***The History of Fasíltum***

Humans during The Latter Times rediscover the fertile and protected valley later to be named the Vale of Ninár.

The otherwise unknown First Flame Lord founds a city upon a vast abandoned Time of Darkness ruin. The Flame Lord, who – legends state – could mould men’s minds like clay (the Seal?), also inaugurates the worship of the Fire-God.

The Flame Lord’s religion develops and spreads, and a monumental Temple of the God of Fire and War is completed (the construction of which takes over twenty years even using remnant technology!).

This ‘First Temple’ is moved into its own pocket dimension using the technology of the Great Ancients (i.e., the Cube of Flint from later publications).

After this feat, the Fire Kingdom begins a campaign of conquest; this imperial state eventually overruns the cities of Mekú, Khirgár, and Tumíssa, among others.

Heiroglyphic script, based around draconic shapes, is developed (later adapted into monumental Bednálljan).

Civil War at some point splinters the Fire Kingdom. Fasíltum controls the Vale of Ninár and the River of Eyági down to the great caldera lake later named Lake Nayári. Opposing dynasties control from Tumíssa down the Umètla Valley to Hyáshra’s Scimitar. A third grouping rules Khirgár.

Néku Tántha, a Fasíltum peasant promoted by merit to general and then to emperor, re-unifies the Fire Kingdom and even expands it to include Thri'íl and Kúrdis (which still celebrates its conversion to the worship of Vemélish).

The outer temple of Vimúhla (in ordinary dimensional space) is finally completed in Fasíltum, but war with several cities of the Bednálljan Plain, especially Purdánim, erupts.

Economic, techno-magical, and military developments.

Purdánim, having undergone its own religious revolution via contact made with another deity (Ksarúl, the Ancient Lord of Secrets) employs devices of dark/cold other-planar energy to ally with the city of Ngála, to take control of the Cradle of the Twins region, and to conquer Mrélu and advance toward Mekú.

The hero Narkoná'a thoroughly reorganises the Fire Kingdom and defeats the dark southern invaders on the shores Hyáshra’s Scimitar.

Nayári, Queen of Darkness, conquers the coastal nations bordering the Deeps of Chanayága and, with troops from Jakálla, Thráya, Urmísh, Paránta, and other cities, drives up the Chaigávra River valley, takes Mekú and then Fasíltum. She employs a techno-magical device – her Silver Serpent – to assassinate King Narkoná'a III.

The First Imperium is born, its capital at Purdánim, but its religion becomes a syncretic one, where both Light and Darkness, Fire and Ice, are balanced: Chótl and Jráka, the Gods of Sun and Space, Being and Non-being, Light and Darkness, are worshipped.

Spell sorcery, already pioneered during the “Pre-Imperial Epoch”, develops rapidly: spells that inform, control minds, heal, augment bodies, conjure elements or forces, invoke beings from other planes, etc. are all revealed to mankind by Chótl and Jráka. Other gods, demons, and spirits (and their temples and shrines) proliferate.

Ssírandar I invades the triple valley region (modern Mu’ugalavyá) and his generals establish worship of the Sun God, especially its war-god aspect, wherever they go.

Ssírandar II tries to push into Livyánu, but is annihilated by a demonic host bound by the heirs of Llyán of Tsámra. This teaches fear of the dread Shadow Gods to the First Imperium.

Back in Fasíltum, the fate of Ssírandar’s army inspires the city’s sorcerers; they gate into Tékumel’s plane a host of super-warriors from The Scarlet Halls. These wild men are then settled in the mountains to the west of the city.

Meanwhile, the secret clergy of the Shadow Gods, in retaliation for the Bednálljan invasion, very carefully foster a religious revolution in Bednálljan society. The Gods of Stability are introduced, starting with Thúmis, then Karakán and Ávanthe, then Belkhánu and Hnálla. The coastal cities, and the cities of the southern Bednálljan Plain, convert quickly. The highland (more herding than growing) areas further north, nearer the mountains and farther from Livyánu, remain staunchly loyal to the family of gods headed by Chótl and Jráka.

Fasíltum marshals its N'lýss super-warriors and goes to battle. The Fire Army and its raging N'lýss primitives (now fighting with trained Serúdla and Sró!) drive south toward, Jakálla. That ancient city’s rulers gain the allegiance of the Salarvyáni wizard Metállja, who gates into Tékumel’s Plane “the Warriors of the Scarlet” to fight against the hordes of The Beast without a Tail. The two armies meet at The Pit of Ón. There an epic battle is fought, one that results in a defeat for both sides.

These events initiate the Wrath of the Gods Period. Cruel and chaotic religious wars rage, simmer down, then flare up again, for many centuries. Almost mythological performances of feats – a quest to the centre of the planet, an adventure alongside the superhero Hrúgga, occur.

Fasíltum is also at one point sacked by Fire Worshippers!

Eventually peace and theocratic control is established from the Tláshte Heights to Thénu Thendráya Peak. Nayári’s syncretic ideas are expanded, supposedly by the simple priest Pavár (but this priest is actually a fiction), and a pantheon of ten gods, five Lords of Glory (the Tlomítlanyal) and five Masters of Shadow (the Tlokiriqáluyal), plus their ten only slightly less powerful Cohorts (the Hlimékluyal), are forced upon everyone.

The Kingdom of the Gods is born (and the Concordat of the Priesthoods enacted and stringently enforced).

Two cities, Béy Sý and Béy Trántis, are founded, and the former becomes the new commemorative capital.

Fire and Darkness worship recedes until it is only practiced in Fasíltum and a few other cities. Millennia pass. The practice of spell sorcery reaches its zenith. Strange spells, such as The Grey Hand, the Silver Halo of Soul Stealing, and the Missile of Metállja, are developed.

The threat of invasion from the northwest causes Emperor Mèshkhanúma to build his famous barrier.

Constant unrest causes the Archons of the Empire of the Gods to secretly order (unless it was the College at the End of Time that did the ordering) the creation of the most powerful enchantment since the introduction of sorcery into Tékumel’s Plane – the Petal Throne.

Suddenly, the Kingdom of the Gods falls. Blame is eventually placed on the practice of too much spell sorcery (but is this true?). In any case, a deep Dark Age ensues. In this warlike age, the worship of the Fire God – Vimúhla as it is by this time known – spreads, as in previous ages.

Fasíltum resurrects the Fire Kingdom yet again, and expands its influence down the Eyági River to Lake Nayári to include, finally, Tléku Míriya, Tléku Sunráya, Vrídu, Aukésha, Krú Sékka and Tkmár Harbour, but no more.

Vimúhla-worship returns to Tumíssa and to Méku (but not to Khirgár).

This Dark Age, into which the Fall of the Kingdom of the Gods plummeted human civilisation, is characterised by fantastical events, thanks to the unregulated use of sorcery and magical devices (the Concordat being void).

The great wizard most closely associated with the city of Fasíltum is Qiyór the Many-Tongued. For High King Amúkanàtl VI this undying wizard crafts not one, but ten, ensorcelled bodyguards. Ten golems of indestructible other-planar steel, armed with razor-sharp twin swords, defend the Vríddi kings of Fasíltum for over one-thousand years. One by one, however, they are destroyed or lost. Considered only legend for many centuries, recent excited city rumours celebrate the discovery of one in the vast labyrinths below Ch'óchi. Supposed negotiations with the Mu'ugalavyáni emperor, for the return to Fasíltum of the golem, are proceeding.

Others of these legends are feared to be in the vaults of the Masters of the City of Sárku.

In fact, it is these cold undead Masters, with their eternal lives and icy calculations, who threatened the city of Fasíltum and the Vale of Ninár more than any other power during the Time of No Kings. This is because the ranks of undead had been growing during the decline of the Empire of the Gods.

The wild N‛lýss are constantly engaged destroying undead, and the wizard kings of Fasíltum and Purdánim bring The Beast without a Tail into Tékumel’s plane and establish him at Hmákuyal underneath Thénu Thèndráya Peak (near Avanthár). He guards against the undead issuing forth.

After the destruction of Great Purdánim by the demon prince Kurrítlakal, the banner of centralisation and renewed order is taken up by the rulers of Fasíltum. Hréka Vríddi, the most able military officer and administrator to have appeared in many centuries, unites clans, negotiates treaties, and fights, until finally he establishes what is now known as the Second Imperium of Tsolyánu at Avanthár.

Hréka Vríddi, in taking up the rulership of Tsolyánu, severs himself from the Vríddi Clan and creates instead the clan and lineage of “Tlakotáni”, formerly the name of the Vimúhla-worshipping martial fraternity to which he belonged.

This decision, known in Fasíltum as “The Abnegation”, begins the city’s very negative attitude toward the Empire of the Petal Throne.

The history of the Second Imperium is pretty much as related in materials published elsewhere (starting with Trakonel I).

***The City of Chiming Skulls***

Geographically, Fasíltum is situated in the embrace of three steep connected hills, the River Eyági, and a fourth promontory across the river. The oldest section of the city lies to the north of the river, beneath Cho'ólan, Dzonóte, and Lekkún Kakkán (the latter meaning defensible tumulus). The newer city section lies south of the Eyági beneath Kà'á Kakkán, which is larger and higher than its northern sisters. Beyond the Kakkáns to the east lies the Foreigners’ Quarter, the great Gate of Trákonel I: the Blazing Light, and Seqhán’s Wall. The amazing Shaft of Lord Amúkanàtl pierces the cliff joining the Dzonóte and Lekkún Kakkáns. Driven and carved at the same time as Avanthár, this feat of engineering and architecture is the chief access to Fasíltum.

It is also its chief defence. Chambers and murder-holes to all sides make any foes an easy prey to fire, poison gas, and other more esoteric weapons.

The river, Seqhán’s Wall, and Kà'á Kakkán defend the southern, newer, area of the city. There the four palaces of the Imperium, the Clan Council Hall, the Hall of Martial Glory, the Red Sandstone Palace, and various wealthy clanhouses stand, overlooked by the House of Emperor Khánmi'yel Nikúma I (a citadel atop the high prow of Kà'á Kakkán).

North of Kà'á Kakkán but south of the Eyági River lies city’s religious precinct, where temples to deities other than Vimúhla and Chiténg are allowed to operate. Further north, built deep into the crest of Cho'ólan Kakkán, stand the two most visible pieces of monumental architecture in Fasíltum. The first is the Palace of the Might of Vríddi and the second is the Fortress of the Emperor Khánmi'yel Nikúma II. At sunset these glow red, black and white.

Just east of these buildings, Lekkún Kakkán rises to a conical peak. At its apex an ancient altar stands, along with a bottomless Flame Pit that dates all the way back to the founding of the city. This most sacred place is named The Pinnacle of Silence, and the city’s most important sacrifices are offered there.

To the far southwest, a few hundred meters beyond the city and topping the narrow ridge that makes up the stern of Kà'á Kakkán, stands one last fortification: the Citadel of the Twelfth Eye of Flame.

Upon a lower eminence forming the northeast wall of the Foreigners’ Quarter (called Chanésh Hill) stands the castle-like Barracks of the Legion of Searing Flame, 10th Imperial Heavy Infantry. The legion’s Field of War lies downslope just to the north of this castle but still within Seqhán’s Wall.

From the south-westernmost tower of the Citadel of the Twelfth Eye of Flame to the most north-eastern curve of Seqhán’s Wall stretches about 3,900 meters of territory. There are many beautiful and unique features to either side of this dividing line, quite apart from the chiming skulls which give the city its nickname. There are the sharply up-thrust hills, which seem to rise almost vertically from the ground; the eight or more immaculately maintained fortresses, the joined Temple Complex of Chiténg and Vimúhla (the largest in the world), the Eyági River and its three bridges, the walks atop the Dzonóte and Kà'á Kakkáns, the Pinnacle of Silence (whose flame is visible for many kilometres), the Shaft of Lord Amúkanàtl, and finally the Ancient Fane of Lord Vimúhla (though few ever see this).

Life revolves around religious and social observances in Fasíltum. The gargantuan Tunkúl-gong of the Temple of Vimúhla (and its myriad lesser imitators throughout the city) sounds at sunrise, as do the chanting processions that climb to the crest of Dzonóte Kakkán to share the first sliver of molten gold over the far eastern horizon. Then throughout the day further ceremonies are held. These conclude two hours after sunset, when chanting litanies performed seemingly by the entire citizenry reverberate softly off the walls of the four Kakkáns (creating a dreamy atmosphere). The evening meal at sunset is the centre-point of most people’s day, and the cuisine of Fasíltum is scorching hot. Holidays here are celebrated with intensity and passion. The least fanatic lay-member of the Temple of Vimúhla still spends scores of hours in personal preparation for various processions or costumed rituals throughout the year. These parades or rites include worship ceremonies dedicated to heroes, historic dates, the foundation of the city itself, legion victories, and even specific individual combats (as well as many religious holy days). The pageantry, rituals, and sacrifices observed on Chitlásha, the fifth intercalary day, know no equal anywhere in Tsolyánu (even Avanthár or Béy Sý).

Given the above, it should be little wonder that all Vríddi, and also all non-Vríddi, citizens of Fasíltum appear supremely proud, to the point of open arrogance.