

New weapons forged in the DARK SUN™ setting

by Timothy B. Brown

Artwork by Brom

The arenas, courts, streets, and deserts of Athas are home to a variety of strange and exotic weapons, many made for unique purposes. The most successful weapons have become fairly widespread. Gladiators know of them all—if your character is brave, seek one out and he'll gladly give you a demonstration. Details on the weapons given here are broken down as follows:

Proficient and Specialized use: Each

weapon is given a proficient use benefit and a specialized use benefit. A warrior who specializes with a given weapon gains both benefits, since he had to become proficient before he could specialize. Any bonuses listed here are in addition to any specialization benefits; for example, if a weapon's damage is supposed to be doubled, it is doubled after all normal specialization bonuses are applied.

Weapon material: The prices, weights,

and damage values given here assume that the weapon has metal components. All of these weapons can be made with other materials according to the Weapon Materials Table (DARK SUN Rules Book, page 51). Note that the cahulak, crusher, datchi club, and master's whip can be easily made without metal; they can easily be purchased for 1% of the price listed and used without damage or attack penalties, regardless of materials used.

Bard's friend

Cost: 10 gp

Weight: 3

Size: S

Type: P/S

Speed Factor: 3

Damage S-M/L: 1d4 + 1/1d3

Popularized by the bards of Balic, the bard's friend is a particularly gruesome-looking weapon, sporting several blades and prongs. If properly used, it is an excellent parrying weapon and brawl-stopper. The blades themselves are most often formed of metal or obsidian, strapped and mounted to a central wooden grip. The prongs are usually metal or wood, though they can be the fangs of desert predators. The grip may have holes for the fingers; when there are no holes, the weapon is usually worn with leather straps holding it to the hand. Known to be a bard's weapon, it is not uncommon to see the blades dripping with poison.

Proficient use: A proficient user is familiar enough with his weapon to know the dangers of storage. He can conceal his bard's friend beneath clothing on his legs, arms, torso, or back with a simple leather strap. So concealed, the weapon can be drawn instantly at the beginning of any combat round. Nonproficient users can only hope to conceal their bard's friend without inflicting injury (1d2 - 1 hp damage per round of attempted concealment).

Specialized use: In addition to being able to conceal his bard's friend on his person, a specialized warrior can use his bard's friend as a parrying weapon or as a

second weapon, at his option, every round. When used to parry, the bard's friend affords the warrior a +3 AC bonus while allowing him to fight with a weapon in his other hand without penalty (unlike normal parrying that requires the character to cease all attacks; see the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide*, page 61). When used as a second weapon, the warrior suffers penalties to each weapon's attack rolls as normal. The warrior must announce his intention to use his weapon to parry or attack each round before initiative is rolled.

Cahulaks

Cost: 12 gp

Weight: 12

Size: M

Type: P/B

Speed Factor: 5

Damage S-M/L: 1d6/1d6

Cahulaks are a pair of four-bladed weapons held together with a length of rope. They can be used in each hand as melee weapons; one or both can also be thrown to tangle and cause damage to an opponent.

The blades are commonly carved from the hip or shoulder bones of a mekillot, but more expensive versions can be forged of steel. The hafts are made of solid lengths of wood or, rarely, sturdy bone. The connecting rope is up to 12' long; an experienced cahulak wielder keeps most of that length looped loosely in one hand when preparing for combat.

Proficient use: The wielder can attack with both cahulaks, one in each hand,



according to the "Attacking with Two Weapons" rules in the *Player's Handbook* (page 96), even though both cahulaks are technically the same size. A proficient character can throw the pair of cahulaks. The target suffers two attacks, but each successful attack only inflicts half normal damage (1d3/1d3). Also, man-sized and smaller creatures can be tangled unless they save vs. petrification, Tangling prevents normal attacks and movement for one round.

Specialized use: A specialized wielder also can attempt to grapple a foe by throwing one cahulak the full length of the connecting rope (12' maximum). On a successful attack roll, the target suffers half-normal damage (1d3/1d3) and the cahulak has grappled the target. Once grappled, the wielder can trip or pull the target off balance, thus preventing it from attacking, depending on the target's relative size. If the grappled target is smaller, the wielder can automatically keep him off balance. If the target is his size or larger, the target must save vs. petrification or be pulled off balance. Targets more than two size categories larger than the wielder cannot be pulled off balance.

Crusher

Cost: 24 gp

Weight: 9

Size: L

Type: B

Speed Factor: 10

Damage S-M/L: 1d4/1d3

A crusher is a spiked stone or metal ball at the end of a 20'-25' flexible pole. The wielder plants one end of the pole in the ground, then whips the weighted end back and forth until it nearly strikes the ground both in front of and behind him.

Weaponsmiths have found that the springy, straight root of the cachava plant, native to the salt flats of the Ivory Plain, is the ideal raw material for crusher construction. While other materials can be used, the cachava root retains its flexibility for many weeks after harvest. While difficult to use in individual combat, crushers can be employed behind a line of friendly troops to disrupt the enemy.

Proficient use: The wielder must spend one uninterrupted round planting the end of his crusher in the ground and beginning the whipping motion. After that round, the wielder picks a "danger space," a circle 2' in diameter centered 10' directly ahead of the weapon. There is a corresponding danger space of equal size 10' directly behind the wielder. Any creature that enters either danger space suffers up to six total attacks in the round. To

retain his crusher, the wielder must have another uninterrupted round to stop its motion and pull the weapon from the ground.

Specialized use: A specialized wielder can use his crusher more effectively by changing its direction of swing more quickly. The danger space becomes a circle with a radius of 10' centered on him and one foot both inside and outside that circle. The wielder can pick any six targets within that danger space to attack each round.

Datchi club

Cost: 12 gp

Weight: 10

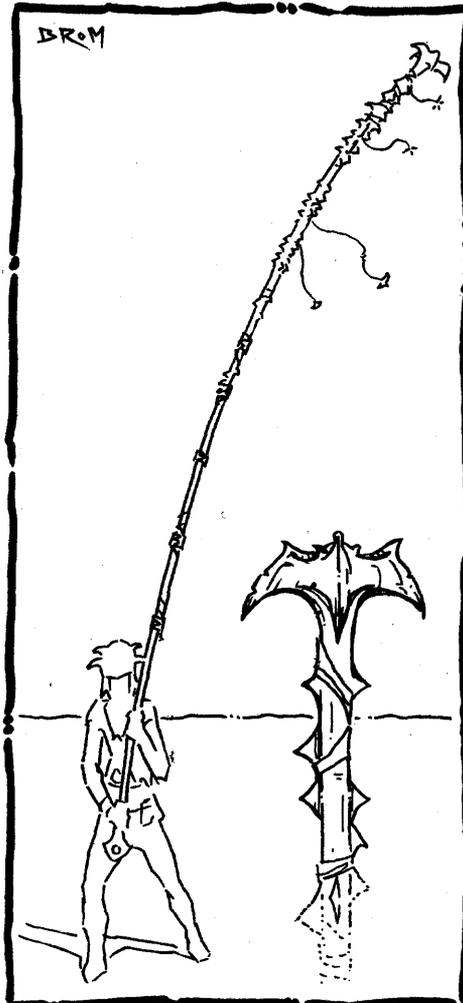
Size: L

Type: B

Speed Factor: 4

Damage S-M/L: 1d6/1d4

The datchi club is a specialized arena weapon, favored among more ruthless crowds because of the horrible wounds it can inflict. The head of the club is 4'-5' long, attached to a wooden or bone handle 3' long. The head is made of porous material, either insect hive or dried roots, and is incredibly light. It is then embedded with dozens of razor points. The razors can be metallic but are more often fashioned from teeth and claws. The handle is very solid, allowing the wielder to grip the base for greater range or to spread his



grip to enhance his leverage.

Proficient use: A datchi-club wielder who is proficient with his weapon can wield it effectively in combat, but receives no special benefits. As light as it is, the datchi club has a good speed factor, making it one of the quickest weapons of its size anywhere on Athas.

Specialized use: The specialized datchi-club wielder can inflict greater damage by spinning the weapon along its long axis during combat. Spinning the datchi club requires great forearm strength—a character can only do so for a number of rounds equal to his strength score per day. Beyond normal damage done, an additional 1d3 hp damage is inflicted while the datchi club is spinning.

Dragon's paw

Cost: 15 gp

Weight: 9

Size: L

Type: P

Speed Factor: 8

Damage S-M/L: 1d6/1d6 +1

The dragon's paw is a multibladed weapon popular among the arena masters of Urik and Tyr. The weapon has two blades, made from any material, one at each end of a 5'-6' wooden shaft. Around the center is a bar or basket that both protects the hand and holds another blade jutting perpendicular to the central shaft. This

blade is called the forward blade, while the others are called the outer blades.

Proficient use: A character familiar with the dragon's paw can cause more damage with the central blade by using the central shaft for leverage. If the wielder makes a successful dexterity check on 1d20 after the successful attack roll, he can inflict an additional 1d4 hp damage using the forward blade.

Specialized use: A warrior specialized in the use of the dragon's paw can sometimes use the outer blades to ward off opponents while using the forward blade to its full effectiveness. If attacking one opponent with the forward blade, and if there is a target within reach of either outer blade, the warrior can make one more attack per round per blade. These outer blade attacks have no attack roll penalty but inflict only 1d2 hp damage.

Gouge

Cost: 6 gp

Weight: 12

Size: L

Type: P/S

Speed Factor: 8

Damage S-M/L: 1d8/1d10

The shoulder-strapped gouge is a specialized infantry weapon perfected for the slave armies of the Shadow King of Nibnaya. It is a weapon that can inflict significant damage against an opponent and is

unlikely to be dropped in the event of a rout. The gouge itself has a wide bone, obsidian, or chitin blade mounted onto a 3'-long wooden shaft. A smaller handle protrudes from a forward position on the main shaft, while the rear of the shaft has a wide grip used to drive the weapon home. The shoulder strap is made of leather or cloth, and it sometimes is expanded to a complete harness around the neck and shoulders. The weapon can be easily turned over to accommodate a left-handed wielder.

Proficient use: A gouge wielder who is familiar with his weapon can use the handles to inflict greater damage on subsequent rounds of contact. After a first round of combat in which the wielder makes a successful attack against an opponent, he can announce his intention to gouge on the subsequent round. If, in that subsequent round, the wielder has a better initiative roll than his opponent, he automatically hits again, gouging the weapon into the opponent and inflicting +2 on his damage roll. If, however, the opponent wins initiative, he manages to avoid the gouge attack; the wielder can make a normal attack but at a -4 penalty to his attack roll for having instead prepared to gouge. The wielder of the gouge must declare his intent before initiative dice are rolled.

Specialized use: In addition to the gouge attack, a specialized wielder can spin his entire body with his gouge to inflict greater damage with a normal attack. The wielder suffers a -2 penalty to his attack roll but inflicts double damage due to his increased momentum on a successful attack. A specialized wielder can elect to gouge or spin again in the round following a successful spin attack.

Master's whip

Cost: 6 gp

Weight: 3

Size: M

Type: P

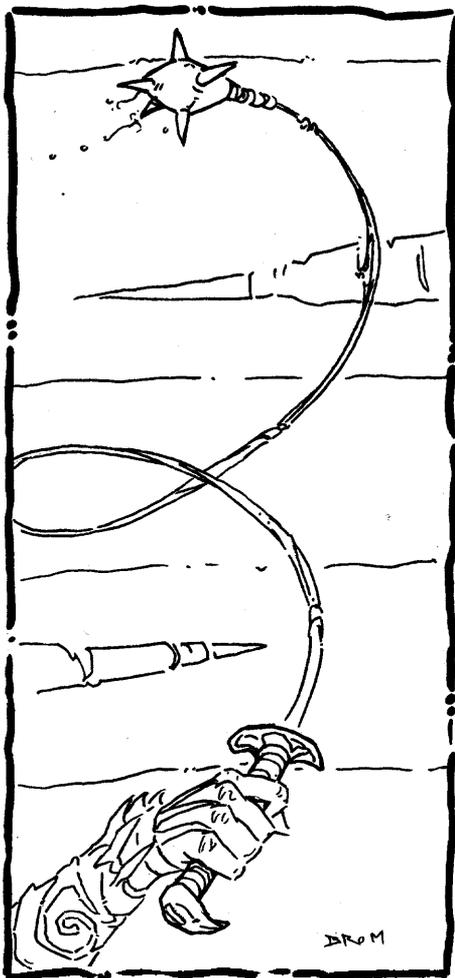
Speed Factor: 8

Damage S-M/L: 1d3/1d2

The master's whip is a favorite weapon among task masters and arena guards across Athas. The handle is usually carved from bone or ivory, then inlaid with decorative elements appropriate to the rank of the wielder. The whip itself is fashioned from leather or, for those that can afford the 15 gp additional cost, giant's hair. What sets the master's whip apart from the normal varieties is its barbed head. The head sports five separate hollow-tipped barbs, one at the end and four others spread out to the sides. The barbed head is most easily carved from bone, but wood also can be used.

Proficient use: Once a wielder is familiar with his master's whip, he can apply poisons to the hollow-tipped barbs and use them effectively against an opponent. Separate poisons may be applied to each of the five barbs, though only inject-





ed or contact poisons can have an effect on the target creature. On each successful hit with the master's whip, the wielder must roll 1d6 to determine which barb struck the victim; 1-4 indicates that one of the side barbs struck home, while a roll of 5 or 6 indicates that the end barb hit the mark. Once "applied" by the master's whip, the poison takes effect as described in the DMG.

Specialized use: A master's-whip specialist can choose which barb strikes the target, but he must announce that choice before the attack roll is made.

Tortoise blades

Cost: 9 gp

Weight: 5

Size: M

Type: P/S

Speed Factor: 5

Damage S-M/L: 1d6/1d6 + 1

Tortoise blades are most often made from their namesake creatures, but they can be carved from bone, chitin, or even stiffened leather. The blade is mounted to the underside of the protective shell permanently—it is the material of the blade that affects its performance in combat. Once strapped to the forearm, a tortoise blade counts as one point toward a piecemeal armor rating (DARK SUN Rules Book, page 72). A warrior with one on each arm and with no other armor would have AC 8.



Proficient use: A proficient tortoise-blade wielder can parry more effectively than with normal weapons. When parrying, the character gains an additional point of AC benefit per tortoise blade worn. To continue the previous example, if the warrior were 6th level, he would gain a +4 bonus plus an additional +2 bonus for the tortoise blades, giving him a parrying AC 2.

Specialized use: In addition to the proficient use benefits, a specialized wielder can use two tortoise blades without the normal two-weapon penalties. The specialized fighter suffers no penalty to his attack roll with the first tortoise blade, and only suffers a -2 penalty with the second.

Weighted pike

Cost: 6 gp

Weight: 15

Size: L

Type: P/B

Speed Factor: 12

Damage S-M/L: 1d6 or 1d6/1d12 or 1d4

The weighted pike is an example of a combination weapon, merging the effectiveness of the pike with that of the mace. The 7'-8' shaft of the weighted pike is almost always made of strong wood (agafari, if possible, though these are usually double the price). The pike blade can be metal, but is more often of bone or fang. The weighted, spiked ball is often ceramic, baked right onto the end of the shaft with the glass or metal spikes in place. The



damage listed is for when the weapon is used as a pike or as a mace. A nonproficient user can only opt for one of these per round of combat.

Proficient use: A proficient wielder can freely change from mace to pike or back again with every attack, even if they occur in a single round. For example, a 10th-level warrior proficient with the weighted pike could attack once with the mace and once with the pike within the round. This assumes, of course, that the character can reposition himself slightly to bring the length of the weapon into play—enclosed spaces are as inconvenient for the weighted pike as they are for other polearm weapons.

Specialized use: In addition to the proficiency benefits, a warrior specialized in the weighted pike can swing the mace end using the length of the weapon for greater effectiveness. The warrior can only make one such attack per round, but a hit inflicts 3d6 hp damage regardless of target size.

Widow's knife

Cost: 5 gp

Weight: 4

Size: M

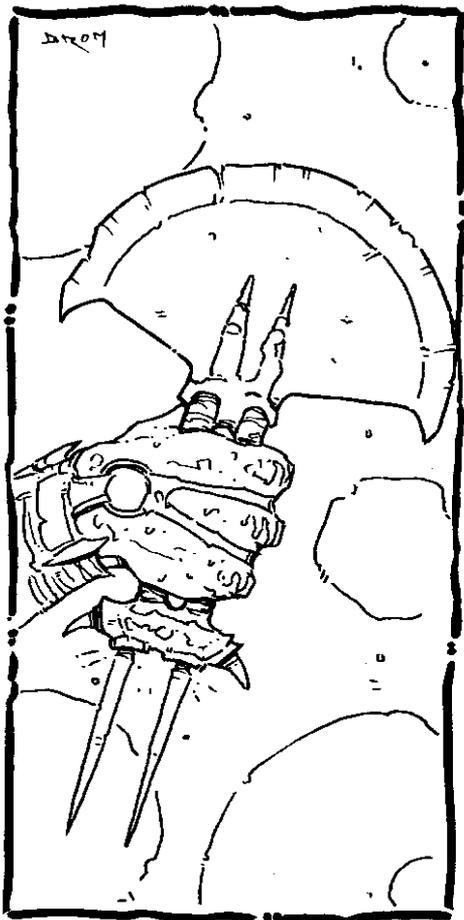
Type: P/S

Speed Factor: 3

Damage S-M/L: 1d4/1d4

ROF: 2/1

Range S/M/L: 1/2/3



The widow's knife takes its name from the similar harvesting tool often used in the verdant belts by women who have lost their husbands and must work themselves. Finely balanced, the widow's knife is a favorite court weapon and arena specialty. The wide end is preferably fashioned of metal, but can be made of obsidian; bone and chitin are too light to balance the weapon. The handle is carved of wood or ivory, often inlaid with markings peculiar to the owner. Particularly ornate widow's knives can cost many hundreds of ceramics. Hidden within the handle are two spring-loaded prongs, activated by a thumb catch on the handle. Once sprung, the prongs require a full round to reposition. The damage value applies to either the blade or prong attack—for game purposes, they are identical. The widow's knife can be thrown as a missile weapon.

Proficient use: A character proficient with the widow's knife can use the spring action of the prongs to greater effectiveness. On a successful attack roll, the wielder can release the spring-loaded prongs to inflict an additional 1d3 hp damage. The wielder must announce his intention to fire the prongs prior to his attack roll, which are then released regardless of his success.

Specialized use: A specialized wielder can throw his widow's knife more effectively. First, he can hurl the blade to better

catch the air and increase its range; short, medium, and long ranges become 2, 4, and 6, respectively, for the specialized thrower. Second, the warrior can more easily make a called shot with a thrown widow's knife, gaining a +4 bonus on such attacks regardless of range. Ω



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