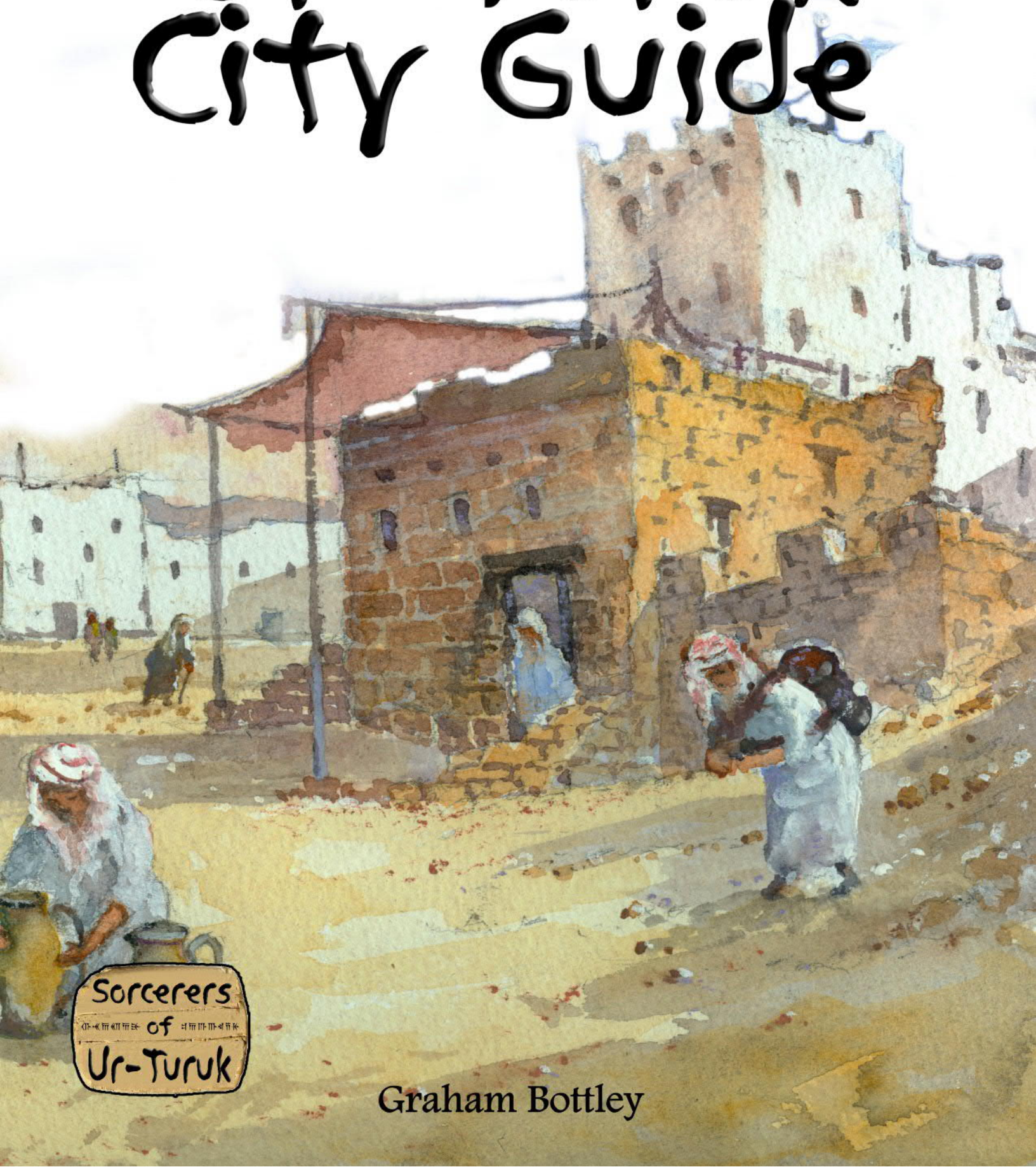


Ur-Turuk City Guide



Sorcerers
of
Ur-Turuk

Graham Bottley

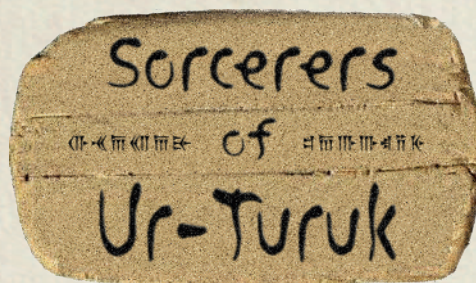
The ancient city of Ur-Turuk lies baking and dusty under a burning sun and is known as the City of the Sorcerers due to it's most famous inhabitants.

This companion volume to the "Sorcerers of Ur-Turuk RPG" core book brings you a detailed description of the history, streets, people and intrigues of this teeming metropolis.

Explore the various city districts, meet the Factions vying for power and control, learn about the Gods both kind and terrifying and experience the vibrant life of the city.

This book is a perfect addition to any Sorcerers of Ur-Turuk campaign, but could easily be used with almost any Sword and Sorcery RPG.

Step through the Gates and lose yourself in Ur-Turuk!



Acknowledgements.

This volume has taken some time to write and finish, forever slipping down my “to do” list or delayed. It was, originally, a stretch goal for the Kickstarter campaign, which itself feels like ancient history now. However, gentle inquiries from various KS backers have kept this moving slowly forward, and to all backers (and indeed Arion Games customers) I owe a huge amount of thanks.

I really must mention the fantastic efforts of Brian, the artist who has provided most of the watercolour art for this book. Some of his works hang on the wall of my office, inspiring me every day and I think the paintings really make this book.

And last but not least, my parents and family have been of enormous support, especially Florence, Benjamin and Beatrice!

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INTRODUCTION

The Sorcerers of Ur-Turuk RPG featured a chapter on the people, history and geography of the ancient City of Sorcerers. Although sufficient to run a game set in the city, it did not really offer enough depth for an extended campaign. Therefore, the idea of this book was born.

A GM can use this book to populate the narrow streets, noble palaces and myth-shrouded temples of the city as a backdrop to the adventures and intrigues of the Sorcerers and their Vahnam. A player can safely read this book as there are no secrets contained within. This was entirely intentional on the part of the author. For one thing, adding secrets of the setting would restrict the potential audience for the book (always a bad thing) and for another it then artificially constrains the GM to following those plots. The hints and suggestions within give a GM room to determine their own story behind the scenes whilst still maintaining a constant setting.

A GM should also remember that this book provides what is commonly known or believed about the city, both historically and today. Just because something is written here does not mean that it is absolute truth in your game. A player should never complain “but in this book it says...”!

Codex 1: History of Ur-Turuk

This chapter describes the history of the great city of Ur-Turuk as recorded by the palace scribes, which can be found in the Royal Library. There are some dissenters who say that this history is little more than propaganda and that the real history is one of repression and bloodshed. It is up to the reader to make up their own mind.

Founding

No-one knows from where they came, but the Alulim have defined the development of the world, even after they vanished without trace. These huge humanoids were master manipulators of magical energies and used these powers to construct vast buildings, even though they apparently had no culture or society. The Alulim appear to have been carnivores, and their favoured prey were the primitive humanoids that had spread throughout the hills and desert margins. The Alulim farmed these humans, breeding them as both beasts of burden and food. There are suggestions that the Alulim also taught these humans language and other skills, although most of the Priests insist that these skills were a later gift from the Gods.

At some point, although the exact details are not known, the Alulim vanished without trace. Although occasional Alulim tombs are found, ornate constructions around a shrivelled and mummified body, it is not thought that the Alulim succumbed to disease or war; rather that some powerful magical accident caused all of these ancients to vanish suddenly. Without the Alulim to corral their “livestock”, the humans fled their confinement and spread out across the inhabitable regions of the world. Some headed into the hills, and some to the forests. A few took to the desert, scraping a living from oases, and some headed to the coasts.

It did not take long for the humans to build villages, farm livestock and grow crops. Metalwork, pottery and other crafts spread quickly, and human civilisation soon looked familiar to a current resident of Ur-Turuk. The Gods also began to be worshipped in these first villages, although there are no legends or writings that describe how this came to be.

The years passed...

One thousand, four hundred and seventy five years before the present day, the warlord Ziundra led his spearmen, slingers and four wheeled chariots out of their nomadic camps in the Valley of Serpents and across the desert wastes towards the coast. Although he did not find a fertile river valley or wide delta, he did find several small villages built in a highly fertile area of numerous freshwater springs, all clustered around a natural harbour.

The villagers, in their crude huts, managed to grow a wide range of crops, even if their yields were low. They herded small flocks of various food animals and fished just off shore in small reed boats. Their simple lives were rudely interrupted by the large horde of soldiers that descended upon them, and even more so by the long trail of wives, children and pack animals that soon followed. Initially, the "army" camped nearby whilst Ziundra decided where fate would lead him and his tribe. The warlord was in favour of heading south along the coast

in search of more villages to plunder, and was supported in this view by all of his war chiefs. However, a small girl named Nianna approached the warlord at council and boldly declared that he could be the greatest chieftain in the world if he listened to her, and his tribe would all lead more comfortable lives.

The war chiefs in the huge tent laughed long and loud at this impertinence, but something in the confidence of the girl made Ziundra think about her words. He dismissed the incredulous chieftains from his tent and asked Nianna what she intended.

The following morning, the spearmen stacked their spears and started to dig vast amounts of clay and mud, to be turned into bricks by the slingers. Within a week, mudbrick houses began to appear on the site of the primitive villages, each surrounded by a walled courtyard and with its own well. Within a month there were streets, marketplaces and granaries. Within a year the new city was surrounded by a mud brick wall with impressive gateways.

The population of Ur-Turuk (meaning 'Place of the Springs') grew rapidly as the inhabitants of small villages flocked to this new style of living. It was also at this time that slavery became



well established in the city; initially only condemned criminals and enemy soldiers were made into slaves, but before long debtors were sold into slavery and professional slavers were seizing villagers from remote settlements to meet demand!

Ziundra proclaimed himself King of the new city and led his army (relieved of building duties and armed with the latest weapons) to subdue and seize the surrounding villages and countryside to ensure a constant supply of food. .

Although apparently a successful King, Ziundra was killed and replaced by his youngest son some seven years after the founding of the city.

Nianna, who provided the idea of the city in the first place, became a priestess of the Great God Enu and oversaw the construction of a sprawling mud brick temple complex. Like many Priestesses of Enu, she married several husbands and had numerous children. On reaching the age of eighty, she mounted her favourite mule and headed out into the desert, never to be seen again.

Legends say that Nianna will return when Ur-Turuk faces it's greatest threat!

The Growth of the City

The city continued to grow for another two hundred and seventeen years, expanding ever outwards as the population increased. The city walls were torn down and rebuilt several times to allow this growth, and the houses within the walls became more complex. Temples began to proliferate, and merchants and noble families prospered. Then, twelve hundred and fifty eight years ago, a new High Priest of Enu was appointed. Claiming descent from Nianna herself, the firebrand Taren caused a storm amongst all peoples within the city by claiming that the chosen of Enu were superior to nobles, generals and even the King himself.

With many of the common workers following the charismatic Priest, the city seemed headed towards civil war. At the last moment, a deal was agreed between the King at the time (whose name is not even remembered) and Taren. The city would fund the building of a new temple to Enu and the Priest would support the King and the nobles.

Construction took nearly ten years and the backbreaking physical work was performed by over a thousand slaves. To get closer to Enu, God of the Sun (amongst other things), the Priests demanded a huge ziggurat temple. The

stepped shape built of millions of mud bricks rose ever higher as the years rolled on, with chambers and halls built within. Eventually, Taren laid the final mud brick on the topmost layer and lit a fire using a water lens to focus the rays of the sun. As soon as the fire was alight on the altar stone, one hundred of the slaves were sacrificed and their hearts burned in the sacred fire. Every day thereafter, at dawn, noon and dusk, another of the slaves was sacrificed until every last one had been given to Enu.

The appearance of the great Ziggurat and the apparent political power of the High Priest of Enu spurred the other religions to greater effort, and soon other great (and small) Temples were springing up across the city. It is around this time that the various factions started to gain their eminence, each pushing for greater political power around the person of the King. Not all of the Factions that fought for dominance in those early days still exist,

and many of the factions now found in the city were formed since, although all will claim to be of ancient origin.

Another event of huge import that occurred in those tumultuous days, was the Sorcerer Hayyan and his fellow users of Magic appearing in the city. Until this point, humans had never been able to utilise the magical forces with which the Alulim had been so adept.

When Hayyan stood proud in the central plaza of the city and demanded an audience with the King, the nobles and guard laughed and threatened the tall, curly-bearded man. With a curt nod to his six fellow Sorcerers, they all raised their arms. With not a sound, fire fell from the sky, small dragons rushed here and there spouting flames, small buildings exploded and the palace walls cracked. As quickly as the terror had started, it ceased, leaving charred corpses and devastated buildings.



Hayyan stepped towards the Vizier of the King (who had survived mostly unscathed, his beard charred and his nerves rattled) and with only a slight smile asked again in a quiet voice for an audience with the King. Hayyan entered the Palace, and although no-one knows for sure what was said in that gilded and fabulous throne room, the first Vahnam of Sorcerers was established in a large house in the docks area. It soon became known throughout the city that Hayyam had found something out in the wilds that had allowed him to wield unimaginable power.

The first effect of the appearance of the Sorcerers was the arrangement of numerous expeditions into the wilds by hopeful treasure hunters, would be Sorcerers and nobles looking for power. Many of these never returned, or at least never returned intact, and this craze was forgotten. Still, many men and women approached the Vahnam in hope, pleading, begging and offering good coin to be trained in the magical arts. Although some were trained, very few had the full potential to achieve greatness as a true Sorcerer, and had instead to content themselves with lesser magical ability.

The Vahnam was a focus of real power in the city even if not political power, but despite the wealth and goods showered upon the Vahnam by wealthy city dwellers, the household was

not a happy place. Internal rivalries between the seven Sorcerers of the Vahnam and their apprentices over differences both small and large created huge problems, and some city casualties. The original seven soon split acrimoniously and all but Hayyan left Ur-Turuk for other cities, leaving their original leader in that first Vahnam building. Even then, all was not harmonious. Hayyan suspected his apprentices and even servants of spying on his work on various strange and mysterious artefacts and he ended up living all but alone.

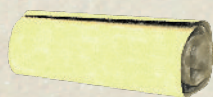
Seven years after the showdown on the central plaza, Hayyan set out with only his manservant and four camels on a secret mission into the wilderness. Hayyan never returned, although his manservant eventually did, half dead from exhaustion and thirst. He was unable to say too much about what he had seen as his tongue and eyes had been torn out, and after a week of suffering, he died in agony. Within a week of the old man's return, the Vahnam had been taken over by the dismissed apprentices, and Sorcerers have been resident in the city ever since.

There have never been many Sorcerers at any one time, with the lesser Mages more frequently seen practicing magic on the city streets.

Major Events

Below are listed a few of the major events that have rocked the city of Ur-Turuk since the times of the Ziggurat building and appearance of the Sorcerers. Of course, there are many more events than just these few in the long and crowded history of such a city, but these are some of those that are well known to all citizens even now.

One note about the calendar followed in the city of Ur-Turuk. The calendar is always expressed in terms of the number of years before the present year. This of course can potentially lead to confusion in written documents, and so the year of writing will be recorded as the number of years since the current King took the throne. To this end, there is a whole cadre of clerks within the city government responsible for maintaining accurate lists of the Kings of the city, and up to date records of the antiquity of specific events.



Eight hundred and ninety six years ago, city society was obsessed with an intense rivalry between two prominent Vahnam's, each claiming to be the pre-eminent authority on magic in the city. Small scale stand-offs

between Vahnam Sorcerers were a daily occurrence in the crowded city streets, taverns, and even in society events. The intensity and frequency of these events increased almost daily, until they came to a head at a lavish wedding between the eldest daughter of the King and a royal Prince of the city of Lasash. The chief Sorcerers from both rival Vahnam's were both invited to the event, possibly as a misguided attempt to reconcile them. As the traditional drink to celebrate the marriage was drunk, the two Sorcerers (Rarat the Grey and Yatu Ballu) started to have a loud and violent argument. Various servants and officials attempted to calm matters, as did the King himself, but to no avail. Before the Sorcerers could be restrained, spells and magic began to erupt throughout the palace hall. When the smoke finally cleared, both Sorcerers were dead, as were two hundred and sixteen of the guests, including the bride.

The anger of the King was huge, as was that of the Prince of Lasash. Both of the feuding Vahnam's were visited by a large number of armed soldiers and one random Sorcerer from each was executed on the spot. The voice of the King, heard several streets away, declared that any further public duelling with magic would be met with rapid and extreme violence. This law has never been repealed by any subsequent King, although disagreements tend to be overlooked in later years.

The city came to the brink of collapse eight hundred and eleven years ago, due to the deprivations and foibles of King Nud-Arar. Several otherwise harmless factions were wiped out completely and others survived only by going underground. Senior government officials and city officers found themselves arrested at dawn, charged with a whole range of crimes by mid-morning and publicly executed at noon. On one particularly noteworthy day, every ship in the harbour was set alight and cast off just before dusk to provide a light show for his current mistress. The “night of the flaming sea” proved to be the last straw, and that very night the surviving senior nobles met and decided to rid the City of its King.

The assassination was carried out by a Gladiator who was presented to the royal stand for winning three successive bouts. Although the gladiator was almost immediately cut down by the royal bodyguard, a new (and more sympathetic) King was soon on the throne, and the family of the gladiator richly rewarded with money and land. An interesting footnote to this episode is that Sumula (the new King) immediately changed his name to Nud-Arar. Thus the official list of Kings does not show a break in Kingship at this time!

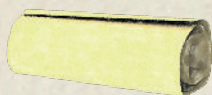


Some six hundred and seventy nine years ago, a merchant of Kar arrived in the city with thirty two followers and nearly ninety camels, loaded down with spices, herbs and rare metals. Despite following this trade route for many years, Horati the Trader was a little careless as he entered the city and took the wrong turning. The ensuing street battle was short but vicious and it ended with the attacking gang taking all of the camels and leaving all but one of the merchant caravan dead in the dust.

The ambassador from Kar was most distressed at this situation (not least because he had invested heavily in Horati’s business) and protested most strongly to the King. The Black Face faction, who had been behind the attack, were at the time one of the most powerful in the city and one of the key powers behind the throne. King Shimeli, a weak and timid ruler, gave in to the threats from nearby and expelled the ambassador. Even worse, the envoys from Kar who arrived to demand restitution were themselves ambushed and severely beaten after getting lost!

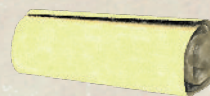
The next development was the arrival of a large army of spearmen, archers and war chariots from the northern city outside the

walls of the city. King Shimeli, in his pride, threatened to unleash the power of his resident Sorcerers (without their knowledge) on the invading army. The commander of the forces from Kar retorted that they also had Sorcerers within the army, thus causing King Shimeli to send his own army to the attack. Four small battles followed over the course of the next three weeks, all of them won by Kar, but the final huge battle was won by the Ur-Turuk army. Despite winning the battle, King Shimeli was strangely found dead with an arrow in his neck at the end of the battle. In the event, Ur-Turuk paid restitution for the losses of the merchant, but Kar paid almost equivalent restitution for the death of the King. This was the most significant of the wars that the city has been involved in, and mostly representative of the way the battles have gone.



Five hundred and twenty two years before the current day, King Zarlumesh announced to his courtiers, nobles and advisors that he would head east across the sea towards the rising sun to discover the land from which the sun sets off on his journey. The King then commissioned a vast fleet of nearly fifteen hundred ships, some vast galleys crewed by slaves, some trading vessels with large triangular sails and some small two man boats. On the first day of the new year, the vast fleet


set off, commanded by the King himself from the foredeck of his flagship Eye of Eru. Only one small boat returned, washed up on a beach south of the city some nine months later. Although there were no people on board, scratched into the deck were the words, "We saw...".




Four hundred and seventy seven years ago, King Ubura (son of the vanished Zarlumesh) died at the age of sixty eight, leaving no less than forty three daughters, but only one son. This son was immediately crowned King Meleg, although from the day of his coronation, Meleg began to accumulate a reputation to rival that of his infamous ancestor Nud-Arar! This foolish man targeted the major religions, but even more foolishly also targeted the several Vahnams at that point resident in the city. Numerous Priests, and even two Sorcerers, lost their lives in the following tumult with the most senior victim being the High Priest of Enu.

Despite the protestations of the entire religious community, Meleg declared himself High Priest of every religion simultaneously. One clear morning, King Meleg ascended the Ziggurat in solemn procession to sacrifice several prominent nobles to Enu. Before the knife could be plunged into the first breast, a huge bird swept out of the clear blue sky and seized

the King. Circling high into the sky, the bird was almost out of sight when he dropped the King, directly above the Ziggurat itself. Needless to say, the resulting corpse was not recognisable as being formerly human.

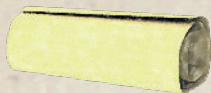


The year two hundred and twelve before the present was notable for a huge plague of scorpions that suddenly arose during a period of drought. Every house was infested with scorpions both large and small, and many animals and people lost their lives over the ten weeks or so of the plague. Eventually, the Sorcerer Ishul returned to the city from a long journey into the wilderness. Ishul was renowned for his ability with animal magic, and within three days no scorpions were to be found anywhere in the city. Ishul never revealed how he had rid the city of the insects, but to this day scorpions are never found naturally within the city walls.



One hundred and fifty one years before the present day, a political and physical battle emerged between the Line of Enu and the followers of the Red God. The initial argument appears to have started due to the selection of the same person by both religions for a keynote sacrifice. That the sacrifice was a minor noble and quite unwilling was ignored by both sets of Priests who immediately commenced assassinations, commercial subterfuge, political attacks and much more against their rivals. Eventually the attacks petered out,

mainly due to the attrition on Priest numbers and supporters, but the two religions have ever since considered each other deadly enemies.



Religion suffered another major upset in the city one hundred and three years ago, when a mad hermit by the name of Yaral Gutum emerged from the deep desert and began ranting in the city squares about the existence of a previously unknown God. The Blind Serpent was apparently curled around a vast stone pillar in the centre of the desert, but was able to exert influence across the whole world. Despite ridicule and even stoning's, Yaral Gutum began to attract followers, acolytes and patrons. A month after his arrival, the hermit gouged out his own eyes outside the main door of the Temple of Enil, ancient God of craftsmen and trade.

The Priests of Enil attempted to stop this display of devotion, but were rushed by the suddenly fanatical crowd of onlookers. Support for Enil faded fast over the coming months, and before long the temple itself had been taken over by the new Cult of the Blind Serpent with Yaral Gutum as High Priest. His first act upon taking up residence in his new temple was to order the melting down of the vast bronze mask in the main chamber, and a huge statue of a snake crafted from the metal. There are still small and minor temples of Enil in the city, but the

Priests of the Blind Serpent can be found on every street.



Twenty three years before the present, the Sorcerer Ar-Halmir travelled with a small group to a newly discovered Alulim ruin many days travel inland. Although this was apparently another expedition like many undertaken by that Vahnam, Ar-Halmir was the only survivor, being found wandering alone and delirious by a nomadic tribe. Brought back to health and passed from tribe to tribe, Ar-Halmir eventually returned to his home in Ur-Turuk. The Sorcerer was interrogated by his Vahnam colleagues but could not remember anything beyond entering what they all thought was just another ruin. After returning to the city, Ar-Halmir found that every spell he cast was significantly more powerful, but at the same time far more unpredictable. Over the course of the following week, his hair turned white and his eyes red and the power of his magic grew. On one fateful day, the District where the Vahnam resided was rocked by a storm of magic and destruction as Ar-Halmir destroyed his fellow Sorcerers in a day-long battle. When the dust cleared and the city watch dared venture into the rubble, they found no trace of the unfortunate Sorcerer. There has never been a repeat of this event but all Sorcerers fear finding the ruin that proved so fatal.

Codex 2: The City Today

Significant Individuals

Although the city of Ur-Turuk has had a long and turbulent history as described in the previous chapter, the current situation is no less unsettled. Although the King seems to wield ultimate and unchallenged power in the city and wider countryside, there are many challenges to this power from the major factions, religions and nobles, as well as outside pressure from other cities and even bandit lords.

Most of the major figures within the city are the leaders of the individual factions (detailed further in Codex 4) but there are some individuals who wield great power and influence yet are outside the major factions. Some of these are in positions that traditionally confer great power (such as the King and General of the Army) whilst others have used their position to acquire power. Of course, although these personages are outside of the more formal faction system, they also rely on the support of powerful factions to maintain their own power.

The King is obviously the most powerful of these significant figures, the remainder are listed in no particular order.

King Shul-Suen

Current King of Ur-Turuk

The current King is in late middle age and now somewhat portly, although he was renowned for his physique and skill at hunting when young. He is always impeccably dressed in the brightest silks and most expensive cloth, and always bedecked with jewels and gems.

Although he started his reign in a positive and enthusiastic way, he is now somewhat lazy and easily led by the opinions and advice of others. He also has a fairly short attention span and an idea that he considers the greatest ever one week may well be forgotten a week later.

Shul-Suen is not overly cruel, especially compared to previous Kings, but he is not above sending those who displease him to the arena or thrown off a high tower.

The King has one official wife, a good number of concubines, six official children and more



than a hundred unofficial children scattered around the city.

Anyone granted an audience with the King will first be impressed with his benevolent manner, but this can change rapidly depending on who has his ear at the time.

Lipit

Senior Ambassador

This elderly woman from one of the deep desert tribes has very dark skin and tightly braided grey hair. She wears the familiar red robes of all Ambassadors, and has spent a lifetime moderating between factions within the city and even between cities. She is well known to be absolutely fearless, and thinks nothing of walking even the most desperate streets late at night on her own. She has of course been attacked several times, but every time she has talked her way out of the situation through her

superlative negotiating skills and incredible self belief.

Lipit is regarded by all city Ambassadors as their head, although this has little practical effect. She is however the first one to be called upon by any of the factions to help settle disputes.

Although generally friendly, she has little time for fools or idiots and considers a lack of thought to be the worst of sins.

Muzid

Overseer of the Arena

This ex gladiator is lean and hard and has a tanned body criss-crossed with scars, earned by a lifetime of combat. He now carries only a shamshir, despite being skilled with a wide variety of weapons, and is never seen wearing armour. Having spent so long inside the arena, the overseer knows everything about



gladiatorial combat, gladiators and the spectators who pay to watch.

Muzid is not affiliated with any faction, but has good contacts within many. He is usually attended by 5-6 current gladiators, and it would be a foolish faction indeed that started a street war with the arena.

Muzid is able to hire new Gladiators, controls the official betting within the arena, controls the buying of wild animals and monsters and is otherwise the absolute ruler of the world within the arena walls.

General Panum

Commander of the Ur-Turuk Army

An elderly warrior with dark tanned skin and white beard and hair, Panum has led the small standing army of the city for nearly three decades. He feels somewhat uncomfortable within the city itself, being more used to a tent in the wilderness surrounded by a military camp.

Panum does not lose his temper easily, but when he does it can be explosive. He has chosen several sub-commanders now that he is getting old, and he trusts them implicitly. He knows, as do they, that if they were to betray

his trust they and their family would suffer badly.

Panum has always been fiercely loyal to the city, even above the person of the King, and will do anything to protect it.

He does have a wife and several adult children, although he does not have a close bond with any due to his prolonged military patrols away from the city.

Prince Batab

Senior son of King Shul-Suen

The eldest son of the King, Batab is a highly confident and extrovert young man, knowing that it is only a matter of time before he is absolute ruler of the city. He has attracted a large collection of hangers-on and admirers, most of whom he considers idiots, who he will use and discard as the mood takes him. He is almost as flighty as his father, but without the sense of experience.

Batab is not yet married, although he is known to visit several noble houses late at night, although several political marriages have been suggested by the advisors to the King. Batab has on numerous occasions made use of various low types to achieve ends he could not achieve officially.

Lady Bulal

Noblewoman of ancient family

This young woman inherited a vast estate of city property and rural estates when she was barely out of her teens. She has always lived a life of incredible luxury and considers herself far more important than mere common people. She is always impeccably dressed and attended by body servants and bodyguards, and spends most of her time relaxing. Her favourite pursuit however is hunting, and she has an extensive stable of mounts, numerous hunting beasts, more than a hundred hunting bows of different design and a whole platoon of skilled huntsmen.

Lord Nawa

Nobleman of great wealth

Only middle aged, but with a long and straggly grey beard and thinning grey hair, this Nobleman is one of the most influential in the entire city. His bloodline goes right back to the founding of the city (reputedly his ancestor was a bastard son of Ziundra the Warlord) and his wealth rivals that of the King itself. He has several huge sprawling palaces in rural districts, including a clifftop palace overlooking the sea to the north of Ur-Turuk, and also has a huge palace within the city itself. Nawa has a whole tribe of children, but refuses to name his successor publically, meaning that

every son and daughter strives daily to become his favourite. It is rumoured that only the King knows who the heir will be.

Nawa is known to be outside the main factions, but he channels financial support to whichever faction he feels will further his own private and mysterious aims at the current time.

Satrap Kug-Ter

Governor of Dranghosia

The Velayat of Dranghosia is one of the furthest from the city, lying between the hills and River Shira to the north-west of Ur-Turuk itself. Although distant, the Velayat has several gold and silver mines and produces copious crops of various fruits from the cooler hill slopes.

Kug-Ter was born into a family of labourers, goat herds and fruit pickers, but rose initially through the local bureaucracy and then through the ranks of the city administration. Upon the offer of a promotion to that of Satrap, Kug-Ter requested his home Velayat. He rules it with an iron fist, tolerating no dissent or independence. Despite his lowly beginnings, he has no time for the common people and considers only public officials to be worthy of respect.

Current state of the city

The city is currently, as always, finely balanced between chaos and success. This is not such much by design as by an accident of circumstance. The city is much like a gyroscope; however you prod it or push it, it keeps on going!

There has been relative peace in Ur-Turuk for several years now, more through a lack of partisan patronage by the King than any direct action.

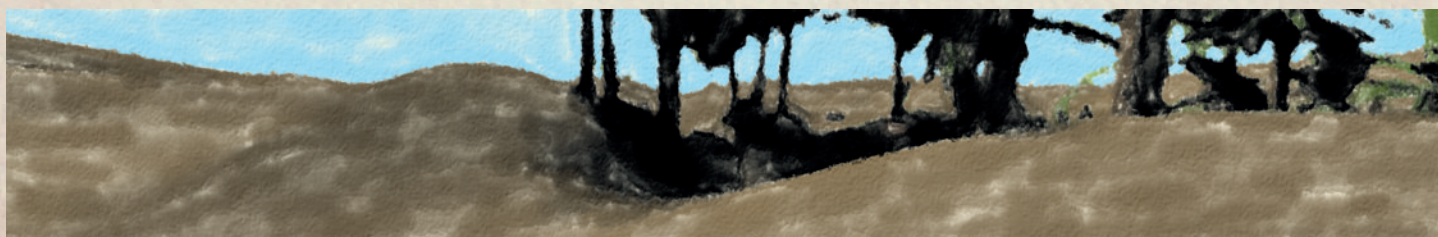
The city administration has entered a rare run of efficiency, able to keep the taxes rolling in with the minimum of effort or conflict. The judiciary, such as it is, keeps the extent of major crime fairly low, although it would be impossible to eliminate all crime in a city such as Ur-Turuk. The notorious districts are by and large left alone by the city officials. Tax collection would be difficult and dangerous and trying to enforce the rule of law would be futile. However, arrangements with appropriate factions can keep even these desperate areas from becoming war zones.

External Relations

The city of Ur-Turuk maintains embassies in all nearby cities and has contact with smaller towns, villages and tribes outside of its direct sphere of influence. Ur-Turuk has had numerous skirmishes and border clashes over the many years since its founding, and so inter-city relations have been, and remain, very variable. The current state of affairs are briefly described below.

Kar

A large city some way to the north of Ur-Turuk, Kar is both a major trade partner and a major trade rival. The fact that Kar is built on both banks of the confluence of the Rivers Urmia and Shira means that the northern city also has a strong river trade. Generally Ur-Turuk is on good terms with Kar, although there have been several attempts by Kar-ian merchants to divert Ur-Turuk bound ships further north. This has not gone down well in Ur-Turuk despite there being no official complaints.



Ishan

This large town is about a day's travel up the River Urmia from Kar. Fiercely independent and a rival to its larger neighbour, Ishan is currently attempting to forge an alliance with Ur-Turuk for self protection and to try and forge preferential trade deals. However, all ships from Ishan must pass through Kar and two have recently been sunk after failing to stop and pay river tolls. Ishan is obviously unhappy at this treatment and its ambassadors have been travelling frequently overland to Ur-Turuk to drum up support.

Ghrazi

This city is another port rival to Ur-Turuk, and its close relationship with Lasash makes it a trade rival too. However, there is still a significant trade with Ur-Turuk, especially for timber floated down the great river. Current thinking in Ur-Turuk is split between courting Ghrazi and trying to usurp its sea trade.

Lasash

This central desert city is built near the headwaters of the River Habani and at the foot of the northern hills. There are many mines in the hills nearby and Lasash is a centre for metal

production and export. Although much of this metal is sent down the river, ultimately to the port city of Ghrazi, some does go overland to Ur-Turuk. The embassy from Ur-Turuk has been trying for many years to increase its influence in Lasash, without much success.

Mani

This small walled city downstream from Lasash is famous for its thieves, robbers and bandits. It attempts to charge a high toll on the metal exported from its bigger northern neighbour, but the armed boat guards usually prevent interference. Ur-Turuk has little to do with this city to avoid upsetting Lasash, although a small embassy is maintained.

Shuparak

This large coastal town sits on a natural cliff harbour a day or two to the south of Ur-Turuk. Although not officially under the control of its larger neighbour, the ruler of this town has the ambassador from Ur-Turuk as a permanent member of his council and very rarely takes any decision that goes against the wishes of the city. There are rumours on the streets of Ur-Turuk that the King is plotting to take over the town completely.

Codex 3: Outside The City

Local Environment

Ur-Turuk is located on a desert coastline in a tropical region and so the surrounding landscape is mostly sandy or rocky and dry. What vegetation there is grows along rivers, near oases or in areas where long-rooted trees can get to the ground water. There is little in the way of seasons, being equally hot all year round, and the day and night are roughly equal in length.

The only variability in annual weather is the two month rainy season, although not that much rain actually falls on the city itself. The coastal location means that although rain-laden clouds roll in off the sea, they don't tend to shed this rain until they are further inland and over higher ground. Of course, this water still finds its way down rivers and streams, and even through ground water back to the surrounding farmland and the city itself.

During the greater part of the year, the skies are cloudless and the sun burns hot, meaning that the days are very warm or hot within an hour of dawn. During the rainy season, the weather cools a little although it would still be

considered warm. The nights are much cooler, although rarely actually cold.

The turbulent seas to the east do sometimes breed violent thunderstorms that roll into the coast and sweep over the cities. Almost constant lightning strikes are accompanied by roaring winds, torrential rain and even hailstones. Although infrequent, these storms are feared by the inhabitants of the city for the street quagmires and building damage that invariably results.

Rural districts

Agriculture

The land immediately around the city for some ten miles or so in all directions is peppered with natural wells and oases, springs and streams. This means that although the soil is naturally sandy and coarse, it nevertheless grows plenty of grain, corn, peas and garlic. These crops produce a fair amount of fodder as an extra benefit and so there are plentiful livestock, with cows and goats the most common.

Some areas are suitable for fruit trees, especially citrus, but coconuts, figs, dates, bananas and pomegranates are also grown.

Villages and Towns

The countryside is dotted with numerous small villages, each sited at a reliable water source, with each village having numerous small farms. There are also more remote farms and livestock stations, although these are not common, with the all of the dangers to be found in the wilderness.

A typical village will be of 10-20 mud brick compounds, each housing one extended family, and each with its own associated fields. There will also be a meeting place (as simple as a cleared space in the centre of the village or as ornate as a large colonnaded hall), an inn or tavern and a small temple or shrine. Any other buildings will generally be barns, stables, granaries or other storage spaces.

Because villages are built near a water source, they are usually fairly green, with trees and plants growing around and between the buildings providing welcome shade from the sun as well as fruits and timber.

There are also a number of small towns in the area surrounding the city. These are in the

main larger versions of the villages, with the same mud brick compounds built closer together to form distinct lanes and streets. The towns almost always have a small daily market, several taverns, at least one temple and other civic buildings. The largest town in each velayat (see below) also has a guard barracks and a small palace to house the Satrap and administrative staff.

People

Most of the people found in the villages and towns will be simple farmers and their families. There are rarely any specialised roles such as hunters, craftsmen, priests or herdsman in the villages, instead these jobs are taken on by such farmers as have a little knowledge or skill. Even the village priest will only undertake that role part time, spending much of the day hoeing fields or herding goats.

Towns tend to have a few more specialists, but even these tend to undertake several professions at once. As such, you may well visit the same person to have your shoes mended as you would to buy dried lizard meat! Towns are also the place to find non-locals. The population of a village will have either been born in the village itself or one of the neighbouring settlements, whilst a town will have a few travelling merchants, a few rogues

hiding away from the city, some garrison soldiers, a wandering priest and other Diaspora.

A stranger in a town will attract some attention if they are dressed unusually, behave strangely or obviously have money. Any stranger will attract attention in a village!

Although towns and villages are generally insular, their people do travel to local markets and even to Ur-Turuk itself. They may not travel regularly, but most villagers will have been to their local town numerous times and to the city at least once or twice. Many will also have fallen prey to urban predators, which is often the case when rural folk travel to the large city!

Because of this, city people who turn up in small villages are treated with a certain reticence and fear. Villagers will also be very unlikely to have seen even a minor mage, let alone a true Sorcerer, and will either be completely overawed or terrified of any overt displays of magic.

Governance and Infrastructure

Each province, known as a Velayat, is governed by a Satrap. This Satrap is assigned by the King himself from a select pool of

courtiers, army officers, faction leaders and priests. The Satrap has almost complete power within their own Velayat, and almost none outside.

The largest town within a Velayat will be the administrative and military base of the district. There will be an official palace, providing accommodation for the Satrap and his staff and usually barracks for the garrison, although the often spartan nature of the official palace means that many of the Satraps build or buy their own house in the town. This more luxurious residence is usually next to or very near the official palace. Although Satraps can and do travel outside their Velayat (normally to Ur-Turuk), very few of them spend long away due to the risk of revolt and revolution by ambitious underlings.

Some Velayats are seen as a better posting than others. The richest, located on the coast, astride trade routes or near the city, provide ample opportunity for self enrichment by an intelligent Satrap with the right contacts and knowledge, and there is often a constant jostling in the royal court to secure the right appointments. It is not unknown for a Satrap in a profitable Velayat to be eliminated to open the way for promotion!

One of the two major duties of a Satrap is overseeing the civilian administration of the

Velayat. Justice, roads, public buildings, law and order and, most importantly, the gathering and safe delivery of taxes to the city. A Satrap who fails to deliver the promised and expected tax coffers annually will incur the severe displeasure of the King and may well be removed before the next tax is due. Each villager is required to pay an annual tax in their home village or town, although this payment is not based upon the individual wealth of the taxpayer.

To assist with these duties, each Satrap has a staff of clerks, overseers and specialists. Some of these staff wield considerable power within their own region and speciality.

The second major duty is the command of the Velayat garrison. These soldiers, mainly cavalry but with some archers and spearmen, are tasked with the protection of the town and villages within the Velayat and are also used to patrol the roads and wilderness in between the settlements, especially if the roads are heavily used by trade caravans. The Satrap is technically the direct commander of the entire garrison, although the less militarily oriented Satraps have an experienced officer to take control of the day to day matters, and the King is of course the ultimate commander.

Although each garrison has in excess of one hundred soldiers, a large majority of these will

be out on patrol at any one time, leaving a small town guard on duty at the barracks. A Satrap will also have his own bodyguard, and some will also have a small mercenary company for their personal protection.

Most patrols are of mounted troops, using camels, horses or riding lizards to cover maximum distance. These patrols are well supplied with food, water, equipment and spare mounts. There are also numerous sites containing a cache of supplies dotted around the wilderness to help a patrol in need.

A significant minor duty of a Satrap and his administration is to make sure all of the villagers and townspeople in his Velayat have food. The highly fertile river lands produce a large amount of grain, vegetables and fruit, and a portion of this is dried and stored in local granaries. This food is then distributed back again to those in need during times of shortage. This food dole has seen the people through numerous famines and droughts, none of which ever seem to last a particularly long time, and is one reason why the city-state of Ur-Turuk is seen as a good place to live. The local clerks keep a record of all of the households in their district and are responsible for distributing food when needed.

Another minor duty is the construction and maintenance of water projects such as canals, boreholes, river dredging and even stone-lined pipelines. Away from the rivers and oases, water is one of the major limitations on agriculture and even daily life. This work is mainly performed by gangs of slaves, who are moved from project to project. These slaves become almost professionals at their specialised tasks, and in fact many continue to work in civil engineering projects if they manage to buy their freedom.

Trade Routes

There is a huge amount of trade that radiates out from, and to, the city of Ur-Turuk, most of which is overland and thus passes through the surrounding countryside. There is some trade direct between towns and villages, but most rural produce is sent to the city for sale.

There is obviously a lot of coastal trade from the city of Ur-Turuk itself to the other cities, but very few of the coastal towns and villages have deep or sheltered enough harbours to support any serious trade. Thus although large trade ships are often seen sailing past, very few of them stop for longer than it takes to resupply.

The overland trade routes are primarily served by long caravans of pack animals. Carts and wagons are used for very heavy loads such as stone and timber, but the routes from the quarries and forests to the city have long been surfaced and reinforced to allow the vehicles to travel. Most of the roads are not nearly good enough to support constant wheels, hence the reliance on animal trains.

Camels, horses and mules are all very popular pack animals, due to their low cost and resilience on long journeys. More exotic animals such as riding lizards or elephants are



also used, although very few caravans will be composed entirely of these beasts.

The merchants who run the caravans are often the same ones who will buy the goods at source and sell them at their destination. These merchants will hire guards and herdsmen (or even have them as permanent employees) and will subsequently keep all of the profits from a trade route. They also, of course, stand to lose everything if the worst happens. Smaller merchants will band together for protection on long journeys, cooperating only until the end of a trade run, when the impromptu agreement will end.

There are also “Caravans for hire” that take on one or multiple loads in one city and transport them safely to a merchant or agent at another city. Because there is an element of trust in handing over a valuable cargo of trade goods, the masters of these caravans are known by their exemplary reputation. Losing even one cargo will result in a loss of this reputation and thus much future business. These caravans are often extremely well guarded for this very reason!

To serve the needs of these large and frequent groups of merchants, many caravanserai have sprung up along the main trade routes. These large roadside inns are often very isolated, but have a large staff and their own guards. All

will provide both private and common sleeping rooms, food, stabling for mounts, large pens for pack animals and forage. The prices are usually reasonable, and so these inns are normally very busy most nights, although they are often deserted during the day.

Wildlife & threats

Although the largest and most dangerous beasts have generally been driven even out of the wild areas between settlements, there are plenty of dangerous creatures that manage to eke out an existence in the wilds or even on the margins of villages. Cheetahs, lions, razorbacks and other predators can survive by picking off stray livestock and even lone villagers, although a predator that takes too many domesticated animals or villagers will find itself hunted down by the villagers themselves or soldiers sent by the Satrap.

Probably the most common large predator found near a village will be crocodiles. These reptiles are found in every size from tiny hatchlings to thirty foot long horrors. The presence of a river, oasis or canal in or near every village almost ensures that crocodiles will be nearby.

Although really large and dangerous creatures tend to stay away from the more settled areas,

it is still possible to run into a dangerous creature or find a lair of several predators. Good local knowledge is essential here as many villages will simply avoid the infested area and hope that the predators leave and find somewhere else to live!

Apart from the occasional dangerous creature, the fertile land in and around every village swarms with smaller creatures. Birds of every kind abound, as do rodents, reptiles, insects and amphibians. Of course, smaller predators also make their home near the villages to feed on these smaller creatures.

Probably the most common (and most dangerous) threat to be found in the settled lands around the city will of course be humans. Bandits, outlaws, criminals and other ne'er do wells are all too common on the roads and village outskirts. Most of these are individuals or very small groups, and thus a threat mainly to lone villagers. However, some of these bandits group together to form really quite large gangs, and these are a threat even to military patrols or small army units.

At times, some of the factions also send armed gangs into the velayats, either to try and impose some law where the Satrap has failed, or else try and oppose the plans of another faction.

Legends and Folklore

There is a large divide in belief between Ur-Turuk and the nearby countryside. The city tends to follow highly organised religion in large and formal temples. The rural districts still follow the same religions, although they may have to wait for a wandering priest to visit the village shrine. Villagers will also worship local nature spirits, household gods and their ancestors. This is seen as primitive and laughable to the more sophisticated city folk, but entirely natural to those who actually live in the villages.

Most village houses will have small private shrines to these powers, and although there will be no formal priests, a family elder will take on the role of priest and lead the devotions within the family group.

Each village will also have its own folklore and legends regarding local heroes, historical events and strange events. Some of these will be purely fictional tales passed down through many generations, whilst others will be firmly based in fact. These local tales can have a serious effect on visitors if the legend is based around the peculiar (or malign) actions of strangers!

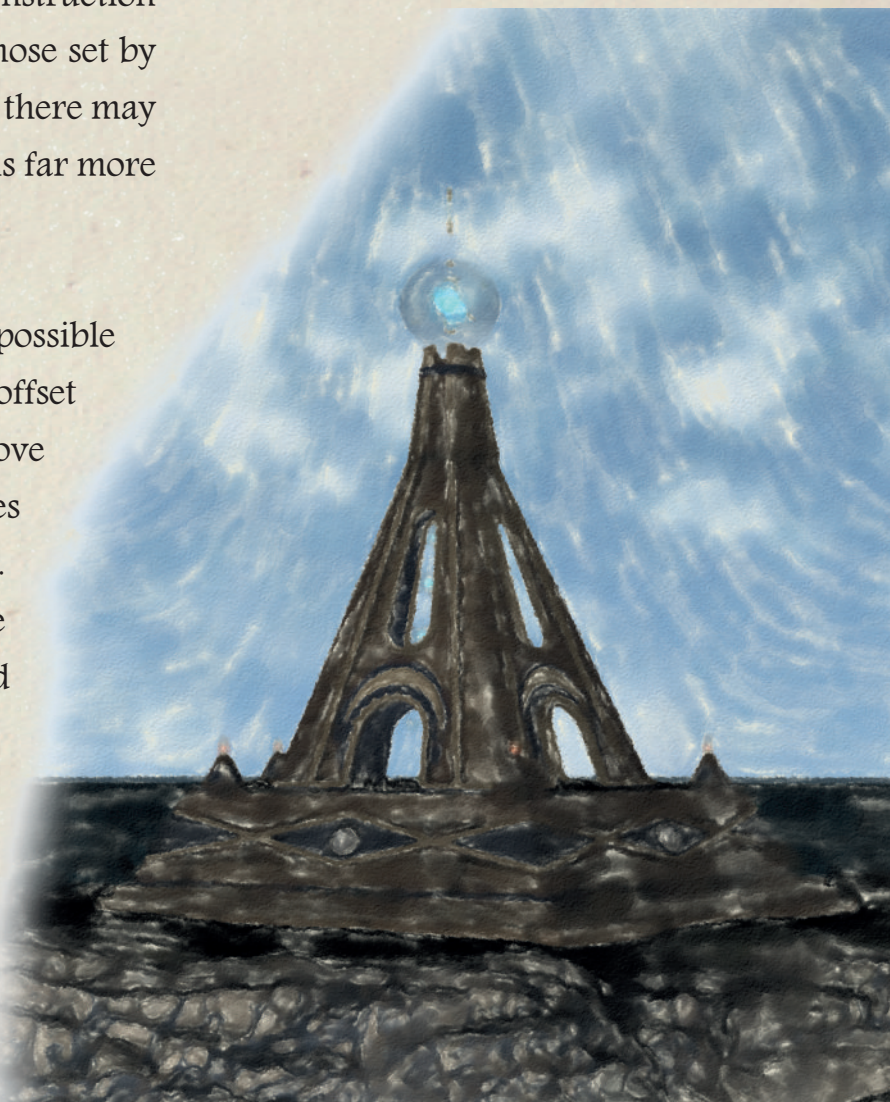
Alulim ruins

There are some ruins built by the mysterious Alulim scattered around the more settled lands around Ur-Turuk, although given that they are well known and more easily accessible, they have almost all been explored and looted by both treasure hunters and the agents of Sorcerers. A mysterious few are still sealed and await someone to work out how to get inside, whilst one notable Alulim compound has even been settled by a brave desert tribe! The exploration of a known but sealed construction poses very different challenges to those set by remote and unsealed ruins. Getting there may be easy and comfortable, getting in is far more difficult!

These ruins can be ornate and impossible towers, metallic domes, stacked and offset disks, huge globes that float just above the ground, underground complexes or buildings of solidified water. Some of these Alulim remains are intact and look much as they would have done on the day the Alulim vanished but others have, for some reason, succumbed to the ravages of time and are in a state of partial collapse. It is suspected that there are still other, unknown ruins buried by the drifting sands of

the desert, by the rocks of a landslide or overgrown with jungle or forest. These buried ruins, even when discovered, must somehow be accessed, which is a significant task in itself!

There are no ruins extant within a days ride of the city of Ur-Turuk. It is said that there were once, but that they have since been destroyed or dismantled in the intervening years. The ruins nearest to the city have long since been discovered, explored and looted and stand empty and desolate. Those that are more remote are those that remain to be explored...



Codex 4: Factions

Life in the city of Ur-Turuk is ruled by the factions to which a person belongs. Every citizen, from the lowest craftsman or dock worker to the King himself, relies on a network of contacts, allies and good relations. Although most will belong primarily to one faction, a person's standing with the other factions will also play a significant role in how easy life is allowed to be.

Of course, there are those that do not belong to a faction at all or only in a minor way. Not all street thugs are members of the Black Face and not all knives for hire are Killers. There are even priests who are members of their religion and not the corresponding faction, although these rarely advance far.

This Codex provides information on the thirteen major factions in the city. There are of course other, lesser, factions in the city. Some of these may have as few as a dozen members and others will only have influence on a single street. The GM is of course free to create whatever factions are desired for a game.

The information given in this chapter on the major factions will also change as a campaign progresses, either due to the actions of the

characters and the Vahnam or due to "off screen" events.

The GM may choose to introduce other minor factions into the city representing the interests of a particular group. There could be a Blacksmiths or Armourers faction, an astrologers faction or even a scholars faction. None of these will wield much political or economic power in the greater city, although within a particular district and amongst a particular type of person they could be significant. These minor factions appear and disappear with some regularity and can be used by the GM to provide either enemies or allies for the Sorcerers and their Vahnam.

Plot Idea

The factions of the city are constantly changing their outlook towards one another with alliances and skirmishes both common and short-lived. An interesting backdrop to a campaign would be a descent into war between the factions, with running battles on the streets, barricades, assassinations and even power struggles within factions. How would the Vahnam operate under such circumstances.

The City Government

Although one of the smallest factions by numbers of active members, the City Government wields probably more power than any other. Most members are either clerks, bureaucrats, courtiers or members of the Royal Family, and the head of the faction is a senior Prince. Although not every member is part of the ruling body, and membership does not confer a government post, the politics of the faction are the politics of the city. This faction is mostly male, for the reason that most city officials and courtiers are male!

History

This faction has been in existence for as long as there has been a formal faction system, and so is one of the oldest factions. The faction has persisted over the years because a good reputation with, and support for, this faction is essential for diplomacy, effective business, land deals and most other larger transactions in the city. It has also had very few other factions openly declaring against it during its history, and those factions are no longer in existence.

Goals

The City Government has one goal: The continued existence and improvement of the

city status. Although the faction officially supports the King, it will oppose a King who seems to be threatening the best interests of the city itself. Kings and other factions will come and go, but the city will continue.

Anyone who professes to support the city itself will be approved of by this faction, and an enemy of the good order of the city is an enemy of this faction.

Significant Members

Prince Sunera is the formal head of this faction, as the fifth child of the King. Sunera has no official government post, although most other members do, and so in theory the Prince is senior to most of the key decision makers in the city. Sunera is an incredibly ambitious man, and sees his position as head of faction as a possible stepping stone to future power. At the same time, he feels a deep loyalty to the city itself and will ruthlessly target anyone who threatens the security of Ur-Turuk.

Lord Thravere is a member of a minor noble family, but has risen to the post of Minister of Security. In this position he has carte blanche to act in the defence of the city and so is an incredibly powerful position. His appointment to this ministry also led to his appointment to the inner council of the faction, as so often happens. Thravere is generally a selfish and suspicious man, and is renowned for being

cruel to the slaves he owns, but he does try his best for the city at large.

Rastor the Old may only occupy a middle-ranking role within the administration, but he has held this position for well over fifty years. The ancient and wrinkled official oversees food imports from the country velayats and so holds a key role in keeping the city fed. Rastor has spent many years acquiring as many favours and contacts as he could manage, and is in an almost invulnerable position.

Initiation

The initiation ceremony to become a formal member of the City Government is held at dawn in the great audience chamber of the palace. The sponsoring member and other mid-ranking and senior members of the faction surround the initiate whilst the initiate recites an oath of allegiance to the city, and swearing to defend the city above all other oaths.

The initiate is then completely wrapped in a huge sheet of yellow silk and must stand completely still whilst all of the other members leave the hall. The initiate can then unwind themselves from the silk and leave the hall.

An initiate need not actually work for the administration, but if they do, immediate superiors cannot be part of the ceremony.

Punishments

A member of the faction who acts against the best interests of the city may be in physical danger from the more militant and fervent members and sub-groups, but even if not, will certainly find it very difficult to live within the city. Taxes will suddenly become very high, almost every official business deal will fall through at an early stage and the offender will find any official request denied or delayed.

Benefits

Although a job within the city administration is not an automatic privilege of membership of this faction, many with a higher standing will have positions of influence granted to them. In addition, a character in good standing with this faction will find it easier to buy land, obtain public contracts or enlist city help, or even obtain access to the King!

Relations to other Factions

City Guard

These two factions tend to have a very good relationship, as the two official branches of the city. There is rivalry on some specific issues, but both realise that they are themselves stronger if the other is also stronger.

Line of Enu

The status of Enu as the Patron God of the city means that the Government has a good and close relationship with this cult. High ranking

ministers are usually invited to major rituals and high priests are usually invited to official city events.

Temple of the Red God

The Government approves of the cult of the Red God with its emphasis on pain and blood, both of which are considered necessary to keep the scum of the city in line.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

The Government is fairly neutral towards this cult. It knows it is popular, hence no disapproval, but sees the flouting of laws in the early days as a challenge to the rule of law and fears it may happen again.

The Dust

This faction is considered irrelevant to the Government although it is not important enough to repress. Official relations are neutral.

Vanishing Hand

This faction, like the Black Face, are criminals, pure and simple, and so in direct competition to the laws of the Government. These factions could be considered at war.

Temple of Uttu

Another cult with which the Government is neutral, the Government does not really care what the devotees get up to in their shadowy cellars, as long as they don't cause trouble.

The Black Face

Like the Vanishing Hand, the Government is at war with this faction.

Killers

Although murder is illegal in Ur-Turuk, many influential people make use of this faction of Assassins to quietly deal with political problems. Thus although the official stance is one of opposition, in practice the Government are regular customers of the services provided by the Killers.

Brotherhood of Coin

This faction and the Government could be considered allies. Profitable trade means plenty of taxes coming in, so the Government supports the Brotherhood. A stable and peaceful city means increased profits, so the Brotherhood supports the Government.

Cult of Nissa

The Government rarely even thinks about this cult, small and scattered as it currently is. Official relations are neutral.

The Bleeding Hook

This faction is somewhat opposed to the Government due to what it sees as repression and in return the Government appreciates the need for the dock workers, but sees them as rebellious and troublesome. Thus official relations are cordial but strained.

The City Guard

The City Guard are the soldiers that protect the city walls and gates, the watchmen that patrol the streets and the guards that keep prisoners incarcerated. Although the City Guard are technically responsible to the City Government and the King, they have a huge amount of independence and anyone who ends up as enemies of the Guard will struggle to live in the city for long, even if they never actually break any laws!

History

This faction is one of the oldest in the city, even if it has changed significantly over the years. Established by one of the earliest Kings as a personal bodyguard, their remit was soon expanded to include law enforcement. As the city became more complicated and grew larger, more and more small roles were added until the City Guard are the main body of armed men within the walls. There have been rebellions and coups by senior Officers over the years but none have ever come to much.

Goals

The main (only) goal of the City Guard is to maintain law and order in the city, at least by their standards. They are not concerned about justice as a concept, preferring instead the end result of a fairly peaceful city. If there are riots,

a visual and harsh punishment will be the end result, even if those punished were not necessarily rioters! They are not particularly concerned about economic or political changes, other than those that affect the monies they receive from the Government.

Most senior officers now are very obviously apolitical as that is one of the main ways of staying in the job!

Significant Members

His Highness Prince Khajaliar is a close cousin of the King and the official leader of the City Guard. Although this fabulously dressed and very overweight Prince is officially in charge, in practice he takes little interest other than signing a few documents and approving a few decisions. He is more than happy to leave most decisions to Rez-Ha-Ama whilst also taking credit for any major successes!

Although Commander Rez-Ha-Ama is only of minor noble birth, he has risen to become the senior officer in the Guard. He does not hold a huge amount of political power in the Guard or the Faction, but does control the Guard on a day to day basis. He is burly and scarred with a pointed goatee beard and braided black hair. He rarely wears finery, preferring a worn guard uniform and armour. He is entirely focused on his job and has very little sense of humour.

Initiation

New City Guardsmen are initiated into the faction in a midnight ceremony held in the main courthouse chamber in the court building. The new Guardsmen, of which there may be several, are lined up in the prisoner area, surrounded by current guardsmen. A senior officer faces the new initiates holding a heavy khopesh and demands of each of them whether they favour law or disorder? The initiate loudly declares that they would give their life in the service of the Guard if asked. The Khopesh is raised by the officer who then asks those assembled whether the “accused” speak truth. The guardsmen all shout yes, and the new initiates are now members!

Punishments

A City Guardsman who accepts bribes, lets a criminal get away when they could be apprehended or even commits a crime will be cast out of the faction, out of their job and indeed arrested. A crime at the minor end of the scale will likely end in a fine, lashes and banishment from the city. Anything more serious will certainly result in a short and very messy period in the arena in front of a large crowd.

Benefits

Members of this faction in good standing will find that their homes suddenly feature on regular patrol routes and that any crimes

committed against them will be aggressively investigated. Notwithstanding interfactional violence, a senior member of this faction will generally live a safe and crime free existence.

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The City Government are probably the main allies of the City Guard as the two main “official” factions. Although there are often minor differences as regards law and order policy, these two factions will work together wherever possible.

Line of Enu

The City Guard are generally well disposed towards Enu, it being the official religion of the city and it’s long and respectable history. Many of the human sacrifices used by the Line of Enu on major holy days are supplied by the condemned cells of the city gaol.

Temple of the Red God

The Red God is also approved of by the City Guard, with the emphasis on pain, punishments and bloodshed. The Guard do have a few reservations about the zeal with which the Red God priests like to spill blood, but overall the two factions get along well.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

The Guard are fairly neutral towards this faction. They are aware of the animosity

between the Blind Serpent and the Red God but do not know the cause. Therefore they watch what the priests of the Blind Serpent do, but rarely intervene.

The Dust

This faction is considered scum by the City Guard, and is considered to be responsible for most of the petty crime in the city. Despite this, there is regular cautious contact between the factions as the City Guard look to purchase information from the street-denzens.

Vanishing Hand

There is nothing but animosity between this faction and the city guard. The Hand are almost all thieves of one sort or another and the fact that they rarely use violence has no bearing at all on the hatred the Guard has for them. A thief is a thief.

Temple of Uttu

The Guard are very wary of the Uttu faction, feeling that they are hiding something with the secrecy they practice. If they have nothing to hide, why do they conduct all of their ceremonies in secret? However, there is no actual proof that the Uttu cult is doing anything wrong and so the Guard are not yet fully opposed.

The Black Face

This faction is probably the worst enemy of the Guard. Not only are they thieves and rogues, they pursue these goals with violence. The Guard persecutes the Black Face with vigour.

Killers

As with the other two underworld factions, the Killers are hated by the City Guard and persecuted wherever possible. Eliminating people should be for the good of the city and should be left to the Guard.

Brotherhood of Coin

The Coin are on fairly good terms with the City Guard. They are a generally law abiding faction and the laws they do break tend to be financial in nature rather than “real” crimes.

Cult of Nissa

The Guard rarely has dealings with Nissa but what dealings it does have are favourable. The Nissa priests look towards peace and stability, goals that the City Guard heartily approve of.

The Bleeding Hook

The City Guard are suspicious of the Bleeding Hook. On the one hand they are apparently hard working people doing an essential job. On the other, they have a reputation for violence and rioting if their pay is poor, contracts are not to their liking or indeed any other grievance.

The Line of Enu

This faction is more than just the priesthood of Enu in the city itself, although all priests are members of the faction. It also counts amongst its members many worshippers of Enu from other walks of life and is a major power in the city.

History

This Faction is one of the oldest in the city and came into being at the same time as the formal priesthood did. Those first priests of the Ziggurat realised that with control of the religious life of the city also came political and social power. As the priesthood and the temple grew in influence, so did the associated faction.

Over the centuries, the faction cemented its power by bringing in influential nobles, military commanders, wealthy merchants and other powerful secular men and women. Although there have been a few internal power struggles over the years, this arrangement has led to the faction becoming very powerful indeed.

The faction today has reach into almost every facet of daily life and has many members who would be expected to pledge loyalty towards

other factions. No-one, even the High Priests, knows just how far this reach goes!

Goals

The oft-stated goal of the Line is to ensure social stability within the city as well as the primacy of Enu over all other Gods. The Line does not oppose the worship of other Gods per se, as long as they are worshipped by as small a congregation as possible!

Significant Members

The current Grand High Priest is not, under faction rules, actually the official leader of the faction, although she certainly wields the most power. Acara is a tall and well built woman of early middle-age who has achieved her high station by a mix of extreme piety, careful political nous and a measure of fortune that has been interpreted by most as the favour of Enu himself. Acara thinks about herself first and the faction and priesthood second and can be ruthless if pushed.

Nawron of Kar is a merchant who has made himself rich by dealing in silks and spices along the coast. He appears as a typical affluent merchant, being fat, well dressed and bejewelled and often suggesting he would sell his own mother for a profit. However, since he became leader of this faction, he has been carefully encouraging supporters and allies to build his own political powerbase.

Prince Hattani is a minor member of the Royal family (a third cousin to the King) who has used his deep and sincere piety to climb higher than he would have been expected to. He considers himself the official go-between in dealing between the Royal court and the Line of Enu.

Initiation

The initiation rites for this faction are separate to those of the priesthood itself, and are actually very simple. The current leader of the faction meets with the applicant and four sponsors in a room deep below the Ziggurat reserved for this purpose only. The leader asks the applicant if they are willing to shed blood for the faction, and when they reply that they are, a small cut is made so that a trickle of blood falls into a brazier. The leader asks if the applicant will support the faction with worldly goods, at which point an expensive item or coins are dropped into the brazier. Lastly, a slave is brought in and the applicant is handed a khopesh asked if they will kill for the faction. At this point, the applicant hands the khopesh back and replies that only Enu may decide life or death. The applicant is then congratulated by their sponsors as the leader leaves without another word.

Punishments

Minor transgressions against the faction by members are dealt with through fines and

public apologies at large temple gatherings. Major infractions are punished by branding with a Ziggurat symbol on the right cheek – a sign that the bearer is in disfavour with Enu. The most severe crimes against the faction tend to result in the person ending up as a ritual sacrifice...

Benefits

The benefits of belonging to this faction are both social (increased influence in society) as well as spiritual (supporting the priesthood makes for a better afterlife!). Members also seem to favour other members when it comes to trade deals, employment and other business.

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The Line has an excellent working relationship with the City Government, being as it is aligned with the official religion of the city.

City Guard

Like the City Government, the Guard are a manifestation of the city itself and so to be worked with and supported. In addition, the City Guard supply many of the condemned prisoners who make up the human sacrifices on major holy days.

Temple of the Red God

As far as the Line of Enu are concerned, the Red God is both an invader, having originated in the lonely deserts, overly violent with their

emphasis on anger and blood, and morally lax due to their refusal to sacrifice people. Although not actually aggressive towards each other, they are unlikely to ever cooperate.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

Relations between the supporters of these two Gods are fairly neutral, although scuffles are not unknown. The Line believe that the Blind Serpent is a flash in the pan as a religion, and will be gone within another hundred years, so there is little to concern themselves with.

The Dust

This faction is irrelevant to the goals and aims of the Line of Enu. Beggars are the lowest of the low and not even worth thinking about.

Vanishing Hand

The Line of Enu disapproves of the Vanishing Hand due to the fact that many of its members are wealthy and therefore prime targets for thieves. However, it recognises that the Hand avoids violence wherever possible which is a small mitigating factor.

Temple of Uttu

The Temple of Uttu is considered an evil religion by The Line of Enu, based mainly on the fact that they meet in secret in dark rooms. Enu supporters will often go out of their way to inconvenience an Uttu priest or member.

The Black Face

This faction is abhorred by the Line of Enu as being against the best interests of the city and its people. As such a state of low grade war exists between them.

Killers

Although the primary activity of the Killers is one disapproved of by the Line, the services of the assassins have been used by high priests over the years and so the relationship between them could be described as "cordial but tense".

Brotherhood of Coin

Many wealthy merchants are members of both the Brotherhood of Coin and the Line of Enu and so the relationship between these factions is at least neutral.

Cult of Nissa

Although the Cult of Nissa is much older than the Cult of the Blind Serpent, the Line of Enu consider both to be dead-end religions that will have faded into obscurity within a century. Although not hostile towards Nissa, the Line would do little to help her supporters.

The Bleeding Hook

As this faction is composed of rough commoners, many of which never visit a temple, the Line regards them as awkward and difficult to deal with. The relations between them are neutral at best.

Temple of the Red God

The Red God was originally the patron God of one of the deep desert tribes with usual fatalistic view of the world and a God to match. Strangely enough, the focus on pain and bloodletting seemed to attract plenty of followers in the city itself and so the Temple has steadily grown stronger over the centuries.

History

There are no written records of when a Priest of the Red God first emerged from the desert to set up a fixed temple. Devotees of this religion insist that when Ziundra first arrived at the villages that would become Ur-Turuk, he found the same block temple that today graces the north end of the Nobles District. The other religions insist that this is nonsense and there have indeed been several running street battles over the issue. That Temple is indeed ancient, whoever built it and when.

The metal screen to divide the rich and poor worshippers has also been in place for hundreds of years, ever since a group of blood crazed craftsmen decided to sacrifice several leading nobles on the joint altar!

The Temple is now one of the more prosperous and popular in the city and many younger

people join for the hint of danger and excess promised.

Goals

The Red God has few political or financial goals. It exists, as the High Priests state on a daily basis, to exult their celestial master through the shedding of much blood and the inflicting of pain. Although many suspect the Temple of more earthly goals, they have yet to show any evidence of this.

Significant Members

High Priest Akeel is now incredibly old and rarely leaves his chambers beneath the temple. He has been High priest for nearly seventy years and in that time has self-flagellated every day in pursuit of a higher spiritual state. He cares little for the city, for the King or the people. He does though care about his God and his soul and is fanatical about the use of pain and blood to honour both.

As might be expected, Akeel is both small and frail and also incredibly scarred. Barely an inch of his skin is not scar tissue and his speech is little more than a mumble due to his scarred cheeks.

Lady Ommel is a wealthy noble who owns a small estate not far from the southern door of the the Temple itself in the Noble District.

Although outwardly she shows no scars or other obvious signs of membership of this faction, her body under her exquisite dresses bears many scars. Lady Ommel has risen high in the ranks of this faction through her obvious devotion and commitment to an ascetic lifestyle. Very few parties are held in her mansion and those that do take place are considered very tame by the wilder elements of the nobility. Lady Ommel has designs on the leadership of the faction and is just waiting for Akeel to die of old age!

Brother Misiin is a junior member of the priesthood, but a senior member of the faction. He seems to have a pain threshold some orders of magnitude above a normal person and so can endure hours and hours of attention from the other priests. Misiin was born to a lowly dock worker in the city but was sold to the Temple of the Red God at an early age and has been devoted ever since. Misiin professes no desire to rise higher in either the priesthood or the faction, but surely a young man of such talents longs to go further?

Initiation

The initiation process to join this faction is, as would be expected, bloody and painful. The new initiate is strapped by wrists and ankles to the metal grille in the centre of the temple on the lower class side, facing through to the noble side. The High Priest or leader of the faction

cuts away all of the clothing of the applicant with an ancient ceremonial knife and makes one long (but not deep) cut into the skin of the bound victim. All of the other fifty senior members of the faction then step forward to inflict their own slice. There is no problem with the applicant crying out or even fainting, but if they once beg or ask for the ritual to stop, they will not be admitted to the faction and nor will they ever be allowed to reapply. There are strict rules about how the cut must be made and any slice that causes real injury or even death results in the guilty member disappearing shortly afterwards to be the victim in a very secret ceremony...

Punishments

Apart from the unspecified but fatal punishment inflicted on those that cut too deep during an initiation, most of the punishments are for infractions against the ethos or name of the God. Any member seen to be too soft hearted or not ruthless enough in life or (Red God forbid) unwilling to inflict pain and suffering will be singled out for a cleansing ceremony involving bloodletting and pain!

Benefits

Most of the benefits associated with belonging to the Temple of the Red God are spiritual ones. The lack of secular or financial goals for the faction means that a member cannot get better business deals, good investments or political

power through membership. However, this focus on spirituality and the cleansing of the soul through pain means that even enemies of the faction recognise that the members are upright and devoted citizens!

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The Temple of the Red God gets on well with the City Government. The Red God has no ambitions to rule or hold power, it does not seek to control trade and it threatens blood and pain from those who do not live focused lives. There are some in the Government faction who worry that the followers of the Red God are somewhat extreme, although as the main targets are the poor, the senior members of the Government have few worries.

City Guard

Like the City Government, the City Guard are also on good terms with the Red God. It's followers seem to commit few street crimes, seem opposed to murder and consider the threat of pain a good persuasion tool.

Line of Enu

The Line of Enu and the Temple of the Red God both claim to be the original and official religion of Ur-Turuk and so there is a long seated rivalry between them. Although it does sometimes spill over into violence between lower ranking members of the two factions,

the majority of the rivalry is played out in sermons and public speeches.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

For many years now the Cult of the Blind Serpent and the Temple of the Red God have been involved in a bitter feud. Although the disagreement dates back less than a hundred years, no-one alive knows the original source of the conflict. Known members of each faction will often attack each other on sight, even in public places. Even the Ambassadors find it impossible to get these two factions to meet.

The Dust

The Red God looks upon the Dust with utter disinterest. The terminally poor have little to offer their God and seem disinterested in the state of their mortal souls in any case. They have occasional uses, but otherwise can safely be ignored.

Vanishing Hand

The Vanishing Hand are looked on with some disapproval by the Red God devotees. They lust after money, even if they do not need it and take it from others to satisfy that need. Although not squeamish about theft itself, the wasting of multiple lives in its pursuit seems pointless.

Temple of Uttu

The two Temples maintain a friendly neutralness. Their potential pools of worshippers do not overlap and neither has designs on the territory of the other. They rarely cooperate, but rarely come into conflict.

The Black Face

Unlike the Vanishing Hand, the Black Face are happy to inflict pain and suffering on their victims and so are cautiously approved of by the Red God. The ease with which the Black Face will murder a victim is a serious black mark, but despite that the Black Face have a cordial relationship with the Red God.

Killers

The Killers are not approved of by the senior Red God members. They, like the Black Face, will kill at the drop of a hat but whereas the Black Face will often be happy just inflicting a beating, the Killers aim to kill every victim every time. Although not enemies with this faction, the Red God considers them bloodthirsty and uncivilised.

Brotherhood of Coin

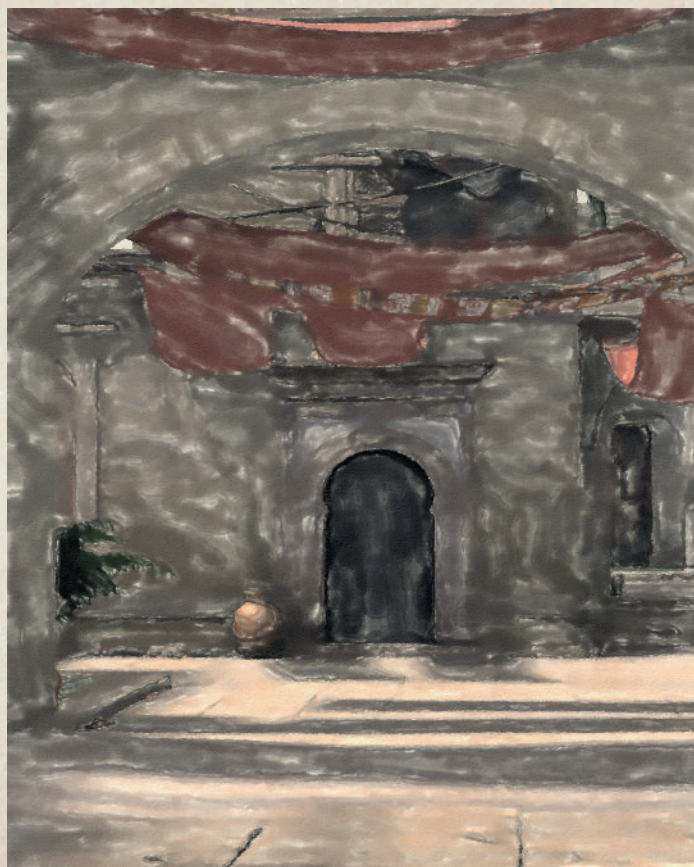
This faction is seen as shallow and vapid and not even worthy of considering as a real faction. The pursuit of money is not something any Red God member would follow with any zeal and so the two factions have almost no contact with each other.

Cult of Nissa

The followers of the Red God consider the devotees of Nissa to be a weak and uninteresting bunch with very little to recommend them. The focus of Nissa on growth, family and peace is of very little interest to the Red God.

The Bleeding Hook

This faction, although crude and physical with no hint of spirituality, is on good terms with the Red God. The Bleeding Hook try to avoid killing unless absolutely necessary but are more than happy to inflict pain if needed. Indeed, some Bleeding Hook members who are unusually proficient with their loading hooks are sometimes employed by the Red God for... special jobs.



The Cult of the Blind Serpent

Almost immediately that this new religion established a foothold in Ur-Turuk, a Faction sprang up to support it and benefit from it. The Cult considers that its religion is the future (and indeed only) hope for the city of Ur-Turuk and feels that the other, older Gods have had their day and are now obsolete.

History

The story of the mad hermit who first saw and heard the Blind Serpent in the desert is well known to all. No-one seemed to know the real name of the Hermit or where in the desert he saw the Blind Serpent and he would not reveal either in the three years he served as High Priest. However, the strength and speed with which this Cult rose in Ur-Turuk was partly because of the large number of people who became ardent followers. In turn, this rapid rise in influence also attracted many new followers in. It is said that the Cult is no larger today than it was two years after its founding.

Once well established, the Hermit and his successors as High Priest seemed to lose all ambition to expand. They had a temple, a good following and influence and have seemed content with that ever since.

Goals

The primary goal of the cult is to establish the Blind Serpent as the pre-eminent and patron God of Ur-Turuk. Many of the younger and more fiery members proclaim that their ultimate goal is for the Blind Serpent to be the only God worshipped in Ur-Turuk. These ambitions are met with wry smiles by the other religions as this Faction has taken no action to fulfil these ambitions since its founding. However, the other religions do keep a close eye on the Cult for any signs of a holy war.

Significant Members

High Priest Seesa is the latest in a long line of High Priests. They never seem to last long in the post and are replaced regularly. Seesa is in her middle years and as homage to the original founder of the religion, wears her hair long and tangled and her clothes torn and holed. She takes her position very seriously indeed and rides into the desert near the city every day before dawn to commune with her serpentine God. Seesa is hard on believers who do not match her standard of devotion and there are a number of younger believers who feel that she is too hard.

The Slave King is a title awarded to the most senior Slave belonging to the King, and the current holder of the post is an old man by the name of Misles. His hair in younger years was blonde and his skin pale although age has

whitened the former and the unrelenting sun darkened the latter. Misles, as a senior Slave, has more freedom than most and is a regular worshipper at the Temple of the Blind Serpent. Misles does everything he can to enhance the prospects for slaves in the city.

Bislem the Blind is the traditional Blind Prophet of the Cult, regarded by most as second in command. This is a position that almost never leads to the leadership and also requires the post holder to ritually put out their eyes. Bislem is a very dark skinned man of short but stocky build. His age is somewhat indeterminate but he is no longer young. Bislem spends his days appearing to stare into the middle distance and contemplating his God. He is a man of few words unless absolutely necessary.

Initiation

The Initiation ceremony for this faction does not take place in Ur-Turuk at all. Some ten miles to the south west of the city lies a small plateau. At the centre of this flat hill is a steep-sided crater around 100' deep and 500' across. There is little to be found in the crater except rocks and a broken marble pillar at the exact centre. A new applicant is taken in splendour to the crater, stripped of their finery and lowered down to the sandy floor on a rope. They must remain there without water, food or much in the way of shelter for three full days at which point the rope is lowered down again.

The applicant must still be strong enough to hold on to the rope as they are pulled up in order to pass the test. Any applicant too weak to hold on but still alive will be rescued, but will not be admitted to the faction.

Punishments

There are very few punishments actually used by this faction other than expulsion. As far as they are concerned, no longer being a member of the faction is punishment enough for all but the worst crimes. If a member commits an act that goes against city law, they will also be reported to (and handed over to) the City Guard to be dealt with.

Benefits

Most of the members of this Cult are young, poor and/or a slave. The other members cannot provide financial or status benefits to a members but the go-ahead philosophy of the Cult means that many members will offer whatever help they can to their brethren. Making an appeal for help with almost anything considered legal will normally attract a significant number of volunteers willing to lend a hand.

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The Cult views the City Government as the Gods-appointed rulers and therefore approve heartily. They encourage their members to pay

their taxes and obey the laws even when they feel that those laws are cruel or unnecessary.

City Guard

Like the Government, the City Guard are seen as the guardians of law and order and so are to be obeyed. They do have disagreements with the Guard about the application of the law but view the Guard as necessary.

Line of Enu

This ancient religion is viewed with pity and a certain contempt by the Cult. The Line of Enu has been in the city for a long, long time and it's day is over but the Cult can patiently wait for Enu to fade away as an old pensioner does.

Temple of the Red God

These two factions hate each other and are engaged in a vicious and bloody feud. The origins of this feud are no longer known but there are few members who would pass one of the enemy in the street without taking at least a verbal shot.

The Dust

The Cult feels sorry for the members of the Dust and offers them help whenever they can. They also feel fairly superior as even their poor membership is not as destitute as the beggars!

Vanishing Hand

This criminal faction is held in mixed regard by the Cult. On the one hand the thieves are trying to make their way in the world as best they can which is a good thing but on the other hand they are doing that through theft!

Temple of Uttu

The Cult views the Temple of Uttu as a dark and evil religion that has no place in Ur-Turuk. Although they are not officially in conflict, there is a certain amount of opposition from both sides.

The Black Face

This faction is opposed by the Cult of the Blind Serpent. Their predilection for violence and murder opposes is regarded as truly awful by most of the members of this faction and the Cult tries to oppose their plans wherever possible.

Killers

This faction is regarded in much the same way as the Black Face. Murdering people, for whatever reason, is not desirable. Although the Cult does try to oppose the Killers, they are not as much of a priority as the Black Face.

Brotherhood of Coin

This faction is held in some regard by the Cult of the Blind Serpent. The members of the Coin have made it in the world and have achieved

their goals, an aim of the Cult members. Although some members of the Coin have inherited their fortunes, someone somewhere made it!

Cult of Nissa

This religion is seen as old, outdated and on the verge of extinction. Although the Blind Serpent has no animosity towards Nissa, they have little regard for them either.

The Bleeding Hook

This faction is viewed with some suspicion by the Blind Serpent. They are solid workers trying to do their best in life but are still too ready to use violence to do that best!



The Dust

This association of beggars and the destitute has a presence across most of the city although is concentrated in the Beggars district. It is one of the largest factions in the city, but is also one of the least powerful. Very few of its members have a stable home, let alone money and influence and so although widespread, there is very little most can do to counter the plans and machinations of other factions.

History

This faction is one of the oldest in the city. Almost as soon as real civilisation appeared, the desperate poor also appeared. Being destitute is a precarious life and so loose associations of beggars began to form for self protection, each based around one street or district. Before long, these began to merge and the Dust was born. They take their name from the constant dust that coats all those who live on the street for most of the time. As one of the least formal of the factions, there have been many internal splits and conflicts and the faction has never been considered stable.

Goals

The Dust is primarily about self survival for its members. Anything it can do to ensure that the poorest citizens of the city are not forgotten will be done. The Dust trades info (a useful

commodity easily gained by such an extensive network of street people) to the other factions for all sorts of aid. Wagon loads of slightly spoiled food, mildewed fabric, an amount of coin. All of these are essential for the poor.

Significant Members

“The Scarred Man” has no other name that he will admit to and there is no-one in the city who can remember his previous life. Old and very thin, he nevertheless looks like someone who was once heavily muscled. He now wears a shapeless and tattered grey robe and has sacks for shoes and he spends his days wandering the Palace District begging for small coins or scraps of food. Although not an official leader of the faction, this mysterious figure is present at every meeting of the leadership and few decisions are made without his approval.

The woman known as Mya is an unusual beggar in that she never actually begs. Well, not from individuals anyway. Mya spends her time asking for charity from nobles, rich merchants and high priests and then distributing the often cartloads she receives. She herself takes just enough to stave off starvation with everything else being handed out through senior members of the faction. Mya lives in a small hut at the very centre of the Beggars district and has also been known to adopt stray and orphan children!

Initiation

The initiation into this faction is relatively simple. The applicant must be a street beggar or all but destitute and must be recommended to the faction by an existing member. The candidate must present themselves at the home of the current faction leader (often a half-collapsed hut in the beggars district) at dawn, wearing a red cloak, white hat and purple sash. They must also hold a silver coin in one hand and a gold coin in the other. How they acquire these items is up to them, but they must give them all away to the many street children that will by now form a long procession behind them. Seven senior members of the faction will welcome the applicant and, if they are suitably attired, welcome them into the house for bread and water as a full member.

Punishments

There are few punishments meted out by this faction. After all, what can you really do to someone clinging to an existence by their fingernails? There are occasional public beatings when the accused has used violence against a fellow member, but the most serious punishment is expulsion. Being expelled from this faction means that every beggar and poor person in the city will be turned against you and survival becomes that much harder.

Benefits

This faction has little power or influence in the city itself, but the trading of information to other factions does usually result in a constant influx of food, clothing, tools and other goods, all somewhat spoiled or less than perfect. Of course, if your very existence is on the breadline, you are unlikely to complain about old grain or cracked pottery. A member of this faction in good standing will rarely actually starve, although their lifestyle is unlikely to attract much envy.

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The government have no time for the beggars, and so the beggars have no time for the government. Because the city has no interest in helping its poorer citizens, the Dust generally ignores the city officials in almost everything!

City Guard

The City Guard are both an enemy (due to their role in stopping petty crime) and a prime customer for the information that is the major asset of the Dust. Relations are somewhat frosty, even though there is regular contact.

Line of Enu

The temple to the Patron God is forbidden ground for many of the beggars who are chased away by the temple guards. The

beggars have little to interest the Priests of Enu and vice versa.

Temple of the Red God

Similar to Enu, the Red God priests look upon the beggars with disdain. Although a little information is traded to these priests, contact is not common.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

The cult, appealing as it does to the poorer parts of society, has some overlap with the Dust and many of the beggars worship this God. There is significant contact between the two factions and the relations between them are very good.

Vanishing Hand

The Hand are regular purchasers of information from the Dust and even see the beggars as fertile recruiting ground for lookouts and to follow marks. The relations between these two factions are good, although there is still an element of distrust due to the unpredictable nature of the thieves.

Temple of Uttu

There is almost no contact between the Dust and the Spider priests. The secretive religion acquires its information through stranger means than simply asking a beggar and the rumours about some of the Uttu practices means that fear is the most common feeling amongst the beggars.

The Black Face

Like the Vanishing Hand, the Face will sometimes employ beggars as informants and for unskilled tasks, but there is a very high casualty rate amongst those employed. The unpredictable violence of the Face means that the beggars usually try and stay out of the way although the monies received for information supplied can be considerable.

Killers

The Killers tend to treat the Dust with more respect than the other criminal factions. They pay a fair price for information when required

and do not prey on the beggars as, for example, the Black Face sometimes do. Their requirements are usually very specific and so trade is not particularly common.

Brotherhood of Coin

This faction has been known to hand over significant quantities of unsaleable goods to the Dust in return for the beggars staying away from the shops and warehouses of the Brotherhood members! Information on smuggling, unlicensed traders and other commercial subjects is always well received by the Brotherhood and relations are usually good.

Cult of Nissa

This Cult provides whatever help and assistance it can to all of the poor, regardless of faction, and so are looked upon kindly by the Dust. The small number of Nissa followers also makes them vulnerable in the political maelstrom of the city, and beggars will often look after Nissa priests in difficult areas of the city.

The Bleeding Hook

The dock workers and porters consider the beggars a nuisance more than anything, and rarely have need of information so relations are fairly distant.



The Vanishing Hand

Crime has been an ever-present factor in Ur-Turuk since its founding and the Vanishing Hand is just one manifestation of this way of life. The Hand, as they are known, sees crime as a necessity without the need for violence or excessive force. Recently, this faction has had more and more “adventurer thieves” join, in search of excitement and thrills rather than a way to survive.

History

This faction is only a hundred years or so old. Throughout the history of the city, various organised crime gangs have risen, prospered and then either been eradicated or split into numerous sub-factions and disappeared. The Vanishing Hand is the product of one such schism between thieves who were happy to murder and those who were not. Since its founding the faction has gone through various changes of outlook and behaviour and it is unlikely that the current form will continue indefinitely.

Goals

The Vanishing Hand exists solely to help its members enrich themselves. It provides a trusted network of fences, thieves and other

rogues for hire, collaboration and advice and members tend to trust each other.

Significant Members

“Flashy” Harroom is one of the leading members of the vanishing hand. He is a regular sight in the taverns and gambling establishments of the city, boasting loudly about his latest theft and planned jobs. In public he wears bright orange pantaloons, a lime green silk shirt and deep-purple gem-encrusted waistcoat, although when working he wears black versions of these without the ornamentation. Flashy has a reputation as a gentleman thief, honourable and cheeky but also unstoppable when it comes to other people's property.

The thief only known as “The Magician” is a specialist pickpocket. He is seemingly able to steal items from internal pockets, from targets he never actually touches and even items too large to fit in his own pockets! He seems to be completely average to look at and in his dress and so no-one is entirely sure exactly who he is. Rumour abound though...

Awais the Cat is generally considered the leader of the Vanishing Hand. She has built a reputation around climbing and entering buildings through very small and very high windows. She is of small and lithe stature, useful for a climber, but well muscled and

strong. She wears her long hair in a tight braid that is always tied with a bright ribbon.

Initiation

Any new potential member must be introduced to the faction by an existing member of good standing. The new member is tasked with stealing a specific item from a specific place at a specific time. Other senior members will ensure they are secreted at appropriate observation points to watch the skills and method of the thief (or even better, not observe!). If the item is taken at the right time, the prospective member must then attend a group meeting where they pledge allegiance to the faction and swear to never compromise another member.

Punishments

Almost the worst thing a member of the Vanishing Hand can do is betray another member, whether to a rival faction or anyone else. Betrayal is the only circumstance where the faction condones violence and murder and a traitor will be lucky to leave the city alive and will be brave to risk returning.

Benefits

The main benefit to members of this faction is the access to a network of fences, advisors and like-minded thieves. A thief looking for accomplices and helpers will know they can trust their fellow members and will use them

above a non-member. The Hand will also try and help any member apprehended by the City Guard although only by non-violent means. A jailbreak is however acceptable!

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The Hand consider the Government overly repressive and harsh for enacting laws that proscribe theft and punish thieves. If the Hand can oppose the City Government in any way, they will.

City Guard

If anything, the City Guard are worse than the Government as far as the Hand are concerned. The Government are so remote from the ordinary person that they have some slight excuse for passing the laws they do. Most Guards however are ordinary people and they should know better. The Guard are the natural enemy of the hand and it will always be so.

Line of Enu

The Priests of Enu are more of a target than anything else. Most of their High Priests are rich, their Ziggurat is rich and many of their devotees are rich. A festival day can provide rich pickings, but otherwise they have little to offer. Relations are strained to say the least!

Temple of the Red God

The Red God and his followers have little to offer the Vanishing Hand. They are not especially rich and so are not good targets and they have a strange obsession with pain and inflicting pain. They are best avoided.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

Like the other religions, the spiritual side of the Blind Serpent holds little appeal for the Hand. However, the fact that it has many common people amongst its congregations does mean that it cannot be all bad. There is a cordial, if strained, relationship between these factions.

The Dust

Although the Beggars seem to lack the necessary spirit and drive to escape a life in the gutter, they are useful sources of information and so are considered a friendly faction.

Temple of Uttu

This secretive religion is fairly irrelevant. It does not have lavish temples and has few members. They can be ignored.

The Black Face

The Black Face are the worst enemies the Vanishing Hand could have. They are in competition when it comes to theft yet will use violence at a moments notice. More than one Vanishing Hand member has come to an

unseemly end at the hands of a Black Face thug.

The two factions are in open conflict.

Killers

Killing people for money is both distasteful and wasteful. After all, if you kill them, how can you rob them? On the other hand, they are effective and discrete and on the rare occasion the Hand needs to remove someone, a Killer is a better option than dirtying ones own hands.

Brotherhood of Coin

Ah yes, the Brotherhood. Source of almost unlimited money and goods! What would we do without them? These two factions are definitely in conflict but the Hand is never an aggressor.

Cult of Nissa

These priests are no wealthy and try to help the poor of the city. They are probably irrelevant in a modern city, but do no real harm. Relations are neutral.

The Bleeding Hook

There is little contact between the two factions. The Hook are not well off and so not targets for the Hand and their spheres of influence are significantly different. Relations are neutral.

Temple of Uttu

This religion is not as old as Enu, but no-one can be entirely sure when it did first appear. The priests seem to keep no records or documents and their secretive and self-selecting nature means that almost everyone in the city is ignorant of the faction details.

History

The Temple of the World Spider first enters city records some three hundred and fifty years ago, around the time of civil disturbance due to food shortages. Almost from nowhere, Priests with distinctive facial spider tattoos appeared on the streets to warn the protesters that although Uttu was there to guard the world from the anarchy of the universe, this protection was a fragile thing and rioting could put it at risk.

The City Government and Guard were of course glad to hear these dire warnings but were not overly concerned when the priests seemed to vanish as rapidly as they had appeared. It was then some years before the priests reappeared in the city, although they themselves insisted they had never left. They have maintained a low key presence in Ur-Turuk ever since.

Goals

This faction looks to appease Uttu in order that the spider-God might protect the world from chaos both external and internal. They seem uninterested in political or monetary gain and are not even that interested in attracting large numbers of worshippers. This faction is devoted purely to the continued existence of Ur-Turuk and the world in general.

Significant Members

High Priest Amur-Khar is the leader of both the religion and the faction. He is a tall, broad shouldered and burly man in his late fifties. He wears the usual black robe and facial spider tattoo common to all priests but also has a shaved head and long black-grey beard. Amur-Khar is the child of city spice merchants but found Uttu early and has since risen up the ranks. Although he is often seen on the city streets, he refuses to talk to anyone unless it is about the Temple.

Initiation

The leadership of the Temple of Uttu selects potential members itself and people cannot apply to join unless invited. If a potential member accepts the invitation, they are told to wait at a specific location in the city at 11.30pm. The applicant will be approached by hooded and robed figures who will blindfold the applicant before leading them by a circuitous route to one of the underground

temples of the cult. Once there, the applicant will be faced by a large but dark room with hooded figures lining every wall. The applicant will have a hand-sized spider placed on their face by a senior priest. If the spider refuses to bite the applicant, they have failed and are escorted out again blindfolded. If the spider does bite, the applicant will collapse and shortly begin to hallucinate. It is rumoured that the God itself speaks to the applicant during this time, but no-one has ever revealed what is said. If the applicant survives, they are admitted to the faction.

Punishments

There are few punishable offences within this faction, the main one being the revelation of temple locations or member names to non-members. This offence, that puts the whole faction at risk, is punishable by means of the same spider used in the initiation ceremony. The accused is tied, speadeagled, to a huge web constructed from iron chains within a temple and one of the cult spiders placed on their naked chest. If the spider bites, the accused is guilty and the bite will always prove fatal for some reason. If the spider does not bite, they are innocent of the charges and may go free.

Benefits

There are few apparent material benefits that accrue for being a member of this faction. Street gossip suggests that members are taught

arcane incantations that allow them to use magic, but there is no evidence for this. Members often do not know the identity of other members and so cannot even use the faction for networking!

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The government tends to leave the Uttu priests alone, and the Temple returns this feeling. The government has nothing that Uttu wants or needs, so they can generally be ignored.

City Guard

Like the government, the Guard can be ignored. They do seem to keep order in the city, which is a good thing, but the priests believe that the modern city would be orderly anyway.

Line of Enu

This faction considers the Uttu priests evil, but this is an obvious misapprehension on their part. Although any attempts at disruption need to be countered, the priests of Enu can be regarded with pity at the obvious lack of influence their so-called God now has.

Temple of the Red God

This faction is of little interest to Uttu. Its goals and beliefs are very different from those of the world-spider and so the two religions have no real contact.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

This faction, like that of Enu, considers the Uttu worshippers to be evil. They are to be pitied for their blindness.

The Dust

The beggars are not normally a recruiting ground for the Temple and they have nothing that the priests could want. There is no formal contact between these factions.

Vanishing Hand

The Temple opposes theft as an obvious symptom of anarchy and so formally disapproves of the Hand. However, they are only a minor symptom and so little conflict exists between them.

The Black Face

This faction is despised by the Temple. They kill, steal and cause mayhem and threaten the entire city with chaos simply for their own personal profit! This is unforgivable and must be opposed where possible.

Killers

Although opposed to the laws of the city, the Killers actually carry out their goals quietly and without much fuss. They don't generally cause major problems for the city and indeed a carefully targeted contract can in fact reduce the threat of disorder.

Brotherhood of Coin

The merchants are a self-serving and greedy bunch, but they harm no-one with their pursuit of profit. Relations between these factions are neutral

Cult of Nissa

This ancient God has, in the view of the Temple, long since died. Her last vestiges of power are insufficient to make any difference to the world, but in her day she did help protect civilisation. The Temple treat the priests of Nissa with a sad benevolence.

The Bleeding Hook

This faction has little in common with Uttu and so there is little communication between them.

Plot Idea

The Sorcerers are approached by a Senior priest of Uttu who reveals that various "messages" have become apparent from their God that a Rogue Sorcerer of great power from another city is on the way to Ur-Turuk to destabilise the ancient City. The priests do not know from where this rogue will come or when, only that they are on their way.

How will the Vahnam respond? Do they trust the spider priests or is this a ruse to get the Sorcerers out of the city?

The Black Face

One of the most feared factions in the city, the Black Face will steal anything from anyone and use any means to achieve this. There are a wide range of skills and types of criminals in this faction but almost all are ruthless and dangerous.

History

The origins of the Face go way back into history and there are no records of the early days. Although many street gangs have come and gone, the Face has survived and expanded due to the succession of utterly ruthless leaders and senior members. The faction has been all but destroyed several times in the past twenty years due to the combined efforts of the City Government, City Guard and even other factions. However, enough Face members have managed to escape the purges and the faction has revived every time.

Goals

This faction exists mainly to make money but also to gain a certain amount of petty power. The members of the Black Face like being able to strut around certain streets and areas like lords and they like inflicting fear on those they extort money from. However, making money

(and lots of it) is the reason for their thefts and violence.

Significant Members

Khosar the Strangler is a thief and murderer who normally lives in the Land Market area. He is tall and well muscled although he is beginning to develop a paunch. His bald head is tattooed and he always wears his trademark leather waistcoat and no shirt. He always carried a short sword, several knives and a short and stout club but his signature weapons are the two thin but strong ropes wrapped around each wrist. These killing cords have strangled many a poor unfortunate and are famous in the city.

Elania of the Five Knives is short, slim and very dark skinned. She has short braided hair and always carried five very sharp long knives made of a rare black and non-reflective steel. Although she does steal, and is skilled at thefts, her speciality is murder. She does not kill for pay, or at least not only for pay, but almost always for malice. If she takes a dislike to anyone, they are dead, regardless of wealth, status or the number of guards they have. When not working, she rarely stops laughing and smiling and is famous for practical jokes.

Initiation

A potential applicant to the Black Face can only be introduced by an existing member of good standing. However, the initiation ceremony, which involves a lot of violence (and sometimes death) is a secret to all but those who have undergone it, and they are forbidden from ever mentioning it. Suffice to say that the successful ones need a good week or so to recover from their injuries.

Punishments

As would probably be expected from such a vicious faction, the punishments meted out to those that transgress the rules of the faction involve violence, pain and death. A member who breaks the rules will be lucky to survive and breaking the rules a second time will be a fatal mistake.

Benefits

The members of this faction are able to make use of their fellow members to fence goods, source muscle and even acquire specific goods. There are also several Black Face houses to provide a secure bolt hole in an emergency.

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The Black Face view the City Government as a major enemy although one that it is difficult to strike at. However, if there is an opportunity

to strike at a Government member without undue risk to themselves, it will be taken.

City Guard

The City Guard are considered fair game for the Black Face and will strike when possible.

Line of Enu

The official religion of the city takes a dim view of the Black Face, and the feeling is reciprocated. The Enu priests are openly critical of criminal activity and so they are considered an enemy of the Face.

Temple of the Red God

This religion earns a certain amount of respect from the Black Hand due to their fondness for spilling blood and inflicting pain. They seem strangely reluctant to kill though. These factions have a cordial relationship.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

This religion opposes the Black Face in all things and so is considered an enemy.

The Dust

The beggars and street people that make up the Dust are considered to be expendable tools to be hired and disposed of as necessary.

Vanishing Hand

There is a deep enmity between these factions and they are considered to be at war.

Members of these factions will kill each other at every opportunity.

Temple of Uttu

Like most of the other religions, they oppose the Black Face and so are opposed in turn.

Killers

The assassins can be useful to reach those enemies too well protected to be reached by the thugs and heavies of the Black Face. However, their lack of aggression is seen as a bit of a weakness and so the two factions are little better than neutral.

Brotherhood of Coin

This faction is an enemy, if only because they are prime targets for the thefts and extortions of the Face. The Black Face feel they have nothing to fear from the soft merchants in turn and ignore any counter-actions.

Cult of Nissa

This ancient religion is irrelevant. There are not many of them and they have nothing to steal. To be ignored.

The Bleeding Hook

The tough dock workers are not afraid of some street violence and so are treated with a certain amount of caution. They rarely have much to steal and tend to fight back against extortion and so these two factions keep a wary distance.



Killers

This association of Assassins is a small faction but holds a disproportionate amount of power. This faction is used by almost all of the others to eliminate well protected enemies both within and outside the city and the Killers have altered the power balance in Ur-Turuk on more than one occasion. Most of the members of this faction are not actually assassins, rather they are fixers, lookouts, agents and contacts. It is estimated that there are less than twenty actual assassins in the city.

History

This faction has been in existence for several hundred years although there appear to be no records from the early days. Originally a loose association of individual assassins, those early members began to realise the advantages of a more formal organisation and the Killers came in to being.

Goals

The Killers strive for high remuneration but only from select jobs performed correctly. They take a huge amount of personal and factional pride in their contracts and the manner of their fulfilment. The Killers will not accept a contract that involves the deaths

of innocent bystanders or is seen to be simply murder.

Significant Members

Malanar the Assassin is one of the key members of the faction. He (or she) has more than fifty completed contracts over the previous decade, although their actual identity has never been revealed. Malanar deals only with a few highly trusted associates who in turn deal with middle-men who in turn deal with the fixers.

Kaylar Red-Hand is a fixer within the faction. She is well known for being a contact for potential customers and also for her care never to pass on what she knows about the assassins whom she represents. She is a tough looking woman with a shaved head and many tattoos and she always carries at least four weapons.

Moneer Roosd is a well respected agent within the faction. He earns significant rewards from other faction members simply by knowing what is going on in the city. He is the man to turn to if you need to know what time a particular noble's slave is sent out to collect bread, what perfume the favoured concubine of the King prefers or what the High Priest of Enu eats for lunch on a thursday. He looks little different from the majority of men in the city, which is how he gathers his information!

Initiation

The Killers often approach potential recruits themselves, offering them the opportunity to join the faction, usually because they have some specific skill, ability, knowledge or employment that is of use. A potential recruit that accepts the invitation will be taken to an empty tower room at midnight by ten cloaked and masked members and presented with a glass vial containing an oily black liquid. The member must first swear allegiance to the faction before drinking all of the liquid. This is a test of faith because there are stories of potential applicants invited simply so that they can drink a potent poison and thus fulfill a contract the Killers hold on them.

Punishments

There is only one punishment used by those who transgress the rules of this faction; Death.

Benefits

The assassin members of this faction benefit from the extensive network of agents, lookouts and other support that always makes a contract easier. The non-assassin members benefit from excellent employment opportunities and good protection against the predations of common thugs and other factions.

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The Government are regular users of the services provided by the Killers and so are well regarded.

City Guard

The Guard, in contrast to the Government, do not use the services of the assassins and indeed will arrest and kill assassins whenever possible. Although not officially considered an enemy, this faction is certainly not an ally.

Line of Enu

Like the Government, the Line of Enu have made use of the services of the Killers on numerous occasions. Relations are cordial.

Temple of the Red God

This religion holds a strange place in the worldview of the Killers. They like inflicting pain and bloodshed but are stolidly against killing. With very little in common, the Killers tend to ignore the Red God.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

This faction opposes the actions of the Killers, so officially the Killers oppose the Blind Serpent. However, they rarely take proactive action against them.

The Dust

The street beggars are very useful, even if they have no style or pride. They are useful to hire as extra pairs of eyes or even as a “crowd for hire”. Relations are good between these two factions.

Vanishing Hand

These thieves may be just that, common thieves, but at least they have a sense of style and a job well done. Although the Killers rarely need things stolen, they occasionally turn to the Hand for this service. Relations are neutral.

Temple of Uttu

This faction is occasionally a customer but otherwise there is little contact.

The Black Face

The violence, aggression and lack of style on the part of these thugs makes them rather distasteful to deal with although they do sometime purchase a contract.

Brotherhood of Coin

Another customer, another target and another neutral faction.

Cult of Nissa

These priests offer no threat to the assassins, never purchase services and are almost never targets. Relations are cordial.

The Bleeding Hook

The Hook are neutral as far as the Killers go. They do not buy services and nor are they targets so they rarely feature in the thoughts of the assassins.

Plot Idea

The Sorcerers are the targets of an attempted Assassination by a member of the Killers. During their response to this attempt, the Sorcerers notice that the would be assassin bears the unmistakable signs of powerful mental control, way beyond the capabilities of any Minor Mage.

However, the other Sorcerers and Vahnams in the city deny all knowledge of the assassin, and have little reason to try assassination anyway. There is no evidence of a Sorcerer from another city, so what is behind this?

Further investigation reveals that many of the senior members of the Killers have been likewise dominated and the fate of the city is in the hands of a person or being unknown with the ability to control minds.

Can the Sorcerers track down the answer before an assassin is successful?

Brotherhood of Coin

This faction is the most popular in the city with members ranging from small market traders to the owners of huge trading houses. Although not every trader and merchant is a member of this faction, those that are tend to have a light edge due to the contacts they make.

History

The Brotherhood was formed some fifty years after the founding of the city by those involved in nascent trade routes. Ships and camel trains were beginning to bring in exotic goods from many, many miles away and the early merchants who funded these trading expeditions began to band together to share resources and information. Over the years, the Brotherhood has grown and changed, becoming a much looser association than in those early days, but is still focused on profit.

Goals

The one and only aim of this faction is to generate as much income as possible, preferably without being at the expense of another member. Trading goods within the city and across the entire region, a member looks to pay as little as possible for their stock and make as much in sales as they can. The faction itself looks to maximise the profits of

all of its members wherever possible, and individual members will also make agreements that work in the best interests of all involved.

Significant Members

Stenoli the Fat is an archetypal merchant. He is middle aged, corpulent from frequent feasting and dressed in the finest silks. He made his money from trading spices, precious metals and gems up and down the coast and is focused entirely on money and profit. He is however a fiercely loyal member of the faction and will help any other member...provided he will make money from the venture.

Lissa Malana runs a market stall near the gladiator arena selling food and drink to the spectators and staff who visit and work in the palace district. She is in her sixties, has a cheerfully wrinkled face and is as small and frail as a bird. Her produce is good, her prices fair and she talks incessantly to everyone. She always seems to know the local gossip and many customers buy things purely to hear the latest news.

Captain Chee is the owner and operator of a large trade ship that plies the coastal trade routes carrying timber, stone, coal, livestock and other bulk goods. He always dresses in his baggy trousers, black shiny deck boots, red bandana and white silk shirt. He is an excellent

sailor and a renowned merchant and is very canny in a deal.

Initiation

The initiation ceremony is very straightforward. At one of the monthly faction meetings, a new member stands up in front of the assembled crowd and loudly claims their allegiance to the faction. Next, he or she must deposit a bag of coins in a large chest as a joining fee and pledge to place the same amount in the chest every year. The joining fee depends on the means of the individual and are reassessed each year.

Punishments

A member found to have transgressed the rules of the faction will be fined a suitable amount (if a minor offence) or expelled for a more serious break of the rules. No current member will ever do business of any sort with an expelled member who faces almost certain financial ruin if they stay in the city.

Benefits

As mentioned above, the contacts and beneficial trade deals that exist between members can allow business to happen that would otherwise struggle. Informal loans, trading space on ships, advance knowledge and preferential prices are all advantages of membership.

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The Government may look to tax the city merchants heavily, but at least they provide security for trade to take place. A strong and stable government is optimal for trade and so the City Government are considered allies.

City Guard

The City Guard are the physical manifestation of the laws and stability of civilisation and so are on good terms with most Brotherhood members.

Line of Enu

Being the “official” religion of the city, the Line of Enu are regarded with calm detachment by the merchants. The relations between the factions are warmly neutral.

Temple of the Red God

There is no contact between these factions as they have absolutely nothing in common and neither has anything the other might want.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

This religion promotes self advancement, something the Brotherhood are all for. The factions have a good relationship although they rarely cooperate on anything.

The Dust

Although the beggars are rarely customers or business partners, they are a way of easily disposing of unsaleable goods in an easy manner and if kept on side can be a source of useful information. Relations are good.

Vanishing Hand

This faction is considered an enemy due to its habit of stealing from the merchants whenever possible. Earning money by theft rather than by brains and hard work is an insult.

Temple of Uttu

There is no significant contact between these factions.

The Black Face

This faction is the bitterest enemy of the Brotherhood. They steal, kill and extort and are to be opposed wherever possible.

Killers

The assassins can, on occasion, prove useful, but they have also proved the end of many a wealthy member with one too many enemies. Relations are neutral.

Cult of Nissa

The Cult has nothing the merchants want (or vice versa) and so there is little contact between these two factions.

The Bleeding Hook

The dockworkers and porters are almost entirely in the employ of Brotherhood members and indeed make up the vast majority of the physical workforce needed for trade. These two factions are close allies.



Cult of Nissa

The power and influence of this faction is definitely waning and although many of the people in the city pay at least lip service to the Goddess, there are few priests or influential faction members. However, the faction does still exist and there is hope amongst the faithful that Nissa's importance will once again rise like a plant from a seed.

History

The worship of Nissa is thought to date back to the days of slavery under the Alulim when most humans were engaged in agriculture of one kind or another. With liberation came a desperate struggle for survival against the harsh environment and the Cult of Nissa rose to prominence. The early days of the city, when most food was grown within sight of the walls, saw the faction grow and thrive. However, as the city developed and became more "urban", the link with food production became more distant and fewer and fewer people within the city cared about this ancient Goddess. She still has significance in the rural districts but very few rural people aspire to become priests.

Goals

The cult aims to ensure that Nissa is worshipped enough to keep the crops growing, livestock thriving, fish in the sea and game on the land. The priests fear that if the city people, who make up a majority of the population, forget about Nissa, she will turn her back on the world and the entire land will become a barren wasteland.

Significant Members

Sister Yalleh is a priestess of Nissa who has made it her life's work to help the people of the city. She is an accomplished physician, midwife, herbalist and horticulturist and spends her days treating wounds, helping the poor to grow a few food plants on rooftops or in small yards and generally doing what she can. She is a small woman with long grey hair and seems constantly worried that she is not doing enough.

Lord Azir is a recent convert to the religion of Nissa due to his huge agricultural estates outside the city. He encountered a priest on his last tour of these farms and plantations and became convinced that worshipping Nissa was one way to greater profits. He has created a small temple within his city mansion, pays stipends to several priests within Ur-Turuk and openly talks about his conversion. The gossip on the street however attributes this new piety purely to greed...

Initiation

In the past, the Cult had extensive initiation rituals and there was a waiting list to join. Now however, prospective members are readily welcomed and the initiation ritual is little more than the new member swearing an oath and the priest or faction member saying a prayer.

Punishments

There are now not enough faction members (and the ones that there are tend to wander the countryside) to inflict any form of punishment other than expulsion from the faction.

Benefits

The lack of influence possessed by this faction means that there are no material benefits to being a member. It is said however that members in good standing enjoy very good health and are rarely ill, although this has never been confirmed.

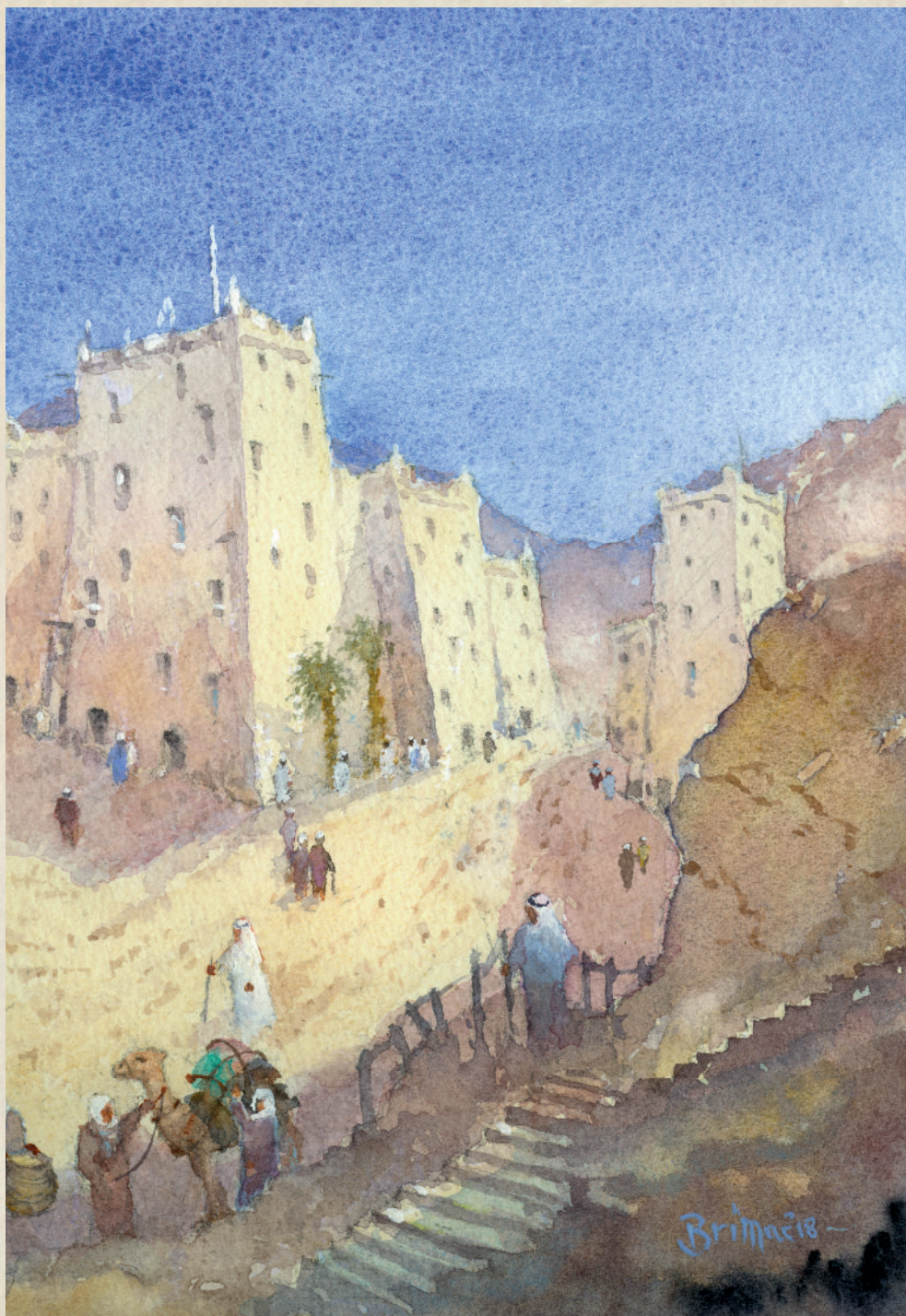
Relations to other Factions

City Government

The Cult have no interest in government or political power and so have no dealings with the City Government. Relationships are officially neutral.

City Guard

This faction is on fairly good terms with the Cult although in truth they will rarely have dealings.



Line of Enu

This religion is seen as a “city religion” and so opposed to the pastoral view of the Nissa priests. Although the two factions are rarely hostile to each other, they will almost never do anything to help each other.

Temple of the Red God

This faction is seen as unpleasant and bloodthirsty to the gentle Nissa followers. Although the Cult will not actively challenge the Red God, they disapprove strongly.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

This newcomer is likely to fade away entirely within a century and so is irrelevant. Although these factions are not officially opposed, they have very little to do with one another.

The Dust

The beggars are victims of civilisation and are to be helped and protected wherever possible. The Cult members hand out food and clothing to the Beggars with no thought of reciprocal assistance, even though that is sometimes forthcoming.

Vanishing Hand

The thieves are of course immoral, as is stealing, but at least they do not kill. Relations are neutral, although a thief in need will probably not be turned away..

Temple of Uttu

This religion is trying to protect the order of the world and is to be respected for that but their means and methods are unusual and dangerous.

The Black Face

These thugs and robbers are evil, nothing more. They are to be despised and opposed wherever possible.

Killers

Although an occasional assassination has positive outcomes for the common people, killing is wrong and should not be used to achieve political ends.

Brotherhood of Coin

The merchants squeeze money out of the land in the shape of crops, animals and minerals and care nothing for what they leave behind. They are misguided and greedy and should be educated.

The Bleeding Hook

The men and women of this faction are misguided, rough and tough although that is mainly due to their city upbringing and no fault of their own. They, like the Brotherhood of Coin, need educating.

The Bleeding Hook

Everyday spent hoisting goods from sunup to sundown gives the dock workers of Ur-Turuk a physique envied even by gladiators, but it does not equip them well to survive the political machinations of the city. Hence the Bleeding Hook came into being to provide the workers with a voice and a sense of brotherhood against the other established factions.

History

In the earlier days of Ur-Turuk as a port, every individual dock or wharf had its own “gang”. They did all of the unloading and loading from that dock and they defended their “turf” with whatever weapons they had at their disposal, primarily the bale hooks used on the docks. Over time, stronger and larger gangs absorbed smaller adjacent ones until eventually almost all of the dock workers were represented by the one faction. Around two hundred odd years ago, this faction took on a more formal organisation and a new name, which it bears to this day.

Goals

The Hook is almost entirely an agent of self-protection for the dock workers. It is a proto-union in that it stands up for the rights of its

members to the merchants who hire them and the city that rules them. It discourages the attentions of the Black Face and Vanishing Hand as well as all of the smaller gangs of thugs looking to extort money or control.

Significant Members

Mattaki is one of the oldest and most senior of the dock workers and as such is respected by almost everyone in that district and the faction. He is in his sixties, is short and grey haired and has a body corded with hard muscle and tanned from the sun. Mattaki has worked the docks since he was a boy and has belonged to various gangs and worked for numerous merchants. He is known to have a temper and is a fierce negotiator of contracts and wages. He is still sought out by merchants however as any team working under the supervision of Mattaki is certain to work very hard indeed.

The dockworker known as Delondra is, at first glance, a tough and muscled worker with close cropped black hair and numerous tattoos on arms and neck. Delondra is however a woman, one of the few to be employed in this type of work. She is as tough as any of the men and can do any of the hard physical work they can do. Delondra is also known as one of the finest brawlers on the docks and her loading hook is feared in every dockside tavern due to her speed, ferocity and strength. It is rumoured that she has a young daughter secreted away

somewhere to whom she returns every evening, but Delondra consistently denies this.

Hablum Skull-Crusher is a giant of a man. He had a long braided black beard and a shaved tattooed head and his biceps are bigger than the thighs of most men. He earns a very good living as a longshoreman due to the sheer amount of cargo he can shift in one go. He is also, reluctantly, used as an enforcer for the Bleeding Hook. He is not a violent man by nature, but is very loyal to the Bleeding Hoom and an enemy of the faction is certainly an enemy of his.

Initiation

The initiation ceremony for this faction is a simple affair. A prospective member must be a dockworker, porter or other manual labourer of that sort and must stand before a crowd of members in an empty warehouse and loudly proclaim their allegiance. If at least ten members object, the candidate is refused. Otherwise, they are thenceforth a member.

Punishments

Breaking the fairly simple rules of the Bleeding Hook is either punishable by temporary expulsion (usually meaning the culprit cannot work within the city) or a severe beating. The most serious crimes against the faction are punished by permanent exclusion.

Benefits

As mentioned above, the main benefit to being a member of the Bleeding Hook is that other members will all rush to your defence against external threats of any kind. A merchant not paying workers, a local thug demanding protection money and a mugger threatening violence will all be met with a suitable response by all nearby Hook members.

Relations to other Factions

City Government

The City Government are there purely to provide comfort and wealth to those that are already comfortable and wealthy and they care little for the workers of the city. They are not to be trusted.

City Guard

The main role of the City Guard is to act as enforcers for the Government. Their repression of the ordinary worker is a cause of conflict between the factions.

Line of Enu

This religion has little to offer the average member of this faction and so there is no real interaction at all between the two.

Temple of the Red God

This God is sometimes worshipped by Bleeding Hook members and so the factions are on generally good terms.

Cult of the Blind Serpent

This religion seems to be against the use of violence, even if necessary, and so are seen as soft and weak.

The Dust

The beggars clutter the streets, never do an honest days work and are a real nuisance most of the time. Relations are neutral at best.

Vanishing Hand

These thieves won't dare steal from the Hook members, at least not openly, so there is no real contact between the factions.

Temple of Uttu

The hierarchy of the Bleeding Hook does not understand the Uttu religion or its goals. The factions have had no dealings for many years.

The Black Face

This faction makes a living from extortion, theft and violence, although the Bleeding Hook can fight back just as hard. Although not in open conflict, the two factions are not on good terms.

Killers

These assassins are far too expensive for a Hook member to hire and in any case, if you are going to kill someone, do it to their face. Neutral.

Brotherhood of Coin

This faction is comprised of those that pay the wages of most of the Hook members. Although there are occasional disputes over wages, contracts and other minutiae, the relations between these two factions are good.

Cult of Nissa

This faction seems to want to help the poor of the city (and outside) and so are helped if possible. There are not many of them though, so there is little official contact.

Plot Idea

Although the Bleeding Hook may be seen as just unskilled labourers, they are vital to trade in the city and see most arrivals and departures.

The Vahnam learns that a powerful and secretive merchant is expecting a large shipment of ancient Alulim artefacts on a chartered ship. The reality of this must be explored and so the Vahnam must, either by agreement with the leaders or deception, join the Bleeding Hook and work as dockers until the ship arrives. During the unloading they must then investigate this apparent shipment of artefacts and if they are real try and obtain them from the merchant. Maybe other items in the shipment will reveal the merchant as incredibly benign or maybe secretly evil?

Codex 5: The Gods

Note: All of the deities referred to in this chapter are described as “Gods”. The primary worshippers of these Gods are described as “priests”. Both of these terms refer to both male and female Gods and priests equally.

The Gods of Ur-Turuk and surrounding lands are ancient and powerful, but also distant and disinterested. They are seen to control the world and major events, but don’t seem to grant special powers to their priests or create significant miracles. Rather, the Gods subtly affect the lives of everyone and everything.

Because of this, there are not “Gods of the Sea” and “Gods of War” as such. The Gods that are worshipped in the city are usually manifestations of emotions or attitudes. Some, such as Enu, are close to a state religion and are seen as patrons and protectors whilst others, such as Uttu the World Spider, are seen as creators of the world and masters of fate.

Because the Gods are seen as subtle and distant, they are not prayed to or worshipped by the common people because they have any great hope of a direct miracle or change of circumstances. The starving poor are not

hoping for a sudden bounty of food and the sick are not praying for a miraculous and unexplained cure. Instead, the poor are hoping for a better harvest and good trading so that the merchants can lower their prices enough. The sick are hoping for a physician to distribute a herbal remedy to alleviate the symptoms.

The temples and cults play on this outlook in their drive to attract worshippers and the dues and donations they bring. Every priest and high priest will emphasise how their God can improve the world and therefore the lot of the potential worshipper and will tell grand stories of how the God has favoured their worshippers over the years.

In many cases, the priests (who themselves seem to lead slightly charmed lives) will use their own experiences and lives as examples of the benefits of worship. Streets that have a large number of temples or shrines will often have many priests standing on the street itself and trying to encourage worshippers to come into their temple. The calls and shouts are reminiscent of a crowded market and the mingled smells of incense, animal entrails and precious oils produce a heady effect.

What is certain is that many of the Gods worshipped now were not known in the early days of the city and many of them will be unknown in centuries to come. A few seem to persist through social pressures if nothing else, but the majority are transitory and are constantly struggling for survival.

This chapter is far from exhaustive and other Gods, cults and demigods will be encountered in the city and greater countryside.

Enu

Father of the Sun
Lord of Fire
Protector of Ur-Turuk

Enu is one of the oldest Gods and is also the one with the most powerful priesthood (at least in Ur-Turuk). The great Ziggurat of Enu was the first major building in the early city and the priests of that time were the first truly powerful faction.

Those early priests worshipped the Sun, bringer of life to the farms and warmth to the land, but also a dealer of death to those caught in the open desert. Enu has never been seen as a particularly kind or benevolent God, rather one to be feared and his priests obeyed.

Symbol

There are several symbols for Enu, originally owned by a specific sub-cult but later subsumed as part of the larger religion. The main (and most common) symbol is that of a stylised sun, cast in some valuable metal (or at least plated). Other common symbols are a flame created from gold wire, an enamelled ziggurat or an eye fashioned from onyx and white marble.

History

It is thought that the worship of Enu goes back to the very founding of Ur-Turuk, and possibly even before. The original city, low rise and fashioned from mud brick, had almost no buildings bigger than a large hut but it is believed that the largest of these were devoted to the worship of the sun. Ancient clay tablets in the palace archives tell the story of how the first king of the city was awarded his crown by the "Servant of the Sun".

A few hundred years after the city was founded, the priests had acquired such power that they were able to use one thousand slaves and ten years to construct a vast ziggurat temple. That they could then afford to sacrifice all thousand slaves on the high altar is further evidence of their wealth.

Since those early days, the cult of Enu has only grown in wealth and political power and owns

vast amounts of land and property both in and around the city. There have been leadership coups within the cult, schisms and bloody internal conflicts. Despite all of these problems, the cult has persisted and is possibly the most recognisable building in the whole of the city and the greater lands.

Purview

Enu is worshiped in his aspect as the Sun and Fire, both essential to life and civilisation. As the “original” God of Ur-Turuk, Enu is also considered the patron and protector of the city.

Priesthood

The priesthood wear white, yellow and red robes to reflect the flames and sun of their God. Junior priests are very common and perform the vast majority of the daily rituals and devotions of the temple. The Line, as they are known, are a common sight in the city. The lower the rank of priest, the more white in their robes. Mid-ranking priests tend to have lots of yellow and for high priests, robes are predominantly red. There are only a handful of high priests at any one time, with political clout and lineage a key factor in promotion prospects.

Temples

Unlike most of the Gods worshiped in the city, Enu only has the one temple in the city itself. The huge Ziggurat towers high above the rest

of the city with an open air high altar at the very top surrounded by eternal flames. The lower levels have shrines, barracks, suites for the high priests, store rooms and so forth. Holy guards patrol the outer plaza regions to keep away non-priests and indeed only priests, temple employees and select dignitaries are allowed onto the ziggurat itself.

Outside the city, temples of Enu take the form of a mini-Ziggurat of two or maybe three levels. Rarely much bigger than a private house, these out-temples usually have only one or two priests assigned to them.

Rituals

There are regular rituals on the Ziggurat right around the clock, normally involving fire and the sacrifice of various animals. The reason for the numerous curious forms the rituals take have long been lost in time, but they are always carefully observed.

Holy days and special events are marked with much grander rituals featuring many priests and dignitaries and often including human sacrifice. Although these poor unfortunates are normally convicted criminals, bandits or other undesirables, the cult does have the legal right to take almost anyone for one of these rituals. They have not, in living memory, exercised this power but that is not to say they cannot.

Away from the main temple, the major daily rituals will still be enacted by priests and the most devout followers using a smaller flame and smaller sacrifices.

Outside Ur-Turuk

There are quite a few smaller ziggurats in the lands immediately around the city, but the further the village is from the city walls, the fewer the ziggurats. Enu is almost alone in having no temples in other cities, although travelling priests are sent to these places to try and recruit whatever followers they can. The High Priests would certainly not turn down opportunities in other cities though.

The Red God

The Bringer of Blood

The Sharp God

Although not as ancient as Enu, the Red God has been worshipped (and indeed feared) for a very long time. The Red God was at first a god of certain deep desert tribes notorious for their cruel and dangerous natures. The ritual cutting of both captives and tribe members was intended to ensure survival in the deadly tractless wastes. Now, he (or even she) is a well known city God.

Symbol

The symbol of both the cult and the God is a curved and stylised dagger with a drop of blood on the tip. Wealthy worshippers wear a dagger symbol with a ruby hung on a fine chain from the tip.

History

Although originally worshipped by the dangerous desert tribes, the God was eventually adopted by city devotees and drawn into the mainstream. The early days of the God in the city were marred by vicious running battles between the followers of the new religion and the priests of the established cults. Numerous bodies were found in dark alleyways, ritually cut and bled out, before the city itself took action. Many, many Red God followers were rounded up and executed in the arena before a truce was reached after much effort by the Ambassadors.

Even after the truce, bloodshed was common between the cults as old ways were hard to forget. More than one Red God temple was burned to the ground before their current fortress-like building was finished. The angry nature of most of the priests and their followers has meant that the cult has had a violent and troubled history in the city, albeit one that is now firmly established due to the popularity of this cult with the City Guard and the Nobility.

Purview

This God stands for blood, anger, pain and vengeance. Most devotees of this cult are driven in because their own lives have been defined by one of these emotions. This self selection means that the cult has a poor reputation amongst outsiders; a reputation that is very well deserved.

Priesthood

Priests of the Red God are chosen from amongst the angriest and most vengeful followers and these characteristics are the key factors that govern promotion within the cult. As would be expected, this does not produce a close or happy feeling within the cult or the temple.

The Priests wear long and light silk robes in a deep blood red colour and all have long uncut hair. All priests of this cult slice their skin as part of cult rituals, or just to show how holy they are, and are thus normally heavily scarred.

Temples

The main temple of the Red God in Ur-Turuk is between the Noble quarter and the Slave Market and has a huge door opening on each. The southern door allows the Nobility to enter into their half of the huge interior space and the northern door allows the common folk to enter theirs. An ornate metalwork screen stretches across this space keeping the two

halves of the congregation apart and a high pulpit sits on top of the eastern end of this screen. The floor was originally composed of blinding white stone but the constant dripping of blood from priests and worshippers over the years has created a deep and interesting patina that resembles deep red varnish. There are no windows in this temple and so all light is provided by candles mounted all along the metal screen.

The blockhouse of the main temple is all one large room, although there are several metal doors set into the incredibly thick walls. These lead to an extensive network of below ground rooms, chambers and tunnels used for the more secret rituals and for other mysterious purposes.

Other sub-temples in the city and in rural districts take a similar form; a heavily built block-like room with one or two smaller chambers beneath. These rarely have a metal screen separating the two halves, although a few have had this installed by a wealthy local wishing to be kept apart from their lower class neighbours.

Rituals

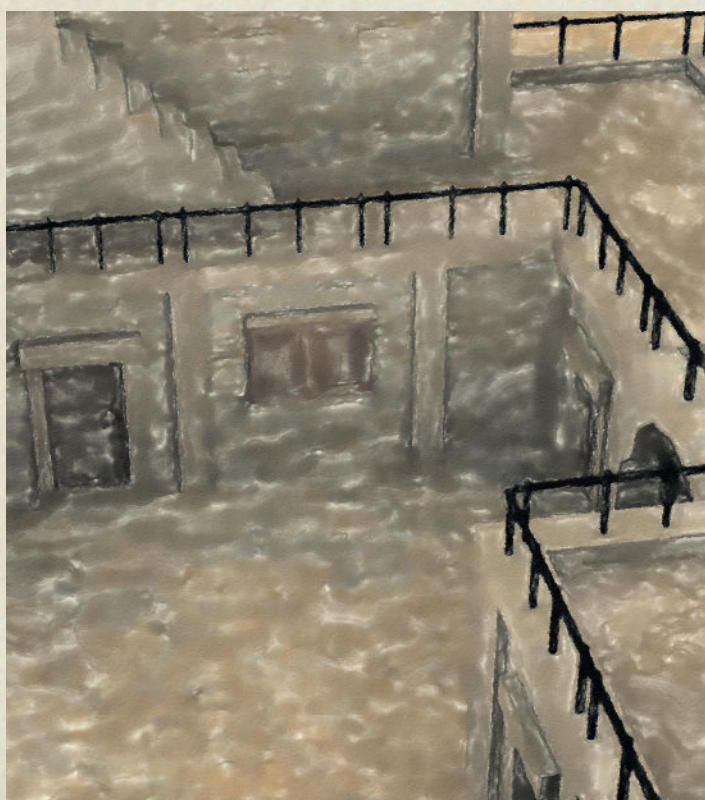
Most of the cult rituals of the Red God involve bloodshed, however minor. A small cut must be made by every worshipper as part of even the shortest ritual, but major rituals may see

exsanguination to the point of unconsciousness. The priests take all care to make sure that no-one dies as part of these rituals, for what is a cut if the recipient does not survive to remember it? Indeed, a death following a ritual is seen as a major failure and can lead to the banishment of the priest responsible.

Daily devotions tend to involve nicks made in the skin with a blessed knife and a few words of liturgy.

Outside Ur-Turuk

The Red God does have temples in towns and cities other than Ur-Turuk, but none are as large or as grand as that one. Most other city temples consider themselves subsidiaries of the Ur-Turuk one.



Blind Serpent

The Night Stalker Death of Civilisations

This cult was founded only one hundred years ago by a mad hermit. Taking over the Temple of Enil within a short time, the cult of the Blind Serpent has since become an integral part of city life. The Blind Serpent is a favourite with the poor and with slaves since it promotes the idea that anyone can achieve anything. It is for this reason that the city officials see the cult as a possible threat. There is a deep and long running hatred between this cult and that of the Red God.

Symbol

Rather unsurprisingly, the symbol of this god is a bronze snake wrapped around a pillar. Expensive versions of the symbol have a small white marble pillar and a gold-plated snake, but most are made entirely of bronze.

History

The day, one hundred years ago, when the mad hermit appeared out of the desert went unremarked at the time. Madmen appear every single day heralding a new religion or new God and this one at first seemed no different. As with most others, this one was

received by jeers, rotten fruit and stones and even the grand gesture of putting out his own eyes was received with little comment. Somehow however, people began to return to the hermit day after day and three months after blinding himself, the hermit and a huge band of nascent followers stormed into the temple of Enil. The temple guards and City Guard could do little to stop this invasion or the violent expulsion of the resident priests.

Lawsuits, city guard actions and more followed, but the Blind Serpent stayed put and a year after their invasion dedicated a brand new statue of an eyeless serpent coiled around a pillar. This huge statue was cast from the bronze reclaimed from the huge face of Enil that had hung in the temple and provoked several weeks of rioting and running battles between the two cults. The hermit vanished without trace three years after founding the cult, but by that time the religion was well established and continued without any problems.

The Blind Serpent has never attempted to take over any other temples, and indeed the main one in Ur-Turuk is the only one for miles around. The hundred years since the founding have been marked by a nasty feud between the cult and the Red God and many priests on both side have been killed or maimed. Neither side

will say what initiated this feud or why it continues.

Purview

This God represents survivability, toughness and resilience. The priests teach that anyone can achieve anything if they try and have faith (in the Blind God).

Priesthood

Priests of the Blind Serpent wear black robes covered by snakeskin cloaks. The wealthiest and most senior priests have a cloak produced from a giant serpent and often have the head of the snake as a hood.

Priests are usually chosen from amongst the lower classes, and indeed all of the High Priests so far have been of lowly background. The priests try and treat everyone equally, but do reserve great scorn for anyone who does not try in life or who gives up and accepts their fate.

Temples

The Temple of the Blind Serpent is an ancient building of stone right next to what is now known as the Serpent gate in the south of the city. It was originally built, many hundreds of years ago, as the temple of Enil and the Blind Snake cult has made very few changes.

The temple has a great central hall, tiled in white marble and walled in gold-coloured stone. A massive bronze snake statue stands in the centre of this hall and cages of blinded snakes occupy niches around the walls. It is customary for worshippers to bring live rodents and other small animals to drop into the cages when they attend rituals.

There is a constant guard on the main doors and smaller side doors and any priest or follower of the Red God trying to enter will be attacked on sight.

Rituals

There are daily rituals held in the temple, and in addition to sermons from a high priest exhorting followers to aspire higher, there are often uplifting tales told by members of the congregation.

Live snakes do form a major part of every ritual and the temple purchases huge numbers from specialist dealers.

Outside Ur-Turuk

There are no temples in the lands surrounding Ur-Turuk, although the cult has established small off-shoots in other coastal cities and towns. None of these are of significant size or importance and it seems as if the religion is restricted to Ur-Turuk itself.

Enil

Kindly Mother
Measurer of Time

This ancient God has been worshipped for almost as long in Ur-Turuk as Enu. A benign and gentle God, her creeds often seemed out of place in the dangerous and violent city. Enil was, until a hundred years ago, one of the two main Gods who watched over the city, but since her main temple was seized by the Blind Serpent, her cult has been in decline.

Symbol

The symbol of Enil is a bronze disc with a relief face upon it. Although only the eyes, nose and mouth are depicted, the face nevertheless looks kind and serene. Personal symbols are hung around the neck with a white ribbon. The faces in temples are often twenty feet high and inscribed around the edges with prayers and exhortations.

History

Enil was worshipped in small temples around the nascent city from the earliest days. Her followers were often women, physicians and others with a lower predilection for violence. As the city grew bigger and religion became more organised, the priests of Enil followed

their brethren of the Enu cult in building a large and formal temple. Although not on the scale of the great ziggurat, the first temple of Enil was a grand building and a refuge from the violence of the city.

Smaller temples sprang up throughout the city districts and in the areas outside over the years, serving the same purpose as the main temple; that of refuge and sanctuary. A Temple of Enil is a calm and safe place to be, and very few people will risk disturbing that serenity with aggression.

The only time this unwritten rule was comprehensively broken was about 100 years ago when the mad hermit who founded the Blind Serpent cult invaded the great temple of Enil and seized control of it from her priests. Since that time, the cult of Enil has retreated to the countryside and the lesser temples and her worshippers have grown less and less.

Purview

Enil stands for safety, security, peace and longevity. Followers of this God are encouraged to be kind to their fellow citizens and many donate money and goods to the poor and needy. Followers are also asked to give aid and shelter to those in need.

Priesthood

The priests of Enil wear ivory coloured silk robes that seem to float and swirl gently around them as they walk. As well as leading daily devotions, the priests spend a lot of their time distributing food and other essentials to the poor. Although a God of peace and safety, most priests are armed (and trained to use those arms) to enable them to protect their temples or those in danger.

Temples

With the grand temple seized a century ago, Enil is now worshipped in small temples in the various urban or rural districts. Although these temples have no standard plan or design, they all feature a large central room looked over by the great bronze face of their God. Most temples also have strong walls and doors to enable any heretic attackers to be kept out until help arrives. Some even have internal secure rooms where those in danger can take safe refuge.

Rituals

The daily rituals of Enil are calm and quiet and last for no more than fifteen minutes. Indeed, up to half of this time is often spent in silent prayer and meditation. When sacrifices are called for, they normally take the form of animals that can be distributed as food once slaughtered.

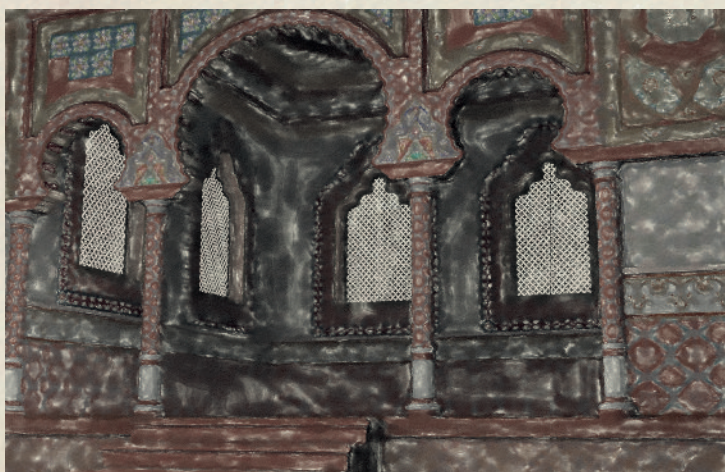
Priests of Enil also perform small services at dawn and dusk, thanking their God for the safe night just passed or asking for a safe night to come. Although these rituals are public, very few are ever attended these days by the followers of the cult.

There are no regular great rituals, which are instead held at times of great danger such as war, plague or other disaster. Congregations seem to grow greatly at these times as the desperate people of the city ask for help from all sources.

Outside Ur-Turuk

There are numerous small temples in the rural districts outside the city, each attended by a single priest. The temples in larger towns and other cities are more substantial and have more priests in attendance, but in these reduced times for the cult, few have more than six or eight priests.

The cult is well regarded by the other cities and towns, although never seen as a major force.



Uttu

The World Spider
Spinner of Everything
The Lurking Dark

This cult has a dark and secretive reputation, with many people equating them with assassins and any unexplained death. Although in the most part this reputation is undeserved, very few outsiders ever find out any of the cult secrets and no insiders ever leave alive.

Symbol

This cult has a large black spider at the centre of a silver web as it's symbol. Initiates just wear the web itself whilst more senior priests wear the full symbol. Lay devotees wear just the spider as a symbol.

History

This cult has been in existence for many hundred years although the low key nature means that no-one is quite sure of the how and when of it's origins. Even the cult archivists (such as they are) have records for only a hundred years at most.

It is likely that the cult stretches back to the early days of the city, lurking in cellars and other dark places. Certainly very, very ancient cave paintings have been found of huge black spiders looming over tiny and terrified stick

people suggesting that this god predates even the Alulim enslavement.

It is known that the cult has quietly spread out throughout the city and along the whole coast without seeming to challenge the other cults or factions. The cult has not openly taken part in politics or any major event throughout the years and so has generally slipped under the radar of notice.

Purview

The World Spider is a creation God, responsible for the world as it is and the world as it will be. Fate and the future are both said to be woven by this ancient being and devotees urge a long and stable future from their God.

Priesthood

Priests of Uttu wear dark grey coarse-woven robes and have a black spider tattooed on their face. The eight legs of the spider extend back around the side of the head.

Appointment of new priests falls to an even more secretive group of high priests who select the most promising devotees to be further initiated. The ceremony that inducts a worshipper into the priesthood demands secrecy of cult secrets, on pain of being devoured by Uttu itself. Indeed, those few priests who have threatened to reveal secrets in the past have been found wrapped in sticky web-like substance and drained of body fluids.

Temples

The World Spider does not have one main temple, or indeed any large open and above ground temples at all. All temples and shrines are below ground in cellars, ancient sewer tunnels or other subterranean spaces. None are large enough to hold more than twenty devotees however.

If the location of the temples in Ur-Turuk or any other city is plotted on a map, they will seem to form the radiating spokes of a web...

Rituals

Most of the daily and regular rituals are sober, short and simple affairs. The leading priest demands that all worshippers show their devotion and then all form a web shape in the temple chamber to pray privately for favourable fate.

The less frequent and more secret rituals are of course unknown to almost everyone outside the cult itself, and they are not saying.

Outside Ur-Turuk

The cult has a strong but quiet presence in the other major cities with temples and shrines in the standard web shape. Each city has its own hierarchy and has very little contact with the other cities. There are no significant temples outside the cities or in the rural districts with the worship of Uttu being an urban trend.

Nissa

**The Provider of Life
Protector of Man**

Although Enu was one of the founding Gods of Ur-Turuk, Nissa was almost certainly worshipped in some format during the enslavement. The enslaved humans had to grow their own food, as did the newly emancipated escapees, and a God who stood for crops, fertility and health would have been seen as an essential lifeline. Nissa is still worshipped today, but is now seen as an old fashioned and minor God.

Symbol

The symbol of Nissa is a teardrop shape, representing the tears of a mother, the lifegiving rain and the loss of blood from a wound. It is usually worn on a silk, leather or woolen cord rather than a metal chain.

History

The very first mud huts built on the land that would become Ur-Turuk featured small places where the inhabitants could give thanks for the crops growing and the livestock not dying. Whether the God Nissa was known by that name at that early date is not known, but it is very likely that those first settlers were worshipping this God.

Although as the city grew the priests never achieved much in the way of political power or influence, the worship of this God continued to be almost ubiquitous as almost everyone was involved in food production in those early days.

As walls were built and the city grew however, more and more people became involved in 'civilised' employment and thus forgot the imperative that without healthy crops, the city itself would die. Combined with the fact that there is no grand temple in the middle of the city, no politically powerful high priest whispering into the ear of the King and no visually obvious worship of the God, people began to forget the household God of their ancestors and the numbers of the faithful dwindled over the years. Nissa is not yet forgotten, but she is surely in terminal decline, at least in the city itself.

Purview

Nissa is the force behind the thriving of crops and livestock, the provision of food, the healing of wounds and the fertility of both people, animals and land.

Priesthood

The few priests of Nissa spend most of their time travelling the streets of the city and the tracks of the rural districts, visiting both rural chapels and the houses of their followers. They often have no home to call their own but rely

on a little hospitality here and there. It is considered a central tenet to followers of this God to feed and shelter her priests whenever they ask.

The priests wear green and blue silk robes and are normally carrying a walking staff and pack with all of their worldly goods.

Temples

Nissa does not have a grand temple nor ever did have. Within the city, houses of worshippers have a small household shrine with places for offerings. A small lower class hut will have a small shelf as a shrine, whilst the mansion of a noble would have a large and ornate room.

Rural districts have small chapels placed out amongst the fields or woodlands, visited by workers before or after their days work.

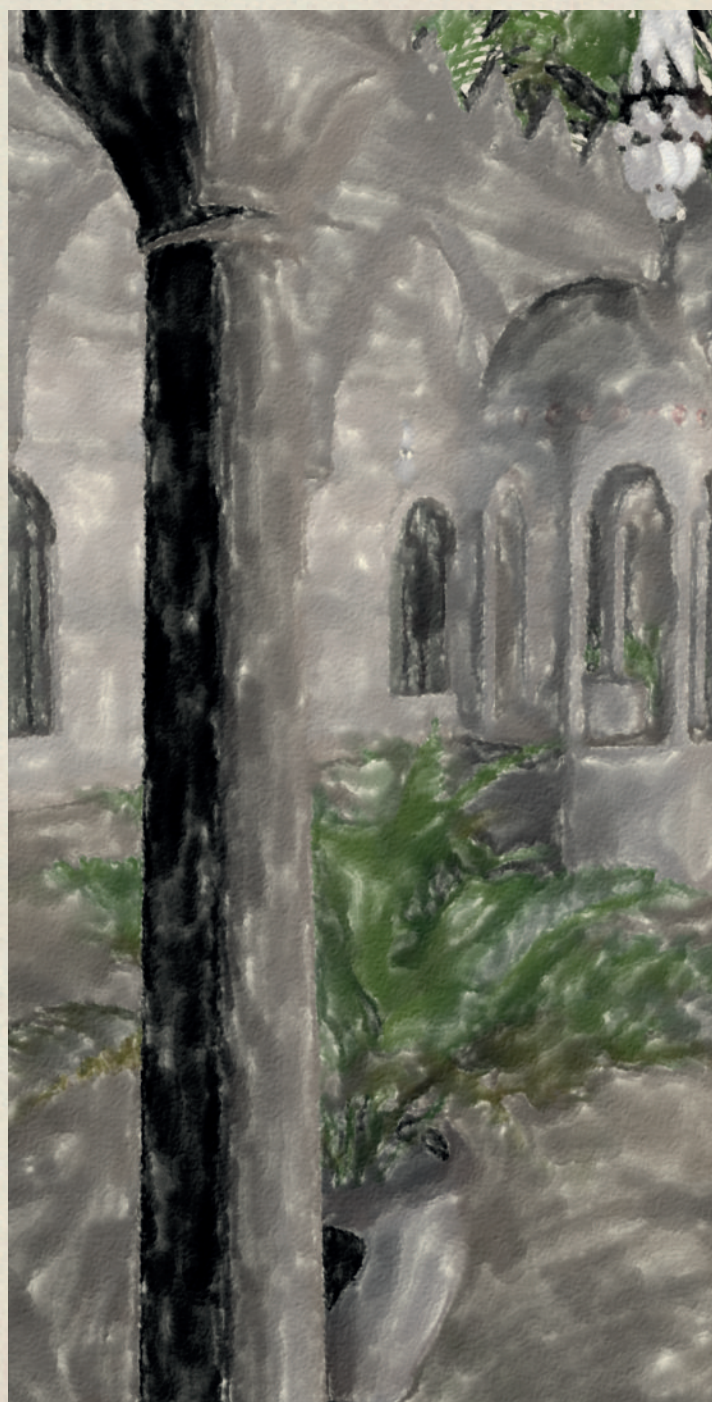
Rituals

The rituals of Nissa are low key and very rarely involve sacrifice of any kind. Why give food or other essentials to your God when you could make use of them yourself? A particularly good harvest or bountiful fishing trip may see a small sacrifice in thanks however.

Given the home-based nature of most of the shrines, many of the rituals are intended to be led by the head of the household rather than a formal priest.

Outside Ur-Turuk

The rural districts around Ur-Turuk do feature small rural shrines placed near farmland and other places of food production. Other cities have a similar pattern of home shrines and rural chapels, further reinforcing the theory that Nissa was worshipped by the ancestral humans during their enslavement.



Abzal

The Burning Breeze Shimmering Heat

Abzal is not really a God of Ur-Turuk, although there are a few priests and worshippers within the city. This God is mainly worshipped by the nomadic tribes that somehow scratch en existence in the desiccated deserts that occupy much of the inner lands. It is said that Abzal is sometimes actually seen by his priests and devotees, although the priests of the other cults dispute this.

The priests and devotees of this cult have a deep and burning hatred of the Blind Serpent, who they see as a false God trying to depose their God.

Symbol

The symbol of this God is a small leather bag of desert sand tied and suspended from a leather thong. These are often gifted at birth and upon the death of the wearer, the sand is poured out back into the desert and the bag burned.

History

Immediately after humans escaped their servitude, the vast majority headed to the coast

and river valleys to found settlements an faint mimicry of their previous masters. A few however went the other way and tried to lose themselves in the vast open spaces of the desert. It is said that the chiefs of these first tribes encountered a being who instructed them how to tame camels, how to find water and where to look for food.

Over time, the devotions applied to this being became the worship of Abzal and a caste of priests formed within the tribes. As the countless years passed, the knowledge and rituals became codified (although only in oral traditions) as the various tribes met and shared information.

Purview

Abzal is revered as the epitome of survival in the desert, without whom only death would await.

Priesthood

The priests of Abzal are chosen at birth due to a look in the eye, a birthmark or even just a feeling on the part of the current tribal priest. Taken from their parents at a young age, these would-be priests are turned out alone into the desert with a single skin of water and a knife. A large majority never return to their tribe, and are therefore not to the liking of their God. Those that do return are obviously blessed and are trained up as full priests.

In reality, some of those that never return are driven mad by their ordeal and spend the rest of their lives living in some remote cave, licking dew from the rocks, eating lizards and worshipping Abzal...

Temples

There are no temples of Abzal unless you include the tent of the tribal priest or a small cave in a rocky outcrop, home to a mad hermit.

Rituals

The rituals of Abzal are focused entirely on the survival of the priest and the tribe. Any tribal member considered a liability will be sacrificed to Abzal, hoping that this display will allow the survival of the rest. There are not normally daily or regular rituals; these must all fit in with the urgent duties of the tribe.

The rituals of the mad hermit priests are frequently unique, mainly unintelligible and generally impossible to follow.

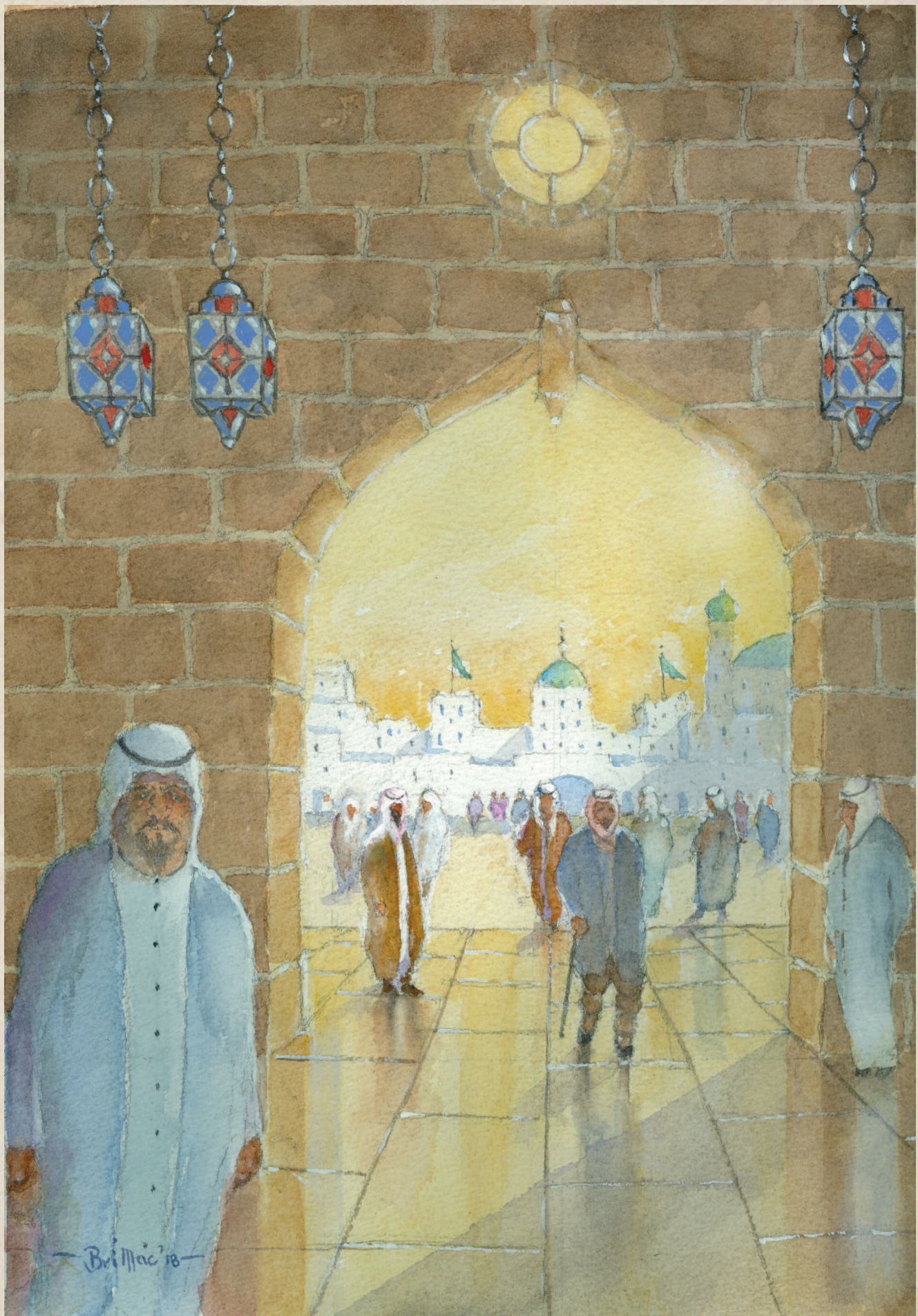
Outside Ur-Turuk

This cult exists almost entirely outside the city, with only a few devotees inside the city itself. Away from the rural farming districts, this cult is probably the main organised religion.

Other Gods

There are of course many other Gods than those listed here. Many small towns and villages have their own unique patron God, secret cults rise and fall, madmen appear proclaiming a great new God and are killed in a dark alleyway a week later. Anyone who proclaims to be an expert on the Gods of the coast should keep their eyes open and their ear to the ground.

In addition to what scholars will refer to as “Real Gods”, there are also many, many more minor deities found across the countryside. A Demi-God may only have sway over a very small or specific area, even as small as a single oasis, cave or desert rock outcrop. Like the “Real Gods”, these very minor deities rarely manifest their power in obvious ways, relying instead on subtle alterations of the natural world. The God of a mountain cave may slowly accumulate sulphurous gasses in the depths, to be released by a freak gust of wind if unwelcome visitors enter. The deity of a desert outcrop might attract the attentions of a lone male lion to help protect his domain and the demigod of an oasis might even roam the area leaving subtle signals to encourage lost travellers toward the life-saving water.



Codex 6: Life in the City

Ur-Turuk, as the oldest, largest and best position city on the coast, is also one of the busiest and most crowded.

The huge sandstone city walls encompass a population of at least fifteen thousand within but outside the city walls are none of the usual slums and suburbs. A long dead King decreed that the land immediately outside the walls was to be kept clear of buildings to aid a defence that was never needed.

Life within is hot, noisy and crowded. Families may well occupy a single room in a crowded tenement building and so much of everyday life for the lower classes is spent on the street. And indeed the street is where much of the life of the city can be found. Traders sell almost everything imaginable from market stalls and mobile barrows. People eat and drink, on the street, socialise there and even work outside.

This outside lifestyle is in part driven by the crowded houses and buildings and in part encouraged by the generally warm and dry weather for much of the year.

Of course, life in the exclusive Nobles district is far different from the dusty and crowded majority of the city and there large mansions

provide cool and spacious accommodation and are surrounded by lush green gardens planted for shade and fruits. Anyone lucky enough to live in this exclusive area can be thankful for the peace that fate has afforded them.

Although the days are short but hot and the nights long but warm (by reason of it's equatorial location), the city seems to be alive all around the clock. There are nearly as many market stalls trading in the early hours of the morning as there are at noon. There are frequent night-games in the arena and slave markets are held at any time of the day. Taverns and inns are open every hour, and even the wealthy and nobles hold parties that go on all night before the guests sleep away their excesses through the hot day. It is for this reason that torches and lanterns are lit at regular intervals along the main streets by dedicated lamplighters and many businesses will have their own external lights to draw in customers.

This cosmopolitan approach to life contrasts starkly with life in the rural districts, where people work outside but live inside, where most work and socialising is done in the hours of daylight and where the noises, smells and

pace of life are greatly reduced. The rural dwellers consider the city folk mad for living so fast, and indeed vice versa!

General Politics & Governance

The city itself is governed in name by the King (or Queen). Of course, they are not able to take every decision and read every report and so they delegate various powers to Ministers, each with a specific remit. There is no set list of Ministerial positions, each King chooses what Ministers he needs at the time and appoints suitable persons.

Suitable in the case of senior appointments almost always comes down to family and social class. Every Minister will be of the Nobility, and most will be related in one way or another to the King. It is felt that this is a key way to ensure the loyalty of the Government to the King, although this has not always been the case.

The individual Ministers have an office and staff in the Royal Palace, and from there they discharge their duties. Each will themselves appoint more junior administrators to oversee particular areas, and again these are appointed based upon family and connections rather than ability or suitability to do the job. These junior

positions will also have a staff of scribes, clerks and other officers ready to do the real work of Government.

Most of the day-to-day decisions about the running of the city will be taken by these junior officials and their staff. A blocked or contaminated well would likely be dealt with by the "Overseer of Water Supplies" who would send out his foreman and labourers to clear said well. The Minister of Public Provision would likely never hear about the well personally. The exception to this is if the matter in hand affects the Noble District or any influential people, at which point the Minister may take personal charge to ensure that important people are not discommoded.

Many of the Junior administrators maintain an office in the district in which they mainly work, and over time these often come to have more sympathy with the common folk around them than their superiors in the Government. It is usually worth approaching these individuals first with a request for something to be done as they are far more likely to care!

It is worth noting that almost all Ministers and Administrators are members of the City Government Faction with a rank and standing appropriate to their position.

Outside the city, the rural districts are divided into twenty one Velayats (districts) and each of these is governed by a Satrap. These senior officials are of equivalent rank to Ministers but are generally considered to be the ultimate authority in their own area with (almost) the power of life, death and taxes over everyone who lives there or even just travels through.

In general, most governance is very light. The Ministers and officials want to avoid any unnecessary work for themselves and the people would just prefer to get on with it without interference from the King and his Ministers!

Slaves & Social Classes

The city of Ur-Turuk, like most of the cities of the coast, has a thriving trade in slaves, and has done almost since the city was founded. Slaves are sourced from captives seized in small border skirmishes, members of renegade tribes, condemned criminals and those so poor that their families sell them into slavery to save the rest.

Slaves have no real legal status and are, in almost every sense of the word, possessions. A slave is fully bound to their owner, and must obey almost any order they are given.

However, there are laws in Ur-Turuk against the mistreatment of livestock, and similar laws apply to Slaves. An owner may not kill a slave (although the punishment for breaking this law is only a fine equivalent to three times the value of the slave), they may not maim or permanently injure a slave, they may not torture, starve, deny medical treatment or torment. Beatings and physical punishment are permitted, but only to a reasonable level.

In practice, these laws are rarely used. Not because the Government refuses to use them; rather the price of slaves is high due to the restricted supply and thus even a young or unskilled slave is a valuable commodity. Even the richest and most sadistic noble will stay their hand from serious violence to avoid damaging an asset.

All new slaves brought into the city are taken first to the Slave Market, where they are registered with the city, and from there to holding pens nearby. Slaves are usually sold within a day of arrival, and most families or married slaves are sold together. Long experience has taught that these slaves work harder and rebel less than those that are split up.

The slave auctions themselves are raucous affairs with much shouting, whistling and loud comments. The auctioneer and the main

buyers however focus carefully on the merchandise for sale and which will have been carefully examined in the holding pens earlier. Once purchased, a slave will be added to a “sold” pen with other purchases from that buyer, and at the end of the auction, slavemasters and guards will take the purchases to their new home.

Slave quarters in most houses and mansions are normally relatively comfortable (certainly better than the slums of the cities) and the slaves are dressed and fed enough food. It may not be fancy, but it will be nutritious, for again a weak slave cannot work well. Slaves are used for all sorts of duties, with those that rebel repeatedly ending up in the arena! Slave quarters in middle class houses (where there may only be one or two slaves) are less comfortable, but still preferable to the gutter. Depending on the owner, these slaves end up almost as part of the family.

It is possible for a slave to earn their freedom through long service or an act such as saving their master’s life. In these cases, slaves are given a bag of coin and their families (if they have them) are also set free. There are many tales of freed slaves becoming very successful and wealthy following their release.

Most slaves owned by a larger household will wear a uniform. This will usually be in the

same colour and similar style to that worn by free servants, but much plainer and simpler. Because slaves are never considered to be “off duty”, most will have no other clothes and they will certainly not own luxuries such as jewellery or other expensive items. Many owners will however grant their slaves small amounts of money which can be saved to buy small luxuries such as richer food, wine, perfume etc.

Daily life as a slave is hard, unremitting and often without hope of improvement. The only positive thing that can be said in it’s defence is that the same applies to many of the urban and rural poor with those poor souls in constant danger of starvation as well! Generally a new slave will be assessed for age, physical ability and existing skills and will be assigned to a task within the household that suits their characteristics. Some initial training may take place, but after that the slave is expected to get on with their job during their allotted hours. A kind and considerate owner will have their slaves working for ten hours per day with other waking hours considered rest time. Less scrupulous owners will insist on a 16–18 hour working day. Slaves in the latter household will have to choose between eating and socialising or sleeping.

The work performed by slaves will be the same as hired servants or other ordinary workers.

Some may work on farms, in stoneyards, in tanneries or as fishermen. Others will be cooks, domestics, grooms and body servants. In general, the only significant differences between a city slave and a servant will be that the servant is free to go home at the end of the day and leave their job if they wish, although they must also budget for their own food and rent and so forth.

Although a majority of slaves are treated well by their owners and work out their lives with no major issues, the law does reserve strict penalties for slaves who rebel or commit crimes. A crime committed in the city itself such as theft, assault or violence will usually be punished by a public whipping before being returned to their owners who may take further action. A slave who damages their owners property (including other slaves) is liable to be sold to the arena and used in a fight against a great beast or trained gladiator. A slave who flees their owner will be seized by the city and put into the arena with several hobbled Cidae. The huge carnivorous birds will not be able to move fast, but they are relentless and a slave will only be able to run away for so long. These pursuits can take many hours and patrons place bets on which escaped slave will last the longest!

There are many Slave Traders in Ur-Turuk, with the most famous (and prosperous) being

Sermegos of Kar. This lean and scarred man has a good eye for a slave and a keen sense of worth. He will never sell a slave cheap no matter how good the persuasion attempt, but is also known for paying fair prices.

Crime & Punishment

The city of Ur-Turuk is, in general, a fairly lawless place. There are of course many city guards, magistrates, laws and even prisons. However, the very crowded nature of much of the city means that strict enforcement of the laws is normally restricted to the larger public areas, the enclosed noble districts and the well to do merchant areas. Of course, many people say that only some laws are enforced in the noble district, that is to say those that are only broken by poor people...

The City Guard are charged with maintaining the security of the city itself as well as law and order within the walls. They are armed with Tulwars and Shields, and each will also carry either a Polearm or a Crossbow. Their uniform consists of red trousers and cloak, black boots, chainmail and a spiked helmet. Junior Officers wear the same as their men, but also have a white silk sash as a mark of rank.

Senior officers instead wear white trousers and cloak and a red sash.

A squad of the city watch is normally composed of three men with polearms, three with crossbows and a junior officer. This is deemed a sufficient patrol or guard to keep most streets or gates safe, although larger squads are used in more dangerous areas such as the Beggars Quarter or when a known threat is imminent. These patrols will usually respond to obvious major crimes that happen in front of them or are reported to them and will head towards screams and other disturbances. In general though, they will not worry too much about petty theft, fistfights, violent arguments, vandalism or criminal damage unless it is upsetting a noble or important person. An exception to this would be if the perpetrators were known criminals or (even worse!) outsiders. Just as many City Guards are thought to be lazy and venal, many others are very zealous in pursuing desert nomads, foreign sailors, country folk and other newcomers.

In theory, refusing to surrender to the watch is in itself a crime punishable by painful death, and so the watch can stop a fight simply by loudly stating that everyone is under arrest and should immediately cease. In practice, this punishment is never used and so the threat that "the city guard are coming" holds little fear for

many hardened brawlers. The city guard are of course authorised to use lethal force if their officer deems it necessary and they are usually fit and well trained so a credible threat. For the officer, this authority is a double edged sword; if they terminate someone important or whose relatives kick up a fuss or the intervention is shown to be cruel or unnecessary, it could be they that are looking at the inside of a Sabre-toothed tiger in the arena...

If the watch do happen to arrest miscreants, they take them immediately to the large jail under the administrative wing next to the Royal Palace. This jail is approached along a sloping and gloomy tunnel from an outer courtyard along which screams and groans echo ominously!

Over the long years since the founding of Ur-Turuk, a complex strata of laws and edicts has built up, and very few of these have ever been rescinded. Thus even the most skilled and experience lawyer struggles to comprehend the whole law code with it's inconsistencies, errors, overlaps and oversights. Even the royally-appointed Magistrates only know a small portion of the laws as they apply to their speciality. For this reason, it is likely that most citizens and visitors break the law many times every day without realising it. It rarely matters

of course because the City Guard don't realise it either and so nothing is done.

The more well known laws prohibit most activities that civilisation frowns upon. Murder, theft, assault, vandalism, treason, forgery, arson and so forth are all against the law. A person arrested for a crime such as these (or indeed any crime that the City Guard believe to be against the law) will be arrested and taken to the jail. Within a day or so, the miscreant will be taken in front of a magistrate in one of the city courtrooms and tried.

A trial only ever involves a Magistrate who interprets and directs the laws of the King. Wearing expensive robes (for they are always people of substance and breeding) the Magistrate sits upon an elevated stone seat and hears the evidence presented by the Guard, any witnesses and anyone willing to defend the prisoner. If it can be arranged in time by friends outside, a lawyer may be present to argue the finer points of the appropriate law with the Magistrate. If found not guilty, the prisoner is immediately released. If found guilty, sentence will be handed down there and then and the prisoner returned to the jail.

Serious crimes such as murder, rape, treason and large thefts will all be dealt with by the prisoner being sentenced to fight in the arena until they die. Depending on the crime and

the Magistrate, the prisoner may be allowed a weapon or even armour, but even if they win a fight, they will be returned to their cell ahead of the next battle. These prisoners are desperate, with no hope of release and only a win in the arena will extend their miserable lives. Some middling crimes may be punishable by one fight in the arena, with freedom allowed if the criminal wins. There are in fact several dangerous hardened criminals who have survived five or six of these fights roaming the city...

Lesser crimes will be dealt with by flogging, mutilation, imprisonment or banishment and the most minor crimes are dealt with by fines. Of course, a member of an illustrious noble family may well find themselves fined for littering because they happened to leave a dead body in the gutter after a duel! It is rare that this noble would ever be tried for murder, unless of course the victim was also of very high station.

Imprisonment is possibly the worst of the punishments. Death in the arena is often slow and painful, but not as slow and painful as the death brought on by a year or more in the squalid and overcrowded jail beneath the palace.

Architecture

The city has evolved over the centuries, although much of it looks like it did in the early days and most of the streets follow the same routes. The streets themselves are mainly of packed earth, sand and dust, although this can become a quagmire after the occasional rainstorm. The vast majority of the winding city streets are also used as a rubbish dump, with animal bones, broken pottery, old cloth and much worse all thrown into piles far enough from the door to avoid the smell but close enough that a long walk is not required. As this invariably ends up dumping rubbish outside someone else's front door, neighbourhood arguments are common.

These roads are normally rutted by cart wheels, littered with animal dung and uneven and dangerous to walk on. They are often lit at night with straw torches or sometimes oil lamps but these are well spaced and produce plenty of flickering light and dancing shadows.

The public squares are paved with large sandstone flags, although these end up partially buried under yet more sand, dust and rubbish. In the noble quarter, the roads are paved with a much finer pale stone that is swept and washed daily by slaves to keep it clear and

clean. These streets tend to be wider, many are bordered by gardens rather than front walls and they are lit at regular intervals by oil lamps on slender stone pillars.



The houses in the poorest areas of the city are built from mud bricks and are usually a basic block shape. Windows are unglazed and window spaces and doorways are covered with crude doors and shutters. Many houses also have a mud brick wall surrounding a small

yard to the rear with either a gate opening onto the road or alleyway or else access only through the house itself. Most houses will be one (or maybe two) story and will have an external mud brick staircase giving access to the roof. The yard may be used for cooking, keeping livestock or as a workshop and some have brightly coloured cloth awnings to provide shade.

The interiors of the houses have packed earth floors and little furniture and with the small windows they are often dark. These factors all mean that many people spend the cool evenings and mornings on their roof, eating, drinking and socialising. An aerial viewer on a cool night would see a galaxy of flickering rooftop lights spread out below.

Slightly better areas of the city have houses that are still made of mud bricks, but are far larger and better built. These larger houses are often three or even four stories high and are usually built around a central courtyard. Each floor will have a balcony opening onto the courtyard and leading to the staircases. Well to do merchants and officials often have a whole building to themselves to house their extended families, servants and slaves, but most are split into apartments. These apartments are either a whole or part floor and are often crowded. Some of these buildings might have four floors and house over a

hundred people! When first built, the courtyards are often tiled in bright patterns, walls are painted white and woodwork and ornamentation decorated in bright colours. Over time, the more crowded buildings in the less well off areas become faded and worn, but the decoration still shows through. Private single occupancy houses will have a strong front door and doorkeeper but multi-occupancy buildings will normally just have an open doorway or light gate.

The seriously wealthy (minor nobles, major merchants and so forth) may live in a large courtyard house, but many will live in a more modern variation. These tower houses have a large wing of three stories containing various domestic rooms (sometimes with stables and stores on the ground floor) and a five story tower at one end. These towers are narrow, with one decent sized room on each floor and often an observation room as the top floor with large windows on each side. These houses also have a long but narrow courtyard garden along the side of the house that does not front the street, filled with fragrant flowers and small trees to provide a peaceful retreat from the heat and dust of the city.

The richest citizens of the city, the oldest noble families and fringe royals, live in the Nobles Quarter. The houses and palaces within this walled district are all very large, are set within

extensive manicured grounds, each with their own boundary wall. There is no one design for the houses here, each one is unique. Some are very, very old, having grown organically over the centuries with additions whenever the current owner needed one. Others are much newer and are designed with more modern lines and innovations.

These palaces have whole wings dedicated to housing slaves, other wings for horses, chariots and hunting animals. They will likely have a large pool, underground cold rooms, extensive kitchens and food stores, numerous luxurious bedrooms, a function room for parties and events, receiving rooms, art galleries and many other rooms. Most of the areas for the resident family will be immaculately decorated and scrupulously clean and will have expensive art or antiques scattered around.

Similarly, the extensive gardens will be maintained by large teams of slaves and servants and will have small hidden groves, summer houses, water features, exotic plants, rare caged animals and other hidden delights. Many of the owners of these palaces attempt to outdo their neighbours in the range and tastefulness of their properties and there is a subtle scale with those at the bottom looked down upon by their more sartorial neighbours, even if they are actually considerably wealthier!

The Royal Palace in theory resembles a larger version of these Noble Palaces, although the greater Royal Palace actually covers an area greater than the entire Noble district! The Royal Palace is home to many, many hundreds of people, from slaves and servants to courtiers, rural nobles, government officials and of course the extended Royal Family. Most of the Royal Palace is a maze of administrative rooms, workshops, courtyards, stores and dormitories, and in fact this is where the city and the rural areas are governed from.

At the heart of the greater palace, not far from the Land Market, is the Old Palace. The core of this building dates back to the earliest days of the city and the throne room here was one of the earliest experiments in building in stone. The old palace is both the home of the King and the core rooms where important visitors are received and the King issues great judgements.

Clothing and Fashions

Given the highly cosmopolitan nature of Ur-Turuk and the sheer numbers of travellers and visitors, almost every clothing style can be seen on the streets. There will be near-naked islanders, fur-clad mountain tribesmen, desert nomads in voluminous robes and everything in between.

Slaves arriving in the city will likely be clothed in what they were wearing when captured but these rags will soon be burned and the slave reclothed in a plain white thigh-length tunic and sandals. The noble estates and wealthier merchants will add a surcoat to this simple uniform to display their own private badge.

Servants will wear a similar uniform to that of a slave whilst working, but the cloth will be of better quality. Outside of their employment, normal clothes will be worn.

The majority of the citizens will wear clothes of cotton or linen. Work clothes will be white, off white or gray, but personal clothes will be of very bright colours.

Men will wear either a long and loose cotton robe, baggy trousers cinched at the ankles and a loose tunic or else a kilt and tunic. Men expecting to either fight or ride a lot will often wear thicker and less baggy trousers. Boots, pointed shoes or sandals will be worn on the feet and a linen cloak will help with keeping the sun off. A man will usually wear a floppy hat, a hood, a headcloth or a turban, again to protect the head from the sun.

Women sometimes wear the same clothing as men, especially if they are engaged in hard work, but most will wear a knee-length tunic, a long flowing linen dress or a baggy shirt and

loose skirt. A headscarf will often be worn for protection from the sun.

Prostitutes and dancers will wrap themselves with wide strips of brightly coloured cloth, and there are several recognised styles of wrapping in the city, each used by a separate group.

The children of poorer families will often run around (at least when small) with no clothes on at all. Older children, and those of wealthier families will wear smaller versions of what their parents wear.

The wealthier folk will wear very similar clothing to the common citizen, although of silk and damask and ornamented with jewels, gold thread and other ornamentation. Indeed, the bodies of the wealthy will also be heavily ornamented with gems in piercings, headbands, necklaces and rings.

Most of the city dwellers have straight blue-black hair, although visitors will have anything from pure white to red and pitch black. Men who work will usually have very short or shaved hair on their heads whilst the nobility (who do not have to work) will often keep their long. Beards are common, with many men growing them long and oiling them with almond oil to improve the sheen.

Women will either braid their hair or coil it around their heads, although the wealthy will use hot pottery rods to curl their hair into ringlets.

Clothing, hair, ornamentation and personal grooming will all be key indicators as to the social standing of a person. Therefore, many people will wear the best clothing they can afford in social situations in order to give the best first impression they can.

There are also various public hot baths located around the city with wealthier mansions having their own, where perfumed oils can be massaged into the body before being scraped off and then washed thoroughly.

Food, Drink and Sanitation

The city of Ur-Turuk was founded where it was because of the numerous and unfailing freshwater springs. Over the centuries, the city has enclosed many of these springs within public water fountains for the general populace. Others were within the boundaries of private houses and have also been enclosed, whilst many others have dug wells. Fresh water is not normally an issue for the residents of the city and in the wealthier areas the springs have been diverted into pipes and

culverts to bring water to the rooms that need it.

Throughout the city there are also public bath houses, where for a few coins a resident can swim or bathe in a cool open-air pool or even stand under a gentle cascade of water.

Because of the high water table and profusion of wells and springs, citizens are banned from creating cesspits or similar. The King (or rather his advisors) knows that if the water supply becomes contaminated, the city could die very quickly. To this end, carts loaded with large barrels are taken through the streets every night and the barrels filled with all of the human waste produced during the day. This waste is carted out to the rural districts to be used as fertiliser on the sandy fields. The large mansions in the Noble District have their own carts and slaves to serve the same function, and the largest of these send five or six carts every day out to their rural estates.

In addition to the sewage carts, there are also collectors of various other waste including bones, torn clothing, broken pottery and more. These carters charge a small amount for this service and so the residents of the poorer districts throw much of their rubbish straight into the narrow streets.

Dead bodies are either cremated or exposed to the elements on a temple roof and the resulting bones interred in an ossuary below the city (of which there are many). A few of the noble estates maintain their own private mausoleum where members of the family and favoured retainers are interred.

The highly pure water supply, protected as it is by the laws of the city and the filtering effect of the local rock and sand, means that many people drink just water. Milk from goats and cows kept in the city is drunk by some and there are many breweries making ale, wine and various spirits for sale either by the mug or as whole barrels. Fruit juice is also a popular drink, squeezed from the large amounts of fruits grown along the fertile coast. In addition, hot drinks are also popular, especially in the evenings, with mint and herbal infusions served at home and from street carts.

The extensive land and sea trade routes centres on Ur-Turuk and the wide and productive farmland that surround it all mean that the city is blessed in both the amount and variety of food available. Fishing fleets supply fish, shellfish and seaweeds, farms supply meat, vegetables, fruits and grains and hunters catch game. The city merchants also trade herbs, spices and mineral flavourings meaning that the local cuisine is highly flavoured and very

diverse. Even the poor eat spiced and flavoured foods, even if the ingredients are of low quality and the portions small.

Most cooking in the city, even in the wealthy districts, takes place over an open wood fire. Pots, hotstones, clay jars and more are used to actually cook the food, but a fire can be found burning in every house every day.

Most meals are based around either meat or fish. Meat for the wealthy will be lamb, beef, chicken, goose and venison with occasional rare game such as antelope. Poorer folks will eat mutton, goat, camel, rabbit and pigeon. Fish (and shellfish) are brought into the city in huge quantities every day, some of it to be salted and exported inland and the rest eaten fresh. In addition to standard fish, there will also be shark, porpoise, octopus, squid, turtle and even certain jellyfish!

This meat or fish will usually be cooked with fruit and/or vegetables and the flavour enhanced with the spices and herbs mentioned above. Onions, chickpeas, lettuces, beans, apricots, pomegranates, oranges, lemons, grapes and olives are all common on the tables of the city although many, many other common and rare fruits and vegetables are available. Most meals are accompanied by unleavened flatbreads made from wheat, barley or rice.



Sweet foods are also popular, with sugarcane a valuable crop in the rural districts. Candied fruits, nuts, yoghurts, honey, and eggs are all incorporated into sweet and sticky dishes.

Some meals served in noble houses can have as many as twenty one small courses and can last anything up to six hours!

Although most people cook and eat at home, there are numerous taverns, eating houses, street vendors and wandering sellers all supplying hot or cold food to those out and about. It is normally possible to get cooked food at any time of night or day and in any district in the city.

Trade

Most trade within the city itself is of the shop/stall/wandering vendor variety selling all sorts of goods to householders and servants. Almost anything can be bought in this way from food and drink, weapons and armour, horses and camels to furniture and even ships! Some sellers are open around the clock, generally those that sell hot food, drink, narcotics, weapons and anything else that might be required at 4am!

There is no clear distinction between what is sold in a shop and what is sold from a barrow,

stall or tray on the street. However, the physical shops tend to be more reputable, have a wider range and have higher prices. By contrast, the street sellers try and shift their stock faster by having lower prices. In theory, all street traders are required to buy a formal license from the City Government but in practice very few actually do.

The Land, Horse and Sea markets trade in general goods, livestock and fish respectively. Pitches here are on a first come, first served basis and so many of the more established dealers will employ people to keep their pitch ticking over through the night when there is less trade simply so that they have the best area in the busy times.

Some of these traders will also be craftsmen who produce their own goods. Woodcarvers, leatherworkers, tailors, bakers etc all come into this category. Normally working out of a combined workshop/shop, these traders often become well known for a specific type of produce and some can become very wealthy.

These small traders will procure the goods they sell from one of the bigger merchants or traders either in one of the markets or from a warehouse. This allows imports to be distributed throughout the city for retail trade and also delivers a profit to the major merchant and the small trader alike.

Much of the major trade is conducted by the great Merchant Houses. These families run camel caravans, river boats and coastal ships to bring imports into the city and export raw materials and worked goods. Most of these Merchant Houses will specialise in one area (such as metalwork, timber or fruits) but there are some that trade in whatever is available whenever they are ready to buy.

Although the Merchant Houses are all members of the Brotherhood of Coin, this does not mean they don't try to cheat, undercut and stymie each other given half a chance. After all, profit is all and any action that increases profits is justified! There are however always opportunities for a smaller operator to make a very nice living through trade, whether as an independent ship or caravan operator or as a retail seller.

Daily Life

The average day for the common folk in the city is long and hard. People rise very early (at dawn or just before) and relight their fire, draw water and other tasks. A simple breakfast will then be eaten of day-old bread, fruit, cheese and eggs, with water, milk or coffee.

People will then head off to work or will open up their workshops or shops. Most workers, shop owners or craftsmen will work into the early evening, having a light lunch at their place of work.

Once work is over, people will head back to their homes to begin the preparation of the evening meal. Because this is eaten late, once the sun has set and the temperatures cooler, the cooking usually takes some time. Whilst the food cooks, people will sit around the home, playing games with dice or cards, telling stories, generally talking or just dozing quietly.

The evening meal is usually the event of the day, with the whole family sitting around to share the food and talk. This meal is often eaten on a balcony or house roof (or even in the street) and the rooftops at this are alive with calls between neighbours, half-heard songs and burning torches. The majority of the city then retires to bed, just before midnight, to sleep until the dawn.

Ur-Turuk never actually sleeps entirely though, and many people are awake primarily at night. Street food vendors, city guard, innkeepers, thieves, fortune tellers and many more people live their lives in the half-lit streets and taverns and rarely see the glare and heat of the sun.

Although the Nobles and other wealthy often keep to the same times as their poorer neighbours, they usually do far less work. The wealthy will be woken at dawn by their servants bearing a large and lavish breakfast. A leisurely swim or bath will follow the meal before a good hour getting dressed and prepared. Women may have her servants or slaves prepare an exotic hairstyle and make up alone may take half an hour!

What little work the wealthy do will often be performed in the short time between getting dressed and a light lunch. Merchants and other self-made rich will need to meet with their factors and officers and make high-level decisions and affix their seal to important documents.

After lunch, some wealthy will retire for a short sleep through the worst of the heat whilst others will gamble, game, talk or read the afternoon away.

The evening meal in a wealthy household will take at least a few hours and the food will be extravagant and copious. The diners will lounge around eating, drinking and talking for most of this time before retiring to bed whenever they feel sufficiently tired to sleep until dawn.

It is worth noting that there is no day off or holy day each week, and most people work every single day in order to keep themselves and their families alive.

Pastimes

Although leisure time is scarce for most inhabitants of the city, there are many activities popular to fill said time.

Gambling with dice and cards is very popular, although most people will use small stones or tokens of wood when gambling with friends and family. There are a wide range of actual games played and many variations of each game. Probably the most common “con” is running a legitimate game by some side-street variant of the rules unknown to everyone else!

The spoken work is very important, even to the poorer citizens, and poetry recitals and literature readings are common in all but the most illiterate homes. Braver souls will compose their own stories and poems, although most people will read learn the

popular short compositions of the day from street poets.

The younger and fitter will often partake in street races, where a whole cohort of racers must get from one point in the city to another by any means. The crowded streets, walls, people and city guard must all be avoided and a detailed knowledge of the local area is as important as actual running speed. Impromptu wrestling matches can be found on most street corners and the current champion of each of these has an elevated status in the adjacent roads.

The better off also enjoy archery in either a public shooting range or their own private range. The most skilled archers in the city enjoy a certain amount of fame across all levels of society and often wear a certain hat or combination of clothing to advertise who they are.

The very well off head out of the city on week- or month-long hunting expeditions. These are huge undertakings with multiple servants, huntsmen, mounts, pack animals, hunting beasts and huntsmen. Although most hunts target “standard” game, some go after larger, more dangerous or even semi-mythical creatures.

Most of the above entertainments are informal or self-organised. However, the city also has plenty of commercial entertainment for the pleasure seeker with coins in their pockets. The largest and most popular is of course the gladiator arena. There are fights staged here on most days between professional fighters, criminals and various beasts. Gambling occurs amongst spectators, food vendors ply their wares and a good time is had by all.

On days when major events are held, the arena will be packed with people and the noise of the spectators roaring on a kill can be heard across the entire city.

There are also many dancers, singers and musicians performing on the street, in taverns and in eating houses. Some wealthier patrons hire performers by the week, month or even year so that they can have entertainment on demand. For the common folk however, a very good performer will draw many patrons from far and wide into the establishment.

Health and Healing

The city of Ur-Turuk is well provided with physicians, apothecaries, teeth-pullers, wisewomen and healer-mages. The majority of these use herbs and other medicines, surgery, knowledge of physiology and other mundane knowledge to heal wounds and diseases and keep people healthy.

The best and most experienced of these can charge considerable sums for their services and are sometimes even retained by a noble house or the royal palace for an astronomical amount of money. These experts will have a well equipped surgery and staff to enable them to deal with any problem.

At the other end of the scale, the newly qualified and untrusted healers can be hired for a little loose change. Although survival



rates are far lower, the poor have very little choice and any chance is better than none. Some of these back-street healers have no fixed place of work and will patch up a customer wherever there is a quiet corner.

Healer-mages do exist in the city, even though they are not common, and charge a high price for their services. Although they are not powerful spellcasters and so cannot heal critical wounds, and despite the fact that everyone is aware that magical healing is not permanent, the immediate effects are often vital. Being able to walk injured into the booth of a healer-mage and walk out hale and hearty is often more important than the long term outlook. Gladiators especially make use of this type of service when they have consecutive fights. Why worry about what will happen in a few days when there is no guarantee you will see another sunset?

Households and Families

Home life within the city is firmly centred around the family. A few (considered unfortunate by most) have just a few members of their family. A wife, maybe a baby and/or aged parent will be about it. This is the state that many newcomers to the city find

themselves in. Most residents will have parents, children, brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles, grandparents and so on. Although this extended family will not necessarily all live in one building, they will usually live close and will support each other in times of trouble.

There are however apartment blocks where most or all of the small apartments are occupied by members of the same family. These tend to be noisier than most, with all of the bickering and arguing that goes on within families, but are also the safest as every member is looking out for everyone else.

Normally, the oldest member of the extended family is considered the head. If ever a serious argument breaks out within the family, the head will decide on who is right and who is wrong.

Even in noble families, family is important. An estate in the noble district may well house ten or even twenty family members of the titled noble. These relatives may well be penniless themselves, but they will be fed and housed by the noble. Unlike most families however, the head of the family will be whichever member has the title. If a relative then acquires their own title, the family will be split with the newly ennobled person becoming head of their own branch of the family.

Marriage in Ur-Turuk is an informal affair for the most part. Although the various religions do bless marriages in a variety of different ceremonies, there is no legal requirement for marriage. However, the local community seem to be the general judge as to whether a couple are married or not and trying to “marry” another person whilst already considered to be married by neighbours will result in a large amount of approbation and ostracism. Most people in the public eye will use a religious ceremony to formalise a marriage, if only to advertise to the city at large that they are indeed married.

Personal Religion

Although the Temples and large formal rituals are the most visible and obvious religion in the city, most actual worship takes place in private homes. Even the meanest mud-brick house will have a small shrine to the chosen God in the corner of the single room, a place where small sacrifices can be left and devotions made. The houses of the nobility may well have a large custom built shrine within their grounds or mansion to allow them to worship without ever leaving the comfort of their estate. It is said that there are twenty different shrines within the royal palace with enough room to

accommodate more than five hundred worshippers between them!

Of course, even with a private shrine most residents of the city will go to one of the official temples for holy days, religious festivals and other major events. For many, it is a chance to be seen as well as a chance to worship officially.

Although priests and acolytes will wear the robes and regalia of their temple, most ordinary people will also wear a small symbol of their chosen God on a leather cord around their neck or wrist or may have a small and appropriate tattoo. The more mainstream the God, the more overt the display of symbols. The symbols of Enu, the Red God and the Blind Snake can be seen on every street, but those of Uttu and Nissa are rarely seen.

Plot Idea

As a nice change of pace from the standard Ruin investigation or dealing with major threats, one session could be full of dealing with a succession of “minor” issues such as a fouled well, petty theft, a kidnapped servant, a plague of rodents, lost shipment of exotic animals etc. This session works very well when run for a Major Character and some Minor characters. Without serious magic, how will the characters deal with everyday life?

Codex 7: Gazetteer

The city of Ur-Turuk is a huge, crowded and complex place. It would be impossible to detail it sufficiently so that a GM knows who lives on which street and which famous person lives where, but in this Codex we hope to supply enough information such that each district comes alive. In some areas, such as the Noble district, the boundary between the district and the rest of the city is very well defined and absolute. Other districts merge gently into their neighbouring areas and it can be difficult to tell sometimes exactly where you are.

A GM can use this section to lay down the bones of how they want their Ur-Turuk to be, whether the characters are visitors or they live there. Feel free to tweak details of either places, people or indeed anything else to suit a particular campaign. The districts of a real city change over time anyway, and nothing is set in stone (or mud brick).

Palace District

The Palace district is at the heart of the city politically, geographically and socially and is clustered around the large central plaza. This huge paved space has a red granite surface, scarred and pitted in places, and is always busy. Street vendors ply their wares, selling food and trinkets, nobles strut and show off their finery, city officials scurry from building



City of Ur-Turuk





to building, other people are here just to be seen.

Right at the centre of the plaza, at the spot where King Ziundra first pitched his tent (so it is said) stands a huge obelisk of the same red granite as the paving. This Obelisk stands to the height of fifteen men and is deeply carved with ancient hieroglyphs telling the story of the founding of the city. This huge stone edifice is considered sacred to the city itself and anyone who dares damage or deface it faces the death penalty in the arena. Despite this, touching the obelisk is a ritual of those who have been on long journeys and are now glad to be home again. Those setting out from a far city often say that they "will be glad to stroke the needle", a saying that elicits strange looks from foreigners unaware of the tradition!

Dominating the west of the plaza is the Palace. As has already been mentioned elsewhere, this vast building is itself the size of a small town. The palace has slowly accumulated and evolved over the many centuries and the architectural style is both mixed and eclectic. There are several entrances to the palace, some for supplies and goods, some for servants and scribes, some for visitors and the grand entrance for the Royal Family themselves. There are no external windows on the ground floor of the palace and other external windows all have heavy metal bars set in them to

discourage thieves. In addition, many of the roof corners sport small towers that are used by guards to keep an eye on the surrounding area. Indeed, there are numerous City Guard and Royal Bodyguard patrolling the area around the palace at any one time and every entrance is very heavily guarded indeed.

The Royal apartments and other staterooms are all high ceilinged and sumptuously furnished, but the majority of the palace building is composed of small offices, kitchens, storerooms, workrooms, tiny bedrooms and other workmanlike accommodation. The passageways that link these rooms were never planned and so to an outsider, the palace is a huge labyrinth. There are many guards posted at strategic locations and it is impossible to enter a forbidden area without being recognised or escorted.

The building to the north of the plaza is almost as large as the royal palace but is far plainer in design and a source of dread to many citizens. Within this huge stone block are the city courtrooms, the City Guard barracks and the gaols, most of which are below ground.

The courthouses are used for both criminal prosecution and civil cases and are judged by the same professional magistrates. In general the courts have a low opinion of poor people and foreigners and so the best way to win a

case is to be noble born. The actual courtrooms are large and plain with high windows casting beams of light onto the drama below.

The City Guard barracks provides accommodation for the guards themselves as well as armouries, offices, training areas and even an infirmary. These areas are rarely seen by non-members of the City Guard.

It is safe to say that no-one wants to see the gaol below the building. The entrance hall is heavily guarded but the areas below ground have few staff for much of the time. The gaol has several large common rooms, poorly lit by narrow light wells that act as the entire living space for the numerous prisoners kept there. There is running water in these huge rooms and some sanitation but they are gloomy and unpleasant places. These common rooms are normally used for prisoners that are not considered dangerous and those incarcerated here are segregated with women and children in one, men in another and foreigners in another. Although unpleasant places to be and generally unstaffed, major violence is rare and most people just long to be out.

More dangerous or infamous prisoners are kept in individual cells carved out of the bedrock around the edges of the subterranean gaol. These cells have heavy doors of

reinforced wood barred and bolted and are dim and dank places. Rats are common and most cells will stink with all sorts of filth. The prisoners in these cells are fed just once a day through a small access hatch in the wall next to the door and are never taken out of the cell unless they are released or else are taken to the arena. The corridors flanking the cells are heavily patrolled and outside visitors, never common anywhere down here, are completely prohibited.

Although most minor criminals survive the dark horrors of the gaol, the ultimate journey for many is across the plaza to the slavemarket (if they are lucky) or the arena (if they are not). The arena or fighting pit is a huge open construction squatting to the northeast of the plaza. Built from stone and mud brick, it has many public gates and one guarded service gate. It is through the latter that prisoners are brought, along with fighting animals and the occasional professional gladiator. There are rumours of a secret tunnel linking the condemned cells of the gaol with the holding pens of the arena although this has never been confirmed by anyone.

The public areas of the arena are mainly tiers of stone seats in a large sweep around the fighting pit itself. These areas are frequented by sellers of snacks and drinks who work their way between the seats to serve people as they



watch the bloodshed below. The seats are not segregated and so it is essential to arrive early to get the best seats near the front.

The areas below the seating are a warren of animal pens, holding cells, armouries, feed bins, offices and other essential areas. These all funnel towards a huge pair of bronze gates through which gladiators and animals enter (usually gladiators first). At the far side of the sand-floored arena are an equally huge pair of wooden doors through which dead bodies are dragged and surviving animals are herded.

The plaza around the arena is crowded at most hours. Notices are nailed to large boards here detailing who will be fighting and when. If the fighter is a condemned criminal, lurid details of their crimes will also be posted to really whip up the crowd into a frenzy and draw in more spectators. Professional gladiators can also be found here, showing off their oiled muscles and drawing the appreciative looks of ladies of all classes.

Just to the south of the arena, and almost as large, is the slavemarket. Although the ground area is only slightly smaller, the slavemarket is a much lower building of only two stories. Within the walls are slave holding pens, sale blocks, smiths to apply chains and bands, branding stations and strongrooms for the storage of coin.

The central area of the slavemarket is a circular chamber used for the actual slave sales. Slaves are brought from the pens either one by one or as small groups and paraded in front of the potential buyers whilst they call out bids. Slave sales take place most days and so this building is crowded all day (and much of the night) with buyers, sellers and staff.

Brightly coloured awnings are hung from the outside faces of the building to provide shade for the buyers and sellers to conclude private details outside the building (and thus avoiding the charges levied by the market!) and also out of the heat of the sun.

Right at the southern edge of the plaza, and sitting in part in the Noble District, is the imposing Temple of the Red God. This squat block of stone has great northern and southern doors and opens into both quarters although the metal screen within prevents this building being used as a gatehouse. This building is described further in Codex 5 but the outside has very little ornamentation and there are no associated grounds. There are always, day and night, priests stationed outside each door to try and draw in worshippers and they often call to passers-by with promises of blood and pain!

Along the eastern and northern edges of this district are some shops, taverns and residential blocks, although these are generally large and grand. Antiques dealers, jewellers, artists, rare spice traders and other such establishments can be found here as can food and drink establishments catering to wealthy merchants and nobility.

Faction Control

This district is firmly controlled by both the City Government and the City Guard. There is a heavy presence of guardsmen and officers on all of the streets and in the plaza at any time of the day and there are also many clerks and other government officials scurrying from place to place. Nothing happens here that is not noted by these factions.

The Red God cult has some slight hold due to the presence of its major temple at the southern end but none of the other factions has managed to secure anything other than a tentative and short-lived foothold here.

Significant Inhabitants

Cahara of Grey Island is a short and stocky dark-skinned woman from a tiny island many days sailing from the coast. She wears a coarse

grey dress beneath her red sleeveless robe and has a mostly shaved head with only a long black plait from the very crown of her head. Cahara is developing a reputation as one of the most efficient and skilled Ambassadors in the city and performs much work for the King and his advisors. Cahara lives in a squat white sandstone tower to the east of the Temple of the Red God, waited upon by numerous muscular male slaves.

Abel Greeneye - This ancient man would stand around four feet tall if he were still able to stand. Unfortunately, time and illness have so withered his legs that he must now be carried around in a roughly-made sedan chair. Abel has a few wispy strands of hair on his head and his chin and incredibly wrinkled skin, but is renowned along the whole coast as the pre-eminent authority on the Alulim. He is very selective in who he will work for however and charges a huge amount to those customers he does select. Abel lives in a sprawling single-story house to the east of the Slave Markets.

Bachalim the Courtesan has no regular residence in the city although she is reputed to own a large and opulent estate in the countryside. She can generally be found living at the palace as a "guest" of the King or one of his senior nobles. Although not in the first flush of youth, Bachalim has been the



elsewhere in the city) is Ancient Pearl. This middle aged woman is from one of the deep desert tribes and has dark skin, black hair and very dark eyes. Her compact and well-guarded stall has several ancient and not so ancient antiques and it is not unknown for the agents of Sorcerers to frequent her stall on the lookout for possible Artefacts.

courtesan of choice for both the last and current King, as well as numerous senior officials, generals and nobles. Her refusal to share any secrets is almost as famous as her beauty!

Notable Shops and Services

Operating from a small stall in the main square (and a well hidden warehouse

The Bloody Sword is a tavern that adjoins the Fighting Pits on the northern side. A favourite with free Gladiators and their trainers, this tavern also attracts fan to see their heroes up close. As a result, non-Gladiators pay an exorbitant premium on food and drink, albeit of good quality.

Noble District

This district is located between the great central plaza and the southern wall of the city. It is unique amongst the districts in having internal walls dividing the estates within from the greater city outside. These walls were constructed many hundreds of years ago following a period of civil disturbance during which the palaces of several wealthy men were razed to the ground.

The walls themselves are considered part of the city walls proper and the walkways atop them are patrolled by City Guards and the tower is manned around the clock. There is only a single gate that pierces the eastern of these walls, and this is manned by a strong contingent of City Guard to keep out undesirables. These guards are under orders to only allow through recognised nobles and liveried servants and are commanded by an officer familiar with all of the nobles who live within.

Just inside the eastern gate is a long and low building of wood built up against the boundary wall of the nearest estate. Within this building wait one or two liveried servants from each of the estates within. These servants are tasked with escorting visitors to the home of their masters if said visitors are not granted entry on their own merits. This is usually a popular duty as most days will see no visitors at all to a particular mansion and the waiting servants spend much of their time gossiping and dozing.

In addition to the city guards on the gates, the streets within and the gates to each mansion are also patrolled by private soldiers hired by the nobles. These soldiers and guards wear livery and will stop and detain anyone not liveried, not obviously a noble or unaccompanied within this district.



The streets themselves are all well paved with quality stone and are swept free of dust on a daily basis by servants (usually at dawn). There are no hawkers, traders, beggars or wandering animals here and even carts are a rare occurrence with most goods carried by hand. At night, torches are lit and mounted on poles spaced at regular intervals along the streets and replaced before they can burn right down.

The upshot of the high walls, restricted access, large gardens and lack of traffic means that this quarter is eerily quiet compared to the rest of the city, especially at night.

Although there is only one gateway in the high walls that surround the district, there is also a door into the southern half of the Temple of the Red God. As has been mentioned elsewhere, the interior of the temple is divided by a metal fence so that worshippers from the Noble District can enter the temple for services without having to mingle with the common city folk in the northern half of the temple. Because it is possible to work your way through the rooms and tunnels beneath the temple itself, a guard is maintained on the southern door out of the temple, although this is both smaller and less vigilant than that mounted on the main gate.

Faction Control

This district is firmly controlled by the City Government with most of the occupying Nobles being members of both the administration and that faction. However, in deference to the social status of the Nobles themselves, the Government faction tends to care little for day-to-day matters, leaving those to the occupants themselves.

Significant Inhabitants

It is worth noting that in addition to the nobles listed below, many of the notables of the other districts have their main residence here.

Prince Kirrnier is a great-uncle of the current King and is incredibly wealthy due to a long lifetime spent accumulating land and business interests. The Prince is old, humourless and appears to be desiccated by the desert winds. His household is very formal and the servants and slaves there are trained to speak or even move as little as possible. Kirrnier has no political ambitions at all, desiring only money and personal comfort.

Princess Uduo is the sole grandchild of Prince Kirrnier and so has had much wealth lavished upon her. She lives in her own small estate within the district, waited upon by a large staff.

Although her estate is one of the smaller plots, it is lavish within and often hosts wild and extravagant parties. There are rumours of neighbours complaining to the Prince who, somewhat surprisingly, seems to pay little heed.

Lady Sylana is certainly not the wealthiest inhabitant of the district, but can apparently trace her lineage back to one of the original founding chieftains. Her home is nearly as ancient, and no-where near as luxurious as many of the mansions, but is a relaxed and peaceful home and a popular place to be a servant.

Shops and Services

There are no shops or services at all located in this district. Indeed, there is a city statute banning any sort of business from the area defined by the city walls and anyone attempting to openly buy or sell within will find themselves dragged away to the nearest guardhouse.

Docks District

The Docks District occupies most of the southeastern corner of the city, bounded on the west by the Noble and Palace districts, on the north by the Warehouse and Merchant districts and on the east by the sea.

The actual docks themselves are built of wood and protrude into the gentle waves of the



natural harbour on which the city sits. The waterline is actually some 20' or so below the level of the city, meaning that there are several sets of wide and broad steps leading from the docks up to the city itself, all guarded with gates and gatehouses. There are also several treadle cranes mounted on the city walls by enterprising merchants to lift heavy cargoes from the dockside into the city. When these cranes were first installed there were numerous accidents with passers-by hit by falling cargo, but now there are only a handful of deaths in any one year.

The docks are normally crowded with ocean-going ships, coastal barges and small vessels and the docksides heaped with barrels, crates, jars and bales of all kinds as well as stacks of timber and stone and other bulky goods. There are also numerous small fishing vessels coming and going at all hours and landing their catches. Although the gates through the city wall are guarded and are capable of being closed, they almost never are and see a constant traffic day and night.

The Sea Market takes up a large portion of the Docks District and is busy around the clock with traders. Almost all fresh fish and seafood landed at the docks will be brought here for sale, but so will many cargoes unloaded from smaller independent traders. As a result, almost half of the stalls will be trading just

about any goods imaginable. The marketplace itself has a strong and characteristic smell derived from the unsold fish discarded in corners and the fact that it never closes to allow the square to be cleaned!

Looming over the market and the surrounding streets is the vast Ziggurat of Enu. This stepped pyramid is lit by numerous torches at night and priests can normally be seen scurrying to and fro across the levels or in and out of the doors. The Ziggurat itself is surrounded by a six feet high wall of stone to deter casual trespassers and the plaza within patrolled by armed soldiers to deter more persistent wanderers.

The streets that surround the Ziggurat and market are mostly comprised of small mud brick dwellings, sometimes of two or even three stories, and with coloured awnings attached. Many of these have narrow alleyways winding between them and everywhere is rubbish and filth. It is not unusual to find a dead dog (or even a human) abandoned in one of the alleyways, and passers by will rarely spare a second glance. There are some larger courtyard houses, although most of these are divided up into multiple smaller apartments rather than being the home of one family.

Because of the constant busyness of the district, the streets are never quiet or empty and newcomers to the district find it impossible to sleep because of the light of torches in the streets and the calls of traders, howls of dogs and screams of victims. Despite the obvious downsides, this district is a popular one with newcomers to the city because accommodation is cheap and easy to find, food, drink and other services are varied and available round the clock and whatever it is you need to buy or sell, you can.

This district is patrolled by the City Guard, but they tend to stick to the main streets and patrol in larger groups. Their opinion of this district is that if you cannot see the crimes being committed, they are not happening and so they don't really need to worry about it!

Despite the crime and filth, there are many, many families here and gangs of half-dressed children are a frequent sight careering along the streets.

Faction Control

This district is almost entirely under the control of the Bleeding Hook, and indeed is the sole area that faction has much influence. The narrow streets and crumbling courtyards are watched over by the dockworkers who live

there and it is a brave outsider that starts trouble. The only part of this district not controlled by the Bleeding Hook is the Ziggurat itself, which is controlled by the Line of Enu. The two factions recognise the border between and realise that neither could make headway across that line and there are few tensions between.

Significant Inhabitants

Abeed Sayeed is a man of late middle age, bald and deeply tanned and covered with scars and worry lines. He habitually wears only worn leather trousers and boots, exposing his corded muscle and multiple tattoos. Abeed has worked the docks of Ur-Turuk since childhood and has risen to become one of the most respected dockers in the District. Abeed is a member of the Bleeding Hook, but has always refused any sort of official office or status. The rumours say that the faction leadership would never take any major decision if Abeed would not and the man continues to work every day on the docks, loading and unloading cargo.

Makbur Greymane is an old man who lives in a partially collapsed hut near to the eastern wall and the docks beyond. Makbur arrived from the deserts some twenty years before and has never left. The old man insists that he is a high priest of a new religion that will shake

the world and overthrow the old Gods once and for all. However, he has been saying that for two decades and nothing yet has happened to make anyone think he is right. The general feeling is that he is a mad old man, driven insane by the baking sun of the deep desert, and nothing more.

Philostratus the Shipmaster is a ship captain who chooses to make his home in the run down streets of the Docks District rather than the more salubrious areas he could easily afford. Although Philostratus has no really large ships, he does have numerous small and medium sized vessels that trade cargo, carry passengers and convey messages along the coast. His small but comfortable home is located in one of the streets to the east of the Ziggurat, although he is only there one week in three.

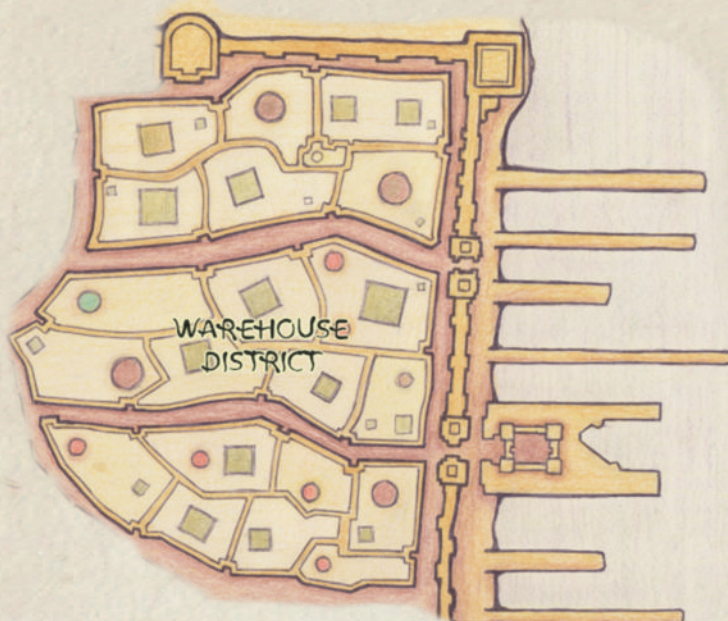
Shops and Services

The small streets of this district are packed with traders, shops, taverns and hostels and almost every other door offers something for sale. There are no luxury emporia here and almost every shop is small and rough, supplying goods for a very local clientele. In addition, the Sea Market has a wide range of transient stalls and traders offering imports of every kind for sale and indeed the street traders seem to spread along nearby streets.

Warehouse District

This small district is comprised of just a few major roads and many small alleyways and has the lowest population of any of the city districts. Almost every building in this district is a mud brick or sandstone warehouse for the storage of goods. Some warehouses are little more than roofed-over yards for the storage of bulky and heavy goods such as stone, grain, timber and so on. Other warehouses are tall and multi-story with both internal staircases or ramps and external doors with pulleys and ropes to lift goods direct to each floor. This type of warehouse is often used for smaller and lighter goods such as spices, fabric, pottery and household goods.

The streets here are of cobble and are better maintained than most in the city and are constantly busy with carts, porters and traders moving goods around. Many street corners and doorways have torches or lanterns mounted above to light the street during the night. There are also regular patrols of city guards and even more regular patrols of private guards. The value of goods being moved on the street at any moment is vast and the merchants and traders of the city take great care to ensure none of it goes missing.



Although almost every trade good can be found stored somewhere in this district, in varying quantities, with the exception of slaves and livestock. Slaves are penned in and beneath the Slave Markets and livestock is brought into the Horse Market and either slaughtered or driven out of the city fairly quickly.

This district is always full of people and carts but still seems to have the least life of any of the city districts. Because no-one (other than a few watchmen) lives here and there are no drinking houses, shops, entertainment or other day to day noises or smells, the area feels very alien.

This area has very high security in addition to the regular patrols. Most doors are strongly built and reinforced, ground floors rarely have windows and the windows that do exist on

higher floors are small, narrow and barred. Although many roofs are flat, these rarely have hatches leading into the building and there are very few cellars.

Faction Control

The Brotherhood of Coin has a firm grip on this district as all of the warehouses are owned and operated by merchants. The Bleeding Hook has some representation due to its members providing the manual labour to actually move the goods too and from ships.

Significant Inhabitants

A nightwatchman by the name of Waseel lives and works in one of the largest warehouses overlooking the docks. Waseel is in his late fifties and not physically imposing but has been credited with preventing no less than nine raids on his warehouse over the past thirty years. He carries a club and a knife but wears no armour and does not carry a shield. Although very modest, the watchman is reputed to be incredibly persuasive and relies more on his silver tongue than his steel knife to protect his warehouse.

Miccan of Kar is the captain of what is essentially a mercenary company based in this

district. Guards provided by Miccan comprise half of the patrols that are found on the streets of this district. Miccan is a tough and grizzled veteran, scarred from many encounters with thieves, and is a very pragmatic operator. Miccan is always on the lookout for new recruits, but is utterly ruthless with any employee that takes advantage of their position to enrich themselves.

Meede is a seller of kebabs cooked fresh on the street to supply the guards and porters that tramp the streets. Early every morning the young woman carries a small brazier, food, fuel and tools to one of the main streets in the district. Within an hour she is selling fresh kebabs made from meats and vegetables and served in flatbread to hungry workers and guards. At regular intervals, one or other of her many children appear with more raw food or fuel and they take away the cash taken so far. The food she produces is so good that even nobles have been known to send servants to buy her kebabs and take them back to the Noble District!

Shops and Services

There are almost no shops or services in this district. There are some street vendors of food or drink supplying the workers here but otherwise little can be bought here.

Merchants Quarter

This small district is where most of the city folk aspire to live. They know that they could never afford to live in the Noble district, and indeed anyone not of Noble birth would be unlikely to be allowed to buy a mansion there no matter their wealth (with Sorcerers the obvious exception). This district is nowhere near as illustrious, but still far above the rest of the city.

The street here are wider and cleaner than the majority of the city and the major routes are paved or cobbled. Piles of rubbish and animal dung can still be found here, especially in the alleyways, but there both less noisome and less frequent than in one of the western districts. There are fairly regular lamps and torches on the street corners and doorways and the City Guard tend to mount regular patrols along the main streets at least.

Most of the houses are larger courtyard houses providing accommodation for the extended families, servants and slaves of the wealthy merchants, city officials and poorer nobility that make this district their home. Some of these courtyard houses have a tower attached and these are even known to house telescopes for astronomy or spying on neighbours. It is also quite common for the courtyards here to

have plenty of plants growing in them and some even have fountains or small waterfalls.

Although this district houses many merchants, few of them trade openly to the general public from their houses. Business deals with other major merchants will take place in comfortable rooms within private houses, but trade with common people will take place through shops, market stalls or even in offices established in warehouses.

Although there are few shops located in this district, there are several taverns, inns and eating houses. These are not the sawdust-floored pits of depravity found in much of the city. The establishments located here tend to be quieter and calmer and with much higher prices.

This district is also quieter than the other districts. The residents tend to live their lives within the walls of their courtyard houses rather than on roofs and streets as the common people do and so there is far less shouting and arguing to be heard!

Faction Control

Like the neighbouring Warehouse District, this district is under the control of the Brotherhood of Coin. Most of the houses are occupied by merchants who like to know what is happening in their own neighbourhood. There are also various poorer nobles and city officials making their homes here and so the City Government keeps a very close eye on happenings here without ever attempting any control.



Significant Inhabitants

Saliaar Snake-eye is the owner of the Skyreach Tower, widely regarded as the best tavern in the district. Situated in an old stone tower that was originally part of a large courtyard house, this multi-floor establishment serves only the best wines and foods. The windows on each

floor look out onto the street either side and the higher floors have views across the city itself and even beyond. Saliaar is a middle aged woman of uncertain origin and background with dark skin and vivid yellow eyes.

It is said that the wealthiest merchant in the district is Tandoshan Al-Atteel. Gossip across the city says that he is wealthier than many of the nobles but prefers to continue to live in the house owner by his forebears. Tandoshan trades in almost everything and has several ships and trade caravans, owns many shops across the city and has enough warehouse space to supply a small army. Notoriously secretive, the merchant himself is rarely seen outside his house and when he does leave, it is in a curtained litter attended by guards, servants and assistants.

Teoa the Blind was once a fairly prosperous merchant who resided in this district. He traded in wines and silks and lived a comfortable life in a substantial house. Although the true story is unknown and mere supposition must suffice, it appears that many years ago Teoa began a disagreement with one of the city Sorcerers and at the height of this disagreement was struck blind. Within a year his business had failed, his family had left or disappeared and Teoa found himself on the street begging for alms. Although that

Vahnam of Sorcerers no longer exists, Teoa seems unable to recover any of his previous fortunes and now begs on the same streets he once owned property on.

Shops and Services

As already mentioned, this district has few traders on the streets itself and almost no shops or emporia. There are however some well-to-do inns and taverns scattered around the major streets serving the residents and their visitors.

The Land Market

This large district stretches across the north and north-west of the city from the North Gate around to the Kings Gate. This is a district of narrow lanes, craftsmen and animals. At its heart, and giving it its name, is the huge open space of the Land Market. Unlike the huge piles of goods in the Sea Market or the animal pens of the Horse Market, this area tends to be thronged with merchant caravans, small rural farmers and other traders. Craftsmen from the rest of the Land Market district also sell their goods here and it is rare for a trader to be selling here two days in a row.



Most of this district is comprised of smaller mud-brick houses crammed shoulder to shoulder along narrow packed earth lanes. Many of the inhabitants of these houses and lanes keep pigs, chickens, donkeys and goats, and these animals are usually allowed to roam the nearby streets. The streets also contain innumerable cesspits and rubbish heaps in every available bit of space and so is usually foul smelling.

The houses themselves are two or three stories high, but will have basic plank doors, glassless shuttered windows and rudimentary furnishings. Most will have a flat roof shaded by cloth awnings where much of the daily life of the house will take place. The streets between these roofs are criss-crossed with ropes used as washing lines and many of the streets are thus in constant shade.



Residents from other, more select districts passing through the Land Market usually comment on the constant background hum of lives being lived all around, the smell from the ubiquitous refuse and the ever present street livestock. Even the streets that adjoin the courthouse and the palace are noisy, smelly and crowded.

The City Guard mount regular patrols through this district, which has enough people in to generate significant minor crime whilst being honest enough to keep the crime minor.

The Land Market itself is a large stone-paved area surrounded by taverns, inns, drinking holes, brothels and hostelrys, all looking to serve the traders, caravan guards, rural farmers and other traders bringing goods into the city to sell. There are numerous wooden trestle tables to provide selling space, although these are allocated on a first come first served basis. There are a small staff of city officials who circulate around the Market charging sellers a fee based upon the quantity and type of stock they have to sell. Generally, the goods sold in this market were either produced in the city itself by small craftsmen, transported here from other landward cities or towns or grown in nearby villages and carried in on mules or small carts.

The presence of the huge marketplace has not discouraged small shops and traders, with the surrounding roads busy with shops and other establishments. Many of these sell the goods produced in the workshops located behind whilst others sell on goods purchased from the incoming caravans and producers. Most of these smaller shops are open around the clock and cater both to locals and others from outside the district.

The people of this district are a real mix of born and bred Ur-Turuk natives along with incomers of all kinds. Many of the residents live here but a few years before moving back to their place of birth or into a better district in the city. It is however a vibrant place with many different languages and dialects spoken, foods eaten and clothing worn.

Faction Control

None of the Factions have overall control of this district, although most have a presence here. The Brotherhood of Coin are particularly strong in and around the marketplace itself, with the Bleeding Hook also having a foothold there. The Dust, Vanishing Hand and Black Face haunt the nearby streets and alleyways and prey on the naive rural farmers and traders new to the city. The various religious factions have representatives here looking for

fresh converts and recruits and the City Guard and Government are always keeping an eye on the significant tax revenues to be had. This lack of overall control means that no faction member is entirely safe here.

Significant Inhabitants

Monwin Disc is a huge man, standing nearly seven feet tall and with a huge blonde beard and long blonde hair. Although originally born into a far northern tribe, his many years in Ur-Turuk has darkened his skin and made him fluent in the language. Although now into his middle years, his huge strength still inspires fear in barroom brawlers in the west of the city. Since arriving here many years before, Monwin has run a brothel of one kind or another in many different locations. Although his prices are high, his beds are clean and his prostitutes are usually exotic and skilled. His current establishment, The Red Oasis, fronts onto the marketplace itself and the ever-present guards means that it is actually safer than the streets outside!

Nellia Treea owns a small shop tucked into one of the quieter back lanes of the northern part of this district. Although the shop front and main room are small and crowded, partially obscured doors lead into other rooms and passages and the premises actually comprises

a surprising amount of space. The shop sells curiosities of all sorts, including the occasional Artefact, and city residents of all sorts, including Sorcerers, can be found wandering through the cramped rooms. Nellia herself is a short, stocky young woman with very long black hair and extensive facial tattoos. She is friendly, but apparently forgetful and clumsy. Those who have known her some time however know that she is not a person to cross.

Browman Ro is regarded as one of the greatest cartographers of the modern age and has travelled most of the lands of the coast. His small home is cramped with maps, books, scrolls and notes. Although friendly and keen to meet new people (especially if they are travellers) he generally talks about nothing but hills, rivers, deserts or other geography. He is heavily tanned from his years riding the wastes.

Shops and Services

There are many, many shops of all kinds in this district, from food shops to weapon workshops to herbalists. Almost anything can be bought here if you know where to go and who to talk to. As a rule, the closer you are to the marketplace, the more expensive the prices will be as those shopkeepers try and take advantage of the traders, farmers and other travellers who make the Land Market their

first port of call, and often walk away with pouches of money. Most of the shops are small family run affairs, comprising of one room and maybe an outside table and awning. A stranger walking down one of the main thoroughfares will face a constant barrage of calls, cries and enticements!

Horse Market

This district, like the Land Market, is centred on a large open market place. This district occupies much of the south-western part of the city, from the Kings Gate around to the Serpent Gate. Also like the Land Market district, the houses here are of mud brick and two or three stories high with many small shops clustered along the alleyways and streets. This district also houses workers and small craftsmen of all kinds in crowded and noisy conditions.

The Horse Market, as its name suggests, is the place where

almost all live animals are bought and sold. A big majority of the animals sold are horses, camels, mules, sheep and cattle, although rarer and stranger animals are also sold here from time to time. Even really large wild animals such as the Auroch can sometimes be sold in the Horse Market, with many dangerous beasts destined for the arena. The animals themselves are held in wooden pens organised into long lines with several much stronger cages scattered throughout the market for truly dangerous creatures.

Although escapes are rare, most inhabitants of this district will have stories of friends or neighbours killed or injured by escaped sabretooth tigers or lions! The city has always insisted that the seller is responsible for the

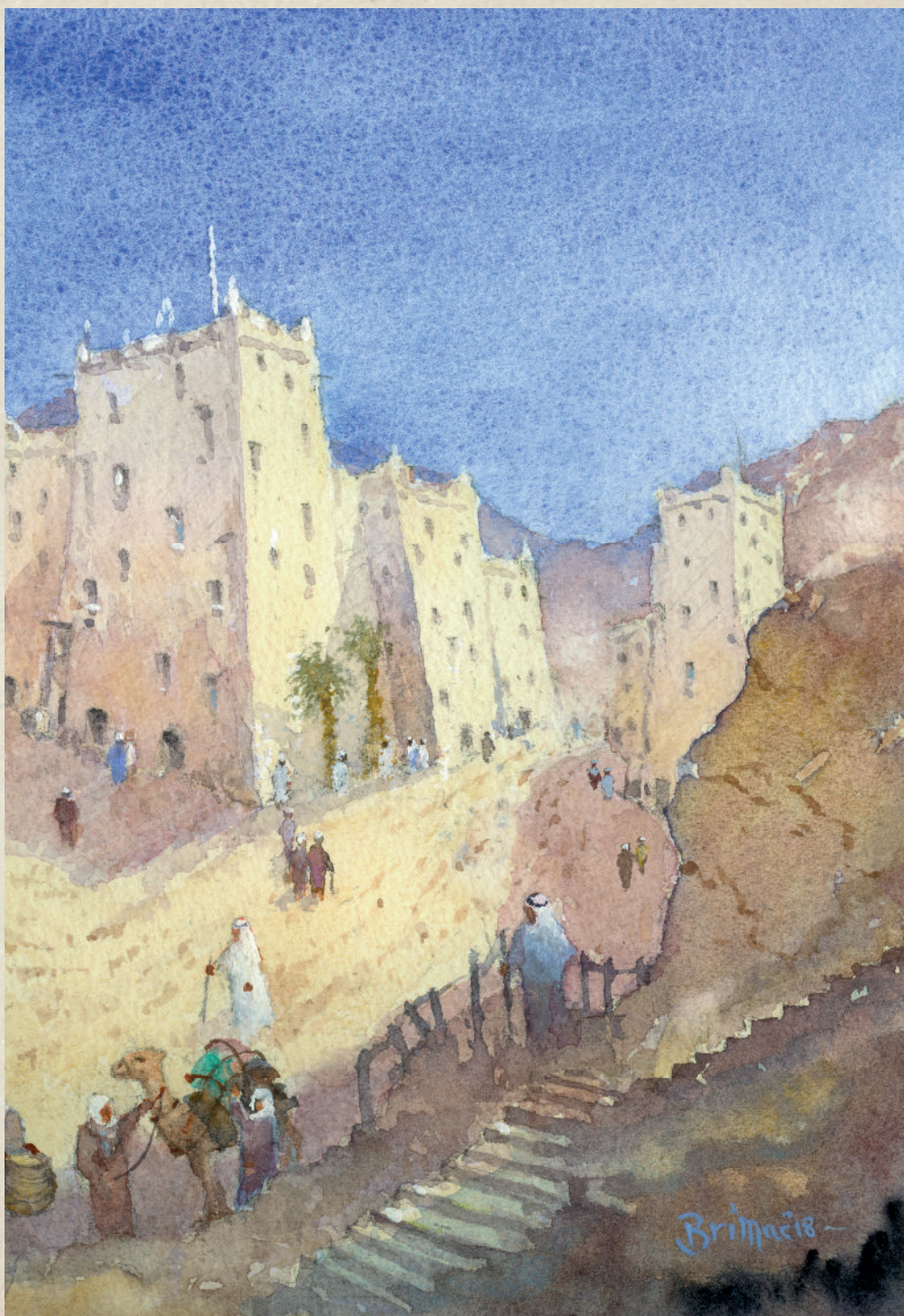


animal until the money has changed hands, at which point the new owner must take all responsibility. Anyone buying a dangerous animal should beware because a negligent owner could at worst find themselves in the arena facing their errant possession...

This district also contains the large temple of the Blind Serpent, once known as the Temple of Enil. This temple sits right next to the Serpent Gate, renamed many years ago for the temple itself. There is a large open plaza in front of the Temple and gate which is sometimes used for festivals, despite the objections from the City Guard about obstruction. Many of the Priests of the Blind Serpent live in this district.

There are fewer inns and taverns around the marketplace than with the Land Market because there tend to be far fewer traders in this area. However, there are several "animal professionals" who have an

office around the marketplace. Animal training, hunting, breeding and more can be bought here and huntsmen and trainers are a common sight in the district. There are also several suppliers specialising in small domesticated animals kept as pets.



Faction Control

Like the Land Market district, there is no one faction that controls this district. The Blind Serpent cult has a strong grip on the area near their temple, but the other factions all have a certain element of influence in the rest of the district.

Significant Inhabitants

Silladar the Animal Trainer is an incredibly old woman with very dark but wrinkled skin, long white hair and is always garbed in an orange robe and dusty black dress. Living in a tower house very near to the Horse Market, she is renowned as being able to train just about any beast brought to her. Some whisper that she uses arcane magic to talk to and control the animals enough to allow her more mundane skills to come into play. She has five apprentices at any one time, all female and all chosen from the street children that throng the city. Completing an apprenticeship with Silladar is a certain way to a lifetime of guaranteed employment.

Holmhaar the Huntsman boasts to anyone who will listen that he is the best huntsman in the city who can track and catch any animal, beast or monster. He wears tall black boots, baggy white trousers and a dark green frock coat,

accessorised with a jewelled Shamshir, curved ebony bow and ivory arrow-case. Holmhaar can be found striding in a manly fashion around the streets of this district, looking dismissively at the animals he sees and recounting loudly how he has vanquished or captured many of those.

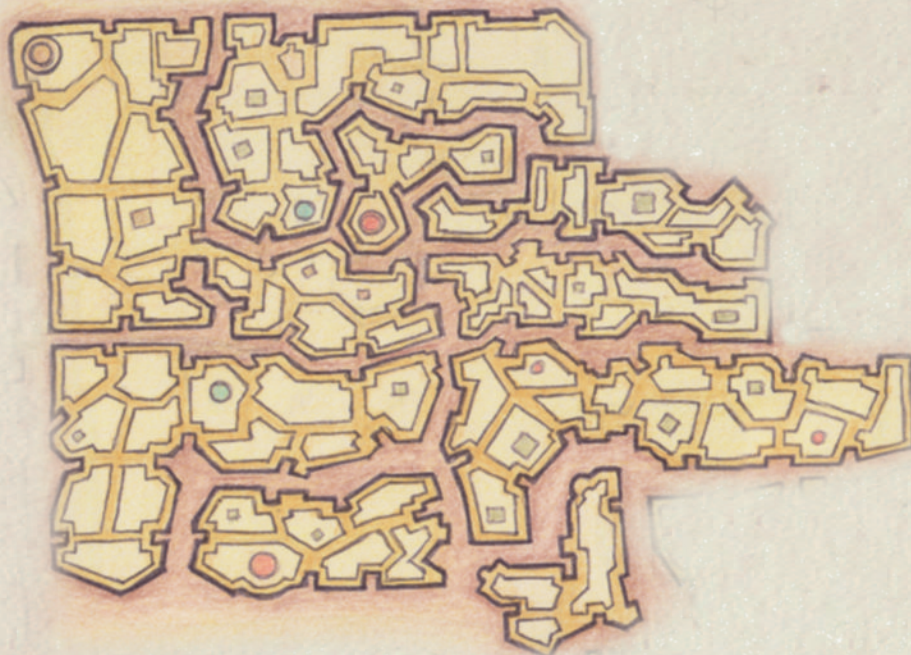
Sharak the Short certainly lives up to his name, standing but five feet tall, although almost as broad. He has muscular and tattooed arms, an almost bald head with just a single braided lock on the right temple and is never seen without his ancient yellow silk scarf. Sharak is known as one of the most untrustworthy and devious traders in the district (indeed the city) but he is also considered to have the best connections and eye for a beast amongst any of the animal dealers. Even the King is said to buy rare beasts from Sharak at times.

Shops and Services

There are many small shops scattered throughout the smaller lanes and alleyways, many of which sell animal-related goods. However, like the Land Market, the shops cater for a wide range of products and most things can be bought from one shopkeeper or another.

Beggars District

This district, right in the centre of the city and adjoining both the Horse Market and the Palace, is probably the most dangerous in the city. The Beggars district is where all of the desperate end up; the wanted criminals, the destitute, the narcotics dealers and the murderers. There are a good many ordinary people here, so down on their luck that they have nowhere else to go and no other way of surviving.



Although in theory the houses here are owned by someone, in practice people live wherever they can hold onto. The houses are almost all of mudbrick, almost all ancient and almost all

on the verge of collapse. There are very few colourful awnings here, no ornamentation or paintwork and very little of the contented hum that is generated by the other districts. A “tenant” who finds an empty house or is able to evict an existing occupant holds onto that house by barricading doors, blocking windows and making sure it is never empty. It is not unusual to find several destitute families crammed together in a small house to ensure that no-one else can take it from them.

Because the trade that takes place here is all of the illegal kind, the only real way to earn

enough coin to pay for food and other essentials is to work for the criminals. Narcotics couriers, watch-men, cheap muscle, gutter prostitution, fences and petty thieves are all avidly recruited, and just as quickly discarded. Life is very cheap, and bodies even cheaper.

The streets here are all of packed earth, sand and rubbish. There are no civic services, the water supply is irregular and often tainted, food can be of very poor quality and the entertainment is whatever the local crime lord decides to provide.

There have been many plans over the years to raze this district to the ground, with some nobles even favouring barricading every exit first! For one reason or another, these plans have never quite come to fruition and the district lingers on within daily sight of the Palace!

Although there are very few legitimate inhabitants of this district, there are some that choose to live here even though they are not criminals! Various priests, Minor Mages, philanthropists and even Sorcerers have made their homes here for a variety of reasons. None of them ever seem to stay long, being driven out or even just disappearing. The inhabitants of this district are rarely friendly to outsiders.

It is also worth noting that many beggars live in this district, hence the name! These beggars usually sleep in whatever hovel or half-collapsed house they can find before dispersing across the rest of the city at daybreak to beg for coin. The uncertainty and violence of the Beggars District means that very few ever bring coin back with them, preferring to spend it on food, drink and other essentials that cannot later be stolen.

Faction Control

This district is the focus of a subtle but vicious turf war between the Dust, the Vanishing Hand and the Black Face. None of these factions has been able to take total control, and so the district is a patchwork where control may be just one or a few houses. The City Guard and City Government have almost no influence here.

Plot Idea

The comings and goings of the Beggars district may seem to be of little interest to a Vahnam, even if it has the misfortune to be located there.

Recently however, Beggars have begun disappearing from the streets overnight, apparently randomly. The disappeared include some Beggars who have supplied information to the Vahnam in the past and even close contacts of some of the characters.

The only (sort of) witnesses describe seeing a flash of green light, hearing a low squealing growl and smelling burned tin. What is causing this problem? Is it a new ploy by the city to clean up the district or something far worse?

Significant Inhabitants

Busnes Talabani is one of the “people to know” in the Beggars District. Outwardly she is simply a poor mother of five struggling to make ends meet in her tumbledown house. However, this fairly flimsy charade masks the fact that her children are in fact street urchins used by her as runners, her poor house has several opulent rooms away from the street and the beggars that are always evident near her door are heavily armed under their rags. Busnes actually runs one of the bigger criminal gangs in the district and makes her money from robbery, protection rackets and theft. Although she is also a member of the Black Face, she also values her independence and often ignores the dictates of the leadership.

The beggar named Sygran is a common sight on the inner streets of the district. Old and dressed in rags, he has the ragged beard and matted hair of many of his kind. Although he spends most of his time asleep in the shade of a handy wall, he does travel the length and breadth of the district every day and knows exactly what is happening there. He is completely uninterested in coin, preferring to beg food, drink or even old clothes from passers by and householders just outside the district.

Ikune is a very fat man from a small group of islands far to the east. He has long and straight black hair, blue-black skin and pale blue eyes. He has a reputation amongst the denizens of this district as a fence to be trusted...if such as he can ever really be that! Ikune will buy almost anything stolen, although the price he pays will be commensurate with the risk the item carries and he will rarely pay above 15% of the full price.

Shops and Services

This district has few shops in the same way that almost every other district has them. There are establishments that sell things, although these are rarely legal! These shops may only stay open for days or weeks before moving on or vanishing altogether. Selling drugs, illegal slaves, stolen goods, body parts, smuggled artefacts and more, these shops provide an outlet for a multitude of illegal activities and an opportunity to buy things available nowhere else. The location of these shops is usually only known to those who need to know.

There are however numerous street vendors who mainly live in other nearby districts and visit each day or evening to sell hot food and cheap drink. There is a decent living to be made this way, although somewhat risky!

Codex 8: Sorcerers

Despite the city of Ur-Turuk being sometimes called the “City of Sorcerers”, there are actually very few full Sorcerers living there. Indeed, there are only ever two or three Vahnams resident in the city at any one time. This chapter provides the descriptions of three such Vahnams that a GM can add to the city.

There are many more Minor Mages in the city than Sorcerers, although they are still rare, and this chapter also describes eight of those that live in the city.

The Vahnam of Zissi

This Vahnam was only established four years ago and the founding Sorcerers are still finding their way in the political landscape of the city. Although of limited magical power (compared to other Vahnams at least) these Sorcerers do however have drive and energy.

The Vahnam building is at the western end of the Land Market district, not far from the Kings Gate and is an old courtyard house. Although not in the best state of repair, this

house is sturdily built from sandstone and secure. When the Vahnam was first founded, a large but low building to the rear of the house was purchased and converted into a stables and a courtyard and an archway put through from the courtyard. The proximity of the Vahnam to the Kings Gate allows the staff to take the horses and hunting dogs out of the city every day for exercise.

The three stories all have internal balconies surrounding the courtyard and all rooms open direct from these balconies. The furniture within is solid and functional, but plain. The Vahnam does not yet have extensive finances and so the Sorcerers live a comfortable lifestyle but nothing more.

The Sorcerers

Fabius Beastfriend is considered the leader of the Vahnam by the other Sorcerers. A young man of around thirty, he has specialised in the Nature element through all of his training and is almost always attended by animals of one sort or another. Fabius adopted a lion cub whilst still an apprentice and the animal has followed him to the Vahnam. As an adult, it

still lives within the Vahnam building, sleeping in the same bedchamber as her master!

Paldus the Summoner is a distant cousin of Fabius. However, whereas the Beastfriend dresses in bright clothing in line with current fashions, Paldus dresses in robes and cloak of black. His dark clothing and long black hair make him stand out on the colourful streets of the city although few comment on his attire. This Sorcerer uses the Summon Control exclusively, but has not focused on any one Element.

Kali of the Spring grew up far to the north of Ur-Turuk in a land of green meadows, cool forests and plentiful springs. She has become a specialist in water magics of all kinds and her clothing reflects that. Her flowing silk robes are of various shades of blue and pale green and she has an aura of coolness and gentle movement.

Maniya is also known as "Void". Although a valued member of the Vahnam, she is also treated with some caution by both the Sorcerers and other residents. She has long had a fascination with Destroy magic and is never happier than when something is being forced into non-existence. She wears a fitted grey jacket and trousers and has a severe close-cropped haircut, giving her a somewhat masculine look.

The Major Characters

Ulamel of the house of Idari is a young nobleman of impeccable lineage and breeding. He wears the latest fashions, parties every night where possible and attempts to take responsibility for nothing. Rarely seen without an attractive woman (or two) on his arm, he is well known in the city as a shallow and vain aristocrat. However, Ulamel is also devoted to the Vahnam and whatever goals the Sorcerers are pursuing and is closely allied with Maniya.

Lakan Manslayer might only be in his thirties but he is considered one of the most dangerous men in the city. He is fast and strong and has a natural talent with blades of all kinds. He will also kill an enemy without a second thought, although never an undeserving one. He always wears his worn and scored studded leather armour and has a Tulwar at his side, but is otherwise unremarkable to look at in all respects.

High Priestess Istunaniska is a devotee of Enu and has special responsibilities within the Temple towards the novice priests. She is very young, only just twenty, but her natural piety and obvious favour in the eyes of her God have led to rapid promotion. She is short and stocky in build but her calm face inspire confidence in all who meet her.

The Minor Characters

Haraga the Cook was at one time a slave, bought and freed by Kali on her arrival in the city. He is a very attractive young man (possibly the reason he was captured for a slave) but is no more than passable in the kitchen. However, the Vahnam are generally undemanding and overlook this mediocrity.

Sergeant Nuzizi is the de-facto leader of the dew soldiers employed by the Vahnam. She is the veteran of several mercenary skirmishes and trains hard every day to ensure her skills remain focussed. She is a lean and hard muscled woman with tattooed arms and tightly braided hair. She favours the Lunar Axe in combat.

Duldulu the Healer is a middle aged man who has lived most of his years in the Beggar District of the city. When the Vahnam was first founded, he was recommended to the Sorcerers by several worthy citizens for his quiet competence with wounds and diseases and was hired soon after. Very quietly spoken (to the point of virtual silence) he just seems to get on with his job without any fuss.

Lamisar the Steward runs the Vahnam on a day to day basis and is competent at his job, even if he does think rather too much of himself. He wears a smart jacket of purple and

seems to feel that anything that gets in the way of the smooth running of the household is sent to test him personally. Visitors are considered a particular hassle he could well do without!



Outlook

The Vahnam, being new, is very proactive in outlook. The Sorcerers are constantly on the lookout for ruins to search or artefacts to research and they also keep a very close eye on the goings on within the city itself. They will view another Vahnam in a friendly way, but will also consider them a potential rival in the search for artefacts.

Factions

The Vahnam has not been in existence long enough to make many allies or enemies, although they are on very good terms with the Line of Enu due to the presence of High Priestess Istunaniska within their household.

They are however working hard to forge what links they can with whom they can, knowing that a good network of connections can be very helpful.

Game Stats

<i>District</i>	Land Market
<i>Building</i>	Medium Building
<i>Wealth</i>	3D
<i>Resources</i>	Mounts-Standard Hunting Beasts
<i>Facilities</i>	Stables Kennels Council Chamber Library Well
<i>Security</i>	3D+2
<i>Slaves</i>	0
<i>Magical Power</i>	+1 pip
<i>Reputations</i>	Friendly - Line of Enu Enemy - None

The Vahnam of Amar-Suena

This Vahnam was founded some thirty years earlier and has become well established in the city. There is usually at least one team attempting to recover artefacts at any one time and the remaining Sorcerers are a common sight on the surrounding streets.

The Vahnam building is located to the east of the Palace Plaza and has a fine view of the palace, barracks, slave market and fighting pit. The core of the building is an ancient grey-stone hall which has been expanded over the years with sandstone and mudbrick outbuildings and a surrounding high wall. The architecture is a real mixture of styles, influences and designs and is something of an acquired taste.

The interiors of the buildings are also a mixture of styles, furnished from items imported from many different areas and locations over three decades. Although varied, the furnishings are all of excellent quality and have stood the test of time. The Vahnam has a comfortable and homely feel to those invited in but intruders are met with great violence.



The Sorcerers

Irkalla Flame-Eye is the leader of the Vahnam and acquired her name because of the pale red of her irises. Irkalla grew up in a small coastal village to the north of Ur-Turuk and found her talent early. She always had an affinity with Spirit magic and has continued to specialise in this Element. Irkalla wears pure white linen robes and rarely undertakes any sort of physical labour.

Antum Stonesoul is originally from the deep desert and has the very dark skin and black hair of those tribes. She also still wears the striped robes and headcloth of the tribes and is sometimes mistaken for a visitor to the city. Antum uses mainly the Summon Control and the Earth Element and has been known to raise whole villages on the edge of the desert near the city in a day...only for them to be gone again by dawn.

Mesh-Hu is a small and swarthy woman, the daughter of a Priest of the Red God from Ur-Turuk. She is a cheerful and happy character and will enjoy a joke with commoner or servant alike. She has never specialised in any specific magic type and is able to cast most lesser spells with ease. It is reputed that the young Mesh-Hu was romantically involved with the King of that

time, a rumour she denies with a laugh and twinkle of the eye.

The enigmatic mage Assur-Taklaku is the fourth and final member of the Vahnam. He is originally from one of the small farming villages outside the city and seems to have some affinity with Nature. Unlike his good friend Mesh-Hu, this mage talks to no-one unless absolutely necessary and even when he does speak it tends to be single words.

The Major Characters

General En-Hedu is a senior officer in the army of the King. She is normally responsible for rural patrols, although she rarely goes out on patrol herself. En-Hedu achieved this rank more through family connections and noble birth than through valour or military success, although she is both a good leader and an astute tactician. A tall, middle aged hawk-faced woman, she is fully aware of her status and considers most other people to be inferior. She is always immaculately dressed in her well polished armour, on which are displayed her many awards.

Sin-Nadin is a scholar and one of the leading authorities on the Alulim in the city and indeed the whole coast. He is a typical scholar, dressed in a dusty and ink-stained robe,

unshaven and ragged. It is very obvious to all who meet him that he lives within his own head and within his scrolls and books rather than the real world. He speaks of little else but the Alulim to anyone he is in conversation with, and has never married.

Amarsin the Traveller is an explorer of experience and skill. She can ride almost anything, survive anywhere and find ruins like a hunting dog finds a stag. Amarsin is only in her late thirties, but her weatherbeaten face and sun bleached hair make her look much older. She always seems to wear her worn leather travelling gear and considers the dust and smell of sweat a bonus!

The Minor Characters

Kam-Hagel is a Courtesan, and much in demand amongst the wealthy of the city. She is no more than thirty years old and very attractive to look at, although her personality and demeanour are what really make her desirable. She has become an expert at keeping all of the powerful nobles of the city interested, without letting them get too close. Or closer than she wants, anyway. She is always dressed in the latest fashions and will be very friendly to anyone she meets (as long as she wants something from them!)

Ur-Zababa is the Huntsman of the Vahnam. He is responsible for maintaining the various beasts in the kennels and taking them out of the city when the Sorcerers wish to hunt. He is quiet and professional and talks softly to himself and his charges in a very old rural dialect unintelligible to most. Although he may appear focused and preoccupied, he is always very alert and it is almost impossible to surprise him.

Pushu-Ken is a woodcarver, employed by the Vahnam to make furniture, tools and other items. He has a small workshop in one of the outbuildings and sleeps in the small roof space above with his wife. Due to a lifetime spent making fine things from timber, he is able to identify types and qualities of woods at a glance or a feel and is even sought out by other woodcarvers from the city to use this talent.

Sillili is the body servant to Irkala. It is her role to bring whatever her mistress needs, at whatever hour of the day she requests it. She is smartly dressed in a long green tunic and carries herself proudly. Although a lowly servant within the Vahnam, her daily contact with the leader of the Vahnam brings her a kind of reflected glory and she sometimes looks down on the other servants because of it!



Outlook

This Vahnam has been founded some years now and has found its place in the life and politics of the city. It does not have to strive to make its mark, it is not in desperate need of Artefacts and magical power. Although not fabulously rich, it is wealthy enough to supply all that the Sorcerers need and it has enough influence with the factions that matter to allow it to influence the life of the city.

Factions

This Vahnam is allied with the City Government (through General En-Hedu) and the City Guard. It is an enemy of the Killers, who some years ago assassinated one of the Major Characters associated with the Vahnam and an enemy of the Black Face.

Game Stats

<i>District</i>	Palace
<i>Building</i>	Large Building
<i>Wealth</i>	4D
<i>Resources</i>	Mounts-Standard Hunting Beasts-Exotic
<i>Facilities</i>	Stables Council Chamber Strongroom Well
Security	4D+2
Slaves	0
<i>Magical Power</i>	2D
<i>Reputations</i>	Friendly – City Guard, City Government Enemy – Black Face, Killers



The Vahnam of Ahai

This Vahnam was originally founded some seventy years ago, and the founding Sorcerers are still in residence. Through a combination of care and subtle magics, the Sorcerers are still active, even though they are all very old. Most of the residents have forgotten that this Vahnam even exists as it is so long that the Sorcerers have even ventured out let alone used great magics. The older citizens of the city may well remember tales of this Vahnam but their younger counterparts seem almost totally uninterested!

The Vahnam building itself is a tall mansion of several towers set within a small courtyard set right on the sea cliff next to the south wall. The building is very, very old and the structure at least shows signs of age and is crumbling in several places. The clustered towers at the centre provide the living accommodation for the Sorcerers themselves and the low buildings around the inside of the walls the lodgings for servants as well as kitchens and other services. The mud brick wall that surrounds the Vahnam has spikes embedded along the top and the main entrance is through a small gateway and old wooden door.

All four of the towers have an external doorway into the courtyard and another into

a low domed building that connects all four. This dome houses the council chamber of the Vahnam and is only ever entered by the Sorcerers themselves.

The interior of the Vahnam is full of old but fine furniture, much of it dating to the early years after the founding. Most of the towers are crowded with furniture, scrolls, artefacts (both intact and disassembled) and ancient curios. The Sorcerers spend the vast majority of their time within their towers and they have moulded themselves around their inhabitants.

The Sorcerers

Muisa Grey-Hair is the leader of the Vahnam through long custom and is named for her hair which has been grey since her teens. Muisa is an expert in the Magic Element and has made a special study of the manipulation of existing spells. Muisa is straight-backed, unusual at her age, and is always dressed in a multi-layered gown of white muslin. She is reserved and quiet and a strict disciplinarian, intolerant of stupidity or laziness even amongst those who do not work at the Vahnam. She is however kind and charitable and has been known to hand out purses of coins to the unfortunates of nearby streets and of the Beggars District.



Brennan Firehand is the most reclusive member of the Vahnam, not seen outside his tower or council chamber for nearly twenty years. Brennan uses the Summon and Shape Controls and the Fire Element and his tower windows are frequently lit with flames of various colours. Brenna wears ancient red robes, now faded to a pale pink, and shuffles around his abode in soft shoes and cap.

Geni of Unnun is the youngest member of the Vahnam by some three or four years and has never specialised, instead spending her years working with all of the Controls and Elements. Still the match for a newly independent Sorcerer with any particular spell, Geni has a long reputation for adaptability. Unlike her colleague Brennan, Geni is an extrovert and spends several days each week visiting friends and allies in the city to provide magical assistance.

Figou has a very, very long grey beard (down to his knees) and long grey hair. He has aged poorly compared to his colleagues and is small, thin and bent. When he must leave his tower, he is carried in an ancient but ornate sedan chair by two servants. Figou has little interest in the political situation of the city and almost never receives visitors. The only draw to meet new people will be if they are an expert in Spirit magic, a field that Figou considers himself a master in.

The Major Characters

Murhen the Merchant spends much of his time at the Vahnam but maintains a comfortable house in the Merchants district. Muhren made a considerable fortune by trading pearls from distant island chains and still maintains a small interest in the business. Old, fat and tired, he now looks for comfort in his latter days and is hard to rouse from reverie.

Eisaan the Agent spent her younger days infiltrating factions, groups and households and there was no-one in the city who knew more about the goings on in the city than her, even those private goings on behind locked doors. Although she has not lurked or crept for many years, she does use Vahnam money to maintain a small network of younger agents and is still very well informed. She still dresses very conservatively in black and never talks unless absolutely necessary.

Mai-Tes the Explorer was born on one of the tiny islands in the eastern sea and spent her youth exploring the endless ocean on a twin-hulled island boat. It was during this time that she met the Sorcerers of the Ahai Vahnam and joined with them to explore the ocean and coast. She maintains a ship still, but rarely sails now due to old bones.

The Minor Characters

Shadrick the Doorkeeper is an incredibly old and dehydrated little man. Most visitors are amazed that he has the strength reach the gate, let alone to open it! Shadrick has been the doorkeeper at the Vahnam since the age of seventeen and is no longer surprised by anything without. Somehow, he has never been attacked or injured whilst acting as doorkeeper although he has often been shouted at or insulted. Shadrick still wears the tattered green robe he has worn every day for the past two decades.

Tauth is the Captain of the Vahnam Guard and is one of the youngest people within the walls. She is lean but well muscled and always carries at least four weapons on her person. She is also never seen without her armour or dark green cloak and has a very serious persona. The very model of a professional soldier, she is dour and humourless. She has six soldiers under her command.

Belsh Longtooth is the Steward of the Vahnam and has held this role for the past twelve years after the previous incumbent died of old age. Belsh has adopted the attitude that since his Sorcerers are old, he is now the effective master of the Vahnam and tries to exert this authority whenever possible. Belsh is smartly dressed in subdued colours and carries himself formally

when outside his own quarters. He acquired his name due to one incisor growing to great length and overhanging his lower lip.

Ellat the Slavemaster is not as old as the Sorcerers, but is still elderly. She is small and skinny and always wears black but is a harsh mistress to the middle-aged slaves owned by the Vahnam. She always carries a short whip and is not afraid to use it on her charges at every opportunity. Ellat was a street urchin in her youth and was rescued from that situation by Figou, to whom she feels a particular loyalty.

Outlook

This Vahnam is very old and has an air of somnolence and decay. There is little interest in the political or social goings-on in the city and even magical events are regarded with detachment. The Sorcerers no longer actively seek out Artefacts, having enough stored within the Vahnam to see them through to their dying days. Even a full blow riot would only see the Sorcerers act to secure their home.

Factions

The Vahnam is on good terms with the “official” factions (City Government and Guard and the Line of Enu) due to long years of support for



the city. The Sorcerers and their Vahnam have, decades ago, supported the city in various things and this has not been forgotten. The Vahnam is an enemy of the Black Face and Vanishing Hand, having been targeted by the criminals at various times, but there has been no active conflict for many years. The other factions are various shades of neutral, and there is little contact between any of them and the Vahnam.

Game Stats

<i>District</i>	Docks
<i>Building</i>	Large Building
<i>Wealth</i>	4D+2
<i>Resources</i>	Mounts-Standard Ship
<i>Facilities</i>	Stables Four Towers Council Chamber Library Strongroom Well
<i>Security</i>	5D+1
<i>Slaves</i>	10
<i>Magical Power</i>	1D
<i>Reputations</i>	Friendly – City Guard, City Government, Line of Enu Enemy – Black Face, Vanishing Hand

Significant Minor Mages

The Sorcerers described above are of course very powerful and able to harness great magical power, but they do not represent every magical person in the city. There are several (although no-one knows exactly how many) minor mages who could be allies or enemies of the Vahnam belonging to the player characters. Some are described here, although there will certainly be others of the GM's devising.

Jafar Fasthand

Jafar is an extravagantly dressed man with a bright red turban, flowing layered orange robes and a deep purple cloak. He has a long and pointed beard, shiny with oil, and his hands are bedecked with numerous glittering rings. Jafar makes a comfortable living through the creation of illusions and light shows for entertainment. His shows have been performed in the palaces of the King and Nobles, the great houses of the merchants and the marketplaces of the common people. It is said that Jafar supplements this income by assisting various freelance thieves and robbers with their heists. The ability to create phantom guards and strange noises or a deeper darkness or unnatural silence is much in demand (it is

said) and a black-clad Jafar has been implicated in several high profile thefts.

<i>Summon</i>	2D
<i>Control</i>	2D
<i>Destroy</i>	2D
<i>Light</i>	2D

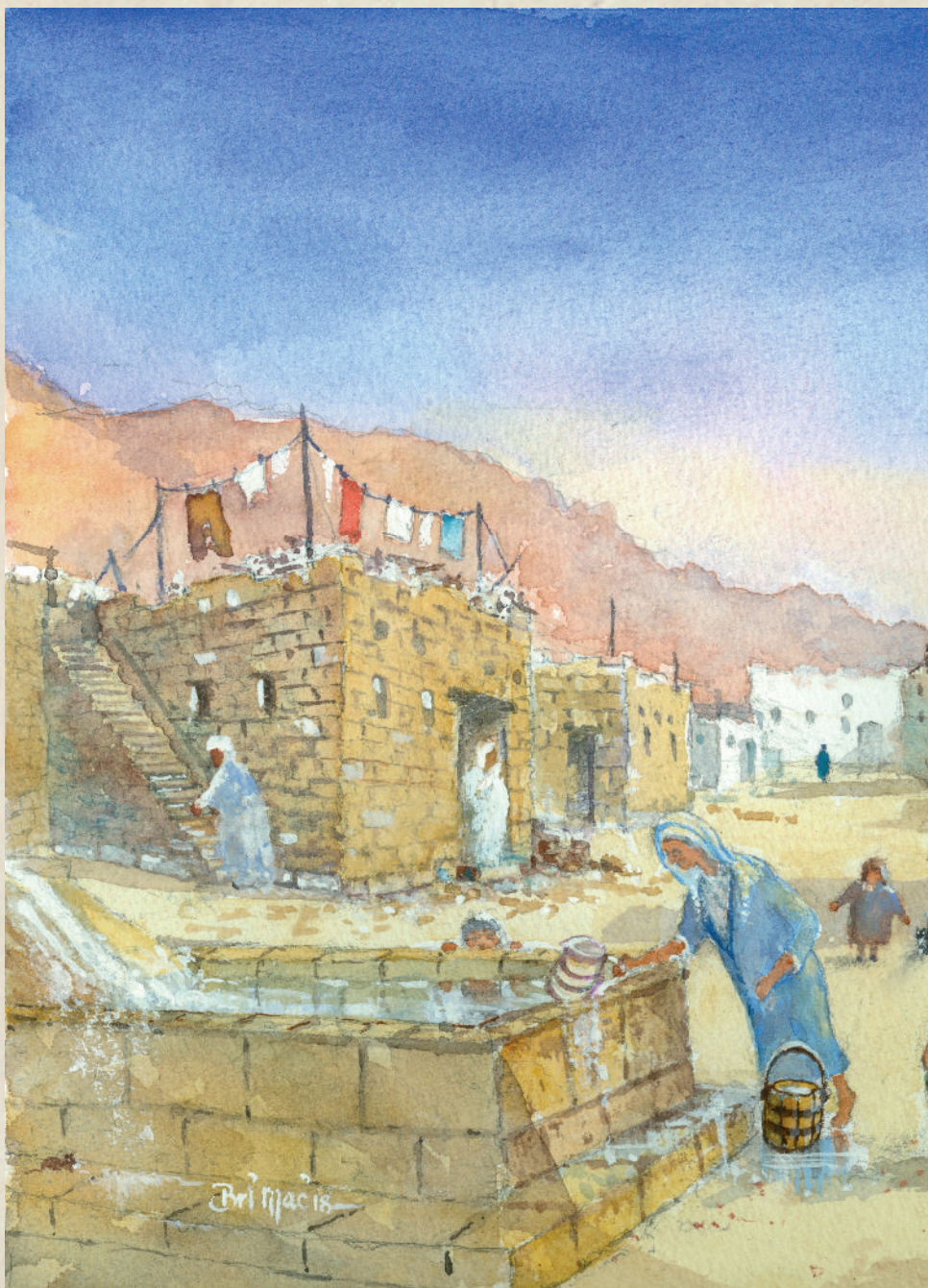
Morgia is young, dark off skin and wide of waist and is known for her ability to find and talk with Ghosts. She usually wears a black hooded cloak over a plain grey gown and it is said that no-one has ever seen her smile, let alone laugh. Morgia is able to summon and exorcise Ghosts (and very minor demons) and

has some ability to force their actions. She sells her services as a Medium to bereaved relatives and as an exorcist to those plagued by poltergeists. She is not particularly brave however and often hires muscle if there is any chance that the spirits could take physical form.

<i>Summon</i>	2D
<i>Control</i>	1D+1
<i>Destroy</i>	2D
<i>Spirit</i>	2D

Zumur Haalta the Elementalist

Zumur at one point was a pirate, which it is where she lost her eye and acquired her impressive collection of scars





and muscled physique. She still wears a white headscarf and deck boots, regardless of what else she is wearing. Although she will never talk about it, something happened on her last tour as a pirate, something which saw her ship cast up on the coast to the north of Ur-Turuk, empty but for the unconscious Zumur.

When she eventually recovered her senses, she realised that she now had some limited magical powers and was able to bring things into existence, even if only briefly. In the year since her shipwreck, Zumur has found regular employment for her new skills and there are rumours that she is considering a return to the pirate life!

<i>Summon</i>	2D
<i>Earth</i>	1D+1
<i>Water</i>	1D+1
<i>Air</i>	1D+1
<i>Fire</i>	1D+1

Hazail

This middle aged woman was originally a mercenary, spending years wielding a Tulwar in border skirmishes and tribal conflicts. Although she had always known that her mind was slightly different to that of most normal people, she relied on the strength of her arm

and her ferocity to make a living. As she approached her fortieth birthday, she was badly wounded in a small battle and faced death. Somehow, she managed to tap her inner reserves and magically heal herself just enough for her to reach safety and real medical care. Since then, she has retired from trying to kill people and instead tries to heal them.

<i>Shape</i>	2D
<i>Summon</i>	2D
<i>Body</i>	2D

Caifas

This young man has the dark skin and hair of the deep desert tribes, although his face and arms are marked with burn scars of various sizes and ages. Caifas wears dark red and orange robes that seem to float and swirl around him and highly polished black boots. He normally wears a hood to shadow his face and maintains a permanent air of mystery. He specialises in fire magic and is known to be open to hire by anyone with enough money.

<i>Summon</i>	2D
<i>Shape</i>	2D
<i>Fire</i>	2D

Appendix: Ur-Turuk Names

D6	D6	Male	Female
1	1	Adurnarseh	Abandokht
	2	Anosh	Adrina
	3	Ariamnes	Amuhia
	4	Ariaspes	Apama
	5	Arsama	Artabanu
	6	Bardia	Barsine
2	1	Carisarnes	Bitham
	2	Catana	Cosrau
	3	Dafarnah	Farnaka
	4	Derash	Freni
	5	Farhad	Iotapa
	6	Gobryas	Jaleh
3	1	Haxamanis	Jobias
	2	Hormizd	Karani
	3	Jawad	Kiana
	4	Kazem	Laleh
	5	Masista	Majidi
	6	Mehrad	Mehregan
4	1	Mir	Mihrab
	2	Naudar	Neda
	3	Otanes	Nazanin
	4	Oxathres	Orasmyn
	5	Parsa	Parmys
	6	Pouriauhyar	Reyhan
5	1	Ramin	Roxana
	2	Saman	Sorayah
	3	Sasan	Stateira
	4	Sear	Tajuya
	5	Sennen	Thriti
	6	Tiri	Tara
6	1	Turan	Tanaz
	2	Tus	Tomrys
	3	Varazdat	Yasamin
	4	Vidarna	Youtab
	5	Walagash	Zenwar
	6	Zurvan	Zeynab

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Ur-Turuk City Guide

The ancient city of Ur-Turuk lies baking and dusty under a burning sun and is known as the City of the Sorcerers due to it's most famous inhabitants.

This companion volume to the "Sorcerers of Ur-Turuk RPG" core book brings you a detailed description of the history, streets, people and intrigues of this teeming metropolis.

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