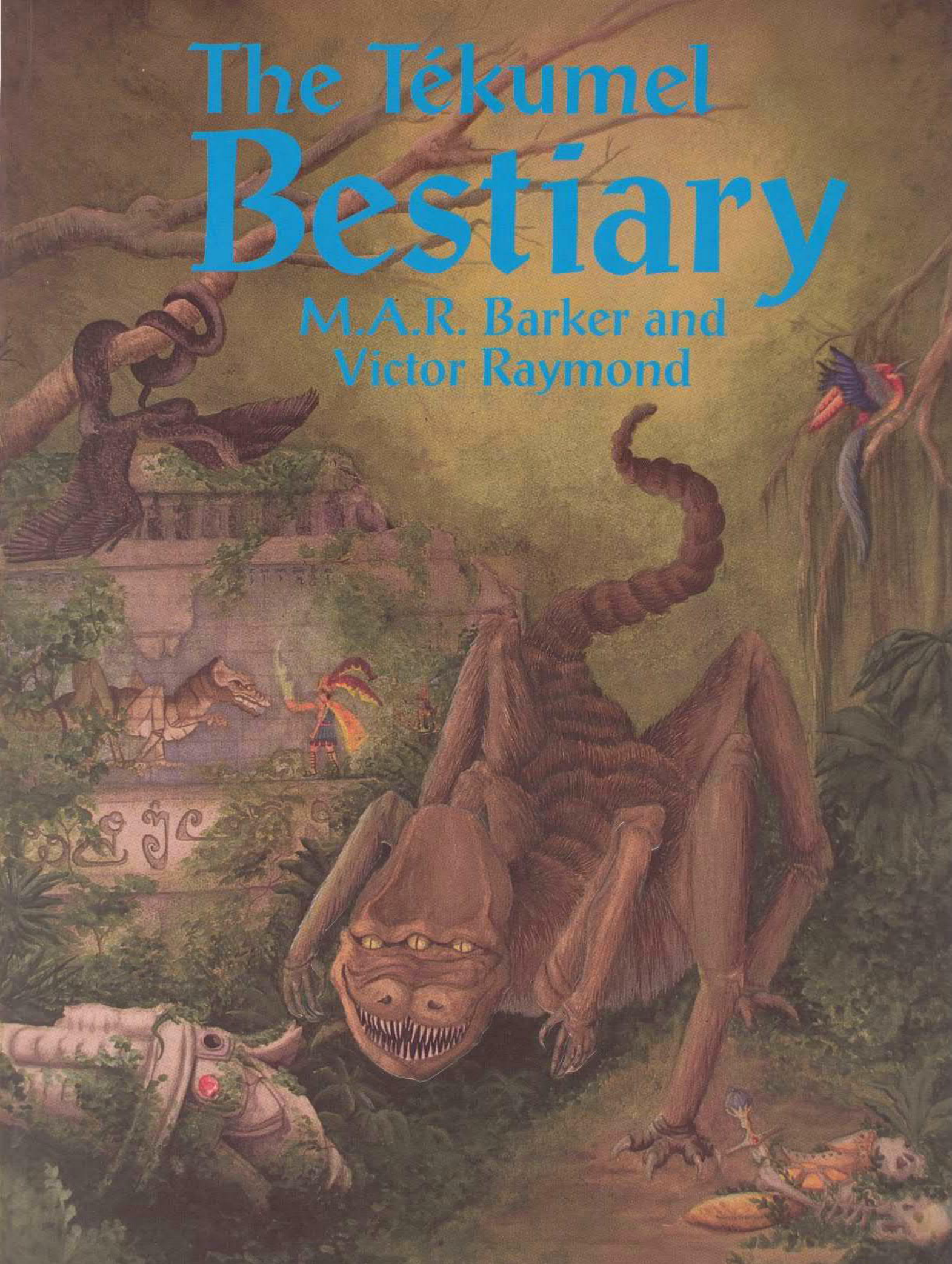


The Téकुmel Bestiary

M.A.R. Barker and
Victor Raymond



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A Guide to the Creatures of Tékumel
by M.A.R. Barker and Victor Raymond

Illustrations by Giovanna Fregni

With special thanks to:
Thomas Juntunen, Erik Baker, and Lynn Litterer

The Tékumel Bestiary

A TOME, Inc. Presentation

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0. INTRODUCTION

Most of the original, indigenous animal and plant species of Tékumel are extinct. Only the hardiest survived the coming of humankind, the warfare with the Hlüss and the Ssú and the many changes wrought thereafter by humans and their allies during the centuries before the Time of Darkness. Tékumel's sentient species were confined to "reservations," and the purplish vegetation that almost covered the continents and filled the seas was exterminated. The planet was terraformed by processes that would now seem godlike to the modern Tekumeláni. Gravity machines were buried near the planet's core, the atmosphere was altered, the climate was reduced to a perpetual "warm tropic" variety comfortable for humankind and the Shén (and acceptable to the other allied species), and plant and animal life was imported from friendly worlds.

At first the new masters of Tékumel attempted to maintain an ecological balance: the starships unloaded trees and plants that were economically useful or aesthetically pleasing, animals that were edible or traditional "pets," and micro-organisms that produced oxygen, nitrogen, and soil nutrients. Birds, which seem to be a uniquely Terran development, were freed to fly in Tékumel's skies. As time passed, the interstellar traders of the allied races found Tékumel a pleasant place and constructed resorts and estates. This, rather than trade or industry, became Tékumel's major "occupation" during the millennium or so before the Time of Darkness.

The commercial tycoons who built their manors upon Tékumel came from many worlds, a few even from far-off Earth. The flora and fauna they imported to stock their pleasure gardens and hunting preserves were thus varied. The Shén brought in many of the reptilian, quadrupedal species from their wide-flung star systems; the Pé Chói did the same with the six-limbed creatures of their worlds. The other races, too, established suitable environments for their own favourite life-forms. Many of these magnates were hunters, scholars, explorers, collectors of oddities, and aesthetes whose tastes in horticulture and zoological gardens ranged from the academic to the weird.

The Time of Darkness brought chaos. The cities crumbled, the waves rose, and Tékumel's core shook with the stresses created by the interruption of the interstellar magnetic and gravitic forces that had existed since the creation of the cosmos. The estates and gardens and hunting preserves were devastated, thousands of species perished, and only the strong and adaptable survived. A million delicate, gauze-winged insects from the Pé Chói worlds fluttered free from their smashed glass cages — and died. Many others did the same. Thousands of species survived to come to terms with Tékumel's atmosphere, unfamiliar food plants, and

hostile inhabitants. A dozen sea-monsters, the Akhó of the deeps, slipped away from the gigantic aquarium constructed by some nameless collector of dangerous marine life. A handful of Terran horses ran from the collapsing stables of a trader from old Earth, and the lumbering six-legged Bazháq of Deneb escaped similarly from the domed mansion of a hunter whose home world revolved around a small star near Procyon.

With this background, it is not surprising to find an incredible diversity of life on Tékumel. Species that could never have evolved together exist side by side in all of the planet's various eco-systems. It is thus no easy task to describe Tékumel's flora and fauna; rarities and oddities are the norm rather than the exception.

Ecologically similar but widely separated areas have diverged since the Time of Darkness also. Just as the flora and fauna of the Gobi Desert, the Sahara, and the deserts of the American Southwest all contain similar but different life-forms, so do the ecological systems of the Great Desert of Galái, the Desert of Sighs, the Desert of Eyági, the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, the Sleeping Desert, and the Plains of Glass vary greatly. The same is true for the jungles, the forests, the mountains, and the seas. Only the fertile agricultural plains display more or less similar inhabitants; this is the result of historical diffusion and trade between the various intelligent races and peoples. The same ecological "niche" may be filled by a six-legged Pé Chói "lizard" in the Desert of Sighs, by a furry, spider-like creature from one of the Ahoggyá worlds in the Sleeping Desert, and by other fauna elsewhere. Any Tekumeláni bestiary must necessarily be extensive — and filled with wonders.

The "fauna" of the Underworlds is more uniform than the inhabitants of the planet's surface; cf. Secs. 1.424 and 3.425.

A full description of Tékumel's denizens is unnecessary in game terms. One may encounter a thousand species of insect life, a dozen birds, several snakes and reptile-like creatures, and a handful of animal varieties on any morning's stroll in the fields just outside Béy Sú. To describe each of these and roll for encounters would be silly. Players seek adventure and achievement; most are not naturalists to whom every new beetle is sheer delight. Omitting innumerable small species (including some vicious biting insects, vipers, and minor food animals), the fauna of Tékumel consists of some rather large and often dangerous species. There are a number of meat animals, both wild and domesticated, including a descendant of the ancient earth cow, but only the following are of interest for game purposes.

1. DESCRIPTIONS

The following lists are divided according to major habitats. Many species occur in more than one locale, of course, and these are noted. Each creature's Tsolyáni name is given first, followed by its nickname (if it has one).



A Bith out hunting

1.1. EVERYWHERE

Atlún

Almost every land area.

Generic word for spider; actually 6-legged, 4-legged, and 8-legged varieties exist, various sizes, colours, and capabilities. The smallest, the Tké'u, is found in Penóm, and its patterns of tiny bites cause a red rash; the largest, the Bith, lives in the mountains of the northeast, grows to 2-3 metres in length, and hunts small game; a nest of these can easily wipe out a hunting party! The most deadly is the Óri, the "puff-spider" of M'mórcha and Nmartúsha; these creatures live in nests and spread nets to catch the unwary; their poison is famous in the west. They are mostly quite small but can grow up to 10 cm in diameter. They are usually white, rather fluffy or fuzzy looking, and have bright green eyes

Hlássu

Throughout Téकुmel.

The generic word for many species of birds.

Riyúl

Every land area except near the two poles.

The generic word for many species of worms.

Mírish

Water areas

The generic word for fish. Hundreds of species exist.

Sézhme

Almost every land area except some islands.

The generic word for innumerable varieties of snakes, some of which are Terran and some from the Shén worlds, plus a few snake-like but unrelated creatures from the Pé Chói planets.

1.2. COMMON INSECTS

Aqpú

Anywhere in temperate regions.

A huge, bumbling, blackish-green night-beetle with a thick carapace, this fist-sized insect is harmless.

Chrí

Almost everywhere.

This is the common housefly, somewhat mutated over the long millennia. It is blue-green, eight-legged, non-poisonous, and from a quarter of an inch to two inches long.

Drí

Almost everywhere.

This is a descendant of the Terran ant. It has not changed much. There are several sub-species, most of which are harmless and live in subterranean nests.

Mazhán

Plains, open fields, and forested slopes.

This bumblebee-like creature has stripes that range from glossy black to a pale grey. Specimens as large as two inches long have been found near the Gilráya Forests. When annoyed, it makes a high-pitched buzzing sound that disorients dogs, cats, and other sensitive animals and actually drives the Pé Chói into convulsions. The Mazhán is a solitary insect, with no economic uses for humankind.

Nzí

Warm, temperate areas, plains, and woods.

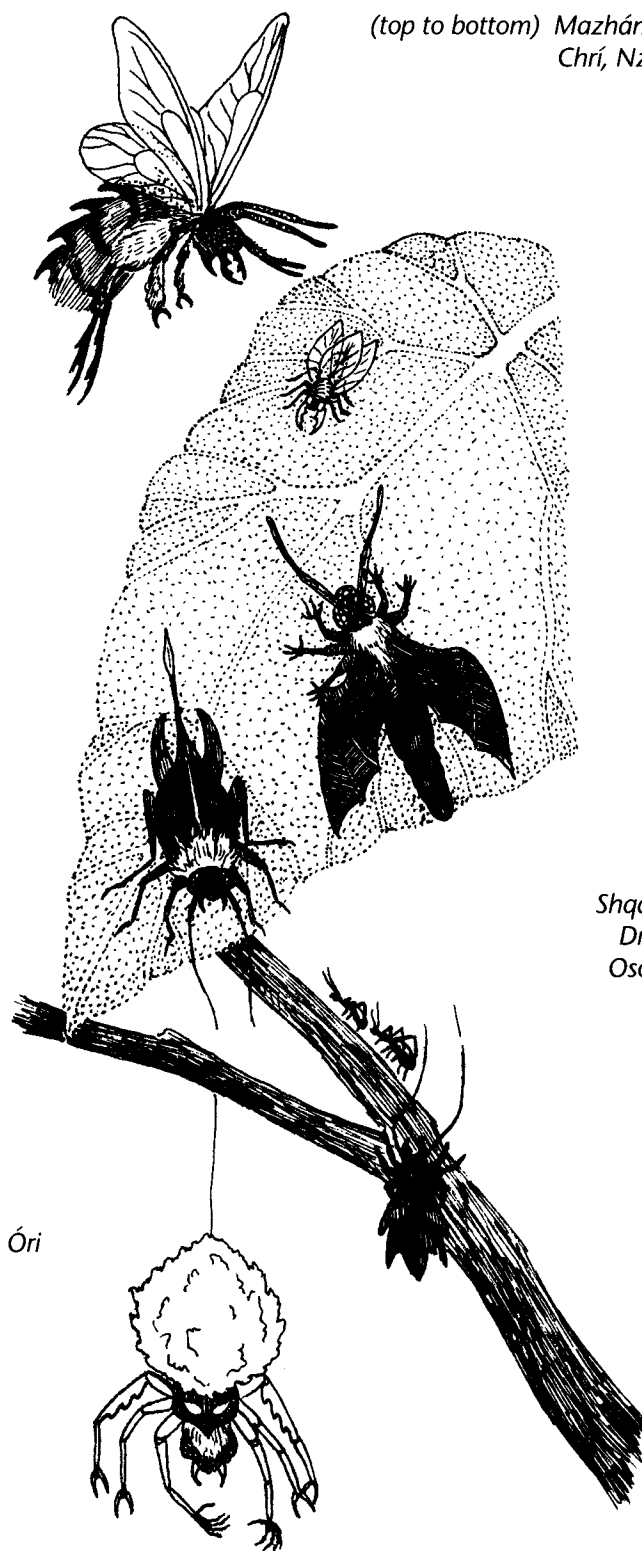
This black, bee-like insect makes honey. It is unrelated to the ancient Terran bee, however, but comes from one of the Pé Chói worlds. It does not sting but leaves a trail of poisonous substance causing rash and sometimes death, if allergic.

Osó

Northern forested regions, primarily Yán Kór, Sa'á Allaqí, and Pijéna.

This dun-coloured boring beetle lives in logs and wood in huge colonies.

(top to bottom) Mazhán,
Chrí, Nzí



Shqá
Drí
Osó

Óri

Shqá

Almost everywhere.

This beetle is black or dark brown, about half an inch in diameter. It is a borer and makes tunnels, rather like a dung-beetle.

1.3. CLEAR TERRAIN

A herd of Chlén, near a Sákbe road

Clear terrain consists of agricultural fields, plains, or lightly wooded areas, with lakes, streams, and low, rolling hills.



Bazháq

Only in the mountains and grassy plains of the Tané Peninsula, west of Mu'ugalavýá.

The Bazháq is one of the three riding beasts known to Téकुmel. It is not found in the Five Empires, however, but far to the west, on the Tané Peninsula. The people of this region employ this rather slow and ponderous creature as a steed, to pull carts, and as meat. This animal stands about six to seven feet tall at the shoulder. It has three pairs of legs, with the front pair being about one foot lower than the rear pair. Each foot ends in a configuration of three "toes"; small, round, and hard, flat on the bottom and sides. On some Bazháq there is a spur. The corrugated pattern which develops on the bottom of the foot gives additional traction.

The neck of the Bazháq is rather short, and is about the same length as the head, which appears rather long, flat and triangular, ending in a parrot-like beak of a gray horny substance similar to the toes. There are no visible ears. This area of the head is covered by two flaps of skin which are folded flat back against the head. The Bazháq has two forward-facing eyes, white, with black pupils, and black or gray irises. The brow ridges are not prominent. The tail is short, a foot or two in length, and is sometimes cropped, following a fashion of the Tané.

The skin resembles leather for texture and strength. It has a pebbled feel, as if many small, round objects lay just below the surface of the skin. The only hair is a spine of very short, very dark fibres. The skin varies from a muddy brown in color to black. The Bazháq is always of one color, never displaying spots, stripes, or patterns of any kind.

The Bazháq is bisexual. The young are born in a leathery sac which splits soon after leaving the mother. The young Bazháq is soon moving under its own power. The colt reaches nearly adult size after one year, but does not fully mature until three or more years of age. Life expectancy is then about ten to twelve years. The Bazháq is an herbivore, and can go ten to twelve days without food if forced, but cannot do without water for any length of time. Bazháq sleep squatting.

The Bazháq is semi-intelligent, and can be trained to simple tasks. It will shy from carnivores, and can distinguish friends and enemies as if by instinct. The beast makes a hissing, mumbling sound when feeding or pleased. This becomes a shrieking hiss when it is angry or in pain.

The Tané ride in saddles between the first two pairs of legs. A second saddle is sometime added, but only for short periods; the animal cannot carry two men with

any ease. The Bazháq is known more for endurance than speed.

Chlén: "the Armour-Beast"

Almost every continental land area.

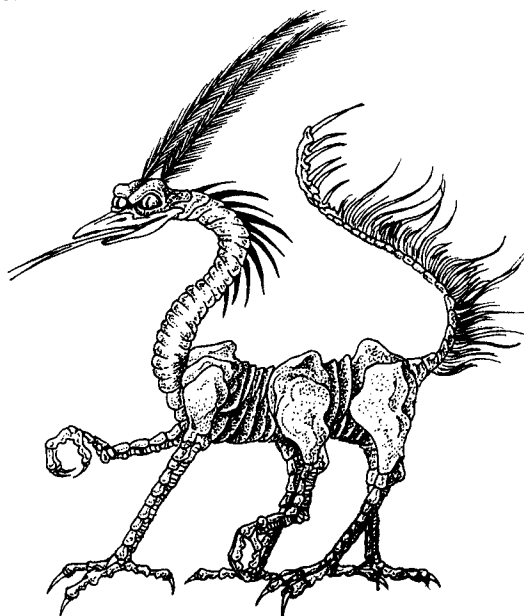
These great, slow-moving six-legged beasts are found all across Téकुmel. They have flattish, horned heads with a splayed beak. A Chlén fights only if attacked. If exhausted or beaten into submission, it can be domesticated by an animal trainer. Its horny integument is the universal substance for armour and weapons; once treated with secret processes to mould it, another series of processes are used to harden it into something just a little softer than iron. Pieces of *Chlén*-hide are taken from a living animal, and it then takes two weeks for the animal to regenerate this, much as a human regrows a fingernail. Chlén are used to pull carts, once tamed, but their slowness makes them usable mainly for loads which are nonperishable and not needed in a hurry. Most transport on Téकुmel is done by bearer slaves.

Dnélu: "the Concealed Leaper"

Clear terrain, particularly grasslands.

These hairy, six-legged, reddish-brown creatures build underground dens covered with a thin layer of grass or sod, and from these they leap out upon passing travellers. They have slender, rod-like antenna and a barbed, prehensile tongue, with which they attempt to carry their victim down into their lair and feed upon him at their leisure. There is only a small chance (15%) that they will attack parties of more than 6 persons; otherwise they remain hidden. They collect bright and glittering objects and thus may have some treasure in their dens.

A Dnélu



Hmá

Domesticated and found almost everywhere. Its favourite habitat is a mountain meadow in the temperate zone.

These are domesticated six-legged, warmblooded mammals. They have long, triangular heads and stand about four feet high. They are herded and used for meat and wool. Their wool is usually grey but may be brown, black, or tan.

Hmélu

As for the Hmá.

The Hmélu is a sub-variety of the Hmá. It is smaller, with tastier meat and is raised mostly for food.

Hyahyú'u: "the Whooper"

Open grasslands and mountains.

These six-limbed animals run in packs and make a weird "hyaa-hyuu" sound which gives them their name. They are covered with ragged, grey-black fur and have three eyes beneath a crest of sticky, spiny excrescences on top of their long, lozenge-shaped skulls. They will fight humans only if they outnumber the party by six or more; otherwise they will flee. They will always run away if the party contains a Páchi Léi. They have a special dread of this nonhuman species.

Jakkóhl

Woods, forests, copses, and clear terrain.

This small, fast, black or brown fox-like mammal bites but is not very dangerous. It is hunted and eaten. It burrows to make a lair for its young. It has litters of 6-7 "pups," like a dog, although it is not related to the Terran animal.

Káika

Domesticated. Found everywhere.

This white or grey duck-like, egg-laying bird grows as big as a turkey. It is domesticated in the Five Empires but is also found wild. It is descended from a mutated Terran species.

Kókh

Deep grass, fields, and open woodlands.

This species of scaly lizard is dangerous to those sleeping in the open. It creeps up silently and then suddenly lunges at a sleeper's throat. Its fangs then inject a numbing poison, and the Kókh drinks the prey's blood. Kókh are a bright, glistening green in colour and about a foot in length. They are sacred to one of the vampire-demonesses of Lady Dlamélish' sect.

Kurukú: "The Small Giggler"

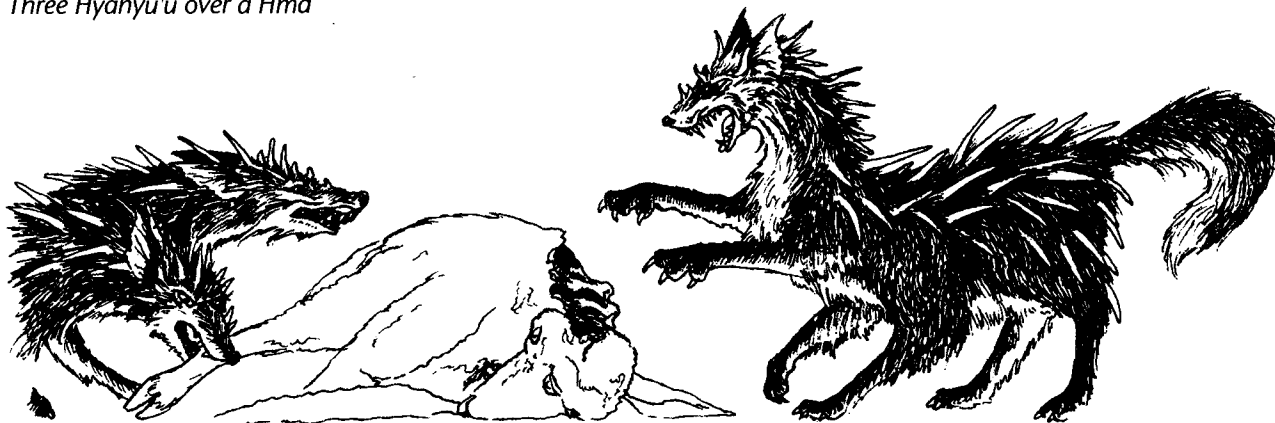
Clear terrain or open forest.

These chestnut-brown-coloured creatures have six legs, as do many of Téikumel's fauna, and they also have a pair of small hands just beneath their blunt, anthropoidal snouts. They range from two to four feet in height. The Kurukú rarely attack humans except in large bands, and flee if approached. They do try to snatch bright objects from passing travellers, however, running off with these and giggling in a very human fashion. Because of this creature's agility, hitting one with a missile is very difficult.

Nyár

Plains and open woods. The largest varieties are found on the Plain of Towers.

Three Hyahyú'u over a Hmá



This big, gentle, six-legged herbivore is related to the Tsi'il. It is smaller, however, and not harmful, even if attacked. It has a sad, wistful, rather deer-like face, reddish fur, and a short stumpy tail. Its meat is gamey but tasty.

Okhíba

Found in open terrain, woods, and light forests throughout the Five Empires but most common in the states of the northeast.

A huge, fat, bumbling food-animal, rather like a dusty-grey sphere on four legs. It has only one defence, a very loud, croaking roar that can shock and deafen an attacker. It is diurnal but prefers shadowy copses and caves along a river-bank. Found throughout the Five Empires, but most common in remote regions and the states of the northeast. Its meat is prized as a delicacy.

Tiúni

Domesticated and found everywhere.

Terran cat; rare in Tsolyánu but popular in Ghatón and the north; many sub-species.

Tlékku

Domesticated and found everywhere.

Terran dog; less common on Tékumel than on old Earth but still sometimes found; various sub-species. A bitch is called Tlékkul.

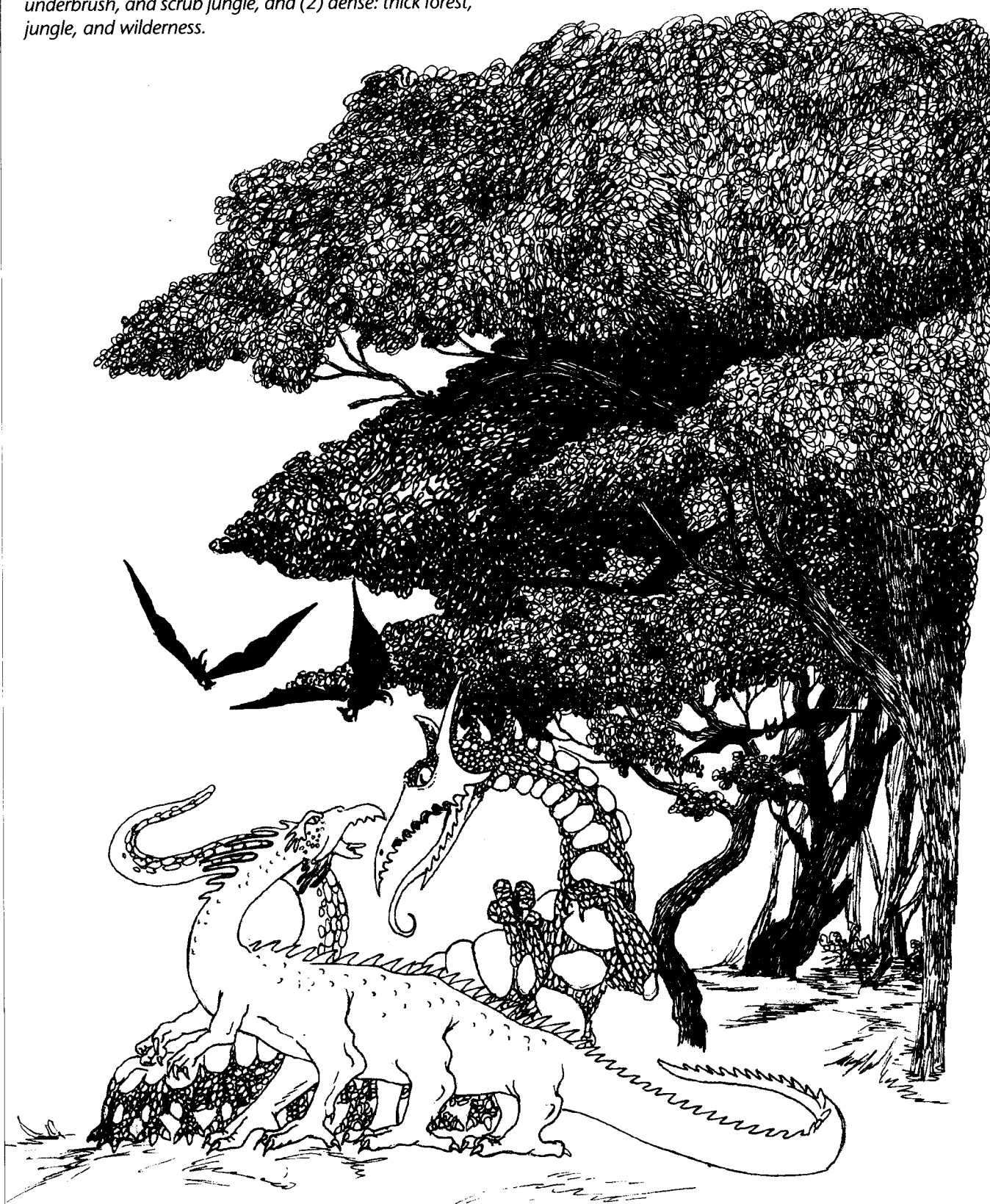


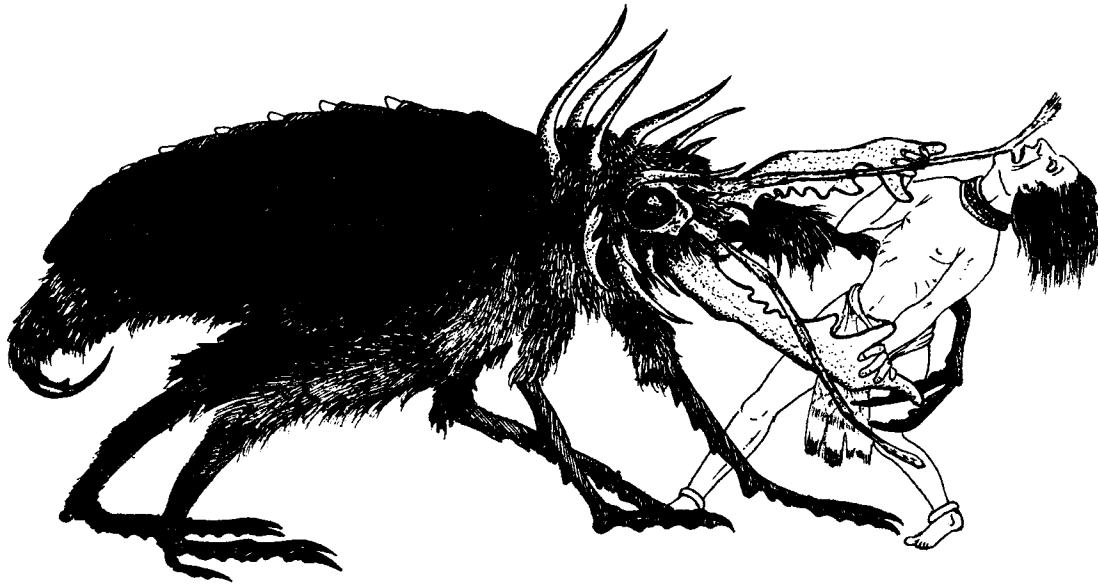
A hunting party out to catch Khéshchal birds

1.4. FORESTS

Hú-bats above a quarrelling Feshénga and Sérudla

Forest terrain consists of: (1) open: woods, timberlands, underbrush, and scrub jungle, and (2) dense: thick forest, jungle, and wilderness.



A Dlákolel**A'áb**

Forests of southern Livyánu, around the city of Dláš.

These gossamer-thin, palm-sized, red, yellow, and orange discs float with the breeze among the trees. They look like falling leaves but actually are animals with limited movement and sensory organs. Seeking warmth, the A'áb land on a sleeping person's face and fix delicate, hair-like claws into the skin. They cover the mouth and nose, and the victim soon suffocates. At the same time, they inject a gentle sleeping drug into the bloodstream to prevent the victim from waking up. They can easily be removed by a comrade, but they present a considerable danger in the autumn season for solitary travellers.

Armidzá

Woods, untravelled rural areas throughout Tsolyánu, Mu'ugalavyá, northern Livyánu, and most of the far North-east. Not known in Salarvyá.

A flat, disc-shaped fungus that grows to various sizes and looks like a scattering of yellow and white coins upon the ground; if touched, it itches furiously and may kill someone who touches it and is allergic to it.

Chnéhl: "the Ape-Mutant"

Forest, caverns, ruins, and the Underworlds (cf. Sec. 9).

These mutants are created from some member of the ancient ape stock of Earth by the Priests of Ksáru. They are roughly humanoid in shape, mottled brown and white, with long, sharp jaws and sharp teeth, a rudimentary nose, and large jewel-like round eyes beneath beetling brows. They will attack parties they outnumber

but will run away if the party is larger than theirs. They fight with clubs and spears, and although they are semi-intelligent, they cannot be trained.

Dlákolel: "the Flying Beetle"

Forest and mountain uplands.

This armoured, titan (10-15 feet long) is somewhat intelligent and may be friendly or neutral. If attacked or if it attacks, it will fight to the death. Its gleaming black mandibles do great damage in melee (add + 2 to the damage done by each hit). Its gleaming black chitin armour gives it the nickname of the "Steed of Sárku." It has six legs and heavy, shiny wings. It cannot actually fly but uses its powerful legs to hop.

Dlikkén: "the One Who Is Many"

Forest and remote mountain uplands.

This segmented, worm-like creature has segments that may break off into separate individuals; each has its own set of eight legs, and if cut off at the jointure, a segment will run off into the underbrush to grow a whole new creature. Only the front segment has a mouth, however, and it cannot divide itself voluntarily. It is blackish-blue in colour, nocturnal, and grows to a length of 8-9 feet in deep forest. The peasants of Sa'á Allaqi say that it is sacred to Lord Ksáru, and devotees of that deity do not kill it unless attacked.

Dzór: "the Forest Giant"

Deep forest.

These huge creatures are shambling, hairy giants, some 10-12 feet tall, and of a dull greyish tan colour. They

have a beak of horny material and three round eyes with nictitating lids. They thus have acute night vision but cannot see well in the daylight; they are thus able to fight at night, but during the day they are at a slight disadvantage. They are generally neutral to men and will ignore humans unless attacked. They will flee if their number is less than their opponents. They fight with clubs and maces and dislike edged weapons. Damage done by a Dzór is quite severe because of their size and strength. They are semi intelligent but cannot speak, nor can they be domesticated or trained.

Gíriku: "the Flying Reptile"

Forest and swamps.

These bluish-green nocturnal flying reptiles have long beaks set with three rows of needle-pointed teeth. Their six eyes see well in the dark. They have a peculiar musty odour which is repellent to man.

Khéshchal: "the Plumed Bird"

Dense forest.

These semi-intelligent birds are covered with brilliant plumage used for feather capes, helmet-crests, etc. They will normally attempt to flee (70% chance), but if cornered, they may be subdued, rather than killed. A subdued Khéshchal is worth a great deal: 3-4,000 Káitars. This bird is not domesticable but is kept in some zoos; the many-coloured Livyáni varieties are the most prized.

Kité: "the Little Whirlwind"

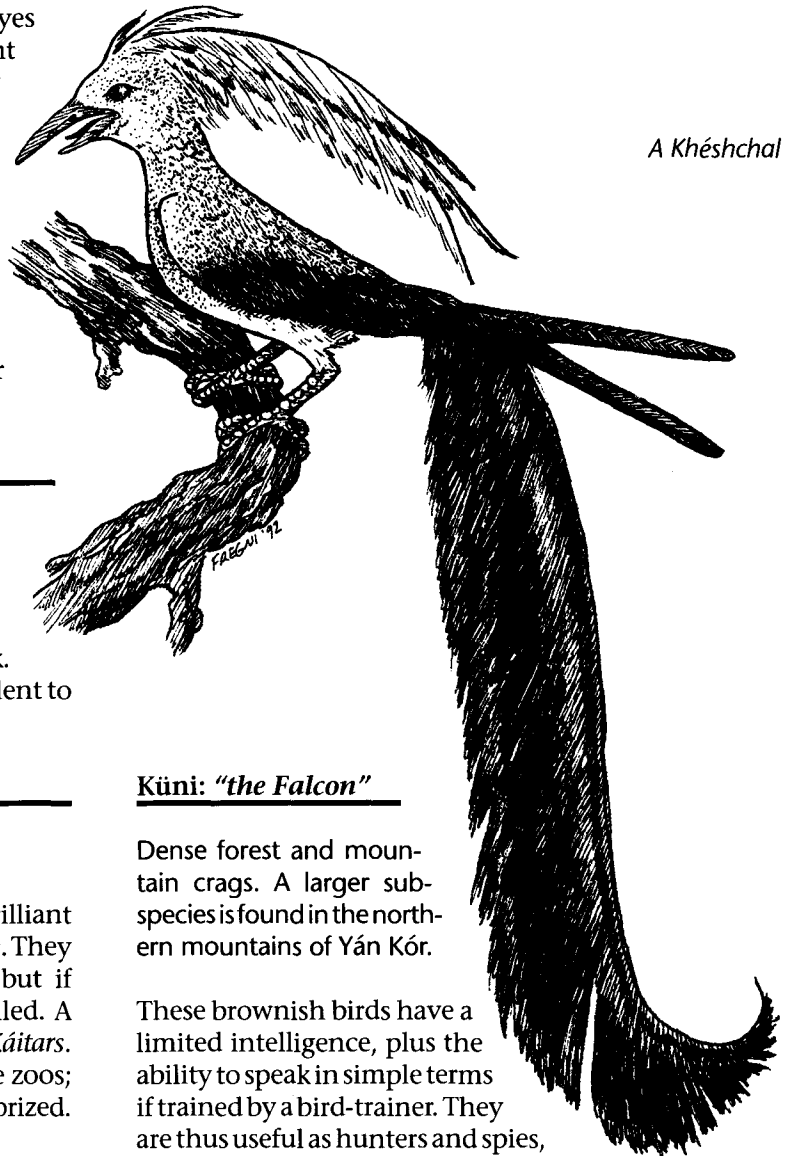
Deep forest and fields throughout the Five Empires, but especially in northeastern Tsolyánu and Sa'á Allaqí.

This small, vicious, carnivore has six legs, a beak-like snout filled with teeth, sleek black fur and a bushy tail. If attacked or cornered, it fights ferociously to the death. Hunters fear it for this reason since it lives in much the same environment as the Jakkóhl and looks superficially like it.

Kurruné

Deep, temperate-zone forest near lakes or streams where it can fish.

Long-beaked, plume-tailed bird; edible (barely); brown, white, black, and tan in colour. It is said to be beloved by the God Thúmis.



A Khéshchal

Küni: "the Falcon"

Dense forest and mountain crags. A larger subspecies is found in the northern mountains of Yán Kór.

These brownish birds have a limited intelligence, plus the ability to speak in simple terms if trained by a bird-trainer. They are thus useful as hunters and spies, since they can report back on the disposition of troops, terrain, etc. They can be trapped, lured down with aromatic Tsúral -buds (a 50% chance), or shot down with blunt-headed arrows smeared with a sticky substance. The Küni will try to escape but cannot fight. They are inedible.

Nráishu

Forested areas throughout the Five Empires and north almost to the Pole.

A six-legged, deer-like herbivore, black or dark brown, with a long-snouted face. Its large eyes see well in the dark, and it is semi-nocturnal. Its front paws are armed with claws for digging roots. If attacked it will flee, though it fights when cornered or wounded. A family herd consists of six to ten members. Its meat is edible but almost too sweet.

Rényu: "the Loyal Follower"

Forest and mountains.

These man-like "canine-oids" have long pointed snouts, sharp, upcurved ears, and blackish or brownish fur. They can speak in simple fashion and use specially designed weapons, although they cannot be trained as soldiers. Their paws are not suited for most human tools or devices. If subdued, they can be trained as servants by an animal trainer. They will then fight loyally for him. They can see in the dark and are good at scouting, tracking, and perceiving "wrongnesses": e.g. secret doors, dangerous packages, etc. It takes about three months to train a Rényu.

Sahulén (or Sahelún: both pronunciations occur)

Deep forest, especially northern Livyánu.

This shy, golden-yellow game bird is edible. Its plumage is used by the Livyáni for costumes.

Sérudla: "the Pale Murderer"

Deep forest throughout the Five Empires and north into Ghatón and the Lorún lands.

These huge creatures are like armoured dragons, covered with iridescent, gleaming, green-grey scales. A Sérudla has six limbs, plus a pair of small arms just below its long neck and a massive, bony head. Ordinary Sérudla are about 15 feet in length, larger ones 25 feet, and very large ones about 35 feet long. The Sérudla is semi-intelligent and fights with crude weapons. It may also spew a terrible acid spittle, of which it has enough, perhaps, for three attacks. It can spit to a distance of 30 feet and hits anything within a ten-foot area. This fluid is poisonous, and Sérudla-hunters invariably take a sorcerer along who is accomplished at the spell of Alleviation. The Sérudla is not invariably hostile, and it may decide to help a human party, attack it, etc. The people of Ghatóni domesticate the Sérudla by a secret process and use it in their army. No other nation has ever learned how to do this.

Shánu'u: "the Flying Carnivore"

Forest and swamp.

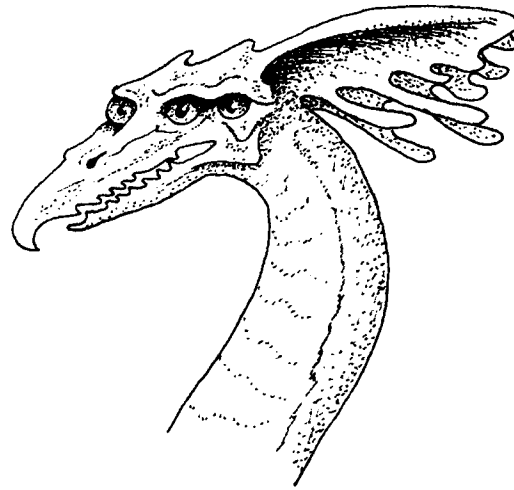
These winged killers are warm-blooded and covered with greyish fur. They are relatives of the Hláka, and a Hláka in a party has a chance of controlling Shánu'u, if not surprised. This control lasts but a short time and cannot be renewed. Shánu'u are between 20 and 30 feet in length, including a long, tufted tail. There is a 50% chance that it will attack and a 50% chance it will flee.

Their fangs often carry bacteria that cause inflammation and rotting diseases.

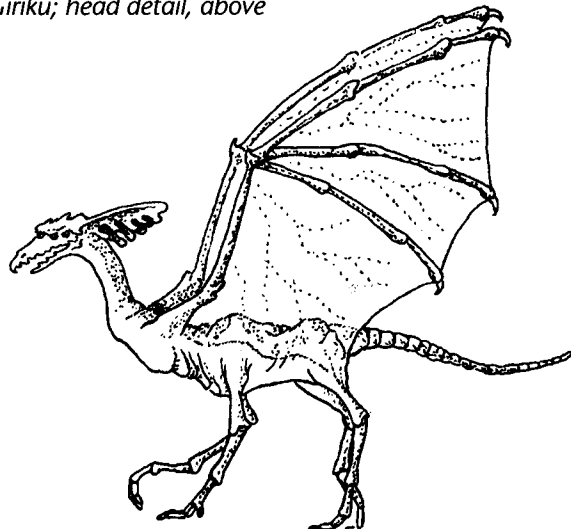
Sikún: "the Little Men"

Forest and woodlands, particularly in the states of the northeast, the Lorún lands, and northeastern Yán Kór.

These small mutants were probably created from human stock by the Lords of the Latter Times. They stand about two feet tall, have four limbs, the back pair of which they use for locomotion and the front pair as hands, but there the resemblance to humanity ends. Their jaws project in a long snout, and their bodies are covered with rank, tan fur. They are about as intelligent as a dog, do not speak, and cannot be trained. They do not use weapons but hide in semi-subterranean lairs, where they accumulate all sorts of trash and artifacts. They are rather uncommon, except in Chayáku where colonies of two or three hundred individuals are found.



A Girikú; head detail, above



Tsi'íl: "the Giant Herbivore"

Open forest and special game preserves.

These passive, gentle, six-legged, herbivores are harmless unless attacked. Their bodies contain a gland, however, which is 80% effective as a repellant for the Haqél, the Tletlákha, and certain other marine creatures. This gland can be sold for up to 4,000 *Káitars*. The Tsi'íl has a horny carapace, with a spiked crest, and rows of jagged spiky growths upon its back. It fights with a spiked mace-like ball at the end of its prehensile tail. Tsi'íl are not domesticable but are used for food. They are raised in 'parks' and are also found in woods, forests, etc. outside of cities and thickly settled rural areas.

Vúr

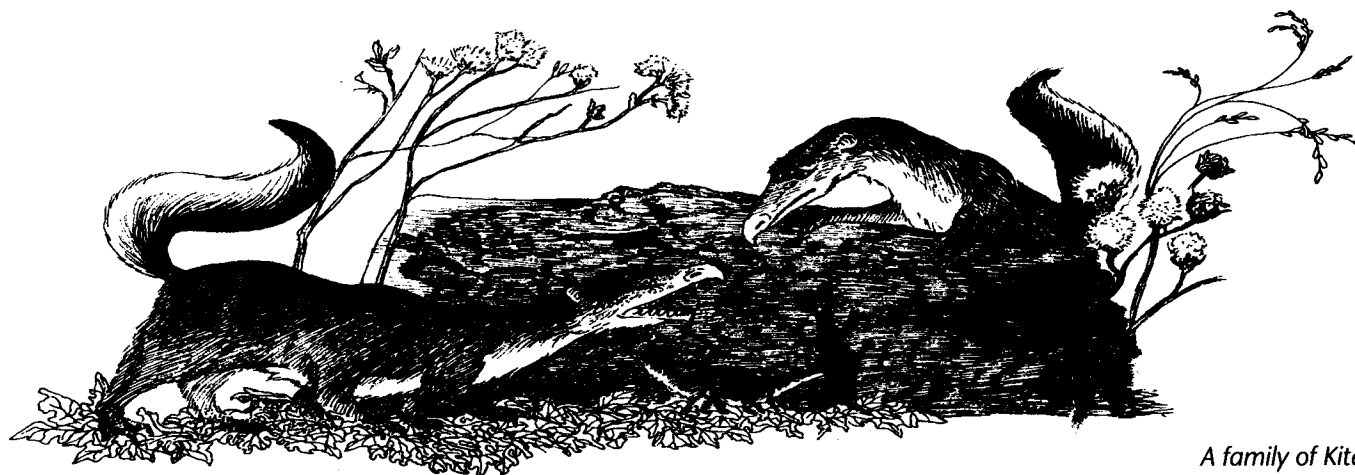
Deep forest and coastal jungle.

This is a large, nocturnal, sooty-black, bat-like flying creature, which grows to three or four feet in length and has a much larger wingspan. It has three eyes, like the Shánu'u, to which it is related. It lives off fruit, vegetables, and small rodents but its bite can be painful — and possibly dangerous because of infection.

Zrné: "the Barbed One"

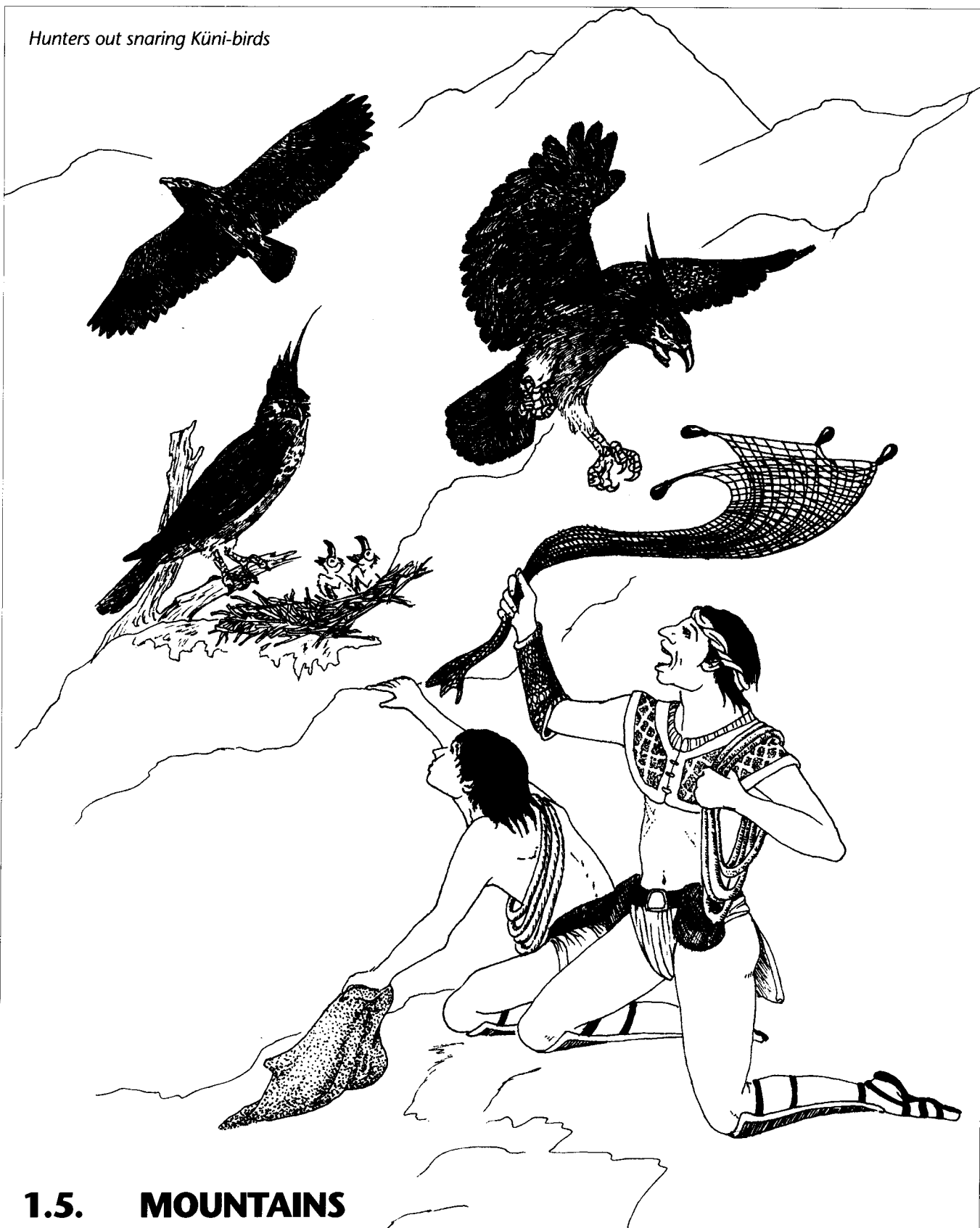
Deep forest, jungle, and mountain foothills. A larger subspecies is found in the highlands of Jánnu and Kilálámmu.

This beast has six legs, the back pair of which is used to leap over obstacles as high as eight feet. Its hide is impervious to ordinary missiles, and its monstrous jaws are lined with rows of needle-pointed barbed teeth. These teeth come out easily and remain fixed in a victim's flesh. If not removed at once, a victim dies within two or three minutes. The Zrné is about eight feet in length, a muddy grey colour, and fights fearlessly to the death. It is a favourite totem animal of the shamans of Rannálu.



A family of Kité

Hunters out snaring Küni-birds



1.5. MOUNTAINS

Mountains consist of (1) low: foothills and peaks up to about 10,000 feet high; and (2) high: the tallest peaks and crags.

Chólokh: "Flying Octopoid Creature"

Open and dense forested slopes, low mountains.

The Chólokh is a six-legged, brownish-grey chitin-covered, insectoid creature with long iridescent gauzy wings hidden beneath a shell cover. In front, near its powerful mandibles, it has eight small tentacles with which it hurls sharp fragments of rock. It thus attacks from a distance of 10-60 feet with its missiles. It then flies in to melee its victim in a single, wild rush. It is fearless and never retreats once in combat. It mostly feeds on small game, but it will attack small human parties.

Gacháya: "the Lizard-Dragon"

The southern continent, Kushí'il Isle, the Isles of Ill Wind, and in the Ahoggyá enclave of Ónmú Tlé Hléktis. A larger variety exists in the Spouting Mountains near Shényu.

A purple-blue, dragon-like lizard from the Shén worlds; considered mythological in Tsolyánu and Five Empires. It has wings, six legs, and grows to 30 feet or so in length. In combat, the Gacháya bites, claws, and hits with its tail. It is inedible and valueless except to the Shén who will pay for its meat and scales.

Gerednyá: "the Flying Worm"

Higher foothills, crags, and mountains.

These creatures are like slender, greyish green worms, 10-15 feet in length, with thin, membranous wings. They have a poisonous sting in their prehensile tails, and they can also strike with their needle-sharp proboscises. They can be driven off by fire. If slain, their wing cases are worth 100 *Káitars* each to makers of *Chlén*-hide armour, since they contain a chemical used in the molding of this material.

Má'èh Lúach Vârd̃s: "the Ones Who Run Away"

One mountainous island south of the equator on the other side of Tékumel.

The Terran horse, somewhat mutated and given a somewhat larger brain by the gene-splicers of the Great Ancients before the Time of Darkness. The island on which horses now dwell is all that is left of a slowly subsiding mountain peak that once was the home of a powerful Terran merchant who retired to Tékumel and brought various animals as playthings for his children. This island is covered with the ruins of his estate, and it now lies inside the territory of the nonhuman Chíma (q.v.), from whose language the name given above is taken. The Chíma have no interest in riding and utilise

horses for food. They would not object to giving some of these animals to a human party, but transport across the uncharted oceans would be a problem. No myths or legends about horses exist in the Five Empires, moreover, and it is thus difficult to see how they could be discovered except by sheer accident.

Ngékka

Limited to the forested hills of a single small continent in the southern ocean on the opposite hemisphere from the Five Empires.

This delicate, graceful, six-legged beast appears to be a mammal but lays leathery eggs from which its young hatch. The Ngékka stands about six feet tall at the shoulder. It has a long neck and a slender, sharp-eared, three-eyed skull; soft and plushy fur of a yellow-white or pure white colour; three-toed feet; and a long, plume-like tail. This species originated in the Rigellian worlds and was brought as an ornament for the zoological preserves of the interstellar entrepreneurs who settled Tékumel before the Time of Darkness. On its home world the Ngékka served as a riding beast and is hence one of just three species that are usable for rapid transport. Unfortunately, the island on which this animal lives is part of the domain of the nonhuman Hokún (q.v.), who have no use for steeds and who permit no human to land upon their shores. The pretty, gentle Ngékka thus remains wild and undomesticated. Its existence is recorded in Llyán of Tsámra's tome, "*A Timeless Record of All Things*," but most scholars believe it to be mythological.



Two Ngékka

Sró: "the Dragon-King"

High mountains, the Plain of Towers, the far northeastern states. Also found in caverns in ruins and the Underworlds, but always with access to the out-of-doors.

These mutants from some ancient reptilian stock can walk, swim, and fly. They are probably related to the Sérudla and the Gacháya, but they are larger — perhaps the largest land animal on Tékumel. Like so many of Tékumel's fauna, they are six-legged, with a pair of small arms just beneath their long, dragon-like heads. They are semi-intelligent and are known to wield huge broadswords in each hand (probably supplied by one of the inimical species, such as the Hlüss) in each hand. They also bite with their jagged-toothed beaks. Small specimens 15-20 feet long are common, with larger individuals somewhat less so, and the really large ones rather rare. A Sró is intelligent enough to gather treasure, and it may be dissuaded from attacking by offering it jewellery or glittery objects.

Syúsyu

Stony areas, mountains, and ruins.

The common wall-lizard, 6-12 inches long. This creature is a quadruped, originally from the Shén worlds. It is edible but awful, and some varieties are mildly poisonous.

Teqéqmu: "the Flying Fungus"

Low mountains, forest, and swamp.

This spongy, khaki-coloured, shapeless bag of noxious gases floats on the wind. When it sees a victim, it drops down and exudes poisonous gas, which can affect as many as ten people. The Teqéqmu is hard to kill: even a fallen one must be burned in order to ensure that it is really dead. Teqéqmu range from 1-2 feet in diameter, to 3-5 feet for the common middle-sized variety, and up to 8-10 feet in diameter for rather rare specimens. The creature is not very intelligent and can often be brought down with missiles or spears. Should it fall on someone, however, its residual gases can kill him within seconds.

Valsúra

Upper highlands and mountains of northern Yán Kór, Chayákk, Jánnu, and Kilálámmu.

A huge puff-ball fungus-creature that resembles a white or greyish round rock. It grows to 5-6 feet in

diameter and is harmless unless there is noise in its vicinity. It may then explode with great violence, killing anyone within about 10 feet, and spreading deadly poisonous spores for twice that distance in all directions.

Vringálu: "the Flying Snake"

Low mountains and dense forest.

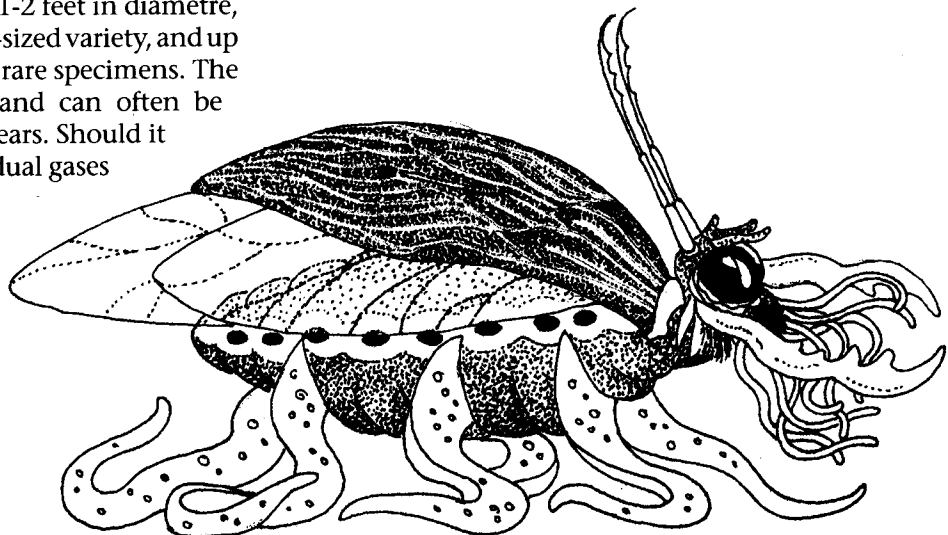
This ropy, blue-black, feathered, snake-like creature attacks viciously and fearlessly. Its teeth contain poison which produces a hideous rotting gangrene, and the victim of a Vringálu must apply *Tsúral*-buds or use sorcerous healing quickly. Vringálu poison is also dangerous to the touch. The wings of these creatures are used by tanners to make excellent leather for armour, boots, etc. A tanner will pay 100 *Káitars* per wing.

Yazái: "the Hunched Ones"

The volcanic wastelands of the Spouting Mountains in Livyánu, and also the hot equatorial barrens of the southern continent.

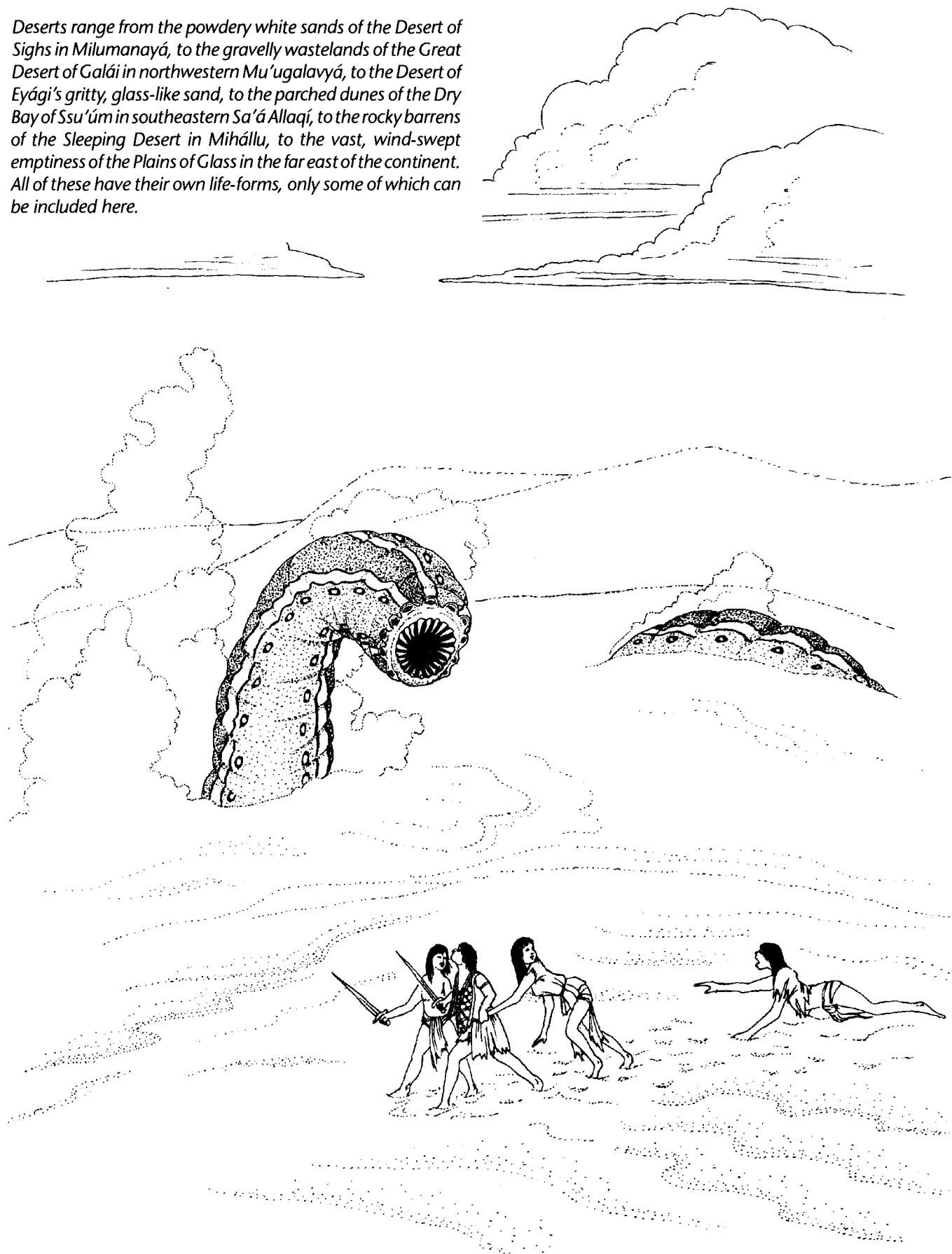
These tall, grey-brown, furred quadrupeds are of human size or slightly larger. They lope in packs across the rocky slopes, feeding on small animals and what vegetation they can find. The Yazái resembles a hunch-backed human, except that its forearms are very long. It thus walks or runs as a quadruped but stands on two legs to fight, etc. The head is a pointed oval, neckless, and with long, vertical eyes and mouth. These creatures' shrill squealing warns other animals of their presence, but they are so fast and agile that escape is difficult. They occasionally attack small parties of humans for reasons unknown. The Shén of Mmatuguál hunt this species for sport.

A Chólokh



1.6. DESERT

Deserts range from the powdery white sands of the Desert of Sighs in Milumanayá, to the gravelly wastelands of the Great Desert of Galái in northwestern Mu'ugalavyá, to the Desert of Eyági's gritty, glass-like sand, to the parched dunes of the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm in southeastern Sa'á Allaqí, to the rocky barrens of the Sleeping Desert in Mihállu, to the vast, wind-swept emptiness of the Plains of Glass in the far east of the continent. All of these have their own life-forms, only some of which can be included here.



Alásh

Milumanayá, the Desert of Sighs, and the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm; other varieties are found in Chürstállu and the Plains of Glass.

The Alásh is a tiny, red, deadly snake. Its venom is so lethal that it is said that a victim has no time to lie down before he is dead.

Anátl

Milumanayá, Chürstállu, and the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, but not farther east.

The Anátl is a sand-skate: a triangular creature 3-6 feet long, with a hard upper carapace and many short legs below. It is said to be related to the Ngóro; q.v. The Anátl does not really fly but glides for distances of up to 60-90 feet between dunes, using the aid of the wind. It has three small eyes hidden under the frontal rim of its carapace. Its mouth is at the bottom of its body, and when it attacks, it falls upon a victim and chews downward, clamping itself to the target with short, powerful, retractable legs. It eats almost any living thing, animal or vegetable, and is usually seen in flocks of 20-50. The nomads usually fall prone and hide beneath their desert-cloaks when Anátl are sighted. The carapace is used as a bowl or carrying-vessel by the tribesmen but has no other value.

Aulléb

Western Mu'ugalavyá and Chürstállu. A non-poisonous green variety is found in Livyánu and M'mórcha.

A lizard about 3 feet in length. It possesses a deadly, blackish, ichorous venom. The Aulléb has four legs, huge and powerful jaws, a small body, and a long, rat-like tail. Most are red-brown, but a few are bright yellow, and these are prized for their skins, from which belts, shoes, and pouches are made.

Anátl skimming over dunes; Ayá, left

Ayá: "the Lord of Sands"

The Desert of Sighs in Milumanayá, the Plains of Glass, and the Plain of Towers.

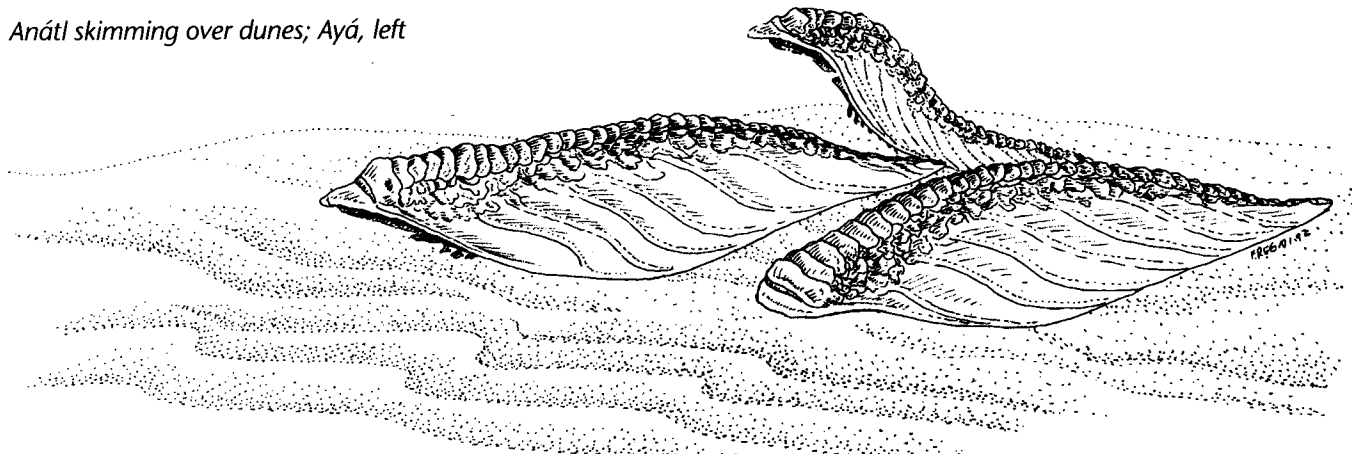
The great sand-worm of the deserts. This creature is pale tan in colour, segmented, and covered with tiny, hairy cilia. It grows up to 250-300 feet in length, digs tunnels beneath the sand, and feeds off others of its own kind. It has no weapons except its gigantic soft-fringed frontal mouth, with which it can swallow a whole caravan! Behind the mouth, all around the "head," is a ring of small, black eyes. The Ayá is related to the Aqáà, the "Worm of the Catacombs";

Chürstállu

Chürstállu and the Great Desert of Galái in Mu'ugalavyá.

Essentially a nocturnal creature, the Chürstállu buries itself for protection from enemies. It is a powerful digger. Tales are told of groups of travellers who stop to camp between two boulders, which are really a pair of these beasts. After dark, the "boulders" rise up and attack from either side!

The Chürstállu reach great size; the largest on record is some 70 feet in length. Like the Hlüss, they appear crustacean or insectoid. They are dun or grey in colour. They have six legs of which the front two have claws for grasping. The body is covered by a shell or carapace, which provides protection and camouflage, for it secretes a sticky substance to which sand and bits of rock cling. The head can be retracted inside the shell for defense. The neck is long and leathery. This creature has two eyes and a hard sharp beak, with a pronounced overbite. Inside the beak are mandibles that inject a paralyzing poison. A Chürstállu also possesses a tail like that of the Hlüss, with which it protects its flank and rear. However, it cannot strike forward with this! The poison in the tail's sting is deadly and fast-acting.



There are anatomical similarities between the Chürstállí and the Hlüss. It is believed that this species was as intelligent as the Hlüss at one time, and that they have been slowly degenerating for aeons. The Chürstállí appear to communicate by means of crackling and hissing sounds, combined with movement of their front claws. Their vocabulary is small but they can communicate messages of danger, food, help, etc. No human has yet mastered their speech, if such it be.

When the Chürstállí hatch they are approximately twice the size of a man's fist, but their growth rate, lifespan, etc. are unknown. During the height of the summer they return to the lairs of their egg mothers with prey they have paralysed but not eaten. In these bodies the egg mother lays her eggs. When they hatch, the young feed on their host, whose bodily fluids have been preserved for this purpose. Young Chürstállí feed on insects, small lizards, and carrion left by the larger of their kind. The small ones "skirmish" as it were, for their elders. It is not uncommon for packs of ten to twenty individuals of different sizes to move together.

The Chürstállí's main source of food is a land fish native to the Galái desert. The long, thin fin and rib bones of this animal are sometimes grasped in the front claws of the Chürstállí and used like swords or daggers. They will eat almost any meat, living or carrion.

The Chürstállí rarely venture more than two to three hundred Tsán from their nesting areas in the Chüru Peak. To the north and west the climate is too cold for them, while to the east and south they lose the advantage of their camouflage, due to the abrupt changes in soil and vegetation.

Legends concerning Chüru Peak make references to a treasure lost somewhere in the heights. Some say it was left behind by the "Dwellers of the Peak," whoever they may have been. It is also said there is something there the Chürstállí feed upon, although the legend hints that they are more often fed upon...

Dalmé

The most remote interior regions of the desert of Sighs, the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, the Sleeping Desert, etc.

A human-appearing insectoid monster that is fortunately rare. It covers itself with what appears to be a mantle of mottled brown, black, or grey, much like a desert-cloak, waits for some unwary victim to approach within a few feet, then rises like a flapping bird to fall upon its prey. It has claws, a mouth full of tooth-like processes, and six long, bony limbs. The creature has been known to tempt humans with a pot of water, food, or some glittering object of value, but it does not use

fire, cannot speak, and is only marginally intelligent

Epéng

Almost any dry or desert region. Other varieties are found in the swamps around Penóm, in the jungles of M'mórcha, etc.

This creature is a "segmented" colony creature. It consists of up to fifty little separate beings, each with six tiny legs, a mouth, etc., which join themselves together in a snake-like "train." Most are black, although the "Mighty Epéng" of the Penóm region is a dull maroon in hue. The sting of the front "mouth" of this creature is very painful though not always fatal. The bite of the "Mighty Epéng," however, is instantly lethal.

Erúnu: "the Old Woman of the Dunes"

The Plains of Glass, the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, and the Sleeping Desert of the northeast.

This strange creature consists of many blackish pods connected by tentacles, a skull-sized central ganglion in which its sense-organs are located, and a number of prehensile tentacles that are used for locomotion, fighting, etc. It grows to about 3 feet in diameter. The Erúnu digs an egg-shaped cavity beneath the sand, fills this with a fluid that resembles water but which is a powerful acid, covers the holes with a thin shell of sand that it sticks together with mucus to resemble a flat sandy surface, and then hides itself nearby. An animal stepping upon the shell breaks through, suffers damage from the acid, and is then seized and torn apart by the Erúnu. The nomads call the creature "the Old Woman of the Dunes" because of the high, cackling, laughter-like sound it emits while feeding.

Fa'á

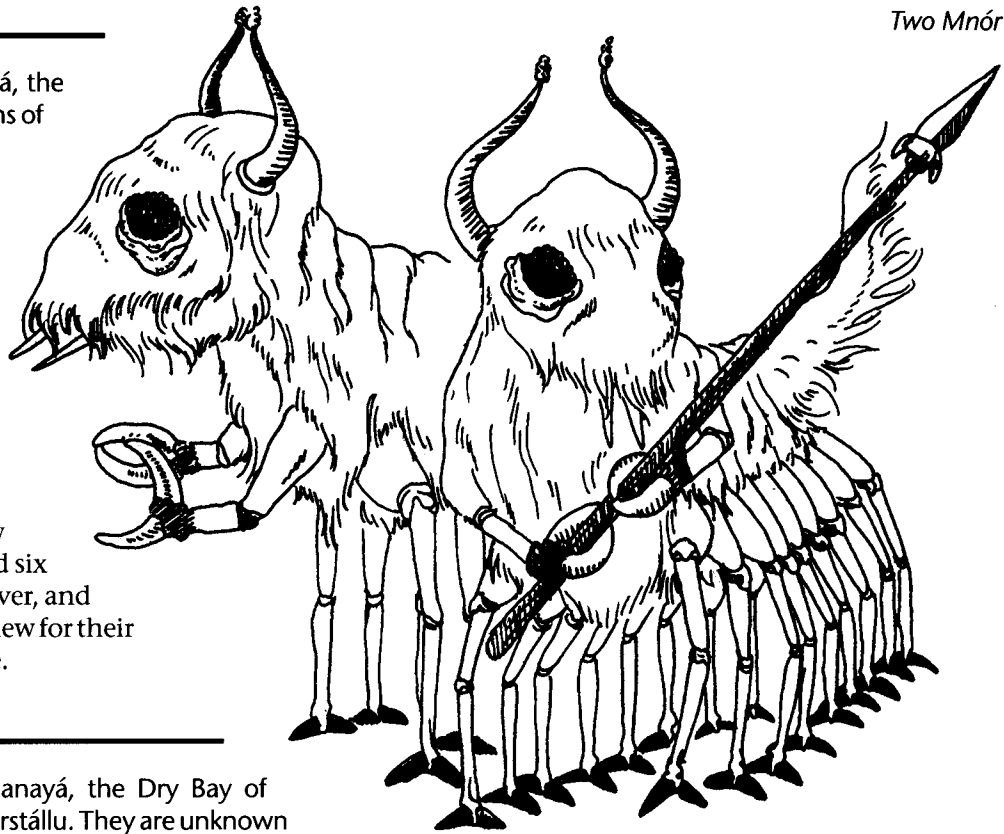
The northern Lorún regions, the Plains of Glass, and the Sleeping Desert.

This creature is said to be originally an inhabitant of one of the Demon Planes, related to some unguessable species there. It is rarely seen in its own shape, a furry, brown ovoid, with four legs and no visible head, tail, or other features. Mostly it appears as a dog, a Hmélu, a Hmá, or some other locally known and harmless animal. It approaches its prey in this fashion, bites or stings (it is not known how), and then runs off. After a short time it returns to find its victim paralysed with its nerve-poison, and it then eats the softer fleshy parts. A spell of Alleviation usually dissipates the venom, but if this is unsuccessful, the prey goes into a coma. Untreated — and uneaten by the creature — a victim may recover or may die within a few days. The Fa'á cannot speak or take on such complex shapes as a human being.

Hídž

The eastern part of Milumanayá, the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, and the Plains of Glass.

This creature resembles a mass of dry bark, black or brown in colour. It fixes itself over water sources in the sand and sends down a tendril to suck up moisture. When approached, it waves its visible fronds frantically, makes a sort of hissing sound, and appears very dangerous — especially when it may grow up to 9-10 feet in diameter and six feet high! It is harmless, however, and the nomads rip fronds off to chew for their water. Otherwise it is inedible.



Two Mnór

Í'a

The Desert of Sighs of Milumanayá, the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, and westward into Chürstállu. They are unknown farther east.

These "sand-clams" are a staple in the diet of the nomads of Milumanayá. They are hard to detect since they burrow to find water in the sand. They grow up to six inches in diameter, look like lumpy black potatoes, and are hard-shelled. When roasted or boiled, they are delicious. A non-native might starve in the deserts, but one who knows how to spot the Í'a's air-holes can survive for months on their succulent juices.

Mighá

The Desert of Sighs, the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, and the Plains of Glass; a bigger, inedible variety is known in Chürstállu.

This grey-green crustacean is saucer-shaped, and has eight legs, a thick upper carapace, and sharp claws. It grows to about a foot and a half in diameter. The Mighá is essentially harmless, although it can inflict nasty scratches if caught with the bare hands. When eaten raw, it produces a sort of silly, giddy mood during which people may say and do things that would be unthinkable otherwise; it is delicious when cooked.

Míku

The Dry Bay of Ssu'úm, the Desert of Eyági, and the barrens around Kayál Peak in eastern Tsolyánu and southeastern Sa'á Allaqí.

Adults of this carnivorous species stand about four feet high. They are a dull, sandy grey in colour. They have a short, stumpy tail and six limbs, the back pair of which is used for locomotion and the front two pairs as hands. The Míku is protected by banded armour, like the ancient Terran armadillo, but its short, snouted head resembles certain lizards. This species lives in families of five or six individuals and subsists on small game, bird eggs, and insects. It will attack small parties of humans who come too close to its semi-subterranean lair, however. The natives of Kayál Peak say that the meat of this animal is excellent when barbecued.

Mnór: "the Shaggy Insect"

Semi-desert and grassland.

These creatures are semi-intelligent and can use very simple tools. They are ovoid in form, with twenty long, slender legs, and are covered with silky pearl-grey fur (which makes them valuable as throw-rugs). A Mnór will normally try to flee, but if attacking or attacked, it fights to the death, using rocks or a heavy club. Its huge, faceted eyes are its most vulnerable feature, and if a blow shatters an eye, the Mnór will turn and flee. These creatures gather all sorts of glittering objects in their lairs.

Utánakh

All deserts except the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm.

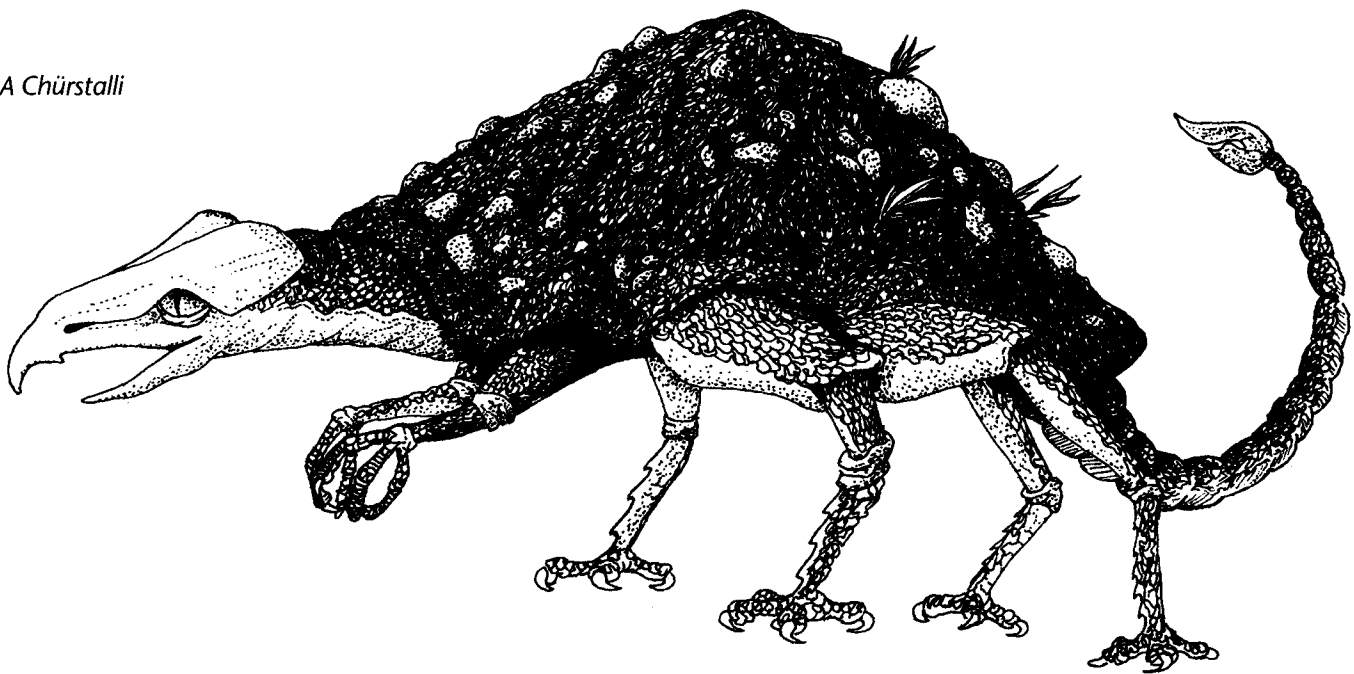
A round, bald-looking, blackish, ugly lump of a creature that buries itself near water in the sand. It grows to about 2-3 feet in diameter and is harmless unless some animal steps upon its hiding place. When this happens, it thrusts a bony, barbed, spear-like extension violently up through the soil and into the victim from beneath, usually killing it. It then sucks the animal's bodily fluids down into its hiding place. A nomad can recognise the peculiarly glassy look of the sand above an Utánakh and avoid it. This creature is inedible and harmless if dug out of its burrow.

Yuál

The Desert of Sighs, the Desert of Eyági, and the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm.

This is another creature eaten as a food-staple by the Milumanayáni nomads, although it is less tasty than the Í'a (q.v.). The Yuál is a small, spherical creature, tan or buff in colour. It has two legs, no arms, and two big yellow eyes. It sits on carrion to eat, taking food in through the same orifice it uses as an anus. The Yuál is very fast, scuttles about making tiny burping sounds, and is quite harmless.

A Chürstalli

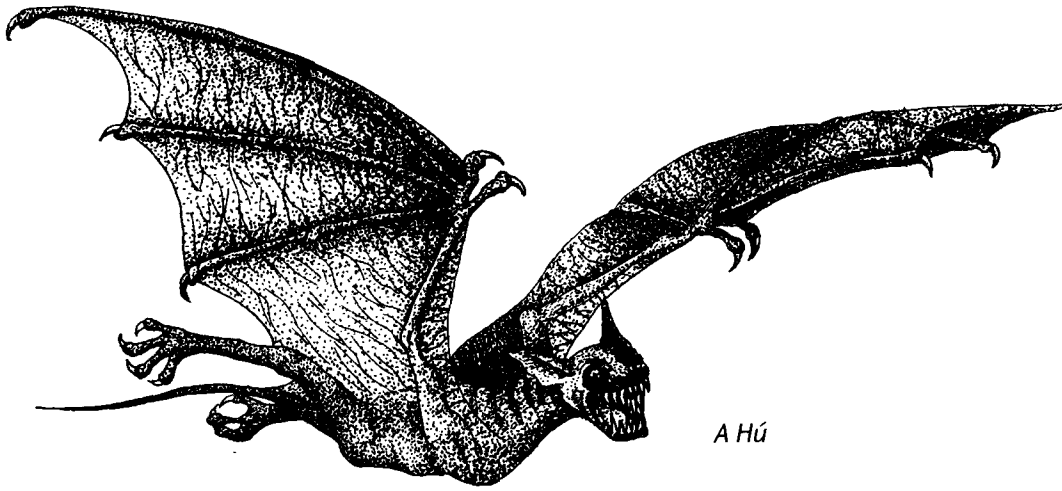


1.7. JUNGLE AND WET LOWLANDS

Wet lowlands consist of (1) low-lying plains: occasional bogs, fens, and marshes; (2) swamps: largely water with interspersed islets and thickets; and (3) dense coastal swamps, sometimes called "mangrove swamps," often home to the horrid "Food of the Ssú."



A Hlu'ún and Káyí



A Hú

Chnáu

Deep forests, swamps, and muddy areas along rivers; the largest variety is found in M'mórcha

A black, segmented, snake-like creature that ranges from one to three feet long. It has rows of tiny swimming limbs all along its tubular body, a head that is long and pointed, like a needle-nosed cone, and two sharp fangs that carry an instantly lethal poison. It moves very fast through water, over mud, or through wet grass.

Hlu'ún

The Tsechélnu Flats and Layóda Swamps of Tsolyánu, the Flats of Gyógma of Háida Pakála, the Sharúna Lowlands of Salarvyá, and the dense coastal bogs of Suchél Head to the south of Shényu.

This gauzy-winged, human-looking insect is about the size of a twelve-year-old boy. It has four very long limbs, a round head with huge eyes, no visible mouth or nose, and a glistening, slimy coating that is very sticky. It sits in the midst of swamps or on a hummock in a pool, looking very much like a mummy or a child clothed in gauze. When its prey approaches, it flies up, lands upon the victim, and wraps it in sticky folds. When the victim has been captured in this way, the Hlu'ún extrudes a proboscis from below its head and feeds upon the juices of the prey. It is particularly feared around the city of Penóm.

Horók: "the Warty One"

All swamps and bogs in warm and temperate regions.

The generic term for several species of frog-like swamp creatures, most of which are harmless. These batrachians have four limbs, soft and moist skin, and subsist on insects and small animals. They come in a variety of

colours, and some are quite beautiful. One variety that inhabits the Layóda Swamps and the Qéqash Swamps across the straits in Háida Pakála grows to 4-6 feet in size; it is quite ferocious and bites, but it can be hypnotised by swinging a rope or other snake-like object in front of it. It is called Zalmíya in the Hijajái language

Hú: "the Night-Watcher"

Swamps, palmetto forests, such as those of Tsechélnu Lowlands and the offshore islands near Ónmu Tlé Hléktis.

The Hú is a bat-like night-flyer. It has very short, black or dark grey fur, a round, rather human-looking head, two long, thin arms that support its leathery wings, and two sharp-clawed, long legs. Some varieties have tails, while others do not. It has three eyes (and is hence possibly originally from the Hláka worlds) and sharp, little teeth. It is carnivorous but does not usually bother anything as large as a human. It ranges from very small (an inch or two) up to two or three feet, with a broader wingspan.

Káyi: "the Eye"

Swamps, caves, ruins, and the Underworlds.

This creature consists of a large greyish white gas bag and a huge, single, bulging eye. Káyi hang high in the air in dark corners and drop their thin, fibrous tentacle-nets down upon prey passing below. These nets are covered with sharp, hollow spines which suck the juices out of a victim. If cut free immediately, the Káyi does not have time to sink these hair-like spines into its prey, and hence does minimal damage. Káyi can be brought down by flaming arrows, but they usually remain out of reach of swords and other hand weapons, though sometimes a spear, pike, or halberd will reach them.

Lrí: “the Flying Stinger”

Swamps, coastal bogs, and low-lying islands.

These stilt-like, dark green, six-legged, winged, insectoid creatures are related to the Hlüss. They sting with their long, segmented tails, paralyzing their victims. The Lrí will try to fly off with a paralysed victim, and the creature then travels in random and misleading directions to its lair, where it feeds its victim to its young. A paralysed victim rescued from the Lrí's clutches may be cured by a spell or an “Eye” of Healing. Two days are needed to recover one's strength after such a rescue.

Pállis or Pállis-marásh

Swamps around Penóm and Púrdimal.

This blue-purple swamp plant has puffy, veined fronds that exude deadly poison. It moves very slowly and can attack a sleeping person within a foot or so of the ground. It grows to 4-6 feet in diameter and resembles a great cabbage.

Qásu

Almost all swamps and bogs.

This is the largest and most vicious of Téकुmel's many scavenger birds, growing to 2-3 feet in height and with a wingspan of 10-18 feet. It is purple and black and is hence sacred to Lord Hrü'ü. It subsists on carrion, small animals, etc. but will attack a human being if annoyed. It is not edible.

Qósoth: “the Shambling One”

The low-lying coast of Salarvyá, Háida Pakála, the Nyémesel Isles, Digánte Head, and islands in the eastern ocean.

These beings exist only partially on Téकुmel's plane. They thus appear as tall, gaunt, five-legged, insubstantial, ghost-like, nocturnal monsters. They do not voluntarily harm humans, however, and sometimes seem incapable of perceiving Téकुmel at all. When encountered, they may pass right through persons on this plane; this causes disorientation, convulsions, coma, and sometimes death. The experience is almost always fatal for the sensitive Pé Chói. The only known cure is a secret potion known to the priests of the sea-goddess, Mrettén, in the Nyémesel Isles.

Shivrái

Palmetto forests of the Tsechélnu Flats, the swamps of Penóm and Púrdimal, and along streams, lakeshores, etc.

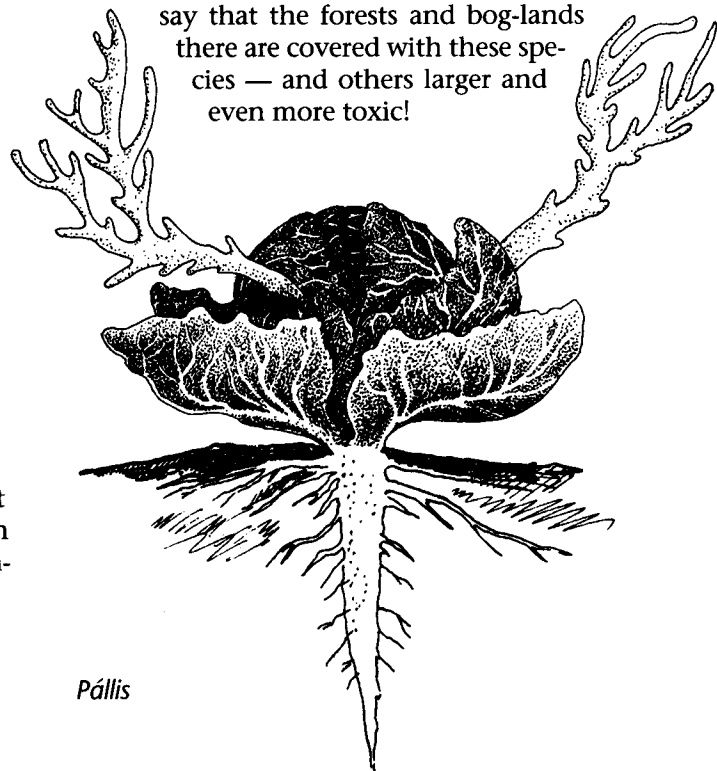
This needle-thin, brown-green insect looks like a pointed twig 10-30 inches long. It has six legs that resemble thin sticks and add to its camouflage. Its flexible, round mouth has projecting spines that move in circular sequence, giving the effect of a hollow rotary drill-bit. With these it can bore a hole the size of a fist into its prey. Larger specimens are said to be able to drill a hole right through a *Chlén*-hide breastplate.

Ssúmani or Mánikh hiSsúyal “the Food of the Ssú”

Wet lowlands, swamps, fens, bogs, palmetto forest, and deep jungle throughout Téकुmel.

This vegetation was native to Téकुmel before the arrival of humankind and the subsequent terraforming of the planet. There are many species: large, acid-filled bluish globes, purple tendrils, thick-leaved red-brown vines, virulent-green and yellow-spotted tubers, fist-sized black ovoids, grape-like clusters of stinking, dark red juice — all containing toxins lethal to humankind. Just touching any of these growths is dangerous, and it is against Tsolyáni law to grow them or even allow them to live. Patches of the Food of the Ssú are thus encountered only in remote areas. No one knows whether the Ssú actually eat these plants — or which ones — but they do seem to cultivate them, and those who have ventured near the Ssú homeland in Ssuyál

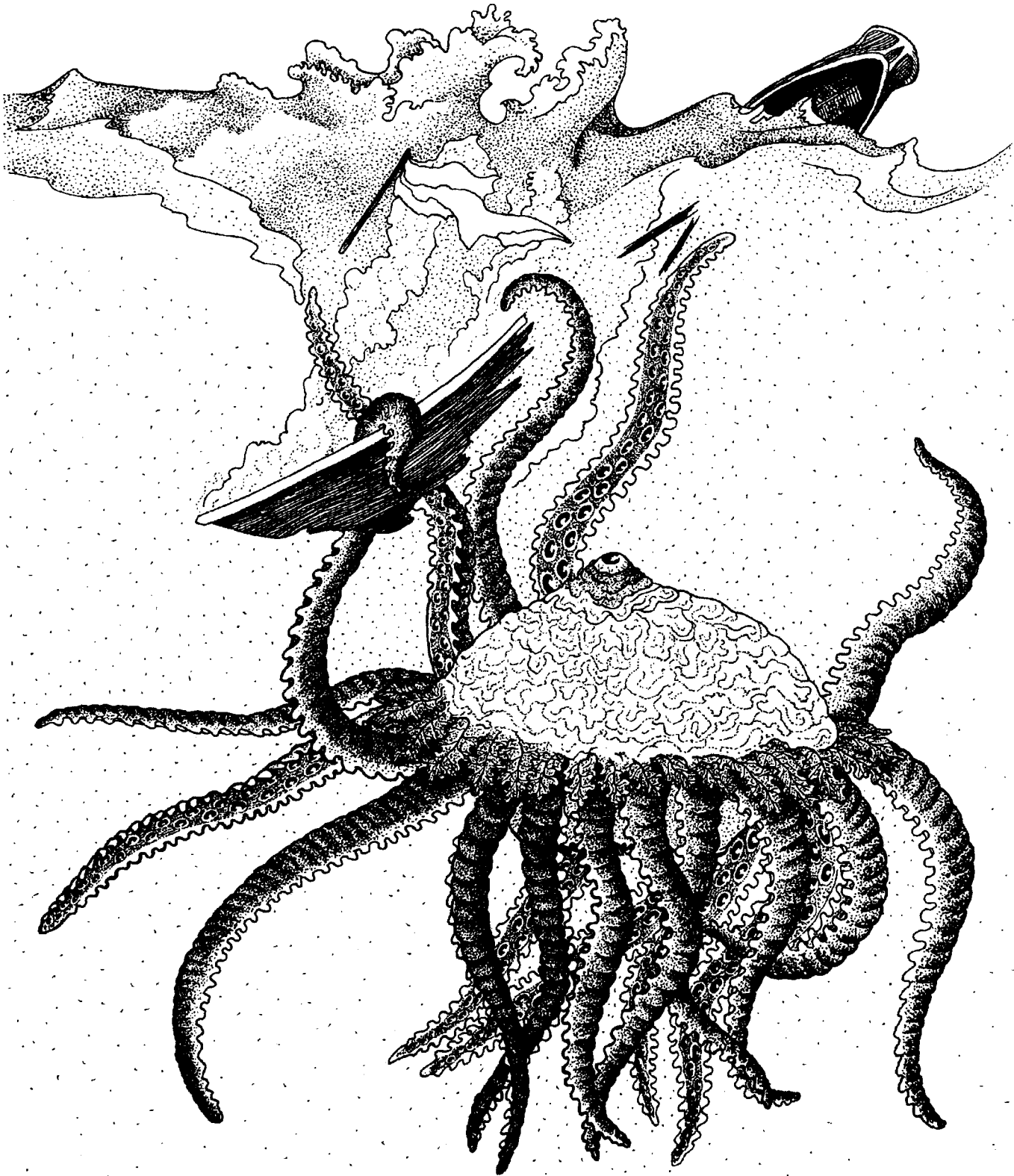
say that the forests and bog-lands there are covered with these species — and others larger and even more toxic!



Pállis

1.8. WATER

An Akhó having a snack



Water habitats consist of (1) inland: lakes, rivers, and inland waterways; (2) coastal: tidal flats and seacoast; and (3) ocean: seas and deep, salt water.

Akhó: "the Embracer of Ships"

Deep ocean and coastal waters. Stories of Akhó inhabiting Lake Parunál and the swamps around the city of Púrdimal are untrue.

These sinewy, dull grey monsters range from small specimens about 10 feet in length, to the commoner size of 15-30 feet, to the largest individuals, which may be 50-75 feet long! Two years ago a dead Akhó was found washed up on a beach in Livyánu that must have measured nearly 100 feet long and 30 feet in diameter! The Akhó has twenty steel-hard tentacles (the largest are the thickness of ships' hawsers!) with which it seizes its victims. The creature has one glaring red eye set atop a cucumber-shaped body, beneath which lies its huge maw, filled with leafy membranous material which eats away a victim with an acid secretion. An Akhó usually attacks the hull of a ship, and larger specimens can crush it to splinters. The beast may also try to snatch defenders from the ship's decks with its tentacles. These monsters swallow almost everything they grab, and treasures have been found in the remains of dead Akhó, consumed who knows how long ago.

Chashkéri: "the Water Maiden"

Coastal flats, lakes, and rivers.

This creature has the superficial appearance of a lovely dark-haired maiden. On closer inspection it will be seen that the "hair" is actually a thick, black, solid fin, and the eyes, nose, and mouth are no more than dark markings on the head. The creature's actual eyes are hidden on either side of its head by its "hair," and its breathing apertures are at the base of its head, just above its slash-like mouth. Chashkéri are masters of hypnosis and can bring as many as 10 or 12 victims under their spell at one time. Their hypnosis has little or no effect upon the Ahoggyá, Shén, or Tinaliya, however. A Chashkéri will drag a hypnotised victim off beneath the water to consume at leisure. Drowning occurs if the prey is not rescued at once. Even if resuscitated, a victim may remain dazed and in no condition to walk for two days after the attack. Although easily slain, a Chashkéri can escape by rapid swimming.

Étla

Various sub-species inhabit the coasts of almost all of the seas and oceans of Tékumel, while others are found along the rivers. Smaller fresh-water varieties are frequent in lakes, marshes, and streams up to an altitude of about 2,000 feet.

These heavily armoured, mottled brown-green, crab-



A Chashkéri

like crustaceans have six legs, two sharp pincer-claws, and — unlike their Terran ancestors — frontally placed eyes and a mouth set with chisel-shaped teeth! Coastal varieties grow to 4-5 feet in diameter, while smaller sub-species may be as tiny as a thumbnail. The Étla runs straight forward, unlike the crab, and it usually holds and bites, rather than pinches. Even rather small individuals can snip off a finger, while the largest can pinch an armoured man in half.

Feshénga: "the Many-Legged Serpent"

Rivers, lake shores, islands, and low-lying coastal or tidal lands. Sub-species exist in the jungles of M'mórcha, Nmartúsha, and also in Rannálu (although this may be a different creature — reports vary).

These smooth-skinned, oily-looking, black, lizard-like monsters run on thirty pairs of tiny legs and attack anything they see. They range from about five feet in length up to giants that measure fifty feet from nose to tail. The Feshénga's serpent-shaped head has three rows of needle-like teeth, whose bite is often poisonous, requiring sorcerous healing at once. The natives of M'mórcha possess herbs that will cure this venom, but in the Five Empires this animal is called "the One Who Introduces You to Lord Srúkarúm, the Lord of Death."

Ghár: "the Armoured Barge"

River banks, lake shores, and coastal flats.

This heavily armoured, lumbering, dark green-grey, quadruped has three powerful sets of heavy jaws hidden in protected cavities beneath its carapace. It extrudes these separately, one above the other, out to a distance of about ten feet. It is also armed with a spiked tail which it uses to defend its rear. The Ghár grows to about 12-15 feet long and has a turtle-like shell covered with spines, ridges and excrescences. The inside of this shell is iridescent, like mother-of-pearl; it is worth 80-1,600 Káitars.

Haqél: "the Toothed Dweller Below"

Deep lakes and streams, coastal flats.

This scaly, dull silver-hued creature drifts just below the surface of a lake or tidal pool with its horn-rimmed maw open waiting for an unwary victim to pass above (either swimming or in a small boat). It then leaps up, seizes its prey, and drags it off under the water. The Haqél fights with serried rows of razor-sharp teeth (made of a horny substance) and also uses its mighty, finned tail to strike. The smaller varieties grow to about 15 feet in length; larger ones range up to 30 feet long; and the largest known individuals are some 50 feet from snout to tail. The Haqél does not often attack larger vessels, but such occurrences are indeed known.

Kátru

Seacoasts and the shores of Lake Parunál.

These clam-like shellfish often contain large pearls. They grow up to 3-4 feet in diameter, and can snap shut

and amputate a swimmer's leg. The Kátru dig deep burrows in sandy lake or sea bottoms and hence require the expertise of experienced divers. These creatures are tasty when steamed or roasted. The natives of Lake Parunál use a marsh herb to make a sauce similar to lemon butter and serve the Kátru as a delicacy.



Kruá: "the Slasher of the Deeps"

Coastal waters, particularly Msúmtel Bay, Kakársha Bay, and the shallows around the Tsoléi Archipelago.

The Kruá is a bone-white, platter-shaped, thickly shelled, crustacean-like creature. It has six long spidery legs and two sawtoothed fighting arms tipped with massive pincers.

It is a rapid swimmer. The smallest varieties range from 3 to 10 feet across the carapace; middle-sized specimens grow up to 20 feet across; and the largest recorded individuals are about 40 feet from side to side.

Missiles bounce harmlessly off its armour plate, and a Kruá must be disabled by cutting off its legs and fighting arms. It can be turned away by pouring blood upon the water, however, and many a ship has saved itself through the sacrifice of some hapless slave or oarsman. Once satisfied, it scuttles back to the depths, and chittering at its enemies.



Mu'agh: "the Jellyfish"

Most waterways and coastal flats; also found in damp sections of the Underworlds.

This acid-secreting, gelatinous, cloudy-translucent, greyish creature ranges from one to ten feet in diameter. The Mu'agh tends to hide in dark, damp places. Damage done by this creature's acid secretion is irreparable. Even sorcerous healing sometimes fails. Strangely enough, the acid cannot penetrate Chlén-hide armour, but it eats away steel in a very short time. A victim must thus rip off and discard an affected item of armour before the acid reaches his flesh. Cloth, leather, etc. offer no protection. A Mu'agh is too soft and amorphous to be slain by edged weapons or cudgels, but it can be slain by fire or intense cold.

Left: A Haqél, Above: Nenyélu
To the Right: A Ngrútha

Nenyélu: "the Eel Fish"

Waterways and coastal flats.

These long, sinuous, black, eel-like creatures have many tiny sharp fins along their sides which they use for propulsion. They also have a pair of rudimentary hands just behind their snake-like heads, which they use to hurl or strike with a jagged stone. They possess only rudimentary intelligence, however. Nenyélu range up to fifteen feet in length and about six inches in diameter. Their bite is poisonous, and even if healed, a victim usually sustains some neural damage.

Ngrútha: "the Leech"

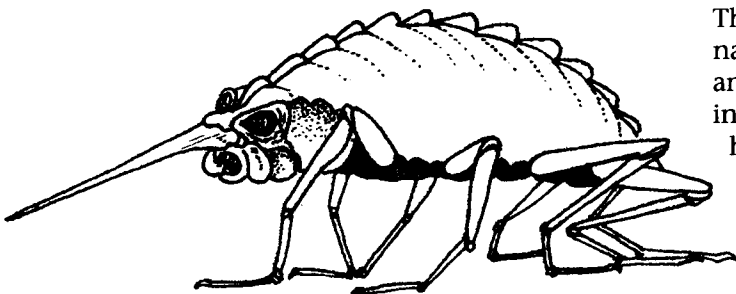
Coastal flats, rivers, and waterways. Also occurs in the Underworlds.

This thick-shelled, crab-like, yellow-green beetle-like monster (possibly closer to Terran crustaceans?) seizes a victim with its eight sucker-tipped legs and insert a thin proboscis into the body through any opening it finds. The Ngrútha then sucks the blood and soft parts out of the victim, leaving an empty husk. At the same time the creature fights off other attackers with its free arms. This creature is very agile for its size: it can run at great speed, climb walls, and even hold on to projections or cracks in a ceiling. The usual specimen measures 10-15 feet long and is about 6 feet in width.

Qáqtla: "the Swamp Snake"

Marshy riverbanks or coastal flats, particularly along the coast near Penóm A larger and more venomous variety is found in the Layóda Swamps and across the Deeps of Chanayága in the Flats of Gyógma.

These beige or brownish snake-like creatures are covered with protective scale armour. They range up to 10 feet in length and have a sort of whip of poisoned tentacles just behind their long, sharp, beak-like mouths. They are fearless fighters and will usually attack anything in their vicinity that moves. Their poison is relatively slow-acting; it can be cured either by sorcery or by potions of certain roots known to the inhabitants of the regions in which this monster occurs.

**Qu'úni**

The island of the deserted City of the Red-Tiled Roofs (on the opposite side of the planet from the Five Empires), and also in enclaves on the Southern Continent.

These pallid, semi-intelligent, shrimp-like, translucent, pale green creatures dwell in colonies. They are roughly human-sized and have six slender legs, the front pair of which ends in three-fingered hands. They are hostile to interlopers and attack humans trying to obtain water from streams near the City of the Red-Tiled Roofs. This ancient city's water supply does not function, and parties there must obtain water from outside. If the Qu'úni see this, they attack in hordes of 100-500 individuals. Otherwise, this species serves mostly as food for the Vriyágga (q.v.). The latter prefer juicier humans to the rather tasteless blandness of a Qu'úni, however, and once discovered, a human party had best remain high up in the crumbling, ruined buildings, out of these two species' reach!

Tletlákha: "the Mouth With Eyes"

Lakes, bogs, and marshes. A larger variety is found in the swamps around Púrdimal, and a small but deadly water-dwelling sub-species exists in Msúmtel Bay.

The Tletlákha is little more than a fanged mouth surrounded by six eyes, with an expandable, reddish brown stomach sac and a tiny tail behind. The ridge protecting the eyes is covered with barbed spines which penetrate the victim's flesh and cannot be removed without surgery. Once attached, the creature gnaws upon its prey, unless forcibly pried loose. The spines must then be removed carefully from the victim's flesh. Hitting the Tletlákha is relatively easy, but stopping it once it is attached and chewing on its prey is difficult. *Chlén*- hide armour gives almost no protection, and even steel is sometimes useless, so powerful are the Tletlákha's jaws.

Tsóggu: "the Drowned One"

The shallow seas around the Tsoléi Archipelago, the waters off the coast of Háida Pakála, and the Tutáita Shallows of Yán Kór. It is rare elsewhere.

This tan-coloured, vaguely humanoid creature is so named because of its resemblance, both in appearance and in odour, to a corpse which has been several days in the water. It employs its pupilless, white eyes to hypnotise and paralyse its victims (as many as six at once!). Sailors say that looking into a Tsóggu's eyes is to lose one's soul, and only sorcerous healing cures the paralysis. The Tsóggu does NOT paralyse itself, if shown itself in a mirror.

Vriyágga

The City of the Red-Tiled Roofs, on the opposite side of the planet from the Five Empires. The actual home of this creature is in the shallow waters outside the city.

In the one of the oldest extant books, "*the Chronicles of Llyán of Tsamra*," there is mention of a semi-legendary race which dwells in a city on an island in the "farthest reaches of the sea"; this race is described as being giant Ghár (q.v.) who ride upon vehicles, and who are called the Vriyágga. The author was probably referring to the terrible inhabitants of the deserted City of the Red-Tiled Roofs, the original name of which is lost in the mists of history.

The City of the Red-Tiled Roofs can only be reached through the subterranean tubeway-car system which still functions under many parts of Tekumel. It is a city of great, empty buildings, vast halls, and intricate architecture, all empty of life and lacking in any sign of the reasons for its desertion long ago. Ewers and utensils still sit on the crumbled tables, furniture long rotted away to dust still lines the hallways, chests of incomprehensible objects are still stored in its storehouses. There are no inhabitants other than the Vriyágga, who still patrol its silent streets.

The Vriyágga is a creature to strike terror into the most heroic breast: a huge pair of wheel-like appendages revolve around central axes like the treads of a tank, powered by gnarled and knotted cores of muscle-fibre. A great central braincase hangs between these, and from the lower part of the parody of a face there depend four (or more in larger specimens) great tentacles covered with powerful suckers. The mouth is lined with poison-dripping purple feelers, which are used to kill and ingest the monster's victims. The ebon eyes are like great black opals, allowing the Vriyágga to see in the dark. This terrible creature has considerable intelligence and can think, organize, call up its fellows, and lay ambushes, although it cannot speak. It is limited, of course, in that it can only enter areas where its great treaded wheels will carry it. Thus, it cannot climb stairs

or do more than reach into smaller rooms. It senses heat and thus gropes about until it catches someone. Its tentacles are very tough and do great damage to a victim caught in their toils. The larger specimens move slower than the younger and smaller ones, of course, but the former are more intelligent and have tentacles capable of snaking their way up into a second storey room! Small individuals range up to five feet in height, with a tentacle-reach of about 10 feet; larger specimens are roughly double this size, and the very largest have "wheels" 15-20 feet high, and a tentacle-reach of perhaps 30 feet.

The origins of the Vriyágga are uncertain. There are no records, and thus it can only be theorized that these creatures were brought as zoological specimens from some distant world during the early period of humanity's technological greatness. They feed upon the Qu'úni (q.v.), another species found along the shores of the island upon which this ancient and mysterious city is located.

Zo'óra: "the God of the Deep"

Seacoast from Jakálla all the way east to northern Livyánu. An even larger variety is found along the coast of Msúmtel Bay, in Háida Pakála, and eastward through the Nyémesel Isles, the southern coasts of Salarvyá, and the Ahoggyá enclave of Ónmu Tlé Hléktis.

This octopoid leviathan is rarely seen, fortunately for shipping. It is a bluish-white in colour, grows up to 50-60 feet in length and has eight stilted limbs that end in clawed pincers. Beneath its spiny carapace, a row of eyes goes all the way around its globular body, just above its tentacled, purple-red maw. This species usually remains far out to sea, but specimens have occasionally entered coastal waters to feed on small boats and clam-harvesters, who believe the monster to be a malevolent deity. The Zo'óra probably originates on one of the Ahoggyá worlds, and these nonhumans have an affinity with it and can persuade it to depart without violence.

1.9. THE UNDERWORLDS



The Tsuru'úm, as the "Underworlds" are called, are the relics of Tékumel's long occupation. Some were excavated by the native Ssú and Hlüss; others are human-built underground installations from before the Time of Darkness, when humankind used technology to travel between the stars. Later, after the cataclysm that cast Tékumel and its solar system into its present "pocket dimension," the Lords of the Latter Times constructed defenses and storehouses far below the surface; some of these are still intact, while others have collapsed, become filled with water, or are crushed beneath many hundreds of feet of stone. Still later, the rulers of the kingdoms, empires, and dynasties that followed built further labyrinths, tombs, and treasure-houses. In more recent times, the custom of Ditrána has arisen, occasioning the construction of more catacombs and "layers" over older excavations. Ditrána denotes the renewal of a city by demolishing all of its buildings down to ground level, sealing the cellars, and erecting a new city on the resulting new surface. The temples do not wish their holiest shrines to be buried without access, however, and tunnels, dug-out chambers, and corridors abound. Some of these are used by the priesthoods, but others are the work of clanless or homeless people, criminals, members of various secret societies, and the dwellers in the more ancient catacombs below. These last dig connecting passages to remain in contact with the surface. Ditrána is supposed to be done every 500 years or so, but many cities are "overdue." Some of the "layers" of catacombs lie directly over one another, while others are scattered about, the result of cities migrating within an area, rivers shifting their banks, and populations moving. Layers are sometimes cut off without access, while others are joined by long connecting tunnels to other sections or to the surface itself.

The beings that inhabit the Tsuru'úm are of several types: (1) Technological marvels of steel, glass, and plastic placed in the underworld as guardians and custodians before the Time of Darkness. These include everything from tiny service robots to huge planetary defense weapons. (2) Further residents, some technological, some androids or mutations, and some strange and whimsical, established in the underworlds by the Lords of the Latter Times. Many of these are treasure- or tomb-guardians; others are defensive; some are simply lost. (3) The guardians stationed by the priesthoods to protect modern temple sanctuaries and catacombs. These may consist of androids, mutations, and genetic creations (using the ancient protoplasm vats and genetic coding machines — some of which are not very accurate any more). Others are species of beasts that thrive in darkness and do sentry-duty just as well. Still others are reanimated Undead, the production of those temples which have discovered what lies beyond this life. (4) Various animals that have wandered into the labyrinths over the millenia and found them comfortable. (5) Homeless people, tomb-robbers, criminals, recluses, and others who have no connection with any of the above but who now inhabit the labyrinths. Only a few of the many denizens of the Underworlds can be listed below.

Aqáà: "the Worm of the Catacombs"

The deepest levels of the Underworlds.

This huge accordion-shaped worm ranges from 20 to 60 feet in length. It is covered with ragged brown bristles and has a maw the size of a large man. A victim swallowed by the Aqáà has only a small chance of cutting his way out through the beast's horny hide before its digestive juices reduce him to mush. A victim can also be cut out from the beast's stomach by his companions, but watch out for the creature's tail, which can strike as effectively as the head! A victim can also be rescued if the Aqáà is slain before digestion occurs. Even if healed, however, residual weakness and injury may remain as long as two to three weeks. The Aqáà is related to the Ayá worm of the deserts (q.v.). These creatures probably escaped from some zoological garden during the catastrophes after the Time of Darkness.

Biridlú: "the Mantle"

The upper sections of the Underworlds, always with some access to the surface.

These ancient treasure guardians are cape-like, black, flying creatures which cling to ceilings and drop down upon the unwary. They then suffocate their victim, gibbering and shrieking, in their powerfully muscled folds. They cannot be cut by *Chlén*-hide weapons but only by steel. A victim inside initially has some chance of cutting himself free, but suffocation soon occurs. Comrades outside may also try to cut their friend free. The Biridlú fights maniacally until all life is gone, and its body must be burned since it may pretend to be dead when it actually is not. This creature is native to caves in some parts of Tékumel and has probably been imported into the Underworlds by those who would have their treasures guarded well.

Dlaqó: "the Carrion-Beetle"

Almost anywhere in the Underworlds, ruins, caverns, etc.

This great armoured beetle-like creature has an iridescent green carapace, six legs, three amber-coloured eyes, and powerful scissors-like mandibles. It lives on carrion and usually does not attack unless provoked. Dlaqó range from fist-sized up through twenty-foot-long monsters. This is another escapee from some ancient zoo.

Biridlú and victim



Hli'ir: "the Beast with the Unendurable Face"

The deeper regions of the Underworlds, catacombs, and tombs.

These mad creatures are hideous to look upon, and anyone who does so may go insane. In fact, it is likely that this creature exists only partially on Tékumel's plane and the "madness" it causes is the result of its powerful telepathic ability, which does not jibe with human (or other Tekumeláni creatures') mental frequencies. The Hli'ir often seem to dash about aimlessly or insanely. Its real shape, purposes, feeding habits, etc. are unknown. It is reported to be roughly human-sized, however. It is said that only a steel weapon or a heavy mace will kill or immobilise this strange being.

Hrá: "the Bloodsucker"

Middle and lower levels of the Underworlds and deep caves.

These are the creations of the ancient priests of Ksáru: they are undead reanimated by sorcery, and they can only be slain by touching them with an "Amulet of the Great God" after they have been "slain." Otherwise they reanimate and will pursue a party relentlessly. They drain their victims of all blood and bodily fluids and leave nothing but a shrivelled husk. There are several types, depending upon the recipe Lord Ksáru's clergy used from among those devised during the Latter Times. Most are 10-12 feet tall, grey or blackish, and retain little of their former intelligence. Others are squat, very strong, and seem to have originally been created as burden-carriers. A few varieties fight with swords, spears, or maces, and the priests of Ksáru still sometimes employ them in night battles. They cannot stand the light. A priest of Ksáru has a slight chance of controlling any Hrá he meets. This control must be gained quickly, for if the Hrá surprises the party, there is no possibility of it.

Hurú'u: "the Howler"

Middle and deeper levels of the Underworlds.

These greyish white, spectral undead creatures wander howling in the Underworld. They are more or less humanoid in form and can be heard at a distance of 200 feet. They perceive a party from this same distance. *Chlén*-hide weapons are slightly less effective against them. They can be driven off by magic or by fire. Their howling deafens all within 10 feet of them. A victim slain by a Hurú'u loses portions of memory and knowledge skills.

Jáigi: "the Exalted Undead"

Anywhere in the Underworlds, in shrines dedicated to Lords Sáru and Durritlámish, and wherever the priests of these sects require the services of more intelligent Undead.

These reanimated Undead are almost invariably humans, both males and females. Only the temples of the Worm Lord and his Cohort are skilled at their creation, although the sects of Lords Hrü'u and Ksáru do have some competence as well. It is difficult to discern that these creatures are not in fact alive, since they can make themselves breathe, eat, excrete, and do everything but reproduce. Considerable effort must be expended to manufacture a Jáigi, and they are used only for highly secret, special missions.

Kúrgha: "the Eaters of Carrion"

The upper levels of the Underworlds, caverns, ruins, and desolate wastelands.

These scuttling, greyish-brown, six-limbed furry beasts range up to some four feet in length and three feet tall. They are bipedal and have vestigial tails, sharp, horny beaks, and three eyes (hence they probably originate on one of the Hláka worlds). They live on refuse and carrion and will attack only when they outnumber their opponents. Their terrible stench warns a party of their presence at a distance of 50 feet—even through doors!

Marashyálu: "the Whimperer"

Middle and deeper levels of various Underworlds, particularly Jakálla and Béy Sü, Ch'óchi in Mu'ugalavyá, etc.

These supernatural creatures of the ancients were set by the Lords of the Latter Times to guard treasure. They are masters of illusion, appearing as children, women, wounded friends, etc., and they weep and implore help. They have hypnotic powers and are said to be able to control up to six humans at once. Victims can then be commanded to fight against their own party. If the Marashyálu carries off a victim, it sucks all the soft organs out of the body by inserting a long proboscis into the mouth or other orifice. This vicious creature can be driven off by magic, but they are almost impossible to defeat physically. They are probably other-planar in origin.



Mrúr "the Undead"

Upper and middle levels of Underworlds, tombs, catacombs, and shrines to the Worm Lord and his Cohort, Lord Dumitāmish. Smaller numbers are found as guardians for the sanctuaries of Lords Ksárul, Hrū'ū, and their Cohorts.

These are the corpses of ancient human (and a few nonhuman) warriors who perished in the catacombs and who have been reanimated by the Priests of Sárku or of Ksárul for their own purposes. Mrúr are relatively simple Undead, with

little willpower or intelligence left. They never retreat. If killed, these liches should be burned. Otherwise their masters may reanimate them once more!

Ngáyu: "the Eater of Swords"

Middle and lower levels of many Underworlds, as well as natural caverns and ruins.

These mud-hued, flattish crustaceans have powerful claws and six legs. They grow to about six feet in diameter, although smaller, plate-sized specimens are more common. Their main weapon is a secretion which they squirt up to some 20 feet. This liquid affects only metal, destroying it completely. It dissolves magical and nonmagical steel weapons alike, but has no effect upon *Chlén*-hide, since this material is organic.

Ngóro: "the Whelk"

The deepest and most remote regions of the labyrinths of the Great Ancients before the Time of Darkness. A few are found on higher levels, but these are rare.

These large colony-creatures lie flat upon the floor of a chamber and resemble the rough stone flooring of the Underworld, although they may feel springy to walk

upon. They grow to lengths of 20-30 feet and are greyish or dull brown on top, with a pale pink underside. Ngóro are made up of millions of tiny individual creatures, who all share in the group mind. They are thus intelligent and use their millions of tiny cilia as both feet and hands. They make and use miniature weapons, magical devices, etc. They would be counted among the sapient races, except that they are reclusive and solitary creatures with no enclave of their own. They are thus termed "Under-people." They sometimes defend themselves by closing up on foes who inadvertently walk on them, crushing them in their powerful folds. There is very little time to jump free before the "carpet" fatally tightens! Ngóro can communicate in reedy, choral voices, and they appear to be somewhat telepathic. They may offer aid, items, guidance, etc. in return for kindness.

Nshé: "the Flowing One"

Throughout the middle and deeper levels of an Underworlds, and occasionally in natural caverns as well.

This creature is a product of ancient sorcery. It is composed entirely of viscous, watery liquid and can flow into almost any shape it wishes, pass under doors, through cracks, etc. Once in a room, it then rises up in the form of a featureless, transparent seven-foot-tall humanoid. It can also adopt such shapes as serpents, balls or spheres, flat sheets, etc. If this monster assumes a shape, it can be temporarily destroyed by edged or blunt weapons. If it remains fluid, it can flow around a victim's feet and draw him down into itself to crush and consume at leisure. One so trapped has an initial chance of leaping free, but thereafter this is impossible. A trapped victim is soon crushed, but can be freed by comrades if they manage to drive the creature away. In liquid form, this can only be done by forcing the Nshé to retreat. Fire is useful, as is the "the Amulet Against the Iniquitous Nshé." Various calming spells are also effective. One whose limbs are crushed by a Nshé requires sorcerous healing in order to walk again. This being is probably the creation of the Lords of the Latter Times, who specialised in such oddities.

Qól: "the Serpent-Headed One"

Upper reaches of the Underworlds, particularly as guardians for the temples of Lords Ksárul and Grugánu, whose priests are said to have created them with the aid of protoplasm vats and gene-splicing devices.

The Qól are mutants from human stock. They are roughly humanoid except for a slender, scale-less, reptilian neck and a flat, diamond-shaped serpent head. In colour, they range from dead white to a pale grey. They see well in darkness and fear light. They are

intelligent enough to fight with poisoned weapons, including arrows and javelins, and also possess venomous fangs. The Qól will not attack, however, unless they outnumber their foes.

Qumqúm: "the Thunderer"

Middle levels of the Underworlds, natural caverns, and a number of ruins: e.g. the City of Ngála, west of Jakála, the city of Hmakuyál, sacred to Lords Ksáru and Hrü'ü, etc.

This spectral creature is invisible to humans but not to Pé Chói and others with special visual abilities. It can be heard coming, however, from a distance of 500 feet since it makes a terrible roaring noise as it moves. It can be driven off by an "Eye of Detestation" or controlled by the "Incomparable Eye of Command." The only way to defeat this creature is to use sorcery or fire, which it fears. Its actual appearance is unknown, and it is theorised that its invisibility probably stems from the fact that it is just a bit "out-of-phase" with Tékumel's plane. Legends state that this creature was imported into this dimension near the end of the Latter Times by the Brethren of the Scarlet Nail, a sub-sect worshipping a deity similar to Lord Sárku. These same patrons are said to have provided the Qumqúm with the odd, curved, double-bladed halberd with which it fights. Although dangerous, this being may ignore parties met in the Underworld.

Ru'ún: "the Demon of Bronze"

The deepest reaches of the Underworlds, particularly those dating from before the Time of Darkness or shortly thereafter.

The commonest variety of these automatons stands some seven feet tall. Other forms are found, including tiny service robots, large and dangerous guardian robots (who demand identification documents not seen on Tékumel for millenia!), custodians, workers, etc. Most modern inhabitants of the planet have no idea that these devices exist far beneath the surface. Some function as defences for dimensional nexus points and also to watch over treasures hidden by the Lords of the Latter Times (who still knew how to control these monsters). Ru'ún are highly intelligent, although they cannot communicate with modern humans because of the extreme disparity between the languages of the Ancients and the Latter Times and the languages of the Five Empires, tens of thousands of years apart. The bodies of some varieties are covered with a fine network of hair-thin wires which impart a powerful electric shock. Others fight with a sword in one hand-like appendage and a kind of projectile device in the other which casts steel bolts 30 feet. Ru'ún obey only the "Incomparable Eye of Command" and the "Amulet of

A Qól



Ruling the Ru'ún," both of which were devised during the Latter Times and are now quite rare. Ru'ún can see with infra-red and ultra-violet light, and some are also built to perceive invisible (i.e. out-of-phase) planes and hear sounds inaudible even to a Pé Chói.

Sagún: "the Fungus"

Damp areas in catacombs, natural caves, and sewers, as well as along the banks of subterranean lakes and streams.

This creature is an ambient fungus developed by the Lords of the Latter Times as a guardian for underground storehouses. Standing about eight feet tall, this convoluted, pale-bluish-grey, leafy-looking creature sways forward upon its mobile stalk to strike with woody appearing claws. It is minimally intelligent and mobile but moves very slowly. It also emits spores, which are poisonous if breathed. Magical alleviation is the most effective cure, although medicament-sprays are known to the better apothecaries as well. If these remedies are not applied very soon, the spores germinate inside the victim's lungs with lethal effects.

Shédra: “the Eater of the Dead”

Upper and middle regions of Underworlds, necropolises, and sanctuaries dedicated to Lords Sárku, Hrű’ü, and Ksáru.

These flesh-eating, undead humans are grey and shrivelled almost beyond recognition. They wander ceaselessly in the Underworld seeking food. Shédra are more intelligent than Mrúr but much less so than Jájgi, who can appear to be very much alive — if they remember to breathe. Shédra fight with steel swords (supplied by their patrons, it is supposed), and a person slain by one of these will himself become a Shédra unless sorcery is applied immediately. Once a victim has become a Shédra, only a spell of Revivification can return him or her to the living.

Srámathu: “the Jolly Strangers”

Upper levels of the Underworlds, city slums, ruins, and out-of-the-way villages.

These creatures are also “Under-people”: an intelligent species that has no separate enclave of its own. The “sapient races” (Sec. 10) all have recognised homelands, and some are organised into states with armies, governments, etc. The “Under-people,” however, remain solitary, aloof, sometimes hostile or neutral to the doings of the larger species, and unwilling to join in anything more than a loose union of “neutrals.” The Srámathu are an example of an ancient parasitical race that — they claim — co-existed on Earth with humankind long before space travel! In form, these creatures are dingy black, bipedal insects, with a forest of upper tentacles that they twine into imitations of human arms. The Srámathu operate in small family groups: two or three “men,” an equal number of “women,” and a few “children.” Using a bodily secretion, they create an outer shell around themselves that looks like a human being in every external detail, clothing and all. They mingle with humanity, particularly in crowded slums and in the Underworlds, where a missing vagrant, child, or recluse will not be missed, and when they get a victim alone, they drop their disguise and feed. In good light it is easy to identify one of these beings, but in semi-darkness they often succeed. One distinguishing feature is the thickness of their calves and ankles: they are unable to create a slender human ankle to hold their own lower extremities, and their feet thus look thick and stumpy. They are not numerous, but they are very dangerous. They can use human weapons and magical devices, but they prefer to surround a victim with a jolly, chattering “family” and then all strike at once.

Thúnru’u: “the Eater of Eyes”

Upper and middle levels of the Underworld, many ruins, towers and citadels belonging to mighty mages, and some natural caverns.

Thúnru’u are relatively common creatures since the Lords of the Latter Times found them useful. The Thúnru’u is humanoid but is about 7-10 feet tall. It is usually a mottled grey, and its skin looks moist, doughy, and blubbery. It possesses two saucer-like eyes, a greyish-yellow beak, and rolls of skin which hang down from its heavy, muscular limbs like billows of flesh. It is not fast, but it is surprisingly agile for a being so huge and unwieldy-looking. Thúnru’u can be domesticated and are used by mages and various temples as servitors. They can be controlled by certain spells and magical devices, and they are repelled by *Tsúral*-buds (which also function as a mild aphrodisiac for humans). Thúnru’u live comfortably in dark, dank places, eating small animals and insects. They thus make excellent treasure- and tomb-guardians. For unknown reasons, Thúnru’u have a taste for small watery spheres and hence hunt and kill the Káyi (q.v.), humans, and other animals in order to eat the eyeballs. It is thought that this species originated in some other star system and was brought to Tékumel as powerful slaves.

Tsú’uru: “the Illusion-Master”

Middle levels of many catacombs and Underworlds. They are less frequently encountered in ruins and natural caverns.

These treasure guardians were created by the sages of the Latter Times. They are related to the Marashyálu. The Tsú’uru appears as anything it wishes, using a form of telepathy plus mild hypnosis to determine what its opponents are most likely to believe. It maintains its illusion until it has slain its foes, whereupon it reverts to its own form — a six-foot-long bundle of ropy, lumpy, blackish tentacles (which it uses in combat to throttle its foes) with a globular central brain ganglion. A Tsú’uru may thus appear as a Ru’ún, a friend known to the party, etc., and only after it has been slain does its true form appear. This creature is completely resistant to telepathy, clairvoyance, and other identifying spells. It is also intelligent enough to dissimulate and pretend to be friendly. It can copy its victims’ gait and behaviour, moreover, but it can utter only a few short sentences, picked from the mind of the victim with whom it is in telepathic rapport.

Vorodlá: "the Flying Undead"

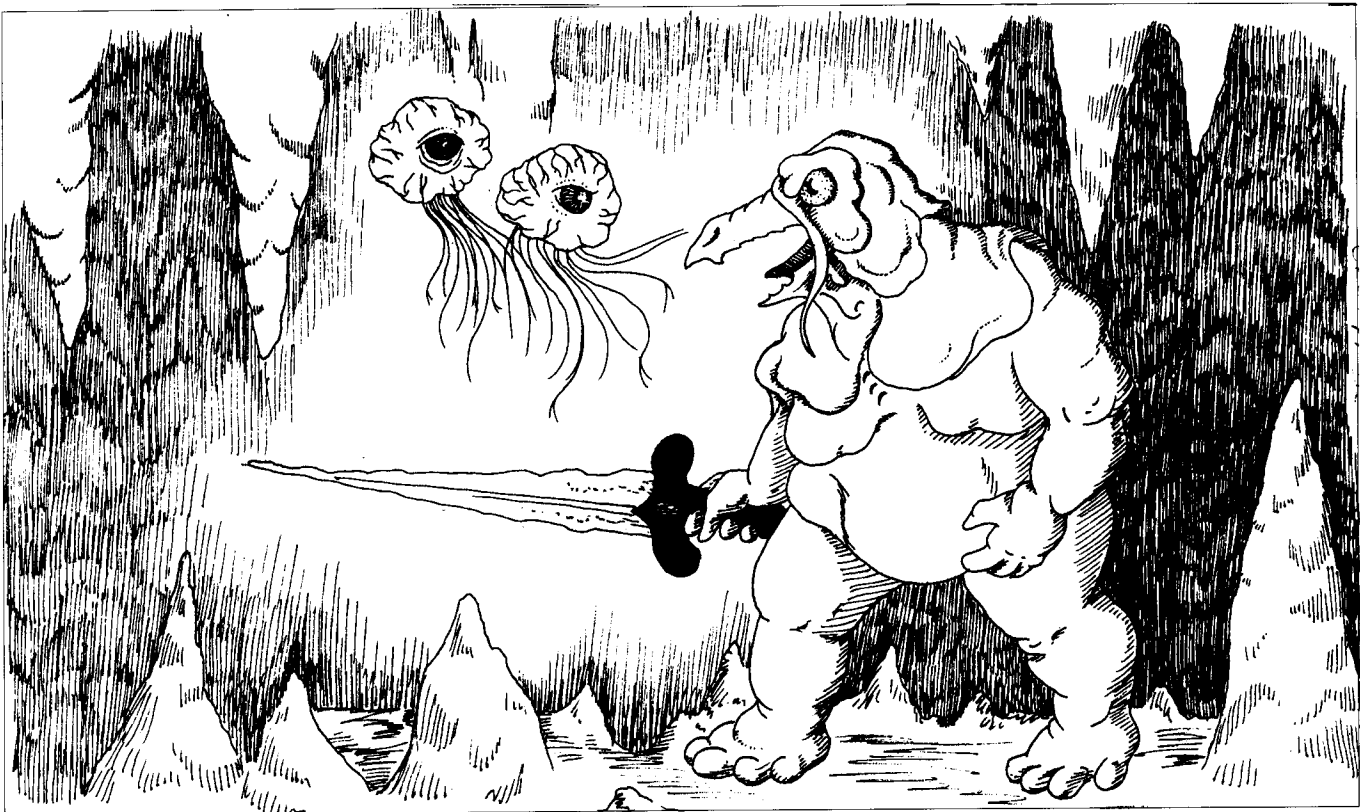
Shrines, tombs, and temples dedicated to Lords Ksáru, Grugánu, Sárku or Durritlámish. Occasionally they are met with elsewhere in the Underworlds and in lonely ruins as well.

These dingy, blackish creatures are the reanimated and restructured bodies of ancient warriors created as defenders of the sanctuaries of Lord Ksáru and other sects friendly to his. The mages of the Latter Times were skilled with gene-restructuring devices, and some of these processes are maintained even to this day, although the operation and theories behind the great protoplasm vats are poorly understood and have become ritual. The Vorodlá is essentially a human being, but it has been given broad, leathery wings and other skeletal modifications. It fights fearlessly, battling on until it is cut to pieces. The body of a Vorodlá must be burned since its magical "life" is difficult to extinguish. These creatures employ swords coated with a numbing poison that causes memory loss and a slow lowering of vitality. Sorcerous healing is the best cure for this, but the priesthoods of the temples named in this section possess medical remedies as well.

Yéleth: "the Angel of Doom"

Middle levels of the Underworlds, and less commonly near ruins and in natural caverns.

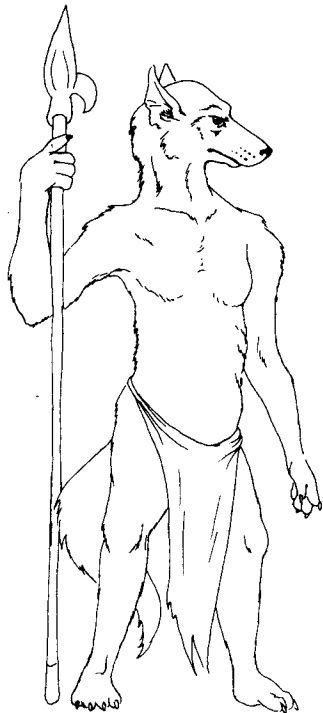
Yéleth are androids created to look like beautiful maidens or handsome youths. The Lords of the Latter Times used them as slaves, entertainers, and guardians, but they have since become independent and developed their talents to suit themselves. Now they acknowledge no master. These creatures have paper white skin, pupilless jet-black eyes, and hair the colour of polished ebony. They use powerful hypnosis as their primary weapon and can dominate up to five or six persons at one time. A Yéleth may order a hypnotised victim to fight against his own party, or the creature may simply paralyse him forever. Magical healing is the only way to return such a victim to normality.



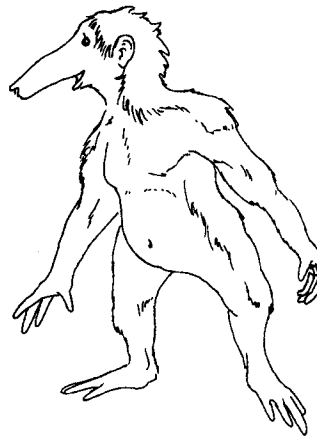
A Thúnru'u out for lunch

Semi-intelligent humanoids of various sorts

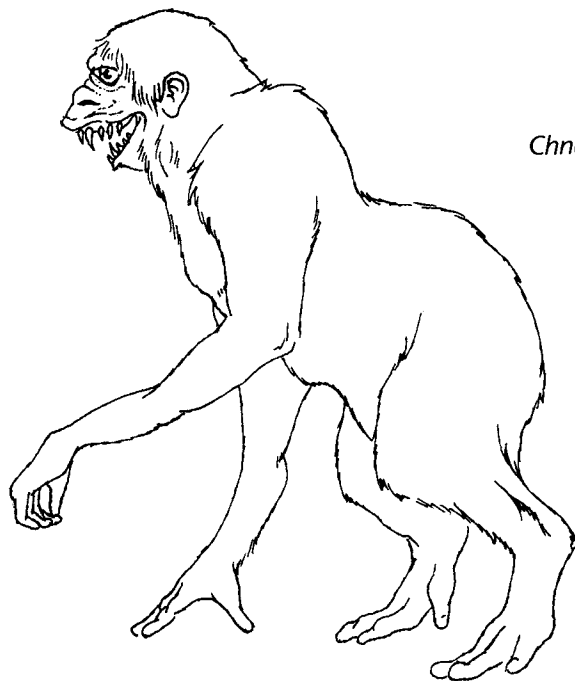
Rényu



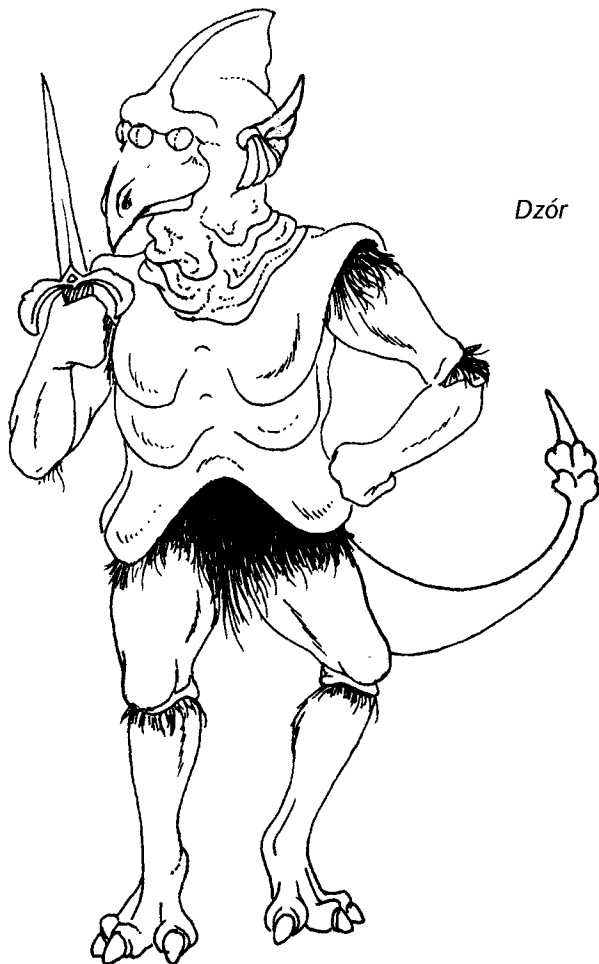
Sikún



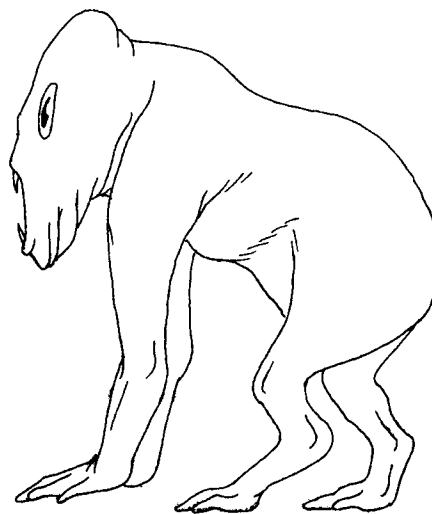
Chnéhl



Dzór



Yazái





Besides humans, Páchi Léi, Pé Chói, Tinalíya, and many other races can be found on Tékumel

1.10. THE INTELLIGENT NONHUMAN RACES

Tékumel's autochthonous inhabitants consist of two very different races: the Hlüss and the Ssú. When humankind arrived, these species were defeated and relegated to "reservations," where they dwell to this day. Besides humanity, other interstellar races came from the stars to join humankind on Tékumel. These include several such "friendly" or "neutral" species as the Pé Chói from Procyon, the reptilian Shén from Antares, the gruff and crude Ahoggyá from Achernar, the rapacious Pygmy Folk from Mirach, the Tinalíya from Algol, the aerial Hláka from Ensis, the Urunén from Betelgeuse, the forest-dwelling Páchi Léi from Arcturus, and the Swamp Folk from Unukalhai. Various races neutral or hostile to humankind and its allies came, too, some as emissaries, others as spies. These are the vicious little Hlutrgú from Algenubi, the stinking Shunned Ones from Regulus, the strange and unpredictable Miháli from Dorsum, the aquatic Nyaggá from Alhena, the semi-translucent Hokún from Markeb, and the Chíma from a remote star system whose name is unrecorded. Still other races dwell secretly amongst humankind, and a few inhabit remote regions of Tékumel and are not likely to be encountered.

Most of the sentient species dwell in enclaves of their own, although individuals may emerge and wander far afield. Many of these creatures are not interested in the affairs of humankind and stay much to themselves. None of these races has any interest in conquest, nor is it likely that they could succeed if they did, so outnumbered (and sorcerously "outgunned") are they by humanity. The Shén possess the closest thing to a human-style government, a large and well-organised army, and structured priesthoods. Even so, these reptilian creatures are interested mainly in defence and have little need or desire for expansion. Those that wander out to take employment in human domains are likely to return home after a few years of "wanderlust." The Five Empires freely grant citizenship to nonhumans, induct them into the priesthoods, enroll them in clans, and accept them into the government, the armies, and commercial establishments. Nonhumans function as warriors, sorcerers (except the Ahoggyá, whose abilities at sorcery are abysmal), and many other trades. The woodcarving of the Páchi Léi is renowned, as are the delicate sculptures done by the Pé Chói, the angular fabric designs of the Shén, and many other arts and crafts. The Hláka make excellent aerial scouts; the Swamp Folk make up a large proportion of Mu'ugalavyá's naval personnel; Ahoggyá, Tinalíya, Swamp Folk, and Shén mercenaries fight in human armies (sometimes on opposite sides), and Pygmy Folk merchants range across the Five Empires. This, say the folk of Tékumel, is as it should be.

The inimical races are another matter. They are invariably hostile: no Ssú, for example, has ever befriended a human or vice-versa — not since the first explorers and terraformers massacred these creatures and took the planet from them. The tradition of hatred is too strong on both sides. The Hlüss dwell in solitary splendour on their island and attack human shipping; the Hlutrgú pour out to raid human areas with incredible savagery, but they do not settle in these regions; the Shunned Ones remain in their sealed cities, except for occasional forays into the Underworlds and the tubeway cars to obtain raw materials; on the far side of the planet, the mighty Hokún hunt humans and consume them as food; the Ssú dwell in their subterranean cities and attack all comers, occasionally taking pieces of conquered territory for themselves but making no serious attempt to reclaim their lost heritage.

Most of the nonhuman species have been detailed in previous works on Tékumel. Indeed, separate articles have been written about the Pé Chói, the Shén, the Tinalíya, and the Miháli. It is superfluous to describe these races again, and all that is needed here is a brief characterisation of each race.

Ahoggyá: "the Knobbed Ones"

The Sharúna Lowlands of Salarvyá, the Flats of Gyógma in Háida Pakála, and Ónmu Tlé Hléktis in the far southeastern ocean are the chief enclaves of this species.

Ahoggyá are knobably, brownish, bristly, tremendously strong creatures, about four or five feet in height. Their bodies are like a thick barrel surmounted by a domed, armoured carapace that makes them look rather like a stocky mushroom. Set equidistantly around the body just under the rim of the carapace are four powerful arms, which end in hands having three fingers and a thumb. Between these arms they have four pairs of independently moveable eyes. Their eating, breathing, and sexual apparatus occupies the middle of their body on each side, and at the base of the body, four thickly muscled, bowed legs project out in a permanent crouch. The Ahoggyá are intelligent and speak, though with a ghastly accent. They have eight sexes, but their mating practices are still a mystery to other species. They have a reputation for bad temper, boisterousness, and crudity, and they prefer to be left alone, but will sometimes help humans, though never gladly. As far as is known, they have no religion whatsoever. Once, the Emperor Dúrumu, "the Copper Blade of Sárku" (ruled 1,747-1,809 A.S.) sent a body of scholars to ascertain the Ahoggyá deities. They concluded that these creatures had no gods at all, whereupon the Emperor classed them as "animals" for citizenship and census purposes, an insult the Ahoggyá never forgot. The Ahoggyá fight in human armies, often bravely and loyally, as long as they are paid. They employ short spears, maces, flails, and other weapons, as well as magical devices.

Chíma: "the Seafarers"

Several islands in the southern ocean, mostly on the opposite side of Tékumel from the Five Empires.

This species subsists largely on fish and a grass-like seaweed, travelling about for much of their lives in boats and large rafts that may hold an entire community. The Chíma are bipeds, standing about five to six feet tall. They are a speckled, grey-green in colour, have very long forearms, a segmented-looking, leathery torso with dark fur down the spine, and a short, thick tail that does not reach the ground. Their heads are long ovoids, with a curious hooked beak that protrudes a foot or more from the face. They have two bright green eyes under a heavy brow-ridge, large, leafy-looking ears, and a small, sharp chin. The Chíma are very social, not hostile to visitors, and fascinated by design, decoration, and body-paint! They manufacture bronze knives and chopper-swords that are shaped like thin, convex discs with the rim sharpened all around. Wandering about among the islets of seaweed, as they do, their social

structure is largely focussed on the village and the family, with little thought for larger organisations. The Chíma are decidedly irreligious, poor sorcerers, and not much interested in affairs beyond their marine environment. There are two sexes: males and females. They have only recently been contacted by the peoples of the Five Empires, through the assistance of the Naqsái, a seafaring human culture that ranges north into the Gulf of Teriyál, southwest of Shényu, and south almost as far as the equator. Chíma young are hatched from green-shelled, gelatinous eggs. They have two sexes: males (15%) and females (85%).

Hláka: "the Furred Flyers"

The Chayengár Range in Kilálámmu, just southeast of the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm. Colonies of Hláka have also been discovered recently in the oceans south of the equator.

The Hláka are flyers. They have leathery wings and greyish or dull brownish fur similar to their larger and heavier cousins, the Shánu'u. They stand about four and a half to five feet tall. Their heads are flattish triangles, with three frontally placed, bright blue eyes with nictitating membranes set in a bony crest. At the sides and backs of their heads they have a sort of furred ruff which conceals their hearing organs. They are bipeds, with two arms to which their wings are attached, rather like a bat. Their legs are short and bowed, and they also possess a powerful tail that ends in a bony, rapier-like point. This they sometimes coat with a poison derived from a local tuber. Hláka can speak, but their comprehension of mathematics is not good, and they are therefore often unable to describe the numbers of an approaching army accurately. They tend to be neutral to human affairs, although young ones often emerge from their territory to serve in human armies. In combat, they use swords, light javelins, and cross-bows, as well as their tails, and they also frequently carry stones and clay pots filled with burning coals to drop on foes below. The Hláka are skittish and nervous, and will fly away from battle on the slightest pretext. They are also terrified of ships and sea-travel. These creatures are warmblooded mammals, have two sexes (males: 55%, and females: 45%), and raise their young in caverns and eyries in their mountain crags. Their religion is complex and quite unintelligible to human-kind: it involves the placing of coloured stones in geometric patterns on high, flat mountaintops at certain astronomically predicted times. Hláka do not comprehend human society very well, make poor slaves, and always eventually return to their homeland.



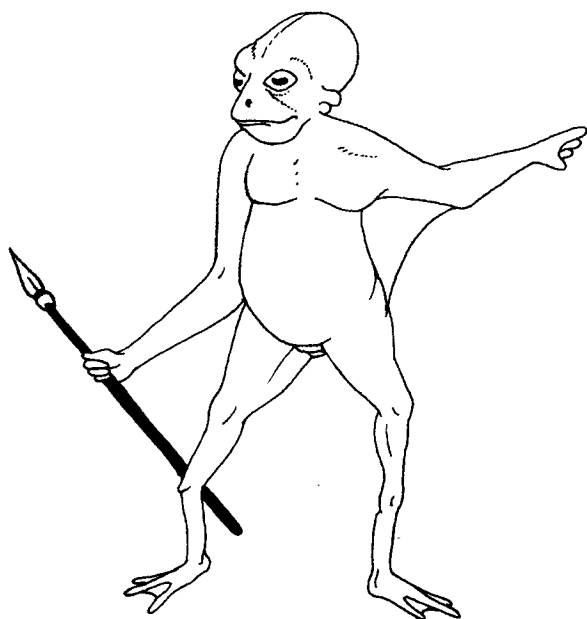
An Ahoggyá



A Chíma



A Hláká



A Hlutrgú

Hlutrgú: "the Swamp Frogs"

This species' home lies in the dismal reaches of the swamps of the Káija Protectorate, east of Msúmtel Bay in southern Tsolyánu. No other enclaves are known.

Hlutrgú are rubbery little creatures, four to four and a half feet tall. They use all four of their limbs as hands or legs, as the need arises. A Hlutrgú's head resembles a bare, bony skull, with a wide mouth filled with fangs. They range from a mottled green, to grey, to almost black in hue. This species is one of humanity's most dangerous and implacable foes. Each year these creatures emerge from their territory in violent, savage raids into human areas, torturing and killing all the humans they capture. They do not seem interested in territorial expansion or in loot, but only in slaughter. Each year, too, thousands of Hlutrgú set out in tiny leather coracles into the Sea of Sóngyal on some sort of migration. Most of these individuals perish in the sea. No one knows what ancient instinct this serves. Hlutrgú are ferocious fighters; they use short, bone-tipped spears, javelins, and throwing darts. Humans have been trying to eliminate the Hlutrgú for generations and have managed to hold them mainly to their own territory, except for their constant raids. They have three sexes: males (95%), female "spawners," (4%), and asexual "leaders" (1%). Details of their society are unknown.

Hlüss: "the Spawn of the Old Ones"

The island of Hlüssuyal and also Ssrú-Gátl Isle in the centre of the Deeps of Chanayága, south of Tsolyánu and east of Livyánu. No other enclaves exist in the northern hemisphere, but they occupy three small islands in the southern ocean at about 30° South Latitude.

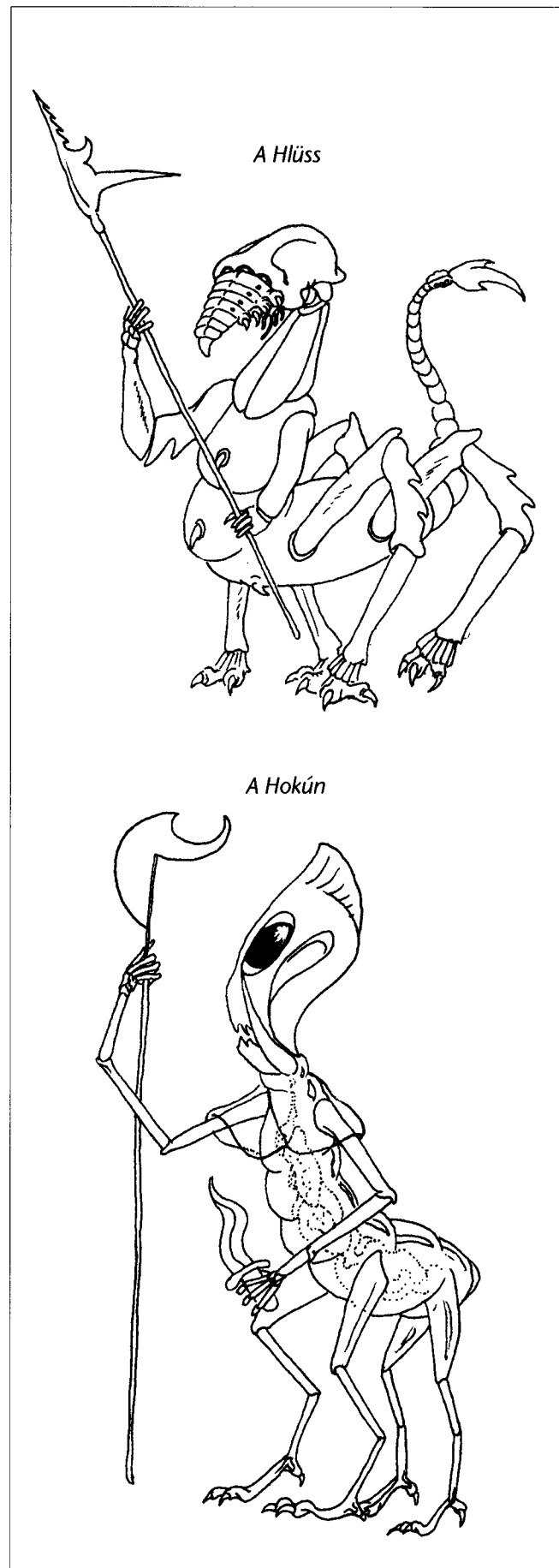
These remnants of prehuman Tékumel are insectoid in appearance: a long, segmented, scorpion-like body, four high-arched legs, a prehensile tail fitted with a deadly sting, two smaller forearms ending in three fingers and a thumb, and a broad, flattish head with three eyes and a chitinous proboscis extending out over razor-sharp mandibles. Their bodies are covered with a light chitinous exoskeleton that ranges from greenish-blue to black in colour. They normally remain on all fours, but in battle, they rear up on their two back legs and use their upper pair of arms to hold weapons and fight, and their middle limbs to grab and tear. The Hlüss are friendly to their relatives, the Ssú, and they are neutral to Hláká, provided that the latter are not accompanied by humans. They are inquisitive and greedy, and they cover their carapaces with gems set in a kind of cement, creating beautiful and alien patterns. They are great seafarers and travel the oceans of Tékumel in their flat, platter-shaped, hive-ships (made of a secretion from the bodies of the Hlüss themselves).

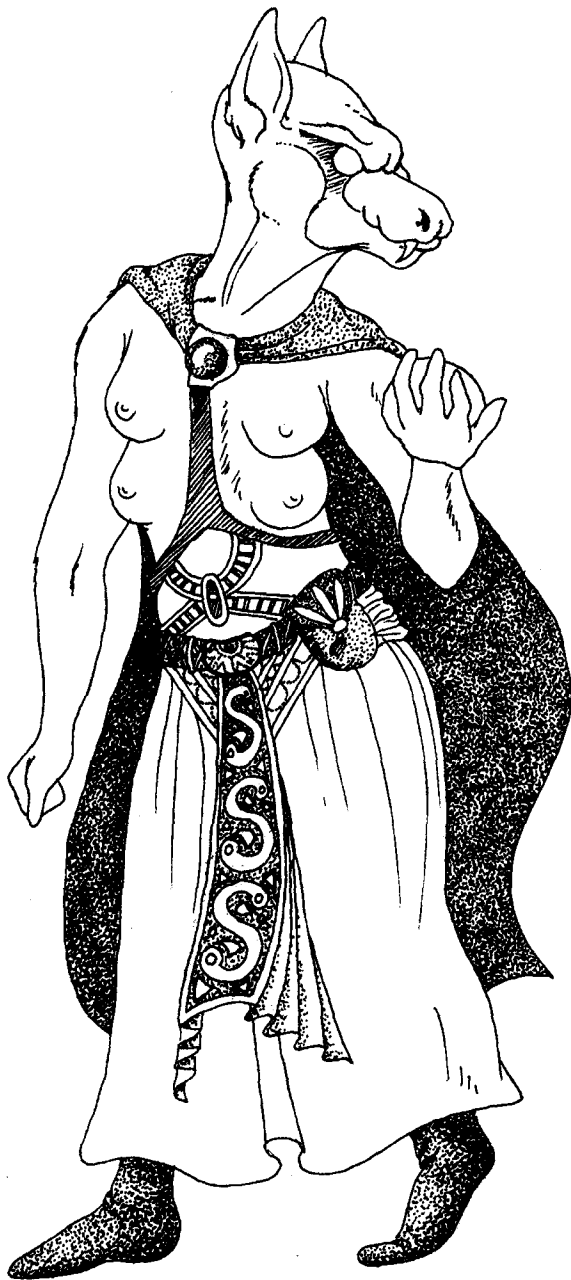
Captives paralysed by their stings are injected with eggs laid by the Hlüss-Mother. The young then emerge from these sacs in about 125 days, and the host dies a horrible death. The Hlüss are great sorcerers and skilled builders, and they frequently send out parties either by sea or through the ancient tubeway car system to seek magical devices and raw materials. They can be detected at sea by the deep, buzzing, humming sound emanating from their ships, and on land by their sweetish, acid odour. The Hlüss have three sexes: the huge and rather rare female egg-layers (2% or less), male fertilisers (5%), and a large majority (93% or so) of neuter drones. Their reputation as fearless and intelligent fighters strikes dread into the hearts of humans and other races throughout Tékumel's northern hemisphere.

Hokún: "the Glass-Monsters"

A largish island named Benré Sà in the southern ocean of the hemisphere opposite the Five Empires, several smaller islands in the northern oceans of the same hemisphere, and a number of islands in other areas as well.

Hokún (also called Sáàkü in some languages) resemble eight-foot-tall sculptures of cloudy green-grey glass. They have six limbs, the rear pair of which are very long and powerful, while the front pair is small and is used to manipulate tools, etc. The middle set is employed for heavy work, grasping, and balance. A Hokún's head is a long, vertical ovoid, with a faceted eye set on either side of a central ridge. A set of powerful mandibles occupies a recess at the base of the throat. The most unusual thing about the Hokún, however, is their hard exoskeleton: thinner areas of this are transparent, and even thicker portions (the torso, the skull, etc.) are somewhat translucent. There are two sexes: males (65%) and egg-laying females (35%). The Hokún employ a mutation of their own species as riding animals: these latter creatures are semi-intelligent, short, squat, and less translucent, yet they are essentially the same species as their riders. Hokún tend to have little individuality and act as a group. In many Hokún cultures, individuals have no personal names or identities but participate in a sort of "group-mind." As far as is known, the Hokún have no religion but only a complex system of prohibitions and commands that stem from "the World-Mind," as they put it. The societies in which the Hokún live are diverse: on their island of Benré Sà, they ride out with long, glass-like lances to hunt humans (who are considered little more than naked animals) and utilise human flesh as food; in other regions the Hokún have enslaved humanity and rule as masters; in a few locales they live as equals with humankind; and on one island humans rule the Hokún and ride the latter's riding beasts themselves! Of all the nonhuman species, the Hokún are perhaps the greatest threat to human hegemony over Tékumel.





A Mihálli

Mihálli: "the Shape-Shifters"

During the Latter Times this strange race occupied large areas of Mihállu, north or Salarvyá and far to the east of Tsolyánu. They are also said to have built "the Unstraightened City" in the Plains of Glass. Now the Mihálli are nearly extinct and have no enclave of their own. Instead, it is believed that they inhabit one or more "pocket dimensions" from which they enter and leave Tékumel's plane as they wish. Individuals are still occasionally encountered.

In form, the Mihálli are very similar to humans, although more slender. They have a rather cat-like head, however, with a longish snout, two eyes, and two up-pointing ears. They are almost hairless and have a skin colouration that ranges from dull green to reddish brown: warriors are of the former colour, and leaders the latter. They possess four breasts, and their hands have five fingers and a thumb. It is thought that they are hermaphroditic, but their reproductive processes are really unknown. Their greatest talent is that of shape-shifting: they can adopt almost any form and maintain it for long periods of time. This shape must be of approximately human size. If an imitated being has more than four limbs, the "extras" appear to be paralysed. Another method of penetrating their disguise is to look into their eyes: these remain a glowing scarlet, whatever shape the creature adopts. Mihálli are possess great interdimensional powers, open and use nexus points, and perhaps even exist on more than one plane at once. Their motivations are so alien that they seem whimsical or even insane to "mono-planar" beings such as humankind. In spite of their humanoid appearance, thus, these creatures are very alien. They remain aloof from other species, and most humans believe them to be mythological creatures. They are rare now on Tékumel, and their ancient homeland of Mihállu is now occupied by human colonists who call themselves "Mihálli."

Nyaggá: "the Dwellers Below"

Only beneath the waters of Lake Parunál to the northeast of Tsolyánu.

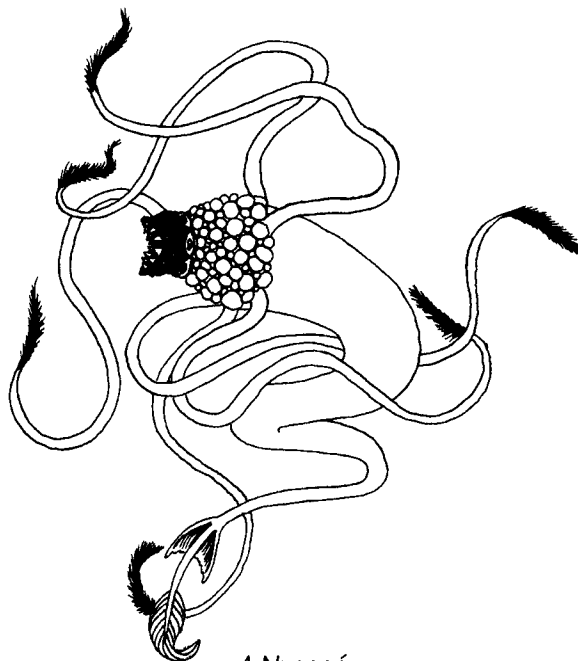
This aquatic race lives underwater and can only remain on shore for periods of an hour or less. A Nyaggá is shaped like a tapering cylinder, perhaps 8-9 feet in length, without fins or scales, of a sickly grey-white colour, and ending in an eel-like tail. The head is round and bulbous, soft and segmented, and rather like a human brain in appearance. At the upper end of this, a round, black-lipped mouth is surrounded by a ring of gleaming ebon eyes. At the junction of the body and the head is a ring of muscle from which six long tentacles emerge. These are retractable and covered with tiny suckers and cilia. Totally extended, a Nyaggá is about fifteen feet long. They are warmblooded and

essentially mammalian, but the details of their reproductive processes are unknown. (There are rumours that these creatures can interbreed with humans: witness the vestigial gills and pallid appearance of some of the folk living in the cities of Ngakü and Prajnú.) Nyaggá are agile swimmers, but on land they must resort to pulling themselves along with their forearms, while coiling and extending their bodies, similar to certain serpents. They prefer to remain aloof and do not bother human shipping — unless it bothers them. They react hostilely to incursions into their watery realm, and their only contact with humankind is a kind of “silent barter,” in which they bring up pieces and sculptures of valuable glass-coral and leave these on the beach. Human traders then leave items they believe the Nyaggá will want in return. In this way “business” is done. These creatures have occasionally raided shore-line villages, but the methods and purposes of these raids are not clear.

Páchi Léi: “the Forest Dwellers”

The thickly forested region of Pán Cháka in southwestern Tsolyánu and southeastern Mu’ugalavyá.

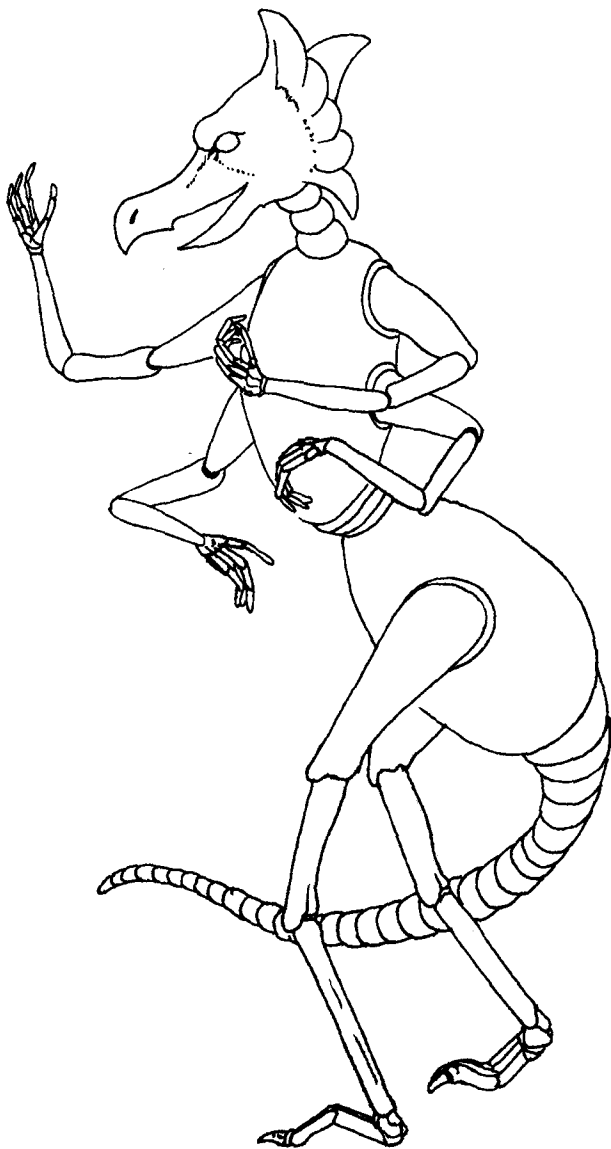
These four-legged, four armed creatures are a grey-green colour, shading to dark green and almost black along the spine. Their pear-shaped, doughy-looking bodies are covered with small knobs and protuberances that give them a knobbed, bulbous look. Páchi Léi range from about five feet to a little over six feet in height. They have two large, platter-shaped eyes which allow them to see well in the dark, and their massive, prognathous jaws are filled with teeth. In their Pán Chákan forests, these beings live in treehouses of carved and polished wood, maintain a dualistic religion (N’rg, who is like Hnálla and Thúmis, or A’lsh, who resembles Ksárul and Hrü’ü), and spend much of their time with their families. In spite of their ferocious appearance, thus, this species is generally peaceful and gentle. Indeed, they are psychologically closer to humankind than many other, more humanoid species of Tékumel. They are loquacious and interested in politics and social interaction, and many of them have attained high posts in the priesthoods, the clans, and the government of Tsolyánu. They use human weapons with ease and are often found in the armies. They also have an atrophied sixth sense that permits them to see “wrongnesses”: secret doors, ambushes, and traps. For historical reasons, the Páchi Léi hate their neighbours, the Mu’ugalavyáni. They make docile slaves and are frequently employed as chamberlains, clerks, etc. Most eventually desire to return to their Chákan home, no matter how high a post they reach. This species reproduces by budding: at certain times during a four-year cycle each individual exudes spore-like spermatozoa which fertilise the “egg-pods” on the bodies of other



A Nyaggá



A Páchi Léi



A Pé Chói



A Pygmy Folk

individuals. These lumps become pod-like extrusions, and in about 250 days these burst open to reveal a viable infant. The Páchi Léi have no families as such, although small "families" of six to eight individuals do live and work together.

Pé Chói: "the Listeners"

The forests of Dó Cháka, between Mu'ugalavyá and Tsołyánu. Other enclaves exist on islands in the southern oceans.

Of all the nonhuman species, these slender creatures are the most friendly to humankind. They range from five and a half to over six feet tall, have two powerful rear legs, a segmented tail, and two sets of forelimbs, the uppermost of which is used for manipulating tools and weapons and for social purposes, while the central pair of limbs is employed for heavier work. Their heads are long and narrow, with two large green eyes, a tapering proboscis, and two fan-like ears at the rear of the skull. They thus resemble the seahorse of ancient Earth. They have two sets of "lungs," one in the torso, and the other in the abdomen. The breathing holes for the latter are located along the inner thighs, which gives rise to the Pé Chói's fear of wading or swimming in water deeper than two feet or so! There are three sexes: males (40%), females (35%), and neuters (25%). The chitin of the males is a gleaming jet black, while that of the females is bone-white. Neuters are black as well, but with a greyish tinge. Pé Chói have excellent vision and hearing, and they are psychic as well. They can detect the presence of other beings within about six feet of themselves, but are not telepathic (unless they have studied this art). They also sense whenever a fellow Pé Chói has been killed at distances up to two or three miles, and they then exact a terrible revenge if the deed was done unjustly (as they perceive justice). In the wilds of the Chákan forests, these creatures have their own intricate society, worship their own deities ("the Father of Nests," who embodies features of most of the Lords of Stability, and "the Black Old One," who encompasses the Lords of Change), and live in harmony with their forest environment. Those who come out into the Five Empires to live are fond of joining human organisations, however: they are found as priests, clansmen, bureaucrats, merchants, and soldiers — all walks of life. They copy human dress and customs, often becoming "more human than human." Because of their great sensitivity and psychic talent, they frequently join the scholarly contingents of human temples, where they become accomplished sorcerers. They serve in the armies of the Five Empires, too, and make good soldiers, fighting with javelins, jag-edged swords, and crossbows. In a military context, the deaths of others of their species does not seem to disturb them. All in all, Pé Chói sometimes seem a little too sophisticated and "delicate,

but in general they are liked and respected by their human counterparts.

The Pygmy Folk: "the Little Ones"

The one known enclave of this species is located in the far northeastern mountains of Yán Kór, close to Lake Parunál and the frontier of Chayákkú.

These creatures stand only about three feet in height. The Tsolyáni call them *Ninínyal* "the Little Ones" (Yán Koryáni *Nyéna*). They have greyish or blackish fur, sharp-nosed faces, sharp teeth, round ears that project upwards from their skulls, with sharp little rodent-like faces, large round ears, and large eyes set one of each side of their heads. They are bipeds, with two muscular rear legs, two upper limbs with three-fingered, claw-like hands, and a vestigial tail. Their sight, smell, and hearing are excellent. They see easily in pitch darkness and can hear faint sounds even through thick stone walls. The Pygmy Folk dwell in subterranean burrows of great size and extent, almost cities in themselves. Their family life is complex. There are three sexes: males (55%), females (15%), and hermaphrodites (30%), who dwell together with the others and participate in some unknown way with the family unit. This species has a reputation for being capricious, venal, greedy, devious, and violent, yet they are generally friendly to humankind. They make ferocious enemies and use most of the weapons employed by humankind, but they will avoid battle when outnumbered. The Yán Koryáni army makes considerable use of them as mercenaries. Their religious beliefs are unknown, though it is said that they possess a complex pantheon, have priests, and perform rituals. They join human temples when residing in the Five Empires, and their abilities as scholars and sorcerers are passable. They are great traders, travellers, and bargainers. As the Tsolyáni proverb puts it: "To bargain with a *Ninínyal* is to throw away your purse."

Shén: "the Demon Warriors"

The largest Shén enclave is the nation-state of Shényu, on the tip of the continent between the Deeps of Chanayága and the Gulf of Teriyál. Between Shényu and the human nation of Livyánu to the north are several smaller Shén nations: Mmátugual, Shrüke'él, Ngúa, Gopúri, Khákh, Qónu, Rá, and Gái. Other Shén enclaves are known, e.g. Shuggár on the southern continent to the southwest of Shényu. There is also an island in the southern ocean inhabited by Shén who have never seen a human being.

The reptilian Shén stand between six and eight feet tall and are covered with gleaming scales. They are bipeds with two powerful back legs, two forearms ending in hands that have three fingers and an opposable thumb,



A Shén



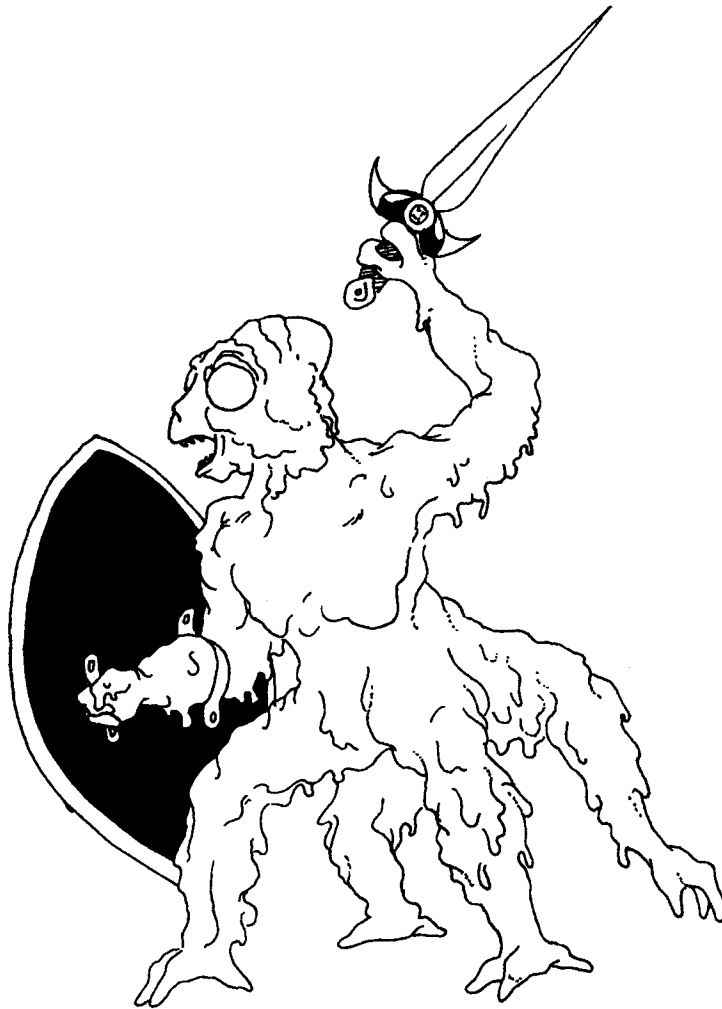
A Shunned One

and a powerful tail with a horny, mace-like ball at the end which they use as a weapon. The curved, beak-like snout has powerful jaws filled with rows of needle-sharp teeth. Along the top of the skull is a crest of spines that normally lies flat but which rises when its owner is angry. There are three sexes: males, who are a gleaming black in colour (40%); females, who are smaller and tinged with grey (35%), and "egg-fertilisers" who are also small and grey and whose task is to fertilise the eggs produced by the males and females (25%). Families consist of one male and one female, plus one or two egg-fertilisers. A number of families may make up an "egg-group": a genetically related unit that recognises its kinship and considers other egg-groups to be outsiders. Some egg-groups are mutually friendly, others are neutral, and some are so hostile to one another that individuals bristle and fight on sight. In mating season members of different egg-groups are careful not to come in contact with one another because the instinct to fight still remains very strong. This is the reason for the existence of the smaller Shén states mentioned above: each of these is actually a separate egg-group, neutral or hostile to the others, and cooperation is thus limited. They are also almost automatically hostile towards the Ahoggyá, whom they blame for eating some Shén captives during the invasion of Salarvyá by the Tsolyáni Emperor Hejjéka II "the Heretic," who ruled from 1,325 to 1,340 A.S. This hatred is probably actually based on some ancient genetic antipathy. Human generals never put a unit of Shén next to a unit of Ahoggyá on the battlefield. These two races do not instantly attack one another, of course, and individuals may sometimes get along when none others of their species are nearby, but groups of each race will usually begin making remarks and insulting one another, and this leads to violence. Shén are physically very powerful but have little patience with the "finer points" of courtesy and culture. Their society is boisterous, harsh, and somewhat crude, and contains features that are repugnant to humans: e.g. eating those of their young who are brash or mischievous! Shén value strength, ferocity, bravery, and endurance. They make indifferent sorcerers and scholars, and their religion consists of a straightforward dualism: "the One of Eggs" (Stability) versus "the One Who Rends" (Change). They prefer their baking hot lands near the equator and come north only to work as mercenaries or merchants for short periods, going home after a few years at most. They use short, heavy axe-swords, maces, halberds, and spears, and one typical weapon is the pistol-crossbow, which is so strong that humans have difficulty cocking it.

The Shunned Ones: "the Stinking Ones"

The only known enclave of this strange race is located just northwest of the Jánnu Range in Yán Kór.

These hideous, inimical humanoids are rarely seen outside their sealed, semi-subterranean, domed cities. They are tall (five and a half to almost seven feet), gangling, skeletal bipeds, with extremely long, bony limbs. The face is withered and puckered-looking, rather like a rotted fruit, and the only discernible facial feature is a pair of round, black, pupilless eyes. These creatures wrap themselves in voluminous, flapping robes of dust-brown or night-black, which gives them a horrifying, spectral look. The most unpleasant thing about them is their terrible stench, which can be detected by humans at a range of nearly 200 feet! The Tsolyáni call them *Vléshgaya*l and the Yán Koryáni name them *Bláshagh*. This species is skilled with sorcery, uses (but does not manufacture) ancient technological devices, and is renowned as fighters. The Shunned Ones rarely leave their domed cities; their air is some type of corrosive, yellow gas, in which humans can function at full strength for no more than half an hour. Thereafter, a victim begins to cough, gasps for breath, and dies within another 30-45 minutes. Little is known about the society of the Shunned Ones. Specimens exhibit at least five types of organs which may be reproductive; these may represent different sexes, or they may be developmental stages in the life-cycle of one sex. This species is irrevocably hostile to humankind and its allies. Their weapons are long metal-tipped



A Grey Ssú

spears, two-handed swords and maces, polearms, and various shorter swords and daggers. They also use the spear-thrower (the Aztec *Atlatl*), which gives them a considerable range for their barbed darts. Parties of Shunned Ones venture into the Underworlds via the ancient tubeway car system to

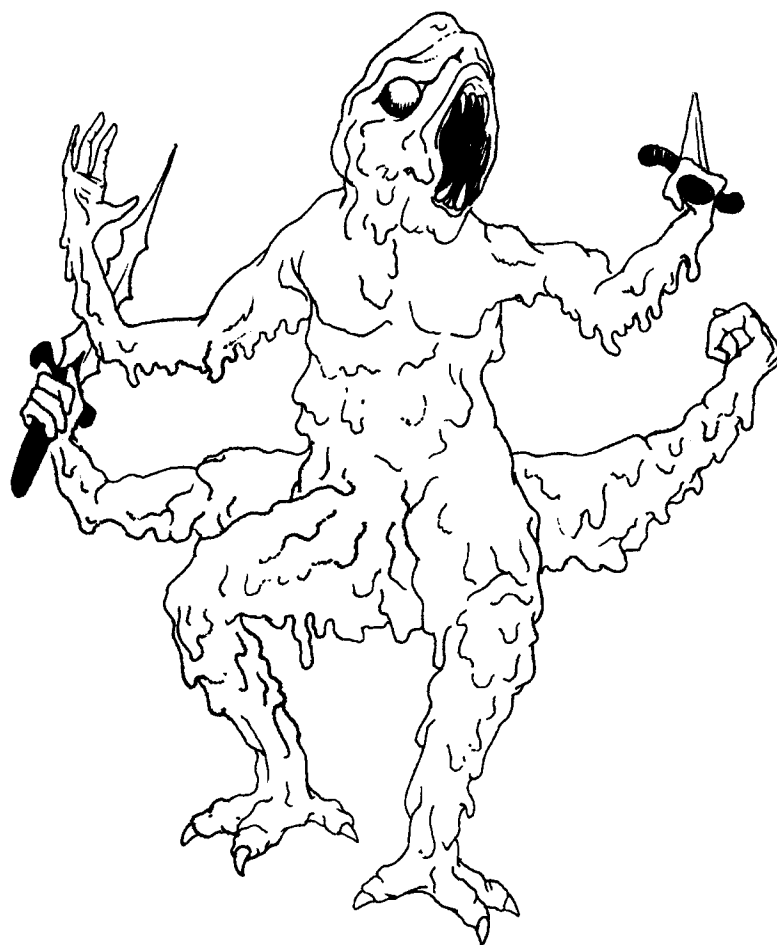
seek magical and technological devices, rather than gold or gems; if encountered, they will fight to the death. Overcome by the stench — and the dread these beings evoke — humans may panic. It takes a very brave person to confront these clever, murderous, utterly alien creatures!

Ssú: "the Enemies of Man"

Ssuyál, the homeland of this race, lies just north of Pecháno, the small human state at the northwest corner of Salarvyá. The Ssú yearn to regain their ancient capital of Ssuganá, the ruins of which lie inside Pecháno. Other enclaves exist on two of the southern continents, and a larger subspecies, the "Black Ssú," dwells on an island at the very western tip of the continent, beyond the Tané Peninsula.

The Ssú and the Hlüss, the two aboriginal races of Tékumel, were defeated, decimated, and placed on reservations by the early human settlers. After the Time of Darkness, the Ssú emerged again, though slowly, to reoccupy regions nearest them. There are two subspecies of Ssú: the smaller Grey Ssú, and the larger, deadlier Black Ssú. These are essentially the same in

A Black Ssú



appearance: a torso centrally set on four equally-spaced, bowed legs, with two upper arms ending in three-digit hands, the the largest "finger" of which functions as a thumb. The head has two large eyes, small nostril slits, and a mouth shaped like a vertical oval. The Ssú's outer integument is wrapped around its limbs like paper on a roll, and the loose ends of this "skin" keep pulling away in ragged swatches, giving the Ssú the appearance of a tattered mummy. A Ssú can rear up on its back legs to fight, and it sometimes uses its middle pair of limbs to hold a shield or another weapon (although only the Black Ssú are adept at this). Grey Ssú range between five and five and half feet in height, while the Black Ssú stand between five feet eight inches and six and a half feet tall. The Black Ssú are more technologically-inclined, wear elaborate armour, and are generally more intelligent than their smaller brothers. All Ssú are distinguished by an odour rather like musty cinnamon (a spice the Tsolyáni call *Máugha*) ; this smell is enough to send humans who have seen the results of Ssú raids into paroxysms of fear. Their language sounds like a sweet, high chiming, tinkling up and down the scale like a chorus of bells. Their writing is a series of small dots, circles, and depressions pressed into wood, stone, or a kind of paper. They see well in the darkness and prefer a dim, blue light in their subterranean nest-cities. Indeed, they often carry blue lanterns when they travel. The Ssú are excellent sorcerers and scholars, and they range over Tékumel via the ancient tubeway car system in search of metals, devices, and raw materials. They also possess a limited hypnotic

power, which can immobilise humans or cause them to turn and fight their comrades. They fight with oddly-designed, one-handed swords, short thrusting spears, crossbows, and daggers. Ssú are friendly to their cousins, the Hlüss, occasionally amicable to

the Hláka, and neutral to the Shunned Ones. They hate humankind and its allies. They have three sexes: female "spawners" (5%), males who function as "drone/leaders" (15%), and worker-fighters (80%).

The Swamp Folk

The Swamp Folk inhabit the miasmal swamps along the lower Putuhénu River in southern Mu'ugalavyá. No other enclaves are known.

These are squat, rotund, rubbery white creatures, ranging from four to six feet in height. They have long sloping skulls, with a bony central crest rising from the forehead and slanting backwards to a point, with a flexible drapery of skin falling from this crest down over the shoulders and upper back. They stand on four equally-spaced legs (like the Ssú, to whom they are not related), and two upper arms with four-digit hands and an opposable thumb. The head has rather humanoid features: two eyes, a largish nose, and a broad mouth. They have two sexes: males (70%), and females (30%). The Swamp Folk (called *Hegléthyal* in Tsolyáni and *A'láthish* in Mu'ugalavyáni) live in village communities of thatched huts on stilts over the river. They travel between houses in small coracles and boats, and

there are usually fast galleys moored nearby. The Swamp Folk are marine-minded, and they make up a large percentage of Mu'ugalavyá's naval personnel. They use no magic and cannot master spells, although they are clever and can use ancient magical and technological devices easily. They do sense "wrongnesses": sloping passages, changes in direction, and interdimensional nexus points. They fit well into human society and are friendly, courteous, and eager to copy human customs. They possess a complex pantheon of nature deities, but when they leave their own enclave, they usually join one of the human temples. They are not theologically inclined, however, and so often find their way into administrative service. In battle, they prefer long spears tipped with bone or bits of Hlüss chitin, cutlasses, and onehanded maces. They are expert slingers but indifferent archers or crossbowmen.

Tinalíya: "the Gnomes"

This species lives in one known enclave, south of the Tláshte Mountains in northern Livyánu.

Tinalíya are small: adults usually stand about two feet in height. They follow the pattern of so many other interstellar species: four short, outward-bowed legs; a spherical abdomen, upon which the torso is centrally placed; two long arms ending in claw-like, three-fingered hands with an opposable thumb; and a back-sloping head with huge eyes; and vaguely humanoid features. The body is divided into small, bulbous segments and is covered all over with a brownish, russet, or tan horny integument. Their limbs thus resemble strings of brown beads. They are intensely curious, learned, materialistic, generous, and friendly. Their most annoying trait is their absolute literal-mindedness. They are completely unable to comprehend exaggerations, metaphors, similes, or jokes. They live in communal underground cities and emerge mostly to seek knowledge and to "see the world." They are noted for their sorcerous talents and their skill with the devices of the ancients. They are even able to repair a few of the simpler "Eyes," etc. They believe in an odd, monotheistic deity, whom they claim has no interest in this universe whatsoever. They are aware of the existence of the other-planar beings humans call "Gods," however, and they often join human priesthoods for purely pragmatic reasons: to learn magic and other subjects. They are doughty fighters, and the Livyáni field several legions of these creatures to serve as a defense for their region. They use long, hooked halberds, needle-pointed rapiers, and thrusting spears. Tinalíya have three sexes: males (10%), females (5%), and neuters (85%). It is mostly the neuters and a few of the females who venture out into the Five Empires to trade, explore, and satisfy their curiosity. Almost all of these travellers eventually return home.

ASwamp Folk



Urunén: "the Cold-Dwellers"

The sub-polar regions around the South Pole. One small continent and several islands there are the only enclave known for this species.

The Urunén have only recently been contacted via the underground tubeway car system. They have had no other contact with humankind since the Latter Times, although they knew of humankind through artifacts and inscriptions. Urunén are a little taller than the human norm (five and half to just over six feet); they are humanoid, bipedal, erect, and have two man-like arms ending in four-digit hands with an opposable thumb. There the resemblance ends. This species is covered with short, brownish fur, almost like a nap of velvet. They have a long tail, which is not prehensile, and their heads are long-snouted, triangular in shape (somewhat resembling a moose), with the brain-case at the back, two big eyes set wide apart on each side of the head, and a moist, mobile nose. They have a society

comparable to those of the Five Empires, with rulers, administrators, priesthoods, etc. Their religion revolves around three deities, each of whom has a different theological rôle or purpose. There are also "small gods": nature spirits, house spirits, etc. They are a self-centred, inward-looking race, good scholars and sorcerers, and their abilities appear to be much on a par with humankind. There are two sexes: males (35%), and females (65%). Urunén family structures are strong, and most of their unions are polygamous because of the discrepancy between males and females. This species seems ready to friendly toward humankind, but if they are betrayed or mistreated, they will be fearsome foes. They have no natural enemies on their island-continent, but they have had civil wars, and their skill with scalloped long swords, double-ended halberds, crossbows, and javelins would make them a force to be reckoned with. Their distance from humankind's enclaves naturally prevents any serious threat from either side.



Two Tinaliya



An Urunén

1.11. HUMAN RACIAL GROUPS

A few remarks must be added regarding human subtypes on Tékumel. The peoples of the Five Empires (including most of the smaller states of the great continent) are relatively homogeneous: most stand about five and a half to six feet tall, are rather slender, with light copper-gold skins, black hair and eyes, and chiseled, aquiline features. Differences are minor: e.g. the people of Dó Cháka and Pán Cháka tend toward broader brows, higher cheekbones, and a lighter, more reddish complexion, and this carries over into Mu'ugalavyá, all the way west to the Plain of Towers. The Livyáni are slimmer and more graceful than the Tsolyáni. The Salarvyáni tend to be bulkier, with a sallow skin tone, thick and bushy beards and considerable body hair. All in all, these variations are not surprising in a population spread as widely as the peoples of the Five Empires. There are two quite distinct racial groups that deserve special mention, however:

N'lüss

The N'lüss dwell in a large, single region north of Mu'ugalavyá. This is broken into various tribal principalities, the largest of which is N'lüss itself.

These northern people are taller than their southern counterparts, ranging up to seven feet in height. The males tend to have luxuriant beards, and their skin colour is somewhat lighter and more golden than that prevailing in the south. The N'lüss live in complex tribal communities, with chieftains, bards, and various features reminiscent of the ancient Nordic peoples of old Earth. They are powerful warriors and often emerge to take employment as mercenaries, usually for Yán Kór or for Tsolyánu, with comparatively few going to Mu'ugalavyá. They prefer great two-handed swords of iron, bronze, or *Chlén*-hide, but also use spears, bows, and daggers. The N'lüss are patriarchal, with special pronouns and terms of respect for their fathers. They claim to be descendants of the ancient dynasty of the Dragon Warriors and so worship the Flame Gods, Vimúhla and Chiténg. They are divided into bands, each ruled by a chieftain (*Sárq*), and their feuds are long-standing and fierce, but with a code of chivalry "that only cowards break." The N'lüss are not often accepted into the clans, temples, and governments of the Five Empires because of their social differences, and they themselves show little interest in sorcery or scholarship. Related to the N'lüss are the sub-arctic Lorún tribes that range the tundra north of Yán Kór. These folk are also taller than their southern neighbours, and their tribal organisation is similar to that of the N'lüss, though details differ.

A N'lüss



A Nóm

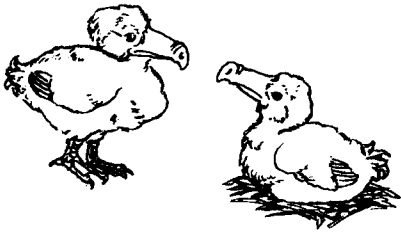


Nóm

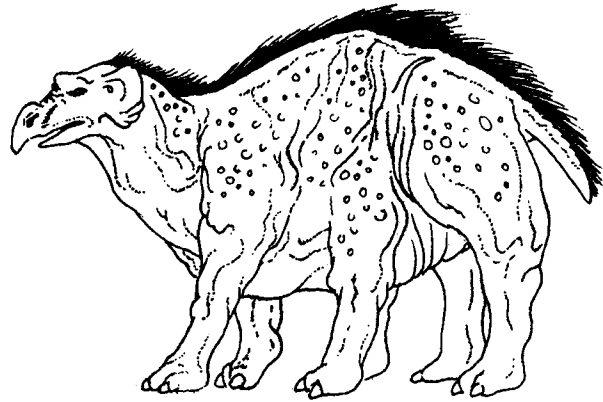
Nomadic sailors of the great ocean east of Salarvyá. An island archipelago is located there, from whence the Nóm range the seas. Many islands are just coral atolls, but others are large enough to support half a hundred families.

The Nóm are not encountered anywhere in the Five Empires, but explorers who have ventured out to the far eastern ocean, Farisé Isle, Dréssa Isle, and the White Water Shoals report having met the black ships of these strange people. Racially, the Nóm are very distinct: they have almost jet-black skin, straight hair, and sharp, triangular faces with long, slightly slanted eyes. At times their eyes are a red-brown or even an amber gold in hue. They live in societies centred around their ships: the Captain is the ruler; under him is the warrior caste; there is a small and relatively powerless caste of priests and merchants; and at the bottom are the slaves. Each ship has a home island, where a fortress and "home crew" (replacements for the ship's personnel) live. Women accompany their menfolk to sea and have a powerful say in the society. The males ostensibly rule the women and marry wives in groups of three (a religious belief), but women may refuse such a marriage — or divorce the husband and leave, as they wish. Premarital sex is permitted, but extra-marital sex is frowned upon as "shameful." In some ways, thus, the Nóm are the most puritanical of Tékumel's many societies. Slaves seem to be a separate caste by choice also; they do not intermarry with the warrior caste and are quite proud of their status. These people are great warriors and fashion excellent weapons of bronze, bone, and obsidian. Armour is made of fish scales. There are always feuds and piratical raids to take goods, slaves, and treasure, and the life of a Nóm warrior is sometimes a short one. The Nóm have eight major deities: five males and three females; there are also minor gods, sacred islands, and a host of spirits and taboos. They are good at sorcery but have a very different concept of it: a Nóm sorcerer memorises just one spell and becomes known for that alone. Literature, history, etc. are all "remembered" with the aid of spell-pictures, and a sorcerer may take his/her name from a particular spell. Thus, Chári-Nóm is the name of a person who is a "picture": a person who uses the picture-spell to create visible, three-dimensional pictures of places and events. Ká-Nóm is a dramatist and drama historian, who uses a similar spell to "recall" dramas and present them again. Dré-Nóm is an historian, whose recollections of past events are kept in pictorial form with the aid of a history-picture spell. An offensive sorcerer may be named "Flame-Strike" (Jóhtë-Nóm), or "Ship-Shield" (Myé'-Nóm). Most sorcerers are concerned with such mundane matters as finding fish, avoiding storms, etc. The society of the Nóm is complex and deserves further investigation.

Domesticated Animals



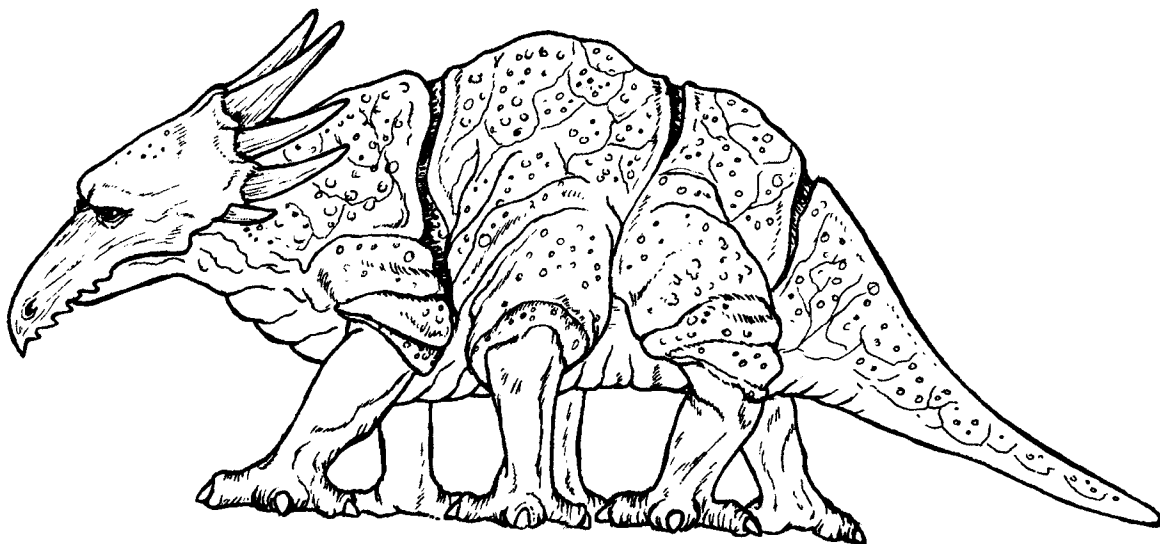
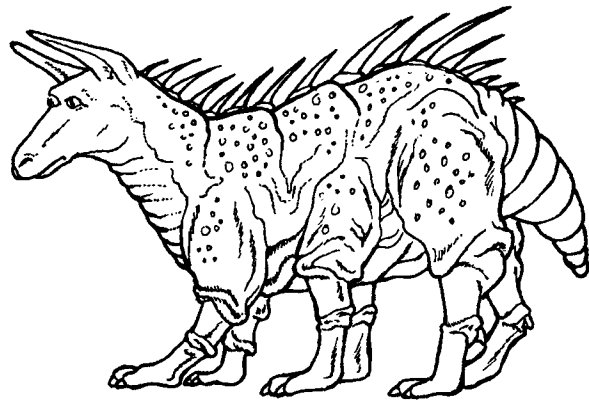
Above, two Káika; below, a Tiuni



Above, a Bazháq, below, a Nyár



Above, a Hmá; below, a Chlén



2. CREATURE STATISTICS

Below are brief explanations of the terms used in the Bestiary tables. Keep in mind that all of the statistics provided for creatures are guidelines, and shouldn't be taken as hard and fast rules. Depending on a creature's maturity, feeding habits, climate and other factors, the statistics may vary a great deal. Feel free therefore to modify the numbers provided if it suits the situation you find the characters in.

Name is self-explanatory. Most names provided are those that a Tsolyáni citizen would use – although there are exceptions. In those cases, a notation is made indicating the origin of the name.

Primary Habitat is the climate and geography that a creature is normally found in. Again, many creatures are limited to specific areas, and are therefore unlikely to be encountered elsewhere. Such creatures include the Chürstalli of the Plain of Towers, and the Bazháq of Tané, and there are many more.

An explanation of the numbers is as follows:

3 • Clear. Clear terrain consists of agricultural fields, plains, or lightly wooded areas, with lakes, streams, and low, rolling hills.

4 • Forest. Forest terrain consists of: *open*: woods, timberlands, underbrush, and scrub jungle, and *dense*: thick forest, jungle, and wilderness.

5 • Mountains. Mountains consist of *low*: foothills and peaks up to about 10,000 feet high; and *high*: the tallest peaks and crags

6 • Deserts. Deserts range from the powdery white sands of the Desert of Sighs in Milumanayá, to the gravelly wastelands of the Great Desert of Galái in northwestern Mu'ugalavyá, to the Desert of Eyági's gritty, glass-like sand, to the parched dunes of the Dry Bay of Ssu'úm in southeastern Sa'á Allaqí, to the rocky barrens of the Sleeping Desert in Mihállu, to the vast, wind-swept emptiness of the Plains of Glass in the far east of the continent. All of these have their own life-forms, only some of which can be included here.

7 • Jungles and Wet Lowlands. Wet lowlands consist of *low-lying plains*: occasional bogs, fens, and marshes; *swamps*: largely water with interspersed islets and thickets; and *dense coastal swamps*, sometimes called "mangrove swamps," often home to the horrid "Food of the Ssú."

8 • Water. Water habitats consist of *inland*: lakes, rivers, and inland waterways; *coastal*: tidal flats and seacoast; and *ocean*: seas and deep, salt water.

9 • The Underworlds. The *Tsuru'úm*, as the "Underworlds" are called, are the relics of Tékumel's long occupation, with the deepest layers belonging to the Ssú and the Hlüss, the Time of the Ancients and the Latter Times. More recent levels are the result of excavations by previous civilizations. Uppermost are those created through the custom of *Ditlana*. Some of the "layers" of catacombs lie directly over one another, while others are scattered about, the result of cities migrating within an area, rivers shifting their banks, and populations moving. Layers are sometimes cut off without access, while others are joined by long connecting tunnels to other sections or to the surface itself.

Secondary Habitat: The number in this column refers to any other areas besides that of a creature's primary habitat in which it might be found. Refer above for further explanation of each habitat, and recall that some species are, indeed, quite specific in their home locale.

Number Appearing: The entry in this column consists of two parts:

- a *Probability distribution*, expressed as two numbers, such as "80/20", and
- a *Number appearing range*, expressed as a pair of ranges, one for minor groups such as hunting packs or individuals, the second for major groups such as families or herds.

By rolling 1d100 for the probability distribution, one selects the appropriate number appearing range. For example, a Chnáu has a probability range of 80/20, with a number appearing range of 1/1-3. This means that there is an 80% chance of encountering a single Chnáu, and a 20% chance of meeting between 1 to 3 of them. Were one to roll a "63", only one creature would be encountered, while a roll of "83" would require an additional roll to determine the exact number of creatures encountered (between 1 and 3, of course).

Some creatures have but a single number or range listed; this implies that one would encounter that number of creatures at any time an encounter occurs.

Intelligence: is fairly straightforward, as creatures are divided into several broad ranges of intelligence, which have an important, but by no means, complete influence on the behavior of a creature. The ranges are named as follows:

- *Low animal*
- *Animal*
- *High animal*
- *Semi-intelligent*
- *Intelligent*
- *Very intelligent*

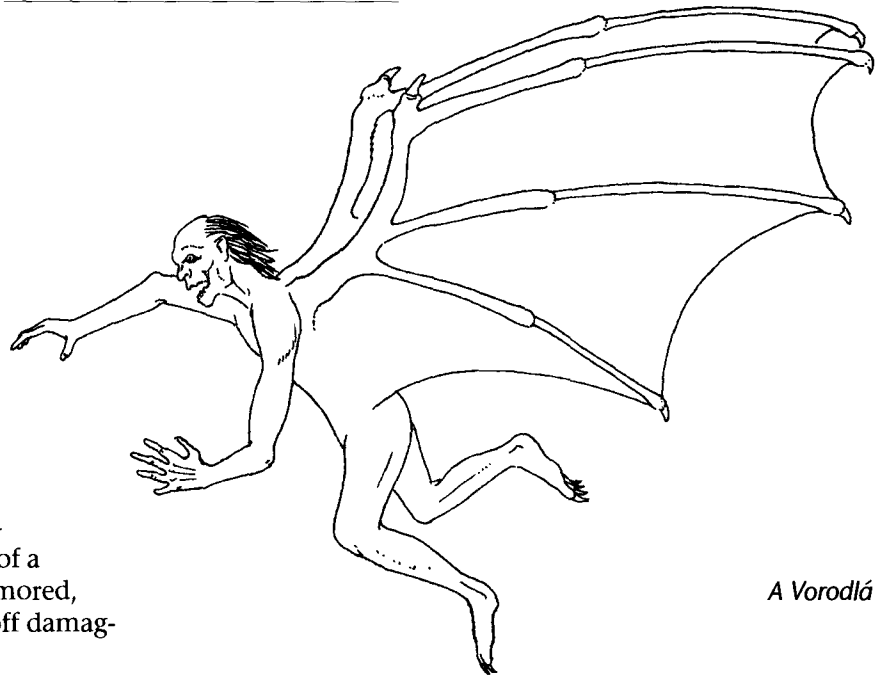
Armor: The entry in this column indicates the number of damage points absorbed by the skin or outer integument of a creature. Some creatures are very well armored, whilst others have little ability to fend off damaging attacks.

Body damage: This is expressed as a base number and an additional variable range of the amount of damage an adult creature can take before being completely overcome. Smaller or larger examples of the same species of creature may have significantly fewer or greater amounts of body damage points. An adolescent creature, for example, may have only 60-70% of the body damage an adult creature might.

Damage done per blow: This is usually expressed as a range, such as 2-6 or 1-20. The result is the number of point inflicted upon an opponent by a creature when in combat. Some creatures are also capable of using weapons besides their natural ones; this is noted where appropriate. A Qól, for example, is capable of inflicting 1-5 points of damage by biting its opponent, or it could also use a weapon, such as a flail, which has a much greater amount of damage possible.

Special ability: Each letter in this column refers to a particular special ability a creature may possess, such as intraplanar ability, or poison, or other factors unique to that species. It is *very* important to refer to the general description of a creature in order to fully understand its capabilities.

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | <i>Has a Poison Attack</i> |
| B | <i>Colony Creature</i> |
| C | <i>Psychically Sensitive</i> |
| D | <i>Capable of Disguise</i> |
| E | <i>Has Otherplanar Capabilities/existance</i> |
| F | <i>Requires Special Weapons to hit it</i> |
| G | <i>Has a Psychic Attack</i> |
| H | <i>Is Undead</i> |



A Vorodlá

Speed: Each creature has a specific "top speed" at which it can move. This characteristic also governs the number of blows a creature gets during a melee round:

- *Very slow: 1 blow every 2 rounds*
- *Slow: 2 blows every 3 rounds*
- *Average: 1 blow per round*
- *Fast: 3 blows every 2 rounds*
- *Very fast: 2 blows every round*

Size: Again, a relatively self-explanatory characteristic, in this case referring to the relative dimensions of an adult creature (as opposed to a very young or older creature).

- *Very small: less than 2 feet long*
- *Small: between 2-4 feet long*
- *Medium: between 4-7 feet in length*
- *Large: between 7-10 feet in length*
- *Very large: between 10-20 feet*
- *Huge: Over 20 feet in length.*

H/B/S is the Height/Build/Strength of the creature, for the purposes of combat. It should also be noted that creatures that are somewhat intelligent to very intelligent can develop some skill in the use of a weapon or weapons; a good example would be the Sérudla, sometimes found wielding a massive sword.

- *Semi-Intelligent: up to 10 skill levels/weapon*
- *Intelligent: as capable as a human*
- *Very Intelligent: at least 10 skill levels/weapon*

For a further explanation of a creature's H/B/S, see the following section.

2.1 CALCULATING FIGHTING ABILITY

The Height/Build/Strength of a creature is effectively a measurement of its ability to fight. Just as in humans, speed and intelligence play a role in determining the final effective H/B/S of a creature. Keep in mind that these figures are primarily for use when engaging intelligent, capable opponents, and should not be used as an absolute measurement of a creature's ability. Given half a chance, a Sró will try to squash a warrior underfoot more quickly than trying to engage in melee.

Size is the basic factor to use when beginning to calculate a creature's H/B/S. Small creatures have little or no ability to defend themselves against an opponent when they are cornered; most will attempt to flee before getting boxed in. Larger creatures have more mass and natural weaponry to defend themselves, and will do so when attacked. But there is an upper limit to the *effective* H/B/S of the largest creatures, as it becomes difficult to fight *tete-a-tete* something as small as a human being.

<i>Size:</i>	
<i>Very Small</i>	20
<i>Small</i>	40
<i>Medium</i>	80
<i>Large</i>	120
<i>Very Large</i>	160
<i>Huge</i>	240

Damage is an *additive* factor to the basic build obtained from a creature's size. This is to reflect the musculature and mass of a creature, not unlike the "build" and "strength" portions of an intelligent creature's H/B/S. Thus a fairly delicate creature, like a Mnór, does not have the advantages of a more solid creature, such as a Zrné. Use the base value *without* the added random roll.

Speed is the next factor to consider. As most creatures have natural weaponry of one form or another (claws, teeth, horns, tails, et cetera), speed has a *multiplicative* effect on the basic build factor obtained from a creature's size and damage. Very slow creatures may only be able to strike half as often as an armed and armored warrior, while the fastest may attack several times within the span of a single swordstroke.

<i>Speed:</i>	
<i>Very Slow</i>	.5
<i>Slow</i>	.75
<i>Average</i>	1.0
<i>Fast</i>	1.25
<i>Very Fast</i>	1.5

Intelligence is treated similarly to speed, in that an intelligent creature will be able to direct its attacks at points of weakness or vulnerability, thus enhancing its natural attack capabilities. Trying to measure intelligence on an absolute scale would, however, be difficult, as there are several different types. A Mrúr, while nominally having a human brain, depends on Otherplanar energy for motivation and impetus, and can be said to be "differently abled." This is different from the cunning of a Shánu'u or a Chürstalli, which is similar to that of their more intelligent cousins, the Hláka and the Hlüss. Bear in mind that semi-intelligent and intelligent creatures can also learn to be skillful when using weapons such as swords and axes.

<i>Intelligence:</i>	
<i>Low Animal</i>	.50
<i>Animal</i>	.75
<i>High Animal</i>	.90
<i>Semi-Intelligent</i>	1.0
<i>Intelligent</i>	1.25
<i>Very Intelligent</i>	1.33

So then the formula for calculating a creature's effective H/B/S can be summarized as follows:

$$((\text{Size} + \text{Damage}) \times \text{Speed}) \times \text{Intelligence} = \text{Effective H/B/S}$$

At this point, an example is in order. A Gerednya is a **medium** sized creature, which gives it a base value of **80**. It is not heavily built, and in fact is rather slender, and this is reflected in the amount of damage that it can take, of **40**. This gives it a basic factor of **120** ($80 + 40 = 120$). It is a **fast** creature, which multiplies the base of 100 by 1.25, resulting in **144**. Finally, it has only an **animal** intelligence, which multiplies the last result by .75, rounded up, giving a result of **108**.



A Khéshchal

3. CREATURE INDEX

The following is an alphabetical list of the creatures included in Sec. 1. The environmental Section number in which each creature is described is given immediately after its name. Following this, the numbers of the Sections of other possible environments in which the creature may occur are listed in brackets. The favoured environments of certain nonhuman races are also marked in this way. Animals that may be found both wild and domesticated are indicated by a "K" after the entry. Page numbers in *italics* indicates an illustration of the appropriate creature.

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Name	Habitat(s)	No. App.	Intelligence	Armor	Body Damage	Damage Done	Sp.	Speed	Size	H/B/S
Ahoggyá	10		intelligent	1	60/70/90 + 1d10	2-11*		average	medium	187
Akhó	8	70/30 1-2/1-5	animal	7	90/150/240 + 1d10	1-20/2-20/ 3-30	A	average	large/very large/huge	158- 360
Alásh	6	90/10 1/1-10	low animal		2 + 1d10	1	A	fast	very small	17
Anátl	6	25/75 1-10/20-50	animal	4	40 + 1d10	1-10	B	average	medium	90
Aqáà	9	90/10 1/1-2	animal	6	120 + 2d10	2-20	A	average	very large	210
Ayá	6	85/15 1/1-3	animal	6	200 + 1d10	3-30		average	huge	330
Bazháq	3 [4, 5]	50/50 2-40/4-80	semi-intelligent	2	60 + 1d10	1-20		average	large	180
Biridlú	9	80/20 1-10/2-20	high animal	4	60 + 1d10	1-20	G	fast	medium	158
Chashkéri	8 [7]	85/15 1-2/1-5	high animal	2	30 + 1d10	1-10	F	average	medium	99
Chíma	10		intelligent	1	35/40/45 + 1-5	2-11*		average	medium	150
Chlén	3 [4, 5]	70/30 1-20/3-60	animal	6	100 + 1d10	0-19		very slow	large	83
Chnúu	7 [4]	80/20 1/1-3	animal	2	15 + 1d10	2-3/2-6	A	very fast	very small/ small	39- 62
Chnéhl	4 [9]	70/30 5-50/10-100	semi-intelligent	2	30 + 1d10	1-10*		average	medium	103
Cholókh	5 [4]	50/50 1/1-10	animal	5	30+1d10	1-10		fast	medium	103
Chürstállí	6	40/60 1-5/2-20	semi-intelligent	6	80/140 + 1d10	2-20/ 3-30	A	average	very large/ huge	240- 380
Dalmé	6	90/10 1/1-5	high animal	2	50 + 1d10	1-10		fast	medium	146
Dlakolel	4 [5]	1/1-5	semi-intelligent	8	80+ 1d10	3-30		average	huge	320
Dlaqó	9	75/25 1/1-5	low animal	6	80 + 1d10	0-19		slow	large	75
Dlikkén	4 [5]	90/10 1/2-6	animal	3	8d10	1-20	B	fast	large	150
Dnélu	3	90/10 1/2-6	animal	1	20 + 1d10	1-10		fast	medium	94
Dzór	4	75/25 1-5/1-10	semi-intelligent	3	80 + 1d10	1-20		average	large	200
Epéng	6 [7]	90/10 1/1-5	animal	3	5/15 + 1d10	2-6/2-11	A	very fast	small/ medium	51- 107
Erúnu	6	1	animal	5	45 + 1d10	1-10	A		medium	94
Étla	8	75/25 1-10/2-20	animal	5	20 + 1d10	1-10		fast	medium	94
Fa'á	6	70/30 1-10/3-30	high animal	2	15 + 1d10	1-5	A,D	fast	small	62
Feshénga	8 [7, 4]	80/20 1-3/1-10	animal	4	60/100 + 1d10	1-10/1-20	A	fast	medium/ large	131- 206

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Name	Habitat(s)	No. App.	Intelligence	Armor	Body Damage	Damage Done	Sp.	Speed	Size	H/B/S
Gacháya	5 [7]	50/50 1/1-10	animal	5	70 + 1d10	2-20		fast	very large	216
Gerednyá	5	60/40 3-30/6-60	animal	4	40 + 1d10	1-10	A	fast	medium	112
Ghár	8 [7]	80/20 1/1-5	animal	6	100 + 1d10	2-20		average	very large	195
Gíniku	4 [7]	80/20 1-10/2-20	animal	4	40 + 1d10	1-10	A	fast	medium	112
Haqél	8	90/10 1/1-5	animal	3	60/120 + 1d10	2-20/ 3-30		fast	large/ very large	169- 262
Hláka	10		intelligent		15/25/35 + 1-5	2-11*	A	fast	small	108
Hli'ír	9	80/20 1-5/1-10	semi-intelligent	1	40 + 1d10	1-10	E, F	fast	medium	150
Hlu'ún	7	80/20 1/1-5	animal	2	30 + 1d10	1-10		fast	medium	103
Hlutrgú	10		intelligent		35/40/45 + 1-5	2-6*		fast	small	125
Hlüss	10		intelligent	3	40/50/60 + 1d10	2-20*	A	average	large	212
Hrá	9	60/40 1-5/2-20	semi-intelligent	2	50 + 1d10	1-20*	H	slow	large	127
Hurú'u	9	90/10 1/1-5	semi-intelligent	3	60 + 1d10	1-20	E, H	fast	large	225
Hyahyú'u	3 [4, 5]	70/30 2-20/5-50	animal	1	20 + 1d10	1-10		fast	medium	94
Jáigi	9	90/10 1-2/2-5	very intelligent		75 + 1d10	3-12*	H	average	medium	206
Káyi	7 [9]	80/20 1-5/3-30	low animal	1	40 + 1d10	0-9	A	average	medium	60
Kité	4 [3]	80/20 1/2-6	animal		15 + 1d10	1-5		fast	small	52
Kókh	3	90/10 1/2-6	animal		3 + 1d10	1-2	A	average	very small	17
Krúa	8	50/50 1/1-10	animal	6	40/80/110 + 1d10	1-20/1-20/ 2-20		fast	med./large/ very large	112- 253
Kurukú	3 [4]	60/40 1-10/3-30	animal	1	15 + 1d10	2-11		very fast	medium	107
Kúrgha	9 [5]	75/25 2-20/5-50	animal		5 + 1d10	1-5		fast	small	42
Lrí	7	80/20 1-10/2-20	animal	5	60 + 1d10	1-10	A	fast	medium	131
Marashyálu	9	**/1-5	intelligent		60 + 1d10	2-11	E, F	average	medium	175
Miháli	10		intelligent		35/40/45 + 1-5	2-11*	C	average	medium	150
Míku	6	75/25 3-8/2-20	animal	4	50 + 1d10	1-10		average	medium	162
Mnór	6 [3]	45/55 1-3/1-10	semi-intelligent	3	40 + 1d10	1-10		fast	medium	150
Mrúr	9	80/20 1-10/2-20	semi-intelligent	1	25 + 1d10	by weapon	H	slow	medium	79

Name	Habitat(s)	No. App.	Intelligence	Armor	Body Damage	Damage Done	Sp.	Speed	Size	H/B/S
Mu'agh	8 [9]	70/30 1-3/1-10	low animal		40 + 1d10	0-9	A		medium	60
Nenyélu	8	65/35 1-5/1-10	high animal	3	40 + 1d10	1-10*	A	fast	medium	135
Ngáyu	9	60/40 1-5/1-10	animal	3	20 + 1d10	1-5/1-10	A	average	small/ medium	45- 75
Ngóro	9	1	intelligent	4	4-9 d10	2-6/2-11/ 2-20*	B	average	small/ med./large	75- 206
Ngrútha	8 [9]	80/20 1/1-10	animal	5	70 + 1d10	1-20		fast	large	183
Nlüss	10		intelligent		40/45/55 + 1-5	2-20*		average	medium	150
Nóm	10		intelligent		30/35/40 + 1d10	2-11*		average	medium	144
Nshé	9	90/10 1/1-2	animal	5	80 + 4d10	1-20		fast	large	187
Nyaggá	10		intelligent	1	45/55/65 + 1d10	2-20*		slow/fast	large	164- 273
Páchi Léi	10		intelligent		25/35/45 + 1d10	2-11*	C	average	medium	143
Pé Chói	10		intelligent	2	30/40/50 + 1d10	2-11*	C	fast	medium	187
Pygmy Folk	10		intelligent		15/20/30 + 1d10	2-6*		fast	small	94
Qáqta	8 [7]	70/30 1-3/1-10	animal	2	40 + 1d10	1-20	A	fast	medium	113
Qól	9	60/40 1-10/3-30	intelligent	1	30 + 1d10	2-11*		average	medium	137
Qósoth	7	90/10 1-3/1-10	semi-intelligent	3	60 + 1d10	1-10	E	average	medium	140
Qu'úni	8 [7]	60/40 2-20/6-60	semi-intelligent	2	25 + 1d10	1-10*		fast	small	81
Qumqúm	9	90/10 1/1-2	intelligent	5	70 + 1d10	2-20*	E	fast	large	297
Rényu	4 [5]	65/35 1-10/2-20	semi-intelligent	1	30 + 1d10	1-10*	C	average	small	70
Ru'ún	9	90/10 1-3/1-10	intelligent	5	100	2-11	C	average	medium	225
Sagún	9	90/10 1/1-3	animal	3	75 + 1d10	1-20	A	slow	large	110
Sérudla	4	70/30 1-2/1-10	semi-intelligent	6	100/140/180 + 1d10	1-20/2-20/ 3-30*	A	average	large/ v.lg./huge	220- 420
Shánu'u	4 [7]	70/30 1-10/2-20	high animal	5	70 + 1d10	1-20		fast	large	214
Shédra	9	80/20 1-5/2-20	semi-intelligent	1	50 + 1d10	1-10*	H	average	medium	130
Shén	10		intelligent	2	50/60/70 + 1d10	2-20*		average	large	225
Shivrái	7	65/35 1-3/1-10	low animal		15 + 1d10	0-4		fast	small	35
Shunned Ones	10		intelligent		30/35/40 + 1d10	2-11*	A	average	medium	144

Name	Habitat(s)	No. App.	Intelligence	Armor	Body Damage	Damage Done	Sp.	Speed	Size	H/B/S
Sikún	4	85/15 4-40/20-200	high animal		15 + 1d10	1-5		fast	small	62
Srámathu	9	65/35 3-8/2-20	intelligent	3	50 + 1d10	2-11*	D	average	medium	162
Sró	5 [9]	75/25 1/1-2	semi-intelligent	7	190/300 + 1d10	2-20/3-30*		average	very large/ huge	350- 540
Ssú (Black)	10		intelligent		50/60/70 + 1d10	2-20*	G	average	large	225
Ssú (Grey)	10		intelligent		35/45/55 + 1d10	2-11*	G	average	medium	156
Swamp Folk	10		intelligent		25/35/45 + 1-5	2-11*	C	average	medium	144
Teqéqmu	5 [7]	90/10 1/1-10	low animal	4	50/70/90 + 1d10	0-4/0-9/ 0-19		slow	small/ med./large	34- 79
Thúnru'u	9	80/20 1-5/1-10	semi-intelligent	3	90 + 1d10	1-20*		average	large	210
Tinalíya	10		intelligent		20/30/40 + 1-5	2-6*		average	small	87
Tletlákha	8 [7]	65/35 1-10/4-40	low animal		5 + 1d10	0-4		fast	small	28
Tsi'il	4	60/40 1-5/1-10	animal	6	110 + 1d10	2-20		slow	very large	152
Tsóggu	8	90/10 1/1-5	animal	1	40 + 1d10	1-10	F	average	medium	90
Tsú'uru	9	90/10 1/1-3	intelligent	1	40 + 1d10	2-11	F	average	medium	150
Urunén	10		intelligent		30/35/45 + 1d10	2-11*		average	medium	144
Vorodlá	9	80/20 1-5/6-15	semi-intelligent	2	60 + 1d10	1-10*	H	fast	medium	175
Vringálu	5 [4]	90/10 1-10/4-40	animal	4	55 + 1d10	1-20	A	fast	medium	127
Vriyágga	8	80/20 1-2/1-10	semi-intelligent	5	70/110 + 1d10	1-20/2-20	A	fast	large/ very large	237 337
Yazái	5 [6]	60/40 2-20/5-50	animal	1	40 + 1d10	1-10		fast	medium	112
Yéleth	9	90/10 1/1-5	intelligent	1	80	2-11*	F	fast	medium	250
Zo'óra	8	90/10 1/1-2	animal	10	300 + 3d10	3-30		average	huge	405
Zmé	4 [5]	40/60 1-5/2-20	high animal	3	60 + 1d10	1-10	A	fast	medium	157

*can also use a weapon

Sp. column: A - poison, B - colony creature, C - Psychically Sensitive, D - Capable of Disguise, E - Otherplanar, F - Requires special weapons to hit, G - Psychic attack, H - Undead (in all cases, refer to creature description)

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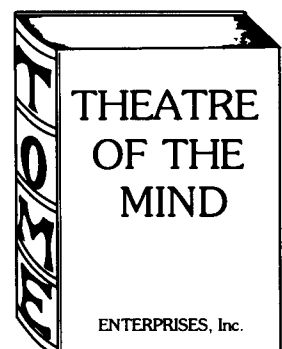
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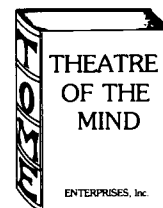
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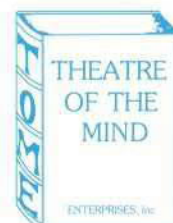
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