

Description générale



Geography

Shem is primarily a land of deserts, though there are more fertile lands in the north and west. Shem is also home to some great mountain ranges, and even volcanoes.

Shem shares borders with Stygia to the south, Argos to the west, and Koth to the north. The nation of Khoraja also occupies a stretch of mountain ranges in the northern part of Shem. To the east of Shem the borders are not clearly defined, for beyond the Mountains of Fire is the vast desert. This desert extends all the way to Turan, and is not really claimed by any power.

The southern regions contain overgrown grass plains known as the Sea of Buryet, after the nearby town. The grass can grow taller than seven feet.

History and politics

In ancient times, the Land of Shem were pastoral countries on the eastern borders of Stygia. It was traversed by nomadic savages who for centuries were ravaged by the Stygians; some of their distant cousins went to the valley of Zingg. Because of this troubled contact, as well as influence

with the Hyborians, the Sons of Shem emerged from barbarism.

Shem was once under the control of the Stygian empire while eastern Shemitish tribes paid tribute to Aquilonia and lent aid to wars. However, after the decline of Stygia's power, they were under the influence of Koth, whose yoke was less galling. Beginning from the east, they started to throw off that yoke as well. However they were subsequently annexed by Aquilonia.

The nation was able to exert control over the region. Each city or tribe of Shemites is independent, often with their own laws and customs. Many of the kings and rulers of the city-states are related in some way.

The city-state of Pelishti was ruled briefly by Uriaz, who was assassinated by the mad king Akhirom. Akhirom ruled until a revolt by his generals placed Mazdak on the throne. Some of Akhirom's decrees were to ban all wine, forbid women from walking the streets, kill all dogs, cut all vines, and pour all honey into the river. He often roamed the streets of the capital Asgulum in disguise to see if his laws were followed.

The city-state of Akkharia is ruled by Sumuabi.

Shemitish mercenaries contributed to the western armies against the Hyrkanian invasion. Invasions from Turan burst upon the Lands of Shem, but they were hurled back by the Aquilonians.

The Kingdoms of Shem attempted to conquer Stygia but were defeated. During the fall of Aquilonia they found the opportunity to conquer their old master, Koth, contributing to the fall of the Hyborian civilization. But then they were overrun by the Hyrkanians who proved sterner masters than Koth ever was. The westernmost parts of Shem were conquered by the Pictish empire.

Nordic-Nemedians who flew the Nordic drift, passing from Koth, aided the people of Shem to throw off the Hyrkanian yoke.

Shem remained one of the few places of the continent where civilized cities still stood.

In later times, western Koth, along with the western lands of Shem, were deluged and formed the Mediterranean.

Population and culture

Appearance wise, the people of Shem, often known as the Sons of Shem, are generally of medium height. Hook noses and dark eyes with blue-black hair are common. Those with mixed Stygian blood are gigantic, broadly and strongly built.

Shemitish strain could be seen in Argos, and stronger one in Koth.

In the western world the Shemites had the reputation of liars. The Shemites are usually tribal in nature. They are primarily nomadic, and travel in groups rather than constructing cities. In the

deserts and plains of Shem, oases tend to be just as important as towns. However, as a major crossroads of landward trade, Shem does have a number of population centres to cater to merchants and caravans.

One of the most notable cities of Shem is Akbitana, southwest of Khoraja in the mountain ranges. This city's famous smiths use volcanic ore to create the finest steel and weapons in all the Hyborian kingdoms.

The desert nomads of Shem have a very distinct notoriety among other peoples. They are known for their covetousness and duplicity and being skilled liars and merciless killers. Shemites are highly skilled with bows, especially their composite Shemite bows with range of five hundred yards.

The Shemite religion is complex and highly developed, and they are very proud of their gods. Some of the Shemite gods include Ishtar, Anu, and Bel, god of thieves. The people of Shem seem to believe in the concept of genius loci, that is, the incarnation of a god in an object that bears their mark or resemblance. Many Shemites own or carry small statues of their gods with them. The city-state of Pelishta views Pteor as its chief god, although the mad king Akhirom briefly tried to supplant worship of Pteor with worship of himself.

In the more pastoral eastern parts of Shem, the Meadow Shemites are somewhat different from their desert-dwelling brethren. The Meadow Shemites, as they are called, are a much more peaceful people, little given to violence or adventure.

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