

# The Excellent Traveling Volume

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ISSUE NO. 6

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

# INTRODUCTION

Let's get the "bad" news out of the way first: this issue does not contain the random underworld generator promised at the back of issue #5. That particular article proved a lot more complex and, more importantly, lengthy than I'd originally imagined. Consequently, I decided it best to set it aside for the moment and return to it at a later date. My apologies to anyone who was waiting for it. I hope you'll find the articles this issue does contain to your liking.

This issue, even more than most, is packed with articles whose content derives very directly from the longer running of the two Empire of the Petal Throne campaigns I'm currently refereeing, about which I've spoken before. That campaign, which began in March 2015, centres on the adventures of a group of Tsolyáni from the city of Sokátis. The original group of characters are all members of the House of Worms, a Sárku worshipping clan of middle rank. These characters are depicted on the cover and consist of the following:

- Aithfo hiZnáyu (top middle): An adventurer who's the lone member of the group not to worship Sárku or Durritlámish, instead being devoted to Ksárul. Aithfo is the group's tactician, commanding a group of Pecháni mercenaries with great skill. He has dreams of being a sea captain and travelling the length and breadth of Tékumel in search of "cash and prizes," in the memorable words of his player.

- Znayáshu hiNokór (bottom left): A lay priest of Durritlámish with an interest in astrology. He makes a living creating horoscopes when not involved in some scheme of his clan-mates. His fiancée, Tu'ásha hiNarkóda, of the Mourning Rock clan of Thráya, died before the two could wed – but that hasn't stopped Znayáshu, who had her corpse carefully preserved and now plans to have her reanimated as a Shédra, so that she can serve the Lord of Worms forever.

- Ssúri hiNokór (second from the bottom left): A ritual priestess of Durritlámish with a keen knowledge of dance and acrobatics, some of which she uses to her advantage even outside the temple. Sharp-tongued and no-nonsense, Ssúri often acts as the public face of this group of characters.

- Keléno hiNokór (bottom middle): A 5th Circle scholar priest of Sárku who prefers to keep his nose in books when he is able (which, sadly, isn't as often as he'd like). He recently developed an interest in demonology, after successfully — and unintentionally — summoning dread Srükárum to fight against an army of Ssú in the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm. Keléno is married to Hmásu hiTéshku, a priestess of Belkhánu, with whom he shares many interests.

- Grujúng hiZnáyu (second from bottom right): An older, ex-legionnaire (formerly of the 6th Imperial Medium Infantry) who finds life in Sokátis dull and so travels around with his clan-mates in search of excitement. He dreams of gaining a commission in the famous First Legion, which is currently posted to Sokátis as a result of the machinations of Imperial politics.

- Jangáiva hiTlélsu (bottom right): A temple guard of Sárku, Jangáiva has lately fallen under the patronage of an officer of the Omnipotent Azure Legion, who is testing her for possible formal induction into that august force. While in Yán Kór, she obtained a demonic hammer that calls itself "Little Sister" and revels in destruction. Jangáiva does her best to keep the weapon under control.

Since the cover illustration was made, two other characters have joined the campaign, Huné hiNokór, a priest of Hrí'ú, and Nébusa hiTéshku, a relation of Keléno's wife. The campaign continues to be great fun and I am gifted with excellent players who never cease to demonstrate what makes Tékumel such a terrific setting for roleplaying games.

# The EXcellent Traveling Volume



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# Livyáni and Tsoléini Characters

## (Additions and Changes)

As I mentioned last issue, I began a second *Empire of the Petal Throne* campaign, this one set in and around the Mu'ugalavyáni city of Gashchné in the far west. While the action of that campaign has not — so far! — given cause for the player characters to leave the borders of the mighty and ever-victorious empire of the Four Palaces of the Square, a handful of Livyáni non-player characters have appeared (most notably Jasház Vríó, the proprietor of the Hostel of the Illustrious Seekers in Gashchné's Foreigners Quarter). For that reason, I began assembling a list of additions and modifications to the *EPT* rules in order to help me generate characters from the lands of the mysterious Shadow Gods.

Though much of what follows is derived from information in *Swords & Glory, Volume 1: Tékumel Sourcebook* and other writings by Professor Barker, some of it (e.g. the Tsoléini level titles) is my own invention and should not be considered an “official” addition to or expansion of the Tékumel setting. It is nevertheless hoped that it will not only prove useful to *EPT* players and referees with an interest in generating Livyáni and Tsoléini characters, but also as a reminder that creating new material for one's personal Tékumel campaign is not “wrong” but, rather, to be encouraged.

### 310. ALIGNMENT

The alignments of Stability and Change mean very little in Livyánu, whose religious beliefs (see p. 4) are unique and ancient, predating the pantheon of Pavár by untold millennia.

Likewise, the Tsoléini have their own unique religious system, described

below, which is seemingly unrelated to those found on the nearby continent. For that reason, the Tsoléini do not concern themselves with the concepts of Stability or Change, which they see as inadequate to encompass the true nature of reality.

### 320. CHOICE OF SEX

The institution of Aridáni exists in Livyánu, just as it does in Tsolyánu, though it is less common. Independent Livyáni women are most common in the priesthoods and rather less so in the military, though there are, of course, exceptions.

The Tsoléini practice near-total equality between men and women, though they have no formal institution of Aridáni. Instead, this equality is an outgrowth of their loose, almost anarchic, family structures and notion of lineage.

### 630. LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE

For Livyáni characters, use the level titles in the following table rather than the Tsolyáni ones listed on p. 27 of the *Empire of the Petal Throne* rulebook.

Tsoléini characters use the level titles in the chart opposite. It should be noted that, because the Tsoléi Archipelago is a magically barren area, there is no native tradition of magic use and thus no Tsoléini level titles for magic-users are provided. Inhabitants of the region who wish to learn magic must travel to other nations (e.g. Livyánu), in which case they employ the level titles employed there. For game purposes, Tsoléini priests are little different than warriors, since they gain no magical abilities as a result of acquiring experience.

**LIVYÁNI LEVEL TITLES**

Level	Warriors	Priests	Magic-Users
1	Sréz	Luvréz	Sha'ánaz
2	Ni'úz	Jagáz	Nyalmáz
3	Eshu'úz	Ancház	Arzaráz
4	Úoz	Nejéz	Waláz
5	Khúaz	Qashánaz	Zarnáz
6	Qáqqodaz	Régaz	Chanáz
7	Rúozhuz	Namaránaz	Shalnáz
8	Rangaochíz	Shamlúz	Nazhadáz
9	Rangaochihóiz	Tarlanáz	Wadráz

**TSOLÉINI LEVEL TITLES**

Level	Warriors	Priests
1	Chíra	Gitú
2	Arsá	Sáigà
3	Kái	Shú Sún
4	Chálu	Urú Sún
5	Tikáshor	Atlá
6	Lío	Lóro
7	Ché	Yákku
8	Osò	Míri
9	Híris	Míri'i

**800. THE “HIRILÁKTE” ARENAS**

In Livyánu, there is no direct equivalent of the Hirilákte arenas. Instead, arenas, where they exist (and not every city has one), are used primarily as exhibition grounds for sacrifices and rituals too large to be celebrated in a temple. Duels are not legally sanctioned in Livyánu and, as such, always occur in secret and on private property, witnessed only by the participants' seconds and a few

friends. Compared to the Tsolyáni and Mu'ugalavyáni, the Livyáni show very little interest in martial competition for gold or glory. The Tsoléini have no arenas of any kind and are, in fact, perplexed when foreigners speak of such things, preferring to settle disputes by recourse to the wisdom of their ancestors rather than through combat. Nevertheless, some Tsoléini have become champions in the arenas of other nations.

**900. STARTING THE GAME**

In Livyánu, the unit of currency is the gold Shí'dok, which is worth two Tsolyáni Káitars. The Shí'dok is further divided into two copper Fayáz, which is divided into two copper Anáz. The Anáz is further divided into two copper Neyób. Finally, the Neyób is divided into two copper Khiya. The Tsoléini have no coins of their own, but instead use small gems (typically agates, carnelians, and garnets) for currency. Starting Livyáni player characters begin with 3–60 (3d20) Shí'dok with which to buy equipment from the list in this same section, while Tsoléini begin play with gems equal in value to 1–100 Káitars.

## 2100. THE GODS, COHORTS, AND DIVINE INTERVENTION

Unlike the other four cultures of the Five Empires, Livyánu does not worship the twenty gods and cohorts of Pavár's pantheon, clinging instead to their mysterious Shadow Gods, whose origins are lost in the mists of time. The Shadow Gods consist of thirteen deities, chief of whom is Qame'él, who is worshipped by the nobles of the city of Tsámra (hex 1923) and is said (by the Tsolyáni, at any rate) to be an amalgam of Thúmis and Ksáru. The Shadowed One is revered all over Livyánu and is purported to be a combination of Hnálla and Hró'ú. The goddess Kirrinéb is similar to the Salarvyáni deity Shiringgáyi in being a fusion of Avánthe and Dlamélish. Vrusáemaz is a deity of darkness and sorcery akin to Wurú. Guodái is the patron of soldiers, administrators, and aristocrats and is reminiscent of Chegárra (possibly with some admixtures of Chiténg). Ru'ungkáno is a fire deity that most closely resembles Vimúhla (with aspects of Karakán and Ksáru) and is widely worshipped in the city of Sraón (hex 2416). The Horned One of Secrets is another variant of Hró'ú (and possibly Ksáru), devoted to sorcery and interplanar travel; he is most powerful in the city of Laigás (hex 2829). The Lost One of the Sea is another deity of Laigás, combining aspects of Avánthe, Dlamélish, and Thúmis. Quyó is a goddess similar to Sárku, whose greatest temple is in Heméktu (hex 3529). Ndárka is an amalgam of Belkhánu and Qón, but is also a patron of crop fertility and is thus much beloved by farmers and peasants. The Sea-Goddess of Kakársha is the patroness of sailors, travellers, and the cities of Kakársh (hex 2916) and Sraón. Kikumársha is very much like Ksáru; he is the patron of music, art, dance, sorcery, knowledge, and archery. Finally, the One of Fears is patron and

protector of the city of Dláš (hex 1918), with attributes not unlike Vimúhla and Hró'ú.

The people of the Tsoléi Islands worship a variety of different gods, most of whom are simply local spirits of rocks, caves, and the sea. These spirits often manifest in the forms of flora and fauna and are thus named for them. A few very old and traditionalist Tsoléini worship deities known as the Dual Gods, who are simply the moons Gayél and Káshi. Special reverence is given to oddly-shaped (but naturally occurring) rocks, which are viewed as enjoying the special blessing of the spirits.

### LIVYÁNI NAMES (OPPOSITE PAGE)

Livyáni naming patterns are similar to those in Tsolyánu. Most Lvyáni have a single personal name and a lineage name. Male names typically (though not exclusively) end with the suffix *-az* or *-úz/-úz*, while female names end with *-ab* or *-eb*. Lineage names are much more varied in form, but, like Tsolyáni lineages, derive from legendary or historical personages of importance.

### LIVYÁNI CLANS

Livyánu, like all of the Five Empires, possesses a clan-based society. However, these clans are much more localised than in, for example, Tsolyánu, typically being associated with a single city or region. In addition, most Livyáni clans have strong religious affiliations, being linked to one of the temples of the Shadow Gods. Alliances and intermarriages between clans are generally limited to those who share temple affiliation (though, as with so many things on Tékumel, there are always exceptions).

The list below provides the names of several Livyáni clans. Especially noteworthy ones are called out, as are

the religious affiliations of each clan.

*Black Earth:* Worshippers of the Horned One of Secrets

*Blended Sands:* Worshippers of Kikkumársha

*Blue-Green Ocean*

*Bright Feathered Cloak*

*Bright Pentagon:* Worshippers of the Sea-Goddess of Kakársha

*Crackling Lightning:* Worshippers of Guodái

*Dying Breeze of Dawn*

*Fine Sand*

*Gilded Wing:* Aristocratic clan of Tsámra; Worshippers of Qame'él

*Girdle of Scarlet*

*Gleaming Pearl:* Worshippers of Vrusáemaz

Male Names	Female Names	Lineage Names
Arkhúaz	Adléb	Adé
Ártubaz	Aluéb	Archán
Artúz	Ámiyeb	Asómu
Chakkáz	Anjáb	Bóizhu
Du'úz	Arjaléb	Chalúna
Easúz	Ba'áb	Chigái
Gyúmiz	Bakéb	Chínngar
Hakkunáz	Dáíleb	Chío
Haláz	Dalúeb	Chi'úna
Harkúz	Dikáb	Dashqúz
Honúz	Disíb	Dekúne
Jesház	Hékkab	Dléssha
Ka'óz	Káeb	Essúra
Kekéz	Má'ab	Galáku
Miúz	Máyyeb	Itáya
Mrío	Mélleb	Jáisha
Niáz	Mi'éb	Kárcha
Nyédz	Míriyeb	Mikkán
Pusúaz	Mísheb	Mírshá
Sénjukaz	Nárayeb	Modzúo
Shaikáz	Nitlánab	Narán
Sürüz	Oáb	Qayéla
Tluváz	Qayéla	Shárqa
Tónusaz	Síkuleb	So'ó
Trináz	Sínkureb	Tarkú'o
Truváz	Tayéb	Vidlárka
Zhuváz	Zaléb	Vrío

*Green Omen:* Worshippers of Ndárka

*Green Spreading Ferns*

*Intertwined Flowers:* Worshippers of Ru'ungkáno

*Iron Ring:* Worshippers of Ndárka

*Ivory Pavillion*

*Mingled Dust:* Worshippers of Qúyo

*Orb of Green Jasper:* Worshippers of Ndárka

*Portico of Yellow Gold:* Ancient and powerful clan; Worshippers of Ndárka

*Sibilant Singing Rain:* Worshippers of Ndárka

*Silver Girdle:* Worshippers of Ru'ungkáno

*Veiled Fury:* Worshippers of the One of Fears

*Water of Life:* Worshippers of Kirrinéb

*Woven Red Shawl:* Worshippers of Game'él

## TSOLÉINI NAMES (OPPOSITE PAGE)

Tsoléini names consist of a personal name, very rarely followed by a second name used to distinguish the individual from others with whom he might share that name. To this personal name, a Tsoléini affixes a place name preceded by “of” or “of the,” which identifies his place of origin. Place names refer to a unique geographical or man-made feature in the vicinity of the Tsoléini’s home.

## TSOLÉINI CLANS

The Tsoléi Islands have long been far removed from the mainstream cultures of the continent. This is reflected in numerous differences between its peoples and those dwelling the Five Empires. One of the most notable of these differences

is the lack of clans, at least as understood elsewhere. The closest thing to the clans of Engsvanyáli-descended cultures are the “place names” noted above. Tsoléini who bear the same place names, even if they are not related to one another in any other way, see each other as kin and allies.



Huné hiNokór of the clan of Dark Flame



Male Names	Female Names	Place Names
Arúa	Ahé	Blue Cove
Béì	Chí	Blue-water Bay
Charúna	Dílu	Coral Crag
Dái	Énò	Clear Stream
Dí	Háne	Dead Tree Ridge
Evelúna	Híke	Far Caverns
Fé	Híri	Green Stone Mansion
Gári	Jáyì	High Granite Cliff
Héle	Kéa	High House
Jíla	Kíkalu	Howling Hill
Lékko	Pá'in	Isle of Stones
Mí'a	Páva	Misty Shore
Náò	Sínu	Pale-mist Pool
Né	Sí'i	Portal
Neigá	Tíla	Red Rock House
Nsô	Tún	Rock of Sighs
Onú	Tsô	Round Peak
Válla	Úre	Sandspit Mansion
Vrú	Vrén	Yellow Forest

# Spells of the Inimical Races (Addition)

Tékumel is home to a multitude of intelligent species, not all of whom are friendly to mankind. Chief among these so-called inimical races are the Hlúss, the Ssú, and the Shunned Ones, the latter two of which are frequently noted as fearsome practitioners of magic. Both the Ssú and the Shunned Ones (or Vlëshgaya, as the Tsolyáni also call them) have appeared as foes in my ongoing campaign. In using them, I gave some thought to the types of spells they might employ, including a handful unique to them. What follows is a brief discussion of how I chose to adapt existing *Empire of the Petal Throne* spells to the inimical races, as well as write-ups for unusual sorceries wielded by them. It is worth noting that, in my campaign, neither the Ssú nor the Shunned Ones have priests, only magic-users – at least so far as anyone knows. Consequently, I do not include notes for adapting priestly skills to either of these races, but referees are encouraged to do so, if their own campaigns they wish to include examples of Ssú or Vlëshgaya priests.

## GROUP I SPELLS

*Create food and drink:* The rations created by this spell provide no sustenance to species other than that of the caster.

*Light:* Because the Ssú are capable of seeing perfectly well in darkness or near-darkness, I replace this spell with *darkness*, which works identically, except that it creates a 30-foot area of utter darkness. Shunned One sorcerers can still cast light.

## GROUP II SPELLS

*Charm creature:* If cast by a Ssú of Level IV or higher, the spell is +10% more effective. That is, add 10% to the roll that the targeted creature needs for a saving

throw (e.g. a creature with 1–2 hit dice less than the Ssú only gets a saving throw on a roll of 70 or more, instead of 60, etc.).

*The vapour of death:* The Shunned Ones are particularly skilled at casting this spell. The Vlëshgaya version of it has a longer maximum range (150 feet before dissipation) and covers an area of 3,600 square feet (a 60' × 60' square). While its movement speed (10 feet per turn) remains the same, its deadliness is increased: saving throws to avoid its effects are rolled at –1 on the dice.

## GROUP III SPELLS

*The Demon:* In my campaign, the inimical races have few direct dealings with the Planes Beyond. They worship no (known) gods and do not truck with demons of any sort. However, some particularly hateful — and foolhardy! — Ssú and Shunned Ones enter into alliances with the Pariah Gods, particularly the Goddess of the Pale Bone, in their efforts to wreak havoc upon humanity. For that reason, this spell summons not a “terrible demonic being,” but a servitor of one of the Pariah Gods. The game effect is identical.

*Doomkill:* Like the vapour of death above, the Shunned Ones are particularly skilled with this spell. The range and effect are identical to that described on p. 24 of the *EPT* rulebook. However, the spell hits its intended target on a roll of 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10.

*Raise the dead:* For whatever reason, neither the Ssú nor Shunned Ones have ever been observed employing this spell.

*Reincarnation:* As with *raise the dead*, this spell is unknown among the inimical races.

*Wish:* Since I do not allow this spell to be learned in my campaign (though I do allow the effect in other circumstances,

such the Barukán Lli Fèshdrubál-Chrén), neither the Ssú nor Shunned Ones have access to it.

## NEW SPELLS

The Ssú and the Vlëshgaya! have been observed using spells seemingly unique to them, each of which has been given a name by the Tsolyáni who saw their use (what the inimical races call them is unknown). In principle, these spells could be learned by members of other races, but that would require finding a Ssú or Shunned One willing to teach them, which is highly unlikely. In any event, these spells are offered as examples to encourage referees to create their own, drawing on existing Tékumel information and his own imagination.

### Comminution (Group II, Ssú)

By means of this spell, the caster is able to destroy metal items, reducing them to dust. If the item is worn, the wearer gets a saving throw to resist the effect; enchanted metal items granted a bonus equal to their bonus (or +1, if no bonus is known). Range: 2”.

### Coruscating Sepulture (Group III, Shunned Ones)

A single target within 12” who fails his saving throw is sheathed in shimmering extra-planar energy from which he cannot escape. If the target cannot cast spells

(whether because he is a warrior or has exhausted all his spells for the day), he is slain. If he has spells, he loses a random one each round until he has no more, after which dies, as above. The spell lasts until either the Shunned One who cast it chooses to end its effect or is himself slain.

### Deliquescence (Group II, Ssú)

The target of this spell turns into a puddle of protoplasmic goo, if he fails his saving throw. In this form, the target retains his mental faculties, but lacks the ability to speak or cast spells. He can move at a rate of 3” per round but is otherwise incapable of any other physical actions. Both *remove curse* and *dispel magic* can reverse the spell’s effect, but the target nevertheless loses 10



percentiles from his Constitution score. Range: 12”.

### **Dread Mark (Group II, Ssú)**

The caster of this spell creates a floating, three-dimensional mark in the shape of interlocking rings imbued with other-planar energy. When any living creature comes within 1” of the mark, it glows intensely and releases its energy, dealing 1–6 six-sided dice of damage to all such creatures within a 3” radius, though a saving throw is permitted. The original creator of the mark is not immune to its effects. Obviously, the spell has no effect on undead or automatons. The mark lasts for 3 days. Range: 12”.

### **The Food of the Ssú (Group III, Ssú)**

This spell creates a 20-foot diameter patch of the deadly purplish vegetation that existed all over Tékumel before man arrived. A non-Ssú (or Hlúss) within the spell’s area of affect immediately suffers 2–12 points of damage and must make a saving throw. Failure indicates that the target’s legs are numbed and he falls into the vegetation, taking another 2–12 points of damage. Every round thereafter, the target must make an additional saving throw to free himself or suffer 2–12 more damage, until either he escapes or he dies. Steel armour protects the target from damage for two rounds before dissolving, while magical armour protects for four rounds before dissolving. Range: 6”. Duration: 3 turns.

It is said that high-level sorcerers of the Temple of Lord Ksáru know a version of this spell.

### **Helical Maw (Group III, Shunned Ones)**

This spell opens up a swirling tear in the fabric of reality 1” in radius. The radius of the tear grows by 1” for 1–6 rounds, after

which it ceases to exist. While it exists, the tear attempts to suck everything within its radius into the other-planar space beyond, including air. Creatures within the radius must make a saving throw to avoid being sucked into it and irrevocably lost. If the saving throw is successful and the creature breathes air, it still suffers 2–12 points of damage from exposure to the other-planar void. Range: 12”.

### **Stupefaction (Group I, Shunned Ones)**

The target of this spell becomes deaf, dumb, and blind, unless a saving throw is made. One turn after the effect first takes place, the target may make another saving throw to shake off the effects. If this saving throw, too, is failed, another one may be made after another turn has passed. If three saving throw attempts fail, the spell’s effects become permanent (though they may be reversed through remove curse and dispel magic). Range: 2”.

### **Suppuration (Group II, Shunned Ones)**

This spell affects 2–12 beings of levels I–III or 1–6 beings of levels IV–VI, while beings above level VI are immune. Those who fail their saving throws find their bodies covered in painful, pustulent boils. If an affected being is wearing chain or plate armour, he suffers 1–4 damage per round, unless the armour is removed. Likewise, movement while afflicted is limited to 3” per round, regardless of armour worn. Attempting to move more quickly, deals 1–4 damage per round of movement (in addition to any damage suffered for wearing heavy armour). Range: 10”. Duration: 1 turn.

## Bestiary (Addition)

Though *Empire of the Petal Throne* includes descriptions of a wide range of the alien planet's flora and fauna, not to mention intelligent non-human species, Tékumel is vast and new creatures are always being discovered. What follows are details of three such new creatures, all of which can be found in the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm. Like everything in *The Excellent Travelling Volume*, these new creatures are intended to serve as examples of how to expand upon and add to the material presented elsewhere in order to make Tékumel your own.



### AJJNÁTHU “THE CREAKER”

*Number Appearing:* 1–6

*Hit Dice:* 4+2

*Armour Class:* 5

*Treasure:* nil

*Movement:* 15”

*Lair:* 20: 2–12

An Ajjnáthu is a long (5–6’), segmented creature with a flattish body and seven sets of legs by which it crawls along the ground. It gets its common name due to the noise its plated segments make when it moves at its full speed just prior to attacking prey. The Ajjnáthu has a venomous bite that causes death in 1–4 rounds, unless *neutralise poison* or an *ineluctable eye of healing* is used. Despite its venom, the people of the Dry

Bay of Ssu'úm sometimes eat Ajjnáthu; properly prepared, it is both harmless and surprisingly tasty.



### MRÍGAKO “THE BRAIN PLANT”

*Number Appearing:* 1–3

*Hit Dice:* 6

*Armour Class:* 4

*Treasure:* nil

*Movement:* 3”

The dreaded Mrígako is a bizarre, plant-like creature that dwells along the edges of the ponds that can be found here and there in the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm. Superficially, the creature's central body bears a resemblance to the brightly-coloured *Kurúsh* flowers of the region. Beneath the body is a mass of tentacles, which it uses for movement and to attack. Within the body is a cerebral ganglion. The Mrígako lures prey within 12” to itself by means a psychic attack that functions like the Group II spell, *charm creature*, except that it also affects human beings, substituting levels for

Hit Dice to determine its effectiveness. This attack is usable only three times per week. Charmed creatures are brought back to the Mrigako, where they are slowly digested over several days.



### ZHU'ÓR "THE AMBUSER"

*Number Appearing:* 1–6

*Hit Dice:* 3/5/8

*Armour Class:* 4

*Treasure:* nil

*Movement:* 12"

*Lair:* 20: 2–12

*Treasure in Lair:* A: 30

A Zhu'ór is a large creature with six limbs, two compound eyes, antennae, and a tooth-filled mouth. Though it appears to be an insect, it is in fact a warm-blooded creature possessing some degree of sentience. A Zhu'ór uses its cunning by burying itself just below the surface of the earth of the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, waiting for potential prey to pass within 1", when it bursts out, surprising on a roll of 1–3. This beast also demonstrates a rudimentary understanding of tactics and cooperates

with others of its kind to bring down dangerous foes. If three or more Zhu'ór attack the same target, each one receives a +1 bonus to its chance to hit. When encountered, there is a 50% chance of a 3 Hit Dice variety, a 30% chance of a 5 Hit Dice variety, and a 20% chance of an 8 Hit Dice variety.

### Í'A

These hard-shelled creatures look like lumpy, black potatoes and burrow themselves beneath the earth and sand of arid environments from the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm all the way westward into Chürstállu. The vary in diameter from under an inch to half a foot. Desert dwellers learn how to spot the air holes through which the Í'a breathe when hiding underground (where they seek out pockets of fresh water). The people of the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm boil the meat of the Í'a to create a surprisingly tasty meal, while those farther west tend to roast it.

### MIGHÁ

The Mighá is grey-green, eight-legged, tough-shelled crustacean with a saucer-shaped body and sharp claws. Mighá can grow up to a foot and a half in diameter. These creatures live solitary existences in the desert, but seek out sources of water, such as pools and springs, to spawn. Despite their fearsome appearances, they are nearly harmless to humans. With proper precautions, such as gloves on the hands, they can be caught without great difficulty. Mighá meat is delicious when cooked, If eaten raw, however, a saving throw against poison must be made or else the eater becomes silly and giddy, saying and doing things that would otherwise be unthinkable.

# The Dry Bay of Ssu'úm

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Although one of my campaigns is based in the Tsolyáni city of Sokátis, the characters have roamed widely across the eastern and northeastern parts of the continent. One particularly memorable series of sessions saw them set out from the city of Disunár (hex 4130) and trek across the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm in order to re-enter Tsolyánu at Hekéllu (hex 3626). Over the course of these sessions, I fleshed out the region a little bit with an eye toward making it a place sufficiently interesting that the characters might one day return there for further adventures.

Like many areas outside of Tsolyánu, Professor Barker provided only limited details of the Dry Bay and nearby Kilalámmu. Thus, in developing it for my campaign, I used those details, however scant, as the foundation on which I built my own vision of this part of the world and its peoples. This brief article, therefore, offers up a mixture of both well-established facts (found primarily in *Swords & Glory, Volume 1: Tékumel Sourcebook*) and original material, created by myself and embellished by my players during several weeks' worth of play investigating the mysteries of the region. As always, referees and players are encouraged to do the same in their own campaigns, in order to fulfil Professor Barker's wish that we should all make Tékumel *our own*.

## HISTORY

In the past, much of what is now known as the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm was a large body of water called, in Engsvanyáli times, the Lake of Lord Aridzó. The lake was dotted with forested islands, many of which were owned by wealthy

aristocrats and upon which they built vacation palaces. For that reason, it was a largely unspoiled hinterland with only a small permanent population. This is perhaps fortunate, as lake was badly hit by the titanic earthquakes the signalled the Fall of Gánga. The disaster drained the lake of all of its water, leaving behind the rocky, inhospitable environment that prevails today.

In the millennia since, some tribes of sturdy Kilalammuyáni and related peoples have established themselves in the Dry Bay, eking out rough livelihoods. Though their numbers are not great, they have nevertheless made a mark on the area, as elaborated below. They have also become caught up on the power plays of the leaders of Disunár and Sirsúm (hex 3530) to unite Kilalámmu under a single banner. This is further complicated by the fact that the western portion of the Dry Bay is claimed by Milumanayá, though they have thus far made little effort to support their claim.

For its part, Tsolyánu tries to play one side off against the other, in order to keep the region fractious and, therefore, not a potential threat. Not all Tsolyáni agree with this approach. The Temple of Hrű'ú, for example, has recently sent an embassy to the Supreme Swordsman (*Héshrik* in the local tongue) of Disunár, attempting to aid him in his own efforts to rule over all of Kilalámmu, including the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm. Likewise, the political and military rulers of the Chaigári Protectorate have come to favour some kind of unity, too, though they tend to favour the Hall of Righteous Elders in Sirsúm (hex 3530) over other candidates. The rising threat of the Ssú, who have begun to make

increasingly daring raids — sometimes even in broad daylight! — contributes to a growing sense that division only plays into the hands of the Enemies of Man.

## ENVIRONMENTAL NOTES

As its name states, the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm is a very arid environment that sees little (60mm or less) rainfall. The terrain is rocky and uneven; the Dry Bay itself is almost completely ringed with mountains. Because of this, temperatures are always quite warm, even in the winter months (approximately 20° C during the month of Trantór), while in the summer, temperatures can reach close to 50° C. Despite this, the Dry Bay is far from bereft of life. Brilliant *Kurúsh*-flowers carpet some portions of the region each spring, continuing into early summer. Numerous beasts, both docile and predatory, dwell in the area (several of which are detailed on p. 11). Despite its name, the Dry Bay is not bereft of springs or ponds. Most settlements are located not far from such sources of fresh water.

Equally noteworthy is that the Dry Bay is a magically “barren” zone. Within it, neither spells nor technological devices of the Ancients (e.g. eyes) function. In game terms, this means that spells already memorized can potentially be cast successfully, but, once cast, they cannot be regained until the caster leaves the Dry Bay. Likewise, technological/magical devices work once, if they have charges of some kind, after which they, too, cease to function while in the area. If the device lacks charges, it does not function at all. This applies to magical arms and armour as well; their bonuses are nil while in the Dry Bay. The region barren zone does not extend to the mountains surrounding the desert itself.

## CULTURAL NOTES

The people of the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm speak an Aóm language that is closely related to Kilalammuyáni, but with some of its vocabulary showing evidence of borrowing from Engsvanyáli — or so says Dalkén hiKárka, a Tsolyáni scholar priest of Hríú'ú who has spent much time studying the matter. The social structure of the inhabitants also mirrors that of the more mountainous regions of Kilalámmu, albeit adapted to a different environment.



As in the Five Empires, clans are a foundation of society. However, they tend to be more localised and strongly associated with a single settlement or region. For example, the aristocratic Red and Black clan is found primarily in and around Sirsúm, while the low-born Brown Slate clan is based in Lorúkal (hex 4030). Clans are often have names that incorporate colours or patterns, which relate to their insignia. Like elsewhere in Kilalámmu, the clans of the Dry Bay use stripes, checks, and colours to identify themselves. Most clans have a “profession,” typically relating to a



craft and leadership in the clan is tied to skill in the clan's profession.

The religion of the Dry Bay is similar to that of the rest of Kilalámmu. The primary deities are two brothers, Aridzó and Heshuél, the goddess Váris, and another god called Súr. Aridzó, who is more popular in the south, is (or so the Tsolyáni say) a Hnálla/Karakán amalgam, while Heshuél, who is more popular in the north, is a Hrü'ú/Vimúhla amalgam. Váris is very similar to the Salarvyáni goddess Shiringgáyi in possessing the characteristics of both Avánthe and Dlamélish. Súr is much like an amalgam of Belkhánu/Sárku.

What is most interesting about these gods is that, unlike those of Pavár's pantheon, they are described as being intimately involved with their worshippers. This is especially true of Váris, who is said to take mortal lovers and give birth to demigods, who then rise to prominence among the people. Worship of the gods takes place primarily in the clanhouse, each of which has a "house priest" who handles everyday rituals. There are also mountaintop shrines dedicated to the gods, but the people of the Dry Bay seem to pay them little heed, visiting them only in times of great need. As noted previously, there is no overarching political in the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm or indeed Kilalámmu more generally. In larger settlements, governance may be entrusted to a hereditary ruler of some sort (*Dzéú* or "chief" is a common title), while in smaller settlements the situation is vaguely democratic (or anarchic from a Tsolyáni point of view). In terms of relations between the sexes, the people of the Dry Bay take a middle ground between northern and southern traditions. Men are the warriors and leaders, while women tend to the home. However, lineage is traced through the

female line and marriages are arranged by female elders. Priesthood is open to both sexes and some women become priestesses in order to gain a degree of independence otherwise uncommon in the region. Needless to say, the institution of Aridáni does not exist here.

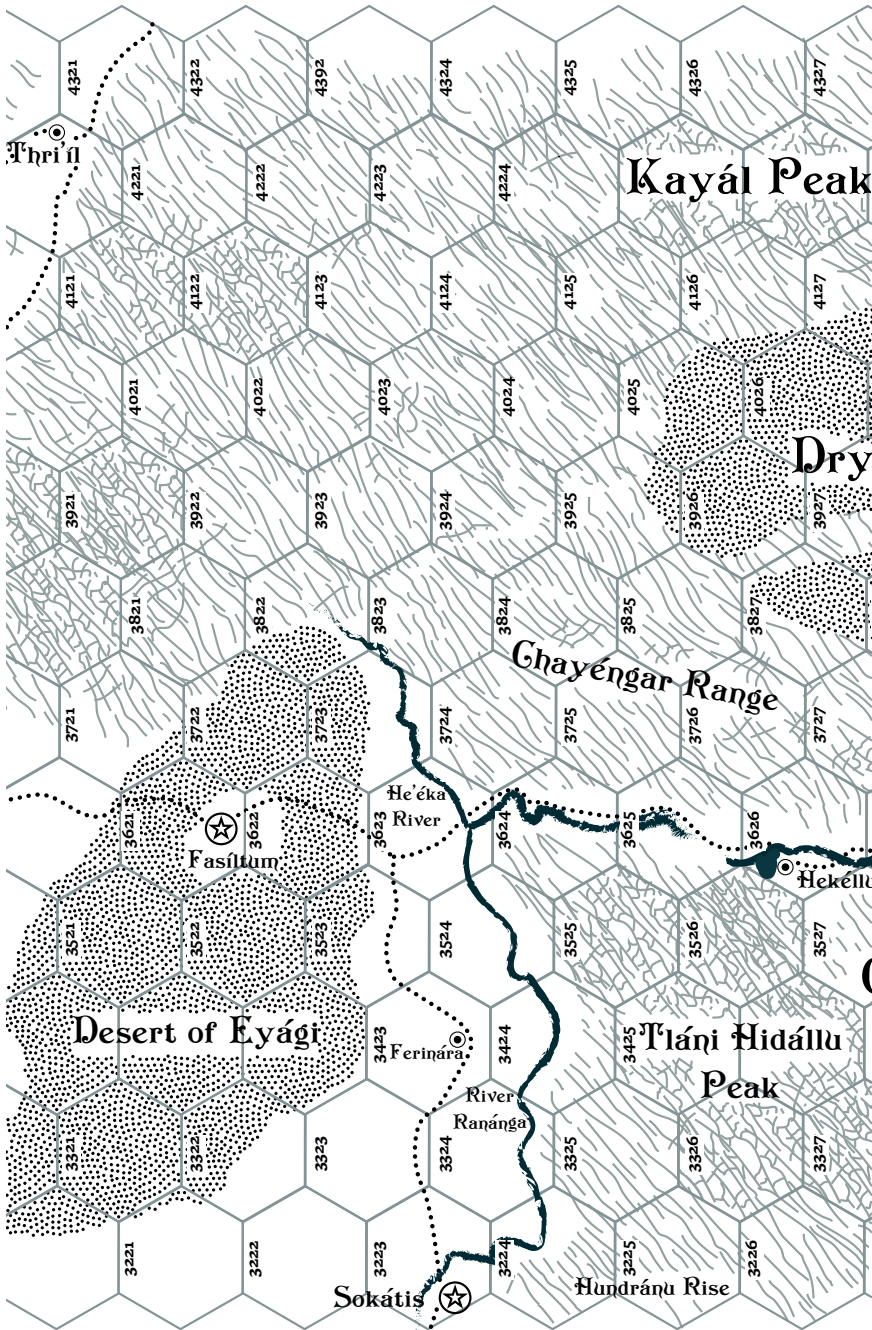
## PLACES OF NOTE

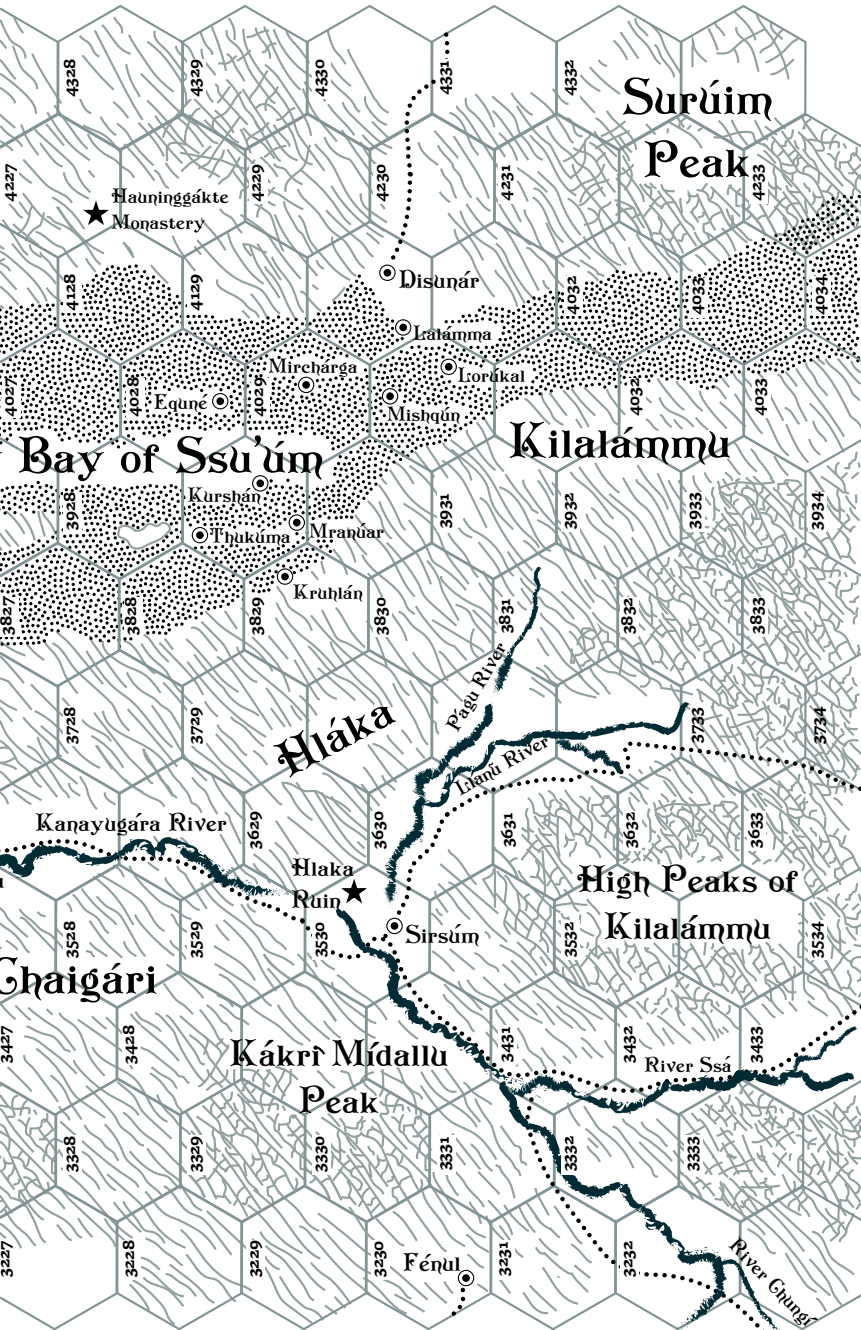
What follows is a very brief gazetteer of some of the settlements and points of interest encountered by the characters of my campaign when they travelled through the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm. Naturally, this gazetteer is far from exhaustive and referees are encouraged to add their own locales (in addition to changing any of what follows based on the needs of their own campaigns).



### Disunár (Hex 4130)

Disunár is a walled town of approximately 10,000 permanent inhabitants, which serves as the "capital" of the Supreme Swordsman, Hennékum Beshúlekká. The Swordsman has ambitions of one day bringing all of Kilalámmu under his rule, starting with the Dry Bay.





To that end, he is actively recruiting mercenaries from Sa'á Allaqí and Tsolyánu. Disunár's buildings are mostly of recent construction, but one structure, known as the House of Accumulated Wisdom (or *Vázh Krúthú Galangzá* in the local tongue), is probably of late Engsvanyáli provenance. The House functions as a kind of public library of ancient texts, as well as a marketplace for similarly ancient baubles and artifacts.

### **Lalámma (Hex 4130)**

This settlement is not a village so much as a desert fortress, whose commander, Drayá Dashkhún, is an ally of the Supreme Swordsman of Disunár. Lalámma has about 60 permanent residents, most of whom are soldiers.

### **Lorúkal (Hex 4030)**

This settlement of 180 permanent residents serves as a trading post between eastern and western Kilalámmu.

### **Mishqún (Hex 4030)**

This is another desert fortress, manned by 50 soldiers loyal to Disunár. Its commander, Kírqa Qánu Qún, is a distant relation of the Supreme Swordsman.

### **Mirchárga (Hex 4029)**

This village of 100 people enjoys a strong relationship with the Hauninggákte Monastery (hex 4227) to the northwest. The monastery is reputedly devoted to an esoteric local aspect of Lord Thúmis called Úl-Dús Sál, who is not well known in the Five Empires. The village chief defers to a cabal of Thúmis priests who regularly journey from the Monastery to Mirchárga.

### **Kurshán (Hex 3929)**

About 120 people dwell here. Kurshán is noteworthy in that, rare for the region, it contains a shrine not located in the mountains. The shrine here is dedicated to the god Súr and staffed by a half-dozen priests.

### **Mranúar (Hex 3929)**

This village is home to 150 people, most of whom are zealous devotees of the goddess Váris, whom they honour with drunken revels whenever greenish Gayél is full. Needless to say, priestesses to Váris enjoy great influence here, sitting on the council of the local chief, who has the odd title of the Storm Upon the Lake.

### **Kruhlán (Hex 3829)**

This village of 100 permanent residents engages in regular trade with the nearby Hláka, some of whom can sometimes be found here.

### **Thukúma (Hex 3929)**

This village of 200 people is ruled by a chieftain named Kitámmaz Joijenáma, who claims descent from the goddess Váris. Located not far from the village is a large tableland (hex 3928) known locally as Akbeshshánu. Akbeshshánu contains Engsvanyáli ruins upon it.

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# The Village of Kumashkékkur

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Kumashkékkur (hex 3124) is a village located to the southeast of Sokátis, on the west side of the Sákbe road to Rû. Not far to the west is the Forest of Gilrayá, while foothills of the Hundránu Rise can be seen to the east. Its total permanent population is small, between 400 or 500 persons, divided into several low status clans. Because of its location, the village also possesses a smaller transient population, consisting primarily of merchants heading eastward to Salarvyá.

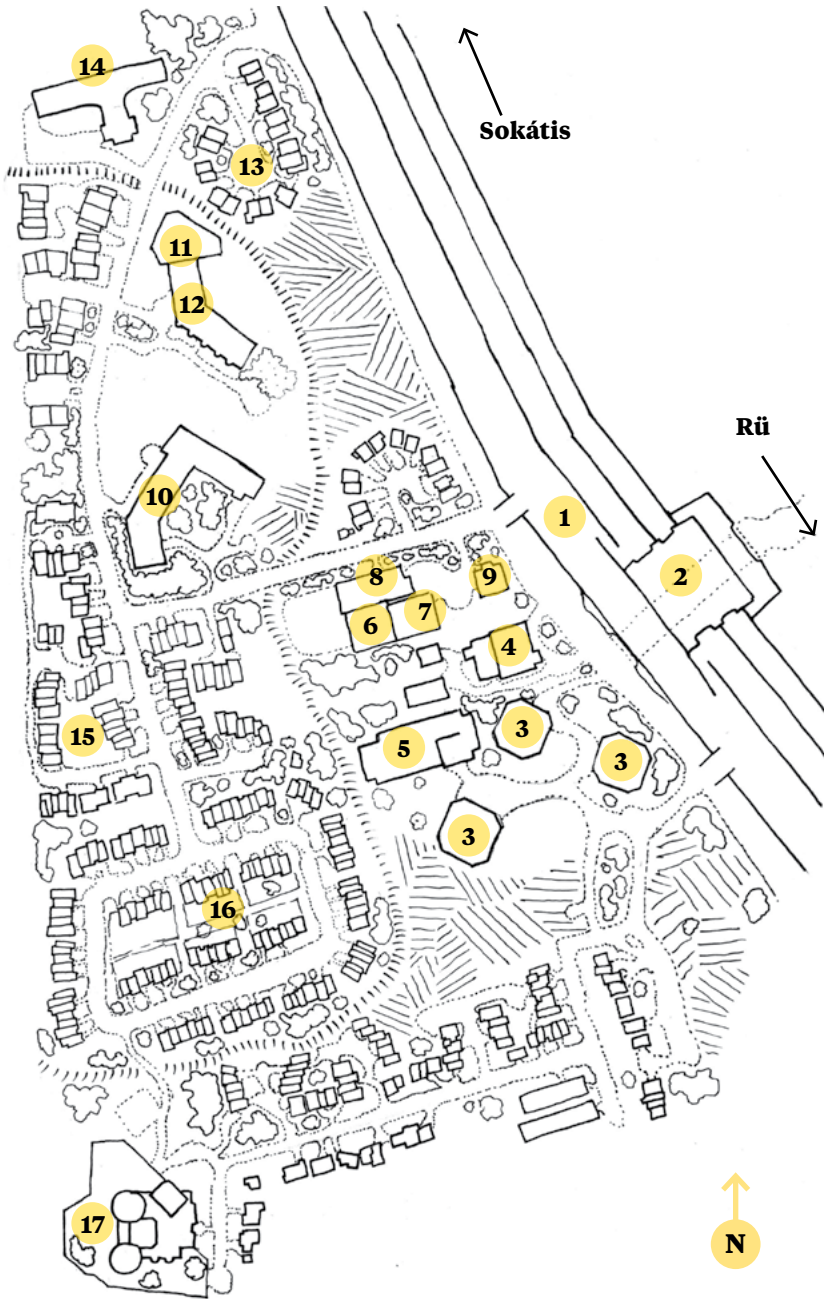
Kumashkékkur is also notable as being a favoured part of a larger fiefdom held by Hehéllukoi Korusái hiTlakán, a member of the noble Blade Raised High clan. The Hehéllukoi maintains a small fortress atop a hill at the southernmost edge of the village. Though small, he frequently visits the fortress on his many trips into the forest, where he hunts Sérudla. Lord Korusái's second wife is a native of Kumashkékkur, which has led to all sorts of gossip, both within the village and back in Sokátis, about what she did in order to gain his affections.

What follows is an overview of the important people and places of Kumashkékkur. The village served (and, as of this writing, continues to serve) as a significant locale in my Sokátis-based campaign. For that reason, not all of the village's secrets are revealed here. Indeed, some of what follows is actually false, though the truth is not widely known and its discovery is likely to become an important part of my campaign (which is why I am not revealing it here). In any event, referees are encouraged to use Kumashkékkur as they see fit, making whatever changes they feel are necessary for their own campaigns. It could very easily be placed elsewhere in Tsolyánu with only a small amount of changes.

## HISTORY

Precisely when Kumashkékkur was first settled is uncertain. Its name is not obviously Tsolyáni or even Engsvanyáli — or so the pedants of the Temple of Thúmis in Sokátis claim! Local legends suggest that Kumashkékkur has Bednálljan origins, which is not impossible, even if it is unlikely. A more plausible theory is advanced by Várshyu hiVangálu (a scholar priest of Lord Ksáru) that the village was founded by Salarvyáni refugees sometime during the latter half of the Engsvanyáli era. He supports this theory by reference to the many Salarvyáni-influenced customs of the village. Nátlu hiVaisúra, another priest of the Blue Lord, disputes this, arguing that the regular traffic along the nearby Sákbe road is sufficient to explain the Salarvyáni influences.

In any event, mentions of Kumashkékkur in the historical record are few. The first verifiable appearance of the name is in a grant by the Priest-King Girándu V to the Notkóru lineage of the Resplendent Domicile of Amber clan. That grant was later reconfirmed early in the Tsolyáni era by the emperor Trákonel I. For reasons that are obscure, the Resplendent Domicile of Amber clan fell into imperial disfavour and were stripped of the grant, which was then transferred to the Blade Raised High clan, which has held it ever since. The grant included not just Kumashkékkur but several other villages, along with the impressive but largely ceremonial title of Hehéllukoi. The Resplendent Domicile of Amber clan fell on hard times, with some of its members forming a new clan known as the House of Worms (see issue #2 of *The Excellent Travelling Volume*).



## CLANS

Leaving aside the ruling Blade Raised High clan, the people of Kumshkékku divide themselves into five different clans.

### Blue Water

This clan consists primarily of farmers and foresters devoted to the gods Hnálla, Avánthe, and their cohorts. Though the largest clan in terms of numbers (exceeding 100 in total), it is not especially influential locally. Its clanmaster is Sorokú hiMrékka, a plainspoken and unpretentious middle-aged man.

### Green Forest

This clan is quite influential in the village, owing to the fact that the Hehéllukoi's second wife is a member of it. The clan is devoted to Avánthe and Dlamélish and most of its members are employed as woodworkers or in related crafts. Its clanmaster is Shánu hiTurúgda, an elderly woman who, through marriage and direct lineage, is related to a good percentage of the folk of Kumashkékku.

### Green Reed

Like Green Forest, this clan is devoted to Avánthe and Dlamélish and is engaged in woodworking. Green Forest is slightly less numerous and influential, but it is nevertheless one of the primary clans of the village. Its clanmaster is Chochún hiOnudál (see p. 24), a gentle old man who is deferential to women, whether of Aridáni status or not.

### Open Sepulchre

Devoted to Belkhánu and (especially) Sárku, this clan originally worked the copper mines to the east of the village, until they played out several generations ago. Since then, the clan occupies itself by doing menial handiwork around the village for other clans, including work related to death and burial. Its clanmaster

is Chekrásh hiAshúla, a blind and feeble old man who delegates most of his official duties to his favourite son, Kakársu.

### Sapphire Bird

This clan is made of herders of Hmá and Hmélu, as well as tanners. Their members worship Avánthe and Dlamélish, like most of the inhabitants of the village. Its clanmaster is Kábish hiChársha, a skinny man of middle years with a ready laugh and a good sense of humour.

## LOCATIONS

With nearly 500 regular inhabitants, Kumashkékku possesses a great many buildings, most of them small dwelling places. These smaller buildings will generally not be discussed in the entries that follow; instead, the focus is on the largest and most noteworthy locations.

### 1. Sákbe Road

The village grew up in sight of the Sákbe road that runs between Sokátis and Rū. The road is in reasonably good condition here and is well maintained, thanks to the continued interest of the governors of Sokátis, who have regularly sent crews to keep it in good repair. There are two ramps that lead up to the Sákbe, as well as an arched passageway that allows transit underneath the road.

### 2. Guard Tower

A fortified guard tower is located on the Sákbe, manned by a small number of local soldiers, who receive stipends from the governor of Sokátis and the Hehéllukoi for their service. They are led by Batán hiChársha (see p. 23), who holds the rank of Tirrikámu. The tower does not contain much in the way of sleeping accommodations; travellers are directed to the village for that. However, it does contain small shrines to deities who do not have temples of their own nearby.

### 3. Bednáljan “Tombs”

Not far from the Sákbe are a trio of broad, squat structures made of rough basalt. These structures vary in height between 12 and 15 feet tall. They are squarish in shape and show no discernible entrances. There is evidence that they once had inscriptions of some sort on their sides, but time and weather has long since erased them. The locals claim that these are the tombs of Bednálján notables, though exactly *which* notables varies from story to story and there is, as already noted, no obvious way into the structures. Nevertheless, the people of Kumashkékku honour the memories of their ancient ancestors with rites and pageants on the fourth intercalary day of each year.

### 4. Guesthouse

Maintained by Dirúla hiMrékka of the Green Reed clan, whose clanhouse is nearby, this building is where travellers are directed to stay. Dirúla, her two husbands, and their children dwell here as well, providing food and lodging for a modest fee (which they often waive, especially if the travellers are of high status).

### 5. Green Reed Clanhouse

This large and rambling structure is home to the Green Reed clan.

### 6. Temple of Avánthe

The priests and priestesses of the goddess Avánthe use this building for the rituals specific to their faith. Their leader is Sa’áka hiOnudál (see p. 26), a member of the Green Forest clan and the second wife of the Hehéllukoi. Within this building is a small shrine to Dilinála, who is not much worshipped in the village.

### 7. Temple of Dlamélish

This building is used for the particular rites associated with Dlamélish and that of her cohort, Hriháyal. The head

priestess is Amilésha hiZaréllu of the Blue Water clan.

### 8. Shared Temple

The people of Kumashkékku tend to see Avánthe and Dlamélish (along with their respective cohorts) as two facets of a greater mystery, not unlike Shiringgáyi of the Salarvyáni. For that reason, there is a building shared by both temples, which is used for joint rituals and worship, such as the Feast of High Summer on the 20th day of the month of Firasúl. Outsiders unfamiliar with the local ways might find this peculiar but it is very much in keeping with the customs of the region.

### 9. Prefect’s House

The fiefdom of which Kumashkékku is a part is an Imperial gift and generates not insignificant revenues through taxes and other levies. Consequently, Avanthár has seen fit to appoint a 12th Circle District Prefect to oversee it. The current prefect is Onuré hiMáika (see p. 25), who uses this building as both her office and home.

### 10. Green Forest Clanhouse

This large and impressive building is home to the Green Forest clan. The clanhouse is noteworthy for having outdoor gardens.

### 11. Ruined Temple of Sáрку

This dilapidated building is what remains of a late Engsvanyáli temple dedicated to Qúrgha, the deity the Tsolyáni revere as Sáрку. Though the Open Sepulchre worship Sáрку, no efforts have been made to restore this temple, which is of interest primarily for historical reasons (e.g. the inscriptions on its remaining walls and some unique statuary).

### 12. Palace

When the Resplendent Domicile of Amber ruled the fiefdom of which Kumashkékku is a part, this palace



was its seat. Constructed in a late Engsvanyáli style, like the temple of Sárku to which it is attached, the palace is in slightly better condition. No one dwells here anymore, but the clans of the village sometimes use palace's large hall as a meeting place for the discussion of matters of mutual concern.

### 13. Sapphire Bird Dwellings

The Sapphire Bird clan does not have a single clanhouse but rather a jumble of buildings in the northeastern portion of the village.

### 14. Blue Water Clanhouse

The Blue Water clanhouse is a large building with a distinctive blue tiled roof.

### 15. Open Sepulchre Dwellings

Like the Sapphire Bird clan, the Open Sepulchre clan does not have a single clanhouse. Instead, they occupy a number of smaller buildings along the western edge of the village.

### 16. Market

Three times weekly, the clans of the village come to this area to trade their goods with one another and with travellers who have come here. The selection is extremely limited when it comes to manufactured goods other than those made of leather, but is surprisingly diverse in the areas of foodstuffs and wooden items.

### 17. Fortress

Sitting atop a hill overlooking the village is a small fortress in the classical Tsolyáni style. This is the home of the Hehéllukoi and his family when they are visiting Kumashkékkur. The fortress also houses a shrine to Karakán.

## PERSONALITIES

Just as important as the locations of the

village are its personalities. Described below are five important non-player characters who dwell in Kumashkékkur, including their Empire of the Petal Throne game statistics and notes about their current activities. These NPCs can be used simply as examples of local colour or as patrons or antagonists to the characters.



### Batán hiChársha

**Level III Warrior; STR 88, INT 42, CON 86, PSY 58, DEX 90, COM 67; To Hit +3; Damage +3;**

**AC 3; HP 14; Original Skills: Cook, Hunter, Tanner; Professional Skills: Axeman, Mace/Flail User, Slinger, Spearman, Swordsman; Languages: Tsolyáni**

Batán is the Tirrikámu of the local Sákbe road guard contingent and a member of the Sapphire Bird clan. He is young (23 years old) and has not, as yet, married, despite the best efforts of his mothers to find him a “nice clan girl” to settle down with. This is because Batán is ambitious and hopes to leave Kumashkékkur for other parts of Tsolyánu. At the moment, his sights are set on Sokátis, where he plans to go in a few months to seek a

commission in the 34th Imperial Heavy Infantry, the Phalanx of Heretlékka, a new legion founded by an aristocratic worshipper of Lady Avánthe.

For now, though, Batán is focusing on his duties to the best of his ability. His men like him and consider him a decent leader, if a little stiff at times. Batán is very devoted to the principle of noble action, even when doing so is not to his personal advantage. In his few off-duty hours, he journeys into the nearby forests and hills hunting game and sometimes more dangerous quarry, such as Zrné. He does this to keep his weapons skills honed, something he otherwise rarely gets a chance to do while on guard duty.

### **Chochún hiOnudál**

**Level II Lay Priest of Stability; STR 28, INT 86, CON 20, PSY 83, DEX 66, COM 58; To Hit -1; Damage +1;**

**AC 9; HP 5; Original Skills: Carpenter, Fletcher, Paper-Ink Maker, Poet, Scribe-Accountant; Professional Skills: Clairaudience, Clairvoyance, Control of Self, Illusionist, Telekinesis; Languages: Tsolyáni**

Chochún hiOnudál is a lay priest of Avánthe and, more significantly, the clanmaster of the Green Reed clan. His health is failing with age (he is in his seventies), but his mind is as sharp as ever. He is always polite, fair-minded, and generous, especially toward women, whom he holds in very high regard. He has three wives, ten children, and many more grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who are his pride and joy. He never ceases to talk about them and their accomplishments to anyone who will listen.

Chochún's primary concern these days is encouraging more traffic through Kumashkékkur. He feels that the village, despite its location, is often overlooked by travellers. He likewise feels that,



as a result, the place is stagnating economically and socially. To that end, Chochún has been attempting to elicit interest in the supposed Bednallján tombs, as well as ruins in the Forest of Gilrayá — (see separate article on p. 27).

### **Korusái hiTlakán**

**Level VII Warrior; STR 94, INT 48, CON 66, PSY 40, DEX 52, COM 89; To Hit +2; Damage +1;**

**AC 3; HP 30; Original Skills: Animal Trainer, Bootmaker, Bricklayer, Hunter, Interpreter, Miner, Orator, Smith-Armourer, Scholar; Professional Skills: Axeman, Bola-Slinger, Bowman, Broadsword and Dagger Man, Crossbowman, Mace/Flail User, Slinger, Spearman, Swordsman; Languages: Salarváni, Tsolyáni**

Korusái hiTlakán is a member of the Blade Raised High clan and the current holder of the title of Hehéllukoi. Handsome, wealthy, and well-spoken, Korusái is a paragon of Tsolyáni nobility.



Though distant from the people of Kumashkékkur, he is well regarded by them for his fairness and gentility. He divides his time between several different holdings within the fief he holds under a grant by the Petal Throne. When in Kumashkékkur, he regularly goes hunting in the Forest of Gilrayá.

At present, the Hehéllukoi has one child, a 17 year-old daughter named Kárua. Her mother, Korusái's first wife, died some when Kárua was young and he spent years mourning her death. Three years ago, he became smitten with Sa'áka hiOnudál (see p. 26), a local — and low-born — priestess of Avánthe, despite the objections of his clan. This marriage has not resulted in any new children, to the disappointment of Korusái. His clan has thus encouraged him to marry again so that he might have a male heir (the Hehéllukoi title descends down the male line of the Tlakán lineage), advice he has yet to take.

### **Onuré hiMáika**

**Level V Adventurer; STR 49, INT 80, CON 43, PSY 83, DEX 60, COM 60; To Hit +1; Damage +0;**

**AC 7; HP 16; Original Skills:**

**Author, Dyer, Jeweller-Goldsmith, Mathematician, Merchant, Scribe-Accountant; Professional Skills: Axeman, Control of Self, Illusionist, Mace/Flail User, Spearman; Bonus Spells: Calm, Locate Objects; Languages: Engsvanyáli, Salarvyáni, Tsolyáni**



Onuré hiMáika is a 12th circle District Prefect and a member of the White Stone clan. She is a relatively recent appointee to this position, having spent most of her career farther east in the Chaigári Protectorate, where she gained a reputation for being “discreet” in dealing with sensitive matters. Onuré is unmarried, never having had the time (or, to be fair, interest) in settling down. Instead, she has devoted her life to service to the Petal Throne, a job at which she has excelled, albeit in a very unglamorous way.

Onuré's superiors sent her to Kumashkékkur to investigate the veracity of rumours that something is not quite right in the village. For example, there are occasional reports of travellers who have gone missing after stopping there. Likewise, the strange hold that the

priestess Sa'áka hiOnudál (see below) seems to exert over the Hehéllukoi has attracted official attention (aided, in part, by prodding from the Blade Raised High clan). So far, Onuré has found no evidence of anything truly untoward in Kumashkékkur, but she continues to keep her ear to the ground.

### Sa'áka hiOnudál

**Level V Priestess of Stability; STR 61, INT 57, CON 82, PSY 54, DEX 53, COM 91; To Hit +2; Damage +1;**

**AC 3; HP 5; Original Skills: Bird-Trainer, Cook, Courtesan, Dyer, Musician, Scribe-Accountant; Professional Skills: Cure Light Wounds, Detect Evil/Good, ESP, Produce Light, Protection from Evil/Good, Telepathy; Bonus Spells: Charm Creature, Heal Serious Wounds, Locate Objects, Sleep, Languages: Engsvanyáli, Llyáni, Pecháni, Salarvyáni, Tsolyáni**

Sa'áka hiOnudál is a ritual priestess of Avánthe and a member of the Green Forest clan. A remarkable beauty, she is also the chief ritual priestess of Kumashkékkur's temple of Avánthe. This already made her an influential person in the village prior to catching the eye of Hehéllukoi Korusái and becoming his wife. Her marriage seems to have helped her position among her coreligionists, as she is frequently called to Sokátis to take part in important meetings and rituals there. Many believe that she might one day rise to become high priestess in the provincial capital.

Of course, some see sinister motives in her marriage to the Hehéllukoi, believing her to have somehow "entranced" him, possibly through magic. This is a rumour advanced by some members of the Hehéllukoi's own clan, who see



her as nothing more than an overly ambitious gold-digger. Kárua hiTlakán, the Hehéllukoi's daughter, reportedly does not like her either, though, again, this could be simply scurrilous gossip. In any event, Sa'áka is now a very important person in Kumashkékkur and she seems to pay little heed to those who question her motives.

# The Forest Ruins

To the west of the village of Kumashkékkur is an old ruin that was built in classical Tsolyáni times by the last Hehéllukoi of the Resplendent Domicile of Amber clan. Named Zhnáyu khyNotkór, he secretly became a devotee of Ksárul after discovering and befriending a strange tribe of Pé Chói-like beings dwelling within the Forest of Gilráya. This tribe, which called itself the T'Mík-Ché-Kík, claimed to be originally from “elsewhere” before finding themselves in eastern Tsolyánu. They knew many mysteries about Ksárul and promised to impart them to Zhnáyu if he pledged himself to the Blue Lord and joined them in their “great work.”

Zhnáyu readily agreed, abandoning the worship of Sárku, a fact he hid from his clan, until his brother, Várshu, discovered it. Angered, Várshu faked evidence that his brother had become a devotee of the Pariah Gods, hoping it would result in his becoming the new Hehéllukoi. Instead, it led to the fall of the Resplendent Domicile of Amber and the transfer of the title to the Blade Raised High clan, a situation that persists to the present day.

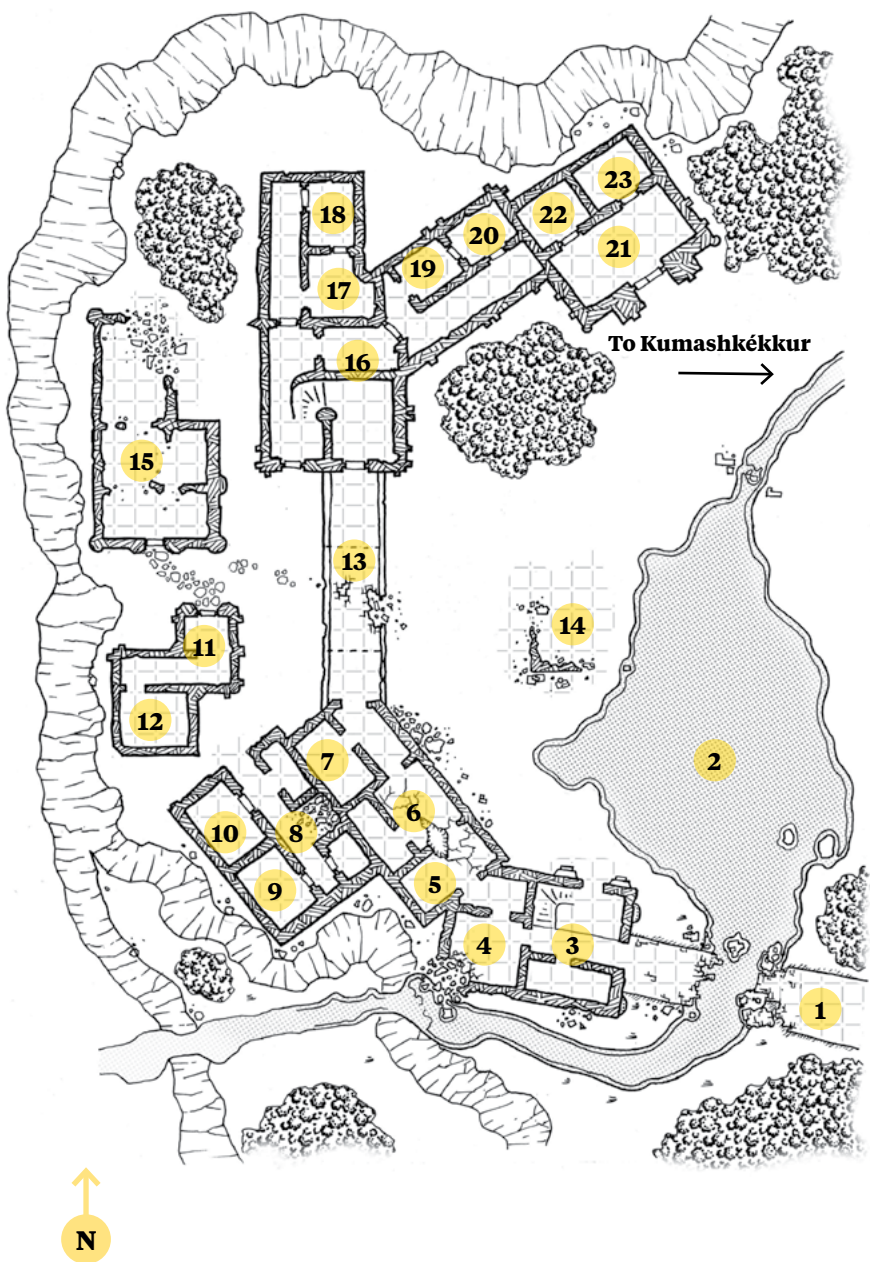
Also persisting are the T'Mík-Ché-Kík, who continue to guard the ruins of the building Zhnáyu secretly built in the forest to aid them in their joint efforts on behalf of Mentutékka. Just what they were actually up to is left to the referee to decide. In my own campaign, the characters spent very little time in the ruins after concluding that they did not want to challenge the T'Mík-Ché-Kík to explore the ruins. However, I did not conceive of the T'Mík-Ché-Kík as inherently hostile, let alone sinister. They are wholly devoted to their weird Aspect of Ksárul, but they do not wish

anyone harm. Whether that is true in every Tékumel campaign is for each referee to decide. The T'Mík-Ché-Kík are left deliberately mysterious so that they can be used as allies, antagonists, or something else entirely.

## MENTUTÉKKA

Numbered among the 62 Aspects of Lord Ksárul is an unusual one known as Mentutékka. This Aspect is said to love nocturnal animals, burrowing beasts, and the creatures of the deep forests. Among his most sacred animals are the Dikkén (see issue #1 of *The Excellent Travelling Volume*) and the Sérudla. Compared to other Aspects of the Ancient Lord of Secrets, Mentutékka is surprisingly warm and caring, not at all like the cold, hard deity of intrigue and power most know.

A few scholars, some of them even worshippers of Ksárul, suggest that Mentutékka is not truly an Aspect of the god but rather a foreign nature-deity whose worship was incorporated into the Temple in ancient times. However, the Temple itself maintains that such opinions are mistaken, the result of limited human perceptions that are incapable of a full understanding of Lord Ksárul's ultimate nature. In any event, this Aspect is not a popular one, being revered primarily in rural and wilderness regions.



### 1. Paved Road

There is a road paved with white stones leading up to the ruined buildings on the other side of the pond. The portion of the road that passed over the water has collapsed, leaving a gap of about 15 feet. Anyone attempting to cross to the other side by swimming across the water will attract the Tletlákha (see area 2 below).

### 2. Pond

Beside the ruins lies a large freshwater pond fed by a stream. At the north end of the pond, where it joins the stream, there is the ruins of a narrow stone bridge. Despite its current, crumbling state, it is still possible to use it, albeit with some danger. Anyone attempting to do so must make a successful roll under his Dexterity percentiles or tumble into the pond.

The pond is 15 feet deep at its greatest extent and is home to 23 ravenous Tletlákha, who generally feed on smaller aquatic animals that dwell within the pond and the connecting stream. Anyone entering the stream, especially if they do so loudly (e.g. falling from the bridge) will immediately attract their attention and be attacked.

**Tletlákha** (AC 5 MV 12" HD 3+3 HP 7, 9 (x3), 11(x3), 12 (x2), 13(x3), 14(x4), 15(x3), 16, 17, 19, 20

Not visible from the surface of the pond is a sealed wooden box which rests on the bottom of the pond. Inside is an *amulet of peaceful existence amongst the powers*. The amulet is a greyish-silver disc about the size of a thumbnail. When worn, the wearer makes his saving throw against hostile spells as if he were magic-user or priest of 11th level, regardless of his actual class and level. Should the wearer nevertheless fail a saving throw against a harmful spell, the amulet vanishes in a puff of dust and reddish flame.

### 3. Entrance Area

This open area contains the remains of a set of stone stairs that once led to the now-collapsed upper floors of the structure.

### 4. Reception Room

Four T'Mík-Ché-Kík stand guard here against interlopers. They wield jagged edged swords and spears.

**T'Mík-Ché-Kík Guards** (AC 2 MV 12" HD 2 HP 7 (x2), 11 (x2))

### 5. Shattered Room

The floor and ceiling of this chamber are badly damaged by age and other travails. Any character entering this room must roll under his Dexterity percentiles to avoid moving too clumsily and causing portions of the ceiling to collapse, dealing 2–12 points of damage to anyone within.

### 6. Empty Room

Nothing currently occupies this area.

### 7. Servant's Quarters

Formerly living quarters of the slave majordomo, this room is now occupied by Ch'k't-Chí, a Level III T'Mík-Ché-Kík magic-user. Two guards stand outside his chamber.

**Ch'k't-Chí** (AC 2 MV 15" HD 2+1 HP 8)

He possesses all the professional skills through *telekinesis* and *shadows*.

T'Mík-Ché-Kík Guards (AC 2 MV 15" HD 2 HP 6, 8)

### 8. Rubble

Stones from the collapsed upper floor litter this small area. Mixed in with the rubble is what appear to be a scattering of yellow and white coins. In reality, the "coins" are the flat disc-shaped fungus known as Armidzá. Any character who touches it must make a saving throw

versus poison. Success indicates that he suffers nothing more than an itching sensation for 1 turn, during which he performs all actions (e.g. combat) at a –1 penalty. Failure indicates that the character suffers an allergic reaction that impairs his breathing, killing him in 1 turn. Any type of healing spell, including *neutralise poison*, will end the reaction and the danger of death.

### 9. Empty Room

Nothing currently occupies this area.

### 10. Kitchen

This area was once a food preparation area. All of its contents are long gone, except for a large (2-ft tall) stone urn. At the bottom of the urn is a thin residue of some clear sticky substance. The substance is sweet to the taste but otherwise harmless.

### 11. Antechamber

The walls of this area are covered in faded frescoes depicting scenes from the Engsványali telling of the Battle of Dórmoron Plain. Any priest, character with the Scholar skill, or indeed a halfway decent Tsolyáni education can probably recognise this. Most notably, the frescoes tend to exalt Ksárul, suggesting that the painter (or his patron) was a devotee of the Doomed Prince of the Blue Room.

### 12. Tomb

This chamber once housed a stone sarcophagus containing the remains of Zhnáyu khyNotkór. The tomb was long ago looted and the remains desecrated. However, there is a hidden compartment in the sarcophagus inside of which is stored a scroll (written in the Tongue of the Priests of Ksárul) with the following spells: *enchanted armour and weapons*, *extra-vision*, *locate gold and gems*, and *locate objects*.

### 13. Collonade

This ruined area was once an open-air colonnade done in an imitation of late Engsványali style. However, the columns have long since collapsed, as has the roof and portions of the tiled floor.

### 14. Guardhouse Ruins

Almost nothing remains of the guardhouse that once sat here. Amidst the rubble can be found a rusty steel dagger with a small azurite in its hilt (worth 100 Káitars).

### 15. Shrine

Housed within this separate building is a shrine consecrated to Mentutékka (see p. 27). All that remains of the shrine is an altar made of blue stone. A worshipper of Ksárul or Grugánu who possesses the Scholar skill will recognise the altar for what it is. If anyone, whether a worshipper of Ksárul or not, pays reverence to it, he will be protected against the attacks of any forest creatures for the next eight days, provided that he himself does no harm to such creatures, in which case the protection ceases.

### 16. Antechambers

These rooms are mostly empty, except for random detritus. The only thing of note is a stone statue of some horrible, multi-limbed monster, possibly a demon. The statue was once adorned with precious stones (as evidenced by recesses in its eye sockets, etc.), but they are no longer present.

### 17. Guardroom

Five T'Mík-Ché-Kík guards can be found here, protecting the entrance to area 18.

**T'Mík-Ché-Kík Guards** (AC 2 MV 15"  
HD 3 HP 10 (x2), 11)



## 18. Library

This was once a library. The walls still show evidence of shelves and bookcases, where tomes and scrolls were kept. Nearly all of its holdings have long since been taken, but one book remains, *Duón Duqála Torúúna*. Also present in the room is Kí-t-Ké, leader of the T'Mík-Ché-Kík and a Level V priest of Mentutékka.

**Kí-t-Ké** (AC 2 MV 15" HD 4+1 HP 18)

He possesses all professional skills through *telepathy* and has the following bonus spells: *creatures*, *dispel evil/good*, and *zoomorphy*. He also has an *eye of indefinable apprehension* with 47 charges and an indicator written in Classical Tsolyáni.

## 19. Despoiled Vault

The entrance to this room was obviously forcibly opened, leaving a gap in the wall where it once was. Other than 6 Káitars bearing the name and image of Trákonel I, the fifth Seal Emperor of Tsolyánu, there is nothing else of value here. Because of their age, these coins are probably worth somewhere between 50 and 100 modern Káitars to collectors or students of history.

## 20. Sleeping Area

Two T'Mík-Ché-Kík guards sleep here when they are not otherwise needed in the ruin.

**T'Mík-Ché-Kík Guards** (AC 2 MV 15" HD 2 HP 5, 7)

## 21. Entrance Hall

This large room is guarded by a single small Sérudla that cooperates with the T'Mík-Ché-Kík in protecting the ruins from further desecration – or looting. The beast attacks anyone who either makes aggressive moves toward it or shows evidence of having attacked the T'Mík-Ché-Kík.

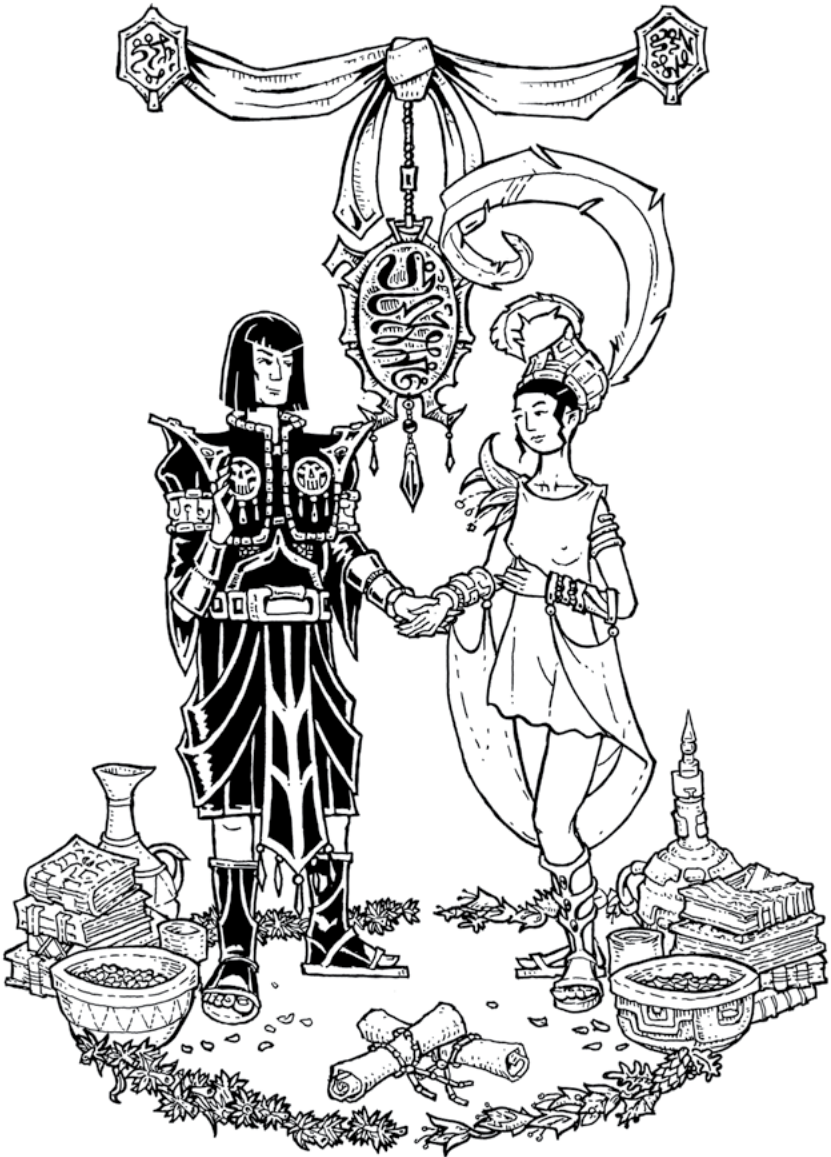
**Sérudla** (AC 2 MV 15" HD 5 HP 27)

## 22. Empty Room

There is no longer anything in this chamber.

## 23. Treasure Vault

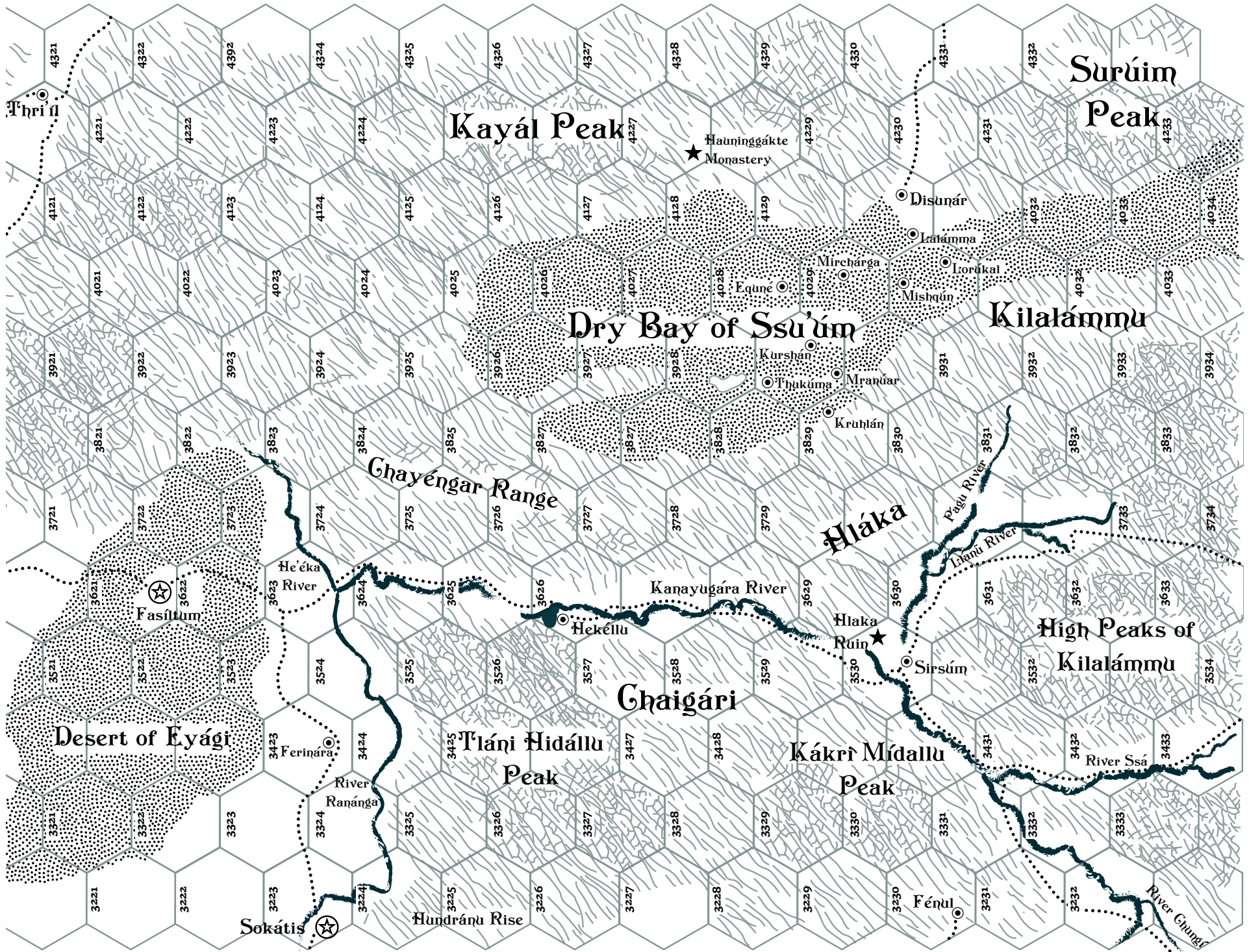
Behind a locked door is the remaining treasure of these ruins, gathered up by the T'Mík-Ché-Kík and now guarded by the Sérudla in area 21. The treasure consists of the following: 10,000 Káitars, 13 gems (worth 20, 50 (x6), 100 (x2), 500, 2000 (x3)), a *shield +1*, a suit of *armour +1*, and a *sword +1* (Change aligned, average ego, speaks Engsvanyáli).



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Commemorative portrait of the marriage between Keléno hiNokór of the clan of the House of Worms and Hmásu hiTéshku of the clan of the Golden Bough, on the twentieth day of Firasúl in the year 2354 A.S.

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# Next Issue

*Pé Chói and Páchi Léi Characters*

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*The Shunned Ones*

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*Demon Weapons*

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*The Martial Artist Character Class*

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