

# Issue Three | Spring 1994

## Servants of the Petal Throne

*Some bureaucratic gleanings from the dais of Mark Wigoder-Daniels*

The Palace of the Realm of the Glorious and Ever-living God King, Master of the Many Universes and Emperor of All, is one of the four departments of the Tsolyáni civil service. It is responsible for all domestic affairs including taxation, law enforcement, land ownership, records and public works. There is a branch of the Palace of the Realm in every town. The Palace in Jakállá comprises a vast complex of buildings situated on the south bank of the Equ'noyel River, below the Governor's Palace.

The visitor approaches along the broad avenue between the temples of Hnalla and Hrü'ü. Passing the Imperial armoury, he enters through great gates surmounted by the azure-&-gold Seal of the Imperium. To his left stretch the parks and gardens, to his right lie the imposing Marble Mansion of Metlunel I and other buildings. Immediately he is approached by the denizens of the outer courts: guides, prostitutes, and food vendors offering sweet pastries, sweetmeats, sherbets and buttermilk. There are also scribes who will draw up petitions for the illiterate, guides and servants, lawyers' touts seeking custom for their masters, and courtiers (often impecunious petty nobles)

who offer to use their "special influence" to help our visitor transact his business here.

Passing through the outer precincts, the visitor is guided to the hall, court or colonnade appropriate to his business. The typical hall is vast and cool after the blazing sunshine outside. The visitor's eyes adjust as he stands facing many stepped pyramids swathed in the smoke of oil lamps. The smells of ink, sweat, incense and wax mingle on the air. In 20th century terms, each pyramid is a separate "office". The overseer of the office sits at the pinnacle, surrounded by his subordinates on descending tiers.

If our visitor is of noble status, he may expect to be escorted to a side chamber where a senior official will come to discuss his business. The majority, though, must present their petition to the scribes on the lowest tier and wait while it is laboriously passed up the levels to the person who must eventually deal with it. This may take hours (or days, if insufficient inducement is offered) and so our visitor may wish to stroll out in the gardens with the crowds of others awaiting judgements.

### Echelons

Key positions in the Palace of the Realm are held by adherents of the Imperial Faction—Omnipotent Azure Legionaries and Lords of the Court of Purple Robes, whose first allegiance is to the Emperor. More numerous are the Royalists, who dominate the higher echelons of the bureaucracy. These people belong to the noble clans that trace their ancestry back to the dynasties of ancient times.

The Palace Chief is Jalugan hiVordesa of the Golden Sunburst Clan, a 51-year-old worshipper of Hnalla with three wives. He is of the XVIIIth Circle, but may be even higher within the secret hierarchy of the Omnipotent Azure Legion. An ardent Imperialist, he keeps a beady eye on powerful members of the Royalist faction such as the head of the Department of Domestic Affairs, the head of the Department of Agency and Exertion, and the Grand Sequestrator of Clan Taxes.

A bureaucrat can expect to rise in the hierarchy until he reaches a Circle equivalent to his social status. To progress beyond this point he will need ability, luck, wealth (for lavish gifts to his superiors), the right political connections, and talent for intrigue. Good looks also help, this being a quality much admired by the Tsolyáni.

To advance in the bureaucracy, first average your Reasoning, Comeliness and any pertinent skill (usually Official, Lawyer, Administrator or Scribe). Use the result to make a standard 2D10 check subject to the following modifiers: +2 for each point your Social Status exceeds to Circle you're applying for; +1 for every three months' salary (at the Circle applied for) offered as inducement; +1 if your lineage has any members at sub-department level or higher; +1D10 if you succeed in a competitive Intrigue check vs the official responsible for your promotion. Critical success on the 2D10 roll advances you one Circle, ordinary success lets you try again in six months. (But critical failure means you are sacked!)

The clans that dominate the most senior positions (XIVth Circle and up) locally are Sea Blue, Golden Sunburst, Golden Bough, and Jade Diadem.

The clans most widespread in the upper hierarchy (IXth through XIIIth Circles) are White Crystal, Purple Gem, Standing Stone, and Joyous of Vra.

The clans with most members in the middle positions (IVth through VIIIth Circle) are Blue Kirtle, Black Stone, Scroll of Wisdom, Iron Plume and Victorious Globe.

The clans figuring prominently in the lower echelons (up to IIIRD Circle) are Plume of White, Sunlit Dome and High Tower.

### The Eight Departments

The Palace of the Realm in Jakállá employs more than a thousand civil servants, plus a whole host of guards, servants and hangers-on. Remember that Jakállá is a vast metropolis and the capital of the Kaija Protectorate. In other towns the Palace of the Realm will be accordingly smaller—perhaps only a hundred officials in Pala Jakállá or Vra. In a small town or village, the Palace of the Realm might amount to no more than a single hall adjoining the headman's clanhouse.

1. The Department of Domestic Affairs
2. The Department of the Seven Commissioners
3. The Marble Mansion of Metlunel I
4. The Department of the Third Courtyard
5. The Department of Agency and Exertion
6. The Department of Accession and Embarkation
7. The Hallway of the Twelve Columns
8. The Department of the City of Lasting Repose

### The Department of Domestic Affairs

This department is run by High Prefect Vrishmuyel hiPurushqe of the Sea Blue Clan (age 56, XVIth Circle). It includes these sub departments, the records for which are held in the three buildings in the south-east area of the Palace compound:

*The Registry of Births, Marriages and Deaths* is headed by Prefect Giu hiQolyelmu of the Golden Bough Clan (age 43, XIIIth Circle). It deals with an average of 100 births a day for Jakállá and surrounding towns and villages. (The figure is kept within reasonable limits by the use of lisutl root, a natural contraceptive genetically engineered by the original colonists of Téकुमेल.)

*The Registry of Aridani Declarations* is headed by Sub Prefect Horri hiGallai of the Golden Bough Clan (age 29, IXth Circle). Here women may come to declare themselves legally independent. The woman is then Aridani, meaning that she has all the legal rights and responsibilities of a man. Aridani status is necessary for any woman who wishes to carry on a career outside her clan—eg, in the priesthood, army or bureaucracy. The option is more popular in the south, but only some 10% of Jakállan women opt for it. If a woman wishes to revoke Aridani status (as some do in later life) she has only to return here and make another declaration to that effect.

*The Registry of Conferral of Citizenship and Rights to Permanent Residence* is headed by Prefect Genemu hiHehesha of the Grey Cloak Clan (age 56, XIth Circle).

*The Registry of Malefactors* is headed by Chokoresh hiMunalek of the Grey Wand Clan (age 27, Xth Circle). This maintains a partial list of known or suspected wrongdoers. Others are kept by the Department of the Seven Commissioners, the Marble Mansion of Metlunel I, the Palace of Ever-Glorious War, and the Omnipotent Azure Legion.

### The Department of the Seven Commissioners

This department is run by Regional Inspector-General Heketh hiSenkdun of the White Crystal Clan (aged 49, XVIIIth Circle; balding, meticulous, a fervent Belkhanu worshipper). It has charge of the following:

Tax affairs are overseen by Grand Sequestrator Count Chushel hiSsanmirin of the Clan of the Cloak of Azure Gems (aged 31, XIVth Circle), who is a portly bearded lecher with five wives and a grand appetite; he is an ardent Royalist. By no coincidence he happens to be one of the wealthiest men in Jakállá. His sub-department comprises the *Office of Assessment of Clan Worth*, the *Office of Collation of Revenue Reports* (which maintains a network of spies and informers) and the *Office for the Organization of Tax Collection* (which employs gangs of former legionaries to scour the countryside).

*The Imperial Mint* is charged with minting and distribution of coins and the prevention of counterfeiting.

*The Stamping Office* marks weights and measures for use in the marketplace, etc, to show that they have been verified by Imperial officials. Falsification of such a stamp is an Imperial crime, though in fact the cost and time required to get weights checked deters most merchants (even the honest ones) from bothering to get this done.

*The Provincial Treasury* might look like a lure to thieves, but it is well-guarded by a crack contingent of the militia and is also reputed to have sorcerous wards.

### The Marble Mansion of Metlunel I

This department is run by Grand Procurator Lord Genemu hiQolyelmu of the Golden Bough Clan (age 42, XVIIIth Circle). He has a sallow complexion and straggly beard, but keen piercing eyes and an intelligence to match. Originally from Bey Sü, Lord Genemu is pretty uncorruptible and is a staunch Imperialist to boot—to the dismay of the local members of his lineage, who tend to be anything but! Lord Genemu is an expert on the epics and has a vast collection of ancient texts. He enjoys socializing and has a large coterie of friends in Jakállá, even though he has only been here two years. His sub departments are:

*The Imperial Courts*, comprising the Court of Ten Pillars, the Court of Delegates and the Court of Thirteen Pillars.

*The Civil Courts*, comprising the First and Third Appellate Courts, the Court of the Brazen Dais and the Court of Pleadings.

*The Office of Interrogation* is operated by members of the Clan of the Edification of the Soul. This is a small tightly-knit clan of low social prestige but great importance in legal matters because its members are traditionally the only people (other than officers of the Omnipotent Azure Legion) who are able to apply judicial torture. A Mri (literally "Quartet") of four orange-robed members of the clan, each wearing the lizard-like mask of the god Chiteng, must be present at any torture or public execution.

*The Gallery of Expectation* contains cells for those undergoing trial. (Some of these "cells" can be quite luxurious if one gives the police guards a large enough bribe.)

*The Office of Debt Reclamation* is where a person found guilty of bankruptcy will be held while his clan is given the chance to pay his debts. If this is not done within a few weeks, his unfortunate bankrupt is handed over to the slaver's clan for sale, and the proceeds are disbursed to his creditors.

### The Department of the Third Courtyard

This is run by High Prefect Elkhorne hiSsanmirin of the Sea Blue Clan (aged 33, XVIth Circle). He is a suave sprightly sophisticated who is on the fast track to a post at Avanthar. The various sub departments here are:

*The Office of Marketplaces* is headed by SuperIntendant Qurrumu hiPrachu'ab of the Purple Gem Clan (aged 52, XIIIth Circle), a genial fellow who has done very well indeed out of this plum posting over the past twenty years. This office is responsible for iSsuing trading permits (but not customs or foreign trade) and appoints market magistrates. It maintains close liaison with the market police.

*The Registry of Slaves* keeps track of all slaves passing through the slave market. You've arrived in town to find your gambling addicted cousin has gone missing? Here's the place to start the search—as long as you're prepared to wade through several hundred scrolls' worth of documentation!

### The Department of Agency and Exertion

This is run by a staunch Royalist: Lord Comptroller Tetukel hiBurutla of the Jade Diadem Clan (aged 60, XVIIth Circle). White-haired and handsome, Lord Tetukel could be said to rule his department with the archetypal iron fist in a velvet glove—except that the wearing of gloves is considered undignified by the Tsolyáni upper classes because of the association with manual labour! Lord Tetukel is an expert falconer with many splendid küini. His daughter is a rising star in the temple of Dlamelish.

The sub-departments under him are:

*The Battalions of Kaija Province* is responsible for the organization of the militia in Jakállá and elsewhere in the province. These amount to some 7000 men in all—effectively an entire legion whose titular general is the Provincial Governor. The militia are drilled as medium infantry, but are unlikely to see battle unless civil war should break out. More often their duties are to act as police (including market police, but not prison or tomb guards), fire wardens and nightwatchmen.

*The Supervisorship of the Arena* deals mainly with Imperial ceremonies to be held at the Hililakte. These are held to celebrate military victories and are useful in creating a sense of national unity which is not a natural part of the Tsolyáni psyche. Other impromptu entertainments may be needed to distract a restless populace, and it is important to move quickly on such occasions.

*The Office of Imperial Benevolence* contracts civic work out to the clans—for example, the recent renovation of the abandoned temple of the Unknown One.

*The Office of Imperial Puissance* deals with the rental of state resources and also (more often) the co-option of labour for huge projects such as the erection of Imperial monuments or the rebuilding of a city through Ditlana ("renewal"). In theory all property belongs to the Imperium and it has the right to co opt labour without payment. In practice only about 30% of the economy is directly controlled and administered by the state, and "compulsory" labour has to be paid for by favours and behind-the-scenes agreements with the chiefs of the clans.

*The Colonnade of Illumination* sees to the hiring of scholars (usually lay-priests of the various temples) as expert advisors, who are then assigned to department as needed.

### The Department of Accession and Embarkation

This is run by High Prefect Gamulu hiMraktine of the Sea Blue Clan (aged 44, XVIth Circle). He is an Imperialist with a special loathing for the Vriddi Clan. One of his uncles is chief of the Mraktine lineage in Bey Sü. An Avanthar worshipper, Gamulu is cold and aloof and is just biding his time until posted up north, safely away from Jakállá and its frivolous and languid lifestyle. He likes mistreating women, but has yet to get into trouble for it. The sub-departments in his charge are:

*The Collectorship of Gate Tolls* supervises the iSsüance of travel permits. (It is necessary to have an official document stating your clan if you travel outside your home city. This can be had for about 2 Kaitars. You might have to wait a week or two.) This office sees to the levying of tolls, not just at the main city gates but at certain bridges and by-ways of historical privilege throughout Jakállá.

*The Office of Harbour Maintenance* oversees maritime matters in the Equ'noyel and MiSsúma estuaries, being responsible for the harbour defences, port security, and the proclamation of storm warnings. (For the last of these, a priest of Karakan is always on hand to cast divinations.)

### The Hallway of the Twelve Columns

This is run by Lord Prefect Meshmuyel hiVrozhimü of the Standing Stone Clan (aged 63, XVIth Circle). Slightly doddering, bald, heavily wheezing, Lord Meshmuyel showers everyone with goblets of saliva when he speaks. A phenomenal grasp of languages and first-hand knowledge of the various countrysies make him an interesting companion. He has a mild temperament except when he starts discussing the temple of Sáрку; he himself is a (disinterested) devotee of Dlamelish.

His sub-departments (all self-explanatory) are

*the Office of Maintenance of the Roads*,

*the Office of Maintenance of the City Walls* and

*the Office of Maintenance of the Prisons*.

### The Department of the City of Lasting Repose

This is run by Grand Officer Meshmuyel vuNaoma of the Clan of the Joyous of Vra (aged 63, XVth Circle). His sister is a member of the Court of Purple Robes in Avanthar. Often unwell, Meshmuyel has an increasingly shaky grip on his department, which usually has to muddle along without him. He is a keen Belkhanu worshipper and co operates closely with that temple. He is tall, still handsome, and a keen marotlan spectator when he is able to make the trip to the Hirilakte. The sub-departments under his jurisdiction are:

*The Office for the Erection of Tombs and Monuments*, which evaluates the cost of works decreed by Avanthar and then passes on its requirements to the Department of Agency and Exertion.

*The Office for the Recovery of Stolen Materials* has charge of a unit of the city militia whose special responsibility is the tracing of items stolen from the nobility or from the Imperium itself. Items stolen from tombs are not within this office's purview, falling instead under the jurisdiction of the tomb police.

### The Omnipotent Azure Legion

The offices of the Omnipotent Azure Legion in Jakállá are situated within the Governor's Palace itself, north of the Palace of the Realm. About thirty officers of the intelligence arm of the Legion deal with matters of the highest state security: treason, zu'ur smuggling, espionage, diabolism, mutiny and rioting. This department also keeps a close watch on bureaucrats and police. As OAL Captain Arodai hiNaqumar says: "Who watches the watchmen? We do, pal, and don't you forget it!"

### Calendar

The Palace of the Realm is closed every Daunel (the sixth day of the week) and on these official holidays:

*The intercalary days:* These five extra days are set aside for religious rites and observances. It is unlucky to commence any enterprise on the intercalary days. Every fourth year, an extra intercalary day is devoted to rituals in praise of the Emperor.

*1 Hasanpor:* New Year's Day (temple ceremonies followed by feasts, pageants and the giving of gifts)

*13 Shapru:* Congregation of the Clans (a local festival; artisans and traders meet at the Commonhouse of the Clans, a banquet paid for and attended by the Governor)

*19 Didom:* The Touching of the Copper Worm (funerary rituals at the necropolis)

*3 Langala:* idsummer's Day; parties and entertainments

*18 Fesru:* Foundation Day of the Legion of Mighties Jakállá

*2 Drenggar:* The Unveiling of Beauty (rituals and orgies)

*9 Drenggar:* The Enhancement of the Emerald Radiance (rituals to Dlamelish; further saturnalia and feasting)

*5 Firasul:* Autumnal Equinox (clan-related rituals)

*7 Pardan:* Festival of Souls (candles set adrift on the MiSsúma river in small floats made of woven leaves)

*10 Halir:* After a proclamation of the Dna harvest, the Palace is closed for the rest of the day. Even high nobles will taste at least one glass of A'ash (grain whiskey).

*5 Trantor:* Midwinter's Day; temperatures in Jakállá can drop as low as 26° C by day, 15° C by night.

*18 Trantor:* The Might of Heroes (military rituals)

*9 Lesdrim:* The Birthday of the Emperor Hirkane (still observed locally, the Emperor Dchich'une being regarded as a pretender)

*10 Dohala:* Accession of Hirkane to the Golden Tower

In addition to official holidays, many departments of the Palace of the Realm are closed (or at best operating with reduced staff) during the height of summer, when the sweltering heat brings most work to a standstill.



*The Palace of the Realm*

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