants have been bribing the same bandits for so long that a bandit clan has actually become mercenary guards for the merchant rather than a potential threat. Such longstanding and familiar relationships are few and far between however.

Many outsiders who do not visit Djaffa often claim that there is no clear division between the merchant and bandit clans. While there is interaction between the two Djaffir tribes, suggesting such a level of collusion between the two is considered a severe insult to the merchant Djaffar and a very funny joke to the bandit Djaffar. Most visitors to Djaffa quickly learn that broaching such topics is a sticky situation and leave it alone.

One of the longstanding and closely held traditions of the Djaffar is one of hospitality. All Djaffir are bound by custom to grant shelter, food, and water to any who ask it, be they friend, enemy, or stranger. Most Djaffir believe this custom to also require them to grant assistance to those who need it even if they don't ask for it and secretly helping those too proud to ask is considered an art by many in Djaffa. The Djaffar consider generosity an important virtue and even bandits are known to give food and water to those they steal from if their victims are in need. Anyone who hoards water or other supplies is seen as an evil miser and shunned by the community until they change their ways.

This is
one of


the reasons that so many merchants come to Djaffa to trade despite its harsh environment and bandit attacks; the foreign merchants know that they can always get help should they need it.

Among the Djaffar, women are not accorded all the same rights as men with men being able to take multiple wives and hold the title of Sheik. Women are allowed to do anything else, but these two things are denied them. For centuries these traditions have remained unchallenged, but in recent years a number of movements have begun to spring up among the Djaffar seeking to truly equalize the place of women in society. While this movement has yet to gain widespread support, the Caliph has made no moves to condemn or support it, appearing to many to give tacit approval to this call for change. This movement for women's rights is strongest among the bandit clans and some clans have already abolished all inequalities between men and women.

THE MASKS OF THE DJAFFAR

The most unusual custom of the Djaffar are the fetish masks they all wear when in public. This tradition stems back from the early days of their lives in Djaffa shortly after the Creator left after showing them the way to Araf. According to Djaffir legend, in those days the Djaffar only wore masks during sandstorms to protect their faces from the stinging sand. Then a magician of great power and evil came to Djaffa, fleeing the havoc created by the





Great Disaster. This magician, named Siril, sought to conquer the Djaffar and bend them to his will, eventually planning to forge them into a mounted army he could use to conquer the entire region. Siril had many initial successes, largely due to the fact he could grasp the soul of anyone whose face he could see, allowing him to fully control their bodies. Using this magical talent—which has not been recorded since—Siril turned the Djaffa against themselves, creating an army of soul bound warriors under his control. Eventually a group of Djaffir ambushed Siril in a sandstorm while wearing their masks and Siril could not affect them with his most powerful magics. Siril is believed to have been killed during that battle, but no body was ever found. To this day there are rumors of Siril sightings throughout Djaffa and he is a common bogeyman in the stories told to Djaffir children. Few of adult age believe he still lives though.

The conflict with Siril was the most destructive in the history of Djaffa, especially because it consisted of Djaffir fighting each other. It is estimated a third of the Djaffar population died in the many battles that Siril instigated, and so when the magician was gone, the Djaffar were very concerned about these events occurring again, especially since Siril's body was not found.

Thus the Djaffar adopted the tactic of constantly wearing their sandstorm masks in order to prevent similar magics from affecting them. Over time this practice has become the expected norm of Djaffa, so much so that Djaffir masks are now commonly enchanted against mind-affecting magics. The wizards of the Djaffar are responsible for the construction of fetish masks.

Some outsiders claim the Djaffar wear masks simply to hide their face so they may steal from and trade with the same person without arousing suspicion by changing masks. Making such a charge in front of a Djaffir is a good way to be challenged to a duel or be refused hospitality, one of the most grievous insults a Djaffir can offer.

Each mask is unique and its appearance is determined by the wizard creating it based on the

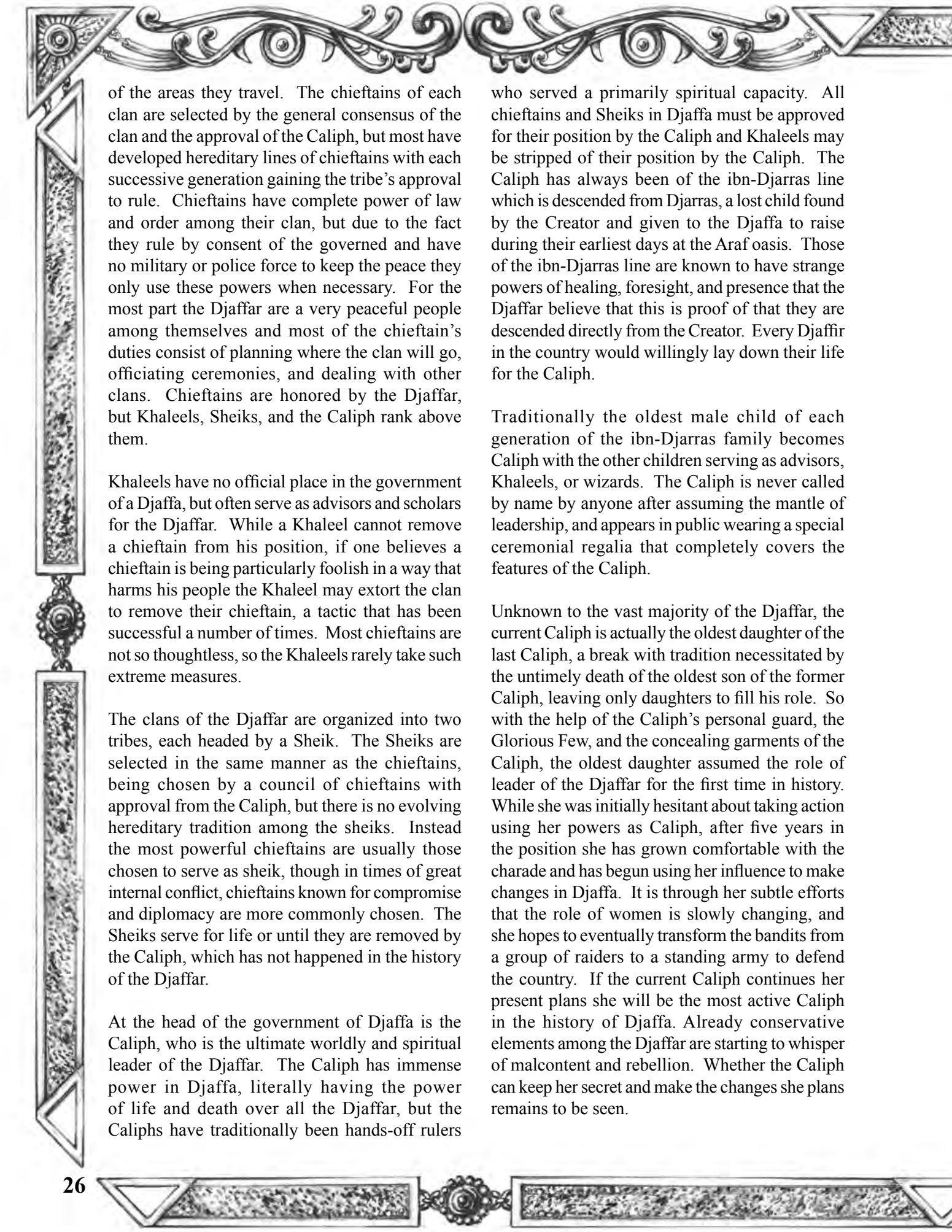
soul of the wearer. Generally speaking once a Djaffir's mask is created the Djaffar may change masks as he grows older, but the basic design of the mask will never change without some drastic change in the wearer's life, such as changing clans or being exiled from Djaffa. While Djaffir design their masks to be pleasing to the eye, they do not decorate them with jewels or other precious objects. To do so would be seen as an amazing show of arrogance and evidence of the fact the Djaffar owning such a mask considers their soul more important than those of others. Several foreigners have made the mistake of making gifts of such items over the years, and always received a cold response to their generosity.

Black is never used except in the masks of the most notorious criminals of Djaffa as it is a color of dishonor among the Djaffar. Anyone wearing a black mask will receive a cold reception among the Djaffar and those who are punished with black on their mask are cursed by the Djaffar wizards so any masks they wear slowly turns black, making it impossible to escape their past misdeeds.

Merchant Djaffir usually color their masks white and then decorate them with red, silver, or gold highlights. Bandit Djaffir usually leave their leather masks a natural brown color and decorate them to look like fierce animals of the desert, such as the sand kra. Thus a horde of bandit Djaffir charging in on aht-rak is a terrifying sight to behold. The bandit Djaffir do not feel so strongly about the ornamentation of their masks and occasionally add gemstones to their masks, but rarely do so in an ostentatious manner.

GOVERNMENT

The Djaffar do not have a very strict structure of government, instead bending and conforming to the needs of their people and the demands of the desert. The basic units of government organization are clans, each of which is led by a chieftain. These clans usually number from ten to one thousand members and often break up into smaller groups while traveling in order to not overtax the resources



of the areas they travel. The chieftains of each clan are selected by the general consensus of the clan and the approval of the Caliph, but most have developed hereditary lines of chieftains with each successive generation gaining the tribe's approval to rule. Chieftains have complete power of law and order among their clan, but due to the fact they rule by consent of the governed and have no military or police force to keep the peace they only use these powers when necessary. For the most part the Djaffar are a very peaceful people among themselves and most of the chieftain's duties consist of planning where the clan will go, officiating ceremonies, and dealing with other clans. Chieftains are honored by the Djaffar, but Khaleels, Sheiks, and the Caliph rank above them.

Khaleels have no official place in the government of a Djaffa, but often serve as advisors and scholars for the Djaffar. While a Khaleel cannot remove a chieftain from his position, if one believes a chieftain is being particularly foolish in a way that harms his people the Khaleel may extort the clan to remove their chieftain, a tactic that has been successful a number of times. Most chieftains are not so thoughtless, so the Khaleels rarely take such extreme measures.

The clans of the Djaffar are organized into two tribes, each headed by a Sheik. The Sheiks are selected in the same manner as the chieftains, being chosen by a council of chieftains with approval from the Caliph, but there is no evolving hereditary tradition among the sheiks. Instead the most powerful chieftains are usually those chosen to serve as sheik, though in times of great internal conflict, chieftains known for compromise and diplomacy are more commonly chosen. The Sheiks serve for life or until they are removed by the Caliph, which has not happened in the history of the Djaffar.

At the head of the government of Djaffa is the Caliph, who is the ultimate worldly and spiritual leader of the Djaffar. The Caliph has immense power in Djaffa, literally having the power of life and death over all the Djaffar, but the Caliphs have traditionally been hands-off rulers

who served a primarily spiritual capacity. All chieftains and Sheiks in Djaffa must be approved for their position by the Caliph and Khaleels may be stripped of their position by the Caliph. The Caliph has always been of the ibn-Djarras line which is descended from Djarras, a lost child found by the Creator and given to the Djaffa to raise during their earliest days at the Araf oasis. Those of the ibn-Djarras line are known to have strange powers of healing, foresight, and presence that the Djaffar believe that this is proof of that they are descended directly from the Creator. Every Djaffir in the country would willingly lay down their life for the Caliph.

Traditionally the oldest male child of each generation of the ibn-Djarras family becomes Caliph with the other children serving as advisors, Khaleels, or wizards. The Caliph is never called by name by anyone after assuming the mantle of leadership, and appears in public wearing a special ceremonial regalia that completely covers the features of the Caliph.

Unknown to the vast majority of the Djaffar, the current Caliph is actually the oldest daughter of the last Caliph, a break with tradition necessitated by the untimely death of the oldest son of the former Caliph, leaving only daughters to fill his role. So with the help of the Caliph's personal guard, the Glorious Few, and the concealing garments of the Caliph, the oldest daughter assumed the role of leader of the Djaffar for the first time in history. While she was initially hesitant about taking action using her powers as Caliph, after five years in the position she has grown comfortable with the charade and has begun using her influence to make changes in Djaffa. It is through her subtle efforts that the role of women is slowly changing, and she hopes to eventually transform the bandits from a group of raiders to a standing army to defend the country. If the current Caliph continues her present plans she will be the most active Caliph in the history of Djaffa. Already conservative elements among the Djaffar are starting to whisper of malcontent and rebellion. Whether the Caliph can keep her secret and make the changes she plans remains to be seen.

MAGIC AND RELIGION

A very religious people, the Djaffar follow a monotheistic faith focused on the Creator, a benign spirit of immense power that looks out for all who wander the world instead of settling down. He appears throughout Djaffir history and literature as a lone desert hermit of old age who always provides assistance or helpful advice when he appears. The Creator is sighted several times each year in Djaffa, but most of these are exaggerations, hallucinations, or simply wishful thinking. The Djaffar believe completely in his existence and the fact he affects their every day life, something which they thank him for readily. Most Djaffir recite several prayers each day in addition to recognized prayer time at sundown as the Djaffar say goodbye to the sun until the next morning. The Creator does not espouse much of a belief or moralistic structure beyond several basic precepts, such as generosity, peace, and hospitality. Despite believing strongly in the Creator and feeling his is a worship that is worth sharing, the Djaffar are not evangelical. They believe only nomads should worship the Creator and that the Creator's power and goodwill should be convincing enough to gain converts. This tactic has been surprisingly successful as some of the more itinerant foreign merchants who frequent Djaffa have converted to worshipping the Creator, particularly after being saved from dehydration in the desert by bandits who are following the Creator's teachings on generosity.

THE ARTS

The Djaffar are expert craftsmen, creating beautiful metal and leather items in addition to striking ceremonial garments. Their goods are widely sought after due to their often elaborate decorative nature, though the majority of Djaffir goods are created for domestic use. Djaffir take great pride in their work, feeling that any tool or item worth making is worth making beautiful. While the Djaffar do not wear particularly decorative

clothes or items on a day to day basis, during celebrations they break out all manner of colorful clothes and accoutrements. The only exception to this are the fetish masks, which remain relatively unadorned. Most Djaffir use a similar philosophy when decorating their tents, living day to day in functional and basic accommodations but pulling out elaborately woven rugs and cushions when company is present. The Djaffar do not practice much in the way of painting, sculpture, or other artistic pursuits that do not create functional goods.

Music is a large part of Djaffir daily life, particularly on occasions when a celebration is held. Djaffir music is very quick and emotional, usually involving a large number of instruments in combination. Djaffir music has two primary genres; music used for dancing and music that tells a story. The two are very similar, but the story music tends to be slightly slower and involve more singing. The Djaffar have created a number of instruments, the most interesting being the djaro, a stringed instrument that also can serve as short bow. Some musicians combine their music with feats of archery in a practice called djaroli, which is a favored spectator sport among the Djaffar.

Many among the Djaffar consider listening to music without dancing as a waste of good music, thus dancing is a very common pastime. Any time music is played in Djaffa some Djaffir will be dancing to it. This practice often causes annoyance when foreigners play music that does not besit the quick, spinning dance style of the Djaffar and the Djaffar do not have the patience for slow music or dancing. Among the Djaffar, dancing is considered a nigh-holy act of joy and is often involved in the worship of the Creator. The most common dancing style among the Djaffar is the django, which involves a quick spinning motion that many outsiders find impossible to keep up without growing ill from dizziness. Some Djaffir have even turned this spinning style of dance into a fighting style involving a pair of scimitars.

LANGUAGE

The Djaffar speak the ancient tongue of the nomads they are descended from, commonly called Nomadic, and Low Talislan. The merchant Djaffir often speak other languages picked up from journeys to other lands and many have a least a smattering of a dozen languages, often speaking in a makeshift pidgin tongue when dealing with outsiders. The bandit Djaffir are not quite so worldly and mainly stick with Nomadic.

MILITARY

Djaffa has no standing army, but if it were ever attacked, every able bodied man and woman is expected to ride to the defense of the country. Among the merchant Djaffir, practice with scimitar and bow is a regular process, but not one that most clans do to any great excess (with the notable exception of some of the Iron Sand clans). Instead the merchants only remain merely proficient with their weapons, feeling that the likelihood of war is very remote.

The bandit Djaffir practice with their weapons daily and are skilled in formation riding, tactics, and other facets of warfare. Only the Iron Sands merchant clans come close to their level of military skill. Hence if Djaffa were invaded the bandit clans would provide most of the strength of the Djaffar defenses, and Sheik Djombi al-Aran would likely assume leadership of the military forces due to the lack of experience on the part of the Caliph. While the Djaffar do not have a well organized or regimented military, all of Djaffa's combatants would be dedicated, highly motivated soldiers who are all masters in the saddle. Thus the Djaffar military will be able to strike quickly and disappear, making any invasion of Djaffa difficult at best. The Djaffar hold few thoughts of conquest.

The average Djaffir is skilled in short bow and scimitar, both in their use on foot and on horseback. All Djaffir own weapons and many possess at least leather armor. Traditionally all Djaffir are able to outfit for war in under five minutes, though among

the merchant tribes this tradition has fallen by the wayside. The Djaffar have no fortifications at all, preferring to use the mobility of their mounts to their advantage. Any invader of Djaffa is likely to find himself beset from all sides by raiders who strike at vulnerable targets and then disappear back in to the sands of the desert.

COMMERCE

Trading is the lifeblood of the Djaffar. The merchant clans of Djaffa constantly travel both inside and beyond Djaffa trading goods they pick up from their fellow Djaffir or from foreign sources. Also, caravans of foreign merchants are a regular sight in Djaffa. Due to its ideal placement between the Eastern and Western Lands. Djaffa trades with a large number of nations and the Djaffar merchant clans are always looking to expand their horizons.

The Djaffar trade in a wide variety of goods, but the merchant Djaffar generally avoid stolen goods, leaving that market to the Farad. They often purchase antiquities from Yitek and Orgovian traders and offer the same for resale in Seven Kingdoms, Zandu, Hadj or even Faradun. While some clans, such as the Iron Sand clans, create their own wares for sale, most Djaffir merchants instead trade with outsiders for their trade goods.

In addition to normal trade goods the Djaffar do a healthy business in trading aht-ra and other animals, although they are careful not to trade anything but gelded mares in order to keep their control of the breeding population. Winged aht-ra are less commonly available, but are sometimes offered up for sale.

WORLDVIEW

Beyond trading with the outside world, the Djaffar have little interest in the world beyond their home sands. They have no interest in conquest and are only interested in foreign politics as it affects their trade activities. The Djaffar are closely allied with Carantheum—both cultures being descended from the same nomadic ancestors. The two countries

would come to each other's aid if attacked and Djaffir merchants often cut deals for Dracartan buyers they would otherwise only cut for other Djaffir. The Djaffar also get along well with the Yittek, Yassan, and Danelek. The Djaffar bandits trade with the Farad, but do not particularly like them and often try to rook them. Most Djaffir consider the Farad thieves, even the bandit Djaffir thinking the Farad are too concerned with profit.

The Djaffar trade frequently with Hadj but tconsider the Hadjin lazy and largely worthless as a people. This does not stop the merchants from taking Hadjin money howver. The Kasmirans often trade with the Djaffar and while one would think the two groups hate each other after watching them interact, they actually have a deep respect for each other that is rarely obvious to the observer. The Kasmirans claim the Djaffar are thieves, while the Djaffar say the Kasmirans are too paranoid and too greedy, but the two groups continue to trade year after year.

The only major enemies the Djaffar have are the Rajans, who they dislike intensely. They consider the folk of Raj to be a corrupted people and want nothing to do with them besides causing them trouble. The Djaffar consider the Rajan religion to be an affront to the Creator and would wipe it out if they could. There are a number of other nations the Djaffar do not think highly of, such as the Kang Empire, but generally they are sufficiently distant to remain out of mind most of the time. Overall, the Djaffar are tolerant of other beliefs and will attempt to conform to local laws whenever travelling in foreign lands.



DJAFFA

FLORA & FAUNA



ABREEL PLANT

The motive plant known to the Djaffar as Abreel is a pulpy plant composed of a barrel-like central stalk and several rubbery tendrils, each covered in sharp needles. By day the Abreel appears as little more than a desrt plant but at night, the entire plantuproots itself from the sandy soil and, using its tendrils to drag itself across the dune to locate water. Abreel typically grow within a days walk of an oasis but some have been known to turn up in the deep desert.

The central stalk of the Abreel plant contains a resevoir of water, a quality that makes this plant very attractive to the Djaffar. Abreel plants are semi-holy to the folk of Djaffa and killing one is seen as a bad omen. That said, many an Abreel plan has saved the life of lone Djaffir caught in the desert without water.

Size: 1'-4' tall; 25 to 180 lbs. (12 lbs. per foot)

Attributes:

INT n/a PER -5
WIL n/a CHA n/a
STR -4 CON +5
DEX -5 SPD -3

Ability Level: 1

Attacks/Damage: Needle covered tendrils DR 1 per tendril; 3 attacks per round

Special Abilities: Movement; May store up to 1 gallon of water per foot of height.

Armor: None

Hit Points: 5-25

Habitat: Red Desert and surrounding Wilderlands.



DESERT KRA

Similar to other Kra species, the Desrt Kra is most at home among the burning sands of the Red Desert. Slightly smaller than other species of Land Kra, the Desert Kra may still grow to a length of up to 32 feet and weigh up to four tons.

Burrowing quickly through the red sands, these creatures can sometimes be spotted by the long "wymmm-trails" that they leave in their wake. Since there are few other creatures that dwell beneath the sand of the Red Desert, the Desert Kra surface in the cool evenings to hunt for prey. Among their favored prey are herds of Aht-Ra, a taste that does not endear these creatures to the Djaffar. Like the other Kra species, Desert Kra kra are blind, sensing prey by vibration.

Size: 20'-32'; 3,000-4,000 lbs.

Attributes:

INT -9 PER +2
WIL +7 CHA n/a
STR +12 DEX -4
CON +8 SPD +3

Ability Level: 5-15

Attacks/Damage: Bite: DR 16

Special Abilities: Burrowing

Armor: Segmented plates, PR 4

Hit Points: 35 +1 per foot

Habitat: Red Desert, may be present in Kasmir

DESERT PALM

The common desert palm is native to such arid lands as Kasmir, Djaffa, Faradun, Raj and Carantheum. The tree is exceptionally hardy, and can thrive in regions where there is little rain or ground water. A layer of spiny, overlapping plates covers the entire length of its trunk, conferring protection from the claws and teeth of grazing herbivores. The spiny plates also make it difficult to climb the tree, particularly as regards novice climbers. Desert palms are valued for their meaty fruit, which may be eaten fresh or preserved by drying. A single oasis may support up to 20 of these valuable trees.

DJAFFA PALM

Similar to the common desert palm, the Djaffa palm is found only in Djaffa and eastern Carantheum. This hardy tree is differentiated from its more common cousin by the color of its foliage; where the desert palm has green fronds, the djaffa variety has scarlet foliage. It's nutritious fruit, known as the Scarlet Date is considered a delicacy in many lands and a common cargo in many Djaffir trade caravans.

AL-MOCHAN SHRUB

The Al-Mochan shrub is found only in the Sanctuary Mountains region of Djaffa. Growing mainly in shaded, low lying areas and it stands up to 4 fet in height its bark is a deep shade of brown with reddish brown foliage. The seeds of the A-Mochan shrub form clusters of beans of a deep brown color that fall to the ground as they ripen. These beans are highly sought after by the Djaffar who harvest them just before they fall to the ground. The beans are then dried, roasted and ground into a fine powder that, when mixed with hot water, creates the invigorating drink known to all as mochan.

Djaffir Wizard

"May the Creator guide you in your travels."

You knew you were bound for greatness from an early age. Even as a child you felt the power of the Creator in your veins. As you approached the age of ascension (puberty), you traveled with your parents to the holy oasis of Araf. Your parents died in a horrible sandstorm en route to Araf but you survived. So was the will of the Creator. Wracked with grief, you drank deeply of the holy waters of Araf and were gifted with a vision. The Wizards of the oasis took you in and instructed you in the ways of magic and the laws of the Creator. Now you are a man and your vision calls. You feel a powerful urge to venture forth from your desert home and explore the world beyond the Red Desert. You seek knowledge and power, and vow one day to return to your people to guide them in the ways of the Creator.

Appearance:

5' - 6', 80-160 lbs. Dark brown skin, hair and eyes. Wiry build.

-1	+1	+1	-1
STR	DEX	PER	CHA
+3	+0	+1	+3
CON	SPD	WIL	INT
+0	18	+3	
CR	HP	MR	

Skills:

Elementalism
(Aeromancy, Geomancy or Pyromancy)
<5 Modes of choice> +4

Staff +2
Dagger +2
Etiquette (Djaffir) +10
Ride +4
Astrology +6
Doctrines +5
Litigator +2
Arcane Lore +6
Administrator +3
Survival +4
Talismancy +6

Nomadic, native
Low Talislan, fluent
High Talislan, fluent



Special Abilities:

None.

Equipment:

Traditional leather fetish mask; linen cloak, robes and headress of silkcloth; boots of aht-ra hide; curved dagger; Iron shod staff; aht-ra leather bound spellbook; belt pouch with assorted spell components; belt pouch with 6 vials of Araf water (restores 4 HP each); aht-ra steed with saddle, tack & harness; 500 gold lumens in assorted coin.

Djaffir Outcast Khaleel

"Drink deep my friend and give thanks to the Creator"

You are Khaleel, or at least you were Khaleel. Like your father, and his father before him, you guarded your oasis against all foes, both natural and supernatural. Other Djaffir sought your council and drank of your waters but that is all gone now. Not one moon ago your life was forever changed when the waters of your precious oasis dried up; gone forever. You have no idea what caused this tragedy but you intend to find out. An outcast among your people now, you are regarded with pity and sympathy but you will never accept this fate. You will find the cause of this disaster and either right it or die trying.

Appearance:

5' - 6', 80-160 lbs. Dark brown skin, hair and eyes. Wiry build.

+0	+1	+2	+2
STR	DEX	PER	CHA
+3	+0	+1	+2
CON	SPD	WIL	INT
+1	20	+2	
CR	HP	MR	

Skills:

Scimitar +4
Short Bow +3
Dagger +2
Ride +4
Survival +6
Guard +6
History +2
Litigator +1
Healer +4
Guide +4

Nomadic, native
Low Talislana, fluent
High Talislan, fluent



Special Abilities:

None.

Equipment:

Traditional leather fetish mask; linen cloak, robes and headress of line; boots of aht-ra hide; aht-ra leather armor; curved dagger; horn short bow; quiver of twenty arrows; aht-ra steed with saddle, tack & harness; 25 gold lumens in assorted coin.

