

The Empire of the Petal Throne

By the time the histories began to be written again, the foundations of the Empire of the Petal Throne (which rules modern Tsolyánu) had already been laid—indeed, formalised and crystallised. The peoples of this part of Tékumel have a predilection for elaborate ceremonial, visual display, and the security brought about by knowing exactly where one stands in the social order. The earliest records of the Second Imperium (those of the fifth Emperor, named Trákonel I ‘the Blazing Light’, whose reign lasted from 139 to 195 of the current era) already indicate that most of the apparatus of the modern Tsolyáni state was in existence. It has changed very little since.

The first Emperor is known only by his clan-name: ‘the Tlakotáni’. There are no records of his antecedents, who he was, or how he came to subdue the other petty states then ruling in the region. All that is certain is that he had a considerable body of supporters, an army of sorts, and a base of operations somewhere near present Béy Sü.

He also possessed an ancient technological device which struck awe into his contemporaries: this was the Seal of the Imperium, which produces impressions upon parchment, stone, or metal which cannot be counterfeited and which seem to contain—if one gazes deeply into its whorls and convolutions—hints of fearful other-planar power. The original purpose of this device is not known, but it serves to surround and enhance the Imperium with all of the power and mystery of the ancients and of the Gods. This Seal (Tsolyani: *Kólumel*) is more than just an emblem; it stands for the organic, living persona of the State itself. *Kólumel* also denotes ‘Emperor’, and a feminine form, *Kólumelra*, signifies ‘Empress’.

The dating system of the Second Imperium begins with the putative first regnal year of the first Tlakotáni, and all years thereafter are termed tuKolumel ‘after the Seal’, abbreviated to ‘A.S.’ As of this writing, the year is 2,358 A.S.

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