

Deeds of the Ever-Glorious

Tekumel Netbook #1

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DEEDS
of the
EVER-GLORIOUS

HISTORIES

of the

TSOLYANI

LEGIONS

by **M.A.R. Barker**

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The numbers proceeding each Legion name and numerical designation are as of this date: 2358 A.S. All 85 Legions currently active are listed herein. Some (given on page 101) are so new that no information on their history was available from the High Chancery at Avanthar in time to be included in this volume. it is hoped to cover these in more detail in an upcoming volume. The extracts that are given are taken from the series “Armies of Tekumel,” Volume I Tsolyanu (Second edition of 2358 A.S.); they have been numbered, as have the older Legions, as per this second edition.

THE DEEDS OF THE EVER-GLORIOUS

By M. A. R. Barker

It is axiomatic that any group is more than just the sum total of its members. During the existence of an organisation, it continues to develop traditions and procedures which eventually take on the nature of a personality of sorts. Idiosyncrasies, methods, and attitudes become structured and crystallised; deeds and events add colour; individuals begin to look to the organization as an object of respect in itself and as a source of strength and support.

This is especially true of groups and institutions on Tekumel. Almost all of the peoples of the Five Empires are solidly tradition-bound, conscious of the antiquity of their realms, aware of history and precedent as living forces which guide them in their present lives. This is true equally of the temples, the great government bureaucracies, and the military forces. Priests tend to look back to ancient texts and scholars who have passed on long before, bureaucrats quote precedents from sources several thousand years past, and soldiers still salute the standards of generals who have been dust for aeons.

Military units are just as susceptible to “personification” as any other organization. Each Legion tends to take on an identity of its own. Its deeds are recorded and held in esteem by bards and epic poets. Its trophies are housed in its headquarters and venerated by successive generations of officers. Its defeats are over, may take on a religious and clan identity: some Legions bear the honour of a whole temple upon their collective shoulders; others represent the aspirations to glory of an ancient and honourable clan. These features are codified by the Tsolyani (and by the troops of other Empires as well), and there are religious rituals and clan ceremonies commemorating the “persona” of various Legions. Sacrifices are made to the appropriate Aspect of the patron deity. Feasts are held on the anniversaries of great victories.

When a Legion is expunged from the Book of Records at Avanthar, its “persona” dies with it - or at least enters a period of mournful non-being. The Legion standards are ceremonially encased in lead wrappings and are then housed in the Hall of Domes. Similarly when a new Legion is created a new “persona” is brought forth. Rituals are performed much as they would be for a newborn child. New banners and uniforms are created by the Legion’s patrons. The Imperium’s messengers announce the Legion’s creation much as they would announce the birth of an heir to the Petal Throne. Men are advised to “be joyous and to feast the coming forth.” It is much the same for an old Legion which is reactivated. It is as though an old friend, long feared lost, had come again. Clan patriarchs feast and drink and weep with joy. The Tunkul gongs are rung in the relevant temples. Men are advised to hasten to join the revived unit. Patrons come forward with gifts and offerings of support: supplies, materials, arms and armour, ancient relics of the old Legion, and money.

In view of all of this, it is very important for students of Tsolyani culture to have access to some of the more important events in the histories of the Imperial Legions. Without these materials it will be impossible to perceive the Tsolyani army as its members and its society see it. It is impossible, of course, to present a complete history of each Legion - particularly those which go back to legendary and mythological periods before the present Tsolyani Empire. But it is possible to comprehend enough of

those events which transpired since the accession of the first Tlakotani Emperor to see something of the history and development of the Legions alluded to above. A list of the dates and titles of the Emperors of the Second Imperium is thus appended below.

The list begins with the Glorious First Emperor, the First Tlakotani, who arose out of the Time of Chaos after the fall of the mighty Empire of Engsvan Hla Ganga about 2,358 years ago - given the inaccuracies of correct dating, the loss of early records, and the difficulty of obtaining access to the records of the Secret Book at Avanthar. The dates of the Emperors are often matters for conjecture, and it will be impossible to discuss their reigns in any detail, although a few of the major events of Tsolyani history will be noticed in a separate table given at the end of the chronological Emperor list. Differing calendrical systems are also to be blamed for inaccuracies below, and the student is advised to request a copy of the compendious “Balamtsanyal hituplankolumeldalidalisayal hiKolumebabarsasa” (“The Histories of the Beloved, Very Great, and Powerful Emperors of the Most Mighty Imperium”) from the library of almost any temple in Tsolyanu. This book, by Heredaru hiMritlekka of Bey Su, is a much better text than that of Chorodu hiSsainggela, the “Balamtsanikh hiGardasisasayallumimra hiVisu”(“The History of the Mighty Deeds of Our Realm”), although this latter book is more recent.

(The Professor prefers to have accents on Tekumel material, but Deeds was originally published without accents. Perhaps in a future version of this net publication we will add the necessary accent marks.

The newest Emperors have been added to this list. More information about the other Emperors and Empresses of Tsolyanu can be found in the freely available Database, Emperors of Tsolyanu, available on the Internet at Tekumel oriented FTP and Web sites. A Deeds of the Ever-Glorious Database will also soon be available.)

The Emperors and Empresses of Tsolyanu			
Number	Dates	Name and Title	Important Events
1	1-85 (?)	...Tlakotani “the First Emperor”	Imperium founded at Bey Su
2	85-90 (?)	(Name unknown - possibly nonexistent)	
3	90-135 (?)	Horukel N’len	
4	135-139 (?)	To....Miuna (First name unknown)	
5	139-195	Trakonel I “the Blazing Light”	Battle against Those Who Served the One Other (c. 176 A.S.)
6	195-196	Heshqu Miuna I	196-219: no Emperor; the Empire ruled by the High Chancellor of Avanthar
7	219-269 (?)	Trakonel II “the Victorious”	
8	269-327 (?)	Deshetl Miuna “the Stable Mountain”	
9	327-382 (?)	Heshqu Miuna II “the Wind-Rider”	
10	382-384 (?)	Trakonel III “God-King”	
11	384-444 (?)	Ashoretl Tikasa “The Power Forever”	
	444-446	(The Period of the Chancellor: no Emperor; the Empire ruled by the High Chancellor of Avanthar; in 445 the False Emperor; Ajjnai Teshkuma, was defeated and slain)	
12	446-464 (?)	Horukel II	
13	464-517 (?)	Sriyesa, “the Lady of the Palaces	
14	517-580 (?)	Horkhunen “the General”	Raids into Pan Chaka and Mu’-ugalavya

The Emperors and Empresses of Tsolyanu			
Number	Dates	Name and Title	Important Events
15	580-641 “Seizer of Cities”	Kurshetl Nikuma I Hills in 590	Subjugation of the Kurt
16	641-709	Arodai Nikuma	
17	709-801	Hehejallu “the Dark Moon”	Accession of Milumanaya to the Empire in 730; hegemony of the priesthood of Sarku, Lord of Worms; annexation of Do Chaka and Pan Chaka in 780-1
18	801-816	Kurshetl Nikuma II “the Viewer of Night”	More religious strife with the priesthoods of the Dark Gods versus those of Stability; unexplained disappearance of the Emperor in 816
	816-830	(The Time of No Emperor: a number of candidates competed for the Petal Throne, while the realm was ruled by a coalition of priesthoods)	
19	830-831	Hrishmuna Neqo I	Distant nephew of the last Emperor
20	831-851	Hrishmuna Neqo II	
21	851-905	Todukai Neqo “Pillar of the State”	Many administrative reforms
22	905-916	Ngangmorel Neqo	
23	916-945	Vayuma Su, “Empress of All the Sands”	Devotee of Thumis and Hnalla; religious strife between the priesthoods of Stability and those of Change
24	945-984	Shaira Su, “Divine Daughter of Thumis”	Further religious strife, almost open civil war, siege of the City of Sarku; final treaty with the priesthoods in 975
25	984-1010 1010-1026	Nriga Gaqchike, “the Spider” (Civil War: the priesthoods brought the Empire into open conflict; various provinces ruled by local warlords)	Ascendancy of the priesthood of Ksarul

The Emperors and Empresses of Tsolyanu			
Number	Dates	Name and Title	Important Events
26	1026-1031	Kanmi'yel Nikuma I "the Warrior"	Order restored
27	1031-1057	Kanmi'yel Nikuma II	Rise of the priesthood of Vimuhla in the west and northeast; from 1056 to 1057 most of the west ruled by Targholel Nikuma "the Usurper"
28	1057-1062	Targholel Nikuma "the Usurper"	Ruled as Emperor
29	1062-1062	Nu'unka "the Pious"	Attempted to restore the rule of the priesthoods of Stability
30	1062-1074	Kanmi'yel Nikuma III "the Scourge of Vimuhla"	Established the rule of the Flame-Gods
31	1074-1122	Kanmi'yel Nikuma IV "Flattener of Peaks"	Worshipper of Vimuhla; Conquest of the island of Vra in 1115
32	1123-1123	Kanmi'yel Nasundel	Ruled only in Bey Su and the east (?)
33	1123-1155	Janule, "She of the Blue Goddess"	Ruled one year in the west only, then Empress of all of the Imperium
34	1155-1202	Metlunel I "the Foolish"	Almost ruined the government of the Empire
35	1202-1251	Metlunel II "the Builder"	Many great palaces and temples erected, Sakbe road system expanded; battles in Salarvya in 1218-1219
36	1251-1279	Tariktanme "Expander of Temples"	Great temples built for several sects, religious controls strengthened and theocracy almost established
37	1279-1279	Sunun Drantike "the Mad"	Ruled in Avanthar only; slain by his sister, who then assumed the throne
38	1279-1306	Dashiluna "the Green-Eyed"	Devotee of Dlamelish, renowned for her imaginative orgies and

The Emperors and Empresses of Tsolyanu			
Number	Dates	Name and Title	Important Events
			other curious habits
39	1306-1318	Tontiken Rirune “Slave of Demons”	Necromancer and black magician
40	1318-1325	Hejjeka I “the Replacer”	Restored the Empire to the rule of the Lords of Stability, re-established customs and laws
41	1325-1340	Hejjeka II “the Heretic”	Gave up the custom of seclusion of Emperors at Avanthar and marched with his troops; War with Salarvya in 1325-1340
42	1340-1355	Ngharradu “the Ascetic”	Restored custom of Imperial seclusion at Avanthar, devoted himself to the service of the Lords of Stability
43	1355-1407	Hejjeka III “the Fat”	
44	1407-1458	Metlunel III “He Who Thirsts”	The meaning of the sobriquet of this Emperor is not known
45	1458-1517	Hejjeka IV “Restorer of Dignities”	Gave local independence back to the Vrayani and to other protectorates, restored ancient patents of nobility.
46	1517-1574	Metlunel V “the Esthete”	Both Chaka Protectorates lost to Mu’ugalavya
47	1574-1623	Hejjeka V “the Open-Handed”	Generously gave away a large part of the treasury
48	1623-1699	Metlunel VI “He Who Is Lamé”	
	1699-1700	(Time of the Usurpers: Chrajuna “the Usurper of the North,” Vriggetsu Dnash, “the Usurper of the South,” Onusu hiBarudla “the Priestking of Fasiltum,” and Qenqolu hiVridi “the General of the West” all competed for the throne; in the end all were defeated, and the Omnipotent Azure Legion crowned a distant cousin of Metlunel VI as Emperor in Avanthar)	
49	1699-1747	Kanmi’yel Nikuma V	This was the throne-name taken

The Emperors and Empresses of Tsolyanu			
Number	Dates	Name and Title	Important Events
		“the Pretender”	by the candidate placed on the Petal Throne by the Omnipotent Azure Legion; Do Chaka retaken from the Mu’ugalavyani in 1711
50	1747-1809	Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku”	Further religious strife and reascendancy of the Temple of Sarku
51	1809-1872	Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess”	Rule of the Lords of Stability reestablished; Pan Chaka retaken in 1842
52	1872-1931	Aleya “the Damsel of Purity”	Worshipper of Avanthé and Dilinala; never married
53	1931-1958	Ninue Jalesa “the Maiden of Beauty”	Younger sister (and lesbian lover) of Aleya; devoted to Dilinala and never married
54	1958-2015	Neshkiruma “the Cloud-Spinner”	Nephew - possibly illegitimate son? - of Ninue; uninterested in government; Milumanaya seceded in 1976
	2015-2015	(Time of Many Emperors: various candidates vied for the throne; eventually a powerful military leader, one of Neshkiruma’s many sons, ascended the Petal Throne)	
55	2015-2065	Gyesmu “the Iron Fist”	Great War with Mu’ugalavya in 2019-2020; Kaija Protectorate taken in 2029, Kerunan in 2031, and Chaigari in 2041, all while Salarvyia was embroiled in a feudal civil war; Chakan Uprising of the Ito clan in 2045
56	2065-2168	Gyesmu Dalisa “the Magnificent and Ever-Living	Order and government restored and solidified
57	2168-2234	Heshtu’atl “the Mighty”	
58	2234-2291	Arshu’u “the Ever-Splendid	
59	2291-2345	Hetkolainen “He Whose Glory Never Ends”	Incursions into Yan Kor by General Kettukal

The Emperors and Empresses of Tsolyanu			
Number	Dates	Name and Title	Important Events
60	2345-2346	Mursun Dlekkumine “the Weak”	Died of strange plague
61	2347-2365	Hirkane hiTlakotani Stone Upon Which the Universe Rests”	Battle of Ru in 2347; more invasions into Yan Kor, Battle of Butrus, etc.
62	2365-	Dhich’une “Eternal Splendour”	Emperor Hirkane’s youngest (revealed) son; said to have slain his father in a coup in 2365; held a false Kolumejalim in which no other candidates could arrive to compete; acceded to the Throne early in 2366; country broke out into civil war; Prince Eselne marching down from the northwest, Prince Mirusiya at Fasiltum in the northeast, Prince Rereshqala moving up from Jakalla in the south, Prince Taksuru occupying Bey Su - the country is in a mess!
(63)	2367	Mridobu “Risen to Rule”	Fourth (revealed) son of Emperor Hirkane Tlakotani; succeeded in briefly in attaining the Petal Throne in 2367: ruled 3 days under the throne name Hiriktashte. Disappeared again. Dhich’une returned. Not known whether his reign is official - still under litigation in the Palace of the Preisthoods in Bey Su.

1. The Omnipotent Azure Legion

The origins of this Legion are not known, although it is thought that its founders were perhaps companions of the first Tlakotani Emperor, guardians of his person and commanders of his army. There are also no data on the beginnings of the custom of keeping the Tsolyani Emperors in seclusion in the great fortress of Avanthar. By the reign of Emperor Trakonel I “the Blazing Light” (circa 139-95), however, there is clear mention of the Seal of the Imperium, the Petal Throne, and the “Servitors of Silence.” The Emperor may still have been taken out for ceremonial processions and services occasionally, as a fragmentary stela from Bey Su suggests, but the framework of the thick tapestry of custom and ritual had already been laid before the end of the first century.

The Omnipotent Azure Legion began as a military force. It is recorded as being present at Tumissa in 176 A.S., when the temple of “the One Other” was pulled down and its site ploughed with salt. Other minor engagements are documented from the records of the reigns of Emperor Heshqu Miuna I and his successors: “A Glorious victory over the Ssu, the enemies of man..” one stela begins. The rest is lost except for the Imperial cartouche of Emperor Deshetl Miuna “the Stable Mountain.” Judging from this, there were still pockets of Ssu in the Empire up to his time, although these creatures have long since been exterminated in all of the five Empires now.

Emperor Horkhunten “the General”(circa 517-80 A.S.) may have been responsible for the establishment of the Legion as an intelligence gathering force. After the palace revolts and assassinations of the reign of Emperor Horukel II, when the Legion was almost driven out of Avanthar, it reestablished its military power and developed the “Servitors of Silence” the deaf-mutes who are the personal body servants of the Emperor in the secret reaches of the citadel. Emperor Horkhunten, who was apparently an active man before his accession to the Petal Throne, chafed at being mewed up in the Golden Tower as custom decreed. In order to gain information and keep up with current events, therefore, he set aside part of the Legion to serve in every city in the Empire as agents of the Imperium, spies, and watch-dogs over the political and sectarian disputes which plagued Tsolyanu. During his reign, thus, the Legion was first officially split into three types of members: military, intelligence, and the personal servants of the Emperor himself. Apparently the Legion of Emperor Horkhunten’s day never numbered more than the standard Tsolyani twenty Cohorts, but some of these were permanently detached for special service while others guarded Avanthar or took part in the military actions of the Empire.

Emperor Kurshetl Nikuma I “the Seizer of Cities” made use of the military arm of the Legion to put down revolts all across the land. It also served in the suppression of the people of the Kurt Hills in 590 A.S. and in the fierce and bloody wars against the nonhuman Hlutrgu in the southeast.

Emperor Hehejallu “the Dark Moon” caused the Legion serious trouble, however. A worshipper of Lord Sarku himself, he disliked having the Omnipotent Azure Legion guarding his person and made efforts to have it replaced by a unit more favourable to the Lord of Worms. This coup apparently failed. For a brief time the Legion of the Peaks of Kraa and the Legion of the Scales of Brown were brought into Avanthar and given posts beside the Petal Throne, but in the end the Omnipotent Azure Legion won out, and these Sarku-worshipping troops were sent packing. No one knows what intrigues, plots, and hidden violence took place within the deaf-mute Servitors of Silence. Emperor Kurshetl Nikuma II “the Viewer of Night” continued the policies of his mad father (if indeed Hehejallu was his father and not some demon from beyond), and upon his disappearance in 816 A.S. the Legion further strengthened its hold upon the Empire. During the Time of No Emperor it negotiated with the priesthoods and with various local rulers, coming finally to a compromise which brought Emperor Hrishmuna Neqo II to the

Petal Throne. He was much of a nonentity, but in 851 A.S. he was followed by one of the best administrators the Imperium has ever had: Todukai Neqo “Pillar of the State.” This ruler organised and systematized the structure of Imperial government: the four “Palaces” were assigned particular duties (i.e. the Palace of the Realm, the Palace of Ever-Glorious War, the Palace of the Priesthood of the Gods, and the Palace of Foreign Lands), and the provincial administrations were reformed. Fiscal reforms, too, were effected, with the present structure of fief tax-farms making up a major part of the revenue organization. Market taxes, property taxes, various types of imposts upon mines and fisheries - all came under Imperial scrutiny. The Omnipotent Azure Legion was assigned specific administrative duties as well: e.g. its offices became a “court of last resort” for cases involving the interests of the Imperium. Its intelligence facilities were broadened, and its role in the surveillance of Imperial government increased many fold. At this time there was talk of divorcing these administrative and intelligence functions from the military arm of the Legion, and also from the Servitors of Silence in Avanthar; this never seems to have been effected, however, since the Tsolyani love of tradition and the inertia of long established custom are so prominent in the society of the Seal Imperium.

After the brief and ineffectual reign of Emperor Ngangmorel Neqo, another powerful ruler came to the Petal Throne. The Empress Vayuma Su “Empress of All the Lands” was a devotee of the Lords of Stability and herself worshipped both Thumis and Avanthé. She sought to eradicate the strongholds of the Dark Gods from Tsolyanu, using political, religious, and military means to do so at every opportunity. Ancient Legions serving the Lords of Change were disbanded or sent to remote stations; the revenues of the temples of the Dark Gods were curtailed and restricted through many legal and semi-legal ways; the missionaries of the temples of the Lords of Stability were encouraged to proselytize up and down the land; clans serving the Dark Gods found themselves without Imperial patronage, their products overtaxed, and their members harassed; and the military units serving the Lords of Stability were brought in to the urban centres and made prominent, their officers promoted to Imperial posts, and their forces used to put down “revolts” within the Dark Lords’ shrines. The priesthoods complained to no avail about the breaching of the Concordat which guaranteed peace between the Temples, and the Empress was faced with uprisings and threats of a general civil war. The Omnipotent Azure Legion at first gladly supported the Empress, since its leaders were devotees either of Lord Hnalla or of Lord Karakan. Eventually, however, it too came to realise that her policies were dangerous to the stability of the realm, and poisoned her, or whether she died a natural death is not known, but in 945 A.S. she was laid to rest in the City of the Dead across the river from Bey Su, and her youngest daughter acceded to the throne under the title of Shaira Su.

This Empress was if anything more of a fanatic than her mother had been. A student of the doctrines of Lord Thumis, she quickly brought the priesthoods of Thumis and his Cohort, Lord Ketengku, into Avanthar. The Legion soon found itself pushed aside once again, and its military arm was ordered to take part in the siege of the City of Sarku, held against the Imperium by the priesthoods of Sarku and his Cohort, Lord Durrilamish. The priesthoods of Ksarul and Hru’u were little better treated. In 975 A.S. the Empress was forced to sign a treaty with the Dark Gods’ temples allowing them religious and secular freedom; it was either this or real civil war. The Omnipotent Azure Legion, which had been somewhat pushed aside by the Empress’ favourites in the Temple of Thumis, once more came into its own.

Empress Shaira Su was replaced in 984 A.S. by a man whose abilities as an intriguer had already made him famous as “the Spider Prince”. Nriga Gaqchike worshipped dark Ksarul, the Doomed Prince of the Blue Room, and so great was his power even before assuming the Petal Throne that all the intrigues of the Temples of Thumis, Ketengku, Hnalla, etc., could not halt him. He expanded the duties

of the intelligence arm of the Legion even farther, making it into a real corps of secret police and giving it jurisdiction over important prisoners of the Throne. The secret prisons beneath Avanthar are still a testimony to the reign of this Emperor.

The Legion played a role also in the Civil War of 1010-26 A.S. which followed the demise of Nriga Gaqchike. It supported a powerful candidate who favoured Lord Hnalla, but this man failed in the Great Test, the Kolumejalim, at which candidates for the throne vie amongst themselves. A powerful warrior, Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma I "the Warrior" was made Emperor, and his battles once more involved the military arm of the Legion with foreign adventures. The Legion was part of an abortive attempt to take Saa Allaqi, raids against the Salarvyani, and other engagements. This Emperor was replaced by Kanmi'yel Nikuma II, much of a nonentity, and then by the terrible Targholel Nikuma "the Usurper." After a brief reign, this warrior died and was replaced by a delicate, pious, and totally ineffective Emperor who took the throne-name Nu'unka "the Pious." He ruled just long enough to have the great golden Disk of Blazing Light installed in the temple of Hnalla at Bey Su, where it can still be seen.

He was followed by two Emperors who worshipped the mighty war-god, Vimuhla, Master of Flame. During the reign of the latter of these, the Legion saw active service in the assault upon the island of Vra, where it earned battle honours and an Imperial Gold of Glory. A special votive standard was also given to the Legion.

During succeeding reigns the Legion prudently kept out of both religion and politics, forming a tradition of loyalty directly to the Petal Throne and simply carrying out the edicts of whoever sat upon it. Empress Janule "She of the Blue Goddess" replaced the male Servitors of Silence with women who served her Lady Avanthé. Emperor Metlunel I "the Foolish" feared nearly everybody and ordered the Legion to stand guard naked so that no one might conceal a dagger or poison. What the stern legionnaires thought of this is not recorded.

Under Emperor Metlunel V "the Esthete" the Legion experienced one of its most serious defeats. The Mu'ugalavyani retook the two Chakan Protectorates, and the Imperium had posted most of the military arm of the Legion at Paya Gupa. In 1565 the Red-Hats invested the city and took it after a terrible, bloody battle through the streets and into the inner citadel. Nearly 17,000 men of the Legion were slain or captured (and later sacrificed). The carelessness and inattention of the Imperium was to blame, of course, but the Emperor was too busy with his bejeweled toys and little slavegirls, and the priesthoods had grown fat and lazy from too much wealth.

The situation worsened, and finally events culminated in the Time of the Usurpers in 1699-1700 A.S. The Legion took sides first with Chrajuna "the Usurper of the North," then with others of the pretenders, and eventually joined the party of the man who later ascended the Petal Throne as Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma V "the Pretender." In 1711 A.S. the military arm took much pleasure in destroying the Mu'ugalavyani in Do Chaka, when the Protectorate was retaken by Tsolyanu. Emperor Durumu "the Copper Blade of Sarku" repeated some of the follies of his predecessor, Hehejallu, however, and some of the Servitors of Silence were slain by priests of Sarku within the precincts of Avanthar itself. After much strife, the Legion and its allies managed to rid the world of this Emperor, and the Petal Throne passed back into the hands of those who supported the Lords of Stability. Empress Nrainue "the Iridescent Goddess" retook the Protectorate of Pan Chaka in 1842 A.S., and the Legion assisted in this. But when Milumanaya seceded in 1976 A.S. the Legion was under suspicion of treasonous intrigue by Emperor Neshkiruma "the Cloud-Spinner," and most of its units were at that time in Jakalla or Thraya. The Legion then took part in the Time of Many Emperors, supporting the candidate who later became Emperor Gyesmu "the Iron Fist." During the Great War of 2020, it fought first along the Khirgari front,

retreated then to Purdimal, escaped from the city as it was being besieged, retreated to Bey Su and Avanthar, and defended the citadels of these two cities until the Mu'ugalavyani supply line became too long and they broke in 2020. Thousands of troops were lost in these engagements, but the Legion still had enough men to participate in the second Battle of Tumissa, at which the Red-Hats were sent fleeing back through the Chakan forests. Battle honours and a great Standard of Victory were granted to the Legion, and several of its officers received the Gold of Imperial Glory.

Only small units of the Legion took part in the subsequent battles for the eastern protectorates: Kaija, Kerunan, and Chaigari. Most of the military arm remained posted at Tumissa, where in 1045 A.S. the Ito clan rose up and slew many Tsolyani by treachery and stealth. The Legion unit posted at Paya Gupa was destroyed to a man, and the heads of its men were hurled from catapults down upon the relieving army when it came. The Tsolyani grimly retook the Chakas, however, and in turn many of the Ito clan saw the impaling stakes at Avanthar. The Legion took a very curious revenge: it demanded and received one newborn taken away and raised completely ignorant of their origins in Avanthar, becoming Servitors of Silence when they became adults. Indoctrinated and trained totally as Tsolyani, this group served as the loyallest of the loyal during the last years of Emperor Gyesmu "the Iron Fist" and the first part of the reign of Emperor Gyesmu Dalisa "the Magnificent and Ever-Living."

Thereafter the Legion saw little military action. Several Cohorts were sent north with General Kettukal hiMraktine during the current reign, when Yan Kor was invaded, but mostly its military arm has been posted at Avanthar and at Bey Su. Its intelligence forces continue to operate all over the Imperium, and it has recently been busy taking over the corps of Imperial messengers, whose task it is to carry dispatches all over the realm.

Lord Qoruma hiRi'inyussa, the High Princeps of the Legion, is a member of the aristocratic Golden Sunburst clan and a worshipper of Hnalla, Master of Light. He is a staunch supporter of the Imperium and no player of Imperial politics or dabbler in the constant religious intrigues which plague the land. He has thus not declared for any of the Imperial Princes or for their sister, Princess Ma'in Kruthai. As Lord Qoruma sees it, the Legion has a duty first to the Petal Throne and then to other things. Political and religious strife would only add to the problems of the Empire now, he believes, and those who appear to have other loyalties are assiduously weeded out of the Legion.

The military arm of the Legion tends to take only those Tsolyani who have distinguished themselves in other units first - or who display such obvious strength and dexterity that they will likely make excellent soldiers. Foreigners are occasionally recruited, but this is not frequent. The intelligence arm, on the other hand, often enlists foreigners who have no clan ties and thus no holds upon their loyalties. Nonhumans and foreign agents make the best spies, Lord Qoruma holds, but they cannot be entrusted with the glorious history of the Legion's deeds. Hence only rare cases can be enlisted into the military arm, none at all into the Servitors of Silence, and yet many are found fit for the lower levels of the intelligence services.

2. The First Legion of Ever-Present Glory; 1st Imperial Heavy Infantry

The history of this Legion is clouded in the mists of early Imperial history. Tradition has it that this unit is the direct continuation of the First Legion of the Engsvanyali Imperium and that it can be traced even farther back to the "Legion of the Foremost" of the Bednalljan kings. This antiquity may be only coincidence and wishful thinking, of course, since it is logical that other empires may well choose a term such as "First Legion" to designate their most elite unit.

In any case, there is mention of a “First Legion” in the semi-mythical histories of the first Tlakotani himself, the founder of the Imperium, and the Legion is mentioned again in the Runes of Trakonel I “the Blazing Light.” It does not receive the additional epithet “....of Ever-Present Glory,” however, until much later - in the reign of Metlunel II “the builder” (1202-51 A.S.), and after this time it is always referred to in Imperial documents by its complete title.

The first records are semi-mythical, as said above; the Legion is noted in the Songs of Ha’adrano of Jakalla as having taken part in the siege of Uruse (perhaps the modern Urmish) which resulted in the accession to the throne of the First Emperor, Tlakotani the Founder. Subsequently the Legion’s history has involved it in almost every major battle and war the Empire has fought. Battle honours were noted in the epic poem, “The Hymn to Na-Iverge,” composed in 451 A.S. praising this Legion’s role in the putting down of the False Emperor Ajjnai Teshkuma in 445 A.S. Then again the Legion is mentioned in the Dispatches of Kurshetl Nikuma I as having aided in the seizing of Dai Oqoqu, the chieftain of the Kurt Hills, and in the pitched battle with the Hlutrgu on the Field of Bogs in Kaija. In 930 A.S. the Empress Vayuma Su “Empress of All the Lands” strove to disband the Legion, due to a quarrel with the military leaders of her day, but this resulted in even greater power for the military, and after her death the reign of Shaira Su (945-984 A.S.) the Legion commanders warned the priests of the Temple of Thumis that they would brook no interference in military affairs and would pull the Empire down around the ears of any priest’s daughter who dared to say them nay. The Legion was thus instrumental in bringing about the end of the priesthood of Thumis’ power and the accession to the throne of Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider,” a blunder which was to cost the Imperium dearly indeed. In the chaos ensuing after the Spider’s demise, the First Legion held the central western provinces intact, with the help of certain other great Legions, and kept the westerners and the northerners at bay until the Great Restoration of Kanmi’yel Nikuma I (1026-31). Thereupon they received the honour of being named “the Hereditary Defenders of the Throne” and were also given lands and fiefs of their own to support their troops - a custom abrogated by Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” in 2099 A.S.

The First Legion of Ever-Present Glory won further battle honours during the Salarvyani War of 1325-40, in the retaking of Do Chaka in 1711, in the war with the Mu’ugalavya in 2020, in the taking of Chaigari in 2041, and in the Battle of Ru in 2347 A.S. It also took part in the various raids into Yan Kor in the 2340’s and 50’s.

The First Legion has now been regrouped under its current general, mighty Kettukal, and it is based at Khirgar during the present crisis with the Yan Koryani

3. The Legion of Potent Destiny; 2nd Imperial Heavy Infantry

This Legion was originated by Emperor Trakonel III “God-King” in circa 383 A.S. It seems to have been a part of the palace guard force at Avanthar. Emperor Ashoretl Tikasa “the Power forever” maintained the Legion, added troops, provided excellent equipment, and saw to it that this unit became one of the finest in his army. Unfortunately, palace intrigues after this ruler’s death led to the Time of the Chancellor, and the Omnipotent Azure Legion, which had felt its hold on Avanthar threatened, now saw to it that extraneous Legions were removed to distant posts or were disbanded. Faced with this choice, the Legion opted to disband. Before this could be completed, however, Emperor Horukel II seized the throne and attempted to reverse the policies of the Chancellor of Avanthar. His first act was to expel some units of the Omnipotent Azure Legion and to surround himself with picked Cohorts of other units. This led to a series of quiet palace revolts and secret assassinations which culminated in his death and the accession of his daughter, Empress Sriyesa “Lady of the Palaces.”

The Legion served the Empress well, although it had to be content with being one of the major Legions of Bey Su, leaving Avanthar to the Omnipotent Azure Legion. General Horkhunen, who later became Emperor in circa 517 A.S. used troops of this Legion to put down priestly revolts and to carry out raids on the recalcitrant cities of the northeast. Emperor Kurshetl Nikuma I “the Seizer of Cities” made further use of this unit in his complex and not well documented campaigns.

During the reign of Emperor Hehejallu “the Dark Moon” the Legion was sent to fight in the Chakas. Here it met its first real defeat: at one of the battles in Pan Chaka it was routed from the field by a force of Pachi Lei and human troops. The Imperium never forgot this, and after the Chakas were annexed to the Empire, the Legion was posted to Katalal “where it might be competent enough to guard the Chlen-herdboys,” as the Secret Book at Avanthar puts it. There the Legion slowly began to decay: Kurshetl Nikuma II “the Viewer of Night” ceased funding it from Avanthar, leaving its finances up to its noble patrons in Bey Su; the citizens of Katalal pressed for a Legion made up of their own people, rather than one composed of outsiders; the priesthoods of Katalal attempted to embroil the Legion in local politics, etc. By the time of Hrishmuna Neqo II the Legion was reduced to three Cohorts who were largely responsible for the guarding of the Sakbe Road towers near Katalal and the garrisoning of various small fiefs and towns nearby. Empress Vayuma Su might have revived the Legion, since its personnel were largely worshippers of the Lords of Stability, but she seems to have been unaware of its existence. In 989 A S the Imperium struck the last Cohort of the Legion from the rolls and allowed it to die out entirely.

The current need for troops has brought about a strange situation. The Omnipotent Azure Legion is at full strength, as it has almost always been. It does have Cohorts in training, however, plus numbers of men enrolled and willing to serve. These are usually the scions of the great families of the Imperium, too aristocratic to be willing to serve in any other unit. Yet the Omnipotent Azure Legion is only rarely used in battle, and some of its “recruits” may well die of old age before their turn comes to be placed in a Cohort. Previously, thus, the recruiters closed their books when the Legion had twenty Cohorts and two in training, but now the Imperium has ordered that all available men be enrolled. In order to do this, the surplus must be enlisted in another Legion. With what may be suspected to be sardonic humour, Lord Qoruma hiRi’inyussa, the Princeps of the Omnipotent Azure Legion, has suggested the reactivation of the Legion’s ancient rival, the Legion of Potent Destiny, as an aristocratic and properly noble unit for these extra recruits. The Imperium has agreed, and now some seven Cohorts have been established, plus two still in training at Bey Su. The commander is Lord Mirusaya hiSsanmirin, a nephew of the Provost of the Chancery, Lord Chaimira hiSsanmirin, and an ex-officer of the Omnipotent Azure Legion. He is of the powerful Sea Blue Clan and thus possesses both the experience and the clan status to attract troops from the noble houses of the Empire. The Legion as yet has no battle experience, and it is doubtful whether it will be sent north to the Yan Koryani border. Its probable role for the immediate future is as garrison troops for Bey Su and its environs.

4. The Legion of Hnalla, Master of Light; 4th Imperial Heavy Infantry

Founded, it is said, by Trakonel I “the Blazing Light,” this Legion is one of the oldest and best documented in the Imperium. Its battle honours are carefully preserved in its Legion Hall at Bey Su, and even the records of the Imperium at Avanthar do not contain the meticulous details which are found in its Book of Deeds. Its first general was one Ma’elura hiTikeshmu, and an unbroken line of officers of the lineage of Tikeshmu extends throughout most of the Legion’s history.

Originally, it is written, the great Emperor Trakonel I himself was a member of this Legion and led it to victory over forces described in the Book of Deeds as “those who would not”(?). Later, he seems to have put down a revolt at Purdimal with these troops, and another notation places him and his armies at Tumissa in A.S. 176, where “those who served the One Other” were slaughtered and their temple pulled down and made into “separate grains, each no bigger than a mote of dust.” The Legion has always been loyal to and supported by the Temple of Hnalla, Master of Light. It has thus served from time to time as a check on the forces of other deities within the Empire. In 723 A.S. the Emperor Hehejallu “the Dark Moon” took the throne, and since he was himself a worshipper of Sarku, Lord of Worms, he undertook to destroy the Legion. At first using stratagems to weaken its chain of command, he progressed to denying it supplies and recruits and to posting scattered units to various distant and precarious areas of the Imperium. The Temple of Hnalla strove against this and managed to maintain Legion solidarity by transferring the headquarters of the Legion to Katalal, where local clans and officials were favourable to Hnalla. The rule of Hehejallu was followed by that of Kurshetl Nikuma II “the Viewer of Night,” and his policies were even harder than those of his predecessor. The Legion was officially ordered to disband and seek sanctuary as priests within their temples. This led to the concealing of much of the Legion’s arms and armour in secret caches in Tumissa, Katalal, and Meku. After nearly fifteen years of terror and bloodshed, Kurshetl Nikuma II was “taken away by demons,” as the records have it, and a civil war ensued, the “Time of No Emperor.” At length a coalition of priesthoods - Karakan, Hnalla, Thumis, Avanthé, and those of other deities as well - came into power and restored order under the puppet Emperor, Hrishmuna Neqo I. At this time the Legion was able to emerge and reform itself.

Subsequently, the Legion took part in the campaign which added the Island of Vra to the Empire, the taking of Do Chaka in 1711, and in the Great War of 2020 with Mu’ugalavya. Battle honours were won at the Siege of Tumissa and the famous Sally of the Victorious at Chene Ho. Thereafter the Legion has been largely posted at Bey Su, with some special units at Avanthar to supplement the Omnipotent Azure Legion there. The Legion is still one of the best organised and strongest in the Imperium, with well-organised recruitment policies, excellent training, and good weapons. It is presently increasing its strength from its usual 15 Cohorts to the full allowable 20.

5. The Legion of the Mighty Prince; 5th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This Legion has often been allowed to lapse and then been revived again after some years. The reason for this is perhaps its name and its history: originally - and many times since - it has served as a “pet” Legion for an active heir-apparent to the throne. The Tsolyani system of government and the means of succession to the Petal Throne have been described elsewhere, and it need only be mentioned here that there is very little for a young, active, and military-minded prince or princess to do until that day when he or she may strive for the “Gold” and defeat other brothers and sisters aspiring to the throne. Thus, it has been customary since the founding of the Imperium to provide a military Legion to serve as the personal command of such a young prince or princess, impatient with the routine of palace life and the dull labyrinth of Imperial bureaucracy.

The Legion was thus founded first, it is recorded, in the reign of Deshetl Miuna “the Stable Mountain,” for his son and heir, Prince Ho’otlaku, who later became Emperor Heshqu Miuna II “Wind-Rider.” This prince utilised the Legion as light or light-medium infantry and personally took it upon several raids into Milumanaya and the north, even as far as what is now Ke’er in Yan Kor. During his reign, then, Heshqu Miuna II maintained the Legion in excellent readiness, but his son, Trakonel III, was

not willing to take on military responsibilities and allowed it to lapse into a state of unpreparedness. During the subsequent reign of Ashoretl Tikasa it was officially disbanded, and nothing more is heard of it until the accession of Horkhun "the General" in 517 A.S. It is then listed as one of the Legions present upon his triumphal entry into Bey Su. No further mention is made of it, however, during his successor's rule, although one might expect to find it in existence under an Emperor as militaristic as Kurshetl Nikuma I "the Seizer of Cities."

The next occurrence of this Legion in military lists is found during the reign of Hrishmuna Neqo II, who used it during his princehood as a splendidly costumed plaything and enjoyed pitting it against tribal peoples, wild beasts, and even troops of other Legions in "Qadarni" - style battles. It is then mentioned no more until the coming of Kanmi'yel Nikuma II in 1031 A.S. There again it seems to have served as a palace guard for the young prince.

The Legion received another encouragement under Hejjeka II "the Heretic" (who abandoned the seclusion of Avanthar and took personal part in military battles) in 1325. Units of this Legion won battle honours during the Salarvyani War in 1325-1340, and at the Battle of Mmillaka it is listed as being "in the van" of the victorious Tsolyani forces. It again was allowed to lapse after the "restoration" of Ngharradu "the Ascetic," and during the troubled times of the Usurpers in 1699-1700, it appears again as a supporter of General Qenqolu hiVridi in the west of the Empire.

Thereafter the history of the Legion has been continuous, sometimes clearly supported by the Imperium and at other times left to fall into weakness and disuse. In the War of 2020 it took part in the futile defense of Mrelu and was defeated there by the Mu'ugalavyani general Mi'itlenish I. Regrouped at Urmish, the Legion took part in the various battles of the war and finally joined in the victory of the Relief of Bey Su in 2020. It subsequently was present at the battle for Kaija in 2031 A.S. and also in Chaigari in 2040-1 A.S.

Currently the Legion has been revived by Prince Eselne, the Emperor's second son, and is receiving once again the lavish funds and treatment which it has had before under young and powerful princelings. It is now posted near Khirgar on the northern frontier, awaiting orders to move against the invading Yan Koryani.

6. The Legion of the Portals of Death; 6th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This Legion is one of those raised by Emperor Gyesmu "the Iron Fist" to counter the Mu'ugalavyani. A previous Legion of the same name had existed in the time of the First Emperor, but it seems to have become extinct in the reign of Emperor Trakonel I "the Blazing Sun," and nothing is known of it.

Emperor Gyesmu had a search made through the Archives at Avanthar for Legion names and numbers which could be reactivated, and when it was discovered that the 2nd Imperial Heavy Infantry, the Legion of the Portals of Death, had once existed, he commanded a priest of Thumis to fabricate a "newly-discovered" Legion history, which would aid in drawing good troops to its banners. This manuscript, called "The Scroll of the Deeds of Those Who Loved the Blazing Light," is still to be seen in the Chancery at Avanthar. It requires much expertise to detect that it is a forgery.

The Emperor was successful, however, and some sixteen Cohorts were raised, largely from the centre of the Empire just south of Bey Su. These fought well during the Mu'ugalavyani siege of the capital in 2020 A.S., and the Legion later took part in the Tsolyani advance in the north which rolled up the enemy before it and sent the Red-Hats helter-skelter back towards their own boundaries. The Legion

received battle honours and a Gold of Imperial Glory during the Great War and was on its way to becoming one of the most popular units in the Empire.

Unfortunately, however, an historian on the staff of the Chancery in Avanthar began to study the Legion's purported early history during the reign of Emperor Heshtu'atl. Certain peculiarities of language and script disturbed him, and after further study, he determined that the document was spurious. The parchment and ink were authentic, probably looted from some tomb, but the vocabulary and grammar of the text were anachronistic in many places. He brought the matter to his superior, who took it to the Provost of the Chancery. Somehow it became known to the court, and after initial attempts to conceal it, the evidence was laid before the Petal Throne.

The officers and men of the Legion were shamed. Tradition is as important to the Tsolyani as personal honour, and the Legion felt that it could not hold up its head again in the Empire, in spite of its battle honours during the Great War. Recruiting fell off, and certain poets composed scurrilous verses on "the heroes whose ancestors are but pen and ink." The Legion commandant was insulted in the presence of the court at Bey Su, and in the resulting personal duel he lost his freedom and became the slave of an officer of the Legion of Serqu Sword of the Empire. Thereafter the Legion was reduced to the status of city guards in Bey Su, and there was talk of disbanding it entirely. In 2297 A.S. there were only two active Cohorts.

Emperor Hetkolainen "He Whose Glory Never Ends" found a solution to the matter which displays the Tsolyani love of formality and ritual very well indeed. He promulgated an edict abolishing the ancient Legion and ordered it stricken from the rolls. "This Legion has never existed," the decree states, "and therefore it must be as it ever was: a legend of the time of the first Great Emperors." He then issued a second decree, founding a "new" Legion - with the same name and Legion number as the old! Solemnly inaugurated in the Great Hall of Audience in Avanthar, the "new" Legion came into being clear of any stain, a unit whose battle record was yet to be seen. This formal fiction brought the Legion back into being, and those who had been "disbanded" were the first to be enrolled.

The Legion now has some twelve Cohorts. It is stationed near the Governor's Palace in Bey Su, and its commander is a nobleman of good lineage: Lord Meshmuyel hiVu'urtesh, of the prestigious Clan of the Golden Bough, and a worshipper of Lord Hnalla. Lord Meshmuyel has requested permission to take his troops north to the Yan Koryani border or to Thri'il in order to gain experience, but this has not as yet been granted.

7. The Legion of Mirkitani, Hero of Victories; 7th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This ancient Legion is mentioned as long ago as the reign of Trakonel I "the Blazing Light." It is recorded that one of the companions of the first Tlakotani was a powerful general and warrior by the name of Mirkitani, and that this man was descended from the Bednalljan rulers of the First Imperium. His career has been mythologized, and one can listen to his semi-magical exploits in half a dozen of the epic poems of which the Tsolyani are fond. Little factual information is available, of course, and perhaps the only visible remnant of his presence is the ruins of "Mirkitani's Castle" in the vicinity of Utermu on the Great River. A tomb ascribed to him is a common tourist site in the City of the Dead at Bey Su, but historians are not certain that this is indeed his or that of some other, later member of his lineage. At Avanthar itself there are also two seals ascribed to him and a set of weapons and armour which are occasionally shown to visitors and carried in processions.

It has been the custom to maintain the fiction that Mirkitani himself is always at the head of his Legion throughout the Legion's long history. Someone of his clan and lineage has been available to

serve as General all along, although the actual clan-membership and lineage-relationship of some of these men might be questioned by sticklers for historical fact.

The battle-honours of the Legion are so many and so various that it is not feasible to list them all. It was certainly present during the reign of Trakonel II “the Victorious,” during the Period of the Chancellor, in which there was no Emperor, in the wars of Horkhunen “the General,” and it was present again during the Civil War of 1010-1026 A S. Although Emperor Hehejallu, “the Dark Moon,” strove to contain the power of the Legions, he did utilise this unit during the war which ended with the accession of Milumanaya to the Empire in 730 A S. Other foreign battle honours were gained during the taking of Do Chaka and Pan Chaka in 780-1, the accession of the Island of Vra in 1115, the War with Salarvya in 1325- 40 (especially the Battle of Chgehl Tiqueje in 1327), and later on also. In the War of 2020, the Legion performed nobly in the Battle of the Temple of Chanis in 2020 and afterward at the sieges of Tumissa and Chene Ho also. Much of the ensuing 300 years was spent as garrison troops in Jakalla and Vra, but the Imperium called the Legion forth once again in 2045 to face the uprisings in the Chakas. More recently, the Legion was used by General Kettukal to rout the Mu’ugalavyani incursion in Pan Chaka in 2346 (the Battle of Butrus), and the Legion is now posted near Khirgar to hold against the Yan Koryani threat there. It currently has some 18 Cohorts and is planning to field its 19th within the month.

Currently it may be noted that the General of this Legion is Mirkitani vuMakkochaqu, Prince of Vra. Ever since the accession of Vra to the Empire in 1115 A.S. the Legion has had a strong southern alignment and has done much to consolidate Imperial power in Vra and the islands off the south coast of Tsolyanu. The present General Mirkitani is a powerful soldier and warrior himself, and he is a personal friend of both General Kettukal hiMraktine and Prince Eselne. He thus forms one of the greatest strengths of the Military Party. If he is not directly related back to the earlier Mirkitanis, no one in the Empire is likely to question this, and his sons are already vying with one another to see who will become “Mirkitani, Hero of Victories” after him.

8. The Legion of the Givers of Sorrow; 8th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This Legion is devoted to Lord Chiteng, the Cohort of Lord Vimuhla and the Lord of Red Spouting Flame. It is thus very ancient, going back to the legendary Period of the Dragon Lords. Legion historians claim that there are records which demonstrate its continuity during the Time of the Fisherman Kings, the First Imperium, and the Engsvan Hla Ganga Empire. Such a lengthy history is likely to be largely hypothetical and mythological at best; yet it is certain that this or a similarly named Legion was in existence during the latter years of the Engsvanyali Empire, as the Stelae of Scarlet Glory at the village of Navai near Tumissa attest.

The first Tsolyani mention of the Legion dates from the reign of Emperor Trakonel II “the Victorious,” who employed it and other troops to defeat the Pachi Lei in Pan Chaka and thus make parts of the region safe for human settlers. In 395 A.S. (if the chronology can be trusted) it appears again in the reign of Emperor Ashoretl Tikasa “the Power Forever” during one of his incursions into Mu’ugalavya. During the Period of the Chancellor (444-6 A.S.) the Legion supported the forces of one of the Princes who worshipped lord Vimuhla, and when this candidate met defeat, the Legion, too, was punished by being sent to guard Penom. Empress Sriyesa “Lady of the Palaces” sent the Legion on a most unusual quest: informed that Hlyss pirates were raiding the southern coasts, she commanded that “the nearest Legion be embarked upon ships and sent after the vandals.” The unlucky Legion of the Givers of Sorrow thus found itself, heavy armour and all, sailing after the deadly nonhumans of Hlyssuyal! The strange, hive-shaped Hlyss nestships met the Tsolyani fleet at sea and sank most of it and

sending the rest scurrying for safety. A storm arose, however, and even these ships were dashed to pieces on Ngeshtu Head, where the Pachi Lei picked up a few survivors and ransomed them back to the Imperium.

General Horkhunnen became Emperor in 517 A.S. He rebuilt the Legion and transferred it to Tumissa, which was far friendlier to the Flame God and his Cohort. There the Legion prospered, taking part in further raids into Pan Chaka and Mu'ugalavya. Emperor Hehejallu "the Dark Moon" had no love for the Lords of the Flame, and he thus ordered the Legion to lead the assault into the Chakas in 780 A.S. It won the day outside of Butrus, and after Pan Chaka had been annexed to the Empire in 781 A.S. the Legion was based at Butrus and given the title "Hammer of the Marches." It was thus kept out of the mainstream of Imperial politics, although it remained a good, provincial Legion. In 1017 A.S. the Legion was briefly left under a cloud when the western candidate for the Petal Throne lost his bid - and his life. But Kanmi'yel Nikuma I "the Warrior" brought it back to strength again, making it a power to be feared. Again it supported the rival candidate, Targholel Nikuma "the Usurper" in 1056, but this time its choice was successful, and for a brief period it was one of the chosen Legions of the Empire. Under Emperor Nu'unka "the Pious," however, it was returned to Butrus - only to be brought forth again in 1063 A.S. by the warlike Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma III "the Scourge of Vimuhla." He and his successor, Kanmi'yel Nikuma IV "Flattener of Peaks" were both devotees of the Flame Gods, and in 1115 A.S. the Legion took part in the assault upon the island of Vra. It won battle honours for its resounding defeat of the Vrayani on the northern end of the island, although the islanders really had little chance against the better armed and trained Tsolyani forces. It then took part in the final siege of the city of Vra, again gaining honourable mention in the battle reports. Empress Janule "She of the Blue Goddess" returned the Legion to Pan Chaka, however, where she felt that the rivalry between the locally based worshippers of Ksarul and the devotees of the Flame would keep both sides too busy to meddle in the rest of the Empire. She appears to have been correct; Emperor Hejjeka II "the Heretic" made no use of the Legion during his Salarvyani campaigns, and later rulers also seem to have been content to leave the Legion in Butrus.

In 1565 A.S. the Chakas were lost to Tsolyanu. The Mu'ugalavyani took advantage of the weakness of Emperor Metlunel V "the Esthete" and invaded the two Protectorates in force. The Legion Cohorts stationed in Butrus fought to the last man, dying bravely in the burning ruins of the citadel. The Mu'ugalavyani so admired their heroism that they gave the Legion battle honours themselves, and these standards and insignia are still said to exist somewhere on the island of Mu'ugallu in Mu'ugalavya. Except for a few support personnel stationed elsewhere at the time, the Legion was extinct.

In 1808 A.S. Emperor Durumu "the Copper Blade of Sarku" needed the aid of the Flame Temples, and he thus made a treaty with them, a condition of which was that this ancient and proud Legion should be reestablished (although again kept far from the centre of Imperial politics). It was thus reformed at Urmish, recruited seven Cohorts, and was given arms and equipment from the caches of the two Flame Temples. The Legion remained there until Empress Nrainue "the Iridescent Goddess" saw her chance to regain Pan Chaka in 1842 A.S. The Legion stormed Butrus, lost over half its strength, but ended with its standards on the upper battlements of the citadel where its last heroes had perished so many years before. Once again it was made "the Hammer of the Marches."

Security lulled the Empire into a false sleep, and the Legion slowly deteriorated into a force of border troops. Then in 2019 A.S. the Mu'ugalavyani struck. Once more the Legion defended Butrus, but this time it was treacherously betrayed by the Governor of the city, who surrendered the city almost intact to the Mu'ugalavyani. The Legion was caught off-guard, but most of its troops barricaded themselves in the great donjon of the citadel and fought until overwhelmed by the Red-Hats' armies.

Only six survivors were taken to Ssa'atis to be exhibited to the throngs at the Temple of Hrsh. They were then ceremoniously sacrificed with full battle honours. Seven men who were on a mission to Bey Su at the time also immolated themselves at the Temple of Chiteng in Bey Su when they learned of the deaths and capture of their comrades. "How can Lord Chiteng have forgotten us?" one of them wrote, "When our brothers march into the Halls of Burning Victory in the Paradise of Chiteng, shall we not be by their sides?"

The Legion was allowed to become extinct, then, and so it lay for nearly two hundred and twenty years, when it was again reactivated by Emperor Arshu'u "the Ever-Splendid". Desiring to please the Vimuhla- and Chiteng-worshipping clans of the west, he authorised troops and equipment for the Legion, gloriously inaugurating it at a great ceremony in Butrus in 2240 A.S. It was allowed to remain in Pan Chaka until recently, when it has now been posted north to Chene Ho to guard against the Yan Koryani invasion. It took part in a battle there on the Atkolel Heights, but its heavy-armoured infantry were unable to scale the steep precipices in the face of the entrenched enemy, and about half a Cohort was lost. Its main force was then part of a great battle north of Chene Ho, and in this engagement it came out victorious, although neither side really gained the field. Its present general, Lord Korikada hiKurushma, is the High Priest of Chiteng at Butrus, a member of the ancient Red Sword clan, and a fanatic devotee of Lord Chiteng. He is an experienced soldier, really less of a priest than a warrior, although in the Temple of Chiteng there is little distinction between the two, and he has seen to it that this sect lavishes arms and equipment upon his Legion. He is a colleague of General Kettukal, although the two do not see eye to eye on his religious persuasion. He has thus been appointed Supreme General of the Army of the Northeast at Chene Ho.

9. The Legion of the Scales of Brown; 9th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This Legion had but a short and unhappy history. In 754 A S Emperor Hehejallu "the Dark Moon" attempted to strengthen the power of his deity, Lord Sarku, Master of Worms, by establishing military unfits within the Temples of Sarku and his Cohort, Durritlamish. Several of these were failures from the start and had to be abandoned, due to the recalcitrance of the priesthoods of these Temples to engage in secular affairs. The Emperor persisted, however, and a number of temple guards, members of certain ancient Sarku-worshipping clans in the north and west, and various other devotees from all over the Imperium were enrolled in one Legion. The Emperor appointed excellent officers to train these troops, and it is recorded that he even withdrew four of the Lightning Bringers, the terrible weapons of the ancients, from their secret storehouses in Avanthar for the use of the magical contingent of the Legion.

The Legion quickly saw its first service in Do Chaka. It met and defeated a force of Chakan troops near Paya Gupa. This engagement was quickly followed by another with the nonhuman Pe Choi, in which the Legion lost four Cohorts but won the field. It was then sent on to assault Paya Gupa itself. The Lightning Bringers were brought into action for the first time in many centuries at this siege. One is recorded as having exploded, but the others breached the walls, and the soldiers of the Dark Lord of Worms stormed the citadel. There, it is written, they committed such atrocities and outrages "as to make all humankind repent of its existence and to bring shame even into the Planes of the Demon Lords."

Other human troops refused to serve beside this Legion, and the Emperor withdrew it to stand near the Petal Throne in Avanthar. There it speedily came into conflict with the Omnipotent Azure Legion, and the excesses of its officers and men were so noxious that it had to be reposted to the City of Sarku. There the Legion's losses were made up not with human recruits but with the undead and with

the creatures of Lord Sarku's labyrinths beneath the city. At this point even the people of the City of Sarku raised complaints, and in order to avoid an uprising Emperor Hehejallu was forced to post the Legion within the confines of the Inner Citadel of the City of Sarku. There it remained for the rest of his reign and most of that of his successor, Emperor Kurshetl Nikuma II "the Viewer of Night." This ruler, nearly as terrible as his father (if indeed there was any genetic connection between them - rumour has it that Kurshetl Nikuma II was sired by a Demon from the Court of Night itself!), used the Legion to fight against the power of the Omnipotent Azure Legion at Bey Su, along with Cohorts of the Legion of Heketh of Purdimal and others. It also took part in the suppression of the uprising in the Kurt Hills in 808 A.S., where once again its hideous nonhuman Cohorts committed such unnatural acts upon the villages of the Kurtani that other human Legions threatened revolt. The Imperium once more withdrew the Legion within the walls of the great Temple of Sarku in its own northern home.

There is but one more mention of the Legion of the Scales of Brown During the reign of Todukai Neqo "Pillar of the State," the Legion was specifically ordered to return the three remaining Lightning Bringers which it still possessed. The order seems to have been disobeyed, and no trace of them has ever been found. The Legion was then commanded to disband, and all mention of it was stricken from the rolls. This edict was reinforced by Empress Vayuma Su, who stated that all human troops must be stripped and sent to other cities in the Empire as slaves, while the "others who are repulsive to man and non-man alike" must be brought forth and destroyed magically by the priesthoods of Thumis and Hnalla. This command also was not obeyed, and Empress Shaira Su "Divine Daughter of Thumis" besieged the city and slew all who resisted. Her troops were never able to enter the last stronghold of the priesthood of Sarku, however, the vast Citadel of Tombs, and it is possible that some of the ancient Legion of the Scales of Brown survived there in the labyrinths.

The Legion thus perished for all practical purposes, and in the Empress' treaty with the priesthoods of the Dark Gods (975 A.S.), it was one of the conditions of the Imperium that "such unnatural and horrible forces as the Legion of the Scales of Brown" should never be allowed to rise again but should remain anathema for all eternity to come."

Unfortunately, nothing in human affairs ever really seems to be permanent, and the demise of the Legion of the Scales of Brown is no exception. Emperor Durumu "the Copper Blade of Sarku" did not attempt to reactivate it, but he did issue an edict honouring its troops for their devotion to the Lord of Worms. He also inserted a clause to the effect that the Legion must remain dormant "until there be some time of pressing need, when once again the forces of the Dark Lords may once again be called upon to serve the Imperium." This time has apparently now come, at least according to the Emperor's youngest son, Prince Dchich'une, who seeks to rebuild the secular power of the Temples of the Dark Gods. He has prevailed upon his own Temple, upon the ancient clans of the City of Sarku, and upon his aging father in Avanthar to allow the reactivation of the Legion of the Scales of Brown. The opposition of the priesthoods of Hnalla, Thumis, Karakan, and Avanthar has all been set aside, and the Prince has found supporters in all parts of the Empire wherever the devotees of the Dark Gods dwell. Rather than alienate certain ancient and noble clans of Penom, the Chakas, and other centres of Sarku-worship, therefore, the Imperium has agreed to the raising of the Legion as a special plaything of the Prince, although it is stipulated that it must remain under the supervision of the Army Commanders wherever it is based. Its officers are also to be selected from known Legions, such as the Battalions of the Seal of the Worm, the Legion of the Peaks of Kraa, the Legion of the Fishers of Death, the Battalions of Vrishtara the Mole, and the Phalanx of Lord Durrilamish of the Rotted Face. A further condition set by the Emperor is that no undead troops or other creatures of the labyrinths are to be recruited. It is whispered, however, that this has already been abrogated by Prince Dchich'une, and that several Cohorts of undead - including

some of the original troops of the Legion of the Scales of Brown itself! - are already in training in the dark places beneath the City of Sarku, and that units of the snake-headed Qol, the Mrur, and the Shedra are ready for battle. The general of this Legion is Lord Sikun hiKhanuma, of the Domed Tomb Clan, himself a priest of the XVIth Circle and Mriyan (=Bishop) of the Temple of Sarku in Meku.

Technically, the Legion has no troops as yet, but some three Cohorts are in training at the City of Sarku, plus whatever hideous things Prince Dchich'une has hidden in the pits beneath. Most of the regular army commanders of the Imperium see the reactivation of this ancient and ill-starred Legion as a threat to the security of the Empire, rather than as any assistance in the present crisis with the Yan Koryani. As Prince Eselne says, "Once the door to evil is opened by either side, the other side must do likewise, and this escalation can only lead to the destruction of both and the eventual Armageddon of the Gods.

10. The Legion of the Searing Flame; 10th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This unit is now inactive and consists only of a paper organisation listed on the rolls at Avanthar. It is included here because of the possibility that the Imperium will allow its reactivation under the pressures of the current military situation in the north.

Much of the history of this unit is shrouded in mystery, for those records which have survived are kept in sealed caskets hidden in the depths beneath the ancient Vridi clanhouse in Fasiltum. Only the patriarchs of the Vridi clan have access to them, and then only at stated intervals. These matters are associated with many clan rituals and are thus known only to a few initiates.

What is certain is that this ancient Legion was a part of the forces of great Fasiltum, the City of the Chiming Skulls, during the times of its semi-autonomy from Bey Su. Its deeds are still the subjects of epic poems and folksongs in the dialect of the northeast. The suppression of the Hlaka, the battles against the Lords of the Sky (possibly the Dragon lords?), the pursuit of the Hetman of Kilalammu and what transpired in the Mountains Beyond, and the never-ending battles against the armies of the First Imperium are all currently known and sung by the bard clans of Fasiltum. Some of these are semi-historical, while others are clearly mythological: e.g. the journey with the epic hero Hrugga into the Bands of the Demon Wars, the March to the Centre of the World, and the rescue of the Legion by the God Vimuhla himself from the clutches of the Encroacher in the Dark. The names of great officers and generals of the Legion fill these epics, but almost nothing is known of these men besides a few crumbling monuments (e.g. the Beshmulu hiVridi Gate, the southernmost gate of Fasiltum: this structure is said to have been erected to commemorate the Legion's victory over the People of the Desert during the First Imperium, and subsequent restorations and enlargements have maintained its original design and the rows of archaic glyphs which state that "the Lord of the Legion of the Searing Flame, mighty Master of the Towers (?), Beshmulu hiVridi, did build this gate to show his enduring contempt for all those who would enter his beloved city, from now until the Egg of Time be whole again. "Beyond this, there are only fragments of history here and there, including much that is mythical and spurious. (One should ignore those guides and dragomen who insist that the jagged remains of the Pinnacle of Silence, to the north of the city, was constructed by Dleshmel hiVridi, thirty-third general of the Legion; this ruin is clearly of Engsvanyali origin.)

Once local autonomy was lost to Fasiltum during the Golden Age, the Legion seems to have been included in the armies of the Priest-kings of Engsvan Hla Ganga. It is recorded that the Legion took part in the defeat of the Hlutrgu and later in the Battle of the Seven-pointed Star. But such statements are best fragmentary, and various scholars disagree, arguing that the Legion which took part in these engagements was a different unit with a similar name.

When the mighty Engsvanyali Empire fell Fasiltum regained some of its local power, and once again a Vriddi styled himself “Master of the Sands, the Mountains, and the Towers of the North.” The Legion seems still to have been in existence, though in a much reduced condition. Some of the poor and decadent records of this period indicate that it then functioned mainly as a defensive unit for the city of Fasiltum, and the Vriddi overlords used it to repel the constant attacks of the barbarians to the east and north. A coalition of the desert peoples, the men of Kilalammu, and certain tribes from Saa Allaqi overran Fasiltum during this time of chaos, and the Legion is said to have perished to the last man in the Citadel of the Fourth Skull (now a ruin about half a Tsan from the present city walls to the northeast). Many of the ancient and arrogant Vriddi lords were put to the sword by the barbarians, and the city was given over to loot and rapine for a period of seven days and nights. The barbarians were eventually reduced by internal quarrels and by plague, and when only a few tribes remained they were set upon by the citizens who remained, strengthened with troops sent by the Warlord of the East (possibly a local King of the regions between Fasiltum and Bey Su). The Legion was memorialized with the blood of a thousand barbarian sacrifices, and a great funeral pyre was built upon the ruins of the Palace of the Fourth Skull. This burned, it is said, for three days and three nights, and the souls of the slain soldiers were wafted directly into the paradise of the Lord of Flame. Thus it remained until well into the time of the Second Imperium.

Emperor Horkhunen “the General” seems to have been the first to revitalize the northeast. Searching for troops for his wars in the west, he came to an agreement with the Vriddi clan and offered them positions in his government and certain other rights and privileges (e.g. the raising of their standard beside his own in the city of Fasiltum). In return, they provided him with soldiers and with peace in the northeast. The Vriddi clan lords thus caused the Legion of the Searing Flame to be entered into the rolls in Avanthar, under the generalship of Lord Farazhme hiVriddi. This man served the Imperium well, but suspicion arose as to his loyalties to the Petal Throne in 575 A.S., and he was asked to return to Fasiltum. Another - and more tractable Vriddi was appointed, and it is written that the Legion worked well with Emperor Kurshetl Nikuma I “Seizer of Cities” in subduing the Kurt Hills in 590.

The Legion was returned to the northeast during the reigns of Hehejallu “the Dark Moon” and Kurshetl Nikuma II “the Viewer of Night,” and there it remained in various capacities until Empress Vayuma Su “Empress of All the Lands” ordered it disbanded in 931 A.S. Using a subterfuge, the Legion command left Fasiltum without orders and marched all of their men into Kilalammu, where they settled and dwelt for almost a hundred years. It is said in one of the epics that “the Flame ploughed the fields, the Flame hunted the prey, the Flame dwelt upon the mountain tops, and ever the Flame awaited the burning once again...” When Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma II acceded to the throne in 1031, one of his first acts was to reactivate the temples of the Flame God and his Cohort, mighty Lord Chiteng He also brought forth the Vriddi as his favoured clan, conferring upon them the rule of cities and many Imperial posts. The Legion was ordered to return (its Vriddi masters had known where it had gone all along), and the Emperor made use of it against his foes within and without the Imperium. The Legion - and the Vriddi rule of Fasiltum - survived the brief reign of Nu’unka “the Pious,” and under Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma III “the Scourge of Vimuhla” it took some part in the restoration of the Flame temples. Under his successor, Kanmi’yel Nikuma IV “Flattener of Peaks,” it seems to have been sent north to Thri’il and Sunraya to maintain order. When Janule “She of the Blue Goddess” came to the Petal Throne, the Legion was prudently kept out of sight at Sunraya in Milumanaya, and there it acted mainly as a defensive force against the Saa Allaqiyani to the northeast.

It was under Metlunel I “the Foolish” that the Legion suffered its last and final disgrace. The ancient Vriddi clan attempted to achieve local autonomy during this reign, and its masters in Fasiltum

summoned the Legion home to defend their city against the forces of the Imperium itself. Unwillingly the Legion officers obeyed. They arrived at Fasiltum only to find the city taken without a struggle, due to the treachery of Gayasu hiVriddi, who had allowed the Imperial armies to enter through the western gate. In hope of Imperial favour, he betrayed his clansmen and his ancient honour - but by so doing he probably saved the city from complete destruction at the hands of the Imperial forces, for the Emperor had given orders that the city was to be razed “to the last two stones” if it were not surrendered at once. The Legion thus found itself facing a considerable Imperial army, alone and without supplies or a base of operations. The Legion generals attempted to parley with the leaders of the Imperial forces, but Prince Onumine (who later ascended the Throne as Emperor Metlunel II “the Builder”) realised why the Legion had abandoned its post in Sunraya. He refused to treat with the rebels and gave them two choices: throw down their arms and become slaves, or leave the Empire forever never to return. The Legion was composed of men of honour, and they chose the latter course, in spite of the fact that they had almost no provisions and had to traverse great distances to the north in order to find a place of refuge. They saluted the prince, however, and departed, although a few chose to become slaves, and several chose to do battle to the death - a fate which Prince Onumine graciously arranged for them.

The others, it is said, traversed Milumanaya, a part of Saa Allaqi (under constant attack from the mountaineers of that region), and on into Yan Kor, where they found a place of rest for a time amongst the feudal peoples of the northern coast (possibly the Lorun?). The records are vague, then, and some say that because of an altercation with the Yan Koryani the survivors of the Legion broke up into three groups: one surrendered entirely to the Yan Koryani and became the servitors of the Lords of Ke’er (where they still maintain a shrine to Lord Vimuhla and are now to all intents and purposes Yan Koryani); the second marched eastwards and disappeared into Chayakku and the principalities to the east; the third group took ship and is said to have settled on some island or other off the northern coast of Yan Kor, where they still dwell. (These may be the inhabitants of the large island of Vridu, which still maintains a curious sort of flame-worship.)

The Legion thus disappears from Tsolyani history. Even Emperor Hejjeka IV “Restorer of Dignities” seems not to have attempted to find its remnants and call them home. The Vriddi lords rose again (and indeed, one of their members became a candidate for the Imperial throne in the Time of the Usurpers in 1699), but the present Emperor has put down the hotheaded younger members of the clan and has given Fasiltum over to a trusted member of the Vriddi family - a man who will not create difficulties for the Imperium.

The Legion may now be revived - if the Vriddi clan desires. The current need for men in the north makes it imperative that all resources be tapped, and there are many in Fasiltum who would be pleased - and appeased - to see the ancient Legion given a place again in the Imperial forces. The religious rituals required for the reactivation of a Legion were planned for the summer but were canceled when omens decreed that the time was inauspicious. After all, a Legion is not simply a paper entity or an organisation of soldiers in the eyes of the Tsolyani: it has a personality of its own, and the souls of living and dead men must be pleased and made joyous. The Legion is also a religious and clan entity, and here, too, there are numerous rituals and sacrifices to be made. Lord Vimuhla must be satisfied with the bringing forth of this “being” again, and the clan rituals must be adhered to and strictly performed in order to guarantee success. All of these things can be done - if the auguries are auspicious, and if the various political balances of the Empire be carefully observed. It is hoped, thus, that the Legion will be officially inaugurated by the end of the current year.

Historically, the weapons and armour of the Legion of the Searing Flame class it as heavy infantry. Illustrations on the walls of the temple of Vimuhla in Fasiltum indicate that these men wore

heavy armour, masked helmets, and bore oval shields with the Flame symbol upon them. Their weapons are pictured as the pike, a heavy one-handed axe-sword, and occasionally a two-handed mace-like weapon. No bows are depicted. The present Imperium plans to recruit men for this unit strictly from Fasilum - but to leaven the Vriddi clan members with others from surrounding clans, which are not so politically dangerous.

11. The Legion of the Echoing Stone; 11th Imperial Heavy Infantry

The southern islands have not provided many Imperial Legions, although in earlier, Engsvanyali times they were famed for their military prowess. It is said that the sinking of the Isle of Ganga “so saddened the men of that place and brought them to consider the futility of the Weave of the Skein of Destiny that they thenceforth eschewed all military activity and took to seeking their solace in the contemplation of their past glories and the victories of their ancestors” (from “The Book of the Settling into the Sea” by Chumireru vuHaggoshe, a famous modern author of the city of Petris Layoda).

The Fall of the Engsvan Hla Ganga Empire is too well known to be recounted here. Suffice it to say that Engsvanyali records go back for many thousands of years, and the Legion of this name has always been listed as the defenders of the city of Tleku on the Island of Thayuri. During the First Imperium, before the coming of Engsvanyali power, this same Legion is mentioned as having repelled the terrible nonhuman Hlutrgu, who assaulted the island in force during the reign of Queen Nayari of the Silken Thighs. Its present general is said to be descended from that long-ago hero who led this Legion to victory over the alien invaders, and his clan (the Clan of the Might of Ganga) maintains a ritual commemoration of his death at the hands of Queen Nayari each year on the 17th of Shapru.

During the Tsolyani Imperium the Legion was maintained only as a garrison for the south; the islands of Vra, Thayuri, and Ganga were added by Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma IV “Flattener of Peaks,” in 1115 A.S., and at this time the Legion is listed as the hereditary defenders of the city of Tleku. No resistance to the Tsolyani seems to have been offered, and the Legion was simply enrolled in Tsolyani records of the period as a regular Legion. (Its history before 1115 A.S. is obscure, however.) Thereafter, the Legion suffered the usual fate of garrison troops in out-of-the-way places: local lordlings kept it up or let it fall into decay, as their means and circumstances permitted, and after some time the Legion seems to have faded away entirely. In 2019 the Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” issued a summons to it to rally to his banners in the north, but the letter was returned from the administrators of the city of Tleku with the notation that “no officers of this Legion could be found to accept the Imperial command.” The Legion then lay inactive until the present day, when the current Emperor, Hirkane Tlakotani, “the Stone upon which the Universe Rests,” ordered its reactivation and staffing. The Lord of the city of Tleku, Lord Ri’isma hiZayuvu, a worshipper of the war-god Karakan, was pleased to use his personal influence and fortune to set the Legion back upon its feet and see to its arming. It now has seven Cohorts, one in training in Tleku, and a number of recruits as yet uncounted. It is further noted that Lord Ri’isma has managed to uncover a cache of ancient steel armour (+2) in the ruins of Ganga, and this he is having remade into armour suitable for his men. No one knows how much he has discovered, but rumour has it that the supply is really quite large and possibly enough to equip several Cohorts.

12. The Legion of the Clan of the Sweet Singers of Nakome; 12th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This Legion recruits only men of the tough semi-desert tribes of the far northeast of the Empire. Most of these tribes are devotees of Hru'u, the Master of Negation, and of Wuru, He Who Appears Where Evil Dwells, the Cohort of Hru'u. Although the Flame-God Vimuhla is strong within Fasiltum itself, the semi-nomadic tribes of the surrounding deserts and on eastwards into Kilalammu tend to worship the Lords of the Dark Trinity.

The origins of this Legion are not known. It does not occur under this name until quite late in Imperial history (Imperial Documents of the Reign of the Night-Lord, by Turum hiCheshkosa of Penom, pp. 342-5), and then it appears as though the Legion was already an old one which was being built up to new strength by Durumu "the Copper Blade of Sarku," in approx. A.S. 1750. As often occurred, however, it is probable that this Legion had previously existed under some other name, and political or religious circumstances brought about its revival under a different title. Certainly it may have drawn men and experience from the ill-fated Legion of the Sable Lord, 9th Imperial Heavy Infantry, disbanded after its support of Vriggetsu Dnash, the Usurper of the South, in 1700 A.S. There is also reason to believe that the ancient clan of the Sweet Singers of Nakome itself remained in existence after the disbanding of the old Legion and perhaps took part in other military Units, such as the Legion of the Deep Purple Dark, also devoted to lord Hru'u. In any case, the history of this Legion is quite obscure before the reign of Durumu.

The nature of the Clan of the Sweet Singers of Nakome is equally obscure. The word "nakome" denotes "clanless person" in Tsolyani and also thus "bastard." Yet this is not the meaning of the word used in this Legion's name, according to its officers. Rather the word "Nakome" is here an ancient clan-lineage going back to the Bednalljan Dynasty and is related to Dnakaimu, the terrible Slayer of the East in the reign of Ssirandar IV. After his defeat, it is said that he fled into the deserts around Fasiltum and became "Nakome" in the dialects of the tribal people. His further history is obscure, although legends about him have persisted in the wastelands of the northeast unto this day. It is said that he founded a cult and a priesthood of his own, devoted to a deity much like Hru'u, and that this sect dwelt in the fringes of the desert near the present town of Ferinara, southeast of Fasiltum.

This Legion seems to have taken a minor part in the retaking of Pan Chaka in 1842 A.S., and in the Great War of 2020 it was one of the Legions defeated in the First Battle of Tumissa in 2019, only to return later with the victorious Tsolyani forces in 2020 to avenge itself and gain considerable battle honours in 2020.

The Legion was posted away from its eastern home during the 21st and 22nd centuries A.S. but was returned to Fasiltum in 2315 by the Emperor Hetkolainen "He Whose Glory Never Ends" in order to take charge of the incipient revolt of the Vridi clan there. Since then it has been reposted again to the City of Sarku in the far north in order to counter any Yan Koryani thrust there. Its present general, Lord Shryka hiVravodaya, is an experienced campaigner who has also seen service with General Kettukal's Legions in Yan Kor.

13. The Legion of Serqu, Sword of the Empire; 14th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This unit is one of the oldest for which any records exist. It is traceable back to one of the officers of the redoubtable Ssirandar I "the Ever-Victorious," the real founder of the Bednalljan Dynasty and ruler of the north for over 50 years.

The first Serqu later married into the Bednalljan ruling clan, the Golden Sunburst, and these worshippers of Karakan (although this deity was not known by this name at that distant time) have maintained the honour of the Legion ever since. This clan membership has also kept the Legion close to the Imperial throne throughout much of subsequent history, and one finds references to innumerable “Serqu’s” in later Bednalljan, Engsvanyali, and Tsolyani records. Clan epics record the deeds of several of these heroes, particularly the 17th Serqu, “the Swathe of Red,” who is said to have defeated the forces of the Salarvyani at Tsatsayagga in late Bednalljan times. The epic goes on to describe this “Serqu’s” love for Alitle Nrasedu, the princess of the little state of Pechano north of present-day Salarvyva and his marriage to her. The coming of Chnur, King of the Ssu, as a wedding guest and the events which then transpired are not for retelling here, but those interested in epic poetry and mythical history may consult the libraries of the Temple of Karakan for copies of this interesting epic.

In Tsolyani times the Legion has always served the throne. It is listed as being present in the myth-history of the first Tlakotani Emperor; it is mentioned again in the “Strivings of Horukel N’len, the Second Emperor; The Singers of the Glories of the God-kings mention it again in the reign of Trakonel I, “the Blazing Light,” and one might go on and on listing its various deeds in almost every major engagement the Tsolyani have faught. It was present in some strength in the battles in Milumanya when that land was added to the Imperium in approx. 730 A.S., and some units were at the First Siege of Chene Ho when the Chakas were annexed in 780-1. During the War with Salarvyva in 1325-40, the Legion is mentioned as being still on the northern frontier, guarding the approaches against Yan Koryani incursions. In later times it became a palace guard Legion and saw no real action for some centuries. It was sent forth again in 1842 when Pan Chaka was retaken, and in the Great War of 2020 it fought well at the Battle of Chene Ho in 2019, which the Tsolyani lost. It regrouped and fought again during the later battles of the War, finally joining in the expulsion of the Mu’ugalavyani in 2020. In 2029 the Legion saw some action in the taking of Kaija from the Salarvyani, but thereafter it was again made a garrison Legion until the present century when it took part in the incursions into Yan Kor. The battle honours of this Legion are thus many and various, and its present position in Imperial politics is good. The present General Serqu is a harsh master and a strict disciplinarian, but he is revered as one of Tsolyanu’s best field officers. He has thus been placed in command of the eastern army in Khirgar (the western being in Chene Ho), and units of his Legion are confronting the Yan Koryani presently on the Sakbe Road and nearby areas at the foot of the eastern part of the Atkoel Heights. The Legion is stronger than it has ever been and is presently at full strength (20 Cohorts).

14. The Legion of the Ruby Hand; 15th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This unit is an ancient and honourable Legion, now fallen upon rather unhappy days. It seems to have been founded in the reign of Hejjeka II “the Heretic” as a military arm of the ancient royalist clan of “Sea Blue.” This clan clearly goes back to the ruling families of the Bednalljan period and has always maintained a noble and aristocratic tradition of military leadership. Under some of the earlier Emperors the Clan of Sea Blue had been much suppressed and mistreated, perhaps out of fear of a Bednalljan revival, but Hejjeka II saw the importance of pleasing these wealthy aristocrats and allowed them to develop an autonomy of a minor sort within their own fiefs and also a good military unit - which he then carefully posted in places in the Empire where it could do no harm to the political balance of power.

This Legion thus took part in the War with Salarvyva in 1325-40 A.S. Hejjeka III “the Fat” gave it undeserved battle honours for a rather poor showing at the Battle of Thri’il against a much smaller Milumanayani force. Metlunel V “the Esthete” spoiled the Legion by making it part of his Imperial court at Avanthar and turning most of its senior officers into gilded bureaucrats. Hejjeka V “the Open

Handed” then proceeded to shower money and lands upon these troops until each man was as wealthy as a minor governor, and all military purpose was lost. When the Time of the Usurpers came in 1699, Chrajuna, the Usurper and Ruler of the North, took it upon himself to slaughter this Legion almost to a man. The Clan of Sea Blue reacted by open, armed rebellion in their strongholds in the south, taking the part of another Usurper, Vriggetsu Dnash “the Usurper of the South.” When peace finally came, and a coalition of forces within the Empire restored the Imperium under Kanmi’yel Nikuma V “the Pretender,” the Legion was all but gone, and thus it remained until the reign of Gyesmu “the Iron Fist.” He revived the Legion, gave it troops and money, saw to it that the clan-masters of the Clan of Sea Blue were rewarded with posts and power and made use of these forces in the Great War of 2020. The Legion took part in the Battle of Chene Ho in 2019, which the Tsolyani lost, and after some initial flight and dispersion, it regrouped at Jakalla and joined in the final battles of that great conflict, including the Battle of Tumissa and the pursuit into Do Chaka of the fleeing Mu’ugalavyani forces.

For the next hundred years this Legion continued to be reasonably active, but time and the pressures of Imperial politics once again saw to it that the Clan of Sea Blue should be suppressed (or at least not encouraged), and by the reign of Mursun Dlekkumine “the Weak” it was once again little more than a facade of courtiers and bureaucrats. The present Emperor, the great Hirkane Tlakotani, has revived it and given it some support. It presently is posted in Bey Su and serves as the citadel guard of the governor’s palace there. It is still not a very active unit, militarily, but the Clan of Sea Blue has begun to lavish wealth and resources upon it recently, the Lady Mnella of Jakalla, one of the members of the Clan of Sea Blue, has presented the Legion with steel armour for seven Cohorts, and her money and resources are obviously behind the appointment of this Legion’s general, Lord Bushu’un hiSsanmirin, to the High Military Council in Avanthar.

15. The Legion of the Deep Purple Dark; 16th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This Legion was originally founded by Emperor Nriga Gaqchike “The Spider” in 1009 A.S. It was then based at Meku, where the priesthood of the Temple of Hru’u held joint sway with the worshippers of Lord Ksarul. During the Civil War of 1010-26 A.S. the Legion defended Meku from the forces of the Vimuhla-worshipping warlord of Tumissa, and when Kanmi’yel Nikuma I “the Warrior” came to the throne in 1026, it was made the hereditary guardian of the governor of Meku, who is always called “the Disposer of Meku” for reasons too lengthy to be dealt with here. The Legion then saw some service during the rather shaky reign of Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma II, and when Targholel Nikuma “the Usurper” arose in Tumissa, the Legion closed the gates of Meku to him and held out for one of the rival Princes. “The Usurper” eventually gained the Petal Throne, however, and one of his first acts was to strip the Legion of most of its secular power. The hereditary guardians of the Disposer of Meku were allowed to retain their Legion status, but they were removed from the rolls of the Imperial Army and were thus effectively reduced to the level of mere palace guards. Emperor Nu’unka “the Pious” completed the annihilation of the Legion, commanding it to disband and its troops to once again become no more than temple guards. This was perhaps wise for the Legion, since Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma III “the Scourge of Vimuhla” would otherwise have destroyed it utterly in his fanatic hatred of the Dark Gods.

The Empress Dashiluna “the Green-Eyed” gave the Legion another lease on life since she required the cooperation of the priesthood of Lord Hru’u for some of her darker activities. Once more the Disposer of Meku had his hereditary guardians, although their sphere of power did not extend beyond the gates of his city. Emperor Tontiken Rirune “the Slave of Demons” went further, allowing the city of Meku several special privileges in return for the aid of the priesthood of Hru’u. The Legion saw

its only military service under Emperor Hejjeka II “the Heretic,” who used it at the Battle of Khum and later at the siege of Nrikakchne. At the latter engagement the Legion was almost completely destroyed by the Salarvyani, and it was then allowed to slip back into obscurity. Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” offered to revive it in 1775 A.S., but the priesthood of Hru’u was then embroiled in the Heresy of the Endless Dark, and the Disposer of Meku was slain by assassins. Most of the remnants of the Legion seem to have perished with him. Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” finally ordered it removed from the rolls.

During the current emergency, the priesthood of Lord Hru’u has once again seen the value of secular power - to some extent - and under the prompting of Prince Mridobu, certain members of the hierarchy have proposed the building of a Legion devoted to the Temple. Troops have been recruited from around Meku and Mrelu, and the Legion has been based at the latter city. Its general is a good subordinate officer of the Legion of the Clan of the Sweet Singers of Nakome, and it is beginning to prosper under him. Ancient caches of arms have been brought up from beneath Meku, and the current three Cohorts of the Legion are fully armed and armoured, although their equipment looks suspiciously like that popular under the Engsvanyali of many centuries before. The scarcity of men has kept the Legion’s development back, but Lord Kureshu hiViridun, of the Dark Flame Clan, has been very active and also rather successful in the short space of time the Legion has been reactivated. Prince Mridobu continues to lend his support, and the Temple of Hru’u is being combed for any who have military experience.

16. The Legion of Heketh of Purdimal; 17th Imperial Heavy Infantry

The early history of this Legion is shrouded in the mists of history; there is a record in the Lament of the Wheel of Black which states that the ancestor of the present Heketh stood beside Lord Ksarul, the Doomed Prince of the Blue Room, and fought for him against the forces of the other gods at the great battle of the Dormoron Plain in “the Time Older than the World.” This is obviously historical myth. Nevertheless, the Legion is extremely ancient, and fragments of battle honours are preserved at the Legion clan-house in Purdimal which date to Bednalljan times, and one tiny seal made of gold portrays a warrior identified as Heketh of the Shadows on one side, while on the other is a portrait of Gamulu III, the “all-Slayer,” One of the most powerful and terrible of the period of the Fishermen Kings. A later record, carved upon a block of polished basalt and now housed in the Temple of Ksarul at Purdimal lists the Legion of Heketh of Purdimal as being present in the Battle of Kuntainu (a city now lost but probably in the northeast of present-day Tsolyanu) under the leadership of Charmushsha, the chief general of the forces of Queen Nayari of the Silken Thighs.

Whatever its pre-Imperial history, this Legion has always served the Tsolyani Empire under the leadership of the ruling clan of dark Purdimal, the Clan of the Black Hood, devoted to Lord Ksarul and to his Cohort, Gruganu, the Knower of Spells. One of the fragmentary records of the Second Tlakotani, whose name and deeds are unknown, contains a mention of this Legion being posted to Jakalla “to care for those there who are rebellious.” In the reign of Trakonel I “the Victorious” this unit is found reposted to Purdimal and in charge of rooting out the Sect of She Who Cannot Be Named in the labyrinths below that ancient city. Of eighteen Cohorts, only 42 men were then listed as survivors.

Battle honours were earned under Hehejallu “the Dark Moon,” in the annexation of Milumanaya to the Empire in 731 A.S. Under his successor, Kurshetl Nikuma II “the Viewer of Night,” moreover, this Legion was posted to Bey Su and seems to have come into conflict with units of the Omnipotent Azure Legion there, causing a minor civil war which lasted for some months - apparently an attempt by

this Emperor to replace the units which served the Lords of Stability with Legions serving the Lords of Change. Upon the failure of this policy and the disappearance of the Emperor, this Legion retreated to Purdimal and held the swamps and approaches of that city against all comers until the reign of Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider,” who also served the Dark Gods and who brought this unit forth again into prominence. In the reign of Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma IV “Flattener of Peaks,” again, this Legion was sent to do battle in the mountain passes north of the City of Sarku in the tumbled wastelands around great Thenu Thendraya Peak. In 1218 at the Battle of Koyluga in Salarvya this Legion was routed and took part in the great retreat of the Tsolyani before the power of the Salarvyani feudal legions. Under Hejjeka II “the Heretic” the Legion saw service again near Salarvya. Thereafter it seems to have been reposted to Purdimal and remained there until the Battle of Chene Ho in 2019 A.S., which the Tsolyani lost. Most of this Legion was annihilated there, and only after some years was it revived by the clan-masters in Purdimal. It then served as a garrison for the city until the present, when it has now been posted to an area near Khirgar to counter the Yan Koryani there.

The general of this unit has always been a member of the Clan of the Black Hood, and no one knows whether there is any familial relationship between successive “Hekeths” since the inner workings of this clan are kept a dark secret. Each time a “Heketh” has died or retired, however, another of the same name has always been brought forward to serve as general. The current “Heketh” uses the lineage-name “hiBurusa” and appears to be a son or close relative of his predecessor. He is almost certainly a follower of the dread Ndalû Clan of the Temple of Ksarul, the “activists” of that faith.

17. The Legion of the Fishers of Death; 21st Imperial Heavy Infantry

The general of this Legion, Lord Helmuna hiSharvoya of Penom, is a wealthy nobleman who has some rather amateurish ideas about military glory. He has used his personal fortunes and those of his clan, the Clan of Dark Fear, to reactivate a very ancient southern Legion which had stood as but an empty name on the Imperial rolls for well over a thousand years.

The original Legion of the Fishers of Death seems to have been a seafaring unit, possibly similar to the modern Tsolyani marines, with some troops trained as sailors and others as archers and swordsmen who could fight from the decks of a ship. The first mention of this Legion is found in the records of the year 807 A.S. during the reign of Kurshetl Nikuma II “the Viewer of Night,” who favoured the worshippers of the Dark Gods, and particularly Lord Sarku and his terrible Cohort, Lord Durritlemish, “He of the Rotted Face.” This Legion was then founded in Penom as a defense against Livyani, Mu’ugalavyani, etc., pirates and also against raids by the seafaring nonhumans, the Hlyss. The Imperium demanded that this Legion be retrained as heavy infantry, however, and this seems to have been agreeable to the clan-lords of Penom. The Legion then saw service in the subsequent chaos of the Time of No Emperor (816-30). The Empress Vayuma Su, “Empress of All the Lands” ordered the disbanding of many Legions serving the Dark Gods in circa 930 A.S. and this Legion was one of these. A brief attempt was made to revive the Legion again in 996 by Emperor Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider,” but this seems to have been unsuccessful for unknown reasons. In 1314 the Emperor Tontiken Rirune “Slave of Demons” once again brought it back into existence and provided it with a central administration, some money, and a recruiting writ. Again this seems to have been ineffective, for nothing more is heard of this Legion until the present day when Lord Helmuna laid his proposal before the Petal Throne and received permission to reestablish the Legion. It is said that the troops of the far south are not good soldiers and that they are neither very brave nor very amenable to discipline. Nevertheless, the Imperium has deemed it wise to allow this Legion to be reactivated in hopes of gaining

a unit which can at least serve as a garrison for the vast tracts of the southern swamplands and the coasts along which pirates still ply their trade. The Legion has only three full Cohorts, with two more in training at Penom. A few officers have steel armour, but Lord Ilemuna has not found enough of this rare metal as yet to armour any of his Cohorts in it - in spite of several attempts to purchase steel from the Mu'ugalavyani and the Livyani. He has even attempted to find buried caches of arms beneath his city, as indicated by certain legends, but he has not met with much success.

18. The Legion of the Lord of Wisdom; 22nd Imperial Heavy Infantry

The Temples of Lord Thumis and his Cohort, Ketengku, have never been known for their interest in military matters. Amongst the Lords of Stability, only Lord Belkhanu is more pacific. Nevertheless, during the current emergency, the Imperium has agreed to the request of a faction within the Temple of Thumis and has allowed the re-establishment of an old and little-known Legion.

It is the Lament to the Wheel of Black which describes the Battle of Dormoron Plain best. In this epic, the forces of the Lords of Stability and the Lords of Change came together against the minions of Lord Ksarul and defeated him, imprisoning him within the Blue Room. Those who were summoned by lord Thumis to the Standard of the Pearl-Grey were called "the Heroes of Wisdom" and their deeds are described in several of the epic poems of which the Tsolyani are fond.

Many eons afterwards, in the time of the mighty Engsvanyali Empire, the High Threshold at Ganga commanded the raising of a force titled "the Heroes of the Lord of Wisdom" to guard the shrine of the Priest Pavar. Men, women, and beings of diverse races were selected from all over Tekumel and were given armour of imperishable steel and weapons begemmed with the steel-grey star sapphires beloved of Thumis. For centuries they were the elite of the Engsvanyali Imperium, and the Prefect of the Legion sat high in the Councils of the Priesthoods.

At last the catastrophe which overtook the Golden Peace occurred, and the island of Ganga itself tilted and slid partway down beneath the waves of the southern sea. The Legion protected its heritage to the last, sadly watching the waves lap higher and higher until the Great Places were the homes only of the fishes. Then they allowed themselves to die. (The student may wish to read "Paean to the Last Warrior," by Holdukai hiVirsenyal, a manuscript of which will be available in almost every Temple of Thumis in the Empire.)

When the first Tlakotani Emperor came to power there was only a handful of aged men still guarding the Outer Precincts of the Shrine of Pavar, all that remained above the sea. What became of these is not known; there were several Hlutrgu raids on the island during the reigns of the early Emperors, and by the time of Heshqu Miuna I they were no more.

Some seven hundred years passed before the Legion was reactivated by the Empress Vayuma Su "Empress of All the lands." In her struggles against the priesthoods of the Lords of Change she resorted to the reactivation of every ancient Legion she could find which had once served the Lords of Stability. The Legion of the Heroes of the Lord of Wisdom thus rose, as it were, from the dead. Its armour was patterned after the ancient Engsvanyali styles, its men were given names in the Engsvanyali language, and its records were even kept in the now forgotten tongue of the Lords of Ganga. The Legion was kept busy militarily also, being sent here and there across the Empire to put down now this pocket of resistance, now that stronghold of the Dark Lords. During the reign of this Empress and her successor, Shaira Su "the Divine Daughter of Thumis," it took part in the siege of the City of Sarku, warred against the Vriddi in Fasilum, fought the forces of She Who Cannot Be Named beneath ghost-haunted

Purdimal, and took part in half a hundred other actions, winning the personal commendation of the Empresses and three Golds of Imperial Glory.

Empress Shaira Su herself brought about the downfall of the Legion, however. She attempted to replace the Omnipotent Azure Legion in Avanthar with units of this force, and when this met powerful resistance, she tried another tack and set it up as the hereditary guardian of each of the Palaces of the Priesthood of the Gods all across the realm. These administrative offices exist in almost every Tsolyani city and large town, and their purpose is to oversee the secular dealings of the Temples, relations between Temples, and the vast lands owned by the priesthoods in the Empire. While this served the Legion well, it also reduced it to a force of police, watchmen, and political appointees without military power.

Emperor Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider” found it quite simple, therefore, to see to the reduction of the Legion. He supported those factions within the Temples of Thumis and Ketengku which favoured no military involvement, and funds for the Legion were curtailed. He also managed to entrap the Legion garrison in Jakalla into a clearly fabricated plot to bribe the governor and the priesthood of Avanthar, thus ridding himself of three enemies at once. The Legion was expunged from the rolls, and its leaders were executed. The Temples of Thumis and Ketengku retreated within their walls and begged the Imperium to be excused from participation in any more military adventures.

Even such powerful rulers as Hejjeka II “the Heretic” could not move the priesthoods of these Temples. The Legion remained deactivated, although Empress Aleya “the Damsel of Purity” managed to persuade the Temple of Thumis to fund a small corps of temple guards and call them by the ancient Legion name. These took no part in the military affairs of the Imperium, and during the Great War of 2020 they fled from their temple at the siege of Urmish and were slaughtered by the Mu’ugalavyani. Other Cohorts did better at the sieges of Purdimal and Katalal, but those at Bey Su took refuge in their temple and refused to join the defenders on Patyel’s Walls. Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” was so displeased that he ordered them never to set foot outside of their temple precincts again: “the Empire shall be as a foreign land for you all until the day you die,” he stated. “Guard your shrines well, for they are now the extent of your domains!”

Emperor Gyesmu Dalisa “the Magnificent and Ever-Living” later annulled this stern command, and the order was made non-hereditary. The wives and children of the Legion were permitted to set foot outside of their temples once more. Nevertheless, the Legion lay under the blackest of clouds until the present day.

The current High Princeps of the Temple of Thumis, Lord Gamalu hiBeshyene, has convinced his colleagues in the Temple of Thumis of the need for a strong Temple Legion. The priesthoods of the war-gods and of the Dark Gods all appear to be striving to build up secular power bases, and his opinion won out over the pacifistic view of the more traditional and conservative leaders of the Temples of Thumis and Ketengku. With some trepidation, Lord Gamalu approached Prince Eselne and various leaders of the old Military Party, and at length it was agreed that the ancient Legion of the Heroes of the Lord of Wisdom (now shortened to just “Legion of the lord of Wisdom”) should be reactivated. Its base, however, would not be located in Jakalla or Bey Su, but away from the centres of Imperial power (and the long memories of the people of Bey Su!) in the far western city of Paya Gupa. The sturdy hill peoples of the foothills of Do Chaka would be its major source of recruits. Its funding would come partially from the Temples of Thumis and Ketengku and partially from the coffers of Lord Gamalu himself. This was agreed to by Avanthar, and the Legion grew quickly from a Cohort or two to almost full strength: twenty Cohorts of hill folk and others from Mrelu, Meku, and even Tumissa. These were largely trained by the advent of the present crisis with Yan Kor, and the Legion first saw military action

at the recent battle just north of Chene Ho, where it performed reasonably well. Two Cohorts of the Legion were lost, however, and several were seriously cut up, while managing to defeat one of Baron Ald's experienced Legions placed opposite it. Lord Gamalu himself led his troops and was slightly wounded by enemy sorcery. The Legion is now regrouped at Chene Ho and is desperately searching for more recruits, a difficult task under present circumstances.

19. The Legion of the Mace Raised High; 23rd Imperial Heavy Infantry

This is a new Legion, organised from amongst the refugees and wandering adventurers settled in the north near Khirgar and Chene Ho. It mainly consists of the tall and ferocious tribal people of N'lyss, who have fled from Mu'ugalavyani oppression in their homeland. The mountainous terrain north of Mu'ugalavya is occupied by many semi-nomadic peoples, some of whom have accepted the discipline and regimentation of the Red-Hats' society, and some of whom have not. Recent atrocities and outrages just north and west of the Tsolyani borders have convinced some of these tribes that they must seek a new homeland elsewhere.

One such man is Kagoth Dvu-Dakkehl, who entered the Imperium with his family and small band of personal followers in 2350 A.S. As chief of a little mountain village near Malchairan, this man commanded the loyalty of about a hundred fighting men. Within a year or so he had risen from being the bodyguard to Prince Eselne's children in the palace at Chene Ho to a post as Captain in the Legion of the Mighty Prince. Various N'lyss bands then approached him to found a unit of their usual variety of light or medium infantry. Prince Eselne, however, encouraged them to apply to the Imperium for a Legion of heavy infantry instead, saying that the size and height of the N'lyss warriors would make them almost as powerful as Shen, and their human agility and dexterity would make them in some ways even more useful.

Kagoth and his patrons listened and eventually took this advice. Prince Eselne approached the Emperor with a request for the Legion name and number of the ancient and deactivated Legion of the Mace Raised High, 23rd Imperial Heavy Infantry, a unit which had existed briefly in the reign of Emperor Ngangmorel Neqo (905-16 A.S.). This Legion was dedicated to the worship of Lord Hru'u, the Supreme Principle of Evil, and immediately after the Emperor's death, his successor, Empress Vayuma Su, ordered it to disband and return to temple-guard status. She further commanded that all records of its existence be destroyed, but some documents were coded and retained in the Secret Book at Avanthar. Lord Chaymira hiSsanmirin, Provost of the Chancery, only recently came upon these missing records and managed to decipher them.

Kagoth, however, was unable to raise more than three Cohorts of N'lyss troops, and Prince Eselne counseled him to recruit other nationalities as well. He thus has a rather mixed bag of soldiery. At this writing he has five Cohorts of heavy-armoured N'lyss, four of Mu'ugalavyani and Yan Koryani political refugees and ex-prisoners, two of such diverse nonhumans as the Shen and the Swamp Folk, and one of Ahoggia (who do not wish to join one of the regular Ahoggia Legions because of some unintelligible local dispute of their own in Haida Pakala). Another Cohort is in training at Thri'il, where this Legion is now based.

20. The Legion of Lord Kurukaa; 25th Imperial Heavy Infantry

The Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma III, "the Scourge of Vimuhla, "brought about a resurgence of the ancient worship of the Flame in Tsolyanu. He married a princess of the Mu'ugalavyani, and later

took another bride from the ancient Bednalljan Clan of Vriddi, the hereditary lords of Fasiltum. He then strove to build legions and other administrative units which would derive power from the wealthy landlords of the west and of the far northeast, where the worship of Vimuhla, Lord of Flame, and his Cohort, Chiteng, was strong.

The Legion of Kurukaa thus came about as part of this effort, a locally-based Legion in the west at the city of Urmish. Its men and its officers were westerners, and their religion was without exception that of the Flame Lords. The Legion was officered by a general named Kurukaa, a locally popular name, and a member of the Beshmylu Clan of Urmish. Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma III then used this Legion as part of his garrison troops in non-Vimuhla-worshipping areas, units being stationed at Bey Su, at Avanthar, in Jakalla, and at Thraya. Officers of this unit sat in the highest councils and took part in the military actions of his reign and of that of the succeeding Emperor, Kanmi'yel Nikuma IV, "Flattener of Peaks."

Upon the death of this last Emperor, the Petal Throne passed to a daughter, Janule, "She of the Blue Goddess," a worshipper of Avanthé and an advocate of a pacifistic policy. The Legion was sent back to Urmish and received no further military support from the capital. Moreover, a scandal amongst its officers led to the impalement of several leaders and the disgrace of the Legion. The succeeding Emperors were not very military-minded, and the Legion saw no real service until the War with Salarvya in 1325-40, when Hejjeka II "the Heretic" sent orders for it to proceed to the eastern front. There, it performed well, if not splendidly, and took part in the Battle of Milks. In the Great War of 2020, the Legion was nearly destroyed at the First Battle of Tumissa, and nothing more is heard from it until 2067, when Emperor Gyesmu Dalisa, "the Magnificent and Ever-Living," brought it back as part of his appeasement policy for the western provinces. The Legion never regained its original status, however, and has continued on as a provincial Legion of no great reputation. It serves as a garrison unit for the city of Urmish and other cities of the west and the southwest, and if needed, it could be called upon to fight. Its troops are not well trained and inexperienced, but the men of Urmish are renowned as good soldiers and determined fighters. The current general, Giriga hiBeshmylu, is a brother of the Governor of Urmish, Lord Ge'eltigane hiBeshmylu, and he has intentions of raising this Legion to its old Imperial status. Lord Giriga is a member of the prestigious Clan of the Red Mountain, an old Vimuhla-worshipping clan, and he can expect money and troops from many centres in the west.

21. The Legion of Mighty Jakalla; 27th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This unit is a recent revival after many centuries of being simply an entry in the records in Avanthar. The early history of the Legion is obscure, and it seems to have been first prominent during the reign of Kurshetl Nikuma I, "the Seizer of Cities" in circa 580-641 A.S. The Legion was then largely composed of worshippers of Avanthé and Hnalla, although other sects made up some of its units as well. In any case, this ancient and honourable Legion perished to a man - or at least disappeared totally from the records - in the days of Emperor Hehejallu "the Dark Moon." Legend has it that it was given the assignment of "seeking the Garden of the Weeping Snows" in the labyrinths below Jakalla by the Imperium, a task which was deliberately meant to end with the destruction of the Legion as punishment for the opposition of the priesthoods of Avanthé and Hnalla to this ruler's bloody reign. The Legion, it is said, marched into the catacombs and never returned: fourteen Cohorts of good troops, singing their battlesongs and their deathsongs, armoured in full steel mail and bearing their weapons on high, led by their officers and their trumpeteers and drummers - the sight must have been a strange one indeed, if

true. In any case, the Legion was never heard from again, and the Emperor ordered only that it be recorded as “absent from further duty” in the “Book of Mighty Deeds.”

The current military crisis with Yan Kor has demanded the revival of several ancient Legions, and the Legion of the Mighty of Jakalla is one of these. Its general, Lord Chiringga hiTishkolun, is an ex-governor of Jakalla and not a man who might otherwise be chosen for his military prowess. He was accused of various crimes against the Imperium, including financial dealings and peculations during his tenure as governor, and rather than order him impaled, the Imperium chose a method more acceptable to his clan (the famous Clan of the Golden Bough) by making him a general and posting him with his troops to the dangerous Yan Koryani border in the north in Khirgar. By dint of much politicking and bribery, the erstwhile governor has kept himself out of battle, and his troops are now part of the garrison of the City of Khirgar. There he whiles away his time in the Temple of Ksarul, intriguing with the various secret societies of his sect to get him transferred and posted elsewhere. He has only some six Cohorts under arms now, with two in training at Jakalla, and these are men of less than the best quality. He has managed to get steel armour for three Cohorts, however, and one of these is armoured in steel armour of a better quality (+1).

22. The Phalanx of Heretlekka of Sokatis; 34th Imperial Heavy Infantry

This is a new Legion founded by one of the wealthy families of the eastern city of Sokatis. Lord Dardayel hiKhanuma, a member of the Green Bough Clan and a worshipper of Goddess Avanthé, has utilised his clan inheritance and also various wealthy friends to establish a new Legion based upon the myth of the mighty epic-hero, Heretlekka. This warrior-demigod is said to have been one of the Dragon Lords and to have settled in Sokatis after wandering the world. There is still a tumbled pyramid of brick and stone in the City of the Dead in Sokatis which bears his name, although some scholars believe that this is nothing more than the tomb of a local governor of the late Engsvanyali Empire.

Lord Dardayel is a man of considerable persuasiveness and charisma; this is proved by the very fact that he has managed to get the Imperium to approve his new Legion and to give it the number of "34th Imperial Heavy Infantry." The previous holder of this number was the great "Legion of the Might of Khu," which perished in Pelesar in Milumanaya when that land seceded from the Empire in 1976. Since then the number "34" had not been granted to any Legion. Lord Dardayel, however, is a personal friend of Lord Mridobu, the Emperor's third son, and it is said also that he has been a suitor for the Princess Ma'in Kruthai, the Emperor's only legitimate daughter. He has thus had the ear of the highest lords of the Imperium and has profited much thereby. He is a strict taskmaster and a pupil of the great Tlaneno the Steersman, and his troops are well trained and drilled to perfection. They have only seen one minor Qadarni battle thus far, however, against the Salarvyani. This they won, and Lord Dardayel has expressed his pleasure and pride to just about every young nobleman in the Empire who will give him ear. He has managed to get the Legion transferred to the border city of Thri'il in the far north, where he hopes daily for a Yan Koryani attack so that his troops again may display their prowess. The Imperium manages to keep him in check, however, and older and wiser heads have persuaded Prince Mridobu not to allow his young friend to rush headlong into a battle against the wily tribesmen of Milumanaya or against the Yan Koryani garrisons stationed across the border.

23. The Phalanx of Lord Durritlemish of the Rotted Face; 6th Imperial Medium Infantry

One of the eastern Legions which has seen service in a variety of engagements is that of the priesthood of dark Lord Durritlemish, the Cohort of Lord Sarku. Drawing upon strength in the eastern hills, this Legion has recruited men for many hundreds of years and continues to thrive. Unfortunately, most of the activity of this unit has been in guarding of temples and the "Cities of the Dead" (i.e. the burial grounds outside of many Tsolyani cities). The Legion is listed as having taken part in a number of battles, but none of these are well authenticated until recent times.

First mention of this unit seems to be in the records of Emperor Hehejallu "the Dark Moon" in 759 A.S. At that time it is noted that the priests of Durritlemish -- not noted for their military interest -- were encouraged by Imperial decree to found a Legion and to see to its perpetual maintenance and strength. The priesthood responded slowly and reluctantly, but the Legion was finally inaugurated in 765 A.S. Troops were recruited by means of Imperial Writ in various villages and towns in the eastern hills, and eventually the listed strength of the Legion stood at seventeen Cohorts. The Legion continued to exist without gaining any battle experience during subsequent reigns until it was almost completely dismantled by Empress Vayuma Su "Empress of All the Lands" in 935 A.S. during the period when she attempted to destroy all vestiges of the worship of the older Dark Gods. The Legion, however, was never officially disbanded and continued on as temple guards of the temples of Sarku and Durritlemish in various parts of the Empire. Emperor Nriga Gaqchike "the Spider" made the Legion into a viable military unit again, and for a few brief years it became something of a real force. After his demise in 1010 A.S., it took part in the Civil War, on the side of the local lords of Sokatis, and when Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma I "the Warrior" came to the throne he saw to it that it was reduced to temple guard status once more. In 1218 A.S. it was part of the Tsolyani forces at the Battle of Koyluga in Salarvya, and after it had regrouped from the ensuing rout, it seems to have had a minor part in the War with Salarvya in 1325-40. In 2019 it was ordered to proceed to the west, a policy which the Emperor Gyesmu "the Iron Fist" implemented in order to strengthen the Imperial central government and weaken local autonomous powers, and it arrived just in time to participate in the defeat at the Battle of Chene Ho in 2019 A.S. Thereafter, it was apparently too fragmented and destroyed to play any further role in the Great War, and only afterwards is it found once more as a garrison unit in Sokatis.

The present general, Lord Fashranu hiNokor, is a member of the traditional clan of the worshippers of Durritlemish, the Clan of Dark Water, and he is himself a Mriyan (roughly "Bishop") of the Temple in Sokatis. His objective seems to be to retain the Legion as a force in the east, and he has resisted all attempts to get him to build the Legion into a fighting force - perhaps only too well aware that it might then be transferred to the northwest to meet the Yan Koryani thrust there. Prince Dhich'une, the Emperor's fourth and youngest son, has indicated that he would like to see medium infantry posted to the City of Sarku in the northwest and would prefer that these units be men of the sects of his own dark gods. Bishop Fashranu has indicated that he will obey his Prince's command - but with some reluctance and only in return for some undisclosed favours. The Legion is said to have several units outfitted in steel armour - some of which was stored beneath Sokatis during the previous dynasties. There is also a rather horrific rumour that the priesthood of the Temple of Durritlemish has offered to provide undead warriors from its subterranean catacombs to staff several Cohorts of this and other Legions serving Sarku and Durritlemish. The outcome of this is unknown; except for the reign of Hehejallu, "the Dark Moon," no use has been made of undead troops "reanimated" by sorcery since the founding of the Imperium. And any schoolboy knows what occurred when Emperor Hehejallu sent forth his skeletal hordes!

24. The Legion of Gusha the Kirghari; 7th Imperial Medium Infantry

The northern tribesmen have always followed a practice, strange for Tekumel, of granting “votes” to both male and female members of their bands. It is not unusual, therefore, to find that this ancient and traditional northern Legion should be ruled not by a general but by a communal council. The name “Gusha” is given to the senior council-leader of this group, and he it is who serves as spokesman for the Legion at Imperial staff meetings and in relations with his fellow officers. In ancient times the name of the Legion changed whenever the general changed, but this practice led to much confusion in Avanthar, and the Imperium itself requested that each successive “Gusha” should take the same name as a sort of title.

The defense of Khirgar - once a tribal city on the outskirts of the terrible northern desert - was from Engsvanyali times entrusted to one of these communal Legions. That of “Gusha” seems to have been one of the best of these. It is first recorded in Engsvanyali records as being named “the Legion of the Powerful Jigetl of Khirgar.” Subsequent name changes are unnecessary to note here. After the fall of the Engsvanyali Imperium, the Legion was reduced to the defense of its own city and provincial territory, and when the first Tlakotani took the Petal Throne, one of the first acts of his reign was to conciliate the north by enrolling most of the available Legions there as “his” troops - paid, perhaps, by promises of booty from the defenders of the cities of the south and east who held out against the First Emperor.

The Legion is mentioned again and again in Tsolyani history; in the reign of Trakonel II “the Victorious” it won battles in Milumanaya; in the Period of the Chancellor (444- 446 A.S. approximately) it seems to have held out against pressure from the northern tribes and the ancestors of the present P’jjenani. In the reign of Kurshetl Nikuma I in 583 it is listed as aiding in the expedition against the Pe Choi rebels and bandits in what is now Do Chaka. There is then a period of eclipse in which records are not found, but the Legion appears again under the name “the Legion of the Broad-Blades of Khirgar, Minions of Churrinyetl the Khirgari” in the time of Hrishmuna Neqo II (905-16 A.S.). The pacifistic Empress Vayuma Su “Empress of All the Lands” and her daughter, Shaira Su, “divine Daughter of Thumis,” used this Legion against the Priesthoods of the Dark Gods, and when Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider” came into power, he ordered it disbanded and its officers sent to the executioner. Fortunately for many of them, however, the council of the Legion was so large and consisted of so many members that responsibility was hard to establish, and a great number of officers and men escaped punishment. Some also fled to the deserts. The Legion then seems to have been allowed to return and regroup in the time of Kanmi’yel Nikuma I “the Warrior,” who favoured the religion of the Legion’s masters, that of the war-god Karakan. Under still another name the Legion served in the wars with Salarvya and was ordered disbanded once more by Empress Dashiluna “the Green-Eyed” in 1286 A.S. Hejjeka II “the Heretic” revived it and brought back its ancient glory, and it was under his rule that the first “Gusha the Khirgari” emerged. Thereafter Gusha’s son and grandson were also named “Gusha,” and the tradition of calling the Legion by the title first emerged. The Legion refused to serve Chrajuna “the Usurper of the North” in 1699-1700, preferring instead to flee away into the deserts, but they returned and fought for Qenqolu hiVridi, “the General of the West” in late 1700 A.S. Once again the Legion went into eclipse during the subsequent reigns, until the time of Gyesmu “the Iron Fist.” The Legion then saw battle in the debacle of Chene Ho, where it experienced real defeat. It regrouped at Purdimal and suffered death and sacrifice when that city fell to the Mu’ugalavyani. When the Great War was over the Legion was rebuilt by the governor of Khirgar, and it subsequently saw service in the taking of the Protectorates of Kija in 2029 and of Chaigari in 2041. It was sent to Do Chaka in 2045 and won battle honours there against the

Ito Clan who sought independence. In the present age it has taken part in the raids into Yan Kor and the Battle of Srigash Field. It is currently posted near Khirgar.

25. The Legion of Lord Langsha of Jaikalor; 8th Imperial Medium Infantry

The history of this Legion only goes back to 2045 A.S. After the taking of the Protectorate of Kaija from the weakened Salarvyani in 2029, the Imperium provided fiefs and tax farms for those who had helped in the conquest. Gyemu “the Iron Fist” was well aware of the fact that he required the cooperation and aid of old, established residents of the new Protectorate who had been neutral or pro-Tsolyani before the accession, and he thus laid careful plans with his military advisors and the priesthoods to care for these allies. He thus provided this Legion both as a reward to the aristocratic Rising Sun Clan and also as a sign of his favour to Lord Langsha hiDetkolu, the clanmaster who had aided the Imperium in taking the city of Jaikalor without the loss of a single life.

The Legion saw no service during the Chakan Uprising, being too newly formed and without sufficient troops. It did serve well in certain minor border actions against the Salarvyani over the years, and it has won three of its seven Qadarni battles (all against the Salarvyani). Otherwise it has been useful mainly as garrison troops for the city of Jaikalor.

The current general, Lord Dridakku hiTukkolen, is a direct descendant (from a collateral lineage) of Lord Langsha. He is a worshipper of Ketengku, as are many of his immediate clan-brothers, and it is said that he himself is not of a particularly military temperament but rather a more scholarly and intellectual man. He takes interest in planning and matters of liaison and supply, however, and his services to the Imperium are much valued in this field.

26. The Battalions of the Seal of the Worm; 9th Imperial Medium Infantry

This Legion was founded by Emperor Hehejallu “the Dark Moon” in circa 769 A.S. Himself a follower of the Dark Gods, the Emperor sought to develop secular power for certain temples which had up till that time taken but little part in the military affairs of the Imperium. Earlier Bednalljan and Engsvanyali sources indicate that there were indeed certain units devoted to the Lords of Change, and particularly to the Masters of the Flame; but the worshippers of Sarku and his Cohort, Durritlemish, were left without much secular power, although the worship of these two deities is very ancient. In order to correct this, the Emperor commanded the raising of several Legions - over the opposition of much of the priesthood, who could see no possibility of becoming militarily great and who also saw that the establishment of several mediocre Legions would only stir up more opposition against them.

Nevertheless, the Legion was founded. A document is preserved in the archives of the Temple at the City of Sarku which shows its beginnings, the number of men, and the sources of its revenue: one copper Qirgal from each Kaitar collected by the Temple in tithes and land taxes “until this Legion may be established “ Another document from some five hundred years later shows that this money was still being collected for the Legion, although all of its financial needs must have been met soon after its original founding! Having received the Imperial Edict, the priests continued to collect money for the Legion - ostensibly - while really using these funds for other projects more to their liking

During the reigns of Empress Vayuma Su and her daughter Shaira Su, the Legion was ordered to be disbanded, and its officers were commanded to retire “within the walls of the City of Sarku, never to appear more.” The priesthood of Sarku retaliated by sealing the gates of their city and daring the Empress to besiege it - which she did forthwith. The Imperial troops stormed the walls of the outer city

and looted and slaughtered many of the inhabitants, but they were unable to breach the mighty Citadel of Tombs in the northern quadrant of the city, and eventually the Empress made a treaty of peace with the priesthoods under which they would provide their usual revenue, and she would guarantee the peace and safety of the Empire for worshippers of the Dark Gods. In 975 this treaty was signed, and it contains certain clauses of “liberties” for the City of Sarku which are still jealously guarded by the priesthoods. For example, no Imperial officer who is himself (or herself) not a worshipper of the Lord of Worms or his Cohort may set foot within the inner temple precincts “without the pleasure of the Masters of the Temple.” No accounting can be taken of the temple tithes without the presence of the Counter of the Coins of the temple. Temple lands may not be sequestered by Imperial decree without a hearing before the Petal Throne in Avanthar - et cetera.

The Legion fared rather badly at first. Under Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider,” it prospered but took no part in battles other than the occasional Milumanayani raids. In the ensuing Civil War, it became once again a garrison for the City of Sarku, and when peace was restored by Kanmi’yel Nikuma I “the Warrior,” it was brushed aside and made into a temple-guard Legion. Kanmi’yel Nikuma III “the Scourge of Vimuhla” persecuted the followers of Sarku and the other Dark Gods, and the Legion was reduced to a paper force only. Kanmi’yel Nikuma IV, “Flattener of Peaks” revived it briefly for service against the P’jjenani and Milumanayani nomads, but it saw no real service. The following ruler, Empress Janule “She of the Blue Goddess” ordered it completely dismantled during her strife with the dark priesthoods, but this order was never carried out, and in the reign of Metlunel II “the Builder” the Legion was ordered to the eastern front against the Salarvyani, where it took part in the Battle of Koyluga, which the Tsolyani lost. In 1219 another battle was lost in the same region, but no record of this Legion’s presence there is found. The reign of Tariktanme “Expander of Temples” saw the revival of strong priestly power, and the City of Sarku was directed to reestablish the Legion and provide troops and arms. The succeeding Empress, Dashiluna “the Green-Eyed,” was a follower of the Goddess Dlamelish, and she made a compact with all of the temples of the Dark Gods to aid her in extirpating the power of the priesthoods of the Lords of Stability. Her son and successor, Tontiken Rirune “Slave of Demons” seems to have taken the matter further and attempted to establish the hegemony of the Dark Gods over all Tsolyanu. His fate, however, is unknown, and Hejjeka I “the Replacer” proceeded to rid himself of all priestly influences. His son, Hejjeka II “the Heretic,” used the Legion against the Salarvyani in the Battle of Mmillaka and also the Battle of Chgehl Tiqueje, and it performed well. The Legion is then heard of but little for the ensuing 250 years, but it is mentioned once again as supporting Chrajuna “the Usurper of the North” in 1699-1700 A.S. It was thereafter reduced to temple-guard status once more until the reign of Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku,” when it saw its greatest glory. It was posted to Chene Ho at this time and took part in the terrible slaughter of the Pe Choi rebels, a fact which the Pe Choi have never forgotten or forgiven. The worship of Sarku is ancient, however, in Do Chaka, and the Imperium quickly saw that it was a mistake to keep this Legion based in territory where it might be subverted by the local powers and the autonomy- seeking rebels of the Ito clan. It was returned to the far north, spent some years at Thri’il, was posted briefly to Mrelu, and has remained in the region around the City of Sarku in much of recent times. It was active in the first battle of the current Yan Koryani crisis, losing many men, and a subsequent battle at the southern entrance to the Atkolel Heights also seems to have ended with the destruction of its units there. Its current general, Lord Qurumu hiKhanuma, of the ancient and secretive Domed Tomb Clan, is a powerful warrior and a good politician in the intrigues of the military councils. He has currently obtained the patronage of Prince Dhich’une, the Emperor’s youngest son and himself a devotee of Lord Sarku, and there are rumours that the Prince is planning to bring forth whole Cohorts composed of the undead and the other creatures of the

labyrinths which are the province of Mighty Sarku-a plan which horrifies the traditional military men of the Empire. But the areas around the City of Sarku are not populous, and it is hard for this Legion to recruit men there. The Prince seems to be convinced that the Temple of Sarku must play a role in secular politics and counteract the Legions and nobles devoted to his brothers. The outcome of this remains to be seen.

27. The Legion of Mnashu of Thri'il; 10th Imperial Medium Infantry

The present Emperor, Hirkane Tlakotani, "the Stone upon which the Universe Rests," has reactivated an ancient Legion under the leadership of a minor lord of the city of Thri'il. This Legion was previously the "Warder of the North" and "the Guardian of the Pass of Skulls" in the reigns of the first and second Kurshetl Nikuma, and the records show that it continued through the period of Nriga Gaqchike "the Spider"; thereafter, however, the record shows no payment to the Legion and no troops are recruited or trained. This is puzzling, since other records of the period are more or less complete, and one can only theorise that some unrecorded event occurred which led to the disbanding of this Legion during or just after the period of the Civil War (1010-1026). The Legion headquarters at Thri'il also seems to have been torn down, and no trace of it remains today.

When Lord Mnashu hiSsaivra of Thri'il, a member of the locally powerful Green Bough Clan, suggested that the Legion be revived, he was opposed by many who felt that the old Legion names were inauspicious and unlucky in the extreme. He persisted, however, and eventually the Imperium granted him permission to build a Legion - but with the condition that he name it after himself. He is thus the sole person who will gain the glory if the Legion does well, and he will be the individual blamed if it is disgraced. Lord Mnashu is a young man, proud, and militarily inclined, and older Imperial officers tend to ignore him at councils. He has fallen back upon his clan resources and also upon the aid of his temple, that of Chegarra the Hero-King, and has managed to recruit some seventeen Cohorts from the surrounding mountains and foothills. Most of his men, thus, are mountaineers, and they are perfectly at home in rough terrain. They are mainly spearmen and swordsmen, and their heavy spears are a familiar weapon to those who must fight the wild beasts of the high mountains. They thus appear to be a ferocious and brave unit, but their discipline in the field is still untried. A Qadarni of sorts was fought with the Milumanayani recently, but the results of this were indecisive. The Legion has just been posted to an area near Khirgar where their mountaineering experience may come in handy and where they may help in repulsing the Yan Koryani incursion there.

28. The Golden Sunburst Legion; 11th Imperial Medium Infantry

This Legion is one of the elite Legions of the Temple of Karakan. It is thus difficult to join, aristocratic in its membership, and of morale so high that it is difficult to restrain once it has entered combat. The priests of the War-God have combed the Empire for young and powerful recruits of their faith, and its present seventeen Cohorts will soon be supplemented by three more, now in training.

The Legion is based in the west. Historically, it is mentioned in the records of the Engsvanyali Empire as part of the forces guarding the western forests, and it continued to play this role down through modern times. First mention of it in Imperial records is found in the semi-mythical histories of the First Tlakotani, who seems to have first fought against the forces of the Warlord of Tumissa and then arranged an alliance (or subjugated him?). The Legion is then seen as one of those which aided the First Emperor in the conquest of the north and the final triumphal march to Bey Su. Trakonel I "the Blazing

Light" utilized these forces in the wars with the worshippers of the Dark Gods in Penom, and in 445 A.S. it aided in the defeat of the rebel Ajjnai Teshkuma "the False Emperor." Kurshetl Nikuma I used it to destroy the rebels of the Kurt Hills, and it seems to have been reposted to Tumissa with the title "the Sword of the West." Emperor Horkhunen "the General" used the Legion again to consolidate his hold upon the west. In 780 A.S. it participated in the Battle of Butrus, and 1115 A.S. its units were listed as part of the force which landed upon the Island of Vra. During the War with Salarvya in 1325-40 it does not seem to have been active. The two Chaka Protectorates were lost in 1565 A.S., and at this time the Legion was confined to the city of Tumissa, where it held the bastions against the Mu'ugalavyani with such notable success that it gained special battle honours. In 1700 A.S. it appears to have supported Qenqolu hiVridi "the General of the West," and afterward it was almost disbanded by Kanmi'yel Nikuma V "the Pretender." During the reign of Durumu "The Copper Blade of Sarku" the Legion held Tumissa and made no attempt to engage in politics -- which resulted in its being left to itself during the turmoil of the conflict between Emperor Durumu's Dark Gods and the priesthoods of the Lords of Stability. When Empress Nrainue "the Iridescent Goddess" took the Throne, she saw to it that the loyalty of the Legion was rewarded. When the Great War of 2020 came, the Legion defended the city of Tumissa, losing to the overwhelming Mu'ugalavyani forces and suffering destruction almost to a man. The forces of Emperor Gyesmu "the Iron Fist" found the heads of many of the legionnaires still upon the spikes along the walls of Tumissa when they finally retook the city late in 2020. He commanded that each of these poor skulls should be encased in gold and should be buried in his mausoleum outside Bey Su "as his guards in the Isles of the Excellent Dead." He then commanded the rebuilding of the Legion and saw to it that it lacked nothing in the way of money or recruits. The Chakan Uprising in 2045 saw the Legion again active, and it performed well in the jungles of Pan Chaka. It has now been posted to the city of Tu'unmra and is apparently on its way north to join the Tsolyani forces defending the Atkolel Heights and the region around Chene Ho.

The Legion has always been part of the Temple of Karakan, and its current general is Tsemel (=Cardinal) Znayashu hiVrazhimi, an experienced military priest of the Standing Stone Clan famous in the west of Tsolyanu. His brother, Lord Rirutlu hiVrazhimi, is Lord Adept of the Temple of Thumis, and there is thus a bond between these two temples in the west which did not exist previously.

29. The Cohorts of Lord Chegarra, the Hero-King; 12th Imperial Medium Infantry

After the Period of the Usurpers (1699-1700) the citizens of Thraya were encouraged to establish a Legion of their own. The governor of the city had supported the forces of the man who assumed the throne under the name of Kanmi'yel Nikuma V "the Pretender," and as usual the Imperium rewarded loyalty with lands, money, and the right to build military units. The Legion was no sooner built, however, when this Emperor died, and the throne passed to Durumu "the Copper Blade of Sarku." He quickly saw to it that those Legions which were staffed by devotees of the Lords of Stability were destroyed or posted to remote and difficult areas. The Legion was thus first ordered to the Gilraya Forests in the far southeast, then to the distant city of Hekellu in the Chaigari fastnesses (then briefly in Tsolyani hands), and finally he commanded that the Legion be disbanded entirely. The Temple of Chegarra resisted, however, and managed to "lose" the entire Legion in the wilds of the Chayengar Range, where it continued to receive secret support from its priesthood. When Nrainue "the Iridescent Goddess" came to the Petal Throne, the Legion emerged from its hiding place and reported that it had "sailed the Dry Bay of Ssu'um in the service of the Imperium." This Empress, not terribly well versed in

geography herself, commanded that it be given “ships for further exploration of that region,” and to this day in the Legion headquarters in Thraya one can see the five great ships ordered built by the Empress, ships which have never touched water. These are carefully maintained, sails and all, in complete readiness for the carrying out of the Imperial order. No such order ever came, of course, since wiser heads informed the Empress of the true state of affairs, and the matter was quietly forgotten.

Later in the reign of the same Empress, the Legion was posted to the west, where it took part in the taking of Pan Chaka in 1842 A.S. When Milumanaya seceded in 1976 A.S. the Legion was sent northwards but arrived too late for the relief of Pelesar. Thereafter it was returned to Thraya for a brief period, and it seems to have taken no active part in the revolts of the Time of Many Emperors (2015 A.S.). The War of 2020 found the Legion involved in the defense of the east, and it was one of those which participated in the Relief of Bey Su in 2020. Thereafter it joined in the series of battles which ended with the rout of the Mu’ugalavyani and the final expansion of the Imperium into the Chakas. After the Great War the Legion had to be rushed back to the east when the Protectorate of Kaija was added to the Empire, and it received battle honours against the Hlutrgu during the troublous accession of the Protectorate of Kerunan to the Imperium in 2031. Units also joined in the battles for the Chaigari Protectorate in 2041. In recent times it was part of General Kettukal hiMraktine’s forces when they invaded Yan Kor and sacked Ke’er. The Legion was never reposted to the east again; it is now at the village of Auksha, a mountain stronghold on the very border of Milumanaya just southeast of Akonar Peak. It is led by Mriyan (=Bishop) Burushaya hiKaikune of the Red Sword Clan, long devoted to the worship of the war-gods, and he is an experienced mountain fighter and a soldier of the utmost discipline and toughness.

30. The Legion of the Clan of the Golden Sphere; 13th Imperial Medium Infantry

This Legion is based in the southeast at the city of Thraya, where the Clan of the Golden Sphere has its base of financial power. This clan is recorded as far back as the Engsvanyali Empire, but there is no record of any Legion formed during the pre-Tsolyani period. It is first listed during the reign of Ninue Jalesa “the Maiden of Beauty” in 1949 A.S., and it seems to have been a creation of the clan-patriarchs to honour this Empress. She provided it with a golden emblem and a great standard, which are still preserved in the clanhouse in Thraya. Members of this Legion are devoted to the worship of Lord Qon, the Guardian of the Gates of Hell, a deity not noted for his military prowess.

During the Great War of 2020, this Legion was part of the force which advanced along the southern perimeter of the Mu’ugalavyani invasion force to relieve the city of Katalal. In 2029 it is listed as part of the army which took the Kaija Protectorate for the Empire, but after this it seems to have received no battle honours. Due to financial problems, the Legion was weakened during the reign of Emperor Arshu’u “the Ever-Splendid,” and only recently has it once again begun to recruit troops. In order to gain experience (and some glory, hopefully), its current general, Clan-Patriarch Changekte hiAmiyala of Thraya, has requested that the Legion be posted to a more dangerous location, and this has been granted. The Legion now forms part of the Tsolyani defenses north of Avanthar in the narrow pass leading to the city of Thri’il. There it has taken part in two Qadarni battles and has won one of these (against the Milumanayani). The objectives of the Legion seem to be to gain experience and develop into a good fighting force, and General Changekte is to be found at almost every major staff meeting in the north, assiduously listening and noting and discussing strategies and military matters, something

which some of his traditional colleagues find a trifle amusing. Yet he perseveres, and within the past five years the Legion has risen in quality from a very poor unit to one which can be rated as mediocre.

31. The Legion of the Night of Shadows; 15th Imperial Medium Infantry

The Temple of Ksarul has recently obtained permission to build a totally new Legion under the auspices of its “activist” faction, the dreaded Ndalul Clan. The establishment of secular power for the non-military temples of the Empire continues to worry the Imperium, and it was with great difficulty that Prince Mridobu convinced the Emperor that this should be encouraged. ‘After all,” he argued, “much of the wealth and the lands of the Empire lie in the possession of the Temples, and it is to our advantage to see that this wealth should be used for the good of the realm.” The Imperium acquiesced on the understanding that these temple-based Legions will remain under the command of the Petal Throne. Generals agreeable to the Empire have been appointed, officers are screened by the Omnipotent Azure Legion, and the troops are stationed far away from major power bases of their Temples, so far as is militarily practicable.

Lord Fereshma’a hiKurodu, of the Dark Flame Clan, is an experienced officer, and his energy and devotion has resulted in the raising of seven Cohorts (at this writing) with one more in training at Jakalla. The Legion has not yet seen combat, and it is currently being used to garrison the region around its base. Prince Mridobu continually urges the Imperium to post it north to Mrelu or at least Purdimal in order that it may gain experience and also serve as part of the northern reserve, but this is strongly resisted by Prince Eselne’s Military Party, which knows only too well that these troops are fanatics of the Ndalul Clan and would add only another series of problems to the military difficulties now faced by the Empire in the north. Prince Mridobu has now proposed an alternative plan: send the Legion to Butrus in Pan Chaka, where it can help guard against any Mu’ugalavyani attempt to exploit the Yan Koryani crisis. This might be more agreeable to the Imperium, except that Butrus is also an ancient stronghold of the Temple of Ksarul. The Legion, however, is clearly needed, and it may be posted to some less delicate area, such as Paya Gupa (over the objections of Lord Gamalu, who does not wish Lord Thumis’ arch-rival, Ksarul, to gain any strength within his own sphere of power) or Tumissa.

32. The Legion of the Lord of Red Devastation; 18th Imperial Medium Infantry

The ancient western clans have traditionally worshipped either the Lord Vimuhla or his counterpart amongst the Lords of Stability, Lord Karakan (or one of their respective Cohorts). During the Time of the Dragon Warriors the worship of the God of Fire seems to have taken a strong hold upon the west all the way through northern Mu’ugalavya and as far east as Katalal. Another stronghold of these sects was ancient Fasiltum, the City of the Chiming Skulls, in the northeast. Somewhere during this long and almost legendary period the Legion of the Lord of Flame was founded; records do not exist, but coins made of a peculiar red gold stamped with the Image of the Flame have been recovered from caches throughout the west, and some of these are stamped with the motto which was later adopted by this Legion: “the Flame Consumes All.” During the First Imperium there seems to have been a conflict with the priesthoods of the Lords of Stability, and the Lords of the South (in particular those of the city of Jakalla) took their troops northeast and west to combat the influence of the “Red-Robes” of Vimuhla and Chiteng, his Cohort. There are no records, of course, but the destruction of Fasiltum is recorded in the Book of Priestkings, and it seems probable that the Legion of the Lord of Red

Devastation also suffered defeat and destruction since it is not recorded as being in existence again until the middle of the Engsvanyali Imperium, when it is listed as among the defenders of the city of Tumissa during the reign of Girandu I.

In Tsolyani times the Legion is noted in the fragmentary records of Trakonel II “the Victorious,” as part of the army which he used to conquer the rebels at Chene Ho, but it is not clear whether this is the same or a different Legion from the one currently enrolled. The next mention is in the documents attributed to Deshetl Miuna “the Stable Mountain,” when the Legion is seen as the garrison of Tumissa, and a Legion Commander was sent to Avanthar to demand more money and support for the repairs of Tumissa’s ancient and crumbling defenses. (No record exists which shows whether this funding was ever received.) In 451 A.S. the “Hymn to Na-Iverge” was composed, and it lists this Legion as present during the rebellion of Ajjnai Teshkuma “the False Emperor” in 445 A.S. In 780 A.S. the Legion fought well at the Battle of Butrus, overcoming hordes of nonhuman Pachi Lei sent against it. The Emperor, Hehejallu “the Dark Moon,” however, felt that it was too dangerous a unit to leave in the west, strong in the worship of Vimuhla, and he thus ordered its posting to Sokatis. There it stayed as border guards and garrison troops until the reign of Hrishmuna Neqo II, who saw to it that the Legion was restored to its western home. The brief reign of Ngangmorel Neqo provides another note of interest: the Legion was ordered to pursue the rebel Jneshu Ka hi-Ito into the forests of the Chakas “until he should be apprehended.” True to its tradition of unquestioning order and discipline, the Legion followed the rebel through the jungles of the Chakas and finally caught up with him - at the city of Pagus in Mu’ugalavya! There the Mu’ugalavyani thought that the Legion was the van of an invasion force and called up all of its might to meet the threat. The Legion commander and his men fought until they were completely overwhelmed, and when the priests of the Mu’ugalavyani god Hrsh questioned them, preparatory to sacrificing them, the matter was explained. The Mu’ugalavyani then took the rebel Jneshu prisoner (although he was one of their puppets in the Chakas) and sacrificed him instead, gave his head to the Tsolyani commander, and escorted the remaining thirty men of the Legion back through the Chakas to safety within the Empire. The Capture of the Rebel has thus formed the basis for several epic poems and dramas presented throughout Tsolyanu ever since.

In 931 A.S. the Empress Vayuma Su “Empress of All the Lands,” made her attempt to crush the power of the Lords of Change, and the Legion was ordered to disband. At a meeting held in the central square of Tumissa, the Legion refused to do this, and elected instead to sacrifice itself - from the general down to the last carter and pot-boy - to the Flame God. At the last moment, however, the governor of Tumissa intervened and commanded instead that the Legion march forth and seek a nobler destiny in death in battle. The Legion then did this: it traveled through the Chakan jungles and confronted the Mu’ugalavyani near Kheiris with a demand for a Qadarni battle to the death. The Mu’ugalavyani obliged, and the Legion won. Its commander having been slain, the Dritlan of the Legion then requested another Qadarni. Again the Mu’ugalavyani provided a force, and again the Legion won, although with terrible losses. When the remaining Kasi demanded a third battle, however, the Mu’ugalavyani refused and instead offered asylum. The Legion was forced to agree, and the next fifty or so years were spent as exiles in Kheiris. When Shaira Su “the Divine Daughter of Thumis” finally passed away, the Emperor Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider” sent to the Legion survivors in Kheiris, and many of these men and their children returned to the Empire to be gloriously reinstated and given battle honours at Avanthar.

The Legion’s subsequent history during the reign of Kanmi’yel Nikuma I “the Warrior” is obscure, and it may be that the Legion supported the wrong side in the Civil War of 1010-1026. In any case, it is not prominent again until the reign of Kanmi’yel Nikuma III “the Scourge of Vimuhla,” who himself was a worshipper of the Flame and who invaded the southern islands with a huge army. The

Legion saw service in Vra, the Island of Thayuri, and finally upon ancient Ganga itself, where it once again gained some battle honours. When Empress Janule “She of the Blue Goddess” came to the Petal Throne in 1123 A.S., the Legion was posted back to Tumissa, and it was then studiously ignored. Tariktanme “Expander of Temples” did not care much for military matters, and although he aided the Temple of Vimuhla at Tumissa, he did not encourage the Legion. Dashiluna “the Green-Eyed” similarly cared little for soldiers (except as bed companions and slaves), and it remained for Hejjeka II “the Heretic” to order the Legion into the War with Salarvya in 1325-40. There it proved an excellent force and once again gained much honour, although it was so weakened that it was reduced to a general staff and only two Cohorts thereafter. In the Time of the Usurpers (1699- 1700) the Legion seems to have supported first Onusu hiBarudla, “the Priestking of Fasiltum,” and then Qenqolu hiVridi, “the General of the West,” himself a worshipper of the Flame. When Kanmi’yel Nikuma V came to the throne the Legion was all but disbanded, and under Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku,” the Legion was ordered to immolate itself en masse in the Temple of Vimuhla in Tumissa. Many men obeyed, but some others refused and sought asylum in Pan Chaka. After the hideous death of Emperor Durumu, the Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” pardoned the survivors and restored the Legion. During the Great War of 2020, the Legion fought at the Battle of the Temple of Chanis, and later it joined in the final battle in the Chakas which saw the Mu’ugalavyani invaders routed. It then saw no further action until the Chakan Uprisings of 2045, where it was first defeated and then later won against the Ito Clan. The Legion was with General Kettukal hiMraktine during the incursions into Yan Kor and participated in the taking of Ke’er. Its current general is Lord Kuruktashmu hiKetkolel, a member of the Red Sun Clan of Tumissa, and a general renowned for his stern and almost fanatical loyalty to his deity and to the Empire. The priesthood of the Temple of Vimuhla supports the Legion and has provided it with a number of men and enough arms for its seventeen present Cohorts. It is rumoured that this Legion is a training ground for the fanatic activists of the Temple of Vimuhla, the Incandescent Blaze Society, and that some of these persons are striving not so much for Imperial victory in the current crisis with Yan Kor as for a victory of the Red-Robes and an alliance with Mu’ugalavya against the Lords of Stability and also against the Dark Gods. There is even rumour - fairly well substantiated - of an alliance across the boundaries of the Stable-Change alignment with the Temple of the War-God, Karakan, which would result in victory of the Military Party and an alliance with the Vimuhla worshippers who make up one of the major parties within Mu’ugalavya.

33. The Aridani Legion of Lady Mrissa; 19th Imperial Medium Infantry

Most women in Tsolyanu remain rather docilely within the security of their clans, protected by law from external events and defended by their husbands and clan-brothers. Within the fabric of the society, however, there is an avenue of escape for the woman who wishes to play a more active role: the Aridani status. Any woman may go before an Imperial magistrate and declare herself an “Aridani,” a woman who is the legal and societal equal to a man, may serve in military units, may marry one or more husbands of her choice (instead of being married off by her clan elders), and may move about freely without losing the prerogatives of her clan membership. The clan will protect her as much as it does any male.

The Lady Mrissa hiChagotlekka, of the Blue Stream Clan, is one of these active women. Her clan traditionally serves the Goddess Avante or her Cohort, Dilinala, but Lady Mrissa seems to have been unwilling to subject herself to the traditional domestic role from early childhood, and she has thus adopted the worship of the War-God, Karakan, and joined a military unit. Her clan, moreover, seems to

have seen this as essentially a good thing, and with its help and her own personal fortune, Lady Mrissa has acted to develop a Legion of her own. Her good friend and comrade in arms, General Kettukal hiMraktine, used his influence in Avanthar to see that a Legion was formed, and he recognised the military talent of this woman as being of great use to the Imperium. After some initial resentment, her clan has gone along with her and provided further aid. Her Legion was thus officially founded in 2346 A.S. It joined in the last of the incursions into Yan Kor, and the battle upon Srigash Field saw the participation of Lady Mrissa's troops, albeit only two Cohorts of them. The Legion has now grown, including women from a variety of cities throughout the Imperium, and further action was seen in the forests of the Chakas, where Lady Mrissa's troops were pitted against the "Bandit Pe Choi" and certain Mu'ugalavyani rebels. Her troops have now been reposted to a site near Khirgar and have taken part in the first great battle of the Yan Koryani crisis, aiding in victory and receiving the compliments of Prince Eselne himself. Women from outside the Empire have applied for service in this Legion, so wide has its fame been spread, and Lady Mrissa is considering the formation of a special Cohort of Aridani mercenaries. It is interesting to note that she also accepts female Pe Choi, and certain other nonhumans which can be divided into two sexes. She has refused to admit one or two Ahoggya, whose sexual divisions are still a puzzle for humans.

34. The Legion of the Many-Legged Serpent; 20th Imperial Medium Infantry

This unit is another of the priestly Legions formed by a particular temple, in this case that of Wuru the Unnamable, the Cohort of Lord Hru'u. Formed first in the time of Emperor Gyesmu "the Iron-Fist" in response to a command for all priestly temple-guard units to become part of the Imperial army, this Legion has seen little duty except against the Hlaka raiders in the hills and peaks of Chaigari on the eastern frontier. It took no part in the Great War of 2020 but was then based at Sokatis. In 2031 it was ordered to participate in the annexation of the Protectorate of Kerunan, and it then saw two or three minor actions. In 2041 it was sent to take Chaigari, and after the brief siege of the city of Hekellu, it was commanded to advance toward the mountain town of Fenul along the Kanayugara River Pass. It became lost in the mountains, however, and never arrived. After some weeks of wandering, it emerged again near Hekellu and remained there as garrison troops ever since.

Its current general is a military priest of the Temple of Wuru: Lord Yamashsha hiKorokol of the Blue Shadow Clan of Hekellu. He is a personal friend of General Kettukal, having served with him in the First Legion at the Battle of Ru (2347 A.S.). This man is a good officer and a native of Hekellu; his Legion is thus gaining in popularity and currently has nine Cohorts and two more in training. General Yamashsha has insisted upon the bringing of further officers from other Legions to serve as recruiters, training officers, and staff. In a recent battle with bandits and Hlaka rebels, the Legion performed excellently..

36. The Forces of Lord Ga'anish of Katalal; 23rd Imperial Medium Infantry

This unit is a continuation of the old Legion of the Sun-Bright Sword, once the pride of the city of Katalal and destroyed beyond rebuilding by the Mu'ugalavyani during the Great War of 2020. After the relief of the city, it was found that every single member of the Legion of the Sun-Bright Sword had been immured alive (or dead) within the Mu'ugalavyani earthworks, and all had perished. This, the Mu'ugalavyani stated, was in revenge for a wrong done them by General Kurishe hiSu'unmra in the time of Kanmi'yel Nikuma V "the Pretender" in 1711 A.S.

What the original wrong was, no one knows. It is to be noted, however, that this Legion maintains an intense and unswerving hatred of the Mu'ugalavyani and has to be kept away from the western borders lest they do something spontaneous about righting old wrongs. They were only allowed to rebuild the Legion in the reign of Arshu'u "the Ever-Splendid," (in 2287 A.S.), and they were forced to take the name of their patron, Lord Ga'anish hiSu'unmra of the Rising Sun-Disk Clan of Katalal. For many years they remained restricted to only three or four Cohorts of troops, and they were either kept in Katalal as city-guards or else posted far across the Empire to such places as Sokatis, Jaikalor, etc. They are now at Purdimal, but their numbers have been allowed to expand to thirteen Cohorts, and one more is building at Katalal.

The present general, Lord Reru hiSu'unmra, is the grandson of Lord Ga'anish. He is a young man, somewhat more of a scholar than a soldier, but his clan-loyalty is intense, and his one desire is to return to Mu'ugalavya at the head of his Legion and wipe the Red-Hats from the face of Tekumel. To this end, he is constantly scheming to obtain recruits, steel armour, and experience. He would thus welcome a Yan Koryani invasion and rather idealistically hopes that he will be allowed to fight in the front ranks.

37. The Regiment of Noble Ssiyor of Mrelu; 25th Imperial Medium Infantry

This is a new Legion, built by Lord Ssiyor hiNaquma, of the Clan of the Triple Peak. Lord Ssiyor does not come of a military clan or lineage, but he is himself fascinated by strategies and clever devices. He is one of the best players of the Tsolyani game Denden, which requires some great degree of skill and forethought, and he has designed his palace in Mrelu to be a clever labyrinth through which his concubines may wander at will but never find their way out. (There was also the disappearance of Lord Falukel hiMmorsa in this maze, but Lord Ssiyor claims innocence.) Lord Ssiyor is a worshipper of Lord Belkhanu, Master of the Excellent Dead, and his current hobby is the drawing up of an elaborate map of the lands of the dead, the various hells and underworlds, and the ambiguously described "Planes of the Beyond." These matters are, however, matters for conjecture only, and Lord Ssiyor claims no validity for his charts. Militarily, the Legion founded by this young aristocrat has had less than a pleasant existence. Since its founding in 2350 A.S. the Legion has engaged in one Qadarni battle near Khirgar, and its defeat was due, perhaps, to Lord Ssiyor's insistence upon clever strategies: he commanded that his troops dig hiding places in the sandy soil and conceal themselves there. Others he directed to carry an extra shield affixed to their own, with a light Chlen-hide helmet fastened behind it to appear as though two men stood where there was in reality but one. These men were to advance toward the enemy and then deliberately flee away, while their hidden comrades were to come out behind the Yan Koryani and slay them from behind. Unfortunately for lord Ssiyor's men, a flying Hlaka scout accidentally saw the digging of the hiding places, and when the Yan Koryani came onto the field the following day, they pretended to advance and pursue the "fleeing" Tsolyani as planned, when they came to the hiding places dug in the earth, however, they stopped and took their long pikes busily to each mound of earth, stabbing downwards and slaying the troops hidden within. Many were killed thus, while others smothered. The Tsolyani who had been ordered to flee attempted to turn back and fight, found themselves hampered by the false shields, threw these away, and battled the enemy shieldless until they perceived that all was lost. The Tsolyani lost almost two full Cohorts in this battle.

Lord Ssiyor is undaunted, however, and plans still further amazing strategies involving Chlen-carts armoured and pulled by beasts or men, great wagons with mobile ballistae (the recoil of which has so far destroyed three carts, twenty men, and a dozen Chlen-beasts), etc. The Imperium has allowed the

rebuilding of the Legion, and it now has nine Cohorts with two more building at Mrelu. Prince Eselne has insisted, however, upon inserting two good Dritlanyal into the Legion as its senior field officers, thus “honouring” Lord Ssiyor with the assignment of two such good men! Lord Ssiyor has taken this in good grace and continues to busy himself with his strategies and devices. He is presently unable to join in the fighting, however, being laid up at Khirgar after a near-fatal accident with a wheeled fence of sharp pike-points which he was intending to have pulled toward the enemy by wild Zrne-beasts. In spite of his best efforts, these animals still cannot distinguish the blue of Tsolyanu from the green of Yan Kor

38. The Legions of Defense Against Evil; 27th Imperial Medium Infantry

This unit was also formed by the command of Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” in 2019 A.S. from a temple-guard unit devoted to the Lord Qon, the Guardian of the Gates of Hell. This sect has very little military inclination, and its Legions have never received much support.

The Legion is based on the island of Ganga and claims ancestry back to the great days of the Engsvanyali Empire. No direct connection with any of the ancient regions can presently be traced, however. In 2020 A.S. it was ordered to advance to Jakalla, where it served as a reserve during the final days of the Great War. In 2029 it took part in the battles which resulted in the annexation of the Kaija Protectorate, although its performance is not described in the dispatches. It also joined in the invasion of Kerunan Protectorate in 2031 and is noted to have done reasonably well there. It appears to have been unpopular with certain other Legions devoted to the War-Gods, however, and the Imperium transferred it back to Jakalla, where it served as city guard garrison for many years. During the present Emperor’s reign, it has been moved to Tumissa to counter-balance the power of the warlike Military Party there, particularly the growing alliance between the devotees of Lord Karakan and those of Vimuhla, Master of the Flame. It is currently being used as a city guard unit there, and in this capacity it has had no opportunity to gain further battle experience.

Its general is Lord Verussa hiNakkolel of the island of Ganga, a member of the prestigious Green Malachite Clan there, and a Mriyan (=Bishop) of the Temple of Qon. He has built the Legion up to eight Cohorts, and this seems about all that the island of Ganga can provide. He could draw upon recruits from elsewhere, of course, but has not seemed inclined to do so. He is an intelligent and reasonable young man, but his military experience is limited

40. The Legion of Chulin the Foreigner; 33rd Imperial Medium Infantry

The Imperium usually recruits foreigners and adventurers directly into one or another of the established Legions, where they will be trained as Tsolyani. During the recent strife with Yan Kor, however, some exceptions to this have been made. One of these is a Legion largely comprised of wanderers and nomads from across the southern seas, particularly from the cities of Keruna and Gorulu in Haida Pakala, where it is reported that some sort of local political strife is going on. Refugees have arrived both in Jakalla and in Tsatsayagga with tales of dynastic warfare and wholesale massacres of those of tribes and clans hostile to the ruling warlords. There has also been a continuing drought in the deserts of the great southern continent for several years now, which has brought many wanderers across to settle in the more fertile northlands.

In 2338 a dark-skinned adventurer, calling himself Chulin of the Grass People, appeared in Jakalla. After initially joining the Jakallan city guards, he was recruited into the Legion of Serqu, Sword of the Empire, by a friendly officer; he has served the Empire well ever since. Prince Rereshqala, the

Emperor's oldest son, took an interest in this man and proposed him for Imperial citizenship, then for the post of Molkar in the Legion of Serqu. Chulin, however, made a counter proposal to the Imperium: "Let me gather as many men as I can of my own people across the seas and form a Legion of our own. We shall bring our own arms and armour, and we shall cost the Empire only bread and wine." Prince Rereshqala took the matter under advisement and eventually laid it before the Petal Throne, offering to back it himself with some of his own personal fortune.

The Imperium agreed and provided the Legion with barracks and supplies, but due to the machinations of Prince Mridobu, who could not bear to see a Legion under the direct command of his oldest brother, the Legion's headquarters was fixed at Purdimal, far away from Rereshqala's centre of power near Jakalla. Chulin was forced to agree to this, and the Legion was officially inaugurated not by Prince Rereshqala but by the Governor of Purdimal. It was slow to gain recruits, for few wished to travel all the way across the Empire to the swampy and miasmic city which was to be the Legion's home. At this point Prince Eselne took a hand, using his powers as commander of the armies of the north to move the Legion on to Khirgar, a city much more to Chulin's liking - and also more favourable to Prince Rereshqala and the Military Party. The Legion now has twelve Cohorts of medium infantry and one in training at Khirgar. These troops are untested in the field but appear reasonably good. They comprise largely people from the southern continent, but there are several nonhumans (Pe Choi, Pachi Lei, a few Shen, renegade Swamp Folk from Mu'ugalavya, ten or twenty Ahoggia, and several physicians of the strange little Tinaliya people of Livyanu) as well, plus other human adventurers from all over the five Empires. Chulin is attempting to train his people to fight as a rapid-moving desert strike force, and he has thus recruited several Milumanayani tribesmen and refugees from the Atkolel Heights. Two dozen or so people of the far north of Yan Kor have also sought refuge in the Imperium, and these are providing the Legion with information and training in warfare in the colder climates beyond the control of the Yan Koryani.

41. The Legion of the Prince of the Blue Room; 35th Imperial Medium Infantry

When Emperor Gyemu "the Iron Fist" commanded that various old temple-guard units should be integrated into the Tsolyani regular army, he must have realised that he was putting secular power into the hands of those who had other objectives in mind than the continuation of the Tlakotani Dynasty. Yet he was forced by circumstances to seek this aid, and in many cases his hopes of an amicable relationship have been justified. In others, they have not.

The priesthood of Ksarul is one of the most secretive and complex organizations in the Imperium. Its real goals are hidden behind many layers of false statements, intricate organization, misleading theology, and carefully planned stratagems. Even during the Great War of 2020, the Emperor did not place much trust in this temple, and the Legion which they obligingly formed was never used. When Purdimal (its home) was besieged, it had already been ordered back to the City of Sarku to hold a reserve line there. By the time it was allowed to return, the war was over. The Emperor did not order its disbanding outright, but he did encourage the ascendancy of the Society of the Blue Light, a secret order within the Temple of Ksarul which wishes no part in the political affairs of the mundane sphere. This offended the ancient and active Ndalun Clan, the secret order within the Temple which seeks power and the overcoming of the forces of the Lords of Stability - and also, it is said, the defeat of the War-Gods, Vimuhla and his Cohort Chiteng. The temple, under the hegemony of the non-warlike Society of the Blue Light, withdrew much of its support, and the Legion suffered from attrition thereby.

It is said - though there is perhaps little truth to the rumour - that it was the Ndalul Clan itself which engineered the death of Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” in 2065 A.S. The Emperor’s heir, the mighty Gyesmu Dalisa “the Magnificent and Ever-Living,” was more diplomatic than his father and saw to it that the Legion (and its coterie of priests of the Ndalul Clan) were given border duty in the far north near the city of Thri’il. The Clan provided the Imperium with a useful defense - and also increased its hold upon the mountain folk of the north. Several of the secret monasteries of the Clan were built in this region between 2079 and 2133 A.S. The Emperor then commanded the Legion to return to Purdimal, where he hoped that it could be reduced to the status of city-guards. This plan was moderately successful; the Legion became involved in the internal politics of the Temple and was considerably weakened. The succeeding reigns saw no great change in this state of affairs, and it remained for Mursun Dlekkumine “the Weak” once more to disturb the balance. He had the Legion transferred to Paya Gupa in hopes of countering the growing power of the priesthood of Thumis there. This resulted in the three-day “War of the Grey and the Blue” between the Thumis and the Ksarul forces there. This was put down with difficulty, and when the Emperor died in 2346, the first act of the present Emperor, mighty Hirkane Tlakotani, was to repost this unit to Purdimal.

The Legion has remained in Purdimal ever since. Its current general, Tsemel (=Cardinal) Saku’u hiFershena, is probably a member of the Ndalul Clan. He is military-minded, a good soldier, and has experience in the incursions into Yan Kor in 2348 A.S. He has done much to build up the Legion and is on good terms with Prince Mridobu, the Emperor’s third son. He is himself a member of the Dark Flame Clan, one of the oldest Ksarul-worshipping clans in the Empire, and this gives him fairly free access to Avanthar. The present Emperor strives to maintain the balance: while not suppressing the Ndalul Clan, he has commanded the Legion to remain in Purdimal, and he has set several officers loyal first to the Imperium over various Cohorts of the Legion to ensure their fidelity. It is possible that the Imperium may now order the Legion into action against Yan Kor, since this would provide an easy method of reducing its power in Purdimal.

42. The Legion of Kaikama of Bey Su; 36th Imperial Medium Infantry

This unit has only recently been granted Legion status. Previously it consisted of several temple guard units of the temples of Dlamelish and Hrihayal, plus a number of young men and Aridani women who serve these two sects in various capacities. Its general, Lord Kaikama hiMrachiyaku, of the White Stone Clan, is a brilliant young homosexual, and many of his staff officers are also of this sexual persuasion. The women officers are noted Lesbians, and the various Cohorts of this Legion are thus divided along sexual-preference lines, according to the strictures of the Temple of Dlamelish. The Empire, of course, has nothing against various sexual preferences or lifestyles; such matters are considered to be beyond the pale of government. But it is nervous about a Legion devoted to the two dark Goddesses since neither of these two sects have ever shown any interest in military affairs before in the history of the Imperium, and it is seen as yet another source of factionalism and friction between the priesthoods of the Lords of Stability and the Lords of Change. Moreover, the Goddess Dlamelish and her Cohort have always stood aside from the squabbling within the priesthoods of the Lords of Change themselves: the eternal quarrels between the servants of the Dark Trinity (Sarku, Ksarul, and Hru’u, plus their respective Cohorts) versus the devotees of the Flame (Vimuhla and his Cohort Chiteng). The formation of an active military unit devoted to yet another faction presents a problem therefore.

General Kaikama is a leader of note. He gained battle honours for his Legion just after its founding by defeating an experienced Milumanayani unit on the northern frontiers some years ago, and

the Imperium has taken notice of his capabilities. His unit is still posted in Bey Su, but it is thought that it may be given a chance for battle and glory in the northwest soon. It currently has seven Cohorts, plus one in training in the capital.

43. The Legion of the Band of Mnerr; 37th Imperial Medium Infantry

Still another new Legion has been formed from the homeless bands of N'lyss refugees entering the Empire from the northwest. The Mu'ugalavyani policy of repression and regimentation has led to demographic upheavals in their northern regions, and the Band of Mnerr, a huge and powerful N'lyss chieftain from the mountains northwest of Ssa'atis, has made its way into the Imperium. The policy of the Tsolyani towards such wandering immigrants has always been to give them refuge, expose them at once to Tsolyani culture, and incorporate them into the structure of the Empire - with as little friction as possible. Mnerr's followers, therefore, have been encouraged to settle in the Chakan forests near Chene Ho, and he has also been assisted with weapons and supplies. Other N'lyss families and individuals have now begun to filter into Do Chaka as well, causing some problems to the settled populations of Chene Ho and Paya Gupa, and the Imperium has urged Mnerr to recruit these N'lyss into his new Legion. This is not always possible, given the ancient clan rivalries between the N'lyss bands, but Mnerr managed to collect some seven Cohorts of troops and arm them in their own traditional style, roughly approximating that of Tsolyani medium infantry. The great size and strength of these barbarian soldiers make them much feared, however, and when this Legion was sent against the Yan Koryani north of Chene Ho, it almost completely annihilated its opponents in the battle, losing two Cohorts of its own. General Korikada hiKurushma, of the Legion of the Givers of Sorrow, who was the senior Tsolyani commander at this battle, found it difficult to bring back the Legion of Mnerr after its initial victory, and the N'lyss pursued their defeated opponents into the Chakan forests and were gone for two days after the battle. As the Tsolyani were about to write them off as losses, they reappeared bearing many Yan Koryani skulls, the flesh of which had been stripped off and ritually eaten by the wild N'lyss. As the chieftain Mnerr himself put it to his Tsolyani comrades, "Let our enemies themselves give us strength!"

The Legion is now regaining its strength at Chene Ho, and the Tsolyani are providing General Mnerr with a crash course in proper battle etiquette and - more importantly - discipline. It is not likely that this will have much effect upon the N'lyss once they enter battle.

44. The Battalions of Sryma of Vra; 39th Imperial Medium Infantry

This is a new unit formed by a lord of the island of Vra: Sryma hiHoqqulen, of the ancient and noble Clan of the High Pinnacle. This Legion is devoted to the clan and to the worship of Lord Chegarra, the Hero-King, Cohort of mighty Karakan.

The High Pinnacle Clan was the enemy of the Tlakotani Dynasty for many centuries. The First Emperor is recorded as having "driven back the "People of the Peak," and these took refuge in the sea, on the island of Vra. It was death for Tsolyani merchants and fisherfolk to land upon the island, and in the poem "The Final Song of Cha-Nume" by Aresmu hiAmiyala (976 A.S.), the island is described as "the First of the Isles of the Excellent Dead."

The Tsolyani attempted the conquest of the island several times, but it was not until 1115 A.S. that they were successful. The nobility of the island was exterminated to a man, their women and children were sold into slavery, and the streets of the little city of Vra were paved with the flayed skins of those who had dared to oppose the might of the Imperium.

The High Pinnacle Clan was assumed to be extinct, and the Tsolyani imposed their own laws and customs upon the islanders. When Hejjeka IV “Restorer of Dignities” came to the throne in 1458 A.S., however, his first act was to proclaim an end to certain ancient hostilities, the restoration of fiefs to some of the disaffected noble families in the Empire, and a general amnesty to all “who had been foes of the glory of Tsolyanu.” At this time a commoner stepped out of the crowd at the coronation festivities at Bey Su and requested audience with the governor. It was then learned that this man was the direct, lineal descendant of the last of the God-Kings of Vra - he possessed the lost Sapphire Seal of the Vrayani dynasty, and he told a story of escaping the island by small boat just as the Tsolyani troops stormed into the palace many years before. The Emperor was constrained to grant a pardon to this man and his descendants, then living as potters in Jakalla, and they were restored to their island as fiefholders under Imperial law. This was perhaps the wisest thing the Imperium could have done; the Vrayani received their ancient rulers’ descendants with the wildest jubilation and proclaimed their loyalty to him and his successors forever. He, however, had lived all his life in Tsolyanu (as had his ancestors by then for some three hundred years), and he continued to serve the Tlakotani Dynasty loyally and almost fanatically until he died in 1501 A.S. His descendants have been faithful ever since.

The Emperor has thus been agreeable to the founding of a new Vrayani Legion and has encouraged the development of a truly Vrayani local autonomy and culture. Lord Sryma is a good soldier, another of those who had served under General Kettukal and learned his lessons well. He has gathered some eleven Cohorts thus far and promises more. He is a good friend of the Governor of Vra, Lord Hu’un hiChle, and there are plans for him to marry the governor’s sister, thus once again bringing a member of the High Pinnacle Clan into the Palace of the God-Kings of Vra.

45. The Legion of Morusai the Chieftain; 40th Imperial Medium Infantry

The original Legion, of which this is a modern descendant, is datable to the reign of Empress Vayuma Su in 931 A.S. She had attempted to disband or destroy all of those units devoted to the Lords of Change and replace them with others serving the lords of Stability. She thus took the recently urbanised people of the fringes of the Kurt Hills (the village of Hauma) and allowed them to form a Legion of medium infantry. They had apparently requested the formation of a unit of heavy infantry earlier, under the reign of Todukai Neqo “Pillar of the State,” but this request must have been refused for unknown reasons. In any case, the Legion came into existence under the title of “The Warriors of the Blue Shield,” mostly devoted to the worship of the goddess Avanthé.

The Legion continued under Empress Shaira Su but was almost disbanded by her successor, Emperor Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider,” who hated Avanthé more than any other deity. There is a brief notice of the Legion in the reign of Kanmi’yel Nikuma I “the Warrior,” and during the period of Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma III “the Scourge of Vimuhla” the Legion may have gone into hiding in the Kurt Hills since it is expunged from the records and marked as “a foe of the Imperium.”

The Empress Janule “She of the Blue Goddess” brought the Legion back and forgave it since she herself worshipped Avanthé. Her patronage of the Kurt Hills peoples resulted in almost a coterie of these hill folk in power in Avanthar. The Legion is mentioned again in the reign of Hejjeka II “the Heretic” as one which was part of the Battle of Mmillaka in the War with Salarvya, but it does not seem to have received any particular battle honours.

When Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” ascended the Petal Throne in 1747 A.S., the Legion was officially disbanded “as being of no further service to the Imperium.” It does not seem to have been

revived - at least under this name - by Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist,” although there is indeed a listing for a Legion of medium infantry based at the village of Hauma during the Great War of 2020.

After this there is no further notice of this unit, and its name remained simply in the record books until the coming of the current fiefholder of village Hauma. This man, Morusai hiBa’ashcha, of the Standing Reed Clan, has used his own wealth and that of his clan to restore a Legion to the area. He has done well, recruiting some eight Cohorts, with one more now in training. The new Legion has taken his name and thus has no official connection with its ancient forbearer (except for the unit number: 40th Medium Infantry). These troops are not experienced and have been posted to Katalal to police the central regions of the Empire. General Morusai is a devoted worshipper of Avanthé and seeks to obtain temple support for his Legion. This is currently under consideration by the priesthood.

46. The Forces of Chai Miridai; 41st Imperial Medium Infantry

The merchants who ply the great Msuma River have established a Legion in order to expand their prestige and indicate their loyalty to the Imperium. These men are members of many clans, but the White Stone Clan of the city of Usenanu is perhaps the most prominent. Through some rather usual politicking and perhaps bribery, this Legion has been activated and given status. It is, however, very new, completely inexperienced, and still limited only to three Cohorts (with one in training). The merchants have chosen a young man, Chai Miridai, a wealthy merchant’s son from the city of Usenanu, to lead the Legion. He had previously served as a Kasi in the Legion of Mirkitani Hero of Victories, and this experience has stood him in good stead. The erstwhile captain (=Kasi) is now a general!

The Legion is most active in recruitment, offering very high pay and promotions. It has been accused of hiring river pirates, foreigners, and other such ilk, but a recent accusation of hiring slaves freed for just this purpose has been strongly refuted both by General Chai Miridai and also by the Imperium.

It is now based in the city of Usenanu and is mainly utilised as river guards and a police force for the central regions of the Imperium.

47. The Legion of the Black Band of Mirizha; 42nd Imperial Medium Infantry

This is another of the new Legions formed from the wandering nomads of N’lyss who have been entering the Imperium in ever greater numbers recently under the pressure of Mu’ugalavyani repression in their homeland. These men come from a variety of strongly localized bands (or “tribes”), and they bring with them their ancient loyalties and hostilities. Thus, when the Imperium perceived that these groups could not all be put together into one or two larger Legions, a policy of forming smaller units containing from three to ten Cohorts was established.

The chieftain Mirizha of the Black Band is one of these tribal leaders. He and his people have stated that they are traditional enemies of the bands led by Kagoth of the Legion of the Mace Raised High, and they are neutral and coldly polite to the tribes which follow Mnerr. Mirizha has thus asked and received permission to establish his own small Legion of medium infantry. He is a fanatic worshipper of Vimuhla and is thus under the patronage of General Korikada of the Legion of the Givers of Sorrow and also of the Governor of Tumissa. He also is a deadly foe of the Yan Koryani, who used his people cruelly when they attempted to settle in the northlands.

At the recent battle north of Chene Ho these people distinguished themselves by slaying a good Cohort of one of the Yan Koryani units sent against them. They lost nearly two Cohorts of their own, however, and are now reduced to three Cohorts, plus one more made up of adolescents and some further nomad recruits at Chene Ho. It was their intention to outdo the Legion Of the Band of Mnerr, but the latter had had somewhat more experience, better training, better arms, and perhaps better luck on the battlefield. Mirizha is now furiously training his troops and sending secret messengers back across the Mu'ugalavyani border into N'lyss to bring out other clans which would be willing to join him.

48. The Regiment of the Clan of the Silver Lightning; 7th Imperial Archers

This is an old and once-excellent Legion, but it has never shaken off the stigma of being unlucky, a reputation earned some 1200 years ago during the reign of Empress Janule "She of the Blue Goddess." Originally this Legion seems to have been based at Meku, where the Clan of the Silver Lightning once had its headquarters. After the Civil War of 1010-26 A.S., however, the Clan was removed to Bey Su because of the favour shown it by Kanmi'yel Nikuma I "the Warrior," whose cause it had strongly supported. The Legion was also permitted to move its headquarters to the capital, and its clan-house there is said to have been one of the wonders of the age. After the usurpation of Targholel Nikuma, however, the Legion fell upon unhappy days and was almost reduced to a paper structure during the reign of Nu'unka "the Pious." Kanmi'yel Nikuma III "the Scourge of Vimuhla" made some use of this unit, since most of its men served the Clan of the Silver Lightning, traditionally a clan devoted to the Lord of Flame, mighty Vimuhla. No battle honours are recorded, however. The Legion did see service during the invasion of the island of Vra in 1115 A.S., and the Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma IV "Flattener of Peaks" granted it battle honours for its attack upon the last Vrayani citadel on the island.

In the last year of Empress Janule "She of the Blue Goddess" the Legion was posted to the Mu'ugalavyani border in Pan Chaka, and there began the series of inauspicious events which have plagued it ever since. During a minor skirmish with the Pachi Lei, the general of the Legion joined his troops to gain some personal glory - only to receive an arrow between the eyes and thus become the only casualty of the battle on the Tsolyani side! Then as the troops bore his body back to Butrus, a party of Mu'ugalavyani seeking a Qadarni battle came upon them and through some strange error took them for a unit of the Legion of the Lord of Red Devastation (which their livery suggested), a Legion particularly respected and sought by the Mu'ugalavyani in revenge for previous defeats. Rather than proclaim the error and thus lose face, the officers of the Legion gave battle to the Mu'ugalavyani and were completely defeated. After the melee was over the Mu'ugalavyani learned of their mistake and, feeling cheated, mutilated and castrated every prisoner, sewed strips of hide to them as "tails" (a sign of cowardice and low station) and whipped them back through the jungles of Pan Chaka to Butrus. Instead of being rewarded for their courage in facing a much better force, the Legion was humiliated and made to suffer incredible hardships. Subsequently, while other units of the Legion were seeking revenge for their comrades' disgrace in the jungle, the Great Storm of 1155 A.S. broke over the Chakas, and all of these troops were lost in the flooded forests. The reputation of being "unlucky" began and then grew even more when the remaining legionnaires were ordered back to Bey Su by Emperor Metlunel I "the Foolish" to "dance with their tails" before the court at Bey Su - a totally undeserved additional humiliation - but the reports of the Legion's defeat had been garbled in transmission, and it was reported that the Legion had shown real cowardice. Those who had suffered castration were commanded to serve as altar boys in the Temple of Dilinala, the Virgin Goddess, Cohort of Avanthé. A message was sent posthaste to the Emperor by the Governor of Butrus, who knew the truth, but through some incredible

error in the bureaucracy, this message was not delivered until the reign of Tariktanme “Expander of Temples” - long after all of the wretched legionnaires were dead!

The Legion was thus allowed to lie unofficially disbanded until the reign of Hejjeka I “the Restorer,” whose historians had finally unearthed the truth of the case. He ordered the Legion revived and the reputations of its officers cleared, giving it a posthumous Gold of Imperial Glory. This did not seem to help such, however, and recruits were loathe to join a Legion with a reputation of always being unlucky.

Emperor Hejjeka II “the Heretic” made use of the Legion in 1325 A.S. It took a small part in the Battle of Khum in Salarvya and seems to have come off well. But no battle honours were granted because the Army Commander forgot to include the Legion in his final report to the Imperium. Nothing more is heard of the Legion until the Time of the Usurpers, when the Legion seems to have joined the forces of Onusu hiBarudla “the Priestking of Fasiltum” - and suffered almost complete decimation in his ensuing defeat.

Empress Aleya “the Damsel of Purity” came to the throne in 1872 A.S. Recalling the curious case of the altar-boys of her goddess, Dilinala, some centuries before, she ordered the Legion once again to perform what she took to be its historical role in the temple, but she was dissuaded in time by the High Priestess who informed her that these legionnaires, unlike their unfortunate predecessors, were not in any sense eunuchs and could not be counted upon to leave the virgin priestesses in their present untouched condition. Annoyed and embarrassed, the Empress ordered the Legion out of her sight forever, sending it to guard the frontiers of Milumanaya. It thus served for some time as the garrison of Pelesar - just in time to suffer the debacle of the secession in 1976 A.S. When Pelesar fell, the mad tribesmen of the city of Hlikku sacrificed every one of the legionnaires to their curious and distasteful deity. Only a skeleton force of liaison officers and a few soldiers remained in Bey Su at the now dilapidated and ruinous clanhouse of the Clan of the Silver Lightning.

Thus things remained until the accession of Gyesmu “the Iron Fist,” whose military needs were so great that only completely defunct and forgotten Legions were allowed to remain dormant. He commanded the Clan to assemble another Legion and provide for its equipment and training, a task which was too costly for the clan members to do on their own. the Imperium thus aided in the rebuilding of the Legion, and it performed well at Purdimal - until the city fell to General Mititlenish I. Once again it was destroyed to a man. The Emperor, however, would not let the ancient and inauspicious Legion die, ordering that the Clan once more provide men and arms for it. Only two Cohorts could be raised, and these were sent to Butrus to bolster the Tsolyani garrison there. The Legion has seen no service since.

At present the Legion is under the command of a clever and ambitious nonhuman, a Pachi Lei, who is a personal friend and colleague of Lord Miko Kesun Tlaneng hiSayu, the Governor of Butrus. This officer is considered a good military planner and a fine warrior, but certain unpleasantnesses with his own people have made it impossible for him to serve in one of the Empire’s Pachi Lei auxiliary legions. He has done all he can to revive the Legion, collecting some eight Cohorts at present date. It is said that he possesses an amulet found in the ruins of an ancient city in the Pan Chakan jungles which, he believes, will save the Legion from any further ill fortune. This item is a hand-sized ball of some bluish metal, stamped with curious runes and fitted with what seems to be a small handle or knob. General Vrogga Dzh-Urru has been informed by certain priests that this device need only be touched in a certain way in order to bring the Legion “immediate and Permanent Victory.” His troops are thus cheered by this and follow him loyally.

49. The Legion of the Peaks of Kraa; 12th Imperial Archers

This Legion is one of those founded by Emperor Hehejallu “the Dark Moon” as a counterbalance to the power of the Legions devoted to the Lords of Stability. Just to the north of the City of Sarku and eastwards into the Kraa Hills a great many settlements of worshippers of the Lord of Worms are to be found, established there since before the coming of the Fisherman Kings, and it was from among these people that the Emperor recruited a Legion of archers.

The Legion first saw service in the accession of Do Chaka in 780 A.S. where it did quite well. It was ordered to serve the Emperor as part of the garrison of Avanthar itself, and under Kurshetl Nikuma II “the Viewer of Night” it attained some noble prominence. Its general, Vuthe hiKhanuma of the Domed Tomb Clan, was made High Prefect and Provost of the Chancery in Avanthar, and for a brief period the Legion attained the status of Imperial bodyguards, second only to the Omnipotent Azure Legion.

When the Emperor disappeared in 816 A.S., the ensuing chaos saw the end of this moment of glory, and the Legion was rapidly reposted to the City of Sarku by Hrishmuna Neqo I. Nothing more is heard of it until the reign of the Empress Vayuma Su, who attempted to disband it. Rather than disband, however, the Legion simply repaired to the inner citadel of the Temple of Sarku and remained there with its comrades, the Battalions of the Seal of the Worm, throughout the long siege initiated by the Empress Shaira Su “Divine Daughter of Thumis.” It is said that many of the Legion’s officers and men voluntarily committed suicide and had themselves buried in the catacombs beneath their temple, “ready to rise again as the undead servitors of our mighty Master” whenever need might require them.

The Legion lay dormant, thus, for a period of several hundred years before being reactivated by Tontiken Rirune “Slave of Demons” in 1311 A.S. At this time four Cohorts of troops were raised from the Kraa Hills, and the Legion was given to a certain Msse hiVorudu, of the Clan of the Domed Tomb. Hejjeka II “the Heretic” had no scruples about employing the Legion in his war with the Salarvyani in 1323, and it is listed as present at the Battle of Mmillaka. Metlunel V “the Esthete” seems to have felt some distaste for the worship of Sarku, and he commanded that the Legion return to its city and remain there “until Lord Sarku himself might come forth to order its men to battle once again.” This order was obeyed, and the Legion served as temple guards and city garrison for many years. In 1753 A.S. the Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” discovered this ancient edict and, it is written, himself performed great sorceries to bring forth the deity himself. Whatever the results of these incantations were is not known, but the Legion is recorded as having then been posted together with its commander “whose face reflects the might of the worm” - Sarku himself, according to legend - to Do Chaka. The Legion seems to have entered into some sort of alliance with the Sarku worshippers of the old Ito Clan there and thus fallen under a cloud. The Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” commanded the Legion to return to the City of Sarku, and there it remained as temple guards until the reign of Gyesmu “the Iron Fist.” During the War of 2020 it was reactivated briefly to serve as a reserve garrison, but it seems to have seen no battle service. Thereafter it fell into almost complete oblivion, only to be revived by the present Emperor, Hirkane Tlakotani, “the Stone upon Which the Universe Rests,” in response to demands by his youngest son, Prince Dhich’ une, who himself serves the Lord of Worms.

Command of this Legion has been given to one Haikon hiVorudu, of the Clan of the Domed Tomb, and the Legion is actively recruiting troops. It now has eight Cohorts (plus, it is whispered, three Cohorts of the undead - those ancient warriors who committed themselves to the catacombs in the reign of Shaira Su). It is famed for using poisoned arrows, and its men wear brown-lacquered armour and the skull-helmets of the Inner Circle of the Temple of Sarku.

50. The Legion of the Clan of the Broken Bough; 19th Imperial Archers

Under the Engsvanyali Empire archers and crossbowmen were not permitted to form true Legions but were termed “adornments” of units of medium or heavy infantry. The reason for this attitude is probably the aristocratic snobbery of the wealthy classes who could afford armour and edged weapons over those who could only equip themselves with bows. During the later part of the Engsvanyali period, however, it became apparent that various regions excelled at archery and could also afford armour. One of the latter Engsvanyali rulers thus ordered the recruitment of several Legions of archers and crossbowmen, drawn from areas which were famed for their skills. The Kurt Hills, Tumissa, Fasiltum, and the northern mountains were included in this edict, and still other Legions were developed based at such urban centres as Jakalla and Khirgar.

The Clan of the Broken Bough of the city of Fasiltum goes back beyond Engsvanyali times to the Bednalljan Dynasty. It has always been devoted to Lord Vimuhla and to the practice of hunting, archery, and related skills. The present Legion seems to have been formed sometime during the reign of Trakonel III “the God-King,” (circa 382-4 A.S.), and it played a part in the battles fought by Horkhun “the General” in circa 555 A.S. Fasiltum was always a difficult city to rule, held, as it were, by a coalition of the ancient clans and the Red-Robes of Vimuhla, and under the rule of Emperor Hehejallu “the Dark Moon,” it was placed under interdict. The Legion is said to have defended the walls and fought against the Tsolyani forces until ordered to lay down their bows by the governor, an act of betrayal for which he later suffered a death which should perhaps not be described here. The Emperor then commanded the disbanding of the Legion and the execution of all those who had served in it, but the executioners released many of the men out of respect for their bravery. Most of these fled into the Desert of Eyagi or to the Dry Bay of Ssu’um, where their descendants are still said to live.

The Legion remained inactive until the reign of Kanmi’yel Nikuma III “the Scourge of Vimuhla” when it was reactivated, and the people of Fasiltum were granted a new charter of liberties. It took part during his reign in the sack of the island of Vra and the repulse of the Milumanayani tribesmen in the Chayengar Range.

It is mentioned again in the reign of Hejjeka II “the Heretic,” who used it to good effect during the siege of Khum in Salarvya. During the troubled times of the Usurpers, the Legion served Onusu hiBarudla “the Priestking of Fasiltum,” and when he was vanquished, it swore fealty to Qenqolu hiVridi “the General of the West.” The restoration of the Imperium and the accession of Kanmi’yel Nikuma V “the Pretender” saw the Legion once again eclipsed and condemned to the mines of the Chayengar Range. The people of Fasiltum did not forget, however, and many years later they raised sufficient funds to buy back each legionnaire who still lived. The “Slaves of Fasiltum” were returned in triumph to their city, and gold fetters were put upon these men to signify that they were not slaves at all but heroes. At initiations into this Legion to this day one of the rituals is the fettering of a new recruit in chains of solid gold and the ceremonial carrying of him through the streets of Fasiltum.

Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” made good use of this Legion during the Great War of 2020, using it at Purdimal, Mrelu, the siege of Bey Su, and finally at the glorious victory of the second Battle of Tumissa. The Legion shared in the battle honours there and returned victorious. Ever since it has remained one of the most prestigious and beloved Legions of the Imperium. Its present general, Jugar hiFa’asu of Fasiltum sits high in the military councils of the Imperium, and the Legion occupies an important post north of Avanthar, guarding the frontier.

51. The Legion of Girikteshmu; 23rd Imperial Archers

This unit is named after an ancient hero, Lord Girikteshmu hiChuren of Jakalla. This person is said to have served the Engsvanyali Emperor, Bashdis Mssa II, so well that he was adopted as a Prince of the Empire - an event so notable that even the Livyani sources mention it. When the island of Ganga slid down into the sea, it is related that Girikteshmu's descendants elected to drown with it, rather than to lose their favoured "post beside the Throne."

The Legion is first mentioned in Tsolyani sources in an inscription of Trakonel I "the Blazing Light": it is listed as part of the force sent against the "People Who Come Forth from Beneath" and also as being present at the Battle of Tumissa in 176 A.S., where "Those Who Served the One Other" were destroyed.

The Legion served Prince Ho'otlaku (later Emperor Heshqu Miuna II "Wind-Rider") during his invasion of Yan Kor, and it is written that the Girikteshmu of that day (for by this time it had become the custom to name each succeeding general "Girikteshmu," as is the custom with other Tsolyani Legions also) carved his name and station upon the stones of Fortress Qu'urgha (present-day Ke'er).

The Legion took part in the annexation of Milumanaya in 730-1, during the reign of Hehejallu "the Dark Moon," but this Emperor feared the powers of the Lords of Stability and saw to it that all Legions serving these deities were sent to distant corners of the Imperium. The Legion thus served for a time in dusty Pelesar, then was sent to the siege of Sunraya, and finally was posted to miasmic Penom - where in 780 A.S. it was ordered to take part in the siege of Butrus. Most of its men were destroyed in this battle, and the Legion was reduced to two Cohorts and ordered to return to Jakalla for disbanding or amalgamation into other Legions. Fortunately, however, the Emperor seems to have forgotten the matter, and in 802 the Legion is still listed as part of the garrison at Jakalla.

The Legion was much favoured by the Empress Vayuma Su and her daughter, Shaira Su, the people of Jakalla were encouraged to join and recruiting was allowed in other cities as well. When the military commanders quarreled with the latter Empress and threatened to destroy the Empire rather than see her disband all of the best Legions, this unit, too, was ordered disbanded. The history of the next few years is clouded, but it seems sure that several of the Jakallan Legions had much to do with the fall of Shaira Su and the accession of Nriga Gaqchike "the Spider" - a mistake they later rued. Civil War ensued between the devotees of the Lords of Stability and their counterparts of the Lords of Change, and the Legion seems to have taken an active political role in the intrigues in Jakalla. Under Kanmi'yel Nikuma I "the Warrior" there is a record of an order releasing the officers of the Legion of Girikteshmu from the prisons of the Tolek Kana Pits "providing that each man gave up a son or brother as hostage to the Imperium." These persons were first imprisoned and then were later sent to the swamps of Penom where a special penal colony was set up for them. Most of them perished in the Mottled Plague of 1046 A.S.

The Legion is mentioned again in 1115 A.S. when it was used by Kanmi'yel Nikuma III "Flattener of Peaks" to sweep the shores of Vra with arrows and make ready for the landing of the Tsolyani forces there. The Empress Janule "She of the Blue Goddess" then provided battle honours for the Legion and commanded it to return to Jakalla to receive a special commemorative triumph. Metlunel II "the Builder" saw to it that the Legion was again used in battle at the Battle of Koyluga in 1218, where the Legion saw its darkest hour: it was surrounded by Salarvyani and cut off from the general Tsolyani rout. The Salarvyani then took great delight in cutting it to pieces, man by man. When arrows were exhausted, the legionnaires made use of stone and brick and sticks of wood. Contingents of untried Salarvyani troops were brought up one by one and allowed to test their mettle against the exhausted

legionnaires until at last flesh could stand no further, and the last Tsolyani soldier died under screaming hordes of Salarvyani axemen.

The record is then silent until the reign of Hejjeka I “the Replacer.” This Emperor commanded the revival of many ancient and defunct units in order to commemorate his “victories.” At the Coronation Jubilee of 1319 A.S., therefore, men who had never held a bow before were dressed in the livery of the Legion of Girikteshmu and were paraded through the streets of Bey Su. A new “Girikteshmu” was appointed from amongst the Emperor’s courtiers, and a complete twenty Cohorts were ordered enrolled. These included merchants, slaves, old men, women and children - anyone who happened to be handy. The Legion headquarters at Jakalla became a bedlam of unhappy and untrained - and untrainable - recruits.

Hejjeka II “the Heretic” took the Petal Throne in 1325 A.S. He perceived the weakness of the Salarvyani and commanded that those who could serve in the Tsolyani army must continue to serve; those who were unfit were ordered discharged. The courtier who had played the role of “Girikteshmu” was given precisely six months to learn the art of the bow or else find himself the target of all of the bows of his erstwhile Legion. Although he made a great effort, it is written that he was not successful in striking the target, and his body was feathered with arrows by his somewhat more enthusiastic legionnaires until it was “as feathered as a Kuni bird.”

The Emperor lost no time in rebuilding this ancient and honourable Legion, and it saw service in Salarvya within the year. All during the War with Salarvya the Legion was used, winning battle honours three times and the Gold of Imperial Glory once. It returned to Jakalla victorious, with the heads of over 3,000 Salarvyani nobles and officers. These were ceremoniously entombed beneath a great statue of the first Girikteshmu, which may still be seen today in the Hall of Excellent Rememberings in the Legion headquarters in Jakalla.

In 1699 the Legion appears to have followed the standards of Vriggetsu Dnash, “the Usurper of the South,” and upon his demise it withdrew into its barracks and played no further part in the various rebellions. Kanmi’yel Nikuma V “the Pretender” ordered it forth once again, sending it to the Pan Chakan frontier. Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” would have had the Legion destroyed, but officials who still remembered the glory of its earlier history thoughtfully “lost” the registration and charter of the Legion in the maze of Tsolyani bureaucracy, and throughout his long reign the Emperor never knew that the Legion still existed. The Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” and her successors were informed of its continued existence, and it saw excellent service in 1842 when Pan Chaka was retaken. In 1976 A.S. it was ordered to go and “see to” Milumanaya, which had seceded, but by the time it arrived at Khirgar the northern reaches were lost to the Tsolyani, and it returned empty-handed to Butrus.

The Great War of 2020 found the Legion in active service once more. Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” sent it to repel the Mu’ugalavyani at Chene Ho in 2019, and the Legion suffered defeat along with the rest of the Tsolyani armies there. It regrouped at Bey Su and eventually managed to join the Battle of the Temple of Chanis in 2020. Its battle honours were tripled for its role there, and it received its special Great Standard (the “Kaingdalidalisa”) which is now kept within its crystal case in Jakalla. Further military honours were received when the Chakan Uprising took place in 2045 A.S., and it has joined with General Kettukal hiMraktine in his invasions of Yan Kor in modern times, being especially useful against the advancing phalanxes of Yan Koryani infantry at Srigash Field. It is said that it was the fourth Cohort of this Legion which was assigned to erect the impaling stake upon which the Baron Ald’s mistress was executed after the fall of Ke’er. The Legion is thus held in special hatred by the Yan Koryani, and when it was posted to the northern border during the current crisis there, it found itself the

target of almost every Yan Koryani missileman in the battle at the foot of the Atkolel Heights! The Legion suffered much loss but came away victorious.

The current “Girkiteshmu” is of the ancient lineage of Koyuga of Jakalla, a member of the Clan of the Red Sun and a worshipper of Chegarrar the Hero-King, as have been all of his ancestors. He is a veteran officer and one of the pillars of the Tsolyani military Party.

53. The Legion of the Crystalline Peak; 41st Imperial Archers

This Legion of archers is based in the city of Ru in Kerunan, and it is now encharged with the defense of the city and with patrolling the small mountain villages and towns of this Protectorate of the Empire.

The Legion was first raised in 2050 A.S. by Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” after the annexation of Kerunan. It was composed then largely of mountain and forest peoples who were hostile to Salarvyani rule and who assisted the Imperium in the annexation of the Protectorate in 2031 A.S.

Aside from one recent event, the Legion has had an undistinguished history. It fought no Qadarni battles, nor did it take part in the pacification of the wilder regions of Chaigari. It was present, however, at the Battle of Ru, when General Kettukal hiMraktine decisively defeated the Salarvyani in 2347 A.S. When he won the victory it briefly shared in his glory. Part of the battle honours and the spoils of the battle were given to the Legion, and it has now built a larger clanhouse and barracks for itself in Ru.

The current general of this Legion is one Hutligainu hiBarregga, a native of Ru and worshipper of Avanthé. He comes from the forest clan of the Crooked Bough, prominent in the villages of the Gilraya Forests. Some five Cohorts are now quartered at Ru, although their military training takes place at Sokatis.

54. The Regiment of the Knower of Spells; 5th Imperial Crossbowmen

This Legion was founded by Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” in 1753 A.S. in response to a demand from the Temple of Gruganu for some military representation. The Emperor favoured the three Dark Lords (Hru’u, Sarku, and Ksarul) and thus quickly granted the request. The Legion was based at Meku, an ancient stronghold of Lord Ksarul and his Cohort, Gruganu, the Knower of Spells.

In 1842 A.S. the Legion participated in the retaking of Pan Chaka, performing reasonably well against the Pachi Lei mercenaries of the Mu’ugalavyani there. The Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess,” however, was no friend of the dark temples and quickly saw to it that the Legion was reduced in strength, its sources of recruits diverted, and those members of the priesthood of Gruganu encouraged who had no taste for military matters.

This state of affairs continued through the reign of Gyesmu “the Iron Fist.” He made some attempt to revive the Legion but met with resistance from the priests of Gruganu, who in that period were firmly convinced of the futility of secular matters and military affairs in particular. The Legion was thus left to defend the city of Meku against the Mu’ugalavyani, and it could not hold against the hordes of red-clad troops for long. It surrendered the city in 2019 A.S. and was allowed to become prisoners of war for the duration in Mu’ugalavya. After the cessation of hostilities in 2020 A.S. some of these men returned to Tsolyanu, but the Imperium refused to recognise them as true soldiers, and for many years thereafter they remained deprived of their lands and clan status. Their rights were only restored by

Emperor Heshtu'atl in 2184 A.S. Ever since, the Legion has remained largely a body of temple guards and city garrison for the citadel of Meku.

The present Emperor has revived the Legion, however, under the generalship of a powerful and ambitious man, Lord Mriggadashu hiTekku'une, who is not much of a soldier but is an excellent administrator. This officer has now raised some six Cohorts and has another in training. These men are reasonably good troops, and the crossbow is a favourite weapon of the west. The marksmanship of the men of Meku is not as famed, perhaps, as that of the people of Tumissa, but it is considered quite good. The Legion has now been posted to Mrelu to counter any Yan Koryani breakthrough in the north.

55. The Legion of Glorious Destiny; 9th Imperial Crossbowmen

The crossbow is traditionally a weapon of the men of Tumissa and also of the northern mountaineers. The Legion of Glorious Destiny is formed largely of the latter, being mentioned first in the edicts of Emperor Gyesmu "the Iron Fist."

When Milumanaya seceded in 1976 A.S. a great many tribes loyal to Tsolyanu took refuge in the Empire, filtering down from the north to settle in the southern foothills of mighty Thenu Thendraya, the Kraa Hills, Akonar Peak, and around the foot of Bey Trantis Peak. The Imperium commanded these people to pay for their lands in troops and assistance, and most of the tribes responded loyally, founding units and Legions for the Empire.

The Great War of 2020 took a heavy toll of these units, and only one man in twenty is said to have found his way home again after the defeat of the Mu'ugalavyani. The Legion of Glorious Destiny was posted to Purdimal shortly after its founding, and it took part there in the long and terrible siege. When the forces of the Mu'ugalavyani general, Mi'itlenish I, finally stormed the citadel, the Legion found its way into the underground labyrinths beneath the place and took refuge with some of the so-called "Old Ones" of Purdimal, the semi-human creatures who inhabit the dank and miasmic tunnels beneath the city. Three Cohorts and a small cadre of officers were thus able to escape the destruction above, and some of these, it is said, never returned to the light but instead took wives from the Old Ones and continued to dwell in the labyrinths forever. Others did emerge, however, and in 2020 the Mu'ugalavyani had to abandon the city and retreat. The remaining men of the Legion were able to rejoin the Tsolyani army, and a few small units of the Legion were present at the second battle of Chene Ho, when the Tsolyani defeated the Mu'ugalavyani Army of the North.

The Empire rewarded the Legion with battle honours and a Gold of Imperial Glory for the commander, and ever since this unit has been considered one of the finest crossbow Legions in the Imperium. The northern tribes continue to join it, and recruits come even today from across the borders in Milumanaya. It has seen recent raids into Yan Kor by General Kettukal hiMraktine. Crossbowmen of this Legion slew many of the defenders of the city of Maxis in Yan Kor when the Tsolyani raiders reached there under General Kettukal's lieutenant, Qeqelmu hiSsaivra.

Currently the Legion is under the command of Lord Sangar hiVu'unavu of Fasiltum, a descendant of one of the mountain tribes from Milumanaya, but one who has married into Tsolyani society and is now a member of the prestigious and ancient Vriddi Clan of Fasiltum. Most of these troops serve Lord Vimuhla, the Lord of Flame, and thus this general is considered particularly appropriate for the Legion, combining as he does the ancient mountain traditions of the north and the urban nobility of the foremost Vimuhla-worshipping clan of the Empire. General Sangar is an excellent officer, tough and demanding, and his troops are the terror of the Milumanayani and Yan Koryani across the border, just north of the City of Sarku.

57. The Legion of the Citadel of Glory; 13th Imperial Crossbowmen

This new Legion is financed partly by the Temple of Vimuhla in Tumissa and partly by the Clan of the Red Sword, one of the ancient and powerful clans of that city. It is led by the Governor of Tumissa in person, Lord Tsumikel hiTengetlaku, who is the most prominent member of the clan. The governor has seen that there are many good crossbowmen among the young men of the city and its surrounding regions to be recruited into the present Legions, and he is desirous of forming a Legion of his own which will bring him, his clan, and his deity, the Mighty Lord of Flame, great glory. He has thus used all of his influence with his temple and with his new-found allies in the temple of the war-god, Karakan, to obtain permission from the Imperium for the founding of a new Legion. This was granted recently, and the Emperor's second son and most active military heir, Prince Eselne, visited the city to celebrate the inauguration of the Legion this year.

The Legion already has recruited five Cohorts, and it is said that their training is as good as that of some of the older and more experienced units. One more Cohort is in training at Tumissa, and several hundred further troops are currently being enrolled. The Legion has no battle experience whatever as yet, and the governor is seeking ways to have it transferred to the northern frontier, perhaps to Khirgar or to Chene Ho, to provide some battle seasoning.

The governor is himself a retired soldier, having served with distinction in the Legion of the Lord of Red Devastation. He will probably not lead the troops in person, being too old, but will entrust them to some younger officer.

58. The Legion of Lord Kharihaya; 14th Imperial Crossbowmen

This Legion is a new unit, formed under the patronage of one of the richest lords of the Imperium, Kharihaya hiBosuga, of the city of Tumissa. Lord Kharihaya is himself too old to command the Legion, and he has thus appointed his nephew, Lord Ekune hiBosuga, to lead it. These men are part of the Red Sun Clan, but they belong to that branch which favours mighty Karakan, Lord of War, rather than the worship of Vimuhla, Master of the Flame. There is thus rivalry within the clan itself, since the Red Sun Clan is prominent also in the military units which are devoted to Vimuhla and Chiteng.

In point of fact, this Legion is but a continuation of a much older unit. The Legion of the Blood-Red Orb was founded in 1071 A.S. by Kanmi'yel Nikuma III "the Scourge of Vimuhla," and it seems to have been financed by the Clan of the Red Sun - the Vimuhla branch, however. It served well in the annexation of the island of Vra in 1115 A.S. under Kanmi'yel Nikuma IV "Flattener of Peaks," and it also fought in Salarvya in 1218 and 1219 under Metlunel II "the Builder." It was exiled to Sokatis in the reign of Dashiluna "the Green-Eyed" who feared the power of the war-gods' temples. Hejjeka II "the Heretic" made use of it during the War with Salarvya, sending it to the Battle of Mmillaka and on into the area near Khum. It was surprised while marching there and nearly destroyed by a fast-moving Salarvyani strike force of light and medium infantry, but its command structure remained intact. In 1653 A.S. it was completely rebuilt and refinanced by its clan in Tumissa, but the Emperor, Metlunel VI "He Who is lame" refused to allow it to seek battle, fearing, perhaps, the growing power of the worshippers of Vimuhla in the west. It joined the side of General Qenqolu hiVridi during the Time of the Usurpers and suffered in his disgrace accordingly.

Nothing more is heard of it until the reign of Neshkiruma "the Cloud-Spinner" who allowed the provinces of Milumanaya to secede. During his reign it is said that the Legion was to be posted to

Khirgar, but this does not seem to have occurred. In the Time of Many Emperors (2015 A.S.) it is not listed as being among the Tumissan rebels. Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” called it forth to the Battle of Chene Ho, and it suffered in the ensuing Tsolyani defeat there, not being reactivated until the present day.

Rather than use the Legion’s old name, which carries connotations of the ownership of Vimuhla, its present patrons have given it the name of its major backer himself and have completely reconstituted it. It has seen some action during the invasions of Yan Kor by General Kettukal hiMraktine, and it has also been part of the victorious force which defeated the Mu’ugalavyani incursion at Butrus. It is currently posted to Paya Gupa, where it is part of the garrison of that city.

Its general, Lord Ekune, is a proud, harsh man of middle years. He is particularly hostile to his clan-cousin, General Kuruktashmu hiKetkolel, of the Legion of the Lord of Red Devastation, taking every opportunity to confront him and - hopefully - humble him. The Imperium has tried to keep these two men apart, but with all available troops being posted to Khirgar to face the Yan Koryani, it has not been possible to do so, and the two men have met and clashed verbally on several occasions.

59. The Legion of the Clan of the Standing Stone; 2nd Imperial Slingers

Legions of slingers are also a relatively recent development, as has been noted above for archers and crossbowmen. A number of units are listed in the Imperial archives at Avanthar, but most of these seem to have been rather short-lived and ephemeral, lasting for perhaps the lifetime of one commander or the reign of one Emperor. From the muddle of records and documents it is difficult to say whether a given Legion is “the same” or “different” than some previous unit from the same city. In the case of the city of Urmish the problem is even more confused by the presence of records which seem to differ from those maintained at Avanthar. During the Great War of 2020 the Mu’ugalavyani sacked the city and destroyed much of the Archives there. When peace came the scribes busily sorted out whatever they could find, added things “as they remembered them” (as the Submission to the Petal Throne from Urmish for the year 2022 A.S. puts it), and otherwise made a muddle of the records. The submissions kept in the Chancery at Avanthar are also incomplete from Urmish, for reasons which are not exactly clear. In any case, the earlier history of some of the military and priestly organisations from Urmish are not amenable to easy research.

The Clan of the Standing Stone is one of the larger clans of Urmish, going back, according to its own reckoning, to the First Imperium, when all of the western clans swore allegiance to the Bednalljans. The right to form a Legion was first given by one of the Jakallan Emperors before the capital was moved north to Bey Su. In that far off time, the clan leaders state, the Legion of their clan was composed of heavy infantry, armed and armoured with all of the elaborate Bednalljan panoply and led by the aristocratic First Lineage of the clan, that of Chuyon the Slayer.

During Engsvanyali times the city and its Legions seem to have experienced many ups and downs, and eventually the Legion of the Clan of the Standing Stone was disbanded for reasons unknown. The Plague of the White Hand of the reign of Bashdis Mssa IV destroyed Urmish almost entirely, and the area lay deserted for nearly a century. Thereafter it was resettled by those who were the descendants of the original refugees, plus many others, and no one can now say whether the men who refounded the Clan of the Standing Stone were direct descendants of those who had previously been the clan-leaders, or whether they were mere upstarts. In later Engsvanyali reigns, however, there was a Legion supported by this clan, although it seems to have been composed of archers or possibly medium infantry.

Clan records from the present Imperium are obscure and much muddled, as mentioned above, and the first actual mention of a Legion of slingers dates to 1909 A.S., when Aleya “the Damsel of Purity” authorized the clan to “use its revenues for the support of its glorious Legion of noble slingers in defense of the Imperium.” The clan had by this time become largely devoted to Lord Thumis, Master of Wisdom, and his Cohort, Lord Ketengku, the Many-Eyed, at least in the city of Urmish.

The Legion saw service during the debacle in Milumanaya in 1976 A.S., retreating through the burning deserts to Khirgar after the secession of the north. It was then returned to Urmish, where it was at the time of the Great War of 2020. It performed well during the first Battle of Tumissa, retreated to Urmish, and suffered the same fate as the rest of the city when the Mu’ugalavyani sacked it. It is written that forty-seven men of this Legion barricaded themselves in one of the round towers which may still be seen today to the west of the main citadel, and there they held off the enemy for some days until at last the Mu’ugalavyani sappers breached the walls and brought the tower down.

The succeeding Emperor, Gyesmu Dalisa “the Magnificent and Ever-Living” restored the Legion and rebuilt the tower as a permanent monument to its gallantry. Its members have since taken part in the incursions into Yan Kor and were at Srigash Field with the armies of Lord Bazhan. The current commander, General Charikasa hiChuyon, is said to be again of the ancient lineage which once made this Legion great, and his troops revere him greatly.

60. The Legion of the Joyful Clan of the Noble Vrayani; 3rd Imperial Slingers

The people of the southern islands have always been renowned as great slingers. There are epic poems dating to the age of the Fishermen Kings which relate the adventures of one Khu’es vuNaoma, whose sling-stone struck out the fourth eye of the Demon Kurritlakal and thus saved mankind. The First Imperium seems to have established these troops as regular light infantry, and the Engsvanyali records state that once the troops of the island of Vra were garlanded with wreaths of gold and given sacks of “sling-stones of diamond and rubies and all precious gems” as a reward for their slaying of the Hlyss and the evil Hlutrgu.

The fall of the Engsvanyali Imperium gave the island its opportunity for independence. When the “People of the Peak” refused to join the first Tlakotani emperor and fled to the island, the Vrayani gave them refuge and joined with them against the mainlanders. Thereafter, for over a thousand years the Vrayani held off the Hlyss, the Hlutrgu, the Tsolyani, and all of the pirates of the southern seas.

The date of the founding of the Legion is not known, but within a hundred years of the founding of the Tsolyani Imperium these slingers are recorded as “serving beside the throne of the God-King of Vra.” There are many legends and epic poems about the men of this ancient and noble unit; e.g. the Song of Tneyu vuWasuma, praising his daring raid upon the homeland of the Hlyss and the treasures which he seized there. These objects were kept in the Eyrie of the Seven Councilors in the citadel of Vra until captured by the Tsolyani in 1115 A.S.

When at last Vra fell to the Tsolyani, the Legion was destroyed. Most of the Vrayani nobility was slain, a few were able to flee in small boats, and only a few captives were taken alive to be sacrificed later to the war-gods by Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma IV “Flattener of Peaks”. The last defenders of the citadel were “strangled with their own slings, their bodies were defiled, and their families were carried over the sea to slavery for the greater Glory of the Imperium.” Many Vrayani women and children dragged out miserable lives in the mines to the north of Avanthar, although one or

two met still less pleasant fates: the story of Princess Eddyana “the Singer of the Golden Cage” is famous, though irrelevant here.

Thus things remained until the reign of Hejjeka IV “Restorer of Dignities,” who restored the Legion of the Clan of the High Pinnacle (as described above) and who also commanded the return of the treasures of Tneyu vuWasuma to the rebuilt citadel of Vra, where they may still be seen today. The Imperium was combed for descendants of the original nobility of Vra, and some were found still living in the mountains north of the Empire, no longer slaves but mostly simple mountaineers and peasants. The coming of the gorgeously dressed Imperial officials to these mean villages is recounted in the “Hymn to the Light Above” by Ndiu vuChrayu (composed in 1550 A.S.). To their great surprise, the villagers were not massacred or enslaved but were instead robed in the strange costumes of the people of Vra, given great sums of money, and were returned in magnificent splendour to the island of their long-forgotten ancestors. There they had to learn all over again the skills of a sea people, and there were those who quietly left and returned to their new homeland in the north. The majority, however, adapted and survived.

In 1582 A S Hejjeka V “the Open-Handed” freely granted nobility in the Empire to all of those who were descended from the ancient Vrayani aristocracy, and he supplied money and equipment also for the founding of a new Legion of slingers. This Legion quickly saw action in the Time of the Usurpers, and their support of Vriggetsu Dnash, “the Usurper of the South” put them under a temporary cloud with the succeeding Emperor, Kanmi’yel Nikuma V “the Pretender.” Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” similarly disliked the followers of the Lords of Stability and ordered the Legion to disband, but before his command had been acted upon, his death occurred, and the accession of Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” saw the cancellation of the order and the restoration of the Legion to Imperial favour.

The Legion took part in the retaking of Pan Chaka and some other minor engagements of this period, and when the Great War of 2020 occurred, it was posted first to Jakalla and later to relieve Katalal. Units of this Legion were present at the Battle of the Temple of Chanis in 2020 A S., and at the second battle of Tumissa it was awarded battle honours and a special standard for its rout of the Mu’ugalavyani left flank. In modern times it was with General Kettukal at the Battle of Butrus and also with the Tsolyani Legions during the first great incursion into Yan Kor. Most of the present twenty Cohorts of the Legion are now at Chene Ho, preparing an offensive there against the Yan Koryani invaders. The present general, Lord Miruene vuChrayu, is a seasoned soldier, a good strategist who is often called upon to give council at the military staff meetings of General Kettukal, and a staunch supporter of the Imperium. He himself worships lord Hnalla, Master of Light, as do most of his troops, but he is not averse to cooperation with Prince Eselne and the Military Party. His tough, wiry little slingers are his pride, and he would like nothing better than to see his sling-stones clattering from the walls of Ke’er once again.

61. The Legion of the Twelve Paths of Avanthé; 9th Imperial Slingers

This Legion is an ancient one which had long lain inactive but which has now been reactivated. It is based in the city of Petris Layoda on the island of Ganga, and its recorded history goes back to Engsvanyali times when the priestesses of the Temple of Avanthé there established a corps of guards for the sacred precincts of the great shrine of Avanthé of the Twelve Paths there.

The Legion is mentioned in Tsolyani times as part of the entourage of Empress Sriyesa “Lady of the Palaces,” (circa 464-517 A.S.), who much favoured Avanthé and invited units of this Goddess’

special units to serve her in Avanthar. Most of these troops were priestesses, and it then seems to have become the custom to recruit troops for this Legion only from amongst the priestesses of the Goddess and not from among her priests. When the Empress died and her last consort, General Horkhunen took the throne, he saw to it that the Legion was posted to the western border where most of the women met their deaths at the hands of the fierce Pachi Lei. For a brief period during the subsequent reigns of Kurshetl Nikuma I “the Seizer of Cities” and Arodai Nikuma, the Legion was reactivated, supplied with troops from the island of Ganga, and retained at Tumissa as garrison troops. Unhappily, however, the reign of Arodai Nikuma was followed by that of Hehejallu “the Dark Moon,” and his devotion to the Lord of Worms, mighty Sarku, led him to commit totally uncalled for excesses. He commanded the Legion to assist in the conquest of Milumanaya (circa 730 A.S.), and the Legion was ordered to march through the northern deserts from Khirgar to the siege of Pelesar. Twelve Cohorts set out, ill-supplied and attired only in the light infantry costume of a leather vest and a kilt. None of these wretched women reached Pelesar, and there is still an oasis in the desert northeast of Khirgar called “the Place of Bones,” where it is assumed the desert tribes surrounded the Legion and destroyed it to the last trooper. The tribes in this area are sometimes cannibalistic, and historians suppose that this was the fate that met most of these poor women, far from their island home.

The Legion was never sent north again until modern times. The Empress Vayuma Su, just as fanatical in her support of the lords of Stability as Emperor Hehejallu had been in his devotion to those of Change, attempted to revive it, but the priestesses of the island of Ganga delayed and procrastinated and eventually begged the Empress not to call their women to battles in the unfamiliar north. The Empress agreed and made this Legion the hereditary guardians of the island of Ganga and the custodians of the half-sunken ruins of the ancient Engsvanyali cities there. Emperor Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider” finally removed the Legion from the rolls and allowed it to slip back into obscurity.

The daughter of the present governor of the island of Ganga, however, is an Aridani woman of great talent and persuasiveness. Lady Su’esa hiNrashkema has prevailed upon her father and through him upon Avanthar to allow the reforming of this Legion and she has found a young, strong priestess to lead it: one Sea hiVaishu, of the Clan of the Blue Girdle. Using the ancient treasury of the Temple of Avanthé on the island, these two women have succeeded in recruiting some nine Cohorts of Aridani slingers. These troops are now posted near Khirgar at the foot of the Atkolel Heights where they function as light infantry auxiliaries

62. The Legion of the Sapphire Kirtle; 12th Imperial Light Infantry

The Empress Shaira Su “Divine Daughter of Thumis” is renowned for her legislation in favour of the rights of the Aridani woman. During her reign many of the principles and limitations of this system of legal independence for those women who desired it were worked out, and she saw to it that clan-daughters seeking Aridani status could not be prevented through some stratagem or machination of their husbands or their clans. In all of this she was supported strongly by the Temples of Thumis (her own sect), Avanthé, and Hnalla, plus those of the Cohorts of these deities. One of the most vocal supporters of “women’s rights” was the Temple of Lady Avanthé’s Cohort, Dilinala, the Maiden of the Emerald Crown. This deity accepts only women into her temples, has nothing to do with males, and stands for “woman as woman alone.” Her priestesses are virgins, and her shrines are frequented by those who seek sanctuary from the tribulations of clan-life, marriage, and the secular world.

Her worship has another side, however: it is almost favoured by those who actively dislike men and who wish to play a much stronger role in the politics and rough-and-tumble of Tsolyani society. A

small percentage of these Aridani women are themselves Lesbians - or at least those not sexually attracted to men. The Empress Shaira Su herself does not seem to have been so-minded, but she gave encouragement to those who were, establishing a Legion of virgin priestesses, which recruited only women and girls. During her reign these troops served as medium infantry and were based in Bey Su. They saw service against the walls of the city of Sarku and were used more than once in the forcible disbanding of other Legions devoted to the Lords of Change. One of these women was among the first to fight her way into the City of Sarku, and the Empress granted her the "Gold of Imperial Glory" for having personally vanquished twelve of the Battalions of the Seal of the Worm on the battlements of the outer enceinte.

The Emperor Nriga Gaqchike "the Spider" came to the throne in 984, and he saw to it that this Legion was transferred to the little city of Tu'unmra in the far west of the Empire. There, he thought, it would be harmless. Unfortunately for him, however, it only added to the strength of his opponents there, and in the Civil War of 1010-26 A.S. it fought on the side of the Warlord of the West. When peace came again and Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma I "the Warrior" took the throne, the Legion stayed at Tu'unmra. It was useful as a garrison of the western forests throughout subsequent reigns and came to prominence again only in the period of the Empress Janule "She of the Blue Goddess." She saw to it that the Legion was given good quarters, arms and equipment, and regular duty as the custodian of the western marches between Tumissa and Chene Ho. Her favour perished with her, however, and during the reign of Empress Dashiluna "the Green-Eyed," who was a devotee of the Goddess Dlamelish, the Legion was commanded to serve at the orgies of the Mistress of Demons herself. Rounded up by force, dressed as slave serving maidens, and otherwise humiliated and degraded, these warrior women were compelled to cater to the jaded pleasures of the priesthood of the Obsidian Princess for many days and nights. At length some contrived to escape and managed to rescue a number of their sisters. They fled to the fastnesses of Do Chaka and took refuge amongst the nonhuman but friendly Pe Choi, where many of them lived out their lives as rebels against the Empire. The succeeding Emperor, the terrible Tontiken Rirune "Slave of Demons" then abolished the Legion officially and ordered it stricken from the rolls.

Abortive attempts to revive the Legion were made by the Empress Nrainue "the Iridescent Goddess" and by her successor, Aleya "the Damsel of Purity." Only in modern times has this found favour once again with the Temple of Dilinala, and after receiving the guarantee of the present Emperor that the honour of these women would be respected "in perpetuity," has the Legion been reactivated. The ancient headquarters at Tu'unmra, which had meantime been used first as a storehouse and then fallen completely into ruins, has been rebuilt and refurbished, and a strong, clearheaded young priestess of Dilinala named Dijaya hiQurruluma of the Blue Girdle Clan has been given command. The lady Dijaya has determined to train her troops as light infantry in imitation of the Yan Koryani, who use their women and girls as archers, javelin-throwers, and skirmish troops, and she has thus broken with the tradition that a Legion must maintain its original troop-type forever. She has collected some twelve Cohorts from all over the Empire and has been successful in building up a corps of highly motivated and well-trained young women. These troops have now seen action on the northern frontier, first in the Atkolel Heights where over a Cohort has been lost in an attempt to dislodge the Yan Koryani from their positions, and then north of Chene Ho. Other Cohorts are based at Khirgar and at the village of Si'is to the southeast of the Heights. The lady Dijaya herself is at Chene Ho, which may have a strange connotation for her since she is descended from the old noble lineage of Qurruluma, the legendary governor of that city in Bednalljan times who died defending its walls from the Red-Robes of the Temple of Vimuhla in Mu'ugalavya. Lady Dijaya is herself a Lesbian and has several regular lovers amongst her officers. She is tough, almost completely fearless, and willing to risk whatever her troops

must risk. She offered to climb the Atkolel Heights herself when she learned of the loss of her troops there, and it was with difficulty that her fellow generals at Chene Ho were able to restrain her. She is now planning an expedition to climb the vertical precipices on the western side of the Heights and thus take the Yan Koryani in the flank or rear.

63. The Legion of the Inverted Hand; 27th Imperial Light Infantry

The Imperium fields very few regular Legions of light infantry, preferring instead to draw light troops from available peasant and urban populations and then return these persons to their regular tasks once the need for them is past. There are, however, a few ethnic groups in the Empire which are proud of being light infantry and which would chafe at being asked to fight in the heavily armoured styles used by the other peoples of the Imperium.

One area which has regularly supplied scouts and bowmen is the Kurt Hills. The small, bandy-legged men of this region are traditionally the best bowmen in the land, and their exploits as scouts are legendary. It is said that once they were challenged to a Qadarni battle on the western frontier by a Cohort of Mu'ugalavyani heavy infantry (how this came about is another story - it is not usual for troop types of different armour classes to make or accept challenges, since the Qadarni battle itself is a religious ritual as well as a practical military exercise, and only equals are allowed to take part). The Mu'ugalavyani dared the Kurt Hills archers to attack them, confident in their large shields and their own composite bows. After standing in the forest all day, however, they saw no sign of the little hill people and sent a messenger to the Tsolyani camp asking "where the cowards have gone." The Tsolyani replied only, "Look upon the armour of your rear ranks." The Mu'ugalavyani were horrified to see that the back of each of their rearmost soldiers was marked with splashes of Blue dye, precisely in those places where an arrow would have penetrated the segments of the armour and slain its wearer! The Mu'ugalavyani base camp was similarly marked with blue, and the heads of the Mu'ugalavyani lookouts were neatly piled in the centre of the headquarters floor. Upon the dispatch table was scrawled, "Your lives are our gifts to you."

The Kurt Hills seem to have maintained some sort of autonomy during the early reigns of the Tlakotani dynasty. Kurshetl Nikuma I "the Seizer of Cities" is recorded as having put down a revolt there in 590 A.S. and captured Dai Oqoqu, the "Chief of All the Kurtani." Thereafter the area appears relatively peaceful, which one minor revolt recorded in 808 A.S. during the reign of Kurshetl Nikuma II "the Viewer of Night" (probably due to this Emperor's hostility to worshippers of Karakan and Chegarran). Vayuma Su "Empress of All the Lands" took the people of the Kurt Hills into her court since they were almost all devotees of the Lords of Stability and deadly enemies of the Dark Gods. During her reign and that of her daughter, Empress Shaira Su "Divine Daughter of Thumis," therefore, a number of Imperial generals and officials bear names which sound like those of the tribesmen of this region.

Emperor Nriga Gaqchike "the Spider" seems to have ignored the religious affiliations of the Legion, but it also played very little part in his campaigns, and it is probable that it was under somewhat of a cloud. The Kurt Hills were briefly independent once again during the Civil War of 1010-26 A.S. and were once more pacified by Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma I "the Warrior," although it took two Legions a month to conquer the last village strongholds, and this at the cost of several thousand lives.

The Legion was officially disbanded by Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma III "the Scourge of Vimuhla" and remained so until Emperor Hejjeka I "the Replacer" ordered it to be raised again in 1322 A.S. This was in time for it to play an important role in the campaigns of Hejjeka II "the Heretic" in the War with Salarvya, and it saw service in the Gilraya Forests, at Koyluga, and also at Khum.

Emperor Hejjeka IV “the Restorer of Dignities” gave the Kurt Hills local autonomy in 1460 A.S., taking them out of the Province of Katalal. This edict was rescinded, however, by Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” almost exactly three hundred years later, and he saw to it that the Legion was sent to the Chakas, where they were exposed to the greatest dangers and given the most difficult tasks. At one point the Legion was sent to scout the territory of the Pe Choi and suffered almost sixty percent casualties. At another, several Cohorts were ordered to push through into Mu’ugalavya and determine the troop strengths of the border Legions; this was done successfully, and the Imperium was compelled to offer a commendation, although the Emperor refused to authorise a “Gold of Imperial Glory.” The Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” reversed matters, giving the Legion an official triumph in Bey Su and bringing it back to its home in splendour. The Empress authorised a large grant of land (just between the two “horns” of the Kurt Hills) for the perpetual maintenance and power of the Legion, and it is thus one of the very few Tsolyani Legions which draws its revenues directly from the land. In 1842 A.S. this unit again saw service in the Chakas, and it remained posted in Butrus for a time before being allowed to return to the Kurt Hills. The Emperor Neshkiruma “the Cloud-Spinner” again brought the Legion to near-disaster. When informed of the secession of Milumanaya, this strange combination of an idealist and a madman gave orders for the Legion to proceed to Pelesar. The orders were sent to Butrus, however, since the Emperor believed for some reason that the Legion was still based there. In the turmoil of events these orders were not forwarded back to the Kurt Hills until almost five years later. The commander of the Legion knew by then that Pelesar was no longer in need of Tsolyani aid and that it was fruitless for him to march there. He contacted the Chancery in Avanthar and requested new orders. Unluckily, his dispatch fell into the hands of a Chancery official who himself was a worshipper of Gruganu. This man concealed the dispatch from his superiors and replied only that the Legion must obey the command of the Emperor. Again the Legion commander wrote, and again he received the same response. He could delay no longer and readied his men for departure. As the first Cohorts were proceeding up the Sakbe Road to Hauma, however, they encountered the entourage of the Prince who later ascended the Petal Throne as Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron-Fist.” When matters were explained to the Prince, he bethought himself of a stratagem: Imperial orders must always be obeyed, he concluded, but if a Legion were to encounter opposition on its way, it must stand and fight. He then offered to combat each member of the Legion individually! Using nothing more dangerous than staves, he entered into a duel with the Captain of the First Cohort. Then the Prince’s bodyguard took turns, and thus many days were passed while the people of the village of Hauma made a fair out of it all and enjoyed themselves hugely. Meanwhile the Prince sent a private messenger to Avanthar and got the orders revoked - and the malicious Chancery official summarily impaled. When he had ascended the Petal Throne after the Time of Many Emperors in 2015, Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” brought the Legion to Bey Su and made much of its loyalty and determination. It fought beside the Emperor at the siege of Avanthar, helped in the retaking of Urmish, and joined in the second Battle of Tumissa. It has been considered one of the most faithful supporters of the Imperium ever since.

Units of the Legion took part in the annexation of Kaija in 2029, in that of Kerunan in 2031, and in Chaigari in 2041. Still other Cohorts were posted to help in the Chakan Uprising of 2045. It has mostly been kept in the north in modern times, based either in Khirgar, Chene Ho, or near the foot of the Atkolel Heights. Its present general, Lord Ka’a hiSrygashchene, is a member of the major clan of the Kurt Hills, the Clan of the Standing Pinnacle, and himself worships Chegarra “the Hero-King.” Most of his men are devoted either to this Cohort or to the War-God Karakan, and the Legion is now a loyal follower of Prince Eselne and his Military Party.

64. The Legion of Lord Kaingmra of Bey Su; 8th Imperial Artillery

This Legion is newly organised by a member of the wealthy and aristocratic Golden Bough Clan of Bey Su. Lord Kaingmra hiZhnyayu comes of ancient royal Bednalljan lineage and has the prestige of his clan to back him.

It is extremely expensive to field a Legion of artillery. The cost of the machines themselves is great enough, but one must also provide the Chlen carts to carry them, the artificers to service them, masons to cut the stone balls for the stone-throwing ballistae, slaves to carry baggage and provisions, etc. Lord Kaingmra has seen to this, being himself an excellent administrator retired from service in the Palace of Ever-Glorious War in Bey Su. He has been able to organise thirteen Cohorts and has one in training at Bey Su, a feat which has much pleased his colleagues in the Royalist Party, which he favours. Being too old himself, he has given active control of his troops to his subordinates, and each Cohort is now commanded by veterans from other artillery units. This is useful, since it is the practice to post individual artillery Cohorts to various parts of the Empire to serve as auxiliaries in army-groups. Thus, two Cohorts are now at Bey Su, three are moving northward to Khirgar, two more are at Tumissa, two are at Thri'il, and four are at Mrelu ready to advance either to Khirgar or on to Chene Ho, as needed. These troops and their machines have thus seen no service as yet, but they are excellently officered and well-equipped. Lord Kaingmra himself is in residence at Bey Su, where he coordinates his Legion's activities through a corps of his own messengers and a few flying Hlaka mercenaries.

65. The Legion of Mengano the Jakallan; 12th Imperial Artillery

It is somewhat difficult to determine the history of this Legion since it has not been the custom for each successive commander to adopt the name of the founder of the Legion, as is true of so many other Tsolyani units. Thus, in the reign of the first Tlakotani, there is a "Legion of Vuma'ur of Jakalla" mentioned in the epics; the mysterious (and possibly non-existent) second Emperor, whose name and titles are nowhere recorded, seems to have had a Legion of artillery entitled "the Corps of Stone-Hurlers"; Emperor Trakonel I "the Blazing Light" was served by one Eshunengbe of Jakalla, and the record is unclear whether these were the same or different units.

The first Mengano is recorded in the reign of Trakonel III "God-King," and the siege of Kai in circa 380 A.S. is quoted by Legion historians as being the first major use of the trebuchet in Tsolyani times. Horkhun "the General" attempted to force the Legion to use the name "Mengano" for its commanders, but the officers of the Legion resisted, and in his day it was called "the Legion of Garusanme.

Sometime during the reign of Kurshetl Nikuma I "the Seizer of Cities" the Legion achieved a great reputation both for siege warfare and also for its use of field artillery as a useful component of large battles. Hehejallu "the Dark Moon" persuaded the Legion to appoint one Vunarsa hiMeshtine, a worshipper of Hru'u, as its commander, and it then served at the siege of Pelesar and later at Hlikku. The great mangonels were dragged across the deserts of Milumanaya by armies of Chlen-beasts and human slaves, and it is said that the Emperor was forced to construct a pipeline for water for these wretched creatures all the way from Khirgar!

The Legion's religious affiliation changed again during the reign of Emperor Todukai Neqo "Pillar of the State," and the worship of Hnalla and Thumis became its predominant sect membership. This was very useful indeed, since the Empress Vayuma Su and her daughter, Shaira Su, were intent upon ridding the Empire of any who served the dark gods, and the Legion thereby escaped disbanding or worse.

Two Cohorts of the Legion were sent to the island of Vra in 1115 A.S. and battered at the walls of the citadel, but without much success. Some elements were with the Tsolyani at the Battle of Koyluga in 1218 A.S., but no further important battle honours seem to have been earned until 1335 A.S. when the Legion assisted at the abortive siege of the city of Nrikakchne in Salarvya. Hejjeka II “the Heretic” made much of the commander of the Legion, whose name is recorded as Aosesna of Saa Allaqi - possibly a mercenary officer settled in the Empire.

During the rather unmilitary reigns of Metlunel V “the Esthete” and Hejjeka V “the Open-Handed” the Legion fell upon evil days, much of its equipment was let go to rot and decay, and its officers were retained as hereditary titles with no real military usefulness. Vriggetsu Dnash “the Usurper of the South” attempted to revive the Legion and use its artillery in 1699 A.S., but the storehouses were found to contain only insect-riddled scraps of wood and corroded metal. He was defeated and executed, and a few of the hereditary “officers of the Legion” shared in his downfall.

Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” made no attempt to rebuild the Legion, preferring instead to establish a new Legion of artillerists of his own. This failed, however, since the coreligionists of the Emperor were not experienced in the use of such machines, and after the collapse of a great trebuchet at Chene Ho, the Emperor is recorded as saying that no further artillery should be constructed in the Empire. He thus focused upon the development of sorcery and magical weapons, to the total detriment of his more conventional forces.

In 1821 A.S. the Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” took steps to see that the ancient art of artillery was restored. She favoured one Bahune the Jakallan, and he adopted the name of Mengano in imitation of the ancient general of the reign of Emperor Horkhun. The Legion then saw action in Pan Chaka and elsewhere, and once again the Legion headquarters in Jakalla flew the banners of the Imperium and was awarded a special standard of victory. Empress Nrainue is also to be blamed, however, for the subsequent decline of the Legion: she took Bahune (or “Mengano”) into her harem of mates at Avanthar, and rather than be immured there forever, he took his own life. The Empress retaliated by disbanding his Legion and having its artillery and other equipment given to city guards and other units all over her Empire. Several of Bahune’s officers and colleagues were also impaled. The Legion was stricken from the rolls.

In 2016 A.S. the Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” attempted to revive as many Legions as he could, perceiving the growing threat of the Mu’ugalavyani to the west. He thus sought amongst the nobility of Jakalla and came upon one Krshumu of the Clan of the White Stone, a worshipper of the Goddess Dlamelish. This man had military aspirations, in spite of his religious affiliation with a temple which paid but scant attention to soldiering, and the Emperor quickly put him in command of the revived Legion. Machines were constructed, many from ancient military textbooks and manuscripts of history, and others were purchased from the Salarvyani and shipped from Tsatsayagga around to Jakalla.

The Legion was thus almost prepared when the Great War of 2020 broke over the land. The Legion then saw service at the first Battle of Tumissa, where its machines were captured and destroyed by the Mu’ugalavyani, the siege of Purdimal, the siege of Urmish, and finally at Bey Su, where the legionnaires continued to fire from the ramparts of Patyel’s Wall until the Mu’ugalavyani smashed the walls away from under the troopers’ feet with their own great engines. Many survived, however, and after regrouping at Bey Su, they were present at the Battle of the Temple of Chanis in 2020, where the Mu’ugalavyani first tasted real defeat. They fought, then, at the second Battle of Tumissa, the Battle of Chene Ho, and would gladly have followed the Mu’ugalavyani through the jungles of the Chakas to Pagus, had the Emperor permitted it.

Units of the Legion saw further service at the little city of Ru during the annexation of the Protectorate of Kerunan in 2031, and light ballistae stopped the Chakan rebels during the Uprising of 2045. When General Krshumu died in 2050 A.S. his Legion was considered one of the finest anywhere in the known world, and his splendid machines were the envy of artillerists from as far away as Tsamra in Livyanu.

Since then the Legion has been largely based at Jakalla, used occasionally against rebels, pirates, and other minor foes, but kept always in readiness. The current general, descended directly from the great Krshumu, is again called Mengano, and he is one of the pillars of the Military Party in spite of his family adherence to the Goddess Dlamelish. His officers and men do not belong to any particular sect or alignment, and he accepts men from almost anywhere in the known world, providing only that they have some competence with mechanisms and with artillery. He has established a private training school for artillerists in Jakalla and has trained officers for the Legion of Lord Kaingmra and also for other units. Most of the Legion has now been posted north to Khirgar to counter the Yan Koryani there, and some units are also at Chene Ho. Two Cohorts are at Sokatis, and General Mengano is urging the Imperium to allow these to break away and form the nucleus of a great eastern Legion of artillery.

66. The Legion of Gagarsha of Mmillaka; 14th Imperial Artillery

The aristocratic Blue Shadow Clan of the city of Thraya founded this Legion in the reign of Gyesmu Dalisa in 2099 A.S. to celebrate the final and permanent accession of the three Protectorates of the east (Kaija, Kerunan, and Chaigari) to the Imperium. The Legion was thus organised, twelve Cohorts were recruited, and the clan provided large numbers of artillery engines, armour, and other equipment. It was then called “the Legion of the Victory of the East.”

Thereafter, however, the Legion saw no service and spent much of its time dabbling in the politics of its city. The clan-leaders determined to disband it and thus escape both its political meddling and the not inconsiderable financial burden of maintaining “nearly five thousand drunken ruffians whose sole service consisted of flinging stones at unwary peasants.” The clan-leaders thus intrigued with the priesthood of their temple, that of Wuru the Unnamable, to have reports sent to Avanthar to the effect that the Legion was no longer needed and was a useless expense for the Imperium.

The Emperor, the great and wise Heshtu’atl, saw through their pleadings, however, and posted one Vurshe hiHehesha, the High Princeps of the Temple of Thumis, to Thraya with orders to look into the matter. In due course this person reported that the Legion was indeed serving no useful purpose, but that the fault lay also with the attitude of certain clan-leaders who valued their purses over the greater good of the Imperium. The Emperor then committed one of the very few real atrocities of his otherwise beneficent reign: he commanded that all of the recalcitrant clan-leaders should be imprisoned in a ruined stone tower on the outskirts of Thraya, sent units of the Omnipotent Azure Legion to see that all was done as ordered, and had the troops of the Legion of the Victory of the East gathered, together with their machines, to engage in some unexpected target practice. Those whose missiles struck the stone tower were rewarded with sacks of coins; those who missed were enslaved; and those whose machines broke or were otherwise incapable of firing were impaled. The Legion was thus speedily reduced from twelve Cohorts to a little more than two, and the leaders of the Blue Shadow Clan died beneath the ruins of the tower. The Legion was then stricken from the rolls, and its members (those who had hit the tower and survived) were recruited into other artillery units and were sent to the northern and western frontiers.

The present Emperor, Hirkane Tlakotani “the Stone upon Which the Universe Rests,” came to the throne in 2346. He quickly perceived the need for a Legion of artillery based somewhere in the east,

and one of the first acts of his reign was to reactivate the Legion of the Victory of the East. He was informed by the priesthood of Wuru, however, that they did not favour the retention of this ancient and inauspicious name for the Legion, nor would they be willing to finance it. The Blue Shadow Clan could no longer be considered as a sponsor either, since this would bring up ancient and unpleasant memories and would contribute to the Emperor's difficulties in placating the powerful clans of the east.

At length the Emperor solved the problem by appointing a young refugee from the city of Mmillaka, a place returned to Salarvya after the Treaty of Ru. This man, Gagarsha hiChurgushsha, of the Clan of the Emerald Girdle, is a devotee of Qon, the Guardian of the Gates of Hell, and is thus completely unconnected to the city of Thraya, the Temple of Wuru, or the Blue Shadow Clan. The Legion is now named after this officer, and although it is still officially based at Thraya, its units are almost always at Sokatis. Of the ancient Legion, no trace remains, and the present nine Cohorts are composed almost entirely of the people of Kerunan, plus some Salarvyani adventurers and others. The Imperium has lavished funds upon this unit, providing it with new machines, Chlen-beasts for the supply carts, and also with some steel armour. As yet, the Legion has seen no battle, but its morale and training are high.

67. The Battalions of Vrishtara the Mole; 2nd Imperial Sappers

Separate Legions of sappers and engineers are not common in any of the five great empires of Tekumel. Many officers take an interest in fortifications, siege warfare, and field fortifications, simply because these are important facets of warfare, and almost any unit may be called upon to throw up earthworks, construct a bridge, or dig a sap. Most of the actual labour is done by peasants recruited both by money and by decree, and local carpenters, masons, and others of the middle-class "mechanics' clans" are used to do the planning and perform the technical operations.

According to the archives, it was Kurshetl Nikuma I "the Seizer of Cities" who first gave prominence to organised siege units, although many of the earlier dynasties had had experts and portions of legions primarily devoted to this as well. The following ruler, Emperor Hehejallu "the Dark Moon," held the opinion that "those who burrow beneath the earth must be worshippers of the Lord of Worms, mighty Sarku," and he saw to it that the various embryonic sapper units recruited devotees of this deity and his Cohort, Durritlamish. The siege of Pelesar and that of the city of Hlikku were carried out by servants of the Worm, and when the latter place fell, it was handed over to lord Emurgen hiSharvoya, Master of the Delvers Beneath, for pillage. It is recorded that nearly seventeen thousand men women and children were sacrificed within three days to the Aspects of the Lord of Worms, and that "when the Imperial Legate assigned to the city entered the place, it reeked of terrible death, yet not a bone, not a scrap of flesh was visible there; all had been borne below into the sappers' tunnels, and only the sorrowful gods knew what had been done with them all..." (from "The Visitations of the Dark," by Emeshmu hiTikeshmu, priest of Hnalla, circa 933 A.S.).

When the Empress Vayuma Su came to the throne in 916 A.S., her first acts were to curb the power of the Dark Gods. Such sapper Legions as still remained after the weak and chaotic period of Ngangmorel Neqo were ordered disbanded. Most obeyed, returning to their villages or taking up other occupations, but the Legion of Khurmél the Burier, based at Purdimal, refused to give up its standards and dug down beneath their barracks into the catacombs below, apparently in hopes of finding the legendary Paradise of the Tomb of their evil deity. Nothing was ever heard from them again, and children in the city of Sarku are told to this day that the ancient legionnaires are still there, digging their way beneath the monolithic Thenu Thendraya Peak, all the way from Purdimal to their home in the City

of Sarku many Tsan to the east! “Dead are they now,” the old legend runs, “and dead shall they evermore be, yet they cannot find peace, cannot cease their digging, cannot lie in the quiet of their graves, until at last they shall come forth in their own city and worship once again in their temple and seek their long-lost homes, now touched with the hand of the dust of an aeon...”

Whatever the truth of the legend, it can be shown that the Empress Vayuma Su and her daughter, Shaira Su, “Divine Daughter of Thumis,” did away entirely with separate units of sappers and commanded certain regular Legions to appoint special sub-units instead who would be charged with these tasks. The latter Empress also established a college of architecture and engineering under the guidance of the priesthood of Thumis and his Cohort, Ketengku, at Bey Su. One of the subjects taught was military engineering, and some of the textbooks prepared during this reign are still in use.

Kanmi’yel Nikuma I “the Warrior” continued the practice of his predecessors, setting up special groups within the various field Legions to deal with engineering and sapping. This he found difficult to maintain since soldiers worshipping the various war-gods had little taste for digging and building, and if others of more amenable sects were recruited, this created factions and dissension within the Legions. He thus ordered that sapper units should once again be detached from the rest of their Legion and given quasi-independent status. By the reign of Kanmi’yel Nikuma III “the Scourge of Vimuhla,” it had become common practice to name these sub-units after their commanders, and some of the best were entered on the Imperial rolls as completely separate Legions. Individual Cohorts might be posted to different cities or to army-groups charged with specific missions, but the cohesion of these sapper Legions was accepted and maintained.

The Legion now called after its commander, Vrishtara hiAuvesu, is an old and distinguished one. It was founded by Kanmi’yel Nikuma IV “Flattener of Peaks” and took part in the siege of the citadel of the island of Vra. It was the clever engineering of this unit which opened the sea beneath the Vrayani citadel called “the Tower of Perfect Power,” washing away its foundations and bringing down enough of it to allow the Tsolyani storming parties to fight their way into the place. Metlunel II “the Builder” used the Legion for more peaceful purposes, excavating and building large stretches of the Sakbe Road network which crisscrosses the Empire. The construction of many of the upper works of the citadel at Avanthar dates to his reign, as does the channeling of the Equnoyel River at Jakalla, the rebuilding of Bey Su after the Ditlana (the ceremonial razing of a city and the building of a new one upon the old foundations, a custom supposed to be performed every five hundred years or so), etc.

Hejjeka II “the Heretic” used the Legion to good effect at the siege of Nrikakchne in Salarvya in 1335 A.S., but the Tsolyani forces were forced to retreat before the walls could be breached.

The Legion seems to have continued to exist without incident until the reign of Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku,” when once again it was ordered to recruit from amongst “those who know the places beneath.” It has remained largely a Legion devoted to Sarku and Durritlamish ever since, although some troops are also worshippers of Hru’u, Wuru, Ksarul, and Gruganu, the other Dark Gods.

During the Great War of 2020 the Legion fought the Mu’ugalavyani sappers in an elaborate counter-mine beneath the walls of Purdimal. Although they were eventually defeated there, the enemy advance was slowed, and the Tsolyani were granted the time to organise more effective defenses farther east. Some men of the Legion are said to have accompanied the last defenders of Purdimal, the men of the Legion of Glorious Destiny, into the labyrinths beneath the city. Most of these emerged again when the invaders left, but some are said to have married into the Old Ones, who live beneath Purdimal, and their descendants are still there. In 2350 A.S. the present High Prefect and Provost of the Chancery of Avanthar, Lord Chaymira hiSsanmirin, was shown a tattered red standard by some of the half-breed Old

Ones which, they claimed, had been seized by their ancestors from the Mu'ugalavyani on the walls of Purdimal.

After the final defeat of the invaders, the Legion has seen no serious military service, instead being utilised largely as engineers and architects by the Imperium. The enlarged storage chambers and magazines beneath Avanthar are their work, as was the ill-fated attempt to construct another Sakbe Road to Purdimal along the dizzy precipices of great Thenu Thendraya Peak (collapsed by an earthquake in 2349 A.S.). The Legion has also been given the task of strengthening the fortifications at Chene Ho, Paya Gupa, and Tumissa, as well as the rebuilding of the outer enceinte at Khirgar. The present general, Vrishtara hiAuvesu, of the Dark Water Clan, is himself from Ru in the farthest eastern region of the Empire, a devoted worshipper of the Lord of Worms, and one of Prince Dhich'une's confidants. Much of the Legion's strength is now concentrated in the north, at Khirgar, Chene Ho, Paya Gupa, Purdimal, and Mrelu. General Vrishtara would very much like to try his skills against the walls of the city of Yan Kor and against Ke'er. The Baron Ald's great black tower, he says, would soon come tumbling down under his tender ministrations, and there would once again be "food for my Mighty Lord..."

68. The Slayers of Cities; 5th Imperial Sappers

The old nobility of the city of Katalal is divided into three great factions: those who serve the war-gods, the devotees of the Lords of Stability, and the ancient stratum of population loyal to the Dark Gods, Sarku, Ksarul, and Hru'u. One cannot enter the city without seeing the ponderous tower of the Temple of Vimuhla to the west of the Great Square of the Seven Heroes, the dark and brooding Shrines of the Dark Lords to the east, and the colourful temples of the Lords of Stability to the north. Each of these groups seems to huddle together, like soldiers around a great leader, and this factionalism has dominated the politics of the city for almost its entire existence.

Very recently the clans who serve the Dark Gods have pooled their resources and established a Legion of their own - this to counteract the prestige and rising power of the Legion of the Forces of Lord Ga'anish. A friend and one-time subordinate officer of the Legion of Vrishtara the Mole has been recruited to lead this Legion, and twelve Cohorts have been recruited, with two more in training. Arms and equipment have been provided generously by the Legion's noble patrons, and the Temples of Sarku, Durritlamish, Ksarul, Gruganu, Hru'u, and Wuru have all made contributions. General Kakaganu hiBeshudla is a member of the Black Stone Clan and a worshipper of Lord Durritlamish. He has set his men to practising and drilling, building fortifications one day and then demolishing them the next, until now he considers his troops nearly the equal of General Vrishtara's men. During the present crisis with Yan Kor various units have been posted to the north of the Empire: two are at Chene Ho, four are at Mrelu, four at Khirgar, and two are now digging in at the village of Si'is to the southeast of the Atkolel Heights. General Kakaganu's men have been charged with the digging of field fortifications to block any Yan Koryani advance to the east of the Atkolel Heights as well.

69. The Flotilla of Hagarr of Paranta; 1st Imperial Marines

The Imperium maintains a rather small navy. An invasion along the southern coast would be fraught with difficulties for any daring enough to attempt it, and no great threat is perceived from this quarter. About five hundred ships of various sizes are based at Penom and Jakalla, and perhaps another two or three hundred are kept at Vra, Tleku on Thayuri Isle, and at Petris Layoda on the island of Ganga. Each of these vessels is allotted a crew of sailors who fight at best as light infantry, plus a complement

of marines, who are armoured approximately in the fashion of medium land troops. The duties of these latter include fighting from ship to ship, occasionally landing to destroy pirate nests, and defending the southern shores against smugglers and others who would evade Imperial scrutiny.

In the Time of Chaos after the downfall of the Engsvanyali Imperium there are legends of a mighty warrior, one Hagarr of Paranta (the exact place is now not known but is supposed to be Pry Teketl Head to the southeast of the city of Penom). Hagarr is said to have fought against the Hlyss, the Hlutrgu, various pirates, innumerable sea monsters and other such-like, and finally “sailed his great ship into the Islands of the Sky, where the Lords of Many Lights there did him homage.” Still another legend has him perishing in the wastes of the now-dry Bay of Ssu’um, where travelers report seeing his metal-hulled vessel protruding from the sand-dunes from time to time.

There is no record of any unit of Imperial marines separate from land-based Legions until modern times, however. Earlier Emperors seem to have used Cohorts of other Legions occasionally to fight at sea, placing these troops under the command of one or another admiral of the fleet. The Red Sky Clan, of the city of Penom continued to claim direct descent from the original Hagarr, and various members of this clan are recorded as serving the Imperium in important capacities, but the clan had no particular military connections until the reign of Kurshetl Nikuma II “the Viewer of Night.” During this period the Red Sky Clan, which largely consists of worshippers of Karakan and his Cohort, Chegarra, joined in the defense of Penom against the incursions of pirates and the nonhuman Hlyss. A leader of this clan is described as collecting a force of sailors and other troops and setting sail for Ssam-ris Isle in the western reaches of the Great Gulf. There he defeated the Mu’ugalavyani settlers and claimed the island in the name of Tsolyanu. His descendants continued to dwell there until the Great War of 2020, when the Mu’ugalavyani landed on the island in force and took it back. Some members of the Red Sky Clan still live on the island and still speak of their “cousins” in Tsolyanu, although they are now completely adapted to Mu’ugalavyani customs and language.

In 2251 A.S. Arshu’u “the Ever-Splendid” commanded that certain Legions be raised to serve largely aboard ships as a counter to the southern pirates and the deadly Hlyss. One of these was to be based at Penom, and it was the Red Sky Clan which offered to recruit troops and pay for the arms and armour of the unit. The ships, of course, were to be supplied by the Imperium. This led to a major scandal in 2305 A.S., when it was discovered that the clan was using its men and the ships to trade along the coast as far as Livyanu and Tsatsayagga in Salarvya. Not only were the coasts being guarded, said the clan-leaders in reply, but we are also enriching the Empire through our commerce. The practice was ordered stopped forthwith, however, and seven or eight renegade captains were seized and impaled, along with all their crews. Since then the ships of the Imperial navy are always officered by men who have no connection with the Clan of the Red Sky.

Aside from raids and local duty, the Legion has seen no major military action. It is now commanded by a namesake of the ancient Hagarr, a man of the lineage of hiChunmiyel, who is himself an excellent sailor and who owns a fleet of merchant ships apart from his military commission. He is rather old for active command, however, and hopes to hand the Legion on to his son, Miridame hiChunmiyel.

70. The Squadrons of Tlaneno the Steersman; 3rd Imperial Marines

This is another of the special Legions of marines raised by the Emperor Arshu’u “the Ever-Splendid” in 2251 A.S. Throughout its existence it has been closely connected with the wealthy Golden Sunburst Clan (which traces its ancestry back to the aristocracy of the Bednalljan Dynasty), and also

with the Temples of Karakan and Chegarra in Jakalla. Approximately half of the men of this Legion are native to the coasts around Jakalla, while the other half are recruited from the island of Vra, Thayuri, and Ganga.

The Legion has seen the usual number of raids, pirates, and smugglers, and it has also defeated a Hlyss incursion off Ngeshtu Head in 2349 A.S. Other than this, however, it has had no real military experience. It was drawn up for battle during the brief war scare which followed the Battle of Ru in 2347 A.S. and was set for a sea invasion of the city of Heru in Salarvya, but this was never attempted. This Legion is now entrusted with the control of river traffic all the way from Jakalla up to Avanthar in the far north and along the Rananga River to the east, and it is thus considered more of a police force than a real military entity.

This is, however, not to the taste of the Legion's present commander. General Tlaneno hiVorodlaya is a prominent member of the Golden Sunburst Clan, a worshipper of Karakan, and a close personal friend of Prince Eselne. General Tlaneno is thus a supporter of the Military Party and one of the most powerful officers in the Empire. His talents exceed those needed for a mere officer of river police, and Prince Eselne consults him about matters of larger strategy, tactics, and other affairs. He has been offered a major post in the Prince's entourage, but this he has refused, preferring instead to remain in command of his ancient and traditional Legion - at least until an opening which suits his political and military abilities appears. It is said that if there is to be a war with Yan Kor, that General Tlaneno may well be given command of an entire army group over the heads of many lesser generals. He may thus find himself playing a much larger role in such a conflict than his clan had originally hoped, although he does not really like serving on land and hates the hot, dry climate of the deserts around Khirgar. He has one driving desire: ever since the discovery of an ancient manuscript in the Tsaqw tongue of Old Yan Kor which describes the "sailings of Dumielu the Wave-Cleaver," General Tlaneno has dreamed of traveling around Salarvya to the southeast, up along the unknown coasts of Rannalu, and around into the Pentrurtra Deeps to take Yan Kor by surprise from the north! According to this ancient book, there is a passage there large enough for "many navies," and if enough ships could be found to make the perilous voyage, Yan Kor could be invaded and devastated before its forces could be brought to bear upon the invaders. Such a plan must remain a dream, of course, since no Emperor would be willing to risk enough ships and men to attempt it, and the perils of the sea itself are not to be ignored, much less the dangers of unknown peoples and coasts in the unknown regions north of the eastern- most coasts of Salarvya!

71. The Legion of Ketl: Prison Guards; 4th Imperial Medium Infantry

This unit is charged not with military duty but with the guarding of Imperial prisoners all across the Empire. Its Cohorts are thus scattered throughout the great cities of Tsolyanu, wherever there is an Imperial prison. The Legion is listed in the military rolls at Avanthar, however, and it should be included in any list of the Empire's forces, although it probably could do no more than aid in the defense of the cities in which its units are stationed.

The guardians of the Tolek Kana Pits just southeast of Bey Su across the Msuma River are one of the earliest forces mentioned in the Runes of Trakonel I "the Blazing Light." The Pits were apparently originally just that: an area of swampy land outside the city, where the hideous purple "Food of the Ssu" (the original vegetation of the planet before its terraforming by humankind) continued to flourish. This area was palisaded and used as a noisome prison compound by the earliest Emperors. In time the

swamps were largely drained, and the later Emperors built the present vast, labyrinthine fortress-prison in their place.

The Legion of Ketl is perhaps named after some early prison commandant, probably a comrade of one of the first Emperors. It quickly became a distinctive unit, dressed always in brown leather and with helmets and arms also lacquered brown. It was encharged with the unpleasant task of guarding the Empire's unwanted and dangerous prisoners, and sub-units of executioners and torturers were established and given specific insignia by the reign of Emperor Hehejallu "the Dark Moon." It may seem strange to note, however, that most of the members of this Legion are not devotees of Lord Sarku, Lord Hru'u, or even the terrible Chiteng, famous as "the Tormentor of the Gods." Rather they are worshippers of Lord Belkhanu, the Lord of the Excellent Dead, for it is this deity who is master of the transition between life and death, and it is fitting that his devotees should perform this service for those so designated by their respective Skeins of Destiny. The Legion is never known for its sadism nor for its violence, therefore, but rather for its solemn adherence to duty and to the sure and careful translation of the living into the Paradise of Teretane, if such is to be their fate.

Lord Arkhane hiPurushqe, the commandant of the Tolek Kana Pits, is the "general" of this Legion throughout the Imperium. He is a quiet, devout man, a good husband and father, and an efficient bureaucrat who prides himself on the fact that all throughout his tenure in the Pits only a tiny handful of prisoners have ever escaped.

During the Great War of 2020, the Legion of Ketl defended their fortress-prison well. The Mu'ugalavyani siege lines encompassed and surrounded the Pits, but they were not able to effect an entrance. They thus bypassed the place and instead set their engines against Patyel's Walls. When the siege was finally lifted, it was found that several guards of the Legion had themselves starved to death rather than deprive the prisoners of the food ordered for them by the Imperium. The Imperium was grateful and commanded battle honours and a special standard for the Legion.

Other than this (plus a few instances during other engagements), the Legion has never seen battle. It now consists not of the usual twenty Cohorts but of thirty-five - a great anomaly in Tsolyani eyes - and, as said above, small units of the Legion are posted from Chene Ho to Sokatis and from Thri'il to Jakalla, wherever there are Imperial prisons. City and provincial prisons are not under their jurisdiction, of course, and the secret prisons beneath Avanthar are also not under their command but rather that of the Omnipotent Azure Legion. If the Legion were again forced to fight, it would do so, using the medium armour and halberds with which it is equipped; but many of its men are aged turnkeys, and at most it could only assist in the defense of a city.

72. The Legion of the Splendour of Shenyu; 4th Imperial Shen Auxiliary Heavy Infantry

The humans of Tekumel have known and cooperated with the reptilian Shen throughout their long history on the planet. Relationships have not always been pleasant, but when seen through the eyes of the historian, they have been reasonably amicable for races as dissimilar as the Shen and their human neighbours. Shen traders have always had access to markets in the human empires, and vice-versa. The Bednalljan records, fragmentary as they are, indicate that Shen mercenaries existed in what is now Tsolyanu, and about twenty years ago workmen digging an irrigation trench near Mrelu came upon a mass burial of Shen bones, amongst which a few coins of the Empire of Llyan of Tsamra were found.

Legion names and histories are, however, not very clear when one comes to the nonhuman auxiliaries of the Empire. Many of these were recruited only for the active lifetime of a particular leader

and were allowed to disband upon his retirement or demise. The archives also show more interest in units which have some relevance to religious or political events apart from purely military ones, and the nonhuman auxiliaries have been allowed to play very little part in human affairs

The Legion of the Splendour of Shenyu is, however, quite an ancient unit. Horkhunen “the General” had a Shen Legion which is called “the Glorious Heroes of Shenyu” in circa 566 A.S. The Empress Vayuma Su began an inquisition in 923 A S “to determine whether her Shen soldiers were truly followers of the Lords of Stability, or whether both of the major Shen gods were in realty aspects of the Lords of Change.” A Shen Legion named “the Victorious of Shenyu” is noted as part of the forces of the Warlord of Bey Su during the Civil War in 1010-26 A.S., and Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma I “the Warrior” sponsored a series of contests in 1028 A.S. “to establish which of the nonhuman races is indeed the mightiest and most skillful in soldierly things in the Empire.” (A Pe Choi seems to have won this curious series of events by use of a stratagem.) Succeeding Emperors made much of the Shen, and there are whole series of letters preserved at Avanthar in which the Imperium seeks recruits from the lords of Shenyu, offering excellent pay and free weapons, plus other inducements. Kanmi’yel Nikuma IV “Flattener of Peaks” offered to settle an entire egg-group of Shen in the southern seas on Buru Isle (between the islands of Thayuri and Ganga), but this offer was never taken up. Metlunel I “the Foolish” made even a better offer: the whole city of Fasiltum and all of its deserts” - providing only that the Shen would slay all of the humans of the region, who had displeased him. The Shen had the sense to refuse this offer, which would have perhaps plunged the Empire into interracial war!

The Legion of the Splendour of Shenyu appears under its present name first in the records of Hejjeka II “the Heretic.” He used Shen troops against the Salarvyani Ahoggia mercenaries during his campaigns in Salarvyu, and these redoubtable warriors fought well at Koyluga and at Khum. The Ahoggia defeated them at the latter city, taking two or three Cohorts of Shen prisoners, and following Ahoggia custom, the hapless captives were slaughtered and their flesh used for food. Ever since this incident there has been enmity between the Shen and the Ahoggia, and even today the wise commander does not station units of these two races near one another. “As hateful as the smoke of an Ahoggia cooking-fire” is still a proverb in Shenyu.

The Legion continued during subsequent reigns, serving under many leaders and taking part in many battles. Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” used Shen troops to put down the uprisings of the priesthoods of the Lords of Stability, and the same units were used by his successor, Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” to suppress the priesthoods of Sarku and Hru’u. The Legion saw battle several times during the reign of Gyesmu “the Iron Fist”: it took part in the first battle of Chene Ho and was defeated by the Mu’ugalavyani Shen mercenaries of Legion XIII of the Second Palace, “Egg-Destroyers.” The Shen again met their own kind at the Battle of the Temple of Chanis in 2020 A.S., when the Legion fought against Legion IX of the Third Palace “Iridescent Egg.” The Tsolyani were victorious this time, and the Shen took great pleasure in pursuing and slaying the enemy Shen, who had the misfortune to belong to another egg-group. It was also alleged that the Shen used their light crossbows to attack the Ahoggia troops on their own side, slaying about thirty of the Legion of Guruggma, but the Shen commander passed this off as a mistake, and the matter was somehow hushed up.

The Shen later refused to go into battle against the rebel Pe Choi during the Chakan Uprising of 2045, stating that they wished no further hostilities with other nonhuman races, but this seems to have been the decision of just one commander. In modern times the Shen have had no qualms about fighting other Shen, the flying Hlaka, or anybody else they have been set against.

Most Shen who enter the Empire seek service in this Legion, since it is the oldest and best known. Its current general is an experienced officer who has won two Qadarni battles against the Shen units of the Mu'ugalavyani. Most of this Legion is now posted at Purdimal, the climate of which is not pleasant for these great reptiles. The Imperium has been asked to send them on to the dryer, hotter climate of Khirgar, but General Kettukal hiMraktine has urged the Shen to remain at Purdimal in order to form a solid rear reserve in case of a Yan Koryani breakthrough in the north.

73. The Legion of Gr-ga the Egg Layer; 5th Imperial Shen Auxiliary Heavy Infantry

This is a new Legion, formed by a rebellious Shen “female” who fled from Shenyu because of some unexplained difficulties with her egg-group. The Shen have three “sexes”: the “males” who instigate the production of the eggs, the “females” who lay the eggs, and the “egg-fertilisers” who come along afterward and fertilize the eggs. Gr-ga seems to have refused to lay eggs for her egg-group, and she is now a proscribed rebel in her own land. Instead of fleeing to one of the smaller Shen states to the north of Shenyu, she has come to Tsolyanu and offered to establish another Legion which will recruit only from those egg-groups hostile to those which rule Shenyu. It is dangerous to post her troops near those of the Legion of the Splendour of Shenyu since Shen of different egg-groups may fight on sight during certain seasons. The Imperium has thus posted her Legion to Khirgar.

There was some doubt at first in Avanthar as to whether or not there would be sufficient Shen warriors of other egg-groups to found a new Legion, but Gr-ga has now recruited some twelve Cohorts and is engaged in training these in the semi-desert terrain just north of Khirgar. Her Legion recently destroyed a Yan Koryani scouting party there in the sand dunes, and the Imperium is favourable to providing her with arms and money. It is now common knowledge that the Baron of Yan Kor has been successful in hiring Shen mercenaries of his own and that these are part of the invasion force occupying the Atkolel Heights. General Kettukal is now attempting to find out whether Gr-ga's troops will be hostile to the Yan Koryani Shen, which seem to be drawn from some of the northern Shen states, and if so, he may seek to use these powerful nonhumans against one another. Otherwise it will prove very difficult indeed for human troops to dislodge the Yan Koryani Shen from their fortified positions in the Heights.

74. The Legion of the City of Chri; 7th Imperial Shen Auxiliary Heavy Infantry

This is another recently organized Legion. Its patron is a human, a wealthy noble of the city of Urmish, of the ancient Vimuhla-worshipping Red Mountain Clan, who has a fanatic love of Shen culture. Lord Freshshayu hiTuruken affects Shen customs, speaks a little of the Shen tongue (as much as any human can master of it, perhaps), and surrounds himself with Shen servants and friends. It is rumoured that he has had to be forcibly restrained from attempting to mate with his Shen egg-layer slaves, whom he purchased after great trouble and expense from the dealers in Livyanu; to have forced himself upon a female Shen would have been an insult too great for even his Shen companions to bear. Lord Freshshayu's fanaticism unfortunately extends into the military realm. He has used his own fortune and whatever he could beg from his clan to pressure the Imperium into authorizing the raising of another Shen Legion. His recruiting efforts in Shenyu have resulted in some seven Cohorts of troops, plus

another in training at Urmish. In order to lead these troops personally, Lord Freshshayu has had a suit of armour constructed for himself which outwardly resembles a Shen, and attired in this costume he struts about the drill-field behind his palace shouting orders in unintelligible Shen! His reptilian comrades, servants, and slaves seem to tolerate him, but if the Shen do have any sense of humour - a quality they are said to be deficient in - they cannot help but consider his posturings both ridiculous and hilarious. It is not known how reliable the troops of this unit would be in battle, and the Imperium has thus kept them back from the Yan Koryani front in spite of the urgings of Lord Freshshayu that they be given their chance at glory. Some of the Shen in this Legion have stated that they would rather serve in the Legion of the Splendour of Shenyu, but for various reasons intelligible only to themselves, they would not be accepted there.

75. The Horde of Hrk-ss, the Eater of Eggs; 9th Imperial Shen Auxiliary Heavy Infantry

This Shen Legion is based at Sokatis. It is composed of the warriors from one egg-group which sought sanctuary in the Empire during the reign of Emperor Heshtu'atl in 2209 A.S.

When one egg-group breaks off from a parent group, due to processes of genetic mutation not well understood by Tsolyani scholars, it is customary for the new egg-group to flee or be slain. Most of such groups and individuals thus never live to find sanctuary elsewhere, but a small percentage does manage to get out to the northern Shen states, where they come into conflict with older settled groups and are either killed or assimilated. In the case of this egg-group, however, there was no refuge in any of the northern principalities, and after a short and violent sojourn in the little state of Xax, the elders of this group took the almost unprecedented step of requesting asylum in human lands. The Livyani apparently refused, and the Mu'ugalavyani could not accept these Shen since so many of their own mercenaries come from Xax. The Yan Koryani were fragmented into warring feudal states at this time, and the Salarvyani were too distant. It is recorded that Emperor Heshtu'atl was intrigued by the offer, however, and ventured to provide the Shen with refuge in a part of the Empire in which no Shen were currently stationed. Just to the southeast of the city of Sokatis the Gilraya Forests meet the foothills of Hundranu Rise, and there the Tsolyani laid out an area of land in which the Shen would have almost sole occupancy and even a form of limited autonomy. In return, the egg-group was to furnish the Imperium with a Legion in perpetuity. This must never be less than ten Cohorts, and it can never exceed the full complement of one Legion (i.e. twenty Cohorts). This the Shen have done. The Shen code of honour is a hard and rigid one, and the Imperium seems to have made an excellent bargain.

Units of this Legion have taken part in raids and Qadarni battles with the Salarvyani, and General Kettukal hiMraktine also made use of them against the recent, abortive Slave Revolt in the area southeast of Fasiltum in 2354 A.S. The current commander, General Hrk-ss, is a powerful, rather elderly Shen who has an intense dislike for the Salarvyani. It is his hope that the Yan Koryani crisis in the north can be speedily settled somehow because he believes that the time is once again ripe to invade Salarvyia and take advantage of the ancient feudal dissensions of that nation.

76. The Legion of Tik-nekw-ket; 1st Imperial Pe Choi Auxiliary Medium Infantry

The Pe Choi are mentally and emotionally one of the most human-like races of Tekumel in spite of their strange, insectoid appearance. They have thus participated in human culture since long before the Empire of Llyan of Tsamra, and Pe Choi mercenaries have fought in human battles all down through history. As is the case with other nonhuman units, however, the Tsolyani Imperium has been careful to maintain its Pe Choi as mercenaries and not to allow them to become too deeply involved in the political and religious intrigues which occupy so much of human doings. Most Pe Choi seem satisfied with this state of affairs, being willing to join with humans in various endeavours for a time but always in the end returning to their own people in the depths of the Chakan forests.

Early records of Pe Choi Legions are scanty, although Emperor Trakonel II “the Victorious” mentions “black and white, limbs churning like a field of bones, emerald eyes filled with the lightnings of deadly war” in the “Homage to the Lord of Battle,” composed in circa 250 A.S. The reference is almost certainly to the Pe Choi, whose males are covered with ebon black chitin, and whose females are chalk-white.

A regular Pe Choi Legion is listed amongst the forces of Emperor Ashoretl Tikasa “the Power Forever,” but its name is not the same as that of any modern Legion: “the Swords of Ti-ptche.” Emperor Horkhunen “the General” Organized several Pe Choi units for his wars in the west, and in 590 A.S. Emperor Kurshetl Nikuma I “the Seizer of Cities” used Pe Choi light infantry against the people of the Kurt Hills.

Emperor Hehejallu “the Dark Moon” does not seem to have trusted the Pe Choi, whose allegiance to their own deities made them suspect in his eyes. He did have a Pe Choi unit at the siege of Butrus in 780 A.S., and it seems to have done well against the Pachi Lei there. During the Time of No Emperor (816-30 A.S.) the Pe Choi regions of the Chakas attained a brief and transitory independence, but this ended when Todukai Neqo “Pillar of the State” made the treaty of Pagus with the Mu’ugalavyani and sent troops in to destroy the Pe Choi rebels.

The first mention of the Legion of Tik-nekw-ket occurs in the archives of Empress Vayuma Su “Empress of All the Lands.” She commanded the raising of a Legion “which must serve the Lords of Stability, no matter what names They are called in the languages of her peoples.” Many Pe Choi were recruited, and these troops were used to defeat the forces of the temples of the Dark Gods at the City of Sarku. For a time, then, Pe Choi of this Legion guarded the gates of the capital at Bey Su, and a Pe Choi was appointed Governor of Mrelu.

Emperor Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider” saw to it that the Pe Choi were exposed to the teachings of the Lords of Change, and a cult of “the Black Old One” grew up in the southern reaches of the Pe Choi jungles which warred with the followers of the Pe Choi equivalent of Hnalla (called “the Father of Nests”). The Legion of Tik-nekw-ket returned home, against its orders, to defend its villages against the followers of the Black Old One, and the Emperor thus had a pretext for disbanding the Legion and executing its “rebellious” troops. He died, however, before this could be carried out, and in the ensuing Civil War of 1010-26 A.S. the Pe Choi were left much to their own devices. Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma I “the Warrior” later reorganised the Legion and used it to guard the western frontiers. It continued to play this role without incident throughout the reigns of the Vimuhla-worshipping Emperors Kanmi’yel Nikuma III “the Scourge of Vimuhla” and Kanmi’yel Nikuma IV “Flattener of Peaks.” The latter sent some minor contingents to aid in the invasion of the island of Vra.

Empress Janule “She of the Blue Goddess” once again brought the Legion into prominence, using it as her special bodyguard at Avanthar. She seems to have felt safer with mercenary nonhuman

bodyguards than with her human subjects. A number of assassination attempts against the life of this Empress are recorded in the archives, and some of these were frustrated directly by the Pe Choi of this Legion. The Empress awarded the Legion the permanent title “Beloved of the Petal Throne,” which it still bears proudly today on its great standards.

A hundred years or so later, however, the Legion suffered great indignities at the hands of Empress Dashiluna “the Green-Eyed,” whose worship of the Goddess Dlamelish led her into all sorts of excesses. She attempted various experiments and used the hidden knowledge of her allies, the priesthood of Ksarul, to produce mutations and monstrosities. One such experiment was the giving of human wives to the male Pe Choi of this Legion at Avanthar and the forcible coupling of human males with the Pe Choi females. These matings produced no offspring, and the Empress turned to drugs and other methods to induce pregnancies. At this point the records fall silent, and the next mention of this Legion is a note to the effect that “the remaining four Cohorts have been posted home to Do Chaka.” Although it is nowhere explicitly stated, it seems probable that the outraged Pe Choi at Avanthar rebelled and were slaughtered. Only those escaped who were posted in Bey Su or elsewhere at the time.

The Legion remained almost in hiding in Do Chaka until the accession of Emperor Hejjeka I “the Replacer.” He offered the Pe Choi elders a huge sum of money - and also, strangely enough, the golden coffin containing the body of Empress Dashiluna - to forgive and forget what had been done to them. Hejjeka II “the Heretic” went further and reinstated the Legion, gave it arms and armour, and took it with him on his campaigns into Salarvya, where it received battle honours at Koyluga, Khum, and the Battle of Mmillaka.

Hejjeka IV “Restorer of Dignities” provided the Legion with even more: he gave the Pe Choi full local autonomy. In 1565 A.S., however, while Emperor Metlunel V “the Esthete” took his pleasures in painting with powdered gemstones, epic dramas performed by naked children, and the curious rhythms of Tinaliya musicians, the Mu’ugalavyani quietly retook the Chakas, and Pe Choi autonomy ended abruptly. Elements of the Legion of Tik-nekw-ket managed to escape, but most were slaughtered or recruited into the army of the Red-Hats.

In 1711 A.S. the Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma V “the Pretender” retook Do Chaka, and at the spearhead of his invasion was the much reduced remainder of this Legion. The subduing of the area was not easy, however, and the Legion spent many more years putting down first one local rebellion and then another. The Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” did not disturb the Legion’s work, although he did not favour followers of the Lords of Stability. Then in 1842 A.S. the Empress Nrainue commanded the invasion of Pan Chaka, and this, too, was retaken from the Mu’ugalavyani. Again, several Pe Choi units played their parts, and the Legion of Tik-nekw-ket was prominent amongst these, winning battle honours. Aleya “the Damsel of Purity” and Ninue Jalesa “the Maiden of Beauty” both surrounded themselves with Pe Choi advisors and friends, and under these Empresses the Legion first took in human recruits as well as Pe Choi.

The Great War of 2020 found the Legion far from the western front. The first months of the war were spent at Bey Su, and the Legion aided in the defense of Bey Su. Later, when the Tsolyani counterattacked, units of this Legion were at the Battle of the Temple of Chanis, and battle honours were again awarded to it. The second Battle of Tumissa, the second Battle of Chene Ho, and other actions of the Great War were also fought by Cohorts of this Legion, and when the Chakas were restored to Tsolyanu, the Legion stayed on in its Do Chakan homeland. In 2045 A.S. it was instrumental in suppressing the Chakan Uprisings, dealing alike with rebel Pe Choi and rebel humans. Since then it has always been posted in the west, and it is now posted in the forests just north of Chene Ho.

77. The Legion of the Nest of Ttik-Deqeq; 9th Imperial Pe Choi Auxiliary Medium Infantry

This Legion was created at the command of Emperor Nriga Gaqchike “the Spider” in 1007 A.S. to counter against those Pe Choi who served “the Father of Nests” (their equivalent of the Lord Hnalla). The members of this Legion were servants of the Black Old One, the Pe Choi form of Lord Hru’u. It drew its recruits from the southern reaches of the Pe Choi area and cooperated with those humans who served Lord Sarku and the other Dark Gods. In 1009 A S this Legion attempted the conquest of the northern Pe Choi villages, but it came into conflict with the Legion of Tik-nekw-ket (see above) and was roundly defeated. It then took refuge in the southern Do Chakan jungles and preyed upon humans and Pe Choi alike during the Civil War of 1010-26 A.S.

In 1056 A S. the tattered remnants of this Legion sought service with Targholel Nikuma “the Usurper” while he was still Lord of Tumissa, and when he ascended the Petal Throne in 1057 A.S. it accompanied him to Avanthar. After his assassination in 1062, Emperor Nu’unka “the Pious” ordered it disbanded and returned to the Chakas. Rather than accept this order - and almost certain death at the hands of those Pe Choi who served the Father of Nests - it slipped across the border and joined the Mu’ugalavyani as a mercenary Legion there.

In 1314 A.S. the terrible Emperor Tontiken Rirune “Slave of Demons” encouraged this Legion to rejoin the forces of the Imperium. One night, while the Mu’ugalavyani garrison of the city of Pagus slept, the Pe Choi put the city watch to the sword, looted the hereditary treasure of the great Temple of Hrsh, and escaped back into Tsolyanu. The treasure was demanded by the Mu’ugalavyani, but it does not ever seem to have reached Avanthar, and it is likely that it still lies buried somewhere in the forests of the Chakas.

Hejjeka I “the Replacer” posted this Legion to the eastern frontier, far away from other Pe Choi units, and his successor, Hejjeka II “the Heretic” made use of it during his campaigns in Salarvya. It won battle honours at Khum and was severely mauled at the siege of Nrikakchne. It is mentioned again in the annals of the strange and twisted Emperor Metlunel III “He Who Thirsts,” but this ruler had developed a secret language and script of his own, and his records have never been translated. All that is known is that it was posted back to the west, and it served on the P’jjenani border until 1565 A.S., when both Chakas were lost to Mu’ugalavya. It does not appear that the Legion fought against the Red Hats, but it knew that it would be punished for the looting of Pagus if it stayed in Mu’ugalavya; therefore, it came back to Tsolyanu and served without distinction for almost a hundred years in the northern mountains near Thri’il. In 1699 A.S. it joined the forces of Chrajuna “the Usurper of the North,” and when this interloper was defeated by Qenqolu hiVridi in 1700 A.S., the Legion was almost totally annihilated along with him.

Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” attempted to reactivate the Legion in 1775 A.S., but it does not seem to have recruited more than three or four Cohorts. Some of these fought in Pan Chaka in 1842 A.S., but the Legion remained weak and much below strength until the time of Gyesmu “the Iron Fist.” He made great use of the Pe Choi, bringing them into Imperial service and offering many rewards for their cooperation against the Mu’ugalavyani. This Legion was again almost totally eliminated, however, at the first Battle of Tumissa, and it played no further part in the Great War.

Emperor Hetkolainen “He Whose Glory Never Ends” attempted to restore the Legion in 2312 A.S., but it suffered terribly from the plague of 2342, which affected only Pe Choi and which took many Pe Choi lives all through the Imperium. It is only now slowly rebuilding itself under the guidance of Prince Dhich’une, the Emperor’s fourth son. Its present general hates the worshippers of Thumis and Ketengku with a passion, stating that these priests all along possessed a cure for the Plague but refused

to use it on those who were not adherents of the Lords of Stability. The Legion is now posted near Khirgar.

78. The Legion of the Forest of Hh-kk-ssa; 10th Imperial Pe Choi Auxiliary Medium Infantry

This Legion takes its name from the secret forest revered by those Pe Choi who serve the Father of Nests (their equivalent of Lord Hnalla, Master of Light). The Forest of Hh-kk-ssa is said to lie in a secret hollow within the northern reaches of Do Chaka, and no worshipper of the Lords of Change is ever permitted to lay eyes upon it and live. Some say that this forest is in fact ensorcelled and only partially upon this plane of being. In any case, the Pe Choi of this Legion are rather a strange and secretive lot, fanatic in their loyalty to those who serve the Lords of Stability.

The Legion was founded from amongst the Pe Choi refugees settled near the village of Si'is during the reign of Empress Aleya "the Damsel of Purity." At this time all of the Pe Choi homeland was in the hands of the Mu'ugalavyani, who worship either the Flame-Lord, Vimuhla, or their own strange deity, Hrsh. In 1900 A.S. the Empress organised this Legion as a counter to the Mu'ugalavyani and also to those who adhered to the Dark Gods of the Empire. She offered to provide it with arms and armour, but the Pe Choi, for reasons of their own, chose instead to serve as light infantry.

Soon after its formation the Legion was posted to Fasiltum in the northeast, probably as a check against the rising power of the Vimuhla-worshipping Vriddi clan there. It then was kept busy in constant raiding and skirmishing with the supporters of this faction and also with the tribes of the Eyagi Desert.

Emperor Neshkiruma "the Cloud-Spinner" sent this Legion upon a strange quest in 1978 A.S. When Milumanaya seceded from the Empire, this weak and ineffectual Emperor ordered the Legion to travel through the Dry Bay of Ssu'um to seek aid from the rulers of Saa Allaqi. The king of that nation at first promised help, then delayed, procrastinated, and prevaricated, all the while plying the Legion with the good things of Saa Allaqi and holding it at court in Saa Allaqiyar. He also got the Legion to aid him - it is not known what means he used - in his own war with the rebels of the city of Karslan on the shores of Lake Parunal. The Saa Allaqiyani made much of the alien Pe Choi, treating them with great honour but keeping them under surveillance and house arrest.

In 2016 A.S. Emperor Gyesmu "the Iron Fist" discovered what had happened to this "lost" Legion, and he sent orders to it commanding it to return. He also wrote to the king of Saa Allaqi threatening Tsolyani vengeance if the Legion were in any way hindered. Again the Saa Allaqiyani hesitated and procrastinated, but the Legion commanders took matters into their own hands. Through various stratagems they managed to obtain permission to visit the hidden mountain shrines outside the city of Saa Allaqiyar, and they then escaped from their escort and cut their way through to the foothills of Suruim Peak, across the eastern reaches of the Dry Bay of Ssu'um, down through Kilalammu to the headwaters of the Pagu River, and along the canyons of this inhospitable land to the Tsolyani outpost city of Hekellu. Their appearance there so astonished the governor, it is said, that the poor man had a brain seizure and died.

The Imperium was by this time aware of the growing Mu'ugalavyani threat in the west, and the Legion was welcomed and returned at once to the west. It took part in the first Battle of Chene Ho, where the Tsolyani were defeated. It regrouped, although down now to only three Cohorts, and aided in the defense of the city of Purdimal. When this, too, was taken by the Mu'ugalavyani, only a handful of Pe Choi escaped to Bey Su, and it took no further part in the Great War.

After the return of the Chakas to Tsolyanu, the Legion re-entered its homeland in glorious victory, and there it began the task of rebuilding its forces. By the time of the Chakan Uprising of 2045, it was powerful enough to aid the Imperium in the suppression of the Ito clan and the final destruction of the rebels' forest bases. It was then posted on to Butrus, where it has served as guardians of the western marches ever since.

79. The Legion of Tikik-dsa-ke; 14th Imperial Pe Choi Auxiliary Medium Infantry

This Legion is another unit devoted to the service of the Father of Nests. It was founded by Hejjeka II "the Heretic," and much of its recruiting was done from amongst Pe Choi settled in various parts of the Empire. As with the Legion of the Forest of Hh-kk-ssa, this unit prefers being light infantry, and it has taken up the crossbow, so popular in the west, as its major weapon.

After serving without much distinction during the campaigns of the War with Salarvya in 1325-40 A.S. the Legion was sent back to Khirgar, where it was established as city guards and wardens of the northern marches. When the Chakas were retaken by Mu'ugalavya in 1565 A.S., the Legion lost all contact with its homeland and continued to adopt human ways until even its knowledge of the Pe Choi language began to fade. Its leaders begged to be reposted to some city nearer the Pe Choi heartland, and Emperor Metlunel VI "He Who Is Lame" granted this, making them part of the garrison at Chene Ho, still at that time in Tsolyani hands.

The Legion took no great part in the Time of the Usurpers, offering allegiance to Chrajuna "the Usurper of the North" but taking no part in his campaigns. When he was at last defeated in 1700 A.S., it shifted allegiance easily to Qenqolu hiVridi, "the General of the West." Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma V "the Pretender" allowed the Legion to serve with his armies during the retaking of Do Chaka in 1711, and it is written that "the members of this Legion were as strange to their own kin of the forests as a fish is to cheese." Most of the units of this Legion preferred to return to Chene Ho and serve amongst the more familiar humans.

Emperor Durumu "the Copper Blade of Sarku" made things most difficult for the worshippers of the Lords of Stability, and his intrigues with the old Sarku-worshipping population of the Chakas brought him into conflict with the Pe Choi. It was at this time that the Battalions of the Seal of the Worm were posted to Chene Ho and were allowed to wreak great slaughter upon the Pe Choi there. The city was almost emptied of Pe Choi, and for many days the streets ran with their ichorous blood. The Pe Choi have never forgiven nor forgotten this, and each member of this Legion to this day takes an oath to the effect that "if the Emperor permits, we shall cleanse the land of the ugly stain of the Lord of Worms, so that it may once more be purified so long as the Light of the Father of Nests remains in the sky."

The Legion fared much better under the ensuing Empresses, gaining some honour during the retaking of Pan Chaka in 1842 A.S. During the Great War of 2020, it saw service first at the Battle of Tumissa, where it was reduced from seventeen Cohorts to three in the space of one afternoon. Regrouped at Urmish, it fought the Mu'ugalavyani until the city fell, and then several small units made their way east to Katalal, where again the Mu'ugalavyani besieged the Tsolyani forces. After the Battle of the Temple of Chanis, the Legion managed to regroup again, gathering troops from both human and Pe Choi sympathizers all over the Imperium, and at the second battle of Tumissa it acquitted itself nobly, gaining battle honours.

Emperor Gyesmu Dalisa reposted the Legion to Khirgar, where it has served ever since in its historic role of city guards and northern frontier wardens. It is now generalled by a brilliant young Pe

Choi, who sits high at the councils of General Kettukal hiMraktine. He advocates a thrust across the Milumanayani deserts to take the city of Hlikku by surprise, an endeavour perhaps too daring for many of his human colleagues.

80. The Legion of the Whistling Peek; 4th Imperial Light Infantry Flying Squadron

The human empires of Tekumel do not seem to have had regular Legions of Hlaka flyers until very recently, although many rulers did make use of individual Hlaka as scouts, messengers, etc. The first organised Legion was the creation of Emperor Hejjeka II “the Heretic”, who in 1330 A.S. contacted the den-elders of the Hlaka and requested their aid in raising a Legion of these curious nonhumans.

It is not known what the Tsolyani offered, and there seems to have been dissension amongst the Hlaka, some of whom were for carrying the Tsolyani messenger high over the domains of the hated Ssu and dropping him, and some for accepting his offer. In the end, the latter faction won, and the Governor of Hekellu was one day amazed to find the skies dark with Hlaka come to serve the Imperium. Human military organisation remained a mystery to these little flying beings, however, and for many years thereafter the Hlaka “Legions” consisted simply of a disorganised horde of Hlaka flying about when and where they chose, with “leaders” who might change from day to day, and weapons which consisted largely of slender javelins and stones to hurl down upon their foes - and occasionally upon their allies, as the mood took them.

The Imperium was able, nevertheless, to make good use of the Hlaka in its campaigns in Salarvya. Judicious questioning elicited information about the numbers and dispositions of troops below, as well as the presence of ambushes, supply trains, and fortifications. Occasionally the Hlaka would also swoop down and snatch up a Salarvyani messenger, dropping him quite literally at the feet of the Tsolyani commanders.

During succeeding reigns the Hlaka began to be posted farther and farther from their mountainous homes in Kilalammu. But it was Metlunel V “the Esthete” who achieved real rapport with them. He encouraged them to nest in the inaccessible caves on the precipices of Avanthar, and certain of them became his eyes and ears all across the Imperium, a practice which many Emperors have since followed - if the Hlaka happen to take a liking to that particular Emperor.

The Hlaka are among the least humanoid of all of the nonhuman races allied with man on Tekumel, in spite of their appearance. They take no part whatsoever in human politics, and their religion is unknown to any but themselves. Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” made an attempt to study their beliefs but came away with the opinion that these beings were “godless beasts,” an idea at which the Hlaka laughed merrily in their sardonic fashion.

Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” seems to have been especially beloved of her Hlaka troops, and there are stories of this Empress riding high above Avanthar in a litter supported by hundreds of flyers, looking down upon her amazed subjects below. In her time the Hlaka aided in the conquest of Pan Chaka, hurling torches and firepots down upon the city of Butrus. The same excellent relations obtained during the reigns of Empress Aleya “the Damsel of Purity” and Ninue Jalesa “the Maiden of Beauty.” Emperor Neshkiruma “the Cloud-Spinner” was himself terrified of heights, however, and paid scant attention to his Hlaka legionnaires, many of whom returned to Kilalammu in disgust.

Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron-Fist” managed to bring some order into the Hlaka command. He ordered the training of young Hlaka in human cities far from their home and away from their fellows, and eventually he produced a group of young Hlaka who could serve the Imperium in customary ways as

officers of their Legions. Hlaka were thus present at all of the battles of the Great War of 2020. The Legion of the Whistling Peak is one of this Emperor's creations, and its officers have continued the tradition of training and discipline which he began. During the siege of Purdimal this Legion showered the Mu'ugalavyani with stones and reported on the progress of the mines to the Tsolyani within the city. When it fell, they flew all the way to Avanthar to report, falling exhausted before the Petal Throne. The Legion saw service at the second Battle of Tumissa and the second Battle of Chene Ho, hurling javelins and stones down upon the foe until they fell from the air too tired to fly. In spite of their timid and rather skittish nature, they performed well all through the campaign in the Chakas, bringing in information about Mu'ugalavyani movements and strengths and occasionally assaulting small parties of the enemy from above.

After the Great War, this Legion was posted to Bey Su, and then certain Cohorts were sent on to Kaija, Kerunan, and Chaigari, as these Protectorates were added to the Empire. In 2254 A.S. Emperor Arshu'u "the Ever-Splendid" ordered the headquarters of the Legion returned to the city of Hekellu, where the Hlaka could more easily contact their kinsmen in Kilalammu. Cohorts continue to be sent all over the Empire to serve in one or another army group, but the Imperium has recognised the need of the Hlaka for proximity to their homeland.

The Legion presently is composed of nineteen Cohorts, plus one Cohort of "wild Hlaka" in training near Hekellu. These troops usually serve only for a year or two, then suddenly fly off home, sometimes to return later with others of their fellows. The Tsolyani have grown accustomed to this and make no demands upon these creatures except those which have become traditional. Five Cohorts of Hlaka now serve on the northwestern frontier near Khirgar, while others are posted to Chene Ho, Tumissa, Purdimal, Meku, etc. The "general" of the Legion, Sua-eya (as near as human lips can come to forming his name) is an elderly Hlaka with much experience. He has flown off home four times and each time returned to seek "the good human" - General Kettukal hiMraktine, whose personal friend he has become.

81. The Legion of Aerial Joy; 9th Imperial Light Infantry Flying Squadron

The second Tsolyani Hlaka Legion is also originally the creation of Emperor Hejjeka II "the Heretic." Like their comrades in the Legion of the Whistling Peak, these Hlaka performed well in the War with Salarvya. They come from another Hlaka "tribe," however, and the Imperium quickly learned not to try to mix Hlaka of one Legion with troops of the other. The basis of this tribal affiliation is not known, but the Tsolyani now simply ask each new Hlaka whether he or she is "one of the air" or "one of the lightnings"; this seems to elicit the desired response, and the newcomer can be enrolled in the proper Legion without difficulty.

This Legion experienced only one period of difficulty while in Tsolyanu: the Emperor Durumu "the Copper Blade of Sarku" disliked their free and easy comings and goings in the secret high places of Avanthar, and he commanded several of them to be caught and impaled as punishment. The remaining Hlaka of this Legion then flew over the citadel, showering it with stones, torches, and dung until no human soldier was willing to venture out upon the battlements. They then flew away to their homes in Kilalammu. Only after Durumu's terrible death and the accession of Empress Nrainue "the Iridescent Goddess" did these little flyers venture to return, and they remained skittishly aloof for many years before finally recognising the Empress' friendliness, as her other Hlaka Legion had done.

During the Great War of 2020 this Legion served at the first Battle of Chene Ho, the siege of Urmish, the siege of Katalal, and the great encirclement of Bey Su. Later, at the Battle of the Temple of

Chanis, the Legion helped the Tsolyani with the field and battle honours were awarded to it. So many Hlaka were slain, however, that the Legion took several years to recover its strength, and it still possesses only some fifteen Cohorts, plus one in training.

In modern times the Legion has been based at Sokatis; it took part in the Battle of Ru in 2347 A.S. and also in some of General Kettukal's incursions into Yan Kor, but most of its strength has been concentrated in the east. Two Cohorts are now based near Khirgar on the northern border, however, and it has been engaged there on the Atkolel Heights with the Hlaka who serve Yan Kor.

The general of this Legion is one Ewo-i-ya, also a close comrade of General Kettukal, for whom almost all Hlaka seem to conceive an instant liking, and Prince Eselne has become an object of their rather timid affection as well. The Hlaka of this Legion recently offered to fly the Prince up over the southeastern flanks of the Atkolel Heights so that he might survey the situation in person, but his generals and other followers counseled strongly against it - after all, the Yan Koryani also have many Hlaka auxiliaries, and an aerial battle above the vertical precipices of the Heights is no place, they say, for a Tsolyani Prince:

82. The Legion of the Tangled Root Eaters; 2nd Imperial Pachi Lei Auxiliary Medium Infantry

The conquest of Pan Chaka took place in circa 780-1, and the archives report that one of the most difficult tasks faced by the Imperial troops was the subduing of the Pachi Lei, the strange, pear-shaped nonhumans who inhabit the jungles southwest of Butrus. The humans of Pan Chaka had allied themselves with the Pachi Lei, and at the Battle of Butrus (780 A.S.) there were "as many of these monsters as the grasses of the fields." Even after Butrus fell and Pan Chaka was mostly in Tsolyani hands, however, the Leaf-Eaters held out, and it was almost a hundred years before a Tsolyani Legate could visit the southern coast of Pan Chaka (much less visit the interior!) in peace.

No Pachi Lei Legions were in existence much before the reign of Emperor Hejjeka II "the Heretic." Hostilities between these creatures and the humans of the Empire had slowly come to a stop by the reign of Emperor Nriga Gaqchike "the Spider," who favoured the Dark Gods and thus had much in common with the Pachi Lei, most of whom seem to worship deities rather similar to Lord Ksarul, the Doomed Prince of the Blue Room, or his Cohort, Gruganu, the Knower of Spells. Emperor Nriga Gaqchike thus had Pachi Lei brought to his court where it is recorded that "he debated theology and metaphysics with them until his wisdom appeared to them like a third moon in the sky, and they bowed before the glory of the Petal Throne and made submission." In spite of this hyperbole, however, he seems to have been unable or uninterested in forming a Pachi Lei Legion.

Emperor Hejjeka II "the Heretic" was thus the first to send an Imperial Legate to Butrus to request the Pachi Lei resident there "to come forth as persons of status in the Empire and join in the tasks of expanding the dominions of the Seal into the dark lands of Salarvya." The "tame" Pachi Lei responded by organising the Legion of Tangled Root-Eaters, with the aid and advice of the Human governor of Pan Chaka. The effort proved very much worthwhile: the Legion's five Cohorts fought at the Battle of Koyluga and struck fear into the Salarvyani. Each Pachi Lei fought with two long swords, holding a shield and a barbed spear in their other two hands. The Salarvyani in front of them were simply bowled over and massacred. Unfortunately, the wild enthusiasm of the Pachi Lei for their task sent them plunging after the fleeing enemy, and they ended by being cut off from their lines. They were surrounded by the Salarvyani rear reserves and would have been massacred had it not been for the Pe

Choi Legion of Tik-nekw-ket, which effected a rescue. The Pachi Lei have never forgotten this timely aid and still speak of the Pe Choi as “our northern brothers.”

Emperor Hejjeka IV “Restorer of Dignities” offered the Pachi Lei local autonomy in 1476 A.S., but the leaders of the Pachi Lei community indignantly sent the Legate back to Avanthar with a message saying, “If we are no longer wanted in Tsolyanu, we shall leave it and settle in some other land; until then we are Imperial citizens “

In 1565 A.S. the Mu’ugalavyani struck quickly, taking advantage of the weakness of Emperor Metlunel V “the Esthete.” The Pachi Lei were absorbed into the Mu’ugalavyani Empire willy-nilly, some of them fighting to the death in the forests, others fleeing by ship to Livyanu or around Ngeshtu Head to Penom. The Red-Hats had little liking for these forest creatures, rightly surmising that they could never be fitted into the militaristic, regimented society of Mu’ugalavya, and they gave permission for a mass slaughter. Butrus was emptied of its Pachi Lei population, and the curious, labyrinthine wooden houses of these nonhumans were set on fire and looted. Many were taken as slaves to Ssa’atis, but when it was found that the people of Mu’ugalavya would not buy them, the slavers slaughtered their merchandise and fed their meat to their human charges, saying that “the meat of one animal is much like that of any other.”

The Legion of Tangled Root-Eaters was reformed from available refugees at Penom, and two or three Cohorts of human refugees were added as well. Emperor Kanmi’yel Nikuma V “the Pretender” made use of this unit in the retaking of Do Chaka in 1711 A.S., although the Pachi Lei made it clear that they would not fight against the Pe Choi. They were thus used against the Ito Clan, who were defending Paya Gupa and Chene Ho. The Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” stationed the Legion at Mrelu, where its allegiance to the Pachi Lei form of Lord Ksarul stood it in good stead with the priesthood of that deity in the city.

When Mu’ugalavya fell into its long internal factional strife in the early 1800’s, the Pachi Lei requested permission to retake Pan Chaka, and the Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” agreed, sending other Legions to aid in the siege of Butrus. The Red-Hats made little resistance, however, and in 1842 A.S. the Pachi Lei general Hozzybe G’dzar himself made the ceremonial cleansing of Butrus and thus brought Pan Chaka back into the Imperium. Whole colonies of Pachi Lei were found dwelling in the heart of the jungles and mountains of southern Pan Chaka, where they had taken refuge from the Mu’ugalavyani nearly three centuries earlier, and there was much rejoicing. The last vestiges of Mu’ugalavyani culture were effaced from Butrus, and hapless settlers were driven back across the western borders into Mu’ugalavya by the thousands.

The Legion was allowed to settle at Butrus and became the official defense force of Pan Chaka. The Empresses Aleya “the Damsel of Purity” and Ninue Jalesa “the Maiden of Beauty” made no objection, although they had no love for the worship of the Dark Gods. Emperor Neshkiruma “the Cloud-Spinner” paid no attention to the Chakas whatsoever, and when he died in 2015 A.S., the Legion found itself embroiled in human intrigues: it was ordered to join the armies of Prince Jaredayu, one of the claimants of the Petal Throne, and Butrus was left almost undefended. late in 2015 the scramble for the throne was resolved, and Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist” assumed the Imperial title. The Legion was at Urmish. Before it could be sent back to Pan Chaka, however, the new Emperor had to put down minor uprisings in Purdimal and Meku, and this unit was thus at the latter city when the Mu’ugalavyani launched the Great War of 2020. Butrus fell within a few days, and the Red-Hats once again made gleeful slaughter all through the Chakas. The Pachi Lei were hunted down and massacred all through the Protectorate, except in the very heart of the jungles.

The Legion, meanwhile, fought well at the siege of Urmish, lost many of its troops at the siege of Katalal, retreated with the Tsolyani forces to the capital and performed nobly on the battlements of Bey Su. It then joined with the Army of the North and took its revenge at the second Battle of Chene Ho. The Mu'ugalavyani commanders at Butrus saw the situation as hopeless and agreed to retreat through the jungles to their homeland "on the sole condition that no Legion of Pachi Lei be permitted to harass us therein." The Pachi Lei were thus cheated of direct revenge, and only after the area had been emptied of Mu'ugalavyani troops were they once more allowed to enter Butrus. In 2045 A.S. the Chakan clans revolted against the Empire, and the Legion was used once again against Paya Gupa and the forest camps of the Ito clan and their secret Mu'ugalavyani allies. Some of the leaders surrendered rather than be faced with Pachi Lei forest troops, but others were seized and taken for torment and execution into the heart of Pan Chaka where even the Imperium could not find them.

In modern times the Legion has mostly remained at Butrus, although General Kettukal hiMraktine has asked that it be posted to Purdimal to counter the Yan Koryani threat. Its general, G-Gum-Shoggu, is said to be attracted to the cause of Prince Mridobu, who also serves one of the Dark Gods, and he is thus not a member of the Military Party. Prince Eselne does not wish the Legion returned to Butrus, therefore, since this would strengthen the power of the Dark Gods, and particularly Lord Ksarul, in Pan Chaka.

83. The Legion of Deep Green Shade; 6th Imperial Pachi Lei Auxiliary Medium Infantry

This unit of Pachi Lei was formed much later than its sister Legion, that of the Tangled Root-Eaters. Empress Aleya "the Damsel of Purity" developed a missionary enterprise in Pan Chaka which was charged with the conversion of worshippers of the Dark Gods to the service of the Lords of Stability. One branch of this mission was composed of a few Pachi Lei who had adopted human deities and had been settled for centuries near Bey Su. The Empress' efforts were only partially successful, and most of the adherents of her new mission were those Pachi Lei living in and around the city of Butrus, where human influence was the strongest. The Temples of Thumis, Lord of Wisdom, and his Cohort, Ketengku, were never very happy with this enterprise, since a number of theological positions developed which were in conflict with the older established doctrines of their faiths. This was especially true of the Pachi Lei. Their forms of worship, tenets, and dogmas smacked all too strongly of the dark faiths which they had supposedly abandoned, and the Empress eventually had to give up her attempt.

Of those Pachi Lei who did join the Temple of Thumis, however, many remained staunch in their new beliefs. During the reign of Empress Ninue Jalesa "the Maiden of Beauty" these Pachi Lei complained of oppression by the worshippers of the other Pachi Lei deities and requested permission to found a Legion of their own to protect themselves. In 1947 A.S. this was granted, and the Legion recruited some three and a half Cohorts.

There is no further mention of this unit until the Great War of 2020, when it was ordered to mobilise as many Cohorts as it could find. Pachi Lei settled in other Tsolyani cities were approached for recruits, and the Legion itself was based at Penom. It was sent to the first Battle of Tumissa, where it fought reasonably well on the Tsolyani right flank against a Mu'ugalavyani unit of Shen. It was eventually decimated and fled, however. It was only reactivated after the Great War, just in time to take part in the Chakan Uprising of 2045 A.S. It served this time within its own chosen environment, the deep forests of the Chakas, and after the Uprising had been quelled, it was allowed to remain on the frontiers, first in Do Chaka, and then later near Tumissa.

The Legion was part of General Kettukal's invasion force when he entered Yan Kor, and it fought well on Srigash Field. It was then returned to a base in the swamps just north of Purdimal, where an uprising amongst the peoples of the swamps was expected. This did not occur, however, and it has remained there, much against its will, until very recently, when it was posted at Khirgar.

The general of this Legion, Lord Fisa-Brugshmy, is a hardened forest fighter. He has urged that his troops be sent on to Chene Ho, where the Chakan jungles would provide more scope for his troops than the deserts around Khirgar. This wish has now been granted, and the Legion is preparing to march to Chene Ho to take up a support role for the Tsolyani armies there. The general is a devotee of the peculiar Pachi Lei form of Lord Thumis and is a personal friend of some of the High Adepts of this temple. His troops have no particular animosity for their fellows in the Legion of Tangled Root-Eaters, but nevertheless the two Legions are never permitted to fight together or to be based near one another for fear of the ancient rivalry and hostility which exists between those Pachi Lei following their own ancient Dark Gods and those advocating the service of the Lords of Stability.

84. The Legion of the Dancer Without Eyes; 2nd Imperial Ahoggya Auxiliary Heavy Infantry

The nonhuman Ahoggya have little love for humankind. Nevertheless, their young seem to pass through a stage during which they seek adventure and violence, and it is possible to employ them for a period of not more than a year or two as mercenaries. They are but little amenable to human discipline and often simply announce where they will stand during a battle and what they will do. They are almost unstoppable once they have begun a charge, and they will pursue a routing foe until that foe is dead to the last man. They usually disdain to follow light infantry or persons whom they consider of lesser status, of course, but once they have joined battle with heavy or medium infantry - and particularly with the Shen - they almost never desist until the victory is theirs or they are all dead.

The Ahoggya make their homes in the salt bogs and marshes of the south coast of Salarvya and across the straits in Haida Pakala. Their Salarvyani settlements are comparatively recent, dating from the Time of Chaos after the fall of the Engsvan Hla Ganga Empire. The Engsvanyali had enlisted several Legions of these creatures, and when the Empire collapsed they settled where they had been posted, bringing their families across the straits to join them. It was then impossible for the humans of Salarvya to dislodge them.

The Ahoggya are fearsome fighters. Gruff, rude, crude, and stubborn, they care little for the niceties of human stratagems. At the Battle of Koyluga they defeated a unit of Shen sent against them by the Tsolyani, took prisoners, and ate their captives - from whence the long-standing hostility between these two nonhuman races stems. Similarly, at the Battle of Mmillaka, they charged off after a Cohort of fleeing Tsolyani, tore their foe each limb from limb, looted the camp, and dashed off into the forests after the camp servants! They are thus used almost always as special striking units and are not posted in what the commander hopes will remain a disciplined line.

The earlier Tsolyani Emperors had no more than a scattering of Ahoggya in their armies; the Salarvyani forbade the recruiting of Ahoggya into foreign forces and carefully kept the secret of their hold over these creatures. The Ahoggya themselves, however, made it known to the world that they would serve for copper which, it appears, they require for their diet, and then other human nations began to recruit from across the straits in Haida Pakala. After the Battle of Koyluga Emperor Hejjeka II "the Heretic" sent a mission across to enlist Ahoggya, and the Legate persuaded four shiploads of them to sail with him back to Tsolyanu. Although two of these ships were lost enroute, the way had been opened,

and within ten years' time others were brought, and the nucleus of the Legion of the Dancer Without Eyes was formed. The origins of this name lie with the Ahoggya, who are unwilling or unable to explain it to their human comrades. It seems to have something to do with their curious system of eight sexes, however.

The Legion continued to be something of a lone showpiece during succeeding reigns, although Vriggetsu Dnash "the Usurper of the South" bribed it into his service in 1699 A.S. Had he lived, it would have been a powerful weapon indeed, for it numbered nearly eighteen Cohorts in his day.

The Legion was originally based at Jakalla, but the people of that city complained to the Imperium that they could not stand the rough, swaggering Ahoggya troops and persuaded the Imperium to move it to a base near Thraya. During the reign of Emperor Kanmi'yel Nikuma V "the Pretender," thus, it took part only in occasional raids across into Salarvya. Durumu "the Copper Blade of Sarku" attempted theological discussions with the Ahoggya in his service but came away feeling that these beasts had no religion worth discussing. He sent units of the Legion to the Chakas, where they terrified the Pe Choi, harassed the Human inhabitants, and so bothered the Pachi Let that the Imperium ordered them withdrawn. The Legion was then posted north to Fasiltum, and thence to Sunraya. There they remained as the garrison of this northern city until the reign of Neshkiruma "the Cloud-Spinner." When Sunraya fell and Milumanaya seceded, the Legion battled its way single-handedly down through the Pass of Skulls to safety in Thri'il, arriving there with less than a quarter of its original strength, but with cartloads of Milumanayani heads which they refused to abandon. Armour, weapons, jewels, and money were all left behind, but "the head of an enemy is a joy for one's descendants," as an Ahoggya saying puts it.

The Great War of 2020 found the Legion posted in the west. At the first Battle of Chene Ho, it fought on long after all the rest of the Tsolyani had fled the field, destroying seven Cohorts of the best Mu'ugalavyani Legion (Legion I of the First Palace: Victorious in Vimuhla) before they were brought down. As one surviving Tsolyani told it, however, the Ahoggya were not really interested in slaying this enemy unit but were simply trying to break through it to get at a Legion of enemy Shen posted behind!

The Imperium awarded the Legion battle honours, mostly posthumously, after the Great War, and it was not until 2030 A.S. that it once again saw battle at the time of the annexation of the Protectorate of Kerunan. It was charged with the taking of the little city of Ru, but finding little there of interest, it advanced on and sacked Mmillaka as well. It was advancing towards Khum all by itself to meet a huge Salarvyani host when at last reason prevailed. It retired to Mmillaka but marched out again across northern Salarvya to take the town of Fenul in 2041 A.S. With some difficulty it was persuaded to return to Jaikalor, where further recruits from Haida Pakala were being gathered.

Succeeding Emperors kept the Legion out of trouble at Jaikalor until the incursions into Yan Kor under General Kettukal hiMraktine. It was then taken north and met the Yan Koryani on Srigash Field. After being showered with missiles by the famous archers of the city of Maxis, the Legion charged into the Yan Koryani line and went straight on through to the walls of that city, where it was repelled by ballistae from the walls. The remainder of the Legion was busy pulling stones from the walls of Maxis when at last the Tsolyani broke the enemy and came up. Thereafter, the Tsolyani kept the Legion as a powerful reserve at a base outside of Khirgar until the present, when it has been sent west to the eastern flanks of the Atkolel Heights. The Ahoggya may be charged with the retaking of the Heights, where it is said that the Baron has posted part of his new Shen Legion. This the Ahoggya general - whose name is unpronounceable and who is thus simply called "the Gnarled One" - would find most desirable. Gaining the top of the cliffs which surround the Heights, however, would be difficult for these creatures, and the

Imperium has thus given this task to better mountaineering troops, holding the Ahoggia back until a foothold has been achieved.

85. The Legion of Guruggma; 3rd Imperial Ahoggia Auxiliary Heavy Infantry

The Emperor Durumu “the Copper Blade of Sarku” is said to have recruited this Legion largely as a means of oppressing the people of the island of Ganga, many of whom were followers of the Goddess Avanthé. The Emperor cared little for the beliefs of the Ahoggia, but he knew that the crude and repulsive Ahoggia would soon come into conflict with the sophisticated and beauty-loving people of the ancient capital of the Ensgvan Hla Ganga Empire. He was not wrong; within a year the Ahoggia had fought a pitched battle with the city guard, defiled a temple of Dilinala, and publicly eaten three priestesses of the Blue Goddess. Appeals to the Imperium went unheeded. Only when the priesthood of Avanthé threatened a full scale uprising on the island did the Emperor order the Ahoggia to desist. His order was disobeyed, and the Ahoggia went on a destructive rampage in the ancient and hallowed ruins on the eastern end of the island. The priests then brought forth certain powerful weapons from the days preceding the Time of Darkness and annihilated so many of the Ahoggia that at last they retreated and barricaded themselves in their headquarters in Petris Layoda. The Imperium finally acted to save them and held the High Priestess of Avanthé at Bey Su as a hostage until the Gangan priests agreed to end the siege.

The Empress Nrainue “the Iridescent Goddess” was herself a worshipper of lady Avanthé, and she commanded the Legion to disband and return to Haida Pakala. Such an order was beyond the understanding of the Ahoggia general, however, and he only replied that he and his troops had been paid and would continue to fight against whomever the Empress desired until their term was up. She then ordered him to mount an attack upon the territory of the Hlutrgu, and this the Ahoggia did single-handedly. They attacked directly across the straits to the east of the Island of Ganga, cleansed a large area of the thick swamps of the Gilraya Forests of Hlutrgu and advanced north along the coasts to Msumtel Bay. There they were eventually annihilated.

The Legion was not reactivated until the time of Emperor Gyesmu “the Iron Fist.” He sent one Guruggma, a Salarvyani renegade, to the Haida Pakalan Ahoggia settlements to recruit troops, and these were based at Jakalla. The Legion was given a new number, the “third” instead of the “first” Ahoggia Auxiliaries, and it was then posted to the western frontier, where the Great War of 2020 was about to begin. Units of this Legion saw service at the first Battle of Tumissa, but these were annihilated after fierce fighting, and other Cohorts were held up at Jakalla until the Tsolyani counterattack in 2020. They then joined in the Battle of the Temple of Chanis, defeated the Mu’ugalavyani units opposite them, and went charging off after the remnants of the enemy without stopping. They returned the next day. The Legion later saw more battle on the field before Tumissa and in the Chakas. After the Great War it was returned to Jakalla.

Emperor Heshtu’atl saw fit to return the Legion to the island of Ganga, believing that he could thus demonstrate to the priesthood of Avanthé on the island that these creatures were indeed reasonable and harmless if kept under control. He also gave the priesthood permission to proselytize amongst them, but this resulted once more in riots and strife, and the Imperium at length decided to allow this old Legion to fall into decay. No further Ahoggia were recruited for it, although it maintained its headquarters and about a Cohort or so of maintenance troops. The present Emperor has now decided to reactivate the Legion and has moved its headquarters to Jakalla, where it can be kept out of trouble with

the priesthood of the Blue Goddess. Some ten Cohorts are now ready, and one is still being trained. Most of the active troops of the Legion have been recently ordered north to Bey Su in the event of need on the northern frontiers.

New Legions of the Tsolyani Imperium

35. The Legion of the Storm of Fire; 21st Imperial Medium Infantry

This new Legion is a revival of an ancient unit that died to the man before the walls of Mmillaka in 1329 A.S. The unit was originally armed as a crossbow Legion, but the new general has added cohorts of axemen. The troops of the new recension are mostly worshippers of Vimuhla and Chiteng. They have been sent to the eastern provinces to fight the Ssu.

39. The Armored Vision of Death; 29th Imperial Medium Infantry

A Legion recently raised at Penom by Prince Dlich'une. The Prince has long sought to gain support from the Sarku worshippers of the southern marshlands. It is said that at least three Cohorts of Undead (Shedra) are also ready at the Temple of the Fourth Worm just outside Penom, Rumour also has it that Vorodla and possibly certain other types of undead creatures are prepared to aid this Legion. The general belongs to the Dark Fear Clan, is about 45 years of age, and is inexperienced - but he did serve for a time in the Legion of the Scales of Brown, and he thus knows something of military matters.

52. The Legion of Elechu of Usenanu; 30th Imperial Archers

A Legion supplied by the wealthy mercantile clans of Usenanu. Its general is a member of the White Stone clan and is devoted to Avanthé. He is not very experienced but is said to be intelligent - though rash. Legions of armoured archers have not been used since Engsvanyali times.

56. The Legion of the Wind of Iron; 10th Imperial Crossbowmen

A new Legion raised by funds from the Temple of Chegarra. Mostly composed of members of the Iron Fist and Iron Hand clans and based in the northern mountains at the town of Aukesha. The general is an ex-member of the Legion of Glorious Destiny, and he is thus of some experience, though not a veteran. He himself is of the Iron Fist clan and is 43 years old. Although his Legion is based in the mountains, its troops are drawn from all over the Empire, and it is thus not a "mountain-trained" unit.

Un-numbered. The Legion of the Translucent Emerald, ??th Imperial Heavy Infantry

Based at Hekellu. It had been ordered to go there and "remain until summoned to return" by one of the Avanthé Empresses, who hated Dlamelish and Hrihayal, which that legion served.. The troops obeyed: they went into hiding in Hekellu, taking up agricultural work and other pursuits. They did keep their ancient cohesion and loyalty, and they stored their arms and armour. The records of this Legion were lost in Avanthar. The Imperium recently sent a mission Hekellu which casually included a command that "all loyal soldiers should come forth and present themselves to the Imperium." What a surprise when a couple of thousand men in full armour appeared to stand in the great square! The Legion

took some part in the war against Yan Kor, was transferred to Tumissa (!) to serve Princess Ma'in Kruthai, and now has marched to Bey Su to join Prince Taksuru. You can look up some of its officers in the warrior/soldier database by going to the "Legion" field and typing in "Translucent Emerald."

(Note: An index is planned. If you are reading this message, check the FTP site you picked this up at regularly for an updated copy.)