

The EXcellent Travelling Volume

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ISSUE NO. 2

A fanzine of M.A.R. Barker's World of Tékumel

INTRODUCTION

When I originally decided to take the plunge and produce a fanzine dedicated to Tékumel (and *Empire of the Petal Throne*), I had no expectation that I'd attract much interest.

Tékumel is, I think it's fair to say, something of an acquired taste. Likewise, a print-only 'zine sent through the mail, in this age of electronic downloads is, to put it charitably, *an oddity*. Consequently, I expected to sell two or three dozen copies, mostly to friends and truly diehard "Petalheads" (to borrow a term coined by Scott Driver).

Instead, I sold *nearly 200 copies*, which is many times more than I anticipated. To say that I was overwhelmed is an understatement — in more ways than one. The deluge of orders caught me truly off-guard, which, combined with my foolishness in inaugurating the 'zine during the hectic month of December, led to several delays in getting all the issues out as quickly as I'd originally intended. I'd like to thank everyone for their patience and goodwill, as I struggled with what at times seemed like an insurmountable task.

At the same time, the high level of interest encouraged me to get to work on the second issue, which you now hold in your hands. This issue is notable in a couple of ways. For one, not all of its content comes from my own pen. One article, detailing the new Adventurer character class is by my friend Victor Raymond, updating an idea of Glenn Rahman. I'm very pleased to include this article, since I've used the Adventurer class to good effect in my own *EPT* campaigns (as has Victor) and think it will be of interest to others. I should note here that, while I am not actively soliciting submissions to future issues, I am not opposed to them, especially if they are relatively short and modular.

The second reason this issue is notable is that it includes an article derived from previously-unseen material created by M.A.R. Barker, namely the map of the Tsolyáni city of Sokátis. I am very lucky to have been given a look at Professor Barker's original hand-drawn map and key, which cartographer extraordinaire Simon Forster has reproduced in his own style. While the accompanying article describing Sokátis is almost wholly my own invention, the map itself is not, making it as close to "official" as anything you're ever likely to see in these pages.

In my previous introduction, I mentioned that I had the good fortune to have corresponded with Professor Barker. Over the course of that correspondence, he regularly impressed me with his kindness and generosity toward me, as well as his terrific creativity. I recall one occasion in which I wrote to him and recounted events from my ongoing campaign centered around the city of Khirgár. In retrospect, I'm somewhat embarrassed to have done this — it feels like a variation on the hoary tale of a fan hounding a RPG writer, "Let me tell you about my character." — but I was so genuinely thrilled to be corresponding with the M.A.R. Barker that I couldn't help myself.

Rather than brush me off or belittle what I told him, Professor Barker instead provided me with all manner of details about Khirgár to incorporate into my campaign. He even commented on my descriptions of certain NPCs I mentioned, saying something to the effect of "Oh yes, I know him well" and then offering up yet more tidbits for me to use. Few things have ever inspired me as much as Professor Barker did in those notes to me. He not only made me fall more deeply in love with Tékumel, he made feel like a *co-creator* of the world with him — which is exactly how all of us who play and referee on this alien planet ought to feel.

James Maliszewski
February 2015

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Random Tsolyáni Faction Names

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The Adventurer

(Addition)

by Victor Raymond

The following is adapted from the original article by Glenn Rahman, published in issue #31 of *The Dragon* (November 1979).

The adventurer lives by his wits and does not follow the strictures of any professional caste. His objectives are easy riches, reputation, and excitement. The adventurer is multi-talented, but often lacks the self-discipline to master any one of the other character professions described in Section 300 of *Empire of the Petal Throne*. Drinking deeply of life and experience, the adventurer instead “picks up” things that will be useful in his escapades, which may or may not add up to a coherent collection of skills and abilities.

310. ALIGNMENT

Adventurers can serve either Change or Stability; there is no notable tendency one way or the other.

320. CHOICE OF SEX

Adventurers can be either male or female, depending on their country of origin and personal background. In the end, the choice of sex for the character is entirely up to the player, subject to referee approval.

420. ORIGINAL SKILLS

Should the adventurer acquire two or more of the original skills included in the chart below, they may be considered an “agent,” which is to say, someone working for a larger political, social or religious faction. A good example of an agent is Helé’a of Ghatón, the servitor of Prince Dhích’uné in Professor Barker’s novel, *The Man of Gold*. An agent provides service to the faction he serves in pursuit of its ends and goals and, as such, is often given difficult, arduous, and perilous tasks — but the rewards can be commensurate with the risks, *if the agent survives*.

Regardless of whether the adventurer functions as an agent, he gains certain benefits if he possesses any of the following original skills:

Original Skill	Benefit
Alchemist	May use and devise poisons
Assassin-Spy-Tracker	+5% chance of success when using this skill
Courtesan/Don Juan	+5% chance of success when using this skill, regardless of the sex of the person the adventurer wishes to influence
Interpreter	Gains two modern or ancient languages instead of just one when acquiring specific professional skills (see below)
Scholar [history, philosophy, etc.]	+10% chance of success to rolls regarding secret or hidden insights specific to his chosen field of study (which must be selected before the character begins play)

430. SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

The adventurer is, by nature, a jack of all trades and a master of none. In game terms, this means that he may possess talents derived from those of a warrior, a priest, and a magic user while not being a member of any of those professions. To reflect this, use the table below to determine his specific professional skills. Like other professions, the adventurer takes the “easiest” ones first. At least when he is inexperienced, his favourite weapon is the dagger.

spearman

knows 1 modern language

control of self

mace/flail user

knows 1 ancient language

illusionist

axeman

can produce light

clairaudience

swordsman

detect good/evil

clairvoyance

500. BONUS SPELLS

By advancing in level, the adventurer can pick up bonus spells, just as if he were a priest or magic user. However, deep and tedious study is not for the mercurial adventurer. He finds Group I spells less of a headache to absorb. In fact, he cannot learn any Group II spells until he possesses at least one-third of all the Group I spells (i.e. six). Neither may he learn any Group III spells until he knows at least one-third of all Group II spells (also six). If the table in Section

500 of *Empire of the Petal Throne* indicates the adventurer should learn a more advanced spell before he has achieved the aforementioned prerequisites, it should instead be read as one of the next lesser group he is permitted to learn.

610. EXPERIENCE POINT BONUSES

An adventurer who has either Dexterity or Comeliness with values of 81-100 adds 5% experience, and both characteristics with values of 81-100 adds 10% experience.

630. LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE

Adventurers use the same experience table as priests.

700. HIT DICE

Use the following table to determine the hit dice for adventurers.

I	1
II	1+3
III	2+1
IV	3+3
V	4+1
VI	5
VII	6
VIII	7
IX	8+1
X	9+1

Sokátis, the City of Roofs

Sokátis, “the City of Roofs,” is one the easternmost cities of Tsolyánu, located not far from Salarvyá, Pecháno, and the Chaigári Protectorate. For that reason, it is both heavily fortified against attack and serves as a nexus for trade to the eastern lands of the continent. Legionnaires, merchants, slave caravans, and travellers all regularly pass through its gates.

Thanks to the comparatively mild climate and good rainfall, agriculture plays an important role in the economy of Sokátis. In addition to the usual grains, farmers in the region grow the best Hnéqu weed in the Imperium. Originally from the homeworld of the Swamp Folk, Hnéqu is a reddish-brown grass that, when chewed, produces mild euphoria, but without any harmful side effects (or addiction). Nalúm vines are cultivated in the rich earth of Sokátis, the fermentation of whose fruits results in some of the best vintages of Ngálu wine in all of Tsolyánu. Mining is also economically important. Sokátis is blessed to control several functioning iron mines in the foothills of Hundránu Rise, all of which are operated by certain clans under licenses granted by the Petal Throne.

HISTORY

Like most Tsolyáni cities, the history of Sokátis is long, though not as long as that of more influential cities such as Jakálla or even Khirgár. Explorations into its Tsur’úm suggest that Sokátis was already a thriving urban centre by the age of the Dragon Warriors. Local

folk tales speak of a lord among the Dragon Warriors, known as Heretlékka, who settled in Sokátis after first having wandered the whole of Tékmel in search of adventure. The 34th Imperial Heavy Infantry Legion takes its name from this legendary warrior, who is something of a “mascot” to the city. Several businesses and locales (such as a ruined brick pyramid reputed to be his tomb in the City of the Dead) are named after him.

However, it was during the time of the Fishermen Kings that Sokátis first rose to verifiable prominence. The city, then called Zhékkat, was among the first to join Gámulu as he attempted to bring order to that part of the continent. Sokátis prospered under Gámulu’s dynasty, in the process forging cultural and religious ties with the inhabitants of what would later become Salarvyá. In this period, Sokátis was an important hub of regional trade – so important, in fact, that Queen Nayári sought an alliance with the city early in her own rise to power. Along with lost Purdánim, Fasíltum, and Tumíssa, Sokátis was one of the foundations on which the First Imperium was built.

After the inauguration of Éngsvan hla Gánga, Sokátis retained its prominence. When civil war shattered the Kingdom of the Gods into several competing dynasties, one such dynasty arose in Sokátis, a notable member of which was the priest-king Shekkéndu Ssá. Legend has it that he so loved his Tlékku and Tiúni that he deified them, causing his people to revolt and throw him into a pit to be eaten by his own animals, who had been starved specifically for that purpose. However, legend also has it that the beasts loyally refused to harm

him and, eventually, Shekkéendu Ssá was freed and restored to his throne. Later, during another period of civil unrest known as the Flower Wars, Sokátis was a prize fought over by the Archons of White and Green – a testimony to its continued importance.

During the Tsolyáni civil war that raged between 1,010 and 1,026 A.S., Sokátis, like many cities, attempted to break away from the Imperium, taking the surrounding lands with it. During this struggle, the temples of Sárku and (especially) Durrtilámish were supportive of this insurrection, which cost them dearly after the emperor Kánmi'yel Nikúma I re-established order. Later, during the so-called “Great War” of 2,019–2,020 A.S., many legions were garrisoned at Sokátis as Tsolyánu launched attacks into Chaigári and deeper into Salarvyá. Some have suggested that this was also done to ensure Sokátis remained loyal, in light of the city's cultural connections to Salarvyá and its history of restiveness.

Given emperor Hirkáne's advanced age, there are signs of a power struggle behind the scenes, as his sons and daughter prepare themselves for the inevitable Kólumejälím. Though the faith of Sárku and his cohort are strong in Sokátis, there is little love here for Prince Dchich'uné, who is seen as a dangerous fanatic. There is no clear “favourite” among Hirkané's heirs in the Roofed City, with the clans and priesthoods holding a variety of opinions. The one common feeling is that the transition to a new emperor (or empress) be a smooth one. If not, Sokátis has a long history of seeking its own path during turbulent times.

DESCRIPTION

Modern Sokátis has a population of approximately 200,000, though this number fluctuates throughout the year, as weather and current events affect the flow of people through the city. Sokátis rests on the southern bank of the Ranánga River. On the northern bank can be found the little village of Tálesh Kü, where many commercial clans dwell and do business. The city's walls are old and impressive, with some sections having been reinforced several times over the millennia, giving it a strangely “imposing” appearance.

Sokátis is called “the City of Roofs” or “the Roofed City,” because it is possible to cross its length in any direction without ever emerging from beneath a portico, colonnade, or gallery into the sunlight. In this, it more closely resembles a Salarvyáni city than a Tsolyáni one. There are stone gargoyles, ornate parapets, intricate bas-reliefs, and thick walls which slope up to the ponderous vaults and domes of its roofs. This should surprise no one familiar with the history of Sokátis, which even now maintains strong cultural and economic ties to Salarvyá.

Unsurprisingly, Salarvyáni make up the largest percentage of non-Tsolyáni in Sokátis. Pecháni can also be found here, though not in anywhere near the same numbers. The Salarvyáni and the Pecháni do not always get along well with one another, due in no small part to longstanding historical grievances between the two nations. Brawls between them are not uncommon in the Foreigners Quarter; so long as they do not cause much commotion (or involve Tsolyáni), the City Guard is usually

content to let them work out their own differences rather than interfering.

Sokátis boasts a significant non-human population as well. Hlāka are the most numerous, which makes sense given the proximity of their homeland to the city. Shén, many of them serving as soldiers in the 9th Imperial Shén Auxiliary Heavy Infantry (the Horde of Hrk-ss), which is often stationed at Sokátis, are the next most numerous. Other Shén came to the city in hopes of eventually settling in the Forest of Gilrayá to the southwest and simply never moved on. Pé Chói and Ahoggyá are present, too, though both are much rarer, particularly the Pé Chói, who are very far from their traditional lands.

Three Sákbe roads lead to Sokátis. The roads heading northward to Ferinára and southwest to Jaikalór are both in excellent shape. The one leading southeast toward Salarvyá is less well-preserved, much to the disappointment of the many merchants who make their livings travelling to and from that country. Over the years, their clans have exerted pressure on the governor to divert funds to their repair and refurbishment. This process is ongoing but slow.

CLANS

Given its size and population, nearly all of the major clans of the Imperium can be found in Sokátis. However, some clans are more prominent in the city, including one unique local one.

BLACK STONE

The clanmaster is Mízhek hiKaloné'i, who is also the governor of the city. Mízhek is clever, sensitive, and active.

His faith in Lord Sáрку is deep yet mild, especially when compared to someone like Prince Dchich'uné, whom the governor dislikes for his zeal. Consequently, Black Stone is much respected in Sokátis even by those who do not serve the Master of the Undead.

CLOAK OF AZURE GEMS

This noble clan is devoted to Lord Ksáru and, to a lesser extent, Lord Hrü'ü (and their cohorts). Its current clanmaster is Bushu'ún hiQoyélmú, a rail-thin middle-aged man who shaves his head and wears a serious expression at all times. He is a lay priest in service to the Doomed Prince and is reputed to have taken a personal interest in the exploration of the nearby valley of Kashkomái. He is utterly devoted to his clan and his temple and, as such, is unmarried.

DARK FEAR, DARK FLAME, DARK MOON, DARK WATER

Devout worshippers of the Dark Trinity (Hrü'ü, Ksáru, and Sáрку), the “dark” clans are considered respectable, if not particularly noteworthy. Their members can be found throughout the bureaucracy of Sokátis. The clanmaster of Dark Moon, Arján hiSrayáku, is a high-ranking administrator in the Palace of the Realm. He is aged, personable, and quite keen to give a good impression of his clan, especially to newcomers to Sokátis.

DOMED TOMB

A solid, respectable Sáрку-aligned clan of wealthy farmers originally from the City of Sáрку. Unlike many of the other Sáрку-worshiping clans in Sokátis, Domed Tomb adheres to a very stern and inflexible version of the Worm Lord's faith. While not fanatics in the popular

sense of the term, they observe all the proper rituals in an exacting fashion. Their clanmaster, Chékkan hiAghái, is young and vigorous. Gossip suggests he is in the employ of Prince Dchich'uné and spends his spare time in the Tsuru'úm raising an army of undead.

GOLDEN BOUGH

Of Engsvanyáli origin, Golden Bough is an important and influential clan in Sokátis, well represented among its palace officials and military personnel. The clan has no particular religious affiliation, though the worship of Hrü'ü seems particularly popular at the moment. This is due to the fact that its current clanmaster is Chu'ésa hiVaisonér, a middle-aged but extremely attractive woman who is very devoted to the Master of Negation. She is a widow but her three eldest children (two sons and a daughter) all serve the temple of Hrü'ü in various capacities.

GREEN FOREST AND GREEN REED

Composed primarily of peasants and rural craftsmen, both these clans serve Avánthe, Dlamélish, and their cohorts. Despite their low status, they are surprisingly influential due to their friendly relations with Salarvyá. The religious practices of these “green clans” owes much to the worship of Shiringgáyi, cementing a bond between them and certain Salarvyáni clans. Many merchants and even nobles in Sokátis who wish to do business in Salarvyá turn to members of Green Forest and Green Reed to act as factors and go-betweenes.

GREY CLOAK

The worship of Thúmis and Keténgku predominate in this respectable clan. Its membership in Sokátis is small,

but it includes a number of prominent individuals in the aforementioned temples. The clanmaster is Srüqu hiSsáivra, a friendly, open-faced old man with three wives, seven children, and twelve grandchildren. Srüqu makes no pretensions to being a scholar but he is genuinely interested in a wide range of topics and enjoys entertaining guests of any clan or affiliation who can carry on a good conversation.

HOUSE OF WORMS

Throughout the Imperium, there are many small, localized clans not found elsewhere. House of Worms is a fairly typical example. Devoted to Lord Sáрку and his cohort, Durritlámish, this clan is overseen by Jukélsa hiTigál, a hairy little man (hinting at Salarvyáni ancestry) much given to invocations of his god in everyday speech – “The Five-Headed Lord of Worms wills it,” “Let us thank the Guide into Darkness for this success,” and so on. He is nevertheless quite affable, though he will try to foist his unattractive (and unaccomplished) son, Hórga, on any young woman he meets.

SEA BLUE

Descended from Bednálljan nobility, members of this haughty clan can be found in important bureaucratic and administrative positions in the city. Most belong to Stability sects, particularly Belkhánu and Hnálla. The clanmaster is Virétsu hiArsúnu, a septuagenarian with long experience at politics and clan administration. His manner is proud, slow, and deliberate. He is very loyal to both his clan and the Lord of the Excellent Dead. Virétsu has four wives, seventeen children, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

SWORD OF FIRE

An ancient clan stretching back to the age of the Dragon Warriors, Sword of Fire is a small but wealthy clan whose members can be found among the military officers of Sokátis. Though Vimúhla is by far the most popular faith among them, the worship of Karakán is not unknown. Its clanmaster is Ukáira hiFershéna, who is equally known for his tall stature and his shrewdness in business dealings.

WHITE STONE

A high clan, the centre of White Stone's power and influence is in Sokátis (and Bény Sü). Its influence in the city is broad, owing to its eclectic religious affiliations. The clanmaster is Jeggéna hiTéyunehl. Nearly ninety years old, he sports a long, white beard and is considered a pillar of the community. He is, unfortunately, quite senile: he can no longer remember the names of his many wives, concubines, children, grandchildren, and great-children.

TEMPLES

The temples of Ksáruł, Sáрку, and Durritlámish are prominent in Sokátis, as are those of Hnálla, Thúmis, and Qón. All other faiths maintain a presence in the city, of course, but few of them exert much influence.

In addition to its shrine, the temple of *Dlamélísh* runs the Green House of the Bountiful Gardens, a high-clan establishment that features elegant gardens with hidden alcoves. Regardless of one's religious affiliation, the Green House is a popular meeting place for clan negotiations, business deals, romantic rendezvous, and more. The more jade patronise the Cage of Silver, run by the temple of *Hriháyal*.

Hnálla is worshipped in Sokátis under his fortieth aspect, Méntukoi hiJér, "the Crown of Light," which is represented in his shrine by a giant crystal. On certain days, the sun shines through a special window-shaft, illuminating the crystal (and the shrine itself). Priestesses bring small children in need of healing or solace to bathe in the crystal's rays and be blessed.

The worship of *Ksáruł* has long associations with Sokátis, in part because the historical centre of the Ancient Lord of Secrets is in the mountains to the north of the city. In addition, just two days' march northeast of Sokátis can be found the valley of Kashkomái, which is reputed to be the resting place of one of the Keys to Lord Ksáruł's prison. The temple seems to have taken these tales quite seriously and has sponsored several expeditions into the area, often employing adventurers and other mercenaries with the requisite skills needed to brave the supposed dangers of the valley.

Owing to its governor, the temple of *Sáрку* is influential, if not necessarily popular. Dhánra hiKálunan, a corpse-like old man with a dry, whispery voice is the Worm Lord's high adept (Level IX) for the eastern empire and stationed here. With a few exceptions, Lord Sáрку's faith is more "gentle" in Sokátis, which is to say, focusing more on the survival of the conscious mind – or Hlákme in Tsolyáni – after death rather than on necromancy.

Interestingly, the temple of Lord Sáрку's cohort, *Durritlámish*, is much more strident in Sokátis, due in no small part to the fact that 6th Imperial Medium Infantry is stationed in the city, bringing devotees of the Opener of Catacombs from all over the Imperium to the city.

In addition, several local clans maintain and protect the City of the Dead and look to Durritlámish as their patron.

Thúmis is very popular in Sokátis and his priesthood maintains a school in the city. Many of this temple's younger clergy belong (or at least are sympathetic) to the Brotherhood of Supernal Wisdom, a radical faction that seeks to establish more schools across Tsolyánu to educate and expand the practices of medicine and science. The eighteenth day of Shápru marks the Adoration of the Grey Veil, during which Thúmis is honoured with rituals and sacrifices of flowers. Meanwhile, on the twenty-fifth day of Dohála, the great Festival of the Light of Wisdom is held. During the festival, a great litter bearing an image of Lord Thúmis is borne to the temple of Hnálla for a "visit."

The temple of **Qón** maintains a large library of texts relating to the Salarvyáni goddess Shiringgáyi (and Salarvyá in general). The library also contains works about the Nóm people of the far eastern ocean, the people of Rannálu, and other planes.

The temple of **Wurú** is a rival of that of Qón in Sokátis, for reasons that are not entirely clear to outsiders. Regardless, the followers of Lord Sárku's cohort are unusually active in the city, particularly in the field of exploring the underworld for historical texts and artifacts.

NOTEWORTHY FEATURES AND CUSTOMS

The supposed closeness of the resting place of one of the keys to the prison of Ksárul has spawned all manner of local myths and legends in Sokátis. One such legend states that the key is held in the magical fortress of someone known

only as "the First Founder." This home vanishes and reappears with seeming irregularity, though (of course!) there are some who claim to be able to predict just when it will return to Téकुमел's plane — information they will gladly share for only a few Káitars! Others claim to already possess a key (or keys) to the Blue Room or fragments of the shattered armour Lord Ksárul wore at the Battle of Dórmoron Plain. These, too, are available for the right price. Visitors to Sokátis are advised to treat these claims with circumspection.

Perhaps because of the peculiar actions of the priest-king Shekkéndu Ssá during Engsvanyáli times, Tlékku and Tiúni are commonly kept as pets in Sokátis. While the former are not uncommon in Tsolyáni cities, the latter are almost unheard of outside of the North. In Sokátis, Tiúni wander its streets quite freely and can often be seen lazing on the rooftops.

The Tsuru'úm beneath Sokátis is extensive and old. There are three distinct levels from Tsolyáni times, one from the Time of No Kings after the fall of Éngsvan hla Gánga, and eight from the reign of the First Imperium (including one of Bednálljan origin). There are also reputedly levels from the age of the Fishermen Kings and earlier, but evidence for them is scant and those with direct knowledge have thus far been reluctant to share what they know. The entire underworld is honeycombed with tunnels dug by the Ssú as well, which is unsurprising, given the proximity of Sokátis to their ancestral lands.

Key to the Map of Sokátis

The map of Sokátis (located in the centrefold of this issue) has the following numbered buildings and areas indicated. Future issues of *The Excellent Travelling Volume* will include more detailed descriptions about some of them, but referees are encouraged to come up with their own descriptions to suit the needs of their adventures and campaigns.

1. The City of the Dead
2. Éngsvanyáli Pyramids
3. Bednálljan Tombs
4. Clan Houses of Embalmers, Mourners, and Necropolis Workers
5. Village of Tálesh Kü
6. Wharves and Storehouses
7. Sákbe Road to Ferinára
8. Galál Isle [Éngsvanyáli pyramid]
9. Bridges of Non-Returning
10. Tower of Sigils
11. Pleasaunce of the Archers of Qómiyel
12. Water Gate and Wharves
13. Fortress of Ssákolúm
14. Colonnade of A Thousand Columns
15. Pyramid of Ssírándár IV
16. Fortress and Barracks of the Legion of the Phalanx of Heretlékka of Sokátis (34th Imperial Heavy Infantry)
17. Temple of Hnálla, the Supreme Principle of Stability
18. Temple of Qón, the Ancient One of Pleasures, Cohort of Belkhánu
19. Temple of Belkhánu, Lord of the Excellent Dead
20. Colonnade of Píru the Water Bringer
21. Palace of the Realm: Governmental Offices, Courts, Bureaus
22. Statues of the Flying Heroes [Depicts a trio of legendary characters from the Time of No Kings reputed to have been gifted by the gods with power of flight]
23. Colonnade of Krá'e Ngáru
24. Palace of Ever-Glorious War: Military Offices
25. Temple of Karakán, God of War
26. Colonnade of Blue Shadows [largest market place in the city]
27. Administration Building
28. Court of Darkness [Location of an Engsvanyáli obelisk in honour of the Dark Trinity of Hrü'ü, Ksáru, and Sáрку]
29. Temple of Durritlámish, the Black Angel of the Putrescent Hand, Cohort of Sáрку
30. Temple of Sáрку, the Master of the Undead
31. Temple of Hrü'ü, the Supreme Principle of Change
32. Covered Street
33. Ruined site of what local history claims is a temple dedicated to a pre-Bednálljan form of Ksáru, though there is little evidence to support this
34. Temple of Wurú the Unnameable, Cohort of Hrü'ü
35. Colonnade of Glorious Joy
36. Covered Court
37. Barracks of the Legion of the Phalanx of Durritlámish of the Rotted Face (6th Imperial Medium Infantry)
38. Administration Building

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- | | |
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| 39. Palace of the Ever-Living Lord, Mízhek hiKaloné'i, the Governor of Sokátis | 62. Palace of the Hill of Stones |
| 40. Gardens | 63. Slave Market |
| 41. Water Gardens | 64. Temple of Hrihayál, the Dancing Maiden of Temptation, Cohort of Dlamélish [Also the location of the Cage of Silver, see p. 8] |
| 42. Gardens | 65. Temple of Dlamélish, the Lady of Sins [Also the location of the Green House of the Bountiful Gardens, see p. 8] |
| 43. Shops and Low Clan Dwellings | 66. Colonnade of the Thirty Governors |
| 44. Covered Street | 67. Temple of Keténgku the Many-Eyed, Cohort of Thúmis |
| 45. Temple of Chiténg, Lord of Red Spouting Flame, Cohort of Vimúhla | 68. Temple of Thúmis, Lord of Wisdom |
| 46. Temple of Vimúhla, the Lord of Fire | 69. Barracks of the Legion of Aerial Joy (9th Imperial Light Infantry Flying Squadron) [Composed of Hláka in service to the Petal Throne] |
| 47. Administration Building | 70. Covered Street |
| 48. Covered Plaza of the Five Stelae [So called because of the presence of five sculpted stone shafts of extremely ancient origin placed here by the Bednálljan king Ssirandar IV] | 71. Gate of Triumph |
| 49. Palace of the Priesthoods of the Gods: Offices for Religious Affairs, Temple Lands, Tithes, etc. | 72. Dwellings of the Highest Clans |
| 50. Temple of Chegárta, the Hero-King, Cohort of Karakán | 73. Tower of the First King |
| 51. Covered Halls of Imperial Glory | 74. Gate of Golden Spheres |
| 52. Court of Emperors | 75. Sákbe Road to Jaikalór |
| 53. Temple of Dilinála, Lovely Maiden of the Emerald Crown, Cohort of Avánthe | 76. Tower of the Four Kings |
| 54. Temple of Avánthe, the Mistress of Heaven | 77. Covered Market [produce] |
| 55. Tower of Victory | 78. Foreigners Quarters |
| 56. Palace of Foreign Lands: Offices for External Affairs | a: Shén |
| 57. Stairs | b: Ahoggyá |
| 58. Temple of Ksárul, the Ancient Lord of Secrets | c: Pé Chóí |
| 59. Temple of Grugánu, the Knower of Spells, Cohort of Ksárul | d: Hláka |
| 60. House of Scribes | 79. Lower Market |
| 61. Waste Slopes | 80. Covered Market [animals] |
| | 81. Sákbe Road to Salarvyá |
| | 82. Dwellings and Shops of Medium Clans |
| | 83. Armour and Weapons Shops |
| | 84. Temple of Drá the Uncaring, Cohort of Hnálla |
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A Portion of the Underworld of Sokátis

Like most Tsolyáni cities, Sokátis has an extensive Tsuru'úm, or underworld, beneath it. This underworld consists of many different strata (or levels), each one the result of the custom of Dítlána by which a city is “renewed” roughly every half-millennium by razing its buildings, filling in their basements and cellars, and constructing new edifices atop the old ones. What follows is the description of but a small portion of the underworld of Sokátis, located below the Foreigners’ Quarter, a common starting point for new player characters. Future issues of *The Excellent Travelling Volume* will detail more of this map, as well as adding new maps that expand on this one, but referees are encouraged to add to it as they wish or simply to use what is presented here as inspiration in creating their own underworlds.

1. Stairs

A crumbling set of clay stairs descends into the underworld. The area is dusty but there is evidence of foot traffic going toward areas 2, 7a, and 9.

2. Statue of Dlamélísh

An expertly carved stone statue stands here, depicting Nisimáya, the eighteenth aspect of Dlamélísh. Called “She of the Well of Virile Waters,” Nisimáya restores potency and vigour to those who have lost them, including by injuries or curses. The statue holds a pail, inside of which can be found 85 Qirgáls, 73 Hlásh, and 113 Káitars, some of which have spilled onto the floor. A worshipper of Dlamélísh or a

character possessing the Scholar skill will recognize the statue for who and what it is.

Any worshipper of the Green-Eyed Lady who places even a single Qirgál into the pail is fully healed of all damage, as well as freed from any diseases, curses, or adverse magical effects. This boon is granted only once per worshipper. If a worshipper of another god (including one of Stability) places a coin here, he is healed as well, but the statue acts similarly to an *eye of transformation* (sec. 1310:30), converting him to the worship of the Mistress of Demons should he fail a saving throw. Should anyone steal one or more coins offered to Dlamélísh, he will be afflicted with a curse that causes him to fail his next saving throw.

3. Defaced Statue

A stone statue of a man in armour stands in this alcove. The statue’s face was smashed long ago, making it impossible to tell his identity.

4. Carrion Eaters

Seven Kúrgha feast upon the fresh corpses of two armoured men. The only obvious wounds on their bodies are the bite marks of the Kúrgha. There is a trail of dried blood leading to area 5.

Kúrgha (AC 6 MV 12” HD 1 HP 5, 4 (x2), 3, 2 (x2), 1)

The corpses wear chlén-hide chainmail armour and helmets and carry swords. They each also have a backpack, inside of which can be found “adventuring” equipment (torches, spikes, mallet, etc.).

5. Memorial

This large, open room contains five ornate pillars carved from a greenish stone. The pillars are decorated with Classical

Tsolyáni script, written in silver, that sing the praises of someone named Kégo hiArsúnu of the Sea Blue clan. Scholars (or those who investigate the matter) know that Kégo was a wealthy devotee of the temple of Hriháyal 500 years ago. He was reputed to have performed the Final Unspeakable Act, which is why he has no tomb. Instead, this chamber was constructed in his memory.

Two Yéleth stand watch over this chamber, one in northwest and one in the southeast. They attack anyone who enters who does not bear a silver symbol of either Hriháyal or Dlamélish (see area 6). The Yéleth attempt to paralyse any who enter illicitly, leaving them to be eaten by scavengers.

Yéleth (AC 6 MV 9" HD 3 HP 13, 11)

6. Guard Room

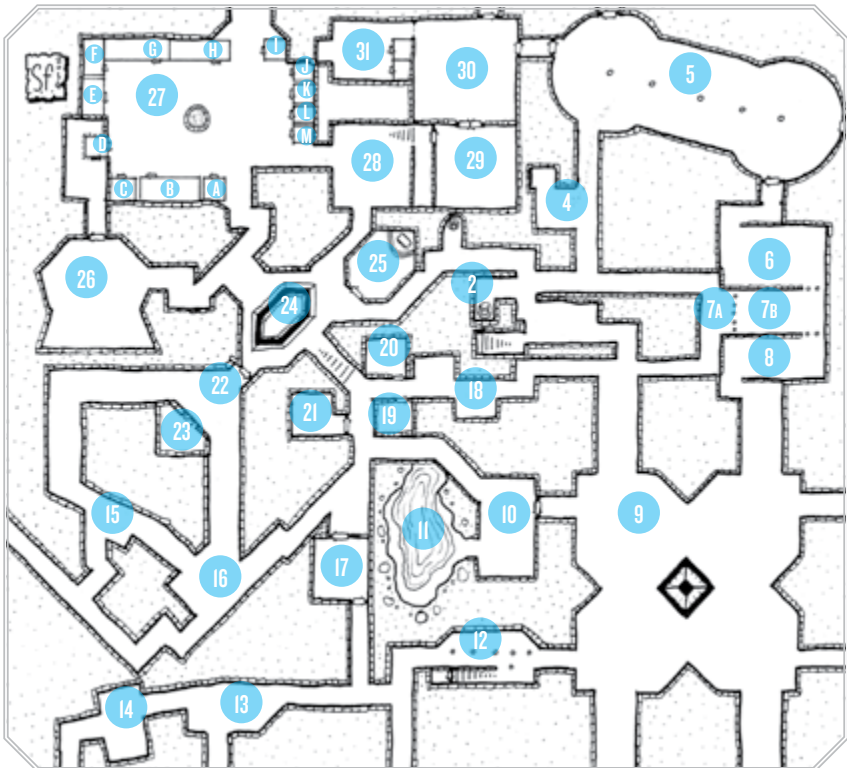
There is an empty wooden weapons rack here, along with a lever that opens the portcullis to area 7b. Beneath some broken masonry is a silver symbol of Hriháyal (worth 200 káitars).

7a. Gaol

There is a lever to open the portcullis to area 7b.

7b. Cell

Accessible by three different portcullises, this area currently holds a Hlāka named Aie-ee-syá who has been frozen by an *excellent ruby eye* employed in a fit of pique by a priestess of Dlamélish when she and her companions encountered him several







years ago. If somehow freed, Aie-ee-syá will be very grateful, offering both a gem (worth 1000 káitars) and 10 arrows +1 to his rescuers.

8. Guard Room

This room is nearly identical to area 6, except that there is no silver symbol of Hriháyal to be found here.

9. Courtyard

The walls of this large, open area are beautifully decorated with paintings of Tsolyáni emperors, Éngsvanyáli priest-kings, Bednálljan rulers, and legendary potentates from the Time of No Kings and before. In the centre of the courtyard is a 10-foot wide shaft that once served as a water well. The well descends an unknown distance below – perhaps into the next level of the underworld (referee's discretion). The shaft is very dark; anyone peering into it has a 3 in 6 chance of being surprised by a Káyi, as it rises upwards to attack.

Káyi (AC 7 MV 15" HD 4 HP 17)

10. Damp Chamber

The floors, walls, and ceilings of this room are slightly damp, which has made it an ideal environment to incubate a variety of multicoloured moulds. These moulds are harmless, however.

11. Pool

This subterranean pool has become the home of two hungry Mu'ágh.

Mu'ágh (AC 8 MV 2" HD 3 HP 12, 10)

12. Stairs

Six stone columns can be found in this area, along with a set of stairs leading upwards that end in a bricked up door. If the bricks are removed, they reveal the

basement of a building in contemporary Sokátis whose inhabitants have no idea that their dwelling/place of business rests atop an entrance into the underworld.

13. Curious Paintings

The walls of this darkened room and the hallways leading to and from it are covered in strange black and white paintings that depict demonic figures of both humanoid and other shapes. If a light source of any kind (whether natural or magical) is shone on the paintings, the figures scatter, "fleeing" into areas of the room or hallways that are not currently illuminated. This effect is magical, but it cannot be dispelled by spells such as *disbelieve* and *dispel* or *dispel evil/good*. Physical damage to the walls does not end the enchantment either; it only creates gaps in the moving tableau that the figures avoid.

14. The Eater of Swords

A single Ngáyu is scuttling around in this otherwise empty chamber.

Ngáyu (AC 6 MV 6" HD 4 HP 19)

15. Bone Pile

In one corner of this room is a collection of gnawed human bones, along with bits of cloth and shattered Chlén hide armour. Also amidst the bones is a scroll tube containing a cursed scroll that afflicts all within 10 feet of the reader with a rotting plague that proves fatal in 2 turns, unless a cure serious wounds spell or an *eye of healing* is employed.

16. The Bloodsucker

More gnawed bones can be found here, along with the desiccated corpses of three human beings, two of whom wear plate armour. Hunched over the corpses is a



single Hrá, armed with a wickedly curved steel sword. The Hrá attacks anyone who approaches.

Hrá (AC 4 MV 12:” HD 7 HP 20)

In addition to their armour, the following can also be found on the corpses: a bola

+2/+1, an *abominable eye of detestation*, and 2,086 Hlášh. The unarmoured corpse also wears a badge that indicates he was a member of the White Stone clan. If it is returned to his relations (along with news of his demise), the clan will be grateful, offering a small reward of 100 Káitars.

Patrons

Section IIIIO of *Empire of the Petal Throne* provides two random tables for generating potential patrons to the player characters. These tables are excellent resources for providing the referee with the bare bones of an adventure, but some, especially neophytes, might wish for a little more “meat” to aid them in the task of constructing a scenario. As in issue #1, what follows are five fleshed-out patrons to be used in conjunction with the tables in *Empire of the Petal Throne*. Each includes not only game statistics for the patron but four different ways to use them. Future issues of *The Excellent Travelling Volume* will continue to provide additional patrons, all of which the referee can use as non-player characters in other contexts, if he so desires.



Tlakár hiMaróda

Level III Adventurer; STR 25, INT 82, CON 53, PSY 83, DEX 31, COM 91; To Hit -1; Damage +0; AC 2; HP 10; Original Skills: Bird-trainer, Botanist, Cook, Hunter, Wine-maker; Professional Skills: Control of Self, Illusionist, Mace/Flail User, Spearman;

Bonus Spells: *Locate Objects*; Languages: Engsvanyáli, Salarvyáni, Tsolyáni

Tlakár is young noble from a minor branch of the Golden Bough clan. He is handsome and he knows it, which, combined with his pride in the prestige of his ancestry, gives him a smug, self-satisfied expression. Consequently, he treats almost everyone he encounters, including members of his own clan, with condescension bordering on disdain. Needless to say, this has not won Tlakár many friends or allies, especially within the Golden Bough clan, where he is viewed as a spoiled child. In order to teach him a much-needed lesson in humility, his clan has cut him off from his allowance and left him with a “mere” three bodyguards (all Level II Warriors) to make his way in the Imperium — a task at which he has thus far not excelled, leading to his current impoverished state.

Other than his looks and a few spells, Tlakár possesses only one other useful ability: he is a very good eavesdropper. Recently, he says he overheard a priestess of Avánthe discussing the supposed location of a subterranean shrine dedicated to the expunged Twenty-Eighth Aspect of the Mistress of Heaven, which is the resting place of a jewelled idol of incalculable value. Tlakár wishes to hire the characters to accompany him on an expedition into the Tsuru’úm to find this shrine and loot its wealth. He offers a 10,000 Káitar fee (payable upon successful completion of the expedition, of course), in addition to half the profits obtained from anything else of value recovered.

1. Everything is exactly as Tlakár says it is. The shrine is real, but it is protected by several types of undead beings and arcane automatons. If they can be

defeated, the shrine contains in excess of 100,000 Káitars in treasure, including the jewelled idol. Of course, the Temple of Avánthe will be none too pleased to learn of this desecration and may investigate the matter. Unfortunately for the characters, Tlakár is very quick to give them up to the Temple to save his own neck.

2. As 1, except agents of the Temple of Avánthe have arrived ahead of the characters and have no interest in the existence of the shrine being confirmed to outsiders.
3. The shrine does not exist. Tlakár's information is completely mistaken.
4. As 3, except that Tlakár is lying. He has made arrangements with foreign slavers to lead the characters into an ambush so that they may be captured and sold outside Tsolyánu, for which he will take a cut of the profits.



Pték Ch'kw

Level IV Warrior; STR 90, INT 65, CON 70, PSY 65, DEX 77, COM 51; To Hit +4; Damage +1; AC 3; HP 17; Original

Skills: Dyer, Mathematician, Miner, Musician, Scribe-accountant, Smith-armourer; Professional Skills: Axeman, Bola-slinger, Crossbowman, Mace/Flail User, Slinger, Spearman, Swordsman; Languages: Pé Chóí, Tsolyáni

Pték Ch'kw is a Pé Chóí soldier originally from the Chákas, but he left his homeland long ago. He worships the Pé Chóí deity known as the Black Old One, but, when asked by humans, he usually claims to serve Lord Vimúhla — not that it matters much, as he is not particularly religious. Despite having served the Imperium for more than a decade, he has no clan affiliation, preferring to remain aloof from human politics and society, much to the consternation of several Change-oriented clans who have offered him membership as a result of his sterling military service to the Petal Throne.

Like all Pé Chóí, Pték can sense the violent death of another of his kind within several miles — and the sense is acute enough that he knows the Pé Chóí was not slain in battle. Recently, he sensed just such a death and wishes the characters to investigate it on his behalf. He would do so on his own, except that the legion to which he is attached is about to leave to participate in a Qadárni battle against another legion and he may be gone for several days. When he returns, Pték will assist them in this investigation, but he hopes they may have resolved the matter before then. He indicates that the sensation was strong enough that he is sure the Pé Chóí died within the city's walls rather than farther away.

1. There is no evidence whatsoever that a Pé Chóí has been slain in the city. No matter how long the characters investigate, they will find nothing to

support Pték's claim. He will be most disappointed to learn this upon his return.

2. The characters discover that a Pé Chói named Tkún Tè-Chí was recently found murdered in a back alley of the city's Foreigners Quarter. Tkún was a travelling merchant who sold general goods and foodstuffs. There are no leads in his murder, but evidence suggests he died as a result of a small poisoned dart, which suggests the involvement of professional assassins.
3. As 2, except that it was known that Tkún Tè-Chí sometimes also acted as a smuggler, bringing illicit items (e.g. stolen ancient artifacts) into the city for sale for buyers willing to pay a premium price for them.
4. As 2, except that Tkún Tè-Chí is the fifth in a string of murders perpetrated against Pé Chói living in the city. The murders occurred every fifteen days exactly, which coincides with the revolution of the moon Káshi around Tékel. The city guard have attempted to keep this matter quiet, but are concerned they will no longer be able to do so, especially since the regularity with which the murders are committed suggests that demonic ritual magic may be involved.

Chogórto Sría

Level III Warrior; STR 65, INT 60, CON 44, PSY 16, DEX 64, COM 48; To Hit +2; Damage +0; AC 7; HP 15; Original Skills: Bootmaker, Fisherman, Fletcher, Mountaineer; Professional Skills: Axeman, Bola-slinger, Crossbowman, Mace/Flail User, Slinger, Spearman, Swordsman; Languages: Pecháni, Tsolyáni



Chogórto is a Pecháni warrior serving as a diplomatic attaché. He is short and slight of build, with delicate features — some might even call him “pretty,” but not to his face! Nevertheless, he is physically fit and muscular, traits he tries to emphasize in order to compensate for his small stature. He wears his wavy hair long and sports a neatly trimmed beard and moustache.

Chogórto approaches the characters, hoping to employ them on a military expedition in the mountains of his homeland. He claims that Ssú raiding parties have grown increasingly bold of late, particularly in the region where the Blue Petal clan (of which he is a member) dwell. He says his clan will pay 1000 káitars per character per month for their service, in addition to providing food, lodgings, and transport to Pecháno. The characters may also take a 25% cut of any spoils taken from the Ssú. This employment is month-to-month, so the characters may leave at any time and Chogórto will arrange for transport back to Tsolyánu at the end of their service.

1. All is as Chogórto says. 1–4 parties of

10–120 Ssú attack each month for the next five months.

2. As 1, except the Ssú raids continue for ten months.
3. As 1, except the characters find themselves facing Pecháni opponents as well. The Blue Petal clan is a vassal of the Rekhmél clan, which is the bitter rival of the royal Beneshchán clan that rules Pecháno. The Blue Petal clan hopes that their success against the Ssú will increase the prestige of their liege lords and thus its overall standing in the country. Certain hotheaded vassals of the Beneshchán fear this possibility and will launch attacks against the Blue Petal while the characters are in its service.
4. As 3, except that there are no Ssú whatsoever. Chogórto has lured the characters to Pecháno under false pretenses of fighting the Enemies of Man. Instead, they will only be fighting the enemies of his clan's liege lords. He will not reveal this detail until they are in Pecháno, after which they may leave, if they wish, but he will provide no payment, transportation, or indeed assistance of any kind in their efforts to do so.

Visháya hiMriyél

Level IV Priest of Stability; STR 49, INT 60, CON 67, PSY 90, DEX 28, COM 64; To Hit +0; Damage +0; AC 7; HP 14; Original Skills: Carpet-maker, Perfumer, Scholar, Scribe-accountant; Professional Skills: Cure Light Wounds, Detect Evil/Good, Produce Light; Bonus Spells: *Dispel Evil/Good*, *Protection from Evil/Good*; Languages: Classical Tsolyáni, Engsvanyáli, Livyáni, Llyáni, Mu'ugalavyáni, Tsolyáni



Visháya is a priestess of Qón and a member of the Amber Cloak clan. By Tsolyáni standards, she is tall and a little too thin, which is why she is often described as “plain,” even though she sports quite a pretty face. Her voice is also exceedingly pleasant, as anyone who speaks to her for any length of time can attest. Visháya is fond of elaborate costumes, particularly headdresses; she is rarely seen without them.

Visháya tells the characters that her younger brother, Dálü, an acolyte within the temple of the Ancient One of Pleasures, has recently gone missing. She believes him to have been kidnapped by agents of the Temple of Durrítlámish, a couple of whom she has seen keenly observing the actions of her brother. Visháya suspects that their interest in Dálü was due to his serving as the personal secretary of Dridákku hiKáshte, the Temple of Qón's Great Proctor (chief scholar). She feels the Temple of Durrítlámish hopes to use Dálü to learn secrets to which he might have been privy as part of his official duties. She would like the characters to look into the matter and, if she is right, rescue her brother.

1. Everything is as Visháya says. Dálü is being held within a secret prison beneath the Temple of Durritlámish, where he is being interrogated and tortured. So far, he has not divulged any secrets. Dálü's capture was done without the knowledge of the Durritlámish hierarchy, but was instead the work of an ambitious priestess named Anká'a hiTáije. If the characters can prove this, the Temple of Durritlámish will cooperate with them in dealing with this egregious violation of the Concordat.

2. As 1, except that the Durritlámish hierarchy has full knowledge of the kidnapping and will do anything to prevent their actions from being made known to the Palace of the Priesthoods.

3. As 1, except that Dálü was not kidnapped. Rather, he has decided to join the Temple of Durritlámish and is providing Anká'a hiTáije with as many secrets as he knows in order to give them both greater status within the Temple. The revelation of this will cause considerable consternation within the Temple of Qón and great personal embarrassment to Visháya.

4. Dálü was not kidnapped at all. Rather, he has fallen in love with a junior priest of Durritlámish named Tekkén hiMawár. Visháya and her clan do not approve of this relationship, because Tekkén is a member of the low status Black Hand clan; he is thus not seen as suitable to someone of Dálü's station. The kidnapping story was concocted simply as a way to get Dálü back from the Temple of Durritlámish, where is currently residing with Tekkén.



Thusúra hiNo'ómu

Level VI Lay Priest of Stability; STR 76, INT 98, CON 43, PSY 48, DEX 36, COM 25; To Hit +2; Damage +2; AC 5; HP 18; Original Skills: Assassin-spy-tracker, Dyer, Glass-blower, Jeweller-goldsmith, Paper-ink maker, Scribe-accountant, Slaver, Swimmer-diver; Professional Skills: Astrologer, Clairaudience, Clairvoyance, Control of Self, Control Person, Illusionist, Medium, Nature Control, Telekinesis; Bonus Spells: *Calm, Extra-Vision, Light*; Languages: Tsolyáni

Thusúra is a lay priestess of Chegárra and a member of the Golden Dawn clan; she is also an agent of the Omnipotent Azure Legion. Stocky and broad-shouldered, she comes across as imposing, even a bit intimidating, which aids her in her work on behalf of the Petal Throne. Thusúra is middle-aged and wears her hair pulled back, in a utilitarian style that further accentuates her hard features. She has a personal entourage consisting of nine guards (all Level II Warriors), a priestess of Chégarra (Level III), and a lay priestess of Keténgku, but she generally keeps them out of sight when operating “in the field.”

Thusúra approaches the characters discreetly, claiming that she has heard of their exploits and recognizes them as loyal servants of the God-Emperor. (The referee should feel free to embellish her claims with incidents from the characters' previous adventures that support her case, while minimizing those that do not) Thusúra then explains that it has recently come to her attention that "foreign agents" in the local city are holding a clandestine auction of "Imperial property" and she would like the characters to attend, posing as potential buyers. Their mission is wholly intelligence gathering; Thusúra does not expect them to do anything other than report what they discover, especially who else is in attendance at the auction.

1. The foreign agents are Salarvyáni attempting to sell a teenaged boy they claim is a secret Imperial heir, but they do not possess the gold plaque necessary to prove his identity (see boxed text).
2. As 1, but they do possess the plaque.
3. The foreign agents are Yán Koryáni attempting to sell the keys to Imperial military codes captured during the current war.
4. The foreign agents are Mu'uglavyáni attempting to sell Imperial correspondence suggesting toleration of the worship of the Pariah Deity known as the One Other by the Petal Throne.

Emperor Hirkáne's father, Hetkoláinen, known by the throne name "He Whose Glory Never Ends," had only two heirs — the present emperor and his older brother, Mursún Dlekkúminè, whom history has called "the Weak." Mursún reigned but for two years, dying after becoming addicting to the deadly drug Zu'úr (see "The Hidden Shrine" in issue #1 for more information). His death unexpectedly thrust Hirkáne onto the Petal Throne, a role for which he was not entirely prepared, which could have had dire consequences for the Imperium.

Fortunately, Hirkáne was both intelligent and quick to learn and has proven a worthy Seal Emperor. Early in his reign, Hirkáne decided not to repeat his father's mistake by having too few heirs, thereby bringing Tsolyánu to the brink of a dynastic crisis. Over the course of decades on the throne, he has produced many heirs, a goodly number of which have been raised away from Avanthár under the auspices of various clans and temples. Each of these heirs has been given "the Gold" — a circular golden plaque impressed with the Seal of the Imperium and that is proof of their princely status. Upon the calling of a Kólumejálím, each prince or princess wishing to participate presents his or her Gold to be verified by the Omnipotent Azure Legion in order to participate in the choosing of the new emperor (or, alternately, renouncing it).

No one outside of the emperor himself and certain officials within the court and the Omnipotent Azure Legion knows the identities of all his heirs. Currently, five are known, but there are almost certain double that — or more — living hidden lives among the great clans and temples of the Imperium. As Hirkáne grows ever older and more feeble, the revelation of new heirs will undoubtedly accelerate, as will schemes to put forward impostors by factions both within and without Tsolyánu. Theoretically, the Gold is intended to make such schemes more difficult to bring to fruition, but it is not impossible, as there may be means to steal, alter, or forge these plaques. The next few years are thus sure to be filled with intrigue, as the race to determine who will next sit upon the Petal Throne accelerates.

Lost and Found

Empire of the Petal Throne assumes newly generated player characters are foreigners whose earliest endeavours in Tsolyánu are at the behest of one or more local patrons (see pp. 19-24 for some examples in this very issue). This assumption is a useful one, not least because it slowly introduces the players to the intricacies of Tsolyáni society without their having to read pages upon pages of background material beforehand. In running *EPT* over the years, however, I have come to realise that it is not the only way to achieve the same end.

The short adventure situation that follows offers another way to introduce new characters (and their players) to Tsolyánu and to Tékumel. I call it an “adventure situation,” because it does not include specific keyed locales; rather, it presents a situation that can be resolved in a variety of different ways without being exhaustive. While sufficient information is provided to enable the referee to develop this situation as he wishes, there is still a need to expand upon the information presented here to create a satisfying kick-off to a new *EPT* campaign.

As written, “Lost and Found” assumes the campaign is beginning in the city of Sokátis described in this issue. However, with only a few small tweaks here and there, it could easily be used in Jakállá or any other city in Tsolyánu that engages in regular trade with Salarvyá.

In the Foreigners Quarter

Regardless of the characters’ backgrounds, “Lost and Found” begins in the Foreigners Quarter, as they stumble

upon a dead body in an alleyway away from the bustling crowds. The body belongs to a young man in his late teen years. From the looks of his clothes (or, rather, lack thereof), he is almost certainly a member of a very low clan, assuming he is not Nakomé. He bears several purplish wounds across his back, all of which appear to be stab wounds. Any character possessing the alchemist, assassin-spy-tracker, botanist, or physician original skills will immediately recognise that the purple colouration is a natural reaction to a blade envenomed with a particular species of the deadly plant known as “the Food of the Ssú” that is found in Pecháno and parts of Salarvyá.

Lying next to the body is a scroll tube bearing the mark of the House of Worms clan, a local clan devoted to Sáрку and Durritlámish. Inside the tube is a couple of parchments that are written in an obviously non-Tsolyáni script marked with two clan symbols, one of which is that of Domed Tomb (the other is not immediately recognisable). Anyone with knowledge of Salarvyáni will recognise it as written in that tongue.

“Hand It Over”

Not long after discovering the dead youth and the scroll, the characters are confronted by two rough-looking men without any clan or temple insignia indicating their identities. They will speak authoritatively, attempting to intimidate the characters into handing over the scroll, claiming that it belongs to them, having been stolen by this street thief. They even offer to give the characters 50 Káitars as a “finder’s fee” for having recovered it for them.

If the characters turn it over, they are

paid — and that ends this adventure. Here's hoping the characters are not so easily cowed! If the characters do not comply, the men will draw their weapons and attack.

Toughs (AC 5 MV 9" HD 2 HP 9, 7)

The men both wield daggers coated in poison. Since the blades have already been used several times, the poison coating it is less effective. Characters struck by them get a +2 bonus to their saving throws. Failure results in death in 1–4 rounds unless *neutralise poison* or an antidote is applied.

The Correspondence

If any characters can read Salarvyáni, they will understand the content of the scrolls. If not, they can hire a translator for a small fee (around 25 Káitars). The correspondence is only two pages long and does not take very long to translate. It is a letter, using a very formal (and somewhat obscure) vocabulary, from representatives of the Gürrüşhyúgga family of Tsa'avtúlgú (a city in eastern Salarvyá) to the Domed Tomb clan of Sokátis, making arrangements for an upcoming meeting between representatives of both sides.

As noted, the correspondence is written in very formal language, often using archaisms derived from Bednálljan Salarvyáni whose meaning is unclear even to fluent speakers of modern Salarvyáni. However, a few facts are clear: the Gürrüşhyúgga representatives are already on their way to Sokátis; their arrival in Tsolyánu is to be secret; no one but select members of the Domed Tomb clan know they are coming; the meeting is to take place in the Tsuru'úm, in a shrine dedicated to Lord Sárku.

What Next?

At this point, the characters are left to determine how best to proceed. What does the correspondence mean and to whom do they give it? There is no "right" answer to this question and, because of that, what follows is merely a listing of some of the most obvious courses of action they may take, along with ideas regarding the consequences of their pursuing them. Players, being the clever and unpredictable sorts they are, may choose paths not listed here. In those cases, the referee is encouraged to extrapolate from the information that follows.

House of Worms Clan

The scroll tube the characters found bore the insignia of a small local clan called House of Worms. If the characters decide to return the scroll tube, the correspondence, or both to this clan, its clanmaster, Jukélsa hiTigál, will be most relieved. He will offer to reward the characters for their actions by paying them a sum of 500 Káitars. He will also offer them some advice: flee Sokátis as soon as possible, lest they run afoul of the wrath of the Domed Tomb clan.

If asked to explain himself, Jukélsa will be reluctant, especially if the characters are not worshippers of Lord Sárku. He is, however, a reasonable man and can be won over with argument. For example, he will open up if pressed about why the Domed Tomb would be angry with the characters, though other angles may get him to open up as well. Jukélsa will explain that there is a growing rift within the local temple of Sárku between those who favour a more moderate approach (such as his clan and that of the city's governor) and those

who favour a more zealous one. The Domed Tomb clan is among the zealots.

According to Jukélsa, the Domed Tomb seek to position themselves as the next masters of Sokátis when, as they believe, Imperial Prince Dchich'uné ascends the Petal Throne. To that end, they have been scheming not only to build up temporal power within the city, but also supernatural power as well. It has long been rumoured that the Domed Tomb are raising an army of the undead in the Tsuru'úm and Jukélsa claims that his spies have gained only limited proof of it — until now.

The correspondence the characters found was stolen from the Domed Tomb clan house by a slave secretly in the employ of House of Worms (the dead youth). Now that the characters have given it to Jukélsa, he knows a little bit more about what the Domed Tomb are planning. He reiterates that the characters leave Sokátis, as he cannot protect them should more agents of the Domed Tomb come looking for the correspondence.

Domed Tomb

It is possible the characters might decide to approach the Domed Tomb clan instead, since the correspondence was meant for them. In such a case, they will meet with its clanmaster, Chékkan hiAghái, who will be quite pleased that they have returned the correspondence to his people, as it was stolen by a slave employed by a rival clan. He will reward them with 1000 Káitars for their efforts and tells them that the clan is in their eternal gratitude. Should they ever need anything, they should not hesitate to come back to the Domed Tomb clan house and he would be happy to assist them, if he can.

This response depends on the characters either not having read the correspondence or doing a good job of suggesting to Chékkan that they have not read it. During his interview with them, he will do his best to ferret out how much the characters know. If they give even the slightest indication that they know about the meeting with the Gürrüşhyúgga, his demeanour will quickly change. He will grow coldly angry and summon guards to dispense with the characters immediately. The odds of their escape are not good, but the referee is encouraged to give them every opportunity to do so, if they are quick and imaginative. Even if they do escape, more toughs — and even more highly skilled assassins — will attempt to hunt them down and slay them while they remain in Sokátis.

Salarvyáni

There are many expatriate Salarvyáni living in Sokátis, any number of whom could provide the characters with information about the Gürrüşhyúgga family, if they seek it out. What they will discover is that the Gürrüşhyúgga are devotees of the Salarvyáni deity known as Black Qárqa, a local variant of Sárku whose worship is sometimes said to be even more repellant and inhuman. Most Salarvyáni treat Qárqa with fear, as the god's devotees engage in all manner of blasphemous rites, as well as consorting with the undead and demonic entities from the Planes Beyond. If the Domed Tomb are allying themselves with the Gürrüşhyúgga, it is not good news for anyone.

Resolutions

By this point, the characters should have enough information to begin to



formulate a plan of final action, whether it be to flee Sokátis or to try and stop the Domed Tomb clan from meeting with representatives of the Gürrüşhyúgga family. The House of Worms clan is a potential ally in the latter, as might be Salarvyáni who hate and fear the worship of Black Qárqa. Other possible allies include Imperial agents, such as the Omnipotent Azure Legion, who would certainly take a dim view of what the Domed Tomb might be planning. Likewise, many within the Temple of Sárku itself would not wish to see the Domed Tomb succeed, as their actions might bring the whole temple into disrepute.

In short, there are many potential ways to resolve this adventure situation, some of which will have long-term

repercussions for the campaign. This is as it should be. While exploring the Tsuru'úm to fight monsters and loot treasure is an enjoyable and diverting activity in *Empire of the Petal Throne*, there is equal enjoyment to be found in navigating the byzantine political and social alliances that make up Tsolyáni society. "Lost and Found" is intended as a straightforward way to involve the characters in some of those alliances, showing them that, even within a single faith (that of Sárku), there are many approaches. One devotee of the Worm Lord is not like another; there are as many perspectives as there are worshippers. Exploring those perspectives is just one of the pleasures that comes from roleplaying on the alien planet of Tékmel.

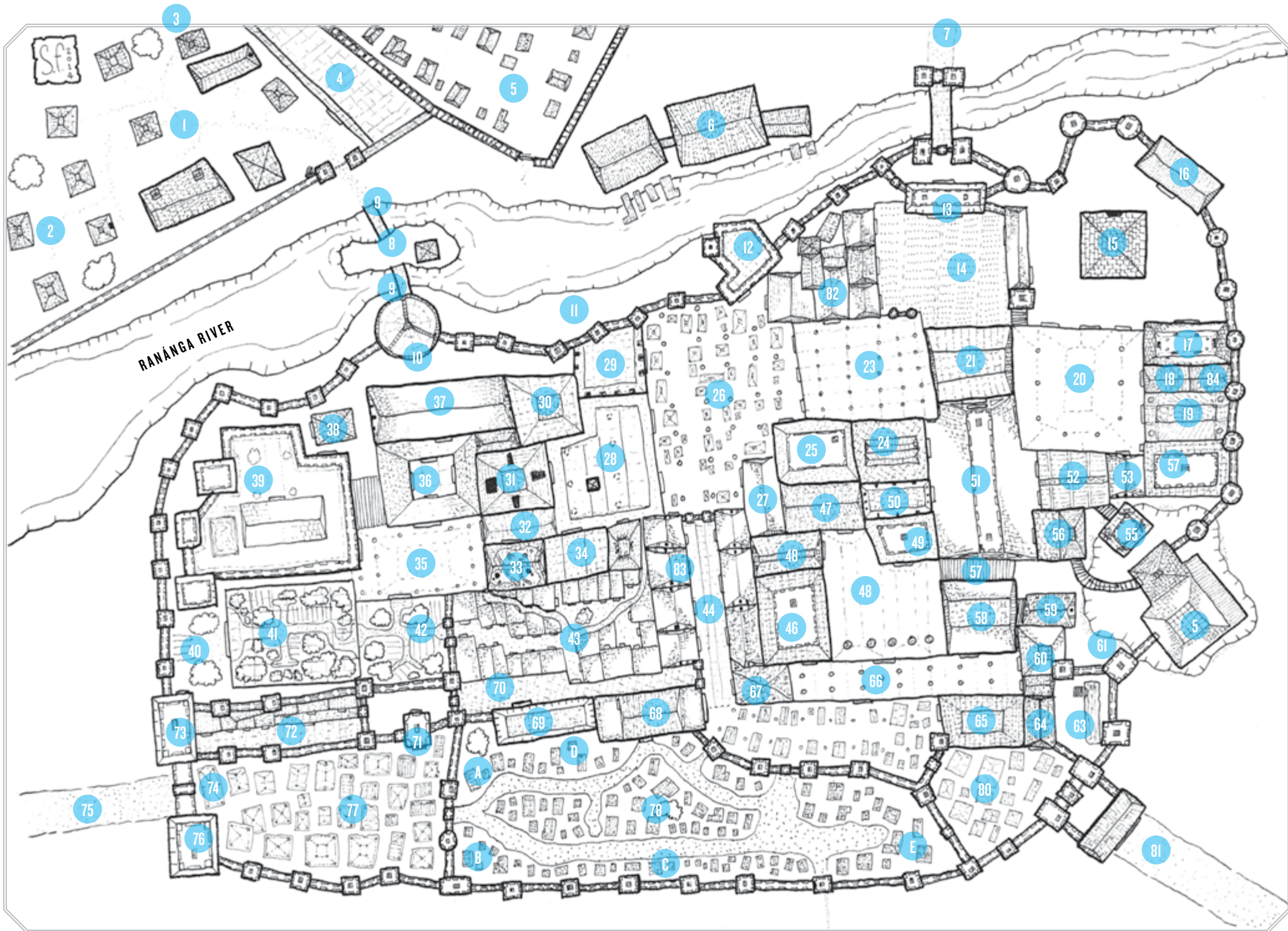
Random Tšolyáni Faction Names

Among the many joys of Empire of the Petal Throne for me is its exquisite use of the English language. The words he chose in naming many aspects of his creation are a delight and help to create a real sense of place. In my own adventures and campaigns, I have attempted to imitate Professor Barker's flair for the exotic and baroque when naming places, magic items, and organisations of my own creation, so that they "fit" the pattern already established in the game. While I have developed some skill at this — if I can plan ahead — there are times when this is not possible.

In such instances, I make use of three random tables I put together. One of the tables consists solely of nouns, another solely of adjectives, and the third is a mix of both. Quick rolls of a 20-sided die on all three provide the basics from which to create the name of a new faction within the Empire. For example, suppose I roll 7, 15, and 13, yielding the following results: "hallowed," "portal," and "order." Immediately, I have a new faction or secret society — the Order of the Hallowed Portal or even the Hallowed Order of the Portal. Let's try another one, this time with the rolls 14, 9, and 20. This gives us "redolent," "crimson," and "sodality." This one is a little harder, since there are two adjectives, but a little thought quickly resolves the matter. Possible interpretations of this second set of rolls include the Sodality of Redolent Crimson and the Sodality of Crimson Redolence, in each case transforming an adjective into a noun.

Like all random tables, those presented here are not intended to be a replacement for creativity but rather a spur to it. Every referee will find there are occasions when the players have embarked on an unanticipated course of action. Having recourse to a few random rolls to incite the imagination is invaluable and it is hoped that these tables — or similar ones that you create — will prove as useful to you as they have to me in my own refereeing.

1	August	Amaranthine	Association
2	Celestial	Ashen	Band
3	Estimable	Aurulent	Brotherhood
4	Everlasting	Blade	Circle
5	Exalted	Brilliance	Clan
6	Glorious	Bulwark	Company
7	Hallowed	Cerulean	Fellowship
8	Honourable	Chamber	Fraternity
9	Immortal	Crimson	Group
10	Immutable	Firmament	Guild
11	Impenetrable	Gilt	League
12	Perpetual	Illumination	Legion
13	Radiant	Lustrous	Order
14	Redolent	Ocherous	Sect
15	Resplendent	Portal	Seekers
16	Sempiternal	Sphere	Servants
17	Solemn	Stygian	Sisterhood
18	Sublime	Tenebrosity	Society
19	Supernal	Vault	Sorority
20	Venerable	Viridian	Sodality



The Tékumel Project

Being 28mm miniatures for N.A.R. Barker's Empire of the Petal Throne setting.

<http://thetekumelproject.blogspot.ca/>

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NEXT ISSUE

The Underworld of Sokátis continued;

Demons of Ksárul and Grugánu;

Salarvyáni and Pecháni characters;

A ruined wizard's "tower";

and More!

