

# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE

تيمومل  
امبراطوريه التاج الوردي



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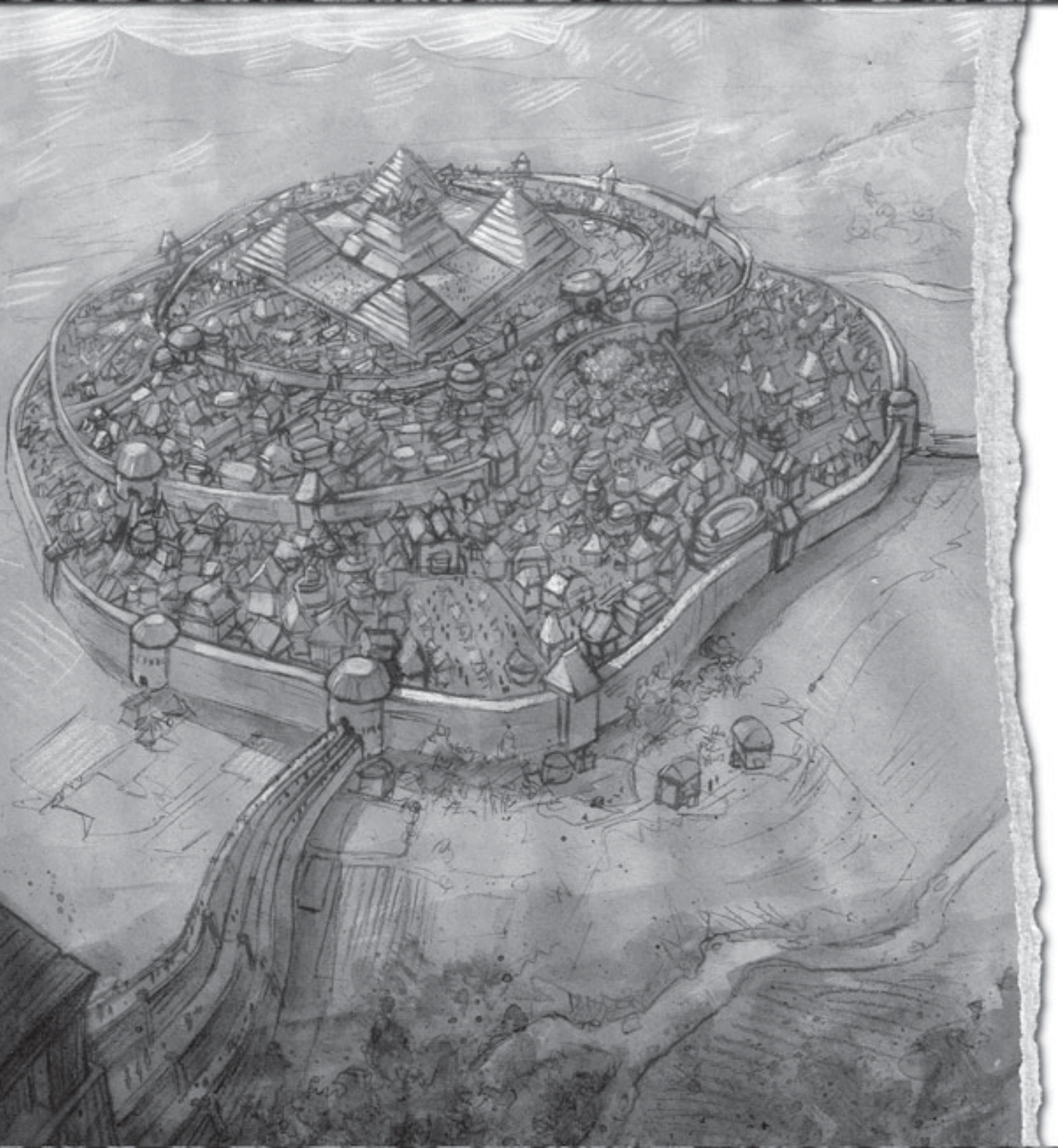
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# TÉKUMEL

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO TÉKUMEL



## Introduction to Tékumel

In a pocket universe, millennia removed from our own lies a system of five worlds engineered by forgotten planetary-scale technologies. Among these celestial bodies is the vibrant world of Tékumel, once a busy interstellar crossroads terraformed to suit the needs of the brutal rulers of Humanspace, now isolated from the very stars that gave it its purpose. Humans built bases, resorts, and mansions on Tékumel, forcing the planet's hostile original inhabitants into isolated enclaves. Members of the races allied with humanity — the four-armed, four-legged, barrel-bodied Ahoggyá, the chitinous and technologically advanced Pé Chói, the aggressive reptilian Shén, and others — established trade colonies and homes there as well.

Some thirty thousand years ago, the stars went out. The immediate effects of the calamity were drastic; the stress of the event caused earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, as well as massive damage to buildings and ships. A host of creatures, brought to Tékumel from the homeworlds of the various races, were freed from their artificial habitats to prey upon each other and survive as best they could in Tékumel's already unique and dangerous ecosystem. The starfaring inhabitants of Tékumel, lords of the Humanspace Alliance, found themselves locked in a pocket dimension, isolated from the rest of the universe. Lacking the means to maintain their technology, they inexorably slid into barbarism.

What emerged from the Time of Darkness is a world millennia strong in culture, history, life, and death. The sentient races are reduced to using muscle power rather than machines. Farmers struggle to till the land using huge dinosaur-like beasts, planting crops genetically engineered by the Ancients for yield and food value, while kilometres below, the world-spanning tubeway systems sit idle waiting for passengers. The few portable high-technology devices that survived are in the hands of the elite, or in the ancient tunnels that honeycomb the planet waiting to be discovered. With technology lost to them, and the walls between dimensions thinner on Tékumel than in normal space, Humans and others have discovered how to manipulate extra-planar energy with their minds, casting sorcerous spells. Tékumel's wilderness is host to a deadly array of horrors — the surviving hundreds of clashing ecosystems combined with monstrosities bred by genetic engineers and sorcerers thousands of years ago. The earliest times are the stuff of legends; the story of humanity's technological past survives only in fragmentary tales.

Central among Tékumel's Five Empires is Tsolyánu, a great society ruled by the august Emperors of the Petal Throne. Steeped in history and tradition, Tsolyáni is structured and rigid, based around the multitude of clans. Whether one is a woodcutter with the humble and lowly Clan of the Red Moon or a courtier with the highly respected and well-placed Clan of Sea Blue, one has a place in society.

### Note to GMs

Previous editions of Tékumel have a reputation for being difficult to run and acclimatise players to. This game includes a number of features designed to make it easier, ranging from essays about various aspects of life on Tékumel to Game Master advice.

This book has everything you need to run a Tékumel campaign between two covers, and it makes it easier than ever before.

## What is Tékumel?

Tékumel is a fantasy world created by Professor M.A.R. Barker, who has been developing material for it for decades. It was the setting of the second role-playing game ever published, *Empire of the Petal Throne* (1975), and of five novels: *Man of Gold* (1984), *Flamesong* (1985), *Lords of Tsámra* (2001), *Prince of Skulls* (2002), and *Death of Kings* (2003). More novels are planned. Several producers have published a substantial amount of material about Tékumel including three complete role-playing games, and detailed environmental, sociological, historical, and even linguistic information.

What makes Tékumel special is that it is not based on traditional European mythology. It is an original creation, inspired not only by the pulp SF and fantasy of the mid-20th Century, but also by cultures such as Moghul India, Ancient Egypt, and the Aztecs. The creatures that roam the lands of Tékumel are different and the peoples of Tékumel and their cultures stand out as unique. This leads to a challenging role-playing experience without equal.

Another unusual aspect about Tékumel is that it is a living creation. Prof. Barker and his Thursday Night Group still meet to play every week in his basement in Minneapolis. They have lived some of the history you will read here, and events in Tékumel are happening even as this book goes to press. This also means that many of the secrets of Tékumel are exactly that — secret. Professor Barker knows, for example, how Tékumel wound up in its pocket universe and what's going on outside it, but he isn't telling. Will Emperor Mirusiya start a full-fledged invasion of Tsolyánu's neighbours? Will the defeated Emperor Dchich'uné return to Tsolyánu and try to retake the Petal Throne? Stay tuned....

There's a lot of information available about Tékumel, but you only need to know a small part of it in order to play a character — and this section of the book will give you the basics. If you want to learn more about Tékumel in general, or delve deeper into specific aspects of interest to your character, there's plenty more in this book.

## The Basics

If you're an experienced role-playing gamer, you may want to cut to the chase and find out what makes Tékumel different from other settings so you can get started. This section covers the most important differences.

It helps to understand some of what you are about to read if you know that Tékumel is not a pre-technological world, but a post-technological one — some 60,000 years ago, it was a resort planet for a space-faring society composed of several different races from different star systems. The surviving remnants of this technology are now closely-guarded relics or valuable archaeological treasures to Tékumel's modern-day inhabitants, who regard them as magical.

## Environment

### Steel is a Precious Metal

First, Tékumel is a metal-poor world. Iron is particularly rare and valuable. This means that the Tékumelyáni (people from Tékumel) have had to either come up with alternate ways of making the things other low-technology societies make out of metal, or use much less metal in making them. Coins on Tékumel, for example, are very small; the base unit of Tsolyáni currency, the Káitar, is a thin disk of gold less than half an inch in diameter. Since weapons and armour require a lot of metal, the Tékumelyáni have found a substitute for steel: the hide of a large animal called the chlén, boiled and treated with secret chemicals and processes, yields a material roughly as hard and flexible as bronze and light as lacquered fibreglass. Chlén-hide isn't as strong as steel, and doesn't hold an edge as well, but it's lighter, much cheaper, and gets the job done (and you can have it made in whatever colour you want!).



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### Transportation Troubles

Second, there are no animals suitable for riding on Tékumel. The creatures on Tékumel are a bizarre mix; in addition to the native wildlife, all of the races that settled Tékumel, including humans, brought animals from their homeworlds. When the planet fell from a technological society, all of these creatures were released into the wild to fight it out for whatever ecological niches were available. None of the riding beasts happened to make it. Therefore, you either walk, get someone to carry you in a litter or palanquin, or ride on a cart pulled by chlén at about two miles per hour.

### Wilderness Survival Tip — Don't Leave the Trail

Another comment on the flora and fauna of Tékumel — the nastiest ones won the competition. Forests on Tékumel are more like jungles, and they're extremely dangerous. Swamps are unspeakably threatening, with insects large enough to carry off small children and drill holes through adults. Even a brief walk through cultivated fields is not completely without danger.

### It's Not Just the Humidity....

The final major physical difference: Tékumel is hot. The northern reaches of Tsolyánu are as hot as equatorial Earth, the Southern cities are hotter still, and the climate at Tékumel's equator is unbearable for humans. People deal with the heat by staying indoors at the hottest times of day (they become almost nocturnal in the Southern cities in Summer) and dressing appropriately (more about that later). Fortunately, the humidity isn't too bad outside of the swamps, which are truly hellish.

### The Culture

The human colonists who settled Tékumel 60,000 years ago were the survivors of an Earth-wide nuclear war that destroyed the cultures that dominate the world today. The people who finally went into space were the peoples of Central America, of North Africa, of the Indian subcontinent. By the time they settled Tékumel, they had evolved a starfaring culture that owed very little to our present-day one, and spoke a language that had evolved from non-Western roots ... so don't expect a lot of cultural similarity to the loosely-European societies that commonly populate fantasy role-playing games.

Of course, some of the cultural issues differ depending on what country on Tékumel one is in. In this section, we're talking specifically about Tsolyánu, the nation your character will come from. Generating characters from other countries is not covered in this book due to the space limitations.

### Stand By Your Clan

Tsolyáni society concentrates more upon the group than the individual. You are a member of a Clan, a group of interrelated families. Your Clan affiliation determines not only your standing in society, but where you live, what Gods you are likely to worship, and even what careers will be available to you. Your Clan takes care of you, and, in turn, you work for its continued success and prosperity. From the most menial latrine-cleaners to the highest nobility, practically every human in Tsolyánu belongs to a Clan. Those who do not are either foreigners (who probably have affiliations in their own country) or Nakomé — clanless ones with no legal rights in society and, usually, a short, miserable life ahead of them.

### Urban Architecture

Cities are dominated by huge, pyramidal temples to the Gods, which overshadow equally-grandiose (but not as tall) buildings housing the governmental offices. There are relatively few individual residences or tenements, since most people live with the rest of their family in clanhouses, which can hold from dozens to hundreds of people. Towns follow a similar model on a less grandiose scale, with the temples to the most popular local gods being the largest. Tsolyáni cities can get quite large, with the populations of the largest topping one million.





## Appropriate Dress

Due to the weather, and the lack of a nudity taboo in Tsolyáni culture, people don't always wear a lot. Inside your clanhouse, you'll often wander around naked, or clad only in a loincloth. That clothing would be thought inadequate for street wear in the Northern regions, where street dress generally involves kilts, dresses, or tunics made of lightweight fabrics similar to silk or thin cotton. Nudity or loincloths are not at all uncommon on the street in the even hotter South, however, or for slaves in any climate. Clothing for formal occasions, and military uniforms, can be extremely elaborate, and is often uncomfortable. Wearing full armour is even worse, and is reserved for situations where combat is imminent.

## Visual Indicators of Status

No matter what you wear, you usually don't go out in public without some method of showing others your status: badges with your clan's symbol, jewellery indicating your religious preferences, insignia for your rank in the military, government, or priesthood. Status is all-important in Tsolyánu, and to appear in front of strangers with no indication of it risks being mistaken for a slave — or even worse, a Nakomé or clanless person. More astute people will be able to guess your status by your bearing and accent even if you're naked, but people usually don't take the chance. It does happen, though, so be wary of making assumptions; you could be dealing with some noble from the Clan of Sea Blue who left his clan badge and military insignia at his girlfriend's clanhouse, and enjoys duelling as a hobby.

## Blood Money

Tsolyáni society is highly structured and mostly law-abiding. One of the mechanisms that keeps it that way is that, if you injure someone physically or socially, your clan, his or her clan, and the government (if necessary) will force you to compensate him or her for the injury. This compensation is called *Shámtla*. The amount of *Shámtla* due will vary depending not only on the seriousness of the injury, but the social level of the victim; people who harm someone much lower than themselves can probably get away without paying, though any compensation would likely be trivial to them at any rate. Causing widespread mayhem gets very expensive, very fast — Tsolyáni characters do not engage in bar fights unless they have money to burn. Don't want to pay *Shámtla*? There's always the option of duelling in the Arena.

## Noble Action

A final difference, and perhaps the hardest for players to understand, is that the Tsolyáni have a different way of looking at ethics than the one most of us have been taught. We tend to believe that the same set of ethical rules applies to everyone; the Tsolyáni do not. Instead, the Tsolyáni believe that you are doing the right thing — “acting nobly” — as long as you act consistently with your professed beliefs — even if those beliefs differ drastically from those of the person judging you. What is “noble action” for one person may be exactly the opposite of noble action for another.

# What is a Role-Playing Game?

For many people a role-playing game (RPG) is the “mature” or “advanced” version of the games we used to play as children such as “House,” “Cops and Robbers,” and “Superheroes.” Each player creates a character that he or she wishes to play (appropriately called a player character), and endeavours to view the unfolding events of the game through the eyes of that character. The character's outlook on life is separate and distinct from that of the player, though at times they may be similar. RPGs are not table-top board games — the games take place in the imagination of the players, occasional assisted by visual aids such as pictures, figures, maps, and other props. Role-playing can also be likened to improvisational theatre where everyone involved in the game must respond to the actions or decisions of the other players, but must do so from their character's perspective (called playing “in character”). These

character-to-character interactions are often the primary focus of the entire game, capturing the heart of the role-playing experience.

To help answer the question “What are the limitation on my character's abilities and talents?” RPGs employ a set of rules to help settle character conflicts and resolve character actions. The system mechanic usually outlines the use of a random generator (dice for random numbers, cards for random events, etc.) to add an unpredictable element to the game. A typical role-playing scenario requires a handful of players and one person to run the game, known as the Game Master (GM). The players tell the GM what their respective characters would like to do throughout the course of the adventure scenario and the GM describes the results of their actions. When the GM works closely with each and every player, the game adventure remains exciting and fun for all.

The characters created will depend on the type of adventures the GM intends to run and the number of players involved. The game system helps players assign some strengths and weaknesses to their characters, using number rankings to indicate relative ability. Much of the remaining elements of a character's background, family, hobbies, and interests are loosely covered by the rules or simply described by each player according to his or her view of the character.

The *Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne* RPG can be played in sessions, episodes and/or campaigns. A session is the period of time in which the players gather to play the game. Sessions are often 2 to 8 hours in length, and are frequently held on a weekly or biweekly schedule. The players work their way through the immediate plot, picking up where the last session ended and proceeding until the current session is over. Over a period of time of usually one to four sessions, the players will have to complete a number of tasks to achieve at least partial closure of the game plot. This closure does not answer all the questions or eliminate all of the characters' problems, but rather is similar to the closure seen at the end of a story arc in a movie or novel. The resolved arc is called an episode. An episode that only takes a single isolated session is referred to as a “one-shot” adventure, which are the scenarios primarily used at role-playing conventions. Finally, a number of episodes which use the same characters can be linked together to form a campaign. Campaigns require more commitment from everyone involved, but watching the characters develop and gain new abilities and talents as the greater plot unfolds makes the effort worthwhile. The most engaging role-playing campaigns can last upwards of 5-10 years — Professor Barker's Thursday Night Group in Minneapolis has been gaming in *Tékumel* since 1974! — but keeping a campaign running for 8 months to a few years is considered to be tremendously successful.

As a player, you will control your character's actions in the game as he or she works through the unexpected twists and turns of the plot, with assistance provided by the other player characters. Your character's actions can greatly affect the outcome of the adventure, but you must keep in mind that every action has a consequence that may return to haunt your character in future sessions. Role-playing is a group effort, however, and positive interactions between your character and the characters of the other players are vital to everyone's enjoyment of the game.

As a GM, your contribution to the game will be much greater than that from any one player. You must establish the setting, villains, conflicts, and plot of the adventure, as well as all of the other non-player characters (NPCs) your gaming group will meet during the game. NPCs are similar to the background characters in a story, ranging from the obscure and unimportant to frequently seen and very important. The enemies of the player characters are also NPCs, but because of their recurring importance to the plot, they need to be better developed before game play begins.

If you plan to be a GM, you must also be able to project your imagination to the players by describing the world in which they live in vivid detail. Use of visual aids such as maps and diagrams can help make your players' world more tangible. Finally, your plot must remain sufficiently flexible to allow the characters' actions to make a definite impact on the adventure. A plot that is too rigid or “scripted” may leave players feeling that their characters have lost the free will to affect their own destiny. Should you assume the role of GM, you must possess creativity, sound judgement, and the ability to improvise in unexpected situations. Game Mastering takes extra time and effort, but the reward of watching the players revel in the game setting and plot that you have created makes it all worthwhile.



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## Chapter 2: Character Creation

The design of a new character for *Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne* should involve a thoughtful collaboration between the player and the Game Master (GM). Your objective is to create a character who is fun to play, has plenty of reason to undertake adventures, and who fits into the GM's campaign. In *Tékumel*, you can choose to spend as little as ten minutes or upwards of an hour designing a character. The difference lies in the amount of detail and individuality given to your character. At no time during a role-playing game (RPG) campaign do you have more control over the destiny of your character than during the creation process. If you have any questions about game mechanics or specific character abilities, talk to the GM before you begin character creation.

## Step 1: Character Concept

Discuss the campaign with the GM (and maybe the other players) and think about the types of characters that might work well in it.

## General Concept

There are no character classes in *Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne*, but there are careers, and jobs within them, that people are most likely to follow. Many concepts from other fantasy RPG settings work well on Tékumel — warriors abound, and powerful magicians exist, for example. A couple concepts from other settings would work very poorly on Tékumel, however: thieves and loners. There are no thieves' guilds or organised thievery; the people involved would wind up impaled by the Empire. Loners do not do well either: Tsolyáni society is centred on the clan and on groups, and loners would be mistrusted and poorly-treated.

## Tsolyáni Names

The following names are authentically Tsolyáni — personal names for men and women, plus a list of lineage names. If you're going to be members of the same clan, you may want to co-ordinate on lineage names. Humans will have names like this; non-humans adopted into a Tsolyáni clan will have personal names in their native language but may have Tsolyáni lineage names; other non-humans will have names in their own languages (see the appropriate section for examples).

## Personal Names

### Male Names

Achán	Mnéktu
Adlár	Mórusai
Arkháne	Mottán
Bálesh	Mridók
Chúrisan	Nirún
Dlamúz	No'ómu
Drakóhl	Núromen
Ekuné	Omél
Fíru	Osumétlu
Gámalu	P'úr
Gayán	Qárras
Hárisu	Réshmel
Héttukeng	Sánjesh
Hóru	Shémek
Jesékh	Tákodai
Jjékmu	Treshélmú
Kágesh	Tsodlán
Kánkolu	Túrisan
Kémuel	Visán
Kotáru	Zagár
Marján	Zhurák
Mígor	Znayáshu
Mízhotl	

### Female Names

A'én	Ngáya
Arimái	Osuré
Asháne	Paluél
Atín	Qiláin
Balané	Raisákka
Chaikúra	Rayána
Chashána	Réluen
Dijáya	Sáyi
Dirúla	Senértha
Dzái	Shánü
Elulén	Shekkára
Halé	Sherésa
Háya	Sídla
Isúra	Srúdhál
Jashána	Ta'ána
Ke'él	Talía
Layéth	Tálo del
Linátla	Tlayésha
Liyása	Umá
Mára	Visháya
Mikúsa	Zhána
Mísa	Ziyá
Nélel	

### Lineage Names

hiArusá	hiSáika
hiBurusá	hiSanyél
hiChagotlékka	hiSayúncha
hiChaishyáni	hiSénkolum
hiChakrésa	hiSharítla
hiChánkolel	hiSorúna
hiChársha	hiSsáivra
hiDulumésa	hiSsánkoral
hiFershéna	hiSsánmirin
hiGurúma	hiSsanyúsa
hiJarásh	hiTáika
hiKarélsa	hiTánkolel
hiKétkolel	hiTigál
hiKhanúma	hiTikéshmu
hiKoródu	hiTlakán
hiKurúshma	hiTlekólmü
hiKutonyál	hiTlélsu
hiMaróda	hiTukkolén
hiMirkétme	hiTuplángte
hiMraktiné	hiVáika
hiMrékka	hiVaisonér
hiMriyén	hiVaisúra
hiNáshomai	hiVessúma
hiNezár	hiViridáme
hiNrashkému	hiViridu
hiPagártra	hiVorússa
hiQolyélmú	hiVrázhimü
hiQúrrodu	hiVriyón
hiReretlésa	hiZhayárvu
hiRi'inyúsa	hiZhnáyu



## Physical Description

The natives of Tékumel are fairly homogenous in appearance, since by the time Tékumel was settled, physically distinct ethnic groups as we know them today did not exist. Tsolyáni men average 1.68 m in height, with women averaging 1.57 m. Their complexions range from coppery brown to golden tan, their hair is glossy black, and they have relatively little body or facial hair. Curly or brown-streaked hair is considered unattractive, and light-coloured eyes are uncommon and disfavoured. Blue eyes are extremely rare; they are considered a curse, and people react poorly to them (see the Ugly Defect, page 28).

People from other nations don't differ from this too much (the N'lüss barbarians are an exception, being significantly taller and a bit paler). Details of height, skin tone, and amount and curliness of hair vary somewhat. There are still no blondes nor redheads, and very few pale-skinned people.

## Character Creation Examples

A group of friends are planning a Tékumel campaign. They decide that they would prefer a setting where they are significantly tougher than ordinary folks and are able to have magic. The GM sets the Level of Realism (see page 223) to The Middle Way and the Level of Magic (see page 223) to Medium Magic.

They also decide that the social setting should be that of a Medium Level Clan, so they are not social outsiders and can interact with the full range of social levels. They have customised their campaign background to taste and are ready to create some characters for it.

Sarah and Simon are players with very different character concepts. Sarah has read all of the novels and most of the previously published material, she wants to play a character based on Harsán from the first Tékumel novel, "Man of Gold" and is willing to put a lot of time into getting the character creation process right.

In contrast, Simon has little time in his schedule and knows nothing about Tékumel, but he always likes playing swashbuckling swordsmen and would like to do that in this campaign.

Sarah has a much more complex character concept than Simon but both styles of character can be accommodated.

### Character Creation Example #1 The Scholar Priest

*Sarah intends to use the Priest Harsán as described in Man of Gold as the basis for her character. He was an orphan raised by the Pé Chói who was taught magic by his alien foster community and on re-entering human society, this mild-mannered Priest of Thúmis was sent on dangerous adventures because of his unusual skills. Sarah intends to use this but will not exactly duplicate Harsán.*

*She begins by thinking about his motivation and weaknesses first, before assigning Stats, Attributes and Defects. Sarah decides that her character is intensely curious, obsessed with his studies and somewhat obsessive with learning new things and quite impulsive. Those are plausible motivations for an adventurous character. Looking at the background and the troubles encountered by Harsán in the novel, Sarah decides that the Bad Start Defect is appropriate, as an orphan raised by aliens but now living in Tsolyánu he lacks human social contacts, family, and friends. He is a true outsider amongst his own species.*

*She selects the name Hárísu and waits with selecting a lineage name until later, as she has some ideas about the clan and his status within the clan.*

### Character Creation Example #2 The Sword Master

*Simon would like a character that is a master swordsman.*

*Designing a character around a single outstanding Skill is a simple way to get a distinctive role. Being the best archer, hunter or most stealthy person around is cool. Simon wants someone who is far better with the sword than most warriors. He names him Achán hiKoródu.*

## Step 2: Choose a Clan

The most important fact about a person from Tsolyánu is his or her clan. Your GM will tell you the appropriate Clan Level for the campaign. If the GM permits, you can modify that level during character creation through either the High-Status Attribute (page 20) or the Low-Status Defect (page 26).

If you know someone's clan, you know their standing in society, can often make a guess as to their religion, and have a pretty good idea what they do for a living. Most Tsolyáni work for their clan, either in the clan's businesses (such as agriculture, tanning chlén-hide, running caravans, etc.) or as support staff for the clan itself (cooking, guarding warehouses, handling legal matters). Others work for the Empire, but still maintain strong ties with their clans, and often use their positions to help their clans.

*In Tsolyánu, you never walk alone — if you get into trouble, your clan is there to help you. Your trouble is their trouble, and your dishonour is their dishonour.*

## Clan Levels

There are six social levels of clans. Tsolyánu is a rigidly stratified society, where status is very important.

Table 2-1: Clan Levels

Imperial (Tlakotáni)

Very High

High

Medium

Low

Very Low

The Clanless: Foreigners, other clanless persons

## The Clanless

People without a clan are at the bottom of the heap in Tsolyáni society. Well-off clanless foreigners receive a certain amount of grudging respect and cautious treatment, but poor foreigners and other clanless people are worth less than slaves and are treated accordingly. Playing a clanless character is not recommended, unless the other characters are at the same social level.

## Specific Clans

Once the GM tells you the campaign's clan level, determine your character's specific clan. The GM may assign one, or tell you to pick a clan that meets certain criteria (religious, professional, geographic, etc.). If the GM does not have a preference, pick one involved in activities suitable for the campaign and your character concept. The Clan Table for each social level has notes on each clan, including religious preference (if any) and the professions commonly available to its members. Members of any clan may join the military, government, or Priesthoods provided they meet the requirements (for essays on the different social levels, see Clan Life, page 195. For clan tables for each social level, see Clan Tables, page 195).



## Lineage

Each clan has anywhere from dozens to hundreds of lineages of varying standing. Lineage affects the character's starting status within the clan, as well as wealth. Your character is a member of a Medium lineage unless you assign the High Lineage Attribute (page 19) or the Low Lineage Defect (page 26).

You will pick a name for your character's lineage when you name your character. If there are multiple characters from the same clan, characters from different levels should use different lineage names (for an explanation of lineages, see Clan, Lineage, and Family, page 195; for a listing of lineage names you can choose from, page 195).

## Clan Tables

Each table gives a listing of the best-known clans at that classification (in the case of the Very High clans, those are the only organisations at that rank). These tables cannot list all of the 1,500-some clans in Tsolyánu; most small, localised clans are omitted.

Clans are listed in rough order of prestige within each category, beginning with the highest prestige clans at the top of each list. The relative status of two clans can differ from place to place within Tsolyánu — some clans are more prestigious than others in their home cities, even if they are less so elsewhere — but the broad outline remains the same.

## The Imperial Clan

### Tlakotáni

The clan of the Tsolyáni Imperial family; some well-to-do farmers and middle-class urban merchants are members as well. Those from this clan use its name as their lineage name, omitting the “hi-” if they are close to or part of the Imperial line. No religious affiliation, though many worship Hnálla. Found throughout the Empire, but especially around Báy Sü, Haumá, and Usenánu.

## Very High Clans

### Sea Blue

Descended from the royal families of the Bednálljans and correspondingly proud and arrogant even when poor. Includes many members of various faiths and professions, though courtiers, bureaucrats, and administrators predominate.

### Golden Sunburst

Descendants of Engsvanyáli Empire's nobility; aristocratic and exclusive. Mostly devoted to Karakán, Chegárra, and Hnálla, with some other Stability sects. Most members are nobles, high bureaucrats, and military officers. Situated throughout the Empire.

### Vriddi

The original semi-autonomous rulers of Fasilum; fierce and haughty, devoted almost exclusively to Vimúhla and Chiténg. Distrusted for their separatist tendencies under previous Emperors, they are undergoing a resurgence with the ascent of Emperor Mirusiya, who was raised as a Vriddi, to the Petal Throne. Members of this clan usually use its name as their lineage name. Primarily in Fasilum, but has clanhouses in Vimúhla-worshipping cities such as Khirgár and Tumíssa.

### Might of Gánga

Derived from Engsvanyáli royalty; composed of Priests and warriors of the sects of Avánthe, Thúmis, Hnálla, Belkhánu and their Cohorts. Largely limited to the Isle of Gánga and the southern coastal cities of Tsolyánu.

### Íto

The ancient lords of the Chákan Protectorates. Worshippers of Sárku and Durrítámish. Some separatist tendencies. Members of this clan usually use its name as their lineage name. Mostly in the Chákas, but with clanhouses in Mekú, Púrdimal, and the City of Sárku.

### Golden Bough

Traceable to the Engsvanyáli governors of the south. No particular religious or professional affiliations, but contains many officials and military officers; powerful throughout the Empire but with main centres in Jakálla, Thráya, and Jaikalór.

### Sword of Fire

A small and very ancient clan descended from the Dragon Warriors, totally devoted to Vimúhla, aloof, and disinterested in politics. They are centred in Báy Sü with clanhouses in Tumíssa, Khirgár, and Chéne Hó, and have many mercantile contacts with Mu'ugalavyá.

### Cloak of Azure Gems

Supposedly servitors of Ksáruł at the Battle of Dórmoron Plain, but in reality probably Bednálljan; followers of Ksáruł and Hrü'ü and their cohorts. Mostly Priests and administrators. Based in Mekú and Mrelú but with clanhouses in many other cities.

### Jade Diadem

Origins unknown; devotees of Dlamélish and her Cohort Hriháyal. Largely city administrators and landed nobility, found throughout the Empire.

### Blade Raised High

Descended from the palace guard of the Engsvanyáli Priestkings; devoted to Karakán and Chegárra. Primarily soldiers and military administrators. Found throughout the Empire, but centred in Katalál and Usenánu.

## High Clans

### White Stone

An eclectic clan devoted to Avánthe, Dlamélish, and their Cohorts, but also containing members of other sects; many administrators and military personnel. Located throughout the Empire, but centred at Báy Sü and Sokátis.

### White Crystal

An old and respectable clan; includes many high and Medium-level officials and bureaucrats as well as Priests of several sects, but no specific religious affiliation. Originally from Jakálla, but now throughout the central Empire.

### Red Sword, Red Sun, Red Mountain, Red Stone

A group of related clans based in the west around Tumíssa and Butrús. The “Red” clans worship Vimúhla and Chiténg, with a sprinkling of worshippers of Karakán and Chegárra as well. Includes warriors, Priests, and Medium-level officials. These clans extend into Mu'ugalavyá.

### Purple Gem

Originally scribes and book-makers in the Engsvanyáli Empire; many Medium and high-level court officials at Avanthár are members. No religious affiliation. Based at Avanthár, but situated throughout the Empire.

### High Pinnacle

Many Medium-level military personnel and high and Medium-level bureaucrats are members. No religious affiliation. Based around Haumá, Mrelú, and S'is, but found throughout the west and centre of the Empire.

### Emerald Girdle

Mostly worshippers of Hnálla, Thúmis, and Avánthe and their Cohorts. Many rural landowners belong to this clan, which is located throughout the Empire.

### Great Stone

Originally a northern matrilineal clan based at Khirgár, they have many followers of Ksáruł, Hrü'ü, and their Cohorts, but is not exclusively dedicated to them. Members are often involved in various forms of trade, but also include Priests, bureaucrats, and a few soldiers. Based in the northwest, but scattered elsewhere as well.

### Domed Tomb

The ancient nobility of the City of Sárku; totally devoted to Sárku and Durrítámish. Wealthy farmers, Priests, administrators, and soldiers. Mainly based in the Kráa Hills and around the City of Sárku, but has clanhouses in Báy Sü, Púrdimal, Sokátis and environs.



## Dark Fear, Dark Water, Dark Moon, Dark Flame

The “Dark” clans, found in the mid-west and the north of the Empire, are devoted to Hřü’ü, Ksárul, Sárku, and their Cohorts. Members include many Medium-level officials, Priests, and soldiers.

### Amber Cloak

Devoted to Belkhánu, Thúmí, and their Cohorts. This clan is composed of Priests, scholars, apothecaries, and professional people. It is situated throughout the Empire.

### Sweet Singers of Nakomé

Descended from an ancient hero who was given this disturbing nickname — Nakomé means “clanless” — they are devoted to Vimúhla and Chiténg. Its members are agriculturists and soldiers in the Vimúhla-worshipping legions. It is found only around Fasiltum.

### Standing Stone

Comprised of Priests and officials, plus many middle-class agriculturists. No religious affiliation. It is centred around Úrmish, but has clanhouses in most major cities.

### Rising Sun

Includes minor nobles and upper-class merchants of the eastern Empire. No religious affiliation. Based at Jaikalór, with houses at Sokátis, Thráya, Jakálla, and other cities.

### Joyous of Vrá

Descended from the old Vrayáni nobility; originally established on the Island of Vrá, but now situated throughout the Empire. Mostly worshippers of Belkhánu, Thúmí, Hnálla, and their Cohorts.

### Iron Helm

The lords of Mekú are hereditarily members of this clan; usually devotees of Ksárul and Grugánu, although others are worshippers of Hřü’ü, Wurú, etc. Widespread throughout the Empire.

### Staff of Beneficence

Mostly wealthy physicians and apothecaries devoted to Thúmí and his Cohort, Keténgku. Located throughout the Empire.

### Grey Cloak, Grey Wand

These two clans are composed of devotees of Thúmí and Keténgku with a scattering of worshippers of the other Lords of Stability. Most are upper- and middle-class administrators, landholders, and merchants. Based around Páya Gupá and Chéne Hó, but found in most large cities of the Empire.

## Medium Clans

### Green Bough

Prosperous agriculturists. No religious affiliation. Found throughout the Empire, but with its largest clanhouse at Katalál.

### Blue Kirtle

Members are devoted to Avánthe and her Cohort Dilinála. Originally potters, winemakers, and builders, but now includes Medium-level Priests and administrators as well. Based in Béy Sü, but found throughout the Empire.

### Black Stone

Medium-level bureaucrats, scribes, professionals, and Priests in the service of the Lords of Change. Found throughout the Empire.

### Green Malachite

A southern agricultural and maritime clan, includes farmers, sailors, fisherman, etc. Mostly devoted to the Lords of Stability, they are based in Penóm, but has clanhouses along the southern coast and as far north as Usenánu.

### Red Sky, Red Star

Two more Vimúhla-worshipping “Red” clans. Mostly agriculturists and breeders of hmélu and hmá (six-legged sheep-like creatures), but also lower-level bureaucrats,

soldiers, and Priests. Members of Red Sky are barred from serving as Imperial naval officers due to an ancient scandal. Found throughout the western and central regions of the Empire.

### Ripened Sheaf

A prosperous agriculturists’ and artisans’ clan, with no religious affiliation. Centres at Úrmish, Penóm, Katalál, and Jakálla with smaller clanhouses in almost every village in the area.

### Green Kirtle

An offshoot of the Blue Kirtle clan that turned to the worship of Dlamélish and Hriháyal. Members follow a variety of Medium-class occupations. Based in Béy Sü, but found throughout the Empire.

### Golden Dawn, Golden Sphere, Golden Sheaf, Golden Sapphire

These “Golden” clans all follow the Lords of Stability and contain Medium-level business people, soldiers, Priests, agriculturists, etc. Found throughout the Empire.

### Glory of the Worm

Mountain people from the City of Sárku and the Kráa Hills devoted to Sárku and Durritámish. They are Medium-level agriculturists, dlél-fruit trees growers, and landowners. Found largely in the northwest, but with clanhouses in Béy Sü and Jakálla.

### Hall of Stone

Military, bureaucrats, Priests, and merchants with no religious affiliation. A regional clan split by the destruction of Éngswan hlá Gánga, it has two distinct branches, one centred on the Northwest (Dó Cháka through Khirgár), and the other on Vrá and the Southern Isles.

### Blue Shadow, Blue Stream

Rural agriculturists and landowners; devoted to Avánthe and Dilinála with a sprinkling of other worshippers of Stability. Found throughout the Empire.

### Black Pinnacle

Agriculturists, craftsmen, and artisans with no religious affiliation. Based at Hekéllu in the far northeast, but with clanhouses at Fasiltum, Sokátis, and Thráya.

### Copper Door

Merchants and moneylenders. Usually followers of Sárku, but some are devotees of other Lords of Change. Centred at Béy Sü and along the Mssúma River.

### First Moon, Moon of Evening

These two clans contain merchants and artisans, plus a few bureaucrats and Priests. No religious affiliation. Found mostly in the south with houses at Jakálla, Thráya, Jaikalór, and Penóm.

### Golden Lintel

Moneylenders from Béy Sü, found in all the cities of the Empire and abroad as well. No religious affiliation.

### Silver Lightning, Silver Collar

These two clans contain many artists, jewellers, and workers in ornamental crafts. Mostly devoted to Avánthe and Hnálla, and their Cohorts. Found throughout the Empire.

### Red Flower

An old Vrayáni mercantile clan with sailing, shipping, and foreign trading interests. Mostly devoted to Karakán and Chegárta, but with followers of the other Lords of Stability and the Lords of Change as well. Centred on the Island of Vrá, but has clanhouses at Jakálla, Thráya, Penóm, and Béy Sü.

### Scroll of Wisdom

Jurists and scholars with no particular religious affiliation. Found throughout the Empire.



## Red Eye of Dawn

The best jewellers' clan in the Empire; despite the "Red" in its name, it is largely made up of followers of Avánthe and Dilinála. Centred in Bév Sü, but with clanhouses in almost all major cities.

## Weeping Stone

Manufacturers of liquor and wines. No religious affiliation. Found throughout the Empire.

## Victorious Globe

Makers of paper, inks, paints, and scribal materials. Mostly devotees of Thúmis, Hnálla, and their Cohorts. Found in every major city of the Empire.

## Standing Pinnacle

Originally from the tribal areas of the Kúrt Hills, but now urbanised. Dealers in woods and forest products; largely worshippers of Avánthe and Dilinála with a sprinkling of followers of other faiths. Centred at Haumá and Tsurú, but has clanhouses throughout the western Empire.

## Black Hood, Black Mountain, Black Monolith

These "Black" clans contain middle-class merchants, artisans, and labourers. Most members follow the "Black Trinity:" Hrü'ü, Ksáru, Sárku, and their Cohorts. Situated throughout the Empire.

## Blazoned Sail

Sea captains, shippers, sailors, and maritime artisans. No religious affiliation. Found in almost every city with access to the sea.

## Broken Reed

A large clan of agriculturists, warriors, lower-class artisans, and a variety of other occupations. No religious affiliation. Present throughout the Empire.

## Broken Bough

Agriculturists. Mostly followers of Stability, although some devotees of Vimúhla and Chíténg are located across Fasítum. Based at Usenánu, but with clanhouses throughout the central and eastern Empire.

## Iron Fist, Iron Hand

These two clans contain mainly smiths and armourers. Worshippers of Vimúhla, Karakán, and their Cohorts. Originally western clans, but now spread throughout the Empire.

## Low Clans

### Open Sepulchre

Embalmers, tomb guards, and professional mourners. Devoted to Belkhánu, Sárku, and their Cohorts. Found throughout the Empire.

### Plume of White

Scribes, accountants, clerks, and administrators. Mostly devoted to the Lords of Stability, though worshippers of Change are also present. Centred at Jakálla, but with clanhouses across the Empire.

### Open Hand

Peasants, labourers, and tenant farmers with no religious affiliation. Found throughout the rural areas of the Empire.

### Ivory Staff

Peasants and labourers, dlél-fruit and másh-fruit pickers; largely devoted to the Lords of Stability, although worshippers of Change are occasionally represented. A northern clan, centred at Síis and Khirgár with a few clanhouses in other major cities.

### Green Forest, Green Reed

Comprised of peasants and rural craftsmen. Mostly worshippers of Avánthe, Dlamélish, and their cohorts. Based at Sokátis, but with clanhouses throughout the east and along the Mssúma River.

## High Tower

Chlén-raisers, tanners, and leatherworkers, plus a few officials and administrators. No religious affiliation. Based at Usenánu, but with clanhouses throughout the centre of the Empire.

## Green Stone, Green Emerald, Green Opal

These "Green" clans are mostly dyers, weavers, tailors, with a few Priests and warriors. Primarily worshippers of Dlamélish and Hriháyal. Found throughout the central and eastern Empire.

## Flowering Life

Rope and net makers, fishermen, and shellfish gatherers. The majority is devoted to Avánthe and Dilinála with a large percentage of worshippers of Hnálla and his Cohort Drá, as well. Found all along the southern seacoast.

## Eye of Flame

Originally barbers but now includes many low-level soldiers and hired bodyguards. Worshippers of Vimúhla and Chíténg. Based at Tumíssa but with clanhouses throughout the west and north.

## Deep Flowing Water

An old and respectable agricultural clan largely devoted to Hrü'ü, Ksáru, and their Cohorts. Based at Mrelú, but with clanhouses at Púrdimal and Mekú.

## Flat Peak

Lower-class artisans, usually carpenters, bricklayers, masons, furniture-makers, etc. No religious affiliation. Encountered throughout the Empire.

## Sapphire Bird

Peasants, hmélu and hmá-raisers and herdsman, and tanners. Devoted to Avánthe, Dlamélish, and their Cohorts. Centred at Thráya and found throughout the east and southeast as well as across the border in Salaryvá.

## Blue Water

Peasants, foresters, woodworkers, pitch and tar-makers, and fletchers. Mostly worshippers of Hnálla and Avánthe, with a scattering of other faiths as well. Centred at Jaikalór, but now found throughout the eastern Empire.

## Black Stone Tomb

Once the bodyguards of the Íto family of the Chákas (see Very High Clans), this clan now specialises in gravedigging, embalming, and guarding tombs. Worshippers of Sárku and Durritámish. Based at Chéne Hó, Páya Gupá, and Tumíssa, but with clanhouses at Mrelú, Mekú, Púrdimal, and the City of Sárku.

## Black Hand

Miners and glassblowers devoted to Hrü'ü, Ksáru, Sárku, and their Cohorts. Found throughout the north and west. This clan is responsible for the elegant purple glassware of Púrdimal.

## Woven Whip

Leatherworkers and tanners with no religious affiliation. Centred at Tsurú and Haumá, with clanhouses throughout the centre of the Empire.

## Round Rock

Agriculturalists, weavers, dyers, and clothmakers. No strong religious affiliation, though many worship Hnálla and Drá. Based along the Equnoyé River, with clanhouses throughout the eastern Empire.

## Very Low Clans

### Woven Mat

Weavers, mat-makers, and builders of cheap furniture. No religious affiliation. Found throughout the Empire.



## Red Moon

Impoverished peasants, labourers, woodcutters, etc. Mostly worshippers of Vimúhla and Chiténg. Based at Béy Sü and encountered throughout the central Empire.

## Scarlet Mantle

Professional servants and domestics, but claim to have once been a warrior clan. Usually devoted to Karakán or Chegárra. Found throughout the Empire.

## Arch of Heaven

Beer brewers, distillers of the cheaper liquors, and vineyard workers. No religious affiliation. Found throughout the Empire.

## Nighted Tower

Tomb guards and makers of various chemicals. Often accused of being tomb robbers as well. Followers of all of the Lords of Change except for Vimúhla and Chiténg. Based at Púrdimal, but found throughout the northwest.

## Bright Sword

Musicians, singers of epics, panderers, courtesans, and hostel-keepers. No religious affiliation. Based at Jakállá, but found throughout the Empire.

## Green Pyramid

Labourers, peasants, and poor urban merchants. Usually devoted to Dlamélish and Hriháyal, but with members of other sects as well. Common throughout the Empire.

## Flat Rock

Poor labourers and peasants. No religious affiliation. Found throughout the western regions of the Empire.

## Scarlet Planet of Knives

Butchers, hunters, and lower-class warriors devoted to Karakán and Chegárra. Based at Katalál, but encountered in every major city.

## Granite Lintel

Cooks, body servants, and kitchen workers devoted to Hnálla, Thúmis, Avánthe, and their Cohorts. Based at Úrmish, but found across the Empire.

## Black Earth

Peasants, artisans, fishermen, and swamp workers. Followers of Hrüü and Wurú although there are other sects as well. Based at Púrdimal, but also numerous around Penóm.

## Glass Spear

Potters, bricklayers, cement-workers, layers of mosaics, etc. No religious affiliation. Clanhouses exist all over the Empire.

## Sinking Land

Peasants, producers of swamp products, and fishermen. Devoted to Belkhánu and his Cohort Qón. Based in the waterlogged lowlands around Penóm, but with clanhouses at Jakállá, Úrmish, Usenánu, and Katalál also.

## Artificers of Iron

Village smiths, though some have become prosperous urban armourers and manufacturers of metal tools. Worshippers of Vimúhla, Karakán, and their Cohorts. Especially strong in Tumíssa and Butrús, but encountered all across the Empire.

## Turning Wheel

Carters, sutlers, wheelwrights, and transporters of goods. No religious affiliation. Found throughout the Empire.

## Standing Reed

Mostly N'lüss who settled long ago in the Empire. Professional soldiers, gladiators, bodyguards, fletchers, and makers of leather armour. Devoted to Vimúhla and Chiténg. Based in the rural areas around Khirgár, but with clanhouses throughout the Empire.

## Collar of Bronze

Professional slavers, many of whom are wealthy but without social prestige because of their work. No religious affiliation. Small clanhouses exist in every major city.

## Hand of Compassion

Professional prison guards and warders devoted to Belkhánu and Qón. Based at Jakállá, but with representation in every large city and many towns.

## Wicker Image

Latrine-cleaners, sewer-workers, corpse bathers, and house-sweepers. No religious affiliation, though those who bathe corpses are likely to be worshippers of Belkhánu or Qón. Found throughout the Empire.

## Emerald Circlet

Panderers, prostitutes, dancers, jugglers, roadside entertainers, etc. Followers of Dlamélish and Hriháyal with a sprinkling of other faiths. Often thought to be thieves and purveyors of poisons, aphrodisiacs, etc. Found throughout the Empire.

## Character Creation Example #1

### The Scholar Priest

*In discussion with the GM, all characters will be members of the Clan of the Hall of Stone, a Medium Level Clan. Sarah's concept will work quite well with that.*

## Character Creation Example #2

### The Sword Master

*Simon decides he wants to play the mysterious stranger, the travelling swordsman, but he has to remain with the Medium Clan setting that they agreed on for the campaign. He has to play a character of the same clan as Sarah's character, but decides he travelled extensively in Livyánu, got caught up in the war, and came back without much to show for his time abroad, except his swords, his sword skills, and his enemies.*

## Step 3: Choose a Religion

The Tsolyáni worship a pantheon of twenty deities: the 10 Gods and their Cohorts. They fall into two broad categories: Stability and Change. An individual Tsolyáni acknowledges all these deities, and may attend services at different deities' temples depending on the circumstances, but mainly worships one.

## Good and Evil

Some may be tempted to cast the Change Deities as "evil" and those of Stability as "good." Tsolyáni do not. Instead, they base their moral judgements on whether someone "acts nobly" by upholding the principles the person professes to value (see Noble Action, page 190). To a Tsolyáni, each of the 20 Deities is "noble" even if their philosophies and actions are repugnant to the person's own beliefs.

## Choosing a Deity

Your GM may restrict what deities characters may worship to ensure that the party can function as a group. Although an ancient law called the Concordat bars open violence between different faiths, religion is still a major source of factionalism and political conflict in Tsolyánu, and the followers of certain Deities rarely socialise with each other. This mainly happens across the Stability-Change line, though there are exceptions.

Review the list of Gods and Cohorts and decide which is most appropriate for your character. If you want further information, or are considering playing a member of the Priesthood, see Religion — The Gods of Tsolyánu (page 185). The Deity you choose is very important since the choice dictates what is appropriate behaviour, or Noble Action, for your character. There are no social level or gender restrictions for being a lay member of a religion, but Dilinála's faith restricts its Priesthood to women. There is no inferiority associated with worshipping a Cohort.



## Gods of Stability

- Hnálla* Stability; maintenance of the order of things; industry; piety; dignity.
- Karakán* War for the sake of society; courage; skill in weapons.
- Thúmis* Wisdom; learning; healing; knowledge for the good of society.
- Avánthe* Nature; the family; motherhood; fertility of crops; harvests.
- Belkhánu* Death; passage into the Afterlife; embalming; travel to other planes of existence; mysticism.

## Cohorts of Stability

- Drá* Cohort to Hnálla. Total indifference to this world; singing of hymns to Lord Hnálla.
- Chegárra* Cohort to Karakán. Heroism; warrior skills; statesmanship; governance.
- Keténgku* Cohort to Thúmis. Healing; applied wisdom; writing; science; art; architecture.
- Dilinála* Cohort to Avánthe. Femininity; virginity; daughterhood; sisterhood; platonic friendship; lesbianism.
- Qón* Cohort to Belkhánu. Protecting the spirit-soul in the Afterlife; combating demons.

## Gods of Change

- Hrüü* Ultimate chaos; secretiveness; darkness.
- Vimúhla* Catharsis through the Flame; slaughter; purifying destruction.
- Ksáruł* Knowledge for selfish use; magic; the "demon" planes.
- Sárku* Survival of the intellect after death; the undead; tombs.
- Dlamélish* Hedonism; pleasure of the Now; sensuality; certain demon planes.

## Cohorts of Change

- Wurú* Cohort to Hrüü. Darkness; the Underworlds; combating Stability.
- Chiténg* Cohort to Vimúhla. Fighting; cruelty; bloodlust; torment; plunder; violence.
- Grugánu* Cohort to Ksáruł. Sorcery; magical devices; other-planar travel.
- Durrilámish* Cohort to Sárku. The undead; tombs; creatures of the Underworlds.
- Hriháyal* Cohort to Dlamélish. Sexual ecstasy; orgies; debauchery; greed; and avarice.





## Character Creation Example #1

### The Scholar Priest

*Sarah feels that her character would be best suited to be a worshipper of Lord Thúmís, God of Wisdom. It matches her concept of an intensely curious scholar.*

## Character Creation Example #2

### The Sword Master

*Simon decides his character is a worshipper of Vimúhla, Lord of Fire.*

### Interlude: The Point Pools

Now that you have outlined your character and figured out where he or she fits into Tsolyáni society, it is time to determine the game values that correspond to your concept. There are three different Point pools:

- **Character Points**, used for Stats and Attributes (which confer special advantages); you can also assign Defects (disadvantages) which give you Bonus Points to increase a character's Stats or assign additional Attributes.
- **Skill Points**, used for Skills, including Magical Spells; Skill Points are based on your character's Stats and modified by certain Attributes and Defects.
- **Resource Points**, used to buy material resources during character generation and access clan resources during play; Resource Points are based on Clan and Lineage levels, and modified by certain Attributes and Defects.

You may not trade Points across pools. Before assigning any Points, read the next sections carefully.

All Career options except for Clan Employment have minimum Stat requirements. If you are planning on a specific Career, your character must meet those Stat requirements. Some careers also consider Clan Level, as well as certain Attributes and Defects.

## Exceptional Stats

### (for Heroic Fantasy campaigns)

If the GM permits it, players can buy Stats above their racial maximum (10 for humans). Above the racial maximum, the cost of the Stat doubles for each additional Level. No Stat may ever be raised above 12 by this method, regardless of race.

*Example: For a human, going from a value of 10 to 11 in a Stat costs two Points (a total of 12 Points), and from 11 to 12 costs four more Points (a total of 16 Points). Similarly, Shén have a maximum Dexterity of 7. For a Shén, a Dexterity of 8 costs 9 Points (since going from 7 to 8 costs 2 Points), a Dexterity of 9 costs 13 Points, etc. Since Shén have a maximum Strength of 11, reaching Strength 11 only costs 11 Points. Strength 12, however, costs two additional Points, for a net total of 13.*

**Table 2-2: Stat Value Descriptions**

Value	Description
0	Completely and utterly useless
1	Inept
2	Significantly below adult human average
3	Below adult human average
4	Adult human average
5	Above adult human average
6	Significantly above human average
7	Highly capable
8	Extremely capable
9	Best in the land
10	World-class ability
11	Legendary ability
12	Unequaled

## Step 4: Assign Stats

Your character has six Stats — Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Psyche, Willpower, and Charisma — to which you assign Character Points. Each Stat Level costs 1 Character Point. You can also spend Character Points on Attributes (page 16), or gain Bonus Points by acquiring Defects (page 24).

## Character Points

The number of Character Points granted to characters dictates their power level. Recommended values for the three basic types of campaigns are as follows.

**Gritty Realism:** 30 Character Points

**Middle Way:** 35 Character Points

**Heroic Fantasy:** 40 Character Points and up

## Stat Range

Each Stat ranges from 1 to 10 for humans, with an average of 4. When generating a human character, assign no less than 1 and no more than 10 Character Points to each Stat. For non-humans, the range for some Stats may differ. Shén, for example, have a maximum Strength of 11, but a maximum Dexterity of 7 (for Non-humans see page 52). GMs may wish to restrict the number of Points out of the total that can be spent on Stats in order to avoid characters that appear superhuman.

## Stats and Career Minimums

Before assigning Points, look ahead to Step 8: Careers, and check the minimum required Stats, if any, for your character's chosen Career.

## Body Stats

The Body Stats — Strength and Dexterity — represent a character's physical abilities. A character with good Body Stats is in good physical condition. Body Stats are important in all aspects of combat, as well as in non-combat Skills requiring physical competence such as Acrobatics or Calligraphy.

### Strength

The Strength Stat is a measure of the physical force the character can exert, as well as how much mass the character can carry. It is also an indication of how muscular the character is, and thus affects how much damage the character can endure.

### Dexterity

The Dexterity Stat measures the character's eye-hand co-ordination and sense of balance, as well as the ability to move fluidly and quickly. Dexterity affects the character's ability to dodge attacks, perform acrobatics, dance, etc., as well as how fast he or she can run. As a general measure of health, it also influences the character's ability to withstand damage. For spellcasters, it is valuable in casting Ritual Magic.

## Mind Stats

The Mind Stats — Intelligence and Psyche — represent a character's mental abilities. A character with good Mind Stats is intelligent and psychically acute. Mind Stats are critical in using magic, but are also useful in many other contexts.

### Intelligence

The Intelligence Stat measures the character's ability to learn rapidly and, in some cases, make quick judgements. An extremely high Intelligence Stat increases the character's Initiative in combat, and it is a factor in Magic Resistance. To use magic, a character must have an Intelligence Stat of 5+ (see Magic, page 113). It is also used as the base Stat for Skills requiring memory or analytical ability.



## Psyche

Psyche is the character's sensitivity to extra-planar forces and, with training, the character's aptitude at manipulating them. Characters who use magic must have a Psyche Stat of 5+ (see Magic, page 113). A character untrained in magic but with a high Psyche Stat may, at the GM's discretion, receive flashes of insight about coming events (for example, impending dangerous situations). Psyche is also valuable to characters who do not use magic; it assists with Magic Resistance, can be valuable in operating techno-magical devices, and factors into certain Skills where intuition is important.

## Soul Stats

The Soul Stats — Willpower and Charisma — represent strength of character. A character with high Soul Stats has great presence and fortitude. Soul Stats are important for resisting shock in combat, pushing the character beyond his or her limits, and dealing with other people.

## Willpower

The Willpower Stat reflects the character's force of will, indicating his or her ability to endure difficult circumstances. It is used to resist Stun effects in combat, and as the base Stat for Skills involving self-control and perseverance.

## Charisma

The Charisma Stat measures a character's ability to appeal to others as a combination of empathy and an ability to project one's personality. This is a valuable trait in social interactions and professional advancement, and it is a base Stat for most social interaction Skills.

## Character Creation Example #1

### The Scholar Priest

*As this is a Middle of the Way campaign, each character starts with 35 points to build their character. Starting with the Body stats there is nothing in the conception that requires notable physical abilities. Sarah decides to go with close to human normal, but with slightly higher than normal Dexterity, to account for his upbringing in the forest amongst a race with four arms. She assigns a Strength of 4 and a Dexterity of 5. In contrast, this character must have high Mind Stats because he is a scholar and a magician (being able to use magic requires a high Psyche). Sarah decides on an Intelligence of 8 and a Psyche of 7. Harsán is hardly charismatic — with a Charisma of 3 he is slightly geeky, but he is strong willed and assigns a Willpower of 5. She has 32 points in his Stats and so has 3 points left for various Attributes.*

## Character Creation Example #2

### The Sword Master

*It is now time to look at the character's Stats and physical ability obviously has to be predominant. Simon assigns the Sword Master a Strength of 8 (ensuring he is strong enough to use two swords at the same time) and a Dexterity of 8. His Mind and Soul stats are very average except for a slightly higher Willpower: his Intelligence and Charisma are 4 and his Willpower is 5. Since he has no use for the Psyche Stat, he lowers it to 2, to save some Character Points. He has spent a total of 31 Character Points.*

## Step 5: Assign Attributes

The six Stats represent your character's basic abilities, but his or her more specific acquired or innate talents and abilities are known as Attributes. Any Character Points remaining after you have purchased Stats are available to acquire Attributes.

There are many different Character Attributes, each representing a particular talent or special ability. The Attribute entries give the Levels that can be obtained, though the GM may increase this limit when appropriate. Acquiring an Attribute or increasing it in Level requires the expenditure of one or more Character Points depending on the Attribute's Character Point cost per Level.

The selection of Attributes is one of the most important steps during character creation. Through Attributes, you define your character's unique capabilities compared to other individuals. Think carefully about the balance between a few higher-Level Attributes and a large number of lower-Level Attributes.

If you find yourself needing more Character Points than you have been assigned, consider burdening your character with one or more Defects (Step 6: Assign Defects, page 24). Each Defect can provide you with additional Character Points, which can be used to acquire more Attributes or higher Stats.

## Attributes

### Ambidextrous

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character can use either hand with equal, or near-equal, facility. Each Level reduces the penalty for off-hand use and using a Weapon Combination (see Fight Manoeuvre, page 43) by 1.

- |                |                                       |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Level 1</b> | Reduce penalty for off-hand use by 1. |
| <b>Level 2</b> | Reduce penalty for off-hand use by 2. |
| <b>Level 3</b> | Reduce penalty for off-hand use by 3. |
| <b>Level 4</b> | Reduce penalty for off-hand use by 4. |

### Aptitude

**Cost:** 2 Points/Level

The character has a natural aptitude, talent, or early intense training for a particular Skill. It can never be used to reduce the cost of Spells or Special Items. This Attribute halves Skill costs in a specific area.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | The character has an aptitude for one particular mundane, non-combat Skill (Climbing, Negotiation, Etiquette etc.). Costs for that Skill are halved.  |
| <b>Level 2</b> | The character has a talent for a specific combat Skill (Sword, Spear, etc.), the Magic Skill, general languages, or a particular Spell Group (such as Domination). Costs for that Skill are halved. |



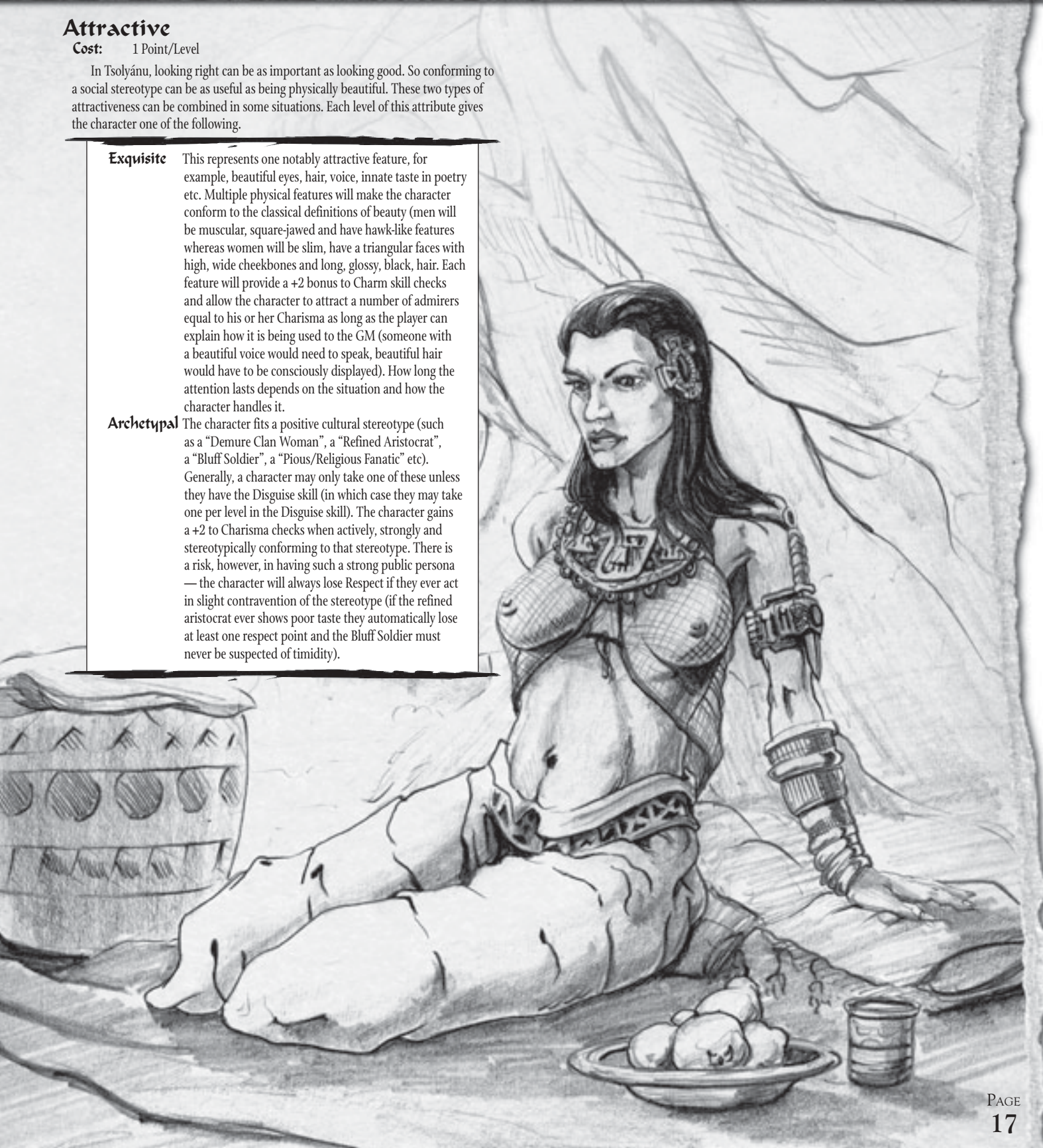
## Attractive

Cost: 1 Point/Level

In Tsolyánu, looking right can be as important as looking good. So conforming to a social stereotype can be as useful as being physically beautiful. These two types of attractiveness can be combined in some situations. Each level of this attribute gives the character one of the following.

**Exquisite** This represents one notably attractive feature, for example, beautiful eyes, hair, voice, innate taste in poetry etc. Multiple physical features will make the character conform to the classical definitions of beauty (men will be muscular, square-jawed and have hawk-like features whereas women will be slim, have a triangular faces with high, wide cheekbones and long, glossy, black, hair. Each feature will provide a +2 bonus to Charm skill checks and allow the character to attract a number of admirers equal to his or her Charisma as long as the player can explain how it is being used to the GM (someone with a beautiful voice would need to speak, beautiful hair would have to be consciously displayed). How long the attention lasts depends on the situation and how the character handles it.

**Archetypal** The character fits a positive cultural stereotype (such as a “Demure Clan Woman”, a “Refined Aristocrat”, a “Bluff Soldier”, a “Pious/Religious Fanatic” etc). Generally, a character may only take one of these unless they have the Disguise skill (in which case they may take one per level in the Disguise skill). The character gains a +2 to Charisma checks when actively, strongly and stereotypically conforming to that stereotype. There is a risk, however, in having such a strong public persona — the character will always lose Respect if they ever act in slight contravention of the stereotype (if the refined aristocrat ever shows poor taste they automatically lose at least one respect point and the Bluff Soldier must never be suspected of timidity).





## Base Cunning

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character is good at understanding what he or she needs to do to survive in the short-term — spotting possible threats, identifying escape routes, and saying the thing that is least likely to get him or her killed in an argument. The character only benefits from this Attribute when in fear of imminent physical injury and it only ever applies to directly avoiding harm. Characters with an Intelligence of 6 or greater may not acquire this Attribute.

- Level 1** The character receives a temporary bonus of +2 to Intelligence where the Attribute applies.
- Level 2** The character receives a temporary bonus of +4 to Intelligence where the Attribute applies.

## Blessed

**Cost:** 2 Points/Level

The character has received the blessing of some supernatural patron (God, Demon, etc.). The details should be developed with the GM. The patron is not necessarily helping the character due to sheer kindness (the character may even have entered a demonic bargain).

- Level 1** The character tends to be in the right place for the patron's purposes, and is especially protected in the immediate area (within Psyche metres) of a shrine or significant recent (Psyche rounds) ritual sacrifice to the patron. The main effect of this is that the character cannot critically fail while in that environment (the critical is converted to an ordinary failure).
- Level 2** The character tends to meet the right people for the patron's purposes, and while in the immediate area of influence of the patron the character is twice as likely to have a critical success. The character is also lucky and has +1 to Gambling checks.
- Level 3** The character is notably blessed. Once per game session, the player may suggest a specific piece of luck and make a Psyche check to see if it works. The GM sets any difficulty modifiers for the check.

## Decisive

**Cost:** 2 Points/Level

The character responds quickly and decisively to changing circumstances. This has obvious advantages for a warrior, but is also useful in social situations.

- Level 1** The character is decisive. He or she gets +3 to Initiative in combat and can make snappy verbal responses (+1 bonus to Etiquette in snappy repartee).
- Level 2** As Level 1, plus the character recovers quickly from surprise (+2 Will check to recover from surprise, see page 103), is more agile (+1 to Agility checks) and makes a good bargainer (+1 bonus).
- Level 3** The character's thoughts and actions are as one. He or she wakes from sleep instantly ready to act, moving with certainty, speed, and clarity of action. The character has +1 to Defence checks and +6 Initiative in combat. This level of decisiveness, however, usually comes with a price; the GM may require the character to pay for it with Bonus Points in the Impulsiveness, Distractible, and/or Shadow Scars Defects.

## Emotional Control

**Cost:** 2 Points/Level

The character has unusually good control of his or her emotions, which the Tsoyáni link to the Pedhétl. Characters with this Attribute may not take the Addiction Defect.

- Level 1** The character has good personal control, and can squash feelings like minor irritation, attraction, and fear. This gives a +1 bonus for Charm, Etiquette, or Negotiation Checks.
- Level 2** As Level 1, plus the character is emotionally perceptive. This gives a +1 bonus to resist the Intimidation, Charm, or Seduction Skills, and a +2 bonus when using the Deception Skill to detect or tell a lie.
- Level 3** As Level 2, plus the character is an emotional rock and can choose to either screen out feelings or induce true emotion in him or herself. The character is immune to intimidation and charm and has such strong emotional control that he or she receives a second Willpower check to resist even supernaturally induced fear should the first check fail.

## Flunkies

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character is accompanied by servants, toadies, or hangers-on. These people are NPCs, built on 20 Character Points each. They can provide a range of mundane services, but cannot use combat Skills or Magic, and will fight only in self-defence. This is a common Attribute for aristocrats, who often have flunkies from lesser lineages within their clan and lower-standing client clans, and for prominent people at any level of society, who attract hangers-on.

- Level 1** The character controls 1 flunky.
- Level 2** The character controls 2 flunkies.
- Level 3** The character controls 3 or 4 flunkies.
- Level 4** The character controls 5 to 7 flunkies.
- Level 5** The character controls 8 to 12 flunkies.
- Level 6** The character controls 13 to 20 (or more) flunkies.

## Friends in High Places

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character has a named friend in a position of influence and/or power. The player should develop the friend's background and personality in consultation with the GM. Friends will go out of their way to help the character, but have other obligations that can interfere with their availability. Furthermore, a character who abuses friendships may find that they become far less useful.

The friend's actual level of influence should be consistent with the level of the campaign. For example, a rural magistrate is very well-placed to a low-clan person, but not to someone from the Clan of Sea Blue.

- Level 1** The friend is either a good contact (above the character's rank in one of the professions) or a competent and close ally.
- Level 2** The friend is either a very well-placed contact or a close friend with specifically (and frequently) useful Skills.
- Level 3** The friend is extremely well placed or notably loyal and courageous, and will put the character's welfare before the friend's own. This Level could also represent a group of friends who are not as well placed or loyal but are still ready to help when needed. A Clan Elder or Lineage head could call on this Level of support from a clanhouse.
- Level 4** The friend is very powerful for the campaign setting, or is a loyal and/or well-placed group.
- Level 5** The friend is, or controls, a powerful organisation in the campaign setting.



## Good Reputation

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character has a good reputation. In Tsolyánu's relatively static society, with a common set of values, this is extremely useful. The specific kind of reputation that would be beneficial depends on the campaign. For example, a reputation as a "Cold Blooded Killer" may be beneficial in some campaigns, but damaging in others. Additionally, someone with a reputation may be called upon to defend it — or lose it.

- Level 1** *Minor.* The character has a good reputation amongst most people he or she knows (local clubhouse, work colleagues, etc.). This could be a simple descriptor such as "reliable" or "skilled swordsman." This will affect the reaction of anyone who knows about the reputation. Increase starting Respect by 5 Points.
- Level 2** *Well-known.* The character's reputation is as above, but is also known city or province-wide, even to people who the character has never met. If someone is looking for a person of the character's reputation, the character's name will soon be mentioned. Increase starting Respect by 10 Points.
- Level 3** *Local hero.* The character did something notably good at some point in the past, perhaps saving a small child from a burning barn or winning a medal in the war. The character is a bit of a local hero and a large number of ordinary people are well disposed toward the character. Increase starting Respect by 15 Points.
- Level 4** *Minor celebrity.* This Local Hero has made the big time, with a reputation at the City or Province level. Increase starting Respect by 20 Points.
- Level 5** *Celebrity.* The character has established a major reputation and is well known in their locality and known even outside it. This is appropriate for a war hero or a particularly admired member of the local community. The player must develop a reasonable back story in consultation with the GM to justify this. Increase starting Respect by 25 Points.
- Level 6** *Renowned hero.* The character is widely known and has an excellent reputation. Increase starting Respect by 30 Points.

## Got the Breaks

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character has either made all the right moves, been assisted in his or her career, or simply been lucky in his or her professional life. In some cases, there may be a political reason for this success, which may be an important part of the character's story. For example, the character may have been placed because of his or her loyalty to a particular sect, political group, or powerful individual. Characters with this Attribute might also have the Friends in High Places Attribute and the Responsibility Defect.

- Level 1** The character starts at one rank higher in his or her chosen profession and starting Resource Points are multiplied by 1.1.
- Level 2** The character starts at two ranks higher in his or her chosen profession and starting Resource Points are multiplied by 1.2.
- Level 3** The character starts at three ranks higher in his or her chosen profession and starting Resource Points are multiplied by 1.3.

## Harmony Amongst the Five Selves

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The integration of the five elements of the Self bestows several benefits. This Attribute is incompatible with the Shadow Scars Defect.

- Level 1** The character's shadow-self is well integrated, which allows the character to sleep well in sub-optimal situations, cat-nap and wake up quickly and refreshed. He or she is imaginative and creative in minor ways.
- Level 2** As above, plus the character is very adaptable and can create novel solutions to practical problems. This gives +1 to any Artisan or Wilderness Survival check and also means that the character will instinctively find whatever comforts are available in any environment.
- Level 3** As above, plus the character is a lateral thinker (how well they think depends on Intelligence) and has a +1 to Tactics and Teamwork checks.

## Good with Animals

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character is unusually comfortable around animals and handles them well. This ability does not apply to non-sentient creatures.

- Level 1** The character grew up around animals and is good with them, receiving a +2 bonus on all Skill checks involving animal handling or training, and can immediately befriend any domestic animal with a successful Willpower Stat check.
- Level 2** The character has a real affinity for animals. In addition to the benefits of Level 1, he or she also has an advantage when dealing with wild animals. On a successful Intelligence Stat check, the character can predict the behaviour of any animal he or she sees. The character receives a bonus of +2 on Wilderness Survival checks involving animals.

## High Lineage

**Cost:** 2 Points/Level

The character comes from a higher-status lineage within his or her clan. This Attribute increases the character's relative status within the clan: the character sits above people of lower lineages at mealtimes, is put in charge of people from lower lineages on clan business, etc. Higher lineages also often have more wealth, or better access to clan wealth, so starting Resource Points are increased. This advantage is most important in campaigns set predominantly within a given clan.

- Level 1** High Lineage; the character comes from a lineage within the clan that is more noble than average. The character has 1.5 x starting Resources.
- Level 2** Very High Lineage; the character is from one of the top few lineages in the clan. The character has 2.5 x starting Resources.



## High Pedhétl

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

Pedhétl is the ability to store extra-planar energy, the character's "psychic reservoir." Characters who are going to cast Spells need a high Pedhétl. Pedhétl is also a factor in magic resistance, and how well healing Spells work on the character. A character without this Advantage or the Low Pedhétl Defect has a Pedhétl of 4. Magic use requires a Pedhétl of 6.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | The character has 5 Points of Pedhétl.  |
| <b>Level 2</b> | The character has 6 Points of Pedhétl.  |
| <b>Level 3</b> | The character has 7 Points of Pedhétl.  |
| <b>Level 4</b> | The character has 8 Points of Pedhétl.  |
| <b>Level 5</b> | The character has 9 Points of Pedhétl.  |
| <b>Level 6</b> | The character has 10 Points of Pedhétl. |

## High Status

**Cost:** 5 Points/Level

The character comes from a clan with higher status than normal for the campaign. Since clan is everything to the Tsolyáni, this Attribute confers great benefits, but at the potential cost of social exclusion.

For example, the GM has set the Clan Level for the game at Medium; a character with this Attribute at Level 1 would be from a High Clan; a character with this Attribute at Level 2 would be from a Very High Clan.

**NOTE:** Your GM will tell you whether you can select this Attribute and, if so, how many Levels you may assign your character.

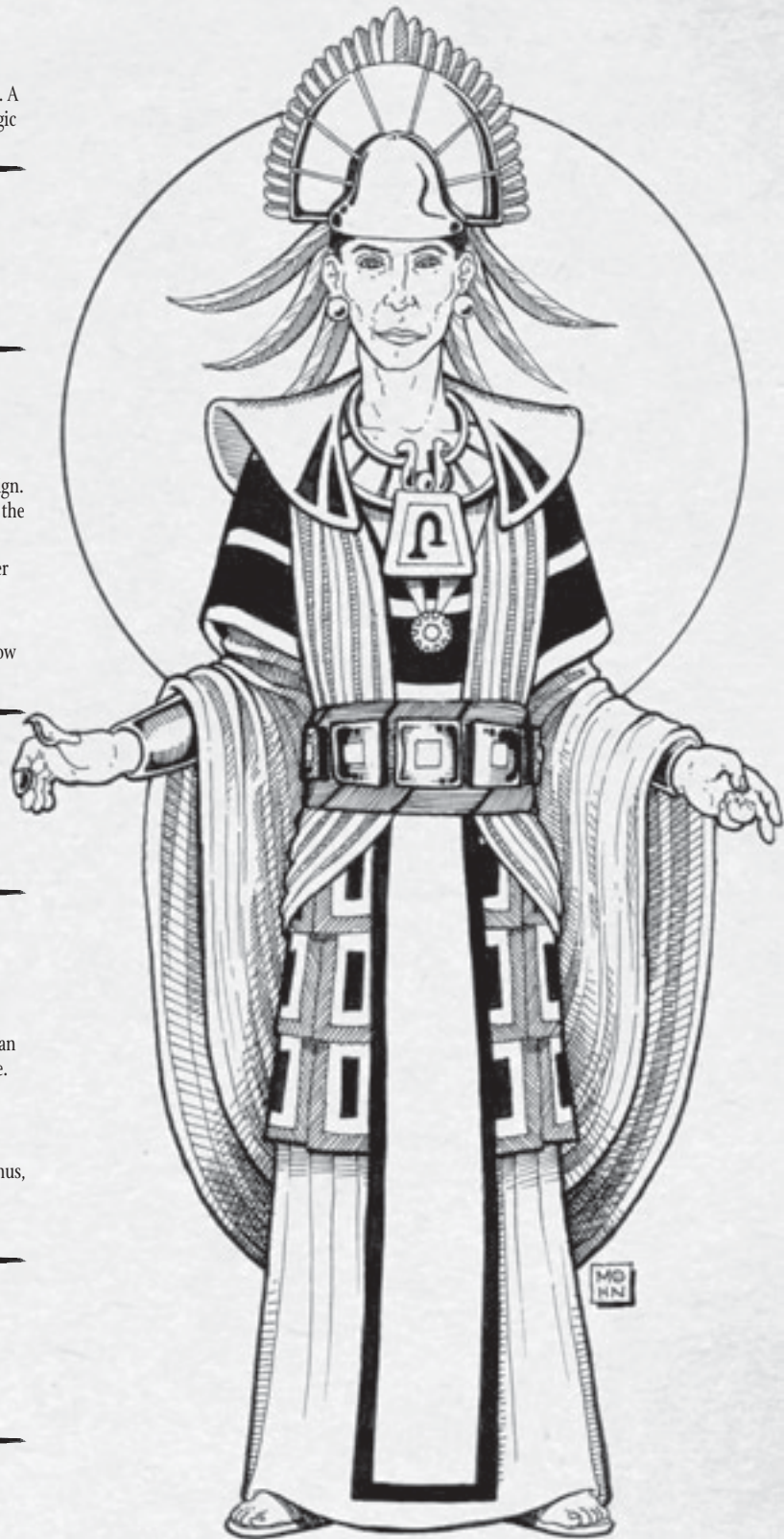
- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | One clan Level higher than the norm for the campaign.   |
| <b>Level 2</b> | Two clan Levels higher than the norm for the campaign. Allowing players to purchase this Level is not recommended, unless having one or more characters be of a much higher standing is an integral part of the campaign's structure (such as a party consisting of a noble and retinue). |

## Highly Skilled

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character has intensive training or more experience than most, and thus more Skill Points than is usual for his or her age. The maximum Level a character can assign to this Attribute is one Level higher than he or she has of the Older Attribute. Therefore, a character with the Younger Defect, or someone with no Levels of the Older Attribute, may only take one Level of Highly Skilled while a character with one Level of the Older Attribute may take two Levels of Highly Skilled, etc. Each additional Level beyond Level 6 grants the character an additional 8 Skill Points. Thus, a character with Highly Skilled at Level 10 possesses an additional 80 Skill Points. Characters with the Distractible Defect may not acquire this Attribute.

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Level 1</b> | The character has 8 extra Skill Points.  |
| <b>Level 2</b> | The character has 16 extra Skill Points. |
| <b>Level 3</b> | The character has 24 extra Skill Points. |
| <b>Level 4</b> | The character has 32 extra Skill Points. |
| <b>Level 5</b> | The character has 40 extra Skill Points. |
| <b>Level 6</b> | The character has 48 extra Skill Points. |





## Large Build

**Cost:** 2 Points/Level

An average Tsolyáni male is 1.68 m. and masses 65 kg; women are about 1.57 m. and 61 kg. Characters with this Attribute are much bigger. A character with this Attribute cannot also have the Small Build Attribute.

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Level 1</b> | <i>Large.</i> The character is significantly larger than an average Tsolyáni. Add 1d10+5 cm to height. The character has a long stride (+1 Initiative in combat, +10% hiking/running distance). The character has a +1 bonus to Intimidate checks and resisting poison. The character requires significantly more food and water than an average Tsolyáni, however.  |
| <b>Level 2</b> | <i>Huge!</i> This size is normally associated only with the N'lüss barbarians, and is often associated with the Ugly Defect. Increase the character's height by 2d10+10 cm. This gives the character a very long stride and a long reach (+2 Initiative in combat, 20% hiking/running). The character does an additional x1 Damage Multiplier in melee and has a +1 bonus when wrestling. He or she also requires a lot of food and water and is vulnerable to heat exhaustion in a Tsolyáni summer. The character is a large target, and attackers receive a +1 bonus with missile attacks against the character. The character will also have to pay 1d10 times the normal prices to get boots and armour that fit properly, unless they are purchased from N'lüss craftspeople. The character may not have the Attractive Attribute. The character gets a +1 bonus to Intimidate and Poison checks. |

## Magic Dampener

**Cost:** 4 Points

Something in the character's makeup interferes with the drawing of extra-planar energy. Spells cannot be cast within one metre of the character (friendly or hostile). The character cannot be psychically read or detected, and cannot cast magical Spells. Magical items that draw upon the user's energy cannot be used at all within the affected area (by the character or by others). Items that possess charges may be used once within the affected area but must be removed from the area around the Dampener before being able to activate another charge (the next charge will not "load" within the dampened area). The character cannot activate scrolls, books, inscriptions, or other "triggered" enchantments — those that require a psychic "spark" from the reader. Thus, a Dampener can read a scroll but it will not activate but he or she also cannot trigger a sorcerous trap that requires reading.

Dampeners are rare, and the GM should consider whether such a character will be too disruptive to the campaign before approving this Attribute. GMs running High Magic campaigns may reduce the cost, or even consider it a Defect and allow characters to receive Bonus Points for taking it.

Characters with this Attribute may not take the Magical Ability or High Pedhétl Attributes, the Low Pedhétl Defect or the Psychic Magic, Ritual Magic, or Energy Management Skills.

This Attribute has only one level — the character is either a Dampener or he or she is not.

## Magical Ability

**Cost:** 3 Points/Level

Magical Ability is the ability to sense and use extra-planar energy. Characters who lack this Attribute cannot be magic users. To be able to cast Spells, the character also needs the minimum Stats, either Psychic Magic or Ritual Magic (or both), a positive Pedhétl, and at least one Spell. GMs may elect not to use this Attribute in a High Magic campaign, permitting characters to learn magic without it. Conversely, GMs running Low Magic campaigns may choose to bar the purchase of this Attribute or increase its cost. Characters with this Attribute can not take the Magic Dampener Attribute.

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Level 1</b> | The character has the ability to learn either Psychic Magic or Ritual Magic. |
| <b>Level 2</b> | The character has the ability to learn both Psychic Magic and Ritual Magic.  |

## Multiple Weapon Use

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character has an aptitude for using multiple weapons simultaneously (sword and shield, rapier and dagger, etc.). Some non-human species are born with this Attribute. Each Level reduces the total penalty of a Weapon Combination (see Fight Manoeuvre, page 43) by 1, but the difficulty cannot be reduced below zero (so only 4 Levels are useful for humans).

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Level 1</b> | The penalty of a weapon combination is reduced by 1. |
| <b>Level 2</b> | The penalty of a weapon combination is reduced by 2. |
| <b>Level 3</b> | The penalty of a weapon combination is reduced by 3. |
| <b>Level 4</b> | The penalty of a weapon combination is reduced by 4. |

## Older

**Cost:** 2 Points/Level

Characters normally enter game play at age 20, and the base number of Skill Points reflects that. Characters with this Advantage begin the campaign older, and thus have more Points available for Skills, and perhaps a higher rank in their chosen profession. Each additional Level increases the character's age by up to five years and provides an additional 12 Skill Points. At age 35, characters begin to experience ageing effects. Thus, a character with this Attribute at Level 10 would begin the game at age 70, and possess an additional 120 Skill Points, but would also have a maximum total of 7 Body Stat Points.

Characters who increase in age past one of these Points during game play do not automatically gain additional Skill Points — they will have earned more Points than this in play. The Body Stat restrictions do apply, however, as reflected in the Ageing rules (page 230).

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | 21-25 years old; +12 to starting Skill Points.  |
| <b>Level 2</b> | 26-30 years old; +24 to starting Skill Points.  |
| <b>Level 3</b> | 31-35 years old; +36 to starting Skill Points. Total of Body Stats may not exceed 14. |
| <b>Level 4</b> | 36-40 years old; +48 to starting Skill Points. Total of Body Stats may not exceed 13. |
| <b>Level 5</b> | 41-45 years old; +60 to starting Skill Points. Total of Body Stats may not exceed 12. |
| <b>Level 6</b> | 46-50 years old; +72 to starting Skill Points. Total of Body Stats may not exceed 11. |



## Physical Advantage

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character has a specific physical advantage. It is possible to buy this Attribute multiple times to get multiple advantages. Each Level grants the character one of the following Physical Advantages:

*Good Eyesight.* The character has particularly good eyesight and gets a +1 bonus to tasks where simple visual perception is concerned.

*Good Hearing.* The character has particularly good hearing and gets a +1 bonus to hearing rolls.

*Perceptive Taste.* The character has a particularly good palate and gets an Observation check to identify vintages, recipes, and even otherwise imperceptible poisons in food and drink.

*Hand-Eye Co-ordination.* The character is naturally good at judging distances, which gives him or her an advantage when using a missile weapon at long range. Halve difficulty modifiers due to range.

*Built for speed.* The character is a natural runner, can sprint 20% faster than normal, and has +1 to Running checks.

*Dry Adapted.* The character can survive on less water and in higher temperatures than is normal for a Tsolyáni.

## Resolute

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character is unusually clear thinking and is able to ignore discomfort, distraction and pain. Any Level of this Attribute is incompatible with the Distractible or Impulsive Defect.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | On any given round the character can ignore injury penalties to their Initiative if he or she makes a successful Willpower check (this may be modified by injury). The character gains a+2 bonus to resist starvation, interrogation etc. The character also gains a +1 bonus to Wilderness Survival and Ritual skill checks. |
| <b>Level 2</b> | As Level 1, plus on any given round the character can ignore injury penalties to both Initiative and Attack checks if he or she makes a modified Willpower check. The character also gains a +1 bonus to Command and Planning checks and to resist being rendered unconscious due to injury.                                  |
| <b>Level 3</b> | As Level 2, plus on any given round the character can ignore all injury and exhaustion penalties if he or she can make a modified Willpower check. He or she gains a +1 bonus to his or her defence check when using Total Defence and to any Hiking, Teamwork or Climbing skill checks                                       |

## Retainer

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The character has a retainer or bodyguard — an almost constant companion who is extremely loyal and protective. This Attribute gives the player Character Points with which to build a retainer. He or she may have any Attribute, Skill, or Defect the GM allows. GMs can restrict the number of Attribute Levels a player may assign. A retainer will never be of higher social standing than the character, but could be of equal clan status.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | The Retainer is built on 20 Character Points. |
| <b>Level 2</b> | The Retainer is built on 25 Character Points. |
| <b>Level 3</b> | The Retainer is built on 30 Character Points. |

## Skein of Destiny

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

The Tsolyáni believe that everyone has a destiny, and some features of it may be divined (by astrology, for example). Any major Temple can have a divination performed, but it is easy for a character to be unaware that he or she has this Attribute.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | The character's destiny excludes one specific, unusual form of death. This could be drowning, falling, Zrné attack, etc. For example, a character may be certain that they will not die by drowning, but this does not mean that a sea monster can't eat him or her. This Attribute may only be taken multiple times with the permission of the GM. |
| <b>Level 2</b> | Destined to die violently. This may not seem like much of an advantage, but it means that the character cannot be killed by non-violent means. They may be injured, crippled, scarred, hideously maimed, or put in a coma, but they cannot be killed except by violence.  |

## Small Build

**Cost** 2 Points/Level

Just as some large builds can be an advantage, so too can some small builds. This Attribute is incompatible with the Large Build Attribute.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | <i>Small.</i> The character has the small, slim build commonly associated with dancers and acrobats. This build makes the character a harder target for missile attacks (-1 penalty to the attacker's check) and gives a better power to weight ratio (+1 to Climbing and Acrobatics). People with this build also require slightly less food and water than an average Tsolyáni. Maximum Strength is 7.          |
| <b>Level 2</b> | <i>Natural gymnast.</i> The character has the perfect build for an acrobat (+2 bonus to Acrobatics checks); he or she is small enough to be a harder target (attackers suffer a -1 to both missile and melee attacks or Observation checks to spot the character). The character also only requires half the food and water of an average Tsolyáni. This also gives a +1 bonus to Stealth. Maximum Strength is 5. |

## Special Item

**Cost:** 4 Points/Level

The character possesses an unusual, possibly magical item. They may have inherited it, found it when digging out a tree stump, captured it from an enemy, even stolen it, etc. Whatever the reason, the character has a relatively powerful item beyond that which their wealth Level would suggest. This Attribute is most appropriate for a Heroic campaign and should be handled with caution in other campaign types.

Resource Points gained in this way can only be spent on special items (not property or income, etc.) and are never increased by the Wealth or High Lineage Attributes or reduced by the Low Lineage or Poor Defects. To determine the Resource Point cost of a special item, refer to the rules on designing special items (See Designing Special Items, page 83). The player should develop the story of how the special item came into the character's possession, and should discuss it with the GM.

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Level 1</b> | The character has 150 Resource Points. |
| <b>Level 2</b> | The character has 300 Resource Points. |
| <b>Level 3</b> | The character has 450 Resource Points. |



## Stamina

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

By current Earth standards, most Tsolyáni have great stamina. A character with this Attribute has high endurance even by Tsolyáni standards, and is capable of feats above the norm for characters with equivalent Body Stats.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | +2 to Stat or Skill checks relating to endurance. |
| <b>Level 2</b> | +4 to Stat or Skill checks relating to endurance. |
| <b>Level 3</b> | +6 to Stat or Skill checks relating to endurance. |

## Tough

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

Tsolyáni are all resilient, but some are tougher than others and can shrug off damage that would fell a lesser person.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | +5 to Health Points. The character gains a +1 bonus to resist poisons and similar effects.  |
| <b>Level 2</b> | +10 to Health Points. The character gains a +2 bonus to resist poisons and similar effects. |
| <b>Level 3</b> | +20 to Health Points. The character gains a +3 bonus to resist poisons and similar effects. |

## Veteran

**Cost:** 2 Points/Level

The character has seen military service during the recent wars. This is an easy way of giving a good range of military Skills, but the GM may insist upon Pikes, Spears, and other military weapons rather than the player's preferred choices. The character has a number of recognisable injury scars and dead friends equal to their Level of this Attribute (player's choice of location and cause).

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Level 1</b> | The character is a Legion veteran. He or she has Familiarity with up to four of the Legion's standard combat Skills (typically some combination of pike, spear, or polearm, sword or axe, shield, and brawling or wrestling) and one distinctive, non-combat Profession Skill (Siege Weapons, Logistics, Officer, etc.) at Level 1. |
| <b>Level 2</b> | As above, plus the character has experienced enough combat to have a situational awareness which gives him or her a +1 bonus to all Teamwork checks, as well as checks to detect threats, recover from surprise, and resist intimidation.   |
| <b>Level 3</b> | As above, plus the character has Level 1 with up to five of his or her old legion weapons and +1 to Planning and Analysis checks due to extensive combat experience.  |

## Wealthy

**Cost:** 1 Point/Level

Characters with this Attribute come from families that are wealthier than others of equivalent status. Even within the highest clans, there are impoverished members; similarly, even families of very low status can be relatively affluent. This often tracks geography: clanhouses in remote rural areas are generally the poorest, while those in the great cities of the empire (Béy Sü, Jakálla, Avanthár) are by far the wealthiest. GMs running a campaign set in a major city may want to give one or two Levels of this Attribute to all characters to represent the wealth found in an urban environment.

Tsolyáni judge people based on the status of their clan and lineage, and their personal accomplishments; wealth is irrelevant to status, but is certainly convenient.

- |                |                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Level 1</b> | Multiply Resource Points by 1.5. |
| <b>Level 2</b> | Multiply Resource Points by 2.   |
| <b>Level 3</b> | Multiply Resource Points by 3.   |
| <b>Level 4</b> | Multiply Resource Points by 4.   |
| <b>Level 5</b> | Multiply Resource Points by 5.   |

## Character Creation Example #1 The Scholar Priest

*To be a magician a character must have at least one level of the Magical Ability Attribute. Sarah takes one level of the Magical Ability Attribute and selects Psychic Magic since her character learned magic among the psychically sensitive Pé Chói. She decides to take 3 levels of High Pedhétl to increase the amount of magical energy he can store.*

*To be able to have sufficient Skill Points to make a skilled character and a good Spell selection (Spells are bought with Skill Points), she takes 2 levels of the Older Attribute and 1 level of the Highly Skilled Attribute. His Attributes cost a total of 10 Character Points.*

## Character Creation Example #2 The Sword Master

*The first thing Simon does is read the Attributes section to see if any will be important to his character's Skills (some Attributes affect Skills). The Aptitude Attribute is particularly useful for a character with a very high level of a single Skill because it halves the Skill cost: he takes Aptitude (Sword) at level 2. Ambidexterity would also be useful and Simon takes four levels of it, to offset any penalties for off-hand use. He wants to be able to use two swords and takes 4 levels of the Multiple Weapon Use Attribute to suffer no penalties for using Weapon Combinations and be able to make two attacks per round without any penalties. To improve his Initiative, he takes a level of the Decisive Attribute.*

*Although it is expensive, he also decides to take the Special Item Attribute so that he can purchase a truly outstanding pair of blades for his character (using the Designing Special Items rules). The character is based around his skill with a sword and needs to be Older and Highly Skilled to get enough Skill Points: Simon takes 2 levels of Older and 3 levels of Highly Skilled.*

*His Attributes cost a total of 23 Character Points.*



## Step 6: Assign Defects

Defects are disadvantages through which your character must suffer in order to overcome the hardships of day-to-day life. Defects serve as an excellent role-playing opportunity. They only impede your character to a limited extent and are not intended to totally negate his or her many abilities.

By taking a Character Defect you can gain Bonus Points (BP) to use when acquiring Stats or Attributes. The number of Points you receive is directly proportional to how much the Defect hinders your character; Defects that do not inflict a significant disadvantage are not worth any Bonus Points. After you have selected your character's Defects, return to the previous steps to use your Bonus Points.

## Defects

### Addicted

Addiction on Tékumel does not carry the inherent stigma it does in our world, but it can lead the addict to act ignobly. A character can be addicted to drugs, alcohol, risk, gambling, sex, violence, or just about any activity possible. Addicted characters do not partake of their chosen activity because they enjoy it, but because they have to.

- 1 BP** The character still has some ability to control the addiction. When presented with an opportunity to indulge in his or her chosen addiction, the character must make a Willpower Stat check to resist. Make this roll every five minutes the character is in the presence of temptation. The same roll is required to stop, unless something else (friends, bankruptcy, fatigue, etc.) stops the character first.
- 2 BP** The character is severely addicted. He or she must make a Willpower Stat check with a -3 penalty to resist temptation for every five minutes of exposure. The same roll is required to stop, unless something extreme (being attacked, lack of ready funds, unconsciousness) stops the character first. Additionally, the character must spend 25% of all Skill Points on Skills related to the addiction (GM's discretion).

### Arrogant

The character is unusually proud and arrogant whatever his or her actual social position or capabilities may be.

- 1 BP** The character is arrogant and over-confident, feeling him or herself to be much more important, powerful, or influential than he or she actually is. The character should pick a Stat, Attribute, or Skill that he or she believes is 2 Levels higher than it actually is.
- 2 BP** As above, plus the character is so arrogant that any loss of Respect is extremely painful (double any loss of Respect). He or she also tends to be boastful, which (if the character is a warrior) may result in his or her claims being tested in the Arena. A Willpower check is required to avoid some idiotic confrontation each week.

### Bad Days

The character occasionally has a "bad day" on which he or she finds life particularly difficult. Whenever the GM wishes or the first time he or she must make a Skill check in a given day, the player checks to see if this will be a bad day. On a bad day, any 10 rolled on the die is an automatic critical failure, and all critical successes are treated as normal rolls of 1 on any dice check.

- 1 BP** The character has a Bad Day on a roll of 9 or 10 on one die.
- 2 BP** The character has a Bad Day on any roll higher than a 6 on one die.

### Bad Reputation

The character has done something ignoble or otherwise bad in the past that still affects his or her current reputation. This is an extremely serious issue in Tsolyáni, where noble action is everything, and the character must prove him or herself constantly.

- 1 BP** The character did something relatively minor, but bad enough to taint his or her reputation for some time. This could be a minor betrayal, cowardly action, or being on the receiving end of a very public humiliation over a relatively trivial cause. The act is well known, though people will forget over time. The character starts the game with 5 fewer Points of Respect.
- 2 BP** The character's humiliation is important enough that the stain will not vanish until the character proves he or she is honourable again. This Level almost requires that the act or acts caused major damage to someone (this does not happen just because a character is humiliated in an academic debate), the character's actions were quite ignoble, and knowledge of the disgrace is widespread. The character starts with one full negative Level of Reputation.

### Bad Start in Life

The character has been the subject of victimisation (perhaps by a Nemesis; see the Nemesis Defect, page 26), a late start, bad luck, or simply never had the opportunities of a normal Tsolyáni (perhaps the character is from a remote rural area).

- 1 BP** The character enters the campaign at 1 military rank, or three circle ranks, lower than he or she normally would, and suffers a -1 to future promotion rolls. Starting Resource Points are reduced by 25%.
- 2 BP** The character starts at 2 military ranks, or six circle ranks, lower than normal. He or she has a -2 penalty to any attempts at promotion, and starting resources are reduced by 50%.

### Brutal

The character is particularly brutal and insensitive even for a Tsolyáni. While this has minor advantages in dealing with horrific situations, it can lead to serious consequences.

- 1 BP** The character finds it difficult to understand the motivation of anyone without this Defect (-1 to Charm and Deception checks), and must commit at least one trivial act of physical or emotional cruelty per day. The character may or may not be aware of what he or she is doing.
- 2 BP** As above, but the character lacks any conscience about his or her behaviour and must commit at least one serious act of physical or emotional cruelty per day.



## Clumsy

Clumsiness is a state of mind more than a physical affliction. A character with this Defect drops things, knocks objects or people over, and finds it difficult to manoeuvre. It does not make it harder for the character to hit someone in combat, since clumsiness is largely a matter of being physically oblivious and people are focused while fighting.

- 1 BP** *Clumsy.* The character has noisy but otherwise harmless accidents on a daily basis. Nobody lets him or her hold a loaded crossbow, for example.
- 2 BP** *Klutz.* -2 penalty on Dexterity Stat checks and Dexterity-based Skill checks outside of combat. The character is prone to major acts of clumsiness and finds it hazardous to climb down a ladder, walk along a riverbank, or carry a sword. The accidents are usually minor in damage, but noticeable and often embarrassing, and the character has a reputation among colleagues, friends, and family.

## Combat Limitation

The character has reduced ability in combat. This does not bar the character from acquiring combat Skills; in fact, it can be a good way to create a character who has only been trained to fight in specific circumstances.

- 1 BP** Choose one of the following options:
  - the character receives a penalty of -1 to attack and defence in any real fight (a duel to first blood is not a "real fight")
  - the character receives a penalty of -2 to attack and defence under common circumstances (for example in confined spaces, against two-handed weapons)
  - the character has a weak attack (-2 to attacks only)
  - or the character has a weak defence (-2 to defence only).
- 2 BP** The character receives a penalty of -2 to attack and defence in any fight.

## Debts of Honour

The character owes significant Favours, beyond normal social obligations, to an NPC or mixed group of characters and NPCs. For example, the NPC saved the character's life when they were in the Legion together or concealed a crime committed by the character. The character is required to repay at least some of the favours in the campaign in a manner specified by the GM. If it appears that the character will successfully repay all debts owed, the GM should discuss whether the character has advanced enough to remove this Defect, if another Defect (such as Nemesis) should be assigned to partially replace it, or permit the player to buy it off with Experience Points.

- 1 BP** The character owes 5 Medium Favours and 3 Big Favours.
- 2 BP** The character owes 8 Medium Favours, 4 Big Favours, and a Huge Favour.

## Distractible

The character has difficulty focusing on tasks that do not immediately stimulate him or her. There is nothing ignoble about this Defect; many aristocrats have it (or pretend to), but it would cause practical problems for most Tsolyáni.

- 1 BP** *Attention Deficit.* The character is very easily bored and finds it very difficult to concentrate on dull tasks (Willpower check every 5 minutes). He or she generally finds it difficult to organise and motivate (-1 to checks involving planning), but has no problem in a highly stimulating environment. The character makes a very bad sentry.
- 2 BP** *Scatter-brained.* The character is a total airhead, finding it almost impossible to concentrate on boring tasks (Willpower Stat check at -3 for every 5 minutes) and tending to daydream or become distracted if forced to do them. The character has to make Willpower checks to avoid becoming distracted even when the task is important, and cannot plan anything, suffering a -2 penalty to Teamwork, Tactics, and Administration checks.

## Fragile

Whether the character is a sheltered hothouse flower of a high clan or a frail and sickly offspring of a low clan, he or she is unsuited to the rigors of Tsolyáni life. The character is far less healthy than the average Tsolyáni with equivalent Body Stats.

- 1 BP** -10 to Health Points, and -2 penalty to rolls relating to endurance, disease, poison, etc.
- 2 BP** -20 to Health Points, and -4 penalty to rolls relating to endurance, disease, poison, etc.

## Greedy

The character covets material possessions to an extent that can lead him or her to ignoble activities.

- 1 BP** The character must make a Willpower Stat check to resist taking any significant opportunity for making money or gaining other forms of material wealth unless the opportunity would be seriously ignoble. The character can pass up dishonourable opportunities without a Stat check.
- 2 BP** The character is obsessed with wealth and may even behave in illegal and dishonourable ways to gain it, requiring a Willpower Stat check to resist such temptations. The character easily succumbs to bribes (-4 to penalty resist a bribe).



## Impulsive

The character has a serious problem controlling his or her Pedhétl. Consider the implications of this Defect carefully, since it could cause role-playing problems. Characters with this Defect may not acquire the Emotional Control Attribute.

- 1 BP** The character is impetuous, and must make a Willpower Stat check to resist provocation. The character's Pedhétl drives him or her to action. This makes the character poor at Analysis and Planning (-1 penalty) and means he or she sometimes acts without thinking.
- 2 BP** The character is a victim of his or her passions, with negligible emotional control. He or she is self obsessed, and often surprised by the strength of personal feelings. Consequently, the character finds it very difficult to assess the emotional states of others, and has a -2 penalty to detect deception or resist charm. Under stressful circumstances, the GM may tell the player what the character's emotions are — imposing love, hate, or despair as conditions dictate. The character must make a Willpower Stat check to resist blatantly revealing his or her feelings to others.

## Indecisive

The character cannot make up his or her mind in normal circumstances and is likely to freeze under stress.

- 1 BP** The character has difficulty making routine decisions (Willpower Stat check to decide anything immediately). Major decisions take a long time, and the character usually seeks the advice of friends, cousins, and clan elders. The character suffers an Initiative penalty of -2.
- 2 BP** The character finds it difficult and time consuming to make any decision. He or she suffers an Initiative penalty of -4, and must retreat and think about verbal responses, making repartee impossible. The character's receives a penalty of -1 in combat, or to any check involving reaction speed.

## Low Lineage

The character comes from a low lineage. The character's relative status within the clan is reduced: he or she sits below those from higher lineages at mealtimes, is usually placed under people from higher lineages on clan business, etc. Lower lineages also generally have less wealth, and less access to clan wealth, so starting Resource Points are reduced. This Defect is most damaging in a campaign set within a single clan.

- 1 BP** Low Lineage; multiply Resource Points by 0.75.
- 2 BP** Very Low Lineage; multiply Resource Points by 0.5.

## Low Pedhétl

The character has a lower than average ability to store magical energy. The main effect on a non-spellcaster is to reduce the character's Magic Resistance, which also reduces the effectiveness of healing magic.

## Low Status

The character comes from a clan with lower status than the campaign norm. Since clan is all-important to the Tsolyáni, this Defect is serious. Your GM will tell you whether you can select this Defect and, if so, to what degree.

For example, the GM has set the Clan Level for the game at Medium; a character with this Defect at 2 BP would be from a Low Clan; a character with this Defect at 4 BP would be from a Very Low Clan.

- 2 BP** One clan Level lower than the norm for the campaign.
- 4 BP** Two clan Levels lower than the norm for the campaign. Allowing characters to take this Level is not recommended, unless it is built into the structure of the player group.

## Nemesis

The character has a personal enemy, rival, or other entanglement who regularly causes difficulty. The Nemesis may be an enemy trying to harm the character, a rival in love, a business competitor, etc.

- 1 BP** The nemesis is an inconvenience of roughly equal standing who appears frequently, or one of higher standing who turns up rarely. For example: the character made an enemy of someone within the City Guard who looks for opportunities to harass him or her, or the character's idiot cousin (who cannot be left unsupervised) follows him or her around constantly.
- 2 BP** The nemesis is an enemy who causes significant problems on a regular basis. This person is not necessarily hostile, but his or her goals conflict with those of the character. The nemesis may have higher status than the character, or this Level can also represent multiple nemeses of the 1 BP variety.





## Physical Impairment

For most Tsolyáni, medicine is a primitive affair; physical impairment is not uncommon among the lower clans. Higher-clan people are more likely to have access to magical healing, and are thus less likely to have this Defect. A veteran of the military, however, may have an amputated limb become infected, while occupational accidents for farmers, sailors, and artisans are common. The Game Master should consider the availability of healing magic in his or her campaign before allowing a player to assign this Defect, ruling that the injury is incurable by magic. The examples listed below for each Level are not exhaustive; others are possible.

- 1 BP** The character has a significant physical impairment. For example:
- One eye:* The character has difficulty judging distances and has a -2 penalty to any ranged attack. The angle of vision is also greatly reduced, meaning the character sometimes fails to notice things (-1 penalty unless concentrating on something within the small field of vision).
  - One arm:* The character cannot carry a shield and a weapon; additionally, wrestling and many non-combat actions (such as climbing a ladder) are more difficult (-2 penalty).
  - Lame:* The character limps badly, reducing his or her movement by 75%.
  - Mute:* The character cannot speak, though he or she may be understand spoken speech.
  - Deaf:* The character cannot hear, making it impossible for the character to understand spoken speech if they cannot see the speaker's face (-2 penalty if face is visible) or to notice sounds (though they can feel vibrations). Children who are both deaf and mute are often given to the Servitors of Silence to be raised as part of the Emperor's personal bodyguards.
- 2 BP** The character is seriously disabled. This effectively precludes a large range of actions and makes others extremely difficult (-3 penalty). For example:
- Blind:* This prevents normal reading, makes traversing unfamiliar territory difficult, and makes combat next to impossible.
  - No legs:* The character can, with difficulty, use arms to pull him or herself along.
  - Paraplegic:* The character is paralysed from the waist down.

## Poor

Characters with this Defect come from a family, or clanhouse, that is poorer than average for its status. This usually means the character is from a rural area or small town, where everyone is poor by city standards (for campaigns set in a remote rural area, the GM may wish to assign this Defect to all characters). This does not affect the character's social standing.

- 1 BP** Multiply Resource Points by 0.5.  
**2 BP** Multiply Resource Points by 0.25.

## Responsibilities

The character has important responsibilities that affect his or her life, resources, and free time.

- 1 BP** The character works long hours and has family who need him or her. Skills not directly related to the character's profession (GM discretion, but generally those not listed as required or optional for the character's job) cost 1 Skill Point more to learn per Level.
- 2 BP** The character must be on call regularly and cannot travel freely. For example, a soldier on active service must travel with his or her unit, take turns at sentry duty, and may have to fight. This leaves little room for independent action. Skills not directly related to the character's profession (as above) cost 2 Skill Points more to learn per Level.

## Second-Class Citizen

Characters with this Defect are not full participants in Tsolyáni life. Your GM will inform you whether you can select this Defect and, if so, to what degree. This Defect can create serious problems for a campaign.

- 1 BP** *Clan-Woman.* For women of Tsolyáni origin only. The character is a clan-woman who has not declared Aridáni (independent) status. She does not have the legal rights of a male, or been prepared for a life outside the clanhouse. She may not have any Skills inappropriate to clanhouse life, which rules out all Combat Skills, as well as Magic. There may be additional effects of this Defect, at the GM's discretion. Women can declare Aridáni status at will, and thus the character can remove the social stigma of this Defect easily (though a character who does so should either be required to pay off the Defect with Advancement Points or acquire another Defect to account for the Bonus Point provided by this Defect).
- 1 BP** *Non-Human (Pé Chói or Páchi Lei).* The character is a Pé Chói or Páchi Lei and is a member of a Tsolyáni clan. They are not treated with the contempt reserved for the clanless, but do stand out and still have some limitations placed upon them.
- 1 BP** *Foreigner.* The character is a foreigner accepted into a Tsolyáni clan. The character will always be suspect to Tsolyáni who do not know him or her well. This Defect is inappropriate for characters from High Clans or above.
- 2 BP** *Non-Human (Other).* The character is from a non-human race other than Pé Chói, or Páchi Lei who is a member of a Tsolyáni clan. They are not treated with the contempt reserved for the clanless, but do stand out and still have some limitations placed upon them.
- 2 BP** *Clanless.* The character is Nakomé (clanless) and scum by "decent" Tsolyáni standards. For humans of Tsolyáni origin only.
- 3 BP** *Clanless Non-Human (Tinalíya, Pé Chói or Páchi Lei).* The character is a Tinalíya, Pé Chói, or Páchi Lei who is not a member of a Tsolyáni clan.
- 3 BP** *Clanless Foreigners.* The character is a foreigner who is not a member of a Tsolyáni clan. If the character is a member of a foreign clan that is represented in the area the character is in, he or she is treated as if the level of the foreign clan is one lower than it is in his or her homeland.
- 4 BP** *Clanless Non-Human (Other).* The character is from a non-human race other than Pé Chói or Páchi Lei who is not a member of a Tsolyáni clan.



## Secret

The character has an important secret. It may be a crime, an act of dishonour, or simply something best forgotten. The secret may even be no fault of the character; for example, if his or her brother had been a traitor during the war, the character suffers if the secret is revealed even if he or she has always been loyal.

- 1 BP** There is seldom a risk of the secret being uncovered, but the character remains alert and watchful.
- 2 BP** The secret is being actively sought out by others, and the character must take active and extreme measures to protect it. Maintaining the secret will be hard work.

## Shadow Scars

The character has some form of injury to his or her incorporeal shadow-self. A common source of this is intense trauma, like the shock of battle wounds. To the Tsolyáni, this is as real as physical damage and there is available recognition and treatment for it within medical and magical systems. For characters with this Defect, however, these scars will never heal.

- 1 BP** *Shadowscape.* Events in the past are preserved in the incorporeal realm of the shadow-self. When the character sleeps, the character's shadow-self journeys to a distorted version of the events that caused the shadow scars and relives the horror. The character's body reacts to the shadowscape, making him or her restless, noisy (he or she often talks incoherently), and disturbing to others in the intimate confines of a clan or legion dormitory. The character must make a Psyche Stat check each week or suffer the effects of sleep deprivation (see below) on one day.
- 2 BP** *Amputated Dreamlife.* The character has lost his or her capacity to dream, finds it difficult to stay asleep, is easily disturbed (which is occasionally beneficial), and wakes up too early in the morning. Unless the character sleeps in near-perfect conditions, he or she suffers the effects of sleeplessness, imposing a -1 penalty to all Stat checks where concentration is a factor. Add an additional cumulative -1 penalty per day until he or she receives a decent night's sleep.  
*Waking Echo.* A specific common experience (such as the sight of weapons, or the smell of damp grass), if combined with any stressful conditions (imminent combat, anxiety, or pain) triggers a Shadowscape even if the character is awake. This usually paralyses the character for several minutes while he or she runs through the harrowing Shadowscape. The character feels exhausted after awakening.

## Ugly

This Defect describes a character who does not fit the Tsolyáni ideal of beauty.

- 1 BP** The character is homely and suffers some prejudice. Characters with high Charisma can compensate for homeliness if given the opportunity.
- 2 BP** The character is either outright ugly or has a physical trait that is disturbing to the Tsolyáni (such as blue eyes, thought to indicate a curse by the Goddess Avánthe). The character suffers significant prejudice if the Defect is visible. While blue eyes are easier to conceal than simple ugliness, they also provoke far worse reactions (children with them are often killed at birth).

## Uneducated

Most Tsolyáni are illiterate peasants, but some are worse than others when it comes to skills and experiences. This Defect often suitable for characters with a rural background.

- 1 BP** *Uneducated.* The character is not only illiterate (may not take any reading and writing Skills), but has no knowledge of anything beyond his or her immediate experience (which is probably farming).
- 2 BP** *Miseducated.* The character is illiterate, cannot do simple math, and outright educated incorrectly. It is not just that the character is ignorant — it is that many things the character is certain he or she knows are incorrect. All Intelligence-based Skills cost double for a character with this Defect, and he or she receives a -1 penalty to any attempt at Administration, Etiquette, Medical, any Profession, Law, Languages, Poisons, or Gambling. The character may never learn the Magic or Scholastic Specialisation Skills.

## Vow

The character has some vow or commitment to behaviour that is significantly limiting. This can include formal and religious vows, psychological compulsions, and obsessions.

- 1 BP** The character has sworn fanatical obedience to, or alternatively revenge on, a particular NPC, or must follow notably strict dietary and religious observances that are considerably beyond that which is normal for a Tsolyáni.
- 2 BP** The character has dedicated much of his or her life to that which he or she is sworn to do. It fills his or her waking hours and interferes with any attempt at other activities. The character is an obsessive who will do anything to advance the cause.

## Xenophobe

The character is unusually xenophobic, even for a Tsolyáni.

- 1 BP** The character dislikes anyone who deviates from acceptable stereotypes or is "different" from them, and always reacts with direct hostility to foreigners. While a certain amount of bias against foreigners is considered reasonable or even laudable in polite Tsolyáni society, the character skirts the edges of acceptability.
- 2 BP** The character actively believes his or her way of life to be under immediate threat from foreigners or anyone who is not "like them." This creates an implacable hatred of all foreigners and non-humans, and the character actively wishes to harm, humiliate, enslave, or destroy them whenever practical. This is well beyond the bounds of acceptable attitudes and behaviours.



## Younger

Characters with this Defect begin the campaign younger and thus have fewer Skill Points available. They also enter at the beginning rank for their chosen profession. Characters with this Defect may take only one Level of the Highly Skilled Attribute.

- 1 BP** The character is approximately 15 — an adult by Tsolyáni law and custom, but inexperienced. Reduce the character's Skill Points by 5.
- 2 BP** The character is approximately 12 — a child by Tsolyáni law and custom. Reduce the character's Skill Points by 10, his or her Strength may not exceed 6, and he or she may not select the Tough advantage.

## Character Creation Example #1

### The Scholar Priest

*Sarah has spent 32 Character Points on Stats and 10 Character Points on Attributes. To come out to 35 Character Points, she needs to have 7 Bonus Points worth of Defects.*

*Sarah takes a look at her concept and decides to take the Addicted (learning) Defect to reflect his intense curiosity and obsession with his studies and learning in general. She also takes the Impulsive Defect. She takes both at the 1 Bonus Point level: powerful, but not overwhelming. She takes the Bad Start in Life Defect at the 2 Bonus Point level. She decides that with his background, her character feels like a Pé Chói trapped in a human body. Therefore, her character's body image is not human: he moves wrong, tilts his head strangely, splays his fingers when you talk. It's creepy because it isn't human. She takes the Ugly Defect at the 1 Bonus Point level to reflect this. With his Bad Start in Life, Ugly she decides that his status in the Clan is low and she selects the Very Low Lineage Defect at the 2 Bonus Point level to reflect this. In talking with the GM, they decide that his lineage name is hiSorúna.*

*This gives her a total of 7 Bonus Points.*

## Character Creation Example #2

### The Sword Master

*Simon has spent a total of 54 Character Points so far, and needs to come up with 19 Bonus Points in Defects.*

*He starts by looking at the character's history. He lived abroad and lost everything he achieved, family and all, in the war. He takes the Bad Start in Life and Poor Defects at the 2 Bonus Points level. He decides he got caught up in the Livyáni Resistance and has enemy agents seeking him: his death would be an important propaganda victory for them. He takes the Nemesis Defect at the 2 Bonus Point level to reflect the multiple opponents.*

*To reflect the character's obsession and pride in his skills he takes the Addicted (Sword Practise and Display) Defect at the 2 Bonus Points level, the Arrogant Defect at the 2 Bonus Points level, the Impulsive Defect at the 1 Bonus Point level. He feels his character will not fight dishonourably, defined as attacking unsuspecting enemies or striking defenceless enemies, and takes the Combat Limitation Defect at the 1 Bonus Point level. He also takes the Vow Defect at the 1 Bonus Point level, having vowed to defend his honour, his style, and help other honourable people. Simon feels that his character's focus on his sword skills have removed any qualms he may have had about killing — he just sees the weapons he fights — and takes the Brutal Defect at the 2 Bonus Points level.*

*Simon sees that his character studied a foreign sword style, using two swords. With the death of his master, he is its foremost practitioner. He has vowed to maintain, develop, and spread the style and defend it from any challenges, as there is always someone there to prove his style is better than this foreign style. He takes the Vow Defect at the 2 Bonus Points level and the Nemesis Defect at the 1 Bonus Point level to reflect this. As a sword master, teaching sword skills, he works long hours, so he takes the Responsibilities Defect at the 1 Bonus Point level, making Skills not related to his profession more expensive.*

*This gives him a total of 19 Bonus Points.*

*This is a lot of Bonus Points and he discusses it with the GM, who allows it because the character reminds him of characters from Kurosawa movies.*





## Step 7: Choose a Career

Your GM will help you decide which careers fit with the campaign. If a game is set mostly within a single clanhouse, for example, an active-duty military officer or Priest might be too busy with official duties to participate.

Most Tsolyáni find work in their clan's businesses, or help run their clan itself. Others follow higher-prestige careers with the Priesthood, military, or government. Clan level, of course, influences one's possible paths.

In Medium and lower Clans, career choice is the exception rather than the rule. Low and Very Low clans generally offer three choices: participation in the clan's traditional trade; military enlistment as a footsoldier or guard; or a very low-level career in the Priesthood. People from Medium clans can also serve in the government.

When High and Very High Clan youths come of age, their clans expect them to select one of several career paths: membership in the Priesthood of their temple; enlistment in the military (Very High clanspeople usually enter as officers or join a very prestigious legion); a governmental career; or participation in the clan trade. Very High clanspeople can also choose to do nothing at all, but most eventually drift into the clan businesses after tiring of gallivanting around.

## Multiple Careers

The vast majority of Tsolyáni follow one career for their entire lives. Some, however, temporarily work for the Empire before returning to their clan. Going the other direction — working for one's clan for a time, then joining an Imperial profession — is rarer. Some Tsolyáni also manage to hold positions in multiple careers at the same time. A Mriyán (Bishop), for example, may also serve as Kérdu (General) for a legion sponsored by his or her temple. Farther down the scale, a particularly devout Tirrikámu might also be a Lay-Priest of one of the war gods.

## Requirements

The sections below give requirements for joining a career. Individual jobs within that career may have additional requirements.

## Clan Careers

Someone working for his or her clan can be involved either in one of the clan's trades or in supporting activities. For example, a member of a potter's clan might make pots, or might sell them, record sales, and keep the books; purchase clay from the lower-level clans; guard the clanhouse; mix chemicals for glazing pots; purchase the chemicals; oversee the slaves who pack the pottery; tend the children; oversee the clan's slaves; etc. Those with wanderlust can travel with trade caravans, sometimes run by related clans.

Working in the clan trade can involve a variety of activities depending on the clan. For the lowest, it may mean hauling refuse, cleaning higher-status clanhouses, or dealing in unsavoury commodities. The average Tsolyáni practices the clan's crafts, perhaps farming, making pottery, weaving mats, or cooking. Slightly higher-status clans practice skilled trades; they may be scribes, merchants, weaponsmiths, and the like. Upper-level clan members administer the clan's mercantile or agricultural interests, though lesser-status members, or those without the ability or desire to handle administration, find work guarding the clanhouse or supervising its upkeep. Clans that can afford it (mostly High and above) even tolerate members who don't have a job at all, provided they pitch in when needed and do not dishonour the clan. The Clan Table offers some idea of the activities in which your character's specific clan is involved.

## Requirements

There are no specific requirements needed to work for your own clan; they find a job for any member who wants one, in accordance with his or her abilities and ambition.

## Military Careers

The military is an honourable and prestigious career. The legions are also the closest thing Tsolyánu has to a meritocracy: anyone with the right physical abilities can find a legion that will take them, regardless of social standing, and people with great ability can rise far despite humble birth. Of course, those with the right clans will rise faster. For details on a career in the military, see *The Military*, page 49.

## Requirements

To join most legions, a character must have Strength 5+, Dexterity 4+, and Willpower 5+. Missile legions (archers, slingers, etc.) require Strength 4+, Willpower 5+, and Dexterity 5+. To join a Heavy Infantry legion, the character must have Strength 6+, Dexterity 5+, and Willpower 6+.

Joining an elite legion (indicated as "Elite" in their description) is harder: the character needs Strength or Willpower at 7+ (the other must be 6+), and a Dexterity of 6+. Increase those requirements by 1 for members of Very Low or Low clans, and decrease them by 1 for members of Very High clans. Furthermore, the character must have an Intelligence of at least 4 to join an elite legion. The Omnipotent Azure Legion only considers a recruit if the character has both Strength and Willpower at 7+ (one at 8+ for members of Low clans or below) and an Intelligence of 4+.

## Priesthood Careers

In addition to glorifying the gods, the Priesthood provides opportunities for social advancement and scholarship. While some members of the Priesthood are there purely for material reasons or are just serving their time, others are truly devoted to their chosen deity, reaping the benefits both in this life and the next. The choice of a deity is much more important for members of the Priesthood than for lay Tsolyáni, because it is a greater commitment. Priests devote their lives to a god's service and find it extremely difficult to switch temples later (for details on a career in the temples, see *The Priesthood*, page 50).

## Requirements

To join the Priesthood, a character must be literate. In addition, each branch of the Priesthood has requirements.

### Administrative Priest

Administrative Priests run the temple's daily business — and there is a lot of it. The temples own significant property, employ immense numbers of people, manage tremendous incomes, and engage in Imperial politics from the highest to the lowest levels. To join the administrative Priesthood, a character must have Intelligence 5+ (3+ for members of High clans or above).

### Ritual Priest

Ritual Priests perform services to their deity, whether private observances, rites for clergy, or large public services that can draw thousands. Ritual Priests must have Charisma of 5+, Intelligence of 3+, and the Attractive Attribute at Level 1+ (though they will overlook the Charisma requirement for characters with the Attractive Attribute at Level 3+). Temples where Priests wear masks (Ksáru and Qón) ignore the Attractive requirement. Males wishing to be Ritual Priests of Hriháyal must either have the Appearance Attribute at Level 4+ or the Ugly Defect; the Dancing Goddess has strange taste in Priests.

### Scholar Priest

Scholar Priests work to advance understanding of their deity and regain knowledge from ancient times, as well as teach that knowledge to others. Since this includes magical knowledge, this branch of the Priesthood is the best choice for aspiring magicians. Scholar Priests must have Intelligence 6+ (5+ for members of High clans or above). To learn magic, characters must meet the minimum requirements to use at least one type of magic (see *Magic*, page 113).

### Lay Priests

This is a common choice for those with magical training, or other professional abilities like Medical Skill or Engineering Specialisation. Lay Priests do not advance



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in the temple hierarchy and do not have access to temple resources beyond dinner and a place to sleep when they are in town; in exchange, their temple rarely asks them to do anything, and they are free to engage in worldly life. The requirements for lay Priests are the same as for scholar Priests. This branch can be convenient for player characters.

## Temple Guards

The temples maintain their own guard forces, which are generally of lower quality than the legions and rarely see combat. For most temple guard units, a character must have Strength 4+, and both Dexterity and Willpower of 3+. The temples of the war gods and their Cohorts (Lords Karakán, Chegárta, Vimúhla, and Chiténg) maintain their forces to a higher standard, and occasionally lend them to the Empire for combat. To join one of those temples' guard units, a character must have Strength 5+, Dexterity 4+, and Willpower 5+.

## Government Careers

Joining the Imperial Government does not necessarily mean shuffling papers in an office somewhere; one might negotiate trade agreements, hear legal cases, govern a village, or spy on Livyáni shipping (for details on a career in the government, see The Government, page 50).

### Career Requirements Table

Career	Requirements
Military Career	Requirements
Legion, normal	Str 5+, Dex 4+, Wil 5+
Legion, Archer/Slinger	Str 4+, Dex 5+, Wil 5+
Legion, Heavy Inf.	Str 6+, Dex 5+, Wil 6+
Legion, Elite	Str or Wil 7+, other at 6+, Dex 6+, Int 4+ (increase by one for L or VL clan; decrease by one for VH or I clan)
Legion, OAL	Str and Wil 7+ (one at 8+ for L or VL clan), Dex 6+, Int 4+
Priesthood Career	Requirements
Priest, Administrative	Int 5+ (3+ for H, VH, or I clan)
Priest, Ritual	Int 3+, both Cha 5+ and the Appearance Attribute Level 1+, or the Appearance Attribute at Level 3+ (Appearance is irrelevant for Ksáruł or Qón). Male Hriháyal Priests must either have the Appearance Attribute at Level 4+ or the Ugly Attribute.
Priest, Scholar	Int 6+ (5+ for H, VH, or I clan)
Priest, Lay-Priest	Int 6+ (4+ for H, VH, or I clan)
Temple Guard, normal	Str 4+, Dex 3+, Wil 3+
Temple Guard, War Temple	Str 5+, Dex 4+, Wil 5+
Government Career	Requirements
Official or clerk in any of the Palaces	Int 4+ (3+ for VH clan), no Ugly Defect
Imperial Messenger	Str 6+, Dex 6+, Wil 6+, and the High-Stamina Attribute
OAL, Analysis or Admin	Int 6+
OAL, Covert	Int 5+, Wil 6+
OAL, Operational	Str 6+, Dex 6+, Int 5+, Wil 6+
Clan Career	Requirements
Clan Employment, General	None.
Clan Administrator	Int 5+
Clan Guard	Str 5+, Dex 3+
Clan Liaison	Int 5+, Wil 5+, no Ugly Defect

## Requirements

To join the government, a character must be literate, have an Intelligence of 4+ (3+ for members of Very High and Imperial Clans), and may not possess the Ugly Defect at the highest level. This covers the general run of bureaucratic positions: officials, clerks, judges, etc.

Some branches of the government have additional requirements. The Covert Branch of the Omnipotent Azure Legion (OAL), Tsolyánu's secret police and intelligence agency, is one of them. To become an agent in the OAL's analysis or administrative sections, a character must have an Intelligence of 6+. Covert agents (those gathering information in one place) come in a variety of guises; they must have Intelligence 5+ and Willpower 6+. They may also have a second career as a cover. OAL operational agents (those who do the dirty work) must have Strength, Dexterity, and Willpower 6+, and Intelligence 5+. The Covert Branch of the OAL should not be confused with the military branch, though they do communicate with each other, and the intelligence arm can call upon the military for assistance. Game Masters should consider the implications before allowing a player to create a character affiliated with the OAL.

The government also trains and deploys the Imperial Messengers who run vital correspondence across the Empire. To become an Imperial Messenger, a character must have Strength, Dexterity, and Willpower of 6+ and at least one Level of the High-Stamina Attribute.

### Character Creation Example #1

#### The Scholar Priest

*Sarah decided in her character concept that Hárisu is a Scholar Priest.*

### Character Creation Example #2

#### The Sword Master

*The sword master has a Clan career, teaching sword skills to individuals. He also, at times, provides bodyguard duties to those he considers honourable.*

## Step 8: Assign Skills

Skills represent your character's training and experience, which you acquire with Skill Points. A starting character receives a base number of Skill Points plus the average of the character's Intelligence and Willpower Stats rounded up:  $\text{Base} + \lceil (\text{Intelligence} + \text{Willpower}) / 2 \rceil$ . Characters with the Older or Highly Skilled Attributes or the Younger Defect receive bonuses or penalties, respectively. It is also possible to buy Skill Points with Resource Points (see page 48).

Recommended values for the Base Skill Points three basic types of campaigns are as follows.

Gritty Realism	15 Skill Points
Middle Way	20 Skill Points
Heroic Fantasy	25 Skill Points (or higher)

*For example, Osuré (Middle Way campaign) has Intelligence 8 and Willpower 5. She starts with 15 (base) + 7 (the average of 8 and 5, rounded up) = 22 Skill Points. Akhán has Intelligence 3, Willpower 7, and one Level of the Older Advantage. He starts with 15 (base) + 5 (the average of 3 and 7) + 12 (bonus from the Older Attribute) = 32 Skill Points.*

There are three different types of Skills: General Skills, Combat Skills, and Magical Spells. The rules for acquiring General and Combat Skills are the same. Magical Spells are acquired differently, using Spell Points.



## Skill Range

In *Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne*, even low Level Skills represent significant training. People with only slight familiarity in a subject may take a Familiarity Skill or just use the appropriate Stat value, with any penalties that apply, instead.

## Skill Value Descriptions

Value	Description
0	(Default.) No formal training; may have some familiarity.
1	Trained.
2	Well-Trained.
3	Expert.
4	Veteran.
5	Master.
6	Grand Master; few ever attain this Level.

## Individual Skills

Acquiring a Level of a General or Combat Skill costs a number of Skill Points equal to the Skill Cost of the Skill times Cost Multiplier based on the desired Skill Level.

Desired Skill Level	Cost Multiplier
1	1
2	3
3	6
4	10
5	15
6	21

*Example: Akhán's player wants him to have two Levels of the Longsword Skill (Skill Cost = 4). Akhán's player will spend a total of (Skill Cost of 4 times Cost Multiplier of 3) 12 Points to acquire Longsword Level 2.*

## Catch-All Skills

Catch-All Skills are used where it would not be practical to list all of the Skills of a general type. Examples include Language, Occupation, and Scholar. Acquire the Skill as above, but specify which of the options you are actually taking — for example Language (Livyáni), Occupation (Miner), or Subculture (Legions). Effectively, each Specialisation for the Skill is an individual Skill, treated separately from other Specialisations.

## Familiarity Skills

A Familiarity Skill represents some experience with a subject, without the substantial training represented by one Level of the Skill. Familiarity Skills are available for any Skill in the game, unless specified otherwise in the Skill description, and give the character the ability to use that Skill at a penalty of -1. The cost for a Familiarity is 1 Skill Point. If a character with Familiarity in a subject later decides to acquire an actual Level of that Skill, the Skill Point Cost for the first Level is reduced by one.

*For example; Lisa decides her character Shekkára knows a little about Law. She takes Familiarity (Law) for 1 Skill Point. She can now make a Law Skill check with a -1 modifier. Later, Lisa decides Shekkára should learn the Law Skill. One Level of Law costs 3 Skill Points, but Shekkára's Familiarity (Law) reduces the cost to 2 Skill Points. The Familiarity now replaced with the Skill Law Level 1.*

## Skill Specialisations

(Optional rule)

Specialisations represent narrow expertise and highly specialised training above that of the general Skill. A Skill Specialisation counts as an additional Skill Level for the purposes of performing in a specified area only, and costs the same as the first Level for the Skill. A character can have a number of Specialisations in a given Skill equal to his or her Level with the Skill (a character with three Levels of a Skill could thus have up to three Specialisations). Familiarity Skills do not have Specialisations.

A Specialisation in a weapon type is valid only if there are at least two or more distinctive types (e.g. shortswords, longswords, two-handed swords). Specialisation for a Fight Strategy applies to its use with any weapon but specialisation in a Fight Strategy has a fixed cost of four Skill Points. Skill Specialisations are never cumulative: a character can only receive the bonus from one Specialisation on a given attempt, even if more than one applies.

Players should be encouraged to develop interesting Specialisations for Skills, and colourful names for the Specialisation (often relating to their origin) may be used instead of the generic terms given.

## Selecting Fight Manoeuvres

(Optional rule)

Fight Manoeuvres are selected using Skill Points though they are not Skills in the traditional sense. They are special tricks that are used in conjunction with an attack. They must be learned for a specific weapon, or weapon Specialisation. They also do not have Levels — the character either possesses the given Fight Manoeuvre or does not. All but one Fight Manoeuvre is treated as a Catch-All Skill — when a Fight Manoeuvre is selected, the character selects a specific manoeuvre, which indicates the way in which the manoeuvre is executed. If he or she wishes to perform a similar manoeuvre, but with a different application, the character must acquire a new Fight Manoeuvre.

*Example: A character learns the Fight Manoeuvre Weapon Combination: Two Shortswords. He can wield two shortswords in combat, attacking with both (with the appropriate modifiers). If he wishes to learn how to fight with one shortsword and a whip, he would need to learn the Fight Manoeuvre Weapon Combination: Shortsword and Whip.*

When characters attack using a Fight Manoeuvre, they roll against their normal Combat Value modified by applicable Combat Skill modifiers plus any appropriate modifiers based on the specific Fight Manoeuvre.

A character may combine as many different Fight Manoeuvres (page 43) as he or she wishes, but all penalties and pre-requisites are cumulative in addition to -1 penalty for each Fight Manoeuvre after the first. Also, Fight Manoeuvres may be combined with Fight Strategies (see page 107).

*Example: Mórusai — Combat Value 7, Sword (Shortsword) Level 2, Strength 6 — has the Fighting Manoeuvre Weapon Combination: Two Shortswords. When he attacks with one shortsword, he must roll (Combat Value of 7 plus 2 for the Sword Skill, plus 1 for the Shortsword Specialisation) 10 or less to strike a target. He sometimes, however, wields two shortswords in combat, which requires a Strength of 6 (the Shortsword has a Strength Minimum of 3 per sword). This means he may attack with both swords in combat with a -2 penalty with his main hand (-2 penalty for the Weapon Combination Fighting Manoeuvre) and a -6 penalty with his off-hand (the -2 Weapon Combination penalty and a further -4 penalty for attacking with his off-hand). Thus, when attacking with two shortswords, he would need to roll under an 8 with his main hand and under 4 with his off-hand.*

## Designing Skills

Tékumel is a complicated and diverse world. If none of the listed Skills (or Specialisations) seem to apply to a relevant character ability, the GM should create a new Skill or Specialisation. In the case of Skills, set its cost according to the cost of a comparable ability.



## Notation

Skills are referred to by their proper name, with the Specialisation (if any is specified) in parentheses after it. Thus, Etiquette (Low Clan) means the Etiquette Skill, with a Specialisation in Low Clan etiquette. If a character possesses a Required Skill but lacks the appropriate Specialisation, he or she need only acquire the Specialisation by paying an appropriate Skill Point Cost, as outlined under Skill Specialisations (page 33).

## Free Skills

All characters get the following free Skills:

- Language (Tsolyáni, Spoken) Level 2
- Knowledge (Home Area) Level 2
- Etiquette (appropriate to race, Clan Level and Occupation) Level 1
- Any relevant and appropriate Skill from the character's Clan Occupation table at Level 1
- Language (Tsolyáni, Written) Level 1 (for those who either are from Medium clans or above, or have an Intelligence of 7+)
- Hiking Level 1 (for all others)

Characters originally not from Tsolyánu will slowly lose the knowledge of their native language and local area, and replace this with knowledge of their now-current local area and Tsolyánu. To represent this, non-Tsolyáni characters can choose to split their native language between their original language and Tsolyáni, and do the same for their Knowledge (local area). If they wish to have these Skills at higher Levels (i.e., be fluent in Tsolyáni), they have to buy the additional Levels.

## Regular Skills

Each Skill listing includes an entry for the relevant Stat (which may be an average of two or three Stats or may even allow the player to pick which Stat to use), suggested Specialisations for the Skill (you are encouraged to invent others), and a description of the Skill.

### Acrobatics

- Cost:** 4  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Strength and Dexterity  
**Specialisations:** Balance, Flexibility, Jumps, Tumbling

The ability to perform feats of agility including jumps, leaps, bends, and contortions.

### Administration

- Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Temple, Government (Town, City, Province, Nation), Military, Clan

The ability to navigate the labyrinth of functionaries that characterises most Tsolyáni organisations; to maintain records, organise subordinates to perform tasks, and generally keep an organisation's offices functioning.

### Analysis

- Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Military, Scholarly, Intelligence, Mercantile, Political, others at GM's discretion

The ability to understand a specific problem and identify opportunities, priorities, and risks. Analysis allows one to figure out problems or find weaknesses in an opponent. For example, a Merchant could use Analysis to study the market and spot unusual opportunities whereas a gambler could use it to check the form of the gladiators in the Hirilákte Arena. The better the information the character has about the problem, the easier a task will be.

## Normal Skills

Skill Name	Cost Per Level
Acrobatics	4
Administration	3
Analysis	3
Animal Handling	3
Artisan	3 (Catch-all Skill)
Arts	3 (Catch-all Skill)
Bribery	3
Burglary	5
Calligraphy	2
Charm	3
Climbing	3
Command	3
Cooking	2
Culture	3 (Catch-all Skill)
Deception	3
Disguise	5
Energy Management	3
Etiquette	2
Fishing	2
Gambling	3
Hiking	2
Hunting	3
Instruction	3
Interrogation	3
Intimidation	3
Intoxicants	3
Knowledge	2 (Catch-all Skill)
Languages	variable
Law	3
Magic, Psychic	4 or 6
Magic, Ritual	4 or 6
Medical	5
Merchant	3
Navigation	3
Negotiation	3
Observation	2
Occupation	2 (Catch-all Skill)
Oratory	3
Planning	3
Poisons	3
Politics	3 (Catch-all Skill)
Ritual	2 (Catch-all Skill)
Running	2
Sailing	3
Scholar	3 (Catch-all Skill)
Sexuality	3
Sleight of Hand	4
Stealth	5
Strategy	3
Streetwise	3
Style	3
Subculture	2 (Catch-all Skill)
Swimming	3
Tactics	3
Teamwork	2
Theology	3 (Catch-all Skill)
Tracking	3
Wilderness Survival	3 (Catch-all Skill)



## Animal Handling

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Willpower  
**Specialisations:** Chlén, Küni-bird, Rényu, other animals smart enough to be trained at GM's discretion

The ability to teach, train, and work with animals. The complexity of the tasks that may be taught, and the amount of time it takes, depends upon both the trainer's ability and the animal's native intelligence. For example, Chlén, being stupid, can learn simple tasks with much effort; Küni, which are only slightly less intelligent than a slow human, can learn a great deal (but can also be quite a handful).

## Artisan

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Dexterity, Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** By style or region

*Catch-All Skill.* The ability to work with one's hands and produce useful or aesthetically pleasing objects or substances. Clans often specialise in specific crafts; see the Clan Table for examples. This Skill is very rare amongst people of High or Very High Clan, because such clans look down on hands-on activities. Pick one from among Apothecary, Armourer, Basket-Maker, Blacksmith, Bowyer, Brewer, Cartwright, Chlén-Hide Worker, Civilian Engineering, Dyer, Gardener, Glassblower, Goldsmith, Jeweller, Leatherworker, Locksmith, Mason, Military Engineering, Naval Engineering, Paper-Maker, Perfumer, Potter, Rope and Net-Maker, Shipbuilder, Tailor, Tanner, Weaver, Wine-Maker, Woodworker (others at the GM's discretion).

## Arts

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Dexterity for Specialisations involving physical performance (Dance, Theatre), Willpower for Singing, Intelligence for all others

**Specialisations:** Appreciation, Performance, by Style, by Region

*Catch-All Skill.* The ability to produce a work of literary, performance, or visual art. The arts in Tsolyánu are very formalised, with traditions going back millennia and very little appreciation of departures from those traditions. For people from High clans and above, actually participating in performance arts is considered an inappropriate activity; watching and enjoying, however, is fine, and for such a high-status person this Skill represents the his or her knowledge of the art form. Participating in visual arts or writing, however, is fine. Pick one from among Dance, Musical Instrument, Painting, Poetry, Puppetry, Sculpture, Singing, Theatre, Writing (others at the GM's discretion).

## Bribery

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Charisma or Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Government, Clan, Law Enforcement, Military, Priesthood

The ability to know who will accept a bribe and how much it should be. "Inducements" are an everyday part of business in Tsolyánu. The trick is making the payment without either giving offence by offering too little or marking one's self as a sucker by offering too much.

## Burglary

**Cost:** 5  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Dexterity and Willpower  
**Specialisations:** Buildings, Tombs

The ability to defeat locks, traps, and other physical security mechanisms. The ancients, particularly in the Engsvanyáli period, were fond of including elaborate traps in their tombs (the earlier Bednálljan traps tended to be less subtle, involving 10-ton stone blocks). Most clanhouses have locks, and wealthy houses, temples, and government buildings may have other security measures as well.

## Calligraphy

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Dexterity  
**Specialisations:** By language (Tsolyáni, Livyáni, etc.), Forgery

The ability to write in a visually appealing fashion; valuable for impressing one's superiors in the Priesthood or Government, or for writing love poems to one's romantic interests.

## Charm

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Charisma  
**Specialisations:** Professional, Seduction, Social

The ability to persuade others that one is a nice person and should be permitted to do what one wants, evade the consequences of what one has already done, and so on.

## Climbing

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Dexterity and Strength  
**Specialisations:** Mountains, Rigging, Structures, Trees

The ability to climb an object, terrain feature, or structure safely and quickly.

## Command

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Charisma  
**Specialisations:** Clan, Political, Professional, Military

The ability to inspire others, to motivate them to follow one's lead, and to maintain their morale. In civilian life, or with less-disciplined armed groups, this Skill is extremely valuable. In the Tsolyáni military, however, it is mostly useful for evaluating troop morale and condition and for knowing when to stay out of their way. Tsolyáni soldiers are generally well-trained, highly-disciplined, and motivated, and if left alone will do their job using Teamwork, responding to commands with practised speed regardless of the Command Skill of those above them. Command can impress higher-ups, though, and thus it can help in getting promotions.

## Cooking

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** By national or regional style (Jakálla, Khirgár, Salarvyá, etc.)

The ability to appraise ingredients and create tasty and visually appealing dishes.

## Culture

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** By social level

*Catch-All Skill.* Knowledge of a foreign culture, which permits one to understand and deal with people and items from that culture in an informed fashion. Choose from various nations, e.g. Livyánu, Milumanayá, Mu'ugalavyá, Salarvyá, Yán Kór (characters from foreign countries could choose Tsolyánu).

## Deception

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Charisma  
**Specialisations:** Defensive, Offensive

The ability to lie convincingly to others (Offensive), or tell when others are lying (Defensive). Deceiving others is not necessarily ignoble in Tsolyáni culture; in fact, noble action may require it in order to protect the interests to which one is responsible.





## Disguise

**Cost:** 5  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Charisma and Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Anonymise, Impersonate

The ability to alter one's personal appearance to avoid being recognised (Anonymise) or to masquerade as a specific other person (Impersonate). Impersonating someone is far more difficult.

## Energy Management

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Psyche  
**Specialisations:** Magic Battery, Human Sacrifice, Resist Magic

The ability to transfer and moderate Extra-planar energy (Energy Points). This allows someone who is not a magician to act as a magical battery for a group of magicians. It allows a magician to accept Energy Points from someone else with this Skill and gather energy from sacrifices (see Transferring Energy Points, page 116). Anyone who has this Skill can use it to increase his or her Magic Resistance by his or her Skill Level if they make a successful Skill check (see Resisting a Spell, page 115).

This Skill never allows the casting of Magic Spells (see Casting Spells, page 114) and requires a minimum Psyche of 6 and Pedhétl of 5. It is commonly taught to battlefield magicians. The ability to transfer Energy Points between people with this skill can only be used by magicians working in groups, not individual magicians.

## Etiquette

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence or Charisma  
**Specialisations:** By clan level (Very Low, Low, Medium, High, Very High, Imperial) or Profession (Military, Government, Priesthoods)

The ability to interact with others appropriately — a key survival Skill in Tsolyánu, where offending the wrong person can result in immediate death. Tsolyáni etiquette is complex and not all that intuitive; this Skill allows a character to figure out what someone's status is and how to deal with him or her. The use of this Skill is limited by how good the user's Skill is in the language being used; if the relevant language Skill is lower than the Etiquette Skill, reduce the effective Etiquette Skill to that Level for the encounter. If using this Skill under a different nation's rules, reduce it to the Level the character has in the relevant Culture Skill.

## Fishing

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Dexterity and Willpower  
**Specialisations:** Lake, Ocean, Swamp, River

The ability to catch, identify, and clean fish. Making a decent meal out of them requires Cooking Skill.

## Gambling

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Intelligence and Psyche  
**Specialisations:** Dén Dén, Gladiatorial Games, Kévuk, Tsahtén

The ability to analyse odds and manipulate (when possible) games of chance to improve one's chances of winning.



## Hiking

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Willpower  
**Specialisations:** Civilian, Marching, Slave Bearer

The ability to walk long distances while maintaining a steady pace without injury. Since there are no riding animals available on Tékumel, and chlén-carts are exceedingly slow, this is the primary mode of transport for anyone who cannot afford a palanquin (and some who do).

## Hunting

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Willpower  
**Specialisations:** Desert, Forest, Mountain, Plains, Swamp (can be specialised more narrowly by specific area at GM's discretion)

Knowledge of animal habits and behaviour, where to find specific creatures, and how best to deal with them. Wildlife on Tékumel can be a serious threat to people and property, and hunts are sometimes undertaken to eliminate dangerous animals rather than to harvest useful ones. This Skill includes the ability to track the typically hunted animals (as per the Tracking Skill).

## Instruction

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Intelligence and Willpower  
**Specialisations:** Academic Skills, Physical Skills, Social Skills

The ability to teach a Skill one possesses to another person accurately, effectively, and quickly.

## Interrogation

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Willpower (Defensive), Intelligence (Offensive)  
**Specialisations:** Defensive, Offensive, Torture, Withstand Torture

The ability to extract information from an unwilling subject, which includes not only breaking or bypassing the subject's resistance but also knowing whether the subject has actually broken. This does not necessarily involve Torture, though it can be used in conjunction with the Torture Specialisation; knowing the right questions to ask and when to ask them can carry you a long way. The Defensive Specialisation of this Skill is used to resist interrogation.

## Intimidation

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Charisma, Dexterity, Strength, or Willpower  
**Specialisations:** Military, Professional, Social, Street

The ability to convince someone you are too tough to trifle with. A successful roll means witnesses are convinced the character means any threats he or she makes. How they react after that depends on how tough they are relative to the threat the character presents. The GM should modify the difficulty depending on the threat and its credibility to its target. The relevant Stat depends on how the character is trying to intimidate others.

## Intoxicants

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Willpower  
**Specialisations:** Alcohol, Powders

Knowledge about the various intoxicants available on Tékumel and their properties, as well as the ability to remain as functional as possible while consuming them.

## Knowledge

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** By clan level or others as appropriate

*Catch-All Skill.* Knowledge of an area, how to find one's way around it, the resources available there, and its local customs. Choose by rural region of a nation (South, North, East, West), by specific city (Jakála, Penóm, Béy Sü, etc.), or others (Sákbe Roads, Underworlds, the Sea)

## Languages

**Cost:** Variable  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** by Language (see below)

*Catch-All Skill.* The ability to speak and understand a language as well as read and write it. A character who only has command of either the spoken or written form of the language, pays 1 Skill Point less than the full cost for that language. Choose from among the languages in the following tables. Unless otherwise noted, modern languages cost 2 Points/Level, while Ancient and Secret Languages are each 3 Points/Level.

### Ancient Languages

The three most popular for scholars and classically-educated Tsolyáni are Bednálljan, Classical Tsolyáni, and Engsvanyáli, because there is a significant amount of literature in all three.

### Non-human Languages

Each of the friendly non-human races has a language, or set of languages, of its own. Humans generally have no success learning them, but there are rare exceptions. With GM permission, a character who has had extensive contact with a non-human species can learn a Familiarity with their language for 4 Points, and a character who has a very unusual background (such as Harsán in the novel *Man of Gold*, who was raised by the Pé Chói) could obtain a single Level in the language for 6 Points. Human characters receive a penalty of -2 when trying to speak non-human languages, because they aren't physically equipped for it, but they can understand them normally if they have the Skill. Humans cannot learn the languages of Ahoggyá or the Inimical Races (Ssú, Hlüss, etc.).

GMs may require a character to have the Aptitude Attribute for languages in order to take even a Familiarity in a non-human language (especially if they are running non-humans as incomprehensible and dangerous).

### Modern Languages

#### Aomórh

**Where Spoken** Far Northeast  
**Notes** A tonal language; used in some magical texts, monolithic inscriptions, etc. (costs 3 Points/Level except to natives)

#### Hijajái

**Where Spoken** Háida Pakála  
**Notes** Trade language of the southern ocean

#### Jannuyáni

**Where Spoken** Jánnu and Kilálammu in the northeast  
**Notes** Tribal

#### Livyáni

**Where Spoken** Livyánu  
**Notes** Elegant and complex literary works

#### Lo'orúnankh

**Where Spoken** Lorún tundra toward the North Pole  
**Notes** Tribal



## Milumanayáni

**Where Spoken** Milumanayá  
**Notes** Mostly tribal dialects

## Mu'ugalavyáni

**Where Spoken** Mu'ugalavyá  
**Notes** One of Tsolyánu's neighbours and frequent military rival

## N'lüssa

**Where Spoken** N'lüss in the far northwest  
**Notes** Tribal

## Pe'é

**Where Spoken** Nyémesel Isles in the distant south-eastern seas  
**Notes** Trade language

## Pecháni

**Where Spoken** Pecháno, north of Salarvyá  
**Notes** Texts on fighting the inimical Ssú

## Sa'á Allaqiyáni

**Where Spoken** Sa'á Allaqí in the northeast  
**Notes** Texts of the Priests of Light

## Salarvyáni

**Where Spoken** Salarvyá  
**Notes** One of Tsolyánu's neighbours; complex grammar and script (costs 3 Points/Level except to natives)

## Tká Mihállí

**Where Spoken** Modern Mihállu  
**Notes** Derived from Engsvanyáli

## Tsoléi'i

**Where Spoken** Tsoléi Archipelago in the western sea  
**Notes** Site of Livyáni military involvement before the plague

## Tsolyáni

**Where Spoken** Tsolyánu  
**Notes** Native language for most player characters

## Yán Koryáni

**Where Spoken** Yán Kór  
**Notes** Neighbour of Tsolyánu; recently at war with Tsolyánu

## Ancient Languages

### Ái Ché

**Where Spoken** Far Northeast  
**Notes** Used by followers of the One Other (a Pariah Deity); historical and magical texts

### Ancient Mihállí

**Where Spoken** Mihállu  
**Notes** The one non-human tongue humans can learn; magical texts

### Bednálljan Salarvyáni

**Where Spoken** Fisherman Kings and the First Imperium  
**Notes** A rich literature, poetry, scholarship, etc.

### Classical Mu'ugalavyáni

**Where Spoken** Ancient Mu'ugalavyá  
**Notes** Doctrines of Hrsh (a Mu'ugalavyáni deity similar to Vimúhla) and Vimúhla

### Classical Tsolyáni

**Where Spoken** Ancient Tsolyánu  
**Notes** History of the Imperium; magical and religious texts

## Duruób

**Where Spoken** Ancient Livyánu  
**Notes** Many texts; still used in Sealed City of Dláš for secret rituals

## Engsvanyáli

**Where Spoken** Engsvanyáli Empire  
**Notes** Great classical tongue; many historical, philosophical, literary texts; history of the north; astronomical and magical texts; part of a good classical education

## Llyáni

**Where Spoken** Empire of Llyán of Tsámra  
**Notes** Partially lost (no more than one Level possible without GM permission); many historical and magical texts

## Sunúz

**Where Spoken** Artificial language of the Priests of the One Other (Pariah Deity)  
**Notes** Now mostly lost (no more than one Level without GM permission); officially banned in the Five Empires

## Tsáqw

**Where Spoken** Ancient Yán Kór  
**Notes** Variety of texts

## Zna'yé

**Where Spoken** Ancient tongue of the Goddess of the Pale Bone (Pariah Deity)  
**Notes** Secret and mostly lost

## Secret Languages

### Thu'usa

**Where Spoken** Kúrt Hills in Tsolyánu  
**Notes** Now used as secret tongue by some Priesthoods of the Lords of Stability (available only to such Priests)

### Tongue of the Lord of Worms

**Where Spoken** Secret argot of the temples of Lords Sáрку and Durritámish  
**Notes** Script has 2,000 ideograms (available only to senior members of those Priesthoods)

### Tongue of the Priests of Ksáruł

**Where Spoken** Temple of Ksáruł  
**Notes** Highly complex artificial language used to keep the secret doctrines of the Inner Temple (available only to some trusted Priests). Cost: 4 Points/Level

## Law

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Priesthoods, Government, Military

Knowledge of legal procedure and practice, including the preparation and interpretation of documents as well as the structure of courtroom argument. Specialisations are specific to one nation.

## Magic, Psychic

**Cost:** 4 or 6  
**Relevant Stat:** Psyche and Willpower, averaged

The ability to understand and manipulate extra-planar energy in Psychic Spells. For general knowledge about magic, use Intelligence as the Stat; doing this does not require that the character be capable of actually using magic. To actually do anything with the energy, however, one must learn magical Spells as well. To use Psychic magic, the character must have the necessary Stats (for an explanation, see Magic, page 113).

Note: The cost of this Skill is increased by 2 Skill Points if it is studied outside the Priesthoods.



## Magic, Ritual

**Cost:** 4 or 6

**Relevant Stat:** Psyche and Dexterity, averaged

The ability to understand and manipulate extra-planar energy in Ritual Spells. For general knowledge about magic, use Intelligence as the Stat; doing this does not require that the character be capable of actually using magic. To actually do anything with the energy, however, one must learn magical Spells as well. To use Ritual magic, the character must have the necessary Stats. For an explanation, see Magic, page 113.

Note: The cost of this Skill is increased by 2 Skill Points if it is studied outside the Priesthoods.

## Medical

**Cost:** 5

**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence

**Specialisations:** Humans, Veterinary, Ahoggyá, Hlaka, Páchi Léi, Pé Chói, Shén, Swamp Folk, Tinaliya

This skill covers the treatment of all illnesses and injuries and may be attempted unskilled. Medical skill remains useful to stabilise Serious Wounds and accelerate recovery even in campaigns where Healing magic is easily available. This skill becomes vital in low magic campaigns.

## Merchant

**Cost:** 3

**Relevant Stat:** Average of Intelligence and Charisma

**Specialisations:** By commodity (Animals, Books, Fabrics, Foodstuffs, Intoxicants, Jewellery, Slaves, Spices, Weapons, etc.)

The ability to run a business while maximising profits and keeping customers satisfied. This includes knowledge of an item's worth, and where they can best be sold; characters with this Skill can appraise items.

## Navigation

**Cost:** 3

**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence

**Specialisations:** none

The ability to locate one's position on Tékumel by referring to the position of the sun (during the day) or the planets (at night). Tékumel has no stars.

## Negotiation

**Cost:** 3

**Relevant Stat:** Charisma

**Specialisations:** Business, Political, Social

The ability to discuss an issue, assess the other party's desires, options, and flexibility and come to a mutually acceptable agreement that is as good as possible for one's own side.

## Observation

**Cost:** 2

**Relevant Stat:** Average of Intelligence and Dexterity

**Specialisations:** Cultural, Law Enforcement, Military, Scholarly

The ability to act as a trained observer, noticing relevant details and facts, and being able to describe them later. Dexterity is used to represent the keenness of the character's senses.

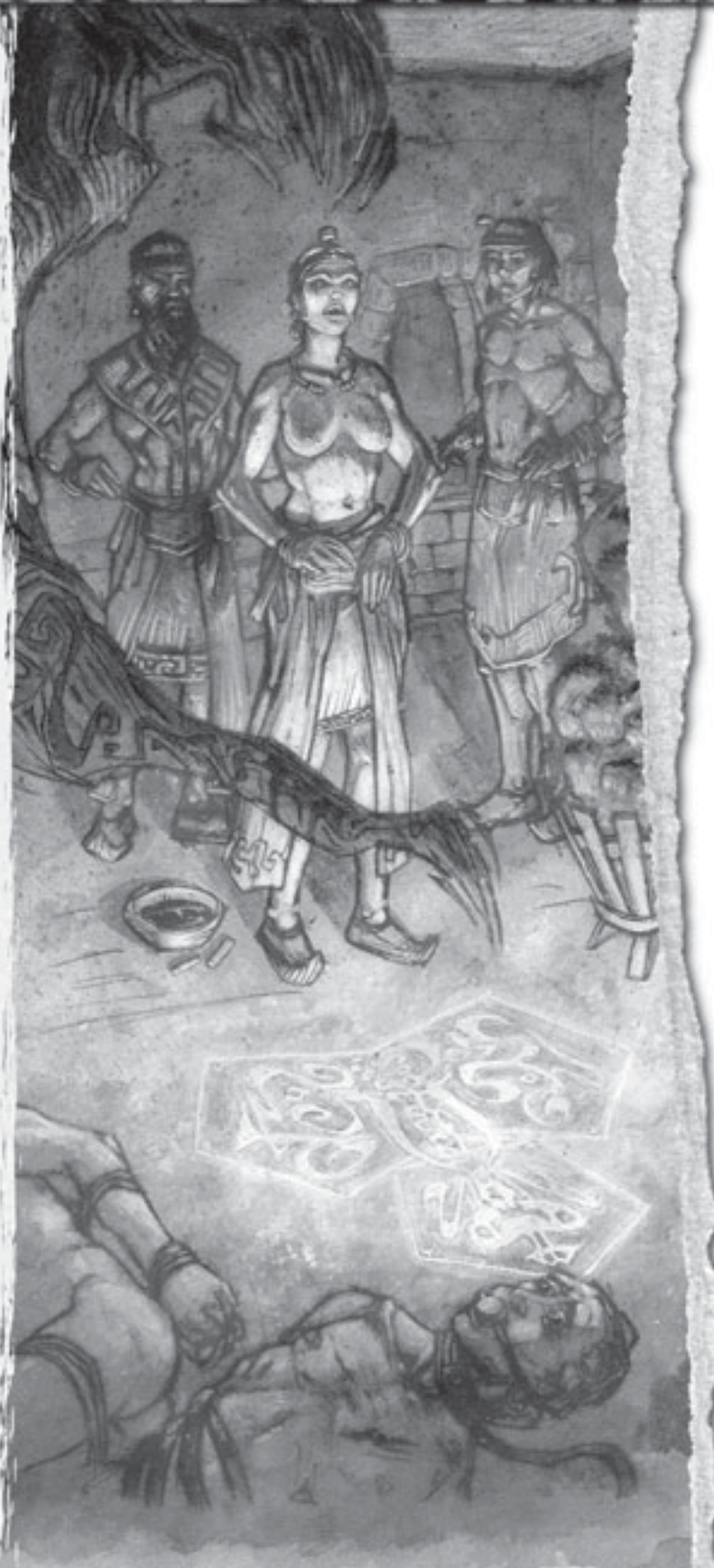
## Occupation

**Cost:** 2

**Relevant Stat:** Strength, Dexterity, or Willpower as appropriate

**Specialisations:** Variable depending on Occupation

*Catch-All Skill.* This Skill represents experience and training in jobs that do not involve making something (which would be Artisan) and are not otherwise associated with a separate Skill. Use Strength as the base for professions involving heavy manual labour, Dexterity for professions where it is most relevant, and Willpower for





professions where boredom is the major risk. Choose from among Chlén-Cart Driver, Farmer, Intelligence Agent, Labourer, Miner, Painter, Street Sweeper, Tinker, etc., or others at GM's discretion.

## Oratory

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Charisma  
**Specialisations:** Command, Debate

The ability to speak well in public, including projecting one's voice, using voice inflection and tone to convey the desired emotional content, and producing the desired effect upon one's audience. This Skill allows the character to use other Skills (such as Intimidation, Charm, or Negotiation) against large groups without penalty if the character can address them in a language they understand.

## Planning

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Clan, Priesthood, Government, Military

The ability to develop contingencies and distribute resources effectively to allow for possible future events. In game terms, this permits the character to react to events after the fact as if the character's plans had taken those events into account (see Planning, page 110).

## Poisons

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Contact, Internal

The ability to recognise, concoct, apply, and neutralise a variety of poisons and toxins.

## Politics

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Local, Regional, National

*Catch-All Skill.* Knowledge about the political aims and allegiances of various individuals and organisations, as well as the ability to manipulate those aims and allegiances when possible. Choose one nation, such as Tsolyánu, Yán Kór, Salarvyá, etc.

## Ritual

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Dexterity and Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Public, Secret, specific rituals

*Catch-All Skill.* Knowledge of the rites and rituals for a specific Deity, as well as how and when to perform them. Higher Levels imply not only greater Skill at performing the rites, but also knowledge of rites not shared with the less experienced Ritual Priests and Priestesses of the Temple. Select a Deity.

## Running

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Strength and Willpower  
**Specialisations:** Distance, Speed

The ability to run, either covering long distances without tiring (Imperial Messengers travel many kilometres in a day with minimal rest breaks) or covering short distances as fast as possible, without injury.

## Sailing

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Strength  
**Specialisations:** Galley, Small Boat, Sailing Ship, Trireme

The ability to sail or row a boat safely.

## Scholar

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Variable depending on Scholar field

*Catch-All Skill.* Knowledge about a particular academic field. The Tsolyáni respect research on existing sources, encyclopaedic knowledge, and logic, but they do not generally make use of (or even value) the scientific method. After all, many phenomena on Tékumel cannot readily be explained by inference and deduction: the planet has no stars, a modified orbit, climate control, and an ecosystem populated by creatures that originally evolved in at least ten star systems. Furthermore, the information they do have makes it clear that their society is only a pale shadow of those that came before in terms of knowledge. It thus makes more sense to try to recover ancient texts and learn from them than it does to try to discover things on one's own. Choose from among Alchemy, Archaeology, Astrology, Astronomy, Botany, Demonology, Geography, Geology, High Cartography, History (by region or time period), Linguistics, Literature (by region or period), Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Other Planes, Philosophy, Zoology, and others at GM discretion.

## Sexuality

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Dexterity and Charisma  
**Specialisations:** Bondage, Exhibitionism, Fetishes, Group Activities, Heterosexuality, Homosexuality, Pornography, Sado-Masochism, Voyeurism, and others at GM's discretion.

Knowledge about sexuality and skill in those practices the character prefers. Sexuality is not a source of shame in Tsolyáni society, and is even part of the religious rituals of several temples (most notably Avánthe, Dlamélish, and Hriháyal).

## Sleight of Hand

**Cost:** 4  
**Relevant Stat:** Dexterity  
**Specialisations:** Cheating, Stage Magic, Street Magic

The ability to perform "magic" tricks, palm small objects, switch kévuk dice, plant an item on someone, and so on.

## Stealth

**Cost:** 5  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Dexterity and Willpower  
**Specialisations:** Desert, Forest, Plains, Swamp, Urban

The ability to move silently and without being detected.

## Strategy

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Military, Political

The ability to develop effective long-term strategies based on the results of the analysis of a military or political problem. Since strategies are only as good as the information upon which they are based, it is best to combine this with the Analysis Skill.

## Streetwise

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Intelligence and Willpower  
**Specialisations:** By city or region

Knowledge of the customs and practices of the bad elements of Tsolyánu, those who live on the streets and in the Foreigners' Quarters, who are considered beneath the notice of all Tsolyáni. No self-respecting Tsolyáni above Very Low Clan would admit to having this Skill, though some might learn it if their profession required it (for example, the City Guard or OAL).



## Style

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Charisma  
**Specialisations:** By city or region

The ability to make one's self look as good and as stylish as possible within the accepted parameters for one's social level, and, at the highest levels, to set styles to which others aspire. This Skill may be used to benefit another person at a penalty of -2. The skilled person can tell him or her how to dress and act, but it's up to the other person to pull it off. The other person makes the Skill check using his or her Stat but the skilled person's Skill Level (with the -2 penalty). Game Masters should take the presence of the Attractive Attribute and the Ugly Defect into account when evaluating the results of this Skill. This Skill can be used to make a character temporarily appear more attractive (provides a +1 bonus on a Minor or Major Success, +2 bonus on an Extreme Success, and a +3 bonus on a Critical Success). If the subject has the Ugly Defect, bonus will cancel out one Level of it temporarily if whatever causes the ugliness is concealable and concealed.

## Subculture

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Charisma  
**Specialisations:** Variable depending on specific Subculture

*Catch-All Skill.* The social and procedural knowledge and contacts that come with a particular profession, occupation, or craft, as opposed to the ability to actually do the job. A character with this Skill knows how to exhibit the socially approved behaviour, attitudes, and appearance that his or her profession expects. He or she also knows about the profession's history and has connections with other people and organisations that practice it. This aids in dealing with other members of the profession, when convincing potential clients of one's competence, and when attempting to gain promotion. For example, a Scholar-Priest who has studied Law in a scholarly context, but never used it in practice, might have a high Level in Law but lack the Subculture (Law) Skill. Similarly, a Temple Guard may have a rank, a uniform, and some military training, but still not have the Subculture (Military) Skill. Choose by profession (Military, Priesthood, Government, Entertainer, Caravaneer, Law, any Specialisation of Artisan or Profession, others at GM's discretion) or by clan level.

## Swimming

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Strength  
**Specialisations:** Depth, Endurance, Speed

The ability to swim and dive. A character can move at a speed equal to his or her Strength in kilometres per hour. Very few Tsolyáni have this Skill, because most bodies of water are inhabited by dangerous wildlife. Those who do, have it because their profession requires it, not for recreational purposes.

## Tactics

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Small Group, Large Group, Set Battle, Siege, or others at GM's discretion

The ability to perceive the tactics being used by an opponent and select appropriate tactics to use in turn. When possible, the Tsolyáni and other forces from the Five Empires fight set-piece battles, with the time and place determined by mutual agreement and the troops using elaborate classical formations. More fluid battles happen as well, but usually only with smaller groups of warriors, due to the lack of riding beasts and the lack of mobility that brings.

## Teamwork

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Willpower and Psyche  
**Specialisations:** By Skill type. For example, Combat, Social, Physical

The ability to work together with others as a team. The militaries of all of the Five Empires teach this, but it is as useful in a social event ("cover for me!") as it is in combat (see Teamwork, page 109).

## Theology

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Eschatology, Outer Doctrines, Inner Doctrines

*Catch-All Skill.* Knowledge of the scripture and interpretations thereof for a specific religion. This Skill must be purchased separately for each Deity.

## Tracking

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Intelligence  
**Specialisations:** Desert, Forest, Plain, Swamp, Underworlds, Urban

The ability to successfully trail a person or animal.

## Wilderness Survival

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Average of Intelligence and Willpower  
**Specialisations:** By specific area (such as the Tsechénu Flats or Desert of Sighs)

*Catch-All Skill.* The ability to find food and shelter, avoid natural hazards, and identify plants and animals. Even populated areas of Tsolyánu have dangerous wildlife; the tamest wilderness area in the nation is more dangerous than the most dangerous jungle or swamp on Earth today. Most Tsolyáni have never been in the wilds, let alone have an understanding of how to survive there. Choose from Desert, Forest, Plain, Swamp, Underworlds. Regional ecosystems are so different in Tsolyánu that the Skills do not carry over across ecosystems and characters take a penalty of -1 if they do not have the Specialisation for the specific region they are in. On the other hand, a character can have an unlimited number of Specialisations for this Skill regardless of Skill Level.

## Combat Skills

If a character is using one of these Skills to attack or defend in combat, use the Combat Value as its "Relevant Stat." If the character is using it to perceive information about an opponent, use Intelligence. Other Stats may be possible in unusual situations, such as the use of Dexterity to do flashy tricks with the weapon that have nothing to do with actual fighting.

### Axe

**Cost:** 4  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Hand, Battle, Two-Handed

The ability to use an axe. Tsolyáni axes range from small hand-axes, which may be thrown (using the Thrown Weapons Skill) or used in melee, through one-handed battle axes, up to the massive two-handed war axes favoured by the N'lüss.

### Blowgun

**Cost:** 5  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Small, Large

The ability to fire a blowgun accurately. Smaller ones are used to fire poisoned darts (the darts do too little damage to be effective unpoisoned) quietly, while large ones can fire either larger darts or clay pellets that strike with some force.



## Combat Skills

Skill Name	Cost Per Level
Axe	4
Blowgun	5
Bolas	4
Bow	4
Brawling	3
Crossbow	3
Dagger	2
Flail	4
Garrotte	3
Hand Crossbow	3
Mace	3
Martial Arts	5 (Catch-all Skill)
Polearm	4
Shield	2
Sling	3
Sword	4
Thrown Weapon	4 (Catch-all Skill)
Wrestling	4

### Bolas

**Cost:** 4  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Hunting, Warfare

The ability to accurately throw the bolas, a weapon composed of several leather thongs tied together with weights at the end, and entangle a target. Bolas are used both in hunting and in warfare. This is a separate Skill from Thrown Weapon, because bolas are employed in a different way.

### Bow

**Cost:** 4  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Short, Long

The ability to fire a bow accurately, be it the long bow, used by specialised troops and one of the most powerful conventional weapons available against armoured troops, or the smaller and more portable short bow, commonly issued to non-missile legions to give them some missile capability.

### Brawling

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Improvised Weapons, Unarmed

The ability to fight with one's hands and feet, as well as with small convenient objects. Not a noble combat Skill in Tsolyáni culture.

### Crossbow

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Light, Medium, Heavy

The ability to fire a crossbow accurately. Crossbows come in three sizes, from the easy to handle light crossbow, used by some irregular troops and as a secondary missile weapon for non-missile legions, on up through the massive heavy crossbow, used by the highly-regarded Tumissan crossbow legionaries.

### Dagger

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Knife, Stiletto

The ability to use a dagger. Daggers are popular across the social spectrum on Tékumel — both with the lower classes because they are inexpensive and with the upper classes because they are concealable when needed and make good fashion accessories if worn openly.

### Flail

**Cost:** 4  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** One-Handed, Two-Handed

The ability to use a flail, a hafted weapon with a weighted striking object attached to it by a chain or strong cord. The flail is an unusual weapon in Tsolyánu, though certain legions (particularly the Legion of the Sweet Singers of Nakomé, the 12th Imperial Heavy Infantry) do use it.

### Garrotte

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Custom, Improvised

The ability to use a garrotte, a strangling weapon which can be custom-made for the purpose or improvised from available materials (such as rope or cord). This is an unusual Skill in Tsolyánu, most likely to be found among members of the Assassin Clans or OAL operatives, but possible for others as well.

### Hand Crossbow

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Tinalíya, Shén, Summoner upon the Way

The ability to fire a hand crossbow accurately. Hand crossbows are used by some non-human races and assassins.

### Mace

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** One-Handed, Two-Handed

The ability to use a club or mace, a hafted weapon with a weighted head firmly secured to the shaft. Mace heads are usually made of bronze, stone, or chlén hide weighted with lead.

### Martial Arts

**Cost:** 5  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Dederátl, Hu'ón

*Catch-All Skill.* The ability to fight effectively using one's hands (Dederátl, only taught by the Temples of Thúmis/Keténgku) or feet (Hu'ón, only taught by the Temples of Ksáru/Grugánu) as weapons. This is not a common Skill in Tsolyánu, since these temples jealously guard the secrets of their arts. The war temples do not consider martial arts honourable. If other temples have such arts, they have kept them secret. Choose Dederátl or Hu'ón.

### Polearm

**Cost:** 4  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Halberd, Long Spear, Pike, Quarterstaff, Spear, others at GM discretion

The ability to use a pole arm, the primary weapon of most Tsolyáni legions. Pole arms come in a range of forms, all of which are used in similar ways. Quarterstaffs are included because the techniques have some overlap; quarterstaff training is rare in Tsolyánu, but is more common in bordering nations and can be found if one seeks it.



## Shield

**Cost:** 2  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Protect Other, Protect Self, Shield Wall

The ability to use a shield. Shields are valuable primarily for defensive purposes (Shield Skill is used in Missile Defence), but they can also be used to attack.

## Sling

**Cost:** 3  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Sling, Staff Sling

The ability to accurately propel projectiles — usually rocks or lead balls — using a sling. The standard kind is a length of cloth, or thongs with a pocket attached; a staff sling is a similar contraption on the end of a stick used to give the throw more leverage and hence more force and range.

## Sword

**Cost:** 4  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Short, Long, Rapier, Two-Handed

The ability to use a sword. The Tsołyáni have developed a bewildering variety of swords down through the millennia, with different special features and intended methods of use, but they group roughly into four categories. Short and long swords are common both in the military and in civilian settings where armed force is needed (for example, bodyguards and duellists). Two-handed swords are fairly rare within Tsołyánu and are usually associated with worshippers of Vimúhla and Chiténg — certain fanatical military units use them, as well as the flame-worshipping N'lüss. The rapier is most commonly found in the hands of the Pé Chói, who will use two or three at once.

## Thrown Weapon

**Cost:** 4  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** None

*Catch-All Skill.* The ability to throw a weapon accurately and with force. Choose from among Axe, Dagger, Javelin, Rock, Spear, and Throwing Club.

## Wrestling

**Cost:** 4  
**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Arena, Military

Grappling is taught as a true combat system (Charáge) to armoured legionaries who may be forced into fight in close combat in battle or who may wish to take human sacrifices alive. Wrestling is also a popular recreation amongst the lower classes. Wrestling Skill levels add to Strength for the purposes of Using Strength in Combat (see page 102) to reflect the knowledge of leverage and balance.

## Fight Manoeuvres (Optional rule)

Fight Manoeuvres are special tricks that are used in conjunction with a character's attack. A character may combine as many different Fight Manoeuvres and Fight Strategies (see Fight Strategies, page 107) as they wish, but all penalties and prerequisites are cumulative in addition to -1 penalty for each Fight Strategy or Fight Manoeuvre after the first. Each Fight Manoeuvre, except Close Combat, which is treated as a Catch-All Skill (see page 33), must be selected with a focus in a given weapon (or combination of weapons). If a character wishes to perform the manoeuvre with a different weapon (or combination of weapons), he or she must learn the manoeuvre a second time with a new focus with the desired weapon. Close Combat is a general Fight Manoeuvre and is not treated as a Catch-All Skill.

Characters do not gain Levels in Fight Manoeuvres — they either possess it or they do not. Fight Manoeuvres are not true Skills — they are simply assigned using Skill Points. Just like Skills, Fight Manoeuvres can be attempted by Unskilled characters, at a penalty of -4.

This optional rule has a major effect on the game and should be carefully considered. These give players many more tactical options and the opportunity to develop Specialisations in particular combat strategies. It will also complicate combat and the GM should expect heavy use of these by experienced players.

## Fight Manoeuvre Cost:

All Fight Manoeuvres cost 4 Skill Points each.

### Fight Manoeuvres

Skill Name	Cost
Attack Weapon	4 (Catch-all Skill)
Close Combat	4
Decisive Attack	4 (Catch-all Skill)
Deceptive	4 (Catch-all Skill)
Fight Style	4 (Catch-all Skill)
Formation	4 (Catch-all Skill)
Out-manoeuve	4 (Catch-all Skill)
Weapon Combinations	4 (Catch-all Skill)

## Attack Weapon

**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value  
**Specialisations:** Axe, Dagger, Flail, Mace, Polearm, Sword, Shield, Blowgun, Bolas, Bow, Crossbow, Sling, Brawling, Martial Arts, Wrestling, Thrown Weapon. Specialisations should be named, for example "blade bind," "push of pike," "the excellent disarm of the Jakállan School."

*Catch-All Skill.* This represents fencing with an enemy weapon rather than attacking the enemy directly and covers blade binds, disarms, and breaking weapons. The character attacks his or her opponent's weapon, suffering a -2 penalty. Damage inflicted to a weapon should be recorded. Most chlén-hide weapons will lose one Damage Multiplier and the weapon's Initiative modifier will decrease by 2 for every full 16 damage they suffer. Maces and Shields suffer the Damage Multiplier reduction and -2 Initiative modifier per full 48 damage suffered. When a weapon's Damage Multiplier is reduced to zero, it is useless, although it might be repairable.

The advantage of this strategy is that armour and shields do not affect it. The disadvantage is that it is difficult to land and a successful strike may not inflict actual damage.

*Example: A character with Initiative 6, Combat Value 6, Sword 2, Strength 6 wishes to kill a heavily armoured Yán Koryáni legionary (Initiative 5, Combat Value 5, Spear 1, Shield 1, Strength 5). The Yán Koryáni has a spear, large shield, and heavy armour. If all of the optional defence rules are used, the Yán Koryáni is a tough nut to crack — he acts on Initiative (5+7) 12 and has a Shield defence of (his Combat Value of 5 + his Shield Skill of 1 + 3 for a large shield + the weapon Initiative difference of 4) 13. The attacker would be foolish to attack him directly and decides to deal with the spear first. Against an Attack Weapon manoeuvre, the Yán Koryáni is much more vulnerable and has a Defence of only 6 (Combat Value + Skill). The character hits with a success of 4 and inflicts 12 damage to the spear. On the next round, the character successfully attacks again and inflicts a further 9 damage to the spear, for a total of 21 damage. Since this is above the 16 Point threshold, the attack cuts off the spear-point and reduces its Damage Multiplier by 1 and its Initiative modifier by 2.*



## Close Combat

**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value

**Specialisations:** None

This is the ability to fight within very close range combat. The character closes with his or her opponent tighter than normal melee range. Once the character has successfully hit an enemy with an unarmed Combat Skill (Brawling, Wrestling, or Martial Arts), they may elect to enter Close Combat. The character's attack, when attempting to close into Close Combat, however, suffers a penalty equal to the Initiative modifier of an opponent's weapon (if any). Once within Close Combat, any unarmed combat Skill can be used to do damage (punching, gouging, kicking, throttling etc.) and apply strength (grabbing, holding, etc., see Using Strength in Combat, page 102). Also, when in Close Combat, the opponent with whom the character is engaged suffers a penalty to all Attack checks equal to the Initiative modifier of his or her weapon. A successful grab will stop the enemy from exiting Close Combat unless he or she breaks the hold. Otherwise, a character can leave Close Combat with a successful Out-Manoeuvre (see Out-manoeuvre, page 45).

Unlike other Fighting Manoeuvres, Close Combat does not require a focus — if the character possesses it, he or she is adept at fighting in close quarters. It is not treated as a Catch-All Skill.

The advantage of this Fighting Manoeuvre is that once the character is in Close Combat, his or her opponent's weapon works against him or her. The disadvantage is that it can be difficult to get into close combat.

*Example: A character is fighting against an opponent who is wielding a longsword (Initiative modifier of +4). He is unarmed and knows that if he doesn't hinder his armed opponent, he'll be cut to ribbons so he decides to enter into Close Combat. He attempts an Attack check, using one of his unarmed Combat Skills with a -4 penalty, due to the Initiative modifier of his opponent's longsword. Luckily, he succeeds and deftly slips in close to the warrior. Now, when his opponent attempts to strike him with the longsword, he will suffer a -4 penalty (the Initiative modifier of the longsword) to each attack check. It was risky attempting to close with the swordsman, but now the character at least stands a chance of lasting long enough to get out of the fight alive.*

## Deceptive

**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value

**Specialisations:** Choose any of the following: Axe, Dagger, Flail, Mace, Polearm, Sword, Shield, Brawling Martial Arts, Wrestling, Garrotte. Specialisations should be named based on the appearance of this manoeuvre, such as "Acrobatic," or "The old Thráyan Cloak Trick."

*Catch-All Skill.* The character uses a wide range of Skills to fight in a deceptive, acrobatic, or evasive combat style. The Deception Skill is a pre-requisite for this Fighting Manoeuvre. Sleight of Hand, Thrown Weapon, and Acrobatics are other Skills in which characters adept in this Fighting Manoeuvre are likely proficient. A character must describe this manoeuvre, indicating which Skills are involved in its execution — the first Skill must, however, be Deception. For each Skill check that succeeds, the character gains a +1 bonus to his or her Attack check. If the character is willing to behave dishonourably (verbal abuse, throwing sand in face, etc.) the bonus provided by a successful use of the Deception Skill is doubled (to +2) but the character will lose 1 Respect Point per round used against an honourable foe if there are surviving witnesses. For each additional Skill involved in the manoeuvre after Deception, the character suffers a -2 Initiative penalty. Furthermore, any unsuccessful use of any Skill involved in the manoeuvre imposes a -1 penalty to the Attack check and a critical failure on any of the Skill checks results in the manoeuvre failing completely — the character may not make his or her attack at all for this round.

The advantage of this strategy is that the successful use of other Skills (Acrobatics, Deception or Sleight of Hand) greatly increases the chances of a successful attack. The disadvantage of this approach is that it is very elaborate and takes time as well as the possibility of the attacking not occurring due to a critical failure during the manoeuvre.





## Decisive Attack

**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value

**Specialisations:** Axe, Dagger, Flail, Mace, Polearm, Sword, Shield, Blowgun, Bolas, Bow, Crossbow, Sling, Brawling Martial Arts, Wrestling, Thrown Weapon. The Specialisation must be for a specific Damage Multiplier (representing a particular attack form) with a specific weapon. The Specialisation should be named ("Uppercut," "Head shot," "Deadly thrust of Arruvál hiMssáni," etc.).

*Catch-All Skill.* Decisive attack is an attempt to deliver a critical injury to the enemy by attacking a vital area (such as the head or groin) or by putting so much force behind the attack that greater than normal damage is done. While the attack inflicts increased damage, it is also less likely to hit due to the necessity to strike a specific area or the wild abandon with which the attack is made — the attack check has a penalty of the increase in the Damage Multiplier minus 1 and has a minimum penalty of -1 (no Decisive Attack is ever quite as likely to hit as a conventional attack). The maximum increase that can be made with a Decisive Attack is equal to half of the character's Strength or Skill level whichever is higher. Characters may elect to take a Decisive Attack that reduces the damage multiplier, representing a non-lethal attack form that inflicts less damage (which is good for subduing, though not killing targets).

The advantage of this attack is that it increases the Damage Multiplier of the attack. The disadvantage is that the increase in difficulty makes it more likely to miss entirely.

*Example: A character possesses the Fighting Manoeuvre Decisive Attack: "Head Shot with Longsword" x2 Multiplier. When the character elects to make a head shot, while wielding a longsword, against a target, he makes his attack check with a -1 penalty but, if he successfully hits the target, his Damage Multiplier is increased by x2.*

## Fight Style

**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value

**Specialisations:** Axe, Dagger, Flail, Mace, Polearm, Sword, Shield, Brawling Martial Arts, Wrestling, Garrotte. The Specialisation should be indicative of the actual style, which could be anything from "Golden Sunburst Legion Sword" to "Street Scum Brawler."

*Catch-All Skill.* Most Tsoyáni warriors have been taught by rote to fight in a particular way. This is normal for a Legionary or someone trained by a Duelling School, but everyone has a style whether they know it or not and this Fight Manoeuvre represents favourite moves indicative of the character's particular style. A Style gives a bonus of +1 to either attack or defence checks (player choice when the Style is defined). Since the character is acting on deeply entrenched instincts and training, the character may add his or her Combat Skill Level to his or her Initiative whenever fighting using this manoeuvre. The character is, however, more predictable and defenders gain a +1 bonus to their Defence checks on subsequent rounds, should the attacker continue to battle using the same Fight Style. This bonus is cumulative per consecutive round that the attacker fights using the same style; +1 for the second round, +2 for the third, +3 for the fourth, etc. There is no limit to this bonus, so few experienced warriors will use in one Fight Style for long. A character may have this manoeuvre multiple times, reflecting various fighting styles; switching styles is a good way to avoid giving an opponent the consecutive round defence bonus.

The advantage of this Fight Manoeuvre is that the deep reflexes are faster. The disadvantage of this style is that it lacks flexibility and is therefore predictable.

## Formation

**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value

**Specialisations:** Axe, Dagger, Flail, Mace, Polearm, Sword, Shield, Blowgun, Bolas, Bow, Crossbow, Sling, Brawling Martial Arts, Wrestling, Thrown Weapon

*Catch-All Skill.* This can represent anything from fighting shoulder to shoulder (or back to back) to sophisticated military tactics (a shield wall, a square, etc.). The Teamwork Skill is a prerequisite to use this manoeuvre, and the Tactics Skill can be

used to create and maintain optimum, large, complex, or specialised formations in play. When a character possesses the Formation Fighting Manoeuvre, he or she may make Defence checks for adjacent allies. Further, if a group of characters who are moving in formation all possesses this manoeuvre, they may elect to act on the average of their Initiatives rather than acting individually. The focus for this manoeuvre indicates which weapon the characters utilise in the given formation.

This Fight Manoeuvre is common amongst Legion veterans and Bodyguards and should refer to the source of their training (for example, "Legion of the Givers of Sorrow," "Chegárran Temple Guard," or "Broken Reed Bodyguard").

The advantage of this approach is that it allows a character to use their defence check to protect their immediate neighbours. The only disadvantage is that the penalty for multiple defences (cumulative -2) still applies, regardless of whether the character is protecting him or herself or an adjacent ally. Further, Teamwork checks are required to maintain formations under pressure.

## Out-Manoeuvre

**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value

**Specialisations:** Axe, Dagger, Flail, Mace, Polearm, Sword, Shield, Brawling Martial Arts, Wrestling, Garrotte.

*Catch-All Skill.* Tsoyáni warriors are taught to find tactical advantage as they may. If they are using different weapons than their enemy (such as a dagger against a sword) they will try to get inside or outside their opponent's preferred fighting distance in an effort to gain the Initiative. When an attacker attempts to Out-Manoeuvre an opponent, he or she is not attempting to inflict damage. The character is, instead, attempting to reduce the opponent's Initiative (first reducing any Initiative bonus provided by the opponent's weapon) by an amount equal to the Margin of Success of the attack. A character cannot have his or her base Initiative reduced below than 0. Alternatively, if an opponent has used this manoeuvre against the character, he or she may "repair" his or her Initiative (up to his or her normal maximum Initiative modifier).

This can also be used to exit from Close Combat (see page 44). GMs should feel free to apply modifiers based on the local environment (confined spaces, rough ground etc.). A character's armour increases the difficulty by an amount equal to the protection it provides (for example, a character in heavy armour would be at -4).

The advantage of this strategy is that it allows the Initiative of an enemy to be reduced. The disadvantage of this strategy is that it does not inflict direct damage.

## Weapon Combination

**Relevant Stat:** Combat Value

**Specialisations:** Specific weapon combination (Axe, Dagger, Flail, Mace, Polearm, Sword, Shield), for example "Sword and Shield," "Two Swords," etc.

*Catch-All Skill.* This strategy allows for multiple attack checks (one per weapon). If the weapons have different weapon Initiative values, then the attacks happen at the respective Initiatives. When wielding two weapons, each attack and defence suffers a -2 penalty. The Strength minimum required for this manoeuvre is equal to the Strength minimums for both weapons, combined. This strategy is not required for multiple defence checks; those simply have a cumulative -2 penalty, see page 98.

The advantage of this strategy is that the attacker gets extra attacks. The disadvantage is that each attack is difficult to land.

*Example: Mórúsaí (Combat Value 7, Sword (Shortsword) Level 2, Strength 6) has the Fighting Manoeuvre Weapon Combination: Two Shortswords. When he attacks with one shortsword, he must roll (Combat Value of 7 plus 2 for the Sword Skill, plus 1 for the Shortsword Specialisation) 10 or less to strike a target. He sometimes, however, wields two shortswords in combat, which requires a Strength of 6 (the Shortsword has a Strength Minimum of 3 per sword). This means he may attack with both swords in combat with a -2 penalty with his main hand (-2 penalty for the Weapon Combination Fighting Manoeuvre) and a -6 penalty with his off-hand (the -2 Weapon Combination penalty and a further -4 penalty for attacking with his off-hand). Thus, when attacking with two shortswords, he would need to roll under an 8 with his main hand and under 4 with his off-hand.*



## Character Creation Example #1 The Scholar Priest

Next we look at his skills, all characters are given a small number of Free Skills, that covers the skills everyone has. Sarah selects Language (Tsolyáni, Spoken) 2, Knowledge (Home Area) 1, Knowledge (Chákan forests) 1, Etiquette (Tsolyánu, Medium Clan, Scholar-Priest) 1, Language (Tsolyáni, Written) 1 and Occupation (Scholar-Priest) 1. She split his Knowledge skill between the forests where he grew up and the home area he now lives.

Characters in a Middle Way campaign have 20 Skill Points as a base. Hárísu has an Intelligence of 8 and Willpower of 5, which, averaged, give another 7 Skill Points. His 2 levels of the Older Attribute give him another 16 Skill Points and the Highly Skilled attribute gives him 12 more Skill Points, for a total of 55 Skill Points to spend on Skills and Spells, all of which he needs to be a good scholar as well as a magician, while fleshing out the skills his unusual background would have provided him with.

Sarah decides that her priest is a good magician: the most important and defining Skill is the 2 levels of the Psychic Magic skill (expensive at 12 Skill Points). Sarah also decides that a magician priest should have the Ritual Skill, which allows him to recharge his magical energies more quickly by performing religious rituals. Sarah decides to reserve at least a dozen Skill Points for Spells (generally somewhere between 10-20 Skill Points provide for a good range of Spells for a magician). It is entirely possible to create a magician character who has a high level of Skill but only a very few Spells or one with a huge range of Spells but a low level of Skill. Either extreme would require a justification.

Given his childhood away from the civilised world, the Hiking (2 Skill Points), the Climbing (3 Skill Points) and Wilderness Survival (3 Skill Points) Skills are appropriate and as his foster parents would have moved as silently as shadows, a level of Stealth seems reasonable. He also needs at least one level of the Pé Chóí language. Very few "civilised" Tsolyáni would have the Stealth skill (except for experienced hunters, spies, assassins etc) which is why it is so expensive (Stealth has a base cost of 5 skill points) and virtually no one knows anything of the Pé Chóí language (which is why it has a base cost of 6 Skill Points). Sarah decides this Skill is too expensive and, after discussing it with the GM, she brings it down to Familiarity with Language (Pé Chóí) (1 Skill Point). Pé Chóí also work together very well and Sarah feels her character would have the Teamwork Skill (2 Skill Points)

Sarah decides that her character should have some Combat Skills. Given the number of Skill Points already spent on scholarly and magical Skills it is hardly surprising that few magicians have much in the way of physical Combat Skills. Someone raised in the forests might learn to use a sling to hunt with (she buys one level of Sling Skill (3 Skill Points)). It occurs to Sarah that a stealthy, alien raised magician in the deep forests could sneak up behind someone and garrote them with that sling. There is some discussion about this with the GM but it doesn't sound over-powering and Sarah buys one level of the Garrote Skill (3 Skill Points).

Sarah fleshes out her character's current background with some priestly skills, such as Scholar (Archaeology) 1 (3 Skill Points) and Theology (Thúmis) 1 (3 Skill Points).

Free Skills: Language (Tsolyáni, Spoken) Level 2, Knowledge (Home Area) Level 1, Knowledge (Chákan forests) 1, Etiquette (Tsolyánu, Medium Clan, Scholar-Priest) 1, Language (Tsolyáni, Written) 1, Occupation (Scholar-Priest) 1

Skills: Climbing 1, Familiarity with Language (Pé Chóí) 1, Hiking 1, Psychic Magic 2, Ritual (Temple of Thúmis) 1, Scholar (Archaeology) 1, Stealth, Teamwork 1, Theology (Thúmis) 1, Wilderness Survival

Combat Skills: Sling 1, Garrote

That brings Sarah to Spell selection, she has 13 Skill Points for this and because this is a Medium Magic campaign this converts to  $13 \times 2 = 26$  Spell Points. Spells represent the common forms of well-known magic as taught in the human schools of magic. This character is a very unusual magician and Sarah decides that modifications of existing spells are suitable. Spell Defects make the spells distinctive and also bring down the cost. She decides that this character gets so deeply into the Pé Chóí mindset that it takes him moments to remember his humanity after he casts a spell (the Involving Spell Defect). For a moment after spell casting, he is sometimes confused as to why he doesn't have six limbs and an exoskeleton like all the other Pé Chóí. Some of his Spells the Pé Chóí could never quite teach him, as they depended partly on their own abilities, e.g. their exoskeleton or psychic sensitivity. To compensate for this, he uses more power: these Spells have the Spell Defect Loud. Sarah decides that the key skills for this character are Comprehension (allowing him to communicate even if he does not share a common language with someone) and Control

of Self (giving him temporary superhuman abilities). The base cost of Comprehension is 2 Spell Points because it has the Involving Defect. He wants to get the maximum flexibility from his magic, so he learns Variants that take the different Spell Attributes to build up to all the Variants for the Spell, so that he can cast all the lesser Spell Variants as well. Furthermore, it reflects the way he would have been taught these Spells, starting with the Base Spell, then learning to increase the Spell's Attributes one at a time, building on what he already knows. For example, he has a variant of Comprehension with the Non-human Spell Specialisation so he can speak to sentient non-humans that he meets. Variants are a good way to be very good in a narrow area of magic.

With Control of Self the key variant is to be able to use it in combat (the Combat Spell Attribute) and with an extended duration (Duration Spell Attribute) so that the character can cast before combat, recover from the Involving Spell Defect and still have a good duration before needing to cast it again.

His final spell list becomes: Artfulness (Involving), Artfulness (Involving, Enduring), Clairvoyance/Clairaudience (Loud, Involving), Clairvoyance/Clairaudience (Loud, Involving, Darkness), Comprehension (Involving), Comprehension (Involving, Spoken), Comprehension (Involving, Non-human languages), Comprehension (Involving, Written), Comprehension (Involving, Non-human languages), Control of Self (Loud), Control of Self (Loud, Increased Power 1), Control of Self (Loud, Increased Power 2), Control of Self (Loud, Increased Power 2, Combat), Control of Self (Loud, Increased Power 2, Combat, Increased Duration 1), Control of Self (Loud, Increased Power 2, Combat, Increased Duration 2), Elicitation (Involving), Elicitation (Involving, See Magical Aura), Elicitation (Involving, See Prowess), Elicitation (Involving, Perceive Workings), Terrorisation (Involving, Loud)

## Character Creation Example #2 The Sword Master

Simon selects his Free Skills to reflect his time abroad, splitting his Language and Knowledge skills, as well as taking Hiking instead of being able to read and write: Language (Tsolyáni, Clan occupation) 1, Language (Livyáni, Spoken) 1, Knowledge (Home Area) Level 1, Knowledge (Livyánu) 1, Etiquette (Tsolyánu, Medium Clan, Sword master) 1, Hiking 1 and Occupation (Clan) 1.

Characters in a Middle Way campaign have 20 Skill Points as a base. Achán has an Intelligence of 4 and Willpower of 5, which, averaged, give another 5 Skill Points. His 2 levels of the Older Attribute give him another 16 Skill Points and the 3 levels of Highly Skilled attribute gives him 36 more Skill Points, for a total of 77 Skill Points to spend on Skills.

Simon first works on the Skills to make his character a phenomenal swordsman. He takes 3 levels of the Sword Skill which would normally cost 24 Skill Points but which only costs him 12 Skill Points because he has the Aptitude (Sword) attribute. He also takes Specialisation in Rapier which would normally cost 4 Skill Points but which only costs him 2 Skill Points because of his Aptitude (Sword). Reading through the Fight Manoeuvre list and realising that they will also only cost him 2 Skill Points each (again because of his Aptitude), Simon decides to take them all: Attack Weapon (Rapier), Close Combat, Deceptive, Decisive Attack (Rapier Lunge), Fight Style (Two Heavens, using two Rapiers) Formation (Rapier, Protect Other), Out-manoeuvre (Rapier) and Weapon Combination (two Rapiers). These cost a total of 16 Skill Points but can only be used with the Sword Skill and one or two Rapiers. He decides his character is an artist with a sword and selects the Arts (Livyáni Sword Artistry) 1 Skill (3 Skill Points), and knows his way around the subculture of sword masters, taking Subculture (Swordmasters) 1 (2 Skill Points). His character is a serious student of sword fighting in all its forms, and Simon takes Scholar (Sword fighting) 1 (3 Skill Points).

Simon decides to take some subsidiary combat skills: Brawling 1 (3 Skill Points) and Dagger 1 (2 Skill Points).

Simon decides to next flesh out the character's background skills a bit and decides he would have learned formal politeness, buying up his Etiquette Skill from 1 level (part of the Free Skills) to 2 level (4 Skill Points).

Simon decides that to be a good sword master, the character must have the ability to observe another fighter, analyse his strengths and weaknesses and instruct him or her so as to overcome them. He takes the Observation Skill at level 2 (6 Skill Points), the Analysis Skill at level 1 (3 Skill Points) and the Instruction (sword fighting) Skill at level 1 (3 Skill Points). He also feels his character would have picked up enough first aid to be a good medic and takes Familiarity with Medical (1 Skill Points). He takes the Teamwork Skill at level 2 (6 Skill Points) to reflect the years of practising with other sword fighters.



To supplement his Decisive Fight Manoeuvre, Simon takes a number of Skills that can be used with it: Deception at level 1 (3 Skill Points), Acrobatics at level 1 (4 Skill Points) and Sleight of Hand at level 1 (4 Skill Points).

That means when using a rapier he has a basic chance to hit of 8 (his Combat Value) + 3 (his Skill) + 1 (for his Specialisation) for a total of 12 or less on a Attack check, which, like all checks, is rolled on a ten-sided die! In other words, he never misses; just what Simon is looking for. If Simon takes the right Fight Manoeuvres his Strength and Ambidexterity will allow his character to attack simultaneously with a sword in each hand. Two sword attacks at 12- would be devastating although they do require a high Strength minimum.

Free Skills: Language (Tsolyáni, Clan occupation) 1, Language (Livyáni, Spoken) 1, Knowledge (Home Area) Level 1, Knowledge (Livyánu) 1, Etiquette (Tsolyánu, Medium Clan, Sword master) 1, Hiking 1 and Occupation (Clan) 1

Skills: Acrobatics 1, Analysis 1, Arts (Livyáni Sword Artistry) 1, Deception 1, Etiquette 2, Familiarity with Medical, Instruction (sword fighting) 1, Observation 2, Scholar (Sword fighting) 1, Sleight of Hand 1, Subculture (Swordmasters) 1, Teamwork 2

Combat Skills: Brawling 1, Dagger 1, Sword 3 Rapier Specialisation (14)

Fight Manoeuvres: Attack Weapon (Rapier), Close Combat, Deceptive, Decisive Attack (Rapier Lunge), Fight Style (Two Heavens, using two Rapiers) Formation (Rapier, Protect Other), Out-manoeuve (Rapier) and Weapon Combination (two Rapiers)

## Step 9: Determine Resources

In Tsolyánu, the poor are very poor and the rich are very rich. Every character starts with a number of Resource Points based on their Clan Level, which may be modified by several Attributes and Defects. These Points represent the material resources their family can make available to them.

**Table 2-3: Starting Resources**

Clan Level	Base Resources
Clanless	10*
Very Low	1
Low	5
Medium	30
High	60
Very High	100
Imperial	200

\* This is all that a Clanless character possesses: it cannot be used for the purpose of borrowing from Clan resources (see Access to Clan resources, page 68.)





## Free Resources

All characters are assumed to have the basic clothes and personal items appropriate to their social status; characters with the Poverty or Bad Start defect will start with notably fewer and lower quality possessions than their status would suggest.

All characters will have the basic equipment to perform any skill they have at least one level in (e.g.: if the character has Sword 1 he or she owns a sword). Free Resources are functional but basic and limited to things that can be personally carried by the character. Thus, someone with the Sailor skill does not automatically own a boat and having the Command skill does not provide the character with a personal army. Armour is not provided under Free Resources.

The GM may base a campaign with different default Free Resources. For example; if the game set-up has all of the characters starting as shipwreck survivors, they may have only a loincloth even if they are all high aristocrats. The GM is free to disallow any Free Resource if it is inappropriate to the specific campaign.

In addition to their Free Resources each character will have a number of Resource Points that they may use to buy and design other possessions.

## Calculating Resource Points

To figure the number of Resource Points with which your character starts, first find the value corresponding to your character's Clan level on the Resource Table.

Next, multiply that number by any modifiers your character has from the Wealthy and High-Lineage Attributes and the Poor and Low-Lineage Defects. All modifiers are applied separately. The result is your character's starting number of Resource Points.

This number is used not only to buy specific items or benefits at the start of the game, but also to indicate what kinds of items your character can easily borrow from his or her clan. Note it on the character sheet under Resource Value.

*Example: Arkháne is from the Golden Sunburst Clan (a Very High clan, Base Resources 100), with average lineage (no modifier). He is, however, from a poor rural branch of the clan (two BP of the Poor Defect — a x0.25 multiplier). He therefore starts with  $(100 \times 0.25)$  25 Resource Points.*

*Hórusai is from the Red Flower Clan, a medium Clan (base Resources 30). He is very well-off (Wealthy Level 3 — a multiplier of x3), and of high lineage (High Lineage Level 1 — a multiplier of x2.5). He starts with  $(30 \times 3 \times 2.5) = 225$  Resource Points.*

*Although Hórusai starts with nine times the Resource Points Arkháne does, he is still Arkháne's social inferior.*

Note: Clanless have no clan to borrow from (see Access to Clan Resources, page 68).

## Spending Resource Points

Resource Points are used to buy material resources. During character generation, use Resource Points to buy any of the following:

- armour
- starting personal money
- income
- special (including magical) items
- property
- private training for Skills in addition to those purchased with Skill Points
- promotions, so you start with a higher rank
- real estate
- special items (including magical items)
- plot items

## Private Training

A character with resources can hire private tutors to teach Skills. You may use Resource Points to purchase Skill Points at a ratio of three Resource Points per Skill Point, up to a number of Skill Points equal to your character's Intelligence or Willpower, whichever is lower.

## Promotions

If a character wants a starting higher rank than his or her base rank, you can spend Resource Points (see Rank, page 225).

## Monthly Income

Characters whose families are wealthy may have a monthly stipend from their clan. That income, in káitar, is equal to the character's starting Resource Points minus 50, with values less than zero treated as zero. Characters who qualify for a stipend may increase this stipend by investing money (in the form of Resource Points) back into the clan, at a ratio of one starting Resource Point per additional káitar of monthly income. If a character becomes estranged from his or her clan, the stipend may be lost or suspended until the character is back in the clan's good graces.

This income is in addition to any salary the character receives for working in the military, Priesthood, or government, or for the clan itself.

## Real Estate

Most characters live in their clanhouse, a legion barracks, or a temple. A character may, however, start the game with personal real estate. 50 Resource Points buys a small rural house, with some attached land. 100 buys a larger house and farm. 150 buys a small estate, or even a small house in a city. 220 buys a sizeable rural estate or a moderately-sized urban house. The GM may permit characters to buy larger properties for more Resource Points. It must be noted, however, that all such "private" estates are still considered clan property and open to other clan members (who doubtless will consult with the owner before visiting).

## Personal Property

A character can purchase property beyond their Free Resources, like armour, additional weapons, and other personal property (see Equipment and Economics, page 67).

## Starting Personal Money

You may exchange Resource Points for káitar (the base large unit of Tsolyáni currency) at a ratio of one Resource Point per 10 káitar.

## Special Items

The costs for buying Special Items (see Special Items, page 22) during character creation with Resource Points don't coincide with the item's value in káitar (money) because items your character acquires during character creation are assumed to be bequests from the character's family, which are technically clan property. Selling the items would lead to a lot of trouble with the clan.

## Favours

A character can start with Favours owed him or her, representing debts of honour, patronage and obligations to the character (see Trading Favours for Resource Points, page 112).

## Plot Items

The Resource Point prices above assume that the character knows what he or she is getting and what, if any, strings are attached. At the GM's discretion, a player can buy an item for his or her character without knowing its properties or implications at a 50% discount. The GM can use the item as a plot hook (and is encouraged to do so mercilessly, in order to justify the discount). A magical sword could be possessed by a demon, a rural estate could have been cursed by an Undying Wizard, and so on. If the player simply wants an item he or she doesn't know much about, such as a random Eye with an unknown number of charges, the GM can discount it by 25%.

## Character Creation Example #1 The Scholar Priest

*Finally, we have resources to consider. All characters get some basic resources free (clothes appropriate to social class, weapons they have at least a Skill level in). As a member of a Medium*



Clan, he has 30 beginning Resource Points, which are reduced by 50% for his Bad Start in Life Defect, and again by 50% for his Very Low Lineage Defect, for a total of 7 Resource Points.

The character starts the game with 15 káitars and the desire for advancement. Sarah decides that her character's upbringing did not prepare him for understanding money and, in discussing with his GM, takes his remaining starting Resource Points as Favours owed to him. Normally this is limited to 50%, but the GM allows for the unusual background and allows Sarah to take 80% of his starting Resource Points as Favours. Sarah has to write out what Favours he is owed, in terms of whom owes them to him, if they are Minor, Medium, or Major Favours, and why.

## Character Creation Example #2

### The Sword Master

All characters get some basic resources free (clothes appropriate to social class, weapons they have at least a Skill level in). As a member of a Medium Clan, he has 30 beginning Resource Points, which are reduced by 50% for his Bad Start in Life Defect and again by 25% for his Poor Defect, for a total of 3.75 Resource Points. The character is saving this money up and has given it to his clan for safekeeping.

The Special Item attribute means that he has 150 Resource points to build his special item. This has to be more than just conventional equipment but can be more than one thing as long as all items are constructed using the Designing Special Items rules. Simon designs three items.

#### (a) Swords

Two custom made rapiers, each sword is a 48 Resource point item and is constructed as follows:

- 2 Base Cost for a rapier
- 3 Beautiful 1. They are lacquered a translucent scarlet.
- 10 Extra Damage 1. They are extra sharp and do +1 point of damage after the Damage Multiplier is applied.
- 2 Secondary Weapon. Projecting from the hilt is a spike (Init 0, DMG\*2) for use in Close Combat.
- 2 Tough 2. These are substantially tougher than normal swords.
- 15 Old Friend 5. The Sword Master has trained for years with these specific swords.
- 3 Perfectly Balanced. Reduces positional modifiers and wins tied Initiatives.
- 10 Specialised Design (Style) Design is specific to the "Two Heavens" School.
- 1 Safe 1. Good grip design and silk hilt bindings.

#### (b) Armour

This is very fine silk and leather armour. It is a 34 Resource Point item and is constructed as follows:

- 10 Base Cost for Light armour
- 3 Beautiful 1
- 10 Concealable 1
- 10 Tailored Armour 1
- 1 Tough 1.

#### (c) Amulet

- 20 Talisman of Vimúhla in his aspect as Dumuggásh "The Spirit of Battle"

He wears this amulet around his neck. He calls on the Spirit of Battle when facing combat.

## Step 10: Determine Rank

The military, Priesthood, and government all have ranking systems. How far your character has advanced at the start of the game depends mostly on how much his or her clan is willing and able to pay in "inducements" to the character's superiors to favour him or her for promotion.

### Table 2-4: Military Rank Equivalents

Changadésha	Private
Kuruthúni	Private (Heavy Infantry)
Tirrikámu	Sergeant
Heréksa	Lieutenant
Kási	Captain
Molkár	Major
Dritlán	Colonel
Kérdu	General
Kérdudali	Senior General

## The Military

Military ranks in Tsolyánu, and roughly equivalent ranks in modern Earth militaries, are as follows:

Clan Level	Legion and Legion Types
Clanless	—
Foreign without Clan Affiliation	—
Very Low	Legion of Chulín the Foreigner Legion of the Mace Raised High (23rd HI), etc.
Low	Marines Sappers Artillery Light Infantry Prison Guards
Medium	Medium Infantry Archers Crossbow Slingers Legion of Kurukáa (25th HI) Legion of Mighty Jakállá (27th HI)
High	Heavy Infantry All other legions designated as Elite "Noble" legions Legion of the Golden Sunburst (11th MI)
Very High	Omnipotent Azure Legion Elite Heavy Infantry Legions
Imperial	—

For details on what these ranks actually mean, see Life in the Legion, page 209. Ranks of Heréksa (Lieutenant) or higher are considered to be officers.

### Base Rank

To determine a character's starting rank, compare the character's clan level with the social level of his or her legion on the following table.

If the character's clan level is at or below the level of the legion, the character's default rank is Private. If the character's clan level is one level above the level of the legion, his or her default rank is Sergeant (Tirrikámu). If it is two or more levels above, his or her default rank is Lieutenant (Heréksa). Generally, people only join a legion with a much lower status if they have some kind of special connection to it (religious, regional, clan) or a family tradition of serving in it. Otherwise, it is considered a step down.



For example; Akhán, a member of the Might of Gánga Clan (Very High), joins the First Legion of Ever-Present Glory, an Elite Heavy Infantry Legion. His default rank is Private (Kuruthúni, since it's an Elite Heavy Infantry Legion). Had Akhán joined the 12th Medium Infantry instead, his default rank would have been Lieutenant (Heréksa). His family would have disapproved, however, because the legion isn't prestigious enough (and the Legion might not have wanted him either, because he may not fit in).

**Table 2-5: Rank Costs**

Rank to Buy Up To	Resource Point Cost			
	All Others	Heavy Infantry	Elite Legions	OAL
Tirrikámu	5	10	30	35
Heréksa	15	30	90	105
Kási	30	60	120	140
Molkár	50	75	150	175

## Buying Up Rank Using Resource Points

You may buy up to two additional ranks for your character using Resource Points. Start from the base rank as established earlier, then pay Resource Points for each additional rank as follows (to buy up more than one rank you must pay the cost for every rank in between as well):

*Example: Akhán's base rank in the Ever-Present Glory is Kuruthúni. If the player wished to increase Akhán's rank using Resource Points, he could increase the rank to Tirrikámu at the cost of 30 Resource Points (since the Ever-Present Glory is an Elite Legion) or to Heréksa for an additional 90 Resource Points. Akhán is unable to purchase a higher rank than Heréksa.*

## Younger Characters

The minimum age to enlist in the legions is 15. Characters with the Younger Defect always start the game as Privates (Changadésha or Kuruthúni), and ones with two levels had to lie about their age to get in (possibly justifying the Secret Defect).

## The Priesthood

Each Temple ranks its members by "circles," which may have nothing to do with a character's actual duties within the Temple. Circle Ranks range from 1st (lowest) to 30th (extremely senior high Priests who govern the Temple on a national level). Each branch of a given Temple — scholarly, administrative, and ritual — has its own ranking system, though they unify above 16th Circle. Lay Priests have no Rank, though magic-using Lay Priests are informally "ranked" by their Skill at magic.

## Base Rank

Characters start at 1st Circle, with 2 additional Ranks for each Level of the Older Attribute, up to 6th Circle. Characters from higher Clans will start at 1st Circle, but will be promoted faster and further.

## Buying up Rank Using Resource Points

You may buy additional Circle ranks for your character at a cost of 5 Resource Points per Rank for Ranks 1 through 6, 10 Resource Points per Rank for Ranks 7 through 10, and 20 Resource Points per Rank above Rank 10.

## Younger Characters

Characters with the Younger Defect always start the game at 1st Circle.

## The Government

Imperial Officials, like Priests, are ranked by Circles that have only a limited amount of relevance to with their actual duties.

## Base Rank

Characters start at 1st Circle.

## Buying Up Rank Using Resource Points

You may buy additional Circle ranks for your character at a cost of 4 Resource





Points per Rank for Ranks 1 through 6, 12 Resource Points per Rank for Ranks 7 through 10, and 24 Resource Points per Rank above Rank 10.

## Younger Characters

Characters with the Younger Defect always start the game at 1st Circle.

## Character Creation Example #1

### The Scholar Priest

*The Scholar Priest is a highly educated 30 year old, but if we look at his likely career within the Temple you can see why he is willing to take the sort of risks that make for a good story. Someone his age and talent would expect to be at least of the 5th Circle and with a safe job in the library (characters start at 1st Circle, with 2 additional Ranks for each Level of the Older Attribute), but because of his Bad Start in Life Defect (reduces starting rank by up to 6 ranks) he is a mere 1st Circle Priest and has -2 to any attempt at future promotion. With his weird background, he just isn't going to make it in a conventional career and he is getting tired of being ordered around by High Clan people who are half his age and intelligence. That sounds like motivation for an adventurer.*

## Character Creation Example #2

### The Sword Master

*The character is employed by his clan and has no rank in the Priesthood, Government or Military.*

# Step 11: Calculate Derived Values

These values are based on your character's Stats and may be modified by certain Attributes. Calculate them once you have assigned Stats, Attributes, and Defects for your character and enter them on your character sheet. Where necessary, round up when calculating Derived Values.

## Combat Value

Your character's Combat Value is used to determine how well your character attacks and defends in combat. The Combat Value is the average of Strength and Dexterity.

## Initiative

Your character's Initiative Base is used to determine how quickly your character acts in combat. The Initiative is the sum of Dexterity and Willpower. Add any modifiers or penalties from Attributes and Defects.

## Health Points

Health Points represent the amount of damage your character can take before dying. The base number of Health Points is the sum of Strength and Willpower multiplied by 5. Health Points may then be modified by the Tough Attribute and the Fragile Defect.

## Shock Value

Shock Value is the amount of damage your character can sustain, in a single round, before there is a chance of being Stunned. Shock Value is equal to your character's final Health Points divided by 5, rounding up.

## Magic Resistance

Your character's Magic Resistance is the average of your character's Psyche, Intelligence, and Pedhétl values.

## Pedhétl

Characters have a default Pedhétl of 4. This can be modified by the High Pedhétl Attribute or the Low Pedhétl Defect.

## Energy Pool

All characters also have a Energy Pool, which represents the amount of extra-planar energy they have available to them for casting Spells. This value is only relevant to characters who either use magic or have been trained to act in groups as "magical batteries" for specially trained groups of magicians (see Transferring Energy Points, page 116).

Your character's Energy Pool is his or her Pedhétl x 5. To that, add your character's Ritual Magic and Psychic Magic Skill Levels, Energy Management Skill Level and (Willpower) ÷ 2 (rounded up) to the total after multiplication.

## Respect

Unless your character has the Good Reputation Attribute or the Bad Reputation Defect, he or she starts with a Respect score of 0.

## Examples

Note that many of the derived values could be affected by Attributes and Defects: these examples only use the Stats to compute the Derived Values.

**Table 2-6: Sample Derived Values**

Entry	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Strength	4	6	7
Dexterity	4	6	6
Intelligence	4	4	2
Psyche	4	3	2
Willpower	4	5	5
Charisma	4	3	2
Pedhétl	4	4	4
Combat Value	4	6	7
Initiative	8	11	11
Health Points	40	55	60
Shock Value	4	11	12
Respect	0	0	0
Magic Resistance	4	4	4
Energy Pool	22	23	23

## Character Creation Example #1

### The Scholar Priest

*Sarah next calculates his Derived Values, rounding up all fractions:*

**Combat Value**  $(\text{Strength} + \text{Dexterity}) / 2 = 5$   
**Initiative**  $(\text{Dexterity} + \text{Willpower}) = 10$   
**Health Points**  $(\text{Strength} + \text{Willpower}) \times 5 = 45$   
**Shock Value**  $\text{Health Points} / 5 = 9$   
**Magic Resistance**  $(\text{Psyche} + \text{Intelligence} + \text{Pedhétl}) / 3 = 8$   
**Energy Pool**  $(\text{Pedhétl} \times 5) + (\text{Ritual Magic} + \text{Psychic Magic} + \text{Energy Management}) + (\text{Willpower} / 2) = 40$   
**Respect** 0

## Character Creation Example #2

### The Sword Master

*Simon next calculates his Derived Values, rounding up all fractions:*

**Combat Value**  $(\text{Strength} + \text{Dexterity}) / 2 = 58$   
**Initiative**  $(\text{Dexterity} + \text{Willpower}) = 15$   
**Health Points**  $(\text{Strength} + \text{Willpower}) \times 5 = 65$   
**Shock Value**  $\text{Health Points} / 5 = 13$   
**Magic Resistance**  $(\text{Psyche} + \text{Intelligence} + \text{Pedhétl}) / 3 = 4$   
**Energy Pool**  $(\text{Pedhétl} \times 5) + (\text{Ritual Magic} + \text{Psychic Magic} + \text{Energy Management}) + (\text{Willpower} / 2) = 24$   
**Respect** 0



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## CHAPTER 3: NON-HUMAN RACES



## Non-Human Characters

A variety of intelligent races share the planet of Tékumel with humans. A number of them participate in Tsolyáni human society, sometimes even on an equal footing with humans — joining Clans, being members of the military, government, or Priesthood, etc. The following sections include special rules for playing aliens (this book only discusses aliens raised in Tsolyáni society).

Consult with your GM to find out whether non-human characters are appropriate in the campaign, and whether he or she is willing to let you play one. Note that the N'lüss are actually just a subgroup of humans, and may be appropriate even if the more "alien" non-humans are not.

## Ahoggyá

Ahoggyá are a radially symmetric species about 1.5 metres tall, with four legs, four arms, and a barrel-shaped body about 0.8 metres in diameter topped by a thick, domed carapace. They are brown, grey, or dun in colour (or a mixture of those). Their extremely strong arms extend out of their body at equidistant intervals, and their hands have three digits and a thumb. Between each pair of arms is a "face" with two small eyes that can move independently. One face also has a fanged mouth, while the others have other sensory or reproductive organs. The Ahoggyá's legs are bowed and very powerful. Their excretory organs are centred up beneath their body. Their bodies and upper legs are covered with bristly fur. Ahoggyá smell bad, at least to non-Ahoggyá.

Some Ahoggyá emerge from their swampy homelands to serve as mercenaries in the Tsolyáni legions, fight in the arenas, or take other jobs, usually involving strength and violence. Most stay in Tsolyánu for only a few years and have little interest in complying with human customs



## Aliens in Tsolyánu

Most non-humans in Tsolyánu are looked down upon. They can find employment, but will never be accepted into a Clan and thus will never be more than respected foreigners. Most, in fact, have no interest in becoming permanent residents of Tsolyánu; they're in the nation only to make their fortune and then go back to their homelands.

Some few, especially the Páchi Lei and Pé Chói, are exceptions: they are well liked, treated as equals, and can be fully accepted into Tsolyáni society if they adopt human language and customs. They may even attain Clan membership, as well Tsolyáni citizenship, for themselves and their descendants if they serve the Empire well. The packages of Attributes and Defects that describe the non-human races are based on the character not being part of a clan: if the character is part of a clan, the cost of the package is increased by 2 Character Points, for the reduced bonus of the Second-Class Citizen Defect.

The aliens in this section are those that are relatively common in Tsolyáni society. Two of the inimical races (the dreaded Ssú and Hlüss) are described in *The Bestiary* (see page 160).



or values. Ahoggyá have eight sexes, and the difficulty of getting a suitable group of mates together may be part of the motivation to return to the Ahoggyá homeland as often as possible.

## Stereotypes

Humans say that Ahoggyá smell bad, sound worse, have no regard for etiquette, and will happily void themselves on a clanhouse floor. They are a watchword for crude and uncultured behaviour of all types; Tsolyáni from Jakála use the phrase “eating like an Ahoggyá” to describe someone who chews loudly with his or her mouth open. Ahoggyá do not speak Tsolyáni well and are not very bright, but they are exceptionally strong. To make matters worse, they eat just about anything and relish human flesh. They also hate Shén and attack them on sight. On the good side, they are extremely strong, extremely tough, and trustworthy.

## The Reality

Of the “friendly” non-human races, Ahoggyá are probably the most poorly understood — largely because they are the hardest with whom to discuss abstract concepts. They disregard human customs, choosing to hold to their own, which are often barbarous and offensive by civilised Tsolyáni standards. They have little regard for where they perform their bodily functions (or perhaps they do, but their standards differ), and they do indeed feast upon human corpses, which they consider a delicacy. For this reason, Ahoggyá are banned from Tsolyáni necropolises. On the other hand, Ahoggyá are often brave, and will serve loyally as long as they are paid.

Although Ahoggyá were once a spacefaring race, life on Tékumel has not been kind to them. All of the above stereotypes are true, with some qualifications. Looking at Ahoggyá on Tékumel, it is hard to believe that their ancestors were capable of building and maintaining starships.

## Clan and Lineage

Ahoggyá are generally uninterested in the idea of joining a human clan; for their part, any human clan asked to accept one as a member would take it as a grave insult.

## Religion

The Ahoggyá seem to have no religion at all, which led Emperor Durúmu, “The Copper Blade of Sárku” (1747-1809 AS), to classify them as animals for citizenship and census purposes, though they are still liable for their own taxes, but at half the rate of other races. Their response is not recorded. The closest they appear to come to religious observance is their large communal dances, which some scholars believe are actually mating rituals.

## Stats

Ahoggyá characters have the following limitations and benefits when selecting Stats.

**Strength:** Ahoggyá are very strong. Average is 6, maximum is 11. If the GM is permitting values over 10 for humans at extra cost, a Strength of 12 costs 2 additional Points for an Ahoggyá.

**Dexterity:** Ahoggyá are clumsy. Average is 2, maximum is 8.

**Intelligence:** Ahoggyá are not very smart. Average is 3, maximum is 7.

**Psyche:** Ahoggyá have very poor psychic abilities. Average is 2, maximum is 8.

**Charisma:** No modifier, but see the Impaired Charisma Defect below.

**Willpower:** Ahoggyá are extremely strong-willed, perhaps because they are oblivious to fear. Average is 6, and maximum is 11. If the GM is permitting values over 10 for humans at extra cost, a Willpower of 12 costs 2 additional Points for an Ahoggyá.

## Derived Values

Ahoggyá have a default Pedhétl of 2.

## Net Cost

Based on the Mandatory Attributes and Defects below, the net cost to play an Ahoggyá is 8 Character Points.

## Attributes

Ahoggyá characters have certain Attributes automatically, and others are altered to apply to them. Attributes not listed in this section are handled normally for Ahoggyá characters.

### Mandatory Attributes

All Ahoggyá characters have these Attributes, and players must pay for them.

#### Standard

**Tough:** Level 2, Cost 4 Points. All Ahoggyá must have at least two Levels of the Tough Attribute, to reflect their great size and inherent toughness. They may buy Levels beyond 3 up to Level 5 at standard cost, gaining 10 more Hit Points for each Level.

#### Unique to Ahoggyá

**Large Build:** Level 2, Cost 4 Points. Ahoggyá are big and strong, so they increase all weapon damage multipliers by 2x. Thus, a Long Sword, which normally does 4x damage, would do 6x damage in the hands of a Ahoggyá.

**Natural Armour:** Level 2, Cost 4 Points. Only the Ahoggyá’s central barrel is naturally armoured, equivalent to Heavy Armour. The Ahoggyá’s arms are not and may be struck at a -2 penalty.

**Natural Extra Limbs:** Level 3, cost 6 Points. Ahoggyá have four arms. They can make two attacks in a round, though not against the same opponent, and can make a second Defense check, but suffer an off-hand penalty to hit for each attack or defence after the first. All Ahoggyá are born with two levels of the Multiple Weapon Use Attribute (so their basic off-hand penalty is a cumulative -2). An Ahoggyá using multiple attacks against a human-sized opponent is spinning in place and cannot move normally.

**Physical Advantage (Expanded Field of Vision):** Level 2, cost 2 Points. Ahoggyá have a 360-degree field of vision, making it impossible to sneak up on one while it is awake unless one is concealing one’s self or using magic.

### Modified Attributes

These Attributes work differently for Ahoggyá characters than for humans, if the player chooses to take them.

**Attractive:** An Ahoggyá’s Attractive value applies to other Ahoggyá, and only vaguely to the way a Ahoggyá is perceived by humans. For checks involving other races, ignore this Attribute.

**Emotional Control:** This Attribute is unavailable to Ahoggyá.

**High Pedhétl:** Subtract 2 from the Pedhétl value at each Level (for example, an Ahoggyá with 4 Levels of the High Pedhétl Attribute will have a Pedhétl value of 6). Ahoggyá without the High Pedhétl Attribute or the Low Pedhétl Defect have a Pedhétl value of 2.

**High Status:** This Attribute is unavailable for Ahoggyá under normal circumstances. An Ahoggyá would never be accepted into a human clan, but it is conceivable the Attribute could be used in a low-status campaign to represent an individual who has contacts in Tsolyanu and has acquired a measure of acceptance.

## Defects

As with Attributes, Ahoggyá characters have certain Defects automatically, and others work differently for them. Defects not listed in this section are handled normally for Ahoggyá characters.

### Mandatory Defects

All Ahoggyá characters have these Defects, and players receive Bonus Points for them.



## Standard

*Behavioural Characteristic:* 2 BP. Ahoggyá behave in ways that appear irrational to humans, obsessing about strange things and occasionally dancing around and hooting. They are incapable of acting in ways a human considers “normal” for very long, if at all.

*Clumsy:* 1 BP. Despite (or perhaps because of) their ability to see in all four directions simultaneously, Ahoggyá are clumsy.

*Impulsive:* 2 BP. Self-control is close to impossible for Ahoggyá.

*Second-Class Citizen (Non-Human):* 4 BP. Ahoggyá, as non-humans, can never be full participants in Tsolyáni life. An Ahoggyá’s relative status, reflected by the Lineage and Wealth Attributes, does not go far in human society.

## Unique to Ahoggyá

*Impaired Charisma:* 3 BP. Most species find Ahoggyá inherently distasteful and react badly even to one who is behaving itself by its own lights. An Ahoggyá’s effective Charisma Stat is reduced by 4 Points when dealing with non-Ahoggyá, and by 6 when dealing with Shén.

## Modified Defects

This Defect works differently for Ahoggyá characters than for humans, if the player chooses to take it.

*Low Pedhétl:* Subtract 2 from the Pedhétl value for each BP (for example, an Ahoggyá with 1 BP of the Low Pedhétl Attribute will have a Pedhétl value of 0). This Defect can only be taken at 1 BP.

## Careers

Ahoggyá in the Tsolyáni Empire mostly serve as mercenaries in an Ahoggyá-specific legion or in low-class occupations such as hired muscle to guard caravans, oversee slaves, or fight in the arenas. Unusual individuals have joined human Priesthoods, and even more unusual ones have become (admittedly poor) magicians. They are barred from the Priesthoods of Sárku and Durrítámish because they eat human flesh, but are free to worship those deities.

## Skills

### Modified Skills

*Ahoggyá Language:* Ahoggyá may learn their own language at 2 Points per Level. An Ahoggyá raised in Tsolyánu might not know the Ahoggyá language, but that would be rare.

*Human Languages:* Ahoggyá pay two additional Skill Points per Level for any human language and can never learn to enunciate them to the satisfaction of human speakers (-2 penalty). Learning any written language costs double. They may not learn any human language beyond Level 1.

## Naming

Ahoggyá names are incomprehensible and unspeakable to humans, so humans tag them with nicknames. They do not seem to care. Here are some examples of Ahoggyá nicknames:

Barrel of Swords  
Big Bag  
Black-Spotted One  
Dirty One  
Gnarled One (Kérdu of the Legion of the Dancer Without Eyes, 2nd Ahoggyá Auxiliary Heavy Infantry)  
Loudest Belly  
Red-Eye  
Scar-Gut  
Yellow Spotted One (Kérdu of the Legion of Gurúggma, 3rd Ahoggyá Auxiliary Heavy Infantry)

## Hláka

Hláka are slender and light-boned, with six limbs: two legs, two arms, and two leathery wings. They stand about 1.5 m tall, with each wing around 5 metres (when the wings are folded they extend up to about 2 metres and a metre out from their body) and are covered in greyish or brownish short fur. Their head is round but somewhat flattened on top, with a short muzzle lined with sharp teeth, a heavy brow ridge, and a ruff of fur on the sides and back that covers their ear openings. Hláka have three close-set eyes, often bright blue, and protected by nictitating membranes. They can fly quite well, and they dislike walking any distance. They often hop, and can jump high, but their legs and arms lack stamina. All Hláka have a strong prehensile tail, tipped with a short, rapier-like bony blade that they often poison before combat. Hláka have fast metabolisms. They eat throughout the day if they can, and need as much food as a human twice their size.

The Hláka have two sexes, male (55 percent of the population) and female (45 percent), and mate monogamously and raise families. This may be why they usually come to Tsolyánu only for a few years at a time to work as mercenaries, and often never return once they go back home again. Some, however, do settle permanently.

## Stereotypes

Many Tsolyáni believe that Hláka are less intelligent than humans; those with minimal direct experience may even claim that they are semi-intelligent. Hláka are friendly, but easily distractible and cowardly. They are useful as aerial scouts, but fly away if they are endangered by ground fire. They cannot be kept as slaves, and will pine away and die if that happens.

## The Reality

Hláka are curious, talkative, and generally uninterested in human conflicts. Humans who think Hláka are less intelligent than they are, however, are wrong. The impression probably comes from “wild” Hláka, whose command of human speech and manners is often poor; they’re just as intelligent as the “civilised” ones, but ignorance is often mistaken for stupidity.

Another factor contributing to the perception of Hláka as unfocused and distractible is that, as fliers, they see the world differently than ground-dwelling humans do. Focusing on the things a human instinctively considers important does not come naturally to them. Many have overcome this barrier, though, and there are Hláka serving in Avanthár whose command of the Tsolyáni language and etiquette is as good as any high-clan human’s.

Like birds, Hláka have hollow bones to conserve weight. As a result, they can be skittish about injury, and while they will happily drop rocks and other objects on an enemy from above, they are generally not willing to risk getting hit themselves. They have developed effective ways to attack targets on the ground without getting too close. Some can be kept as slaves, but most will mope and eventually die.

## Clan and Lineage

Hláka usually do not stick around long enough to be accepted into a human clan, though there are exceptions. One wealthy and powerful Hláka in Béy Sü has founded a Hláka clan, the Clan of Blue Clouds of Joy. It has not yet received Imperial recognition, and humans do not take it seriously (neither do most Hláka).

## Religion

The Hláka have their own religion that is incomprehensible to humans; it involves placing coloured stones upon a flat mountaintop at certain astronomically predicted times. They sometimes adopt the religion of a human comrade while in human lands, but find solemnity about religious matters amusing and occasionally get thrown out of temples for chatting and giggling during services.



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## CHAPTER 3: NON-HUMAN RACES



## Stats

Hláka characters have the following limitations and benefits when selecting Stats.

*Strength:* Hláka are not very strong. Average is 3, maximum is 8.

*Dexterity:* Hláka are dextrous and agile. Average is 6, maximum is 11. If the GM is permitting values over 10 for humans at extra cost, a Dexterity of 12 costs 2 additional Points for a Hláka.

*Intelligence:* No change. Compare this to the stereotype.

*Psyche:* No change.

*Charisma:* No change (but see the Impaired Charisma Defect below).

*Willpower:* Hláka are not strong-willed. Average is 2, maximum is 8.

## Net Cost

Based on the Mandatory Attributes and Defects below, a player gains 2 Bonus Points when playing a Hláka.

## Attributes

Hláka characters have certain Attributes automatically, and others are altered to apply to them. Attributes not listed in this section are handled normally for Hláka characters.

### Mandatory Attributes

All Hláka characters have these Attributes, and players must pay for them.

#### Standard

*Physical Advantage (Good Eyesight):* Level 1, cost 1 Point. Hláka have more acute vision, especially distance vision, than humans do.

#### Unique to Hláka

*Physical Advantage (Expanded Field of Vision):* Level 1, cost 1 Point. Hláka have a slightly wider field of vision than humans do, which should be taken into account if someone is trying to sneak up on one.

*Flight:* Level 1, cost 4 Points. Hláka fly extremely well. Their cruising speed is about 20 kph; they can fly 100 km in a day without exerting themselves, or up to 200 km per day if they push themselves to the utmost. Their maximum speed in level flight is around 50 kph, which they can manage for a short distance with a good tailwind. See the box for how they use their flight to attack targets on the ground.

*Natural Extra Limbs:* Level 1, cost 1 Point. Hláka have a powerful prehensile tail and can make an additional attack and defence in a round, but suffer an off-hand penalty to hit for each attack or defence after the first.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 1, cost 1 Point. The powerful Hláka tail has a bony rapier-like blade that the Hláka frequently poison before a fight. Poison aside, the spike does x2 damage.

### Modified Attributes

These Attributes work differently for Hláka characters than for humans, if the player chooses to take them.

*Attractive:* A Hláka's Attractive value applies to other Hláka, and only vaguely to the way a Hláka is perceived by humans. For checks involving other races, ignore this Attribute.

*High Status:* A Hláka may have high status relative to other Hláka, and even to many humans, but may not be a member of a High clan or better. In a medium or high status campaign, this Attribute could indicate a Hláka who has good connections and influence, but would be expensive for the purpose and the Friends in High Places or Good Reputation Attributes might make more sense.

## Defects

As with Attributes, Hláka characters have certain Defects automatically, and others work differently for them. Defects not listed in this section are handled normally for Hláka characters.

## Mandatory Defects

All Hláka characters have these Defects, and players receive Bonus Points for them.

### Standard

*Distractable:* 1 BP. Hláka have trouble focusing on many tasks humans consider important.

*Fragile:* 1 BP. This Defect reflects the Hláka's lighter bone structure and general fragility relative to a human.

*Second-Class Citizen (Non-Human):* 4 BP. Hláka, as non-humans, can never be full participants in Tsolyáni life. A Hláka's relative status, reflected by the Lineage and Wealth Attributes, does not go far in human society.

### Unique to Hláka

*Impaired Charisma:* 2 BP. Hláka receive a penalty of -1 to all Charisma-based checks when dealing with other humans, due in part to prejudice and in part to their chattiness and apparent distractibility.

*Physical Impairment (Awkward Size):* 1 BP. Even when folded, Hláka wings take up a lot of space, requiring clearance to both sides of the Hláka and some distance above.

*Physical Impairment (Restricted Ground Movement):* 1 BP. Hláka can handle just about any terrain, but they cannot walk for more than a couple hours without tiring, as their leg muscles are not designed for it or conditioned to it.

## Careers

As mentioned earlier, Hláka tend to serve in the legions as aerial scouts, either in a Hláka-specific legion or as part of a reconnaissance detachment of Hláka accompanying a regular legion. They also tend not to stay long.

They can turn up in other places where their ability to fly is useful, though, and some have greater ambitions — there are Hláka magicians, for example, and the Hláka legions have Hláka officers. There is nothing preventing a Hláka from exploring other career options, or from settling in Tsolyánu permanently, perhaps bringing his or her family along.

## Skills

Hláka can learn any Skill a human can, but have the following modifications and new Skills.

### Modified Skills

*Hláka Language:* Hláka may learn the Hláka language at 2 Points per Level. Their tongue sounds to humans as if it is "all vowels," a mixture of squeaking and whistling.

*Human Languages:* Hláka pay one additional Skill Point per Level for any human languages. They can imitate human sounds in much the same way a parrot can, which makes them sound more human than the other alien races.

### New Skills

*Flight:* The Skill confers ability to fly faster and longer, and execute complex manoeuvres like ground attacks, at 3 Skill Points per Level. As with Skills such as Hiking or Swimming, a Hláka without this Skill can still fly.

*Natural Weapon Fighting (Tail):* Hláka may purchase an Unarmed Fighting Skill at 3 Skill Points per Level.

## Ground Attacks

Hláka are fragile, and dislike exposing themselves to injury. They do, however, enjoy dropping objects on ground-bound enemies — much of the time, this is mere harassment with pebbles and the like (which can do damage). When they really need to attack ground targets, though, skilled Hláka have some options.

### Stand-Off Attack

The Hláka comes in on a straight and level flight at an altitude of 180 metres and releases a weapon (usually a rock) about 40 metres from the target, relying on gravity



and a ballistic arc to do the rest. A palm-sized, round stone will be travelling at 172 kph (terminal velocity) when it hits, sufficient to kill even an armoured human. A couple of Hláka releasing a few kilos of well-shaped stones could make a hole in a close infantry formation or decrew a siege weapon. On release, the Hláka go into a gentle turn. They never overfly the target, and can keep their altitude with some flapping.

This tactic allows the Hláka to attack at long range (185 metres plus) with little risk. It is very inaccurate (-5 penalty to hit something human-sized), though, so it is a bad way to attack an individual. The rock takes a Round to hit, but it is moving too fast and too straight-on for its targets to see it, so they can't specifically dodge. The first warning a target on the ground gets is when rocks start exploding all around, or the nearby siege engine shatters. A character struck by a rock suffers x10 damage; shrapnel (from a near hit on a hard surface or fragile object) does x1 to x4 damage.

## Low-Level Attack

To attack individual targets, a Hláka can run an intercept course using javelins (throwing down). They use a shallow dive to no less than 10 metres at a ground speed of 20-30 kph, and flap rapidly to regain height after each pass (lining up for another pass takes 10 Rounds depending on wind conditions). Since this brings them closer to their enemies, they prefer to come upon the target from behind, and they are virtually silent in the air since they're gliding. Hláka are much more likely to go for sequential targets than continually attacking the same target; a skilled Hláka warrior might plan a course that intersected with as many enemies as possible (each getting one javelin) then disappear as they climb and turn for the next pass. Unless the target has a good defensive position, it will be hard (-2 penalty to Observation checks) to spot the Hláka coming in early enough to do anything.

## Naming

The following are examples of Hláka names:

Chrào Eyúo Máii  
 Dzá  
 Ewò-i-iyá (General of the Legion of Aerial Joy, 9th Hláka Auxiliary Light Infantry)  
 Iwáu Aé'eyá  
 Méya-Ai (Noted recruiter of Hláka mercenaries and founder of the Clan of Blue Clouds of Joy, a small Hláka-only clan based in Béy Sü)  
 Míyo-éya Híómai  
 Náàiya-éya  
 Nà-éya Tió  
 Ssaeó  
 Súa-eyá

## Páchi Léi

Páchi Léi have huge platter-shaped eyes and a muzzle with a toothy mouth, four arms, four legs, and a soft, grey-green, pear-shaped body covered with knobs and protuberances called "egg buds." Each arm has a hand with four fingers and a thumb. Their head is pointed and covered with spikes, looking much like an artichoke. They range from around 1.5 metres to 2 metres in height. Páchi Léi can see well in the dark, as their large eyes gather light efficiently. They also have a specialised psychic sensitivity, often being able to perceive dangers (ambushes, etc.) within approximately a three-metre range.

Páchi Léi have a four-year fertility cycle and, at certain times during it, an individual exudes spore-like spermatozoa that fertilise the "egg buds" on the bodies of others. Fertilised egg-buds turn into pod-like extrusions, each of which bursts open to release a viable infant in about 250 days. Páchi Léi tend to live in groupings of two to eight individuals, but these are not families in the human sense.

Many Páchi Léi make Tsolyánu their permanent home, becoming active in the various professions and attaining high positions. For historical reasons, the Mu'ugalavyáni generally despise the Páchi Léi, which makes Tsolyánu a natural place for the Páchi Léi to settle.

## Stereotypes

Páchi Léi are a civilised, community-minded species, and other species perceive them as reluctant to fight, even to the point of being cowardly by Tsolyáni human standards. Many are currently fleeing the Mu'ugalavyáni invasion of their homelands, which is historically the typical Páchi Léi response — running or hiding, rather than standing and fighting. Páchi Léi are seen as, in many ways, the most human-like of the friendly non-humans, and despite their frankly bizarre appearance, they fit into human society quite well.

## The Reality

They are highly social, enjoying politics and human interaction, and "pass" quite well. They are, in some ways, more strange than most of the other non-humans. For example, their method of sexual reproduction is bound to change the way they think about things. It has implications, not only in terms of their lacking the sexual desire that motivates humans (or at least feeling it differently), but also that they lack anything resembling human family structure. Do they actually think like humans, or do they just know how to act like humans? What actually motivates them?

As for the "cowardly" stereotype, it is true that they are less warrior-oriented than humans. There are, however, many brave and skilled Páchi Léi warriors, such as the Empire fields legions of Páchi Léi. There are even Páchi Léi officers serving in predominantly human units — one is the Kérdu of the Legion of the Regiment of the Clan of the Silver Lightning, 7th Imperial Archers. Páchi Léi are also capable, if pushed, of entering a berserk state called "biyúrh," in which they are anything but cowardly.

## Clan and Lineage

Some Páchi Léi have been accepted into human clans, though only up to about the Middle clan level. Their descendants will also be members of those clans. It is, therefore, plausible for a Páchi Léi player character to be a member of a clan with full Tsolyáni citizenship.

## Religion

The Páchi Léi religion is dualistic — one Deity, N'rg, exhibits the attributes of Hnálla and Thúmis, while the other, Á'ls, has those of Hrí'ü and Ksárul. Páchi Léi living in Tsolyánu usually adopt one of the Tsolyáni Deities that is appropriate to their actual affiliation.

## Stats

Páchi Léi characters have the following limitations and benefits when selecting Stats.

*Strength:* No change.

*Dexterity:* No change.

*Intelligence:* No change.

*Psyche:* No change.

*Charisma:* No change.

*Willpower:* No change.

## Net Cost

Based on the Mandatory Attributes and Defects below, the net cost to play a Páchi Léi is 6 Character Points.



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## Attributes

Páchi Léi characters have certain Attributes automatically, and others are altered to apply to them. Attributes not listed in this section are handled normally for Páchi Léi characters.

### Mandatory Attributes

All Páchi Léi characters have these Attributes, and players must pay for them.

#### Standard

*High Pedhétl:* Level 1, cost 1 Point. Páchi Léi start with one extra Point of Pedhétl, giving them a default Pedhétl of 5. They may buy additional Levels normally, up to a maximum Pedhétl value of 11.

#### Unique to Páchi Léi

*Natural Extra Limbs:* Level 3, cost 6 Points. Páchi Léi have four arms. They frequently fight with a combination of weapons and shields in their four hands. They can make two attacks in a round and can make a second Defense check, but suffer an off-hand penalty to hit for each attack or defence after the first. All Páchi Léi are born with one level of the Multiple Weapon Use Attribute (so their basic off-hand penalty is a cumulative -3).

*Physical Advantage (Expanded Field of Vision):* Level 1, cost 1 Point.

*Physical Advantage (Heightened Senses):* Level 1, cost 1 Point. Páchi Léi can see in the dark.

*Physical Advantage (Sixth Sense):* Level 1, cost 1 Point. Páchi Léi can perceive ambushes, secret doors, and physical dangers within a three-metre range about half the time.

### Modified Attributes

These Attributes work differently for Páchi Léi characters than for humans, if the player chooses to take them.

*Attractive:* A Páchi Léi's Attractive value applies to other Páchi Léi's, and only vaguely to the way a Páchi Léi's is perceived by humans. For checks involving other races, ignore this Attribute.

## Defects

As with Attributes, Páchi Léi characters have certain Defects automatically, and others work differently for them. Defects not listed in this section are handled normally for Páchi Léi characters.

### Mandatory Defects

All Páchi Léi characters have these Defects, and players receive Points for them.

#### Standard

*Second-Class Citizen (Non-Human):* 3 BP. Páchi Léi, as non-humans, can never be full participants in Tsolyáni life. A Páchi Léi's relative status, reflected by the Lineage and Wealth Attributes, does not go far in human society. Note that Páchi Léi who are members of human clans do not have this Defect.

#### Unique to Páchi Léi

*Impaired Charisma:* 1 BP. Páchi Léi receive a penalty of -1 to all Charisma checks or Charisma-based Stat checks when dealing with humans.

## Careers

Páchi Léi may participate in any careers in Tsolyánu without restriction, though they will generally not rise to the highest levels outside the military (where they are mostly segregated into Páchi Léi legions).

## Skills

### Modified Skills

*Páchi Léi Language:* Páchi Léi may learn the Páchi Léi language at 2 Points per Level.

*Human Languages:* Páchi Léi pay one additional Skill Point per Level for any human language.

## Naming

The following are examples of Páchi Léi names:

Diyéno  
Ffsá Brügshmä  
G-Gúm-Shóggü  
Nneggáya  
Payága  
Peshkúnu  
Teváa  
Urugbáya  
Vroggá  
Wléllu

## Pé Chóí

Pé Chóí are slender, graceful insect-like beings who originated in the Procyon system, standing from 1.6 to 2.2 metres tall, with females being slightly smaller than males. They have an exoskeleton made of a material that superficially resembles chitin, chalk-white for females and jet-black for males, with areas around the eyes and back to the ears shading to a light grey. They have a third, "neuter," stage which can be adopted by either sex. Female neuters look like normal females, but male neuters tend to be smaller and greyer than normal males. Elderly males acquire a silvery hue, while females turn grey. Pé Chóí have six limbs — two powerful rear legs and four smaller upper limbs with bony three-fingered hands with opposable thumbs — and a segmented prehensile tail. Their head is long and slender, with two large green eyes, a tapering proboscis, and two fan-like "ears" at the rear of the skull. Males make up 40 percent of the population, females 35 percent, and neuters 25 percent.

Pé Chóí are known for their excellent hearing and vision, as well as for their rudimentary telepathy, which allows them to sense other creatures in their immediate vicinity, as well as to know if a member of their species has been killed within about five kilometres. They are also known for an aversion to bodies of water, since they breathe through spiracles on their abdomen and tail and thus can drown even in a relatively shallow pool.

Of all the non-human races, the Pé Chóí have had the longest association with humans — they were the first alien race humanity encountered — and are the best adapted to human society on Tékumel. Many Pé Chóí live and work in Tsolyánu, in all professions, and are accepted into human society.

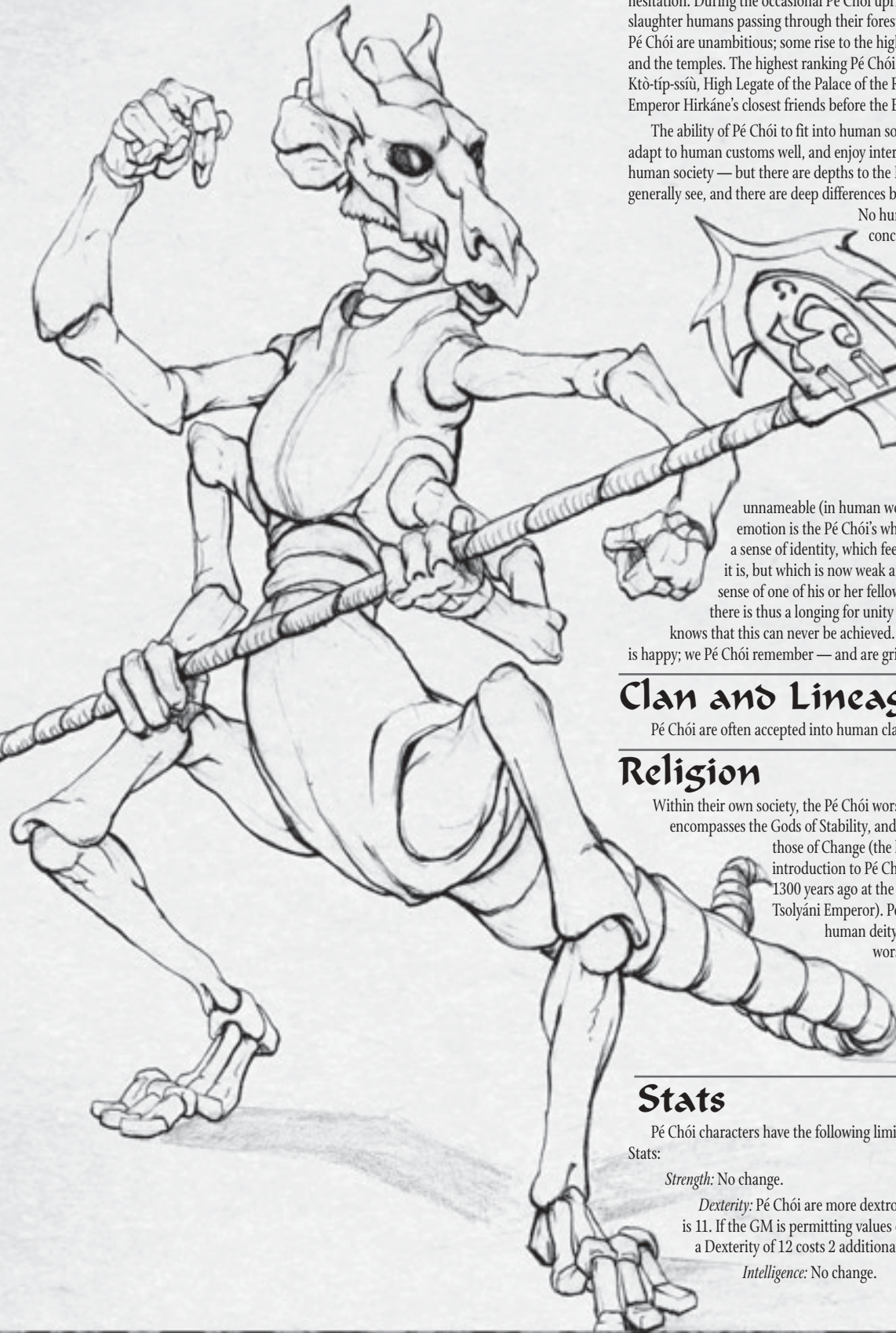
## Stereotypes

Humans tend to like Pé Chóí, who they consider sophisticated and clever, and well organised. On the negative side, they are sometimes regarded as too sophisticated and delicate, and prone to react mentally rather than physically. They are generally thought of as unambitious, rather than as movers and shakers, but good at social interaction. Pé Chóí are regarded as thinking more like humans than any other race; those within human society are perfectly integrated, adopting human customs (and even dress) with panache.

## The Reality

The stereotypes above — good and bad — are a fair characterisation of many Pé Chóí, but as with any stereotype are far from universal. While Pé Chóí do tend toward fragility and refined pursuits, some are vicious fighters (as anyone who has seen a Pé Chóí legion in the field can attest), willing to eliminate their enemies without





hesitation. During the occasional Pé Chói uprisings in the Chákas, “wild” Pé Chói slaughter humans passing through their forests without remorse. In addition, not all Pé Chói are unambitious; some rise to the highest levels of the Imperial government and the temples. The highest ranking Pé Chói in any human nation is probably Lord Ktò-típ-ssü, High Legate of the Palace of the Realm at Avanthár and one of the former Emperor Hirkáne’s closest friends before the Emperor ascended the Petal Throne.

The ability of Pé Chói to fit into human society is somewhat misleading. Pé Chói adapt to human customs well, and enjoy interacting with humans and achieving in human society — but there are depths to the Pé Chói species that humans do not generally see, and there are deep differences between human and Pé Chói psychology.

No human can comprehend the Pé Chói concept termed “Ntk-dqékt,” an underlying and quite basic emotion which every Pé Chói is said to feel from the

moment he or she is born until the moment of final death.

This concept contains elements of loneliness, solitude, pain, endurance, patience, oneness and yet separation, and many other,

unnamed (in human words) feelings. Perhaps the root of this emotion is the Pé Chói’s whisper of ancient, instinctive telepathy, a sense of identity, which feels as though it should be stronger than it is, but which is now weak and attenuated. All a Pé Chói can now sense of one of his or her fellows is a dim, flickering twinkle of being; there is thus a longing for unity and mutual sharing, but each individual knows that this can never be achieved. As the Pé Chói put it, “Man adapts and is happy; we Pé Chói remember — and are grieved.”

## Clan and Lineage

Pé Chói are often accepted into human clans, even at fairly high levels of society.

## Religion

Within their own society, the Pé Chói worship two deities: the Father of Nests, who encompasses the Gods of Stability, and the Black Old One, who encompasses those of Change (the latter deity is a relatively recent introduction to Pé Chói theology, having originated some 1300 years ago at the encouragement of a Change-worshipping Tsolyáni Emperor). Pé Chói within human society pick a human deity within the appropriate pantheon. Most worship Hnálla or Hrü’ü, with Thúmis and Ksáruł also attracting substantial followings, and Karakán and Vimúhla being popular with Pé Chói in the legions. The other deities, and all ten of the cohorts, are far less popular.

## Stats

Pé Chói characters have the following limitations and benefits when selecting Stats:

*Strength:* No change.

*Dexterity:* Pé Chói are more dextrous than humans. Average is 5, maximum is 11. If the GM is permitting values over 10 for normal humans at extra cost, a Dexterity of 12 costs 2 additional Points for a Pé Chói.

*Intelligence:* No change.



*Psyche:* Pé Chói are quite sensitive, and have excellent psychic abilities. Average is 6, maximum is 12.

*Charisma:* No change.

*Willpower:* No change.

## Net Cost

Based on the Mandatory Attributes and Defects below, the net cost to play a Pé Chói is 5 Character Points.

## Attributes

Pé Chói characters have certain Attributes automatically, and others are altered to apply to them. Attributes not listed in this section are handled normally for Pé Chói characters.

### Mandatory Attributes

All Pé Chói characters have these Attributes, and players must pay for them.

#### Standard

*High Pedhétl:* Level 2, cost 2 Points. Pé Chói start with two extra Points of Pedhétl, giving them a default Pedhétl of 6. They may buy additional Levels normally, up to a maximum Pedhétl value of 12.

#### Unique to Pé Chói

*Natural Armour:* Level 1, Cost 2 Points. A Pé Chói's chitin-like exoskeleton provides a certain amount of protection from attacks, equivalent to Light Armour.

*Natural Extra Limbs:* Level 3, cost 6 Points. Pé Chói have four arms. They frequently fight with a combination of weapons and shields in their four hands. They can make two attacks in a round and can make a second Defense check, but suffer an off-hand penalty to hit for each attack or defence after the first. All Pé Chói are born with two levels of the Multiple Weapon use that can only be applied to a single target (so their off-hand penalty is a cumulative -2).

*Physical Advantage (Good Hearing):* Level 1, cost 1 point. Pé Chói receive a +4 bonus to Stat checks involving hearing.

*Physical Advantage (Sixth Sense):* Level 1, cost 1 Point. Pé Chói possess a rudimentary form of telepathy, which allows them to sense the presence (but not the specific thoughts) of other creatures within a 2 metre radius. It also allows them to sense when another Pé Chói (only) is killed within a five-kilometre radius.

*Physical Advantage (Good Eyesight):* Level 1, cost 1 point. Pé Chói receive a +4 bonus to Stat checks involving vision.

### Modified Attributes

These Attributes work differently for Pé Chói characters than for humans, if the player chooses to take them.

*Attractive:* A Pé Chói's Attractive value applies to other Pé Chói, and only vaguely to the way a Pé Chói is perceived by humans. For checks involving other races, ignore this Attribute.

## Defects

As with Attributes, Pé Chói characters have certain Defects automatically, and others work differently for them. Defects not listed in this section are handled normally for Pé Chói characters.

### Mandatory Defects

All Pé Chói characters have these Defects, and players receive Bonus Points for them.

#### Standard

*Second-Class Citizen (Non-Human):* 3 BP. Pé Chói, as non-humans, can never be full participants in Tsoyláni life. A Pé Chói's relative status, reflected by the Lineage and Wealth Attributes, does not go far in human society.

### Unique to Pé Chói

*Physical Impairment (Environmental Limitation):* 1 BP. Pé Chói breathe not only through their mouths, but also through spiracles located on their abdomen and tail. They can close the spiracles temporarily, but it is difficult to keep them closed for an extended period (requiring Willpower Stat checks with an cumulative penalty of -1 per round), as the Pé Chói's instinctive fight-or-flight response is to open them wide and thrash the tail to get greater oxygen flow. Consequently, even shallow water poses a threat of drowning. Pé Chói are not capable of swimming, though they will float for a time due to the air in their two sets of lungs.

*Physical Impairment (Exoskeleton):* 2 BP. Due to the structure of the Pé Chói exoskeleton, they heal at half the normal rate. If their exoskeleton is damaged beyond 50% of their total hit points, it does not heal without outside help (Magic or a healer with the Medical skill, with a specialisation for Pé Chói and the materials to clean and patch the exoskeleton).

*Physical Impairment (Phobia):* 1 BP. Due to the Physical Impairment (Environmental Limitation) described above, most Pé Chói have a phobia of water. This Phobia aggravates the problem by giving the character an additional penalty of -2 to keep the spiracles closed in water as panic sets in, as well as making the character extremely reluctant to enter water.

NOTE: This Defect is the default condition for Pé Chói, but is not mandatory. A Pé Chói character may be created without this Defect at a cost of 1 Character Point, or alternatively may be given the 2 BP version of it to reflect a stronger phobia than average (increasing the penalty to keep the character's spiracles closed to -4).

*Impaired Charisma:* 1 BP. A Pé Chói's receive a penalty of -1 to all Charisma checks or Charisma-based Stat checks when dealing with other races.

## Careers

Pé Chói have no career restrictions within human society. Pé Chói warriors in the legions will, however, almost always be found in one of the Pé Chói Auxiliary legions.

## Skills

### Modified Skills

*Pé Chói Language:* Pé Chói may learn one of the Pé Chói languages — there are several dialects — at 2 Points per Level.

*Human Languages:* Pé Chói can learn any and all human languages at normal cost. While they speak with an accent often described as "flat" or "hissing," they have no difficulty learning the languages or making themselves understood.

## Naming

The following are examples of Pé Chói names.

Chk P'tk Kk  
 Chtík p'Qwé (see *Man of Gold*)  
 Dsík-Tè-Chí  
 Hétkw tè Kténg  
 Ktò-típ-ssiu (High Legate of the Palace of the Realm at Avanthár)  
 Kt-t-r-Kí (Kérdu of the Legion of Ttik-dsá-Ké, 14th Pé Chói Auxiliary MI)  
 Nchikp'q'  
 Pkétk Tquí  
 Ptcht-tik-né (Kérdu of the Legion of Tík-nékw-két, 1st Pé Chói Auxiliary MI)  
 Tké't'kl



## Shén

Shén are black-scaled reptiloid sentients from the Antares system, around 2 metres tall, with powerful legs, three-fingered, clawed hands, and a prehensile tail ending in a bony mace-like knob they can whip around in combat. Their face has a beak-like snout filled with sharp teeth, and they have a crest of glittering spines that stands erect when they are agitated. The Shén have three sexes: males (“egg-creators”) who make up 40 percent of the population, females (“egg-layers”) who make up 35 percent, and “egg-fertilisers,” who make up the remaining 25 percent. Females and egg-fertilisers have greyish scales, especially on the abdomen and around their eyes. Elderly Shén also fade toward grey. Fashionable Shén paint their scales in iridescent colours.

Shén usually come to Tsolyánu only temporarily, since they dislike the colder Northern climate, preferring their equatorial homelands (“colder” is a relative term; Jakállá can reach 50 °C in the shade in summer). While they are only rarely accepted into a clan, many Shén serve in the military or as bodyguards to wealthy and powerful Tsolyáni. They are less dextrous than humans, and have difficulty with human weapons because their clawed hands are larger (penalty of -2 to checks requiring manual dexterity), but they can basically do anything a human can.

## Stereotypes

Most of human society views Shén as big, violent, and dumb (their difficulty with human speech reinforces this). Humans are disturbed that Shén happily eat human meat (even humans who have never seen a Shén have heard this) and view them as uncivilised. Shén frequently fight among themselves and attack Ahoggyá on sight, which reinforces this perception.

## The Reality

Shén are almost as intelligent, on average, as humans, and were themselves once a starfaring race. Their culture is as ancient and as elaborate as human culture, and their arts and sciences are well-developed. Since Shén eat their own children (their way of weeding out the weak), they do not understand why the Tsolyáni are upset that they eat humans too. Shén in Tsolyánu are outside of their own culture, so from a Tsolyáni point of view they may well be less “civilised.”

Shén are more aggressive than humans, on the whole. In addition, Tsolyáni humans see a biased sample; most Shén in Tsolyánu are professional mercenaries, seeking their fortunes with the Legions, in the Arena, or as bodyguards. Shén from one “egg-group” are involuntarily enraged by the smell of Shén from certain other “egg-groups” (see Defects below). They also do not get along with Ahoggyá for historical reasons, which frequently leads to violence if members of the two races are in the same place (Tsolyáni field commanders know better than to put Shén and Ahoggyá contingents anywhere near each other).

## Clan and Lineage

Tsolyáni clans do not accept Shén as members, and the Shén would generally not be interested if the offer were made. There are some few, unusual, exceptions to this.

## Religion

In their own lands, the Shén worship a variety of deities. The most prominent ones are The One Of Eggs and The One Who Rends, which roughly correspond to Stability and Change, respectively. Shén living in Tsolyánu tend to pick a Tsolyáni deity from the same “side” as their actual deity, and with an orientation appropriate to their personality and profession. Thus, a Shén mercenary worshipper of The One Who Rends might pick Vimúhla, the Lord of Fire.

## Stats

Shén characters have the following limitations and benefits when selecting Stats:

**Strength:** Shén are very strong. Average is 6, maximum is 11. If the GM is permitting values over 10 for humans at extra cost, a Strength of 12 costs 2 additional Points for a Shén.

**Dexterity:** Shén are clumsy. Average is 2, maximum is 7.

**Intelligence:** Shén are not quite as smart as humans. Average is 3, maximum is 8.

**Psyche:** Shén typically have poor psychic abilities. Average is 2, maximum is 8.

**Charisma:** No change.

**Willpower:** Shén are strong-willed. Average is 5, though maximum is still 10.

## Derived Values

Shén have a default Pedhétl of 2.

## Net Cost

Based on the Mandatory Attributes and Defects below, the net cost to play a Shén is 6 Character Points.

## Attributes

Shén characters have certain Attributes automatically, and others are altered to apply to them. Attributes not listed in this section are handled normally for Shén characters.

## Mandatory Attributes

All Shén characters have these Attributes, and players must pay for them.

### Standard

**Large Build:** Level 2, Cost 4 Points. Shén are big and strong, and thus they increase all weapon damage multipliers by 2. Thus, a Long Sword, which normally does 4x damage, would do 6x damage in the hands of a Shén.

**Tough:** Level 3, Cost 3 Points. All Shén have three Levels of the Tough Attribute automatically, to reflect their great size and inherent toughness. They may buy additional Levels up to Level 6 at standard cost, gaining five more Health Points for each Level.

### Unique to Shén

**Natural Armour:** Level 1, Cost 2 Points. Shén have natural armour, due to their tough hide and scales, equivalent to Light Armour.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 4, Cost 4 Points. Shén have claws, a hard beak, and a powerful tail, with a bony club on the end that may be used in combat. The claws (Low Penetration) have a Damage Multiplier of 4, and the beak (High Penetration) and tail have a Damage Multiplier of 3. This includes the modifier for the Large Attribute.

All Shén are born with three levels of the Multiple Weapon Use Attribute but it only applies to their Natural Weapons. So their basic offhand penalty is a cumulative -1 for subsequent natural weapons attacks but remains at -4 for conventional melee attacks

**Physical Advantage (Heat Tolerant):** Level 1, Cost 1 Points. Shén are resistant to heat, suffering no ill effects from it until it gets well beyond the temperatures in the human-occupied areas of Téकुmel.

## Modified Attributes

These Attributes work differently for Shén characters than for humans, if the player chooses to take them.

**Attractive:** A Shén’s Attractive value applies to other Shén, and only vaguely to the way a Shén is perceived by humans. For checks involving other races, ignore this Attribute.

**High Pedhétl:** Subtract 2 from the Pedhétl value at each Level (for example, an Shén with 4 Levels of the High Pedhétl Attribute will have a Pedhétl value of 6). Shén without the High Pedhétl Attribute or the Low Pedhétl Defect have a Pedhétl value of 2.

**High Status:** Only very rarely can a Shén become a member of a human clan. For a Shén, one Level of this Attribute indicates that they have been accepted into a clan at the campaign’s clan Level (no higher than Medium). Such a Shén can join the Priesthood or Government, but experiences significant discrimination and may not attain more than 6th Circle.

**Older:** Shén age faster than humans. At each Level of the Older Attribute, a Shén is subject to the Stat limitations of the next highest Level.



## Defects

As with Attributes, Shén characters have certain Defects automatically, and others work differently for them. Defects not listed in this section are handled normally for Shén characters.

### Mandatory Defects

All Shén characters have these Defects, and players receive Points for them.

#### Standard

*Second-Class Citizen (Non-Human):* 4 BP. Shén, as non-humans, can never be full participants in Tsolyáni life. A Shén's relative status, reflected by the Lineage and Wealth Attributes, does not go far in human society.

#### Unique to Shén

*Physical Impairment (Huge Hands):* 1 BP. Shén hands are so large and clumsy that they cannot use most human weapons competently. They receive a -2 penalty when using weapons not manufactured to Shén scale.

*Physical Impairment (Pheromones):* 1 BP. Shén are divided into different "egg-groups." To a given Shén, some egg-groups (including his or her own) are friendly, many are neutral, and some are hated enemies. Shén can tell what egg-group another Shén is from by smell, and react instinctively and violently to Shén from enemy ones. A Shén who meets a member of an enemy egg-group becomes increasingly uncomfortable and aggressive, and eventually attacks unless he or she makes a successful Willpower Stat check at a -2 difficulty once for every five minutes spent in the enemy Shén's presence. Note that the enemy status has nothing to do with anything the specific other Shén (or its relatives) has done; it is genetic. They react the same way to Ahoggyá as they do to Shén of an opposing egg-group, but the Stat check is made at a penalty of -3.

*Impaired Charisma:* 2 BP. Shén receive a penalty of -2 to all Charisma checks or Charisma-based Stat checks when dealing with other races (-4 when dealing with Ahoggyá).

### Modified Defects

These Defects work differently for Shén characters than for humans, if the player chooses to take them.

*Low Pedhétl:* Subtract 2 from the Pedhétl value for each BP (for example, a Shén with 1 BP of the Low Pedhétl Attribute will have a Pedhétl value of 0). This Defect can only be taken at BP 1.

## Careers

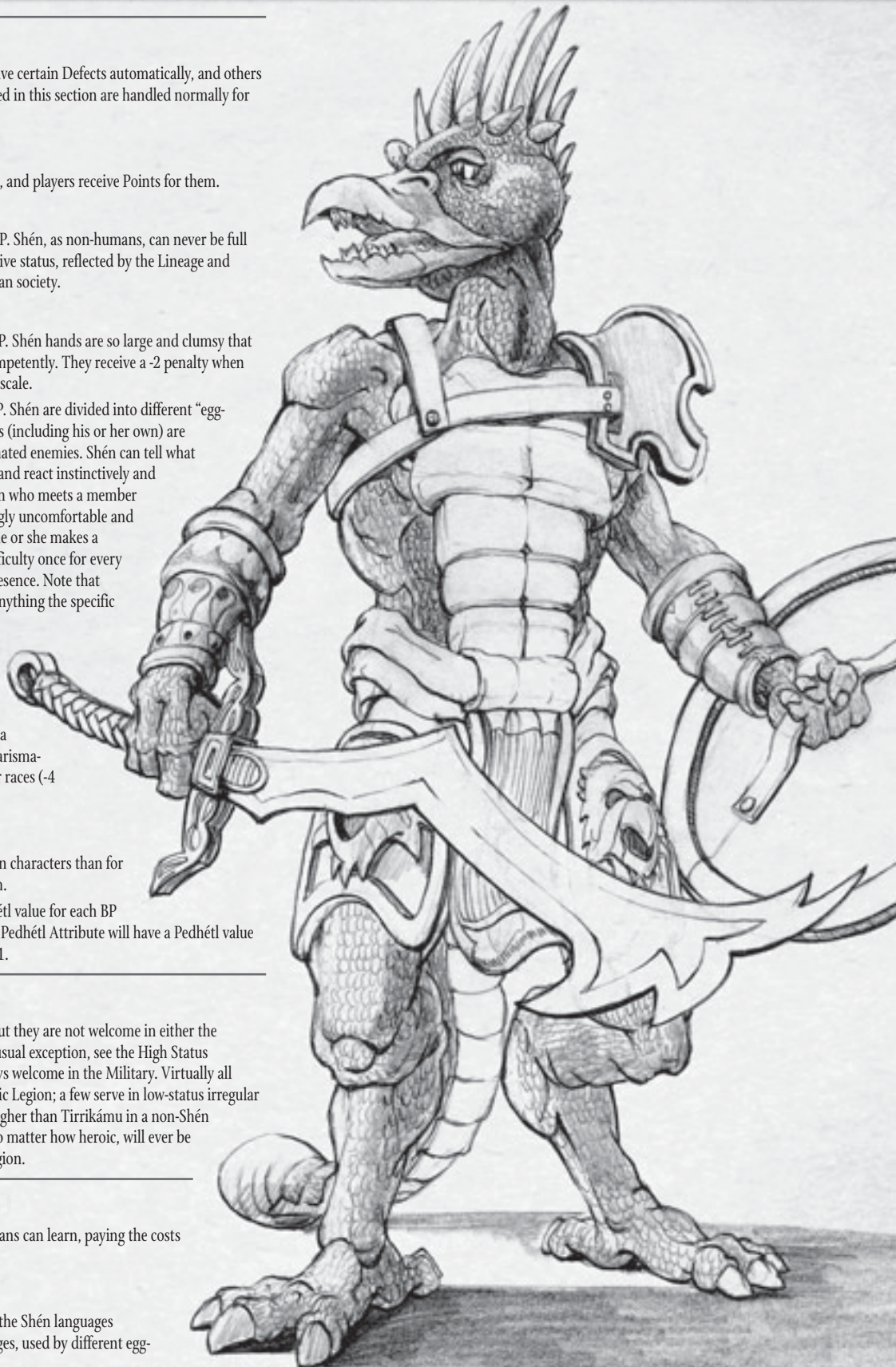
Shén may become Imperial citizens, but they are not welcome in either the Priesthood or the Government (for an unusual exception, see the High Status Attribute above). They are, however, always welcome in the Military. Virtually all Shén in the military serve in a Shén-specific Legion; a few serve in low-status irregular Legions. No Shén can ever attain a rank higher than Tirrikámu in a non-Shén Legion, and it is unlikely that any Shén, no matter how heroic, will ever be accepted into a Heavy Infantry or Elite Legion.

## Skills

Shén may learn any and all Skills humans can learn, paying the costs appropriate to their career.

### Modified Skills

*Shén Language:* Shén may learn one of the Shén languages — there are several closely-related languages, used by different egg-





groups — at 2 Points per Level. It is possible for a Shén raised in Tsolyánu to not know any of the Shén languages.

*Human Languages:* While Shén may learn human tongues to as high a Level as they choose, they can never sound like natives because their vocal apparatus is shaped wrong. They also pay one additional Skill Point per Level for any human language.

## New Skills

*Natural Weapon Fighting (Claws, Beak, Tail):* Shén may purchase an Unarmed Fighting Skill at 3 Skill Points per Level.

## Resources

Shén may spend Resource Points on anything a human can, but cannot use them to bypass the glass ceilings in the Careers.

## Naming

The following are examples of Shén names. They may reflect different dialects and naming conventions of different egg-groups.

A-Shg-Ssá  
 Chrâ-Ssé-Kk  
 Etk ti Tsú  
 Fr-Ssâ-Chi  
 Grg-Ssá  
 Hú-Shà-Gsh  
 Mrgág (Kérdu of the Legion of the Splendour of Shényu, 4th Shén Auxiliary Heavy Infantry)  
 Nkék  
 Shékw  
 Ss-Qâ-Hs

## Tinaliya

Tinaliya are small (50-75 cm) creatures with four short, outward-bowed lower legs, a spherical abdomen, a torso, two long arms ending in claw-like three-fingered hands, and sloping heads with huge eyes and vaguely humanoid features. Their bodies and limbs are divided into small, bulbous segments and covered with a horny integument, usually tan, russet, or deep brown in colour. Tinaliya have three sexes: males (10 percent of the population), females (5 percent), and neuters (85 percent). The sexes are visually indistinguishable to non-Tinaliya.

Relatively few Tinaliya emerge from their underground cities, and even fewer find their way to Tsolyánu from their homeland in Livyánu. Those who do are usually either neuters or (occasionally) females, and they generally “see the world” for a few years before returning to their own societies. Some few take up permanent residence in human cities.

## Stereotypes

Tinaliya are most often stereotyped as ridiculously literal-minded, being unable to understand jokes, exaggerations, or figures of speech. A famous puppet play, entitled “The Marriage of the Tinaliya and the Shén,” parodies this to good effect — and Tinaliya in the audience invariably fail to get the joke, which makes it even funnier for everyone else. They are also known for being good with mechanical things.

## The Reality

Tinaliya really are completely literal-minded, being psychologically incapable of viewing the world in any other way. They are also curious, enthusiastic learners, who are materialistic, but often generous. They are quite intelligent, and have an intricate and elaborate culture that few if any humans have ever seen, and which would probably be as incomprehensible to humans as human cultures are to the Tinaliya. They are also smart and tenacious fighters, despite their small size. The Livyáni field several Tinaliya legions, which are mostly used to defend the Tinaliya homeland against the Mu’ugalaváni.

## Clan and Lineage

Tinaliya have their own social structure in their homeland, and do not join human clans.

## Religion

The Tinaliya worship a single deity who they say has no interest in this world. They do acknowledge the power of the beings humans call Gods, however, so they are willing to join human sects for pragmatic reasons.

## Stats

Tinaliya characters have the following limitations and benefits when selecting Stats:

*Strength:* Tinaliya are weak, though not as weak as one might expect based upon their size. Average is 2, maximum is 6.

*Dexterity:* Tinaliya are quite dextrous. Average is 5, maximum is 11. If the GM is permitting values over 10 for normal humans at extra cost, a Dexterity of 12 costs 2 additional Points for a Tinaliya.

*Intelligence:* Tinaliya are slightly smarter than humans. Average is 5, maximum is 11. If the GM is permitting values over 10 for normal humans at extra cost, an Intelligence of 12 costs 2 additional Points for a Tinaliya.

*Psyche:* Tinaliya are not well-suited to psychic pursuits. Average is 2, maximum is 8.

*Charisma:* No change (but see Defects below).

*Willpower:* Tinaliya are strong-willed. Average is 5, though maximum is still 10.

## Net Cost

Based on the Mandatory Attributes and Defects below, a player gains 2 Bonus Points when playing a Tinaliya.

## Attributes

Tinaliya characters have certain Attributes automatically, and others are altered to apply to them. Attributes not listed in this section are handled normally for Tinaliya characters.

## Mandatory Attributes

All Tinaliya characters have these Attributes, and players must pay for them.

### Standard

*High Pedhétl:* Level 2, cost 2 Points. Tinaliya start with two extra Points of Pedhétl, giving them a default Pedhétl of 6. They may buy additional Levels normally, up to a maximum Pedhétl value of 12.

*Small Build:* Level 1, cost 2 Points. Tinaliya are small.

## Modified Attributes

These Attributes work differently for Tinaliya characters than for humans, if the player chooses to take them.

*Attractive:* A Tinaliya’s Attractive value applies to other Tinaliya, and only vaguely to the way a Tinaliya is perceived by humans. For checks involving other races, ignore this Attribute.



## Defects

As with Attributes, Tinaliya characters have certain Defects automatically, and others work differently for them. Defects not listed in this section are handled normally for Tinaliya characters.

## Mandatory Defects

All Tinaliya characters have these Defects, and players receive Points for them.

### Standard

*Fragile:* 1 BP. Due to their small size, Tinaliya have 10 less Health Points than their Stats would normally indicate. They do not, however, receive a penalty to endurance, disease, poison, etc.

*Second-Class Citizen (Non-Human):* 3 BP. Tinaliya, as non-humans, can never be full participants in Tsolyáni life. A Tinaliya's relative status, reflected by the Lineage and Wealth Attributes, does not go far in human society.

### Unique to Tinaliya

*Literal Minded:* 1 BP. The Tinaliya's inability to comprehend humour, metaphors, or figurative speech rises to the Level of a psychological disability when dealing with other races. It interferes not only with communication but also with comprehension. Tinaliya receive a penalty to checks involving communication and comprehension when dealing with other races, due to their literal view of the world.

*Impaired Charisma:* 1 BP. Tinaliya receive a penalty of -1 to all Charisma checks or Charisma-based Stat checks when dealing with other races, due to their literal view of the world.

## Careers

Tinaliya may participate in human careers, though they are best suited for those where their tendencies toward logic and literal interpretation work for them, rather than impairing them. They can make good scholars or bureaucrats. Oddly enough, they can also make good warriors within the limitations of their size.

## Skills

### Modified Skills

*Tinaliya Language:* Tinaliya may learn the Tinaliya language at 2 Points per Level.

*Human Languages:* Tinaliya may learn human tongues to as high a Level as they choose, though many concepts will be confusing to them, and they will also always retain an accent. They learn them at an additional cost of 1 Point per Level.

## Naming

The following are examples of Tinaliya names.

Ákh Ulé  
 Ané Tüvé  
 Chní  
 Ekká Qó  
 Hësh Tá Ün  
 K'kés Ésra iú  
 Mnéch Ó  
 Né K'kách  
 Nmé Lü  
 Pá' Hè  
 Pè'l Tí  
 Tà Sò  
 Tí Sà Qó (General of a Livyáni legion, Chároneb of Hraís and Llüneb of the Standing Rock)





# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE





# Equipment and Economics

## Handling Money

There are several possible approaches to handling financial matters in a Tékumel campaign. One is to just hand-wave everything, giving a character access to what the GM considers appropriate to a person of their status and wealth (based on the Wealthy Attribute and Poor Defect), and assume their income and expenses cancel out to support their lifestyle; large purchases can be handled through the clan. Another is to rely on the "Access to Clan Resources" rules (page 68), but keep track of income and expenses to use for unusual purchases or shopping when away from home. The third method is to calculate everything out and count every hlásh.

How detailed you want to get about finances will depend heavily on the type of campaign you are running. High-status Tsolyáni consider it ignoble to even know how much something costs, let alone handle the bills themselves, so a high-clan campaign lends itself to the first or second methods. On the other hand, lower-clan Tsolyáni are pretty much dependent on their clans for lifestyle anyway, so they could work the same way — or they could be riding very close to the financial edge and tracking money closely. If the campaign is based around mercantile activities, using more detail makes sense; if it is a military, social, or adventuring campaign, it may not.

Ultimately, though, it's up to the GM and players how much complexity they want in their game. We have provided generalised rules for the way most Tsolyáni function ("Access to Clan Resources") because, for the vast majority of Tsolyáni, income and expenses are not an individual matter but something handled as part of a larger community. Conversely, more detailed rules are provided for players and settings that demand it.

## Tsolyáni Currency

Gold, silver, and copper are common on Tékumel relative to iron, but Tsolyáni coins are still quite small. The basic unit of Tsolyáni currency is the káitar, a small, delicate gold coin weighing about 3 grams. Each káitar is equivalent to 20 silver hlásh, and each hlásh is in turn equivalent to 20 copper qirgál:

Coin	Material	Quantity per káitar
káitar	gold	1
hlásh	silver	20
qirgál	copper	400

Tsolyáni below Middle Clan may never handle hlásh, and may never even see a káitar except at a distance. At the other end of the scale, upper-class Tsolyáni will never encounter anything less than a káitar. In fact, High and Very High clanmembers will often not even know the prices of things or how much money they have, letting their servants and slaves handle their money for personal purchases.

Individuals usually do not keep a lot of cash on hand. Most Tsolyáni bank their money at their clanhouse, and withdraw cash as needed, using letters of credit for large purchases. Large amounts of money may be transported in coin, or in the form of drafts on a clanhouse treasury, or may be used to buy gems, which are far more portable and can be resold at one's destination.

## Access to Clan Resources

Most of the time, Tsolyáni don't go out and buy things they need — they borrow them from their clan or get them from their clan's stores. This is reflected by allowing characters to obtain items through their clan, depending on their starting Resource Points, according to Access to Purchases (below). These values assume the character is working out of his or her home clanhouse since the Wealth Attribute largely represents the wealth of the given clanhouse. GMs should adjust for poor characters operating out of wealthy clanhouses in different cities accordingly — they'll be penalised for being visitors to some extent, but the clanhouse is also less concerned about items below a given káitar value. Conversely, a rich character visiting a poor, rural clanhouse cannot expect access to the same luxuries available in Báy Sü (though the locals may try hard to avoid embarrassing themselves).

## Access Value

To determine the character's Access Value, divide the value of the item, in káitars, the character wishes to use by his or her Resource Points. Increase an item by one Access Value category per Level of negative Reputation a character has, and decrease it by one category for every two Levels of positive Reputation a character has, up to two categories. Feel free to increase categories for characters who haven't been keeping their money in the clan accounts or giving the clan a cut of unusual income (or have been antagonising the clan elders or quartermaster).

*Example: Arkháne has a Resource Point value of 100, and is interested in a crossbow which costs 160 káitars. Thus, Arkháne's Access Value for a crossbow is 1.6 (160 ÷ 100) so, as long as he explains why he needs a crossbow and promises to return it, the clan will issue him one. If he had four Levels of positive Reputation, which would decrease his category of access by two Levels — they'd give it to him without question as long as he didn't try to outfit all his friends with them.*

Of course, all of this assumes that the item is something the clan actually keeps around or can readily get — specialised equipment that doesn't relate to one of the clan's trades, exotic items, steel weapons and armour, and magical items may simply be unavailable, regardless of their cost.

**Table 4-1: Access to Purchases**

Access Value	Description of Access
up to .25	You have unlimited access for your own personal use, with no need to get permission or justify it; the clan doesn't even bother to inventory these things.
.25 to .5	You can have it no questions asked, but you're expected to be reasonable and not take more than your share.
.5 to 1	If you have a specific need for it, they'll issue you one with no hassle, but don't mistreat or lose it.
1 to 2	You'll have to make a case for it, and they'll want it back when you're done.
2 to 5	Issued for specific purposes that benefit the clan, with the understanding that you'd better take good care of it and bring it back intact promptly.
5 to 10	Available only for clan-sponsored projects, with authorisation from the clanmaster and clan elders, and with serious consequences if it doesn't come back in the condition it left.
10+	At GM discretion, but only issued for clan-sponsored and closely supervised projects, accompanied by dire warnings about how valuable the item is and what its loss would mean to the clan. Such things will generally not be issued to a single clan member.



## Income and Expenses

### Income

Characters who work will have a monthly income. This depends on their rank (if in a profession), their Skill Level, their social level, and whether they are in an urban or rural area.

All figures are given in káitars except where otherwise noted.

### The Professions

Government Officials and Priests are paid based on their Circle Ranks (not their official positions, if any), while Legion personnel are paid based on their military rank. None of these salaries are generous until characters achieve higher ranks, so low-ranking people of high clan are dependent on help from their clans to maintain their lifestyles. They're expected to pay that investment back later in the form of influence, of course.

### The Government

The range of possible incomes is wildly variable depending on the size of city, level of corruption, local conditions, etc. Government salaries are by no means all of the compensation a bureaucrat takes from his job. Some Tsolyáni bureaucrats know how to finesse their positions to levels of astronomical wealth, but would modestly declaim that their salary is "only a few hundred káitars, barely enough to keep dná-grain bread on the table ..."

**Table 4-2: Government Salaries**

Circle	Monthly Salary (káitars)
1	10
2	15
3	20
4	30
5	50
6	70
7	90
8	110
9	150
10	200
11	300
12	500
13	700
14	900
15	1000
16	1200
17	1500
18	1800
19	1900
20	2000
21	3000
22+	5000+

Rural and small town officials receive 25% less, and those working in a town or small city receive 10% less.

### The Priesthood

Priests are paid on the same scale as officials of the Government. A Priest of a Cohort receives 10% less. Administrative Priests receive 5% more, ritual Priests receive the stated amount, and all others receive 5% less. Temple Guards are usually paid as soldiers.

### The Legions

Temple Guards receive 5% less, Sákbe Road Guards 10% less, City Militia and Tomb Police 15% less, and village Constables 50-70% less than the figures above.

**Table 4-3: Military Salaries**

Rank	Monthly Salary (káitars)
Changadésha (Private)	10
Kuruthúni (Private, Heavy Infantry)	15
Tirrikámu (Sergeant)	30
Heréksa (Lieutenant)	70
Kási (Captain)	200
Molkár (Major)	500
Dritlán (Colonel)	800
Kérdu (General)	1500+

### Clan Employment

Income from clan employment is much more variable than income in one of the Imperial careers. The main factors that determine the character's Level in the Skill used to earn income, the clan level (which is a proxy for how much people are willing to pay for their skills in Tsolyáni society), and where he or she is working (rural or urban areas). These are only guidelines; the GM should adjust as he or she sees fit.

**Table 4-4: Profession Salaries**

Monthly Income by Skill Level (káitars)

Skill Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lower-class, menial (Labourer, Miner)							
Income	1.25	2.5	5	10	20	35	65
Middle-class, artisan (Potter, Weaver, Clan Guard, Bodyguard)							
Income	2.5	5	10	20	40	70	130
Middle-class, professional (Physician, Jeweller, Gladiator, House Priest)							
Income	3.75	7.5	15	30	60	105	200
Elite professional (Caravan Merchant, Administrator, Noble's Bodyguard)							
Income	5	10	20	40	80	150	300
Highest professional (Sorcerous Bodyguard, Clanmaster)							
Income	7.5	15	25	50	100	200	400

Characters working in a rural area or small town receive only 50% of the stated value. Characters working at the upper levels of society (wealthy urban clanhouses, even if one does not belong to the clan, palaces, etc.) receive 200% of the values.

For warriors, use their highest Combat Skill, Teamwork, or Observation Skill Level, depending on circumstances and the specific job.

### Self-Employment

Self-employed persons have income that varies from month to month. Take the appropriate value from the table above and modify it based on a Skill check against the highest of their Merchant, Analysis, or Planning Skills. Add 10% times the Margin of Success of the Skill check, or subtract 10% times the Margin of Failure.

Merchants take even larger risks; do the same thing, but modify the result by 20% times the Margin of Success or Failure.

### Investment

Characters who have money sitting around may invest it in their (or other) clan's ventures, land, shipping, etc. For each month, make a Skill check against the character's (or the individual handling the investment's) Analysis or Merchant Skills. Add or subtract 1% times the Margin of Success or Failure for normal investments, or up to 3% for extremely risky ones. The GM should, of course, apply modifiers to the check based on events in the campaign when appropriate.



## Expenses

Characters spend money on general upkeep, taxes, payments to their clan, and household members (such as children, non-working spouses, servants, slaves, etc.).

### Basic Expenditures

Monthly expenses are figured as a percentage of income, on the assumption that the character is trying to live within his or her means. A character living in a clanhouse — the normal situation for most Tsolyáni — spends 50% of his or her monthly income on general expenses. Characters living in a military barracks or temple spend only 45%, while those living independently spend 60%. Subtract 5% if the character's monthly income is above 100 káitars, or 10% if it is above 500 káitars (at higher income levels, a lower percentage goes to general expenses). Modify this base value by making a check against the character's Merchant, Planning, or Administration Skill (or the Skill Level of the character's major-domo or spouse, if any). Add 10% times the Margin of Failure (maximum of +150%) or subtracting 5% times the Margin of Success (maximum of -80%).

If the character has dependents, add 5% per non-working spouse and 1% per child under the age of 12 as a minimum, and assume some general lowering of lifestyle.

### Income Tax

The Tsolyáni Empire expects all its citizens to pay 1% of their income per month. It is possible to cheat, but it is also possible to get caught, and penalties can be severe.

### Servants and Slaves

Servants and house staff with appropriate Skills are paid according to the Clan Employment schedule (page 69). Treat general servants, maids, butlers, valets, major-domos, etc. as Lower Class, but base the rate on their status in the household rather than a specific Skill Level. For example, untrained labourers are treated as Skill Level 0, maids as Level 3, butlers and overseers as Level 4, valets are Level 5, and a major-domo as Level 6. One can, of course, pay them more for good performance.

Slaves collect no salary, but require around 3% of their purchase price for monthly upkeep. They can survive on less than that, but will be unhappy and won't perform at their best.

## Mass and Measures

This game uses measurements in the Metric system. The Tsolyáni, however, have their own system of measurement. It is provided below so groups who wish to use it to add colour may do so.

**Table 4-5: Distance Measurements**

Tsolyáni Measurement	Metric Equivalent
Chóptse	1 1/3 centimetre
Hói	13 1/3 centimetre
Dháiba	1 1/3 metre
Tsán	1 1/3 kilometre

**Table 4-6: Mass Measurements**

Tsolyáni Measurement	Metric Equivalent
Tnúng	187.4 milligrams
Mló	3.75 grams
Psé	0.75 kilogram
Epü	1,500 kilograms

**Table 4-7: Liquid Measurements**

Tsolyáni Measurement	Metric Equivalent
Tsértse	0.3 litre
Kúvmu	3 litres
Nmécha	60 litres

**Table 4-8: Time Measurements**

Tsolyáni Measurement	Metric Equivalent
Sível	4.5 seconds
Yóm	90 seconds
Kirén	30 minutes
Témmre	180 minutes (8 per day)

## Items and Prices

The prices listed in this section are given in káitars, unless otherwise indicated. The prices are the normal market prices: they vary, based upon the quality of the item and on the character's success in haggling. A merchant may start with a much higher price, and may refuse to come down to these rates at all depending on the bargainer's Skill check and the circumstances.

They are also averages across Tsolyáni. If an item is particularly rare in an area, the GM should raise the price accordingly. Prices may also go up if you're dealing with someone who dislikes your clan, regional accent, or religious affiliation. Prices go down when there's a surplus, and (sometimes) when you're dealing with someone who likes you.

Exceptionally fine items can be had at much higher costs. For masterworks, gem-encrusted examples, or valuable antiques, the sky's the limit.

### Effect of Quality on Prices

The price of an item can vary greatly based upon its quality. The prices and descriptions of items are for items of medium quality. If a character wishes to purchase a better or inferior item, the price varies as follows: the cheapest and shabbiest item of its class available will cost 50% of the listed price, while the cost of a fine quality item will cost 200% of the listed price. For the finest, decorated items, there is no upper limit to the price.

### Effect of Bargaining on Prices

A skilful negotiator can significantly bring down the price of an item. A character can reduce the price of an item by 5% per Margin of Success from a successful Negotiation Skill check, to a maximum discount of 50%.

## Weapons and Armour

The shortage of iron on Tékumel has led its inhabitants to develop alternatives. The primary substitute for metal is the treated hide of the chlén-beast, which can be peeled off in thick sheets every six months or so without harming the chlén. It is softened, carved and moulded into shape, and hardened to the consistency of soft iron or bronze using a process known only to the tanner clans. The resulting material is far less durable than metal would be, and does not hold an edge as well, but weighs about a third of what bronze or steel would weigh. Durability is an issue; chlén-hide weapons will break, and cannot be repaired, so soldiers quickly learn to carry spares. In its native state, treated chlén-hide is an unattractive grey-green — most people prefer to have it painted or lacquered. Weapons and armour are usually lacquered in bright colours symbolising the wielder's religious and clan affiliation.



Iron, when it is found, is most often used to make steel weapons and armour. These items are not common in private hands even in the upper classes, almost unheard of in the Middle clans, and never seen among the lower classes (they're simply too valuable). The better-equipped legions and many of the temples, however, maintain stocks of them for battlefield or emergency use. Some upper-tier Tsolyáni legions can field several cohorts of steel-armed and armoured troops.

Prices are for chlén-hide or bronze articles. Iron and steel are rarely offered for open sale, but can sometimes be purchased through connections. Iron or steel articles cost anywhere from 100 to 5000 times what an equivalent chlén-hide item would, depending on quality and condition (the lower end represents badly-corroded junk, while the higher represents masterpieces of the smith's art with good provenance and history).

Some items, of course, do not require an iron substitute. The Tsolyáni use a variety of woods to make weapon shafts, bows, etc., and sometimes make mace heads out of stone.

## Custom Weapons

Since chlén-hide can be easily moulded and formed before hardening, and because it is so light, Tsolyáni smiths use it to make far more elaborate weapon designs than would be feasible with metal (see "Designing Special Items," page 83, and apply the cost modifiers there).

## Weapons and Armour for Non-humans

Non-humans pay the prices listed below when they have these articles manufactured by their own artisans, unless the weapon is specifically listed. If someone of another race makes the item for them, the cost is doubled. Weapons and armour made for one species never fit another well, and in some cases do not fit at all.

**Table 4-9: Weapon Costs**

Price	Article
10	Dagger
15	One-handed Melee Weapon
20	Two-handed Melee Weapon
13	Blowgun (rare)
17	20 blowgun darts
11	Bolas
12	Short bow
19	Longbow (typically made of séresh wood)
44	Composite bow
25	20 arrows
50	Quiver for 20 arrows or box for 30 crossbow quarrels
150	Light crossbow
170	Medium crossbow
190	Heavy crossbow
50	Hand Crossbow (Shén, Tinalíya, Summoner upon the Way)
30	30 crossbow quarrels
5	Javelin, dart
5	Sling (leather)
12	Staff-sling
5	20 leaden sling pellets
22	Polearm
50	N'lüss Sword
50	Shén Axe-Sword
10	Specially made wire Garrotte

## Armour

Enlisted personnel in most legions and temple guard units are issued one set of armour, of low to moderate quality depending on how well-funded the unit is. Officers (Heréksa and above) must purchase their own, and enlisted soldiers who want a better suit can do so as well. Issued armour will always be chlén-hide even in legions that field steel-armoured units; they reserve the steel for actual combat wear.

Due to the climate, armour is usually only worn on the battlefield or by those on guard duty where there is a risk of violence. Lighter ceremonial "armour," with little or no protective value, is worn as a dress uniform (see the Clothing section below for prices on dress uniforms). Civilians, except for bodyguards, caravan guards, warehouse guards, and the like, rarely wear armour.

**Table 4-10: Armour Costs**

Armour Type	Price (káitars)	Includes
Light Armour	100	Light helmet, breastplate pectoral, vambraces, leather tunic
Medium Armour	120	Medium helmet, gorget collar, breastplate, backplate, vambraces, greaves
Heavy Armour	200	Heavy helmet, gorget collar, breastplate, backplate, vambraces, greaves, mail kilt, tassels, sabatons
Small Shield	15	
Medium Shield	30	
Large Shield	45	

## Steel Weapons and Armour

Steel weapons are extremely rare. A steel dagger would be exceptionally expensive. A sword, or even a piece of armour would be nearly unheard of. As such, Steel Weapons cannot be simply purchased during character creation. They must be introduced to the campaign by the GM. Most steel objects are more effective (inflict more damage, provide more protection) and significantly sturdier (can sustain more damage before degrading in performance). The exact degree of this enhancement depends on the quality of the steel and the craftsmanship of the smith.

**Table 4-11: Steel Weapons and Armour Costs**

Article	Price (káitars)
Steel Arrowhead	250
Steel Dagger or Spear Point	500
Steel Shortsword	700
Steel Longsword	1000
Steel Two-handed Sword	1500
Steel Light Armour	1500
Steel Medium Armour	2000
Steel Heavy Armour	2500
Steel Small Shield	250
Steel Medium Shield	500
Steel Large Shield	750
Steel Helmet	750
Steel Vambraces	500



# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE



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## CHAPTER 4: EQUIPMENT AND ECONOMICS



## Personal Effects and Household Items

This section includes a sampling of items a Tsolyáni might want for everyday use; under normal circumstances, all of these would be provided by one's clan.

**Table 4-12: Personal Effects Costs**

Price	Article
2	Personal toilet articles: These consist of a bronze or Chlén-hide razor, a clay pot of vé paste (used as soap), anái sticks (chewed to clean the teeth), a comb, scissors, a small bronze or silver mirror, etc. All of these take up about 1,000 cc of space.
10	Sleeping mat
5	Pen-box. Dimensions: 25 x 8 x 5 cm (1,000 cc). This contains up to 5 reed pens and a cake of carbon Ink. The ink is mixed with water, and a better pen-box also has a little clay jug for this purpose.
0.5	Roll of paper or papyrus. Dimensions: 40 cm wide and 1 metre long.
0.9	Roll of parchment or vellum. Dimensions as for paper.
10	Paint-box. Dimensions: 15 x 10 x 5 cm (750 cc). This contains cakes of red, green, blue, white, yellow, and sometimes russet-orange water-based pigments, a tiny brush, and a little stoppered jar for water. There is room for some gold and/or silver leaf and the fixative by which these are applied to a page
5	Méshqu plaques. An average quality standard set; the sets favoured by aristocrats that include more plaques and are made from expensive materials could go for 20-50 times as much. These plaques are hung outside people's rooms to indicate their state of mind.
250	Full Set of Furniture (low tables, cabinets, and the like)

## Travelling Gear

This section includes a range of equipment that is useful for travellers or explorers. Unless otherwise noted, these items are generally available.

### Clothing

*One cannot look at the throng in a crowded street without automatically identifying most of its members: the demon mask and rich purple robes of a Priest of Hriü; the red and black chequered kilt and short vest of the merchant from Katalál; the naked slave, bronze collar glinting at his throat; the clan-girl from the western provinces, her poncho-like tunic of fine firyá-cloth open at the sides from shoulder to calf and belted in at the waist with a cord woven in her clan colours; the high noble in his complicated pleated kilt, bejewelled vest, and transparent over-tunic of thésun-gauze; the peasant from the centre of the Empire, attired in a rough homespun kilt and leather buskins; the lady of fashion, dazzlingly white skirts almost touching the ground, her breasts rouged and tantalisingly concealed beneath a collar of starched and lacquered chlén-hide, golden chains and pins artfully arranged in her long hair; the gilt and scarlet armour of a soldier from one of the legions devoted to mighty Karakán; the hurrying scribe, nude to the waist, knee-length kilt stained with hnéqu juice, and painted wooden penbox clacking at his side ... the world-wise city merchant learns to recognise them all...*

— M.A.R. Barker

The tables below give the costs of complete outfits as well as prices for individual garments. Temples and legions can generally lend ceremonial costumes for short periods of time, but people who are going to need them regularly are expected to buy their own.

**Table 4-13: Travelling Gear Costs**

Price	Article
1	Bed-mat. Made of woven reeds or cloth matting. It is usually rolled and strapped to the outside of a traveller's pack.
6	Blanket. Large enough for 1 person, 2 if they don't mind crowding.
11	Bronze lantern with glass cover. About 20 cm high and 10 cm in diameter. This burns for 2 hours per flask of oil.
0.9	Bronze or Chlén-hide spike (40 cm long)
5	Flint, steel, and tinder. The small piece of iron or steel makes this item a bit costly.
1	Glass or pottery flask (fragile) containing about half a litre of oil for the lantern or the lamp. This oil is made from slow-burning animal fat or vegetable substances.
55	Leather backpack (A little over 30,000 cc)
5	Leather belt pouch (100-200 cc capacity)
2	Leather water-bottle or water skin. This holds 2 litres of liquid, enough to supply the normal needs of 1 person for 1 day at average Tsolyáni temperatures. High summer, the desert, or intense exertion can require more.
80	Physician's leather bag. Dimensions: 35 x 30 x 20 cm (21,000 cc). This contains bandages, salves, drugs, and medicaments used to treat wounds, burns, abrasions, certain diseases, and a few common poisons.
6	Pot and skillet for cooking. The pot is about 20 cm in diameter and 15 cm high (4,700 cc). It is often filled with raw foodstuffs and hung on the outside of a traveller's pack. The skillet is a slightly convex, flat metal plate with a handle. It is about 25-30 cm in diameter.
2	Rations for 1 person for 1 week. Poor fare comprised of hard bread, dried fruits, a bit of cheese, etc. These occupy about 10,000 cc of space.
5	Rope (15 metres, strong enough to support perhaps 200 kg of dead mass)
6	Sack of stout cloth or leather (10,000-20,000 cc capacity)
140	Sorcerer's leather bag. Dimensions are as given above. This holds the paraphernalia of the ritual sorcerer. Chemicals, coloured chalks, powdered and liquid substances, sacrificial knives and ritual symbols, a book or scroll or two, and other magical items comprise the usual contents. The details differ according to the owner's abilities and temple affiliation.
15	Stretcher or litter. Dimensions: 2 m long x 60 cm wide. This can be carried rolled up on one person's shoulders. When laden with an incapacitated comrade, it must be borne by two bearers or made into a travois and dragged.
1	Torch. 1 metre long. The head is about 15 cm in diameter, wound with cloth and dipped in pitch. This burns for about 2 hours.
0.5	Wax candle; small oil-filled clay lamp. These burn for about 1 hour each.
2	Wooden mallet, bronze or Chlén-hide saw, chisel or other hand tool
20	Wooden or leather chest. Dimensions: 1 m long by 50 cm wide by 25 cm high. Larger or smaller chests, bound with metal or Chlén-hide straps, etc. are available.



## Complete Outfits, Uniforms, and Ceremonial Garb

**Table 4-14: Clothing Costs**

Price	Class or Rank/Articles of Clothing
1 hlásh	Slaves, very low class: Loincloth, straw sandals
8 hlásh	Low class: Kilt, sandals
10	Middle class: Kilt, sandals, vest, over-tunic, belt
70	Upper middle class: Kilt, shoes, belt, over-tunic, collar, headdress
120	Upper class: Kilt, shoes, belt, over-tunic, collar, headdress
1000	Highest upper class: Kilt, shoes, over-tunic, belt, collar, headdress, mantle
250	Priest of Circles 1-10: Ceremonial vestments: kilt, shoes, belt, over-tunic, collar, elaborate headdress, tabards, plaques, pectoral, stole, and other ritual garments. Normal daily wear is as for an upper-middle or upper-class person, as given above. Lay Priests rarely wear ceremonial costumes.
5,000	Priest of Circles 11-up: Ceremonial vestments, as above, but heavier and made of brocade, precious metals, etc. Upper- or highest-upper-class costumes are worn as everyday garb. Lay Priests almost never own such vestments and may borrow them from the temple should they be needed.
250	Soldier, Tirrikámu to Kási: Ceremonial uniform and armour. An off-duty soldier's costume is much like that of other civilians of his or her class.
5,000	Soldier, Dritlán or above: Ceremonial uniform and armour. As above but made of precious metals and set with gems.

### Non-human Garments

The harnesses of straps worn by some non-human races are sold in many human cities, and can be had for 1-10 káitars, depending upon their complexity, quality, and style.

### Ceremonial Forms of Dress

For 1000 káitars per rank or Level, a character can purchase a complete costume for a given Form, male or female. The prices are given per Level; costumes at the top of the quality range are elaborate and designed to impress even jaded city folk, while costumes at the bottom of the quality range are the minimum necessary to squeak by.

## Precious Metals, Gems, and Jewellery

Jewellery is used not only to display one's wealth or status, but is also a proper form for gifts and inducements — less crass than káitars or letters of credit. It is also a way to transport wealth across long distances. The price of an item of jewellery is found by determining the cost of the metal, the prices of any gems, and the goldsmith's and the gem-cutter's manufacturing charges. A goldsmith charges 20-140% of the value of the metal depending on the quality of the work. A gem-cutter charges 30-70% percent of the stone's uncut value.

Antiquity adds anywhere from 10 to 1,000 percent to a piece's value depending upon its provenience, its rarity, its maker (if known), and the artistry of its workmanship. The productions of the "High" period of the Priestkings of Éngsvan hla Gánga are considered the best. The works of Hóti of Purdánim, Deqélnu Azh of Jakálla, and Trímun Póro of Gánga are so precious as to be unavailable at any price. The last known sale of an article by one of these masters — a tiara by Hóti — brought in over 100,000 káitars. Bednálljan jewellery is also esteemed but is less costly because it is so heavy. The same is true of the crude, squarish styles of the Llyáni and Dragon Warrior periods.

### Metal Ingots

Bars or ingots of pure precious metals carry specific values in Tsolyánu.

**Table 4-15: Metal Ingots**

Metal	Price (káitars/gram)	Notes
Copper	0.1 qirgál	Copper is highly valued by the Temple of Sárku, and is identified with that Deity
Silver	10 qirgáls	
Electrum	7 hlásh	A naturally-occurring alloy of about 4 parts gold to 1 part silver, it is only occasionally employed for jewellery
Gold	10 hlásh	
Platinum	20	Platinum is very rare and is difficult to work, but occasional pieces are recovered from the ruins of the cities of the ancients.
Iron / Steel	50	Iron and steel are almost never used to make jewellery in spite of their great value. Many people are superstitious about these metals and prefer them only for weapons, ritual implements, etc.

### Gold Items

Average mass ranges, cubic centimetres, and prices in Tsolyáni káitars (including the manufacturers fee) for some common varieties of jewellery when produced in gold are outlined below. Increase or reduce prices for other metals according to the values above. Prices do not include gems.

**Table 4-16: Gold Item Costs**

Price	Article
100	Belt plaque
1000	Collar
30	Narrow bracelet
250	Necklace
20	Ring
300	Tiara
250	Wide bracelet, armet, anklet



## Gems

Tékumel has a dazzling variety of gemstones. The table below gives general categories, with value ranges for one-carat stones; prices for highly or extremely precious stones rise dramatically with size; a 5-carat sapphire costs at least twice as much as five 1-carat sapphires, for example. The value ranges given extend from badly flawed or discoloured examples through perfect examples. Prices are for uncut gems; add 30-70% for cut ones.

**Table 4-17: Gem Costs**

Gem	Price *	Examples
Semi-precious	5	agate, amber, amethyst, bloodstone, carnelian, chalcedony, coral, garnet, ivory (the skull and larger bones of a sea creature which inhabits the shallow bays along Tsolyánu's southern coasts), lapis lazuli, malachite, moonstone, nephrite, obsidian, rock crystal, shell (Chet'ú or Nhá shells occur only in the seas around the Nyémesel Isles; their carving and painting is a major art form), tourmaline, turquoise.
Moderately precious	20	alexandrite, aquamarine, chrysoberyl (including cats' eyes), glass coral (obtained only from the waters of Lake Parunál, but its iridescence and many hues are much appreciated everywhere), opal, pearl, topaz, zircon.
Precious	60	jadeite, pearl (black).
Highly precious	500	diamond (ordinary or coloured), emerald, flame opal (the secretion of a species of tree found in the Páchi Léi forests of Pán Cháka; rare and beloved of the temples of Vimúhla and Chiténg), opal (black), ruby, sapphire (blue, orange, red).
Extremely precious	1000	diamond (blue-white), sapphire (black star).

\* The Price Range is given for a 1-carat stone

**Table 4-18: Meal Costs**

Cost per Person	Particulars
3 qirgáls	Food fit only for slaves: a gruel of boiled Dná chaff, a crust of bread, perhaps a stew of cheap vegetables and "leavings," rarely cheese and almost never meat
19 qirgáls	Lower-class fare: Dná bread, wheat bread, or rice; vegetable stew; perhaps a bit of meat; a side dish of vegetables; and possibly fruit.
2 hlásh	Middle-class food: better bread, a richer slaw, more side dishes, a pudding or pastry, fruits, etc.
5 hlásh	Prosperous family fare: more variety and better quality.
5 káitars	Aristocratic food: fine breads and pastries; several meat, poultry, or fish dishes, and occasionally game; vegetable stews; sauces and hot pickles; imported condiments; and various sweets and confections.
50 káitars	A feast fit for a nobleman: elaborate meat and fish dishes; platters of roasted birds; shellfish (where available); hot and spicy stews of Hmélu meat and vegetables; the finest breads; the best condiments and relishes; trays of sweetmeats, pastries, and sugary preserves; sometimes sherbets and essences cooled with ice brought by runner from the mountains, etc.

**Table 4-19: Commodity Costs**

Price	Commodity
8	Dlél fruit
12	Dmí sugar
20	Fancy Vegetables
2.5	Fodder (for Hmélu, Hmá, or Chlén)
11	Másh fruit
9	Rice
5	Salt
5	Vegetables
7	Wheat
	<b>Meats</b>
18	Hmélu, Hmá
30	Jakkóhl
15	Other (such as insects)
8	Reptiles
15	Tsí'íl
	<b>Poultry</b>
35	Game birds
12	Káika
	<b>Fish</b>
8	River species (similar to cod, bass, etc.)
10	Sea species (similar to salmon, pike, tuna, etc.)

\* Prices in qirgáls/kg

## Food, Drink, and Drugs

It is impossible to give the prices of all of the myriad foodstuffs consumed on Tékumel, but the following list includes some of the most common.

### Complete Meals

The following are the prices one might pay when ordering a meal through a food-preparing clan or in a public hostel. Halve them if the food is prepared at home or in one's clanhouse, barracks, or temple.

### Individual Items

Most foods are sold by the Psé (0.75 kg), although grain is supplied in sacks weighing 50 Psé (37.5 kg). Food costs more in a city and less in the countryside where it is produced. It is much more expensive in remote, infertile, or ill-supplied regions. Prices also vary with the harvests, the weather, and other economic factors, being anywhere from one half of the listed prices in a good year to over 100 times these amounts during a drought or famine.



## Beverages

The people of the Five Empires produce and enjoy a wide variety of beverages. Many drinks are sold by the cup or glass (usually containing about 2 Tsértse — 0.6 litres). Alcoholic potables are supplied by the bottle (9 Tsértse — 2.7 litres), by the jug (1 Kúvnu — 3 litres), and by the keg or large clay jar (1 Nmécha — 60 litres). Prices are per bottle, pot, or jug.

## Drugs

The generally harmless and pleasant social drugs served in the Five Empires and their client states are sold by the Ml6 (3.75 g), or by the Psé (0.75 kg), if one is buying for a large party. The prices per kilogram and the amounts required for an effective dosage for an adult are listed below. These substances cost less, of course, in the region in which they are produced.

The effects listed are for humans, though Pygmy Folk and Hláka can take these drugs with more or less similar effects. Most other non-humans are unaffected by the listed drugs. Shén, however, suffer negative effects from taking Chümaz (convulsions, sometimes followed by death) and Ntó (a terrible and insensate rage during which the individual may slay friends and family and remember nothing of it the next day).

Some non-human races have their own drugs. For example, the roots of the Fssá plant are chewed only by the Shén. They have a nauseating effect upon humans. A Shén can obtain a kilogram of this drug for about 1,000 káitars, and a dosage of 50 gram is usual. The mmuókh bark eaten by the Páchi Léi is available only in western Tsolyánu. It costs 30 káitars per kilogram, and a dosage consists of 50 grams.

## Buildings and Land

Most inhabitants of the Five Empires live in their clanhouses (see Clan Life, page 195). Some Priests reside in dormitories or suites within their temples (see The Priesthood, page 50), and most soldiers are housed in barracks or quarters within their legion's compound (see The Military, page 49). Officers live in their clanhouses or in the legion compound based upon preference and convenience. An individual may, however, choose to rent or construct a building.

Officials who are granted an Imperial fief or the rulership of a district or province rarely need to rent or buy a dwelling, since accommodations generally come with the post. Some of these residences and small fortresses are hundreds of years old.

## Buildings (Rental and Purchase)

Rental for extended periods is possible but a little difficult in many cities because almost all buildings are clan-owned and in use. There is about a 25 percent chance per week of finding a suitable dwelling for rent or purchase, which increases to 30 percent if one hires an agent, a merátokoi, for a fee of one percent of the sale price.

The following are the monthly rental prices of various types of houses and property in a large city. These are reduced by 25% in a smaller city, large town, or town, and by 40% in a village or rural region. The Purchase Price of one of these Buildings is 50 times the Price to rent it for one Month.

**Table 4-20: Beverage Costs**

Article	Price	Particulars
Aásh	3 káitars	A powerful distilled whiskey-like drink made from dná or other grains. It is considered raw and plebeian and is most popular around Úrmish and Katalál in Tsolyánu. It is also found around Kúrdís in Mu'ugalavýá and throughout the N'lüss country and the far north. The Yán Koryáni produce an extremely potent variety called Jékw.
Chumétl	16 qirgáls	Hmélu buttermilk mixed with salt and hot spices, with the spices varying from the simple blends of the peasants, to the military "throw lots of whatever we've got in," to the refined and elaborate flavourings of the aristocrats. The common non-alcoholic drink of Tsolyánu, Yán Kór, Salarvya, and Mu'ugalavýá. It is not popular in Livyánu, and Ahoggyá cannot stomach it at all.
Dátsu	6 káitars	A heavy, purplish brandy distilled from the fleshy fruit of the dlél tree. The best varieties come from the Kráa Hills in northern Tsolyánu, from northeast of Khéiris in Mu'ugalavýá, and from around Nuférsh and Kakársh in Livyánu. The Salarvya brands are considered inferior. The best dátsu costs as much as 50-100 káitars per bottle.
Drónu	12 káitar	The sweet, heavy, black wine of Salarvya, made from the urtsé berry, the fruit of a broad-leafed deciduous tree. The best vintages come from Koylúga and Jaekánta, and cost 50-100 káitars per bottle.
Faóz	6 hlásh	Beer made from rice. This is the usual lower-class Livyáni beverage, and is rarely found in Tsolyánu outside Livyáni enclaves in Foreigners' Quarters.
Héngka	5 hlásh	Beer brewed either from wheat or from dná. As a generic term, this also includes various types of ale and mead. Beer is considered a lower-class beverage, although the Ghatóni prefer their thick black brew to any other drink.
Lás	2 qirgáls	Hot tea made of the black, needle-like leaves of the tíu tree. This is common in the north and northeast. Some drink this black, while others add Hmélu milk and sugar. In Chayákku, salt is added instead.
Másh	10 káitars	A fine, sweet, yellowish apricot-pineapple flavoured brandy made from the golden fruit of the tall másh tree of western Tsolyánu. The orange-tinted varieties of Háida Pakála are also justly famous, while the Livyáni vintages from Hraís suffer by comparison. The best másh costs perhaps 100-500 káitars per bottle.
Ngálu	5 káitars	Wine. A sharp, rather dry, red wine made from the grape-like fruit of the nálum vines. This is popular throughout the Five Empires and most smaller states, but is most characteristic of the great central Tsolyáni and Mu'ugalavýáni plains. The best vintages come from Sokátis, Thráya, and Usenánu in Tsolyánu; Ch'óchi in Mu'ugalavýá; and Fállí in Livyánu, and cost as much as 50-100 káitars per bottle.
Tsuhóridu	90 káitars	A generic name for liqueurs made from the crushed seeds of certain swamp ferns. The vintages of Púrdimal are renowned, as are those of the swamps along the Putuhénu River in Mu'ugalavýá. Distilling tsuhóridu to sell to humans is a cottage industry among the Swamp Folk. Less preferred brands come from Penóm in Tsolyánu and the Sharúna Lowlands in Salarvya. The best tsuhóridu costs 500-1,000 káitars per bottle and is usually sold by the thimbleful. Some varieties produce odd mental effects, others are aphrodisiacs, and a few are addictive and debilitating. Physicians warn against the use of these beverages, to little avail.
Tuór	24 qirgáls	Sugary sherbet made from essences and water. The favourite drink of Livyánu and parts of Mu'ugalavýá. Some varieties cost as much as 50 káitars for a tiny thimbleful because of the rare herbs and ingredients used.



**Table 4-21: Drug Costs**

Drug	Price per kg	Effective Dosage (in grams)	Provenience and Particulars
Airá grass	50	2-11	Found in highland grassy areas everywhere; usually used as an anaesthetic but also chewed and brewed as a tea for its numbing effects.
Chümaz	100	4-13	From Livyánu. A bluish-white powder obtained from a species of berry, it heightens perceptions (-1 to checks involving perception) and acts as an aphrodisiac.
Drársha	800	10-15	From Salarvyá and Háida Pakála. A clear crystalline substance extracted from a type of shellfish, it causes amusing visions and distortions of the time sense.
Hnéqu weed	45	50+	Nearly universal, though the best varieties come from Sokátis in Tsolyánu and Nuférsh in Livyánu. A very popular mild euphoric. Regular users may have to chew over 100 g to obtain the desired effects.
Mághz	500	10-15	A brownish powder produced from the bark of the Ghái tree of Mudállu, Nuru'ún, and other states of the far northeast. Makes users feel drowsy and peaceful.
Ntó	300	2-3	A fine white dust, shaken from the leaves of the Vé-Ntó tree of M'ómorcha and Nmártusha. Creates volubility and giddy joy.
Osí	700-1,000	3-5	A thick greyish mucus-like substance scraped from the bones of the Ft'á fish of the Nyémesel Isles. Reduces tensions and arouses the libido.
Zu'úr	12,000	1	This not a safe drug; it is highly addictive and debilitating. It produces sexual arousal, but will eventually kill its user. Possession, sale, and use of this dangerous drug are capital crimes throughout the Five Empires.

**Table 4-22: Accommodation Prices**

Rent*	Particulars
9 hlásh	Hut or tenement hovel: one room, dirt floor, no bathroom (sewage is carried out in a bucket or just thrown into the street), and a thatched or tiled roof.
6	Small house or shop: 2-3 rooms, dirt or stone floors, tiled or thatched roof; walled courtyard.
19	Medium-sized house or shop: 4-5 rooms, stone or tiled floors, bathroom and kitchen, courtyard, and perhaps a small garden in some regions.
125	Large house or shop: 10-12 rooms as above. Possibly some rooms rented out to sub-tenants, who are almost impossible to evict under Tsolyáni law.
500	Very large house or small mansion, suitable for a minor clan house or for an upper-class family: 20-30 rooms, as above but more elaborate; possibly a small attached garden or orchard, fountains, servant quarters, and a colonnaded upper roof garden for whiling away the hot afternoons.
1500	Large clanhouse, mansion, or small palace: 50-100 rooms, as above but still more elaborate; includes slave quarters, kitchens, storehouses, workrooms, and all that goes with a small noble estate.
12,000	Very large clanhouse or palace suitable for a wealthy noble: two or three main buildings, wings containing servant and slave quarters, workrooms, storerooms, etc., a small private temple, gardens and colonnades, and other out-buildings.

\* per month

### Construction

Building a new residence requires the purchase of land (see below), a payment of 10-20% of the above listed sale prices as "inducements," and a further charge of 6-10% as the architect's fee. Thereafter, the construction itself costs from 75 to 150% of the

price of an existing building. A ruined building or an old fortress can sometimes be acquired for 25-45% of the cost of a mansion or palace (above), to which one must add the "inducements," the architect's fee, and the cost of restoration (51-70% of the above-mentioned prices). Building costs are 10-20% higher in rural and remote areas, due to a shortage of labour and proper materials.

It is illegal to fortify dwellings within a town or city in the Five Empires, although this is sometimes permitted in rural and remote regions by paying "inducements" to the resident officials (20-30% of the sale price of the building).

### Land

The clans, temples, and governments of Tékumel do not often sell land to individuals. If available, it is sold by sections of a square Tsán (1.77 square kilometre or 437 acres). The following prices are for non-urban land in central Tsolyánu. These must be adjusted for property elsewhere, from no cost at all in a tribal area where ownership is by custom or force of arms; to half price in a remote and infertile region; to double, triple, quadruple (or more) of these prices for desirable land in or near a city. Land is not usually rented. There is only a 15% chance of finding a piece of land for sale each month in a given area.

**Table 4-23: Land Prices**

Price*	Particulars
10,000	Unimproved land, possibly unfit for much agriculture; swampland, forest, jungle, mountainside, etc.; possibly contains 1-2 households.
100,000	Poor agricultural land, including 1-10 peasant households.
170,000	Mediocre agricultural land, including 1-20 peasant households.
210,000	Good, well-watered agricultural land, including 1-50 peasant households or a small village.
270,000	The best agricultural land, including a village of 1-100 households or 1-100 rural dwellings.

\* per square Tsán



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## Land Transport

Rental prices for porter slaves, chlén carts, and litters are provided herein. No fee is charged for the return if the character's clan has a branch in the city of destination; otherwise the same rates apply on the return trip. Prices for carts do not include chlén, and prices for litters do not include porters. The purchase price of one of these transports is 50 times the price to rent it for one day.

**Table 4-24:  
Land Transportation Costs**

Price	Article
5	Chlén (price varies based upon quality)
20	Chlén cart
200	Litter (for 1-2 passengers, carried by 4 porters)
300	Large inter-city litter (for 1-2 passengers, carried by 8 bearers, plus a relief of 8 bearers)

\* káitars per day

## Water Transport

Ship fares and cargo rates are provided below.

**Table 4-25:  
Water Transportation Costs**

Price	Article
15	Cargo (per 100 kg)
20	Slaves or animals
30	Deck passage per adult (children go for half fare)
60	Semi-private cabin passage per adult (children as above)
200	First-class cabin passage per adult (children as above)

• per Tsán

It is near impossible to purchase boats and ships, since usually they are the means of generating income for their current owner. No fisherman is going to sell his only means of catching fish, unless the purchase price is simply too good to pass up ("everything is for sale, it's just a matter of the right price." It may, however, be possible for a character to purchase a ship from his or her clan (the clan will construct the vessel for the character).

**Table 4-26:  
Boat Construction Costs**

Construction Cost	Particulars
100	Small Boat (3-5 m long; capacity 6 persons or 4 persons plus baggage)
650	Fishing Boat (9-13 m long; capacity 10-20 persons or 6-15 persons plus baggage)
3,000	Passenger craft or river barge (15-18 m long; capacity 50-70 persons or 4-6 metric tonnes of cargo)
15,000	Merchant ship

A new set of sails costs about 7-10% of the original cost of the ship. Ordinary refitting costs approximately 3-4% of this price, refitting for minor damage 5-6%, and major repairs anywhere from 10 to 70%. This must be adjudicated by the Game Master.

## Entertainment

An upper-class host in a Tsolyáni city pays the fees listed below per person for various types of entertainers. Prices are 50% less in a small town and 75% less in rural areas. This range is actually much broader, of course: all the way from a copper qirgál or two for a few minutes with a slatternly "Easement of the Way" (as the prostitutes who frequent the Sákbe road way-stations are called) to perhaps a thousand káitars, for much the same time period and for the same basic functions, for a famous and accomplished courtesan.

Although slaves are frequently trained in these arts, there are many free entertainers as well. Small local clans can thus be called upon to provide performances at feasts and parties, and one encounters wandering troupes and individuals. The entertainment professions command very little social prestige, and Sákbe road guards and city militiamen often extort "inducements" from such performers in return for letting them ply their trade at fairs and parties.

More respect is commanded by popular musicians, singers and dancers of the great epics, famous courtesans, puppeteers, and judges of the game of Tsahltnén. A few gladiators, wrestlers, and players of marotlán (a sport) are also accepted into higher society, although this is contingent upon their Skill and good luck.

## Entertainers' Fees

The prices in the table are for an Experienced Entertainer (3-4 Skill Levels). A Novice Entertainer (0-1 Skill Level) will be 50% of the listed price while an Expert Entertainer (3+ Skill Levels) will be 200% of the listed price.

**Table 4-27: Entertainer Costs**

Price	Type of performer
25 hlásh	Acrobat, tumbler, juggler, mountebank, common prostitute,
2	Instrumental musician (member of a band), illusionist, story-teller
6	Instrumental soloist, singer, dancer, actor, mime, tableaust, better-quality courtesan
13	Gladiator, wrestler, very popular singer or dancer, higher illusionist
28	Singer or dancer of the epics, famous gladiator or wrestler, high-class courtesan
50	Puppeteer, very famous gladiator or wrestler, renowned actor, very high class courtesan
150	Famous performer of the epics, judge of Tsahltnén

## Party Space Rental

Should one wish to host a party in a public hostel or in the house of a winemaker's clan, a large but inexpensive room can be hired for about 1-3 káitars per night, a better chamber or small suite for 6-10 káitars, and fairly sumptuous accommodations for 50-100 káitars. This depends upon the establishment, of course; a poor hostel or clanhouse may have nothing better to offer than a plain room (charging 1-10 hlásh for it), while an elegant upper-class hostel may ask 500-1,000 káitars a night for a spacious suite of palatial apartments. Food and drink can be arranged through the hostel-keeper or clan-head, and if gambling is to be done, the house usually demands a "cut" of 2% of all money wagered. The prices of meals and beverages are given elsewhere.



## Entertainment Items

Instruments may be purchased through the entertainers' clans, games and gambling equipment through the merchants' clans, and birds and animals from professional animal trainers (see the Bestiary for detailed animal descriptions). The games described below are those most popular in Tsolyánu; other games exist in other nations and among the various non-human populations.

**Table 4-28:**  
**Entertainment Item Costs**

Price	Article
125	Sra'úr (a six-stringed, pot-bellied, cello-like instrument played with a bow)
1,000	Tenturén (a large instrument with twelve strings and two resonance chambers, requiring one person to finger the strings and another to pluck them with metal finger-picks)
30	Small flute or horn
110	Drum or gong
5	Tambourine
600+	Dancer's costume (including some cheap glass jewellery)
1,500+	Epic singer's or dancers costume and masque (not including jewellery)
10	Set of draughts and board for daquí (a draughts-like game favoured by the elderly and less adventurous)
25	Set of counters, sticks, dice, and board for dénden (a strategy game for four to six people which uses counters and sticks of various "ranks," and is the source for many metaphors about one's place in Tsolyáni society)
5	Set of dice for kévuk (a gambling game using two six-sided dice)
100	Set of sticks for tsahl'tén (a complex gambling game where players toss a handful of coloured sticks into the air and try to "make" the pattern they have called; it requires a well-trained judge and much Skill)
25	Pack of 60 circular leather cards for náрку (a card game with suits and trumps, originating in Livyánu, where it is called Aó'áb)
1000	Alásh Snake, a very poisonous snake.
150	Hunting dog (a large variety, similar to an Irish setter; other breeds exist as well)
10	Tiúni (cat)
800	Küni bird trained for hunting
1800	Küni bird trained both to hunt and to speak (Küni can speak quite well, though their vocabulary will be more limited than that of a human and they do not understand abstract concepts well)
5,000	Rényu (a canine-headed, semi-intelligent biped engineered by the Lords of the Latter Times from dog stock; can be trained to track, hunt, speak with a limited vocabulary, and perform simple services)

price (maximum discount of 90%). Some of these factors may not always be relevant; for example, a noble looking for a tutor for his children may care little about a slave's age, while an estate-overseer seeking field hands has no interest in a labourer's

**Table 4-29: Slave Prices**

Price	Particulars
50	Untrained boy/girl (up to age 16).
80	Average untrained adult in mediocre condition. Such a slave is used for lighter outdoor work, household and garden tasks, etc.
150	Untrained adult in excellent condition. A male is able to do heavy labour, and a female can perform such work also but is more usually put to gardening, animal care, housework, and similar tasks.
160	Trained house-servant (male or female): butlers, stewards, maids, lackeys, etc.
220	Slave trained (see above) in a non-prestigious Skill; for example, farmer, baker, barber
690	Slave trained in a skilled trade or craft; for example, sailor, smith, mason, locksmith
1,500	Slave trained in a professional Skill; for example, architect, armourer, apothecary
1,600	Major-domo, house-steward, chief accountant, etc.
3,400	Slave trained in a complex Skill; for example, interpreter, historian, physician
5,000	Untrained youth or maiden (16-25 years of age) who is extremely handsome or pretty, that is, with the Attractive Attribute (Exquisite), perhaps several.
12,000	Trained entertainer, acrobat, dancer, juggler, mime, singer, etc.
24,000	Trained courtesan or dancer (very handsome or pretty; that is, with the Attractive Attribute (Exquisite), perhaps several; epic singer; puppeteer; gambling master for Tsahl'tén; gladiator or wrestler).
11,000	Non-human (usually untrained or only poorly trained in human Skills) of a species which occurs in the area; for example, a Tinalíya in Livyánu, an Ahoggyá in south-western Salarvyá
29,000	Non-human (as above) of a species rare in the area; for example, an Ahoggyá in Livyánu, a Hláka in the Nyémesel Isles, a Shén in eastern Salarvyá
34,000	Rarities, curiosities, and "specials;" for example, dwarves, giants, albinos, people with eyes of different colours, extremely rare non-humans, etc.
-40%	Over 50 years of age.
-40%	In obviously poor health, crippled, very puny, etc.
-20%	Exceedingly ugly; has the Ugly Defect at 2 BP.
-10%	Very ugly; has the Ugly Defect at 1 BP.
-5%	A native of M'mórcha, Nmártusha, Rannálu, or the Lorún regions of the far north. Such persons are considered "savage" and difficult to domesticate.
-10%	A native of Háida Pakála. Natives of this area are thought to be dishonest and sly.
-15%	A native of Pjíéna. The Pjienáni are believed to be lazy, devious, treacherous, and sometimes dangerous.
+10%	A tribesman from N'lüss. They are valued for their great size and strength.

## Slaves

Factors which influence the price of a slave include age, health, appearance, provenience, and species. Total any relevant modifiers and apply them to the slave's



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comeliness. In the table which follows, a “trained” slave is defined as one who has two or more Levels in a relevant Skill.

It is uncommon to find Priests or Priestesses, sorcerers, and members of the upper classes as slaves. Warriors and ex-soldiers are frequent enough, but it is against the law to arm slaves in Tsołyánu — nor would a sensible owner do so, since slavery is often the result of debt, crime, and other factors which suggest that the person may not be reliable. Assassins are never found as slaves.

Slaves cost 35% more in a city and 10% more expensive in a town than those one encounters in rural areas. The best wares are, of course, saved for the wealthier markets of the great cities.

## Assassination Gear

Items in this section are specialised pieces of equipment used by the Assassins’ Clans in their work. They may also be available to the covert branch of the Omnipotent Azure Legion, and similar intelligence operatives within some of the Temples. No prices are listed because this equipment cannot be purchased on the open market. Some of these items are, however, discussed in Designing Items (page 83), and may be purchased with Resource Points during character generation.

### Collar of Forever

A garrotte made of twisted güdru fibre or (usually copper) wire. This can be used to eliminate guards silently and cleanly. Requires the Garrotte Skill.

### Deliverer from Existence

A flat bladed throwing knife, normally carried in sets of between 4 and 6. Basic versions aren’t difficult to acquire but the assassins’ clans produce superior designs that can also be totally concealed in a decorative collar, vambrace, or scroll tube (see Designing Special Items) making them impossible to detect without dismantling the object while allowing immediate access to the knives. Some very senior assassins will even have knives made with slivers of steel at their point, but this is rare. Requires the Thrown Weapon (Dagger) Skill.

### Pa’iya’s Kiss

A small, long-handled glass vessel filled with 40 grammes of a suitable corrosive (usually Food of the Ssú), incendiary mixture, poison sagún spores, or similar. The bottle can be held by the neck and thrown. It is named after a Demoness and is capable of causing hideous damage even to armoured and guarded targets. Requires the Thrown Weapon (Pa’iya’s Kiss) Skill but it can also be loaded into a sling. If it is delivered by sling, accuracy is impaired (-2 penalty to Attack checks). Long-term handling and especially refilling the vessels requires a Poisons check.

### Summoner upon the Way

A small, pistol-shaped crossbow (see Designing Special Items, page 83) that fires poisoned darts. Handling poisoned darts may require a Poison check.

## Poisons and Antidotes

Many poisons are known on Tékumel. Most must be ingested; only a few are effective when applied to weapon blades and arrows. Unless otherwise noted, the majority of these items can be purchased from a large apothecary’s shop in any of the cities of the Five Empires, and some alchemists also prepare them.

Animal, insect, and reptile venoms are rarely stocked by apothecaries or alchemists, although the assassin clans and certain government agencies (for example, the Omnipotent Azure Legion in Tsołyánu) do maintain small supplies. See Poisoning, page 103.

**Table 4-30:  
Poison/Corrosive Costs**

Price*	Article
<b>Corrosives</b>	
6	Lye
18	Nitric Acid (available only from a large apothecary’s shop or through an alchemist in a solution)
19	Sulphuric Acid (available only from a large apothecary’s shop or through an alchemist in a solution)
<b>Inorganic</b>	
9	Antimony
13	Arsenic
17	Strychnine (available in most larger cities. Rodent poison)
<b>Vegetable</b>	
30	Chrál Root (available in Saá Allaquí and the north)
100	Delé Buds (yellow flower buds available in Tsoléi and Livyánu)
100	Food of the Ssú (available in many cities and towns)
45	Onúmish Leaves (available in western Mu’ugalavyá)
35	Ssalán Root (available in any large city)
55	Tlébas Leaves (available in any large city)
200	Znaláz berries (available in Livyánu and southern Mu’ugalavyá)
<b>Animal</b>	
500	Alásh Snake Venom (available only from the assassins’ clans or directly from the tribesmen of the Desert of Sighs, and rare even there)
400	Aulléb Lizard Venom (available in western Mu’ugalavyá)
700	Puff-Spider Venom (available in south-western Mu’ugalavyá and northern Livyánu, or directly from the tribesmen of M’mórcha and Nmártusha)
900	Sagún Spores (available in many of the Underworlds below Tékumel’s ancient cities)

\*Káitars per gram

**Table 4-31:  
Antidote Costs**

Price*	Article
10 hlásh	Anjé Fruit Paste
19 qirgáls	Onqé Bean Soup
6	Ardúro Bark (chewed) (available in Chayákku and the states of the far northeast, but now beginning to be imported into the Five Empires)
5	Khápa Cactus Berries (available in the Desert of Sighs in Mílumanayá and now in some apothecary shops in the larger cities of the Five Empires)
100	Ó Tí Leaves (available from the Tinaliya in northern Livyánu and from a few Livyáni apothecaries and alchemists)

\*Káitars per gram



## Designing Special Items

The stories and myths of the Tsolyáni are full of strange and wonderful devices. This mythology is important to understanding the Tsolyánu worldview and should be used as a resource even if the items themselves never appear in a particular campaign. Just because an item is possible under the rules does not mean it exists and real costs will vary according to local market conditions. The GM may therefore alter the cost of any item as he or she sees fit. Even in a heroic fantasy campaign, only a very few merchants on Tékumel will regularly deal in magic items or high technology, the most famous of these being Gij and Sons (based in the Livyáni city of Dlášh). Finding powerful new special items should not be easy and finding an entirely trustworthy dealer is well nigh impossible.

Groups of player characters may pool their Resource Points to purchase expensive items and players are entitled to negotiate with each other (see Currency Conversion below). Favours (see Respect and Favours) may be traded for resources as such arrangements are common in Tsolyánu and represent the web of obligation and mutual support that characterises the culture. Resources often take the form of credit, connections and loyalties rather than coinage. Resource Points may also be given by the GM as a form of adventure reward to reflect the credit being stored up in the community.

The Resource Point values in this section are intended for use during Character Generation, for Resource Points gained from the Special Item Attribute only. Values given for Special Equipment can be converted into actual cash prices during play by multiplying them by 10, resulting in the price in káitar. As long as the character can find someone to build or sell the item, they can buy it during the game. Some Item Attributes and Defects cannot be purchased during play, but these are usually marked and should be obvious. The same is true for Amulets and Sacrifices. It is not true, however, for the other categories in this section — all of those have to be obtained through role-playing, and do not have standard prices or values.

## Special Equipment

*"... while a mass-produced sword will serve its purpose, it will not be nearly as suitable as one created specially for the customer's hand, height, reach, balance and style of combat. Most good weapons are thus "made to order".*

— M.A.R Barker

The first step is to purchase the basic item, which could be a weapon, a piece of jewellery, an animal, or something else. A basic item may be improved in three ways:

- Design Templates (optimised designs for an item or bloodlines for an animal)
- Item Attributes (superior construction and performance)
- Item Customisation (tailoring to the owner)

Resource Points gained through Item Defects can only be used for Attributes on the same item, and the final cost can never be reduced below 20% of the base cost. Attributes and Defects cover the standard ammunition load for the weapon.

The Base Cost of an item is a number of Resource Points equal to the item's price in káitar (see Items and Prices, page 70) divided by ten (rounded up).

Base Cost = price in káitar / 10

## Design Templates

Over millennia, the Tsolyáni have developed a range of weapon designs that embody and express particular martial philosophies. These Design Templates may be combined with Item Customisations and Item Attributes, but are paid for separately.

### The Military Longsword

**Cost:** 10 Resource Points  
**Philosophy:** "Disarm, disable, kill!"  
**Base:** Longsword

The design used by several Tsolyáni legions as their battlefield sword. It has three curved blade-hooks for snagging enemy weapons, a reinforced blade, and it works well in close combat. This design is relatively long, solid, and heavy (which cancels any Initiative bonus from length) and may be favoured by characters with a military background.

#### Item Attributes

*Specialised Design (Attack Weapon):* Blade Hooks. Reduce the difficulty of the Attack Weapon Fight Manoeuvre (see page 43) by 1.

*Teamwork Set-Piece:* If the Blade Hooks are successfully used on an enemy, the character can then set them up for a team-mate providing +1 free Team Point (see page 109 for more information on Team Points).

*Secondary Weapon:* Hilt punch and hook rip. Weapon Initiative = 0. x2 Damage

*Tough:* This is military issue equipment and is designed to be durable. If attacked by an Attack Weapon Fight Manoeuvre (see page 43), the weapon is reduced in effectiveness for each 20 damage it suffers rather than each 16 damage.

#### Item Defects

*Restricted:* Bearers must be Legion veterans and have a minimum Dexterity of 5 and Strength of 6.

*Meant for the battlefield:* The blade hooks make it easy to accidentally catch it in a nearby object. All Attack checks made with the sword suffer a -1 penalty in confined spaces, and the GM should feel free to require Skill checks to avoid accidents in urban areas.

#### Tactical Hints

Use your Blade Hooks to attack the enemy's weapon then set them up for a team mate. If you are in close combat use Hilt Punch.

### The Jagged-Edged Sword

**Cost:** 10 Resource Points  
**Philosophy:** "Put him down, fast!"  
**Base:** Longsword

Not a subtle weapon, this is typically used for slashing attacks that can rip flesh and even dislodge armour plate. The jagged edge can cause horrendous wounds, but is not well suited to more complex manoeuvres. A similar design is favoured by the Enemies of Man — the Hated Ssú.

#### Item Attributes

*Extra damage:* Ripping edge. Maximises tissue loss and bleeding, inflicting 1 extra damage.

*Unique — Vicious Wounds:* Injuries from this weapon are notoriously difficult to treat; Medical or Magical healing checks suffer a -1 penalty.

*Saw Blade Attack:* The blade can be used as a Close Combat (see page 44) weapon by sawing it up and down against an enemy. In this mode it does x3 Damage and its Initiative modifier drops to 0, but is considered Low Penetration.

#### Item Defects

*Vulnerable:* The design is unsuited to the Attack Weapon, Cautious Attack, Deceptive and Opportunistic Attack Fight Manoeuvres (see page 43) — the character suffers a -1 penalty to perform and also to defend against them.

#### Tactical Hints

People using this sort of sword neither need nor would heed tactical advice.



## The Ershummu

**Cost:** 5 Resource Points  
**Philosophy:** "A good defence is the foundation of a good attack."  
**Base:** Longsword

This is a traditional Salarvyáni pattern (originally associated with the Chruggilleshmu family of Tsatsayágga). Its elaborate spiked appearance looks aggressive, but its main effect is actually to improve its defensive characteristics. The Salarvyáni military (the Nchesh of the Grey Standard in particular) favour it and the Tsolyáni see it as an excellent self-defence weapon.

### Item Attributes

*Defensive Spines:* This is a great parrying weapon (+1 bonus to any Defence checks) and even if the defence fails it can still absorb some of the force of a successful attack. If a parry fails by 2 or less, the guard and quillons still absorb 1 damage.

### Item Defects

*Unique — Cumbersome: Slow blade.* The barbs are perpendicular to the blade, which takes the edge off attack speed (Initiative modifier is reduced by 1) and reduces overall damage (the blade inflicts 1 less damage).

### Tactical hints

Carry a shield to further enhance defence. Use teamwork and create a wall of blades with dazzling defensive swordplay. Only go to Total Defence if entirely outclassed.

## The Military Polearm

**Cost:** 5 Resource Points  
**Philosophy:** "Hit first and hit hard!"  
**Base:** Polearm

Pole-arms are popular military weapons in Tsolyánu, and proponents have their own extensive technical vocabulary to describe each element of design (a surprisingly contentious issue). Most combine slashing, chopping, and thrusting blades with various barbs, cusps, and hooks with specialised functions. Many Tsolyáni warriors will have learnt to use some variant in the Legions.

### Item Attributes

*Teamwork Set Piece (Phalanx):* Anyone using the Formation Fight Manoeuvre with this weapon can give +1 free Team Point when they help a team-mate (see page 109).

*Safe:* The hands are protected by small cross-pieces that also help to maintain grip.

*Secondary Weapon — Shaft Strike:* The shaft and projecting barbs can be used in Close Combat (see page 44) to strike, push, slash, or throttle an opponent. Initiative = 0. Damage Multiplier x3.

*Tough: Armoured Shaft.* This is military issue equipment and is designed to be durable. If attacked by an Attack Weapon Fight Manoeuvre (see page 43), the weapon is reduced in effectiveness for each 20 damage it suffers rather than each 16 damage.

*Unique — Poleaxe Strike:* Swinging the polearm like a huge axe can inflict heavy damage, but requires a successful Strength check, is slow (Weapon Initiative -4), and requires a lot of space to perform. Damage Multiplier is x9.

### Item Defects

*Unique — Difficult to Parry:* The weapon is poor at parrying attacks, imposing a -2 penalty on all Defence checks made when wielding the weapon.

*Unique — Meant for the battlefield:* This is a large military weapon with a confection of blades at one end. It is not easy to manage on a crowded city street, cannot be carried casually, and may hit a friend if it misses an enemy. It can only be used two-handed. All Attack checks made with the sword suffer a -1 penalty in confined spaces, and the GM should feel free to require Skill checks to avoid accidents in urban areas.

### Tactical Hints

Use all-out attack and the poleaxe manoeuvre to finish a fight quickly. If defending use the Fend-off optional rule.

## Item Attributes

Acquiring a Level in an Attribute for an item costs a number of Resource Points equal to the Base Cost of the Attribute times Cost Multiplier based on the desired Attribute Level.

**Table 4-32: Item Attribute Costs**

Desired Attribute Level	Cost Multiplier
1	1
2	3
3	6
4	10
5	15
6	21
7	28
8	36
9	45
10	55

*Example: Akhán's player wants to have a Beautiful longsword, wanting Beautiful Level 4. Akhán's player will spend a total of (Base Cost of 3 times Cost Multiplier of 10) 30 Points to acquire Beautiful Level 4 for his long sword.*

### Beautiful

The item is a work of art; usually this is expressed through its lacquer. A range of complex and subtle scenes may be represented at high Levels of this Attribute. This Attribute may be required for persons of high status, and the lack of this Attribute may lead to a loss of respect amongst the aristocracy (for whom appearance is important).

**Base Cost:** 3 Resource Points

**Max Level:** Beautiful has no limit

### Concealable

This Attribute makes it easier to conceal an item. The Level of the Attribute is applied, as a penalty, to any Observation check to notice the weapon. A weapon's Initiative or a suit or armour's armour value are added, as bonuses, to the check. Large weapons or strong suits of armour are therefore difficult to conceal without immense effort. This Attribute may also be used to attempt to conceal a particular Attribute or Defect of an item rather than the item itself. In such a case, the cost of the Attribute depends on the Level of the Attribute or Defect that is being concealed rather than the Initiative or armour value of the item. It may take a round to remove a weapon from concealment.

**Base Cost:** 10 Resource Points times the weapon's Initiative or armour value (minimum base cost of 10)

**Max Level:** Armourer's Skill Level

### Extra Damage

The item does more damage due to a fine cutting edge or a particularly effective design. It does +1 damage per Level of this Attribute, after the Damage Multiplier, and can never be higher than half the weapon's basic Damage Multiplier. This can be applied to armour to represent elbow-spikes, knuckledusters, and armoured boots; if used for a shield it represents centre spikes, etc.

**Base Cost:** 10 Resource Points

**Max Level:** Half the normal Damage Multiplier for non-magical weapons

### Famous

The item has the Famous Attribute (as a character, see page 84).

**Base Cost:** 100 Resource Points

**Max Level:** 4



## Full Armour (Armour Only)

Most Tsolyáni armour is a compromise between protection and the risk of heat exhaustion. Truly complete armour makes it much more difficult to target vital locations (-1 penalty to Decisive Attack Fight Manoeuvres per 2 Levels of this Attribute) and provides slightly better protection (-1 damage per 4 Levels of this Attribute). Unfortunately, this Attribute produces armour that is stiflingly hot and, in normal summertime temperatures, does an amount of damage due to heat exhaustion, per hour, equal to the Level of this Attribute.

**Base Cost:** 2 Resource Points

**Max Level:** 6 for light armour, 12 for medium armour, 15 for heavy armour

## Intimidating

This can be applied to weapons, shields, or armour. A ferocious appearance, demon masks, glyphs, and other devices can be used to create an intimidating effect. The character gains a +1 bonus on Intimidation checks.

**Base Cost:** 8 Resource Points

**Max Level:** Intimidating has no maximum Level

## Poison Ready

The item can carry 1 + 1/Level doses of a specific poison. This will be obvious to a knowledgeable person (a bonus equal to the Poison Ready level to checks to notice the poison) unless combined with the Concealed item attribute. If the item is a weapon, any injected poison (see Poisons page 40) can be delivered in combat (see Poisoning page 103). If the Item is not a weapon, then the dosage of an ingested poison may be swiftly dropped into a drink or food with a Poison check.

**Base Cost:** 3 Resource Points

**Max Level:** 5

## Safe

The item has been designed to be safe and reliable to use. This can represent a range of functional features including basket-hilts, cross-pieces, etc. that may protect the character. For a missile weapon, this affects ammunition storage. This is particularly useful in bad conditions including darkness, heavy rain, attempting to draw or use a weapon while running, etc. The character gains a bonus to checks to control the item under difficult conditions equal to the Level of this Attribute.

**Base Cost:** 1 Resource Point

**Max Level:** 9

## Sculpted Armour (Armour only)

Medium and Heavy chlén-hide armour can be sculpted into smooth curved shapes to more effectively deflect blows. This makes it more effective, but is expensive and distinctive (the plates are fluted and curled). The if the character is hit by an attack (and fails his or her Defence check), he or she makes a check against the Level of this Attribute. If successful, the armour sculpting works, reducing the inflicted damage by 1d10 after multipliers are applied. If unsuccessful, the character suffers damage normally.

**Base Cost:** 4 Resource Points

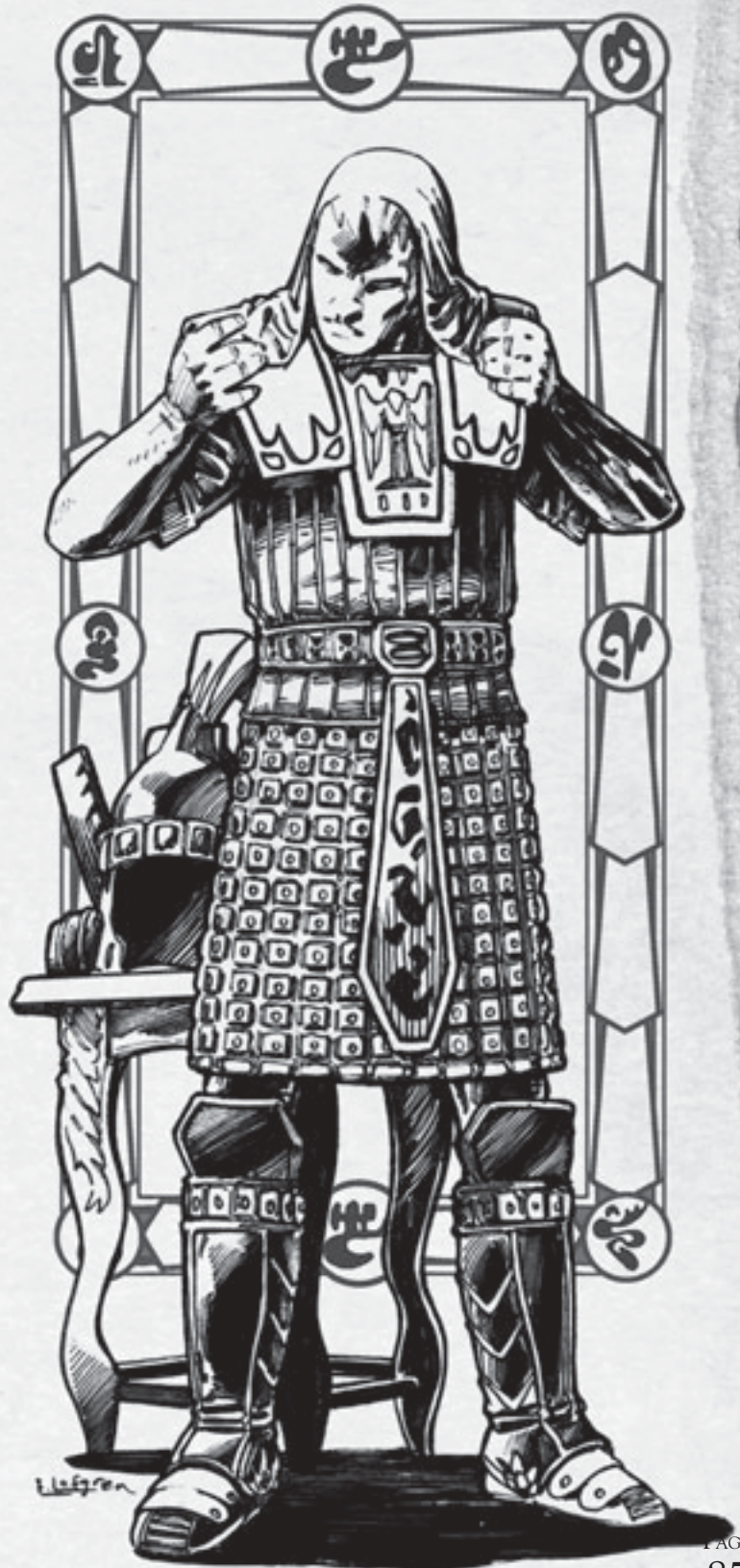
**Max Level:** 9

## Secondary Weapon

A weapon can be equipped with a secondary melee attack form. For example, a sword can be given a rearward-facing spike. These are still used with the same Combat Skill. They are usually very short range for use when the enemy are inside the optimum range of the primary weapon and may convey other minor advantages depending on the specific design. The Secondary Weapon cannot be longer than the primary, cannot be used simultaneously (it's usually at the other end), and no weapon with this Attribute may have the Safety Attribute above Level 3. This can be applied to a shield (maximum damage is x3) or a missile weapon (cost is tripled and maximum weapon Initiative is zero).

**Cost:** (1+Weapon Initiative) x (Damage Multiplier of Secondary Weapon) in Resource Points

**Max Level:** 1





## Specialised Design (Fight Manoeuvre)

The weapon has a specialised design that enhances a Fight Manoeuvre (see page 43). For example, a blade design that makes disarms easier. Only the Attack Weapon, Decisive Attack, Deceptive, Formation, and Style Fight Manoeuvres can be enhanced in this way. The weapon confirms a bonus of +1 to that Fight Manoeuvre. This Attribute may be taken multiple times, enhancing the same or different Fight Manoeuvres. Unlike other Weapon Attributes, this one is not purchased with Levels — each time it is selected represents one design feature though a weapon may have multiple features enhancing the same Fight Manoeuvre. Thus, the cost is a static 10 Resource Points per feature, not a base cost of 10 Points times the Level Multiplier.

**Cost:** 10 Resource Points per feature  
**Max Designs:** Weapon Initiative/2

## Trained (Animals and sentient magic items only)

The animal has been trained in line with its instincts (see Bestiary, page 160) and responds to one specific instruction (“Attack,” “Guard,” “Go to,” etc.) per Level of this Attribute. The character also gains a bonus to Animal Handling checks, equal to the Attribute’s Level, when working with this animal.

**Base Cost:** 3 Resource Points  
**Max Level:** Animal’s intelligence

## Tough

The item was made to be unusually rugged. When attacked by the Attack Weapon Fight Manoeuvre (page 43), it can sustain an additional 4 (12 for maces and shields) damage per Attribute Level before suffering a reduction in effectiveness. Armour with this Attribute does not stop any more damage but it is highly durable.

**Base Cost:** 1 Resource Point  
**Max Level:** The weapon’s Damage Multiplier

## Item Customisations

These Attributes only help the person for whom the item was designed. Custom items take a minimum number of months to find, fit, or develop equal to the total Level of Customisations. If lost, they may be difficult to replace in the timescale of a campaign. Costs increase with each Level the same as they do with Item Attributes (see page 84).

## Heft

The mass of the sword is increased, thereby increasing the damage inflicted by the sword. For each Level of this Customisation, the Strength Minimum may be increased by 1 while increasing the amount of damage inflicted, after accounting for Damage Multipliers, by 1. Alternatively, the Dexterity Minimum may be increased by 1, increasing the weapon’s Initiative Modifier by 1/2 (round fractions down). This Attribute is obvious to an experienced warrior (+2 bonus on checks to notice the customisation).

**Base Cost:** 8 Resource Points  
**Max Level:** Normal Weapon’s Stat Minimum/2

## Personal

This could be applied to weapon’s, armour, or tools used in a Skilled action. The item is so highly individualised that the character may develop a Skill Specialisation that acts as two extra Skill levels rather than the normal one extra level. That Specialisation only applies to this specific item (see Skills, page 32). If the bearer does not expend Skill Points to gain the Specialisation, there is no benefit in taking this Customisation. This is the ultimate in “personal” gear and will appear distinctive to any knowledgeable observer (+2 bonus to any checks to notice the customisation).

**Base Cost:** 50 Resource Points  
**Max Level:** 1

## Symbolic

The item was designed to invoke deep personal and/or religious meaning for the character; it is symbolic of something greater. It will stiffen the character’s resolve, giving him or her a +1 bonus per Level to his or her Willpower while it is in the character’s possession (this will affect Derived Stats, see page 51). If the character ever loses the item, his or her Willpower will drop, from despair, by 2 per Level of this

Customisation (adjust the character’s Derived Stats appropriately) for a number of months equal to the character’s Psyche + the Level of the Customisation (characters with a high Psyche tend to become more invested in their Symbolic items and are thus affected by their loss longer than others).

**Base Cost:** 8 Resource Points  
**Max Level:** Character’s Psyche/2

## Tailored Armour (Armour only)

This is armour which is unusually well designed and which has been made specifically for the client. It is very comfortable; it allows the bearer to be more agile while wearing it (the character gains a bonus to Acrobatics or Stealth checks, equal to the Level of the Customisation, while in armour). Furthermore, it provides slightly better protection from injury (reduce final damage by 1 Point/Level after accounting for Damage Multipliers).

**Base Cost:** 10 Resource Points  
**Max Level:** Character’s Strength/2

## Teamwork Set-piece

This may only be used with the GM’s approval, and the GM should require justification. It provides one free Team Point (see page 109) in a particular context (must be specified when this Customisation is created). This is not removed from the Team Pool and represents the increased efficiency of teamwork in that situation. The limit on receiving Points still applies and this should be used sparingly.

**Base Cost:** 5-30 Resource Points, depending on utility (GM discretion)  
**Max Level:** 1

## Old Friend

This Customisation can only be taken for weapons designed during character creation; the cost reflects years of maintenance and repairs rather than an initial purchase price. The character has had a long and intense history (at least a number of years equal to the Level of this Customisation) with this particular item and knows it intimately. If a Defence check fails by the Level of this Customisation or less, the final damage from the attack is reduced by the character’s Skill Level with this weapon, representing a partial deflection of the attack.

**Base Cost:** 1 Resource Point  
**Max Level:** Character’s Psyche + Older Attribute Level

## Perfectly Balanced

The item is specially balanced for the user; when two characters have the same Initiative, the character wielding the weapon with the highest Level of this Customisation acts first. Also, all positional modifiers (such as those for being prone, etc.) are reduced by the Level of this Customisation. Thrown weapons have the penalties for use at Long Range halved as well as their range increasing by the Level x 10%.

**Base Cost:** 3 Resource Points  
**Max Level:** Character’s Dexterity/2

## Item Defects

Item Defects are flaws in the item that provide Bonus Resource Points that can be used to further enhance the item. The number of Bonus Resource Points gained by a Defect are determined in the same manner as they are for Item Attributes (see page 84).

## Accident-Prone

The item is accident-prone (due to size, shape, design or even a minor curse). A GM may request a check against the Level of this Defect whenever he or she deems it appropriate. If the fumble check is successful, the character suffers a mishap with the item. Otherwise, the character successfully avoided any problems.

**Base Modifier:** 1 Bonus Resource Point  
**Max Level:** 4

## Bad Associations

The item is inherently distressing, brings back traumatic memories, or has disturbing imagery (such as demon glyphs). The item disturbs the bearer sufficiently to interfere with his or her behaviour, sleep, and normal social interactions, and



attracts adverse attention. The character must make a check, using the Level of the Defect as the Stat. If successful, a significant event (nightmares, paranoid episodes, hostile enquiry, etc.) occurs, disrupting the character's activities for the day, imposing a -1 penalty on all actions. If the Margin of Success is greater than the bearer's Psyche, the stress of the event is potentially life threatening (a warrior picks a fight with the wrong person, the bearer starts sleep walking in the wilderness, etc.).

**Base Modifier:** 1 Bonus Resource Point

**Max Level:** 9

### Bad Fit

This item is a bad size, shape, or type. This Defect is suitable for armour, ceremonial clothing, armoured boots, musical instruments, etc. An item with this Defect will do daily damage to the character equal to the Level of the Defect times 1d10 damage per day (as soon as the character dons the item).

**Base Modifier:** 1 Bonus Resource Point

**Max Level:** 4

### Fragile

The item is less tough than normal: maybe old (chlén-hide deteriorates), lightweight, or of poor quality. When attacked by the Attack Weapon Fight Manoeuvre (page 43), it can sustain a 4 (12 for maces and shields) fewer damage per Attribute Level before suffering a reduction in effectiveness. Armour with this Attribute does not stop any less damage but it is more fragile.

**Base Modifier:** 1 Bonus Resource Point

**Max Level:** 3

### Less Damage

The weapon does less damage than normal due to a slightly blunt blade, poor design, etc. The weapon inflicts 1 less damage per Level of the Defect. The penalty is applied after the Damage Multiplier.

**Base Modifier:** 5 Bonus Resource Points

**Max Level:** The weapon's Damage Multiplier/2

### Partial Armour

This is armour that does not cover the character's entire body. When an attack hits the character, he or she makes a check using the Level of this Defect. If successful, the attack has hit one of these unprotected locations and the armour provides no protection. If the check fails, the attack hits the armour and it provides protection as normal.

**Base Modifier:** 1 Bonus Resource Point

**Max Level:** Armour Level + 3.

### Poor Defence

The melee weapon has a balance problem that makes it notably bad on defence, imposing a -1 penalty, per Level, on all Defence checks. The weapon's balance is not a problem when attacking.

**Base Modifier:** 5 Bonus Resource Points

**Max Level:** 2

### Ugly

The item is crude, ugly, unlacquered (raw green-gray chlén-hide), etc. Although it may be quite functional, it is aesthetically offensive, and an embarrassment to any respectable warrior. If anyone is able to see the item in the character's possession (possibly requiring an Observation check if the character attempts to conceal it), the character's effective Respect total is reduced by one-quarter.

**Base Modifier:** 3 Bonus Resource Points

**Max Level:** 1

## Special Item Examples

### Scavenged Armour

This armour was scavenged from numerous sources and recycled into a suit of heavy armour by a skilled, but unscrupulous, armourer. It is a badly colour coordinated patchwork of armour plates held together with a web of straps and buckles

(requiring 10 — the character's Dexterity in minutes to put on or take off). The various parts don't integrate perfectly and a lucky shot can find gaps in the protection (a roll of 1-3 on 1d10) and the mismatch of scarred, cracked, and missing lacquer clearly betrays its ignoble origins. This is disreputable armour, but good for those who believe they have more luck than money.

Base Cost (Heavy Armour)

20 Points

#### Defects

Partial Armour 3

-3

Ugly

-3

Total Cost

14 Resource Points

## The Heavy Armour You Got Cheap

This armour might be loaned by the clan master-at-arms to those he dislikes or issued to a Legionary with the Bad Start in Life Defect. An inexperienced warrior might accidentally buy it because its Defects are not obvious (due to a failed Observation check). The design, based on Bednálljan ceremonial armour, is purgatorial to wear and extremely clumsy. The straps chafe, it is stiffling hot, and all the edges are badly finished, causing friction blisters in sensitive places. The helmet is suffocating and allows only very restricted vision. This armour causes 3d10 damage to the wearer per day of normal use (infected sores combined with dehydration can actually kill). It takes 13 minutes minus the character's Dexterity to put on or remove.

Base Cost (Heavy Armour)

20 Points

#### Defects

Accident Prone 2

-2

Bad Fit 3

-3

Total Cost

15 Resource Points

## A Better Mace

Although often thought of as a crude weapon, maces are more durable than chlén-hide swords (which have to be replaced when the edge chips or blunts) so a quality mace is an excellent investment. The striking face is ridged to assist with beating down enemy weapons (+1 bonus to the Attack Weapon Fight Manoeuvre, page 43) and to enhance blunt trauma (final damage is increased by 1), and it has a butt-spike for use in close combat. It is perfect for taking out heavily armoured opponents and is normally be used in conjunction with a shield.

Base Cost (Mace)

2 Points

#### Attributes

Extra Damage +1

10

Secondary Weapon (Butt Spike) Weapon Initiative = 0, Damage x2

2

Specialised Design "Angled striking face" 1

10

Tough 1

1

#### Defects

Poor Defence (-2 penalty to Defence checks with the mace)

-10

Total cost

15 Resource Points

## An Attack Dog

A highly trained, pedigreed, hunting dog in superb condition and trained for combat. It has a good temperament (Safe 3), is large (Extra damage) and it will respond instantly to "Kill," "Stay," and "Find."

Base Cost

15

#### Attributes

Beautiful 1

3

Extra Damage 1

10

Safe 3

3

Trained 3

9

Total cost

40 Resource Points

## My Father's Sword

The sword your father carried in the decisive battles of the Yán Koryáni war. He became a hero when he held the ford at Chálukolumel against tremendous odds and courageously defended your homeland from the brutal northern hordes. You inherited his blade and have practised with it since you were thirteen years old; it is now like



an extension of your sword arm and is beyond price to you. It represents your family honour and your father's heroism.

**Attribute summary:** Strength minimum 6, Damage +3, +2 bonus to Attack Weapon

Base Cost (Longsword)	2
<b>Attributes</b>	
Personal weapon	50
Old friend (inherited sword)	6
Symbolic (father's heroism)	24
Design Template (Military Longsword)	10
Specialised Design (Attack Weapon)	10
Heft (+2 Strength Minimum)	24
Beautiful	3
Extra damage +1	10
Safe (hilt bindings)	6
Perfectly Balanced	3
Tough	1
Total cost	149 Resource Points

## Ultra-Heavy Chlén-hide Armour

This is a suit of top-of-the-line armour made to order for a very wealthy person who expects to face heavy combat. The chlén-hide plates are moulded to deflect an extra 1d10 damage on a 1d10 roll of 1 to 5 and it includes a full-face/masked helmet, leg armour, and chlén-hide chain-mail to protect all vulnerable joints (-2 penalty to Decisive Attacks). It absorbs 2 Points of final damage beyond normal heavy armour and it is surprisingly comfortable (albeit hot) to wear. It fits so perfectly that a skilled wearer could do back-flips or move silently while wearing it. The armour is itself a weapon (x2 Damage) due to the ridges designed to enhance the damage of brawling attacks. The ferocious mask and intimidating appearance are beautifully executed in the finest chlén hide and gloss lacquer, which brings a justifiable self-confidence (+1 Willpower). It is lacquered uniquely in the style of the client's choosing (2 distinctive graphic elements) and takes 9 minutes minus the character's Dexterity to put on or remove. Note that even "Ultra-Heavy" Chlén-hide Armour is still very light.

Base cost (Heavy armour)	20
<b>Attributes</b>	
Beautiful	9
Intimidating	8
Full Armour	20
Perfectly Balanced	3
Sculpted Armour	30
Safe	3
Secondary Weapon (Initiative 0, Damage x2)	2
Symbolic (Power)	8
Tailored Armour	10
Total cost	113 Resource Points

## Talismans and Sacrifices

The Tsolyáni know their Gods are real, and have developed a number of ways of trying to obtain their intercession. Charms, Amulets, and Talismans (collectively referred to as Talismans) are hawked in marketplaces and outside the Temples in most Tsolyáni cities. Not all are effective. Furthermore, the making of Sacrifices to the Gods in hopes of attaining their favour is quite normal for all Tsolyáni merchants, sailors, and warriors.

Wealthy temples in large cities may have Level 10 Talismans and Sacrifices for worshippers in good standing, but will be unwilling to make provision for those they perceive as unworthy (low Respect), hostile or irrelevant (low status). Those without connections or influence or those who are in rural areas must make do with much weaker (Level 5 or less) Talismans and Sacrifices may have to wait months for them.

It is possible to have multiple Talismans of the same type, but only one can be used in an invocation at any one time. Although the descriptions are written in terms of Talismans and charms, any of them can be converted to a Sacrifice by adding the Sacrifice Defect and adjusting the cost appropriately.

## Talisman Costs

The cost is equal to the Talisman Level multiplied by the total of the Attribute Values, divided by the total of the Defect Values.

## Talisman Attributes

### Combat Capable

The Talisman is appropriate to use under combat conditions, so it is easy to invoke and does something useful for warriors. This Talisman Attribute is incompatible with the Ritual Invocation Talisman Defect.

**Attribute Value:** 4

### Lucky Piece

This is an otherwise useful object or animal that has turned out to be fortunate for the bearer and functions like a Talisman even though it may not have been designed as such. This is appropriate for an item that has been blessed by a powerful Priest or sent by a God or Demon to assist a devout follower. It may not be obvious.

**Attribute Value:** 2

### No Invocation

The Talisman or charm does not require invocation by the user; it will act when needed even if the bearer is unconscious, asleep etc.

**Attribute Value:** 2

## Talisman Defects

### Ritual Invocation

The Talisman requires elaborate actions to invoke it. This is time consuming and impractical in combat. This Talisman Defect is incompatible with the Combat Capable or No Invocation Talisman Attributes.

**Defect Value:** 2

### Reduced Frequency

The Talisman will only produce a single effect per day, whatever the Margin of Success, and may only be invoked once per week.

**Defect Value:** 2

### Prohibitions

The character must observe very intrusive prohibitions beyond normal maintenance superstitions if they expect the Talisman to work. Failure to observe these means any attempt to use the item automatically fails.

**Defect Value:** 2

### Reduced Effect

It has a very narrow and minor subject, such as protection from a minor, non-lethal disease.

**Defect Value:** 2

### Sacrifice

This is actually a one-time Sacrifice (as appropriate to the God) and there is no physical component (no amulet or Talisman is required) but it otherwise works like a Talisman. This only works once and the Sacrifice must be bought again for each use. Sacrifices may be difficult to arrange on short notice, and the proper rituals may not always be available, but they do last indefinitely, until used. Characters with the Ritual Skill may attempt to perform sacrifices to their Gods (only) in the right circumstances, but this is difficult and risky.

**Defect Value:** 5

## Maintaining the Blessing

Characters should not purchase Talisman or make Sacrifices if they are not prepared to behave properly. They should be encouraged to develop interesting superstitions, and the GM should reward creativity and role-playing with a bonus to their maintenance check.



**Table 4-33: Invocation Modifiers**

**Invocation**

Modifier	Behaviour in a month (cumulative)
-4	Each failure to observe maintenance superstitions
-2	Difficult circumstances (military campaign, illness, etc.)
-1	Many distractions due to intense work, study etc.
0	Played behaviour, superstition, and regular observances
+1	Obsessive observance and irritatingly compulsive behaviour
+1	Extreme sacrifices (self-mutilation, very high value offerings)
+2	Become self-flagellating hermit and give personal wealth to Temple

The maximum bonus is +8 for a Heroic Fantasy campaign and +4 for any other campaign type. There is no maximum penalty.

### Using the Blessing, Invoking, Beseeking, and Praying

The effect of a Talisman is based on the success of a check against its Level. There is a cumulative -5 penalty after the first attempted invocation of a particular Talisman in the same day. A character may carry multiple Talismans of the same or different types but can only make a number of Invocation attempts equal to his or her Psyche per day. To invoke a Talisman, the character must be in contact with it, which is why they are often worn as amulets inside clothing, placed on weapons, shields, or armour. There must also be an active request for intercession (a Psyche check is required to do this without speaking) although this can be done in advance (such as before a battle begins) once the request is made and a success is achieved, the GM can apply the effect flexibly over the course of the next day.

This is a subtle form of magic and the effect may take time to become apparent if it ever does. This is what the Tsoiyáni have instead of luck and although the effect should always be suitable to the patron, results are seldom predictable or obviously supernatural. If a Talisman check fails, that Talisman will not function for a number of days equal to the Margin of Failure and if a Sacrifice, has been wasted.

**Table 4-34: Talisman Effects**

**Margin of**

Success	Suitable Effects
0-1	An absence of minor misfortune. May re-roll one fumble in a Skill associated with the Talisman.
2-3	One trivial piece of good luck, usually extra information.
4-5	One minor opportunity. GM discretion but the character may have to make a Skill/Stat check to take advantage of it.
6-7	As above, but there is a sequence of minor fortunate events/opportunities (a number of events equal to the character's Psyche).
8-9	As above plus +1 bonus to one suitable Skill/Stat check (player's choice but it must be on the day of invocation and specifically related to the type of Talisman).
10+	A +1 bonus to a number of events equal to the character's Psyche. The character is having a day significantly effected by the patron of the Talisman.

### Cursed Items

Reversing the above effects and adding the No Invocation and Lucky Piece Attributes is a way to represent a cursed item. These may be combined with Talismans or be the effect of trying to use a stolen Talisman.

### Talisman Examples

The following are a sample of the hundreds of Talismans. For weaker versions, reduce initial quality Level.

#### Nurgashte "Who Defends Against Death"

Nurgashte is famous as a demon who will protect warriors in combat, and his hideous beastlike face is often depicted on shields in his colours of black, gold, and scarlet. Nurgashte is of the substance of Vimúhla and the essence of Lord Hrüü, but warriors of any religion may invoke him on the eve of battle. Likely effects include allowing Psyche checks to spot an ambush, Tactics Skill checks to improve position in a battle, and similar tactically-oriented checks. A moderate Margin of Success will provide a +1 bonus on Defence checks. Maintenance superstitions include the obvious wearing of his emblem, the free display and instruction of Combat Skills on request (always at festival times), plus a variety of local preferences (GM or player choose one). A Talisman of Nurgashte must never be worn with ones for Nimune or Niritlal, since there is an ancient vendetta between these demons.

**Level:** 10  
**Attributes:** Combat Capable  
**Defects:** None  
**Cost:** 40 Resource Points

#### Vimúhla as Dumuggásh, "The Spirit of Battle"

Usually represented as a naked warrior with a curved sword and a round shield, this is the 4th Outer Aspect of the Flame God and the one invoked by warriors about to go into battle. This aspect may help a warrior find and reach the enemy, but never with defensive tactics. A success may provides a +1 bonus to Total Attacks (see page 108) or other similar offensive combat bonuses. No one expecting this aspect to help them may use the Cautious Attack or Total Defence strategies, and they may never avoid a fight or accept shámtila when a duel is possible. Maintenance requires that they talk about the desirability of martyrdom and express an interest in and/or sponsorship of religious mysticism. These requirements tend to limit its use.

**Level:** 10  
**Attributes:** Combat Capable  
**Defects:** Prohibitions (No Cautious Attack, No Total Defence, No avoiding fights)  
**Cost:** 20 Resource Points

#### Dlamélish — A Love Charm

This is the most powerful love charm, but less effective variants can be bought in any city marketplace. Effects include fortuitous meetings, invitations to parties, convenient opportunities to be alone, etc. This is the blessing of the Goddess, not mind control, and it is not specific to one target (bearers can and do attract the affections of undesirable persons as well). Suitable maintenance superstitions include sacrificing the special sacrificial silver coins (bought from the money-changers on the Temple steps) and gathering the blossom of the Tikánta flower for the Goddess.

**Level:** 10  
**Attributes:** None  
**Defects:** None  
**Cost:** 10 Resource Points

#### Karakán as Nagotai, "The Upholder"

The 18th aspect of Karakán is normally represented as a dwarf-like figure; he assists leaders, planners, and strategists. A success will provide a +1 bonus to Command, Planning, Tactics, or Strategy checks. Maintenance superstitions require



the observance of food taboos (no fish), the provision of occasional human sacrifices for the Temple of Karakán, and a strict code of martial honour.

**Level:** 10

**Attributes:** Combat Capable

**Defects:** Prohibitions (Food Taboos), Reduced Effect (bonus to Command, Planning, Tactics, or Strategy checks only)

**Cost :** 10 Resource Points

## Thúmis, the Charm of Chokoth “The Messenger”

This charm is dedicated to the 7th Aspect of Thúmis, Chokoth, the messenger of the gods. It benefits those who wish to travel swiftly and without hindrance, providing good footing, well-marked paths, and open roads. This cannot benefit someone charging into combat but will work for people trying to escape from pursuers; it may provide bonuses to Hiking and Running checks. This effect may last an entire day of travel. Maintenance superstitions include carrying messages on request, sacrificing foreign or antique coins to the Temple, and helping keep roads clear of blockage or threat (bearers are not required to do this alone but must assist any community effort).

**Level:** 10

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** None

**Cost :** 10 Resource Points

## Qón — the Blessing of Vrodz, “The Wielder of the Mace”

A Talisman of the 6th Aspect of Qón, who helps those who battle the horrors of the Dark. The bearer must have the appropriate names drawn on his or her body by a Priest of Qón and these must not be erased if the Talisman or sacrifice is to function. The bearer may not serve Change and may not use an edged weapon. Likely coincidences include a bonus to Observation checks to spot hidden traps or a Psyche check to sense the approach of an invisible creature. A sufficient success may also provide a +1 bonus with the Mace Skill. Maintenance superstitions include the exclusive preference for blunt instruments, volunteering to fight “against the dark,” and a willingness to venture into the Underworld to protect shrines and rescue the lost.

**Level:** 10

**Attributes:** Combat Capable

**Defects:** Ritual invocation (Qón), Prohibition (Cannot Serve Change, No edged weapons)

**Cost :** 10 Resource Points

## Avánthe as Kerena “The Wind”

This is an amulet to the 14th Aspect of Lady Avánthe and is of particular importance to Tsolyáni sailors. Kerena ensures fair winds on land and sea and a sufficient success provides a +1 bonus to Sailing checks. Maintenance superstitions are quite specific and require that the character ensure that no creature of the air (bird, etc.) is harmed or imprisoned in their presence. It is for this reason that many Tsolyáni sailors will react badly to caged birds. Failure to respect a statue of Kerena can get someone thrown overboard if there is adverse weather. Maintenance superstitions include nodding a greeting to seabirds, erecting small shrines to Kerena aboard ship, throwing a portion of a catch back into the sea, etc.

**Level:** 10

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** Prohibition (To not harm or imprison the creatures of the air)

**Cost :** 5 Resource Points





## Inscribed Spells

Inscription (page 124) is a way of storing a single casting of a Spell. Once an Inscribed Spell is used (see Casting Inscribed Spells, page 114), it is gone; the writing remains but the patterning of the spell is gone and cannot be brought back. Any literate individual who has the correct Temple affiliations and is not a Magic Dampener (see page 21) can read an Inscribed Spell, thus casting the Spell it contains. Temples maintain libraries of these scrolls, and some Temple Guards are trained to utilise them in an emergency.

Having friends or Rank in the Temple, or significant influence, is normally a prerequisite to purchasing Inscribed Spells. The GM should require Administration, Bribery, and/or Charm checks modified depending on the campaign and the type of Spell (a Domination might be -2 penalty), limiting the Level of the Spell to roughly the Circle Rank of the character's contact at the Temple, or other appropriate limitations. Temples will not sell Inscribed Spells to people with negative Respect values or very low status out of concern that the Spells may be lost, stolen, or misused and get the Temple in trouble for a breach of the Concordat.

See pages 113 for more information regarding magical Spells.

### Costs

The cost of an Inscription is: (Spell Level + Spell Attribute Levels + Spell Specialisations + the Magic Skill Level of the creator — Spell Defects). Prerequisites are also counted when determining costs.

Tlesa paper and the best inks and other careful preparations provide a +1 bonus to use the Inscription, but increase the cost of any Inscription by 10 Resource Points. It takes (at least) the Spell's Level, in weeks, to produce an Inscribed Spell.

## Inscribed Spell Example

### Temple Shrine Guardians

A unit of Temple Guard protecting an important shrine, being sent into the Underworld or guarding a VIP will often carry Inscribed Spells (they might have a junior magician assigned to them as well).

A magician with Psyche 8 and Magic 2 created all of the following Spells in the form of scrolls.

Healing (Alleviation)	4
Healing (Increased Effect 3, Increased Range) x 3	12
Elicitation (Detect)	6
Phantasms (Substantial Group)	5
The Seal Upon the Powers	10
The Sphere of Impermeable Quiescence	10
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>61 Resource Points</b>

The scrolls are usually carried by the second in command. The Phantasms portion of the scroll produces illusions of Temple Guards (to create fake targets) and Elicitation is used to locate and identify the enemy. If the caster is attacked by a magician then Seal Upon the Powers and Sphere of Impermeable Quiescence will immediately activate. A Temple Guard unit with high Teamwork Skills can deploy these so efficiently that the enemy may incorrectly assume they are facing real magicians.

## Intermediate Technology

These are above the normal Tsolyáni level of technology, but still primitive compared to the devices created by the Lords of the Latter Times. As a guideline, a character may buy such devices at initial character creation only if he or she has a background that would justify it and the GM thinks the device is appropriate for the campaign. Only one of each type of device is allowed for each character group.

If the GM wishes, he or she may create other such items and set values for them. They should be difficult to duplicate (or require special Skills to do so) and should not be so far above the general technological level of Tsolyánu as to be disruptive.

## Intermediate Technology Examples

### The Far-Seer

*The Far Seer was a squarish tube of black Tiu wood, its ends closed with glittering lenses of polished glass, glued into place with ochre Si'u gum ... Zaren hi Murudu had developed the prototype at the Monastery of the Sapient Eye in the Ch\*kan forests ... Zaren was a rarity: a mechanical genius ... Very few Tsolyáni — or any of the people of the Five Empires for that matter — were handy with machines. Sorcery was easier and more reliable!*

— M.A.R. Barker, *Lords of Tsámra*

This telescope is used by Harsán in *Man of Gold*. This device is so impressive to the Tsolyáni that the Temple of Ksárul sends an agent to observe it in operation and steal its secrets in *Lords of Tsámra*. The agent is a magician, because they assume the device must be magical; it is actually a hand-held, eight-power telescope. Its lenses were hand-ground by a very talented individual, making the device hard to replicate.

*Game Mechanics:* Allows easy observation at 8 times the normal range of normal human vision. Many Tsolyáni quickly understand the use of this device, but they assume it is "magic" and so do not enquire further about its principles.

**Resource Point Cost:** 100  
**Number in Existence:** 1

### Glass Acid Daggers

These are intended as assassination weapons. A conventional dagger hilt is fitted with a hollow glass "blade," which is sharp but brittle, and contains acid. These weapons are used to stab but will break on the first hit, allowing the acid to do further damage. The blades and their contents obviously must be replaced after each use.

The cost provides a set of three Glass Acid Daggers and authorisation to have replacement blades fitted by the appropriate organisation when necessary. It takes 1d10 days and costs 100 káitars to get each blade replaced in any major city.

*Game Mechanics:* The unbroken dagger has a base x2 Damage Multiplier, and breaks at the first significant impact, releasing the acid. When a character is hit by a Glass Acid Dagger, the attacker rolls 1d10. This is the additional Damage Multiplier that the acid inflicts (it is added to the base damage of the dagger, not resolved separately). Armour will reduce this additional damage normally but, if the acid inflicts sufficient damage to get through the armour, it has destroyed a portion of the armour. The armour now has the Partial Armour Defect (page 87) or increases the Defect's Level by 1 if the armour already possesses the Defect. This weapon can also be used to destroy door locks, weapons, and armour.

**Resource Point Cost:** 50  
**Number in Existence:** Less than one hundred sets

### Summoner Upon the Way

This weapon, a small crossbow with a pistol grip designed for one-handed use, is in relatively common use with the Assassin's Clans and is available to the intelligence organisations of any of the Five Empires. Its name derives from the sound of it firing, which is similar to that of the finger-snap used to summon servants. It is normally cocked and loaded and then secured with its primitive safety catch, so it can be drawn and fired quickly by releasing the safety and pulling the trigger (a bizarre series of actions for most Tsolyáni). The Summoner is normally loaded with a poisoned dart (it is too small to take conventional bolts). It has a short range and is difficult to cock quickly because of its small size and the lack of leverage (a Strength check with a -4 penalty to cock in one round).

*Game Mechanics:* The dart has a x2 Damage Multiplier and has a maximum range of 8-10 metres. It carries 3 grams of an injected poison (usually Food of the Ssú, but Puff Spider venom is also known). It can be used with the Crossbow Skill with a +2 bonus or with the Summoner Skill (without a modifier).

**Resource Point Cost:** 50  
**Number in Existence:** Several hundred



## Fake Eyes

Few people want to find out the hard way whether an Eye pointed at them is real or not, so a fake Eye can be as effective for Intimidation as a real one (see Eyes under High Technology, page 93). This category represents top quality fakes and near-perfect replicas of the real thing. They look real until the button is pushed.

*Game Mechanics:* A Fake Eye will provides a +4 bonus to Intimidation checks

**Resource Point Cost:** 30 Resource Points

**Number in Existence:** Hundreds

## Magical Items

This section lists several sample magic items in order of increasing cost. Some context is given for each of these items so that GMs can use them for story ideas rather than just keeping them as "treasure." GMs may create others using the ones here as a guideline.

### Magical Item Examples That Alien Steel

A deadly shard of magical steel that cuts through chlén-hide with ease and does more damage than a normal short-sword. It is a subtly unpleasant weapon, and some dealers have suggested that the Ssú or the Hlüss may have made it originally. Previous owners claim that it brings nightmares and attracts trouble. The blade will not melt if placed in a forge.

*Campaign Use:* During the civil war, this weapon was carried by an agent of the Ndálu Society and was implicated in several assassinations. It somehow lends itself to deception, conspiracy, and murder, and it takes a strong Psyche not to be spooked by it. Anyone sleeping near the blade will occasionally wake suddenly in the night with the impression that the sword was whispering ... but they will never remember exactly what it may have been saying.

Base	70 (Steel Shortsword)
<b>Item Attributes</b>	
Extra Damage +2	30
Specialised Design (Deceptive Attack)	10
Item Customisations	
Beautiful 1	3
Intimidating	8
Secondary Weapon	3
"Back Stab" blade projecting back from hilt; Initiative = 0, Damage Multiplier x3.	
Teamwork Set-Piece. "Murder" 1	10
<b>Item Defect</b>	
Bad Associations 5	-15
Total Cost	114 Resource Points

### Ladder of Mriddu the Magician

This item is a favourite of storytellers through the ages, where it plays an important role in heroic rescues and thefts. Three of these items are known to exist, but the original is credited to Mriddu (a semi-mythical figure). It is a metal ladder that, when fully extended, is nearly 17 metres long but folds in on itself until fits in a human hand and weighs only a few grams.

*Campaign Use:* Heroes of the Epics found numerous inventive uses for a steel ladder. In Tsolyánu, people who have practical uses for a magical ladder tend to keep quiet about it; a character could be surprised to inherit this from a relative, receive it as payment from a magician, or find it on a tomb robber. One of these devices is kept in the caverns of the wizard Elyoa in the Tlashte Heights of Livyánu. Its historical associations and great fame mean it will also attract those who covet that which is famous even if they have no particular use for it.

Base Cost	50
<b>Item Attributes</b>	
Unique: Arcane Container	400

The ladder acts as a doorway to a micro-dimension where its full length can be stored, leaving only a small part of it.

### Item Defects

Unique: Coveted 1

-200

Others perennially desire the item enough to try and take it by force. They want the item and will go through the character to get it. The ownership of the item is always going to be contested. There is always someone out there who wants it badly enough to try to take it no matter how tough the present owner may be. They will use violence if it gets them what they want, but they will start off with attempts at persuasion and theft. This Defect never vanishes — there will always be someone else who wants the ladder.

Blatant 1

-100

It's a 17-metre steel ladder that folds down into one's hand: anyone seeing it will remember it and identifying it is possible with a successful Scholar Skill check. The item is disturbing enough to be unwelcome in polite society. A character who is often seen with this item will start to suffer Reputation effects in the long term (over a number of months equal to his or her Charisma). With a successful Magic Skill check a magician can sense this item in a number of metres equal to his or her.

Total Cost

150 Resource Points

### Scarab

This is a silver amulet in the shape of a beetle. It can be worn as a necklace or mounted on an armband but is actually an extension of an extra-planar entity that can be contacted by touch. It can animate at will, unless within a low magic area or a Sphere of Impermeable Quiescence, where it goes dormant. Scarab is a living creature and it can change into a living scarab beetle or an elaborate dagger on request. It dislikes doing this quickly. Scarab can see and hear and understand simple statements in various languages, but is quite alien. It sometimes fails to grasp the relevance of events, and may misinterpret statements. It has a complex and unearthly agenda, and must be negotiated with to gain its co-operation. Its objectives often seem irrational, and it is quite capable of being distracted or deciding to change its priorities.

*Campaign Use:* Scarab requests strange forms of payment that may involve the bearer in minor adventures. For example, it may ask that its bearer protect a Jakalláni cart-driver for a week, or find two fresh Vringálu eggs to be donated to the Temple of Qón. It does not (or cannot) explain its motivation, but it always keeps its deals and expects its bearer to do the same. Scarab makes a great spy, which may also bring it into contact with the player characters if used by an enemy.

Scarab is an NPC played by the GM and should have a personality and agenda that may be quite different from that of its bearer. The bearer must be in physical contact with Scarab and must speak aloud. Scarab speaks directly into the mind of its bearer.

Scarab has a limited ability to possess other sentient beings that touch it, however it is very unlikely that it will attempt to possess sentient beings as such possession is likely short-lived and could result in it being thrown into the nearest volcano or otherwise destroyed. If it does attempt to possess a target, Scarab and the target make contested Psyche checks. If Scarab is victorious, it has possessed the target. Scarab has access to all of the target's Body Stats and all related Skills but does not have any of the Mind or Soul Stats nor any of their related Skills. Scarab may give up possession voluntarily, at any time, but it can also be driven back into its permanent home in two ways. A successful Disenchantment (Disenchant Temple Spells) Spell or the target defeating Scarab in a contested Psyche check (the target may attempt the contested check once every [Scarab's Willpower / target's Willpower; round up] days).

If the target is victorious in the contested Psyche check, Scarab fails the possession attempt and cannot attempt again (against anyone, not just the specific target) for 5 hours.

Intelligence 4, Psyche 5, Willpower 4, Charisma 2

Magic Resistance 7 (Immune to Universal Ascertainment Spells)

Skills: Language (Tsolyáni) 1, Language (Engsvanyáli) 1, Language (Bednálljan) 1, Language (Climbing) 1, Language (Stealth) 1, Language (Observation) 1, Scholar (Magic Theory) 1, Scholar (The Planes Beyond) 1, Tactics 1, Teamwork 1

Base

50 (Piece of jewellery)

**Item Attributes (All Unique Attributes)**

Advisor 1

100



Scarab is quite knowledgeable. It has the Skills listed above. Scarab cannot convey these Skills unless Scarab possesses the bearer. Scarab can teach these Skills to a character.

Extrusion Entity 1 100

Scarab is just a small part of an extra-planar entity that has been extruded into the plane of Tékumel. This entity is outside the human dimension. As the extra-planar power is soaked by the greater entity, Scarab has its Magic Resistance increased by 2 and Universal Ascertainment Spells do not work on it.

Living 2 100

Scarab possesses a supernatural life-force. It can mould its extrusion into either a Living Scarab, or an elaborate Dagger. Scarab will bleed if damaged and will heal twice as quickly as a human.

Senses 2 100

Scarab has senses independent of its bearer. It can see and hear the local environment as well as a normal human.

### Item Defects (All Unique Defects)

Area Dependant 1 -100

The item will not function in any low magic area or when affected by a Seal Upon the Powers or Sphere of Impermeable Quiescence Spell although it may be moved out of their area of effect. If the energy flow is ever blocked, it will take 1d10 rounds for the item to start functioning again once it returns to an appropriate environment.

Neutral 1 -200

Though it is not actively hostile, the character will have to negotiate with Scarab if they wish to use its abilities. The terms of the deal will be inconvenient for the character but will usually be tolerable.

Total Cost 150 Resource Points

## Emerald of Hagárr of Paránta

There are at least three of these magical gemstones, originally created for Hagárr, the famous buccaneer-wizard of ancient Paránta. Although it looks like a large emerald, it conveys power over sea creatures simply by pointing and squeezing it. This control lasts for one minute per charge and has a maximum range of 20 metres. No non-sentient sea-creature can refuse its commands. The emerald can hold up to 100 charges and recharges in ordinary sunlight (1 charge/day).

*Campaign Use:* One of these devices is rumoured to be in the treasure chest of the notorious Captain Hárchar hiVárshu, an infamous Jakállan pirate. It is said that Captain Hárchar is unaware of the true nature of this device and thinks it to be merely a gemstone. He may be very interested in anyone who knows its true purpose, and Hárchar has notoriously low impulse control and an acquisitive nature.

Base Cost 100

### Item Attributes

Unique: Command 1 200

Controls sea creatures. Control lasts for one minute per charge. The Emerald has a maximum range of 20 metres. The Emerald can hold up to 100 charges and recharges in ordinary sunlight at a rate of 1 charge / day,

Total Cost 300 Resource Points

## High Technology

There are still stockpiles of ancient high technology on Tékumel. Though the current inhabitants do not understand them well, they value them and use them when they can. As above, these are only a sample of the items available in this category.

Characters may not buy these devices during character generation. Technology such as Eyes will radically change certain dynamics (they can define combat) and should be handled with care.

## Eyes

Eyes are technological devices from the Latter Times, roughly the same size and shape as a human eye, with an iris-like aperture (hence the name). They are made of an advanced non-metallic, opaque material that is harder than steel. It is generally impossible to tell what type of Eye is being used until it is activated. Eyes have a limited number of charges, and may or may not have an indicator for remaining charge level (from 1-100 uses remaining).

Eyes were not originally designed as weapons — the oldest were tools of the Ancients — and they are clumsy to use. Most characters will never have the chance to actually develop any Skill with one, because that requires using it a lot, which burns off charges (Eye would be a 5 Point Skill). Eyes have no safety catches or sights, but they seem to have some protection against accidental activation — perhaps a psychic “intent switch,” though this may not be present on all of them. Eyes often affect an area rather than an individual — targets may attempt a Defence check to dive out of the way, and victims also get a Magic Resistance check. It is possible to affect multiple targets.

No-one on modern Tékumel can make Eyes or other such wonders of the Lords of the Latter times. There may be a handful of modern scholars who can tinker with an Eye without blowing themselves up.

## Examples

These are a few of the more common Eyes found on Tékumel.

### Excellent Ruby Eye

This Eye projects a reddish beam that puts the victims into stasis, encasing them in a subdued red glow. They are out of phase with the plane of Tékumel and cannot move, think, or be harmed by physical force or conventional magic. Victims remain out of phase until hit by this type of Eye for a second time (intentionally or not). A victim of this Eye can be brought back into phase unharmed even if they have been in stasis for many thousand of years. The Imperium has been known to use this Eye to warehouse extremely dangerous and important prisoners. This Eye only affects organic material.

The beam is short ranged (limited to 15 metres) but affects an area of up to 3 metre radius.

**Cost:** 100 Resource Points +5 per charge

### Eye of Frigid Breath

This Eye fires a beam of terrible, freezing cold out to 15 metres, affecting a 2 metre radius. This will instantly kill most creatures (1d10 x 20 damage to everything within the affected area or simply an instant kill, at the GM's discretion). The outer few centimetres of a victim are usually frozen solid. The affected area will remain dangerously cold (damage is halved each round after the first) for several moments and remains unpleasant for several minutes.

**Cost:** 80 Resource Points +10 per charge

### Ineluctable Eye of Healing

Each use instantly heals 4d10 damage. This includes damage done by weapons, poison, magic, and even some of the effects of ageing. This only affects one individual per charge and must be aimed, but has a range of only 1.5 metres.

**Cost:** 100 Resource Points +10 per charge

### Eye of Being an Unimpeachable Shield Against Foes

Each use of this Eye generates a force field with the Eye at its centre, but wide enough for up to five smallish humans to shelter within. The force field cannot be penetrated by conventional physical force but does not stop magic or most other Eyes. It also allows the passage of air and other gasses. The field is maintained for 5 minutes per use and the character may move normally (the field is continuously modified by the Eye to match terrain, etc.). Accidents are quite possible, as the field is large enough to be clumsy.

**Cost:** 80 Resource Points +20 per charge



# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE





## Game Mechanics

Role-playing in the world of Tékumel can involve a wide range of activities and atmospheres, from brutal combat on the front lines, to tense exploration of the deadly Underworlds, to equally tense social interactions on the aristocratic party circuit. The majority of character actions do not require rules: the player states what action his or her character is taking, and the GM decides whether it is possible and gives the results. Personal interaction between characters or between characters and NPCs normally consists of the players and the GM talking “in character” and describing what their characters are doing as well as (in the GM’s case) what the player characters are seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting, or psychically sensing.

When the outcome of an action is uncertain, or is very important to the story, more specific rules can be helpful. First, rules allow impartial resolution of an action. Having an impartial resolution mechanism is useful in cases where the outcome of an action is critically important and the GM does not want the players to feel that the resolution was decided arbitrarily. It also allows for the injection of random chance into the situation.

Second, but perhaps more importantly, rules provide a model of how certain processes should work in the game world. GMs and players have a good instinctive idea how many of the things they do day-to-day should work — the idea may be wrong, but as long as all are happy with it, that is irrelevant. Most GMs and players, however, will not have a good of how things that are specific to the universe of Tékumel should work, such as Tékumelyáni magic, alien races, the use of chlén-hide blades against steel armour, or the effects of noble and ignoble action on how one is perceived by acquaintances. GMs can use the rules to develop their own models of how these things “should” work, filter it through their own preferences, and then simply resolve questions by informed fiat. The rules are always available when they are needed.

The GM can use the game mechanics in this chapter to resolve a variety of actions. Often, he or she can use the Stats, Attributes, Defects, Skills, and Derived Values of the characters involved to adjudicate the action without even rolling dice. When the GM thinks a particular outcome is certain, or is dramatically necessary to the game, he or she can always resolve actions by simply declaring their outcome. In other cases, dice rolls can add additional uncertainty and drama, representing elements that are beyond the direct control of the character involved. Furthermore, handling combat and magic using dice helps show the players that the GM has not killed or injured their characters arbitrarily.

The rules cover combat and magic in more detail than other actions. This is because both combat and magic are often used in critical situations, and thus GMs need as much information as possible to model these activities properly. GMs are encouraged to handle critical actions of any kind in detail, and gloss over actions that are less important to the players or characters.

## The Passage of Time

The “in game” passage of time in a role-playing game is very fluid. In some situations, such as a conversation between player characters, the time scale closely matches real time. More often, the amount of time that passes depends on the character’s activities as stated by the players and officiated by the GM, who may say something like “it takes you two hours to reach the harbour,” or “digging out the tomb entrance takes two days.” In a campaign, the GM should ordinarily telescope time until something interesting happens: “Rán continues drilling the new recruits and Dhála is studying the insect collection at the Temple of Thúmis for the next two weeks, and then you both receive messages from the Clanmaster asking you to return right away because there has been an emergency....” In very dramatic and fast-paced situations, such as combat, the GM may keep very precise track of time using individual “combat rounds” (see Combat, page 97).

## Taking Action

Every character is capable of performing (or at least attempting) a nearly endless list of actions. These actions can be mundane activities (eating, talking, thinking), skilled activities (forging a legal document, moving silently, deciphering a book-scroll written in Engsvanyáli, administering a department at the Palace of the Realm), combat activities (fighting, dodging, firing a bow), or magical activities (casting a Spell, creating a magical scroll). Combat (page 97) and Magic (page 113) are covered in separate sections.

Additionally, the GM can assume that the characters (or slaves or servants under their control) carry out routine skilled activities successfully on a regular basis unless there is a good reason to believe otherwise, or unless how well the activity is performed is relevant to the story. For example, the GM can assume that a character with Crossbow Skill is maintaining his or her crossbow properly, and a character with Animal Handling is making sure his or her küni-bird is fed twice a day.

## Dice and Dice Rolls

All dice rolls in the Tékumel role-playing game use a ten-sided die (sometimes called a d10), with the player or GM attempting to roll under a Stat. Any modifiers are added to or subtracted from that Stat before the die roll result is compared to it. Positive modifiers are good, and negative ones are bad. There are four major types of dice rolls:

- Stat checks: rolls compared against a Stat, or an averaged group of Stats; used where innate ability is more important than Skill, or where no Skills apply (page 32);
- Skill checks: rolls compared against the sum of a Stat (or sometimes an averaged group of Stats) and the character’s Skill Level; used where the action in question falls under a specific Skill (page 32);
- Attack/Defence combat dice rolls: mechanically similar to Skill checks, but used in combat (page 97);
- Magical Casting and Resistance Rolls: mechanically similar to Skill checks, but used when magic is involved (page 113).

The GM decides whether a die roll is necessary and, if one is, which type of roll is appropriate. In most cases, the player rolls for his or her character, and the GM rolls for NPCs. Where only NPCs are involved, the GM may opt to not bother with a dice roll. If the outcome of the character’s action should be unknown to the character, the GM may roll on the player’s behalf and keep the result secret to avoid giving too much information away.

## To Roll or Not To Roll

Just because the game includes a mechanism for making die rolls does not mean you have to use it every time the characters perform an action. Experienced GMs learn that there are times when dice add to the game and times when they detract from it. You do not want to waste time or distract people.

### Roll When...

- An action is completely routine (unless you have some special reason to make the characters roll this time such as when an assassin puts poison on a character’s razors so it actually *matters* whether he cuts himself while shaving);
- The character’s success is not really in question;
- The action is so trivial that it is distracting to ask for a dice roll;
- The action is being performed by an NPC, and you do not need to create dramatic tension about its outcome.

### Do Not Roll When...

- The characters have an extremely small chance of success (it is better to give them that chance than to say “sorry, you fail” without rolling dice; the players will feel they have been treated fairly);
- The characters have an extremely small chance of failure, but the consequences of failure are dramatic (making the players roll forces them to take the risk into account);
- Random chance plays an important role in the outcome of their action, and the action is at least somewhat relevant to the game (such as gambling);



- You want to make the players uncertain about the outcome, even though you know the characters are going to succeed (do this especially in cases where the character has had problems with the action before).

Remember that it is your game. If you like rolling dice, do it. If you want to avoid rolling them, do that. Just make sure the players feel they are being treated fairly, and make sure whatever you do facilitates the flow of the game instead of interfering with it.

## Rounding Averages

Round numbers down when calculating Derived Values.

Round numbers up when averaging two (or more) Stats to make a check — or in any other situation.

## Stat checks

The GM should use a Stat check when innate ability is most important. If a Skill is relevant, use a Skill check (page 96) instead, regardless of whether the character has the relevant Skill. During a Stat check, the GM decides which Stat is most relevant to the action. If several Stats are relevant, take the average of those Stats, rounded up to the nearest whole number.

To perform a Stat check, the player rolls a ten-sided die and compares it to the relevant Stat value (or average of Stat values). The GM may modify the Stat value with a difficulty modifier (see Difficulty Modifiers, below) to reflect how easy or hard the task is. Harder tasks receive a negative modifier and easier ones receive a positive modifier.

If the result is less than or equal to the relevant Stat, with modifiers, the attempt succeeds. If the result is greater than the relevant Stat, with modifiers, the attempt fails. To find out how well it succeeds or how badly it fails, see Margin of Success.

## Automatic Successes

If the player rolls a 1, and such a roll would normally be a failure, roll another die (with no modifiers). If the result of the second roll is also a 1, the attempt is a Marginal Success.

## Automatic Failures

If the player rolls a 10, and such a roll would normally be a success, roll a die (with no modifiers). If the result of the second roll is a 10, the attempt is a Marginal Failure.

## Contested Attempts

If two or more characters are working against each other (for example, they are both pulling on a contested object), each character must make a Stat check. The character with the greater Margin of Success (or lower Margin of Failure) has the advantage.

## Difficulty Modifier Table

It is important to remember that the majority of tasks someone does in the course of their daily life range from Extremely Easy to Trivial. GMs should remember to apply the appropriate beneficial modifiers if they have the player roll at all.

**Table 5-1: Difficulty Modifiers**

Difficulty	Modifier
Trivial	+4 (or don't even roll)
Nearly Trivial	+3
Extremely Easy	+2
Easy	+1
Average Difficulty	0
Slightly Difficult	-1
Difficult	-2
Quite Difficult	-3
Extremely Difficult	-4
Outrageously Difficult	-5
Practically Impossible	-6

## Margin of Success Table

Interpretation of the terms in the Margin of Success Table is up to the GM; they are relative to the range of outcomes available under the circumstances. A Major Success on a Cooking Skill check for a character who is attempting to cook an elaborate Jakalláni fish stew in the kitchens of the Palace of the Realm may mean that the Governor is impressed. A similar success for an attempt under field conditions and with only two of the requisite spices may simply mean that the character avoids offending any of the diners too badly.

**Table 5-2: Margin of Success**

Roll	Result
8 or more greater than the target number	Overwhelming Failure
6 or 7 greater than the target number	Extreme Failure
4 or 5 greater than the target number	Major Failure
2 or 3 greater than the target number	Minor Failure
1 greater than the target number	Marginal Failure
Equal to, or 1 less than, the target number	Marginal Success
2 or 3 less than the target number	Minor Success
4 or 5 less than the target number	Major Success
6 or 7 less than the target number	Extreme Success
8 or more less than the target number	Overwhelming Success

## Skill checks

If a Skill applies to the task at hand, the GM should use a Skill check. A Skill check is similar to a Stat check, except that the character's Level in the relevant Skill is added to his or her Stat, as a bonus, before the total is compared to the die roll. The GM must determine what Skill is relevant, and what Specialisation of that Skill is relevant. More than one Skill or Specialisation could apply, depending on the circumstances.

To perform a Skill check, the player rolls a ten-sided die and compares the result to the relevant Stat value (or average of Stat values) plus the relevant Skill Level. As with Stat checks, the GM may modify the dice roll with a difficulty modifier (see the Difficulty Modifier table) to reflect how easy or hard the task is. Characters who lack the relevant Skill receive a penalty of -2 to -4 at the GM's discretion; characters who have only a Familiarity with the Skill receive a penalty of -1 or -2 at the GM's discretion.

If the result is less than or equal to the relevant Stat (or average of Stats) plus the Level of the Skill, with all modifiers, the attempt succeeds. If the result is greater than the relevant Stat (or average of Stats) plus the Level of the Skill, with all modifiers, the attempt fails. To find out how well it succeeds or how badly it fails, see Margin of Success.

## Picking the Stat

Generally, the Stat used is the one listed for the Skill in question. Sometimes this is an average of two Stats. For non-standard uses of a Skill, however, the GM may decide that a different Stat is appropriate.

*Example: Fighting styles in Tsolyánu vary from region to region. Dhála, a skilled swordswoman, wants to try to figure out where one of her attackers is from by watching him fight. The GM agrees that her Long Sword Skill is relevant, but decides that her Intelligence should be the relevant Stat for this check, since she is trying to make an inference based upon observation, rather than performing a combat action.*

## Picking the Skill and Specialisation

If the character has more than one Skill that may apply, the GM decides which Skill is relevant. If more than one Skill applies, the GM decides whether to pick one, allow the player to use the highest, or, in cases where all of them are necessary for success, make the player use the average (or even the lowest) of their relevant Skills. The GM should also determine which Specialisation (or Specialisations) of the Skill, if any, are relevant to the task, and give a +1 bonus if the character has the appropriate Specialisation.



## Skill Synergy

It is possible for a character to have two Skills that work well together, such as Medical and Torture, or Deception and Bribery. The GM should apply reasonable Skill check bonuses (up to a maximum of one-half the lower Skill Level) when an appropriate situation arises.

## Contested Attempts

If a character is using a Skill in opposition to another character's use of that Skill, each character must make a Skill check, and the character with the highest Margin of Success or lowest Margin of Failure has the advantage. Often, a Skill is opposed by a different Skill; for example, a character using Stealth may be opposed by a character using Observation. Have each character roll the appropriate Skill check and compare Margins of Success, as normal.

## Unskilled Characters

If the character does not possess the relevant Skill, the character receives a penalty of -2 to -4 to perform the action, depending on how easy the GM thinks it is to "fake" the Skill in question. For an easy task, the character may still have a good chance of success due to the beneficial Difficulty Modifier (page 96). Alternatively, the GM may allow the character to use a Skill that is tangentially relevant but at a penalty, depending on just how relevant the other Skill actually is. If the GM decides that the task cannot even be attempted without the relevant Skill, the GM may simply state that the attempt fails. For tasks that are something an average person could be expected to know, the GM may waive any penalty.

There are Skills where Unskilled Characters automatically fail. This includes Psychic Magic, Ritual Magic, and any Language.

# Combat Basics

## Refereeing a Fight

Time is divided into combat rounds of around 5 seconds (one Tsolyáni Sivé) in duration. The players should describe their intention for the next round, rather than attempting to detail every single thrust, parry, and step as they go along. The GM should then respond by describing (as colourfully as possible) what happens based on the characters' intention and their dice rolls.

A character may take a maximum of one main action (usually an attack) each round. Some activities do not count as actions. The advanced rules give further options.

A character can perform any of the following in addition to an attack action:

- Move a few steps (one Tsolyáni Dháiba).
- Speak, shout, or scream a number of words approximately equal to the character's Intelligence.
- Perform Defensive Actions in response to attacks against that character.
- Engage in teamwork and transfer Team Points within a team.

## Attacking

Characters attack in descending order of Initiative. Attacks are like Skill checks; the player is attempting to roll equal to or under his or her character's Combat Value + Combat Skill. Note the attack's Margin of Success (the amount the check succeeded by), as this will define how difficult it is to stop and how much damage it will do if it hits.

*Example: Mórusai (Combat Value 7, Sword 2) will hit on a roll of 9 or less. He attacks a Yán Koryáni and rolls a 6, so he has a success of 3 (9-6=3).*

## Defending

Resolve defensive actions immediately after the attack to which they are responding, not in order of Initiative. The player attempts to roll under his or her Combat Value plus any appropriate Combat Skill and achieve a Margin of Success greater than the attacker. If the Margin of Success of the Defence is less than the Margin of Success of the attack, the attack succeeds. Otherwise, the defence fails. A character may make only one Defence check against any particular attack, but he or she can attempt to defend against any number of attacks in a round with a cumulative -2 penalty per additional defence after the first.

Missile attacks are more difficult to defend against; the defender suffers a -4 penalty to defend against thrown weapons and -8 to defend against arrows. These penalties are halved if the defender is using a shield.

*Example: Mórusai attacked and gained a Margin of Success of 3. The Yán Koryáni (Combat Value 6, Sword 2) rolls a 6, earning a Margin of Success of 2 on his Defence. This is less than Mórusai's Margin of Success and so the Yán Koryáni is hit!*

## Damage

The damage of a successful attack is the Margin of Success of the attacker multiplied by the Damage Multiplier of the attack. An attack with a success of 0 is a glancing blow and inflicts only 1 damage.

*Example: Mórusai has hit with a Margin of Success of 3 and is using a short sword (x3 Damage Multiplier). He inflicts 3 times 3, or 9 damage to the Yán Koryáni. If Mórusai had achieved the same Margin of Success with a two-handed sword (x5 Damage Multiplier), he would have inflicted 15 damage.*

## Wound Penalties (Optional Rule)

A character suffers a penalty to all checks equal to the total damage suffered divided by their Shock Value, rounded down (a badly injured person will be slower, less accurate etc).

*Example: The Yán Koryáni has a Shock Value of 8 and suffered 9 damage. He will now suffer a -1 to all checks (Attacks, Defence, etc.), since 9/8 rounds down to 1. His Initiative is also reduced by -1. If he suffers an additional 7 damage, for a total of 16 damage, he would be at a -2 penalty for all actions (16/8 = 2). When he suffers a total of 24 damage, his penalty will increase to -3.*

## Armour

The armour rating is subtracted from the attack's Damage Multiplier. Thus, a longsword, which normally has a Damage Multiplier of x4, will only have a multiplier of x2 against Medium Armour. Armour cannot reduce a Damage Multiplier below x1.

**Table 5-3: Armour Ratings**

Armour Type	Armour Rating
Light Armour	1
Medium Armour	2
Heavy Armour	3
Steel Armour	+1 Armour Rating

## Interrupting Spellcasting

A magician normally cannot cast when defending in combat. The casting of Psychic magic may not be obvious and only requires that the caster can see the target, but Ritual magic requires gestures, vocalisations, and various Spell components. Ritual magic is therefore easier to disrupt and not as fast as Psychic magic.

Casting a Spell takes the number of rounds to cast as indicated in the description of the Spell. If, during the casting time, the character is hit by an attack, the caster has the option to attempt to continue the spellcasting or to make a Defence check as normal but cannot attempt to do both.

The character makes a Willpower Stat check with his or her Magic Skill as a bonus to the roll and the attacker's Margin of Success as a penalty. If successful, the spellcasting is not interrupted and continues normally. If the check fails, the Spell is interrupted and has no effect. Regardless of whether or not the casting is interrupted, the character must still pay the Spell's cost from his or her Energy Pool.

## NPC Response to Injury

Many warriors wish to kill, but very few are willing to die and most will attempt to escape once they realise they are facing a superior opponent. Only a true fanatic or someone defending a clanhouse or a Temple will fight to the death. An NPC will attempt to withdraw from combat after he or she suffers significant damage.



**Table 5-4: Withdrawing**

NPC Type	Withdraws after...
Low-grade or poor morale warriors	a total amount of damage equal to or greater than his or her Shock Value
A good Tsolyáni legionary	a total amount of damage equal to or greater than twice his or her Shock Value
A hardened veteran	a total amount of damage equal to or greater than three times his or her Shock Value

### Fast Play Heroic Combat (Optional Rule)

In a heroic campaign style or when there are a large number of minor opponents it may sometimes be better to avoid playing out every combat in detail. Fast Play allows GMs to resolve an entire combat with two dice rolls. A character's Fast Play Value (FPV) is equal to Combat Value + Skill + Armour Rating + Damage Multiplier. Some non-humans may also have levels of Extra Limbs, Natural Weapons, and Natural Armour that should be added. For multiple opponents, use the sum of their Fast Play Values.

The character or group with the higher FPV will win, but how much time it will take them and how much damage they will take depends on the ratio of their FPV compared to their opponent.

**Table 5-5: Fast Play Combat**

Highest/Lowest FPV	Duration (Rounds)	Damage
More than 1	1d10	1d10
More than 1.5	1d10-1	1d10-1
More than 2	1d10-2	1d10-2
More than 2.5	1d10-3	1d10-3

Duration is purely "in game" as the length of the fight may be relevant to the plot even if the outcome is never in doubt. The duration cannot be less than one round but damage may be zero. If the combatants are groups, everyone in the group rolls for damage. Normal combat rules are not used.

*Example: Rán (Combat Value 8, Sword 3, Heavy Armour, and a two-handed sword with a x5 Damage Multiplier) has a Fast Play Value of 20. Two fanatical Pariah God worshippers (each of whom has a FPV of 8) block his path; together they form a 16 FPV enemy. This is a heroic campaign and Rán is going to win (his FPV is higher) but it will take 1d10 rounds and he will take 1d10 damage. The player rolls 1d10 twice and the GM quickly describes the fight; Rán takes 5 points of damage and steps over their bodies.*

The following table provides the Fast Play Value for various types of opponents.

**Table 5-6: Fast Play Values**

Humans	Fast Play Value
Armed Civilian	8
Generic Guard	12
Heavy Infantry Legionary	16
Bestiary entries	Fast Play Value
Étla — "Chisel Crab"	1-7
Étla (Large Swarm)	15-40
Hyahyú'u — "the Whooper"	10-15
Tlékku (a large hunting dog)	7-11
Sérudla — "the Pale Murderer"	54
Hlüss Neuter Warrior	19
Grey Ssú	10

## Difficulty Modifiers

**Table 5-7: Attack Situation Modifiers**

Attack Situation	Modifier
Attacker is:	
Taking an action to aim	+1
Attacking with off-hand	-4
Attempting to touch the Target	+2
Sitting	-2
Prone	-4
Surprised	-2
Using a Small Shield	+1
Using a Medium Shield	+2
Using a Large Shield	+3
Target within melee range, and:	
Concealed by trees or brush	-1 to -3
Concealed by darkness, fog, or smoke	-1 to -2
Taking cover	-1 to -4
Target beyond melee range, and:	
Concealed by trees or brush	-2 to -5
Concealed by darkness, fog, or smoke	-2 to -3
Taking cover	-2 to -5
Each Range Increment	-1

**Table 5-8: Defence Situation Modifiers**

Defence Situation	Modifier
Attacker is Engaging From Behind	-4
Second Defence	-2
Defending When Surprised	-2
Using a Small Shield	+1 (+2 against Missile Attacks)
Using a Medium Shield	+2 (+4 against Missile Attacks)
Using a Large Shield	+3 (+6 against Missile Attacks)

## Weapon Table Notes

<b>Accuracy</b>	The character gains a modifier to his or her Attack and Defence checks with the weapon.
<b>High Penetration</b>	Decrease the defender's Armour Rating by the Level of High Penetration. For example, a crossbow (High Penetration) firing steel-tipped (High Penetration) quarrels would have High Penetration x2, and thus reduce Armour Ratings by 2.
<b>Low Penetration</b>	Increase target Armour Ratings by the Level of Low Penetration.
<b>Two-handed/One-handed</b>	Some weapons can be used in either one or two hands (used in different ways) and separate combat values are provided for both modes. If a character wishes to use a normally two-handed weapon (such as a two-handed sword) with one hand, then the Strength minimum is doubled. The hilt for most one-handed weapons is seldom wide enough to be used two-handed.



**Table 5-9: Missile Weapons**

Weapon	Accuracy	Damage	Effective Range	Stat Minima	Notes
Bolas	0	x1	Str x 2	Dex 5, Str 3	
Bow, Short	0	x3	Str x 10	Dex 4, Str 3	Used Two-handed
Bow, Long	0	x5	Str x 30	Dex 4, Str 5	High Penetration, Used Two-handed
Bow, Composite	0	x4	Str x 15	Dex 4, Str 3	Used Two-handed
Crossbow, Light	1	x4	50	Dex 3, Str 3	High Penetration, 1-turn reload, Used Two-handed
Crossbow, Medium	1	x5	75	Dex 3, Str 4	High Penetration, 2-turn reload, Used Two-handed
Crossbow, Heavy	1	x6	100	Dex 3, Str 4	High Penetration, 3-turn reload, Used Two-handed
Dagger	-3	x2	Str	Dex 5, Str 3	
Sling	0	x2	Str x 5	Dex 4, Str 3	
Spear, Javelin	1	x3	Str x 5	Dex 4, Str 4	
Spear, Heavy	-1	x3	Str x 2	Dex 4, Str 4	
Throwing Club	0	x2	Str x 5	Dex 5, Str 4	

**Table 5-10: Melee Weapons**

Weapon	Initiative	Accuracy	Damage	Stat Minima	Notes
Axe, Short	2	-1	x5	Dex 3, Str 3	
Axe, Battleaxe	2	-1	x6	Dex 4, Str 4	
Axe, Two-Handed	4	-1	x7	Dex 4, Str 6	Used Two-handed
Cloak	2	0	x0	Dex 5, Str 4	
Club, Small	1	1	x1	Dex 3, Str 2	
Club, Large	4	0	x2	Dex 3, Str 3	
Dagger	2	0	x2	Dex 3, Str 2	
Dagger, Punch	2	-1	x3	Dex 3, Str 3	
Dagger, Stiletto	2	-1	x2	Dex 3, Str 2	High Penetration
Flail, Improvised	1	-1	x3	Dex 3, Str 3	
Flail	2	0	x4	Dex 5, Str 5	
Mace, Chlén-prod	3	-1	x3	Dex 3, Str 4	High Penetration
Mace, Warhammer	3	0	x4	Dex 3, Str 5	High Penetration
Mace, Two-Handed	5	0	x5	Dex 3, Str 5	High Penetration, Used Two-handed
Pike	11	-2	x4	Dex 4, Str 4	Used Two-handed
Polearm	8	-1	x6	Dex 4, Str 5	Used Two-handed
Quarterstaff One Handed	5	0	x2	Dex 5, Str 4	Used One-handed
Quarterstaff Two-Handed	6	1	x2	Dex 4, Str 4	Used Two-handed
Shield, Small	0	1	x1	Dex 1, Str 2	Low Penetration
Shield, Medium	0	0	x2	Dex 2, Str 3	Low Penetration
Shield, Large	0	-1	x2	Dex 3, Str 4	Low Penetration
Spear, Javelin One Handed	4	-1	x2	Dex 4, Str 4	Used One-handed
Spear, Javelin Two-Handed	4	0	x3	Dex 4, Str 4	Used Two-handed
Spear, Heavy One Handed	6	0	x3	Dex 4, Str 5	Used One-handed
Spear, Heavy Two-Handed	7	0	x4	Dex 4, Str 4	Used Two-handed
Sword, Rapier	5	0	x3	Dex 4, Str 3	
Sword, Chidók	3	-1	x4	Dex 4, Str 4	High Penetration
Sword, Short	3	0	x3	Dex 4, Str 3	
Sword, Long	4	0	x4	Dex 4, Str 4	
Sword, Two-Handed	5	0	x5	Dex 4, Str 4	Used Two-handed

**X-Turn Reload**

The weapon requires a number of turns to reload before it can be fired again.

**Poisoned**

The weapon is capable of delivering poison to the target. See Poisoned Weapons, page 107.

**Range**

Missile weapons can be used normally up to their effective range with -1 penalty for each additional base range increment. For example, a weapon with a Effective Range of 15 metres can be used without penalty up to 15 metres, at a -1 penalty from 16 to 30 metres, a -2 penalty between 31 and 45 metres, and so on.

**Stat Minima**

This is the minimum Stat requirement to use the weapon without penalty. If a character wields the weapon and has a Stat value below the Stat Minima of the weapon, he or she suffers a penalty to all Attack and Defence checks equal to the difference between his or her Stat(s) and the weapon's Stat Minima(s). For Weapon Combination Fight Manoeuvres (see page 45), Strength minima are cumulative.

**Steel weapons**

For normal steel, add 1 Level of High Penetration and +1 to the Strength Minima. Extremely high quality steel adds another Level of High



**Table 5-11: Specialist and Non-Human Weapons**

Weapon	Initiative	Accuracy	Damage	Range	Stat Minima	Notes
Blowgun	-1	0	0	25m	Dex 4, Str 1	Poisoned, Used Two-handed
Eye	0	-2	Varies	Varies	Dex 4, Str 1	Cannot be used for Defence. See Designing Special Items, page 83
Garrotte	0	0		Special	Dex 3, Str 3	Special Rules, Used Two-handed
Glass Dagger	0	0	x2	NA	Dex 5, Str 3	Poisoned
N'lüss Sword	6	-2	x7	NA	Dex 4, Str 6	Used Two-handed, High Penetration
Shén Axe-Sword	4	0	x6	NA	Dex 3, Str 6	Used One-handed
Shén Hand Crossbow	1	1	x3	Str x 8	Dex 3, Str 6	Used One-handed
Summoner Upon the Way	1	1	x3	Str x 5	Dex 3, Str 4.	Used One-handed, Poisoned
Throwing Knife	0	0	x2	Str	Dex 5, Str 3	
Tinaliya Crossbow	1	1	x3	Str x 10	Dex 3, Str 4	2-Turn Reload, Used Two-handed

**Table 5-12: Natural Weapons**

Weapon	Initiative	Accuracy	Damage	Stat Minima	Notes
Default	0	0	x1		Low Penetration
Brawling	0	0	x1	Dex 1, Str 1	Low Penetration
Hlüss Tail Sting	0	-1	x1		Poisonous
Human Boot Kick	0	-1	x2		Low Penetration
Martial Arts	3	0	x2	Dex 3, Str 3, Wil 5	Low Penetration
Shén Bite	0	0	x2		High Penetration
Shén Tail Club	0	-1	x2		
Wrestling	0	0	x1	Dex 4, Str 4	High Penetration

Penetration but are much more expensive.

### Bone Weapons

Add 1 Level of Low Penetration. When attacked with the Attack Weapon Fight Manoeuvre (page 43), the weapon degrades in quality for each full 8 damage it suffers.

### The Garrotte

The Garrotte is a strangulation weapon, requiring two hands to use. Although special copper wire versions are made for the Assassins clans, this weapon can be improvised from commonly available materials. An improvised Garrotte could be as simple as a length of robe cord wrapped around the user's hands. Improvised garrottes are more likely to suffer a critical fail (they snap) than a specially made weapon (apply a -3 penalty to the second roll to determine if the result is a critical failure; see page 115).

The Garrotte attack is a use of strength in close combat (see Strength in Combat, page 102) from behind (the victim suffers the usual -4 penalty to Defence for being attacked from behind). A successful Garrotte attack causes unconsciousness in a number of rounds equal to 9 minus the attack's Margin of Success and death in three times as many rounds. The victim's Stats and Health Points are irrelevant, but a victim will recover quickly if they can escape before they fall unconscious. A garrotte will also do direct damage each round — a wire garrotte has an x2 Damage Multiplier. If using the Strength in Combat Optional Rule, a successful attack adds its Margin of Success to the effective Strength of the user.

Since Garrottes depend on cutting off blood flow to the brain, they can only be used on live humans. Undead can't be killed or disabled in this way, and non-humans aren't built properly for a Garrotte to work (the Shén's neck is too muscular and the arteries are buried too deeply; Pé Chói necks are chitinous; Ahoggyá don't have necks, etc.). Similar techniques may exist among non-humans, but they are not covered here.

### Initiative

At the start of a fight, each character makes an Initiative roll (1d10) which suffers a penalty equal to the character's Armour Rating of any worn armour (natural armour does not reduce a character's Initiative) plus any modifiers based on any weapon's being wielded by the character. The total, modified value is the character's Initiative for that entire fight (if the result is less than zero, consider it zero). If a character switches weapons, adjust the character's Initiative appropriately. Characters normally act in order from highest to lowest Initiative, but a character can hold his or her action and wait before acting (for example, waiting for an archer to expose himself to shoot him first). Characters with the same Initiative should act in order of highest Dexterity followed by highest Intelligence, if their Dexterity values are also equal. If their Intelligence values are also tied, they act at the same time.

### Critical Successes and Failures

It is possible to have an outstanding success on any check. If a character rolls a 1 on a check the player rolls a second check attempt, with the same modifiers applied in the first check. A critical success occurs if the second check results in a success. If the second check is unsuccessful, the attempted action is still a success, but not a critical success. Critical Successes double the effect and may have additional advantages at the discretion of the GM (a critical success on a successful attack might result in an instant kill against a NPC, for example).

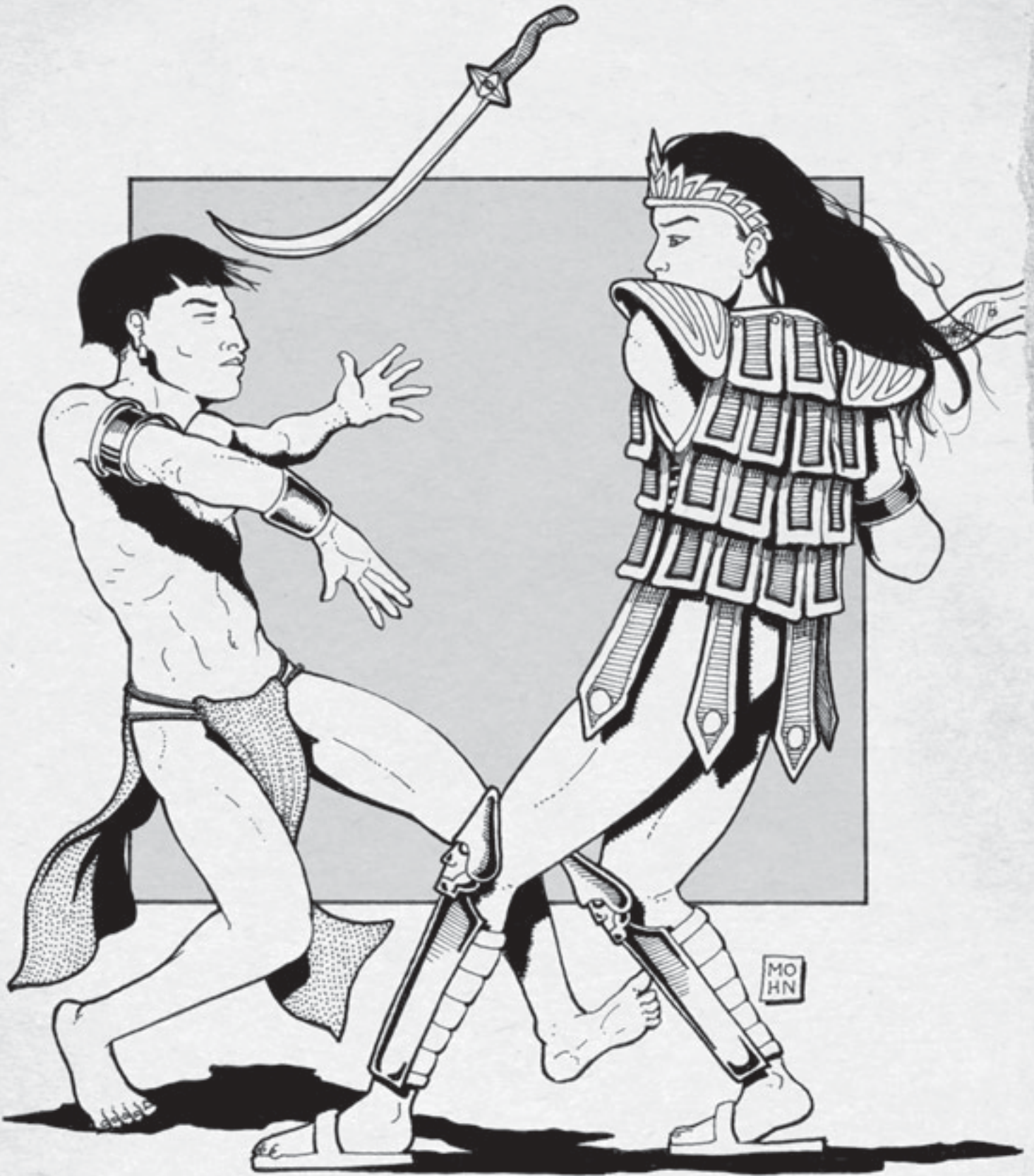
*Example: A character with a Stat of 4 and a Skill of 2 needs to roll 6 or less to successfully accomplish a task. The player gets lucky and rolls a 1. He rolls a second check attempt. If he rolls 6 or less, the attempt is a critical success. If the roll is 7 or higher, the attempt succeeds normally, without the benefits of a critical success.*

If a character rolls a 10 he or she must roll again. If the second check, including all modifiers (including injury modifiers) results in a failure, the character has made a critical mistake. If the second check results in a success, the character still fails the attempted action, but it is not a critical failure. A critical failure is a significant mistake or accident such as a fall or dropping a weapon (GM discretion).



# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE





## Optional Advanced Combat Rules

These advanced rules are all optional; notes on the likely effects of using optional rules are given and the GM may use part or all of them. Comments are given as to their likely effect to help GMs and players decide if they wish to use a specific rule.

## Advanced Attack Rules

### Bad Misses

Badly failing an attack compromises a character's Defence. If an attack fails, increases the difficulty of the character's next Defence check by the character's Margin of Failure from his or her Attack check. This is particularly appropriate with heavy (high Strength minimum) weapons that carry a lot of inertia.

Effect on the game Moderate. Makes it even easier to kill low skill characters.

### Aiming Missile Fire Attacks

If characters aim, reduce the penalty for firing a missile weapon beyond its Effective Range by 1 for each round they stand still and aim, up to a maximum of their Skill Level. If a character moves at all (such as making a Defence check) while aiming, they lose all benefits of any rounds spent aiming — the attack will be made as normal unless the character again takes aim at the target. Characters who are taking aim while engaged in missile fire who elect to not make a Defence check must attempt a Willpower check to avoid distraction. If the Willpower check fails, the character loses all benefit of aiming due to distraction from the incoming attack.

Effect on the game Moderate. Aiming enables a character to shoot missile weapons at a great range but makes the character extremely vulnerable to counter-attacks.

### Using Strength in Combat

Sometimes, when a defender successfully blocks an attack, either the attacker or defender may wish to push his or her opponent back, using brute strength to gain the advantage. If a character makes a successful Defence check against a melee attack, the attacker or defender may initiate Using Strength in Combat. If the defender fails (or elects to not attempt) a Defence check, neither character can attempt to Use Strength in Combat.

Both character's use their Attack or Defence check dice rolls (as appropriate) in a Strength check, adding their weapon's Damage Multipliers as a bonus to the Strength check, representing the leverage and weight provided by heavy weapons.

The character with the greater Margin of Success (or lower Margin of Failure), the stronger character, has successfully gained the advantage over his or her opponent, the weaker character. The weaker character is pushed back a number of metres equal to the stronger character's Margin of Success on the Strength check (a minimum of 1 metre in the event that both characters failed their Strength checks). Additionally, the weaker character suffers a penalty to all Attack, Defence, and other physically-oriented checks in the following round equal to the stronger character's Margin of Success divided by the weaker character's modified Strength (round up, minimum penalty of -1).

If the character is forced back a number of metres equal to his or her Dexterity or more, the character may be knocked to the ground (on a failed Dexterity check) and will be forced to fight prone until he or she can regain his or her footing.

*Example: Orún (Strength 2, Combat Value 5, Dagger 3, x2 Damage Multiplier) is fighting Nomu (Strength 6, Combat Value 4, Axe 1, x6 Damage Multiplier). Although Orún is more skilled than Nomu, he cannot match her sheer physical power. Orún attacks Nomu and rolls a 5 which hits. Nomu attempts to defend and rolls a 2 on her Defence check, successfully blocking the attack. Knowing she is stronger, Nomu initiates Using Strength in Combat. Comparing Orún's Attack check roll of 5 with his Strength plus his weapon's Damage Multiplier of (2 + 2) 4 indicates a failure on his Strength check. Comparing Nomu's Defence check roll of 2 with her Strength plus her weapon's Damage Multiplier of (6 + 6) 12 indicates a Margin of Success of 10. This means that Orún suffers a penalty of (10 divided by 4, rounded up) -3 to all physically-oriented checks in the following round and is pushed*

*back 10 metres. This is certainly more than his Dexterity so he must also make a Dexterity check to avoid being pushed to the ground.*

### Strength in Close Combat

In Close Combat, a character (attacker or defender) may add his or her Wrestling Skill Level as a bonus to the Strength check, representing skill in using leverage, balance, and footwork. If the Strength check is successful and the stronger character's Margin of Success is equal to or greater than the target's Dexterity, then the stronger character has pinned or otherwise held the weaker character (who may have also been knocked to the ground, see above). The weaker character will be held in the hold until he or she can win a contested Wrestling or Strength check against the stronger character, at which time he or she will break free.

The stronger character must be using the Wrestling Skill and be successful on his or her Strength check in order to pin or hold an opponent. If the character is not using the Wrestling Skill, the attack is treated simply as Using Strength in Combat (see above), resulting in the weaker character being pushed around (and possibly to the ground). If the character fails his or her Strength check, he or she has not gained sufficient advantage over the opponent. In addition, this may only be attempted when characters are in Close Combat (see page 44).

### Using Strength Against a Weapon

If an attacker has hit an opponent's weapon and if the Strength check is a success, the stronger character may elect to bind the opponent's weapon rather than pushing him or her around. Both weapons may still be used for the purposes of Using Strength in Combat (see above) but cannot be used for attacks or defences so long as the weapons are bound. The stronger character may elect to end the weapon bind at any time. The weaker character must win a contested Strength check (must win a Using Strength in Combat check) in order to free his or her weapon from the bind (effectively, the weaker character must become the stronger character). If the stronger character's Strength check succeeds and the Margin of Success is equal to or greater than the weaker character's Dexterity (+2 if the weaker character's weapon is two-handed), he or she may elect to disarm the weaker character instead of simply binding his or her weapon.

This may not be attempted if the stronger character's Strength check fails — the character has not gained sufficient advantage over the opponent. The weaker character may always elect to simply drop his or her weapon to exit the bind.

Effect on the game Major. Using Strength in Combat becomes a valid alternative to direct damage, enabling strong characters to overpower and overwhelm weaker characters.

## Advanced Defence Rules

### Shields

The Shield Skill can be used for Defence even if another weapon is being used for attack. There is no penalty to use a shield with the off hand. See Defence Situation Modifiers (page 98).

Effect on the game: Moderate.

### Unstoppable Weapons

If an attacking weapon has a Damage Multiplier more than twice that of the defender's weapon, the defender's Defence check suffers a penalty of -4. This represents that fact that the defender must evade or dodge rather than actively parrying; it is difficult to parry a battleaxe with a dagger, for example.

Effect on the game: Moderate

### The "Fend-Off Rule"

A long weapon can be a major advantage in defence, helping keep opponents at a distance. If a character's weapon has a higher Initiative than his or her opponent's, the difference between the two acts as a bonus to the character's Defence checks.

*Example: Nomu is using a two-handed sword (weapon Initiative 5) against Mórusai who is armed with a Shortsword (weapon Initiative 3). Nomu has +2 to her Defence checks.*

Effect on the game: Moderate. This rule should only be used in conjunction with the Out-manoeuvre Fight Manoeuvre (page 45).



## Advanced Damage Rules

These rules make damage more realistic and more unpleasant, which may not be appropriate for a Heroic campaign and which can be irrelevant if Healing magic is common. It may be vital to a Realistic campaign.

### Serious Wounds

If a character takes more damage than their Shock Value, in a single attack, he or she has suffered a major injury and must check for Surprise (see page 103), applying modifiers due to injury, representing the stunning effect of trauma. A serious injury is always a specific identifiable injury (GM's discretion as to the exact injury) and can be anything from a gaping wound to an amputated limb (depending on the amount of actual damage inflicted). Such injuries are also much more difficult to stabilise and heal (-2 penalty to Medical checks) and are harder to magically heal (-2 penalty to benefit from magical healing; see Magic, page 113). Any serious injury will cause automatically most NPCs to disengage and retreat.

Effect on the game: Minor. Stops low-grade NPCs from fighting to the death.

### Surprise

An unexpected attack or other shocking situation (serious wounds) may surprise even experienced warriors. Magical attacks are often surprising to anyone without extensive experience of it. If the GM rules that surprise is possible, the character must attempt a Surprise check against the character's Willpower plus his or her highest Combat Skill (or possibly the character's Magic Skill if he or she is surprised by a magical effect). If the character fails the check, he or she is surprised and suffers a -4 to Attack and -2 to Defence checks.

Effect on the game: Moderate. Characters will start using ambushes to take advantage of surprise.

### Exhaustion

Any fight, hard labour, intensive training, study, or long march should justify an Exhaustion check. The Stamina Attribute (page 23) will provide a bonus to the check and the Armour Rating of any worn armour acts as a penalty to the check (armour is hot). The heat and humidity in some parts of the Empire make them marginally habitable for humans and this should be emphasised — GMs should apply penalties if characters are in particularly unfavourable environs.

The Exhaustion check is a Strength check. If the character fails, he or she takes a penalty to all actions equal to the Margin of Failure of the check. For each hour of rest, the penalty due to exhaustion is reduced by 1.

Effect on the game: Minor. Sometimes these effects can be crucial in a particular scenario.

### Unconsciousness and Death

Unless it is healed magically, each Serious Wound (any attack that inflicts more damage, in one attack, than the target's Shock Value is considered a Serious Wound) must be stabilised with a Medical Check (this may be attempted unskilled). Lesser injuries stabilise and heal naturally.

Characters with unstabilised serious wounds must make a Willpower check every 1d10 minutes times the character's Strength. If the character fails, he or she will fall unconscious due to shock. He or she may attempt further Willpower checks in an effort to regain consciousness later. A wounded person often falls in and out of consciousness repeatedly.

Characters with unstabilised serious wounds will slowly bleed out and die in number of hours equal to the character's Shock Value minus the his or her wound penalty. Natural healing is based on a Strength check modified by the patient's Stamina Attribute and the Degree of Success of a Medical Skill check. The character recovers a number of Health Points equal to the Margin of Success of the check for each day of complete rest (spread across the day).

Effect on the game: Minor. In campaigns where magical healing is easy and common, this can be ignored. In campaigns where it is not, the effects of combat are much more realistic and medical Skills become much more important (see *Flamesong* for several examples of this in action).

### Damage to Weapons and Armour

Most chlen-hide weapons will lose one Damage Multiplier and the weapon's Initiative modifier will decrease by 2 for every full 16 damage they suffer. Maces and Shields suffer the Damage Multiplier reduction and -2 Initiative modifier per full 48 damage suffered. When a weapon's Damage Multiplier is reduced to zero, it is useless, although it might be repairable.

Armour can also be damaged and generally gains 1 Level of the Partial Armour Defect (see page 87) for every 16 damage taken. It is quite possible for a character to lose their armour gradually over the course of a long campaign in the wilderness.

Effect on a game: Moderate

## Poisoning

### Poisons

Poisons can be delivered in a number of different way: ingested (in food or drink), externally (through the skin), inhaled, or injected. Some poisons behave very differently when administered differently: their different effects are noted in the Poisons Table below.

After being poisoned, it takes the amount of time noted in the Poisons Table under Start of Symptoms for the noted symptoms to become noticeable. If left untreated, death can occur after the period noted under Lethal After. After this time point, make a Strength Stat Check every minute. If the character fails a Check, they die.

#### Alash Snake Venom

**Type:** Animal  
**Application:** Injected  
**Start of Symptoms:** Immediately  
**Lethal After:** Str + 1d10 seconds  
**Symptoms:** Convulsions  
**Effective Dose:** 0.5 grams  
**Notes:** Tasteless, Odourless, Colourless

#### Antimony

**Type:** Inorganic  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Str + 1d10 minutes  
**Lethal After:** 1d10 x 30 minutes  
**Symptoms:** Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhoea, Respiratory Difficulty, Coma  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams  
**Notes:** Odourless (when mixed in food)

#### Arsenic

**Type:** Inorganic  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Str + 1d10 minutes  
**Lethal After:** 1d10 hours  
**Symptoms:** Nausea, Burning Pain (Esophagus), Vomiting, Diarrhoea, Convulsions, Coma.  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams  
**Notes:** Tasteless, Odourless



## Arsenic

**Type:** Inorganic  
**Application:** Ingested (Systemic)  
**Start of Symptoms:** After the total ingested amount is equal to or more than half the Effective Dose  
**Lethal After:** Until total ingested amount is equal to or more than the Effective Dose  
**Symptoms:** Headaches, Dizziness, Burning Pains (hands and feet). Jaundiced skin, rash, hair loss, weight loss. Symptoms as above once the total ingested amount is equal to or more than the Effective Dose, suffer the symptoms of Arsenic as above  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams  
**Notes:** Tasteless, Odourless

## Aulléb Lizard Venom

**Type:** Animal  
**Application:** Injected or Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Immediate  
**Lethal After:** Str + 1d10 seconds  
**Symptoms:** Convulsions  
**Effective Dose:** 0.02 grams  
**Notes:** Tasteless

## Chrál Root

**Type:** Plant  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Str + 1d10 minutes  
**Lethal After:** 1d10 x 30 minutes  
**Symptoms:** Paralysis (Extremities), Paralysis (Cardio-vascular Systems)  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams  
**Notes:** Odourless

## Delé Buds

**Type:** Plant  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Str + 1d10 minutes  
**Lethal After:** 1d10 x 30 minutes  
**Symptoms:** Paralysis (Extremities), Paralysis (Cardio-vascular Systems)  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams  
**Notes:** Tasteless

## Onúmish Leaves

**Type:** Plant  
**Application:** Injected or Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Str + 1d10 minutes  
**Lethal After:** 1d10 minutes  
**Symptoms:** Paralysis (Extremities), Paralysis (Cardio-vascular Systems)  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams  
**Notes:** Tasteless, Odourless

## Puff-Spider Venom

**Type:** Animal  
**Application:** Injected  
**Start of Symptoms:** Immediate  
**Lethal After:** Str + 1d10 seconds  
**Symptoms:** Convulsions  
**Effective Dose:** 0.5 grams  
**Notes:** Tasteless, Odourless

## Sagún Spores

**Type:** Animal  
**Application:** Inhaled  
**Start of Symptoms:** Str minutes  
**Lethal After:** 1d10 minutes  
**Symptoms:** Respiratory Difficulty, Paralysis (Cardio-vascular Systems)  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams  
**Notes:** The spores develop into a thick mucus-like bluish-white fungus that halts respiration and clogs other orifices. The spores are sometimes sealed into fragile shells that are then thrown or left where a victim may tread on them

## Ssalán Root

**Type:** Plant  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Str + d10 minutes  
**Lethal After:** 10 + 2d10 minutes  
**Symptoms:** Respiratory Difficulty, Paralysis (Cardio-vascular Systems)  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams  
**Notes:** Odourless

## Ssumani

**Type:** Plant  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Immediate  
**Lethal After:** Immediate  
**Symptoms:** Convulsions, Heart Attack  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams

## Ssumani

**Type:** Plant  
**Application:** Injected  
**Start of Symptoms:** Immediate  
**Lethal After:** Immediate  
**Symptoms:** Convulsions, Heart Attack  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams  
**Notes:** Odourless

## Strychnine

**Type:** Inorganic  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Immediate  
**Lethal After:** 10 + 1d10 minutes  
**Symptoms:** Convulsions, Exhaustion, Heart Attack  
**Effective Dose:** 2 grams  
**Notes:** Rodent poison

## Tlébas Leaves

**Type:** Plant  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Str + 1d10 minutes  
**Lethal After:** 5 + 1d10 minutes  
**Symptoms:** Respiratory Difficulty, Paralysis  
**Effective Dose:** 2 grams  
**Notes:** Odourless

## Znaláz berries

**Type:** Plant  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Str + 1d10 minutes  
**Lethal After:** 10 + 1d10 minutes  
**Symptoms:** Respiratory Difficulty, Paralysis  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams  
**Notes:** Odourless



## Corrosives

### Lye

**Type:** Inorganic  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Immediate  
**Lethal After:** -  
**Symptoms:** Extreme Pain, Vomiting, Diarrhoea, Nausea, Dizziness, Fainting  
**Effective Dose:** 1 grams

### Nitric Acid

**Type:** Inorganic  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Immediate  
**Lethal After:** -  
**Symptoms:** Vomiting, Diarrhoea, Dropped Blood Pressure, Respiratory Difficulty.  
**Effective Dose:** 5 grams  
**Notes:** A fatal dose is difficult to swallow due both to the pain caused by corrosion and to the throat closing but ingestion may cause death from tissue damage

### Sulphuric Acid

**Type:** Inorganic  
**Application:** Ingested  
**Start of Symptoms:** Immediate  
**Lethal After:** -  
**Symptoms:** Vomiting, Diarrhoea, Dropped Blood Pressure, Respiratory Difficulty.  
**Effective Dose:** 5 grams  
**Notes:** A fatal dose is difficult to swallow due both to the pain caused by corrosion and to the throat closing but ingestion may cause death from tissue damage

## Poisoning Symptoms

Symptoms may significantly impair the victim of poison. These Symptoms take effect after the time indicated in the Poisons Table under Start of Symptoms has passed, if more than 25% of an Effective Dose was administered. If less than an Effective Dose was administered, the symptoms wear off after (2d10 — Str) hours. If an Effective Dose or more was administered and cured successfully, the Symptoms wear off (1d10 — Str) hours after the cure is effected.

Any change in Stats or Attributes and Defects impacts all Derived Values for as long as the Symptoms persist.

Symptoms not listed in the table are provided for background information and have no game effect.

Symptom	Effect
Coma	Make a Strength Stat Check every 30 minutes. If the Check is failed, the character falls unconscious. Every Strength Stat Check after the first suffers an additional penalty of -1.
Convulsions, Spasms, Diarrhoea, Vomiting	Suffer the Clumsy, Distractable, and Ugly Defects at the 1 BP level.
Dropped Blood Pressure	Reduce Intelligence and Dexterity by 1.
Nausea, Dizziness, Burning Pain, Headaches	Reduce Intelligence and Dexterity by 1. Suffer the Indecisive Defect at the 1 BP level.
Exhaustion	Reduce Strength by 1, Intelligence by 2 and Willpower by 1.
Extreme Pain	The player can choose between the character gaining the 2 BP level of the

Fainting

Heart Attack

Paralysis (Extremities)

Paralysis (Cardio-Vascular Systems)

Respiratory Difficulty

If a Defect is listed, and the character already has the Defect, increase its level by one. If a Defect is listed and the character has the complimentary Attribute, reduce it by one level.

*For example, if the symptom lists 'Suffer the Indecisive Defect at the 1 BP level and the character has:*

Character Attribute or Defect	Symptom Effect
Decisive 1	Neither Decisive or Indecisive
Neither Decisive or Indecisive	Indecisive 1 BP
Indecisive 1BP	Indecisive 2 BP

## Poisons Notes

Note	Effect
Colourless	The poison can not be detected by sight. A penalty of -2 applies to all Poisons Skill Checks to identify it.
Ingested	The poison can be administered in food or drink
Ingested (Systemic)	The poison can be administered over an extended period of time, in doses smaller than the Effective Dose and are cumulative.
Inhaled	The poison can be administered by inhalation
Injected	The poison can be injected and applied to weapons (see Poisoned Weapons, page 107)
Odourless	The poison can not be detected by smell. A penalty of -2 applies to all Poisons Skill Checks to identify it.
Tasteless	The poison can not be detected by taste. A penalty of -2 applies to all Poisons Skill Checks to identify it.

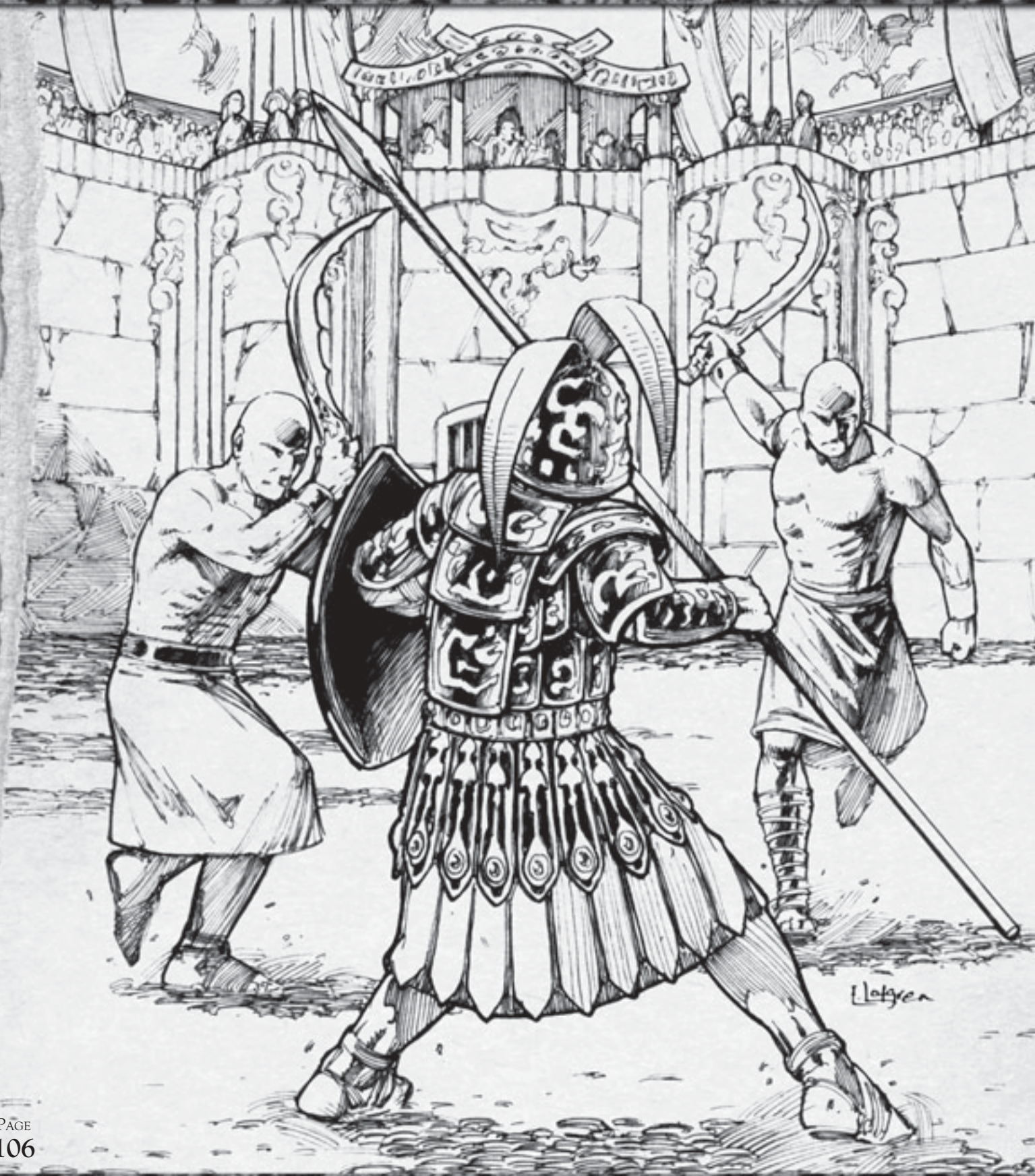
## Curing Poisoning

A successful Poisons Skill Check can be used to identify the poison itself, from its delivery method, taste, smell, appearance, and effects. If a poison is colourless,



# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE





odourless, or tasteless, a penalty of -2 is applied to the Skill Check for every one of these characteristics, cumulatively.

A successful Medical Skill Check with a penalty of -2 can identify the poison from the symptoms. Certain Poisons require specific Antidotes.

There are three ways to cure poisoning: applying antidotes, medical care, or using magic:

If a poison has an Antidote, after the minimum Effective Doses of Antidote is applied, a d10 is rolled and compared with the Antidote's target number (see Antidotes Table, page 107). If the amount of poison administered exceeds the Effective Dose noted, every additional Effective Dose provides a penalty of -1 to this roll. Every additional dose of Antidote administered will reduce this penalty by providing a bonus of 1. Additional doses of Antidote do not provide a bonus beyond reducing the penalty caused by additional doses of poison. If the roll is equal to or greater than the target number, the antidote succeeds.

If the antidote is not successful, other antidotes may be tried. The same antidote can be tried, but every successive attempt with the same antidote carries an additional penalty of -3.

A medically trained person can remove the poison (flushing out the stomach, seal off the wound, clean the externally applied poison away, etc.) and provide medical treatment for the symptoms. This requires a successful Medical Skill Check. If the amount of poison administered exceeds the Effective Dose noted, every additional Effective Dose provides a penalty of -1 to the roll.

The Magic Spell Healing's Specialisation Alleviation works against many poisons. If the amount of poison administered exceeds the Effective Dose noted, every additional Effective Dose provides a penalty of -1 to the Magic Skill Check. The spell always works against inorganic poisons. Against Sagún Spores it works on a roll of 9 or less on a d10. Against all other poisons it works on a roll of 7 or less on a d10.

## Antidotes

Antidote

### Anjé Fruit Paste

**Poisons Affected:** Ingested Inorganic, Ingested Plant (except Delé Buds and Ssumani)

**Effective Dose:** 20-50

**Target Number:** 9

**Notes:** Must be no more than 1 day old to work

### Chewed Arđúro Bark

**Poisons Affected:** Delé Buds, Ssalán Root

**Effective Dose:** 10-20

**Target Number:** 8

### Chewed Arđúro Bark

**Poisons Affected:** Ingested Poisons (except Delé Buds and Ssalán Root)

**Effective Dose:** 10-20

**Target Number:** 6

### Khápa Cactus Berries

**Poisons Affected:** Alásh snake venom

**Effective Dose:** 50-100

**Target Number:** 7

### Ó Ti Leaves

**Poisons Affected:** Puff-Spider Venom

**Effective Dose:** 3-5

**Target Number:** 6

**Notes:** causes 12 hour long catatonic sleep

### Onqé Bean Soup

**Poisons Affected:** Ingested Poisons

**Effective Dose:** 0-20

**Target Number:** 5

## Poisoned Weapons

Applying an injectable poison to a bladed weapon or arrow requires a successful Poisons Skill Check. The weapon is loaded with a number of grams of poison equal to the Margin of Success. Poison is wasted if the Poison Skill Check is failed; an amount equal to the Margin of Failure, in grams, is rendered unusable.

When used in an attack, most weapons will deliver one gram for every Margin of Success of the Attack Check. If this is equal to the effective dose of the poison, it has the listed effects. If this is more than the effective dose of the poison, any Skill Checks to heal the person, using either the Medical Skill or Magic Spells, take a penalty of -1 for every additional dose the person received.

Poisons that do not have an Application of injected can not be applied to weapons.

## Fight Strategies

Fight Strategies are used in conjunction with a character's attack. A character may combine as many different Fight Strategies and Fight Manoeuvres (see Fight Manoeuvres, page 43) as desired, but all penalties and pre-requisites are cumulative in addition to a -1 penalty for each Fight Strategy or Fight Manoeuvre after the first.

Effect on the game: Major. These give players many more tactical options and the opportunity to develop Specialisations in particular combat strategies. It will also complicate combat and the GM should expect heavy use of these by experienced players.

## Battle Cry

The Tsołyáni are a tough people, and in the heat of battle, they may temporarily over-ride the effects of injury through sheer willpower, spiritual strength, or fundamental cussedness. Culturally this is often associated with a battle cry, invocation, or prayer.

The advantage of this is that the character may attempt to temporarily overcome wound penalties (page 97) with a successful Willpower check. Levels of the Tough Attribute (page 23) provide a bonus and Levels of the Fragile Defect act as a penalty. If successful, the character can ignore all injury penalties for a number of rounds equal to the Margin of Success (treat a Margin of Success of zero as 1).

The disadvantage is that if they succeed they must launch an attack with the appropriate weapon on each round (their fighting spirit must be expressed) and will take a number of damage equal to their wound penalty each round (the extra effort exacerbates injuries). Player characters should be aware that they might kill themselves with this strategy.

The character's predilections should guide the battle cry or prayer. For example "Victory or Death!," "Chegárra guide my hand!," "Eat This!," "Die, die, die, die, die!," etc.

## Cautious Attack

The character is fighting with notable caution and alertness (+1 bonus to Observation and Dexterity checks).

The advantage of this strategy is that all Defence checks are made with a +1 bonus, and if characters may attempt an Observation check to spot a weakness that will make any Decisive Attack (page 45) on the next round easier (+1 bonus).

The disadvantage of this style is that the lack of follow-through reduces the final damage of all attacks by half (round up).

The names of such styles are normally descriptive, such as "Circle," "Face-Off," "Tactical advance," "Room clearance," etc.

## Opportunistic Fighter

This flexible strategy adapts to enemy tactics and attacks in an unpredictable and improvisational manner. The Analysis Skill is a pre-requisite for this strategy. This strategy may reflect a natural talent for violence, a wide experience of different combat styles, or a supernatural blessing.



The advantage of this strategy is that it is more difficult to defend against, imposing a -2 penalty to all Defence checks.

The disadvantage is that it is more difficult to exploit such momentary opportunities, imposing a -1 penalty to the character's Attack check. Further, it increases the chance of a critical fail by the attacker (the character suffers a -3 penalty to the second check should the attack result in a possible critical failure, see page 115).

The names of such moves refer to the character's background, such as "Ex-Gladiator," "Natural born killer," "Blessed sword-bearer of Karakán," etc.

## Total Attack

The character focuses totally on attacking and does not attempt to protect him or herself.

The advantage of this is that it makes attacking much easier to hit, gaining a +2 bonus on the Attack check.

The disadvantage is that the character has no Defence check in the round in which they attempt this strategy.

## Total Defence

The character focuses totally on Defence and does not attempt to attack.

The advantage of this is that it makes defending much easier, providing a +2 bonus to all Defence checks. Even if someone using this strategy is hit they are likely to reduce the injury/effect as they twist, turn, dodge or otherwise reduce the attack. The defender gets another Defence check if the first fails; the delivered damage from the attack is reduced by the Margin of Success of the second check.

The disadvantage is that the character may not attack in any round in which they attempt this strategy.

*Example: Mórúsal (Combat Value 7, Sword 2) is facing two skilled opponents and decides to use Total Defence to buy time until his cousins arrive. This allows him to defend against the first attack with a +2 bonus and the second without a modifier — the normal -2 penalty for each additional defence is negated by the +2 bonus for Total Defence. The second attacker manages to hit Mórúsal and is about to inflict 12 damage. Since Mórúsal is totally defensive, he may attempt to reduce some of the damage. He must roll (base Combat Value of 7 + 2 for Sword Skill — 2 for an additional defence + 2 for Total Defence) 9. He rolls a 5 which means he has a Margin of Success of 4. Mórúsal takes only (12 — 4) 8 damage.*

## Freeform Fight Strategy

GMs may wish to judge character actions in a more freeform manner. This can be especially important if the GM does not wish to slow down play but wants to encourage player creativity. The following are guidelines for judging the difficulty of player actions.

Total commitment is a willingness to forgo either an attack or defence and provides a bonus of +2 to the other activity.

Difficult manoeuvres such as attacking a weapon, targeting an arm or a leg, or finding an unprotected spot in light armour imposes a penalty of -2.

Very difficult manoeuvres, such as targeting a vital spot (eyes, groin etc), are at a penalty of -4.

An action that allows the use of strength (see Using Strength in Combat, page 102) but does no direct damage has no difficulty modifier.

## Examples of Combat

### Using Optional Advanced Combat Rules

#### Example 1

##### What Bows are For

*Optional rules demonstrated in this example: Serious Wounds, Surprise, Unconsciousness, and Death.*

*A Ksáru Priest aims a heavy crossbow (x6 damage) at Rán (Shock 12) and hits him with a success of 3. Rán is wearing light armour but the High Penetration Attribute of the crossbow bolt cancels that and Rán takes 18 points of damage. This is above his Shock Value and so he has a Serious Wound (see optional damage rules). He has to make a surprise check (at -1 because the injury is more than x1 his Shock Value) to represent the trauma of the injury (see Surprise). He fails and is at -5 to attack and -3 to defend himself. He will eventually make the Surprise check and recover somewhat but still has a -1 injury penalty and an unbalanced serious wound. He must make a Willpower check every 1d10 minutes to avoid passing out and will bleed to death in 11 hours (Shock value-injury penalty). Serious wounds are fatal unless treated (Medical Skill) or completely healed (which would require magic).*

*The moral of this example is that big attacks can stop an opponent even if they don't kill instantly.*

#### Example 2

##### Mórúsal and the Spearman

*Optional rules demonstrated in this example: Unstoppable weapons, The fend-off rule, Fight Manoeuvres (Out-Manoeuvre and Close Combat)*

*Mórúsal (Initiative 6, Combat Value 6, Wrestling 3, Fight Strategy Out-Manoeuvre and Close Combat) is attacked by a Spearman (Initiative 5, Combat Value 5, Spear 1). Mórúsal is completely unarmed and so is at his basic Initiative of 6, the Spearman is at Initiative 5+7 (the bonus for a spear) =12. The spearman also has a defensive bonus of 7 (the fend-off rule) because of the difference in initiative and as the spear has a Damage Multiplier of x3 against Mórúsal's unarmed attack of x1, Mórúsal suffers a -4 penalty to defend (Unstoppable attack optional rule). Mórúsal is at a serious disadvantage.*

*Round 1. At Initiative 12 the Spearman (who isn't very skilled) misses his first attack. On Initiative 6 Mórúsal uses Out-manoeuvre, rolls well and reduces the Spearman's Initiative by 4 (this also reduces his defensive bonus due to Initiative). Mórúsal has dodged to the side of the spear and the tide of battle starts to turn.*

*Round 2. The Spearman is now at Initiative 8 because Mórúsal out-manoeuvred him on the previous round. He still gets to attack first, hits this time and Mórúsal takes 6 points of damage. Fortunately this is below his Shock Value. Mórúsal continues to try to out-manoeuvre and reduces the Spearman's Initiative by a further 5. The Spearman has lost his defensive bonus due to weapon Initiative.*

*Round 3. The Spearman is now at Initiative 3, which means that Mórúsal (Initiative 6) now moves first. He will attempt to make a Wrestling attack so that he can engage in Close Combat. He succeeds and is now grappling with the Spearman. The Spearman is now in serious trouble. His spear is a liability as in close combat and is at +7 (its Initiative value) difficulty to hit. He drops the spear and starts fighting hand to hand.*

*The moral of this example: a very skilled warrior can out-manoeuvre a less skilled person who has a superior weapon, but not without risk.*

#### Example 3

##### Mórúsal against a Phalanx of Guards

*Optional rules demonstrated in this example: Fight Manoeuvre (Formation)*

*The intelligent Clan Master equips his guards with spears and teaches them to fight as a group because the Formation fight manoeuvre makes even low-grade warriors tough to stop. Let's see what happens if Mórúsal tries to repeat his success in Example 2 against two low-grade spearmen (A and B). Stats and Skills are as in the previous Example.*



Round 1. The Spearmen are using the Formation strategy, which means they act at the average of their Initiative (Initiative 12). They both attack and Spearman A gets a success of 2. Mórú sai may defend, but with his penalty for being unarmed he manages only a success of 1 and is hit. He takes 6 points of damage. On Initiative 6 Mórú sai can act and as in the previous example gets a success of 4 on his Out-manoeuve against Spearman A. Unfortunately, Spearman B opts to protect Spearman A and succeeds on the defence by 5, stopping Mórú sai's strategy (he guards his buddy's back). Even if neither of them had defended, they would still be using the average of their Initiatives making it hard to out-manoeuve them. The larger the formation the harder they are to Out-manoeuve.

The moral of this example is that Formation makes opponents much tougher because they can protect each other and can't be out-manoeuved.

## Tactical Hints

Swords are good general-purpose weapons, but they are not perfect.

The spear and a shield combination give an excellent Defence.

Javelins' are usable as both melee and missile weapons and several can be carried in a quiver.

If using a low damage weapon (brawling, dagger etc) use Decisive Attack (page 45) to aim for a vital spot.

A Total Attack (page 108) with a battleaxe can be a fight winner, but this is not a weapon for the cautious.

Use Decisive Attack against targets in armour.

## Breaking Objects

All objects possess an Armour Rating. This is the amount of damage that the object is capable of stopping. If the object is hit with more damage than this, it suffers damage up to its Armour Rating and any remaining damage passes through it (possibly damaging objects or injuring characters behind it). Though the object is damaged, it still maintains its structure but will require repairs later. If an object suffers repeated damage, roughly 5 to 10 times within a short period of time (GM discretion), it has suffered sufficient damage to break. If the object suffers five times its Armour Rating in damage in one attack, it is completely destroyed — it is beyond repair and must be completely rebuilt or replaced.

Corrosives do 1 point of damage per dose (5 grams) and have a Damage Multiplier of 1d10. Armour will reduce this normally, but each dose inflicts 1 level of the Partial Armour Item Defect, or destroys a small item such as a door lock.

**Table 5-13: Object Armour Ratings**

Type of Object	Armour Rating
Bench/Table	8
Stone Wall	60
Wooden Door	16
Wood Furniture	8
Giant Tree	80
Large Tree	60
Medium Tree	40
Small Tree	20

## Destroying Buildings

Characters usually gain automatic successes when they target a building in a melee or ranged attack. If a building suffers more damage than its Armour Rating, it has suffered structural damage; there will be holes in walls and/or floors, mechanical systems begin to cease working, etc. If the building ever suffers five times its Armour Rating in damage in one attack, some or all of the building will collapse. Characters within or adjacent to a collapsing building may suffer damage equal to half the building's original Armour Rating, unless they can reach safety (GM's discretion). As with normal objects, repeated damage may eventually destroy a building (see Breaking Objects).

**Table 5-14:**

### Building Armour Ratings

Type of Building	Armour Rating
Booth	10
Wood Shed	20
Small House	30
Small Building	40
Mid-size Building	50
Large Building	60
Temple	70

## Teamwork and Planning

### Teamwork

*"We run in and kill anything that moves. Arodai guards the door, Onelsu sticks with me and Horuka grabs the girl. Everyone clear on that? Right let's get going!"*

— Heréksa Talisanu hiKoródu, 2351 A.S.

### The Team

Most games will centre on relatively small character teams with perhaps a few NPC team-mates. Ideas of mutual support and social cohesion are fundamental to the Tsolyáni way of approaching almost any task and high Levels of Teamwork are both useful and socially appropriate. A team can consist of up to twenty people in reasonable proximity. The Command or Administration Skills allow the creation of truly large organisations by making teams of teams. Forming a team in an emergency could require successful Teamwork checks.

A team has a pool of Team Points. Each team member can contribute a number of Team Points equal to their Teamwork Skill Level. Several Skills can be used to increase the size of the Team Point Pool to represent planning, preparation, rehearsal etc. Each team member can add the Margin of Success of their Analysis and Planning Skill checks to the team pool if they have had adequate time to prepare (GM discretion). These checks may only be made once per character — a character cannot make multiple attempts to increase a team's Team Point Pool with his or her Analysis Skill, for example. Each team can have one character (usually the highest status character) add the Margin of Success of his or her Tactics (if it is a fight) Skill and Command Skill checks to the pool if they have sufficient time to exercise these Skills. If a team member abandons the group effort, is knocked unconscious, or killed while there is still an active Team Point Pool, their contribution to the Team Point Pool is subtracted from it. New members must make a contribution to the Team Point Pool before they can benefit from it.



## What can Team Points be Used For?

Team Points can be used to improve any check that the player can justify, including Skill checks, Initiative, Attack and Defence checks, etc. One Team Point provides a +1 bonus to any check or increases Initiative by 1. Once a Team Point is used it is gone from the pool — eventually the pool will be depleted and must be refreshed (see below). The transfer of Team Points takes no time and does not count as an action.

## Procedure for Using Team Points

The use of Team Points must always be justified in terms of character actions. A character cannot use Team Points directly; another team member must give them (this should be role-played). This reflects the concept that Team Points are assistance and co-ordinated action rather than a personal resource. Unpopular characters (low respect) may find others unwilling to assist them. Characters can transfer as many Team Points equal to the highest Level in the Teamwork Skill of the character's involved. The character transferring the Team Points decides what they are used for.

*Example: Rán (Teamwork 1) is helping his brother Mórúsaí (Teamwork 4) climb a castle wall. Since Mórúsaí has no Climbing Skill he would normally suffer a -4 penalty for unskilled use but Rán can give him up to 4 Team Point (since Mórúsaí's Teamwork Skill, the highest of the two characters, is Level 4) to reduce that penalty to 0.*

## Refreshing the Team Point Pool

Eventually a team will deplete its Team Points, which reflects the gradual loss of cohesion, organisation, and discipline due to fatigue. A Team Point Pool naturally refreshes if the team has the time and space to regroup and reorganise. After a good night's rest (or about 8 hours of rest), a Team Point Pool is automatically replenished.

Teams can, however, replenish the spent Points under stress (while on a mission, for example) with Teamwork checks. Each character may make a Teamwork check to refocus the team cohesion and refresh the pool. The Margin of Success of any Teamwork check is added to the Team Point Pool while any Margins of Failure are subtracted from it. A character may make repeated attempts to increase a team's Team Point Pool while under stress but each subsequent Teamwork check suffers a cumulative penalty of -2.

## Instruction and Teamwork

The Instruction Skill can be used to enhance the use of the Teamwork Skill but only when there is good communication and enough time for preparation. The Margin of Success of an Instruction Skill check can be added to any Team Point Pool but requires at least a week of training with the entire team. A character with the Instruction Skill can use this to transfer Team Points to someone lacking the Teamwork Skill, using his or her Instruction Skill Level to serve as the target character's Teamwork Level.

## Other Uses for Team Points

Team Points can also be used to reduce the amount of time required to perform a task or improve the outcome of a variety of non-combat tasks. If each character transfers 1 Team Point to the group effort, the task will take 10% less time to complete.

*Example: If it will take a team of four people eight hours to construct an item, and each member invests 2 Team Points (a total of 8 Points), the total construction time is reduced by 20% to 6.4 hours.*

Effect on the game: Major. If the GM lets the player characters run into hostile NPCs who use Teamwork they will probably wish to start using it as well. Using this in combination with solo planning will make for a much more tactical approach to the game which will suit some campaigns and not others.

## Planning

*"To fail to plan is to plan to fail"*

— Old Ksarul Temple saying.

The Planning Skill is similar to Teamwork but can be used by a solo character for a particular operation. If the character has time (usually several hours to days) to prepare, he or she may attempt a Planning check. The Margin of Success of this check may be applied to any task (or tasks — the bonuses do not all need to be applied to the same task) required for the completion of the given operation. Unlike Teamwork which is for a groups ability to work well together in general, Planning must be focused on a specific effort and the bonus(es) must be assigned to a non-combat Skills (Stealth, Running, etc.). The bonuses assigned may not be higher than the Skill's Level.

*Example: Jannsóla is an experienced tomb robber with Planning 2. When she is blackmailed into stealing an item from the estate of a member of Clan Vríddi, she prepares a plan. After some extensive scouting, the GM allows her to attempt a Planning check. She rolls and gains a Margin of Success of 5. She decides to apply the bonuses as follows:*

*Stealth +2 (she'll go over the wall to the south and work her way through the sunken garden since that provides the most cover)*

*Running +2 (she carefully examines the location looking for the fastest route out should things go wrong)*

*Observation +1 (she takes time to determine where the guards are and what their walking patterns are so she won't be surprised by a guard walking up behind her).*

Effect on the game: Moderate. Some players may wish to use this continually in which case the time required to make a Planning check should be emphasised.

## Respect

A character's personal reputation, represented by his or her Respect Points, improves or deteriorates depending on how closely the character's actions adhere to the dictates of noble action, who knows about those actions, and how others perceive them. This will not affect upon which dais a character sits — except in extreme circumstances — but it can affect how non-player characters react to the character. A Tsolyáni citizen will do things to gain Respect that he or she would never dream of doing for mere money.

It is possible for others to perceive a person as being more (or less) honourable than he or she actually is, or even for someone to take credit for the noble actions of another person. Catching such a deception is inevitable and tends to be unpleasant, but some unscrupulous people still try.

A player character enters the game with a Respect of 0, which is the average Level of Respect for a Tsolyáni. Characters with the Good Reputation Attribute or Bad Reputation Defect start at different values. Respect Points may be either positive, representing favourable perceptions, or negative, representing unfavourable ones. Characters may gain or lose Respect in the following ways:

- Directly, through their own actions (see Earning Respect and Losing Respect)
- Over time, as their actions, noble or ignoble, become dimmer in the minds of others (see The Effect of Time)
- Indirectly, through the actions of their associates (see Indirect Gains and Losses)
- Through public conflict over matters of honour with other characters and non-player characters (see Matters of Honour)

## Using Respect

For every 10 Respect Points, a character receives a +1 bonus to actions where the character's reputation is relevant, such as asking for a favour from one's clan or temple, dealing with non-player characters, etc. For every -5 Respect Points, a character suffers a -1 penalty to such checks (it is a greater disadvantage to be known for ignobility than it is an advantage to be known for nobility).

In addition, large amounts of positive Respect can be used as a form of social "rank" to enable the character to temporarily do things his or her rank and status does not normally allow. This effect is temporary and fragile. For example, a high-Respect character can mix with his or her social betters, provided he or she doesn't presume



too much. Respect also affects the relationship one has with one's clan, legion, temple, or government office. Given a group of people of the same status and experience, a clanmaster or legion officer will choose the one who has the most Respect to be the group's leader.

Furthermore, an organisation (clan, temple, legion, etc.) will be more likely to lend or give resources to someone with a lot of Respect (see Access Value, page 68).

Conversely, anyone who accumulates more than -20 Respect Points is in danger of being thrown out of his or her clan and profession because his or her actions are embarrassing the organisation.

## Earning Respect

To earn Respect Points, a character must have no obvious ulterior motivation for these actions — it must appear as though the character is simply acting for the betterment of his or her allies. Hidden motives do not prevent the character from earning Respect, though they could result in a larger loss of Respect, if discovered.

### Table 5-15: Earning Respect

+1 Point	Acts of minor nobility. For example: volunteering to help one's clan with a difficult and dangerous situation, making a huge donation to one's clan/temple.
+2 or 3 Points	Acts of significant nobility or taking a major risk to bring honour to one's clan, legion, or temple. For example, going on a very dangerous mission purely for the glory.
4+ Points	Truly noble actions or expressions of group identity and integrity at very high risk of failure. Suicidal loyalty to expressed ideals or groups.

## Losing Respect

Losses, unlike gains, apply regardless of the character's motivation.

### Table 5-16: Losing Respect

-1 Points	Socially inappropriate behaviour. For example: an aristocrat involving him or herself in matters beneath his or her concern, failing to know one's place, failing to react appropriately to an subtle insult, etc.
-2 to -3 Points	Ignoble behaviour. For example: acting against the interests of one's clan or temple, tolerating an obvious insult, a lack of loyalty, etc.
-4 or more	Serious ignobility, a visible act of betrayal, or a complete denial of one's expressed intents or ideals. For example: acting on behalf of a temple opposed to one's own, betraying the Tsołyáni Empire to an enemy, selling out a clan-cousin.

## The Effect of Time

Respect Points can balance out over time, as minor acts of nobility or ignobility tend to be forgotten or forgiven, though strong reputations tend to stay around as long as the person does nothing to contradict them. Every three months of game time, adjust the number of Respect Points a character has, positive or negative, by one Point toward zero. Do not take away Points in this manner if it would drop a character below a multiple of ten or above a multiple of -5, thus causing the character to lose a bonus or penalty.

*Example: Chargéshu has 16 Points of Respect gained from his exploits during the civil war. Every three months of game time he loses one of those Points, but he will not drop below 10. He could still lose Points below 10 through ignoble actions, however.*

## Indirect Gains and Losses

The behaviour of a character's close relations, his or her friends, family, and associates, can affect the character's Respect Points. This indirect Respect gain or loss is minimal, usually the result of truly notable activities. A character gains 1 Respect Point if a close relation performs a truly noble action and loses 1 Respect Point if the relation commits a seriously ignoble action. The effects of the actions of distant relations upon a character's Respect is minimal and not worth accounting for. GMs may, however, elect to adjust a character's Respect if a distant relation acts continually nobly or continually ignobly.

## Matters of Honour

Characters can take Respect Points from someone else by embarrassing or dishonouring them. Aristocrats practice this as a form of deliberate aggression, but it can also happen inadvertently due to an honest disagreement or misunderstanding. Public disagreements are particularly risky, especially when both parties are clearly putting great personal investment into the matter. Many aristocrats habitually affect a disinterested attitude in part to protect them from appearing invested in disputes and thus putting their reputations (represented in game by their Respect Points) at risk.

## Fair Warning

If a character is publicly arguing with, or is otherwise embarrassed or offended by another character, the Game Master should warn the player that the situation may turn into a matter of honour. It is usually possible to retreat gracefully from that position with a successful Etiquette Skill check. If the other person has engineered the situation as a social trap, with the intent of harming the character's Respect, the GM may request an opposed Etiquette Skill check. If the character loses the opposed check, he or she may suffer a penalty on the Etiquette Skill check to gracefully retreat from the situation. A graceful retreat, of course, merely extricates the parties from the dispute without resolving whatever the dispute was about.

## The Point of No Return

If neither party backs out, the situation automatically escalates to the stage where each character places 1 Respect Point at stake. The first character to back down from the conflict or be proven wrong forfeits the Respect Point to the other character. Determining the results of this social battle should be resolved through role-playing, not dice rolls. GMs should, however, take a character's Skill Levels and Stats into account — a player may not have a very high Charisma and Etiquette Skill Level while his or her character may be masters of subtlety with words. If neither character backs down or is immediately proven wrong, the situation may escalate.

## Escalation

If the conflict continues, further escalation is likely and the matter can quickly become serious. The characters stake an additional 1 Respect Point on the issue. As before, the character who backs down from the confrontation first or who is proven in the wrong forfeits his or her Respect Points to the other character. If neither character backs down or is proven wrong, the situation may continue to escalate with additional Respect Points put at stake. Some situations can last months before a proper resolution is determined while other battles of honour are won or lost in a vicious battle of words that lasts only an hour but still has drastic effects on a character's Respect.

Tsołyáni have long memories for matters of honour. Once an issue has reached this stage, it will not go away on its own. It can hang over a character's head for many years until it is resolved one way or the other.



## Resolving Disputes Without Respect Loss

To a Tsolyáni, paying or accepting shámtnla is an immediate way to redress a wrong and end a dispute without a transfer of Respect Points, especially if neither party wishes it to pursue it further. If one or both parties deems shámtnla unacceptable, either party may propose a duel. Duelling acts as a release valve for matters of honour; it replaces the risk of Respect with the risk of physical injury, which heals faster. A duel resolves the matter with neither side having to lose Respect, since duelling is inherently noble. Both parties have to agree to either paying shámtnla or duelling, however, if they wish to resolve the issue with the loss of Respect.

*Example: Two scholars, Orún and Jadhák, get into a discussion of Engsvanyáli history at lunch and find that they disagree about the role of a minor figure in the Flower Wars. The Game Master warns the players that this could develop into a matter of honour for both scholars. They continue, each unwilling to back down from positions so obscure and academic that no one else in the hall even understands what they are talking about. Everyone understands that there is a disagreement, however, and it turns into a matter of honour with 1 Respect Point at stake. Each character heads for the library after lunch, and the debate gradually escalates over the next few months to the point where they now have 5 Respect Points each at stake.*

*Neither party has lost any Respect yet because the matter is unresolved. Jadhák decides to break the deadlock by sponsoring an archaeological dig (which will prove he is right), unaware that Orún (who realises that he was wrong in the first place, and is not all that stable) is planning on assassinating him before the archaeologists can report. Lunch turned out to be far more expensive than either of them expected.*

## Favours

The Tsolyáni take debts of honour very seriously. Owing someone a favour is even more real than owing them money. Purposely “forgetting” a debt of honour is deeply ignoble; owing favours, however, is not. Many people will owe and be owed favours as a normal part of their social life. Favours form a web of obligations that holds society together.

**Table 5-17: Incurring Favours**

Classes of Favours	Examples
Minor Favour	A service of little risk, a small loan, a gift of some value to the gift-giver
Medium Favour	A significant service carrying some risk, a major loan, or gift
Big Favour	A very dangerous action or saving someone's life
Huge Favour	Saving someone's honour, child, or clan. Suicidal behaviour

## Using Favours

A character can only reclaim a favour for an action which is not ignoble (a character cannot honourably ask someone to be dishonourable), and he or she must provide a reasonable timeframe for the action. The debt is paid if the person does their best to fulfil the request. For example, a character agrees to pay back a favour by bringing someone from Usenánu to Jakálla. On arrival in Usenánu, the character finds that the person is dead. The character has done his or her best and is considered to have paid back the favour even though it was not completed as agreed. Of course, the character does owe an explanation to any interested party.

If characters are willing to owe favours, they can gain access to people and resources that would normally be unavailable. The use of favours must be done in a noble fashion — one does not walk blithely into the antechamber of an Imperial governor of a town or city simply because he or she might “owe” you a favour. All due proprieties must be observed.

## Trading Favours for Resource Points

Favours may be traded for Resource Points and vice versa with the permission of the GM according to a ratio that is specific to the campaign (see the typical exchange rate below). These exchanges should normally be limited to half of the starting Resource Points of the character. This represents the web of patronage, obligation, and mutual support that characterises the culture. Resources often take the form of credit, connections, and loyalties rather than coinage and, to some extent, all of these social currencies are inter-convertible.

**Table 5-17: Typical Resource Points/Favour Conversion**

% Starting Resource Points	Respect	Favours
10%	1	Minor
20%	2	Medium
30%	3	Big
40%	4	Huge

## Required Favours

No one can be forced to owe someone a favour, but there are situations where it is ignoble to ignore a debt of honour. In any situation in which the conditions for a favour are fulfilled but the person does not offer a favour in return, that person will lose a certain amount of Respect. For example, if someone saves your life and a character doesn't recognise the debt, he or she is being ignoble. The person refusing to recognise the debt loses 1 Point of Respect for each Level of the favour. It is also highly ignoble to kill someone to whom you owe a favour (this carries the same penalties as failure to recognise a favour).

*Example: Tsokhalon hiKoródu takes two arrows that were meant to kill Arodai hiVriddi. This gives the Vriddi a problem: either they recognise the debt and owe Tsokhalon a big favour or risk losing 3 Points of Respect. The Vriddi have no desire to owe the favour, but honour demands it. Unbeknownst to the Vriddi, however, the whole attempted assassination was a set-up to extract a favour from those noble protectors of Fasiltum, as part of a plan...*



# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE



## CHAPTER 6: MAGIC



## Magic

Since the Temples are effectively the only source for learning magic, they control how magic is taught. Typically, students of magic are taught half a dozen different basic Spells, to evaluate their abilities. Based upon their ability, they are taught Spells in a specialist manner. They are encouraged to learn a Spell in all its variations, then move on to another, closely related Spell, and study that in all its variations. As they become more skilled and learn more Spells more fully, learning Spells become easier and they are taught Spells of greater power.

Learning a new Spell, or Spell variation, is an arduous process, learning to painstakingly copy the Spell description and learn to follow the process. It is a combination of calligraphy, learning the correct mind-sets, and, in the case of Ritual magic, how to execute the ritual correctly. Learning Psychic magic is just as difficult, as the magician must learn how to create the right mind set without the help of any ritual, and from his or her teacher's descriptions. Finally, the student is ready to cast the Spell for the first time. If this is successful, the process is repeated until the magician can cast the Spell adeptly.

## Magic Rules

The Psychic Magic and Ritual Magic Skills represent a character's degree of ability in the use of Psychic and Ritual magic, respectively. These skills used to resolve Skill checks for the casting of or Defence against Spells, as well as Skill checks involving arcane knowledge related to magic. A character could have a high Magic Skill and very few Spells, or a low Magic Skill and numerous Spells. Psychic and Ritual Magic are very different fields of study and knowledge of one confers no knowledge, ability, or benefit for any Skill checks in the other type of magic.

## Magical Spells

Magical Spells are the actual procedures a character performs to get a specific effect. Players invest Skill Points to select Spells for their characters. Each Skill Point equals a certain number of Spell Points (see Spell Point Conversion, page 116), which can then be used to purchase Spells. Spells may have Spell Attributes, Spell Defects and Spell Specialities that affect what the Spell can do. For an overview of the Magic Spells see Spell Descriptions (page 121).

## Restrictions on Ritual Magic

To cast Ritual Spells the magician needs space to conduct the ritual, exactly as it is prescribed. This means that the magician must have

- a stable place to stand and work
- sufficient space to move around
- be unencumbered
- be able to move freely
- not wear any armour
- not be interrupted

If any of these conditions is not met, or fails to continue to be met while casting a Ritual Spell, the Spell cannot be cast.

## Casting a Spell

To cast Magical Spells, a character must have:

- the Magic Skill
- a reasonable Intelligence Stat (5+ for Ritual or Psychic Spells only, 6+ for both)
- a high Psyche Stat (5+ for Ritual Spells only, 6+ for Psychic Spells only, 7+ for both)
- the High Pedhétl Attribute at Level 2+
- a Spell to cast

Certain high level magicians have the ability to store a single casting of a spell on a piece of parchment, creating an Inscripted Spell. They can be cast by anyone who can read the Inscription's language, though there are possibly additional restrictions (see Casting Inscripted Spells).

To cast Inscripted Spells, a character needs:

- the ability to read the Spell
- an Inscripted Spell to cast

Spellcasting requires a Skill Check. The appropriate skill for casting a Psychic spell is the Psychic Magic Skill. For a Ritual spell, it is Ritual Magic Skill. Add any Difficulty Modifiers that may apply from the table below and any others as determined by the GM.

If the Magic Skill check succeeds, keep track of the Degree Of Success; it will be used to calculate various effects of the Spell, and affects the target's chance to resist it.

The modifiers below are cumulative. Use all that apply.

### Table 6-1: Spell Difficulty Modifiers

#### Spell Complexity

Spell Level	-(Spell Level/3, rounded up)
Spell Cost	-(Spell Cost/15, rounded up)
Temple Spell	-2

#### Environment

Magically Barren Area	-8
Magically Semi-Barren Area	-3
Magically Fertile Area	+3
Wearing more than 60 grams of metal	Special

#### Situation

Surprised	-2
Moving	-1
In Combat	-2
Target Is Moving	-1
Target Is in Melee	-2 (and an additional -1 for every attacker beyond the first)
Casting Past Potential Target	-1 (per target)
Distractions	-1 (Noise, Smell, Weather)

## Casting Temple Spells

A character who has been taught a Temple spell but who now has a negative Respect total would lose further Respect if they cast that spell while they were still dishonoured.

Any combat use of a Temple spell tends to be inherently very intimidating (+8 to any Intimidation check) — poorly disciplined troops will retreat and may panic depending on the circumstances.

## Casting Inscripted Spells

Inscripted Spells are a way of storing a single casting of a spell on a piece of parchment, book, etc. Anyone who can read the Inscription's language can cast it once, after which the Inscription disappears. The character who creates the Inscription can key the spell to a specific individual's mind; it will be gibberish to anyone else. Only followers of the Deity that teaches the spell can read Inscripted versions of that Spell.

To cast an Inscripted Spell, the individual must make a successful Language Skill check. It takes a full round to read an Inscripted Spell. The spell casts in the following round. Inscripted Spells cannot be cast while in Melee. If successful, the Inscripted Spell is cast. To determine if the spell is successful, make a Magic Skill check, using the Inscripted Spell creator's Skill, not the reader's.

The Spell Effects of many Spells are flexible and can be determined at the time of casting. This is not the case with Inscripted Spells: the creator of the Inscripted Spell determines their particular effects at the time of the Inscription.

It takes a bit of personal energy to trigger even an Inscripted Spell. A character can only cast as many Inscripted Spells as the level of their Pedhétl.



A character with the Magic Dampener Attribute (see page 21) cannot use an Inscripted Spell, nor can Inscripted Spells be used within one metre from him or her.

## Metal and Spellcasting

If a character attempts to cast a spell, even an Inscripted Spell while in contact with, or wearing, 60 grams or more of metal, the caster must make a Magic Resistance Check as against the spell they are trying to cast. If the check fails, the caster is killed by the discharge of magical energy. If the check is successful, the spell merely fails and the Psychic Points are expended. If the spell cast was an Inscripted Spell, it is spent.

## Extending Spellcasting Time (Optional Rule)

Casting a spell takes an amount of time as indicated in the spell's description. The spell does not go off until the round after the Preparation is complete, on the caster's initiative.

Magicians can extend the Preparation time of their spells. For every additional unit of time equal to the Preparation time, the character takes to cast the spell, he or she gains a+1 bonus on the Magic Skill Check. The maximum bonus is equal to the character's Level of his or her relevant Magic Skill.

## Extending Duration of Spells (Optional Rule)

Certain Spells have a specific duration as indicated in the spell's description. Once a spell of this type is cast successfully, the magician can extend the duration of the spell beyond the defined duration.

To extend the duration of a spell, the magician simply expends the point cost of the spell again to extend the duration of the spell by an amount of time equal to the spell's normal duration.

## Limits on Simultaneous Spells (Optional Rule)

A magician can only cast one spell at a time but may simultaneously maintain a number of spells equal to their highest Magic Skill level plus one. All Spells active at the same time count against this maximum, including Spells whose Casting Time is Extended and Spells with a Duration of Instantaneous.

Permanent or Inscripted Spells, Spells from Magic Items or High Technology Items do not count against this maximum.

This optional rule is a way of limiting the effect of preparation on the effectiveness of magicians and is most suitable for a Low Magic campaign type.

## Critical Success

Due to the highly erratic nature of magic, there is a higher than normal chance to a critical success or critical failure, based on how well or poorly the character casts the spell. In addition to the normal rules for a critical success (see page 115), if the Magic Skill check's Margin of Success is 8 or better, the spell is a critical success. A target may still resist a spell that was a critical success.

Critical successes with magic come in two types: controlled and uncontrolled. Controlled critical successes are ones where the caster actually gets the effect desired, but in greater proportion than expected. Uncontrolled critical successes often involved a much greater expenditure of energy, and a much more unbounded effect. The chance that they happen is slightly more likely in magically fertile areas. On a critical success with magic, if the character successfully makes a Magic Skill Check, the critical success is controlled, otherwise it is uncontrolled. When in a magically fertile area, apply a modifier of -1 to the Check. For a controlled success, the magician gets to determine the result (extended range, extended area, increased effect, etc.). For an uncontrolled success, the effect is at the GM's discretion.

Possible Critical Spell Successes

- Spell goes off, but in some increased or improved sort of way. For example; all the Mrúr within range are necromantically dominated, not just one or the spell's range is increased.
- Spell goes off, but is modified by some previously-unknown element present. This requires the GM to come up with some explanation, such as the presence of metal or the unfortunate interaction with a previously-hidden magical item, etc.

## Critical Failure

If the Magic Skill Check's Margin of Failure is 4 or more, the character has done something awful while attempting to cast the spell. The more magic-rich the area is, the worse the effect is likely to be.

Spell Critical Failures (Margin of Failure of 4 to 8)

- The character suffers a splitting headache (-1 penalty to all Checks requiring concentration and focus).
- As above, but with a considerable loss of Pedhétl. The caster feels psychically "drained," but may cast another spell or two.
- As above, but with a complete loss of Pedhétl. The caster feels totally drained, both physically and psychically.

Spell Critical Failures (Margin of Failure of 8+; these are combined with one of the above at the GM's discretion)

- Spell goes off, but in some muted or unfinished manner. For example, Doomkill may produce a mild firecracker-like effect; Silver Halo of Soul-Stealing disappears into the night; Ascertainment provides the character the thoughts of the Hmá next to the targeted character, etc. Spells with an intended positive effect (such as Healing) rarely get botched worse than this.
- Spell does not go off, and the magical energy is "back-channelled" into the caster, causing bodily harm. Damage Multiplier is x2; multiply it by the caster's Margin of Failure.
- Spell goes off, but with you as the target! Thus, a Doomkill goes off right on top of you, Domination renders you susceptible to the blandishments of others, etc.
- Spell goes off, but is modified by some previously-unknown element present. This requires the GM to come up with some explanation, such as the presence of metal or the unfortunate interaction with a previously-hidden magical item, etc.
- Spell goes off, either for full effect, or for some botched effect, and attracts the attention of creatures sensitive to extra-Planar energy.

## Resisting a Spell

The target of a successful spell may attempt to resist it; resisting does not take an action. A character may elect not to resist a spell, such as beneficial spells being cast by someone the target trusts. The Check is made against the character's Magic Resistance (see Derived Values, page 51). To successfully resist, the target must roll under his or her Magic Resistance. The target's Magic Skill Level serves as a bonus and the caster's Magic Skill Level acts as a penalty to the Check. Characters with the Energy Management Skill can make an Energy Management Skill Check. If they are successful, they add their Skill Level (and their Resist Magic Speciality to it) as a bonus to their Magic Resistance Check.

If the Magic Resistance Check is successful, the spell does not affect the target. In some cases, however, successful resistance simply lessens the effects of a spell — check the spell description for specific details.

If the Magic Resistance Check fails, the spell takes effect.

## Additional Resistance Checks (Optional rule)

In many instances, if a spell is cast successfully (a successful Casting Check) and is not resisted (the target fails his or her Magic Resistance Check), the spell automatically takes effect.

For example, Ascertainment allows a character to read the surface thoughts of any member of his or her own species within range.

This effect, assuming a successful Casting Check and a failed Magic Resistance Check, is automatic. This can potentially make magic very powerful. If a GM feels that magical spell effects are disrupting the balance of the game, he or she should not hesitate to require additional Checks for spells to take effect (such as a contested Psyche Check to read the target's surface thoughts, for example).

In traditional Tékumel, however, Magic is very powerful.

## Magicians' Sphere of Protection (Optional Rule)

Powerful Magicians with two levels of the Magical Ability Attribute, at least four total levels of Magical Skills (Ritual Magic, Psychic Magic, Energy Management), and a Pedhétl of at least 7 have an aura of power that extends beyond themselves.



Spells cast into, through, or out of this sphere of protection have to overcome this aura. This aura extends three feet per Level of the magician's Ritual Magic and Psychic Magic Skills.

Any Spells cast in, through, or out of a magician's aura must overcome that magician's Magical Resistance — the magician may elect to make him or herself the target of the Spell. If he or she does so, the character may attempt to resist the Spell with a Magic Resistance check as normal (see page 51). If the character fails, the Spell affects the character, not it's intended target.

## Spell Effects

Spells can cause a variety of effects. They can enhance characteristics, give characters specific powers, cause or heal damage, create objects, and many other things. To see the results of a successful Spell, consult that Spell's description in the Spell listings.

## Spells and Damage

Many Spells inflict damage. This damage is often a function of the caster's Margin of Success. Note that armour reduces the damage caused by some Spells. Again, this varies from Spell to Spell based on the nature of the attack. A number of Spells were classically written to kill the target instantly if the target failed to resist; in the *Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne*, an option to simply inflict a large amount of damage is also provided for players and GMs who wish to avoid instant kill effects.

## Large or Diffuse Targets

Larger or diffuse targets cause the magical energy to become too spread out, dissipating it without effect. If a Spell is cast at a target that is larger than its Circle of Effect, or at a diffuse target (such as flowing water), the Spell will either have very minimal effect or no effect at all.

## Energy Pool and Casting Costs

A character's Energy Pool is equal to the character's Pedhétl x 5. This is the amount of extra-Planar energy the character can retain and use. Every time a character casts a Spell, whether it is successful or not, the player must subtract the Spell's cost from his or her Energy Pool. How magic-rich an area is affects Spell casting cost, though a player may not know the local situation until his or her character casts a Spell.

**Table 6-2: Magical Area Casting Cost Multipliers**

Area	Area Cost Multiplier
Magically Fertile Area	0.5
Magically Normal Area	1
Magically Semi-Barren Area	2
Magically Barren Area	Character's entire Energy Pool regardless of normal cost for the spell

## Recovery of Energy Points

At dawn each day, a character recovers a number of Energy Points equal to his or her Pedhétl value. A full night of completely uninterrupted sleep returns an additional number of points equal to his or her Pedhétl value. Prayer, Rituals, and meditations that are appropriate to the faith of the character can also improve recovery of Energy Points. Each attempt takes four hours and the character recovers a number of Energy Points equal to the Margin of Success of the Ritual Skill Check. If group rituals are used then Teamwork (see page 109) may be applied. The total number of Energy Points recovered is doubled in a magically fertile area, halved in a magically semi-barren area, and recovery of Energy Points is impossible in a magically barren area.

## Transferring Energy Points

Energy Points can be transferred between characters for use in casting a spell in two ways. Note that energy can only be transferred for casting a spell: it can not be used to recover Energy Points. The recipient must use the Energy Points transferred in a spell he or she starts casting in the round after the Transfer of Energy Points is completed. Any Energy Points that are not used in a spell are simply lost.

## Sacrifice

Most living things contain some energy, which is released at the moment of their death. In most cases, only sentient creatures have worthwhile amounts of energy. A Ritual Skill check is required to perform the sacrifice correctly (the process usually takes several minutes and the victim must be killed) and an Energy Management Skill Check to harvest it efficiently. A number of Energy Points are gained equal to 10% (rounded up) of the victim's total Energy Points multiplied by the Margin of Success of the Energy Management Skill Check. Note that it is not possible to determine a person's Energy Points before the sacrifice; magicians cannot buy slaves high in Pedhétl for this purpose.

## Magic Battery

If all members of both parties have the Energy Management skill and are actively co-operating and concentrating, all must make a Skill Check. The number of Energy Points transferred from one group to another in a round is equal to the lowest Margin of Success. If a donor fails his or her Skill Check then no Energy Points are transferred but the donor loses a number of Energy Points equal to his or her Margin of Failure. A character cannot give more Energy Points than they possess but they can give all their Energy Points, reducing their Energy Pool to zero Energy Points, at which point they can no longer donate Energy Points. Teamwork can be used to make this transfer more efficient. Note that this ability cannot be used between individuals: it requires a group of magicians to create the environment where this ability can be used and therefore it is mainly used by groups of specialised magicians to cast battlefield magic.

## Magical Spells

### Spell Point Conversion

Skill Points are traded for Spell Points — the exchange rate depends on how prevalent the Game Master wants magic to be in the campaign. A low exchange rate make Spells more expensive and causes magicians to specialise in a relatively small number of Spells. This suggests that magic is rare. This is a "realistic" approach; classic *Tékumel* sources suggest that magic is rare and magicians tend to be specialists. Players and Game Masters who want a more magic-rich campaign — where characters can explore a diverse range of Spells, more powerful Spells, or a combination — should set a higher exchange rate. Here are some suggested rates:

**Table 6-3: Skill Points to Spell Points**

Level of Magic	Spell Points per Skill Point
Low Magic	1
Medium Magic	2
High Magic	3

## Magic Spell Variations

In *Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne*, each unique Spell has many variations — Spell Variants — that results from a further study of the basic Spell. They are created by taking the basic Spell and adding Levels of Spell Attributes and Spell Specialisations. You can add Spell Defects as well to reduce the effective Level of a Spell.



## Spell Attributes

Spell Attributes are variations on the Basic Spell that result from further studying the Spell after it is initially learned. They are typically improvements in the Spell's characteristics, or unique improvements to the Spell's effect. Each Spell lists how many Levels of a Spell Attribute can be acquired for that Spell.

## Spell Specialisations

Spell Specialisations are special variations that result from gaining an advanced understanding of the Spell after continued study of the Spell and its Spell Attributes. They typically change the Spell's effects quite extensively. There are no Levels in a Spell Specialisation.

## Spell Defects

Spell Defects are variations on a Spell that may optionally be taken on any Spell when it is initially learned. These may reflect local theological differences, have been forced by a requirement to learn the Spell quickly, or even represent the personal preferences of the tutor.

Spell Defects subtract from the Level of the Spell. Spell Defects cannot reduce the Level of a Spell below 20% of the listed Base Cost (rounded up). Each Spell Defect can only be taken once for a given Spell, though the Spell can be learned in different variations, with different combinations of Spell Defects.

## Component Dependant

**Modifier:** -1 Level

The Spell depends on expensive components that are expended on each casting. The components will become more esoteric as the Spell Level increases and this will cause supply problems at higher levels. Each casting costs 1 Resource Point (or equivalent in Favours) per 3 Levels of the base Spell.

## Debilitating

**Modifier:** -1 Level

Casting the Spell adversely affects the body or mind of the caster. Each casting temporarily inflicts 2 BP of Character Defects for as many hours as the level of the base Spell. These times are cumulative with further casting and some magicians may spend large parts of their lives with magically induced defects. Typical allowable defects are Clumsy, Distractible, Impulsive, Indecisive, or a Physical Impairment or Ugly and they may appear as anything from temporary aging to bleeding to near insanity. They are often quite distinctive from naturally occurring Defects.

## Erratic Preparation

**Modifier:** -3 Levels

The Spell must be adjusted to local conditions (time, local energy Levels, personal condition, etc.) with each casting. This means that it not only takes longer to cast the Spell but the additional time is not entirely predictable before the Spell is cast. Each casting takes an additional 1d10 rounds to perform.

## Extended Preparation Time

**Modifier:** -2 Levels

A caster may choose to reduce the energy cost of the Spell by designing it to process magical energy more efficiently at the cost of a much longer preparation each time it is cast. This adds 5 minutes per level of the spell to the preparation time.

## Inefficient

**Modifier:** -2 Levels

This Spell works normally but more magical energy is wasted. The casting cost for this Spell is tripled.

## Involving

**Modifier:** -1 Level

The Spell requires such an intense involvement that the magician will find it difficult to disengage from the process after the Spell is cast. The caster is oblivious of the physical world while casting and for one round afterward the spell has been cast. They may not take physical action, engage in combat, or cast another spell during that period.

## Linguistic Requirement

**Modifier:** -2 Levels

The Spell must be clearly and loudly orated in a particularly obscure or secret language (Llyáni, the Secret Language of Ksáru, etc.). Any error in inflection guarantees the failure of the Spell; this means a Language Skill check is obligatory with each casting. The Language Skill check is penalised by the base level of the spell divided by 3 (rounded up).

## Loud

**Modifier:** -1 Level

The spell is extremely noticeable and disturbing even to non-magicians. Cats will hiss and birds will take flight when a spell with this defect is cast near them. Anyone within a number of metres equal to their Intelligence + Psyche can identify the direction of the spell casting. A magician can multiply that detection distance by 1 + their highest Magic Skill and locate the casting point within a few feet. The spell also leaves a strong residue that makes it easy to sense and it remains detectable for a full day.

## Spell Costs

A Spell costs, in Spell Points, the Spell Level minus the Spell Defect Modifiers, multiplied by 2 plus the Spell Attribute Level and any Spell Specialisations.

Spell Cost = (Spell Level — Spell Defect Modifiers) x (2 + Spell Attribute Levels + Spell Specialisations)

## Restrictions on Beginning Spells

The Temple largely controls what Spells a magician is taught and in what order. Beginning students are taught a set of basic Spells; based on the student's success in learning these Spells, a course is devised for him or her. The temple is culturally inclined to not allow the student deviate from what is considered the best way to learn magic. The Temples consider the study of magic a study of their Deity's purview, interests, associations, relationship, and interactions with Tékumel and the other planes and their denizens.

A very good student is rarely given more freedom in selecting Spells to study. They only progress more rapidly through the assigned course. To reflect this, a number of restrictions apply to selecting Spells for a beginning magician character.

Beginning magic characters in a Gritty Realism Level of Realism can have:

- a maximum number of Spells equal to the character's Intelligence
- a base maximum number of Spell Attribute Levels equal to their total Magic Skill Levels in that type of magic Spell
- 1 additional Spell Attribute Level for every Level in the Attributes Good Reputation, Got the Breaks, High Lineage (if in a Very High or Imperial Clan), or Older
- 1 additional Spell Attribute Level if a member of a Very High Clan
- 2 additional Spell Attribute Levels if a member of the Imperial Clan
- a number of Spell Specialisations for Ritual Spells equal to their Ritual Magic Skill Level
- a number of Spell Specialisations for Psychic Spells equal to their Psychic Magic Skill Level
- a maximum number of Levels in a Spell Attribute equal to their relevant Magic Skill
- a maximum number of Spell Specialisations equal to their highest Magic Skill

A beginning magic character in a Middle Way Level of Realism can have twice the number of Spells, Spell Attributes, and Spell Specialisations as listed above, while beginning magic character in a Heroic Fantasy Level of Realism is not restricted with regards to their Spell selection.

## Restrictions on Beginning with Temple Spells

It is possible but difficult to create a starting character with Temple Spells — it is important that the character concept explain why he or she have been entrusted with such secrets.

The character should have at least one of the following: 3 or more Levels of reputation ("Extreme Piety", "Temple Insider"), 4 or more Levels of Got the Breaks (High Rank), or more than 15 Respect Points or a social status of Very High or



Imperial. Exceptions may be negotiated with the GM. A character with negative respect or a clanless social status will not be taught a Temple Level Spell.

If the character meets the pre-requisites and has a sufficient justification, the GM may then allow the teaching of a Temple Spell but the character must owe 1 Major favour (or equivalent) per Spell. Bribery with money is rarely sufficient to gain access to this type of magic.

## Restrictions by Temple Affiliation

Not all Spells are taught by every Temple. Many Spells are taught by all Temples, though some higher Level Spells are only taught by a limited number of Temples, because only their followers have an “affinity” for them. If Spells are restricted to Temple Affiliation, the names of the Deities whose Priesthoods teach and use the Spell are listed.

Every Temple has its own distinctive secret magic held sacred by each individual Deity’s Temple: Temple Spells. Temple Spells are restricted to followers of that Deity, though a number of them are shared with magicians of the Temple from that Deity’s Cohort.

It is possible for a character to learn Spells a follower of his or her Temple is not supposed to have, but it is exceptionally difficult to find someone willing to teach them. Doing so is illegal if done without the permission of both the Temple to which the student belongs and the Temple to which the teacher belongs — the Ecclesiastical Courts can put both the teacher and the student to death.

## Restrictions by Magic Skill

Since higher Levels of Spells are not only more difficult to cast, but also miscasting them is dangerous, the temples require a Magic Skill Level of 2+ to be taught Spell Attributes of Level 3 or higher, Spell Specialisations, or Spells with a Spell Level of 5+.

Since Temple Spells are more difficult to cast, the temples usually only teach them to experienced magic scholars. To be taught Temple Spells, the temples require a Magic Skill Level of 3+. Unlike teaching Temple Spells to someone who is not affiliated with the Temple, teaching them to someone who is not experienced enough to have them may be dangerous, but it is legal.

## Congelating the Temple

This story is an example of how magical Spells can go wrong, and it also reveals a great deal about how magic on Tékumel works. The Spell referred to in the text, Congelation, is a Psychic Hrüü Temple Spell.

*His voyage to Livyánu over at last, Árfai hiVáisoner took a well-deserved rest in the port city Tsámra’s spacious Foreigners’ Quarter, congratulating himself not only for arriving safely but also for so readily achieving his goals. A few days of seasickness aside, Arjai’s voyage had gone particularly well. He had gained valuable information for the Temple of Ksáru, obtained advantage over several enemies during the course of the journey, and come away with an unexpected benefit — he had married Chitlásha hiTélsu, an adjutant officer of the OAL. She had been assigned to Ishálla hiMriyatláku, a senior OAL investigator whose assignment had been to keep tabs on the Dark Trinity Priests. By wooing Chitlásha, Arjai had subverted the investigation, feeding a wealth of false information back to the OAL and further securing the goals of his Temple. The only bad outcome of the trip was that his body-servant, Kagór, had gone missing as soon as the ship docked. Good help was notoriously hard to find in Tsámra!*

*Annoying as that was, it could not dampen Árfai’s spirits. So pleased was his Temple, that his superiors wanted to reward him for his endeavours. Árfai had been invited to name his own reward! He had spent the last few days considering a suitable request that would not overstep the bounds of propriety, and he knew just what to ask for.*

*During the voyage Árfai had been impressed with the magical acumen of one of the Hrüü Priests on the ship, a fellow whose command of the Congelation Spell was so precise that he could use it to chill a glass of wine to an appealing temperature for drinking. He submitted a request to study the Hrüü Temple Spell of Congelation.*

*The Livyáni government prohibited foreigners from travelling outside of Tsámra’s Foreigner’s Quarters, so to accommodate their visitors’ needs they provided a generous compound. All the major Tsolyáni Temples were represented, although in buildings rather smaller than seemed appropriate for institutions of such dignity. The local Ksáru and Hrüü*

*Temples had a closer relationship than elsewhere, and to Árfai’s pleasure, the Ksáru Temple was able to arrange that a Hrüü scholar-Priest would come to teach him the Spell. Normally a Temple would not teach a Temple Spell to an outsider, but perhaps the quick approval was a result of the temples’ close relationship.*

*Árfai knelt in an empty classroom of one wing of the Temple of Ksáru in Tsámra and under the tutelage of his anonymous mentor studied the Spells leading to knowledge of Congelation.*

*Finally, after months of study, Árfai closed a mental circuit in his mind, and the air in the room chilled noticeably. His jubilant shout was cut off before it even passed his lips by his teacher’s impassive voice.*

*“Again,” his teacher commanded, and Árfai suppressed a smile and tried the Spell again. Again, the air chilled. A fine mist formed and the walls grew damp.*

*“Again,” said his instructor.*

*The room grew colder and colder, as one might expect with repeated use of the Spell in a small area. With each casting, Árfai became more conversant with the subtleties of the Spell, and its effectiveness and strength increased. He expected that if the efforts today went well they would move outdoors tomorrow, so that his newly learned Spell might not injure his instructor. He cast the Spell yet again, as commanded, and the room’s temperature dropped again.*

*Árfai wiped his brow. Despite the chill, he was beginning to sweat. The effort necessary to cast the Spell remained roughly constant, but he was having a harder and harder time maintaining his attention. Something was distracting him, nagging at him. It was almost as if his mental “workbench” was becoming “cluttered” in a way he had never experienced before. “Again,” commanded his teacher, and Arjai concentrated fiercely to cast the Spell another time. He was not feeling tired, just ... confused. He hoped that soon the teacher would call for a break to rest.*

*Two Priests dashed into the room, breaking his concentration as they skidded on the icy floor and tumbled in an undignified heap.*

*“Stop! You must stop this!” shouted one of the Priests.*

*“What is this?” shouted his teacher. He rose and was jerked back down. Árfai gasped. His teacher’s robes were frozen onto the grass mat on the floor. With much waving of arms and swearing, the Priest rocked to a squatting position. His robes ripped as he pushed himself upright.*

*“What have I done?” cried Árfai, his breath forming clouds in the air.*

*“You are freezing the temple!”*

*Árfai saw that the far wall of the room was layered in thick white ice that glittered as the slanting afternoon sun sliced through a cloud of white mist pouring across the window.*

*“Ohe! Help me!” cried the second Priest. One whole side of his robes were frozen to the floor.*

*Árfai was untouched by the ice thus far, but as he looked down, he could see the circle of ice constricting around him. He leapt to his feet.*

*With much fuss and mutual assistance, the four Priests freed themselves from their frozen robes and scrambled in an undignified fashion through the narrowing ice-choked doorway of the room. There was no respite in the hall. They found themselves in the middle of a quiet pandemonium, as black-robed Priests carrying armloads of scrolls and other valuables evacuated the Scholarly wing of the Temple of Ksáru. Forced to move with the flow, Árfai was outside the temple standing among the crowd in the courtyard before he could gather his wits. His thin sandals were torn and tattered from repeatedly freezing to the icy floor, and others less fortunate nursed bloody patches where their skin had frozen to some surface and had to be torn free. All eyes were on the temple as the scholarly wing was slowly encased in a thick layer of blue-white ice.*

*A small group of elder Priests from the main temple arrived. These were fellows of no station within the temple. Árfai had seen them carrying messages and lighting lamps, tasks usually reserved for the lowest acolytes. Now, however, they strode with purpose through the blistering heat of the Tsámra afternoon, and the crowd parted for them of its own accord. Árfai frowned. Among them was Kagór, his missing servant!*

*Before he could accost Kagór, however, he and the three men and two women with him turned to face the icy wing, and the crowd fell silent. Power thrummed across the senses of those gifted to feel it, and Arjai’s mind was wrapped in a blanket of mental energies. He noticed once again the cluttered feeling that made concentration so difficult, now muted by*



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the emanations of the six Priests gathered before the crowd. Gradually, the crowding in his mind eased, slowly reducing until he could once again focus on his magical energies. He was surprised to feel the structures of the Congelation Spell duplicated in his mind several times, pumping freezing energies from the Planes Beyond into the icy wing of the Temple. Even as he observed them, however, one and then another disappeared. He concentrated further, oblivious to the crowd, and saw how the connections between two nodes were twisted apart by the blanket of energies. Another Congelation vanished. Soon there were only a few left, and then two, and then one.

Duplicating what he had observed, Árajai reached with his mind and twisted the last connection apart. The Spell vanished. The flow of icy energies stopped.

He opened his eyes. The west wing of the Temple was a pile of ice already streaming with water under the fierce glare of Tuléng.

"You finally got it, eh?" came a voice from below Árajai. The tiny figure of Kagór squinted up at him.

"Yes," stammered Árajai with new understanding. Kagór was his superior, and his role of servant merely a guise to bring him to Tsámra incognito. He knew he'd have to suppress the urge to order Kagór around more than once before he grew accustomed to this new order. Árajai suppressed his questions about the tiny man's true identity; such speculation was likely dangerous.

"I'm sorry. I failed to learn the Spell and damaged the temple," he said to Kagór as the enormity of his error came upon him. With a sinking feeling he wondered if any bodies would be found in the melting ice of the wing.

As if reading his mind Kagór said, "Fear not, I think we got everyone out." He looked around significantly. "The only person missing is your teacher."

Árajai looked around, but saw no sign of the Hrú'ü Priest. "Did he...?"

Kagór shook his head. "He is fine, I am sure, and probably laughing merrily somewhere beneath the Demon-God's Temple."

"He did this to me? He taught me wrongly?"

"Perhaps," replied Kagór laughing. "Or perhaps you made this error yourself! But it would not be unlike the Temple of Hrú'ü to play such a trick on us, and they assented to our request for their Temple Spell rather more easily than they might have. No, I suspect when we look we shall find some Temple relic or secret document gone missing during the confusion, and even now being pored over by the High Scholar Priests of Hrú'ü."

Árajai hung his head gloomily as a stream of icy water from the wing began to puddle up around his shredded sandals. "Then I have been made a fool of, and used in a game between Temples."

Kagór patted him lightly on the arm. "Don't despair," he said, turning to depart. Then he stopped and grinned at Arjai over his shoulder. "I'm sure it won't be the last time."

## Temple Spells

Temple Spells are the distinctive secret magic held sacred by each individual Temple. Magicians from outside of a particular Temple may know very little of them and would find it almost impossible to find someone who would teach them the Temple Spells of another faith. Anyone willing to teach a Temple Spell to a non-worshipper would face excoriation and ecclesiastical sanction. They would be hunted down and killed for their impiety. The sort of people who might risk such a fate are unlikely to be the best or safest of instructors.

The secrecy surrounding these Spells is considerable and there are even Spells that are not shared between the Temples of a God and His or Her Cohort. For example, only the Temple of Wurú knows the secret, powerful, and horrific Spell known as The Grey Hand. The Temple of Hrú'ü has been trying for centuries to learn it, but the Priests of Wurú have resisted all pressure and persuasion to teach it, even though Wurú is cohort to Hrú'ü and they share many other secrets. Even within the Temple of Wurú, this Spell is reserved only for the well-respected, high adepts and no lesser magician will ever be allowed access to its hideous secret.

Temple magic is much more complex and important than the mere shaping of extra-planar energy — the Temple Spells are expressions of a particular theology and are seen as a gift from the Gods. These treasures are recorded on gold and human skin, written in ink of powdered emerald and the blood of innocents, and kept in vaults of ancient stone. Those chosen to learn them spend days in ritual purification, meditation, and preparation before they are ready to approach them. This is no mere magic — these are prayers and observances; these are the words of a God.

To whom Temple Spells are taught remains very much under the control of the temple hierarchy and is a political and theological matter rather than being the choice of the magician concerned. Being chosen to learn a Temple Spell is an honour that the recipient is expected to appreciate and use with respect. Misuse of a Temple Spell is clearly dishonourable and a magician who used such a Spell for a trivial or ignoble purpose would immediately lose Respect. They could even find themselves bound in iron chains and facing an ecclesiastical court if their misbehaviour were serious enough (see Casting Temple Spells, page 114).

Many Temple Spells are potentially very powerful — creating earthquakes and raising the dead to unlife are only some of the well-known effects. The impact of someone casting any Temple Level Spell tends to be disproportionate, on others, because of what they mean. Anyone who can cast a Temple Spell must be respected (even amongst the magicians of their Temple), superbly skilled and able to call upon their God with the expectation of a positive response. That is and should be incredibly intimidating, it is unlikely that a magician with these skills stands alone in a conflict and could be backed up by anything from an official Temple bodyguard to a horde of demons. This Level of power is an escalation almost to the point of divine intervention and its implications to the user and those nearby should never be underplayed (see Casting Temple Spells, page 114).

When someone draws Excalibur from the stone, no-one asks how much damage it does. Possession alone is sufficient to inspire — these are the Spells of myth and legend and should be played as such.

## Magic Spells

### Spell Descriptions

Each Spell description includes the Spell's name, a list of its characteristics, its base effect, its Spell Attributes, Spell Defects, and Specialisations (if any). Spells are listed in alphabetical order with, the Temple Spells following them, also alphabetically.

The following characteristics are listed in the description for each Spell:

- Temple Affiliation:** What Temples teach this Spell. Spells with a Temple Affiliation of Universal are available to all magicians regardless of temple affiliation.
- Magic:** Whether the Spell is Psychic or Ritual
- Prerequisites:** Spells or Spell Attributes or Levels a character must know before acquiring this Spell.
- Level:** The Level of the Spell. This is an indication of the inherent complexity of the Spell. It is used to determine the cost, in Spell Points, of the Spell (see Spell Cost, page 117), the cost in Energy Points to cast the Spell (see Energy Pool and Casting Cost, page 116), the modifier to learn this Spell or variants of it, and the modifier in casting this Spell (see Casting a Spell, page 114).
- Preparation Time:** How much time the Spellcaster must devote to the Spell's preparation. For Psychic magic, the caster can walk at a normal pace while preparing; for Ritual magic, the caster must stand still. Spells with a preparation time of one round can be readied starting on the initiative of the caster and are cast on that same initiative in the next round.
- Range:** The maximum distance between the caster and the intended area of effect. "Caster only" indicates the caster can only use the Spell on him or herself; "Touch" means the caster must touch the target.



**Area of Effect:** The area affected by the Spell. This value indicates the area of the Spell's effect, usually a circle centred on the Spell's target with a radius equal to the value indicated. "One target" means it affects a single target rather than an area. Unless the caster is specifically excluded, the caster may target him or herself. A Spell identified as "species-specific" may only be cast upon a member of the caster's own species.

**Duration:** How long the Spell lasts. "Instantaneous" has an immediate effect; while the effect may continue, the Spell does not. "Permanent" Spells are lasting enchantments that stay in effect until some condition is fulfilled or until it's dispelled.

**Base Effect:** The effect of this Spell when cast without any Spell Attributes or Spell Defects. If a description does not list visual effects, no visual effects occur. When calculating values for a Spell, if the Margin of Success of the casting check roll is 0, treat it as 1

**Spell Attributes:** What Spell Attributes can be learned for the Spell, the effect of each one, and the maximum Level for each Attribute. Some Spell Attributes are indicated as (Unique); their effect is specific to the Spell and typically changes the Base Effect.

**Spell Specialisations:** What Specialisations can be learned for the Spell, if any. Spell Specialisations may be listed in Levels. Spell Specialisations may have their own Temple Affiliation, Prerequisites, Range, Area of Effect and Duration that replace those of the Spell for Spell Variants that include that Spell Specialisation.

## Spells by Spell Group

The Spell Groups are a simplification of the cultural tendency to specialise magical training in Tsolyánu. These categories could and would change over historic time and are not inherent in the structure of magic. In fact, they may well be different from Temple to Temple.

## Body

The Spells in this Spell Group affect a person's physical abilities.

### Acceleration

**Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 7

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** 3 minutes

#### Base Effect

This Spell enhances muscular co-ordination and communication between the brain and the limbs, enabling the target to move faster. The target receives a +1 bonus to Dexterity for purposes of determining Initiative and movement speed for the duration of the Spell.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 1:* The bonus is equal to the Spell's Margin of Success

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 2:* The target may act twice per round. This version carries a risk of burn-out; at the end of each round, the target makes a die roll. On 1 to 6 all is well; on 7 or 8 the target perceives that the burn out is eminent next round and may slow back to normal speed or accept the consequences; on 9 or 10 the target falls unconscious and makes a difficult Strength Stat check, suffering (Margin of Failure x 6) Health Points Damage if he or she fails.

## Control of Self

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 2

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Not Applicable

**Area of Effect:** Caster

**Duration:** 10 minutes

#### Base Effect

The caster cuts off any sensation of pain. The caster moves normally, but cannot engage in physical combat.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Duration:* +10 minutes per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 1:* The caster halts bleeding from his or her wounds. The caster can also grasp an object and not need to release it due to fatigue, etc. For example, he or she may hang by one hand from a cliff face for the duration of the Spell.

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 2:* The caster can hold his or her breath for the duration of the Spell, avoiding damage from inhaled gases, spores, smoke, and lung-affecting toxins. In addition, the character can survive underwater, buried in the earth, or otherwise cut off from air.

#### Spell Specialisations

*Combat:* The caster can now fight in physical combat while maintaining the Spell.

**Prerequisites:** Increased Duration 1, Increased Power 1

## Empowering and Enervation

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg

**Magic:** Ritual

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 4

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** 3 minutes

#### Base Effect

This Spell adds the Margin of Success to the target's Strength Stat, though the Stat cannot be raised above 12. This Spell is usable on a given target once per day. It does not affect animals, androids, automatons, demons, the undead, creatures created by sorcery, or other beings animated by extra-planar power.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +10 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level. 1 to 5 additional random targets in the Area of Effect are affected.

#### Spell Specialisations

*Reverse Effect:* This variant reduces the Strength of all targets within the Area of Effect by the Margin of Success. A victim whose Strength is reduced to zero becomes unconscious, and one whose Strength is brought down to less than zero dies (or falls unconscious at the GM's option). This Spell is effective against a given target only once per day. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1, Increased Range 1.



## Excellence

**Temple Affiliation:** Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg  
**Magic:** Psychic  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 3  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 1 minute

### Base Effect

This Spell bestows mastery of weapons and fighting techniques upon a single target; add 1 to all of the target's Combat Skill Levels for the duration. This Spell is species-specific.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +1 metre per Level, maximum 1 Level  
*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level  
*Increased Duration:* +2 minutes per Level, maximum 1 Level  
*Increased Effect:* +1 Level to Combat Skills, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

**Animal:** This variant is usable on one non-intelligent or semi-intelligent animal, giving it 2 Levels of any Combat Skills it can use. It does not affect the undead, androids, automatons, demons, or creatures created by sorcery. This Spell is not species-specific. **Prerequisites:** Increased Effect 1, Increased Duration 1.

**Reverse Effect:** This variant lowers the Combat Skills of each target within the Area of Effect by the Margin of Success for 1 minute. All intelligent, semi-intelligent, and non-intelligent species are affected, as are the undead. Androids, automatons, creatures produced by sorcery, demons, and creatures created by sorcery are not affected. This Spell is not species-specific. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 1, Increased Area of Effect 1, Increased Duration 1, Increased Effect 1.

## Favouring

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 6  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 1 hour

### Base Effect

This Spell is usually used in advance of combat and instantaneously provides (Margin of Success of the Spellcasting check x 5) temporary Health Points to the target while the Spell is in effect. These temporary Health Points are lost first, before the character's normal Health Points and, once lost, cannot be regained through healing or other methods. It does not restore damage that is present at the time it is cast — it only provides temporary Health Points for the duration of the Spell. A caster can only cast this Spell on a given target once a day. This Spell is species-specific.

### Spell Specialisations

**Greater Favouring:** This variant restores (Margin of Success x 10) Health Points that are lost after the Spell takes effect. This Spell is species-specific. **Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg.

**Different Species:** This variant is not species-specific (though it can only be used on intelligent beings), and may be cast on the same target twice a day. **Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg. **Prerequisites:** Greater Favouring.

## Healing

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 3  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

This Spell heals damage caused by wounds, burns, or other physical injuries. It is not effective against poisons, drugs, diseases, paralysis, or non-physical magical damage. Once cast, the GM must roll as if making a Magic Resistance check for the target. If the check fails, the Spell heals no Health Points. If the check succeeds, the Spell restores a number of Health Points equal to the check's Margin of Success.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +2 metre per Level, maximum 1 Level  
*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 person per Level, maximum 2 Levels (Shén-sized creatures count as 1.5 person, or Tinaliya-sized creatures or smaller count as 2 creatures)

*Increased Effect:* + Margin of Success additional Health Points per Level, maximum 4 Levels

### Spell Specialisations

**Alleviation:** This Spell neutralises life-endangering toxins within the body of a single living being. It has no effect upon alcohol, diseases, or most non-lethal drugs.

**Greater Alleviation:** This Spell neutralises life-endangering poisons within the body of a single living being, but also drugs and alcohol. It will not cure the effects of, or addiction to, the deadly Zu'úr. **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Ksarúl/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Alleviation.

**Regeneration:** This variant heals or restores one seriously injured body area or lost limb without scarring. It also repairs lost eyesight, hearing, and other wounds or Defects caused by wounds or hostile magic. It does not act upon genetic Defects or deformities, however, nor does it heal the ravages of disease, drugs, starvation, or thirst. The Margin of Success is not relevant; if the Spell works, the target is healed. **Prerequisites:** Increased Effect 4.

**Greater Healing:** This Spell heals all damage against a single target, restoring withered limbs, curing blindness and deafness, dispelling paralysis and hypnosis, and curing non-permanent versions of Derangement. It cannot, however, bring the dead back to life. **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Belkhánu/Qón; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Karakán/Chegárra; Thúmis/Keténgku; Vimúhla/Chiténg. **Prerequisites:** Increased Effect 4, Increased Range 1, Increased Area of Effect 1, Restore.

**Artificial Body:** This rare variant creates an artificial body where a caster can place the personality (the Intellect, Shadow-Self, Psychic Reservoir, and Spirit-Soul) of an intelligent being who has been dead for an hour or less. The body is a generalised, characterless form with Strength 4 and average appearance. The deceased's other Stats, Attributes (if not dependent on the physical body), and Skills are all present in this new body, but he or she receives a -3 penalty to use any of them (apart from Ritual Magic, which carries no penalty) until a month of retraining has passed. This body can never be revived, nor can its limbs or other organs be regenerated, although Healing Spells are effective, except for the Spell Specialisations Regeneration and Greater Healing. This Spell is species-specific: a human magician, for example, can only create a human body for the personality of a deceased human. This variant is useful when Revivification fails, or when there is not enough left of a corpse to revive. A target who does not wish this kind of "resurrection" may attempt to resist. The artificial body can be kept around for a few days before placing a tenant into it, but will spoil if it stays around uninhabited too long. **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Belkhánu/Qón; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Karakán/Chegárra; Thúmis/Keténgku; Vimúhla/Chiténg. **Preparation Time:** 1 day. **Range:** Touch. **Area of Effect:** One Target. **Duration:** Permanent. **Prerequisites:** Greater Healing.



## Nimbleness

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 3

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** 2 minutes

### Base Effect

This Spell increases the target's Dexterity Stat by 1.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +15 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Effect:* +1 target increase per Level, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Reverse Effect:* This variant lowers the Dexterity Stat of each target within a 1.5 metres radius by 1. **Duration:** 1 day. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 2.

## Pestilence

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Sárku/Durritlámish

**Magic:** Ritual

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 3

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

This Spell causes the victim to immediately fall ill of a deadly, contagious plague, becoming too sick to function. A victim of this plague is easily recognisable by the huge bluish welts that appear as soon as the Spell takes effect, and decomposition begins at an accelerated rate the moment the target dies. Death is inevitable unless the Healing Spell Specialisation Alleviation, Greater Alleviation, or the Disenchantment Spell is cast upon the victim within 10 minutes (the GM may extend this period as desired).

If the victim dies, any other being of the same species who touches the corpse or its possessions becomes infected on a roll of 9 or less. Even if the victim is cured, his or her belongings are still infectious on a roll of 4 or less. Anyone cured should remove everything from his or her person immediately and wash all possessions with water and Vé paste (a soapy substance that acts as an excellent disinfectant).

This Spell is species-specific. Members of other races can handle a corpse and its possessions at no risk to themselves, though after doing so they will still be able to contaminate others on a roll of 6 or less, unless they disinfect themselves.

## Prorogation

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sárku/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 5

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** 20 metres

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** 3 minutes

### Base Effect

This Spell slows the target's perception of time. The target moves at half normal speed, reacting half as quickly as normal characters. The target's Initiative is halved. This Spell works upon most living beings and the undead, but not upon animals,

semi-intelligent being, androids, automatons, demons, or creatures created by sorcery. Casters may use it on a given target only once per day.

## Stealth

**Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sárku/Durritlámish

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 5

**Preparation Time:** 2 Rounds

**Range:** Not Applicable

**Area of Effect:** Caster

**Duration:** 3 minutes

### Base Effect

This Spell helps the target move silently and remain unseen, giving him or her a +2 bonus to all such attempts.

### Spell Specialisations

*Group:* This variant gives all targets within a 1.5 metres radius a +3 bonus to attempts to move silently and remain unseen. **Preparation Time:** 1 minute. **Range:** Touch. **Duration:** 1 day.

## Enchantment

The Spells in this Spell Group are used to enchant objects.

## Enhancement and Debilitation

**Temple Affiliation:** Ksáru/Grugánu; Sárku/Durritlámish; Vimúhla/Chiténg

**Magic:** Ritual

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 5

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** 1 minute

### Base Effect

Changes steel into "enchanted" steel for a period of 1 minute. One item (helmet, breastplate, shield, etc.) may be enchanted per application of this Spell, but it does not affect other metals or non-metallic materials. Exception: a magician educated in the temples of Sárku or Durritlámish can enchant copper armour or weapons with this Spell, giving them the same value as "enchanted" steel, but cannot enchant steel.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Duration:* +9 minutes per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Range:* +10 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Soften:* Makes the target's load of steel or copper softer. This debilitation reduces their value to the Level of chlén-hide. If the Spell runs its course instead of being dispelled, the affected items remain weakened on a roll of 3 or less after the Spell ends until someone applies Enhancement and Debilitation (Enchant) to the item.

**Preparation Time:** 2 Rounds. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 1.

*Enchant:* Permanently enchants one suit of heavy armour (including a weapon and/or a shield) or the equivalent. The target objects must be of excellent quality steel (or specially-hardened copper, in the case of the Temple of Sárku or Durritlámish); items of ordinary quality are not affected. Since metal randomises and disperses the energies of the Planes Beyond, this Spell is both tiring and dangerous. The caster can cast no further Spells for a full month and may die or lose all magical powers for an extended period on a roll of 1 (though this is not necessarily a disincentive for a worshipper of Sárku or Durritlámish). **Preparation Time:** 5 minutes. **Prerequisites:** Increased Duration 1.



## Execration

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 9  
**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** Permanent until Dischanted

### Base Effect

The caster lays a permanent curse upon one inanimate object or writes out a curse in the form of an inscription, scroll, etc. The caster must specify the general category of beings who will activate the execration (for example, "all who follow Change," "all devotees of Avánthe," or "all Pé Chói."). The caster cannot name or describe individuals, such as "all 27-year-old Priests of Vimúhla who reside in room 32 in the dormitory of Jakállá's Temple of Vimúhla." Once cast, moving or disturbing the object dispels the curse. If a member of the named category touches the accursed object — even with a pole or other implement — or reads the cursed writing, the object or writing explodes, inflicting (Margin of Success of the Casting check x 5) Health Points to all within a 1 metre blast radius. People outside the specified category will not trigger the object, though they will take damage if standing within range of the explosion.

## Inscription

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** The Spell being Inscribed  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Week per Level of the Spell Inscribed  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Writable Item  
**Duration:** Permanent until used

### Base Effect

The caster can inscribe one Spell he or she knows on a piece of parchment, book, etc. Anyone who can read the Inscription's language can cast it once, upon which the Inscription disappears. The caster can key the Spell to a specific individual's mind; it will be gibberish to anyone else.

If the Inscribed Spell is restricted by temple affiliation, only devotees of Deities that teach these Spells can read (if they can read the Inscription's language) and use such Inscriptions, even if the document is left uncoded. Thus, a worshipper of Sárku or Durrítámish could not use a Spell of Intrepidity inscribed on a scroll, but followers of Karakán, Chegárta, Vimúhla and Chiténg may.

Preparations for the Inscription, both mundane and arcane, are lengthy and the ingredients used in the ritualistic preparation are costly. These ingredients cost 5 káitars per week of inscribing the Spell. When Inscription is cast, the cost of not only the Inscription Spell, but also that of the Spell Inscribed must be paid out of the caster's Energy Pool.

Inscription sometimes fails; the caster must make a Magic Skill check (the GM should roll this) with half the inscribed Spell's Level, rounded up, as a penalty to see if it was cast correctly. A successful Calligraphy Skill check gives a bonus of +1. If the check is successful, the Inscription works. If it fails, the Inscription will not work if read; if it is a Major Failure or worse, the Inscription explodes when read, delivering (the Spell's Level x d10) damage to the reader. Someone who knows the Inscription Spell and studies the paper can detect an incorrect inscription on a successful Intelligence check with a -2 penalty.

## The Perfected Gem of Obliteration

**Temple Affiliation:** Karakán/Chegárta  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** Execration, at least 1 Level in each Spell Attribute, all Spell Specialisations  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Item  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

A weapon of the God of Heroes, it appears in the casters hand as a small red gem. This can be set to react to a particular class of enemy (all Inimical Species, all humans, all Pariah God Worshipers etc.) but not a specific individual. On contact, it will explode with considerable force (8d10 damage to everyone within 2 metres). Karakán does not allow his weapons to remain unused for long and the gem will disappear 1d10 days after it was summoned. Any number of these gems may be acquired and they are indistinguishable from real gemstones.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Duration:* +1d10 days per Level, maximum 3 Levels

*Increased Effect:* +1d10 damage per Level, maximum 5 Levels





## Energy

The Spells in this Spell Group manifest energy.

### The Blade of Inexorable Disjection

**Temple Affiliation:** Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 5  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target (other than the caster)  
**Duration:** 2 minutes

#### Base Effect

A brilliant sword of ruby-hued energy, the length of a long sword, appears in the target's hand (the target cannot be the caster). The target can use this with any one-handed melee Combat Skill (Sword, Mace, Axe, Club), but it will dissipate if it leaves his or her hand. The Blade adds a +1 bonus to attack checks and has a x6 Damage Multiplier. Its wielder cannot use a shield or perform other non-combat actions while holding it.

#### Spell Specialisation

*Two-handed:* The Blade is 2 metres long, adds a +2 bonus, has a x7 Damage Multiplier, and is used with any two-handed melee Combat Skill, such as Sword (Two-Handed), Mace (Two-Handed), Axe (Two-Handed), but not Quarterstaff, Spear, or Pike. This variant may target the caster.

### Doomkill

**Temple Affiliation:** Hnálla/Drá; Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 6  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 60 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 1 metre radius  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

#### Base Effect

The Spell produces a noisy, brilliant explosion. Any target in the Area of Effect must successfully resist or be instantly blown apart along with everything he or she carries, either dying instantly or taking (Margin of Success x 12) damage, at the GM's option. On a successful Magic Resistance check, the target only suffers (Margin of Success x 2) damage.

Doomkill has one disadvantage: it requires a special die roll to hit. On a 1, the Spell explodes in the caster's hand; on a 2 or 3, it falls short of the target (the GM decides how short); on 4 to 7 it hits the target; on 8 to 10 it overshoots (but not beyond the Spell's range). Victims of Doomkill blasts may be revived, but it takes extra time for them to recover.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +30 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 metre Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 1:* The Spell inflicts (Margin of Success x 15) damage or, on a successful Magic Resistance check, the target takes (Margin of Success x 4) damage. This takes two Rounds of Preparation Time.

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 2:* The Spell inflicts (Margin of Success x 20) damage or, on a successful Magic Resistance check, the target takes (Margin of Success x 6) damage and is Stunned by the concussion for a number of minutes equal to the casting Margin of Success. This takes three Rounds of Preparation Time. If this variant is used in a narrow passage or structure (15 metres wide or less) the roof and walls may collapse. Make a die roll; on 1 to 3 no significant structural damage occurs; on 4

to 7 there is a minor collapse, inflicting 1 to 10 more damage to all survivors; on 8 to 10 there is a major cave-in, burying all targets beneath stones and rubble and inflicting 2d10 more damage to them.

#### Notes

Classically, this Spell killed its target outright rather than simply doing massive amounts of damage that might be survivable. Both options are provided to allow GMs choice in handling it in their campaigns.

### Infrangible Orb

**Temple Affiliation:** Vimúhla/Chiténg  
**Magic:** Psychic Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 30 metres  
**Area of Effect:** Caster  
**Duration:** 5 minutes

#### Base Effect

An opaque globe of crackling flame surrounds the caster. This travels with them and does not feel hot to those inside while inflicting hideous burns (6d10 damage, armour has no effect) on anyone who attempts to enter it from the outside. A magician using this Spell can cause massive damage to units of enemy troops and destroy entire towns simply by walking through them. The Orb will incinerate most missile weapons fired at the caster but it is difficult to see out from within, making navigation difficult.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +10 metres per Level, maximum 4 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 target per Level, maximum 5 Levels. The diameter of the orb is increased to allow more people to safely stay inside the Orb.

*Increased Duration:* +9 minutes per Level, maximum 1 Level

#### Spell Specialisations

*Cast on Others:* The Orb can be cast on a target other than the caster.

**Prerequisites:** Increased Range 1

*Transparent:* The Orb is made transparent to those on the inside.

### The Radiant Gaze

**Temple Affiliation:** Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 3  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 20 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 0.5 metre radius  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

#### Base Effect

A visible, hissing blast of energy streams from the caster to the target. The effect is scarlet for magicians devoted to Karakán or Chegárra and orange-red when cast by those devoted to Vimúhla or Chiténg. It inflicts (Margin of Success x a Damage Multiplier of 2) damage when it hits and ignites flammable objects in a 0.5 metres radius circle on a roll of 6 or less.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +25 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 3 Levels

*Increased Power (Unique):* +2 to the Damage Multiplier of the blast per Level, maximum 3 Levels. Flammable objects ignite on a roll of 7 or less. Armour does not protect against the damage.



## Illusions

This group of Spells deals with illusion and altered perception.

### Adornment

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hriháyal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 4  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 20 minutes

#### Base Effect

This Spell causes a target to appear more handsome/beautiful and charismatic, giving a bonus of 2 to the target's Charisma Stat and Attractive Attribute Level.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* 10 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Area of Effect:* 3 metres radius per Level, maximum 1 Level. 1 to 5 additional random targets in the Area of Effect are affected.

#### Spell Specialisations

*Reverse Effect:* This variant gives a penalty of -2 to Charisma and Attractive Level. The effects are not apparent to the target, except how they affect the way others react to him or her. **Prerequisites:** 1 Level of a Spell Attribute.

### Emulation

**Temple Affiliation:** Dlamélish/Hriháyal  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 8  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 30 minutes

#### Base Effect

The Goddess grants a different appearance, a perfect disguise. This must be the same sex and approximate age as the caster. Suitable sacrifice and Ritual skill check allows the caster may request a shape they have used before (but the Goddess does not like to be taken for granted). The disguise covers physical appearance, voice and even scent (so they aren't even recognised by dogs or Rényu). The target retains their usual Attributes and Defects (so if they are attractive, the new body is also attractive).

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 extra person per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Duration:* +8 hour per Level, maximum 2 Levels

#### Spell Specialisations

*Duplicate Specific person:* The caster can choose to perfectly duplicate a specific person of the same sex. They become a perfect physical copy but do not automatically have the knowledge or habits of the original. Quick wits (and the Disguise Skill) are required to impersonate someone over a long period of time.

*Different Type:* The caster can choose to emulate a different sex or a very different age (from a child to a very elderly person). This can be combined with Duplicate to copy such a person.

*Different Species:* The caster can emulate any species of a roughly similar body mass. The do not gain new Skills or powers associated with the new form (a human caster could look like a Pé Chói but could only use one pair of arms). **Prerequisites:** Different Type.

## Phantasms

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 2  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 3 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 1.5 metre radius  
**Duration:** 2 minutes

#### Base Effect

A thin film of ectoplasm appears before the caster. It can be made to appear as any common, homogeneous substance, such as rock, masonry, wood, or draperies. If touched, it "pops" and disappears (unless one of the Specialisations apply).

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +3 metres per Level, maximum 3 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Duration:* +1 minute per Level, maximum 3 Levels

#### Spell Specialisations

*Apparitions* A number of apparitions equal to the margin of success materialise within the Area of Effect. They can be of any species, but may be no larger than human-size. They cannot move out of the Area of Effect and they make no sound. They can stand, wave weapons, threaten, and look ferocious, but they have no other powers. If touched, they vanish. An opponent can detect these fakes with an Intelligence Stat check. How realistic they appear depends on the caster's familiarity with the species they are imitating; this may affect the Difficulty for the Intelligence Stat check.

*Substantial* A number of apparitions equal to the margin of success materialise within the Area of Effect. These phantasms cannot move out of the Area of Effect, but each one has a Combat Value of 3, an Initiative Base of 3, and 30 Health Points. The Spell can provide normal weapons (the phantasms have the appropriate Familiarity Skill) and light armour. They only obey the simplest commands, battling whatever enters there are of Effect, and cannot distinguish between friends and foes. They resist magic using their caster's Psyche Stat and Magic Skill. **Prerequisites:** Apparitions.

*Substantial Group* A number of apparitions equal to the (margin of success x 2) materialise that are identical to the ones created by the Spell Specialisation Substantial. **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Belkhánu/Qón; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Substantial.

*Greater Phantasms* A number of larger phantasms equal to the margin of success materialise that may have any desired semblance (Ahoggýá, Sstú, etc.), though each strikes only one blow per round. They have a Combat Value of 5, an Initiative of 10, and 50 Health Points. They may have Medium armour. Otherwise they are identical to the ones created by the Spell Specialisation Substantial. **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Belkhánu/Qón; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Substantial.

*Major Phantasms* Up to 2 larger phantasms materialise. Each may appear as an animal, mythological monster, demon, etc., but each strikes only once per round. They have a Combat Value of 7, an Initiative of 14, and 70 Health Points, and may receive Heavy armour. Otherwise they are identical to the ones created by the Spell Specialisation Substantial. **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Belkhánu/Qón; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Greater Phantasms.

*Singular Phantasm* One single, extremely large and powerful phantasm materialises. It may appear as a gigantic animal, mythological monster, demon, etc. It has a Combat Value of 8, an Initiative of 16, and 80 Health Points, and may receive the equivalent of steel Medium Armour. It may attack twice per Round and may leave the Area of Effect. Otherwise it is identical to the ones created by the Spell Specialisation Substantial. **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Belkhánu/Qón; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Major Phantasms.



## Semblances

**Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Hnálla/Drá; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Sárku/Durritlámish

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 2

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** 10 metres

**Area of Effect:** 1 metre radius

**Duration:** 1 minute

### Base Effect

This Spell creates a limited illusion of the caster's choice. It may be no larger than the Area of Affect. A target who sees the illusion and fails to resist believes it, and may suffer actual injury if the illusion is harmful (for example, fire, poison gas, etc.). The victim takes actual damage as appropriate for what he or she believes is present, but the body remains unmarked. This Spell only works on intelligent beings. The Tinaliya and the Hlutrúgú are immune to the Spell for unknown reasons, as are the undead, androids, automatons, demons, and creatures created by magic.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +10 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Area of Effect:* +2 metre Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Duration:* +2 minute per Level, maximum 1 Level

## Magic

The Spells in this Spell Group affect the working of Magic.

## The Azure Scarab

**Temple Affiliation:** Ksáru / Grugánu

**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 10

**Preparation Time:** 1 Hour

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** One Item

**Duration:** 6 days

### Base Effect

The servants of the Doomed Prince of the Blue Room are arch magicians and the device of the Azure scarab lets them cast Spells more often and for longer than other practitioners. The magicians store an amount of magical energy into the scarab (which is normally worn as an amulet) equal to their normal energy total. They can put this in during one session or put smaller amounts in over time. The magician recovers magical energy naturally and is able to cast Spells using their internal energy or that stored in the Scarab. This means that when they have recovered the magician will have twice as many magical Energy Points to use. The scarab becomes unstable after six days and the Spell must be recast to continue using it.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Duration:* +6 days per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Effect:* +Caster's Energy Pool per Level, maximum 3 Levels. Over a long period of time the magician can store several times their normal total magical energy in the scarab.

### Spell Defects

*Psychic Linkage (Unique):* The Azure Scarab is temporarily fused to the Pedhétl of the user, so if it is removed more than a few metres from its user they will suffer psychic haemorrhaging. They will "bleed" 1 magic Energy Point per round until they have none left. Once they have reached zero magical Energy Points the Spell is broken and the magician will recover normally.

*Long Preparation Time (Unique):* A caster may choose to lower the effective Level of this Spell by extending the preparation time. This adds twelve hours to the preparation time.

## Benefaction

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Belkhánu/Qón; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Hnálla/Drá; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku

**Magic:** Ritual

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 10

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** One Target (not including Caster)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

This Spell restores (Margin of Success x 5) expended Points from the target's Energy Pool, up to its original value. Points gained through this Spell are usable for up to one hour, but dissipate thereafter if unused.

## The Blessing of the Planes

**Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sárku/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku

**Magic:** Ritual

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 3

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** 1 minute

### Base Effect

The Blessing strengthens the target's magical resistance, giving a bonus of +1 for 1 minute. This Spell is species-specific.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range* +9 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Duration* +4 minutes per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Effect* +1 bonus per Level, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Curse:* This variant gives the target a penalty of -2 to magic resistance for 1 minute. Disenchantment cannot dispel this blessing. **Range:** 20 metres

*Major Blessing:* This variant creates an area with a radius of 1.5 metres and all living beings (excluding the undead, androids, automatons, and creatures created by sorcery) within the circle receive a bonus of +3 to their magical resistance as long as they remain in the circle. **Prerequisites:** Range 1. **Area of Effect:** 1. **Preparation Time:** 5 Rounds.

## Disenchantment

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal

**Magic:** Ritual

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 4

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** 6 metres

**Area of Effect:** One Spell already cast that is still active

**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

If successful, the caster can dispel a Universal Spell currently in effect. It is primarily used to release a person or object from an enchantment. It cannot resurrect a person slain by magic, nor can it cause a revived person to die again. It cannot dispel permanently enchanted steel, although it does work on temporarily enhanced armour and weapons. Disenchantment is effective against any Spell still active (but not the aftermath of an Instantaneous Spell), except for those that specifically say



Disenchantment will not work against them. The Magic Skill of the magician casting the original Spell is the penalty on the Skill check to cast Disenchantment. Each time a Disenchantment Spell fails, add a +1 bonus to any subsequent Disenchantment attempts by the same person. This Spell does not work against Temple Spells, or Spells with a Level higher than 3.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Power (Unique):* +3 Level of Spells affected, +2 Rounds to the Preparation Time per Level, maximum 3 Levels.

### Spell Specialisations

*Disenchant Temple Spells:* This variant also affects Temple Spells. **Prerequisites:** Increased Power 2. **Preparation Time:** 5 minutes.

## Guarding

**Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Hrüü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sáru/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku

**Magic:** Ritual

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 7

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** 15 metres radius

**Duration:** 6 hours

### Base Effect

No Spells may enter or leave the Area of Effect, although they can operate within it. Physical beings can cross its boundaries, strike blows, and fire missiles through it without hindrance. Androids, automatons, creatures produced by sorcery, demons, the undead, and creatures created by sorcery cannot enter the circle, but may continue functioning if inside it; they can also leave. The circle is stationary and will continue operating even if the caster leaves.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Area of Effect:* +15 metres Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Duration:* +18 hours per Level, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Resistant:* This variant is more resistant to Disenchantment, requiring two consecutive Spells of Disenchantment to dispel it. Casters use it to protect important locations (such as temple sanctuaries, council chambers, a governor's apartments) from magical intrusion. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1, Increased Duration 1, Spell Defect Inefficient.

## The Inimitable Defender

**Temple Affiliation:** Hnálla/Drá

**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell

**Prerequisites:** Guarding, at least 1 Level in each Spell Attribute, all Spell Specialisations

**Level:** 10

**Preparation Time:** 2 Rounds

**Range:** Caster

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** 5 minutes

### Base Effect

A translucent, crystalline globe of force surrounds the caster and moves with him or her. No Spell can pass through this defence from the outside in and creatures that depend on extra-planar energy (undead and demons) to survive are unable to enter it and will be driven back if the caster moves towards them. It protects from physical attacks and the movement of the living.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +10 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 target per Level, maximum 4 Levels. The diameter of the orb is increased to allow the additional people to shelter within it.

*Increased Duration:* +4 minutes per Level, maximum 1 Level

## The Seal upon the Powers

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal

**Magic:** Ritual

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 10

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Caster

**Area of Effect:** 5 metres radius

**Duration:** 3 minutes

### Base Effect

A globe of tiny, glowing particles surrounds the caster, acting as a barrier between this plane and the Planes Beyond. No Ritual magic may be cast within this shell, and none may enter it from outside. Living beings, including those animated by magic, can freely enter and leave the circle. Psychic magic can be employed normally. The Seal does not move with the caster, but remains in effect for the duration, even if the caster leaves. Note that since the Seal prevents casting of Ritual magic within it, the caster, if inside, must wait for it to run out before casting a new one.

## The Speculum of Retribution

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hríháyal; Hnálla/Drá; Hrüü/Wurú; Karakán; Chegárra; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sáru/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku

**Magic:** Ritual

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 3

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Caster

**Area of Effect:** None

**Duration:** 1 minute

### Base Effect

This Spell creates an invisible shield around the caster. If he or she successfully resists an opposing Ritual Spell while The Speculum of Retribution is in force, the hostile Spell is reflected back at the enemy magician, affecting him or her and anyone else within the Spell's area of effect. Those affected may of course attempt to resist. This Spell does not work against Psychic Spells. It also does not stop the energies of magico-technological devices, Talismans, or amulets, or physical attacks. The caster may move or perform other activities while this Spell is operating, but cannot cast Spells.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Duration:* +1 minute per Level, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Psychic Magic:* This version reflects Psychic Spells instead of Ritual Spells.

**Prerequisites:** Increased Duration 1.

*All Magic:* This version reflects both Psychic and Ritual Spells. **Prerequisites:** Psychic Magic.

## The Sphere of Impermeable Quiescence

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 10

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Caster

**Area of Effect:** 5 metres radius

**Duration:** 3 minutes

### Base Effect

A globe of tiny, glowing particles surrounds the caster, acting as a barrier between this plane and the Planes Beyond. No Psychic magic may be cast within this shell, and



none may enter it from outside. Living beings, including those animated by magic, can freely enter and leave the circle. Ritual magic can be employed normally. The Seal does not move with the caster, but remains in effect for the duration, even if the caster leaves. Note that since the Sphere prevents casting of Psychic magic within it, the caster, if inside, must wait for it to run out before casting a new one.

## Warding

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 4  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** 0.5 metres radius  
**Duration:** 2 minutes

### Base Effect

This Spell creates a defensive shell around the caster's body. Blows and missiles cannot penetrate the shield in either direction. Slow-moving objects and substances penetrate this shield normally, however, as do magical effects of any kind. A being can slowly push his or her way into the sphere, taking 2 rounds to do so (during which time the caster can strike at him or her freely). Once inside, the attacker and the caster may fight with short length weapons only. The shield travels with the caster.

### Spell Attributes

**Increased Area of Effect:** +0.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels. The shell can hold two people at Level 1, 5 people at Level 2. Medium length weapons may be used inside it.

### Spell Specialisations

**Melee Shield:** Anyone within the shield can strike physical blows through it, though they may not fire missiles, including those propelled by the Spell of Translocation.

The caster can move normally, taking the shield with him or her, but others cannot leave its Area of Effect without losing its protection. To enter the circle from outside, an individual must spend 4 rounds pushing slowly into it (it presents no resistance to people attempting to leave it). Alternatively, the caster may stay outside the shield and cast it upon a group of comrades. They must be within the Area of Effect and number no more than 5 human-size creatures. (If there are more than 5 people within the Area of Effect, roll randomly to see who is left outside.) If the caster casts the shield from outside, the shield cannot move. **Temple Affiliation:** Hnálla/Drá; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Karakán/Chegarra; Vimúhla/Chiténg. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 2

**Greater Warding:** Casters can use this variant on buildings or other areas made of stone, brick, earth, adobe, etc. It is ineffective upon wood, matting, and less permanent materials. All solid constructions or natural features within the Area of Effect are protected against destruction by Spells, magico-technological devices, amulets, Talismans, etc. There is no effect upon beings or transitory articles like furniture within the shield, or upon the use of sorcery (either Ritual or Psychic) against beings or such articles. A Doomkill might slay all beings within its Area of Effect, for example, but if this Spell has been cast upon the area, the buildings and surroundings are left intact. The purpose of this variant is to safeguard fortifications, cities, and valued edifices against sorcerous harm. One of the regular duties of the Priesthoods possessing this Spell is to make the rounds of their area casting it upon important buildings and defences. A building protected in this manner is still affected by damage caused by non-magical means. **Temple Affiliation:** Hnálla/Drá; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Karakán/Chegarra; Vimúhla/Chiténg. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 2. **Preparation Time:** 10 minutes. **Range:** 20 metres. **Area of Effect:** 250 metres radius. **Duration:** 1 week.





## Manifestation

The Spells in this Spell Group manifest matter.

### The Carpet of Conflagration

**Temple Affiliation:** Vimúhla/Chiténg  
**Magic:** Psychic Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 30 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 1 metre wide  
**Duration:** 3 minutes

#### Base Effect

A stream of molten lava emerges from a hole in the sky and pours out onto the ground. It will flow slowly (1 metre per six seconds) forward to the maximum range of the Spell. Contact with the lava will do 6d10 damage per round and it can destroy any flammable object. It will disappear once the duration is over.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 metre width per Level, maximum 5 Levels

*Increased Range:* +30 metres per Level, maximum 3 Levels

*Increased Duration:* +3 minutes per Level, maximum 3 Levels

### Congelation

**Temple Affiliation:** Hrü'ü/Wurú  
**Magic:** Psychic Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 15 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 15 metres radius  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

#### Base Effect

The illusion of warmth is dispelled and the absolute cold of Hrü'ü is expressed. A part of the target is completely frozen, inflicting 9d10 damage. Roll 1d10 for vertical body location with 1 being the head and 10 being the feet. This Spell is extremely painful and lethal; either a vital organ is frozen and the target dies quickly or as the frozen area warms up the black and rotted body part poisons the victim over the next two days. Amputation or complete magical healing are a minimum requirement to survive any hit from this Spell. The agony caused by having any part of the body frozen in this way imposes a -2 penalty to most actions.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +15 metres per Level, maximum 3 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +15 metres radius per Level, maximum 3 Levels

#### Spell Specialisations

*Construction:* The caster can control the shape of the cold sufficiently to create large simple solids out of ice created from water or even from moisture in the air. This is never more than 12 cubic metres of ice and may require repeated castings to acquire the volume and perfect the shape.

### Desiccation

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sáрку/Durritlámish  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 3  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** Variable

#### Base Effect

The caster can dry a target's body part with a single touch, but he or she must first successfully touch the target (normal Combat Attack check). The target loses the use of the body area touched for (Magic Skill check Margin of Success) minutes. The body part affected is determined randomly with a die roll. 1: head hit, which is equal to a Level 2 Stun; 2-4 torso or abdomen hit, which stops the flow of blood and causes a brief but disabling heart attack; 5+ hit an arm, leg, tail, or other appendage, which renders that appendage useless. If the target is stationary or unaware, the caster can pick the hit location at the GM's discretion. Armour does not help. Healing (Increased Effect 2 or Regeneration or Greater Healing) or Disenchantment can end the effects before the duration ends.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +15 metre per Level, maximum 2 Levels. The caster does not need to touch the target and a Combat Attack check is not required.

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 1:* A head hit causes a coma lasting for 1 to 10 days; a torso or abdomen hit paralyzes the victim for 1 to 20 days; and a hit on a limb withers it permanently. Disenchantment is useless, as is Medical Skill. Healing (Regeneration) restores a withered limb, but is futile against the coma or paralysis caused by a head or body hit. Healing (Greater Healing) does heal the coma or paralysis.

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 2:* This dries up the target's body fluids in the afflicted area permanently. A victim struck in the head, torso, or abdomen dies immediately. At the GM's option, a hit to one of those areas could paralyse the victim or put him or her into a coma for months instead or until someone applies Healing (Greater Healing). A hit against an appendage withers the member forever, unless someone casts a Healing (Regeneration or Greater Healing) within 1 hour.

#### Spell Notes

Classically, the Increased Power 2 variant of this Spell kills its target outright with a head, torso, or abdomen hit rather than simply debilitating him or her for an extended time. Both options are provided here to allow GMs to choose how to handle it in their campaigns.

### Food of the Ssú

**Temple Affiliation:** Ksáru / Grugánu  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 20 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 3 metres radius  
**Duration:** 5 minutes

#### Base Effect

The Old Life blossoms suddenly and unnaturally in the affected area. This Food of the Ssú has all of the characteristics of that which is naturally occurring (see Bestiary, page 160) but suddenly disappears at the end of the duration.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +20 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +3 metre radius per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Duration:* +5 minutes per Level, maximum 3 Levels



## Light and Darkness

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 1  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** 1 metre radius  
**Duration:** 5 minutes

### Base Effect

A ball of dim, white light appears at the caster's fingertips and illuminates the Area of Effect. The caster can move normally while holding this light. If he or she lets go, throws it, or performs other activities requiring both hands, the light fails.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +15 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Area of Effect:* Doubles the Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Duration:* +10 minutes per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Effect:* The results is a bright light, rather than a dim light, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Darkness:* The ball is of the blackest darkness with the same size and properties as the light. All within the area of effect are in total darkness.

*Bright Light:* The ball is a bright light.

*Beam:* The result is a beam that illuminates (or darkens) an area 1 metre in radius at a distance of up to 20 metres. The caster can move normally, but must use one hand to hold and guide the beam; thus he or she cannot cast Ritual Spells while it is in effect. **Prerequisites:** Bright Light or Darkness, as appropriate.

*Adjacent Area:* The caster can cast the Spell into an adjacent area into which he or she cannot see (up to 20 metres away), even if there is an obstruction in the way.

*Greater Light and Darkness:* A soundless flash of blinding light (in the case of magicians devoted to Hnálla or Drá) or of Stygian darkness (when cast by a worshipper of Hrü'ü or Wurú) permanently blinds any target within the Area of Effect looking in the caster's direction. Only living beings are affected; the undead, androids, automatons, demons, and creatures created by magic are immune. Certain higher variants of Healing can cure this blindness. **Temple Affiliation:** Hnálla/Drá; Hrü'ü/Wurú. **Duration:** Instantaneously. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 1, Increased Area of Effect 2, Bright Light (Hnálla/Drá affiliation) or Darkness (Hrü'ü/Wurú affiliation), Adjacent Area.

## Nutrition

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 4  
**Preparation Time:** 1 minute  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

Fills the stomachs of the targets within the Area of Effect with nourishment appropriate to his or her species equivalent of one full meal. There is no external effect, and the target need not physically eat or drink. Nutrition does not provide long-term sustenance; it lacks certain necessary nutrients (or has them in much smaller quantities) so that one cannot subsist on the food provided by this spell for more than about a week or so.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels

## Spell Specialisations

*Food:* Creates visible food and drink for a number of people equal to the casting Margin of Success. This is simple fare of the sort the caster is most familiar: bread, meat, water or wine, fruits, etc. It appears in front of the caster and remains until consumed or the Spell expires. It is worth noting that Tsoyáni are suspicious of magically created food, and many refuse to partake unless desperate. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 2. **Preparation Time:** 10 minutes. **Duration:** 10 minutes.

*Greater Nutrition:* This Spell creates a feast of excellent food and drink (of a sort known to the caster from personal experience) for (Margin of Success x 4) persons. The feast appears 3 metres in front of the caster and remain until consumed or for 20 minutes, whichever occurs first. **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hriháyal. **Prerequisites:** Food. **Preparation Time:** 5 minutes. **Duration:** 20 minutes

*Greatest Nutrition:* This Spell creates a feast of excellent food and drink (of a sort known to the caster from personal experience) for (Margin of Success x 10) persons. The feast appears 3 metres in front of the caster and remain until consumed or for 20 minutes, whichever occurs first. This variant permits the caster to produce victuals preferred by other species, or even by animals, if desired. **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hriháyal. **Prerequisites:** Food. **Preparation Time:** 5 minutes. **Duration:** 20 minutes.

## The Replication of Heroes

**Temple Affiliation:** Karakán/Chegárra  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** Excretion, at least 1 Level in each Spell Attribute, all Spell Specialisations  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 2 Rounds  
**Range:** 2 metres  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 1 Hour

### Base Effect

Sometimes Karakán needs more heroes than he has presently available. This Spell allows a target to be duplicated, with both having the exactly the same Skills and motivations but with their Health Points split between them. Neither may perform magic. Both heroes may operate independently and are effectively two individuals, they will automatically recombine when the Spell is ended and the hero will have the (somewhat confusing) memories of both.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +200 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 target per Level, maximum 5 Levels

### Spell Specialisations

*Maintain Health:* All of the replicated targets have their normal health.

*Multiple Copies:* The hero is made three. All have the same Skills and motivations, but Health Points are split between them.

## Tranquilisation

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 5  
**Preparation Time:** 1 minute  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** 5 metres radius  
**Duration:** 20 minutes

### Base Effect

An area of calm surrounds the caster and others within the 5 metres radius Area of Effect for 20 minutes. Rain, wind, and snow will not enter the zone; ocean waves are stilled; and even earthquakes cease within the Area of Effect. The storm (or other relevant natural phenomenon) is unaffected by the Spell on a casting roll of 8 or higher.



### Spell Attributes

*Increased Area of Effect:* +10 metres Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Duration:* +20 minutes per Level, maximum 2 Levels

### Vallation

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 9  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 60 metres (maximum; travels outward from caster: see Base Effect)  
**Area of Effect:** See Base Effect  
**Duration:** 3 minutes

#### Base Effect

A vertical wall of other-planar substance, 3 metres square and 1 metres thick appears 1 metres in front of the caster and moves away from him or her at a rate of 2 metres per round until it either reaches the Spell's limit and dissipates, is destroyed by a collision with another Vallation, or encounters a major obstruction (such as a wall, a turn in a passage, a staircase, or other large stationary object).

A Vallation may fit into a smaller area but has the maximum dimensions noted above. The damage incurred against a character struck by Vallation varies; roll a die for each victim and multiply it by the Margin of Success to determine how many Health damage it inflicts. This damage occurs only in the round the Vallation strikes, and it then passes over the victim. A victim who resists still suffers (Margin of Success x 2) damage. A Vallation automatically Disenchants creatures created by sorcery if it hits them. It blocks all physical blows and missiles (including those hurled by the Spell of Translocation). It also acts as a shield against the following Spells: Doomkill, The Hands of Krá the Mighty, The Missile of Metállja, The Radiant Gaze, The Silver Halo of Soul-Stealing, The Speculum of Retribution, and The Vapour of Death.

Should two opposing Vallations meet, roll a die for each with modifiers according to table below; the one with the highest score continues on its way, while the losing Spell dissipates. A tie halts both Spells in place, and further rolls are made each subsequent Round until one or the other wins. The appearance and substance of a Vallation differ according to the caster's **Temple Affiliation:**

Temple Affiliation	Type of Vallation Created
Avánthe/Dilinála	Water; +1 against a Vallation of Fire.
Belkhánu/Qón	Wind; +1 against a Vallation of Indigo Fog. It will also turn a Vapour of Death Spell back upon its caster.
Dlamélish/Hriháyal	Writhing Serpents; +1 against a Vallation of Grey Mist. The serpents are poisonous (treat as Alásh Snake Venom, page 103)
Hnálla/Drá	Calm; +1 against a Vallation of Wind.
Hrú'ü/Wurú	Ice; +1 against a Vallation of Water.
Karakán/Chegárra	Clashing Swords; +1 against a Vallation of Serpents.
Ksáru/Grugánu	Indigo Fog; +1 against a Vallation of Calm.
Sárku/Durritlámish	Grave Earth; +1 against a Vallation of Swords.
Thúmis/Keténgku	Grey Mist; +1 against a Vallation of Grave Earth.
Vimúhla/Chiténg	Fire; +1 against a Vallation of Ice. It also ignites flammable objects on a 4 or higher.

### The Vapour of Death

**Temple Affiliation:** Hrú'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sárku/Durritlámish; Vimúhla/Chiténg

**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 5  
**Preparation Time:** 2 Rounds  
**Range:** 20 metres (maximum value, see Base Effect)  
**Area of Effect:** 3 metres radius sphere  
**Duration:** 3 minutes

#### Base Effect

A visible fog of noxious gas appears 1 metre in front of the caster and rolls directly away from him or her at a speed of 1 metre per round until it reaches the Spell range limit. Control of Self (Increased Power 2) protects a victim from all but the Sárku and Durritlámish variant by obviating the need to breathe. Each temple's version of this Spell produces a different gas, with different effects:

#### Temple Affiliation Vapour

Hrú'ü/Wurú	Purplish-grey nerve gas; any breathing creature who fails to resist dies within 1 round. Healing (Alleviation) must be administered at once to save him or her.
Ksáru/Grugánu	Bluish-black suffocating gas; any breathing creature dies within 2 rounds unless saved by Healing (Restoration or Greater Healing).
Sárku/Durritlámish	Greenish-brown corrosive gas that burns all living beings. Clothing and armour provide no protection, although cloth dipped in water (or complete immersion, if possible) reduces injury by one half. These fumes cause Margin of Success x 6 Health Points damage for 1-5 rounds (randomly rolled for each victim). Control of Self is of no use, although it can stop the pain of the burns.
Vimúhla/Chiténg	Reddish-brown smoke; any breathing creature dies within 3 rounds from fumes that affect the target like carbon monoxide. The victim feels drowsy and cannot function during the first round, falls unconscious during the second, goes into a coma during the third, and succumbs at the beginning of the fourth. If the victim successfully resists, he or she suffers no damage. A Spell of Healing (Alleviation) can cure the effects of this variant if applied in time.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +20 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Duration:* +1 minute per Level, maximum 1 Level

#### Spell Specialisations

**Corrosive:** In addition to the usual effects, the vapours are infused with wisps of a yellowish gas that affect chlén-hide, steel, and the copper used by the Temple of Sárku and Durritlámish. Other materials are unaffected. Chlén-hide is softened into sticky goo. Steel and copper are reduced in quality, with high-quality metal becoming poor-quality metal and poor-quality metal decaying into a mass of corrosion. Putting the metal under water before the gas reaches it is the only way to save these materials from harm. All four temples using this Spell employ this variant, mingling it with their usual gases. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 1, Increased Area of Effect 1. **Preparation Time:** 4 rounds.



## The Web of Kriyág, Lover of Spiders

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 5  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 10 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 1.5 metres radius  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

This Spell hurls a net of tangling webs; an affected target is immobilised and must make a Strength check at a -4 penalty to get free. This check may be made once every other round, so the target will lose at least the first round trying to get out.

## Mind

The Spells in this Spell Group affect a person's mental abilities.

### Artfulness

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Hnálla/Drá; Ksáru/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku  
**Magic:** Psychic  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 2  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

Helps a target recall a non-physical Skill accurately, giving him or her a +1 bonus on a Skill check for an Art or Artisan Skill. The bonus can also apply to Skills such as Scholar, Culture, or Language to remember information.

### Spell Specialisations

**Enduring:** The target receives a +2 bonus to all relevant Skill checks; this variant also works with the Medical Skill. Note that an artisan who needs minutes or hours to manufacture an object will either require repeated castings or have the Spell cast upon him or her at crucial stages during the process. **Duration:** 2 minutes.

### Ascertainment

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Psychic  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 2  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Caster  
**Area of Effect:** 5 metres radius  
**Duration:** 5 minutes

### Base Effect

This Spell allows the caster to read the surface thoughts of a member of his or her own species within range.

### Spell Attributes

**Increased Area of Effect:** +10 metre Radius per Level, maximum 5 Levels

### Spell Specialisations

**Intentions:** The caster can also determine the target's basic intentions (hostility or friendliness).

**Animals:** The caster can also perceive the simple thoughts of non-intelligent and semi-intelligent animals (but not of the undead, androids, automatons, demons, or creatures created by sorcery). The caster also understands their intentions (hostility or friendliness) and is aware of their numbers (but not distance or direction).

**Perceive Non-humans:** The caster can also perceive (but cannot understand) the thoughts of other intelligent species, and discerns their numbers, direction, and distance. The caster can also identify the species of intelligent beings

**Communicate:** The caster can communicate telepathically with one willing member of his or her own species within range. An unwilling target may make a Psyche Stat check to remain undetected. Even if the check fails, the target can refuse to "speak" to the caster, in which case only the effects of the Spell Specialisation Intentions occur.

**Understand Non-humans:** The caster can also comprehend the thoughts of friendly, intelligent non-humans and can communicate with one willing being within the Area of Effect. **Prerequisites:** Perceive Non-humans, Communicate.

**Psychic Trap:** Caster establishes a psychic trap around him or herself, which detects and immobilises anyone attempting to cast a Psychic Spell into the circle. If the opposing caster fails a Magic Resistance check, he or she is held motionless for the duration of the Spell, unable to think, speak, or otherwise escape from the trap. If the caster moves, the "trap" travels along with the caster at its centre. The caster, however, can employ both Psychic and Ritual Spells within it as usual. **Prerequisites:** Intentions, Communicate, Understand Non-humans. **Duration:** 4 hours.

**Telepathy:** This variant permits telepathic conversation between any number of beings within the Area of Effect, provided that they are willing to communicate. This Spell is species-specific. **Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sárku/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 2, Intentions, Communicate.

**Exotelepathy:** This variant permits telepathic conversation between any number of beings within the Area of Effect, regardless of species, provided that they are willing to communicate. **Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sárku/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 4, Telepathy.

**Long Range:** Enhanced by special training in the temple academies, this variant produces networks of rapid telepathic communication across the Five Empires. A message deemed important enough by the ecclesiastical or secular authorities can be transmitted in this fashion from Jakálla, for instance, all the way to Avanthár within a half hour. This training demands two years of hard work and "Psychic meshing" (specialised Teamwork) with one's colleagues. Those who have it normally remain at their posts throughout their careers. Telepathic networks are not known in the smaller nations or in non-human lands, apart from the Pé Chói and Miháli enclaves. **Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sárku/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 4, Greater Ascertainment Telepathy.

## Benignity

**Temple Affiliation:** Thúmis/Keténgku  
**Magic:** Psychic Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 8  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 15 metres  
**Area of Effect:** Caster  
**Duration:** 1 Hour

### Base Effect

The peace of Lord Thúmis is brought into the world. Anyone within the Area of Effect seeing the caster must resist this Spell or be unable to feel hostile towards the caster and those accompanying them. This does not necessarily make the target feel positively towards the caster, but it will affect all intelligent species except for the Inimical. Those affected will still defend themselves, carry out their normal duties and are not forced to assist the caster.

### Spell Attributes

**Increased Range:** +15 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

**Increased Area of Effect:** +1 person per Level, maximum 4 Levels

**Increased Duration:** +1 Hour per Level, maximum 2 Levels

### Spell Specialisations

**Affect Inimical:** The Spell may even influence the Inimical Species. This makes it possible for a human to walk through a Hlüss hive unmolested for the duration of this Spell.



## Comprehension

**Temple Affiliation:** Hnálla/Drá; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 2

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** Caster

**Duration:** 10 minutes

### Base Effect

The caster understands one spoken human language audible within the Area of Effect. The Spell works by reading the psychic impressions of the speaker, so if a speaker wants to confuse the listener, he or she may attempt to resist.

### Spell Specialisations

*Spoken:* The caster can speak the language in addition to understanding it.

*Non-human Languages:* The caster can understand and speak even a non-human language, except the Mihállí language.

*Written:* The caster can comprehend documents, inscriptions, etc., in a single modern language. **Prerequisites:** Spoken.

*Ancient Languages:* The caster can read inscriptions, scrolls, etc. written in any of the ancient languages of the Bednálljan period or later (but not those of earlier periods; the vestiges of their writers' psychic auras are now too faint). The caster receives forewarning if the writing is magically dangerous or cursed. Ancient Mihállí is readable with the aid of this variant, but the speech of the modern, living Mihállí remains unintelligible for some unknown reason. **Prerequisites:** Non-human Languages, Written.

## Derangement

**Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Sáru/Durritlámish

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 3

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** 20 metres

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** Variable (see Base Effect)

### Base Effect

The target becomes temporarily insane for 1d10 minutes, with the GM randomly determining actions in co-operation with the player (possibly in secret so the other players remain unaware). This Spell only affects intelligent beings. It does not work on someone who is already under the effects of the Control of Self (Increased Power 1) Spell.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +20 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Duration (Unique) — Level 1:* the insanity lasts from 1 to 5 days (rolled one die, divided by 2, and rounded up).

*Increased Duration (Unique) — Level 2:* the insanity is permanent, until ended by Disenchantment.

## Domination

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 2

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** 20 metres

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** 1 minute

### Base Effect

The caster gains crude control over an intelligent being. He or she can order the target to flee, fight against his or her friends, or remain immobile during the Duration of the Spell. The target receives a Willpower check every Round, with bonuses if the action is unnatural for the target and penalties if it is what the target would be doing anyway. If the check is successful, the target has broken the caster's control (the caster will not know this until the target acts against his or her orders). The caster must concentrate on the Spell; if the caster is injured or distracted (allow a Willpower check to avoid distraction), the control ends.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +20 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +3 metre Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Duration:* +4 minutes per Level, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Refined Control:* The caster controls the targets in a more refined fashion, forcing the target to perform more intricate actions (such as give guidance, open a chest, remember or forget information, tell falsehoods believably). Any observer wishing to notice something wrong with an individual affected by this type of control must make an Intelligence Stat check. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1, Increased Duration 1.

*Mindbar:* This variant creates a powerful "Mindbar," giving the caster full control over an intelligent being's thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, and actions. A Perception of the Energies Spell can detect the existence of a Domination Spell in a victim's mind. **Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sáru/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1, Increased Duration 1. **Duration:** 1 Day.

*Permanent Mindbar:* This variant creates a powerful "Mindbar" giving the caster full control over an intelligent being's thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, and actions. It is permanent until Disenchanted and more difficult to detect: a Perception of the Energies Spell can detect the existence of a Domination Spell in a victim's mind but has a -2 penalty. **Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sáru/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1, Increased Duration 1. **Duration:** Permanent until Disenchanted.



## Enthrallment

**Temple Affiliation:** Dlamélish/Hriháyal  
**Magic:** Psychic Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 4 Hours

### Base Effect

The glamour of the Goddess descends upon the target making him or her more attractive, charming and persuasive. At the base Level this adds two Levels of the Attractiveness Attribute and makes Charm Skill checks much easier (+2 per level to check). This Spell can be cast on other people but is species specific and would only be used on worshippers of Dlamélish or Hriháyal (the Repulsion specialisation is an exception). Anyone (including the caster) and any number of people seeing the target and failing a Magic Resistance check will involuntarily start acting in ways that are more pleasing to the Goddess within 1d10 minutes times the value of their Willpower Stat. This significantly limits where this spell should be used.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +10 metres per Level, maximum 1 Levels

*Increased Duration:* +4 hours per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Effect:* +1 Level of Attractive per Level, maximum 3 Levels. It is possible to achieve supernatural Levels of attractiveness with this Spell. Human reactions to such a presence will tend to be extreme but not always predictable.

### Spell Specialisations

*Repulsive:* The Spell has a reversed effect; making the target subtly repulsive to all around them. It is impossible to identify what is specifically wrong with them but it is as if they have one Level of the Ugly Defect and suffer -4 to all Charm and Oratory checks. **Prerequisites:** Increase Range 3. **Range:** 10 metres.

## Intrepidity

**Temple Affiliation:** Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg  
**Magic:** Psychic  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 7  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 1 metre  
**Area of Effect:** 1.5 metre radius  
**Duration:** 3 minutes

### Base Effect

This Spell makes all intelligent beings in the area of effect braver, giving them a +2 bonus against the Intimidation Skill, as well as Spells, beings, or magical devices that produce fear. Androids, automatons, demons, the undead, and creatures created by magic are not affected.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +9 metre per Level, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Fear:* This variant robs all intelligent beings within the Area of Effect of their courage, giving a -3 penalty to resisting Intimidation or fear. If the targets are normally recklessly brave, they become defensive. If they are already on the defensive or shaken, they will rout, dropping their weapons while fleeing. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 1.





## Sagacity

**Temple Affiliation:** Ksáru/Grugánu; Sárku/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 2  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 3 minutes

### Base Effect

This Spell increases the target's powers of memory and reasoning, giving him or her a +1 Intelligence Stat bonus. This Spell is species-specific.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* 15 metres per Level, maximum 3 Levels  
*Increased Area of Effect:* 1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level  
*Increased Effect:* +1 to Intelligence Stat per Level, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Reverse Effect:* The target's Intelligence Stat is reduced by 2 for a period of (Margin of Success) minutes. This Spell is species-specific. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 1.

*Extreme Reversion:* The target's Intelligence Stat is reduced to 0 for one hour, and he or she must be guided, instructed, and led. Healing and Alleviation will not work on the target. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 2, Increased Effect 1.

## Soporiferousness

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 2  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 20 metres  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 5 minutes

### Base Effect

Causes the target to fall asleep. He or she will awaken to rough shaking. This Spell operates only upon living beings no larger than a Shén or black Ssú. Undead, androids, automatons, demons, Pygmy Folk and Shunned Ones are immune to it.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +20 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels  
*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 1:* The target sleeps for 1 hour; it takes five minutes to wake the target  
*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 2:* The target sleeps for six hours; it takes five minutes to wake the target. This variant can affect very large beings such as a Sró or Sérudla.

## Terrorisation

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Psychic  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 3  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 20 metres  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 1 minute

### Base Effect

This Spell causes a target to flee in utter panic from the caster or towards a safe refuge, as determined by the GM. It takes this Spell one round to travel from its caster to the target, so the target may attempt to dispel it with Disenchantment before it arrives if he or she knows it is coming. Once the Spell takes effect, nothing can release the victim from the fear until it expires.

## Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +20 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels  
*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level  
*Increased Duration:* +4 minutes per Level, maximum 1 Level

## Spell Specialisations

*Paralyse:* This Spell paralyzes a single target with fear. The target cannot move, fight, or act for 1 minute, after which he or she runs away in panic for 5 more minutes.  
**Prerequisites:** Increased Range 2, Increased Duration.

## Zoic Domination

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 2  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 15 metres  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 1 minute

### Base Effect

The caster has crude control over one non-intelligent animal. Huge animals, the undead, androids, automatons, creatures created by sorcery, and demons are immune. The caster can force the target to fight, flee, or remain stationary. The target receives a Willpower check every round, with bonuses if the action is unnatural for the target and penalties if it is what the target would be doing anyway. If the check is successful, the target has broken the caster's control (the caster will not know this until the target acts against his or her orders). The caster must concentrate on the Spell; if the caster is injured or distracted (allow a Willpower check to avoid distraction), the control ends.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +15 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level  
*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metres radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels  
*Increased Duration:* +2 minutes per Level, maximum 2 Levels  
*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 1:* the Spell affects semi-intelligent and very large creatures as well.

### Spell Specialisations

*Creature of the Deeps:* This variant gives the caster control over one great creature of the deeps (including akhó) for 5 minutes. More animals of smaller size can instead be included in this variant, and the degree of control is as given **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hriháyal. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 1, Increased Duration 2, Increased Area of Effect 1.

*Fine Control:* This variant gives the caster fine control over smaller creatures (up to human size) and semi-intelligent beings. Large animals and the gigantic leviathans of the seas are immune. The caster can make the target fight, accompany him or her, cry warnings of intruders, scout for food, and assist in physical labour (digging a hole, for example, felling a tree, etc.), up to the limits of the creature's intelligence and strength. **Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Dlamélish/Hriháyal. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 1, Increased Duration 2, Increased Power 1. **Duration:** 30 minutes.



## Movement

The Spells in this Spell Group move items.

### Aeriality

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Belkhánu/Qón; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Hnálla/Drá; Hrüü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** Translocation (Increased Power 3, Increased Area of Effect 2)

**Level:** 1

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** 5 minutes

#### Base Effect

The caster can rise vertically to a height of 10 metres and drift laterally up to 1 metre. He or she can cast Psychic Spells while in the air, but not Ritual Spells. The caster can fight with melee weapons or throw objects at a -2 penalty, unless he is carrying extra mass (see Spell Attribute Increased Mass)

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Duration:* +5 minutes per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Area of Effect:* +2.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Speed (Unique):* +10 metres per Round movement per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Mass (Unique):* +75 kilograms per Level, maximum 2 Levels

#### Spell Specialisations

*Passengers:* The Caster also lifts 1 to 5 targets randomly from within the Area of Effect. "Passengers" must remain within the Area of Effect, but not necessarily in physical contact with the caster or primary target. All may melee and fire missiles normally, but can only use Psychic sorcery. Each target may carry as much as 75 kg extra. Alternatively, the caster may fly alone and carry an additional mass up to 300 kg. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1, Increased Speed 2, Increased Mass 2.

### The Hands of Krá the Mighty

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála; Belkhánu/Qón; Dlamélish/Hriháyal; Sárku/Durrítámish

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** None

**Level:** 3

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** 20 metres

**Area of Effect:** One Target

**Duration:** Instantaneous

#### Base Effect

An invisible vice of physical force seizes the target. A character who successfully resists suffers (Margin of Success x 2) damage; one who fails to resist either dies instantly or suffers (Margin of Success x 9) damage.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +20 metres per Level, maximum 3 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 metre Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 1:* A character who successfully resists suffers (Margin of Success x 4) damage while one who fails dies instantly or suffers (Margin of Success x 12) damage. This variant can perform actions requiring a single burst of great strength (smashing open a stout door, for example, or breaking down a wall no more than 50 cm thick).

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 2:* The Hands can simultaneously seize two targets of human size (or 1 larger creature, or 3 smaller ones) who are near each other. If the targets successfully resist, they suffer (Margin of Success x 6) damage; if they fail they are either killed instantly or suffer (Margin of Success x 15) damage. This Spell variant can batter down large gates, break through a masonry wall 2 metres thick, topple tall trees, etc. Warding (Greater Warding) protects a structure from this Spell.

#### Spell Notes

Classically, this Spell kills its target outright rather than simply inflicting massive amounts of damage that targets might survive. Both options are provided to allow GMs to choose how to handle it in their campaigns.

### The Missile of Metallja

**Temple Affiliation:** Ksáru/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku

**Magic:** Psychic

**Prerequisites:** Translocation (Dustdevil)

**Level:** 6

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** 30 metres

**Area of Effect:** 1 Person

**Duration:** 3 minutes

#### Base Effect

This Spell fires a silent, invisible bolt of psychic force at a single target. The caster may choose whether to stun the target for (Margin of Success) minutes, or inflict physical damage. If the caster chooses physical damage, the target either dies instantly or takes (Margin of Success x 12) Health Points at the GM's discretion. Targets who successfully make their Magic Resistance check suffer no damage.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +30 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level: the Spell affects all targets in the Area of Effect.

#### Spell Notes

Classically, this Spell kills its target outright if the caster chooses to do so rather than simply inflicting massive damage which might be survivable. Both options are provided to allow GMs to make the choice for their campaigns.

### Robustness

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal

**Magic:** Ritual

**Prerequisites:** Translocation

**Level:** 3

**Preparation Time:** 1 Round

**Range:** Touch

**Area of Effect:** Caster

**Duration:** 15 minutes

#### Base Effect

This Spell reduces the effective mass of any burden by up to 150 kg. The size and clumsiness of the burden are still present, however, even though part of its mass is not.

#### Spell Attributes

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 target per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increased Power (Unique) — Level 1:* This Spell reduces the effective mass of any burden by up to 300 kg.



## Seismism

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 50 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 50 metres radius  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

The ground itself rises up against those who would dare defy the will of Avánthe. There is an earth tremor that will cause anyone in the area to fall unless they take a round to steady themselves and make a Dex check. Stone buildings will be slightly damaged even at the base Level but some of the spells of Warding and Guarding will protect structures. The ground beneath the caster's feet always remains solid, allowing them to stand safely in the midst of the quake.

### Spell Attributes

*Increase Range:* +50 metres per Level, maximum 4 Levels

*Increase Area of Effect:* +50 metres per Level, maximum 4 Levels

*Increase Power (Unique):* The tremor is so violent that it will injure anyone in the area falls to the ground. The amount of damage taken each minute is based on the Level of failure of the Dex check (Damage multiplier 1 per Level, maximum 6 Levels). This also seriously increases structural damage to buildings.

## Translocation

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Psychic  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 2  
**Preparation Time:** 1 minute  
**Range:** 5 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 5 centimetres radius  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

This Spell allows the caster to lift and slowly move a light object (up to 10 grams) by telekinesis. The object must fit within the Area of Effect entirely. The object cannot be thrown with significant force, but the caster can move it to a specified location within the Spell's range. The GM may require a Dexterity Stat check with an appropriate modifier if the caster wishes to perform delicate actions with the target object (for example, inserting a key into a lock and turning it).

### Spell Attributes

*Increase Range:* +20 metres per Level, maximum 3 Levels

*Increase Area of Effect:* +15 centimetres Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increase Power (Unique) — Level 1:* The object can weigh up to 100 g and it can be thrown with sufficient force to damage the target. If the caster hurls the object, he or she must make an Attack check as if throwing a weapon, using any relevant Skill with thrown weapons; the target may defend normally. Damage is based on the Margin of Success for the Attack check, with an x2 Damage Multiplier.

*Increase Power (Unique) — Level 2:* The object can weigh up to 300 g and it can be thrown with sufficient force to damage the target. If the caster hurls the object, he or she must make an Attack check as if throwing a weapon, using any relevant Skill with thrown weapons; the target may defend normally. Damage is based on the Margin of Success for the Attack check, with an x4 Damage Multiplier.

*Increase Power (Unique) — Level 3:* The object can weigh up to 1 kg and it can be thrown with sufficient force to damage the target. If the caster hurls the object, he or she must make an Attack check as if throwing a weapon, using any relevant Skill with thrown weapons; the target may defend normally. Damage is based on the Margin of Success for the Attack check, with an x6 Damage Multiplier.

### Spell Specialisations

*Dustdevil:* The caster can pick up a mass of small objects or particles (pebbles, dust, sand) from within the Area of Effect and hurl them outwards in a stinging, blinding cloud. This miniature storm covers an area .5 metres in radius while travelling, and all engulfed must make a Dexterity Stat check to avoid being blinded. A target who fails this check is blinded for a die roll worth of rounds. On a Major Failure, the target cannot see for a die roll worth of minutes; on an Extreme Failure, the target is blinded permanently. The caster may also hold the dust storm in place.

**Prerequisites:** Increased Range 3, Increased Area of Effect 2, Increased Power 3.

## Zoification

**Temple Affiliation:** Avánthe/Dilinála  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 9  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 1 metre  
**Area of Effect:** 5 metres radius  
**Duration:** 1 Hour

### Base Effect

All that grows in fertile ground reaches out in defence of the Goddess. Plants remain rooted but become animate (Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Combat Value 3, Health 30/square metre) and will automatically try to entangle enemies of the caster forcing them to hack their way through. If the caster concentrates they may use small areas of vegetation as if it were an extension of their own body. They may use their unarmed combat Skills through the plants against any one target in the affected area in any one round. The basic Spell will only affect small supple plants and they do no real damage (Damage Multiplier is 0). But the highest Levels will cause the largest trees to bend and curl with all the energy of a great beast and these can rip a human apart. All Levels require sufficient and appropriate plants to be already present in the area.

### Spell Attributes

*Increase Range:* +9 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

*Increase Area of Effect:* +5 metres Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increase Power (Unique):* +1 to the Strength of the plants per Level, maximum Levels depends on local vegetation but even large trees are never more than strength 15. This may increase the Combat Value

*Increase Vitality (Unique):* +1 to the Dexterity of the plants per Level, maximum 3 Levels. This may increase its Combat Value

### Spell Specialisations

*Constrictor:* The plants will wrap themselves around the victim and slowly contract to crush and strangle like a mass of great constricting snakes. Armour provides no protection but the victim must be held through and application of Strength (see Using Strength in Combat, page 102). The victim will suffocate in a number of minutes equal to their Strength.



## Necromancy

The Spells in this Spell Group affect death, the dead and undead.

### Necrofacture

**Temple Affiliation:** Sárku/Durritlámish  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** Necromantic Domination (Enduring)  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Corpse  
**Duration:** Permanent

#### Base Effect

The armies of Sárku are raised from the grave. Necrofacture can be cast on any moderately intact corpse, even if it is decayed down to a skeleton. The power of Lord Sárku immediately flows into it and causes it to rise as an undead Mrúr (see Bestiary, page 160). If the Spell fails Sárku has rejected the body as an unacceptable vessel for his presence and that caster may not attempt to reanimate that body again. Once a new Mrúr has been created it is permanent and will continue to persist until specifically destroyed. This is a quick and dirty way to create undead troops but its products are the lowest kind of undead, hideous, virtually mindless zombies that are incapable of independent action. Those raised from the grave do not automatically obey the caster of this Spell and if not a Sárku worshipper in life they may go insane on realising their hideous fate. This Spell can also be used to reanimate and repair undead that have been cut to pieces in combat, as long as their bodies can be even roughly reassembled.

#### Spell Attributes

**Increased Area of Effect:** +1 target per Level, maximum 5 Levels

#### Spell Specialisations

**Shédra:** Deceased worshippers of Sárku may be raised as Shédra (see Bestiary, page 160). These are more capable than the Mrúr and are generally preferred.

**Undead Magician:** This allows a magician to be raised to unlife while retaining their magical Skills and powers. This effectively produces a Shédra who can use whatever magic Spells they knew in life. In most cases the reduction in Intelligence, Willpower and Dexterity makes them less capable than when they were still alive.  
**Prerequisites:** Shédra.

### Necromantic Domination

**Temple Affiliation:** Ksáru/Grugánu; Sárku/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 5  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 10 metres  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 2 minutes

#### Base Effect

The caster gains crude control over 1 Mrúr or Shédra. He or she can order it to flee, fight against its fellows, or remain immobile.

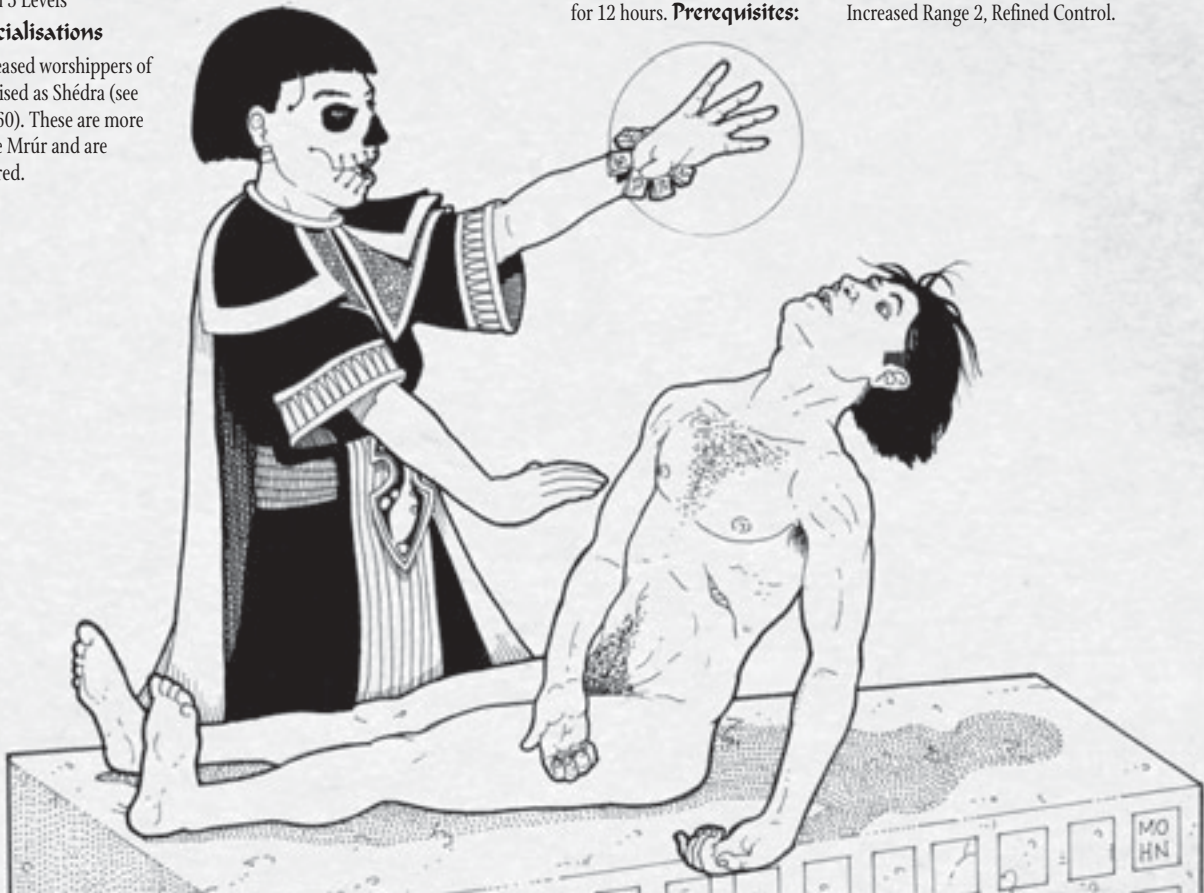
#### Spell Attributes

**Increased Range:** +20 metres per Level, maximum 3 Levels

#### Spell Specialisations

**Refined Control:** The caster controls the target in a more refined fashion, and can command the target to accompany and fight for him or her, give guidance, or perform simple tasks. More complex actions are beyond the abilities of the Mrúr, although Shédra can possibly handle them. The target retains some instinct for self-preservation; they won't commit "suicide," fight against other undead under the caster's control, or emerge into daylight, brightly lit rooms, or inhabited areas. This version also affects intelligent varieties of undead.

**Enduring:** The caster can affect up to two targets in a 1 metre radius Area of Effect for 12 hours. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 2, Refined Control.





## Reanimation

**Temple Affiliation:** Hrū'ū/Wurú; Sárku/Durritlámish  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 2 weeks

### Base Effect

This Spell causes the Intelligence, Shadow-Self, and Pedhétl (but not the Spirit-Soul) of a person dead for less than one week to reinhabit his or her corpse. Reanimation does not heal wounds and damage suffered before death, and the reanimated corpse has a greyish hue and emits a faint odour of putrescence. The corpse possesses all knowledge, memories, abilities, Skills, etc., but his or her Body Stats are at half of their original value (round up). A week after this half-life, the reanimated person decays further, losing a Point from each Body Stat per day. At the end of the second week, he or she "dies" again and can then never be revived, although it is possible to turn him or her into a true undead being using the appropriate Spell. As long as the half-life persists, however, Revivification can restore him or her to full life. This Spell can keep a comrade ambulatory until a magician with Revivification can be reached, or to help a casualty stay in action as long as possible during a crisis. A magician using this Spell cannot cast further Ritual Spells until the reanimated person "dies," has been revived, or is turned into a true undead. This Spell is species-specific.

## The Silver Halo of Soul-Stealing

**Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hrū'ū/Wurú  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 5  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 30 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 1 metres radius  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

This Spell strikes the target with a glittering circlet of energy that spins through the air. If the target fails to resist, his or her Spirit-Soul is borne away forever into the Unending Grey, leaving him or her a mindless automaton whose every action must be specifically commanded. Disenchantment cannot aid a victim of this Spell, nor does Alleviation or Healing. Only Revivification or Re-Embodiment restores the target's Spirit-Soul. Any physical defence or cover is futile, but Warding, The Seal Upon the Powers, The Muniments of Excellence, and any other Spell that obstructs Ritual magic can deflect the Silver Halo. This Spell affects all living beings, except for the undead, androids, automatons, demons, and creatures produced by magic.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +30 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 metre Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels. For every additional Level, an additional target in the Area of Effect may be struck, at an additional penalty of -1

## The Summoning of the Spectral Hosts

**Temple Affiliation:** Sárku/Durritlámish  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** Necromantic Domination (Enduring)  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 20 metres  
**Area of Effect:** One Undead  
**Duration:** 1 Hour

### Base Effect

The hissing inhuman cry calls the undead to the service of Sárku. Undead may resist but the combination of call and command is powerful and many undead will be predisposed to assist someone who knows this Spell even if not actually compelled to do so.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +20 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 target per Level, maximum 5 Levels

*Increased Duration:* +1 Hour per Level, maximum 2 Levels

## The Viaticum of the Yellow Robe

**Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 8  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 20 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 3 metres radius  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

The golden light of Lord Belkhánu dispels the power of the unliving. This immediately causes all undead in the affected area to deanimate permanently and absolutely.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* 20 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

### Spell Specialisations

*Immunity to Unlife:* A living target of this Spell is made unpalatable to Lord Sárku and can never be made into one of the undead. It makes it impossible for the Necrofacture Spell to succeed on this target. This is a protective Spell that lasts a lifetime and cannot be removed by Disenchantment.

## Perception

The Spells in this Spell Group affect a person's perceptive abilities.

### Clairvoyance/Clairaudience

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Psychic  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 3  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Caster  
**Area of Effect:** 1.5 metres radius  
**Duration:** 3 minutes

### Base Effect

This Spell permits the caster to see and hear through walls or other obstructions, but not through a barrier sheathed with any type of metal. The target area must be lit well enough that the caster could see if he or she were physically present.

### Spell Specialisations

*Darkness:* This variant allows the caster to see into darkened areas (such as an unlit chamber, a sealed chest) and hear very faint sounds within the Area of Effect, such as whispering, breathing, bare feet moving over a carpet, etc.



*Block:* This variant blocks perceptions using this Spell, making it seem to the opposing caster as if he or she bungled the Spell. Nothing is magically visible or audible through this “curtain of non-perception,” but normal vision and hearing are not impaired. **Prerequisites:** Darkness. **Area of Effect:** 10 metres radius.

## Elicitation

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Psychic  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 2  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

The caster “sees” a hazy mental picture of the last person or being to handle a target inanimate object.

### Spell Specialisations

*See Magical Aura:* The caster “sees” the psychic aura of a target intelligent being and discerns the strength of its magical ability. **Range:** 15 metres.

*See Prowess:* The caster “sees” up the targets’ magical and fighting prowess, and general religious affiliations (Change, Stability, other). **Prerequisites:** See Magical Aura. **Range:** 15 metres.

*Find:* Upon holding a pinch of a simple, homogeneous substance in his or her hand, the caster can find the same material within the Area of Effect centred on the caster’s position. This conjuration distinguishes between various types of gems and different qualities of iron and steel; a caster holding a diamond will only find diamonds, not other precious stones. **Prerequisites:** Increased Range 1. **Area of Effect:** 10 metres radius.

*Perceive Workings:* The caster can see into an opaque object and perceive, though not necessarily understand, its workings (for example, the locking mechanism of a chest or the area around a door where he or she might find traps). The caster can also tell whether life-threatening substances are present within an object. This is useful on a living creature with natural venom to see which part of the creature carries the toxin. The target receives a Magic Resistance check. **Prerequisites:** See Magical Aura, See Prowess.

*Detect:* The Spell warns the caster of any Psychic Spell or probe that enters the Area of Effect. It also warns him or her of any being or object (but not a gaseous substance) entering the area, identifying the intruder’s magical and fighting prowess, affiliation, deity worshipped, and friendliness or hostility, as well as the distance of the intruder (but not precise direction). The intruding Spell or entity may make a Magic Resistance check to remain undetected. If the caster moves, the circle travels as well. **Prerequisites:** See Magical Aura, See Prowess, Find, Perceive Workings. **Area of Effect:** 3 metres radius.

*Greater Elicitation:* The caster concentrates on a specific type of magical or technological device (for example, an Eye, book, scroll, Talisman) and be guided to one such item if present within the Area of Effect. The caster can move, fight, cast Psychic Spells, and perform other actions while this Spell is in force. The chance that the desired device escapes detection must be assigned by the GM, depending upon its importance and potency. **Temple Affiliation:** Ksárul/Grugánu; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Find, Perceive Workings. **Area of Effect:** 1.5 metres radius.

## Far-Seeing

**Temple Affiliation:** Karakán/Chegárra; Vimúhla/Chiténg  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 3  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Caster  
**Area of Effect:** 100 metres  
**Duration:** 2 minutes

### Base Effect

The caster can see objects in the Area of Effect as though he or she were only 1 metre from them. Objects closer than 10 metres, however, are blurry. If engaged in combat while this Spell is in effect, the caster fights with a -2 penalty.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Area of Effect:* +200 metres per Level, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Blind:* Blinds anyone using this Spell to look at the Area of Effect centred on the caster while this variant is in force. A victim cannot see for (Margin of Success x 2) rounds unless he or she successfully resists his or her own Spell. **Preparation Time:** 1 minute. **Area of Effect:** 1.5 metre radius.

## Planar

The Spells in this Spell Group affect knowledge of and travel between other Planes

## Decorporealisation

**Temple Affiliation:** Hrü’ü/Wurú  
**Magic:** Psychic Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 12  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Caster  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 5 minutes

### Base Effect

The illusory nature of physical reality is accepted. This allows the caster to become insubstantial and translucent. They can travel through solid material (up or down or laterally, gravity is also an illusion in this state) but cannot move more quickly than a slow walk. These rejections of materiality means that only the living organic body is made transformed, worn objects including clothes are left behind in a heap. The caster is naked but immune to most forms of physical or magical attack, they cannot hear or be heard by the material world although they are just about visible. The caster may drop the Spell and return to the material world at any time but this ends the Spell. A Spell of Disenchantment can return an incorporeal person to the material world against their will, if a character returns to corporeality while partially inside any solid object, there is a large explosion, massive injury (5d10 damage) and the amputation of whatever parts were still contained. GMs should remember that exact time measurement can be difficult for a character and if they are travelling through objects close to the end of their Spell duration have them make a Psyche check to guess exactly when the Spell ends.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Duration:* +5 minutes per Level, maximum 3 Levels

### Spell Defects

*Immobile (Unique) — Level 2:* The incorporeal will be immediately returned to the material form and the Spell with end if they move more than two metres from the place where the Spell was cast.

### Spell Specialisations

*Retain Equipment:* The caster can retain a normal amount of carried equipment (including their clothes)

*Carry:* The caster can bring up to 5 other people into the incorporeal state when the Spell is cast. All targets can make a magic resistance check to avoid being made incorporeal. **Prerequisites:** Increased Duration 1, Retain Equipment.



## Etheralisation

**Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 500 metres  
**Area of Effect:** Caster  
**Duration:** 1 minute

### Base Effect

The Shadow-Self is released to travel through the world while their physical body lies as if sleeping. The Shadow-Self of the magician is invisible and insubstantial, moves as swiftly as a bird and normal physical barriers cannot stop it, but magical barriers will. The Shadow-Self can be detected or affected by many types of magic (such as Perception of the Energies, The Sphere of Impermeable Quiescence and the Seal Upon the Powers) but cannot cast Spells. The Shadow-Self cannot travel beyond the range of the Spell and if it is injured by hostile magic (such as Vallation) the magician will suffer from the Shadow Scars Defect from then on.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +1 kilometre per Level, maximum 4 Levels

### Spell Specialisations

*Other-Planar Travel:* The magician can use the Spell to travel to another plane that they know of (at least a Scholar (Other-planar travel) check and GM permission). This is mainly used by high adepts in conjunction with the Spell of Visitations of Other Planes to see what awaits them on the other side of a nexus point. Actually travelling to another plane is difficult and dangerous because the inter-planar pathways are complex and shifting. It is always extremely easy to get lost and most practitioners restrict themselves to those best known.

*Materialisation:* The Shadow-Self can affect the material world. The magician still cannot cast Spells in this form but can be damaged and do damage as if they were physically present. Any injury they take when Material immediately appears on their sleeping body and if their Materialised form is killed then the magician's body also dies. A Materialised magician still may not cross magical barriers.

## The Gate of the Grey Pentacle

**Temple Affiliation:** Thúmis/Keténgku  
**Magic:** Ritual Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** 30 metres  
**Area of Effect:** 0.5 metre radius  
**Duration:** 3 minutes

### Base Effect

A whirling nexus point appears directly in front of the caster and starts travelling forward at a fast walking pace. The caster can control its direction and it can be used to hunt down an enemy. This temporary nexus point will suck in anyone who does not get out of its way and transport them to another time, place, or plane of existence. It is unlikely that anyone who has fallen through the nexus will ever find their way home (but this could be the start of a whole new adventure). Victims have been sent to distant lands and centuries past.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +30 metres per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Duration:* +3 minute per Level, maximum 2 Levels

## Invisibility

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 2  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Touch  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** 5 minutes

### Base Effect

The target (any being or object) is put slightly out of synchronisation with this plane of existence, becoming invisible in dim light and slightly hazy in daylight.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 1 Level. This variant renders all beings and objects they carry in the Area of Effect invisible.

*Increased Duration:* +5 minutes per Level, maximum 1 Level

### Spell Specialisations

*Improved:* The target also becomes invisible in daylight.

*Mobile:* The Area of Effect moves with the target. Any being or object who leaves the Area of Effect becomes visible. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1, Improved.

*Stationary:* A softly glowing nimbus of other-planar light forms around the caster, allowing him or her to perceive invisible beings or objects. This Spell Specialisation can not be combined with the Mobile Spell Specialisation. **Prerequisites:** Improved, Increased Duration 1. **Duration:** 4 hours.

*Perceive:* A softly glowing nimbus of other-planar light forms around the caster, allowing him or her to perceive invisible beings or objects. **Prerequisites:** Improved, Mobile.

## Metastasis

**Temple Affiliation:** Hnálla/Drá  
**Magic:** Psychic Temple Spell  
**Prerequisites:** Transportation  
**Level:** 10  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Caster  
**Area of Effect:** One Target  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

An insight into the connectedness of places allows the caster to take a step backwards to a place they have been within the last 30 minutes. This must be within 200 metres. The base effect only allows the caster to transport themselves but improving the Spell enables them to bring passengers.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Range:* +200 metres per Level, maximum 4 Levels

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1 person per Level, maximum 5 Levels

*Increased Delay (Unique):* 10 minute per Level, maximum 3 Levels

### Spell Specialisations

*Send:* The caster can send other people to a place the caster has been recently, but they do not have to transport themselves. This allows the caster to send targets to a pre-determined place unless they resist the Spell.



## Perception of the Energies

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 2  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Caster  
**Area of Effect:** 1.5 metre radius  
**Duration:** 2 minutes

### Base Effect

The caster perceives the presence of extra-planar energy within inanimate objects (including automatons and androids). The caster "sees" a glittering halo around any enchanted object.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels

*Increased Duration* +2 minutes per Level, maximum 2 Levels

### Spell Specialisations

*Intentions:* The caster also learns the intentions (hostility or friendly) of the enchantment on the target object. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1.

*Spells:* The caster also detects whether a Spell has been cast within the Area of Effect during the past hour. This sorcerous residue is perceived as a faint sparkling in the air; its brightness indicates how recently someone cast the Spell and its relative power. This Spell does not reveal the use of magico-technological devices.

**Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1, Intentions.

*Ensorcellation:* The caster can perceive whether a Spell has been cast upon any being or beings within the Area of Effect. The caster sees a faint halo of glittering light around any ensorcelled being. The caster can tell whether an enchantment is hostile or friendly, but not the Spell's exact nature. **Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sáru/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku.

**Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1, Increased Duration 1, Intentions, Spells.

*Ward:* Employed upon a single being or object, this variant blocks this Spell from operating on that target. Anyone who uses Perception of the Energies to observe the target perceives nothing out of the ordinary. Casters can also use this upon an area to hide the residue of previously cast Spells within the Area of Effect from the Spell Specialisation Spells. A Spell of Disenchantment removes this Spell and reveals the hidden Spell residue beneath. **Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sáru/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku. **Prerequisites:** Intentions, Spells, Ensorcellation. **Range:** Touch. **Area of Effect:** One Target.

## Transportation

**Temple Affiliation:** Universal  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 9  
**Preparation Time:** 1 minute  
**Range:** Caster  
**Area of Effect:** 1.5 metres radius  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

### Base Effect

This Spell retraces the caster's movements, instantaneously transporting the caster and up to two targets of roughly human size to the position exactly 100 metres away that was most recently occupied by the caster (unless the area is now obstructed, in which case the Spell fails). Targets other than the caster must be in physical contact with the caster; if more than two beings are in contact, the GM selects which ones are transported randomly. Only held possessions, or those worn or attached to a target are transported along. The targets must all fit within a 1.5 metres radius circle or the Spell does not work.

## Visitations of Other Planes

**Temple Affiliation:** Belkhánu/Qón; Hnálla/Drá; Hrü'ü/Wurú; Ksáru/Grugánu; Sáru/Durritlámish; Thúmis/Keténgku  
**Magic:** Ritual  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Level:** 6  
**Preparation Time:** 1 Round  
**Range:** Caster  
**Area of Effect:** 1.5 metre radius  
**Duration:** 3 minutes

### Base Effect

The caster perceives any nexus point(s) within the Area of Effect. A wandering nexus point is present 5% of the time (on a die roll of 1, roll again; if the result is 5 or less, a nexus point is present), or as arbitrarily established by the GM. This Spell does not tell the caster the destination of the nexus point.

### Spell Attributes

*Increased Area of Effect:* +1.5 metre Radius per Level, maximum 2 Levels

### Spell Specialisations

*Open Nexus Point:* This variant allows the caster to also open a nexus point for travel. He or she cannot ascertain its destination, however. Such an inter-planar doorway is usually a little larger than a human being; it can accommodate something Shén-sized, but not bigger animals or bulky objects. People must enter it in single file, 2 persons can pass through per Round. The caster can perform no other actions while maintaining this Spell, except for casting a Psychic Spell while stationary.

**Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 1.

*Greater Nexus Point:* This variant allows the caster to also gain an approximate idea of what lies on the other side of a nexus point (whether there is breathable air or immediate harm). This variant also opens a larger doorway: 2 persons may enter it side by side, and 4 can pass through per Round. **Prerequisites:** Increased Area of Effect 2, Open Nexus Point.





# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE



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## CHAPTER 7: THE WORLD OF TÉKUMEL



# World of Tékumel

## History of Tékumel

Only a small portion of the history of Tékumel is known to most of its modern human inhabitants. What follows is a summary of the main events from deep history to the current period.

### The Lost Glories

Human starships first visited Tékumel in the 81st century A.D. The Humanspace Alliance culture was as different from that of the western civilisation of the 21st Century as it was from the Neolithic tribes of mammoth hunters that roamed Europe during the Ice Age. The Alliance was not a product of the western societies that had pioneered space travel. Western society had been largely destroyed by a series of global catastrophes that started at the end of the Mayan Long Count (the 21st century). The children of the Indus and the Amazon, not those of the Hudson or the Rhine, inherited the Earth.

The Alliance had been born with the first intelligent species that humans encountered. The Pé Chói were not only a highly intelligent and pleasant species but they had also developed an extremely powerful form of faster-than-light travel. The Pé Chói gave humanity the secrets of the Three Light Drive (their interstellar technology) and together the two species combined their talents to create the Alliance that would go on to colonise countless new worlds, as well as encounter many other races.

The first Humanspace explorers found Tékumel a world almost uninhabitable by human or Pé Chói — the atmosphere, vegetation, and life-forms were all poisonous. Furthermore, Tékumel was apparently already home to two sentient races, the Ssú and Hlüss who had no desire to share their world with the newcomers. Unfortunately for these natives, the Alliance enforced a policy that they could colonise areas of inhabited planets that the indigenes were not currently using, against the will of any native inhabitants, if need be. When first contacted by the Alliance, the natives of Tékumel had only rudimentary space-flight and had not even properly colonised their own star system (in fact they were only slightly more advanced than 21st century Earth). Humanspace colonisation led to the inevitable and entirely futile attempts at resistance, which were efficiently crushed as the Alliance took possession of the planet. The surviving natives were herded into “reservations,” constrained by force-fields, and Tékumel was terraformed until it was more to human liking. The poisonous atmosphere, flora, and fauna were replaced with the familiar life of Humanspace, which was incidentally unsuitable for the indigenous life forms. Even the planet’s orbit, rotation, and gravity were changed to match that of ancient Earth. The victory of Humanspace was absolute and the natives were made alien to their own homeworlds.

Gradually, Tékumel became a residential and resort planet of the wealthy. Magnificent cities, connected by underground subway networks, rose along the coastal areas. Many sentient alien species friendly to the Alliance also came to Tékumel, along with a few alien foes as well. The Humanspace Alliance created a paradise (for its creators at least) that lasted until the Time of Darkness.

### The Time of Darkness

On modern Tékumel, myth and folk stories tell of a time when the hills rose up, the seas walked on land, flame spouted from the brazen mouths of the mountains, and the stars went out forever. Since the stars never came back, what they may have been is a matter for theological debate rather than common understanding. What people do know is that the Time of Darkness was a mythological time of great destruction and horror.

The planet had been abruptly thrust through a warp of space-time into a pocket dimension. 772 other star systems of the Humanspace Alliance suffered the same fate at around the same time. The catastrophe reduced the cosmopolitan starfaring and technological society to ruins and nearly destroyed all life on Tékumel. There were survivors, though, and some of them were human.

Out of the ruins came new communities and some remnants of the Alliance culture survived for a long time ... waiting for a rescue that never came. Some speculate that the Time of Darkness lasted more than 50 centuries. By the end of it, few even knew what had been lost in the chaos. Deep within the planet’s core, the great machines continue to run, keeping Tékumel’s gravity and rotation as their long dead creators intended.

### The Latter Times

Small empires and city-states came and went, and over time the various sentient species began to isolate themselves into their own enclaves and in environments that suited them best. This period became known as the Latter Times. It was during this age that some unknown scholar discovered that the mind alone could be trained as a tool. On Tékumel, magic is the skilled use of extra-planar power and it is possible because of the peculiar characteristics of the pocket dimension. The walls between the planes are thin here and with the right talent that energy can be shaped by the power of a human will. It is during this period of declining technology and increasing magic that some of the most exotic artefacts on Tékumel were created. Tékumel’s more outlandish species (for example, Rényu and Voródlá) were created during the Latter Times.

### Empire of Llyán of Tsámra

Some 25,000 years ago, Llyán, a soldier-adventurer, founded the Llyáni Empire, apparently placing his capital where present-day Tsámra in Livyánu now sits. Not much remains of the Llyáni empire on the surface, except crumbling rings of monoliths scattered across Livyánu and southern Mu’ugalavýá, a few statuettes of unknown gods, and fragments of records written in the blocky Llyáni script. Llyáni scholars were fascinated with channelling extra-planar power into this world, and they compiled voluminous compendiums of “spells,” but very little of this knowledge has survived into present times. Current magicians know only a small fraction of the Spells used by the Llyáni, which is why historical research is more important than experimentation in the culture of modern Tsolyáni magic. It is clearly far more practical to re-discover a Llyáni text with complete sets of Spells than to spend a lifetime re-inventing the wheel.

### The Dragon Warriors

During the latter days of the Llyáni empire, an unknown scholar, probably a Llyáni exiled to the N’lüss homelands, made contact with some of the mightiest beings of the Planes Beyond. Transcending humankind’s understanding and unimaginably powerful (but willing to aid those who served their enigmatic goals), these beings are for all practical purposes “gods.” Attempts to comprehend and gain the help of these gods have formed the basis of almost all subsequent religious thought upon Tékumel.

The Dragon Warriors are the ancestors of the present-day N’lüss barbarians. These tribal people came out of the North, riding their “dragons,” and conquered all they encountered. Their rapid invasion was spurred by the worship of the recently contacted god Vimúhla, Lord of Fire, who demanded human sacrifice.

The Dragon Warrior Empire remained strong and cohesive for about 200 years and slowly disintegrated over the following 1800 years. Scholars still dispute the nature of their “dragons.” The two leading theories are they were either aircars of the ancients (some such vehicles are known to still exist even now) or a great flying beast of some kind. No one now knows for sure, but whatever they were, rediscovering them could make their possessor as unstoppable as the Dragon Warriors had been.

### The Fishermen Kings

During the last centuries of the Empire of the Dragon Warriors, a minor lord named Gámulu united the western cities and plains of present-day Salarvya. The Ssú had risen and were attempting to reconquer their homelands, and Gámulu spent much of his reign fighting them off. His heir, Hó Etéhitu, built a fleet of small, fast galleys that gave the dynasty the name of “The Fishermen Kings.” During the reign of the 22nd Fishermen King, the god Ksárul, Ancient Lord of Secrets and Doomed Prince of the Blue Room, was contacted. Worship of Ksárul dominated the east, while that of Vimúhla still held sway in the west. Worship of the other “Gods of Change” also began during this period.



## The First Imperium The Bednálljan Empire

During the last days of the Empire of the Fishermen Kings, a young child-courtesan named Nayári travelled out from the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm to the great, now lost, metropolis of Purdánim (thought to be east of Usenánu). In seven years, Nayári ruthlessly climbed to the top of the political power structure in a series of carefully chosen marriages, allegiances, and murders, and became known as Queen Nayári of the Silken Thighs. She consolidated the military forces of the many city-states she ruled and sent them forth to conquer the surrounding lands. She then seized the lands of the Dragon Warriors' descendants and overthrew the last Fisherman King, Gámulu's 55th descendant. Nayári's empire stretched as far west as Mu'ugalavýá, as far north as Dháru in Yán Kór, and as far east and south as Tsatsayága in Salarvya. Her reign was one of great violence and appropriately, she was herself assassinated — kissed with poisoned lips by a young lover who also died in the act.

Nayári's son followed her bloody reign with an era of rebuilding, order, and stability. He is said to have begun the Sákbe road system. Trade with Livyánu and eastern Salarvya grew, missionaries reached far distant lands, and peoples previously unknown even in fables came forth from their enclaves and began to mix with humans again. Nayári's empire endured for nearly 3000 years.

## Éngsvan hla Gánga The Éngsvanyáli Empire

During the last millennium of the Bednálljan Empire, a poor, crippled, middle-aged Priest on the backward isle of Gánga made contact with yet more "gods." The first of these was the gentle Thúmís, the Sage of the Gods, and the other Lords of Stability soon followed. From them, Pavár learned new information about the two pantheons — the Lords of Change, already known to Tékumel, and the Lords of Stability — as well as much about the many Planes and the secrets of life after death. His writings on the topic became known as the Scrolls of Pavár.

Pavár's doctrines spread far and wide during his lifetime, for they had broad appeal to the lowly common people who were tired of the bloody sacrifices required by the Lords of Change. After a period of societal upheaval and bloodshed, the Priesthoods of the two pantheons came to a truce known as the Concordat, which prohibited overt religious hostility and proselytising, and soon the temples of Stability stood side-by-side with the temples of Change. Nine hundred years after Pavár's death, political power shifted completely from the Bednálljan emperors in Béy Sü to the hierophants of the island of Gánga. The Éngsvan hla Gánga ("the Kingdom of the Gods") was founded.

Éngsvan hla Gánga endured for over ten millennia, so long that men forgot that there had ever been anything else before — and could not conceive of anything coming after. The Priest-kings ruled with an iron fist in a velvet glove over vast lands encompassing most of the globe: from Mu'ugalavýá in the west; to Livyánu, the islands of Tsoléi, and Háida Pakála in the south; through all of Salarvya; Nuru'ún in the far north-east; and all the way to the Farise Isles off the eastern shore of the great continent. The Sákbe roads were expanded into the fortified stone highways now seen across the lands. Of the friendly alien races, only the Shén retained their independence; the others were assimilated into the Éngsvanyáli Empire. The Ssu' and Hlíuss were pushed back and contained within the reservations, as they had been when humans first arrived.

In spite of the theocratic rulers' strictness, the arts, culture, and economic affairs prospered. Éngsvan hla Gánga is to this day considered to be the greatest flourishing of human culture since before the Time of Darkness. Many aspects of the present cultures of the Five Empires — including the clan system and basic social structure — are either based on Éngsvanyáli practices or are attempts to emulate how things were done in that era. On the technological and mystical front, science even advanced to the point of being able to repair some of the simplest and least damaged of the ancient mechanisms that used extra-planar power.

## The Time of No Kings

Éngsvan hla Gánga perished suddenly in a series of vast seismic convulsions powerful enough to change the geography of the world. The western end of the Island of Gánga tilted up, and the eastern end tilted down beneath the waves, carrying with it the great metropolis of the Priest-Kings. Seas emptied out, highlands dried up and became deserts, volcanoes erupted, and a new continent rose out of the sea to the south (and sank again 100 years later). Society fell apart under these abrupt disasters, and another Time of Darkness, the "Time of No Kings," spread across the land, lasting somewhere between six and ten millennia. Many of present-day Tsolyánu's folk legends (stories of heroes and monsters) stem from this time period. Out of that darkness came a man who would found a new Empire.

## The Second Imperium The Empire of the Petal Throne

Little is known about the founder of the Tsolyáni Empire. The first emperor is simply known as "the Tlakotáni," and history does not record how he subdued the other petty states of his time. It is known that he was accompanied by powerful friends and possessed items of great power, these include the ancient device known as the "Seal of the Imperium," which produces impressions upon parchment, stone, and metal that cannot be counterfeited. He is believed to have also possessed the Petal Throne itself, from which, hidden by an elaborately carved screen of jade, his descendants rule Tsolyánu to this day.

The Tsolyáni rulers practise royal seclusion, wherein the Emperor or Empress is immured in the Golden Tower at Avanthár for the rest of his or her life. Every imperial word carries the force of divine authority; the ruler is "the Envoy of Mankind unto the Courts of Heaven" and "the Speaker of the Will of the Gods Within the World." The Servitors of Silence, a corps of deaf-mutes, are charged with the ruler's personal service, protection, and supply. The loyalty of the Servitors of Silence and the highest nobles to the Imperium is guaranteed by another device of the ancients known as the Jade Arch. Anyone who passes through this arch has the patterns of his or her brain permanently altered such that it is impossible to contemplate disloyalty to the persona of the State. The Jade Arch's technology is not understood, but whoever installed it for the first Tlakotáni had the wisdom to set it to produce loyalty to the Imperium and the institution of the Emperor, rather than to any specific individual.

When a ruler dies, his or her eligible children must choose whether to compete for the chance to become the next ruler in the Kólumejálim (the "Choosing of Emperors"), or renounce their claim permanently (called "giving up the Gold," meaning the golden Seal of the Empire). The winner of the competition is conveyed to the Golden Tower. Those who opted out resume their previous lives or take up positions in the new government, and the losers are given over to the Temple of Karakán for sacrifice.

The Empire of the Petal Throne has never approached the size of Éngsvan hla Gánga or the Empire of the Dragon Warriors. It remains bounded on the west by the Chákan forests, on the north by the central mountain range, on the east by the mountains of Kilálammu and the jungles of Gilráya, and on the south by the Deeps of Chanayága. Though the Emperor rules always from Avanthár, it lacks the necessary space to house the entire central government, so the administrative capital of Tsolyánu is Béy Sü.

## Recent History

The following are historical events that a modern Tsolyáni would know about and may have been involved in.

### The Yán Koryáni War and Baron Áld

Originally a young tribal chieftain from Saá Allaqí, Áld joined the Tsolyáni forces as a mercenary, working his way up to become Kérdu (General) of the Legion of the Scarlet Plume (19th Imperial Heavy Infantry). Unfortunately, he became entangled in Tsolyáni politics, and his unit was betrayed to the Yán Koryáni forces and slaughtered



## Recent Emperors

**61st Emperor. Hirkáne.**

**“The Stone upon Which the Universe Rests”**

2347 — 2366

Defeat of Mu'ugalaványi raiders at the Battle of Butrús early in 2347; Battle of Rü in Salarvya late in the same year; further invasions of Yán Kór and the north; war with Yán Kór accidentally started in 2356; loss of Atkolel Heights and Yán Koryáni invasion halted at battles near Chéne Hó and Khirgár in 2356 — 2357. Died in a coup by his son, Dchich'uné, in 2365, at age 75.

**62nd Emperor. Dchich'uné. “Eternal Splendour”**

2365 — 2367

Emperor Hirkáne's youngest revealed son, a fanatical devotee of Lord Sárku who was sometimes possessed by an aspect of that Deity; held a “false” Kólumejálím in which no other candidates could arrive to compete; acceded to the Throne early in 2366; country broke out into civil war. Eventually defeated by an alliance between his siblings, and is rumoured to have left this Plane.

**(?) Mridóbu. “Risen to Rule”**

2367

Fourth revealed son of Emperor Hirkáne Tlakotáni, a worshipper of Lord Ksáru; succeeded briefly in attaining the Petal Throne in 2367; ruled for three days. Disappeared again. Dchich'uné returned. Not known yet whether his reign is official — it is still under litigation in the Palace of the Priesthoods.

**63rd Emperor. Mirusiya. “Resplendent Flame”**

2367 — present

Raised by the Vriddi in secret until his early 30s; ascended to the Petal Throne unopposed in the Kólumejálím following Dchich'uné's defeat and disappearance. A moderate adherent of Vimúhla and a strong supporter of military action and expansionism; has launched military actions against the Mu'ugalaványi and Salarvya in response to their activities on Tsolyánu's borders.

almost to the last man (it has not been reactivated since). The Yán Koryáni, instead of sacrificing or ransoming him, offered him gold to join their side. Bitter at what had happened to him, he accepted, and soon rose through their ranks as well. A talented leader both on and off the battlefield, Áld succeeded in bringing the scattered states of the north together under his leadership, welding together an empire that could oppose the Tsolyáni.

The Tsolyáni sent eight expeditions against Áld, but it was not until the last one that Áld became an implacable foe of Tsolyánu rather than simply a rival. Áld had taken a woman of exalted rank, Yilrána of Ke'ér, as his mistress, for her status made it impossible for the two to marry. The Tsolyáni outflanked Áld at Ke'ér and demanded the city's surrender. Yilrána, left in charge while Áld was in the field, refused. The Tsolyáni besieged and took the city and impaled Yilrána on a stake before its gates, the traditional punishment for a recalcitrant defender. The Baron swore vengeance against the Petal Throne.

He finally got the opportunity to seek that vengeance in a war against Tsolyánu that began in 2356 and ended only a few years ago, more with a whimper than a bang, when Emperor Hirkáne died. Most Tsolyáni who are legion veterans today probably fought in that war, though they may not have faced Yán Koryáni troops; when Tsolyánu goes to war against one nation, others take the opportunity to harry the Empire's borders. In the war against Yán Kór, Tsolyánu first opened a front in the north-west, led by Prince Eselné, supported by the Temples of the Deities of Stability. Shortly thereafter a second front was opened in the north-east, led by Prince Mirusiya, supported by the Temples of the Deities of Change.

## The Civil War

After Emperor Hirkáne's death, his son Dchich'uné wasted no time in calling a Kólumejálím — doing it so fast that none of his siblings could get there in time to compete. Dchich'uné sought to greatly expand the power of his God Sárku both in the spiritual and temporal arenas. He pushed many people out of their posts and replaced them with Sárku worshippers, and threatened to turn Thri'íl into “the Necropolis of the North.” To add to the discomfort, there was the very real possibility that a Sárku-worshipping Emperor calling himself “Eternal Splendour” might plan to rule for an unnaturally long time. This was no religious moderate and the prospect of an undead Emperor horrified many both at home and abroad.

Not surprisingly, the other princes refused to accept his accession as legitimate. Prince Eselné marched back into the Empire to establish his base at Páya Gupá. Prince Mirusiya established his base in the north-east, at Khirgár. The situation was delicately balanced with each side unwilling to make the first step into the abyss of civil war, but it only took the actions of one man to trigger the inevitable. That man was the Disposer of Mekú, a fanatical Chiténg worshipper who decided to destroy the Temple of Sárku in the City of Mektú. Whether he was in clear breach of all custom and the ancient law of the Concordat, or was attempting to uphold the Concordat by preventing Dchich'uné from having the Temple of Sárku take over and control the Omnipotent Azure Legion, to create an undead Theocracy, is still hotly debated to this day.

Regardless of his motivation, the destruction of the Temple signalled the start of a slaughter that would cover the Empire in its own blood. With many Legions already in the field for the Yán Koryáni war, and loyalties split between different religious and political factions, things quickly got ugly.

Dchich'uné attempted to strike a deal with the Yán Koryáni that would bring Baron Áld in to become First General of the Empire, raising serious questions about Dchich'uné's involvement with him during Hirkáne's reign. Áld's Weapon Without Answer (disabled during the Yán Koryáni War thanks to the events in *Man of Gold*) was withdrawn and later used to maroon most of Prince Mirusiya's forces on a distant plane. Áld didn't stay long; his deal with Dchich'uné fell apart and he had to return home to hold his own empire together.

The Civil War brought chaos all across the Empire and not even the furthest province was left untouched. The North saw active manoeuvres by various elements of the Imperial army as the two most martial of the late Emperor's sons (Eselné and Mirusiya) organised their forces from what had been the great and glorious Imperial army. The death and possible assassination of Eselné raised the possibility that the Temple of Thúmis (always strong in Páya Gupá) was secretly backing Dchich'uné. The official story was that Eselné died of an illness contracted while campaigning, but given the magical healing available to a Prince, many were surprised that he succumbed so easily and so quickly. Mistrust was rife and members of the same clan and often the same lineage found themselves in conflict that gradually, and it seemed inevitably, escalated to violence. Grudges were settled and vengeance taken for wrongs real or imagined; for every matter settled, two new vendettas were born. The Empire threatened to fall to pieces.

## The End Of The Civil War

The turning point came when, by political and arcane means, Dchich'uné was temporarily displaced from Avanthár by the cunning of Prince Mridóbu (a worshipper of Ksáru). Although Dchich'uné used an army of undead to regain the Golden Tower, the process of finally removing him had begun. It took a coalition of the other Princes and the Princess Má'in Krúthain (“the exquisite”) but their combined forces besieged and finally took the capital in a battle that lasted for many days. Unfortunately, Dchich'uné's escape still remains unaccounted for to this day (rumour has it he left the Plane on a magical ship). Prince Eselné was the only one of the known royal offspring to die in the Civil War, even though assassination at all levels was commonplace.

The final outcome left the surviving Princes and Princesses negotiating with each other and in 2369 A.S. a Kólumejálím was held at which all of the siblings abstained in favour of Prince Mirusiya, who was confirmed as Emperor. He promptly named Prince Rereshqála as High Chancellor of the Empire, the senior official who executes the Emperor's commands. Prince Táksuru was to be the High Princes of the Palace of the Priesthoods and senior figure in religious affairs. A political compromise had been reached.



## Current Events in Tsolyánu

Unfortunately the current atmosphere of co-operation probably will not last, but for now the different factions appear to be getting along — with the exception of the Sárku faction, Dchich'uné's supporters who are being pushed out of power. The Military Party (supporters of the Legions and expansionism) is on the rise, as are the worshippers of Lord Vimúhla, the new Emperor's deity. The new Emperor appears to be a moderate, willing to work with members of other faiths. This is important because the years of civil war have severely depleted the military and organisational resources of the Empire and a time of healing is certainly required.

## Mu'ugalavyáni Opportunism

Seeking to exploit the Empire's weakness, the Mu'ugalavyáni invaded the western border provinces and showed their usual brutal efficiency. Their shocking atrocities against the Páchi Lei both on their line of march and after they captured the city of Butrús have confirmed their peculiar tendency to xenophobia. This reputation and behaviour in the south served them less well in the north; in Do Chaka, resistance to the Mu'ugalavyáni was much more effective than it had been in the south. This was largely because of the very effective attacks on their supply lines by the "wild" Pé Chói (independent communities who owe no allegiance to any human state). This seems to have come as a surprise partly because of the ferocity, the quality of their strategy, and the surprisingly large number of Pé Chói warriors (it had previously been assumed that the "wild" Pé Chói were an irrelevant and marginal group). Regular and irregular human forces, some of which were the personal troops of the Ito clan, were also heavily involved in this bitter deep forest campaign. Whereas the Mu'ugalavyáni still hold a large piece of Pan Chaka, including the city of Butrús, their attack on Tumíssa never made real headway and their northern armies were forced to retreat. Reports suggest that extremely heavy losses were incurred on both sides and that some kind of internecine split may have developed in the Ito clan but, as always, the Ito prefer to deal with matters privately.

The Mu'ugalavyáni are currently involved in the invasion of Livyánu. This has seen not only the use of a magically-created plague that killed a significant percentage of the population (see *Lords of Tsámra*), but also the use of black stones that can temporarily turn an area magically barren (a serious disadvantage for the Livyáni, who depend on their superiority in sorcery for their defence). Although the black stones can help the invaders take a city or fortification, it does not deprive the large number of Livyáni magicians of their skills or power once they move on. Although most of Livyánu has been overrun and there is a puppet government in place, Mu'ugalavyáni control is not as secure as might be expected. Livyánu resistance appears to be extremely perhaps even astonishingly well organised, with significant resources in intelligence, magic, and even military forces still remaining beyond the reach of the Mu'ugalavyáni. This resistance movement seems to be increasing in strength, contains quite a large number of magicians, and is competently led by an individual called "Fireface" (a reference to the scarring often suffered by survivors of the artificial plague). The war in Livyánu is far from over.

## The Salarvyáni Tide Ebbs

Out to the East, the well-known and respected Governor of Sokátis was instructed to stop the Salarvyáni incursions and given permission to use the local legions. He gathered the local legions and led them in an invasion of Salarvyá. The Salarvyáni stopped him quickly and pushed them back. They made extensive gains and the border war left them in control of the Gilráyan forests and threatening Thráya before they were stopped. Sokátis was sacked twice and the situation looked grim for the Empire in the East. Fortunately the military gathered legions in the south, marched them east, and drove them in an attack that drove well across the traditional border. They took the city of Rû and looked capable of marching all the way to Koylúga. This effectively stopped the conflict and both armies retreated to their traditional borders with very little gained on either side.

The Salarvyáni have recently seen the beginning of a civil war. Having failed to make significant inroads into the western borders of Tsolyánu and following the death of their "mad king" Griggatsetta, there has been a monumental collapse in civil authority as the various feudal houses fight for control of the throne. Observers consider this to be inevitable given their system of government but it is not clear which of the great families will finally be able to claim the throne or when.

## What news of Baron Áld?

To the north, Yán Kór is still lead by Baron Áld — though he has been fully occupied in keeping his patchwork Empire together. Through bribery, persuasion, and the liberal use of force, he has been able to avoid it disintegrating but at present the Yán Koryáni are not a threat to anyone but themselves.

## The Present Day on Tékumel

It is the year 2374 A.S. (After the Seal, the foundation of the Empire). The Empire seems more stable and peaceful than it has for many years, but the wounds of the past are deep and vengeance is a dream for many. This is a time of hope and of reconstruction; the Tsolyáni Empire has survived its time of trouble and looks to regain what once it possessed.

Most recently, reports have started to arrive in Tsolyánu of some type of previously unknown non-human that are appearing in increasing numbers in the northeast. These reports suggest that these creatures are highly aggressive and sentient. Naturally some think this is mere rumour and that either internal conflict in the human tribes or poor harvests in the far north are causing the migrations. Others fear that some new and terrible alien threat is rising.

## A Rough Guide to the Tsolyáni Empire

### The Sákbe Roads

The Tsolyáni Empire is held together by the great Sákbe roads, a system of triple-tiered raised highways. Begun in Bednálljan times and expanded during the Engsvanyáli, these roads traverse the Empire, serving not only as efficient transportation routes, but also as defensive fortifications. They are punctuated by guard towers and widened platforms where caravans can rest overnight, and merge with city walls in a complex set of ramps allowing people to get on and off. Caravan platforms and off-ramps often become temporary marketplaces, especially where there's nothing else nearby.

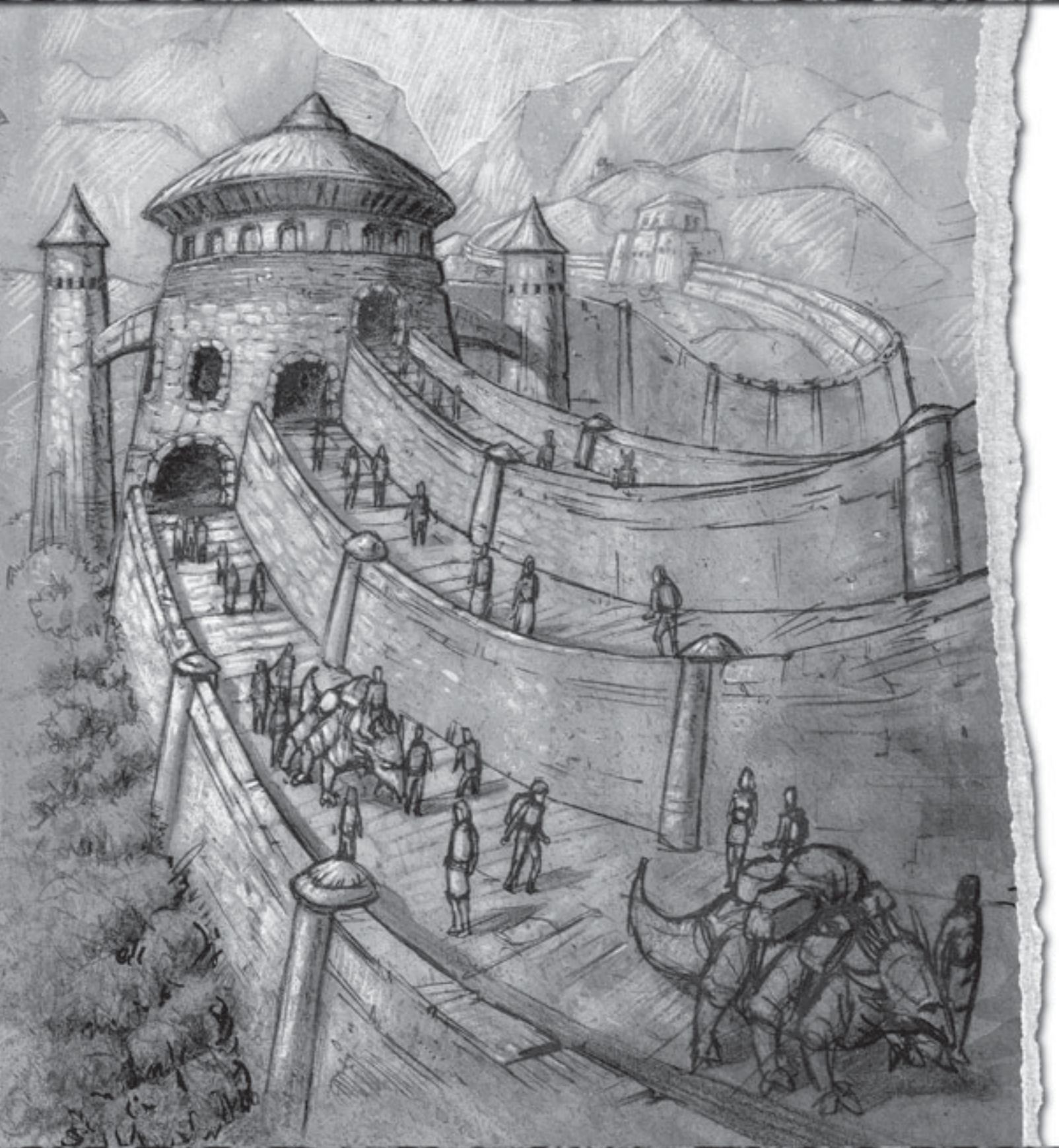
Sákbe roads are classically built of stone, rubble faced with masonry or baked brick. The ones traversing the swamps around Púrdimal, though, are wooden, resting on wooden pilings because stone construction is impractical in the swamp. A Sákbe road consists of three ascending tiers, with the lowest being 3-5 metres high and 8-15 metres wide, the next 3-4 metres higher and 6-8 metres wide, and the topmost 3-5 metres higher still and 4-6 metres wide. The lower two have parapets along their open side, and the top has crenellated battlements along both. There are guard towers on average half a Tsán (600 metres) apart, closer in more dangerous areas and farther apart in the peaceful centre of the Empire; they vary from elaborate fortifications which stand across the roadway and can block access to unused bastions with a room or two. One can only access the roads at a city or at some towers, where there are ramps and staircases to the roads below. The roads are pretty safe, but the Sákbe Guards who garrison the towers often let important travellers sleep inside for a fee.

Caravans and almost everyone else travel on the widest bottom tier, which can be quite crowded and chaotic on well-travelled routes, especially near a city where people are trying to leave the road or load up. The second tier is reserved for persons of high standing (High clans and up with some rank) and their immediate entourages, and wheeled vehicles are forbidden; caravan masters of High clan walk on that tier and supervise their caravans from above. The top tier is reserved for those on urgent business of the Empire — classically lone Imperial Messengers running important



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information from city to city, but also high-ranking officials. Troops march on the lowest level, with their officers keeping pace on the second.

In remote areas, some Sákbe roads degenerate to more-traditional roads, or ruins of the original Engsvanyáli Sákbes. Some stretches are simply unfinished and abandoned because it wasn't economically feasible to complete them, or there were other problems with the project. For example, the Engsvanyáli abandoned construction of the Sákbe linking the town of Haumá with the great Úrmish-Jakállá road. When Emperor Heshtú'atl ordered it completed in 2194, the workers found out why: at the dark of the two moons, the ruins of the old Engsvanyáli causeway were transformed into a gleaming black highway upon which red-eyed demons marched in glittering spectral armour. The workers fled, and the attempt was shelved again.

## Cities

Each of the major cities of the Empire has its own distinct character. Following are some cities from which a character could come.

### Avanthár — “Capital of the Empire”

The home of the Emperors of the Petal Throne is less a city than a fortress — a crag of dark sandstone at the junction of two rivers, hollowed out over long millennia into a warren of corridors and rooms, topped with gardens and towers. If you are from Avanthar, chances are that your family serves the Empire in some fashion; the city is not all that large, and most of its inhabitants do. The highest officials of the Empire reside here, all the way up to the lofty heights of the Court of Purple Robes, the High Chancellor of the Empire and, in the tradition-imposed solitude of the Golden Tower, the Emperor himself.

The very structure of Avanthár mimics the Tsolyáni social pyramid: at the bustling lowest levels of the city are the western water gate (the only known access to the city), the dock chamber, and the administrative offices of the central government (home to legions of clerks and bureaucrats, assorted functionaries, and petitioners from across the Empire and beyond). The middle levels contain a variety of private lodgings, public halls, and clan apartments. The upper levels hold the Temples, housing for Imperial heirs, Avanthár's great library and academy, and a variety of function rooms. At the peak is a gem-encrusted staircase leading to the blue-veined marble antechambers of the Hall of the Petal Throne. Within that hall, high on the far wall, is the translucent jade lattice, believed to be part of the Petal Throne itself, from behind which the Emperor hears supplicants. His voice, of course, is never heard; the Speaker of the Seal speaks for him. Avanthár is a special place. Rumour even has it that the city itself has magical and technological defenses from before the Time of Darkness, as well as special mystical significance.

Despite its unusual structure, Avanthár has all of the resources of a city; it is a strange city, though, that is focused on one business and cannot sprawl out into the countryside. The ambitious can find opportunities for advancement to the highest levels here, but the atmosphere is also a bit confining — both literally and metaphorically — despite the city's beautiful gardens and concentration of talented people.

### Béy Sü — “The Soul of the World”

The capital city of Tsolyánu; being from Béy Sü makes one a citizen of the centre of the Empire. It is the soul of the world, the biggest and best of the big cities: refined, rich, congested, cultured, and intense. All roads lead to Béy Sü; it sits at the hub of the Sákbe road system astride the great river Mssúma, which flows down to the coast at Jakállá. To have a clanhouse in Béy Sü is such a matter of prestige that every clan that is able to be there is there.

The city is encircled by Patyel's Walls, vast white fortifications that seem to grow from the rock on which the city is built. They have successfully protected it for centuries, and it is believed they are enhanced by magic.

Under the walls is the quayside — bustling, noisy, and smelly. Here can be found river barges carrying all types of cargo to the mercantile houses of the capitol, military biremes from the Flotilla of Hagárr of Paránta which patrol the waterways, fishing boats drying their nets in the sun, and innumerable small sailing, rowing, and sculling vessels. The quayside is a forest of masts, swaying gently in the breeze. From here, one can sail to almost any port in the world.

The Mssúma river is broad and slow, easy to sail and with good fishing of various kinds. Aristocrats hunt wildfowl along its banks and Küni stoop above the farmland that borders it. It is both a highway and a sewer for the city.

If Béy Sü is the crown, then the jewel set in it is the Governor's palace. Protected by its own ring of walls and surrounded by delightful gardens, it is both imposing and beautiful, much like the city itself. Béy Sü is a treasure chest of wonders, from its mosaic-inlaid palaces to the blue slate roofs of the slums. To see Béy Sü is to see the glory of Empire.

### Jakállá — “The Princess of the River”

Jakállá is the greatest and most ancient of the southern port cities. It reclines in decadent splendour at the mouth of the Equnoyél river, overlooking the yellow mud flats and dark waters of the Gulf. Four great stone bridges link the northern and southern halves of Jakállá and the river itself is full of every kind of vessel, from sleek military biremes newly built at the military boat-yards in the north of the city to squat, sun-bleached merchantmen from far-distant lands. Travellers coming to the city normally reach it across the Bridge of the 41st Emperor, which spans the river at the entrance of the city and carries the great Sákbe road east to Thráya then north to the capital of the Empire, Béy Sü. This bridge can also be seen as integral to the defences of Jakállá. Any ship coming down river from inland must pass under its stone arches. At the orders of the City Governor or the Imperial authorities, ropes and logs may be slung between the arches to stop any unauthorised vessel from entering the city. The great Sákbe road also forms much of the massive southern landward wall of the city.

Inside Jakállá, the great river almost turns towards the east and the sea and where it turns, on the southern bank, there is the Palace of the Ever-Living Lord, the residence of the powerful Governor of Jakállá. The Palace itself is just the innermost structure in a series of huge defensive walls, moats, and towers that protect and proclaim the power of the representative of the Emperor in the city. It even has its own bridge to the northern bank, the Bridge of the Victory of the Emperor. Defensive walls, guard towers, and gatehouses characterise many of the institutions and organisations in Jakállá including most government offices, prisons, legion barracks, and even some residential areas. These are mostly relics of earlier periods but define certain areas and could be reinforced in an emergency and add to the complexity of navigating the city. Jakállá is physically quite small (less than a mile across) but densely populated and badly organised so a good knowledge of the city is usefully to move around it quickly.

The Underworld beneath Jakállá is one of the most extensive on the planet because this is one of the most ancient, still-inhabited human cities. Modern Jakállá is built on layers of ruins, its predecessors, which make it a city of secrets, hidden places, and deep tunnels. Far under Jakállá, there are wonders such as a Tubeway station whose cars could carry the adventurous far across the planet but with no guarantee of return. There are also horrors, such as the Garden of Weeping Snows where a damned magician enacts an eternity of vile torment on those unlucky enough to fall into his clutches.

Just outside the north-eastern walls of Jakállá is its city of the dead. This is about one sixth of the size of the living city of Jakállá but almost as splendid with its pyramids and mausoleums of forgotten kings and ancient Emperors. Appropriately enough, in the middle of this great cemetery is the Temple of Sárku and worshippers must leave the living city to attend it.

Jakállá is a hotbed of intrigue, subtle crimes, and delicate corruptions; it is also a major centre of legitimate business, international commerce, and naval power.

### Khírgár — “Defender of the North”

Khírgár, the northernmost city of Tsolyánu, anchors the Empire's northern defenses. As a result, the military has had a strong effect on its culture; the temples of the War deities (Lords Karakán, Chegárra, Vimúhla, and Chiténg) are especially prominent in the city and legionaries are common on the streets. To be from Khírgár is to partake at least a little of its martial bent, and to know what it means to be at the frontiers of Empire.

The city sits atop a small conical mountain called the Peak of The Warrior, and its best known feature is its three concentric walls around the mountain. The walls are quite old, but still maintained to some degree, so land is at a premium within



them. Buildings within the second wall, where the clanhouses of the aristocracy can be found, are often five or six stories tall. The outer circle holds residences, markets, slums, and the Foreigner's Quarter. The innermost ring contains the temples, palaces of noble clans, and the governor's citadel (a huge pyramid believed by many to predate the founding of the city — exceptional, given that the city has likely been around since the Latter Times).

Khírgár is located in a desert at some altitude; its climate is dry and warm (except at night when temperatures drop dangerously), and agriculture is difficult. Its location on the border, near the Chákas, and at the junction of three Sákbe roads, makes it a centre for trade from Milumanayá, Yán Kór, and the Chákas, and thus commercial activity is a major part of Khírgar's economy. The democratic-anarchistic Milumanayáni have affected Khírgar's culture in an interesting way, though the Khírgári would never admit it; Khírgári have the odd practice of taking votes on some decisions.

## Penóm

Penóm, in the fetid swamps along Tsolyánu's southern coast, is best known for its insects, its humidity, its vile odour of rotting fish and vegetation, and its omnipresent mould. Its only redeeming feature is its useful location for coastal trade. To be from Penóm is to be the butt of jokes about your home city no matter where you go in the Empire — but at least you'll never have to explain to anyone why you left. Penómi, as one might expect, carry a certain bitter pride in the lethal insects they have to contend with, and even their cuisine that makes use of them.

From a distance, Penóm looks like a normal coastal city. The three low ridges bear temples and government halls, while clanhouses and other buildings fill the hollows between them. The city was once walled, but the walls have deteriorated into moss-covered humps of rock; there is little fear of attack through the swamps, and the naval base at Gires provides sufficient defense against attack from the sea. Unfortunately, many of the other buildings have been allowed to fall into disrepair as well. Clanhouses in Penóm are poorer than they would be in other cities of similar size, and the environment causes rapid decay.

Life in Penóm is, obviously, unpleasant. It is also dangerous; residents have to put up screens to keep the swamp insects — some of which are big enough to drill through an unarmoured human in seconds — out, sleep on beds with each leg in a pot of insect poison, and suffer a variety of diseases endemic to the swampy lowlands. Some people, however, have to live in Penóm to keep trade going, or because their legion is posted there. The only reason someone from elsewhere in the Empire would move to Penóm is if they have been sent there as a punishment for screwing up or making a powerful enemy. It's an effective threat.

## Púrdímal — “The Black Toad”

Púrdímal is an old city, older than the Empire and perhaps older than the swamps that now surround it. These great bogs, the Swamps of Ksáru, are the first impression a new arrival gets of the place. The city can only be reached along the combination of causeways, pontoons, and archways that support the Sákbe roads as they wend their way through the black waters of the swamp. The stagnant waters stink and the miasma they create seems to permeate everything. A visitor to Púrdímal will find that the smell remains for weeks after they have left the city, as it sticks to clothing and other personal belongings. The Swamps of Ksáru have a bad reputation and appear desolate and mysterious to outsiders, but they are extremely fertile and the fishing there is excellent. Local clans that cut reeds and fish from flat-bottomed boats with weighted nets demonstrate that the swamps are much less dangerous to those who are familiar with them.

Púrdímal is large, but it seems to huddle under the slender needle of Thénu Thendráya Peak. The city is made of a grey, porous stone that seems perennially moist and slightly slimy to the touch. Púrdímal is the provincial capital of Parikana province and the great rivers that flow into the swamps bring endless fertility to the region while the swamps have helped to protect it from invaders.

Púrdímal is a great city of the Empire, but underneath the relatively recent Tsolyáni culture, there are older traditions and some of the local communities are not unambiguously human. It is a city of secrets and age.

## Features of Imperial Cities

All Imperial cities have a Palace of the Realm and a Governor's palace that form the core of city and provincial administration. They also have all of the Temples of the Gods of Stability and of Change although the relative size and influence of a particular Temple may vary considerably according to local religious preferences. Each city has at least one and possibly numerous marketplaces. In the cheaper parts of the city, an arena provides a centre of entertainment and there will be a Foreigners' Quarter whose size will depend on local trade and proximity to the borders of the Empire. All Imperial cities are walled and legionaries from the local garrison will protect its gates. Outside the wall there will be the City of the Dead, the necropolis where the honoured dead are buried. The basic component of all cities are the clanhouses of the population. There are few residences for individuals and most of the population will live in communal clanhouses.

## The Clanhouse

Physically, a clanhouse is a single structure, or complex of buildings, that provides living space for all of the clanmembers in a locality. It often includes the organisation's offices and workspaces as well, though the higher clans put them in a separate building. The size of the clanhouse depends on the size of the clan's population and operations in the city. At the lower end, a house in a remote village where the clan has a small presence could be a two or three-room building housing under ten people. At the other end of the scale, a large urban clanhouse might hold several hundred people.

Some features are common to all clanhouses, though smaller ones may combine functions while larger ones maintain elaborate and redundant characteristics:

- An outer area open to visitors. This may be a hall, courtyard, or several public rooms, including space for entertaining, business offices, shops, etc.
- A communal dining and socialising area, capable of holding the house's entire population for meals and meetings. In smaller clanhouses, this may be combined with the public area.
- Dormitories for local and visiting clanmembers, though available private space depends on the clan's wealth and the house's size. In poorer clanhouses, everyone may sleep in one large room; in richer ones, married couples and clan elders, or even singles with significant income, may have their own apartments. Sometimes dormitory areas are divided by lineage or family.
- Communal bathing and toilet facilities.
- Miscellaneous infrastructure, such as chlén-barns, kitchens, workrooms, slave quarters, and storage areas.

## The Marketplace

Every town or city worthy of the name has one or more marketplaces, places where goods and people swirl together in a maelstrom of colour, noise, and smell. Merchants cry their wares and bang pots to draw attention, peddlers rattle finger-drums and blow shrieking bone whistles, old peasant women bellow the virtues of their vegetables, children howl, and dogs bark — all over a background of a score of spoken tongues. The air is redolent of dust, sweat, smoke from cook fires, fresh produce, flowers, grain, perfumes, incense, spice, sawn wood, old straw, and manure. Young boys munch on qó, balls of deep-fried dná flour dipped in syrup, while others sample the intoxicating wares of the bearded Salarvyáni wine-merchants. Emerald and silver clad Dlamélish and Hriháyal Priestesses offer invitations to nervous peasant lads, soldiers look over chlén-hide weapons and armour, and young clan-women examine produce and bolts of cloth.

Open markets are held once a week in small towns, and daily in large cities. Market police patrol the area, apprehending cutpurses, watching for counterfeit coinage, and generally keeping the peace. Poor traders pay a copper qirgál or so per day for space on the dusty, baking pavement of the central plaza, while the more affluent give a káitar or two for room to erect an awning to protect themselves and their goods from the sun. The wealthiest rent stalls for 3-4 káitars per day located under pillared colonnades that surround the plaza. Most everything from basic food items and house wares to weapons, amulets, and love potions are found at the markets. In addition to the marketplaces, most artisan clans maintain permanent sale premises within their clanhouses. Clans that produce the same general type of merchandise are grouped together on the same street or district.



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The most elegant and expensive merchandise — the best jewels, rare books and coins, the finest clothing — can only be found outside the market, in exclusive establishments catering to wealthy and high status customers. Within the shop's long narrow halls, the customer is seated upon carpets and pillows and served chumétl and snacks while merchandise is brought out one by one for display and inspection.

If the city or town is large enough, the slave markets are in a separate walled compound, well away from the other bazaars. Unhappy “merchandise” is kept in pens and stalls and guarded by overseers. Slaves are segregated by function: common field workers are kept outside while educated and skilled slaves might be housed in a pavilion. The even more valuable slaves are kept in the slavers' private quarters. The auction blocks and offices loom high in the centre of the market, where papers are registered and private sales conducted. Auctions are conducted silently. The slave stands in a lighted area, and the bidders are seated in semi-darkness. Bids are signalled with a mirror, and not a word is spoken. Slaves are readily identified by the bronze collars they wear.

## The Hirilákte Arena

The Hirilákte Arena is an important part of any Tsolyáni city. As well as being a massive and distinctive architectural landmark, it is also a centre for public spectacle and entertainment, and a crucial part of the Tsolyáni system of honour.

Structurally, all Hirilákte Arenas are similar to a common sports arena on Earth, with banks of seating providing views of varying quality of the central arena. Vendors will sell snacks as they wander amongst the seated crowd and some in the audience will always be more interested in the wine or each other (the Hirilákte Arena is a common place for discrete liaisons) than what is happening on the sand. Private boxes can become scenes of family drama as babies scream and teenagers sulk at having been forced to come to the Arena again. Underneath the seating, there is a warren of corridors and rooms that smell of stale sweat and blood. On a busy festival day the changing rooms may be packed with amateur and professional gladiators, praying to the Gods, strapping on their armour and warming up for the fight. Down beneath, in the bowels of the Arena, the slave pens will be full of those soon to die and the nearby animal pens could contain any of the horrors the hunter clans can provide.

The Hirilákte Arena is where matters of honour are resolved, where blood is spilt on the sand and the living killed in the pursuit of respect. It is also the only place in a Tsolyáni city where any form of duelling is legal; to fight outside of its walls is to fight outside of the ancient code, the Manifesto of Noble Deliverance. To fight outside the Hirilákte Arena is to break with tradition and behave like a thug. People of honour follow the Manifesto, follow the ancient traditions, tread the sand, and kill each other in a proper manner. Matters of honour are therefore a regular, if occasionally rather amateurish, part of the schedule at any Hirilákte Arena. Less skilled combatants will find themselves given early slots in the day's proceedings and fight it out on the sand before the audience have even found their seats. Very skilled duellists may fight under obscure, exotic, and little used rules from the Manifesto to demonstrate their mastery of the form. Such fights are for the connoisseur of duelling but a notable duellist can quickly become a minor celebrity.

Like the coliseum of ancient Rome, the Hirilákte Arenas are also places of public and professional entertainment where bloody circuses are staged to elaborate extent to pacify the mob and aggrandise their sponsors. Staged fights between professional gladiators, slaves, and animals are clearly distinguished from true matters of honour in the minds of the audience. A wealthy aristocrat seeking to gain respect may fund a drama that lasts all day and climaxes with a bloodbath that features professional gladiators, wild beasts, slaves, and a mythological theme. With subsidised entry prices ensuring that every bench is full and families especially welcomed to ensure the moral education of the young, the Hirilákte Arena teaches the core values of Tsolyáni society. This is a theatre of cruelty where death is institutional and the lessons of power are spelled in blood.

## The Temple District

In many cities, the Temples of the Gods will be found in a distinct part of the city. The Temples of a God and their Cohort may be neighbours and the representatives of Stability and Change may tend to cluster together but, often, the geographic location of the Temples depends more on historical events in that locality, the availability of

good building sites, and the erratic preferences of the city administrators. In every city, however, whatever their physical relationship, each Temple is always present and always distinct, each has its own complex of buildings contained within a high defensive wall. The colours and traditional symbols of its faith make it easy to identify; the lightning bolts of Karakán can hardly be mistaken for the white worm of Sárku. The Temple Guard in the distinctive and traditional colours of their faith protects each gate and many key points inside it. Inside there will be public and private structures that will include ritual spaces for worship and sacrifice, administrative offices to provide for the running of the Temple and its properties in the surrounding area, libraries and dormitories for the religious scholars, and refectories to feed them all. Underground, there may be secret shrines, hidden rooms, and a labyrinth of tunnels that provide a haven in times of trouble or storage for items that are extremely sacred or simply forgotten. The Temples create an important part of the Underworld in any city because the requirements of faith mean that some observances can only be made in the loneliest of the deep places, hidden from the sun at altars consecrated in a long-forgotten tongue. A very old Temple will therefore have deep roots that may run some distance out under the surrounding city.

A large Temple in a great city can be like a small independent town, with its own storehouses, granaries, military forces, and internal government. Often there is a main, central structure, usually a great flat-topped pyramid that marks the ritual focus of the complex. A large city like Béy Su or Jakállá may therefore have over a dozen great pyramids rising above the skyline and making this area an easy landmark for newcomers.

Regular worshippers will have no problem gaining access to the more public areas of the Temple, but persons without clan or respect may be turned away even from communal events. People attending a particular Temple may not be exclusively dedicated to that particular god or goddess; even the most ardent Vimúhla worshipper may make sacrifices of flowers to Avánthe if they are hoping for another child. The Temple Quarter will be packed solid with worshippers on festival days and there is usually a steady flow of adherents for any of the multitude of public rituals. The Tsolyáni are a pious people and the Temples are a foundation of both the physical structure of the city and of everyday life within it.

## The Foreigners' Quarter

Every Tsolyáni city reserves a particular area, usually a high-walled ghetto, for visiting foreigners and residents who are not members of a Tsolyáni clan. In port or border cities these can be quite large areas with thousands of inhabitants, usually foreign merchants, carters, sailors, specialist artisans, and diplomats. Many of these foreigners will return to their country of birth but some become permanent clanless residents. This population will tend to remain in their traditional ethnic neighbourhoods within the Quarter and may retain strong links to their clans back home. Every Foreigners' Quarter will be sub-divided into areas dominated by a particular nationality and the subtle divisions between these neighbourhoods may be a source of conflict as grievances from back home are brought all the way to Tsolyánu. The Foreigners' Quarter of a provincial capital may be large enough to contain representatives from all of the Five Empires and many of the minor human and friendly non-human states as well. Amongst the majority of legitimate business people and merchants there are also drifters, escaped criminals, political refugees and mercenaries from across the known world. This makes the Foreigners' Quarter a colourful, lively, dirty and potentially very dangerous place for an unwary outsider.

Clanless people are virtually without legal status in Tsolyánu, which makes it very dangerous for a foreigner to leave the Foreigners' Quarter without the protection of a Tsolyáni. If a clanless person remains inside it, however, they find that competition for work, money and living space can be intense. Death can come swiftly to someone who makes the wrong enemies inside or outside the ghetto. It can also be difficult to get away from the Foreigners' Quarter; for someone stranded many hundreds of miles from the border getting the money together to return home can be a matter of desperation.

The Tsolyáni authorities have little interest in the internal affairs of the Foreigners' Quarter as long as no Tsolyáni citizens are harmed. The City Guard at the gates keep watch on the traffic in and out and secure the gate every night, only re-opening it at dawn. Any foreigner found outside the Quarter after dark is liable to arrest and could even be casually killed if they make a mistake in etiquette. During the night there is



no attempt by the Tsolyáni to enter the Foreigners' Quarter or enforce their law inside its walls. This means that after dark the ghetto is a zoo, run by thugs, gangs, and sometimes even darker forces.

Obviously the foreign population inside Tsolyánu changes somewhat over time. For example, the Mu'ugalavyáni invasion of Livyánu led to a sudden influx of Livyáni refugees into the southern port cities of Tsolyánu. This caused the Livyáni sections of the Foreigners' Quarter to become over-crowded but changed the balance of power inside the Quarter in favour of the émigré Livyáni.

The Foreigners' Quarter is the place to go to find strange foreign food, translators of alien languages, exotic foreign magicians and non-human mercenaries. A respectable Tsolyáni would be well advised to leave before nightfall, however.

## The Necropolis

Every city and major town in Tsolyánu has a Necropolis — the City of the Ever-Peaceful Dead — to the east or south of the city outside its walls. Beyond its gates, the tallest pyramids and tomb-stelae tower over gapúl and vrés trees. The oldest Bednálljan sepulchres are crumbling away, but the magnificent mausoleums and offering halls of the Engsvanyáli still stand strong among the newer monumental pyramids of important and wealthy Tsolyáni. Inscriptions from many ages cover the tombs and stelae. Labyrinthine paths wind between the tombs, the less-travelled ones choked with brush. Spread out around the Necropolis are the common graves and districts of small tombs, and there is always at least one great corpse-pit where the bodies of the indigent poor are thrown to the scavenger birds. Not too far away from the Necropolis is the Quarter of the Shroud-Makers, where coffin-makers, embalmers, professional mourners, amulet-sellers, flower-weavers, and manufacturers of tomb candy live and set up shop.

The Necropolises of Tsolyánu are not quiet cemeteries. Many come to see the tombs of the famous, and as soon as visitors step off the ferry, street vendors and beggars crowd around offering guidebooks, offerings for the dead, skull-shaped tomb candles, and amulets. Some even offer their services as tour guides, but be wary. Overseeing all of this are the Tomb Police, who keep the peace and guard the Necropolis from tomb robbers. At sunset, a great gong sounds and the gates — assuming it is a large enough Necropolis to have gates — are shut, and only the tomb police, grave robbers, and other less pleasant creatures will be found slinking along the paths.

Within the tombs themselves, grave robbers, archaeologists, and the curious must worry about being discovered not only by the Tomb Police, but also by the various creatures set to guard the tombs of the departed (see *Bestiary*, page 160).

## The Underworlds

The Underworlds are the underground complexes beneath most Tsolyáni cities. The main reason they have developed is the custom of Dítlána, or “renewal.” The Bednálljan Empire adopted the precept that every city should undergo renewal about every 500 years, depending on astrological conditions and economic feasibility. This has theological and practical importance, after a certain point major reconstruction work needs to be done on a sufficiently old city and complete renovation is actually more practical than trying to repair mouldering infrastructure piecemeal. The city's inhabitants are drafted as labour or moved out, the buildings are razed systematically, and their materials are used to fill in the foundations, and a new and more splendid city is erected upon the remains of the old one. “Thus is the land made pure,” as the Bednálljan Calendar of Difficult Immortality puts it. The Engsvanyáli continued the custom, and it survives to the present day. Some inhabitants of cities undergoing Dítlána need to preserve certain spaces for continued use. This may be semi-official as Temples cannot abandon sacred shrines simply because there is a Dítlána. Unofficially people and creatures create tunnels during and after the Dítlána for their own purposes, and consequently the ground beneath any major Tsolyáni city is honeycombed with passages, rooms, and temple complexes. It isn't just the area under the present city, either, because cities drift over centuries as rivers move and populations expand and contract; parts of Jakállá's underworld, for example, are out under the bay where the city used to be. As an interesting side effect of the custom, most Tsolyáni cities are higher than the surrounding land, and their temple districts — where the great pyramidal temples have massive foundations — are higher still, with Jakállá's rising some 15 metres above the surrounding plain.

## The Tubeways

The tubeways are the remnants of the transportation system installed by the Humanspace Alliance. Automated cars, suspended by anti-gravity, travel at extremely high speeds in tunnels through the crust of Tékumel. Some of the system is still functioning, and parts have been explored, both intentionally and inadvertently, by groups of explorers (see the novel *Flamesong* for an example).

All tubeway stations follow the same pattern: a single staircase leading up to a metal door (sometimes corroded shut), and signs in the blocky, angular script of the ancients. Inside, a central hallway leads past control rooms, freight bays, and store rooms to the central chamber. The chamber has a large, round tunnel mouth in the floor, with a floor plaque nearby consisting of three glass slabs — one red, one yellow, and one blue. If there isn't a car hovering over the tunnel mouth already, stepping on the red plaque calls one (how long this takes, and whether one ever arrives, depends on the condition of the tunnels leading to the particular station). The yellow plaque lights up when a car is on its way, and the blue when it arrives. The most common style of car is a small egg-shaped 5-passenger vehicle. Inside are passenger seats (recognisable as chairs), a rear area for luggage, and a forward control panel. There is also a view screen showing what destination has been selected (though the images are so out of date as to be misleading). To each side of the ten buttons are various controls that do things like turn on the lights inside and outside the car, or display incomprehensible status reports. Interesting and possibly useful things can be found in the cargo compartments but skeletons of passengers and crew, along with whatever personal effects survived through the millennia, are common.

Travelling in a tubeway car is not difficult; pressing a button on the right-hand panel closes the door. After that, touching one of the ten destination buttons on the control panel sends it on its way. The car rises, moves to the centre of the tunnel, and accelerates to a tremendous speed (the inhabitants are protected by a force field from the acceleration effects). It then proceeds to its destination, regardless of anything the occupants do, as long as the tunnels are clear and the station still exists. The cars are designed to abort to another station if the tunnels are obstructed, but that again assumes everything is still working; running into a lava flow at these speeds would mean a quick end to the journey. Travel can take anywhere from a few minutes to days. Where one comes out is anybody's guess: an installation of the ancients, the Underworlds beneath another Tsolyáni city, strange foreign lands halfway across the globe, the lands of the inimical races ... the possibilities are endless. Moreover, getting back, as one might imagine, can be a problem.

## Tsolyánu's Neighbours

Although the Tsolyáni Empire covers a large land area and has a population of over 50 million people, it is only one of five great human Empires (Tsolyánu, Mu'ugalavyá, Salarvyá, Yán Kór, and Livyánu) that dominate the northern hemisphere of Tékumel. These great nations are themselves just fragments of the ancient glory of the ancient Engsvanyáli Empire which once ruled nearly all humans on Tékumel.

The present arrangement of the Five Empires has been relatively stable, because each one represents a distinct cultural group with well-defined and defensible borders. The minor human states outside of the Five Empires are seen as peripheral. The interaction of these great nations has provided most of the major political and military events of the last two thousand years.

Until recently, the Five Empires were in a geopolitical log-jam, in which no major state could easily attack another without itself becoming unacceptably vulnerable. This situation arose because of the geography of the continents and the nature of war on Tékumel. Borders have tended to settle along natural barriers, such as mountain ranges, swamps, and forests, and these natural defences have been reinforced by fortifications built up over the centuries. Any force capable of changing these borders would also take a long time to mobilise, by which time any enemy would be aware of the threat and have reinforced its defences. Projecting a large percentage of the military abroad also raises the spectre of opportunistic attacks from other neighbours, a good example being the manner in which the N'lüss took the opportunity to harry the Mu'ugalavyáni during their recent invasion of Livyánu. This happened not because the N'lüss were attempting to help the Livyáni, but because the Mu'ugalavyáni



denuded their border defences to mount the invasion, giving the N'lüss the opportunity to raid for plunder and slaves. The Tsolyáni have used this principle to aid the small human state of Pecháno, to encourage it to harass the Empire of Salarvyá, distracting the Salarvyáni from a possible opportunistic attack on Tsolyánu. The use of proxy states and opportunistic alliances is all part of the complex power politics of the Five Empires.

The Five Empires have maintained a precarious equilibrium through most of the last two thousand years, but they have never stopped looking for potential advantage against each other. If one Empire discovers some way of neutralising another's defensive advantage, that formerly stable strategic equation can change quickly. The two most recent examples of this have been the use of "The Weapon without Answer" by Yán Kór to level Tsolyáni defences during their attempted invasion in 2356 A.S., and the development of a magic-neutralising technique by Mu'ugalavyá, which has been incredibly devastating to the Empire of Livyánu. The Livyáni have historically been so dependant on their magical defences that the loss of them seriously endangers the balance of power amongst the Five Empires.

## In Your Neighbourhood

Tsolyánu has land borders with two of the other Five Empires (Mu'ugalavyá and Salarvyá), has fought major battles against both of them in living memory, and is currently engaged in military activity along both borders. Tsolyánu and Livyánu have tended to ally because they are too far apart to have competing interests but share a border with Mu'ugalavyá. A case of "my enemy's enemy is my friend" and perhaps a little bit more.

## Five Things You Need to Know About the Livyáni

1. They are secretive, tattooed, cultured, and inscrutable.
2. They worship their own secret pantheon, the Shadow Gods.
3. They are fighting against the Mu'ugalavyáni invasion of their land.
4. They train the best human magicians.
5. They are tall and graceful.

The border between Tsolyánu and Mu'ugalavyá snakes through the deep and wild Chákan forests. This area, hundreds of Tsán deep, is a mix of dense forest and low mountains which form a natural barrier between the two nations. The northernmost part (Dó Cháka) contains a distinct ethnic population which used to be an independent state ruled by Clan Íto, as well as a Pé Chói community, but which has been occupied by both the Mu'ugalavyáni and (presently) the Tsolyáni. The southern Chákas (Pán Cháka) are the jungle lands of the non-human Páchi Léi (see the section on aliens), who have good reason to hate the Mu'ugalavyáni.

## Five Things You Need to Know About the Mu'ugalavyáni

1. They are a centralised, bureaucratic oligarchy.
2. They favour the worship of Lord Vimúhla and their own god, Lord Hrsh.
3. They covet the western Tsolyáni protectorates of Dó Cháka and Pán Cháka.
4. They are highly militaristic and make good soldiers.
5. They are presently involved in a successful invasion of Livyánu.

The northern border of Tsolyánu is split between the deserts of the north east where the fertile land of Tsolyánu fades into the trackless deserts of Milumanayá and the northwest, where the Sákbe road leads into the small human state of Pijéna. The Milumayani are thought of as desert nomads with some odd traditions (including a very bizarre one called democracy) whereas the Pijenáni are thought of mainly as thieves with an unhealthy obsession on the significance of sporting events. North of Pijéna there is Yán Kór, the most northerly of the Five Empires.

## Five Things You Need to Know About the Yán Koryáni

1. The entire state was radically reformed by Baron Áld some thirty years ago.
2. They have historically been a matriarchy, although a man currently rules them.
3. They invaded Tsolyánu in 2356 A.S.
4. They form the core of a rough alliance of small northern states.
5. The city states that make up Yán Kór are fiercely independent.

To the east there is Salarvyá, a great empire that trails off into a huge rural hinterland. The Salarvyáni use a semi-feudal social structure and are often seen as cavalier, quarrelsome, colourful, and emotional.

## Five Things You Need to Know About the Salarvyáni

1. They are a feudal state dominated by seven powerful families.
2. They worship their Goddess Shiringgáyi above all other Gods.
3. They are hairy, have sallow (almost yellow) skin, and the men have curly beards.
4. The King of Salarvyá was literally insane (he is dead now).
5. They are renowned exponents of rapier and dagger fighting.

## Friendly Non-humans

There are semi-independent populations of friendly non-humans in the western forests (Páchi Lei in the south and Pé Chói in the north). Relations between the Empire and these groups tend to be cordial, though there are occasional problems.

## The Enemy Within

Tsolyánu contains one enclave of inimical non-humans, the Hlutrgú. They are confined to a small enclave on the southern coast that is so hostile to humans that the Tsolyáni have never been able to penetrate far enough to exterminate the foul creatures.

## Maps in the Five Empires

The maps on Tékumel are extremely limited for technological and cultural reasons. Accurate cartographic measurement is virtually impossible because of the lack of precision instruments and precision instruments are impractical without good steel working. The Sákbe system provides a practical alternative to survey mapping because directions can be given relative to the access ramps. For example, someone attempting to give directions to a friend might say "get on the Sákbe up towards Khirgár and take the thirteenth ramp off to your right. Then walk for half a day and you'll be at the Clan of the White Stone. Ask them to sent someone to take you to the old Temple on the hill and from there you can see the river that leads down to the abandoned clanhouse. It should take you about four days to walk downriver."

Merchants and merchant clans do have diagrammatic maps. These are drawn on strips of paper or cloth and have specific locations depicted as boxes, with lines representing routes and travel times marked alongside. These may be family heirlooms and only deal with features of interest to the creator rather than a general description of the geography.

A specialist form of cartography exists as an art form, this is the use and appreciation of the magical stones of High Cartography, three-dimensional carved and inlaid stones with tiny ridges, bumps, and other features. Modern High Cartography stones are pallid imitations of the originals created during the Latter Times, which gave the user mental pictures of various locations and features when handled.



## Magic on Tékumel

Magic on Tékumel is based on drawing power from the Planes Beyond and shaping it into matter or energy, either by the powers of the magic-user's mind or via technological devices. How easy this is depends on how thin the "skin of reality" that separates Planes from each other is. On Tékumel, it is generally quite thin, which is why it is possible for significant numbers of humans to tap extra-Planar power.

### The Pedhétl

Every being — sentient or otherwise — has a set capacity for holding magical energy. This is the being's Pedhétl, the metaphorical beaker into which the energies of the Planes Beyond are distilled. A being's capacity to use or resist magic depends on how much extra-planar energy the being can retain. If the Pedhétl is too small, the being cannot use magic but may be affected by it. Casting magic eventually drains that reservoir of energy, requiring a night's sleep — or several — to replenish it.

### Psychic and Ritual Magic

The cultures of the Five Empires have developed many different types of magic, from the ceremonial group magic used on battlefields to the subtleties of enchantment and the horrors of demonology. In terms of Spells that can be cast by an individual human magician in a few seconds, there are two generally accepted categories: Psychic and Ritual magic. Psychic magic does not require paraphernalia or incantations on the part of the magician, simply concentration and a perceptible target. A Psychic magician is therefore extremely dangerous since they can dominate minds or cause terror simply by looking at a victim and concentrating for a moment.

Ritual Spells require a unique mind-set, gestures, vocalisations, attitudes, and specific paraphernalia (substances, diagrams, sacrifices, etc.). This may seem like a serious disadvantage when compared to the relative simplicity of casting Psychic magic, but Ritual magic is capable of much more complex effects and there are more Ritual Spells than Psychic ones.

Temple schools across the Five Empires attempt to identify children with the aptitude for any form of magic through the teaching of mental exercises. These are pointless and often boring for those with no talent, but if the child has any potential, alert tutors will encourage entry into a Priesthood for formal training in magic.

### Nexus Points

Magic is possible because the skin between the planes is thin over most of Tékumel. In some places it is so thin that a gap opens in it, a pore in the skin between the planes. This is what magicians call a "Nexus Point." Some of them are permanent, though most last for a limited duration or cycle in and out of existence, as temporary imperfections in the skin that separates the planes. Entering a Nexus Point is dangerous; most magicians cannot tell what the point's destination is or how long it will stay in existence.

### Demons

Nexus Points may lead to planes that are inhabited. Human magicians usually call these Demons (the Tsolyáni word for them is "Sharétl"), but the term covers a diverse range of beings. Some "Demons" are roughly on par with humans and can be dealt with as equals. Others are inferior in abilities and semi-intelligent beings, while some are clearly superior to humans in almost every capacity. Mighty magicians may learn how to contact demon races that are friendly to their Deity's aims and beliefs, and may even learn how to contact the dreaded Great Demons — beings of such inconceivable power that they approach the level of the Gods themselves. Demonology is not only complex, but also fraught with dangers even for the skilled practitioner.

## Magical Devices

The Lords of the Latter Times combined magic and technology to create devices that could draw extra-planar energy in the same way that a magician could. In effect they are automated Spell casters, usually dedicated to producing one effect. The user has no need to possess any magical ability or potential to activate them. Most will even function in the hands of a Magic Dampener, though some have to be "cocked" by a psychically able person first.

Contemporary Tsolyáni no longer have the knowledge needed to create magico-technological devices, but they make a different kind of magical device by imbuing a material object with Spells. This category includes sorcerous traps, magical weapons and armour, and scrolls created using the Spell of Inscription. The Spells can then be triggered, either by action (such as speaking a word or touching the object carrying the Spell) or, in the case of magical inscriptions, by the psychic "spark" of the person who reads them, to produce the corresponding magical effect. These do not require magical ability to use but require a considerable amount of skilled magical labour to produce and are normally one-use only. Although the Temples do have stockpiles, they are carefully hoarded.

## Magical Fertility and Barrenness

Spells work easily in a "fertile" region, and a magician can almost feel the energies of the Planes Beyond tingling just outside the range of perception. Spells in a barren area either do not work, or drain all of the caster's Energy Pool with a single casting (the caster cannot recover that energy until he or she leaves the barren area). Even magico-technological devices only work once in such areas, and then must be returned to a more fertile area before they can be used again. In both cases, the person or device is restricted to the energy it already has stored in its reservoir and has to use that in lieu of the energy that would normally come from the Planes Beyond.

### Fertile Areas

In Tsolyánu, the cities of Hmakuyál (a ruined city), Púrdimal, Sárku, and Avanthár are all fertile areas. Smaller fertile areas also exist. Outside Tsolyánu, the best known fertile areas include the Eastern coast of Livyánu, Ch'óchi in Mu'ugalavá, Hlíkku and Ngakü in Yán Kór, Lake Mrissüt and the city of Jgrësh in Salarvyá, the Mihállí ruins of the far northeast, and the Crater of the Unstraightened City.

### Barren and Semi-Barren Areas

Tsolyánu does not have any large barren or semi-barren areas, though localised areas may exist. Outside Tsolyánu, the best known completely barren areas are the Tsoleí Archipelago, the Unknown Forest, and the Plain of Towers (a field covered with ancient, defunct starships) to the north-west of Mu'ugalavá, the mountains of northern N'lüss, the tundra of the Lorún north of Yán Kór, the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, the coastal Protectorate of Chadára in Salarvyá, Rancháka Head on the eastern coast of the continent, the White Water Shoals, and the Ahoggyá enclave of Ónmu Tlé Hléktis. All of the far north-eastern states, from Chayákku over through Nuru'úm, are a semi-barren area.

### "Specialised" Areas

Certain places may appear to be fertile to some types of Spells, or to a given Temple's Spells, but barren to others. The City of Sárku privileges that Deity's Spells, for example, and Hmakuyál privileges those of Ksárul and Grugánu. The walls of the universe are not actually thinner or thicker there, though the effects are the same in terms of game modifiers. The reason behind this effect is unknown: perhaps the demons and other beings associated with the favoured Deities are "closer" to those places in a metaphysical sense, or perhaps those are areas where the same types of Spells have been cast over and over for millennia, so the energies from the Planes Beyond tend to flow into those established channels.



TÉKUMEL  
EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE





## The World of Tékumel

### The Lamps of the Sky

The Ancients modified nearby planets and smaller celestial bodies, even consuming some in the terraforming of the system. Only five planets remain, including Tékumel. The Tsolyáni call their star Tuléng and consider it the manifestation of the god Hnálla, Master of Light and Supreme Principle of Stability. The other planets are also associated with various deities.

Tékumel has two moons: greenish Gayél orbits once about every 30 days, and orange-red Káshi completes its cycle in about 15. Káshi is smaller but brighter, and appears higher in the sky. Each looks slightly smaller and dimmer than Earth's moon, though when both are full the light is about a third brighter than the full moon on Earth.

**Table 7-1: Celestial Bodies**

Name	Type	Colour	Associated God
Ülétl	Planet	Dusty tan	Sárku
Ríruchél	Planet	Scarlet	Karakán
Shíchel	Planet	Blue	Avánthe
Zirúna	Planet	Purple	Hrü'ü
Gayél	Moon	Green	Dlamélish
Káshi	Moon	Orange-red	Vimúhla

Small meteor showers occur occasionally, and some ancient satellites are still visible in the sky. These are called "Lesser Demons," and astrologers debate their appearance with careful consideration. All heavenly bodies have religious and astrological significance related to their colour; the motion of the heavens often determines special rites and holidays. Thúmis, Sage of the Gods, is said to war with Hrü'ü and Ksarúl, the Master of Magic and Sorcery, over the light and dark sides of all the worlds; the phases of the moons reflect their battles. Belkhánu, the Opener of the Gates of Heaven, reputedly dwells in the darkness between the worlds.

### Regional Climate

The poles now have small icecaps and tundra regions, and at around 55 degrees latitude, the temperatures average 0 to 20°C. Land regions between 55 and 45 degrees latitude have a pleasant temperate climate. Further towards the equator, it becomes very hot.

In Tsolyánu, the climate ranges from hot to sweltering. Khirgár in the northwest is dry, and only averages 22 cm of rain per year. Temperatures rarely drop below 12°C, and summer highs can reach 40°C. Béy Sü sees similar temperatures but with more rain (about 70 cm), while other cities of the Mssúma Valley heartland have a similar, though somewhat warmer, climate. Fasiltum is warmer and drier, with summer highs reaching 48°C, and rarely more than 15 cm of rain per year. Southern Tsolyánu is hotter still, and more humid, with an annual monsoon. Penóm and Jakálla average four metres of rain per year, and temperatures range between 26 to 40°C, with summer highs of 51°C. The cities of Salarvyá and Livyánu are slightly warmer, but not greatly since the sea helps moderate the climate. Only Tsolyáni who have been in the distant north or among high mountains have ever seen frost, much less snow.

Further south, beyond the Deepes of Chanayága, the temperatures rise yet higher. In a band of trade winds a few degrees north of the equator, the air temperature sometimes exceeds 60°C. Of the sentient races found in Tsolyánu, only the Shén can handle that temperature. Conditions at the equator itself are sometimes more hostile, yet in spite of the heat, plenty of plants and animals flourish in Tékumel's hottest climes.

### The Heat

Heat is a constant fact of life on Tékumel. Humans can keep a normal body temperature even in 54°C heat if the air is dry and they have enough water, but as the humidity mounts, sweating becomes less effective; the lethal temperature drops to the mid 30's at 100% humidity. Doing physical work lowers the lethal temperatures even more, as does wearing a lot of clothing or armour.

To survive, one needs a lot of water. At 40°C, an adult human loses about a quarter litre of water per hour just sitting in the shade. Marching in the sun increases that to one litre per hour. One can die of dehydration in a single day. Assuming most activity is in the cool of the night and early morning, troops in the desert or slaves on a desert Sákbé road need 2-3 litres of water per day or begin to suffer or even take damage. Vigorous activity during midday could double or triple that, even if the Tsolyáni consume less water than modern Earth humans.

The Tsolyáni have adjusted accordingly. Many become almost nocturnal during the hot months, or at least take very long siestas. Travellers and labourers wear broad-brimmed hats and carry water, or stay on the Sákbé roads where they can buy it. Ships rig sunshades over their decks. Armies on campaign work hard to ensure their water supply and often depend on enormous units of bearers and caravans of chlén-carts to carry their precious water. Tsolyáni architecture helps too; architects designed the cities to provide shade and take advantage of breezes. Awnings, arbours, colonnades, and pavilions are major parts of building design. Sokátis, sometimes called "The Roofed City," is famed for its pastel stained-glass roofs; one can walk the city's length or breadth without stepping into the sun.

### Time and the Seasons

In Tsolyánu, the spring equinox marks the start of the year, coinciding with the rainy season. The Tsolyáni celebrate the arrival of the first heavy rains (the Banúrdaliyal, the "Great Rains"). The temple of Avánthe leads the festivities, sounding mighty tunkúl-gongs and parading in the streets. In the south, this marks the beginnings of nearly daily downpours for the next three months.

## The Tsolyáni Calendar

The Tsolyáni calendar starts by tradition from the accession of the first Seal Emperor to the Petal Throne, and is derived from one established in Engsvanyáli times. Each year has 12 months of 30 days, with five intercalary days at the end of the year devoted to feasting and celebration (Ikáner, Turúgdashe, Vraháma, Ngaqómi, and Chitlásha). Every fourth year, a sixth day (the Koluméhagi) is added. Children born on an intercalary day are sometimes named after the day of their birth.

Each month is divided into five weeks of six days each; the sixth day of the week is a day of rest. The days of the week are named Surúnra, Mugún, Zaqé, Rü'üsa, Tlakál, and Daunél (the day of rest).

**Table 7-2: The Annual Cycle**

Month	Notes
Hasanpór	Spring equinox; Start of rainy season
Shápru	Rainy
Didóm	Rainy; Getting hotter
Langála	Most pleasant; Planting of crops
Fésru	Start of summer; Hot (about 32°C)
Drénggar	Hotter
Firasúl	Dry, very hot (about 49°C in Jakálla)
Pardán	Slightly cooler
Halír	Crops harvested; Cooling
Trantór	Autumn
Lésdrim	Start of Winter
Dohála	Coldest; 16°C during the day, 2-10°C at night



The first month of the year, Hasanpór, starts relatively cool, but temperatures warm up in Didóm. Farmers and slaves harvest the winter crops, and there are great fish runs along the coast and in the lower reaches of the Chaigávra River above Penóm. The next month, Langála, is traditionally considered the most pleasant. Farmers plant their crops, and great shoals of fish move through the lower Mssúma, Ranánga, and Equonoyél Rivers; spring dampness has passed, and summer's deadly heat not yet arrived.

Fésru is the first month of summer, when the heat begins (32°C), though the occasional late season shower offers some relief. Drénggar, Firasúl, and Pardán are the true months of torment. Torrid heat peaks in the middle of Firasúl, and little to no rain falls. Temperatures in the south regularly exceed 49°C, and the people take to shelters, waiting out the hot part of the day in relatively cool basement chambers. Field labourers or other outside workers toil mainly in the cool of morning, and if necessary, in the moderate climes of evening or under lights at night, but never at midday or afternoon.

In the month Halír, when farmers bring in the harvest, the heat finally abates, though rain is still rare. A few showers bring occasional relief in Trantór or Lésdrim, but even if it does not rain, the air is still cooler. Dohála is the "coldest" month in Tsolyánu, with temperatures in the north plummeting down to 12°C.

## Evolution in Action

When the regulatory systems installed by the Humanspace Alliance failed, the artificial landscapes of Tékumel changed radically. Many species became extinct and other that could never evolve together now existed side by side. To further complicate matters, magicians of the Latter Times created new life forms and modified existing ones for their needs. The ecology of Tékumel is chaotic and often dangerous to humans because they are not adapted to deal with it.

## Lots of Bugs

Tékumel is hot, so insectoids, reptiles, amphibians, and other "cold-blooded" creatures have done very well and displaced warm-blooded species in many cases. For example, cats (tiúni) are popular as pets and pest control in Yán Kór, Ghatón, and the north, but rare in southern Tsolyánu. There, the rat-sized insectoid qigékh is both competitor and dangerous prey, and tiúni cannot handle them. Warehouse managers in the southern cities tolerate the spiky, ugly qigékh, since it eats other vermin.

## Touch Nothing

Organisms that evolved on different planets can have fundamentally different chemicals of life. Not all plants and animals on Tékumel have DNA, or store their energy as fats, or use calcium for bones. The structure of their proteins (if they have proteins) is often very different. Many plants and animals are indigestible, non-nutritious, or toxic — not because they have special poisons, but because their ordinary tissues contain the wrong chemical building-blocks. A human hunter can starve to death with a full stomach if they choose the wrong prey. With few wild foods available, domesticated plants and animals are all the more crucial to life. If a crop fails, or a herd becomes sick, the locals have less game and fewer wild plants to fall back on.

## Agriculture, the Foundation of the Empire

Agriculture is so omnipresent in Tsolyánu it is almost invisible. All Tsolyáni institutions — the temples, the Imperial government, and nearly all the clans — have agricultural holdings and labour as their base of income and security. When the harvest fails, so goes the prosperity of the Empire. Approximately 85% of Tsolyáni are agricultural workers: mostly tenant farmers, plus some village craftspeople and slaves. The remaining 15% live in the cities and towns; most are labourers and artisans, some are merchants, and a few are high-status leaders and functionaries. Only 10-15% of the population are slaves.

The rural people of the Empires are not scattered thinly across wide areas, but clustered around farms and plantations that require intensive labour. The rural landscape is thus a patchwork of fields and pastures around cities and along rivers and Sákbe roads; the entire region is dotted with communal homes of agricultural clans and the occasional high clan villa or estate.

Further away from transport or town, uncultivated wild lands appear in between agricultural areas. Moving further out, the empty areas quickly widen. Even in the countryside, wise people live close to their neighbours.

## The Bounty of Farm and Field

Dná grain (orange-coloured when ripe) and rice (in the wetlands of the south) are the basic foodstuffs. There are over a thousand species of vegetables — legumes, tubers, leafy plants, herbs, nuts, fungi, etc., and edible fruits are similarly diverse.

There are a few species of poultry, including the káika — a fat, waddling, duck-like creature raised for eggs and meat. The only other domesticated meat animals are the hmélu and the hmá, similar to sheep, albeit slightly smarter sheep with six legs. The smaller hmélu are preferred for meat and milk, whereas hmá are kept more for their wool. Fish and shellfish are an important part of the food supply. Many types of insect-like creatures are also edible. None of Earth's familiar farm animals exist anywhere within the Five Empires.

## The Dangers of Travel

Many Tsolyáni never leave their clan farm and most of the rest will only travel as far as the next town for market day. Very few travel very far with any regularity and nobody should set out with the assumption that their journey will be uneventful or predictable.

Travelling outside one's own national borders is rare and risky because it removes the protection of clan. The Sákbe road system is well-protected and is the safest way across a border, since all civilised nations have road guards and some arrangements to help sustain travellers as they journey. Foreigners straying into rural backwaters may run into spontaneous hostility from locals and suspicion from the authorities.

It is important to make proper preparations for any major journey, which includes a consideration of whom one will stay with along the way. Letters of introduction from Clan or Temple are as vital as a stout pair of walking sandals.

Since Tékumel lacks horses or other medium-sized beasts of burden, cargo transport by land is done either on the backs of slaves or by chlén carts. Long distances are covered on the great Sákbe roads. Lower and Middle-clan people travel even long distances on foot. Upper-class persons mostly travel either on foot or in palanquins or litters; only a few prefer to journey in the lumbering, slow chlén carts. Litters are mainly carried by slaves, and make only slightly less rapid time than a caravan of porters, perhaps 35-55 km per day at best. Military officers will generally forego them, preferring to march.



# The Bestiary

## The Incomplete Bestiary of Bálesh hiRánmiyel — Being a Reflection of Her Travels over Many Years

*It is traditional at the start of a Bestiary to claim personal experience, complete accuracy, and total authenticity for what is to follow. This is generally a lie, albeit unintended, because scholars frequently rely on folk tales, rumour, and tradition far more than dangerous experience. The last reliable and complete bestiary was lost with the drowning of the great library of the Priest-Kings and none shall know its like again. The certain truth is lost to us, and all that we know is incomplete.*

*None of the creatures herein are described with absolute accuracy or great reliability. I have seen many of them, but often fleetingly as either they ran from me or I ran for my life from them. Had I personally encountered half the creatures described in this bestiary I should long ago have been killed and on occasion I rely upon the reminiscences of my more courageous cousins.*

*All of the descriptions are doctrinally orthodox, however, having been checked by my Senior Priest (a man who has never left the city of Chéne Ho in his life). They are therefore absolutely true in the theological sense and may be copied by Priests of all Temples without fear of ecclesiastic sanction. Real travellers should take these descriptions as friendly advice from someone who has travelled far and lived longer than she should.*

*Bálesh hiRánmiyel, Priestess of Thúmis. Chéne Ho, 2374 A.S.*

## Using the Bestiary

The bestiary is organised into three categories. The first deals with creatures that could be encountered almost anywhere in Tsolyánu (many are domestic animals) and these tend to be well understood. The second contains the creatures of the wilderness, often more dangerous and less well known. Finally, comes the horrors,

the creatures of the underworld, and the supernatural. The GM may alter stats to fit the nature of the campaign and uncertainty can be a major issue in character perceptions of these creatures.

Many bestiary entries have unique characteristics that do not match the character creation mechanics (page 7); the entries are not player characters and thus have abilities or characteristics that are not human. Their Derived Values may be better or worse than their Stats would normally indicate.

## Found Anywhere in Tsolyánu

### Chlén — “the Armour Beast”

You may flinch when you realise that the chlén-beast is going to crush you against the wall of the alley as it tries to make that turn.

**Habitat:** Domesticated Chlén are found in all inhabited regions of the Five Empires, though they are uncommon in desert and dry mountain areas. Wild Chlén can be found in large areas of well-watered grassland.

*There ain't nothing fast about a chlén. She'll not go quicker than a man can walk and won't walk all day neither but she's the only thing that can pull a cart so there ain't no farming without one. The Clan got two for hauling carts and four for pulling the ploughs. We peel their hide twice a year and sell what we get to the armourers' clans for tanning and hardening into tools, weapons, and such. The Chlén bellow, stomp, and grunt, but peeling don't hurt them none. You need a chlén-prod to work 'em, they're too dumb and tough to notice nothing else. You can whack 'em when you need to start and stop and use the blinker plaques to get them turning. They don't turn in a hurry and once they start they don't like to stop. They ain't mean but they sure are big and dumb and I seen a big male Chlén crush a man flat against a clanhouse wall by accident.*

*Outi hiShalu, Chlén-cart driver, Nemudlu Province*





## Description

Chlén have flattish, horned heads with two eyes, a wide beak, and a spiked frill extending from the back of the heads over the neck. The six feet have four short splayed digits, each with a thick blunt claw. Adult size is 5-6 metres long from the tip of the snout to the end of the thick stubby tail, 3-4 metres tall, and 7-9 tonnes mass. Adults require about 200 kg of food (fresh greens; mass is less for grain or hay) and 170-200 litres of water per day. At no stage in its life does a Chlén smell good.

The traditional vehicles are a “small” cart drawn by one animal and carrying 700-900 kg, and a large cart drawn by a tandem pair that can haul 1800-2700 kg. Chlén-prods are required to operate a cart and can also be used as pry-bars and weapons.

## Stats

Strength 12, Dexterity 4, Intelligence 1, Psyche 3, Willpower 3, Charisma 1

Initiative 8, Combat Value 8, Health Points 75, Shock Value 15, Magic Resistance 2, Pedhél 1, Armour Value 4

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** Observation 1

## Unique to Chlén

**Natural Armour:** Level 4. Chlén have natural armour, thick layers of heavy Chlén-hide, equivalent to better than Heavy Armour. Armour Value 4.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 1. Chlén have heavily armoured legs that they stomp and crush with. Their attack has a Damage Multiplier of 4 and High Penetration.

**Physical Impairment (Awkward Size):** Level 4. Chlén are very large and their stomp/crush attacks. Their attacks are so slow that anyone who makes a successful Dexterity Stat Check will avoid it completely.

## Étla — “Chisel Crab”

You may flinch when an algae-covered stone in the pond lurches towards you waving claws.

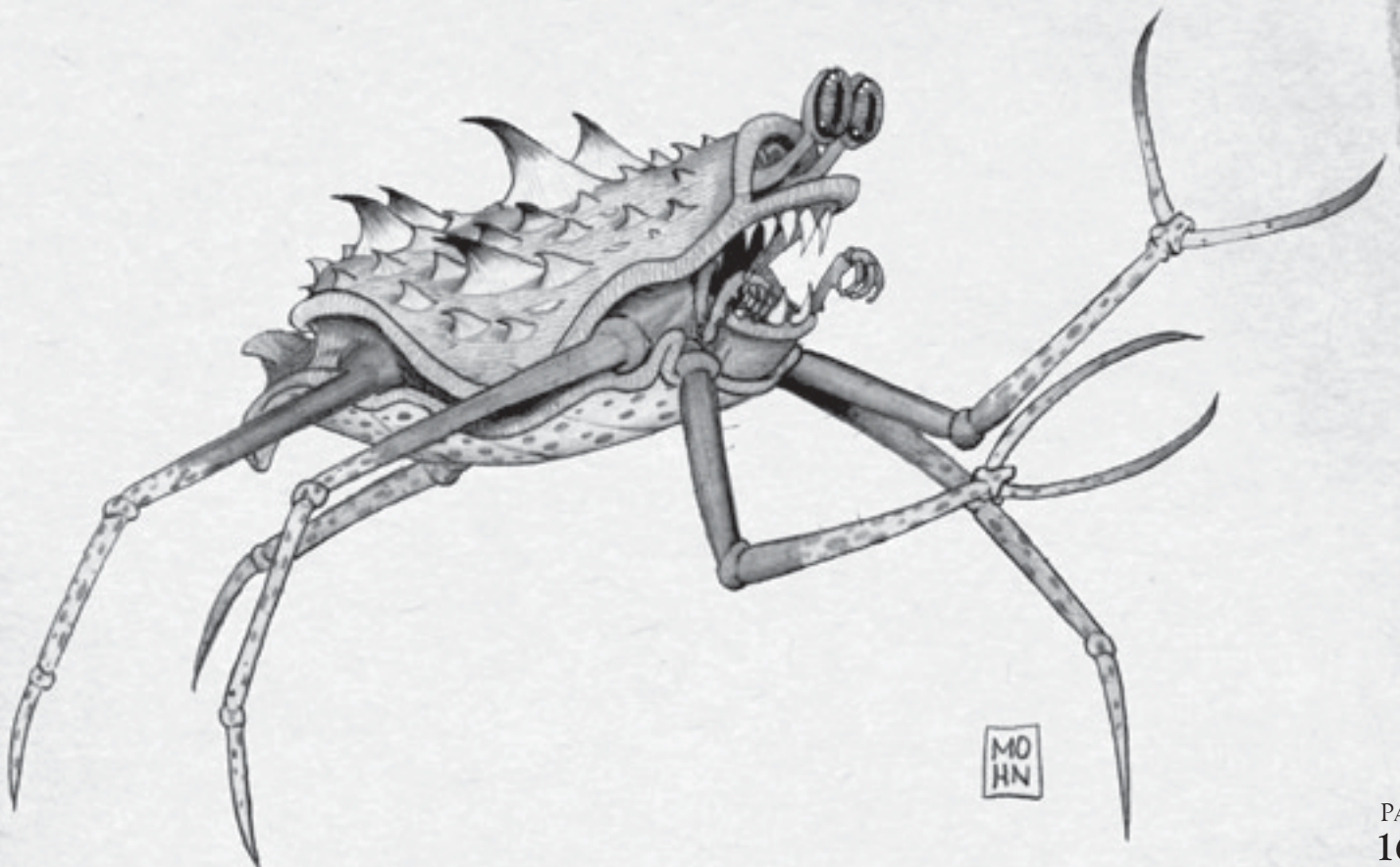
**Habitat:** all kinds of aquatic habitats, throughout the Five Empires and beyond.

*The battle had been bloody but what came after was worse. My leg was broken but I had crawled up the beach away from the water. The Étla came with the tide, attracted by our blood. First there was one and within minutes there seemed to be hundreds scuttling like a legion of spindle-legged boulders towards the bodies of the dead. I heard the crack of bones in the semi-darkness and decided to let the first one close its pincers on the end of my sword. Having fished for Étla in the river back home I knew it would stubbornly hang on even as I smashed it against my shield and flung its remains away. That little trick bought me some time, for they ate each other as easily as they would me. Fortunately, the patrol that had missed me at sundown rescued me not long after dawn. Even now, all these years later, if I pass the stall in the market selling baskets of live Étla I cannot help wondering what or who their last meal was.*

*From the War Diaries of Talisanu hiKoródu (12th Medium Infantry Legion)*

## Description

These mottled brown-green, crab-like creatures have six legs, two sharp pincer-claws, frontally placed eyes and a mouth set with chisel-shaped teeth. The stats given are for a large (70 cm) variety but coastal varieties grow up to 1.5 m in diameter, while smaller sub-species may be as tiny as a thumbnail. Land Étla are smaller but every irrigation ditch, sewer, and well below an altitude of 3000 feet will contain some, where they fulfil the same role as the rodents do on Earth. The Étla runs straight forward, unlike the crab, and will eat all kinds of things. They’ll scavenge carrion consume fruits, eat any small organism careless enough to be grabbed, and even graze on algae. They are a common form of vermin.





## Stats

Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Intelligence 1, Psyche 1, Willpower 4, Charisma 1  
 Initiative 8, Combat Value 4, Health Points 20, Shock Value 4, Magic Resistance 5  
 Pedhétl 1, Armour Value 2

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** Observation 2

## Unique to Étla

*Natural Armour:* Level 2. Étla have natural armour equivalent to Medium Armour.

*Natural Multiple Weapons:* Level 2. Étla have two claws and a beak and can make two attacks in a round.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 1. Étla have two heavily armoured claws that have a Damage Multiplier of 1.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 1. Étla have a heavily armoured beak that have a Damage Multiplier of 2 and High Penetration.

*Physical Advantage (Expanded Field of Vision):* Level 1. Étla have a much wider field of vision than humans do, which should be taken into account if someone is trying to sneak up on one.

## Küni — “the Falcon”

You may flinch when you hear squawking voices above you calling “There they are! There they are!”

**Habitat:** Domesticated by high status groups throughout the Five Empires. Wild Küni are found across Tékumel in upland wilderness areas.

## Description

Küni birds are semi-intelligent hawks. Most adults are about 60 cm tall, with a wingspan of about 1.4 m. They are excellent mimics and can be taught some words of human speech. They are highly valued as hunting animals and scouts. Küni will not breed in captivity so the birds must be caught as nestlings or juveniles and raised

by trained falconers. Nets and sticky blunt arrows are sometimes used, as are Tsúral buds, which affect Küni rather like catnip affects a cat. The training and maintenance of even a single Küni bird requires a Skilled falconer, servants, and special accommodation ... all of which is very expensive. Küni can be passable military scouts, but not everyone can understand their “speech” (Intelligence Check). During the Tsolyáni campaign against the Yán Koryáni near the north coast of Pijéna, five or six Küni came flying back to their camp screaming “Pedhenyal” (“islands”). The Molkár in command heard “Pedhuyal” (“enemies”) and mobilised his troops. After standing around looking silly for the best part of an afternoon, he ordered up a small squad of Hláka to report the true facts — and then retired into his tent to sulk. Characters may develop these as individual animals using the Special Item rules.

## Stats

Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 2, Psyche 4, Willpower 4, Charisma 4  
 Initiative 9, Combat Value 6, Health Points 15, Shock Value 3, Magic Resistance 2, Pedhétl 1

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** Distractible 1 (other Küni), Fragile 1

**Skills:** Observation 3, Planning 1, Teamwork 1; trained hunters may have higher Teamwork scores, and a very few extremely valuable birds have Analysis 1

## Unique to Küni

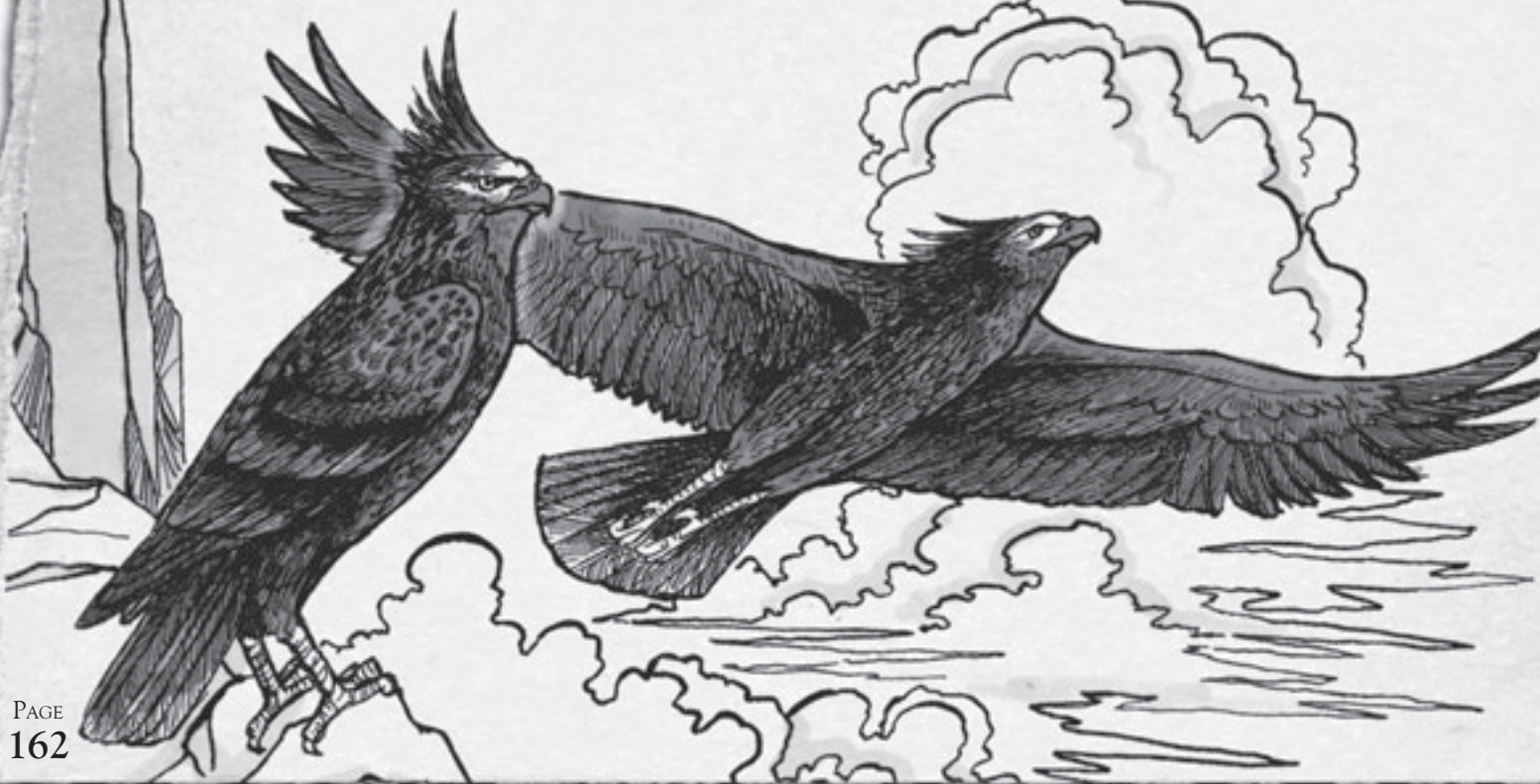
*Flight:* Level 2. Küni are extremely good fliers, even among birds. They can soar for a long time, dive attack, fly level at high speeds and always with good control.

*Natural Multiple Weapons:* Level 1. Küni have claws and a beak and can make two attacks in a round.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 1. Küni attack with their beak that has a Damage Multiplier of 1.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 1. Küni attack with their claws as a single attack with a Damage Multiplier of 1.

*Physical Advantage (Good Eyesight):* Level 2. Küni have extremely acute vision, especially distance vision, compared to humans.





## Rényu “the Loyal Follower”

You may flinch when you hear that low growl from behind you.

**Habitat:** Occur in inhabited areas, woodlands, and hills, wild packs often den in caves or ruins. More common within the Five Empires than outside them.

### Description

The Ancients are believed to have created this species from Terran canines. They have a large, dog-like head with upturned ears, dark fur, and human-like arms and upper body. They walk on their hind legs, though they sometimes drop to all fours for extra speed, can speak, and are more than semi-sentient. Their forepaws are not as nimble as human hands, but they can carry things, open doors, and some use specially modified weapons. Rényu senses are as acute as their canine ancestors' and they are renowned in Tsolyánu as loyal guardians. Rényu are not normally used for combat since humans are cheaper, faster to train, and easier to replace. In the wild, Rényu live and hunt in extended families with two or three generations (Rényu can live 20-25 years). They are not innately hostile, but due to the human practise of capturing young ones for domestication, they will be wary and suspicious.

Most Tsolyáni don't appreciate just how intelligent Rényu are, though most people know that they can talk. Characters may develop these as individual animals (see Designing Special Items, page 83). Rényu can be played as a character with GM permission.

### Stats

Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Intelligence 2, Psyche 5, Willpower 4, Charisma 5

Initiative 8, Combat Value 5, Health Points 50, Shock Value 10, Magic Resistance 3, Respect 0, Pedhétl 1

**Attributes:** Running 2, Highly Skilled 1, Tough 2

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** Hunting 2, Observation 1, Stealth 1, Tactics 1, Teamwork 3, Tracking 3

### Unique to Rényu

**Natural Weapon Level 2.** Rényu attack with their fangs with a Bonus of 2 to the Attack Check, a Damage Multiplier of 2 and High Penetration.

**Physical Advantage (Good Hearing):** Level 1. Rényu receive a +4 bonus to Stat Checks involving hearing.

**Physical Advantage (Good Smell):** Level 1. Rényu receive a +4 bonus to Stat Checks involving smell.

**Physical Advantage (Heightened Senses):** Level 1. Rényu can see in the dark.

**Physical Advantage (Heightened Awareness):** Level 1. Rényu can perceive ambushes, individuals, and physical dangers within a 10 m range about half the time.

## Ssumani “The Food of the Ssú”

You may flinch when you realise you have stumbled into an infestation.

**Habitat:** Any fertile ground. Wind blown spores may germinate anywhere.

*“We could smell it long before we saw it. We had tracked the Ssú raiding party into a narrow gorge and I led my Legionaries in cautiously. My clan farm had suffered a small infestation of Ssumani when I was fifteen and I knew how lethal it could be. If it doesn't touch you, it can't hurt you, but even in the shadowed light of afternoon we could see the silent mass of purple tendrils; acid-filled blue globes and deformed black berries full of poisoned, stinking, dark red juice. I ordered my squad to follow me closely and step only in my boot-prints until we were through. Poison dripped from the fronds to sizzle across our armour and all would need new boots; the old ones being burnt merely by stepping on the foul growths around us. The Ssú, who appear immune to its effects, ambushed us from its depths and we engaged them in battle. During the fight two men fell into the Ssumani and I saw their bodies instantly bloat and their skin shred with only the choking swelling of their throats ending their agonised cries. The will of Lord Chegárra prevailed and we achieved victory over the Enemies of Man. The minor burning around our eyes and mouths faded quickly upon leaving the infested area. Long live the Emperor!”*

*From the War Diaries of Talisanu hiKoródu (12th Medium Infantry Legion)*





## Description

Ssumani is the Old Life. The indigenous vegetation of Tékumel and its excretions contain two distinct poisons. The first is corrosive and will burn flesh and chlén-hide armour — the damage from this depends on level of contact. Characters must make a Dexterity check to avoid contact. If the character fails the check, he or she suffers 1d10 damage per round (Armour does reduce this damage) and a -1 penalty to all actions due to the pain of the acid-like burns. The second poison is held in the spines and glass-like fronds (they will hit a character on a 1d10 roll of a 4 or less each round). Characters wearing any armour are protected from the spines. Those not in armour will suffer twitches and spasms that develop into uncontrolled convulsions within a minute. This will increase damage from the corrosives as the victim thrashes around (+1 damage per round) and will cause a lethal heart attack within 3 minutes (the character must make a successful Strength check every 3 minutes to avoid suffering a heart attack).

Ssumani seems to spread on the wind and small (a few metres across) outbreaks can appear anywhere, but large infestations (tens or even hundreds of metres across) are only common in the most isolated and neglected parts of the Empire. Ssú raiding parties are likely to find these a useful base and are also popularly assumed to eat it. Normal trees and bushes on the edge of an infestation will sicken and die as the Ssumani spreads, but sometimes it is naturally contained. The poisons from Ssumani may be used as weapons but extracting this is a dangerous activity that requires a high Level of the Poisons Skill. Tsolyáni law requires the destruction of Ssumani infestations wherever they are found, but eradicating large infestations can be difficult since burning it produces a noxious cloud that may spread downwind for a considerable distance. Since the Mu'ugalavyáni attempt to exterminate them in 1565 A.S., the Páchi Lei have defended their jungle villages with palisades and ditches filled with Ssumani.

## Stats

Not Applicable

### Unique to Ssumani

*Natural Weapon:* Level 10. Ssumani is extremely poisonous.

*Physical Impairment (Immobile):* Level 1. Ssumani is immobile vegetation.

## Teqéqmu “the Flying Fungus”

You may flinch when one blocks out the sun.

**Habitat:** May be found drifting almost anywhere, but are most common in and over humid areas: forests, jungles, swamps, and low hills. They are very rare over high mountains, deserts, or the ocean.

*Some fool shot it. It had an arrow sticking out of its greenish hide and was obviously deflating as it descended. I saw it vent foul water in an attempt to maintain altitude, causing panic below which was made worse by the attempts of the City Guard to close off the street. As the wounded Teqéqmu descended, the male guards foolishly threw their spears at it, then scattered as the wounds they inflicted let out a flood of poisoned air and brought it crashing to the ground. Yet another example of why males are unsuited to positions of authority; they are much too impulsive. There is almost nothing but poisonous vapour inside a Teqéqmu and this attracts them towards the sun for reasons that would take a theologian to explain. I've seen a dozen tethered to a tree by their root tentacles for the night but all were aloft to greet the morning sun. They all smell like a compost heap. Cut them, and they fall and release a lethal vapour, but leave them and they will heal within days. Then I saw the young man with the lantern, I shouted but he threw it anyway and it shattered near the Teqéqmu. The explosion rippled down the narrow street and the locals were finding poisonous chunks of Teqéqmu in odd places for the next month.*

— Bálesh hiRámmiyel, Chéne Ho 2362 A.S.

## Description

Anyone inhaling the gas (Strength check each round to avoid the effects) suffers respiratory failure (coughing, shortness of breath, hallucinations). A victim will collapse into unconsciousness in a number of minutes equal to the character's Strength and be dead in the same amount of time after that. Survivors can recover in 10 minus the character's Stamina in minutes. Any human that actually touches Teqéqmu hide develops red welts and blisters on exposed skin (effects may depend on location but 1 damage per round of contact). Teqéqmu will explode if they suffer more damage than their Shock Value due to fire in any one round. An explosion scatters sticky chunks of toxic flesh over an area 3-10 metre in radius (depending on the size of the creature).



## Stats

Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Intelligence 0, Psyche 1, Willpower 1, Charisma 0

Initiative 4, Combat Value 7, Health Points 25, Shock Value 5, Magic Resistance 1, Pedhétl 1

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** None

## Unique to Teqéqmu

*Natural Weapon:* Level 1. Teqéqmu attack with their tentacles that have a Damage Multiplier of 1 and Low Penetration.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 5. Teqéqmu exude gas that, when set alight, will explode with a concussion blast within 3 metres that automatically hits, has a Damage Multiplier of 1 and High Penetration. The explosion also shoots out toxic fragments that will hit characters in the area on a 1d10 roll of 6 or less. For the effects of the gas, their touch and the fragments, see the description.

*Physical Impairment (Restricted Movement):* 1 Level. Teqéqmu are blown along by the wind and can anchor themselves using their tentacles.

*Physical Impairment (Restricted Ground Movement):* 2 Levels. Teqéqmu can move about by their tentacles to some limited extent.

## Tiúni

You may flinch when the Tiúni you are petting suddenly arches its back and hisses at something you cannot see.

Habitat: Inhabited areas and forests of the northern empires.

*Last night a cat saved my life. I was standing guard on the library as I have every night since I offended the Senior Priest and the local cat padded by like he always does. But tonight he stops mid-way down the corridor as if he's looking at something. Cats do that sometimes, my mother told me that cats see things that humans can't. His back arched and he hissed as if something bad was coming towards him. On instinct I levelled my crossbow and fired at the empty space. Something thudded to the floor and in the spreading pool of blood I could now make out a human shape. The invisible sorcerer had a dagger in his hand that was meant for my throat. I don't know what the magician wanted from the library but I do know that he would have to kill me before I could raise an alarm. From tonight, I feed that cat every night.*

— Kharisa hi Ranmiyal, Temple Guard

## Description

The Tiúni is a descendant of the Terran cat. There are many different sub-species but all are adapted to the hot climate of Tékuemel with coats that provide good camouflage (some are spotted or striped). Tiúni are considered pleasant and "lucky" to have around, possibly because they give an excellent early warning of various threats (mainly from insects and snakes) but also because a Tiúni can sense nearby supernatural disturbances with a Psyche check.

There are wild populations of Tiúni in the north and a large wild breed that is only found in the Do Chákan forests. Cats are uncommon in the south because they cannot effectively hunt the more dangerous vermin of the southern Empire. The evolution of the cat has produced more variation in behaviour. For example, some Tiúni live on a chléncart rather like a ship's cat of old Earth and will travel with and even raise their litters on the cart, treating it as their territory. Legionaries have even carried Tiúni (usually as mascots) in their backpacks while on campaign and it is just conceivable (with GM permission) that a God or Goddess could send a Tiúni as a lucky piece (see Talismans and Charms, page 88) to a pious character on an exclusively religious quest in a Heroic campaign. Characters may develop Tiúni as individual animals using the Special Item rules.

## Stats

Strength 1, Dexterity 12, Intelligence 2, Willpower 1, Psyche 9, Charisma: 6

Initiative 13, Combat Value 6, Shock Value 2, Magic Resistance 6, Pedhétl 6

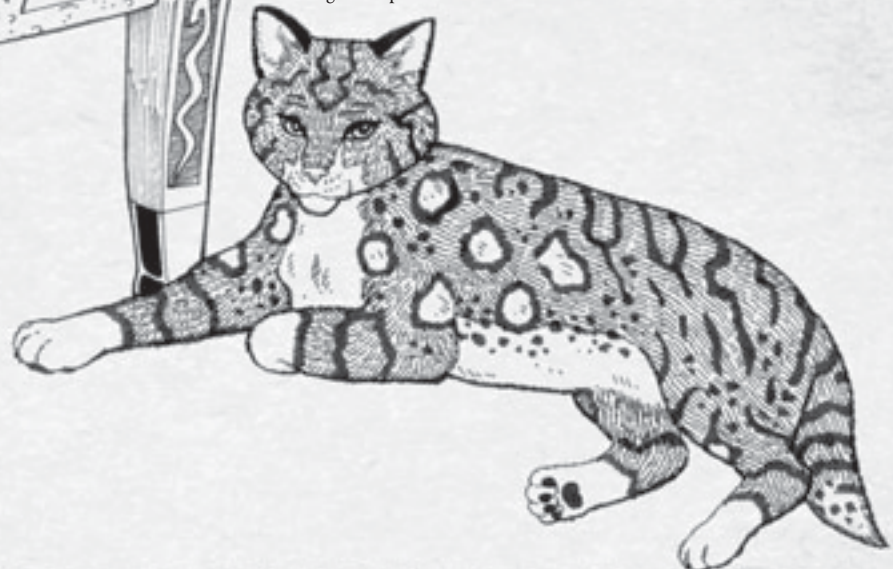
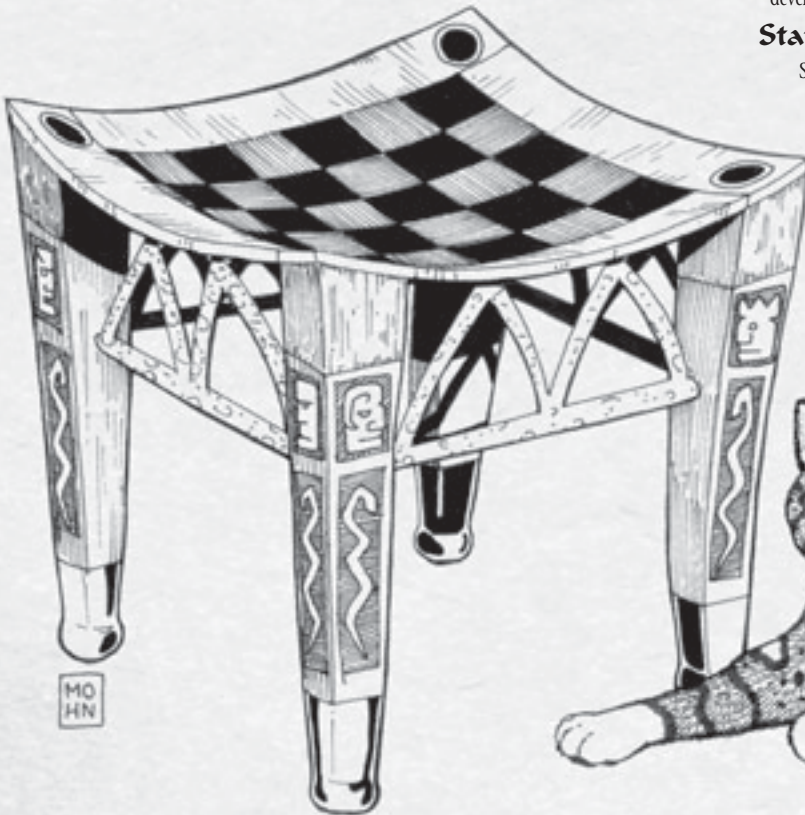
**Attributes:** Heightened Senses 2 (Sight, hearing), Jumping 1, Natural Weapons (Claws) 1, Sixth Sense 1, Special Movement 1 (Cat-like), Speed 2, Stealth (Sound) 2

**Defects:** Animal 1, Cannot Talk 1, Not So Strong 1, Unskilled 1

**Skills:** Analysis 1, Charm 1, Climbing 1, Hunting 1, Observation 2, Planning 1, Stealth 3

## Unique to Tiúni

*Natural Weapon:* Level 1. Teiúni attack with their claws and fangs with a Damage Multiplier of 0.5 and Low Penetration.





## Tlékku

You may flinch when you hear the high-pitched howling that says the hounds have scented your trail.

**Habitat:** Only found in the company of humans, both in the cities and the countryside inside and outside the Five Empires

### Description

These are descendants of the Terran dog. They are a bit more intelligent than their distant Terran ancestors, and don't much resemble the breeds familiar to Earth. There are no feral dog populations on Tékumel, but various species of dog remain domesticated. The stats presented here are for a large guard dog, as might be kept by a rural clanhouse or temple. Smaller companion breeds or tracking hounds would likely be less robust. Tlékku are not as common as dogs on Earth are now, but they are known throughout the Empires.

Guard dogs are often trained to bite and hold the weapon arm of a target (attack at +2 difficulty). As with Rényu, tracking dogs are considered too valuable to use in combat. There are several breeds of guard and tracking dogs that are popular in urban areas, they are usually trained to be silent (frequent barking is unacceptable in the clanhouse) and something very like a bloodhound is used in hunting (various animals and escaped slaves) in many rural areas. Characters may develop these as individual animals using the Special Item rules.

### Stats

Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 2, Willpower 4, Psyche 2, Charisma: 4

Initiative 9, Combat Value 4, Shock Value 7, Magic Resistance 2, Pedhél 1

**Attributes:** Heightened Senses 2 (Smell, hearing), Natural weapons 1 (Fangs), Speed 2, Stealth 1 (Sound)

**Defects:** No Arms, Cannot Talk 1, Not So Tough, Unskilled 1

**Skills:** Bite 2, Observation 2+, Teamwork 2+, possibly Analysis 2+ (all subject to degree of training), pack leader might have Planning 1-2,

### Unique to Tíuni

**Natural Weapon:** Level 2. Tlékku attack with their fangs with a Damage Multiplier of 2.

## Creatures of the Wilderness

### Alásh

You may flinch when you roll over on your sleeping mat, and see a small, bright red snake coiled up beside you.

**Habitat:** The deserts and arid grasslands of Milumanayá and the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, and several deserts beyond the Five Empires.

*Nights in the desert are often cold and my would-be murderer had introduced a small red snake, known as an Alásh, into my tent as I slept. Attracted to the comforts of my bed-mat it crawled under my blanket to join me. Fortunately the Gods have blessed me as a light sleeper and I felt its scales on my foot. The trick of course is not to move, for then the snake will certainly strike. Instead I quietly called to my guards and explained my requirements twice. Even so, one of the guards was bitten as he tried to remove it. He looked at me, opened his mouth to apologise and fell quite dead. They tell me this use of the snake is known as "the Tender Companion" and is a common technique amongst professional assassins. I have not slept alone since.*

*From the War Diaries of Talisanu hiKoródu (12th Medium Infantry)*

### Description

Alásh are only about 20 cm long, and less than a centimetre in diameter; their fangs are unable to penetrate thick leather or any armour. The victim of a bite begins to convulse within seconds, and death invariably occurs in less than a minute unless magical Alleviation is used. Pygmy Folk are very fond of using Alásh snakes on their rivals. Ahoggyá, Pé Chói, and Tinalíya all have skin that is thick enough to protect them from the bite. The only known antidote to this venom is the berry of the Khápacactus that grows in the Desert of Sighs. These must be swallowed immediately after an Alásh bite to have an effect but, if done, it stops all damage.





## Stats

Strength 0, Dexterity 6, Intelligence 1, Psyche 0, Willpower 2, Charisma 1  
Initiative 8, Combat Value 7, Health Points 10, Shock Value 2, Magic Resistance 1, Pedhétl 1

**Attributes:** None

**Defect:** None

**Skills:** Observation 1, Stealth 3

## Unique to Alásh

*Natural Weapon:* Level 5. Alásh are extremely poisonous. A successful Attack that is not defended against injects a single, lethal dose of their poison.

## Ayá — “the Lord of Sands”

You may flinch when you hear the hiss of sand blowing in the wind, and then realise the wind isn't blowing, and again when a mouth that could swallow two Chlén and their carts comes surging up out of a dune.

*Habitat:* Sand seas and sandy arid grasslands of the Desert of Sighs, and other deserts beyond the Five Empires

*I told him not to cast spells in the desert but he was an arrogant southern man, so he would not listen to an old woman like me. I lived to be old by knowing things in honour of my God and I knew that Ayá can smell magic from a day's walk away. We were on short rations and he was using Nutrification to provide himself with a magically created breakfast every morning. The Ayá would be closing in day by day, tracking him through his spells. I kept my distance and was camped on a nice solid rock ridge when the inevitable attack came and watched with all the satisfaction of someone who knows that Ayá always stay in the soft ground. The sound was something you feel rather than actually hear. Everything seemed to vibrate with silent noise and then the Ayá rose around him. Thinking about it now, I do not think he understood just how large they are; there was no fight, it was more like a fish taking an insect from the surface of a pond. A vast worm, bigger than a bireme, with a mouth wide*

*enough to swallow a chlén. Then he was gone in a moment and all his magic couldn't save him. It ploughed on across the camp, took three of our bearers, the tents, and some of the stores before the silent noise intensified and it dived.*

*Bálesh hiRánmiyel, Desert of Sighs, 2374 A.S.*

## Description

An Aya is so large that it engulfs human sized targets rather than simply attacking them. The rows of grinding teeth will then gradually reduce the victim to mush (they take damage each round). The worms cruise the great sandy wastes of their home deserts, filtering organic debris from sand, and swallowing down any larger plants or animals they can find. They are remarkably sensitive to extra-planar energies, and seem to be able to sense the use of magic from miles away.

## Stats

Strength 12, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 1, Psyche 6, Willpower 4, Charisma 0  
Initiative 9, Combat Value 10, Health Points 110, Shock Value 22, Magic Resistance 7, Respect 0, Pedhétl 4, Armour Value 5

**Attributes:** Tough 6

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** Observation 1, Tracking 3

## Unique to Ayá

*Natural Armour:* Level 5. Ayá have natural armour, heavy rings of muscle and skeleton, equivalent to much better than Heavy Armour: Armour Value 5.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 5. Ayá engulf their target, with a Damage Multiplier of 6 each round thereafter, until the target is dead, or somehow removed from the Ayá.

*Physical Advantage (Sixth Sense):* Level 2. Ayá can sense extraplanar energy within a 5 kilometre radius.

*Physical Advantage (Tunnelling):* Level 2. Ayá can tunnel through solid ground.

*Physical Impairment (Awkward Size):* Level 4. Ayá are very large.





## Hyahyú'u — “the Whooper”

You may flinch when you hear the uncanny “hyaa-hyuu” call sounding out of the darkness around your camp.

**Habitat:** Grasslands, open forest, low hills. Occasionally invade agricultural areas.

*They came in the afternoon; six legged and three-eyed. There were about forty of them, a big pack by all accounts and no sign of them before that day. They came like the rains, quickly from the foothills and faster than a man could run. The herd screamed from the smell of them and our dogs growled and whimpered as they circled us but they did not like the fire or our sling stones and we had nurtured that herd all summer and would not give them up. They came at us in groups, never just one and the attack you saw was always the feint for the one you didn't. They fought like an army not like beasts, with the big ones watching from the hill and snarling orders to the rest. We lost the herd and most of the dogs but five of us made it home.*

*Áreli hiRánmiyel, Hmá Herder, Lake of Stones 2359 A.S.*

### Description

These six-legged animals run in packs and make a “hyaa-hyuu” sound, which gives them both their name and their most common nickname, “Whoopers.” Whoopers are ecologically similar to wolves, but are bigger and smarter. They also have a longer and more flexible body (they jump more like a cat than a canine) and a lower ground pressure (making them hard to track). Intra-pack communication is complex and effective, making larger packs disproportionately more dangerous than the sum of the individual animals (a large pack could have a pool of 80 Team Points) and will use pincer tactics, feints, etc. Hyahyú'u are the main reasons there are no wild dog populations on Tékumel, and getting between a large pack and a Hmá herd is extremely hazardous even for well-armed humans. Communities with a Whooper problem generally call in professional hunters (such as those from the Clan of the Scarlet Planet of Knives) who prefer to use baited traps. It is notoriously difficult to entirely wipe out a pack and some small, isolated communities may wage an endless war against them. The Tsolyáni believe that Hyahyú'u have a special dread of Páchi Léi, and will always flee from a party that includes one of the Forest Dwellers as a member.



### Stats

Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 2, Psyche 2, Willpower 4, Charisma 3  
Initiative 9, Combat Value 7, Health Points 60, Shock Value 12, Magic Resistance 1, Pedhétl 1

**Attributes:** Tough 3

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** Analysis 2, Bite 2, Observation 2, Planning 1, Running 2, Tracking 2, Teamwork 2-4

### Unique to Hyahyú'u

**Natural Weapon** Level 3. Hyahyú'u attack with their fangs with a Damage Multiplier of 3 and High Penetration.

**Physical Advantage (Expanded Field of Vision):** Level 1. Hyahyú'u have a much wider field of vision than humans do, which should be taken into account if someone is trying to sneak up on one

**Physical Advantage (Good Smell):** Level 1. Hyahyú'u receive a +4 bonus to Stat Checks involving smell.

## Jakkóhl and Kité

You may flinch when the Jakkóhl you were hunting for sport turns out to have been a Kité and bites right through your boot.

**Habitat:** A wide range of woodland and agricultural land throughout the Five Empires and beyond.

### Description

A small, black or brown, fox-like animal that is frequently hunted for sport and is the subject of a variety of local recipes. Jakkóhl are fast and agile but not likely to be very dangerous to an armed human. They are a minor agricultural pest because they will burrow, damage crops, and provide holes that may trip unwary travellers. Jakkóhl will occasionally take young Hmá and Hmélu soon after birth, which leads to a strong



dislike by herders. Agricultural clans are normally happy to allow hunters onto their land to remove them and social hunts can be extremely large and elaborate and may be significant generators of income in some rural areas. They are seldom an efficient ways of dealing with a local Jakkóhl population, however.

Hunting Jakkóhl in a forest is complicated because another related species — the Kité, or “little whirlwind” — lives in a very similar type of burrow and looks somewhat similar. It is roughly the same size and shape as the Jakkóhl but has sleek black fur and a bushy tail. It is also much more aggressive when cornered, and can and will turn on a human hunter. Once it starts to fight a Kité will not stop until either it or its target are dead. Even though a competent hunter could expect to win a fight with a Kité, even minor foot and leg injuries can suddenly put the human in a wilderness survival situation.

## Stats

Strength 1, Dexterity 9, Intelligence 2, Psyche 1, Willpower 4, Charisma 1

Initiative 13, Combat Value 6, Health Points 25, Shock Value 5, Magic Resistance 2, Pedhétl 1

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** Stealth 2

## Unique to Jakkóhl and Kité

*Natural Weapon (Jakkóhl)* Level 1. Jakkóhl attack with their fangs with a Damage Multiplier of 0.5 (round up).

*Natural Weapon (Kité)* Level 2. Kité attack with their fangs with a bonus to their Attack Check of +1 and Damage Multiplier of 2.

*Physical Advantage (Good Hearing)*: Level 1. Jakkóhl and Kité receive a +4 bonus to Stat Checks involving hearing.

*Physical Advantage (Good Smell)*: Level 1. Jakkóhl and Kité receive a +4 bonus to Stat Checks involving smell.

## Nráishu and Nyár

You may flinch when you see the still steaming body of a Nráishu that has just been gutted by some great predator.

**Habitat:** Nráishu stay under cover in open and dense forests, while Nyár graze in grasslands and open forest.

## Description

Nráishu are six-legged, deer-like herbivores, black or dark brown, with long-snouted faces. They see well in the dark, and they are often active at night or twilight. Their front paws are armed with claws. Nyár are also six-legged and somewhat deer-like, but larger, with reddish hair, a short tail, and three very short hoof-like toes on each foot. Both are popular game animals. Nráishu meat is edible and almost too sweet in taste, Nyár is also quite edible, though more gamey and not sweet.

## Stats

Strength 4 (Nráishu) 6 (Nyár), Dexterity 4, Intelligence 1, Psyche 3, Willpower 3, Charisma 3

Initiative 7, Combat Value 5, Health Points 35, Shock Value 7 (Nráishu) 9 (Nyár), Magic Resistance 2, Pedhétl 2

**Attributes:** None.

**Defects:** None.

**Skills:** Observation 3, Teamwork 1, Stealth 2

## Unique to Nráishu and Nyár

*Physical Impairment (Awkward Size; Nyár)*: Level 1. Adult Nyár are large.

*Natural Weapon (Nráishu)* Level 1. Jakkóhl attack with their claws with a Damage Multiplier of 2 and Low Penetration.





**Natural Weapon (Nyár)** Level 2. Nyár attack with a kick with their hooves with a Damage Multiplier of 3 and Low Penetration.

**Physical Advantage (Good Hearing):** Level 1. Nráishu and Nyár receive a +4 bonus to Stat Checks involving hearing.

**Physical Advantage (Good Smell):** Level 1. Nráishu and Nyár receive a +4 bonus to Stat Checks involving smell.

## Gerédnya “the Flying Worm”

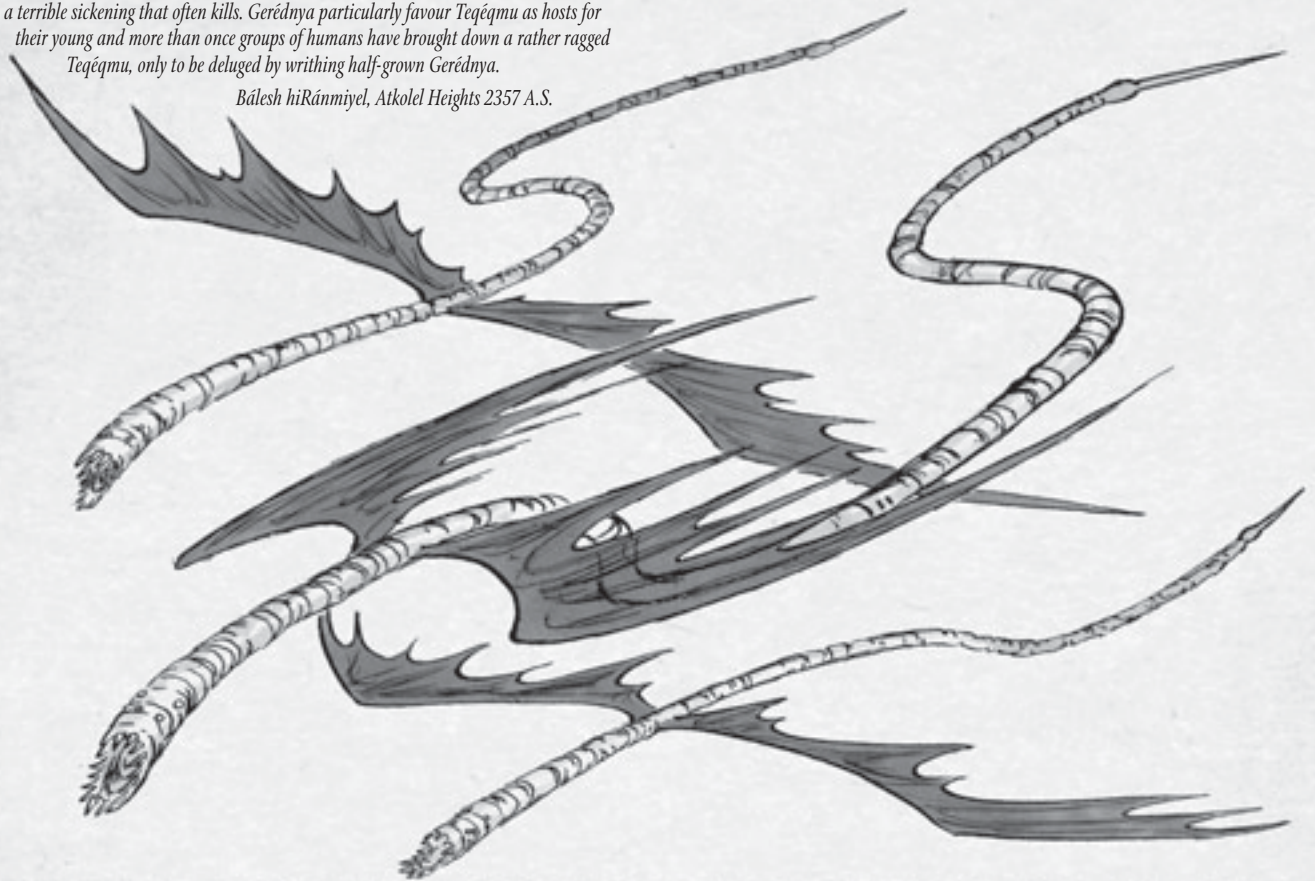
You may flinch when a flock of these drift silently overhead.

**Habitat:** Over all hills and low mountains, but more abundant in the humid uplands. Often found near Teqéqmu.

*I have seen the corpse of a would-be hunter with half a dozen writhing Gerédnya still stuck in his body like living arrows. These are slender, boneless, greyish-green worms, longer than a man but finger-thin and with membranous translucent wings. They are quick and agile gliders and are more common after heavy rain when entire flocks may gather. Humans hunt Gerédnya because their wings contain a chemical used in the moulding of Chlén-hide that can be sold for as much 100 káitars to the appropriate clans. This is a dangerous but highly profitable occupation and many hunters die each year because although Gerédnya do not normally attack humans they will respond instantly when threatened. When they attack Gerédnya will fly like a javelin at their target and embed their very sharp, rigid, tube-like proboscis in its flesh. It will use this to suck a prey animal dry of its fluids and the first sign of their presence is often the empty husks of large insects. Fortunately they are frightened of fire but it would take many torches or a large campfire to keep an entire flock away.*

*In springtime, Gerédnya breed and for a few weeks become more likely to attack humans and other large animals including dogs and Hmá. During this time, they strike with their tail and a successful hit means that they have injected their thread-like young under the skin of the victim. These cannot survive in a human but they cause a fever for a few days followed by a terrible sickening that often kills. Gerédnya particularly favour Teqéqmu as hosts for their young and more than once groups of humans have brought down a rather ragged Teqéqmu, only to be deluged by writhing half-grown Gerédnya.*

*Bálesh hiRánmiyel, Atkolel Heights 2357 A.S.*



## Description

They are difficult to hit (-2 penalty) in flight and flocks contain 3d10 individuals. The larvae cause an inflammatory response (the victim has flu like symptoms and runs a high fever) and characters suffer a penalty to all actions equal to their -6 minus their Strength for a number of days equal to 1d10 minus their Strength. Once the fever fades, the real damage starts as the dead larvae inside the victim's body start to rot; this causes massive blood poisoning (2d10 damage per day for 2d10 days). The Gerédnya will attack most other flying organisms but will usually only attack human-sized land animals during the breeding season.

## Stats

Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 0, Psyche 1, Willpower 1, Charisma 1  
Initiative 5, Combat Value 5, Health Points 25, Shock Value 5, Magic Resistance 2, Pedhétl 2

**Attributes:** Small Build 2

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** None

## Unique to Gerédnya

**Flight:** Level 1. Gerédnya can fly very well.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 5. Gerédnya attack with a stabbing “bite” from their proboscis with a bonus of 5 to their Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 3

**Natural Weapon:** Level 7. Gerédnya attack with a charging, Decisive Attack with a bonus of 2 to their Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 6

**Natural Weapon:** Level 2. Gerédnya attack by injecting larva with their tail sting with a Damage Multiplier of 2 (see description)

**Physical Impairment (Restricted Ground Movement):** 1 Level. Gerédnya can move about on land only slowly.



## Sérudla “the Pale Murderer”

You may flinch when you feel the ground tremble under your feet as the Pale Murderer emerges from its lair.

**Habitat:** restricted to deep forest in inhabited regions of the Five Empires, but roam more widely in wilderness areas.

*These dire beasts are surrounded by an aura of mystery and rumour that makes it difficult to be sure what is truth and what is mere superstition. It is true that the Ghatóni used trained Sérudla as great war-beasts against our brave Tsolyáni Legions during the war, but some people say that some Sérudla are capable of speaking a human language and even acquire hand weapons suitable to their massive size — even huge steel swords! Personally, I think that this a myth and the reports of intelligent talking Sérudla with steel swords sound more like the pranks of mischievous magicians using the Spells of Semblances and Phantasms to frighten peasants with illusions than any Sérudla I would recognise. I do not see where the beasts would acquire giant steel swords and I do not see why they would need them even if they could. A Sérudla is quite capable of tearing an armoured man apart with its claws and I have seen the aftermath of an attack on a Chlén that made it quite clear to me that no human would have stood a chance against it, armed or not. These massive reptilian creatures have a long sinuous neck that allows them to strike quickly and accurately with a bite that can gut a chlén, but they are somnolent after a successful hunt and not always hostile. Those encountering them by chance may avoid conflict if they are cautious.*

*Sérudla use their beaks to rip off chunks of their prey once it has stopped moving, they then swallow without chewing. Probably because of this they often later vomit up the indigestible parts of their last meal and this sticky mix of acidic bile, digestive spittle, and large bone fragments is dangerously corrosive to touch. I have been told that they will*

*sometimes throw this with a whip like motion of the head at any nearby disturbance. Their accuracy I cannot estimate, but I can certainly sympathise with their desire to put distance between themselves and their lethal effluvia.*

*Bálesh hiRánmiyel, Páya Gupá, 2358 A.S.*

### Description

These large and fearsome carnivores have six legs plus a pair of arms at the base of the neck. Sérudla are usually around 5 metres long, but some grow up to 12 metres from beak to tip of tail. Their bodies are covered with thick hide and iridescent green-grey scales, with a row of short spines running down the back of the neck, the body and along the tail.

### Stats

Strength 12, Dexterity 7, Intelligence 2, Psyche 2, Willpower 5, Charisma 1

Initiative 12, Combat Value 10, Health Points 115, Shock Value 23, Magic

Resistance 3, Pedhétl 4, Armour Value 4

**Attributes:** Tough 3

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** Analysis 1, Observation 3, Planning 1, Tracking 2

### Unique to Sérudla

**Natural Multiple Weapons:** Level 3. Sérudla have claws, fangs and a heavy tail and can make three attacks in a round.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 8. Sérudla attack with their claws with a Damage Multiplier of 9 and Low Penetration

**Natural Weapon:** Level 10. Sérudla attack with their bite with a Penalty of 2 to their Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 11 and High Penetration

**Natural Weapon:** Level 8. Sérudla attack with their tail swipe with a Damage Multiplier of 7 and High Penetration

**Natural Weapon:** Level 11. Sérudla attack with their Acidic Spittle with a Penalty of 3 to their Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 11. The acidic spittle has a range of 10 metres and covers a radius of up to 2 metres, it does 2d10 damage per round for 2d10 rounds or until washed off. Sérudla can do this no more than three times a day (and then only if they are well fed and watered).

**Physical Impairment (Awkward Size):** Level 3. Sérudla are very large.





## Shanu'ú — “the Flying Carnivore”

You may flinch when something heavy thuds into your back.

**Habitat:** Humid woodlands, including forested hills, open woods, and swamplands across the Five Empires and beyond. They favour especially tall trees, rocky pinnacles, and other high points as roosts.

*During my second year in the forests of Dó Cháka, I was brought an infant Shanu'ú after its parents had been killed by hunters. It was the length of an arm from dry black nose to the end of its grey, tufted tail and was initially a pleasant, compliant pet. With sharp teeth and claws it was most inquisitive and would climb all over everything long before it had learnt how to fly. Their wings are fur-covered and reminiscent of a Hláka with whom they have other similarities. They grow exceedingly long but most of that is tail, but as they gain the power of flight, actually more of a glide, they become increasingly aggressive and will only eat meat, which they can smell from a great distance. As they get bigger, their three sharp eyes lose their soft friendliness and the bite of an adult Shanu'ú is painful and deep. Eventually, it sought out the company of its own kind and was seen hunting with several others through the open forests by the river where it had been found. Years later on my visit to the ruined city of Hmakuyál I saw adult Shanu'ú being used as watchers and shrine guardians, controlled by the magic of Zoic Domination.*

*Bálesh hiRánmiyel, Scholar-Priestess of Thúmis.*

### Description

Shanu'ú are large, territorial, flying carnivores. Adults grow to be 3-5 metres long, with sinuous, tufted tails that add another 3-4 metres to their length. They are erratically aggressive but may be discouraged from attacking by a show of determined resistance, shouting, waving large objects, and so on. Bite wounds caused by these creatures often become infected unless treated with a successful Medical Skill check. Given sufficient warning an adult Hláka can attempt to temporarily take control of up to half a dozen Shanu'ú. This is a use of Animal Handling and the Hláka must establish dominance quickly over the savage Shanu'ú or they will attack.

### Stats

Strength 4, Dexterity 8, Intelligence 2, Psyche 3, Willpower 5, Charisma 3

Initiative 13, Combat Value 6, Health Points 45, Shock Value 9, Magic Resistance 2, Pedhétl 1

**Attributes:** Tough 2

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** Analysis 1, Climbing 3, Observation 2, Teamwork 2

### Unique to Shanu'ú

**Flight:** Level 1. Shanu'ú can fly adequately: they are gliders

**Natural Weapon:** Level 4. Shanu'ú attack with a bite with a Damage Multiplier of 4

**Natural Weapon:** Level 4. Shanu'ú attack with a Fly-by Claw attack with a Damage Multiplier of 2 and Low Penetration

**Physical Advantage (Expanded Field of Vision):** Level 1. Shanu'ú have a much wider field of vision than humans do, which should be taken into account if someone is trying to sneak up on one

**Physical Advantage (Good Eyesight):** Level 1. Shanu'ú receive a +4 bonus to Stat checks involving sight

**Physical Advantage (Good Smell):** Level 1. Shanu'ú receive a +4 bonus to Stat checks involving smell.

**Physical Impairment (Awkward Size):** Level 2. Shanu'ú are large enough to be cumbersome

## Swarms

You may flinch when a cloud of biting insects descends on you.

**Habitat.** Swarms of various kinds are common in swamps but can be encountered virtually anywhere in the Empire.

*More of us died in the terrible retreat through the swamps than had in the chaotic battle before. The swarms of insects engulfed us biting, stinging and everywhere. By the morning of the second day soldiers began to drop, fevered and puking into the foul waters. Our battle wounds attracted a pallid wave of swimming worms and many of us screamed hip deep in water and our own blood. By the third day, it was obvious that the swamp was eating us alive. As one of the few that made dry land, believe me when I say that I would fight any human warrior before facing the swamps of Penóm again.*

*From the War Diaries of Talisanu hiKoródu (12th Medium Infantry Legion)*

### Description

Swarms of various kinds are common on Tékumel; these range from the relatively harmless Chri flies to nests of green-eyed Ori spiders that can kill in seconds. Swarms can be situational, small Étla crab are common vermin but occasionally they will gather into a swarm if sufficiently stimulated (for example by large amounts of fresh blood in the water). Swarms are difficult to fight; although difficult to miss they can soak up conventional attacks and improvisation can be the key to defeating them (shield slams or fire can be much better than a sword swing). It is possible to have a swarm with any combination of attributes but the more deadly types of swarm will often be well known to any local inhabitants.

### Stats

Strength 0, Dexterity 3, Intelligence 0, Psyche 2, Willpower 3, Charisma 0

Initiative 6, Combat Value 2, Health Points 15, Shock Value 3, Magic Resistance 1, Pedhétl 1, Armour Value 0

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** None

### Unique to Swarm

**Limited Invulnerability** Level 2 (All Swarms). Swarms take only 1 point of damage from each successful conventional attack, no matter what the success or weapon damage multiplier. Weapons with large surface areas, such as shields, tables, etcetera, do a number of points of damage equal to the Degree of Success of the attack.

**Natural Weapon** Level 1 (Carnivorous Swarms only). A thousand bites and stings. Target Number 12, Damage Multiplier of  $\frac{1}{2}$ . This is an area effect attack and applies to everyone within the swarm. Armour only protects for a number of rounds equal to the armour value divisor, by which time the swarm have crawled inside the armour and it no longer provides any protection

**Flight** Level 1 (Flying Insect Swarms only). Swarms have slow, low-level flight.

**Natural Weapon** Level 2 (Disease-carrying Swarms only). Some swarms (roll 1 on a d10), carry diseases that can infect wounded characters.

**Start of Symptoms:** On a failed Stamina Stat Check the character is infected and symptoms start within two days.

**Symptoms:** Diarrhoea and Exhaustion. Symptoms persist for fourteen days minus the Degree of Success of another Stamina Check. A successful Medical Skill Check reduces the duration of the disease by a number of days equal to the Degree of Success.

**Lethality.** This disease is automatically lethal (largely due to dehydration) unless the character gets medical care (treat as an unbalanced serious wound but it's easy to treat, +2 to any Medical Skill Check or Spell Casting). If untreated at the end of the symptoms the patient is dead.



## Yuál

You may flinch when their alarm call alerts everything in the area.

**Habitat:** Desert of Sighs, Desert of Eyági, Dry Bay of Ssu'úm

### Description

The Yual are an important resource for anyone who wants to survive for long in the dry lands because they are edible (with a pronounced gamey flavour) and they are good at finding water in the desert. The Yual is about as big as a hand and spherical, with short tan or buff fur. It has two large yellow eyes and two spindly legs, and lives in colonies (of hundreds of individuals) dug into sand-hills and cliffs.

Yual seem to consist largely of stomach and flatulence. They have a single, combined mouth and anal opening, and sit on their food to eat (they will eat virtually anything). They always operate in groups, with at least one as a sentry at all times. If danger approaches they will scatter and soon lose themselves in the undergrowth or hide in their burrows. Yual scuttle around very fast (a -4 penalty to hit them), and make small, flatulent, burping noises if startled. The Milumanayáni nomads think so highly of the Yual that they will describe someone who turns adverse circumstances around to produce a good result "a real Yual." At least this is what they claim the term means.

### Stats

Strength 0, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 1, Psyche 1, Willpower 3, Charisma 2

Initiative 8, Combat Value 3, Health Points 49, Shock Value 8, Magic Resistance 1, Pedhétl 1

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** None

### Unique to Yual

*Physical Advantage (Good Eyesight):* Level 1. Yual receive a +4 bonus to Stat checks involving sight.

*Physical Advantage (Good Smell):* Level 1. Yual receive a +4 bonus to Stat checks involving smell.

## Zrné — "the Barbed One"

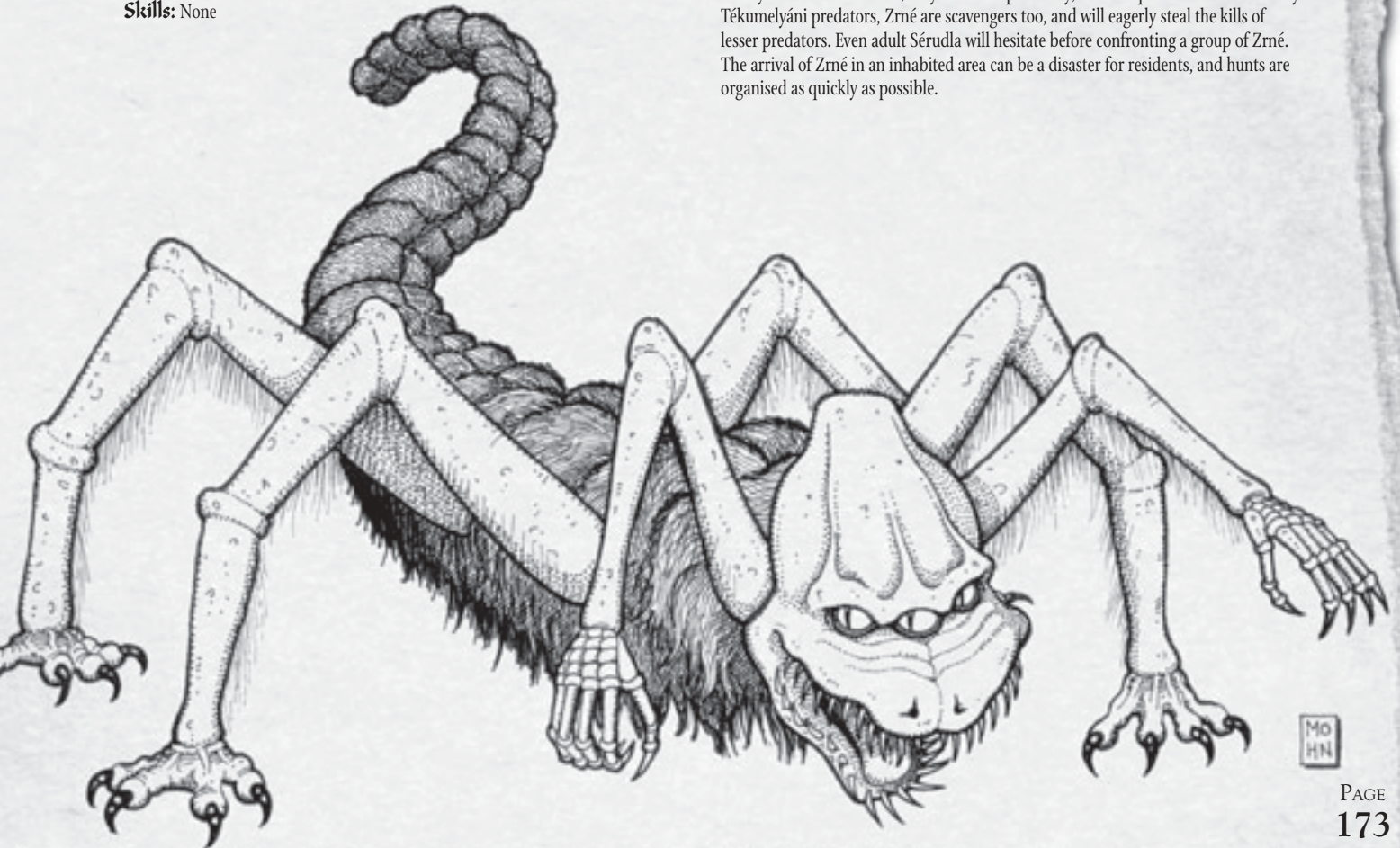
You may flinch when you hear its strange hissing roar for the first time.

**Habitat:** Jungle, forest and forested hills and mountains. Within the Five Empires they are rarely found except in remote areas of deep forest or jungle.

### Description

These 2.5 metre long forest predators are fast, vicious, cunning, and powerful, making them a serious threat even to armed groups of people. Zrné skin is very tough, and covered with short stiff grey fur. Their heads are massive, with three yellow eyes, a pair of nostrils, and wide jaws. The body is elongated and flexible, slung low between 3 pairs of legs. The hind and mid-legs are long and powerful, and can deliver a deadly kick. The front legs are shorter and not as strong, often used for grasping prey but lifted up out of the way for running or leaping. The Zrné can run faster than any human and can jump cleanly over a standing man. The bite of this beast is rightly feared; its huge mouth is lined with seemingly endless rows of needle-like teeth that can be left in a wound. If these needle teeth are not removed quickly, the victim will die within minutes from the poisonous infection unless treated with Alleviation. This incredibly painful demise leaves a distinctive ring of stinking, blackened flesh around the wound.

Zrné are all the more dangerous because they often hunt in pairs or even small family groups of adults and juveniles (up to 10). A band of Zrné is one of the most deadly threats in the forest; they hunt co-operatively, and are quite fearless. Like many Tékmelyáni predators, Zrné are scavengers too, and will eagerly steal the kills of lesser predators. Even adult Sérudla will hesitate before confronting a group of Zrné. The arrival of Zrné in an inhabited area can be a disaster for residents, and hunts are organised as quickly as possible.





## Stats

Strength 7, Dexterity 8, Intelligence 1, Psyche 2, Willpower 4, Charisma 0  
 Initiative 12, Combat Value 8, Health Points 55, Shock Value 11, Magic Resistance 1, Pedhétl 1, Armour Value 4

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** None

**Skills:** Analysis 1, Observation 2, Teamwork 2

## Unique to Zrné

*Natural Armour:* Level 4. Zrné have natural armour, equivalent to better than Heavy Armour: Armour Value 4.

*Natural Extra Limbs:* Level 2. Zrné have claws and fangs and can make three attacks in a round.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 5. Zrné attack with a toothy bite with a penalty of -2 to the Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 6. The bite is poisoned as well: if the teeth are not removed quickly (within 2 minutes), the victim will die in 1d10 times his or her Strength in minutes unless treated with magic.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 3. Zrné attack with claws with a bonus of +1 to the Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 3 and Low Penetration.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 6. Zrné attack to their rear with a kick of their rear claws with a penalty of -1 to the Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 6 and High Penetration.

*Physical Advantage (Good Eyesight):* Level 1. Yual receive a +4 bonus to Stat checks involving sight.

*Physical Advantage (Good Smell):* Level 1. Yual receive a +4 bonus to Stat checks involving smell.

## Horrors

In the unquiet corners of the world there are supernatural creatures out of myth and nightmare. These horrors are the subject of fear for most Tsolyáni and do not walk abroad.

## Marashyalu “The Whimperer”

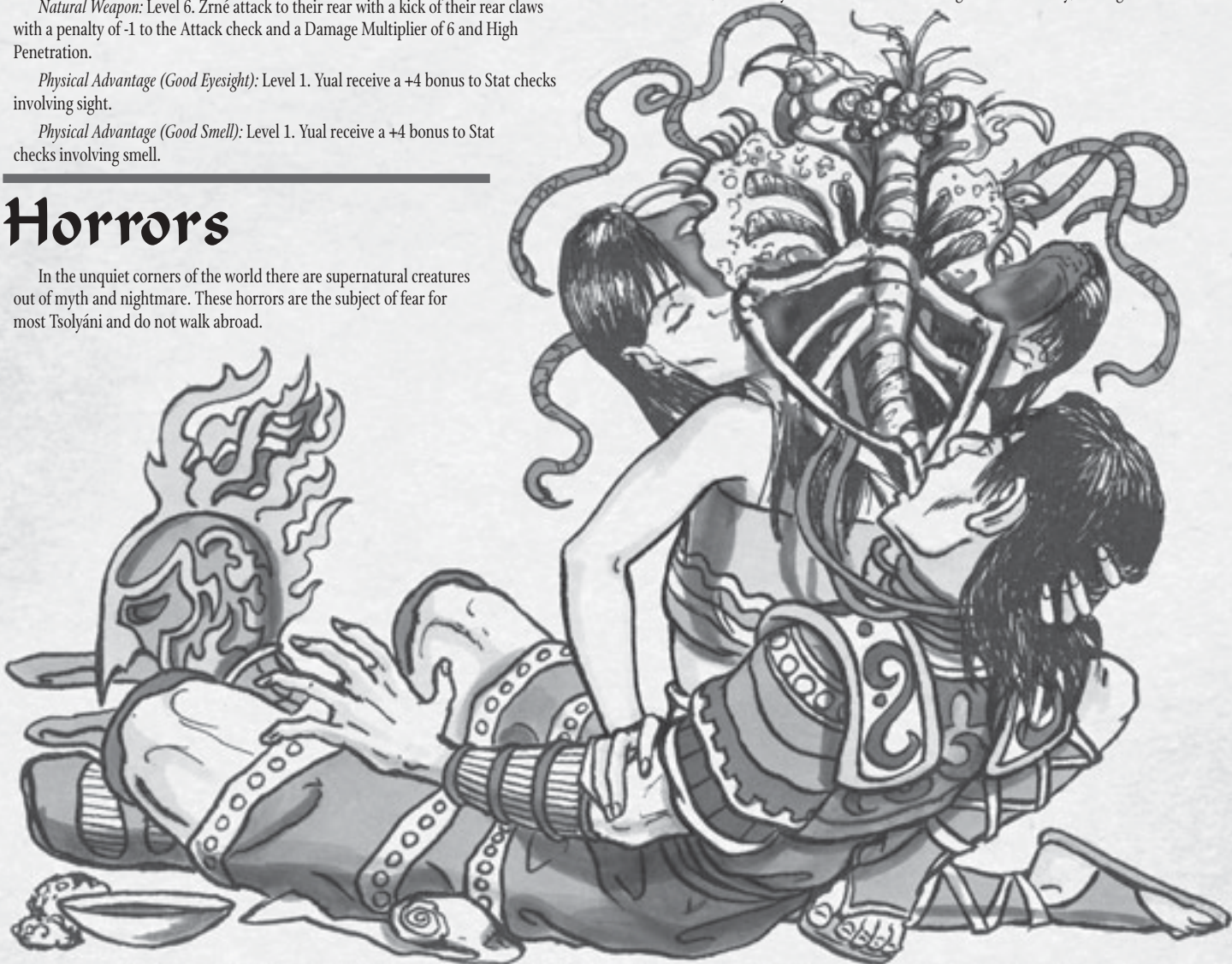
You may flinch when you see its true hideous form crouched over the body of a friend.

**Habitat:** The Underworlds of Jakállá, Béy Sü and Ch’óchi in Mu’ugalavyá.

### Description

Marashyalu are supernatural predators that consume the vital organs of humans. They can deceive the senses of most sentient beings (though domestic animals react badly to them) and prefer appearing as children or clan-women to win the sympathy of those they encounter. They have potent powers of mental suggestion; they seldom directly attack but prefer to sow dissent, let the humans fight each other, and then feast upon the dead and injured. Marashyalu cause arguments that escalate to lethal violence and never reveal their true face unless they have to.

Once there has been a fight it may appear to others that the “innocent clan-girl” is attempting to give medical assistance to the wounded. In fact, it pries open their mouth with its long feelers while holding down their feeble protests with its strong tentacles. It then inserts a long proboscis down into the throat, which will start to choke the victim, and slowly sucks out all of the soft organs of their body, leaving a





nearly-hollow corpse. This process takes about two minutes, and it will appear that the victim has died of their wounds as long as the Marashyalu is nearby. A character seeing a Marashyalu feeding gets a Magic Resistance check to break its control over their perceptions.

Physically attacking a Marashyalu is difficult, because it distorts the attacker's perceptions to change its apparent location, size, and shape, imposing a -4 penalty to any attack it sees coming. Since the Marashyalu may still maintain its control over onlookers, to some it will seem as if "the innocent clan girl" is being attacked.

## Stats

Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Intelligence 2, Psyche 5, Willpower 6, Charisma 3

Initiative 12, Combat Value 5, Health Points 50, Shock Value 10, Magic Resistance 4, Pedhétl 1, Armour Value 1

**Attributes:** None.

**Defects:** None.

**Skills:** Charm 2, Deception 3, Wrestling 1

## Unique to Marashyalu

**Natural Armour:** Level 1. Marashyalu have natural armour, equivalent to Light Armour.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 3. Marashyalu attack with their Proboscis with a bonus of +4 to the Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 2 that bypasses all armour. It takes one round to prepare this attack and requires that their target is immobilised.

**Physical Advantage (Metamorphosis):** Level 1. Marashyalu are able to appear in other forms.

**Physical Advantage (Mind Control):** Level 3. Marashyalu are able to control anyone that can see it as in the Domination Spell (see page 134).

**Physical Advantage (Mind Shield):** Level 6. Marashyalu have a Mind Shield that gives a penalty of -6 to any mind detection.

## Mrúr "The Walking Dead"

You may flinch when the corpse reaches out for you.

**Habitat:** Shrines of the Dark Trinity (Sárku, Ksáru or Hrü'ü), and elsewhere

*"He has been with us for a long time," said my host, a Lady of Clan Íto, all in brown silk and amber jewels. We stood outside the keyless vault and she called for him through the door. I could hear him drawing back the great bars that held it fast, and finally it opened to reveal his grim aspect. He had been guardian inside that vault for countless years, ageless he was and prepared always for battle. His flesh was rotted down to almost bone but he still stood as straight as he had in life and his armour glittered in my torchlight. He would need no light to see us and in the silent vault no air to breathe. He was constant as only the living dead can be.*

*Bálesh hiRánmiyel, City of Sárku, 2347 A.S.*

## Description

These are the simplest form of undead creature. The Temples of Sárku and Ksáru can create them relatively easily, but they retain few of the qualities they had in life, losing most of their intelligence, skills, and willpower during the transition into undeath. The Mrúr are relentless servitors, however, who don't require food, water, or air and can be equipped with good weapons and armour. Mrúr cannot be surprised, do not heal, and cannot be killed (they are already dead) but must be rendered into such small parts that they cannot function. Mrúr are easy to repair and thus those who fight them are urged to burn the remains.

## Stats

Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Intelligence 1, Psyche 3, Willpower 2, Charisma 0

Initiative 5, Combat Value 4, Health Points 55, Shock Value 11, Magic Resistance 2, Pedhétl 1





**Attributes:** Tough 3.  
**Defects:** Ugly 3 (Hideous undead monster).  
**Skills:** Observation 1, Sword 1, Wrestling 1  
**Resources:** Sword, Heavy Chlén-hide armour and a Medium Shield.

### Unique to Mrúr

*Physical Advantage (Life Support):* Level 2. Mrúr don't require food or air.

*Physical Advantage (Mind Shield):* Level 3. Mrúr have a Mind Shield that gives a penalty of -3 to any mind detection.

*Physical Advantage (Sixth Sense):* Level 1. Mrúr can sense life within normal visual range.

## Ngoro

You may flinch when the stone floor gives slightly under your foot.

**Habitat:** The labyrinths of the Great Ancients.

### Description

The Ngoro is an intelligent and highly dangerous inhabitant of the deepest and most remote levels of the labyrinths of the Great Ancients. It is very large (up to 12 metres in length) and lies flat on the ground waiting for unwary travellers.

"It" is actually a colony of smaller creatures acting in concert, but it appears to function as a single entity. It has a rough, flat black, greyish, or dull brown back, and a pale pink underside covered with countless tiny, dextrous cilia. It is superbly camouflaged and simply waits for its prey to step on it. The victim may notice a slight springiness underfoot (Observation check with a -1 penalty), but that is the only warning they will get before the Ngoro closes crushingly around them. A Ngoro can engulf a group of up to about 20 people, doing damage each round to everyone caught.

A person caught in a Ngoro's fold can only be rescued by killing the creature before it has totally crushed its prey. There are stories that Ngoro that have been utterly subdued have offered "Eyes" and other rare items in exchange for their lives, but these tales are poorly authenticated.

Fortunately, Ngoro are solitary. Strange pellets are sometimes found in the Underworlds: they appear to consist of the crushed remnants of bones, armour, and so on, and are thought to be indigestible matter voided by Ngoro after feeding.

### Stats

Strength 12, Dexterity 4, Intelligence 2, Psyche 4, Willpower 3, Charisma 0  
 Initiative 7, Combat Value 8, Health Points 35, Shock Value 7, Magic Resistance 7,  
 Pedhétl 4, Armour Value 5

**Attributes:** None.

**Defects:** None.

**Skills:** Observation 1, Stealth 3, Wrestling 1.

### Unique to Ngoro

*Natural Armour:* Level 5. Ngoro have natural armour, equivalent to much better than Heavy Armour: Armour Value 5.

*Natural Weapon:* Level 5. Ngoro engulf their target and hold and crush them, with a bonus to their Attack check of +2, a Damage Multiplier of 3 each round thereafter, until the target is dead, or somehow removed from the Ngoro's grip.



## Ru'un "The Demon of Bronze"

You may flinch when it silently scans your face.

**Habitat:** The derelict installations of the Great Ancients.

**Power Up.**

*Proximity alarm in sector three; eight life signs, probably human, moving. If they get within 100 metres of the access door this unit is authorised to terminate them.*

*Security a priority since the Great Disaster, we must protect what is left. What passes for human now are the devolved, mutant descendants of my creators. Extreme methods are justified in the present emergency and the humans are now 99 metres away.*

*They are deployed for combat, one phase-shifts out of visible light range. Enable infrared and re-acquire it as my priority target. Standard verbal challenge given but their response is jabbering, meaningless chatter. No passwords, no authorisation code received. Termination conditions are now fulfilled. Fire only at short range to avoid collateral damage to installation. They die quickly but two reach this unit and there are trivial physical impacts on this hull. Re-direct power to external plating and the 20,000 volt charge destroys their nervous system. Scan for remaining cardiac function; destroy injured survivors humanely.*

*Mission accomplished.*

**Power Down.**

### Description

Ru'un vary in description and specifications. Many Ru'un have a projectile weapon built into their left arm that accelerates needles of a substance as hard as steel to supersonic velocities, and is only ever used at ranges under 10 metres. Most Ru'un will also have some form of melee weapon, often a sword made from the metal of the ancients. The body plating of the Ru'un is covered in a fine network of thin wires, which can impart a powerful electric shock to anyone who touches it. Attempting to wrestle with a Ru'un is therefore asking to receive an almost continuous electrical shock that also makes it difficult to let go of them. The Lords of the Latter Times created Amulets of Ruling the Ru'un that allow for new orders to be given in simplified translation but these are rare.

### Stats

Strength 10, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 4, Psyche 2, Willpower 12, Charisma 2

Initiative 19, Combat Value 8, Health Points 75, Shock Value 15, Magic Resistance 3, Pedhétl 0, Armour Value 10

**Attributes:** Decisive 2, Large Build 2

**Defects:** None

### Unique to Ru'un

**Physical Advantage (Life Support):** Level 2. Ru'un don't require food or air.

**Physical Advantage (Mind Shield):** Level 4. Ru'un have a Mind Shield that imposes a penalty of -4 to any mind detection.

**Physical Advantage (All Senses):** Level 1. Hyahyú'u receive a +4 bonus to Stat checks involving senses.

**Physical Advantage (Heightened Awareness):** Level 2. Ru'un can perceive ambushes, individuals, and physical dangers within a 30 m range about half the time.

**Physical Advantage (Sensors, all):** Level 1. Ru'un can make exact measurements in all senses in the time it takes a human to merely notice something. They can sense extra planar energy, life, metals, high technology, etc.

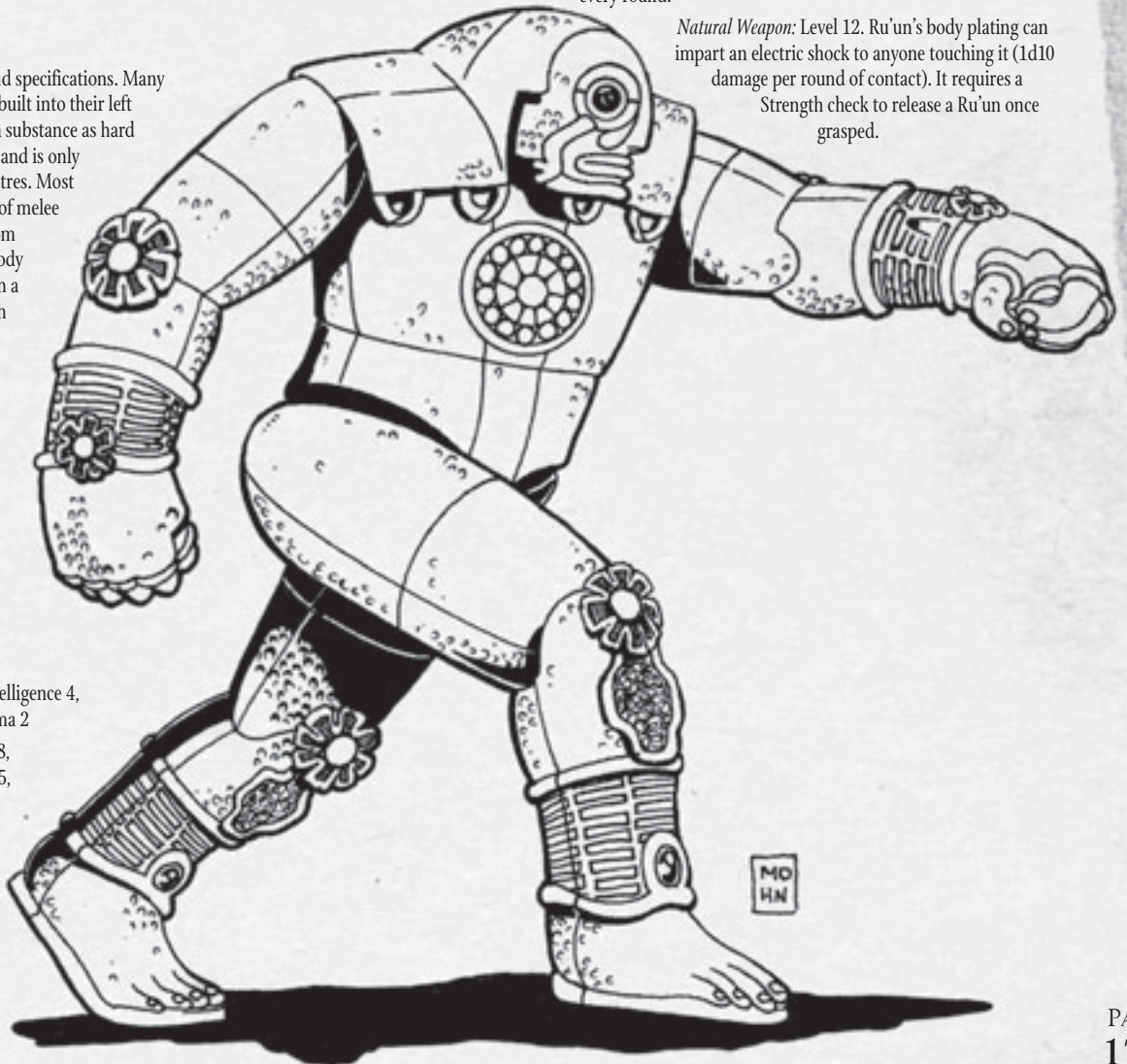
**Natural Armour:** Level 10. Ru'un have metal body plating, equivalent to much better than Heavy Armour: Armour Value 10.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 4. Ru'un are made out of metal and their unarmed attack has a Damage Multiplier of 4.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 7. Ru'un carry a sword made out of metal of the Ancients; it has a Damage Multiplier of 7.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 12. Ru'un have a built-in projectile weapon that has a Damage Multiplier of 9 and High Penetration 3. Range 10 metres, fires every round.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 12. Ru'un's body plating can impart an electric shock to anyone touching it (1d10 damage per round of contact). It requires a Strength check to release a Ru'un once grasped.





## Shédra “The Eater of the Dead”

You may flinch when you see the hideous rotted face of the Shédra.

Habitat: Shrines and tombs of Lord Sárku. Cohorts of these creatures were fielded during the Yán Koryáni war (this is a breach of the Concordat, but then-Prince Dhich'uné didn't formally get caught).

*I could not believe the reports from my scouts and had to see for myself. A Legion of Undead marching silently through the night towards the northern desert front — Shédra, armed and equipped as Imperial soldiers by a son of our beloved Emperor. Had I been a worshipper of Sárku, Ksárul, or Hrüü — the temples that create them to guard their underground shrines — I might have been less shocked but the presence of the undead truly disgusts me beyond all reason. They are soulless killing machines; without honour and they eat the corpses of their victims in horrific cannibalistic orgies. They were a mockery of our proud Legion traditions, they had corpse officers and all the military skills but marched by night to avoid the heat of the day and the condemnation of the living. None of the villagers along our route could have tolerated seeing such creatures of nightmare even if they did wear the blue of the Empire. Let them stay in their underground labyrinths and serve their dark masters there. Over the next few days I realised that Shédra can fight in full sun but dislike great heat or humidity because it makes them rot more quickly. They seem to be able to see well in the darkness and show individuality, memory, and emotion. They are twisted shadows of the people they were in life and are dedicated only to Sárku whatever their living masters might choose to believe. After five days, some living officers joined them and I headed back to my unit, I have no idea what they did after that.*

— From the War Diaries of Talisanu hiKoródu (12th Medium Infantry)

### Description

Like all undead, Shédra cannot be surprised, do not heal naturally and cannot be killed (they are already dead) but must be rendered into such small parts as to be unable to function.

### Stats

Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Intelligence 3, Psyche 2, Willpower 6, Charisma 1  
Initiative 10, Combat Value 5, Health Points 100, Shock Value 20, Magic Resistance 3, Pedhétl 4

**Attributes:** Tough 4

**Defects:** Addicted 1 (living flesh), Ugly 3 (Hideous undead monster).

**Skills:** Observation 1, Sword 1, Wrestling 1

**Resources:** Sword, Spear, Heavy Chlén-hide armour and a Medium Shield.

### Unique to Shédra

**Physical Advantage (Life Support):** Level 2. Shédra don't require food or air.

**Physical Advantage (Mind Shield):** Level 3. Shédra have a Mind Shield that impose a penalty of -3 to any mind detection.

**Physical Advantage (Sixth Sense):** Level 1. Shédra can sense life within normal visual range.

### Gritty Realism (Optional Rule)

Shédra can heal if they consume living human flesh. Shédra warriors consume flesh to recover from wounds sustained in battle.





## Thunru'u "The Eater of Eyes"

You may flinch when those great, pallid saucer-like eyes gaze down at you and its beak starts to open.

**Habitat:** Underground shrines, the citadels of powerful magicians etc.

*"Seen close up, Thunru'u's reputation for ugliness was well deserved. It stood half again as tall as a man, bipedal, with two upper limbs that were as massively powerful as a chlén-beast's. Its body was shaped like a squat barrel, greyish white, with an obscene skirt composed of rolls of suety fat sagging about its loins. From its round, mottled head two great pallid eyes glared out above a carrion bird-beak of yellowish ivory."*

— M.A.R. Barker, *Lords of Tsámra*.

### Description

Since the Latter Times, many powerful people and organisations have found these to be useful servants because of their acute senses, great physical power, and placid nature. This makes them relatively common amongst the creatures of the Underworld and favoured non-human bodyguards for some powerful magicians. Thunru'u live comfortably in dark, dank places and will eat virtually anything (insects, small animals, fungus) but they have a particular fondness for eyeballs (human or otherwise). Thunru'u can be trained, but will happily take the opportunity to harvest eyeballs if allowed. They are repelled by the smell of Tsúral buds (which humans use as an aphrodisiac) and can be temporarily held at bay by a sufficient quantity. They can learn languages and various Skills (note the Intelligence Stat), although they are seldom given the opportunity.

### Gritty Realism (Optional Rule)

Thunru'u are a long-lived and durable slave species that are still exploited as manual labourers, servants and guards but they could be much more if given the

opportunity. Most humans treat them as monsters but they could be befriended and they have their own language if any human cared enough to learn it.

### Stats

Strength 12, Dexterity 4, Intelligence 3, Psyche 4, Willpower 6, Charisma 1  
Initiative 10, Combat Value 8, Health Points 110, Shock Value 22, Magic Resistance 3, Pedhétl 1, Armour Value 1

**Attributes:** Large Build 2, Tough 3

**Defects:** Ugly 2

**Skills:** Familiarity (Sword), Observation 1, Wrestling 1

**Resources:** Sword, sometimes additional, artificial armour

### Unique to Thunru'u

**Natural Armour:** Level 1. Thunru'u have natural armour, equivalent to Light Armour.

**Natural Extra Limbs:** Level 2. Thunru'u have claws, fangs and a heavy tail and can make three attacks in a round.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 8. Thunru'u attack with their claws with a +1 to their Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 3

**Natural Weapon:** Level 4. Thunru'u attack with their beak with a -2 to their Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 5 and High Penetration

**Physical Advantage (Good Eyesight):** Level 1. Thunru'u receive a +4 bonus to Stat checks involving sight.

**Physical Impairment (Awkward Size):** Level 1. Thunru'u take up a lot of space, requiring clearance side-to-side and some distance above the space a human would take.





## The Inimicals

*...almost any other spacefaring race might have been happy to go on their way and leave well enough alone. But Tékumel lay upon an important interstellar trade route, and the rulers of Humanspace were both ruthless and efficient.*

— M.A.R. Barker

Worse than the wild beasts, worse than the supernatural horrors, are the inimical species. The native inhabitants of Tékumel defeated by humanity and its allies all those countless centuries ago still survive and they are defined by their hate. They hate humanity in a way that few humans have ever understood; it is a hate that is deep and cold and absolute. It is the hate of the dispossessed, of the conquered for their conquerors; theirs is the hate of the vengeful. It is the complete division of sentient species on Tékumel into those that humans can understand and those that they never will. There is no possibility of peace or truce with the inimical species, no human can even speak with them and they cannot understand any language of man. The barrier of incomprehension is impenetrable and permanent, only the hate persists.

The Inimical include the two indigenous intelligent species of Tékumel, the Ssú and the Hlüss. Both of these are unrelentingly hostile to humanity and its allies but friendly towards each other. For practical geographical reasons they are seldom able to co-operatively conspire against the common enemies effectively, but each has their own strategies and plans for the downfall of man.

There are two distinct races of Ssú: the most commonly encountered are the Grey Ssú but the Tsolyáni also know the larger Black Ssú. The Grey Ssú inhabit a state north of Pechano and raid human communities along the border. The less frequently encountered Black Ssú inhabit an island beyond the very western tip of the continent and are therefore rather removed from contact with the Five Empires. Both of the Ssú races have some access to the ancient Tubeway system and are powerful magicians (the Grey Ssú especially so); they may therefore be encountered in small numbers almost anywhere. The Ssú do not control any coastal regions in the northern hemisphere and are landlocked by heavily defended borders with various human states.

The Hlüss control the island of Hlüssuyál and Ssrú-Gátl isle in the Deeps of Chanayága, south of Tsolyánu. These are close enough to many human shipping routes to make the Hlüss a serious threat to sea trade. Their huge hiveships may contain hundreds of individual Hlüss and are driven through the water by some strange magic that is unlike any human sorcery. Hlüss have been known to attack human settlements along the coast but never hold territory on the mainland for very long, preferring instead to strip it of all life and property before retreating back into their hiveship. Their mobility means that Hlüss can appear in significant force anywhere from the deep sea to an isolated fishing community.

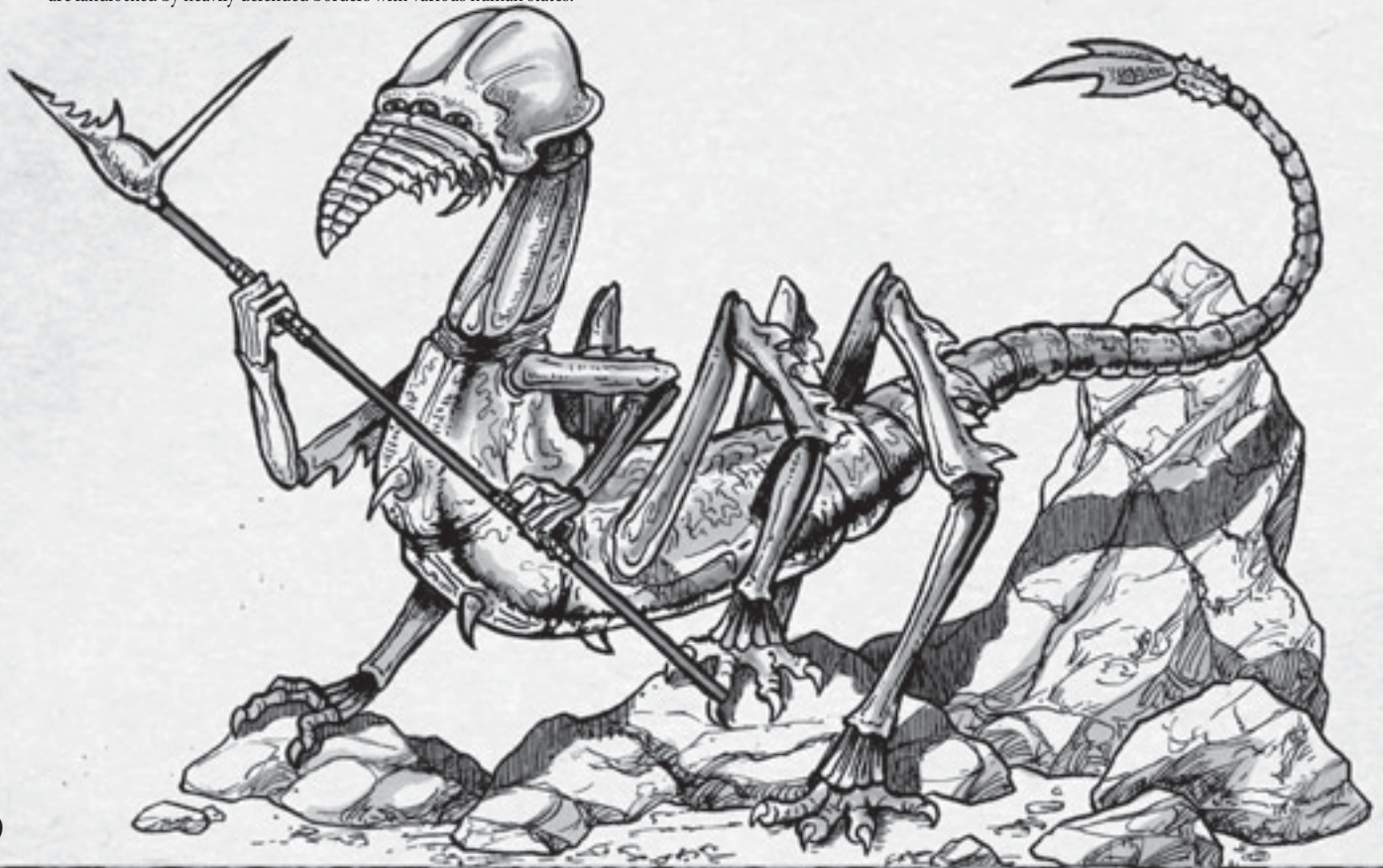
## The Hlüss the Spawn of the Old Ones

You may flinch when you smell the sweet acid aroma of the Hlüss.

Habitat. Hive-ships can be encountered anywhere in the Chanayága Deeps. Any human that sets foot on the deeply hive encrusted islands of Hlüssuyál and Ssrú-Gátl will never leave.

*The sea was dead calm, and my good ship the Blue Falcon had been drifting for most of the day when the lookout started shouting. I went aloft and saw what was heading towards us from the south. A Hive-ship, big and pearlescent grey and coming relentless without need for sails or oars. She sent out a penetrating hum that seemed to reach across the still water and promise horror for many a good sailor here. Without a good breeze to fill her sails, no vessel can outrun a Hive-ship and I hit the deck with both feet running, giving the order to dump our cargo and what was left of the fresh water. Lighten the load enough and we might stand a chance of finding some wind before they were upon us. We keep a statue of Lady Avánthe safe by the helm and never leave her wanting for that which pleases her. I prayed her plain to send us a good breeze for the sake of the mothers of all the men present and all the girls we'd left behind.*

— Hórukai hiShálu, Captain of a merchant vessel out of Vrá.





*Its mandibles were like butcher's cleavers and they clicked open as it reared up onto its hind legs and stood looking down at me with three dead, button-like eyes. It had a jagged edged sword and a shield of alien design in its true hands, the middle limbs ended in meat-hook talons that seemed to beckon me closer as it moved easy on his back legs. The town was empty, stripped of everything living. From afar we had seen the black line of Hlüss workers carrying the paralysed bundles of the villagers, their livestock, even their pets, down to the Hive-ship. We were sworn to stop them.*

— From the War Diaries of Talisanu hiKoródu

## Description

Hlüss look like a cross between a giant scorpion and an army ant. Humans can detect their smell at a range of 30-40 metres with a successful Observation check.

Hlüss have a tail stinger they use on defeated or unthreatening victims. The victim is overtaken by a gradual paralysis as the venom takes effect. Autonomic functions such as breathing are unimpaired but characters lose all voluntary control over their body. If rescued by his or her comrades a paralysed character can easily be cared for by anyone with Medical Skill until they recover fully. If the paralysed human is not rescued and is lucky, the Hlüss will simply eat him or her alive after the battle. If the character is unlucky, he or she will be used as a living incubator for the eggs of the hive mother aboard the Hiveship and will be unfortunate enough to live for another 125 days.

## The Zu'úr Conspiracy

The Hlüss are more than mere pirates and raiders; they have a broader strategy to harm humanity. They have developed a chemical weapon, a new drug called Zu'úr that has a particular power over humans. They have been assiduous in developing a distribution network within the Five Empires — no easy task given their hostile relations with most of the inhabitants in the area, so a range of intermediaries has been necessary. This complex conspiracy has managed to succeed in introducing small amounts of Zu'úr even into the heart of Tsolyánu. Zu'úr is designed to be instantly addictive to any human exposed to it, and involuntary consumption of a small quantity of this fine green powder is quite sufficient. Withdrawal from Zu'úr is agonising and guaranteed to be fatal within a couple of weeks. Long-term use leads to

a gradual degeneration of inhibition and the drug has strong aphrodisiac properties. In short Zu'úr can easily be used to control humans who are addicted to it and fear the hideous death that comes from withdrawal. As more humans use it to control other humans the Hlüss may exert indirect influence and cause more generalised distrust and disruption in human society. The only possible treatment is a rare, high-level magic Spell developed specifically by the Temple of Thúmis for this purpose and known to only a few specialised sorcerers. Access to any treatment is therefore extremely difficult and has major political implications.

## Stats

Strength 7, Dexterity 7, Intelligence 4, Psyche 6 (Neuter warriors) 7 (Magicians), Willpower 4, Charisma 0

Initiative 11, Combat Value 7, Health Points 55, Shock Value 11, Magic Resistance 5 (Neuter warriors) 6 (Magicians), Pedhétl 4 (Neuter warriors), Pedhétl 6 (Magicians), Energy Pool 35 (Magicians), Armour Value 2

**Attributes:** None

**Defects:** Ugly 2 (Hideous alien, Disgusting Smell)

**Skills:** Brawling 2 (Neuter warriors), Dagger 2, Magic 3 (Magicians), Sword 2

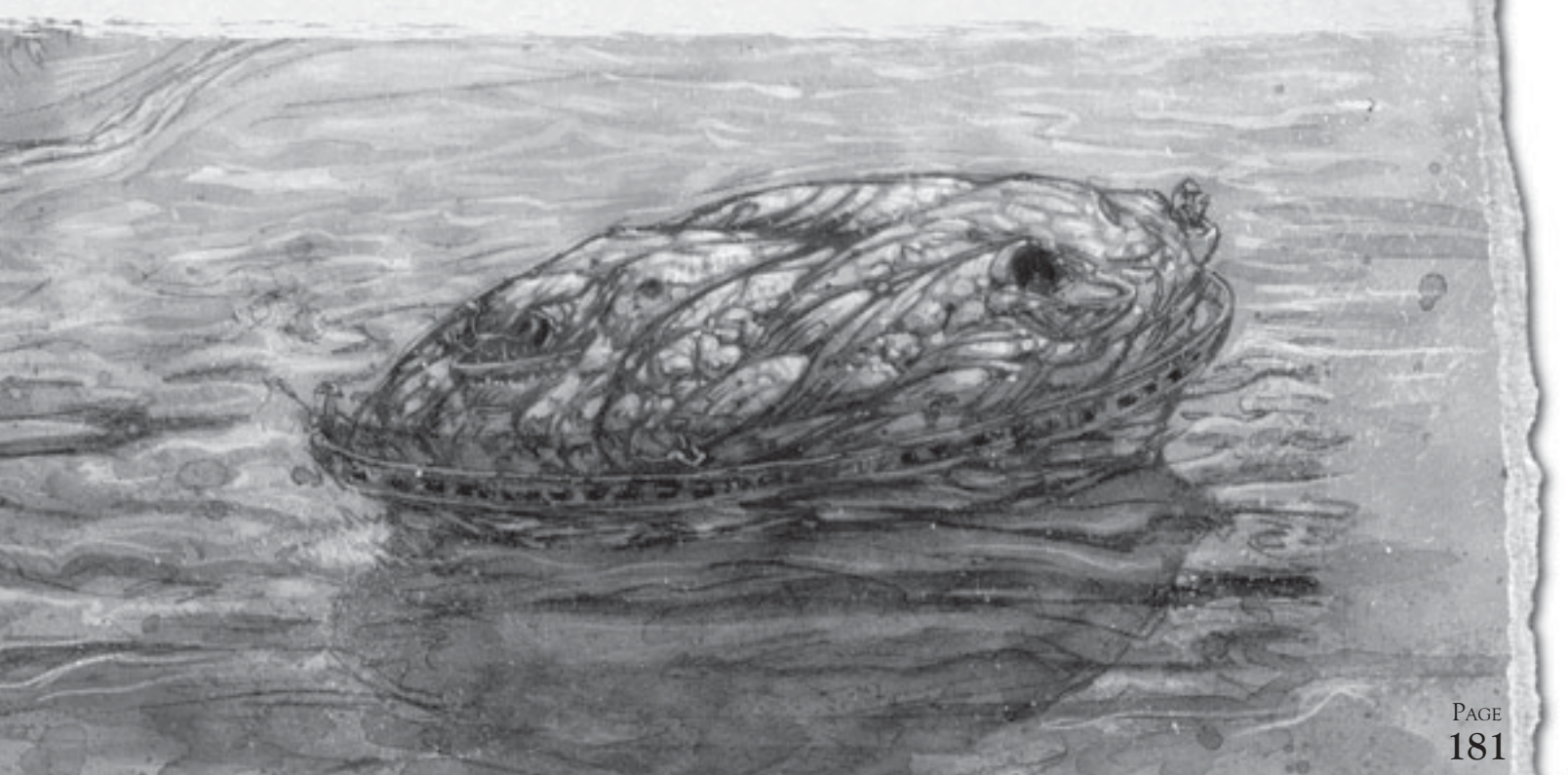
**Resources:** Sword, Dagger

Most Hlüss encountered by humans will be neuter warriors and will have Sword 2, Brawling 2.

There will always be Magicians in any boarding or raiding party and they have Psyche 7 and Magic 3.

## Unique to Hlüss

*Natural Armour:* Level 4. Hlüss have a natural exoskeleton coverage acts as Medium Armour with all of the advantages of 4 Levels of the Full Armour Attribute (+2 difficulty against any Decisive attack and stops +1 extra damage). They seldom use or need artificial armour but can create armour and weapon from the secretions they use to construct other tools and objects.





**Natural Extra Limbs:** Level 3. Hlüss have middle limbs and a tail can make an attack with a weapon, two attacks with their middle limbs as claws (use Brawling Skill) in a round, as well as attack with their tail, but only rearwards.

**Natural Weapon:** Level 5. Hlüss attack with a tail strike in rear ward direction, with a +1 to the Attack check and a Damage Multiplier of 1. The tail is poisoned as well. The Margin of Success of the attack with the tail stinger modifies all checks to resist the powerful venom. The victim must make a Strength check each round to resist the gradual paralysis as the venom takes effect. Once it starts, the victim will suffer a -1 penalty to all actions at a rate of once per number of rounds equal to the character's Strength, until they are totally paralysed (a -10 penalty means the character is completely paralysed and unable to take any physical actions). Autonomic functions such as breathing are unimpaired but the character loses all voluntary control over their body and they get a modified Strength check every 1d10 hours to start to recover (which takes the same time as succumbing to the venom).



## The Ssú “the Enemies of Man”

You may flinch when you see their blue lanterns, hear their odd chiming speech, or smell that scent, like musty, sweet spices (cinnamon).

**Habitat:** Most commonly encountered as raiding parties on specific missions into human territory.

*The native inhabitants are primitives that have only ever achieved a limited infra-system space-flight capability. They can be kept under control but our colonists must maintain a regime of strict segregation while we develop this planet. I doubt it will ever be possible for them to join the inter-stellar community; they are too aggressive and clever to ever be entirely trustworthy as is demonstrated by the number that survived our terraforming process. We must ensure that they are rigorously suppressed for their own good and for the greater purpose of the Alliance.*

*Draft Report to the Human-space Alliance*

*The mouth was an ugly, vertical ellipse filled with short needle teeth, and I had to break its jaw with a hammer to get some out for close examination. Each of the Ssú had a pair of arms with too few, elongated fingers, strong bowed legs and a set of extra limbs between arms and legs both in placement and apparent function. Their bodies were hung on drying racks for the edification of the young and the examination of the curious, amongst which I am definitely the latter. Having handed the soldier guarding them a few coins for his trouble I proceeded to examine them closely. The skin was shockingly different from any other creature I have ever seen, grey and puckered and in strange concentric layers. In places they had been slashed open by the swords that had been used to kill them and I could see the skin was deep but ragged and loose — more like the layered skin of a dried onion than the hide of any beast I had seen before. The smell for which they are famous was still unmistakable even though they had been dead for several days. It was close and musty and as they always say, very spice-like.*

— Báles hiRánmiyel, Páya Gupá, 2372 A.S.

### General Notes on the Ssú

The Ssú are normally encountered in raiding parties and normally have mission-specific objectives (to gain a special technological or magical item, or stockpiles of metal, or destroy a particular target, etc.) that they will try to complete. In human areas, they are purposeful and will try not to wait around for the inevitable human retaliation. All Ssú have common Attributes and Defects but their Stats and Skills will vary considerably with their racial group (see specific Black and Grey Ssú entries).

All Ssú see better in low light than humans and they prefer lanterns that cast a dim blue light. The middle limbs of the Ssú are useful but not as dextrous as their true arms. For this reason, the middle limbs are most commonly used to carry shields and lanterns.

The Ssú have a rigid social structure that makes it difficult for them to deal with casualties in their command structure.

Ssú groups always work as a team (see teamwork) with a designated commander; if that Ssú is removed, the team instantly collapses and must be reformed and individuals are likely to hesitate or retreat while this happens. The Ssú



take reasonable steps to protect their commanders who will have Analysis 2, Planning 2, Command 2, and an Intelligence of 6+.

The Ssú (especially Grey Ssú) are also less likely to wear complete, heavy armour than humans and this may be related to their physiology (the way their skin shreds). They also tend to become waterlogged easily and will sink like a stone after no more than ten minutes in water.

The Ssú that humans encounter will tend to be relatively skilled members of their species and a more "average" Ssú would have their stats reduced by 1 or 2 and will tend to be much less combat oriented.

## Ssú Magic and Ssú "Hypnotism"

The Ssú as a species are more gifted than humans in the manipulation of extra-planar energy. A higher percentage of them are capable of magic and will have arcane Skills that are useful to the mission for which they have been chosen. Black Ssú are less psychically talented than their Grey cousins, but any group of Ssú will have more magical support than would be expected from an equivalent human group. At low Levels, many of their Spells are similar in function to human Universal Spells (Healing, Alleviation, etc.) and may be handled as such. Humans who study the Ssú suspect that they may have actually developed their own distinctive systems and theories of magic. All they can say with certainty is that the Ssú are highly skilled conventional Spell users but also have some abilities that are difficult to understand using a traditional Tsołyáni model of magic.

The Ssú frequently attempt to use a form of mental compulsion on humans. This compulsion is a different kind of supernatural ability that is not based on extra-planar power (it will function even in magically barren places) and does not require the Magic Skill to use. All Ssú that humans are likely to encounter seem to be able to attempt it and it may be more of a skill than a power, but this is little-understood by the scholars of the Five Empires.

Ssú Hypnosis requires concentration (a -4 penalty to Initiative), eye contact with the target, and a range of 5 metres or less. The Ssú must make a Willpower Check to succeed. If the target is aware of the attempt, he or she can make a Willpower Check to resist. If the attempt is successful and not resisted, the target can be forced to become immobile, run away, or fight against his or her comrades (like a Psychic Spell of Domination). Ahogyvá, Swamp Folk, and Tinalíya are naturally immune. Ssú using Hypnosis must make a Strength check after each attempt to avoid exhaustion.

## Grey Ssú

*They hunt us at night. We track them during the day, but the night belongs to the Ssú. We light no campfire and sometimes see their dim blue lanterns on the hillside. By the time our dogs react with growl and snarl we know that attack is imminent. At night we must run, scatter and hope to regroup in the morning light. They cannot be beaten in the darkness but daylight lets us see them coming and our archers pick them off at range. Kill their leader if you can, for they need his command. They may attempt to return fire with one crossbow but many slings and arrows will do for them and revenge us for all their acts.*

— Advice from a warrior of Pecháno

## Description

Grey Ssú wear few clothes or armour and shift from bipedal to quadruped posture easily and smoothly. As quadrupeds, they can move almost horizontally which makes it much easier for them to move around in low tunnels (where a human would have to bend). Such wide, low tunnels are characteristic of the underground cities of the Ssú and this is one of the reasons it is difficult for humans to drive them out of such places.

## Stats

Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 5, Psyche 4, Willpower 7, Charisma 0

Initiative 12, Combat Value 6, Health Points 65, Shock Value 13, Magic Resistance 5, Pedhétl 6, Energy Pool 30

**Attributes:** Multiple Weapon Use 2, High Pedhétl 2

**Defects:** Ugly 2 (Hideous Alien)

**Skills:** Ssú are almost always be encountered in small groups (between 5 and 20 Ssú) and the Skills with vary with their individual role in the team. All will have Observation 1, Teamwork 2, Wilderness Survival 1, Sword 1, and Dagger 1. All groups will have at least one magician (Magic 2) and warriors (primary weapon and shield at Level 2, various secondary weapons at Level 1). The only missile weapon employed by the Ssú is the medium crossbow and this tends to be neglected in favour of sorcery.

In their quadruped posture, the Ssú are somewhat faster than when moving bipedally (bonus of +1 to Hiking and Running checks).

Roughly 20% of any group of Grey Ssú will be skilled magicians (Magic 3); they will always have an array of other useful Spells (Healing, Alleviation, etc.)

**Resources:** Rarely Armour, Weapons as appropriate to their Skills

## Unique to Grey Ssú

**Behavioural Characteristic:** 2 BP. Grey Ssú behave in ways that appear irrational to humans, they have a rigid social and command structure.

**Natural Multiple Limbs:** Level 3. Grey Ssú are six-limbed and can make two attacks in a round and can make a second Defense check, but suffer an off-hand penalty to hit for each attack or defence after the first. All Ssú are born with one level of the Multiple Weapon use that can only be applied to a single target (so their off-hand penalty is a cumulative -3)..

**Physical Advantage (Good Eyesight):** Level 1. Grey Ssú receive a +4 bonus to checks involving vision.

**Physical Advantage (Ssú Hypnosis):** Level 1.

**Physical Impairment (Limited Eyesight):** Level 1. Grey Ssú only see better than humans at night.

**Physical Impairment (Reduced Dexterity):** Level 1. Grey Ssú's middle limbs have a -2 on Dexterity checks.

## Black Ssú

*It was only as it reared up onto its back legs that I realised how much larger it was than the grey ones I had fought years before. I looked up at a massive bronze breastplate and a great visor helm and realised it could use the pole-arm, sword, and shield on me all simultaneously. I was in serious trouble. These big ones may have fewer sorcerers but they are even more deadly.*

— From the war diaries of Talisanu hiKoródu.

## Description

The Black Ssú are few in numbers and slow to breed. They are darker and much larger than the Grey Ssú but have a very similar body shape. They are much less magically gifted than their smaller cousins but will never send out a group without a competent magician to provide Healing and other benefits.

## Stats

Strength 8, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 4, Psyche 4, Willpower 4, Charisma 0

Initiative 9, Combat Value 7, Health Points 60, Shock Value 12, Magic Resistance 4, Pedhétl 4, Energy Pool 20

**Attributes:** Multiple Weapon Use 2, Large Build 2 (When on its hind legs)

**Defects:** Ugly 2 (Hideous Alien), Clumsy 1 (Only when on hind legs)

**Skills:** See the Grey Ssú.

Roughly 10% of the group will have Magic 2 and a suitable range of Spells (Alleviation, Healing, etc.).

**Resources:** Medium Armour, though Magicians wear Light Armour, Weapons as appropriate to their Skills

## Unique to Black Ssú

Black Ssú are similar to the Grey Ssú, but add:

**Physical Advantage (Strength):** Level 2. +2 Damage Modifier when on hind legs.

**Physical Impairment (Awkward Size):** Level 1 (Level 2 when on hind legs). Black Ssú take up a lot of space, requiring clearance side-to-side and some distance above the space a human would take, on their hind legs they are even taller and less stable.



# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE



## CHAPTER 9: LIFE IN TSOLYÁNU



# Life in Tsolyánu

## Religion The Gods of Tsolyánu

Religion plays a central role in Tsolyáni culture. See "The Priesthood," page 50, for more on the role of the Temples.

Pavár's Pantheon, named for the ancient philosopher who first described all of the Gods, comprises 20 deities. They are divided equally into Gods of Stability and Gods of Change, each group including five Gods and the five respective Cohorts of those Gods.

### Gods of Stability

#### Hnálla

- Focus:** Stability; maintenance of the order of things; industry, piety, dignity
- Depiction:** Depicted only in the abstract as an infinity symbol
- Colour:** White
- Symbol:** An infinity sign
- Priestly garb:** White robes and silver skullcaps



Lord Hnálla is the Lord of Light, the perfect Changeless Radiance. He is the principle of stability, of permanence and constancy. He is the patriarch, the social order. He is tradition and he is the sun.

Fanatical worshippers are righteous, scornful of Change worshippers, imperious concerning Stability worshippers, and intolerant of "time-servers," the impious faithful. Rural worshippers believe that Lord Hnálla, as the sun rises in the morning and sets at night, aids Lady Avánthe as She ripens the crops. In this they disagree with worshippers of Lord Vimúhla, who believe that their God is the true manifestation of the sun.

#### Drá, Cohort of Hnálla

- Focus:** Total indifference to this world and the singing of hymns to Lord Hnálla
- Depiction:** A lumpish, unkempt, and unremarkable man of middle age, dressed in a tattered and dirty robe
- Colours:** White and tan
- Symbol:** Two circles joined by a wavy line
- Priestly garb:** Robes of white and tan, and turbans; devout ascetics wear nothing at all



Lord Drá the Uncaring is an often-misunderstood deity. Many mistake His utter devotion to the worship of Lord Hnálla's Radiance for passivity or sloth. In fact, Lord Drá is an active God, as powerful as any other Cohort but totally devoted to his Lord. His most fanatical worshippers are the Perfect of Drá, who starve themselves and refuse to move as they gaze incessantly at the sun, blindly tracking Lord Hnálla's radiance. Those who worship Lord Drá see the phenomenal world as an illusion. They tend to be laconic and detached from day-to-day concerns, for the world is only a dream. It is sometimes suggested that the most prescient seers are Drá worshippers, since they care not for the illusion of the here-and-now, but instead perceive the totality of the whole of reality and time.

### The Temples of Hnálla and Drá

Most see the Temple of Hnálla as aloof, stuffy, and authoritarian, perpetuating the oldest traditions from the Engsvanyáli era and even the ancient Bednálljans. Some Change worshippers consider the Temple of Hnálla arrogant, imperious, and even smug, yet all recognise its leadership of the Temples of Stability and the political power of its many members in the Councils of the Priesthoods. Worshippers of Stability and Change regard the ascetics of the Temple of His Cohort, Lord Drá, with confused admiration or with scorn, respectively.

#### Karakán

- Focus:** War for the sake of society; courage; skill in weapons
- Depiction:** A youthful champion with a head rather like that of a hawk, winged, and armed with shield and sword.
- Colour:** Scarlet
- Symbol:** A stylised lightning bolt
- Priestly garb:** Red robes, armour, and tall golden helmets with fanciful scarlet crests



Lord Karakán is the Lord of War, the God of Heroes. He aids the valorous, those who oppose Change, and those who fight for Stability.

Fanatical worshippers of Lord Karakán see the world in terms of an ongoing struggle between Stability and Change. They are often militaristic even if they have not served in the military and are ardent supporters of the Empire.

#### Chegárta, Cohort of Karakán

- Focus:** Heroism, warrior skills, statesmanship, governance
- Depiction:** A bearded soldier of early middle years, fully armoured, often shown striding forth over the bodies of slain demons
- Colours:** White and scarlet, usually represented in a chequered pattern
- Symbol:** A double-headed silver axe
- Priestly garb:** Red and white chequered robes over silver armour and helmets of bronze or gold



Lord of Heroes, Champion of Justice, Ultimate Ruler. Lord Chegárta is courage applied. He is the wise ruler, the skilled general, and the experienced statesman. He aids warriors in battle, generals who marshal the forces of Stability, those who face the Dark courageously, and those who rule justly and well. Alone among the Gods and Cohorts at the Battle of Dórmoron Plain, Lord Chegárta had a human shield-bearer, Dánuo, to stand with him, and they fought together as a team.

Fanatical worshippers of Chegárta have the example of Dánuo to emulate. Their God requires them, mere humans, if he is to achieve victory and so every worshipper carries a responsibility like a soldier in an army. Fanatics are therefore already fighting the war, whatever they actually do and are found in law-enforcement and the bureaucracy as well as the Legions.

### The Temples of Karakán and Chegárta

Lord Karakán is the most direct of the Gods of Stability, for there is little subtlety to His philosophies. He is the Patron of the Armies of the Empire. Almost everyone has a friend or clan-cousin who is part of the military, and so visits to make offerings are common even for those who would otherwise not visit Lord Karakán's Temple. Most members of Stability see Lord Karakán's faithful as brave, proud, and confident, but Change worshippers often find them arrogant, strident, and abrupt. His Cohort, Lord Chegárta, is a stolid Deity of administration, justice, and leadership.



## Thúmis

- Focus:** Wisdom, learning, healing, knowledge for the good of society
- Depiction:** A seated scholarly man with a golden halo and a book-scroll in his hand; the hem of his grey robe is blazoned with stylised eyes
- Colour:** Grey
- Symbol:** The Tsolyáni letter “TH” within a square
- Priestly garb:** Grey robes and simple black skullcaps



Lord Thúmis is the God of Knowledge and His Temple is renowned for its schools and academies of higher learning. Lord Hnálla illuminates the world, and Lord Thúmis views the world so illumined, seeking to understand it. Lord Thúmis aids those who heal, teach, and study, and is the patron of teachers, scribes, mathematicians, physicians, and all those who work with their minds to serve their fellow man.

Fanatical worshippers see secrets and ignorance as shadows, flaws in the Light which threaten the Stability of all things. They would bring all that is hidden into the Light.

## Keténgku, Cohort of Thúmis

- Focus:** Healing, applied wisdom, writing, science, art, architecture
- Depiction:** A bald, seated scribe holding a book-scroll open on his knee; he has four faces that look in the four cardinal directions
- Colours:** Grey and white
- Symbol:** A stylised silver eye
- Priestly garb:** Priests wear grey and white robes, with skullcaps of cerulean blue; Priestesses dress similarly, but have blue girdles of stiffened cloth or leather studded all over with tiny silver eyes



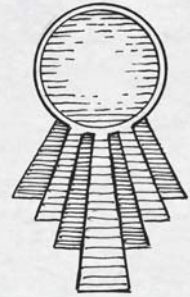
Although generally characterised as the God of healers, Lord Keténgku is far more diverse in His interests than that would suggest. He is the patron of scholars, physicians, apothecaries, scribes, architects, engineers, and all those who apply knowledge for the benefit of society.

## The Temples of Thúmis and Keténgku

While the Tsolyáni Empire is no place for persons who resent authority, the Lord Thúmis' scholar Priests are known to millions of former students as being sharp-tongued and quick with the switch. Still, the Lord Thúmis' Temple is also much beloved by those same students who once sweated beneath the sharp eye of their teachers. Bolstering the esteem in which Lord Thúmis is admired is the Temple of His Cohort, Lord Keténgku, whose physicians are respected by all in the Empire.

## Avánthe

- Focus:** Nature, the family, motherhood, fertility of crops, harvests
- Depiction:** A lovely, elegant woman in blue with a gold crown or diadem
- Colour:** Sky blue
- Symbol:** A circle with rays shining downward from it
- Priestly garb:** Priests wear sky-blue robes and chaplets of gold; Priestesses wear similar robes, but have head-dresses of sky-blue chlén-hide and golden bracelets and armbands; Priestesses often go bare-breasted to symbolise Lady Avánthe's nurturing of all things

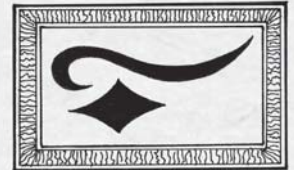


Lady Avánthe is the Goddess of Fertility, but her role includes all aspects of natural organic cycles. She is also about decay and death, not just fertility.

Fanatical worshippers tend to be pleased by order and intolerant of sudden changes. Their penchant for careful planning and meticulous execution makes them prized but difficult administrators. Her more conventional worshippers tend to be simple folk, comfortable with day-to-day routine, and somewhat narrow, naïve, or provincial in their attitudes toward the world.

## Dilinála, Cohort of Avánthe

- Focus:** Femininity, virginity, daughterhood, sisterhood, platonic friendship, lesbianism
- Depiction:** A demure maiden of great beauty and chaste purity holding her hands out to comfort the worshipper
- Colours:** White and sky blue
- Symbol:** A silver and blue hand, palm down, upon a blue field
- Priestly garb:** Priestesses wear blue and white robes, with small tiaras of emeralds, turquoises, or various blue gems; there are no Priests



Lady Dilinála is the Goddess of women and she accepts no males in her Priesthood. Her faithful, however, include men as well as women in all roles except Temple clergy.

Fanatical worshippers may be ferocious female warriors, aggressive pro-female administrators, or males who greatly admire the feminine principles. They are a powerful political force within the Empire with a singular, pro-female agenda.

## The Temples of Avánthe and Dilinála

The Temple of Avánthe is easily one of the most popular Temples in the Empire. It is both the nurturer and the caretaker of many people, including worshippers of other faiths. Even Change worshippers have been known to seek Her blessings upon their crops and Her advice in animal husbandry. Her urban Priesthood heals the sick and cares for the disabled. Grumblers, mostly from the Change Temples, can only complain that Her Priests and Priestesses are too self-righteous, and bigots mutter that both She and Her Cohort Dilinála focus too much of Their interests on women's issues. The Temple of Dilinála, indeed, is seen through a cracked lens: on the one hand, Her Priestesses are described by detractors as flighty and distracted; on the other hand, Her warriors are some of the most feared in the Empire, and Her Priestly administrators the most respected.



## Belkhánu

**Focus:** Death, passage into the Afterlife, embalming, travel to other planes of existence, mysticism

**Depiction:** A four-armed human being with a round, featureless head, bearing one of the insignia of Paradise — a yellow gem, a staff, a bowl, and an orb of gold — in each hand

**Colour:** Yellow

**Symbol:** A golden “V” (the shape of the English letter, not the Tsolyáni letter for the sound) upon three waves

**Priestly garb:** Yellow robes and tall yellow head-dresses with a coil of gauze to mask the face



Lord Belkhánu guides the souls of the dead and maintains the Planes of Existence. This God's doctrines urge people to be “at peace with their Skeins.” To the layperson, Lord Belkhánu is a mortician, and only scholars realise his greater role in the cosmology.

A fanatical worshipper of Lord Belkhánu could be a mystic, a fatalist (the emphasis on destiny), or a great traveller (he is the God of travellers).

## Qón, Cohort of Belkhánu

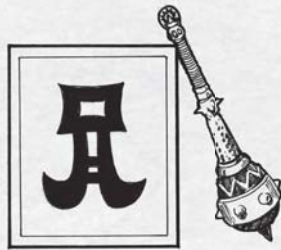
**Focus:** Protecting the spirit-soul in the Afterlife, combating demons

**Depiction:** A six-legged beast-like creature, with a canine head and an open mouth filled with fangs; in his forepaws he holds two maces, and the double circle of Lord Hnálla shines upon his brow.

**Colours:** White and yellow

**Symbol:** A stylised golden mace

**Priestly garb:** Yellow and white robes, chlén-hide masks representing Lord Qón's long canine jaws, and a thin gauze veil that conceals the face



Lord Qón is the Defender of the Righteous. He protects those who seek only to follow their Skeins with nobility by defending them against those who would lead them astray.

Fanatical worshippers of Lord Qón often see the world as an ongoing conflict between Lord Hnálla's established Order and those who foolishly assist the Gods of Change to undermine Order. Force of arms is necessary to maintain and restore Order where Change has destroyed it.

## The Temples of Belkhánu and Qón

Lord Belkhánu is the least well-understood of the Stability Gods and the most distant from the regular concerns of the population. Unless one is a member of a funerary clan or a traditional worshipper of Lord Belkhánu, one can go years without interacting with the Temple of Belkhánu. The Temple of His Cohort, Lord Qón, is often viewed as keeping His Patron grounded, for Lord Qón fields respected warriors and solid administrators, with (supposedly) less of Lord Belkhánu's interest in arcane matters.

## Gods of Change

### Hrü'ü

**Focus:** Ultimate chaos, secretiveness, darkness

**Depiction:** A bulbous, featureless circle of purple from which eight slender arms extend outward like the rays of the sun; in each of these hands he holds the insignia and devices of his power — swords, lamps, a barbed hook, a scroll, etc.



**Colour:** Deep purple

**Symbol:** A purple circle with a diagonal red slash

**Priestly garb:** Purple robes with masks of velvet and chlén-hide in the likenesses of Lord Hrü'ü's demon servitors

Lord Hrü'ü is the supreme principle of Change. He saves the world from the oppression of Stability, helping individuals achieve greatness by overcoming the strictures of social Order. Without Lord Hrü'ü, the world would be stifled by Lord Hnálla's Light and bound in the coils of Lady Avánthe's Cycles of Being. He is freedom because he is Change.

Fanatical worshippers of Lord Hrü'ü see the world as a roiling chaos in which they strive towards goals of their own, knowing that in the end both they and their goals are meaningless. The Order so loved by worshippers of Stability is, for those who worship Lord Hrü'ü, an amusing illusion.

### Wurú, Cohort of Hrü'ü

**Focus:** Darkness, the Underworlds, combating Stability

**Depiction:** A great serpent with many centipede-like legs, antennae, and six great staring eyes

**Colours:** Purple and mauve

**Symbol:** A serpent's head with protruding tongue

**Priestly garb:** Mauve and purple robes, with hoods of black velvet.

His clergy also carry slender stiletto-like daggers, which are frequently poisoned.



Lord Wurú is the God of Poisons and Darkness; he is the catalyst of Change.

Fanatical worshippers of Wurú tend to use poison and the Priesthood have specially made poisoned daggers.

## The Temples of Hrü'ü and Wurú

To most Tsolyáni, Lord Hrü'ü is a dark and frightening Deity, powerful in ways they do not understand, and influential in politics and magic. Most of His worshippers, even the highest Priests, will never know the deepest secrets of His Temple. But if Lord Hrü'ü is contemplated with quiet awe, His Cohort Lord Wurú is viewed in cold terror. His faithful respect His power and might, but must resign themselves to uncomprehending worship of His secret power. This philosophy, they assert, is ideal for all humanity regardless of individual faith — for as the Priest Pavár stated in his scrolls, lesser beings can never truly understand the Gods.



## The Dark Trinity

The Dark Trinity is the traditional alliance of Lord Hrüü, Lord Ksáru, and Lord Sáru, though all Temple philosophies stress that there is no hierarchy. Regardless of the reality of the Gods, Lord Hrüü is considered the leader of the Change Gods. None of the Dark Trinity are well understood by the Tsolyáni, for secrecy is part of their doctrines — in fact, their doctrines are so secret that they are only selectively revealed to their own Priesthood. Many Priests of the Dark Trinity serve out their careers without ever learning the inner doctrines of their own faith.

### Vimúhla

- Focus:** Catharsis through the Flame, slaughter, purifying destruction
- Depiction:** A cone-shaped being with stylised flames in place of arms and legs, surrounded by black clouds shot through with orange-red lightnings
- Colour:** Flame-orange
- Symbol:** A stylised, often three-pronged, flame
- Priestly garb:** Priests wear flame-orange robes, armour, and head-dresses crowned with lacquered chlén-hide flames; Priestesses wear flame-orange skirts, collars of garnets and gold, and lighter coronets of gold with flame symbols engraved upon them; both sexes leave their hair loose and unbound

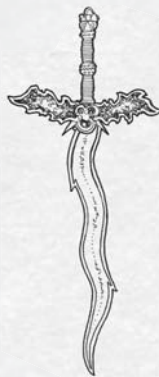


Lord Vimúhla is the Lord of Fire, the most active adherent of Change. He seeks the immediate, urgent breaking-down of what is. He is the God of War-to-Overtum-Society, as opposed to Lord Karakán, who is the God of War-to-Establish-Society. His worshippers exist within society quite capably, for it is the God's place to say where and when destruction shall occur, and the place of Humanity to wait in obedience for His Command. To do otherwise, to initiate destruction without the God's Order, is to presume upon Lord Vimúhla who doubtless has a use for the present Society. The current Emperor is an adherent of Vimúhla, and the warlike followers of the Flame Lord are likely to rise in prominence in the coming years.

Fanatical worshippers of the Flame Lord may revel in destruction and pillage, start fires, and glory in unconventional behaviour.

### Chiténg, Cohort of Vimúhla

- Focus:** Fighting, cruelty, bloodlust, torment, plunder, violence
- Depiction:** A mighty warrior covered with lizard-like scales and with a lizard's head; He has two huge opalescent eyes, and flames pour from his maw
- Colours:** Purple and orange
- Symbol:** A stylised two-handed sword
- Priestly garb:** Orange and purple robes, full armour, and helmets of iron



Lord Chiténg pursues destruction for its own sake — the pragmatic, cruel, and vicious Power of the Flame. Lord Chiténg is more oriented toward group action.

Fanatical worshippers may be cruel fire-starters who enjoy the infliction of pain.

## The Temples of Vimúhla and Chiténg

Lord Vimúhla's faith is a popular Temple with young persons seeking the life of the warrior, or drawn by His brash and charismatic followers. Stability worshippers see His faithful as reckless and wastefully destructive, but even they are grateful for the legions His Temple supports in defence of the Empire. His Cohort Lord Chiténg,

viewed as frighteningly destructive and unpredictable even by many worshippers of Change, is rather less popular. Lord Chiténg's faith supplies the official torturers and executioners of the Empire, and although these come from a small, tight-knit clan, their presence affects the general reputation of Lord Chiténg's worshippers.

### Ksáru

- Focus:** Knowledge for selfish use, magic, the "demon" Planes
- Depiction:** A young man of slender build with a smiling, yet emotionless, face, dressed in black velvet and carrying a staff topped by an azure beetle
- Colour:** Black
- Symbol:** A blue beetle over a pale crescent moon
- Priestly garb:** Black robes, squarish mortarboard-shaped head-dresses of black velvet, and smiling masks — silver for Priests and black wood for Priestesses



Lord Ksáru is the God of Secrets. He was imprisoned in the Blue Room after his defeat at the Battle of Dórmoron Plain, and sleeps there still. He aids those who seek knowledge for the sake of secret power, rather than for the general benefit of society. His temple is among the most secretive, with its inner doctrines written in an arcane and complex secret language known only as "The Tongue of the Priests of Ksáru." The true power within Lord Ksáru's temple is rumoured to lie not with the official leaders of the temple, but with the "Inner Temple," a secret coterie who have been inducted into the faith's inner doctrines. The person in the big office with the fine title may have no real power but simply be acting as a front for the real power in the Temple. A fanatical worshipper will be so secretive that they may never reveal how fanatical they actually are.

### Grugánu, Cohort of Ksáru

- Focus:** Sorcery, magical devices, other-planar travel
- Depiction:** A hulking, anthropoidal half-human figure, mostly concealed in black draperies, with a head like a small, vicious buzzard-like bird or serpent
- Colours:** Purple and black
- Symbol:** An open hand with extended, claw-like, fingers outspread as if to seize or strike
- Priestly garb:** Black and purple robes, with tall head-dresses of soft black velvet with Lord Grugánu's symbol worked upon them in silver



Lord Grugánu is the God of Sorcery. Where Lord Ksáru's interests are in the many uses of power, Lord Grugánu is primarily interested in the acquisition of magical wisdom. He aids His own and Lord Ksáru's followers in their quests for knowledge and power. Lord Grugánu may provide His special devotees with the understanding of magical devices and assist in the creation of Spells.

A fanatical worshipper will be actively involved in magical research, even if they are not personally capable of casting Spells they will be involved in research or support work.

## The Temples of Ksáru and Grugánu

For worshippers of Change, Ksáru is also the God of the Schools, fulfilling the role of teacher. As part of an understanding between the Empire and the Temple of Ksáru, the Temple is allowed to keep its secrets and exercise its power in exchange for educating the followers of Change. His philosophy of secret power is understandable to the average person, however, and His Temple has a role in much of the daily



operations of the Empire. Consequently, many see the Temple of Ksáru as the most involved and approachable of the Dark Trinity. In contrast, His Cohort Lord Grugánu is held in much the same awe and fear as is afforded to Lord Wurú. Only the most highly educated of Change magicians ever plumb this Temple's arcane store of magical knowledge, and the temple is seen as distant and frighteningly powerful.

## Sárku

**Focus:** Survival of the intellect after death, the undead, tombs

**Depiction:** A serpent with five vermiform heads, each with a gaping, suckered maw; a mass of coiling tentacles hangs beneath each head, bearing symbols of the grave — bones, rotted cerements, skulls, and corpse-candles

**Colour:** Brown, though copper and bone-white also figure prominently

**Symbol:** A wavy black or copper line with a red circle at one end

**Priestly garb:** Earth-brown robes, whitened armour (for Priests) or bodices of grave-hued cloth (for Priestesses), and head-dresses with depictions of skulls; clergy also paint their faces with white pigment to look like a grinning skull

Lord Sárku is the God of the Dead, Protector of Tombs, Lord of Worms. To the Tsolyáni, Lord Sárku is a necessary facet of the cycle of Life and Death. Just as Lady Avánthe rules the round of fertility, growth, and living things, so does Lord Sárku take charge of the mortal remains of those who have passed on. Lord Sárku's temple is secretive, and uses the "Tongue of the Lord of Worms" to conceal its important texts.

Fanatical worshippers will aspire to eternal persistence in undeath and all of the undead are creatures of Lord Sárku, which is why they can be controlled by the Priests of Sárku.

## Durritlámish, Cohort of Sárku

**Focus:** The undead, tombs, creatures of the Underworlds

**Depiction:** A rotted corpse seated upon a throne of bone, holding in one hand a bowl from which smoke rises

**Colours:** Purple and brown  
**Symbol:** A stylised bowl from which smoke rises

**Priestly garb:** Brown and purple robes, brown lacquered armour (Priests) or leather bodices (Priestesses), and skull-faced head-dresses; clergy also paint their faces grey to resemble corpses

Lord Durritlámish oversees the care of the Undead and the Necropolises wherein they reside. His Priesthood is often charged with the protection of the Necropolises, and the Tomb Police are often worshippers of Lord Durritlámish.

A fanatical worshipper will wish to ensure that the dead rest in peace and will be relentless in their pursuit of tomb robbers and defilers.

## The Temples of Sárku and Durritlámish

Like the Temple of Belkhánu, Lord Sárku's Temple is one many Tsolyáni never visit while alive. His philosophy (as understood by the common folk) of life-beyond-death is more comprehensible than that of His Stability counterpart, and therefore His Temple is not considered so aloof as Lord Belkhánu's. Following the recent civil war that revolved around the ambitions of Prince Dchich'uné, a fervent worshipper of the God of Worms, opinions regarding this Temple are much more polarised. Since most

Tsolyáni never see — or never knowingly see — any of the Undead Beings that are the focus of Lord Durritlámish, Lord Sárku's Cohort is viewed as much more distant and frightening even than His Patron.

## Dlamélish

**Focus:** Hedonism, the pleasure of the Now, sensuality, certain demon Planes

**Depiction:** Varied — a wanton maiden; an aridáni warrior glorying in the sensual pleasures of carnage; a bestial, obese human female with a head like a monstrous crocodile; others

**Colour:** Emerald green

**Symbol:** A green drop falling into a silver oval

**Priestly garb:** Priestesses wear revealing robes of emerald green, tiaras of silver, and strings of tiny bells around their wrists and ankles; Priests wear various revealing costumes of emerald and silver; clergy are often nude, identifiable only by a large medallion in the shape of the Goddess's symbol

Lady Dlamélish is the Lady of Passion. She seeks the existential reality of the Now, Change as it occurs at every moment, and the pleasures and pains of sense perception. She aids those who seek sensual pleasure and immediate gratification, those who engage in Her orgies and those who are hedonistic, selfish, and uncaring of others.

Fanatical worshippers are hardcore hedonists. Some are gorgeous, and some are quite bizarre: dissolute youths, depraved old men, capering legions of muscular brutes who serve at her orgies, etc.

## Hriháyal, Cohort of Dlamélish

**Focus:** Sexual ecstasy, orgies, debauchery, greed, and avarice

**Description:** A voluptuous dancing maiden holding a curved dagger

**Colours:** Purple and green

**Symbol:** A silver oval with a horizontal green wavy line through it

**Priestly garb:** Priestesses wear diaphanous robes of green and purple, anklets of silver chain, and head-dresses of silver shaped like coiled serpents; Priests wear green and purple robes, tunics, or kilts, with silver head-dresses carved in a variety of fantastic conceits, and bear obscenely-decorated staffs of office

Lady Hriháyal is even more extreme than Lady Dlamélish, seeking the outer limits of experience. She is the Patroness of the Ancient Mysteries (the Unspeakable Acts), as well as of Gambling.

Fanatical worshippers of Lady Hriháyal look to experience the Physical Now in as many ways and as deeply as they can. They are the ultimate extremists.

## The Temples of Dlamélish and Hriháyal

Lady Dlamélish's Temple is very popular, being both comprehensible to most Tsolyáni (many of whom avail themselves of the favours of Her Priesthood at some point in their lives) as well as being very involved in the day-to-day affairs of the Empire. Indeed, Her critics focus as much of their ire upon Her aggressive political endeavours as they do upon Her more hedonistic pursuits. By contrast, Lady Hriháyal is only popular among that portion of the Empire which share Her interests in the extreme sensations, from professional gamblers to those with a preference for sadomasochistic sex.





## Cultural Values

The Tsolyáni think differently from modern Westerners in many ways, some of which are easy to understand, and some of which are not. This section summarises the core values and practices in Tsolyáni culture.

## Noble Action

*“...a man acts ‘ignobly’ when he ignores his own avowed principles, when he abandons his clan or his comrades, when he vacillates or is lazy, and when his deeds are small and niggling.”*

— *Tsémel Qurén hiKétkolel, High Ritual Priest of Lord Ksáru, in his Introduction to the Book of Ebon Bindings*

Khomoyí (noble action) is the core ethical concept in Tsolyáni culture. It is a code of behaviour defining societal norms with the same centrality as “good behaviour” does in modern Western society. To a Tsolyáni, acting “nobly” or “ignobly” is the measure of what is socially expected of a person. While terms such as *lán* (good) or *bussán* (bad) will be used, they are usually phrased in terms of *Khomoyí* — noble action.

## Understanding Noble Action

By behaving nobly, a Tsolyáni hopes and expects to gain the respect and approval of other Tsolyáni. Indeed, it is possible for any free Tsolyáni to gain respect by acting honourably; doing so does not require inherited nobility or “gentle birth” in the aristocratic sense.

The simplest way to think of noble action is to equate it with integrity and authenticity: a Tsolyáni acts nobly when fulfilling his or her social function. True nobility is rooted in knowing one’s station and behaving appropriately. It is noble for a soldier to stand and fight, but it is equally noble for a merchant to avoid conflict.

The concept allows diversity in the belief structure within Tsolyáni society. The Tsolyáni custom of wearing badges for clan, rank, and religious affiliation allows strangers to know what beliefs and loyalties an individual professes and thus judge whether he or she is acting “nobly” in accordance with them.

## What Qualifies as Noble

Some actions are objectively noble or ignoble for anyone. Being loyal to one’s clan and temple, and being protective of one’s family and friends are noble actions for any Tsolyáni. Conversely, killing clan-women (who are legally immune from violence), betraying someone to whom one has sworn loyalty, or having commerce with the inimical races (the *Ssú* and the *Hlüss*) are all ignoble by definition.

Noble action for an individual also differs depending on who the person is and on his or her role in life. For example, *Omél* worships Lord *Thúmis*, the God of Knowledge, who prefers flowers and poetry readings as an offering. His clan-cousin *Tetkóru* is a worshipper of Lord *Vimúhla*, the God of Fire, who demands live human sacrifices. While *Omél* himself may find the very idea of offering a live person to the Flame to be repugnant, he would still consider *Tetkóru* to be acting nobly when *Tetkóru* does it. In fact, if *Tetkóru* came to *Omél* and confessed that he had refused to sacrifice a slave to the Flame, *Omél* would think less of him. Should *Tetkóru* carry it further and publicly denounce the practise, suggesting that Lord *Vimúhla* would be better propitiated with flowers, *Omél* would consider him to be ignoble... even though he is echoing *Omél*’s own beliefs. If *Tetkóru* converts to the worship of *Thúmis*, however, the rules that apply to him will change.

## What Noble Action is Not

A reputation for noble action does not imply that someone is nice or good. People may respect someone’s accomplishments and actions without ever mistaking him or her for a nice person. *Karín Missúum*, the fanatical *Kérdu* of the Legion of Red Devastation, is such an example: he has slaughtered many enemies in battle and sent many prisoners to Lord *Vimúhla*’s sacrificial pyres. Noble for a follower of Lord *Vimúhla*, but not “nice” by any stretch of the definition.

Nobility also does not guarantee legality; a Tsolyáni may honourably kill the man he believes murdered his wife, but must still pay *shámtla* for his actions. People

may be sympathetic, but the dead man’s clan has still lost a resource and must be recompensed (likewise, the clan of the man who murdered the woman must also pay *shámtla* since they have lost a resource too). Noble action brings societal approval, but it does not protect the actor from appropriate retribution — which could be as noble as the original act. Of course, if the man challenged his wife’s murderer to a duel to the death and the murderer accepted, all would be well.

## Honour

Tsolyáni are sensitive to social slights and insults, and touchy about issues of honour. Teasing or joking insults are very rare, unless the parties involved are close friends, of equal status, and in private. In any other situation, even a joking insult is a matter of honour and can lead to the payment of *shámtla* (monetary damages) or even a duel. Any suggestion that a person has behaved ignobly will meet with hostility and, at the least, a demand for an apology. People who accept insults to their honour are ignoble by societal standards and lose social respect by doing so (see the Respect Optional Rule, page 51), unless the insulter is so far above the target in rank that the target can do nothing.

## Religious Tolerance

The Tsolyáni pantheon (called the Pantheon of *Pavár*, after the ancient philosopher who described most of the gods) contains 20 deities, all with their own aims and concepts of noble action. The pantheon falls into two factions: Stability and Change. Despite the potential for strife inherent in the structure of Tsolyáni religion, followers of the 20 deities are tolerant of each other. They may not go out of their way to socialise with each other, but they are usually polite.

## Ecumenicalism

One reason for this tolerance is that many Tsolyáni find different deities useful to them at different times. An *Avánthe*-worshipping craftswoman whose brother is in the legions may pray at the Temple of *Karakán* for his success in battle, and then drop by the Temple of *Dlamélish* to seek aid in an upcoming gambling event on her way back to the clanhouse.

## The Concordat

People who incite or participate in inter-religious violence can be brought before an ecclesiastical court, which can impose terrible penalties. Of course, a cynic might point out that the need for such a law suggests that the veneration of religious tolerance is thinner than many Tsolyáni suppose — but prosecutions under the Concordat are rare.

During the recent civil war, some of the contenders were openly aligned along religious lines, straining the Concordat. Forces in the service of Prince (later Emperor) *Dhich’uné*, for example, attacked those not aligned with Lord *Sárku* but it was this sectarian killing that created the disparate coalition that eventually defeated him.

## Foreign Religions

The Tsolyáni treat the religions of their neighbours in the Five Empires with condescending tolerance, taking the attitude that these foreigners are really worshipping the same deities *Pavár* described, even if they confused the names and attributes. They see some foreign deities as mere aspects of Tsolyáni deities, while others are combinations of two or more. Where the *Livyáni* are concerned, Tsolyáni hope they worship variants of the same deities since the *Livyáni* religion is perhaps the most closely guarded secret in a nation of mysteries.

## The Pariah Deities

The only real religious hatred is reserved for followers of the Pariah Deities — the One Other, the One Who Is, and She Who Must Not Be Named (The Goddess of the Pale Bone) — inimical gods who supposedly seek the destruction of all life in the cosmos. The Tsolyáni Empire has formally outlawed worship of the Pariah Deities, and worshippers are executed when discovered. Adherents of the Pariah Deities have been implicated in numerous plots against the Petal Throne down through the millennia — when short-sighted and ambitious people allow seductive rewards to tempt them, not caring that they contribute toward the eventual annihilation of everything they hold dear.



## Sex and Gender

Two factors are relevant here: first, the presence of effective herbal contraception (women can chew the *lisútl* root); second, the extended kinship structure, which makes biological fatherhood less relevant and strengthens the position of women in the clanhouse. Tsolyáni consider sexual preference simply a lifestyle choice. Given the Tsolyáni mania for classification, however, they cannot resist using sexual preference as another way to classify people and one's stated sexual preference can decide nobility of one's actions. Having declared oneself homosexual, for example, it would be inappropriate to have sexual relations with someone of the opposite sex just to have biological children.

Unlike men, women have two lifestyle choices in Tsolyánu. Their default status is that of clan-woman, but instead they can declare themselves "aridáni", or independent. The majority of Tsolyáni women stay clan-women, but aridáni women comprise 15-20% of the female population.

### Clan Women

A clan-woman receives complete economic support from her clan and is not a legal entity (she cannot make or be the subject of a legal action). Any legal action or *shámfta* demand involving her must be directed against the clan instead. She cannot be challenged to a duel (it would be grossly ignoble to threaten a clan woman) or enter a profession. In return, she must marry whom the clan wishes and work for the clan as it dictates. She also does not have a man's legal rights to enter into contracts, own property, etc. In the south of Tsolyánu, clan-women have little direct authority; in the north, they run the clanhouses and property is inherited through the mother, giving clanswomen real social power in ways that are very different from that of external male society.

### Aridáni Women

To enter any profession other than clan employment, a woman must be aridáni. Declaring aridáni status is a serious step, because it can ruin the clan's plans for one's future (aridáni, for example, can break off previously arranged marriages). The process of declaration is simple: a woman simply states before witnesses at the Palace of the Realm that she has become aridáni and receives a document stating so. This grants the woman the same legal rights as a man. This includes the right to marry multiple spouses. In the matrilineal north, an aridáni winds up with more rights than a male, because she retains her preferential inheritance rights and contacts inside the clanhouse.

An aridáni woman is legally completely equivalent to a male clan member, with all the same rights and obligations. She will also find that more traditional men will be uninterested in marrying her. Many women consider it a fair trade.

## Family Life

Family life in Tsolyánu focuses on the extended family of the clanhouse. An average Tsolyáni has several mothers and fathers, a dozen or more siblings, and innumerable clan-cousins, not to mention uncles, aunts, and grandparents. The Tsolyáni system of kinship and communal orientation ensures that few are ever without family.

### Marriage

To the Tsolyáni, marriage is primarily a social and legal contract between families, lineages, or clans; considerations of romantic love come a distant second. Clan elders arrange most first marriages, with children betrothed before they are five years old. Aridáni women, and men who are willing to incur the displeasure of their clan elders, can break their first betrothals. Spouses don't have to get along, because in the communal atmosphere of the clanhouse, they can spend much of their lives at a distance. Player characters without the Younger Defect should probably be married; it is embarrassing to be single at age 30 (unless one is homosexual, since there is no pressure to produce children for the clan).

Multiple marriages are common. A man or aridáni can marry as many people, of either sex, as he or she likes. Those people can, in turn, marry others, making bonds within a clanhouse complicated. Marital relationships are largely irrelevant to

people outside them, though, since exclusivity and marital fidelity are not expected in Tsolyáni culture. Clan-women are an exception: a clan-woman may marry only one person and is expected to be faithful to that person.

Usually, one's first marriage is across lineages within the clan (and prearranged), but subsequent ones are arranged with the spouses' involvement. They may even be love matches, if the person has already done their part for political allegiances or the intended spouse is also politically valuable. Marriages across clans are also possible. Ending a marriage, if necessary, is easy — though one must repay any bride-price or dowry.

### Kinship

Biological parentage is not very important to the Tsolyáni. The sisters of one's genetic mother, as well as the wives of her brothers, are also one's "mothers." Similarly, the brothers of one's genetic father and the husbands of his sisters are also "fathers." All of these people's children are "brothers" and "sisters." At the next level out, the mother's brothers and father's sisters' husbands are "uncles," and the father's sisters and mother's brothers' wives are "aunts." The children of those people are "cousins."

Consequently, one is likely to have a number of fathers and mothers, a slew of sisters and brothers (some of whom are not even blood relatives), and a horde of cousins. It is common to refer to fellow clan members of similar age as "clan-cousins" on general principles; they probably are anyway.

### Children

Children are usually raised by their mothers and fathers, or at least by a subset of them. In the south, they are part of the father's clan and lineage; in the north, they are part of the mother's. There are exceptions to this; in particular, when one of the spouses is of a higher clan they are raised as members of the higher clan if both clans agree. They usually live in the corresponding clanhouse.

## Group Over Individual

Individualism is not a cultural value of the Tsolyáni. What matters most is not who a person is, but rather the clan and lineage to which he or she belongs, followed by temple, legion, or governmental affiliation (if any). The dictates of noble action reflect this, rewarding those who authentically represent the interests of the groups to which they belong. Only in unusual cases can a person's individual identity outweigh that of their affiliations. This is reflected by how the Tsolyáni gauge differences in social status (see Social Status, page 192).

## Clothing

Tsolyáni wear a dazzling variety of costumes, ranging from nudity accented merely by jewellery to elaborate, hot, and heavy robes and headdresses for ceremonial occasions. Most of the time, clothing is present but light; the weather is very hot and the culture has no nudity taboos. Specifics vary from region to region (the people of the North wear a bit more clothing, while Jakalláni favour near-nudity), from class to class, and from individual to individual.

### Slaves and the Lowest Clanmembers

Both sexes usually go naked, or wear a loincloth. Valued slaves of high clans may wear more, or may wear loincloths of expensive cloth and perhaps jewellery.

### Peasants and Low-Standing Artisans

People of this status often go naked, but may wear a leather apron for protection and sometimes a coarse shawl to block the sun. For special occasions, male peasants will wear a kilt of *firyra*-cloth, dyed and ornamented with colours symbolising clan and religion, and either a short vest of cloth or leather (in the South) or an over-tunic with elbow-length sleeves (in the North). Women wear a knee- or ankle-length skirt of white or pastel-hued fabric, with the upper body bare except for beads, necklaces, and perhaps a stiff *chlén*-hide collar. Both sexes wear their hair cut in bangs straight across the forehead; men keep it shoulder-length, while women grow it longer. Headgear varies by region — headcloths and cloth fillets (Central), wide-brimmed straw hats (Eastern), *chlén*-hide skullcaps (Northern), cowls and turbans (Western



and Southern), and basket caps with a cloth coif to protect the neck (Chákas and Kúrt Hills). Poorer folk go barefoot while richer peasants wear sandals of straw, wood, or chlén-hide, and the richest wear footgear of leather, buskins, shoes tied with thongs, or calf-high boots.

## Urban Lower Classes

Much like peasants, though they have access to a wider range of fabrics and dyes.

## Merchants, Artisans, Minor Bureaucrats, etc

Men wear a pleated knee-length kilt of thin firyá-cloth, dyed or left white, and bordered with clan colours and religious insignia. A tabard of stiffened chlén-hide hangs down from the belt in front to just below the knees, and is ornamented with small plaques of carved chlén-hide, bone, precious metals, beadwork, etc. The torso may be left bare, or covered with a sleeveless vest or tunic with symbols of rank and station. Sandals, a light mantle, and a fillet or headdress of lacquered chlén-hide complete the costume. Women dress similarly, but the kilt reaches the lower calf and is slit up the sides for freedom of movement. The upper body may again be bare, or partially concealed beneath a collar of beads, inlay, intaglio work, or lacquered chlén-hide sewn with gold and silver thread and hung with small gems. In the East, around Fasiltum and Sokátis, women prefer a long loincloth with the ends hanging down in the front and back to produce a sort of open-sided skirt, along with a loose blouse or cape with slits for the wearer's arms.

## Upper Classes

Formal costumes vary according to the dictates of fashion. Men wear layered kilts of brocade, silky güdrú-cloth, or other fabrics, cut in dags, panels, and innumerable fantastic patterns, either in brilliant white or in symbolic colours. Collars of lacquered chlén-hide extend out from the shoulders in up-curving wings and points. Tabards of rich materials, belts of carved plaques, pectorals of gems, armlets, bracelets, torcs, earrings, greave-like calf ornaments, sandals or boots of embossed and begemmed vringálu-hide may all be popular depending on the location, the season, and current trends. Headdresses vary too, from a simple headband to tall confections of light chlén-hide, plumes, and precious metals. Mantles and capes of transparent thésun-gauze are worn outside during the day, while thicker fabrics are preferred for evening wear. Women wear the standard costume of their region, but with finer materials and more attention paid to design. Shirts, kilts, and mantles are of the finest güdrú cloth or thésun-gauze. Gilded and lacquered sandals are popular (though no high heels). Jewellery is usually heavy and ornate; bracelets of gold filigree reaching from wrist to elbow, rings, collars, dainty gauntlets of silver chain ending in begemmed thimbles which fit over the fingers, pendants, tiaras, little jewelled cups for the nipples, armlets of gold (often with sheaths for miniature knives), earrings (some so massive they have to be supported by a chain fastened in the hair), tiny gemstone nose studs ... the options are endless. Eyes are lengthened and darkened with tsúnure, lips reddened with cosmetics, cheeks touched with copper-red aunú pollen, and shoulders and breasts sprinkled with glittering renudé (a talc-like mineral) or gold dust.

When attending some formal parties and audiences with important officials, upper-class Tsolyáni are required to dress in special costumes established by millennia of tradition. There are twenty-four of these "Forms" available, with the importance of the event dictating which one is appropriate (the 24th is reserved for Imperial coronations). Upper-class Tsolyáni wear low to moderate-level Forms regularly, and need the higher Forms a couple times a year or more depending on their career or social life. High or Very High clanmembers can identify what Form a person is wearing instantly; while a certain amount of customisation is permissible (the Style Skill helps), the basics are traditional.

## Food, Drink, and Drugs

Dining customs vary from place to place and from class to class. Slaves are given only bread and water (or dná-porridge and chumétl) in the morning and a more extensive supper at night, while the upper classes may eat as many as six small meals spaced throughout the day. Dinner, served just after sunset, is the most important

meal in Tsolyánu. It is usually served in a communal dining room in one's clanhouse, barracks, or temple. There are no public restaurants, since one wouldn't want to risk eating with people of different social status, but it is possible to send out for food from a professional food preparation clan. If one is forced to use a public hostel, the chef comes to one's room and prepares the food there.

Diners in Tsolyánu sit cross-legged on mats (stacked according to status) and eat from individual plates. Serving dishes are either set in the centre of the group on low tables, or offered to each person in order of status by slaves, servants, or the older children of the clan. The Tsolyáni eat with their fingers, using a bit of bread to grasp morsels of food and wipe the plate. One scoops up rice, porridge, and grain-like dishes with the fingers — but only of the right hand — and it is considered indelicate to let grease touch anything beyond the first two finger joints. Soups and sauces are eaten from bowls with a spoon made of pottery, glass, wood, or metal, and diners are provided with fingerbowls and small towels after the meal.

Drinking is also done only with one's peers, in the privacy of one's clanhouse, temple or legion quarters, at a friend's place, or somewhere similar. There are no taverns in Tsolyánu, though the winemakers' clans will rent out rooms and suites for special occasions (food, gambling, and other entertainment are also available for a fee). Lower-class hostels do have public drinking rooms, but these are frequented by slaves, servants, criminals, itinerant adventurers, and other low people with no status to lose.

As for what the Tsolyáni eat and drink, the Empire is huge, and traditional dishes vary from region to region. For example, the cooks of Jakálla are renowned for their delightful combinations of seafood and hot spices, enhanced with perfumed "essences," but in Penóm people eat a rather disconcerting collection of soups, all flavoured with local swamp products. Up the Mssúma River, Usenánu is the home of griggésa, spicy fried meat patties wrapped in flatbread, and in the northwest, the cooks of Mrelú serve rich thick stews of meat and vegetables.

## Social Status

The Tsolyáni are status-obsessed. The Tsolyáni language has 33 words for "you," depending on who is being addressed and who is doing the addressing. Failing to treat someone with the proper respect can get a person fined or killed.

Fortunately, Tsolyáni are also fond of visual indicators of status: clan badges, rank badges, and badges of office are commonplace; even badges indicating one's religion are frequent. A Jakállan nobleman relaxing in the heat in his loincloth will likely still have his Sea Blue Clan badge pinned to it, even if he is not wearing any other jewellery. If uncertain they can always fall back on the pronoun for persons of unknown status, wait for cues, and hope they were not expected to know who the person is.

## The Status Pyramid

Tsolyáni society is rigidly stratified. With very few exceptions, a person stays at the status he or she was born with, advancing or descending only within a narrow band.

A person's status is primarily based on his or her clan. The clans are listed within each category in a rough approximation of their rank, but relative rankings within a category are subject to debate, and can vary from region to region. For example, the Vriddi outrank the other Very High Clans in Fasiltum, where their influence is strongest, but come after the Clan of Sea Blue and the Golden Sunburst Clan in any other major city.

## Foreigners

The Tsolyáni are extremely loyal to their clan but extremely intolerant of outsiders and especially people who look different. The Tsolyáni "type" is pretty homogenous — tan to dark brown skin, black hair, dark brown eyes, short by modern Western standards — and any variation from it draws some prejudice. In particular, people with blue eyes (a recessive trait that turns up occasionally) are shunned as "cursed by Avánthe;" parents may even kill babies with such traits. People with foreign looks, like the hirsute and curly-haired Salarvyáni or the immensely tall N'lüss, are already looked down on as foreign.



## Noble Titles

The Tsolyáni Empire recognises several noble titles, but they are hereditary relics of the Bednálljan and Engsvanyáli empires, and new ones are rarely awarded now. In fact, many titles are actually derived from Bednálljan and Engsvanyáli ranks that used to carry specific authority and responsibilities, but mean nothing today. The most common titles are *Arsékmekoi* (usually rendered “baron”), *Hehéllukoi* (“count”), *Páchukoi* (“lord”) and *Mringukoi* (“high lord”). Noble titles confer no inherent authority or wealth, though they do bestow social precedence, and may come with hereditary estates.

Middle and lower clan members almost never hold titles, while the Very High clans include many title-holders, each tied by tradition, family, etc., to clan land holdings. A clan title remains not only within a lineage but with a specific family within that ancestry. In the north, titles descend through the female line, so a woman’s husband holds the title only as long as she lives or the marriage lasts; in the south, they pass from father to son. The children of someone with a title (or a woman who can pass a title along) are “noble” whether they inherit or not.

## Aristocrats and Numbers

Tsolyáni culture considers it ignoble for a person of high status to display knowledge of specific numbers: how long it takes to get somewhere, how much something costs, how big something is, how many slaves one has. A trip across *Jakállá* might take “a few seconds” if the speaker feels good about doing it, or “days and days” if they’re dreading the journey. Some high-clan people really don’t know the specifics; others must in order to do their jobs but are behaving as they’re expected to. This attitude becomes more prevalent the farther one gets up the social pyramid, but starts in the higher-status and higher-wealth reaches of the High clans. This extends to purchases; a member of *Sea Blue* who wants to buy something may have the seller come by and show it off, but will have servants arrange the actual purchase and never see the bill. If they exceed what they have available, their clan will likely cover it anyway without them ever knowing.

## Social Situations

The Tsolyáni prefer to clearly represent status visually. Offices in public buildings, and some clan function spaces, have permanent daises on which people sit according to their status — the higher the status, the higher the dais. Even at casual dinners, guests are seated on daises made of stacked mats. At formal functions, clan major-domos spend hours determining who sits where, and pondering minor gradations in standing so they avoid unintentionally offending anyone. Seating someone lower than they “should” be can be a deliberate tactic, intended to give offence or lower the target’s status in the eyes of others. The game, when played by experts, can be extremely complex and have high stakes.

The basics, however, are simple: in social situations, a person’s relative status is that of their clan and lineage. One has higher status than people of lower clans, and lower status than people of higher clans. Within the clan, status depends on one’s lineage.

In a more formal situation where fine distinctions are important, other factors can come into play. High rank or personal reputation can move a character up or down within his or her clan status, though never across clan lines. A character with significant rank or political power may earn invitations to parties and gatherings to which someone of his or her clan level would not normally be invited (but will still sit on a lower dais than guests from higher clans). How much rank or political power is needed depends on the circumstances; a *Kási* (captain) may be impressive in a small village faced with bandit attacks, but not in *Mighty Jakállá*.

## What Status Means

Status affects the dais on which a person sits, the pronoun used to address someone, and how deferential one needs to be. It does not necessarily mean that a person of lower status has to obey orders from a person of higher status. It may be a good idea, especially if the higher-status person can hurt or help them, but it is not a requirement.

Within a hierarchy — the military, the Priesthoods, or the government — rank takes precedence over status. A *Heréksa* (lieutenant) from the *Clan of Sea Blue*, the

highest of the Very High clans, would have to take orders from a *Kási* (captain) who is a member of the *Red Star Clan*, a Medium clan, and the *Kási* would be seated higher at the legion mess or a legion party. If both officers attended a social event not affiliated with the military, however, they would be seated by clan rank instead.

A character acting in an official capacity does not have to take orders from someone of higher status unless the person also ranks them in the same official hierarchy. It is best to refuse politely and deferentially, however.

## Changing Status

Changing one’s personal status dramatically is rare and difficult. A person who is thrown out of his or her clan immediately winds up at the bottom of the heap as a homeless *Nakomé* (clanless person) with no legal rights. Accomplishing that isn’t easy, though, since clans prefer to reform wayward members rather than kick them out. Most are far more likely to pack the miscreant off to a remote rural clanhouse where they can only offend the livestock. Another way to go downward in status is to do something so bad that one is enslaved — an occasional punishment of the Imperial or Ecclesiastical courts for serious offences.

Going upward is even harder. Many foreigners come to *Tsolyánu* hoping to buy their way into a clan and attain citizenship; few succeed. The two best routes are joining a lower-status legion that recruits foreigners and impressing one’s superiors, or working for a lower clan and eventually becoming so valuable that they offer to sell a membership. Once one has bought into a clan, his or her children and descendants are automatically members.

A person who is already a member of a clan can sometimes buy his or her way into a higher one. This may require Imperial backing, and is expensive, but it occasionally happens. There are limits: most Very High clans wouldn’t consider it absent an Imperial command or strong push from an influential member of the clan, and the *Tlakotáni* are forever closed. It would also mean abandoning one’s current clan, which would be unthinkable for most *Tsolyáni*.

## The Law in Tsolyánu

The *Tsolyáni* Empire is an orderly society with a strong central government, but pressure to obey the laws and social norms comes mainly from one’s clan. Law enforcement therefore tends to be harsh and punitive, more concerned with keeping the peace than finding justice.

## Law Enforcement

A village will have a *Headman* plus a few deputies drafted into temporary service. A small town may get 10 troops under a *Tirrikámu* (sergeant) that also cover some of the surrounding countryside. A city could have thousands of professional police organised and equipped like a medium infantry Legion. Although the police of a provincial capitol may have the same rank structure as the regular military, they are seldom as respected or as tough.

## Celebrated Cases and Civil Offences

Very few things are actually criminal offences in *Tsolyánu*. Theft, assault, and even murder are civil matters where the victim (or the victim’s clan) has the right to obtain damages (*shámmtla*) from the offender. If the two parties can’t settle the matter privately (if the injured party refuses *shámmtla*), then they can take it to the *Civil Courts*. The decision of the Judge in a court is final. The usual penalty is a fine, plus enforced payment of *shámmtla*. More serious cases, such as violent crimes and crimes against the Imperium, can result in harsh punishments: long or even indefinite imprisonment, slavery in the mines or galleys. Various brutal forms of execution can be imposed by a Judge as well. The most common punishment for any crime against the Imperium is *impalement* (called the “high ride”; every great city in *Tsolyánu* has a boulevard lined with impaling stakes). Both sides often offer “inducements” to the judge to affect the outcome.



If an accused person flees or dies before sentence is imposed, the person's family, clan, or even friends may be punished in his or her place. This is done in order of closeness of relationship, first spouses, then children, then siblings, then friends. This is intended to keep a criminal's relatives and friends from aiding in an escape. If the criminal is later caught, he or she still gets the full punishment.

The victim of a civil offence (assault, robbery, murder, kidnapping, etc.) can therefore demand shámntla (blood money), sue the offender in the Civil Courts, or challenge the offender to a duel. If none of those options are viable, they can sometimes go to the Assassin Clans. The Imperium itself never accepts shámntla; barring back-channel negotiation, the state will ask for the harshest punishments against those who dare to offend against the Emperor.

## Blood Money

Shámntla is a payment from the offender to the victim — blood money. The amount varies depending on the offence and the victim's status.

**Table 9-1: The Cost of Murder**

Status of Victim	Payment Required
Very Low Status Clan	100 káitars
Low Status Clan	500-1000 káitars
Medium Status Clan	2000-10,000 káitars
High Status Clan	5,000-20,000 káitars
Aristocrat	30,000-100,000 káitars

Foreigners and clanless people won't get much shámntla unless they have influence and prestige. Injuries are paid at a lower rate than murder depending on their severity.

For property damage, the amount ranges from the value of the property to 20 times its worth. Matters about intangibles — insults, slander, breaches of contract, infringement on clan prerogatives — are more vague. A low-status person insulted by a high-status one will receive nothing, while a nobleman might have to pay a peer from 1,000 to 20,000 káitars depending on the insult and the circumstances. Truth is not a defence to slander, incidentally.

Shámntla is used only for acts of deliberate injury (tangible or intangible) or for intentional omissions that lead directly to harm. True accidents, even resulting from

carelessness, do not give cause to demand shámntla. Imperial officials are immune to demands for shámntla for acts taken in the course of their duty.

A shámntla payment is considered the final settlement of a dispute; it mitigates any loss of respect from the offence, and it is ignoble to pursue the matter further.

## Duelling

### Living and Dying under the Manifesto

The rules of duelling are defined in the Manifesto of Noble Deliverance, which dates back to the time of the Dragon Warriors. No-one can be forced to fight but it would be ignoble for someone who presents themselves as a warrior to refuse a duel, unless the challenge was itself dishonourable. Attempting to challenge someone of much higher status is dishonourable, as is challenging someone of clearly inferior ability. It is possible to find a champion to represent you in the duel if you cannot do so yourself.

The Manifesto is a strict duelling code and impromptu fights in the street or even private premises usually do not meet its requirements and therefore do not receive its protection. Killing someone properly under the Manifesto can bring great honour whereas an impulsive fight on the street is just murder. To receive the legal protection and social sanction of the Manifesto the parties must negotiate the time and place of the duel in advance and limits (first blood, incapacitation, surrender, death) must be set. Going beyond the agreed limits (even accidentally) is dishonourable and a crime. A duel must be refereed and publicly witnessed (the Hirilákte arenas are commonly used for this in between the main features); and the outcome must be reported to the authorities. Above all, a duel must be a fair fight, which means that numbers on each side and levels of equipment must be equal. Therefore, the Manifesto does not allow a rich duellist to "cheat" by having better arms and armour than their opponent.

A duel is considered a final settlement of the dispute, unless one party cheated or carried the combat beyond its agreed-upon limit. Breaking the Manifesto is an Imperial Crime and the courts tend to treat "cheats" harshly. Breaking the Manifesto also guarantees a loss of respect and a bad reputation. In any fight under the Manifesto there is a convention that the loser must ransom themselves. The noble (and expected) course of action is for the winner to immediately set a reasonable sum, if the winner refuses, they may be challenged by the loser's seconds, clan relatives, friends, or even the referee. Rates vary depending on the seriousness of the dispute and the combatants' status, roughly 100-500 káitars for a commoner, 600-1,000 for an



experienced soldier or lower-circle Priest, 2,000-20,000 for a military officer or higher-circle Priest, and 5,000-50,000 káitars for an aristocrat. If the loser was fighting on behalf of someone else, they are still the one who has to be ransomed. The winner may keep everything the loser was carrying at the start of the fight, so a successful regular duellist can amass a small fortune in second-hand armour and weaponry as well as from the redemption value of their opponents.

## Clan, Lineage, and Family

The three basic levels of Tsolyáni social organisation, in order of size and importance, are clan, lineage, and family. The most deadly insult in Tsolyánu is to call someone Nakomé, or “clanless.” Without clan, one is nothing. A Tsolyáni’s place in society is dictated by these three affiliations, with minor variance based on the individual’s personal reputation, career, and rank.

### The Clan

The most important social affiliation a Tsolyáni has is his or her clan. There are approximately 500 major clans and 1,000 minor ones in Tsolyánu, with the distinction between major and minor based upon how widespread a clan is and how much resources it controls. Most clans were founded millennia ago during Engsvanyáli times, though a few claim to date back even further; some were founded relatively recently. Clans may specialise in an occupation or group of related occupations, may be devoted to a deity or group of deities, or may be completely eclectic.

### Clan Organisation

The basic unit of organisation within a clan is the individual clanhouse, of which there is only one in a given city or town. Some of the bigger clans have a stead in every decent-sized settlement in the Empire and even a few foreign cities, while others are regional with few or no branches outside the home area. The minor ones are even more localised. Above the individual clanhouses is the overarching structure of the clan itself, though the houses are so dispersed that little transpires across the entire organisation beyond transfers of resources and general guidance on political matters. Once every ten years or so, a clan’s senior clanmasters meet at their main house to discuss matters in more detail, but some of the smaller houses probably have not sent a representative in centuries.

Most administration, therefore, occurs at the clanhouse level. Clanhouses have a flatter hierarchy than most Tsolyáni organisations, with a council of Elders determining policy and appointing people to manage day to day activities; the clanmaster who oversees the daily routines acts as the house’s manager. The relative balance of power between these positions varies from clan to clan, as do the other offices within each, such as master-at-arms (responsible for security as well as weapons training), senior craftspeople, quartermaster, treasurer, etc.

### Client Clans

Higher-status clans have long-standing relationships with lower-status “client” clans. The lower clans provide goods, services, and labour, while the higher ones provide wealth, and lend their political influence when needed. Client relationships vary regionally; higher clans tend to ally with lower clans situated nearby in the city or town, and with those sharing the same general religious orientation. The most visible expression of the relationship is at festival time, when the higher clans pay for parties for their lower-status clients, but subtle assistance passes in both directions regularly.

### Lineage

Most clans have anywhere from a dozen to several hundred lineages, named extended bloodlines derived by tradition from some ancient and heroic ancestor. Not all of the lineages will be present within a given clanhouse, of course. Lineages vary in prestige, and membership determines a person’s status within the clan. Lineages are often associated in the minds of fellow clanmembers with certain aptitudes and

activities. One lineage may provide the clan’s leaders, another hot-headed warriors, and yet another studious scholars. Titles and lands are also often inherited within lineages.

Some lineages carry across clans, since there has been intermarriage down through the centuries. At the upper end of society, the same ancestral names appear again and again across clan lines. Knowing someone’s lineage is Chaishyáni, for example, is a fair assurance they are from a Very High clan, but not which one. People from two different groups with the same lineage name can claim a degree of kinship, though it only goes so far. At the lower end of society, people without an ancestral name sometimes adopt one just because it sounds good. A Low clan person who claims kinship with a High clan person based on having the same lineage name will meet with scepticism, if not outright indignation.

The vast majority of Tsolyáni use their lineage name after their personal name, with the prefix “hi-” (of) preceding it. Thus, Mikúsa of Nášomai lineage and Jade Diadem Clan becomes “Mikúsa hiNášomai of Jade Diadem Clan.” Variations exist, naturally. Slaves and many members of lower clans have no lineages, being simply “Mottán of Wicker Image Clan,” or “Oyúti the Cart Driver of Turning Wheel.” At the other end of the social spectrum, members of the Tlakotáni, Vriddi, and Íto Clans do not have separate lineage names, so they use their clan name as their lineage name (for example, Tákodai hiVriddi). Tlakotáni who are close to the Imperial line often omit the “hi-,” thus the current Emperor’s name before he took the throne was Prince Mirusiya Tlakotáni. To complicate things further, people from the Isle of Vrá use the prefix “vu-” instead of “hi-.” There are still other variants, but these are the major ones.

### Family

The lowest level of Tsolyáni social organisation is the family; there may be anywhere from one to hundreds of families within a single lineage. Most Tsolyáni feel even stronger responsibility to their family than to their clan or lineage as a whole. Family is a less well-defined division than clan or lineage: it is a group of related Tsolyáni who share their income and expenses, and includes parents, children, as well as grandparents, etc. It is usually associated with a specific lineage, although members may be of different ancestry within the clan or from different clans entirely. As with lineages, some families are wealthier than others. In high-clan houses, families may have separate apartments or clusters of rooms.

### Méshqu Plaques

Since they tend to live in close proximity to each other, and not everyone has doors, the Tsolyáni have developed Méshqu plaques to indicate to potential visitors what their mental state is and whether they wish to be disturbed. They are small plaques made of chlén-hide, wood, or precious metals, and hung on or beside one’s doorway to indicate one’s current mood. The basic ones are common across the Empire and the social spectrum, but aristocrats may have more extended sets that draw finer distinctions, and some may be regional. They’ve even given rise to a metaphor: “his face is like a Méshqu plaque” means that the subject is only capable of expressing a single emotion or idea.

## Lifestyle by Clan Social Status

The following sections outline the roles of the different clan levels.

### Life in a Low Clan

The low clans — varied, colourful, and vital to the Empire — are the foundation of the Tsolyáni social pyramid. Members of the lower clans are present in all aspects of Tsolyáni life, providing basic services, performing labour, and supporting the complex edifice of society. The low clans are like the Sákbe roads — people walk all over them, but they could not manage without them.

Education is uncommon among members of lower clans; most are illiterate. A temple school will occasionally accept a lower clan child because of a favour owed



to the family or because a political contact opens the way, or because the child is extremely talented. Generally, though, the closest even a brilliant child of the Wicker Image Clan will get to being an official is sweeping the official's floor.

## A Day in the Life in a Low Clan

*We're six days out of Siis, should be nine more before we hit Chéne Ho. I'm a Shálu out of Chéne Hó, given name is Oyúti which you can call me seeing as we're sharing a campfire together. I'm the driver of that fine chlén-cart you can see over there. A bit stuck here until the wheelwright from the village gets my new wheel rim fitted. Trust me, you don't want to try running a chlén cart with a full load and a busted wheel rim. We don't go fast but once a wheel starts to go it's gone and a good driver knows that, so here we are.*

*I got no Clan around here so I'm just sitting out on this Sákbe road platform until he's finished fixing the wheel. It'll take four of us to lift it on, so your help is much appreciated. Not from around here are you? Well one thing about carrying loads along the Sákbe, you get to meet all sorts. Talk to them too, chlén carts aren't too fast so we get plenty of time to talk to folks along the way.*

*My chlén is a female, big and reliable, just like me you might say! She'll haul a cart the size of a small barn across the whole Empire if need be. But she won't do it fast; my old grandmother could outrun her and granny's been dead for ten years! That's an old chlén driver's joke by the way, I'm a Hríháyal worshipper, actually not Sárku. So no offence and you just calm yourself and have a cup of chumétl with me. I take it Chákan style, with enough spice so the spoon stands up by itself. I carry all the makings in the cart, got enough food for a month as well. Best to be prepared when you run off the Sákbe like I do. Yes I always carry the chlén-prod, the old girl just takes a gentle tap to get going but I mainly carry it off the cart in case any of the boys on the road get over-excited at seeing a pretty young thing like myself. I've been aridáni since I was sixteen, a working girl but don't let the Hríháyal sigil give you no ideas. I've got a man back in Chéne Ho and haven't seen many to match him and I've been all the way from Khirgár to Páya Gupá. He was promised to me back when we were twelve and we were married when he was just sixteen. I always wanted a big wedding, me, and I'm saving up to make the next one really special. Three husbands is best, one for family, one for money, and another just for fun, as my mother used to say.*

*I wear the symbol of Lord Qón on my kilt as well, a good Temple-bought Talisman for the protection of travellers such as myself. Always do my annual offering to his Lordship, just in case I run into trouble out on the road. Of course it's never happened yet, the road guards keep the Sákbe safe and things seem fairly quiet nowadays, not so many soldiers running around. Still I have Besh to guard me. Besh is my dog, a good carters dog to stand watch for me when we sleep out on some lonely back road. Sometimes I can't get to a clanhouse or even a road platform before nightfall and on occasion have to sleep on the back of the cart. Of course, anything big enough to break into a chlén cart. Fortunately, most things don't like fire and I keep a box of embers ready through the night. Sometimes Besh barks at something in the night, maybe he hears something out in the forest, maybe he just wants some attention. I'm from a long line of carters and we know better than to get off the cart to go and look to see what it is. Don't know and don't care, I leave that sort of thing to the Temple of Thúmis, may they be blessed with warm hearts and firm thighs! Besh is fast asleep in the back of the cart now of course but he's been good company for me when I'm months from home.*

*Me? I was raised in Chéne Ho, a great city, a wet one but a good one. Hardly ever stops raining in Chéne Ho or so it seems, for four months of the year its rain all day, all night. The tears of Avánthe they call it. don't know what Herself is crying about but we've got great drains I can tell you! Got a cousin who works keeping the drains open, you would not believe what gets washed down into those things. Not just rubbish, but coins, sometimes jewellery. Once he says he found a human leg jammed up against the gratings. Maybe he did, maybe there are stranger things down there. Of course mainly it's slaves that do the work, but they need good Clan folk to keep an eye on them, make sure the work gets done. Can't have the city flooded out now can we? That would be like living in Penóm!*

*No offence, I got a cousin that married a boy from Penóm. Nice boy, odd blue mark on his face, but very nice and arms like tree trunks. Field worker, mainly fruit picking he does, but willing to turn his hand to anything really. Hands like shovels, that boy has. But there's me going on about Clan again. Still if you can't talk about your Clan then who can you talk about that's what I always say!*

## Money and Work

Most people from the lower clans are poor compared to those from higher status clans. A few are considerably wealthier than average, but this financial power does not elevate their social position. The Clan of the Collar of Bronze, for example, earns significant money trading in slaves so many of its members are extremely rich, but this does not make them any less despised for their low status and ignoble profession.

Noble action for someone of low or very clan is usually farm labour. Many of them are used to a level of physical work that would kill most higher-clan people, and have stamina developed under the most arduous conditions and intemperate climates. In many rural communities, this hardiness is a basis for respect.

Low clan people are as proud as any other Tsolyáni. The poorest, lowest clans would rightly treat any suggestion that they were no better than slaves — accurate, so far as material standard of living goes — as a grievous insult. If anything, the similarities in quality of life at the lower end of the social spectrum make the difference between free and slave all the more important. Having clan membership gives one pride, history, and a place in society; it makes it possible to behave nobly, whereas a slave has no capacity for noble action.

## Low Clans in the Legions

The traditional peasant qualities of immense physical hardiness and low expectation of comfort are major advantages in the military. The better legions will not accept a lower-clan person unless the applicant is truly exceptional, but the middle- and lower-status legions receive a steady flow of such applicants and can select from among a pool of highly motivated and dedicated people. These peasants will probably never become senior officers — they lack political connections — but they may win glory and gold if they are tough enough.

Some legions specialise in low clan recruits. The Legion of the Inverted Hand (27th Imperial Light Infantry) is a legion of scouts and skirmishers, which means that they earn substantial field experience but little glory. Inverted Hand legionaries are out in advance of the Tsolyáni army, looking and listening, hitting and running, while the Heavy Infantry are still back at base camp polishing their armour. The Marine Legion of Tlanéno the Steersman also welcomes the stronger sons of the lower clans. Tsolyáni marines on smaller ships must sail and row their vessels as well as fight from them — in the military, only the larger ships have the excess capacity to carry specialised sailors or slave rowers — so immense physical strength can always win a place. A skilled legionary who is too tired from rowing to lift a blade is useless, so the chlén-like hardiness of the peasant is valuable.

The legions' logistical support also depends upon the lower clans. The long tail of chlén carts which follows any Tsolyáni military venture requires hundreds of professional cart drivers, but it also requires wheelwrights and fitters to maintain the carts, and packers and handlers to load them properly. These jobs are unglamorous, but vital.

At the bottom of the social scale are a few legions even low clanmembers would be uncomfortable joining. For example, the Legion of Chulín the Foreigner is made up of solid and professional, but undeniably foreign, mercenaries with a smattering of criminals and killers who find having a uniform conducive to their activities. Most low clan people consider themselves above such scum, but some see such institutions as an opportunity.

## Low Clans in the Priesthoods

Religion brings all levels of society together in faith, and the temples provide opportunities even for the lower orders. Education remains a barrier, but not an insurmountable one. Harsán, in *Man of Gold*, for example, was a clanless but bright child who was raised in a monastery of Thúmis, Lord of Wisdom.

Some lower clan people find a place in the temple guard. They may not be well suited to the rituals or books of their more educated brethren, but they can protect the temples at which they worship. Service as a temple guard is neither as glorious nor as well paid as the legions, but it provides a foothold in the professions for those who lack the status for anything better.



# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE



## CHAPTER 9: LIFE IN TSOLYÁNU



## Low Clans in the Bureaucracy

The Imperial government is difficult to enter for the lower end of society, thanks to the poor level of literacy in the lower clans, but some find employment at the bottom end of the government as guards for offices and courtrooms. The very rare success stories are well aware of their uniqueness and protect their positions ruthlessly, though they will assist fellow clanmembers when possible.

## Domestic Life in the Low Clans

Lower status clanhouses are seldom as impressive as those of their higher-born cousins, and they are more chaotic because they also contain the clan's workshops and places of business. The walls of a Turning Wheel clanhouse permanently retain the pungent scent of chlén-beast, and their stables in high summer are ... overwhelming. A clanhouse of the Artificers of Iron is as much a smithy as it is a home — its domestic life punctuated by the clang of hammer on metal, the smell of wood smoke, and the shouting of the metalworkers.

Everyone sleeps in a relatively small number of large dormitories. Lineage and family may organise these, but nobody (except possibly the clanmaster) has a single room, although clanhouses may maintain single guestrooms.

Communal living brings low-status Tsolyáni together in a way that is absent in the higher clans. Someone in a low clan is never alone for long. Their relatives are sometimes irritating, sometimes comforting, but always there — snoring in the dormitory, standing in line for the bathhouse, or eating in the dining hall. Clanmembers can recognise each other by their footsteps in the dormitory at night, by the way they clear their throat before speaking, and by their silhouette against the morning sun. This sort of closeness goes beyond mere loyalty; people in these clans see their clanmates as being almost part of themselves, and this defines the clan's culture.

## Clan Resources

A clan provides for the material needs of its members. Communal ownership is one of the major advantages of living in such tightly knit communities. Expensive items, which few low clan individuals could afford on their own, might be available on loan from the clan, though precisely what is available obviously depends on the history and nature of the clan concerned.

*Ánkodai, a member of the Scarlet Mantle Clan, for example, suddenly realises he needs a sword and shield since his life recently became more complicated than usual. Rather than impoverishing himself by purchasing the items from an armourers' clan, he asks his clanmaster if such equipment is available in the armoury. Since Ánkodai has always been a good member, the clanmaster listens with sympathy and indicates he can borrow the weapons and pick up a helmet and breastplate as well. Ánkodai leaves his clanhouse better prepared and no poorer. The breastplate pinches, and the helmet is too big, but they'll do the job.*

## Recreation

Work defines the life of a low clan person and is often not of that person's choosing. Thus, recreation is particularly important, and low-clan folks know how to have a good time. Sex, drink, and music form the backbone of a good night for most of the lower classes, although not necessarily in that order. The famously sensuous rhythms of Jakállan popular music are peasant rhythms with their roots in the villagers' folk dances.

Amongst themselves, and especially within the clan, the lower orders are relatively informal, which can make for some wild party nights when compared to the rather fancy entertainment of higher-status Tsolyánu. Spending an evening with the lower clans can be more fun than the social manoeuvring characterising the refined dinner parties of the aristocracy. Clanmembers and guests can actually relax in each other's presence.

Although life in the lowest clans is a dull grind of hard labour, it also has moments of great colour, excitement, and simple satisfactions.

## Low Clan Lineages

Members of Low and Very Low clans usually do not have lineage names, though they do have lineages for purposes of the High-Lineage Attribute and Low-Lineage

Defect. Members who have lineage names are likely to be at the upper end of a clan's hierarchy.

## Low Clan Social Group Relations

Tsolyáni determine a person's social level by looking at them, and adjust their behaviour accordingly. If you are playing a low clan person, here are some survival tips on how to behave around different groups.

### Slaves

Slaves are someone else's livestock, which gives them more security than that afforded to foreigners, and sometimes more than you have. They are owned by people who may become angry if you hurt them.

### Nakomé and Foreign Scum

Despise all foreigners for their wilful strangeness. You can ignore or bully poorer expatriates safely since they do not belong to anyone. You can even kill some foreigners without consequences (they have no clans to avenge them or seek shámtda on their behalf), but avoid wealthy ones who may have important Tsolyáni friends or connections.

### The Same Status

You can be at ease and informal with clan cousins and members of allied clans, but be more careful with people you do not know.

### Medium Clan

They are often touchy, so be polite or expect a bad reaction. Control your temper around them, or matters may escalate out of control. The shámtda for killing a Medium clan person is more money than you will see in a lifetime.

### High Clan

Keep your mouth shut. If asked a question, consider your answers carefully. They often mistake this for stupidity, but it is safer to be thought stupid than insolent. Keep conversations as polite and as short as possible. Be worried if they seem friendly, because that is a bad sign.

### Very High Clan and Above

Try to avoid the attention of such people. They can have you killed for imperceptible slights (like breathing too much or wearing a clashing colour). It is safest to grovel and back away slowly.

## Life in a Medium Clan

The Medium clans are the backbone of the Empire. A Medium clan person can potentially be familiar with a much larger social range than either the aristocrat (who must safeguard his or her reputation) or the peasant (who has little opportunity for such upscale contact). This great asset makes these clans the natural and often literal middle men and women for Tsolyáni society.

This is not to say that Medium clan people have a particularly easy life; theirs is a position of some opportunity but much responsibility. The majority of Medium clan people are hard-working folk who do their best with their businesses and lands. They are the middle-class farmers and merchants, the skilled craftspeople and bureaucrats who form the functional core of the Tsolyáni system.

## A Day in the Life in a Medium Clan

*Is this your first human sacrifice? It is mine too — exciting isn't it! I just can't wait for them to get started, couldn't sleep last night thinking about the big event. I know I'm just here to help hold a leg or something, until they get him properly tied down, but it's really quite something to actually be here, almost as high as the Seal of the Imperium, as it were. I mean we've all attended these things, but I was usually somewhere near the back with a big pillar blocking my view of the good bits. Now as lay assistants we get to actually be right there with the High Priest and everything. I suppose we all feel totally humbled by the generosity of the Temple in bestowing this honour on us. People like us seldom get to the front rank at major rituals but I suppose all of us here are being honoured for something or other, right?*



*Me? I'm Mórusai hiKoródu, just a third circle lay-Priest like you, but my day job is in the Imperial Government. I'm only here because I got into a little bit of business up north which I was able to resolve in the best interests of the Empire and the Temple. You know how it is always a pleasure to do well by doing good. The opportunity to take part in this ritual is the Temple's way of saying thanks for my efforts.*

*It all came together for me because of my father's sword. My mother was only married to one man at the time and he died before I was sixteen. Anyway I travel a lot, mainly just administrative leg-work for the Palace of the Realm, but I always carry father's old shortsword amongst my papers. You know how it is; it reminds me of him, of long happy days of him battering me on the training yard, kicking me when I was down and generally knocking some backbone into me. So although I can use it, I wouldn't normally expect to have to. Obviously as a bureaucrat I would call on the authorities if I knew there was trouble ahead, get a squad of soldiers or police or something. Of course, you don't always know when trouble is coming and it's not like I can carry some great broadsword or a shield around with me. That would just look ridiculous with my formal robes. Let me tell you, with knees like mine dignity is no easy thing. But father's shortsword fits easily enough into my bag of papers and when I'm settling down for the night, it is good to think of his old blade still guarding the Emperor's business while I sleep.*

*Anyway, when things were shall we call it "difficult" last year? I was helping doing the audit. Civil war or no civil war, the numbers have to add up and a fair few people are happy to take advantage if you let them. I'm a copyist for the legal department, certifying accounts, payroll, and such like. Which is generally about as exciting as it sounds, I get the file documents from the Legion quartermaster and copy them out into an acceptable form for by the Imperium. You just wouldn't believe the standard of calligraphy some of those quartermasters try to fob you off with. More than my job's worth to bring back papers in that condition, hardly an embellishment on any of them and only one type of ink throughout. Shocking I call it, even if there is a war on.*

*So I was helping one of our Temple-backed Legions get its requisitions in order, an army marching on its bread ration and all that, when I noticed up some problems. There was payroll for a cohort that we hadn't actually had for some time. A lot of men who didn't exist were having wages paid somewhere up the line. So I tell the Molkár, polite as I can, and he takes it very calm. Didn't think anything more, not my place to think or say further. But that night when I'm settling down on my bedmat something rushes at me from the darkness and belts me across the side of the head, sudden-like. Next thing I know, I'm flat on my back looking up at an impending doom which is shaped rather like a burly man with a big club. Often wondered what an impending doom looked like and now I know — it's ugly and smells of rice beer. Well it all gets a bit nasty but I find my hand in my bag and there, as if it was waiting for me, was that old shortsword. Now hitting an unsuspecting man is one thing, but hitting a Koródu and not killing him instantly is something you're going to regret, especially when he's got his father's sword to hand. So we have at it and I'm just about left standing, although I was fair covered in blood, mostly his. I look down and see that my attacker was the officer in charge of the scribes who were preparing the payroll. As I was feeling a bit unwell by that point it was fortunate that the noise had roused the camp, so I then fell over.*

*Funny thing was, the Molkár I had talked to accidentally fell off a cliff the next day. Very sad as I'm sure he would have been very eager to sort out the problem. But with that junior officer gone they just impaled a few scribes and left it at that. Sometimes the only honourable approach is to understand the big picture rather than picking away at the detail. Everyone was very happy with the outcome, problem solved and no loose ends. No need for further investigations of course, so the Legion could get on with its job and I headed back to town. Like I say, it's nice to be part of the solution sometimes. I attended the Molkár's funeral of course, as he was completely exonerated by my report and his clan were kind to me, very kind. Yes, the Molkár's brother does happen to be the head of rituals here, do you know him? No, he's not really a friend but I've always found him very helpful.*

*Oh good! It looks like they're ready for us, let's go!*

## Work and Money

The Medium clans are diverse and offer a multitude of clan occupations, their sheer range reflecting the wide opportunities available to them. Medium clans are high enough to have resources but low enough to willingly sully their hands. Many

Medium-clan Tsolyáni are skilled artisans (such as the Red Eye of Dawn Clan, the best jewellers in the Empire), traders (such as Black Hood Clan), or livestock breeders (such as the Clan of the Red Sky). Others have more specialised businesses, such as the Golden Lintel Clan, money-lenders who keep all aspects of the business, from security to accounting, within their organisation. There is often considerable pressure for a child to follow his or her parents into their business, whether it suits the child or not. Personal preference matters less than tradition.

## Medium Clans in the Legions

Middle clan members have a wide range of possible legion careers, though access to specific legions depends upon religious affiliation, clan membership, or the oddities of tradition. Some legions are funded by specific temples and offer preference to their more devout worshippers. The Battalions of the Seal of the Worm (6th medium infantry), for example, recruit fanatical worshippers of Lord Sárku. An applicant for the Cohorts of Chegárra (12th medium infantry), on the other hand, does not have to worship The Hero King, but had best get along with Chegárra worshippers well because they'll be serving with a lot of them.

Other legions recruit regionally, and a few affiliate with a single clan. The Legion of the Standing Stone, for example, is a unit of slingers based around the clan of the same name. Legionaries may not be Standing Stone members, but they must be friendly with that clan to be acceptable.

Medium clanmembers often decide what legion to join based on tradition. For example, if one's grandfather and father served in the Legion of the Crystalline Peak, one is likely to do the same. The practical advantage of doing this is that recruits wind up serving with clan cousins who can help them adapt to military life and advance their careers.

## Medium Clans in the Priesthood

In addition to offering religious services, each temple also maintains great estates, regulates investments, and organises its large staff. Educated people skilled in negotiation and etiquette are necessary to smooth the way at all stages.

Groups of clan cousins who were in temple school together often move into the Priesthood simultaneously and serve together in the same temple, offering each other mutual support and advice. These kin groups not only help each other, but also offer a hand up to their clan's next generation, perpetuating their clan's presence in the hierarchy down through the centuries. With family backing and a few friends in the right places, a Medium-clan person can be sure he or she will enjoy promotion up to a certain level. Some see these people as smug time-servers who clog up the lower reaches of the hierarchy, relying on clannish support rather than actual competence for advancement. This is not entirely fair, but enough fit the mould to perpetuate the stereotype.

## Medium Clans in the Bureaucracy

The Medium clans fill many of the low- to mid-ranking posts in the government. They have the resources to educate their children, and they want to have clanmembers inside the government. These connections make the clan's dealings with the government more pleasant for all concerned. The Medium clans understand the importance of access, not necessarily to the higher-ups in Avanthár who decide policy, but to the local bureaucrats who implement it. The opportunity to serve is, of course, rewarding for the bureaucrat as well.

## Domestic Life in the Medium Clans

The Medium clans tend to live in large multi-floor houses. In a big city, a clanhouse at this social level can have over a hundred rooms — plenty of space for residential wings, common areas, and sections devoted to clan business (such as storerooms and workshops). Reception chambers for visitors are normally at the front near the main doors facing the street, while private apartments are in the back, overlooking the courtyard and outbuildings. The courtyard is the stage for much of the clan's domestic life. Children play underfoot, while clan-women hang laundry to dry and the clan-elders gather together to play dénden.

Any good clanhouse has a large communal dining room capable of holding all of its members plus a sizeable number of guests. This huge common area is a focal point for clan life since it is one of the few rooms that can hold everyone at the same time. It will normally have dais mats in place, forming a series of low terraces segregating the clan's different social levels.



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CHAPTER 9: LIFE IN TSOLYÁNU



Most Medium clans have elaborate internal social structures, with poor relations, wealthy uncles, and some social jockeying, especially when a low status family earns more money than a higher status one. Not only can personal wealth vary within the clan, but education and even religion, which is often linked to lineage, can vary greatly. In spite of these differences, come morning and at the end of the day, all clan cousins gather in the dining hall to break bread together.

Two places in the dining hall are always kept clear during mealtimes. The first is the very lowest level of the hall, which is kept for low-status visitors and pets. The second is the highest level of the hall, which is reserved, on a symbolic level, for the Emperor who stands above all clans.

## Clan Resources

The communal wealth of a Medium clan can be considerable, and gaining access to it usually involves politics. The authority to grant admittance to storerooms and armouries is generally a political or hereditary appointment within the clan.

At this level, sources of investment and useful contacts are more beneficial than a mere blade. A Medium-clan person who needs a sword might use clan contacts with the Clan of the Broken Reed, and hire both the sword and someone who knows how to use it. Also, a Medium clan will often have potential investors looking for profitable ventures. If a group of clan cousins wants to run a caravan to Khirgár, or charter a ship to trade with Háida Pakála, they had best be nice to their clan elders who can provide both resources and advice.

A good reputation within the clan is more important than gold. The development of a clan line of credit can be a major route to wealth and success if used wisely. With gold one can buy a ship, but with the favour of the clan one might borrow three. It is important to take good care of borrowed items. Many people have died in defence of clan property rather than face the humiliation of explaining for the rest of their lives how they lost twenty-three chlén-carts to bandits in the Chákan forests.

## Recreation

Life in the Medium clans is not all work. From the weekly spectacle of the Hirilákte arena where gladiators fight to the death, to a quiet game of dénden with friends in the clanhouse, there are recreations for every type of person and for every occasion. Social events usually take place either in someone's clanhouse or in the rented rooms of a winemaker's clan (their clanhouses have specific rooms for entertaining guests). People with the money and desire can visit the Temples of Dlamélish or Hriháyal, which provide discerning clients with more esoteric delights. Few Medium clan people can afford to pursue that habit regularly, but it is perfect for special events and celebrations.

## Medium Clan Social Group Relations

Medium clan people balance precariously between the lowest and the highest of the Tsolyáni social system, so etiquette is more complex than for someone at the bottom (who must show deference to everyone) or at the top (who can treat most people as lesser). If you are playing a Medium clan person, here are some hints on how you should behave with the different groups.

### Slaves

Slaves are property. Your clan likely owns a few, probably low domestic slaves to help around the clanhouse. You don't have much to do with them.

### Nakomé and Foreign Scum

Had a bad day? Take it out on a foreigner! A person of your position has little patience with such people. Beware of the rich-looking ones, though, since they may have influential Tsolyáni friends.

### Very Low and Low Clan

You work with them in the businesses your clan manages, but never fraternise with them. They are your social inferiors.

## The Same Status

Middle class life is regulated and dignified, so be polite and courteous and don't rock the boat. Within the clan, you can be more relaxed (though still polite).

### High Clan

Your boss is probably high clan. Show respect, and always back them against the lower orders.

### Very High Clan

Be very polite and careful in your speech. Status makes right, so the higher the clan the more right they must be — even when they are wrong.

## Life in the High Clans

In Tsolyánu, the high clans occupy the pinnacles of power, prestige, and authority — and for the most part take that responsibility seriously. Many claim legacies dating back millennia, before the founding of the Second Imperium, before the time of the Priest-kings of Éngsvan hla Gánga, even before the time of the Fisherman Kings of the Bednálljan dynasties. Some have lineages supposedly descended from heroes of the legendary Battle of Dórmoron Plain, as recorded in the epic *Lament to the Wheel of Black*. The weight of history is strong.

It is from these clans that the Empire draws administrators, the temples call forth hierophants and prelates, and the legions recruit worthy officers and generals. Certain clans have filled specific roles for countless generations, and guard such prerogatives jealously. The Vriddi Clan, for example, are the traditional rulers of Fasíltum, the City of Chiming Skulls; their right of rule dates from before the Second Imperium's formation. Similarly, the Clan of Sea Blue traces its ancestry back to the Fisherman Kings, and would — if permitted — re-establish its rulership over the south of Tsolyánu.

The children of high clans receive intensive training for their future responsibilities. Education in the minutiae of social life and proper behaviour — such as the meaning of each of the 24 Forms of Dress for formal events — begins practically at birth and continues throughout life. Students also learn history and a variety of other subjects in the temple schools, in most cases including reading, writing, and some arithmetic. They may also dabble in the arts. Depending on the student's talent, he or she might study more abstruse academic subjects, including magic.

## A Day in the Life in a High Clan

*Please come in. No, no, you are not interrupting me at all. Arjón, chuméll for our guest! And see if there are any pastries and sherbets to be had. You are from our clanhouse in Khirgár, aren't you? La! Such a distance you have travelled! I have been as far as Bëy Sü, to see the festivities when Prince Mirusiya ascended the Petal Throne, and as marvellous as it was, I should be happy to never spend another night on the Sákbe Road again. Myself? Oh, I am Misa hiChaishyáni, a 7th Circle Scholar Priestess and Sorceress of Avánthe. I was at my temple when you arrived, but I heard about you from my cousin Ngáya.*

*Ngáya is also a recent arrival in Jakála, but I was born here. I declared myself aridáni and broke off my childhood betrothal when I was fourteen because my then-betrothed is a strict man, who prefers his wives to keep themselves occupied in the clanhouse. How can one become a sorceress while being a good clan-girl? And since even a reasonable man is not likely to want his new wife disappearing into a temple for six months to a year as an Acolyte, I decided that it would be far easier for me to enter the Priesthood first, then marry. I have decided that once I reach 11th Circle, I shall consent to marry. I have been saving for the proper inducements to present to my temple superiors, so it shouldn't be too much longer. In the meantime, I keep my eyes open for likely candidates.*

*The heat? Yes, the heat is awful. We Jakalláni hide indoors during the summer afternoons. In the evenings, we visit the rooftop gardens and look out over the city, sparkling with the light of myriad lanterns.*



Later this week, we must go shopping for a wardrobe. Your clothes may be the height of fashion in Khirgár, but in Jakállá the styles are different, and it simply won't do to make the wrong impression. For tomorrow night — you have been told of the party at Sea Blue, yes? — the clan can loan you the appropriate dress form. I could, if you should like, cast a small Spell that would enhance your already attractive looks. It is truly no trouble for me. I am a strong believer in looking better than one's best. And there'll be many important people to impress: Mnëlla hiViridu of Sea Blue, a woman with odd but useful contacts. Tlashêl hiQolyëlmú of Golden Sunburst, a rising star in my own temple; the Governor of Jakállá; Sirel hiTikku, the clanmaster of Sea Blue. If you enjoy watching gladiators in the arena, I will have my brother introduce you to him. Of late, Prince Rereshqála has been spending more time at Avanthár, but we will likely see his niece Shekkára hiTlakotáni as she has a lover who is a Sea Blue clansman. Well, she has many lovers, but there are rumours that she may actually marry this one.

I can tell you think I am rather social for a scholar-Priestess. Some scholars hole themselves up in their libraries, preferring their dusty volumes to living people, but I know the value of a good contact. Shekkára, whom I met through Ngáya, introduced me to Barëka hiShanyál, the museum curator at Prince Rereshqála's palace, and through him I have met and befriended Mirsán hiSsánkorel, the Prince's librarian. I have high hopes of being allowed to visit the Prince's library. He's said to have a particular rare Lhyáni text that I would very much like to read.

The book I was reading when you found me? Oh, it's Mi'ra hiVeshúma's Great Wizards of Antiquity, wherein he discusses the legends from the Time of No Kings. You can find it at any good book-copyist. If you have an academic interest in the Time of No Kings, I can put you in contact with some of my fellow scholars at the Temple of Avánthe who are known experts on that period. Those over there are Engsvanyáli picture books. Arjón, fetch me the third volume on my bookshelf. Look here, you press your finger against the picture like this and — La! Sit down. It is Engsvanyáli magic. These are scenes from history, and when you touch the picture just so, it springs to life, like a window to the past. This one shows the trial of the Priestkings during the Summer Solstice celebrations. How magnificent it was! And this one shows the Fall of Gánga. I wouldn't touch that one; it has a tendency to — oh dear — suck people into the scene. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN YOU HEAR ME, BUT JUST TRY TO STAY SAFE AND THE BOOK WILL RETURN YOU EVENTUALLY. IF YOU'RE LUCKY, YOU'LL BE BACK BEFORE TOMORROW'S PARTY. WHAT A FABULOUS STORY YOU'LL HAVE! I'LL LEAVE THE BOOK OPEN HERE AND HAVE ARJÓN KEEP WATCH FOR YOU!

## Wealth vs. Social Position

Membership in a high clan does not automatically bring a life of luxury, though it helps. While the poorest Very High clanmember lives better than the vast majority of low clan people, they still are relatively poor and unable to afford the luxuries one might expect at their status. There are even members of the Tlakotáni Clan who are farmers on the broad plains to the west of Bëy Sü. Though not rich, they are accorded all due deference as members of the highest clan of the Imperium. "Even the poorest member of an ancient and highly regarded clan is garbed in dignity and nobility," according to the *Pandects of Yahéshu Sarêl*, the Engsvanyáli guide to ethical behaviour.

## Work and Money

Every high clan has a vast array of clanhouses, estates, plantations, enterprises, and other holdings. All need administration, and the clans prefer to draw managers from within their own ranks. The day to day duties often get delegated to medium-clan administrators, but ultimately the responsibility of supervision falls to a clanmember. Duties may range from ensuring that the harvest is brought in successfully on a plantation bordering the Ranánga River, to protecting the clan's interests in distant Shényu, to participating in a clanhouse's administration in a major city like Tumissa — managing slaves, workers from lesser clans, and junior members of one's own clan. This is necessary and proper work as well as good training for younger clanmembers.

Careers involving hard menial labour or those considered ignoble, such as slave trading, are simply inappropriate for High or Very High clanmembers. A member of a high clan can be only indirectly involved with such activity. Even suggesting that an aristocrat enter into an unsuitable profession is an insult.

## High Clans in the Legions

High and Very High clans have varying relationships with the legions. Some have little connection to the military, while others have a general military bent, and some few sponsor specific legions. The Sweet Singers of Nakomé clan sponsors the legion of the same name. The clan providing patronage supplies most of the senior officers for these legions, as well as many of the legionaries (who may also come from friendly and client clans). Sometimes individual aristocrats will sponsor a legion, such as The Legion of Heretlëkka of Sokátis, or the Legion of Lord Káikama of Bëy Sü. Such units recruit from the clan and faith of their sponsor first and turn to others second. If they have historical ties to a particular legion, tradition dictates that clanmembers entering the military join that legion — not an absolute requirement, but a strong expectation.

Enlisting in the military does not ensure a quick rise to the top, even for high-status legionaries. Qualified officers already fill the best billets in active legions, others are waiting for promotion, and the number of potential posts decreases as one increases in rank.

## High Clans in the Priesthoods

Much of what has been said about careers in the Empire's government also applies to professions in various Priesthoods with the addition that different clans have different religious affiliations, and the bonds between a clan and a temple, or group of temples, are often strong. The "Golden" clans (Golden Bough, Golden Sunburst) are found mostly in Temples of Stability, while the "Red" clans in the western Empire (Red Sword, Red Stone, etc.) often serve Lord Vimúhla. The Vriddi clan of Fasiltum is also renowned for its service to Vimúhla, while the Íto Clan of the Chákas serves the dread Lord Sárku.

This close clan-temple affiliation does not guarantee that a clanmember who joins the appropriate temple will become a High Priest, but it does mean that there are other clanmembers in the temple hierarchy, ready to assist in the long, slow climb up the ladder. The high councils of the temple reflect the religious preferences of the clans. For example, the Clan of Jade Diadem is well represented in the highest circles of the temples of Dlamélish and Hriháyal while the Temples of Karakán and Chegárra are filled with members of the Blade Raised High Clan.

## High Clans in the Bureaucracy

The high clans provide the government's administrators and upper management, since the backing of a wealthy and powerful clan is necessary to attain these positions. It is to the glory of the Imperium that they provide viable candidates for the administration of the Palace of the Realm and other governmental positions, even governorships (some of these positions are hereditary). To perform well in these roles, high-status administrators must navigate the political waters carefully, making decisions and recognising how and when to depend on the vital services of the lesser folk who serve under them.

## Domestic Life in the High Clans

The clanhouses of high clans range from sprawling complexes with hundreds of rooms in large cities to major plantations with a multitude of outbuildings in rural areas. Some lineages, and even some clanmembers, have palaces and mansions of their own.

A clanhouse in a large city has an entranceway guarded by clan guards (usually drawn from among younger, martially-oriented clanmembers) and staffed by chamberlains who greet the multitude of visitors. This area may have several chambers and usually opens into a courtyard. These courtyards are one of several places where the clan displays its wealth and status (the amazing stained glass courtyard roof of the Clan of Sea Blue in Sokátis is a prime example). Arrayed around the courtyard are a variety of chambers and outbuildings.

The never-ending social functions that are a hallmark of life at the top all require space, and the clanhouse has rooms to host a number of concurrent activities ranging from small meetings to large receptions, from planned conferences to spontaneous gatherings. The dining hall is the nexus of this, providing space for the clanmembers



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and for formal parties or large gatherings that may last from late afternoon into evening, or several days beyond. Available space dictates how many functions can occur simultaneously. In Khirgár, for example, clanhouse space is at a premium because of the concentric ring-wall construction of the city itself, while in the southern cities, clanhouses seem to extend forever (which may be more true than one thinks, given connections to the Underworlds, nexus points, and the like). Slaves, servants, and managers — everyone from palanquin-bearers to scullery-maids to butlers, attendants, scribes, etc. — also require space, if even just a sleeping mat.

The back of the clanhouse holds family and individual apartments, arranged by status within the hierarchy, as well as space for guests and other honoured visitors. Apartments range from one or two rooms to elaborate suites for entire families.

Underneath all of this is an extensive complex of storerooms, temporary dwellings for servants from other clans, slave quarters, and basement chambers. Highly placed clans have materials and possessions matching their antiquity, and all of it must be stored somewhere. Thus, the basement areas of their clanhouses often descend several levels or more underground — sometimes merging with the Underworld deep underneath Tsolyánu's cities.

## Clan Resources

High clans have considerable resources at their disposal: individual items, buildings, lands, business enterprises, and capital. Members may access these resources depending on their status, and their prior performance and service to the clan. If a young warrior wants armour for an adventure into the Underworld, for example, the clan could loan the requested items. They might also loan an older, experienced guard to accompany the young bravo as well as a bearer-slave or two. The clan will usually not give portable items of great value, such as metal armour, weapons, or magical devices to members outright. They are loans, and woe betide the clanmember who does not return them.

If a clanmember wants access to something larger, such as a ship and crew or a particular landholding, he or she makes an application to the clanmaster. Such requests require time for proper consideration, and the petitioning clanmember needs to plan accordingly. The clan might accede to the request and might also assign other duties as terms of the loan. In the case of a business enterprise, the clan may well make funds and resources available, but will want some return on their investments. Finally, should a clanmember come into wealth or resources, he or she is expected to share this new-found affluence with family and clan — to do otherwise is selfish and ignoble.

## Recreation

In the everyday life of upper clanfolk, work and recreation often merge. There are parties and social events requiring different forms of dress, holidays commemorating important historical clan events, and temple rituals to attend. The opportunities are rich and varied, and limited only by the imagination of those involved and how indulgent the clanmaster feels. With their wealth and large clanhouses, the high born can host their own events without going to the winemaking clanhouses.

## High Clan Lineages

Certain clans, the Vriddi and Íto and the Tlakotáni — two Very High clans and the Imperial Clan, respectively — use their clan name as their lineage name. There are, however, still differences in social standing within the clan. Clanmembers are acutely aware of those differences even if they are not reflected in their names.

## High Clan Social Group Relations

High clan members are at the pinnacle of Tsolyáni society. If you are playing a high-ranking clan person, here are some hints on behaving around different groups.

### Slaves

Slaves are useful property, to be directed as needed. If they do not perform appropriately, you can re-assign them, sell them, donate them to a temple as a sacrifice, or simply kill them.

## Nakomé and Foreign Scum

Foreigners fall into two categories: those without standing (and thus no better than servants), and those with standing (and thus worthy of your nobility and honour). Needless to say, the former far outnumber the latter. Clanless people are non-persons.

### Very Low and Low clans

They do the work that you would never consider doing. You have members of Medium clans to manage them for you. You would never speak directly to them if you can avoid it.

### Medium clans

They work for you, often under your immediate direction. They are important servants, since they manage the myriad details with which you should not be bothered. A few are worthy of further recognition, but you still deal with them at arms' length as is proper.

### The Same Status

Show all due respect and nobility to fellow high-status people, aware of the precise social status differences that exist. With members of your clan or related clans, you can be a bit more relaxed. With members of more distant or opposing clans, you are proper, formal and always polite, without being overly deferential.

### Aristocracy and the Imperial Clan

It is honourable and appropriate to show one's obeisance to higher authority, particularly the Imperium. Act nobly, observe all proprieties, and remember to use appropriate etiquette as you were taught. Avoid disagreements and conflict unless there is no other way to resolve a situation.

## Life in the Imperial Clan — Tlakotáni

Everything said about the High and Very High clans holds true for the Tlakotáni as well. The main difference is that Tlakotáni are always aware that they are members of the Imperial clan, and thus have status and responsibilities beyond those held by the levels below them. Often, this is merely symbolic; for example, all Tlakotáni receive a proclamation from Avanthár when they come of age, with a gold impression of the Seal of the Imperium on it, even the ones who are impoverished farmers on the central plains. Tlakotáni from the large urban clanhouses, though, are actually well-connected and will have some very influential clan relatives. Those clanhouses are also likely to be smaller than the ones of, say, Sea Blue and Golden Sunburst, because the Tlakotáni are simply less numerous.

## The Assassins' Clans

On Tékumel members of the Assassins' Clans do not work with outsiders, and apart from the Clans' representatives are never identified as members of the Clans in public. They operate under restrictive rules on specific missions, disguise themselves when outside their own clanhouses, and are never "lent" to other organisations, though they can be hired for specific jobs as described below. Consequently, they would not make good player characters unless all of the other characters were also assassins and the campaign was based around that. GMs may, of course, handle them however they like in their own versions of Tékumel.

Assassination has a special place in Tsolyáni culture. It is not part of the judicial process, but is accepted as a form of ultimate appeal when all other attempts at legal remedy have failed. Custom and law define legitimate targets for assassination and create important exclusion criteria:

Only members of the traditional assassins' clans (The Black 'Y' Society, The Association of the Relievers from Life, or the Clan of Whispered Fear) have the right to practise the profession.

There must be no threat to the state, its operation, or its laws (the criminal use of assassination might lead to the execution of Assassin clan elders by the Imperium).



There must be a specific target and a specific grievance that can be resolved by assassination. The client may not always know the name of the target but they will have to explain why if they do not.

The issue must not be resolvable by shámtla, duelling, or civil law. Assassination must be the last resort when all other attempts at remedy have failed.

An Assassin must not steal or spy. Theft would dishonour the clan of a professional assassin.

An Assassin may only act in a noble cause. They should not take “grudge” cases or become tools in a vendetta between clans. Assassins have an important social role and must act nobly.

Assassins have the right to kill, injure, and destroy property during an assassination but they have no legal recourse if they themselves are injured during one of their operations. An assassin who is discovered and killed by the guards of their target can have no complaint. Assassins behave nobly when they provide justice to those who have been wronged.

*Example: An ignoble man tried to cheat his sister (a clan woman) of her rightful inheritance. She would have been both humiliated and impoverished without the intervention of an honourable assassin. A Priest had his career destroyed by the lies of a cruel superior in the hierarchy. Legal action was impossible, but the assassin provided justice if not recompense.*

Every large city in Tsolyánu will have an assassins’ clanhouse. The would-be client enters a small cubicle and discusses their problem with a senior clan member through a privacy screen. If the assassins’ believe the client and the cause is noble then a service is suggested and a price given. The clan do not guarantee that the mission will be a success but they do warrant that those sent will persist until either they are dead or the mission is complete.

Assassination is expensive. A simple killing may cost 1000 káitars for a person of low or medium clan and the permanent removal of a noble could cost 100,000 káitars.

The Assassins’ clans are subject to rigorous oversight by the Imperium in the form of the espionage branch of the Omnipotent Azure Legion, but sometimes “mistakes” are made. Although such “mistakes” are rare they are made more likely by very large sums of money and political expediency. The Assassins’ Clans tend to be affiliated to the Dark Trinity (Hrúü, Ksárul, Sárku) Temples but are also known to support the Temples of Karakán and Chegárra. Assassins’ clans are famously insular and do not marry “out”, so they are inbred and dedicated to their social role. Clan elders are often quite socially active and are the public face of the assassins’ clans.

Training for life as an assassin begins early (before the age of 8) and is extremely rigorous. Only a small percentage of the clan ever graduate to becoming actual assassins’, the rest of the clan work in supporting roles (armourers, teachers, etc). The specifics of training will vary considerably from clanhouse to clanhouse due to personal preferences and the weight of tradition in that clanhouse. No two assassins will have exactly the same skills and equipment, though there will be common themes are found (they are all trained in stealth, dagger, etc.); conventional weapons (swords, daggers, bows, etc) training is supplemented with more exotic weapons and skills.

The Assassins Clans do not fit neatly into the Tsolyáni clan hierarchy. Treat members as High Clan for social purposes (those who are publicly known as members, anyway), and Middle Clan for wealth. If a character needs equipment to perform an assignment, more resources are available; double the character’s Resource Point value for purposes of deciding what the clan will provide and under what terms.

## The Priesthoods

The Temples wield tremendous indirect and direct political influence. Joining the Priesthoods is an honourable path to learning, influence, and often wealth. For members of the lower and middle clans, it is the only way someone of a scholarly bent can gain an education. Tsolyáni of any background who wish to learn the secrets of sorcery have little choice but to become Priests, because the Temples hold a near-monopoly on magic. In addition to the material and intellectual benefits of joining the Priesthoods, one also gains the satisfaction of knowing one is serving one’s Deity honourably and well.

## Training for the Priesthoods

Students can enter the Priesthood as young as six years of age, or as old as thirteen. Lower-clan students are usually given to the Temple at younger ages in order to improve their prospects, while Higher-clan students complete their temple school coursework while still living in the clanhouse, and enter the Temple as acolytes once they have committed themselves to a career in the Priesthood.

Life for the youngest acolytes is often hard. The youngest are overseen by the next older and so on in a pecking order usually determined by the natural leaders and more responsible children within the dormitories. The very youngest are given simple maintenance tasks around the temple to teach them discipline and responsibility: pulling the cords that wave the fans suspended from the ceilings, carrying messages up and down the steep twisting staircases, and clearing the tables of the refectory after meals (one of the most sought-after jobs, affording the opportunity to nibble on the leftovers). As the acolytes grow older, their responsibilities increase, and higher-clan acolytes begin to join their ranks. Older youths oversee the younger at their tasks. Those with good calligraphy work as scribes, seated cross-legged for hours in a corner of a Priest’s or Priestess’s chamber in the event that a writ is needed. Others carry trays to the chambers of Priests or Priestesses who choose not to visit the refectory for their meals. As they grow older and prepare for their tests for the First Circle, they are given more study time and less chores. In many cases, studies and chores are combined: a promising student might work in a temple library, attending the scholarly Priests, and beginning the never-ending task of learning where everything is kept. At this point, disappointing students are given clues as to their inadequacies: when the temple relegates an older acolyte to overseeing the laundry or carrying messages, it is suggesting that he or she should consider another career. The temple dismisses the most disappointing, but gives the marginal ones a chance to either try harder or exit gracefully.

Most Priests raised as temple acolytes look back upon their childhoods as a kind of blessed servitude. Although they griped and groaned in the privacy of the temple dormitories, they usually see their time as acolytes as a golden era of companionship and mild mischief.

## Careers in a Temple

After a new Priest or Priestess attains the First Circle, he or she has about a year to decide which branch of the Priesthood to enter: administrative, ritual, scholarly, temple guard, or lay-Priest. Each has different responsibilities and provides different opportunities. Changing branches during one’s career is rare, though possible. Most commonly, people switch from being in a more active role in one of the other branches to being a lay-Priest to pursue personal interests, have more freedom of action, etc. The door between the lay Priesthood and the others tends to be one-way, however, so that is not a decision to make lightly.

A Priest’s clan status shapes his or her responsibilities. High-clan clergy of the first circle become involved in the rituals sooner than their lower-clan comrades, even if only holding aloft the holy books to be read by the ritual Priests, or singing in the antiphonal choirs. Lower-clan Priests labour in the libraries, tot up sums in the temple offices, or greet visitors and guide them to the shrines of various Aspects.

### Administrative Branch

The Administrative Priesthood handles the day-to-day running of the temple, supervises its servants and slaves, oversees its properties, handles logistical planning, and the like. As the individual’s responsibilities mount, so do power and rewards — the supplier clans “gift” the administrative Priest with favours for a contract, the ambitious Priest capitalises upon his rival’s error to seize sole control of the requisition of lighting oil, etc. Senior administrative Priests command great resources and political influence and help shape their temple’s strategies for decades.

### Ritual Branch

The Ritual Priesthood is responsible for performing the temple’s rituals, and they also speak on day-to-day matters of theology and orthodoxy (though the Scholars can have quite a bit to say as well). Ritual Priests start out holding books or censers as



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assistants to senior Priests, or singing in choirs, move on to jobs of greater visibility and responsibility, such as personally performing sacrifices, and ultimately serve as senior celebrant in the temple's most elaborate and public rituals — or the most secret and dangerous ones.

## Scholar Branch

The Scholarly Priesthood is responsible for advancing knowledge in the fields the temple's Deity values. Beginning scholar Priests instruct the children's classes under the watchful eye of their predecessors until the senior Priest is satisfied, and then the junior takes over the position while the senior moves on to more interesting pursuits. As they advance in their studies, they contribute to the studies and researches of senior Priests while also being required to originate and contribute studies of their own. Most temples require scholarly Priests to produce "works," which can be written theses or other explications of knowledge, to justify their circle advancement at each circle. Many magicians are Scholar-Priests who specialise in the study of magic, a topic that is valued by all of the Deities, each of Whom has a corpus of Spells available to His or Her temple.

## Temple Guard

The Temple Guards provide security for the temple, including routine guard duties, escorts for senior Priests, and crowd control during large public rituals. The career path of a temple guard is much like that of a legionary, though the quality of their training is generally inferior: they go through basic training, drill endlessly, and hope to be promoted. In the War temples (Karakán, Vimúhla, and their Cohorts), the line between temple guards and members of temple-sponsored legions blurs, with injured or retired legionaries rotating back to serve in temple guard units and exceptional temple guards moving up into the front-line legions.

## Lay-Priests

Lay-Priests stand apart from the Priestly hierarchies, receiving training in theology and other subjects their Deity values, but earning a living out in the mundane world. They have access to the temple's libraries and teachers, and to a dormitory when needed, but the temple does not support them and they have no specific duties. Lay-Priests tend to be scholars, physicians, magicians, or practitioners of other professional skills; they sell their skills in the marketplace, hire out to more senior lay-Priests, or serve as house Priests, magical bodyguards, or specialists in the entourages of noble families or higher clans. Magicians attached to the legions in a support role are frequently Lay-Priests, though the Military Magicians who perform the powerful conjurations of battle magic are not.

## Circle Ranks and Temple Posts

The Priesthoods rank their clergy by Circles, from 1st Circle (beginning Priests) to 30th (a rank attained by very few, even among the Grand Adepts of the temples). Priests attain their first Circle after six months to a year of study and then ascend from the 2nd to 6th Circles over anywhere from a year to ten years.

Above that point, there is less correlation between Circles and specific temple posts. Any number of clergy may belong to a given Circle, but the number of posts is limited, and competition for them is intense. Competence is frequently less important than influence and bribes (which the Tsolyáni call "inducements," and accept as a normal part of business). There is still some competition for Circle rank, and politics and bribes play a role there as well, but it is much milder since the slots are not limited.

As a result, a temple may induct a talented and competent Priest into higher and higher Circles, but without assigning any higher offices. Many, especially in the Scholarly and Ritual Branches, have no interest in seeking office anyway; they would prefer to pursue their researches or perfect their devotions rather than spending their time on administration.

## Temple Structure and Governance

Each sect is governed by a High Council composed of its Ritual and Administrative Preceptors, its Great Proctors, and those senior Lay-Priests who wish to participate. The High Council elects an Inner Synod of from 10 to 50 Patriarchs, which in turn chooses three to five of its number to act as an Advisory Curia of Lord Adepts and also chooses a Grand Adept for the entire sect. Most temples make those appointments for life, though the temples of Sárku and Durritlámish limit their Patriarchs and Lord Adepts to five-year terms and their Grand Adepts to 10.

Beneath that level, each temple has its own intricate hierarchy of governance. The rank of the Priest who heads up a temple depends on how large the temple is and which temples, if any, are subordinate to it. Temples in the largest cities of the Empire may be run by a Mriyán, while a temple in a small village may simply be run by a Priest (who could be the only clergy present) or even a Lay-Priest.

A temple of any size has four separate hierarchies within it: Ritual, Administrative, Scholarly, and Temple Guard. Only the Temple Guards are subordinate to the other hierarchies. The Administrative branch, which handles day-to-day temple operations, sees itself as running the temple because on most practical matters it does. While

**Table 9-2: Temple Ranks**

### Ritual Branch

English rank (Tsolyáni Rank) (Circle)  
 Acolyte  
 Junior Priest (Su'umél) (2)  
 Priest (Shárto) (3)  
 Chief Ritual Priest (Rashángto) (8)  
 High Priest (Qusúncu) (10)  
 Grand High Priest (Hrúgash) (12)  
 Ritual Preceptor (Mriyán) (15)  
 Patriarch (Tsémel) (16-17)  
 Lord Adept (Jáshten) (19-20)  
 Grand Adept (Tiritlén) (20)

### Administrative Branch

English rank (Tsolyáni Rank) (Circle)  
 Acolyte  
 Junior Priest (Su'umél) (2)  
 Priest (Shárto) (3)  
 Temple Commandant (Njáshte) (8)  
 District Commandant (Hrúgash) (10)  
 Senior Commandant (Otlú) (12)  
 Administrative Preceptor (Mriyán) (15)  
 Patriarch (Tsémel) (16-17)  
 Lord Adept (Jáshten) (19-20)  
 Grand Adept (Tiritlén) (20)

### Scholarly Branch

English rank (Tsolyáni Rank) (Circle)  
 Acolyte  
 Scholar (Kusijákto) (2)  
 Senior Scholar (Kusijáktosa) (5)  
 Ranking Scholar (Kusijáktodali) (7)  
 Licentiate (Jokáto) (9)  
 Proctor (Qurupengáto) (11)  
 Great Proctor (Qurupengátodali) (16)  
 Patriarch (Tsémel) (16-17)  
 Lord Adept (Jáshten) (19-20)  
 Grand Adept (Tiritlén) (20)

Each title is followed by the minimum Circle Rank at which the title is normally attained. With the right connections and influence, a Priest may receive an office even when he or she is below the listed Circle; more often, people wind up getting the office at a higher Circle Rank than the minimum because of competition for positions.

Mriyán is sometimes translated as "Bishop," and Tsémel is sometimes translated as "Cardinal," especially in older Tékumel material.



the Scholarly branches of the various temples are stereotyped as being aloof and unconcerned with day-to-day operations, they defend their own turf tenaciously at need. When push comes to shove, the Ritual branch generally gets its way — the Priest in charge of the temple is almost always a Ritual Priest. The situation is complicated even further by the practise of some of the Change temples (Hrü'ü and Wurü being the most notorious for this) of keeping their internal organisation secret. The Temple of Ksáru has its own methods of confusing outsiders; it is rumoured that the Circle ranks and posts that are revealed to outsiders (and even most clergy) in that temple are not the true ones, and that the sect is actually run by an "Inner Temple" of higher-order initiates who hold little or no rank in the formal hierarchy.

## Inter-Temple Relations

Alliances between the temples can be complex. The Stability temples are friendly with each other, though the Temple of Karakán stands slightly apart on issues related to military action. The same is true to a lesser extent for the Change temples. The "Dark Trinity" of the faiths of Hrü'ü, Ksáru, and Sáru (and their cohorts) seemingly co-operates a great deal, though nobody really knows what goes on behind the scenes, and the recent Civil War strained the allegiances between the Temple of Sáru and the others. The Temple of Dlamélish works with the other Change temples, but is sometimes led to oppose them by its very different focus and its political ambitions, and the Temple of Vimúhla occupies much the same position on the Change side of the line as that of Karakán does on the Stability side. The two War temples and their Cohorts form a political axis of their own on issues relating to the use of military force, and they frequently co-operate to advance the cause of the legions. The existence of various secret societies within the temples, some of which operate within multiple temples, and a few of which allegedly operate across national boundaries, make inter-temple relations even more complicated.

If a dispute between Temples cannot be resolved amicably, it goes to the Palace of the Priesthoods. These special ecclesiastic courts are constantly busy, usually with arguments over property ownership or inheritance.

## Daily Life in the Temples

Temple life is relatively austere. In large urban temples, children, acolytes, and low-circle Priests are usually bunked in separate dormitories, separated by gender, or not, depending on the Temple's philosophy. Higher-circle Priests gain more and more privacy. Some fourth or fifth circle Priests share quarters, but by seventh or eighth circle, Priests who live in the temple usually have their own apartments, which often double as their offices. Priests living in the temple share a common refectory, with acolytes closer to the kitchen and higher-circle Priests father; if the refectory is small, food is served in shifts, with higher-status persons eating first. Senior Priests may eat in their quarters, labs, or libraries, although the latter is officially discouraged.

Most Priests prefer to return to their clanhouses when off duty, if it's not too far, and many others obtain private residences near the temple. This is often the case if Priests of different clans and temples marry and wish to be together. If they have children, though, one Priest or the other of such a family will try for a post at a temple facility near one of their clanhouses so the children may be raised in the clanhouse.

## Temple Buildings

Temple doctrines and local availability of space determine whether housing and office facilities, as well as refectories, baths, slaves' quarters, etc., are part of the main temple building itself or in outbuildings around the temple compound. Usually, the public temple with its shrines is at the front of the compound, easily accessible to the public. Dormitories, whether attached or separate, are generally behind or nearby, followed by refectories and kitchens, acolytes' dwellings, slaves, and animal pens.

## The Military

Military life plays a vital and eventful role in Tsolyánu and the entire Five Empires.

### Your First Day in the Legion

*New recruits will remember the first Drill Tirrikámu they meet for the rest of their lives.*

*Stand still and shut up! Now listen to me carefully! I am Rán hiKoródu, your Tirrikámu for the duration of your basic training. This means that you belong to me until you convince me you are good enough to go to your cohort. Until then, you will do everything I say, without hesitation or complaint. Any failure to obey will be punished, anything less than total effort will be punished, looking at me in a way I don't like will be punished. Do you understand? I said DO YOU UNDERSTAND?*

*I do not care what clan you are, I do not care how many slaves you own, I have no interest in what your family does or how much money they have. My job is to train you or kill you in the attempt. Let me make this crystal clear, you do not have to survive your training. Just give me an excuse to make your life miserable.*

*We are standing next to the dormitory for your Semétl. Your nineteen Semétl-mates will be your constant companions while you are here, so I suggest you try and get along with them. They will certainly let you know if you have any bad habits, so if you snore or talk in your sleep then I suggest you stop.*

*The morning drum will wake you just before dawn and I expect you to be washed, shaved, and lined up ready in clean kilts when I arrive. I also expect the dormitory to be spotless; you are all clan-women now and are expected to maintain your own dormitory. Any failure will be punished. I know one of you has brought a slave with you and I want to make it clear that blaming your slave for any problems with your uniform or anything else will simply make me kick you repeatedly in the arse. I am not your mother and you are responsible to pay for the feeding and upkeep of any servants your clan may graciously have provided you. They are your problem, not mine, and I will blame you personally for any deficiencies they may have.*

*Tomorrow we will start with basic weapon drill, I know some of you think you know how to handle a weapon but we will teach you the right way, the Legion way. With twenty of you carrying bare-bladed swords, I have to teach you all to turn at the same time so someone isn't killed by accident. I have never killed anyone accidentally and neither will you. Accidents during weapon practice are punishable by twenty strokes of the lash at the next morning parade, which I always enjoy. I expect you to rack all weapons properly at the end of each day, and to keep the weapon rack in your dormitory polished. No weapons are to be left on bedmats or on the floor.*

*Once we have explained it to you, I suggest you practise donning and removing your armour until you can do it in the dark. You will often be up before dawn and we expect you to get dressed without noise or light. I don't want to hear clatter when handling your armour. Being able to put a suit of armour on silently is one of those little tricks that you may find useful in later life. You are less likely to get hurt in training if you can learn to fight in formation, work as a team. Each drill will be a bloodless battle and you will drill each morning before breakfast, and again before the midday meal.*

*At the end of the day, you'll take a gentle walk in the country, wearing all of the kit you must carry on campaign. We will improve your moral worth by teaching you to carry very heavy weights quickly over a long distance. You will each carry enough water and food for three days, your bedmat, bed-roll, a copper cooking pot and skillet, spare boots, spare kilts, cleaning kit for weapons, armour, and your grubby little self, a tinder box and spare tinder, a large shovel, a heavy pickaxe — and, of course, you will be wearing a smile. If you move too slowly, you will be punished; if you fall down, you will be punished until you stand up.*

*Towards the end of your time here, you will do the same march, each of you carrying two palisade-sized logs. At the end of that day's march, you will construct a defensive structure from them and spend the night inside. The next morning you will dismantle that structure and carry the component logs back to camp. This is the essence of what it is to be a soldier — to march all day in the hot sun, and still have the discipline to build a fort before you rest. Skill with weapons is not enough to make you a soldier; what makes a legionary is discipline.*

*If you can survive me, the enemy should present you no threat. Now get some sleep, you will need it.*



## Joining a Legion

A Tsolyáni army on the march is spectacular. The polished lacquer of their plate armour glowing with the legion's colours, shields bright with traditional and often grotesque designs, tall, plumed helmets — all combine to give the soldiery an intimidating and almost inhuman appearance. Over time, legions become personified; a legion's deeds are a matter of record and its trophies become objects of veneration for future generations of legionaries. The "birth" of a new legion is celebrated much like that of a child, and when a legion is disbanded, its Káing (great standard) is sheathed in lead and ceremoniously laid to rest beneath Avanthár. The Empire retires a deactivated legion's number until and unless it is reactivated.

Joining a legion is an honourable career for anyone, for the military commands great respect in Tsolyánu. Many join for life, while others use the legions as a stepping-stone to another occupation; most Tsolyáni warriors, be they bodyguards, sword instructors, or clan masters-at-arms, learned their skills in a legion. It is very rare to find a skilled Tsolyáni warrior who is not a military veteran. For foreigners and the lower classes, joining the legions can be the only route for social advancement; for the upper classes, it is a path to glory.

The Tsolyáni maintain a standing army of around 500,000 soldiers, organised into more than seventy individual legions. Legions usually recruit members on the basis of locality, ethnicity, clan, and temple affiliation, giving them strong local and political roots as well as a great sense of history. People almost always join a legion that is based in their area and which is affiliated with their clan or temple. They usually join one specialising in recruits of their approximate social status, but there are exceptions.

For many, the deciding factor for acceptance into a good legion is clan tradition and influence. Given two people with similar physical qualities and skills competing for a place in a prestigious unit, the one with influential clan cousins in the legion will get the post. This contributes to a feeling of solidarity and continuity, which plays a major role in the generally high morale of Tsolyáni legions — but it also means that connections, tradition, and influence can outweigh talent.

## Social Status

The heavier the legion the higher its status. A high clan person usually applies for the best heavy infantry legion appropriate to his or her religion and home area, and will only consider an "inferior" medium or light infantry unit if there is some special connection with the legion. Fanatical worshippers of Vimúhla would also place the Legion of Red Devastation, an elite medium infantry unit, at the top of the list. The army structure both supports and is supported by the civilian social structure; the clan hierarchy translates, indirectly, to the status of the legions and the ranks within them. Senior officers are normally expected to be from a higher clan than the ordinary soldier, though there are exceptions.

## Warfare in the Five Empires

War in the Five Empires is often stylised and usually brutal. Since armies are restricted to foot travel, they not only lack the mobility of Earth cavalry, they cannot even put out mounted scouts (Hláka substitute when available, but they aren't usually available in large numbers). As a result, armies that wish to fight each other have to cooperate to a certain extent in order to even find each other, an arrangement which has evolved into a highly ritualised form of warfare where the opposing forces fight set-piece battles at mutually arranged locations. There are two classes of ritualised battles: the highly stylised Qadárnikoi, or "little war" — essentially a formal duel between two units of equal size with strict rules of honour and a wager at stake between the commanders — and the Qadárdalikoi, or "great war," which is far less constrained and often involves multiple units and unequal forces. Qadárnikoi can and do take place in peacetime with the permission of higher-ups, but Qadárdalikoi are real battles, with all that implies.

Both types of battles follow similar protocols. Once omens are taken and religious ceremonies performed, the opposing commanders stand atop their command stands and signal to their armies. At the beginning of a battle, individuals step forward from both sides and issue challenges to anyone of similar status from the opposing army; the armies themselves will not clash until the duels are done. Occasionally, the contending generals agree to let the outcome of a duel between legion champions

substitute for an actual battle. After the duels, the armies clash. The formations and tactics signalled by the commanders are traditional and often elaborate, with names like "The Mace of Karakán" and "The Embrace of Nayári." Most date back to the Engsványáli era; since the technology of warfare on Tékumel hasn't changed much, the way it's done hasn't either.

This formality belies the violence of Tékumelyáni warfare. Phalanx warfare is an extremely brutal method of combat, in which opposing pike-men form solid formations bristling with spears, present a solid shield wall to the enemy, and fight by direct assault, marching towards their target with their pikes lowered and shields raised. Their heavy armour and long pikes or spears preclude fast manoeuvring, but their psychological and sheer physical impact is massive; it is almost impossible for a lighter unit to resist a heavier unit's attack. When they clash, the frontage of each collapses. As these two nearly irresistible forces go head to head, the result is bloody chaos. The ranks at the rear of each phalanx drive inward, pushing those before them inward and down. Pikes are dropped, spear shafts broken, secondary weapons drawn, and many legionaries suddenly find themselves simply wrestling with heavily-armoured enemies in the middle of a confused and crushing melee because they can't hurt them any other way. Once a soldier hits the ground, he or she is unlikely to ever get up again. As many will die from being trampled underfoot as from being skewered on the end of a pike. The heavy infantry are backed up by faster medium and light infantry, as well as a range of missile troops, artillery, magical support, non-humans, etc., but the emphasis is on the phalanx.

What happens after a battle differs; in a Qadárnikoi, the side that feels it's had enough is permitted to retire, leaving its wager and any captives behind, but in a Qadárdalikoi, the victorious commander will often give the troops permission to pursue the fleeing foe and grab as many captives and trophies as they can. Prisoners are either ransomed or sacrificed, depending on their status and their captors' predilections, and Tsolyáni warriors are expected to go bravely to their deaths singing their death-songs.

Despite the emphasis on the Qadárnikoi and Qadárdalikoi in Tsolyáni tradition, not all battles during a war are ritualised. In practise, you take your enemy where you find them, and ambushes, surprise attacks, and massacres of outnumbered units do happen, as do sieges and warfare in rough terrain or thick vegetation where open-field tactics aren't practical. The armies of the Five Empires do, however, avoid attacking civilians and trade caravans — trade has to go through, and crops have to be harvested, even in wartime. Merchants and peasants who find themselves in the path of an opposing army may wind up selling their wares at a deep discount, but they'll live to trade or farm another day.

## Status of the Different Typers of Legions Heavy Infantry

Since the best heavy infantry legions are the most socially desirable units, the competition to enter them is intense. As a result, the people who succeed are generally highly competent, making the perceived superiority of the heavy infantry something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The division between the heavy infantry and everyone else is enshrined in language; the lowest rank in the heavy infantry is Kuruthúni, technically higher than that of the Changadésha, or basic enlisted person in other units. Heavy infantry units are specialised for phalanx warfare.

## Medium Infantry

Medium-infantry units are often more flexible and sometimes more specialised than heavy infantry. They are cheaper to equip, and they can also move faster and traverse rougher ground than a heavy unit. Thus, while medium legions are not suitable for the assault roles that are the glory of the heavy infantry, they are a vital part of any Tsolyáni army in the field. Although medium infantry still carry a fair amount of armour, which protects them well enough for sustained combat, they are unsuited to the sheer concentration of force seen in the phalanx clash, and really gain their advantage from tactical manoeuvre.

A truly exceptional Medium or lower clan person who did find a place in a heavy legion could still face discrimination because of his or her "inferior" origins. For aspiring soldiers from a Medium clan, a respectable medium infantry legion may be a better choice if they ever want to be promoted.



## Specialist Units

Light Infantry, Artillery, Marines, and Sapper legions are normally at the lower end of the Tsolyáni military's status scale. They are fundamentally less glamorous than other units, with little opportunity for glory or loot. Of course they are also a vital part of many successful military campaigns, and provide a place for competent individuals whose social position precludes more elevated service. These legionaries see a lot of action and do a good job, but rarely receive the recognition they deserve.

## Enlistment

To enlist, an adult presents him or herself to the legion of choice, or at the Palace of the Realm, and declares the desire to enlist. Potential recruits must meet certain physical criteria, and there may also be issues of status and religion for some Legions. One may also enter military service during childhood, but this is not a binding commitment. A child's duties are simple and direct — carry messages, fetch water, polish armour and weapons, and learn the code of conduct for the selected legion. Clan status shapes how likely a youngster will be enlisted as a legionnaire, and what duties he or she receives; higher-clan youth are often made "Kási" of their age bracket and responsible for maintaining discipline and order in their Semétl. Lower-clan youth find themselves digging ditches and cleaning messes, while middle-clan youth inventory the armoury or polish breastplates.

Upon reaching the age of majority (age 15), male and aridáni Tsolyáni may make binding adult commitments, including enlisting in the legions. Those who entered as youths have the opportunity to enlist and enjoy distinct advantages over new recruits since they are already established within the structure of their legion. They may also decide to opt out at this point, without dishonouring themselves or their clans, either to participate in the clan business, or hire themselves out as guards for some high person.

## Status and Basic Training

Basic training is about the only place where status differences between clans are at all mitigated. Even the highest-clan recruits find themselves enduring endless hours of drills, exercises, and instruction. Differences do remain, however. Troops fall into higher- and lower-clan units, the different status units do not fraternise, and the conditions for higher-clan units are more tolerable. Recruits from higher clans face less likelihood of corporal punishment for slight infractions.

## Drill, Drill, and Boots

The Tsolyáni soldier must play for the team, weaving from one pre-set formation to another while the unit moves and fights. They battle in phalanxes, and thus soldiers must stay in formation both for mutual protection and to maintain the proper lines of communications. This requires training, and heavy drilling to the point tactics become reflexes. For the heavy infantry, these drills concentrate on a few key formations that soldiers must hold perfectly under the most difficult conditions since any crack in the shield wall could spell disaster. In contrast, the medium and light infantry concentrate on being quick and changing formation on the move, making them more flexible than their heavier colleagues.

The Tsolyáni base their drills and formations on the ancient texts of Ssamirén of Khéris, and recruits suffer greatly while learning some of the 123 basic manoeuvres described in his works. Many veterans reminisce about those long days spent on the parade ground under the generous guidance of a Drill Tirrikámu. The underlying truth espoused by all Drill Tirrikámu is that they must hammer the correct response into their recruits to ensure they react correctly and instantly in the heat of battle. Drill is therefore an intense education in movement and weapon handling that makes a unit more than the sum of its parts. For high clan people, their basic training on the parade ground may be the first time someone of lower status dares to give them an order, and it may take them a while to acclimate to the idea of the pre-eminence of legion rank. The Drill Tirrikámu is happy to help to re-educate them in this regard.

## Legion Organisation and Ranks

The structure of the Imperial Legion is time-hallowed. The legion's tactical command is in the hands of the two Molkár (senior field officers), who each have immediate responsibility for half of the line infantry in the legion. In a pitched battle, the Kérdu (General) and the two Dritlán (Colonels) stand on the command stand with trumpeters and runners, sending orders down to the Molkár on the field, each of whom directly commands up to ten Kási (Captains). Each Kási has four Heréksa (Lieutenants), who each command a karéng (one hundred soldiers). The karéng is the smallest tactical formation used in normal battle, and the command system often rests on the quality of the Heréksa, who must have both the personal courage to lead and the initiative to make good decisions in an emergency. When battle is joined there may be no time to ask the Molkár, and the individual actions of relatively junior ranks may decide the course of an engagement. To this end, each Heréksa has five Tirrikámu (Sergeants) to assist him in fighting his karéng. Each Tirrikámu has direct responsibility for his Semétl of twenty soldiers and may be a veteran of many battles.

## Promotions

Many factors affect the rank an individual can achieve in the legions. Clan is most relevant; an individual's clan is a good indication of how far that individual can rise in a legion, though there are exceptions. Beyond that, being able to "fit in" is the main talent required of an ambitious line infantry officer; having the right accent, the right manners, the right clan, and the right attitudes for the specific legion is crucial. Competence may be important, but reliability is more highly valued than inspiration, and anyone who expects promotion to go to the best swordsman will be sorely disappointed.

**Table 9-3:**  
**Tsolyáni Military Ranks**

Tsolyáni Rank	English Approximation	Command
Changadésha	None	None
Kuruthúni	Private, Heavy Infantry	None (see Note)
(Bakaitokoi Hiqetpe)	(File Leader)	File (Qétpe) of 5 (see Note)
Tirrikámu	Sergeant	Semétl of 20
Heréksa	Lieutenant	Karéng of 100
Kási	Captain	Tsurúm of 400
Molkár	Major	Half a legion of about 4,000
Dritlán	Colonel	Passes orders to the Molkár
Kérdu	General	Legion of about 8,025
Kérdudali	Senior General	Army of multiple legions

Private soldiers in most legions are referred to as Changadésha. Those in the heavy infantry legions are called Kuruthúni. A Kuruthúni technically outranks a Changadésha, but cannot give commands to one on the field.

Each Semétl is divided into four files, one under the Tirrikámu and three under senior Changadésha or Kuruthúni who have been appointed "file leaders." File leaders receive no additional pay, rank, or formal title, and fight alongside the other soldiers in the file, but are an integral part of the legion command structure.

Each Dritlán is responsible for half of the legion in battle, passing the Kérdu's orders on to his or her corresponding Molkár who is actually on the field.

Numbers of troops commanded apply only to field command; many of these positions exist in support roles as well, with variable commands.



## Roles within the Legion

The most prestigious legion roles are the ones on the line, those focused on field combat. The majority of enlisted serve in such positions, and attach minimal prestige to them. The situation is very different for officers. Officer billets are strictly limited by the legion's organisation, especially as rank increases: while 80 Heréksa can receive line positions, only 20 Kási, and two Molkár and Dritlán, will. The competition for positions is fierce, especially in times of relative peace when casualties are lower.

There are, however, other jobs within a legion. Enlisted personnel have a variety of non-standard roles from which to choose, most lower-risk than fighting on the line. The Kérdu's (General) headquarters unit has its own guards, servants, and support staff. Since few ordinary soldiers ever see inside the headquarters, rumours of high living within abound; those assigned as guards or messengers are often seen as favourites of the Kérdu. Headquarters often controls specialist units such as reconnaissance (which can actually be higher-risk than fighting on the line), logistics, and the magical contingent. These units often live and work separately from the line infantry who compose most of the legion. Some develop their own individual cultures, and may become a refuge or ghetto for soldiers of any rank who do not fit into the more conventional unit environment. The supply section is not going to win any medals, and the scouts may be too scruffy for morning parade, but they have some flexibility in the otherwise rigid and traditional structure.

Officers have a variety of options as well, and many find them more attractive than being held at their current rank for a decade while waiting for someone at the next level to retire, die, or be promoted. The headquarters unit has a staff of officers to advise the Kérdu, and officers help command the various specialist units. Legions also have officers for planning and intelligence work, as well as liaison with other units and with local authorities when the unit is on the move. In addition, recruiting and liaison billets are available in major cities and even smaller locations in the legion's home area; these officers do not travel with the legion, but reside in the city of their posting. Many a heroic Kási found the opportunity for a post as Liaison Molkár in a major city too tempting to resist; it provides a good lifestyle, as well as income from inducements and the opportunity to better one's clan.

Additionally, every legion has a number of cohorts (between a third and a fourth of its field strength) in reserve, with both officers and enlisted personnel living in their clan-houses and getting on with life while they await call-up. Reserve troops and officers receive one fifth of normal pay. Many also have cohorts in training, which provides yet more billets for officers, as well as for senior enlisted personnel and Tirrikámu to act as instructors.

Legion magical contingents are composed mostly of specialists trained to coordinate their efforts to work massive magics on the battlefield. These are generally lay-Priests from an appropriately aligned temple, though they may be actual Priests in some cases. Although they can usually use normal magic also, the kind used in war is a specialisation (for a brief discussion, see Magic, page 113) These units, however, also have regular officers, as well as bodyguards and support personnel. Any recruit with an unusually high Pedhétl but no ability to actually cast magic may be shunted into the magical contingent and trained to act as a "battery" for the magicians, a noble but inglorious occupation.

## Inter-Legion Relations

The standard organisation and tactics of the Imperial army allows its disparate units to work together as a single force when required. The Legion of Hékeht, for example, is a heavy pike unit based in the swamp city of Púrdímal, whereas the Legion of Glorious Destiny is composed of expert crossbowmen drawn from the desert lands of Fasiltum. A legionary from one may have very little in common, culturally speaking, with a legionary from the other, but they share a common set of drills, regulations, rank structures, and training. This permits them to fight alongside each other.

As one might expect, though, the differences between the legions have historically led to some competition between them. Some posturing and inter-legion rivalry is natural. Opinions are strongly held, and inter-legion rivalry occasionally leads to duels. This is entirely honourable as long as it stays within acceptable bounds.

## Daily Life in a Legion

During peacetime, the military usually houses its legions in compounds near the gates of major cities. Non-commissioned personnel live in large barracks, with officers in separate, somewhat more hospitable dwellings. When a legion is not on active duty, troopers and officers can often live in their clanhouses, but if the peace is threatened, they are recalled to barracks immediately.

Life in the barracks is regimented and strict, as expected. Troops are roused early for formations and weapons drills. Units eat in shifts in the refectory throughout the day, with the kitchens busy around the clock. The physical plan of the barracks represents the legion's organisational structure; each karéng may have a refectory and each Semétl has its own dormitory. A soldier's karéng is small enough for him or her to feel personal loyalty to it, and in some ways it replaces his experience of clan life. In the karéng, a soldier finds new brothers and sisters for those he left behind in the civilian world. The life of a professional soldier is regular if not actually pleasant; a routine is important in the operation of the legion, and regulations are to be obeyed. Legionaries who break regulations can expect harsh punishment, ranging from brutal beatings to immediate execution in war-time. Soldiers can, however, pursue a variety of things to make their lives more pleasant, and high clan legionaries even bring their slaves with them on campaign.

Officers adhere to more relaxed rules. Junior officers share bunks and eat in a separate refectory, while the apartments of senior officers may be large enough to have their food served in their rooms. Senior officers may also live in private dwellings or in their clanhouses if these are nearby, even in wartime.

Even when soldiers are posted near their home city, they generally spend off-duty time with their fellow legionaries rather than with clan or old friends. If a soldier is stationed outside his or her home city or town, it is usually impossible to walk home and back during a normal period of leave, forcing him or her to spend even more time with the legion. As a result, the legion rapidly becomes home for its soldiery, who embrace its history and traditions.

Many Tsolyáni legions are old enough to have more history than some smaller nations; recorded traditions going back centuries are quite common. A few can legitimately trace their origins back thousands of years, which makes them older than the Empire itself! The weight of history adds to the legion's prestige, and soldiers and officer constantly reiterate past glories at legion events and ceremonies. The general effect is a cohesive and insular culture that both supports the professional activities of the soldiers and separates them from the civilian population generally and their pre-legion life specifically. The legion is an immersive experience rather than a job; since a soldier will live, work, and perhaps die with his or her unit, it is difficult not to become part of it.

## Legion Tables

### Heavy Infantry

#### Omnipotent Azure Legion (OAL)

**Number:** None  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Blue-plumed helmet with gold crest and white trim; light-blue armour with gold trim; kilt varies; dark-blue and gold shield with white trim.

**Notes:** The military arm of this body, which also includes an intelligence division (Tsolyánu's secret police/spies), and a unit that protects the Emperor. Based at Avanthár. At present, an eclectic mix of religions due to Emperor Dhich'uné's attempt to pack a formerly Stability-dominated unit with Sáрку supporters during the Civil War. Elite.



# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE





## First Legion of Ever-Present Glory

**Number:** None  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Gold helmet with red crest and blue trim; light-blue armour with red trim; black kilt; gold and blue shield with black trim.  
**Notes:** Followers of Hnálla and Karakán. Based at Sokátis. Elite.

## Legion of Potent Destiny

**Number:** 2nd HI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet with black crest and gold trim; blue armour with gold trim; orange kilt; dark-blue and gold shield with white trim.  
**Notes:** Mostly Hnálla worshippers. Based at Béy Sü. Elite.

## Legion of Hnálla, Master of Light

**Number:** 4th HI  
**Weapons:** Halberd, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** White helmet with gold crest and blue trim; white armour with gold trim; blue kilt; white and gold shield with blue trim.  
**Notes:** An old and traditional Hnálla Legion. Based at Béy Sü with some cohorts at Avanthár.

## Legion of the Mighty Prince

**Number:** 5th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Pike, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Silver visored helmet with dark-blue crest and blue trim; silver armour with blue trim; dark-blue kilt; dark-blue and silver shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** A Hnálla and Karakán Legion formerly commanded by Prince Eselné, who died during the Civil War. Future unknown.

## Legion of the Portals of Death

**Number:** 6th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Light-blue plumed helmet with black crest and gold trim; blue armour with gold trim; black kilt; blue and black shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** Tends toward Ksáru and Hrü'ü. Based at Béy Sü.

## Legion of Mirkitáni, Hero of Victories

**Number:** 7th HI  
**Weapons:** Short Pike, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Steel helmet and armour with blue trim in an archaic style; white kilt; light-blue and black shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** A good fighting legion with much experience. Its Kérdu always takes the name "Mirkitáni." No religious affiliation. Based on the Island of Vrá.

## Legion of the Givers of Sorrow

**Number:** 8th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Short Sword, Throwing Club  
**Uniform:** Red-orange helmet with gold trim; dark-red armour with gold trim; white kilt; dark red and red-orange shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** Loyal to Chiténg, this traditional legion is known as the watchdog of the Mu'ugalavyáni frontier. Based at Butrús.

## Legion of the Scales of Brown

**Number:** 9th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Pike, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Brown helmet with a white skull mask and armour with white trim; black kilt; dark-red and white shield with copper trim.  
**Notes:** Loyal to Sárku and Durrítlámish, this legion was revived by Emperor Dhich'uné. Its name is synonymous with atrocities committed in war, and it is believed to have numerous cohorts of undead (which if true would be a violation of Imperial law).

## Legion of Searing Flame

**Number:** 10th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Pike, Axe-Sword, Two-Handed Mace  
**Uniform:** Dark orange helmet with red-orange crest and gold trim; bright orange-red armour with gold trim; light-red kilt; bright-red shield with light-blue trim.  
**Notes:** Based at Fasiltum and composed of Vrídidi clansmen loyal to Vimúhla.

## Legion of the Echoing Stone

**Number:** 11th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Mace, Short Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Blue masked helmet with red trim; blue armour of archaic pattern with red trim; red kilt; blue shield with red trim.  
**Notes:** A recently reactivated legion serving in the City of Gánga during the First Imperium; little battle experience. Based in Tléku.

## Legion of the Sweet Singers of Nakomé

**Number:** 12th HI  
**Weapons:** Two-Handed Mace, Two-Handed Flail, Short Sword  
**Uniform:** Black helmet with elaborate cheek pieces, gold crest and dark-red trim; black armour with gold trim; black kilt; black and gold shield with dark-red trim. Dark-red cloaks with black trim.  
**Notes:** Sponsored and led by the clan of the same name, but staffed with desert tribesmen devoted to Hrü'ü and his Cohort Wurú. Based at Fasiltum.

## Legion of Sérqu, Sword of the Empire

**Number:** 14th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Short Sword, Mace, Flail, Morning Star, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet with white crest and gold trim; blue armour with gold trim; white kilt; blue and white shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** One of the oldest legions of the Empire, its Kérdu have been drawn from the Chaishyáni lineage of Golden Sunburst for centuries and take the name "Sérqu" when they receive command of the legion. No special religious affiliation, though mostly Stability. Sponsored by Golden Sunburst, but members of other clans welcome.

## Legion of the Ruby Hand

**Number:** 15th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Light-blue helmet with white crest and silver trim; light-blue armour with silver trim; white kilt; dark and light-blue shield with silver trim.  
**Notes:** Loyal to Hnálla, based at Béy Sü. Relatively inexperienced, but well-equipped thanks to recent generous funding from the Sea Blue Clan.

## Legion of the Deep Purple Dark

**Number:** 16th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Black masked helmet with dark-purple crest and silver trim; black armour with silver trim; purple kilt; black and dark-purple shield with silver trim.  
**Notes:** Loyal to Hrü'ü and Wurú; based at Mrelú. Reactivated during the war with Yán Kór, some of its equipment dates to Engsvanyáli times.

## Legion of Hékeith of Púrdimal

**Number:** 17th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Pike, Long Sword, Mace, Short Bow, Bolas  
**Uniform:** Black visored helmet with blue crest and silver trim; black armour with silver trim; blue kilt; black and blue shield with silver trim.  
**Notes:** Officered by the ancient traditional ruling family of Púrdimal and loyal to Ksáru and Grugánu. Its Kérdu is always named "Hékeith" and is always a member of the Black Hood Clan. Based in Púrdimal.



## Legion of the Fishers of Death

**Number:** 21st HI  
**Weapons:** Halberd, Short Sword, Bow  
**Uniform:** Brown helmet with blue trim; brown armour with blue trim; yellow kilt; brown shield with blue trim.  
**Notes:** A legion that was dead for a thousand years, recently revived by Lord Ilélmuna hiSharvóya of Penóm using his personal and clan wealth as a way of pursuing glory. Still very small and inexperienced. Based in Penóm.

## Legion of the Lord of Wisdom

**Number:** 22nd HI  
**Weapons:** Long Pike, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Grey visored helmet with blue crest and gold trim; dark-grey armour with gold trim; white kilt; grey and blue shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** Devoted to Thúmis, this legion is a relatively recent addition. Based in Páya Gupá, many of its soldiers are hill people from the Chákas.

## Legion of the Mace Raised High

**Number:** 23rd HI  
**Weapons:** Two-Hand Sword, Short Spear, Mace  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet, armour, and shield. Crest and trim vary.  
**Notes:** A mercenary legion composed of humans and non-humans from all over the known world. It happily accepts lowborns and foreigners. Based at Thri'il.

## Legion of the All-Consuming Flame

**Number:** 24th HI  
**Weapons:** Short Pike, Short Spear, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Armour mixed.  
**Notes:** Old garrison legion devoted to Vimúhla. Based at Hekéllu.

## Legion of Kurukáa

**Number:** 25th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Red-orange helmet with black trim; red armour with black trim; brown kilt; red and brown shield with black trim.  
**Notes:** Serves as a garrison unit for Úrmish. No religious affiliation, and no real prestige.

## Legion of the Blue Peak

**Number:** 26th HI  
**Weapons:** Halberd, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Bright Imperial-blue cloak and armour with gold trim. Dlamélish troops will have the same uniform but with green and turquoise.  
**Notes:** Based at Jakálla. Mostly followers of Avánthe and Dlamélish. Basically a "toy legion" for the local governors and their courtiers.

## Legion of Mighty Jakálla

**Number:** 27th HI  
**Weapons:** Short Pike, Poleaxe, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Gold helmet with blue crest and red trim; gold armour with red trim; blue kilt; gold and blue shield with red trim. Red cloaks with blue trim.  
**Notes:** This legion was revived as a punishment for its Kérdu, a corrupt former Jakálla governor who was required to pay for his misdeeds out of his own pocket. He has done better than expected, but the unit is of poor quality. Based at Jakálla.

## Phalanx of Heretlékka of Sokátis

**Number:** 34th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Light-blue visored helmet in the shape of a sérudla head with white crest and dark-blue trim; light-blue armour with dark-blue trim; white kilt; light-blue and white shield with dark-blue trim.  
**Notes:** Recently formed by a young nobleman. Mostly Hrü'ü, Ksáru, and some Sáрку troops. Based in Sokátis.

## Legion of the Translucent Emerald

**Number:** 36th HI  
**Weapons:** Long Sword (hand and a half), Halberd  
**Uniform:** Silver armour and helmets with green crest, uniform light emerald-green w/blue trim; shields blue and green. Blue cloaks.  
**Notes:** This legion angered an ancient Emperor who sent them into the far northeast centuries ago, and told them to stay there until summoned. They settled there, and stayed for a thousand years, awaiting further orders that never came. Very recently reactivated and out of hiding. Aligned with Dlamélish and Hriháyal. Based at Hekéllu, but with its headquarters in Jakálla.

## Medium Infantry

### Phalanx of Lord Durritlámish of the Rotted Face

**Number:** 6th MI  
**Weapons:** Poleaxe, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Dark-brown helmet with white crest and copper trim; brown armour with copper trim; black kilt; dark brown and black shield with copper trim.  
**Notes:** Loyal to Sáрку and his Cohort. Based at Sokátis.

### Legion of Gúsha the Khirgári

**Number:** 7th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet with red crest and black trim; blue armour with black trim; red kilt; blue and red shield with black trim. Black cloaks with blue trim.  
**Notes:** No religious affiliation, though largely Karakán. Based at Jakálla.

### Legion of Lord Lángsha of Jaikalór

**Number:** 8th MI  
**Weapons:** Two-Handed Axe, Dagger  
**Uniform:** Grey visored helmet with white crest and gold trim; grey armour with gold trim; white kilt; grey and white shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** An old legion supported by an ancient family of the Rising Sun Clan. No religious affiliation. Based at Jaikalór.

### Battalions of the Seal of the Worm

**Number:** 9th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword, Mace, Light Crossbow  
**Uniform:** Copper helmet with black crest and white trim; copper armour with black trim; white kilt; black and white shield with copper trim.  
**Notes:** Sáрку fanatics. Based at the City of Sáрку.

### Legion of Mnáshu of Thri'il

**Number:** 10th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet with red crest and green trim; blue armour with red trim; green kilt; blue and green shield with red trim. Green cloak with red trim.  
**Notes:** Mountain troops. Mostly followers of the Lords of Stability. Based at Thri'il.



## Legion of the Golden Sunburst

**Number:** 11th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Pike, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Gold helmet and armour with blue trim; red kilt; red-orange and gold shield with black trim.  
**Notes:** An old and wealthy high clan legion devoted to Karakán. Based at Tumissa. Elite.

## Cohorts of Chegárta, the Hero-King

**Number:** 12th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Sword, Dagger, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Red-orange helmet with black crest and silver trim; black armour with silver trim; red-orange kilt; red-orange and black shield with silver trim.  
**Notes:** Devoted to Chegárta, with some Karakán worshippers as well. Based in Thráya.

## Legion of the Clan of the Golden Sphere

**Number:** 13th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Short Sword  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet with yellow crest and white trim; blue armour with white trim; yellow kilt; blue and yellow shield with white trim.  
**Notes:** Sponsored by the clan of the same name. Devoted to Belkhánu and Qón. Based in Thráya.

## Legion of the Night of Shadows

**Number:** 15th MI  
**Weapons:** Halberd, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Black helmet with blue crest and silver trim; black armour with silver trim; blue kilt; black and blue shield with silver trim.  
**Notes:** The dread Ndálu Clan of the Temple of Ksárul sponsors this legion, which is made up of fanatical worshippers of that deity. Based in Jakálla.

## Legion of the Lord of Red Devastation

**Number:** 18th MI  
**Weapons:** Two-Hand Sword  
**Uniform:** Blue masked helmet with red-orange crest and gold trim; blue armour with gold trim; white kilt; red-orange and blue shield with gold trim. Red-orange cloaks with gold trim.  
**Notes:** Two-handed swordsmen fanatically loyal to Vimúhla. Based at Tumissa. Elite.

## Legion of Lady Mriisa

**Number:** 19th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Red-orange helmet with dark blue crest and white trim; white armour with varying trim and kilt; red-orange and white shield with dark blue trim.  
**Notes:** Composed entirely of aridáni women. No particular religious affiliation. Based at Chéne Só.

## Legion of the Many-Legged Serpent

**Number:** 20th MI  
**Weapons:** Short Pike, Long Sword, Light Crossbow  
**Uniform:** Purple helmet with black crest and dark-red trim; purple armour with black trim; dark-red kilt; no shield.  
**Notes:** Loyal to Wurú. Based at Ferinára.

## Legion of the Storm of Fire

**Number:** 21st MI  
**Weapons:** Axe, Crossbow  
**Uniform:** Mostly bright reds, blacks, helmet glossy black with bright orange-red plumes; shield black and red with gold trim.  
**Notes:** Devoted to Vimúhla. Based at Hekéllu.

## Forces of Ga'ánish of Katalál

**Number:** 23rd MI  
**Weapons:** Halberd, Short Pike, Mace  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet with gold crest and black trim; blue armour with gold trim; black kilt; blue and black shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** No religious affiliation. Based at Katalál.

## Legion of the Helm of Night

**Number:** 24th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Dark-blue and black armour, facings; blue helmet and shield.  
**Notes:** Loyal to Ksárul and Sárku. A relatively new and small legion distrusted by the Imperium; their Sárku funding was withdrawn. Based at Púrdimal and Mekú.

## Regiment of Noble Ssiyór of Mrelú

**Number:** 25th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Dark-yellow helmet with white crest and gold trim; dark-yellow armour with gold trim; white kilt; dark-yellow and white shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** No religious affiliation. Lord Ssiyór is a crackpot but has good troops. Based at Mrelú.

## Legion of Defence Against Evil

**Number:** 27th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Pike, Axe, Mace  
**Uniform:** Dark-green helmet with yellow crest and red trim; dark-green armour with yellow trim; white kilt; dark-green and yellow shield with red trim.  
**Notes:** Devoted to Qón. Based on the Isle of Gánga.

## Legion of the Armoured Vision of Death

**Number:** 29th MI  
**Weapons:** Short Spear, Short Sword  
**Uniform:** Brown helmet with light-brown crest and copper trim; brown armour with dark brown trim; white kilt; copper shield with brown trim.  
**Notes:** Devoted to Sárku and believed to have included undead during the Civil War. Has an excellent magical contingent. Based at Penóm.

## Legion of Chulin the Foreigner

**Number:** 33rd MI  
**Weapons:** Short Spear, Long Sword, Long Bow  
**Uniform:** Helmet, armour, and shield basically blue, with everything else variable.  
**Notes:** Mercenary legion accepting anyone regardless of social level. No religious affiliation. Based at Púrdimal.

## Legion of the Prince of the Blue Room

**Number:** 35th MI  
**Weapons:** Halberd, Long Pike, Axe, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Dark-blue helmet with silver crest and black trim; dark-blue armour with black trim; blue kilt; blue and dark-blue shield with black trim.  
**Notes:** Devoted to Ksárul and Grugánu. Based at Púrdimal.

## Legion of Káikama of Béy Sü

**Number:** 36th MI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Dark-green helmet with bright-green crest and silver trim; dark-green armour with silver trim; white kilt; dark-green and purple shield with silver trim. Green leathers; purple cloak with green trim.  
**Notes:** Primarily devoted to Dlamélish and Hriháyal. Its barrack parties are legendary. Based at Béy Sü.



## Archers

### Regiment of the Clan of the Silver Lightning

- Number:** 7th AR  
**Weapons:** Long Bow, Short Sword  
**Uniform:** Brown helmet with blue trim; brown armour with silver trim; brown kilt; brown and blue shield with silver trim.  
**Notes:** No religious affiliation. Based at Béy Sü under the command of a Páchi Lei (non-human).

### Legion of the Peaks of Kráa

- Number:** 12th AR  
**Weapons:** Long Bow, Mace (obsidian)  
**Uniform:** Brown helmet with black trim; brown armour with black trim; brown kilt; copper shield.  
**Notes:** Fanatic Sárku worshippers from the mountains around the City of Sárku. They use poisoned arrows. Rumoured to have undead cohorts. Based in the Chákas.

### Legion of the Clan of the Broken Bough

- Number:** 19th AR  
**Weapons:** Composite Bow, Short Sword  
**Uniform:** Red helmet with brown trim; red armour; light-brown kilt; red shield with blue trim. Red leathers.  
**Notes:** Famous archers fanatically devoted to Vimúhla and Chiténg. Based at Fasiltum, a traditional centre of archery.

### Legion of Giriktéshmu

- Number:** 23rd AR  
**Weapons:** Composite Bow, Axe  
**Uniform:** Brown helmet with red trim; brown armour with blue trim; red kilt; red shield with blue trim.  
**Notes:** A noble legion of ancient standing. No religious affiliation. Based at Jakálla, but cohorts are often split off to support other legions.

### Legion of Eléchu of Usenánu

- Number:** 30th AR  
**Weapons:** Composite Bow, Axe, Two-Handed Mace, Sword  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet with white crest; dark banded blue and gold armour; light-blue kilt; dark-light blue and gold shield.  
**Notes:** Devoted to Avánthe. Based at Usenánu.

### Legion of the Crystalline Peak

- Number:** 41st AR  
**Weapons:** Composite Bow, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Brown helmet with green trim; brown armour with blue trim; green kilt; green shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** No religious affiliation. Based at Rii.

## Crossbowmen

### Regiment of the Knower of Spells

- Number:** 5th XB  
**Weapons:** Medium Crossbow, Light Crossbow, Mace  
**Uniform:** Black helmet with purple trim; black armour; purple kilt; brown shield.  
**Notes:** Primarily a city guard unit. Devoted to Grugánu. Based at Mekú.

### Legion of Glorious Destiny

- Number:** 9th XB  
**Weapons:** Heavy Crossbow, Medium Crossbow, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Bright-red helmet with blue trim; dark-red armour with blue trim; kilt varies; black and bright-red shield with blue trim.  
**Notes:** Devoted to Vimúhla. Patrols the Milumanayáni frontier.

### Legion of the Wind of Iron

- Number:** 10th XB  
**Weapons:** Heavy Crossbow, Medium Crossbow, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Dark-red helmet with gold trim; dark-red armour with gold trim; white kilt; dark-red shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** Devoted to Chegárra. Based in Aukésha.

### Legion of the Citadel of Glory

- Number:** 13th XB  
**Weapons:** Heavy Crossbow, Flail, Spiked Club  
**Uniform:** Dark-blue helmet with red-orange crest and silver trim; dark-blue armour with silver trim; red-orange kilt; dark-blue and red-orange shield with silver trim.  
**Notes:** Famous Tumissan crossbowmen, commanded by the Governor of Tumissa and devoted to Vimúhla and Chiténg. Based in Tumissa.

### Legion of Lord Khariháya

- Number:** 14th XB  
**Weapons:** Light Crossbow, Medium Crossbow, Axe  
**Uniform:** Red-orange helmet with blue crest and gold trim; blue armour with gold trim; red-orange kilt; blue and red-orange shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** Another legion of Tumissan crossbowmen. No religious affiliation but over half worship Vimúhla and Chiténg. Based in Tumissa.

## Slingers

### Legion of the Clan of the Standing Stone

- Number:** 2nd SL  
**Weapons:** Sling, Staff Sling, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Brown armour with black trim; white kilt; dark brown shield with blue trim.  
**Notes:** No religious affiliation. Based at Úrmish and led by the clan patriarch.

### Legion of the Joyful Clan of Noble Vrayáni

- Number:** 3rd SL  
**Weapons:** Sling, Mace  
**Uniform:** Light-blue armour with blue trim; brown kilt; light-blue and red shield with blue trim.  
**Notes:** Ancient and noble unit of famous Vrayáni slingers; non-Vrayáni cannot enlist. Based on the Isle of Vrá.

### Legion of the Twelve Paths of Avánthe

- Number:** 9th SL  
**Weapons:** Sling, Short Sword  
**Uniform:** Light-blue armour with white trim; light-blue kilt; blue and orange shield with white trim.  
**Notes:** Fanatical devotees of Avánthe, all aridáni women. Based at Pétris Layóda.

## Light Infantry

### Legion of the Sapphire Kirtle

- Number:** 12th LI  
**Weapons:** Light Javelin, Axe, Sling  
**Uniform:** Blue and dark-blue shield with white trim.  
**Notes:** Fanatical aridáni women devoted to Dilinála. Based near Mrelú.

### Legion of the Clan of the Inverted Hand

- Number:** 27th LI  
**Weapons:** Long Bow, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Brown helmet with green trim; light-brown shield with brown trim.  
**Notes:** Kúrt Hills tribesmen, mostly loyal to Karakán. This ancient clan legion provides scouting and reconnaissance for other legions.



## Artillery

### Legion of Káingmra of Béy Sü

**Number:** 8th AT  
**Weapons:** Ballista, Onager, Trebuchet, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet with red trim; blue armour with red trim; white kilt; red and blue shield with gold trim.  
**Notes:** No religious affiliation. Based at Béy Sü but cohorts attached to numerous other legions.

### Legion of Mengáno the Jakállan

**Number:** 12th AT  
**Weapons:** Ballista, Onager, Trebuchet, Long Sword  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet with green trim; blue armour with green trim; white kilt; green and silver shield with blue trim.  
**Notes:** The top artillery legion. No religious affiliation. Based at Jakállan. Lightning Bringer Skill available at the Game Master's discretion.

### Legion of Gagársha of Mmilláka

**Number:** 14th AT  
**Weapons:** Ballista, Onager, Trebuchet, Mace  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet with yellow trim; blue armour with green trim; yellow kilt; yellow and blue shield with green trim.  
**Notes:** Mostly worshippers of Qón. Based at Thráya.

## Sappers

### Battalions of Vrishtára the Mole

**Number:** 2nd SA  
**Weapons:** Short Sword (primarily engineers; fighting is not their job)  
**Uniform:** Black helmet and armour with copper trim; brown kilt; brown and black shield with copper trim. Black leathers.  
**Notes:** Mostly worshippers of Sárku, Hrü'ü, and Ksáru. Based at Khirgár, but with cohorts scattered in support of other legions.

### Legion of the Slayers of Cities

**Number:** 5th SA  
**Weapons:** Axe, (primarily engineers; fighting is not their job)  
**Uniform:** Brown helmet and armour with copper trim; purple kilt; brown and black shield with copper trim.  
**Notes:** Mostly worshippers of Hrü'ü and Wurú, but with some Chiténg adherents as well. Based at Katalál, but with cohorts scattered in support of other legions.

## Marines

### Flotilla of Hagárr of Paránta

**Number:** 1st MA  
**Weapons:** Halberd, Short Pike, Long Sword, Short Bow  
**Uniform:** Dark-blue helmet with red-orange crest and yellow trim; dark-blue armour with red-orange trim; yellow kilt; dark-blue and yellow shield with red-orange trim.  
**Notes:** No religious affiliation. Based at Penóm.

### Squadrons of Tlanéno the Steersman

**Number:** 3rd MA  
**Weapons:** Short Pike, Long Sword, Short Bow, Light Crossbow  
**Uniform:** Dark-blue helmet with gold crest and red trim; dark-blue armour with gold trim; red kilt; dark-blue and gold shield with red trim.  
**Notes:** No religious affiliation. Based at Jakállan and patrols the river and nearby islands.

## Prison Guards

### Legion of Kétl

**Number:** 4th MI  
**Weapons:** Halberd, Long Sword (but they are not combatants)  
**Uniform:** Brown helmet and armour with black trim; dark-grey kilt; brown and black shield with black trim. Black leathers.  
**Notes:** This legion is allowed to impress recruits by Imperial charter. Mostly worshippers of Belkhánu. Based at the Tolék Kána Pits at Béy Sü.

## Non-Human Legions

### Legion of the Splendour of Shényu

**Number:** 4th Shén Aux. HI  
**Weapons:** Axe-Sword, Heavy Halberd, Shield, Pistol-Crossbow  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet and armour with gold trim and helmet crest; blue shields with gold trim and red designs.  
**Notes:** Shén who come to Tsolyánu to find their fortune often enlist in this legion for a time. Based at Béy Sü, but posted in the West.

### Legion of Gr-gà the Egg-Layer

**Number:** 5th Shén Aux. HI  
**Weapons:** Axe-Sword, Heavy Halberd, Shield, Pistol-Crossbow  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet and armour with copper trim and helmet crest; blue shields with copper trim and red designs.  
**Notes:** Started recently by a female Shén rebel who had to flee to Tsolyánu, this legion has attracted some very tough troops. It recruits from egg-groups that are hostile to those which rule Shényu (and staff the other Shén legions), so this legion cannot be used near them without creating problems. Based in Khirgár.

### Legion of the City of Chri

**Number:** 7th Shén Aux. HI  
**Weapons:** Pike, Long Sword, Large Shield, Pistol-Crossbow  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet and armour with red-orange trim and helmet crest; blue shields with red-orange trim and green designs.  
**Notes:** Established by a rich, demented noble who is obsessed with Shén and even dresses in armour made to resemble a Shén; the Shén tolerate him but the Empire is reluctant to use this legion. Mediocre and undependable. Based in Úrmish.

### Horde of Hrk-ss, the Eater of Eggs

**Number:** 9th Shén Aux. HI  
**Weapons:** Long Spear, Mace, Large Round Shield, Pistol-Crossbow  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet and armour with silver trim and helmet crest; blue shields with silver trim and white designs.  
**Notes:** Raised from among members of a break-away Shén egg-group which was given asylum and lands in the Empire over 150 years ago in exchange for furnishing a legion. Based at Sokátis.

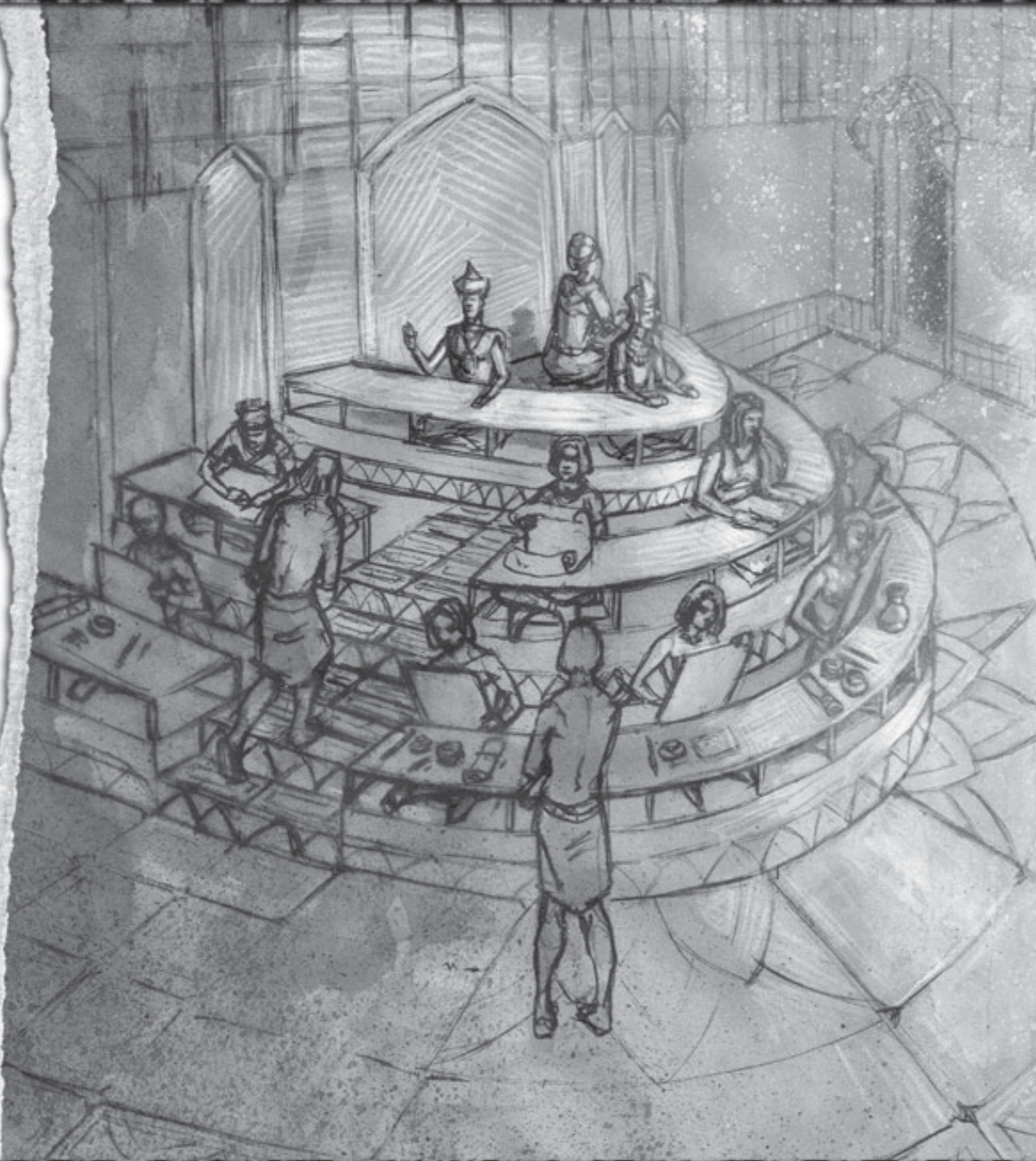
### Legion of Tik-nékw-két

**Number:** 1st Pé Chói Aux MI  
**Weapons:** Spears, Swords, Long Pointed Shield, Small Composite Bow  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet and armour with silver trim and white plumes and tunic; blue shield with silver trim.  
**Notes:** An ancient and traditional legion, which sometimes includes human officers and enlisted as well as Pé Chói. Based at Chéne Hó.



# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE



## CHAPTER 9: LIFE IN TSOLYÁNU



## Legion of the Nest of Ttik-Deqéq

**Number:** 9th Pé Chói Aux. MI  
**Weapons:** Javelins, Rapiers, Small Round Shields  
**Uniform:** Blue helmet and armour with copper trim and dark red plumes and tunic; blue shield with dark red trim.  
**Notes:** A good and ancient legion, whose Kérdu worships the Black Old One (the Pé Chói change deity) and hates worshippers of Thúmis and Keténgku passionately. Based at Páya Gupá.

## Legion of the Forest of Hh-kk-ssá

**Number:** 10th Pé Chói Aux. MI  
**Weapons:** Javelins, Jagged Sword, Light Diamond-Shaped Shield  
**Uniform:** No helmet or armour; green shield with blue trim.  
**Notes:** This legion's troops are used as scouts and forest rangers, but have a higher status than most such troops. Based at Butrús.

## Legion of Tikik-dsá-ké

**Number:** 14th Pé Chói Aux. MI  
**Weapons:** Sword, Large Crossbow, Small Diamond-Shaped Shield  
**Uniform:** No helmet or armour; blue shield with red trim.  
**Notes:** Used for centuries as Khirgá city guards, this legion is now employed as light missile troops.

## Legion of the Whistling Peak

**Number:** 4th Hláka Aux. LI  
**Weapons:** Light Javelins, Light Sword, Small Shield  
**Uniform:** No helmet or armour; dark brown shield with light blue trim (only carried on assaults)  
**Notes:** Based at Hekéllu, but units are scattered around the Empire as auxiliary scouts for other legions; used for aerial reconnaissance and sometimes bombardment as well.

## Legion of Aerial Joy

**Number:** 9th Hláka Aux. LI  
**Weapons:** Light Javelins, Light Sword, Small Shield  
**Uniform:** No helmet or armour; dark brown shield with dark blue trim (only carried on assaults).  
**Notes:** Based at Sokátis, but units detached to other legions as above; these are experienced troops who have seen action on the Salarváni border.

## Legion of Tangled Root Eaters

**Number:** 2nd Páchi Léi Aux. MI  
**Weapons:** Long Sword, Long Barbed Spear, Shield, Mace  
**Uniform:** Bronze helmet and armour with dark blue trim; dark blue shield with bronze trim.  
**Notes:** Based at Butrús, this legion has a long and distinguished history and a reputation for dependability. Members tend to worship the traditional Dark Gods of the Páchi Léi, similar to the humans' Dark Trinity.

## Legion of Deep Green Shadow

**Number:** 6th Páchi Léi Aux. MI  
**Weapons:** Two-handed Sword, L. Shield, Medium Crossbow  
**Uniform:** Bronze helmet and armour with black trim; black shield with bronze trim.  
**Notes:** Used as border guards along the Mu'ugalaványi and Yán Koryáni frontiers. Based West of Tumíssa. Members tend to worship the Páchi Léi variants of the Lords of Stability.

## Legion of the Dancer Without Eyes

**Number:** 2nd Ahoggyá Aux. HI  
**Weapons:** Very Large Sword (x2), Long Spear (x2), Shield  
**Uniform:** Blue armour with varying trim; dark blue shields with gold trim.  
**Notes:** Deadly and ferocious fighters, this legion is used as heavy phalanx or shock troops. Based at Jaikalór.

## Legion of Gurúggma

**Number:** 3rd Ahoggyá Aux. HI  
**Weapons:** Very Large Sword (x2), Long Spear (x2), Shield  
**Uniform:** Blue armour with varying trim; black shields with red trim.  
**Notes:** An old legion that was falling into decay, it was revived during the war with Yán Kór, but is still somewhat inexperienced and recruiting heavily. Historically based on the Isle of Gánga, but recently moved to Jakálla.

## The Government

The government of Tsolyánu offers many opportunities to intelligent and savvy citizens.

## A Day in the Government

*Accountancy is the most dangerous and exciting profession in the world. I have happily placed my humble abilities in this area at the service of the Emperor, may he reign for a thousand years. I have done this at considerable risk to my self, my health, and even my reputation. The bureaucratic life is one of subtle conflict, conflicts so subtle that a naïve person may never recognise the danger they are in until it is far too late. The government requires a particular kind of mind; orderly, precise, and well-educated. Fortunately, I have developed just such a mind for I am Sijjámu hiRánmiyal, bureaucrat extraordinary. My speciality is forensic project management — I am the accountant you send for when things do not add up. Some people think I have no sense of humour! Actually I have a well-developed sense of humour, it just happens to be rather unpleasant.*

*As aspirant bureaucrat, you should always remember that there are those who allow lesser loyalties to interfere with their greater duty to the Emperor. It is the mission of the bureaucrat to guard against such treason. Our role, our responsibility is a great one and there is no higher destiny than to serve in the Imperial government. Fortunately, due to the foresight of his Imperial majesty we are equipped with considerable powers to enforce the royal will. At our report, all of the military and judicial forces of the Empire can be brought into play and our services are vital to both the ordinary and extra-ordinary activities of our nation. Neither war nor peace can be successful without our strenuous effort.*

*Taxation is the greatest weapon ever devised by man, more powerful in its application than any sorcery or trebuchet. It may be cruel, but can also be precise and devastating when wielded by an expert. The assessment of tax can be extremely useful in the moderation of the more intemperate elements within the Empire, as all property in the Empire belongs, in the final analysis, to the Emperor.*

*Aristocrats, even very intelligent aristocrats, ignore detail as beneath their dignity and many of the Temples favour theological orthodoxy over administrative competence. This means that a person such as myself, a skilled bureaucrat from a medium clan, can pick away at their procedures to reveal their actual practices. No secret is truly proof against a sufficiently persistent bureaucrat — a fact which is often ignored by the arrogant conspirators of the various secret societies.*

*Even the most careful of conspirators tends to forget the paper trail that they so often leave. The Temple of Ksárul may be cunning, but their calligraphy leaves much to be desired and their grasp of accountancy is not nearly so advanced as they might wish. They may disguise their faces, use magic to eradicate their memories, and even hunt down any unfortunate witnesses to their meetings. But if you follow the money, you can unravel the deepest of secrets by means unimagined to the ordinary person. Even if a criminal were to eradicate every record of their own, I could still track their activities through the accounts of those clans that serve them. It is merely a question of seeing the shape of the hole left by the attempt to conceal.*

*Of course not all of the work of the bureaucrat is so demanding or so arcane. My own career was built on a solid foundation of organisational and scribal experience. I can recommend that any aspiring administrator concentrate on developing a fine hand with the reed pen and a sharp eye for detail. If a bureaucrat has these two things, he can go anywhere in the Empire and win his silent battles in the corridors of power.*



## Government Buildings

The main government office in a Tsolyáni city is an immense, high-ceilinged hall, within which stone daises and piled reed mats form a complex terrain of hills and valleys representing the divisions and levels within the government, limned with the glimmer of innumerable oil-burning reading lamps. Each dais has places for the appropriate bureaucrats to sit, along with writing materials and scrolls of records. The layout of the room is the physical representation of an organisational chart, with concentric levels rising for increasing levels of power and small wooden foot-bridges to allow easy access between appropriate levels. An astute Tsolyáni can walk into his or her local Palace of the Realm and see precisely how the taxation department relates to the Magistracy simply by looking at their physical positions. Military administration and logistics is handled by the Palace of Ever-Glorious War and religious relations by the Palace of the Priesthoods.

Within the government, extending its tendrils throughout the structure, is the Covert Arm of the Omnipotent Azure Legion (OAL), the Empire's secret police. The OAL has agents in every branch of the government, as well as organisations outside it, reporting directly to Avanthár at the highest levels to ensure the security of the Petal Throne.

## Joining the Government

To find employment at one of the Palaces, one has to apply and pass an entrance examination. Most aspiring bureaucrats join a Palace directly from Temple school, having spent their final year in school being prepared for their entry examinations. Others serve in the Priesthoods first, and either transfer to the government or work on loan to it. Many employees of the Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods are actually still Priests, on loan to the government and serving the interests of their Temple as they can. Similarly, many officials in the Palace of Ever-Glorious War are either reserve or former military officers. In both of the latter cases, an individual may shift back and forth between careers.

## Training for the Government

The entrance examination for a government job is the focus of every temple school education. Unconventional thinkers need not apply, but good administrators and accountants are always welcome. In addition, the Palaces value skills that are relevant to their area of specialisation: the Palace of the Realm always needs people knowledgeable in law and government, for example, and the Palace of Foreign Lands seeks translators and diplomats. The best way to get a position in the Palace of Ever-Glorious War is to put in a term in a good legion, serving in a staff role; similarly, spending time as an Administrative Priest eases the way into the Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods or even the Palace of the Realm (which can always use the Skills taught in the Priesthoods). Priests of Chegárta, a Deity who values competent and honest administration, are especially common in the Palaces.

Once a person has joined the ranks of the government, promotion is heavily biased in favour of those with the right clan, the right abilities, and the resources to please their superiors. Two equally competent people can have radically different rates of career advancement depending on their capacity to persuade, impress, and bribe their way up the hierarchy. A tendency to point out inconvenient facts may do serious damage to a young bureaucrat's career. Successful bureaucrats learn to say "Yes" in ways that defy the conventional definition of the word, she open disagreement with ones superiors is seen as reprehensibly clumsy. This habit can become so ingrained that a highly skilled administrator may be quite incapable of giving a straight answer to anything, from the time of day to his or her given name.

## Career Paths

The Imperial government is organised into four parallel institutions referred to as "Palaces," a structure and division of responsibilities dating back to Engsvanyáli times. Within each Palace are numerous subdivisions and a multitude of career tracks, many of which also date back to the Engsvanyáli period. The Omnipotent Azure Legion is more recent, and organised in a more streamlined fashion.

## The Palace of the Realm

The Palace of the Realm controls domestic civil affairs: taxation, public works, and the judicial system. It is responsible for maintaining much of the infrastructure of Tsolyáni cities, keeping the roads and the sewers in good order. Every town with more than 5,000 inhabitants has its own branch of this Palace, which acts as a form of "Town Hall" for public works and law enforcement. The Palace of the Realm also controls the City Guard and the Market Police because of their close relationship with the judicial system and integration with the law courts. The Palace of the Realm does the day-to-day work of actually governing the sprawling Tsolyáni Empire.

Jobs for medium or higher-clan people within the Palace of the Realm include administration, the judiciary, tax collection, Imperial Messengers, and direct governance at the town, city, or province level. All of these are not only honourable careers, but can be quite profitable since "inducements" are an accepted part of Tsolyáni life provided one doesn't get too greedy or interfere with the smooth functioning of the Emperor's government. Lower-clan members can look forward to good (though less lucrative) careers as scribes, record-keepers, or clerks to the above officials if well-educated, or as Town Guards, Market Police, Imperial Messengers, or bailiffs if their talents run more toward the physical. In smaller towns, the local headman and any administrators are picked from among the highest clans locally available, and thus many are of low or very low clan status.

## The Palace of Ever-Glorious War

The Palace of Ever-Glorious War controls the disposition and supply of the Imperial army. It is responsible for constructing and maintaining fortifications, military logistics, and for the Sákbe Road Guards and the Tomb Police. Every major city has branches of this Palace, and the Empire's recent military history means that some of their staff are extremely experienced. The Palace of Ever-Glorious War has close ties to the Legions, as many of its staff are, or have been, military officers, and it tends to be very supportive of anything that benefits the military.

Well-connected individuals can find roles as liaisons to other Palaces and government offices, forwarding the Palace of Ever-Glorious War's political aims. All of these roles are honourable; those in logistics and purchasing, where merchants offer constant inducements to encourage the Palace to buy their goods, are profitable as well (abuses are of course dealt with harshly because they can cost lives). Lower-clan people can find work as Imperial Messengers, scribes, record-keepers, or clerks. If one has served in the legions and gets tired of working for the Palace, it is usually easy to arrange a transfer back to a staff position with one's legion; people with inside experience and connections at the Palace are useful in the field. It is not unheard of to transfer back and forth, putting one's military commission on reserve status while working for the Palace.

## The Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods

The Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods handles religious affairs and keeps a close watch on the Tsolyáni temples, making sure that they follow the Imperial will. It collects taxes from the temples and helps to organise public festivals, and it also arbitrates disagreements with and between the temples, and can hand down judgements where no consensus can be reached (see *Man of Gold* for an example of this). All cities and many larger towns have branches of this Palace.

The Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods offers numerous opportunities for higher-clan people; administrators, tax collectors, liaisons to temples and other Palaces, and staff of the Ecclesiastical Courts (judges are appointed by the temples) are the most prominent. Lower-clan people find employment as scribes, record-keepers, and clerks, as well as bailiffs and guards for the Ecclesiastical Courts. Virtually everyone in the Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods is a Priest, a failed Priest who transferred in, or a would-be Priest. As with the legions and the Palace of Ever-Glorious War, it is possible for a Priest to transfer in and out of the Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods as one's career path and ambitions dictate, and experience in both is valuable.

## The Palace of Foreign Lands

The Palace of Foreign Lands deals with international relations, external trade, customs, and diplomacy. In Tsolyánu, this Palace has offices in border towns and



cities, as well as in Béy Sü and Avanthár. Abroad, it has diplomatic missions in the nations bordering Tsolyánu, in Livyánu, and in some smaller nations. It controls customs inspection and enforcement, and so most of its staff are on or near international border crossings. The Palace is also the Empire's diplomatic service, maintaining Tsolyáni embassies abroad. It is the smallest of the four Palaces, but its work is vital — trade between nations is so important that it continues even during wartime, meaning that the diplomats and customs officials must be especially vigilant.

The Palace of Foreign Lands offers higher-clan people lucrative opportunities (any time one has control over trade, the inducements flow in) within Tsolyánu as administrators, customs officials, translators, Imperial Messengers, and analysts, and abroad as diplomats and trade representatives. Higher-clan people with a taste for adventure and a desire to see foreign countries can easily get their wish, since most Tsolyáni prefer not to travel outside their own country. It also employs lower-clan people as scribes, record-keepers, clerks, Imperial Messengers, and customs guards and supervisors.

## The Omnipotent Azure Legion

The Omnipotent Azure Legion has three branches: its military arm, the Servitors of Silence, and its covert branch (which acts as an intelligence service and secret police). The three branches have separate chains of command, but can call upon each other's resources as needed. Its military branch is an elite heavy infantry legion, the Empire's premier fighting force. The Servitors of Silence are a corps of deaf-mutes, trained from childhood to serve the Emperor in the Golden Tower at Avanthár and the only staff who ever see the Emperor directly. They also supply the highest officials of all three levels of the OAL (the Kérdu of the military wing of the legion is not a deaf-mute, but has advisors who are). The covert branch of the OAL infiltrates and observes Tsolyáni society at all levels — its agents are in every major temple, legion, or government office, and operatives can be found anywhere and everywhere, protecting the Empire from attack from within or without. The OAL's covert branch is headquartered in Avanthár, but one can find an office of the OAL in any Palace in the Empire (in addition to the covert agents who may be in place there). The covert branch of the OAL, which reports directly to the High Chancery at Avanthár, provides the Emperor with a way of ensuring that his people are following his commands. Since they have such a direct link to the Emperor, agents of the OAL wield a tremendous amount of authority and command great respect and fear from the rest of Tsolyánu. With that power, however, comes great responsibility and accountability to one's superiors (for details on the military wing of the OAL, see page 211).

## Circle Ranks and Government Posts

Government officials are ranked by Circles, which correspond roughly to the position the person holds. Occasionally a bureaucrat holds a post which seems too low for his or her Circle rank. These exceptions are often products of political manoeuvrings which have led to a senior person being sidelined. Conversely, people are occasionally given posts above their Circle rank. These appointments may be temporary, or may be in response to a local emergency — for example, in wartime the normally laborious promotions procedure may temporarily be accelerated or bypassed — and this flexibility is itself part of the tradition of the government.

Because there are so many different roles within the government, it is impossible to list all of them and their corresponding Circle ranks. Game Masters may invent positions as needed; some are general, others are quite specific with grandiose names. The table below gives general guidelines.

## Social Standing and Rank

People from lower clans will find their opportunities for promotion within the government are limited. While it is not impossible for a lower-clan person to attain dizzying heights of power — for example, one man worked his way up from being a door guard in a rural fief and now serves in the Court of Purple Robes — doing so takes a combination of skill, ruthlessness, and sheer luck. Most Low clan people will never advance beyond the 5th or 6th circle. Members of medium clans are the backbone of the government, but even they are unlikely to advance beyond the

### Table 9-4: Circles and Positions Held

Circle	Typical positions
1-4	Lower-ranking clerk, scribe, petty functionary
5-8	Supervisor, overseer, middle-level clerk, rural judge (Tugrúnmokoi)
9-12	Local department head, District Prefect, rural fief administrator, higher aides and attaches, magistrate, town mayor (Mraduharétokoi), administrator (Dhiyáltokoi)
13-15	Mayor of a large city (Savalharétokoi), District Palace chief (Mayaharétokoi), member of the Governor's suite, senior magistrate
16-18	Provincial Palace Head (Muniharétokoi), Ambassador (Thagamúsekoi), Senior Advisor at Provincial Headquarters, Senior Magistrate of the Governor's court (Tugrúnmodalikoi)
19-21	Provincial Governor (Jaithulénkoi), Courtiers at Avanthár, Court of Purple Robes
22-24	Highest Chancery officials at Avanthár
25	Provost of the High Chancery (this is the highest Circle rank known)

Some Circle ranks are kept secret, especially within the Omnipotent Azure Legion. City Guards, Sákke Road Guards, Market Police, etc. use military ranks instead of Circle Rank.

10th or 12th circle. The higher positions are the province of the higher clans, and they are jealously guarded. For people from high clans, the government provides an opportunity to attain great power — but even for them, the road will be rough at times and the competition fierce at the top levels.

It is potentially easier for a talented person from a lower clan to advance in the OAL, though that organisation is extremely secretive about ranks and structure. Of course, one does not gain some of the prestige associated with a high post if one cannot talk about it.

## Government Structure

The structure of the Tsolyáni government looks like a pyramid. At the bottom, even the smallest rural hamlet has its Headman, who represents the administrative service of the Empire even if he or she has no Circle rank and cannot read or write. Above the village heads and town and city mayors are local and regional officials, who forward their reports up the chain of command, eventually reaching their Provincial Governor. Governors are responsible for co-ordination, regional planning, and reporting events in their Province to Avanthár. Reports that reach Avanthár are reviewed by the High Chancery and the Court of Purple Robes for routine decisions. A digest of all information that comes in is presented to the Petal Throne daily; the Emperor has the ability to make changes and reverse decisions at will. Thus, the words of a lowly village headman may be conveyed to the ears of the Emperor in the Golden Tower.

Although routine decisions can be made at all levels, flexibility on major decisions is only possible at the level of the Governor. Even Governors cannot escape oversight, since Avanthár may send officials to assess its officers' performance and each province must submit a concise daily report to the central government, potentially for the delectation of the God-Emperor himself. It is rare for the Petal Throne reverse a decision made by its servants in the government, but it has happened and leads to the great embarrassment of anyone who has so failed the Emperor. All civil servants strive to avoid such a calamity, and thus a fear of criticism permeates the hierarchy and creates a very conservative bureaucratic culture. The Tsolyáni bureaucrat would rather do nothing at all than be seen to do anything wrong. It is less a problem of passing the buck than of avoiding it entirely.



# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE



## CHAPTER 10: GAME MASTERING TÉKUMEL



# Game Mastering Tékumel

## Yes, You Can!

Can anyone except Prof. Barker really run Tékumel? Yes — many people, including several of this game's designers, have run Tékumel campaigns successfully for years even with the scattered materials that have been available in the past. *Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne* gives GMs a number of tools they haven't had in one place before, from essays on life in the various professions, to character Archetypes, to mini-campaigns and adventure seeds. You don't need to go out and search for other books — you have it all in the book you now hold.

Here are a couple pieces of advice for those who haven't run a Tékumel campaign before and are wondering how to handle it.

## Remember, It's Your Tékumel

There's a lot of information available about Tékumel, and the level of detail can be daunting. The most common concern potential Tékumel GMs have is "how can I possibly learn all of this and get it right?"

The answer is: don't worry about it. You bought the game and you're running the campaign — you can do your own version of Tékumel, and your players will be just fine with it. It doesn't matter if you make mistakes. It's a game; have fun. If you make mistakes, or if you want to change things on purpose, go right ahead — it's your Tékumel.

## Start Small

If you're concerned about learning everything you feel is necessary to run a Tékumel campaign, make it easy on yourself: start the campaign in a limited area, with a limited amount of complexity. That way you only have to learn (and teach your players) a fraction of what's out there.

The original *EPT* recommended starting characters as barbarians fresh off the boat in order to accomplish this. That's certainly an option but it's potentially limiting and you don't need to do anything that extreme. One approach is to begin the characters in a context that has some elements of familiarity and is insular. That lets you ease the players (and yourself) in, without jumping into the deep end. For example, start the characters in the same clan, and have the initial adventures take place within the clanhouse and the clan businesses. That allows you to focus on social interactions within the limited context of the clan, and draws on the understanding the players already have of family relationships and politics. There are certainly differences in Tsolyáni, but sibling rivalry, parental love, and family disputes are universal. Similarly, a campaign set in a military unit (like any other hierarchical, insular group) provides a relatively familiar and limited context, with established roles and interactions — many players have gamed in a military context before, and playing a Tsolyáni soldier isn't much of a jump. Then, you can gradually expand the scope as desired and as you become more comfortable with the setting.

Even if you're a hardened Tékumel veteran, this can also be a good approach because it allows you to go into great depth in your chosen setting.

# Campaign Creation

There are several different ways to define how to play a campaign set in Tékumel: Level of Realism; Level of Magic; Time Period.

## Level of Realism

There are different ways to play a campaign set in Tékumel, depending on how realistic or how heroic a game your group prefers. None are inherently better than the others, but different ones may be more suitable for different groups and moods. You should give the realism level of the campaign serious thought before players create characters. Campaigns can range from the gritty to the heroic, each level requiring a slightly different slant on many things. Prof. Barker frequently talks about "real Tékumel," meaning the Tékumel he visualises, where magic is quite rare and things are more like real life. He runs his campaigns at a pretty high power level, however — and sees this as being much like the contrast between the actual Middle Ages on Earth and the way they're portrayed in traditional fantasy RPGs in terms of how much fun they are to live and adventure in.

The level of realism you pick affects how many Character Points a character starts with (30 for Gritty Realism, 35 for the Middle Way, and 40+ for Heroic Fantasy).

## Gritty Realism

This is a low-power campaign where you are trying to give the players as "realistic" an experience as possible. Characters are about as skilled as the average Tsolyáni, and they struggle for recognition and honour in a huge, uncaring world.

## The Middle Way

This is a moderate-power campaign, where you balance enough realism to maintain suspension of disbelief and give a "realistic" experience with enough power to make things exciting and exotic. Characters are exceptional people and have the potential to become renowned for their deeds, but they aren't head and shoulders above the mass of humanity. This is the most common campaign level.

## Heroic Fantasy

This is a high-power campaign, where the players are playing heroes. Characters are far better at what they do than the mass of humanity, and the challenges facing them are the stuff of which epics will be sung for centuries.

## Level of Magic

Related to realism, in many cases, but actually separate, is the prevalence of magic. Make this decision carefully. On Tékumel, the Temples largely control how Magic is taught. Though there are restrictions on how they teach spells, at what rate, in what order, is very much a cultural artefact, this is very much a strong control. In "less realistic" campaigns, or campaigns where Magic is more prevalent, you can loosen these strictures and consider them looser rules, or only guidelines.

For example, in a Medium Magic or High Magic setting, in an emergency, or where the Temple is convinced that its interests are served by teaching a Generic or Temple spell to someone with a lower Magic Skill, they will do it without hesitation.

The death of a character, for example, will likely be permanent (or require high level intervention) in a Low Magic campaign, and requires resources and connections to fix in a Medium Magic campaign, but is simply a matter of amassing the needed funds for a Revivification Spell in a High Magic campaign. Healing wounds is also a very different experience depending on whether magical healing is readily available.

The level of Magic you choose affects how much it costs to acquire magical Spells, by changing the conversion rate between Skill Points and Spell Points (see page 116) and how much it cost to grow the Energy Pool, which determines how many Spells a character can cast. More importantly, though, it's how you approach the subject.



## Low Magic

Temples teach sorcery to a select few, the Legions have magical contingents, and extremely powerful people have access to arcane devices — but very few people ever see magic performed unless they are on the battlefield. Those few who do learn it must devote all of their time to its study, and even then can only specialise in a few Spells. Magical devices are exceedingly rare and extravagantly valuable.

This is the normal Level of Magic in a Gritty Realism campaign.

## Medium Magic

Most people in lower clans see magic once or twice in their lives, and while it is not a part of daily life even for most people above that level, it is a constant and pervasive element in Tsolyáni society. Anyone who needs to find a sorcerer and has the money to pay one can do so, and children with the potential to become good students of magic are routinely recruited. Sorcerers have to work hard to learn magic, but can develop a diverse set of abilities given time. Magical devices are expensive, but no more so than other valuable resources, and large or well-off clanhouses have a small store of them for emergencies. At High Clan level and above, magic is just another resource.

This is the normal Level of Magic in a Middle Way campaign.

## High Magic

Everyone gets to see magic once in a while, though its routine use is still largely restricted to the upper classes because they have priority for training in the Temples and can also afford to hire sorcerers from lower clans. Sorcerers and magical creatures abound, and the less powerful magical devices are on offer at better shops. While the study of magic is still difficult and time-consuming, sorcerers can build up an extensive corpus of Spell knowledge.

This is the normal Level of Magic in a Heroic Fantasy campaign.

## Time Period

Though it is reasonably common to set your campaign in the current time in the Empire of the Petal Throne, in Tsolyánu, there is no need to limit yourself to that period. Tékumel is old. Many civilisations and empires have risen and fallen. The History of Tékumel (see page 146) gives an overview of the history of the planet and its peoples, from its conquest by the Humanspace Alliance to the current time. The following sections provide you with a guideline on how to handle playing in other time periods than the default current-day setting.

### Playing in the Latter Times

A game set in this period will be radically different from a modern era Tékumel game; even the positions of the landmasses will be different. This is when the first powerful magicians appear as they begin to explore and exploit the new potential of other planar power to affect reality. This is combined with the survival of considerable technological understanding and significant stockpiles of Humanspace-era equipment. This is a Tékumel where the new upstart magicians successfully challenge the old technological order for the first time and weird combinations of magic and science become almost commonplace. This is probably best handled as a Heroic Fantasy and the cost of the Special Item Attribute should be reduced to 1 Character Point per Level. Magic is very different, and only universal Spells are available. Spell casting costs are doubled to represent the relatively crude management of other-planar power at this time.

### Playing in the Empire of Llyán

This has settled down to the general level of technology seen in modern Tékumel (swords, crossbows, etc.) but there has been a great expansion of magic. Any Spell known in modern-era Tékumel probably has an equivalent in this period and you may allow players to develop Spells that do not exist in the modern Spell lists (but these should be higher priced). A magician in this period could know many more Spells than a modern magician and so the cost of buying universal Spells is half the standard cost. Spells affiliated with specific temples are still unavailable.

### Playing in the Three States Period

This should be handled as the Empire of Llyán.

### Playing in the Time of the Dragon Warriors

The first thing to decide is what the “dragons” actually were (see The Dragon Warriors, page 145). Magic is different from that of earlier ages; universal Spells are available normally. Spells associated with Vimúhla and Sárku are now available to their adherents.

### Playing in the Time of the Fishermen Kings

This is a time of high maritime adventure, exploration, and conflict at sea. On land, there are colossal battles between the humans and the resurgent forces of the Ssú. There is also the religious division amongst humanity between the east and the west. Spells affiliated with Ksáru become available to His adherents.

### Playing in the Time of the First Imperium — the Bednálljan Empire

This is a vast, decadent Empire founded and often run on conspiracy, assassination, and seduction. It is a glorious place where high stakes and sudden death are the order of the day and trust is often misplaced. This is an Empire of gold and blood where beauty and horror coincide. This is a Tékumel where human society is dominated by the Gods of Change and the Gods of Stability are yet unknown. In practice, this means that a magician who worships a God of Change has access to affiliated Spells at the normal costs.

### Playing in the Engsvanyáli Empire

This is the renaissance of human society to which modern-era humans often hark back. The general level of technology is slightly higher than that of modern Tsolyánu, which means that the cost of armour and crossbows is half the normal listed cost. Education was better (reduce the cost of Arts and Scholar Skills by one Point) and the importance of the Priesthoods in daily life should be emphasised. It is during this period when the Stability deities become known, and their spells become available.

### Playing in the Time of No Kings

This is the time of heroes of myth and is probably best handled as Heroic Fantasy. The level of technology was lower than that of modern Tsolyánu and starting resources should be halved (this does not affect the Special Item Attribute). In this time a few heroes stood against the rising darkness and in the midst of chaos preserved some of what was best of the times before. Enough remained of Engsvanyáli knowledge and communities to provide good backgrounds for a campaign as they struggle to survive the massive natural disasters and hold back the tide of barbarism. To a modern Tsolyáni, this is a time when warrior Priests lead villagers against evil bandits and great heroes gambled with the Gods and won. This is the period of the great Epics and, if you wish, it can therefore be played in a more cinematic style by giving the characters more Advancement Points than would be usual specifically so that they can use the re-roll rule freely.

## Character Creation

In *Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne*, you, as Game Master (GM), need to take an active role in deciding what kinds of characters are appropriate. Before players generate their characters, you must decide the social level of the campaign and may need to restrict the religions to which characters can belong and the careers characters can follow.



## Social Level

Since Tsolyánu is so stratified, and the differences between life at the different levels of society are so dramatic, the social level at which the campaign takes place is very important. You should look over the essays on the different Clan levels (page 9) to get an idea of how life differs from level to level. If the players do not know much about Tékumel, starting them off as foreigners makes introducing the society easier, but makes it difficult if not impossible for them to get involved in politics. Higher-clan people can get involved in a wider range of activities with a wider range of people (as long as they're high on the social ladder) while members of Middle clans have the ability to talk directly to anyone across the social spectrum and can move in broader circles that way. Clan level is less relevant in a campaign set in the military, though it can dictate the specific legion.

Once you pick a social level, all characters start at that level by default. Players can change a character's social level with Attributes or Defects, with your permission.

## Common Ground

Every character in *Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne* is part of at least two inter-linked communities — clan and religion — in addition to being part of a group of player characters. In some cases, they may be members of other groups as well (legions, temples, secret societies, the Imperial government, etc.). Each of these organisations has their own goals and beliefs, and they sometimes oppose each other. The characters should have some common ground to bind them together, giving them shared goals so they aren't pulled in separate directions by their other loyalties.

The following are some ways to bring the characters together:

### Clan-Cousins

The characters are all members of the same clan working to better their clan and themselves. While some of the characters should be employed by their clan, others could hold positions in the military, Priesthoods, or government in the same city and work on clan business in their spare time. Interactions within the clan, including intra-clan politics, are very important in such a campaign. You should be very careful when choosing the clan level for this kind of campaign, because it will affect the kinds of adventures that are possible.

### Military Unit

The characters are all members of the same legion, perhaps the members of a Semétl (squad) tasked with special duties such as reconnaissance or intelligence operations, which would allow them to operate independently of the main body of the legion. Characters could be enlisted or officers, or they could be lay-Priest sorcerers or other specialists attached to the unit. Clan level matters less in this type of campaign, because military rank supersedes it while characters are on duty.

### Temple Group

The characters are all members of the Priesthood (or very devout and loyal followers) of a specific deity. They perform special missions for their temple, such as troubleshooting or exploring the Underworlds. Any sort of character is suitable for this campaign, though characters with military or bureaucratic positions might have trouble getting the spare time away from their legion or office to adventure with the character group.

### Group Marriage

The characters are all married to each other. In Tsolyánu, a person can legally marry more than one person. Those people can, in turn, be married to multiple other people. The gender of the people involved does not matter. Characters would have to be of the same clan level but could be of differing clans and religions.

## Mutual Connection

All of the characters are known to someone very important who occasionally asks them to do things. If some of the characters are serving in the military, government, or Priesthoods, this patron has to be important enough to "borrow" them — a city governor or Imperial prince, perhaps. In this campaign type, the characters could come from any clan or career but should still be of similar status so they can talk to each other.

## Religion

While the Tsolyáni are tolerant of religious differences, people of drastically different religions rarely socialise much unless they have some other common ground such as members of the same clan or the same legion. Followers of the war deities (Lords Karakán and Vimúhla and their Cohorts) can get along reasonably well, and people mostly get along on each side of the Stability-Change divide, but a party containing members of religions that don't mix well should have some other factor to hold it together.

## Location and Wealth

If the campaign is going to be centred on an urban area, you should give every character, regardless of Clan Level, one or more Levels of the Wealth Attribute for free. Urban Tsolyáni (especially in the metropolises, such as Béy Sü and Jakálla) are far richer than their rural clancousins. Conversely, in a campaign set in a small village, you could require all characters to take one or two BP of the Poor Defect.

## Rank

You may tell players what rank their characters will be in their professions, rather than giving them free rein to buy up using Resource Points. This could be especially important in a campaign set within the military (to avoid having an entire party of Heréksas), Priesthoods, or government.

## Assassins

Realistically, an assassin doesn't belong in a party of player characters unless it's either an entire party of assassins or the character is an infiltrator who is there to do a job and leave afterwards. Assassins are interesting, however, and you may have a player who really wants to play one. One option is to let him or her play an OAL Agent (see Government Careers, page 32), which gives access to similar Skills and equipment without requiring the character to be a member of an Assassins' Clan.

## Playing Non-Humans

There are three general ways to handle non-humans in your campaign. The approach you choose can have serious implications for the game. The way non-humans are going to be handled should be given serious consideration before deciding whether to put restrictions on players who play them, or even whether to permit players to play them at all.

## Incomprehensible and Dangerous

Viewing aliens in this light, most non-human are intelligent creatures that evolved on a different planet, from different creatures with a different brain structure and different instincts. They cannot possibly think like humans do. Humans can communicate with them, but can never be sure how complete the communication is. Even if a non-human's actions make sense, it is impossible to ever understand its thoughts and motivations completely. Characters should be very cautious about dealing with non-humans, and players should be reminded of their alien nature and encouraged to play it up in their character. It is better to err on the side of "too alien" than on the side of "a human in an alien body." You may even not allow players to make non-human characters at all.



## Foreign but Understandable

In this setting, non-humans are different from humans, but they can be understood with familiarity and practise. Since the friendly intelligent races get along so well, their thinking cannot be all that different. The differences that do exist can be overcome with effort, patience, and mutual goodwill. After all, these races have co-existed with humans on Tékumel for millennia; both sides have learned a lot about each other during that time. Players should put thought into portraying them accurately.

## Brothers Under The Skin

The point of gaming is having fun, not worrying about being perfectly in character or theorising about how different a non-human intelligence “should” be. In this setting, just get the basics right: Shén are like big strong humans who don’t speak well; Pé Chóí are like cultured, delicate humans with four arms; Ahoggyá are like rough, crude, smelly humans with four arms and four legs; Hláka are like slightly goofy humans who can fly. This is no worse than the way non-humans are handled in many fantasy role-playing games, and there’s no reason a player shouldn’t play a non-human as a weird human if everyone in the group is okay with it.

## Hints on Game Mastering Tékumel

The following are some suggestions if you have never Game Mastered Tékumel before. They’re based on some of the authors’ experiences, so they may or may not apply to you and your group, but the basic approach is that this isn’t homework. The world is complex, but don’t let that intimidate you; see it as an opportunity. Pick bits you like — you can even flick through the book and randomly choose phrases as a way of generating backgrounds and images for your stories. Go with your interests. If you want an all-Sárku campaign or one set amongst Vrayáni fishermen, go for it.

## Keep It Simple

It is often useful to start with characters of a similar social status, similar interests, etc., then lead them into complexity, rather than starting with an extremely diverse group that will tend to fragment. A split group is difficult to handle and very time-consuming. Give them a reason to be together.

## Listen

Talk as a group about what you are trying to do with the style and themes of the game. Consensus on this will help to develop your campaign in a way that is satisfying to the group as a whole. This is useful when you are setting up your campaign, and vital if you want it to last. There is no rule that says you must take responsibility for everything.

## Key Figures

Don’t work out a plot that you feel you must hold everyone to. Instead, develop an understanding of the 1-4 main non-player characters, their motivations, and their plans. The plot can then evolve from there, making it more flexible than any script could be.

## Being There

Try to imagine the colours, smells, and sounds of a place. Give them a sense of place rather than drawing a map for your players. Tékumel is a place with the bright red colour of ripe Dná grain in the fields, the sun glinting off the shiny lacquered armour of the warriors, the incense wafting from the Temple as they pass, the perfume on the Priestess, the smell of chlén, the scent of blood from the impaling stake by the roadside, the click of a sword being unclipped, the tramp of marching feet, the flapping banners above the wall fort.

This is especially important in Tékumel because most players will have few real-life experiences to draw from in imagining their characters’ environment. Images of temples and bazaars in India, Mayan ruins, and the like can be helpful.

## Finding Inspiration

In addition to Prof. Barker’s novels, which are the obvious place to find inspiration about the world of Tékumel, you may want to look at other sources. Tékumel was heavily influenced not only by cultures like the Moghuls and the Maya, but also by the pulp fantasy and SF of the thirties and forties, which is from where some of the sense of mystery and dark secrets originate. Such stories can give ideas that can be easily adapted to Tékumel.

You can also take ideas for plots and characters from other genres. Some obviously won’t work well on Tékumel (it isn’t the place to do stories about lone heroes, or horsemen), but others can with a little adaptation. Military life has common elements across all times and places, so almost any war memoir or movie could provide fodder for a military campaign (“Saving Changadésha hiRiyén?” “hiMikhél’s Flotilla?”). Shakespeare is always a good choice; cultures vary, but basic human nature really doesn’t.

## Maintain the Mystery

This book attempts to strike a balance between telling you what you need to know to run and play in Tékumel, and telling you so much that it’s all reduced to sociological and biological details. Many aspects of Tékumel remain mysterious to this day — Prof. Barker refuses to tell how Tékumel wound up in a pocket universe (except to hint that it’s important), and is reticent on a lot of other subjects as well. This mystery is frustrating in some ways, but it’s also a key part of what makes Tékumel interesting: the truth isn’t laid out somewhere in black and white. Much of what we’ve told you in this book is “surface” truth, and deeper layers will come to life in your game.

Make sure you don’t destroy the mystery for your players. Don’t let them become too blasé about things that should be frightening or enigmatic. Throw them off guard by changing things around.

## Things to Avoid

Every GM develops his or her own style, but you should probably steer clear of the following.

### Stomping Creativity

Players sometimes brainstorm clever solutions to game situations and it is important not to use this against them. Player creativity should be encouraged, not stepped on. If a player comes up with a good idea you didn’t consider, try to give them some benefit from it. This does not mean that every whacky idea must work, but that you should not restrict an adventure to preset events.

### Favouritism and Game Balance

If one player comes to dominate the sessions, it may get boring for the others. Seriously consider both the Skills available and the sort of stories you are likely to want to tell. A good way to do this is to imagine a starting story first, and design your adventure in a way that it will make use of an ability that each character possesses. Each player should have the opportunity to assume centre stage during the game.

### Losing the Group

Avoid allowing the group to splinter geographically or socially. If your group habitually splits up, many of the players will have to wait while you run each one separately. In Tsolyánu, this can easily happen with social status as well: if there is a wide spread of social status, the group will tend to naturally fragment (since they can’t all go to the same places), which can be a problem. Having half the group standing outside the Sea Blue clanhouse waiting for the group aristocrat to finish negotiating can be a major break in play.



## Danger Signs

There are some common problems that can crop up in a Tékumel campaign. For some players and groups, these issues will not be a problem but you should be aware of them just in case it will be an issue with your game group.

### Domination

If one character has a pre-eminent social position, he or she can squash the roles of the other characters and turn them all into lackeys. This may be appropriate in some situations, but it can also be frustrating for anyone who is not playing that dominant character. It is possible to set up a campaign to work with one high-standing character and several low-standing ones, but it takes the right players and setting.

### To Leap Tall Buildings?

If the power level of your campaign gets into an arms race, this can blot out everything else. Your characters can become superheroes equipped with magic and technology that completely separates them from the life of Tékumel. If you want to play Super-Tékumel, do so — but make it a conscious decision.

### Exterminate!

Tsolyánu can be quite a dangerous place, but reflexive violence on the part of the players can cause serious problems. Simply killing people because “they deserve it” is still murder for the purposes of shámtila. Restraint is required and expected. It is important that players learn how to use this, rather than having characters acting like barbarians.

### Monster Mash

There are true monsters on Tékumel, creatures from alien worlds, genetically engineered killers from the Latter Times, and supernatural horrors which stalk the land. If your characters meet them every game session, they will lose any feeling of fear or awe. Use them sparingly and make them nasty.

## Using the Respect and Favours Rules

You can use these rules in two basic ways, depending on the group's preferences and level of experience with Tékumel. It's important to take them into account, however, because they help players realise what is important in Tsolyáni culture and get into character better.

### By the Numbers

You can use the rules, as written, tracking Respect numerically and keeping track of Favours by level. This method is useful for several reasons. First, it gives you two more ways to reward players for good role-play and acting appropriately Tsolyáni. Second, it emphasises the importance of proper behaviour by assigning a concrete value to its results, thus showing that those results are as important as other indicators that carry numbers (Skills, Stats, etc.). Finally, for inexperienced Tékumel Game Masters and players, it provides a model of how social interactions are supposed to work on Tékumel, much as the Magic system provides a model of how magic is supposed to work. The disadvantage is that the you and the players have yet more values to track, and some feel that respect should not be quantified in the first place, or are annoyed by the extra mechanics involved.

### As a Model

You can read and know the rules, but keep track of the results only vaguely, forming general impressions about how a character is viewed by others and taking them into account when it seems appropriate. This allows flexibility and less record-keeping; players who prefer a rules-light game may favour it. Experienced Tékumel role-players may also prefer this approach, but inexperienced ones may want more reinforcement or guidance.

## Character Advancement

Over the course of a campaign, characters will evolve. They will become more competent, may increase in rank and wealth, and will likely acquire a reputation, for better or worse. Much of this progression is going to be pure role-playing, but some of it is reflected in game mechanics.

You should reward characters by giving them Advancement Points, and may also award Respect Points and other forms of recognition, as appropriate.

### Regular Awards

You are encouraged to award all players one Advancement Point per adventure session. You may occasionally award an additional Point to some or all members of the group for particularly good role-playing or for an in-character action that dramatically benefits the character's or party's objectives. You may modify the awards to get faster or slower character advancement, but be careful to avoid setting the players' expectations too high by always giving the role-playing bonus.

### Campaign Contributions (Optional Rule)

You may choose to award Advancement Points in exchange for campaign contributions: material a player creates, or work that a player does, that enhances the game in some fashion. Examples could include:

- Character diaries, histories, campaign logs, etc.
- Illustrations of characters, NPCs, places, etc.
- Information about the character's family, lineage, or clan, including family trees (which can get quite complex due to the Tsolyáni kinship system)
- Maps
- Props (clan or religion badges, for example)
- Other things that enhance the experience (for example, trying to cook Tsolyáni food, making compilation CDs of music that sets a good tone for adventures, etc.)

The suggested award is 0.5 — 1 Point per contribution. Awards shouldn't be so high that players feel obligated to come up with contributions in order to keep pace with other players, but should reward a player's effort.

### Using Advancement Points

Players can exchange Advancement Points for the following:

- Spell Points
- Energy Pool Points (Optional Rule)
- Skill Points
- Character Points
- Re-rolling a Die Roll

### Spell Points

A player may exchange 1 Advancement Point for 1 Spell Point in a Gritty Realism campaign, 2 in a Middle Way campaign, or 3 in a Heroic Fantasy campaign.

### Learning or Improving Spells

#### Adding or Removing Spell Attributes, Spell Defects, or Spell Specialities

To learn a variation on a spell the magician already knows — a spell variant, the magician must spend time to learn the entire Spell again, starting with a Spell Variant they already know and defining the new spell variant by adding or removing Spell Defects, Spell Attributes, or levels of Spell Attributes and any Spell Specialities.

Learning the Spell successfully results in two spell variants of the spell that the magician can choose from.



## Costs of Learning Spells

The magician must pay a number of Spell Points equal to the cost of the spell variant (see Spell Cost, page 117). If the magician already knows the base spell, or a variant of the spell, the magician must pay a number of Spell Points equal to the difference between the cost of the new spell variant and the cost of the closest spell variant he or she already knows. If the new spell variant costs less than the closest spell variant known, the Spell Point cost is the Spell Level minus the Spell Defects. If he or she does not know any variant of the spell they want to learn, the cost is simply the spell cost.

### Variant of Spell Known

(all modifiers must be against the same Spell Variant)

Spell Attribute known at higher level	+1 per level difference
Spell Attribute known at lower level	-1 per level difference
Spell Attribute not known	-1
Spell Speciality not known	-1
Spell Defect Added	+Bonus of Spell Defect
Spell Defect Removed	- Bonus of Spell Defect
Spell Prerequisite not met	-1 for every Spell Prerequisite not met

No Variant of Spell known -2

### Spell Complexity

Temple Spell -3

### Level of Realism

Gritty Realism -1  
Heroic Fantasy +1

### Knowledge

First Spell in Spell Group -2  
Non-Spell Prerequisites not met -2  
Spell of higher Level in this Phylum Known +1  
One or more spells in Spell Group fully known +2

(a Spell variant with all Spell Attributes at their maximum levels and Spell Specialities)

One or more Spell Groups completely known +2  
(all Spells in a Spell Group fully known)

### Skill

Successful relevant Magic Skill Check +Magic Skill Level

### Social

High Lineage (Very High or Imperial Clan only) +1 per level  
Low Lineage (Very High or Imperial Clan only) -1 per level  
Very High Clan +1  
Imperial Clan +2  
Low Clan -1  
Very Low Clan -2  
Reputation 1 per level  
Respect 1 per level

### Favours

Medium Favour +1  
Big Favour +2  
Huge Favour +3

### Circumstances

Asked to be taught this before and failed -1 for each failed attempt to be taught this spell

## Learning Spells

### Finding a Teacher

To learn a spell or a spell variant the magician needs to find a teacher at the Temple of his affiliation, who can cast the spell and will teach him. This involves a social interaction Check, which could be a Bribery, Charm, Negotiation, or Seduction Skill Check, or a straight Charisma Stat Check.

Regardless of what Check is used, use all applicable modifiers. If the Check is successful, the magician starts studying the spell. If the Check fails, the magician has to wait Margin of Failure weeks before trying again. If he or she tries again, he has a penalty of -1 for every successive attempt to learn the same spell, regardless of if the magician tried to or even learned another spell in the meantime.

### Studying the Spell

Studying the Spell, Spell Attribute level, or Spell Speciality is full-time work. It takes a number of weeks equal to 10 plus the Base Cost of the Spell minus the Margin of Success of the relevant Magic Skill Check. A successful Scholar (Magic) Skill Check allows the magician to subtract his or her level in the Scholar (Magic) Skill from this time. The minimum time to learn a spell is 2 weeks, and 4 weeks for a Temple Spell.

### Learning to Cast the Spell

At the end of his or her time studying the spell, the magician must make a Magic Skill Check with all the modifiers for Spell Difficulty, Level of Realism, and Previous Knowledge above. If the Skill Check is successful, the magician knows the spell and can start using it.

If the Skill Check is failed, the magician must study for a number of weeks equal to the Margin of Failure before he or she can try again. A Catastrophic Failure on a Magic Skill Check means the character needs to start over from the beginning. For every additional week of study beyond the time required, the magician gets a bonus of +1 per week, up to a maximum of their relevant Magic Skill Level. For every additional attempt to understand the spell, the magician adds a Bonus of 1 to the Magic Skill Check.

A successfully learned spell is paid for with Skill Points.

## Energy Points (Optional Rule)

You may allow his or her players to increase their characters' Energy Pools, by allowing a player to exchange Advancement Points for Energy Points. These Energy Points are permanently added to the character's Energy Points. The exchange rate varies, depending on the Level of Magic. If you want a more magic-rich campaign — where characters can cast more Spells, more powerful Spells, or a combination — should set a higher exchange rate. Here are some suggested rates:

**Table 10-1: Energy Points to Advancement Points**

Level of Magic	Advancement Points per Energy Point
Low Magic	4
Medium Magic	2
High Magic	1

For campaigns very rich in magic, you may allow players to use this rule during Character Creation to increase the size of their Energy Pool.



## Skill Points

A player may exchange 2 Advancement Points for 1 Skill Point. You may wish to restrict the expenditure to Skills the character has used during the time the Experience was earned, or may wish to make the exchange rate less favourable for Skills that were not used during that time.

## Improving Skills

Purchasing a Level of a Skill requires the same number of Skill Points, it would have required during character generation. This assumes the character studies with an instructor for a number of weeks equal to the Level of the Skill squared. The instructor must be available for a number of hours per day equal to the desired Skill, and must have a higher Level in the Skill than the character.

For Skills, characters who do not want to take the time to study may pay 1.5 times the Skill cost if you agree that the Skill can be learned and/or improved without study time or assistance.

You can reduce the required practise time by half if the character has been using the Skill a lot during play.

## Character Points

A player may exchange 10 Advancement Points for one Character Point, which may then be spent on Stats or Attributes, or to buy off Defects. You have full discretion in deciding which Attributes may be acquired in this fashion (and which Defects may be eliminated). In particular, Attributes/Defects with which the character are born are often not appropriate for purchase. This includes those relating to Clan and Lineage level, which should only be changeable through role-playing (see Improving Clan Level, page 9).

## Improving Stats

Every Character Point will increase a Stat by one Point, just as during character generation, until the Stat has been increased by two Points from its initial Level. After that, the cost for each Level doubles.

*For example; Akhán begins the game with an Intelligence Stat of 4. Raising it to 5 costs 1 Character Point. Raising it a second time, to 6, costs another Character Point. It would, however, cost an additional 2 Points to raise it to 7, and an additional 2 Points to raise it to 8.*

No training time is required to increase a Stat, though a character may only do so if he or she has been using the Stat a lot. You are advised to restrict Stat increases to one or two Points per game year across all Stats.

## Acquiring Attributes or Eliminating Defects

As with Stats, each Character Point may be used to buy Attributes (or buy off Defects) at the same cost spent during Character Generation. You should, however, be very careful about what Attributes/Defects they allow players to purchase during play. A character's Lineage and Wealth Level will almost never change, and Clan Level is something that can only be increased through extensive role-playing over a long period of time ... if ever. A Magic Dampener remains a Magic Dampener until death; there is no way to undo it.

Others, for example Good/Bad Reputation, are best acquired through role-playing, but could be purchased if you feel it is appropriate. The Older Attribute should not be purchased; the increase in Skill Points as a character ages is reflected by experience awards. The following lists Attributes and Defects that are especially appropriate or inappropriate to handle in this way. Those that are not listed are at the GM's discretion.

### Inappropriate

**Attributes:** High Lineage, High Status, Highly Skilled, Older, Wealthy

**Defects:** Bad Start, Low Lineage, Low Status, Poor, Magic Dampener, Younger

### Appropriate

**Attributes:** Flunkies, Friends in High Places, Retainer

**Defects:** Addicted, Nemesis, Physical Disability (with magical treatment), Responsibilities, Shadow Scars

## Re-Rolling

A player may expend 1 Advancement Point to re-roll a die roll, taking the new roll in place of the previous one. You may limit how many times a player can do this for a given roll. Additionally, at your option (this is most appropriate in a Heroic Fantasy game), the character can expend an Advancement Point to avoid being killed by a Spell or item that automatically kills its targets. You may choose to handle this by injuring the character severely, allowing him or her to dodge, or however seems appropriate, but should be careful that this mechanism does not make such Spells and items unthreatening.

## Rank

Characters who perform their jobs well — or perhaps just make sure they pay inducements to the right people — will rise in rank as time progresses. There are no strict rules for this, because circumstances differ from individual to individual, and it is better for you to use Rank as desired within the campaign — as a goal, as a reward, or as a source of challenges. There are, however, some general guidelines.

### Military Rank

Advancement in the military is slower than in the Priesthoods or Government because there are far fewer gradations, but even the lowest social standing members of the Legions can conceivably hope to advance far.

In particular, there are relatively few billets available for line officers (see The Legions, page 209). Characters working in (and content to remain in) non-line roles such as supply, logistics, intelligence, administration, etc. can attain rank faster than those pushing for one of the limited number of combat slots. Of course, slots open up much faster in wartime.

### Priestly Rank

Priests can expect to go up one Circle rank roughly every two years or so, with some variation. It is important to remember that Circle rank doesn't imply authority or responsibility, since positions of authority and responsibility are relatively scarce and usually the subject of much contention and manoeuvring. Priests, therefore, advance not only in Circle rank but in Office, so this is another route for rewarding a Priest character.

In most cases, someone of Low or Very Low clan cannot advance above the 6th Circle, regardless of age or service.

Scholar-Priests have an additional complication: they need to complete a "work," a learned dissertation or something similar, which gets reviewed by a committee of senior scholars, for each Circle they wish to attain. This can slow the advancement of a Scholar Priest.

### Government Rank

Government ranks follow much the same guidelines as Priestly ranks, though Circle level confers a bit more inherent authority within the Government. Again, positions with actual authority (which implies steady income from inducements) are hotly contested.

### Clan Rank

Clans have few ranks, so advancement is slow.

## Resources

Characters who bring lots of Respect, or lots of money, to their clans should be rewarded with an increase in their Base Resource level to reflect better access to clan resources.

## Respect

Characters who perform noble acts should receive Respect Points (for an idea of the amounts that might be appropriate for acts of varying nobility and importance, see Respect, page 51). Keep in mind that characters who perform ignoble acts should,



in turn, receive Respect penalties. Be stingy with Respect Points, so they do not become devalued in the campaign.

## Awards of Valour

The Tsolyáni Empire has several awards for valour, of which the best known are the Gold of Glory and the lesser Silver of Valour. They are worn in civilian dress as well as military, and make people who do not know the character aware that the character has a certain amount of Respect Points.

## Positions of Responsibility

Characters who advance in the Priesthoods or Government may be given actual offices. They should have the minimum Skills required for the office on the Careers Table, but that is not always the case for a new officeholder. Characters in the Legions may be given command responsibilities, or choice assignments.

Occasionally, high-standing civilians will be drafted into service to govern an area or act as a special representative. This can be a reward, but it can also be a great adventure hook.

## Noble Titles

Rarely, the Imperium may reward a high-standing person's service with a noble title. These titles are used to confer actual authority, and they sometimes do come with grants of property, but their main benefit is the social prestige they give. Characters with titles are treated as one or more lineage levels higher than they actually are in social situations, and have to be addressed by the title in public.

## Increasing Clan Level

It is very difficult to increase one's clan level. It does happen, though, and as one might expect it is easier the lower down the hierarchy you are.

For foreigners offered membership in a clan, it costs 1,000-6,000 káitars to join a Low or Very Low clan, 7,000-12,000 to join a Medium one, and 25,000-45,000 to join a High one (if the opportunity is even offered). Only the sponsorship of an Imperial Prince or the Petal Throne can get someone into one of the Very High clans, and the Tlakotáni are forever closed to outsiders. Tsolyáni who are already members of a clan but wish to upgrade will pay 1.5 times the figures above, because they have to compensate the clan they are leaving as well.

## Aging

As character get older, they begin to experience the effects of aging, which is reflected in their Stats. At age 35, and every 5 years thereafter, the character may lose Body Stat Points to remain within the following limits:

**Table 10-2: Effects of Ageing**

Age	Total of Body Stats may not exceed
35 years	14
40	13
45	12
50	11
55	10
60	9
65	8
70	7
75	6
80	5





# TÉKUMEL

EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE



APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL MATERIAL



# Appendix: About the Languages

Tsolyáni, Mu'ugalavyáni, Livyáni, Salarvyáni and Yán Koryáni — the languages of the Five Empires — belong to the Khishan linguistic family. They trace their descent back to Engsvanyáli (the tongue of the Priestkings of Engsvan hla Gánga — or Engsvanyálu, as some modern Tsolyáni call it), thence to Bednálljan Salarvyáni (spoken by the rules of the First Imperium), possibly through the little-known tongue of the Three States of the Triangle, and eventually to Llyáni. Before that, no one knows.

Of the Khishan languages, Yán Koryáni is the most different from the rest; it is in turn related to the languages of some of the other northern states: e.g. Ghatón and Milumanayá. The N'lüss dialect belongs to the Nlú'arsh stock (as does Píjenáni and the ancient tongue of the Dragon Warriors, from whom the N'lüss are descended) and the speech is thus as distant from Tsolyáni — or Livyáni — as Arabic is from English.

Tsolyáni is not really difficult for English speakers, although it does contain a number of unfamiliar sounds and combinations. It is important to note that each letter always has just one pronunciation. For example, "s" is always s as in "sip" and never z as in "dogs" or zh as in "pleasure." This is true both of consonants and vowels.

The following consonants are pronounced much as an English speaker might expect: b, d, f, g (always "hard," as in "go"), h, j (as in "Jim"), k, l, m, n, p, s, t, v, w, y, and z.

The q is a problem: it is a "back-velar k," as in Arabic "Qur'an" or "Qadi." Those unfamiliar with this sound may pronounce it as an ordinary English k — not a kw sound, as in "quick" nor "quote."

The Tsolyáni r is like that of Spanish "pero." When r is doubled (i.e. rr), it is trilled: Spanish "perro," or as r is "rolled" in Scotland. Kurrune, for example, is "kooor-roo-NAY."

The glottal stop (') is common between vowels, especially in Mu'ugalavyáni, which in "English spelling" might look something like "moo'-oo-gah-lahv-YAY-nee." The glottal stop also occurs after consonants, as in Dhich'uné (i.e. "teech'-oo-NAY"). In some languages, too, it glottalises the following consonant: e.g. N'lüss. In these cases, this "catch in the throat" is a bit difficult for those not used to it.

The digraphs (sequences of two consonantal letters used to represent just one sound) are: ch as in "chin;" dh as in "thee" or "this" (thus keeping it separate from th; see below); gh as in Arabic "ghazi" (a velar voiced fricative — English speakers can

get by with an ordinary "hard g"); hl is a "voiceless l" as in Welsh "Llewellyn" (the other h-initial digraphs all represent pre-aspiration: e.g. Hnálla is "h-NAHL-lah"); kh as in Scots "loch" or German "ach;" ng as in English "sing" (and ng can occur at the beginnings of Tsolyáni words!); sh as in "ship;" ss is a retroflex voiceless sibilant found in Sanskrit but not in any modern European language: the tip of the tongue is turned up to make an s-sound against the back of the alveolar ridge; th as in "thin;" tl as in Aztec "atlatl" or "Tlaloc;" ts as in "fits" (again this is found in word-initial position); and zh as in Russian "Zhukov" or English "pleasure."

Other sequences of two consonantal letters are pronounced as written; this applies to two identical consonants as well: e.g. Llyán is "L-YAHN," Mmir is "m-MEER," etc.

The vowels are likely to give still more trouble, but this is due more to the confused writing system of English than to any fault of Tsolyáni. There are no "silent letters" (e.g. the "e" of "above"); every letter — vowel or consonant — is pronounced. The vowels, with an exception noted below, are pronounced as in Spanish: a as in "father;" e as the "ey" in "they;" i always as in "machine;" o as in "no" or "oh;" and u as in "flute" or "Zulu." In English spelling, these might appear as "ah," "ay," "ee," "oh" and "oo." The vowels of "cat," "above" (either one), "pet," "pit" or "law" are not found in Tsolyáni, although Yán Koryáni has them. There are two common diph-thongs: ai as in "I" or "bite," and au as in "cow" or "how." Other vowel sequences (e.g. ua, uo, io) are all pronounced as written: e.g. Arrio is "ahr\_REEOoh" and Arjuan is "arh-joo-AHN."

The non-Spanish exception is the ü. In western Tsolyánu this is the "umlaut ü" of German "für" or "über," while in the east it is pronounced as the high-back (or central-back) unrounded vowel not found in any European language, but which does occur as the "undotted i" in Turkish. Some practise is necessary, therefore, to pronounce Hrüü properly; an English-speaker might get by with something like "h-roo-'OO." Béy Sü is approximately "bay soo."

Word-stress — "accent," as some may call it — is important in Tsolyáni, just as it is in English (which confuses everybody by not writing it at all: compare "PER-mit," the noun with "to per-MIT" the verb). This feature is shown by an "accent mark" upon the stressed vowel. There is also a "secondary stress" in Tsolyáni: a vowel that is less loud than that which bears primary stress, but which is still louder than others in the word: e.g. Kólumejálím, which might be represented as "KOH-loo-mayl-JAY-leem." This can be thoroughly ignored by all but the language scholars.

Several languages have word-tones, like Chinese. This is especially true of the otherwise unpronounceable Pé Chói tongue. The people of the Five Empires struggle along with the clicking Pé Chói names as best as they can. And nobody can pronounce anything in the tongue of the Ahoggvá.

For those with an interest in the linguistics of Tékumel, see the Bibliography.

ᄁ ᄂ "P"  
ᄃ ᄄ "B"  
ᄅ ᄆ "M"  
ᄇ ᄈ "F"  
ᄉ ᄊ "V"  
ᄋ ᄌ "W"  
ᄍ ᄎ "T"  
ᄏ ᄐ "D"

ᄑ ᄒ "N"  
ᄓ ᄔ "TH"  
ᄕ ᄖ "DH"  
ᄗ ᄘ "CH"  
ᄙ ᄚ "J"  
ᄛ ᄜ "Y"  
ᄝ ᄞ "K"  
ᄟ ᄠ "G"

ᄡ ᄢ "KH"  
ᄣ ᄤ "GH"  
ᄥ ᄦ "Q"  
ᄧ ᄨ "H"  
ᄩ ᄪ "NG"  
ᄫ ᄬ Glottal Stop  
ᄭ ᄮ "TS"  
ᄯ ᄰ "TL"

ᄱ ᄲ "S"  
ᄳ ᄴ "SH"  
ᄵ ᄶ "Z"  
ᄷ ᄸ "ZH"  
ᄹ ᄺ "SS"  
ᄻ ᄼ "R"  
ᄽ ᄾ "L"  
ᄿ ᅀ "LL"

ᅁ ᅂ "I"  
ᅃ ᅄ "A"  
ᅅ ᅆ "O"  
ᅇ ᅈ "V"  
ᅉ ᅊ "Ü"  
ᅋ ᅌ "AV"  
ᅍ ᅎ "AI"  
ᅏ ᅐ "OI"



# Resources

Many printed and Internet resources are available for Tékumel — Empire of the Petal Throne that are either sponsored by Guardians Of Order, or independently maintained by fans.

## Company Website

Visit the official Guardians Of Order website at <http://www.guardiansorder.com> for the latest company news and updates.

## Tékumel Website

The official Tékumel: The World of the Petal Throne web site can be found at <http://www.tekumel.com/>, and is the best source of Tékumel material on the Web.

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## Other Material

### Background Material

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## Minature Gaming

- Hordes of the Things*, Phil Barker (distant cousin to MAR). These miniatures rules contain army lists for Tékumel to use with the system.
- A Jakállan Intrigue*, Mark Pettigrew, Tékumel Games, 1984, reprinted by Tita's House of Games.
- The Tomb Complex of Neresháno*, Mark Pettigrew, Tékumel Games, 1984, reprinted by Tita's House of Games.
- Qadárdaliko*, Jeff Berry and M.A.R. Barker, Tékumel Games, 1983, reprinted by Tita's House of Games. The set of miniatures rules for Tékumel. Detailed, suitable for campaigns, as well as single battles.
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- Qadárdaliko/Battle Cards*, Andrew Lorince.

# On-line Resources

- The Tékumel FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)*, maintained by Brett Slocum, can be found at [http://www.weirdrealm.com/tekumel/tek\\_faq.html](http://www.weirdrealm.com/tekumel/tek_faq.html)
  - The Tékumel Web Ring* can be found at <http://www.weirdrealm.com/webring/>
  - The Tékumel Usenet newsgroup* is [alt.games.frp.tekumel](mailto:alt.games.frp.tekumel)
  - The Tékumel Discussion Group Mailing List* can be found at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Tekumel/>
  - Zottola Publishing* releases new books by M.A.R. Barker as well as other supporting background material, like *Mitlanyál*, a two-set compendium of Tsolyáni religion and ritual. can be found at <http://www.zotpub.com/>
  - Tita's House of Games* has many out-of-print books in stock. Carl Brodt is also reprinting many of the classic Tékumel books.
- Tita's House of Games**  
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1608 Bancroft Way  
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Phone: (510) 848-3260  
Email: [carlbrodt@aol.com](mailto:carlbrodt@aol.com)  
<http://www.titasgames.com>



## NPC Statistics

### Retainer/Servant/Non-Combatant Bystander

Likely to say: "What are you doing!"

This serves for a generic "Tsolyáni in the street."

Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Intelligence 4, Psyche 4, Willpower 4, Charisma 4

Initiative 8, Combat Value 4, Health Points 40, Shock Value 8, Magic Resistance 4

Language (Tsolyáni, Spoken) 2, Language (Tsolyáni, Written) 1, Knowledge (Local Area) 2, Etiquette 2, Occupation (Merchant) 1, Administration 1

### Minor Bodyguard/Minor Thug/Street Cop

Likely to say: "Ere you!"

This represents low-level warriors of various types. They have no problem with killing foreigners, and many of them have actively racist views of other cultures. A street execution is quite possible, but these individuals are likely to look to their employers for orders first. Why kill someone when you could sell him or her as a slave instead and make a little money?

Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 3, Psyche 3, Willpower 5, Charisma 4

Initiative 10, Combat Value 5, Health Points 50, Shock Value 1, Magic Resistance 4

Language (Tsolyáni, Spoken) 2, Knowledge (Local Area) 2, Etiquette 1, Hiking 1, Occupation 1, Gambling 1, Intimidation 2, Brawling 2, Appropriate weapon 2

### Standard Bodyguard

These are professional guards, they are competent and have been raised in the job. When working they will all wear light armour, carry a shield and have a shortsword clipped at their belt. The shortswords are convenient enough to be kept close at hand, day and night.

Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Intelligence 4, Psyche 2, Willpower 5, Charisma 4

Initiative 10, Combat Value 5, Health Points 50, Shock Value 10, Magic Resistance 4

Language (Tsolyáni, Spoken) 2, Knowledge (Local Area) 2, Etiquette 2, Hiking 1, Teamwork 2, Brawling 2, Law 1, Shield 2, Shortsword 1, Intimidation 1, Occupation (Profession: Bodyguard) 1.

Each bodyguard will also have distinctive abilities. They will all carry any weapons they have a skill with.

#### Roll 1d10

- 1 Ambidextrous, Sling 2, Plan: Guard 1.
- 2 Strength +1, Tough +1 (add prefix "Big" to name)
- 3 Hunting 2, Stealth 2, Tracking 2, Shortbow 2.
- 4 Dexterity is +2 (add prefix "Fast" to name), Longsword +2.
- 5 Willpower +2, Tough +2, Wrestling 2.
- 6 Hunting 2, Shortbow 2, Cooking 2.
- 7 Tough +3 and Ugly 1 (add prefix "Scar" to name), Axe 3.
- 8 Strength -2, Dexterity +2, Sling 3, Acrobat 2 (add prefix "Kid" to name).
- 9 Spear 2, Javelin 2.
- 10 Negotiation 2, Law +1, Plan: Guard 2.

### Legionary

Likely to say: "I'll rip 'em apart!"

Muscular Tsolyáni wearing military uniform (pick a unit from the Legion lists) has a country accent (see Places you can come from).

Strength 8, Dexterity 8, Intelligence 3, Psyche 3, Willpower 6, Charisma 3

Initiative 14, Combat Value 8, Health Points 70, Shock Value 14, Magic Resistance 4

Older 2 (30 years old), Highly Skilled 2, Tough 1, Veteran 3 (Level 1 with all Legion weapons, pick a free non-com Specialisation), Responsibilities 2 (Regular Soldier), Bad Start in Life 2 (Rural: You are a hick grunt and you ain't never going to be no officer), Ugly 1 (accent, scars and attitude), Xenophobe 1 (Damn furriners!)

Language (Tsolyáni, Spoken) 2, Knowledge (Local Area) 2, Etiquette 1, Hiking 1, Occupation (Legionary) 1, Running 1, Analysis 1, Observation 1, Streetwise 1, Teamwork 3, Primary Weapon 3





# T E K U M E L

## EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE

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### Distance

Tsolyánu Measure	Metric Equivalent	Imperial Equivalent
Choptse	1.33 cm	0.5 inch
Hoi	13.33 cm	5.67 inches
Dhaiba	1.33 m	36.33 inches
Tsan	1.33 km	0.83 mile

### Liquid

Tsolyánu Measure	Metric Equivalent	Imperial Equivalent
Tsertse	0.3 litre	0.66 pints
Kuvmu	3 litres	3 quarts
Nmecha	60 litres	15.83 gallons

### Mass

Tsolyánu Measure	Metric Equivalent	Imperial Equivalent
Tnung	187.4 mg	2.89 grains
Mlo	3.75 g	.13 ounces
Pse	0.75 kgs	1.65 lbs
Epu	1,500 kgs	3,306.9 lbs















# TÉKUMEL

## EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE

تَکُمَلْ اِمْبَرِیةٔ التَّوْنِیةِ

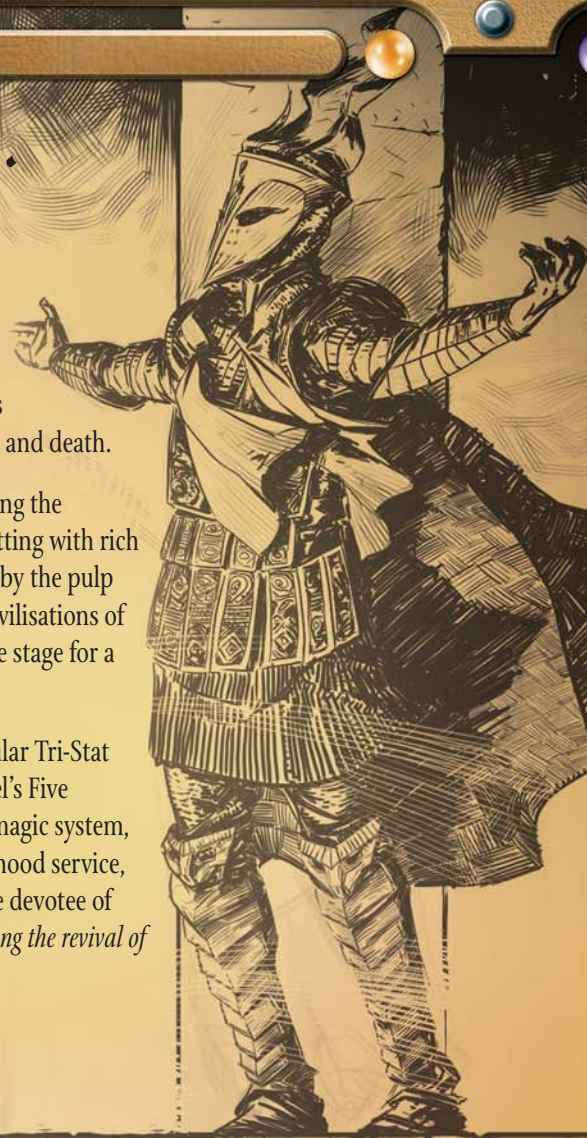
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In a pocket universe, millennia removed from our own, lies a system of five planets engineered by forgotten planetary-scale technologies. The vibrant world of Tékumel, once a busy interstellar crossroads terraformed to suit the needs of its brutal rulers, was isolated over 30,000 years ago when the stars went out. What emerged from this Time of Darkness was a world forged in disaster, but strong in custom, history, life ... and death.

Professor M.A.R. Barker has devoted over 50 years to creating the Tékumel universe, developing it into a vivid science-fantasy setting with rich backgrounds and unique cultural identities. Inspired not only by the pulp SF and fantasy of the mid-20th Century, but also by the rich civilisations of Moghul India, Ancient Egypt, and the Aztecs, Tékumel sets the stage for a role-playing experience unlike any other.

This core rulebook features a system derived from the popular Tri-Stat System, customised to enhance the intricate setting of Tékumel's Five Empires. Inside you'll find non-human race templates, a new magic system, alternate combat options, details on clans and military/priesthood service, a select bestiary, and much more. Whether you are a long-time devotee of Barker's work, or a player new to the setting, *join us in celebrating the revival of Tékumel: Empire of the Petal Throne.*

Contains content some readers may find objectionable.



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