

CONAN[®]

PIRATE ISLES



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Introduction

Welcome to the Pirate Isles

THE DESERT WIND whips up from the coast of Hyrkania, sending waves of spray arcing over the shielded bulwark to break on the side of your face. Beside you another of the Red Brotherhood laughs with pleasure at the salty sting, gripping his tulwar firmly as your sleek galley closes with the limping merchantman. Soon the waves will run crimson once more as another cargo of booty passes into cut-throat hands.

Know, o reader, that poised within the covers of this tome lie various texts describing all manner of brutal and sadistic sea dogs. From the silk-pantalooned Red Brotherhood to the dusky menace of the corsairs of the Black Kingdoms, from the swashbuckling rovers of the Barachan Isles to the ruthless privateers of Zingara.

All these assorted brigands and more besides await you amongst the Pirate Isles, the latest explosive source book for *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Seeking the freedom that only the sea can bring, these renegades prey on the weak and helpless, piling their decks high with bloodstained gold and hapless captives destined for the slave blocks of a dozen lands.

Whether you see them as brutal killers or dashing freebooters, many of Conan's greatest adventures were aboard pirate vessels or with a motley crew at his back. Now you too can stalk the western coast, ready to pillage goods intended for the Road of Kings, or row into royal Aghrapur itself to raid imperial merchantmen.

Hoist the sail, dog brothers, for the treasures of Hyboria are waiting to be plucked!

WHAT WILL YOU FIND WITHIN?

Pirate Isles contains rules for integrating sea-faring adventures into your Hyborian chronicle. Although pirates and their kin certainly receive the most focus, characters of all persuasions can find something of value within.

Pirates of Hyboria details the cultures and lifestyles of various pirate bands. This chapter focuses on the four known pirate fraternities, their secret ways and their illicit activities. It

includes new feats for pirate characters, a system for leveraging leadership and reputation to rule a pirate ship. This chapter finishes with a description of the myths and legends surrounding pirate life, providing a system to quickly generate similar stories for your own use.

Foreign Shores addresses the building of suitable settlements for pillaging. It opens with a discussion of various coastal targets then moves on to outline what kind of loot they might contain. After having found the loot, characters will need to dispose of it using the rules contained for fencing. The last two sections provide rules for seeding in islands and for various complications that could occur during sea travel.

Pirate Feats looks into the details of building a character, their ship and the complexities of pirate feats, while Ships of the Sea provides a simple system for building sea-worthy ships of the Hyborian Age.

In Seas of Steel we present a contested system for closing with the target, including rules for withering arrow fire, boarding and conquering a ship, mutinies and the looting of a ship's cargo.

Riders and Beasts of the Sea outlines various named personalities as well as creatures, necromantic threats and various demons summoned to dominate the deep places of the world.

The will to summon these creatures is the focus of Powers of the Sea. Outlining a variety of new spells, some of which fall into the sorcery styles presented in the main rulebook, for two new sorcery styles: Sea Witchery and Weather Witching. The chapter closes with a short discussion on the herbs, alchemical preparations and magical items to be found at sea.

The book draws towards a close with the Call of the Sea, providing Games Masters with various adventure seeds for both short jounneys and entire campaigns of bloody piracy.

Welcome to the wild world of the pirates of the Hyborian Age. Rogues and murderers, revolutionaries and fugitives, regardless of their background and motives, each has a gift that no other Hyborian can claim: they are free.

Pirates of Hyboria

Astride the Crimson Waves

PIRATES OF HYBORIA deals with the most fundamental, burning question posed by pirate adventures. 'Now what?' Once the characters board a ship, what do they do? How do pirates live, work and gather the plunder of nations into their bloody hands? What rules do they follow in their life of slaughter? Where do they come from and where are they going?

This chapter addresses these questions in four sections. To Trail in the Wake of Blood, The Pirates' Life, Royalty of the Sea and The Stuff of Legends. The first deals with the how characters become involved with the pirate life. The second explains that life in detail, going into the hazards and rewards of the freest occupation. The third discusses the problems stemming from attempting to actually rule over wild pirates. The fourth, and last, section provides information about the stories that pirates tell themselves.

TO TRAIL IN THE WAKE OF BLOOD

Pirates come from all walks of life. Soldiers and sailors, tinkers and farmers all take up the bloody path. Some cultures actively encourage it; others force it on any man with a spine and freedom in his blood.

Many a lawless fighter or a member of a broken mercenary army finds his way onto the waves as well. Even some sorcerers turn their

'And I am 'Bêlit', she cried, as one might say 'I am queen.'

'Look at me, Conan! She threw her arms wide. 'I am 'Bêlit, queen of the black coast. Oh, tiger of the North, you are as cold as the snowy mountains that bred you. Take me and crush me with your fierce love! Go with me to the ends of the earth and the ends of the sea. I am a queen by fire and steel and slaughter - be thou my king!

His eyes swept the bloodstained ranks, seeking expressions of wrath or jealousy. He saw none. The fury was gone from the ebon faces. He realised that to these men 'Bêlit was more than a woman: a goddess whose will was unquestioned. He glanced at the Argus, wallowing in the crimson sea-wash, heeling far over, her decks awash, held up by grappling irons. He glanced at the blue-fringed shore, at the far green hazes of the ocean, at the vibrant figure which stood before him, and his barbaric soul stirred within him. To quest these shining blue realms with that white-skinned young tiger cat - to love, laugh, wander and pillage -

'I'll sail with you,' he grunted, shaking the red drops from his blade.

gaze to the watery depths in their search for forgotten powers and ancient lore.

In a handful of countries serving on the sea is just another fact of life. Among the Argosseans, the men of the Black Kingdoms, the slaves of Turan and the Zingaran a man is not a man until he spends at least some of their life with water under his feet. Argossean and Zingaran men may undertake this passage in merchant fleets or among the black-hearted pirates. The men of the Black Kingdoms take to their ships only when the promise of plunder and carnage calls them forth. Similarly, the slaves of Turan regard their own Red Brotherhood as their only hope to freedom; the staid simplicity of legitimate trade cannot compete with the opportunity to take up arms against those who would hold their kin in chains.

Many other countries including Khitai, Vendhya, Kambuja, Kosala, Iranistan, Zembabwe, Kush, Stygia and Shem have long traditions of naval service. These countries all have access to the sea, and use it as yet another means of transportation, trade and the acquisition of luxuries from far away lands. Even countries like Iranistan, a vast desert,

Pirate Cultures

Culture	Pirate Group	Rivals	Common Ship Hulls	Referred to as
Argossean	Barachan Pirates (a.k.a. Red Brotherhood)	Zingaran Freebooters, Zingaran Navy	Carrack, Galley	Pirates, buccaneers
Black Kingdoms	Black Corsairs	N/A	Galley	Corsairs
Turanian	Red Brotherhood	Turanian Navy	Carrack, Galleon	Pirates
Zingaran	Fellowship of Freebooters	Barachan Pirates, Argossean Navy	Galleon, Galley	Freebooters, buccaneers

not noted for its ability to build ships, participate in the maritime trade.

The remaining peoples of the world find themselves swept out to sea for any number of reasons. Mercenaries often find themselves in the employ of fearful merchants. Soldiers from any number of countries follow diplomats out onto the waves. Nobles travel as a matter of course, attempting to alleviate the boredom of their lives with journeys to far-off foreign ports. Even common folk might find themselves swept away on the bloody tide, fleeing from accusations or doubt.

PIRATE CULTURES

Four cultures are known to directly support pirate 'brotherhoods'. These cultures and their associated pirates are detailed in the Pirate Culture table, the fields in the table contain the following information:

Culture: The culture supports a given pirate group.

Pirate Group: The name of the pirate group.

Rivals: The groups that the pirates deliberately target.

Common Ship Hulls: The most common type of ship these pirates sail.

Referred to as: The term used most often when referring to a specific group.

Barachan Pirates

The Barachan Pirates, also called the Red Brotherhood, take their name from their home on the Barachan Isles. These hard living, hard drinking pirates sail the west coast of Hyboria as far north as Vanaheim though they rarely travel any further south than Kush, and try to avoid the Southern Isles unless blown there by an ill-favoured wind.

The young men of Argos grow up hearing tales of the ferocious, noble pirates and their never-ending war on the diabolic Freebooters of Zingara and their mother's sing them to sleep with songs about the wonders of the sea. Many grow up to serve on the great fleets that bring seemingly limitless wealth to the Argossean merchants and nobles.

This environment creates an ideal recruiting ground for the Barachan Pirates. Although technically outlaws, and hunted by the Argossean Navy, in reality they are the heroes of the common people and even merchants in the Argossean cities turn a blind eye to their cargoes, so long as they do not bear the merchant's stamp. Where service on a ship of the line or a merchant ship might earn a man a living wage, a few years of plunder as a member of the Red Brotherhood can earn him enough to establish himself.

Roughly three quarters of the Red Brotherhood is composed of young men who take to the seas for a time, then return to their homes. These young pirates spend a few wild years raiding and plundering Zingarans under assumed names. Many pick up battle scars they will lie about in later life and most of these young men leave their life of piracy with enough ill gotten gold to arrange a marriage and establish a small business of some sort. Most of the young men come either from the nobility or the absolute lowest classes as the greater bulk of the merchant and agricultural classes simply cannot spare their children for such follies.

The other quarter of the Red Brotherhood, and backbone of its fighting strength, is composed of equal measures true outlaws and bold adventurers from many countries. These men do not dabble in the world of the waves, they drink deeply of the freedom it offers. Many have fled from the law in other lands. Most have bounties on their head, placed there by one government or another. These pirates will live and die on the waves, holding positions places of command and respect on the hundreds of ships that make up the pirate fleet, where young men look up to them like gods. They are full members of the Brotherhood, entitled to all of the rights and privileges thereof.

It is an open secret that the Argossean government supports the Red Brotherhood with gold, information, ships and occasionally 'off duty' officers and 'mercenaries' with elite combat training. In return for this support the hard-bitten core

The following feat is available to Argossean youths who wish to take up the pirate's trade.

Argossean Dreamer (General)

You grew up on tales of the daring deeds of the Barachan pirates. These tales give you a vast storehouse of pirate lore, although not all of it is of practical use.

Prerequisites: Must be an Argossean, may only be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to your total skill points per level when taking a level in the pirate class.

of the Red Brotherhood avoids the Argossean coasts and focuses on the eternally amusing sport of sinking Zingaran cargo boats. A part of this agreement insures that full brothers will not be hunted down for their crimes, regardless of where they were committed. Experienced merchant sailors know to pay, and pay well, the various authorities in Argossean ports or face the Barachan pirates' wrath.

Black Corsairs

The Black Corsairs are not so much a pirate organisation as they are a natural offshoot of the raiding culture of the Black Kingdoms. The people of the Southern Black Kingdoms, as well as Kush, Darfar, and Kesh engage in constant warfare among themselves. They also loot, hire on as mercenaries and seek out bloody mayhem as a matter of course. Setting sail on a ship to raid the coasts or sail further north to loot good steel hardly conflicts with their primal inclinations.

Although one may find members of many tribes aboard a ship, the most famous and fearsome come from the Southern Isles. These fierce black barbarians combine the raiding culture of the south with nautical knowledge gathered over centuries of seafaring. They are natural sailors, with a fierce warrior ethic which is uncomfortably close to matching that of the Cimmerian barbarians.

Many Black Corsair vessels sail north under the command of tribal leaders. These ships, comprising roughly eighty percent of the corsair's encountered, generally confine their activities to the Black Coast and Kush. Their free crews all hail from one tribe,

although they take slaves from many other tribes and nations. These vessels may go north for occasional raids, but generally avoid the Stygian coast entirely.

Roughly twenty percent of the black corsair ships sail under the command of northern captains. These foreigners typically hail from Argos, Shem or Zingara. They bring boats south, using the secrets of deep-water navigation to avoid the coast hugging corsairs. Once they dock at the Southern Isles they pick up crews of willing raiders with promises of plunder. The islanders happily oblige; the lure of gold and slaughter draws them north without a moments pause.

These northern ships roam the seas as far north as the Pictish Wilderness and as far east as Vendhya. The combination of the Southern Islander's natural lust for raiding and their foreign captain's ambition leads to a synergy far greater than the sum of its parts. These ships may even take on pirates from other nations from time to time, although their brutal approach makes it unlikely.

The following feat is available to Southern Isle and Black Kingdom youths who wish to take up the pirate's trade.

Black Corsair (General)

You grew up hearing tales of the plunder and slaves to be had in other kingdoms. These tales fire your lust for blood, glory and raiding.

Prerequisites: Must be an a Southern Islander or from the Black Kingdoms, may only be taken at 1st level

Benefit: You gain a +2 to any skill check or attack roll required for a boarding action.

Red Brotherhood

The Red Brotherhood of the Vilayet Sea owe its origins to radically different forces to those which shape other pirate groups. Certainly some of them are men of Hyrkanian and Turanian descent who look to the waters hoping to plunder the vast wealth moving down the coast to begin its journey along the Road of Kings. Most, however, carry the brutal marks of a slave's torment. Their callused hands and scarred bodies raise sails not for plunder, but for the bloody business of revenge.

The Red Brotherhood is composed of equal parts men who took to the waves for glory and plunder and escaped

Relations between the Red Brotherhoods

There is considerable speculation as to whether the two Red Brotherhoods, one in the Western Ocean and the other in the Vilayet Sea, are related entities. Do they share members? Have a common origin? Obey the same rules and regulations?

This point is left deliberately undefined in this book. The Games Master may instead select from among the following options, depending on the needs of his own campaign. Some, none, or all of the following may be true; more likely the truth was lost long ago, leaving only memories and stories behind.

The possible connections include:

- ❖ None. The coincidence of the names was just that, a coincidence. The two groups do not have anything to do with one another.
- ❖ Argosseans founded the Red Brotherhood. A renegade band of Argossean slaves took to the waves of the Vilayet Sea. They styled themselves the 'Red Brotherhood', using stories from their youths as free men to sustain them during the lean years.
- ❖ The Red Brotherhood extends across the oceans. The two groups are actually the same, and there is considerable commerce between the branches. Captains travel regularly between the Western Ocean and the Vilayet Sea to exchange information and learn new sailing techniques.
- ❖ The two groups were once one (as three above) but now are engaged in bitter disputes.

slaves who desire nothing so much as the absolute destruction of their former masters and Kozaks. The later two already have reason enough to hate the Turanian and Hyrkanian governments. Those who take to sea of their own choice quickly become outlaws, sentenced to slavery and the worst torments imaginable. This common hatred forms the bond that links all of the wandering pirates of the Red Brotherhood together. They know that, regardless of any other arguments they might have, their common enemy will savour their destruction if they give it a single chance.

The following feat is available to any man who wishes to start his adventures as a member of the Red Brotherhood.

Whip Weary (General)

You have survived the worst that your former Turanian masters could offer. Their torments may have broken you for a time, but the freedom of the sea healed your wounds, making you stronger than those weak-willed men in their feathered beds could ever dream.

Prerequisites: Must have been a Turanian slave, may only be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: You immediately lose 2 points from either your Strength, Dexterity, Constitution or Charisma. You gain a +2 bonus to your Fortitude and Will saving throws.

Since simply being captured on a pirate ship is grounds for immediate arrest, torture and eventual execution, anyone who is willing to haul a line is considered to be an immediate member of the Red Brotherhood. To many outsiders this openness seems completely insane; spies could easily slip into their midst, but from the Brotherhood's point of view it makes perfect sense; spies are no more likely to survive contact with government forces than regular pirates.

The Red Brotherhood preys on both mercantile and military shipping. They hunt down the former both for the loot they provide and to hear the delightful screams of their former masters as they struggle to remain afloat. The later they attack as a pre-emptive measure; each military ship removed from service, or commandeered for the pirates' use, is another hull that will never be used to hunt them down.

Zingaran Freebooters

Zingaran freebooters fancy themselves as a cut above the common run of pirates. Where others dress for practicality and battle, freebooters adorn themselves in as many colourful silks as they can loot. Where others use whatever weapons they can find, freebooters take the time to find exactly the right tool for the job. When in a port they regale others with tales of the far-off places they have seen, the

beautiful women who threw themselves at their feet, and the great treasures they found and lost to a whim of chance.

The reality of the freebooter's life is not that much different from their Argossean counterparts. They live a hard life, filled with violence and death. They sail the seas as far south as the Black Coast, and as far north as the Pictish Wilderness. They prey primarily on their own great merchant fleets, as well as those of Argos and Shem. Some will also attack Stygian galleys, although such exploits can cause more trouble than they might possibly be worth.

Unlike the Barachan Pirates, the Zingaran Freebooters are not associated with the government of their homeland in any way. Indeed, the constant civil wars that rend the nation make it impossible for a pirate to know exactly whom he should negotiate with. The best that most pirates manage is a wary truce with the current ruler of one of Zingara's many ports. Such pacts, however, have a tendency to end badly; once the wars sweep by, all agreements become void.

Most, if not all, of the freebooter captains come from noble lines who have fallen to hard times. Some are refugees, others take to the waves in the hope of amassing a fortune sufficient enough to return home covered in glory. Out among the waves, regardless of their past, their noble bearing gives them a natural power to command, and Zingarans, pirates or not, respond to the manners bred into nobles from their earliest days.

The bulk of a freebooter crew come from the common castes. Like the nobles, they may be refugees from the war, simply seeking out a fortune or more commonly, they take to the waves to avoid the lash or the noose. Zingaran 'justice' miscarries as often as it bears logical fruit, but that does not allay the harshness of its sentences. The corrupt and the pure alike often swim out to the closest ship rather than allow a lord to flay the skin from their bodies.

These common freebooters work hard to maintain the mystique of their profession, subjecting newcomers to the most degrading experiences they can imagine. These trials usually consist of nothing more sophisticated than taunting and physical abuse, but some particularly devilish tormentors can make their way onto freebooters ships. Once passing through this initiation, the newcomer finds acceptance among the crew, so long as he does not violate any of their many rules of conduct.

The following feat is available to Zingaran youths who wish to take up the freebooter's call.

Freebooter's Fortune (General)

Your absolute certainty that the bloody road leads to a better life seems to lend a charm of good luck to your path.

Prerequisites: Must have been a Zingaran, may only be taken at 1st level.

Benefit: If you fail a Swim or Profession (sailor) skill check you may immediately re-roll the check with a -4 penalty. If you fail this check then you fail the skill roll.

OCEAN GOING CULTURES

Although pirate sagas dominate the shanties of the waves, the vast majority of sea-faring activity involves honest folk attempting to make a decent living. Merchants, fishermen, sailors, marines and numerous other nautical men all just hope that they reach their destinations without meeting any pirates. This peaceful hope in a world of decaying morality marks them as prey for those who ride the barbaric tide.

All coastal nations and peoples are home to fishing villages and small-scale water trade. This trade moves worked goods from one village to another. In the north this local trade can be marginally profitable, however, in the south, where gold flows freely, many a skilled sailor has made a lifetime's earning by boarding a seemingly innocuous fishing boat.

Anything that could actually be called a nation, rather than a gathering of peoples, also boasts a wealthy and far ranging merchant fleet. This merchant activity is divided into two separate routes; the Western Ocean and the Southern Sea/Eastern Ocean. The Fires of the South mark the dividing line and few, with the exception of the fearsome Black Corsairs will attempt the long and dangerous crossing.

Merchant ships of Zingara, Argos, Shem, Stygia and Kush ply their trade along the Western Ocean trade route, while the small boats of the various tribes of the Black Kingdoms also work this route at irregular intervals, depending on the whim of their king. This trade route moves goods along

the entire west coast of Hyboria, as well as linking distant nations with inland trade routes to the rest of the Hyborian kingdoms.

The Southern Sea/Eastern Ocean trade routes link the nations of Zembabwei, Iranistan, Kosala, Vendhya, Khitai and Kambuja. These nations trade with one another, but must transport goods along the Road of Kings (starting in Aghrapur) to ensure their delivery to the western side of the continent.

The Ocean Going Cultures table lists the most common occupations for ships by nationality in order of commonality and typical hull types.

Ocean Going Cultures

Culture	Common Ship Hulls	Occupations
Argossean	Carrack, Galley, Galleon	Merchants, fishermen
Black Kingdoms	Galley	Fishermen, slavers, merchants
Hyrkanian	Dhow	Slavers, bounty hunters
Iranistani	Dhow	Merchants, fishermen
Kambujan	Carrack, Galley	Merchants, fishermen
Khitai	Junk	Fishermen, merchants
Kosalan	Galley	Merchants, fishermen
Kushite	Galley	Fishermen, merchants
Shemite	Galley	Fisherman merchants
Stygian	Galley	Slavers, merchants
Turanian	Carrack, Galleon, Dhow	Slavers, fishermen, merchants
Vanir	Longboat	Fishermen, raiders
Vendhyan	Galley	Merchants, fishermen
Zembabweian	Galley	Fishermen
Zingaran	Galleon, Galley	Fishermen, merchants

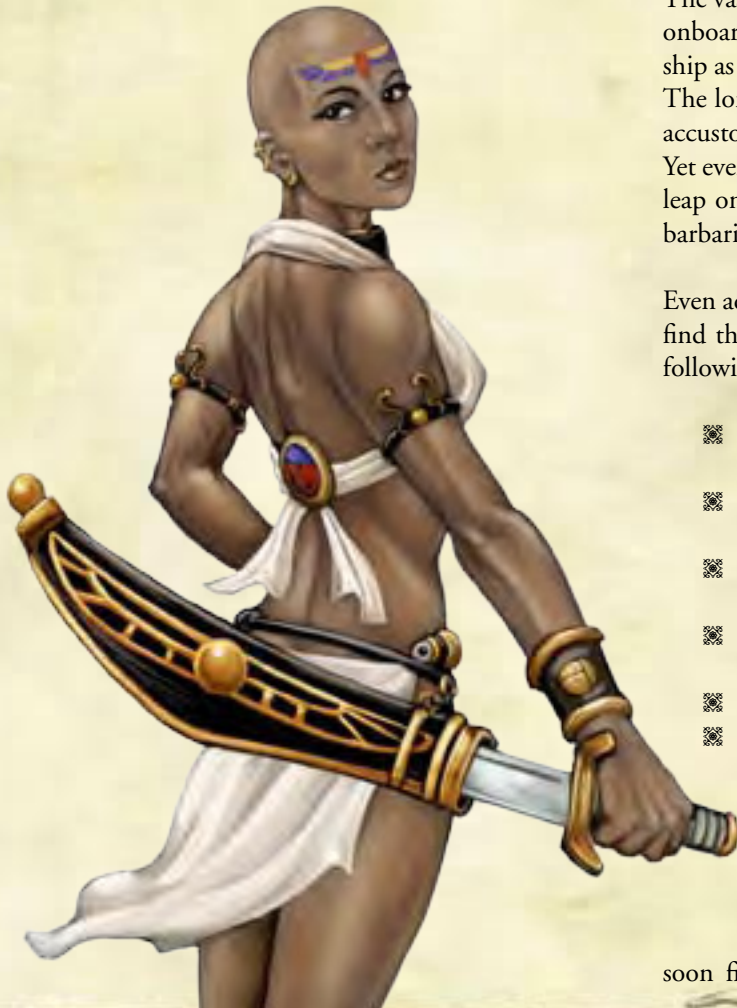
ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE MOB

The vast majority of adventurers will not start their travels onboard a ship. In fact, they may well regard life aboard a ship as a dull interlude in the midst of a life of great deeds. The long calm of the open water offers no allure to those accustomed to the bright blue flames of clashing swords. Yet even the mighty Cimmerians must, from time to time, leap onto a sailing boat, buying their passage with silver, barbaric charisma or a bloody blade.

Even adventurers who try to avoid ships completely might find themselves aboard a pirate or merchant ship for the following reasons:

- ❖ The pirates sank the boat he was on for whatever reason.
- ❖ He needs to get from one place to another fairly quickly.
- ❖ Hired on as a mercenary guard for a valuable cargo.
- ❖ Pressed into service after falling into a drunken stupor.
- ❖ Finding a map to an old pirate treasure.
- ❖ Travelling with a friend who has any of the above categories.

While most adventurers caught at sea will try to return to the solid land as soon as possible, they may soon find the sea's wild freedom



plaguing their dreams and few who taste the life of a pirate can every fully turn their back on it.

THE PIRATES' LIFE

Drunken pirates, whether lolling by bright fires in dismal brothels or squatting on wave-stained docks, sing the praises of their wild lifestyle. They tell of the women they have ravished, great cargoes thrown down into the abyssal ocean because they had no more room for plunder and the cities which fell before their ravenous hunger.

The realities of pirate life play out differently. The day-to-day work of a pirate closely resembles that of any other sailor. If he wishes to remain alive he must not only master the arts of wind and sail, but also the red rage of war. Not even rage will save him if luck turns against him, as a result, most pirates also engage in innumerable petty superstitions they claim turn Fortune's favour. Add to all of that the wild joy of the seas, the freedom of each man to let nothing stand between him and the horizon, and nothing could possibly keep order in their lives other than a strong arm or an iron will.

WORKING THE RIGGING

The day-to-day life of any sailor hardly counts as high adventure. Pirate vessels suffer from this problem even more than more legitimate traffic. Merchant and fishing vessels typically run with a light crew, so everyone has something to do most of the time. Pirate and military vessels must deliberately over crew, so that they have bodies to lose and yet still maintain a sizeable force. This forces most pirates to spend long, lazy days aboard ship. Work details break the monotony, but pirates are known to amuse themselves with backbiting, gossiping and occasionally maiming each other in knife accidents.

Each of the four pirate brotherhoods and each ship captain handles this ennui differently, and this difference in approach gives each pirate ship a unique culture and flavour, similar to that of others of the same brotherhood, but still very different from those of other pirate bands.

Barachan pirates organise their crews into relatively orderly rotations, each rotation containing sufficient sailors and 'marines' to crew a ship and man all available posts. Off duty pirates spend their time sleeping, talking quietly or working on various maintenance projects. Of the entire pirate brotherhoods the

Barachan seem the most like an ordinary, if very overpopulated, merchant ship.

The violence in their blood lurks

out of sight, surfacing in midnight squabbles and the occasional quiet murder.

The Black Corsairs take a very different approach to controlling the crew's bloodlust. They do not. The captain maintains order by force of will alone. The majority of the ship's crew avoids actual work, preferring to spend their time waiting for the next opportunity for bloodshed. Work is assigned out either as punishment (for real work involving the ship's structure and movement) or as a reward (specifically dealing with the oar slaves). The captain must hand out rewards and punishments liberally, or very little actually gets done.

The Turanian Red Brotherhood works hard to maintain the fighting readiness of its crews. Each crewmember spends at least some time every day training with knife, scimitar and captured bows. Those not training take shifts performing basic ship's functions, with older sailors assisting the less able. Each shift has roughly three quarters experienced sailors and one quarter new recruits who might not even know how to tie a knot.

Of all the pirate brotherhoods, the Freebooters know the most about how to make down time interesting. They are well known for having one or more 'playthings' on board; usually young women snatched from their homes and pressed into service by uncouth masters. In casting off their ties with their homelands the Freebooters also deliberately rebel against the code of chivalry that binds their brothers. They seem to delight in forming cabals and spreading rumours, to the point where even a corrupt noble would have trouble following all of the plots. Their captains tend to ignore treachery within the crew so long as it does not grow to become a true threat.

OF SAIL AND STERN

Pirates, and sailors of all stripes, spend most of their time sitting on ships. They know the intricacies of every plank, can speak for hours about the difference between the types of rope used for various applications, and honestly consider issues about keel length and composition to be some of the most pressing issues imaginable. When one spends every day and every night for six months floating in what amounts to a wooden box with a sheet attached to it, these things do, in fact, become important. However, what is more important to a pirate than what a ship looks like is what it can carry. Although some pirates capture ships, most just loot them and let them sink into the same blood-stained waters that consumed its crew.

Rather than trying to duplicate every possible ship type, the Ships section in the Seas of Steel chapter (pg. 58)

Common Occurrences and Conventions Table

Event	Barachan Pirates	Black Corsairs	Red Brotherhood	Zingaran Freebooters
New member joins the crew	New member allowed to participate, but not given a voice in affairs until after three successful raids.	New member forced to clean the slave's pen.	New member forced to be the first person to board the next target ship.	New member forced to fight one crewmember of equal strength.
Challenge the Captain	Untried members attacked by full crew, while full brothers are allowed to challenge.	Anyone allowed to challenge.	Anyone allowed to challenge.	Untried members attacked by full crew, full brothers allowed to challenge.
Dividing the Plunder	One share for each crewmember, three for officers.	Plunder divided by the captain as he sees fit.	One share for each crewmember, one for officers, four shares for the common good.	One half share for each crewmember, one share for full members, four shares for officers.
Approach an unknown ship	Flags flown, offer of surrender extended.	Immediate boarding attempt.	Immediate boarding attempt.	Immediate boarding attempt.
Settle a dispute between crewmembers	Duel to first blood acceptable, captain may also judge dispute.	Duel to the death.	Contest of endurance, usually involving simple torture (holding breath, holding hand in a flame).	Duel to the death.
Dealing with disabled crewmember	Returned to Argossean port with three shares.	Thrown overboard.	Released on an island with one month's provisions.	Returned to a Zingaran port with one share.
Common Officer Positions	Captain, Boson, First and Second Mate, Navigator.	Captain.	Captain, Boson, Master of Arms, Master of Sails.	Captain, Boson, First and Second Mate, Navigator.

contains information about a wide variety of generic hulls. Pirates, merchants and navies can modify these hulls using the rules presented there. Each hull has relative values for its speed, manoeuvrability and cargo capacity that determine exactly how it performs while boarding or waits to be boarded.

CODES OF CONDUCT

As stated in the Codes of Honour section of the *Conan the Roleplaying Game*, there are no pirate codes of honour. Most pirates throw honour to the waves with their first kill. However, these rough characters do have a code of behaviour that governs their actions.

The above table lists common occurrences and the conventions that govern them among the four pirate brotherhoods.

A share is defined by dividing the total value of the cargo by the total number of the individuals in the crew at the time the ship arrives at port. Individuals who receive ½ shares count as ½ a crewman. Individuals who receive more than one share count as that number of crewmen when making the division.

ROYALTY OF THE SEA

A rare few pirates, probably including the characters, will find the life of swabbing over decks and dying at the command of another unbearable. These natural leaders rise up, seizing power in the small self-contained world of the ship on which they serve, throwing other contenders overboard to feed the plentiful sharks. Leading a band of murderous cut-throats infected by the surge of the sea usually proves more difficult than these ruthless few had imagined. Without a steady supply of bloodshed and plunder sea-dogs become restless, eventually turning to bite the hand which feeds them.

RULING A FLOATING KINGDOM

Each ship, whether pirate or legitimate, is its own, individual kingdom when sailing abroad. The captain is the god who sets the rules and ensures the enforcement of those rules. Ships, and those who sail them, live and die by his word. Only those with strong leadership skills, a solid strategic

sense and the will to do what must be done can successfully take up this challenge.

Most pirate crews spend most of their time plotting and scheming to kill one another off. Beyond these petty rivalries most crews contain a core of loyal retainers, a pirate horde and those unaligned pirates content simply to serve the good of the ship.

The loyal retainers are pirates who bind their lives to the captain. Mechanically they are the retainers gained by the captain's Leadership feat. These loyal retainers will never turn on the captain, they may, however, stand down or transfer their loyalty if the captain falls to a legitimate challenge. More often, they attack the challenger and the rest of the crew, knowing that the other wolves will not hesitate to take revenge for their past slights. Captains generally give their servants choice assignments and a slightly better share of the loot. Loyal retainers generally comprise less than a third of the total crew of any given pirate ship.

The pirate horde comprises those pirates attracted to the captain by his reputation for plunder and slaughter. They do not feel any particular loyalty to a specific captain, but rather allow their own personal agendas to keep them aboard. So long as the captain continues to live up to his reputation the horde remains content. If the captain falls to a challenger or fails to give enough sport, the horde becomes restless and may mutiny. Mechanically pirate hordes are the followers gathered using the Pirate Horde feat (pg. 44). A sufficiently charismatic or famous person can easily sway these followers, as the feat is heavily tied to the Reputation mechanics.

Unaligned pirates represent the bulk of pirates around the world. They swear allegiance only to themselves and serve only for as long as it remains in their best interest to do so. Characters who have no followers but who do have the Leadership feat find ready recruits from within this faction. Generally these fellows are the first to break first when things go bad, and scream the loudest for larger rewards when things go well.

MAINTAINING ORDER

Maintaining order on a pirate ship does not require any effort during the long downtimes associated with sailing. The crew may wander about and grumble, but they will rarely take up weapons against an established captain until they have reason to. This reason typically comes during the brief moments of action when pirate crews

enter into a frenzy of activity. The actual break down of order may occur up to a week later, but the event precipitates the crisis.

Loyal Retainers

Loyal retainers never make checks for potential mutiny. They will follow the captain to whatever end. They may strike against a usurper, but only if they think they can get away with it. In any event, many times the former loyal retainers do not survive long enough to take a coherent plan of action.

Pirate Horde

Whenever an event occurs (see the Stuff of Legends section below) a captain leading a pirate horde must make a mutiny check. This mutiny check is separate from the one required by the unaligned pirates. The DC of this check and its modifiers depends on the circumstances surrounding the event. If the mutiny is not lead by a Player Character, assign one character from the pirate horde to lead it. The Mutiny Table refers to both the DC and the modifiers for mutiny checks.

Unaligned Pirates

Whenever an event occurs (see the Stuff of Legends section below) a captain with unaligned pirates in his crew must make a mutiny check. This mutiny check is separate from the one required for the pirate horde. The DC of this check and its modifiers depends on the circumstances surrounding the event Player Character, assign one character from the unaligned pirates to lead it. The Mutiny Table refers to both the DC and the modifiers for mutiny checks.

If the captain fails this check the mutiny will occur in seven days, minus the amount by which he failed. Thus, if the captain fails a mutiny check by three then the pirate horde will revolt sometime in the next four days. If the captain fails by seven or more the pirate horde immediately surges out of control.

Under this system, a ship with three crew components (loyal retainers, a pirate horde and unaligned pirates) is extremely unstable. Every time one of the two disloyal groups mutinies there is a chance of a cascading effect in the other group.

Automatic Mutinies

When a character of sufficient importance joins an already existing pirate crew (Reputation 35 or higher), that character may immediately trigger a mutiny check. If he has the Leadership, Horde, or Pirate feat but does not currently have followers he automatically triggers a full

Mutiny Table

Event	Horde DC	Unaligned DC
Mutiny among the unaligned pirates	15	–
Mutiny among the pirate horde	–	20
Natural event (storm, disease, and so on)	15	10
Unnatural event (targeted by a spell or curse)	20	25
Violent event (attacked by another ship)	10	15
Disaster (ship wrecked)	25	30
Captain fails to share plunder	25	20
Crew finds an extremely valuable (30,000 sp or more) plunder	20	25
Bonuses and Penalties	Modifier	
Captain's experience	+ Captain's character level	
Captain's personal magnetism	+ Captain's positive Charisma modifier	
Captain has Leadership	+2	
Captain has Pirate Horde	+2	
Mutiny leader has Leadership	-2	
Mutiny leader has Pirate Horde	-2	
Every 5 points by which a captain's reputation exceeds the mutiny leader's	+1	
Every 5 points by which a mutiny leader's reputation exceeds the captain's	-1	
Situational Modifiers	Modifier	
Barachan Pirate crew fighting Zingaran ship or settlement	+4	
Zingaran Freebooter fighting Argossean/Barachan ship or settlement	+4	
Red Brotherhood ship attacking a Turanian ship	+6	
Black Corsair ship attacking anything	+2	
Black Corsair ship under attack	-2	

ANATOMY OF A MUTINY

Mechanically all mutinies go through the following steps:

- ❖ An event occurs that triggers a mutiny check
- ❖ The captain makes separate mutiny check for the unaligned pirates and the pirate horde
- ❖ If he succeeds on both mutiny checks the crew does not mutiny
- ❖ If he fails one mutiny check but not the other then a mutiny occurs within seven days minus the amount that he failed by. The part of the crew not in mutiny must then make a mutiny check or join in
- ❖ If he fails both mutiny checks then the crew mutinies in seven days minus the greater of the two amounts that he failed the check by.

mutiny, gathering up to his entire follower allotment from the available crew onboard the ship.

If there are any remaining members of the pirate horde or unaligned pirates then the captain must make immediate mutiny checks or they turn against him as well. These 'secondary mutineers' do not necessarily swear immediate allegiance to the character, but their leader may become his cohort.

If a captain fails mutiny checks on both his pirate horde and unaligned pirate crew members, both groups mutiny at the earliest possible opportunity.

EFFECTS OF A MUTINY

Mutinies play out as a boarding action by a hostile crew. The mutineers battle the loyal crew until one or the other can no longer sustain the conflict. This action may result in the death of some or all of the crew, damage to the ship, on the destruction of all onboard cargo. For more information please refer to the Seas of Steel chapter (pg. 58).

THE STUFF OF LEGENDS

The romance of a pirate's life cannot be found in the daily grind of his existence. The sailing man cannot find it in the ripe smell of unwashed slaves chained to long oars, or in the bubbling screams of men with spears in their bowels. Instead it glimmers under the shining stars as pirates gather around their rum to sing the legends spawned by others of their kind. They sing of Amra the Lion, of Belit the Queen of the Black Sea and of the legendary pirates from long ago. They sing of forgotten islands filled with gold, of shores far beyond the endless blue water, of the darkness below the waves that reached up to drink in the life of many a sea-dog. These legends add glamour to their own brief, harsh existence, giving them something to hope for beyond a hard death at the hands of their enemies.

THE WOLVES OF THE SEAS

The interesting parts of a pirate's life start when the fragile order ruling the day breaks apart at the sight of a sail, village of reasonable size, or other unusual happenstance. The entire crew rouses to life, breaking out weapons and swarming the rigging. Galley crews break out the barbed

whips, lashing their slaves into a bloody rowing frenzy. Drums beat, trumpets sound and the sailors prepare for the moments in which stories are born.

Pirates live for these moments when something happens. Then the long days of quiet toil fall behind them as the waves carry them forward to charge headlong at their prey or flee stronger pirates, naval vessels or storm winds. Whether charging an opponent or running away, these moments create the framework upon which pirates hang their tales.

The stories pirates tell about themselves revolve around a very basic predator/prey relationship. The pirate ship either finds prey (a merchant vessel, settlement or wounded pirate vessel) or is avoiding some greater force that wishes to consume it (a storm, a stronger vessel or the like). This basic relationship leads to the pirate's nickname: Wolves of the Sea.

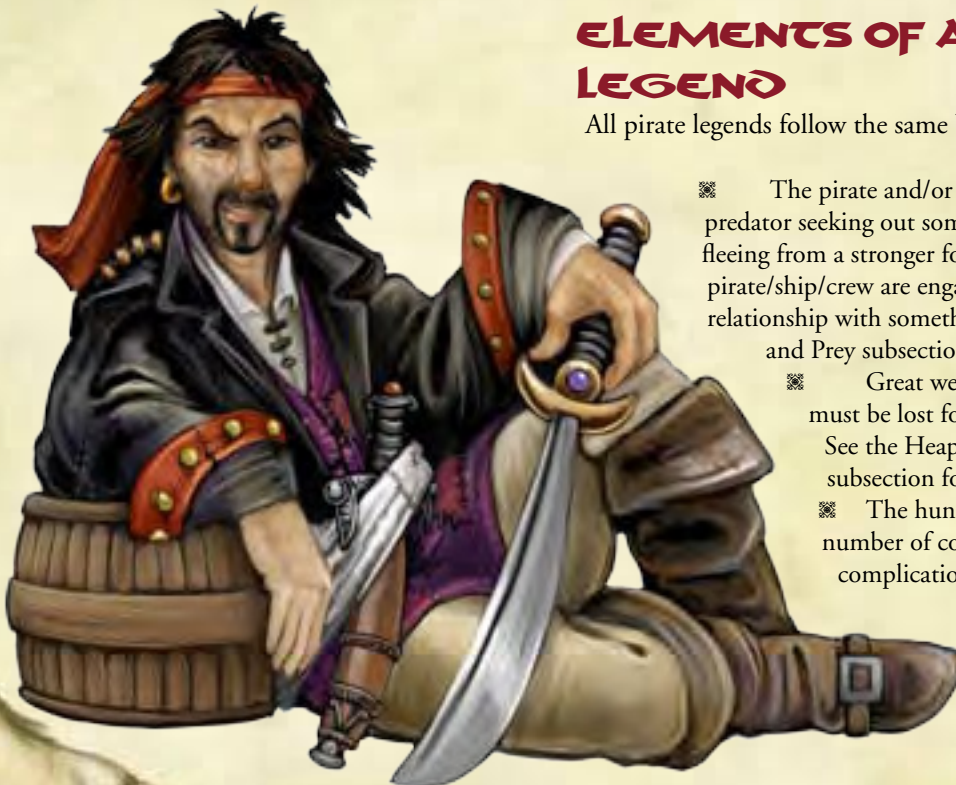
USING THIS SECTION

The information in this section provides players and Games Masters with the tools required to quickly build 'pirate stories'. These stories may be used for adventure seeds, to enhance the campaign background, to fill in down time between adventures or simply to help character's come up with tall tales with which to awe landlubbers.

ELEMENTS OF A PIRATE LEGEND

All pirate legends follow the same basic pattern:

- ❖ The pirate and/or his ship are either the predator seeking out some target, or the prey fleeing from a stronger force. In either case the pirate/ship/crew are engaged in a predator/prey relationship with something. See the Hunter and Prey subsection for more details.
- ❖ Great wealth is available, but must be lost for one reason or another. See the Heaps of Gleaming Gems subsection for more details.
- ❖ The hunt/chase runs into a number of complications. These complications may be bad omens, bad weather, other pirates, unexpected resistance or any of a number of other



potential issues. See the Complications and Omens section for more details.

- ✦ When the pirate finally achieves the goal there is an orgy of excess surrounding it. Villages are sacked, women ravished and treasures squandered in insane abandon. See the Resolution section for more details.

The following sections list suggestions for base types and details to insert into the structure outlined above.

Compiled examples using this basic structure can be found in the Call of the Sea chapter (pg. 112).

HUNTER AND PREY

The basic hunter/prey relationship inherent in pirate stories requires that the pirate ship either be seeking some specific target or that it be under assault from a hostile force. In either case the relationship between the two dominates the story.

d8 Pirates taking the role of predator in the story are hunting...

1	A merchant ship.
2	A ship from a rival pirate group.
3	A village or merchant camp.
4	A poorly defended town with a major weakness (corrupt mayor, recent sickness, internal civil conflict, etc.)
5	A lost pirate treasure. All lost pirate treasures have their own background story, constructed on this model.
6	A wastrel who violated the sanctity of the pirate's way of life.
7	An old enemy.
8	A large, malignant animal (i.e. great whales, great sharks, and giant squid).

d6 Pirates taking the role of prey in the story may be hunted by...

1	A naval vessel from a rival government.
2	A storm or other natural event. These may also be used as complications rather than predators.
3	A pirate vessel from a rival faction.
4	A curse or other supernatural effect/creature. These effects will typically have some kind of source, either a hostile living sorcerer or an ancient force from the forgotten abyss of time.
5	Necromantic events (i.e. raised dead and ghost ships).
6	Large, malignant animals (i.e. great whales, great sharks, and giant squid).

Some entries occur on both lists. For example, a pirate ship may either hunt a giant animal (perhaps in pursuit of some unique element in its body) or be hunted by such an animal (perhaps in retaliation for an unintended violation of the creature's hunting grounds).

The lists above provide some general suggestions. Players and Games Master are encouraged to embellish the basic descriptions with details drawn from other sections of this book, information from other media and their own imaginations.

HEAPS OF GLEAMING GEMS

Pirates rarely do anything unless the action results in some sort of reward. In classical thinking this reward is always a huge heap of gold and gems, perhaps only partially contained in an otherwise intact chest and such luxurious treasure is certainly common in the Hyborian Age. Other treasures exist, however, just waiting for a determined man to pluck them from their weak-willed holder's hands.

The suggestions listed below are further explained in the Cargo and Plunder section of the Foreign Shores chapter (pg. 21). Players and Games Masters wishing to create detailed treasures should refer to that section for further information including how to tailor a treasure based on its history or nationality.

d6 Pirate's prey carries...

1	Crates of gold and gems.
2	A cargo of relatively non-perishable luxury goods (i.e. spices and silk).
3	A cargo of well made weapons.
4	A hold full of perishable luxury goods (i.e. flowers, plants, exotic grains, slaves).
5	A hold full of goods that seem worthless, but are in fact extremely valuable to the right buyer (i.e. books, artefacts from an ancient civilisation, etc.)
6	An empty hold. The prize is either hidden (i.e. a letter) or a person/small object on board.

A common feature of pirate stories is for or more reversals regarding the 'cargo type'. For example, a pirate may attack his prey believing that it holds crates of gold and gems. When he finally overtakes the target it turns out to have a load of dried millet. Just before they sink the thing in disgust a crewmember searches through the cargo, discovering a quantity of gems. The gems turn out to be glass, but hidden in two of the bags of millet there are old books that contain necromantic secrets fit to blast the mind of lesser men.

COMPLICATIONS AND OMENS

A story that runs roughly ‘We came, we saw, we conquered’, with few complications along the way, does not truly attract a listener’s interest. Instead, things must be difficult to be interesting. There must be problems, setbacks and conflicts that cause the pirate to show his pluck. These complications come in a wide variety of forms, including supernatural entities, other pirates and natural events like sudden storms, fog, and becalming.

Throughout this book there are examples and detailed information about these complications. The information provided below is intended to provide the players and Games Masters with key ideas, not present a definitive list of all possible problems.

d4 Natural and supernatural conflict involved...

- 1 Being blown far off course or out into the deep sea. This may or may not force the pirate away from his prey.
- 2 Encountering an ancient ruin with a curse. If the prey flees into it the pirates have to choose to dare the curse.
- 3 Encountering a giant, enraged animal (usually sent by a sorcerer).
- 4 Becoming becalmed.

d4 Human originated conflict involved...

- 1 Another ship appears, seeking the same treasure (may be a pirate or a legitimate vessel).
- 2 The heap of gleaming gems has a guardian of some kind.
- 3 The crew may mutiny.
- 4 The map may be encrypted requiring a key to decipher.

In addition to what we think of as normal conflicts, pirates are subject to a wide variety of internal psychological conflicts stemming from their extensive exposure to the superstitions of the sea. Many of these superstitions come from garbled legends of various magical effects; a few are simply fantasies concocted by men with too much time on their hands. The magical effects referred to here can be found in the Powers of the Sea chapter. The practical effects of some (but not all) superstitions can be bound in the Seas of Steel chapter.

d6 Superstitions that created psychological conflict for pirates were...

- 1 White rocks in the ballast will cause the ship to sink. A man found stacking such stones into a ship is a traitor or sorcerer.
- 2 Dolphins sailing along side mean safe passage.
- 3 A ringing glass means that a sailor will die.
- 4 A knife driven into the mast, handle pointing in the direction of the needed wind, will call up enough wind to travel forward. A white handled knife will kill the wind.
- 5 When there is no wind, it is a curse placed on one person in the crew. Kill the person and the curse will lift.
- 6 The green stone from the island ruins wants to return home. Any craft carrying a bit of it will sink, with the crew rising as shades to carry the stone back to its rightful resting place.

RESOLUTION

One of the oddest things about pirate tales is that the pirates only rarely actually get the treasure. If they do somehow secure it, they lose it to some random twist of fate later on, while trying to sell it or store it for future use.

Unless there is some reason to assume otherwise, whatever treasure the pirates acquire does not have a lasting effect on their lifestyle. The sole exceptions to this rule are the Barachan Pirates. Although as a group they do no better than the other pirates, many of the young men who come to the sea to make their fortune do in fact manage to put a good bit away. Enough, at least, to stop the roving life after a few years and set themselves up with a small business back home.

Scurvy Dogs

Staying on Top of the Pile

AS DESCRIBED IN the Maintaining Order section of *Pirates of Hyboria* (pg. 4), ship crews are divided into three distinct groups: loyal retainers, the pirate horde and unaligned pirates. The captain oversees these three groups with varying levels of interest or indifference, depending on his personality and circumstances. Too much of either can spark a mutiny.

However, even dedicated captains cannot be everywhere at once. They must rely on their officers, custom and clear duties and roles in order to ensure the ship's survival. These forces may be just as strong, or even stronger than the captain, depending on the ship and its crew composition.

In game terms, failing to fulfil the required roles or breaking the shipboard traditions increases the difficulty of the captain's mutiny checks. Similarly, elevating an officer to a position with too much power can spark a mutiny, although it might make the ship a bit more efficient.

WATCHES AND STATIONS

A ship operates 24 hours a day, every day. Each day is divided into six 'watches', as follows:

Watch	Time
Midwatch	00:00 to 4:00
Morning Watch	04:00 to 8:00
Fore-noon Watch	08:00 to 12:00
Afternoon Watch	12:00 to 16:00
Dog Watch (1 st)	16:00 to 18:00
Dog Watch (2 nd)	18:00 to 20:00
Evening Watch	20:00 to 24:00

Sailors aboard naval and merchant vessels usually serve three watches in a row. Pirates only serve two, as their ships generally have a much larger crew. However, when pursuing a prey vessel all members of a pirate crew end

up on deck, either sailing or preparing for the boarding action.

A sailor onboard a ship may find himself performing one of the following duties:

Cabin Boy: The captain's personal servant, generally a young boy or slave.

Carpenter: Responsible for mending the ship and providing basic ship maintenance. Carpenters report to a boson or a master carpenter.

Cook: Responsible for making something out of the dried, salted and often mouldy provisions available on the ship. The cook is usually not able to perform any other duty, either due to injury or mental defect.

Coxswain: Responsible for the captain's launch.

Fireman: Responsible for monitoring any fires aboard the ship, as well as dowsing any out of control flames.

Grapher: responsible for painting, making signs and drawing maps.

Lookout: Responsible for watching the horizon and identifying incoming ships, weather and land.

Mate: Either a foreman responsible for several other seamen or an assistant to an officer (or the cook).

Rigger: Responsible for the lines, sails and ship's rigging. Most riggers are fearless men who will cling to the highest rigging even in the middle of a storm.

Seaman: Responsible for general shipboard duties. May assist the riggers or work the deck and lines. Sometimes seamen are referred to as able-bodied seamen.

Swabbie: Responsible for cleaning the deck, the hold, and often the ship's outer hull. Swabbies are at the bottom of the social hierarchy on pirate vessels. Most swabbies were assigned their duties as punishment for some infraction and devotedly hope for the day when they will finally work off their debt enough to become seamen again.

Once a character assumes his duties, he is stuck there until the crew situation changes. Among pirates, this means that every engagement is an opportunity for advancement. Swabbies always look for opportunities to 'remove' any of the other crewmen in the hope of finally receiving a real assignment. Mates, who are slightly more important than regular crew, are just also tempting targets.

OFFICERS

Most characters, being extraordinary men and women with great egos, will not content themselves with holding a mundane role among the crew. Instead, they will strive for a place of power among their peers. At first, this may simply mean becoming a mate; later, though, they will want to take on the powers associated with officer positions.

Vessels in the Hyborian Age have a number of the following officers aboard them:

Captain: Responsible for the ship as a whole. A ship's captain is its final judge, its master, and its military commander. A ship cannot function without a captain.

1st Mate (also called Captain's Mate): Responsible for the ship when the captain is otherwise occupied. Acts as a liaison with the crew, enforcing the captain's will with hard words and sharp blows.

2nd Mate: Assists the 1st mate in the execution of his duties. May be even harsher than the 1st mate when forcing sailors to perform their duties.

Boson (also called Boatswain): A foreman for the crew, responsible for the rigging, ship maintenance and the sails. May come into conflict with the Master Carpenter if that position exists because of their overlapping duties.

Healer: A scholar responsible for providing basic medical services to the crew. The healer might or might not have the Heal skill. If he does, the ship's injured casualties may recover normally. If he does not, the ship's casualties automatically die within 2d4 days.

Helmsman: Responsible for steering the ship. A helmsman is not really an officer, but his position is important enough that he wields considerable influence among the other crewmen.

Master of Arms: Responsible for combat training and combat readiness. He manages the store of arms and armour, ensures all of the crewmen have some basic martial savvy.

Master Carpenter: Responsible for the carpenters in the crew. Most master carpenters are crippled in the ship's service and often find service as cooks.

Master of Sails: Responsible for the helmsmen, riggers and the navigator, although the navigator may be independent.

Navigator: Responsible for setting the course and maintaining the ship charts. Navigators may report to the Master of Sails or directly to the captain.

Officer of the Watch: A temporary position, shared by the various officers on deck. The officer of the watch is the highest-ranking officer on deck during a particular watch. He may make minor decisions on his own, but must wake the 1st mate for anything more important than changing the sail's tacking.

Quartermaster: Responsible for the ship stores and provisions. The Quartermaster may also act as the crew's advocate to the captain.

Officers and Mutiny

A single person can properly perform a number of officer duties equal to his Intelligence modifier.

The captain receives a bonus to his mutiny check equal to the number of additional roles he takes on.

An officer receives a bonus to his effective Leadership score equal to the number of roles he takes on when determining the number of sailors he can pull into his loyal retainer crew when forming a mutiny.

Officers aboard Barachan Vessels

Barachan pirates generally maintain the following officer roles: Captain, Boson, 1st Mate, 2nd Mate, and Navigator. The Navigator and Captain usually take on the Helmsman role, while the Boson acts as the Quartermaster.

Each officer commissions at least one mate. Some officers commission as many as three, although only aboard the largest ships is this practice acceptable.

Aboard Barachan vessels the loyal retainers serve the 1st mate and the boson. The unaligned pirates generally live in well-deserved fear of the 1st mate's whip and the boson's rough hands. If the captain has called up a pirate horde its members will generally ignore the other officers as long as they can, grudgingly obeying when forced into action.

Officers aboard Black Corsair Vessels

The Black Corsairs do not adopt the weak, civilized ways of the other pirate groups. They answer only to one person; their chief, their god-king, their captain.

A captain may raise the status of individual crewmembers at his whim. For example, King Conan serves as a Master of Arms aboard a Black Corsair vessel for years, but never aspired to become captain himself.

Aboard Black Corsair vessels the three parts of the crew live in identical subservience to the captain. The lack of a formal command structure makes the Corsairs marginally less effective on long raids, but they make up for their lack of logistics with their animalistic rage.

Officers aboard Red Brotherhood Vessels

Unlike the other pirate crews, the Red Brotherhood runs relatively loose ships. They regard one another as comrades-in-arms, brothers in the long fight against Turan's King. Many of these ships elect their officers by common acclamation rather than accepting the captain's decisions.

Red Brotherhood ships often maintain the following roles: Captain, Boson, Master of Arms and Master of Sails. All three of the lesser officers report directly to the captain. The captain also serves as the Quartermaster, administering the ship's common funds.

Red Brotherhood ship crews, regardless of their divisions among the three crew types, uniformly hate Turan. They do not engage in mutinies when in striking distance of their enemies. Furthermore, they mutiny to remove a captain, not to put a particular leader in place. Once the captain is

removed, the ship stops dead in the water until a new leader emerges. This can take a week or more, depending on the political skills of the various faction leaders.

Officers aboard Zingaran Freebooters

The Zingaran Freebooters run relatively well-organised ships. They support the following officer roles: Captain, Boson, 1st and 2nd Mate, Navigator and Quartermaster.

In a change from the Argossean model, the Quartermaster, Navigator and the 1st Mate report directly to the captain. The Boson reports to the Quartermaster. Each officer has the right of life and death over his crews, although the captain retains the right to spare a crewmember's life if he chooses to do so.

Zingaran pirate ships suffer from extreme fractionalisation. The loyal retainers keep to themselves, avoiding the potential taint of associating with those of unproven loyalty. The unaligned pirates, recognising their second-class status, often resent the 'captain's men'. Any mutiny is accompanied by a bloody purge of the loyal retainers. The pirate horde is even worse, since they only serve because of their belief in the captain. If a stronger leader appears, or if the captain falls, they can almost always be counted upon to launch their own mutiny, lead by their own prospective leaders.

TRADITIONS AND SUPERSTITIONS

The Hyborian Age is a time of superstition and sorcery, an era when the common man lives in fear of evil magic and whole kingdoms topple at the whim of depraved sorcerers. In this time sailors, always a superstitious folk, live in a complex miasma of rituals and fears derived from the lore of the sea. Captains who violate these traditions run the risk of sparking a mutiny. At the very least, they reduce their standing with their crew, making a mutiny much harder to suppress.

Each of the four pirate groups has its own signaturesuperstitions and traditions. A captain who violates



these rituals suffers a -1 penalty per incident on his next mutiny check.

Barachan Traditions

The Barachan Pirates, deriving as they do from the maritime culture of Argos, observe a plethora of complex superstitions. They, being civilised folk, would naturally resent being called superstitious while they engage in these practices.

Among the hundreds of petty rituals and beliefs the Barachans hold to, the following stand out for particular attention:

- ❖ Dolphins sailing along side mean safe passage.
- ❖ The green stone from the island ruins wants to return home. Any craft carrying a bit of it will sink, with the crew rising as shades to carry the stone back to its rightful resting place.
- ❖ A woman who stands on deck during a sunny day will bring a thunderstorm.
- ❖ A woman in the hold will spoil any grain carried there.
- ❖ The ship's captain must spit on the deck before leaving the ship. When he returns, he must step where he spat.
- ❖ A boson must use a whip made of cow's leather on a malingerer or the crewman will never learn his lesson.
- ❖ If a crow lands on the ship's mast the lookout will die within a day.
- ❖ If a crow lands on the ship's figurehead the ship will sink within a week. Killing the bird will break the curse.

Black Corsair Traditions

The Black Corsairs, like their countrymen in the far south, live a life filled with superstitious fear. They have the following notable traditions and superstitions:

- ❖ When there is no wind, it is a curse placed on one person in the crew. Kill the person and the curse will lift.
- ❖ If the ship's captain catches a fish he must give each crewmember a piece. The crewmembers that do not receive a piece will die during the next fight.
- ❖ If a woman bleeds on the deck the ship will never find a safe harbour during a storm.
 - ❖ Sea gulls are the ghosts of dead pirates. They must be fed or the ghosts will bring disaster to the ship.

- ❖ The ghosts of sailors become monsters under the waves. They demand a regular sacrifice of grain and beer or these sea monsters will capsize the ship.

Red Brotherhood Traditions

The former slaves who make up the Red Brotherhood cling to rituals that demonstrate their continued freedom. Anything that could potentially interfere with that freedom presents a threat they must deal with immediately.

- ❖ White rocks in the ballast will cause the ship to sink. A man found stacking such stones into a ship is a traitor or sorcerer.
- ❖ Red rocks in the ballast bring good luck, but also make the ship more subject to storms. Only a very foolhardy captain will allow such ballast onto his vessel.
- ❖ Leaving a man with obvious shackle gall to die brings bad luck.
- ❖ Officers must keep a bit of earth in their boots to ensure the ship will find safe harbours. Barefooted officers condemn the ship to a watery grave.
- ❖ A sailor who hangs himself from the spars dooms his shipmates to servitude for the rest of their lives. Sailors will abandon the ship as soon as they can, and even the officers may well flee if given the opportunity.

Zingaran Traditions

Zingaran Freebooters pride themselves on their flamboyant style and passionate approach to the pirate's life. They also hate the Barachan Pirates and Argossean Navy with undying passion.

- ❖ A white handled knife turns in the mate's hands, cutting a cord at a critical time.
- ❖ A knife driven into the mast, handle pointing in the direction of the needed wind, will call up enough wind to travel forward. A white handled knife will kill the wind.
- ❖ A ringing glass means that a sailor will die.
- ❖ An Argossean woman on board a ship will cause the ship to founder at sea. The only possible solution is to throw her overboard, weighted down with a hunk of bleeding meat.
- ❖ A pirate's weapon is his manhood. If he loses his sword or it breaks, the pirate is impotent until he takes a replacement blade from the cold, dead hands of another pirate.

Foreign Shores

Of Savage Shores & Crossed Palms

PIRATES LIVE OUT their lives on the open waves, trusting to the strength of their own skills in the chaotic might of the sea. However, the things that they wish to buy come from nations that will never know the scent of the sea. The dives and fleshpots that they gift with their song cluster at the mouths of rivers, not on large rafts far out at sea. In fact, although a pirate may well live out his life on the open seas he spends the majority of his time planning what he will do when he finally gets back to shore. The company of a hundred other men will not hold his undivided attention for long.

This chapter deals with those forlorn shores without trying to provide a large number of extraneous details. Readers looking for detailed information about the lands of the Hyborian Age should refer to *The Road of Kings*.

The system presented here creates settlements that the characters can encounter, plunder, and leave. It does not include a great deal of information about the power structures of the community or how many X level nomads are sitting getting drunk in the local tavern. If the Games Master wishes to create a more in depth community he should examine any one of a number of other products, including the *Core Rule Book II* and the *Book of Strongholds and Lairs*.

SETTLEMENTS

From bustling port cities to tiny villages that will never have a name, pirates of all types look forward to finding a nice settlement to dock at or plunder. Sometimes their intention turns from one to the other in an instant. A brief stop for water at a fishing village might end quite badly for it's inhabitant, while an attack on a better-defended settlement may well end with a stalemate involving the pirates unloading their cargo for a premium rate.

For pirate purposes settlements fall into three basic categories:

❖ *Prey Settlements* – these settlements have fewer people in them than the pirate's crew, or the pirates

think they have the advantage for some reason. Pirates will generally attack these settlements without a second thought, attempting to raze them and steal anything of value.

❖ *Ports of Call* – a port of call has something that the pirates need, usually a renewable resource like food, water, or liquor. Pirates will only attack one of their own ports of call if they are truly desperate. However, another pirate crew's port of call may well be a valid target, especially if the pirates can catch the rival ship in port with the crew otherwise engaged.

❖ *Ports* – a port is a place (usually a city) where many pirates gather at once. These places may well be legitimate settlements, although a few cities dedicated to particular pirate groups exist among the mist-shrouded isles. As a rule, pirates of the same group do not attack one another when in a port, although similar restraint does not apply to rivals. Any conflicts will have to be relatively covert, as the city may well have the resources to intervene if the pirate crews run riot in the streets.

When generating a settlement the Games Master uses slightly different rules for each of the three types. This allows him to customise the settlement for its role in the story, rather than customising the story to meet the needs of the settlement.

PREY SETTLEMENTS

The people living in them think of them as fishing villages, as little nameless towns gathering the wealth of a region to send it out for luxuries on the occasional merchant ships, or as places of rest along the long, weary road between the various nations of the world. Pirates consider all settlements that line the coasts from Vanaheim to Khitai as prey, seeing them only in terms

of what can be looted from them: gold, supplies, trade goods, women, and slaves.

All of these settlements share specific characteristics including:

- ❖ Complications
- ❖ Defences
- ❖ Dock
- ❖ Human Assets
- ❖ Leadership
- ❖ Storage

When combined these elements create a simple settlement for the characters to plunder. The remainder of this section provides generic information about these elements, as well as culturally appropriate modifications to things like complications, defences, human assets and leadership.

Generally these rules assume that settlements fall into one of three categories: insignificant, minor or important. Insignificant settlements may not even have a name. Minor settlements have a name and usually some kind of permanent structures associated with them. Important settlements may not be incredibly large, but they have access to something that causes the local government to take notice of them. Pirates can loot insignificant settlements with relative impunity, but harming minor and important settlements carries repercussions that may affect the pirate's reputation and even his life.

A typical settlement statistic block for an insignificant village on the Zingaran coast might look like this:

Insignificant Zingaran Village

Complication: Lord using fishing boats for smuggling illegal goods.

Defences: Fenced village, Village militia.

Dock: Class 1 (can dock small ship hulls)

Human Assets: 120 commoners, 4 beautiful females and 2 beautiful males

Leadership: 4th level Zingaran soldier (Lord's niece)

Storage: 3 Cargo Units – two of salt fish, one of black lotus

Complications

After burning a few defenceless villages to the ground, the thrill of it will wear off. Even Conan's exploits as a successful corsair are treated in a few cursory sentences. Simply put, there is not that much interest in a simple story of 'sail in, kill everyone, loot the place', repeated twenty or thirty times.

Thus, the first and most important entry in the settlement statistic block are its complications. Pirate characters are assumed to engage in various outrageous acts between games. The game sessions themselves focus on those times when things go wrong, when unexpected complications come up causing the situation to run quickly out of control. It is these moments, when the characters must respond to rapidly changing circumstances, which capture the essence of pirate tales.

Each settlement that the players interact with should have at least one complication. Larger, more important settlements may have two or three. As a general rule insignificant settlements have one complication, minor settlements have one or two, and important settlements have one to three. These complications in turn come in one of three basic forms:

- ❖ Someone within the settlement is not who they appear to be. They may be a demon in disguise, a sorcerer attempting to secure sacrifices for an ancient ritual or a well-known pirate searching for his long lost daughter. The characters' sudden appearance on the scene forces the individual to take extraordinary actions.
- ❖ Something in the settlement is more important than it appears. In the above example the lord of the province uses the fishing village as a stopping point in his lotus smuggling operation. Other examples of this kind of complication include: an old painting in the village inn is actually a map to an ancient pirate treasure or the town is built on the foundations of an ancient and haunted ruin.
- ❖ An event is about to occur that makes the settlement important for a brief time. The character's timing brings them into conflict with this event. Examples of this might include: a noble is travelling though the settlement, a war party from a rival nation is preparing to attack the settlement or a large storm comes sweeping in just as the characters land to attack.

Although Games Masters can probably create an infinite number of complications for their players to interact with, the following lists some common issues by culture:

The goal of a complication is to make the characters attempt to sack the village more interesting. In effect, the complication is the 'adventure seed' that leads the characters from the mundane activity of looting to a more exciting experience involving unexpected twists and reversals.

Culture	Example Complications
Hyborian	The village leader was once a pirate of great renown. Initiate an immediate mutiny check when he calls on the crew.
	One of the village women comes from an unbroken line of wise women. She offers to take the pirates to an 'ancient treasure' in return for them sparing the village.
	The local lord has greatly expanded the dock in preparation for building a war fleet and has stationed a garrison of fighting men in the settlement to protect his investment.
	The local shrine to Mithra has powerful counterspells around it that prevent sorcery from functioning there. Its destruction at the pirates' hands unleashes an ancient and unspeakable evil.
	The village is a gathering place for rebels who are planning a great battle within the next month. Not only do they have considerable military power but the local authorities are closing in on them with a sizeable force as well.
	The village is host to a terrible plague.
Shemite	A child in the settlement is the illegitimate son of one of the local merchant princes. He is quite valuable as a hostage and very dangerous to kill.
	The local priest was a great Zamorian thief (Reputation 25+) who fled his past long ago. One of the characters may well recognise him.
	The village well is the only source of sweet water within a day's walk on foot.
	The village is a well-known gathering point for nomads of all kinds. Immediately after the pirates attack the nomads begin to gather for their annual festival.
	One of the women in the village is about to marry the son of an important nomad chief.
Stygian	The local village priest is actually a highly placed member of The Black Ring.
	One of the village leaders long ago made a demonic pact to gain greater power over his fellows. He turns this magic against the pirates when they arrive.
	The village has a guardian spirit, some creature that protects the village as an unintended side effect of protecting some ancient, evil sorcery.
	Several of the commoners dabble in sorcery. When the pirates appear they band together to level curses on those who would destroy them.
	The pirates attack at the same time that a smuggler is moving a magical treasure though the village towards one of the larger inland settlements.
	A high priest of The Black Ring is searching the village for the 'reborn sacrifice' that will complete a vile ritual he wishes to enact in order to strengthen his own position within the cult.
Southern	The village hetman was once a black corsair and still has connections among the many pirate fleets.
	The village witch doctor is actually a sorcerer of some small skill, especially adept at curses and sea witchery.
	The village is wealthy beyond measure because it lies close to a nearly infinite source of ivory; perhaps an elephant graveyard or something more sinister.
	The village's foundations go back to the time of Atlantis. Deep underground there are chambers that the villagers use for storage in which a famous black corsair hid his plunder in centuries ago.
	A rival tribe attacks the village when the pirates strike.
	A rival tribe's hetman is visiting the village for peace talks when the pirates attack.
Turanian	One of the villagers is actually a spy, sent by the King to keep an eye on pirate activities.
	The village shipwright worked for the Turanian navy before he fled to safety. He knows how to build masterwork hulls and fast ships unlike anything available to ordinary pirates.
	The village is actually a staging ground for a small, unaligned pirate fleet.
	The village acts as a waypoint for naval scout ships on their long patrols around the Vilayet Sea.
	A Khitain merchant ship, attempting to escape the heavy tolls of Aghrapur, has slipped into the settlement. It contains exotic cargoes that even the Turanians might think twice about allowing though.
	The slaves in the settlement revolted the day before the pirates arrived. A detachment of the Turanian army is on its way to deal with the problem.

Defences

Settlements in the Hyborian Age are less defenceless than a reaver would like to think. For every innocent village without a presentable fence, pirates can find a half dozen with crude walls of wood and a sturdy gate. When faced with these obstacles weak willed corsairs change their course to easier waters; those made of stronger stuff prepare themselves arm up for the battle ahead.

Defences come in three basic types: cover, garrisons and impediments. Cover provides protection from attacks. Garrisons indicate some kind of military force, generally a militia, but sometimes armed guards or a mercenary unit. Impediments count as either difficult terrain or obstacles, depending on the exact type of impediment present.

As with complications, the number of defences present depends entirely on the importance and number of structures in the settlement they defend. Insignificant settlements generally have no defences at all but may have as many as two structures. Minor settlements will have at least one structure and potentially two. An important settlement might have as many as four.

The similarity between defences and complications does not end with their quantity. Defences serve the same purpose as complications; they make the settlement more interesting to interact with than a small group of houses on a beach. However, where complications add narrative depth to the settlement defences, serve to increase the tactical interest of the encounter. Rather than worrying about what would be 'historically accurate' or 'logical', these settlements attempt to pose interesting tactical challenges.

The following defences provide the Games Master with examples to draw from when designing defences for settlements the character's encounter.

Cover: Defences that provide cover do so by interposing some relatively hard mass (usually wood or stone) between the defender and the attacker. This mass hampers those who attack around it, although the defender usually selects a position that hampers his attacker more than him; as cover provides a +4 bonus to the defender's Defensive Value (DV).

Typical cover providing defensive structures include:

- ❖ *Catwalk:* a catwalk is attached to a impeding wall to allow the defenders to attack over the impediment. Some

catwalks are covered to prevent arched arrow fire. (Hardness 5, Hit Points 10)

- ❖ **Slate Roofs:** provide cover from arrow fire and negates the use of fire arrows to ignite the building. (Hardness 8, Hit Points 2)
- ❖ **Wooden Roof:** provides cover form arrow fire but does not negate the use of fire. (Hardness 4, Hit Points 2)
- ❖ **Shutters:** Many walls have stout wooden shutters built into the windows. These shutters keep out the wind, and can be opened to provide a clear arc of fire. They can take a modest beating but can be broken down by a determined attacker. (Hardness 4, Hit Points 5)

Some defensive structures may provide concealment rather than cover. Concealment allows the defender to make a miss change percentile roll to avoid being struck. If he rolls a 20 or less the attack misses due to the concealment.

Typical concealment providing defensive structures include:

- ❖ **Blinds:** Defensive blinds are curtains, crannies and other places where the defenders can hide. Some villages actually have blinds built into the rooftops, allowing defenders to fight with concealment as they retreat though the settlement.
- ❖ **Thatch Roof:** A thatch roof provides concealment from ranged fire but does not prevent the use of fire.

Impediments: Defences that check the attacker's movement for a long period of time (like a wall) are impediments. The defenders place impediments where they can hold the attackers in place for direct assault.

Some impediments (like walls) provide cover as well as impeding progress. Others (like mud pits) impede progress but do not provide other bonuses.

Typical impediments include:

- ❖ **Ditches:** a five-foot wide drainage or irrigation ditch creates hampered terrain for movement.
- ❖ **Dragon's Teeth:** These rows of stakes (which are commonly tipped with poison in Stygia) hamper movement but do not prevent it. Creatures of Large

THE USE OF FIRE

Several of the structures above (particularly thatch roofs and wooden walls) note that they do not prevent fire attacks. Similarly the slate roof entry indicates that it 'negates attacks by fire'. However, there are few rules for the use of fire in a large-scale conflict like the sacking of a settlement.

Any structure made of wood or thatch can be set on fire as a full round action, assuming that the attacker has access to flame. The fire starts in a five-foot square and expands to all adjacent squares at the beginning of every round until the object is completely ablaze. A burning object takes 1d4 damage per round, regardless of its Hardness.

Putting out a fire takes one full round action per 5-ft. square, and requires that the character have access to water or something with which to smother the flames. Characters attempting to put out a fire must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or take 1d4 damage from the fire.

A character attempting to pass through a flame filled square takes 1d4 damage per square crossed. He may also try to Jump over or around the fires, depending on the situation, though failure to succeed the Jump check deals the character the aforementioned damage.

or greater size take 1d8 damage for every five-feet of dragon's teeth they pass through.

- ❖ **Earthen Wall:** An earthen wall is made from alternating layers of a laminate of grasses, stones, and packed soil. In areas with sufficiently fine soil the outer skin may be made of partially glazed clay resembling pottery. The wall may be of any height. A normal earthen wall has a Climb DC of 15, hardness 4 and 300 hp per ten foot section.
- ❖ **Hedges:** hedges (and other large, thorny bushes) are common in almost any land. These hedges block movement and also provide those hiding in or behind them with concealment from attacks. If the attacker has an edged weapon he may spend a full round action to hack down a five foot by five foot section of the hedge.
- ❖ **Kelp Anchors:** Although rarely planned, the sudden appearance of a large kelp forest in a bay may well choke it off to larger ships. Any ship with a medium or large hull attempting to enter the bay becomes stuck.
- ❖ **Mud Pit:** Mud, especially when it is deep enough as to completely encase the legs, forms a very effective impediment. Strategically placed mudpits (especially concealed ones) can easily form a killing field for a prepared group of archers.
- ❖ **Pottery Shards:** broken pottery can carry a razor's edge, at least until someone steps on it with a booted foot. Settlements that use pottery shards generally scatter them under straw or light sand so that they are not immediately obvious.
- ❖ **Stone Wall:** a wall made of local stone, usually mortared together, although dry stone walls are not unknown or significantly different. The wall has a Climb DC of 20, hardness 8 and 450 hp per ten-foot section.
- ❖ **Sunken Stakes:** Another water-based impediment, sunken stakes are long iron-tipped poles with iron heads driven into the ground near the village's pier. The locals know where the stakes are, but any medium or large hulled ship that runs into one takes 1d8 structural damage per round per stake, and may become stuck (10% chance per round).
- ❖ **Trench:** where many villages have ditches of various kinds, very few bother to dig a defensive trench. A trench, unlike a ditch, is kept free of obstructions and provides cover to those who are within it. Entering or leaving a trench requires a Jump skill check (DC 10). Failure on entry means that the character falls into the trench, taking 1d6 damage.

❖ **Wooden Fence:** A wooden fence provides concealment and acts as a barrier to movement (Climb DC 15 to cross). It has hardness 4 and 50 hit points per ten-foot section. Some of these fences have spikes or some kind of simple trap on the top to prevent people from climbing over so easily.

❖ **Wooden Wall:** A wooden wall is made from lengths of wood which have been lashed together, usually either whole logs or split logs treated with tar. The wall has hardness 4 and 80 hit points per ten-foot section. Getting over the wall requires a Climb skill check (DC 20).

Garrisons: Garrisons give the settlement a defensive unit beyond its mass of unarmed and unarmoured commoners. This unit may be a militia, a formal military unit or a noble's retinue.

❖ **Militia:** A militia is a group of armed and armoured citizen fighters who work in the settlement by day and train in the evenings. The militia may be well or poorly equipped, but in either case it will provide more resistance than the average villager. A sample militia unit is described in the Riders of the Waves chapter (pg. 69).

❖ **Military:** military units are professional soldiers commissioned by the local government. A military unit will be very well trained and well equipped, although they may not be willing to engage pirates unless directly threatened. Sample military units are described under the Marines entry in the Riders of the Waves chapter (pg. 69).

❖ **Noble's Retinue:** in lands where nobles have official title to the land they also have the responsibility to defend it. Their retinues will include their own followers, cohorts and a number of mercenary soldiers. Use the Naval Captain and Marines entries in the Riders of the Waves chapter (pg. 69) respectively, or create a noble based on the needs of a particular adventure.

Dock

All coastal settlements, whether on the Western Ocean or the inland Vilayet Sea, boast some form of dock or pier. This dock may be nothing more than a line of barely worked trees driven into the sand to tie boats to or an elaborate stone structure with space for all but the largest of ships. The quality of a settlement's dock is directly related to its

importance – insignificant settlements rarely have docks of decent size, while important settlements boast impressive docks useful for a wide variety of purposes.

Although the art of building docks and piers has preoccupied some of the greatest architectural minds in history, settlement statistics generally group these complex entities into one of four classes:

Class 1: These docks can handle small hulls, and potentially up to one medium hull. They consist of little more than a space to tie off the boats.

Class 2: These docks can handle multiple medium hulls. They consist of wooden or stone pylons with walkways built between the ship anchorage points. A Class 2 dock can dry-dock a small hull.

Class 3: These docks can handle multiple large hulls. They consist of stone pylons driven into the harbour bottom, creating an elaborate array of anchorage points for ships of all sizes. They can dry-dock a medium hull.

Class 4: These docks can handle multiple gargantuan ship hulls. They have an elaborate network of stone pylons driven deep into the sea floor along with river side and harbour access. Class 4 docks only occur in the largest and most important settlements (like Messantia) or in unique pirate settlements. Class 4 docks can dry-dock any size ship.

If the pirates choose to attack a settlement that cannot dock their ship they must use landing craft to get to shore. Otherwise they stand a good chance of running their ship aground, preventing them from escaping and potentially stranding them in the settlement until they can repair their vessel.

Human Assets

Each settlement has a wide array of commoners in it. From the character's point of view, these crudely armed commoners are mostly just an impediment on their path to riches. However, a few of them might actually have some value in and of themselves; assuming that the pirates do not accidentally kill them.

As with all of the other attributes, the number of human assets depends on the importance of the settlement. Insignificant settlements will have between 50 and 150 individuals; minor settlements will have between 75 and 200 individuals, while important settlements may have as many as 500 commoners of various sorts.

Within this population roughly 1 in 20 will qualify for sale as a 'beautiful' slave. These individuals may be of either gender. If the village has a noble garrison it will also have at least one beautiful, educated noble's daughter waiting to be captured and sold to the highest bidder.

For information about the combat abilities of the average villager please refer to the Riders of the Waves chapter (pg. 69). For information about how many survive a typical plundering attempt please refer to the Cargo and Plunder section below.

Note that southerners (both South Islanders and those from the Black Kingdoms) tend to be barbarians rather than commoners and these peoples are more difficult to plunder than the softer people of the north.

Leadership

The question of village leadership often poses a problem for the Games Master. On one hand, it provides yet another opportunity to differentiate the settlement from a 'generic' loot and pillage encounter. On the other, detailed and interesting Non-Player Characters can take quite a while to put together. The Road of Kings provides considerable assistance with this, although the simple system provided below can also help.

Any random settlement has an 80% chance of being lead by a commoner with a commoner level of 1d8+1. This commoner acts as the local headsman and tries to negotiate with the pirates before they land.

The settlement has a 20% chance of having a character from one of the race's favoured classes as its leader (level 1d8+1). This leader will deal with the pirates directly, and may try to hire them for other purposes. This means that, for example, a Stygian settlement will likely have a scholar/priest leader who can wield terrible magic in the defence of his own interests. Similarly a Zingaran settlement will likely have a pirate or a soldier, perhaps with noble pretensions.

Storage

Settlements, unlike ships, have quite a bit of space to store cargo. This cargo may be local produce or items stored at the settlement for eventual shipment elsewhere. The level of importance attached to the settlement determines how many cargoes it contains, as well as their potential value.

Insignificant settlements can store up to three cargoes. These will generally be common cargoes for the region, rather than uncommon or exotic cargoes. Note that a

common cargo on the Black Coast (say, ivory) may be worth more elsewhere.

Minor settlements can store up to six cargoes. These will generally be common cargoes, although one or two may be uncommon or exotic cargoes. There is a 10% chance that any given minor settlement will have one exotic cargo.

Important settlements can store up to nine cargoes. At least half of these are common cargoes for the region. The other half is comprised equally of uncommon and exotic cargoes.

Any settlement may, at the Games Master's discretion, have a unique cargo of some kind. These cargoes are always tied to specific story events that drive the characters ever deeper into the wild conflicts of the Hyborian Age.

Example Settlements

The following example settlements provide the Games Master with ready to loot targets in a wide variety of settings. They can be easily modified to allow for variations in region, campaign level and political complexity.

Insignificant Argossean Village

Complication: Village is the port of call for a famous pirate ship.

Defences: Ditches

Dock: Class 3 (can dock up to large ship hulls)

Human Assets: 100 commoners, 2 beautiful females and 3 beautiful males

Leadership: 5th Level Commoner

Storage: 3 Cargo Units – two of salt fish, one of silver (held over from the last pirate visit)

This small village does not even have a name. The people who live in it just call it home; the pirates who come to trade with one of the large merchant concerns in Argos refer to it as their 'bread basket'. Unless the other pirates and their merchant cohorts are in port for some reason the village looks much like any Argossean village – small cottages lining a large and relatively sturdy pier. Closer examination shows that the pier is quite a bit larger than one might ordinarily expect from such an isolated settlement.

Important Turanian Village (Kumzar)

Complication: The village shipwright is a master of his trade (Commoner 20).

Defences: Earthen Wall, Catwalks, Dragon's Teeth, Military garrison (Turanian Army)

Dock: Class 3 (can dock large ship hulls)

Human Assets: 400 commoners, 12 beautiful females and 8 beautiful males

Leadership: 8th level Turanian nomad

Storage: 8 Cargo Units – four of cured lumber, two of rough silk, one of fine silk and one of dried provisions

Kumzar, a small walled garrison on the Vilayet Sea, provides a temporary home to naval and merchant ships that are blown north from Aghrapur during their journey. They have sufficient facilities to refit a ship damaged by the intermittent storms, or build a new one if need be. Most of the time they act as a supply depot for the Turanian Navy, repairing ships after combat. The village is encircled completely by a wall made of mud bricks and packed earth, with a loose stone core. The garrison lives alongside the less militant villagers.

Minor Kambujan Village

Complication: The people of the village are fighting off a dark, winged terror that comes from the jungles once every month. They do not know what it wants or why it comes, but they do know that it takes one woman or girl child to feed its hunger.

Defences: Militia, slate roofs, wooden fence.

Dock: Class 2 (can dock medium ship hulls)

Human Assets: 200 commoners, 6 beautiful females and 4 beautiful males

Leadership: 3rd level Eastern (count as Vendhyan) noble

Storage: 5 Cargo Units – two of salt fish, one of black lotus, two of exotic wines

This little village on the Kambujan peninsula is suitable for raiding either by the local pirates or by the black corsairs. It is composed of dozens of small, tile roofed homes (counted as a slate roof for game purposes), clustered around a central well. About half of the houses stand in the sheltered bay that the fishermen use to protect their boats. About a year ago the village started to suffer monthly attacks by an unknown and seemingly unstoppable force, a great winged creature that smells of brimstone. The villagers believe it to be a demon god from the ancient world, something that must be obeyed and endured. The village leader (a local noble) believes that it is a sending but he cannot find the magician responsible or work out why it plagues his home.

Insignificant Khitan Village

Complication: One of the villagers is a powerful sage (scholar 15) hiding from his enemies.

Defences: Pottery shards (scattered under straw when they see the pirates coming)

Dock: Class 1 (can dock small ship hulls)

Human Assets: 80 commoners, 2 beautiful females and 2 beautiful males

Leadership: 2nd level Commoner

Storage: 3 Cargo Units – one of salt fish, one of silk, one of black lotus

This small Khitai village would be rather uninteresting to the local pirates, but highly exciting to Black Corsairs or other foreign thieves. The silk and black lotus are hardly uncommon in Khitai, but will fetch a considerable price in the west. The village itself is rather unremarkable; wood and reed circular huts set against a beach with a simple worked stone pier capable of holding a handful of fishing craft, a larger warehouse filled with silk and fish, and of course a mulberry grove a few hundred yards from the sea. When attacked the villagers retreat to the grove, throwing broken pottery and straw into the streets to slow the attackers.

The scholar will only use his magic if he feels directly threatened. Although the death of his neighbours would trouble him, he feels that maintaining his cover is more important than anything else.

Minor Shemite Village (Jbail)

Complication: The headman's daughter is not his own, but the child of a merchant prince. He receives a stipend every year to maintain her.



Defences: Dragon's teeth, militia, wooden fence
Dock: Class 2 (can dock medium ship hulls)
Human Assets: 150 commoners, 2 beautiful female and 5 beautiful males
Leadership: 6th level Shemite nomad
Storage: 4 Cargo Units – two of salt fish, one of hides, one of gold

Jbail sits on the rocky coast of Shem, protected from the winds and waves by low cliffs of native stone. The village centre has a large pen made of wooden stakes, a tall slat fence and a central wooden tower. The pen is used to hold the village goat herd and warehouse, as well as providing a defensible fortress should pirates or nomads come. This central pen makes Jbail an attractive storage place for various merchant concerns along the western coast, something that the old headsman worked hard to promote by charging well under one third what the nearby Shemite cities charge for warehouse space. Whether his successor will continue the trend remains to be seen.

Insignificant Stygian Village

Complication: The commoner's dabble in sorcery.

Defences: Sunken Stakes.

Dock: Class 1 (can dock small ship hulls)

Human Assets: 60 commoners, 3 beautiful females

Leadership: 9th level commoner

Storage: 3 Cargo Units – two of salt fish, one of rope

Pirate's tales about the prevalence of magic among the Stygians have their roots in little villages like this one. Ten of the villagers have extensive experience with curses, and happily use them to break pirates who attack their homes. These dabblers are not actually scholars, but have the Dabbler feat. Otherwise this village is fairly unremarkable; square reed huts with palm leaf roofs, a great central cooking fire, with the whole affair strung out over almost a quarter of a mile of beach.

Important Vendhyan Settlement (Alwaye)

Complication: The village, although mostly unremarkable, holds an ancient temple complex. The villagers cannot maintain the temple, but pilgrims come from around the country to pray on the ruined steps.

Defences: Blinds, kelp anchors, noble's retinue, thatch roofs, trenches.

Dock: Class 2 (can dock medium ship hulls, but kelp keeps anything beyond a small hull out)

Human Assets: 300 commoners, 10 beautiful females and 5 beautiful males

Leadership: 7th level Vendhyan noble

Storage: 8 Cargo Units – one of salt fish, one of dried foods, one of meat, three of iron, one of common gems, one of silk

A thousand years ago Alwaye was a great religious centre, noted for its learning and debauchery. Those days of glory long ago past into legend, leaving behind a modest town and a great ruin where thousands of scholars are gathered for orgies of blood and power. The locals do their best to maintain their homes among the old stones, but the ancient ruin shows the wear of countless generations of trophy takers.

The local noble, a skilled fighter and relatively kind man, has recently begun to organise pilgrimages to the old site. He takes care to not show the pilgrims how the once great sanctuary has been converted into a vast warehouse for his mercantile wealth. He also made arrangements for good smelted iron to transfer through his hands, taking a bit of profit from the venture for very little cost.

PORTS OF CALL

Ports of call are built using the same rules as prey settlements. However, the settlement has some resource that makes it useful to the pirates. These resources may include:

- ❖ A friendly village council that maintains a good dock for dry-docking and repairs.
- ❖ A particularly large population of whores and taverns.
- ❖ One or more relatively corrupt merchants who will buy and sell anything.
- ❖ A steady supply of fresh water or food.
- ❖ Skilled craftsmen (blacksmiths, coopers and shipwrights) who can help the pirates repair their vessel or refit a captured ship.

A port of call may be fairly large, or it may be just a small village that happens to have an arrangement. In either case pirates of the same group may use the port of call, assuming that they are not rivals. Other pirate groups will happily treat the port of call as a prey settlement, partially just to deny the other pirates access to the valuable resource.

PORTS

The great ports of the world, including Messantia, Khem and Aghrapur, are beyond the scope of this system. No single pirate ship, or even a fleet of such ships, could reasonably threaten them, though a sorcerer with a serious grudge might be able to damage such a place.

Although pirates cannot easily prey on the great ports, they are highly

concerned with getting access to them. Each port has excellent facilities, access to master craftsmen and markets for a wide variety of plunders. When a pirate ship gains access to a port he can use these resources, effectively giving him large bonuses to any skill rolls required to refit his ship or sell the plunder gathered from a hundred other ships.

Gaining access to a particular port requires a Diplomacy skill check. This check's DC depends on the port, the pirate captain's reputation and the captain's affiliation. The table below provides the necessary information to calculate the check DC. Pirate captains may use their reputation as a bonus on any Diplomacy skill checks required to gain access to a port for which the DC is 20 or less. Captains may attempt to gain access to a port once a month, and may not take 10 or 20 on this skill check. Failing this skill check by more than five causes a fully armed naval fleet to chase away the pirate ship.

Port Access Difficulties Table

Port	Barachan Pirate	Black Corsair	Red Brotherhood	Zingaran Freebooter	Independent
Kordava	25	25	–	15	20
Messantia	15	25	–	25	20
Asgalun	20	30	–	20	20
Khemi	25	30	–	25	25
Kulalo	30	20	–	30	20
Yota-Pong	–	20	–	–	20
Khorala	–	20	–	–	20
Angkhor	–	20	–	–	20
Paikang	–	25	–	–	20
Aghrapur	–	–	25	–	–
Khoraf	–	–	25	–	–
Tortage	5	–	–	–	–

CARGOES AND PLUNDER

Although many pirates enjoy indulging in the red tide of war, most would rather be rich than dead. As such, they regard the quality of plunder as being far more important than the quality of the fight to secure it.

The basic unit of plunder is the cargo – defined as an ambiguous unit equal to what a mid-sized ship could carry. Cargoes are generally bigger than a breadbasket, and somewhat smaller than a herd of elephants. A cargo is generally larger than anything one man could comfortably carry. A small or medium hulled ship can carry one cargo (barring modifications). Large hulled merchant ships may carry as many as four cargoes with proper modifications, although they will be rather slow when fully loaded.

Cargoes fall into one of four categories of rarity: common, uncommon and exotic. Common cargoes are easily available within the

Leadership, Port Access, and Fencing

Most pirate captains have ready blades, not silver tongues. How, then, do individuals like Amra and Storn gain access to reputable ports? Similarly how do individual captains with limited Gather Information skills find a reasonably dishonest fence?

The key to such activities for those characters that lack extensive social graces lies in the Leadership feat. Rather than having a pirate cohort the captain may choose to have a contact in one of the great ports. Similarly, the captain may substitute a known fence for one or more of his personal followers. So long as the cohort remains alive the captain will always have free access to the specified port; so long as the followers are well paid he will retain a fence who can help him to dispose of his goods.

region. Uncommon cargoes come from distant lands, but are not unheard of. Exotic cargoes come from distant lands, passing from hand to hand before they finally end up in the pirate's holds. Of the three, exotic cargoes generally bring the best price while common cargoes are readily available and can easily be both bought and sold.

The value of a cargo depends on its rarity in the market the individual brings it to. Some goods are always rare (gems, gold, silver and the like) while others may be quite valuable in one place and almost worthless in another (silk, spices). The cargo tables suggest values by region as well as listing various common, uncommon and exotic cargoes.

Cargo By Region

Region	Common (1000 sp)	Uncommon (10,000sp)	Exotic (50,000 sp)
East	Dried Fish	Arms	Furs
	Dried Fruits	Armour	Ivory
	Exotic Feathers	Ale	Olive Oil
	Grain	Exotic Cloth	Shemite Wine
	Leather	Exotic Goods	–
	Lumber	Fine Lumber	–
	Raw Metal	Gems	–
	Regional Cloth	Gold	–
	Regional Goods	Lotus	–
	Semi-precious stones	Incense	–
	Silk	Silver	–
	Spices	Slaves	–
	Wine	–	–
South	Ale	Arms	Lotus
	Dried Fish	Armour	Fine Lumber
	Dried Fruits	Exotic Cloth	Furs
	Exotic Feathers	Exotic Goods	Gems
	Grain	Gold	Incense
	Leather	Ivory	Olive Oil
	Raw Metal	Lumber	Shemite Wine
	Regional Cloth	Semi-precious stones	Silk
	Regional Goods	Spices	Silver
	Slaves	–	–
	Wine	–	–
West	Ale	Arms	Fine Lumber
	Dried Fish	Armour	Gems
	Dried Fruit	Exotic Cloth	Gold
	Grain	Exotic Feathers	Incense
	Leather	Exotic Goods	Ivory
	Lumber	Furs	Lotus
	Raw Metal	Olive Oil	Silk
	Regional Cloth	Semi-precious stones	Silver
	Regional Goods	Shemite Wine	Spices
	Wine	Slaves	–
	Vilayet Sea	Ale	Arms
Dried Fish		Armour	Furs
Dried Fruits		Exotic Cloth	Gold
Grain		Exotic Goods	Lotus
Incense		Gems	Ivory
Leather		Silver	Olive Oil
Lumber		Spices	Shemite Wine
Regional Goods		Raw Metal	–
Semi-precious stones		–	–
Silk		–	–
Slaves		–	–
Wine		–	–

Cargo Descriptions

The following entries give general descriptions of the cargoes mentioned above. When necessary the Games Master should feel free to invent whatever details seem necessary at the time.

Ale: A somewhat bitter, somewhat sweet alcoholic beverage brewed with yeast and (if the drinker is fortunate) hops. Well-known breweries may sell their ale into other kingdoms, but most are locally brewed. A pirate crew finding a cargo of ale may not get incredibly rich, but they will have a solid liquid ration for a few weeks.

Arms: The ship is carrying a load of weapons suitable to its country of origin. At the Games Masters discretion the crew may break out these weapons when the pirates attack, giving them access to better weapons than the average merchant crew.

Armour: The hold bulges with jerkins, shirts and hauberts made by local craftsmen. The merchants will not have time to break out the armour, but if the Games Master allows, the pirate crew may make use of it.

Dried Fish: Dried, smoked and salt cured local fish. These cargoes may not be terribly valuable but they do provide food for many days. A single cargo of dried fish contains 3000 days of food.

Dried Fruits: Dried, sugar cured or otherwise preserved fruits. These cargoes may be somewhat valuable if taken outside of their originating region, but most preserved fruits do not travel very well at all.

Exotic Cloth: A hold full of non-local cloth. A load of regional cloth taken to another region becomes exotic cloth. A load of exotic cloth taken back to its home region becomes regional cloth. When the

Games Master establishes this cargo he must specify which region the cargo originally came from.

Exotic Feathers: A hold full of colourful, exotic feathers. Although each feather may only sell for half a silver in bulk, but in mass they can be quite valuable. The majority of the cargo hold is taken up with measures to prevent salt water from damaging the merchandise.

Exotic Goods: A hold full of non-local worked goods (shoes, boots, belts, silverware, bells and so on). A load of regional goods taken to another region becomes exotic goods. A load of exotic goods taken back to its home region becomes regional goods. When the Games Master establishes this cargo he must specify which region the cargo originally came from. The Games Master should also feel free to describe the contents of the cargo, taking into account its region and country of origin.

Fine Lumber: A hold full of fine-grained lumber. This lumber is not overly useful for making ships or buildings, but makes fine furniture, statuary and other fancywork.

Furs: A massive load of fine furs from the northern lands. Furs are particularly valuable in many lands, as they can only be gathered from the furthest north, where few merchants dare to tread. Few animals rarely have hide stout enough to make armour from, but civilised people pay handsomely for tissue thin leather attached to a pretty pelt.

Gems: A chest of rubies, emeralds, pearls and other rare stones. The chest is hidden in a 'junk' cargo of common goods (usually lumber or regional goods). The value of the cargo is included in the gem price. Finding the gem cargo requires a Search check (DC 15).

Gold: A chest of worked and unworked gold. This is the ultimate pirate cargo, the great haul that they all dream of. The chest is hidden in a 'junk' cargo of common goods (usually lumber or grain). The value of the cargo is included in the gold value. Finding the gold cargo requires a Search check (DC 20).

Grain: A cargo hold full of dried grain. These cargoes are often used to mask more interesting, and valuable, cargoes.

Incense: A cargo hold full of aromatics, including several kinds of mixed incense. These cargoes tend to be highly flammable and subject to water damage, but if the pirate

can get them to a good-sized port the reward can be tremendous.

Ivory: The raw tusks of elephants. Ivory is valued all over the world, although its largest market is currently the Hyborian nations.

Leather: Tanned animal hides, usually cattle but sometimes camel, goat or sheep as well. Finely tanned leather is an important and regular trade item, but not something that many pirates consider worthy plunder.

Lotus: This cargo may include black, golden, green, grey, purple, white or yellow lotus. A cargo of lotus is usually small enough to hide in some other 'junk' cargo like grain or lumber. The value of the trash cargo is figured into the value of lotus cargo. Finding the lotus requires a Search check (DC 15)

Lumber: Dried lumber of various species and kinds. Although each type of lumber is useful for a different purpose, pirates tend to see anything that is not directly nailed to their ship as all being of the same sort of thing; heavy cargo that is not worth much, but that does float.

Olive Oil: Large barrels of olive oil, used for waterproofing, cooking and lamp oil. This oil is very valuable in most regions of the world, but is also hard to transport for any distance. Pirates know that Shemite ships often carry a cargo of olive oil, and so target them whenever they may be headed to the east.

Raw Metal: The exact contents and type of a raw metal cargo must be defined when the Games Master places it. The metal has not yet been worked; instead it is headed to a larger market where craftsmen are more plentiful.

Regional Cloth: A hold full of local cloth. A load of regional cloth taken to another region becomes exotic cloth. A load of exotic cloth taken back to its home region becomes regional cloth. When the Games Master establishes this cargo he must specify which region the cargo originally came from.

Regional Goods: A hold full of local worked goods (shoes, boots, belts, silverware, bells and so on). A load of regional goods taken to another region becomes exotic goods. A load of exotic goods taken back to its home region becomes regional goods. When the Games Master establishes this cargo he must specify which region the cargo originally came from. The Games Master should also feel free to describe the contents of the cargo, taking into account its region and country of origin.

Semi-precious Stones: A chest full of semi-precious stones (lapis lazuli, opals, topaz and the like). The chest is hidden in a 'junk' cargo of common goods (usually lumber or regional goods). The value of the cargo is included in the stone's price. Finding the semi-precious stone cargo requires a Search check (DC 20).

Shemite Wine: The vineyards of Shem are known throughout the world for their fine wines. It is said that the people of the East will pay handsomely for even a flagon of their finest. Fortunately it comes a bit less dear to those who live in the west. A hold full of shemite wine contains dozens of casks, each containing enough well made wine to get a dozen men drunk.

Silk: A hold full of bolts of silk cloth. Silk is very common in the East (where it is the regional cloth) but hardly seen at all in the west. A man who could get a hold full of silk from the East all the way to Messantia would have his fortunes made.

Silver: A chest full of raw and worked silver. The chest is hidden in a 'junk' cargo of common goods (usually lumber or grain). The value of the cargo is included in the silver's price. Finding the silver cargo requires a Search check (DC 15).

Slaves: A cargo hold full of human merchandise, usually in relatively good condition. Many pirate ships maintain a cargo of slaves to work the oars.

Spices: A small chest full of spices, worth their weight in gold. The chest is hidden in a 'junk' cargo of common goods (usually grain or lumber). The value of the cargo is included in the spice cargo price. Finding the spice cargo requires a Search check (DC 15).

Wine: Casks of good, drinkable wine. The casks are not worth much individually but there is a 5% chance that the character can fence this particular cargo for ten times its normal value to a collector or someone with a specific, seasonal need.

FENCING GOODS

After the pirates successfully acquire a cargo they will wish to sell it. Unfortunately they cannot simply sail into a friendly port and spend months looking for a buyer. Instead they have to smuggle the cargo in at the dead of night, avoiding port authorities should they seize their cargo of ill-gotten gains. Unfortunately this means that the pirates usually sell their cargoes for silver on the luna.

Pirate captains may attempt to fence their goods at any port or port of call. In order to do so they may make a Gather Information skill check (DC 20) to find a reputable fence or merchant who is willing to make shady dealings. If he succeeds the fence will buy the cargo for 20% of its absolute value. For every 10 points by which he exceeds the DC he earns an additional 10% of the value. If he sells his cargo in one of the great ports he receives an additional 10% of the value automatically.

If, on the other hand, the pirate fails this Gather Information skill check then the captain and his crew come to the attention of the local authorities. At best they can expect to have to fight off an attempt to seize their ship, along with a fast and bloody execution should they themselves find iron chains wrapped around them. At worst, they may have to flee the region entirely, hounded by naval vessels to the furthest corners of the world.

If the pirate sells to one of his followers he does not have to make the skill check and gains 20% of the cargo's value. If he has a cohort in a port he may automatically enter the port and gets 30% of his the value. In either case he cannot make a skill check to increase the proportion of the wealth he receives.

THE MERCHANT LIFE

Perceptive players will no doubt recognise that there is considerable wealth to be made hauling cargo from one place to another. Although this is strictly true, the rules and focus of *Pirate Isles* is on pirates, not on their prey.

If the players wish to engage in long term play as merchants, Games Masters may find the following rules helpful:

- ❖ A merchant character can buy a cargo for 100% of its local value. If he makes a Diplomacy skill check (DC 15) he can decrease this initial cost by 10%. For every five points by which he surpasses the DC, subtract an additional 10%.
- ❖ A merchant character may sell a cargo for its full value, but it takes 30 days to find a buyer. The character may reduce this time by making a Diplomacy skill check (DC 15). Subtract the amount by which the skill check exceeded the DC from the total number of days spent selling the cargo, with a minimum of 15 days spent.

If the players wish to engage in long term play as fences, Games Masters may find the following rules helpful:

- ❖ When the fence wishes to acquire a cargo, he must make a Gather Information skill check (DC 15 for common, 25 for uncommon and 35 for exotic cargoes). If he succeeds he locates a pirate who can acquire the cargo within 2d4 weeks. If he fails by more than 5 points his inquiries come to the attention of one or more hostile characters.
- ❖ A fence can purchase this cargo for 40% of its absolute value. He may make a Bluff skill check (DC 20) to reduce this by 10%. If he fails this skill check by more than 5 points he angers his contact, potentially triggering an attack.
- ❖ A fence may sell this cargo for 50% of its absolute value. He may increase this by making a Diplomacy skill check (DC 15). For every 5 points by which the skill check exceeds the DC increase the sales price by 10%. If he fails this skill check he draws the attention of the local authorities.

In either case remember that the characters have become extremely vulnerable. Merchants are the rightful prey of pirates. Fences draw quite a bit of unwanted attention, especially if they get aggressive or greedy.

UNKNOWN ISLANDS

The uncharted island chains of Hyboria, much like her great coasts and dark inland regions, provide characters and Games Masters with a broad canvas upon which to paint incredible adventures. Such a large, blank canvas can be daunting. How can we create island adventures in keeping with the Hyborian Age? How do we capture the unique flavour of the islands while still presenting a setting the players will recognise?

In a practical sense islands are Hyborian dungeons. They are cut off from the surrounding world by distance and time. The adventurers have whatever resources they brought to the island with them, and face whatever dwells there until they leave or destroy the target. In either case the island itself is not the threat; the threat comes from what lives there.

In the Conan tales, islands preserve fragments of the past. Every island Conan encounters shelters some ancient remnant of a forgotten era, awakened by his mighty

presence into a mockery of life. If we take our cue from the tales then every island encounter should include this element of the unknown.

At the same time, most of the Cimmerian's island adventures also involve one or more contemporary forces invading the island for their own reasons. They may be fleeing others, searching for treasures or trying to discover the lost secrets of the civilisation that once dwelled there. These contemporary forces may either compete with the adventurer or simply ignore him as they go about their own business.

In order to allow Games Masters and players to easily simulate this structure, islands have a 'statistic block' much like that of a settlement. This statistic block contains information about the island's geography, the threat contained on the island, and various interested parties who are actively interested in the island when the adventurers arrive.

An example statistic block might look like this:

Island of the Black Ones

Geography: Far out to sea, low volcanic tropical island, white sand, shallow water

Legend: Said to be the resting place of an ancient treasure.

Ancients: Black Ones (ancient demons, bound to defend the island). Defensive plants cause the eaters to sleep.

Current: Factious Zingaran Freebooter crew (loyal retainers and unaligned pirates).

Suggestions for how to fill out these descriptions are listed below.

GEOGRAPHY

Island geography comes into play in several of the Conan stories, but only when it presents an obstacle to the hero. From this, we can assume that if it does not specifically hurt or hinder the characters, the islands specific geography is relatively irrelevant to the story being told.

Taking from the stories, the geography attribute contains the following information:

- ❖ Distance to mainland
- ❖ Geographical barriers to entry/exit
- ❖ Distinctive features that character's might notice
- ❖ An assessment of the depth of the water around the island

The only area of the description with an actual game effect is the water depth. Shallow water can only support small or medium ship hulls. Deep water can support any ship hull.

The Rule of Inaccessibility

As a general rule the closer an island is to the main land the more inaccessible it is. For example, an island in the middle of the empty vastness of the sea will probably have easily accessible beaches. Islands close to shore may be composed of great cliffs, have nearly impassable swamps around them or similar such barriers.

This rule does not derive from any known geological or practical process. It comes from the function of islands in the Hyborian world. In order for an island to maintain remnants from past times it must be physically isolated from the general population. This can either be accomplished by setting the island far away, or by making it difficult to access.

LEGEND

Islands all have legends, whether they be of great pirate treasures or ancient evils best forgotten by the modern world. Islands seem to pick up these stories, and they form a tangible way to make the characters not only aware of the island, but interested and attracted to whatever might actually exist there.

A legend either tells the characters why they would want to go to a specific island (i.e. it holds a great treasure) or why they wish to avoid it at all costs (i.e. unearthly things walk there, things that can drive a man to visions and madness).

ANCIENTS

Island ruins are uniformly made out of green stone, with unearthly or archaic architecture. These ruins are almost always remarkably well preserved, although they do show some of the signs of age (fallen blocks, broken statues and similar wear).

The ancient's description covers two distinct elements: the intelligence present on the island and a natural or supernatural defence that presents an obstacle to the characters. When combined these two create a potential story, as well as a glimpse of the past.

The intelligence may be a single entity (a demon or powerful sorcerer) or a group of creatures (the Black Ones or grey apes). In the later case the group will have a leader who wields some form of necromantic or magical powers. These ancient creatures cannot replace themselves; once they die they leave this world forever. It is possible for an intrepid adventurer or stout group to entirely clear an island, forever destroying a remnant of the long forgotten past. Scholars may weep; men of more substance know that such foulness cannot be allowed to persevere in the modern world.

All islands with an ancient component have some protective mechanism. These generally fall into one of these types:

- ❖ The island's flora has a soporific effect on those who pass beneath or ingest it. The target must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or fall into slumber for 2d4 hours. During this time the affected character may have visions of the past or the future. The island's intelligence will act against all affected characters, executing diabolical plans that usually involve some grisly sacrifice.
- ❖ The island's ruins are particularly decayed. Every 10 minutes (real time) characters moving around in them must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or take 1d4 blunt damage from falling debris. If the character rolls a natural 1 he takes damage and twists his ankle, reducing his movement speed by ten feet per round until someone takes the time to make a Heal check (DC 20).
- ❖ The island's ruins contain some inexplicable element of horror. Those who look



upon them must make a Terror check (DC 15). Characters that succeed do not need to make the check again. Characters that fail receive a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, ability checks and flees from the area as quickly as possible. If the area has an active horrific effect (i.e. it restores itself to its former grandeur during the night hours) then character's that formerly succeeded must make a second Terror check. This effect remains until the character leaves the island for at least 24 hours.

Each of these base types may have any number of variations. For example, what if the decayed ruins were covered with a moss that causes hallucinations when it gets into wounds? What about an ancient, horrible ruin that causes people to act to rebuild it when they fail their Will saving throws? Such variations add interest and danger to what would otherwise be very repetitive experiences.

CURRENT

In addition to the issues that come from the past, most islands also have some current problem. This problem may be brought to the island by the characters (mutinous crew or disease) or it may be following on the character's heels (another pirate ship or naval vessel). Alternatively it could be an event in the recent past that makes the island more attractive than it would ordinarily be (a pirate left a great treasure behind).

The 'current' entry provides information about secondary complications that affect the character's adventure on the island. Current information that does not provide some kind of potential conflict is just background noise, and probably should be changed to create a more interesting event.

NAVAL AND PIRATE VARIATION

A pirate ship may make the Knowledge (geography) skill check described above to find, rather than avoid other ships.

A naval vessel that seeks out pirates may make the Knowledge (geography) check described above to find a pirate rather than avoid pirates.

Examples of possible current entries include:

- ☒ Someone has fled to the island in an attempt to escape pursuit
- ☒ The crew is about to mutiny
- ☒ A pirate left a great treasure on the island, but no one knows exactly where it is
- ☒ The character's cohort will defect, choosing to stay on the island with well over half the crew

In each case the characters must deal with the event or effect while still dealing with whatever ancient evil lurks on the island itself.

TRAVEL BY SEA

Swift sailing ships fly like birds over the choppy waters, driven by perfect winds. Great galleys break the backs of a hundred slaves sweeping down on hapless merchant vessels driven by the weak arms of civilised men. A ship is always leaving for somewhere, and can easily find the wind it needs to come into and out of a harbour. These are the seas of legend; troubles that plague later ages simply do not occur here.

So long as sea travel is a secondary element of the game, this attitude is enough. More than enough really; the dangers of the sea pose a threat to the narrative flow of the adventure. Being becalmed out in the middle of the ocean lay at the foundation of many a sailor's nightmare; so too does it pose the Games Master with an incredible headache. Better to just consult a chart and be done with it.

However, games revolving around interactions at sea need a bit more narrative meat to their sea travel. In these cases the journey is itself part of the story, not just a throw away element. The characters should face difficulties, overcome obstacles and potentially deal with problems varying from crew discontent to the ship capsizing because of an insufficiently deep keel.

PIRATE TREASURES

A 'pirate treasure' is between three and five exotic cargoes located on an island or other similar place. Deserted islands are traditional, but one might find them anywhere sufficiently far from the 'civilised' world.

In order to create a pirate treasure adventure, simply build an island-like encounter and place it wherever you wish.

Distance from Common Ports (Miles at Sea)

Port	Kordava	Messantia	Asgalun	Khemi	Kulalo	Yota-Pong	Khorla	Angkhor	Paikang	Tortage
Kordava	–	1400	2000	2300	3650	7450	8050	11050	13850	300
Messantia	1400	–	600	900	2250	6050	6650	9650	12450	900
Asgalun	2000	600	–	300	1650	5450	6050	9050	11850	1500
Khemi	2300	900	300	–	1350	5150	5750	8750	11550	1800
Kulalo	3650	2250	1650	1350	–	3800	4400	7400	10200	–
Yota-Pong	7450	6050	5450	5150	3800	–	600	3600	7400	–
Khorala	8050	6650	6050	5750	4400	600	–	3000	5800	–
Angkhor	11050	9650	9050	8750	7400	3600	3000	–	2800	–
Paikang	13850	12450	11850	11550	10200	7400	5800	2800	–	–
Tortage	300	900	1500	1800	–	–	–	–	–	–

Travel Time between Common Ports (Days/rowed)

Port	Kordava	Messantia	Asgalun	Khemi	Kulalo	Yota-Pong	Khorla	Angkhor	Paikang	Tortage
Kordava	–	23	33	38	61	124	134	184	231	5
Messantia	23	–	10	15	38	101	111	161	208	15
Asgalun	33	10	–	5	28	91	101	151	198	25
Khemi	38	15	5	–	23	86	96	146	193	30
Kulalo	61	38	28	23	–	63	73	123	170	–
Yota-Pong	124	101	91	86	63	–	10	60	123	–
Khorala	134	111	101	96	73	10	–	50	97	–
Angkhor	184	161	151	146	123	60	50	–	47	–
Paikang	231	208	198	193	170	123	97	47	–	–
Tortage	5	15	25	30	–	–	–	–	–	–

Travel Time between Common Ports (Fast Travel)

Port	Kordava	Messantia	Asgalun	Khemi	Kulalo	Yota-Pong	Khorla	Angkhor	Paikang	Tortage
Kordava	–	12	17	19	30	62	67	92	115	3
Messantia	12	–	5	8	19	50	55	80	104	8
Asgalun	17	5	–	3	14	45	50	75	99	13
Khemi	19	8	3	–	11	43	48	73	96	15
Kulalo	30	19	14	11	–	32	37	62	85	–
Yota-Pong	62	50	45	43	32	–	5	30	62	–
Khorala	67	55	50	48	37	5	–	25	48	–
Angkhor	92	80	75	73	62	30	25	–	23	–
Paikang	115	104	99	96	85	62	48	23	–	–
Tortage	3	8	13	15	–	–	–	–	–	–

SIMPLE TRAVEL

When ordinarily land bound characters wish to use a ship to move along the coast, use the following chart. Unless there is a specific reason otherwise there is a ship available that can be convinced to take passengers where they wish to go.

The great cities of Aghrapur and Khoraf on the Vilayet sea are 450 miles apart. These distances reflect likely sea routes as well as expected currents and wind patterns; they are not direct lines from the great ports.

Using the standard travel speed for a trading galley under sail, we can

determine the time distance between the ports as detailed above.

It takes eight days to cross the Vilayet Sea.

From the above chart, we can see that it takes almost a year and a half to get from Zingara to Khitai, assuming that the adventurer's travel from one major port to another on a ship making the long haul. This does not count time spent in various ports along the way; loading and offloading cargoes could easily result in up to an additional 25% extension in travel time.

The above times assume a mix of days under sail and becalmed, effectively equalling the speed of a rowed craft. Generally rowed craft assume that they can move for 10 hours a day. These times also assume a minimum of deep water travel; ships may be able to cut down travel times between certain ports by as much as 30% if they are capable of deep water journeys. These journeys are: Messentia to Khemi (10%), Yota-Pong to Khorala (20%) and Khorala to Angkhor (30%).

Assume that when a ship leaves port it will arrive at its destination within a window of time equal to 80% of the base time +3% for every point by which the ship's captain fails a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 20).

Fast Travel

The travel time tables above use the rather leisurely speeds outlined in the *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Although these speeds seem fast compared to land movement, many ships can far exceed the two knot speed suggested there for the average merchant ship.

The Games Masters may choose to use the table below, which reduces travel times for ships in half. This represents not only the less leisurely pace of shipping, but also the incredible distances travelled by a ship under sail.

Using this higher speed it still takes quite a bit of time to travel from one point in Hyboria to another, but not the multiple years indicated by the previous method. Traffic between Kordava and Messentia or Asgalum becomes not only possible, but profitable as well. Long sea voyages to Paikang seem possible, but hardly worth the effort compared to the easier, safer and shorter Road of Kings.

Assume that when a ship leaves port it will arrive at its destination within a window of time equal to 80% of the base time +3% for every point by which the

ship's captain fails a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 20).

These times also assume a minimum of deep water travel; ships may be able to cut down travel times between certain ports by as much as 30% if they are capable of deep water journeys. These journeys are: Messentia to Khemi (10%), Yota-Pong to Khorala (20%) and Khorala to Angkhor (30%).

Travel Costs

As a matter of dignity the mighty Cimmerian never pays for his passage. Instead he either forces his way onto the ship and takes mercenary service or takes over the ship, tossing the cold, lifeless body of its former master to the circling sharks. Characters other than Conan may well find that they have to pay.

As a general rule, assume that all travel by merchant ship costs 1 silver per day of the passage. Travel by pirate ship costs 2 silver per day of passage. Travel in one of those ships designed to transport people rather than cargo or thieves costs 3 silver per day of passage.

A character with 6 or more ranks in Profession (sailor) can take on work as an able bodied seaman, defraying the cost of his travel and earning 1 silver per day of passage. A character with a base attack bonus of +5 or higher may take on service as a marine if he makes a successful Intimidate skill check (DC 15), earning him passage and board but no additional dues.

NARRATIVE TRAVEL

Narrative travel occurs when the players and Games Master wish for the journey itself to be part of the story. The characters may need to get to a particular place before a deadline, race before a storm using the winds to carry them far away from their oppressors or some similar travel related activity. In this case the simple system outlined above does not provide sufficient information or details to allow for an epic journey. It resolves trips half way around the world with a single Profession (sailor) skill check and the expenditure of a number of silver coins.

The narrative system focuses on the production of challenges that the characters can resolve. It also presents a slightly more complex model of ship travel, including currents, wind-speeds and tides.

SETTING OUT

Sometimes the single most difficult part of a journey by sea comes when the characters wish to set out. Contrary winds can keep a sailing ship in harbour for days, even

Found Ship Type

d100	Ship Type	In order to gain passage you must:
1 – 40	Fishing	Convince the fisherman to let you on or head in the direction you need to go. Bluff or Diplomacy skill check (DC 15).
41 – 60	Merchant	Sign on to the ship as an able-bodied seaman or as a marine. Alternately, may be able to talk the captain into taking on passengers. The first required a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 15). The second requires a full kit of armour or weapons and a base attack bonus of +3 or higher. The third requires a Diplomacy skill check (DC 20) and costs 2 sp per day of the voyage.
61 – 65	Pleasure	Acquire or hijack the craft. Pleasure ships generally do not take on non-noble passengers, nor do they alter their intended destinations at the whims of adventurers.
66 – 70	Religious	Members of the cult are always welcome on board. Others must pay 3 silver per day of passage or join the cult.
71 – 90	Naval	Join the service. You may do this as an able bodied sailor (requires Profession (sailor) skill check, DC 10), as a marine (requires Base Attack Bonus +2 or higher) or as a rower (requires STR 15 or higher). Alternately you may be pressed into service by being attacked by a group of sailors armed with clubs.
91 – 100	Pirate	Join the crew. If you have 3 or more levels of pirate you may do this automatically. If not, make an Intimidate skill check (DC 15) or a Bluff skill check (DC 20) to make your way onto the ship.

weeks. Ship captains usually have a purpose other than sailing wherever the character's wish; sometimes there might not even be any ships in the harbour, thanks to piracy, a whim of fate, or just bad weather.

When the character's wish to take ship to a port or small town have them make a Gather Information skill check (DC 25). If the character succeeds then they learn of a ship leaving within 2d4 days that will head in generally the correct direction. If the characters beat this Gather Information skill check by 5 or more the ship leaves within 1d4 days. If they beat it by 10 or more then the ship will leave that day as soon as the tide starts to go out. See the Determining the Tide sidebar below for more details.

If the characters fail this Gather Information skill check they must spend 2d4 days in port before making another attempt.

Once a boat is found, roll on the following table to determine what kind of vessel it is.

Note that all of the skill checks and 'automatic' rules above can be superseded by a role-playing opportunity.

Each of the ship types displayed above have their own challenges, as described below:

Fishing ships are generally small hulls built to carry a large amount of cargo. They generally do not have deep-water keels, but are relatively hearty and weather tested ships. Fishing ships may head to sea for long periods of time, and generally cover a wide range of waters in their search for

a good catch. Pirates generally leave them alone. Fishing ships take 150% of the normal time to get anywhere, unless the characters kill the crew and take over.

Merchant ships have medium or large hulls. They generally run with light crews, but travel fast in an attempt to avoid being overhauled by pirates. Merchant ships sometimes employ marines to protect them out on the open seas.

Pleasure craft have small or medium hulls. They are nobles' toys, built for speed and beauty rather than fighting or cargo hauling. A pleasure craft can generally achieve speeds impossible to other craft, but laying hands on one can be difficult at best. A character with the Do You Know Who I Am? noble class ability may make a contested Charisma check with the boat's owner (a noble with a level equal to 2d4+2) to commandeer the craft.

Religious craft may have small or medium hulls. They generally move pilgrims from one place to another, or carry cargoes for various cults. Some are on religious journeys requiring specific ritual actions. A priest of the sect may always commandeer a religious vessel. When the dice result indicates a religious craft, roll 1d4. On a result of 1, the craft is from a cult followed by one of the characters. Otherwise it is from a different cult or a potentially a hostile one.

Naval craft have medium or large hulls. They answer to the local government and typically leave a port only if they have a specific mission. These missions are often 'secret', but well known



to the local population. Once a character signs on he is expected to travel with the ship for the duration of its mission; naval captains generally look poorly on people who try to escape their terms of service. Being hanged for mutiny or insubordination probably does not rank highly on most character's list of potential fates.

Pirate craft have medium or large hulls. They enter ports under the guise of merchant ships, but generally the local's know the truth within a few hours. Pirate ships already have a captain; the characters may choose just to sign on, or may challenge for leadership as soon as they meet the appropriate criteria. See the *Pirates of Hyboria* chapter (pg. 4) for more information on leading mutinies.

Determining the Tide

Generally players, even dedicated players of pirates, do not need to know when the tide is coming in or going out. In a travel time scale of days, a few hours delay in the beginning does not cause the adventure to end.

However, there are times when minutes count. For example, if the characters pursue a Stygian priest down to the docks and he leaps aboard his ship, using a tortured slave to turn the tide, the characters will want to pursue him as quickly as possible. In these cases use the following approximation:

For each port, roll 1d12. This sets the port's 'cycle' for the rest of the game. Record this number with the Games Master's notes about the city.

Determining the Tide

Value	Tide
1	Low Tide – tide fully out. Small ships can leave the port.
2	Tide coming in – rowed ships can leave the port.
3	Tide coming in – ships cannot leave the port.
4	Tide coming in – ships cannot leave the port.
5	Tide coming in – ships cannot leave the port.
6	Tide coming in – ships cannot leave the port.
7	Tide fully in – high tide. Ships can leave the port.
8	Tide going out – ships can leave the port.
9	Tide going out – ships can leave the port.
10	Tide going out – medium ships can leave the port.
11	Tide going out – medium ships can leave the port.
12	Tide going out – small ships can leave the port.

The result tells the players and Games Master what phase the tide is in at the moment it is rolled. Increment this number once per hour, creating a cycle with two high tides and two low tides every day.

Note that some of the ports with deepwater harbours allow medium and even large ships to leave at any time that the tide is not against them. These harbours include Kordava, Tortage, Messantia, Yota-Pong and Paikang.

WITH SAILS UNFURLED

When events progress smoothly, ships can travel considerable distance quickly. The chart below lists typical speeds for various boat builds, including those from *Conan the Roleplaying Game* book. Where there are differences between what the core book lists and what this book recommends, this book takes precedence.

For more information about these ships please refer to the *Ships of the Sea* chapter (pg. 47). For more information about those things that slow ships down please refer to the section below.

Note that the speeds per day above are in knots: multiply the overland value by 1.15 to determine exactly how many miles the ship travels in a day.

Ship Speed per day

Name	Speed (Rowed/ per day)	Speed (Sail/ per day)	Crew Min/Max plus Marines
Argossean Galleon	0	5/120	16/80 plus 50 marines
Argossean Merchant	2.5/25	2.5/60	24/72
Barachan Sloop	0	4/96	4/12
Black Corsair Galley	4/40	2/48	68/224
Red Brotherhood Dhow	0	3/72	4/12 plus 100 pirates
Turanian Dhow	0	4/96	4/12 plus 50 marines
Trading Galley	2.5/25	2.5/60	24/72
Stygian Galley	3/30	2/48	30/90
Zingaran Carrack	2/20	3/72	56/224
Zingaran Galleon	0	6/144	16/80 plus 50 marines

A large, well-trained crew provides a bonus to these skill checks equal to the bonus they provide to tactical movement and boarding manoeuvres. See the Seas of Steel (pg. 58) chapter for more details.

Pirate Encounters

When a ship runs into a pirate, its response depends entirely on its mission. Pleasure ships, religious ships and merchant ships generally run for their lives. Naval and pirate ships will generally attempt to engage. Fishing vessels generally ignore pirates; other than fish they have nothing worth stealing. In any case, use the rules in

the Seas of Steel chapter (pg. 58) to resolve the tactical movement required.

In the Western Ocean roll 1d6 to determine what kind of pirate the ship encounters. A result of 1 or 2 is a Barachan Pirate, a 3 or 4 produces a Zingaran Freebooter, and 5 or 6 results in a Black Corsair.

In the Southern Sea and Eastern Ocean most pirates are either independent or Black Corsairs.

In the Vilayet Sea almost all (99%) of pirate encounters will be with Red Brotherhood ships.

PERILS OF THE SEA

Once the characters finally get out of port, things do not always go well. Contrary winds, storms and predators can delay travel in any number of unexpected ways. A skilled captain can often avoid these challenges; a skilled crew however is at the mercy of their officers.

When the characters are crewing a ship, simply roll 1d4 and use that number of obstacles for the characters to overcome.

When they actually control the vessel in question make the following skill checks once per week to determine if something unpleasant occurs:

- ❖ Knowledge (geography) skill check (DC 20) to identify and avoid known pirate routes. The DC of this check increases to 25 for merchant vessels and decreases to 15 for naval vessels. Failure initiates an encounter with a pirate ship.
- ❖ Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 20) to prevent shipboard accidents. Failure generates an accident at sea from the table below.
- ❖ Survival skill check (DC 20) to predict and avoid inclement weather. Failure causes a weather difficulty from the table below. If the character beats this skill check by 10 or more he doubles the ship's base speed for 1d4 days.

One character may make the three skill checks or the checks may be broken up among the crew. A character that chooses not to make the skill check may instead select one of the checks above and make an aid another check to give the primary character a +2 bonus to his result.

Accidents at Sea

Things rarely run perfectly onboard a ship. Problems occur; rats get into the food stocks, weakened boards let water in and sometimes mistakes happen with lanterns and other fire sources. These accidents can severely damage the ship but most are simply difficulties to be overcome rather than life threatening problems.

Roll 1d12 and consult the chart below for possible accidents and their resolution mechanics. Games Masters are encouraged to use the table below as a starting point, embellishing as necessary to create an interesting adventure situation.

Weather Problems

Just as things rarely run perfectly well, the weather rarely co-operates with those who find themselves relying on sails or oars for travel. Storms appear, winds vanish and strange sea currents appear out of nowhere, to vanish as soon as they have worked their mischief.

Accidents at Sea

d12	Accident
1	Sailor badly injured during the marine's practice. The crew and marines (or other armed characters on board) are at odds. The crew may mutiny (see rules in <i>Pirates of Hyboria</i> , pg. 4).
2	Undetected rot in the rigging causes a sail to come crashing down. The accident injures 1d4 x 10% of the crew. Properly re-rigging the sails at sea requires two Profession (sailor) skill checks (DC 25) and each attempt takes one day. Only one character may roll for either Profession (sailor) or Use Rope, but other characters may aid another to assist.
3	Hull punctured by underwater creature. The hull takes 2d10 structural damage and begins to leak. Repairing the leak takes one day and a Profession (carpenter) skill check (DC 15).
4	A loose rope tangles the rudder. The ship maintains its current direction, regardless of your efforts, until it is untangled. Make a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 15) and a Swim skill check (DC 15) to remove the obstruction and avoid going down with it respectively.
5	Insects hatch in the foodstuffs, spoiling them. The captain must make a mutiny check (DC 20) to maintain course. The crew will begin to starve in 1d4 days.
6	The ship's livestock break loose. Recapturing the animals requires the characters to chase around after them using the standard combat rules.
7	Incorrectly secured cargo breaks free in the hold. Roll 2d6 – it takes the resulting number of Strength checks (DC 15) to get the cargo secured. Each time the character makes an attempt to stow the cargo he must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or take 1d4 bludgeoning damage.
8	Something particularly nasty begins growing in the bilge water. All characters must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) or take 1 point of Constitution damage each day. This damage begins to heal when the character makes his saving throw. Purging the bilge takes 1d4 days, and forces the characters engaged in the effort to make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or become sick as described above.
9	Rats begin to consume the food and supplies aboard the ship. If the rats are not dealt with somehow they double the food consumption on board the ship and inflict 1d4 damage directly to the cargo and rigging every day.
10	One of the sailors drops a torch. The characters have 2d4 rounds to put it out before it begins to burn the ship. See the rules for fire in the <i>Seas of Steel</i> chapter (pg. 58) for more details.
11	Galley Only. The drummer strikes a bad rhythm, causing the oars to tangle. 1d8 crewmembers are killed outright, and another 1d8 take 2d6 bludgeoning damage. Untangling the oars and the rowers takes 1 day. Injured crew members require a Heal check (DC 15) to be able to man their oars within the week. Those that do not receive treatment are crippled.
12	The cooking fire spills out of its bounds. The characters have 1d4 rounds to put it out before it begins to burn the ship. See the rules for fire in the <i>Seas of Steel</i> chapter (pg. 58) for more details.

Weather problems

d10	Accident
1	A great storm comes racing up behind you. The captain must make a Profession (sailor) check (DC 20) to squeeze out an extra day of travel in the hours before it arrives. Once within the storm, all crewmembers actively working the ship (usually 20% of the crew) must make Profession (sailor) skill checks (DC 10) or be swept overboard.
2	The lookout spots a great wind storm just before it arrives. The crew must make two Profession (sailor) skill checks (DC 25) to lower the sails or the rigging and mast will be damaged, taking 1d4 days to repair.
3	With a great rending sound the main sail splits in two under a sudden gust. Getting the ship back under control requires a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 10) by the pilot. Repairing the sail requires 4 days, -1 for every crewmember that makes a Use Rope skill check (DC 20). Up to four crewmembers can work on the sail at a time.
4	The wind dies, leaving the ship immobile. This lasts for 2d4 days; at the end of that time the captain may make a Survival skill check (DC 20) to find a zephyr of wind. A ship with oars may row itself at its normal rowing speed.
5	In the middle of an otherwise uneventful storm a wave strikes the hull from an unexpected angle. There is a massive influx of water, equal to flooding below decks. The ship will sink unless something is done. See the flooding rules in <i>Seas of Steel</i> (see pg. 58) for more details.
6	Under the relentless pounding of the waves the cargo breaks free. One cargo unit will be lost each round unless the characters can work together to make a DC 20 Strength check.
7	A sudden cold wind causes the deck to become incredibly slick. Each character on deck must make a Balance skill check (DC 15) or fall overboard.
8	A wave washes over the deck, taking 1d4 crewmembers with it. Any character caught on deck must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or be washed overboard as well.
9	A gust of wind knocks a crewman overboard. The characters have 2d4 rounds to save him before he begins to drown.
10	Sea fire plays around the prow and mast. The sailors become edgy, expecting disaster. The captain must make a Diplomacy skill check (DC 20) or the crew acts as a Novice crew for 2d4 days.

Roll 1d10 and consult the chart above for possible weather problems and their

effects on the ship. Games Masters are encouraged to use the table below as a starting point, embellishing as necessary to create an interesting adventure situation.

Pirate Feats

Whispered on the Waves

ANYONE WITH AN iota of training and a good sword can take to the waves and call himself a pirate. If he burns a few boats or loots a handful of villages other people may even take his claim seriously. However, the old pirate brotherhoods have refined their art over centuries. Although they lack anything resembling formal schooling, the vast array of stories and traditions that make up their culture still contain refined knowledge of how to best spot a mark, set sails to catch even the last breath of wind and when to take them down before they shatter the mast.

MARINE FORMATION

Soldiers who wish to take to sea may gain the following new formation rather than one of the standard four. They may do this any time they gain the Formation Combat class ability.

Marine: You are highly trained in the arts of both boarding and repelling borders. While there are at least two other soldiers with this Formation Combat ability in the action with you, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to any attack roll or skill check required to execute or resist a boarding manoeuvre.

This is an extraordinary ability.

BLOODED SPEAR (GENERAL)

You have blooded your spear in the body of many enemies. The sure knowledge that you can and will kill again guides your hands to further victory.

Prerequisites: Black Corsair (see pg. 6), must be a Southern Islander, must have three levels of pirate.

Benefit: You increase your racial bonus to attack rolls with any kind of spear or javelin to +2.

Normal: Southern Islanders gain a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls with any kind of spear or javelin.

HARD HANDS (GENERAL)

Working with sail and sheet has hardened your hands so that they feel like stone. A blow from your fist can rock back even the strongest opponent.

Prerequisites: Sneak Attack class feature, Brawl.

Benefit: As a full attack you make one unarmed attack it is always considered a sneak attack unless the opponent takes the total defence action.

Normal: In order to execute a sneak attack the target must be denied his dodge or parry bonus to Defence Value.

HEART OF HATE (GENERAL)

Hate for your former masters gives you incredible strength of arm and will. Unfortunately it also blinds you to the consequences of your actions.

Prerequisites: Whip Wary (see pg. 7).

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls when attacking a Turanin or Hyrkanian target. You gain a further +1 bonus to Will saves to resist any fear effect created by a Turanin or Hyrkanian character.

Special: You suffer an additional -2 penalty to save against hypnotism of any kind. Your rage makes you very easy to manipulate.

HUNTED (GENERAL)

Your time as an escaped slave has sharpened your senses. Others may think that you suffer from paranoia, but you know that in every shadow there lurks a potential slaver waiting to return you to your former masters.

Prerequisites: Uncanny Dodge class feature, Whip Wary (see pg. 7).

Benefit: Your sensitive nerves snap when someone gets the drop on you. If someone attacks you while you are flat-footed you may immediately make an attack of opportunity against the attacker. This attack of opportunity counts against your maximum number of attacks of opportunity for the round.

JOLLY CHANTS (GENERAL)

You know a hundred chants to help lift a sailor's heart. Your songs help your fellow crewmates endure the long, dull moments before the prey finally comes into sight.

Pirate Feats

Feat	Type	Prerequisites
Blooded Spear	General	Black Corsair, must be a Southern Islander, must have three levels of pirate class
Hard Hands	General	Sneak Attack class feature, Brawl
Heart of Hate	General	Whip Weary
Hunted	General	Uncanny Dodge class feature, Whip Weary
Jolly Chants	General	Cha 13, Argossean Dreamer
Master of the Waves	General	Int 13, Navigation, Profession (sailor) 12 ranks
Ocean's Wrath	General	Con 13, Blooded Spear, Fighting-Madness, Must be Southern Islander, Base Attack Bonus +1
Pirate Horde	General	Cha 13, Leadership, must have 12 levels of pirate class
Pirate Chants	General	Cha 13, Argossean Dreamer
Pirate Cure	General	Con 15, must have three levels of pirate class
Sea's Breath	General	Con 13, Swim 5 ranks, Endurance
Sharp Blade	General	Seamanship Class feature, must be a Zingaran
Steel's Sacrifice	General	Whip Weary
Take the Tap	General	Argossean Dreamer, Brawl, Endurance
True Brother	General	Argossean Dreamer, Leadership, must be at least 6 th level
Unfettered	General	Whip Weary
Unfurled Sails	General	Argossean Dreamer
Up the Rigging	General	Freebooter's Fortune
Viper 's Speed	General	Freebooter's Fortune
Voice like a Drum	General	Cha 15, Black Corsair, must be a Southern Islander
Water Snake	General	Endurance, Swim 10 ranks
Wave Dance	General	Seamanship class ability, Freebooter's Fortune, must be a Zingaran

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Argossean Dreamer (see pg. 6).

Benefit: You may choose to add your Charisma modifier to the captain's for the purposes of making a mutiny check. Alternately, you may apply your Charisma modifier as a penalty to the captain's check. This second action represents your support of the mutiny leader rather than the current authority.

MASTER OF THE WAVES (GENERAL)

Your experience as a sailor, pirate and navigator gives you an edge in naval combat. You know how to make the most out of any wind, predict where your target will next appear, and can anticipate problems long before they occur.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Navigation, Profession (sailor) 12 ranks.

Benefit: You may predict the course of any ship by looking at it and making a Knowledge (geography) check (DC 20). You gain a +1 bonus to any Profession (sailor) skill check required when commanding a ship to perform nautical manoeuvres.

Normal: You must guess the course of any ship, without systemic confirmation of any kind.

OCEAN'S WRATH (GENERAL)

The wrath in your heart rivals that of the great sea storms. It gives you the strength to sweep aside any who would oppose you.

Prerequisites: Con 13, Blooded Spear, Fighting-Madness, Must be a Southern Islander, Base Attack Bonus +1.

Benefit: When under the effects of Fighting-Madness your ferocious attacks stagger your opponent. Each time you successful strike a target while gaining the benefits of Fighting-Madness the target must make a contested Strength check with you. If you fail there is no effect. If the target fails the check he must move five feet for every 10 points by which he failed in the direction of your choice. An opponent knocked against the rail or over a cliff may make a Reflex save (DC equalling the amount of damage dealt) to avoid falling.

PIRATE HORDE (GENERAL)

Your reputation and knowledge allow you to gather together a pirate horde to crew your ship. You must be able to lead them to plunder and glory or they will turn on you.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Leadership, must have 12 levels of pirate class.

Benefit: You may assemble a group of pirates to sail your ship, augmenting your existing followers. You must be in a port of call frequented by pirates and must send out word that you are looking for able-bodied seamen. You will have to expend 100 gl in up front payments each week. Every week that you gather the horde you gain a number of followers equal to your loyal retainers. This crew forms a pirate horde and is subject to the rules governing mutiny outlined in the Pirates of Hyboria chapter (pg. 4). You may gather a horde for a number of weeks equal to your positive Charisma modifier.

Normal: All crewmembers you recruit beyond your loyal retainers are unaligned pirates.

PIRATE CHANTS (GENERAL)

You know hundreds of songs about the red glory of plunder and the pirate life. When you sing them your crewmates take heart, surging forward against seemingly impossible odds.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, Argossean Dreamer (see pg. 6).

Benefit: During a boarding manoeuvre or action you may take a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity reciting an inspiring chant. For one round all allied units within earshot gain a +2 bonus to any required Morale checks and a +1 bonus to their attack rolls and skill checks.

PIRATE CURE (GENERAL)

Pirate medicine is rough, but it includes a number of highly effective treatments. In some cases, the cure might be worse than the ill.

Prerequisites: Con 15, must have three levels of pirate class.

Benefit: When you make a Heal check to help treat a wound, poison or disease you may choose to roll 1d4. You gain a bonus equal to the result, though the target takes a corresponding amount of Constitution damage due to the roughness of the treatment.

SEA'S BREATH (GENERAL)

You are very adept at holding your breath and moving underwater. There are those who think that you are part fish; in truth though you simply have a knack for swimming properly.

Prerequisites: Con 13, Swim 5 ranks, Endurance.

Benefit: You count rounds normally when holding your breath.

Normal: You lose one round of breath every time you take a standard action.

SHARP BLADE (GENERAL)

You have a gift for cutting deep with a blade in your hands and a deck under your feet.

Prerequisites: Seamanship class feature, must be a Zingaran.

Benefit: When you successfully execute a sneak attack and you would qualify for your Seamanship bonus you may add your Seamanship bonus to the total damage you do.

STEEL'S SACRIFICE (GENERAL)

You know that the true strength of steel lies in the hand of the man who wields it.

Prerequisites: Whip Weary (see pg. 7).

Benefit: When you strike an object to do damage you may subtract your Wisdom bonus from the object's hardness for the purposes of damaging it.

TAKE THE TAP (GENERAL)

Your life among the pirates forced you to learn how to take a few blows without flinching. This makes you a superior unarmed fighter.

Prerequisites: Argossean Dreamer, Brawl, Endurance.

Benefit: When you are unarmed, wearing no armour, and choose to fight defensively you gain Damage Reduction equal to your Constitution modifier against unarmed attacks. This Damage Reduction works as normal and stacks with any natural Damage Reduction you might have.

TRUE BROTHER (GENERAL)

You are a true member of the Barachan Pirates, a member of respected member of their loose band of brothers. Your brother pirates look to you for wisdom and solace in times of trouble.

Prerequisites: Argossean Dreamer (see pg. 6), Leadership, must be at least 6th level.

Benefit: When you captain a Barachan ship and you fail a mutiny check you may immediately make a second mutiny check at the same DC. If you fail this check the mutiny occurs normally. If you succeed, you receive warning from some member of the mutineers who still retains a vestige of loyalty to you.

UNFETTERED (GENERAL)

After spending a part of your life in slavery you vowed that no chain or bond would ever hold you again. This vow dominates your every waking moment, giving you a remarkable ability to slip bonds but also making you uncomfortable in closed spaces.

Prerequisites: Whip Weary (see pg. 7).

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to any Escape Artist and Open Lock skill checks. When struggling to remove bonds using the Open Lock skill you do not suffer from a circumstance penalty for using simple tools.

UNFURLED SAILS (GENERAL)

The accumulated wisdom of a thousand stories tells you exactly how far you can push a mast before it unmoors from the deck.

Prerequisites: Argossean Dreamer (see pg. 6).

Benefit: When you are an officer on a ship you may increase the bonus movement that the ship receives from a strong wind by your Wisdom modifier.

UP THE RIGGING (GENERAL)

You are far more comfortable on rigging than any sane person should be. You can run along ropes as if they were bridges, swing from mast to deck without harming yourself, and leap from deck to deck without tripping on anything.

Prerequisites: Freebooter's Fortune (see pg. 8).

Benefit: You do not need to make a Balance check when executing a boarding or shipboard manoeuvre.

Normal: Many boarding and shipboard manoeuvres require a Balance check to prevent the character from falling into the ocean.



VIPER'S SPEED (GENERAL)

You can move with the speed of a striking viper, sailing past defenders before they can take action.

Prerequisites: Freebooter's Fortune (see pg. 8).

Benefit: You do not suffer from attacks of opportunity when performing boarding and shipboard manoeuvres.

VOICE LIKE A DRUM (GENERAL)

You can chant the cadence of the great rowing drums, bellowing loudly enough keep the rowers in synch.

Prerequisites: Cha 15, Black Corsair (see pg. 6), must be a Southern Islander.

Benefit: As a full round action you may bellow a perfect rowing cadence. This increases the movement granted by the ships rowing banks by +1. This effect does not stack with the cadence drum component.

WATER SNAKE (GENERAL)

You can swim like a coral snake or a dolphin, covering long distances at great speed.

Prerequisites: Endurance, Swim 10 ranks.

Benefit: You can move your normal movement as a full round action or one half your normal movement as a move action while swimming.

Normal: You can move one half your normal movement as a full round action or one quarter your normal movement as a move action while swimming.

WAVE DANCE (GENERAL)

You are extremely adept at using the pitch and weave of a sailing ship to your defensive advantage.

Prerequisites: Seamanship class feature, Freebooter's Fortune (see pg. 8).

Benefit: You may increase your DV bonus from the Seamanship class ability by +2.

Ships of the Sea

Vessels of Choice

SPEAKING OF PIRATES invokes images of great sailing ships travelling the far waters of the world. Conan himself captains galleys and carracks, faces galleons and gondolas, and even drives a rowboat down a river with his mighty arms.

However, what exactly are these ships and boats? How do they work in terms of the story and the mechanics? How do pirates customise their ships over, say, a merchant or a naval vessel? What about a fishing boat or a small gondola?

Ships, ship hulls, and their associated kit represent one of the most complex endeavours of human technology over the last few thousand years. New technology and innovations spawn in the minds of ship builders on a yearly basis over at least the last six thousand years.

The system presented below does not claim to represent all ships from every era, or even 'realistic' ships. It tries to duplicate the feel of vessels implied in the source material, rather than history or other forms of literature. True sailing buffs would be well advised to use another supplement to simulate the ships of the Caribbean or ancient Roman war galleys.

This section presents a system for building these ships, a system tied to the narrative combat system described in the Seas of Steel chapter (pg. 58). The system does not produce 'historically accurate' vessels. Instead it focuses on the creation of ships that mirror the performance

characteristics and usefulness of those found in the Conan stories.

This chapter proposes a system for shipbuilding based on the concept of ship hulls and components. Each hull is a generic size; the components represent relative technologies that increase the functions of the ship. These functions may or may not represent actual, physical technologies: in some cases they are logistical or organisational improvements that simply make the ship function more effectively.

SHIP HULL SIZE

Pirate Isles assumes that most ships fit into one of three broad hull categories: small, medium and large. There are also two other ship sizes – a one-man or smaller vessel, a Tiny hull such as a coracle and the rare Gargantuan hulls produced by Khitai and occasionally Argos for military use.

All wooden hulls have hardness 5 unless this is further modified.

Tiny hulls are suitable for a small personal craft like a rowboat, coracle or canoe. Barring modification these ships move at 1 plus the rower's strength modifier in knots. They may have a small sail of some kind as well. By definition all Tiny hulls are equipped for both rowing and light sailing.

Small hulls appear in all manner of applications from local fishing boats to the pleasure yachts of powerful nobles. Their shallow depth and relatively low draft make them useful riverboats

Ship Qualities by Hull Size

Hull Size	Length	Beam	Depth	Hit Points	Components	Min Crew	Cost
Tiny	> 12 ft.	< 8 ft.	> 2 ft.	15	0	1	10 sp
Small	> 30 ft.	< 15 ft.	> 4 ft.	100	1	2	3,000 sp
Medium	> 100 ft.	< 25 ft.	> 6 ft.	200	3	4	5,000 sp
Large	> 181 ft.	< 32 ft.	> 8 ft.	400	4	8	50,000 sp
Huge	> 210 ft.	< 70 ft.	> 10 ft.	800	6	16	80,000 sp
Gargantuan	> 300 ft.	< 90 ft.	> 25 ft.	1600	9	32	150,000 sp

as well. Small ships have a base speed of 1.5 knots and are too large for one person to row effectively.

Medium ship hulls comprise the bulk of Hyboria's merchant fleets. These relatively fast, manoeuvrable, and light ships can carry a good amount of cargo and are flexible enough to meet a wide variety of needs. Prosperous fishermen also sail in medium hulled ships, ranging far out to sea in their quest for larger schools of fish. A medium hulled ship moves at a base speed of 2 knots.

Large hulled ships make up the bulk of the naval and pirate forces of the Hyborian Age. These large ships generally have both sails and oars to ensure that whatever the weather conditions they will always be able to move towards their objective. Prosperous merchants also use large hulled ships for their superior range capabilities and larger cargo holds. A large hulled ship moves at a base speed of 2 knots.

Huge-hulled ships are the rare flagships of great ocean-going powers. These massive ships dwarf anything else on the seas in terms of resources, weaponry and speed. Unfortunately they also require a king's ransom to maintain. Argos, Shem, Stygia and Zingara all have one or two of these leviathans at their disposal should the need arise. Pirates of all of the brotherhoods sit for days, spinning tales about how they will be the ones who finally 'crack the nut' and get their hands on these magnificent vessels. These ships have a base speed of 2 knots. Gargantuan ships are little more than legend if one were ever to be discovered it would be the making of anyone who could claim her.

All ships carry two weeks of provisions unless they have a component (like a vitals store or deep water hull) that allows them to travel further.

SHIP COMPONENTS

The ship hulls presented above have little more than empty shells, constructed with a bare minimum of equipment. An owner could, theoretically, take these ships out into the open water. However, the true strength of a ship comes not from its basic configuration, but from the components built into it during its construction.

When a ship is built the builder may choose to add as many

SHIP SPOTTING

A character that sees a ship for the first time may make a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 15) to identify which nation built her. Each nation has a unique style, and most sailors pick up on common silhouettes quickly.

components as the hull allows. Once constructed, refitting a ship requires access to a dry dock and costs twice as much as the amounts listed below.

The following rules apply to any ship using the above named components:

Argossean Rigging: Ships with Argossean Rigging can take the best advantage of whatever wind presents itself, even tacking against an almost head on wind. In tactical movement they gain +1 movement point regardless of the wind direction. In strategic/overland movement they gain +2 knots from any windy condition except bestilled. Ships may only have one kind of rigging (i.e. a ship may not have both merchant and Turanian rigging)

BUILDING AND MODIFYING BY HAND

Crews can use the normal Craft rules to build or modify a ship. The components and the appropriate skills are as follows:

- ❖ Building the hull requires a Craft (shipmaking) skill check DC 15.
- ❖ Craft (shipmaking) governs: banks of oars, boarding deck, castle deck, combat reinforcement, deep water hull, hard wood, hull sheathing, moorings, ramming prow, and thin lines.
- ❖ Craft (woodworking) governs: barracks, cargo hold, catapult, drums, fishing hold, passenger rooms, slave hold and vitals storage.
- ❖ Craft (sailmaking) governs all of the riggings.

Ship Components

Name	Cost	Craft DC	Effect
Argossean Rigging	18,000	25	Allows for tacking against the wind.
Banks of Oars	3,000	15	Vehicle has a rowed speed, additional banks create higher speeds.
Barracks	5,000	15	Can easily house marines or non-combatants
Boarding Deck	5,000	15	Gains a bonus to initiating and a penalty to resisting boarding manoeuvres.
Cargo Hold	2,000	10	Can hold one cargo.
Castle Deck	4,000	15	Gains a bonus to resisting and a penalty to initiating boarding manoeuvres.
Catapult	4,000	20	Ship has a ranged attack in addition to that granted by any marines or pirates.
Combat Reinforcement	4,000 per size category over Tiny	15	Gains a bonus % to hit points.
Deep Water Hull	2,000	15	Has a keel that allows it to move in deep water with ease, but is less manoeuvrable and more limited in its selection of harbours.
Drums	700	10	Can gain a temporary bonus to rowing speed.
Fishing Hold	1,000	10	Has a wide array of nets and a hold designed for fish storage.
Hardwood	2,000 per size category	15	Hull becomes harder to damage. May be layered with hull cladding.
Hull cladding	2,000 per size over Medium	15	Hull becomes harder to damage. May be layered with hardened wood.
Merchant Rigging	3,000	10	Adds slightly to base speed.
Moorings	4,000	15	Can carry one or more smaller boats on board.
Passenger Rooms	10,000	20	Can carry up to four people in comfort.
Ramming Prow	1,000	10	Ship does additional damage when ramming a target.
Slave Hold	2,000	10	Ship can carry a cargo of slaves.
Thin lines	5,000	10	Ship can move faster, but is less manoeuvrable.
Turanian Rigging	9,000	20	Ship moves quickly on the wind.
Vitals Storage	2,000	10	Ship can go for longer periods of time without contact with the land.
Zingaran Rigging	18,000	20	More speed but less manoeuvrable.

A character can recognise Argossean rigging on any ship in line of sight by making a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 15).

Banks of Oars: Ships with banks of oars have the ability to move themselves at their 'base' speed. By adding a second bank of oars the ship can double its base speed; a third bank of oars will triple it. A ship with two banks of oars is called a bireme and one with three banks a trireme. A ship of medium or larger hull size that can move under oar power is called a galley.

Most galleys use freemen or pressed crews to man their oars rather than slaves. These men can expect to be paid as normal crewmen. Each oar requires one rower; each bank of oars has one oar per five feet of the ships length.

Galleys of all kinds generally use their sails for strategic movement, and then ship oars when engaging in ship-to-ship combat.

Barracks: Ships with a barracks have bunks, a storage locker and equipment for maintaining a ready compliment of marines at sea. Each barracks can hold up to 50 marines if they live in very close quarters.

Boarding Deck: A boarding deck is relatively flat and low from stem to stern, with a small rail and readily available boarding lines. There are planks, hooked pools, and other tools used for grappling another ship within easy reach of any point. Boarding decks give the crew a +1 bonus to

initiating any boarding manoeuvre and a -1 penalty to resisting a similar manoeuvre executed by a hostile vessel.

Cargo Hold: A cargo hold is more than just a placeholder; it contains a wide variety of fixings with which to fasten cargo in place along with special reinforcing and waterproofing to help preserve cargoes. Each cargo hold on a ship can hold one 'cargo' as described in the Foreign Shores chapter (pg. 21). A cargo hold can carry up to 100 men but not in a combat ready state.

Castle Deck: A castle deck has elaborate defences against board including raised fore and aft castles, a high railing and various modifications to the deck in order to prevent long-term grappling. These modifications give the defenders a +1 bonus to rolls to resist boarding manoeuvres, but a -1 penalty to any roll required to initiate one.

Catapult: Although dangerous, some ships carry catapults to throw balls of flaming pitch at their targets. This modification includes not only the catapult, but also the carefully constructed pitch warming and storing sections of the ship as well. The catapult inflicts little physical damage on its target, but it does have a chance of setting the opposing vessel ablaze. See the Seas of Steel chapter (pg. 58) for more details.

Combat Reinforcement: The hull has an exceptional amount of cross bracing and additional support built into it. This increases the hull's absolute hit points by 20%. The total number of hit points a ship has not only keeps it afloat longer, but also protects the crew and cargo from incidental damage inflicted during the average pirate attack.

Deep Water Hull: The hull has a number of modifications for deep water travel, including a long keel, altered ballast's, a larger food store and some crude means of water purification. These ships can go for months without seeing another ship or land, although they generally try to return to somewhere with food and water before starvation sets in.

A deep-water ship gives its crew a +2 bonus to any skill check required to resist a weather based effect.

Drums: An important part of any galley is the great drums that sets the rowing rhythm. When properly used these drums can add +1 knot to the galley's maximum speed. Sounding the drum requires a Perform (percussion) skill check (DC 15).

A sailor can recognise the sound of a galley drum by making a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 10).

Fishing Hold: The ship has a wide array of nets, lines and traps designed to catch fish and other sea creatures. The cargo hold is modified to store fish for a long period of time. Traditionally this means that the ship holds a good bit of water, more than would ordinarily be safe. The ship counts as a vessel one size larger for the purpose of determining the damage it can do with a ram, but loses half a knot from its maximum speed. The crew may choose to bail out the water in order to regain their speed, but doing so loses the ramming advantage as well.

Hardwood: The ship is made of a particularly hard wood like oak. Increase its base hardness by 2.

Hull Cladding: The ship has a lining of lead, copper or bronze over its lower hull. This protects the ship from ramming attacks: add +2 to the ships hardness against prow rams.

Merchant Rigging: The ship is rigged to run with both sails and oars. This somewhat clumsy arrangement is easy to make, but only adds half a knot to the ships base speed (under sail or oar). Merchant rigging does not add any movement points during closing turns. Ships may only have one kind of rigging (i.e. a ship may not have both merchant and turan rigging)

A character can recognise Merchant rigging on any ship in line of sight by making a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 15).

Moorings: The ship has sufficient rigs to carry and deploy several smaller boats. This component can only be built into a medium or larger ship. Medium ships can moor up to two Tiny hulls. Large ships can moor up to two Small ships or four Tiny hulls. Gargantuan ship hulls may moor up to four Small hulls. These ships may be used for ship-to-shore commerce or ship-to-ship combat.

Passenger Rooms: The ship has two well-appointed cabins, along with a store of luxury foods and fine wines for noble passengers enjoyment. These passenger rooms allow the ship to charge 4 sp/day for passage rather than 1 sp/day.

Ramming Prow: The ship has a curved metal ram attached to the prow. This enables it to do considerable damage when ramming a target. Increase the damage done by the ship's ramming attack by one size increment and increase the critical hit modifier to x3.

Slave Hold: The ship is capable of hauling a cargo of slaves for a significant distance (over 100 miles) without having the majority of the cargo die due to poor conditions. The conditions within a slave hold are little better than those for animal cargoes, but they are survivable.

Thin Lines: The ship has a very narrow profile and is low to the water, allowing it to race forward. The ship can add +1 knot to its base speed. A thin lined ship gives its captain a -2 penalty on his attack roll to resist boarding.

Turanian Rigging: The ship is well rigged to take advantage of the wind. It gains +1 knot to overland movement and +1 movement point in during closing turns when the wind favours the ship. Ships may only have one kind of rigging (i.e. a ship may not have both merchant and turan rigging).

A character can recognise Turanian rigging on any ship in line of sight by making a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 10).

Vitals Store: The ship has sufficient resources to supply its crew and marines with food and water for 120 days.

Zingaran Rigging: The ship is rigged in the Zingaran fashion, allowing it to run fast and hard with the wind but making it less likely to be able to use any wind to its own advantage. In closing turns they gain +1 movement point when the wind favours them. In strategic/overland movement they gain +3 knots from most wind conditions

except for a contrary wind or bestilled. A ship may only have one kind of rigging.

A character can recognise Zingaran rigging on any ship in line of sight by making a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 15).

MAINTENANCE

Ships unfortunately consume resources much like a barbarian guzzles wine. Not only does the owner have to pay his crews; he must also keep the ship itself in working order. This requires time, energy and no small amount of silver.

All ship hulls require monthly maintenance. This activity is assumed to take place during the ships normal travels. If this maintenance fails then the ship sustains damage, which must be repaired normally. Repairing damage is described in the Seas of Steel chapter (pg. 58).

The captain may make the Profession (sailor) skill check to manage the ship maintenance himself, or he may delegate this task to one of his loyal retainers. Whoever makes the skill check may gain assistance (from the aid another action) from a number of other crewmen equal to his Wisdom modifier. Additionally, a skilled crew provides its bonus to the skill check.

The first time the crew fails to maintain the ship deal the damage from the 1st failure column. If they do not repair this damage failure deals the damage described in the 2nd failure column. If they continue to ignore the decay of their ship and fail again deal the damage from the 3rd failure column.

When repairing maintenance damage the crew must fix the effects in reverse order. For example, the crew must fix the damage



Maintenance Requirements

Ship Hull	DC	1 st Failure	2 nd Failure	3 rd Failure
Tiny	10	10% Hit Points	10% Hit points	20% Hit Points
Small	15	10% Hit Points	10% Hit Points	1 Component
Medium	20	1 Component	10% Hit Points	1 Component
Large	25	1 Component	1 Component	10% Hit Points
Huge	25	1 Component	1 Component	10% Hit Points
Gargantuan	30	2 Components	2 Components	2 Components and 20% Hit Points

inflicted by the 3rd maintenance failure before they can address the underlying issues in the 2nd failure. Damage listed as a 10% of the vessels hit points inflicts that amount to the vessel's maximum hit points, not its current hit points. Damage to a component renders it inoperable until repaired.

CUSTOM SHIPS

The following ships demonstrate the system used to build ships. Each ship statistic block contains the following information:

Ship Size Nationality General type (Value): Describes the hull's size, country of origin, general use and the cost to buy the ship in silver.

Dimensions: Length x Beam

Crew: Listed as Minimum/Maximum, along with the maximum number of marines if applicable. The maximum crew size is equal to x 2 the minimum for Tiny and Small craft, x 3 the minimum for a Medium craft, x 4 for a Large craft and x 7 the minimum for a Huge craft, x9 the minimum for a Gargantuan craft.

Hardness/HP: The hardness and hit points of the vessel. These are used extensively in the Seas of Steel chapter.

Speed (Rowed): The maximum speed the ship can achieve when moved under oars. Given in knots.

Speed (Sail): The maximum speed the ship can achieve with a good wind. Given in knots.

Tactical Movement: The maximum number of movement points the ship can spend per round. This equals the speed in knots a particular vessel can achieve under the appropriate method of motion (either rowed or sailed)

rounded down. The entries assume favourable wind.

Modifiers: The accumulated modifiers from the ships components.

Max. Cargo: The maximum number of cargoes the vessel can hold.

Components: The raw list of components installed on the ship.

This statistic block is then followed by a description of the ship in question.

SAMPLE SHIPS

ARGOSSEAN GALLEON

Huge Argossean Naval Vessel (107,000 sp)

Dimensions: 190 ft. long x 30 ft. wide

Crew: 16/80 with a complement of 50 marines.

Hardness/HP: 7/800

Speed (Rowed): 0

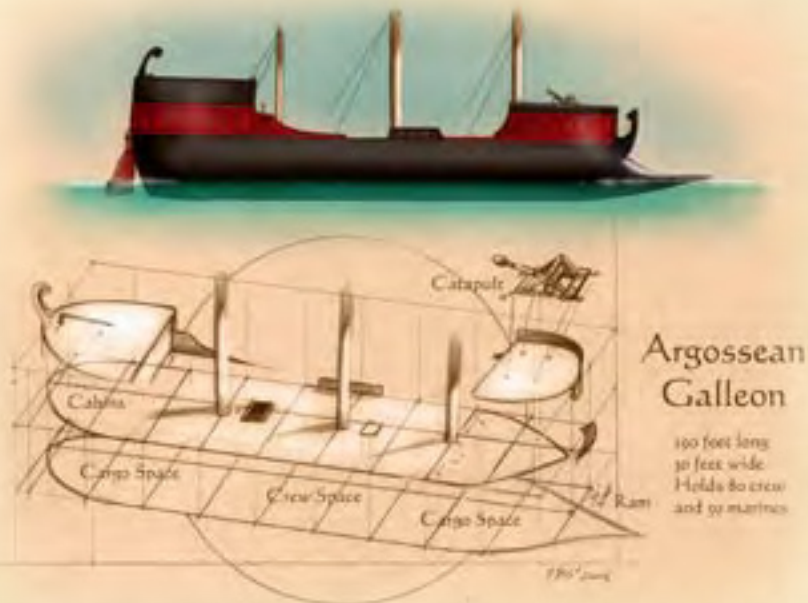
Speed (Sail): 5

Tactical Movement: 4

Modifiers: +1 tactical movement, +2 movement overland, +1 base speed from thin lines, -2 to attack rolls made to resist boarding.

Max Cargo: 0.

Components: Barracks, Catapult, Deep water hull, Hardwood, Ramming Prow, Thin Lines



Argos can field as many as four of these massive galleons, although they claim to only have two. Each galleon is more than a match for any four other ships; the massive size, heavy timbers and remarkable speed make it almost impossible to escape them and dangerous to close with. More importantly these ships each have a single short range catapult built into them. Secured to the deck with heavy pins, the catapult slings a dangerous mix of oils and tar at enemy ships, potentially burning them to the waterline before they even begin to engage.

ARGOSSEAN MERCHANTMAN

Medium Argossean Merchant Galley
(15,000 sp)

Dimensions: 50 ft. long x 15 ft. wide

Crew: 24/72

Hardness/HP: 5/200

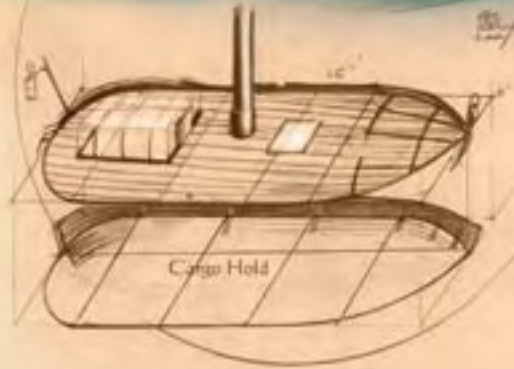
Speed (Rowed): 2.5 knots

Speed (Sail): 2.5 knots

Tactical Movement: 2

Modifiers: –

Max Cargo: 1



Barachan Sloop

Small,
4-11 crewmen

Components: Banks of oars, merchant rigging, cargo hold

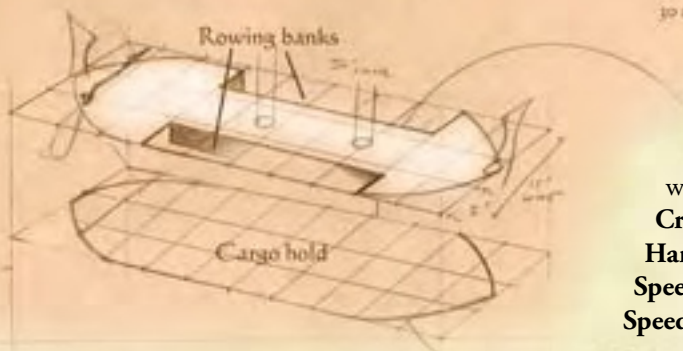
This common merchant ship has up to two masts and well rigged sails. It sails with a complement of rowers, and may have as many as twice its minimum required crew on board at any given time. More often it runs with 30 crewmembers (20 rowers, 4 sailors, a captain and a handful of replacements).

Pirates can find this kind of ship plying the waters of every sea, as well as working the great rivers. These ships are cheap enough to be owned by small merchant concerns; a great one may well sport dozens of these vessels.



Argossean Merchant Vessel

50 feet long
15 feet wide
Normally carries
30 crewmen



BARACHAN SLOOP

Medium Barachan
Pirate Vessel (35,000 sp)

Dimensions: 80 ft. long x 10 ft.

wide

Crew: 4/12

Hardness/HP: 5/200

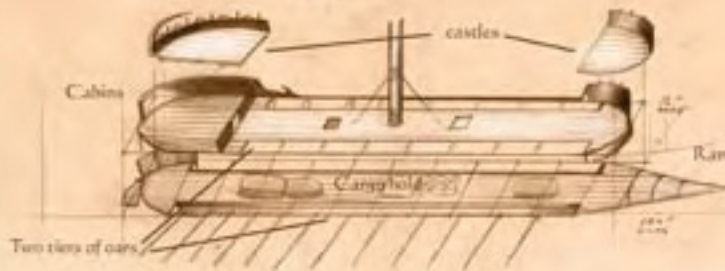
Speed (Rowed): 0

Speed (Sail): 4



Black Corsair Galley

110 feet long, 15 feet wide
Up to 272 crewmen



Tactical Movement: 3

Modifiers: +1 to boarding actions, -1 to resist boarding, +2 overland movement, +1 movement point during closing.

Max Cargo: 1

Components: Argossean rigging, boarding deck, cargo hold.

These small single mast ships are used more for travel than plundering. They are modified pleasure craft, designed to move quickly and target other pleasure vessels and small merchant ships. A number also see service as smugglers and illegal couriers.

BLACK CORSAIR GALLEY

Large South Islander Pirate
Bireme (60,000 sp)

Dimensions: 120 ft. long x
12 ft. wide

Crew: 68/272 crew

Hardness/HP: 5/400

Speed (Rowed): 4

Speed (Sail):
2

Tactical Movement: 4

Modifiers: –

Max Cargo: 2

Components: 2 Banks of Oars, 2
Cargo Holds

These long, low galleys have two banks of oars, one offset from the other. When the southern corsairs begin to sing their chants and pull their oars little on the sea can outrun them. These ships also have deep holds, capable of storing the booty they acquire during their long days of hunting and destruction.

RED BROTHERHOOD DHOW

Medium Turanian Pirate Vessel

(22,000 sp)

Dimensions: 60 ft. long x 15 ft. wide

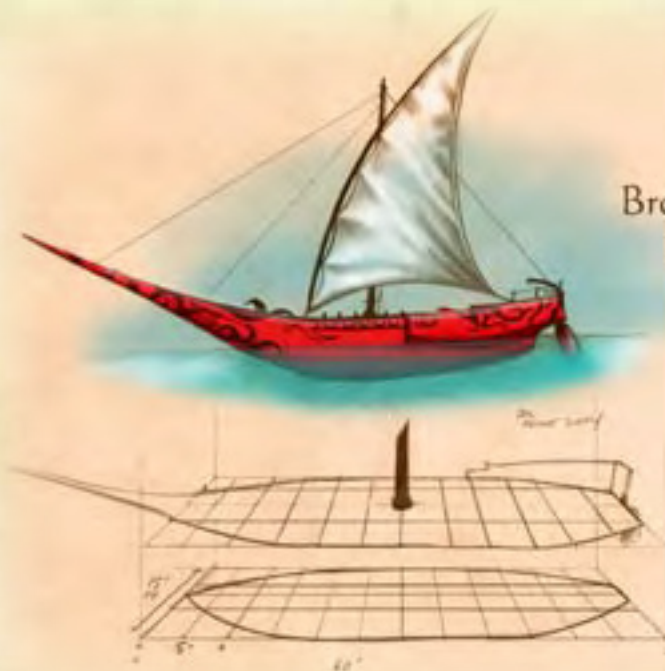
Crew: 4/12 plus 100 pirates in the hold

Hardness/HP: 5/200

Speed (Rowed): 0

Speed (Sail): 3

Tactical Movement: 3



Red Brotherhood Dhow

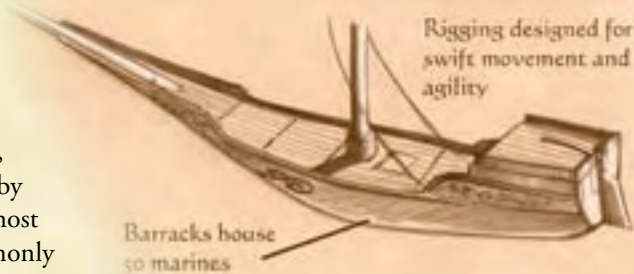
60 feet long
15 feet wide
can carry 100
pirates in the hold

Modifiers: +1 to boarding actions, -3 to resist boarding, +1 base speed from thin lines

Max Cargo: 1

Components: Boarding Deck, Cargo Hold, Thin Lines

These stolen Turanian vessels have lateen (triangular) sails with relatively sophisticated rigging. They move about the Vilayet Sea at will, striking down smaller crews by force of numbers. Unlike most pirate ships they will commonly attack a naval vessel.



Turanian Naval Dhow

A swift, small ship.

TURANIAN NAVAL DHOW

Medium Turanian Naval Galley (29,000 sp)

Dimensions: 55 ft. long x 15 ft. wide

Crew: 4/12 plus 50 marines

Hardness/HP: 5/200

Speed (Rowed): 0

Speed (Sail): 4

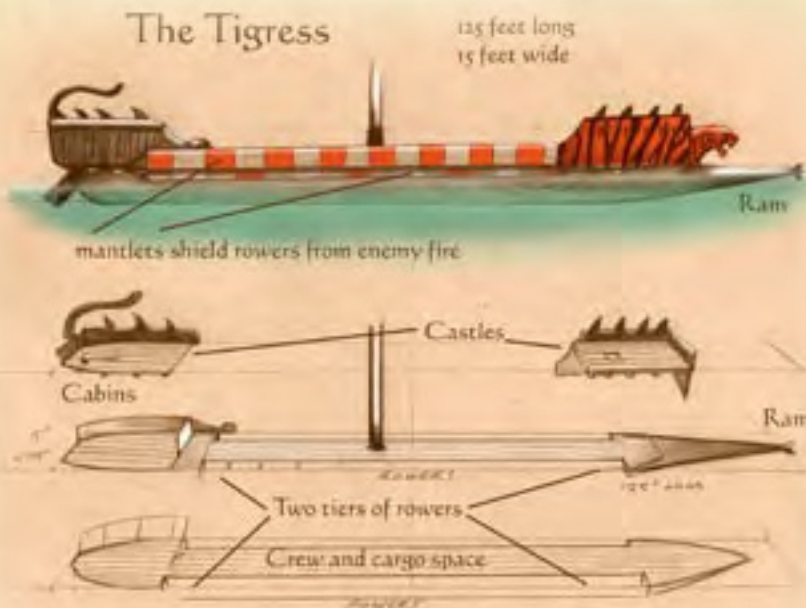
Tactical Movement: 4

Modifiers: +1 overland speed from rigging, +1 movement point when the wind is favourable in closing, +1 base speed from thin lines, -2 to resist boarding.

Max Cargo: None

Components: Barracks, Turan Rigging, Thin Lines

These small ships are extremely fast, so as to better hunt down their pirate prey. Few ships on the Vilayet Sea can outpace them in the wind, although a galley can escape them if the wind fails. Once they close the marines set to work, cutting down the escaped slaves who make up most of the Red Brotherhood.



THE TIGRESS

Large South Islander Pirate Bireme (59,000 sp)

Dimensions: 125 ft. long x 15 ft. wide

Crew: 68/272 crew

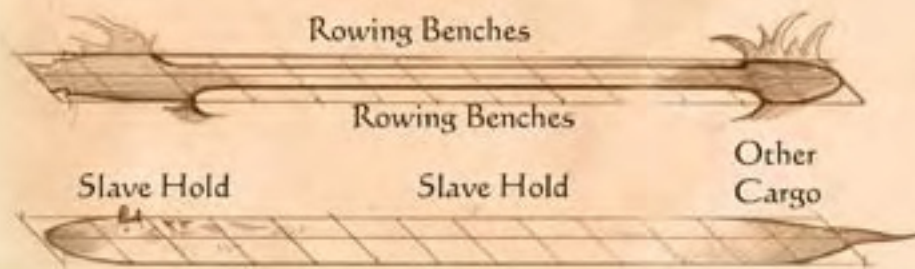
Hardness/HP: 5/400

Speed (Rowed): 4

Speed (Sail): 2

Tactical Movement: 4

Modifiers: Makes ramming attacks.



Stygian Galley

65 feet long
10 feet wide

Max Cargo: 1

Components: 2 Banks of Oars, Cargo Hold, Ramming Prow

The Tigress is a Black Corsair galley (technically a bireme) under the command of Bêlit. She is a low, fast ship driven by the mighty arms of her barbaric crew. Her fast oars (almost 20 to a side) allow her to swiftly close with any ship not of her own make. Once she takes Amra on board nothing will ever be able to stand in her path.

Crew: 30/90 with up to 100 slaves on board

Hardness/HP: 5/200

Speed (Rowed): 3

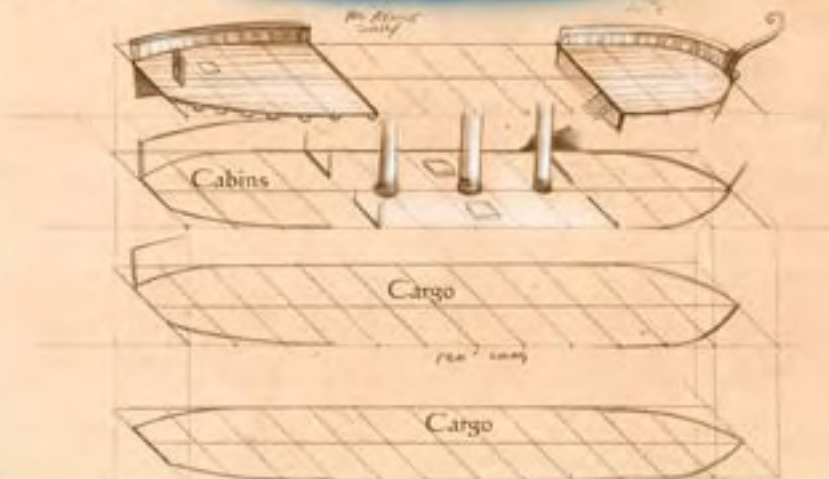
Speed (Sail): 2

Tactical Movement: 3

Zingaran Carrack



120 feet long
20 feet wide



STYGIAN GALLEY

Medium Stygian
Merchant Galley (Value
10,700 sp)

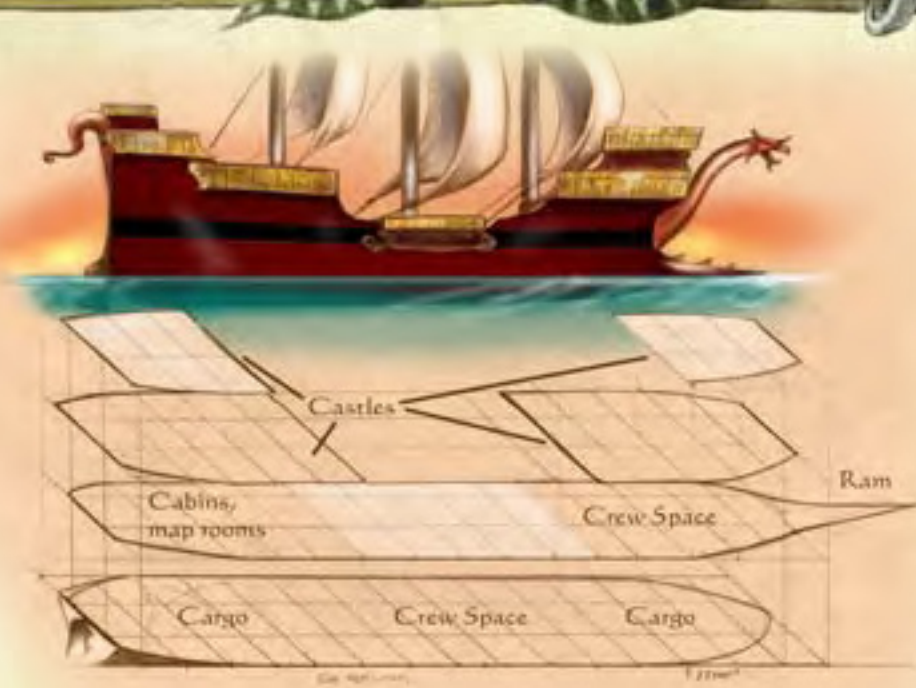
Dimensions: 65 ft.
long x 10 ft. wide

Modifiers: –

Max Cargo: 2 cargoes of slaves

Components: Bank of Oars, Drum, Slave Hold

Sailors recognise the infamous stygian galleys not by their sails, but by the throbbing beat of their slave drums. The galleys carry slaves from all over the world to a short, brutal life of service and sacrifice among the priests and nobles of Stygia. They generally have black sails, stink like the foulest pits and avoid other folk. Stygian captains are generally a pale and terrified lot, since they know that at any moment a priest may appear and demand their services.



Zingaran Galleon 300 feet long
40 feet wide

ZINGARAN CARRACK

Large Zingaran Merchant (75,000 sp)

Dimensions: 120 ft. long x 20 ft. wide

Crew: 56/224

Hardness/HP: 5/400

Speed (Rowed): 2

Speed (Sail): 5

Tactical Movement: 2/3

Modifiers: +1 tactical movement when the wind is behind, +3 overland movement

Max Cargo: 2

Components: Banks of Oars, 2 cargo holds, Zingaran Rigging

The three-masted Zingaran carrack is a common sight on many coasts. These fast moving, cargo ships make up the backbone of the Zingaran merchant fleet; their ability to travel at speed while carrying huge cargoes makes them well loved by many a merchant prince.

These carracks have three masts, rigged in the Zingaran style. This makes them very fast when under sail, but does cause them problems when they face contrary winds.

ZINGARAN GALLEON

Huge Zingaran Naval Vessel (125,000 sp)

Dimensions: 200 ft. long x 40 ft. wide

Crew: 16/80 with a complement of 100 marines.

Hardness/HP: 7/800

Speed (Rowed): 0

Speed (Sail): 6

Tactical Movement: 3/4

Modifiers: +1 tactical movement when the wind is favourable, +3 overland movement from rigging, +1 base movement from thin lines, -2 to resist boarding.

Max Cargo: 0

Components: 2 Barracks, Hardwood, Ramming Prow, Thin Lines, Zingaran Rigged

The Zingaran nation can field a number of these great galleons, massive ships with high sides and a large complement of armed marines. These highly dangerous ships are more than a match for most pirate crews – the heavily armed and well-trained marines can easily cut their way through the poorly equipped and trained pirate crews.

Seas of Steel

Scourge of the Four Tides

BEHIND ALL OF the pretty lies and grand ambitions arising from the pirate's life there lurks the constant threat of death. Pirates live a harsh life, and their ends come in no prettier a fashion. For every pirate covered with gold and jewels a hundred more fall to the sea. Yet a hundred more rise to take their place, reaching forth rugged-hands to grip a dream.

The Sea of Steel chapter discusses how the fallen meet their untimely demise. It includes information about tactical movement, boarding and the shipboard manoeuvres that pirates may execute. It concludes with a discussion of ship damage, flooding and the destruction of cargo that occurs when two ships engage one another.

The boarding manoeuvres in particular use the rules outlined in the free Conan mass combat system available for download at Mongoose Publishing's website.

BASIC MECHANICS

All boarding actions involve four basic activities: closing the gap, the boarding itself, fighting onboard a ship, and assessing the damage done to both vessels. This section outlines the basic rules mechanics used for these four activities.

When the Games Master declares an encounter the characters are either the prey ship or the hunter. In either case, the two ships start up to 6 units apart (roll 1d6). A random roll determines whether the wind favours the hunter or the prey, allowing for further modifiers. The encounter then begins, breaking down into closing turns of roughly 10 minutes.

Each turn the captains of both ships make a contested Profession (sailor) skill check modified by the crews experience level. The ship that succeeds moves an amount equal to its tactical movement (see *Ships of the Sea*, pg. 47 for more information). If the gap between the two shrinks to 2 or less

then both may use archery attacks to damage the other. If it shrinks to 0 then the hunter may attempt to board the prey. If it increases to 8 or more then the prey ship escapes.

Once the gap shrinks to 0 the hunting ship's captain may execute a boarding manoeuvre by making an attack roll with bonuses from his Base Attack Bonus, his crew's skill bonus and the ship's deck construction. The prey captain resists by making a similar roll. The amount by which the hunter succeeds determines what kinds of boarding tricks he may attempt. These tricks give the hunter's crew additional bonuses in the subsequent ship-to-ship conflict.

Characters handle ship-to-ship combat using either the mass combat system or a somewhat simpler narrative resolution system suggested below. In either case the selected boarding manoeuvre gives the characters and crew a bonus for the duration of the conflict.

As both crews struggle for survival the platform upon which they fight sustains damage. This damage may take the form of damaged ship components, destroyed cargo, flooding or every sailor's nightmare: fire. Checks for major damage to the structure of both ships happen during the entire combat, with a final check for structural failure when one crew or the other finally gives up. The pirates can then transfer whatever survives into their own holds; then take up sail again looking for another target.

CREW SKILL LEVEL

In reality pirate crews were notoriously poorly trained and disciplined. A similarly outfitted naval ship could out gun them three to one. However, in the Hyborian age pirate crews may well be able seamen whose barbaric excesses actually make them even more efficient than their highly trained counterparts.

When making any check that calls for a Profession (sailor) skill check from the captain the Games Master may give

Example Crew

The *Deviant's* crew is comprised mostly of 1st level followers as well as 1st and 2nd level unaligned pirates of Zingaran descent. These gentlemen have an average modified total skill as sailors equal to 4. This translates into a +0 competence bonus for their skill, +1 because they are Zingaran, for a total bonus of +1.

A Barachan pirate may have a mostly unaligned crew of Barachan pirates. These gentlemen have a total Profession (sailor) bonus of +6. This gives the captain a +1 bonus to his own skill checks, as well as the +1 bonus they give for being primary Argossean, for a total bonus of +2.

said captain a competence bonus based on the following chart. This bonus is based on the average expected modified Profession (sailor) bonus (not rank) of the crew.

Crew Bonus

Profession Level	Crew Skill Level	Bonus
4	Able Bodied	+0
6	Competent	+1
8	Experienced	+2
10	Expert	+3
12	Legendary	+4

Additionally a crew composed primarily of Argossean, Southern Islanders or Zingaran sailors grants an additional +1 bonus.

JUST TWO SHIPS?

Although the rules above describe the 'classical' situation of a two ships, the Games Master may well declare that there are three, six, ten, or even dozens of ships involved. So long as all of the ships are generally on one of the two sides, the system can be adapted to say 'fleet' rather than ship without any particular changes.

If there are three or more sides, each participant must declare its prey and make contested skill checks with its target.

CLOSING THE GAP

In order to grapple in bloody battle characters must first close the distance between their ship and the prey. Doing so is not always simple; for some reason merchants flee

from their inevitable fate as fodder for the crabs. The rules below outline a relatively simple way to get through the complexities of boarding; they emphasize getting to the bloody knife-work rather than the intricacies of sailing.

SETTING THE SCENE

When the Games Master declares that an encounter is about to begin establish the following information:

- ❖ Which ship is the hunter and which the prey. Note that it is entirely possible for the 'prey' ship to be considerably stronger than the hunter; in this case the prey has set a trap for the predator and things will shortly become very difficult for the attacker.
- ❖ Establish the distance between the two. The Games Master may set this value at some number (usually 3) or roll 1d6 to determine it randomly. A result of 1 usually indicates some sort of visual obstruction (a fog or haze) while 6 indicates a very clear day.
- ❖ Declare any additional environmental conditions.
- ❖ Roll 1d4. On an even result the wind favours the prey, on an odd result it favours the hunter. This may grant modifiers to the two ship's movement, depending on the components the ship possesses.

Once the Games Master establishes the scene the two captains begin to make their skill checks.

THE CLOSING TURN

Each closing turn the following happens:

- ❖ The two captains make an opposed Profession (sailor) skill check modified by their crew bonus.
- ❖ The winner may move up to his maximum allowed movement. He may either close with the other ship (reducing the distance between them) or move away.
- ❖ The Games Master assesses the distance between the two vessels.

If the distance between the two vessels is 0, then the ship that closed the gap may execute a boarding manoeuvre. See the section on boarding manoeuvres for more details.

If the distance between the two vessels is 1 or 2, then both ships may execute ranged attacks against one another. See below for more details.

If the distance between the two vessels is between 3 and 7 then the closing continues.

If the distance between the two vessels is greater than 8, the fleeing vessel escapes.

Ranged Attacks

A ship with a significant ability to deliver ranged attacks (a company of marines, a catapult or a number of pirates trained in the use of Shemite, Stygian or Hyrkanian bows) may make a ranged attack if the target ship is within 2 movement points.

Attacks by crew are handled using the rules for mass combat. Each unit aboard the ship launches one ranged attack at a -4 penalty. They target the units on the other ships. If using the mass combat rules then the attack must hit the DV of the crew. If using the narrative combat rules then the attack must beat a Defence Value of 10; every point of the success above 10 indicates the number of non-marine crewmembers damaged by the attack. Marines and crews with large shields are immune to ranged attacks. A critical strike automatically kills the injured crewmembers.

In either case if the attack result beats one or more characters' Dodge Defence Value then those characters take 1d4 arrows each, doing damage as appropriate to the type of bow used. On a critical hit he takes 2d4 arrows instead.

Attacks by catapult make an attack roll using the average Base Attack Bonus plus Dexterity modifier for the crew (either marines or pirates). The attack must beat an Defence Value of 15 if the target is at a range of 1, or 20 if the target is at range of 2. If it hits the attacker rolls 1d4: on a result of 1 the shot hits the rigging, reducing the target's sail movement by 1. On all other results it has a 50% chance of starting a fire on the target ship.

Characters may make ranged attacks normally, inflicting damage on the opposing crew.

If the ranged attack reduces the target's crew below the minimum crew required to operate it, the captain suffers a skill penalty equal to the number of sailors he is short.

For example, a ship with a

minimum crew of 24 suffers a -10 penalty when reduced to 14 crew members.

USING THE ENVIRONMENT

The Games Master may declare one or more of the following weather conditions as part of the starting scenario. Every three closing turns he may change these conditions; this reflects the sudden changes in weather common to sea-going adventure.

- ❖ **Change of Wind:** The wind shifts its favour: if it favoured the hunter, it now favours the prey and vice versa. Recalculate any movement bonuses the ship may gain from its components.
- ❖ **Fog:** The prey craft only needs to achieve five points of separation to escape.
- ❖ **Heavy Seas:** Galleys must reduce their speed by two points.
- ❖ **Heavy Wind:** Sailing ships may increase their movement by two points.
- ❖ **Storm:** Both ships take 1d6 damage every closing turn. Their captains must make Profession (sailor) skill checks (DC 20). Each captain that succeeds and who is under sail rather than oar may increase his movement by one point. A captain that fails suffers a -4 penalty to any other Profession (sailor) skill checks he must make.
- ❖ **Shallow Waters:** The ships sail among reefs or some other sudden shallow. The captains of Medium or larger ships must make Profession (sailor) skill checks (DC 20) to avoid grounding his ship.
- ❖ **Wind Dies:** there is no wind at all. Sailing ships have 0 movement and their captains cannot make Profession (sailor) checks. A galley may still move under oar power.

The Games Master should feel free to invent additional weather to befoul the environment.

CHANGING HUNTER AND PREY

There are times when the prey vessel will try to close with the attacker. These include:

- ❖ The prey vessel is actually laying a trap for the target. They wish to let the other close the distance, then turn and execute a boarding manoeuvre when the two are extremely close.
- ❖ The prey vessel knows that it cannot escape and wishes to gain the bonuses for performing

Boarding Manoeuvres

Check Difference	Boarding Manoeuvre
0	Held: You are not in a good position to attack the target, but you did get within range. You gain a +4 bonus to your Profession (sailor) check and your attack roll next round.
1	Grappled: You pull close enough to the target to get both grapple lines and poles onto her. Your crew gains +1 attack and damage during the first round of the boarding action. One quarter of your ship length matches up with the prey vessel.
3	Glancing Ram: You strike the opponent on a backward angle, damaging the ship but not significantly. You do structural damage to the target equal to your movement points multiplied by the size category modifier category of your ship, 1d4 + movement multiplied by the size category modifier if your ship has a ram. Your crew may board but suffer a -1 penalty to attack and damage rolls the first round. One quarter of your ship length matches up with the prey vessel.
5	Solid Grapple: You pull close to the target. Your crew may make a Balance skill check (DC 15). If they succeed, then they are not subject to attacks of opportunity when boarding the enemy vessel. You match one half of your ship's length to the prey vessel.
7	From Behind: You hit the other ship solidly with your own. You may choose to strike either the prow or the rear of your target ship. This attack does 1d4 + movement points multiplied by your ship's size modifier to the target vessel, increased to 1d6 + movement points if your ship has a ram. Your crew may board the target vessel, but must move over your prow to do so - your ship's width is matched up against the prey vessel.
9	Broadside Ram: You caught the opposing ship's side on with your ram. You may choose to strike either the port or starboard side. You do 1d6 + movement points multiplied by your ships size modifier to the target vessel. If you have a ram increase this damage to 1d8 + movement. If the other ship does not break up you are stuck in it and must make a Profession (sailor) skill check with a DC equal to the damage you inflicted to break free. Your crew may board and gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls during the first round. Your prow and up to 5 ft. of both gunnels' sides matches up with the prey vessel.
11	Broadside Grapple: You draw abreast with the target. If your crew makes a Climb check (DC 15) they can immediately begin the engagement in a merged formation. Your entire length matches up with the prey vessel.

a boarding manoeuvre rather than allowing the hunter to maintain the initiative.

- ☒ The prey vessel is a pirate itself, and willing to join the fray. In this case the closing will likely only last a single round as both vessels wish to close.

Outmanoeuvring a Faster Craft

The system described above may be used on a map, substituting the word 'squares' for the word 'movement points'. However, the contested system assumes that speed is not the only factor in winning a closing contest. Generally the better seaman will win, not the person with the fastest ship.

Take the classic example of sailing into a fog bank and going silent. The hunter passes by, missing the prey ship in the fog. In this case the hunting ship physically passed quite close to the prey; the prey's captain's superior seamanship created an effective distance between the two craft that eventually resulted in the hunter losing its target. In system terms he 'moved away' and ended the encounter.

BOARDING MANOEUVRES

The ship that closed the distance to 0 may execute a boarding manoeuvre. If this manoeuvre is successful then the two ships are joined and the crews engage in combat. If it is not then at the beginning of the next closing turn the two captains make Profession (sailor) skill checks: whichever wins may choose to move away or attempt another boarding action.

The captain of the ship executing the boarding manoeuvre rolls 1d20 plus his Base Attack Bonus, the crew's competence bonus and any bonus he may receive from his ship's components. The captain of the defending ship makes a similar roll, using his own ship's crew and modifiers.

A roll of a natural 20 results in a critical strike with the ram. This inflicts x 2 normal damage (x3 if the ship has a ram). If this attack inflicts more damage than the target has hit points then the target ship breaks in half.

If the defender wins the boarding manoeuvre fails. If the attacker succeeds, he consults the following chart. He may execute any manoeuvre on the table up to the one indicated by the difference between his attack roll and the defender's defence roll.

The defender may, if he has the ability to do so, attempt to launch a ranged attack at the attacking ship. If he does so, he automatically forfeits his defensive roll, but may make the ranged attack.

Size Category Modifiers

Size Category	Multiplier
Fine	x½
Small	x1
Medium	x2
Large	x3
Huge	x4
Gargantuan	x5

Once boarding begins combat shifts from closing turns to combat rounds.

FIGHTING ONBOARD A SHIP

All ship-to-ship combats start with the two sides facing one another, lined up onboard their ships unless the boarding manoeuvre allows for a merged starting position. How the combat plays out depends on which method the Games Master selects.

MASS COMBAT

Using the mass combat rules two crews (represented by counters) may attack one another. The number of units actually facing one on each side another depends entirely on the boarding manoeuvre chosen:

- ❖ **Held:** No contact between the two ships.
- ❖ **Grappled:** Number of squares equal to one quarter of your ship's length.
- ❖ **Glancing Ram:** Number of squares equal to one quarter of your ship's length.
- ❖ **Solid Grapple:** Number of squares equal to one half of your ship's length.
- ❖ **From Behind:** Number of squares equal to your ship's beam.
 - ❖ **Broadside Ram:** Number of squares equal to your ship's beam plus ten feet.

- ❖ **Broadside Grapple:** Number of squares equal to your ships length or the target vessel's length, whichever is lower.

Units attack and defend normally after the first round. Characters may attack crew units, the captain and his lackeys, or the target ship. Battle ends when one crew or the other breaks due to loses, or everyone on the opposing side is dead.

NARRATIVE COMBAT

When using the narrative combat system the press of boarding becomes a background against which the characters execute their own combat options. Rather than manipulating counters the Games Master describes the scene and the players move around it. This system has three parts: a method for resolving the background in each round of combat, a method for presenting targets to the characters and manoeuvres that correspond to the combat manoeuvres listed in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*.

Round by Round Background

Every round the Games Master makes one contested attack roll for each crew; the winner loses 15% of the total crew and the loser loses 25%. If the crew has medium armour or large shields it loses 5% less; if it has heavy armour it loses 10% less. These two do not stack. The attack roll and losses may be further modified by manoeuvres executed by the characters.

Once a crew reaches 50% losses it breaks. If the shore is in sight the survivors leap into the water, ignoring any sharks or other creatures waiting there to feast upon them. If they are deep out to sea the crew will fight on, but at a -2 morale penalty to the attack roll and inflict 10% less damage. The characters may attempt to force them to surrender using one of the manoeuvres listed below.

The attacker is assumed to be boarding the defender, unless the attacker's crew breaks. Then the defender may choose to either board the target or disengage.

If the crew has a mix of marines and sailors, assume that the marines lead the charge or take the brunt of the attack repelling the boarders. They are, in effect, a separate 'crew' trained for this sort of combat. Marines break when they take 70% casualties; they never attempt to flee but may surrender. Once the marines break the seamen engage in combat as well.

If the crews are merged (from a broadside grapple) both crews lose an additional 5% of their crew every round.

A crew cannot inflict more damage in absolute terms than it has crewmembers unless the majority of the crew has Combat Reflexes. Thus, a 24-man crew can only injure 24 of the other crew, even if the % result would indicate otherwise.

Finding Someone To Kill

Every round of combat the characters may either choose to execute a manoeuvre or support the crew. If the character supports the crew he may make an attack roll, a Charisma attribute check or a Profession (sailor) skill check. The DC for any of these actions is 10. If the character succeeds he adds +2 to his crew's attack roll. This represents the character fighting side by side with his crew, exhorting them to greater efforts or assisting with the securing of the target ship.

If the character chooses to execute a manoeuvre sufficient foes appear to oppose him, as described below. If the opposing crew cannot provide sufficient opposition (e.g. the characters have already killed the opposing captain) then use the default DC to determine success or failure.

Every target you kill or disable reduces the total number of the opposing crew.

Combat Manoeuvres

Characters involved with a boarding action or ship-to-ship combat may execute the following manoeuvres:

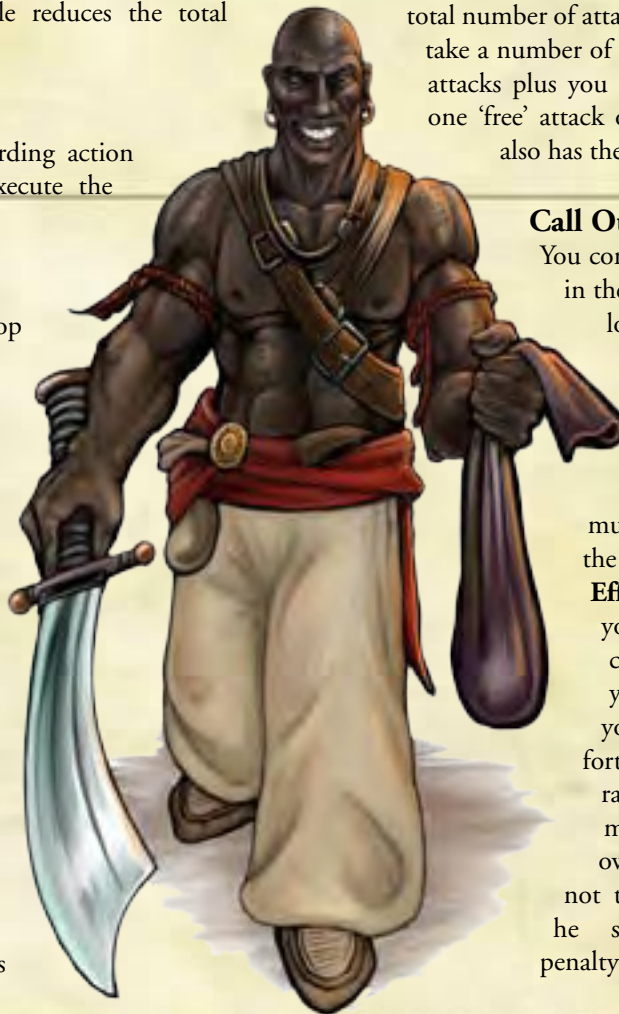
Avast!

You shout out a command to stop the slaughter, trying to force the crew to surrender.

Prerequisite: Leadership

Circumstance: Your crew must be at least 20% larger than the opposing crew and must have won the last contested combat roll.

Effect: As a standard action you make an Intimidate skill check opposed by the target captain's roll of a d20 plus his Leadership score. If he fails then his crew throws down their weapons. If he succeeds then they continue to fight on. If the captain is already dead, then the DC for this skill check is his Leadership score.



Bound Down

You leap from the rigging, crashing into your opponents below with the force of a falling stone.

Prerequisite: Jump or Tumble skill 10+

Circumstance: You must either be already in the rigging or make a Climb skill check (DC 10) to climb into the rigging; this later delays the execution of your manoeuvre for one round.

Effect: As a full round action you leap down from the ship's rigging, using your body as a weapon. You take 1d6 damage from the fall, but may attack a number of targets equal to your total number of attacks of opportunity for the round.

Brace the Gunwale

You brace your mighty legs on the gunwale, creating a shining wall of death to prevent a boarding action.

Prerequisite: Combat Reflexes

Circumstance: You must be the defender in a boarding action.

Effect: You have a number of targets equal to your total number of attacks of opportunity. You may take a number of attacks equal to your normal attacks plus you may attack each target with one 'free' attack of opportunity. Each target also has the opportunity to attack you.

Call Out

You command the cowardly captain in the other vessel to step forth or lose the respect of his men.

Prerequisite: Three or more levels of pirate, Reputation 10+

Circumstance: You must be within line of sight of the captain.

Effect: As a standard action you make a Diplomacy skill check (DC 15) modified by your Reputation modifier. If you succeed the captain comes forth to do battle with you rather than executing manoeuvres of his own. If he chooses not to come forth he suffers a penalty to all

attack rolls and skill checks equal to your Charisma modifier.

Ease Off

You call your crew back a bit, giving them a moment to reorganise.

Prerequisite: Leadership

Circumstance: Your crew must be the attackers in a boarding action.

Effect: Make a Diplomacy skill check (DC 20). If you succeed neither side takes damage this round, and your crew gains a bonus equal to 2 + 1 for every five points by which your skill check exceeded the DC to their attack roll next round.

Fleet Footed Leap

You leap from the rigging of one ship to the rigging of another, ignoring the danger of falling into the water below.

Prerequisite: Jump or Tumble skill 10+

Circumstance: You must either be already in the rigging or make a Climb skill check (DC 10) to climb into the rigging; this later delays the execution of your manoeuvre for one round.

Effect: As a full round action you may make a Jump skill check (DC 20). If you succeed, you have boarded the enemy ship without provoking any attacks of opportunity. If you fail you fall into the sea between the two ships, taking 2d6 damage every round until you swim free. While onboard the enemy ship you may attack and are attacked by a number of targets equal to your normal number of attacks when taking the full attack option.

From Below

You take a mighty breath, dive over the side of your own vessel, and appear on the opposite side of the other.

Prerequisite: Con 15+, Swim 10+

Circumstance: You must not have executed a manoeuvre requiring an attack roll or presenting combat targets in the last round. You cannot wear more than light armour.

Effect: As a full round action you leap into the water and swim under the two vessels. You move ½ of your normal movement each round; it will normally take four rounds to swim under the ships and come up on the other side. When you come up on the other side of the ship you may board without taking any attacks of opportunity. If you have the Bite Sword class ability

you may come aboard armed; otherwise you must take a move action to draw your weapon when you arrive. Every round thereafter you may attack a number of targets equal to your normal number of attacks when making a full attack action. You are attacked by an equal number of opponents.

Leap Aboard

You take a mighty leap, carrying yourself onto the opposing vessel.

Prerequisite: Str 15+, +1 or higher base attack bonus

Circumstance: Your ship must be engaged in a boarding action.

Effect: You make a Jump skill check (DC 15). If you succeed you suffer 1d4 attacks of opportunity as you charge into the thick of the enemy. Until you return to your own ship you may attack as many targets as you normally could by making a full attack. You are attacked by an equal number of opponents.

If you fail you fall into the sea between the two ships, taking 2d6 damage every round until you swim free.

Lion's Roar

You unleash a mighty bellow, hoping to break the opponent's spirits.

Prerequisite: Leadership

Circumstance: The opposing crew must be broken.

Effect: As a standard action you make an Intimidate skill check opposed by the target captain's Intimidation skill check. If he fails then his crew throws down their weapons, begging for mercy. If he succeeds then they continue to fight on. If the captain is already dead, then the DC for this skill check is his Leadership score

Run the Bulwark

You leap up onto the bulwark, the railings of the ship raised up above the deck. You then run along it, striking at the ropes binding the ships together.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +11

Circumstance: The ships must be grappled.

Effect: As a full round action you may make a Balance skill check (DC 20). If you succeed you suffer 1d4 attacks of opportunity that you may not dodge or parry. If you survive these you clear one quarter of your ships rails of lines and grappling hooks. If you have removed all of the grapples from your vessel the attacker must attempt to board your ship again.

Damage to the Ship

% of Total HP	Tiny	Small	Medium	Large	Huge	Gargantuan	Effect
1-20%	15	100	200	400	800	1600	Speed reduced by one knot
21-40%	3	20	40	80	160	320	One random component destroyed, 30% chance of flooding.
41-60%	6	40	80	160	320	640	Flooding, One random component destroyed, speed reduced by one knot.
61-80%	9	60	120	240	480	960	Two random component destroyed.
81-100%	12	80	160	320	640	1280	Foundering: the ship will sink in 1d100 minutes.

Set Ablaze

You start a wicked blaze on the ship under your feet.

Prerequisite: No code of honour

Circumstance: You may only set ablaze the ship you are on. Thus, if you wish to ignite the opposing side's ship you must first execute a manoeuvre that takes you onto the enemy ship. You must have access to a source of fire.

Effect: As a full round action you may set a five foot section of the ship you are on alight. The blaze uses the rules for fire described below. The opposing captain must make a Diplomacy skill check (DC 15) to break away some of his crew to stop the blaze.

Set the Pace

Your urgings cause your crew to set the pace of the conflict, allowing them to take less damage.

Prerequisite: Leadership

Circumstance: Your crew must be engaged in a boarding action.

Effect: As a standard action make a Diplomacy skill check, opposed by the opposing captain or with a DC of 10 if the target captain is dead. If you succeed your crew seizes the initiative in the fight, taking 5% less damage per round regardless of if they win or lose the contested attack roll.

Throw Back

You bodily grab a pirate and use him as a human ram, driving his fellows back over the sounds of his screams.

Prerequisite: Str 18+, Improved Grapple

Circumstance: You must have made an attack roll in the last round.

Effect: As a full round action you grapple a target and thrust him before you, using him to knock over others. You must succeed at a touch attack and a grapple roll with one target. You must then make a Strength check (DC 10). For every five points of your success, your throw forces one target to make a Balance skill check (DC 15) or

be thrown over the side. Targets in the water between the ships take 2d6 damage per round until they can win free.

BURNED TO THE WATERLINE

Once the characters carve their way through the human opposition, the Games Master must assess the damage done to the target vessel. Damage to the crew and the vessel are assessed separately.

DAMAGE TO THE CREW

When the combat ends add together the total number of casualties for each side. Each surviving captain then rolls 1d10 and multiplies the result by 10%. The resulting percentage of the captain's injured crew died during the battle. The remainder are simply wounded and will recover if given medical attention.

DAMAGE TO THE HULL AND CARGO

Damage to the hull comes from the following elements:

- ☒ A ramming or ranged attack targeting the ship itself.
- ☒ The general melee. Each round the winning crew's vessel takes 2d10 structural damage; the losing crew's vessel takes 4d10 damage. Subtract the ship's hardness from this damage.

Compare the damage with the total number of hit points that the ship possessed, using the Damage to the Ship Table above.

Apply all of the effects that a ship qualifies for. For example, a ship that has taken

60% of its total hit points in damage suffers from flooding and loses one component.

Select the component destroyed at random, either by rolling a dice or by simply declaring the damage to specific components. If a cargo hold or slave hold is destroyed then the cargo it contains is also destroyed.

FLOODING

If a ship is taking on water then it is flooding. The amount of flooding and the damage done to the ship determine how difficult it is to save the vessel:

If the vessel is flooding because of a weather effect then the captain must make a Craft (woodworking) skill check modified by his crew's skill (DC 20). If he fails then the vessel loses one knot of base speed and takes 20% of its total hit points in damage. He must make a similar skill check again; if the vessel reaches 0 hit points before he stems the flood then it begins to founder.

If the vessel floods because of damage then the captain must make a Craft (woodworking) skill check modified by his crew's skill (DC 25). If he fails then the vessel takes an additional 20% of its total hit points in damage. He must make a similar check again; if the vessel reaches 0 hit points before he stems the flood then it begins to founder.

A foundering ship will remain above water for 1d100 minutes. Once it sinks any cargo onboard may be considered destroyed, although a sorcerer may be able to reach it using an elemental or one of the demons of the deep. Anyone still on the ship must make a Swim skill check (DC 20) or be sucked down into the ocean with the failing vessel.

A reasonably intact (has sustained less than 40% of its hits in damage) vessel may support another, foundering vessel, preventing it from sinking into the sea. Neither vessel may move while doing this. Any weather complication will cause the supporting ship to begin flooding.

FIRE

Fire represents a terrible danger onboard a ship. Not only does it inflict damage directly to the ship's hit points. Fire consumes the ship as deals damage, preventing the crew from performing effective repairs. A cut rope or broken board may be spliced back together; a burned object must be replaced or retooled.



Fires may start as the result of deliberate action (e.g. a ranged attack or a combat manoeuvre). The fire starts in a five-foot square and expands to all adjacent squares at the beginning of every round until the object is completely ablaze. A burning object takes 1d4 damage per round, regardless of its Hardness.

Putting out a fire takes one full round action per five-foot square, and requires that the character have access to water or something to smother the flames. Characters attempting to put out a fire must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or take 1d4 damage from the fire.

A character attempting to cross through a flame filled square takes 1d4 damage per square crossed. He may also try to jump over or around the fires, depending on the situation.

Damage inflicted to a ship by fire cannot be repaired while at sea. The ship must make its way to a local harbour for refitting.

REPAIRING DAMAGE

Assuming that the ship did not suffer fire damage the crew can, with sufficient time, almost completely refit the vessel at sea.

Each day the captain or the ship's carpenter may make a Craft (woodworking) skill check (DC 15). This skill check is modified by the crew's skill level. If successful the crew repairs 1d10 damage multiplied by ship's size modifier percent of the damage.

Components may also be repaired: the DC is equal to the creation DC and the skill required is determined by the component type. See the Ships of the Sea chapter (pg. 47) for more details. A component is repaired at the rate of 500 sp cost per day.

So long as the ship did not take fire damage there is no cost to the repairs other than time. Any damage done by fire must be repaired at port: hit point damage costs 1 sp per hit point for wood, components cost 1/5th their original price.

RECREATED SHIP-TO-SHIP COMBAT

In order to demonstrate the use of the system described above, we will recreate one of the seminal sea battles of the Conan saga; the battle between the *Argus* and the *Tigress* in *Queen of the Black Coast*.

The *Argus*, her captain Tito, and her crew are perfectly average examples of their kind. This means that the crew gives Tito a +2 bonus to his skill checks. He himself has a Profession (sailor) rank of +13 and a BAB of +7. His ship is a merchant ship with 2 movement points. His total bonus to Profession (sailor) skill checks is +17 and a total boarding bonus of +9. Tito is a good sailor, in a good ship. He has 24 crewmen, the minimum number to run his ship.

The *Tigress*, her captain Bêlit, and her crew are remarkable specimens. Her crew gives her a +1 bonus to her skill checks. She has a Profession (sailor) skill rank of +9 and a BAB of +9. Her total bonuses are Profession (sailor) +10 and total boarding bonus +10. The *Tigress* has 4 movement points. She is a decent sailor in a very dangerous ship. She has 200 crewmen, comfortably over the 68 required to manage her ship.

In the first round of closing the Games Master establishes the following elements:

- ❖ The *Tigress* is 3 movement points from the target.
- ❖ The wind favours the *Tigress*.
- ❖ Both ships are under oar.

In the first closing turn Tito rolls a 11 and Bêlit a 12. Tito's total bonus equal 28, far superior to Bêlit's 22. He heads towards shore, hoping to beach his ship in a creek and escape on foot. He increases the distance between the two ships to 5 points; not enough to escape. On a decent roll next round he should increase the distance to 7, thereby insuring his escape if not the safety of his ship.

In the second turn of closing Tito rolls a 4 and Bêlit a 15. Her 25 beats his 22. She closes into 1 movement point.

Since she is within 1 movement point both crews may unleash ranged attacks if they have bows. However, the *Argus* runs with a light crew and cannot launch an attack. The *Tigress*, on the other hand, has both Shemite bows and enough hands to wield them. Her crew fires a volley, rolling a total of 20. 10 of the *Argus*'s crew fall to the volley, pierced though by arrows.

Conan, being a character, may also make ranged attacks at this time. He bends bow, sending shafts into his targets. Given his uncanny luck he puts arrows through three of them, killing them outright.

In the third turn of closing Tito is in a great deal of trouble. His formerly impressive +17 bonus is down to +7 (+17 minus 10 for his crew being short handed). He rolls a 10, for a total of 17. Bêlit rolls a 12 for a total of 22. She closes to 0 as her crew launches yet another ranged attack. They roll a critical hit – the Games Master decrees that Tito goes down, a shaft in his stout heart.

Conan takes command of the remaining 14 sailors. He orders them to execute a ranged attack, forfeiting his chance to get away. Unfortunately the black corsairs carry large shields: they hide behind them as a small rain of arrows comes down.

Bêlit rolls a d20 and comes up with a total attack result of 22. She chooses a broadside ram, allowing her to inflict massive damage on her targets. The *Tigress* inflicts (1d8+4) x 4 damage to the *Argus*. Bêlit rolls a

5, resulting in 36 points of damage to the *Argus*. She is a medium ship with hardness 5, so she takes 31 points of damage. The target crew is nearly at 50% damage already; it will not take much to break them.

Bêlit supports her crew, making a Charisma check (DC 10) giving them a +2 bonus to their attack rolls. She rolls a 12, beating the DC just with the dice. This increases their total bonus to +7.

Meanwhile, Conan executes a Leap Aboard manoeuvre. He lashes about him with his broad sword, relying on his armour to keep him alive. He resolves combat normally, cutting through the unarmoured southerners with ease.

In the first round of general combat the corsairs have a +7 attack bonus – the Argossean sailors a +3. They roll a 14 and a 12 respectively. The corsairs win this round of the engagement; they inflict 6 (25% of 24) casualties on the *Argus*' crew. This reduces them from their current total of 14 to 8 survivors. These individuals would like to flee, but have little chance to do so. The corsairs take 14 casualties (10% of 200 is 20, but there are only 14 crew members aboard the *Argus*) but it is unknown how many of these are dead or simply injured.

Conan, being a character, continues fighting on. Each round he may attack and is attacked by two opponents.

Bêlit continues to support her crew, easily making the necessary Charisma checks.

The second round of boarding continues to go poorly for the *Argus*. Her remaining crewmembers now have a +1 bonus to their attack rolls and a –10% damage penalty. The blacks slaughter them, killing another 6 and taking 8 casualties themselves. The *Argus*' crew is down to two men – the Games Master rules that the next round will see their deaths and the fall of the *Argus*.

In the third round of combat the remaining crewmen fall. The corsairs have 24 casualties to deal with, not including the damage inflicted by Conan upon their deck.

Conan can continue to fight on, killing two targets per round until the corsairs finally bring the bows to bear. Then he will fall under a storm of arrows.

After the fight, the *Tigress* has taken 6d10 damage. Bêlit rolls a 5, 7, 9, 10, 4 and 6 for a total of 41. Since this damage comes in three groups of 2d10, she may subtract 15 points from the total 26. She has not been appreciably damaged, but could use a day at sea to fix the nicks and scratches.

The *Argus* is not so lucky. She took 31 points from the ram and an additional 12d10 from the fighting. The Games Master rolls 8, 4, 2, 4, 9, 5, 6, 4, 3, 7, 10, 7, 3 for a total of 65, minus 15 for a modified result of 50. The *Argus* was a medium vessel – the total of 81 points of damage means that it now has a base speed of half a knot (2.5 – 2), has lost the use of two components and is now flooding. Without a crew to repair her she is lost.



Riders of the Waves

Notables and Nemeses

THIS CHAPTER CONTAINS statistics on the various named and unnamed individuals that characters may encounter during their adventures on the seas around Hyboria. This information includes notable personalities like Amra the Lion, generic character types like Red Brotherhood pirate captains or their rival Turanian naval commanders and information about the various crew types.

NAMED PERSONALITIES

The following personalities appear in the Conan stories. The Games Master can use them as either key characters in his games, or as examples of fully detailed characters to inspire other, unique creations.

Note that when using a character like Amra the Lion or Bêlit directly the Games Master may wish to consider whether or not the characters should be allowed to interfere with their destiny as described in the stories. Saving Bêlit will profoundly change Conan's life; similarly, allowing Amra the Lion to fall in battle will end the saga of Conan long before he treads the jewelled thrones of the world beneath his feet.

AMRA THE LION (CONAN THE REAVER)

Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian barbarian 7/soldier 1/thief 1/pirate 1)

Hit Dice: 8d10+2d8+40 (98 hp)

Initiative: +14 (+5 Dex, +9 Reflex save)

Speed: 25 ft.* (mail hauberk and superior scale corselet)

DV (Dodge): 20 (+5 level, +5 Dex)

DV (Parry): 17 (+2 level, +5 Str)

DR: 9 (+8 mail hauberk and superior scale corselet, +1 steel cap)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +13/+13

Attack: Broadsword +13 melee; or Shemite bow +13 ranged

He saw a tall powerfully built figure in a black scale-mail hauberk, burnished greaves and a blue-steel helmet from which jutted bull's horns highly polished. From the mailed shoulders fell the scarlet cloak, blowing in the sea-wind. A broad shagreen belt with a golden buckle held the scabbard of the broadsword he bore. Under the horned helmet a square-cut black mane contrasted with smouldering blue eyes.

R. E. Howard, *The Queen of the Black Coast*

Full Attack: Broadsword +13/+8 melee; or Shemite bow +13/+8 ranged

Damage: Broadsword 1d10+7, or Shemite bow 1d10+4

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack, To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Sneak Attack Style (broadsword), Greater Crimson Mist, Versatility (proficient will all weaponry)

Special Qualities: Fearless, Bite Sword, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Seamanship +1 (+1 to DV on board ship), Trapfinding, Barbaric Code of Honour.

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +14, Will +8 (+11 vs. Corruption, +10 vs. fear or Terror)

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 20, Con 19, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 19

Skills: Balance +12, Bluff +16, Climb +11, Decipher Script +8, Gather Information +10, Hide +12, Intimidate +15, Jump +9, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (geography) +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +15, Search +8, Spot +9, Survival +8*, Swim +8

Feats: Track, Diehard, Endurance, Fighting-Madness, Sleep Mastery,

Striking Cobra, Combat Expertise, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Brawl

Reputation: 72 (Villain when with Bêlit or named as Amra) (He may add a +8 bonus to his Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information checks)

Possessions: Aquilonian broadsword, Kothic superior scale corselet, Nemedian mail hauberk, Aesir horned helmet (steel cap), Shemite bow (+4), good-quality Ophirean cloak (scarlet).

This description reflects Conan during his time aboard Bêlit's corsair ship, the *Tigress*. He is known as Amra, the Lion, to the black corsairs who make up her crew, and his fame among the Southern Islanders and folk of the Black Coast is exceeded by no-one save Bêlit herself. The two of them make a superbly effective team. Bêlit is a natural tactical and strategic genius, knowing instinctively when and where to raid, and when to fade into the sea-mists. Conan is her muscle, capable of carrying out her plans to the letter, leading her loyal corsairs into battle, and slaying without mercy any who resist.

Conan's fighting style is still based around the powerful strikes of his broadsword, but he has refined it somewhat, especially during his time working for the Hyrkanian army. This is also where he first made extensive use of the bow, experience that has stood him in good stead with the Shemite bows provided by Bêlit for her corsairs' use. His equipment is little changed from that which he had aboard the Argossean trading galley when he first encountered Bêlit's pirates. The only real differences are that he now has astonishing wealth, the plunder of the shipping lanes for several years; and that, as Bêlit's lieutenant, he has claimed the best Shemite bow on the ship, with a draw very nearly powerful enough to make full use of his mighty brawn.

Conan's character at this time in his life is very much dependent on whether he is still with Bêlit, or is wandering after her death.

In the latter case, it may be worth adding another level or two of barbarian to him, representing the time he spends warring and ruling in the Black Kingdoms. If he is still a pirate, he is unlikely to be encountered save in the course of his business; the characters might be secretive port contacts of his, used to dispose of the plunder of the seas surreptitiously in Messantia, or might be pirates themselves negotiating a temporary alliance, or most dangerous of all might be aboard a ship attacked by the black corsairs led by Bêlit and Amra. Conan's wrath and fierceness during this period of his life are in large part what makes him and the corsairs so feared from Argos to the Southern Islands. After Bêlit's death, that fierceness is tempered with a deep melancholy, somewhat detached from the world – but the wrath is still there, just beneath the surface. It is hard to touch Conan's emotions during either period unless you are Bêlit herself, and it seems likely that even his barbaric code of honour is stretched to the limit at this time.



ARATUS THE BRYTHUNIAN

'Before any could answer, a rat-faced Brythunian, standing behind his fellows, whirled a sling swiftly and deadly. Straight as an arrow sped the stone to its mark, and Conan reeled and fell as a tall tree falls to the woodsman's ax. The rat-faced one yelped in triumph and ran to stab the prostrate man, but a lean Corinthian thrust him back.

'What, Aratus, would you break the law of the Brotherhood, you dog?'

'No law is broken,' snarled the Brythunian.

R. E. Howard, *Iron Shadows in the Moon*

Medium Brythunian Thief 2/ Pirate 5

Hit Dice: 7d8 (32 hit points)

Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Ref); +12 if making a ferocious attack

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge): 17 (+3 base, +3 Dex, +1 Dodge); 18 (+1 seamanship) if aboard a ship; -2 penalty if making a ferocious attack

DV (Parry): 14 (+2 base, +1 Str, +1 Dodge); 15 (+1 seamanship) if aboard a ship; -2 penalty if making a ferocious attack

DR: -

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +5/+5

Attack: Sling +7 ranged; or Cutlass +5 melee

Full Attack: Sling +7 ranged; or Cutlass +5 melee

Ferocious Attack: Cutlass +7 melee (1d10+3/ 19-20 x2/ AP 3)

Damage: Sling 1d8+1 / x3 / AP 2 or Cutlass 1d10+1 / 19-20 x2 / AP 3)

Special Attacks: Sneak attack style (sling), sneak attack +3d6/+3d8, ferocious attack, sneak subdual

Special Qualities: Hyborian qualities, adaptability (*diplomacy, bluff*), background skills (*balance, climb, open locks, move silently*), trapfinding, seamanship +1, pirate code (Vilayet sea flags), to sail a road of blood and slaughter, uncanny dodge, mobility

Space/Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +0

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 9, Cha 14

Skills: Appraise +7, Balance +13*, Bluff +11, Climb +6*, Diplomacy +6, Escape Artist +8, Forgery +5, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +8, Hide +4, Jump +6, Knowledge (geography) +4, Move Silently +9, Open Locks +5, Profession (sailor) +6*, Tumble +13, Use Rope +11* (gains a +1 circumstance bonus to these feats when he is aboard a ship)

Feats: Eyes of the Cat, Light-Footed, Point Blank Shot, Persuasive, Leadership, Combat Expertise

Reputation: 20 (villain) (+3 bonus to Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information checks; not included in statistics above)

Leadership: 9 (4th level cohort; 12 1st level)

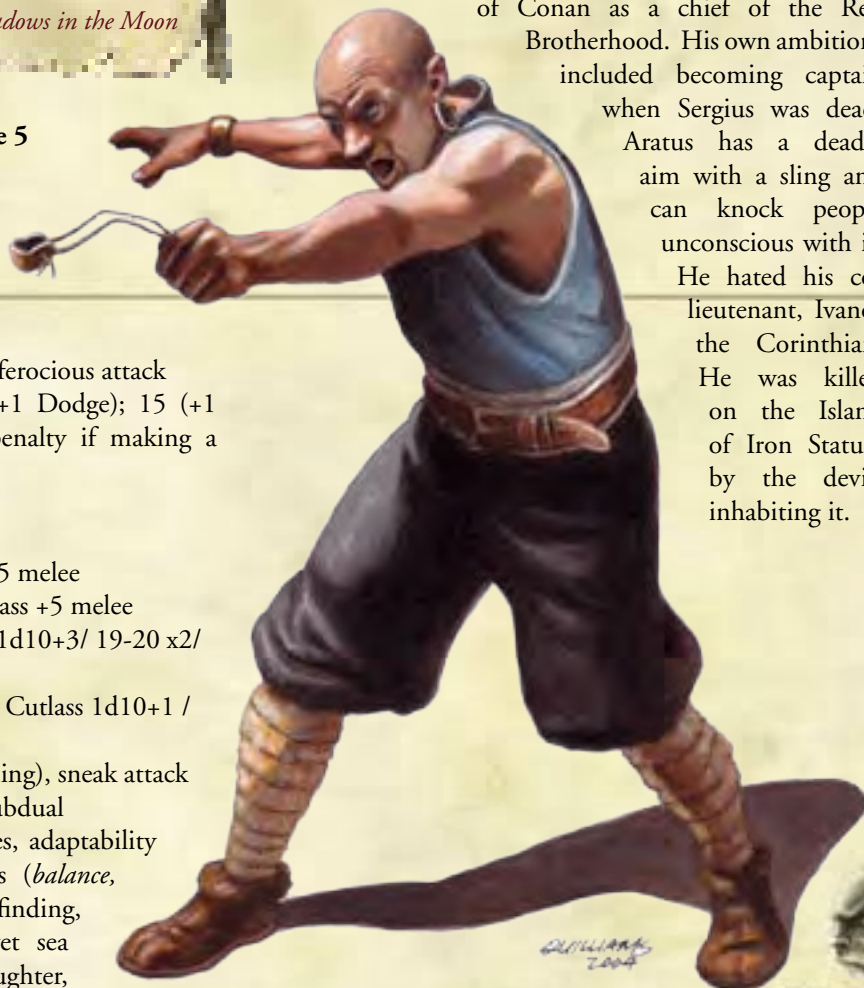
Allegiances: The Red Brotherhood, Captain Sergius, Crew

Possessions: Sling, cutlass

Aratus is a rat-faced Brythunian. One of Sergius' lieutenants, he opposed the ascension of Conan as a chief of the Red Brotherhood. His own ambitions included becoming captain when Sergius was dead.

Aratus has a deadly aim with a sling and can knock people unconscious with it.

He hated his co-lieutenant, Ivanos the Corinthian. He was killed on the Island of Iron Statues by the devils inhabiting it.



BLIT

She was slender, yet formed like a goddess: at once lithe and voluptuous. Her only garment was a broad silken girdle. Her white ivory limbs and the ivory globes of her breasts drove a beat of fierce passion through the Cimmerian's pulse, even in the panting fury of battle. Her rich black hair, black as a Stygian night, fell in rippling burnished clusters down her supple back. Her dark eyes burned on the Cimmerian.

She was untamed as a desert wind, supple and dangerous as a she-panther.

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

Medium-Size Humanoid (Pelishtim noble 3/pirate 10)

Hit Dice: 10d8+10+6 (66 hp)

Initiative: +9 (+3 Dex, +6 Reflex save)

Speed: 40 ft. (unarmoured)

DV (Dodge): 22 (+8 level, +3 Dex, +1 Light-Footed)

DV (Parry): 18 (+6 level, +2 Str)

DR: -

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +11/+11

Attack: Dagger +12 melee finesse; or Shemite longbow +14 ranged

Full Attack: Dagger +12/+5 melee finesse; or Shemite longbow +14/+9 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4+2, or Shemite longbow 1d10 (+1 within 100 ft.)

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack (additional attack), To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Attack +4d6, Sneak Subdual, +1 to damage on a coup de grace

Special Qualities: Pelishtim traits, Bite Sword, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Improved Mobility, Seamanship +2 (+2 to DV on board ship), Pirate Code (Black Coast drums), Poison Resistance +1, Special regional features (Shem) +1.

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

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

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 8, Cha 23

Skills: Appraise +16, Bluff +20, Gather Information +22, Handle Animal

+9, Hide +14, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (geography) +16, Knowledge (religion) +10, Move Silently +14, Profession (sailor) +9, Sense Motive +10, Spot +9

Feats: Fleet-footed, Light-footed, Improved Feint, Leadership, Navigation, Steely Gaze

Reputation: 89 (Villain) (She may add a +9 bonus to all Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information checks)

Leadership: 21/23 (13th level, +6 Cha, +2 Great Renown, +2 base of operations (ship) for followers only) (10th level cohort; Followers: 300 1st level, 12 2nd level, 4 3rd level, 2 4th level, and 1 5th level)

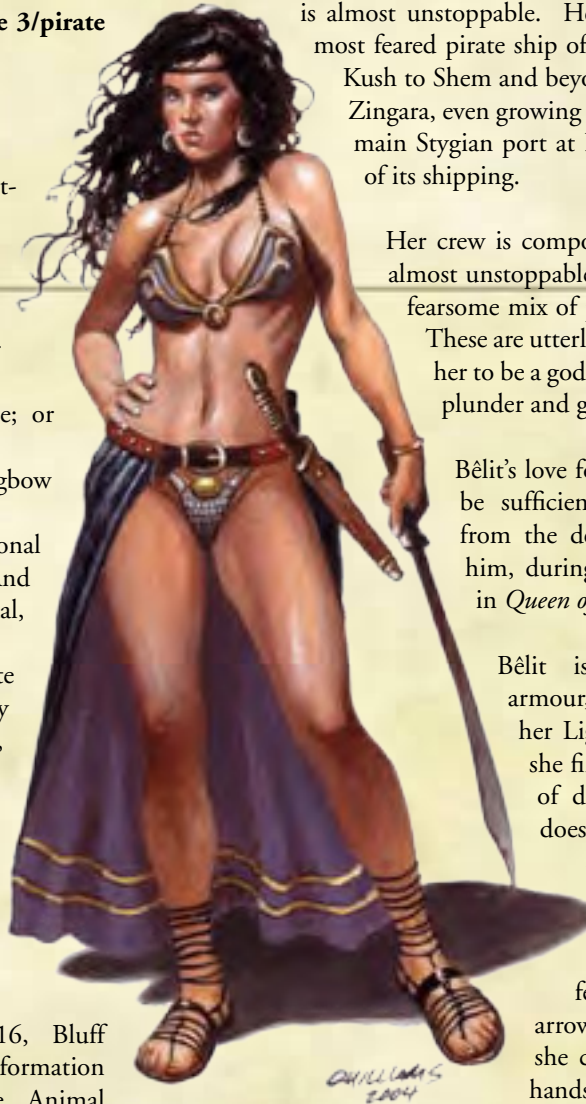
Possessions: Dagger, gems, revealing outfit, corsair galley with adoring savage crew.

Bêlit's main strengths are her innate tactical and strategic genius, and her irresistible charm. She is already renowned as Queen of the Black Coast, the greatest pirate leader that ever lived among the black corsairs. With the young Conan (then known as Amra the Lion) at her side, she is almost unstoppable. Her corsair galley is the most feared pirate ship of the Black Coast from Kush to Shem and beyond as far as Argos and Zingara, even growing so bold as to attack the main Stygian port at Khemi and burn most of its shipping.

Her crew is composed predominantly of almost unstoppable Southern Islanders, a fearsome mix of pirates and barbarians. These are utterly loyal to her, believing her to be a goddess sent to grant them plunder and glory.

Bêlit's love for Conan will one day be sufficient to bring her back from the dead as a ghost to aid him, during the events described in *Queen of the Black Coast*.

Bêlit is unlikely to wear armour, given the benefits of her Light-footed feat, which she finds preferable to those of donning harness. She does not usually carry the Shemite bow, but her galley has plenty of such bows aboard, and if she ever did feel the need to shoot arrows into her enemies she could certainly lay her hands on a bow.



BLACK ZARONO

Medium Humanoid (Zingaran pirate 10/noble 2)

Hit Dice: 10d8+4 (49 hp)

Initiative: +14 (+4 Improved Initiative, +3 Dex, +7 Reflex save)

Speed: 25* ft. (breastplate and mail hauberk)

DV (Dodge): 18* (+7 level, +1 Dex)

DV (Parry): 20* (+6 level, +3 Str, +1 Regional Bonus)

DR: 10 (+9 mail hauberk and breastplate, +1 steel cap)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +11/+11

Attack: Broadsword +13 melee; or hunting bow +11 ranged

Full Attack: Broadsword +13/+8 melee; or hunting bow +11/+6 ranged

Damage: Broadsword 1d10+3 melee; or hunting bow 1d8 ranged

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack (additional attack), To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Attack +4d6

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Improved Mobility, Seamanship +2 (+2 to DV on board ship), Pirate Code (Zingaran Trumpets), Poison Resistance +1, Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth (Zarono's noble class features are more or less on-hold at present, though he still affects a noble bearing).

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +9 (only +6 vs. Corruption)

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 13

Skills: Balance +17, Bluff +5, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (geography) +7, Profession (sailor) +14, Sense Motive +7, and Use Rope +12

Feats: Leadership, Navigation, Combat Expertise, Sneak Subdual, Improved Trip, Improved Disarm, Zingaran Surprise, Improved Initiative, No Honour, Improved Critical (broadsword)

The stranger was dark, with a lean, predatory face, and a thin black mustache. A bunch of lace was gathered at his throat, and there was lace on his wrists.

R. E. Howard, *The Black Stranger*



Corruption: 1

Reputation: 77 (Villain) (Zarono may add a +8 bonus to all Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information checks when dealing with others)

Leadership: 13 (12th level, +1 Cha)

Possessions: Broadsword, noble's shirt, breastplate, mail hauberk, morion helmet (steel cap).

Zarono is a notorious Zingaran buccaneer, and can be taken as a typical example of a Zingaran pirate captain, other than his noble

blood. Even this background is not entirely unusual for a Zingaran pirate, since disgraced or impoverished aristocrats often take to the high seas. As a young man, Zarono made use of his high-born status to become a well-known figure at the Zingaran royal court, before a sudden reversal of fortunes led to him to a life at sea.

During his years as an elegant but deadly courtier Zarono mastered the both the arming sword and broadsword, and over the years he has become one of the most renowned swordsmen of the Western Sea. His high quality armour is also a relic of his time as a hereditary noble.

Some day, if he can take enough loot to re-establish himself in respectability, he fully intends to return to the life of a cultured aristocrat, though his wastrel nature drives him to spend all his treasure on women and pleasure, and so his leaving the life of a pirate seems unlikely. If he ever gains that one really big haul, though, he will turn his back on the seas forever, ideally with a young noble girl on his arm – partly for show, but mostly because he delights in corrupting and tormenting innocent beauty.

Zarono is nothing if not adaptable and even the loss of his carrack would not balk him for long – he could steal, or build another if it came down to it.

OLIVIA

"I am called Olivia. I was his captive. I ran away. He followed me. That's why he came here. Oh, do not leave me here! His warriors are not far behind him. They will find his corpse - they will find me near it - oh! She moaned in her terror and wrung her white hands.

He stared at her in perplexity.

"Would you be better off with me?" he demanded. "I am a barbarian, and I know from your looks that you fear me."

"Yes, I fear you," she replied, too distracted to dissemble. "My flesh crawls at the horror of your aspect. But I fear the Hyrkianians more. Oh, let me go with you! They will put me to the torture if they find me beside their dead lord."

R. E. Howard, *Iron Shadows on the Moon*

Medium Ophirean Noble 1/Nomad 1

Hit Dice: 1d8+1d10+4 (14 hit points)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge): 12 (+0 base, +2 Dex)

DV (Parry): 9 (+0 base, -1 Str)

DR: -

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +0/+0

Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 melee finesse

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 melee finesse

Damage: Unarmed Strike 1d4-1 subdual

Special Qualities: Hyborian qualities, adaptability (*ride, sense motive*), background skills (*diplomacy, craft: embroidery, sense motive, knowledge: nobility*), title (princess), rank hath its privileges, wealth, favoured terrain (*desert*) +1, born to the saddle (Olivia's noble class features are more or less on-hold at present, though she still affects a noble bearing)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +3, Craft (embroidery) +5, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +4, Knowledge (nobility) +3, Ride +12, Profession (slave girl) +5, Sense Motive +6

Feats: Track, Skill Focus (Ride), Iron Will

Reputation: 4 (coward)

Allegiances: Conan

Possessions: Sandals and girdled tunic

Olivia, a strangely virile beauty, ever fresh and unsullied, is a daughter of the King of Ophir. Extremely wilful, she refused to marry a prince of Koth, so her father sold her to a Shemite chief as a slave. She lived as a nomad of Shem for this period. The Shemite chief treated her well, but this chief eventually gave her as a gift to Shah Amurath of Akif of the Purple Gardens. He treated her shamefully. She escaped her captor, but Shah Amurath caught up to her eventually. Fortunately for Olivia, Conan caught up to the shah at the same time. After Conan killed Shah Amurath, she belonged to the Cimmerian, who promised to make her Queen of the Blue Sea when he joined the Red Brotherhood of the Vilayet. It is unknown how long she remained with him, or what eventual fate befell her. She is a slender girl in sandals and a girdled tunic. She has dark hair and pale white skin. She is frightened of barbarians, pirates and storms, but even more frightened of Turanians.



PUBLIO

Publio sat at a carved teakwood desk writing on rich parchment with a golden quill. He was a short man, with a massive head and quick dark eyes. His blue robe was of the finest watered silk, trimmed with cloth-of-gold, and from his thick white throat hung a heavy gold chain.

As the Cimmerian entered, the merchant looked up with a gesture of annoyance. He froze in the midst of his gesture. His mouth opened; he started as at a ghost out of the past. 'Unbelief and fear glimmered in his wide eyes.

'Well,' said Conan, 'have you no word of greeting, Publio?'

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

Medium Humanoid (Argossean Commoner 5/Noble 4)

Hit Dice: 5d4+4d8 (32 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflex save)

Speed: 30ft. (robe)

DV (Dodge): 14 (+3 level, +1 Dex)

DV (Parry): 13 (+4 level, -1 Str)

DR: 0 (robe)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +4/+4

Attack: Stiletto +5 melee

Full Attack: Stiletto +5

Damage: Stiletto 1d4-1melee

Special Attacks:

Special Qualities: Skill Focus (profession, merchant), Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth, Special Region Feature +1, Social Ability: Refuge

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 12, Con 10,

Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14

Skills: Appraise +15, Balance +5, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Gather Information +6, Knowledge (local) +5, Profession (merchant) +12, Profession (sailor) +5, Sense Motive +7 and Use Rope +5.

Feats: Leadership, Negotiator, No Honour, Skill Focus (Appraise)

Reputation: 14

Leadership: 11 (+2 for followers (stable base): 40 1st, one 2nd; cohort level 5th)

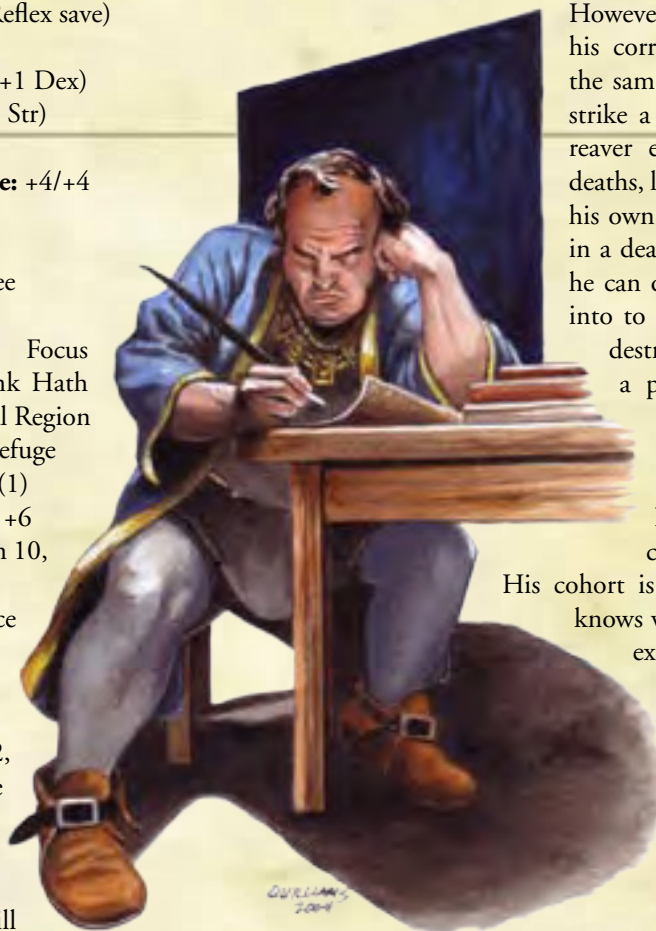
Possessions: Stiletto

Publio started his career down on the docks, selling sour wine and rotting fish to sailors. Like most such merchants he also dealt in stolen goods, buying trinkets from sailors and reselling them to legitimate merchants at low prices. It was not until he struck a bargain with Amra the Lion that his fortunes began to rise. Amra sold him the wealth of Stygia, Kush and the Black Kingdoms silvers on the luna, allowing Publio to deeply undercut his competition. Unlike the famous corsair, however, Publio invested his earnings wisely, eventually becoming a powerful man in Messantia.

The Publio represented above has pulled himself up from the stink of his younger days. His vast wealth transformed him in the eyes of society from a wretched example of common existence into a model of prosperity. He is a prince of merchants, with his hands in many dealings throughout his home city.

However his wealth is just a mask for his corrupt heart. Inside he is still the same gutter merchant that would strike a deal with the most fearsome reaver ever known. He will order deaths, lie, cheat and even murder with his own hand if he must to get ahead in a deal. Should someone cross him he can quickly set a host of resources into to motion with the intention of destroying his foes. Although not a particularly skilled combatant he has the ability to quickly gather a small host of lackeys.

Publio's followers are generally commoners who run his stalls. His cohort is an old pirate (level 5) who knows well what bloody deeds Publio executed to reach his current position. The two work together to ensure that nothing of the past can disturb the present.



SERGIOUS OF KHROSHA

"I, by Ishtar!" bellowed a bull-like voice, as a huge figure swaggered forward: a giant, naked to the waist, where his capacious belly was girdled by a wide sash that upheld voluminous silken pantaloons. His head was shaven except for a scalp-lock, his mustaches drooped over a rat-trap mouth. Green Shemitish slippers with upturned toes were on his feet, a long straight sword in his hand. Conan stared and glared. "Sergius of 'Khrosha, by Crom!" sneered Conan with bitter scorn. "You were always a coward, you 'Kothic cur." Without formality, the combatants engaged. Sergius coming in with a rush, quick on his feet as a giant cat for all his bulk.

R. E. Howard, *Iron Shadows on the Moon*

Medium Kothian Thief 4/ Pirate 10

Hit Dice: 10d8+30+8 (83 hit points)

Initiative: +22 (+5 Dex, +11 Ref., +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative); +26 on the first round of an attack if he declares a ferocious attack.

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge): 25 (+9 base, +5 Dex, +1 Dodge); 27 on board ship (+2 seamanship); (-4 penalty on first round of attacks if he declares a ferocious attack)

DV (Parry): 21 (+7 base, +3 Str, +1 Dodge); 23 on board ship (+2 seamanship); (-4 penalty on first round of attacks if he declares a ferocious attack)

DR:

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +10/+10

Attack: Arming Sword +15 melee finesse (1d10+3/19-20 x2 / AP 5)

Full Attack: Arming Sword +15/+10 melee finesse

Ferocious Attack: Arming Sword +19/+14/+19 melee finesse

Damage: Arming Sword
1d10+7/19-20 x2 / AP 5

Special Attacks:
Sneak attack style
(arming sword, dagger),
sneak attack +5d6/5d8,
sneak subdual,
ferocious attack
(additional attack)

Special Qualities: Hyborean traits, adaptability (*intimidate, bluff*), background skills (*appraise, bluff, gather information, tumble*), seamanship +2, pirate code (Vilayet sea flags), to sail a road of blood and slaughter, uncanny dodge, mobility, bite sword, improved uncanny dodge, poison resistance +1, improved mobility, trapfinding, trap sense +1

Space/Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +18, Will +4

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 16

Skills: Appraise +12, Balance +12*, Bluff +24, Climb +3*, Gather Information +10, Hide +6, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +10, Profession (sailor) +13*, Search +5, Sense Motive +7, Spot +2, Tumble +12, Use Rope +11* (* these skills gain a +2 circumstance bonus when he is aboard a ship)

Feats: Navigation, Eyes of the Cat, Light-Footed, Lightning Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Steely Gaze, Carouser, Leadership, Skill Focus (profession: sailor), Persuasive, Striking Cobra

Reputation: 53 (cruel) (+6 bonus to Bluff and Intimidate checks; may only use the bonus on Intimidate against authority figures; not included in above statistics)

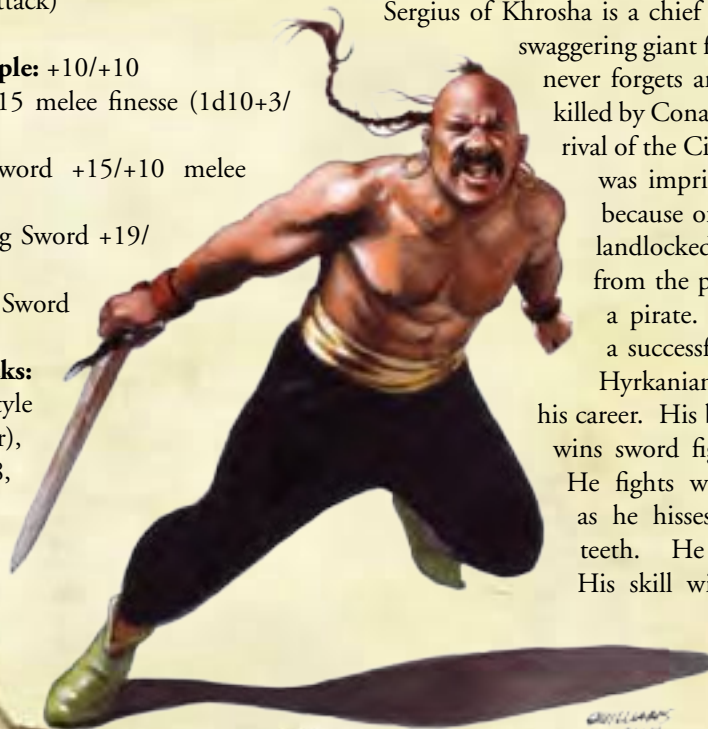
Leadership: 15/16 (7th level cohort; 70 1st level, three 2nd level, one 3rd level)

Alliances: His pirate crew; the Red Brotherhood

Possessions: Arming sword, wide sash, voluminous silken pantaloons, green Shemitish slippers with upturned feet

Sergius of Khrosha is a chief of the Red Brotherhood, a swaggering giant from Koth. Captain Sergius never forgets an enemy and, until he was killed by Conan in a duel, was a passionate rival of the Cimmerian's. It is believed he was imprisoned for a time in Ophir because of Conan. His homeland is landlocked and, since he knew Conan from the past, Sergius was not always a pirate. However, he did become a successful pirate, even capturing a Hyrkanian galley toward the end of his career. His blindingly fast attacks often wins sword fights within the first blow. He fights with a long straight sword as he hisses curses between clenched teeth. He is vengeful and boastful. His skill with a sword is superlative.

Two of Captain Sergius' lieutenants were Aratus the Brythunian and Ivanos the Corinthian.



STROM**Medium Humanoid (Barachan pirate 13)****Hit Dice:** 10d8+10+6 (61 hp)**Initiative:** +9 (+1 Dex, +8 Reflex save)**Speed:** 25 ft. (breastplate)**DV (Dodge):** 20* (+9 level, +1 Dex)**DV (Parry):** 20* (+6 level, +4 Str)**DR:** 6 (+6 breastplate)**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +13/+13**Attack:** Cutlass +13 melee; or longbow +10 ranged**Full Attack:** Cutlass +13/+8 melee; or longbow +10/+5 ranged**Damage:** Cutlass 1d10+4 melee; or longbow 1d10 ranged**Special Attacks:** Ferocious Attack (additional attack; stun, blood & slaughter), To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Attack +4d6**Special Qualities:** Bite Sword, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Improved Mobility, Seamanship +3 (+3 to DV on board ship), Pirate Code (Barachan smoke and rockets), Poison Resistance +1.**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)**Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +4**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 15**Skills:** Balance +19, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (geography) +11, Profession (sailor) +18, and Use Rope +19**Feats:** Leadership, Navigation, Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Armour Proficiency: Medium**Reputation:** 82 (Trickster)

(May apply his +9 bonus to Intimidate and Gather Information checks, but has a -9 penalty to Bluff checks if he is known to the person).

Leadership: 15 (13th level, +2 Cha)**Possessions:** Broadsword, cutlass.

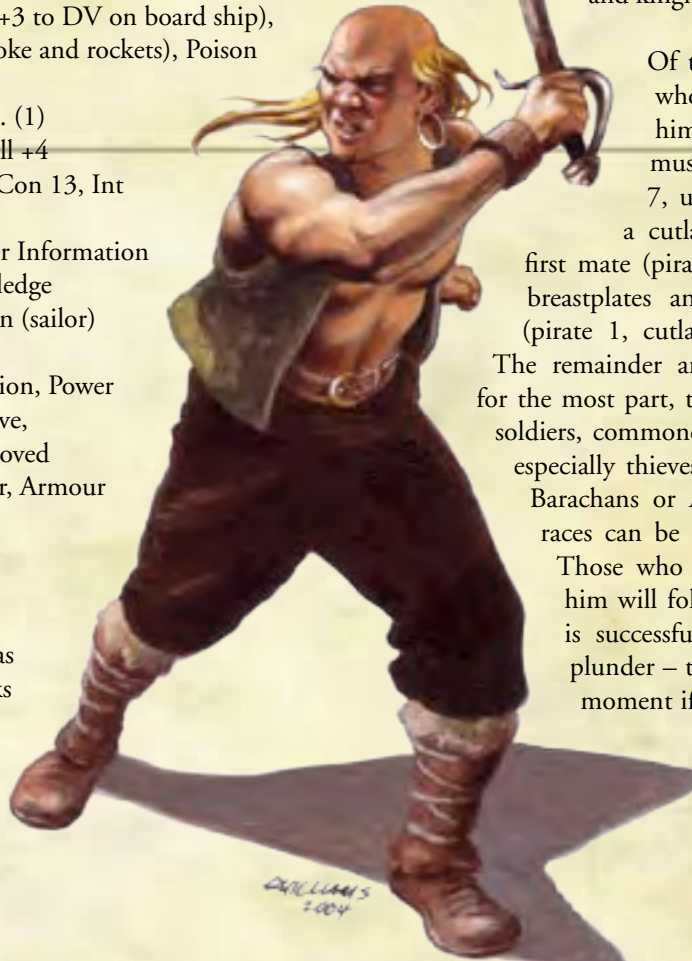
Strom had halted just within good earshot. He was a big man, bare-headed, his tawny hair blowing in the wind. Of all the sea-rovers who haunted the Barachans, none was more famed for devilry than he.

R. E. Howard, *The Black Stranger*

Strom is a lusty, devil-may-care pirate captain. He is powerfully built, and usually disdains a helmet so as to appear both more stylish and to ensure his vision and hearing are totally unimpeded. Though he is a notorious freebooter, well known in the Barachan Isles and beyond, he is not quite so completely dishonourable as most pirates. He will readily betray an ally if the circumstance seems appropriate, but he will rarely do so by actually stabbing him in the back.

Strom's ship is a carrack called the *Red Hand*, which flies his personal flag, a scarlet skull on a black field. He typically has around 150 men under him, armed with pikes, war spears, battleaxes, cutlasses and longbows. Most wear at least some armour – mail shirts, brigandines, and burgonet helmets (treat as steel caps), though many even have breastplates, looted from guardsmen and knights.

Of the 150, Strom has 64 men who are personally loyal to him: his boson, a brawny, hard-muscled giant of a man (pirate 7, unarmoured but armed with a cutlass), two lieutenants and a first mate (pirate 2, pirate 2 and pirate 3, breastplates and cutlasses) and 60 crew (pirate 1, cutlasses and assorted armour). The remainder are 1st and 2nd level pirates for the most part, though include a number of soldiers, commoners, barbarians, nomads and especially thieves as well. The majority are Barachans or Argosseans, but men of all races can be found among Strom's crew. Those who are not personally loyal to him will follow him only so long as he is successful and they are laden with plunder – they would turn on him in a moment if they thought he had lost his touch.



VALENZO, COUNT OF KORZETTA (NOW IN EXILE)

The Count was a lean, wiry man of medium height and late middle age. He was dark, sombre of expression. Trunk hose and doublet were of black silk, the only colour about his costume the jewels that twinkled on his sword-hilt, and the wine-coloured cloak thrown carelessly over his shoulder. He twisted his thin black moustache nervously, and turned his gloomy eyes on his seneschal - a leather-featured man in steel and satin.

R. E. Howard, *The Black Stranger*

Medium Humanoid (Zingaran noble 12)

Hit Dice: 10d8+4+10 (59 hp)

Initiative: +9 (+4 Dex, +5 Reflex save)

Speed: 25 ft. (breastplate)

DV (Dodge): 18 (+4 level, +4 Dex)

DV (Parry): 26 (+6 level, +2 Str, +1 Parry, +4 Cha, +3 regional feature)

DR: 7 (+6 breastplate, +1 steel cap)

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +11/+11

Attack: Arming sword +18 melee finesse; or crossbow +13 ranged

Full Attack: Arming sword +18/+13 melee finesse; or crossbow +13/+8 ranged

Damage: Arming sword 1d10+2 melee finesse; or crossbow 1d10 ranged

Special Attacks: Social Ability: Smear Others, Sneak Attack +1d6

Special Qualities: Social Ability: Refuge (wooden fort on the shore of Korvela Bay), Title (Count), Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth, Do You Know Who I Am?, Lead by Example +4

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +7

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 9, Cha 19

Skills: Balance +7, Bluff +19, Diplomacy +20, Gather

Information +14, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Profession (sailor) +2, Ride +9, Sense Motive +15, and Use Rope +7

Feats: Leadership, Weapon Focus (arming sword), Parry, Combat Expertise, Intricate Swordplay, Improved Feint

Reputation: 36 (Cruel) (He may apply his +5 bonus to Bluff and Intimidate checks; He may only apply the bonus to Intimidate when dealing with authority figures)

Leadership: 18 (12th level, +4 Cha, +4 noble, -2 cruelty, -2 demonic pact – cohort only)

Corruption: 3

Possessions: Arming sword, noble's outfit (see sidebar), breastplate, steel cap.

Count Valenzo is a deeply troubled man, and it shows in his moody, brooding demeanour. He fled his native Zingara, selling his castle there to set sail with a few loyal retainers amid rumours of diabolism and evil.

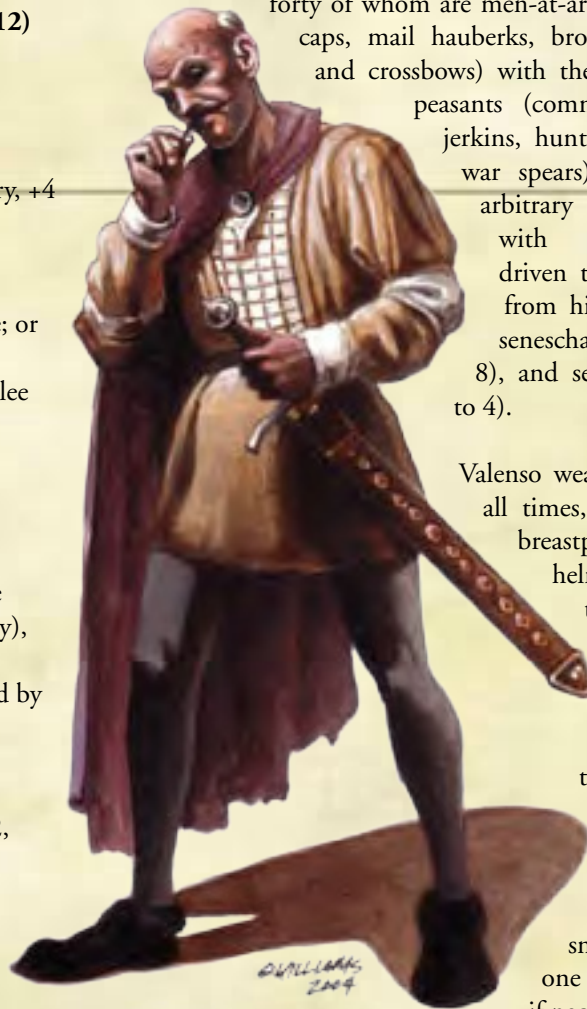
The Count has built a new home, a fort on the shore of Korvela Bay at the edge of the Pictish Wilderness and the sea. Here he lives with his niece and just a hundred men,

forty of whom are men-at-arms (soldier 1, with steel caps, mail hauberks, broadswords or battleaxes, and crossbows) with the remaining sixty being

peasants (commoner 1, with leather jerkins, hunting bows, hatchets and war spears).

His reputation for arbitrary cruelty, possibly tinged with demon-worship, has driven the rest of his followers from him. Valenzo also has a seneschal, Galbro (commoner 8), and seven captains (soldier 2 to 4).

Valenzo wears his arming sword at all times, but only pulls on his breastplate and open-faced helmet if he is expecting trouble. He does not usually carry a missile weapon, preferring to give orders to his troops rather than take an active part in the fight, at least until it gets to close quarters. However, he would be willing and able to snatch a crossbow from one of his men and use that if necessary.



OCEAN GOING PERSONALITIES

This section lists various 'generic' personalities intended to provide opposition and interaction for heroic characters. In order to provide a wide range of possible threats these characters are presented using a slightly different format from the standard monster/character statistic block. Each beginning statistic block represents the compiled information typical of a character in the role presented. A secondary statistic block below that presents information pertinent to specific racial/class synergies that give a particular character more abilities than the 'standard' block allows. For example, Argossean and Zingaran pirate captains are more culturally suited to their roles, thereby gaining bonuses that others lack.

MERCHANT CAPTAIN

Medium Humanoid (Pirate 7)

Hit Dice: 7d8+7 (42 hp)

Initiative: +6 (+1 Dex, +5 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft. (see below for regional adjustments)

DV (Dodge): 16* (+5 level, +1 Dex)

DV (Parry): 15* (+3 level, +2 Str)

DR: (see below for regional equipment)

Attack: +7 melee or +6 ranged

Full Attack: +7 melee or +6 ranged

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack (additional attack), To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Attack +2d6, Sneak Subdual

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Seamanship +2 (+2 to DV on board ship), Pirate Code (as appropriate, see below for regional variations).

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 15

Skills: Appraise +13, Climb +7, Balance +11, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (geography) +13, Profession (sailor) +11, and Use Rope +11

Feats: Carouser, Combat Reflexes, Leadership

Reputation: 9

Leadership: 9 (7th level, +2 Cha; followers: 12 1st level; cohort 4th level pirate)

Common folk say that the difference between a pirate captain and a merchant captain is a matter of opportunity. They are not far from wrong. Most captains sailing on legitimate business have, at one time or another, spent



time on a pirate vessel. In some cases this time was spent as a common deck hand; a few rose to prominence among the bloody brotherhoods before turning their hands to honest trade. All are skilled seamen who can guide a ship through troubled waters.

Merchant captains may appear in stories as the commanders of ships the characters desire to loot. In early chronicles they may command ships the character's serve on, or may be mentors who point the characters towards opportunities for young men and women of able body and sound mind. As legitimate men and women, merchant captains work hard to maintain their reputations as decent folk, although their prior involvements with pirates may be well known in certain circles.

Merchant captains generally run with fairly light crews, unless they are carrying marines or have hired mercenaries. They do not need to carry as many men as a naval vessel or pirate ship; unfortunately this usually means that they do not have sufficient numbers to withstand a serious attack either.

Merchant Captains by Nationality

Nationality	Regional Adjustments
Argossean	Skills: +2 Balance, +2 Knowledge (geography), +2 Profession (sailor), +2 Use Rope <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Weapon Focus (Cutlass), Fleet footed, Barachan Smoke and Rockets <i>DR/Move:</i> 4 (quilted jerkin and steel cap)/ 40 ft. (8 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Cutlass (+8 melee, 1d10+2 damage, 19-20/x2, AP 2)
Hyrkanian or Turanian	Skills: +2 Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Intimidate <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Replace Carouser with Far Shot; Vilayet Sea Flags <i>DR/Move:</i> 5 (Leather jerkin and steel cap)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Tulwar (melee +7, 2d8+3 damage 18-20/x3, AP 3) or Hyrkanian bow +2 (ranged +7, 1d10+2, 19-20/x2, AP 3) <i>Special:</i> -2 to saves against hypnotism
Iranistani	<i>Feats/Codes:</i> Black Corsair Drums <i>DR/Move:</i> 5 (Leather jerkin and steel cap)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Tulwar (melee +7, 2d8+3 damage 18-20/x3, AP 3) <i>Special:</i> -2 to saves against hypnotism
Kambujan	<i>Feats/Codes:</i> Black Corsair Drums <i>DR/Move:</i> 5 (mail shirt)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Arming Sword (melee +7, 1d10+2 damage 19-20/x2, AP 2) <i>Special:</i> -2 to saves against hypnotism
Khitan	Skills: +3 Knowledge (geography) <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Replace with: Brawl, Improved Unarmed Combat, Hard Hands, Leadership; Black Corsair Drums <i>DR/Move:</i> 3 (quilted jerkin)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Unarmed Strike (melee +7, 1d6+2+2d6 sneak) <i>Special:</i> -2 to saves against hypnotism
Kosalan	<i>Feats/Codes:</i> Black Corsair Drums <i>DR/Move:</i> 4 (leather jerkin and steel helm)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Scimitar (melee +7, 1d8+2 damage 18-20/x2, AP 2) <i>Special:</i> -2 to saves against hypnotism
Kushite or Zembabwean	Skills: +4 Hide, Move Silently, Survival, +2 Listen and Spot <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Black Corsair Drums <i>DR/Move:</i> Large shield (+4 DV when parrying melee or dodging ranged attacks)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> hunting spear (+7 melee, 1d8+3 damage, x2, AP 1)
Shemite	Soldier 1/Pirate 6. +2 hit points, loses the ferocious attack and bit sword abilities. Base Saves: +7 Fort, +5 Reflex, +2 Will <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot; either Smoke and Rockets or Trumpets <i>DR/Move:</i> 4 (quilted cap and steel helm) <i>Weapons:</i> Short sword (+7 melee, 1d8+2, 19-20/x2, AP 1) or Shemite Bow +2 (+8 ranged (+6/+6 rapid), 1d10+3/x3, AP 4) <i>Special:</i> -1 to all saves
Stygian	Skills: Knowledge (Arcane) 6 ranks, subtract four ranks of Knowledge (geography) <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Replace Carouser with Dabbler, Black Corsair Drums <i>DR/Move:</i> 3 (quilted jerkin), Large shield (+4 DV when parrying melee or dodging ranged attacks)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Short sword (+7 melee, 1d8+2, 19-20/x2, AP 1) or Stygian Bow +2 (+7 ranged 1d12+2, 19-20/x2, AP 2)
Vendhyan	Skills: +4 Diplomacy, Sense Motive, and Knowledge (nobility) <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Black Corsair Drums <i>DR/Move:</i> 6 (mail shirt and steel cap)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Tulwar (melee +7, 2d8+3 damage 18-20/x3, AP 3) <i>Special:</i> +1 to Will saves except against hypnotism
Zingaran	Skills: +1 Profession (sailor, Balance, and Use Rope) <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Freebooter's Fortune, Wave Dance; Zingaran Trumpets <i>DR/Move:</i> 3 (quilted jerkin)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Broadsword (+8 melee, 1d10+2, 19-20/x2, AP 3) <i>Special:</i> +1d6 sneak attack damage, -1 Fortitude save, -7 hit points, +1 Leadership

Naval Captains by Nationality

Nationality	Regional Adjustments
Argossean	<p>Skills: +2 Balance, +2 Knowledge (geography), +2 Profession (sailor), +2 Use Rope Feats: WF/WS: Cutlass <i>DR/Move:</i> 10 (mail hauberk and breastplate, steel cap, Large Shield +4 DV to parrying melee or dodge ranged)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Cutlass (+11/+6 melee, 1d10+5 damage, 19-20/x2, AP 2)</p>
Hyrkanian or Turanian	<p>Skills: +2 Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Intimidate Feats: Replace Cleave/Power Attack with Point Blank Shot/Far Shot; WF/WS (Hyrkanian Bow) <i>DR/Move:</i> 9 (Mail shirt and breastplate, steel helm)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Tulwar (melee +10/+5, 2d8+4 damage 18-20/x3, AP 3) or Hyrkanian bow +3 (ranged +10/+5, 1d10+5, 19-20/x2, AP 3) <i>Special:</i> -2 to saves against hypnotism</p>
Kambujan	<p>Feats: WF/WS: Arming Sword <i>DR/Move:</i> 9 (mail shirt and brigandine coat, steel helmet, buckler +2 to DV when parrying melee or dodging ranged)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Arming Sword (melee +11/+6, 1d10+5 damage 19-20/x2, AP 2) <i>Special:</i> -2 to saves against hypnotism</p>
Khintan	<p>Skills: +3 Knowledge (geography) Feats: Improved Unarmed Combat; Replace Cleave/Power Attack with Brawl and Improved Grapple; WF/WS: Broadsword <i>DR/Move:</i> 7 (Brigandine coat and steel helm)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Unarmed Strike (melee +10/+5, 1d6+3) or Broadsword (+11/+6 melee, 1d10+5, 19-20/x2, AP 3) <i>Special:</i> -2 to saves against hypnotism</p>
Shemite	<p>Feats: Replace Cleave/Power attack with Point Blank Shot/Rapid Shot; WF/WS: Shemite Bow <i>DR/Move:</i> 6 (Mail shirt and steel helm, buckler +2 DV when parrying melee or dodging ranged)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapons:</i> Short sword (+10/+5 melee, 1d8+3, 19-20/x2, AP 1) or Shemite Bow +3 (+12/+7 ranged (+10/+10/+5 rapid), 1d10+4/x3, AP 4) <i>Special:</i> -1 to all saves</p>
Stygian	<p>Skills: Knowledge (Arcane) 6 ranks, subtract four ranks of Knowledge (geography) Feats: Dabbler; WF/WS: Stygian Bow <i>DR/Move:</i> 10 (Mail shirt and breastplate steel helm, large shield +4 DV when parrying melee or dodging ranged attacks)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Short sword (+10/+5 melee, 1d8+2, 19-20/x2, AP 1), Stygian Bow +3 (+10/+5 ranged 1d12+5, 19-20/x2, AP 2)</p>
Vendhyan	<p>Skills: +4 Diplomacy, Sense Motive, and Knowledge (nobility) <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Quick Draw, Great Cleave; WF/WS: Tulwar <i>DR/Move:</i> 9 (mail shirt and brigandine coat, steel cap)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Tulwar (melee +11/+6, 2d8+6 damage 18-20/x3, AP 3) <i>Special:</i> +1 to Will saves except against hypnotism</p>
Zingaran	<p>Skills: +1 Profession (sailor), Balance, and Use Rope Feats: Two Weapon Combat Proficiency, Two-Weapon Defence; WF/WS: Broadsword <i>DR/Move:</i> 6 (mail shirt and steel helm)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Broadsword (+11/+6 melee, 1d10+5, 19-20/x2, AP 3) and off hand short sword (+11 melee, 1d8+3, 19-20/x2) <i>Special:</i> +1d6 sneak attack damage, -1 Fortitude save, -8 hit points, +1 Leadership</p>



NAVAL CAPTAIN

Medium Humanoid (Soldier 6/Noble 2)

Hit Dice: 6d10+2d8+16 (62 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft. (see below for regional adjustments)

DV (Dodge): 15 (+3 level, +2 Dex)

DV (Parry): 19 (+5 level, +3 Str, +1 Parry feat)

DR: (see below for regional equipment)

Attack: +10 melee or +9 ranged

Full Attack: +10/+5 melee or +9/+4 ranged

Special Attacks: –

Special Qualities: Title, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Wealth, Formation Fighting (marine)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +5

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 14

Skills: Bluff +5, Climb +9, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (geography) +7, Profession (sailor) +8, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Cleave, Leadership, Parry, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (see equipment type), Weapon Specialist (see equipment type)

Reputation: 14

Leadership: 10 (8 level, +2 Cha; followers: 18 1st level soldiers; cohort 5th level soldier)

Naval captains almost never have a piratical background. Instead they are nobles and soldiers, serving their people by taking to the seas to protect shipping. Often they carry the red banner of war to other nations as well, sometimes in reprisal for 'acts of piracy'; many times these attacks amount to little more than piracy themselves.

Naval captains, although not as able a seaman as their pirate foes, make excellent adversaries for any pirate vessel. They have superior equipment generally better-trained crews and a wide array of resources at their disposal. Alternately, the characters may start out as marines or sailors on a naval vessel, chasing down pirates for glory and honour. Eventually the characters may face the choice of whether to continue taking orders from the military commanders or find freedom on the waves among the pirates they once hunted.

Naval ships run with large crews (between four and six times what they need to sail) of both sailors and soldiers. These crews rarely mutiny, although it occasional revolts have occurred in the past.

Generally the captain's personal followers are the ships officers, although some officers may be loyal to another commander or placed on

the ship for some other purpose. A captain will generally have between one and three units of marines (pg. 86) under his command.

Stygian ships sent by the great temples there may have a priest or sorcerer on board. If they do, the sorcerer does not obey the captain's commands; it is much more likely that the relationship works the other way around. More often than not the naval officers devoutly wish to get the priest off of their ship so that they can return to normal business.

Very few nations in the Hyborian Age can field a navy of any significant strength. The table below reflects this; only nations that have an organised navy are represented. Other nations either hire pirates to serve as a navy or conscript merchant vessels for military purposes.

PIRATE CAPTAIN

Medium Humanoid (Pirate 10)

Hit Dice: 10d8+20 (68 hp)

Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +7 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft. (see below for regional adjustments)

DV (Dodge): 19* (+7 level, +2 Dex)

DV (Parry): 17* (+5 level, +2 Str)

DR: (see below for regional equipment)

Attack: +9 melee or +9 ranged

Full Attack: +9/+4 melee or +9/+4 ranged

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack (additional attack), To Sail A Road Of Blood And Slaughter, Sneak Attack +3d6, Sneak Subdual

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Improved Mobility, Seamanship +2 (+2 to DV on board ship), Pirate Code (as appropriate, see below for regional variations), Navigation.

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

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

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 16

Skills: Appraise +16, Climb +7, Balance +14, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (geography) +16, Profession (sailor) +14, Use Rope +14

Feats: Carouser, Combat Reflexes, Leadership, No Honour

Reputation: 11

Leadership: 13 (10 level, +3 Cha; followers: 40 1st level pirates; cohort 6th level pirate)

Pirate captains are not that much different than their merchant rivals. They start out life as able-bodied sailors seeking a berth on any ship, legitimate or not. However, when the moment came to take up their own ship they

Pirate Captains by Nationality

Nationality	Regional Adjustments
Argossean	Skills: +2 Balance, +2 Knowledge (geography), +2 Profession (sailor), +2 Use Rope <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Weapon Focus (cutlass), Feetfooted, Pirate Code Expert; Barachan Smoke and Rockets <i>DR/Move:</i> 7 (breastplate and steel cap)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Cutlass (+10/+5 melee, 1d10+2 damage, 19-20/x2, AP 2)
Hyrkanian or Turanian	Skills: +2 Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Intimidate <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Replace Carouser with Far Shot; Vilayet Sea Flags <i>DR/Move:</i> 7 (mail hauberk and steel cap)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Tulwar (melee +9/+4, 2d8+3 damage 18-20/x3, AP 3) or Hyrkanian bow +2 (ranged +9/+4, 1d10+2, 19-20/x2, AP 3) <i>Special:</i> -2 to saves against hypnotism
South Islander	<i>Feats/Codes:</i> Black Corsair, Blooded Spear, Voice like a Drum; Black Corsair Drums <i>DR/Move:</i> Large shield (+4 DV when parrying melee or dodging ranged attacks)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> hunting spear (+11/+6 melee, 1d8+3 damage, x2, AP 1) <i>Special:</i> +2 Strength, -1 Leadership, -2 to will saves against Terror
Zingaran	Skills: +1 Profession (sailor), Balance, and Use Rope <i>Feats/Codes:</i> Freebooter's Fortune, Pirate Code Expert, Wave Dance; Zingaran Trumpets <i>DR/Move:</i> 7 (mail hauberk and steel cap), carry a buckler (+2 DV when parrying melee or dodging ranged attacks)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) <i>Weapon:</i> Broadsword (+10/+5 melee, 1d10+2, 19-20/x2, AP 3) <i>Special:</i> +1d6 sneak attack damage, -1 Fortitude save, -7 hit points, +1 Leadership

chose a very different route. Rather than taking the easy money offered by sailing from one port of call to another, they took to the high seas as rovers and wolves, seeking their gold in blood and slaughter. The strain of this path gives them an edge over their former comrades, an edge that translated into superior skill and equipment for raiding.

These captains generally appear as either patrons of the characters enemies or mentors in the stories about the character's early days. Later on legitimate characters may spend their time hunting down these hardened criminals, or pirates may turn to them as allies or prey.

A pirate ship generally requires forty crew to run, and carries anywhere between three and five times that number depending on the amount of conflict they expect to encounter. Only the captain's personal followers count as loyal retainers. The others are unaligned pirates, liable to mutiny at the first sign of trouble.

Pirate captains not aligned with one of the four major factions tend to vanish suddenly, with only their stripped skull's appearance on some distant shore to serve as a reminder never to travel in claimed waters.

LAND BASED PERSONALITIES

The following pre-generated personalities might interact with characters during their brief stays on land. These

personalities are not generally relevant to characters in the long run; they represent temporary threats, obstacles or assistance depending on the character's needs at that moment. The militia and villagers entries also have mass combat statistic blocks to assist Games Masters in preparing villages that the characters can then plunder.

MILITIA AND LOCAL WATCHES

Medium Humanoid (Soldier 1)

Hit Dice: 1d10+1 (7 hp)

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex, +0 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft. (see below for regional adjustments)

DV (Dodge): 10* (+0 level, +0 Dex)

DV (Parry): 11* (+0 level, +1 Str)

DR: 5 (leather jerkin and steel cap)

Attack: War spear +3 melee (2d4+1/x3, AP 2, reach), club +2 melee (1d8/x2, AP 1) or hunting bow +1 ranged (1d8/x2, AP 1, range 50 ft.)

Full Attack: War spear +3 melee (2d4+1/x3, AP 2, reach), club +2 melee (1d8/x2, AP 1) or hunting bow +1 ranged (1d8/x2, AP 1, range 50 ft.)

Special Attacks:

Special Qualities:

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/10 ft. (2)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Profession (farmer) +3

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus (equipped weapon)

Unit Statistics

Unit Size: 4

Creatures Per Counter: 8

Counter Hit Points: 11

Militia and local watches spend a part of their day training with weapons. Although they lack the combat experience that makes mercenaries so dangerous, they make up for their inexperience with weight of numbers. They also have a tendency to use ranged and reach weapons to reduce the advantage that superior experience gives a talented foe.

When not on active duty militia members have jobs (usually farming) through which they support their families. They only take up arms when patrolling the area around their settlement or when under attack. Unless they have a skilled leader they will only fight to the death if forced to protect their family or homes.

Most militias have at least one sergeant (a 3rd level soldier) who organises the defences. Militias with over one hundred members may also have a veteran soldier (5th level or higher) who trains them in return for room and board. This soldier may have wounds that prevent him from fighting, or he may take up arms when the settlement comes under direct attack.

The militia units displayed above are 'generic'; that is, one can find leather clad spear wielders just about anywhere in the world. More detailed information about the inhabitants of various lands can be found in the *Road of Kings*. They use spears to keep their opponents at bay or bows if they have sufficient range. When the targets close they draw truncheons and try to hold the target until more skilled troops arrive to dispatch them.

VILLAGERS

Medium Humanoid (Commoner 1)

Hit Dice: 1d4+1 (3 hp)

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex, +0 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft. (see below for regional adjustments)

DV (Dodge): 10 (+0 level, +0 Dex)

DV (Parry): 11 (+0 level, +1 Str)

DR: 3 (quilted jerkin)

Attack: Club +1 melee (1d8+1/x2, AP 1)

Full Attack:

Special Attacks:

Special Qualities:

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/10 ft.
(2)

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Profession (one) +6

Feats: Skill focus (Profession)

Unit Statistics

Unit Size: 10

Creatures Per Counter: 10

Counter Hit Points: 8

Villagers are much the same the world over. These common, simple folk attempt to live out their days without encountering too much violence. When the red tide of war sweeps over them, they fight as best they can but die by their hundreds at the hands of well-equipped fighting men. In fact some mercenaries consider killing villagers a sport; certainly it entails far fewer risks than engaging trained warriors in battle.

If given the opportunity most villagers flee rather than engage in pitched battle. They can always rebuild their crude homes; what possessions they have fit on their backs. If caught unaware they fight with what little martial skill they possess.

Many pirates come to agreements with villages and even small towns. In return for not being burned to the ground, murdered and ravished the people of the village provide the pirates with free food and a relatively safe harbour whenever asked. These agreements protect the village from the crew of one ship, but do not extend to others; a truth that has caused more than one village elder unthinkable grief after he invites the wrong ship into port.

Villages and towns have an 80% chance of being lead by a commoner (level 1d8+1). 20% of the time the leader is of the race's favoured class (level 1d8+1). This leader will attempt to deal with the pirates or send for help before engaging in battle.

PIRATE, NAVAL AND MERCHANT CREWS

The crews described below represent the normal run of characters found on various kinds of ships. The characters may well recruit a higher quality of crewmen for their own vessels. All of the crew descriptions have mass combat blocks to assist the players and the Games Master when running boarding actions and similar events.

BARACHAN PIRATES

Medium Humanoid (Argossean pirate 2)

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex save)

Speed: 25 ft.

DV (Dodge): 13* (+1 level, +2 Dex)

DV (Parry): 12* (+1 level, +1 Str)

DR: 6 (breast plate)

Attack: Cutlass +3 melee (1d10+1, 19-20/x2, AP 2)

Full Attack: Cutlass +3 melee (1d10+1, 19-20/x2, AP 2)

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack

Special Qualities: Seamanship +1, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Pirate Code (smoke and rockets)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Balance +8, Climb +5, Knowledge (geography) +4, Profession (sailor) +6, Spot +4, Use Rope +8

Feats: Argossean Dreamer, Weapon Focus (cutlass)

Climate/Terrain: Any sea

Organisation: Raiding party (6-10 plus 1 leader of 5th level) or shipload (90 to 110 plus 1 pirate captain and his followers).

Unit Statistics

Unit Size: 10

Creatures Per Counter: 10

Counter Hit Points: 19

The Barachan Pirates are arguably some of the greatest seamen and pirates of the Hyborian Age. They sail to almost all of the nations of the West, raiding and pillaging at will. Some even take to the deep water, hoping to find untold riches on lost islands and continents far out on the Western Ocean. They are masters of wind and star, living with freedom that civilised men can only imagine.

These pirate crews generally number between 100 and 120 men, most of them equipped with breastplates and cutlasses. They adjust their armour so that it can be easily shed of in case they are thrown overboard. A few know how to use bows, but archery is not really their strongest skill. Their captains rely on good seamanship to avoid ranged attacks, preferring to have their men ready for a sudden boarding action rather than entangled with bows.

A pirate crew will almost always run if it appears that things are going against them. They receive pay based on shares of the plunder; a dead man does not collect anything at all. Targets that put up a hard fight will often find that the Barachan's leave after the first exchange, searching for softer targets.

A pirate crew is almost always lead by a pirate captain (see above) of the corresponding nationality. Occasionally an adventurer or mercenary with little sea experience will take over a ship, but these individuals rarely last for long.

BLACK CORSAIRS

Medium Humanoid (South Islander pirate 2)

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge vs Ranged): 17* (+1 level, +1 Dex, +1 racial bonus, +4 large shield)

DV (Dodge vs. Melee): 13 (+1 level, +1 Dex, +1 racial bonus)

DV (Parry): 17* (+1 level, +2 Str, +4 large shield)

DR: –

Attack: Hunting spear +5 melee (1d8+2/x2) or Shemite bow +2 ranged (1d10/x3)

Full Attack: Hunting spear +5 melee (1d8+2/x2) or Shemite bow +2 ranged (1d10/x3)

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter

Special Qualities: Seamanship +1, Pirate Code (black coast drums), -2 racial penalty to Terror saves

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will -1

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Skills: Balance +5, Perform (dance) +5, Profession (sailor) +3, Survival +3, Swim +4, Use Rope +5

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Shemite Bow), Weapon Focus (hunting spear)

Climate/Terrain: Any sea

Organisation: Raiding party (6-10 plus 1 leader of 5th level) or shipload (80 to 90 plus 1 pirate captain and his followers).

Unit Statistics

Unit Size: 10

Creatures Per Counter: 10

Counter Hit Points: 12

The infamous black corsairs generally confine their raiding to the Black Coast, in part because they lack the skill to navigate over long distances. However, if they find a navigator they will happily go as far as the Pictish Wilderness or the Vendhyan coast. Their constant search for blood and slaughter, along with their willingness to kill or enslave anyone who resists them causes other's to fear them.

Black corsairs generally lack the discipline to fight in close formations, but the tight confines



of boarding actions force them to crowd together. They tend to rake the decks of opposing ships with long distance arrow fire before closing to engage in melee. Most black corsair captains try to minimise enemy losses, so that they can maximise their profits in the slave trade.

Characters may encounter the black corsairs any time they stay close to the coasts. These corsairs tend to sail just on the edge of coastal waters, avoiding deeper water where their lack of skill may count against them. They strike hard at coastal villages on the Black Coast, then come north to sell goods; stopping to plunder anyone who happens to come into view.

MERCHANT CREW

Medium Humanoid (Argossean pirate 1)

Hit Dice: 1d8+2 (6 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV (Dodge): 12* (+0 level, +2 Dex)

DV (Parry): 11* (+0 level, +1 Str)

DR: 4 (quilted jerkin and steel cap)

Attack: Cutlass +2 melee (1d10+1, 19-20/x2, AP 2)

Full Attack: Cutlass +2 melee (1d10+1, 19-20/x2, AP 2)

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack

Special Qualities: Seamanship +1

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will -1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Skills: Balance +8, Climb +5, Knowledge (geography) +4, Profession (sailor) +5, Spot +3, Use Rope +8

Feats: Argossean Dreamer, Weapon Focus (cutlass)

Climate/Terrain: Any sea

Organisation: Crew (20 to 40 crewmembers)

Unit Statistics

Unit Size: 4

Creatures Per Counter: 10

Counter Hit Points: 11

Merchant crews the world over sail the high seas, trying to move goods from one port to another without meeting a pirate or naval vessel interested in a bit of extra plunder. These hardworking men know that their brother sailors regard them as rightful prey, a state that does very little for their peace of mind.

Merchant sailors do not do the majority of their work carrying weapons or wearing armour. Instead they dress for comfort, usually in fairly close fitting shirts and trousers. When they spot a pirate ship they break out arms and armour, as much to sell their lives dearly as from any hope of staving off the wolves.

Non-Argossean crews are somewhat less skilled as seamen, but may be more able combatants. Crews from the southern lands in particular have a mix of barbarian and pirate crewmembers, ensuring a slightly more combat ready unit.

Most merchant crews will fight to the death, as they know nothing good comes from surrender. They are not, however, particularly loyal to any given captain. Many were pressed into service or awoke from a drunken stupor to find themselves sailing towards an unknown destination. If given a chance to join a pirate crew many of these stalwart fellows will leave their former lives behind in an instant.

MARINES

Medium Humanoid (soldier 3)

Hit Dice: 3d10+3 (19 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflex save)

Speed: (see below)

DV (Dodge): 13* (+1 level, +2 Dex)

DV (Parry): 13* (+2 level, +1 Str)

DR: (see below)

Marine Units by Nationality

Nationality	Regional Adjustments
Argossean	<p>Skills: +2 Balance, +2 Knowledge (geography), +2 Profession (sailor), +2 Use Rope WF: Cutlass and hunting bow DR/Move: 7 (mail hauberk, steel cap, Large Shield +4 DV to parrying melee or dodge ranged)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) Weapon: Cutlass (+5 melee, 1d10+1 damage, 19-20/x2, AP 2) or hunting bow (+ 6 ranged 1d8+1/x2, AP 1) Unit Hit Points: 28</p>
Hyrkanian or Turanian	<p>Skills: +2 Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Intimidate WF: Hyrkanian Bow and tulwar DR/Move: 9 (Mail shirt and breastplate, steel helm)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) Weapon: Tulwar (melee +5, 2d8+1 damage 18-20/x3, AP 3) or Hyrkanian bow +1 (ranged +6, 1d10+1, 19-20/x2, AP 3) Special: -2 to saves against hypnotism Unit Hit Points: 30</p>
Kambujan	<p>WF: Arming Sword and hunting bow DR/Move: 6 (mail shirt steel helmet, buckler +2 to DV when parrying melee or dodging ranged)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) Weapon: Arming Sword (melee +5, 1d10+1 damage 19-20/x2, AP 2) or hunting bow (+ 6 ranged 1d8+1/x2, AP 1) Special: -2 to saves against hypnotism Unit Hit Points: 27</p>
Khitani	<p>Skills: +3 Knowledge (geography) Feats: Improved Unarmed Combat WF: Broadsword and javelin DR/Move: 7 (Brigandine coat and steel helm)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) Weapon: Unarmed Strike (melee +4, 1d4+1) or Broadsword (+5melee, 1d10+1, 19-20/x2, AP 3) or hunting bow (+ 6 ranged 1d8/x2, AP 1) Special: -2 to saves against hypnotism Unit Hit Points: 28</p>
Shemite	<p>WF: Short Sword and Shemite Bow DR/Move: 6 (Mail shirt and steel helm, buckler +2 DV when parrying melee or dodging ranged)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) Weapons: Short sword (+5 melee, 1d8+1, 19-20/x2, AP 1) or Shemite Bow +1 (+6 ranged, 1d10+1/x3, AP 4) Special: -1 to all saves Unit Hit Points: 27</p>
Stygian	<p>Skills: Knowledge (Arcane) 6 ranks, subtract four ranks of Knowledge (geography) WF: Stygian Bow and short sword DR/Move: 10 (Mail shirt and breastplate steel helm, large shield +4 DV when parrying melee or dodging ranged attacks)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) Weapon: Short sword (+5 melee, 1d8+1, 19-20/x2, AP 1), Stygian Bow +1 (+6ranged 1d12+1, 19-20/x2, AP 2) Unit Hit Points: 31</p>
Vendhyan	<p>Skills: +4 Diplomacy, Sense Motive, and Knowledge (nobility) Feats: Combat Expertise WF/WS: Tulwar and hunting bow DR/Move: 9 (mail shirt and brigandine coat, steel cap)/ 25 ft. (5 squares) Weapon: Tulwar (melee +5, 2d8+1 damage 18-20/x3, AP 3) or hunting bow (+ 6 ranged 1d8+1/x2, AP 1) Special: +1 to Will saves except against hypnotism Unit Hit Points: 30</p>
Zingaran	<p>Skills: +1 Profession (sailor), Balance, and Use Rope Feats: Combat Expertise WF: Broadsword and hunting bow DR/Move: 6 (mail shirt and steel helm)/ 30 ft. (6 squares) Weapon: Broadsword (+6 melee, 1d10+1, 19-20/x2, AP 3) or or hunting bow (+ 6 ranged 1d8+1 /x2, AP 1) Special: +1d6 sneak attack damage, -1 Fortitude save, -3 hit points Unit Hit Points: 24</p>



Attack: +5 melee or +6 ranged (see below for weapons)

Full Attack: +5 melee or +6 ranged

Special Attacks:

Special Qualities: Formation combat (marine)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +7, Profession (sailor) +5

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus (close combat weapon), Weapon Focus (ranged combat weapon)

Climate/Terrain: Any sea

Organisation: One squad (5 soldiers) or a command (50 soldiers plus one naval captain and his followers).

Generic Unit Statistics

Unit Size: 10

Creatures Per Counter: 5

Unit Hit Points: See Marine Units by Nationality Table

Naval ships, contrary to popular belief, are not crewed with a vast number of highly skilled combatants. Instead, the average naval ship has a large crew (usually between four and six times the actual number required to run the ship) of sailors (1st level pirates) and a core crew of specially trained sailors called marines. Only these marines study naval warfare, hand-to-hand combat and the art of boarding other ships.

A marine unit is typically better trained and better equipped than an average pirate crew. They may have shields to ward off arrows and use bows to rake the opponent as they close. They also regard the sailors as being expendable; after all, there are far more than enough sailors available to run the ship. In a pinch most marines can also act as able-bodied seamen, although they prefer not to.

When a naval ship engages a pirate ship it is the marines who bear the brunt of the engagement. Using their superior armour, training and weapons they push forward, breaking onto the enemy ship. When defending the marines generally force the sailors onto the front lines, using their bows to inflict terrible damage on the attacker before taking the fight to them.

Characters may very well start their ocean going adventures as sailors working with a marine unit, or even as junior marines training to hunt pirates and attack other war ships. Later, when the characters rule their own floating kingdoms, marines form a dangerous threat that the characters would be best advised to avoid. Although even a group of well-

armed marines is no real danger to a high level character, they can easily chew through a pirate crew leaving the characters effectively stranded on the high seas.

TURAN RED

BROTHERHOOD

Medium Humanoid (Turanian pirate 2)

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex save)

Speed: 25 ft.

DV (Dodge): 13* (+1 level, +2 Dex)

DV (Parry): 12* (+1 level, +1 Str)

DR: 5 (leather jerkin and steel cap)

Attack: Scimitar +2 melee (1d8+1 damage 18-20/x2, AP 2) or hunting bow +3 ranged (1d8+1/x2, AP 1)

Full Attack: Scimitar +2 melee (1d8+1 damage 18-20/x2, AP 2) or hunting bow +3 ranged (1d8+1/x2, AP 1)

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack

Special Qualities: Seamanship +1, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Pirate Code (smoke and rockets)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will -1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +6, Knowledge (geography) +5, Profession (sailor) +4, Use Rope +7

Feats: Whip Wary

Climate/Terrain: Vilayet Sea

Organisation: Raiding party (6-10 plus 1 leader of 5th level) or shipload (90 to 110 plus 1 pirate captain and his followers).

Unit Statistics

Unit Size: 10

Creatures Per Counter: 10

Counter Hit Points: 17

The pirates of the Red Brotherhood regard themselves as equal parts pirates, revolutionaries and the hand of divine justice blessed with the might to carry red revenge directly to the heart of their wealthier oppressors. They sail the Vilayet Sea, striking out in bloody rage against anything that crosses their path. Although many target Hyrkanian and Turanian merchant ships, a few prey exclusively on naval vessels and port towns. Some even take on service with various magicians and sorcerers in an attempt to gain advantage over their adversaries.

Members of the Red Brotherhood watch each other's backs and work well together when engaged in boarding actions. They regard each other as fellow freedom fighters and will do what they can to keep each other alive. However, most will not lay down their own lives for their brothers; after

all, there are always more brothers being born every day under their old master's lash.

Characters who start out in Turan and Hyrkania may well have friends, family or acquaintances that dwell among the Red Brotherhood. They could even start out as slaves themselves, breaking free of their chains and joining the reavers in their noble cause.

Red Brotherhood crews generally consist of 90 to 110 'free brothers', a pirate captain, and his loyal retainers.

ZINGARAN FREEBOOTERS

Medium Humanoid (Zingaran pirate 2)

Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex save)

Speed: 25 ft.

DV (Dodge): 13* (+1 level, +2 Dex)

DV (Parry): 12* (+1 level, +1 Str)

DR: 5 (leather jerkin and steel cap)

Attack: Broadsword +4 melee (1d10+1, 19-20/x2, AP 3) or hunting bow +3 ranged (1d8+1/x2, AP 1)

Full Attack: Scimitar +4 melee (1d10+1, 19-20/x2, AP 3) or hunting bow +3 ranged (1d8+1/x2, AP 1)

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack

Special Qualities: Seamanship +1, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Pirate Code (smoke and rockets), +1d6 sneak attack

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will -1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10

Skills: Balance +4, Bluff +4, Climb +6, Knowledge (geography) +5, Profession (sailor) +4, Use Rope +7

Feats: Freebooter's Fortune, Weapon Focus (broadsword)

Climate/Terrain: Vilayet Sea

Organisation: Raiding party (6-10 plus 1 leader of 5th

level) or shipload (80 to 100 plus 1 pirate captain and his followers).

Unit Statistics

Unit Size: 10

Creatures Per Counter: 10

Counter Hit Points: 14

The Zingaran Freebooters style themselves the 'Wolves of the Sea'. They claim to be the most bloodthirsty, dishonourable and determined group to ever set sail on the waves. Their claims are not far from the truth; a more wretched group of villains would be hard to find in the Hyborian age.

In order to enhance their reputation the Freebooters prefer to attack targets that have limited defensive capability. They target coastal villages and merchant ships rather than other pirates or naval vessels. They also turn tail and run if it looks like they will end up engaging in a particularly difficult conflict. Their crews are only barely loyal to the captain, regardless of how well things are going. They are also not the most tactically adept of sailors; unlike the Barachan Pirates, they do not use their knowledge of deep sea navigation to gain advantage over their foes.

Characters may encounter the Zingaran Freebooters either on the open seas or in port towns where the Freebooters gather to tell stories about their brave deeds. In either case the Freebooters are more talk than fight; they might try a few passes with a foe who holds steel in his hand, but most will run the other way as soon as the fight gets moderately hot.

Zingaran ships typically run with a crew of 80 to 100 pirates, along with the captain and his loyal retainers.



Beasts of the Seas

Friends and Foes of the Deep

THE WATERS CLOSE to the coasts are free of fantastical beasts, for where men regularly roam legendary creatures retreat to reveal nothing but fish and open waves. Far out to sea, however, things change, here the world becomes wild, filled with forgotten beasts and terrors from beyond the furthest darkness.

ANIMALS

Untainted animals rarely, if ever, threaten Conan. However, the mighty Cimmerian is as much a spirit of the wilds as he is a man; a group of civilised men will never be able to move though the world as easily as he.

The following animals represent some of the creatures that dwell beneath the Hyborian seas. Each such animal represents a broad type, not a specific creature.

DOLPHIN

Medium Animal

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11)

Initiative: +6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Speed: Swim 80 ft. (16 squares)

DV: 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)

DR: 3

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+1

Attack: Slam +2 melee (2d4)

Full Attack: Slam +2 melee (2d4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attacks: Charging Strike

Special Qualities: Blindsight 120 ft., hold breath, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +1

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Skills: Listen +8*, Spot +7*, Swim +8*

Feats: Weapon Focus (slam)

Climate/Terrain: Aquatic

Organisation: Pair or school (3 – 20)

Advancement: 3 – 4 HD (Medium); 5 – 6 HD (Large)

Sunlight flashes off of the flanks of these long, graceful creatures as they leap out of the water, playing in the wake of the boats...

Dolphins, also called the friendly fish, are actually mammals related in some way to the great whales that roam the seas. They may be found on nearly every shoreline, along many major rivers, and even in the vast empty blue far from the lands of men.

Sailors and pirates regard these playful creatures as a good omen. They say that a ship graced with their presence will not run into foul water. Rumours claim that dolphins will carry a sailor to the nearest shore if they find him in deep water, that they might guide a hungry ship to fish and that in times of great need they will come to defend a ship against the creatures of the far deep.

Combat

Dolphins, as a rule, do not engage humans in combat. They do so only when possessed or charmed into obedience. They do attack the various animals of the deep, occasionally assisting human ships by drawing off dangerous attackers. However, this is a side effect of their constant search for fresh prey, not a result of any particular love of humans.

In combat dolphins may use the following abilities:

Blindsight (Ex): Dolphins 'see' by emitting high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most other creatures, that allow them to locate objects and creatures within 120 feet. Its normal vision is approximately as good as a humans.

Charging Strike (Ex): If a dolphin executes a charge attack it strikes with its snout, dealing 2d8 damage in addition to their normal bite damage. It cannot effectively use charging strike on a target smaller than itself.

Hold Breath (Ex): A dolphin can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to six times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skills: A dolphin has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. It has a +4 racial bonus to Spot and Listen checks that is negated if it cannot use its blindsight.

GIANT OCTOPUS

Large Animal (aquatic)

Hit Dice: 8d8+8 (44)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflex)

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 30 ft.

DV: 19 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural, +1 Dodge)

DR: 2

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+15

Attack: Tentacle +10 melee (1d4+5)

Full Attack: 8 tentacles +10 melee (1d4+5) and bite +5 melee (1d8+2)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. /10 ft. (20 ft. with tentacle)

Special Attacks: Improved grab, constrict

Special Qualities: Ink cloud, jet, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +3

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 3

Skills: Escape Artist +12*, Hide +12*, Listen +4, Spot +6, Swim +13*

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Skill Focus (Hide)

Climate/Terrain: Warm aquatic

Organisation: Solitary or pair

Advancement: 9-12 HD (Large), 13 – 24 HD (Huge)

A roiling mass of tentacles shoots out of the water, snatching a sailor from the deck. The waves choke his sudden scream of terror...

Giant octopi look like larger versions of their less aggressive cousins. They have a sack body with two golden, slitted eyes. Their eight tentacles are covered with strong suckers and thin barbs that give them an impressive grip. Octopi also have chameleon skin; they can change their coloration and patterning to better blend with the surrounding environment.

Giant octopi roam the Black Coast and the waters of the Southern Sea. Rumours place them as far north as Stygia, but wise sailors know that such an encounter usually indicates the machinations of a sorcerer rather than anything more natural. Many sailors claim that any interaction with the great beasts bodes ill, speaking poorly of both the captain and his plans.

By and large, giant octopi do not generally attack moving ships. However, they are extremely aggressive and highly curious creatures. They will attack swimmers or carefully investigate ships that anchor in their hunting territories.

They also have long memories; once one gets a taste for man flesh it will happily hunt ships that anchor near by.

Combat

Giant octopi attack either from the water or carefully clamber up the side of the ship to pluck a target from the rigging. In either case their goal is to take a single target into the water so that they can eat it at their leisure. If attacked they jet down into the darkness far away from anything that might hurt them.

An opponent can attack a giant octopus's tentacles with a sunder attack. These tentacles have 10 hit points each. If the octopus is grappling a target and the grappling tentacle is attacked it uses another tentacle to make its attack of opportunity. Severing one of the creature's tentacles deals 5 points of damage to the creature. It withdraws from combat if it loses more than two tentacles. A severed tentacle regenerates within 1d10 days.

In combat giant octopi may use any of the following special abilities:

Constrict (Ex): The creature deals 2d8+6 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the creature must hit an opponent of any size with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Ink Cloud (Ex): A giant octopus can emit a cloud of jet-black ink 20 feet wide and 20 feet long once per minute as a free action. The cloud provides total concealment. The creature normally uses this concealment to escape from an overwhelming attacker. All vision within the cloud is obscured.

Jet (Ex): A giant octopus can jet backward once per round as a full-round action. This action carries it 200 feet in a straight line. The octopus does not provoke an attack of opportunity while jetting.

Skills: A giant octopus can change colours, giving it a +4 racial bonus to Hide skill checks. It can also squeeze and contort its body, giving it a +10 racial bonus to Escape Artist skill checks. As an aquatic creature it has a +8 racial bonus to Swim skill checks and can take 10 on a Swim skill check at any time. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

SARGASSUM

Thick, waxy weeds float on the sea's surface. They cluster around the ship, latching on to it. The once fleet hull sags in the water, dragging some unseen weight along with it...

At first glance sargassum looks like nothing more than a handful of weeds floating on the water. They cover miles of open water, or sometimes congregate into harbours or bays. In ones or twos they are relatively harmless; however they come in floats of thousands, covering miles of the ocean's surface. The area around a float has a scattering of weeds around it; the float itself is semi-solid, containing both living plants and the rotted remains of millions of dead ones. Most floats have an 'edge' approximately five miles deep, and a centre mass of equal size.

A sailor may make a Knowledge (nature) skill check (DC 15) to recognise sargassum for what it is. If they fail, then they do not recognise the plant, even if they make the skill checks to spot it.

Sailors may spot the edge of the float with a Spot skill check (DC 15). A ship on the edges of a float may attempt to get around it using a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 20). If the boat does not stop the telltale signs (e.g. floating individual sargassum, an unusual number of birds) then they continue into the mass.

Once into the edge, the crew may make a Spot skill check (DC 5) to notice the thick concentration of weeds surrounding the ship. At this stage a sailed vessel has no way to escape the sargassum float without going through it; a rowed vessel can try to move clear by having the captain make a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 25). In either case the ship is slowed by half.

Eventually the ship will reach the centre mass, a sticky mass of fresh plants and rotted vegetable matter. The stink of this mass makes it recognisable at a half-mile range. Once grounded in the mass the crew will have to hack the ship free. Each five-foot section of sargassum has hardness 0 and 10 hit points. Pushing the boat free will require at least one day of dedicated labour for a small ship hull, two days for a medium one and three for a large.

SEA SNAKE

You hear a sharp hiss coming from behind the sacks of grain; a blur of brightly coloured motion darts towards you...

A sea snake uses the same statistics and information as a medium

viper (*Conan the Roleplaying Game*, pg. 310), but it increases its swim speed to 30 feet.

Sea snakes are usually brightly coloured, banded and very aggressive. They live near the shore in warm waters, usually along the Black Coast, but there are reports of these poisonous creatures as far west as Vendhya.

Sailors regard sea snakes as omens of bad times ahead. In part this is because of their deadly poisons and vicious tempers. However, they usually come aboard in search of rats and other prey animals; these prey animals may be almost impossible for the ship's crew to find, but the snakes can smell them. Such creatures readily consume the ship's supplies, leaving the crew without even the horrid substances they usually must consume for sustenance.

SHARK

Large Animal (aquatic)

Hit Dice: 7d8+7 (38 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Reflex)

Speed: Swim 60 ft. (12 squares)

DV: 16 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural, +1 Dodge)

DR: 2

Base Attack/Grapple: +5/+12

Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d8+4)

Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d8+4)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attack: Constrict 2d8+4, improved grab, sneak attack +2d6

Special Qualities: Blindsight, blood frenzy, keen scent

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Escape Artist +12, Hide +12, Listen +4, Spot +6, Swim +13

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Great Fortitude

Climate/Terrain: Aquatic

Organisation: Solitary, school (2 – 5), or pack (6 – 11)

Advancement: 8-12 HD (Large)

Triangular fins circle you at a distance. Then you feel a sharp tug on your leg...

The mighty pirates of the Hyborian Age ignore smaller sharks except when they need a good-sized fish for the fire. The larger 'devil fish' that circle pirate ships as they close on their prey are another matter all together. These long, slender creatures move with frightening speed to snap up any one or any thing that enters the water.

Sharks can be found as far north as Zingara, but generally prefer warmer waters. They lurk on the coast of Khitai as well, and hunt all of the shores between.

Sailors claim that a shark in the water surely signals either a battle or an execution. They are not far wrong; sharks long ago learned to lurk near where pirate vessels encounter merchants. In any sea battle there is a 50% chance that sharks will cluster between the two ships snapping up fresh meat.

Combat

Sharks attack targets by sneaking under them, then surging up. When they hunt in packs, two or three obviously circling while the rest lurk below, waiting for an opportunity to strike.

They have the following abilities:

Blindsight (Ex): A shark can locate creatures underwater within a 90 feet radius regardless of lighting conditions.

Blood Frenzy (Ex): When a creature is injured within 90 feet of the shark it enters a blood frenzy. It gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls. It also gains a -2 penalty to its DV. The frenzy lasts for one minute.

Constrict (Ex): The creature deals 2d8+4 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the creature must hit an opponent of any size with a bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check it establishes a hold and can constrict. Sharks usually hold on for one round then release the grapple to make another attack run.

Keen Scent (Ex): A shark can notice creatures by scent within a 180 feet radius and can smell blood in the water up to a mile away.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Any time the shark's target would be denied his dodge or parry bonus to Defence Value (whether the target actually has a dodge/parry bonus or not) or when the shark flanks the target, the shark's bite attack deals +2d6 bonus damage.

Skills: A shark has a +8 racial bonus to any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming provided it swims in a straight line.

WHALE

Huge Animal

Hit Dice: 9d8+48 (88 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflex)

Speed: Swim 50 ft. (10 squares)

DV: 16 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural)

DR: 4

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+22

Attack: Bite +12 melee (2d6+12)

Full Attack: Bite +12 melee (2d6+12)

Space/Reach: 15 ft. /10 ft.

Special Attack: -

Special Qualities: Charging attack, blindsight 120 ft., hold breath, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +5

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 15, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6

Skills: Listen +14*, Spot +14*, Swim +16

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Run, Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Aquatic

Organisation: Solitary, pair, or pod (6 - 11)

Advancement: 10 - 15 HD (Large), 16 - 30 HD (Huge)

A great bulk flashes though just under the water. The ship shivers as something huge strikes it with a blow mightier than a giant's...

The whales described above are relatively small versions of predatory whales, no more than 30 feet long. They have grey, grey blue or spotted black and white skin, great grasping jaws and wise eyes that speak of ageless wisdom. These whales dance and play in all of the waters of the world but only come close to shore in the far north.

Sailors believe that whales of all types bring good fortune. They say that a pod of whales near by means good weather, good fishing and safe sailing for the next few days. These legends are mostly true; whales play during times of plenty, so a ship seeing whales at all is undoubtedly near a fine haul of fish.

Blindsight (Ex): Whales 'see' by emitting high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most other creatures, allowing them to locate objects and creatures within 120 feet. Its normal vision is approximately as good as a humans.

Charging Strike (Ex): If a whale executes a charge attack it strikes with its head, dealing 3d12 blunt damage in addition to its normal bite damage. It cannot effectively use charging strike on a target smaller than itself.

Hold Breath (Ex): A whale can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to eight times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skills: A whale has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. It has a +4 racial bonus to Spot and Listen checks that is negated if it cannot use its blindsight.

CREATURES FROM THE PAST

The necromantic arts can raise creatures from the distant past into a frightful mockery of life. These creatures act and die like living creatures, but cannot reproduce. When destroyed these creatures break down into a mass of corruption not dissimilar to that of a rotted corpse.

The spells sustaining these creatures prevent them from ageing. They may be killed by violence or poison, but not by the slow decay of time.

AQUATIC DRAGON

Huge Animal

Hit Dice: 10d8+66 (111 hp)

Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +7 Reflex)

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 50 ft.

DV: 14 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 Dodge)

DR: 7

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+23

Attack: Bite +13 melee (2d8+12)

Full Attack: Bite +13 melee (2d8+12)

Space/Reach: 15 ft. /10 ft.

Special Attacks: –

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +4

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 9

Skills: Hide +4*, Listen +4, Spot +9, Swim +16

Feats: Dodge, Great Fortitude, Toughness (2)

Climate/Terrain: Aquatic

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: 11-22 HD (Huge)

In a flash a long neck comes snaking over the ship's rail. The creature's narrow, needle toothed muzzle shears off a sailor's leg then pulls back down below. You can hear thrashing from the water below...

These revenants from an ancient age have ovoid bodies, long flippers in place of legs, and immensely long,

thin tails and necks. Their narrow heads have long, needle-toothed muzzles well designed for snatching fish out of the water. They come in many different colours, ranging from iridescent blue to muted greens. When they swam the seas as natural creatures they were not overly aggressive; the necromancy that called them from dust maddens them, turning them into deadly predators.

Each aquatic dragon has a story behind it; a reason that it exists in its particular place and no other. Sorcerers call most forth to protect a particular place or to destroy an enemy. The sorcerer's magic sustains them long after he has vanished, leaving them purposeless and alone. Under most circumstances this means that the creature lashes out at whatever it encounters; a few retain some semblance of purpose and rove around their home waters.

Sailors regard encounters with aquatic dragons as omens of terrible things to come. Not only do the creatures delight in killing men, there is also almost always something dark and forgotten near them.

Combat

Aquatic dragons are aggressive and dangerous, striking hard then vanishing back into the water. It will reach aboard a ship to snatch an unwary sailor or ambush and kill swimmers.

Skills: * An aquatic dragon has a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks in water.



GHOST WHALE

Gargantuan Animal

Hit Dice: 12d8+8 (141 hp)

Initiative: +9 (+1 Dex, +8 Reflex)

Speed: Swim 40 ft. (8 squares)

DV: 16 (-4 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural)

DR: 8

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+33

Attack: Bite +17 melee (4d6 +12)

Full Attack: Bite +17 melee and tail slap +12 melee (1d8+6)

Space/Reach: 20 ft. /15 ft.

Special Attack: Charging attack

Special Qualities: Blindsight 120 ft., hold breath, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +6

Abilities: Str 35, Dex 13, Con 24, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 6

Skills: Listen +15*, Spot +14*, Swim +20

Feats: Alertness, Diehard, Endurance, Improved natural attack (bite), Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Aquatic

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: 13 – 18 HD (Gargantuan); 19 – 36 HD (Colossal)

The white hide of the creature catches the moonlight as it submerges. A moment later the ship tips to one side, a massive shudder racing through it. You hear the sound of timbers breaking below decks...

These great white whales once roamed the deepest seas, preying on giant octopi and the great kraken. They grew to be over 60 feet in length. They were wise beyond their means, capable of deep thought and wisdom unknown to the men of their era. Unfortunately, those brought back through necromantic means go mad, turning their intelligence to the destruction of all life.

Ghost whales may be found anywhere in the world, although they are far too large to come close to shore. Like all creatures brought back through necromancy they once served a sorcerer; unlike most such creatures though their intelligence allowed them to slip the bonds of control long ago. They now rove the seas, searching for and destroying anything that resembles the hated creatures that inflicted on them their current state.

Most sailors panic when they see a ghost whale resting on the water. They regard the creatures as omens of death, pain and imminent destruction. All of these are absolutely true; the ghost whale will stop at nothing to destroy living creatures.



Combat

Ghost whales are quite intelligent. If they spot a ship they will sink beneath the waves and ram it repeatedly, until they break it into splinters, then pick off the sailors one by one. If chased they will swim for long distances, dragging the target further and further from the shore and help. Then they submerge, losing the opponent in the uncharted vastness of the sea.

In combat ghost whales may use any of the following abilities:

Blindsight (Ex): Ghost whales 'see' by emitting high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most other creatures, allowing them to locate objects and creatures within 120 feet. Its normal vision is approximately as good as a humans.

Charging Strike (Ex): If a ghost whale executes a charge attack it strikes with its head, dealing 5d12 blunt damage in addition to its normal bite damage. It cannot effectively use charging strike on a target smaller than itself.

Hold Breath (Ex): A ghost whale can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to ten times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Skills: A ghost whale has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. It has a +4 racial bonus to Spot and Listen checks that is negated if it cannot use its blindsight.

GREAT SHARK

Huge Animal (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 18d8+66 (147 hp)

Initiative: +13 (+2 Dex, +11 Reflex)

Speed: Swim 60 ft. (12 squares)

DV: 17 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural)

DR: 6

Base Attack/Grapple: +13/+27

Attack: Bite +18 melee (2d8+9)

Full Attack: Bite +18 melee (2d8+9)

Space/Reach: 15 ft. /10ft.

Special Attacks: Constrict 2d8+9, improved grab, sneak attack +2d8, swallow whole

Special Qualities: Blindsight, blood frenzy, keen scent

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +13, Will +12

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Escape Artist +12, Hide +12, Listen +4, Spot +6, Swim +13

Feats: Improved Natural Attack (bite), Endurance, Run, Toughness (2), Weapon Focus (bite)

Climate/Terrain: Aquatic

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: 19 – 32 HD (Huge), 32+ HD (Gargantuan)

A telltale ripple alerts you moments before a giant creature, streamlined like a shark but with a five-foot wide mouth, leaps the waves towards you...

Sorcerers summon these terrors from a forgotten age using a single great, black tooth as wide across as a man's hand. Three rows of these teeth cover the top and bottom of the awakened creature's jaw, which stretches nearly five feet in width. They may be up to 30 feet in length and weigh up to 20,000 lb. The summoning process drove these vicious

predators mad, but otherwise does not alter their behaviour in the slightest.

Like other necromantic creatures, great sharks appear everywhere in the world. They tend to remain close to their original summoning places, although a few escape the chains of compulsion to embark on a wave of destruction though out the wide seas. Once unleashed nothing can stop them save death.

Sailors believe that when a great shark enters a harbour that it will become a polluted pit of death within a month. Whether this is true or not has never been determined; no one stays close enough to such creatures to find out.

Combat

Great sharks attack targets straight on, attempting to swallow them whole. If they miss or the target avoids being swallowed they shake it once, then submerge to make another attack run. They kill and consume anything they encounter regardless of its relative size. Some even worry away at sailing ships, using their great jaws to tear holes in their hulls.

They have the following abilities:



Blindsense (Ex): A great shark can locate creatures underwater within a 90 feet radius regardless of lighting conditions.

Blood Frenzy (Ex): When a creature is injured within 90 feet of the shark the shark enters the blood frenzy. It gains a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls. It also suffers from a -2 penalty to its DV. The frenzy lasts for one minute.

Constrict (Ex): The creature deals 2d8+9 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the creature must hit an opponent of any size with a bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check it establishes a hold and can constrict. Great sharks usually hold on for one round then release the grapple to make another attack run.

Keen Scent (Ex): A great shark can notice creatures by scent within a 180 feet radius and can smell blood in the water up to a mile away.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Any time the great shark's target would be denied his dodge or parry bonus to Defence Value (whether the target actually has a dodge/parry bonus or not), or when the shark flanks the target, the shark's bite attack deals +2d8 bonus damage.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A great shark can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to one size smaller by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d6+6 points of bludgeoning damage plus 1d4 points of acid damage per round from the creature's digestive juices. A swallowed creature can cut its way out using a light slashing weapon by dealing 25 points of damage to the shark (DV 13). Once the creature exits muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out.

A Huge great shark's gullet can hold 2 Large, 8 Medium or Small, 32 Tiny, 128 Diminutive, or 512 Fine or smaller opponents.

Skills: A shark has a +8 racial bonus to any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming provided it swims in a straight line.

KRAKEN

Huge Animal (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 12d8+18 (44)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflex)

Speed: Swim 80 ft. (16 squares)

DV: 17 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +6 natural)

DR: 4

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+29

Attack: Tentacle +15 melee (1d6+8)

Full Attack: 10 tentacles +15 melee (1d6+8) and bite +10 melee (2d8+4)

Space/Reach: 15 ft. /15 ft. (30 ft. with tentacle)

Special Attacks: Improved grab, constrict 1d6+8

Special Qualities: Ink cloud, jet, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +5

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Listen +10, Spot +11, Swim +16

Feats: Alertness, Diehard, Endurance, Toughness (2)

Climate/Terrain: Aquatic

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: 13-24 (Huge), 25+ HD (Gargantuan)

The lookout screams as a massive red tentacle wraps around his waist, hoisting him high into the air before dragging him under the waves...

These giant squid once grew to be over 40 feet long. Once shy and reclusive, the necromantic mandates embedded in the spells keeping them alive drive these creatures to be both aggressive and cunning in battle. Their dinner plate sized golden eyes stare out with inhuman intelligence, ablaze with malign fury that owes itself to no mortal origin.

In the lore of the sea, a kraken sighting means that the ship will soon stumble into calm seas. Of course this may just be wishful thinking; the same lore says that kraken range over wide areas, and so calm seas will almost ensure that the creature passes far from the ship.

Combat

Kraken rarely expose themselves to extended attack. They surface next to a ship, snatch a few sailors, then vanish under the waves. If they wish to destroy a ship then they wait beneath it, attaching their massive tentacles to the hull and slowly pulling it apart.

An opponent can attack a kraken's tentacles with a sunder attack. These tentacles have 10 hit points each. If the kraken grapples a target and the grappling tentacle is attacked it uses another tentacle to make its attack of opportunity.



Severing one of the creature's tentacles deals 5 points of damage to the creature. It withdraws from combat if it loses more than two tentacles. A severed tentacle regenerates within 1d10 days.

In combat kraken may use any of the following special abilities:

Constrict (Ex): The creature deals 1d6+6 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the creature must hit an opponent of any size with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Ink Cloud (Ex): A kraken can emit a cloud of jet-black ink 20 feet wide and 20 feet long once per minute as a free action. The cloud provides total concealment. The creature normally uses this concealment to escape from an overwhelming attacker. All vision within the cloud is obscured.

Jet (Ex): Kraken can jet backward once per round as a full-round action. This action carries it 200 feet in a straight line. The kraken does not provoke an attack of opportunity while jetting.

Skills: As an aquatic creature the kraken has a +8 racial bonus to Swim skill checks and can take 10 on a Swim skill check at any time. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

DEMONS OF THE DARK WATERS

Hyborian demons come from the outermost darkness, taking on a form of mortal flesh to conceal their dark spirits. They create their forms by pulling bits and pieces of the past out of the mind of the summoning sorcerer. Thus, even though the spirit inhabiting the body may well have walked the world a thousand times its seems unique every time.

Sorcerers who study the lore of the sea and wish to share its secrets, might summon one or more of the demons described below, though in doing so they risk their very souls. In return they learn of things unimaginable in this age, of secrets long since hidden on the shadowed sea floor.

These creatures generate Terror like any other supernatural creature.

BLACK ONES

Large Outsider (native)

Hit Dice: 10d8+50 (95)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflex)

Speed: 25 ft. (5 squares)

DV: 19 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural)

DR: 7

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+20

Magic Attack: +8

Attack: Claw +15 melee 1d8+6

Full Attack: 2 claws +15 melee 1d8+6 and 1 bite +10 melee (1d4+3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /10 ft.

Special Attack: Whistle

Special Qualities: –

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +7

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16

Skills: Balance +15, Climb +19, Bluff +16, Jump +19, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Hide +15, Intimidate +16, Move Silently +15, Perform (ritual) +16, Search +15

Feats: Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Steely Gaze

Climate/Terrain: Isle of the Black Ones

Organisation: Solitary, group (6 – 10), or the entire group of 50

Advancement: –

No one knows the origin of the Black Ones, save perhaps those mad scholars who drink deep of the wisdom contained in the Scrolls of Skelos. Whatever it is, they

The superb symmetry of body and limbs was more impressive at close range. Under the ebon skin long, rounded muscles rippled, and Conan did not doubt that the monster could rend an ordinary man limb from limb. The nails of the fingers provided further weapons, for they were grown like the talons of a wild beast. The face was a carved ebony mask. The eyes were tawny, a vibrant gold that glowed and glittered. But the face was inhuman: each line, each feature stamped with evil - evil transcending the mere evil of humanity. The thing was not a human - it could not be: it was a growth of Life from the pits of blasphemous creation - a perversion of evolutionary developments.

R. E. Howard, *The Pool of the Black One*

seem to inhabit a single island far out in the Western Ocean. What purpose it serves, if any, cannot be guessed. Similarly their dark desire to take a target to their great green pool, hold it under the oily surface, and transform it into a palm-sized statue devoid of live can only be understood by minds that move in the same, inhuman ways as their own.

These creatures appear to have existed for centuries, if not millennia, on the Isle. They constructed an elaborate city at one point, though the ravages of time transformed it into a ruin long ago. Of the handful left, most refuse to ever speak to a mortal; indeed they fight in utter silence, not even grunting or gasping as they slay.

Their leader has the powers listed above, but also casts spells as a 6th level scholar. He wears a jewelled headband, the only clothing seen on any of these creatures. The Games Master should assign him whatever spells will best bedevil the characters, as his knowledge of sorcery extends back centuries.

There may be a great treasure of gold and silver located on the island. However, only the mightiest could hope to possibly deal with these creatures, their diabolic intelligence and the sorcery of their leader.

Combat

The Black Ones have no respect at all for humans. They regard humans as animals; they do, however, recognise an armed human as a potentially threat. As such, they will typically wait until hungry crews drug themselves on the fruit of their island (Fortitude save DC 15 or fall into slumber for 1d4 hours) before gathering the main bulk for transformation into statues. Stragglers or those who go off alone will be quickly attacked by at least one of these creatures, often with a small group waiting near by in case the hunter needs assistance.

When attacking in melee combat the Black One may choose to either rend with his claws (inflicting slashing damage) or close his hand into a great fist (inflicting blunt damage).

In addition, all Black Ones have the following special ability:

Whistle (Su): Once per day the creature uses his thin black flute to target a creature within evil eye range. On the first round he casts *entrance* on the target; on the second round he casts *domination*. These abilities function just like the spells of the same name.



DEMON OF THE DEEP

Gargantuan Outsider (Aquatic, demon)

Hit Dice: 20d8+80 (170 hp)

Initiative: +17 (+5 Dex, +12 Reflex)

Speed: Swim 100 ft.

DV: 23 (-4 size, +5 Dex, +12 natural)

DR: 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +20/+44

Magic Attack: +11

Attack: Tentacle +32 melee (1d10+12)

Full Attack: 4 tentacles +32 melee (1d10+12)

Space/Reach: 20 ft. /20 ft. (40 ft. with tentacle)

Special Attack: Improved grab, rend 2d8+12

Special Qualities: Blindsense 240 ft.

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +17, Will +16

Abilities: Str 35, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 12

Skills: Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcane) +24, Knowledge (geography) +24, Listen +27, Perform (ritual) +24, Spot +27, Search +24, Sense Motive +27, Survival +27

Feats: Adept (sea witchery), Adept (weather witching), Combat Reflexes, Menacing Aura, Navigation, Steely Gaze, Track

Climate/Terrain: Aquatic

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: 21 – 40 HD (Gargantuan)

Faint green lights blink up at you from deep beneath the waves. The water erupts, carrying the stink of rotted seaweed and something unimaginably foul as it surges past, wrapping tentacles around the great mast. With a groan the ship lurches to one side, dragged down by demonic strength...

Sorcerers with more desire than sense call up the Demon of the Deep to teach them the sea's secrets. It is an ancient creature, with an amorphous body composed of rotted weeds and stagnant water. It can shape this water into whatever form it desires; most often it just lashes out with watery tentacles. It's six great, lamp-like green eyes

burn like cold flames, searching though the souls of those it encounters.

The creature speaks all of the tongues of men as well as Demonic, Old Stygian and Archeronian. It can converse in Water as well, although it rarely chooses to do so.

Sorcerers summon the Demon of the Deep to plumb its extensive knowledge of history and magic. It can also cast spells as a 20th level scholar, and can use any spell from the *sea witchery* or *weather witching* styles. If forced to it will teach these spells, but it regards such an imposition as an invitation to hunt down and destroy the offending sorcerer.

The demon may be summoned with a *summon demon* spell. It may also be bound in a *demonic pact*.

When not obeying the dictates of a petty sorcerer the Demon of the Deep dwells in the deepest, least accessible ruins at the bottom of the sea. There it searches for a means of returning to its home in the Outer Darkness.

Combat

The Demon of the Deep generally does not attack individual targets standing on land or on a ship. It first loops its great tentacles around the vessel, dragging it underwater and then rends it apart. The creature then loops a tentacle around a few surviving or floating targets and pulls them underwater. When those targets drown it moves on to the next, plucking people from the water like a man might pluck the legs off a fly.

It can manage up to four tentacles at a time. An opponent can attack the demon's tentacles with a sunder attack. These tentacles have 20 hit points each. If the demon grapples a target and the grappling tentacle is attacked it uses another tentacle to make its attack of opportunity. Severing one of the creature's tentacles deals no damage to the creature. A severed tentacle falls apart. The creature can manifest a new tentacle the round after one is cut off.



In combat the creature can use one of the following abilities:

Blindsense (Ex): The Demon of the Deep can locate creatures underwater within a 90 feet radius regardless of lighting conditions.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the creature must hit an opponent of any size with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check it establishes a hold and can grapple normally.

Rend (Ex): If the demon hits a single target with two tentacle attacks it automatically inflicts an additional 2d8+12 damage to that target, ignoring DR from armour or helmets. If it hits a target with three tentacles increase this damage to 3d8+12. If it hits with all four tentacle attacks the rend does 4d8+12 damage.



vast, rising up out of the unknown depths...

Sea fire is an odd demon, having neither body nor truly form. It cannot even be seen, except in the waves at night when it plays with its target. It cannot cause physical harm but can easily lead a ship to death through subtle manipulation.

During the day sea fire lies quiet, resting away from the brighter light of the sun. At night it becomes active, attempting to call forth creatures to destroy its target and confusing the navigator/sailors to make them run aground.

Sea fire understands Demonic but does not speak. It can be summoned using the *summon demon* spell.

Although normal sea fire does exist, sailors regard all such effects with great dread. There is no way for a normal person to tell the difference between true sea fire and the demonic variety. Sailors who catch sight of it have been known to cower below decks until it finally goes away.

SEA FIRE

Medium Outsider (demon)

Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+5 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Speed: Fly 20 ft. (perfect, 4 squares)

DV: 19 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural, +1 Dodge)

DR: –

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/–

Magic Attack: +7

Attack: –

Full Attack: –

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /5ft.

Special Attack: Confuse

Special Qualities: Immunities, manifest, summon monsters

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +3

Abilities: Str –, Dex 20, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 20

Skills: Intimidate +13, Profession (sailor) +5

Feats: Dodge, Skill Focus (Intimidate)

Climate/Terrain: Aquatic

Organisation: Solitary

Advancement: 3 – 6 HD (Large)

Pale light dances around the prow as it cuts through the waves. The light illuminates the swimming sharks and something

Combat

Sea fire does not engage in combat. If attacked in a meaningful way (with silver or engaged in a war of souls) it will immediately attempt to return to the Outer Dark that spawned it.

If not engaged in combat the creature will try to use its abilities to plague the ship's crew.

Confuse (Su): Once per round the sea fire may target one humanoid within 60 feet. That target must make a Will save (DC equal to the creature's modified magic attack roll). If the target succeeds it is immune to the sea fire's confuse effect for the next week. If it fails then it gains a –4 competence penalty to all Profession skill checks for the next seven days.

Immunities (Su): Sea fire is immune to all physical damage, except that dealt by objects made from silver. Silver weapons are not generally manufactured during the Hyborian Age,

although improvised weapons made from silver benches, candlesticks, mugs and so on could be used.

Manifest (Su): As a standard action the sea fire can either leave Earth and return to its home place, or appear on Earth. In either case it manifests in the target destination at the end of its action.

Summon Monsters (Su): Once per day the sea fire may attempt to call up to 30 HD of animals to its location. This ability has a 30% chance of success. The summoned creatures take 1d4 hours to gather and are hostile when they arrive.

SIREN

Medium Outsider (demon)

Hit Dice: 10d8+10 (52 hp)

Initiative: +11 (+4 Dex, +7 Reflex)

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 30 ft.

DV: 19 (+4 Dex, +4 natural, +1 Dodge)

DR: 6

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+12

Magic Attack: +11

Attack: Slam +12 melee (1d6+2)

Full Attack: Slam +12 melee (1d6+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. /5 ft.

Special Attacks: –

Special Qualities: Body voice, manifest, waterbreathing

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +11

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 18, Cha 22

Skills: Bluff +19, Diplomacy +19, Listen +17, Knowledge (arcane) +12, Perform (dance) +19, Spot +17, Sense Motive +17

Feats: Adept (hypnotism), Dodge, Archer's Bane

Climate/Terrain: Aquatic

Organisation: Solitary or coven (2 – 16 sirens)

Advancement: 9– 18 HD (Medium)

A supple-backed woman lounges on the sea rock; spray from the waves coats her like a diaphanous gown. Her gaze promises desires you have only known in your dreams; her out stretched arms welcome you into her embrace...

These human-like female demons have light green/blue scales on their skin, slitted eyes, and webbed hands. They come forth to be the playthings of some sorcerers, as well as to protect areas and close off shipping through specific areas.



Sirens speak all human languages, as well as Demonic. Without speaking they can easily make their intentions obvious to any male, of whatever race.

All sirens know and can cast any spell from the hypnotism school. They generally use *hypnotism*, *hypnotic suggestion* and *mass hypnotic suggestion* to lure sailors from their ships; clasp them in their clammy embrace; then sink down to the shadowed sea floor to consume them. A single siren can kill off an entire pirate crew if left unchecked; leisurely gathering enough blood and souls to inflame her inhuman passions.

Sorcerers use the *summon demon* spell to summon sirens, just as they summon other creatures from beyond the stars.

Sailors regard the presence of a siren as a sure sign of death to come. They say that a siren never entered the world that did not lust for the blood of men. They speak of crews brought to a watery grave, writhing in pleasure as the breath raced from their lungs. All of these things are true, but often the siren's destruction was not originally intended for the pirates; the command that binds the siren to this world may well be centuries old, a remnant of some forgotten sorcerer's hate.

Combat

Sirens avoid direct combat unless forced into it. If faced with a target they cannot hypnotise or dominate they will vanish under the waves, never to be seen again. When cornered sirens turn to fight, slamming opponents with their frail looking hands.

In combat sirens use the following special powers:

Body Voice (Su): Any creature that can see the siren can hear the words that she whispers as she moves. This extends the siren's evil eye range to line of sight.

Manifest (Su): As a standard action the siren can either leave Earth and return to its home place or appear on Earth. In either case it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

Waterbreathing (Su): Sirens can breath water as if it were air.

Powers of the Sea

Mysteries of the Waves

IN THEIR QUEST for knowledge, some sorcerers turn to the endless reaches of the sea. Of course, once that quest is corrupted into a blind drive for power these same sorcerers continue to reach out, touching on powers far older and darker than anything dreamed of by laymen. The murky depths of the sea hide terrible things, things called up long ago that mortals were never meant to traffic with.

This section contains a number of new spells for the existing sorcery schools as well as two new schools: sea witchery and weather witching. Sea witchery deals with the magic of the sea, where weather witching touches on the infinite power of the sky. Additionally, the sea and its ancient creatures contain a variety of new alchemical tricks for a sorcerers use.

SORCERY SPELLS AND STYLES

Like all of the black arts, the magic of the sea stretches back into the mists of prehistory. None now know when the first spells blighted the waters; now scholars only know that such things are possible. What one sorcerer can do, another must do better to prove his own worth.

CURSES

Curses fuelled by the sea's wrath have much the same effect as those inflicted by fortune or the foul beasts from beyond human knowledge. However, their effects are perhaps even more terrible; fortune's curses have subtle effects while the sea's drain the body of its vital life essence, leaving it a broken and tormented husk begging for death before the end finally comes.

Curse of Broken Blood

PP Cost: 4

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: One creature

Duration: Six hours/scholar level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +3 or higher, *lesser ill-fortune*

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

With a few whispered words the sorcerer places a terrible curse upon the victim; he gains no sustenance at all from water, wine or any other liquid. After a number of hours equal to 24 plus the character's Constitution score he must make a Constitution check every hour (DC 10, +1 for every previous check) or take 1d6 points of non-lethal damage. Characters that take damage from this curse are automatically *staggered* and cannot remove the effect until they receive a sustaining drink.

Wind's Hated Son

PP Cost: 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 5 minutes

Range: Magic Link

Target: One target

Duration: One month

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +3 or higher, *lesser ill-fortune*

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

This curse causes all wind to die around the target character. No wind blows within a one mile radius, excepting those winds caused by magical effects or supernatural creatures. Any ship the target is on is automatically bestilled and must be rowed to whatever destination it wishes to reach. Many sailors will kill a person with this curse, believing that it is a precursor to even more dangerous effects.

NATURE MAGIC

The powers of the beasts and plants of the sea can move mountains and alter the face of the Earth. Command of such power may seem petty to some sorcerers,

Sorcery Style	Spells	Prerequisites
Curses	Curse of Broken Blood	Magic attack bonus +3 or higher, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i>
	Wind's Hated Son	Magic attack bonus +3 or higher, <i>lesser ill-fortune</i>
Nature Magic	Choke Harbour	Knowledge (nature) 7 ranks, <i>summon beast</i>
	Child of the Waves	Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, <i>summon beast</i>
	Wrath of the Deep	Knowledge (nature) 10 ranks, <i>greater summon beast, summon beast</i>
Necromancy	Derketa's Dhow	Magic attack bonus +6, Ritual Sacrifice, <i>raise corpse</i>
	Drum of the Dead	Magic attack bonus +3, Ritual Sacrifice, <i>raise corpse</i>
Sea Witchery	Blood and Water	Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, <i>sense currents</i>
	Grip of the Deep	Knowledge (arcana) 7 ranks, <i>sense currents</i>
	Jaws of Atlantis	Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks, <i>grip of the deep, sense currents</i>
	Rolling Waves	Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks, <i>sense currents</i>
	Sense Currents (basic sea witchery)	Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks
	Set's Blessing	Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, Tortured Sacrifice, Ritual Sacrifice, <i>sense currents</i>
	Storm of Waves	Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks, <i>rolling waves, sense currents</i>
Weather Witching	Tentacles of the Deep	Knowledge (arcana) 8, <i>sense currents</i>
	Bottle Storms	Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, <i>knot wind</i>
	Bottle Thunder	Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, <i>knot wind</i>
	Call the Northern Wind	Knowledge (nature) 6 ranks, <i>knot wind</i>
	Call the Southern Wind	Knowledge (nature) 6 ranks, <i>knot wind</i>
	Knot Wind (basic weather witching)	Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks
	Wind's Wrath	Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, <i>knot wind</i>

focused as they are on the outer darkness and the perversity of their own souls, but for many it represents the absolute pinnacle of their desire to master the world.

Choke Harbour

PP Cost: 16 PP plus 8 PP per day

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: 10 miles

Area: One mile/scholar level radius

Duration: One day, continuous

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 7 ranks, *summon beast*

Magic Attack Roll: None

By invoking the powers of the sea the sorcerer calls up a vast mass of quickly growing kelp. The entire area under effect becomes choked with algae, kelp and strange, twisted plants from the depths of the sea. This effect radiates outward from a point selected by the caster and affects the coast as well as all coastal features including swamps and local rivers.

The waters become impassable to ships with medium or large hulls. Even small-hulled

ships reduce their speed by half. Furthermore the waters, regardless of their original abundance, become barren of fish or other wildlife. Settlements that rely on the local fishing for a significant portion of their food will begin to starve in 2d4 days.

Once cast, the sorcerer may maintain the spell by spending 10 minutes repeating the original incantations. He must do this at the same place, and using the same focus, that he originally cast the spell from. If he fails to do so the magic ends.

When the magic ends the choking mass vanishes within 1d4 hours and fish return to the area in 1d6 days.

Focus: A large altar made of fragments of driftwood and weed. The altar is hollow and contains water from the deepest depths of the sea and sargassum.

Child of the Waves

PP Cost: 2 points/hour

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: 10 miles/scholar level

Target: One ship whose name and description is known to you

Duration: Concentration
Saving Throw: None
Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, *summon beast*
Magic Attack Roll: None

Child of the waves calls forth a dolphin or whale from the surrounding seas and binds it to your will. This creature takes an image of a ship from your mind, and then uses its knowledge of the sea to find your target. It tries to lead you to it, swimming in a relatively straight line.

You must concentrate to maintain your control over the sea creature. Each hour that you concentrate you must invest 2 PP to maintain the spell.

Focus: A small carving of a dolphin.

Wrath of the Deep

PP Cost: 8+ points
Components: V, S, F, XP
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: One mile/scholar level
Target: One animal that can be found in the local environment
Duration: One minute/scholar level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 10 ranks, *greater summon beast*, *summon beast*
Magic Attack Roll: None



This spell acts as the *summon beast* spell, but can summon Huge or larger aquatic creatures. Huge creatures cost 8PP, Gargantuan cost 16 PP and Colossal creatures cost 32 PP.

Focus: A small carving of the animal you wish to summon. This carving can be reused.

Experience Point Cost: 200 XP for Huge creatures, 400 XP for Gargantuan creatures and 800 XP for Colossal creatures.

NECROMANCY

Although most of the black art of necromancy focuses on the easily accessible dead a few sorcerers use their power to call beings out of their watery graves. These hateful spells can drag an entire ship from the deep for whatever frightful purpose the sorcerer's dark heart desires.

Derketa's Dhow

PP Cost: 15 plus 5 points per hour
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 hour
Range: 100 miles
Target: One sunken ship
Duration: Concentration
Saving Throw: None
Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +6, Ritual Sacrifice, *raise corpse*
Magic Attack Roll: None

This horrific spell wrenches a sunken boat from its watery grave, drags echoes of the sailors' spirits from whatever awaited them beyond the veil, and then forces them to crew the ship until the sorcerer chooses to release them.

Regardless of the ship's original crew or cargo it is populated by 40 of the risen dead. It moves on the winds of the sorcerer's will, travelling at 10 knots across any body of water regardless of the weather or water conditions. The ship does not take damage from natural weapons, but the crew can be slain. If the sorcerer is onboard the ship when he ceases concentration or can no longer pay the power point cost he is immediately attacked by the crew. The ship has 10 movement points for determining closing.

Once the spell ends the *Derketa's Dhow* sinks back beneath the waves, never to be seen or heard from again.

Material Component: A fragment from a ship lost at sea.

Drums of the Dead**PP Cost:** 8**Components:** V, S, F**Casting Time:** 1 hour**Range:** One target**Target:** One sunken ship**Duration:** One day per scholar level**Saving Throw:** Will negates**Prerequisites:** Magic attack bonus +3, Ritual Sacrifice, *raise corpse***Magic Attack Roll:** Sets the DC of the Will save

This spell targets a victim who must make a Will save while being ritually sacrificed by the sorcerer. If the target fails the save, his tortured death not only provides power but also becomes a part of the larger spell being cast. He picks up a properly prepared ox-hide drum and beats it until his body finally fails. His spirit continues to sound the drum until the duration elapses or the spell is somehow lifted.

The drum increases the overland movement speed of any ship with oars by +2 and gives the ship +2 movement points during a closing turn.

Focus: An elaborately made ox-hide drum costing no less than 50 gl.

SEA WITCHERY

The restless churning of the sea represents a dark mystery that many sorcerers cannot resist. To become master of that which cannot be mastered sorcerers will risk any degree of corruption; the sea is both a symbol of that mastery and the ultimate target. Whole nations depend upon it for their livelihood; whole stretches of human history are defined by its boundaries; a sorcerer who masters those boundaries could be said to have mastered life itself.

Blood and Water**PP Cost:** 4 power points**Components:** V, S**Casting Time:** 1 round**Range:** Touch**Target:** One pint of liquid**Duration:** One minute**Saving Throw:** Fortitude resists**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, *sense currents***Magic Attack Roll:** Sets the DC of the Fortitude save

With a touch and a muttered word the sorcerer transforms a goblet of ordinary liquid into deadly poison. This poison does 1d6 Constitution primary damage and 2d6 Constitution secondary damage one minute later to the individual who ingests it.

Material Component: A fine black powder ground from the burned bones of a poison victim.

Grip of the Deep**PP Cost:** 8 PP**Components:** V, S, F**Casting Time:** 1 round**Range:** Long (400 ft. + 40 ft. per scholar level)**Target:** One ship/5 scholar levels**Duration:** One minute/level**Saving Throw:** Will negates**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (arcana) 7 ranks, *sense currents***Magic Attack Roll:** Sets the DC of the Will save

With a broad gesture of his hand the sorcerer causes one or more fleeing ships to stop dead in the water. For the duration of this spell the target ships freeze in place, unable to move regardless of the efforts of wind or oar. The targets have 0 movement points and the captains cannot make Profession (sailor) skill checks to avoid

closing. After the duration elapses the ships begin moving as normal.

The captain of a targeted ship may make a Will save to resist the effect. If the ship is moving at more than four knots it takes 2d10 structural damage and everyone on board must make a Reflex save (DC 14) or be thrown to the deck, becoming prone and taking 1d4 non-lethal bludgeoning damage.

All of the target ships must be within range, but they do not have to be close to one another.

Focus: A stone from the bottom of a still harbour. The stone may be reused.

Jaws of Atlantis

PP Cost: 15

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft. per scholar level)

Target: One ship

Duration: One round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks, *grip of the deep*, *sense currents*

Magic Attack Roll: Set the DC of the Will save

By clenching his hand into a claw and invoking the proper mystical phrases the sorcerer causes the water under a target ship to become like a steel trap. The target ship suddenly stops dead in the water, regardless of its original speed. The ship takes 3d10 structural damage per round as the water outside tries to crush it into splinters. It has effectively 0 movement points and the captain cannot make Profession (sailor) skill checks to avoid closing. After the duration elapses the ships begins moving as normal.

The captain of the targeted ship may make a Will save to resist the effect. If the ship is moving at more than four knots it takes 2d10 structural damage and everyone on board must make a Reflex save (DC 14) or be thrown to the deck, becoming prone and taking 1d4 non-lethal bludgeoning damage.

Focus: A stone from the bottom of a still sea. The stone may be reused.

Rolling Waves

PP Cost: 4 points per ship

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft. per scholar level)

Target: One ship/ 5 scholar levels

Duration: One minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana), *sense currents*

Magic Attack Roll: None

This spell calls up a vast arcane tide, deep but very narrowly focused. It rises up under an individual ship (one per 5 levels of the scholar class the caster has) and allows that ship to travel inland as if it were on the sea. This spell lasts for one minute per scholar level, and so is primarily used for sudden attacks or to quickly reach a specific point close to water.

The spell does not do appreciable damage to the environment, although the water called up leaves a strong stench of decaying fish when it recedes.

Sense Currents (Basic Sea Witchery)

PP Cost: 1 PP

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: 10 miles/scholar level radius

Target: Self

Duration: Instant

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks

Magic Attack Roll: None

When you cast this spell you gain a clear picture of the water's movement within range of the spell. If you wish you may use this knowledge to assist a ship's captain, increasing the ship's base speed by +1 knot for the rest of the day.

Set's Blessings

PP Cost: 18 points plus 6 points per hour

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 10 minutes

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

Target: One ship

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice, *sense currents*

Magic Attack Roll: None

This horrific spell is well known in the unhallowed halls of Set's Temple, but rarely used in public. When preparing the spell the sorcerer must carefully torture a sacrifice, then lash him

to the prow of the ship to be blessed. After speaking the dreaded words, the ship is lifted up by a blood-red wave and carried forward at enormous speed. As long as the sorcerer can maintain his chant and the power expenditure required the ship gains enhanced movement and manoeuvrability.

A ship affected by *Set's blessing* moves at 12 knots per hour, regardless of sea or weather conditions. It also leaves a trail of blood that stains the sea's surface for at least 24 hours after the ship passes. Unlike a normal ship it can change facing without moving and gains a +4 bonus to any boarding manoeuvre.

The ship has 12 movement points.

Focus: The iron nails used to attach the sacrifice to the prow must be blessed and properly enchanted in the temple of Set. They may be reused.

Storm of Waves

PP Cost: 20 PP

Components: V, S, XP

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: One mile/scholar level

Target: 100 yards of beach/2 scholar levels

Duration: Instant

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks, *rolling waves*, *sense current*

Magic Attack Roll: None

After a lengthy ritual you cause the sea to roll in, inflicting 8d10 structural damage on every building within range. Any cargo stored within the area is also instantly destroyed.

Experience Point Cost: 100 XP

Tentacles of the Deep

PP Cost: 4 PP

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft. per scholar level)

Target: One target per round

Duration: One round/scholar level

Saving Throw: Reflex negates

Prerequisites: Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, *sense currents*

Magic Attack Roll: Once per attack, sets the DC of the Reflex save

This mighty spell causes the water around the

target vessel to roil and bubble. Each round, the sorcerer may target one person on the vessel. The ocean water lashes upward at that person, attempting to grasp them and pull them under water.

The target may make a Reflex save with a DC set by the sorcerer's magical attack roll to resist. If he fails then he takes 1d6 non-lethal damage and is taken off of the ship and into the roiling water. There he must swim normally or sink into the fathomless sea.

WEATHER WITCHING

Just as the sea is one of the basic boundaries of human life, so too the weather forms a constant reminder of man's subservience to nature itself. Crops only grow where the whim of the wind allows it; cities come and go with the sudden clap of thunder and unending rain. A sorcerer who masters the weather can shape nations to his whims, destroy fleets and cause the people to bow down before him in proper reverence and awe.

Bottle Storms

PP Cost: 25

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: One mile/sorcerer level

Target: Area

Duration: Until the bottle is broken.

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, *knot wind*

Magic Attack Roll: None

After an hour-long ritual you bind the normal weather for an area into a bottle. It cannot rain again until something breaks the bottle. This causes an intense, crop-killing drought. Rivers dry up, animals die and eventually the area will transform into a desert. Sorcerers who know this spell can hold entire nations hostage to their depraved whims.

Wind does not move within the area of effect. Ships are considered bestilled and must use oars to move. Ships without oars cannot move within the area of effect unless towed.

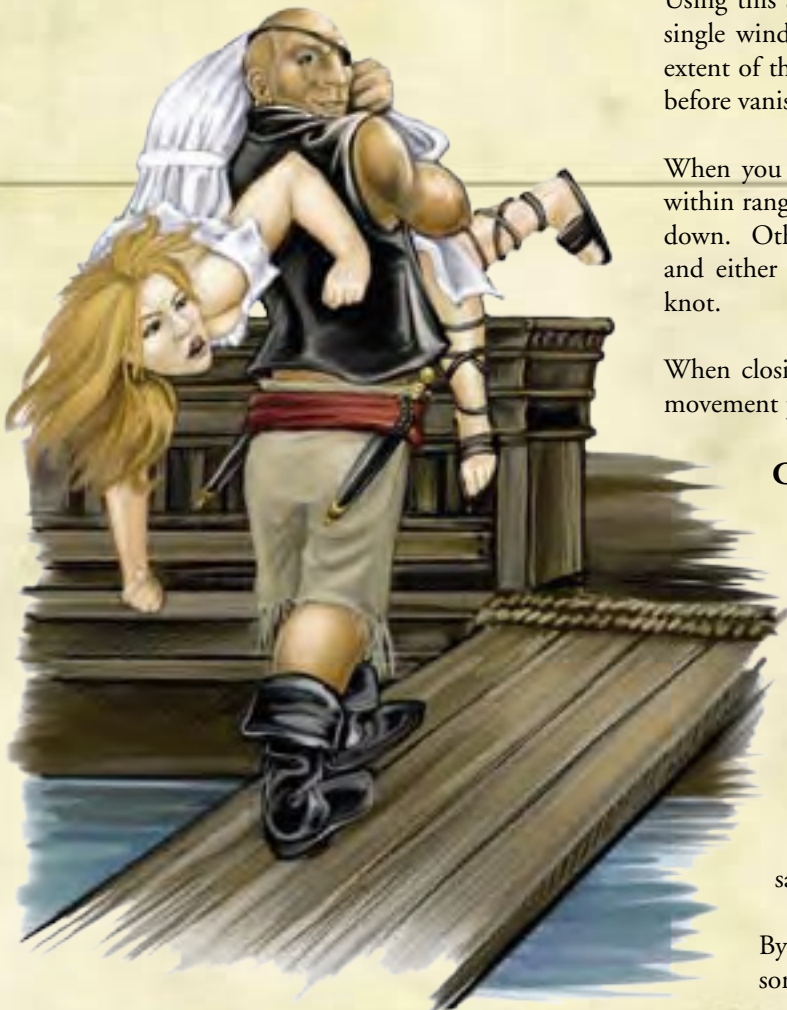
If something breaks the bottle or if the bottle moves out of the area of effect the weather returns to normal. If the drought lasts for more than two months it can take years to repair the damage to the lands.

Material Component: A glass bottle chased with gold wire costing at least 100 gl.

Bottle Thunder**PP Cost:** 10**Components:** V, S, M, XP**Casting Time:** 1 hour**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./ 2 scholar levels)**Target:** One target**Duration:** Instant**Saving Throw:** Reflex negates**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, *knot wind***Magic Attack Roll:** None

This spell prepares a glowing bottle filled with lightning for your use. It takes one hour to prepare the bottle; the preparation ritual must be cast during a thunderstorm. At the end of the ritual you expend the experience and power points to complete the enchantment.

Releasing the lightning is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. You may target one person within close range who must then make a Reflex saving throw. If the target fails he takes 4d6 damage and is thrown backwards a number of five feet squares equal to your Charisma modifier.



If someone breaks the bottle he automatically suffers the effects of the spell without recourse to a saving throw. If the sorcerer breaks the bottle (e.g. by falling on it) he suffers the same fate.

Material Component: A glass bottle chased with gold wire costing at least 100 gl. The spell must be performed during a thunderstorm.

Experience Point Cost: 50 XP

Knot Wind (Weather Witching Basic Spell)**PP Cost:** 1**Components:** S, M, XP**Casting Time:** 1 round**Range:** Long (400 ft. plus 40 ft. per scholar level)**Target:** One target**Duration:** One minute/scholar level**Saving Throw:** Reflex negates**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks**Magic Attack Roll:** Sets Reflex save DC, determines strength of the wind

Using this spell you create a knot that holds within it a single wind. When released, this wind runs out to the extent of the range, blowing for the duration of the spell before vanishing.

When you release the wind you may choose one target within range that must make a Reflex save or be knocked down. Otherwise, you may select on ship within range and either increase or decrease its sailing speed by one knot.

When closing this spell gives the target vessel one extra movement point for one closing turn.

Call the Northern Wind**PP Cost:** 10**Components:** V, S, XP**Casting Time:** 1 hour**Area:** One mile/scholar level radius around caster**Duration:** One minute/scholar level**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates (every minute)**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (nature) 6 ranks, *knot wind***Magic Attack Roll:** Sets Fortitude save DC

By invoking this magic the sorcerer reaches up into

the furthest lands of the north, pulling down a storm of cold, bone chilling winds. All living creatures caught within the area of effect take 1 point of cold damage every minute. Each target may make a Fortitude saving throw to resist this damage, but must make the save each round.

This spell freezes rivers and kills crops in addition to damaging living creatures.

Experience Point Cost: 50 XP per mile radius affected.

Call the Southern Wind

PP Cost: 10

Components: V, S, XP

Casting Time: 1 hour

Area: One mile/scholar level radius around caster

Duration: One minute/scholar level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (every minute)

Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 6 ranks, *knot wind*

Magic Attack Roll: Sets Fortitude save DC

This spell reaches into the heart of the Mountains of Fire, drawing forth writhing winds so hot that they scorch the ground they pass over. All living creatures within the area of effect must make a Fortitude save or become *exhausted*. Those that make this saving throw must make it again one minute later for the entire duration of the spell.

Crops caught within the area of effect wither into nothing. Furthermore there is a 20% chance that any stretch of grassland or forest will catch on fire, sparking a natural disaster of incredible proportions.

Experience Point Cost: 50 XP per mile radius affected.

Wind's Wrath

PP Cost: 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Close (25 ft. plus 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One target

Duration: Instant

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, *knot wind*

Magic Attack Roll: Sets the Will save DC

This brief incantation twists the wind surrounding a target into a momentary maelstrom, gibbering elemental insanities into the target's ear. In that moment the target receives a momentary glimpse into the harsh truths of reality. Civilised men must make a Will save or become flat-footed.

Characters from races with the barbarian favoured class, who have already faced the worst the world has to offer, are immune to this effect.

ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

The infinite reaches of the sea hold a wide variety of alchemical treasures for those who wish to look for them. Exotic plants grow on long forgotten islands. Strange plants wash into with the tide, borne who knows how far by unimaginable currents. Small vials filled with unidentifiable substances come up in fisherman's nets, carrying secrets from the distant past.

The following items may appear in sea-faring campaigns:

ARGOSSEAN DREAM DUST

On the Barachan Isles there is a small, waxy plant with dark green leaves and blood red flowers that grows far up on the rocks. Although most pirates do not know its use, some ancient texts speak of it as a kind of substitute for black lotus powder. Unfortunately they are all quite wrong; the Argossean dream dust plant does in fact grant visions but they are not of a restful sort.

If the sorcerer inhales a dose of the dream dust he only needs to spend 1 power point per minute when maintaining a *visions* spell, or 0 points when maintaining *visions of torment and enlightenment*. When the spell ends the sorcerer's vision continues to wander for another 24 hours, rendering him helpless.

Cost: 150 sp/dose

ATLANTEAN PEACE

The secrets of this embalming dust are long forgotten, but vials of it still come to light in fishermen's nets from time to time. It is a thin, black powder that flame cannot consume, that never spoils and that never falls into decay.

A single dose of the powder, when thrown fills an area 30 feet in diameter. The natural process of decay is halted within the area of effect. Furthermore any creature that breathes the mist must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or immediately begin to choke. Failure inflicts 4d6 damage. The creature must make the saving throw every round that he breathes the mist; it is possible to hold one's breath while enveloped within it.

The mist stays in place for one round in an open area, but can hang in the air indefinitely when used underground. The people of Atlantis used it to preserve bodies and tombs; Picts and similar peoples who gain access to it in this later day use it as a means of punishment and terror.

Cost: 400 sp/dose

STYGIAN MOULD

In the dark, humid depths of Stygia the priests of Set have learned how to gather a terrible, bright red mould. They mix it with secret herbs and a sticky sap, load it into hand held globes of glass, and use it to devastating effect in naval warfare.

Those who have mastered *greater telekinesis* can even use it at extended range, lofting the globe further than they could manage through mundane means.

The material in the orb is uncomfortable for living creatures, but it truly does damage when it strikes wood. When the mould in the orb comes into contact with wood it explodes into frenzied life, eating through the material in a matter of moments. The resulting mass has the strength and texture of soft cheese.

A ship hit by a sphere of Stygian mould takes 4d10 structural damage. A 20 feet by 20 feet section of the hull has its hardness reduced to 0. This can cause flooding and other problems as described in the Seas of Steel chapter (pg. 58).

MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items are rare in the Hyborian Age; most come from the misty past. The following magical artefacts are examples of items that could be wielded against the characters during their ocean-going adventures.

JADE ALTAR

This man-sized jade altar is covered with hieroglyphs of ancient origin. These hieroglyphs have no meaning in today's world, but speak of unthinkable blasphemies from an earlier age. A single man cannot move it, but several could fit poles into channels carved into its surface and carry it with great effect.



The object allows its user to *control weather*, as the water elemental special ability, at a cost of 20 PP per hour. The altar can fortunately be used as a working table for ritual or tortured sacrifices, providing a convenient source of power for a dedicated weather worker.

GLASS BOWL

This dark blue glass bowl, incised with silver sigils, measures perhaps three feet across. When filled with fresh human blood (enough to kill a single human sacrifice, although not immediately) it acts as a crystal ball, granting a +4 bonus to the sorcerer's magical attack roll when using the *visions* spell.

Additionally, the sorcerer who uses the glass bowl may extend the reach of his *sea witchery* or *weather witching* spells into the viewed area. This costs 4 Power Points, which may be drawn from the same tortured victim who provided the blood for the bowl's initial activation.

UNBOUND COMPASS

This is a small, relatively flat bowl made of translucent golden glass. It holds thin oil, upon which floats a needle. The oil has a faint red tint, and shines under the sun. The floating needle never follows true north. By spending 10 power points a sorcerer can 'set' the needle to point at his current location. Until reset, the needle will continue to point the way towards the last set location.

The Call of the Sea

Adventures on the Four Tides

THE COMMON THREAD running through all of the chapters of this book is the desire to get the characters off of the dry land and out into the open sea. Each chapter provides either enticements or suggestions for what can go wrong in order to keep the characters interested.

In this chapter we pull all of these ideas together to create a handful of simple adventures for the player's amusement. These give examples of why a character might choose to sail the seas of blood and slaughter; turning their backs on the green shores for the wild blue waves.

This chapter lists some simple adventure seeds, as well as a brief overview of five short adventures with suggested characters.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Each of the seeds below starts an adventure, but it would not truly be a pirate adventure if things were as straightforward as they seemed. Assume that things will completely change in tenor and tone at least twice during the course of the adventure.

- 1) The characters start the adventure running for their lives from a massed pack of heavily armed and armoured guardsmen. They see a ship pulling away from dock, its crew chanting a merry tune as they put their backs into the oars...
- 2) A drunken pirate stands up on the characters' table as they are engaged in heavy drinking. He declares that he is 'King of the World' and throws a dozen blood red rubies out into the crowd. A moment later a riot erupts: half of the patrons want one of the gems, the other half want the pirate to tell him where he found them...
- 3) The adventurers find an old necklace on the body of one of the hosts they hack through. It is a simple, worked disk forged of gold. The next night they are attacked by the same band, their wounds still evident on the corpses. If they put them down, the same fight happens again the next night. The necklace is part of a cursed pirate treasure...
- 4) While out whoring one of the characters' companions for the evening tells him that she knows of a secret treasure, but he has to promise not to tell anyone that she told him. If he agrees, she explains that one of the local pirates just struck it rich with a few cargo loads of gold; now he is busy burying it out on one of the local islands...
- 5) A naval captain approaches the characters as they languish in jail for disorderly conduct. He will see to it that all charges are dropped in return for them accompanying him on a mission to deal with a notorious pirate...
- 6) The local rulers march the characters and a small group of others up to the gallows for crimes they probably committed. Just as the executioner prepares to kick the stools out from under their feet a concealed pirate crew attacks, trying to free their leader...
- 7) One of the character's street vendor contacts, to which they usually sell the booty they 'liberate' from others, suddenly vanishes. Simultaneously a new merchant enters the town, a man of considerable wealth. A chance encounter on the street a few days later reveals that the former street vendor and the new merchant are the same man. Where did his sudden wealth come from, and what will he do to protect it?
- 8) The characters are left for dead after being beaten and robbed. A press gang finds them, ties them



up and carries them to their ship. When they wake up they are far out to sea, manacled in a tight hold with a dozen other unwashed slaves...

- 9) The characters see a Stygian gondola headed out to sea, driven by a wind straight out of hell. A weeping woman stands on the pier, her head in her hands. Looking up she promises them anything, anything at all, if they can just get her brother back...

ADVENTURES

The following adventures carry the concepts outlined in five of the adventure seeds even further. They clarify the basic predator/prey relationship inherent in the story and propose simple complications that will keep the characters on their toes.

Note that these adventures represent one way to grow the seeds outlined above. Games Masters are strongly encouraged to change the details to fit their specific groups.

FROM FIRE TO FIRE TO FIRE

Based on: Adventure Seed 1

Predator: Pirates from the second complication, characters later

Prey: Merchant ship in the first complication, a naval fort in the second and third

Summary: After the players leap aboard the moving merchant vessel the captain asks them to sign up as mercenary marines. He is travelling for the Black Coast, where he hopes to make a fortune selling good steel weapons to the southerners. Unfortunately things do not go well, forcing the characters to either become pirates on a mission of vengeance or learn how to swim with arrows in their backs.

Complication One: The merchant ship is attacked. The players may attempt to save it if they wish, but a merchant is no match for a competent pirate. However, if they display sufficient mettle the pirate captain will offer to let them live rather than throwing them to the sharks.

Complication Two: The Zingaran pirate ship is bestilled far out to sea. She does not have oars, so the crew sets to making and mending. During one conversation the character's learn that the crew is close to mutiny and that the captain is leading them into what will almost surely be a death trap: a frontal assault on a naval fortress on the Zingaran coast.

Complication Three: The Zingaran fort is well aware of the oncoming attack. They send a galleon out to deal with the threat, forcing the pirates to flee for their lives or fight a losing battle.

Resolution: The pirates may not escape the galleon; if they do not, then the players have a very hard fight on their hands. If the characters are sufficiently skilled pirates or leaders they could try to lead a mutiny, taking over the ship or escaping during the ensuing confusion.

Prepared Characters: Merchant captain (Argossean), Argossean merchant ship, Black Zarono, Naval captain, Zingaran galleon.

THE KING OF THE WORLD

Based on: Adventure Seed 2

Predator: The pirate's old captain

Prey: The old pirate

Potential Background: The drunken pirate just returned from a long trip far out to sea. His ship encountered an island there, stacked with the treasures of a forgotten age. Unfortunately he is no navigator, although he knows enough to fake such knowledge to those who are not skilled sailors. Assuming that he survives the riot his former ship captain will be looking for him, trying to shut him up before he leads someone else to the treasure.

Complication One: Since the drunk stood on their table several rather dangerous pirates and a number of rogues assume that the characters both know him and know his secret. They are not averse to cutting off body parts to get the information.

Complication Two: The next morning the drunken pirate ends up dead on the characters' doorstep. He is clutching something that looks like a bunch of lines and circles; a map to those who know how to read the stars. One, unfortunately, that he stole from his former captain, who really would like it back now.

Resolution: The characters now have a map, but may not have the skill to use it. They may give into their greed and try to follow it, sell it to the highest bidder or simply return it to its rightful owner.

Prepared Characters: Assorted pirates and thieves, at least one generic pirate captain.

VALE OF SHADES

Based on: Adventure Seed 3

Predator: The curse on the gold

Prey: Whoever holds the gold

Potential Background: In the dim mists of time an ancient city purchased its freedom with blood and gold. They cursed the gold treasure, insuring that the people who took it would never be able to rest in death until it was all returned to the city. Over the centuries the cursed gold passed from plunderer to plunderer, building up a huge mass of risen dead who quest to return it to its proper place, but have no idea where that might be.

Complication One: The characters easily put down the first wave of risen dead. The next

night, even more come. The next night, even more. It should quickly become apparent that they cannot hold out forever. It also becomes clear that the bodies are getting older and older; skeletons dressed in armour from a thousand years ago fight side by side with fresh pirate corpses. Fortunately the characters have a chance to recognise one of the later as a notorious pirate and adventurer from a nearby coast.

Complication Two: The pirate's crew is out looking for him. They know where he got the gold, but not where to return it to relieve the curse. However, realising that they have a serious problem they want to get his share back and return it at least to where they found it. The characters are now caught up in the curse and could benefit from returning it.

Complication Three: Once on the sea, the characters find themselves under attack by a ghost ship. Even if they survive and return the gold the curse will continue to hound them.

Resolution: The characters may simply accept that they are going to be attacked every so often by risen dead. Alternately, they may try to resolve the problem, eventually dealing with ancient Acheron and its foul magic.

Prepared Characters: Assorted risen dead, pirates, a pirate captain (Zingaran) and a ghost ship.

BLOOD AND IRON

Based on: Adventure Seed 4

Predator: A group of slavers

Prey: The characters

Potential Background: The whore works with a large group of slavers, identifying and luring potentially skilled slaves into traps where they can be taken easily. If the slavers capture the characters they will be sold down into Stygia; if they do not then the characters have earned themselves several powerful enemies.

Complication One: When the characters go to learn about the treasure the slavers attack them from behind, using nets, ropes and various soporifics. They would rather not rough up the merchandise, but they will inflict serious damage if they have too. There are four slavers for every character and they strike from ambush.

Complication Two: The various locals, who use the proceeds to fund their enterprises, sponsor the slavers. If the characters escape then they will have a hard time coming to grips with the slavers directly; carving a bloody

path though they will eventually get the characters into a load of trouble with the local authorities.

Complication Three: If the characters fall to the slavers they wake up in a Stygian slave market from which they will probably try to escape. Fighting their way free, they find themselves deep in the jungle, surrounded by dangerous foes. Hundreds of miles away the slavers and their dancing girl accomplices continue to work their wiles...

Resolution: The resolution is up to the players. They may feel sufficiently pleased with just getting out with their skins intact. Others may wish to take up their revenge with the pertinent authorities. Most with a heartbeat will want a few pounds of flesh in revenge, although their preferred targets may differ.

Prepared Characters: Commoner characters, slavers scaled to the characters level (average level -2), and various beasts for the jungles.

PRISON MADE OF LIES

Based on: Adventure Seed 5

Predator: The naval captain

Prey: A rival naval captain

Potential Background: Our heroes are simply pawns in a much larger scheme. The captain is emptying the prisons to gather a crew with which he will commandeer an Argossean galleon. His rival arranged for the captain to lose his commission, so the captain will make him pay with his life. Once on the seas the captain hunts down his rival, hoping to sink him and make it look like the work of pirates.

Complication One: Capturing the galleon will not be easy. A skeleton crew of well-trained marines guards the ship; they have armour and good steel swords against the knives and clubs of the prisoners. Use the boarding rules or mass combat rules to determine the result.

Complication Two: Once out to sea the captain will have to deal with a mutiny. He can bind some of the crew to loyalty with his Leadership feat; the rest are an unaligned crew with more interest in plunder than his honour. The characters may either participate in the mutiny or help the captain; either one has its own rewards.

Complication Three: The government in Argos asks the Barachan Pirates to destroy the rogue galleon. Three pirate carracks respond, fighting both the galleon and each other for the prize.

Resolution: The naval captain will eventually turn his ship back over to Argos, once he has destroyed his rival. He will happily sell his crew out as 'braggarts who captured the ship during a routine inspection'. If he is killed during the mutiny though the characters find themselves on an Argossean galleon, one of the fastest and most dangerous ships on the seas...

Prepared Characters: Naval captain (Argossean), Barachan Pirate crew, marines.

NO MAN'S PRICE

Based on: Adventure Seed 6

Predator: Impending corporal punishment

Prey: The pirate captain and his hidden isle

Summary: The characters are about to be hanged for their crimes when a fight breaks out around them. Either the captain or the crew will offer to show the characters to an island full of 'beautiful, subservient concubines' if they will help. In either case, the island is in truth filled with sirens, who will happily consume anyone who gets too close.

Complication One: The pirate crew wants their former captain to return the ship's charter. The charter happens to be written on what the captain believes is a map to a 'paradise island'. If the characters help the captain to escape he will offer to navigate to the island as a sign of his gratitude. If they help the crew, the new captain (statistically identical to the old) will offer to take them on board to escape their troubles with the local authorities.

Complication Two: Whichever ship the characters choose sails far, far out to sea. During this journey a charismatic young pirate becomes discontent. Approximately three weeks out to sea he leads the unaligned pirates in a mutiny. If the characters help to put the mutiny down they may continue on their way. If they do not, the new captain will throw them overboard as a demonstration of his new authority.

Complication Three: Regardless of the characters' mode of transportation they will eventually wash up on the shore of an island guarded by six ancient sirens. The wreckage of ships, some hundreds of years old, litter the island's beaches and its white sanded bay. These creatures will torment the characters, attempting to drive them mad with their supple bodies. Eventually the characters will either die or alternatively...

Resolution: If the characters escape from the island they will have to make their way back to the mainland.

Prepared Characters: Pirate captain (Argossean), pirate crew (Argossean), sirens.

FACE OF THE FORTUNATE

Based on: Adventure Seed 7

Predator: The merchant at first, later the Black Corsair captain who supplies him

Prey: The characters at first, later the merchant he decides to cut his losses

Summary: A merchant/fence the characters usually deal with disappears without a trace. Simultaneously, a new merchant with considerable wealth enters the town. During some routine, and probably illegal activity, the characters encounter the new merchant and discover he is, in fact their old friend. The merchant is dealing with a black corsair, who sells him exotic cargoes for silver on the gold. As soon as he is discovered the merchant will do whatever it takes, even kill, to protect himself and his newfound prosperity.

Complication One: The merchant recognises the characters when they see him. He will order increasing numbers of local thugs (thief 2 or better) to attack the characters. These attacks will start with numbers equal to the total number of characters in their party, this number doubles with each unsuccessful assault. The characters can stop the attacks by tracking down the merchant or discovering the source of his wealth. The later option will require the characters engage in an investigation down at the local docks.

Complication Two: At first glance the merchant's new client looks like a foreign smuggler. However, if the characters follow him out to his ship they will discover Black Corsairs moored in a hidden harbour. Alternately, if they approach the merchant the Black Corsair's spies will notice the contact. In either case, the corsair captain orders his men to kill the merchant and his friends before they reveal the pirate's presence.

Resolution: Facing an entire Black Corsair crew may be beyond the characters' abilities. The characters may call in military assistance, ask for help from various thieves guilds or draw on any other resources they have on hand. The corsairs will attack once then withdraw.

Prepared Characters: Pirate captain (Black Corsair), pirate crew (Black Corsair).

THE SERPENT OF DREAMS

Based on: Adventure Seed 8

Predator: Slavers at first, then the Stygians

Prey: The characters

Summary: After a particularly heavy night in the local bars and whorehouses the characters struggle to alertness only to discover they are stripped to the waist and chained to oars. They are now galley slaves, headed to Stygia for auction. If they can escape from the ship before it arrives in Stygia they stand a relatively good chance of avoiding any further unpleasantness. Once in Stygia, the local temple will purchase them as 'useful implements for Set's worship'

Complication One: The galley the characters are in is not the cleanest thing on the sea. 1d4 days into the journey approximately half of the galley slaves become sick with a hacking cough and intense fever. The ship stalls in the water, driven only by the strength of the few mobile slaves. The characters will have a chance to encounter the Stygian slavers up close and personal.

Complication Two: If the characters did not seize the opportunity presented by complication one they will eventually enter a Stygian harbour. There, the surviving galley slaves will be put up for auction. Although the slavers offer them signally, the local temple will buy all of the galley slaves for a 'special holy service'. The slavers are particularly attentive while escorting the heavily chained prisoners to and from their ship, but could be overcome before their transaction or the delivery.

Complication Three: If the characters still have not freed themselves, the next complication arises during the sacrifice ceremony itself. As the great Sons of Set move in to eat a few helpless sacrifices, they decide instead to have a noble dinner. As they consume priests and nobles the ensuing chaos may give the characters a chance to escape.

Resolution: On the run in a foreign country, what will the characters choose to do? Will they accept their fate, strike out into the great Stygian jungles or try to make for Shem or will they look for the innumerable smuggler's coves along the Stygian coast, hoping to encounter a pirate vessel to find a berth on?

Prepared Characters: Merchant captain (Stygian), merchant crew (Stygian), Galley.

Ship's Charters

The Laws of the Lawless

PIRATE SHIPS REPRESENT many things in the Hyborian age: a way to escape from the burdens of ordinary life, a place where civilised men can shed the withering shackles of law and access to an unthinkable amount of gold. It is this later aspect of pirate-life that causes the most disputes. When lawless men find themselves in the presence of chests filled with gems and gold they cannot help but follow their basest instincts. Mayhem follows shortly thereafter, leaving many an unmanaged ship drifting on the waves.

In order to prevent this grizzly fate, most pirate crews adopt something called a 'charter'. This charter consists of a set of agreements between the captain, the officers and the crew about how they will settle disputes and divide the spoils. These agreements have the force of law on the open seas, though only a strong man can enforce them.

The form a ship's charter takes depends on the dominant culture aboard the vessel. Argossean and Zingaran ship charters take the form of unusually long and complex legal documents written to intimidate illiterate common sailors. Turanian Red Brotherhood charters are usually contained in sea chanteys passed from one sailor to another. The fearsome Black Corsairs do not bother with something as worthless as a ship charter, instead placing their entire faith in the strength of one man.

The Code of Contact section of *Pirates of Hyboria* (pg. 4) presents a sample charter and traditional rules associated with each of the four primary pirate groups. If the Games Master or players do not wish to construct a specific ship charter they may use the presented charter without penalty.

ELEMENTS OF A SHIP'S CHARTER

Each ship charter contains one or more of the following elements. A charter with a handful of elements is easily enforced, but provides few benefits to the captain and

crew. Conversely, a character with a large number of elements presents considerable enforcement difficulties, but provides the vessel and her crew with considerable benefits.

The elements below have two designators; code and format. The code designation indicates an element of the agreement between pirates. Elements with the format designation outline the physical elements of the charter, its recording method and how people are added to the charter for example.

Each element lists several possible options. Where appropriate, these options have a 'cultural' note, indicating that they are customary with the designated pirate group. A ship charter may use any option, but choosing options other than those customarily agreed upon may result in penalties for the captain and crew.

FORMAT

Medium

The **medium** element specifies the method used to record the ship's charter. A list of common mediums includes:

Chantey: A ship's charter recorded as a sea chantey uses lewd, easy to remember lyrics to encapsulate the agreement. The ship's cook holds the 'official' version of the chantey, and takes responsibility for teaching it to the new sailors. Sea chanteys are particularly popular among the Red Brotherhood of the Vilayet Sea.

Pirates can debate the relative merits of a chantey charter, its elements and even methods of implementation in relative secrecy. To a landlubber or any character without at least four ranks of Profession (sailor), such discussions sound like nothing but a drunken argument about the particulars of extremely lewd drinking songs.

Code: A ship's charter recorded as a code takes the form of five to ten

statements about how a pirate should and should not act. These statements may be recorded somewhere (usually on the ship's mast) but do not have to be. Each member of the crew is expected to memorise the code; failure to do so provides the other pirates with an infinite source of amusement as they make up 'correct' versions of the unknown code elements. These 'correct' versions usually involve having to perform a wide variety of humiliating and dangerous acts at the command of everyone from the ship's captain to the bilge rat.

Most professional sailors or any character with at least six ranks in Profession (sailor) can pick up one element of a code each day they sail on a ship. Within seven to ten days they have learned everything they need to know about how this particular ship operates.

A wet-behind-the-ears sailor or a landlubber (called, in this context, a goat) cannot automatically gather elements of the ship's code. Instead, each day they stay on the ship they may make a Gather Information check (DC 15). If they succeed, then they learn one element of the code. If they fail, then they learn one 'code' that is obviously false, but that they must obey for the rest of the day.

Codes are particularly common among large pirate fleets organised under a single captain. Some of the larger Black Corsair fleets also use codes to settle disputes among the captains.

Contract: A ship's charter recorded as a contract can sprawl across dozens of parchment pages. The scribe usually writes these documents in a careful, cramped script designed to foil all but the most dedicated reader. Encapsulated in obtuse and ambiguous language, the charter contains the same kinds of information held in less complex mediums. However, the language makes it much more difficult to enforce and considerably easier to manipulate to the captain's own ends.

Any time an element of a ship's charter might provide a bonus or a penalty to the ship, the ship's captain or a mutiny leader may make a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 20) to negate the element for this roll. This represents the character's ability to find a loophole or precedent to support his particular interpretation of the rules.

Contracts are particularly prevalent among the Barachan and Zingaran pirates. Both cultures support a high degree of literacy and culture capable of producing complex legal codes and a willingness to use both in the pursuit of personal power.

A character that spends considerable time studying a contract character may earn the name 'sea lawyer' among his fellow sailors.

Totem Stick: A totem stick ship's charter looks like a simple, carved stick like one might find in any of the barbaric southern kingdoms. Each stick holds between five and seven carved images, each one representing a character from one of the innumerable stories of pirate life circulated through their culture. The figures represent specific agreements between the holder of the stick (usually the ship's captain) and the crew.

A character from the Southern Kingdoms can automatically read a totem stick. Others, less adept at identifying the abstract characters and their meanings, must make a Knowledge (history) skill check (DC 15) to interpret one of the carvings.

Black Corsair crews do not, as a rule, bother with charters. When they do, the totem stick becomes a visible symbol of the captain's authority. The first action of any mutiny is to claim the stick, and thereby symbolically the captain's manhood and authority.

Signature

If a charter exists each member of the pirate crew must demonstrate that he understands its importance and supports it. This demonstration, called a signature, takes one of the following forms:

Blood Sign: The prospective pirate must place his own blood on the object embodying the ship charter. The captain may accept this blood informally, even casually. More often, the offering of blood is an important shipboard ritual: the entire crew watches as the prospective member abases himself before the captain, then cheers as he cuts a bloody wound in his arm, smearing the contract object with his own blood. If the prospective crewmember manages to complete the bloodletting without passing out he is considered a full signatory of the charter (Fortitude save DC 15). If he falls unconscious due to blood loss, the crew will still accept him but he is considered unlucky until he kills at least five men in battle.

Blood signs are most common among the Black Corsairs.

Demonstrated Worth: Most pirate crews allow a prospective pirate to prove himself in battle rather than forcing him to submit to other signature methods. Usually, this means the character must kill three enemies or engage in three raids before the crew accepts him as a full member.

This is the default signature format in the Hyborian Age. The other methods are used only in isolated circumstances or as a means of boosting morale.

Hazing Ritual: The prospective pirate must endure three or four torturous hazing rituals in order to be 'worthy' of joining the crew. These experiences include time-honoured favourites like:

- ❖ Walking a wet line naked while pirates throw offal at the character who must make three successful Balance skill checks (DC 15).
- ❖ Hold on to a rope while being dunked in the wake: Strength check (DC 13, 15, 18 in succession). Failure indicates a fall into the ocean.
- ❖ Character must scrub the bilge with his teeth.
- ❖ Cut the ship's flag symbol into your arm: Fortitude save (DC 18) to endure the pain without screaming.
- ❖ Swallow a whole, living fish (whatever the crew can catch that day).
- ❖ Be beaten with ropes while carrying bilge water in your mouth. Each time you spill the bilge water (Fortitude save DC 15) you must go back. If you can make it four times, you fill a cup and have to drink it.
- ❖ Clean out the slave pens. Cleaning the slave pens is a disgusting job, requiring at least one day of work and Fortitude saves to resist 1d4 standard diseases.

Even if the character fails he will 'pass' the initiation rite. The point is to humiliate the prospective pirate.

Personal Stake: The prospective pirate must put up a 1/100th of the cost of the vessel and its supplies as proof of his sincerity. This money is given directly to the captain. In theory, the captain then shares it with the other members of the crew. However, in all pirate groups except the Red Brotherhood the captain is informally expected to keep the stake for his personal funds.

Recitation: The prospective pirate must recite the entirety of the charter while suffering abuse from the other crewmembers. He must make four Intelligence checks (DC 12) in six tries. If he fails, the ship's crew will drop him off the side to feed the sharks. A character with six ranks of Profession (sailor) gains a +2 bonus to this check. If the charter is a code (see above) and the character took the time to learn all of the elements before formally joining the crew he gains an additional +2 bonus to the checks.

A character that meets the signature requirements for a charter may refer to the other pirates as his 'brothers'.

CODES

Challenge for Rank

Pirates are, for the most part, ambitious, dishonest and dishonourable. In order to preserve the carefully orchestrated chaos that is a sailing ship, most crews adopt rules to focus their ambition, or at least restrain it until an appropriate time. These rules, referred to collectively as the 'right to challenge for rank' make up a large part of most ship charters.

Challenges aboard a pirate ship are almost always fights to the death. Such fights are often the only entertainment are also a source of entertainment during the long voyages the pirates undertake. Nothing amuses these depraved men quite as much as watching two of their closest friends tear one another to pieces with knives and teeth.

The right to challenge does not necessarily imply the right to mutiny: an individual may challenge, but if he loses no one else needs to be involved.

Regardless how the charter phrases them, the rules for challenging for rank use one of the following formats:

Anyone may Challenge: In this situation, anyone with sufficient strength and vigour can challenge for rank at any time. The individual does not need to be a member of the crew, although it may help to prevent him from being stabbed in the back himself at a later date.

This is the default condition in the Black Corsairs. These savage pirates respect nothing but raw strength and deadly will.

Challenges may only be issued by crewmembers at a given time: Any crewmember may challenge any officer, but only during a specific day and time. This time, usually known as the 'calling out', comes around no more than once a month.

Crews that use this particular method of challenging for rank often support an extremely poisonous atmosphere of corruption and intrigue. Pirates save up their grievances, expending them in a sudden, blistering torrent when the moment of challenge occurs.

Challenges may be issued by crewmembers at any time: Any crewmember may challenge for any position at any time. Challenges may be frequent on a ship with very weak officers or where such a class is completely non-existent.

This condition is the default agreement in the Barachan, Turanian, and Zingaran pirate groups. Other arrangements exist, but they increase the amount of intrigue and frustration that exists within the crew.

Crew may not challenge for rank: The crew may never legally challenge for rank. This is a common condition on naval ships that become pirates, but is rarely seen on other, less structured vessels. A character that challenges another will find himself subject to punishments up to and including execution.

A ship charter may have multiple entries for this element. In the case of multiple entries, each entry indicates one of the following ranks: mate, officer or captain.

Coming Aboard and Staying On

Most ship charters include some information about how the pirate crew will treat characters who come aboard ship without either engaging in a fight or paying for passage.

Generally this code takes one of the following forms:

Able-bodied sailors may board: The charter states that any able-bodied sailor or any character with at least four ranks of Profession (sailor) may board the ship. If he can learn the charter he may eventually become a full brother.

This is the default condition for most pirate ships in the Hyborian Age. Pirates do not leave other sailors behind if they display sufficient courage.

No man may board: By these rules no sailor, no matter how skilled, may board without the captain's express permission. Any invader is immediately repulsed.

This is the default condition on Black Corsair ships.

Divide the Plunder

Successful pirate ships acquire plunder. Unsuccessful pirate ships end up at the bottom of the ocean. The later ship does not have to worry about how it spreads its wealth among the crew. The former, though, must make some provision for the division of plunder or face even greater than usual rioting and mutiny.

The standard unit of plunder is referred to as a 'share'. Each share is defined as the total actual value of the loot contained in the ships hold, divided by the number of shares owed to living crewmen.

Typical arrangements include:

Crewmembers receives a full share: Each crew member (including officers) receives a full share. The captain takes four shares for ship repairs and supplies. Ship brothers are expected to pay for their own food, weapons and clothing.

This is the traditional division of plunder among the Red Brotherhood.

Non-brothers receive a half share; crewmembers receive a full share, four shares for the officers: Each working crewmember of the crew receives a half share. Those who have been accepted into the pirate ship and its charter receive a full share. Officers receive four full shares. Each crewmember pays for his own way, although the officers are expected to provide for their mates.

This is the traditional division of plunder among the Zingaran Freebooters.

Crewmembers receives a full share, Officers receive three shares: Each crew member receives a full share. Designated ships officers receive three shares. The captain may reserve up to 10% of the plunder for ship repairs and supplies. Ship officers are expected to pay for supplies and ship repairs related to their own areas of control. Custom also dictates they pay for their mates equipment, provisions, and weapon as well.

This is the traditional division of plunder among the Barachan Pirates.

Captain dispenses wealth as he sees fit: The captain has complete control of the plunder. He may award it to crewmembers based on their loyalty, service or his own personal whims. The captain is responsible for equipping and feeding his men, as well as providing them with whatever tools and supplies they may need to perform their duties.

This is the traditional division of plunder among the Black Corsairs.

This particular code of the ship's charter specifies that only living members of the ship's crew divide the plunder. Many pirates, realising that dead man draw no shares, have taken to making sure their injured comrades (or uninjured but could-be-injured rivals) end up feeding the fishes to line their own pockets.

Since pirate captains traditionally handle the plunder's fencing, they often take an additional 5% of the total plunder for themselves. Their pirate shipmates know that

this goes on, but usually consider it one of the privileges of command.

A pirate who holds back loot from a ship is stealing from rest of the crew. His fate, as well as the fate of those that assist him, depends on the methods the ship's charter specifies for settling disputes.

Treatment of Prey

Although they seem lawless, pirates do abide by a set of rules of engagement when dealing with non-hostiles. They accept these restrictions out of a sense of self-interest rather than any innate decency. If they develop a reputation for sinking and killing everyone they meet, then no one will surrender and there is a good chance at least half of their plunder will end up on the seafloor.

This code of a ship's charter takes one of the following forms:

Attempt to Board: The ship flies a distinctive flag, but does not offer surrender. If the pursued vessel does not immediately heave too it can expect to be boarded and gutted. The pirates will generally allow fleeing sailors to retreat with their lives.

This is the default treatment of prey by the Black Corsairs, Red Brotherhood and Zingaran Freebooters.

Attempt to Sink: The ship flies distinctive flags, but neither offers quarter nor accepts any offers of surrender. They will attempt to sink the target ship, losing plunder if necessary in order to send their target to the bottom of the sea.

Very few pirate ships adopt this particular charter code. It is counterproductive to business and the ever-present pirate goal of becoming filthy rich.

Note that none of the above possibilities allow the pirate ship to avoid plundering a merchantman or other profitable vessel. The concept of a privateer, a ship commissioned by a government to perform acts of piracy is unheard of in the Hyborian Age.

Fly Flags and Offer Surrender: The ship flies a distinctive flag, usually one designed by a crewmember or the captain, whenever it approaches an unknown ship. If the vessel is a merchantmen it offers terms of surrender, usually amounting to 'give up everything you have and leave'. If the vessel does not surrender the pirate will immediately attempt to board.

This is the default treatment of prey by the Barachan Pirates.

Settling Disputes

Left to their own devices, pirates generally settle their disputes though the simple, but expedient, method of chopping one another to pieces. This kind of wanton violence tends to disrupt the ordered chaos of shipboard life. In order to prevent this from interfering with the pirates' overall goals, most ships adopt a somewhat less lethal, or at least more controlled method to arbitrate issues.

This code takes one of the following forms:

Captain's Adjudication: The captain may decide on the merits of any cases brought before him. This decision is final, so crewmembers often try to work things out among themselves before bringing in the final authority. Failure to obey the captain's decision is grounds for being thrown to the sharks.

This is the traditional method for setting disputes among the Barachan Pirates.

Contest of Endurance: When two pirates disagree about a particular matter they settle their dispute though a test of endurance. Traditionally, this involves both parties putting their hand over an open flame. Each round, both characters must make a Concentration skill check (DC 10 + 2 for each successive round after the first). If the character fails, he pulls his hand from the flame. The last character to remove his hand from the fire is considered the 'victor'.

Characters who engage in a contest of endurance take one point of fire damage for every round they hold their hand near the flame.

Duel to First Blood: Any argument aboard the ship, from a dispute about bunking privileges to an accusation of murder, may be settled by a duel between the two parties. These duels sometimes become deadly, but are usually restricted to simple bloodletting with knives.

Duel to the Death: Any argument aboard the ship may be settled by a duel to the death. The captain must oversee the duel, or it counts as murder of a shipmate rather than an official way to resolve a dispute.

BONUSES AND PENALTIES BY PIRATE GROUP

The following table lists the bonuses and penalties associated with the various elements and element options listed above. All bonuses are to the mutiny check described in the Pirates of Hyboria chapter (pg. 4).

Charter	Barachan Pirates	Black Corsairs	Red Brotherhood	Zingaran Freebooters
<i>Medium</i>				
Chantey	-1	-1	+0	-1
Code	+1 if captain commands four or more ships.	+0	+0	+1 if captain commands four or more ships.
Contract	+0	-1	-1	+0
Totem Stick	-2	+0	-2	-2
<i>Signature</i>	No bonuses or penalties.			
<i>Challenge for Rank</i>				
Challenge at a given time	+1	+1	+1	+1
Challenge at any time	+1	+0	+1	+1
Anyone may challenge	+0	+0	-2	-2
No one may challenge	-2	-1	-2	-2
<i>Coming and Staying Aboard</i>	No bonuses or penalties			
<i>Divide the Plunder</i>				
One share each, four for the common good	+0	-2	+0	-1
Between Half and four shares based on rank	-2	-2	-4	+0
Between one and three based on rank	+0	-2	-4	-2
Captain dispenses	-2	+0	+0	-2
<i>Treatment of Prey</i>				
Fly flags and offer surrender	+1	-4	-2	-1
Attempt to board	+0	+0	+0	+0
Attempt to sink	-1 (+1 if specifically targeting Zingarans)	+2	+1	-1 (+1 if specifically targeting Zingarans)
<i>Settle Disputes</i>				
Captain's adjudication	+0 (+1 if included with duel to first blood)	+0	+0	+0
Contest of endurance	-2	+0	+1	-2
Duel to first blood	+0 (+1 if included with duel to first blood)	-3	-2	-1
Duel to the death	-2	+1	-2	+1
<i>Pension for Disabled Pirates</i>				
Returned to homeport with shares	+1 per share	-2	-2	+1 per share
Released on an island with provisions	+0	-2	+1 per month	-1
Thrown overboard	-2	+1	-4	-1

This is the traditional method for setting disputes among the Zingaran Freebooters.

This form of resolution may be included multiple times. Each instance may refer to a number of specific disputes (between two pirates, between a pirate and a landlubber, between

a crewman and an officer) or to specific circumstances (murder, theft or sexual assault for example).

Pension for Disabled Pirates

Pirates, despite their otherwise uncivilised lifestyles, do have a relatively sophisticated method of dealing with badly injured crewmates. Many ship's charters contain detailed recommendations about how to treat those



Released on an island with provisions: If there are no friendly ports, a ship may agree to release those who are badly injured in relatively neutral territory with provisions sufficient to sustain them while they look for work or food.

Traditionally the Red Brotherhood releases its injured comrades in the rich fishing waters of the southern Vilayet Sea. They give each injured man a month of provisions, even if it means the rest of the ship must go hungry until they find another port.

VIOLATING THE CHARTER

When the captain orders his crew to violate the ship's charter he must make a mutiny check. If he fails, the ship precedes though the mutiny rules outlined in the Pirates of Hyboria chapter (pg. 4).

If the captain initiates a mutiny check by breaking the charter he does not gain any bonuses from the charter for the duration of the check. However, if the charter inflicts penalties on the captain he still suffers from them, even though he has broken the charter's terms.

EXAMPLE CHARTERS

Any generic pirate vessel the characters encounter during the course of the game may use the following example charters.

CHARTER FORMAT

Charter entries use the following format:

Medium: Describes the transmission medium for the charter

Signature: Describes how a character can add his name to the charter

Code: Gives the details of a specific code encompassed by the charter

injured in battle, along with specific repayments for lost limbs and pensions for those who can no longer work the ship.

These traditional arrangements include:

Returned to a homeport with shares: The pirates will keep a non-functional crewmate on board until they reach a port in their home territory. The crew donate from their own shares to provide the injured crewmate with bonus shares for his own use.

Among the Barachan Pirates a crewmember may expect to three shares as a send off. The Zingaran Freebooters give their former crewmember a single share, and count him lucky to have landed in a safe harbour.

Thrown Overboard: Although the northern pirate groups care for their own, the southern are less considerate. They toss any crewmember who cannot support the ship within three days to the sharks.

The Black Corsairs are famous for their disregard for their crewmates lives. Most northern sailors will not set foot on a southern ship for this reason.

Mutiny Modifier: Total of the bonuses and penalties of the charter's elements on the captain's mutiny checks

BARACHAN PIRATE VESSEL

This charter represents a contract typically found among the Barachan pirates. The captain usually stores this document in his personal footlocker. Traditionally, the charter is considered part of the ship rather than the captain's property. Each new captain agrees to uphold the charter, although he may alter it over time to suit his own needs. If the character is destroyed then the captain and the current crew draw up a new charter for the vessel.

Medium: Contract

Signature: Demonstrated Worth, Hazing Ritual or Personal Stake

Code: Challenge for Rank (mate): Challenge at any time

Code: Challenge for Rank (officer or captain): Challenge after landfall

Code: Divide the Plunder: One and three

Code: Treatment of Prey: Fly flags and offer surrender

Code: Settle Disputes (petty): Duel to first blood

Code: Settle Disputes (criminal): Captain's Adjudication

Code: Pension for Disabled Pirates: Returned to home port with three shares

Mutiny Modifier: +7

BLACK CORSAIR VESSEL

As a rule, Black Corsair vessels do not have charters. Those that do are old boats with a long tradition of carnage along the southern coast. These boats come from a specific village in the Southern Isles, where the village chief and his men sail forth regularly to take what they wish from their weaker prey.

Medium: Totem Stick

Signature: Blood Sign

Code: Challenge for Rank: Challenge at any time

Code: Divide the Plunder: Captain dispenses

Code: Treatment of Prey: Attempt boarding

Code: Settle Disputes: Captain's Adjudication

Code: Pension for Disabled Pirates: Thrown Overboard

Mutiny Modifier: +1

RED BROTHERHOOD

The ships of the Red Brotherhood sail the Vilayet Sea, bound together as much by their common enemy as by their desire for profit. The pirates who work these ships know they will beg for death should their enemies catch them. Therefore, they hide their charters in simple chanteys and other lewd songs.

Medium: Chantey

Signature: Demonstrated Worth

Code: Challenge for Rank: Challenge at any time

Code: Divide the Plunder: One share each, four for the common good

Code: Treatment of Prey: Attempt boarding

Code: Settle Disputes: Contest of Endurance

Code: Pension Disable Pirates: Released on an island with one month of provisions

Mutiny Modifier: +2

ZINGARAN FREEBOOTER VESSEL

The Zingaran Freebooters pride themselves on their complex and comprehensive ship's charters. In fact, they often claim that the other groups lack of such comprehensive documents displays their lack of understanding regarding the 'proper rules of the sea'.

Each time a captain takes command of a Zingaran ship he may choose to keep the existing charter or start afresh. If he chooses to create a new charter, each crewman may, for a period of one day, freely speak his mind. At the end of that time the officers, their mates, and the oldest member of the crew draw up the new charter using the most ornate language their minds can muster.

Medium: Contract

Signature: Demonstrated Worth, Hazing Ritual or Personal Stake

Code: Challenge for Rank: Challenge at any time

Code: Divide the Plunder: Between a half share and four shares based on rank

Code: Treatment of Prey: Attempt to board

Code: Settle Disputes: Duel to the death

Code: Pension for Disabled Pirates: Returned to home port with one share

Mutiny Modifier: +3

Pirate Coves

Damp Holes & Pristine Beaches

FOR THE MOST part, pirates live in a sodden world of ships and sails. They spend almost every day of their lives working and sleeping in a few square feet of space, competing with their mates for something resembling edible food.

Occasionally, though, these sea-loving men make their way back to shore. There they huddle in hidden coves close to bustling cities, establish hordes in island caves and found boisterous pirate cities far from the reach of other civilised men. In these places they count their ill-gotten plunder, dreaming of the next ship they will send down into the bottomless deep.

Of these, probably the most famous are the 'smuggler's coves' that riddle the Hyborian coast. These quiet coves function as way stations and safe havens for pirates of all stripes.

SMUGGLER'S COVES

Pirates and smugglers are, arguably, the same breed. In fact, many pirates turn a good silver from smuggling illegal goods, while most smugglers will happily lift a cargo from an unsuspecting merchantman. Both groups pass on information about local 'smuggler's coves', places where a ship might find a good harbour and little trouble.

In order to qualify as a smuggler's cove, the harbour must meet the following criteria: it must have a small local population, no (or rarely used) inland access, rarely visited by outsiders and a deep harbour. Places meeting all of these criteria are relatively rare, and knowledge of their location as precious as gold.

The factors for a smuggler's cove are completely outside of a pirate's control. Three of them are social factors dependent on the state of the nation and the cove's position relative to the major population centres. The fourth, the harbour, is a natural factor at odds with the other three. Deep harbours

are national treasures, often closely guarded by the central government. Fortunately, most nations lack anything resembling a central government, so local interests often prevail.

LOCAL POPULATION

Very few coves, even ones on the Stygian coast, are completely deserted. The fertile fishing waters of the seas and oceans draw settlements like a loadstone draws iron. Even the most inhospitable lands have a handful of fishing villages or a few shanties littering the coasts. Deep harbours like those that make a good smuggler's cove will always attract local attention. Villages spring up in such places like weeds; even if someone burns them to the ground they will not take long to re-establish themselves again.

Local villages can, however, be a good thing, especially for a pirate crew looking to unload a hold full of ill-gotten gains or hoping to refit after a pitched battle. The community in an established smuggler's cove has long since grown accustomed to ignoring the presence of pirates. Many go a step further; they will sell the pirates services (anything from carpentry to their own daughters) for a relatively fair price. Fair, in this case, being a relative term. Pirates can expect to pay up to three times the normal price for what they want to buy, but will not have to answer any awkward questions.

Many villages in this situation do surprisingly well. The local fishermen take on the role of intermediaries between the merchants of the larger cities and the pirate groups. The pirates leave their plunder in return for gold and the provisions they need. The merchants come by sometime later to buy whatever the pirates dropped off. The locals skim coin on both ends, making a tidy profit for themselves.

This leads many of these local villages to be surprisingly well stocked with everything a pirate might want.

Most have abundant supplies of liquor, tools and food, many also support a small but well endowed population of whores.

ACCESS

One of the last things pirates or smugglers want for their little hideaways is for them to suddenly become popular spots for settlement or noble holidays. For this reason, they like to moor up in coves that have very little access to the outside world. In fact, if the community were completely cut off, most pirates would feel considerably more secure.

Unfortunately, things rarely work out quite that perfectly. Most communities have at least a dirt path leading to a major road. Some will have even more elaborate access methods, including the occasional paved road.

Of course, access to a road is not all bad. The merchants who help to create the factoring relationship mentioned above cannot visit a completely isolated community. A well established, easy to access community has more buyers and the potential for more services, but is correspondingly less secure.

VISITATION

In an ideal world, outsiders would never bother to come to the cove. No young lovers would row there for romantic rendezvous nor would traitors gather there to plan their nefarious deeds. Alas, it is indeed an imperfect world. The very traits endearing the cove to the pirates makes it a ideal place for others who wish for privacy, peace or some combination of the two.

The closer a cove is to a major population centre, the more likely it becomes that the pirates will be disturbed by others seeking out the cove's unique qualities. This disturbance may be a minor annoyance or a major problem depending on the situation and who exactly appears.

Coves close to but ignored by civilisation generally boast an ill-favoured reputation. They

may be cursed, subject to some kind of unusual phenomena or simply unlucky.

HARBOUR

A cove's harbour uses the same classification scheme as settlements' docks (pg. 26). Coves usually boast a type 3 or type 4 dock, or the natural equivalent there of.

LEARNING ABOUT A COVE

Knowledge of smuggler's coves, their whereabouts and particularities, is a currency rarely traded among the pirates of the Hyborian Age. A fast bolthole or a quiet place to rest can often make the difference between life and death.

In order to simulate this, rather than play out each and ever possible exchange, a character can make a Profession (sailor) skill check any time he wishes to find a nearby smugglers cove. The nature of the cove the character wishes to find, as well as its proximity to his present location, determines the DC of the skill check.

A character with five or more levels in the pirate or thief class may add his Intelligence modifier, if positive, as a bonus to this check. If the character has levels in both pirate and thief he gains this bonus if he his combined levels in both classes equal five or more.

Each character can only make this check once per voyage.

Base DC: This factor determines the base DC of the Profession (sailor) skill check. The values and their effects are:

Far (5): The pirate determines the location of a smuggler's cove 3d4 days away from his current location. This cove may be within two days of land travel of any specific destination of the pirate's choice.

Near (10): The pirate determines the location of a smuggler's cove 2d4 days away from his current location. This cove may be within one day of land travel from any specific destination of the pirate's choice.

Cove Knowledge Check

	Modifier
Base DC	
Far	5
Near	10
Close	15
Local Population	
Small Village	+5
Willing Hosts	+10
Empty	+15
Factors	+15
Access	
Easy Access	-5
Limited Access	+5
No Access	+10
Visitation	
Common	+5
Uncommon	+10
Rare	+15
Harbour	
Type 3	+0
Type 4	+10

Close (15): The pirate determines the location of a smuggler's cove 1d4 days away from his current location. This cove may be within one hour of travel from any specific destination of the pirate's choice.

Local Population: This factor determines what kinds of people inhabit the cove. The values and their effects are:

Small Village (+5): The cove contains a small village filled with relatively hostile locals. They want nothing to do with the lowlifes and hooligans that occasionally disturb the waters of their fine harbour. These villages do not have anything to sell nor will they buy a pirate's plunder.

Willing Hosts (+10): The cove contains a fishing village that is happy to take a pirate's coin, but will not buy their plunder. The village provides basic materials, weapons and services at 150% of normal prices.

Empty (+15): The cove is completely empty, save for the occasional large animal. There is always some elaborate explanation for why no one goes here any more. There is also a 50% chance (determined by the Games Master) the cove holds some kind of curse or malignant entity.

Factors (+15): The cove contains a fishing village just as base as the pirates. These course folk offer fine services and any materials pirates might need at 300% of the normal cost. They will also buy whole cargoes from the pirates (using the rules for fencing (pg. 33)).

Access: This factor determines how easy it is to enter and leave the cove by land. The values and their effects are:

Easy Access (-5): The cove is very close to a major road. Increase the visitation chance increases by one step (A rarely visited cove would become an uncommonly visited cove, while an uncommonly visited cove become commonly visited).

Limited Access (+5): The cove is cut off from the major roads. It may only have a single dirt path or animal tract leading to it. The visitation chance remains unchanged.

No Access (+10): The cove is cut off from the land by some kind of natural barrier. The visitation chance decreases by 10%.

Visitation: This factor determines how likely it is that the pirates will be interrupted while in the cove. The values and their effects are:

Common (+5): The cove is a relatively well known place to go in order to 'be alone'. There is a 50% chance per day

that someone will join the pirates in the cove. There is a 25% chance these visitors are from the local authorities; the rest will mind their own business so long as the pirates keep to themselves.

Uncommon (+10): Outsiders come to the cove on occasion. There is a 30% chance per day that someone will join the pirates in the cove. There is a 50% chance these visitors are from the local authorities; the rest will mind their own business so long as the pirates keep to themselves.

Rare (+15): Outsiders rarely, if ever, come to the cove. There is a 10% chance per day that someone will join the pirates in their humble retreat. There is a 50% chance these visitors are from the local authorities and a 25% chance that the visitors are from another pirate crew. The remainder will mind their own business so long as the pirates keep to themselves.

Harbour: This factor determines what kind of dock the cove supports. The values and their effects are:

Type 3 (+0): The harbour has the equivalent of a type 3 port.

Type 4 (+10): The harbour has the equivalent of a type 4 port.

FINDING A COVE

When a pirate vessel enters a smuggler's cove they gain a measure of protection from their enemies. This protection comes partially from the cove's isolated location and partially an unwillingness to draw attention to themselves by engaging in hostilities in such a valuable resource. Naval vessels are less picky about their choice of battlefields, but will often shy away from destroying working villages or other civilian targets.

When a character wishes to find a target hidden in a cove he has two options:

- † Make a Profession (sailor) skill check with a DC equal to the DC of the check made by the target to find the cove. This represents the character's ability to guess where his target might have gone to ground. If he succeeds he knows how to find the target.

OR

- † Make a Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 25) to patrol the coast. This will not allow the character to find the cove, but does allow him to find the target ship 1d4 hours after it leaves the cove's protection.

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