

MURGHÔM CAMPAIGN SETTING
VERSION 1.1
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INTRODUCTION

This article was written with the intent of making the land of Murghôm in the Forgotten Realms campaign setting a fully playable campaign area, with all the requisite 3rd Edition Dungeons and Dragons game mechanics detailed out. A prospective reader should note that while I have tried to stay very close to the original source materials, a large part of this article is non-canon. This is a first version, and by no means an exhaustive treatment. There is certainly room for the addition of more feats, villages, magic, equipment, monsters, NPCs, and, of course, plots. Depending on how this article is received, I may add some/many of these in the future. I hope this article will prove useful to some of you.

- Samy Merchi, 24 Nov 2001

Disclaimer

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Sources

The canon sources used in the construction of this article are in order of importance:

- The Horde Boxed Set by David Cook et al.
- Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting by Ed Greenwood et al.
- The Forgotten Realms Atlas by Karen Wynn Fonstad
- The Forgotten Realms Roll of Years by unknown
- Oriental Adventures by James Wyatt et al.

Material imported from Oriental Adventures is notated in this article with (OA).

Timeline

This article includes events that have taken place in the year 1375 DR. The recommended starting year for campaigns by the Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting is 1372 DR. If you start your campaign in that year, you may have to ignore some of the material in this article, or fudge the years slightly. If you want to stick to the years mentioned in this article, I recommend bringing your campaign into this area in the years 1377-1385 for best compatibility with this article.

FAITHS

Muhjari (lesser god)

The Righteous Ruler, Divine Charity, Keeper of the Secret

Symbol:	Pyramid; square cross-sected by two lines
Alignment:	LN
Portfolio:	Rulership, charity, respect, order, faith, sciences
Domains:	Law, Family or Community (OA), Knowledge, Nobility
Favored weapon:	"Edge of Constance" (scimitar)

Though the name of the actual personage being worshipped is Muham (muh-HAHM), the religion itself is called Muhjari (MUCH-djari, 'ch' as in 'ach', 'loch'). The Muhjari faith de-emphasizes worshipping the person of Muham, and focuses on worshipping his teachings. Muham, said to have lived many millennia ago, is believed to have been a bard who collected scientific knowledge instead of stories. He is said to have been a teacher and leader who believed very strongly in societal order. According to Muhjari teachings, Muham's studies unlocked the one ultimate cosmic truth which elevated him to a higher level of existence. From there, he watches over his people and waits for them to discover the same truth so they can join him in the beyond.

The bulk of Muhjari church influence can be found in the lands of the Muhjein: Murghôm and Semphar. There is minute influence in Mulhorand, and some of Muhjari's ancient origin in the lands around the Golden Water remains in the sparse temples and worshippers of that area. In Murghôm and Semphar, the faith is dominant over all others, and to a great degree defines the people and culture of those two lands. The church is very organized, formulaic and hierarchical, the epitome of Lawfulness, and has a great number of rules, restrictions and protocols to abide by, especially for the mullahs (Muhjari clerics) even more than for the lay people. One of the church's main functions is to maintain a well functioning societal system, backing the ruler and satisfying the populace. Occasionally, those two interests conflict and that is a very trying time of soulsearching and differing opinions for Muhjari faithful. Muhjari temples are almost always built in the shape of ziggurats, or terraced/stepped pyramids. Female mullahs are rare but exist after Salima's example some 250 years ago.

Mullahs pray for their spells at noon. Holy days tend to be astronomical events, such as solstices, equinoxes, eclipses and planetary conjunctions, which mullahs are very accomplished at calculating. Also, the church often joins the state in venerating such days as a ruler's marriage, the birth of a royal child, war victories, and anniversaries thereof. Mullahs most often multiclass as bards or fighters.

History/Relationships: Muham was indeed a mortal in ancient times predating many deities on Toril, such as the Mulhorandi pantheon. The cosmic truth he unlocked was the existence and means of communicating with the overlord of deities, Ao. For this information, he was threatened by agents of a faith who desired access to this secret. Muham, rather than divulging the secret, accepted death. For this show of respect and loyalty to a superior power, Ao elevated Muham to godhood. Muham is most hostile with most members of the Mulhorandi pantheon, especially Anhur, Horus-Re, Set and Thoth, who have repeatedly tried to eradicate the Muhjari faith in favor of their own. Muham gets along reasonably well with Siamorphe, as well as both Bane and Torm. Among the latter pair, Torm is very dissatisfied with Muham's links with Bane, while Bane is more amused by Torm's dissatisfaction. Shar, as one of the deities predating Muham, looks upon him favorably for some unrevealed reason, as does her sister Selûne who appreciates the mullahs' knowledge of and respect for the night sky. Muham is hostile to Cyric, Gargauth and Talos because they represent ideas that would topple his rigid social order.

Dogma: "Love the faithful / fight the faithless. Respect for your superiors / charity for your inferiors." You may disobey your superior if you do it respectfully. Lying and going behind your superior's back is not respectful. Help those in need. Teaching or enabling someone to help themselves is the best help. Sometimes your inferiors do not know what is best for them. Be just in deciding what is best for your inferiors. Your superiors know better than you do what is best for you. Everyone has a place and is

important in the social hierarchy. Think. Strive for a greater understanding of the world. Teach greater understanding of the world. Numbers are important. Machinery and mechanical contraptions can be useful tools but are never the path to true knowledge. "Faith, not face, makes blessed." Faith is everything. Never waver, never doubt, and you will prevail. If you die with faith in your heart you will be blessed to join Muham in the great Secret. Those who die without faith will never live again. Faith, not race, is important. Support the existing social order. "Quench rebellion. Quench disrespect. Quench stupidity. Quench faithlessness." Always support a faithful who has wronged you over an infidel who has not. Take no more wives than you can support. Take no more wives than you can support children, divided by four. A woman who bears four children and no more is blessed.

FEATS

Blood Magic [Metamagic]

You can channel your own life force to cast spells.

BENEFIT: You can summon your very life force to cast one extra spell per day, at a peril to your health. Those classes that do not prepare spells can use blood magic to cast any spell they know. Those classes that prepare spells can use blood magic to cast any spell they have prepared for that day, and that spell does not have to be unexpended (it may have been cast already). Using blood magic to cast an extra spell causes you to become fatigued, and suffer a hit point loss proportionate to the power of the spell being cast. A spell causes 1d6 damage, plus 1d6 per spell level. Thus, a blood cantrip or orison would cause 1d6 damage, a blood magic missile 2d6 and a blood shapechange 10d6.

Devout [General]

You come from a land of great religious devotion.

REGIONS: Murghôm

BENEFIT: Cleric of a certain deity is a favored class to you in addition to any other favored classes you may have. In addition, Knowledge (religion) is considered a class skill for all your classes and you gain a +1 to all checks with that skill. Your region dictates what deity you must choose as your patron to gain the benefits of this feat. Should your deity ever change so as to not be the one dictated by your region, you lose all benefits of this feat.

SPECIAL: In Murghôm, you must be a cleric of Muhjari to gain the benefits of this feat.

Retract [General, Fighter]

You can use a reach weapon inside its reach.

PREREQUISITE: Expertise

BENEFIT: You can change your grip on a reach weapon to fight at a different range. This is a free action that can be performed only once a round and does not provoke Attacks of Opportunity. The weapon must be a reach weapon that normally can not fight inside its reach, such as a ranseur, glaive, or naginata (hereafter referred to as fixed reach weapons). You can change grip to fight at any range less than the weapon's maximum reach, for example a weapon with 15' reach could be used to fight at 10' or 5'. The weapon can only fight and threaten targets within that range until the grip is changed again. While fighting inside the weapon's normal range, you have reduced leverage and the weapon's damage die is reduced by one category, to a minimum of d1.

NORMAL: A character without this feat can not wield a fixed reach weapon inside its reach. Chain, spiked chain and similar non-fixed reach weapons can normally be used inside their reaches.

Retract, Improved [General, Fighter]

You use more precise strikes to compensate for lack of leverage.

PREREQUISITES: Retract, Weapon Focus (any fixed reach weapon)

BENEFIT: When using Retract to fight inside a fixed reach weapon's reach, you do not suffer the usual damage die reduction.

NORMAL: A character without this feat has his weapon's damage die reduced by one category when using a fixed reach weapon inside its reach.

SPECIAL: This feat applies to all fixed reach weapons as long as the character has Weapon Focus in at least one fixed reach weapon such as

a ranseur, glaive or naginata.

Retract, Supreme [General, Fighter]

You fight inside your reach as easily as at your normal reach.

PREREQUISITES: Improved Retract, Quick Draw, Combat Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes

BENEFIT: You can use a fixed reach weapon just like a non-fixed reach weapon such as a spiked chain. You have no need for grip changes and can fight and threaten any targets inside your maximum reach.

NORMAL: A character without this feat can only use a fixed-reach weapon at one range at a time.

REGIONS

Murghôm

Square of dark red, cross-sected from corner to corner by two golden lines, a golden hawk with wings spread in upper quadrant

CAPITAL: Murghyr
POPULATION: 840,990 (humans 95%, goblinoids 3%, drow 1%)
GOVERNMENT: Autocracy (Bey Yared ATAROQ I), tribal
RELIGIONS: Muhjari, Mulhorandi pantheon, Tempus, Red Knight, Chauntea
IMPORTS: Smoked sturgeon, caviar, lumber
EXPORTS: Chalcedony, jasper, dates, oranges, grain, horses, copper, slaves
ALIGNMENT: LN, NG, LE
INFLUENCES: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Iraq, Turkey
PREFERRED RACES: Human, aasimar, tiefling, goblin, hobgoblin, drow
PREFERRED CLASSES: Bard, Cleric, Fighter, Paladin, Rogue
AUTOMATIC LANGUAGES: Muhjuri
BONUS LANGUAGES: Mulhorandi, Durpari, Devic, Raumathan*, Untheric, Goblin
REGIONAL FEATS: Saddleback, Bullheaded, Thug, Militia, Devout
REGIONAL EQUIPMENT: a) Scimitar/MW, falchion/MW, khopesh/MW or saber/MW
b) Light warhorse, bit and bridle, military saddle, and studded leather barding
c) 2 2nd level divine scrolls

(* Raumathan is a language spoken by the Raumvira settlements around the Lake of Mists, as well as by the Commani, Khassidi and Naican tribes of the Endless Waste. It is written in Dethek script. If a DM wishes to use only the languages mentioned in the Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting, replace Raumathan with Tuigan.)

In ancient times part of the Imaskar empire, Murghôm and its sister nation, Semphar, survived the fall of that civilization as loose parts of Mulhorand. Though Mulhorand still claims both countries as territory, Semphar has long now been a separate nation, while Murghôm is still in the throes of trying to establish its independency. These pursuits were for a long time hindered by a lack of central government in Murghôm lands. Only for the past two or three centuries has there been a noticeable central government in Murghôm, and though its power over the people has steadily been growing in cities, it is still even today hard pressed to have a say in rural matters. Murghôm and Semphar share a common faith, called Muhjari.

Murghôm's ruler has the title of Bey. The rulership is hereditary, going to the second oldest son. The first son's responsibility in Muhjari culture is to act as head for, provide for and look after the family, and this is considered to supersede the responsibilities of rulership. Murghôm was ruled for over four decades by Bey Tharmakkas IV who was obsessed with conquering Semphar with military might, and paid little attention to other affairs. In the Year of the Banner (1368 DR), Tharmakkas was overthrown in a coup by his second son, Tharmakkas V. The fate of Tharmakkas IV is a common subject of public speculation, as he was never seen again after the coup, nor was his death ever claimed by his son. Unfortunately, the popular Tharmakkas V only reigned slightly less than six months before he succumbed to an exotic illness, and was replaced by the family's third son Yared, who titled himself Bey Ataroq I as if to marry respect for the past (Ataroq = "Old Blood") with the dawning of a new age (starting over a lineage with I).

Underneath the new Bey serve the emirs that have power over their own city but none of the surrounding countryside and villages. Settlements smaller than cities do not have emirs, but instead are presided over by elders known as atamen ("Old Wisdoms"). Emirs are directly subject to the Bey as in a feudal society, but although the atamen are in a nominally similar position, in practice there is a mutual nonaggression pact between the Bey and the atamen -- as long as the atamen keep their settlements in line

and don't challenge the Bey, the settlements can do as they please. At times of war or other serious societal issues, atamen often form a great council which either challenges the Bey or gives him unwavering support -- there is no middle ground in the hearts and minds of Murghôm.

Murghôm is a nation poised on the cusp of serious societal change under the reign of the progressive reformer Bey Ataroq I. Its military emphasis weakened by the lack of Tharmakkas IV, it remains to be seen how it can stand up to mighty neighbors such as Mulhorand, Thay, and not least significantly, the Hordelands.

SIDEBAR: TERMINOLOGY

Muhjari	= the religion of Muhjari	("Muham's Word")
Muhjuri	= the language of Muhjuri	("Muham's Words")
Muhjein	= the faithful of Muhjari	("Muham's Tribe")
Murghôm	= the country of Murghôm	("Murg's Plains")
Murghyr	= the capital of Murghôm	("Murg's House")
Murghol	= one of Murghôm's rivers	("Murg's Wash")
Murghein	= the people of Murghôm	("Murg's Tribe")
Mullah	= cleric of Muhjari	

Life and Society

Murghôm is a country with deep Muhjari religious convictions in urban and rural areas alike separating it from its would-be parent Mulhorand. While the two populations, urban and rural, sometimes seem as different as night and day, and generally have little to do with each other -- sometimes to such a degree that they might almost be considered two different countries inside each other -- they unhesitatingly support each other against intruding faiths. Both the urban and rural people are very aware that if they did not have a common faith and identity to share against the outsiders, they would have become a part of Mulhorand very long ago. This is a very strong tie that creates a sense of kinship and brotherhood among the Murghein people no matter where they are from.

A decade ago, the bulk of Murghôm's resources were directed towards building up its military and conquering Semphar. Under the rule of Ataroq I, this has seen an almost complete cessation. The military forces in areas bordering Semphar have been reduced to a nominal amount that seems more designed to just slow down any invaders rather than repel them. Many of the troops formerly stationed in Port Ghaast have been reassigned to Rauthil which seems the new Bey's point of military emphasis. Even so, Rauthil is not the military juggernaut Port Ghaast once was, as the military has seen a significant downscaling.

In a move that seems similarly aimed at filling the coffers at the Bey's castle, the taxes for ships traveling up and down the Rauthenflow have been increased. Whereas formerly a significantly cheaper route between the East and West than the Golden Way further north, the Rauthenflow now remains only a slightly cheaper option. The tactic seems to have worked, as while many foreign merchants bristle at the heightened taxes, they still continue to use the Rauthenflow.

The move that has perhaps alarmed the population most and caused the most criticism towards the new Bey is the coming of the drow in the Year of the Risen Elfkin (1375 DR). After unknown dealings with the Bey, thousands of drow have migrated from the Underdark to the urban areas of Murghôm, becoming merchants, soldiers, clerics and most commonly, slave traders. At the same time, punishments of death and longer imprisonment than one year have been changed into being stripped of citizenship and becoming a slave. Many of these slaves end up being sold by the drow to the Underdark.

All the above reforms are ones that bring money to the Bey. However, the money does not stay with him. Instead, he is committed to improving the quality of life in all of Murghôm. The bulk of newfound money is passed on to subsidize the Muhjari church which is the central organization in Murghôm providing social systems such as education and charity. Schools have started to sprout up in the rural areas, run by mullahs (Muhjari clerics) and the churches in cities are becoming more able by the month to tend to and support the poor.

While other faiths, in particular the Mulhorandi pantheon, are tolerated within Murghôm, none of them receive these financial subsidies.

Murghôm is taking a quick leap forward, but in doing so, it seems to not be looking out for any attempts to trip it. There is a concern among the populace that with the weakened military, Thay or Semphar or even the drow might attempt to annex Murghôm. There is less concern about Mulhorand with whom the Bey claims to have excellent relations. In fact, to many it looks like the Bey is putting his faith to

Mulhorand defending 'its territory' should anyone try to invade Murghôm. Many patriotic Murghein are conflicted between appreciating the reforms and not liking this attitude.

Customs

Murghôm has many customs, some of them shared by Semphar or other neighboring countries, that set it apart from the other countries on Toril.

The internal organs of animals are not to be eaten. In Muhjari culture they are where different parts of the soul reside. The intellect in the brain, the courage in the heart, the charisma in the lungs, the selfishness in the stomach and so on all the way to the intestines where lie spirituality and faith. The typical burial of Murghôm is a ground burial wrapped in a textile shroud but no coffin. The stomach of the deceased is removed if possible before the burial, to allow them to ascend to the afterlife free of selfishness.

Veils are generally a sign of a woman who is not available for courtship. Often, this means married women but unmarried and uninterested women -- which are rare -- also can use them, as can betrothed women. Most unmarried women of age show off their faces as an open invitation for courtship. A gesture of covering one's mouth with one's hand is sometimes used by particularly blunt women as a rude gesture to tell the man they are conversing with to go away. Veils do not have to be of cloth -- veil-like curtains of small beads or pearls are also popular among the more well-off people. Married people are generally expected by society to wear veils, but it is not a crime to go without one, although it is frowned upon. Arranged marriages are common, and women generally have less choice (although not no choice) in choosing their mate than their fathers do. Love is not generally necessary in a Murghein marriage, but true to Muhjari faith, respect is crucial. Divorce is possible and relatively easy to accomplish if disrespect from the spouse can be proven. Physical and psychological abuse are almost always considered disrespect. Divorce is hard to accomplish without disrespect, and attempting a divorce unprovoked can be considered disrespectful in itself.

The sunhawk, a golden-colored variety of the common hawk, is a sacred animal in the Muhjari faith. It is rare in the lands between the Endless Waste and the Golden Water, and unseen elsewhere. The sighting of one is often interpreted as a good or bad omen depending on the bad or good weather, respectively, that it is sighted in. Murghôm's royal regalia is crafted with golden hawk motifs.

Alcohol and other mind-clouding substances are forbidden and frowned upon by the Muhjari faith which asks one to maintain clarity of mind. Tobacco and other recreational substances which do not cause the user to act erratically are not forbidden or frowned upon. Muhjari towns and cities do not have taverns or bars as such due to a lack of alcohol. More Western inns and taverns are replaced by guesthouses, food stalls in the streets and coffee/tea houses or tents that also serve food. Muhjari hospitality is great and travelers are often invited free of charge to share a meal with a new acquaintance and his family, even if the new acquaintance is just a camel broker who spent an hour haggling with the visitor over the price of a camel.

Haggling is common and expected everywhere where money exchanges hands, except charity to beggars, temples, and other recipients. The haggling is expected by Murghein to be conducted jovially, with a smile on your face, not gritting your teeth in a battle to the death. Haughtiness, arrogance, price ultimatums and not smiling while haggling are considered extremely rude, while those who are flexible, friendly and conversational whilst haggling are quickly embraced and befriended by the Murghein even if no deal is closed.

Charity is an important part of Muhjari, and beggars are more prevalent in the streets of Murghôm than elsewhere in Faerun. They are, however, less persistent and bothersome than elsewhere, passively sitting to the side of a street, waiting and hoping for their due rather than actively pestering passersby for them. One of the very basic and deeply ingrained Muhjari tenets is: "Respect for your superiors / charity for your inferiors".

Like in Mulhorand, slavery is allowed in Murghôm. Unlike in Mulhorand, however, slaves are the direct property of the individual person who bought them (there is a paper certificate for the ownership of a slave), and there is no legal obligation to treat them well -- slaves are non-entities in Murghôm law. Generally, people have the decency to treat them well, but the slaves of a less decent person have no legal recourse available to them. Slaves are identified by a tattoo of a black square on their foreheads, and additionally have the name of their owner tattooed on their forearm. "He wears sleeves" is a common

Murghôm euphemism for someone having a dark secret. A person becomes a slave either by importation from another country as a slave, by being born to two slaves, by being sentenced to slavery or -- after the new Bey's reforms -- by being sentenced to death or over one year of imprisonment which are instead converted to lifelong slavery.

Horses are an important facet of Murghôm life. A horse is a popular coming of age (12-18 years, depending on merits) gift, especially to male children. Females generally receive horses as dowries. Most adults, even those who live in the city, are expected to own at least one horse, and one comes off as a beggar at worst, an eccentric at best, if one does not own a horse. Horse breeding is a popular discussion topic and hobby among the populace, especially the nobility who may own massive horse ranches. The most valued horse breeds in Murghôm are neck-to-neck the Raurin and the Semphari (which can both really only be afforded by nobility), both graceful and fast horses used to an arid climate. Good horsemanship is appreciated more in Murghôm than good swordsmanship or being a successful merchant. Annually the cities and towns arrange riding contests whose winners go on to compete once a year in Murghyr. The ultimate winner every year is awarded great honors, a noble title and some land. It is extremely rare for anyone to win more than once, but should anyone ever do so, they have the right to ask the Bey for any one personal favor. The last such event happened decades ago in the youth of Tharmakkas IV, in which a young maiden from a small rural town bested all her male opponents two years in a row. When asked for the personal favor, she requested the Bey to become one of his wives. The woman, named Qamala, became the mother of the Bey's second and third sons, the late Tharmakkas V and the current Bey Ataroq I. She has only been seen in public a few times after her husband was deposed, and many Murghein talk of her and her story as a legend.

Major Geographic Features

Murghôm is a great fertile agricultural plain that benefits from the moderating climate influences of the forests in the north as well as the large bodies of water to the east and west. To the north, it rises to the Mountains of Copper, and to the south it becomes the desert Plains of Purple Dust.

RAUTHENFLOW: A river irrigating the heartland of Murghôm as well as connecting the Gbor Nor and the Sea of Fallen Stars, the Rauthenflow is a major artery for trade between the East and West, allowing ships from Cormyr to sail directly to the docks of Dhaztanar in Semphar. Understandably, Murghôm taxes the ships using this route that the country has to spend money on maintaining. The taxation is now more severe than under the rule of Tharmakkas IV. Due to Bey Ataroq I's negotiations with Pharaoh Horustep III, the taxing of the Rauthenflow is now logistically undertaken only by Murghôm rather than both Murghôm and Mulhorand as before. Mulhorand still receives tax profits but they are no longer physically present on the Rauthenflow to conduct the taxes themselves.

MURGHOL: The Murghol is a river beginning from the Sunrise Mountains separating Thay from the Endless Waste. It flows down from the mountains, takes in the Clearflow which brings water from the Lake of Mists, and continues southwards past the Mountains of Copper, feeding the Rauthenflow where Murghôm's capital Murghyr lies. The Murghol/Clearflow route is a major north/south trade corridor between Murghôm and the Raumvira settlements around the Lake of Mists but it is relatively dangerous due to being well exposed to the nomadic raiders of the Khassidi and Commani tribes.

ROAD OF THE DAWN: An important road in ancient times, the Road of the Dawn (also called the Road to the Dawn) was built when the Rauthenflow wasn't navigable, for caravan traffic between Skuld in Mulhorand and the more easterly locations of Semphar and Solon. With the advance of the Plains of Purple Dust from the south, and the collapse of Solon, the road onwards from the Murghôm city of Zindalankh has virtually disappeared. The part between Skuld and Zindalankh still exists but sees very little traffic.

MOUNTAINS OF COPPER: These mountains serve as Murghôm's northern boundary. Over the centuries, hundreds of copper mines, of which over a hundred are active even at present, and thousands of shafts have been constructed. The environmental impact by the ore smelting has been disastrous, ranging from massive deforestation to black smoke to chemical-ridden poisonous water. The small mining communities eke out a hard life against the continuous monster and bandit raids. It is commonly hoped that the new Bey would take initiative to clean out the monster-infested mountains to make the miners' life easier. Among the various things inhabiting the mountains is a number of reclusive golden-colored

arakocra whom the Murghein consider celestial messengers. The mountains are a holy pilgrimage to some Murghein, especially young men who wish to prove themselves of age.

GBOR NOR: Literally translated as "Brightstar Lake", Gbor Nor is the body of water separating Murghôm and Semphar. Although accurate measurements have never been conducted, it is generally considered one of the largest lakes on Toril, and locals even like to boast of it as the largest, period. It is connected to the Sea of Fallen Stars by the Rauthenflow and is fed by rivers from the Raurin Alta, Teyla Shan and the Shalhoond. Its southern part is sometimes called the Sempharwater. For some reason, creatures in the Gbor Nor grow larger than their common varieties in other bodies of water. Especially renowned is the lake's giant sturgeon, a popular dish in the courts of Semphar and Murghôm alike.

PLAINS OF PURPLE DUST: A desert of high buttes surrounded by dunes of fine, purple sand, the Plains of Purple Dust are the northern arm of Raurin, the Dust Desert. It reaches up north all the way to make a grab for the southern edges of the Gbor Nor and Murghôm, brushing Delbyl, Somraggah and Zindalankh. The desert contains the Grinning Skull Oasis, a poisoned magical oasis where the ailing Sheik Ar-Rabi's band of desert raiders is based. Some 450 men strong, it lives by raiding southern Murghôm and the other tribes of the desert. The Plains are also home to many exotic monsters, such as brass and copper dragons, sandlings and rocs nesting on top of the buttes.

SHALHOOND: The Shalhoond is a vast forest separating Semphar and Murghôm from the Endless Waste. Neither the nomads from the north nor the Muhjein from the south venture deep into the dangerous forest but instead contain their hunting, gathering and lumbering operations to the forest's edges at most. The forest is the main source of lumber -- chiefly walnut, birch and pine -- to both countries to its south, but the lumbering expeditions are not welcomed by the numerous wild elven settlements dwelling within the Shalhoond. More than once have the humans come to blows with the elves over advancement into the woods. The Shalhoond is sometimes called the Great Wild Wood.

FIELDS OF GANATH: The strip of cleared farmland between Rauthil and Murghyr was once the southern part of the Rauwood. Ganath was a great Murghein hero who opposed the tyrannical rule of his nemesis, a regent of Murghôm appointed by Mulhorand. In the Year of the Bloody Fields (1110 DR), Ganath rode to the southern Rauwood for a confrontation with the regent Bashir Taef, a powerful cleric of Set. It is said they fought for four days and four nights in the depths of the forest at a stalemate. According to the legend, on the fifth morning, Ganath -- a powerful paladin -- made the ultimate offer to his god -- his life for the freedom of the Murghein from the clutches of Set. A massive pillar of fire could be seen striking the heart of the Ganathwood from as far away as Murghyr. The conflagration raged on for four days and four nights, and when it was gone, so was the southern part of the Rauwood -- so much ashes and soot. Ganath and Taef were never seen again. Those who ventured to the blackened land to search for any traces of Ganath only found his white horse, untarnished by the fire and ashes. Ever since, the Fields of Ganath have been a fertile farmland from the ashy 'Blessing of Ganath'. Ganath remains revered as a hero, champion and liberator of the Murghein, and there are festivals during the first tenday of Eleint celebrating him.

GANATHWOOD: Renamed from the Rauwood to the Ganathwood after Ganath's epic confrontation, this is the area north of the Fields of Ganath. In long-ago times, it used to be vaguely connected with the Shalhoond, and the two have never had significant contact and species exchange/migration with the other forests elsewhere in Faerun. The Ganathwood used to be a source of savage goblinkind, but in recent centuries, goblinkind have become more and more urbanized, especially the hobgoblins who have carved out a solid niche for themselves in Murghôm as elite warriors during Tharmakkas IV's rule. Few goblinkind remain in the wilderness of Murghôm, instead they have become part and parcel of the cities, for better or worse. In the Ganathwood, the power vacuum left by their vacation appears to have been filled recently, as people venturing into the wood have frequently been encountering a wide variety of monsters, even some not before seen in Murghôm. Rumors abound as to what could be happening in the Ganathwood. Some say an evil creature -- guesses ranging from demons to the spirit of Bashir Taef to a deepspawn -- is amassing an army within. The people in the area are very glad the new Bey has shifted his main military emphasis from Port Ghaast closer to the Ganathwood, but some people wonder if this is just a coincidence.

RAUTHGOR: Also known as the Rainbow Falls, Rauthgor is one of the most impressive natural wonders in its corner of Faerun. It is also the biggest obstacle to boat trade on the Rauthenflow. Dropping the Rauthenflow from the Murghôm plateau to coastal elevations, it initially plummets some half mile

uninterrupted, and then continues to descend another half mile down over smaller terraced waterfalls. Ages ago, the Imaskar empire undertook the massive construction work of building a miles-long channel that bypassed the falls and allowed ships to move back and forth past Rauthgor. In the millennia since, the channel fell into disuse, the locks mediating water levels rusted and broke down until the construction was in shambles. Only relatively recently, a little under a century ago, Semphar merchants poured immense amounts of money into restoring the Stairway of Water as the channel is known. Today, the Rainbow Falls can again be bypassed by ships sailing up and down from the Murghôm plateau, with a spectacular view of the falls south of the Stairway.

Important Sites

The bulk of Murghôm is farmland and grazing land with frequent small tribal settlements dotting the territory. The cities serve as bustling centers of trade and have very packed markets at the end of each tenday.

MURGHYR (Metropolis, 38,746): The capital of Murghôm, Murghyr has the seats of both state and church in the forms of the royal palace and Murghôm's greatest temple, a stepped pyramid reaching a height of almost a hundred meters. Bey Ataroq I has claimed both seats. It sits at the junction where the river Murghol brings water from the Sunrise Mountains and the Lake of Mists into the Rauthenflow. The nearby fertile Fields of Ganath provide food for the metropolis. At the end of each tenday, the vast market almost doubles the city's population, with practically everything available if the price is right.

RAUTHIL (Large Town, 4,813): The most recent addition to Murghôm, Rauthil was until only a few years ago a very vaguely nominally part of Mulhorand, who had a taxing post there for ships on the Rauthenflow. In negotiations with the Pharaoh of Mulhorand, Bey Ataroq I successfully proposed that Murghôm could administrate the city to provide Mulhorand with a buffer against any threats from Thay. Mulhorand still receives the same amount of taxes as before, but the taxing itself is logistically carried out by Murghein officials in the city. The Bey has appropriately shunted the bulk of his military to Rauthil. Where formerly inhabited predominantly by ethnic Mulan, with the introduction of 2,000 Murghein soldiers and several hundred more officials and civilians, the city has more than doubled in size in only a few years' time, and the ethnic Mulan only number roughly half of the city's inhabitants anymore. Ethnic tensions are the most serious problem in Rauthil today.

SULTIM (Metropolis, 51,494): Not a part of Murghôm, Sultim is a wretched hive of scum and villainy on the coast of the Alambar Sea. An independent city-state ruled with an iron fist by Emir Sallah Qashtun (LE male hobgoblin Ftr4/Sor6), it is the unloading point to Inner Sea merchants who don't want to embark on the Rauthenflow because of the taxes. Sultim then trades the merchandise onwards to Murghôm. Many bandits do not dare attack caravans flying Sultim's flag because the city has a reputation for not forgetting, not forgiving, and extremely cruel punishments. Sultim is an ethnically and racially very mixed city, attracting the legally challenged from all over the Inner Sea. As long as one behaves inside the city, the emir does not seem to care what is done outside the city. Those who do not behave inside the city will soon become fodder for the public torture and executions in the city square.

PORT GHAAST (Small City, 7,195): In the recent years, Port Ghaast has lost nearly half of its population, the contingent of 5,000 mercenaries given as a supposed 'gift' from the new Bey to the Pharaoh of Mulhorand for his campaign in Unther. In truth, the Bey just wanted to shunt the financial drain of paying the mercenaries onto someone else's shoulders. The conscripted military force in Port Ghaast has also seen sizable downscaling, much of it sent to Rauthil and some of it spread out elsewhere in Murghôm. Whereas during Tharmakkas IV's rule, Port Ghaast was a military juggernaut of some 10,000 troops in readiness, it today only holds a tenth of that at best. It is administered by Umar the Patrician (LN male human Ftr4/Clr3/Exp1), an intelligent and charismatic leader who used to be only the local military commander, but now administers the entire city including the civilians. He had been unhappy with Tharmakkas IV's rule and the lack of discipline, faithlessness and loyalty in the mercenaries the old Bey had filled the city with. Now, he has no mercenaries to contend with anymore, but neither does he have much of a military force as a whole to command either. Generally, he's finding Port Ghaast far easier to control now despite being unused to leading civilians, but he is extremely concerned over the reduced military's capability to defend the city against possible attacks from Semphar or the Hordelands.

PHANNASKUL (Large City, 21,003): Soon after the new Bey came to power, the rulership of Phannaskul the Iron changed hands. An uprising by the poor against the merchant guilds was quelled by the Bey's replacing of the senile and ineffective Emir Tarman with the uprising's leader, a young paladin called Hatim the Righteous. The inexperienced paladin now holds sway over the city and is trying to get to grips with its politics. The merchant guilds are not happy with this because Emir Hatim is reducing their power and influence. Sitting near the eastern end of the Rauthenflow, the city derives its name from the dull ironlike coloration of its stone fortifications and buildings. It is still a dirty and crowded city although the new idealistic emir is hoping to change this.

JHANDYL (Small City, 8,245): The first stop for the smelted ore coming down from the Mountains of Copper, Jhandyl is a city of smiths. Many metal wares tend to be cheap in this city, and with the city sitting on the Rauthenflow, the quality metal merchandise of Jhandyl easily spreads all over the Inner Sea.

ZINDALANKH (Large City, 14,520): When the Rauthenflow wasn't navigable, Zindalankh was a major trading city and a hub of the Road to the Dawn. Since the river was restored to a navigable condition, however, Zindalankh has dwindled, its citizens stricken into poverty. It has become a rough, lawless town which disregards the dictates of the Bey and the Muhjari faith alike. The Bey has taken notice of this, and some people say the disrespectful Zindalankh's days have been numbered, that it must soon decide between capitulating or being ejected from Murghôm. So far, no action has been taken by the Bey, however.

SOMRAGGAH (Large Town, 3,662): Dealing rather well with the desert's encroachment from the south, Somraggah has turned from a farming community to supporting itself via precious stones -- most notably jasper and chalcedony -- found in its dried streams and riverbeds, as well as date orchards.

DELBYL (Large Town, 2,114): Considered by many a border town of Murghôm, the next towns westwards along the road from Delbyl are Mulharahold and Maerlyr, both solidly in Mulhorand's hands. Delbyl sits astride the Road to the Dawn, and has suffered from the collapse of that road like Zindalankh and Somraggah have.

KHALAB (Village, 652): This fishing village is home to a famous poet, bard and repository of Gbor Nor lore, Salid Dhuzma. It is a popular pilgrimage for young bards who hope to be taken into apprenticeship with Dhuzma. Although it's well known Dhuzma only takes one student a year, hundreds of bards queue at his tower in hopes of being selected.

USTANN (Small Town, 1,811): This town is home to the Myrthard clan of fishermen who hunt the giant sturgeon of the Gbor Nor. The price of one giant sturgeon can feed a family for a year, and no more than five have ever been brought out of the lake during one year. The clan is thus very secretive about their methods and discourages competition, going so far as to intimidate and sabotage possible competitors.

Regional History

It is believed that the Muhjein people of Murghôm and Semphar originate from the lands surrounding the Golden Water to the south, and migrated inland several millennia ago. They were pushed further north and eventually cut off from the Golden Water area by the expansion of the Raurin desert. The Muhjein epic 'Balqash' is a song telling the story of a thousand people on an endless walk, each verse being a separate tale unto itself of triumphing over one adversity or another. It is thought to originate from the time of this migration, or very shortly after it. With them, the Muhjein brought the Muhjari faith, culture and language, all of which have in the ages since declined severely in the south, although they still exist there. Today, Murghôm and Semphar are the heartland of the Muhjari. It is generally agreed by scholars that the two diverged to the different sides of the Gbor Nor soon after their arrival in the area, before Imaskari influence. The tribe migrating to the west bank of the Gbor Nor roamed the areas between present-day Phannaskul and Zindalankh, and was according to oral tradition led by a man named Murg, from whose name Murghôm (and various other place names) comes.

The Imaskari were the first recorded civilization, several millennia ago, that tried to subjugate the Muhjein. They had as much success as those after them -- while they could dominate the land and impose laws, they found it next to impossible to dominate the hearts and minds of the Muhjein people. This would become a trend as later the Mulhorandi empire and the Kao empire would both annex Muhjein lands, only to eventually have the Muhjein slip back out of their grasp, stronger if anything.

The conquering civilizations have never fully absorbed the Muhjein, but they have had significant effect on the development of Murghôm. The major impact of the Imaskari was making the Rauthenflow navigable, and though their work later fell into shambles, without it as a foundation, there would have been little to restore to operation in recent decades. Many of the surprisingly advanced agricultural techniques of the Murghein, like terraced gardens, were by all indications developed by the Imaskari. The Mulhorandi promoted trade and transportation with the construction of several roads including the Road to the Dawn which has now, ironically enough, fallen back into disuse with the restoration of the Imaskari works on the Rauthenflow. It is also well argued that the powerful sense of community and devotion to faith among the Muhjein was built up and fostered by the repeated attempts to impose the Mulhorandi faith upon the Muhjein.

Murghôm has persistently risen up several times over its history against its occupying empire. Most importantly or at least best documented are the uprisings against the Mulhorandi. The most significant of these was spearheaded by the one-eyed Muhjari paladin Ganath and his wife Salima, a powerful cleric of Muhjari and the first recorded female one. In the Year of the Bloody Fields, he sacrificed his life to destroy the Mulhorandi regent of Murghôm, while she gave hers in freeing the great council of tribal chiefs the regent had imprisoned in Maerlar. Inspired by their sacrifices, the Murghein pushed Mulhorandi influence out of Murghôm for several decades, during which the first true Murghôm dynasty was founded, as the great tribal council elected Ganath and Salima's son Umar as leader of a joint tribal military based out of Murghyr. Bey Umar Rasqallah I reigned for some fifteen years until he was poisoned by a Mulhorandi noble. However, unlike Mulhorand had hoped, the military remained in strong, capable hands despite the Bey's death, and continued to resist occupation attempts for a long time to come. The only time Mulhorand has managed to completely occupy all of Murghôm since the Year of Bloody Fields was in the Year of the Fallen Throne (1319 DR) in which Bey Salas Tharmakkas III and his court were slain by the invasion of a particularly brilliant Mulhorandi military commander. This led to seven years of insurgent guerrilla warfare in Murghôm until Bey Hedoz Tharmakkas IV with the help of Semphar succeeded at driving Mulhorand from Murghôm once again.

Soon after Tharmakkas IV ascended to the throne in the Year of the Striking Hawk (1326 DR), his opinions towards Semphar turned very sour despite the help Semphar had provided during the War of Resistance. The bulk of Tharmakkas IV's administration was aimed towards conquering and rehabilitating Semphar, whom he felt were not sufficiently faithful to Muhjari. He has conducted two major wars (called the First and Second Great Reclamations) in an attempt to occupy Semphar. One of Semphar's most successful retaliations was using its financial might to instigate the Sell-Sword Rebellion of Murghôm's mercenaries.

Recently, Tharmakkas IV was overthrown in a coup by his son Tharmakkas V, who only reigned for less than six months before succumbing to an illness. He was succeeded by the current Bey Ataroq I who seems to have abandoned the attempts to conquer Semphar and instead is implementing a number of social reforms in an attempt to internally strengthen Murghôm.

Plots and Rumors

The recent reforms implemented by Bey Ataroq I have changed a lot in Murghôm. As usual, radical changes open up a lot of opportunities for the entrepreneurial soul.

DON'T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS: Several times now, a caravan of slaves traveling from Murghyr to the Mountains of Copper has been assaulted by a group of bandits, the drow caravanmasters slain to the last person. Rumors abound that an armored figure with a ghostlike glow is the leader of the bandits -- and what's more, the figure is whispered to be none other than the elderly Bey Tharmakkas IV, liberating his people from the clutches of the evil drow. Is it indeed the old Bey? Is he somehow undead or alive? And if it isn't him, who is it?

PORT ALAMO: When the PCs are visiting Port Ghaast, the racial problems the city is having reach a boiling point. The elves of the Shalhoond want the drow in Port Ghaast dead, dead, dead, and launch a siege of the city to accomplish this. The city's human and hobgoblin military must decide to stand fast in defense of their fellow citizens, or hand the drow over to save their own skins, with the PCs in the middle of all this. And if this isn't enough, there appears to be a serial killer on the loose inside the city who targets hobgoblins and drow alike. Who is the serial killer and is she connected with the elven siege? Will the city

hand over the drow? Is it possible to mediate a truce between the elves and their dark kin, and calm millennia of enmity?

WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE: While visiting a town the PCs are in to give a public speech, Bey Ataroq I suffers an assassination attempt. He survives but is livid at this disrespect for his benevolent rule. A large (sufficiently so to get the PCs interested) sum of money is offered for the culprit, dead or alive. Further investigation starts showing condemning evidence towards an NPC the PCs have befriended before. What's more, the PCs hear about a deadly drow bounty hunter hot on the same trail they are. Is the NPC friend the culprit? If so, will the PCs take their own friend in and likely condemn him to slavery under the drow, or will they consider death at the hands of the drow bounty hunter a more merciful fate? And if the NPC was framed, or backed by others, who is really behind the plot? Foreign merchants unhappy with the new taxes on the Rauthenflow? Loyal supporters of Tharmakkas IV? Thay or Semphar? The drow themselves? An anti-drow faction? Or all of them? How deep does the plot go and are the PCs in over their head?

DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY: A Mulhorandi noble expedition arrives in a city the PCs are in. Late at night in a tavern or on the streets, a brawl breaks out and one of the Mulhorandi nobles slays a Murghein commoner in accordance to Mulhorandi but not Murghôm law. Nationalistic Murghein demand punishment if not a lynching, the nobles claim Mulhorandi law supersedes Murghôm law. The PCs may be part of the nobles' expedition, part of the Murghein, or outsiders in the area. In any case, they will have a tough nut to crack if they want to defuse the situation, especially in convincing the nobles not to report the actions of the Murghein to higher authorities in Mulhorand who might consider this sufficient insubordination to warrant demonstrating their power to Murghôm.

LAST FLIGHT OF THE GOLDBIRD: The aarakocra of the Mountains of Copper are being slaughtered by an unknown culprit. The Murghein consider this a terrible omen, and are willing to pay a handsome sum of money to anyone who will save the last of the celestial messengers from what looks like imminent doom. However, it may or may not, depending on the DM's preferences, turn out to anyone investigating that the Murghein-induced environmental disasters are at least indirectly to blame -- perhaps they have whilst mining unwittingly released a vengeful efreeti entombed centuries ago by the aarakocra? Or maybe the foul wastes were considered appealing by a black dragon who decided to settle in the area and claim dominance of the skies? Even worse, what if a past magical accident or something in the land causes long-burning forge fires to achieve a sadistic, psychopathic life as homicidal fire elementals? They would not attack the humans who created and maintain them, but anything else in the area could be fair game. The PCs might have to convince the villagers to shut down their forges temporarily, and in the future not keep them burning for long periods of time uninterrupted.

NPCS

Bey Yared Ataroq I

Male human Ari5/Clr10 of Muhjari: CR 14; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d8+5 plus 10d8+10; hp 86; Init +0; Spd 20 ft, fly 90 ft; AC 22 (touch 13, flat-footed 17); Atk +8/+3/-2 melee (1d6+2, +1 icy burst scimitar); Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/10 ft; SA Rebuke undead 4/day; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +15; Str 12, Dex 7, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 19, Cha 13. Height 5 ft 5 in.

Languages: Muhjuri, Mulhorandi, Common

Skills and Feats: Appraise +7, Bluff +8, Concentration +16, Diplomacy +26, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (religion) +17, Perform +8, Scry +7, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +4; Expertise, Thug, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Leadership, Craft Wondrous Items, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Improved Critical (scimitar)

Cleric Spells per Day: 6/6/6/5/5/3. Base DC = 14 + spell level. Domains: Community (OA, +2 Diplomacy, calm emotions as spell-like ability), Knowledge (divinations at +1 caster level, Knowledge skills class skills). Usually prepared spells: Cure Minor Wounds, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Light, Purify Food and Drink, Read Magic; Bless, Comprehend Languages, Deathwatch, Entropic Shield, Shield of Faith, Cure Light Wounds; Death Knell, Enthrall, Gentle Repose, Shield Other, Zone of Truth, Cure Moderate Wounds; Dispel Magic, Negative Energy Protection, Water Breathing, Clairaudience/Clairvoyance, Cure Serious Wounds; Divination, Dismissal, Neutralize Poison, Restoration, Cure Critical Wounds; Flame Strike, Ethereal Jaunt, True Seeing

Possessions: Breastplate of Command, Mithral Large Shield, +1 icy burst scimitar, Wings of Flying, Ring of Mind Shielding, Medallion of Thoughts, Phylactery of Faithfulness

The new Bey of Murghôm, Yared Ataroq I is a driven, ruthless young man who has a burning, fanatical love for his country and religion. He is a calculating, economically savvy pragmatist who firmly believes in the ends justifying the means, and is more than willing to do anything he sees as necessary, no matter how dark, if he believes it will benefit his god and country. As the head of state and church, he is the most powerful man in Murghôm.

Yared was born in the Year of the Bloodbird (1346 DR) as the third son of Bey Tharmakkas IV and the second son of the Bey's second wife, Qamala. Legitimately, he

TABLE 1: Murghôm's royal family (all years in DR)

HEDOZ THARMAKKAS IV (m)	1326-1368	[b. 1291, missing 1368 after coup]
Magdi (f)	[m. 1326]	
Eriz (m)	[b. 1329]	
Kadrin (f)	[b. 1329]	
Alazin (f)	[b. 1345, d. 1357 in storm]	
Kuwain (f)	[b. 1353]	
Qamala (f)	[m. 1330]	
Mazil (f)	[b. 1331]	
Kima (f)	[b. 1334]	
Leiza (f)	[b. 1338, d. 1351 of murder]	
Khiva (f)	[b. 1340, d. 1359 in childbirth]	
Qara (f)	[b. 1341]	
Skishi (f)	[b. 1344]	
SHAHAN THARMAKKAS V (m)	1368-1368	[b. 1345 DR, d. 1368 DR of illness]
YARED ATAROQ I (m)	1368-present	[b. 1346 DR]
Yazil (f)	[b. 1346]	
Shama (f)	[b. 1350]	
Sultana (f)	[b. 1358]	
Biwa (f)	[m. 1335]	
Tez (f)	[b. 1339, d. 1356 by dragon]	
Mil (f)	[b. 1340]	
Afis (m)	[b. 1349, d. 1370 in duel]	
Skishi (f)	[m. 1341, d. 1343 in childbirth]	
Kazif (f)	[m. 1355]	
Mehmer (m)	[b. 1356]	
Neilli (f)	[b. 1358]	
Niqi (f)	[b. 1351, m. 1366]	
Kazimir (m)	[b. 1367]	
Liakha (f)	[b. 1368]	

b. = born
m. = married
d. = died

has three brothers and twelve sisters, approximately half of whom are full siblings, and one of whom is a fraternal twin sister.

Unlike most of his siblings, Yared received the bulk of his education abroad, in the city of Skuld in Mulhorand. There, away from his home and family, thrust into the company of strangers at the age of eight, his nationalistic feelings and dedication to his Muhjari faith grew as did his loathing of the Mulhorandi people. Often, his young, overt defiance of Mulhorand in favor of Murghôm brought him scorn and belittlement.

Some years later, as Yared was coming to his early puberty, his approach was changed by two female fellow students -- his twin sister Yazil, and his Mulhorandi lover-to-be Vashti bin Turin. The two girls taught him patience and subtlety which took good root in the young boy. Today, surreptitious and covert manipulation are the Bey's most devastating weapon, and there remain precious few people he has not twisted around his little finger with sweet honeyed words and a perfectly falsified amicable smile.

At the age of sixteen, Yared and Yazil ended their studies in Skuld, moving back to the royal palace in Murghyr. With him, Yared brought his now-lover Vashti, although only Yazil was privy to the relationship between the two. Soon afterwards, Yared and Vashti joined the Muhjari clergy, their intellect and money quickly propelling them forward in the ranks of the church.

The coup in which Tharmakkas V overthrew his father was, ultimately, caused and inspired by Yared's whisperings in his brother's ear about how their father's obsession with Semphar was ruining the country. However, the death of Tharmakkas V not half a year after the coup was nothing but pure bad luck which caught Yared as much by surprise as it did anyone. Where he had planned to serve as an adviser to his brother, now he had to take up the crown himself.

Ascending to power, Yared assumed the titular name of Ataroq I, and proclaimed himself head of state and church alike. He has enacted a great number of social reforms and there appears to be no indication he is slowing down. Combining economical expertise with a silvered snake's tongue, he works hard to benefit his god and country, and has no compunctions about ruthlessly crushing anyone or anything that stands in his path.

In the short term, the Bey is playing possum, capitulating to and bending over for Mulhorand, counting on this to allow the country to improve and strengthen itself. In the long term, he is aiming for Mulhorand's recognition of Murghôm's independence, but does not expect Murghôm to be in a shape to achieve that for at least a generation or two yet.

Vashti Bint Turin

Female aasimar Clr5 of Muhjari/Sor4: CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d8+5 plus 4d4+4; hp 53; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +3 (1d8-2, shortspear); Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/10 ft; SA Turn Undead 6/day; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +13; Str 6, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 20, Cha 16. Height 5 ft.

Languages: Mulhorandi, Muhjuri, Common

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Scry +13, Spellcraft +5, Listen +7, Spot +7; Arcane Schooling, Alertness, Combat Casting, Brew Potion

Cleric Spells per Day: 5/6/4/3. Base DC = 15 + spell level. Domains: Law (law spells at +1 caster level), Nobility (inspire +2 on rolls for 3 rounds). Usually prepared spells: Cure Minor Wounds, Detect Magic, Light, Mending, Create Water; Divine Favor, Command, Detect Chaos, Obscuring Mist, Cure Light Wounds; Delay Poison, Enthrall, Cure Moderate Wounds x2; Magic Circle Against Chaos, Dispel Magic, Cure Serious Wounds.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/4; base DC = 13 + spell level): Prestidigitation, Mage Hand, Arcane Mark, Open/Close, Daze, Detect Magic; Alarm, Mage Armor, Shield; Invisibility

Possessions: +1 longspear, Ring of Protection +1, Ring of Feather Falling, Cloak of Arachnida.

Vashti bin Turin is the third child and middle daughter of a Mulhorandi cleric of Anhur. Her mother died in childbirth, and she was raised by her strict stepmother, stricter nursemaid, and strictest father. Throughout

her time in the family, she felt loathed and reviled in the house, becoming depressed and self-destructive in response to the hate she felt she was subject to.

During her early puberty, she became acquainted with two fellow students at the institution where she was being educated, a brother and sister from Murghôm. These twins, Yared and Yazil of the Murghôm royal family, befriended Vashti and became a refuge from her house in the young girl's life. Over the years, Vashti became enamored with the serious-minded Yared, and the two became lovers.

When the twins finished their studies, and headed back to Murghôm, Vashti pleaded for the opportunity to join them. Knowing that her father would never allow Vashti to do so, the trio never bothered to ask, and instead framed her death to facilitate secreting her away to Murghôm where she spurned Mulhorand and its deities, joining the clergy of Muhjari alongside Yared. By this time, she was very deeply devoted to him, practically hanging on his every word.

In Murghôm, Vashti came across some evidence that caused her to question her origin and roots. Investigating the whispers she had heard, she found out of a Murghein horseman who had had an affair with a Mulhorandi cleric's wife. He had come to take the woman and her newborn child away from the cleric shortly after the delivery, but instead he and the woman had been slain by the furious cleric's fell magics.

Through some miracle, Vashti had survived the magical blow that had struck down her mother and the horseman, and this led her to a new understanding of why her spells sometimes did not work as she bid them to. Turning to study and master her insubordinate magics, she tamed the sorcerous powers of her blood. With her heightened understanding of herself and her origins, she gained some measure of peace with herself and left behind her self-destructive puberty. Only one question remained to her: that of which man was her true father. So far, she has not dared to follow the investigation back to Mulhorand in fear of the truth and her father alike.

Soon after Yared's ascent to the crown of Murghôm, he gave her to the newly-instated Emir Hatim of Phannaskul as wife. She was shocked and hurt by this action from the man she was in love with. Nonetheless, clingy and sycophantic towards the Bey, she capitulated to his cold logic which wanted her to spy on the Emir for him. Unknown to the Emir, Vashti secretly remains the Bey's lover. He promises her the Emir will be out of the way soon. She hopes so.

Emir Hatim Qojand ("The Righteous")

Male human Pa15: CR 5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d10-5; hp 28; Init +0; Spd 20 ft; AC 16 (touch 10, flat-footed 16); Atk +8 (1d6+3, scimitar); Face/Reach 5 ft by 5 ft/10 ft; SA Smite Evil, Turn Undead 7/day; SQ Divine Grace, Divine Health, Aura of Courage; AL LG; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 18. Height 6 ft.

Languages: Muhjuri, Common

Skills and Feats: Heal +9, Ride +4; Saddleback, Quick Draw, Mounted Combat

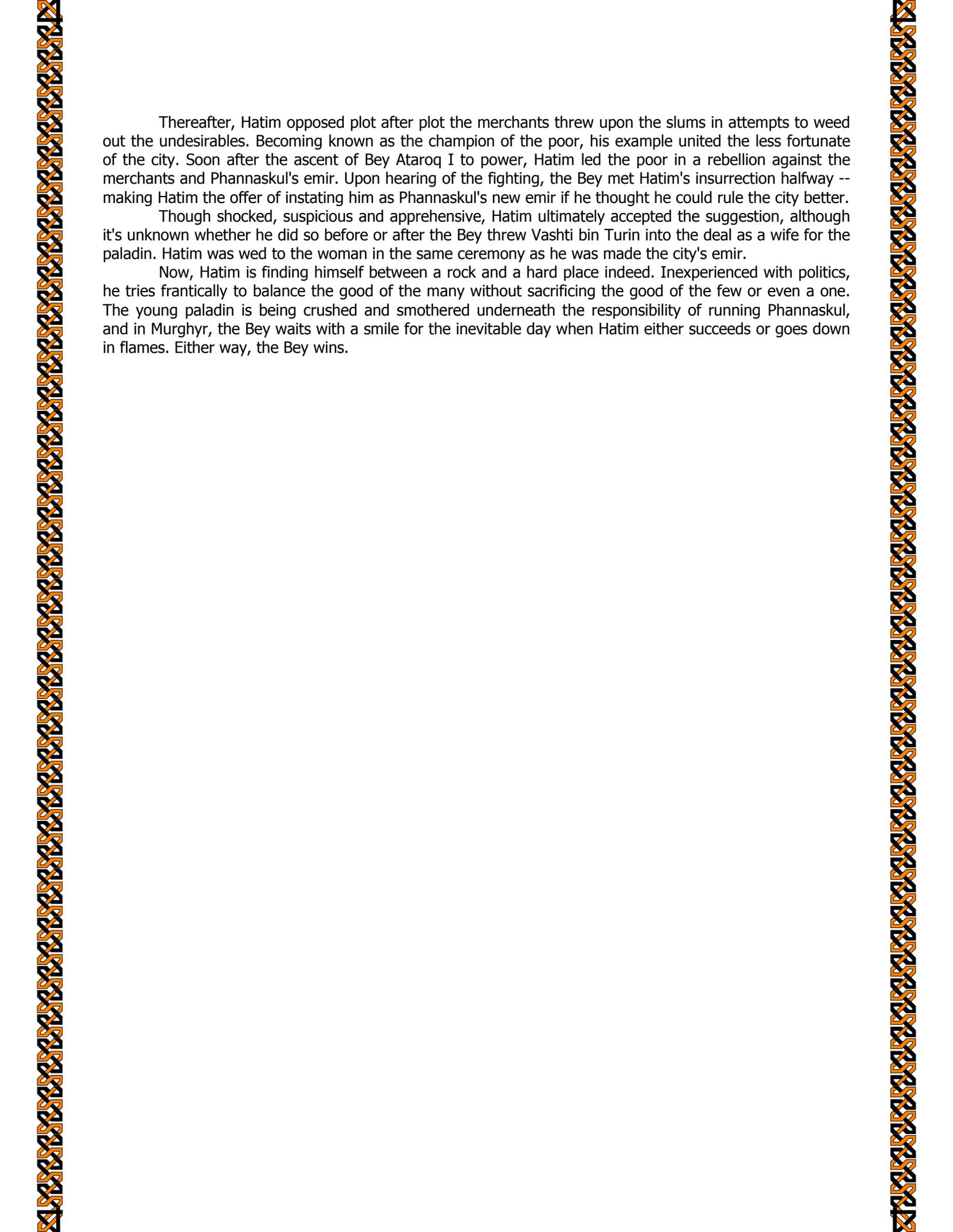
Paladin Spells per Day: 1. Base DC = 12 + spell level. Usually prepared spells: Cure Light Wounds

Possessions: +1 silvered scimitar, +1 studded leather armor, +1 small steel shield

Hatim is the son of a prostitute from the filthy alleys of Phannaskul. All his childhood, he was a beggar at best as his mother plied her trade to try and provide survival for herself and her son. He was not a very religious boy. Food tended to be more important than prayer.

His life changed when the merchants of the city launched an operation to cleanse the slums, to get rid of the beggars and apple-snatchers. Swarms of plague-infested rats poured to the narrow alleys of the slums, and an epidemic began. Hatim remained healthy day after day as he found his friends dying all around him. When his mother took ill as well, Hatim fell into despair.

It was while out rummaging for clean water for his mother, Hatim saw a weapon fall out of a passing wagon. No one else seemed to notice it, but to his eyes, it was as bright as the sun itself. He picked it up, and read the inscription in Semphari script, 'When you believe'. With this weapon that he still carries today, Hatim thwarted the clan of wererats behind the epidemic, saving the people of the slums from total annihilation. Returning to his mother, she began a slow recovery from his embrace.



Thereafter, Hatim opposed plot after plot the merchants threw upon the slums in attempts to weed out the undesirables. Becoming known as the champion of the poor, his example united the less fortunate of the city. Soon after the ascent of Bey Ataroq I to power, Hatim led the poor in a rebellion against the merchants and Phannaskul's emir. Upon hearing of the fighting, the Bey met Hatim's insurrection halfway -- making Hatim the offer of instating him as Phannaskul's new emir if he thought he could rule the city better.

Though shocked, suspicious and apprehensive, Hatim ultimately accepted the suggestion, although it's unknown whether he did so before or after the Bey threw Vashti bin Turin into the deal as a wife for the paladin. Hatim was wed to the woman in the same ceremony as he was made the city's emir.

Now, Hatim is finding himself between a rock and a hard place indeed. Inexperienced with politics, he tries frantically to balance the good of the many without sacrificing the good of the few or even a one. The young paladin is being crushed and smothered underneath the responsibility of running Phannaskul, and in Murghyr, the Bey waits with a smile for the inevitable day when Hatim either succeeds or goes down in flames. Either way, the Bey wins.

CREATURES

Horse, Raurin

Large Animal

Hit Dice:	3d8+12 (25hp)
Initiative:	+1 (Dex)
Speed:	60 ft.
AC:	14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural)
Attacks:	2 hooves +4 melee, bite -1 melee
Damage:	Hoof 1d4+3; bite 1d3+1
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Scent
Saves:	Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 17, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6
Skills:	Listen +7, Spot +7
Feats:	Run, Endurance
Climate/Terrain:	Raurin Desert and surrounding lands
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	1
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	-

These animals are slim and slender, resembling the proportions of a light warhorse. They are some 15 hands high, and almost always golden, dun or gray. The Raurin improves on the light warhorse, being stronger, tougher, more sure-footed. Its most famous quality, however, fabled in horse races, is the spurts of speed it can achieve. Furthermore, it can last for 1-3 days without water, and does not need to be fed grain, being able to subsist on fodder alone. A common average market price for a healthy Raurin is 1200 gp.

CARRYING CAPACITY: A light load for a Raurin is up to 260 pounds; a medium load, 261-520 pounds; a heavy load, 521-780 pounds. A Raurin can drag 3900 pounds.

IN THE REALMS: The Raurin is an ancient breed that dwelled in the Raurin when the desert was still a green land. It became strong and tough in surviving the desertification process, and was afterwards tamed by men coming to the desert. It is popular with the rich and wealthy of Murghôm and Semphar, and celebrated in the horse fairs, markets and races of those countries. Desert tribes sometimes have also managed to tame some Raurin for their use. Elsewhere on Faerun, the breed is virtually unknown.

VERSION HISTORY

- 1.1 Changed distribution format to PDF.
 Changed base document from ASCII to Word. Prettified document.
 Added feats Blood Magic, Retract, Improved Retract, Supreme Retract.
 Improved typography with PDF, removed note on shortcomings of typography.
- 1.0 Initial release to REALMS-L, 24-NOV-2001