

# Men of Iron, Men of Bronze



Michael Buhl

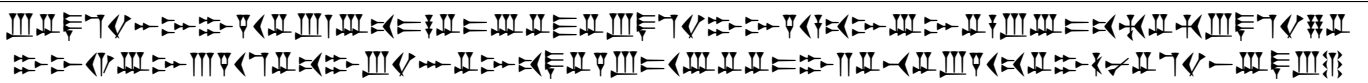


μουσων Ελικωνιαδων αρχωμεθ αεδειν,  
αιθ' Ελικωνος εχουσιν ορος μεγα τε ζαθεον τε  
και τε περι κρηνην ιοειδα ποσσ' απαλοισιν  
ορχευνται και βωμον ερισθενεος Κρονιωνος.

εννουχιαι στειχον περικαλλεα οσσαν ιεισαι,  
υμνευσαι Δια τ' αιγιοχον και ποτνιαν Ηρην  
Αργειην, χρυσειοσι πεδιλοις εμβεβαιαν,  
κουρην τ' αιγιοχοιο Διος γλαυκωπιν Αθηνην  
φοιβον τ' Απολλωνα και Αρτεμιν ιοχειραν  
ηδε Ποσειδαωνα γεροχον

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# INTRODUCTION

*“Sing, goddess, of the wrath of Achilles son of Peleus  
That brought countless woes upon the Achaeans,  
And hurled down to Hades many brave souls of heroes,  
And made their bodies a feast for dogs and birds.”*

Homer, *The Illiad*, book 1

We begin 1500 years after the fall of Atlantis. After generations of darkness, civilization is returning to the world, but now barbarians are moving in from all sides.

This setting, called the Mythic World, was influenced by various mythologies, primarily Greek, but also Canaanite, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Norse, and Celtic. It is also heavily influenced by Xena, Conan, and various other sword and sorcery stories. Historically, the setting is about 1100 BC; however, there are many elements which are anachronistic (like in the Greek myths themselves), and elements are taken from about a thousand year period around that date (and in the case of some elements, sometimes much, much more modern).

Rules wise, several optional rules are provided. The important ones are summarized as follows. Magic items are rare; to compensate, PCs get more at-



tribute points. Some of the weapons and armor are modified. Spells are harder to learn, some have changes, some are removed, and magic as a whole is much more dangerous to the caster. There are different special materials. Oracles, Witches, and Druids mostly take the place of clerics. Languages are different and very few characters are literate by default. The alignment system has been removed. For a particular campaign, the GM may decide to use some, all, or none of these optional rules, as suits the tone of campaign.

This book contains both a description of a late Bronze Age setting as well as some optional rules to go with the setting. It should go without saying that everything here is optional. A Game Master who wants to use the setting without the rule changes, or some of the rules changes in a different setting, or even import the setting to a different system is free to. I am not here to tell you that you are having fun wrong.

- **Character Creation** (page: 9) A description of the races, changes to classes, new feats, and a list of available languages.
- **Equipment** (page: 30) Weapons and armor in the bronze age, special materials from iron to orichalcum, and transportation such as ships and chariots.
- **Magic** (page: 47) Magic items and the changes to spells.



3<sup>rd</sup>—Prayer, Sacred Bond 4<sup>th</sup>—Contagion, Imbue with Spell Ability, 5<sup>th</sup>—Atonement, Commune, Hallow, 9<sup>th</sup>—Miracle, Winds of Vengeance.

elite warriors. Many elements of their Nubian culture have survived, including the Nubian arts of wrestling.

**Skills** The Medjay Warrior adds Knowledge(Religion) as a class skill.

**Corsair of the Sea People (Fighter Archetype)**

*The waters of the Mediterranean have bred a different kind of pirate. The Sea People are a group of sailors composed of people throughout the Mediterranean Sea—primarily Achaeans, Hattites, Keltoi, Illyrians, Thracians, and Sicils. In recent times they have been a threat around the Mediterranean, not only attacking shipping but also raiding settlements along the coast. About 18 years ago bands of Sea People joined together and attacked Kemet. Although the attack was eventually repulsed, the survivors moved into southern Canaan where they now control several cities, notably Ghazzat, Ashdod, and Ashkelon.*

**Combat Style Feat** The Medjay Warrior must choose their combat style feats from the choices listed below. At 2<sup>nd</sup> level he can choose from Improved Disarm, Improved Grapple, Improved Trip, Point Blank Shot, and Exotic Weapon Proficiency (khopesh). At 6<sup>th</sup> level, he adds Rapid Shot and Greater Grapple to the list. At 10<sup>th</sup> level, he adds Greater Disarm and Greater Trip to the list.

**Armor Proficiency** The Corsair of the Sea People is not proficient with heavy armor or tower shields.

As normal with ranger combat style feats, the Medjay warrior can only use the chosen feats while wearing light, medium, or no armor.

**Shipboard Training** The corsair adds acrobatics as a class skill. At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the corsair gains a +1 bonus to swim, climb, and profession(sailor) checks. These bonuses increase by +1 for every 4 levels after 2<sup>nd</sup>. This ability replaces Bravery.

**Favored Terrain** At 3<sup>rd</sup> level the Medjay warrior must choose Desert as his favored terrain. At 8<sup>th</sup> level and beyond, he is no longer restricted and may select any terrain for any subsequent favored terrains.

**Bonus Feats** The corsair can select a rogue talent from the list below in place of a bonus feat. The rogue talents available to the corsair are: Assault Leader, Black Market Connections, Combat Swipe, Distracting Attack, Expert Leaper, Guileful Polyglot, Hold Breath, Ledge Walker, Nimble Climber, Peerless Maneuver, Positioning Attack, Rope Master, Stand Up, Strong Impression, and Strong Stroke.

**Spells** The Medjay warrior adds the following spells to his spell list: 1<sup>st</sup>—*cause fear*, 2<sup>nd</sup>—*command undead*, 3<sup>rd</sup>—*cup of dust*, 4<sup>th</sup>—*ray of exhaustion*.

**Sneak Attack** At 6<sup>th</sup> level, the corsair gains a sneak attack of +1d6 as the rogue ability. This ability stacks with any other sneak attack the character might have from another class. The sneak attack damage increases by +1d6 at 12<sup>th</sup> level and 18<sup>th</sup> level. This ability replaces the fighter bonus feats gained at 6<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> level.

**Spartan Hoplite (Fighter Archetype)**

*The Spartan system of agoge creates some of the fiercest warriors in the world. At the age of seven all Spartan boys leave their homes for training. For the next fourteen years, the boys are put through demanding physical and mental challenges. The boys are encouraged to fight amongst each other to determine the strongest and are kept underfed to encourage them to learn to steal food. As they get older, their training includes spying on the Spartan's slaves and killing any who speak out against their masters. Finally, to graduate each group of students are given a creature which they must hunt and kill as proof of their worth. The military training of the agoge teaches not only skill in combat, but also how to work with the other members of the unit.*

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex)** At 11<sup>th</sup> level, the corsair gains uncanny dodge as the barbarian ability. This ability replaces armor training 3.

*Occasionally, boys from outside Sparta are admitted to the agoge. It is considered a great honor to be one thus chosen. Also, girls are sometimes sent for training. Generally Spartan girls are trained separately under a significantly less harsh regime. If a family does not have any sons, they will sometimes choose to send a daughter to the agoge. In this case the girl is legally considered to be male and subject to all requirements of Spartan men. Many of the women who completed this training are sent as diplomats to the Amazons, and this exchange has brought close ties between Sparta and the Amazons. In return, many Amazon boys who wish to become warriors will enter the agoge and become citizens of Sparta.*

**Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex)** At 15<sup>th</sup> level, the corsair gains improved uncanny dodge as the barbarian ability. This ability replaces armor training 4.

**Medjay Warrior (Ranger Archetype)**

*The Medjay are a group of Nubians who have become assimilated into Kemet culture. The Pharaoh traditionally trains Medjay children to be loyal bodyguards, scouts, and*





# GAZETTEER

*“My husband has died and I have no son. They say about you that you have many sons. You might give me one of your sons to become my husband. I would not want to take one of my servants as a husband. I am afraid”*

Pharaoh Ankhesenamun, *Letter to King Suppiluliuma*

## ASIA

### Canaan 𐤊𐤍𐤏

On the eastern edge of the Mediterranean, the area of Canaan is broken into several loosely allied city-states. For the most part, the Canaanites are seafarers and merchants. The cities of Canaan are maritime powers, Canaanites are some of the world’s best seafarers and have set colonies across the Mediterranean.

Of the northern cities, the most important by far is the port city of Kadesh. Many of the smaller cities of Canaan resemble smaller versions of Kadesh. The city of Ugarit is old city and a center of religion, the island city of Arvad is very conservative, and the southern city of Tyre is the most militaristic of the cities of the coast.

Southern Canaan is less populated and serves as a buffer between the wealthy cities of the north and Kemet to the south. There is a group of cities controlled by a group of the Sea Peoples known as the Philistines. Inland there is much less wealth. There are a few small cities which have grown on the trade routes from Mesopotamia, such as Khalpe, Aqhat, and Dimashqa. Inland of the Philistines are a set of cities being invaded by the desert nomads known as the Habiru.

**Kadesh** 𐤊𐤏𐤏 The principle city of Canaan, Kadesh is perhaps the world’s most cosmopolitan city. It has several foreign districts where Achaeans, Kemeti, Caphtorian, and Mesopotamian traders and immigrants live. The location of the city makes it the center of trade for the world. Caravans from Mesopotamia go to Kadesh from across the desert. Ships from Kemet come to Kadesh bringing goods not just from Kemet, but also from Punt and Æthiopia. Ships from Caphtor, Achaea, and Hatti all go to Kadesh to sell their goods.

Fitting the cosmopolitan population, there is also wide variety in religion. There are temples here to every god imaginable and many you couldn’t imagine. However, while the city’s government allows all of these temples

to exist, they have also forbidden any human sacrifice within the city’s area. Of course, that means it just happens in secret. The local Canaanite religions are often overshadowed by foreign cults, but Astarte, Dagon, and Ba’al all are important.

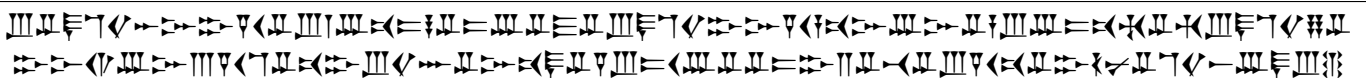
For a map of Kadesh, see page 107. The city is located on a narrow peninsula which ends shortly off the west end of the map. As seen in the map, there are several foreign districts which surround the central area inhabited by Canaanites. There is a small harbor to the south next to the market, but the main harbor is on the northern side of the peninsula. There ships are shielded between the peninsula and a small island. On the island are temples, parks, and homes of some of the more important merchant-princes, and the island is connected to the mainland by means of a causeway.

The city is ruled by a king, known as Ba’al Kadesh, which is elected by a council of merchants. As the council has the power to elect a new king at any time, the actual authority of the king is limited. The current king is a 47 year old man who had been an olive oil merchant previously. As long as trade keeps going, he has been fairly hands off.

The limited authority of the king means most power is in the hands of the merchants. The city’s military consists of a large navy funded by the merchants, and a small army. However, each of the merchant princes has their own private mercenary force, and if a threat to the city arises these private armies would come together to create a sizable force. At least that is what the king hopes would happen, there has not been a large enough threat to the city to warrant the king asking the merchant-princes for aid in recent memory, and the king privately worries about the loyalty of some of the merchants.

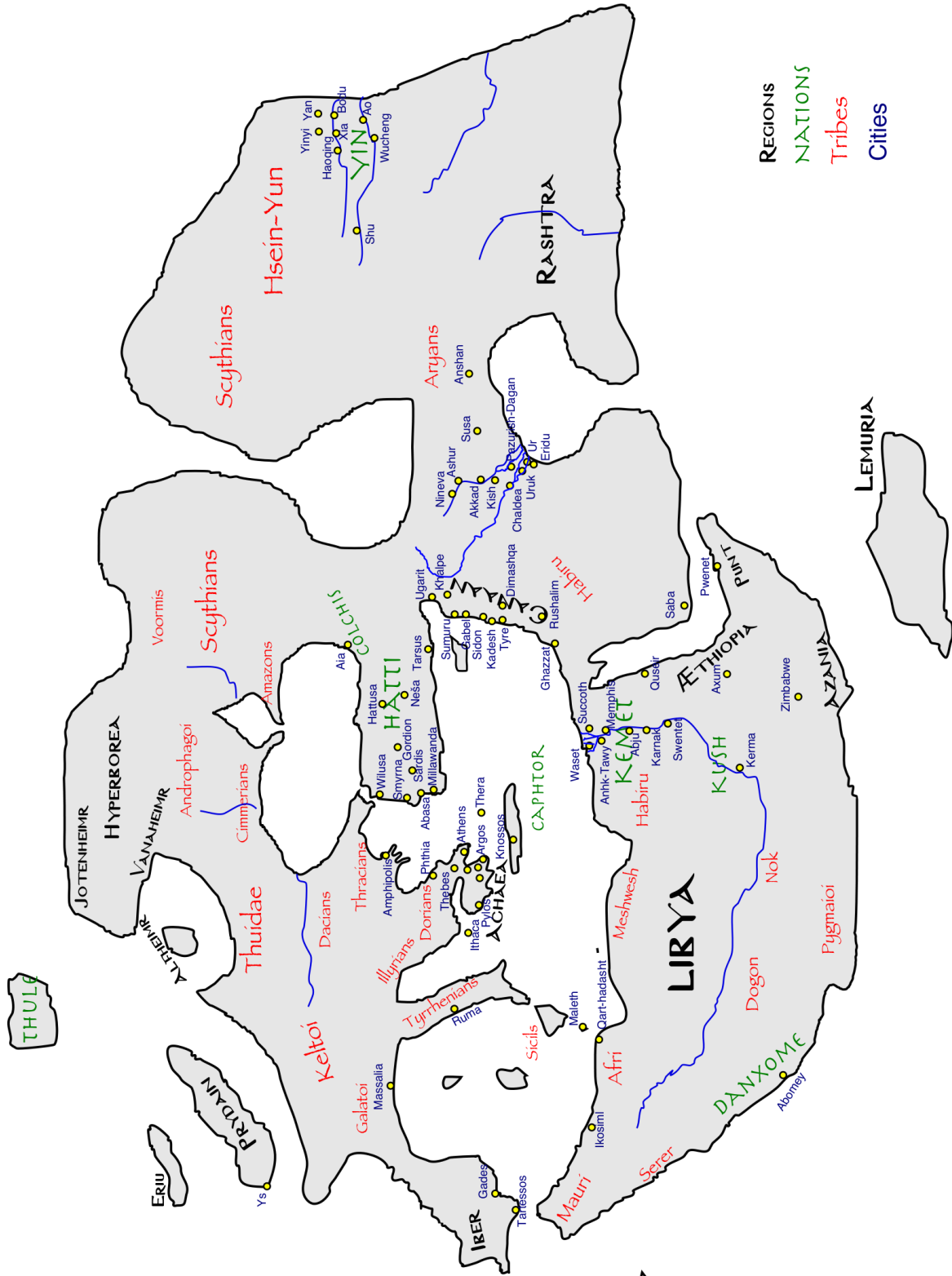
Iberia, and Ikosim in western Libya.

**Ugarit** Ugarit is a very old city and was the first important city in Canaan. While it is still an important city, it is a city in decline. Ugarit is still a important religious center, and is the center of the cults of Dagon and Hadad, the gods of the sea and storms. As these are important





# Appendix 5: Maps







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