

# THE NUMEC OF HEPEKERIA

Bill Gant, November 1994

## DESCRIPTION

Hepekeria [A5+] is a large island separated from Lythia by the Elanas. It is mostly desert and semi-desert, but there are grasslands and evergreen hardwood forests along the coasts. The Hepekerian desert is the source of numerous tales of fanciful beasts and hidden riches beneath the sands.

Most Hepekerians are semi-nomadic tribes people, and the tribes or clans of the interior drylands are "organised" into a confederacy that does little to prevent conflict among them. This "Hepekerian Confederacy" seems to exist only to keep foreigners out of the region, and they succeed to the extent that very little of the desert is known, since few outsiders who venture off the trade routes emerge with their lives.

The coastal regions are civilised, but those who dwell around the cities are shunned by their desert cousins, the Numec. These desert nomads, a hard and sometimes cruel people, dwell in one of Lythia's harshest regions, and consider themselves to be the "nobility" of Hepekeria. The Numec look with disdain on the Falani and Korlic peoples of the coast.

Perhaps because of the harsh environment in which they live, the Numec are reputed to be among the world's finest warriors. Surprisingly, they also produce the world's finest steel (with the exception of khuzdul steel, of course).

The secrets of the manufacture of Hepekerian steel are jealously guarded by the Taugari Cult, a spiritual/artisan class that has existed since 10 TR. The cause of its foundation is unclear, and heavily masked by legend, but it seems likely that refugees from the Targan Genocide brought the steel-making art to Hepeker. It is known that the Targan Empire (the predecessor of Dalkesh) contained weaponcrafting clans of considerable skill. Some believe that the techniques were passed from the fabled khuzdul city of Merdain, to the ancient Mafani, and from there to the Targan River cultures. Why the skill seems to have been lost everywhere else in the world is a mystery.

The Taugari cultists dwell in small permanent settlements in the heart of the desert. They acquire iron by mining several ore-rich rock outcroppings and occasionally in trade with the coastal cities. Taugari swords are seldom available in trade; the Numec tend to regard their weapons as semi-sacred objects.

## NUMEC PLAYER CHARACTERS

Modify character generation with the following:

**BIRTHDATE:** Numec tend to be born in mid-summer - roll 1d30:

| 1d30  | Month       |
|-------|-------------|
| 1-3   | 1. Nuzyael  |
| 4-6   | 2. Peonu    |
| 7-9   | 3. Kelen    |
| 10-13 | 4. Nolus    |
| 14-18 | 5. Larane   |
| 19-22 | 6. Agrazhar |

| 1d30  | Month      |
|-------|------------|
| 23-24 | 7. Azura   |
| 25    | 8. Halane  |
| 26    | 9. Savor   |
| 27    | 10. Ilvin  |
| 28    | 11. Navek  |
| 29-30 | 12. Morgat |

**HEIGHT:** 5d6+48" (Male), 5d6+46" (Female).

**COMPLEXION:** 3d6+4.

**STRENGTH:** 4d4+2. Up to two dice can be re-rolled (Key Attribute).

**ENDURANCE:** 4d4+2. Up to two dice can be re-rolled (Key Attribute).

**DEXTERITY:** 4d4+2. Up to two dice can be re-rolled (Key Attribute).

**WILL:** 3d6+2. One die can be re-rolled (Key Attribute).

**SKILLS:** In addition to the Sunsign bonus, all Numec males gain a +2 bonus to Sword SB, and a +1 bonus to Dagger SB. These benefits are only available to Numec males who were born and raised in the inland regions of Hepekeria.

## NUMEC CULTURE

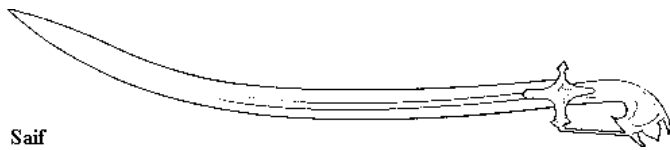
The Numec, being semi-nomadic, tend to move from one oasis to another. Herding is common (particularly of goats), but agriculture is nominal, sometimes even non-existent. Hence, the Numec tribesmen of Hepekeria are very similar to the Bedouins of ancient Terra.

**RELIGION:** Hepekerians worship a god called Baf'hamet, or father of wisdom. Most are fanatical worshippers. The virtues of this religion are: *Vengeful*, *Honest*, *Proud*, *Suspicious* and *Temperate*. Baf'hamet is a fierce warrior, as harsh as the Hepekerian desert, but he is proud and true to his word. Priests of Baf'hamet enforce religious laws that are unquestioningly obeyed by all Hepekerians, regardless of rank. Worshippers are forbidden to drink alcohol or eat pork. Women have almost negligible rights, and married women are forbidden to show their faces outdoors, and must wear black robes and masks when outside the home. Polygamy is popular under religious law, as a man's status is increased in proportion to the number of wives he has.

**LANGUAGE:** The principal language of Hepekeria is Numer, characterised by long vowel sounds and abrupt guttural stops. The script, which reads from right to left, is called Hekori.

**NUMEC WEAPONS:** All Numec males can fight, and are always armed. Typical weapons are described below.

- **Cane spear** [5 lbs; WQ 10; A/D 5/1; Pr -10, Se -20; 4b -e 7p; 45d]. A long, thin spear, it is often used mounted. The weapon is not penalised if used in the primary hand for a mounted charge.
- **Broadsword** [3 lbs; WQ 13; A/D 3/2; Pr --, Se -15; 3b 5e 3p; 185d]. A straight, double-edged sword.
- **Saif** [Str Dex Dex (Ang+3; Ahn/Nad+1); 3 lbs; WQ 13; A/D 3/2; Pr --, Se -15; 3b 5e 4p; 200d]. A curved, single-edged sword with a thick blade. It is often highly decorated with gold and silver, and the pommel is typically hooked.



- **Shamshir** [Str Dex Dex (Ang+3; Ahn/Nad+1); 3 lbs; WQ 12; A/D 3/2; Pr --, Se -15; 3b 5e 5p; 180d]. A heavily curved scimitar with a sharp point and short crossbar. Generally quite simple in design, with few decorations.



- **Jambiya** [1 lb; WQ 12; A/D 1/1; Pr --, Se -5; 1b 2e 4p; 30d]. A curved, double-edged dagger, worn over the navel. The metal-covered wooden scabbard and handle are often elaborately decorated and inlaid.
- **Roundshield.**
- **Buckler.**
- **Lance.**
- **Thanath** [Str Str Dex (Ang+3; Ahn/Nad+1); (Heavy) 9 lbs; WQ 17; A/D 5/2; Pr -15, Se -25; 6b 14+1d4e 12p; priceless]. A perfectly-balanced two-handed scimitar, slightly curved and sharpened for about one third of its trailing edge. It is one of the world's finest weapons, and is given only to the greatest Numec warriors worthy of this sacred sword, which is made by the Taugari cultists and said to be blessed by Baf'hamet himself. It is said to be able to cut easily through six anvils in a single stroke. A "typical" Thanath has the following characteristics:
  - **IRRESISTIBLE STROKE OF FURY** - If 10 Piety Points are sacrificed to the Thanath, the sword inflicts 14+5d6e Impact. If 20 PPs are sacrificed, the weapon inflicts 19+14d6e Impact. If 30 PPs are sacrificed, it inflicts 27+31d6e Impact (or 136e if you don't want to roll all those dice). If 40 PPs are sacrificed, the Impact is 272e. For every 10 PPs sacrificed beyond this, the Impact doubles. The Impact is boosted only for the next stroke, and the sacrifice of Piety Points must be made before attacking.

- *GUIDING HAND OF BAF'HAMET* - The wielder of the Thanath always gains a +20 EML bonus to strike with it, as if the sword itself were guiding his hand.
- *THE OVERWHELMING BLADE* - The Thanath has a bonus to damage opposing weapons it blocks or is blocked by. The opposing weapon must add 1d10 to its normal 3d6 weapon damage check when striking the Thanath.
- *INVINCIBLE STEEL* - The Thanath is immune to mundane damage. It never has to make a weapon damage check except as a result of conflict with an enchanted weapon. If an enchanted weapon is about to damage or break the Thanath, the sword automatically drains Fatigue Points from the wielder, with each point temporarily increasing the sword's WQ by +1.
- *PROTECTIVE BLESSING* - The wielder of the Thanath is protected by the sword, suffering only half any effective Impact against him. This benefit is granted only if the wielder chooses to sacrifice Fatigue Points (1 FP for each point of effective Impact) when struck.

The Thanath only fights willingly for virtuous and fanatical worshippers of Baf'hamet who have a Sword ML of 120+ (the worshipper must also have an initial Piety Point total of 100+ to be granted the sword in the first place). A terrible curse is said to befall any lesser person who wields it.

- **Bows and other missile weapons** are *never* used by Hepekerians, for they proudly believe that it is "base beyond measure to steal away a man's life with an arrow".

**ARMOUR:** Common Hepekerian belief is that "no-one can die save on the day appointed", and for this reason they will not wear armour. A Numec's turban (0.8 lbs) provides some protection to the Skull, however: B2 E3 P2 F3 S0 T3.

**CLOTHING:** The Numec tribesmen proudly wear their traditional clothes. They characteristically wear a camel-wool robe with long, wide sleeves, called a Gubba. It is usually black, or striped with diagonal bands of red, blue or brown. A turban is also worn, wrapped around the head in such a way that one strip always passes beneath the chin. The Gubba and turban are typical items of clothing for the Numec.



Many Hepekerian men wear a Tiraz on the upper arms. Tiraz are bands or strips of brocade or cloth of a contrasting colour, sometimes richly embroidered in gold and coloured thread. Real Tiraz, in an honorific sense, are granted only to the most deserving warriors by a Priest of Baf'hamet - all other Tiraz are technically decorative fakes. Tiraz often feature quotations from the Holy Scriptures, but are sometimes left plain.

Whereas the coastal people tend to wear their swords at the waist, the Numec adhere to the traditional custom of suspending their swords from a baldric across the right shoulder.

**MOUNTS:** All Numec tribesmen can ride camels, although some can also ride horses, particularly in the semi-desert to coastal regions. Camels are considered to be far superior to horses, since they require less food and water, can travel for days

without either, and move much faster over sand. To a Numec, a camel is more valuable than a wife.

**PRIESTS OF BAF'HAMET:** The Priests of Baf'hamet are the keepers of religious laws. Although the Emir rules a tribe, he always listens to the wise counsel of his Priest(s). Because they are seen to be closer to Baf'hamet than normal people, Priests are regarded with awe. To offend or harm a Priest is to seek eternal damnation from Baf'hamet. Only the eldest son of a Priest may become a Priest of Baf'hamet.

The "Church" is divided into hierarchies, or Circles of Command. Ritual Invocations that can be called by a Priest of Baf'hamet are as follows:

Awe (V/25)  
Battlelust (IV/40)  
Command (IV/20)  
Courage (III/10)

Curse (II/10)  
Endurance (V/30)  
Summoning (V/30)  
Weapon Charm (III/20)

